

The Family Store: A History Of Jewish Businesses In Downtown Asheville, 1880–1990

Harry Blomberg (1904-1991) lived in Asheville, North Carolina, his entire life. His motto was, "Work hard, treat your customers and employees fairly, and always give back to your community."

His father, Lewis Blomberg, had immigrated to America

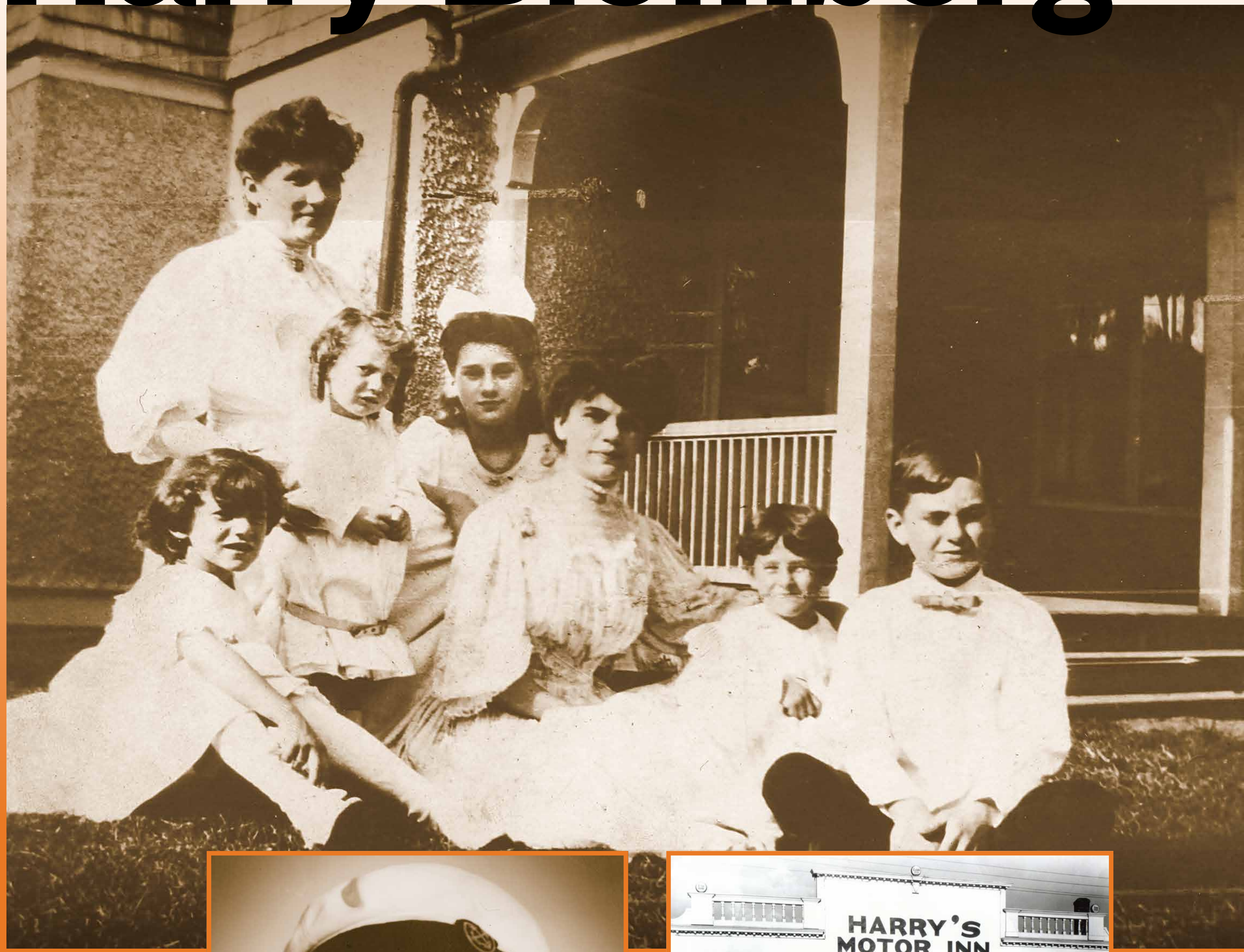
from Linkova, Lithuania, and moved to Savannah, Georgia. Lewis had been a peddler who probably obtained his goods from The Baltimore Bargain House, which provided immigrant peddlers with credit, merchandise and an assigned territory to peddle their wares.

Harry Blomberg

Harry, the youngest of Lewis's five children, was born in 1904.

He grew up on Spruce Street, which was a bustling neighborhood of family homes and boarding houses, including My Old Kentucky Home, Thomas Wolfe's mother's boarding house.

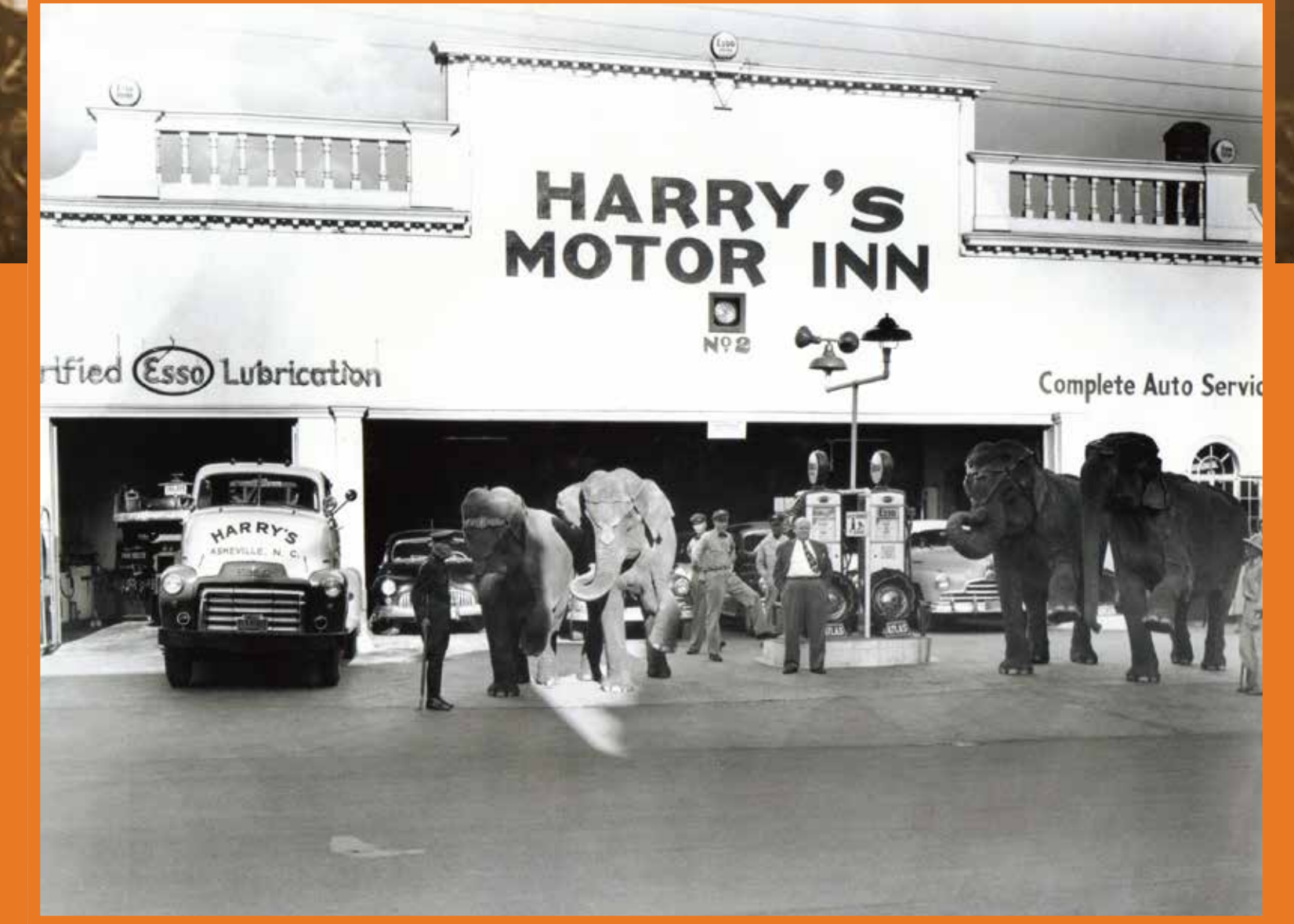
Lewis was upset that Harry, a high school drop-out, would not go into the family business. Harry loved automobiles, a fairly new invention in the 1920s. Lewis told his son, "You will never amount to anything; you have wheels in your head." His Asheville High School principal, Andy Hutchins, told him, "You're wasting your time fooling around with cars. You ought to get a job and go to work!" Harry proved them both wrong!



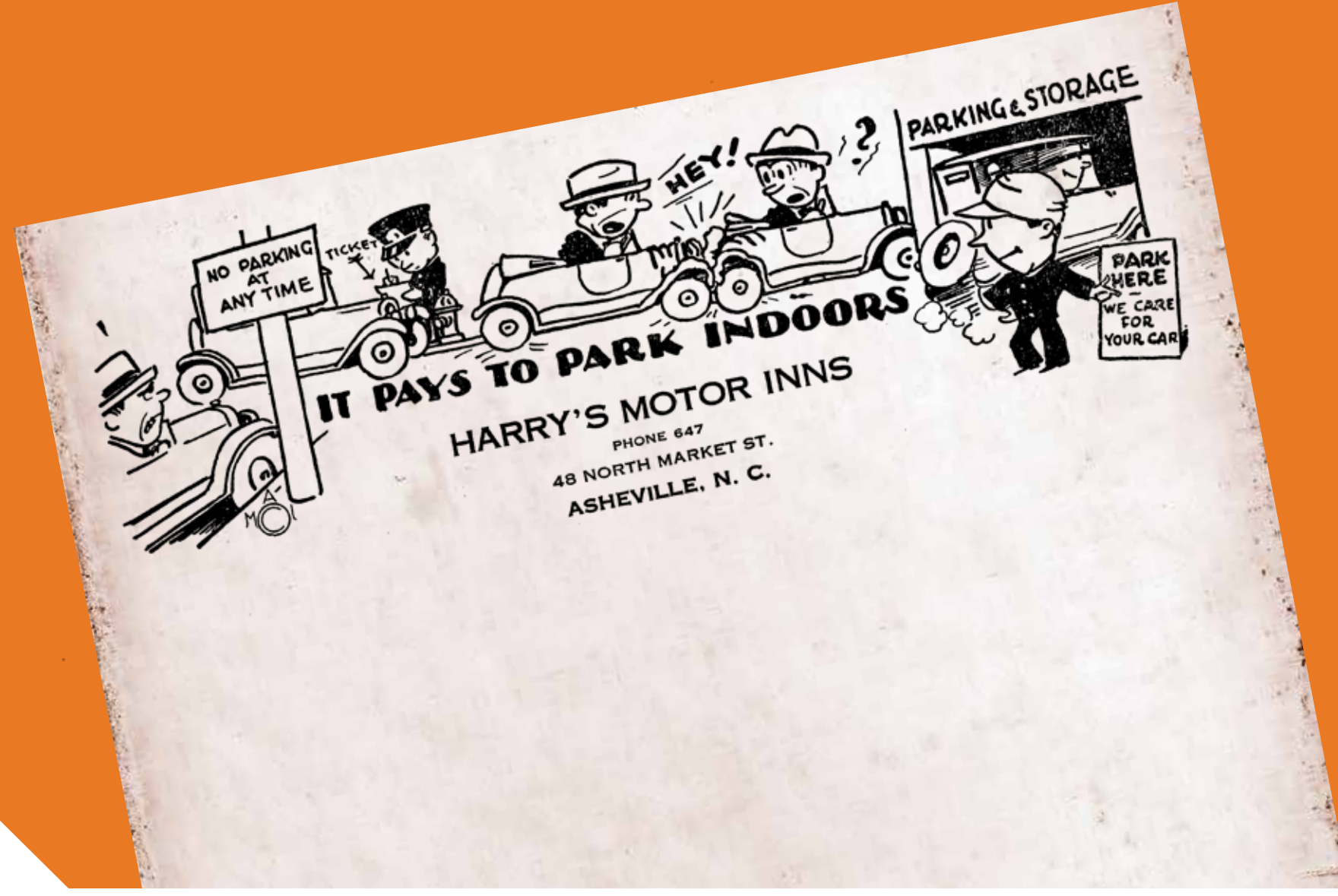
Blomberg family in front of their home at 31 Woodfin Street (no longer standing). Harry is the second child on the left with long curls. Circa 1906



HARRY BLOMBERG 1950s



When the circus came to Asheville it would parade through downtown. The elephants were "parked" at Harry's Motor Inn No. 2



One Man's Generosity

"Except for one man's love of heritage and lack of greediness, the Wolfe home would have been torn down in 1941 and turned into a produce market."

— Bob Terrill, Asheville Citizen Times article, August 23, 1981

Harry bought the Old Kentucky Home in 1941 from a bank foreclosure to save it from demolition and then sold it back to the Wolfe family three months later because he believed it belonged with them.



Harry's

GOES TEXACO ALL THE WAY!

FREE GIFTS and FAVORS

Friday Afternoon and Saturday and Sunday. Harry! Quantity Limited!

At Triangle Texaco Station At Harry's Texaco Station No. 2

Fire Chief Hats For The Kiddies Fire Chief Lollipops

Salt and Pepper Sets For Ladies Texaco Banks

Only New Texaco **Sky Chief** Gives All 3

1. TOP OCTANE
2. BETTER
3. LONGER LIFE



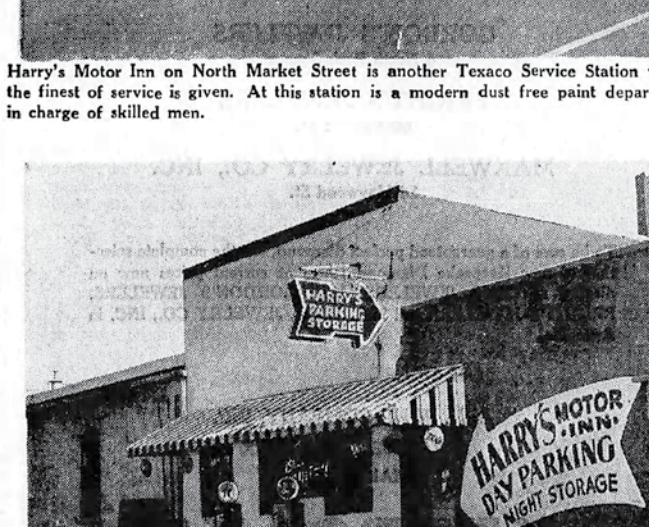
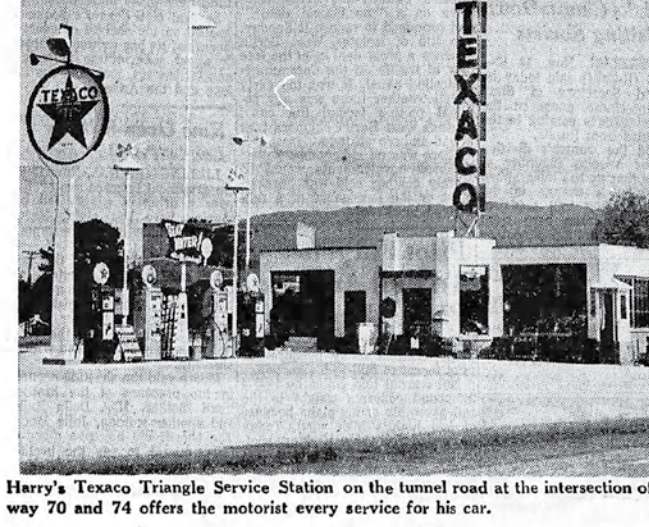


Harry's Texaco Station and Service Center, 48 North Market Street, Asheville, N.C. 28801. Harry's Texaco Station and Service Center, 71-73 Haywood Street, Asheville, N.C. 28801. Harry's Texaco Station and Service Center, 1000 Lexington Avenue, Asheville, N.C. 28801. Harry's Texaco Station and Service Center, 1000 Lexington Avenue, Asheville, N.C. 28801.

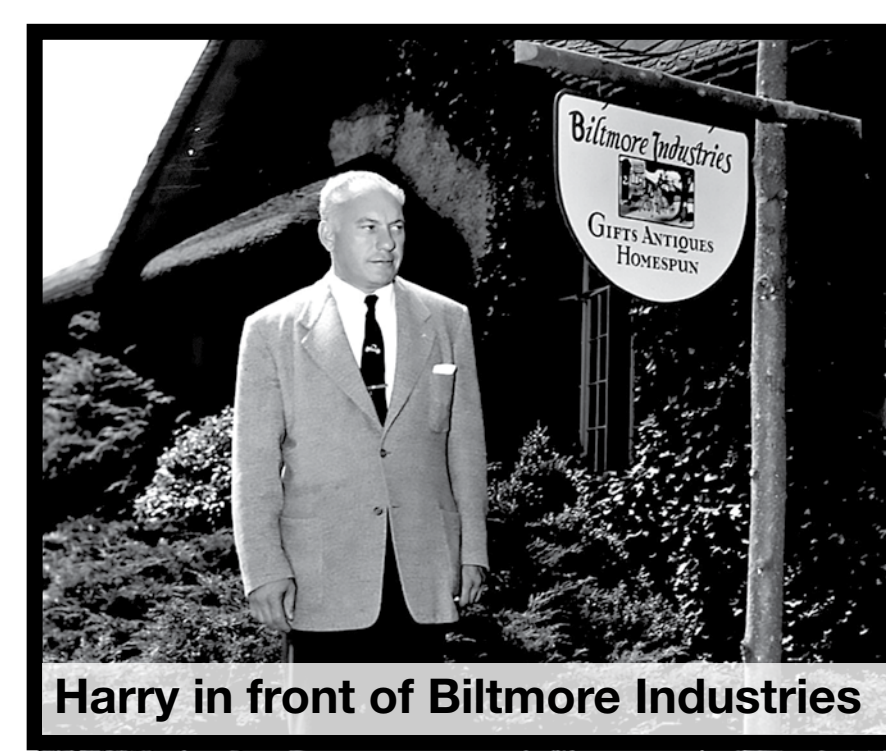
HARRY BLOMBERG ENTERED BUSINESS IN ASHEVILLE IN 1923

Harry B. Blomberg, youngest of five children of Lewis and Sarah Blomberg, was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1904. He came to Asheville in 1923 to work for Biltmore Industries. He later started his own business, Harry's Motor Inns, in 1923.

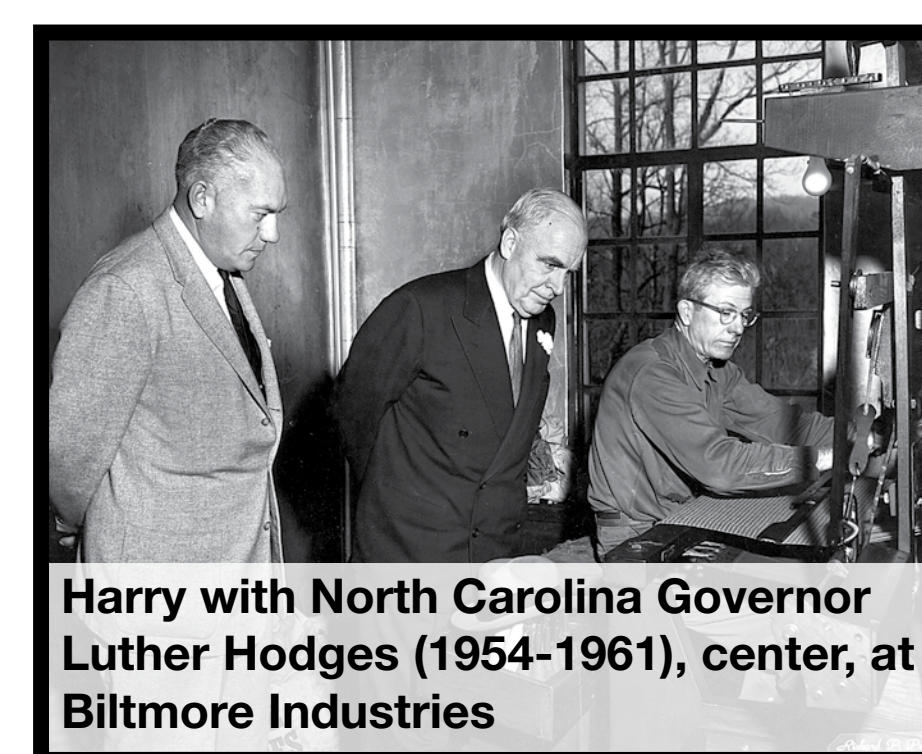
GO "TEXACO" WITH HARRY'S



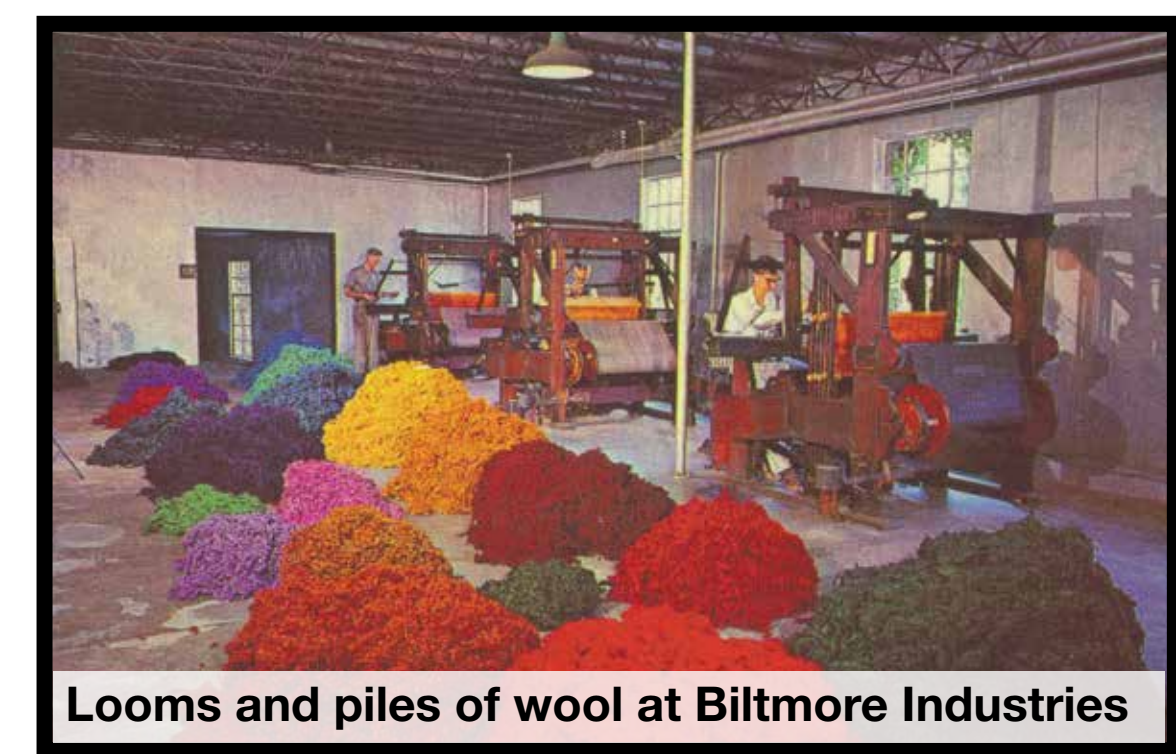
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Harry in front of Biltmore Industries



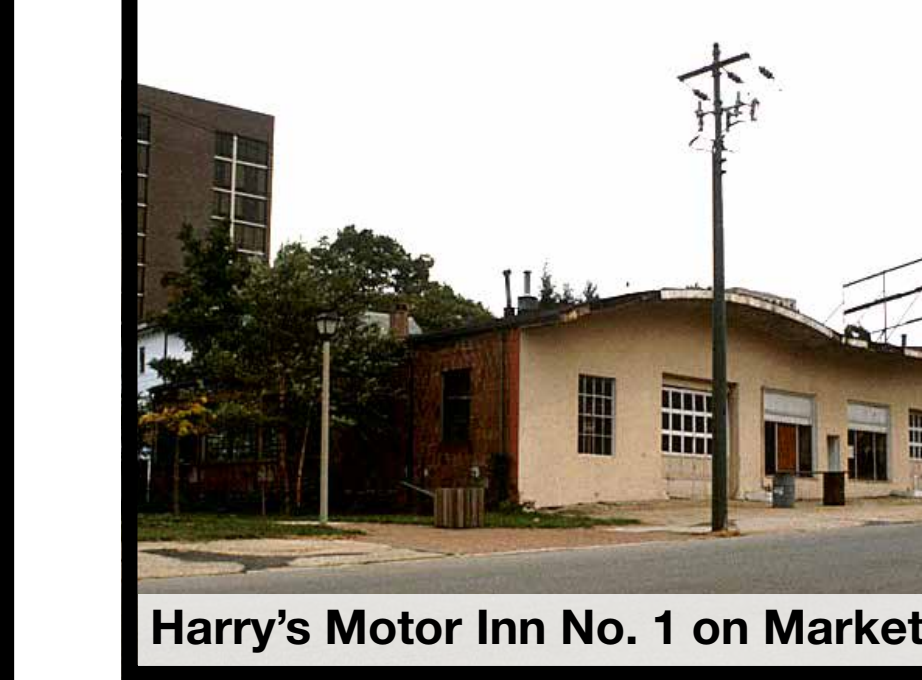
Harry with North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges (1954-1961), center, at Biltmore Industries



Looms and piles of wool at Biltmore Industries



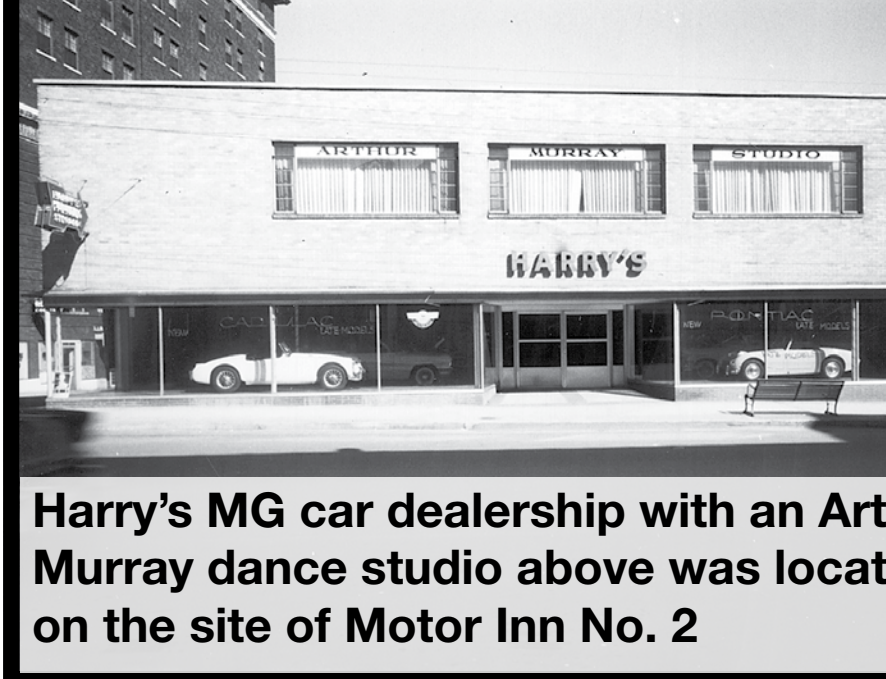
Harry's first gas station is currently the Asheville Community Theatre



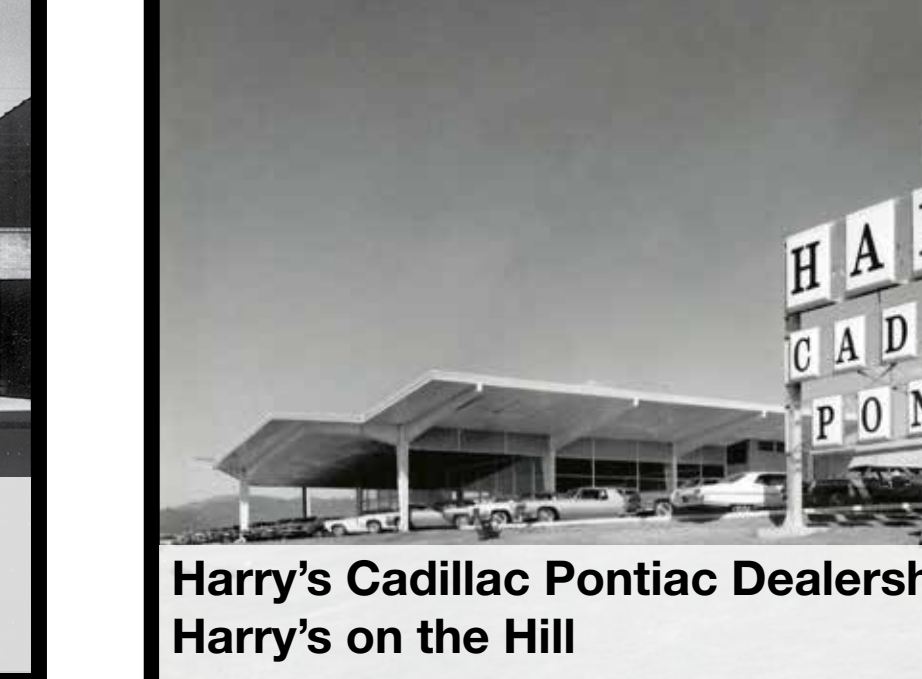
Harry's Motor Inn No. 1 on Market Street



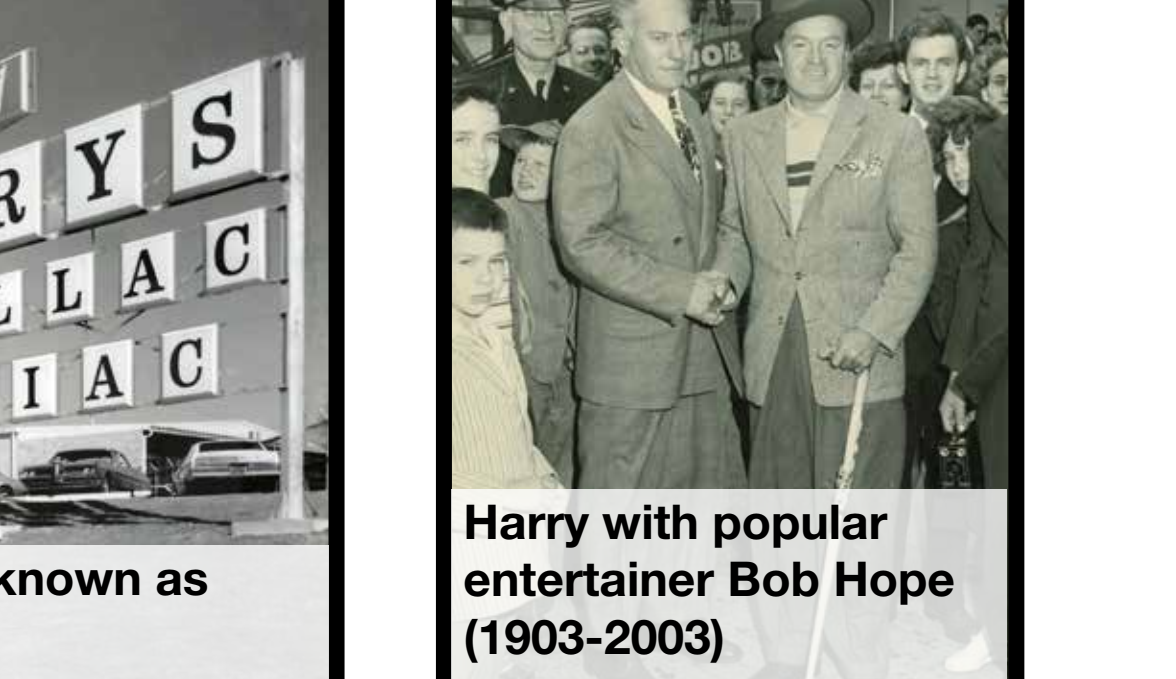
Harry's Cadillac Pontiac Dealership and Service Center



Harry's MG car dealership with an Arthur Murray dance studio above was located on the site of Motor Inn No. 2



Harry's Cadillac Pontiac Dealership known as Harry's on the Hill



Harry with popular entertainer Bob Hope (1903-2003)

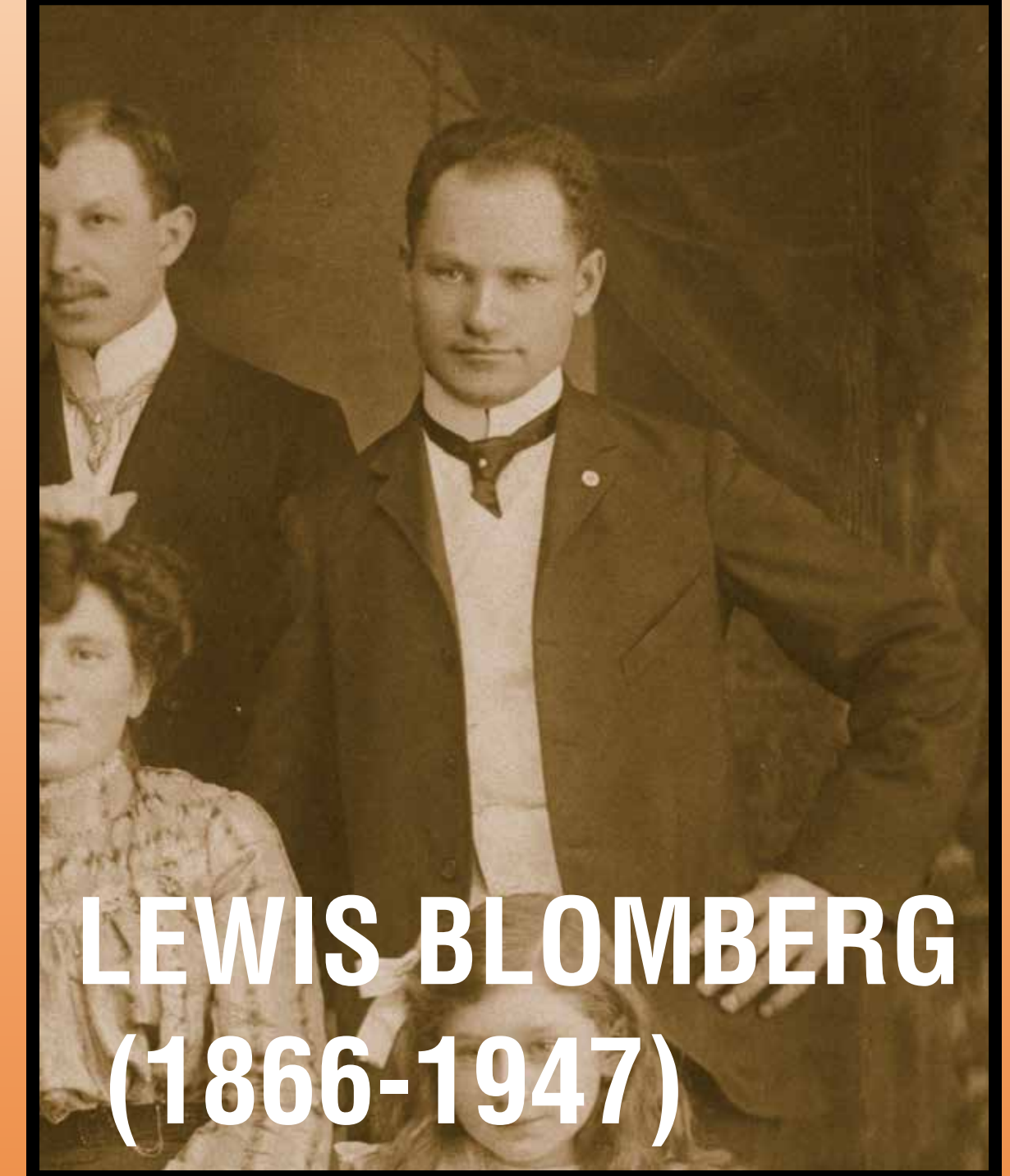
1923
Harry opened his first business, a gas station, on the corner of North Market and Walnut Streets.

1927
Harry's Motor Inn No. 1 at 48 North Market Street, is now the location of the Thomas Wolfe Memorial Visitor Center. No. 1 offered auto care, including a place for the mostly rag-top cars of the era to be housed safely out of the weather.
Harry's Motor Inn No. 2, 71-73 Haywood Street, was where Pack Memorial Library is currently located.

1937
Harry was awarded the area Cadillac dealership, and he opened a showroom at 68 Haywood Street. He later added other makes, including Pontiac, and sold MGs from a showroom across Haywood Street. Celebrities, including Bob Hope and President Franklin Roosevelt, rode in Harry's cars when they came to Asheville.

1953
Harry purchased Biltmore Industries from Fred Seely Jr. and reopened it to continue to provide jobs for mountain craft artisans. It survives today as Grovewood Village.

1967
Needing room to expand, Harry moved his dealership to Patton Avenue overlooking the Town and Country Shopping Center. It became known as Harry's On The Hill and is a Buick GMC dealership.



LEWIS BLOMBERG (1866-1947)

Starting in 1887 Lewis Blomberg, Harry's father, owned numerous businesses in downtown, including the Model Cigar Store, the Racket Store, Blomberg's Sporting Goods, and the Strand movie theater. He also ran a salvage business and a junk and hide business. These enterprises were at various locations, including Biltmore, Patton, and Lexington Avenues.



Model Cigar Store



Blomberg's Sporting Goods



Racket Store



L. Blomberg Leading Tobacconist

PHOTO CREDITS: PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY; HARRY BLOMBERG 1923; HARRY'S MOTOR INN NO. 2; BLOMBERG SPORTING GOODS (BOB FORTUNE COLLECTION); MODEL CIGAR STORE; UNCA RAMSEY LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: BLOMBERG FAMILY, LEWIS BLOMBERG, MOTOR INN LETTERHEAD, BILTMORE INDUSTRIES, INC. ARCHIVES; MOTOR INN WITH ELEPHANTS; BOB HOPE AND LUTHER HODGE.