

WINTER JAZZ FEST

Saturday Feb 25th thru
Sunday Feb 26th

At the Historic
Penn Wells Hotel, Wellsboro

Saturday February 25

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Free Jazz Jam Session

Penn Wells Hotel Lobby

Bring your instrument & join the fun!

7:30 pm Jazz Piano Concert

Featuring
**Bram
Wijnands**
Penn Wells
Dining Room
Tickets \$20



Sunday February 26

Brunch in the Penn Wells Dining
Room – Featuring Three River City
Jazz Band – Brunch \$14.95

Overnight packages available

Includes room, concert, dinner, and
brunch - \$90 per person
(excluding tax and gratuity)

Call 570-787-7800 or visit
www.endlessmountain.net
to purchase tickets

Proceeds Benefit the Endless
Mountain Music Festival

Sponsored by Indigo Wireless,
Wellsboro Imaging, Robert M. Sides
Family Music Centers,
Penn Wells Hotel

Looking Back

Some Assembly Required

Photo and Story By Joyce M. Tice

Starting in 1891 when the first Sears and Roebuck catalog was issued, a person could order almost any item ever thought of or needed for the household or farm through the mail. Beginning in 1908 that availability even included the house or barn to put it in.

A beginning investment of a dollar would bring the blueprint. An additional \$500 to \$4,000 would pay for a kit with as many as 30,000 pieces of material delivered by railcar and ready to be assembled. This might include 750 pounds of nails, 27 gallons of paint, 28 doors, gutters, cabinet door knobs, and all the rest, excluding cement, plaster, or brick. By 1914 Sears shipped precut materials and began numbering for easy construction.

Before the days of heavy bulldozers or backhoes, basements were dug out with mules or horses pulling scoops. Some were even hand dug with the whole family, including children, participating. For \$42 you could get a machine to assist in building your own cement blocks.

Over time the Sears offerings included chicken coops, barns, office buildings, apartment houses, even a two-story schoolhouse. Whole streets were laid out with Sears houses, and many thousands are still in use today. In 1918 the Standard Oil Company purchased 192 Sears homes for workers in southern Illinois. The cost was a million dollars and set the record for the biggest sale.

There were several grades of buildings in the Sears Modern Homes catalog. High end models were the Honor-Bilt line. The Econo Built,

later known as Standard Built, and the Lighter Built were lower grades. A buyer could even make modifications that Sears would adjust for them. They might combine features of two or more models. These are called Sears hybrids. If you can't quite find a house in any of the examples in the books or on the

A beginning investment of a dollar would bring the blueprint.

The house at 83 North Main Street in Mansfield is a 1917 vintage Sears home.



Internet, that might be the reason.

There are many hundreds of these Sears homes in our local area. You are probably driving by several daily without realizing it. I'd like to do a survey of them, particularly in the Mansfield area. If you own or know of a Sears home, please contact me. I'd like to know the address, the model, and date if you know them and have a photo.



Joyce M. Tice is the creator of the Tri-Counties Genealogy and History Web site (www.joycetice.com/jmtindex.htm). She can be reached at lookingback@mountainhomemag.com.