

1978  
30 Years  
2008

# APPALACHIAN BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION

## Century-old Smithy Still Intact

### New Owner Making Plans to Save Shop

Editor's Note: Bill Mehr wanted to share this story with the ABA.

Hi Dave,

I live in Orange, MA. I have lived here since 1971.

The blacksmith shop is in the center of Orange and is about 200 years old. I first walked into Phil Nystrom's shop when I arrived in town. He was a real character. His father started the blacksmith shop about 100 years ago, and Phil learned the trade from his dad.

About ten years ago my in-laws bought the building from the man to whom Phil willed it.

Upon my father-in-law's passing, my mother-in-law asked me to help her. She put it up for sale and decided to sell off the tools and perhaps, demolish the building (if it did not sell) for the timbers. But, recently, I walked inside with some guys who were interested in some of the tools and just fell in love with the place again. And so, I am trying to talk her into saving everything, just as it is and perhaps, make it into a museum or an education spot.

She seems up for that and I am off on another project!! I love challenges. I have gathered some folk who feel the same way as I

do, and we are just starting to gather info to apply for a historical designation from the state, which will then place the building on the National Historic Register.

The other step is applying for 501c3 status. I am meeting with two professionals—an accountant (the treasurer) and a lawyer! I can feel the momentum starting in my veins, and encouraging words like yours, in your email, just add fuel to the fire.

You should look into what Orange was about 100 years ago—a very important part of the indus-



trial revolution, with many industries located on the Millers River to take advantage of water power.

Have a great day,  
Bill Mehr

