

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 11, Number 4

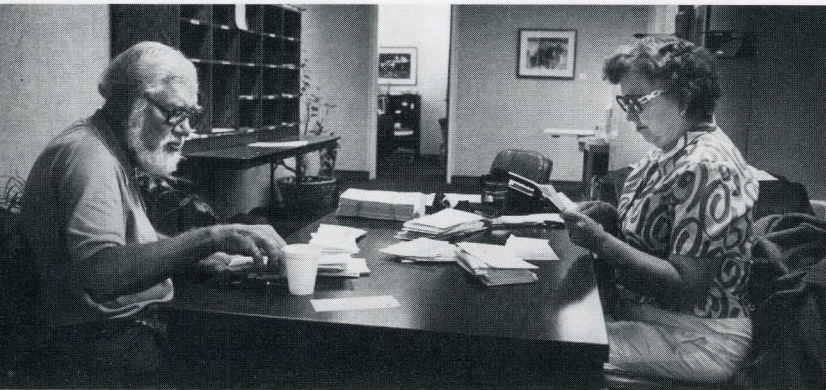
Winter 1985



From the Editor: Thank You

Last issue was subscription appeal time and now it's appreciation time, so here goes: A big "thank you" to those who sent in their voluntary subscription payment from all of us here at GOLDENSEAL. We will not have a grand total until the end of the government fiscal year next June, but so far the returns are running ahead of this time last year. Reader contributions keep us in business, and we are sincerely grateful.

We owe a special thanks this year to Archie and Virginia Morris, brought in through the Department's volunteer program to handle the mail during the first few weeks of subscription time. The Morrisses have lived an exciting life, a good chunk of it in Paris, and are now settled down for retirement in their native West Virginia. They processed several hundred subscriptions a day back in September and October, never losing their calm as far as any of us could see. Their priceless but unpaid labor helped keep GOLDENSEAL subscriptions genuinely voluntary. Thank you, Archie and Virginia.



Thanks also to the many readers who sent notes with their subscription checks. Your ideas, praise and criticism are valuable to us. We are working for you, since you help pay the bills. Let us know how we are doing, for we have no other way of finding out.

We especially appreciate hearing of any problems with delivery of your magazine. Our best efforts are wasted if we can't get GOLDENSEAL into your mailbox, and we're glad that a lot of folks took the subscription drive as a good time to catch up on mailing list corrections. We think we have made all necessary changes in time for this issue. Let us know if you still have trouble, or if you have problems you've not yet notified us about. Managing a mailing list of 28,000 names is a big job, requiring year-round attention. We work on it every day, but we need your cooperation to do it right.

We have tried to accommodate special instructions as to gift renewals, and appreciate the patience of people who had renewed or begun their own subscriptions shortly before receiving our reminder letter. An appeal for payment is an unwelcome surprise when you have just sent money, we know. However, as I noted in the letter and in my "Renewal Time" editorial in the last issue, the reminders go out routinely to everyone on the GOLDENSEAL mailing list as of September each year. We don't expect anyone to

make a contribution more than once a year, or to pay for a gift subscription which someone else has already bought for them. I hoped the postscript to my letter made this clear, and apologize to those who were confused.

The convenience and substantial savings of being able to do the single bulk-rate mailing once a year to everyone is one of the things that makes the voluntary subscription system work. A change to monitoring thousands of individual expiration dates, sending out notices on a hundred or more of these each day, and special billing for gift subscriptions would increase our staff and postage costs tremendously. First-class postage on the individual reminders would exceed \$6,000 a year by itself. To accommodate that and the extra staff and computer time, we would have to shift to regular paid subscriptions at once. We could raise more money that way, we're sure, but more of it would go into overhead rather than directly into the production of your magazine. We would also sacrifice many readers on limited incomes, including some who have contributed their recollections for fine GOLDENSEAL stories. In short, it's a change we'd prefer not to make. With your help and understanding we can continue to make voluntary subscriptions work to the advantage of all of us.

So—our thanks if you have sent in your subscription check and a gentle reminder if you haven't. We do need the support of everyone, and hope that we may soon hear from those who have not yet begun a voluntary subscription.

Thanks also, incidentally, for the many kinds of non-cash support readers give us. Story suggestions come in daily and receive our serious consideration. We are unable to make stories of all of them, or even most, but do get many good leads that way. We likewise appreciate the word-of-mouth endorsement of our readers. GOLDENSEAL has always kept a low promotional profile, so our steady growth depends almost entirely on reader recommendations. We are grateful, for it's the best tribute as well as powerful advertising.

Well, that's about enough thankfulness, I believe, even for this blessing-counting season between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We promise now to settle back down to work for you. My editorial crystal ball has clarified a little since last issue, and the new year looks good. Our freelancers are working on gospel music, for example, as well as the different kind of music produced by Huntington bandmaster Henry Shadwell. The Hancock County feature I promised is in this issue, and we are working on a couple of good stories from the other panhandle. I expect we will be publishing more Monroe County material by J. Z. Ellison, for we have a fine new manuscript of his on hand now, and we've just scheduled a heartwarming Father's Day story from McDowell County. Altogether, 1986 should be a very good year and with your continued support we're confident it will be.

Meanwhile, we wish you the best for the coming holidays.

—Ken Sullivan

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Goldenseal

Volume 11, Number 4

Winter 1985

COVER: The teddy bear was introduced in Theodore Roosevelt's time, and Billy Newcomb had one of the first. Our portrait, from 1907 or 1908, makes a fine Christmas cover for 1985. Mr. Newcomb's Huntington story begins on page 9. Photographer unknown.

-
- 2** Mountain Music: A Partial List of Recordings
-
- 4** Letters from Readers
-
- 7** Current Programs, Events, Publications
-
- 9** High Water and Growing Pains: A Huntingtonian Looks Back on 1913
By William B. Newcomb
-
- 16** Going 'Senging
By Jacqueline G. Goodwin
- 20** Digging It Right
-
- 22** Rock Springs Park: A Panhandle Playground
By Susan M. Weaver
- 25** Rock Springs Souvenirs: Postcards of the Park
-
- 30** "I Just Use a Bow": Oldtime Fiddler Mike Humphreys
By Robert Spence
-
- 35** "With all Tenderness and Devotion"
The Love Letters of Holly Jack Perkins, Part II
Compiled by Betty L. MacQueen
-
- 42** Juanita Farmer Hamby: "In Life, You Do What You Have To Do"
By Lori L. Henshey
-
- 49** Bicycles
By Arthur C. Prichard
-
- 54** Cities Celebrate: Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg Turn 200
By Martha Lewis Manning
-
- 60** Tobacco Barns
Photoessay by LeRoy G. Schultz
-
- 65** School Work
By J. Z. Ellison
-
- 66** Timothy Corn: Folk Tales from the Eastern Panhandle
As Told to Lucy Baker Ebert
-
- 69** The Pat Gainer Folklore Endowment
-
- 70** GOLDENSEAL Index
-

PHOTOS: Artcraft Studio, Michael Keller, Arthur C. Prichard, LeRoy G. Schultz, James L. Stewart, Judith Walls

Mountain Music

A Partial List of Recordings

If you like bluegrass, oldtime or traditional mountain music, you know West Virginia has its share of good musicians. You may not know that dozens of them have recorded albums. Whether you prefer the masterful fiddling of Woody Simmons, Andy Boarman's traditional banjo and Autoharp music or fine string band picking, they're available for you at such outlets as Fret & Fiddle in St. Albans, The Shop at the Cultural Center in Charleston, Charlie Jordan's Music City in Elkins, and other stores specializing in mountain music. Prices vary from \$5.00 to \$12.50, the majority being in the \$7.00 range.

GOLDENSEAL has compiled this list as a service to its readers, with the help of the Friends of Old Time Music and Dance. The list is as comprehensive as we can make it, but by no means complete, and we welcome readers' comments.

Selections are listed by artist(s) and title, with the recording company, if known, in parentheses.

Back Road Travelers (formerly Booger Hole Revival): "Creek's Up, and The Rain's Still Fallin'."

Bailes Brothers: "Four Bailes Brothers" (Original Records); "Early Radio Favorites"; and "The Bailes Brothers, Johnny and Homer" (Old Homestead Records).

Elmer Bird: "Elmer's Greatest Licks" (Fret & Fiddle Records); "Bumble Bee Waltz" (Hurricane Records); "Home Sweet Home"; and "Banjo Man From Turkey Creek" (Fret & Fiddle).

Andrew F. Boarman: "Mountain State Music" (June Appal Recordings). Andrew Boarman was featured in GOLDENSEAL, January 1979.

Booger Hole Revival (now Back Road Travelers): "Roll The Woodpile Down."

Roger Bryant: "Allegheny" (Americountry Records).

Keith Butcher: "Appalachian Legacy."

Senator Robert Byrd: "Mountain Fiddler" (County Records).

Senator Byrd's music was featured in GOLDENSEAL, April 1979.

French Carpenter and Jenes Cottrell: "Elzics Farewell: Old-Time Songs and Tunes From Clay County, West Virginia" (Kanawha Records).

Jenes Cottrell was featured in GOLDENSEAL, April 1981.

The Cedar Point String Band: "The Cedar Point String Band" (Riverside Records).

Clan Erdverkle: "Potatoes & Oatmeal"; and "Just Landed, Winter's Coming."



Blackie Cool: "Back Memories from Webster and Randolph Counties" (Augusta Heritage Records).

Blackie Cool was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1981.

Critton Hollow String Band: "Poor Boy" (Yodelay Hee Records); and "Sweet Home" (Yodelay Hee).

Currence Brothers: "Gospel Grass"; and "Muddy, Boggy Banjo Man."

The Currence Brothers were featured in GOLDENSEAL, July 1980.

Scott Davis: "Whatever It Takes."

Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerard: "Hardhitting Songs for Hard Hit People" (Rounder).

Hazel Dickens: "The Sweat of My Brow" (Flying Fish Records).

Hazel Dickens was featured in GOLDENSEAL, April 1976.

Pike Dillon & Riley Marcum: "Pickin' Grass" (Riverside).

The Dobbs Brothers and Mary Faith Rhodes: "The Dobbs Brothers and Mary Faith Rhodes" (Fret & Fiddle).

Wilson Douglas: "Right Hand Fork of Rush's Creek" (Rounder).

Wilson Douglas was featured in GOLDENSEAL, January 1977.

Lorraine Duisit: "Hawks and Herons" (Flying Fish).

Bob Fietsam: "Presenting Bob Fietsam" (Fret & Fiddle).

Mike Filbin: "Fayette Station."

The Flaherty Brothers: "The Flaherty Brothers Band."

Russell Fluharty: "West Virginia Heritage" (Page Recording Company).

Allen Freeman: "Together at Last"; "Out of the Cold" (Frozen Sound Records); and "Sidetrack."

Jimmy and Valerie Gabehart: "Steadfast" (Kandy Jam Records).

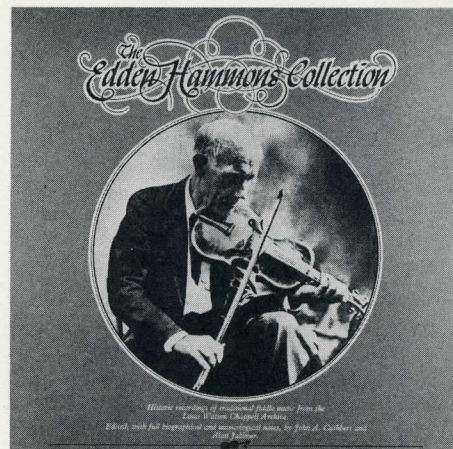
Worley Gardner: "Mountain Melodies II."

Frank George: "Traditional Music for Banjo, Fiddle and Bagpipes" (Kanawha).

Frank George with John Hilt: "Swope's Knobs" (Anachronistic Records).

Frank George was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1983.

Goldrush: "Goldrush."



Edden Hammons: "The Edden Hammons Collection" (West Virginia University Press). Reviewed in GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1985.

Maggie Hammons Parker, Lee Hammons, Sherman Hammons, Mose Coffman, Burl Hammons: "Shaking Down the Acorns" (Rounder).

Dorsey Harvey: "Dorsey, Harvey" (Poca River Music).

Hollow Rock String Band with Tommy Thompson: "Hollow Rock String Band" (Kanawha Records).

John Johnson: "Fiddlin' John" (Augusta Heritage). John Johnson was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1984.

Clark Kessinger: "Sweet Bed of Daisies" (County); "Old Time Music" (Rounder); "Legend of Clark Kessinger" (County); and "The Kessinger Brothers" (County).

Robin Kessinger: "Flowers of Edinburg" (Fret & Fiddle).

Rich Kirby and Michael Kline: "I Can Feel the People Stirring"; and "They Can't Put it Back" (June Appal).

Laurel Mountain Boys: "Sometime, Somewhere"; and "Long Black Beauty" (Old Homestead).

The Lilly Brothers: "Bluegrass Breakdown" (Rounder); and "What Will I Leave Behind" (County).

The Lilly Brothers were featured in GOLDENSEAL, April 1975.

Karen MacKay: "West Virginia Woman" (West Virginia Woman Records); and "Annie Oakley Rides Again" (West Virginia Woman).

Karen MacKay with Rhonda Wallace and Bill Hairston: "Mountain Paths" (Clover Enterprises).

Paul McCoy: "Allegheny Trails."

Darrell McCumbers: "Coon Chase"; and "Hill-billy Hobo" (Old Homestead).

French Mitchell: "First Fiddle" (Elderberry Records).

French Mitchell was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1983.

Mountain Grass: "West Virginia, My Home" (Revona Records).

Dave Morris and Flora Gammon: "From Grandfather's Land" (Sagittarius Records).

Putnam County Pickers (now Stark Raven): "Let The Cat Out" (ACI Records).

Red Wing: "Red Wing" (Dorrmar Records).

Blind Alfred Reed: "How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live" (Rounder).

Blind Alfred Reed was featured in GOLDENSEAL, January 1976.

Mary Faith Rhodes and the Dobbs Brothers: "Take Care of Yourself" (Fret & Fiddle).

Riverjunction Bluegrass: "Bluegrass With Style" (Fret & Fiddle).

Sam and Carrie Rizzetta: "Bucks and Does" (Flying Cloud Music).

Lefty Shafer: "Fiddles, Sings & Whistles" (Riverside).

Lefty Shafer was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1984.

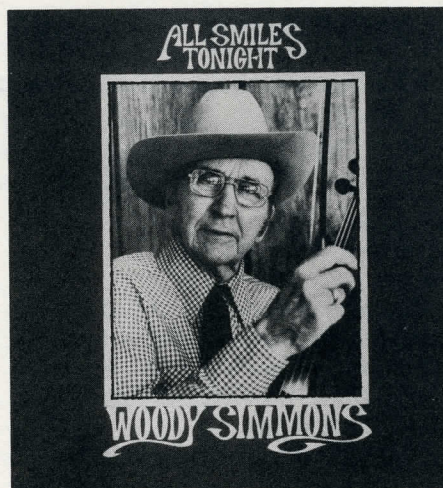
Robert Shafer: "Pickin' Around"; and "National Flatpicking Champion 1983" (Riverside); also featured on "Art Stamper" (Old Homestead).

Paul Skyland: "Songchild" (Riverside).

Glen Smith & The Mountain State Pickers: "Mountain State Pickers" (Kanawha).

Mike Souter: "Night Sky."

South Land Express: "South Land Express" (Fret & Fiddle).



Woody Simmons: "All Smiles Tonight" (Elderberry).

Woody Simmons was featured in GOLDENSEAL, July 1979.

Don Sowards & The Laurel Mountain Boys: "Carolina Sunshine" (Leather Records).

Stark Raven (formerly Putnam County Pickers): "One Hundred Million Reasons" (Vitag Records).

Trapezoid: "Now and Then" (Flying Fish); "Three Forks of Cheat" (Rounder); and "Another Country" (Flying Fish).

Twisted Laurel: "Homegrown."

Cliff Waldron: "One More Mile, One More Town, One More Time" (Rebel Records); "Right On" (Rebel); and "Cliff Waldron and The New Shades of Grass" (Rebel).

Bill & Carlotta Wellington: "Kitty Alone" (Homespun Records).

Billy Edd Wheeler: "Asheville" (Sagittarius); and "Wild Mountain Flower" (Flying Fish).

Wild Turkey String Band: "Wild Turkey String Band" (Kanawha).

The band was featured in GOLDENSEAL, July 1977.

Aunt Jennie Wilson: "A Portrait of Aunt Jennie Wilson" (Sagittarius).

Aunt Jennie Wilson was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1984.

Melvin Wine: "Cold Frosty Morning" (Poplar).

Gary Winkles: "Next Good Warm Day" (Appalachian Sound).

Nimrod Workman & Phyllis Boyens: "Mother Jones' Will"; and "Passing thru the Garden" (June Appal).

Nimrod Workman, Hazel Dickens, Sarah Gunning, George Tucker: "Come All You Coal Miners."

Oscar & Eugene Wright: "Old Time Fiddle and Guitar Music."

Special Offer

Our readers often ask why GOLDENSEAL doesn't publish articles dealing with the Civil War, Indian occupation, white settlement, exploration, and other matters from the early history of West Virginia.

We get other inquiries, too, some of them difficult to impossible to answer. But we have a ready response to the history question, for the fact is West Virginia already has a fine history journal.

West Virginia History is its name, and it's our sister publication here at the Department of Culture and History. Serious amateur and professional historians know that each issue of *West Virginia History* includes articles of the sort they will not find in any other magazine anywhere. Even GOLDENSEAL.

For example, the current issue has nine articles, on subjects as diverse as early gunsmithing, integration, and the wartime coal strikes of 1943. There is a feature of West Virginia's first Congresswoman and a collection of Civil War letters, recounting the war as seen by a Confederate colonel. Also included is the first half of a two-part article on southern West Virginia coal entrepreneur William Nelson Page, to be concluded in the upcoming *West Virginia History*. The 272 pages are topped off with more than 20 book reviews, a summary of state history articles in other publications, an index and other items.

West Virginia History is a book-sized annual publication, served by an advisory panel of distinguished historians from all parts of the state. Each issue is illustrated, with original photographs from the State Archives, many of them published for the first time in the pages of *West Virginia History*. Normally a subscription would cost you \$10 a year.

However, as a special introductory offer, the editors are now offering the readers of GOLDENSEAL the chance to subscribe to *West Virginia History* for \$8. That's a savings of 20% over the usual price.

If you want to learn more about the history of our state, use the handy coupon on the other side. ▶

Yes, I'm a GOLDENSEAL reader who wants to learn more West Virginia history by taking advantage of the special *West Virginia History* subscription offer. I'm enclosing my check or money order for \$8 payable to the Department of Culture and History. Please enter my subscription at the address below.

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Thank you!

Use this coupon only for subscriptions to *West Virginia History*. There is a *GOLDENSEAL* coupon in the back of this issue.

WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY



VOLUME XLV 1984

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. Published letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

Greenville, WV
September 20, 1985

Editor:

Enclosed is a donation of \$10 to help support your wonderful magazine. Some of the interesting stories which I have read in the *GOLDENSEAL* come close home to me.

The one written by Helen Ellison a few years ago, where she shows the picture of cutting ice on the Ellison mill dam, is one of them. The farm on which I live joins the Ellison property. The Ellisons came to this section of the country a few years before the Larews. My home farm was settled by Peter Larew in 1798 and has been in the Larew family ever since. I was born in this neighborhood in 1899 and have seen many changes.

I have a number of pictures of the old home that Peter Larew Sr. built. It was remodeled several times before my husband Robert Larew and I moved in.

My husband's uncle Peter Larew Sr. and sisters ran a summer resort here. I have the old register which dates back to about 1893.

In the spring the maple sugar orchard was opened and gallons of syrup were made, also a lot of sugar. This fine syrup was used freely on the table. I have the molds in which the sugar was shaped. We also have the old pan in which the water was boiled down. The wooden buckets were here at the time we came to this old home.

There were several stands of beehives and honey was plentiful on the table for the guests who boarded here. Hogs, sheep and cattle were raised on the farm, also chickens and turkeys. They furnished all the meat which was used by the family. The bacon was sugar cured and hickory smoked in an old log house. I have recipes for the salt mixture which was used on the meat. My husband and I used that for years. Sincerely,
Mrs. Robert Larew

You will be interested in J. Z. Ellison's "School Work" essay in this issue.—
ed.

Dried Apple Pie

Alliance, Ohio
September 25, 1985
Editor:

I was pleased with the dried apple story. The fried dried apple pie was a great favorite of many. The Maiden Blush apple for dried apples had the flavor.

The circle of dough was rolled out, dried apples put in one half, the dough doubled over and the edge crimped, put in an iron skillet and turned over when one side was done.

Yours truly,
Freda Dye

Mallory, WV
September 19, 1985
Editor:

I'm enclosing a check for renewal of my *GOLDENSEAL*, plus \$3 for an extra copy.

I was so thrilled to get this particular issue because of the article on dried apple pies, but I barely got to glance through it. Our son was visiting us from Columbia, South Carolina, and when he read about the pies I knew my copy was leaving with him, along with some of my dried apples which I do every fall. If you can spare the extra copy I will be so grateful.

Thank you so much for the wonderful magazine. It is a treasure trove. I enjoy it so much and am always passing it on to others I think will enjoy it too.

Respectfully yours,
Clarissa Cashion





Bluefield Jews

San Antonio, Texas
August 13, 1985

Editor:

I have just returned from a visit with relatives in Bluefield, where I saw and obtained a copy of your Summer 1985 issue. Having been raised in Bluefield's Jewish community, I was especially pleased with your article, "Faith, Knowledge and Practice." Of particular interest to me is the family photograph shown at the top of page 18, an original of which is still in my possession. "Daughter Beatrice" in that picture was my mother.

Allow me to correct one error in your representation of the portrait: My grandfather's family name was Brod-kin, not Rosenthal.

My cousin, Harry Rosenthal, is the sole survivor of the group in the portrait. The lady holding him is his mother, Minnie Brodkin Rosenthal. Currently a resident of Florida, Harry recently celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary. His brothers, Sidney and Robert, are both prominent members of Bluefield's Jewish community to this day.

The young girl seated between my grandparents was my beloved aunt, Edna Brodkin Goldstein. She and her husband, Irving Goldstein, were life-long residents of Beckley. They were the parents of Arthur and Gloria Goldstein. Well into her 80's, she just recently passed away.

Reading from left to right, the men standing in the portrait were my uncles, Sam Brodkin, Alter Rosenthal and Issac Brodkin.

I was also intrigued by the group photograph on page 22. Not only did I know everyone there, I am in it myself. That picture was taken just five years before I moved to Texas.

I am sending my contribution check for \$10, and will appreciate your placing me on your list to receive future issues of GOLDENSEAL.

Yours very truly,
Hennon Gilbert

Still More on Fairy Diddles

Daniels, WV

Editor:

I read with interest the letters you received putting our little ferry diddle in his own position—an animal with a true identity. A family of them moved onto my premises a few years ago—into my pine trees, outbuildings, even my attic, to find scraps of cotton and cloth for their nests in the shop and smoke house. They brought their cute babies out later for us to see.

I feared over-population, so I caught some in a "Have-a-Heart" trap and transported them out to Grandview State Park to establish a new residence there.

I love your publication.

Yours truly,
Ethel B. Trail

Morgantown, WV
September 30, 1985

Editor:

Here's even more than you want to know about fairy diddles.

Bygone meanings of *fairy* (chiefly Scottish) and *diddle* (chiefly dialectal) account for the charming aptness of our name for the red squirrel. From the older definitions, *fairy diddle* implies a delicate and graceful creature that moves with short, rapid motions.

Although fairy diddle is not in my dictionaries, *boomer* is. It's a southern and midland U.S. name for the red squirrel, but seems much less apt in depicting the animal's behavior than it's scientific name does. *Tamiasciurus* means chipmunk (*Tamias*) squirrel (*Sciurus*). Indeed, some of the red squirrel's behavior is more like that of chipmunks than of gray or fox squirrels.

In the box on page 7 of the Fall GOLDENSEAL there are two apparent errors. Jimmy Pack, an old friend and colleague of mine, is most unlikely to have told you "distinct from red" and there is a *c* missing from *Tamiasciurus*. Thanks for providing us readers with such delightful reading.

Regards,
Jack Gill

You're right. We should have cited Mr. Pack to the effect that the fairy diddle is distinct from the "fox or gray" squirrel instead of "red, fox or gray."—ed.

Camden-on-Gauley, WV

Editor:

Here's another opinion on a fairy diddle, and, of course, the one I believe to be true and proper. Why? Because my dad explained it to me, and we just happen to be mountain folk—descendants of lumber people—much acquainted with the woods and its various forms of life.

A fairy diddle is a little red-colored squirrel with a shade darker tail, about the size of a chipmunk and as fast as greased lightning. You understand, of course, it's minus the stripes. Although it's red it definitely is not a red squirrel.

As far as the castrating goes, these little devils are the culprits. If they catch an unguarded nest of red or gray squirrels they sneak in and do their evil deed.

Now, if you're real mountain folks, you would call them "mountain boomers."

There's a bunch of them around here now. Just scampering across the road like you wouldn't believe.

If you don't believe this explanation just give my ol' dad (William E. Davis—that's Pap to us) a buzz and he'll explain it to you real fast, while he's showing you all his steam toys and offering you some supper. 'Course you know, mountain supper is dinner to city folks and dinner to us is lunch to them, but that's another story.

Sure enjoyed your article.

Sincerely,
Sharon Varney

New Milton, WV
September 5, 1985
Editor:

I read with pleasure your story about the ferry diddles, which is a flying squirrel. I had three in a cage once when I was remodeling the old one-room school on Maxwell Ridge in Doddridge County near West Union, making a hunting camp out of it. There was a nest of them between the walls there. I caught them with a fish net, kept them one day and turned them loose. They are still nesting in the trees around the camp.

You are invited to spend a weekend at the camp in March or April or any time in early spring to see for yourself. Any of the owners of the camp will tell you about them. How they fly, which they do. So if you wish proof, just drive out on Maxwell Ridge. Billy McKinney or anyone at the Basham's Camp will tell you.

Thank you,
S. L. Basham

And Here We Go Again

Morro Bay, California
September 30, 1985
Editor:

Now that you have pretty well explained the ferry diddle, when are you going to start the stories on the hoop snakes? Seems to me the oldtimers are still in rare form. Haven't been back for 22 years but the stories sound the same as when I was growing up in Clay County. I always enjoy GOLD-ENSEAL.

Sincerely,
Ruby M. Tucker

Burnsville, North Carolina

October 1, 1985

Editor:

I think your readers' survey on fairy diddles was one of the best features I've seen in your magazine. I saw in the same issue the mention of a bird called a shikepoke or shitepoke. According to the story, the bird had unusual digestive habits. I've heard this term applied to the green heron in the South and the bittern in the North, and once in a religious program a preacher made reference to "atheistic, intellectual shitepokes!"

As with the fairy diddles, we are "onto something important" with this concept of shitepokes. Please open this up to your readers to tell us what they can about this unusual critter!

With good spirits,
Doug Elliott

OK, folks—if you will lay off the fairy diddle, we'll open the floor on hoop snakes and shikepokes. Send your comments on either or both and we'll see what comes of it.—ed.

Kenna

Chester, WV

Editor:

GOLDENSEAL was sent as a gift in my husband's memory.

I have enjoyed it very much. In this issue the story of Kenna and about the O. J. Morrison store sure brought back memories, as my mother took me there shopping when I was small. My name was Susan Catherine Bourgeois then. I was born about two miles out of Ripley, on Ravenswood Pike and was raised in Jackson County. Now in my 80th year, I have lived in Hancock County since 1933, as this was my husband's home.

Sincerely,
Susan Huff

Beans

Huntington, WV

October 1, 1985

Editor:

I appreciated the nice article "That Was a Fine Bean" in the Fall 1984 issue.

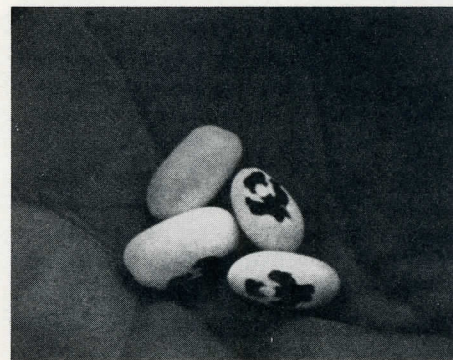
Since reading it I feel more convinced that the Trout bean mentioned is the ancient one the Indians gave my grandmother and grandpa. Jacob Trout of Big Lick (now Roanoke, Virginia)

named it and due to the old custom of saving seeds it has found its way to West Virginia. I think maybe it came with an uncle who taught and wed here. He attended Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, an old Lutheran school way back where my grandpa donated a brick building called Trout Hall and his brother-in-law gave one called Miller Hall.

The Trouts came from Germany because of Catholic persecution in Martin Luther's time, finally coming to America in William Penn's time, to Philadelphia. They drifted down the Valley of Virginia to Roanoke. My father's people also came over the same time and they drifted down the Valley to Augusta County as pioneers.

Why I am writing all this I just don't know unless it's old age. I will be 93 in two months. Please forgive my ramblings and if the author of the article knows anything more about Trout beans, I'd like to hear.

Most sincerely,
Mrs. William Fitzpatrick



Porters Falls, WV

July 26, 1985

Editor:

I read an article last year in your Fall 1984 edition about Ruby Morris, a farmer in Braxton County.

I was very interested in the Bird's Eye beans she raises. She states that she sells some things in the West Virginia Department of Agriculture *Market Bulletin* which my aunt gets, so I have watched for her name.

Today I again picked up the GOLD-ENSEAL that this article was in and I am determined to have some of those beans. I have never seen these beans before and I would really like to have some of them. If you possibly can, please help me out.

Sincerely yours,
Larry Edgell

Current Programs • Events • Publications

GOLDENSEAL announcements are published as a service, as space permits. They are not paid advertisements and items are screened according to the likely interests of our readers. We welcome events announcements and review copies of books and records, but cannot guarantee publication.

New Fayette County History

GOLDENSEAL readers interested in West Virginia county histories, and Fayette County in particular, will want to know of John Cavalier's *Panorama of Fayette County*. Mr. Cavalier's new history, printed by McClain Printing Company of Parsons, was published last summer.

Mr. Cavalier is an educator, and his book deals primarily with the history of Fayette County schools. The contents are systematically broken down into dozens of small communities in the county, and a brief history, particularly of the local school, is given for each place. The author can't quite reach from A to Z, but he does look at every place from Alloy to Wyndal, and he has photographs of many of the early schools. The specialized interest of Mr. Cavalier's book makes it a valuable supplement to the classic Peters and Carden history of Fayette County, first published in 1926 and more recently reprinted by McClain.

John Cavalier is the author of one previous local history, *Smithers, West Virginia*, published in 1978. *Panorama of Fayette County* (hardback, 486 pages, with index and nearly 200 photographs) may be purchased for \$35, postpaid. Mail orders may be sent to Mr. Cavalier, Box 177, Smithers, WV 25186.

FOOTMAD Concerts

The Friends of Old Time Music and Dance (FOOTMAD) have brought American folk and British Isles music to the Kanawha Valley for several years, and this winter and spring will be no exception. The group's 1985-86 concert schedule, recently announced, promises FOOTMAD's most varied offerings so far.

The new "Traditions" series began in October but has several concerts yet to come. Sadie Green Sales, a folk-rag-time duo, will perform on January 11, followed by the traditional Irish group Mick Moloney and Friends on Feb-

ruary 8. There will be more traditional Irish music with Joe and Antoinette McKenna on March 8, and the blues duo Bowling Green will perform April 12. The season winds up on May 10 with Sukay, playing the traditional music of South America.

The Saturday night concerts begin at eight o'clock, at Ferrell Auditorium on the West Virginia State College campus in Institute. The ticket price is usually \$5, depending on the concert. Advance tickets are available through local outlets, or may be ordered from FOOTMAD, P. O. Box 1684, Charleston, WV 25326; phone (304) 965-6718 or 988-0702. Kanawha Valley FOOTMAD is a membership organization, with membership information available at the same address.

Midwife Magazine

West Virginia midwives and expectant parents may be interested to learn of *The Practicing Midwife*, a quarterly magazine published by Practicing Midwife Publications, Inc.

Midwifery is a fast growing trend in the country today, with money one important reason. Hospital charges sometimes running \$2,000 or more, coupled with obstetrician fees, are more than many families can afford. In contrast, a midwife will usually charge no more than \$250. Sometimes a barter system is employed, with the midwife exchanging her skills for goods and services valuable to her. Other women prefer midwives because they feel hospitals are cold and impersonal.

The Practicing Midwife includes articles and interviews on such subjects as the importance of hiring licensed midwives, information on midwifery schools, how midwives can deal with sometimes hostile media, studies of birth rates, birth defects and breech births. The magazine also offers an "Ask the Midwife" column, advice from doctors, book reviews and a calendar of events. Advertisements provide information on training and supplies.

Subscription rates are \$20 for an individual subscription and \$25 for all

institutions; rates for Canada and Mexico are \$23 and overseas rates are \$25. Subscription inquiries should be sent to *The Practicing Midwife*, 42 The Farm, Summertown, TN 38483.

New History of Washington Bottom

Washington Bottom is the large river bottom lying between Blennerhassett and Newberry islands, in the big bend of the Ohio below Parkersburg. Like a lot of other prime Ohio Valley lands, it once belonged to George Washington, passing to his descendants upon his death in 1799. A niece and nephew literally drew the two 1,200-acre tracts from a hat, which seemed the fairest way to divide the ex-president's vast property holdings among 23 heirs.

According to Charles M. Boso's new book, *A View of Washington Bottom*, much has transpired since Washington's time. Harmon Blennerhassett moved onto his nearby island in 1800, to dabble in schemes that would trouble international politics for years to come. The Bottom itself was soon divided into several sizable farms and sold out of the Washington family. The farms became smaller as generations passed, averaging less than 60 acres each by 1920. This changed after World War II, when most of the Bottom was recombined into large tracts by a few corporations. The industrial aristocracy of DuPont, Borg-Warner and others now claim George Washington's place in the deed books.

The long history of Washington Bottom is summarized in Boso's book. *A View of Washington Bottom* is a narrative account, with close attention to shifting land occupation patterns. Particularly helpful in this regard is a series of land maps, outlining ownership from 1820 to 1981.

A View of Washington Bottom, an illustrated, 121-page paperback, sells for \$8.95. Mail orders, including \$1.50 postage and handling plus 45 cents sales tax from West Virginia residents, should be sent to Charles M. Boso, Rt. 1, Box 75, Washington, WV 26181.

Charleston Jewish History

Following the recent GOLDENSEAL article on the Bluefield Jewish community, Simon Meyer brought to our attention a fine history of the Jews of Charleston. *One Hundred Years: An Anthology—Charleston Jewry* was edited by Mr. Meyer and published in 1972.

One Hundred Years is a collection of writings on important events and institutions among local Jews. There are sections on sports, culture, business and charity, as well as Zionism and prejudice against Jews, among other topics. A fascinating demographic study by Rabbi Samuel Cooper profiles the city's Jewish population in 1972, giving overall numbers as well as detailed analysis by age, occupation, marital status and so forth. Concern is expressed in this section about the dwindling size of the Jewish community at the time, with people being lost to death and migration faster than they were being replaced.

Editor Meyer introduces *One Hundred Years* with a general background narrative, followed by contributions by several other writers. Particular attention is given to religious life throughout the book, especially to the B'Nai Jacob and Temple Israel synagogues. Each institution is presented in text and photographs, as is the earlier Virginia Street Temple.

One Hundred Years (216 pages plus appendix) may be purchased in local bookstores or by mail. The mail order price is \$16.40 (hardback) or \$10 (paperback), postpaid. Orders may be sent to Simon Meyer, 1540 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25311.

Greenbrier Railroading

The Chesapeake & Ohio Railway has been an important institution in West Virginia since John Henry's hammer rang out in Summers County in the early 1870's. The legendary steel driver worked on the main line, helping to forge another national rail link from East to West. The idea was to provide long distance service, while picking up local business from branch lines along the way. For the C&O one such important branch was its Greenbrier Division, built up the Greenbrier Valley into upper Pocahontas County at the turn of the century.

The Durbin Route is a new illus-

trated history of the Greenbrier Division, written by William Price McNeel and published by Pictorial Histories Publishing Company. The book covers the Division from construction through its busiest period, and finally down to the pulling of the tracks from the upper valley in the late 1970's. Today the memory of the boom years is preserved in the Scenic Railroad at Cass, recalling a time when timber and other resources brought steam engines bustling into Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties.

Author William Price McNeel is from an old Pocahontas County family and currently editor of the *Pocahontas Times* at Marlinton. He knows his country well, and sets the story of railroading into the context of local history and geography. His book is illustrated with about 150 photographs and several maps.

The Durbin Route may be purchased in bookstores or ordered by mail. Orders, including the \$9.95 price and \$1.50 postage and handling, should be addressed to Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue, S.E., Charleston, WV 25304.

Civil War History

September Blood, a new book written by Terry Lowry and published by Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, is a detailed account of a significant Civil War battle fought in Western Virginia.

The Battle of Carnifex Ferry was fought near Summersville in September 1861. The battle raged for a day and a night, ending with a Union victory which paved the way for West Virginia statehood by destroying the Confederate threat in the Kanawha Valley and opening communications for the Union forces to the north and south.

September Blood is heavily illustrated with historical photos and recent views of the battlefield. Particular attention is given to geography, and various maps help the reader obtain a clear picture of the battle scene. While the author uses traditional sources such as Boyd Stutler's *Civil War in West Virginia* and the published *Official Records*, his use of personal memoirs, diaries, unpublished accounts, newspaper articles and battle reports, enables him to present a ringside view

of the action. Lowry, who contributed to the Time-Life series of Civil War books, previously published another West Virginia Civil War battle story, *The Battle of Scary Creek: Military Operations in the Kanawha Valley*.

September Blood, a 141-page paperback, includes notes, a bibliography, and a roster of those wounded, captured and killed from both armies. There is also a brief history of the development of the Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park, and the individuals who fought to preserve the site.

September Blood is available in bookstores or may be ordered for \$9.95, plus \$1.50 postage and handling, from Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue S.E., Charleston, WV 25304.

Child's History of Harrison County

The Harrison County Bicentennial Committee recently announced publication of *Among These Hills: A Child's History of Harrison County*. The book was written by County Historian-In-Residence James M. Pool, and illustrated by the drawings of Artist-In-Residence Beth Crowder.

In *Among These Hills*, the 200-year history of Harrison County unfolds as the fictional Hadley family lives the nonfiction history of the area. The book is easily readable and heavily illustrated, which makes it an enjoyable way for children to learn the development of Harrison County, from the Indian attacks of 1784 to the recent bicentennial celebration. Anna Smucker, a children's librarian for the Clarksburg-Harrison Public Library, says *Among These Hills* is "a book that will excite children's imaginations and encourage them to ask many of the questions asked by the young Hadleys about the people, places and events that have played an important role in our county's history."

Among These Hills is a limited edition, 225-page hardback, with a foreword by Dr. Dorothy Davis. It is sponsored by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

To order send \$15.95 plus postage and handling to the Harrison County Bicentennial Committee, c/o Waldomere, 404 West Pike Street, Clarksburg, WV 26301.

Tucked beneath the highest gable of our tall house was a small half-moon window which was my secret lookout when I was about nine years old. Even though the house is gone now, that unfurnished end of the attic is still very real to me. So I visit it now and then, take hold of those rough-sawed studs and climb to my lofty perch. From there I look out on Huntington as it was in 1913, and listen.

From a sound track somewhere inside my head I pick up the rhythm of hoof beats on bricks, the low hum of a swiftly drawn surrey, and sometimes the crescendo of a sudden rainstorm pelting the tin roof a foot from my head. I hear the courthouse clock striking the hour, the throbbing grind of a streetcar and the snorts and vaporous panting of a steam locomotive. The fire bell rings a coded alarm and there's also the mellow blast of a steamboat whistle from the Ohio. Always I can hear the rasping voice of a boy named Norman, who perpetually bossed a ball game on the vacant lot at the corner.

Looking down through graceful limbs of a great elm, I see the red brick pavement, the streetcar track and an uncrowded row of attractive frame and brick houses on the north side of Sixth Avenue, each with its distinctive architectural features. They make a sharp contrast with the narrow lots and pinched front yards on our side.

Over there now I see that perfect gentlemen, 70-year-old Edmund Sehon, on his way to business. Always meticulously turned out in a stiff-bosom shirt, black bow tie and gray cut-away coat, Mr. Sehon never wore a topcoat or permitted heat in his bedroom.

The iceman is working his way up Sixth Avenue, shouldering 50- and 100-pound blocks on a thick leather pad. Small boys stand on the rear step of the ice wagon to scoop up refreshing frozen slivers. Members of a chain gang from the city jail sweep along the curb with long-handled street brooms. They brush past Witcher McCullough's car, resplendent with its shining brass headlamps and big brake and gear-shift levers on the outside by the driver's seat.

It may not be far wrong to speak of 1913 as the final year of the 19th Century. The glow of the "Gay '90's" persisted, it seems to me, until it flickered out at harvest time in 1914, when many



This is the house of Mr. Newcomb's early memory, on Sixth Avenue in Huntington. The upper gable's half-moon window is not visible from this perspective. Family snapshot, after 1911.

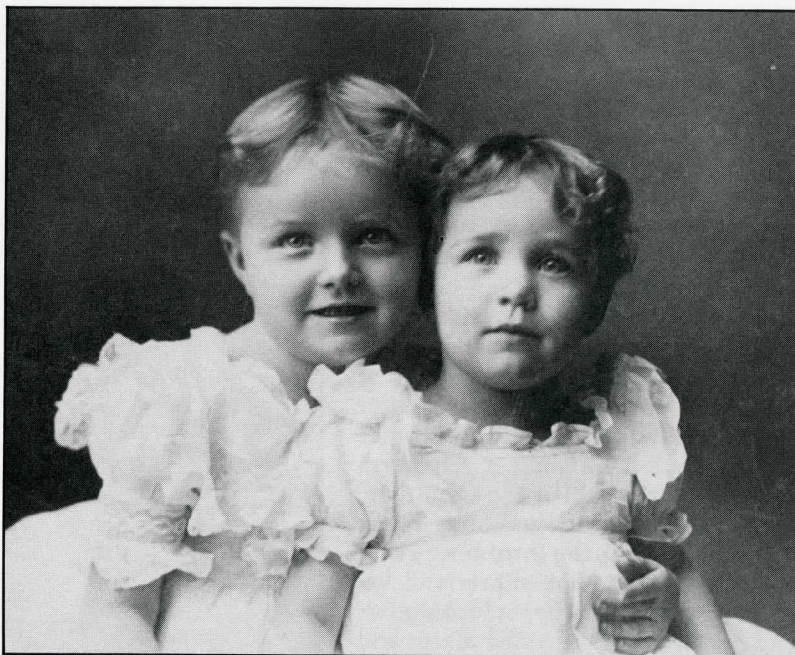
High Water and Growing Pains

A Huntingtonian Looks Back on 1913

By William B. Newcomb



Left: William B. Newcomb with animal companion, about 1908. Photographer unknown.



Right: Older sisters Alta and Carolyn in 1900. Photographer unknown.

cherished promises of the 20th Century also vanished in the outbreak of the European war. I am just old enough to have clear memories of life as it was immediately before World War I. Certain of my personal experiences in 1913 were unusual. Others were painful. The result is that the one year rolls back almost as a motion picture.

Our city was just past 40 years old then. Its growth had been vigorous and rapid, pushed by energetic men from North and South who had laid aside their arms at the end of the Civil War. Yet, Huntington was a staid and orderly place, with broad avenues and cross streets precisely laid out by railroad construction engineers before any buildings were erected. It was the second city in the United States to have electric streetcars, a distinction achieved in 1888.

A radius of 280 miles drawn around my hometown will enclose the entire state of Ohio, cross Lake Erie to cut through a segment of Ontario and swing west of Indianapolis. It will take in Louisville and all of Kentucky's bluegrass as well as its mountains. Sweeping south, the circle encompasses Cumberland Gap, the route of the Wilderness Road and all of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina. Swinging eastward through Virginia, it includes the Shenandoah Valley and goes on north to take in Pittsburgh. This magic cir-

cle also encloses our entire state of West Virginia. It's clear that Huntington is practically at the center of the civilized world.

It wasn't always there. Huntington came into being only in the 1870's, when Collis P. Huntington and his associates built the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway through the mountains and sought an extensive level area above the banks of the Ohio River as their temporary western terminus. For some years before the mainline was extended to Cincinnati, passengers and freight were transferred to steamboats at Huntington. The carefully planned town thrived as a transportation center, with railway shops and a variety of home-owned industries.

Long before my time, the C&O offered through sleeping car service from Louisville and Cincinnati through Huntington to Richmond and Washington, and via the Pennsylvania Railroad to New York City. My father rode the trains in both directions, first mostly to Cincinnati to buy merchandise for the dry goods store in which he was a partner. He made his first trip to the New York market in 1897, with a stopover in Washington for the inauguration of William McKinley. As the business grew into a full-fledged department store his trips to New York became frequent, one reason so many of my childhood memories are tied to the arrival and departure of trains.

It is hard to describe the excitement which prevailed when the afternoon eastbound pulled in at five o'clock. Often hundreds of people stood on the long concrete platform parallel to the tracks. Youngsters would speculate on every puff of smoke visible in the west, each hoping to be the first to see the locomotive round a distant curve. Then there would be the warnings from station attendants to stand back and that brief exposure to fire, steam and swirling cinders as the engine thundered by.

When the train came to a halt, families would spread out to spot some aunt or grandmother among the arrivals. Departing Pullman car passengers would seek out their car numbers and then stand chatting with friends while the train was worked over from end to end. The locomotive that had pulled the train from Cincinnati would be replaced with one fresh from the roundhouse. Mail, express and baggage, had to be unloaded and loaded. The train would be cut in two to add cars and to rearrange the Pullmans, to be dropped off in proper order along the line, one for White Sulphur Springs, one for Covington, Virginia, to be shunted to Hot Springs, one for Charlottesville to be added to a train bound for Richmond and Old Point Comfort, and others to be transferred to the Pennsylvania system at Washington for the New York passengers.

My eyes would be on my father, but also on the dining car which seemed about as near to heaven as I ever expected to get. I knew about dining cars. My parents had taken me to New York in 1911. All I had to see were those lighted electric lamps on the tables. Then I could picture the steward with his brass buttons and snow white vest, the cheerful black waiters, the spotless tablecloths, the sparkling bottled water from White Sulphur Springs, and the hash brown potatoes. By what mysterious processes those potatoes were prepared I have never discovered. But I can testify that for at least a half-century hash 'brown potatoes were standardized at near perfection by the chefs on C&O dining cars.

Half of those who greeted the arrival of any particular train probably had no connection with anyone coming or going. This was especially true after the new station was opened in 1913. The broad covered platform was a natural late afternoon gathering place for young people who lived within easy walking distance. It could be a fashion show. Women bound for the mountain resorts, Atlantic City, New York or Europe wore carefully planned traveling costumes. Distinguished-looking passengers from other cities would alight to be greeted by local friends who knew they were passing through. There were no gates to keep the crowd from mingling with the passengers, or to keep small boys from watching railroad men couple cars and give signals with their wonderful lanterns. Nor were there any restrictions to keep my grandmother from walking up to the locomotive to have a look at the engineer. If he had a good face, she could ride with an easier mind.

I have no memories of New Year's Day, 1913. I do remember the election of November 1912. As my mother scanned the dark sky from an open door that morning, a half-grown black cat with runny eyes darted inside. Mama looked at the cat she had never seen before and then back at the lowering clouds. "This," she said, "is a Democrat day."

So it was, and my man in the White House went down in defeat. During the fall of 1908, Republican William Howard Taft had made a short campaign visit to Huntington. I was held up to the automobile in which he was riding to receive a handshake and a



The Anderson-Newcomb Company store on Third Avenue in 1911. The lavish decorations welcomed a Huntington convention of the United Commercial Travelers. Photographer unknown.

campaign poster. The day after that election my father gave me the horn and drum he had promised if Taft won. It didn't bother me too much four years later when Dad bolted his party to vote for Teddy Roosevelt on the Bull Moose ticket. But now my personal contact with the presidency was gone. In one swoop the genial face of Mr. Taft and the toothsome grin of Teddy Roosevelt were replaced by the dour countenance of Thomas Woodrow Wilson, a man who didn't even know me.

Less than a month after the 1913 in-

auguration of President Wilson, the Ohio River rose majestically to lay claim to land that rightfully belongs to it. I use the word *majestically*, for although a flood is a tragic experience for those whose lives and property are at stake, a great flood on the Ohio is a magnificent sight. To bring things into perspective we have to realize that the river was there first, doing its job of digging a channel, shaping a valley and building fertile flood plains. When heavy rains over several states and melting snow in the mountains sud-



Father William H. Newcomb (at front, in shirt sleeves) sits beside partner Charles N. Anderson at group outing. Date and photographer unknown.

denly give the river more water than it can move within its banks, it must spread out over flat areas between the hills to find ancient shore lines to hold the water until it can pass on to the Mississippi and ultimately to the Gulf of Mexico.

The locks and dams on the Ohio in 1913 were designed to maintain a minimum depth of nine feet for paddle-wheel steamboats. At Huntington this meant the river could rise 41 feet from low stage before it topped the banks at flood stage. A practiced eye looking down Tenth Street toward the wharf could pretty well judge the depth of the river. As the water rose the wharf floated up. When the water was high a steamboat alongside, its great stacks carrying plumes of black smoke, seemed to stand higher than the street.

As the tributaries rise rapidly, all sorts of debris floats down the Ohio—logs, whole trees, small buildings, great masses of brush and whatever else litters the banks. The water is swift and muddy. It's a river doing its work. Some of that mud will be dropped to make soil in the bottom lands. As the water nears flood stage the current slackens and the rise becomes steady, relatively gradual and measurable in tenths of a foot per hour. In flat country a flood

brings the most terror, because escape to higher ground is sometimes impossible. And, of course, in narrow valleys a small stream can wreak sudden havoc. In the broad Ohio Valley we're fortunate to have our beautiful hills and much level ground beyond the reach of any recorded flood. This higher ground provides a means of escape and a place to look down on the awesome grandeur of a great flood.

Born in Guyandotte in 1870, my father witnessed the floods of 1883 and 1884 from the vantage point of a flooded home. He probably got around some in a rowboat a man gave him during the flood of 1884. I can't believe that he would have missed seeing Huntington's flooded central business district only two miles to the west. The one story I remember well was of his attempt to rescue a cat stranded on a floating log at the mouth of the Guyandotte River. Scratched and bitten beyond endurance, he gave up and pitched the cat into the water.

Through his experiences, my father had gained a feeling for the Ohio River and where its waters could spread. But the unexpected happened in 1913. Miles of recently paved streets and a network of storm sewers opened up new paths for the river. To the aston-

ishment of my father and many others familiar with the ways of the Ohio, little street rivers and backed up sewers poured water into areas untouched by previous floods.

If you sell housewares, china and glass in your basement and have the usual assortment of department store merchandise on the street floor, the threat of a flood calls for a tough decision. Don't panic and move too soon. The river has a way of dropping away just when a great flood seems inevitable. The disruption of business from an unnecessary move could ruin a whole year's net profit. But don't wait too long. You can lose all of that merchandise and your equipment as well.

Once the Ohio is out of its banks and widespread heavy rains continue, all predictions of where the water will be in 48 hours are shaky.

Just how the 1913 decision to move was made at the store I do not know. Charles N. Anderson had joined the company in 1908 as the major stockholder. He and my father had rolltop desks opposite each other on the balcony that overlooked the street floor. Frequently, they turned in their swivel chairs to discuss management problems. They had a deep respect for each other, plus the ability to combine their very different talents for the good of the business.

Of the two, Mr. Anderson was more deskbound. He kept a steady hand on Anderson-Newcomb finances. In those years just before the first federal income tax law was enacted, that meant plowing every available nickel back into the growing business. My father had an immense amount of energy and spent most of his time on his feet. I can close my eyes and see him, pencil between his teeth, papers in both hands, taking two steps at a time as he dashed up the stairs to the balcony. In addition to many management duties, the main floor departments were his principal responsibility.

In most matters that involved physical exertion, Mr. Anderson deferred to my father, who, in late March, was keeping an anxious eye on the river. So I can imagine that on his return from a look down Tenth Street and some talk with fellow merchants along Third Avenue, he rushed back to his desk with no mind for routine matters. Then there may have been a wor-

ried conference between Will and "C. N."

"Will, how about the river?"

"It's going to get us," Papa might have replied.

"Should we start moving?"

"Yes."

"All right, Will."

If it was that way, I am certain that C. N. calmly turned back to the work on his desk and that seconds later Will was in the basement giving carefully-thought-out instructions. It was a sensible division of responsibilities. One partner looked to all the important details necessary to keep the business running, while the other dealt with the river. Which does not mean that Mr. Anderson was unaware of the flood or didn't lend a hand when time began to run out. Nor would my father have had it any other way. As the buyer, he had an intimate knowledge of the merchandise to be moved. He was the one to manage an orderly retreat as the river inched up.

The first job was to pack up all of those pots and pans, fine china and glassware and a thousand other items. There was no space to spare on the

second and third floors. Everything from the basement, including counters and tables, was brought up the steps or on the slow hydraulic freight elevator to wagons in the alley and hauled to higher ground. Among the last things to come out were the big electric motors that powered the passenger elevator and the fantastic endless cable system that sent small metal cash boxes darting between the cashier and the salespeople.

On the street floor, the first job was the construction of large wooden trestles resembling carpenters' sawhorses but much higher and stronger. The long rows of marble-based showcases down the center aisle and counters from the side aisles were lifted onto the trestles. Some of the stock from the shelves was stacked on top. It was work for experts at fast handling of merchandise. There is an art to moving a stock of goods without breaking things or taking the "bloom" off. Things are not to be mixed up, either. A lot of business can be lost after a flood if it takes days to sort out a jumbled stock.

With the Ohio already flowing down Third Avenue and lapping at the side-

walk in front of the store, the time came to open a cut-off valve and let the flood water pent up in the sewer gush into the basement. When the building was erected in 1901 there had been the option of connecting to either of two sewer lines in the alley. One was lower than the basement floor. The other, about five feet above floor level, was chosen. Surface water and seepage that collected in the elevator pits drained to a deep dry well beneath the floor. A portable pump with a hose running to the alley could keep the well from overflowing for days while water seeped through hundreds of crevices in the walls.

My father got a lot of satisfaction out of holding the river at bay long after it was several feet higher than the basement floor. He often speculated that a connection with the lower sewer could have been disastrous because the greater pressure might have made it impossible to hold the water out. Forty-eight precious hours could have been lost.

At our home half a mile from the store there was no danger of flooding. But my mother had problems of her own. Children spread the word along

Anderson-Newcomb was not the only business to suffer in the 1913 flood. As this picture shows, the main commercial district was devastated. Photographer unknown.



the avenue that the city water and natural gas would be shut off within several hours. Mama didn't hesitate. All available kettles, fruit jars and the bathtub were filled with water. Then she stayed up all night to bake bread and cook other food. My boyhood memories of Mama's bread surpass even those of the 1913 flood. Baked in large pans, it rose high to make slices big enough to fill a dinner plate. The golden crust was thick and crisp. Inside, the texture was rather open and firm. The most satisfying way to eat this remarkable bread was to cover a thick slice with home-canned blackberries.

To get back to the high water, I found myself with a share of the cooking. In our backyard we propped up a big kettle over a fire. It was my pleasant duty to keep the fire going with wood and coal to make soup to feed the workers at the store.

So long as the river is rising, the water in the channel is higher than it is at the shore. When a flood reaches its highest level, or crest, the "hump" in the channel drops and the water in the flooded areas rises slightly. Then slowly the water recedes. It would be wrong to say that Huntington suddenly came to life again after the Ohio crested on April 1, 1913. The great river's mighty thrust, spectacular as it was, cannot be compared with the human drama on shore. Huntington reeled under the impact of a high and muddy river but it didn't collapse. There was no panic, no disorder.

In this misfortune, white families suffered more than black. Huntington's black population lived in an older residential section on high ground and not one family was touched by the 1913 disaster. People in the newer neighborhoods who were driven from their homes found shelter in school buildings, while others moved in with friends. Perhaps most of the families in the flooded areas lived in two-story houses. They moved much of their household goods upstairs. Heavy pieces of furniture and pianos were propped up as high as possible. Many families then retreated upstairs themselves. Afterward there were stories about hearing crashes below when heavy pieces floated and turned over.

As if from nowhere, rowboats showed up all over town. The most



The Huntington business district snapped back after the flood, and the Anderson-Newcomb Company soon added three extra floors to accommodate the increasing trade. This 1926 photograph shows the addition and a good view of Third Avenue. Photographer unknown.

common type was the johnboat, a homemade flat-bottomed craft. It was slow but stable. Pulled alongside a porch roof, it was the means of escape if the water went still higher. Boats moving through the flooded streets gave some sense of security to families marooned on upper floors. Enterprising men made money from sight-seeing boat rides. Our whole family made the grand tour through the downtown business section. Everything went fine until a passing "gondolier" deliberately splashed us with his oar. Our man splashed back. My father was able to stop the battle before we were soaked. I thought it was fun. My mother and sisters thought otherwise.

On our boat ride we passed a barge loaded with horse-drawn fire engines, now minus the horses. For long after-

ward I assumed that unless a fire was kept going under the boiler there would have been a long delay in getting the pumper in action. Recently I learned that the engines were capable of developing a full head of steam in less than 15 minutes from the time the kindling was lit.

There was concern about public safety. Citizens, including my father, organized as volunteers to patrol the streets at night. I wondered what Papa might do with the big stick he carried. As it turned out, there was no upsurge of crime and no fires to report.

While the water was high my father carried me down the alley to the store on his shoulders. We climbed a ladder and went in through a balcony window. One of my uncles was guarding the building. I rode piggyback as we

sloshed around among the elevated counters and showcases on the main floor where the water had been 43 inches deep. How could I know that I was in training for the 1937 flood, when I would have to make the decisions at Anderson-Newcomb Department Store?

After the river returned to its banks, several days elapsed before the store basement was cleaned up. That delayed the start-up of the cash carrier cable system. Business was brisk when the store reopened. I was pressed into service to run tickets and cash between salespeople and a cashier.

My father came home with several bolts of washable silk prints that had slipped off a counter during the flood—the only merchandise that had gotten wet. My mother enlisted the help of Viney Anderson, a black woman, who washed and pressed the fabrics which were returned to the store and sold at half price. Their washability had been proven.

I do not remember particulars about a relief organization that made a survey of the needs of flood victims and

undertook the task of providing replacement of household furnishings. I do know that my father helped in this effort. On his first day out on the survey he was puzzled by the request at nearly every home for a "safe." In certain sections of the town that was the word for ice box.

As far as I know, all the relief work was done by volunteers and was funded locally. It was before the time of "disaster areas" and ready help from the federal government. On the other hand, in 1913 millions of dollars from the local economy were not flowing into the national treasury.

Citywide the urge was to clean up, dry out, help those in need and forget about the flood. Huntington was in its period of greatest growth. In our own case, we broke ground on a rear lot for a three-story addition to the Anderson-Newcomb building. Elsewhere all over downtown new buildings were under construction.

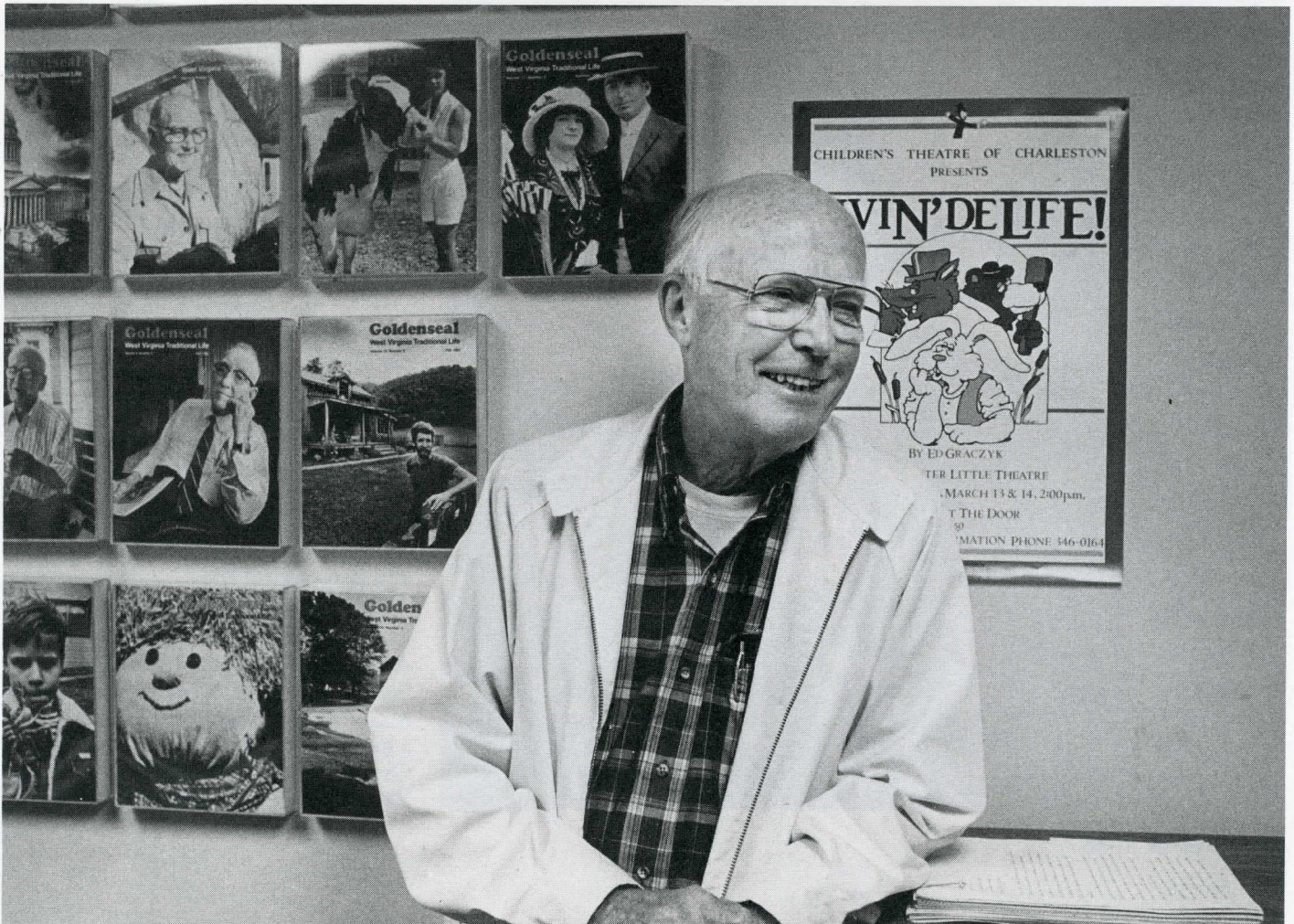
On my ninth birthday, May 5th, I was given a bicycle and minutes later gave up trying to ride it. With dismay I watched as my playmates rode around

our backyard on my bicycle. I myself couldn't manage it. For months I had been subject to occasional severe pain in my right hip. Dr. C. R. Enslow, our family physician, had labored over me to no avail.

When school was out I was taken to Cincinnati to have my hip examined and X-rayed by Dr. Albert Freiberg, a pioneer orthopedic surgeon then known as a "bone specialist." The diagnosis was tuberculosis of the bone. The standard treatment was to put the joint "at rest" in a plaster cast that circled my waist and enclosed my leg down to the knee. Perhaps my parents understood, but it was not made plain to me that the hip joint would never move again. Nor did I know that 42 months would pass before I was free of plaster casts, or that pain would persist until the joint was fused with a bone graft in 1931. I am told that today an infection of the kind I had can be cleared up in a few weeks with antibiotics.

So much for 1913. To say the least it was an interesting year for me and for the growing city of Huntington. ♣

Author Newcomb on a recent visit to the GOLDENSEAL office. He's an active octogenarian now, pursuing a busy retirement. Photo by Michael Keller.



Going 'Senging

By Jacqueline G. Goodwin
Photographs by Michael Keller

Ginseng growing wild in the Wirt County woods. The distinctive features are the five leaflets per prong and the cluster of berries in the center.



Splashes of warm, late-summer sunlight filter down through the trees as my mother-in-law, Isabelle Goodwin, leads a group of ginseng hunters down an old, long and winding logging road in rural Wirt County. Besides Isabelle, our party consists of Mai Wilson, Mai's son Buddy, Mike Ellison, photographer Mike Keller and me.

The plant we are after is properly known as *Panax quinquefolium*, a member of the Aralia family and closely related to its Asian cousin, *Panax ginseng*. A perennial that may reach a height of more than two feet, ginseng is commonly found throughout the Appalachian Mountains in shaded forests of mixed hardwoods, although it is not unusual to find a patch in a pine thicket. The slow-growing plant is most abundant on hillsides sloping north and east. Like all root plants, it prefers light, loose soil. There are plenty of such places in West Virginia, and mountaineers have been digging 'seng (pronounced "sang") for generations.

The plants are easily spotted by the experienced eye. At the top of the green stem "prongs," with three to five leaflets, branch off. In the center, a smaller stem grows, ending in a cluster of small greenish-yellow flowers which produce shiny berries that ripen in late summer. These crimson berries usually contain two flat seeds each. Ginseng roots sometimes resemble small white carrots, although all kinds of shapes can be found. These tuberous roots range in size from a half inch to upwards of 10 inches, depending on age and environmental conditions.

It is the ginseng's roots that are prized by Orientals who have valued the plant as a panacea and aphrodisiac for many centuries. The Chinese word "jin-chen" translates as "man-shaped root," and it is a fact that the Chinese prefer roots that resemble the human body. They believe that the more the root looks like a man the greater its value in banishing human weakness and prolonging life.

American Indians also put ginseng high on their list of wild plants possessing miraculous healing powers. Some called it "qarantequeu" or "little man," using it for every ailment from a headache to a stomachache. Like some Orientals, two tribes in particular, the Pawnees and the Mohawks, believed

the root to be a powerful aphrodisiac, or sexual stimulant.

In fact, the European discovery of American ginseng can be traced to a band of Mohawk Indians. After seeing a sketch of the Chinese ginseng plant, drawn by Jesuit missionary Joseph Francoise Lafitau, they led the priest to a similar plant not far from his cabin at the Suzanne Creek Mission on the St. Lawrence River near Montreal. The year was 1716.

After sending the plant to Paris where it was verified as a close relative to the Asian variety, Lafitau sent a shipment of North American roots to China, where they were readily accepted. Thus was the beginning of the ginseng trade.

Today the demand for ginseng far exceeds the supply. Because of the high prices paid for wild 'seng, some would-be hunters have resorted to the less strenuous method of cultivating ginseng just like other crops. Unfortunately, the root of a cultivated plant is valued at about one third of its wild counterpart, and it takes five to seven years to grow. In addition, during this long growing season, the cultivated 'seng is highly susceptible to a variety of disease, including wilt, blight and rot. As a result, many of those who yearned to make a fast buck growing ginseng have returned to the tried and true practice—gathering the wild plant.

The price is right nowadays, as Isabelle knows. "Right now, if I could have back all the 'seng I've sold for a little bit of nothing over the years, I could make quite a lot of money," explains the 64-year-old plant hunter as she takes us to a secret spot marked by a long stick and an empty pop can. "Here we are," she says, pointing to a steep hill which we quickly climb. At the top we watch as Buddy and Mike Ellison check out the area below.

"Let's see if you can spot any 'seng before we point it out," Mai Wilson instructs with a twinkle in her eye as she lets on that there is ginseng close by.

I am quick to learn that an inexperienced 'seng hunter like myself will have some difficulty spotting the plant in the woods. At this point anything green looks like the magic plant, even though I carry a leafy ginseng top for comparison. My face etched in confusion, I am given a few sympathetic

'Seng hunter Isabelle Goodwin does her digging with a screwdriver. She finds the plant by knowing what grows around it.



looks by both Mai and Isabelle as they scout the area themselves.

"It's harder when 'seng turns yellow because a lot of other plants are also turning yellow," Mai says. "Poison ivy looks a lot like 'seng when it starts to turn, but 'seng has more of a gold color than anything. Look for the red berries."

I follow her like a dutiful pup, all the time searching for those crimson berries which are supposed to be so easy to see. Tired and sweaty, I give up and sit down to rest a spell. Leaning against a large oak, I ask Isabelle to explain the tricks of the trade. She replies, "I can see one leaf and I know it is 'seng. My sister Wanda always called me 'Old Eagle Eye.' Said I could spot it a mile away. It's true. I can see it clear across a hollow up against a bank. All I have to see is the shape of the leaf and where it forks out."

"Izzie taught me and Buddy how to 'seng," Mai calls out from a flat below. "Taught me the same way she's showing you, with the ginseng top."

"You have to learn to recognize the things that grow around 'seng," Isabelle adds. She points out ferns, rattleroot, and three-leaf and five-leaf ivy. "These plants seem to always grow around 'seng. They must like the same soil."

As they talk both women remove the ginseng they have discovered. Armed with screwdrivers or "'seng hoes," they gently dig down into the ground, being careful not to harm the precious commodity. They compare roots. I am surprised that Isabelle's big four-prong plant has a much smaller root than Mai's three-prong. "Why is your root smaller?" I ask.

"My husband, Jim, has a theory about 'seng," she explains. "He believes if 'seng grows in a real rich ground the tops grow so fast that the roots don't. If you get a big top it'll be a small root, and vice versa."

"I've never found what you would call a 'big root,' though. But not too long ago I dug a root that looked ex-

actly like a man's body. It really looked like a human."

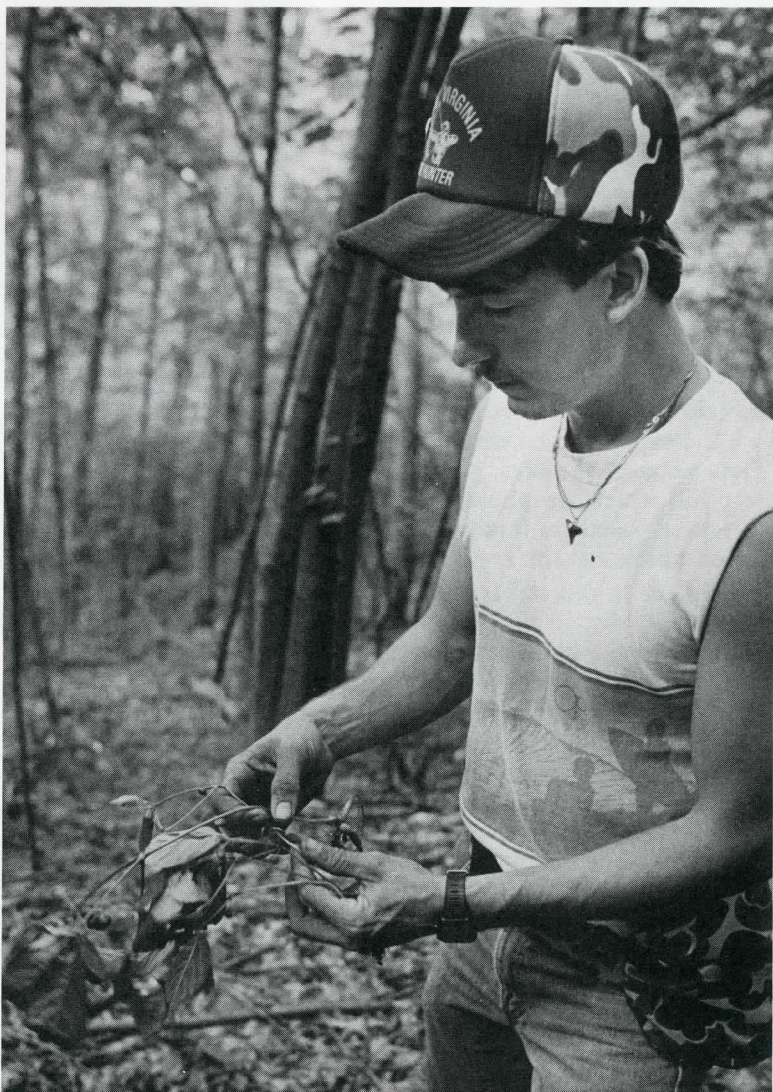
Like the good 'seng hunters they are, both Isabelle and Mai abide by the ginsenger's code of ethics. They only dig plants that are at least a three-prong and always return the seeds to the site where they found the plant. By following this procedure, ginseng will have a chance to perpetuate in a location where it is already established.

After half an hour or so my guides have exhausted the area and are ready to call it a day. Between the two of them, they have found a number of what they feel are "average sized" roots. On our way to our cars we are rejoined by Buddy Wilson and Mike Ellison, who proudly show off their own collection of prime roots. They too consider it a good day.

Back at Isabelle's home I listen as she explains the proper way of cleaning and drying the fresh roots. "I wash them right away. I don't scrub them because they say it does something to the roots. As soon as I'm done I lay

Left: Mai Wilson with the results of a half-hour of ginseng digging.

Right: Buddy Wilson is a young outdoorsman who learned 'senging from his mother and Isabelle Goodwin.



them out on a flat pan and let the air dry them. After my 'seng is dried I put it in a paper bag because if you put it in plastic the roots will mold." It takes about five pounds of green roots to make a pound of marketable dried roots.

"Just what is a pound of 'seng going for these days?" I ask Isabelle.

"Right now most dealers are paying about \$130 a pound. But you have to be careful. Shop around. Last year I received \$180 a pound. I called around and one dealer in Parkersburg quoted me \$128. Then I called a man in Creston. He was paying \$130. Finally I sold it to a man in Ritchie County for \$180.

"Many people don't trust the dealer," Isabelle continues. "Like a lot of people around here, I usually get my 'seng weighed at one of the grocery stores before I sell it. In this way I am sure of my roots' weight before I complete the deal. One time the man at the market weighed it an ounce less than the dealer. Another time the dealer weighed my roots two ounces less

than the man in the grocery store. But the most money I received in one year was \$700. It was selling for about \$100 a pound that year. Sold it to old man Lott."

Every once in a while a ginseng digger will stumble upon an exceptionally large find. Jim and Isabelle Goodwin are no exception. "About eight years ago we were 'senging and we found a couple of big patches about 50 feet apart. There were 296 plants in one and about 163 in the other," she tells me.

Jim enters the room and quickly gets into the conversation. "I went back out there about two years ago and couldn't find a thing. It was so brushy it was hard getting through. A skunk followed me all over the hillside. For what reason I don't know," Jim adds, laughing.

Isabelle has had to contend with more dangerous creatures. She reveals she has killed a total of seven rattlesnakes—48 inches being the biggest—since she started to 'seng. "The first

one I killed, I walked up on it. My sister-in-law, Nellie, was with me. I said, 'Nellie, I can't move. Bring me a rock.' She had already started to walk down the hill. The snake's mouth was open and it started rattling. She brought me a large rock and I just dropped it on the snake's head.

"The next one I killed was laying right on the road. It had a ground squirrel in its mouth. I killed the snake and let the little thing loose. The only thing I could find to kill it with was a large clump of hard, red clay mud. I clobbered it."

Snakes aren't the only creatures that Isabelle has had to fend off while 'senging. Dogs have been especially troublesome. "Down Flint Run one time we had two kids with us," she recalls. "All at once we heard some dogs coming. It sounded like a dozen. We got those kids up a pine tree. The owners came a-running and got the dogs. They had heard us hollering."

Isabelle has been treed herself. "I was about two flats above her one time," Jim recalls. "All at once I heard dogs a-hollering and I ran as fast as I could to where I thought she was. They were coming to her. But she had climbed a tree and when I got there they had stopped."

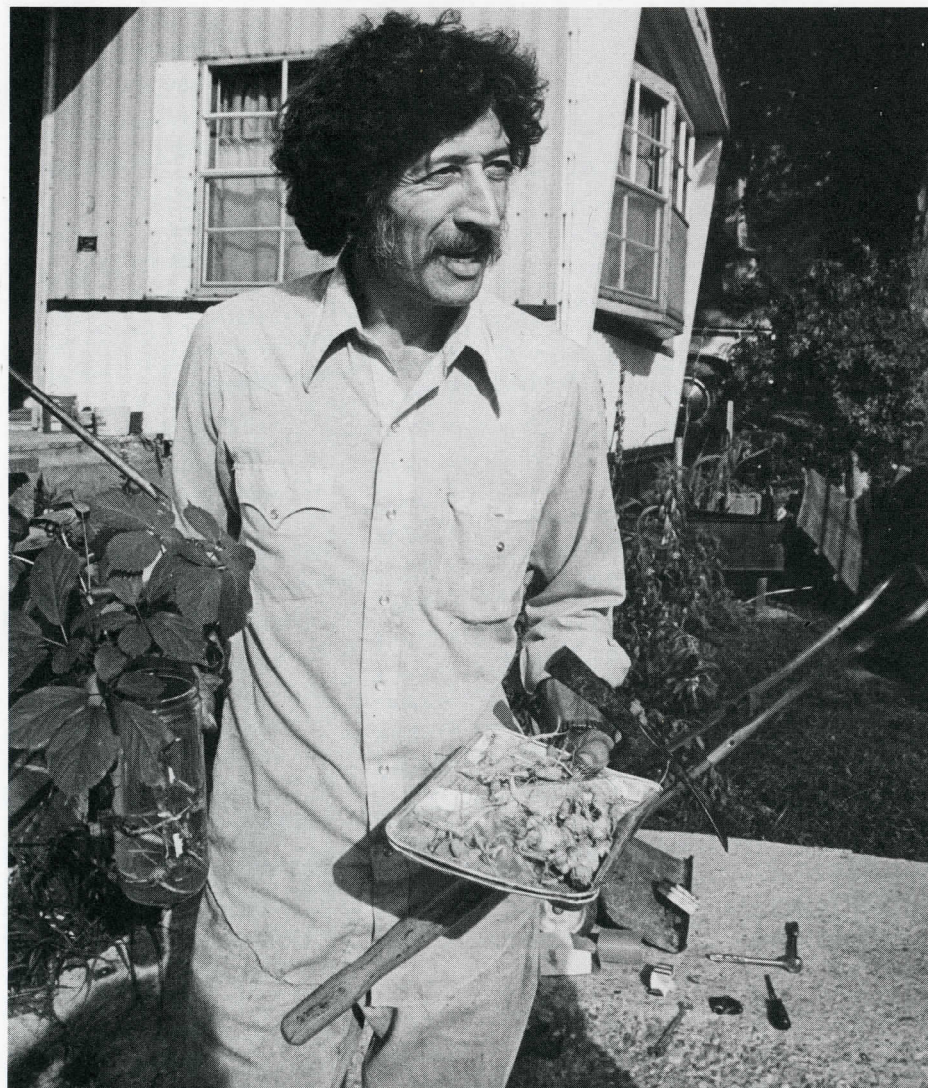
To both Jim and Isabelle, skunks, snakes and dogs can definitely be a nuisance when 'senging, but in their view they aren't half as bad as the August 15 to November 30 legal digging season that state regulations impose. Both husband and wife think that the allowed time continues too far in the wrong direction, well beyond the natural digging season. They do not hesitate to air their feelings.

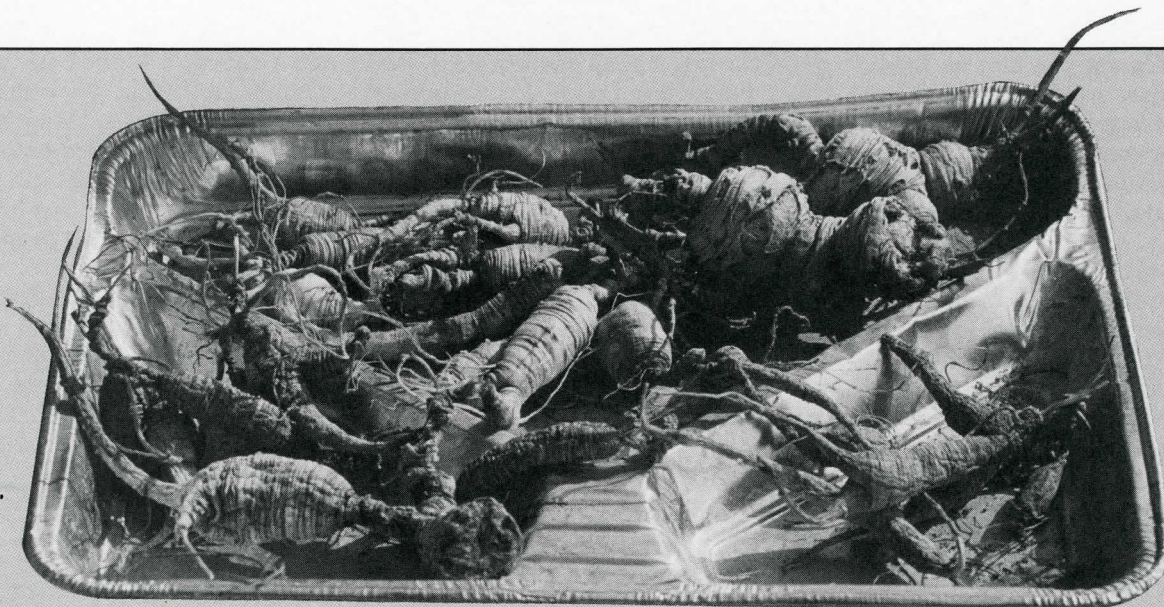
"There's no way a person can hunt ginseng the 30th of November. There's nothing there. The first big frost knocks it down. You can't even find it November first let alone the 30th of November," says Isabelle. "Even by the middle of October there isn't very much showing," adds Jim. "It's the stupidest law there is."

The Goodwins are not the only family around Elizabeth that enjoy hunting ginseng. Bob McFee and his father, Warren, have been ginsenging for years and once the younger McFee settled himself behind his kitchen table, he freely shared his knowledge and experience.

"My dad taught me to 'seng. He's

Bob McFee with ginseng plant and roots. He swears by the specialized 'seng hoe in his left hand.





Digging It Right

Ginseng has been harvested in the mountains of West Virginia for centuries. Long known for its medicinal benefits, it is thought to be effective in the treatment of cancer, rheumatism, diabetes, sexual impotency, stress and aging. It is also used as an ingredient in hair and skin products and soft drinks. American use has increased with the natural foods movement, but Mountain State ginseng is still mostly exported to the Orient.

West Virginia ginseng is all of the American ginseng species, technically known as *Panax quinquefolius*. The five-leaved perennial herb thrives in the moderate climate of forests throughout our state. The mature plant usually grows from eight to 20 inches tall, and the spindle-shaped root is generally about two to four inches long and one to two inches thick. The root is aromatic and has a bitter-sweet taste. The stem sprouts several clusters of about five leaves each, with a small group of yellow-green flowers in the center. These produce one to three seeded red berries in late summer.

Ginseng is sold to dealers, who in turn sell it to agents who export the dried roots, sometimes pressed into tablets, to Asiatic countries, especially Hong Kong. Dealers who purchase ginseng gathered in West Virginia are required by state law

to register each year with the Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, dealers must submit an Export Certificate Report to the DNR, plus the Ginseng Dealers Report every 30 days. The reports provide information on the amount of wild, native ginseng bought or sold in the state.

This close supervision is part of the effort to ensure the survival of wild ginseng. At one time, the herb was abundant throughout the eastern United States. As ginseng and many other wild plants and animals became rarer, concerned countries formed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, which placed ginseng on its three original lists of wild plants to be protected.

Because of the danger of extinction, state regulations governing the gathering, replanting and exportation of ginseng are updated yearly and strictly enforced. There are ways to gather ginseng productively and still maintain a balance of the species by replanting.

To dig ginseng properly, the Department of Natural Resources recommends using a digging fork about one foot wide. Dig around the stem carefully, for unharmed roots bring better prices. Never uproot imma-

ture ginseng, which will not replace itself. Indications of a mature plant are red berries and several "prongs," or leaf clusters.

The reseedling of wild ginseng is required. After the plant is pulled from the ground, squeeze the berries to break the pulp. Plant the seeds at least 12 inches apart and about one-and-a-half inches deep. Cover with dirt and mulch with dried leaves, moss or other forest litter. The mulch helps keep the soil moist and loose, prevents weeds from growing and protects against freezing during the two years it takes for ginseng seeds to germinate and the four to five years to flower and seed.

After the ginseng is gathered and the seeds have been replanted, dust the dirt off the plant and set aside for several days until the root is wilted. Gently wash the root and air dry.

The legal collecting season for ginseng in West Virginia runs from August 15 through November 30. Possession of green 'ginseng between January 1 and July 31 of each year is illegal.

The ginseng harvest is now a million-dollar industry in West Virginia, and the DNR notes that the regulations are meant to protect the important wild crop. GOLDEN-SEAL readers wishing to dig ginseng during the 1986 season may obtain further information from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, State Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.



'Senging is a handed-down skill for most West Virginians. Here Bob gives credit to the man who taught him, father Warren McFee.

an oldtimer, but he still ginsengs too. We went out yesterday evening for a little bit. He didn't find very much, but a handful. I found the most, but I was in the right place. He just wasn't in the best spot. A couple of those he found were yellow, and some of them the leaves were beginning to fall off."

I ask Bob if he uses the ginseng he finds for medicinal purposes, and the storyteller in him appears. "I've chewed on the roots. They're good for arthritis and rheumatism. Here, taste one." He breaks apart a small section and hands it to me. I put it in my mouth and experience a taste reminiscent of one from my childhood. "See? It tastes like licorice. Kind of bitter and kind of sweet," he says, as I nod my head in agreement.

Unlike Isabelle, who agrees with the common belief that the best side of a hill to find ginseng is the north, but who admits to having found some "awfully good 'seng" on the east, Bob definitely prefers the east hillside. "The east side is where I usually find 'seng," he affirms. "I think it grows better there. It's where the sun comes up early and

hits the plant first. But I'll hunt both sides. I just prefer the east."

Bob's cleaning procedure also differs from Isabelle's. "Most times I use a toothbrush on the roots. I try to keep my roots pretty well clean. It takes all the dirt off and they look a lot better, too."

Whereas Isabelle relies on a simple screwdriver to help dig 'seng, Bob employs a more elaborate tool. He takes pleasure and pride in describing this unique object. "I use a 'seng hoe," he says. "It is made from a mountain climber's pick. There was only six of these made around here in Wirt County. My dad made mine about 20 years ago. I have the original one. You can't buy one like this in a hardware store. I think it works much better than a screwdriver."

However, there is one subject that the McFees and the Goodwins completely agree upon—the legal digging season. Like Jim and Isabelle, Bob is quite adamant about the law and eagerly voiced his opinion. "I don't think there should be a season. Many people hunt it out of season anyway. It's a waste of time to regulate it."

Although conservation experts fear that ginseng is getting scarcer all the time, it has not diminished the enthusiasm both Isabelle and Bob have for their profitable hobby. Bob resents the fact that the blame is put on the 'seng hunter's shoulders. "The government thinks the people who hunt 'seng are making it become extinct. But I'll tell you who is making it go extinct. It's the pulp and paper companies. They're the ones who are endangering it. These companies are cutting down all the hardwoods, which kill the 'seng. Out in the open it can't live—it can't grow. It needs shade."

Bob McFee needs the shade, too, when the time of year comes for him to get out in the woods with his handed-down 'seng hoe. That was clear from the time I'd spent as his guest, and I'd pretty much figured out the answer to my final question before I asked it. "Would you ever stop ginsenging?" I inquired.

"My dad 'senged and his dad 'senged and I'll continue to 'seng," he told me. "I enjoy getting out in the woods too much to quit." ♦



The Rock Springs Park Main Pavilion as it appeared in 1897. A few loafers enjoy the shade of the train siding. Photographer unknown.

Rock Springs Park

A Panhandle Playground

By Susan M. Weaver

As traffic on Route 30 speeds through the uppermost county of West Virginia toward the new Jennings Randolph Bridge across the Ohio River, it is unlikely that many of the travelers are aware that the ribbons of concrete are laid across the site of once-bustling Rock Springs Park. Children's laughter, music from the carousel's Wurlitzer organ, twinkling lights, multicolored floral gardens and appetizing smells emanating from concession stands once enlivened the place where the big road runs now. Those were the sights, sounds and smells of Rock Springs Park at the turn of the century.

The small Hancock County town of Chester was home to Rock Springs, once the most popular picnic ground and amusement park in the tri-state area. The history of the resort began in the 1880's, when the lush valley of shade trees was known as Rock Springs Grove. The focal point of this "cool and in every way inviting retreat" was a spring which "flowed from a solid wall of rock." Patsy Kernan, wharf-master in nearby East Liverpool, Ohio, leased the property and arranged for the ferryboat *Ollie Neville* to carry picnickers across the Ohio River.

"Popular, pushing, prudent Patsy Kernan proposes to make Rock Springs

Park a delightful place," stated a local newspaper editor at the time. Indeed Kernan did. He erected sheds to house the picnic tables and built a platform large enough to accommodate 15 sets of dancers. Over the next several years he continued to improve the grounds by adding a lunchroom, baseball diamond, roller rink, and merry-go-round. A long history of outings by church, school, business, and fraternal groups began at this time. In 1893, Patsy relinquished his management of the resort and was succeeded by L. J. McGhie, who operated the park with little change for the next three years.

During the following decade, Rock

Springs Park experienced its greatest period of growth. The events which resulted in the commercial development of the park began in 1893 when J. E. McDonald, an East Liverpool attorney, purchased the Marks' farm, land which included Rock Springs Park. McDonald announced plans for the erection of a bridge between Chester and East Liverpool. The East Liverpool Bridge Company (chartered in West Virginia) began surveying the area and securing stock subscriptions. The national financial panic of 1893 curtailed the project until 1896, when construction finally began. The Chester Bridge officially opened to the public on December 31, 1896, a date which signaled the beginning of the end for Patsy Kernan's ferryboat.

As work proceeded on the bridge, McDonald and his business partners turned their attentions to the development of the 475 acres of land which they owned. The direct result was the establishment of the Chester Land Company. Part of the company's plans called for the enlargement and development of Rock Springs Park. McDonald secured a 25-year franchise to build and operate a streetcar line over the new bridge, to make the park and the rapidly developing town of Chester more accessible to the public. On May 26th, 1897, the first trolley of the Chester and East Liverpool Street Railway Company crossed the bridge and traveled to the end of the line. It was not coincidental that the trolley tracks ended at the entrance to Rock Springs Park. Just a few days later, on Memorial Day, thousands of people attended Rock Spring's official opening. The pleasure-seekers found three new roller coasters and a beautiful dance pavilion capable of accommodating 5,000.

Over the next 10 years, through the leadership and financial support of men such as McDonald and his successor, C. A. Smith, Rock Springs Park grew to become the showcase of the area. In its peak years, the park employed 350 workers during the summer season, with attendance reaching as high as 20,000 a day. These visitors provided a lucrative market to vendors of colorful postcard views of the park. These cards were sent with greetings to friends and relatives, or kept as souvenirs of the day's fun. Fortunately many of these views have been left behind and serve

The Evening Review Outing

Monday, August 15, 1910

Fill out the coupon below and upon presentation at the Evening Review counting room, 407 Washington Street, Thursday morning, August 15, by any member of the family, the required number of street car tickets for the children of the family, good over the East Liverpool Traction company, will be furnished.

No street car tickets are required for children under five years of age. If you are not a subscriber for the Evening Review, buy a copy of any news stand, or better still leave an order for a week's trial subscription. Out-of-town children will be supplied with street car tickets on the train, or by mail on request.

Tickets for out-of-town children can be secured at the Evening Review counting room, 407 Washington street; F. L. Fisher, grocery, West End; Mulheim & Keenan News Stand, East End; Wm. Hocking, Jr., Cigar Store, Chester; Henry Wooster's Grocery, West End, Wellsville; Fuller's Book Store, Main street, Wellsville.

Evening Review Outing Coupon

Monday, August 15th, 1910

Number of children between 5 and 16 years

Parents' Name

Residence

SPECIAL NOTICE—The Evening Review desires to furnish street car tickets to every child in East Liverpool, Wellsville, Newell and Chester, W. Va., and all children residing outside of these cities. Children's street car tickets will not be good returning from park until after 4 p. m. on day of picnic.

Evening Review Clipping

Organized excursions were big business for Rock Springs Park. In 1910 the East Liverpool *Evening Review*, across the river in Ohio, offered free streetcar transportation for children presenting a newspaper clipping.

as an excellent visual record of the park's facilities and landscaping.

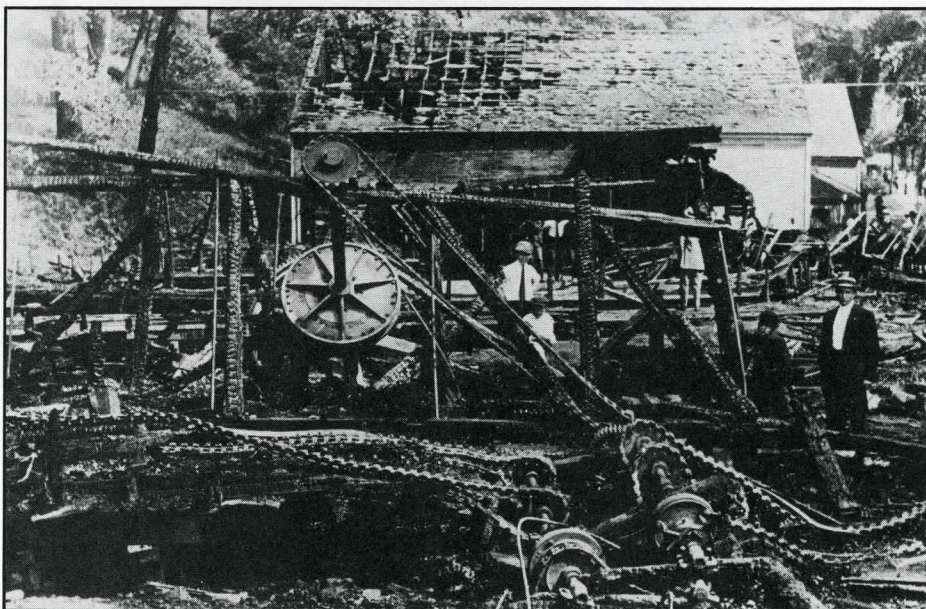
Rock Springs Park flourished in the early 1900's because of a newly-built bridge and trolley system. Therefore, it is ironic that the park's recent demise was also brought about by plans for a new bridge and improved transportation. But the Rock Springs Park purchased by the West Virginia Department of Highways in 1974 was a mere shadow of the grand resort it had

been in its youth. The park had been dealt a severe blow in 1912, when the Central Passenger Association rescinded all Pennsylvania Railroad excursion business. The cost difference between the excursion rate and the regular rate made a trip to the park prohibitively expensive. For example, the excursion rate from Pittsburgh to Chester was 55 cents, compared to the regular rate of \$2.50. Local civic and trade organizations combined to fight the ruling as more and more outings previously scheduled for the summer were cancelled. An editorial in the *East Liverpool Review* sheds some light on the underlying motive in this loyal support by noting that "the excursion crowds never failed to leave a great deal of money in the coffers of local merchants."

Representatives of Rock Springs Park and other organizations affected by the ruling appealed to the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington. In July of 1913 the ICC "ruled against picnickers" by stating that it did not have the power to compel the railroads to restore the old rate. At the close of the 1913 summer season, the Rock Springs management announced "the poorest season the park had ever experienced in a financial way."

The Pennsylvania Railroad ruling did not defeat Rock Springs Park, but it did stunt its further development. The park struggled along, depending

Fire ravaged the Park's popular Old Mill in June 1915, bringing a tragic end to a school outing. This photo shows tangled machinery left in the wreckage. Photographer unknown.



heavily on the streetcar line to deliver local patrons. In 1925 C. C. McDonald, former manager of Summit Beach Park in Akron, Ohio, leased Rock Springs. "I plan to bring the park back in popularity and in improvements to the days when it was the popular playground and outing spot in West Virginia," he announced. He began by ordering 600 gallons of yellow and white paint and hiring a landscape gardener to restore the grounds. The park's scenic railway was replaced by a modern roller coaster. The dance pavilion was improved and a small zoo added.

These steps were taken in a general attempt to elevate the park to its former status. For a while, things looked good. In 1929 the Pennsylvania Railroad restored excursion rates and once again trainloads of tourists frequented the day resort. Riverboat excursions

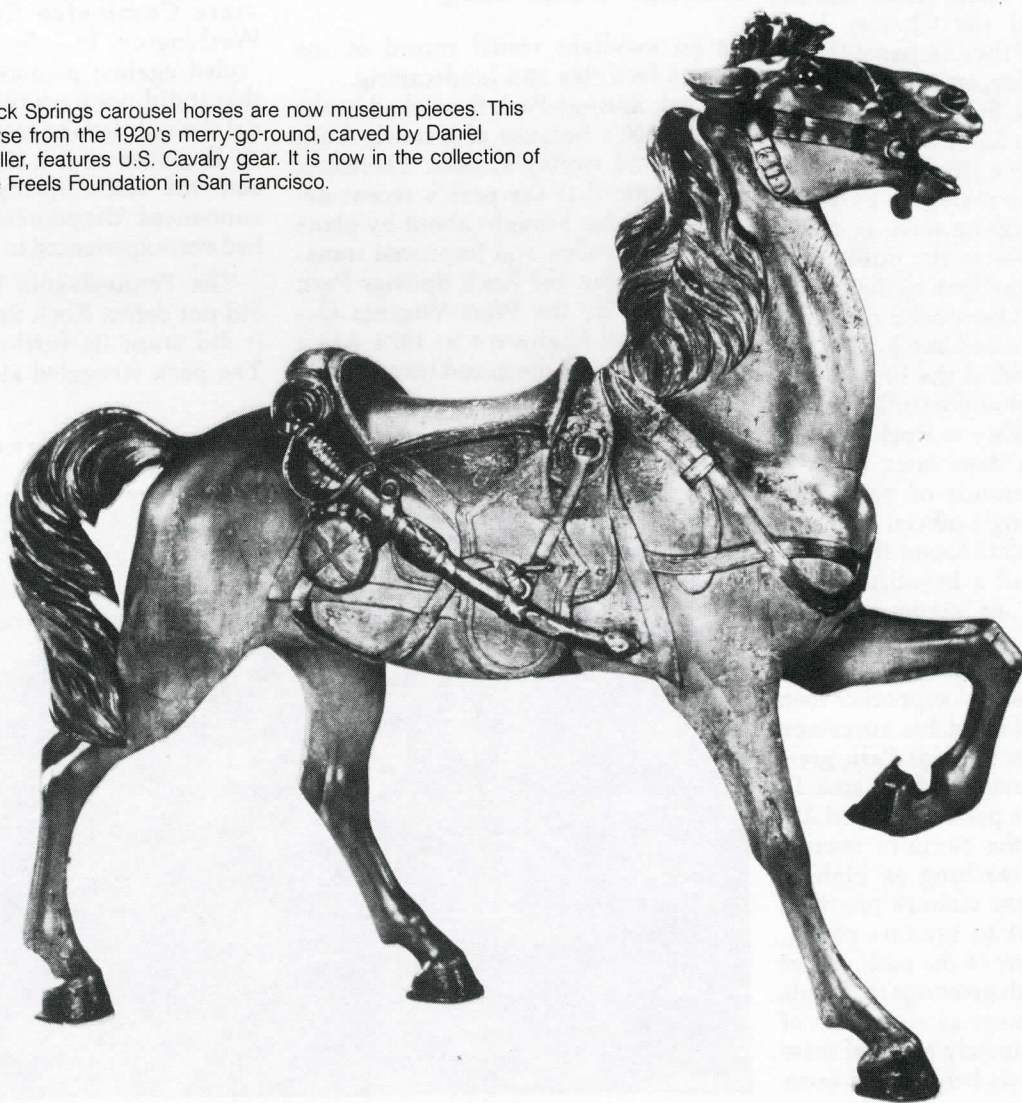
again became a popular means of transportation to Rock Springs. The steamer *Washington* brought children from river towns for their annual school picnics. Rock Springs Park was no longer queen of amusement parks, but still certainly a member of the royal family.

In 1950 the 45-acre park was purchased by Robert and Virginia Hand, the son-in-law and daughter of C. C. McDonald. Realizing they could not compete with larger amusement parks of the time, the Hands resigned themselves to the fulfillment of the recreational needs of a strictly local clientele. For 20 years Rock Springs led a prosperous but humble life before closing on Memorial Day of 1970. At a public auction in 1974, the 21 remaining structures were sold for \$5,200. The park was stripped of all buildings

within 45 days and the road-building earth movers and steamrollers soon began to arrive.

When the Department of Highways leveled the park to create approaches to the Randolph Bridge, it did leave a few clues in the surrounding landscape. The log cabin, the former residence of the Hands, is now privately owned. It was moved a short distance from its original site and overlooks the new highway. A Rock Springs Memorial Park has been established by the city of Chester on an unused fragment of Highway Department land. The one feature of the park which has existed for as long as anyone can remember still remains. But even the famous spring which "flowed from a solid wall of rock" has now been reduced to a mere trickle in the basin between the roads. ♣

Rock Springs carousel horses are now museum pieces. This horse from the 1920's merry-go-round, carved by Daniel Muller, features U.S. Cavalry gear. It is now in the collection of the Freels Foundation in San Francisco.





Rock Springs Souvenirs: Postcards of the Park

The Rock Springs. The heart of the resort was the famous rock spring. Here, on a hot summer afternoon, tourists could pause for a cool and refreshing drink. Local legend states that George Washington and his men took advantage of the crystal-clear drinking water on one of their trips down the nearby Ohio River. Perhaps the spring is best described in the words of a tourist to her family in Ohio, "Flows like your Lisbon pump—but never needs pumping."



Flower Beds. The natural beauty of Rock Springs Park was enhanced with formal gardens, fountains and lily ponds. The first sign of approaching summer was gardeners mowing, planting and trimming, while other workers prepared the buildings by applying a fresh coat of paint to each. In 1906 the park management announced that "a carload of flowers" and 30,000 shrubs were being planted throughout the grounds.



Park Entrance. Postcards were popular travel souvenirs at the turn of the century, just as they are today, and Rock Springs Park visitors bought them by the thousands. A popular view was of the grand park entrance, with its massive double gates and ornate trim. Rock Springs was a streetcar park and the tracks ran right to the door.

The Old Mill. On June 6, 1915, the annual Chester and Newell, West Virginia, and East Liverpool and Wells-ville, Ohio, combined school picnic with 16,000 in attendance was brought to a tragic end. Shortly after 7:00 p.m. a fire broke out in the Old Mill which resulted in the death of four students. The Old Mill had been built in 1903. Inside were seven rooms, each depicting a different historical scene. Large boats zigzagged through the rooms in a six-foot-wide trough over 1,500 feet in length.

The evening of the fire, bystanders stated that flames suddenly sprang out of the entrance. "While the rescue work was going on, thousands of people crowded about the place," the newspaper reported. "Scores of women fainted and pandemonium reigned in the red glare of the flames which quickly burst through the lightly constructed building." Word spread throughout Chester and neighboring towns, followed by panic as parents feared for the lives of their offspring. Parental inquiries caused "one of the

worst cases in the history of Bell telephone," according to the paper. "The extra calls ran into the thousands."

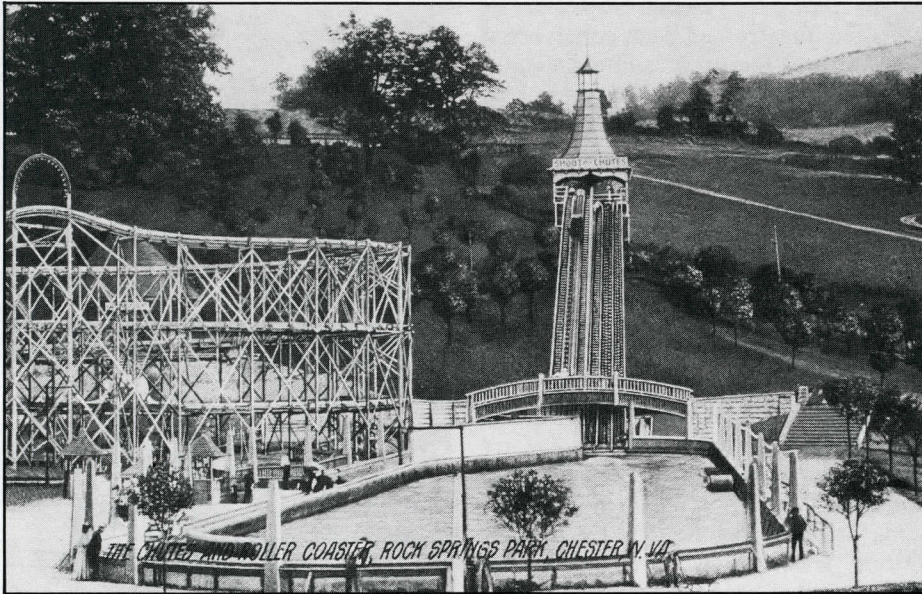
The Chester and East Liverpool fire departments answered the alarm, but the Old Mill was completely destroyed. The cause of the fire was never determined, although park owner C. A. Smith attributed it to a discarded cigarette. Spectators, however, stated that they believed the dynamo was the source of the fire. Three days later workers burned and cleared what remained of the building.

The Old Mill had been one of the most popular attractions at Rock Springs Park. In later years the decline of the park was attributed not only to the elimination of railroad excursions but to the loss of the Old Mill.



The World's Greatest Scenic Railway was a gravity operated ride a mile long. Although the attraction cost \$35,000 to build, C. A. Smith claimed the railway paid for itself in its first year of operation, 1906. It is quite likely that either Smith's claim or the construction cost was an exaggeration, since the price of a ride was only a nickel.





The **Shoot-the-Chutes** was added to the park in 1906 at a cost of \$20,000. The 12 boats were pulled to the top of the chute by a chain trolley operated by a 65-horsepower electric motor. From there each boat shot down the 700-foot slide and skipped across a 200-foot cement pool. Similar attractions were featured in many amusement parks of the period. The Rock Springs roller coaster is located to the left in this view.



1897 Carousel and Later Carousel House. The showpiece of any amusement park was its carousel. Patsy Kernan operated a merry-go-round in Rock Springs Park in the early 1890's. It was replaced in 1897 by the carousel shown here. In 1906 the park purchased yet another model and shipped the old one to Mexico. To house the new Coney Island-style carousel, the Finley Brothers Construction Company of Chester built a 65-foot-high octagonal building with a 90-foot diameter.

The park's final carousel, replacing the Coney Island model, arrived in the mid-1920's. This machine (not shown) was produced in the Dentzel factory in Philadelphia, where the 48 Arabian horses were artistically carved by Daniel Muller. The historically accurate gear of the U.S. Cavalry adorned some of the horses. This last merry-go-round is now in the collection of the Freels Foundation in San Francisco, a non-profit organization for the preservation of carousels. Foundation President Larry Freels says it is one of the finest in the nation.



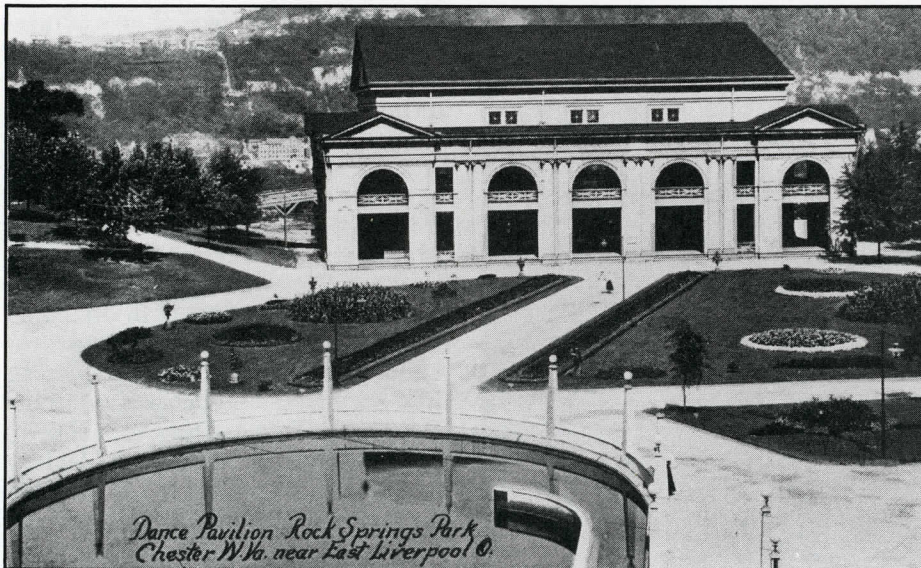
Rock Springs Park, W. Va. The Flower Gardens.

1906 Main Pavilion and Summer Theatre. The popularity of dancing at the turn of the century was reflected in the size and elegance of Rock Springs Park's dance pavilions. The original Main Pavilion, constructed in 1897 by J. E. McDonald, was razed in 1905 to make room for the dance hall pictured here. This new structure, called the Casino, was built at a cost of \$30,000 and opened on April 21, 1906. The first floor featured a six-alley bowling court, billiard hall, Japanese tea garden, shooting gallery, toilets, barbershop, and park offices. The second floor was devoted entirely to dancing. The 18,000-square-foot white maple dance floor could accommodate 750 couples.

In 1914, in the first of several devastating fires at Rock Springs Park, the Casino was destroyed. The following season the park management convert-

ed the Summer Theatre into a dance hall. The theatre had been constructed in 1903 and featured "refined vaudeville" acts for an admission fee of 20 cents. It suffered the same fate as the Casino in a 1917 fire which also destroyed the bathhouse and icehouse.

Construction began almost immediately on a new dance hall (not shown) on the same site as the first two pavilions. This building was improved and enlarged in 1927 and christened Virginia Gardens in honor of Virginia McDonald Hand, daughter of park manager C. C. McDonald. During the Big Band era, entertainers such as Guy Lombardo, Harry James, Stan Kenton, and Paul Whiteman performed at Virginia Gardens. In June 1974 a gala "Last Dance" was held here, attracting over a thousand people who wished to bid farewell to the historic park.



Lake. In 1900 C. A. Smith purchased a controlling interest in Rock Springs Park and began improving the grounds at a phenomenal rate. Perhaps the grandest project in terms of the money spent—a full \$50,000—and size was the creation of an artificial lake. The lake covered three and a half acres and was used for boating in the summer and ice skating in the winter. The south end of the lake featured this large is-

This panoramic view of Rock Springs Park encompasses many of the major attractions of the resort. They are (left to right) the baseball diamond and grandstand, the Scenic Railway, the Casino (background), the Shoot-The-Chutes (foreground), and the Leap-The-Dips roller coaster. The two major industries of Chester can be seen in the upper corners of the postcard. The smoke stacks of the American Sheet and Tin Mill can be seen on the left, and on the right are the bottle kilns of the Taylor, Smith, and Taylor Pottery Company.

We're grateful to Michael Bertheaud, Gary Sinick and the Pete Arner family for supplying some of the postcards and photographs of Rock Springs Park.



Copyright 1906, Ross Studio, N. Y.
P. G. 4552a The Lake,
Rock Springs Park, Chester, W. Va.

land, surrounded by a 40-foot lagoon.

Supposedly, when the lake was created the water was to be no deeper than three feet. The plans required a lattice work to be installed in any deeper spot, to prevent drownings. Nonetheless there were several drownings, suggesting that the lattice was never constructed.

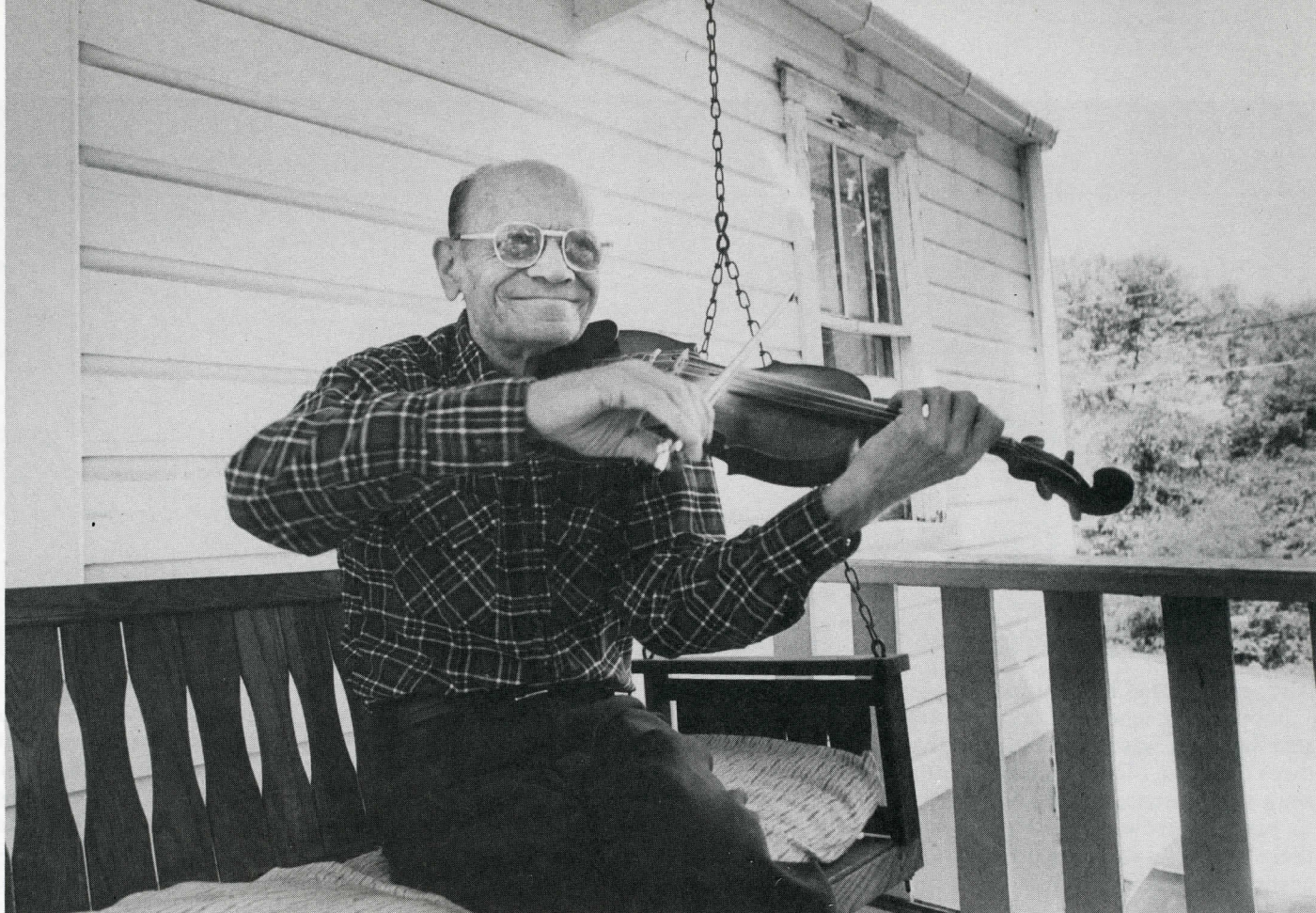
On the northeast shore of the lake a swimming pool and bathhouse were

built. The pool was 170 feet long and had a maximum depth of nine feet. During 1904, the first summer of the pool's use, the *East Liverpool Tribune* reported that "colored picnickers" were prohibited from using the pool. The newspaper noted that black visitors were permitted to swim in the lake and that all other Rock Springs amusements were available to them.

In winter the lake served a purpose

besides recreation. Laborers were hired, usually in January, to harvest ice from the frozen surface. Chutes were built from the lake's edge to the Summer Theatre. Workers cut the ice into large blocks and slid them down the chutes to be packed in sawdust in the theatre's basement. In the summer this ice was used to manufacture and preserve ice cream for the park's numerous refreshment stands.





Mike Humphreys fiddling on his back porch in South Charleston on a sunny day last fall.

"I Just Use a Bow"

Oldtime Fiddler Mike Humphreys

By Robert Spence

Photographs by Michael Keller

Mike Humphreys really didn't expect anyone to show up last spring to talk with him about his life and music. "When you called I just thought it was one of my friends playing a joke," he said. "But come on in and I'll be glad to tell you about it."

That was the modest introduction to a West Virginia fiddler who is considered one of the best who ever lived. Mike is a quiet man whose music is so polished that it is a delight to hear him play. "He plays a style that is absolutely pure, one that leaves nothing out," says Bobby Taylor, a friend and

admirer of Mike's. "He has all the skills to be a perfect fiddler." Bobby knows, for he is a championship fiddler himself.

Humphreys, who lives in South Charleston, turned 66 years old this past summer, and was honored with the Vandalia Award at the Vandalia Gathering last Memorial Day weekend. His fiddling has been a vital contribution to mountain music for 40 years, despite his decision not to seek a recording career.

That choice may be the most surprising thing about Mike, because it

is clear that his fiddling has been cherished by many of the most knowledgeable men and women who listen to the music. Bill Monroe, for example, one of the creators of bluegrass music, invited Mike to be in his band. Clark Kessinger, the legendary West Virginia fiddler, considered Humphreys a most formidable rival in fiddling contests all across the Appalachian region.

Yet Mike always looked at music as a pleasure instead of something to use for a livelihood. "God gave him this wonderful gift, and he used it to create

happiness for himself and his friends," Mike's daughter, Judy Hodges, says. "He was always glad to just go and play the fiddle for anyone who wanted him to."

Another interesting turn in Mike's character is his ability to adapt his talent to many forms of entertainment. Though he is especially gifted in traditional music, he is one of the few fiddlers who appreciates the three major types of rural music. He loves bluegrass as well as traditional tunes, and he plays country music as well as either. He is a fiddler who is happy to play backup to any of the styles. His career has moved freely from playing in bands to playing at radio stations to playing at festivals.

Mike's reputation nowadays is that of a man who used his talents without feeling that he needed to show off his ego or prove that he is superior to anyone. For that reason it was all the more worthwhile to spend a couple of days talking about his life and documenting his ability to create fine music.

Mike Humphreys' story began in Elkview, Kanawha County, where he was born on May 25, 1919. Both parents were musicians and his mother, in particular, was considered one of the best fiddlers in their community. "I was born half a Taylor," Mike says while talking about his mother's family. "All of the Taylors could make music.

my father's side was turned that way, too, and I got music going and coming. So there was a time when I could swing a bow."

Felix Asbury Humphreys, Mike's grandfather, also had the talent and evidently used it for fun with his own family. "He used his fiddle to get his children out of bed in the morning to work on the farm," Mike says. "He'd go around playing that fiddle at four o'clock in the morning to get them out and started working, which they did from daylight till dark." The older man made music at other times as well, Mike adds. "I can remember going to see him and we'd know he was getting ready to play his fiddle when we'd hear his foot patting as he sat in a rocker on his porch."

With those examples so close at hand, Mike's interest in music began early in his life. He recalls that his father kept a farm in Kanawha County and also worked part-time for what was



The "Mountain Melody Boys," photographed at WCHS in Charleston. Humphreys is at the right rear. Photographer and date unknown.

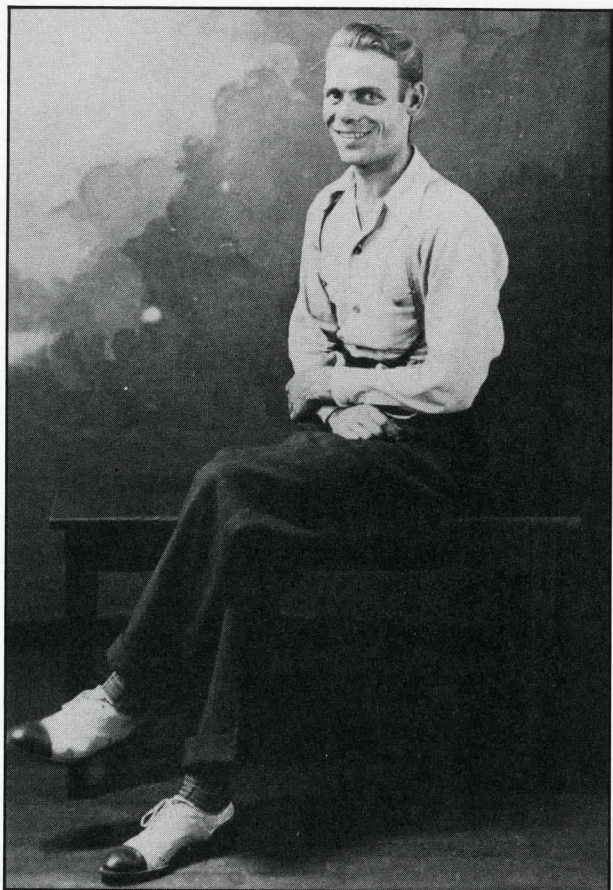
then the United Fuel Gas Company and now is Mountaineer Gas. The young people of the community provided their own amusement, which many times included music and dancing.

"Elkview was just a wide place in the road in the '20's and '30's," Mike adds. "So we played a lot of music at home when we were kids growing up. Of course, we'd go to the beanstringings and peach-peelings and always had a party and dance. Those were back in some good days."

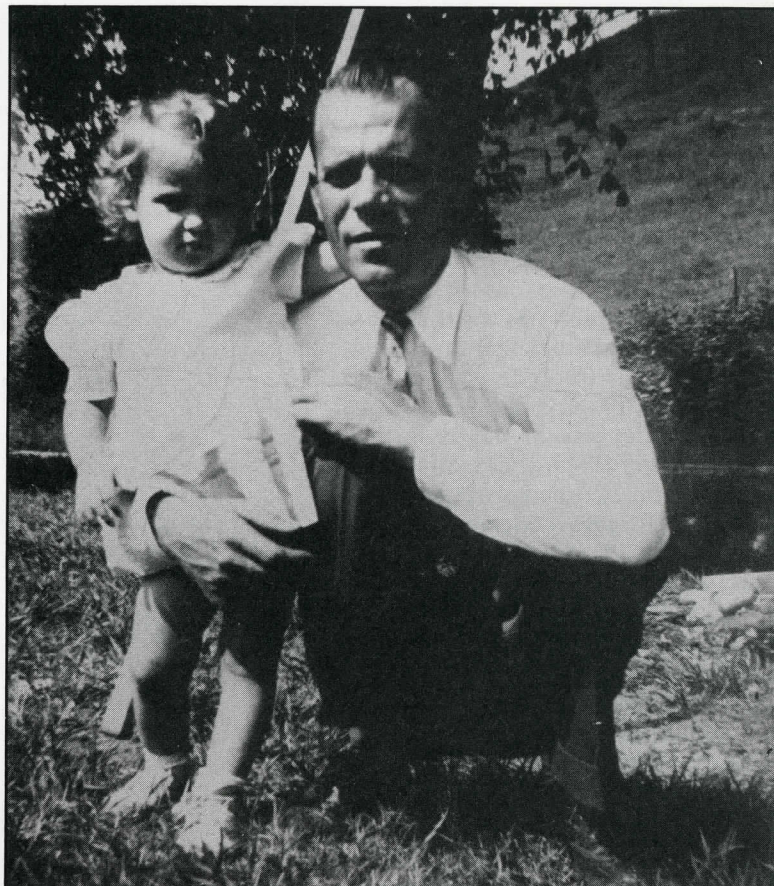
Mike recalls that those also were the

years when radio was beginning to break up the isolation of rural areas and that soon he began hearing good music that way. It wasn't long before he heard the fiddling of one man who was to inspire young musicians from that time until the late 1960's.

"When I first heard Clark Kessinger play his fiddle," Mike says, "I decided that I wanted to play it too, even though I had already learned to play the guitar and mandolin. Clark and Arthur Smith were my two favorite fiddlers. They were the two best I thought I ever heard, and I began learning to play by trying



Left: The smile is the same one familiar to his friends today, but Mike was a younger man when he dressed up for this portrait. Photographer and date unknown.



Right: Music stayed secondary to a man with family responsibilities, and Mike never became a professional. Here he is with daughter Judy at Elkview. Photographer unknown, late 1940's.

to follow what they were doing on the radio."

It wasn't long then until Mike had the opportunity to meet one of his favorites. "I went down to a studio one day to see Arthur Smith," he recalls about the great radio and recording star. "I wanted to see how he rolled basses. And he showed me how to play 'Red Apple Rag.' I tried it and showed him what I was doing, and he said, 'Boy, one of these days you're going to make a fiddler.' I've been wondering ever since when that day was going to come around."

Mike's first chance to show his new talent to his neighbors came along soon after he met Arthur Smith. "I went to a dance in an old store in Elkview one night," he remembers. "The fiddler didn't show up and some of the boys asked me to play for them. I had my mandolin with me, but it didn't sound loud enough to play for a dance. So I said, 'Well, what do you want me to play with?' They said that they had a fiddle with them and asked me to try it."

"I only knew one tune on a fiddle then, and that was 'Rag Time Annie.' So I played that all night long for them. When I finished one set they would ask me what I was going to play next and I'd say, 'Rag Time Annie.' By the time the night was over I knew how to play that tune, anyway."

Mike's repertoire grew fairly quickly, though, and by the time he was old enough to leave his parents' farm and strike out on his own he had become a popular musician who loved to go to social events. "I could dance back then, too," he says. "I never liked to square dance, but I always enjoyed the old backstep. I could cut a rug."

Soon after this, Mike met Clark Kessinger for the first time when the older fiddler visited Elkview. In later years, Mike often competed in fiddle contests where Kessinger played and today recalls their rivalry as something that gave both a challenge for over 20 years. "Clark was hard to beat," Mike says. "One time I won the Ohio State Championship when he was there, and the way I was able to win was by

trick fiddling—making the fiddle move all over my body as I played."

Also about this time, Mike found the work he was comfortable with and began going out on jobs with several of the construction firms that were busy building factories, office buildings, and houses in the Kanawha Valley during the late 1930's. "Of course, when I left my parents, I had to scratch to take care of myself," he says. "I started in doing jobs like that, here, there, and yon. I just did what they told me to, mostly in carpentry or pouring mortar and things like that."

In 1940 Mike married Agnes Combs and the couple became the parents of five children: Robert, Michael, Gary, Judy, and Glenn. Judy remembers today that music was a large part of their life and that Mike often gathered his children around and played for them. He made a game of it, having them guess the tunes he played on his fiddle.

During those years, his music remained a main interest as he spent his free time playing informally all through the area. It was during the years just

before and after World War II that he played in bands that toured the state and performed on radio programs.

"I played everywhere with some of the boys, from Oak Hill to Logan to here in Charleston," he says. "One of the places I liked to play the best was the Sunny Side Inn up on Elk River. I played there off and on for 16 years. And I played down here at the Rose Garden, which used to be called the West Falls. So I played anywhere from Hurricane on to Clay."

The bands that Mike played with during those years make a roster of the musicians who preserved rural music from the end of the Depression until the later 1950's. He fondly remembers playing with the Bailes Brothers, Bob Biddle and the Buckaroos, and the Mountain Melody Boys. As they listened to the music performed by these and other bands on the radio stations, younger musicians often learned to appreciate the values of the old-style tunes.

"It was a little easier to play on the radio than it was to get up and play when people were looking at you, so

I played on radio for a long time," Mike recalls. "Some of us were on the 'Old Farm Hour' program pretty often. That was one thing that gave musicians of the late '30's and early '40's an outlet. So a lot of us came here to Charleston to play on that. There wasn't any money hardly anywhere else."

The relaxed way that the radio stations operated at that time made it comfortable for people like Mike to make their music. He says, "The way they ran things then at the radio stations, you just went in and they introduced you and let you play as long as you wanted to. We'd go in, just a little three- or four-piece string band—a banjo, fiddle, guitar, and sometimes a bass—and make a little money like that."

It was during this time, when the small string bands were having a hard time paying their way, that Mike got an offer that his friend Bobby Taylor describes as the ultimate compliment that a bluegrass musician could receive. That was when Bill Monroe asked Humphreys to join his famous Bluegrass Boys.

"That was back in 1943," Mike says. "I went down to Huntington to see Bill Monroe and his band. I was backstage fooling around with my fiddle and I played the song 'Footprints in the Snow' for him. He turned around and said, 'Now, boys, that's the way it should be played. That's the only fellow I ever heard who plays that song right.'" The song is still one of Monroe's trademark tunes and his comment was remarkably high praise for Humphreys. Mike adds that Monroe took his name and address and wrote in a week or two asking him to travel with the Bluegrass Boys. Mike declined because he didn't want to spend that much time on the road. "I never did like to travel that much," he says. "I like to stay here in West Virginia because I like the hills. I don't like to look far off."

Humphreys passed up the chance to tour with the greatest bluegrass band at that time, but he was ready to make an important and long-lasting contribution in the next era. Soon after the end of World War II, the development of television and the creation of folk-

The Vandalia Award

Fiddler Mike Humphreys became the latest recipient of the Vandalia Award on May 25, 1985. The Award, given at each year's Vandalia Gathering in Charleston, is West Virginia's highest folklife honor.

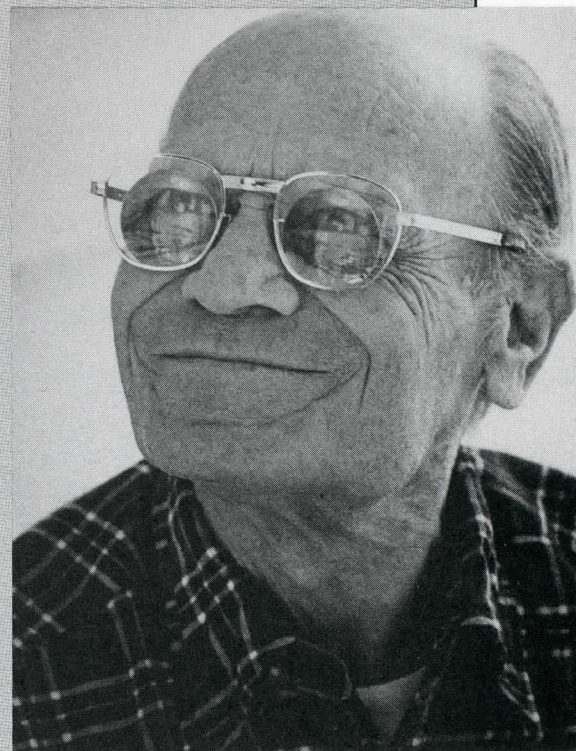
The official proclamation recognizing Mr. Humphreys noted that he "has mastered our traditional mountain music and excels in particular as a fiddler in the authentic oldtime style," adding that he has made music for himself and others for more than half a century. "Through these public performances and many private efforts he has had a profound influence on traditional fiddlers in West Virginia and beyond," the proclamation continued, "and gained an unsurpassed reputation among musicians and lovers of mountain music."

The proclamation concluded that

Mr. Humphreys "has done much to ensure the survival of our traditional music and the culture of which it is a part."

Mike Humphreys joins distinguished company in receiving the Vandalia Award. Past honorees include Melvin Wine (1981), Ira Mullins (1982), Woody Simmons (1983) and Aunt Jenny Wilson (1984). All are master practitioners of West Virginia mountain music, chosen for their excellence and their influence on younger musicians.

The Vandalia Award is given annually to a West Virginian who has made outstanding contributions toward the continuation of the state's folk heritage. The Award recognizes a lifetime of achievement in the performance, creation or perpetuation of our state's traditional arts. The Award is presented by the Department of Culture and History to those who exemplify the spirit of folklife in West Virginia.



The 1985 Vandalia Award winner is modest about his musical accomplishments. "I guess I'm a pretty good fiddler," he says. "I've heard worse, though I've heard better."

life festivals opened new opportunities for musicians like Mike. In the last 25 years his fiddling has won the recognition that it long deserved.

In the early 1960's WCHS-TV in Charleston broadcast the "Buddy Starcher Show"—a popular program that ran five days a week in the early mornings and gave West Virginia string musicians many chances to show their talents. Mike became one of the regulars on the show and younger musicians, hearing him there for the first time, began learning his style. Within a few years, the festivals were started and this reinforced Mike's influence because it let him work directly with young people, some of whom organized bands like the Outdoor Plumbing Company, which patterned part of its music on Mike's style.

"I went over one morning to see if I could be a guest on Buddy's program," Mike recalls. "He said he wanted to give me a job, so I took it. He

had an hour's program and a lot of people have told me that they watched the show. He paid us according to how many commercials they sold, and it gave me a lot of exposure.

"It's a lot of fun to go to the festivals, too," he added. "I always did enjoy getting out and seeing people and playing with them like that. Bobby Taylor was the first who got in touch with me about playing at Vandalia and I haven't missed a year of it. I've won the fiddling contest there twice. In 1979 I won the bluegrass fiddling contest and the oldtime fiddlers contest, too."

By the time television and folk festivals came into their own, Mike had reached the highest point of technical greatness that he was to attain. Yet when he is asked to explain his style he avoids going into great detail because he would rather treat it lightly. "Well," he says laughing, "I just use a bow." And with typical modesty, he encourages young

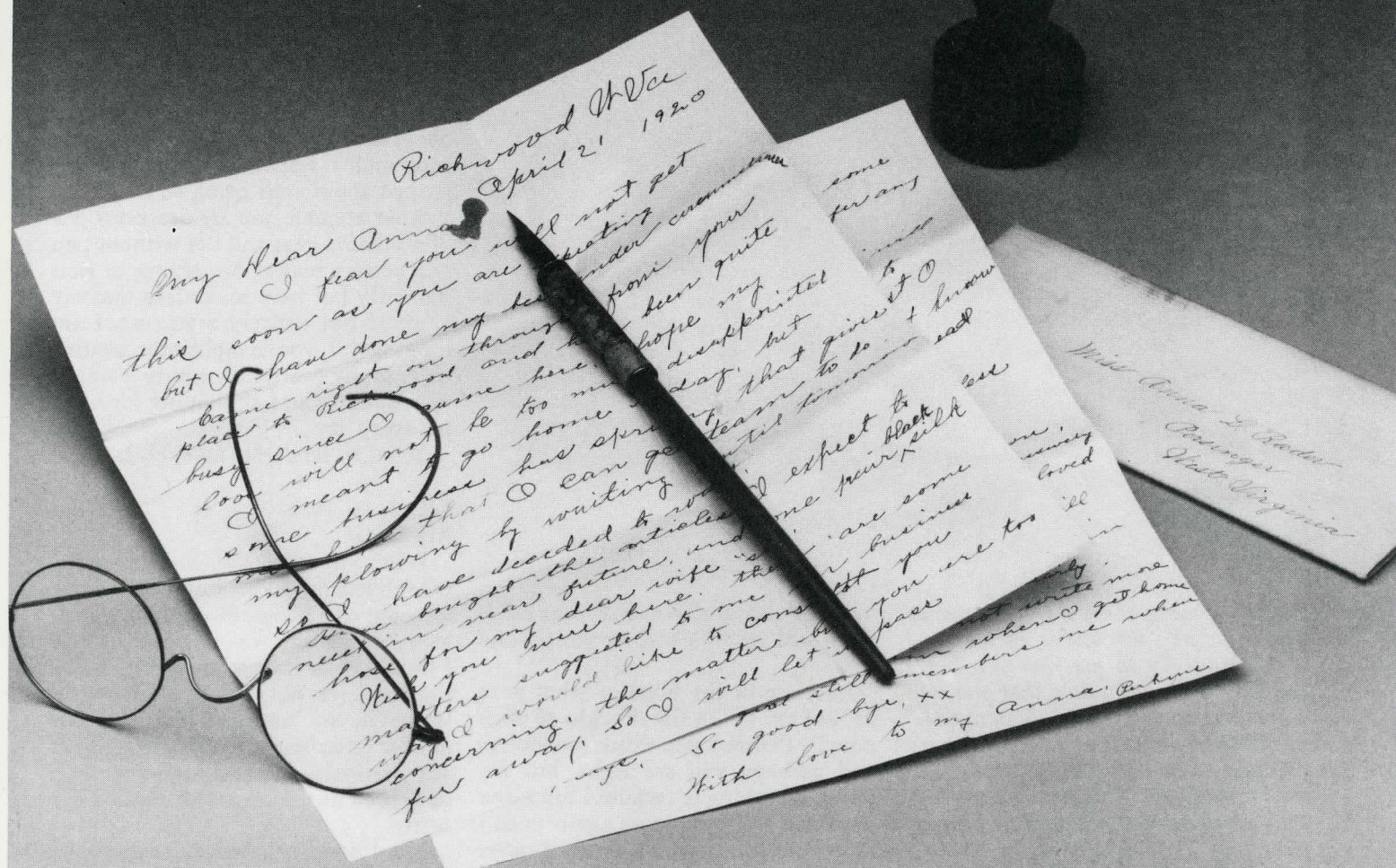
musicians to go in their own directions and not be unduly influenced by another fiddler. "I guess I'm a pretty good fiddler," he says. "I've heard worse, though I've heard a lot better. But everybody plays different. People will say, 'Why don't you play like Mike Humphreys?' But don't do it. Play like yourself. It's more fun that way."

It is left to folks like Bobby Taylor, who studied Mike's style for years, to explain why Humphreys has won his reputation. "He plays with a smooth, rolling bow and can roll a chord into another note in a manner that is hard to believe. His ear was so good that he could play fitting material behind country, bluegrass, traditional, or anything he wanted to. I don't know anyone in oldtime or bluegrass music who wouldn't want to own an album by him," Taylor says of the Mike Humphreys record that never was made. "He was always a top fiddler to reckon with." ♣

Mike Humphreys on stage at the 1985 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. He has been a Vandalia regular from the very first.



"With all Tenderness and Devotion"



Holly Jack Perkins sent most of his love letters from the Calvin farm and surrounding points. This one was written on a 1920 visit to Richwood. Photo by Michael Keller.

The Love Letters of Holly Jack Perkins, Part II

Compiled by Betty L. MacQueen

In the last GOLDENSEAL we introduced the 1919-20 courtship of Anna Rader and Holly Jack Perkins by publishing the first 15 of Mr. Perkins' love letters. The letters tell a story of rural Nicholas County early in this century,

and of course they tell the story of love growing from winter into spring. This time we'll conclude the romance by publishing the final 16 letters.

We pick up the story in March. Holly Jack is industriously breaking

ground for another farming season, although he doesn't seem to have his mind fully on his work. The success of his courtship is certain now and he looks to the future with almost unbearable impatience. "I imagine I can

"The very fibers of my heart and soul have grown into and fastened upon and intertwined about your being so that I feel that we are one."

hear the cooing of my dove," he writes at one point, "but she is in her cage and cannot fly to me just yet. But I rejoice in the assurance that she will come as soon as that little door opens." We have no direct indication of Anna's feelings—for all his passion, Holly Jack evidently never kept her letters—but will presume that she was just as eager.

Somehow the time passed until May 23, 1920. On that day Anna L. Rader, 41, and Holly Jackson Perkins, 57, were married. We're pleased to assure you that they indeed lived happily ever after, with their union enduring for a quarter-century, until Holly Jack's death in the year 1945.

Calvin, West Virginia
March 10, 1920
Miss Anna Rader:

With all tenderness and devotion, I take up my pen to jot you a few lines. I arrived home Monday P.M. Haven't gotten sick, thanks to my dear old girl for her precaution and pains to make me comfortable and happy. I wonder what you are doing while I am trying to write you. My heart is longing for you. You made me so very happy during my last visit. I shall never forget it. I still am happy in the thought of

you, and the recollection of your kindness, and yet in a way am lonely and sad.

I rejoice in the hope of what is to be, but am sad in the thought of what now is. Perhaps you think me foolish and perhaps you are right, but my sweet, one thing is certain: I can never have any real happiness again until I find it in your dear presence. I never have known anything so precious and endearing to me as my adored Anna. I do not wish to appear too sentimental, but my heart is speaking and after having said all that the strongest language that is at my command can express I have even then utterly failed to give the faintest idea of what my heart feels with reference to my darling.

With love and fond wishes, I am sincerely yours, H. J. P.

March 16, 1920
Miss Anna:

Dearest girl, with pleasure I write you. I was so very glad to hear from you and learn that you were well and happy except for only one thing. If it were possible I would wipe out every obstacle that interferes in the least with your most perfect and complete happiness, for one so good and pure, so much like an angel, most assuredly

deserves to be happy. It is the ambition of my life (so far as in me lies) to make my dear beloved happy. The time drags so slowly in bringing another opportunity for me to see you that sometimes I almost despair. But am glad to realize that hour by hour it is passing. And that by and by I shall be permitted to stand in your dear presence again, if Providence is willing.

I am so lonely without you. The very fibers of my heart and soul have grown into and fastened upon and intertwined about your being so that I feel that we are one. You are dearest to me of all that is dear and life without you is a perfect blank. Am trying to wait patiently but have to confess that my effort is not entirely a success. I am longing for you. I hold you continually in my heart, how empty it would be without you. I am hoping for a letter every day.

Yours in tenderest love, H. J.

March 18, 1920

My Dear:

Don't know that you will expect another letter this week, but if I can write one that will be worth as much to you as your last one was to me, I believe I should write it whether you are looking for it or not. I have rec'd many letters in my time but that was the dearest letter of my life. It brought joy and comfort to me, and expressed such composed happiness that it thrilled my being.

No, I don't believe you're guilty of flattery but I fear your opinion of me is higher than I deserve. I hope that you will not think more highly of me than you should but it caused me to feel that I should try to live up to your opinion. I would not that you should ever be deceived in me.

I am aware, Dearest, that I should be more patient, or at least I should not speak of or in any way express to you my weakness on that score and cause you unnecessary unrest. That of itself is criminal on my part, for all the happiness I have, I have found in you. And then for me to conduct myself in a way to cause you (who is so dear to me, and has so highly honored me, by giving your dear heart to be mine), to be sad through sympathy for me is absolutely wicked.

I am so much pleased to learn of your happiness in the anticipation of our future. The time now is, Dearest,

that you may call me your very own.
You have my whole heart.

Yours forever, Perkins.

Donald, West Virginia

March 23, 1920

My Dear Anna:

This is only Tuesday, but in order that you may be sure to get my letter this week I will write now. I came via Summersville, stopped there until near noon and from there to my brother-in-law's, where I stopped at 3 o'clock, got my dinner and remained until this time. I had a muddy, hard trip.

Did you see the aurora borealis or northern light last night? It was at its brightest about 10 o'clock, the most vivid I ever saw.

I am going on to Brother Sam's today, had a good night's rest and am feeling fine today but am longing for my dear sweet. It already seems a week since I saw you.

Dear heart, I can't enjoy my visit, I cannot find anything to talk about. You know, from the abundance of the heart we speak, but that which means most, upon my heart, I cannot speak of at all, and I am just dying to tell my friends about you. How good you are and how I love you, but you see I cannot say that, and it leaves me dumb.

I hope you will have a good time and enjoy life till I come to you. My life is incomplete without my angel.

Goodbye 'til I come, Perkins

Donald, West Virginia

March 25, 1920

My Dear Anna:

I am still alive and well. Am at Sam's and have been here since Tuesday. Found all well except Mrs. Perkins, who has been an invalid five years from rheumatism. This is a lonely old place. Brother works in a coal mine not far from here, leaving for work before it is light and returning about 5 p.m. I have been passing the time during the day strolling around the old place. You see, this is where I was reared.

I am having a lot of leisure time to think of my dear girl, and do not fail to employ it in that way. Do not see anyone who looks so good and seems so dear as my own dear sweet. I will see you at time appointed if no preventing Providence. I know you are enjoying this fine weather. You must not work too hard. I will write again

the first of next week. Unless I hear from you today perhaps will not hear until I get back to Calvin. You know 'twill make me sick to have to wait that long.

Goodbye my dear, H. J. P.

Calvin, West Virginia

April 1, 1920

Dear Miss Anna:

My angel, my pride, my love.

You were wondering what I was doing Sunday. Well I spent a good part

of the day on the road all alone, studying about my Anna.

My loneliness seems too intolerable to be endured. It was bad enough when there was nothing better in sight. But since I can see the happiness that awaits me the suspense of waiting is almost distracting. How happy I would be if you were here.

Have been doing some work straightening up fences, cleaning meadow, etc. It is raining today and you have some idea how slowly it will

Mr. Perkins was a mature gentleman by the time of his second marriage. Date and photographer unknown.



"I have waited for many things, but this waiting for you, Dear Anna, is the hardest waiting I have ever experienced."

pass to your unworthy lover.

I wish Sunday would hurry. Three days waiting, yet each day equals one week. If I ever find your presence again, think I will just remain with you until you get ready to bring me home.

With sincere love I am yours, Holly.

April 6, 1920

My Dearest Anna:

Am home safe again. I arrived at 12:30 o'clock. The walk wasn't hard on me. Did not get cold nor wet. Went to bed at 7:30 and rose with the sun this morning. I am feeling just fine today so far as the body is concerned.

I shall not complain of loneliness in this letter. I wish to come to you with cheerfulness this time, for I know you are good and will do your best to satisfy my longings at earliest possible date.

My *mind* is reconciled to your will; yet my *heart* is crying out after you. My very *soul* is yearning and longing for you.

You are so *dear* to me, in fact you are my very *life*, my *joy*, and *pride*. I imagine I can hear the cooing of my dove, but she is in her cage and cannot fly to me just yet. But I rejoice in the assurance that she will come as soon as that little door opens. How my *heart* will be gladdened at the sight of her

coming. How gloriously the beautiful sun light of *happiness* will beam upon me *then*. Wish I could picture to you the *joy* of my *anticipation* at the time of *your coming*. Am *trying* to wait *patiently*. I pray God to be my *companion* while I wait and to be *ours* after you come. For *none* can be *genuinely* happy without *His* companionship.

As I have told you, I prayed God would lead me to one who was fitted for my *happiness* and I for *hers*. He has so *graciously* heard and answered my petition in providing for me so *angelic* a being as I have found in my dear *Anna* and has pointed you out to me as being the *proper one*. It *forces* me to feel that I am *blessed* far beyond that I deserve so that I have *resolved* to try to be a *better* man than I have ever been, and pray also that I may be able to make you *completely* happy.

Had a letter stating that my baby girl is better. I am feeling real well today. God is dealing *kindly* with me.

With sincere and most devoted love I am yours, Perkins

April 15, 1920

My Precious Anna:

I have waited often for the arrival of trains, have waited for long-looked-for letters, have waited for payment of money when it seemed that I could not

wait. I have waited for the coming of friends, have waited for many, many things, but this waiting for *you*, Dear Anna, is the hardest waiting I have ever experienced. But I am doing my *best* to wait *patiently*.

With love, H. J. P.

Richwood, West Virginia

April 21, 1920

My Dear Anna:

I fear you will not get this as soon as you are expecting. But I have done my best under the circumstances. I came right on through from your place to Richwood and have been quite busy since I came here. Hope my love will not be too much disappointed. I meant to go home today, but some business has sprung that gives me hope that I can get a team to do my plowing by waiting until tomorrow, so I have decided to wait.

I have bought the articles I expect to need in near future, and one pair black silk hose for my dear wife.

I wish you were here. There are some matters suggested to me in a business way. I would like to consult you but you are too far away. So I will let it pass.

My heart is calling hourly for you, but am patiently waiting and submissively enduring all the suffering, for my loved girl's sake, realizing the time will soon come when I shall be happy in the presence of the one I love so dearly.

With love to my Anna, Perkins.

April 23, 1920

My Precious Anna:

This is Thursday night. I have just gotten home. Was successful in hiring Mr. McClung's team. I just finished attending to the horses when dark came. I then struck a beeline for the post office, rec'd your dear letter, back home, had lunch, and am now trying to answer your most welcome message.

You cannot imagine how much comfort it contained for me. I was just wishing all the way home that I were coming to my dear companion. And what did I find in her stead? It was only a sweet message from the same dear one of whom I had been thinking all the way on that lonely road, and oh! how I appreciated those lines.

Am sure you did not dream while writing that letter that you were injecting into those lines, such great

happiness for the one you are so anxious to help to be happy and the one that loves you more than all the world combined. It isn't any wonder that you can infuse such happiness into my very being, for you seem more to me like an angel than an ordinary feminine human being.

Yes, dear, I got home OK, thank you. Haven't done any work this week, but am tired. Have been quite busy. I have every article prepared and ready for the big day, but how many will pass before the big one comes?

Bought my first article of clothing for my dear wife while I was at Richwood as I told you in the letter written while I was there. Will bring them when I come again.

No, I cannot earn my housekeeper by walking. Would be worn out many times before I could earn her. Yes, I too wish those walks could be discontinued by our coming together. Not that I mind the walking, but the waiting. I have no fears as to you being good, but I fear you are better than I deserve. Hope you will not wait to hear from me before writing. If you do I cannot hear from you this week. It is now 9:40 o'clock. Will close, have prayer and go to bed. Good night, dearest.

Love from your old sweetheart, H. J. P.

April 27, 1920

Miss Anna, Dear Wife:

I am glad I am in the last week of suspense, waiting for the time when I shall see my darling again. Haven't heard from you but once since I saw you, but am expecting a letter today. I will be disappointed if it fails to come. I am lonesome for you today, and a letter will help me so much.

Am trying to get my plowing done, but the weather is so unfavorable. I have plowed the garden and have a good start on the corn ground. Will begin at noon today if it doesn't rain.

Say, Dear, are there any potatoes that can be bought down there? I don't know whether I shall be able to find any here or not.

Was at Sunday School Sunday. At home in the afternoon I wanted to see my little Anna so bad, I could not enjoy myself anywhere. Hope you had a nice day. Have you been well? And happy? I am sure you have been good.

I believe you have been praying for your unworthy sweetheart, haven't

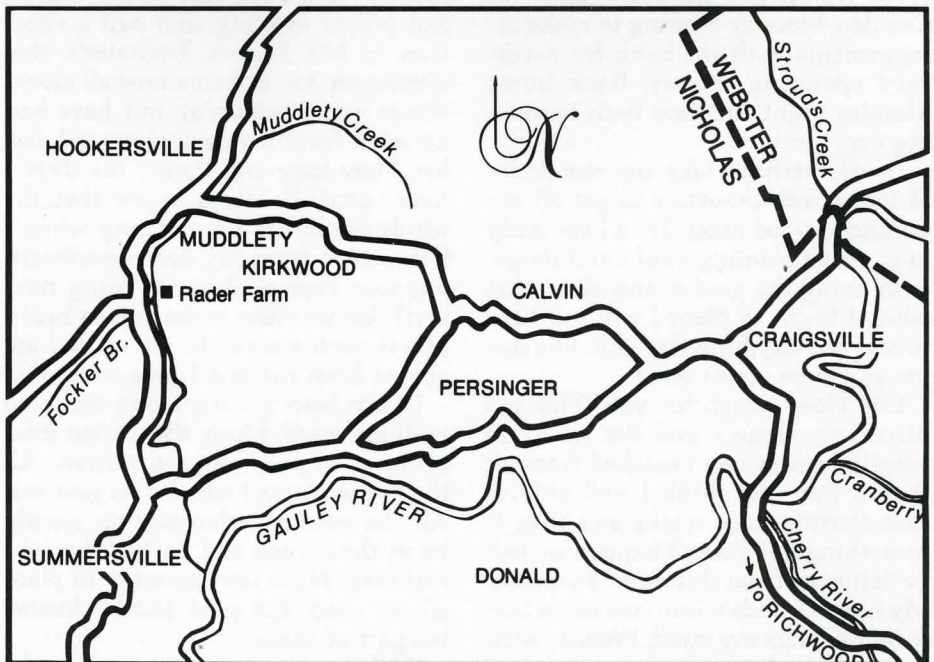


Anna Rader in younger days. She was 41 at the time of her marriage in 1920. Date and photographer unknown.

you? The intolerable loneliness that had formerly attended me at night has not been so unbearable, since I saw you last, and it occurred to me last night as I was going to have prayer that my dear was praying for me. Something is helping me bear the burden and I was needing help, don't you know? Am expecting my Queen soon. Will see you Sunday.

With sincere love I remain, Perk.

Mr. Perkins made his courting trips from Calvin to the Rader farm on foot. Unpredictable weather was a problem for the wintertime romance. The previous year's great flu epidemic was fresh in memory and many trips were cancelled for fear of exposure. Map by Ed Hicks.



April 29, 1920

Miss Anna Dear:

Will write a few lines today to let you know I am still alive. Am quite busy when it isn't too wet to plow. Rec'd a heavy blow from the handle of the plow Tuesday. The horses were going rapidly when the plow ran against a stone. The end of the handle struck me on the left side of my chest over the heart. I soon had to quit work for the evening. When night came I was feeling so badly I did not feel safe in staying alone, so I went and staid at Mr. Murphy's that night. Came home Wednesday morning and at noon started plowing again. Have been working since then. Didn't sleep much last night but think I am some better today.

Will see you Sunday at the time you suggested in your last letter. Am hoping to hear from you today. I may be disappointed but will still have something to hope for.

Are you almost ready to come to me now, my dearest? Am still waiting patiently. Are you freezing this cold weather? Hope not. Hope you are happy and well.

Will take this to the office, get my mail if any, and then start plowing. Am sorry you think me incapable of the love I expressed in that letter. Was sorry I could not find stronger language, for really, Dear, I utterly failed

"I could just write on and on and on and still have something unsaid."

to express what my heart feels for my love.

Most tenderly, Perkins.

May 5, 1920

Miss Anna:

I have just come in from harrowing to get dinner. But before I eat, I must take time to write my dear wife. Arrived home OK Monday. Went to Camden Monday evening to make arrangements with the bank for necessary spending money. Back home Monday night and have been harrowing ever since.

It will perhaps take the remainder of today and tomorrow to get all my ground in good order. Then I am ready to go ahead planting until I'm through. I am fixing the garden and all so that when I begin to plant I will not have to stop for anything else. You like one job at a time, don't you?

Oh! How I wish for you. This old place is so lonely and the world so empty. I am as one banished from all that is dear but think I will survive that *terrible* three weeks and then if something else doesn't happen we will be delivered from this awful suspense. My heart bounds within me when that thought enters my mind. Wonder what my angel is doing this beautiful day?

If I could just draw her to my bosom and plant one kiss to her loving lips it seems that I could be happy the rest of the week.

Goodbye my sweet, Perk.

May 9, 1920

Dearest Anna:

My *pride*, my *love*, my *wife*, this is Sunday night. I attended Sunday School and prayer meeting, and had a short visit at Mr. Homer Fitzwater's this afternoon. Am at home now all alone. Wrote you Wednesday but have had no word from my darling since I saw her. How long and dreary the days I have spent. It seems to me that the whole world has gone wrong when I fail to hear from my dear sweetheart. Suppose your mail is not going now, is it? Am wanting to see you so badly. Life is such a blank to me while I am absent from the one I love so dearly.

I have been getting along real well with my work. I have the garden fixed up in good shape for cultivation. All the beans planted which you gave me. All the potatoes planted that should be in the garden and part of the general crop. Have seed potatoes to plant all we need, but paid \$3.50 a bushel for part of them.

Will begin planting corn in the

morning if no Providential hindrance. I am about well of the blow from the plow handle. My cold fails to let up as I think it should. But am able to work, work, cook, and eat, go to bed, sleep and get up and go again without any rest. So I think I am not seriously ill, do you?

Well, if we can make it one more week I think I am safe so far as any ill coming to me because of suspense. Don't you think I am braving the storm fairly well? Will see my dear Sunday if the Lord is willing. Wish I could have you in my arms tonight, but must wait. Would like to press your sweet lips but must wait. Wish you were my very own, but must patiently wait. I feel tonight that it is an honor to wait for one so good, so true, so pure, so noble. A genuine lady, a real woman. I could just write on and on and on and still have something unsaid.

Good night, H. J. P.

May 12, 1920

My Dear Old Girl:

Be assured I will never forget you. Rec'd a letter Monday and one Tuesday. Both were dear good letters and each bore a camel load of comfort to Perkins. Many thanks, for I was getting so lonesome for my dear sweetheart.

No, I don't think of you as being contrary or selfish. I have become perfectly resigned to your will and am patiently waiting. It is true I become wonderfully anxious some times. And am longing for you every hour. Yet I feel that the happiness of receiving you when at last the time shall come will be so great that I can well afford to suffer the unpleasantness it brings me by being absent from you a few more days. I almost feel that you are with me all the time. I cherish such loving tenderness for you and feel such implicit confidence in you that it seems that you are around and about me all the time.

Say, Dear, do you know that your prayers for a Christian man and to have a Christian home have been right along on the same line with the prayers of the unworthy man? Dearest Anna, do you know I haven't any fears as to you being able to make me happy? And also being able to live up to my expectations of you. I am not exacting in my nature. To know you have a will

to make me happy is of itself sufficient to give me happiness. I am praying to God every day to make our union a blessing to each of us and that God might be honored by it. As I have told you before, I feel that union with you brings me under reserved obligation to my God, for I believe He has directed me to you in answer to prayer. So if God is leading why should we fear?

Finished planting corn noon yesterday. I was planting today till rain stopped me.

Goodbye Dearest, H. J. P.

May 19, 1920

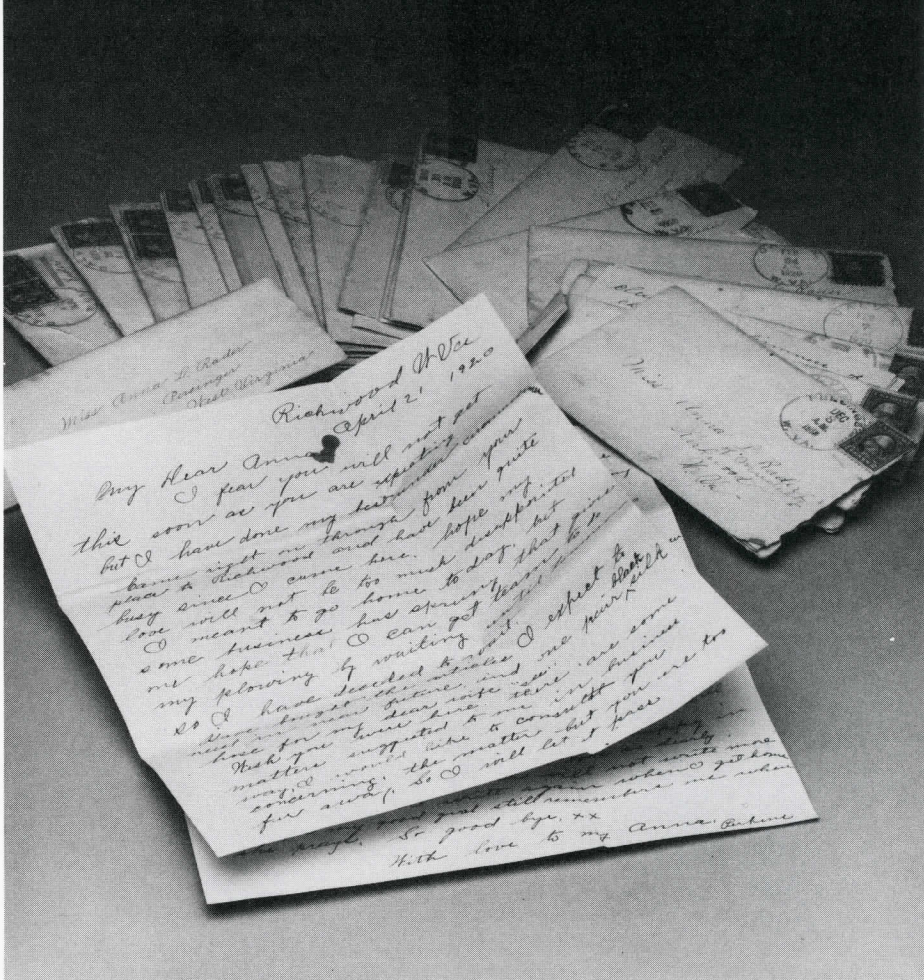
Miss Anna:

Here comes my last letter, perhaps, to my dear old sweetheart and don't you know it makes me feel so sad it seems that I can hardly write it. My correspondence with you has been the source of greater pleasure to me of anything of the kind in all the history of my life.

From the first letter I wrote even before your reply my anxiety was wrought to its highest tension. My hopes were bright before I heard from you. Your first letter wrought a great change in the light of my life. It gave me brighter hope of happiness yet to come to me than all that the world ever gave me before. Your letters from start to finish have been of great worth to me, have brightened my dreary life, have cheered my drooping heart, have pacified my troubled weary mind. They surely have been a godsend to me. Your sentiment in all has been carefully and deliberately expressed. And whether or not your conclusion of the matter has been wise, yet I must say you have approached every proposition I have placed before you in a sensible, ladylike way.

I have loved your manner of meeting my demands. I love your letters, I love your manner of decision on questions and in fact I love you with all my heart. So I feel like weeping when the thought comes to me, that this is the closing of a correspondence that has been of such great moment to me. I thank you for the courtesy you have shown me all the way through. I thank you for the hospitality you have shown me from the beginning, I thank you for all you have done for me. I kiss this, my last love letter.

God bless you my dear wife, H.J.P. ♣



The love letters of Holly Jack Perkins. We've returned the collection to the family now, and thank them for sharing a fine love story. Photo by Michael Keller.

We Get Letters, Too

GOLDENSEAL's first installment of Holly Jack Perkins' love letters came as a surprise to Mary Alice Perkins Crookshanks, his granddaughter. She promptly got a letter of her own in the mail, supplying us the fine photo of Holly Jack we're using this time and further information on the family:

St. Albans, WV

September 23, 1985

Editor:

Enclosed is a picture of Holly Jack Perkins to use in the second part of the series, "Dear Anna."

He was my grandfather. Anna was my step-grandmother, but the only grandmother I ever knew as my grandmother died in 1915, before I was born. We lived on the farm adjoining theirs. My father was Guy Perkins, a merchant and postmaster at Calvin for years.

The young daughter of whom my grandfather speaks in the letters is Phala Baker. She is still living, in Kailua, Hawaii. The baby he speaks of is my sister, Bea Diamond, who was born April 8, 1919. She lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. My brother, Lloyd Perkins of South Charleston, still owns their farm at Calvin.

I really appreciate and treasure the article, as this is the first time I've seen these letters. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,
Mary Alice Crookshanks

Juanita Farmer Hamby:



Juanita Hamby (right) with husband Claude and a friend, on a visit to a Boone County coal mine. Photographer unknown, about 1954.

Charles Farmer's experience in store management led him to move his family to West Virginia in 1925, where he eventually became manager of the Consolidation Coal Company store in the small town of Ohley on Cabin Creek in Kanawha County.

Before the Great Depression, the Farmer family enjoyed good living on Cabin Creek. They occupied a six-room house, the nine children sharing two of the three bedrooms. Juanita especially remembers that the dining room had a pie safe, a type of wooden cabinet with metal doors. The doors had small holes punched in them to provide ventilation for the pies kept there to cool after baking. They had a nice, small yard cut short by the railroad tracks running out of Cabin Creek Junction. Across the tracks was an old, wooden swinging bridge where Juanita and her brothers and sisters would play for hours. Later, her own children played on that same bridge.

About the time the Depression hit in 1929, Juanita's father lost his job as manager of the Consol company store and things began to get rough. He later found employment with the WPA, started by the Roosevelt Administration to provide jobs for the unemployed. Juanita was young and became aware of the Depression only when it affected her family. She remembers it well to this day.

"Times was really hard," she says. "That summer there were a lot of wild berries. We used to go up in the hills and pick five-gallon buckets full of huckleberries, and they were canned for use in the winter. We also had a lot of beans. People just lived according to their income."

"Dad worked on the road during the Depression. You got commodities, and that was flour, raisins, and what they called chicory coffee, which wasn't very good, but you drank it anyway."

There was little work for young people, but Juanita found a few families not as hard hit as her own. The women would hire young girls to come into their homes and style their hair. "I used to set hair, pincurl and finger-wave. You'd go to the ladies' houses, and they'd give you 15 cents, or whatever, but it bought lunches when I was in high school."

"In Life, You Do What You Have To Do"

By Lori L. Henshey

You just respect some people. Not because their wealth or station demand it, but because, although they prefer the good, they take the bad when it comes and do the best they can with it. My grandmother, Juanita Farmer Hamby, is one of those people.

Juanita was born on a small farm in Motley, in Virginia's Pittsylvania

County, on January 3, 1919. She was the third child in a family of nine, born to Charles Anderson Farmer and Francis Tabatha Roark Farmer. She had a happy childhood in Motley, where her father ran a small country store. He sold, among other things, flour out of the barrel, twists of tobacco, watermelons and peppermint candy.

Father Charles Anderson Farmer was a Virginia storekeeper before moving the family to Cabin Creek in 1926. Photographer unknown, 1920's.

There was very little money for recreation, but occasionally they would have picnics, parties, or go to one of the two favorite local restaurants. "One was called the Dirty Shame," she says, "and we'd go there and listen to music, dance and drink cokes. Another one, up at Eskdale, was called Belcher's Place. Sometimes we'd go to people's houses and they'd have parties and square dances, and we'd play games."

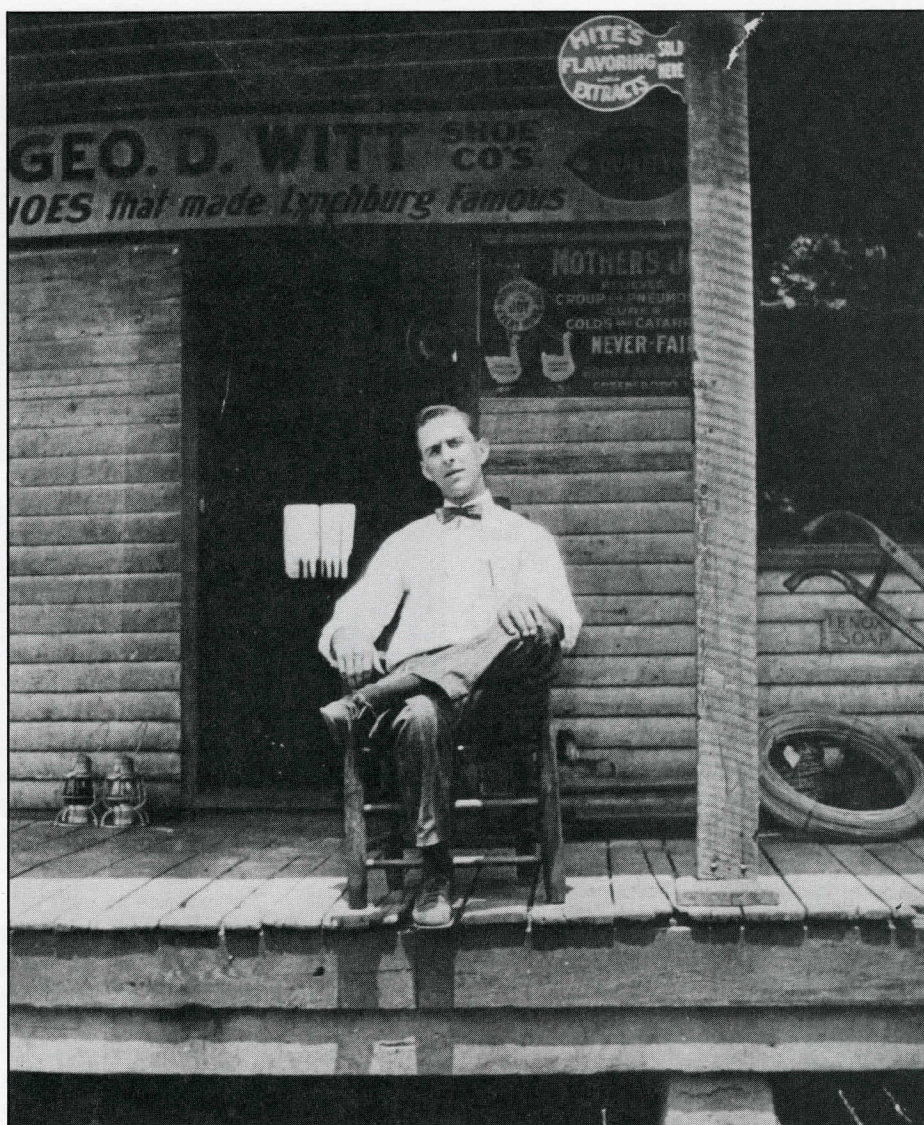
School activities also kept her busy. In addition to playing a saxophone in the Leewood Junior High School marching band, she was the center for the girl's basketball team. She proudly remembers one game. "Chelyan Junior High and Leewood Junior High had tied for the championship. I made the basket that won that championship," she said. "The time was running out, and the guard threw me the ball and I shot it back from the center line, and that ball never even touched the basket. I didn't even know it had gone in."

Although Juanita enjoyed school and was a good student, she was forced to quit when she was 17. There was too little money in the family for school clothes, lunches and other necessities for her to continue.

Juanita met my grandfather, Charles Claude Hamby, when she was 18. My great-grandfather, Henderson Hamby, had brought him to Ohley in 1926. Stories of fortunes to be made working in the mines of coal-rich West Virginia brought them from Crumpler, North Carolina, after Mr. Hamby's divorce from his wife Emma. Of three children, he brought only his son, leaving Claude's two sisters with their mother.

Young Claude Hamby was a handsome man, strong and well-built from his work in the mines. He carried himself with dignity, and Juanita Farmer took notice. She was a tall, pretty young woman, with long brown hair and pale blue eyes, and Claude noticed her as well. They made a fine-looking couple.

Because Juanita's mother and father did not approve of her dating Claude, they had to meet secretly in the next community. "Your Gramps was working in the mines when I met him," she told me. "We used to meet up at Belcher's Place at Eskdale on Sunday, and



Claude would always be there waiting for me. I'd have to walk up there, about a mile. I would walk as far as Mother and Daddy could see me, and then I'd run all the way. Then we'd dance too long, and I'd have to run all the way back."

After about a year of this clandestine courtship, the young couple eloped. Tired of the brief meetings, they scraped up enough money for a marriage license and to pay a friend to drive them to Catlettsburg, Kentucky. They were married there by a justice of the peace, on a cool, crisp day in March 1938. "We didn't have a honeymoon," she says. "We were lucky to have enough money to get a marriage license." She remembers that the license cost about \$2 then.

The newlyweds returned to Ohley, announced their marriage and gathered up Juanita's things. They moved

up the creek to Acme, where Claude had rented a four-room house nestled in the valley, shaded by a large hill. It was there that they began 34 years of marriage.

Juanita and Claude had been married 10 and a half months when their first child, Kay Frances, was born in January 1939. Harold Eugene was born in July of the next year, and Beverly Lynn came along in September 1941.

All three children were born in the little house, with the company doctor present and Juanita's mother there to help. Claude was also present during the birth of the first three children. "Each child cost Claude \$10," Juanita laughs. "All three cost him \$30." Juanita recalls that although they did have medicine for labor pain at the time, she was never given any. "That's what you call natural childbirth, I guess—without the classes."

The children were bottle-fed, with a mixture of Carnation milk and water, and a little Karo syrup for the digestion. "Back then, you didn't have bottle sterilizers," Juanita said. "You boiled them in pots."

The Hambys had a Home Comfort stove for cooking. "It was smooth on top," she recalls. "You had caps on it, and you used a tool called a cap lifter to take the caps off. Then you would put your coal in there and it burned something like wood burns. And you could cook just as good a meal as you can on an electric stove."

Food was simple, but good. "Back then, you weren't as aware of nutrition as you are now," oldest daughter Kay says. "It wasn't a bit unusual, living in a coal camp, to have a meal of pinto beans, fried potatoes and cornbread. We didn't have much red meat then, but we had a lot of chicken. Fried bread was a treat. It was deep fried, coated with butter and cinnamon, and sprinkled with sugar. I can remember Mother making fried bread, and all of us kids gathering in the living room listening to the radio and eating our fried bread."

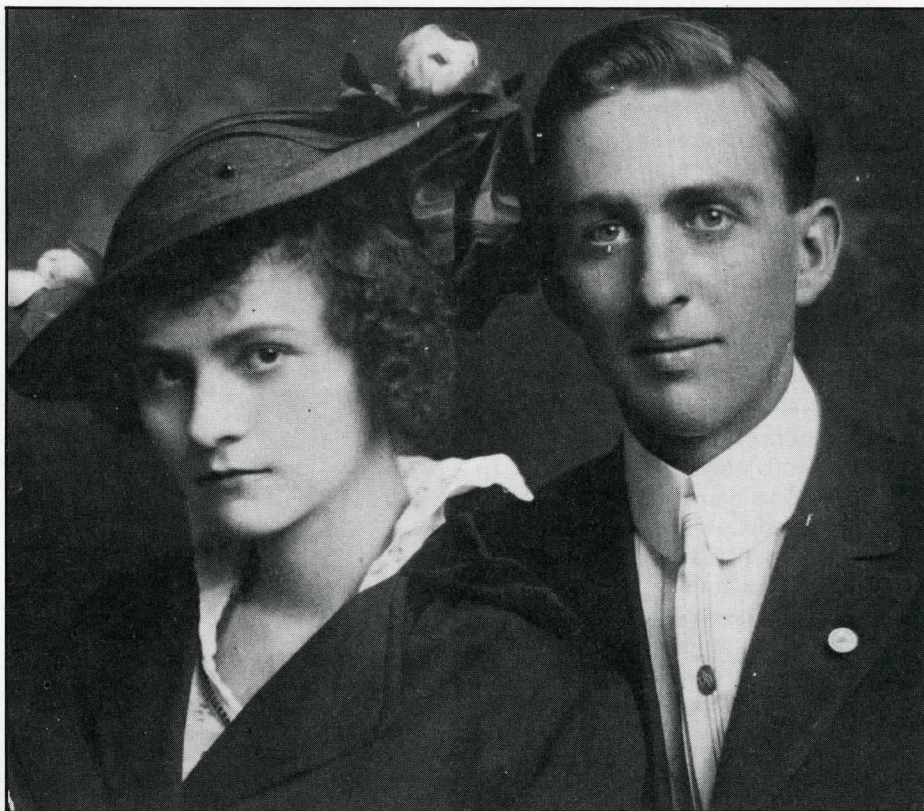
"Then, you didn't buy chickens dressed like you do now," Juanita remembers. "You bought them while they were alive, killed them and dressed them yourself."

Claude worked in Acme Mine Number 2, owned by the Truax-Traer Coal Company. He made six or seven dollars a day, which was plenty to live on. Bread was about 11 cents a loaf and cigarettes about 15 cents a pack.

Juanita says, "Claude run a motor inside the mine. A motor would bring the coal out on little cars to the tippie. The tippie was a big building that came down from the mines. It had a chute, and the coal was brought out of the mines in the coal cars and dumped down the chute into the tippie, where it was dumped into the railroad cars."

"He wore jeans to work in—jeans were considered work pants then—and a hard hat with a carbide light attached to the front. Miners used to wear canvas hats but, when the mine companies became more conscious of safety procedures, they came out with the rule that said you had to wear hard hats."

Although Juanita would occasionally ride a bus or hire someone to take her to Charleston to shop, she bought all her groceries at the company store



Frances Roark Farmer was voted the most beautiful girl in her county in her youth. She and husband Charles made a striking couple. Photographer unknown, about 1915.

in Acme. It was a big wooden building with a long concrete porch, with rails around it. Teenage boys used to sit on the rails in the summertime and drink pop or chew tobacco. The post office was in the company store, although it later moved out to a building of its own.

The store sold dry and canned goods, common medicines, furniture, jewelry and other merchandise. There was a butcher shop with fresh meat.

There was also a beer window and the coal miners would come there after work or on their days off. They weren't allowed to drink beer inside the store, so they had to order their beer through the window. Almost every day coal miners would line up outside to enjoy a cold beer, discussing the latest events in the mines or keeping up on the juiciest gossip in the community. For some, who worked inside the mines all day, the sunshine itself was enough reason to be there.

Although cash was accepted in the company store, scrip was more common. "It was all metal," Juanita recalls, "with a hole punched in it, and it had the name of the coal company on it and the amount of the coin. If

you worked in the mines, you went to the company store, and if you needed five dollars, you signed out for it. This was taken out of the working man's paycheck.

"People used scrip a lot during the Depression, because you didn't have the cash to go buy things. Also, there was very few cars and that made transportation to other stores difficult. That made scrip very convenient." Laughing, she adds, "That way the company got back all the money you made."

Coal was used for heating, and was purchased from the company. "Coal was brought to our house on dump trucks," she explains. "Everybody had what they called a coalhouse. It was just a little wooden building, big enough to hold a load of coal. The truck would back up and dump the coal into the coalhouse. That was also taken off of your paycheck."

The company doctor, Dr. Whiteside, had an office in Kayford. "If you needed a doctor you'd go to the company store and leave a message, and he would come every day at each store, pick up his messages, and make his rounds," she recalls. "He came to the house, carrying his little black bag with all of



Juanita (third from right, seated) was the center for the Leewood Junior High team in 1931. She remembers making the basket that won the championship. Photographer unknown.

his medications in that. There was no prescription writing because there was no drugstore on Cabin Creek. The nearest one was down at Cabin Creek Junction."

Daughter Kay remembers being given "a lot of penicillin and little pink pills. It's a good thing none of us were allergic to penicillin," she says, "because that's all we ever got."

Juanita made most of the family's clothes. She had a treadle sewing machine. More often than not, she had to design her own patterns and cut them from newspaper.

The family also had a mail-order charge account with Montgomery Ward. "In the fall we would order everything we would need—shoes, coats, and everything—for the winter, and throughout the winter we would pay for these things," she says. "In the spring we would do the same thing."

Juanita remembers the first and only time she had a tailor-made suit. The tailor, who made suits for men and women, came to the company store and measured her for it. The suit was black wool. "That Easter, I got Harold an Eton suit, a jacket with little short pants,

knee socks, brown oxfords, and a small cap with a bill on it. Kay and Beverly had new outfits and new coats. And that morning I dressed up my kids and we caught the bus out of Cabin Creek and went down to South Charleston, to my mother's. Boy, we really looked snazzy!"

Family life for the Hambys was simple by today's standards. They had no telephone, no car, and no television, but managed to make their own entertainment. Occasionally they went to Eskdale to see a movie. "There were a lot of Westerns then," Juanita says, "and John Wayne was very popular. 'Casablanca' was playing and 'Gone With the Wind,' which was my favorite. Movies playing then will always be with us; they're still good movies today."

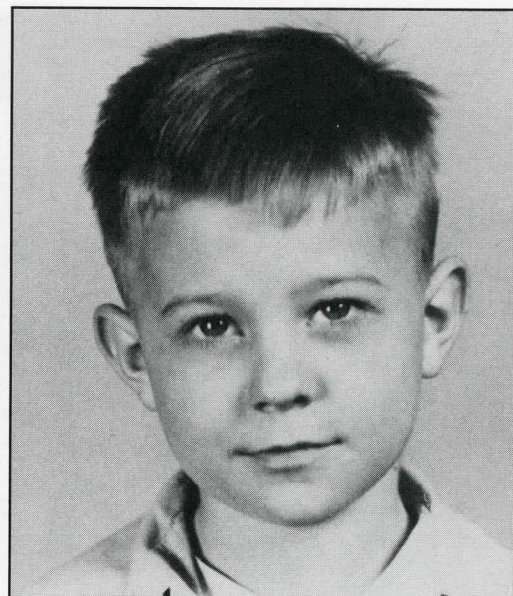
Sometimes there was drinking and dancing. "You didn't have money to get out and go places," Juanita says, "and no car either, so people would make home brew and have square dances in their homes. They'd clear a whole room out, furniture and all; any rugs on the floor, they'd put them up. But not very many people had rugs.

"The home brew was made with malt

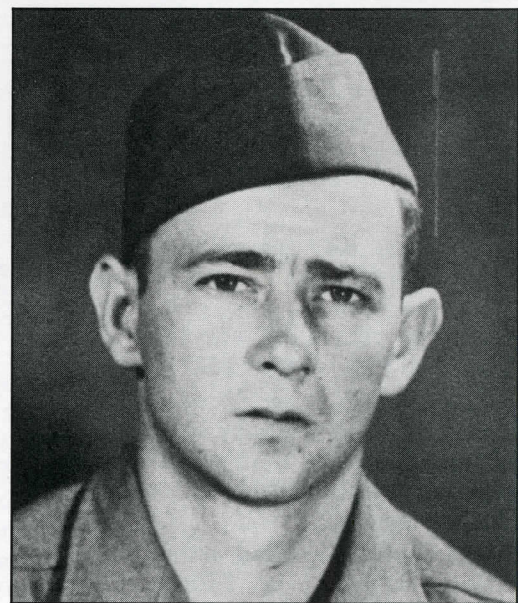
and yeast, and you'd put it in a big churn. You'd let it set for several days and then it would ferment. You'd bottle it up, put it in the refrigerator, and when you popped the cork, it was just like champagne today. I know one time Claude made some home brew. He didn't have any bottles so he put it in quart jars. I went to bed and later something went off like a shotgun, and that stuff was blowing up. About every 15 minutes a jar would blow up, and home brew was running all over the place."

The square dances required musicians and a caller to call the figures. Guitars and fiddles were the main musical instruments, and there was at least one ukulele. "You danced till three or four o'clock in the morning. It was fun—all the fun you knew."

The good times were overshadowed as news of Hitler's exploits in Europe reached Cabin Creek and the threat of war became imminent. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, war was declared. "I remember Roosevelt coming on the radio," Juanita relates, "saying we were at war with Japan. I just felt kind of numb. But, it would seem worse today than it did then. All you had



Like many women, Juanita Hamby attended to the home front in World War II, raising the family and working in the company store. Here she is with daughters Kay (left) and Beverly in 1944. Son Harold is shown in a school photo from about 1945. Claude's GI portrait is from about the same time. Photographers unknown.



then was what you read in the newspaper, and what you heard on the radio. There was no TV, no communication like there is today."

Claude Hamby was drafted March 15, 1944. As a PFC in the 75th Infantry Division, his major campaigns were the Battle of the Bulge, in the Ardennes Forest, and in the Rhineland in Germany. He was awarded the Bronze Star on April 3, 1945 for carrying explosives to the front under

heavy fire. "About all he ever said about the Battle of the Bulge," Juanita relates, "is that the bullets came close enough to knock snow down his shirt collar."

To make extra money, Juanita went to work in the company store butcher shop, much to Claude's displeasure. The children, not yet in school, were kept by a baby-sitter. The store was within walking distance, so transportation was not a problem. One of the

few clear memories that Kay has of that time was watching her mother walk to work. "I can remember Mother walking through the knee-deep snow to go to work in the company store. I don't think I knew why she was going to work, except that it was because Dad had gone to the war."

Of the two years Claude was in the service, Juanita saw him only twice. The first time was when he was on a weekend furlough from Camp Walters

in Texas. He was later stationed in Kentucky, and when he was about to be shipped overseas, Juanita rode a Greyhound bus there and brought him back to Acme with her that night. He left early the next morning.

Juanita says, "There was one time, it was about two months that I never did hear from Claude. Well, I began to think he had been killed or captured, so I sent a telegram. It was very brief, and I said, 'No news of you for some-

just threw it away because he couldn't get it home."

They corresponded as much as possible, but Juanita never really knew what Claude was doing at any given time. "Mail was censored then, to keep military secrets from slipping out, so he couldn't write anything specific about what he was involved in."

In spite of this, in his letters Claude described two times that he narrowly escaped death. Once was when a group

the nearby barn. "They were up in the hayloft and had been watching us all that time. One night the farmer who owned the place went up to get some hay. I guess they were hungry for they asked him to bring them some food. So he came in the house and told us they were up there. So we went out and called for them to come down.

"They didn't answer so we opened up on them," Claude's letter continued. "After we had fired a few rounds,

Mother and daughter in a moment of togetherness. This is Kay Hamby Graham on a recent visit to Juanita's Putnam County home. Photo by Michael Keller.



time. My thoughts are with you.' And he brought it back with him from the war and I can remember him taking it out and saying, 'This was one of the worst scares I ever got while I was gone.' He thought one of the kids had died.

"He sent presents," Juanita remembers. "He sent me a locket, and Kay a string of pearls. He said he found a set of silver in a German house one time, very expensive, and he carried it around and carried it around and he finally

of GI's was moving captured German ammunition. "The boys had started to unload it and it blew up," Claude wrote. "I had to go on guard and had just walked by them. If I hadn't had to go on guard, I would have been with them. You see how lucky I am."

Another letter, dated May 10, 1945, described an incident that occurred when Claude and others were staying at a house in Germany. Unknown to them, Nazi soldiers were holed up in

and threw a couple of hand grenades they begin to yell they were coming out. We went up in the loft and found a machine gun, rifles, a machine pistol and a Luger, that's another pistol. Boy, what they could have done to us."

On the home front Juanita remembers the air raid drills, practiced during the war in case bombing should occur in the United States. "They would blow a siren for a blackout and if you burned lights, you'd have to cover your



Juanita Hamby is a grandmother now, enjoying her retirement. "I've had a good life," she says, "although there have been struggles and frightening times." Photo by Michael Keller.

windows so no light could shine out," she says. "People mostly used blankets because that was the best cover-up to keep the light inside. And they had men stationed in certain parts of the community, to make their runs to see if people had lights on. And if people had lights on they'd yell, 'Turn off them lights!' And then there was a siren to let you know when it was over."

The war years were better economically than the Depression, but there were still problems. "Meat was rationed and gasoline was rationed," she says. "When I worked there at the store, you would get a book of food stamps, and you could only buy so much. And the days the meat came in, the lines would be way back."

Metal rationing was practiced during the war, and Juanita remembers that none was available to the general public. "Tricycles and bicycles were

not made because the metal all went into the war effort. If you bought a child's wagon, it was made out of wood, with wood wheels. You bought no metal toys. The Christmas that Claude was gone, I got Harold a wooden wagon with wooden wheels. The stuff really wasn't worth carrying home, but they were toys."

Claude returned home after the war was over, and they resumed normal family life. He went back to work in Acme Number 2, eventually earned his foreman papers, and worked there as a foreman until black lung forced his early retirement in 1962.

The couple's fourth and final child, Melanie Dawn, was born on July 23, 1957, the only one of the Hamby children to be born in a hospital.

Claude and Juanita moved to Hurricane in 1965. Looking toward the uncertain future, she tested to receive her

GED and went to nursing school. She received her Practical Nursing License within six months, in 1968, at age 49. "Claude was retired," she says. "I had to do something with my life. I had to have something I could fall back on to support me. And that was the reason for it." She began her nursing career at Thomas Memorial Hospital in South Charleston, where she worked until her retirement in 1983. Claude had died of black lung disease in 1972.

Juanita is presently enjoying her retirement and delighting in her newest grandchild. She continues to live as she always has, taking each day at a time, not expecting anything extra, and making the best of what she has. She takes it all philosophically. "I've had a good life, although there's been struggles and frightening times. But in life, you do what you have to do. And I wasn't alone in that." ♣

The high-wheeler, or "Ordinary," bicycle stood nearly as tall as its rider. It was a simple machine, with the cyclist applying power directly to the drive wheel. This unknown Manningtonian was photographed by James L. Stewart in the 1880's.

Bicycles

By Arthur C. Prichard

When Caleb Burt proudly pedaled his new bicycle through Mannington better than a century ago, his friends no doubt noticed the outlandish machine. We may imagine the conversation that followed.

"What in the world is that?"

"It's Caleb Burt's new wheel. He just got it."

"Caleb, how do you get off?" called one of the young men.

"That's easy, George," Caleb answered. Carefully steering the bicycle, he pedaled across the dirt street and swung off the high-wheeler.

"Of course, there are other ways of getting off," he told his two friends. "I've fallen off sideways a few times. And I've taken a couple of nose dives over the front end. Once when I hit a rock. Another time when I braked too hard and locked the front wheel."

"How do you get on the contraption? Use a ladder?"

"It isn't hard. Start pushing the bicycle. Put your left foot on this little metal step on the frame above the rear wheel; then swing onto the seat. You soon get the hang of it."

"What do you call this kind of bicycle?" one asked.

"It's known as an 'Ordinary.'"

The young men laughed. "It doesn't look ordinary to me," commented George.

George was right. The front wheel of Burt's bicycle, four or four and a half feet high, dwarfed the rear wheel, only 14 or 16 inches in diameter. Both had narrow, solid tires. There was a rod-like handlebar, and pedals on the big front wheel propelled the bicycle. The seat was almost directly above the large wheel. A handlebar, fastened to the handlebar, operated a small brake that pressed down on top of the front wheel. When an adult sat erect on the seat, his head was high in the air and

he and his bike presented a striking sight. One advantage of the Ordinary was that the large wheel revolved with each turn of the pedals, moving the rider farther and faster than earlier bicycles had.

The Ordinary was becoming popular in Europe and the United States when Caleb Burt bought his in 1882. The English nicknamed it the "Penny-Farthing" for two English coins; the large, thick penny, called a cartwheel, and the small farthing, worth a quarter of a penny. Those two coins, when placed side by side, resembled the Ordinary.

Burt's high-wheeler was the first of a number of such bicycles bought by the young men of my Marion County hometown. Soon George Hagerty, Homer Koen, Harry and Fred Beatty and others were proudly riding new bicycles through Mannington.

Still, there were problems which





These are the Wheeling Wheelmen, one of many popular cycling clubs in the late 19th Century. Photographer unknown, 1880's, courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection/WVU.

limited sales. The legs of many youngsters and some adults were not long enough to pedal the Ordinary. It was considered unladylike for females to ride the high-wheelers. The frequency of cuts, bruises and even broken bones from tumbling off the unstable vehicles discouraged use and caused the disfavor of parents and spouses. The Ordinary came to be regarded as dangerous. At least one manufacturer issued printed instructions on how to fall gracefully and safely.

To many people the cost of the high-wheelers was a deterring factor. One young man who lacked the money was Dan Nay. According to Frank Huey and Fred Milan, in their 1942 newspaper series on Mannington history, Dan got around the financial hurdle by building his own bike. He used parts from a discarded threshing machine and the heads of rain barrels. The bicycle was cumbersome and noisy, but

it worked. The ingenious Dan "was the talk of the town for some time," according to Huey and Milan.

Many kinds of bicycles preceded the Ordinary. The prototype of all of them consisted of two carriage wheels, one behind the other, connected by a backbone of wood. It had a saddle and backrest, and a tiller to steer the front wheel. There were no pedals. The rider, resting his weight on the saddle, propelled the vehicle by walking or running on the ground. When the bicycle gained momentum he could rest his legs briefly, and travel more quickly and easily than by simply walking.

A few years after the Ordinary was introduced, a more practical bicycle began appearing in Mannington. Its wheels were the same size, and both smaller than the Ordinary's large front wheel. The seat was located farther back, over the pedals for the chain-driven rear wheel. Pneumatic tires re-

placed the earlier solid rubber. Metal tubing replaced the Ordinary's solid metal frame, making the bicycle lighter and easier to handle. The new machine, more stable than the high wheeler and with its seat nearer the ground, earned the name, Safety bicycle.

Burl Marr or Arch Burt, a son of Caleb, may have been the first Manningtonian to have owned a Safety, although Claude Basnett and Brandy Wilson also had such bikes early on. Soon there was a rush to buy them.

The oil boom, beginning in 1890, brought new people to town and increased the income of local folks. There was more money for bikes and better bikes for the money. The newer cycles, being smaller, lighter and less dangerous, encouraged more boys and girls to ride. The riding style was more modest, lessening social opposition to female cyclists. The paving of some



The Safety bicycle, successor to the Ordinary, is essentially the same bicycle we know today. The proud owner is Dale Hamilton of Mannington, about 1903 or 1904. Photographer unknown, courtesy Charles Long.

town streets also encouraged the use of bicycles. Soon riding a bicycle became the thing to do. In the late 1890's a local newspaper reported that "two thirds of the population of Mannington owns wheels," and boasted there were more riders than in any other town of similar size in West Virginia.

Among the girls and women riding the improved bicycles of the 1890's were Georgia Morris and Nellie Burt, who had Genevas; Willa Hough on a Rumble, a brand with pretty wheels; and Myrtle Timblin with a Barnes. Nell Blachshire was said to be the best "wheel-woman" in town.

Bicycle racing was popular through the early 1900's. Races were held on holidays, especially the Fourth of July, when they sometimes competed for attention with firehose cart racing. Old newspaper accounts tell of bike races from half a mile to 16 miles long.

Racers often had to contend with

tricky riding conditions. The *Fairmont Free Press* of July 7, 1898, reported that races held on the Fourth by the Fairmont Athletic Club were one and two miles long. Rain before one of the races had made the route muddy. The riders worked hard to finish. They had to dismount, clean mud from their bikes and start again. "And so on to the end of the race," the paper said, "but the riders showed grit and went on to the finish." In a road race on another Fourth of July, one contestant had five punctures.

James I. "Jimmie" Phillips of our town won his share of races. Margaret Atha recalls he was a winner of one of the Fairview-Mannington races. Newspaper historians Milan and Huey wrote: "The fastest cyclist in town is unquestionably, Jimmie Phillips; there is a warm contest for the claim of the slowest." Helen Singleton and Katherine Lutes, daughters of Mr. Phillips,

today have one of their father's medals.

Another variety of bicycle appearing after the Ordinary was the tandem. Harry Dacre's lyrics "I can't afford a carriage,/ But you'll look sweet upon the seat/ Of a bicycle built for two" must have had a tender meaning for some Manningtonians. There were several of the two-seaters in our town. Today they're remembered locally for the romantic sight of sweethearts riding blissfully together, and also in connection with racing. Claude Bassett and Guy Clayton had gained a reputation for fast tandem riding, according to a local newspaper, and Arch Burt and Ed Chichester teamed up to give them competition.

The popularity of cycling in the latter part of the 19th Century and the early 20th resulted in the formation of bicycle clubs. Members raced and took trips together, going to scenic and his-



The Safety bicycle offered speed as well as stability, and racer James I. Phillips knew how to get the most from his. He is shown here in the 1800's, with one of many medals he won. Phillips photo courtesy his family, photographer unknown.

toric sites. "Claude Basnett, Bob Burt, Arch Burt, Ed Chichester and Edd E. Meredith went to Chasswood Park Sunday on their wheels," the June 2, 1899, *Mannington Advocate* noted of one such excursion. "The trip was quite an exciting one, the killing of a black-snake, six feet four inches long, was but one of the many events. The roads are nice from here to Shinnston, via Cunningham's store and Wyatt. The party returned by coming down the river and up Bingamon and found bad roads, as they (the roads, not boys) had recently been worked."

One of the first bicycles I remember belonged to my father. It was red, and a big one. The average bike then, in the opening years of the 20th Century, had a 22-inch frame, but Dad's was a 26-incher. Standing six feet, two and a half inches, with large shoulders, big hands and chest, and weighing 230 to 240 pounds, he needed a big bike. He had purchased the bicycle before I can remember, maybe before I was born. Perhaps he bought it in a burst of enthusiasm to exercise more, but I don't

remember ever seeing him ride it.

I do recall a lot about his bicycle. I learned to ride it before I was big enough to straddle the seat. Before my legs were long enough to reach the pedals, I crouched in the frame, poking my right leg through and pedaling that way. That required the development of a different kind of balance than riding the usual way, and was not as comfortable.

I rode Dad's big bike some and Andy Johnson, a man who worked for us, rode it often. Andy loved bicycles and motorcycles, and he enjoyed tinkering with them. At times our basement was cluttered with parts. I remember Andy and me riding Dad's bicycle to the Homewood Addition, a mile or so from where we lived, one sunny afternoon. I, seven or eight years old, rode on the cross bar. While visiting with the Ferry family in Homewood, we decided that Ted Ferry, some five years older than I, should take a ride with us. With Andy on the seat, Ted on the cross bar, and me perched on the handlebar, we started off. While going downhill on

a rocky dirt road, we hit a hole or a rock and Andy jammed on the brake. The sudden slackening of speed threw me headfirst. I landed in front of the bicycle in time for it and the two remaining cyclists to run over me. I wasn't injured, but all of us were scared. Especially Andy.

"Let's keep this accident a secret," he said. "It could be something only we three would know. No one else, especially your dad, Arthur." I never did tell Father.

I remember getting a bicycle of my own when I was still quite young. I had always wanted a pony, and several of my friends had them. Dad showed little interest in that idea. Although a practical and somewhat stern man, however, he was a loving father. His gift of a bicycle did allow me to grow up in a saddle of sorts and didn't require feeding, currying and turning out to pasture. I think my pleas for a pony were partly responsible for my getting a bike at a younger age than some of my friends.

When they did get their own wheels

we rode constantly. We ran errands on our bikes, occasionally raced each other, and tried stunts. There were relatively few automobiles and not many buggies and wagons to contend with on the streets of Mannington.

While the Safety bicycles were not as dangerous as the old high-wheeler, they had their share of accidents. I remember one near our house, at the corner of Pleasant and Locust streets, when I was a teenager. I was 60 or 70 feet from the corner, under the family car. I was greasing the Chandler, a tedious job of removing the many individual grease cups, filling them by hand, and replacing them.

Upon hearing a clash and a muffled, surprised squeal, I shifted my position until I had a view of the corner. I saw a youngster's body land on the front end of an automobile. Quickly rolling out, I hurried over. By the time I got there the driver of the car was inspecting the lad, Howard "Doc" Batson. The car and the bicycle had come together at the inside of the corner. Not seeing the bike coming down Pleasant Street, the driver had cut the corner too sharply, leaving the boy no place to go.

Doc, still surprised but relatively calm, was looking himself over. Satisfied with his own condition, he turned to the bicycle. He discovered that it wouldn't go. The twisted front wheel would not pass through the fork, and the frame was bent. On seeing the damage done, Doc finally lost his composure. He jumped up and down.

"Now what am I going to do? It isn't my bike! A friend let me have it for a ride. See what you've done!" Gradually he calmed down. I presume Doc got the bicycle repaired and the incident settled with the owner of the bike. He and I later became good friends, studying at West Virginia University together until he accepted an appointment to West Point. Later, while serving under General MacArthur, he was captured at Corregidor and died a prisoner of war.

Over the years, bicycles have remained popular in Mannington. Numerous changes improved them. A variety of designs extended their usefulness to different age groups. The original one-speed bicycle gave way to multiple gears. First came three-gears then five, 10, and even 12 and 15. Lower gears made it easier to ride hilly roads, and higher gears increased speed.

Besides the two-wheelers, there were also three-wheel tricycles. These were developed at about the same time as the high-wheeler, in the 1870's. Full-size tricycles were ridden by folks with poor balance and used for light delivering work. The ready acceptance of Safety bicycles initially set back the use of tricycles. Later the number of children's tricycles increased. Being good, stable vehicles on which small boys and girls could learn to maneuver on wheels and prepare for the greater freedom of riding bicycles, the little trikes became popular.

Although the use of adult tricycles declined after the introduction of the Safety bike, recently their number has

increased. Cautious senior citizens use them for short shopping trips, jaunts around town, and recreation.

Nowadays people enjoy the sleek new cycles, but many have not forgotten the old machines. Some have made a hobby of collecting and reconditioning antique bicycles. James Schumaker of Huntington is one West Virginian who rides an old high-wheeler. The Wheelmen is a national organization for those who share this interest, and some cyclists have organized local clubs. They hold meets, ride in parades and generally do the things people did a century ago when bicycles were regarded as reliable transportation as well as serious fun. ♣

As the bicycle evolved from serious adult transportation to child's toy, the tricycle was a natural offshoot. Melissa Ann Efaw demonstrates that Manningtonians still begin their cycling young. Photo by Arthur Prichard.



Cities Celebrate Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg Turn 200

By Martha Lewis Manning

The bands played, the bells rang and the people all turned out to celebrate the 200th birthday of three major West Virginia cities this year. October saw the climax of year-long activities and exhibits recalling the establishment of Morgantown and Clarksburg in 1785. October also saw a grand initiation of events to follow in Parkersburg, as that city celebrates its founding in the same year.

In Morgantown, with dignitaries, flags, bunting, ritual and pomp, a ceremony took place on the Courthouse Square. It was a colorful presentation and dedication of a plaque to the City of Morgantown by Monongalia County, commemorating the bicentennial of "Morgan's Town." This ceremony was part of an extended pageant that included a street fair of living history, a colorful parade of bands, and

As the sign says, Morgantown celebrated its bicentennial this year, joining Clarksburg and Parkersburg in doing so. This scene is from the October 13 parade. Photo by Judith Walls.



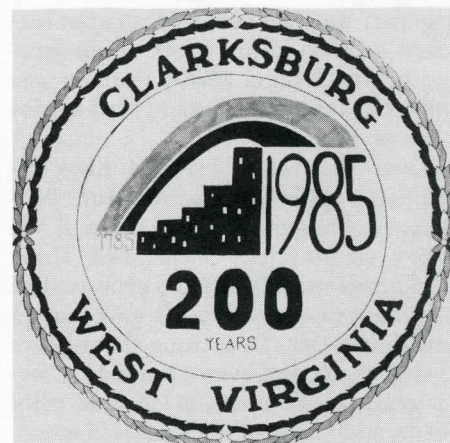
a synchronized music and fireworks display from a barge on the river. The big day was the high point of a six-week festival of the arts.

The Monongahela River, a vital influence in the development of Morgantown, was celebrated with a regatta. There were races, both serious and comical, for watercraft from stern-wheelers to rubber rafts. Spectators on shore cheered the contestants from the newly enclosed River Front Park.

Clarksburg's Bicentennial Weekend, October 18-20, had "The Immigrant" as its theme, reminding citizens that all are immigrants, whether their families came early or late. Jim Pool, bicentennial director, commented, "Clarksburg is a city of immigrants. Since 1920 it is a microcosm of the country's melting pot. The Belgians came to work in the glass factories as that was what they had been doing for centuries in their own country. The Spaniards worked in zinc smelting, using donkeys as they had done at home. Many Italians came to work in the coal mines and remained to share their culture in a lively, annual Italian Heritage Festival." An exhibit pointed out the influence of immigrants on the development of the city.

Among activities recalling Clarksburg's boom years was a visit to the Waldo, the fashionable luxury hotel of the early 1900's, which had its own trolley line to the railroad station. It was a nostalgic step into the past to wander through the elegant lobby, board the trolley-bus for a nickel fare, and find an exhibit of engines and cars to explore before returning to the Courthouse Plaza for still more events.

The climax came on Sunday with the dedication of Bicentennial Park,



where a bas-relief monument by Bill Hopen titled "The Immigrant" was unveiled. The park adds beauty to the center city and will serve as a permanent reminder of the 1985 milestone.

Parkersburg's gala day in October, which initiated that city's bicentennial celebration, was a reenactment of the first wedding at Neal Station. Neal Station was a blockhouse built by Captain James Neal, the first permanent settler. As historian Dr. Bernard Allen put it, "Blockhouses, or forts, served not only for protection but also for social communication, for trading and for justice." The first wedding with its customs, costumes and bright hopes for the future was remembered as a happy experience in pioneer life. A reenacted wedding reception was held in the city park where the public was entertained with music, square dancing, authentic foods, crafts and athletic demonstrations.

An historic play, "Light Through the Darkness," written and produced by students at Franklin High School, followed by "Taps," brought the afternoon to a close. The wedding day celebration initiated a series of bicentennial events, exhibits and productions that will continue well into 1986.

How did it happen that these three major West Virginia cities had their foundations laid at the same time? The story goes back to George Washington's time.

Washington was an avid explorer. As early as 1748 he was surveying the upper reaches of the Potomac River. Driven to see what was beyond the mountains to the west, he first crossed them in 1753. Always he kept a journal in which he made many references to the fertile soil and the trees, the rivers and streams. In spite of the perils of frontier life he rightly predicted, "the west will become populated faster than any other similar empire was." Washington's dream was to throw the region open to pioneers and weld it to the east by highways of communication and commerce.

Seeking a water route from the Atlantic to the Ohio through Western Virginia, Washington and others after him hoped to locate a connection between such rivers as the Little Kanawha and the West Fork. Even for light canoes a practicable route could not be found, and Washington had to content

Waldo Hotel, Clarksburg, W. Va.



Above: The Waldo was the place to stay in times gone by. The historic building was a special stop for bicentennial celebrators. Postcard view, date unknown.

Below: Clarksburg became a major distribution center for several counties. Ruhl Koblegard & Company supplied wholesale groceries. Photographer and date unknown. Both photos courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection/WVU.



himself with exploring the Ohio. He made a trial run downriver from the Monongahela to the mouth of the Kanawha and reported in his journal, "it is navigable all the way, no shallows, no rapids. I drank of this clear sparkling water." But he saw that a more direct route across Western Virginia would have to be by land.

Washington was not alone in telling of the beauties of the country west of the hills. Many of the militia who fought with him in the French and Indian War saw the potential and returned to make their homes there. The same occurred after the Revolutionary War, when soldiers were paid with land bounties of up to 400 acres, which they could either sell or inhabit. Washington proved his interest in Western Virginia by personally buying about 35,000 acres from militiamen.

Soon there was a series of forts along the Monongahela and its tributaries, at Washington's recommendation no more than 25 miles apart, and families felt safer in coming to this region. A great influx of folks busily built cabins and planted corn fields to establish their possession of a piece of this land of promise.

It was a tremendous real estate development. The task of surveying and accounting for all the acreage was centered at land offices, which opened at Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg, where communities had

grown up around the forts. Harrison County historian Dorothy Davis says, "Morgantown, as the seat of the Virginia General Court, was the legal center. Decisions were made in Morgantown. When Harrison County was formed in 1784, many would break away from the old county and go to the new to get in on the 'ground floor.' When Wood County was formed from Harrison County the move was to Parkersburg."

Washington's early transportation dreams were not forgotten as the region developed. Trappers and pioneers could send their products east on the backs of horses or mules, but as population grew roads needed to be hacked out to accommodate wagonloads of goods. Before the Revolution the Virginia Assembly authorized construction of a state road from Winchester through Romney to Morgantown. To continue the project, in 1786 they appointed a commission to open a wagon road from the state road to Clarksburg and on to the mouth of the Little Kanawha at Parkersburg. The road from Clarksburg to Parkersburg was blazed by following a compass due west. When the toll road opened in 1838 and the Morgantown-Clarksburg turnpike was completed two years later, these three towns were open to the eastern markets and to steamboats on the Ohio.

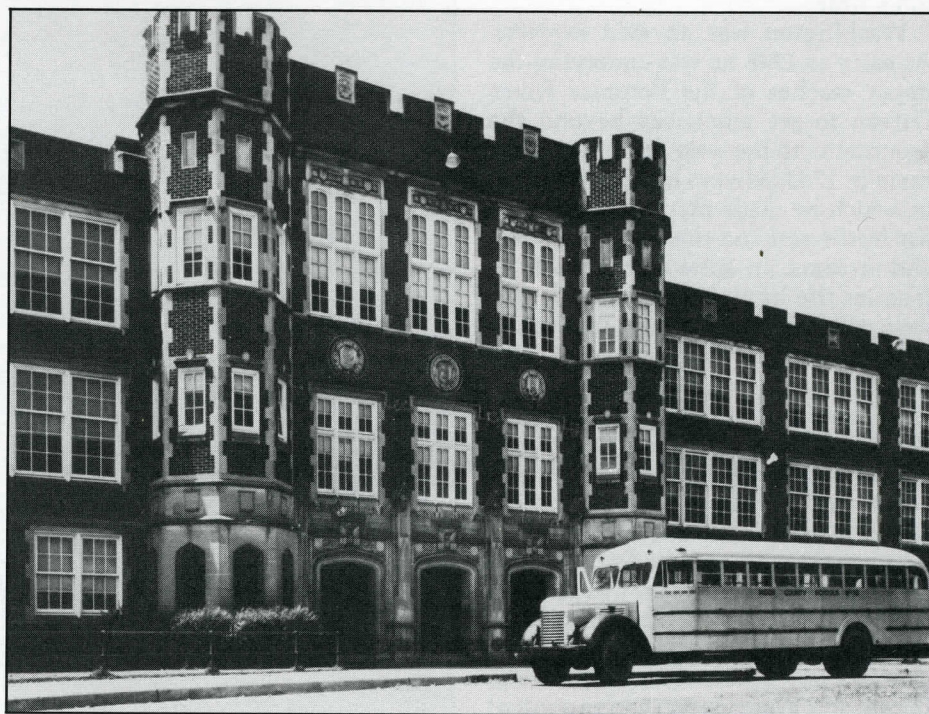
The early settlers had to survive, first

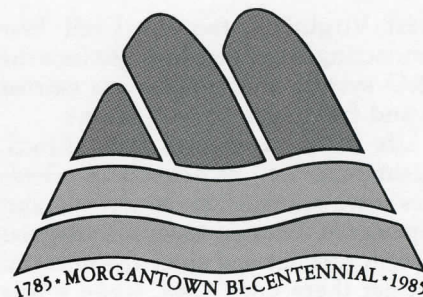
of all, a purely physical struggle for existence. To clear land, build shelters and harvest crops with primitive tools was tedious and exhausting. But they were trying the new territory not only for themselves but also for coming generations. They wanted their children to have the educational opportunities that would have been available had they remained safely on the east coast. So it was not long before log schoolhouses appeared to provide at least a taste of book learning. As towns developed, academies for higher education became one of the first concerns.

Randolph Academy in Clarksburg, the first west of the Appalachians, was chartered by the Virginia legislature in 1787. The ambitious dream was to establish for the territory west of the mountains and north of the Little Kanawha an institution such as the College of William and Mary in coastal Virginia. The charter provided that one-sixth of surveyors' fees from surrounding counties, which formerly had gone east to the famous Tidewater college, would now be diverted to Randolph Academy. Ideally this tax would have provided a sound base for Randolph, and academies established later, if it had been possible to monitor wilderness surveyors. In fact, the support was erratic. The dream did not materialize due to inconstant funding and because poor road conditions limited



Education was important to the growth of the bicentennial cities. This is Parkersburg High School, built on 27 acres in 1917. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Artcraft Studio, Parkersburg.





Morgantown threw a grand historical costume ball as part of its celebration. Bill Bonsall and Margaret Nesius were among dancers at the June 1 affair. Photo by Judith Walls.

the school to the local area, but it was an example of the importance given to education.

Academies were subscription schools which provided "adequate middle class education and fair training for ministers, teachers, lawyers and politics, with emphasis on politics," according to Dorothy Davis. In Morgantown a common school was established in 1803, and Monongalia Academy in 1814. Then followed The Morgantown Female Academy and Woodburn Female Seminary, earning the town a reputation as an educational center. A quote from the late Dr. Earl Core's *The Monongalia Story* called it "a good place to send your children, one of the most healthful spots on the banks of the Monongahela in a village noted for its morality and intelligence."

The academies were often church-related, with preachers serving as teachers. These schools attracted an educated, professional class of people to the area, notably the Reverend George Towers, Oxford-trained and a fine teacher. Towers was the director of Clarksburg's Randolph Academy from 1795 to 1814. Committed preacher-teachers were active in Morgantown and Parkersburg as well, with the result that, as historian John Alex-

ander Williams wrote, "The transition from buckskin to broadcloth, from soldier and surveyor to lawyer, legislator and judge, rarely took more than two generations. The sons of Zackquill Morgan, for example, served in the legislature."

After the Civil War, academies where the privileged were taught gave way to free public schools where all were given the opportunity. The legislature of West Virginia, at its first meeting in 1863, passed an act establishing schools for black children as well as white. Thomas Jefferson's democratic philosophy, "to have free schools good enough for the rich so they might be good enough for the poor," was bearing fruit.

By 1867 Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg had all established public schools. In Clarksburg what was originally the Randolph Academy became part of the free school system and a building on the site has been used continually for education. The present Towers School was built in 1895. When Alexander Wade became superintendent of schools at Morgantown in 1875, he implemented a merit system for examining and promoting students that was adopted by many other states. The Parkersburg school

system grew and maintained high standards. The year 1917 saw the construction of a high school on 27 acres of land, for a long time the largest public school in West Virginia.

Several citizens of the three cities were involved in the creation of the State of West Virginia. When Virginia seceded from the Union, Clarksburg became a center for the statehood movement. A convention led by John Carlile of the city summoned the first Wheeling Convention. At the second Wheeling Convention, in June 1861, delegates created a Unionist "Restored" government of Virginia, at the urging of Waitman T. Willey of Morgantown, and Francis H. Pierpont of Morgantown was named governor. In 1863, when West Virginia became a separate state, Arthur Boreman of Parkersburg became the first governor. Willey was one of the first U.S. senators.

Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg paced each other in their development. The peace after the Revolution, the exploration and use of natural resources, the beginning of a system of roads, and the founding of courts and educational institutions were among the common factors. But nothing had such impact as the railroads.

The Baltimore & Ohio Railway was completed to Frederick, Maryland, in 1832, but it took another 20 years to overcome the physical obstacles in almost every mile west of Cumberland. The adventurous B&O built so many tunnels through the hills that a later traveler said he understood what was meant by "underground railroad." In 1856 the first lines ran from Baltimore through Clarksburg to Parkersburg and 15 years later, when the 4,397-foot span was completed across the Ohio River, both the east and west were opened to

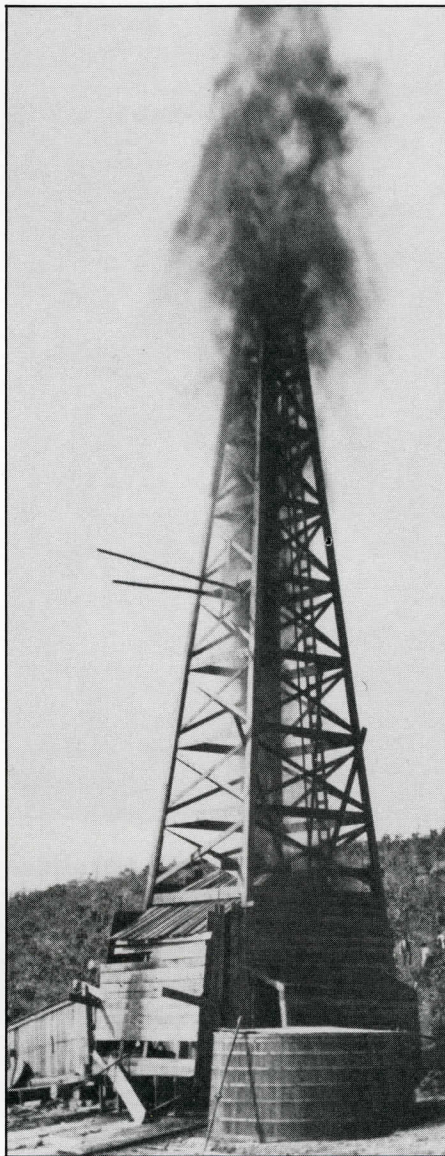
West Virginia. After the Civil War connecting lines were brought into the B&O system and freight was carried to and from surrounding towns.

Life revolved around the railroad. Business as well as household schedules were adjusted to its arrivals and departures. Morgantown's industrial growth was delayed since the rails did not get there until 1884, when a line was built through Morgantown from Fairmont to Connellsville, Pennsylvania. Immediately afterwards business boomed, the University had a dramatic increase in enrollment and several new buildings were added.

The first settlers had built their lives around the abundant resources above the ground. There was plenty of wood for cabins, to supply heat and furnish barrels for whiskey made from surplus corn. Exploration of the vast underground mineral deposits began with salt boring. Salt was used for tanning leather, fish and meat packing, and other commercial and household purposes, and later formed the basis for such chemicals as sodium, chlorine, magnesium and many pharmaceuticals. Salt production was important enough to the economy that the first bank in Clarksburg, founded by John George Jackson in 1814, was named the Saline Bank.

The first commercial use of coal came in 1840, when thousands of tons were dug to supply fuel for the special furnaces to evaporate moisture from salt. It was the beginning of the coal industry, which with the building of the railroads would become an economic giant. Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg each benefited magnificently. Coal company offices were located in these cities and their money was banked there.

Natural gas, the invisible fuel, was discovered in 1824 incidental to salt boring. The supply of natural gas seemed limitless and had an impact similar to coal on the economy. It attracted important industries to the three cities. Among them was pottery making, which found gas much better than the wood or coal used in earlier days. Zinc, carbon and graphite preparation also required natural gas, and a Clarksburg carbon company, in one year, used a billion cubic feet. Tin plate mills likewise depended on gas. The American Sheet and Tin Plate Company's payrolls boosted the economy in Mor-



Gushers from surrounding oil fields made Parkersburg a petroleum boom town at the turn of the century. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Artcraft Studio, Parkersburg.

gantown and Clarksburg until the Great Depression.

But glass was the big industry drawn by abundant gas. No fuel is better for the controlled heat that maintains a mixture of silica, lime, potash and other elements at a temperature of 2,300 degrees F. until it becomes glass. Glass, all kinds of glass, has been one of the most important industries in the three cities, flourishing not only because of natural gas but also from native silica. Window glass, wire glass, bottles, jars, tumblers, fine cut lead crystal and ruby-colored table ware, technical glass and even children's marbles, were important regional products.

Clarksburg, Morgantown and Par-

kersburg were triplets born at the same time, during the peace that followed the Revolutionary War. As triplets in any family, they were influenced by the same hardy parents, and shared many of the same ambitions. As they grew they remained similar in some ways, but separate personalities emerged because of their different locations.

Parkersburg is a river town. Located at the confluence of the Little Kanawha and the Ohio, which continues on to the Mississippi, it is connected by water to the world. Since the first steamboat was launched on the Ohio in 1811, much of the business of the city has been related to shipping. When the turnpike, and later the railroad, linked Parkersburg with the east coast it became a center for transporting coal, clay, tobacco, lumber and heavy machinery to distant markets.

The discovery of oil and gas at Burning Springs, in neighboring Wirt County, in 1860 made the Parkersburg area "one of the largest petroleum regions then known on the globe," as local historian Kate Harris wrote in 1913. "It was like Eldorado and San Francisco as adventurers and capitalists rushed in." Oil barrels couldn't be made fast enough and pipelines had to be built from the wells to the refineries. Since Parkersburg had the supply stores, the banks, the refineries and the transportation outlet it became a prosperous petroleum center for the rest of the century.

"It was politically important, a city of senators, governors and judges from 1865 to 1900," Dr. Bernard Allen says of Parkersburg. "Arthur Boreman was the first governor of West Virginia and Johnson Newlon Camden, oil man and railroad developer, was a United States senator. In the 20th Century there was Jack Hoblitzel who managed Cecil Underwood's successful campaign for the governorship. It was Robert McDonough who urged John F. Kennedy to come to this state for a campaign which strongly influenced his election as president."

"Clarksburg is the typical West Virginia city because it is located well within the state and is the commercial center for the surrounding inner counties," commented Dorothy Davis. "It is a distribution center. At one time it had the largest independent wholesale grocery company in the world, the

Horner-Gaylord Company. They distributed Karo by the carload!

"The cattle industry has always undergirded the economy of Harrison County because of the bluegrass pasture land of the West Fork valley," she continued. "The roads had to be built to move the cattle to Baltimore and the eastern market to satisfy the Victorian taste for bluegrass beef. When the railroad came through, Lost Creek was the largest cattle shipping point on the whole B&O system."

Morgantown, on the "beautiful, blue Monongahela," grew rapidly from a small town to a thriving city as the 19th Century steamed its way into the 20th. The river, which provided transportation only in the rainy seasons, became navigable all year after the construction of locks and dams. The first steamboats arrived in 1889 and coal barges soon became a familiar sight.

In 1895 the B&O Railway connected Morgantown with Connellsville and soon after George C. Sturgiss, an influential and far-sighted citizen, promoted the building of another line to the regional B&O center at Grafton. With river and rail transportation connecting to all points, Morgantown became a link between the resource wealth of northern West Virginia and the hungry factories of Pittsburgh.

The University was Morgantown's greatest asset. First established following the Civil War as an agriculture college under the federal land grant program, it was a small school in a quiet town. With the arrival of the railroad it grew in enrollment and branches of learning. Today West Virginia University is a combination of several colleges and a center for research in as many fields. Since 1912 it has reached out to serve each county through the Agriculture Extension Program, and problems in the sciences and engineering have often been referred to the University for solution. As Dr. Earl Core wrote in *Morgantown: A Bicentennial History*, "One hundred years ago most of the money in Morgantown resulted from agricultural pursuits; fifty years ago most of it came from coal mining or factories. Today it is from the University."

Two hundred years have passed since the triplet cities were born. Children of the wilderness, they were cradled in log forts and suckled off the opulent



What's a celebration without fireworks? Morgantown closed its day-long festivities of October 17 with a spectacular display over the Monongalia County Courthouse. Photo by Judith Walls.

earth. Their family albums include pictures of leaders and followers, both honorable and dishonorable, with scenes of serene as well as tortured land.

In short, the years have been both powerful and painful. In our celebrations we are naturally inclined to remember the good parts of our heritage. We glory in past achievements and often turn only to those happy pages. But as we look to the future it is time to reflect upon the whole picture, to focus on past errors and make an effort to see that they are not repeated. There was growth, but there was also blood and tears. Peculiar politics, poor working conditions in mines and factories, child labor in the glass plants, and lack of concern for the environment and the limits of underground resources are all part of our heritage. George Washington's "highways of communication and commerce" were built, but too often they seemed to run only one way, taking our natural wealth out and bringing too little in return.

Parkersburg, Morgantown and Clarksburg are mindful of these things

as they take stock of the past. Their commemorations note both trials and accomplishments, and pay tribute to ordinary people as well as the rich and powerful. Immigrants celebrate along with the old blood, and all are aware of the present need for adaptive growth in the face of changing times. Mainly, however, the mood is one of pride and optimism for the three West Virginia cities. After all, they can look back on two full centuries, and forward to a third. ★

Further Reading:

The following books have been published as part of the bicentennial celebrations:

Parkersburg: A Bicentennial History, by Dr. Bernard Allen.

Among These Hills: A Child's History of Harrison County, by James M. Pool.

The Harrison County Bicentennial Album, a compilation of articles from the County and City bicentennials.

Morgantown: A Bicentennial History, by West Virginia University Public History Option, Barbara Howe, Director.

It is December now, and the tobacco barns of West Virginia are emptying fast. The 1985 crop is on its way to the big auction warehouses in Huntington and neighboring Kentucky and Ohio. The sales floors opened for business in mid-November and marketing will continue intermittently through early January, with Mountain State burley being picked over by buyers

Tobacco Barns

Photoessay by LeRoy G. Schultz

from Reynolds and other big tobacco companies. When it's over, several thousand West Virginia farmers will be left a few thousand dollars richer for a hard season of work.

The tobacco crop is tightly administered, with U.S. Department of Agriculture programs overseeing acreage allotments and basic prices. About 2,300 acres were grown statewide this year,





Above: This mid-summer crop is still a long way from harvest. Note the tobacco blooms, which later will be carefully removed by hand. The barn and tobacco field were photographed in Lincoln County.

Right: The butt ends of tobacco stalks are speared onto wooden stakes in the field, with the stakes then laid between poles to hang the wilting plants upside down. An old log corn crib has been adapted to house this Putnam County burley.

Left: This 1870's Cabell County barn, demolished since the picture was made, was the oldest known tobacco barn in West Virginia. Unchinked logs offered ideal ventilation for the curing crop, while providing protection from the rain.





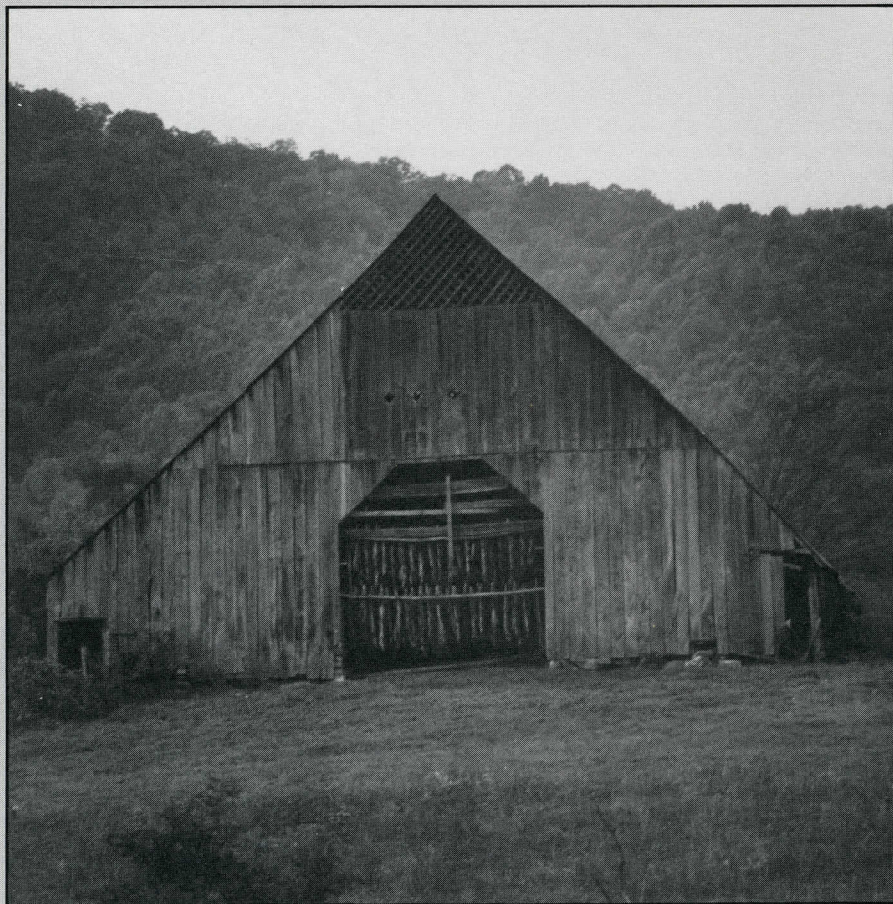
Above: West Virginia's largest tobacco barn was a marvel of scientific farming principles. Controlled ventilation was provided by continuous ridge vents and an ingenious system of vertical side doors. The latter were joined by tie rods and worked in unison, like louvers or sideways venetian blinds; note that a group of five of the tall, narrow doors stand open here. The Mason County barn, built by the West Virginia University Extension Service in 1950, is no longer used for tobacco curing.

Left: Missing planks and open doors provide the ventilation necessary for another crop of Putnam burley. Underlying construction indicates that this was once a smaller two-story log structure, with side expansions and board siding added later.



Above: Well-engineered barns are one solution, but tobacco can be cured in about any dry place in a pinch. These loose leaves have been strung across the porch of an abandoned Putnam County farmhouse.

Below: A Wayne County barn of a highly unusual design. The modified A-frame provides sufficient height for several tiers of tobacco, while the upper lattice permits flow-through ventilation. The large central door provides easy access for farm vehicles of all sizes.



with the average farm family producing perhaps 1,500 pounds of cured tobacco on an acre or less of land. The farmer knew to expect about \$1.75 per pound on average, with 30 cents of that going back to the support program. Nothing can take the backbreaking work out of tobacco farming, but the overall management of the crop is highly structured these days.

It wasn't always like that, for the early history of the weed is chaotic and colorful. Tobacco goes way back in the history of West Virginia, and back to the earliest days of our mother state. Tobacco was the first reliable cash crop in the colony of Virginia, so valuable that for many years it functioned as currency. Virginia's first governor's mansion was paid for with 22,500 pounds of tobacco, and small, middling and large planters traded on the worth of their crop. The trade was managed through agents in London, and its handling formed one of the first grievances against the home country.

Virginians began settling the western mountains in the 18th Century, carving farms from the wild territory that would become the state of West Virginia. Tobacco was an important crop on many such farms, grown primarily for home consumption in the early period of isolation. Western tobacco entered the commerce of the mountains as soon as individual farmers found a route to market.

In the earliest times, European settlers had adopted the Indian custom, smoking their tobacco in pipes. Chewing and the taking of snuff later became popular. Habits changed again in the 19th Century, when many Americans were introduced to cigars in the Mexican War. Tobacco entered the modern manufacturing age after the Civil War, when the Duke, brothers of North Carolina put together the giant American Tobacco monopoly. In West Virginia, Wheeling emerged as a center of tobacco manufacturing, particularly cigars and chewing tobacco. Today, historic Marsh-Wheeling Stogies continue to provide a bracing smoke for many, and Mail Pouch chewing tobacco remains a regional favorite.

The West Virginia leaf makes its way to the Wheeling tobacco companies and to the larger tobacco centers in Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina. Most of the state's tobacco now comes from the southwestern counties, with

Mason, Lincoln, Cabell, Jackson and Putnam being major producers. Tobacco is mostly a family crop, according to the State Department of Agriculture, though some growers have assembled sizable acreages through leasing the individual allotments of others.

West Virginia tobacco is mostly air-cured, unlike the flue-cured product of other places. Curing is a slow process, dependent on time and weather, and the crop's last stop on its way to auction is in barns specially adapted for the purpose. Tobacco is harvested in late summer, still hand-cut as for centuries past. The sturdy stalks are carefully split onto four-foot wooden stakes. The stakes of green tobacco are hung in tiers in the barn, starting at the highest point in the back and working toward the door. During the curing period the farmer must be alert to barn burn caused by improper ventilation, using his barn doors to regulate the flow of air and guard against the dampness of rainy weather. Curing takes about 90 days, followed by stripping when the tobacco comes "in case," a special time in late fall when the moisture content of dried tobacco is right for pliant handling. Some farmers still tie their graded tobacco into "hands," binding the leaf stems into bunches as big as a man can grasp, but most West Virginia tobacco now goes to market in bales.

Tobacco is in the barn for only a few months of the year, so few barns were built exclusively for that short use. However, many barns in the southwestern counties were built with tobacco in mind, the special needs of the crop influencing the design of a building that might also be used for other purposes. These versatile tobacco barns were outfitted with tiers of poles throughout their upper regions, to accommodate the tobacco stakes. Special attention was paid to ventilation, with many of the early structures built of spaced logs.

The barns shown here are representative of West Virginia tobacco barns, the products of native ingenuity and local materials. They are aging structures, some of them abandoned and deteriorating. In time most will be replaced by modern prefab buildings of one type or another, but for now they stand as monuments to one part of West Virginia agriculture. ♣



This Mason County tobacco farm is more than a century old. The simple double-pen log construction allows for a dogtrot breezeway in the middle, a versatile plan providing sheltered storage of barn equipment during other seasons.

What better barnside advertising in tobacco-rich Mason County? Kentucky Club pipe tobacco is another product of Bloch Brothers, the Wheeling company that manufactures the famous Mail Pouch chewing tobacco.



School Work

By J. Z. Ellison

I was 11 years old when I first got the bid to be janitor of the Hans Creek school in Monroe County. It was the summer of 1927. The school superintendent published a notice in the *Monroe Watchman*, the county paper, naming the day and hour that he would be at the one-room school to accept bids. Anyone 11 or older could bid and the low bidder got the job. I bid \$20 for the nine months, payable two weeks after the term was over.

My father's farm was a mile from the schoolhouse. I crossed Hans Creek on a footbridge maintained by the Board of Education. Roads in that part of the county were dirt and so bad in winter and spring that we bought a license for our Model T for only six months of the year, but walking was best for such a short distance anyhow. I left home at eight o'clock and had time for my duties before school took up at nine.

The job required me, mornings, to open the building; hang the flag on the outside pole in good weather, or inside in foul weather; dust the desks and window sills; and, in winter, to remove the ashes from the wood-burning stove, kindle a fire, and have the building warm when the students and teacher arrived. When school let out at four o'clock, I was to take down the flag; fold it and put it on a shelf; sweep and lock up. Once a month the floor was to be mopped with oil.

A few days before school opened in the fall, I spent a day cleaning the building, washing windows—Mother furnished a cake of Bon Ami for that—and oiling the floor. Teacher Mary Miller came that day with the year's supplies. They included the flag, a coil of window cord for the flagpole, a mortised wooden box of chalk, new erasers, a new broom, a five-gallon can of floor oil and a mop.

The superintendent took bids for eight cords of firewood at the same time the bidding for janitor took place. Most of the cordwood was so green it wouldn't burn in hell with the blower open, and it was the janitor's job to

supply the kindling. That was hard. Kerosene, or lamp oil as we called it, was too expensive and the weekly *Monroe Watchman* was hardly thick enough to start one fire, let alone five. Before cold weather I hitched our pony to a sled and went to the ridge to grub pine stumps. The best stumps were found on shale banks, some so steep I had to help the pony pull the empty sled. The roots were rich in resin and made excellent kindling. I also hunted up broken fence rails.

The schoolhouse had a six-foot vestibule which ran the width of the building. In one end I neatly stacked my kindling. In the other end, to the right, was a row of 20-penny nails for students to hang coats, hats or shawls. These nails were not assigned like lockers, but something like "squatter's rights" applied. I used the same nail all the years I went to school there. Above the nails were shelves for our lunches, usually biscuit and corn bread sandwiches, filled with fried pork, apple butter or some such.

The floor oiling took place when the weather was nice, so that furniture could be moved outside. We looked forward to "oil day." Classes ended about two o'clock. Some students cleaned around the schoolhouse and others helped with the furniture and mopping. The treatment made the building highly inflammable and the floor slick, but it did keep the dust down.

My janitor's job did not include cleaning privies. Hans Creek ran beneath a considerable cliff just across the road from the schoolhouse. The girls' toilet was located to the left of the cliff in a field near the creek. It was furnished with a large mail order catalog tied by a string where it could swing freely. This kept the field mice from raiding the paper for nesting material. Flood water washed under the privy from time to time. The boys had no privy and went down under the cliff itself. The large overhanging ledge was a favorite place for us boys to gather on rainy days during recess or lunch

hour—out of sight of the teacher and of sisters who might tell on us for using the forbidden tobacco.

Drinking water was carried from a sulphur spring about halfway between the boys' cliff and the girls' privy. The big tin bucket with its dipper sat on a bench in the vestibule. Water carrying was not a part of my job. In fact, it was such a privilege to go to the spring that the teacher had to see that each student got a turn. When rain raised the level of the creek it sometimes surrounded the wooden hive which collected the spring water. Then we would go about a quarter-mile to a spring near Peter Larew's house.

There was no school yard for me to take care of. The schoolhouse was located in a crop field. The road fence came to the front corners of the building, and the grassy road bank and dirt road were our playground, except when crop rotation called for meadow around the school. Then we could play in the field. But when corn was to be planted, the plowing came right to the building. Mr. Larew, who owned the farm, hired Frank Akers to do the plowing. Frank was old enough to smile and wink at the teacher, but just barely past the age for required school attendance. He plowed so close that the double-tree behind the horses would rake all around the building. Sometimes Frank would plow the last furrow twice, showing half of his wad of tobacco as he grinned in the window. A few of us boys chewed a little and he knew we would like to be out there with him.

The school term ended soon after spring plowing. I turned the key in to the teacher and my job was done. I got the janitor's job the next year, too. But after that my oldest sister got the teacher's job, and Father sent me to Greenville to school. It was six miles horseback each way, but he knew I wouldn't take orders from my sister.

We expect to publish a feature article on Mr. Ellison's later education at Greenville in a future GOLDENSEAL.
—ed.

Timothy Corn

Folk Tales from the Eastern Panhandle

As Told to Lucy Baker Ebert

Timothy Corn is not a make-believe character. He was as real as you and I are, maybe more so. Timothy owned and lived on Lot No. 7 in the Patterson Creek Manor that Joseph Neaville surveyed for Lord Fairfax in 1793, as is recorded in the Hardy County deed book. This lot is now in the Burlington community, on the farm of Garland Ebert, Jr. We do know that Timothy Corn was buried on what is now the Roy Whipp farm, three miles northeast of Burlington in present Mineral County.

Timothy had a roving nature. In fact, he did more roving than farming, spending most of his time hunting and fishing. And how he loved to talk. He talked to everyone who would listen, and rarely was there a person that couldn't take time to listen to one of Timothy Corn's stories. After his time, the stories were handed down in the local families. Grandfather John Arnold told them to his children. His son, Uncle David Arnold of Knobley Farm, in his wonderful way of telling stories, told the Timothy Corn stories to me. Uncle Dave is dead now, so I'll pass them along. I won't vouch for their truthfulness. I'll merely tell them to you as they were told to me long ago.

One fine day Timothy Corn fished all day long. It was an unlucky day for him. A turtle grabbed his last bait and broke the line, trying to get away. Timothy started home without a fish. To add to his dismay, while crawling over some sycamore roots he looked down into a deep hole in the creek and saw barrells of the nicest kind of fish swimming around. It did not take Timothy long to figure out a way to catch some of them. He took two pieces of string from his pocket, with which he tied the bottoms of his pants tight to his legs. Then he jumped into the creek, dived down deep, unbuckled his belt and came slowly up through the school of fish. Very laboriously he

climbed up on the creekbank, got way back from the water and untied his pant legs. Out fell a dishpan full of the nicest bass that he had seen all summer and almost a tub full of sunnies, besides enough trout for his breakfast.

Timothy liked to hunt too. One time he spent his whole day turkey hunting and had no luck. On his way home he spied some turkeys going to roost, but he only had one bullet left for his gun. The turkeys were roosting on a crooked tree limb, or he would have shot them all straight through and got the whole bunch with a single shot. As it was, he had to climb back on the hillside, level with the end of the branch that they were roosting on, and shoot into the end of the limb. That cracked the limb, and as it snapped shut the turkeys' feet were caught in the crack. Timothy then cut the branch off and carried it home with six turkeys caught in it.

Timothy Corn was also a big game hunter. Over on Branch Mountain there is a peculiar knob, and on that knob lived a tremendous big deer who could watch out in all directions. Try hard as he could, Timothy Corn could not get near enough to shoot the alert animal. Finally he had an idea. By measuring very carefully and heating his gun barrel in a fire, he bent the barrel to the exact curve of the knob. Then all Timothy had to do was to shoot around the curve of the knob with his curved gun and wait. Soon they sped by, the bullet hell-bent and covered with sweat, just a few feet behind the deer.

On another of Timothy Corn's hunting days, he had shot all his bullets and still got nothing. He was on his way home, eating a peach that he found in his pocket, when he saw a deer. He used the peach seed for a bullet and hit the deer but didn't kill it. Some several years later he was hunting in the same woods with the same luck. He saw a peach tree and stepped

up on what he thought was a log to reach for a peach, when the log and tree raised up and started off. The tree was growing right out of the deer that Timothy had shot with a peach seed years before.

That's the way Uncle Dave Arnold told that story. The late Gip Martin of Antioch ended it another way. Timothy saw the peach tree, according to Mr. Martin, put his gun down and climbed the tree. The tree raised up and he saw it was growing out of a deer, so he caught it by the horns, then reached down and cut its throat.

Like any good hunter, Timothy Corn was proud of his dogs. Once he attended the big Muster Day of the militia at Burlington. While there he kept bragging about his coon dogs. Mr. Lige Hough (the name is now spelled High) from Purgitsville also had some coon dogs that he was very proud of. Mr. Hough and Timothy got into a hot argument over whose dogs were the best. Finally they agreed to try out the dogs and see which could tree the most coons in one night. A keg of whiskey was put up for the winner and held at the old Homestead Hotel at Burlington.

On a good October night, Timothy went over to Hough's place and they tried out Mr. Hough's coon dogs first. They had a good catch, got all the coons that the two men could carry home. On the next sultry night when the trails were good, Mr. Hough came to Timothy's and they took his dogs up Dry Run Hollow. The dogs treed a coon right off but Timothy said, "Let them alone," and the men sat down to wait. They could hear the dogs go off on a trail and back to the same tree, off on another trail and back to the tree. The men talked and dozed. At daybreak, Timothy figured his dogs must be getting tired so he and Mr. Hough went to check on them. They saw a hollow tree with a big crack, and the crack moving in and out, in and out. It turned out that Timothy's dogs had rounded up

every coon in the district and that tree was so full that when they breathed they spread the crack out. Mr. Hogh said, "Timothy, you beat me. The keg of whiskey is yours but I certainly would like to sample it."

Timothy Corn had a lot of dogs, no special breed, just dogs. He had one hound-dog that he especially liked. He almost always kept that hound-dog, named Monie, with him. He claimed she was the fastest running dog in the world, and she was fast. That got her into trouble. One day while Timothy was hunting, Monie took out after a deer. Just about the time she got up to full speed she ran smack into a sapling tree. Monie was going so fast and the sapling was so sturdy that it split her right in two, half and half. Timothy came running up, took in the situation at a glance and tore off his shirt. He slapped the dog back together and tied it up good with his shirt. Two weeks later when he took the bandage off, he found that he had put her together wrong—two legs up and two legs down. This worried Timothy until he tried her out for speed and found she could run just as fast and much further than before. She would run on two legs until they got tired and then roll over and run on the other two. Yes, old Monie was a remarkable dog.

Timothy Corn generally used Monie for a deer dog, back in those days before the game laws. One day they were deer hunting down on Hanging Rock Mountain. Monie started running a big deer. Soon they were going so fast that they couldn't stop when they came to the river. The deer jumped the river and just as it left the ground, Monie grabbed hold of the big deer's tail and was pulled across to the other side. Timothy had to swim across. It was a cold day, and when he got across the river Monie had killed the big deer, so Timothy built a fire and ate venison steak while he dried off.

Considering his habits, it's not surprising that Timothy Corn had very little money. Nonetheless, he had a big family. All his children were, of necessity, thrifty children. They would start out in the morning without a penny. Then they would start trading shoes, hats, coats, anything they had on. By evening when they came home each child would have his own things back and always some change in his pocket.





As I told you at the start, Timothy Corn was real and I hope you still believe that after reading of his unusual adventures. If not, we have church records to prove it. Actually we have them second-hand, from an old newspaper clipping given to me by Ann Vandiver Stout, Uncle Dave Arnold's niece. It is taken from the Keyser Tribune dated February 16, 1878. The editor, C. H. Vandiver, headed his article, "Scraps from an old record book kept by the Burlington Baptist Church." Mr. Vandiver wrote of church discipline, which it seems Timothy needed from time to time.

"Perhaps the most conspicuous character we shall refer to is 'Timothy Corn,'" the editor wrote. "Timothy has been handed down as the traditional liar of that period. We have understood his yarns were always of the sensational and extravagant type, not

malicious in get up or purpose, but, simply to gain notoriety for his profession. It was Timothy who vowed that one of his boys had run a hundred furrows, each a mile long, before breakfast. Upon another occasion he solemnly declared that while in the woods one day, he came across an immense lot of live fish in a hole of water where a tree had blown over.

"It appears that Timothy had got his name on the church roll and his besetting sin caused the brethren no little trouble. Timothy was up before the church on divers occasions. At the April 1812 session the record reads: 'Then met the church at Timothy Corn's in order to do business, and after singing and praying, proceeded as follows: Bro. Timothy Corn excommunicated till God restore him by humble repentance.' Then comes the indictment: 'Timothy Corn is charged with telling

lies and did not give satisfaction to this body therefore he withdrew himself and is excommunicated till God restore him by humble repentance.' Nothing more appears on the record for or against Timothy until February 1821, nine years afterwards, when it appears Timothy Corn came forward, made a confession satisfactory to the church and was restored to his seat among us."

There you have it, good proof of Timothy's existence. I am glad he got back in the good graces of the church but not sure he ever entirely reformed. It seems he even stretched the story of his repentance, in fact. "In telling the story of his excommunication from the church," according to Uncle Dave Arnold, "Timothy added that he was so very sorry over the whole trouble that he wept hogshead after hogshead after hogshead of tears over it." ★

The Pat Gainer Folklore Endowment

Professor Patrick W. Gainer spent a lifetime tracking down the stories and songs of West Virginia's folk heritage, working from his home in Gilmer County and his office at West Virginia University. His collecting ended with his death in 1981, but the University recently announced that the important work will continue under the auspices of a new Patrick Ward Gainer Endowment for Regional Folklore Study. The endowment will operate from the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, the archives branch of the University Library.

The Gainer Endowment was established with \$8,000 in seed money donated by Borg-Warner Corporation, and the further gift of Gainer's own collection by his family. The Gainer folklore material, much of it gathered during his 30 years at WVU, includes a dozen feet of manuscripts, 150 tape recordings, books, photographs and other items. John Cuthbert, associate curator of the West Virginia Collection, notes that the material is an important addition to University archives, and will complement the earlier collections of Louis Watson Chappell and other folklorists.

"As the sole folklorist at the University and the primary scholar in the state from the end of World War II until the early 1970's, he bridged a tremendous gap in the history of folklore scholarship in the state," according to Cuthbert. The curator added that "Dr. Gainer was one of the few academic folklorists who grew up in the tradition he studied. He possessed a special ability to identify with the tradition bearers of his native region and was able to penetrate barriers impervious to outsiders."

Gainer, a Gilmer County native, studied English at West Virginia University during the 1920's. Master folklorists Chappell and John Harrington Cox were both on the faculty at the time, and Gainer first began collecting

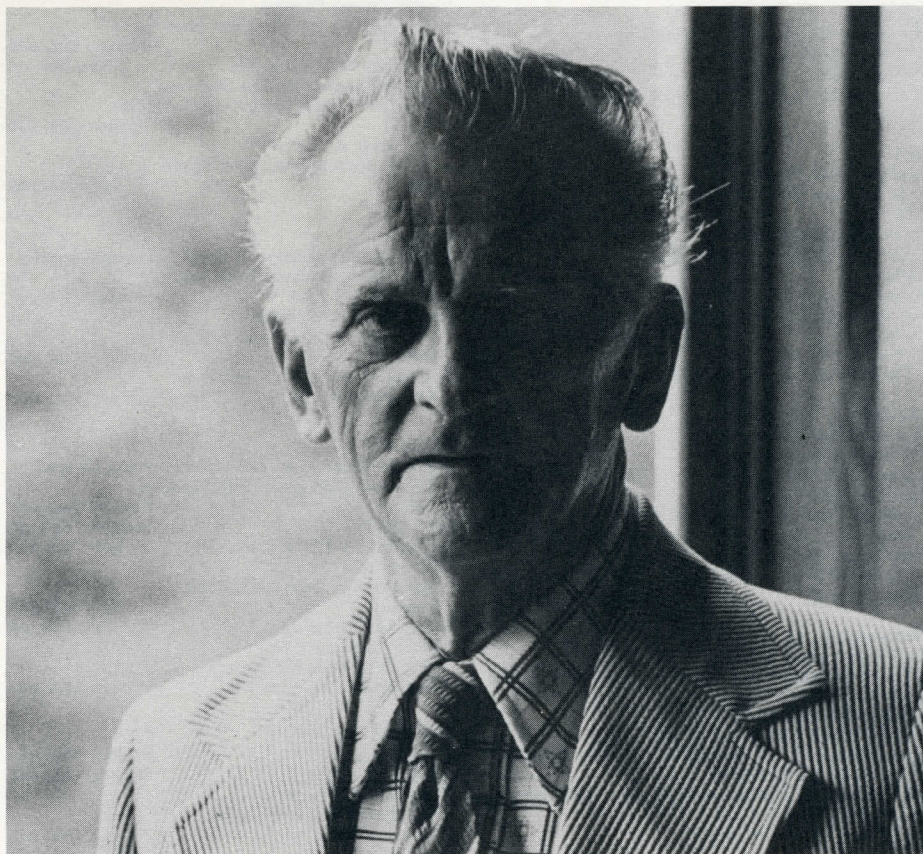
traditional ballads under their tutelage. He himself became a WVU professor in 1946, after further study at the University of Chicago and St. Louis University. In 1950 he established the West Virginia State Folk Festival in his hometown of Glenville, the forerunner of the many such festivals today. Glenville remains one of the most authentic festivals in the state, as accessible to native musicians as to scholars, and thus serves as a fitting monument to a man "born to the culture."

Today Dr. Gainer's work survives in his books, *Folk Songs of the West Virginia Hills* and *Witches, Ghosts and Signs: Folklore of the Southern Appalachians*, in two recordings of "Folk Songs of the Allegheny Mountains," and of course in the large archival collection now housed at the West Vir-

ginia Collection. His spirit will live on in the Gainer Endowment, which officials note will not be used in the routine processing of the new collection, but rather for the future encouragement of folklore work of the sort Pat Gainer undertook while alive.

Those wishing to support the Patrick Ward Gainer Endowment for Regional Folklore study may make tax-deductible contributions. Checks payable to the WVU Foundation/Gainer Endowment should be sent to the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Colson Hall, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506. Contributors of \$100 or more will receive a free copy of the "Edden Hammons Collection" record album, reviewed in the Summer 1985 GOLDENSEAL.

West Virginia folklorist Patrick Ward Gainer, 1904-1981.



Goldenseal Index

Volume 11, 1985

Articles which appeared in Volume 11 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

In the Subject category, articles are listed under their main topic, with many articles cross-referenced under alternate Subject headings. When more than one article appears under a heading, the order is alphabetical by first word of title. Each entry is followed by the seasonal designation of the issue, issue volume and number, and page number. Short notices, such as appear in the regular column, "Current Programs, Events, Publications," are not included in the index.

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of the calendar year (e.g., Volume 10, Number 4).

Subject

Agriculture

- "A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
- Hard Work and Independence
The Showwalters of Eagle's Nest Ranch Spring; 11:1; p34
- Maple Sugar Time Spring; 11:1; p64
- No Place Better to Live
The Campbells of Monroe County Fall; 11:3; p25
- "Satisfied to Stay Here"
Nellie Fulk Hill of Sunnyside Farm Spring; 11:1; p52
- Tobacco Barns Winter; 11:4; p60

Architecture

- No Place Better to Live
The Campbells of Monroe County Fall; 11:3; p25
- Tobacco Barns Winter; 11:4; p60

Auctions

- Auctions and Auctioneers Summer; 11:2; p38

Chinaware

- The Homer Laughlin China Company
"There's Something about Dinnerware" Spring; 11:1; p9
- Ed Carson of the Homer Laughlin China Company Spring; 11:1; p19

Coal

- Juanita Farmer Hamby:
"In Life You Do What You Have To Do" Winter; 11:4; p42
- Three Sides to the Story
Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p53
- Walter Seacrist
A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p60
- "What Next?"
The Busy Life of Deemy Dick Fall; 11:3; p37

Commerce

- "A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
- Auctions and Auctioneers Summer; 11:2; p38
- From the Fields of Clover
Looking Back with Georgie Chambers Webb Fall; 11:3; p42
- "Getting on the Job Early"
The Priest Family of Franklin Fall; 11:3; p18
- Going 'Senging Winter; 11:4; p16

Construction

- "It Was Rough at Times"
The Memories of P. L. Johnston Spring; 11:1; p28

Crafts and Craftspeople

- Keeping to the Straight and Pure
The Stonewall Jackson Jubilee Summer; 11:2; p65
- Music From the Woodpile
Musician and Craftsman Ray Epler Fall; 11:3; p9
- One Piece at a Time
The Small World of Leland Feamster Spring; 11:1; p59

Crime and Punishment

- Doing Time on Kennison Mountain
Pocahontas County's Forgotten Prison Spring; 11:1; p38

Education

- School Work Winter; 11:4; p65
- "What Next?"
The Busy Life of Deemy Dick Fall; 11:3; p37

Ethnic Culture

- Faith, Knowledge and Practice
The Jews of Southern West Virginia Summer; 11:2; p16
- Purim
A Jewish Holiday Service Summer; 11:2; p20

Family History

- "A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
- Dear Anna
The Love Letters of Holly Jack Perkins Fall; 11:3; p30
- High Water and Growing Pains
A Huntingtonian Looks Back on 1913 Winter; 11:4; p9
- Juanita Farmer Hamby:
"In Life You Do What You Have To Do" Winter; 11:4; p42
- Stories My Father Told Me
"With all Tenderness and Devotion"
The Love Letters of Holly Jack Perkins Part II Winter; 11:4; p35
- With Never A Recipe
Family History and Dried Apple Pie Fall; 11:3; p59

Festivals

- Big Snow, Outhouses, and Good Growing Ground
The Champion Liars from Vandalia 1984 Spring; 11:1; p67
- Good Times at Glenville
The West Virginia State Folk Festival Summer; 11:2; p68
- Keeping to the Straight and Pure
The Stonewall Jackson Jubilee Summer; 11:2; p65

Folklore

- Big Snow, Outhouses, and Good Growing Ground
The Champion Liars from Vandalia 1984 Spring; 11:1; p67
- Fairy Diddles Summer; 11:2; p8
- Pat Gainer on Witches and Ghosts Fall; 11:3; p70
- "Tokens from the Past"
Supernatural Tales for the Fall Season Fall; 11:3; p65
- Stories My Father Told Me
Timothy Corn Fall; 11:3; p8
- Folk Tales from the Eastern Panhandle Winter; 11:4; p66

Folkways

- Going 'Senging Winter; 11:4; p16
- Maple Sugar Time Spring; 11:1; p64
- One Piece at a Time
The Small World of Leland Feamster Spring; 11:1; p59
- Water Witching Spring; 11:1; p47

Food

- With Never A Recipe
Family History and Dried Apple Pie Fall; 11:3; p59

History

- "A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
- Bicycles Winter; 11:4; p49
- Cities Celebrate
Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg Turn 200 Winter; 11:4; p54
- Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32
- "Getting on the Job Early"
The Priest Family of Franklin Fall; 11:3; p18
- High Water and Growing Pains
A Huntingtonian Looks Back on 1913 Winter; 11:4; p9
- The Homer Laughlin China Company Spring; 11:1; p9

Hunting and Trapping

- The Trappers' Rendezvous Summer; 11:2; p9

Industry

- Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32
- Dick Lloyd
He Kept the Gas Moving for 43 Years Summer; 11:2; p44
- "Getting on the Job Early"
The Priest Family of Franklin Fall; 11:3; p18
- "It Was Rough at Times"
The Memories of P. L. Johnston Spring; 11:1; p28
- The Homer Laughlin China Company Spring; 11:1; p9
- "There's Something About Dinnerware"
Ed Carson of the Homer Laughlin China Company Spring; 11:1; p19
- Three Sides to the Story
Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p53
- Walter Seacrist
A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p60

Labor History

- Three Sides to the Story
Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p53
- Walter Seacrist
A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine Wars Summer; 11:2; p60

Medicine

- "A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50

Music and Musicians

- All-Around Musicians
Ralph Hamrick and Early Country Music Spring; 11:1; p23
- Good Times at Glenville
The West Virginia State Folk Festival Summer; 11:2; p68
- "I Just Use a Bow"
Oldtime Fiddler Mike Humphreys Winter; 11:4; p30

Keeping to the Straight and Pure
The Stonewall Jackson Jubilee Summer; 11:2; p65
Mountain Music Winter; 11:4; p2
Music From the Woodpile
Musician and Craftsman Ray Epler Fall; 11:3; p9
Walter Seacrist
A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine
Wars Summer; 11:2; p60

Oil and Gas
Dick Lloyd
He Kept the Gas Moving for 43
Years Summer; 11:2; p44
From the Fields of Clover
Looking Back with Georgie Chambers
Webb Fall; 11:3; p42
"It Was Rough at Times"
The Memories of P. L. Johnston Spring; 11:1; p28

Politics
Three Sides to the Story
Governor Hatfield and the Mine
Wars Summer; 11:2; p53

Pottery
Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg
Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32
The Homer Laughlin China
Company Spring; 11:1; p9
"There's Something about Dinnerware"
Ed Carson of the Homer Laughlin China
Company Spring; 11:1; p19

Prisons
Doing Time on Kennison Mountain
Pocahontas County's Forgotten
Prison Spring; 11:1; p38

Radio
All-Around Musicians
Ralph Hamrick and Early Country
Music Spring; 11:1; p23

Religion
Faith, Knowledge and Practice
The Jews of Southern West
Virginia Summer; 11:2; p16
Purim
A Jewish Holiday Service Summer; 11:2; p20
"What Next?"
The Busy Life of Deemy Dick Fall; 11:3; p37

Recreation
Bicycles Winter; 11:4; p49
Cities Celebrate
Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg
Turn 200 Winter; 11:4; p54
Rock Springs Park
A Panhandle Playground Winter; 11:4; p22
Rock Springs Souvenirs:
Postcards of the Park Winter; 11:4; p25

Rivers and River Boating
Captain Charles Henry Stone
"God Gave Us a Beautiful Gift in These
Rivers" Summer; 11:2; p25
High Water and Growing Pains
A Huntingtonian Looks Back on
1913 Winter; 11:4; p9

Rural Life
"A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
Auctions and Auctioneers Summer; 11:2; p38
Big Snow, Outhouses, and Good Growing Ground
The Champion Liars from Vandalia
1984 Spring; 11:1; p67
Captain Charles Henry Stone
"God Gave Us a Beautiful Gift in These
Rivers" Summer; 11:2; p25
Dear Anna
The Love Letters of Holly Jack
Perkins Fall; 11:3; p30
From the Fields of Clover
Looking Back with Georgie Chambers
Webb Fall; 11:3; p42
Going 'Senging Winter; 11:4; p16
Hard Work and Independence
The Showwalters of Eagle's Nest
Ranch Spring; 11:1; p34

"I Just Use a Bow"
Oldtime Fiddler Mike
Humphreys Winter; 11:4; p30
Juanita Farmer Hamby: "In Life You Do What You
Have To Do" Winter; 11:4; p42
Maple Sugar Time Spring; 11:1; p64
Music From the Woodpile
Musician and Craftsman Ray Epler Fall; 11:3; p9
No Place Better to Live
The Campbells of Monroe County Fall; 11:3; p25
"Satisfied to Stay Here"
Nellie Fulk Hill of Sunnyside
Farm Spring; 11:1; p52
School Work Winter; 11:4; p65
Stories My Father Told Me Fall; 11:3; p8
The Trappers' Rendezvous Summer; 11:2; p9
Tobacco Barns Winter; 11:4; p60
Water Witching Spring; 11:1; p47
With Never a Recipe
Family History and Dried Apple
Pie Fall; 11:3; p59

Stoneware
Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg
Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32

Towns and Townspeople
"A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50
Bicycles Winter; 11:4; p49
Cities Celebrate
Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg
Turn 200 Winter; 11:4; p54
Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg
Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32
"Getting on the Job Early"
The Priest Family of Franklin Fall; 11:3; p18
High Water and Growing Pains
A Huntingtonian Looks Back at
1913 Winter; 11:4; p9
Rock Springs Park
A Panhandle Playground Winter; 11:4; p22
Rock Springs Souvenirs:
Postcards of the Park Winter; 11:4; p25

Toy Making
One Piece at a Time
The Small World of Leland
Feamster Spring; 11:1; p59

Author

Baker, Stanley
Crocks and Churns
A. P. Donaghho and Parkersburg
Stoneware Summer; 11:2; p32

Brand, Irene B.
Captain Charles Henry Stone
"God Gave Us a Beautiful Gift in These
Rivers" Summer; 11:2; p25

Brawley, Harry M.
Stories My Father Told Me Fall; 11:3; p8

Carper, Helen
With Never a Recipe
Family History and Dried Apple
Pie Fall; 11:3; p59

Crockett, Maureen
Doing Time on Kennison Mountain
Pocahontas County's Forgotten
Prison Spring; 11:1; p38

Deitz, Dennis
Maple Sugar Time Spring; 11:1; p64

Ebert, Lucy Baker
Timothy Corn
Folk Tales from the Eastern
Panhandle Winter; 11:4; p66

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Frazier, Kitty B.
From the Fields of Clover
Looking Back with Georgie Chambers
Webb Fall; 11:3; p42

Gainer, Jeff
Pat Gainer on Witches and Ghosts Fall; 11:3; p70

Giffin, Vernon O.
Tokens From the Past
Supernatural Tales for the Fall
Season Fall; 11:3; p65

Goodwin, Jacqueline G.
Going 'Senging Winter; 11:4; p16
The Trappers' Rendezvous Summer; 11:2; p9
Water Witching Spring; 11:1; p47

Hall, Patricia
"What Next?"
The Busy Life of Deemy Dick Fall; 11:3; p37

Henshey, Lori L.
Juanita Farmer Hamby: "In Life You Do What You
Have To Do" Winter; 11:4; p42

Hutchins, Steven
Fairy Diddles Summer; 11:2; p8

Julian, Norman
Hard Work and Independence
The Showwalters of Eagle's Nest
Ranch Spring; 11:1; p34

Manning, Martha Lewis
Cities Celebrate
Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg
Turn 200 Winter; 11:4; p54

MacQueen, Betty L.
Dear Anna
The Love Letters of Holly Jack
Perkins Fall; 11:3; p30
"With All Tenderness and Devotion"
The Love Letters of Holly Jack Perkins,
Part II Winter; 11:4; p35

Meador, Michael
Faith Knowledge and Practice
The Jews of Southern West
Virginia Summer; 11:2; p16

Newcomb, William B.
High Water and Growing Pains
A Huntingtonian Looks Back on
1913 Winter; 11:4; p9

Parker, Sharon
Keeping to the Straight and Pure
The Stonewall Jackson Jubilee Summer; 11:2; p65

Platania, Joseph
Three Sides to the Story
Governor Hatfield and the Mine
Wars Summer; 11:2; p53

Prichard, Arthur C.
Auctions and Auctioneers Summer; 11:2; p38

Samples, Mack
Good Times at Glenville
The West Virginia State Folk
Festival Summer; 11:2; p68

Schultz, LeRoy G.
Tobacco Barns Winter; 11:4; p60

Schwarz, Bob
Dick Lloyd
He Kept the Gas Moving for 43
Years Summer; 11:2; p44

Swartz, Gordon III
Walter Seacrist
A Songwriting Miner Remembers the Mine
Wars Summer; 11:2; p60

Spence, Robert
"I Just Use a Bow"
Oldtime Fiddler Mike
Humphreys Winter; 11:4; p30

"It Was Rough at Times"
The Memories of P. L. Johnston Spring; 11:1; p28
Music From the Woodpile
Musician and Craftsman Ray Epler Fall; 11:3; p9

Stevens, MaryAnne
No Place Better to Live
The Campbells of Monroe County Fall; 11:3; p25

Stover, Joyce
"A Really Fine Place"
Talking About Kenna Fall; 11:3; p50

Tribe, Ivan M.
All-Around Musicians
Ralph Hamrick and Early Country
Music Spring; 11:1; p23

Warnock, Charles
"Satisfied to Stay Here"
Nellie Fulk Hill of Sunnyside
Farm Spring; 11:1; p52

Weaver, Susan
Rock Springs Park
A Panhandle Playground Winter; 11:4; p22
Rock Springs Souvenirs:
Postcards of the Park Winter; 11:4; p25

Welch, Jack
The Homer Laughlin China
Company Spring; 11:1; p9
"There's Something About Dinnerware"
Ed Carson of the Homer Laughlin China
Company Spring; 11:1; p19

Winkles, Gary
"Getting on the Job Early"
The Priest Family of Franklin Fall; 11:3; p18

Yale, Andy
One Piece at a Time
The Small World of Leland
Fearnster Spring; 11:1; p59

Photographer

Chadwick, Doug Summer; 11:2; p16
Fall; 11:3; p25

Johnson, Robert Spring; 11:1; p31

Julian, Norman Spring; 11:1; p34

Keller, Michael Spring; 11:1; p7
Spring; 11:1; p12
Spring; 11:1; p23
Spring; 11:1; p47
Summer; 11:2; p9
Summer; 11:2; p25
Summer; 11:2; p32
Fall; 11:3; p9
Fall; 11:3; p50
Fall; 11:3; p59
Winter; 11:4; p16
Winter; 11:4; p30
Winter; 11:4; p42
Spring; 11:1; p18
Spring; 11:1; p23
Spring; 11:1; p28
Summer; 11:2; p38
Winter; 11:4; p49
Summer; 11:2; p44
Fall; 11:3; p37
Winter; 11:4; p60
Winter; 11:4; p54
Spring; 11:1; p52
Fall; 11:3; p42
Spring; 11:1; p59

Lee, Rick

Maggard Studio

Mitchell, Thomas

Prichard, Arthur

Rittenhouse, Ron

Schultz, LeRoy G.

Walls, Judith

Warnock, Charles

Wyrostok, Chuck

Yale, Andy

Location

Cabell County Winter; 11:4; p9

Clarksburg Winter; 11:4; p54

Eastern Panhandle Fall; 11:3; p65
Winter; 11:4; p66

Franklin	Fall; 11:3; p18	Mason County	Summer; 11:2; p25
Gilmer County	Summer; 11:2; p9	Mercer County	Summer; 11:2; p16
	Fall; 11:3; p70	Mineral County	Winter; 11:4; p66
Glenville	Summer; 11:2; p9	Monroe County	Fall; 11:3; p25
	Summer; 11:2; p68		Winter; 11:4; p65
Greenbrier County	Spring; 11:1; p59		
Hancock County	Spring; 11:1; p9	Morgantown	Winter; 11:4; p54
	Winter; 11:4; p22	Moundsville	Fall; 11:3; p37
Huntington	Winter; 11:4; p9	Newell	Spring; 11:1; p9
Jackson County	Spring; 11:1; p23	Nicholas County	Spring; 11:1; p64
Jacksons Mill	Summer; 11:2; p65		Fall; 11:3; p30
Jefferson County	Spring; 11:1; p52		Winter; 11:4; p35
Kanawha County	Summer; 11:2; p53	Parkersburg	Summer; 11:2; p32
	Fall; 11:3; p8		Winter; 11:4; p54
	Fall; 11:3; p9	Pendleton County	Fall; 11:3; p18
	Winter; 11:4; p30	Pocahontas County	Spring; 11:1; p38
	Winter; 11:4; p42	Point Pleasant	Summer; 11:2; p25
Kenna	Fall; 11:3; p50	Putnam County	Fall; 11:3; p59
Lewis County	Summer; 11:2; p65	Roane County	Fall; 11:3; p42
	Fall; 11:3; p50	Summers County	Spring; 11:1; p59
Logan County	Spring; 11:1; p28	Tucker County	Spring; 11:1; p34
Mannington	Winter; 11:4; p49	Wetzel County	Summer; 11:2; p44
Marion County	Winter; 11:4; p49	Wirt County	Spring; 11:1; p46
Marshall County	Fall; 11:3; p37	Wood County	Summer; 11:2; p32

In This Issue

LUCY BAKER EBERT, at age 85, has been interested in Eastern Panhandle lore for a long time. She is a retired educator, having taught at Potomac State College among other places. "Timothy Corn" is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

J. Z. ELLISON was born in Monroe County in 1915, and educated at West Virginia University. He is a former sales representative for John W. Eshelman & Sons. He has been involved in several agricultural associations, including the West Virginia Poultry Association and West Virginia Farm Supply. This is his first contribution 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 most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL, "The Trappers' Rendezvous," appeared in the Summer 1985 GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER is the chief of photographic services for the Department of Culture and History.

BETTY L. MACQUEEN was born in Spencer in 1922. She received her B.A. degree from West Virginia State College in 1977. She is an active member of the West Virginia Writer's Association, has had several short stories and articles published, and is currently Administrator of the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program.

MARTHA MANNING, a West Virginia native, is descended from a long line of glassworkers. She holds a degree in music from West Virginia University, and spent many years as a pianist, organist, and teacher. She and her husband, Walter, a retired history professor, live in Morgantown. After her own retirement, Mrs. Manning's inborn interest in the glass industry surfaced. Combining this interest with her hobby of photography, she began research into West Virginia stained glass, with the help of a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Foundation, Inc. She has written previous articles on West Virginia glass for GOLDENSEAL.

WILLIAM B. NEWCOMB, born in Huntington in 1904, can trace his Cabell County ancestry to the Revolutionary era. He attended Marshall and Ohio Wesleyan universities and studied retailing at New York University graduate school. A retiree of the Anderson-Newcomb Company, where he was divisional merchandise manager and corporate secretary, Mr. Newcomb is now a trustee of the West Virginia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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 1950 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.

LEROY G. SCHULTZ, who says he spent most of his 1930's childhood in a barn in rural Missouri, since 1968 has lived in Morgantown, where he is a professor of social work at WVU. Schultz is West Virginia's only "barnographer," and is currently preparing two books on international agricultural architecture. He has contributed several articles on vernacular architecture to GOLDENSEAL over the years.

BOB SPENCE was born and raised in Logan, and his people have lived there since 1790. He graduated from Marshall University in 1974 with a B.A. in journalism. He worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years, for other newspapers, and now makes his living as a freelance writer. In 1976 Bob wrote *The Land of the Guyandotte*, a 600-page history of Logan County, and has contributed several articles to GOLDENSEAL over the years.

SUSAN WEAVER, a lifelong resident of Hancock County, earned her A.A. in library science from Marshall University in 1982. She served as a children's librarian in Chester for five years, and is now an interpreter for the Museum of Ceramics in nearby East Liverpool, Ohio. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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Inside Goldenseal

Page 16—Like much of West Virginia, Wirt County is ginseng country. We found some expert 'sengers among local residents.

Page 30—Mike Humphreys is one of West Virginia's best fiddlers ever. Kanawha County has been home for most of his 66 years.

Page 9—William Newcomb was a Huntington youngster in 1913. He remembers the great flood and other events of that busy year.

Page 22—Rock Springs Park was the place to go, back in the days of street-cars and straw hats. Historic post-cards bring the Hancock County amusement park back to life.

Page 66—Timothy Corn was Mineral County's all-time greatest liar, local folks say. Read his tales and judge for yourself.

Page 49—West Virginians have been bicycling for a century. Arthur Prichard tells how the two-wheelers came to his town of Mannington.

Page 35—Here they are, the rest of Holly Jack's love letters to Anna. Yes, they did marry and live happily ever after.

Page 65—J. Z. Ellison became a part-time school janitor in 1927. He was 11, and a student himself at the time.

Page 60—West Virginia "barnographer" LeRoy Schultz is back, this time with a photoessay on tobacco barns in the southwest counties.

Page 42—Juanita Hamby saw good times and bad on Cabin Creek, and can smile about it all today. Her granddaughter tells the story.

