Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 11, Number 2 Summer 1985

Summertime is festival time in the Mountain State. Things got underway as early as last April, with the big ramp feeds at Richwood, Clay and other places, and will continue until cold weather shuts us down again this fall. In the meantime, there will be dozens of events big and small, all across West Virginia.

In the last issue we ran our regular GOLDENSEAL festival calendar, listing well over 100 of the top events. We'd like to give you feature stories on all of them, but limited space prevents that. Instead we take turns, showcasing a few each year as we get the chance. We've done stories on the Mountain State Forest Festival, the Italian Heritage Festival, Martinsburg's big Apple Harvest Festival and others in the past, and have plenty more waiting for future treatment.

This time, we'd like to direct your attention to some fine music and crafts festivals in different parts of the state. In addition to the two events highlighted here, we've put together a special "Festival Season in the Mountain State" section, beginning on page 65. There you'll find features on the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville, and the Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts and Crafts Jubilee at Jackson's Mill. We hope you'll take time to read the stories — and then get out to visit both this summer.

1985 Augusta Workshops

Someone has taken the time to alphabetize the Augusta Heritage Workshops classes for the 1985 Augusta brochure. The list starts with Accordian, Appalachian Literature, Appalachian Religions, and works on down through the dozens of other offerings for the annual Elkins summer sessions. The Augusta organizers didn't quite make it to "Z" this time, ending instead with Woodslore.

Friends of Augusta won't be surprised if zither instruction is added in the future, to round things out. In the meantime, all will agree that the Augusta people have again come up with a remarkable program for their 13th year. As in past seasons, the workshops concentrate on traditional Appalachian subjects, particularly music and crafts, and on our root culture from the British Isles. However, Augusta continues to branch out into other folk cultures as well, this year including Sea Islands music and dance from Georgia and Cajun dance from Louisiana. Instruction is also offered in various crafts not specifically associated with the mountain region, this time including tole painting, stained glass and book binding.

The 13th Augusta Heritage Workshops get underway at the Davis and Elkins College campus in Elkins on July 14. The five-week program continues through mid-August, culminating in the annual Augusta Festival on August 16 to 18.

Week-long courses will be taught in several distinct categories, including dance, music, crafts and folklore, with shorter "mini-classes" available in most of the same areas. New offerings this summer include Appalachian Literature, by bookseller George Brosi of Kentucky, and The Art of Performance. The latter class, for artists interested in sharpening their performance and business skills, will be taught by musician Paul Reisler and others.

The Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops are part of the Augusta Heritage Center, a year-round organization which also sponsors research and fieldwork as well as the Augusta Festival and Winter Augusta. GOLDENSEAL readers interested in the summer workshops or other Augusta programs should contact Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops, at Davis and Elkins College, Elkins 26241; phone (304) 636-1903. Tuition is generally $135-$140 per course, with campus housing available for $122 weekly per person. Augusta Festival tickets cost $15 and may be ordered from the same address.

Appalachian Open Music Championships

The second annual Appalachian Open Championships will be held August 2-4 at Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County. The music contests will offer prizes in bluegrass banjo, guitar, mandolin and fiddle. There is also a special "Best of West Virginia" award for the top West Virginia resident competing in each instrumental category. First place in each category carries a cash prize of $500, ranging down to $50 for fifth place, with an additional $300 for the best West Virginian in each. The bluegrass band contest offers a $1500 first prize, decreasing to $200 for fifth place.

This is the one in the East to win, according to advance publicity, with the organizers noting that last year's Appalachian Open drew contestants from across the country. There are no registration fees for any of the categories, and no admission charge to the public. Events get underway with bluegrass banjo at 7 p.m. on the 2nd and continue through the big one, the band contest at noon on Sunday the 4th. Camping is now allowed, so lodging arrangements should be made elsewhere in the area.

Camp Washington-Carver, West Virginia's newest rural cultural arts center, is adjacent to Babcock State Park, off Route 60 at Clifftop. Further information on the Appalachian Open is available from Bobby Taylor, % Camp Washington-Carver, Route 1, Box 5, Clifftop 25831, or by calling (304) 438-6429.

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Goldenseal

Volume 11, Number 2 — Summer 1985

COVER: Henry Rodgin, shown with wife Anna early in their marriage, was among Bluefield's successful Jewish merchants. "Faith, Knowledge and Practice: The Jews of Southern West Virginia" begins on page 16. Photo courtesy of the Rodgin family.

PHOTOS: Doug Chadwick, Mel Grubb, Michael Keller, Scott Kitchen, Peggy Powell, Arthur C. Prichard, Ron Rittenhouse, Ron Snow

Letters from Readers

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305.

Athens, WV
February 19, 1985
Editor:
During a recent visit to my barber, I reviewed a copy of the GOLDENSEAL magazine. I was very much surprised to find such a fine magazine, which was produced about West Virginia. The reading was very interesting to the true, proud, West Virginian. The articles were very well written and contained many subjects which have been lost through our state's history. Even though there have been countless books and articles concerning West Virginia's history, this magazine is written about people we can relate to and be proud to call fellow West Virginians.

I would like for my children to read this magazine so that they can get some idea as to their heritage and can stand up and state to the world that "I'm a West Virginian and very proud of that fact."

I'm enclosing a $10.00 contribution and looking forward to receiving this fantastic magazine.

Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Wayne Sizemore

Transplanted West Virginians

Monrovia, CA
Editor:
There was an article in the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper "West Virginia: Traditions of Early America." It told of your publication, GOLDENSEAL. I am taking the liberty of sending you a check for $10.00, the stated cost of your quarterly. I am especially interested in the issue which contains items on "Opal Freeman, Midwife" and the 50th anniversary of Arthurdale.

Am I confused or wasn't that Eleanor, WV? Need I tell you I am a transplanted West Virginian? I remember as a child, Eleanor Roosevelt came to our state. I believe she was the first woman allowed to go down into a coal mine. It was considered "unlucky" for a woman to be in a mine.

My family and I came to California in 1946, for economic reasons. We've raised a family here, they have married and are raising families, too. This is a beautiful state also, and we are loyal to it, smog and all!

The following quotation, "Breathes there the man, with soul so dead, Who never to himself hath said, This is my own, my native land!" — Sir Walter Scott

This is the way I feel about my home state and I am proud of it, its people and its heritage. Growing up there gave me a sense of values that has stood me in good stead all my life.
Sincerely,
Princine Proffitt

It's easy to confuse the histories of Eleanor (Putnam County) and Arthurdale (Preston County), for they were both Depression "resettlement communities" and both pet projects of Eleanor Roosevelt. There was also a third such West Virginia community, at Dailey in Randolph County. — ed.

Los Alamos, NM
April 7, 1985
Editor:
Some West Virginians reach temporary havens in other states where our professions lead us. This in no way diminishes our love of the native state nor our respect for roots in West Virginia life. Our lives are made richer by the variety of people, geography and climate. Another native West Virginian, from Wheeling now in Santa Fe, acquainted me with the GOLDENSEAL magazine.

In the first issue I read (Volume 10, Number 4) there was a letter from O. H. "Pop" Francis. What a remarkable coincidence! I grew through the 'teen years at the VA hospital where Pop Francis and my father worked in adjacent buildings. My life most surely would have been different had Pop Francis not been there to advise us on ailments of our decrepit cars. He often loaned us his garage and tools to bumble our way through many repair operations. His home and garage in Falling Water remain clear in my memory, as does Pop Francis himself, with his ever present cigar and good nature. Most of the knowledge that I now apply to a collector car hobby was derived from that period. I remain proud of my West Virginia heritage and acquaintances with good people like Pop Francis.
Sincerely,
Richard L. Blake

Lititz, PA
January 26, 1985
Editor:
Please find enclosed a $10.00 contribution. I hope it will help insure continued publication of GOLDENSEAL.

Just finished reading the winter issue, and after having gotten over a twinge of homesickness, I felt like writing a line of appreciation. I was born and raised in West Virginia between Cass and Durbin at the foot of Cheat Mountain. Spent many happy days roaming in the big country of Cheat. I was told the reason it was called Cheat Mountain was because of its ability to cheat one out of his sense of direction.

Being unable to maintain a livelihood, I like many reluctant West Virginians have been living in Pennsylvania for over thirty years. One never forgets their place of birth, for this reason GOLDENSEAL is like a letter from home.
Sincerely,
Bert T. Hevener

Kennison Mountain Prison

Morgantown, WV
March 18, 1985
Editor:
Today for the first time I have read an issue of GOLDENSEAL. Although I am not a West Virginian, this state has been home to me and my family for nearly ten years. I do not know, however, why I have not discovered this excellent publication.

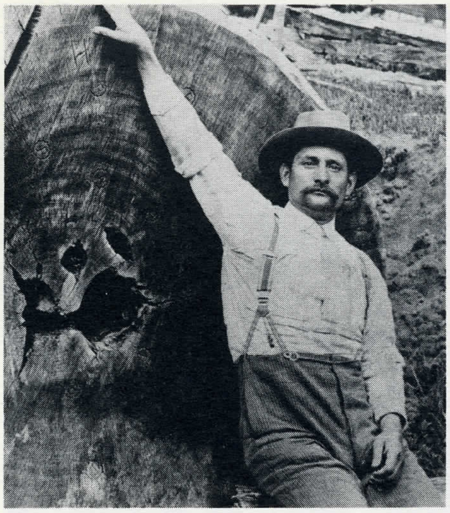
A friend, knowing of my interest in penal systems and of my own recent retirement from the Bureau of Prisons, more specifically the Kennedy Youth Center here in Morgantown, thought I would find the article "Doing Time on Kennison Mountain" by Maureen Crockett meaningful. And I did. In fact, another Bureau of Prison's retiree, Forrest Cloonan, also living in Morgantown, began his career because of his contact with the personnel at Mill Point. But of even greater significance to me was Ms. Crockett's reference to Mylton Kennedy, an early superintendent of Mill Point. My career really began in Englewood, Colorado, where I first met Mr. Kennedy, Warden of what was known then as the Federal Correctional Institute. I had a great deal of respect and affection for Mylt and for his wife, Pat. I wondered, as a result of reading this article, whether or not the author had been in touch with Mr. Kennedy, who now lives in Denver, Colorado.

Not only because of this article but also because of the articles generally, my wife and I would like to receive GOLDENSEAL. We are enclosing a check in the amount of $10.00. Thank you.
Sincerely,
Joseph Santos, Jr.

Writer Maureen Crockett is a close friend of former Mill Point superintendent Mylton Kennedy, and consulted him often in writing the article. — ed.

Logging and Loggers

Morgantown, WV
February 9, 1985
Editor:
In your recent issue of GOLDENSEAL, you featured a picture in the "Logging and Loggers" article by Norman Julian of my great-grandfather. He is sitting beside a huge cut tree, and the picture is titled, "Unknown Woodhick.' I have contacted two granddaughters who have positively identified him as John A. Hinkle. He lived in Wheeler, West Virginia, between the years 1856 and 1930, where he owned a general store and operated the Wheeler Post Office. He was a photographer, watchmaker and wrote deeds and other le-



gal papers. He also was a contractor for the Burns Brothers Lumber Company at Burnsville and for Hollywood Lumber Company, which was near his home. His store is still in operation by the family, and a granddaughter, Mrs. Orla Hinkle Lowther now resides in the home. Another interesting note on this remarkable man is that his portrait hangs in the Webster Springs Woodchopper's Hall of Fame. Each year during the fourth week of May, a Woodchopper's Festival is held, and a Champion Woodchopper is chosen to be honored.

This issue of GOLDENSEAL not only surprised me with my great-grandfather's picture, but also featured Mollohan's Mill, which is just a mile from the Hinkle home.

We enjoy your magazine very much and look forward to receiving it.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Gene Gallagher

Don Mole's Math

Somerville, MA
February 9, 1985
Editor:
This is a late response to "Don Mole's New Math" in the Spring 1983 issue. In it, Don described his method for dividing a whole number plus a fraction (such as 9⅞) by 2. His method: divide the whole number by 2, discard the remainder (in this case 1), add the old numerator and denominator ($7+8=15$) to get the new numerator; and multiply the old denominator by 2 to get the new denominator ($8\times2=16$). Answer $4\frac{15}{16}$.

This method can be generalized for dividing by a number other than two (for example, 3). The trick is to notice the remainder left from the whole number.

If the remainder is 1, make the numerator of the new fraction just like Don did, but make the denominator by multiplying the old denominator by 3 (or whatever number you're dividing by).

Example: 7⅝ divided by 3. 7 divided by 3 gives 2, with a remainder of 1. The new numerator will be $5+8=13$; the new denominator will be $8\times3=24$. So the answer is $2\frac{13}{24}$.

If the remainder is more than 1, everything stays the same except the new numerator. To get it, add in one extra old denominator each time the remainder goes up by 1.

Example: 8¼ divided by 3. 8 divided by 3 gives 2, with a remainder of 2. The new denominator is $3\times4=12$. The new numerator is $4+4+1=9$. Why? The remainder was 2, so we added two "4's" to the old numerator (4 was the old denominator).

Another example: 23½ divided by 4. 23 divided by 4 gives 5, with a remainder of 3. The new denominator is $4\times2=8$. Since the remainder is 3, we add three "2's" to the old numerator; so the new numerator is $2+2+2+1=7$. The answer is therefore 5⅞.

This is a lot harder to explain than to figure out, once you get it!
Sincerely,
Doug Lipman

Jackson's Mill 4-H Camp

Fairmont, WV
March 5, 1985
Editor:
I have just completed reading two articles in the Summer 1984 edition of GOLDENSEAL concerning the 4-H and Jackson's Mill. I found them both very interesting and enjoyable.

In 1982 James Morris — the gentleman interviewed in the second article — requested Monongahela Power Company to write an article concerning the Company's role in donating the land to the State. That assignment fell upon my shoulders, fortunately, and I commenced doing some research into the donation of the original five acres.

In my research I discovered the photograph that GOLDENSEAL

taken, Mr. Watson's family owned the five acres encompassing the mill, the Jackson homestead and a few outbuildings.

The date of this photograph is probably around 1914. The Jackson home burned in 1915 and the bridge over the West Fork River in the foreground was built sometime around 1912 or 1913. The name of the photographer was not discovered in my research.

About half a dozen years after this photograph was taken representatives of West Virginia's Extension Service approached George M. Alexander, president of Monongahela, about the possibility of donating the land to the State. Monongahela agreed to do so if the State would budget enough money to get the camp started.

used in the upper lefthand corner of page 10. I noticed that in the caption beneath the photograph that it was stated that date and photographer were unknown. Let me relate to you some of the background to that picture.

That picture is part of a three-album collection of World War I-era photographs known unofficially as the Watson pictures. That collection is currently owned by this Company and kept by the Public Information Division. Mr. J. O. Watson, an early chief executive officer of the Monongahela Valley Traction Company — a forerunner of Monongahela Power Company — apparently had these photographs taken.

At the time the photographs were

I enjoyed the fine articles about a wonderful part of West Virginia — Jackson's Mill.

Sincerely,
Charles L. Critchfield
Monongahela Power Company

Current Programs • Events • Publications

Banjo Man Honored Again

For the second straight year, Elmer Bird, Putnam County's "Banjo Man from Turkey Creek," has been voted the nation's best oldtime banjo player by the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America. The organization held its 11th annual convention in Nashville in January, with Bird serving as the opening act. He beat out fellow nominees Cathy Fink, Covey Wise, Tommy Thompson and others to take the honor in the Society's polling.

The Banjo Man won the same title in early 1984, and has had a busy year in between. On a recent visit to the GOLDENSEAL office he reported that he has been selected to the cast of Jamboree USA, on radio station WWVA in Wheeling, and has completed his third album. The new record, "Bumble Bee Waltz," was produced by friend John Hartford.

During the past festival season, Bird was featured at the Bob Evans Farm Festival in Ohio, the Louvin Brothers Festival in Alabama, and for six days at Huntington Galleries, among other performances. This spring he performed at Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. West Virginians wanting to catch his act later in the season will find him at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes in early July and at the Locust Grove Bluegrass Festival in Hazelton the third weekend in August.

Merchant People

Griesinger Films of Buckhannon, producers of the 1982 PBS television special, *Small Business My Way,* is back with another look at small town business. *Merchant People: Pride, Power, and Belief in Rural America,* in part an adaptation of material from the earlier special, is available in 16mm film or videocassette. Like its predecessor the new film focuses on the business community of Buckhannon, featuring gas station operators, bankers, a car dealer and an insurance agent, among others. All feel the squeeze on small town merchants in a shopping center era, and they express their hopes and fears eloquently.

Filmmaker Peter Griesinger desires extensive educational use of his latest production, and has published a 45-page study guide to accompany *Merchant People.* The guide includes the script to the film, followed by a section of discussion and essay questions for both high school and college students. The guide is included with each copy of the film, with multiple copies available.

Merchant People may be ordered from Central West Virginia Media Arts, P. O. Box 1102, Buckhannon 26201; phone (304) 472-7828. The 16mm film sells for $450, with ½-inch or ¾-inch videotapes available for $100. The film or either video format may be rented for $55 weekly. Extra copies of the study guide cost $1.75 each, or $1.50 each for orders of more than 20 copies.

Quilts at the Cultural Center

The best of West Virginia quilts will be on display again this summer in the Cultural Center, at the Capitol Complex in Charleston. The 49 quilts in this year's show will drape the 40-foot marble walls of the Cultural Center's great hall, from Memorial Day weekend until September 9.

The quilts selected for display were chosen from among all entries, in a blind jurying by an out-of-state quilting authority. Awards were given in the usual categories of traditional pieced, traditional applique and contemporary, with a new category added this year for quilters' cooperatives. The Best of Show quilt will be purchased for the West Virginia Permanent Collection, as in years past, with all other quilts for sale in the Cultural Center Shop. All quilts in the annual show are by West Virginians, gathered in a statewide search each spring.

The 1985 quilt show is sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History and open to the public at no charge. Cultural Center hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, and 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

New Folk Recordings List

The American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress has recently begun a new project, the publication of an annual guide to the most important new folk music and folklore recordings. The first publication, *American Folk Music and Folklore Recordings 1983: A Selected List,* covering 31 recordings for that year, was issued in late 1984. A 1984 list is now being compiled, to be published later this year.

The 1983 *Selected List* includes recordings from various American folk and ethnic traditions. Of special interest to GOLDENSEAL readers will be the several West Virginia and Appalachian listings, Clay County's John Johnson among them. Johnson's "Fiddlin' John" album was released by Augusta Heritage Records of Elkins, with notes by Michael Kline.

Folklife Center director Alan Jabbour believes that the annual publication will be especially useful for building solid public collection of folk recordings, and therefore in broadening the awareness of such music. "We hope that the *Selected List,* by increasing the availability of well-annotated, high-quality recordings through libraries and educational institutions, will foster appreciation of America's traditional music and speech," he notes. "Greater appreciation in turn will promote a better understanding of the varied folk arts and expressive cultures of our nation's many peoples."

Copies of the current booklet are available at no charge, by writing to *Selected List,* American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Suggestions for recordings to be included in the future are also welcome, at the same address.

Morgantown Bicentennial

The surveyor went to work on Colonel Zackquill Morgan's Monongalia County land in 1783, laying it off into streets and building lots at the confluence of Decker's Creek and the Monongahela River. Two years later the Colonel and his associates got formal permission from the Virginia General Assembly for the establishment of a municipality, and the place called "Morgan's Town" on the original plat map was officially created. The latter year, 1785, is now accepted as Morgantown's birth date, and in 1985 the busy university town looks back on two centuries of its history.

Morgantown is marking its bicentennial with a year-long series of commemorations, beginning as early as last winter. Events of interest this summer include several Independence Day celebrations, among them fireworks at Mountaineer Field on July 3 and an all-day air show at the airport on July 7. There are also continuous exhibits at several locations, including a Seneca cut glass collection, historic photographs, and a special display on WVU sports history at the Coliseum.

The WVU Public History program has produced a handsome softbound history of Morgantown for the Bicentennial Committee. *Morgantown: A Bicentennial History,* broken into sections on transportation, industry, education and other subjects, includes dozens of early photographs. The centerfold is a 1919 panoramic view of downtown from Westover hill, with a striking 1985 color panorama of the same scene by photographer Mark Crabtree reproduced immediately above it. The 75-page book, with an "Afterword" by the late Earl Core, was sponsored by the Monongalia Historical Society and Consolidation Coal Company.

GOLDENSEAL readers interested in further information on the bicentennial celebrations, exhibits, or the published history should contact the Morgantown Bicentennial Committee, High and Kirk Streets, Morgantown 26505. The committee may be called at (304) 292-3326.

Old Mills Society

The Winter 1984 GOLDENSEAL articles on Mollohan Mill in Webster County sparked the interest of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills. The national Society recently sent us a selection of their literature, along with an invitation for interested West Virginians to join the nonprofit group.

The Society describes its purpose as "to promote interest, both publicly and privately, in old mills and other Americana now passing from the scene." The group, chartered in Maine with representatives all over the East and Midwest, is interested in wind as well as water mills. The Society publishes the quarterly *Old Mill News* and a variety of books and special publications. The latter include state-by-state listings of old mills, with the West Virginia list of 88 such structures available for $1.40.

Annual dues are $8, including a year's subscription to *Old Mill News.* Checks payable to the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills may be sent to Bernard Webb, Circulation Manager, 4841 Mill Brook Drive, Dunwoody, GA 30338. Those interested only in the seven-page West Virginia mills list should write to Clarence D. Clapper, 291 Franconia Avenue, Telford, PA 18969.

New Music from an Old Master

"The Edden Hammons Collection"

The recent release of "The Edden Hammons Collection" will help settle a lot of arguments across West Virginia. It may still require bravery bordering upon foolhardiness to speculate about the single all-time best fiddler in a state known for its master fiddlers, but from now on we'll all have more evidence to argue from. The new record album from West Virginia University Press removes any doubt that Edden Hammons was a champion, at least among the very best, and it will contribute to his legend.

Hammons lived mostly in and around Webster County until his death in 1955, building over the decades a reputation still respected by musicians old enough to remember him. Woody Simmons of Randolph County, one of our finest living fiddlers and a man to be reckoned with at Mountain State fiddle contests, doesn't hesitate to call Hammons "the best oldtime fiddler I ever heard." In a 1979 GOLDENSEAL interview Woody said that the Webster Countian once beat him on his own home ground, and that he'd yet to see Hammons' playing surpassed.

Until now, memory and the tales of old fiddlers were about all anyone had to go on regarding the music of Edden Hammons. As is too often the case, he left no commercial recordings. But Hammons' music was not lost, for like many others he was recorded by the great WVU folklorist Louis Watson Chappell. At the suggestion of colleague Patrick Gainer, Chappell recorded Hammons on apparently three occasions in 1947, near the end of his massive folk recordings project. For better than 35 years the old single-copy disk recordings were all that was left of Hammons. They remained with Chappell for most of that time, and after him with the University's West Virginia and Regional History Collection, available only to scholars and to the few dedicated musicians who happened to hear of their existence.

All that changes with the issuance of "The Edden Hammons Collection." The new record brings the music of the old master into the living room of anyone interested enough to purchase a copy. Record buyers will hear Hammons pretty much the way Chappell found him, for the album's producers have kept editing and electronic tinkering to a minimum. Nonetheless they have extracted surprisingly good sound from the primitive field recordings, and the power of Hammon's fiddle overwhelms the technical flaws that remain.

Hammons plays solo on 12 tunes, and on three others is accompanied by his son James on guitar. Presumably these 15 represent the best of the 52 originally recorded for Chappell. They include some well-known fiddle standards, including "Arkansas Traveler," "Mississippi Sawyer," and "Forked Deer." Others, such as "Queen of the Earth and Child of the Skies," are less familiar, and evidently date directly back to Hammons' ancestral British Isles. A few are apparently indigenous only within the Hammons family, including "Falls of Richmond" and "Digging Potatoes." Alan Jabbour, who researched the family extensively for an earlier Library of Congress record project with folk specialist Carl Fleischhauer, provides extensive background notes on the tunes. Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center and a fiddler himself, approaches the material with the double advantage of scholar and musician.

West Virginia Collection assistant curator John Cuthbert and his colleagues have made "The Edden Hammons Collection" into an attractive package, including the LP record itself and a handsome accompanying booklet by way of documentation. The album is their first record release (Sound Archives 001), and all pains have been taken to make an initial good impression. It's unlikely that anyone knowledgeable enough to recognize the Hammons name will be disappointed in the product, and this album deserves a place on the record shelf of all fans of West Virginia traditional music.

—Ken Sullivan

"The Edden Hammons Collection" may be found in selected stores, or ordered directly from West Virginia University Press. Mail orders should include the $10.95 purchase price, plus $1.25 postage and handling, with West Virginia residents adding 5% sales tax. Orders should be sent to West Virginia University Press, Wise Library, P.O. Box 6069, Morgantown 26506.

Films on West Virginia and Appalachia

The West Virginia Library Commission has the largest collection of state and regional films that we know of, all available for the free use of West Virginians. Each summer we ask Steve Fesenmeier, director of the Commission's Film Services unit, to update GOLDENSEAL readers on the latest additions. The ones listed here were all acquired since this time last year.

These films, and the dozens of others in the collection, were all made in West Virginia or the larger Appalachian region, or are by or about West Virginians. You may contact your local public library to arrange to borrow any of them.

An American Adventure: The Rocket Pilots
77/min. (VHS) 1981
Chuck Yeager, a native of Lincoln County, was the first man to break the sound barrier, leading America into the space age. He and other test pilots who flew the X-15 are the subject of this spectacular story.

Bitter Cane
75/min. 1983
Haiti was the world's first black democracy and is now the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Many American businesses, including at least one in West Virginia, are moving their factories there. Interviews with West Virginia workers, Haitian peasants, and American businessmen reveal the semi-feudal nature of the evolving economy.

Booker
40/min. 1983
Booker T. Washington grew up in Malden. Shelley Duvall and Levar Burton star in this biography of a giant American educator. The film also includes much Civil War history.

Buffalo Creek Revisited
30/min. 1984
In 1972 a faulty coal company dam flooded the community of Buffalo Creek in Logan County, with great loss of life and property. Mimi Pickering, who directed the original Appalshop film, *Buffalo Creek: An Act of Man,* returned a decade later for this second look. Includes interviews with Secretary of State Ken Hechler, Congressman Bob Wise, Logan Countian Beth Spence, and surviving residents.

The Business of America
30/min. 1983
Ending with the recent successful takeover of Weirton Steel by its employees, this critical look at the history of American steel confronts a key issue of the 1980's. By comparing the views of steelworkers, community leaders, business executives and economists, we see the underlying reasons companies like U.S. Steel no longer provide the jobs once expected.

Coalfields
39/min. 1984
Industrial landscapes of West Virginia are transformed through a series of distorting mattes into a dynamic field of shapes and spaces. Original poetic text for this experimental film was supplied by Kimiko Hahn, with sound composition by Earl Howard.

Discover Harper's Ferry
7/min. 1983
This short film touches briefly on three themes: The Civil War, John Brown, and local industry. It gives the visitor an orientation to the Harper's Ferry National Historic Park and surrounding areas like Maryland Heights, Virginius Island, and Jefferson Rock.

The Great Weirton Steal
58/min. 1984
A painful film about a miracle operation to save a company and a town. In 1982 the workers at Weirton Steel were given the chance to buy their company, by taking pay cuts and borrowing large sums of money. Many different viewpoints are shown.

Hills of Green, Palace of Gold
28/min. (VHS) 1983
The Hare Krishna temple outside of Moundsville is one of the top tourist attractions in the state. Every year thousands of visitors come to see one of the most elaborate religious shrines in the country. The history and sociology of the community are shown, as well as neighbors' reactions.

Jon McBride: Astronaut
25/min. (VHS) 1983
West Virginia native Jon McBride became a Space Shuttle astronaut in 1984. Scenes from his childhood, military career, and astronaut training are woven together to make a moving biography of a man who has "the right stuff." Produced by William Drennen Jr. and directed by Gary Simmons, the film uses video, space footage and the latest techniques.

The Newcomers
30/min. 1956
Southern Appalachians came to Cincinnati in the '50's to escape the grinding poverty at home. They had difficulty adjusting to Big City Life, but with the help of local churches, many did. The pain and the joys of this aspect of the nationwide move to the cities are shown humanely.

Nothing to Fear — The Legacy of F.D.R.
52/min. 1982
Senator Jennings Randolph was in Congress during the birth of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. He, along with other experts and FDR's son, discuss the contributions of one of America's great presidents. A balanced account, showing both the failures and successes, is presented.

Pearl S. Buck
25/min. 1983
Hugh Downs is the host of this heartwarming biography of Pearl Buck. Winner of the Nobel Prize and one of America's most popular authors, Buck came from West Virginia stock. She grew up in China with her missionary parents.

Split Cherry Tree
26/min. 1982
Based on an Appalachian short story by Jesse Stuart, nominated for an Academy Award. David, the first member of his family to go to high school, accidentally breaks a limb off a cherry tree and is made to work after school to pay. His father, with a gun, is going to teach the teacher a lesson — but instead, is himself taught the importance of education.

Strangers and Kin
58/min. 1983
A lively and informative exploration of the images depicting, and often afflicting, the people of Appalachia from colonial times to the present. Hollywood film clips, network TV shows, readings of literature and dramatic sketches and interviews show the evolution of stereotypes.

The Upper South
26/min. 1983
West Virginia is one of the states of the Upper South. With roots extending back to America's first permanent settlement, it is shown to be a region rich in history and tradition.

Voices From a Steeltown
29/min. 1983
Braddock, Pennsylvania, is one of hundreds of small Appalachian towns which are struggling to survive. Once booming with 25,000 citizens, it now has only 6,000. A native filmmaker returns home to document this "Little Pittsburgh." The once thriving library which had its own pool and music hall is used as a metaphor for the devastation of a proud steel town.

West Virginia Filmmakers
28/min. (VHS) 1983
This videotape looks at several West Virginia filmmakers who have decided to stay home and make films about local stories and issues. Charlestonian Robert Gates, Wheeling director Ellis Dungan (who made Tarzan movies in India for a decade) and Buckhannon filmmaker Peter Griesinger are profiled.

West Virginia Renaissance
25/min. 1982
This Department of Culture and History film asks the question, 'What is culture?' Such luminaries as author and editor Jim Comstock, musician Aunt Jenny Wilson, glass sculptor Roberto Moretti, and others provide some answers. A lavish depiction of our state's varied culture, from oldtime music to fine art.

Fairy Diddles

By Steven Hutchins

While working at Woodlands Institute, near Cherry Grove in Pendleton County, a student asked me, "Hey, Steve what's a fairy diddle?"

"A what?"

"A fairy diddle!"

"Where did you hear that?"

"Well, while we were visiting Aunt Angie we heard some scratching and running around in her attic and she said they were fairy diddles. So what's a fairy diddle?" I promised to find out.

Now, in the 14 or so years that I've been in West Virginia, I've heard and seen some rather unusual things. When I lived in the Eastern Panhandle I knew a man that swore that a "black panther," an animal twice as big as a bobcat but only half the size of a mountain lion, was an infrequent but regular visitor to his isolated farmstead. This beast was supposed to have a long tail and coal black fur. And I know two people who claim to have seen mountain lions near where I currently live. One claims that his comes up on the back porch to feed. I even know someone who claims to have seen a hoop snake, which takes its tail in its mouth and rolls downhill — "back in the 50's, it was." But nothing prepared me for the answers that I got when I started posing the fairy diddles question to people across the state.

Wallis Bennett is 86 years old. By his own admission he has been a logger, ginsenger, moonshiner, trapper, and just about every other occupation that allows a man to be out-of-doors and earn a little money. Although he claims that he is not as spry as he once was, keeping up with him outdoors is a formidable task for anyone. Wallis does not know the Latin names of the plants that he points out, but he can tell you one or more folk names and what the plants are good for as well as anyone I know.

Wallis had an answer to my question. "Well, you see, when a grey squirrel or a red squirrel adult male can, he'll sneak into a nest of young ones when the mama's gone away for some reason. Then as quick as he can he'll castrate all the young males. Sometimes he'll kill them but usually he'll just cut them. Then when those steer squirrels grow up they are known as fairy diddles."

Orville Richardson is in his mid-50's. He doesn't get into the woods as much as he used to, but still gathers his own black cohosh "to break up a chest cold" and ginseng for tonic. Orville has an excellent memory for fine points and his answer to my question was typically more detailed than any of the others.

"Well, a fairy diddle is a real fast critter," he said. "You'll usually find them near pine trees and when they are around they'll chase away the red squirrels. There isn't as many of them around as there used to be. Now, they look a lot like a chipmunk but they don't have any stripes on them. All red with a long tail, but smaller than a regular squirrel. Cecil and I hit one with his car this summer and we showed it to people. I'm sorry you weren't around. Another name for them is a boomer."

The very first answer I received was "that's just another name for a ground squirrel," and most everyone agreed that the fairy diddle is an animal of about that size and shape. My friend Mary Mathews did not. She is what she calls middle-aged, and has her own opinions about everything. She was curt with me the day I asked her, and very sure of her unusual answer. "Fairy diddles! Oh, you've seen them. They grow back in the woods in the springtime. They're all curled up and fuzzy. Then they get to be those green ferns when they grow up."

Ralph Simms is a builder and mason who lives near my farm. Currently he's building an impressive bridge across the creek to his new house. He's Orville Richardson's cousin, and has about the same understanding of fairy diddles. "Those fellows are a lot like a red squirrel but they are a bit smaller and *fast*. They are powerful fast."

Larry Zickafoose is another of my friends from up in the Panhandle. Larry works in Baltimore but drives to his homeplace almost every weekend. His father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all were farmers in the surrounding area. When the sun is going down and Larry is out on the porch in his rocker you can almost see how deep his roots run. Not one to talk on endlessly, Larry's answer was short and to the point. "Fairy diddles are young groundhogs before they leave their mamas, while they are still nursing."

Margaret Deitz and Jacob Tucker are my nearest neighbors, a brother and sister who were both born and raised on the farm they live on today. In their 70's now, they are intelligent and well-read people. In the 10 years that I have known them they have been invaluable in explaining the how's, why's, when's, where's, and the "used to be's" of life back in a West Virginia hollow. For me, no exploration of something like this would be complete without consulting them.

"A fairy diddle is a fairy diddle!" I was told. "And he is a fellow that you don't see very often any more. There used to be a lot of them up on the mountain where Grandfather used to live. They are smaller than the ground squirrel but they look just the same. Sometimes they are a yellow color also."

"Oh, that's just an oldtime name for a flying squirrel," someone else told me. "You don't see them very often because they are a night animal."

Now, I personally don't believe that any of these answers are necessarily right or wrong. But clearly I am onto something important in this business of the fairy diddle. Maybe you can help. Write to GOLDENSEAL and let us know just what a fairy diddle is in your part of West Virginia.

Jack Baisden, Jr., of Baisden Fur, Root and Salvage of Logan, grades fur at the trappers' rendezvous. Father Jack Baisden, Sr., stands behind him.

The Trappers' Rendezvous

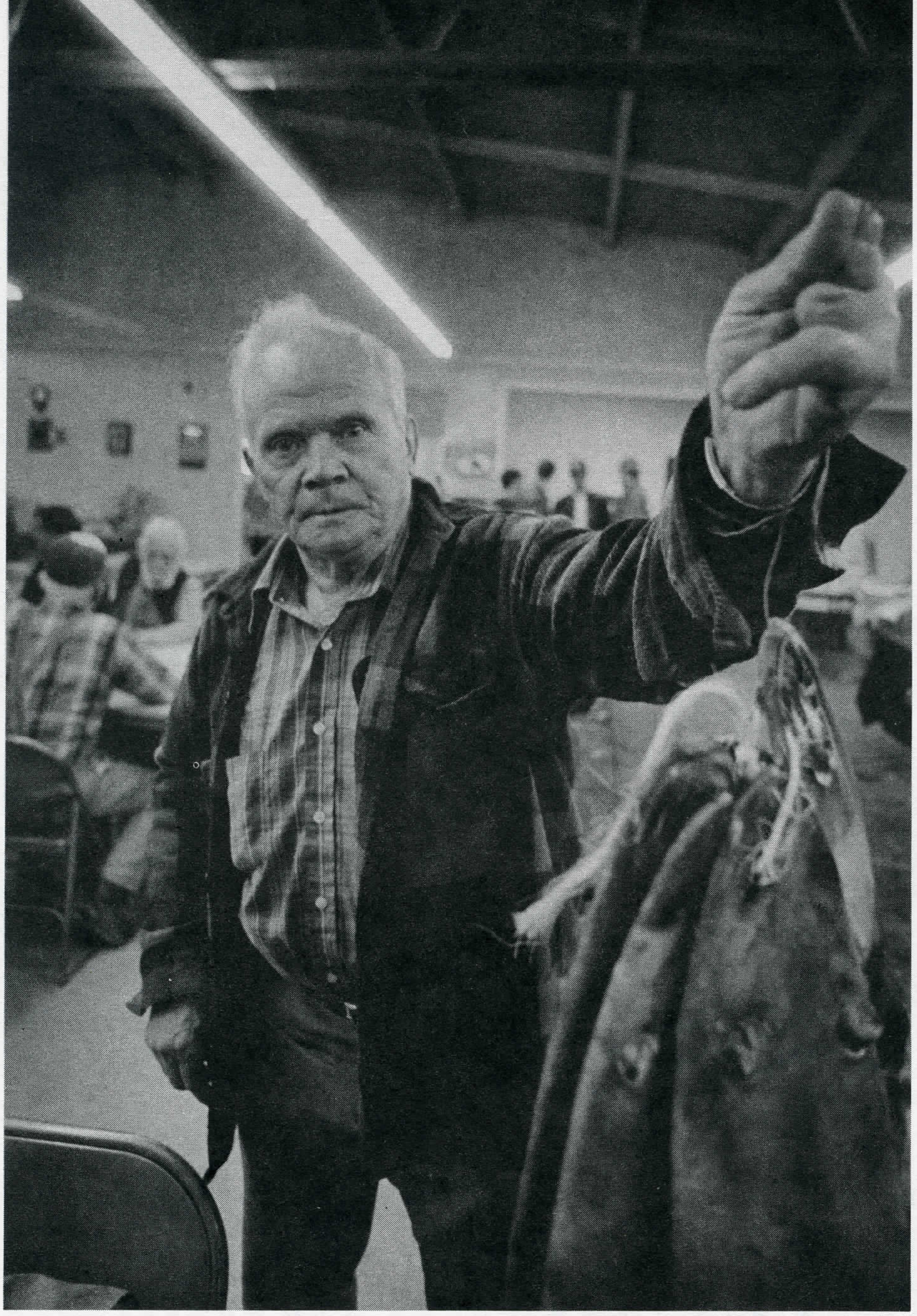
By Jacqueline G. Goodwin
Photographs by Michael Keller

Over the first weekend of March, I attended the West Virginia Trappers Association's Spring Rendezvous in Gilmer County. It was a two-day affair and consisted of demonstrations by some of the state's foremost trapping experts, displays, and a large assortment of trapping and muzzle loading rifle paraphernalia for sale.

In this case the old adage, "follow your nose" was very appropriate, and photographer Mike Keller and I did just that. Our noses led us to the Gilmer County Recreation Center in Glenville, where we savored a variety of exotic odors from "essence of skunk" to "musk of fox."

The rendezvous, which would wind up on Sunday with the customary fur auction, had lured many other visitors, from full-time trappers to curious locals, all attracted by the fascinating sights and the friendliness of the participants. One such sight was the large assortment of furs, piled in every available space, already graded and waiting to be auctioned. It was a beautiful contrast — the rust fox pelts and the brown shining mink fur against the light-colored walls. Another attraction was the camaradie between the oldtimers and the young trappers as they sat around exchanging stories and trading ideas, both waiting for their furs to be graded.

"Traditionally the spring rendezvous is the most successful one we have," said Scott Hartman, general organizer for the National Trappers Association and a resident of New Martinsville. Hartman, also secretary



Above: Summersville resident Ralph Perrine brought five raccoons and three red foxes to the rendezvous. The 81-year-old man was disappointed in the year's coon hunting, noting that he had had dog trouble.
Opposite: Ed Buck, wearing a beaver-skin hat of his own making, discusses a bobcat carcass with writer Jacqueline Goodwin. Buck, author of *The Appalachian Bobcat*, is an authority on the subject.

of the WVTA, should know, since it is his responsibility to work with each state affiliate that requests his help. "Each state has a director that I keep in close contact with. I guess you can call me an all-round trouble shooter," he added.

Coordinator of the National Convention, Hartman told me that this year the event would be held the third weekend in August in Duluth, Minnesota, on the shores of Lake Superior. "Approximately 20,000 or more people will attend the National Convention. I expect a lot of them will be West Virginians with their fishing equipment," he said, as he handed me a complimentary copy of NTA's *Trapping Handbook.* I leafed through the book as he continued. "One of our priorities is education. That is, we try to educate those who trap. This book is both for the beginner and the accomplished trapper. Tom Krause, the author, did a terrific job." By this time I had skimmed enough of the handbook to suspect he was right. My English teacher instincts told me it was well written. "When you're done, why don't you donate this copy to the library where you teach?" he suggested. I promised him I would.

Another trapper I met was Jim Rollins, who also doubles as the Association's District Five director. Immediately he made me feel right at home as he volunteered information not only about the rendezvous, but trapping in general. "The original idea of the rendezvous was to bring all the clubs or chapters we could together for the mutual benefit and enjoyment of all. This is our eighth rendezvous."

I asked Rollins to tell me about the schedule of events planned for the rest of the rendezvous. "Right now the trapper is having his furs graded. Trappers register when they first come in and receive a number for the grading rotation. Tomorrow is the auction. Buyers must be registered and have their monies posted by 11 a.m. The auction will start at 1 p.m. If you haven't seen one, it's really worth seeing.

"Besides the trappers, the West Virginia Muzzle Loaders Association and the Up-the-River Bowhunters Association, a local group, will conduct shoots tomorrow," Rollins continued. "We ordinarily have a reenactment of a Civil War battle, but this year the group couldn't make it. I'm sorry they aren't here. They added a lot. Two years ago we had the Boy Scouts from Braxton County show up and they did authentic American Indian dances. Just absolutely fabulous. They had about 60 people involved. It was great," he said, as he waved to friends. Looking over in their direction I could not help but notice the fine handmade muzzle loading rifles they carried. After asking if I was interested in knowing how much certain furs went for at the February auction, Rollins left me with the comment, "Don't forget to talk to Ed Buck. He does it all. Hunts, traps, fishes. He's something else." Then he added, "I'll bring you back the exact figures."

Within seconds I had met Ed Buck. Rollins was right. He looked like an honest-to-goodness "mountain man." Clad in khaki-colored trousers, fur vest, plaid shirt, and a hat made out of three beavers, which he had caught and sewed by himself, Buck is known by one and all, and everybody wants a word with him. Author of *The Appalachian Bobcat and All of its North American Relatives,* Buck's greatest love is the bobcat. "I'm past 83 and I've been trapping since 1914," he said. "I was born in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, near the New York line and lived there until I was 12 years old, when my family came down to West Virginia.

"Practically every year I trap. Started when I was too young to set the traps myself. I had people in my father's shop set them for me. He was a merchant tailor by trade. I bought my first trap when I was eight. A fellow who had a little store called a fair store said, 'Why don't you go out and sell these *Grit* newspapers for me?' So I took the papers out on the street and sold five of them and I got two cents apiece. As I walked by the 5-and-10 cent store there was a Number 0 long-spring Victor trap hanging there. Brand new and it was 10 cents. You should have seen me grab that thing off the hook."

According to Buck, trapping is usually done in the months when the animal's fur is in top condition. "By the first of March furbearing animals begin to shed. They also begin to fade. At this time the fur will not make good garments. So the season goes out and doesn't come back until the first weekend of November. Now the furs are what we call 'prime.' The fleshy side is pinkish, rather than black like it is in the spring."

I asked Buck what animal was trapped the most in West Virginia. He replied, "Foxes and raccoons are trapped the most around here. Used to be the muskrat, but the 'rat population is down a little bit. For the last couple of years the red and the grey fox have brought in the most money. But in the country at large, moneywise the muskrat is the best."

Buck feels that trapping has changed for the better since he was a boy. "With the advent of the WVTA and NTA, laws have been enacted which have protected some furbearing animals that desperately needed protecting." A past president of the WVTA, Buck served for three consecutive terms, his last ending just two years ago. Like Rollins, he was quick to supply details about the history of

the rendezvous and subsequent fur auctions. "Back in 1977 we decided to hold these gatherings because we felt we could give the trapper more money for the furs he caught than he was getting anywhere else. We were right. He received a lot more money than he would have if he had sold them privately.

"Now let me explain the grading and auction procedures for you. The trapper stands there. His fur is graded as he watches. If he is satisfied he says it is okay to let it go through. Nobody knows what price a fur will go for until it is auctioned. So if a trapper agrees, then it must be sold. It is a commitment."

A graduate biologist from Bridgewater College and a former Richwood High School teacher for 36 years, Buck pointed to a large stack of deer hides. "See those deer hides? Well, they will be made into leather. Buyers come and get them and they in turn sell the hides to tanneries. The tanneries will put them through a machine that removes hair. Then they are tanned, rolled, and straightened. A lot of handbags will be made from these hides."

I made my way over to the other entrance, where I had noticed a young man carrying a bobcat. By this time curious crowds of onlookers had gathered around him and were asking a lot of questions and examining his cat. I learned that he was Mick Baisden and he was there for the day to help his brother, Jack Baisden, owner of Baisden Fur, Root and Salvage. I also learned that the animal had been trapped by Doug Tingler in Ritchie County on January 10. I asked Baisden what he was planning to do with the cat and he replied, "I bought it and I'm going to sell it to a guy in Logan who wants to have it mounted."

By this time the voices were getting louder. One man asserted, "This cat is five years old."

"It's no more than two," came the response.

I recognized the first voice. It was Ed Buck. "Why do you think the bobcat is five?" I asked. He bent down and opened the animal's mouth. "Look here," he said, pointing to the cat's teeth. "See? They are worn."

"I still disagree," said James Snider of Gilmer County. "This cat is a male. Adult males usually weigh around 22 pounds and this one only weighs 18 pounds." He showed us the animal's tag.

"Well, I'll take off a year there. And this cat is pretty light. Older bobcats tend to be darker. He's four," Buck conceded. 'Did you know that bobcats are different than most of our animals? It is three years before a male starts breeding. As a result, it is hard to build up a cat population," he added.

George Shank's Tips for Trappers

One of the colorful regulars at the trappers' rendezvous signs himself "George Shank, P.D." If you ask he will tell you that that "P.D." stands for Pelt Doctor. It's an honorary title, evidently self-bestowed, but his friends agree that Dr. Shank has earned it. He has been "putting up" furs for longer than many of us have been alive, and for the past decade he has traveled around to demonstrate his skill for the education of less expert trappers.

As Shank figures it, it takes a lifetime for an animal to produce a prime pelt, and he strongly believes that trappers are ethically obliged to take the little extra time to assure proper handling. He passes out a sheet of tips at his demonstrations. We have reproduced them here, with the italics just as he has them in the original:

SOME *NECESSARY RULES* TO FOLLOW IN ORDER TO GET AS MUCH AS 100% MORE FOR YOUR FURS.

Harvest your fur *only during the season* when *pelts are prime.* This season is not, I repeat, not during August, September, or early October!

Kill the animals with the *least possible damage* to their pelts.

Clean and *dry the fur,* and *skin* the animal *properly.* Make cuts only in the *proper places.* Leave enough hind leg skin on the pelt to reach the hooks on wire stretchers. Remove tail bones and *split tails to the end.* Do not make "loose ears," "big eyes," or cut off nose skin improperly.

After making certain the *fur* is *dry* and *free* of *all dirt, burrs,* and other *foreign matter* (by combing and brushing), *remove* all *meat* and *fat* by fleshing. Put on "fur form," stretcher for drying.

Racoon, o'possum, mink, muskrat, and skunk are dried *skin side out.* The drying process is started on bob cat, fisher, and fox, skin side out, and turned fur inside out. (Check with your buyer re grey fox.) Beaver must be skinned open and stretched round.

Do not freeze green pelts if at all possible to take care of them otherwise. Should you be compelled to freeze a pelt, *never use plastic bags* to freeze them in. *Use brown paper bags.* Clean and dry the fur, roll tightly, *fur side out,* starting at the head end. Place immediately in the brown paper bag and seal or tie. Be certain your freezer is at a temperature of *zero or below. Never* remove, thaw, and refreeze a pelt.

It takes an animal a lifetime to raise a crop of fur. Show your concern and ability to harvest this God-given crop properly. Don't goof it up with a few moments of carelessness, or a "don't-give-a-damn" attitude. It is a certainty that all will profit by abiding by the rules. I am also certain that if the proper rules aren't followed, the fur taker is the one who is going to get cut, "first' and "worst."

George Shank, P.D.

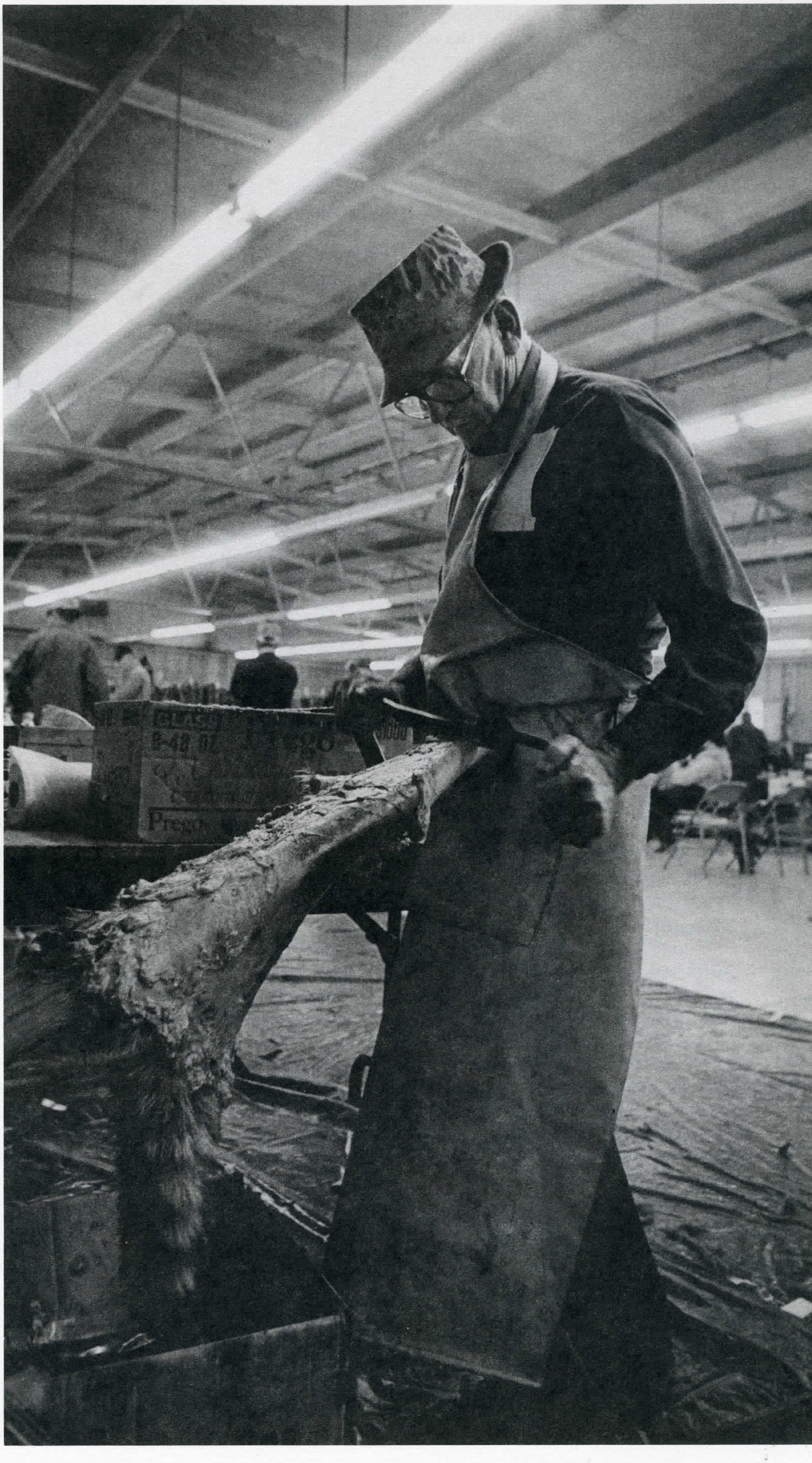
Like the gentlemen they are, Buck and Snider respect each other's opinions and the friendly disagreement ends. Both walk off together as they continue to talk cat.

Another "oldtimer" I ran into was my uncle, Ralph Perrine. Like many of the other trappers, the main reason he had come to the rendezvous was to sell his catch. "I didn't get to come last year, but I generally come. I have three red foxes, five coons, and this ginseng in the bag over there," the 81-year-old Summersville resident explained.

"I caught the red fox in a trap. A steel trap — double spring one-and-a-half. The other two foxes are another feller's. I'm going to sell them for him. I didn't do too well coon hunting this year. My old coon dog died and I just had a young dog. He was a registered English blue tick. He wasn't trained, but I finally sold him. Sold him for $100. He was a pretty dog and had a beautiful bark. If a dog can't bark then I get rid of him pretty quick." He held up his string of coons for me to inspect.

Besides trapping and coon hunting, Uncle Ralph also managed to gather a pound and a half of ginseng. He eagerly displayed the large brown paper sack. When asked how much money he expected to make off the 'seng he replied, "Don't know. Two years ago I had two pounds of 'seng. Had been offered $120 a pound for it, but I knew I could get more, so I brought it down here. The man looked inside, started to tear the bag down, and then took a couple of roots out. I said, 'What's going on?' He said, 'You got here something special.' You know, there are all sorts of grades and types. There's wild and there's cultivated. There is six, seven, eight grades of the stuff. Well, the man wouldn't grade it until the main man came back from eating his lunch. When he looked at my 'seng he wrote 'northern' on the bag and I wound up getting $310 for two pounds of 'seng, $155 a pound.

"Have you eaten yet?" Uncle Ralph asked. I shook my head. "Grab you a plate and go right through." He pointed to the cafeteria. "It was



"Pelt Doctor" George Shank fleshes a skin. He specializes in demonstrations for less experienced trappers, to show them how to "put up" their furs properly.

Harold Wilson was at the rendezvous with a full line of animal scent lures and other trapping gear. He traps professionally, rather than as a hobby.

the best dinner. They have baked steak, mashed potatoes, green beans, cole slaw, and pie for dessert. It was so good."

I didn't make it to the cafeteria. Rollins had returned with a copy of February's sale forms. Looking over the figures I noticed that a large muskrat had brought $6, whereas, a large mink had brought $22.50. The pelt that had gone for the most money was a heavy red fox. It was auctioned for $34.50. "These prices are lower than I expected," I said. He agreed. "The fur market is a very volatile thing. A trapper never knows how much a pelt will bring until it is actually auctioned." I told him it must be difficult to make a living trapping. "It is," he replied. "Out of 500,000 trappers in the United States, 1,000 or less are full-time. For most people it is a hobby. If a person does trap full-time, then he usually has a sideline business like making and selling lures."

One of these people who has such a sideline business is Harold Wilson. A resident of Ohio, I found him sitting behind a wide array of homemade animal scent lures and an assortment of various traps and trapping gear, all for sale. When asked which of his concoctions was his best seller, he pointed to a small bottle strategically placed in front of the others. "I've been in this business for over three years and my Number 22 Fox Lure definitely outsells the rest," he drawled. "What's in it?" I asked. "Can't tell. It's a secret recipe . . . but it's guaranteed." After awhile it was obvious Wilson wasn't going to divulge any more information to me or anyone else, so I moved on.

The next person to catch my eye was George Shank, the "Pelt Doctor." To say Shank is a crowd pleaser is an understatement. As he continued to flesh a coon skin, Shank seemed oblivious to the large group of people that had gathered around him. I finally got his attention. "What tools do you use?" I asked. "A couple of oldtime draw knives — one dull one and one sharp one. There are regular fleshing knives on the market, but I like my old draw knives, one of which was made by a blacksmith many years ago. In this skin game a person needs a tail stripper and an old umbrella rib, which I use for a tail splitter. I also use a comb and brush and this here old soup spoon to put on the final polish to the job." He stopped and showed me the spoon. Then he resumed the long and rhythmical strokes that make him an expert in his field. As he worked he continued to explain.

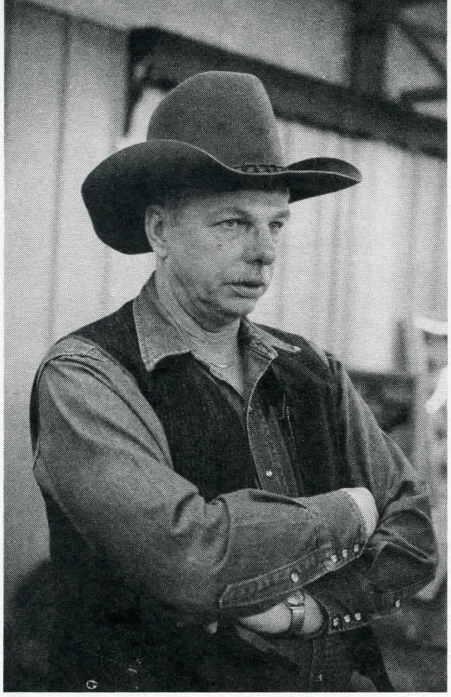
"This old soup spoon is what I started out with for a fleshing tool back in the '40's, when I first became aware of the fact that in order to get top price for my fur I had better put it up properly. I still use it to scrape mink hides and for the fine touch on the others."

"How many hides can you scrape in an hour?" I asked. "That depends a lot on the type and condition of the hide," Shank replied. "I can scrape and stretch six good coon hides an hour on the average. That is, if they are already skinned out properly."

Even though he is 65 and still recovering from a stroke which he suffered last June, George Shank continued to "put up" furs for his friends and neighbors. "I usually charge them a couple of dollars a piece for each skin. That's skinning, fleshing, stretching, and drying. For nine years I scraped a lot of skins for a couple of local fur buyers. I haven't kept too close of an account of the number of hides I've scraped, but in the last 10 years a conservative guess would be that 15,000 skins have gone over this old fleshing beam."

Shank has fond memories of trophy furs he has trapped over the years. "I caught a $35 mink and a $1.25 fox in California during the late '40's. But the best one was the $2.85 skunk I got when I was about 10 years old as I went to school in Russelldale. Bought a new pair of shoes with that $2.85 and got a couple of days off school to boot, on account of the teacher didn't seem to like the way I smelled."

In the past, the Burlington native



has worked long and hard, giving demonstrations for the benefit of trappers in general and the West Virginia Trappers Association in particular. "I think it was back about 1976 or 1977 that I attended a fur sale at Glenville and saw an awful lot of fine fur that was really poorly put up. I got the idea that it would be a good thing to set up a demonstration in fur handling at those fur takers' get-togethers. That's how it got started and I've been at it ever since. I do about four set-ups a season for the WVTA."

It is apparent that Shank loves what he does. However, thoughts of slowing down a bit have crept into his mind recently and he said he did plan to retire some day. "Link Wood from Greenbrier County has a good knack and a lot of interest in this skinning and fleshing business. I hope he can see fit to take over when I leave off."

Before I left I decided I had to meet the president of the WVTA. After a couple of minutes I finally located Don Hunter of Grafton. From talking with him I learned that each year there are anywhere from 20 to 35 county organizations in the state that make up the Trappers Association. I also learned that even though trapping is a hobby for most trappers in West Virginia, there are some who do trap full-time and depend on it for their annual income. According to Hunter, the Association must watch out for their interests. "The WVTA monitors the legislation that would affect trapping and as a result hurt these people," he said. "We also promote trapping and try to educate the public about it. You know, contrary to what some people believe, trappers are very skilled. They are also responsible." With that, he handed me a copy of the "Trappers Code of Ethics." Included in the Code were 10 rules which emphasized a strong trapping ethic. Hunter also pointed out that the WVTA works closely with the National Trappers Association. "The NTA is our parent organization," he added.

I looked at my watch. It was 3:15. Mike and I had been there for over three hours. The time had quickly gone by. I looked around. Instead of the crowd thinning out more people continued to arrive, mostly in pickup trucks and vans.

An oldtimer approached me and asked, "Is this your first fur auction?" I nodded my head.

"Nothing smells quite like a fur auction except a fur auction," he said, laughing.

Watching the old man walk away I had to agree, although the smell didn't bother me anymore. At first it had been overpowering, but I had gotten used to it in my fascination with the events around me. The beauty of the furs contrasted sharply with their stench at this stage of handling, but that seemed no more incongruous than the fact that the down-to-earth men gathered in Glenville were the first step in a sophisticated worldwide fur trade. Perhaps the glamorous people whose backs these men will clothe should come here as well, to see how their fashionable garments originate in the work and sweat of a group of determined West Virginians.

Above: Don Hunter of Grafton is president of the West Virginia Trappers Association. "Contrary to what some people believe," he says, "trappers are very responsible."
Below: These racks of fox skins will soon be part of expensive fur garments.

Opposite: The scales of justice and crossed ram's horns (Shofars) in this stained glass window at the Bluefield synagogue symbolize the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement. These are the most important Jewish holidays and occur in the fall, in the month of Tishri on the Jewish calendar. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Faith, Knowledge and Practice

The Jews of Southern West Virginia

By Michael M. Meador
Photographs by Doug Chadwick

Jews have comprised a significant group in West Virginia since 1849, when the first synagogue was founded in Wheeling. By the time of the state's formation in 1863 there were also thriving Jewish communities in Parkersburg and Charleston. The number of Jews in West Virginia has always remained small, however, and until the 1880's almost none of the state's Jews lived south of the Kanawha River. This was soon to change, because of events occurring as far apart as Russia and West Virginia.

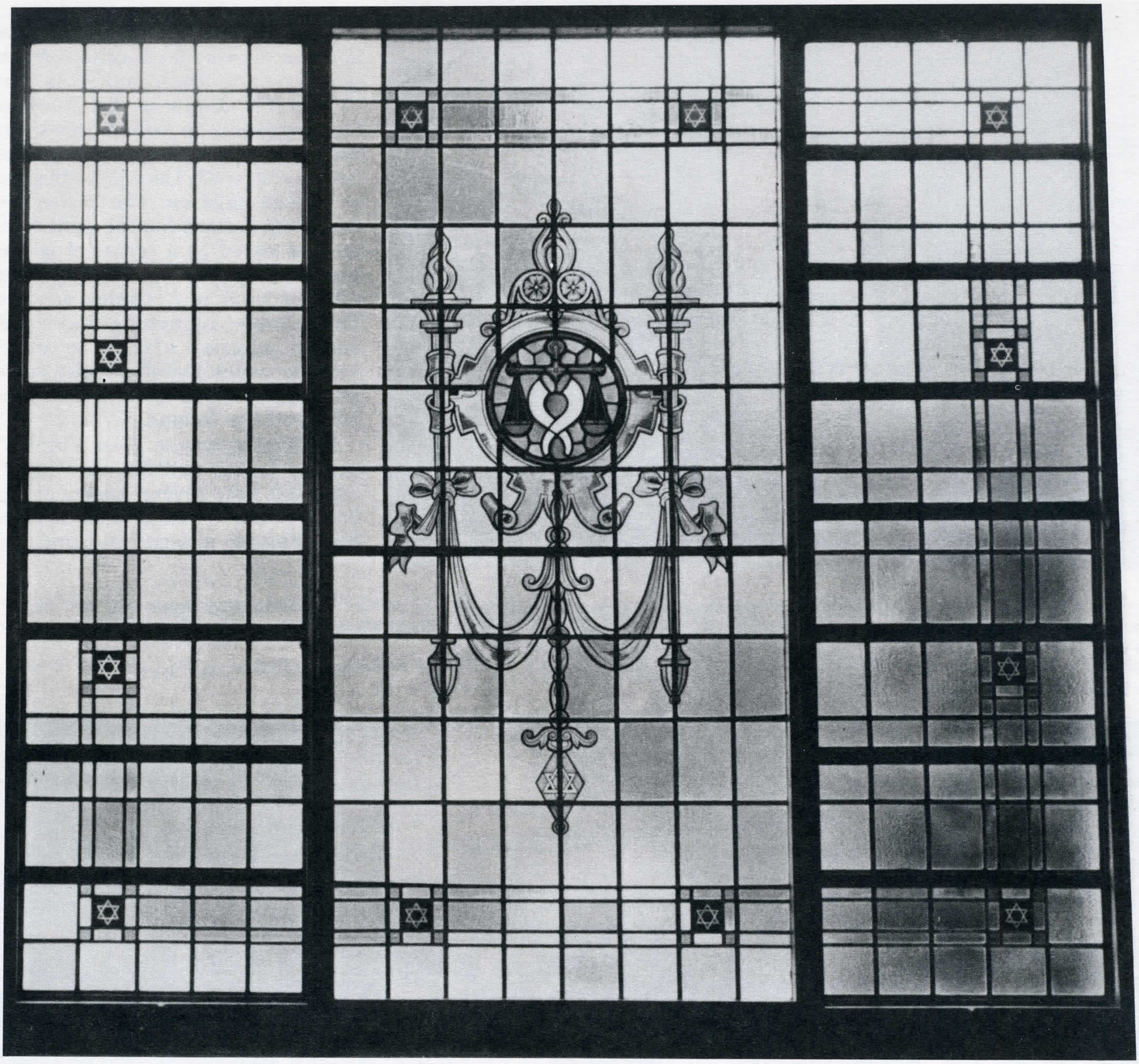
The presence of a vast reserve of coal in the southernmost part of West Virginia had been known for many years, but it wasn't until 1883 when the Norfolk & Western Railway extended its tracks into the area that it became possible to mine coal profitably. A veritable explosion of mine openings in the great Pocahontas Coalfield of Mercer and McDowell counties, and Tazewell County in Virginia, led to the importation of thousands of foreign and domestic laborers to work the mines.

About the same time in faraway Russia, events were occurring which would send vast waves of Jewish immigrants to America. Russia was going through a period of political unrest, which resulted in the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881. His son and successor, Alexander III, was openly anti-Semitic and during his reign the Jews in Russia underwent great persecution. A highranking member of the Czar's government was quoted as saying that the Russian policy toward Jews would be to exterminate a third, convert a third to Christianity and to drive the remaining third from the country. Violent anti-Jewish riots, or pograms, and other persecutions of Jews occurred throughout Russian-occupied Poland and Lithuania.

During the late 18th century Russia had participated with Prussia and Austria in dividing up Poland among themselves, and in the process had added over a million Jews to its population. For centuries, Jews had lived in Poland and that country had become a refuge for Jews fleeing other parts of Europe. With the final partition of Poland in 1795 the Jews there found themselves thrust into a country which neither welcomed them nor would grant them full privileges as citizens. Hostility against Russia's Jews exploded in the 1880's and thousands fled to America.

The first Jews who ventured into southern West Virginia were newly arrived refugees from Eastern Europe. Like many other immigrants, they were drawn to the area by the booming coal mines. Unlike other groups, however, the Jews mostly did not come to mine coal. They preferred to establish businesses which would cater to the needs of the miners and their families. In this they were pursuing lines of work they had followed in Eastern Europe, where many artisans, small traders and pub owners were Jewish. The coalfields of Mercer, McDowell and Tazewell counties were soon settled by Jewish merchants who peddled household goods door to door and opened businesses. A small but growing Jewish population developed in the Pocahontas Coalfield in the 1880's as new immigrants arrived to join already established friends and relatives.

The Jewish immigrant to the southern West Virginia coalfields had to overcome particular cultural obstacles that non-Jewish immigrants did not face. In Eastern Europe, Jews had been segregated by law and by choice into their own communities, where the precepts of their religion had been faithfully and minutely observed. Life was governed from morning to evening by the Talmud, a



vast encyclopedic interpretation of law and lore based upon the Jewish Bible, the scriptures known to Christians as the Old Testament.

Russian Jewish communities which were under seige, literally and culturally, stubbornly fought to preserve their religion, language and culture. It became almost an article of faith for Jews to resist the learning or speaking of the Russian language, or sending their children to any but Jewish schools. Marriage to non-Jews was forbidden, and Jews purposefully dressed differently from Christians and usually associated with them only in business transactions.

New Jewish immigrants to the Pocahontas Coalfield found conditions vastly different from those in Russia, with no Jewish communities, synagogues or schools to sustain them. However, they did find religious freedom in their new home, and obsolete European customs which had been followed for cultural preservation were gradually dropped. Jewish newcomers to southern West Virginia readily adopted the dress and language of their new home as they bravely settled down in the midst of their Christian neighbors. Jewish children attending public school quickly made non-Jewish friends and a spirit of openness developed in the coalfields which would have been unthinkable in Europe.

This did not mean that the Jews were ready to be assimilated to the point of losing their own identity. Although Yiddish, the Jewish vernacular language, was spoken, the lack of Hebrew and religious schools was a matter of some concern for the early Jewish settlers in southern West Virginia. They feared that without a basic knowledge of Jewish history and the Hebrew language their children and grandchildren might abandon the faith. Religious education of the young was seen as the only way to

assure the continuation of Judaism.

From the earliest times, Jews have had a reverence for education. A cornerstone of their faith is the "V'Ahavta" found in the book of Deuteronomy, in which Jews are commanded to love the Lord their God and to teach His words diligently to their children. The Jewish settlers from Eastern Europe came from an area noted as a center of Jewish learning. Every village and town had scholars who ran Hebrew schools. There were numerous more advanced religious schools, or yeshivahs, to which Jewish families could send their sons to learn Hebrew, the Bible and the Talmud.

Many of southern West Virginia's earliest Jewish settlers were highly educated, with several known as Hebrew scholars. Some held degrees from Russian colleges and universi-

Above: Baby Harry Rosenthal, the focal point of this picture, later prospered in Bluefield. The portrait, made in Brooklyn about 1910, is of Jacob and Fannie Rosenthal and family. Daughter Beatrice, right, was the first of her family to come to Bluefield, with husband Ezra Gilbert. Harry came to live with them after high school. Photographer unknown.

Below: The Rodgin Jewelry Store, with Mr. Rodgin at left. The company slogan, "My Mother's Wedding Ring Came From Rodgin's" may be seen in the background. Date and photographer unknown.

The original Scott Street home of Congregation Ahavath Sholom. The building was acquired from the Presbyterians in 1907. Date and photographer unknown.

ties. To provide for the education of Jewish youth scattered throughout the coalfields, European-style Hebrew schools called "cheders" were established from time to time and conducted by various Hebrew scholars. These small schools were never really adequate.

The first Jewish community in the Bluefield area sprang up in the boom town of Pocahontas, Virginia, the first town established following the opening of the N&W in 1883. It had quickly become a marketing center for the entire region. The enterprising Jews of Pocahontas prospered as they opened a wide variety of businesses, ranging from buying furs to selling furniture. One commodity which flowed in abundance in Pocahontas was liquor, and some Jewish merchants got their start by running pool rooms and selling whiskey by the suitcase-full to the thirsty miners who poured into the little town on weekends.

Pocahontas soon gained a reputation as a rough-and-tumble workingman's town, with hundreds of miners and their families living in the community. The more refined mine owners and operators preferred to reside a few miles away, on the West Virginia side of the line in Bramwell, where Jewish merchants were operating businesses by 1886. Bramwell would soon gain a reputation of its own for its unusually high concentration of millionaire coal tycoons.

Bluefield, which didn't exist before 1883, was established as an important N&W coal shipping center by the mid-1880's and incorporated in 1889. By the latter year, Jewish merchants had moved in from nearby Pocahontas, to open businesses in the new town. Bluefield's Jewish businessmen were soon operating clothing and jewelry stores, pawnshops, and a junk business.

Representative of the aspiring Jewish immigrants who came to Bluefield at this time was the family of Henry Rodgin. Henry himself was born in Lithuania in 1884, and had come with his family to America in 1887. The Rodgins settled in Mercer County because of relatives who had earlier established themselves there. They lived for a time in Coopers near Bramwell, and in the early 1890's moved to Bluefield.

To help support his family, Henry went to work at the age of 11 as the first newspaper delivery boy for the new *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*. Every morning he would fold and deliver his newspapers on foot to 300 customers. Later, as a prominent local businessman, he enjoyed talking to groups of paper boys about his early experiences and how they too could succeed in life. In 1925, when the *Sunset News Observer*, the *Telegraph's* new sister publication, rolled off the presses, Rodgin was invited by publisher Hugh Ike Shott, Sr., to deliver the first papers to many of his original customers.

In 1902, at the age of 18, with funds accumulated from his newspaper route, Henry Rodgin opened a jewel-

The bar mitzvah is an important Jewish ceremony, marking a boy's passing into manhood at age 13. Here Harry Kammer is blessed by Rabbi Goldsmith, formerly of the Bluefield synagogue. Photograph by Mel Grubb, late 1960's.

Purim

A Jewish Holiday Service

At the festival of Purim a cold March rain is falling on Bluefield. It is Friday evening, the beginning of the Sabbath or Shabbat and many of the faithful have gathered at the synagogue for the services which tonight will be enlivened by Purim festivities. By the Jewish calendar the date is 15/16 Adar 5745 — the 5,745th year since the world was created, according to Jewish Biblical reckoning, and the 12th lunar month.

Children use these "groggers," or noisemakers, to add a light touch to the Purim service. They are printed with pictures of Wicked Haman, Mordecai the Jew, and others from the Megillah reading. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

A small group of adults has gathered in the social hall. In the sanctuary children try to restrain themselves from running up and down the aisles while a guitar player puts the final tuning on his instrument. The rabbi enters. He is short, bearded and wearing a black doctor's academic gown with a long white and blue embroidered prayer shawl around his neck. On his head is the black skull cap called a "yarmulke." He is Elbert Sapinsley, and his friends refer to him as Bert. He shakes hands with the non-Jewish guitar player and discusses with him the evening's service. Susan, the rabbi's wife and the congregation's religious school superintendent, enters the sanctuary and motions for the youngsters to settle down. They slide into the front three pews. The guitar player and the children go through one last practice of the evening's music and the adults, cued by the singing, come into the sanctuary to find their seats. The Shabbat service begins.

Purim is one of the most joyful Jewish festivals. It commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the wicked Haman through the intercession of Queen Esther. Connected with the festival are, traditionally, parties and games. For Shabbat services which fall during Purim the Megillah (Book of Esther) is read. Each time the rabbi pronounces the name of Haman during the reading the children shake rattles and special noisemakers called groggers to drown him out.

The service begins with the lighting of the Shabbat candles, a ritual which is traditionally performed by a female of the congregation. Tonight the candles will be lit by 10-year-old Sarah Raskin, who represents the Gimmel (third) class from the religious school.

The lighting of the Shabbat candles signifies that the Sabbath has begun. The ritual, which is a central part of Jewish worship, traditionally was done in the home before the first star came out. Traditional Jews believe that once the Shabbat candles are lit, no other fires may be kindled until after the Sabbath has ended.

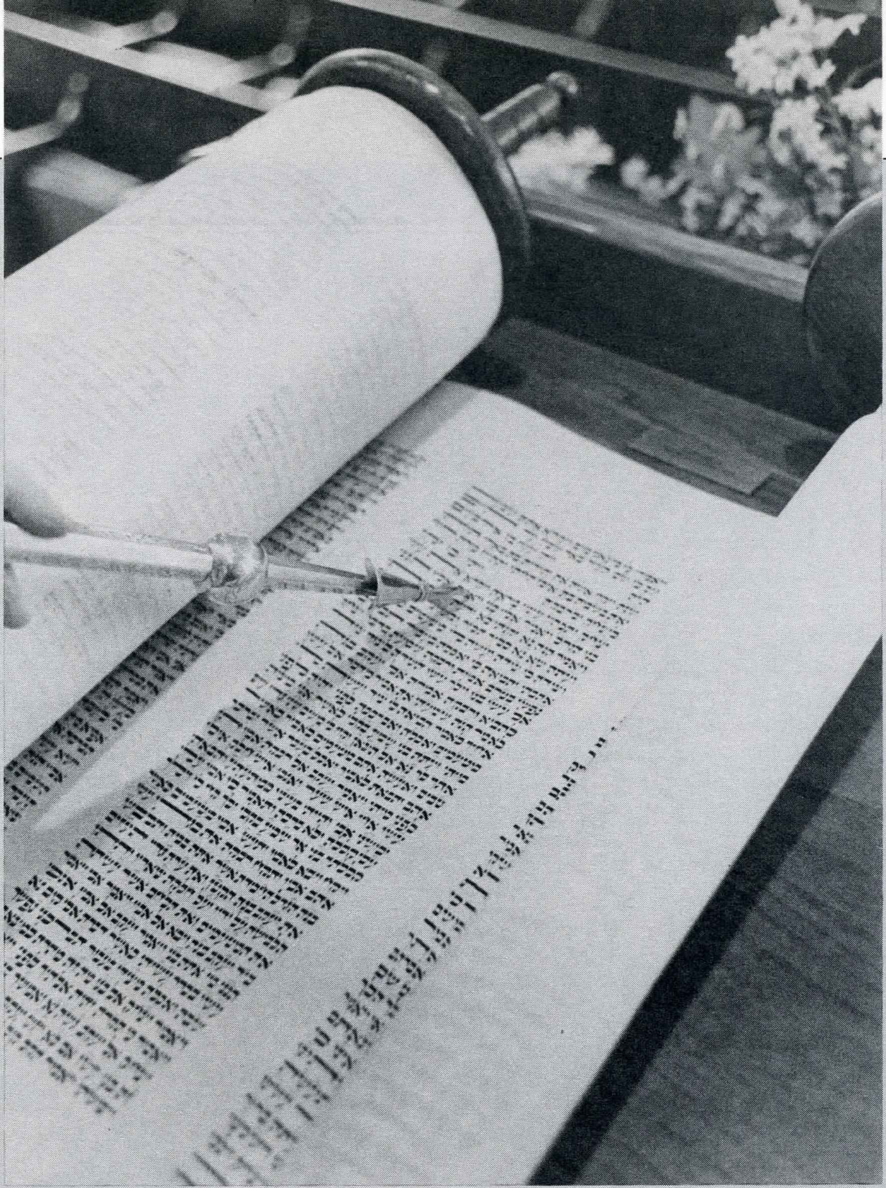
The lighting of the Shabbat candles is followed by the unaccompanied singing of "Havenu Shalom Aleichem" (Peace Unto You) and several short readings and prayers, some in English and some in Hebrew. The children stand and sing the Bar'chu, "Praised be the Lord to Whom all Praise is Due." There are more prayers and readings, including the Shema, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God the Lord is one," called the watchword of the Jewish people. The youngsters then sing two more songs and it is time for the reading of the Megillah. The children squirm in anticipation as the groggers are handed out. They are printed with pictures of Queen Esther, her cousin Mordecai, and wicked Haman. Some of the noisemakers appear to have participated in many years of Megillah readings.

The rabbi smilingly leans over the pulpit and explains to the children that they may make noise anytime he pronounces the name of "you know who" but that he won't give them any cues and they are to stop when he raises his hand. Everyone seems to know the rules. The reading begins with a summary of the first few chapters of the Megillah, during which the rabbi carefully avoids the mention of Haman's name. He begins to read in Hebrew (a rhythmic language punctuated with strong consonants) and the children sit on the edge of their seats, groggers in hand. Suddenly the name "Haman" is pronounced and the sanctuary explodes with the metallic clacking. Some of the teenagers hiss. The rabbi raises his hand and the noise stops almost as quickly as it starts. He reads on, the name, the noise, the name, the noise. The adults laugh. The children manage to get louder each time.

The rabbi finishes the reading in Hebrew and begins an English translation about Mordecai the Jew, his beautiful cousin who becomes the wife of King Ahasuerus and who convinces her husband not to follow the advice of the wicked Haman to kill the Jews. The Biblical theme of the reading is that God will deliver the Jewish people from persecution if they are faithful to His precepts. The rabbi explains that the Purim story capsulizes the many times tyrants have made Jews into scapegoats for the world's ills. The groggers are collected and put away for next year.

Tonight there will not be a sermon. There are a few more short prayers and the rabbi prepares to conclude the service. He turns from the congregation and faces east, toward the two large wooden doors which are decorated with carvings representing the story of Noah, the sacrifice of Isaac, the Twelve Tribes, the fruit of the vine, the seven-branched candelabrum (menorah) and the burning bush. Above the doors is carved in Hebrew, "Da lifney mi atah omed" (Know before Whom you stand). Above the inscription are two wooden tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. A light in a large ruby glass holder burns in front of the two doors. This is the "Ner Tamid," or eternal light. The "Aron Hakodesh," the Holy Ark, is reminiscent of the Ancient Temple in Jerusalem, and this is in the synagogue's eastern wall.

The rabbi slides open the two carved doors to reveal a lighted alcove in which three large Torah scrolls are enshrined. (The Torah consists of the first five books of the Bible.) Each scroll is covered with an elaborately embroidered velvet mantle and wound on two large wooden spools. The central scroll is topped with two high silver ornaments. A large silver shield decorated with lions and Hebrew inscriptions hangs from a chain suspended around the central Torah scroll. Around one scroll hangs a silver pointer called a "yod," one end of which is shaped like a pointing hand. This is used when the scrolls are read, to enable the reader to keep his place among the closely written Hebrew. The yod protects the valuable, meticulously handwritten scroll from damage caused by body oil on the reader's fingers.



The precious handwritten scrolls are read with a hand-shaped pointer called a "yod," to avoid fingerprints. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Tonight, because of the preceding Megillah reading, the rabbi will not read from the scrolls. Instead, he now leads the congregation in paying reverence to God and thanksgiving for the Torah, which symbolizes all Jewish learning. They recite the Aleinu (the Adoration), some bowing toward Jerusalem. An important concluding prayer, the Kaddish, is then recited; similar to the Christian Lord's Prayer, it praises God and prays that His will and kingdom soon will reign on earth. Rabbi Sapinsley makes some announcements, gives a closing benediction, and invites the congregation to an "Oneg Shabbat" (reception) in the social hall. The holiday service has lasted about 50 minutes.

— Michael M. Meador

Members of Ahavath Sholom celebrate the congregation's 50th anniversary in 1954. Photographer unknown.

ry store. He soon gained his customers' confidence as a reputable and honest businessman. "My mother's wedding ring came from the Henry Rodgin Company" became the store motto, as Rodgin's sought the trade of generations of Bluefield families.

In 1913 Rodgin married Anna Grollman, a native of Baltimore. She had attended the Peabody Conservatory of Music on a scholarship and was teaching violin at the time of her marriage. The new Mrs. Henry Rodgin brought a note of classical culture to Bluefield and would be a central figure in the musical arts of the area for the next 50 years. The couple had two children, daughter Bertie and son "Jay."

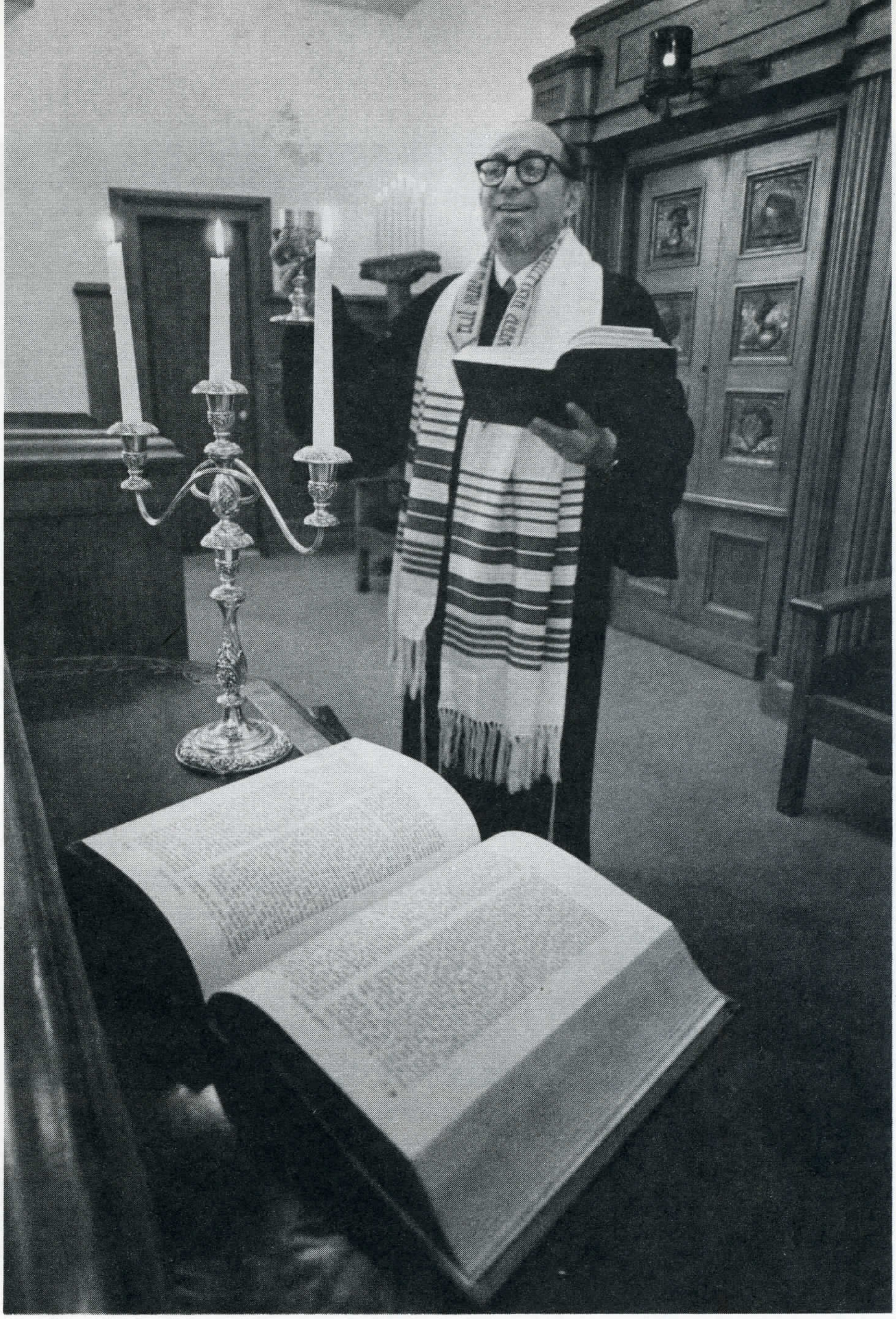
Today, Rodgin is remembered in Bluefield for his work in education. His faith in learning arose from deep personal beliefs. His own family was well educated. A cousin at the turn of the century was a well-known New York gynecologist-obstetrician, who had written one of the first medical books dealing with the study of human sexuality. Another cousin had taught mathematics to Albert Einstein in Germany, and Rodgin later met Einstein at this relative's New York home. Rodgin himself was largely self-educated. The story goes that among other things he taught himself optometry, from an optometrist's case left as collateral for a small loan at Rodgin's Jewelry. When it became apparent that the equipment would not be reclaimed, he enrolled in a correspondence course and set to work to master the new field.

Like other Jews in the community, Rodgin passed his trust in education along to the younger generation. Daughter Bertie attended Johns Hopkins University and became one of its youngest graduates. Jay attended Bluefield College before transferring to Columbia University, where he graduated in 1940 with a doctor's degree in optometry. One of Bertie's sons is now a children's doctor in Philadelphia, while Jay's son and daughter both became optometrists, reflecting their grandfather's early interest. Nephews Jerome and LeRoy Katz became successful local lawyers with Henry's support, with Jerome Katz serving for several years as judge of the circuit court.

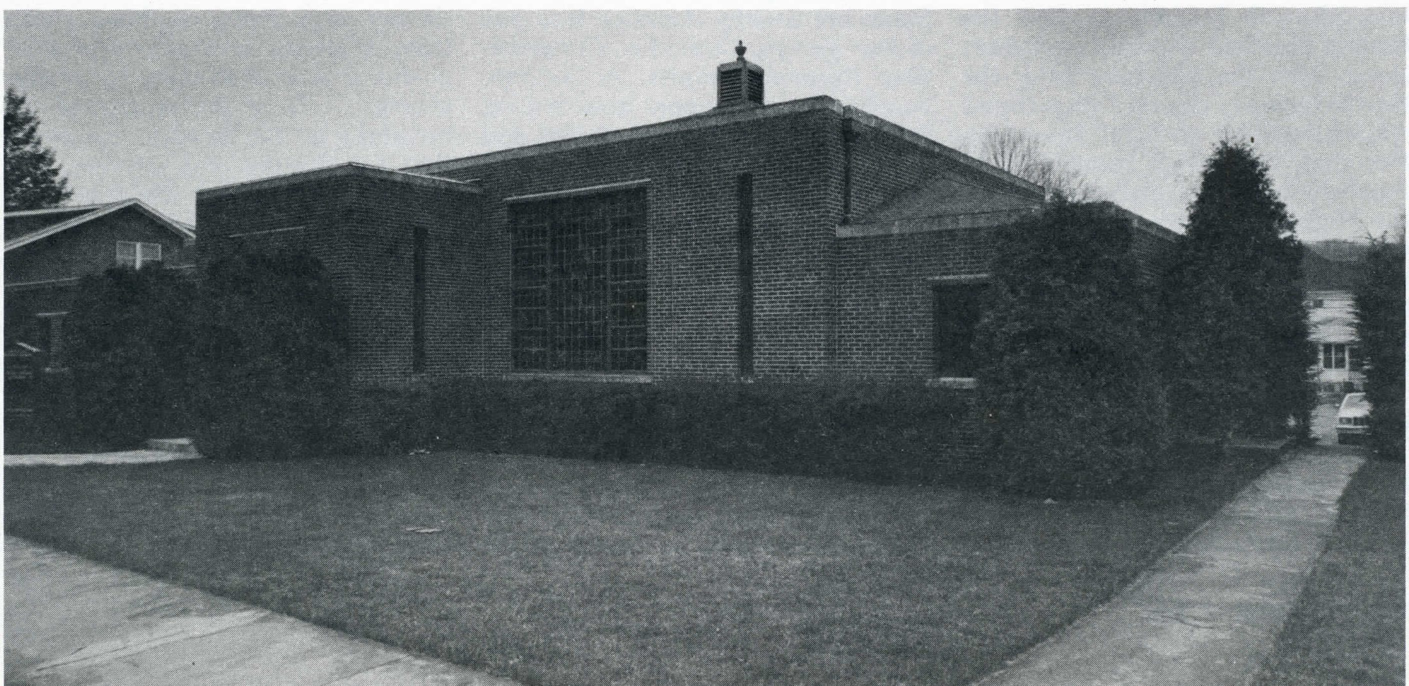
Henry Rodgin's promotion of education was not limited to members of his own family and religion. He encouraged the young people he came into contact with to attend college. Many could not afford it, so the crusading jeweler gave speeches to local civic clubs, urging them to set up educational scholarships. Coal operators patronizing Rodgin's Jewelry were encouraged to give scholarships to their miners' children. From his own pockets Rodgin supported high school students of both races and different religions at local colleges. Bluefield State College at the time educated only black students, and Rodgin was instrumental in persuading the Baptist Church to locate its college in Bluefield, Virginia, so that white students might also have the opportunity of a local education.

After Rodgin's death his widow captured the spirit of the man by observing to the *Daily Telegraph* that he had taken as his guide the Talmudic maxim, "Separate not thyself from the community." The Bluefield jeweler had defined community broadly, to encompass the personal concerns of family and religion as well as the wider affairs of his city.

For Rodgin and others the spiritual heart of their community was Judaism, and they attended diligently to that. By 1904 enough Jewish families, about two dozen, had settled in the



Right: Rabbi Elbert Sapinsley has been the spiritual leader of the Bluefield congregation since 1975. Photo by Doug Chadwick.
Below: The modern synagogue on Albemarle Street was dedicated in 1950. Photo by Doug Chadwick.



Alice Ann Kammer lights the candles at her brother's bar mitzvah. Photo by Mel Grubb, late 1960's.

area to warrant the formation of a congregation. Ten men are traditionally required for a public service or to form a congregation, and Henry Rodgin was among the 16 pioneers who founded Bluefield's Congregation Ahavath Sholom. In 1907 the Jews of Bluefield acquired a religious home with the purchase from the Presbyterians of an abandoned church building on Scott Street. Before that, the Jewish community in Bluefield had only met together on the High Holy Days for services in various homes and stores, under the leadership of well-educated members of the community. From 1904 to 1921, the congregation was served by European-trained religious leaders. They conducted services along Orthodox lines, mostly in Hebrew. In 1921 the congregation was successful in attracting its first American-trained rabbi, and more liberal ways began to predominate. This new spirit was reflected in the organization of a graded school for religious education, and the introduction of significant amounts of English into the worship service.

Jewish congregations in the United States are usually classified into one of four groups, Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform, based primarily upon how willing they are to reinterpret teachings and laws to meet new circumstances. The Bluefield congregation in its 80-year history has evolved from Orthodox through Conservative to Reform, as new families with progressive ideas have moved into the community and older members with memories of Europe have died or moved elsewhere. At present Congregation Ahavath Sholom ("Love of Peace") is Reform and affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Strong Orthodox and Conservative elements can still be found in the Bluefield Jewish community, but services are traditional Reform. Occasional Orthodox services are held upon request.

The geographical size of the congregation has also undergone changes over the past 80 years. Originally founded for the immediate Bluefield area, the congregation has spread out to encompass members in Princeton and Beckley, as well as nearby southwest Virginia.

By 1939 the needs of the congregation had outgrown the small wooden structure purchased in 1907 and the building was sold to provide funds for the construction of a new synagogue. World War II caused a shortage of building material, however, and work on the new synagogue was not begun until 1946. During the war services were held in various locations. When the new synagogue on Albemarle Street was finally dedicated in 1950, only a very small amount of the $100,000 construction costs had been borrowed and there was no mortgage on the building.

"The Jewish community of southern West Virginia has undergone many changes in its 100-year history," according to Rabbi Elbert Sapinsley, who has served the Bluefield congregation since 1975. "The ultraconservative beliefs and practices of Eastern Europe's Jews have been replaced in most of the area's Jewish families by a more open and flexible American view of what it means to be Jewish. Some Jews, not finding eligible people among their own, have married non-Jews and many families have ceased to adhere to traditional dietary laws. There has been a shift from a Jewish community of merchants to one dominated by professionals. A large percentage of the members of the Bluefield congregation are doctors and lawyers, and many of the Jewish children who grew up in the Bluefield community and have moved away are highly educated professionals.

"One can expect that the Jewish community of southern West Virginia in the future will continue to make a significant positive contribution to the area and evolve to meet and reflect changing circumstances," the rabbi continued. "The goal, however, must be to continue to maintain faith, knowledge and practice."

Captain Charles Henry Stone at home in Point Pleasant. Two important things in his life are nearby — the Kanawha River and the bridge that replaced the family ferryboat.

Captain Charles Henry Stone
"God Gave Us a Beautiful Gift in These Rivers"

By Irene B. Brand
Photographs by Michael Keller

"I grew up with a boat in my hand. From the very first, I loved the river, and my great desire was to be a river man. I wouldn't be anything else but a river man," relates Captain Charles Henry Stone of Mason County. Sitting in his comfortable home on Point Pleasant's Mount Vernon Avenue where he lives with his wife, Jean, and surrounded by pictures of the steamboat era, Captain Stone loves to recall the past. He has pleasant memories of the days when Point Pleasant was a bustling river town, timing its schedule to the whistle of the packetboats, the thriving dry dock business, and the rumble of ferryboats as they plied the Kanawha and Ohio rivers.

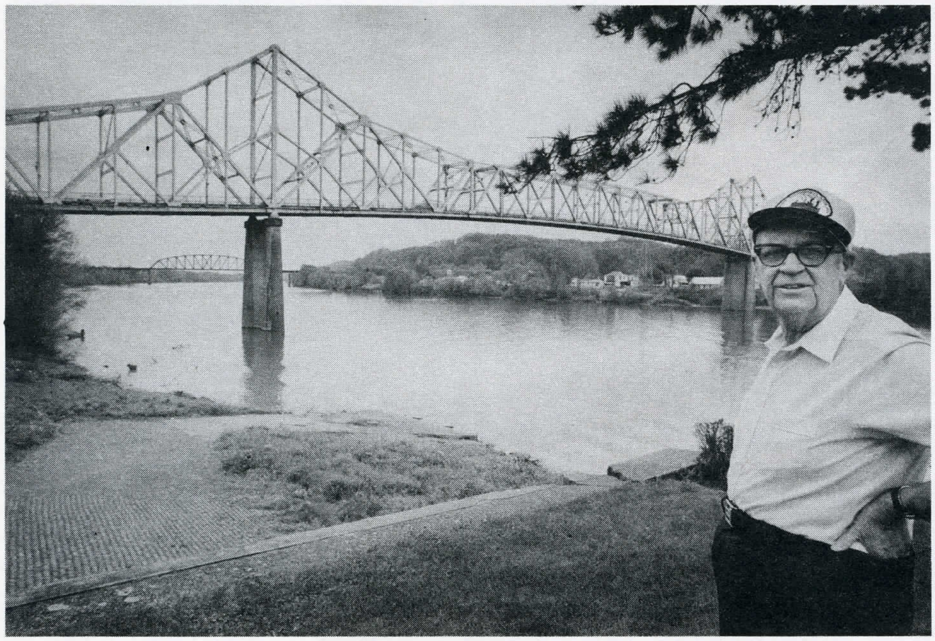
When Captain Stone's heritage is considered, it isn't surprising that the river became one of the great loves of his life. As a child Stone lived with his parents in their home on the high bank facing the mouth of the Kanawha River and its juncture with the Ohio. From that point young Charles Stone had a commanding view of both the Kanawha and Ohio rivers, where several generations of Stones had operated ferries.

A ferry of some kind may have been in operation at Point Pleasant as early as 1791, but the first record of a ferryboat in the area was in 1850. It was managed by John W. Deem and James Stone, ancestors of Captain Stone. Possibly the ferry operated by Deem and Stone was maneuvered by real "horsepower" — that is, by a horse operating a treadmill.

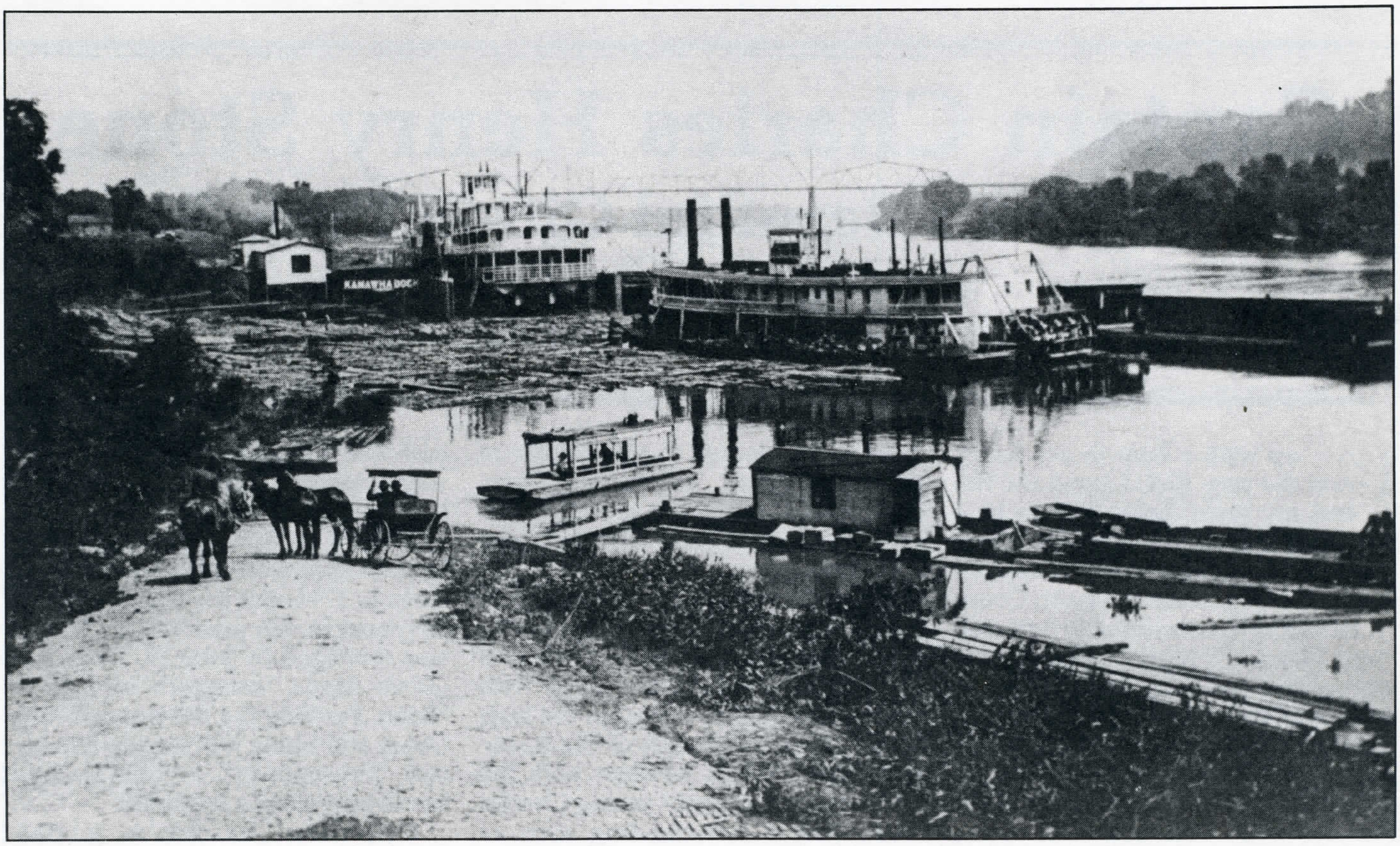
Captain Stone's greatgrandparents, James and Eliza Deem Stone, settled in Point Pleasant in the mid-1850's, living in the log cabin situated at the confluence of the rivers, now known as the Mansion House. By 1882 the Stones were running ferries on both the Kanawha and Ohio rivers. Their first steam ferry was built in 1888 and christened *The Charles Stone,* named for Captain Stone's great-uncle. With this steam craft, the Stone family took care of passenger traffic on both rivers. This boat operated until 1901, when it was wrecked on a winter night. A watchman had been left to guard the boat, and he wasn't aware that ice was forming on the sternwheel of the craft. The weight of the ice caused the vessel to start sinking, and although the watchman tried to build up steam in the boilers, it was too late. The boat broke away from its moorings, completely turned over, and finally came to rest on the sandbar below the Kanawha River.

In 1882, James Henry Stone, the grandfather of Captain Stone, took over exclusive operation of the Kanawha River ferry between Henderson and Point Pleasant, which he operated for 45 years. Upon his retirement, his son, C. C. Stone (Charles Henry's father), continued the ferry service for 15 more years until the Shadle Bridge was opened in 1934, thus ending more than a half-century of Stone ferryboat history in the Mason County area.

Soon after Captain Stone's birth, his father built a sidewheel ferry and named it after his son. Up until that time the transportation system had consisted of ferry flats, with a small yacht shoving the flats across the riv-



Left: The old Point Pleasant ferry landing is near the Stone house.
Below: The landing at a busier time. The horseback rider and team and buggy await the ferryboat *Will Stone*. The Kanawha Dry Docks are in the background. Date and photographer unknown.



er, but with the building of the *Charles Henry Stone* ferry crossing became more comfortable for the passengers.

"Dad had the ferryboat," Captain Stone remembers, "and he also had some gasoline boats that he used for towing. As a child I ran to the river every time I got a chance to ride on one of the boats.

I learned to steer a boat just like young people today learn to drive a car. They couldn't keep me off the boats. I rode the ferry every Saturday. My parents made me go to Sunday School, but on Sunday afternoon I'd go down and work on the ferry."

At first Charles Stone was so small he had to stand on a box to steer. He didn't have the strength to handle the equipment, but he could guide the boat on the right course by looking out the door and window. Remembering that his summers were also spent on the ferryboat, Stone says, "It sorta made me mad sometimes, when I'd see the other young people out on the sandbar swimming and I'd have to work. The only time I could swim was when the traffic was light, and I'd paddle around by myself, but it wasn't any fun that way."

From his early association with the ferry business, as well as remembering stories shared by his father, Captain Stone has accumulated a vast knowledge about the Point Pleasant ferries. "Dad ran only the Kanawha River ferry," he reports. "There was a ferry on the Ohio River, but Dad had nothing to do with that."

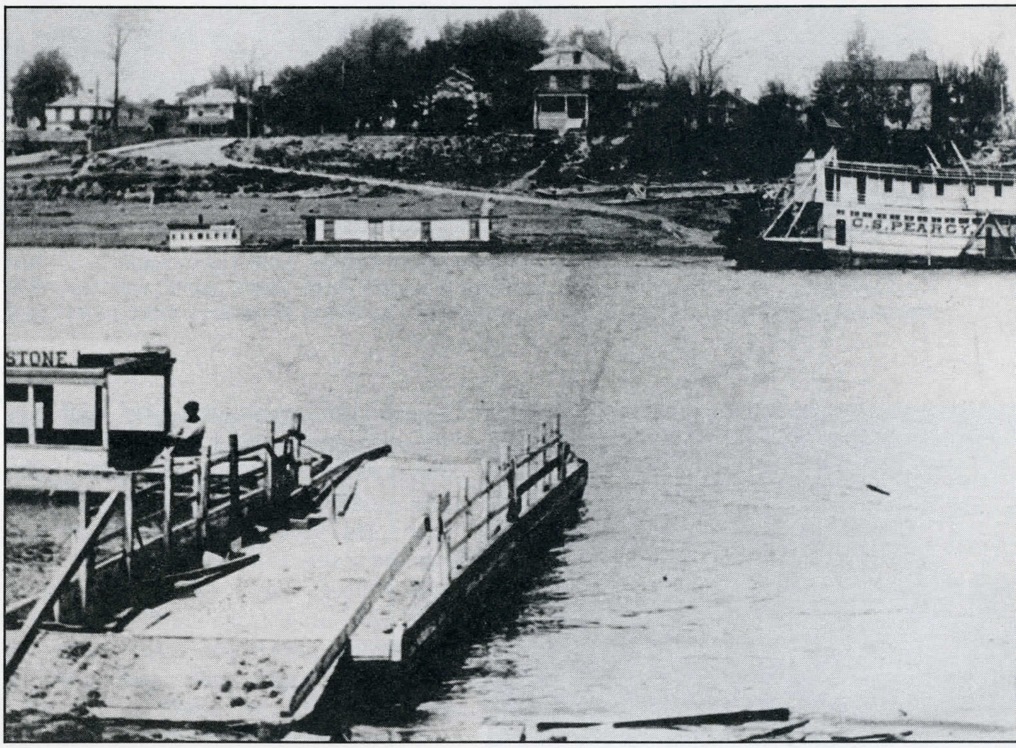
The first run of the day would start at six o'clock, to enable working people from the south side of the river to arrive at Point Pleasant in time for work. Usually the last regularly scheduled trip was at 10 o'clock, except on Saturdays when the ferry might run until midnight. However, the Stones provided 24-hour service in case of emergencies. Mr. Stone slept on the ferryboat, and if a doctor needed to cross the river he would accommodate the physician. A bell was mounted on each shore to be rung for service.

Fare for crossing the river varied over the years, but when Captain Stone first remembers the cost was 25 cents for car and driver, and a nickle each for any other passengers. Pedestrians were charged a dime by the time the ferry closed its service, although in earlier days the fare hadn't been that costly. For large trucks, probably none larger than two-ton vehicles at that time, 75 cents was charged for ferry service.

During floods the ferries were closed, for no one could get to the landing. Ice also stopped the ferry, as did low water during the drier seasons of the year. Sometimes when the water dwindled to its lowest level the Stones spread two ferry flats across the water, connected to the river's banks by boards to make a temporary bridge for patrons to walk across. Captain Stone doesn't remember that anyone was charged for this courtesy.

The ferry was used for many things besides transporting passengers. When a death occurred during flood season, the Stones would take the ferry to bring the deceased to Point Pleasant for burial.

At one time they took the ferry flats up the Kanawha River to the Mount Vernon Farms and ferried some of the Shadle livestock, including prized Morgan horses, for showing at the Gallia County Fair in Ohio. Occasionally whole herds of cattle were moved across the ferry. If the herd was too large to transport at one time, part of the animals would be taken across while the rest of the herd grazed on weeds growing around the landing. Usually about 40 head of cattle could be accommodated on the ferry flats. At times the animals would be moved directly



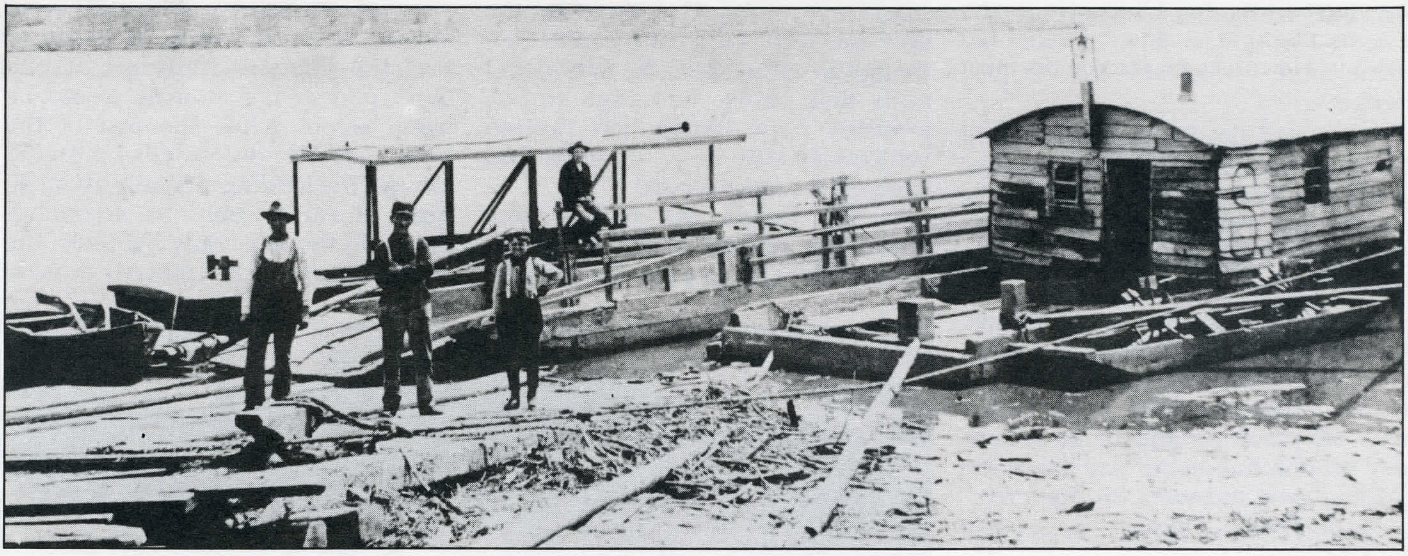
The view from the other side, with the *Frank Stone* and attached ferry flat at the Henderson landing. The large house in the central background was the family home at the time of Captain Stone's birth. Photographer unknown, 1917.

from the Henderson ferry to the Ohio River ferry.

"The owners would only pay one time, for Dad and the other ferry operator had worked out an agreement," Captain Stone recollects. "If the herd started on the Ohio side then they'd ride our Henderson ferry free, and the opposite would be done if they rode Dad's ferry first."

One time when a herd was coming down the hill to the landing, something frightened the animals and they bolted across the ferryboat into the water. The men behind rode their horses into the water and herded them on across the river, although Captain Stone believes some of the cattle perished before reaching the other side.

Also it seems likely that in those days, when automobile brakes



Above: The Stones were in the business for generations. Captain Stone's grandfather, J. H. Stone, stands with arms crossed here, with the Captain's father, C. C. Stone, to his left. The boat is the *Will Stone*. Photographer unknown, 1902.
Below: Not surprisingly, Captain Stone is a student of river history these days. Here he stands in front of part of his collection.

weren't always trustworthy, that cars sometimes plunged into the river in their effort to cross the ferry, but Stone only remembers two incidents when the vehicles couldn't stop and ran into the river. Usually the wire and railings were strong enough to hold the car. But due to the necessity of coming down the steep incline to reach the ferries, brake failure was a problem to be considered.

Captain Stone remembers that one tragic accident did occur because of mechanical failure of a vehicle. The Swan Family Show carnival was coming to Point Pleasant from the Henderson side to set up at the fair grounds. The trailer that carried the tents and equipment was being pulled by a tractor, whose brakes failed, and when the driver headed toward the bank to prevent the heavy vehicle from crashing into the river he ran across a boy who had jumped from the trailer. Several hours passed before enough men were found to lift the heavy load from the boy's body. Even though medical help was given, the boy died later that day.

The ferry attendants were saddened by the event, but that same evening a humorous episode left them with mixed feelings about the day. Joe, a Henderson resident, came to ride the ferry, and he went into the makeshift toilet that hung out over the hull of the boat. While he was in there a heavily loaded lumber truck pulled off the ferryboat and started up the hill, but when its brakes failed the truck rolled back on the ferryboat, crashed into the railings and splintered the outhouse. Knowing that Joe was in the wreckage, Captain Stone said he feared another tragedy had resulted, and he rushed to peer into the little building. Joe was alive and well, but his body was crammed into the top of the outhouse. Frightened, Joe shouted, "What in tarnation is going on out there?"

Captain Stone still remembers his reaction. "I was so mournful over the death we'd seen that morning, and then to have this happen, all I could do was lay down on the outriggers and laugh until I cried. We had to pull Joe out between timbers that weren't more than 10 inches apart."

In the early days of ferry service, it wasn't at all unusual for Indians to ride the boats. Captain Stone's father recalled one occasion when two Indians came down on the Henderson side, heading for Ohio, and he rowed them across in the yawl since they were the only passengers. The two men, dressed in high hats with shawls around their shoulders, sat speechless in the boat, and when they arrived at the other bank they left without any communication whatever. The Stones never charged Indians any fare for they expected to ride without paying.

Although Captain Stone wasn't

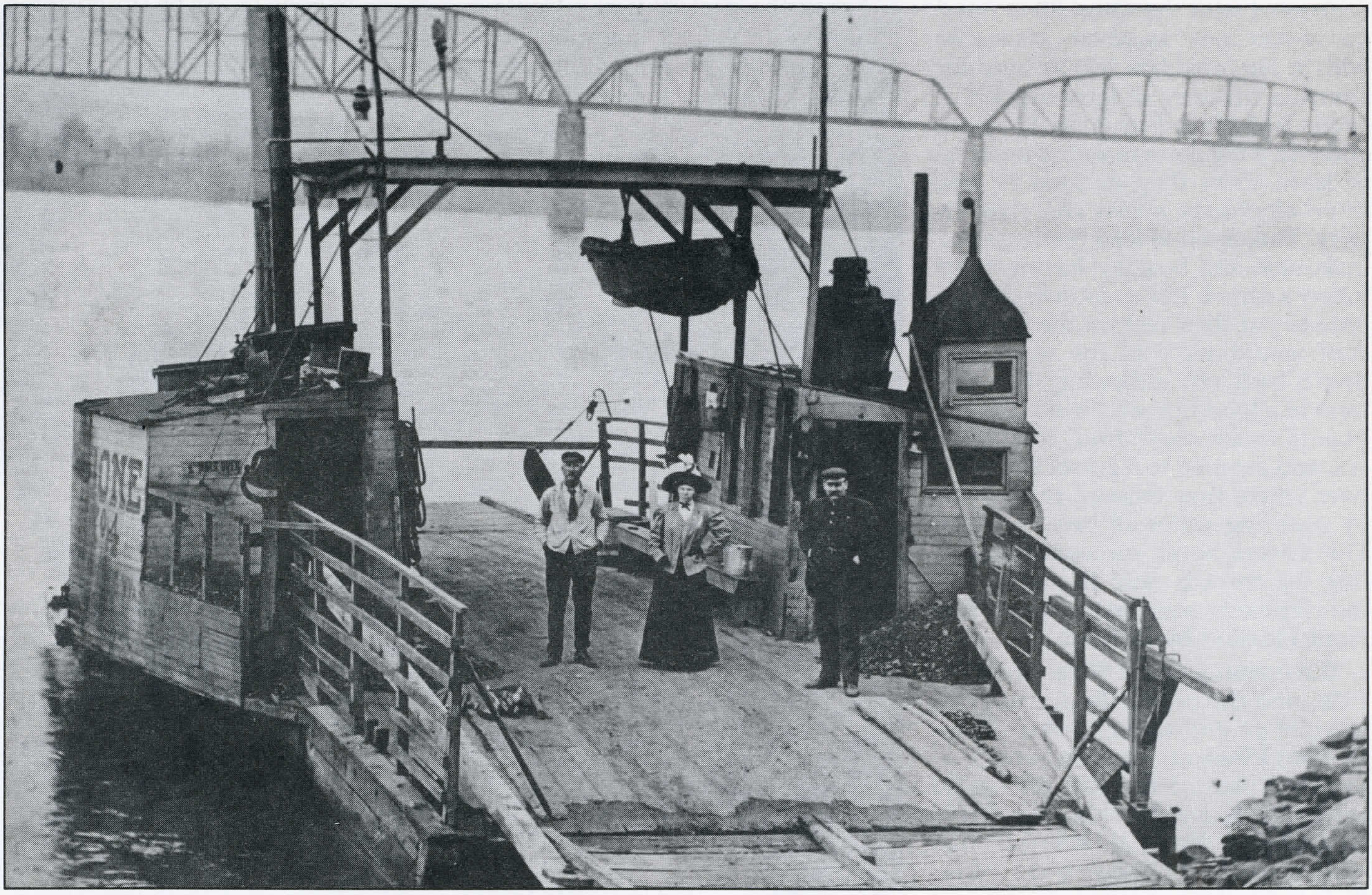
connected with the Ohio River ferry, he recalls one incident associated with it. He considers it to be his most amusing memory of ferry service. A circus had played in Point Pleasant, and when the owners were preparing to leave town they decided to take three elephants across the river by ferry. They tried to lead the large animals onto the boat by having them follow a camel. But as soon as the elephants put their feet on the boat the craft would settle in the water and they'd back off, indicating their distress in a loud uproar. Finally the elephants broke away from their drivers, and escaped to a gravel bar in the river where they enjoyed themselves by squirting water all over the area. The drivers never succeeded in getting the animals onto the ferry, and the elephants were later taken out of Point Pleasant by railroad.

The opening of the Silver Bridge in 1928, and the Shadle Bridge in 1934, brought an end to the ferry business in Point Pleasant. Captain Stone's father had wanted to build the bridge across the Kanawha, but powerful financial and political interests had prevented him from doing so. Nevertheless, because Mr. Stone had the legal privilege to operate a ferry he was supposed to be paid for losing his franchise. When the bridge officials didn't fulfill their part of the agreement after the bridge opened, Mr. Stone started operating the ferry again. The first day he ferried 10 cars, the second day 30, and on the third day 60 cars crossed the ferry because the drivers liked Mr. Stone and had known him for so long. Soon the bridge officials paid up, and the ferry was discontinued.

According to Captain Stone, his father was already involved in the towing barge business by that time. "In 1931 Dad bought his first steamboat, and that was wonderful although I had to start out and do the hard work. Working as a deck hand, I had to wheel the coal out of the fuel flats. That was backbreaking work, but when I wasn't wheeling coal I could be up in the pilot house steering."

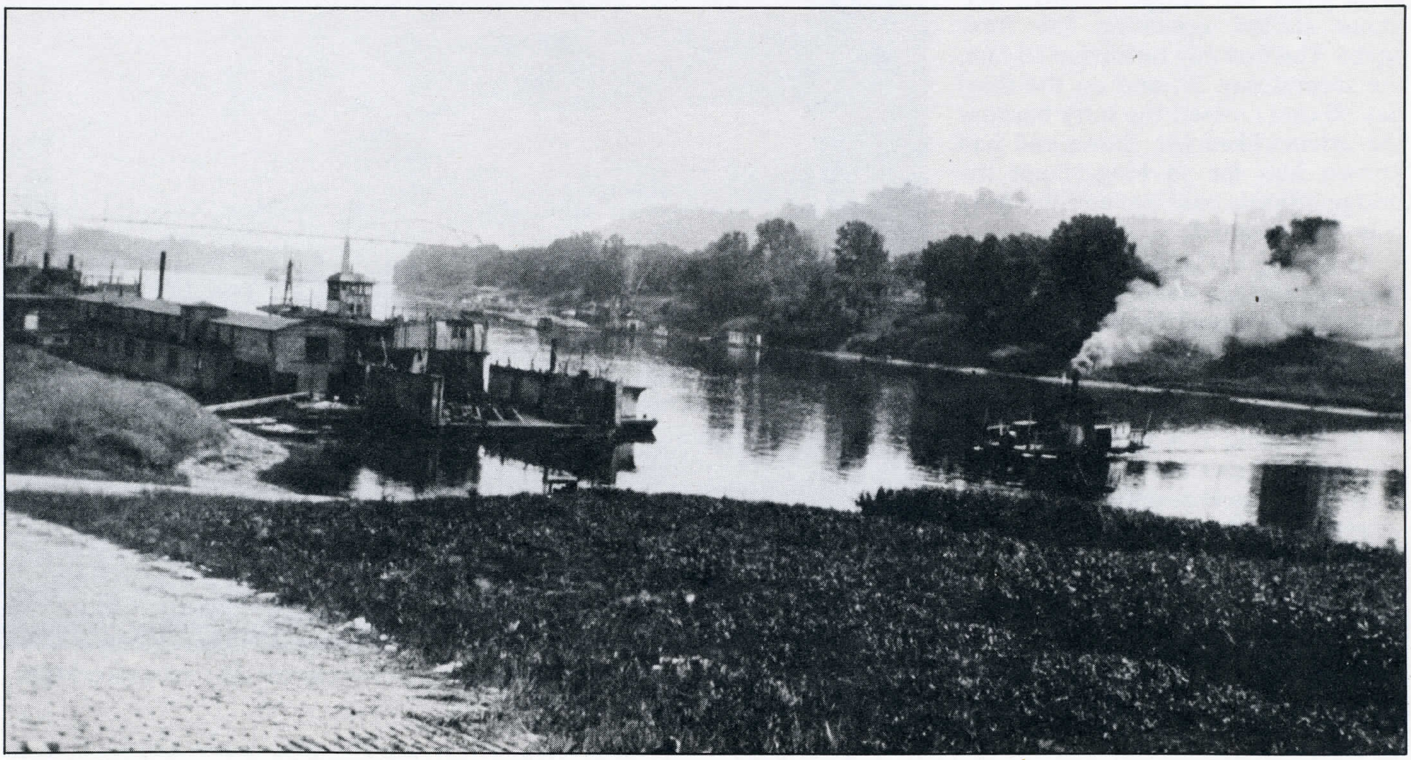
Captain Stone's first experience on a diesel boat came when the Gallipolis Locks were under construction in 1935. He worked as a pilot on the *Pioneer,* a boat that towed materials from Pittsburgh to Gallipolis. "Diesel

Stone with a paddlewheel steamer and a ferryboat from his collection. All historic photographs in this article are courtesy of the Captain.



Above: The Stones, with their landings on the Kanawha, cooperated with the nearby Ohio River ferries. This is the Ohio ferry *Boone No. 4,* which went into local service about 1903. Date and photographer unknown.

Below: The *Charles Henry Stone,* named for the Captain soon after his birth, steams toward the landing. This was the last Stone ferryboat, in service until the bridge was built in 1934. Date and photographer unknown.



boats were just starting then, and you didn't have to have a license to operate them. It was pretty nice for an 18-year-old boy to have a job like that without a pilot license." Captain Stone worked on the *Julius Fleischman* for the necessary experience to apply for his master's license, which he received in 1936.

During the next few years the Stones operated their own boats on the Kanawha River, changing to diesel vessels in 1943. They continued service until 1966, when they sold out to R. and E. Towing, owned by Robert Bosworth of Henderson.

The fact that he no longer piloted a boat didn't dim Captain Stone's interest in the river, which has been kept alive through a hobby that he started in childhood. "Back in the early days, I was fascinated by boat pictures, and Dad was, too. He had several of the old pictures hanging in his office. Besides, as a boy, I remember looking over the postcard collection at Huff's Drug Store, and I purchased a number of them. I still have a lot of the ones I bought then, and they make wonderful slides."

During the past 20 years, Captain Stone has developed many of those pictures into slides. He is often featured as a speaker on river history, which enables him to use his vast collection of boat photographs. He has accumulated several series of pictures featuring steamboat accidents, as well as other incidents of river history. "Because of my great love for the river, I like to talk about it. To me, God gave us a beautiful gift when he gave us these rivers."

In gathering his slide collection, Captain Stone has been aided by Gerald Sutphin of Huntington, formerly associated with the Army Corps of Engineers. For historical background he contacts Captain Fred Way of Sewickley, Pennsylvania. Captain Way is considered the foremost authority on river history, having written several books documenting the history of packetboats and steamboats.

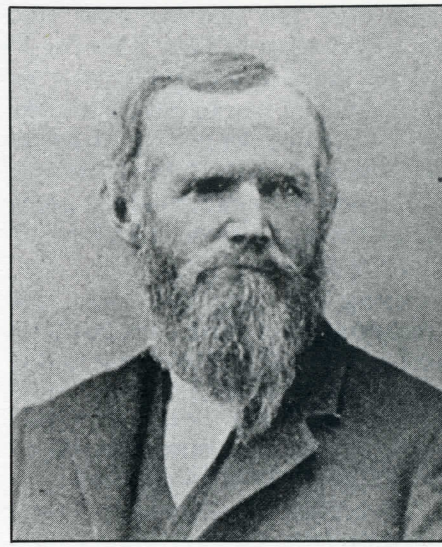
Many of Stone's photos have been given to him by people who have no use for them. He appreciates these gifts, especially since he is preserving his collecton for the public's use. "I'm making tapes about my pictures, and when I'm gone they'll be stored at the Mason County Library, where people can use them for reference. They won't be able to check out the pictures, but they can use them inside the library."

Currently Captain Stone is assembling photograph albums for his two daughters and his sister's children. The albums will contain copies of the 35 pictures that hung in his parents' home, and will be supplemented by a taped narration.

Although it has been almost 20 years since Captain Stone sold his boats, he still works with the river business, helping daily in the Bosworth offices south of Henderson. And Robert Bosworth is more than an employer. When speaking of him Stone says, "Cap Bosworth and I have always been very good friends, although I'm older than he is, and he surprised me in February of this year by naming one of his new boats the *Captain Charles H. Stone*. When I was a baby," he adds laughingly, "I had a boat named after me, and now 70 years later when I'm in my second childhood, another boat will have my name."

Captain Stone figures his life has come full circle now that another boat has been named for him in his retirement years. The R. and E. Towing boat, *Charles H. Stone*, handles a tow of barges behind him.

A. P. Donaghho, in a picture from an 1896 edition of the Parkersburg *State Journal*.



Crocks and Churns

A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg Stoneware

By Stanley W. Baker
Photographs by Michael Keller

The Donaghho crock is one relic which may be found in antique and secondhand stores across West Virginia. I've seen them for years, but I initially avoided the familiar blue-stenciled stoneware from Parkersburg, since my taste led me to older and less frequently seen artifacts. However, I realize now that this prevalence indicates how important Donaghho products were in our history. Donaghho's stoneware pottery was more than just a Parkersburg industry. Stoneware was a necessity of the 19th century, providing a durable container for food storage and processing used daily by our ancestors.

Since the Donaghho kilns stopped firing pottery only 75 years ago, the history of this local industry is not necessarily to be found in written texts. Much of the Donaghho story lives in the oral traditions of the community, just as the stoneware jugs and jars have survived in Parkersburg's cellars and outbuildings. Former employees of the pottery could still be interviewed not so many years ago, and well into the 20th century street car conductors still called the intersection of Murdock and Emerson avenues "Pottery Junction."

Tradition has it that Alexander or "A. P." Donaghho, as he was commonly referred to, came to Parkersburg from Pennsylvania in the early 1870's to buy the community's first pottery business, then owned by Nathaniel Clark. An early partner of Donaghho's by the name of Krause was mentioned by Dan Mercer, one of the last employees of the pottery. Prior to the turn of the century, A. P. Donaghho's son, Walter, joined in the business and became principal owner when his father died in 1899. Within the next 10 years, the clay sources expired and the property was sold to U.S. Senator J. N. Camden. With only minor variation this account has been retold countless times, and periodically Parkersburg newspapers have published articles rekindling local interest in Donaghho.

Such traditional stories are a good starting point in the study of Donaghho and other local potteries in Parkersburg. But the public memory, although generally faithful to the truth, may include some details which may not be absolute fact. Fortunately, there are literally hundreds of other sources available to histori-

A 20-gallon Donaghho crock and three-gallon churn in a Kanawha County backyard. The crock is unusual in its large size. Items courtesy of Bob Taylor.

ans of local lore. Some of the most important are census records, city directories, industrial advertisements, and various courthouse records, including deeds, wills, and mortgage information. Many of these include minor details about Parkersburg's potteries. Added together, a concise history of this industry can be written.

The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey is one good source, summarizing clay industry information in two published reports. G. P. Grimsley's 1908 Survey report, *Clays, Limestones and Cements,* has one of the finest early accounts of the industry in Parkersburg. Although this report focuses on the nature of the clay used by Donaghho, a very good historical description of the pottery and how it operated is included. "It was built in 1866 and has been under the present ownership since 1874," Grimsley states. "The articles made are stoneware crocks, jugs, jars, earthenware, and flower pots. The clay is ground in a wet pan, molded on two power wheels and one foot power wheel, and dried by steam in two large rooms for 48 hours. The ware is placed on long board shelves set on racks, where it is fired by steam."

Grimsley added further details on the manufacturing process. "The ware is burned in two conical updraft kilns 13 feet high and 13 feet in diameter inside," his report notes. "The kilns are at each end of the frame building, containing the machinery and dry rooms. One kiln is used for salt glazed ware and the other is a muffle kiln for slip glazed ware. Wood and coal are used for fuel and the kilns are burned 30 to 48 hours. The capacity of the plant is about 5000 gallons a week, equal to two kilns. Milk pans and flower pots are molded in plaster molds, while the other ware is turned by hand. Power is furnished by two gas engines.

"The product is sold in West Virginia and much of it is shipped to Virginia, South Carolina, and even Ohio," Grimsley goes on to say. The wording suggests that he found the Ohio market a little surprising, considering the state's own strong stoneware industry. That Donaghho ware was competitive there suggests that a good product was being made at a good price.

Above: Donaghho brought the eagle design with him from the lower Monongahela Valley. "Excelsior Pottery" was commonly used on big items, such as this 10-gallon crock. Items courtesy of Bernard Dowler.

Below: A gallon jug, crock, and two-gallon water cooler. The water cooler was found in an abandoned privy pit at Parkersburg's old U.S. Hotel. Items courtesy of Bernard Dowler.

More items from Bernard Dowler's collection. The four-gallon churn was once common in Ohio Valley kitchens.

Grimsley's description may be compared to the plan map of the kiln found in the 1886 edition of *An Atlas of Wood County, West Virginia* by J. M. Lathrop, H. C. Penny, and W. R. Proctor. Their map accurately shows the east to west alignment of the two kilns and the connecting shed used to house the machinery and the drying stoneware. It also suggests another interconnected work or storage building to the north. Small ancillary buildings are indicated. It is fortunate that both the written description and the map drawings were completed, since no overall photographic views of the pottery are available. Although tradition remembers only the kicking of the potter's wheel and the laborious turning of the clay mill by a blind horse named Charlie, Donaghho's had apparently introduced a stationary steam engine to his shop. This engine was used to drive the two power wheels Grimsley mentions and to produce steam to heat the drying room, where the ware was slowly dried prior to firing. With the advent of the gasoline engine, this new power source was also added to the operation to increase the efficiency of the plant.

Although Donaghho is best remembered for his operations in Parkersburg, he learned his trade in his native state of Pennsylvania. Both historical references and cobalt stenciling on Donaghho stoneware indicate that he had owned a pottery in Fredericktown, Pennsylvania, on the west bank of the Monongahela River. He was probably born in this Washington County community. The lower Monongahela Valley was one of the most important stoneware manufacturing districts in the upper Ohio Valley region, providing a ready source of clay suitable for high-temperature firing. As a small boy, A. P. Donaghho would have had the opportunity to learn about this industry near his home on the Monongahela.

An 1882 history of Washington County states that the Donaghho family first began to produce stoneware along the Monongahela in 1843. The book goes on to indicate that the first potter's name was "Polk Donaghho." Census records and A. P. Donaghho's grave marker in the Parkersburg Odd Fellows Cemetery both agree that he was born in 1829. If the 1843 date for the first Fredericktown firing is correct, A. P. Donaghho would have been only 14 years old and obviously not the master potter. Donaghho's biographical sketch in *The History of the Upper Ohio Valley* says that John Donaghho, A. P.'s father, was a schoolteacher and merchant and not in the pottery business. Presumably the first Donaghho stoneware was made by a relative of A. P., possibly an uncle. On the other hand, the date of 1843 might be in error by five or 10 years, and A. P. in earlier years may have been called by his middle name, Polk. At any rate, it's clear that young Donaghho did learn the trade in the lower Monongahela Valley pottery district.

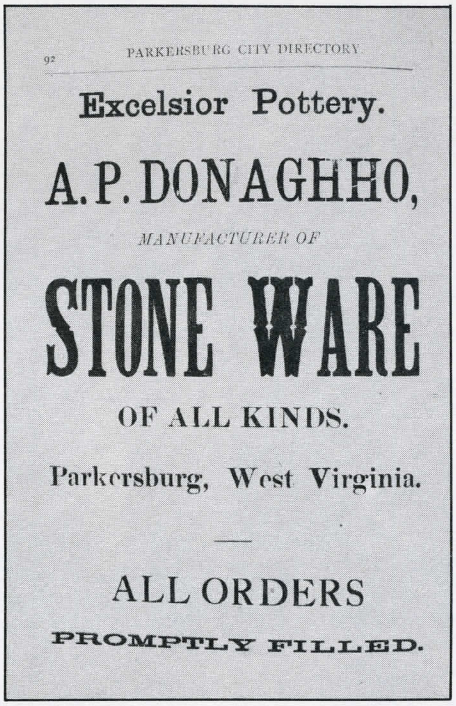
Donaghho continued making pottery along the Monongahela until 1852. That year he made an unsuccessful trip to California to establish a pottery there. Soon afterwards, Donaghho again began to make stoneware in western Pennsylvania. He continued to fire pottery throughout the 1860's, but evidently retained no ownership in any Pennsylvania pottery after he moved to West Virginia.

Some references suggest that Donaghho came to Parkersburg in 1872 or 1874. However, Wood County census records indicate, as does Donaghho's biographical sketch, that he came by 1870. In fact, an 1894 article on the pottery in *Smith's Index,* a local paper, states precisely that Donaghho moved to the area in January of 1870. Property deeds show that he acquired his first piece of property just outside the Parkersburg city limits in the summer of that year. This four-acre tract on Bullskin Creek would become the site of his pottery and was specified as the "Donaghho Pottery Property" in the sale by his heirs in 1906.

Tradition has it that Donaghho and an earlier Parkersburg potter, Nathaniel Clark, had some business arrangement which ultimately led to Donaghho acquiring sole ownership of this property. But historical evidence suggests that Clark may have died several years prior to 1870 and could not have been associated with Donaghho. Land deeds indicate that Clark, Parkersburg's first known potter, came to this area by 1849 and acquired property, possibly the site of the kiln or clay bank.

In addition to Clark, several other potters are listed in the various census records in the late 1800's. In the 1850 census, 24-year-old Robert M. Dickson, born in Pennsylvania, and 31-year-old George Gicer, an immigrant from Germany, are listed as living in the Clark household. By 1860, the Clark pottery had only one helper, Clark Burley, a former resident of Ohio. Nathaniel Clark's son also worked in the pottery.

The census of 1870 indicates that the pottery industry in Parkersburg had become more vigorous, with at least two potteries in operation. Young Clark was still active, as was Parkerburg's newest potter, A. P. Do-



This A. P. Donaghho ad appeared in the 1877-78 Gribbens Brothers Parkersburg City Directory.

naghho. Other potters listed were Justice Graham, James Crouse, and John Holmes, all from Ohio, and John Crumine from Virginia. It is unclear which pottery employed Graham, but perhaps he came with Donaghho, since his daughter had been born in Pennsylvania the previous year. There is less doubt about John Crumine, who was listed as a part of Donaghho's household. Evidence has been found which suggests that John Holmes worked independently of both Clark and Donaghho. Traditional information indicates that James Crouse (or Krause) was associated with the Donaghho Pottery.

In fact, two popular misconceptions about the Donaghho pottery are associated with James Crouse. Dan Mercer, the last laborer working for the Donaghho's, thought that Crouse was a business partner of Donaghho and that he had some financial interests in the pottery. Some people have assumed that this is the reason why Parkersburg's most successful pottery was called Excelsior Pottery and not simply Donaghho. But James Crouse was listed merely as a potter's hand in the 1870 census, and the Parkersburg city directory three years later clearly states that A. P. Donaghho was the "sole owner" of Excelsior Pottery. The only financial dealings known between Donaghho and Crouse are found in a deed recorded in the Wood County Courthouse. In 1882, a fifth of an acre owned by Crouse was conveyed to A. P. Donaghho.

This confusion about the ownership of the pottery and the assumption that the Excelsior name was used only during the first few years has led to the belief that certain pieces of stoneware marked with the Excelsior name are older than those stenciled "A. P. Donaghho". But the historical evidence does not support the discontinuation of the Excelsior name until 1900 or after. Excelsior is listed in at least two county directories, 1873 and 1896. The last documented evidence for the use of this name is found on a sales slip dated August 2,

Right: Half-gallon canning jars were widely used before cheaper glass became available. The crock holds three gallons. Items courtesy Kim Johnson.

Below: Milk pans were used to cool fresh milk in the days before refrigeration. Courtesy of Bernard Dowler.

Above: Bob Maher has much Donaghho ware among the crockery in his Parkersburg antique shop. The spouted container is a four-gallon water cooler.
Opposite: A 10-gallon Donaghho crock and modern 35mm camera are a contrast in size and manufacturing technology. Crock courtesy Kim Johnson.

1900, after the death of A. P. Donaghho himself in 1899. Only when the business reverted to the Donaghho heirs is there any evidence of the discontinuation of the Excelsior name, at which time the business was simply referred to as the "Donaghho Pottery." Although the Excelsior logo is not indicative of age, the use of this stencil was reserved for larger pieces of stoneware over two or three gallons in size. Lesser examples are marked with only the name of "A. P. Donaghho" and the site of the pottery, "Parkersburg, W.Va."

A. P. Donaghho remained sole owner of Excelsior Pottery until the mid-1880's, when son Walter became part of the firm. Walter Donaghho was born in 1859 and evidently was learning the trade by the age of 14. He finished school by the end of the decade and apparently began working full time in the family pottery. *Smith's Index* states that Walter was made a full partner in 1884 at the age of 25. The Excelsior name was still used on the ware, although all receipts and advertisements after 1884 were in the name of "A. P. Donaghho and Son." Of course, Walter became the principal owner when his father died in 1899, with the rest of the business reverting to the other Donaghho heirs. No doubt the occurence of stoneware marked "Donaghho Pottery" is indicative of the new ownership, and may help date the stoneware stenciled "A. P. Donaghho" as before 1900 and stoneware marked "Donaghho Pottery" as after 1900.

The pottery is listed in both the 1905 and in the 1907 Parkersburg city directories. G. P. Grimsley's 1908 report suggests that the firm was still in operation at that time, but a 1910 Geological Survey report of the Wood County area indicates that the Donaghho plant had been abandoned for several years. Information for both the 1907 city directory and the 1908 Grimsley report must have been gathered in 1906, since the sale of the property by the heirs of A. P. Donaghho on September 3, 1906, can be considered a terminal date for the plant. Obviously, the sale of the property might not coincide with the last firing of the kilns, but the pottery was apparently still in full operation during Grimsley's visit and Walter was still referring to himself as a potter in the 1907 directory. At any rate, the pottery was in demise by the turn of the century and possibly for several months in 1906 Walter was simply selling the remainder of the stock, the equipment, and finally the property itself.

By this time, stoneware did not enjoy the same market advantages it once had. The closing of the Donaghho pottery in 1906 roughly coincides with the diminishing stoneware trade in general. The Bureau of Weights and Measures had recently been established and strict standardization of vessel size had to be adhered to by each potter. More importantly, small stoneware manufacturers were meeting stiff competition from both the very large potteries in such places as East Liverpool, Ohio, and various glass manufacturers. The continuation of the Donaghho pottery for even a few years after 1900 was due only to good management and high volume trading. Folk stories about there being at least one Donaghho crock or churn in the corner of every kitchen in our region may not be an exaggeration. Grimsley estimated that the Donaghho pottery could fire 5,000 gallons per week, and an 1896 Parkersburg industrial newspaper advertised that the plant fired 150,000 gallons per year. This is substantiated by *Smith's Index,* which states that Donaghho's fired 75 kiln loads per year. At such a large volume, rivaling any plant in the competing Monongahela River district, the Donaghho pottery would have been a major contender in the market. It is easy to see why literally hundreds if not thousands of Donaghho pieces have survived until today.

Although Parkersburg's stoneware industry continued to operate for a short time after 1900, advances in glass technology eventually made potteries like Donaghho's uncompetitive. Glass containers could be made cheaply and more easily styled. The transparency of glass and its relative weight offset stoneware's durability. Methods for home canning in glass improved and made the traditional preserving and storage of goods in stoneware less attractive. Stoneware preserving was limited to pickled foods such as kraut, beans, corn, turnips or cucumbers; some cooked fruits; and cooked meats like pork, sealed under lard. The storage and processing of milk, cream and butter in stoneware crocks and pans were made obsolete by cheaper, lighter and easily cleaned glass.

In short, Walter Donaghho faced great problems in the months before the autumn of 1906. No doubt, sales of stoneware had slowed and clay on the pottery property may have been nearly exhausted. Cheap property in the area where clay could be dug was nonexistent, because the city was expanding northward and had encompassed the pottery property. Walter Donaghho was faced with the decision whether to move the business or to discontinue its operation. He knew that even if the pottery was moved, it still might not flourish as it once had. Such a move would have necessitated higher prices in an already tight market.

Today we know that Walter Donaghho's final decision marks more than the end of one of Parkersburg's leading industries. His decision coincides with the decline in the production of local stonewares across the United States. In the 19th century, stoneware was a necessity and prior to 1906 the Donaghho mark was looked to as a standard of quality. Parkersburg stoneware is still being sought in the Mountain State, but the reasons are different. Today, the name Donaghho is merely an antique novelty in a new kind of market in our region.

Bob Hillberry clearly enjoys auctioneering. He reports that Mrs. Hillberry prodded him into the profession, saying he "was talking all the time" anyway.

Auctions and Auctioneers

Photographs and Text by
Arthur C. Prichard

Sold for $10 to the gentleman with the straw hat. What's your number?" Bob Hillberry, the auctioneer, asked the question as he pointed to the buyer. The sale clerk jotted down the price, the article and the successful bidder's number on a multiform paper, for the records and the cashier.

"Now what do I hear for this? Who'll give $15?" Hillberry asked as he gestured toward a lamp which an assistant had placed on the platform beside him. He was selling the household goods of a widower, who was preparing to move from his seven-room house into a trailer which wouldn't accommodate all the furniture, farm equipment and belongings accumulated in nearly half a century of married life. The children having taken what they wanted and enough for the owner's reduced needs having been set aside, the remainder was being auctioned off.

Hillberry was conducting one of the most common types of auction sales — a general household-personal property sale, with furniture, household goods, tools, books, equipment going on the auction block. People from a wide area were in attendance, motivated by their own reasons. Probably there were newly married couples, searching for inexpensive furniture to help them begin housekeeping; established couples looking for a rug, dishwasher, TV, refrigerator, or some other replacement item; antique collectors and dealers, hoping for choice pieces; and auction fans who came just for the fun of it.

Household and farm equipment sales, brought about by the owner's death, his preparing to live with a son or daughter or simply to move away, are commonplace. Often these sales provide remarkable bargains. Late one afternoon several years ago, when most of the buyers had left a poorly attended sale, I purchased two easy chairs for a dollar. At times I've seen good rugs, refrigerators, washing machines and other household items sell for only a fraction of their worth. The reverse is true as well, for when the bidding gets hot items sometimes go for much more than their worth. Auction fever can work for you or against you.

In addition to the estate or house-

Handcrafted heirlooms sometimes come on the auction block. This quilt is being sold by Joe Pyles.

hold goods auction, there are numerous other types. One of ancient practice is that of selling property for indebtedness. A bank, store or financial agency, having foreclosed on a person's or company's collateral, sells the property when the owner fails to repay the debt. Often the sale takes place at the county courthouse, on the street, or at the site of the property, to satisfy the mortgage holder.

Another kind of auction, becoming popular again, is the sale of new merchandise. These are conducted in school auditoriums, community centers, or some other enclosure large enough to accommodate a crowd and of easy access to those furnishing the goods. New furniture, household articles, tools, toys, and food all may be sold to the highest bidder. Jim Rexroad of Brucetown Mills conducts such sales in our area of north-central West Virginia. Buying wholesale and trucking in the articles himself, he sells good merchandise at reasonable prices.

In the past half century another type of auction has become popular here and in other parts of the state. That is the sale of livestock. Permanent markets offer farmers a good, and generally handy, place to buy or sell cattle, sheep, goats, horses, chickens and other animals. The first such West Virginia market opened in Parkersburg in 1932. Not too long afterwards a market was started in Rachel, in Marion County. A little later it was moved to the outskirts of Mannington. In 1948 the Mannington Livestock Sales Company was one of 19 livestock auctions in the state. I was sorry to see it close in the summer of 1984 when the property was sold to a shopping center developer.

Auctioneers get into their business in various ways. Bob Hillberry jokingly says his wife was responsible for him becoming an auctioneer. "She said I was talking all the time and I ought to go to school and become an auctioneer so I could get paid for it."

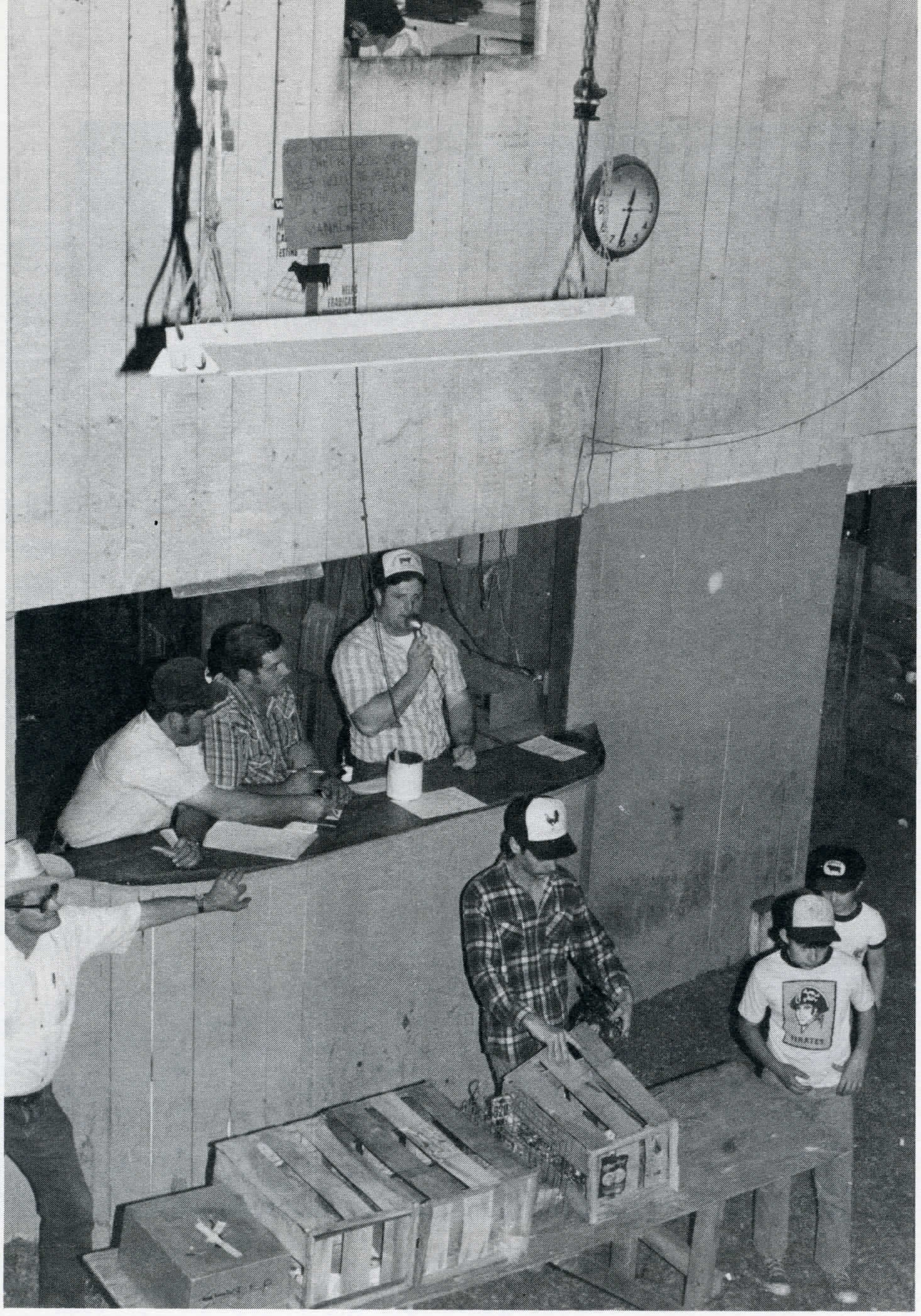
Hillberry began by helping experienced auctioneers, including Joe Looman, Frank Norman, and Frank Wines. "I did go away to study," he adds. "I went to Repperts School in Indiana. The school was for about three weeks."

Auctioneer Jim Rexroad began by substituting for a friend, who found himself unable to conduct a sale because he couldn't get off from his regular job. Stepping in to get his friend out of a jam, Jim found himself a new career. Later Rexroad attended the Mendenhall School of Auctioneering at High Point, North Carolina.

Joe Pyles worked under Hillberry and Charles Bean until he was old enough to get a license. One has to be 18 years old, take a written and an oral state test, and be bonded for $10,000. After that, the auctioneer is required to pay an annual fee of $50 to keep the license active.

"Joe Pyles is as good as there is around," declares Hillberry. "Joe is a good, honest boy and conducts good sales. He never went to an auctioneering school. He's smart enough, and with the experience he has he doesn't have to go now."

Dallas Heldreth, desiring to become an auctioneer, enrolled in a course given at Bridgeport by Knotts Auctioneers of Ohio. Five hours a night, once a week, he and other aspiring auctioneers studied and prac-



Livestock sales are a distinct type of auction. These crates of chickens are being sold at the Mannington livestock sales building.

ticed the profession. The evening course near home permitted them to attend without taking time off from their jobs or being away overnight.

Joe Looman attended an auctioneering school in Sioux City, Iowa, at the beginning of his nearly 20 years as an auctioneer. A friend, persuading Ab Cole to help with some auctioning of livestock, got Ab started in the auctioning business nearly 40 years ago. Recently Merle "Pete" Cole, Ab's son, was licensed after several years of helping his father with sales. John Swiger now helps Hillberry.

There are many qualities which contribute to being a good auctioneer. Above all, one has to stay on top of the fast-moving action. "You have to watch what you're doing," says Hillberry. "People bid many different ways. Saturday a fellow in front just winked one eye. One will put up a finger. When it goes to a half some will whittle a finger, meaning half a dollar. Others nod their head. Some speak out their bid." Still others pull an ear or touch their noses.

"Even if you keep your eyes open," comments Hillberry, "you'll still make a mistake now and then. I made one Saturday. A woman said she had the bid. I was looking at her and didn't think she did. But I opened it up to the two of them again, and let only those two bid. The other girl got it anyway."

Bidders sometimes try to hoodwink him, Hillberry says. "Once in a while someone, after getting a box of things and taking something out of it, will say he didn't bid on the box. I take the things back, but if I have seen him taking something out, I say, 'You put it back, then I'll sell it. Otherwise, you take it home.' That's what hurts such a fellow in a crowd.

"Also you have to keep track of the time and the amount you have to sell," Hillberry continues. "At times you have to speed up and lump things together. Maybe you won't get much, but you have to keep the sale moving. If your audience is getting tired of the type of things you're selling, you need to switch, so they will be interested."

Jim Rexroad agrees that the auctioneer must stay alert. "Sometimes two of one family, maybe a husband and wife, get to bidding on the same article, not knowing the other side is bidding. I try to prevent that," he says.

Then too, a good auctioneer needs to be honest and to treat people fairly. "The best advertising is treating people right, giving them good deals, being honest with them," Jim's wife says. "When they learn they can trust you, your business increases."

Another quality that helps is a good sense of humor. Humor keeps an audience loose. It is entertaining. People like to laugh. A good auctioneer may introduce humor into his selling. Often he will make himself the butt of a joke to get laughs. Holding up a chamber pot and pretending ignorance, he will ask, "What in the world could this be?" Or in putting up a rolling pin for sale, say, "Men, this is the kind of rolling pin for your wife. It is a *small* one. Never, for your own protection, buy your missus a

The cap says "Jim's Country Auction" and the man under it is Jim Rexroad. He conducts sales in a large area around his Preston County home.

big one. I did that once." In offering hair curlers for sale, the auctioneer may quip, "These are guaranteed to make most of your wives more beautiful."

Humorous incidents also occur spontaneously in the excitement of an auction. Rexroad tells of when two women, one sitting directly in front of the other, got excited in bidding on the same article. The one in front turned and said to the other, "I'll raise you $5."

The other, speaking to her competitor and not to the auctioneer, replied, "I'll raise you another $5. How do you like that?"

"Fine," shot back the first. "I'll raise you five more."

They bid up the object, addressing each other, and not the auctioneer. Jim stood watching, with the amount going up without any work on his part. The article brought a very good price, he remembers.

The modern interest in antiques is contributing greatly to the popularity and profitability of estate or personal property auctions. Many times the possessions of ordinary families include things of considerable value, not because those things were unusual or costly when new but because they are old and now scarce. There was a time when old furniture and other articles didn't bring much. But the interest in antiques has changed the situation.

Hillberry said, "The other day I went up to a man's house to see what he wanted me to sell. He had a lot of stuff in the barn which, if I hadn't gone, he would have thrown away, probably $500 or $600 worth of old tools. He said, 'Nobody uses these things any more.' He was mistaken. They were antiques. They fetch the money. Some of his family said they were glad I had come for already they had burned up some of the stuff. We found three old, old, oil lamps which they didn't think would fetch anything. Had a jar which I think will bring $100 or more, made in Wheeling; has all kinds of writing on it. It is perfect. Those with writing are hard to find. What makes the pressed-back chairs go are the designs on the back. You don't get them in your new furniture. They had two. The other day I sold two of them. They brought $60 each, and a woman who came later said she would have paid $100 apiece."

At a sale here a few years ago some old political buttons, which had been free handouts in past campaigns, sold for $35 each.

Sometimes true treasures are uncovered at auctions. Valuable first editions or rare books may be found. This past summer I discovered a local 1909 Bell Telephone Company directory at a sale. Someone in the family had saved it. Unfortunately for me, another bidder spotted it and was willing to pay far more than I was.

A few years ago a collection of dolls was among the items sold at an estate auction in our neighborhood. Although many were small and unpretentious, they had come from many parts of the world, picked up by the former owner in her travels. The collection sold for less than $500 at the sale. I was told that the buyer resold just one of the dolls for $500 and another for about $300, and that the collection was really worth several thousand dollars.

A local auctioneer told me he had been called to the country to help a family prepare for a sale. A man, poking around a little farm building, asked, "Are you going to sell this stuff under the building?"

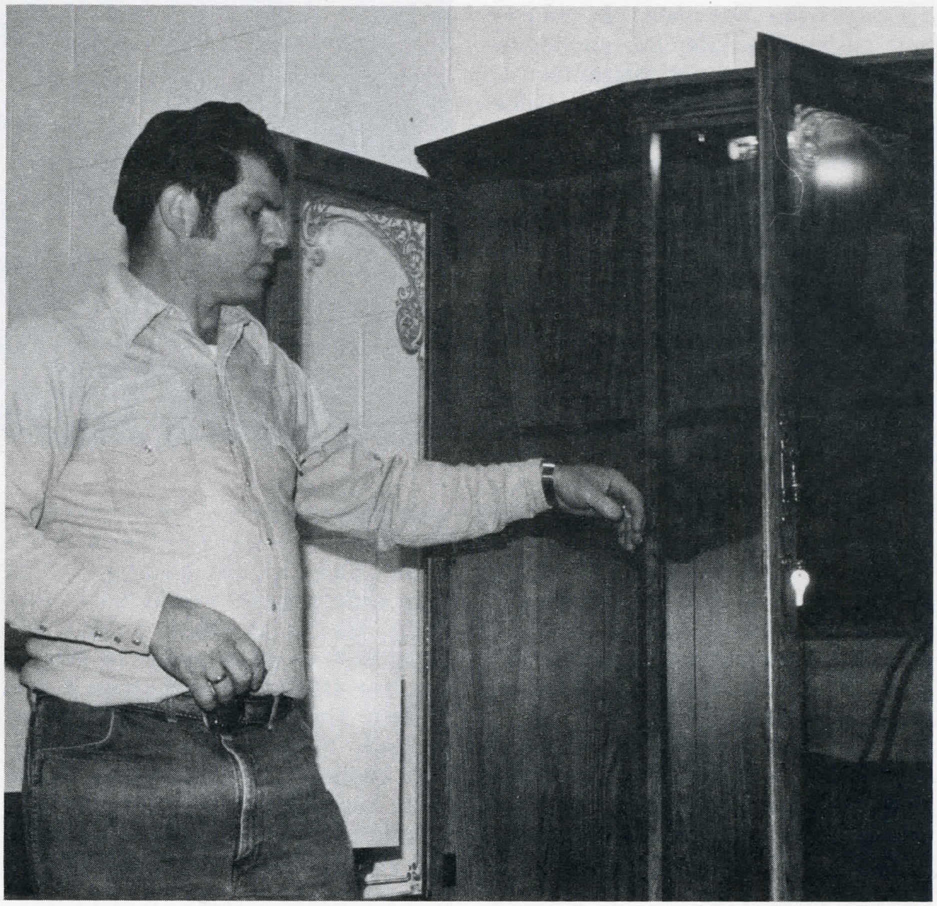
"I didn't know there was anything under it," the auctioneer answered.

"The man got three old jugs out," the auctioneer later told me. "At the sale they brought good prices. One sold for $80, if I remember right."

Ab Cole said, "Once I came across an old container for spools of thread. I hadn't any idea of its value. The highest bid I got was $3. The same day the buyer resold it for $150. That bidder had made a good find at my auction that day."

While an article's age, its scarcity

Below: Good bookkeeping is critical to an auctioneer's success. Here Mrs. Bob Hillberry (seated) presides at the registration table at a Hillberry auction.
Below right: Fine furniture often goes on sale at West Virginia auctions. Dallas Heldreth shows a cabinet.



and whether or not it is a popular antique are important elements in determining price, there are other considerations. At an auction one of the most important factors is the interest bidders have in an item. In one case I heard of, after the death of a father his children decided not to divide any of his things among themselves, and instead to auction off everything. But two of them were so interested in having a small black and white picture of their father and a team of horses that their competitive bidding resulted in the photograph selling for more than $100.

Any auctioneer will tell you that an auction starts long before the first article is offered for sale. The sale actually begins when the family or administrator contacts the auctioneer. He then takes inventory of what is to be sold — the antique, the ordinary, the unusual, the valuable, the less valuable. Together the seller and auctioneer select the site of the sale, and see that there are places for parking and for vendors providing the food.

There are decisions as to the time of the sale and the extent of the advertising; selecting newspapers and preparing the ads; preparing posters and handbills; mailing and distributing them; informing regular customers and antique dealers; and announcing the forthcoming sale at other auctions. There is the task of organizing the merchandise, making it accessible, placing the especially desirable articles where they can be seen easily.

On the day of the sale, much more work needs to be done. Signs must be placed to direct prospective buyers to the site. The business area has to be arranged, including preparing the auctioneer's platform, the registrar's place, and the cashier's table. The

Plenty of customers are the key to a successful sale. Here Dallas Heldreth, center, works the crowd at a Joe Pyles auction.

public address system must be connected and tested. People must be helped to park, and food preparations checked upon.

After the sale there is still work to do. Road signs must be collected, equipment packed, and merchandise which hasn't been picked up and unsold items cared for. The grounds must be cleaned, with trash and paper collected. Workers must be paid, and a settlement with the owner or administrator made. Only after all this is done is the sale actually closed.

Every auction has its moments, some of them sad. For example, last year I saw a small boy of about six and his sister and parents deliver "Lamb Chop," a large pet lamb, to the Mannington Livestock Sale Yard. The parents had gotten the lamb for the boy and girl when it was small. Now it had grown too big for their limited space and had to be sold. When the pet was separated from the family and put into a strange pen in the sale barn, it began bleating in fright. The boy, touched at the parting but apparently unaware of his lamb's ultimate destination, turned to his mother. "Will they hurt Lamb Chop?"

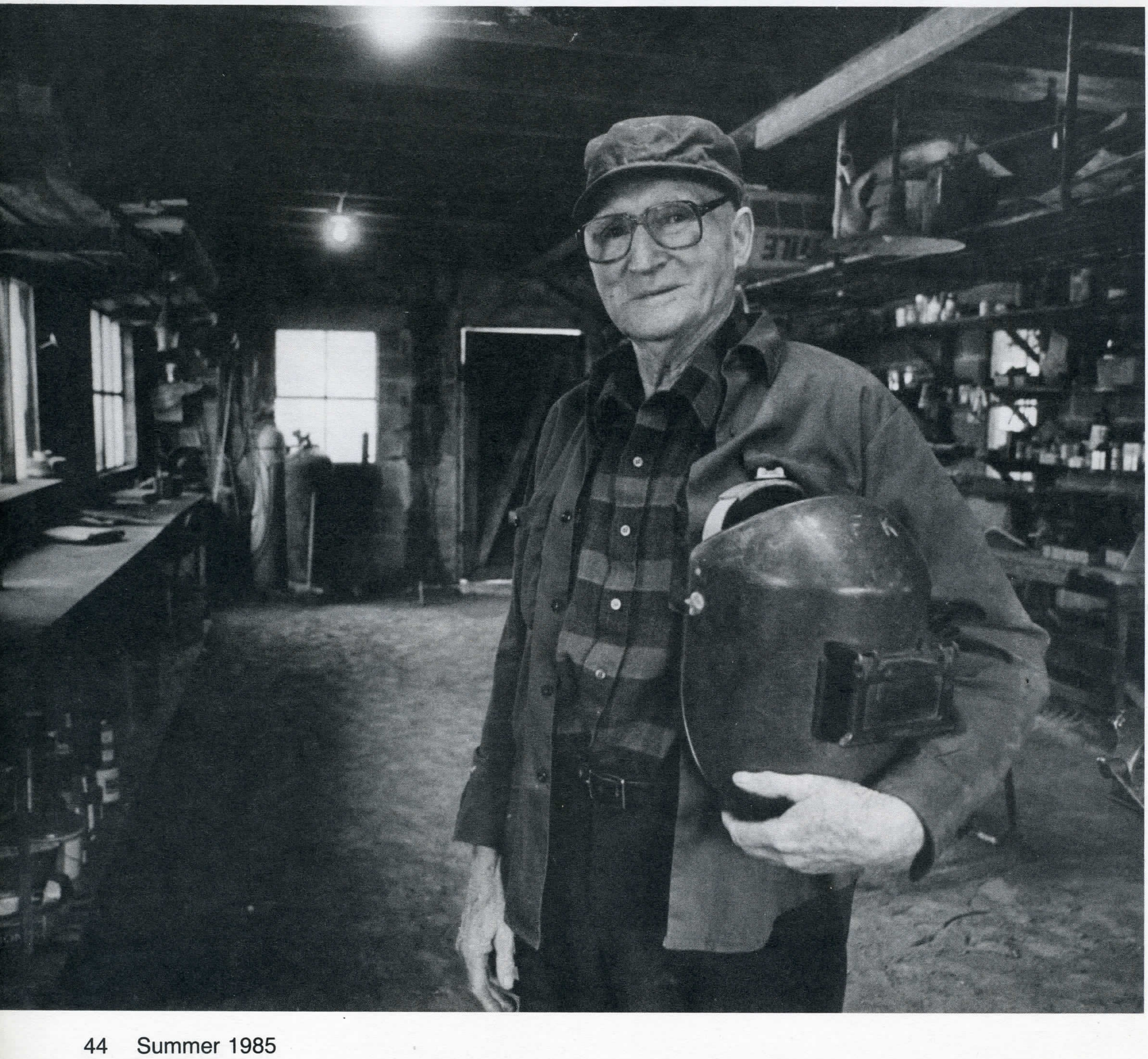
These are the sorts of things one sees at West Virginia auctions. As in this case, they're sometimes tragic or somber, as families part with ill-chosen pets at livestock yards and others witness the breakup of the old family home at an estate sale. Just as often, the auction provides fun and humor. Either way, they do their job, providing bargains to the bidder and a chance for the seller to profit from the mess in the attic or the junk under the shed. Auctions are an important part of our rural culture and we'd be a poorer people without them.

Dick Lloyd

He Kept the Gas Moving for 43 Years

By Bob Schwarz
Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

Dick Lloyd is an active 80-year-old. Here he stands with his welder's helmet inside his well equipped shop.



Dick Lloyd is 80 now. As long as he can remember, he's been a tinkerer. Behind his house sits a workroom, and in that workroom Dick plays around, still looking for answers. During his years working for other people, he tinkered too — tinkered with some very big machines, and became very skilled at it. Once an idea of his saved his company half a million dollars.

Dick was born in 1905. His life story is mixed up with the changing history of the West Virginia natural gas business. To help a young visitor curious about the past, Dick searches his memory all the way back to 1920, when he was starting out. He recalls that he was just shy of his 15th birthday when he began as a trench digger on a 20-inch pipeline. His tools were a pick and shovel. He worked in a space two shovel lengths long, by four feet deep and two feet wide. That first day, Dick could barely handle even that little space.

Later on, as boiler supervisor for the Hope Natural Gas Company, parts of four states — West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia — became his territory. Beginning in 1948, until he took early retirement 16 years later at age 59, he travelled the Appalachian oil and gas fields, going from one station to another. The boilers he looked after provided muscle to the Hope's huge gas compressors. And the compressors in turn put gas under pressure, and moved it to distant cities, factories and homes.

Nowadays, only someone with a degree can be called an engineer. As far as names are concerned, a boiler expert without a degree is just a plain old operator. But in his heart, Dick Lloyd knows he's an engineer. He knows engines and boilers. He knows how to take them apart, how to put them together, how to get the most out of them.

Dick's field is combustion engineering and he's learned it well, theory and practice both. He knows what he can do, knows what most degreed engineers can do. He says quietly, "It's not what you know — it's what you can do with what you know."

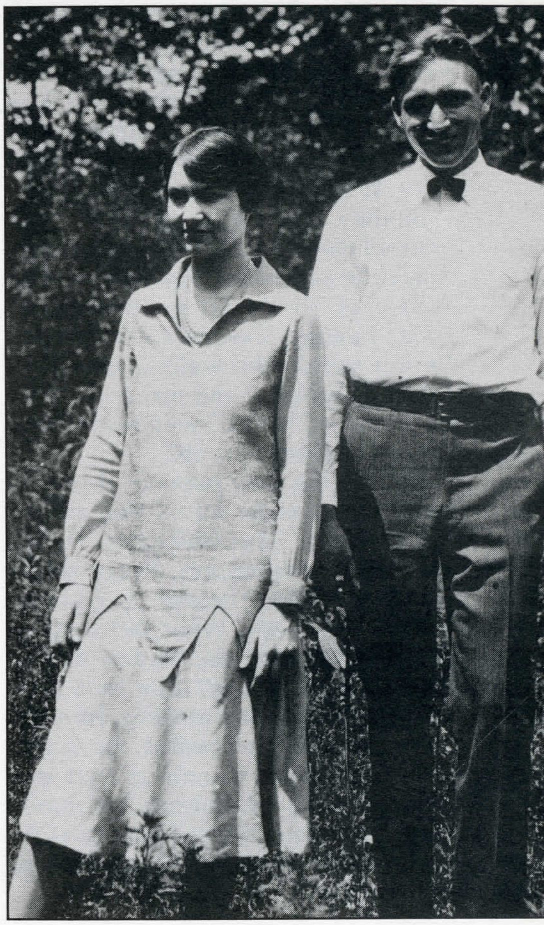
Dick grew up in Fairmont. He'd just finished grade school when he went to work on that first ditch-digging job. Natural gas was not yet a major industry in most of West Virginia. In those days, people were desperate to get at the stuff and develop it. The burgeoning gas business was bringing in precious jobs.

The gas business, of course, began at the wellhead. "But drilling a single successful well was by itself useless," Dick observes. Gas had to be moved, and it took a lot of wells — all concentrated in one area — to justify putting in a pipeline. Such pipelines were the arteries of the business. They reached out, on the one hand to the gas fields and on the other to the consumers. At the critical moment, an area would be abuzz with pipeline activity. The pipelines fed into a compressing station, and other lines snaked out again.

This was what was happening around Fairmont when young Dick Lloyd showed up for his summer job. The Gallagher Compressing Station was going up, and the 20-inch pipeline was being put in. But no wellhead gas would flow through this pipeline. Instead, it would handle artificial gas — coke oven gas, to be exact — captured as a byproduct at the nearby Domestic Coke plant.

Coke oven gas yielded 500 BTU per cubic foot in heat energy, only half the 1,000 BTU industry standard, and had to be mixed with richer gas before it went to market. The mixing took place at the Hastings Station in Wetzel County. But, says Dick, the gas wouldn't stay mixed. The gas travelled all the way to Cleveland, often stratifying in the lines on the way. A shot of 500 BTU gas would emerge from the lines, then a shot of standard gas. This didn't make for even burning, and it didn't make for happy customers. Eventually, in 1930, after years of half-satisfactory results, the Hastings Station received the order to use all the coke oven gas at Hastings, for boiler fuel. No more was to go into consumer lines. That was the end of the era for coke oven gas.

Dick came in at the beginning, however, when the pipeline from the coke plant was just going in. In those days, laying a pipeline required a small army of men. Dick Lloyd was one of those men. He recalls that the big sections of pipe came in by railroad to the nearest siding. Teams of horses did the heavy work from there, dragging one section at a time to where the men were working.



Dick with Eathel Postlewaite, when they were courting. She became the first Mrs. Lloyd in 1927. Date and photographer unknown.

That old iron pipe was heavy stuff. Putting in a 20-foot section of 20-inch required 16 men. They inserted a carrying pole into the section, lifted, moved it over to the trench, and lowered the pipe into the ground.

Trench digging was hard work. The foreman would lay down a shovel and measure out two lengths. That was a man's portion. The next man had a similar portion. Of his first day on the job, Dick confesses, "I was just a boy then, and I didn't know how to handle dirt."

That one section of digging took Dick the whole day. The other men had completed their sections, and gone forward to new ones. Dick alone remained. The boss told the foreman to send the boy home. But the foreman answered that he should have a better trial on his first day.

So Dick stayed on. May through

August he worked on the pipeline. Each 10-hour workday earned him $3.00. Soon it was September, and school was about to begin again. The pipeline was nearly complete and Dick quit digging to give high school a try. It would be a short try.

Biology was the worst. Even now, after all these years, Dick remembers how little appeal biology had for him. A boy of 15 craved excitement. To Dick, biology lessons were trapped forever within the walls of the classroom. Examining the make-up of little bugs — "What," wondered Dick, "was the point of it all?"

But the big new plant he'd helped build the pipeline for — that excited his curiosity. The Gallagher Station was now in operation. Every morning, men passed through its gates on the way to work. What did they do there? What was the station like on the inside? One day, after he'd been in high school four months, he went down to see, and asked for a job. They put him on, and at that moment, Dick's classroom education came to an end. From now on, as far as learning was concerned, he was on his own.

Dick's first job at the Gallagher Station wasn't any improvement over ditch digging. He was getting closer to a boiler to be sure, but he was still on the underside. He found himself staring up at a very large pile of fresh cinders. An old Ford truck had had the job of taking away cinders from under the boiler. "Now," recalls Dick, "the truck was broke down." In the meantime, cinders had been dumped out on the ground, and had accumulated. Suddenly the people in charge had a problem. The superintendent asked Dick if he could do the job the truck had been doing, with a wheelbarrow.

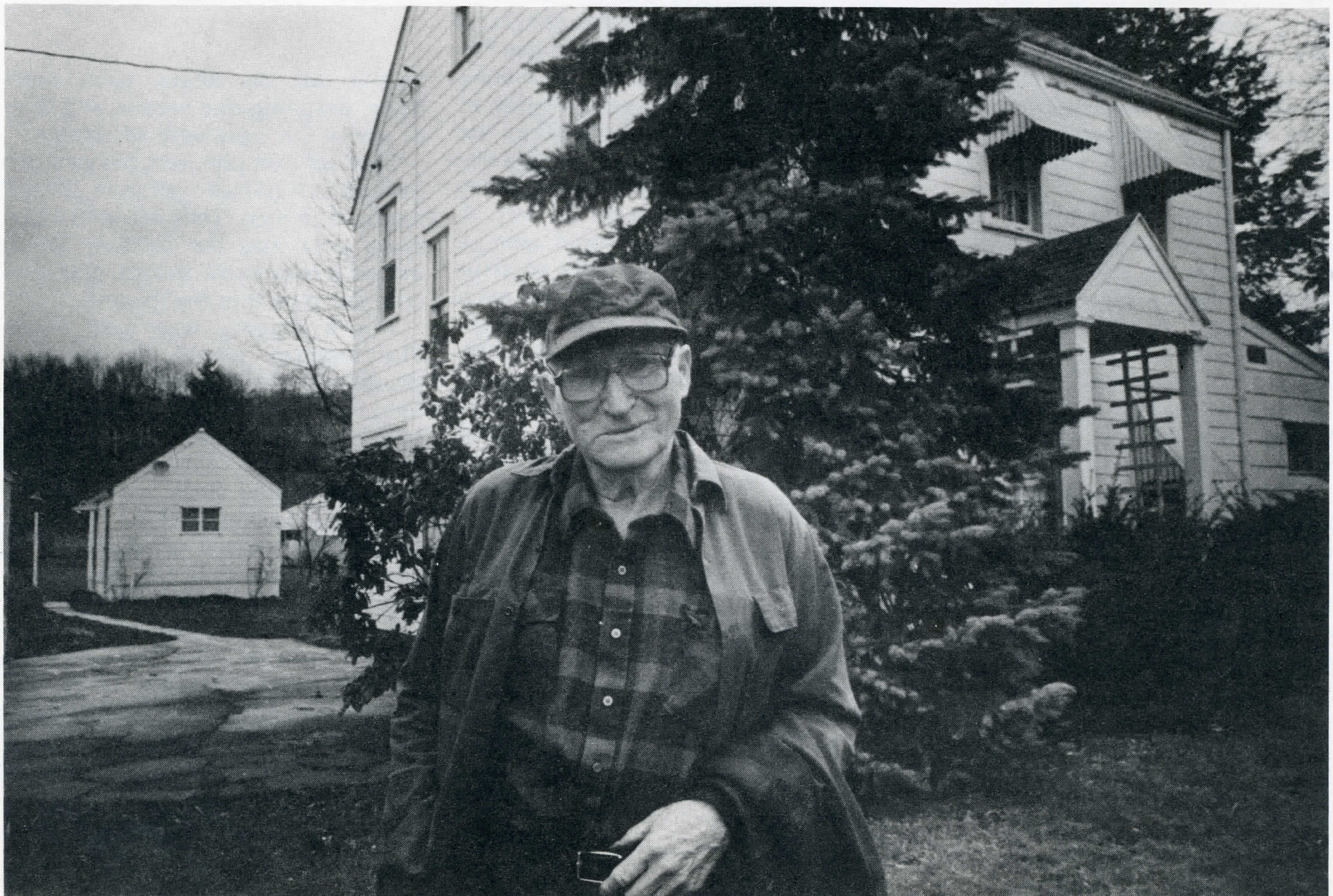
So for nearly a month, Dick wheeled cinders. He took them away and dumped them in what was known as the blow-off pit. It was a slow job, with new cinders constantly coming, but Dick was gaining on the pile.

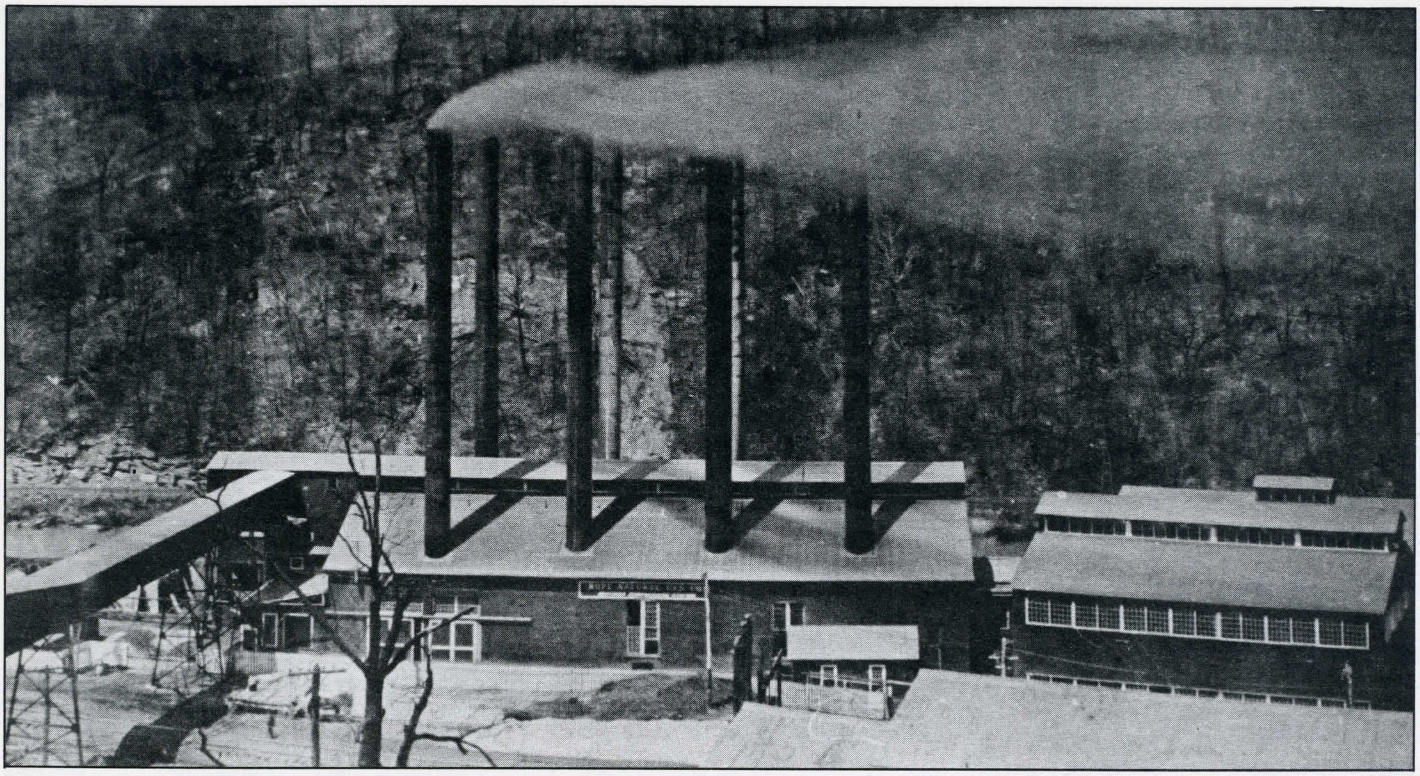
Then the man in charge decided he had enough cinders in the blow-off pit. Now he wanted them moved farther away, to the area around the drip tank pit. Each load of cinders would now have to be wheeled five or six hundred feet, all the way to the lower end of the yard. It made for a long wheelbarrow trip, and it took a lot of time. "Now the pile grew faster than I could take away cinders," Dick remembers. "I started losing." He wondered if he was burning up more in shoe leather than he was making in wages. It was close, he figured. He was discouraged, and he quit. It wouldn't be the last time.

"Four or five times I quit," he recalls. "But folks then seemed bigger than people today. A week or so later, I'd go back down to the plant, and Ed the superintendent would say, 'Want a job?' Each time I quit, he hired me back."

Dick's first work at the Gallagher Station paid $133 a month. That was about a dollar a day better than digging trenches, but the hours were worse. Just two shifts manned the plant, and they divided the work week between them. A man worked 12 hours on, 12 hours off, seven days a week — 84 hours in all. At the end of each month, first one shift worked an 18-hour day, then the other shift did. That took care of rotating the shifts.

Phillips Lumber Company built this fine house for the Lloyds back in 1935, and Dick has been there ever since. His shop is at the rear.




The Hope Natural Gas plant at Hastings, about 1918. Dick went there as a young foreman in 1924. Photographer unknown.

Long work weeks were still the rule, but not always so long as at Gallagher. An 84-hour week was a trifle much. What kind of life did that leave a young man? Elsewhere in the company, at Hastings for instance, men had already gone over to six eight-hour days. But even when that schedule finally came in at the Gallagher, there still was no swing shift. So when the engineer took his day off each week, Dick covered. For the first time, he did an engineer's work. From then on, he had his chance up close to the boilers, the guts of a compressing station.

Dick wanted to know theory, too, and he took correspondence courses for that. He sent away to Chicago, and got his hands on the Hayes Course on Combustion Engineering. This man Hayes was the leading combustion engineer in the country, and had practical experience with boilers. He also understood the men who worked on boilers — appreciated what they already knew, and what they needed to learn. As a result, the Hayes course was unique in its field.

To this day, Dick Lloyd remains grateful. "Here was a course," says Dick with a smile, "that catered to a dumb layman like me." Dick read the material, then reread it again and again. Finally, he felt, he was getting to know boilers.

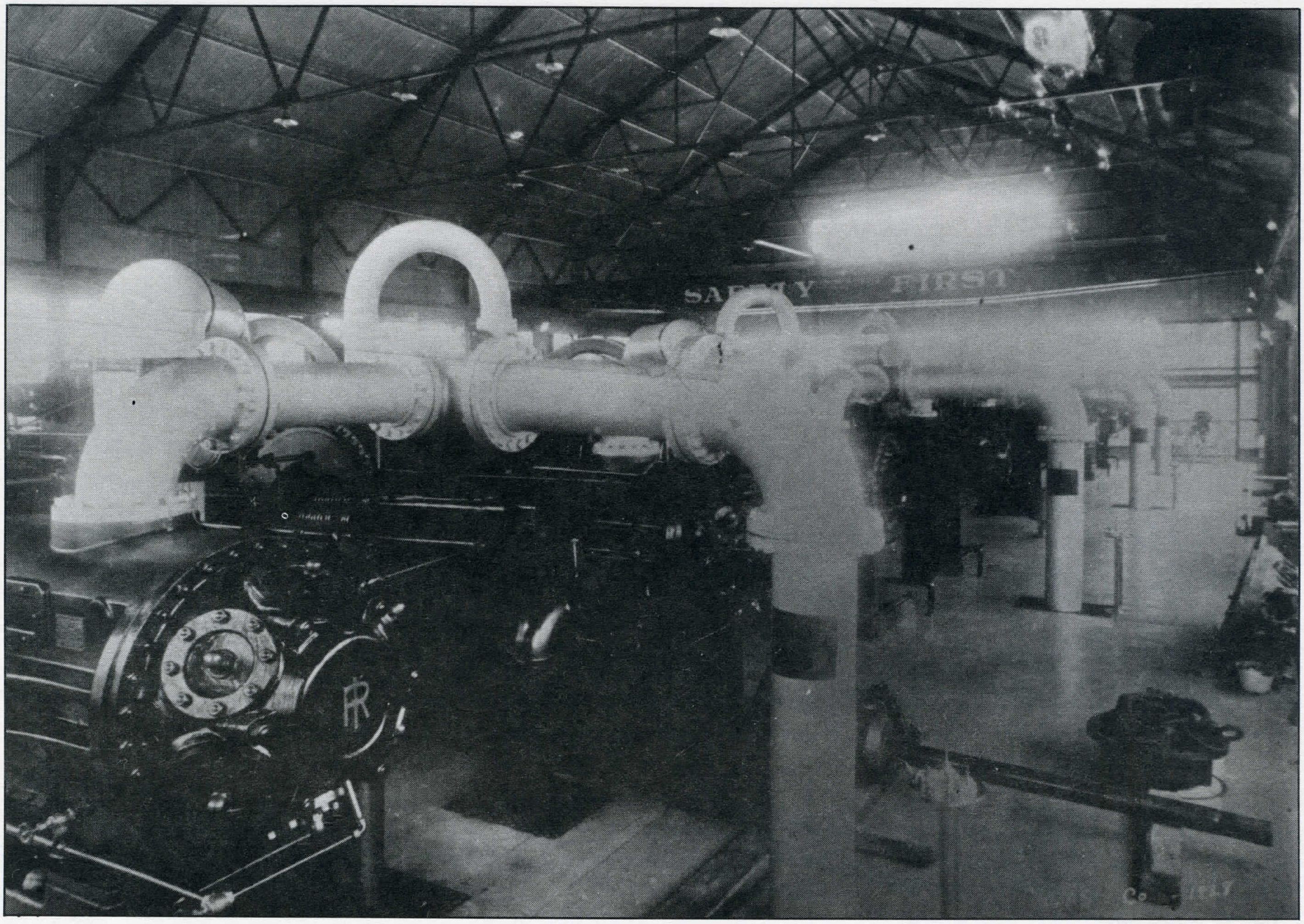
There was an experienced man named John Clark at Gallagher. Dick was taking the Hayes course, and asking a lot of questions. One day Clark took Dick with him up to Hastings in Wetzel County, and both men did some boiler efficiency tests. "Mine came out pretty much the same as his," Dick remembers proudly. Clark must have been impressed, for he took Dick under his wing. Later John Clark became president of Hope Natural Gas, and he would often trust Dick with important assignments.

Half a year after the boiler tests, the company transferred Dick to Hastings, and made him boiler foreman. He was just 19 years old. This was 1924, and Hastings was the world's biggest compressing station. Twelve boilers of 365 horsepower, and four boilers of 410, powered the compressors. For one shift each day, Dick was maintenance foreman in charge of boilers. He had eight men under him.

Those early years at Hastings were exciting times. The new technology was coming in fast. A man who knew a little theory and who kept his eyes open could make a lot of suggestions. Yet, there were times when the company didn't move fast enough, when ideas Dick thought had merit got sidetracked.

Some of the ideas were simple. "They had a funny system then," Dick remembers of one. "Each man shoveling cinders was issued his own shovel, and he kept it in his locker. A man would get two or three nicks on his shovel, and he'd run to his shift foreman. The shift foreman would order new shovels for his whole crew." Three different shift foremen operated this way, and a lot of good shovels were thrown out. Dick suggested there be just a single pool of shovels, and that the one pool serve all. This was a reasonable idea, and the superintendent bought it. But it was bad politics, for the shift foremen didn't.

"It was a clannish thing then," says Dick. "A foreman had his own little territory, and he'd zealously defend it. Suddenly, there wasn't a shovel to be found." The day shift had left the evening before, and had locked all the shovels in their lockers. The evening shift had come in, and



The interior of a gas compression plant was home to Lloyd for many years. This view of a Hope plant was made in 1928. Photographer unknown.

they had just sat. The night shift followed, and did the same. When Dick came in the next morning, the cinder pits were full to overflowing. It was an awful sight.

Here he was, his mind charged with ideas. If Hastings wasn't ready for a simple shovel idea, was this, Dick Lloyd wondered, the place for him? Again he was frustrated and again he quit. It was Thanksgiving, 1926.

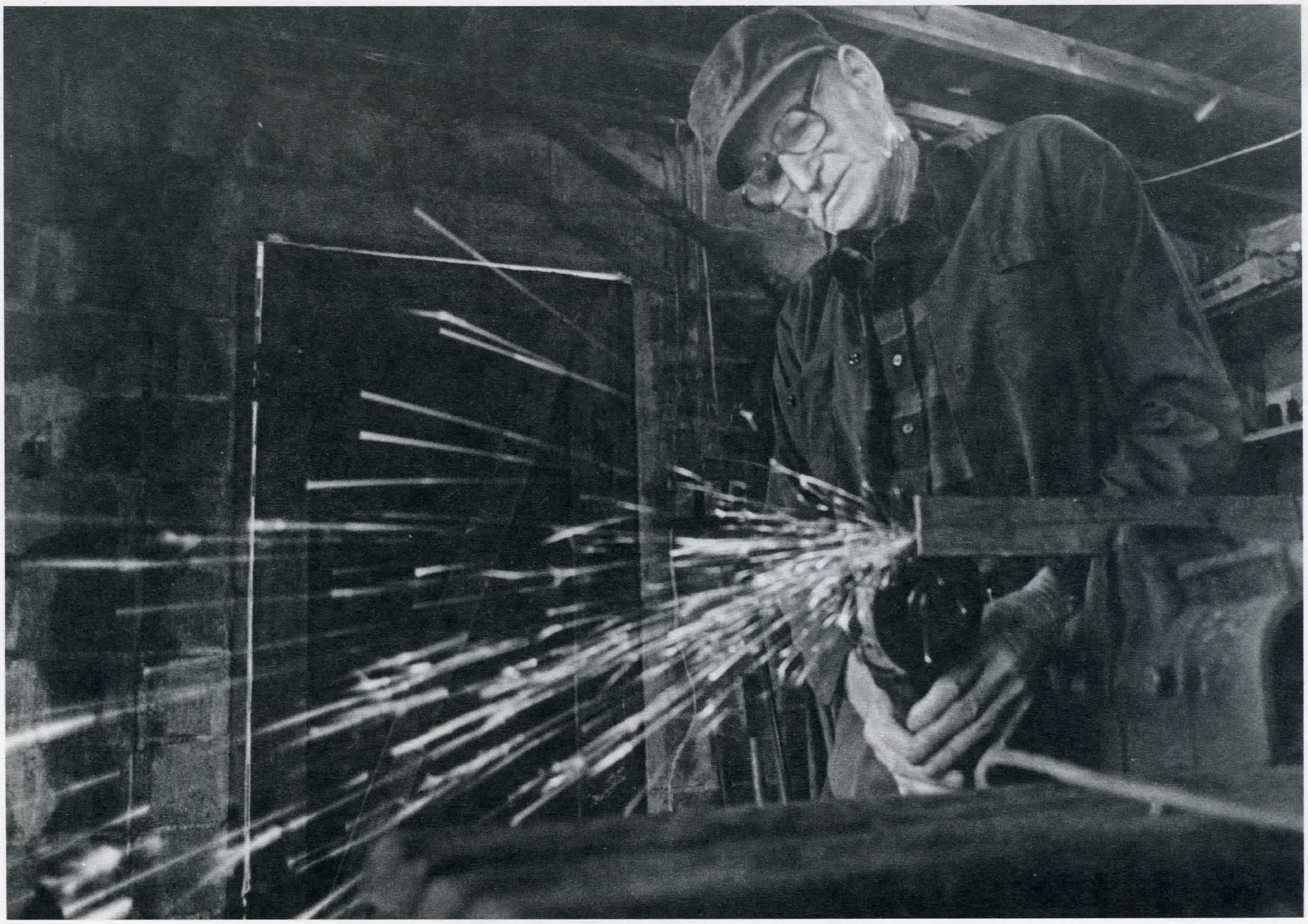
Dick headed to a big town, Pittsburgh, and hired on there. He had a dream: Days he'd work, nights he'd take courses. Work he did, but he never got around to the courses. He was a lad of 21, and he was ambitious. And yet, there are times when a man's personal life needs attending also. In short, things weren't going well in the love department. With Dick out of state, the girl he had his eye on back home had become engaged to another man. Was he going to let her just slip away? And was life in such a fast town as Pittsburgh going to be right for Dick Lloyd?

He answered "no" to both questions, and his stay in Pittsburgh was not a long one. After a few months, he returned to West Virginia, this time to Logan County. There he found work with Appalachian Electric. Closer to home and his girl, he wasn't, but for the first time he was laying eyes on modern boilers. He was impressed. Dick put in his six days a week, and learned what he could.

Finally, some friends told Dick it was time he came back to Hastings. Superintendent Jim Mayfield, they told him, had been holding a job open for him. Mayfield had said Dick would be back within six months, and he was right. It was the spring of 1927 when Dick returned. That summer, he and Eathel Postlewaite were married. They would spend the next 35 years together, the rest of her life.

Three years later, in 1930, the Hope Company put in three enormous boilers rated at 100,000 pounds steam per hour at the Hastings plant. (The reckoning on boilers was changing: Going out were ratings in terms of horsepower developed; coming in was reckoning in steam output per hour.) Hastings was looking for efficiency. The three big boilers would now do the work of 16, and the old west boiler room at Hastings would be completely done away with.

In 1941 more changes came in. Two big Babcock & Wilcox pulverized fuel facilities came on line. One was capable of turning out 100,000 pounds steam per hour, the other 125,000. Inside each unit, nine 11-inch hardened steel balls went round and round on what Dick calls a race. The steel balls ground up the coal until 90% of it would pass through a flour-sized screen. Powder was the result, and



Lloyd has worked with tools all his life and can still make the sparks fly. Here he works with a handheld grinder.

suddenly it was a whole new ballgame. Coal could be burned in suspension, just as if it were a gas. Says Dick, "We could now switch on the fly from coal to gas. It made things nice."

A few years later, the company faced a crisis. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers had instituted a code for boilers, and the state had adopted it. Now the state said that Hope wasn't in compliance, and that the company was dragging its feet. Charleston was threatening to throw a Hope vice-president in jail. Company officials needed someone to coordinate things and they needed results fast. So, in 1948, Dick went on the road. "They told me I'd be my own boss, and I was," he remembers today.

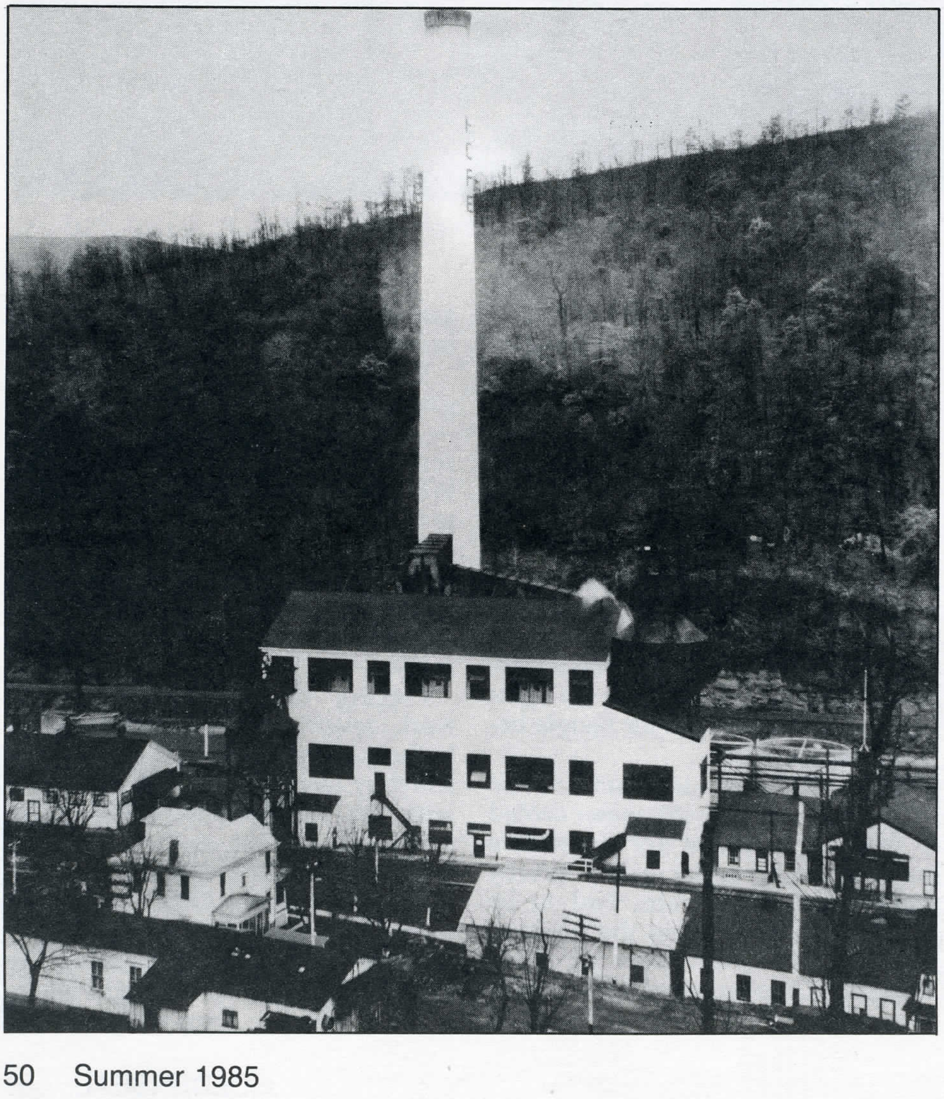
Over the next 16 years, Dick took on diverse tasks. For the most part, of course, he inspected and overhauled boilers. But he also did a lot of pinch-hitting. The company might have a construction project nearing completion, and Hope higher-ups would want their own man at the scene to make sure things came out right. They often chose Dick Lloyd.

In all, Dick was in charge of construction on four different boilers, on several compressing stations, and on a fractionating plant at Hastings. A fractionating plant is a big complex where heavier, richer elements are separated from gas. Without fractionating, we'd have no butane for lighters and no bottled gas for people beyond the gas lines.

Dick's $500,000 idea came in the '50's. Hastings was still water cooled in those days, and at dry times there wasn't enough water in the nearby creek. Additional water had to be pumped 16 miles from the backwaters of the Ohio River at Twin Bridges. Unfortunately, the water pipe was always plagued by algae growth, which gradually shrank its carrying capacity.

Traditionally, a method called pigging had been the remedy. The "pig" — a trap with scrapers on it — was sent through the line once a week. Water carried the trap from one end to the other, and the scrapers cleared out the algae. Trouble was, they also took layers of oxide off, and exposed the pipe to renewed corrosion. Frequent pigging gradually wore a pipe away.

Pigging the pipe required one work crew itself, and constant repairs to the pipe called for other men. And still they were fighting a losing battle with the old 12-inch pipeline. The proposed solution was total replacement, at a cost of about half a million dollars. Instead, Dick suggested chemical treatment of the water. Specifically, he proposed to extend the life of the metal by adding a phosphate product to form a film on the



Above: A safety meet at Hastings in September 1938. Dick says he was in the group but is unable to find himself today. Photographer unknown.
Left: The "new" boiler room at the Hope Natural Gas station in Hastings. The operation was installed in 1930 and this picture was probably made soon after. Photographer unknown.

inside of the pipe. Further deterioration could be avoided by adding chlorine to kill the algae, getting rid of the pig. "What did we have to lose?" he figured.

The chemicals saved the old pipeline. As it happened, the timing was excellent. At Hastings, before another 10 years were out, air cooling would replace water cooling. Thin tubes and air fans would remove heat from the system, and the long water line would no longer be needed. In the meantime, for almost another decade, the old pipe served. A half-million dollars had been saved.

Over 40 years had passed since Dick Lloyd had dug that first trench. It was now the early '60's, and changes were again coming into the business. At compressor stations, a new technology was about to replace the old. The steam cycle was on the way out. To power the big compressors, a gas cycle would take its place. The work would now fall to angle-type, turbocharged gas engines, rated at 2,500 horsepower. For each horsepower/hour developed, the new gas engines required just 7,000 BTU of fuel energy. The steam method had required 17,000. Again, a more efficient technology was taking over.

Coal-fired boilers were Dick Lloyd's specialty. Now at his company they were about to vanish into history. Dick's expertise was about to become outmoded. But a man who once had saved the company a small fortune might prove valuable again, some big people at Hope figured. They asked Dick to stay on. They wanted him to share his experience and horse sense with younger people in the company.

"Just who," Dick remembers asking, "do you think all that experience and horse sense would rub off on?"

"Why, the wage earners, of course," they told him.

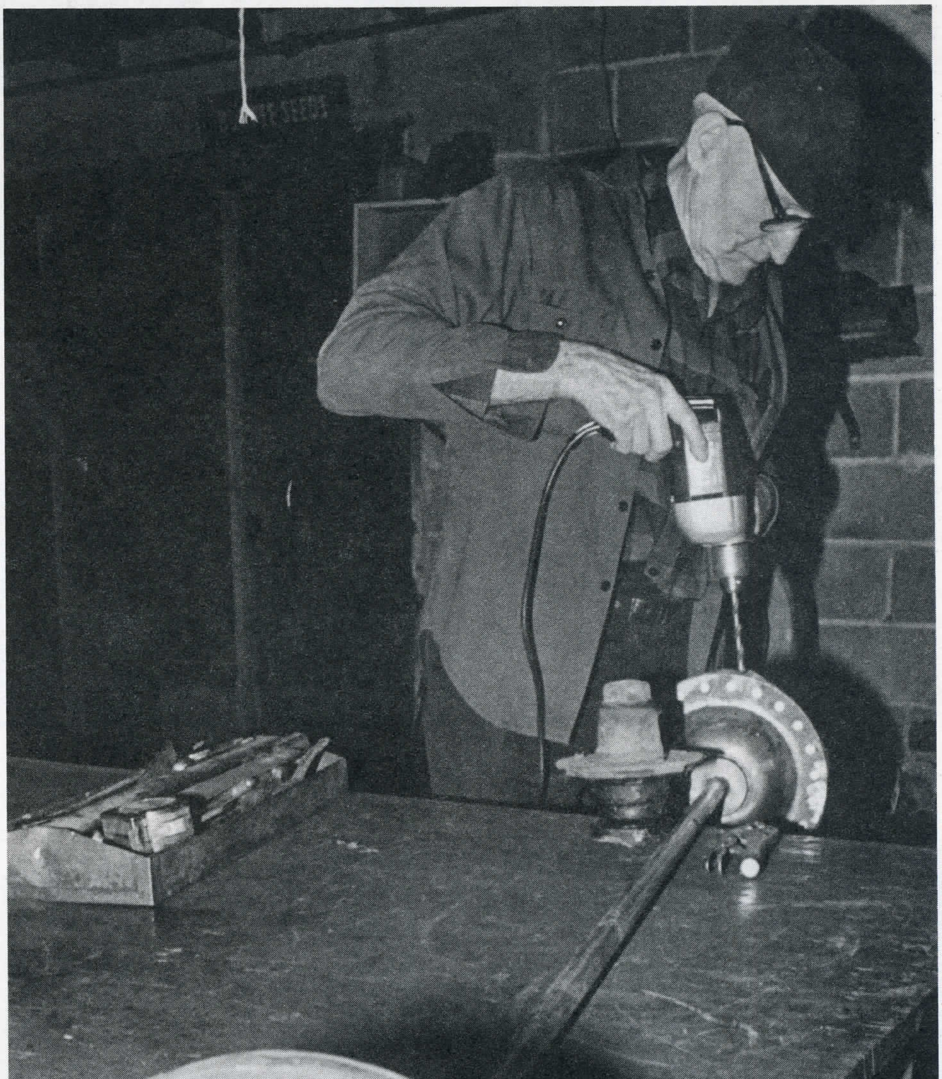
"If it would rub off on the executives, I'd gladly stay."

On December 31, 1963, Dick Lloyd worked his last day. He has no regrets about early retirement. True, his monthly pension checks are smaller. But, says Dick, "When you're young, everything you see you want. When you're old, you know what you want, and it's not so much."

Dick's last 16 years on the road had often pitted home life against career. Now he was ready to decide in favor of home. He had had enough living out of suitcases. Sometimes Eathel had come along and they had had the company of each other, but it was still living out of suitcases. Instead of one person away from home, it was two.

Several times along the way, Dick had been offered the superintendent's position at one Hope station or another. He had always turned the top job down. To be cooped up in a company house, on 24-hour call, to have to phone in if he went down the road for 15 minutes — that wasn't what Dick Lloyd would call living.

Eathel was gone now. She had died in a car accident early in 1962. They had spent 35 years together, good years, says Dick. They had raised a boy and a girl together. Now as 1963 neared its end, and with retirement at hand, Dick married



Mechanical experiments take up more of Lloyd's time now than when he was working. Our photographer caught him at work on this recent shop project.

Remembering the Linewalker

Moving natural gas in West Virginia's long distance pipelines is a high technology business today, with computers continuously monitoring the flow from central locations. Electronic sensors pick up trouble spots as they develop and repair crews can be rushed in, by helicopter if necessary.

In Dick Lloyd's early days, things were different. Gas company employees walked the long lines, listening for trouble with their own ears and relying on a few simple hand tools for on-the-spot repairs. In the following paragraphs Lloyd remembers the work of the old linewalkers, and how they solved one common problem.

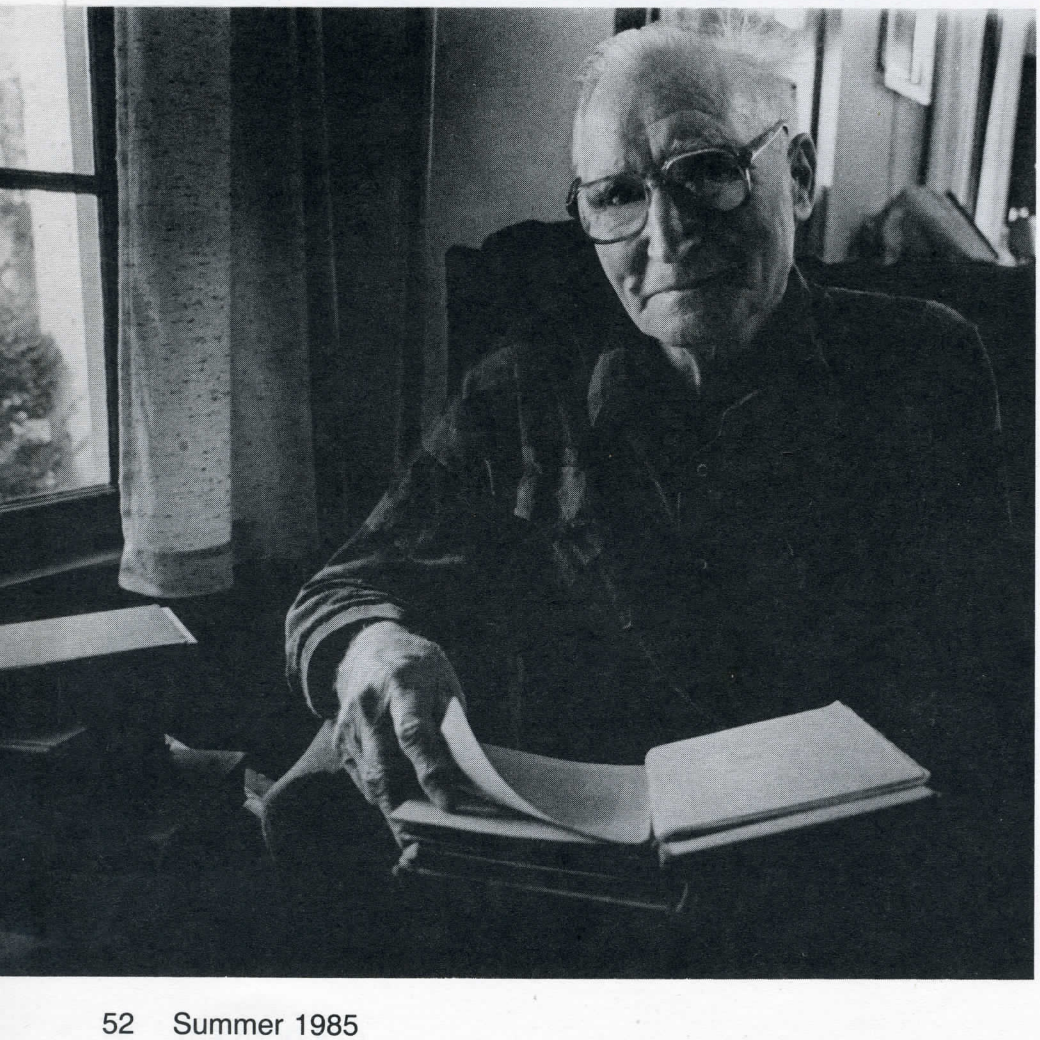
"When I came into the game, a linewalker carried a combination monkey-pipe wrench, a hammer, a punch, and some plugs.

"A pipeline over these hills always had low spots where the line was exposed. In such spots, there'd be condensation in the line, and water would slosh around in the pipe. A man walking the line could hear it.

"In winter that water would freeze up. Left unchecked, ice would choke off the flow of gas completely. That's where the linewalker came in. He'd go to a low spot, where he knew there'd be an ice problem. He'd punch a tiny hole on the underside of the pipe — that'd be the hole where water from the defrosting ice would run out. Then a bit higher up, on the side of the pipe, he'd punch another pin hole. Gas would come out of the hole, the linewalker'd put a match to it, and there'd be a small gas fire to defrost the ice. When all the water had come out, the linewalker would tap plugs into the two pinholes, and be on his way.

"That old wrought iron pipe a person could do that with. The punch wouldn't blow the pipe. But the high tensile pipe they put in today wouldn't take that kind of treatment. It'd blow from the punch."

Dick Lloyd, a man of action for many decades, also has a scholarly side. Here he studies history by the window.



again, this time to Iva Paul. Iva gave Dick 20 years, also good ones, until she too died in late 1983.

Today Dick Lloyd lives in a two-story house, right along Route 20 in Wetzel County. Phillips Lumber Company built the house back in 1935, and Dick has called it home since. Route 20 was a newly gravelled road when the house was going up. It is paved now, has been for almost half a century. Just off the main road, behind Dick's house, is a modern school six years old. The school sits on property that once belonged to Dick. On land he was doing nothing with, kids now have the opportunity to learn.

Dick likes that, for he has built his life on learning and hard work. When he worked for the company, he prided himself on giving full value to his employer. "Years and years ago, I remember pushing a wheelbarrow on one job, and working with a gang of men. Ten minutes before noon, they'd all knock off, and sit down. I'd keep pushing the wheelbarrow till noon. After a few days, one of the men sitting down looked up at me and said, 'Dick, don't you know how foolish you are? The noon whistle's going to blow in 10 minutes.'

"That didn't deter me," says Dick Lloyd. "I kept right on wheeling, that day, and the next, and the next."

Governor Henry Drury Hatfield inherited major coalfield labor troubles from his predecessor, W. E. Glasscock. State Archives photo.

Three Sides to the Story

Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars

By Joseph Platania

A blustery March wind threatened to dislodge the silk top hats of the men in the audience assembled at the old State Capitol. They had gathered to hear the governor-elect, Dr. Henry D. Hatfield, deliver his inaugural address. The date was March 4, 1913, and across the nation the Progressive Era was in full swing with social and political change in the air. As a symbol of the transition, Governor Hatfield became the first West Virginia governor to ride in his inaugural parade in an automobile. But this day of orderly pomp and ceremony did not hide the fact that the state faced a grave crisis in the Kanawha Coalfield.

In the narrow, coal-rich valleys of Cabin Creek and Paint Creek, less than 20 miles from the inaugural site, martial law had been imposed for the third time by Governor Glasscock, Hatfield's predecessor. Thousands of desperate miners and their families, driven from company-owned houses, had fought mine guards in a yearlong mine war. For the union miners out on strike, it had been a year of sadness, sickness, hunger, and violence.

In his speech Governor Hatfield referred to the mine war as a "flagrant contest" between labor and management. He said that a huge industrial territory was involved, and estimated that over 30,000 men were affected. Among his personal papers there is the further notation that "the year of labor trouble had cost the state over $2 million and an untold number of lives." He knew that he had inherited an open wound in this conflict.

On the day of his inaugural Hatfield expressed his desire to go into the Paint and Cabin creeks section to investigate conditions for himself. Almost a half-century later, his daughter, Hazel Hatfield Fairless, recalled the events of the time for Marshall University researcher Carolyn Karr. Mrs. Fairless recalled that her father received letters threatening his life and one threatening to kidnap his daughter. His military advisers also warned that his life might be in danger if he visited the strike zone. She remembered that his only reply was that "they needed a doctor." At daybreak on the day following his inauguration he made the first of several trips into the strike-torn area, carrying his medical bag and by himself.

"Right after the inauguration Father left for Cabin Creek and spent a week or 10 days up there," Mrs. Fairless recalled. "He didn't go as governor but to practice medicine. He didn't say who he was and for awhile he wasn't recognized. Everybody had pneumonia in the camps. It was a brave thing to do and created good will. He also had long conversations with Mother Jones in the camp.

"Father said that there were three sides to every story — your side, his side and somewhere in between," Mrs. Fairless concluded.

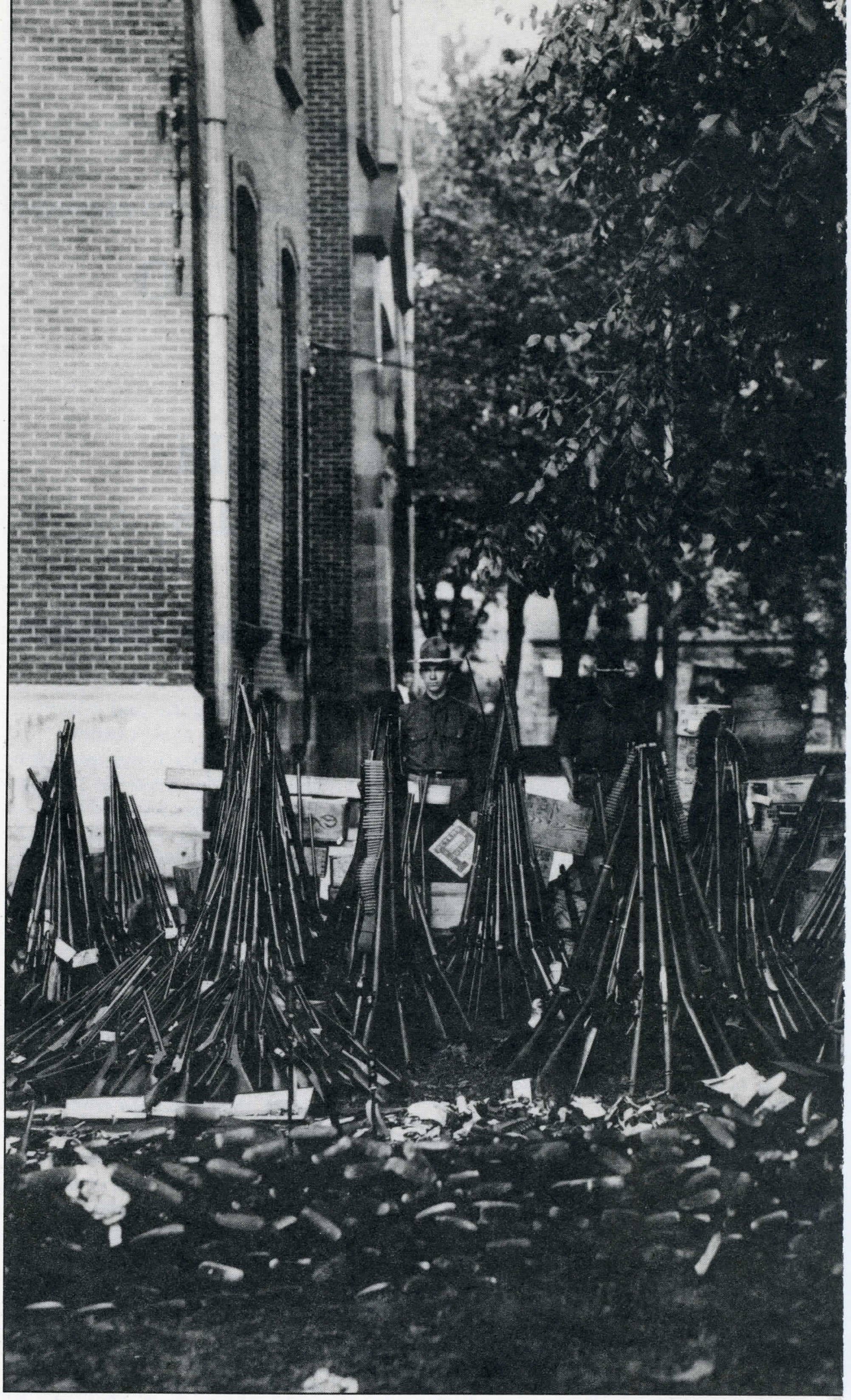
Dr. Henry Drury Hatfield, the state's 14th and, at age 37, then youngest governor, was no stranger to the coalfields and to miners. He was born on Mate Creek in what is now Mingo County, on September 15, 1875. He was the son of Elias Hatfield and a nephew of feuding Devil Anse Hatfield. Despite his family background, Henry Hatfield once told an interviewer that "all the McCoys are friendly towards me" and he had never had "so much as a fist fight with a McCoy."

Hatfield had been a doctor in the southern coalfields almost from the time he finished medical school. In his practice he had gone into shabby company houses as well as the isolated cabins of mountaineers, and often given free medical care both places. The poverty of many of his patients, among them miners who had lost their credit at the company store during hard times, made a lasting impression. Hatfield knew when he stepped off the C & O train at Cabin Creek, black bag in hand, that difficult days as a doctor and as governor lay before him.

No one had to tell the family of striking miner Cesco Estep that there was a mine war on Paint and Cabin creeks. Mr. Estep had become a casualty of that war one violent wintry night the month before the new governor arrived.

Francis Francesco Estep was a Cabin Creek miner who found six 10-hour days a week insufficient to support his family. He also resented the oppressive mine guard system under

The National Guard found the two sides in the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek war to be well armed. These are some of the confiscated guns and ammunition. State Archives photo.



which he worked. He decided to go with the United Mine Workers and joined the strike that broke out in April 1912. He was evicted from his company house and found shelter for himself and his family in a small frame house in Holly Grove. In early May Cesco Estep saw his first trainload of Baldwin-Felts mine guards arrive on their way to Mucklow on Paint Creek. By summer hundreds of homeless miners were lodged in tents supplied by the union, including some living near the Estep home.

The strike had dragged on through the summer of 1912 as strikers tried to drive the mine guards from the area. Twice martial law was declared by Governor Glasscock. On the morning of February 7, 1913, another shooting incident took place near Holly Grove. That set off rumors that the guards were going to attack the tent colony from the "Bull Moose Special" during its late run up the creek.

The Bull Moose Special was a steel-plated train that rolled out of the Huntington C & O shops in February 1913, consisting of a locomotive, baggage car and day coach. The railroad permitted mine guards to outfit the train with machine guns, high-powered rifles, and ammunition. The armored train was used to transport scab workers up to Paint and Cabin creeks to work in the mines.

On the night of February 7, 1913, the "Special" had a different purpose as it carried the Kanawha County Sheriff and six deputies, plus coal operator Quinn Morton and 14 of his mine guards, into the strike zone. The sheriff had a warrant for unnamed persons, carrying the charge of "inciting a riot," to serve as legal justification for the war party.

As the darkened train moved past the tent village of Holly Grove, where armed strikers were thought to be hiding, the firing started. Sleeping families awoke to the sound of bullets ripping through their tents and houses.

The Estep home was in the line of fire. Cesco hollered to his wife, Maud, who was seven months pregnant, to get two-year-old Clifford and go to the cellar for safety. As Maud ran with the baby, Cesco was outside running toward the back. As he turned the corner, more than 100 rounds perforated the little house, with 19 bullets passing through Maud's and Clifford's clothing without leaving a scratch. Cesco was less fortunate. One bullet caught him in the face, killing him instantly in the sight of his wife.

Early the next morning Maud Estep was taken to a nearby hospital and Clifford taken in by relatives. More than 60 years later he was interviewed by Associated Press writer Strat Douthat. Clifford had come at the invitation of the West Virginia Labor History Association to attend the

1975 Labor Day picnic at Holly Grove in honor of his father.

"I was two years old at the time my father was killed," Estep recalled for the reporter. "He had stepped outside and I was in the house with my mother. She was holding me in her arms while they were shooting. She said the bullets sounded like splinters flying off the wall and there were a hundred bullet holes in the house."

"They even shot up my father's funeral a few days later," Mr. Estep reported bitterly. He enjoyed the 1975 memorial picnic and died two years later with the knowledge that his father was no longer a forgotten hero of the early struggle.

Dave Tamplin of the Fayette County town of Boomer also remembered those bloody days on the two creeks. He was interviewed in April 1973 as part of Marshall University's Oral History of Appalachia program. Mr. Tamplin had lived in Boomer since his birth in 1894 and was an independent businessman there.

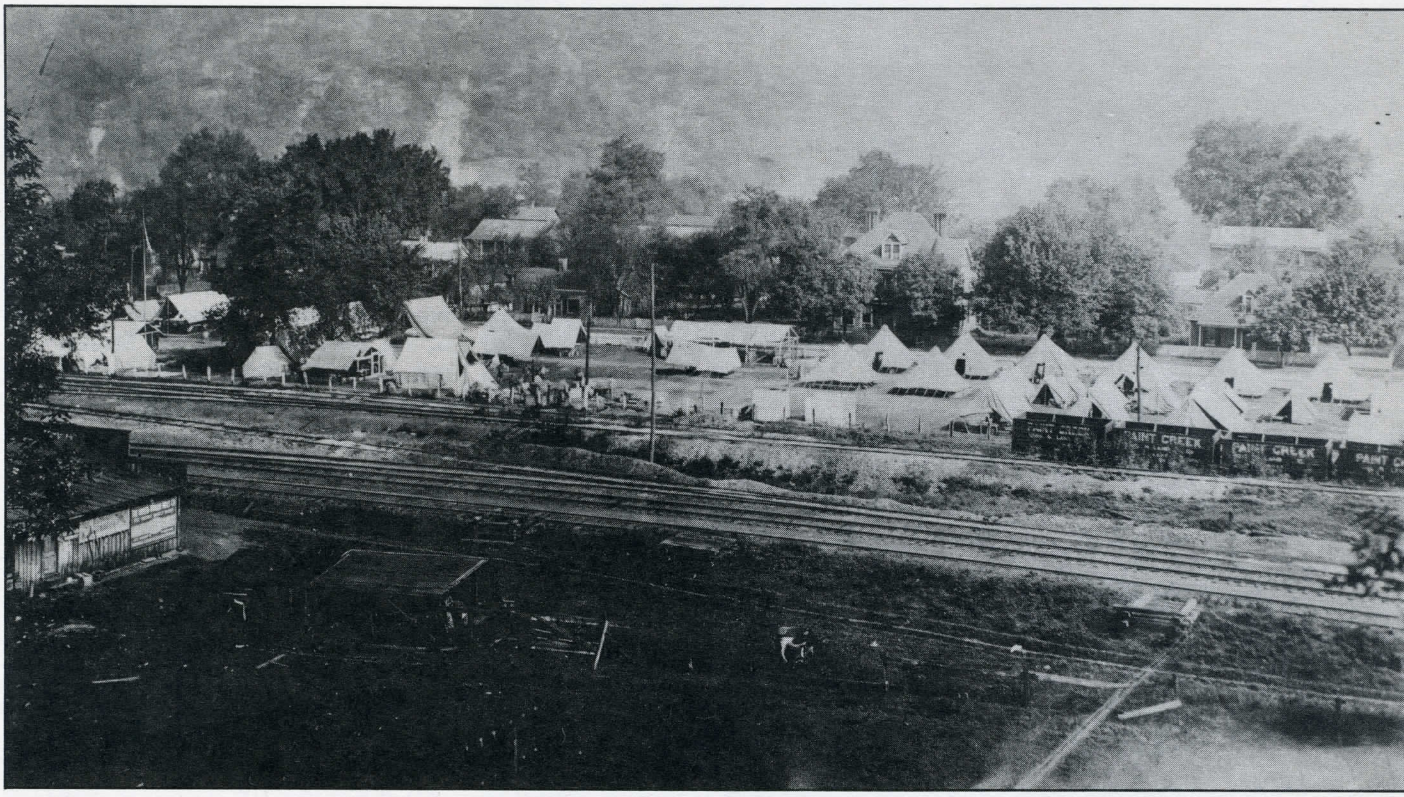
"Those on Paint Creek came out on strike in 1912," he recalled. "There was a few of them that went back to work but most of them didn't. The union was strong in the Valley, but not up New River and not up the creeks. So, they were trying to organize up Paint Creek.

"No organizer for the union or any person at all, if you didn't work up the hollow, was allowed to go up through there and go on company property," Mr. Tamplin continued. "They had militia all up there. They were all practically kids around 17, 18 and 19 years old, and getting a kick out of belonging to the militia."

Tamplin remembered that a Colonel Ford was in charge of the militia. "He knew that the miners at Muckow and Mahan and those places were getting food and ammunition from somewhere else besides getting it up through Paint Creek. What was going on, the miners from Boomer and this vicinity were going up Morris Creek and over the mountains to Paint Creek and taking them ammunition and supplies.

"Nobody had any use for the militia," Mr. Tamplin said, "because they were considered mine guards in those days." He went on to compare the militia to Pennsylvania's notorious "Coal and Iron" police. "They was the ones that run the bullpen at the mouth of Paint Creek. If they caught a man attempting to go up the creek and organize, they would put him in," he added. "They had a fence around it, made of barbed wire. They'd fence him in the bullpen, kept them in there maybe for two or three weeks at a time." Tamplin credited Hatfield with rectifying the situation. "That was the first act that Governor Hatfield did when he came in. He sent Colonel Abe Lilly, which was our attorney general, up there to tear that bullpen down. So Abe Lilly came up to the mouth of Paint Creek and they did away with the bullpen."

John T. Walton, born in Kanawha County mining camp of Black Cat in 1904, supplies another firsthand ac-



The troops set up their camp at the mouth of Cabin Creek, near Pratt. It was here that the "tin horn" court was held. State Archives photo.

count of the Paint Creek mine wars. Mr. Walton grew up in a series of mining camps including Mucklow, Kayford and Quarrier in the Paint-Cabin area. His father operated company stores in these coal camps. The Walton family later moved to Lewisburg and then to Huntington in 1923. He was interviewed in May and June 1976 in Huntington as part of the Oral History of Appalachia program.

"Mother Jones came into our camp on two occasions," Walton recalled. "I did see her up on the stand addressing the men one time. The other time may have been over at Smithers." Walton was aware of the revered labor leader's fiesty reputation. "They'd wrote bad things about her in the paper," he said. "Sometimes she had said these things and sometimes she hadn't."

Mr. Walton also recognized the mine guards' role in the labor war. "The Paint Creek strike had been coming up for some time. For several months production was down in the mines and everybody was on edge and the tension was high. Finally the coal operators decided they'd bring in the Baldwin-Felts guards. Well, I think if they'd left those fellas out of there things would've been a whole lot better.

"The mine guards stayed at what we called the clubhouse at the upper end of the camp," Mr. Walton said, referring to the camp at Mucklow. "I think it must have had 14 or 16 rooms in it. It was a good-size thing and this lady ran it for a number of years. She took care of visiting officials and the guards who also ate over at the clubhouse. There were about 15 guards in all. They didn't bother anybody, of course, but some of the teenagers would hurl some very nasty remarks in their direction. The fact was, the store man [Walton's father] was in between the company and the men all the time. You had to please the company and you had to please the people. We just kept right in the middle of the road. But the men respected my father. There was just no two ways about that."

Hatfield in his medical corpsman uniform. He was able to use his status as a doctor to gain confidence among the miners. State Archives photo.

John Walton turned in his memory to the Battle of Mucklow in the summer of 1912. "Well, about two days before the battle it seemed that everybody just evaporated from the camp," he said. "A lot of men took their families out on the train as the trains ran steadily up and down the creeks.

"Mr. Scott, who was in charge of the stable, took his family and went down someplace on the river to visit relatives. So Dad had to look after the mules, and on this particular day it had gotten around that there was just liable to be a mighty big battle. That morning Mother took her two kids and we crawled under the house down in next to the chimney, so that if they did shoot down that way, well, maybe we'd all be safe. Dad got up at his regular time, built a fire in the stove, and went over and fed and watered the mules. He did just ordinary things around the house and then went up to the store for awhile. In the meantime, the guards had built themselves a fortress just down the hill from the clubhouse at the foot of this little hill. They took green cross ties and stacked them so that they would have protection. They fixed it so that they had almost a 360-degree view of the camp.

"The guards had lever-action Winchesters and then they had this Gatling gun," Walton continued. "It was really a fine piece of machinery. They'd run the Gatling gun until it got hot, so hot they're afraid the bullets would stick in it, and then they'd let it up when the other men started in with their Winchester rifles. The guards sprayed the woods with bullets in every direction. When this Gatling gun stopped you could hear the trees splitting. They'd crack and pop like they do up north when it's cold, they say. But only one bullet landed in our yard. It was a stray."

After the strike broke out, the coal companies had protected their property with search lights and concrete forts manned by mine guards at strategic points in the narrow valleys. The operators then began to reopen their mines with scab workers lured by ads in large Eastern newspapers offering steady work at good wages. The imported workers were brought in by special trains, escorted by mine guards.

The return of Mother Jones to West Virginia was a major turning point in the conflict. She had earlier visited the state as a UMW organizer at the time of the 1902 general strike. Now the old woman was 82, and no less determined. Soon after her arrival, she rallied thousands of miners on the State Capitol grounds where she denounced Governor Glasscock and inflamed her audience to arm themselves and do whatever was necessary to win their fight.

Howard Lee, West Virginia's former attorney general who is now 105 and living in Florida, reports in his book, *Bloodletting in Appalachia,* that mine guards were ambushed and killed by the strikers. Assaults, murders, sniper attacks, pitched battles and destruction of property were daily occurrences. These guerrilla activities led to the July 26, 1912, Mucklow battle that John Walton remembers so vividly. An estimated 100,000 shots were exchanged between strikers and guards. Miraculously, only 12 strikers and four guards were reported killed, although the number of dead miners may have been much higher, according to Lee.

While the Walton home at Mucklow was spared, the company store was caught in the crossfire. "They fired at the store mainly from the Gatling gun emplacement," John Walton recalled for the Marshall University interviewer. "They riddled the top of the store and later we had to put all sorts of patches on it to keep the rain out, and replace the good-

New Mine Wars Book by Lon Savage

Jalamap Publications of South Charleston recently published *Thunder in the Mountains.* The new book is one of the best popular accounts so far written of the West Virginia labor troubles collectively known as the mine wars.

Savage writes of the 1920-21 period, mainly in Logan and Mingo counties. This was the second wave of the mine wars, following the bitter 1912-13 strikes on Paint and Cabin creeks and preceding the eventual unionization of West Virginia in the 1930's. Violence rocked the coalfields as the United Mine Workers, determined to protect their national contracts by organizing Southern Appalachia, clashed with coal operators ready to resist at any cost. State government, at this time in an anti-labor phase, sided with the coal industry, and miners soon found themselves harassed by state and federal troops as well as private company guards.

Author Savage picks up the story with Sid Hatfield and the so-called Matewan Massacre in Mingo County. Hatfield, Matewan's pro-union police chief, shot it out with a group of Baldwin-Felts mine detectives on the streets of his town on May 19, 1920. Seven of the Baldwin-Felts men were killed, including two of the Felts brothers themselves, while Hatfield's group lost two coal miners and Matewan Mayor C. C. Testerman.

The facts of the Matewan Massacre are still in dispute, as is the assessment of guilt; Hatfield's motives were left clouded, for example, by the fact that he married Testerman's young widow less than two weeks after the mayor had died fighting at his side. The effects of the shoot-out, however, are quite clear. The event sharpened the conflict in Mingo County, with several periods of state and federal martial law following. The Matewan unionists were all acquitted by a sympathetic local jury, but Hatfield and his associate Ed Chambers were later gunned down by Baldwin-Felts agents on the McDowell County Courthouse steps. The two men had gone to Welch, unarmed, to face other charges. Their murders outraged miners all over the state and touched off the most famous episode in West Virginia labor history, the Armed March on Logan and Mingo and the resulting Battle of Blair Mountain.

It's a powerful story, told in a powerful way by a man who was a practicing journalist for 10 years early in his career. Lon Savage, a native of Charleston and a former UPI bureau chief, is now an administrator at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg. GOLDENSEAL readers interested in his account of the mine wars may order the 160-page paperback for $7.95, postpaid, from Jalamap Publications, 601 D Street, South Charleston 25303. The second printing of *Thunder in the Mountains* will be ready for mailing by mid-June.

Mother Jones was among those treated by the doctor governor. She looks peaceful enough in this photo soon after the strike, but was known as a terror of the coalfields. She poses here with friends in 1913 or 1914. West Virginia and Regional History Collection photo.

size plate glasses. There wasn't a glass window or a piece of glass left. And then inside, where they hit the pine floor, one of those bullets would go down in there and there'd be a splinter stick up almost a foot above the floor.

"There were 50 to 60 shots in the store, mainly through the ceiling and roof. I think the biggest part of these fellas [the miners] were on the mountain. They had binoculars and some of them would sit there and they'd pin out a man and pretty soon they'd concentrate their fire on him. The battle lasted, I think, about two or two and a half hours. And for years after that, up on the mountain, kids would find what we called 'puddles,' or the empty shells from the bullets that the miners had used in the battle. They were quite a collector's item there for awhile."

On September 1, 1912, union miners from the north side of the Kanawha armed themselves and crossed the river to aid the strikers. Almost 6,000 men headed for the strike district. Mine guards, warned of the pending invasion, resupplied their arsenals and manned the barricades.

This was the volatile situation on the morning of September 12, 1912, when Governor Glasscock, fearing the enraged miners would wipe out the guards, declared the strike zone under martial law and sent 1,200 state militia by special trains into the region. The militia seized 1,872 rifles, 556 pistols, six machine guns, 225,000 rounds of ammunition, and 480 blackjacks in the area of the fighting, according to Lee. A military court was set up and a nearby freight house was made into a jail, "the bullpen at the mouth of Paint Creek" that Dave Tamplin mentions. By the middle of October the militia was withdrawn, only to be returned a month later.

Under this second round of martial law, another military court was set up to try all offenses committed within the strike area. Miners' rights as civilian citizens were denied by a court that worked with frightening speed. Men arrested one day were tried the next, without benefit of counsel or witnesses, and sentenced to the penitentiary or to local jails the third day. As many as 30 men were tried at a time. Lengthy prison terms were handed out for misdemeanors. The judges were "laymen untrained in the law and they had little regard for the laws of the land or for the U.S. Constitution," states Lee. Mother Jones was seized by the militia during this period, for attempting to read the Declaration of Independence on Cabin Creek.

By January 10, 1913, the militia was again withdrawn and martial law lifted. In its wake, Lee comments, "the operators brought in their scab workers under military protection; mines resumed operation; and thousands of miners and their families starved."

On February 10, 1913, three days after the attack on Holly Grove by the Bull Moose Special, Governor Glasscock issued his third and last martial law proclamation and troops were again rushed in. A new military court convened and many strikers were given jail sentences. More than 20, including Mother Jones, were handed 10- and 20-year terms in the state penitentiary.

This was the situation that W. E. Glasscock handed over to Henry Hatfield on inauguration day. The new governor was left the responsibility of reviewing the many pending convictions of the military courts. On the second day of his visit into the strike zone at a camp near the Kanawha River, Hatfield's attention was drawn to a small hut removed from the rest of the debris and the military compounds. It was here that he encountered the infamous Mother Jones and he met her as doctor as well as governor.

Researcher Karr found Hatfield's recollections of what transpired among his papers. "I noticed a soldier marching to and fro in front of the little cabin on the banks of the Kanawha River. I told the soldier who I was and inquired what responsibility he had there. He told me Mother Jones was being guarded in this little shack and when I entered I found her lying on a straw tick on the floor, carrying a temperature of 104, a very rapid respiration and a constant cough. She had pneumonia."

The new governor immediately ordered that Mother Jones be removed from the hut. "I flagged the first train and had a soldier take her to Charleston where she was placed under the care of a competent physician," he remembered.

Many years later in a Huntington newspaper interview, Governor Hatfield reflected, "When I put Mother Jones in the hospital, though, I thought surely she would die. I got some outside physicians to treat her, however, and they were successful."

Soon after his return from his mission of mercy to the strike zone, Governor Hatfield took action to bring both sides together for a settlement. He had created personal good will in the battletorn area by his visits. This was reinforced by the pardon he gave Mother Jones and all others who had been convicted by the military courts. In Hatfield's own words, "I quietly turned out of jail and the penitentiary all military prisoners who had been sentenced by my predecessor."

As expected, the operators and union leaders were unable to agree to a settlement. Hatfield himself then took over the negotiations, making his own proposal. The union remained suspicious of his contract proposals and delayed accepting them. The governor lost his patience and gave the strikers an ultimatum — "either accept it or get off the creek." He had still greater difficulty with the operators, who were openly hostile to any proposal which gave the miners the right to organize. But his demand that the strike cease within 36 hours was complied with, and both sides finally accepted the terms of the "Hatfield Contract." It was signed on May 1, 1913.

With Hatfield's help the strikers won some gains, but at a high price already paid by their own and their families' suffering. The union could now become the bargaining agent for Kanawha Coalfield miners. The terms agreed upon also included a nine-hour work day; the coal operators' agreement to the right of the miners to organize and to grant them the right to trade in independent stores; payment of wages twice a month; and roughly a two-and-a-half cent a ton increase in wages. Small boys and old men who operated the mine ventilation doors — jobs on the bottom rung of the mine system — would now receive a dollar for nine hours work.

The settlement did not bring an end to West Virginia's mine wars, for further blood was to be shed at Blair Mountain and other places within a few years. But the truce did bring temporary peace and a welcome respite for the troubled twin valleys of the Kanawha Coalfield. Governor Hatfield had looked at the "three sides" to the story and had found the third way right where he expected it, between the demands of the warring contenders. For his first two months in office it was a considerable accomplishment and, for the time, it was enough.

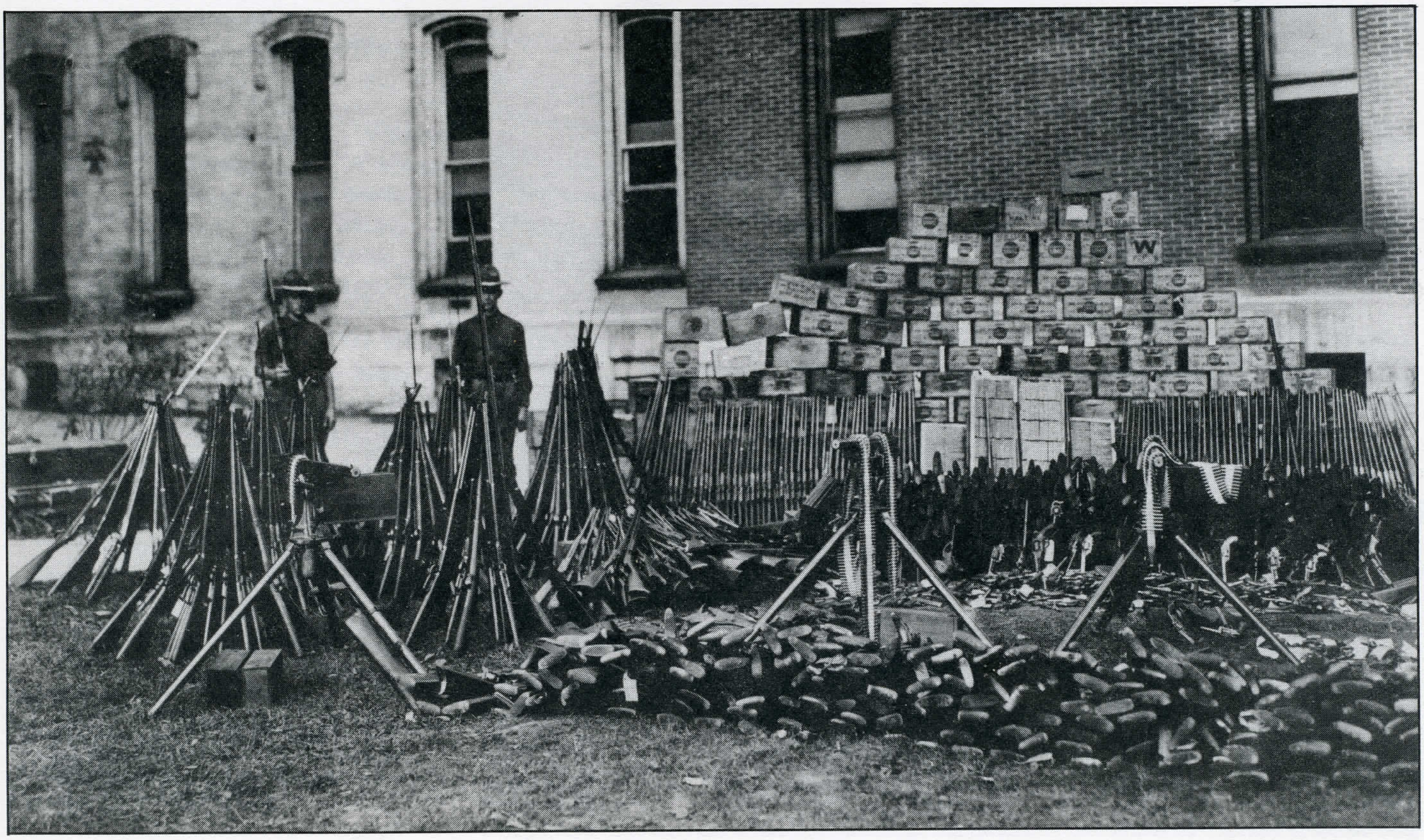
Further Reading:

Bloodletting in Appalachia, by Howard B. Lee (Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1969).

"Forgotten Heroes of the 1912-13 Miners' Strike," by Lois C. McLean, in GOLDENSEAL, Volume 4, Number 4 (October-December 1978), pp. 23-27.

"Henry Drury Hatfield," by John G. Morgan, in his *West Virginia Governors* (Charleston: Charleston Newspapers, 1980), pp. 87-94.

More munitions from the strike zone. Note the coal company machine guns at front and the boxes of ammunition behind. State Archives photo.



Walter Seacrist

A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine Wars

By Gordon L. Swartz III

The mine wars of Walter Seacrist's youth were long past when this 1954 photograph was made. Mr. Seacrist poses with his wife, Virgie, at Holly Grove on Paint Creek. Photographer unknown.

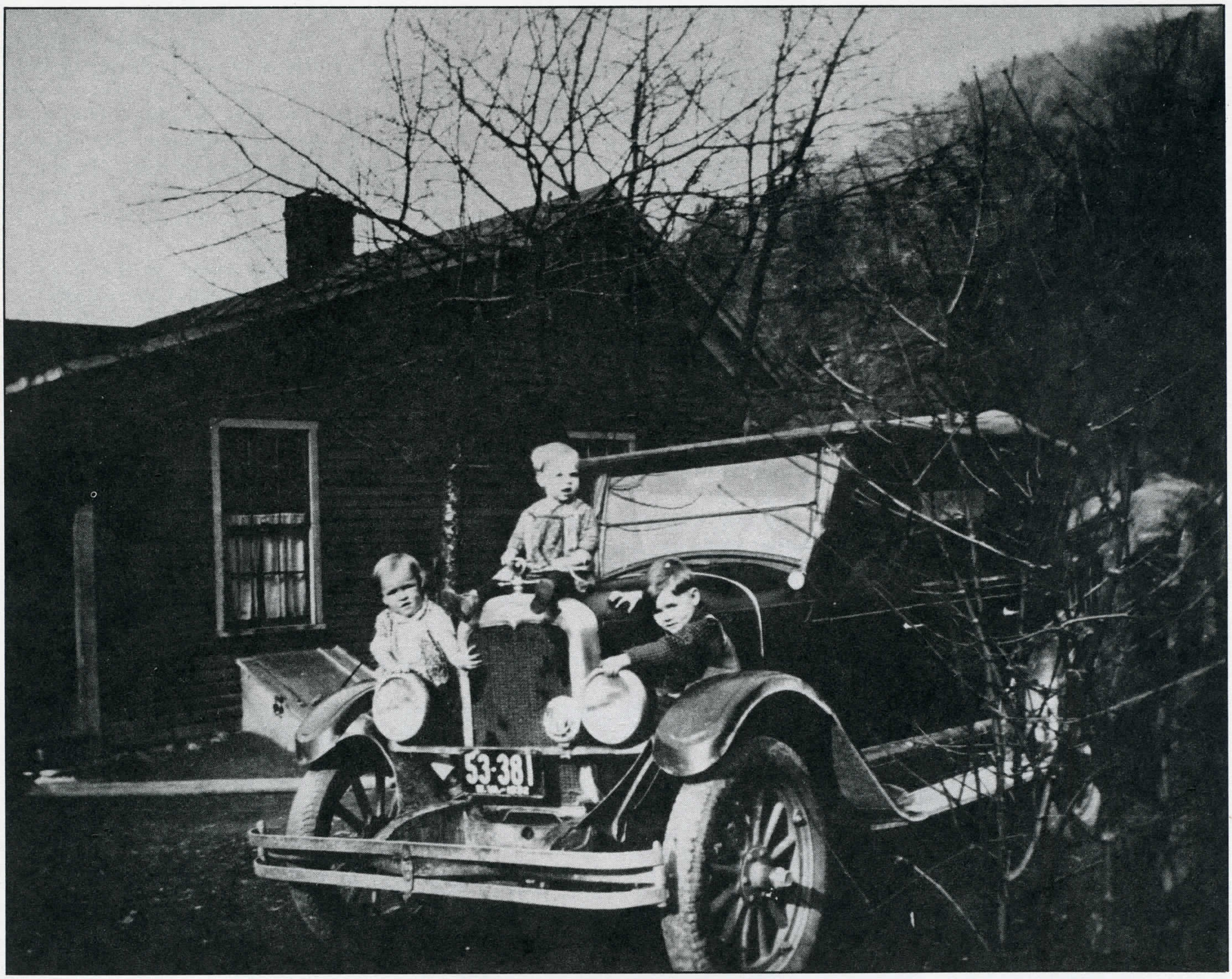
My great-uncle, Walter Alexander Seacrist, was born August 19, 1906, one of 12 children of William Henry and Lydia Johnson Seacrist. He was raised in the infamous coal camp called Holly Grove on Paint Creek in Kanawha County. He was just a youngster at the time of the 1912-13 labor trouble there, but he had strong memories of the period and later wrote songs about it. One was "Harrison County Jail," about his uncle John's 99-year jail sentence (later revoked) for his part in the strike.

The first stanza expresses the viewpoint of a man bitter about being locked away without benefit of a civilian trial:

Come all you jolly citizens
And listen to my tale.
I'll tell you of a boarding house
They call the county jail.
And if you don't believe me
And think I'm telling a lie,
Just come before some tinhorn court,
You'll see the same as I.

Much later, Walter elaborated on the story in taped recollections for my brother. "This song, 'Harrison County Jail,' of course, is about John," he reported. "Back in the '12 and '13 strike they had killed one of the Baldwin-Felts guards up at Gallagher, it is now — it was Mucklow then, the name of the place. They brought him out to Pratt and the state militia were stationed there. Martial law was in effect. There was one company of 'em stationed at Pratt and another stationed on the scale yard between Holly Grove and Gallagher. At Pratt the chief officer was Major James Davis.

"John, on the box that this guard's body was in, wrote with a piece of chalk: 'Another SOB gone to hell.' This Major Davis arrested him, and John hit him. So they tried him in what we called the 'tinhorn court' there in the Pratt railroad depot. That was their guard house. And they sent him to the Harrison County Jail. His sentence was 99 years."



Seacrist was born here in 1906. This later view shows younger sister Lois (left), and niece and nephew Georgia and Gordon Swartz. Gordon is the father of our writer, Gordon Swartz III. Date and photographer unknown.

The 'tinhorn court' was the military court at Pratt, for which Governor Hatfield later threw out the questionable sentences. Walter Seacrist believed that Mother Jones had a hand in the new govenor's decision, at least in the case of his uncle John. "Mother Jones went to the governor that had just been elected, Dr. Henry Hatfield, and got a pardon for him and went and brought him home," Walter concluded.

He reported other bloodshed, including the killing of another mine guard. This was "the night of the shooting at the station there at Holly Grove when the Baldwin-Felts guard was killed. His name was Stringer. Another one was shot, but he got in the weeds and crawled away and got to Hansford to the hospital and got away."

Walter said that his uncle was sought in that case as well. "There was something like 500 miners in Holly Grove that night, but the next morning they came to arrest John," he reported. "The girl, Gladys Perry, lived across the hollow, round back of the cemetery. She saw 'em coming and knew that they were after John and she came running around to tell him, fell over a rail fence, and broke her arm. But she got there and got him told before they got there, and he hid in the attic of Grandma Seacrist's house. They didn't get him.

"About the woman that was shot, Mrs. John Hall. She was having a baby at the time the Bull Moose train ran. She was shot in the foot the same night and from the same train Cesco Estep was killed." Of Estep's death, Walter went on, "I have a song about that. The title of it is 'Striker's Orphaned Child,' sung to the same tune as 'The Drunkard's Child.' And it goes like this:

My father was a striker in nineteen
and thirteen
He was the sweetest daddy, he
never treated us mean
He worked in dark and danger, almost day and night
To earn for us a living, to bring us
all up right."

Walter sang several more stanzas into the tape recorder, bringing the ballad around to Estep's death while trying to get his family to safety and concluding with an assurance that they would all be reunited in the hereafter. "This was dedicated to Clifford Estep, whose father was killed February 11, 1912, from the Bull Moose train," he noted.

Like many miners, Walter Seacrist identified the chief villains of this period of the coal wars as Kanawha County Sheriff Bonner Hill and Governor William E. Glasscock. He seems to have taken a kinder view of Governor Hatfield, although he was not satisfied with Hatfield's eventual settlement of the strike. "Shortly after this," he said, "they had an election and Dr. Henry Hatfield was elected governor of West Virginia. He came up with what was known there in the coalfields as the Hatfield Agreement, broke the strike and put the miners back to work. And that's pretty much the story of the 1912-13 strike."

Walter himself got through the early bloodshed unscathed, but he had his troubles growing up. He contracted tuberculosis as a teenager and lay in bed for over a year. It was thought that he might never recover. When he did recover enough to get around, he was sent away from Paint Creek to live in Jackson County. He lived on a farm with a couple by the name of Meadows. The fresh air of Jackson County and the kindness of the Meadows family helped Walter in his slow recovery. Later, he began working in the mines on Paint Creek, as had his father and brothers. He began preaching in the Baptist Church at age 19.

Walter, two of his brothers, and his father were working a shift when the father was nearly killed. Henry Seacrist was driving a car of coal out of the mine when the mule's back hit a sag in the roof. The mule panicked and lurched forward, dragging Walter's father up on the load of coal which he was hauling. His body went through between the sagging roof and the load of coal. There was hardly any space there. It was said that there couldn't have been over 14 inches clearance.

Henry was taken to the hospital and expected to die. One eyeball had been pushed out of its socket. His ribs were crushed. He had multiple fractures and contusions. Against the odds, he lived, but his hair turned white during his week in the hospital. He was unable to return to work in the mine. Walter did not work in the mine for much longer himself. His father's accident left a terrible impression on him, as is shown in his poem, "Blood on the Coal." It concluded by warning faraway consum-

Seacrist took his union ways with him when he left West Virginia to work in Florida. Here he is (left) with other members of his Teamsters local at Cape Canaveral. Air Force photo, date unknown.

ers of the terrible price often paid for the fuel they took for granted:

> You who live in cities, or out on the farm,
> You don't know the thing called trouble,
> You really don't know harm.
> Firemen as you feed the furnace
> To make the engine go,
> Do you know that there is some miner's blood
> On all the coal you throw?

During 1931, Walter affiliated himself with the West Virginia Mine Workers' Union, a dissident offshoot of the main United Mine Workers of America. John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers was having trouble in other quarters, and the miners of West Virginia felt abandoned. There was much infighting among the hierarchy of the UMWA. A large part of the West Virginia coalfields were striking and had to have some sort of an organization. Conditions at the mines and the coal camps did not allow the postponement of a strike until the UMW was ready to help.

Frank Keeney and Fred Mooney, two of the early UMW leaders in the southern coalfields, organized the splinter union in West Virginia. Among these rebels there was no love lost for John L. Lewis, as is evidenced by Walter's poem, "The Coal Miner's Dream." This is a dissatisfied miner's imagining of Judgment Day, when Lewis is found lacking as a union man — "and, by good St. Peter, was kicked down the golden stair!"

Governors Glasscock and Conley, as well as Sheriff Hill, quickly follow the UMW president down those stairs, but dissident leader Frank Keeney got a far kinder reception:

> Next came Frank Keeney, a man they all know well.
> With a West Virginia Mine Worker's agreement,
> He'd followed the operators to hell.
> Then grand old St. Peter looked down the golden stair
> And told him to come up higher,
> It was too hot for a union man down there.

Walter put his feelings as a preacher as well as a unionist into this and other songs and poems, freely mixing religious imagery with strong labor sentiments.

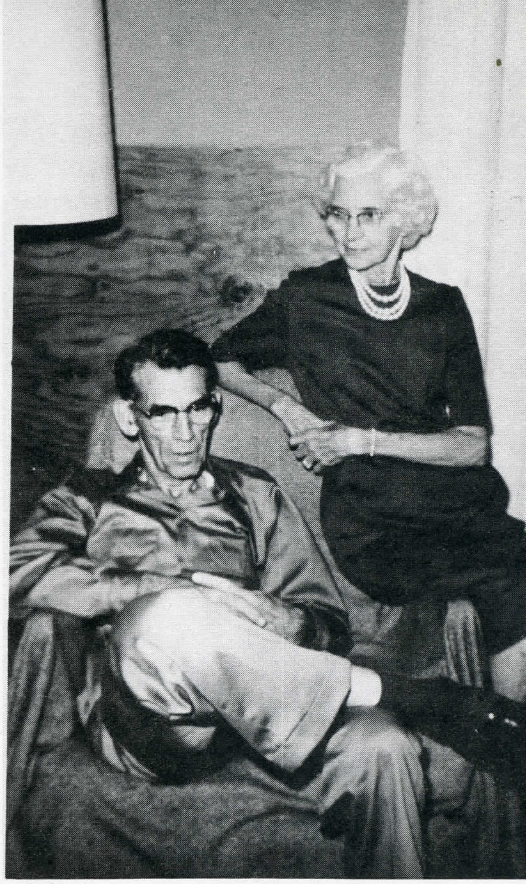
A man now, in his late 20's, Walter was in on the concluding chapter of the struggle that finally brought full unionization to West Virginia's coalfields in the 1930's. These victorious years were less violent than had been the mine wars of his youth, but they were not without controversy. Brookwood Labor College of Katonah, New York, had representatives in the Kanawha Coalfields, and there were several other groups from outside the state also. These "agitators" were denounced by some in West Virginia, the word Bolshevik being used frequently. The press tried to foment a panic against the red menace. It is true that Brookwood was a socialist institution, but at the time anyone who joined a union was considered a socialist by many. Coal operators portrayed themselves as trying to protect the state against the evil being taught by these "foreigners" from New York.

As usual, Walter Seacrist came to his own independent conclusions. Tom Tippett, a Brookwood professor, made his acquaintance during this period. Tippett was impressed with the young preacher-miner, and the two men became friends. Walter made trips to the Brookwood campus, taking classes and telling the Brookwooders of the plight of the coal miners. He also wrote "Tom Tippett" about his good friend:

> There was a man in New York State
> Tom Tippett was his name
> To help the poor hard working man
> To West Virginia came.

Several verses told of Tippett's work with Keeney and the miners, ending with the promise that the unionizing professor would be "coming back again."

The early 1930's brought Walter this new friend, and also farewell to an old one. Mother Jones died in 1930. Walter remembered her from as early as the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike. "I knew her, carried her little briefcase around for her in the big strike," he remembered of those childhood days. "I knew her again in the 1920-21 Logan County march." Not surprisingly, he participated in later memorial services at her grave.



Walter and Virgie Seacrist in a quiet moment at home. Photographer unknown, 1965.

"I was elected in 1932 to conduct the memorial services at her grave," he recalled in his taped recollections. "She died in Washington in early '30 and is buried in Mount Olive Cemetery in Mount Olive, Illinois. That's just a few miles out of Springfield. There at her grave there were just two stones. The headstone said 'Mother.' The footstone said 'Mother Jones.'

"I spoke there at this service at her tomb. Also the governor [actually U.S. Senator] of West Virginia, whose name was Rush D. Holt, was with me, and he also spoke. We spoke to some 60,000 miners and their wives that day." Walter concluded his taped reminiscences of the event by singing his version of "The Death of Mother Jones":

> The world today's in mourning
> For the death of Mother Jones
> Gloom and sorrow hover
> Around the miner's homes.

The origins of this old song are uncertain, but in his book *Only A Miner* folklorist Archie Green says Walter probably learned it from his friend Tom Tippett. Walter was proud of his version but did not seek credit for the

An aging Walter Seacrist visits with his brother Clinton, a few years before his death in 1975. Photographer unknown, about 1970.

song, as several others had done.

Nor did Walter Seacrist choose to work out the rest of his days as a West Virginia coal miner. He was disturbed by his father's fate and perhaps by coalfields warfare as well, or maybe as a union man he was simply satisfied by the gains made during the 1930's. At any rate, he chose to move away and he finished his working life as a custodian at Cape Canaveral, Florida. It was there that he recorded these recollections, before his death of natural causes in August 1975.

Another Song by Walter Seacrist

Of the many songs and poems left by Walter Seacrist, the most touching is "Law in the West Virginia Hills." Perhaps this is because it concerns a tragedy that, of all the tragic events of the unionizing period, came closest to his own heart. During the strike of 1930-31, the wife of Walter's imprisoned brother witnessed the eviction of Mrs. Chris Deviti from her company-owned house at Hugheston, Kanawha County. The company guards kicked the pregnant Mrs. Deviti in the stomach. Mrs. Seacrist, also pregnant, was untouched but deeply affected by the sight. She and her unborn child died mysteriously a few days later.

The song is sung to the tune of "The Little Rosewood Casket."

In a little village graveyard
Underneath a grassy mound
There sleeps a lovely maiden
In the cold and silent ground.

She was so tender-hearted,
So kind and noble, too.
People that knew her loved her.
If you could have met her, so
  would you.

She was young and hopeful.
She was full of youthful life.
She made our home more cheer-
  ful.
She was my brother's wife.

My mother how she loved her,
As much as she loved her son.
She was so kind and cheerful,
It seemed her life had just begun.

My brother was a miner,
Toiling almost day and night,
Deep down in the coal mines
Away from God's sunlight.

To this valley came a union.
Brother joined with the band
To better his conditions.
Children were starving on every
  hand.

Then the cruel mine foreman,
To which my brother hired,
Learned he had joined the union,
Then he was quickly fired.

Then all over Kanawha Valley,
"We will strike," the miners said,
"For we are tired and hungry
And our children cry for bread."

These miners got together
One warm July day.
They laid away their tools
And struck for better pay.

Then the cruel company gunmen
With officers from all around
Came and drove them from their
  houses,
Threw their stuff out on the
  ground.

My sister saw these cruelties
As they terrorized the town.
Saw them murder unborn babies,
Kick these helpless mothers down.

Such cruel sights paralyzed her.
Something snapped in her head.
Not another word she uttered.
Two days later she was dead.

In Chillicothe prison
So very very far away
From his home and his loved ones
Brother sits and grieves today.

He was sent to this prison,
Whiskey was the charge they say,
By the law that cruelly murdered
His lovely wife that sad day.

Peace a stranger in the valley
Because justice is never there.
As you read this sad poem,
Tell me, do you think it fair?

My brother he is in prison,
His lovely wife she is dead,
While still in this same valley
Little children cry for bread.

Festival Season in the Mountain State

Keeping to the Straight and Pure

The Stonewall Jackson Jubilee

By Sharon Parker

The melodious sounds of fiddles, banjos, dulcimers and ballad-singing voices fill the center arena of the old barn and converted animal stalls house more than 100 artisans and craftspeople. Numerous other activities occur throughout the grounds at Jackson's Mill, for it is Labor Day weekend and time once again for the Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts and Crafts Jubilee. Held each year at the West Virginia State 4-H Camp in Lewis County, the Jubilee is a look at the way things were done in a different and earlier era and a demonstration that traditional arts and quality craftsmanship are still valued by a high-tech society.

Over a decade of increasing popularity and growth prove this to the satisfaction of the board of directors of the Jubilee, now getting ready for the 12th annual celebration. Dan Tabler, president of the Jubilee board, credits the success of the festival to the "commitment to cultural and heritage preservation of the volunteer board members" along with the continued expansion of activities with a traditional flavor. "We find," Tabler explained, "many of our visitors returning year after year because they came and enjoyed the traditional music concerts or the wide representation of craftspeople demonstrating their trades and selling their wares.

"We could have been content to contain the Jubilee to the barn area of the Mill, but the board was open to new ideas and to showing West Virginia for the wonderfully diverse

Melvin Wine is a regular at the Jubilee. All photos courtesy of the Stonewall Jackson Jubilee.

state it is," Tabler continued. "Thus the Jubilee has grown to include a quilt show, art exhibit, Civil War demonstration unit, photography exhibit, animal petting farm, Jubilee Chorale performances, a needlepoint exhibit and horseshoe pitching competition."

With all there is to see, hear, and touch, the next desire is to satisfy one's sense of taste. There is no problem doing that. "It is possible to stay for the entire four days and never eat at the same food stand," according to Bill Frye, chairman of the concessions committee. In addition to Frye's 4-H members' hand-cranked ice cream, this year's Jubilee will have a beef barbecue on Saturday and a Sunday chicken barbecue. And that's just the beginning of the down-home cooking to be found at the Stonewall Jackson Jubilee.

The relationship between the Jubilee and Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp is naturally a close one. The "Mill" provides an ideal setting for the four-day celebration, and in return the Jubilee has used a portion of the revenues generated from admission and craft sales commissions to upgrade facilities at the Camp. Over the years, the Jubilee board has appropriated funds to enlarge the public restrooms and add shower facilities, build a picnic pavilion, contribute to the construction of a competition-level horseshoe pitching court and build a structure to house the various concession stands run by Lewis County service and community organizations. The organizations operating these concessions shared in a net profit of more than $20,000 during the 1984 Jubilee, according to Tabler.

The music and the crafts are the cornerstones of this tribute to Appalachian culture and history. According to Debbie Walker, who chairs the crafts committee, the 1984 Jubilee boasted 110 juried craftspeople in 90 individual booths. "We had just begun a new jurying procedure, designed to eliminate crafts that were not reflective of Appalachian heritage and traditions," she noted. "There had been some concern that we would not be able to have a good showing, but this was certainly not the case."

The music has also been kept au-

Above: Like other festivals, the Jubilee recognizes the British roots of our mountain culture. Here Clan Erdverkle, young West Virginians specializing in British Isles music, prepare for a performance.
Left: Fiddlers Wilson Douglas, Frank George and others take part in a Jubilee jam session.

thentic. Kenney Parker of French Creek, the music committee chairman since the first year of the festival, can take credit for that, and it has not always been easy. Board president Tabler admitted that in the past there had been some interest in importing Nashville-style musicians. "But Kenney kept us straight and pure by insisting the musicians and storytellers invited to perform at the Jubilee's continuous concerts have solid backgrounds in traditional heritage music."

According to Tabler, Parker won with quiet persistence and the loyalty of the musicians and large audiences attests to the correctness of his position. "Wherever I go, I hear that we have the best traditional music concerts in the state," Tabler proclaims immodestly. Certainly the Jubilee concerts are among the biggest, with last year's audiences treated to shows featuring over 100 performers.

The 1985 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts and Crafts Jubilee will open at noon on Friday, August 30, and will close at 4 p.m., Monday, September 2. Brochures and additional information are available by writing: Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts and Crafts Jubilee, P.O. Box 956, Weston 26452.

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Everyone likes to know who their friends are, and we're no exception. We know a lot of you individually, through calls, visits, and correspondence, but we don't have a good statistical view of our readers as a group. Will you help us, by taking a few minutes to answer these questions? It will allow us to serve you better. There's no need to sign your name, but we'll welcome your comments or suggestions.

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3. Which GOLDENSEAL article(s) have you enjoyed the most?

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Please continue on other side.

7. How old are you? ____

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11. Were you born in West Virginia? ____

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THANK YOU!

Good Times at Glenville

The West Virginia State Folk Festival

By Mack Samples

The battered signs that greet you on each of the approaches to Glenville say "Home of the West Virginia State Folk Festival." And, if you come into the Gilmer County town on Route 33 from the east, you will be greeted by another sign, one of those historical markers, that tells you that the "West Virginia Hills" was written here, inspired by the lush, green hills that surround the town. If by now you begin to get the idea that Glenville and music are somehow intertwined, you are right. For Glenville was involved in the preservation of traditional music long before it became fashionable and long before outsiders took notice of our culture.

Glenville got into the preservation business on a formal basis during the summer of 1950, when Dr. Patrick Gainer made an assignment in the Folk Culture class which he was teaching at Glenville State College. Professor Gainer, a native of Gilmer County, asked each of his students to go out into the rural areas and interview, and if possible bring to class, a true mountain craftsperson or musician. The project was so successful that it was expanded the next summer and the mountain folk artists were asked to perform for a small audience. Events were added each year and eventually the West Virginia State Folk Festival was chartered. Dr. Gainer's objective was to preserve and maintain the old ways of West Virginia and he was careful to point out that he wanted to feature original, nonprofessional, dyed-in-the-wool West Virginia musicians, dancers, singers, and craftspeople.

Dr. Gainer gave up the festival in the mid-50's, but Mrs. E. G. (Fern) Rollyson and Dr. Byron Turner took up the cause. Most of the credit for holding the festival to the course set by Gainer should go to these two individuals. They too have passed from the scene, but the festival board of directors, now under the leadership of Ancil Cutlip, has clung tenaciously to those original ideas.

The pressures to change the festival have come from all directions. Some of the merchants in town have cried for greater commercialization to attract more people. (The festival committee now considers 2000 people a successful crowd.) Professional and semi-professional folk entertainers incessantly try to "get hired" for a fee. Craftspeople who make a living at their craft want to change the festival into a money-making fair. Many want to hire big-name country singers to come and entertain. Others want the festival to move out of town and become one of the thousands of nameless bluegrass festivals that are held in fields throughout Appalachia. But the volunteer committee has weathered all these storms. They bill their festival as the most traditional in the Appalachians and they have been pretty successful in holding to their claim.

Every attempt is made to keep the festival small, noncommercial, and slightly unorganized. There are no "workshops" and little attempt is made to formally educate anyone. The members of the festival committee continue to believe that tradition is best passed by traditional means.

The oldtime fiddlers who come to

Betty Perry and Jo Dobbs fiddle while Dave Peyton joins in on autoharp. The Glenville festival is known for its jam sessions. Photo by Peggy Powell.

the festival, many of them in their 70's and 80's, did not learn to play their instruments in classrooms or workshops. They learned by listening and playing along with friends and relatives as they were growing up. Many people are under the false impression that this process has stopped and that the tradition of passing music from one person to another is dead. Those who attend the West Virginia State Folk Festival know better. No one has to announce that an old fiddler is going to be at a certain place at a certain time to teach fiddle licks. The young and the old soon find each other. Fiddlers can be heard 24 hours a day during the three-day event. They gather on the porch of the Conrad Motel, in front of the Kanawha Union Bank, under the trees on the Glenville State College campus, or right in the middle of the street.

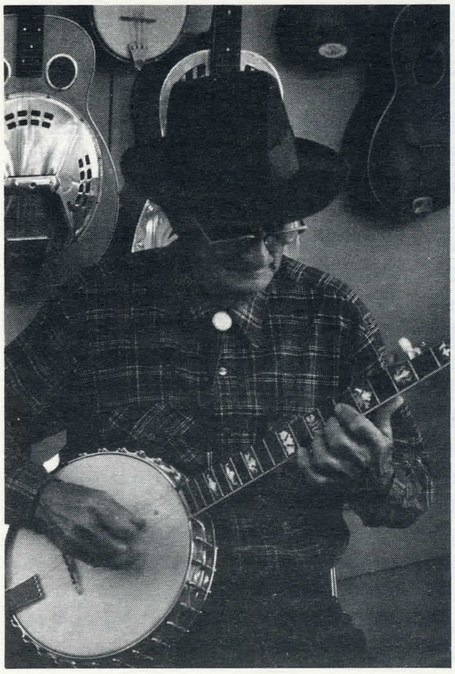
The fiddle and banjo contests are highly competitive, but the only award is a ribbon. There are no cash awards for any competition. Many people do not realize that such master fiddlers as Lee Triplett, Ira Mullins, Melvin Wine, and Woody Simmons were competing for ribbons at Glenville long before they were ever recognized by the Vandalia Gathering or the Augusta Heritage Festival. The festival crowd always enjoyed the intense competition between Lee and Ira, both Clay County natives. They sometimes would not speak to one another on contest day but always managed to leave town as friends. They both claimed first-place ribbons over the years, but the records show that Melvin Wine took the blue home more often than any other fiddle contestant. Phoebe Parsons of Calhoun County dominated the old-time banjo contest when she was in her prime and has been one to reckon with in recent years.

Many of the most popular musicians who were the soul of the festival for so many years have passed on. But a new generation has arrived to carry on the traditions. These younger West Virginia fiddlers are different, not as competitive. The old fiddlers took the contests very seriously and hard feelings often resulted. Fiddlers today seem to enjoy the jam sessions more than the contest. Yet no one doubts the ability of such young fiddlers as Dave Bing, John

Above: Traditional crafts, including blacksmithing and spinning, make up an important part of the West Virginia State Folk Festival. Photos by Ron Snow.
Below: The late Sloan Staggs was a regular at Glenville. Here he picks the banjo a few years before his death. Photo by Ron Snow.

Morris, Ricky Roberts, and Buddy Griffin. In short, the tradition of fiddling in West Virginia is very much alive.

Dancing is a central attraction at the festival. Local men construct a wooden platform at the corner of Main and Court streets on the day before the festival and all traffic is rerouted through town. Everyone knows that the dancing will begin as soon as the sun goes down on Thursday. Glenville remains one of the few places where the traditional four-couple squares are called. When the square dance band starts to warm up, couples begin to gather on the platform and await the instructions of the caller. Tom Luzader does most of the calling and he calls through a microphone for all sets. Soon the platform is full and dancers spill out into the street. The traditional squares are easy to learn and folks who have never before square danced find themselves being led through the routines. They dance mostly to two squares: "Take a Little Peek," and "The Butterfly Whirl." There is little doubt that the Folk Festival is the reason that the traditional squares have survived in central West Virginia.



Clogging is not as common in West Virginia as it is a little farther south, but the people do "fancy stepping" as they go through the routines. The oldtimers call it "backstepping" or "flatfoot dancing." It is unstructured foot rhythm to the sounds of the fiddle band. Marshall Wiant, now deceased, was the undisputed king of the flatfooters. His tradition lives on, however, as many of the current dancers have copied his style, including me. The dancing is a joy to watch and great fun to do. It goes on into the wee hours on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

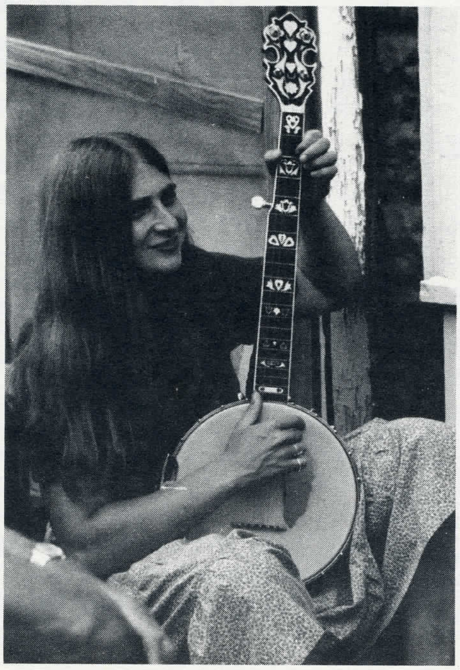
For those who enjoy hard-core folk music, a semi-organized program is presented on Friday and Saturday evenings in the Glenville State College auditorium. All who want to perform gather in back of the auditorium and someone is designated to introduce them to a small audience. Only pure folk music is allowed, although someone usually violates the rules once or twice during the evening. There is an unwritten rule that no song that came along after 1900 should be performed, and this eliminates even very early commercial country music. The program usually consists of old ballads and fiddle and banjo tunes. Since bluegrass is not permitted, the red hot pickers usually do not perform on these formal programs.

Many of the groups that perform on these night programs are organized minutes before they go on stage. Frank George usually organizes a "Box Elder Band" each year in honor of a tree that used to stand in the middle of town. It was a favorite gathering place for jam sessions for many years. The tree was sacrificed in the name of progress a few years back and the festival has never been quite the same since. It is impromptu bands such as the "Box Elder" that make the festival the great event that it is. Noah Cottrill was always a favorite on these programs, for in addition to being a good folk musician he was a born entertainer. At times, big names in folk entertainment circles such as The Beers Family, Mike Seeger, and the Red Clay Ramblers have appeared at the festival and they have been made welcome. Yet, this was not what Dr. Gainer had in mind. He wanted to showcase native, nonprofessional talent.

The West Virginia Folk Festival is a non-profit organization and most years it ends up in the red. In recent years it has been assisted with a grant from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Commission. Most events are free, but a $1 admission charge has been instituted for the fiddle and banjo contests and for the night programs. The committee was forced into this action because of rising costs. There is no attempt on the part of the committee to make any profit.

Everyone agrees that the best part of the festival is the informal music sessions that happen all over town. Almost anywhere there is space to gather, musicians look each other in the eye and play the tunes that have

Below left: J. P. Fraley finds a quiet spot for a fiddle tune. Photo by Ron Snow.
Below right: Like the best West Virginia festivals, Glenville is a place for the young to learn the old music. Festival planners intend to keep it low key and noncommercial. Photo by Ron Snow.



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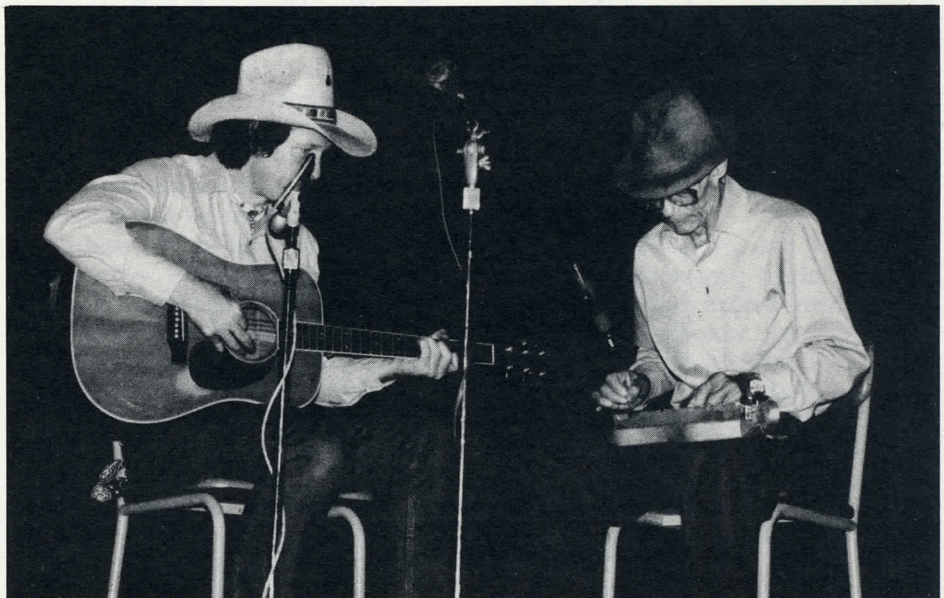
been played in the Appalachian Mountains for nearly 200 years. The music is mostly instrumental, but in the wee hours of the morning, after the watchers and listeners have all gone to bed, the musicians sometimes get down to some serious singing. Bluegrass and modern hot licks often sneak into these late sessions.

Everyone also agrees that Glenville is really a musicians' festival, because they are the ones who enjoy it the most. And that is just what the festival committee wants it to be. They want the music to live on and to be enjoyed by those who play it. They want to attract musicians who play, not for money, but for the sheer ecstasy that the old music brings to their souls.

This year's West Virginia State Folk Festival is scheduled for June 21-23. Planners advise that lodging and camping accommodations in Glenville are limited and advance reservations recommended. Call (304) 462-7361 for further information on the festival.



Basil Blake (right) and Dave Morris make music at the Glenville Festival. Photo by Scott Kitchen.

Basil Blake Dies

The Glenville festival and the rest of West Virginia were left poorer by the March 16 death of Basil Blake. The 72-year-old Blake was a traditional musician, dulcimer maker, and all-around practical craftsman.

Writer Mack Samples remembers Basil Blake as one of a handful of performers remaining from the very early days of the West Virginia State Folk Festival. "He had been around the festival a lot longer than I have," says the Glenville State College dean, adding that he believes that Blake may have been among the original participants in 1951. Samples also notes that Blake had been featured at college craft demonstrations many times over the years.

Blake was one of the people responsible for the preservation of mountain dulcimer music before its recent boom in popularity, and one of the few craftsmen left who had learned dulcimer construction by traditional means. He was from a talented Braxton County family and is survived by, among others, his sister, the popular fiddler Sarah Singleton.

Basil Blake will be mourned by the many who had the chance to learn from him at Glenville and other festivals, or as he strummed a simple instrument of his own making under the apple tree in his backyard.

In This Issue

STANLEY W. BAKER, a graduate of Ohio State University with a degree in Anthropology, has worked as an archeologist for both the West Virginia Geological Survey and the Ohio Historical Society. He has had a lifelong interest in the history and prehistory of the Ohio Valley. "Crocks and Churns" is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

IRENE B. BRAND, a lifelong resident of Mason County, earned her B.A. and Master's degrees at Marshall University. She has taught at Point Pleasant Junior High School for the past 18 years and has done freelance writing for several years. Her romance novel, *A Change of Heart,* was published in 1984, and she has two more books scheduled for publication. She has written previous articles for GOLDENSEAL on Point Pleasant and its rivers.

DOUG CHADWICK was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Portland, Oregon, Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and a school for filmmaking and video in Rome. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970 and has worked as a photographer for the *Fayette Tribune* and the *Raleigh Register.* He has contributed periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

JACQUELINE G. GOODWIN was born and raised in New Jersey, but earned her undergraduate and Master's degrees at West Virginia University. She now lives and teaches in Wirt County. She also freelances, and has written for *State Ed,* a publication of the West Virginia Department of Education; she is currently finishing her first novel. Her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL was the cover story on scarecrows in Winter 1983.

MICHAEL KELLER and REBECCA LUIGART-STAYNER are staff photographers for the Department of Culture and History.

MICHAEL M. MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University, graduating with a degree in sociology. His long-time association with the West Virginia 4-H program combined with a long-standing interest in history to produce his recent book, "A Walking Tour of Historic Jackson's Mill." Michael M. Meador, who has written several previous articles for GOLDENSEAL, is not to be confused with photographer Michael Meador.

JOSEPH PLATANIA is a Huntington native who earned his B.A. and M.A. at Marshall University. He has worked for the West Virginia Department of Welfare and as a claims examiner with the Veterans Administration, and also as a part-time instructor in the political science department at Marshall. A freelance writer for the past several years, he published his first GOLDENSEAL article, on West Virginia glassmaking, in the Spring 1983 issue.

ARTHUR C. PRICHARD, born and reared in Mannington, graduated from West Virginia University and McCormick Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) of Chicago. Mr. Prichard served as pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania, and in Wheeling and Mannington before retiring in 1970. He was a moderator of Wheeling Presbytery and the Synod of West Virginia for his denomination, and in 1969 received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Davis and Elkins College. Author of the recently published history *An Appalachian Legacy: Mannington Life and Spirit,* he writes frequently for GOLDENSEAL and other publications.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native, has been chief photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post* since 1969. He is a member of the National Press Photographers Association, the Professional Photographers of West Virginia, and the American Photographic Historical Society. His hobby is collecting old cameras and photographs, to preserve the heritage of our pioneer photographers. He is a frequent contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

MACK SAMPLES, a native West Virginian, is a musician descended from a long line of mountain musicians. He is a graduate of Glenville State College and Ohio University, and is now a dean at Glenville State. He has published in *Wonderful West Virginia* and other publications. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

BOB SCHWARZ is a New York State native who has farmed in Wetzel County for the last 11 years. He has taught at the high school and college level and does freelance writing. "46 Years Was Enough," in the Fall 1984 issue, was his last contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GORDON L. SWARTZ III, a native West Virginian, is a WVU graduate and a Marine Corps veteran. He is a roof bolter at Consolidation Coal's Shoemaker Mine in Marshall County. This is his first appearance in GOLDENSEAL.

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