

Friendsville  
Maryland  
A  
Brief  
History

by  
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## Introduction

Friendsville sits in the Northwestern corner of Garrett County, Maryland. Friendsville was initially founded in 1765 when John Friend Sr. (1728 to Aft. 1808) traveled from (what is now) the area of Paw Paw, WV. If you are from the Garrett County, Maryland area and a descendant of one of the many pioneer families, we are sure you think that a new article about the history of Friendsville could not be written. In many ways this is correct. There has been much written of this area, along with some family histories. However, if (as some old timers would say) “you have the mud on your feet and you can never wash it off”, there is pride for this land, this area, and these people. This book is a reflection on all the works that were written before as well as encompassing some new materials. It is intended to be used as an avenue to bring the history of the area back into the forefront, as a gentle reminder to those who have read the previous writings. There is always something else to be said about the land that you love; this little dot on the landscape of our beloved America, “our little corner of the world”.

We hope that this, mostly pictorial history, will find its way to the young people of Garrett County, that it will allow them to learn of their rich heritage, to view some of the sites that their parents, grandparents or even great grandparents saw during their lifetime spent in this beautiful valley along the Youghiogheny River. Hopefully, they will understand that life in America is not all about big cities and freeways; that their home is coveted by many others living in America; the many people who can only wish for the experience of small town living.

Since you have purchased this book, we must assume your interest might lay in the fact you know something about the area and its people, or possibly that you want to learn more about its beginnings or how the town of Friendsville came to be. Please take the time to sit with your children or grandchildren and tell them of your memories. Take a walk with them down Memory Lane. We can almost guarantee you they will never forget the journey. The youth of today will never learn of their past if we do not take the time to share our lives and memories with them.

One would also think that there could not be one more article written about John Friend, Sr. (affectionately called Old John to distinguish him from the many other John Friends in his lineage). The stories and the histories of the descendants of Old John and of the many other pioneer families who help create Friendsville are no less important than that of Old John. However, as with most publications one must control the amount of subject matter, so with that said, we will direct this publication towards the history of Friendsville, MD and not towards the family histories.

Prior to about 1774, John Friend might have been the only white man living in the area of (today's) Garrett County. "Old John's " land claim was known as "**Friend's Fortune**". It has been noted that just after the Revolutionary War there were about 50 families living in what is now Garrett County but only about a dozen families were living in the far western section known as the Sandy Creek Glades. These families were squatters living in the area in violation of the King's command of 1763; they also became unauthorized squatters upon the land of the Maryland proprietor. After the Revolutionary War, the land "Westward of Fort Cumberland" (now Cumberland, MD) was surveyed

into fifty-acre lots by Col. Francis Deakins.<sup>1</sup> These lots were offered to the soldiers who had served in the war and parceled out to them by a lottery. The lots were known simply as the Military Lots. Many soldiers never saw the land they received in the lottery but sold their land rights to others, some of which were wealthy land investors. “Old John” Friend’s land was enumerated (as a settler and designated red ink of the Deakins’ Map) as Military Lots No. 3281, 3282, and 3283. These Military lots are located just west of the bridge crossing the Youghiogheny River leading into Friendsville and most likely encompassed the Friend Graveyard, near the highway.

The early pioneer families supported themselves by farming and hunting in the area, then rich with game and fish. Log homes sheltered them.

Some of the early settlers to join the Friends in the western Maryland area have been noted as Wilt, arriving about 1799; Durst, arriving about 1809; and Bittinger, arriving about 1814. These families settle in what is today the Accident, New Germany area.

Probably one of the earliest mentions of any sort of industry (but which was really a necessity) was for a mill. Cornelius Ward would come to Friendsville to build a grist mill. The date the mill was built is unknown but we know Mr. Ward died in 1795, so the mill pre-dated 1795. Cornelius Ward’s daughter Elizabeth would eventually marry John Friend Jr., son of “Old John” Friend.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Military Lots of Garrett County are discussed in greater detail in Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> For details see: **John Friend Jr. of Friend’s Delight, Sang Run, MD** (2007) by Dr. Patrick T. Smith

The earliest records of a school are noted as being The Blooming Rose School. Meshack Browning attended this school about 1796.

The Mary Ann Iron furnace was built by John Brobst about 1823. It later became known as the Bear Creek furnace. By now the sleepy little hamlet was coming alive with activity. John Brobst named his furnace after Mary Ann Friend, his wife and granddaughter of “Old John” Friend .<sup>3</sup>

On January 7, 1830 a post office was established, the mail being delivered to FRIENDS MD, which was changed to Friendsville August 18, 1832. Gabriel Friend, the son of “Old John” was the first postmaster in the town.

Before the turn of the century, the Town of Friendsville had a blacksmith, a grocery and grog store (meaning they sold liquor), a gun maker, a boot and shoemaker, plus churches or meeting houses. There were stock dealers in the area and raising livestock was for some a means of making a living. Gathering ginseng and selling it to dealers in New York provided income for some families. Pelts were also shipped to market and helped supplement the farming income.

About 1894, J. W. McCullough, of Friendsville and H. E. Clark of PA erected a sawmill at the junction of the Big and Little Bear Creek. This mill was later called the Bear Creek Lumber Company. A wooden tramway was used to move logs to the mill.

In 1898 a large band mill was built at Friendsville by a man named Taylor. Taylor also built about twenty miles of narrow-gauge railroad up Big Bear Creek; when finished the rails extended almost to Swanton. The narrow-gauge railroad was use to

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<sup>3</sup> For details see **Joseph Friend, Sarah Green and Their Descendents of Friendsville, MD** (2008) by Patty (Friend) Thompson and Patrick T. Smith



transport logs to the mill. About the same time The Lock Haven Lumber Company, operated the South branch railroad with a mill at Friendsville.

In 1904 Friendsville was incorporated and the town was now in its “boom days” as the Confluence & Oakland Railroad had been constructed in 1901. Now residents of the town were able to have needed items sent in to the town by rail. Households could be filled with furniture, easily picked up at the railway station. Stock for stores, farming items; all the necessities of the “modern world” were available to the people of Friendsville via rail.

Prior to the construction of the current bank in Friendsville, this town lot was the site of the Leslie Friend department store, a very large three story building covered with the “gingerbread” woodwork of the period in which it was built. The Friendsville post office was, at one time, housed in this same building.

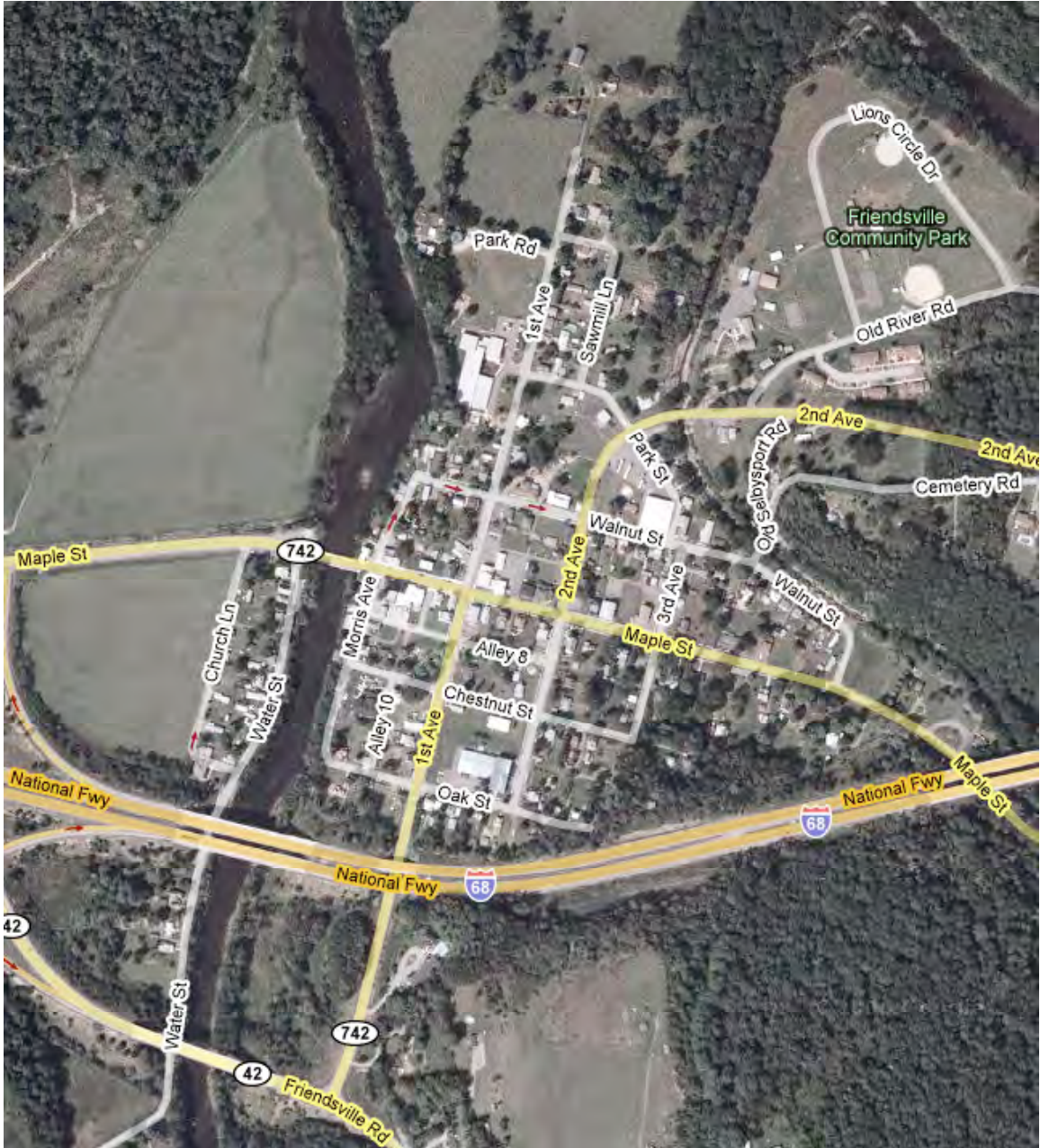
The first bank in Friendsville was located in the building where the Friend Family Association of America’s museum and library are currently housed. Built by Leslie Friend, the bank operated from about 1902 until the mid 1900’s.

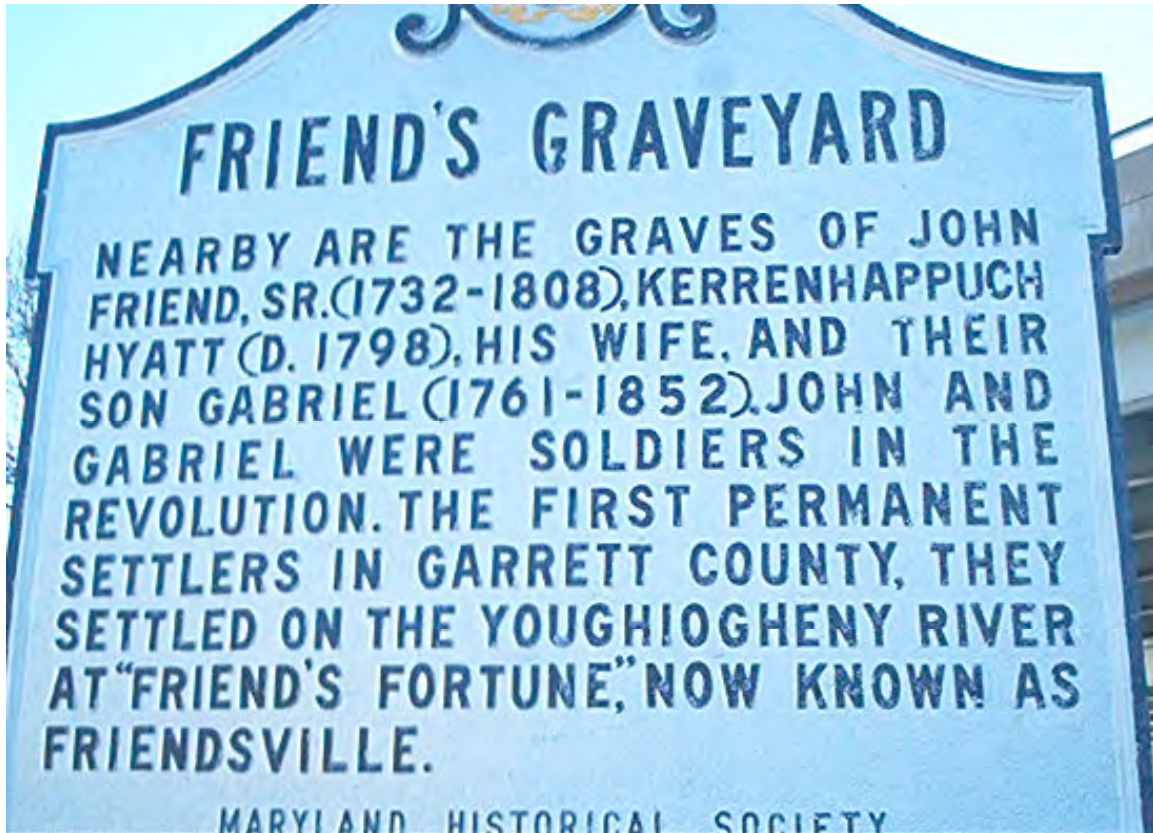
The mill, across the street from today’s FFAA museum was also owned by Leslie Friend, where grain was ground into meal/flour and also operated as a feed store. Leslie Friend also operated the Friendsville Electric Company prior to the building of Deep Creek Lake.

In 1964 the town of Friendsville celebrated its bicentennial. In 2014 the town will celebrate its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Unlike some small towns settled in the 1700’s, which are now nothing more than a distance memory to some or have been forgotten all

together; Friendsville has survived the test of time. The fortitude of its residents and their love for this beautiful mountain valley can be accredited for this success story.

We hope you enjoy the pictorial history of the Town of Friendsville, Maryland that has been gathered for this publication and that you enjoy your trip down Memory Lane.





The "Old John" Cemetery is the final resting place of John Friend Sr. Photograph taken from the West bound exit ramp of Interstate 68 looking Westward to the cemetery (June 2008).



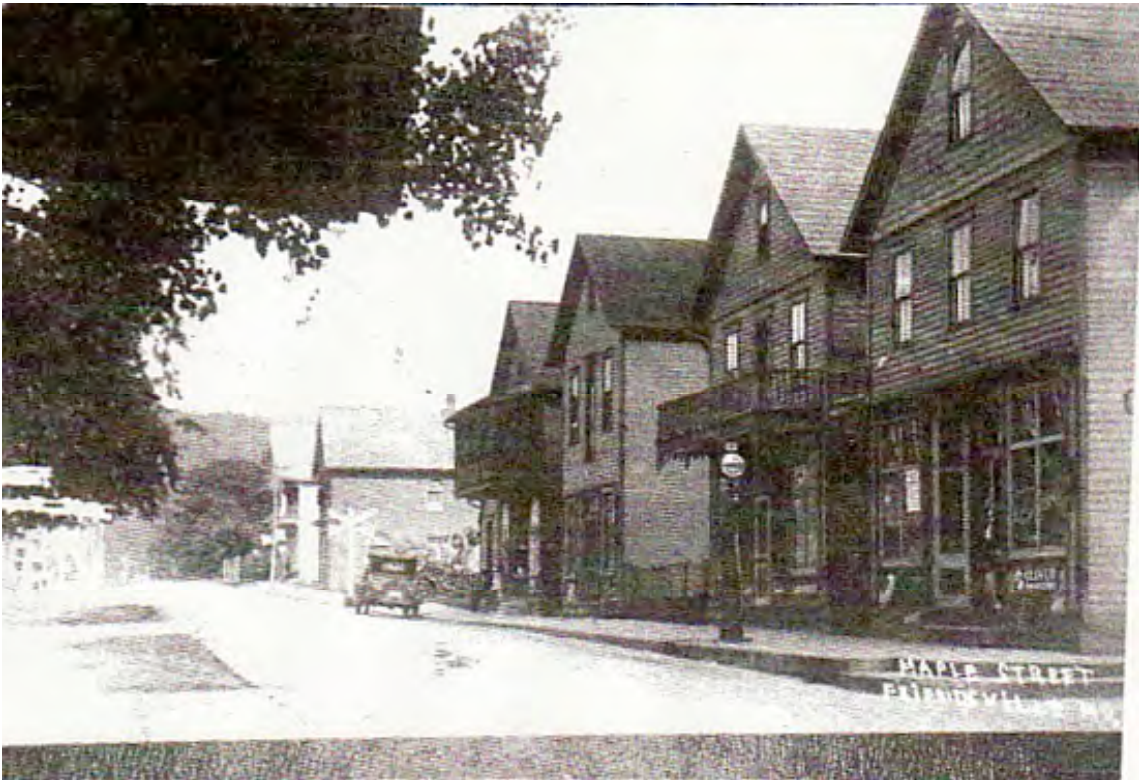
Old bridge to Friendsville (which have been replaced). The label on the photograph reads **"Youghiogheny River at Friendsville (looking up the river). Bridge, there is a man and his wagon, being pulled by a team of oxen."** This view would be looking South.



New bridge spanning the Youghiogheny River (1932)



Maple Street



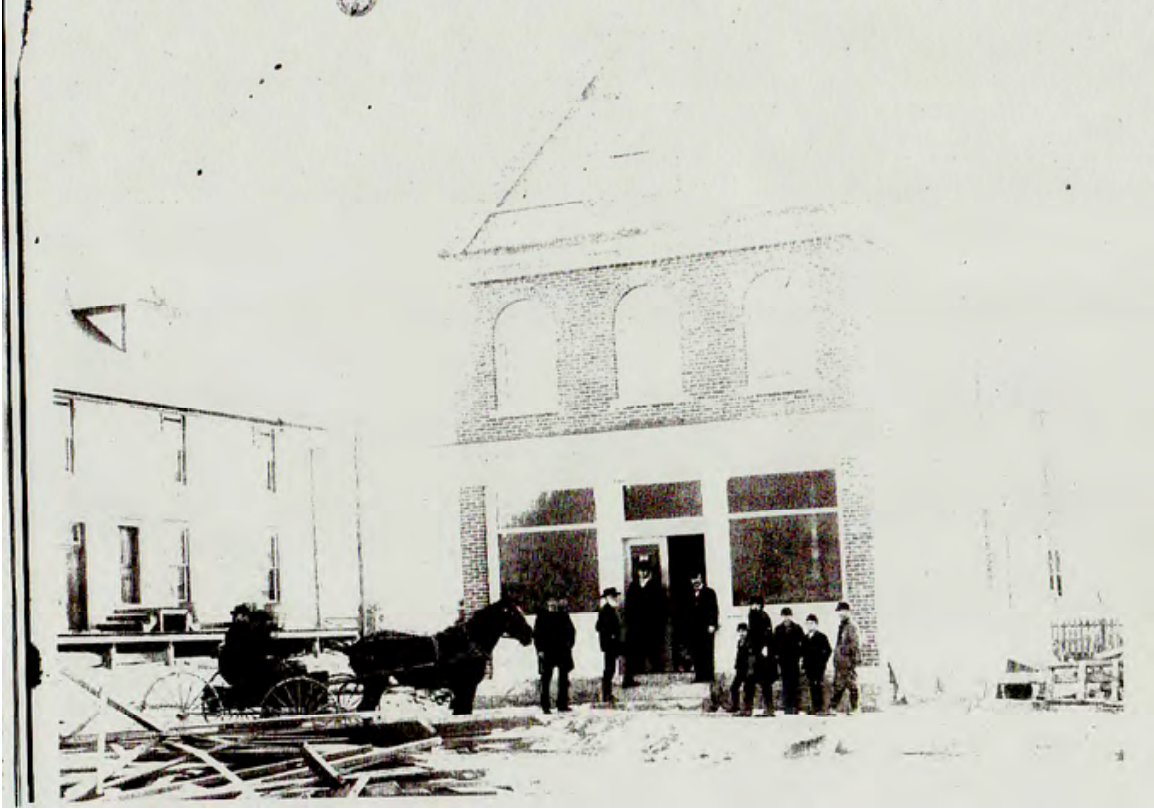
Maple Street



Maple Street, looking Eastward. The Old Mill Restaurant (Food) on the right side of the photograph is the building to the right of the center in the Maple Street picture from the 1920's (June 2008).



Maple Street (1948). In the center and to the left of center are the Yough Motor Company and the Grist Mill



First National Bank of Friendsville. One of the earliest known pictures of the building. The building is located at 261 Maple Street. The building is now the present day location of the Friend Family Association of America Headquarters and Museum.



First National Bank of Friendsville at 261 Maple Street.





Thomas and Priscilla Gary Home. Later the home of Henry Wolfe and then the home of Olin Friend.



McClullough Home. John W. McCullough was one of the first city councilmen when Friendsville was incorporated.

### **The Military Lots of Garrett County**

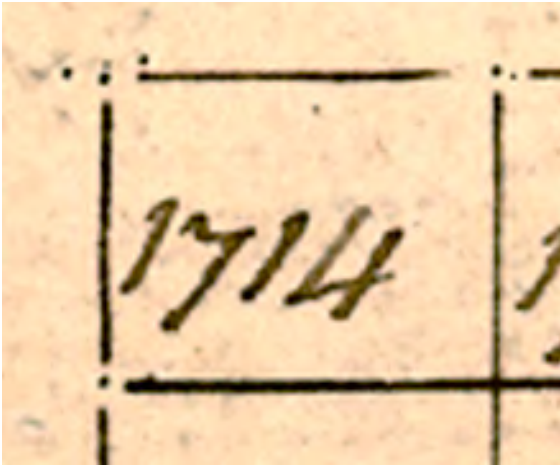
Many land deeds in this book make reference to the Military Lots (ML) of Garrett County, Maryland. This excerpt from **The Maps and Papers of William H.H. Friend** (Patrick T. Smith (2006), pages 25-28) gives a brief explanation of the Military Lot system.

**Military Lots** are another key component to these maps and surveys. The American Revolution taxed the limited colonial resources to the breaking point and in 1777 the Continental Army was desperate for troops. The Maryland General Assembly passed a law designed to encourage men to volunteer for the army. Each volunteer that completed three years of military service would receive one fifty-acre lot of land. A recruiting officer, who enlisted twenty able bodied men, would receive two fifty acre lots, while officers were to receive four fifty acre lots. The Maryland General Assembly determined that the lots were to be taken from Washington County on the western side of Fort Cumberland, Maryland (present day Allegany and Garrett Counties). It was not until 1787, six years after the war, that Colonel Francis Deakins, with the help of ten teams, surveyed 4165 fifty-acre lots.



**The 1787 Deakins' Map**

Only land that could be farmed or cultivated was surveyed. The less assessable mountainous areas were excluded from the map, which accounts for large open areas on the map. The standard Military Lot was a rectangle, measuring 100 perches (1650 feet) by 80 perches (1320 feet),



Although numerous lots were not rectangles.



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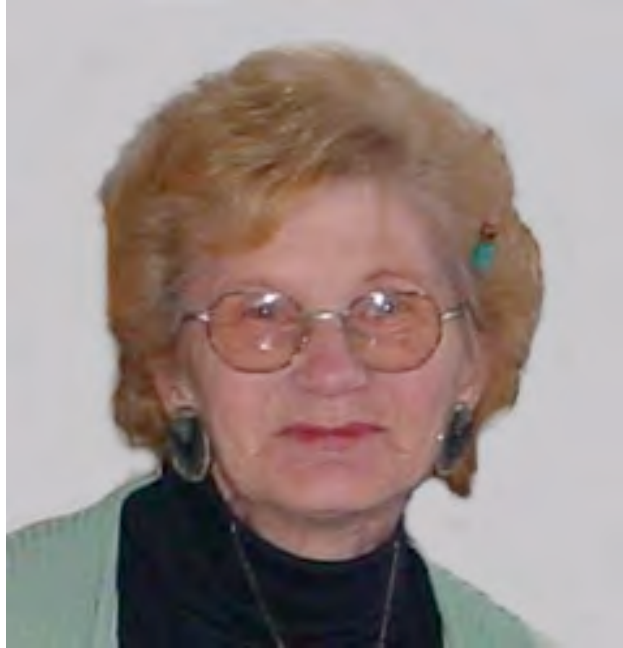
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