

Logan, WV - 2004

### My WV Mountain - McCormick's part in the history of Logan County

When Monroe County natives C.O. McCormick, Sr. and his wife Cleona heard from his cousin W.J. McCormick how fast the Logan County area was developing after W.W.I and that the taxi company he worked for needed another driver, they picked up and came to the Logan coalfields, a decision they never regretted. This was in 1921, and the early going was tough. First, there was no taxi job.

They were in a new coalfield town with only \$37.30, no job, and they needed a room. C.O. found one, for \$37.50 a month, in advance. Before he would rent it, he went to Frank Chirico at Victory Grocery asking for credit for a month's groceries. He then rented the room and took a job at Logan Machine and Electric. That was the beginning of McCormick's "one full block of shopping satisfaction in downtown Logan."



1921 Logan Machine and Electric

Soon after, C.O. heard of another job winding armatures for Island Creek Machine Shops, which he took. He walked from Cherry Tree to Holden every day until they moved into a company house large enough for Cleona to rent a room. Her reputation as a cook got around, soon single men asked to "board" with them. And the extra money they saved. During their time in Holden, Okey Jr. was born.

C.O. was forever on the lookout for that window of opportunity to open that he knew would be just right for his next step. He knew it when it came; his chance to buy a service station in Cherry Tree. He opened the Music & McCormick Service Station in Cherry Tree with business partner Dallas Music.



His first big business decision was asking Standard Oil Company for what they must have looked on as a favor. He offered to pay a penny per gallon extra to be saved for future investments. His second big decision was when electric appliances came to Logan. C.O. remodeled the service station, giving him room to sell Kelvinator appliances.

In 1936, with an investment of \$600, McCormick's leased a 20' by 40' storeroom on the corner of Washington and Stratton Streets for an appliance store. The other businesses on the block then included a hotel, supermarket and bakery. Success still seemed slim, but C.O. and Cleona believed in working hard, but mostly they believed in each other. During the Depression year of 1938, the McCormick's traded their small storeroom for the larger hotel lobby and include furniture to their store. Even when success still seem slim, in 1942, they added ladies clothing to the store, and moved the furniture to a separate warehouse.

