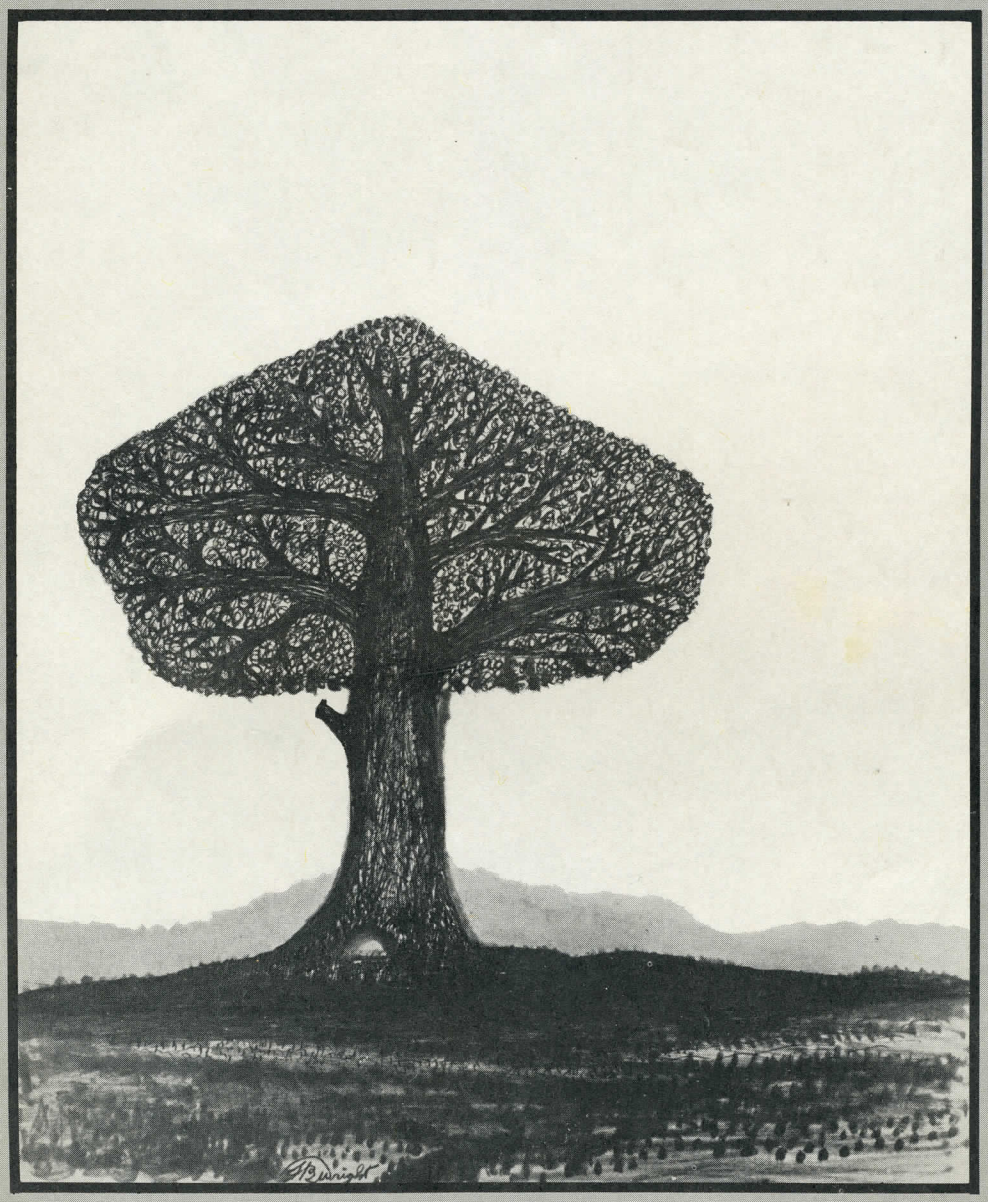
Goldenseal

Volume 1, Number 1 April-June 1975



Ex-coal Miner and Self-taught Artist•
The Lilly Brothers from Clear Creek•Jackson
County Woman Remembers Farm Life: 1893-1970

Goldenseal

A Forum for Those Who Document West Virginia's Traditional Life

Issued four times a year in Jan., Apr., July, and Oct. and distributed without charge.

 Maunscripts and photographs are welcome. 304-348 2286.

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COVER A 1975 drawing by John B. Wright, Huntington. Tree (also see page 26). Ball point pen and felt markers. 9" x 11". Photograph by Tom Evans. An article about the artist is on pages 11-26.

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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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Your Forum

• GOLDENSEAL is sponsored by two agencies of the State of West Virginia, the Department of Commerce and the Arts and Humanities Council. A quarterly publication, it will serve not only as a device to preserve many aspects of the State's traditional life but also as a means of communication for students and enthusiasts of West Virginia's folklife.

• All over the State more and more people, individually and through institutions, are responding to the definite need for us West Virginians to document our orally transmitted traditions. GOLDENSEAL, in every way possible, will attempt to promote those valuable efforts. In order for this to happen, of course, you the reader must actively contribute to these pages. Not only is publishable material welcome but also news concerning West Virginia's folklife and related procedures.

• We are grateful to Dr. Earl L. Core, the botanist at West Virginia University, for writing the first article for GOLDENSEAL. He clearly shows us the longtime, untainted reputation this wild medicinal plant has enjoyed. -Editor

Letters will be published in GOLDENSEAL when the editorial office receives ones of interest to a number of people.

GOLDENSEAL

(Hydrastis canadensis, L.)

Goldenseal

by Earl L. Core
West Virginia University

In the shadows of the mighty forest that covered the Appalachian, or Endless Mountains, and the hills to the west, the American aborigines before the coming of the Eurpoean invaders had discovered hundreds of plants useful to them in various ways. Poles and bark of trees were used in housing; canoes were made by certain techniques, baskets and bags by others. Parts of some plants could be used for food; others formed the basis for alcoholic drinks; still others had remarkable narcotic properties. Many were used in the treatment of the various physical ailments that assailed their bodies.

Many of the plants the Indians used in attempts to cure diseases were, of course, without avail, as is true of many of the remedies we buy in drug stores today. But, through a long and costly process of trial and error, others had

been found to be of value. When the Europeans came, this knowledge was transmitted to them, with the result that the valuable plants quickly came to be very scarce. Goldenseal is one of these.

Goldenseal is a member of the crowfoot family and has the Latin name *Hydrastis canadensis*. It is interesting to note that only one other species of *Hydrastis* is known to exist and it (*Hydrastis jeżoensis*) is half-way around the world, in the forests of Japan.

Goldenseal is found in the rich soil of deep woods, and in moist places at the edge of wooded lands, flowering from April to May, fruiting in July. It was found originally from Vermont west to Minnesota and eastern Nebraska, south to Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, and eastern Kansas. It was most abundant, however, in the Appalachians, where it has probably been growing since Mesozoic times, when dinosaurs roamed the forests and Indians were still millions of years in the future.

Nothing about the general appearance of the plant would have attracted the attention of the Indians. It is certainly nondescript in character; the plant is low, 6 to 10 inches high, hidden by other forest herbs; the flowers are inconspicuous, lacking petals entirely, and with only three tiny, pinkish, early-falling sepals. The greenish-white stamens and pistils essentially constitute the flower, and it is not very noticeable. The fruit, unexpectedly, develops to resemble an enlarged red raspberry.

Perhaps it was the thick knotted rootstock, with its bright yellow interior, that attracted the notice of the Indians. The color was pleasing to their eyes, and the root became the source of a yellow dye for their clothing and their implements of warfare.

A rootstock so handsome in color must certainly possess other virtues. Some of these, through experimentation, the Indians discovered: they used it as a general tonic, a stomach remedy, as an application to ulcerations. It even served as an insect repellent.

The fresh rootstocks, gathered in autumn, were chopped and pounded to a pulp, then perhaps boiled in water and the resulting liquid applied as a wash for skin diseases or sore eyes, or as a gargle for inflammation of the mucous membrane of the throat. For use an an insect repellent the Cherokees pounded the rootstocks with bear fat and smeared it on their bodies. The pioneers chewed the rootstocks to heal a sore mouth.

The results secured from the various uses were in general so satisfactory that the plant was highly valued by the aborigines, and also by the early settlers. The rootstocks were included for many years in the U.S. Pharmacopoeia and commanded a high price, probably second only to ginseng. In 1909, for example, when most crude plant drugs were selling for five cents or less a pound, goldenseal was bringing $1.50 a pound. It is no wonder that in many places it became completely extinct and in most places quite rare. Most of the drug is now secured from plants grown in cultivation. Production amounts to seven or eight tons of rootstocks annually. The wholesale price of the powdered root, in 1975, is about $50.00 a pound.

Its use in so many different ways could be explained by the fact that the rootstocks contain at least three alkaloids, hydrastine, canadine, and herberine. It is valuable as an astringent and thus helps in the treatment of ulcers and sore eyes. Whether the drug is really useful as a tonic or in treatment of stomach disorders is not known; perhaps it is only psychological, as is certainly true of many pharmaceutical preparations today.

A tincture, in alcohol, as prepared today, has a reddish-orange color, staining everything with which it comes in contact a deep yellow. It has a persistent bitter, then burning taste, no distinguishable odor, and a slightly acid reaction.

Many other common English names have been used, such as golden-root, orange-root, yellow-root, yellow puccoon, eye-balm, ground raspberry, Indian turmeric, Indian paint, and Indian dye.

Current: PROGRAMS • FESTIVALS • PUBLICATIONS

STATE FOLKLORE SOCIETY PREPARES NEXT JOURNAL

The West Virginia Folklore Society was reactivated in February of 1974, and at the same time plans were made to revive the West Virginia Folklore Journal, its official publication. In the new series an issue of the biannual journal, edited by Dr. Patrick W. Gainer, also the society's president, was completed late last year. Another is due within a few weeks. The society's other officers, who are charged by the charter "to collect, preserve, and make known the folklore of West Virginia," are Ms. Margaret Pantalone, first vice-president and consulting editor; Dr. Byron Jackson, second vice-president; Ms. Catherine Faris, secretary; and Ms. Judy Prozzillo, treasurer.

Five types of memberships, each bringing a Journal subscription, are available as follows, institutional, $5.00; adult, $3.00; student (high school, college, graduate) $2.00; patron, $25.00; and lifetime, $100.00. Checks are made payable to West Virginia Folklore Society and sent to Box 446, Fairmont, W. Va. 26554.

Dr. Gainer, Professor Emeritus of English at W. Va. University, traces the society's lineage to Francis James Child, who collected and published from 1882 to 1898 The English and Scottish Popular Ballads. Dr. John Harrington Cox, a professor at W. Va. University and founder of the society in 1915, studied under George Lyman Kittredge, the Harvard University scholar who re-edited Child's work in 1904. Later Gainer, then an undergraduate, studied under Cox.

Making older style wooden pitchforks at Fort New Salem during 1974 festival.

SALEM FESTIVAL GROWS

The fifth annual Heritage Arts Festival at Salem College will feature 80 craftspeople who for the first time will be selected by a jury of College faculty members. Much more folk music than before will be offered, and an original historical drama, "Rhododendron Flower," will be presented. Festival dates are April 25 through 27. Both Fort New Salem, the college's replica pioneer log village, and the entire campus are to be the setting for this expanded weekend event. Although there is no gate admission, certain key events will require $1.00 tickets; or $5.00 weekend tickets good for ten events may be purchased.

Some of the musicians on the folk music programs will be Glen Smith, champion fiddler, and his son Delano; Russell Fluharty, "The (hammered) Dulcimer Man;" Charles Maxon, plucked dulcimer player; Paul Crane, banjo player; and Jim Henderson on bagpipes. Friday and Saturday (25th and 26th) nights at 7:30 they will play in concerts, and on Saturday at 3:00 p.m. there

will be a jazz concert. Musicians in the area playing traditional music are urged to come, register, and play any time all day Saturday on an "open stage." On Sunday afternoon at 1:30 there will be a gospel and spiritual music program and at 4:00 at the Armory a concert of choral and orchestral music. Other special activities during the festival are to be The Country Store and shows of Quilts and Fancy Work, Children's Art, and College Art.

WINDFALL, NEW FOLKLORE MAGAZINE, DUE IN MAY

The name of a new student publication from Parkersburg High School due late in May is to be Windfall. Modeled after the Rabun Gap, Georgia, folklore magazine Foxfire, it is being produced by 22 students under the direction of art teacher Kenneth Gilbert. His class is a humanities elective in the art department, and 12 of the students will return next fall to join around 30 others who will together comprise two courses and work on four issues for the 1975-76 school year. Windfall will be concerned with traditional lore from Wood County and several surrounding ones.

Funded only by the high school and a $1,000 grant from the Parkersburg Community Foundation, the project, Mr. Gilbert reports, is actively seeking additional funding. Their equipment so far is decidedly inadequate, he says, for the needs of the dedicated documentarians. Their first 100-page issue of Windfall will be available around June 1 and may be ordered by sending $2.00 to Parkersburg High School, 2101 Dudley Ave., Parkersburg, W. Va. 26101.

Sherman Hammons from Marlinton at the Pocahontas County Festival in 1974.

MID-MAY FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL IN POCAHONTAS

The Pocahontas County Mountain Music and Bluegrass Festival will be held at an earlier date this year, May 16 through 18. To be in Huntersville, W. Va., on Old Bridge Road by Peg's Place, the festival welcomes all mountain and bluegrass musicians as well as people who have arts and crafts to sell. Concerts will be on Friday night (16th) at 8:00, Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and again at 8:00, and on Sunday at 10:00 and 1:00. Reasonably priced camping and food are to be available, and admission is $2.00 per day or $5.00 for the three days. There is no charge for children under 12. More information is available by writing Miss B.J. Sharp, 814 Second Ave., Marlinton, W. Va. 24954 or by phoning 304-799-6302.

GLENVILLE FOLK ACTIVITIES WILL OVERLAP

Between June 16 and 20 Glenville State College for the second year will offer an Appalachain Folk Culture course in conjunction with the West Virginia State Folk Festival. The dates of the festival are June 19 through 22. Among the instructors in the

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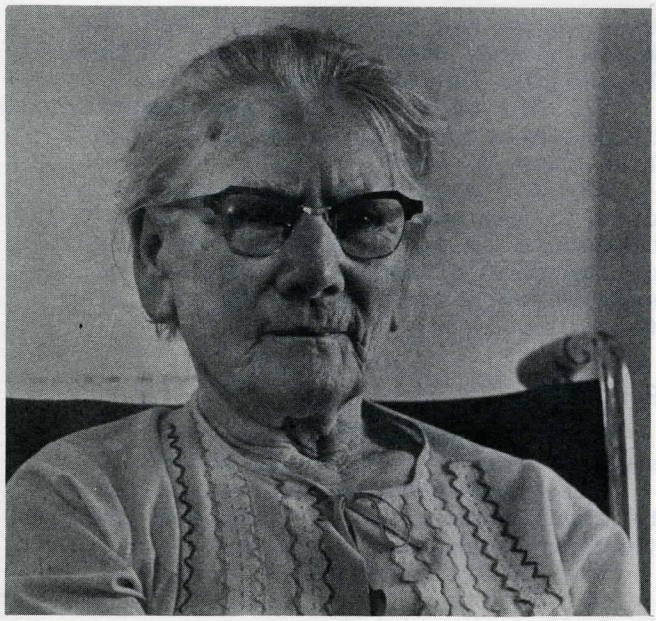

Central West Virginia Farm Life Between 1893 and 1970

Interview with Mrs. Anna Hopkins

by Mildred Kroeger

Mrs. Hopkins at her home in Ripley in February 1975. Photograph by Tom Screven.

Anna Casto Hopkins is a native of Jackson County, W. Va., and now lives in Ripley. Mrs. Hopkins was born on September 26, 1893, at Belgrove. She is the daughter of Joel and Polly Casto as were six brothers and sisters who shared the log house where they were all born and raised.

When she was twenty years old she married Robert Hopkins. They had three sons and one daughter. During their married life they lived about five miles from Harmony, W. Va., near Beech Fork. Their livelihood was made primarily from the farm, although Mr. Hopkins worked in the oil fields at times.

He passed away in 1965, and Mrs. Hopkins stayed on the farm for a time, until she fell and broke her hip. Afterwards she stayed with some relatives near her farm. About four years later she sustained another fall and has since been confined to her home. Her sister, Mrs. Brady (Ava) Munday, is also a widow and moved from Parkersburg to stay with her.

The following interview was taped in two sessons on March 23 and 25, 1973, by Mildred Kroeger, a younger native of Mrs. Hopkins' area of Jackson County. Ms. Kroeger's taping and transcription were part of the Appalachian Culture course she took at Marshall University. The tape is reposited in the archives of the James E. Morrow Library at Marshall. Exerpts of the transcript were made by the editor.

Christmas Customs

AH: Christmas Eve we'd hang our stockings in front of the fireplace and we felt sure that Santa Claus would come down the chimney and bring us some toys. And he usually did, bring us some little things, not like they do today though. Today they expect so many grand toys, but we just got some little--oh, maybe a dish (china) doll or some candy and things like that.

MK: What is a dish doll?

AH: Well it was--the body was cloth filled with sawdust with little legs from the knee down dish and little arms and hands from the elbow down made out of dish and a dish head. That was the type of doll we had when I was a little girl; that was all the kind we got. They didn't even have the dolls that was made out of--that had wax hair, you know. We had them later, but now this was when I was a little girl. We had to be real easy with them, or we would

break their legs off or their hands, but we was really proud of them.

MK: And did your mother make them or what? Did they buy the parts?

AH: No, they would buy them at the store; but, of course, we thought that Santa Claus had them.

MK: But what about this tradition that we called Santa Clausing out in the country?

AH: Well, people would dress up, you know, with their false faces on and go Santa Clausing. We called it Santa Clausing. They would go to people's houses where they had little children, you know, and they would take them candy, and they never took toys, they just took candy then, you know. But now on Christmas Eve when we'd hang our stockings up was when we'd get our toys. But they would bring us candy and sometimes a little chewing gum, apples, or something like that. And it used to be nearly always a white Christmas, not like it is now. We always had snow nearly for Christmas.

After I was married and had my family little, there would still be Santa Clauses come every year nearly. They'd come for miles, a whole big bunch of them. Of course, they didn't bring us no candy or nothing.

We've had Santas at our house clear from Lower Big Run, up there at home--Santa Clauses with their false faces on and old clothes try to make it look like Santa Claus.

I went Santa Clausing with the (my) children a lot of times. I went with them and it was really funny. We had a good time fooling people, you know, and trying to guess who we were and everything like that. It was different from today.

Doctors

MK: What about doctoring do you remember? Did you go to the doctor very often?

AH: Not often. All the doctors we had would come from their home to our home. We never had no hospitals close and didn't even think of going to the hospital for every thing like they do now. Doctors would ride all night to see a sick person. They would go day or night. There is more difference there than anything I can think of. You can't hardly get an appointment, but, now, a doctor would ride all night long to come. A lot of times you had to go after them, you know, for a long time they didn't even have no telephones or nothing like that. You'd have to go and get a doctor, but they would always come if they was at home. They never failed to come.

MK: Did they give you any immunizations or shots before you started to school like they do now?

AH: Not when I went to school, they didn't, not any. Didn't even hear tell of such a thing, and we all drunk out of the same drinking cup and out of the same water bucket and everything like that.

Schooling

MK: What about where you went to school, was it a one-room school?

AH: A one-room school and there would be about from 60 to 70 scholars and one teacher taught all of them.

MK: In all grades?

AH: From the first grade to the eighth, including the eighth.

MK: Did you go down to White Pine?

AH: Yes, White Pine School. It was crowded, but we didn't know the difference.

MK: Did they actually teach you every minute, or did you sort of teach yourself?

AH: Well, now, I think they did more teaching then than they do now. I really do. They taught all of them. From the ABC's and through the eighth grade. They was busy, but, now, they all tried to learn, seemed like and did. We knew when it was time to get quiet. Of course, we had a 15 minute recess between eight o'clock--no 8:30--and 12:00, and then we had an hour at noon. We played baseball--and played ball. In the wintertime we would skate on ice. Everyone that was big enough to go to school could skate on ice.

MK: What about your books? Did you have a lot of books and paper? Was it provided by the school?

AH: No, we used slates and slate pencils mostly for our school work.

MK: Did you erase it each time?

AH: Yes, erase it each time, and a lot of work done on the blackboard with chalk. And we all bought our own books.

MK: Bet you took care of them too.

AH: Yes we did, then passed them on down to the next one younger than us. That's the way we did. And I still got part of my old books yet; and, oh, about--I expect it has been about 18 years ago--I bought McGuffey's Readers, you know. I bought the whole outfit up to the seventh. I didn't get the eighth, I don't think. I'm proud of them books. Every lesson in them books had a moral

seemed like, you know. There was always a good side to everything in them books. There wasn't books like they got later; they seem kind of dull to me. They didn't have no moral to the lessons like them old readers.

They used to have literaries in schools, you know, a long time ago and they would take up a subject and one would argue one way and one another, you know, and that was pretty interesting.

MK: I think that is what we call debate, but I never heard it called literary.

AH: And then, you know, now, we used to have spelling bees and different schools would meet and see who could outspell the others and who could spell the longest and things like that--and have arithmetic races.

MK: If the teacher ever had to punish you, how did they do it?

AH: Most of the time they used a little switch, and sometimes they would tie a scarf or something around you and tie you to something there in the schoolhouse, a post or something.

MK: I bet that would settle you down for a while, wouldn't it?

AH: Yes, and put them in the corner sometimes.

MK: Did you ever have to do that?

AH: No, but now, there was a post went up on each side of the stove, and they would put a scarf around them and tie them to that sometimes.

MK: I never heard of them doing that. I didn't know they did anything like that.

AH: Well, they did. Or make them sit in the corner, the dunce corner.

The Farm and Household

MK: How did you make your living on the farm in those days?

AH: We raised mostly all but our sugar and soda and coffee and stuff like that. We raised our living mostly. We had our meat and our milk and our butter and our chickens and our eggs and our hog's meat. We was never hardly ever out of anything like that, and we raised our own corn and wheat for corn bread and biscuits, and flour. Instead of buying beans and potatoes and everything like that, we raised all that, always on the farm.

We nearly always raised cane and had molasses and our fruit. We nearly always had fruit, you know; we hardly ever had to buy anything like that. Never bought a can of tomatoes, nor peaches, nor a glass of jelly or apple butter or anything like that. Never bought a jar of that in my life when I lived on a farm.

MK: How about canning, you did that all on your own, right?

AH: Canning? Yes, I always done my own canning, every bit of it.

MK: Did you ever use those stone jars to keep anything in?

AH: I don't think I ever canned any in stone jars, but my mother used to. That was the only kind she ever had, but now, I don't remember ever canning in stone jars. We would use, instead--my mother dried a lot of stuff instead of canning it. She would dry beans and corn and all kinds of things like that, where we canned it when I got old enough to be raising my family.

MK: What about your washing?

AH: I never had a washer until after my family grew up. We always washed on a board and made most of our soap that I washed with. Make enough soap every spring to do until the next spring.

MK: How did you make your soap?

AH: Well, I would take the meat scraps and extra grease, and we would save that all winter until spring, and then we would just get us some lye and put all the grease in it that lye would eat up and boil it so long. We could tell when it got into soap and let it set until it got cool and we would take a big butcher knife and cut in that big kettle cross ways, this way and that way, and lift it out and put it on papers on the table in the building and let it dry, and then I would just sack it up and get it out as I used it. And it was good soap.

Grandma used to make it with ashes, they called it ash hopper, you know, and fill it up with ashes and pour water in and let it run out a little spout, you know, and that is the kind of lye she had. But now I never did it that way; I had lye in the can.

MK: Did you ever live in a log cabin or anything like that?

AH: Well, I was raised in a log house with great big logs, some of them I expect nearly two feet wide, notched and put up that way. Grandpa took a broad ax and hewed them down. I like a log house.

MK: Did you have a dirt floor or did you have the other kind of floor in it?

AH: No, we had--a lot of people had dirt floors, but my dad didn't, he had a floor and sealed on the inside with lumber and paper.

MK: Was it all just one big room, or what?

AH: For a while it was just one big room, and then they made bedrooms and a kitchen off and a porch and rooms between the living room and the kitchen. You had

to go across the front porch to get to the kitchen. It was log, too, and it was just one room, and it was pretty good sized, though.

Well, when I was a little girl going to school in the fall of the year, you know, instead of bringing their cattle to cattle sales like Ripley and Spencer and different places, you know, somebody would come around there and buy up all the cattle they had to sell and then they would take them out and just drive them. And we have set--the teacher when they would be passing our school--the teacher would take us out and let us--sometimes they would be an hour in passing the schoolhouse in droves of cattle.

MK: Well, I'll be, I never knew that.

AH: I'll never forget that, we always got out and the teacher would always go out with us and we would sit up on the bank and watch the cattle pass. And they used to buy turkeys, you know, somebody would buy turkeys and drive them to market.

MK: You mean you can drive turkeys?

AH: You can drive turkeys, and now that was real, for they have roosted them a time or two up home. Robert used to buy the turkeys that way, you know. Hundreds and hundreds of them and it gets so late you have to let them to go roost, you know, they won't go any further.

Pasttimes

MK: How did you pass the time when you were a kid if you didn't have a TV or radio or anything?

AH: Well, I have wondered, but it seems to me that the children were a lot better satisfied then than they are today.

MK: What did you do, just make up your own games?

AH: Yeah, make up our own games and meet at a certain place on Sunday and play games of all kinds, and tell tales, popped popcorn, cracked hickory nuts, had taffy pulls,and things like that. We always had molasses to make popcorn balls and make taffy.

MK: One of the customs out in the country was serenading. Do you want to tell me what it was like and what it was all about?

AH: Well, let me see now. Well, a whole crowd would come in the first night after you was married with cow bells and cans and serenade the newlyweds. And the more noise you made, the better it suited them. The newlyweds would come to the door and kiss and then they would quiet down, but sometimes they would let them make an awful lot of noise before they would come to the door and kiss.

MK: They usually had to treat you before you would go home,didn't they? Some candy or something?

AH: Yes, most of the time, had candy and cookies. Most of the time candy, you know, and cigars and things like that. That was about all there was to that; it was for me.

MK; What did the young people do at the the serenade? Did they play games?

AH: Yes, they did. They played games after the serenade for an hour or two. Most of the time outside if it was pretty or inside I reckon if it wasn't, but, now, they did play games. Now, at my serenade, they didn't play games. They just talked for a while. But now they do play games; I know they did when Jeanie and Arnold was married.

MK: Did they ever have showers for girls out in the country when they got married like they do here in town?

AH: No, they didn't ever. We never even thought of such things. Never had any shower until just the last several years they have had them, but they didn't used to. Or baby showers either.

MK: Probably the neighbors just handed their stuff around to one another--hand-me-downs.

AH: Yeah, they did more then than when they had the real showers. When somebody had out-growed their clothes they would give them to the new baby. They did that, but no showers.

The Funeral

MK: Out in the country when anybody passed away, how did they usually take care of it?

AH: It was taken care of in the home. They kept them in the home. For a few years before they got to taking them to the undertakers they would come to your home,and then they got so that they always come and got them and took them to the undertakers; but they didn't used to do that.

MK: And the people in the family would take care of them?

AH: No, the neighbors. Friends would stay through the night and the corpse was set up, and sometimes they would sing good religious songs, and sometimes they would just sit and talk, but it was not like it is now. But, now, so far in all my family the friends dug the grave. I don't know how long that will go on though, because people is a-changing all the time.

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What is Old-time String Band Music?

by Nowell Creadick

Mr. Creadick adapted this article from one that appeared in "The Devil's Box," (June 1, 1973, No. XXI), a quarterly newsletter of the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers' Association, Route 11, 16 Bond Street, Clarksville, Tenn. 37040.

I had an interesting experience this fall at the fiddler's contest portion of the Mountain State Forest Festival here in Elkins, West Virginia. I asked the lady at the contestants' registration window if they had separate categories for old-time and bluegrass banjo. She didn't know what I was talking about and referred me to the director of the contest. He didn't know what I was talking about. Someone in "authority" then said, "Well, they've *all* been playing old-time banjo!" I was excited and entered. They were *all* playing bluegrass banjo! I was the only old-time banjo player in the contest.

I hope this is not a common experience. The solution in this case was simple. I offered my help for next year's contest and they readily accepted. People in these situations usually realize their problems and are quite willing to accept help. This is a first and essential step to the title question; do all one can to insure that contests recognize and *promote the fact that they recognize* the difference in these two musical styles.

The question is, of course, much more involved than the above problem and its simple solution. I think everyone can agree on a couple of points: (1) old-time--played on fiddle, banjo, and guitar--and bluegrass--played on those three, mandolin, and string bass--are different, (2) there are striking and not-so-striking regional differences in old-time music. Let me suggest that the regions be allowed to call their particular styles old-time without argument from other regions. That is, the Canadian, New England, Southern Mountain, Western, and Cajun styles all have their roots in pre-industrial North American history and deserve the fullest efforts toward their preservation.

Now let me discuss point one a bit further. Some problems arise in the separation of old-time and bluegrass music. The banjo is a fairly clear-cut case of pick-less clawhammer versus some form of up-picking bluegrass playing. I would include Charlie Poole-type players (two-finger, up-picking) in the old-time category. Also, some clawhammer players (such as Kyle Creed) use one specially designed finger pick, and this shouId be allowed. The point is to allow for individuality--make the judges adapt--don't force the musicians to change!

The heart of the problem, what is old-time music, lies, I think, in the fiddling. Again, I hope we can agree on a premise that an "old" tune played in a "modern" style is not old-time

music. That of course leads to: what is an "old" tune, and what is a "modern" style? I suggest a simple criterion for "old" tunes, that they must have been composed and played before World War II. I think this is a good gauge for several reasons. (1) In the broadest sense, World War II and its aftermath marked a tremendous change in American culture. The nation was fully "industralized" after this time, and people who played string band music in their homes, on the perennial porches, and at community gatherings and dances had truly disappeared. With the tremendous economic and social changes generated by the war, people began a widespread change towards "consuming" their entertainment rather than producing it. Country and Western music was packaged, advertised, and sold like a can of beans. (2) I would guess that 99% of bluegrass "arrangements were composed after this period, therefore, this cut-off point helps to solve the bluegrass/old-time problem. (3) The commercial recordings of the '20s and '30s were fairly firmly based on the folklife of the people who bought the records. I think that that music reflects, then, the music period we're interested in preserving.

At this point it seems I must try to discuss, a bit more succinctly, some of the foundations of my thoughts on old-time music. I'm mainly talking about fiddle tunes and the people who have preserved them over the past couple of centuries in this country and, secondarily, Canada. The tunes were, for the most part, passed from fiddler to fiddler, not by written music. Many are ultimately from Western Europe, but many were composed during the first 200 years of this nation's life. These tunes are beautiful to hear, and reflect something that I think is the heart of the and *the answer to* the whole question regarding old-time music, that these tunes and the style in which they were played reflect a *style of life*. That life-style was non-commercial, non-"performance oriented;" and the music helped preserve the strong sense of family, friendships, and community of that time period. I think that way of life is a very large part of what we are trying to preserve.

Now to the more thorny problem of what is the old-time style. First, I would repeat that regional differences are natural and should be encouraged and promoted rather than discouraged. Not being from the "Western" fiddlers' section, I can only speak to their problem from records and tapes I've heard. It seems as if their fiddling has become very contest oriented and "clean" to the point of sterility. This, of course, should be discouraged by some alteration in the judging system.

In our section, the Southern Mountains, the problem is perhaps even more difficult, the separation of old-time and bluegrass fiddling. I believe there is a clear-cut difference in most cases, say, the difference between Tommy Jarrell and Kenny Baker. The problems arise at the margin, and again, I think, there is a deeper meaning involved. This meaning can be explained by a hypothetical question put to the two above mentioned fiddlers: "Where did you get that tune?" Tommy: "I learned it from my father." Kenny: "Oh, it's just something *I* put together from hearing it around. *I* sort of fixed it up a bit." There, I think is the difference; and in keeping with my point about preservation of a life style, I think it is Tommy Jarrell's music style that we must try to preserve. In his answer, he shows a connection with and a consciousness of his past, family and community. Kenny Baker is more performance and, therefore, more "I" oriented.

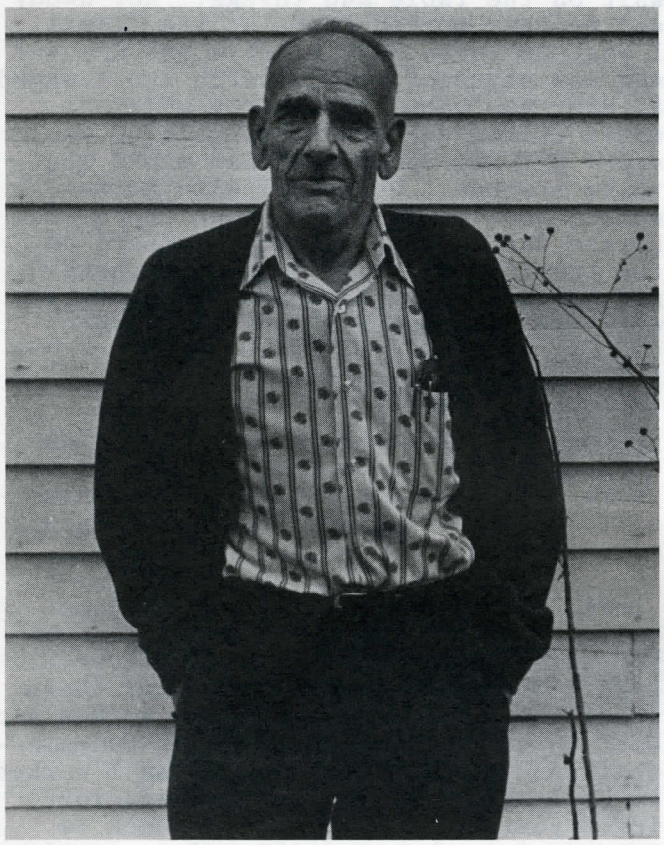
The common argument at this point is, "What will be left for artistic expression and interpretation?" In bluegrass it usually means bluesy-jazzy variations of the tune. My answer to the "interpreters" is that there *are* traditional variations, but they are usually of a very subtle nature. Old-time music is, I think, characterized by the development of the *spirit* of the tune rather than attempts at clever melodic variations. Perhaps certain tunes lend themselves to more non-traditional playing than others. I have in mind the "standards," such as "Soldier's Joy" or "Arkansas Traveler," which seem suitable for more individual interpretation than other less commonly known tunes. We should try to maintain the style and character of this class of old-time music, for example, Tommy Jarrell's version of"Sally Ann"should be played as he plays it and the origin attributed to him.

I have left folk songs out of this discussion since I am not well prepared in their origin and development. I hope others will try to develop some fruitful discussion in this category. Finally, I think that this whole question of "what is old-time music" is a Pandora's Box, and that my contribution is simply that, my contribution. I look forward to seeing other views on this debatable topic in *Goldenseal*.

John B. Wright

Retired Coal Miner and Self-taught Artist

by Tom Screven



Wright in Huntington in January 1975. (Photograph by Tom Screven.)

This article comes about as the result of Mr. John Wright's remembrances he allowed me to tape in several conversations from late December, 1974, through February, 1975. Meeting him last December was a sizable event, for it ended my off and on search for him over the two years after I first saw Gerald Ratliff's remarkable 1968 photographs (pages 17-23). In trying to locate Mr. Wright,my first disappointment came early in 1972 when I drove into Crum, saw his abandoned shop, found out he had moved, and was unable to learn of his whereabouts.

John Berry Wright was born on July 24, 1902, on a farm near Jacksboro, Tennessee. After he migrated from that Cumberland Mountain community to Logan County, W. Va., in 1924, he became deeply involved in at least three activities that have been practiced by many West Virginians in this century.

He was a coal miner for about thirty years and organized miners for union membership around 1930; influenced by his wife's family, he became an avid ginseng digger for many years; and on retirement he has turned childhood talents into a second career as an artist.

Boyhood in Tennessee

Mr. Wright's father Samuel was a railroad man, millwright, and farmer. The fourteen Wright children went to a one-room school about four miles away from their two-story log home. Getting to the Oak Grove School was not an easy task, and John Wright's formal schooling ended after a few years.

He now considers his whittling as a small boy just an idle pasttime.

JW: I done a lot of whittling. I make walking canes and things like that. Buddy, I could whittle when I was little. When I was nine, ten-years old, I could whittle almost as good as I can now. But, you know, I didn't put it to no use--just whittled.

Wright grew up around a small home mining operation which could have influenced his choice later to become a coal miner. His family's "pick and shovel mine" became active every fall as far back as he can remember. With breast augers the men would "go and dig it out and deliver it with horses and wagons." Occasionally the family sold coal to neighbors "if fellows wanted to buy it to keep from digging it."

Not long before he stopped going to school he began what he feels was a more important creative project than whittling. He carved a ship in a rock near his home. Both the farm and the carved rock were flooded by the Tennessee Valley Authority's Norris Dam project in the mid-1930s

JW: I never done but one art work in my (early) life and done it with a hammer and chisel on a rock there at the dam. Put that ship on that rock.

I done that before they ever put the dam in there. That was way back when I was young. See, my daddy was a millwright. He did work with them old tools

that you use to cut the stone burrs used to grind meal on. And I'd just get something in my head, buddy, and I'd just get over on a cliff or somewhere and just go to pecking on it. And, boy, I made the prettiest ship ever you saw, buddy, on that thing.

TS: About how old were you?

JW: Oh, I was about eleven-years old, why, just going to school, and I'd come in in the evening and I'd get my work done. Buddy, I'd head for that rock cliff to get that done.

TS: How long did it take you?

JW: Oh, I was two years, I guess, a-doing it or more.

TS: What kind of tools did you use?

JW: With them there hand picks. I'd just make me a line how I wanted to do it and just start pecking and get it right out of there.

In 1917, only a few years later, the United States declared war on Germany, and Wright managed to get himself in the Navy.

JW: I went in in 1917.

TS: You were only 15?

JW: Yeah, but I lied a little bit, you know, to get in. Slipped off, and I got my uncle and them to vouch for me, you know, to get in.

TS: Where did you go in the Navy?

JW: I went to Hampton Roads, Virginia, and then I was transferred out of there on the U.S.S. New York, that big ship, but I got hurt and didn't get to take my round. Got mashed up with some boxes and things, loading on the ship. And I didn't get to make the round and I got a medical discharge. They sent me back to Coal Creek, Tennessee.

The Move to West Virginia

Wright's adventure in the Navy returned him to the Cumberland Mountains a man prematurely. A permanent job was hard to find, so in 1924 he migrated to West Virginia.

JW: Well, I was just ginning around, first one job to the other. Me and my brother-in-law, Otto Lovely--he's dead now--we took a notion one day we'd come in to West Virginia to find some work.

TS: Was the word out that it was a good place to get work?

JW: Yeah, yeah, they was coming from here down there after people, you know, to come out here and work. But we didn't know that at the time, but we come anyway.

His first job was at a mine in Omar (Logan County) loading coal. His wife-to-be, Ida Maynard, a Wayne County woman, had come over to work in a job related to the area's other flourishing industry, timbering. Wright warmly recalled their meeting and referred to her as if she were still alive, although Mrs. Wright died in 1971.

JW: I believe it was Thanksgiving evening at Omar, and she was staying with her first cousin cooking for the log men, you know, that worked. She was helping wait on the table and things. Her daddy and brother worked there at the sawmill. I went up there on the train one day and she was standing on the porch and I waved at her, you know, like a boy will. I waved at her and she waved back at me, and I got off up at the next place the thing stopped. Pulled it with horses, pulled them trains up through there with horses and hauled logs out of there on the tram. And I came back down there and got to fooling around. Made a hitch with her, and been with her ever since.

Life of the Miner

The Wrights lived in many coal mine communities in Logan and Boone Counties, as Mr. Wright's account revealed. Also he told of his regular promotions into more skilled jobs.

JW: I worked on Coal River at Braeholm. I worked at the Whitesville Coal Company. I worked at Big Coal River, then I worked at Stowe. I worked there three years and then come back to Man and went up to Lorado. I worked at Lundale--that was the same company. Then I worked at Crites for Crites Coal Company for three years. And then I come back to Holden; I loaded coal there for, oh, I guess six months, then went back on bonded track and electric work, and then I really stuck at 22 Holden over there. That's where I done my last work, on 22 Holden.

Recalling the harsh conditions in the mines early in his career, he again talked of his job progression.

JW: Oh, man, I waded water in the coal mines. You'd put your shovel under coal and start to load it up and you'd just load water. You had to be awful good to load coal. I've loaded coal in places like that. And I've loaded where they had a big chain out the tipple, and if that chain didn't drag that coal they'd

dock you a half a car--and you just getting 25 and 30 cents a ton for it. It wasn't much, and them cars wouldn't hold over two tons. Then I worked up to bonding track, and then I went to breaking on the motor and making $2.80 a day. Buddy, I thought I was making money then. I went from that up to hanging wire in the mines, and went from that to electrician. I was on electrician's job when I was cut out of the mines.

During the years around 1930 Wright did his share of union organizing. He still comes across as a strong union man. After one conversation about the union's struggle he stated, "I wouldn't be getting my money now if it hadn't been for all that."

The guards hired by coal operators to keep the peace had often been deputized by Sheriff Don Chafin in Logan County. They were far from sympathetic to union men.

JW: Oh, I've laid awake a-many a night and studied how to do that, and I organized fellows right there at the Y.M.C.A. at Omar. And then those tin-bills, I call them--thugs and whatever you call it--was a-working the post, you know, with them guns and was guarding and everything, trying to keep them out. *Militia* was what it was. I'd organize them fellows and get a gang of them together and get to talking to them. I've talked them into joining....

He is not entirely easy talking about the worst of the strife that came from organizing, but he tells fragments of stories about the people he knew, Chafin, Tennis Hatfield, and Nim(rod) Workman.

JW: See, we was a-fighting for our rights and they didn't want it, you see. They was a-working them colored people up there just like slaves, you know; and a white man, he just had to take what he could get, or whatever he could work at, why, that's what he got. If they wanted to give him a quarter, why, that's all he got. And we come out for the raise, and we got it. But we had a time of it.

Four of the Wright's nine children were born during the Depression when the nation's economic troubles hit miners hard.

JW: There was times we didn't get to do nothing, work a day and a half a week and go to the store--they'd allow you a dollar a day, that's all they'd allow you, a dollar a day for something to eat, and, buddy, you know that didn't go nowhere for five or six in a family. You just had to make it the best you could. Of course I'd do little jobs for fellows and made a little on the side.

Wright Remembers Ginseng

TS: Did you ever dig ginseng?

JW: Oh, man, that's the prettiest weed you ever did think in the world, buddy, when it's yellow or green either one. Yeah, I've ginsenged many a time in my life. One winter we ginsenged in two hollows; we dug $384.00 worth of sang out of it that one year. I found a big bunch of sang once. Her (Mrs. Wright) and my sister-in-law, we was a-ginsenging in a big hollow back there and I went up on the knob and I seen a bunch of stuff just as red as it could be. Looked like these big old saw briar berries, you know how red they turn. But these were big wads as big as your fist sticking up there, buddy. I kept looking at that, and I started to go back off of the hill and I said, "Well, I'm a-going up there and look at that anyhow. It may be old ginse...he-seng (male plant), you know."

TS: He-seng? What's...?

JW: That's just like sang, but it ain't got no berries. You can't sell it. But it's got a different leaf; it's got a round leaf on it more than ginseng has. I went up there and, boy, sure enough there stood them big four-prongs--big seeds a-hanging there, buddy, just as red as blood. Well, they was over on the other side of the hill from me, and hollered to them. I said, "Well, girls," I said, "I've found it." I said, "This is the old he-seng, the daddy of them all." I said, "This is the stomping ground." I said, "I found it all."

And they come over there to dig that sang. I think I got 59 five-prongs and 48 four-prongs out of that bunch of sang. That was one day's sanging, buddy, that I was happy a-doing.

TS: How many years did you do that?

JW: Oh, off and on. We'd every fall of the year, late in the year, we'd go ginsenging when we was able.

TS: What about in Tennessee before

continued

you came up to West Virginia?

JW: No, I never did do nothing but swim and....

TS: Do you remember when you first knew about ginseng?

JW: Oh, yeah. My father-in-law, mother-in-law, I heard them talking about ginsenging, you know, and I'd say, "I'm a-going to go a-ginsenging." And they'd go with me. Effie--that's my sister-in-law, she was full of meanness--she'd try to get things on me. She'd say, "John, I smell a four-prong." She said she could smell it, you know. (Laughs) And I'd go to looking, and I'd go all around that thing, buddy. She wouldn't dig it, she wouldn't tell me where it was at, but she'd done saw the four-prong, you know. She could see it as far as you can see. And I got to watching that stuff and I got to looking at it and I said, "If you fellows can find it, I can." Well, I went to hunting, brother, and I come up with them a-ginsenging; I learned it pretty quick. But it's a hard weed to hunt. There's so many things that looks like it.

TS: What about selling it? Was it...?

JW: No, it wasn't no job selling it. Anybody'd buy it. There were fellows would come around and buy it. You could send it off and you'd get more out of it, but they'd cut you down on a whole lot of it, you know. You could make more selling to the fellows that buy it around folks than you could to send it off.

TS: How did you dry the root?

JW: Well, you'd either dry it in the sun, or you could bake it in the stove. When the cook stove started cooling down you could put it in the oven, you know, and just let it cool off in that heat. It'd dry out....

TS: Did you ever hang it on a string?

JW: Yeah, strung it up--looked like stringing beans, buddy, just like you have a big bean stringing. Yeah, dried it every way, buddy, in the sun, on top of the house and porches.

TS: I've heard of people putting the berries back in the ground after they dug it. Did you all do that?

JW: Yeah, you can do that, but if they dry up, though, they won't come up, if you let them dry up. You got to plant them while they're moist. Yeah, they'd plant them seeds back. I never did bring them in; I always planted them right back where I dug; I'd just cover them up. But you can plant them; you could have a ginseng patch--*acre* if you wanted it.

TS: Did you ever know anybody who grew it at home?

JW: Yeah, my father-in-law and her (Mrs. Wright's) mother, they had patches of sang. They had three-prong, two-prong around those bees--where they had their bee hives, you know. They'd have that set full to keep fellows from coming in and digging it, you know. (Laughs)

(Around 1945) Yeah, me and my mother-in-law and daddy (in-law) went up a big hollow and it was the awfulest snakiest place that ever was. And this old woman, she went with us. Poor old thing, she wore these here--she made her own clothes, you know, wove them on them looms. And she wore big dresses that dragged the ground, you know. She had on a striped skirt and a blue blouse, and we was ginsening over a hill, and I heard that rattlesnake. I heard him start, just singing, just as quick as I come up over the hill. And I seen her, she was standing on the log (laughs) and she heard it, but she couldn't tell where it was at. I come on down until it got a little louder, till I could hear it. My mother-in-law was up on the hill from me and she said, "John," said "you better not go too close to that." Said, "You don't know where it's at." Said, "There may be a den of them things there." And that old woman, she jumped off of that log (Laughs) and a limb caught on her dress, you know, and she thought that snake had struck at her, you know. Right down that mountain, buddy--a race horse couldn't catch that old woman. Buddy, right down that mountain--there was a big bush a-hold of her dress, and she thought it was that snake had struck her, you know, and was a-holding to it. Lord, I laughed till I thought I'd die. And my mother-in-law said, "John," said, "you ought not laugh at that," I said, "that snake might bite you." I said, "No, it ain't," I said, "I see it," I said, "I'm going to blow it right through." Boy, I shot it in about five pieces, buddy, and I got him. And that poor old thing, she'd run herself to death trying to get away from that....(Laughs)

Wright at Webb, W.Va.,home in 1952 a few months before his mine accident. Photographer unknown.

Mine Accident

At mine Number 22 in Holden in 1952 Mr. Wright was on "the hoot owl shift." Around four in the morning a slate fall nearly claimed his life. He remembered, "it was four hours and forty minutes before they could get to me."

JW: Yeah, my old buddy, he--I didn't know nothing about it but till about ten minutes before they pulled me out. My buddy, the one that was a-breaking for me, he said, "It was my fault." He said, "Old buddy...." He called me "old buddy" all the time. And he said, "Old buddy's not dead." Said, "I feel his hand move." Said, "I'm going to go in after him." And the boss man said, "No, you ain't going in there." That safety man said, "Why, let him go." Said, "Let him go right in there."

They shoved a big piece of steel between me and the gob, rock that was open and timber, so they could jack it up, you know, and pull me out. I was down under the deck of the motor. So he kind of raised me up, and I heard him say, "Old buddy is not dead. I'm going to pull him out of there." And he drug me out of there, and my back was broke and one of my legs.

From Coal Miner to Artist

John B. Wright never went in the mines again. After he recovered in Holden Hospital the family moved a few times and in about 1955 settled in a house in Crum (Wayne County) on the north side of Bull Mountain near Route 52. That house, the surrounding area, and his Tennessee homeplace were to become his frequent subjects when he discovered his talent for painting.

But whittling came first. He described his uneasy search at 50 years old for something to do that would satisfy him.

JW: No, I just didn't know what to take a-hold of. I'd sit around, smoke and chew and get around and watch the birds and things and get out there in the woods and just look at something or other and I said, "Well, by gollies, I can do that too." I'd just get me a piece of poplar or a piece of something or other and go to whittling on it, and I'd make it. I'd make it just like he was sitting there hollering. I'd watch them birds and rabbits and squirrels. I took most to squirrels, though, buddy; I'm a squirrel lover and I'd get out a-hunting and I'd watch them.

In another conversation he attributed his discovery of the commercial possibilities of his art work to friends.

JW: I just got to whittling stuff and got to making things.

TS: How soon was that after you quit the mines?

JW: About a year, a year and a half. I'd just get lonesome and I'd go to whittling or sit down and go to writing (lettering and doodling) or making something or other. I got into that and fellows started talking to me and telling me, "John," said, "you ought to go ahead with that." Said, "You're doing good, buddy," Said, "You can sell that stuff."

Whittling, however, did not provide

the challenge Wright needed.

JW: And then I got tired of that, you see, and I went to drawing--trying out paint and seeing what colors I could change to make it look different.

I had a lot of boards and stuff was going to waste and went to marking on those car tops, you know, drawing little pictures, first one thing--sketches, I guess. And I drawed Bull Mountain and put it on a car top. And then I'd draw it on window glasses and set them on the hill there. Drawed pictures of farms and valleys and coal mines and things like that, you know. I'd just get it in my mind and I'd just draw that thing. I drawed it with paint, though; there never was nothing on it.

TS: You didn't do any sketching with a pencil first?

JW: No, I just went to work with the brush. What I done was with a brush.

TS: What kind of paint did you use?

JW: I used enamel paint, black and green and stuff like that. I'd just take two or three different kinds of paint and mix it together and just whatever it come out that's what I made. I made some pretty good pictures, too.

Around 1957 Wright began putting his paintings outside for highway travelers to see. People stopped more and more to see and buy them, but until the mid-1960s his work was not promoted by anyone except himself.

Mrs. Cynthia Gearhart in Lavalette has a business in molded ceramics supplies, and she teaches the technique. In about 1966 Wright built a small shop near the highway. Over the door was a sign reading "HAND CRAFTS." Mrs. Gearhart was making trips to teach in a town south of Crum and stopped to talk to the artist. On December 13, 1966, the Huntington *Herald-Dispatch* carried a long article with photographs on Mr. Wright in which he, inevitably, was compared to Mrs. Anna Mary Robertson ("Grandma") Moses.

Mrs. Gearhart in that period led the organizing of Wayne County Arts and Crafts which was loosely connected with the county's Community Action Agency. For two or three years around 1968 Mrs. Gearhart took Mr. Wright's work to the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes. Mr. Wright himself went to that fair in 1968 and 1969.

Early in 1968 Mr. Wright's work appeared in an arts and crafts sale in Lavalette at the Volunteer Fire Department. Mrs. Florette Angel, then an Arts and Crafts Representative with the West Virginia Department of Commerce, saw his work there. In May of that year she took Department photographer Gerald Ratcliff to Crum where he made the photographs accompanying this article.

1968 Photographs of Wright, his Family, and his Work at Crum, W. Va.

 by Gerald Ratliff

(opposite, above) Wright in the doorway of the shop he built in the mid-1960s seen from Route 52. His home is partially visible at the right side of the building. (opposite, below) Behind Wright on the door frame is one of a pair of electrified lanterns he made from plastic bleach containers (also see overleaf). The lanterns were painted red, and holes were cut in the eyes for light to shine through. The painting on the right just under the roof is of his log homeplace in Tennessee and his brother's boat. Symbolically, the house is small in scale and below the line of T.V.A. flooding that came in the 1930s.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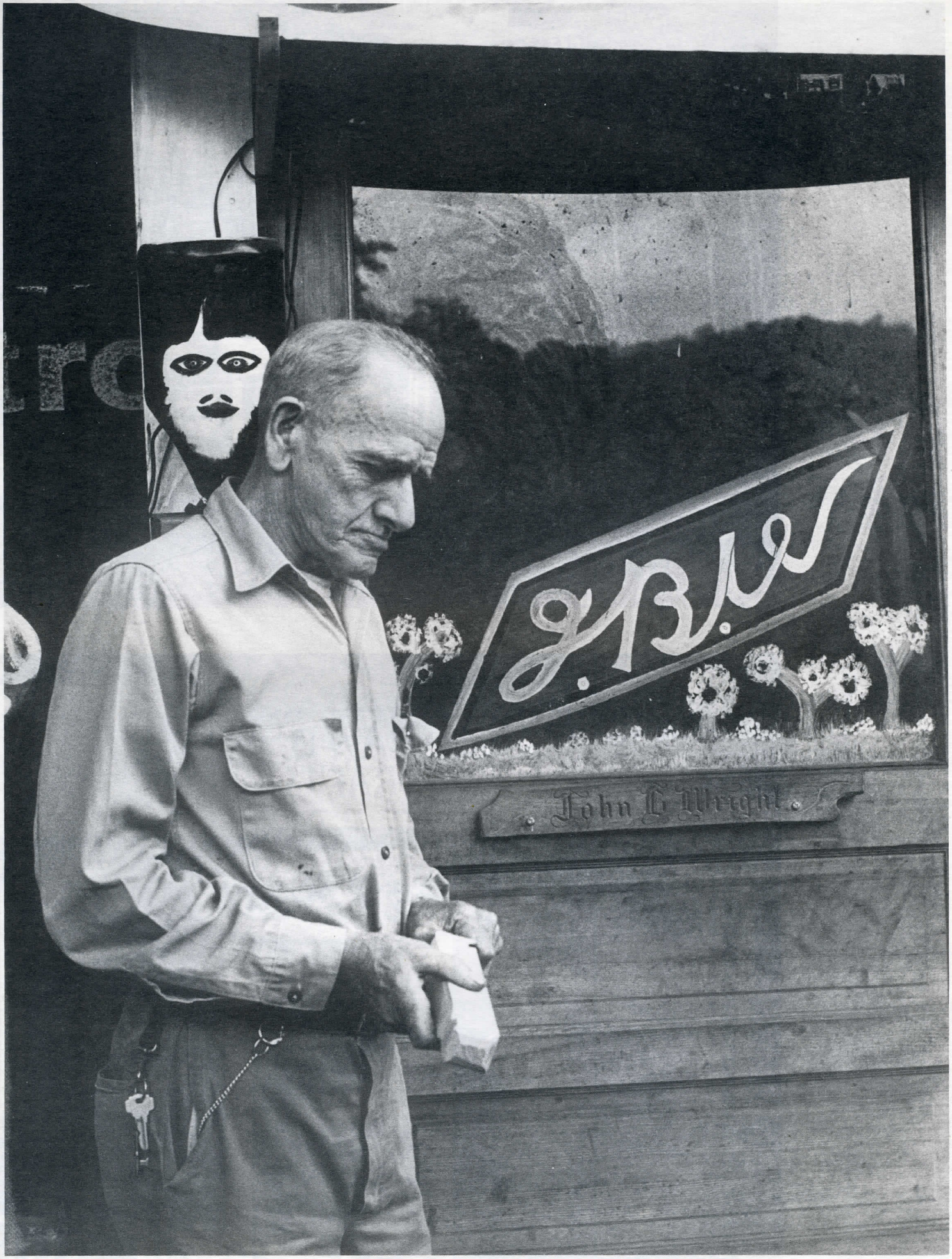
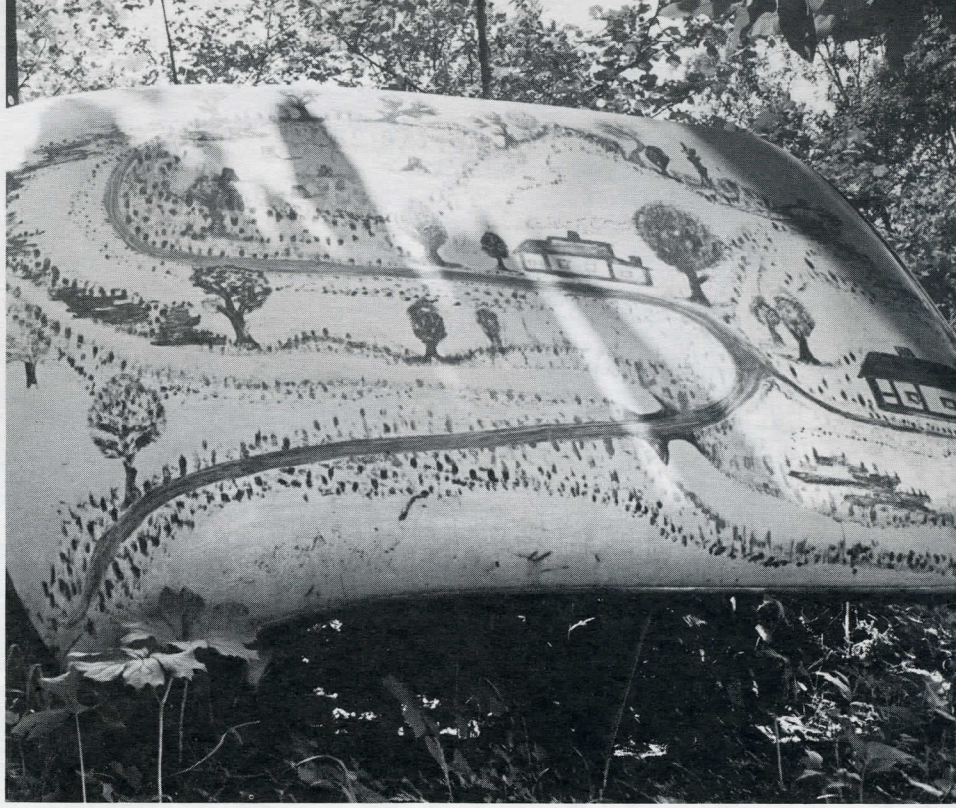

John G Wright

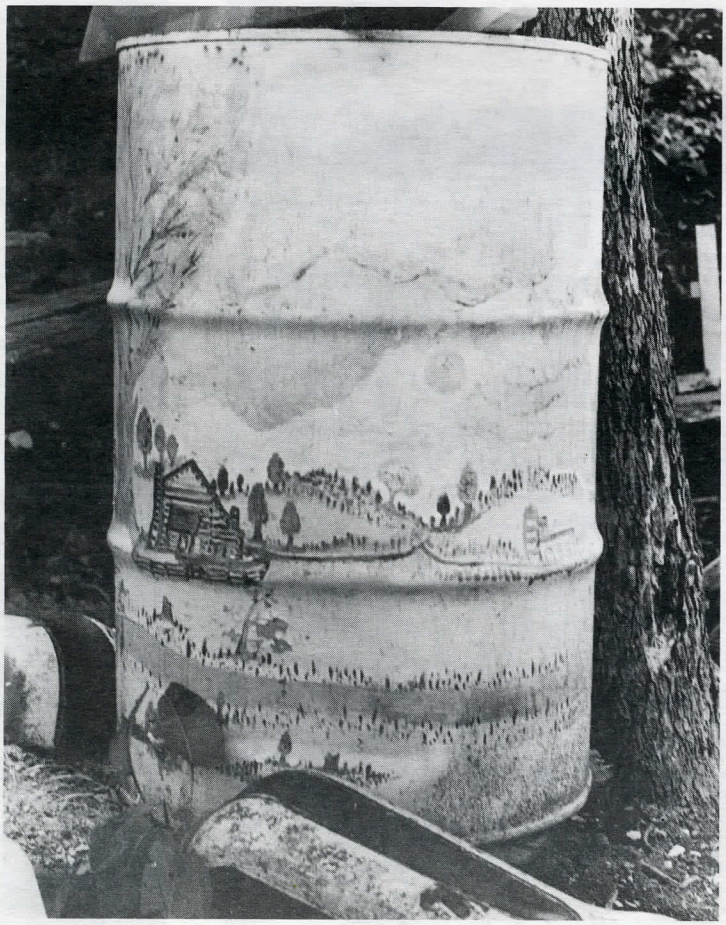
Three Paintings

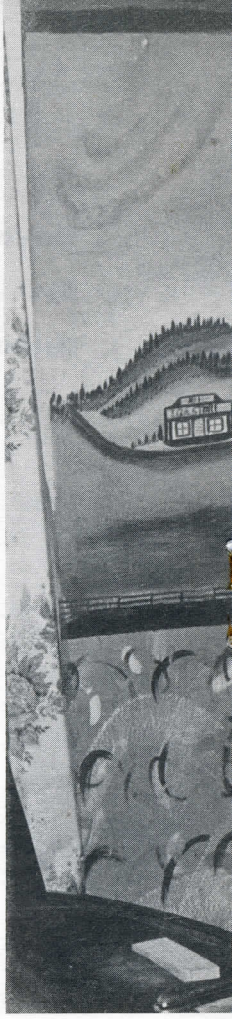
That Were Displayed

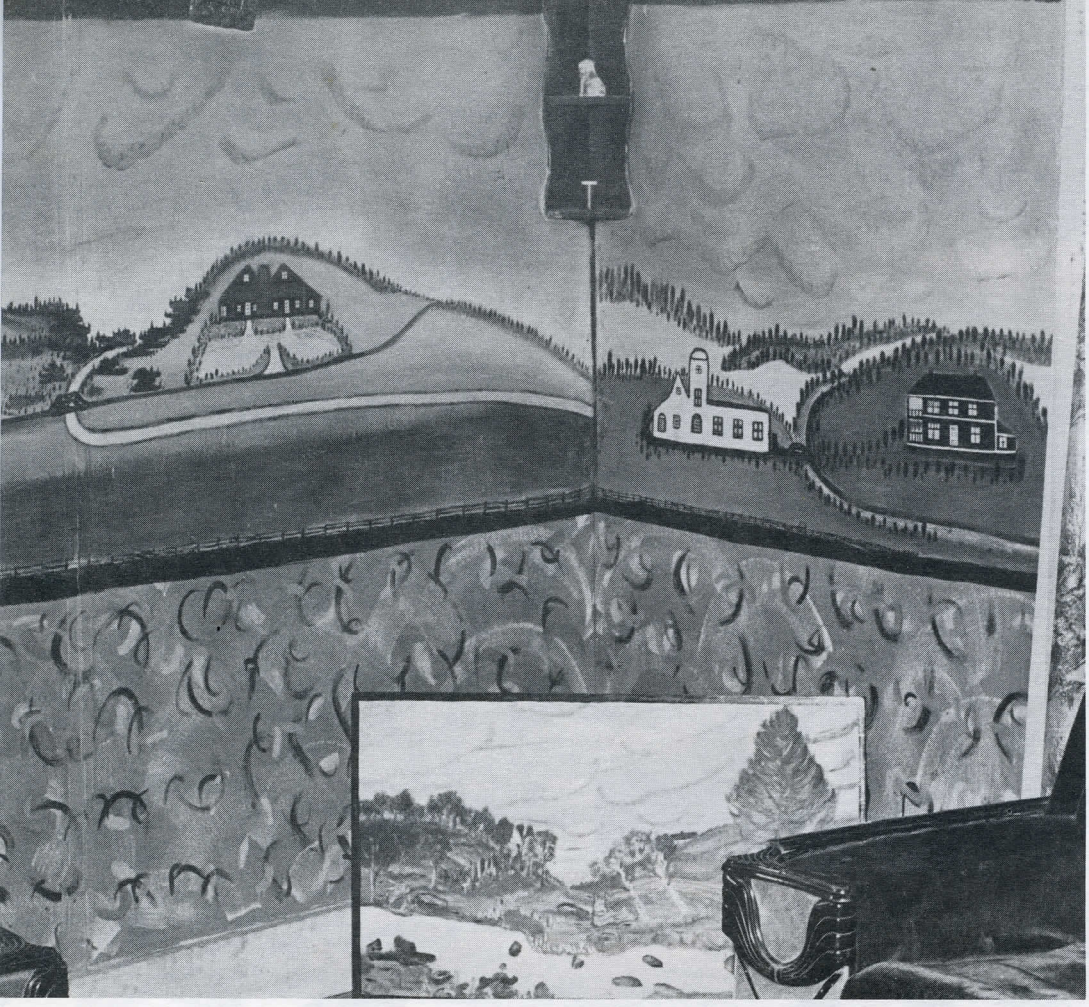
Outdoors

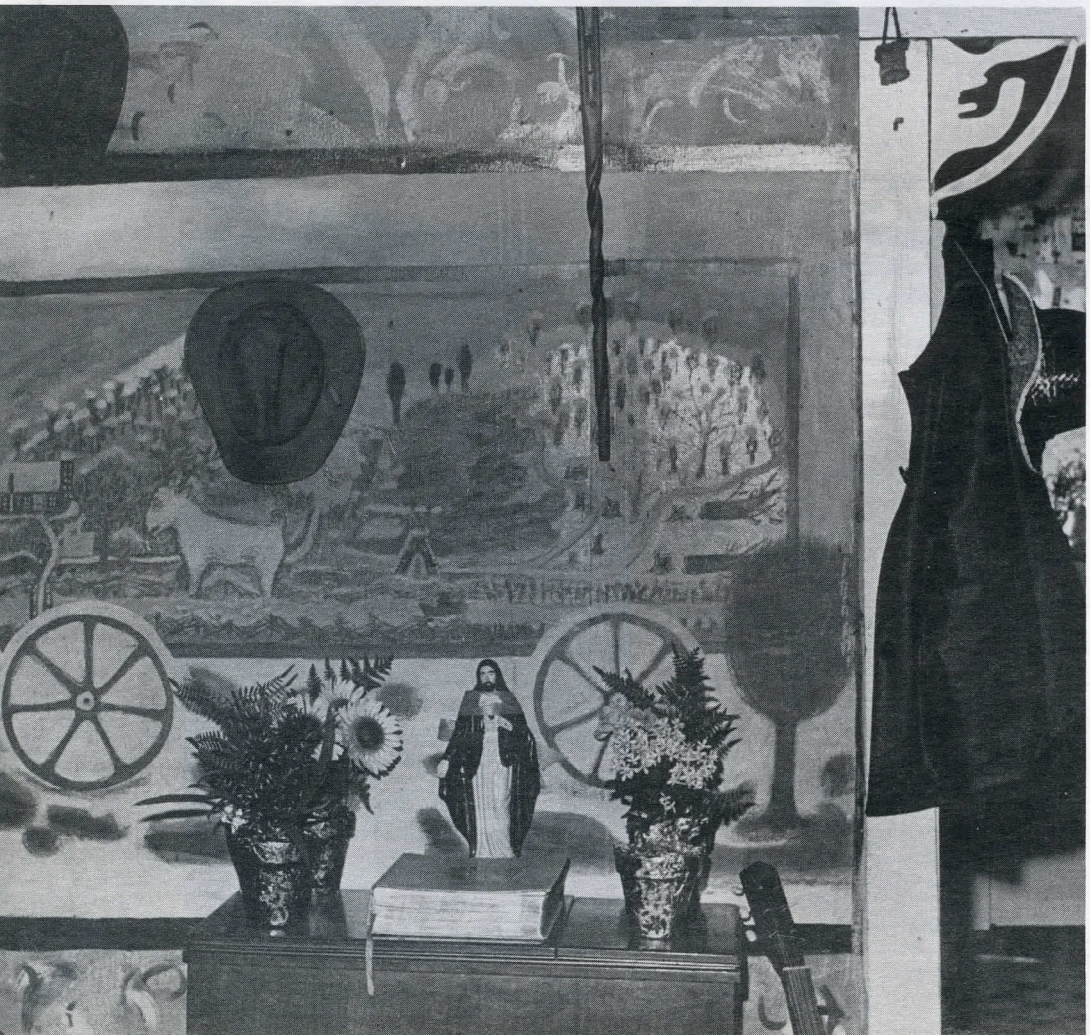


(above) On car roof, a scene of Route 52, Bull Mountain, and the Wright home on the right. The shop is not in the picture. (below,left) A 55-gallon oil drum with a picture of Tennessee homeplace. (below,right) In foreground is a car hood with a painting of Bull Mountain, where the object actually sat.









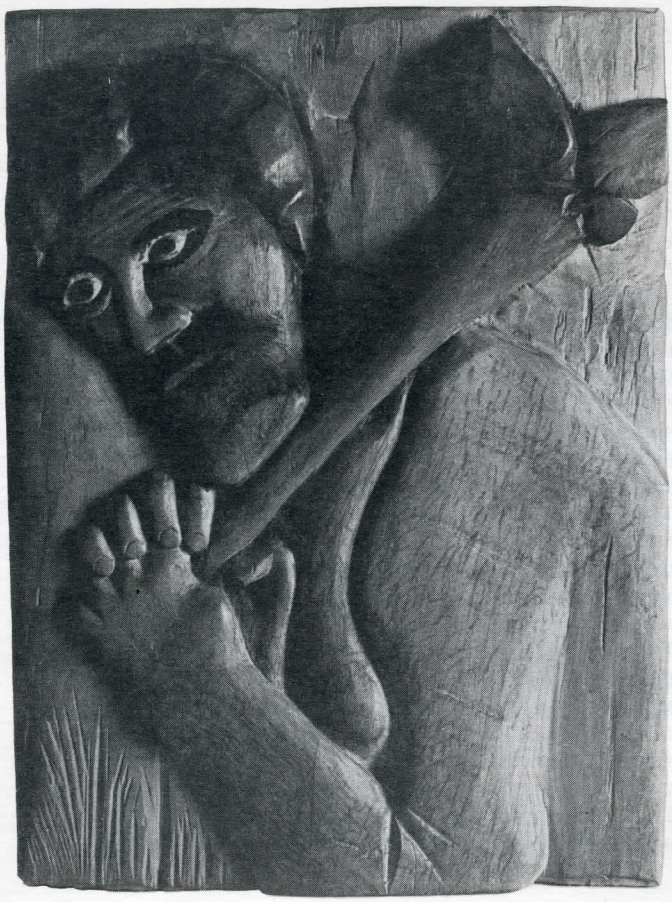
Four Views of the

Wrights' Living Room

Showing His Murals

(far left,above) Seated on the sofa are Mr. and Mrs. Wright and their youngest son T.G. The painted scene is of a bridge across the Tennessee River. (far left,below) To the right of center is the Bull Creek (W.Va.) Church of Christ. On the far right is a photograph of four of the Wright's children. A small head of a woman carved in wood is on the front edge of the TV set. (left, above) On the wall to the right and also in the painting on board on the floor are scenes in Beauty, Ky. (left, below) A memory painting of a medicine show wagon. Wright forgets the name of the medicine doctor but remembers that when the liniment he sold was used "you could feel it go right out your heels." One of Wright's walking canes carved in a vine-scarred sapling hangs to the right of center.

(above) Table in Hand Crafts shop with wood carvings. The pig (right), an unfinished wood carving, can be seen in the upper left of the above photograph.



(left) Old Stone age (man) or Cave Man. Carved poplar, partly stained and painted. 7 1/2" x 10 1/4" x 2". [W. Va. Department of Commerce Collection] (below) Table with wood carvings in front of one of Wright's living room murals. On the right is a sewing basket he made of popsicle sticks. On the left in the mural is Wright's log homeplace.

Wife's Death and Aftermath

A very short time after Mrs. Wright died in 1971 John Wright sold their home at Crum. He was deeply affected by the loss, and almost at once he permanently closed and dismantled the handcrafts shop on Route 52. He was extremely unsettled for the years leading up to a few months ago when he moved in with a daughter and her family in Huntington.

The household, in a sense, revolves around Wright's two pre-school grandsons, who are small but lively. The boys' uncle and Wright's youngest son, Thomas Gordon ("T.G.") also lives in the home. T.G. is twenty-one and has recently returned from Army duty in Okinawa. He is the young teenage son in the 1968 photograph of the Wrights.

The family's home was built quite early in this century. It is a two-story frame house with a full front porch. Painted white, it now is a somewhat stately farmhouse misplaced on a greedily encroaching street that leads into a four-lane highway. The elevated four-lane, in fact, soars overhead only two blocks away and punctuates the plight of the orphaned house.

Wright is physically uncomfortable most of the time now.

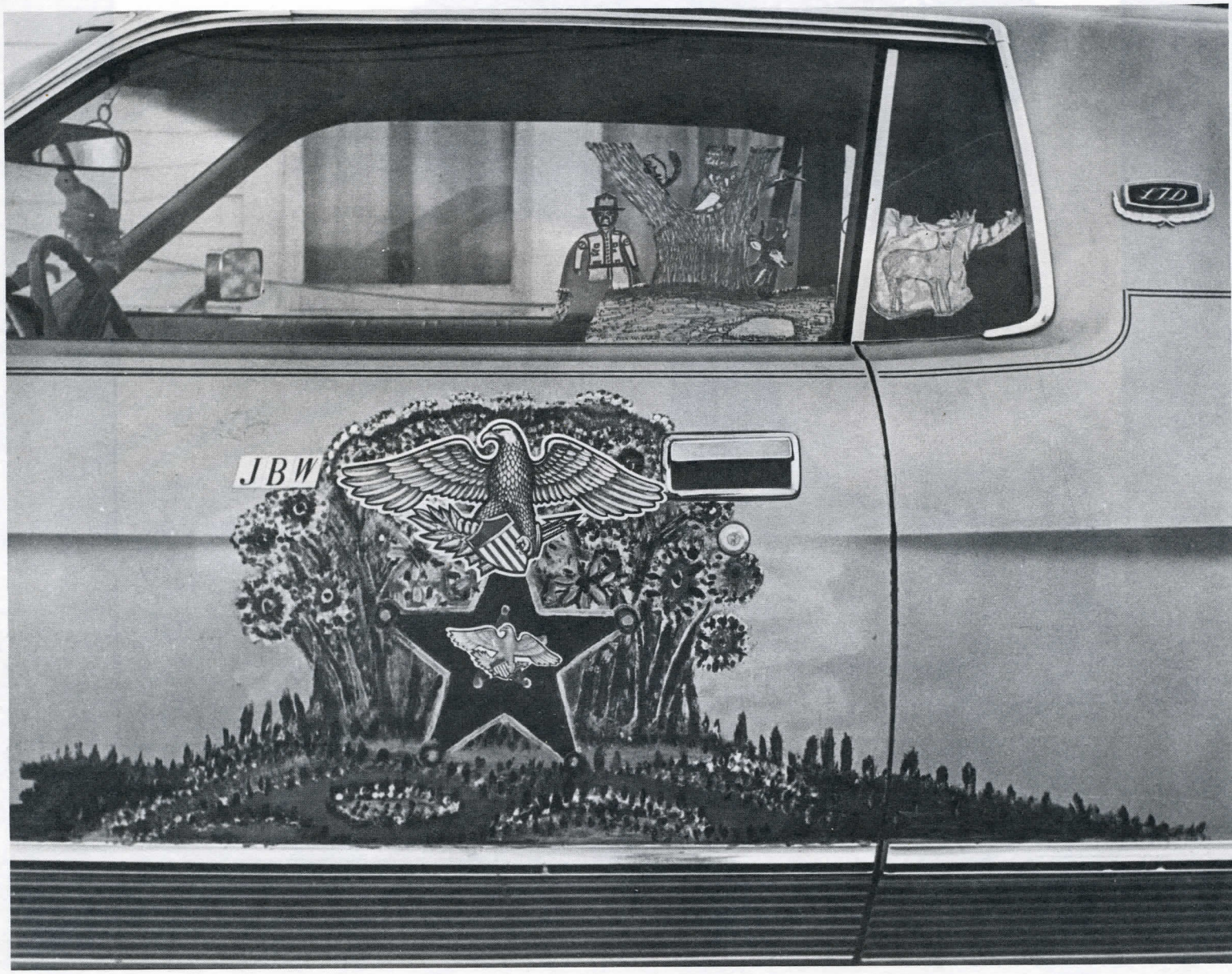
TS: What would you say is the state of your health now?

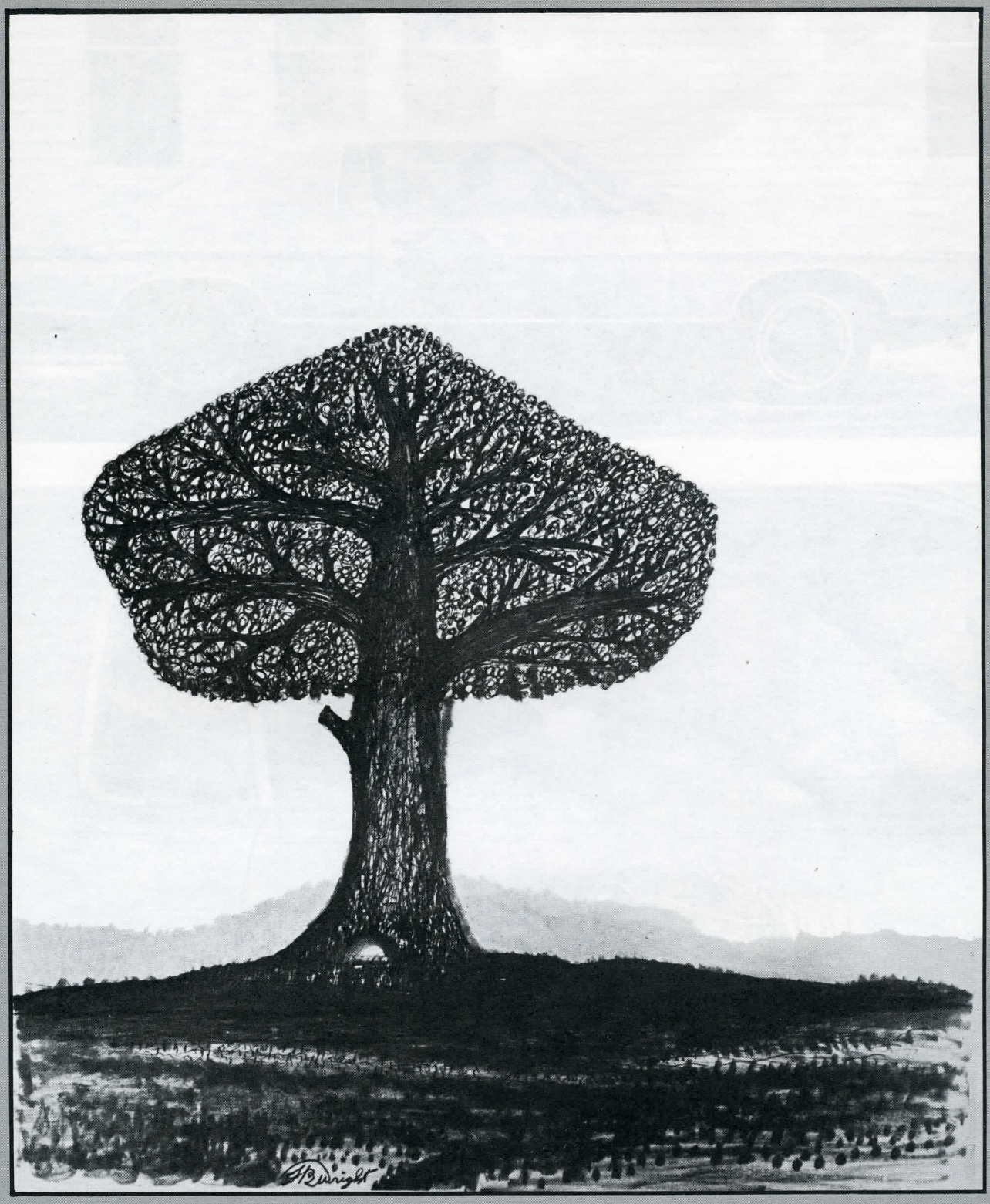
JW: Well, I just ain't got no strength. My lungs are so weak I can't breath. I have to breath so hard, you see, it's just shocking my nerves, and it's bad on my heart too, you know. No, they tell me not to run nowhere or pick up nothing over ten pounds--or five--and to be careful how I stoop to pick it up. And you know there's something wrong. Well, they just wouldn't come out and tell me exactly, but I know what's wrong. See, I got a weak heart and I've had the high blood pressure, stuff like that. And a man ain't no good in shape like that. Of course at some times I feel just as good as I ever did. But it don't last long.

Even so, he enjoys driving his Ford LTD for brief visits with his family in Wayne County and, occasionally, Columbus, Ohio. He would like to paint, but his doctor has forbidden him to use enamel or any other oil base paint. He wants to test artists' acrylic paint, and will carve in wood again if he can figure how to go about it without over-exerting himself.

Wright is unsure of the importance of most of the few drawings he has begun producing within recent months. He indicates that, as before, his latest artistic urges have come about through a struggle against boredom, yet he has shown real pleasure at getting a color right or an animal's likeness to satisfy him. He questions whether the materials he uses now are appropriate. The large chain discount stores in the area have been the source both for his paper, mainly an inexpensive sketch pad with thin 9" x 11" sheets, and his drawing instruments. Experimenting in these months, he has produced around two dozen highly personal studies and only a very few drawings he considers finished. In his own mind, he has been merely fooling around with ball point pens, wide felt markers in many colors, and water colors. On nearly all of them, however, he has signed three initials or "J. B. Wright" in his elegant, old-fashioned script. Also, he is pleased when eager buyers for them come along.

(above) Young man's head. 1975. Ball point pen and felt marker (yellow). 2" x 2 1/2".


JBW



Principal Influences on the Music of the Lilly Brothers of Clear Creek, West Virginia

by James J. McDonald

The following article first appeared in the October 1973 *Journal of American Folklore* and is reprinted here with their kind permission and also that of the author, James J. McDonald. He was a college student in Boston in 1964 when he began to pay close attention to the Lilly Brothers. He commented recently, "I owe Everett Lilly much in the way of any character development I might have, for he was a fine model for me at a critical stage of development."

Mitchell B. ("Bea") remains in Boston. Everett Lilly lives in Clear Creek and taught a course in bluegrass music this winter in Beckley at the Southern Appalachian Circuit of Antioch College. He conducts the brothers' professional affairs, which are beginning to flourish in Japan. He has been made a vice-president of Towa Kikaku and Company, a large Tokyo concern. Under the arrangement, the Lilly Brothers have toured Japan and made recordings there. For the company he is booking American music groups to play in that country. The brothers will play this year in Japan again, at festivals and colleges in this country, and in Canada.

For the next issue of *Goldenseal* Everett Lilly has agreed to contribute comments of his own about the Lilly Brothers' history, the articles about them in recent years in numerous publications, and their plans for the future.-Ed.

Musical groups such as the Lilly Brothers obviously have many external and internal forces acting on them that account for the music they play at any particular moment. Choice of material and style are the result of the meshing of these forces. Personal relationships,

The Lilly Brothers, Everett, left, and "Bea." Photographed by Deborah Marks at the 1972 festival at Berryville, Va. (Courtesy *Muleskinner News. Apr.1973*)

aspirations, cultural context, physical conditions, and economic conditions all contribute, and none can be meaningfully studied in isolation without a general understanding of the other major forces that are operant. Thus, the issues and events broached here are only the grossest set of events that can be said to influence the musical evolution of the Lilly Brothers, who are a traditional southern Appalachian band that was professionally active between 1938-1970 and that still plays occasional dates.

The Lilly Brothers are an important traditional hillbilly band from many points of view, but this article is primarily concerned with their relationship to bluegrass music, the only remaining commercially viable type of traditional stringband music. I will first look at the general evolution of this music in the time period 1920-1970 and then look at the Lilly Brothers' professional career in an effort to tie the general context of old-timey bluegrass music to the specific context of their music.

General Context

Hillbilly music embodies southern folk music and styles plus slicker, more professional outgrowths that have appeared as part of a continuum since the 1920s: from the early, ragged, and raucous string bands of the twenties with almost all the instruments playing melody and little singing;[1] to the harmony-singing, solid, instrumental, brother acts of the thirties;[2] the synthesis of bluegrass style in the forties;[3] the "classical" period of bluegrass in the fifties; the folk tradition revival and the further development of technical proficiency required of bluegrass bands. There are many styles of hillbilly music. In general, all styles share the same song base; that is, any song may be performed in string-band, duet, traditional, or bluegrass style. Hillbilly music is the traditional folk music of the southern Appalachians, and professional variations on this tradition continue to evolve.

Three basic elements of southern traditional music came together in the twentieth century to make hillbilly music, and these three broad stylistic strains are still alive in mountain culture. The first is a method of singing that involves a sliding attack and frequent grace notes sung in a clear, intense, vibrato-free voice, a vocal style that was known to exist in eighteenth-century New England church music.[4] The second is the polyphonic singing style that came from the eighteenth-century shape-note singing schools, sacred harp singing, and such hymnals as Billy Walker's *Southern Harmony of 1835*[5] and *Christian Harmony* published shortly after the Civil War. Two-to four-part contrapuntal polyphonic is the basis of the style.

The third element of Appalachian folk music is an instrumental tradition that arose in association with dancing.[6] This style began with the Anglo-Scotch fiddles and fiddling styles introduced into the mountains by the earliest settlers, which brought jigs, reels, clogs, and strathspys to the southern mountains. This linear type of dancing music changed somewhat in the mountains, and the fiddling began to include double stops using an open string as a drone. Later the fiddler was joined by a banjo picker to form a dance band complete with lead (fiddle) and rhythm instrument.

The banjo, an instrument of African derivation, came to the hills in the nineteenth century. The short fifth string, or drone string, that makes the five-string banjo so specifically Appalachian was added around 1848.[7] The instrument is picked or strummed in a manner that allows percussive rhythmic elements to dominate over the melody notes.[8]

At the beginning of the twentieth century the people who carried the above three traditions were exposed to new musical ideas and influences. As communications networks expanded and improved and the South became more urbanized and industrialized, the mountaineers became subject to urban-white popular culture instruments and styles, as well as additional Negro influences.[9] The usual band consisting of fiddle and banjo now began to be supplemented, first by guitars, which were sold through mail-order houses by the end of the nineteenth century,[10] and later (1910-1925) by the mandolin, string bass, and "Hawaiian," or "dobro" style, guitar played with a steel bar.

By the twenties the two-piece band had expanded to a minimum of three pieces. The first instrument added was the guitar, which played bass and the major rhythms. The mandolin, when available, either followed the melody line or strummed chords, while the fiddle remained the primary melody instrument; the banjo was used for intermediate rhythms, syncopations, and some melody. With a shift

See footnotes on page 40.

away from dance music, the instrumentalists began to sing as they played, and bands played more popular and sentimental songs.

From 1923 onward, the phonograph and radio industries started to play a role in the development of hillbilly music. The better folk musicians could now support themselves, at least partially, by making music.[11] This meant that the recording bands could spend the time to reach new levels of competency by playing full time on radio stations and touring the South. The high point of this style of music, which is now known as old-timey, was reached in 1927-1930.

The Depression caused record sales to drop out of sight.[12] When the music business recovered from the low of 1930-1934, the branch of hillbilly music that was economically dominant began to move away from the string-band tradition. This music became more star-oriented with commercial tastes and more blues. Larger bands developed, sometimes electrified and drawing on jazz and other popular music.[13] Blues were assimilated into this hillbilly music style, largely by Jimmie Rodgers[14] or the "country" faction. Large bands, influenced also by big-band swing, sprang up and by 1937 had developed a distinctive sound called western swing.[15] This branch of music continued to evolve through a cowboy image into the highly commercial pop music of the 1960s known as the Nashville sound.

The branch of 1930s music less successful than the Jimmie Rodgers style is the "mountain" faction, which relied more heavily on evolving Appalachian Anglo-American folksong tradition and instrumentation. The Carter Family was the most famous proponent of this type throughout the thirties.[16] Coincidentally, both the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers were "discovered by R.C.A. Victor at the same recording session in Bristol, Tennessee, August 1927."[17]

The Carter Family, composed of A. P. Carter, his wife, Sara and sister-in-law Maybelle, recorded over 300 sides before they retired in 1943.[18] Many of the songs were intact or slightly modified folksongs of the southern oral tradition that A. P. came in contact with around his Maces Springs, Scott County, Virginia, home. Their song repertory consisted of traditional lyrical and spiritual songs. The lyrical side was represented by such songs as "Lula Walls," "Homestead on the Farm," "My Clinch Mountain Home," "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," and "Will the Circle be Unbroken," which reflected the traditional Appalachian themes of lost love, love of the old homeplace, and death, especially of the mother. The religious songs of the Carter Family were also of the traditional variety; for instance, "Diamonds in the Rough," "God Gave Noah the Rainbow Sign," "Little Moses," and "On the Rock Where Moses Stood." Religious songs have always been a large part of the southern oral tradition, and in some back areas of Appalachia church music is now the dominant oral tradition, since the influence of TV and radio has weakened the secular oral tradition. The distinctive Carter sound involved Sara singing lead, with Maybelle providing an alto and A. P. snatches of bass.[19] The accompaniment was provided by autoharp chords played by Sara, and Maybelle's inventive pick-and-strum guitar style almost always played out of "C" chord fingering. The Carter family's music was widely disseminated by radio and records in its time and has influenced almost all white American folksingers since then.

Also representing the "mountain" branch of hillbilly music in the thirties were the appearance and popularity of many brother acts. These groups, such as the Morris Brothers, the Delmore Brothers , the Dixon Brothers, the Callahan Brothers, the Monroe Brothers, the Blue Sky Boys, [20] and later, the Lilly Brothers, represent the stylistic development that is embodied today in bluegrass music.

In general, these duos featured harmony singing based in the southern rural tradition, plus guitar and mandolin accompaniments, although the Delmore Brothers used two guitars and the Dixon Brothers carried a dobro guitar.[21] Two of these groups stand well above the others in terms of historical impact and professional ability: the Monroe Brothers and the Blue Sky Boys.[22] Both groups employed harmony singing plus mandolin and guitar,[23] and both followed similar professional paths that were appropriate to the time. The path consisted of doing short commercial radio programs daily, either very early in the morning or at noon, for little money, in order to make their sound known and thus salable through records and personal appearances at country music parks and auditoriums throughout the South.[24]

The Monroe Brothers split up in 1938, [25] but Bill was a regular on the Grand Ole Opry with his own band by the following year.[26] His music kept evolving: he brought more jazz influ-

ences into his mandolin picking and over the next ten years, almost alone, developed the musical style today known as "bluegrass."[27]

The Blue Sky Boys, Earl and Bill Bolick from Hickory, North Carolina, in the "Land of the Blue Sky," began their professional career in 1935.[28] Although they also were a guitar and mandolin combo, their sound was quite different from that of the Monroes. In mournful, extremely tight harmony, the closest ever in country music, they sang traditional songs of death, sorrow and unrequited love. The Bolicks consciously tried to keep their traditional sound intact and generally recorded older folkdsongs, such as "The Butcher Boy," "Banks of the Ohio," "Cindy," and "Only One More Step." After their return from World War II, the Blue Sky Boys found that the commercial music world was no longer sympathetic to their musical goals, and they retired rather than compromise their music.[29] The Blue Sky Boys were one of the few groups to call their music folksongs,[30] a term used later in a similar manner by the Lilly Brothers.[31] The impression that the Blue Sky Boys had on the Lillys may best be understood by the fact that, even today in Bea Lilly's singing, his phrasing and attack are noticeably like those of Earl Bolick.

The most commercially successful hillbilly music of the forties and fifties was the Jimmie Rodgers, western swing main trunk that evolved through Gene Autry, Ernest Tubb, and Hank Williams to Tom T. Hall and Merle Haggard in the late sixties.[32] However, the mountain style string-band tradition, of which the Lilly Brothers are a part, survived in the form of bluegrass music, the only style of non-electrified string-band music that has survived until today.[33]

A lot of the people down on the Grand Ole Opry kid me about bluegrass. They tell it to me... like I really started something...when I started bluegrass, that can't be stopped. I'm really proud of the bluegrass music and I'm glad to see people play it. You should always play it the best way you can. Play it good and clean and play it the best way you can. Play it good and keep perfect time. It takes really good timing with bluegrass music, and it takes some good high voices to really deliver it right.[34]

Bluegrass music is the style evolved by Bill Monroe with his Blue Grass Boys through the forties. The style was fully synthesized by 1949 when at least three professional bands were playing the new music. They were Monroe himself, Flatt and Scruggs, and the Stanley Brothers.[35] Although the Lilly Brothers at that time, as always, were more oriented toward older string-band styles, they began to include bluegrass style numbers in their repertories. This tendency continued until the early sixties.

L. Mayne Smith identifies the essential characteristics of bluegrass music as follows:

1. Bluegrass is hillbilly music. It is played by professional, white, southern musicians primarily for a southern audience.
2. In contrast to many other hillbilly styles, bluegrass is not dance music and is seldom used for this purpose.
3. Bluegrass bands are made up of no less than three nor more than seven musicians who play non-electrified stringed instruments and who sings as many as four parts.
4. The integration of these instruments and voices in performance is more formalized and complex than that encountered in previous string band styles. Instruments can perform several well defined roles, and each instrument changes roles according to predictable patterns.
5. Bluegrass is the only string band style in which the banjo has a major solo role which emphasizes melodic over rhythmic aspects. The basic bluegrass banjo style was first played by Earl Scruggs in 1945, when he was one of the Blue Grass Boys, and the style is named after him. Every bluegrass band includes a banjo played in "Scruggs style" or some derivative thereof.[36]

During the fifties and sixties bluegrass bands became somewhat more common as more musicians served their apprenticeship as Blue Grass Boys, and, in the Flatt and Scruggs' tradition, left to start or become influential in other musical groups. A partial list of these musicians includes Jimmy Martin, Sonny Osborne, James Monroe, Mac Wiseman, Peter Rowan, Bill Keith, Don Reno, Don Stover, and Richard Greene.

The last major new musical influence on the Lilly Brothers was the development, within the Nashville faction of popular commercial music, of honky-tonk music.[37]

Tootsie's is like a thousand other beer joints in the South with such names as Junior's Dew Drop Inn and Pearl's Howdy Club, and a certain type of country boy feels right at home there, whether he has $250,000 in his pocket or just came in on the bus from Plain Dealing, Louisiana with a guitar across his back and white cotton socks rolled down in little cylinders atop his grease-resistant work shoes.

This is the milieu of commercial country music, the Southern honky-tonk. Sometimes it is

called "hillbilly music," which is only half accurate, because the southern lowlanders have contributed just as much as the hill folks, perhaps more; and sometimes "country and western," which is misleading because much of it, as reflects the culture of Abilene, Texas, tends to be pretty thin stuff. "Southern White working music" would never do as a tag, but that is what it is.[38]

Honky-tonk music is that branch of country music that deals with subject and instrumentation suitable to be played in hillbilly bars by either a juke box or a live band. The style's earliest and most famous practitioner was Hank Williams during the early fifties. The style continued through the singing of Hawkshaw Hawkins, Dolly Parton, Porter Wagoner, Earnest Tubb, George Jones, Jean Shepherd, Loretta Lynn, Jim Reeves, Ray Price, and other such country music "stars," including Merle Haggard of today.[39] Early honky-tonk and current honky-tonk songs deal with essentially the same themes: lost love, truck driving (replacing the old train songs), the old homeplace, the alienation of the rural Southerner brought about by urbanization, and variations on the old "slipping around"[40] theme. The titles of mainstream songs, such as "Your Cheating Heart," "Cold Cold Heart," He'll Have to Go,""Walking After Midnight," Six Days on the Road," "My Son Calls Another Man Daddy," and "The Bottle Let Me Down," go a long way toward explaining the subject matter. The sound was a combination of new technology, represented by the extensive use of pedal steel guitar, and older singing styles, represented by the strident and traditionally based voice of a George Jones. This is honky-tonk music, heard or understood within its context, that of the small bar in any urban area where first-generation urbanites with southern rural backgrouns or sympathies gather for commiseration and wenching ceremonies. The Hillbilly Ranch, Park Square, Boston, Massachusetts, is such a place, and there, in 1952, the Lilly Brothers were hired to play six or seven half-hour sets, seven nights a week.[41] This they did for eighteen years, until Everett Lilly returned to Clear Creek, West Virginia in 1970.[42]

Specific Context

Mitchell B. Lilly, one of three brothers and four sisters, was born December 15, 1921, and Everett was born July 1, 1923, in Clear Creek, West Virginia.[43] Clear Creek is roughly twenty miles out of Beckley, just over Spruce Mountain on Route 1 and lies just after Miners Creek and just before White Oak, all unincorporated towns with similar populations.[44] The town runs along a hollow, and the Lilly Brothers's homeplace is to the left, right before you come to the store. It continues from the main road about a hundred yards down to the creek, which everyone claims has been poisioned by the mining. Mining is about the only type of steady work available, and it's been that way for quite a while, although "Consolidated's" big, machine-intensive operation in Miners Creek is quite different from the labor-intensive operation that was going on in White Oak twenty or thirty years ago. The road up to that old mine is all grown over now and is used only by raccoon hunters. The Lilly's homestead, being right on the main road, is in one of the better locations. As in many mountain towns, there seems to be a correlation between how close you are to the road and how well off you are. People in Clear Creek play and sing now much as they probably did when the Lillys were growing up. The older folks sing primarily religious songs, with a few traditional secular numbers. Religion seems to be a large part of everyone's life, whether he is Methodist, Baptist, or Church of God. Since Everett Lilly came home, the Sunday church attendance and the music at the little church in White Oak have improved, although they were probably quite good while he was still up North.[45]

Everett and Bea have been playing and singing together for a long time. They started singing together when Everett was three, and they grew up singing spiritual and traditional songs they learned from their family and neighbors. Their mother taught them their version of "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse." Although they both can play either instrument well, Bea concentrated on playing the guitar and Everett played mandolin, an instrument fairly new to that region. While still in their teens they developed the basic style that they would be most proud of all their lives. Everett and Bea can both sing baritone, lead, or tenor, but the combination of Everett singing tenor and Bea leading in a traditional southern song is what they would always call "real Lilly Brothers' music."[46]

They listened to the popular radio entertainers, the Monroe Brothers, the Callahan Brothers, and the Carter Family, but the group that they had the best "feel" for and the group with whom it is possible to draw many parallels is the Blue Sky

Boys. Like the Blue Sky Boys, the Lilly Brothers called their music folksongs; like the Blue Sky Boys they played and enjoyed mostly the old-time songs; like them also, they never changed their basic commitment to this style of music and chose to suffer the consequences of that commitment. This style is a synthesis of four major parts: first, the instrumental attack of Charlie and Bill Monroe, with Bea filling in the Charlie-style runs with a thumb pick and Everett filling in the spaces between the words with mandolin runs while playing melody line between verses; second, the harmony and phrasing of the Blue Sky Boys, which is especially noticeable in Bea's voicing; third, Everett's clear, intense tenor voice; and fourth, Everett's mandolin style, which is an individualist style although it was largely influenced by Bill Monroe's mandolin playing between 1936 and 1938. It entails always playing the melody but embellishing that melody with slides, grace notes, and pieces of runs.[47] His right rhythm hand attack has never been equaled.

During the late thirties and early forties, after each did a stint in the mines, the Lillys began to play local churches, schools, shows, theatres, and radio stations, often working with their drop-thumb-banjo-playing, hometown friend Paul Taylor.[48] It should be noted that almost everybody in Clear Creek is named Lilly, Taylor, or Stover. They helped open radio station WJLS in Beckley in 1940.[49] In 1948, the Lillys joined Red Belcher, a banjo-playing pitchman, in Wheeling, West Virginia. Calling themselves the Kentucky Ridge Runners,[50] they had a fifteen-minute radio show and were regulars on the WWVA Jamboree. They were joined for three months in the summer of 1948 by fiddler Tex Logan, who was taking some time off from M.I.T., and at that time the band had recorded two sides for Page Record Company of Johnstown, Pennsylvania: "Kentucky is Only a Dream" and "The Old Grey Goose." Everett, as always, was wary of recording under any name besides his own and so did not play at the session. He did later record "What Are They Doing in Heaven" and "They Sleep Together, Now at Rest" for Page Records under the name Lilly Brothers.[51] The brother act split up between 1950 and 1952 when Everett left to join Flatt and Scruggs.[52]

Everett made sure that his name showed up as tenor singer on the Flatt and Scruggs Columbia 78's that were cut during his stint (such as "Tis Sweet to be Remembered," "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse," "Somehow Tonight," and "Earl's Breakdown"), but he was not completely happy taking a secondary position in the band. After a discussion with Tex Logan in Raleigh, North Carolina, in the summer of 1952, Everett, Bea, and Don Stover, a life-long friend and neighbor, went to Boston to join Logan.[53] At the time they came to Boston, Bea was thirty-one and Everett was twenty-nine. Everett had just spent two years recording with a band destined to be the biggest financial success in its field, the Foggy Mountain Boys (1950-1953 is often considered to be the high water mark for inventiveness and vitality in that band's career). Everett had been a part of the formation of bluegrass music. He knew how a band "on the make" had to be operated. His singing and playing and showmanship ability were at as high a level as the band he had left. Bea Lilly was a very good, clear-voiced, lead singer. Don Stover had been playing Scruggs-style banjo since 1947[54] and was a master of the more traditional styles. Parallels with the Stanley Brothers come to mind, but instead of staying in the South where they had to rub up against other musicians and participate in the cross-pollination essential to the early development of a whole new style, the Lillys went north to spread their type of music. They were used to drumming up a following through radio performances and personal appearances and started to do the same thing in Boston; but, despite their professional ability, they were rural Southerners moving to a northern city, and they shared the cultural difficulties that thousands of newly urbanized people in Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit experienced. Certainly the tenement houses that the Lillys and Stovers lived in in East Cambridge during the fifties and early sixties would not look at all odd if transposed to the Appalachian ghetto of Chicago.[55]

They called themselves the "Confederate Mountaineers." The band soon had their own daily fifteen-minute show on WCOP. They also appeared on "Hayloft Jamboree" each afternoon and played at a bar in the evening, first the Plaza, then the Mohawk Ranch, finally settling in at the Hillbilly Ranch located next to the Trailways Bus Terminal at the edge of Boston's entertainment district. They also played whatever shows "Hayloft Jamboree" could generate at Boston Garden, Boston Arena, or Mechanics Hall.[56]

In 1956 Tex Logan, who had introduced the Lillys to Boston, took a job in New Jersey. It is hard to assess

Logan's continuing influence on the brothers other than to note the growing importance of the fiddle in the Lilly's music. It should also be pointed out that Logan was, in general, an old-timey rather than a bluegrass fiddler. It is safe to say that he was aware of many styles of fiddling and that he was an old-timey fiddler because he enjoyed it. In this respect Logan may be seen as a factor influencing the Lillys toward tradition rather than innovation during the 1950s, at a time when the Lilly Brothers, due to drive, technical ability and familiarity with what was being done in the field, were best able to push ahead with a new commercially acceptable, bluegrass-like, personal style.

After Tex left Boston the Lillys tried hiring other fiddlers (the most colorful they remember was Scotty Stoneman), but it never seemed to quite work out, so Everett began to play fiddle himself. Playing at the Hillbilly Ranch he found that he had to contend with a constant, rather high, background sound level. This fact, coupled with the Ranch's atrocious sound system, meant that his mandolin could hardly be heard above the din. At first he electrified the mandolin, but he found that the sound quality was inferior and the electric instrument was not able to produce the same kind of slurs and slides he expected. Thus, in order to "get the sound out," he began doing more fiddling himself. This trend continued, until by the mid-sixties he generally played fiddle. With two voices acting as one unit, catching lines, ornamenting melodies, and leading and backing up almost simultaneously, it is not possible to fiddle and sing at the same time. As a result, the kind of timing required for the duet numbers began to slip.

In 1956 and 1957 the Lilly Brothers and Don Stover recorded eleven cuts for Event Records of Westbrook, Maine.[58] The tapes from these sessions have recently been released by County (729). These recordings reveal the high level of competence the band had reached, particularly in Stover's banjo work. The band split up for a year in 1958. Everett went back on the road with Flatt and Scruggs, and Don left to pick and record with Bill Monroe as a Blue Grass Boy. It was during this period that Don, Bea, and Chubby Anthony recorded a couple of songs for Mike Seeger's Folkways album, *Mountain Music Bluegrass Style*.[59] Back in Boston by October 1959, they were featured in a concert with Merle Travis at Jordon Hall and were back to playing nightly at the Ranch, where they were to stay for the next ten years.

I stayed for most of the next set. Nervous young sailors asked the silent girls to dance, a drunk truck driver got too friendly with a waitress and had to be helped into the night air, a recruit in an unpressed Army uniform played a number with the band and did a fast version of a banjo tune he had learned from a Flatt & Scruggs record. Through it all Everett smiled and sang, sometimes turning to Bea, who nodded gravely to what Everett was saying. For some numbers, they stood aside on the little stage and let Don Stover have the microphone to sing and play. As I sat listening, drinking the last of the Budweiser that Everett had managed to get into my glass, I realized that the folk audience with its emphasis on social identification on one side and showmanship on the other, would probably never understand Everett and Bea. The city people never really understand the country people.[60]

Mike Seeger recorded Folkways FA 2933, *The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover: Folk Songs from Southern Mountains* at the Boston YMCA in January of 1961,[61] and in 1962-63 two albums were released on Prestige Folklore, *The Lilly Brothers Bluegrass Breakdown* (FL 14010) and *Country Songs: The Lilly Brothers Bluegrass* (FL 14035). These albums were well known by Hillbilly Ranch regulars who often requested various songs from them. The recordings also introduced the band to many people and allowed the Lillys to reap some benefits from the sixties' folk boom: they got requests to appear at colleges and folk festivals, such as the Boston Arts Festival, the University of Chicago, the University of Minnesota, the Newport Folk Festival, the Mariposa Folk Festival, Bard College, Harvard, and Yale. Such occasions as these were looked upon as interesting sidelights by the Lillys, but essentially they were a honky-tonk band in the sixties.

During the mid- to late sixties, the Lillys often spoke without conviction of leaving the Hillbilly Ranch and going on the road, but they could never all get the "leaving fever" at the same time and it never happened, although Stover did go south for a year around 1968 to play with Buzz Buzby. One of the reasons they stayed was that Everett, Bea, and Don all had large families. They did not want to leave for long periods, which would be necessary if they went on the road. Supporting the family meant that the "boys" each played six nights a week and on special dates, as well as working at a steady day job from time to time. Their wives almost always held full-time

jobs. Playing special dates out of the Ranch were good times for the Lillys, since they knew that people would come just to listen to their music and would be appreciative of it. However, they also knew that the owners of the Hillbilly Ranch did not like them to be out of town on a weekend, so they were careful to space these dates far enough apart.

Playing at one spot for so many years did have some advantages. The Ranch became one of a chain of oases that exist across the country for misplaced Southerners. Truck drivers or sailors that had shared good times and stories with Everett or Don could be sure of a warm welcome when they next came through town six months or a year later. The oasis principle also worked with other hillbilly musicians who might find themselves in town overnight, such as Bill Monroe, Mac Magaha, George Hamilton IV, and Don Reno, who would stop by after a show to play a set.

This life changed the Lillys music considerably. The clientele did enjoy the old-time numbers, but they also wanted the old and current honky-tonk hits. Everett was always against this on the principle that it wasn't proper Lilly Brothers's music, while Bea and Stover, to some extent, were more amicable to these pressures(see Appendix B). Gradually the time spent playing this type of number increased until by the late sixties the only time one could expect to hear bluegrass or mountain music was late in the evening on a Friday, Saturday,or Sunday. Especially striking in this vein was Bea's mournful (remember the Blue Sky Boys) rendition of "Your Cheating Heart." This period of their lives and music came to an end in 1970.

In January of 1970, Everett's sixteen-year-old son, Jiles was killed in an auto accident. Six months earlier his youngest son had been involved in a nearly fatal accident. After the second tragedy, his physical presence in the city did not mean much, for spiritually he and his wife Joanne were already back in Clear Creek. After a benefit performance at John Hancock Hall in February, he left for West Virginia where he bought a mobile home and placed it behind his father's house. Bea followed within a year but soon returned to Boston, where he has worked a series of factory jobs, leaving music almost entirely. Stover stayed in Boston and tried to make a living as a leader of his own group, the White Oak Mountain Boys, and by giving banjo lessons. From January 1970 until the present, the music of the Lilly Brothers changed drastically. Their thoughts turned inward and back to their early religious background. The music that might be played around the house was now all sacred and most of the playing they did was at the little church in White Oak.

They are sometimes asked now to play at major bluegrass festivals, and if their appearance at Berryville, Virginia, in 1971 is typical, they now play mostly the old-time hymns. Everett may deliver a short sermon between numbers. It should be noted that it was mostly the older members of the audience who seemed touched by the brothers' song choices and sincerity.

Summary

The musical evolution of the Lilly Brothers conveniently lends itself to four classifications.

1. 1925-1940: Early sacred tradition and brother acts. This period covers their singing together as children, learning traditional southern Appalachian styles of sacred and secular songs, and their early development of a professional style through listening to radio programs of the Monroe Brothers and the Blue Sky Boys.

2. 1940-1952: Their early professional development. This period encompasses their starting as a brother act on WJLS in Beckley, West Virginia, touring the South in a Hudson bus, separating for World War II, joining WWVA Jamboree in 1948, and Everett's going with Flatt and Scruggs in 1950-1952. This period takes them from the local talent stage to their arrival in Boston, when they were a very tight professional group playing at the top of their field. At this point they were capable of going on to become the top group in their field except for two major factors:

   a. A poor managerial decision that took them to a northern city away from the real "action."
   b. Their being slightly out of step with their time. The strong traditional culture and values that eventually brought them back home also kept them from evolving into commercial successes. Their base in the music they heard as children and teenagers was so strong that they were incapable of seriously turning to the music of a man that they felt was no longer playing real music, Bill Monroe after the

late forties. Bill's new jazz-oriented style of picking was never fully appreciated by the melody-oriented Lillys.

3. 1952-1970: Their tenure at the Hillbilly Ranch, Park Square, Boston. This might be called their honky-tonk period, a time of very gradual loss of enthusiasm and ability to perform well in the style they considered their forte, that is, duet-style singing and playing. This change was brought on by:
   a. Everett's taking up the fiddle to increase volume at the Ranch.
   b. The cultural stress of constant interaction with a working-class, northern, urban environment.
   c. Their isolation much of the time from their professional peers.
   d. Pressure from the Ranch customers to play more honky-tonk songs.
4. 1970: Their return to their roots. In March of 1970, Everett Lilly moved back to Clear Creek and is no longer a full-time professional musician. Bea soon followed.

What music the Lilly Brothers do play now is generally old-time white spirituals. They occasionally appear at bluegrass festivals where they are referred to as old timers, even though they are no older than some of the mainstream bluegrass bands.

APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENTS

The Lilly Brothers preferred certain makes and types of instruments and, like most other professional hillbilly musicians, would play only the professional standard, that is, large dread-naught flat-top guitars and Gibson mandolins. From photographs included in Tom Heathwood's article in *Muleskinner News*, vol. 1, no. 6, November-December 1970, we can see what models they used. The earliest picture, in which Bea is approximately ten years old, shows him holding a flat-top guitar of indeterminate make. A 1940 picture of WJLS shows Bea holding a J-45 model Gibson guitar and Everett an "A" model Gibson mandolin. In the next picture, taken in 1948 at Wheeling, West Virginia, Everett is shown with an "F" hole Gibson model F-2 mandolin, while Bea has a Gibson "Jumbo." A picture taken between 1950 and 1952 while Everett was with Flatt and Scruggs shows him with a Gibson Artist's Model "3 point" F-4. The three album photographs taken between 1960 and 1963 (two Prestige and one Folkways) shows Everett with the same Artist's Model F-4 and Bea with what looks like a "D" model Martin, although actually it is a guitar he made. He used specifications similar to a Martin D-45 and handmade the guitar. This is the guitar he played at all engagements from sometime before 1961 until 1969, when his wife bought him a new D-35 Martin. Like a number of musicians, Everett dabbled in instrument dealing. During the sixties he generally had a guitar, a banjo, and a few mandolins around the house that children would play. The personal instruments he relied upon through the sixties were the clear-finished Artist's Model F-5, known as the "White Mandolin;" a black-finished round hold Artist's Model F-5, known as the "Black Mandolin;" and a fiddle of unknown origin that he bought in a pawn shop in New Bedford, Massachusetts. By 1969, however, both of the mandolins had had accidents and were unplayable.

Having found himself in the position of having to borrow a mandolin to play a date, Everett bought a Gibson F-5 sight unseen out of Chicago through a friend for $350. It should be noted that Everett preferred the F-4 sound to that of the F-5. He always claimed that having the more strident sound on the high strings was well worth the trade-off in bass quality, since the higher sounds were more important to the Lilly Brothers type of music. He also only judged an instrument after having played it into a microphone, since it was the sound produced by the mandolin plus microphone that reached an audience.

APPENDIX B: SONGS AND TUNES OF THE LILLY BROTHERS AT HILLBILLY RANCH, 1965-1970

The following is only a partial list of the band's repertory. It is especially deficient in sacred and slow instrumental waltz numbers. The songs are shown here according to the style in which they were performed. Thus, "traditional" songs are those done in a pre-1946 manner, such as brother duet, Carter Family style, or fiddle tune. "Bluegrass" refers to inclusion of three-finger banjo picking plus singing style. "Honky-tonk" numbers were generally of more recent vintage and always played at a tempo amenable to slow dancing. This style of song was sometimes referred to by band members as "belly rubbing music."

Traditional

Wildwood Flower
Katy Hill
Storms Are on the Ocean
That Star Belongs to Me
We Shall Meet
More Pretty Girls than One
Shady Grove
Ragtime Annie
The Letter Edged in Black
Rank Stranger
Four Nights Experience
New River Train
Under the Double Eagle
The Streets of Laredo
Are You Washed in the Blood

Traditional

Tom Dooley
Six More Miles
Keep on the Sunny Side
Watermelon on the Vine
Great Speckled Bird
Cindy
The Lighting Express
Bonaparte's Retreat
Sweeter than the Flowers
Rolling On
I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes
Fisher's Hornpipe
Sally Goodin
Chicken Reel
Arkansas Traveler
A Beautiful Life
In the Pines
Weeping Willow
Will the Circle be Broken
Bile Them Cabbage Down
Billy in the Low Ground
The Wreck of Old 97
East Virginia Blues
Open up Those Pearly Gates

Little Joe
Dig a Hole in the Meadow
What Would You Give in Exchange
Oh Hide You in the Blood
That Cold Grey Tomb of Stone
Goodbye Maggie
Trouble, Trouble
There'll Come a Time
Little Rosewood Casket
Jack and Mae
Southern Skys
Knoxville Girl
Will the Circle be Unbroken
Mississippi Sawyer
Red Wing
Camptown Races
Eight More Miles to Louisville
West Virginia Waltz
Over the Waves
Up Jumped the Devil
Orange Blossom Special
Barbara Allen
The Butcher Boy
Katy Dear

Old Joe Clark
Little Birdie
Soldiers Joy
Turkey in the Straw
Wreck of the F. F.V.
Saints Go Marching In
St. Louis Blues
In My Dear Old Southern Home
Forgotten Soldier Boy
Banks of the Ohio
Where is My Sailor Boy
Sinner You Better Get Ready
Black Mountain Rag
Devils Dream
You Are My Flower
Your Love Is Like a Flower
The Wreck of No. 9
Amazing Grace
Long Journey Home
Mother's only Sleeping
Train Forty-five
Lee Highway Blues
Sourwood Mountain
Waves on the Sea
Rabbit in the Log

Bluegrass

Wabash Cannonball
Cabin in Caroline
Cumberland Express
Little Cabin Home on the Hill
Are You Tired of Me My Darling
Riding on My Savior's Train
Home Sweet Home
Bugle Call Rag
Katy Cline
Salty Dog
Sweetheart You've Done Me Wrong
Footprints in the Snow
Uncle Pen

Columbus Stockade Blues
Miller's Cave
Monroe's Hornpipe
John Henry
Truck Driving Man
Why Do You Wander
Blue Moon of Kentucky
Jimmy Brown the Newsboy
Old Slewfoot
The Ballad of Jed Clampett
Little Maggie
Bring Back My Blue Eyed Boy to Me
Little Annie

John Hardy
Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms
Foggy Mountain Top
We'll Meet Again Sweetheart
Homestead on the Farm
Tragic Romance
Rawhide
Earl's Breakdown
Cripple Creek
Bluegrass Breakdown
Foggy Mountain Breakdown
Put My Little Shoes Away
Blackberry Blossom

Honky-Tonk

My Son Calls Another Man Daddy
The Yellow Rose of Texas
San Antonio Rose
With This Ring I Thee Wed
Wings of A Dove

Long Black Veil
Your Cheating Heart
On the Banks of the Old Ponchatrain
Married by the Bible--Divorced by the Law

Green, Green, Grass of Home
Tennessee Waltz
Kentucky Waltz
Filipino Baby
Springtime in Alaska
Fraulein
Almost Persuaded
Fraulein

continued to Footnotes on page 40

Younger old-time musicians playing 'under the elm in the parking lot' at a recent folk festival in Glenville.

continued from page 4

college's course will be folklorist Dr. Patrick W. Gainer, Franklin George, the versatile folk music instrumentalist, and Charles Scott, art professor at the college. Makers of traditional crafts, musicians, and square dancers from the area will be visiting teachers. For the tuition, lodging, and meals the course may cost as little as $57.29. Complete information is available from Mack K. Samples, Glenville State College, Glenville, W. Va. 26351.

The Folk Festival in its 26th year will, as always, feature traditional instrumental and vocal music above all else. The fiddle and banjo contests at 2:30 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday (20th and 21st) will attract musicians from far and wide, and at 7:30 Thursday through Saturday nights the folk music concerts will be held in the college auditorium. Crafts in The Country Store and around town, good foods, square dancing, events honoring the West Virginia Belles, the muzzle-loading rifle shooting contest, the 10:30 Saturday morning parade, the spelling bee, and shape note singing on Sunday morning at Job's Temple are all on the schedule as before. There is no charge for any of this except food, crafts, and hand-turned, homemade ice cream at the corner of Main and Court. For a brochure write the West Virginia State Folk Festival, Inc., Box 127, Glenville, W. Va. 26351.

PLANS TOLD FOR MOUNTAIN STATE ART AND CRAFT FAIR

The five-day Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes will be from June 2 through 6 this year. The organizers of this major crafts event in the State and, indeed, in the Eastern United States are pleased that in the past two years their previous thorny traffic problems have been eliminated.

With much flavor of old country fairs, it will present 110 juried craftspeople with more studio glass, wood products, leaded glass, and metal jewelry than ever before, it is reported. Among special exhibits it is hoped there will be more emphasis on blacksmithing and basket making. This year students of traditional mountain music will be provided special times and a place where they may join workshops led by the seasoned performers on hand.

THIRD AUGUSTA HERITAGE ARTS WORKSHOP'S PLANS

For the third annual Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop from July 7 through August 9 the sponsor, the Randolph County Creative Arts Council, has selected Scottie and Jim Wiest as co-directors. On the campus of Davis and Elkins College, the workshop again expects to attract students ranging from teenagers to senior citizens.

Mrs. Wiest, a potter, and Mr. Wiest, a leather craftsperson, are planning several innovations this

A class in making braided rugs at Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop.

year. A course called Appalachian Documentation conducted by Dr. Barbara W. Tedford, will be freely structured to fill students' needs and will have a number of guest lecturers, including Mike Seeger, the noted collector and performer of American country and folk music. A unit on every aspect of log cabin building will be offered, and Henry Glassie, the prominent Indiana University folklorist, will lecture on the log cabin's development. Added to the traditional mountain crafts taught before, courses this year will be offered in making several older types of rugs, in whittling, and mountain toy making. The Davis and Elkins College Library's folklore collection will be moved to the site of the workshop for students' use.

Other teachers and special lecturers the Wiests thus far expect to participate in the courses are

Beatrice Bannerman, weaver
Okey Chenoweth, poet
Dwight Diller, folk musician
Wolfgang Flor, sculptor (whittler)
Dr. Patrick W. Gainer, folk song scholar
Fred Gerber, vegetable dyer
Dr. Margaret P. Goddin, literature scholar
Olive Goodwin, weaver
Candace Laird, basketry expert
Robert Maslowski, archaeologist
Susan Maslowski, potter
Virginia McTeer, Am. Indian lore expert
Richard Miecznikowski, potter
Ed Pitner, nature lore scholar
Lucy Quarrier, weaver
Bets Ramsey, quilt maker
Paul Reisler, musical instrument maker
Dick Schnacke, folk toy expert
Don West, Appalachian history scholar
Dale Wilson, folk dramatist.

Complete information about the workshop, campus accommodations, and the possibility of receiving college credit for courses is available by writing Jim and Scottie Wiest, Suite 321, Tygart Hotel, Elkins, W. Va. 26241.

TWO BOOKS BY GAINER DUE

Folk Songs from the West Virginia Hills by Dr. Patrick W. Gainer will be published in May by Sececa Books in Grantsville. The 240-page book will contain a large annotated sampling of the songs he has collected and traced over 50 years. It includes ballads, play-party songs, Negro spirituals, and fiddle-tune songs. The cloth edition will be priced at $15.00. Seneca Books will also issue Dr. Gainer's new book, Ghost Stories and Witching Tales in the coming months. It will also contain superstitions, folk remedies, and the language of central Appalachia. Further information on these books and others from the publisher may be requested from Box 474, Grantsville, W. Va. 26147.

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MK: Yes, I think so, some ways good and in some ways not so good.

AH: Seems like in so many ways. It won't be long before everybody will have to hire somebody to dig their grave and take care of that.

Church Life

MK: What about the Sunday schools out in the country?

AH: I like the old country Sunday school meetings. It didn't get too bad to go to the Sunday school and meetings and prayer meetings. Between the revivals and such as that, we mostly always had something going on at the church, but now I don't know of a church--or very many churches--out in the country around home that is--well, there are too, at Harmony and Wolf Camp, I guess, but White Pine and Falling Water and places where I used to go to church, the churches are just gone nearly. Them two churches are just about gone. It is a pretty sad thing to think about really.

MK: Did you have pretty good attendance out in there?

AH: Oh, yes, everybody went for miles and miles.

MK: That was about the only way they had of getting together--I mean really--to see everybody?

AH: Yes, it was really. And they would go for miles to attend a big meeting. There would be so many sometimes the church wouldn't hold them all, and there was so many more people then in the country than there is now, and they all liked to go to church.

Before and After Electricity

AH: (Before the Hopkins had electricity during World War II) I nearly always had to fill my lamps and clean the globes every evening. Well, this evening I had gone to fill my lamps and didn't have no oil. Well, the store was, I expect, a quarter of a mile down there anyhow. Well, I grabbed my oil can and my basket of eggs to get my oil with, and I knowed I would have to hurry or it would be way after dark before I could get back. And I took a near cut over the hill through just a little path. And I had a slipper that had a sole loose right at the toe of my slipper and I was going down through that little path just making ninety, and I caught the sole of my slipper on I don't know what, but, anyhow, there I went. I expect I was at least ten feet before I quit sliding. My oil jug flew out of my hand and went over into the hollow and broke in a million pieces, and my eggs scattered all over that path. I expect I had four or five good eggs when I went to pick them up, but I knew I had to have my oil. And so I went ahead down to the store and got me a bottle and got me some oil. I hurt my knee awful bad. I laid there a right smart little bit--thought I was killed, you know. And, well, finally I thought I would try to get up and I got up and limped down to the store, and I got my oil and come back home and I filled up my lamps. But I couldn't hardly get up and down the stairs for two or three days after that, my knee was so sore--it was bad. It hurt my knee pretty bad, but we had our lamp oil. Now, things like that happened, you know. Things like that happened often.

(After electricity was installed) Oh, we thought we had everything.

MK: I'll bet.

AH: Just press a little button and flip a little switch, you know, for our lights and everything. It took a while to get used to that.

MK: What did you do for refrigerators before you had that?

AH: We just done without.

MK: Did you use ice boxes or anything like that?

AH: No, we never did have ice boxes, and a lot of times we would put our milk in the cooker with a bail and tie it on a rope and hang it down in a well to keep it good and cold. The well was about 35 feet deep and that milk would stay good and cold, and that was our refrigerator.

MK: What about ice cream? Did you ever make ice cream?

AH: No, we would make snow cream.

MK: How did you make that?

AH: Well, we just get snow and we would beat the snow up in the cream off of our milk, you know. We would skim cream off of our milk, have a good rich milk with a lot of cream in it. And we would somtimes take a spoon and sometimes a egg beater and beat that up, put our flavoring and sugar in just to suit our taste, you know. It was good.

See next page for note on the Marshall University Oral History and Culture Project.

Marshall University Oral History and Culture Project

The Marshall University Oral History and Culture Project is an attempt to collect and preserve the rich, yet rapidly disappearing, oral and visual tradition of Appalachia by creating a central archive at the James E. Morrow Library. Further, the project seeks to establish closer ties between the University and the region it serves. The idea for the project was first conceived in the spring of 1972.

To date, more than 250 interviews have been conducted. Once collected, the tapes are transcribed and both tape and transcript preserved. The project's primary concern is the collection and preservation of materials depicting the lives and heritage of the Appalachian working classes. It is a cohesive element drawing the region together in a common search for our history and social development. We are recording the uniqueness of the past as an encouragement for the preservation of this culture in the future.

For further information contact Dr. Michael J. Galgano, Director, Oral History, at Marshall University.

See pages 5-8, 39

FOOTNOTES

Principal Influences on the Music of the Lilly Brothers of Clear Creek, West Virginia

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5 George P. Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (New York, 1965), 58-69.
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9 Malone, 9-14, 34-38.
10 Seeger and Cohen, 15-16.
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17 Ibid., 86.
18 Ibid., 63.
19 Ibid., 62-68.
20 Ibid., 120-131.
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28 Ibid., 129-131.
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53 Bill Vernon, "Tex Logan Remembers the Lilly Brothers," *Muleskinner News*, I (Nov.-Dec. 1970).
54 Mike Seeger's Liner Notes to *Mountain Music Bluegrass Style*, Folkways FA 2318.
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57 Vernon.
58 Dave Freeman on *The Lilly Brothers & Don Stover Country*, County Album 729.
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61 Seeger, Notes, FA 2433.

Goldenseal Staff

COLLEEN ANDERSON (Editorial Assistant and Designer), a Michigan native, came to West Virginia as a VISTA volunteer in 1970. She attended Western Michigan University and West Virginia State College, and received a B.A. degree in English from West Virginia University. She worked with Cabin Creek Quilts, a VISTA-organized craft cooperative, and spent a year as Information Representative for the West Virginia Commission on Aging. She lives in Procious in Clay County.

TOM SCRÈVEN (Editor) is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. He attended Birmingham-Southern College and the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. At the latter he received a B.A. degree in English. In the late 1950s he moved to New York, N.Y., where, after two years as an aspiring stage actor, he worked for 10 years as wholesale salesman and coordinator of promotion for several home furnishings firms.

In 1971 he moved to West Virginia and shortly afterward became an Arts and Crafts Representative for the West Virginia Department of Commerce. In the earlier months of both 1973 and 1974 Screven edited a West Virginia arts and crafts publication called *Hearth and Fair*, which no longer exists.

In This Issue

EARL L. CORE is a native West Virginian, his family having settled in the area later to become Monongalia County in 1772. He received an A.B. degree from West Virginia University in 1926, and M.A. in 1928, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1936. He received the honorary D.Sc. degree from Waynesburg College (1957) and from West Virginia University (1974). He joined the staff of West Virginia University in 1928, serving as chairman of the Department of Biology from 1948 to 1966. During 1943-45 he was botanist of the Colombia Cinchona Mission, at Bogota. He organized the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club in 1936 and was editor of its journal, *Castanea*, from 1936 to 1971. He also aided in the organization of the Herbarium, the Arboretum, and the Terra Alta Biological Station, of West Virginia University. He was president of the West Virginia Academy of Science in 1971-72. He is the author of numerous books and articles on botany, including *Vegetation of West Virginia*, and has also written extensively on local history. He served four years on the Morgantown City Council and was mayor in 1956-57.

NOWELL CREADICK, a native of North Carolina, attended Elon College, received his M.A. degree in economics from Duke University, and is working toward a Ph.D. in economics. He taught at King College in Tennessee and now teaches economics at Davis and Elkins College. Creadick has been playing many stringed instruments since the early 1960s and has competed in music conventions and festivals throughout the southern mountains. Playing banjo, he won the West Virginia State Folk Festival First Prizes in 1973 and 1974 and received a first place award in the 1974 Mountain State Forest Festival. He has written articles and reviews, many of which were published in *The Devil's Box*. Creadick has played in several old-time bands; he is currently a member of the Self-Rising String Band, an old-time dance band that is available to play at functions in the area.

JAMES J. McDONALD was born in San Francisco but grew up in Boston. An architect, he studied at the Boston Architectural Center and received a Masters of Architecture in Urban Design from Rice University in Houston, Texas. He is now a critic in architecture and urban design in the School of Architecture at Rice.

His first contact with bluegrass music and the Lilly Brothers was at the 1963 Boston Arts Festival when, he recalls, he "was knocked out."

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