

Summers County (WV) (Images of America)

Ed Robinson



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It was the pull of the steam engine that brought residents to Summers County after the Civil War. With Hinton as a bustling hub of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, Summers County found itself along the path of goods and travelers going to and from Richmond and the Midwest. Surrounded by breathtaking scenery and good mountain air, residents prospered in the county, building beautiful homes and lively communities. Lumber and riverboat traffic also added to the scene, although it was around the C&O that the area's culture truly thrived. Legends such as John Henry, the Steel Drivin' Man who out-drilled a steam drill while digging the Great Bend Tunnel, came to symbolize the grit-and-steel consciousness of this West Virginia county.

Life was good, but work was hard. When diesel engines became the norm in the 1950s, Summers County's fabric began to change. Today tourism and recreation are the greatest industries in the area, but residents have not forgotten their past. Each year the county taps into its railroading heritage with festivals and celebrations, and efforts are being made to preserve some of Hinton's unique architecture.



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