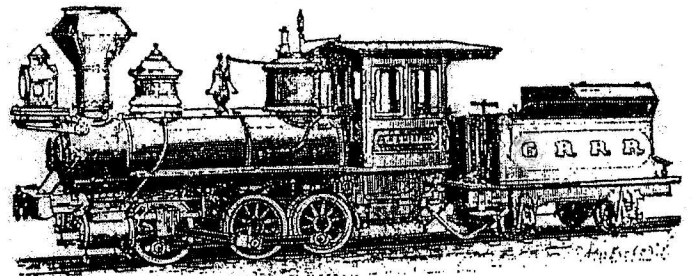


## GREEN RIDGE RAILROAD

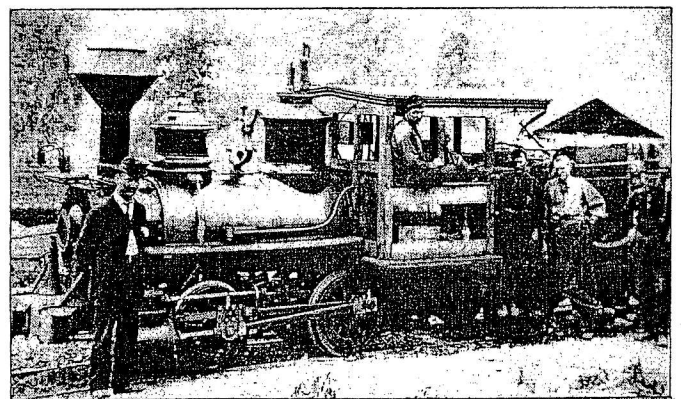
by Benjamin F. G. Kline, Jr.

Approximately 8 miles east of Cumberland several mountain ridges traverse the eastern end of Allegany County, two are Green Ridge and Town Hill. The western most, Green Ridge, was the location of a narrow gauge logging railroad. Due to certain circumstances, detailed information on this railroad is limited to contemporary printed sources, and maps within these sources do not locate the railroad. The first information published appears in the 1889 edition of Poor's Manual of Railroads and is as follows: Green Ridge Railroad of Maryland, owned by F. Mertens, Sons. Length-16 miles, using 25 to 30 pound rails at 36 inch gauge. Locomotives, 2; cars, 20; located in Allegany County. Line runs from Okonoko, West Virginia, to Finksburg, Maryland. F. Mertens, President; Wm. Mertens, Treasurer; Jno. H. Mertens, manager. Office address, Cumberland, Maryland. Connections were: Baltimore & Ohio at Okonoko, West Virginia; and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal at Darkey's Lock, Maryland. The following changes are noted in 1890: a 4 mile branch, total now 20 miles; cars, 23; it also noted that the railroad was chartered on November 11, 1883, and that Edward Schilling was superintendent. The final listing was 1896, when the railroad was 26 miles long, and now owned one passenger car in addition to its previous listing. Town Creek, Maryland, has now replaced Darkey's Lock as the canal connection. Both places were directly across the Potomac River from Okonoko. No information can be had concerning the precise route of this railroad, however, a logical route would have been to follow Big Run and Deep Run, in the valley between Green Ridge and Town Hill, to Fifteen Mile Creek, following the branches of this stream. There is considerable state-owned land in this vicinity, which is usually evidence of lumbering operations. In addition, the following facts are relative. The first outlet for shipping timber was with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, and this is one in very few instances of a logging railroad connecting with this type of transportation. The Green Ridge Railroad also crossed the Potomac River using a trestle which connected with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Okonoko, West Virginia. The Mertens owned considerable acreage on Town Hill and Green Ride Mountains and were noted for their or-



An advertising illustration from the Mt. Savage Locomotive Works shows Green Ridge R. R. No. 1, an 0-6-0. The name upon the cab panel is Hein and Mertens.

chards. Finksburg is given as its extreme terminal, and the actual location may be present day Flintstone, Maryland. There is a Mertens Avenue traveling through the area, but its grades and route are entirely unsuitable for the location of a railroad. There is a place called "Railroad Hollow" on the western slope of Green Ridge, but whether it was used to locate the Green Ridge Railroad or not is unknown. The locomotives used on the railroad were two small engines built by the Mount Savage Locomotive Works of Frostburg, Maryland, and it is doubtful if they survived the closing of the railroad, which from all indications was in 1897. (From Tall Pines and Winding Rivers, 1976)



Showing signs of hard usage, the 0-4-0 locomotive of the Green Ridge Railroad stands at one of the sawmills on the job. Photo by W. Raymond Hicks.