

Foreword

The twenty-first century reveals that our younger culture is changing, with less emphasis upon our past. Computers, sophisticated television games, ultra sonic waves of communication and countless other methods of entertainment now control our occupation with time. Men and women of the late 1800's found their occupation with time much different, not nearly as elaborate as we do in today's world. The Town of Pulaski, Virginia at approximately 2000 feet above sea level, nestled in the beautiful hills and valleys of the Blue Ridge Mountains remains, in reality, no different than the rest of the world. If for only a moment, you were able to vividly imagine what life was to those pioneering families, then you might appreciate who you are, what you are, and how you are able to reach your goals in today's time. If you would, please envision the following.

Visitors to the past one find themselves engrossed by the loudness of nature's sounds arising from forest and echoing from Draper's Mountains. Walking through the massive virgin forests into the clearings, made by the wild animals, allow your eyes to absorb the beauty of Peak's Knob; which provides a point of reference as you walk from home to home. As you approach the first home you find yourself greeted by a mother and her six small children, all are racing to complete their daily chores. The mother, dressed in a bonnet to hide herself from sun, her dress flowing to the tops of her lady-like work boots, greets you as one of her own. You find through your brief conversation with her that there are only two other homes, a store and a barroom for your inspection. After receiving a fresh ladel of mountain spring water, you make your way by the other two homes to the town store. However, before you approach the store you hear faintly in the distance a sound, which is very unfamiliar into the sounds of this practically untouched region of nature. Soon you find your legs in perpetual motion in the direction of the approaching sound, which is traveling with the speed of two horses on a long stretch of metal rails of dual tracks directly in your line of path. As the large engine and its cars pass by, it whales the sound of steam and puffs wildly at your face, providing your heart with an element of surprise. The train stops not too far from you near a large tank of water suspended on platforms high above the train's engine. Not knowing exactly where you are, you ask the full-bearded conductor his exact location. He responds, "What's wrong you crazy man, don't you know you are in **MARTIN'S TANK**". Uncertain about your true whereabouts you find your way across a winding creek to the house where you originally stopped. It is at this home that you receive bedding and food for your morning journey back to the twenty-first century. It is very certain what our surroundings are today, but it can be very rewarding to know how our ancestors were able to mold, produce and construct this small town that we now call Pulaski, Virginia. The great German family called Seagle was able to assist with the massive minds and muscles that were needed to build a successful business. The following is a brief history of the Seagle Men and their efforts to raise a town and grow their business. Many of the pieces of this great puzzle were obtained through research in previously printed documents, which I have quoted and have given full credit. However, much of the information I have compiled came to me through stories and chats with elder members of the Seagle Family and citizens of our fine Town.

S. Todd Bruce, Funeral Director - Seagle Funeral Home

The surname Seagle began to appear in the funeral business in Wytheville, Virginia. in and about the year 1880 under the name of **J.F. Seagle and Son**, a furniture, manufacturing and undertaking business. The firm often advertised *cheap Northern furniture at 10% above cost, with an addition to having all kinds of Coffins and Trimmings on hand. More especially the Metallic Burial Caskets, trimmed in satin.* The first recorded hearse used for the transportation of caskets to the cemetery was in June 7, 1883. The new black horse-drawn carriage hearse became an attraction for Southwest Virginian's. (*See Appendix #1*)

James Frederick Seagle, who was born November 3, 1826, was the founding father of the Seagle Firm. His father, Henry W. Seagle died February 25, 1837 leaving six children. James's siblings were Margaret Amiline, William, Charles, Augustus, Sarah Henrietta and John Jacob. James selected a local citizen, John Baumgardner of Wytheville, to become his guardian. A major decision in his life, which ignited the historical fuse enabling countless Seagle men for over fourteen centuries to raise their families began, on a cold wintery day in Wytheville, Va. on February 13, 1843.

At the tender age of 17, James began his apprenticeship to learn the trade of cabinet making with Fleming K. Rich. Mr. Rich's building, in excellent condition with white columns, is still standing and occupied well into the 21st century. James married his first wife, Mary Harrell. Their large family consisted of four daughters and six sons; Nancy Seagle Peek, Mary Jane Seagle Akers, Virginia Seagle Fulweider, Susan Bell Seagle Bennett, Charles Seagle, A. Seagle, William Cloyd Seagle, Robert Mason Seagle, James Thomas Seagle, and Walter F. Seagle. In 1860, prior to the Civil War, James listed his occupation as cabinet maker, and in 1880 he and his large family were living in a home on Jefferson Street in the Town of Wytheville. James was not only a well known businessman, but ascended to becoming a local statesman, having served as a city councilman in 1887. In 1893 James's business was well known in Wytheville as "**J.F. Seagle & Son**", and was also listed as an undertaker establishment in the Community Business Directory.

Evidently on May 1, 1886 the Seagle Firm branched out to Pulaski City where the name became **W.C. Seagle and Brother**. (*See Appendix #2 & #3*) Pulaski City issued a corporation license for the sum of one dollar. Either William, Charles or Robert, the only living brothers, of W.C., became a partner to the firm. The whereabouts of James Frederick in relation to the firm does not exist beyond this date; however, it is recorded that James Frederick continued his life and his undertaking career in the Town of Wytheville. (*See Appendix #4 & #5*) It has been recorded that the first place of business was found to be in the home of W.C. Seagle on Commerce Street located at the corner of Lake Street from 1886 - 1890. The book by George T. Swaim, titled, "Lest We Forget", a history of Pulaski from 1877 to 1911 we find that, "*The present town of Pulaski like all other good and large things started from a very small beginning. The one thing above all others to give Pulaski a start was the discovery in 1877, of Altoona coal mines, nine miles northwest of town by Wm. T. Hart. Pulaski was then called Martin's Tank and the entire town consisted of three houses, one store and a barroom. Two of these houses all still standing, (1911), one of them and the largest and best built is the present residence of Mrs. W.C. Seagle. Another was the N.&W. house for the section master and is now used by the town as a repair shop. The first store in Martin's Tank*

was in the Seagle residence and was owned by Calfee Bros.” Historically this store must have been prior to 1886. (See Appendix #6)

Found in Deed Book No. 13, page 299 recorded in Pulaski County on the third day of September 1890, we find that W.C. Seagle acquired a new partner outside of the Seagle Family. James Gemmell became the first non-Seagle to acquire an interest in the Seagle Business. The new name became **Gemmell & Seagle** Dealers in Furniture, Carpets, Mattings, Linoleum and Undertaker and Embalmer, advertising in Pulaski City. We are assuming that the other brother to Seagle surrendered his interest in the firm to W.C. The two new partners acquired expertise and built one of the Pulaski City's first skyscrapers of two stories, which housed their furniture and undertaking business. 209 Commerce Street became the home for the new firm. The idea of this tall brick building was so new to its time that the structure actually bowed after the brick was attached to the frame. Although slightly deformed, it stood for approximately 70 years. The structure was welcomed by the citizens of Pulaski City, where they were able to walk on wooden sidewalks that provided a clear and clean pathway to and from the building. Commerce Street began to grow and became the business hub for this small railroad and iron ore community. On September 26, 1899 recorded in Deed book no. 19, page 502 in Pulaski County is found where the deed to 209 Commerce Street was conveyed to W.C. Seagle where he began to operate without James Gemmell as **W.C. Seagle & Co.** During that same year, another undertaking establishment was in operation in Pulaski. Found on a letterhead dated May 1, 1899 titled “J.H. Ratcliff and Co. Undertakers and Furniture Dealers” we find that a William Bently and B. Kropff sold to W.C. Seagle their entire interest in all crop and all grubbing for \$30.00 where W.C. Seagle was to pay half the amount in furniture and the other half in something to eat after March 15th, 1900. W.C. Seagle not only was a business leader in undertaking and furniture, but also his ability to transact and purchase land and property was found to be an additional pursuit of his happiness. On November 17, 1903 he purchased the Sweansea Hotel/ Curtilage, stable and lot situate at the corner of Commerce Street and Valley Street to Maple Street, from L.S. Calfee for a total of \$3,000.00. W.C. was also a noted Mason, as found in the History of Pythagoras Lodge #239 Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Pulaski, Virginia published 1965. He was a member of #239 A.F.&A.M. and duly recorded as a member in 1890 and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in 1894. Records also find that he was a member of the local Commandery, as found in a receipt of dues dated 1895. James Gemmell was also a member of Pythagoras Lodge and was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in 1894. However, for some unknown reason he withdrew his membership in 1896. In the first decade of the Twentieth Century, the recording of deaths was first noted. Unlike in the Twenty-First Century where death certificates are filed with local health departments, in the earlier system an individual was given authority by a locality to record deaths. His official title was a Plethonitary. Only burial or removal permits were issued to the Plethonitary by the state health department. At the bottom of an actual permit dated 1903 it reads, *“Burial permits must be delivered by the undertaker to the sexton or other persons in charge of the burial ground or cemetery where burial takes place. When the body is to be shipped to a distant point, requiring the service of a common carrier, in addition to a removal permit the body must be accompanied with a transit permit containing the certificate of the undertaker, which must be attached to the box containing the body. The local registrar to whom this permit*

is sent by the sexton may return it to the undertaker if this latter requests it.” One of the original Plethonitary’s in Pulaski was A. Blevins, as seen on actual documents. (See Appendix #7 & #8)

The year 1906 became a major turning point in the Seagle Firm. The Death of W.C. Seagle provided an opportunity for new partners to join the venture. W.C. Seagle’s son Fred continued as the only licensed undertaker along with his brothers, Dexter (Deck), George (Hop), and Tom. The firm became to be known as **Seagle Brothers**, The Furniture Men and Funeral Directors. Their motto became known as “We Turn A House Into A Home”. (See Appendix #9) A death notice dated 1906 from The Southwest Times reads as follows. In bold print: DEATH CLAIMS ANOTHER-CITIZEN After a Brief Illness W. C. Seagle Dies of Typhoid Fever. *Again the heavy hand of Death has been laid upon our community, and this time has taken away one of Pulaski’s leading businessmen, who had just passed the prime of life. William C. Seagle died at his home on Commerce Street last Saturday, September 29th, shortly before 8 o’clock in the morning, after an illness of little over two weeks with typhoid fever, which developed a malignant force more suddenly than usual and affected the brain more seriously than is common in such cases. While Mr. Seagle was apparently a strong and well man, he was of late years suffered much with stomach troubles and headaches that evidently came from an organic disaffection, but he was a man of strong will, and only yielded to disease when resistance was unveiling, so those who knew him best were fearful of fatal results as his illness advanced, but the end came with a suddenness for which his family and friends were not prepared. He was given every care that medical attention and nursing could provide but as there comes a time in the lives of all man, when human aid and skill are no avail, so it was with him a higher power had issued the final summons that another soul should enter the Great Beyond. William Cloyd Seagle was born in Wytheville, February 26, 1853 and was thus in his 53rd year of life. He was married in the town of his birth at the early age of twenty-one to Miss Mittie Hollman, and after a married life of thirty-three years he is survived by his widow and seven children. He spent his early life at Wytheville, and there learned the business and profession he was to follow, that of furniture dealer and undertaker. He came to Pulaski in 1887 when this town was taking on its strength for the development that has followed and Mr. Seagle was one of the few merchants who have been closely identified with the commercial history of Pulaski since its early days. He first began business in a small frame building up near the Calfee Lake as W.C. Seagle & Co.; but as the business grew, it was moved into larger quarters, and was changed into the firm of Gemmell and Seagle, but after a short time Mr. Seagle bought the Gemmell interests, and continued the business as W.C. Seagle. Throughout his industry, application and economy Mr. Seagle had built up a splendid business, and had added to his holdings in Pulaski, and was regarded as one of its wealthy citizens. At an early age the deceased had recognized the virtues of religion, and became a Christian at the old Bethpage Disciple’s church in Wytheville under the ministry of Rev. Dexter Snow, one of the pioneer preachers of the Southwest, and throughout his life Mr. Seagle was a conscientious church member, discharging his obligations according to the dictates of his conscience. He was a member also of the local lodge of Odd Fellows, and his standing therein was attested at his burial by the large representation of the Lodge that took part in the services, there being over seventy of its members in attendance. The deceased is survived by his wife,*

five sons, who are Dexter E., Fred A., William H., Tom and Hoilman, two daughters, Lura and Mary, his father James F. Seagle, of Wytheville, two brothers, Charles Seagle, of Wytheville, and W.T. Seagle, of near Roanoke, four sisters, Mrs. Luke Bennett, of Washington, Mrs. W.M. Peck and Mrs. W.F. Fulwider, of Bristol, and Mrs. J.T. Akers of Knoxville. The funeral services were held at the Disciple's Church here, of which the deceased was a member and a deacon, and were conducted by Rev. C.H. Poage, of Radford, assisted by the Rev. J.B. Morton in the presence of one of the largest crowds that ever assembled in this city on such an occasion. The church services were simple, and at the conclusion the Odd Fellows took charge with a short service in the church, and conducted the burial, which was made at Oakwood Cemetery.

Frederick Archibald Seagle was born August 30, 1886 in Pulaski, Va. He was a graduate of Pulaski High School and soon married Mable Carson. Their children were Frederick Gray Seagle, who was born July 4, 1910, Oscar Lyle Seagle born March 16, 1921, Iris Garnett Smith, and Coleen Seagle Cummings. (*See Appendix #10*) Fred, as he was known to most people, was a tall genuine looking businessman of the time. He was a Graduate of the Cincinnati School of Embalming in the Spring Class of April 16, 1904. Fred not only had enough foresight to see the necessity of his father's business having a continuation in their licensure, but he also elected to attend the most prestigious school of embalming in the country. This school is now known as the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science offering a Bachelor of Mortuary Science Degree as well as Associate of Mortuary Science Degree and one year certificates. Immediately following his graduation from embalming school, Fred applied with the Commonwealth of Virginia to sit for the Virginia State Board Examination. He passed with flying colors on May 16, 1904 giving his father W.C. confidence that the Seagle Firm would continue into the 20th Century. Fred was also active in the First Christian Church, was one of the original members of the Pythagoras Masonic Lodge #239 A.F.&A.M., and was a town councilman for 32 years serving in the 4th Ward. He was also Vice-Mayor. Fred was also a member of the original Pulaski Fire Department, then known as the Pulaski Hose Company, and served as their Secretary for an unspecified period of time. The following is a portion quoted from the book titled, Lest We Forget A history of Pulaski from 1877 to 1911 written by George T. Swaim. *“On December 9, 1909 the Garmorhunt Building located at the corner of second and near main Street, caught fire in some unknown manner and when the alarm of fire was given the Hose Company promptly responded, but found on connecting their hose that they were frozen from not being properly drained since being used the night before. It was some time before other hoses could be secured and in that time the fire had gained such heading that it was seen that the building was doomed. However, the fire boys went in their work with a vinn and although the weather was freezing cold and they were in danger of being killed by falling walls they stood to the task and kept a stream of water flowing on the building for several quarters and thereby, saved all the business houses on the street. It looked impossible to save the buildings adjoining an account of the close proximity to the burning building, but with the skill of veterans and the courage and fortitude of these boys confined the fire to the above building, although several times they had to turn from their labor to put out buildings that had caught from the terrific heat across the street. Fred Seagle was a member of the Hose Company participating in this fight and who did such valiant work.”* The following is an article dated November 8, 1956 from the Southwest Times, titled,

“Veteran Citizen Dies; Services Set for Saturday” *Fred A. Seagle, 70, prominent Pulaski Businessman and funeral director, died last night at his home on Cliff Street. Born in Wytheville in 1886, the son of the late William C. Seagle and Mittie E. Seagle, he operated a mortuary and furniture store here for over 50 years. A lifelong member and trustee of the First Christian Church, Mr. Seagle was a charter member of the church choir, a mason, and an Elk. A civic leader, he served the town as councilman for 34 years and also vice mayor. Mr. Seagle was a member of Pulaski’s original fire department. Funeral services will be held Saturday at 2:00 P.M. from the First Christian Church. The Rev. John O. Atkins, pastor, will officiate. Graveside services will be conducted at Oakwood by members of the Elks Lodge. Honorary pallbearers will be members of the Elks and Masonic lodges, and Men’s Bible Class of the First Christian Church. Active pallbearers were Ernest Painter, Raymond Dawson, Frank Graham, James Steger, George Gibson, and B.K. Hall. In other articles found in the Southwest Times were; “Fred Seagle’s Death Lamented By Church Board, Church Choir, and Town Council.”*

Dexter Emmett Seagle, or Deck as known to most people of Pulaski, was born October 18, 1881 and married Ruby Wygal Seagle. They begot not children. Deck originally began his involvement with the Seagle Undertaking business in his teenage years. As most sons of undertakers, he had decided to broaden his knowledge of life and attended the University College of Medicine. He graduated from the University College of Medicine, in Richmond, Va., with a major in Pharmacy on May 15, 1902. His passing of the Virginia Board of Pharmacy in his last semester of college allowed him to become a licensed Pharmacist on March 21, 1902. (*See Appendix #11*) One of his greatest accomplishments was to be appointed by the Governor of Virginia as a member of the State Board of Pharmacy. Deck later accomplished the grueling exam of the National Associates of Boards of Pharmacy on January 27, 1927. Deck attended and graduated with his brother Tom from the Cincinnati School of Embalming on April 26, 1913, allowing him to practice the art of embalming and gave him the expertise of a funeral director. He was also active and was very instrumental in bringing the Elks Club to Pulaski. If one visits the Elks Club you will see his name as a founding father of Elk Patriotism in Pulaski. His involvement with the Seagle Brothers undertaking establishment was somewhat flexible, because in 1911 he and his brother George opened the **Seagle Pharmacy** on Main Street beside the Pulaski Theater. (*See Appendix #12*) In a special edition of The Southwest Times dated February 22, 1927, the article stated that “*The business is owned by D.E. Seagle and his younger brother G.H. Seagle. It would be difficult to find two more alert and progressive men in Pulaski or two who had greater ability in their dealings with customers.*” *Seagles Pharmacy, like Seagle Brothers, actively campaigned a slogan, “Seagles Label Like Sterling On Silver.”* It is uncertain their involvement in the undertaking firm beyond 1911, although in the same edition of The Southwest Times an advertisement for Seagle Brothers is found explaining that the undertaking firm had three licensed morticians available at your service. We must assume that Deck, in 1927, was still practicing as a mortician and as a pharmacist. Seagle Pharmacy was purchased many years later by the Martin Family. It has since been sold and is owned and operated by Pharmacist Eddie Hale under the business name Martins Pharmacy. Quoted from History of Pythagoras Lodge No. 239, we find; “*D.E. Seagle was raised in Pythagoras Lodge April 24, 1909. He was elected Junior Deacon*

when Brother A.S. Wheeler resigned June 7, 1915. Going through the chairs in order, he was elected Worshipful Master in 1918 and again in 1929. Brother Seagle held various offices in his lodge, being Steward from 1919 through 1925. His proficiency as a ritualist is well known. He was appointed District Deputy Grand Master for the 55th Masonic District in 1923, 1924, and 1925. Right Worshipful Brother D.E. Seagle died in 1937. Perhaps the dean of Pythagoras ritualists was Right Worshipful Dexter E. Seagle, who in 1937 entered 'that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' 'Doctor Deck', as he was affectionately known among Virginia Masons, was for years a member of the Grand Lecturers of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, and had he been allocated a little more time among us, he may have reached the office of Grand Lecturer of Virginia Masons.

George Hoilman Seagle (See Appendix # 13) The following information has been compiled by Patricia Ernestine Hall Guthrie, granddaughter of George Hoilman Seagle.

My grandfather, George Hoilman Seagle was born in Pulaski, Va. on February 10, 1893 and died at the young age of 49, on September 10, 1942. In his early years he was called "Hoilman", and later became known in Pulaski as "Hop". Some in town also called him "Dr. Hop" or "Dr. Seagle" because of his profession as a pharmacist. He was the son of William Cloyd Seagle and Mittie Hoilman. William Cloyd Seagle was a businessman who came to Pulaski in its early days and was the father of seven children.

My grandfather married Pulaski County resident, Ruby Pearl Lindsay (July 12, 1895-Oct. 4, 1988). They had three children. My mother, Elizabeth Ernestine Seagle, (1917-2002) was the eldest. Next came Jacquelyn Lindsay Seagle, known in Pulaski as "Jackie", (1925-1985); and my uncle, George Hoilman Seagle, Jr. (1929-2002) was the youngest.

Hop Seagle and his brother, Dexter Seagle, "Uncle Deck" opened Seagle's Pharmacy in 1911. Dexter died in 1937, and my grandfather continued the business until his death in 1942 when it was then sold to Henry and Ralph Martin and became "Martin's Pharmacy". It was located beside the old Pulaski Theater on Main Street. My mother told me that "Daddy went to Atlanta, Georgia where he became a registered pharmacist." His other brothers were also businessmen in Pulaski. Mother reported that "Uncle Fred and Uncle Tom had the furniture store and undertaking business. Uncle Bill owned Pulaski Hardware. He also had two sisters who lived in Pulaski, Mary and Lura.

Mother reported that the pharmacy was a real part of her life as a child. "Daddy spent a lot of time there," she said. She described the prescription department as being in the back of the store on the second floor. There was a spiral stairway to get upstairs. "I don't know how many times a day my daddy went up and down those steps. He did have a little hole cut in the floor with a basket attached to a rope, and when he would get a prescription filled, he would pull the basket up and ring the buzzer so Pete, or whoever was on the first floor could come get it. Pete Saunders was Daddy's right hand man." Mother reported that her father worked until about 9 P.M. every night. "On the left hand side as you go in the door there was a room built off inside there and it had glass in it and a door and Daddy sold Victrolas and you could go in there and play records to decide if you wanted to buy it. It was a real popular place and I loved to go in there," mother said. "One of the records was 'Stop That Ticklin' Jock'. I'll never forget that. It was all laughter, the whole thing, and you couldn't keep from laughing yourself."

She described how at Christmastime her daddy enjoyed going to the Roanoke warehouse and picking up the things he thought people would want to buy - special things like waffle irons and coffee pots and things like that. He enjoyed decorating the small windows in the front of the shop and would place these special things in the windows for the Christmas season. According to mother, Granddaddy Seagle put in stools at the soda counter upon which you could spin around, and tables and chairs were in the center of the room. "At first he sold ice cream and milk shakes and that kind of thing, no sandwiches or anything like that, but then he got this idea of having lunch type things and he hired Blanche Roop from Newbern, and boy she could whip up those sandwiches in no time at all! Aunt Mary (his sister), boy, she made a thousand pies! Daddy had built a case in the store that would hold about 6 pies. He would send the man who delivered the medicines (you could have your prescription delivered in those days) to go out there and get the pies. She would make butterscotch, lemon, and chocolate, every one of them 'out of this world'! They would be sold before the delivery boy got back to the store. People would put their order in for what they wanted, to be sure they got a piece. Sold out every day in 15 minutes, easy."

I have a little menu on the front of which it says, "Seagle's Lunch Service", "BUTTER TOASTED SANDWICHES, HOT AND COLD DRINKS". The drinks offered at 5 cents a glass were Coca Cola, Cherry Smash, Grape Juice, Ginger Ale, Root Beer, Green River, and Dr. Pepper. Coffee, tea, sweet milk and butter milk could be purchased also for a nickel but hot chocolate and milk shakes (in 6 varieties) cost 10 cents! He served ice cream sodas in 5 varieties for 10 cents, flavored milks of chocolate, strawberry, vanilla and pineapple for 10 cents; plain sodas in 4 varieties for a nickel; malted milk for 15 cents, and egg malted milk for 20 cents!

"Butter Toasted Sandwiches" included country ham at 15 cents, and the rest for 10 cents each which were chicken salad, pimento cheese, Swiss cheese, American cheese, tomato, and olive. For dessert, he served pineapple, chocolate nut, strawberry, cherry, and butter scotch sundaes, all of which cost 15 cents each. A banana split cost a whopping 25 cents. There was also something on the menu called "Ades" in flavors of lemon, lime, and orange for 10 cents each. He also served orange juice for 15 cents and tomatoe juice for 10 cents. He also offered Whitman's and Durand's Candies and Hot Butter-Toasted Nuts.

My mother, Ernestine, described life in the late 30's and early 40's in Pulaski. Speaking of my infancy she said, "I'd get you all dressed up in the carriage and walk to the drugstore every afternoon and around 4 o'clock all of the housewives convened and sat around those tables and talked, drank coca-colas, and it was such a relaxed time to be alive. Nobody was in a hurry.

William Henry Seagle, although one of the five brothers, never really a participant in the Seagle Firm, was recognized as a respected citizen of Southwest Virginia. **(See Appendix #14** As quoted from History of Pythagoras Lodge No. 239, we find "Brother W.H. Seagle was raised in Pythagoras Lodge May 15, 1916. He was elected Junior Deacon in 1936 and went through the chairs in order, becoming Worshipful Master in 1922; again starting as Junior Deacon he became Worshipful Master in 1940. Right Worshipful Brother Seagle was appointed District Deputy Grand Master of Masons to the 40th Masonic Region in 1939. He died in office as Worshipful Master on March 9, 1940. He bequeathed the sum of \$2,000.00 to Pythagoras Lodge.

The minutes of March 18, 1940 contain a vote of thanks for this bequest.”

Thomas Mason Seagle or Tom as known to most people of Pulaski, was born January 16, 1891. Tom graduated from Pulaski High School, then located in the two story stone building on Sixth Street. Tom, although short and heavy in structure, possessed the ability to play baseball with a swift pitch, and can be remembered as one that attained a radiant voice during church choir events. Tom married Mahala Blanche Hurst and they bore Thomas Roswell Seagle, Sr. and Cloyd DuVal Seagle. (*See Appendix #14*) Tom was a member of the Pythagoras Masonic Lodge #239 A.F.& A.M. Quoted from History of Pythagoras Lodge No. 239 we find that “*Brother Thomas M. Seagle was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on August 24, 1914 and received his 40 year Masonic Veterans Pin on June 17, 1957 and his 50 year Masonic Veteran Pin on August 17, 1964. Although always a good Mason, he never desired to hold office. Tom was in good standing at the time of the lodge history book published in 1965.*” He was a founding father of Anderson Memorial Presbyterian Church. The following is a quote from Phyllis King’s submission to the Pulaski Heritage Book, “*On a cold Sunday morning in January 1928, Reverend Robert King, D.D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Pulaski, Virginia, Mr. T.M. “Tom” Seagle, Mr. N.C. Carlton and others met at the General Chemical Club House in the East end section of Pulaski to begin a Sunday School for residents and interested persons. Shortly after the beginning of the Sunday School, a Christian social group known as the ‘Mustard Seed Club’ was organized with the members sending many contributions to China and to the Children’s Home. In 1936 a building, that once was a livery stable located on the corner of Pico Drive and Franklin Avenue became a church. The church was named in memory of Rev. Frank P. Anderson’s mother whom had left money to be used for the work of the Lord. Mr. T.M. Seagle donated a steeple, which gave the building the appearance of a church. In 60 years many pastors have conducted Sunday morning worship, Rev. Frank Anderson, Rev. E. H. Gartrell, Rev. W.W. Arrowood, Rev. P.O. Sartelle, Dr. Manson Tate, Rev. John Ricks, Jr., Rev. George Murray III, Rev. S. Browne Hoyt, Rev. James Edwards, Rev. Hershey Longenecker, Rev. Raymond Riddleberger, and Rev. Weston Guthrie.” Tom, like Fred, graduated from the Cincinnati School of Embalming on April 26, 1913. A front page article of the Southwest Times dated April 2, 1913, titled “Pulaski Boy In Dayton’s Flood”, stated that Tom Seagle was among the student embalmers called from Cincinnati to aid in caring for Dayton’s dead.” *A torrential solid week of rain followed by a blizzard of snow fell upon the city of Dayton, Ohio. Tom explained, “It was a pitiful sight to behold. The city was partly under water and part of it was burning. Men, women and children driven to the windows and other openings by the flames would plunge into the water hoping to be rescued, at the same time taking chances on perishing in watery graves, seeming to prefer death in drowning rather than being burned alive.” Hundreds of lives had been lost in this manner, and Tom like many of his student colleagues were there to rescue the living and embalm the dead. He arrived on train with one hundred nurses, fifty doctors and thirteen embalmers. This was a sight and an experience that he preferred to grow from spiritually and mentally, but remember with dignity.* Tom was also a member of the Pulaski Fire Department and was a member of the local Elks Club.*

Seagle Funeral Home has served the entire Southwest Virginia more particularly Pulaski County, and conducted business in three centuries beginning with its

establishment in 1880. Seagles, having served for so many years can find its roots in our community unlike most local businesses. In 1918 a flu epidemic struck the Town of Pulaski with proportions of devastation unseen by citizens of that time. The death rate in Pulaski resulting from this epidemic was higher per capita than most cities in the country. Tom Seagle, and his older brother Fred worked night and day for about two weeks to see that people, and in some cases entire families, received decent burials. A room in the Elks building on Main Street was used as a makeshift hospital. They were told on many trips to the hospital that they would need to return shortly because someone was taking their last breaths. They were supposedly the only funeral directors in town to not have the flu. Unable to physically handle the excess number of deaths, Tom and Fred sent word to a Bluefield, W.Va. Funeral Director to take the train to Pulaski. Unfortunately when the Funeral Director arrived, he caught the flu and died. Most of the funerals were conducted at night to avoid contact with any living citizen in fear of catching the virus.

The all-famous Hillsville Courthouse murders brought about shock to the entire country. Angry citizens could not understand how such an act of violence could occur in the United States Courtroom. Judge Massie, the presiding judge, was caught by unbelievable surprise when bullets brought him to his shocking death. Judge Massie's body was placed on a train and brought to Pulaski where it was met by Tom and Fred Seagle. The Seagle firm was entrusted to carry out the wishes of the judges family.

The years 1939 - 1940 brought a drastic change to Pulaski County. The Claytor Lake Dam was built by Appalachian Power Company to provide power for their business and to create a wonderful park and lake for families to enjoy. Before the farms and pastures were flooded by the rising water, much was needed to prepare the land for this invasion. Homes, barns, and fields of crops were abandoned. However, many old family cemeteries were in danger of disappearing forever. The Seagle firm was contracted to assist families and their communities in relocating their ancestors. Tom Seagle and his sons DuVal and Roswell were found overseeing the disinterring and relocating entire cemeteries to other locations. Little was publicized about this momentous and necessary feat. When Claremont Elementary School was built, the Seagle firm was again called to relocate a small family cemetery to Oakwood Town Cemetery.

It is uncertain the approximate year that Tom Seagle branched out on his own to open another Seagle firm. An advertisement from The Southwest Times dated February 22, 1927, reveals that Fred and Dexter were operating as Seagle Brothers on Commerce Street. With no actual documentation, we are assuming that Tom opened the second Seagle firm somewhere between 1920 and 1927. Tom continued to operate his furniture business, and in 1933, from a store front property in the 200 block of North Jefferson opened a Funeral Directors Establishment, while he continued to operate the furniture store at Thrid and Jefferson Streets. On Saturday July 17, 1948 at 1:00 P.M. T. M. Seagle and his two Sons, DuVal and Roswell opened a modern funeral home at the corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets in the midst of many major churches.

Cloyd DuVal Seagle, or better known as "DuVal", was born August 4, 1915 in Pulaski. DuVal was one of Tom's two sons that chose to continue the Seagle name in the funeral industry. DuVal graduated from Pulaski High School in 1933 after which he continued his education at the Fork Union Military Academy, where he was noted as an expert pianist. (*See Appendix #15*) He attained the status of State Tennis Champion, which was a difficult accomplishment in the 1930's. He followed in his father's and his

uncle Fred's footsteps by attending the Cincinnati School of Embalming in the fall class of 1938. His success allowed him to sit for the examination of the Virginia State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers on December 14, 1938 which he found successful and allowed him to practice as an Embalmer. A funeral licensee in the Commonwealth of Virginia, during this era, was required to obtain an embalmers license and a funeral directors license. On June 19, 1939 DuVal sat for the funeral directors examination, which he passed and he became a dual licensee. Almost forty years later, DuVal was fortunate to be recommended by his colleagues to the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia for an appointment to the board of directors for the Virginia Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers. In June 1977, DuVal was tending the Seagle Furniture Store when the telephone rang and it was Governor Mills Godwin phoning from Richmond. DuVal responded favorably and served a seven years term.

Shortly after W.W.II, the Town of Pulaski was blessed to have four funeral establishments; Thomas M. Seagle & Sons, Seagle Brothers, Stevens, and Vaughn-Guynn. Vaughn-Guynn's decision to sell their interest in their Pulaski firm prompted Stanley Stevens and DuVal Seagle to respond with buy-out offers. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Seagle purchased the funeral firm together and operated it for approximately two weeks as "Chapel On The Hill", until Mr. Seagle sold his interest to Mr. Stevens so that he might have a modern funeral home of his own. (*See Appendix # 16*) Stevens at that time operated from their furniture store located at Washington and Third Streets. A short time later the manager of the former Vaughn-Guynn Funeral Home, who was Stanley Strickler, opened his own establishment on Jefferson Avenue. He remained there until his retirement when he sold his business to Mark Bower in the early 1970's. Mr. Bower's business has since then located to Bob White Blvd.

Professional etiquette in the mid 1900's was somewhat more pronounced than what is seen today. The relationship between DuVal Seagle and Mr. Stanley Stevens exemplified great qualities on both parts. The death of Stanley Strickler's mother allowed business competitiveness to be temporarily layed to rest, as DuVal Seagle was asked by Mr. Strickler, to ride with him to the out of town cemetery where his mother would be interred. Time changes all, but the human touch of realism finds its way to the doorbell of all homes, "even to the families of funeral directors." DuVal was a W.W.II veteran having served in the U.S. Navy. DuVal became a life member of the Pulaski Elks Lodge # 1067, a life member of the Pythagoras Masonic Lodge #239 A.F.&A.M. where he was active in having the Lodge building built in the early 1950's and assisted in the preparation of the History of Pythagoras Lodge #239, was instrumental in the construction and organization of the Hensel Eckman Y.M.C.A., and was very pro-active in the abolition of the funeral home ambulance business in the late 1960's.

The following information has been compiled by John Seagle, eldest son of Thomas Roswell Seagle. **Thomas Roswell Seagle, Sr.**, (*See Appendix #17*) commonly known as "Brother", was born January 22, 1918 to Blanche Hurst Seagle and Thomas Mason Seagle. Roswell's mother, Blanche Hurst was of English descent with ancestry related to one of the oldest recorded family names. The Hursts immigrated to Ohio and then by horse and wagon to Hiwassee, Va. Roswell's father was of German origin, the family having immigrated to this country in 1736. The early Seagles in this country lived in North Carolina moving on to Grayson County, Wythe County and then to Pulaski. Early ancestors were in carpentry and pottery. One of Thomas M. Seagle's ancestors,

Daniel, was a potter in Lincoln County, N.C. and original pieces of his works can be seen in the Mint Museum in Charlotte, N.C. Roswell was born at the Seagle Home on 719 Prospect Avenue on land that was purchased from Mrs. Seagle's uncle, Dr. Hurst, a general practitioner. Infant Roswell had a brother of two years at home, Cloyd DuVal Seagle. That year would start some precarious situations for the young family. The world wide flu epidemic occurred in 1918. This deadly epidemic occurred in Pulaski late in September just as World War I was ending. Infant Roswell's father Tom, already a funeral director carrying on the Seagle name in the funeral business started by Tom's grandfather, William Cloyd Seagle who launched the business on Commerce Street in Pulaski in the 1880's along with his brother Fred Seagle, were the only funeral directors able to practice. The other morticians were too sick and an outside funeral director from Bluefield came to Pulaski only to catch the deadly flu and die. Tom and grave digger John Crouse, a strapping man worked relentlessly to bury the dead. In all, 125 people from Pulaski County, 92 of them from the Town of Pulaski died in the course of two months. Fortunately, the Seagle family was spared from the epidemic and young Roswell was able to grow with his family.

In their young childhood DuVal and Roswell played and frolicked at their home on Prospect Avenue, an area not heavily inhabited at the time. Then, the next precarious event occurred in Roswell's young life. The Great Depression forced the majority of Americans into great sacrifice and despair. The young family decided to move in with Blanche Seagles parents, Allen Princeton and Anna Larua Spriggs Hurst on Upland Drive. Most recently, Michael Dowell, the former Fine Arts Center director and his wife Pat Gooch, daughter of noted outdoorsman Bob Gooch, resided at the old homestead. Roswell still enjoyed a young boy's life and the family was able to rent the house on Prospect Avenue to a young doctor in town by the name of Dr. Dougla Divers.

Fate once again played a precarious role. As the depression waged on, the Hurst home was engulfed in fire and the family was forced to move. Tom, having separated from the Seagle Brothers Funeral Business now operated by his brother Fred and nephews Gray and Oscar, rented show room storespace from a Mr. A.A. McNew on the corner of Third Street and Jefferson Avenue. During the late 1920's with the depression looming into the 1930's, Blanche and Tom slept on a mattress in the show room and the young boys slept in one room upstairs. Having plenty of time on their hands, father and sons papered over the windows of the warehouse and began repairing furniture, appliances and heating stoves for resale. Thus, the start of the Seagle's Furniture Exchange, a tradition started on Commerce Street by Toms father, W.C. in the 1880's as a part of the funeral business. From the early 1930's till the present, the "Store" as it became known has served as not only a place of business, but a place to stop for friendly conversation.

The boys now nearing high school age developed an interest in music. They had the opportunity to study from the world renowned musician and conductor Professor A.V. Fine, a Russian native who moved to Pulaski from New York. Roswell went on to play the saxophone and clarinet, and DuVal was a gifted pianist. Sports was also in the boy's life; Roswell played high school basketball and baseball at the Cincinnati College of Embalming. DuVal, an avid tennis player, won the Virginia State Tennis Title in Charlottesville, Va. in 1933. At age 87 he was still actively exercising and batting tennis balls. In 1933, Tom rented another building close to the furniture exchange and beside

what was once the Piggly Wiggly Store and later Dawn's Florist on Jefferson Avenue. Here, he continued his funeral business, that his father and grandfather started and in direct competition with his brother Fred's business Seagle Brothers Funeral Home. Tom enlisted the help of an in-law, Pete Hurst in his new adventure. The name of the new business was Hurst-Seagle Funeral Service and this partnership would not last long, as DuVal now out of high school and a year at V.P.I, now Virginia Tech., and then Fork Union Military Academy moved back to Pulaski and began his apprenticeship with his father. Roswell, near finishing high school began his apprenticeship one year following DuVal. One of the boy's early experiences was the disinterment of family graves in the area where Claytor Lake was to be flooded. Long time grave digger John Crouse, Tom and the boys worked tirelessly to ensure that families loved ones were reinterred with respect and dignity. The number of disinterments reached the hundreds.

Upon completion of their apprenticeships, both Seagles attended the Cincinnati School of Embalming. DuVal graduating in 1938 and Roswell in 1939. Thus the beginning of Thomas M. Seagle & Sons Funeral Home, one of the most trusted and respected funeral homes in the State of Virginia and a direct extension of the original Seagle brothers business. The perils of life would again challenge the family with the approach of World War II. Entangled in the spirit of the times of sacrifice and volunteerism, both Seagle boys enlisted in the armed services for the war effort. DuVal left DuVal, Jr., Ruth, and wife Laura King Harmon Seagle at home and enlisted in the Navy. Roswell, still single, enlisted in the Army on his birthday January 22, 1942 at the age of 24. He was in the medical unit of the 257 ISCU and served in Rome, Naples and Pompey, and Italy earning the good conduct medal and was discharged on October 24, 1945. Roswell married Francis Louis Crist, just before his discharge, on September 29, 1945. Francis was just discharged from the Red Cross and had served in France when some of the most intense bombing by the Germans occurred. The couple had met in Pulaski when the Crist Family came to visit the Kirkland Family. Roswell and Francis became the proud parents of their first child, Roswell Seagle, Jr., a daughter Margaret Seagle Ratcliffe, and then John Edward Seagle.

Religion and faith played a large part in both Seagle brother's lives. Through the years Roswell at one time had 13 consecutive years of perfect attendance and also was a deacon at the familie's chosen church, First Presbyterian on Jefferson Avenue. DuVal sang in the church choir for years and also served as deacon, elder and, trustee. Roswell was also a member of the Elks Lodge, Pulaski Country Club, and always maintained his love of music and friendships.

In the Spring of 1964, Roswell and Frances became the proud owners of one of the finest Victorian homes in Pulaski, 628 Prospect Avenue. Being only the third owners, the home was originally built by John Eckman around 1900 for his son Joe. The home was later owned by noted Judge John Draper and his wife Tidee. Judge Draper was a direct descendent of Mary Draper Ingles, who was famous for escaping from a tribe of Indians in the middle of the 1700's. Roswell and Frances remodeled and furnished the home with antiques, which became a hobby for the years remaining in their lives. Now, (2002), Dr. Gerty and family reside in this wonderful mansion.

Sadly in November of 1967, Thomas Mason Seagle, "Big Tom" as he had become known, died at age 76. The business was carried on by the sons and the legacy of the oldest established business in Pulaski continued. Tom's widow, Blanche, lived to be 98

years of age and died in 1987. Roswell retired from the family business in 1973 and sold his interest to Mr. Wayne Ondich. Roswell died of a heart attack in February 1981, and his widow Frances died in May of 1993.

Anthony Wayne Ondich, Jr., was born March 24, 1940 in Emporia, Virginia to Frances Miller Ondich and Anthony Wayne Ondich, Sr. (*See Appendix #18*) He graduated from High School in 1959, and graduated from the Cincinnati School of Embalming in 1964. He has three children, Anthony Wayne Ondich, III, Tracie Lynn DeLuca, and Amiee Ondich Hall, and he is married to Nancy Riggs Ondich. Wayne came to Southwest Virginia to begin his career with Richardson Funeral Home in Christiansburg. He was later employed with Strickler Funeral Service in Pulaski before he left the funeral industry to become involved with the American Heart Association. Subsequently he was approached by Roswell Seagle about purchasing his partnership in the Seagle funeral firm. July 1, 1973 Wayne became only the third non-family owner in the Seagle Firm in its 92 year history. In 1983 at the age of 67, DuVal Seagle sold the remaining interest in the Seagle firm to Wayne, and continued on as an employee until his complete retirement December 31, 1999 at the age of 84. Wayne is a member of the Pulaski Rotary Club, and a member of Christ Episcopal Church. In 1986, Wayne began construction of the addition to the Seagle Funeral Home. This addition provided a 250-seat chapel, large conference room, spacious handicapped hallways, a large casket display room, two storage rooms and a large two-car garage. He contracted Mr. George Galloway to be the contractor for the job. The building practically doubled in size, allowing for multiple visitations to occur simultaneously. During the construction, an inscription was found dating the construction of the original building to be 1921. In 2003, with joint efforts between the First Christian Church and the Seagle Funeral Home, a spacious parking lot was constructed at the corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets. This joint effort provided a large number of off-street parking for both locations.

S. Todd Bruce, born January 27, 1965 to Wallace and Judy Bruce of Radford, Virginia. (*See Appendix #19*) He graduated from Radford High School in 1983, from New River Community College in 1986 with an Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Police Science and Forensic Science, and attended The Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science where he attained a Bachelor of Mortuary Science Degree, and was instrumental in the writing and publication of the college history. After completing and passing the National Board Examination he tested for the Virginia State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers Board Examination, and passed allowing him to practice as a Funeral Director and Embalmer. He completed his apprenticeship with Director Darrell Mullins at Seaver-Sanders Funeral Home and with John S. Hubble, Jr. at DeVilbiss Funeral Home in Radford. His first licensed employment opportunity was with Thomas M. Seagle & Sons Funeral Home. After three years he left to pursue management opportunities with DeVilbiss Funeral Home and with Mullins and Thompson Funeral Service in Fredericksburg, VA. In 1993 he was married to Tracie M. Mitchell of Dublin, and have one son named Michael. In early 1998 Wayne Ondich approached him to discuss an opportunity to become an equal partner with the Seagle Firm. They reached an agreement and S. Todd Bruce became the fourth non-Seagle Family owner to the Seagle funeral firm on June 1, 1998. Todd is a member of Pythagoras Lodge #239 A.F.&A.M., Virginia May Lodge #38 A.F.&A.M., Pulaski Royal Arch Chapter, Blacksburg Commandry, Pulaski Order of the Eastern Star, Kazim Temple of Shriners, Dublin Lions

Club, a board member of The Greater Pulaski Alliance, Past President and Treasurer of Radford Volunteer Fire & Rescue, and a member of Dublin United Methodist Church.

The post W.W.II era provided many opportunities for veterans and their families. One such local family capitalized on those prosperous times, and they opened a supplemental funeral business of their own. Mr. Vance Leeson and his brother Garnett approached the Seagle firm about the need for a modern vault company specializing in concrete burial vaults. In this period, most vaults were constructed from wood. Much was done to support and encourage their brilliant idea. The Seagle Firm, like many others, provided the Leesons with their vault business. The Seagles, in addition, gave them, with no consideration, their entire stock of personal lowering devices, tents, and tent equipment for their future use. The new franchise company to Pulaski was called "Virginia Wilbert Vault Company", which is still in operation today as Virginia Vault Services. Garnett Leeson and Ranold Davis, a long time employee, were once in a West Virginia Cemetery, which happened to have a railroad track passing through its center. They both were busy setting up the tent for that day's funeral when they began to hear the approach of a steam train, which occurred quite frequently in this location. Garnett commented, "I believe it is coming from the west". Ranold said, "I believe it is coming from the east." To their surprise, they could see two trains approaching from both the east and the west, and were about to meet in the middle of the cemetery. Seconds later the two Wilbert employees witnessed a head on collision of two freight trains in the middle of the cemetery. I am sure that this story can be seen unique to all funeral and train stories sloshing within the bottom of the pails of time.

In the White Gate Community of Giles County, Va. stands a small funeral home called A.Vest & Sons. Due to the untimely death of Lucian Aurelius Vest, a licensed founder of their business, there arose a need for assistance. The Seagle firm was summonsed to assist families during their most needed times throughout that small community. Tom Seagle and his sons DuVal and Roswell provided professional assistance to the Vest Firm for well over two years while a grandson Louis Vest served his apprenticeship with the Seagle firm in Pulaski under the auspices of DuVal Seagle's license. The Seagle funeral firm continued to provide embalming expertise to the Vest family for many decades. Thus, there has been a long-standing relationship between the two old firms.

The following is an excerpt from the *V-8 Times Magazine for Ford V-8 Enthusiasts*, Published by the Early Ford V-8 Club Vol. 29, No.4 July/Aug 1992, titled A PLEASANT UNDERTAKING, by Josephine S. O'Donnell, Southeast Editor. "One day last summer, I received a phone call from a gentleman by the name of Oscar Seagle who lives in Virginia. He was in the process of completing the restoration of a 1936 Ford ambulance/hearse. Now I realize it's not often that we hear about these types of vehicles - but what makes this story really unique is Oscar's father purchased this vehicle in 1935 to use in their family funeral business. The history and story behind this hearse is so interesting I'm just going to sit back and let Oscar tell you in his own words."

My grandfather's first hearse was a horse-drawn coach purchased in 1907. My dad posed next to his vehicle in 1907. During the period between 1907 and 1935 we, of course, went from horse-drawn to gas-powered hearses. In 1935, my father purchased a new 1936 Ford hearse/ ambulance from the local Ford dealer for the princely sum of \$1,470.00. This hearse was in service in the family business until my dad retired in 1953.

In most small towns in the '20s and '30s, the local undertakers supplied the ambulance services for the communities - they were the forefathers of today's rescue squads. We received the same medical training as the fire department personnel. We were called, along with the police, to respond to all types of emergencies - auto and industrial accidents as well as taking women in labor to the hospital. Thank goodness I never had to deliver a baby! A couple of times it was close, but I drove faster and kept the siren and red light going and made it to the hospital ahead of the stork! Because our ambulance/hearse did double duty as the town emergency vehicle, it was always kept at the ready as an ambulance. Cars at that time were sometimes difficult to start during the winter months, so we kept it stored in the Plymouth dealer's garage. Not only did they have the only heated garage in town, but they even did our routine maintenance. Dad would receive emergency calls from the police or individuals, then if I was not nearby, he would call me to go get the ambulance from the garage and pick me up. Sounds simple doesn't it? Don't forget one important fact - this was generations before CB's and car phones. If my brother and I were not home, we always had to be near a business or home with phone service. Dad had to know where we were at all times, even during the evening when we were on a date. We had to be available in case of emergencies. So many of our dates consisted of a soda at the local drugstore, a movie, or nearby dances. We were always waiting for the phone to ring. When it was necessary to use the vehicle as a hearse, the cot, jump seat, floor run, and ambulance sign was removed. A canvas bag was placed over the bumper-mounted red light. We had wheeled, collapsible, church trucks, which were used as casket carriers. These were placed in the under deck storage compartment for easy access, and the flower racks were placed in the rear side windows. Eventually I moved away from home and pursued another career, but my brother and father continued the business. When my father died in 1953, the hearse was sold to an individual who owned a salvage yard and the new owner used it as a truck until 1956. It eventually ended up parked outside with the other unwanted and worn-out vehicles. The years continued to pass and in time I also retired. Then in 1979 I returned to my hometown of Pulaski to live. I've always had an interest in cars. Since I retired, I have had time to restore many fine vehicles. But, because that '36 hearse was such an important part of my life, I never completely forgot it. In 1990 Kruse International Auctioneers auctioned off the estate of the person who had purchased our hearse. I found out that my dad's hearse was to be part of that three-day auction. Of course I was vitally interested in the sale! When the first day of the auction dawned, I was going to avoid the crowds and arrived there bright and early, along with a couple hundred other people and a busload of museum curators from New York! I spent many anxious hours of waiting and watching the auctioneer's hammer seal the bid on other vehicles. Finally, at long last, "my" hearse was on the block! The bidding started. Eventually the bidders narrowed down to me and one of the curators from New York. The nerve! He was trying to buy my hearse! He and I were both determined to take "her" home with us, but he just wouldn't stop bidding. After a while, a friend of mine walked up to the curator and said "Now you just hush up. That boy that's bidding wants that vehicle because it belonged to his daddy!" Well, faced with logic like that, the curator did the only thing possible - he shut up and I was able to buy my hearse. Needless to say, the "Old Girl" was badly abused, but very sound, with only surface rust, with no rust through. It is most unusual to buy a vehicle from a salvage yard and find every part intact - absolutely all components

were there with the exception of half of the left front fender. Even the medallion indicating the unit had been stretched by "The Shop of Siebert - Est. 1853 - Toledo, Ohio" was affixed to a storage compartment door. I found all instruments in place and in working order with the odometer showing 24,000 miles. I brought "her" home and completed a frame-off restoration in nine months. Everything was removed and reconditioned or replaced with genuine Ford parts. All woodwork was refinished, new upholstery, headliner and vinyl roof. The engine was rebuilt, the frame and front end re-aligned, and finally it was painted with Ford Gunmetal Gray just like it was originally. Completing a frame-off restoration in nine months is extraordinary, but preceding this project several other very unique occurrences happened. Keep in mind as you read these that when some of them happened, I did not have the hearse, nor did I know where it was. (1) In 1983, my wife Mickey and I were browsing through an antique warehouse in Pulaski, when I spotted two familiar wooden objects. They turned out to be the flower racks for the side windows. The owner of the antique shop verified that he had purchased them from the auction of my dad's store. I bought them and stored them in my attic where they remained until I restored the hearse. (2) In 1987 my son sold his home in Pennsylvania. He returned the two side-door nameplates from the hearse that I had given him many years before. I brought those nameplates back to Pulaski where they laid on my workbench until the vehicle was restored in 1991. At the Kruse auction in 1990, after I purchased the hearse, they also offered three church trucks. I purchased these without close examination. When I brought them home, I recognized one as being from my dad's store as it had a distinct break in one of the cross bars that had been repaired long ago. (3) Six months after I purchased the hearse, I was having some welding done at the home of a longtime friend. I noticed an old ambulance cot that had been painted green, sitting on his back porch being used as a chaise lounge. I asked where he got it, as it looked familiar. He allowed that he had purchased it when my dad's business was being auctioned. When I told him that I recognized it as being from the old hearse, he sold it to me for \$5.00. I brought it home and it fits right in the side latches of the coach. I'm presently removing the green restoring it back to the original aluminum. (4) Finally, the new home for this restored vehicle is just 1 1/2 blocks from its original home base. I'm assuming that in light of all these unusual events, that the "Old Girl" was destined to belong to me and would come home where she belonged, knowing she would receive my T.L.C. I've spent many hours working on, repairing and restoring this vehicle. When I purchased this vehicle, not only did I buy something truly unique, but also along with everything else that came with it, I have a part of my past and value the memories that come with it.

SEAGLE HEARSE

1880 Horse Drawn Carriage
(See Appendix #20)

1906 Horse Drawn Carriage
(See Appendix #21)

1918 Motorized Hearse (Model and type unknown)

Receipt dated February 23, 1918:

Hearse Cost:	\$2,650.00
War Tax:	\$79.50
Freight:	\$54.70
License Tag:	\$11.60
Total:	\$2,795.80

1925 Henney Limousine Hearse
(See Appendix #22)

September 7, 1925 The Southwest Times article titled "Seagle Brothers Have New Hearse - Purchase Is Latest Model In Burial Equipment And Refinement" "*Seagle Brothers received yesterday a new limousine hearse through the L.B. Davis Sales Co., of Raleigh, N.C. This car is of the latest model, is covered with French Meritas cloth and lined with Spanish leather. It is probably the most up-to-date funeral car in Southwest Virginia, beautiful in appearance and lacking that drear appearance of older model hearses. It was manufactured by John W. Henry & Co., Freeport, Ill., and embodies all the refinements developed in hearse making during the past sixty years. The purchasing of this car by Seagle Brothers gives to Pulaski and Pulaski County the modern and solemn refinements which have been available only in the larger centers of population.*"

1936 Ford Hearse/Ambulance Combination
(See Appendix #23)

Seagle Brothers Furniture and Undertaking Business continued operation under the leadership of Fred Seagle. With the assistance of his sons, Gray and Oscar, and the many part-time employees, the Seagle name was able to continue on in the funeral industry. Oscar ventured on to seek a lifelong career with Protane Corporation ending his career as vice-president and returned to Pulaski in 1982 and married Mickey Whitaker Jackson. Oscar is a member of the First United Methodist Church, where he inherited the Seagle trait of the music of voice, participating in the church choir. He was also a member of Pythagoras Masonic Lodge #239 A.F.&A.M. Much of the material needed to compile a history of the Seagle Funeral Home was provided by Oscar and from the storage of documents that his sister Coleen Cummings collected for ninety some odd years. Gray Seagle remained for many years as the only non-licensed son to assist his father Fred in the operations of Seagle Brothers. Gray was a noted Mason as seen in the History of Pythagoras Lodge No. 239 receiving his Certificate of Proficiency on August 4, 1947. He was also an accountant for a local hardware business and later was employed at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. In 1953, three years before death of Fred, Seagle Brothers on Commerce Street closed its doors for the last time.

Live organ music has always been a service provided by all Pulaski funeral homes. The idea of someone working for a business for over 45 years seems unlikely in today's society; however, Bettye Steger has provided music for thousands of families through Seagle Funeral Home. Bettye gracefully followed her mother's musical talent. Her mother, Daisy B. Heldreth, was a long time organist for the former Greever Funeral

Home in Tazewell, Virginia. Another lovely face has provided Seagle Families with delightful music: Becky Melton has not only provided memorable musical experiences for countless families, but also she instills a dignified vision of beauty for their memory picture. *(See Appendix #24 & #25)*

The revered and prestigious name of Seagle in the funeral industry continues to serve citizens of Southwest Virginia from the corner of Fifth and Jefferson Streets in the Town of Pulaski as **Thomas M. Seagle & Sons Funeral Home**. Citizens of the distant and recent past have come to trust **Seagle Funeral Home** under the leadership of J.H. Seagle, James Gemmell, W.C. Seagle, Fred Seagle, Tom Seagle, George Seagle, Dexter Seagle, DuVal Seagle, Roswell Seagle, Gray Seagle, Oscar Seagle and the most recent owners of the business, Wayne Ondich, Jr. and S. Todd Bruce, with their many part-time associates. The Seagle Name will continue on in memory of the Seagle men who have unselfishly served families in their most needed times.

2003

Yesterday evening business owners and leaders met in the Pulaski Town Council Chambers to discuss with Federal, State, and Local authorities the possibilities of receiving funds from the Community Development Block Grant. If, granted this money would be utilized to upgrade buildings in the Pulaski Downtown that are visibly designated as slums and blight. It is quite ironic that the founding fathers of this small town must have struggled in equally difficult times to construct the same buildings which are now being preserved and maintained as part of our historical past. The commercial and business zone once embodied the south side of Commerce Street with buildings of grandure and wealth. The Seagle family and their business, like many others, originated on the south side of commerce street. Much of the land that is now the Main Street was then swamp land and was not considered useable.

Memories have been etched in the minds of countless people who have been associated with the Pulaski County, many of which have been either associated with the Seagle firm or have been close friends and consequently, entrusted the Seagle firm with their family funerals. The name Seagle, in the eyes of the public and to funeral service colleagues, has perpetually meant unprecedented professionalism. As our business touches the light of three centuries we vow to continue this commitment to the citizens of Pulaski County and its surrounding communities.