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KLOTS SILK THROWING MILL TIME CAPSULE IN THE MARYLAND MOUNTAINS

The village of Lonaconing straddles Georges Creek, deep in a valley lined with the company towns of Western Maryland's coal country. The visitor is immediately aware of Lonaconing's industrial heritage; the rows of hastily constructed working-class housing, the site of the former glass manufactory, and, most impressively, the massive iron furnace of the Georges Creek Iron & Coal Co. They have witnessed decades of economic decline in the valley and, more recently, the first signs of rebirth.

Beyond the creek, across the tracks of the Cumberland & Pennsylvania RR, stands the most compelling testament to Lonaconing's industrial past. As it has since its doors were closed on July 7, 1957, the Klots Throwing Mill stands solid and silent. With the exception of broken windows and a

leaky roof, the mill has changed little since then.

Henry Durrell Klots and George Klots began throwing silk in New York in the 1880s. The brothers joined with Marcus Frieder to move the operation to Carbondale, PA, after a fire in 1894. Silk mills often located near coal fields to make use of the transportation infrastructure and a ready supply of labor in the form of miners' wives and daughters. The Klots Throwing Co. went on to build additional mills in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. Frieder was later involved in the development of the General Silk Corp., a holding and sales company for the General Silk Importing Co., the National Spun Silk Co., and the General Silk Dyeing Co.

The Klots Throwing Mill in Lonaconing was completed in 1907. Much of the cost of construction was borne by

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Joshua Phillips

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Klots Throwing Mill, Lonaconing, MD. The mill is intact from its full complement of machinery down to the workers' personal effects, left at work stations when the mill shut down in 1957. Skeins of raw silk, labeled "From Allied Occupied Japan," still rest in their boxes in the basement.