

## **The William E. Long Family and Long's Store**

**by Dale MacAllister, 2008**

William Evans Long (1855–5 May 1926) was a prominent merchant of West Rockingham. He was a son of Samuel and Emily Evans Long. Samuel Long (1 Feb 1821–28 Dec 1892) was born in Pennsylvania and came to Virginia, first living in Shenandoah County. He worked as a dry goods merchant and farmer. In 1853 Samuel married Emily Evans (18 June 1835–12 Dec 1896), a native of London, England. Both are buried in Cooks Creek Presbyterian Cemetery west of Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Besides William E. Long, who was born while the family lived in Shenandoah County, Samuel and Emily Long had three additional children:

Mary Virginia Long (19 Oct. 1854–6 Aug. 1920) married 30 Oct. 1872, in Rockingham County, John B. Bowman (20 Nov. 1849–19 June 1893), son of Samuel and Evaline Bowman. Mary Virginia “Jennie,” according to her marriage record, was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia. John and “Jennie” Long Bowman lived near Greenmount, Virginia, and are buried in Antioch Christian Cemetery near Greenmount. Two of their children who died young are also buried at Antioch: William E. Bowman (17 Sept. 1873–11 Oct. 1873) and Jonnie B. Bowman (25 Mar. 1888–28 Mar. 1888).

Frances E. Long (9 Sept. 1857–20 June 1908) married 26 Feb. 1880, in Rockingham County, Franklin R. Rhodes (25 Apr. 1858–7 May 1926), son of Henry A. and Mary A. Rhodes of the Lilly neighborhood. The marriage record for Frances states that she was born in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. If this is correct, the family had returned to Pennsylvania in 1857. While Franklin Rhodes lived in Rockingham, he was primarily a farmer. He later moved to Prince William County, Virginia, where he worked for the real estate business of Rhodes & Arehart. Rhodes died in Nokesville. He was survived by one son William Rhodes of Nokesville. Franklin and Frances Long Rhodes are buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery.

Samuel Edward Long (30 May 1865–19 Oct. 1876), who was born in Rockingham County, died of “hemorrhage” at age 11 at the Long home “Grandview.” He is buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery.

The Samuel and Emily Long family left Shenandoah County and moved to Rockingham County in 1868. In 1872 Samuel Long bought slightly more than 60 acres of land from David R. Hopkins located along “North Mountain Road,” current Whitmore Shop Road (Route 613) northwest of Mount Clinton. This is likely the property with a house the Long’s called “Grandview.” This property would have been on the ridge northwest of Mount Clinton and no doubt commanded a grand view of the surrounding countryside.

In August 1880 Samuel Long bought about 50½ acres from the estate of John Rodeffer, who had died in 1878 (Deed Book 18, p. 125). This included the old Hopkins Upper Mill on Muddy Creek which included both grist and saw mill operations. Long opened a store and a post office named Chrisman at the Hopkins/Rodeffer Mill. Chrisman was not the first choice for the post office name. William Long submitted the name Mount Rock, but it was rejected. The Chrisman name, his second choice, was to honor Major George Chrisman, a famous Civil War leader and expert farmer, who owned several houses in the surrounding area. The small Chrisman community is located along Muddy Creek about 3 miles south of Singers Glen on current Singers Glen Road (Route 613).

Son William E. Long, who was born in the Mount Olive section of Shenandoah County, Virginia, was listed as a store clerk in the 1880 Rockingham census. In March 1881 he was appointed postmaster of the Chrisman Post Office, a job he apparently held until 1887. Samuel Long followed his son as postmaster at Chrisman serving from 1887 to 1893. In 1893 Samuel's son-in-law Franklin R. Rhodes was named postmaster there.

Samuel Long also opened a general store at Greenmount, a few miles east of Chrisman. J. W. Mauck (18 Feb. 1835–2 May 1912), who had come from Page County in 1854, was the merchant at Greenmount and had been postmaster there from 1877 to 1889. By September 1889, William E. Long was named postmaster at Greenmount. He also worked in the local Long's Store and continued as postmaster until 1893.

In August 1892 Samuel Long bought from A. B. and Fannie E. Driver (Deed Book 44, p. 276) the Mount Clinton store business, which had operated since the 1870s as A. B. Driver & Company. The Long family took over operation of the store business and ran it for nearly 95 years. William E. Long was appointed postmaster of Mount Clinton in 1893, a position he held until 1897. Sometime in this period William E. Long was involved in a business partnership known as Long & Bowman. John B. Bowman, Long's brother-in-law who died in 1893, was the likely partner. The partnership was revealed in an 1890's suit (Deed Book 51, p. 205) instituted by William Long, the surviving partner, to recover debts owed to the business.

In 1886 William E. Long had married Sarah Alice Showalter (1867–1959), daughter of Andrew "Jackson" and Catherine Miller Showalter. William and Sarah had the following children:

Charles Edward "Ed" Long (1887–1961). Ed Long was associated with his father and brothers in the Long's Store business. He was postmaster of Mount Clinton for 48 years and worked in the family store for over 50 years. Ed Long is buried Cooks Creek Cemetery.

Tracey Edith Long (1889–1934). She is buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery.

William Evans Long, Jr., (17 Jan. 1896–10 May 1940). William served at Fortress Monroe from June 1917 until the close of World War I. He worked in the family store for a number of years and married Mary Elizabeth Ruebush of Weyers Cave, Virginia, in 1927. William moved to Harrisonburg and worked in radio and later soil conservation work. William died of heart disease at age 44. William and Mary are buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery.

Samuel Claude Long (1898–11 Mar. 1925) worked in the family store business. He married Mary Ethel Ruebush (5 Aug. 1902–10 Jan. 1991), daughter of John and Phoebe Ruebush of Mount Sidney, Virginia, in 1924. S. Claude Long died of heart disease at age 27. He and Mary Ethel were parents of a son Samuel Claude Long, Jr., (29 May 1925–Mar. 1988). Samuel Claude, Jr., who served in the 101st Airborne Division during World War II, married Leona Raish in 1948. They were the parents of two sons Richard Samuel and William Claude Long. S. Claude and Mary Ethel are buried Cooks Creek Cemetery.

Frank R. Long (1901–24 Feb. 1958), married Rhoda Bennett (16 Aug. 1906–Apr. 1987), daughter of Adam and Cora Lambert Bennett. Frank R. and Rhoda are buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery. Frank and Rhoda Long had one daughter Phyllis Long who married Nelson Miller and lived at Mount Clinton.

Owen Woodward Long (19 Mar. 1904–2 June 1955). Owen was associated with his brothers in the Long's Store business and the family farm. He was plagued with debilitating arthritis for a number of years. In 1945 he married Mary Ethel Ruebush Long, the widow of his older brother Samuel Claude. Owen is buried in Cooks Creek Cemetery.

In April 1897, following the death of their father Samuel Long, Frances E. Rhodes and Mary Virginia Bowman agreed to sell the Mount Clinton store property to their brother William E. Long for \$2,500 (Deed Book 57, p. 524). From the 1890s William E. Long was well established at his Mount Clinton location just west of the Muddy Creek bridge. After his sons reached maturity, the Mount Clinton business went by the name of W. E. Long & Sons.

When William E. Long died in 1926, the store business continued under the management of his sons C. Edward and Frank R. Long. Frank Long eventually turned the business over to his nephew Claude Long in 1959. It operated under the name of S. C. Long & Sons. The Long family's control of Long's Store ended December 31, 1987 upon Claude Long's retirement, after he had spent 28 years in the business. S. Claude Long (29 May 1925–10 Mar. 1988) died a short three months after he retired. At the turn of the century, Mount Clinton Post Office was made a station of the Harrisonburg Post Office. The post office was housed in a small single-room addition built onto the west side of the store building. The post office closed for good in 1970.

Three different people tried their hand at running the store following Claude Long's retirement: Tammy Heatwole, Jerry Heatwole, and Roger Shifflett. Each took turns for about one year. The Long's Store building was torn down in early 1995, leaving the Long home, which sat west of the store, as the remaining evidence of the Long family's close association with the village of Mount Clinton.

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