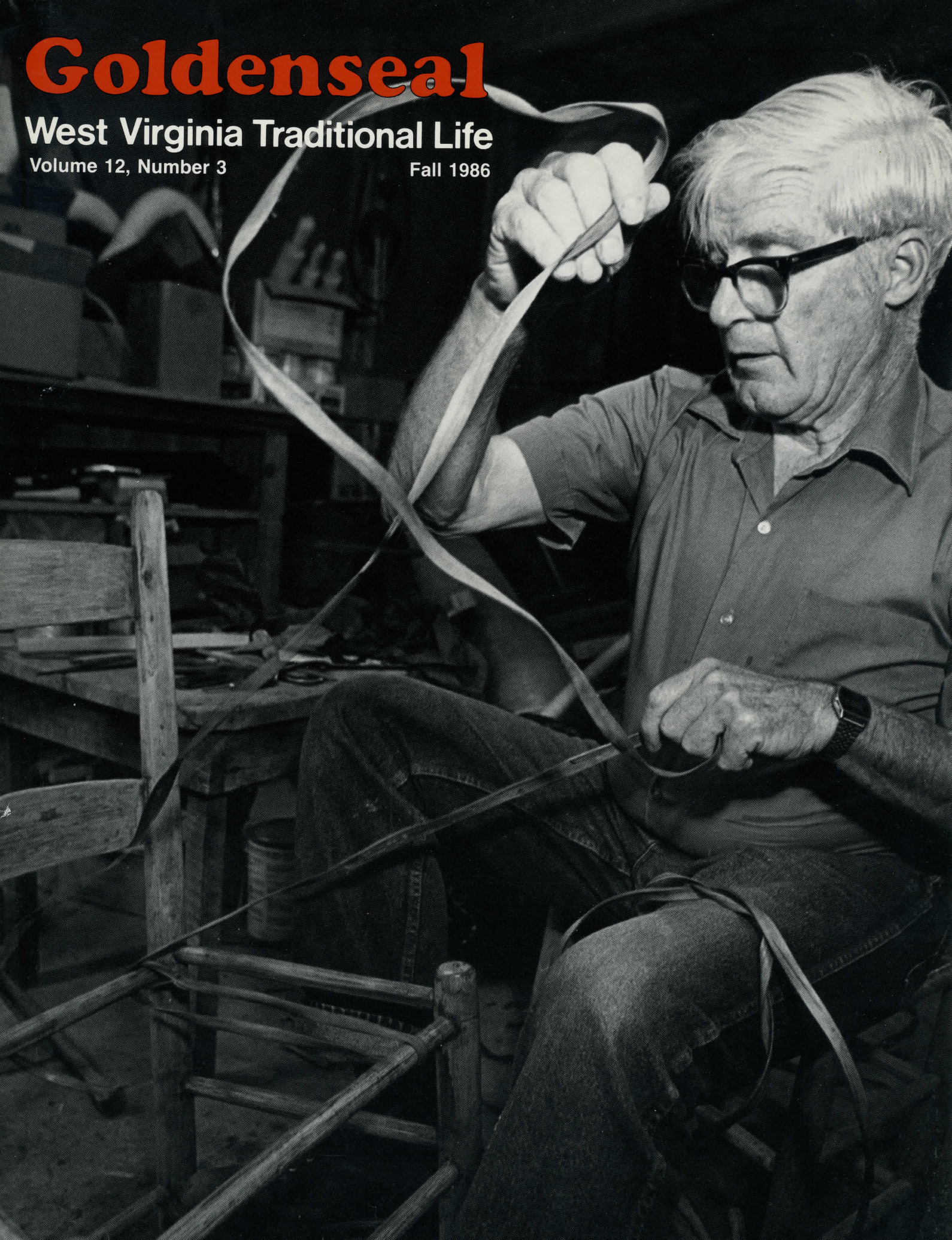
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 12, Number 3 Fall 1986



From the Editor: Renewal Time

It's fall again. That means a lot of important things across West Virginia, from harvest time to football season. The children have returned to school, Labor Day is behind us, and Halloween and even Thanksgiving are on the way.

Fall brings another important event that we hope you won't forget — renewal time for your voluntary subscription to GOLDENSEAL. If you approve of the job we have done for you over the last four issues, we must have your help now to produce the next four.

That's not news to veteran GOLDENSEAL readers. You know that the magazine is supported by its readers, and that every year at this time we ask you to renew your support. But there is an added urgency this year. As you may have seen in news reports, the Management Task Force that recently surveyed state government recommended that GOLDENSEAL be made self-sufficient. As with any family budget, we must start making ends meet.

That recommendation, among many others the Task Force made to save tax money, is not something we disagree with. We think GOLDENSEAL should pay its own way, and have worked toward that goal since beginning our subscription program back in 1981. We have made good progress toward self-sufficiency each year, as the support of our readers steadily increases.

The recent report means that we must do still better this year. To close the gap between income and outgo, we will continue to do everything necessary to hold down expenses. We have kept per-copy printing costs steady to declining over the past few years, for example, by working closely with our printers to increase efficiency. A recent breakthrough in setting type directly from our computer to theirs promises further savings of time and money. Printing is our biggest single cost, so progress there is especially important. We will also hold down other expenses as possible.

Overall costs inevitably rise, however — the cost of postage, salaries, and of pay to the freelancers who fill your magazine each issue, among other items. That means we need help on the income side, too, and for that we must call on you. Specifically, we are increasing the voluntary subscription fee to $12.50. We hope you agree that the increase is reasonable at this time, considering that a voluntary subscription to GOLDENSEAL remained at $10 for five full years.

We think GOLDENSEAL is a good buy at the new price. That $12.50 is probably no more than you pay for cable TV for a month and less than many folks spend playing the lottery in a couple of weeks. It might take an average-size family to the movies once, if they economized on the popcorn. Do you get any less enjoyment out of a year's worth of GOLDENSEAL?

A price increase alone won't get us to the break-even point, however, for our real strength is in the number of readers supporting us. This year of all years, I urge you to begin a voluntary subscription if you have not already done so. We wish to keep everyone on the mailing list who wants the magazine, whether or not they can contribute at present. That's one of the main attractions of the voluntary system, but to make it work we need the support of all those who can help. If you are not really interested in receiving the magazine, let us know that, too. We won't be offended. We know GOLDENSEAL is not for everyone and will save your copy for someone else.

So there you have it. That's the situation and how we propose to remedy it. I hasten to add that we don't regard the case as desperate. The Department of Culture and History's support for what we do remains strong and no one intends to shut GOLDENSEAL down. We merely must do a better job paying our bills. With your help, I'm confident we can.

You will receive a letter from me within a few days, giving further details. That letter will include a pre-labeled reply coupon and a postpaid return envelope for your convenience. Simply enclose a check or money order for $12.50, slip it in the mail and you're all set. I promise we'll not bother you for another year.

What we will do is the best job we can producing GOLDENSEAL for you. It's impossible to predict what all will go into your magazine over the next 12 months, but several exciting projects are in the works. You will be seeing another nice agricultural piece from Jackie Goodwin, most recently our draft horses author, for example, and we are reactivating Yvonne Farley, a popular GOLDENSEAL writer of a few years ago, on a Parkersburg religion story. There is a Northern Panhandle glass factory article coming soon, and I'm pleased to say we are still making headway in the Eastern Panhandle as well. You will see in this issue the fine teamwork of William Theriault and Frank Herrera — from Jefferson and Berkeley counties, respectively, and you can't get more eastern than that without changing your accent — and I'm trying to get them started on another story as this magazine goes to press.

There will be more tall tales from the annual statewide Liars' Contest, the usual announcements of timely items of interest to our readers, occasional book and record reviews, and a full calendar of 1987 fairs and festivals, among the other regular features you have come to expect. I've seen about enough on fairy diddles, but maybe we will get another lively debate going in the letters column.

There's no shortage of good West Virginia material, in other words, and with your backing we will continue putting the best of it into the pages of GOLDENSEAL.

—Ken Sullivan

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GOLDENSEAL is published four times a year, in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. The magazine is distributed without charge, although a $12.50 yearly contribution is suggested. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Phone (304) 348-0220.

Goldenseal

Volume 12, Number 3 Fall 1986

COVER: Webster Countian Arthur Woods whips a leathery hickory split through the air as he begins a new bottom for an old chair. "West Virginia Split Bottom: The Seat of Choice" starts on page 8. Photo by Michael Keller.

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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.

Tenants Harbor, Maine
April 29, 1986
Editor:
Enclosed is a check for $10 for your wonderful magazine. We remember it when it was mimeographed and have followed it through the years as it has been improved. I love to see the use of color but question its validity since it is bound to mean a higher cost. However, the public will buy a magazine printed in color quicker than one printed only in black ink. So — do what you think is right. The main thing is to keep publishing GOLDENSEAL.

We lived about 14 years in Harpers Ferry (Bolivar) and have fond memories of our activities and friends we made across the state. We enjoyed several of the craft shows through the years and haven't found any elsewhere that compare to Cedar Lakes and the Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival in Jefferson County.

Thanks again for sending us GOLDENSEAL for the past nine years that we have lived in Maine. This state reminds us a lot of West Virginia. We will be back this summer visiting relatives and friends. We hope to get to Charleston while there. Would like to see the Cultural Center once more.

Thank you for a *real* magazine, about *real* people leading *real* lives in a *real* state. I'm looking forward to meeting one of them, Ruby Morris, in your great state soon. Each issue is treasured and shared with others here in Maine.
Sincerely,
Roy & Inez Daniel

Coral Springs, Florida
May 30, 1986
Editor:
We really do enjoy GOLDENSEAL, way down here in south Florida, and many members of our West Virginia Club here do, too. To "sing the praises" of our home state is the main objective of our organization. From Delray Beach to Hollywood we are 60 members strong, and meet once a month in the community center at Holiday Park, Ft. Lauderdale. Hubbard Chapman and his wife, Amelia, lead our group. These two were former residents of Huntington, and now reside in Ft. Lauderdale. Even though surrounded by orange blossoms and hibiscus, our club always manages to keep us in "a West Virginia state of mind."

I am a transplanted West Virginian from McMechen, a beautiful little town near Wheeling. My husband, Watson, and I are grateful as we have the best of both worlds in getting to go back and live our summers in the Mountain State. Thank you again, staff of the GOLDENSEAL, for continually giving us pride in our heritage and information concerning our beloved West Virginia.

Now — mimicking Clint Eastwood — "GOLDENSEAL, keep on not only making my *day* but making my world!"
Most sincerely,
Xlee Zink
Corresponding Secretary
West Virginia Club

Ernie Carpenter

Hamlin, WV
June 18, 1986
Editor:
This note is to tell you folks that from among all your fine issues, the Summer 1986 is the finest I've ever read.

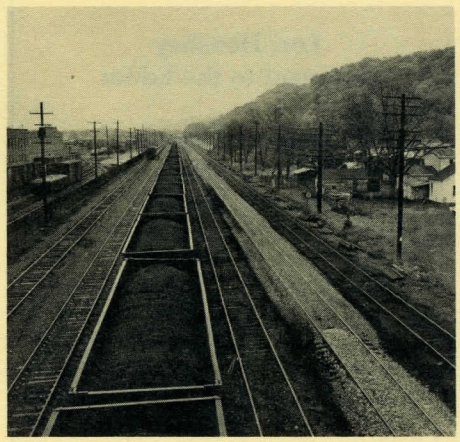
I was fortunate to watch the senior fiddlers play at this year's Vandalia Gathering. I was moved by Mr. Carpenter's playing. Gerald Milnes' and Michael Kline's article brought the wonderful sounds into full color and detail for me.

History, continuity, is vital. If we know where we've been, we can pretty well figure out where we're going (or how to make the best of it).

The squirrel hunting story was also beautiful. And a barber named Shears! Thanks.
Sincerely,
Paul Gartner

C&O Patch

Raceland, Kentucky
July 16, 1986
Editor:
My dad and I received a copy of GOLDENSEAL as a gift. We both read it with great interest, especially my dad on the article, "The C&O Patch." He worked at the C&O shops in Huntington, starting at age 13 in 1916, and retiring in 1968 with 52 years' service. He walked from what was then Crossroads to the Huntington shops, which was about three miles. He continued to work there until 1925 when he moved to the Raceland car shops at Raceland, Kentucky, from which he retired.



He knew many people mentioned in the article, also the places. I doubt there are many people who remember the C&O Patch, for as you said, "it was a place in time only for those who experienced it."
Sincerely,
John & Bonnie June Wentz

Music Man Henry Shadwell

Huntington, WV
June 6, 1986
Editor:
I was really shocked to learn about your magazine. I saw it for the first time on this date. As many times that I've been at the Capitol building and in the Cultural Center, I've never seen or heard of it before. I would like

very much to have the Spring 1986 issue if at all possible.

Why? In 1938, I was the high school student selected to carry the American flag in Canada at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, by Mr. Henry Shadwell. I had always seen the American flag carried on the right side of a parade. So in Canada, I bumped the fellow who was carrying the Canadian flag over to the left side as we marched towards the Maple Leaf Stadium.

The boo-boo was recognized by an admiral, who was all decked out in his white uniform and saber. He started running towards me to stop me and switch us back before entering the stadium in full view of the spectators. This admiral got his foot caught around his saber and tripped and fell into the dirt of the soccer field. Sliding into second base wouldn't have had a two-cent difference from his looks, with all the dirt and dust on him. It was only afterward that I learned what was going on and why this admiral was trying so hard to get to me, even though I kept on marching and never stopping.

Rest assured that I really caught hell later for making such a diplomatic boo-boo. From what I did, symbolically, Canada had momentarily been taken over by the United States, with the stars and stripes being paraded through Toronto and all over the Maple Leaf Stadium.

Enclosed is my check for $20 for *two years'* subscription.
Sincerely,
John B. Napier

Beaver Creek

New Martinsville, WV
July 6, 1986
Editor:
I just want to tell you how much I enjoy GOLDENSEAL, and, in particular, just how much I've appreciated the last three issues. How many nostalgic memories they have evoked!

How vivid the pictures — growing up on Grandpa's farm on Little Beaver Creek. Going to church on Sunday at Little Union Church — the original, up on the hill — where Mr. Holly Jack Perkins was the old gentleman who led the singing every Sunday. The lower stretches of Big Beaver Creek I'm not familiar with, but the upper creek I am. I know *exactly* where the change in stream flow takes place — it was at the lower left corner of my uncle's farm. Just below that was a big, rocky pool where we used to go swimming, and from there on it was all downhill!

When I was very young, we went to the baptismal service for some of my older cousins. Because Little Beaver was inadequate, we went to Beaver Mills. The picture I carry in my mind was just like the photograph. The photograph shown, of course, was taken at an earlier period. Nevertheless, it was very nearly the same.

So — I just want to express my appreciation, and say "Thank you!"
Sincerely,
Edwin Milam

Holly Jack Perkins

Stow, Ohio
May 30, 1986
Editor:
Being a former West Virginian home on a visit, I had the opportunity to read your Fall and Winter 1985 GOLDENSEAL's, which contained the Holly Jack Perkins love letters to his dear Anna.

I happen to have known and remembered something of both families. Anna's sister Bertha was my grade school teacher for one or two years. Also, her sister Goldie taught in our Nicholas County High School at Summersville for several years after I had left to pursue my career in Ohio.

I also found several of your other articles very interesting. Have enclosed my check for one year's subscription.
Yours truly,
Flora Opal McMillion Molster

Diddles, Hoop Snakes & Hoopies

Powellton, WV
May 14, 1986
Editor:
Fairy-diddles, flying squirrels and hoop snakes. Having spent 62 years in the woods, and on streams and lakes of West Virginia, including 42 consecutive seasons of deer hunting, I would like to add my two cents' worth. I started under the tutelage of my father, who was an avid squirrel hunter, when I accompanied him to a two-pillowcase natural chestnut gathering — he carried his, I dragged mine, being only seven years old.

First off, fairy-diddles are as different from flying squirrels as dogs are from cats. [Those who told you otherwise] must be pretty old and possibly suffering from eating too many hillbilly possums.

I believe fairy-diddles are the result of a regional gene cross which occurred from the mating of a red-gray squirrel and a chipmunk, since the fairy-diddle or boomer has the characteristic marks of both. Fairy-diddles are found only in about 10 of West Virginia's 55 counties.

As for their castration of boar gray squirrels, I observed an incident on an old fallen chestnut tree in Deer Creek of Pocohontas County which convinced me of Boomer's surgical skills.

Sitting motionless about 50 feet from the uprooted end of a fallen chestnut tree which was three feet in diameter, waiting for a gobbler to answer my Lynch caller chirps, I saw Boomer and his intended patient start their chase from one end of the log across the 40-foot length to the downhill end nearly out of my sight. They rung that log like a Christmas tree tinsel trimmer. In-sight/out-of-sight, screeching, screaming, squawking, for at least 10 minutes.

Finally, Boomer took off to chattering like a winning team cheerleader. The old gray boar dragged himself upon the top side of the log, bleeding and dragging lumpy tissue behind him until he disappeared near the root end. Having forgotten the turkey, I walked along the log. Red splotches of blood were along the entire length of the old chestnut that looked like an expressionist artist had used it for an easel.

Flying squirrels get their name from their ability to glide through the air aided by the excess skin between their front and hind legs. That gives them buoyancy when they jump from limb to limb or to the ground, spreading their four legs out like a drunken sailor taking a bellybuster dive into a pool of water. The flying squirrels I have seen are usually white with gray on the back and tail and have none of the colors of Boomer, although about the size of most chattering fairy-diddles.

My funniest encounter with flying squirrels came about in the '50's, when TV was in its infancy. Having to "pipe" the TV signal down the mountain and boost it to some neighbors required my having a booster box on a holey beech tree on the creek bank. Repairing the box one evening, I climbed up to face level with a nesting hole of four flying squirrels. They zippily departed right in my face and I nearly fell out of the tree with dampened trousers.

Hoop snakes, "believe it or not," did exist at least once. While blackberry picking one hot July morning on a steep hillside, I nearly stepped on a snake about three feet long. As I shifted into overdrive on my takeoff, I looked over my shoulder and saw a perfect snake wheel rolling downhill toward me. Overdrive wasn't fast enough then, so I went airborne like a rocket booster and lost berry bucket and all.

Sincerely,
Charles Mayes

Clarksburg, WV
June 12, 1986
Editor:
The term "Hoopie" comes from hoop snakes.
Anonymous

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 West Virginia Publisher

A new West Virginia book publisher, Aegina Press, has begun operations in Huntington. Aegina Press has already published seven full-length books, and it has another eight in production now, according to managing editor Ira Herman.

Aegina receives manuscripts from all over the United States, and has accepted one book by an author who lives in England. But the press is especially interested in West Virginia or Tri-State area books and authors. Three of the books now out have West Virginia connections. A poetry book, *Field of Vision*, has just been released, authored by Huntingtonian Kirk Judd. Aegina Press has also published two books by former West Virginian Louis Reed. Once the prosecuting attorney of Wirt County, Reed was widely published in the '30's and '40's, appearing in *Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Evening Post* and other periodicals. The previously unpublished Reed books are *The Wicks and the Wacks*, a fanciful children's book, and *Burning Springs*, a historical novel about the great oil rush at Burning Springs, Wirt County.

"We're particularly excited about Reed's *Burning Springs*," Herman said. "It's a thoroughly researched factual novel set in the Civil War era right here in West Virginia. It has a lot of West Virginia history in it, and we're going to try to sell it to the New York publishers and to the movies."

Aegina Press takes its name from the ancient Greek island of Aegina, an early center of art and culture. Ira Herman is a native Huntingtonian, a 1966 graduate of Huntington High School and a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles. He was managing editor of Mountain State Press at the University of Charleston prior to establishing his own book publishing venture in Huntington.

The new press will be publishing novels, histories, poetry, biography, and other types of books. Writers wishing to submit manuscripts should send them, with a self-addressed stamped return mailer, to Aegina Press, 4937 Humphrey Road, Huntington, WV 25704. Further information on Aegina publications is available at the same address, or by calling (304) 429-7204.

New River Train

The Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society will again sponsor its popular New River Train sightseeing excursions this October. The railroad group has operated the fall foliage trips annually since 1966.

For 1986 there will be four round trips from Huntington to Hinton, with passenger boarding at St. Albans and Charleston as well. The highlight of the all-day excursion will be the passage through the historic and scenic New River Gorge.

The New River Train will operate on October 11, 12 and 18, 19, departing Huntington at 8:30 a.m. and Charleston at 10:00. The train arrives back in Huntington at 8:15 p.m., with a two-hour afternoon stop at Hinton.

Basic fares for the New River Train are $50 for adults and $30 for children under 12, with premium service costing $95. For further information contact the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society at P.O. Box 271, Huntington, WV 25707.

Wild Foods Group

The National Wild Foods Association is a national organization with strong roots in the Mountain State. Currently, the group's president is a West Virginian, Edelene Wood of Parkersburg, as is its treasurer, Maxine Scarbro of Charleston. The Association holds its yearly meeting and food preparation contest at North Bend State Park in Ritchie County, annually coinciding with Nature Wonder

Weekend on the third weekend of September.

The Wild Foods Association promotes the study and safe use of wild foods, as well as the collecting of historic recipes for wild food preparation. Membership in the NWFA is open to "anyone interested in the identification, gathering and preparation of wild foods," according to a recent statement from the group. "The only requirement is that you wish to be a part of an organization which recognizes wild food gathering and usage as a national pastime."

GOLDENSEAL readers with such interests may send $2 annual dues to Maxine Scarbro, NWFA Treasurer, 266 Oakwood Road, Charleston, WV 25314. Historic recipes may be sent to Edelene Wood, NWFA President, 3404 Hemlock Avenue, Parkersburg, WV 26104.

Mountain Film & Video

The latest Appalshop catalog offers dozens of regional film and video programs, from Appalachia's leading media production center. All Appalshop documentaries have a strong mountain culture focus. Eastern Kentucky predominates, but West Virginia is featured in many. There are two films on the tragic 1972 Buffalo Creek flood, one on the controversial Recht Decision to improve state schools, and one on Gilmer County herb doctor Catfish Gray, for example. Mr. Gray offers the sound advice to "just be temperate and moderate in all things. But I don't think you can love too much. That's one thing I don't think you can overdo."

That good counsel is probably worth more than most medicine, herbal or store-bought, and it's the sort of folk wisdom common to Appalshop productions. Mountaineers discuss natural childbirth, tale telling, quilting and the time-tested religion of the Old Regular Baptists. The filmmaking cooperative is noted for tackling the hard issues, too, and other movies address such matters as strip mining, politics, unemployment and regional migration. A respectful attitude toward mountain people is maintained throughout, reflecting Appalshop's tradition of drawing its filmmakers from the region it portrays.

Singer Nimrod Workman is among the West Virginians profiled by Appalshop films. Photo by Jim Pate.

In addition to its best-known component, Appalshop Films, the nonprofit Appalshop family includes Headwaters Television, Roadside Theater, Mountain Photography Workshop and radio station WMMT-FM. June Appal Recordings has a distinguished back list of mostly Appalachian music recordings.

Appalshop films and videotapes may be purchased or rented at competitive prices. For a catalog, contact Appalshop, Box 743, Whitesburg, KY 41858.

National Folklife Annual

The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress has inaugurated a new yearly publication series celebrating the wide range of traditional life and culture in the United States. The first volume, *Folklife Annual 1985*, was issued in mid-1986. The book's subjects reflect the diversity of its theme — the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, the early history of the Archive of American Folksong, cowboy life, stone carvers at the Washington Cathedral, the Watts Towers in California, and religious folk artist Howard Finster.

Selected by Alan Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center, and James Hardin, folklife publications editor, the essays in the 176-page, hardback volume are intended for a wide popular audience. There are 136 illustrations, many in color, collected from a variety of sources, including the collections of the Library of Congress and documentary files of folklife field workers. The handsome, large-format *Annual* is reminiscent of the old hardbound *American Heritage's* in giving permanent packaging to material with the feel and design of magazine articles.

The study of folklife has been an activity at the Library of Congress since the Archive of Folksong (now the Archive of Folk Culture) was established in 1928. Currently part of the American Folklife Center, the archive has assembled one of the most significant collections of folklife materials in the world. The center itself was created in 1976 by the American Folklife Preservation Act to "preserve and present American folklife."

Folklife Annual 1985 is available for $16 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (Stock No. 030-000-00169-9). The 1986 volume will be released next year.

Pickens History

Haven in the Hardwood: A History of Pickens, West Virginia is an historical account of the Randolph County town of Pickens. It was compiled and written by Drs. Arnold and Rosemary Smith Nelson, and Ozella Smith. Arnold Nelson, the primary author, became interested in Pickens while a professor at West Virginia Wesleyan College; Rosemary Nelson and Ozella Smith are both natives of the town.

Haven in the Hardwood, printed in 1971 by McClain Printing Company in Parsons, and reprinted in 1978, is still available for purchase. The book has two main sections. Beginning with the middle of the 19th Century, the first section describes the growth of Pickens. The birth and development of important industries, such as lumber and coal, are reviewed. Also discussed is the railroad, which in providing an outlet for Pickens' natural resources contributed significantly to the growth of the community. The colorful accounts of people and events in Pickens are illustrated by more than 100 photographs. The second section of the book is genealogical, providing information on the families who settled in and helped develop the town.

Haven in the Hardwood, a hardback, may be ordered through the Pickens Improvement and Historical Society, Pickens, WV 26230, for $15, including postage and handling.

Preservation Award

Professor Emory L. Kemp, director of West Virginia University's program in the history of science and technology, has been given a national award for his work in historic preservation. Kemp is one of 16 Americans, and the only educator, to receive a Public Service to Transportation and Historic Preservation Award.

The awards are presented biennially, and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Kemp was presented the award by Transportation Secretary Elizabeth H. Dole. "Dr. Kemp has brought significant improvements to the transportation user while preserving important segments of our national heritage and resources," said Secretary Dole.

Professor Kemp, the former WVU chairman of civil engineering, is an authority on the history of engineering, industrial technology and historic preservation. He has participated in many restoration and interpretation projects, including the Wheeling Custom House (now West Virginia Independence Hall), the mill at Jackson's Mill and the Cass lumber mill, and a study of New River Gorge. Dr. Kemp has been a consultant on the restoration of many historic bridges in West Virginia, one of which was the Wheeling Suspension Bridge. This restoration project led to a fellowship with the Smithsonian Institution and to an upcoming book on the history of suspension bridges built in America, England and France from 1801 to 1870.

Appalachian Archives

There is a new archival guide available to scholars researching the mountain region. *Archives in Appalachia: A Directory* catalogs 181 repositories throughout Appalachia, with the states of North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia all represented. These archival repositories hold historical records documenting the political, social, cultural and economic history of the mountains.

Each entry in the new guide is based on a questionnaire completed by the repository staff. Information provided includes the name, location, and hours of each institution, as well as the type of material held. Subject areas covered by the records are given, as are the geographical area the records cover and the inclusive dates and size of the holdings. Also included are indexes by type of material (for example, photographs) and by subject, a map showing the counties covered by the directory, and a list of agencies which do not currently collect archival materials but which plan to do so in the future.

The directory was compiled by the Appalachian Consortium, a regional non-profit research and publication venture, as part of a project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Copies of *Archives in Appalachia* are available for $2.00 from the Appalachian Consortium, University Hall, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608.

Wheeling Midwives' Conference

MANA, the Midwives' Alliance of North America, is an organization for licensed midwives which promotes the modern practice of midwifery. MANA will hold its 4th annual conference on October 16-19, 1986, at Oglebay Park in Wheeling. Featured speakers will include Susan Weed, Norma Swenson and Vera Keene, and workshops on therapeutic touch, herbs for birth, and the ethics of modern reproductive technology will be held. The main focus of the conference will be the pros and cons of formal credentialing for today's midwife.

At least 200 participants are expected at the international conference, with the majority of attendees practicing midwives interested in learning of new products and new techniques. For exhibitors, limited both space will be available for $225 per booth; half booths may be rented, and there are special discounts for non-profit organizations. Booth rental will be limited to pregnancy and health care products.

To rent an exhibit booth, contact: Jan Seale, P.O. Box 323, Hinton, WV 25951, (304) 466-0287; For general information contact: Ruth Walsh, P.O. Box 5, Linn, WV 26384, (304) 462-5617.

Back in June we were pleasantly surprised to hear from GOLDENSEAL's old friend, writer-photographer Bob Swisher of Richmond. Mr. Swisher's roots are in central West Virginia and he had some interesting comments about the photograph of Elk River waterman Shelt Carpenter, published in the summer issue.

"I can't prove it," he wrote, "but I believe the photo of Shelt Carpenter with the 'photographer unknown' caption on p. 31 of the Summer 1986 issue (in 'Ernie Carpenter: Tales of the Elk River Country') was taken by my late uncle Thomas Hyer Swisher. I was amazed to see the picture since an identical photo, handed down in my family and now in my possession, was the only one in existence as far as I had known until my GOLDENSEAL arrived. I had always heard Uncle Tom took the picture. He was brought up in Sutton."

We had gotten our print of the photograph from the Carpenter family, and thought *that* copy was the only one in existence. We wrote back to Mr. Swisher, needless to say, requesting further information about the picture and the photographer. He responded, in part:

"Tom was not a professional photographer, just a talented amateur. We in the family have always loved the Shelt Carpenter portrait and as far as I know it's the best picture Uncle Tom ever took and a one-of-a-kind thing for him. I'll ask his son Charles if there are other such 'picturesque' pictures from the Elk River Valley that Uncle Tom might have taken, but I'd be surprised if there is any sort of undiscovered cache.

"I recall hearing that the Shelt Carpenter picture was published a long time ago in — of all places — *Arizona Highways* magazine, a magazine along the lines of *Wonderful West Virginia*. Years ago my parents had a subscription to *Arizona Highways*.

"Some biographical information on Thomas Hyer Swisher: He was born 26 March 1899 in his grand-

Shelt Carpenter on Elk River. Photo by Thomas Hyer Swisher, about 1932.

Shelt Carpenter's Photographer

parents' house in Jane Lew, Lewis County and grew up in Sutton. After graduating from Sutton High School in 1916 he entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and later transferred to the mechanical engineering department of West Virginia University, from which he graduated in 1923.

"Shortly after Uncle Tom's graduation from West Virginia University, his father, Hugh Swisher, organized a group to bring electricity to Sutton. Young Tom designed that first electrical plant in Sutton, together with all the transmission lines and street lights it served. The generator was placed in the town's ice plant, where steam boilers were already available.

"Tom went on to have a distinguished career with the General Electric Company in Schenectady and Chicago. He died in California 28 February 1977."

That letter came in mid-July. By the first of August, Mr. Swisher was back in touch, by telephone this time. He told us that he had heard from his cousin Charles, the photographer's son now living in California. Charles Swisher agreed that the photograph was Thomas Swisher's work, made by a Voigtlander camera on 4X5-inch film, about 1932. He confirmed the Carpenter family's belief that the picture was a contest prize winner many years ago, thinking this may be how it got into *Arizona Highways*.

Most intriguingly, and contrary to Bob Swisher's original expectation, Charles believes there are many more old Tom Swisher pictures of the Elk River country. He has promised to look for them in the family photo albums. You can bet we will be working with him on that, hoping to put together a special feature on the subject sometime soon.

In the meantime, Bob Swisher was kind enough to provide us his print of the Carpenter photograph, in better shape than the one we used for the summer GOLDENSEAL. We are reproducing this Swisher family copy here, with our thanks.

—Editor

Front Street Saturday Night

By Harry M. Brawley

Today it is Kanawha Boulevard, East. It used to be called Kanawha Street, and before that it was Front Street. Even though the original name was officially abandoned more than a century ago, it was still referred to as "Front Street" by oldtimers in the middle of the 20th Century. By whatever name, this riverfront street has played a key role during most of Charleston's nearly 200 years. Let us take a look at the 'teen years of this century and see what Front Street was like.

Saturday was the big day for Charleston, with thousands of people drifting in. By supper time — people ate breakfast, dinner and supper in those days — the crowds had finished whatever business they may have had on the side streets and headed for the riverfront.

The four blocks of Front Street from Hale to Court were filled with grocery stores, hardware stores, butcher shops, clothing stores, hotels, pharmacies and leather shops. Almost all were open on Saturday night. Each seemed to have regular loafers, who came to spend the evening and to meet the drifters who went from place to place. The noise buildup began about seven o'clock, and by nine the cacophony echoed well up the side streets. It was a joyous clamor.

Front Street people talked of many things, but politics and sports were certain topics no matter where one went. During 1917-18, World War I entered nearly all conversations, with the Republicans blaming President Wilson for American involvement and the Democrats defending him. In sports, West Virginia University was riding high by 1921-22. For two years in a row, Pitt fell to the Mountaineers and joy knew no bounds.

Conversation often turned to the river and steamboats. A story repeated innumerable times was about the sinking of the *Kanawha Belle,* which carried passengers and cargo between Charleston and Montgomery. One snowy night the *Belle* stopped at Handley on its way upstream. The captain took a break for dinner, turning the boat over to his second in command. As soon as all cargo and passengers were put ashore, the new man found there was nothing on board for further up the river and turned the boat around. When the captain returned to his post he was not informed of the turnaround and thought he was still heading for Montgomery. The *Kanawha Belle* had picked up speed before he realized which way his boat was headed. By then it was too late, and the boat crashed over the dam below Handley. Some casualties were suffered by the crew, the boat was wrecked, and the accident became part of Kanawha River lore.

There was no general rule about where Front Street discussions were held. Usually they took place in the back of the store, so as not to interfere with business, with the loafers gradually moving to the front as customers finished their shopping and stayed to talk. Since there were few chairs, the favorite conversation position was squatting in the posture we called "hunkering down." If the discussion area was a grubby storeroom or back alley exit, one found tobacco chewers spitting in the general direction of a bucket or old jar.

Some of the men were expert whittlers. I remember one old gentleman who could take a two-by-two of good, soft wood and carve a link chain in a couple of evenings. That fascinated me as a child and it still does. Another man could turn out a walking stick with an animal head at the top and fancy curlicues below. Boats, small automobiles and animals also materialized under the knife.

Hawkers and peddlers ballyhooed their wares along the street. In one presidential election (I think it was Wilson vs. Hughes in 1916) an enterprising man had a large board near the levee, filled with campaign buttons for both parties. One could look at the number of buttons remaining on the two sides and see who was ahead. Front Street crowds also drew beggars and pencil vendors.

It was almost a weekly Mardi Gras, with the noise most intense in the 500 and 600 blocks. This was the area between Court and Summers streets, where buildings on the two sides of Front formed a canyon 30 or 40 feet high. I spent my Saturday evenings at Brawley Hardware, almost in the middle at 606 Front Street, and got the full benefit of the hubbub. Across from us was Joseph Popp's Leather Shop, with a good view of the Kanawha River from its rear windows.

Almost always there was something going on at the levee, and that was the attraction for those who wandered in the 700 block. Showboats were often there during the warm months and there might be cargo or passenger boats loading or unloading. Frequently there was a band playing. Further up, in the 800 block, was the Ruffner Hotel. Its front porch was a great place to watch the river.

We didn't know it then, but Front Street's glory days were numbered. The State Capitol burned in 1921, opening space on upper Capitol Street. As key businesses moved to the old Capitol site and the nearby Governor's Mansion lot, the heart of downtown shifted and the riverfront began to fade. Then mid-1930's boulevard construction destroyed the river side of the old street. Urban renewal later took the other side. Except for a few buildings in the 800 block and the courthouse area, old Front Street is now gone.

However, things go in cycles. The old street now sees a greatly expanded use of the Kanawha River for recreation, and it booms once again when the annual Sternwheel Regatta holds the spotlight. Today Capitol Street itself is in flux. Looking carefully one sees another Victorian canyon, just waiting to fill the gap left when Front Street's Saturday nights became ancient history remembered by only a few oldtimers.

West Virginia Split Bottom

The Seat of Choice

By Gerald Milnes

Photographs by Michael Keller

A split bottom chair, properly made with a few hand tools, will last a century. This fine "shaved" chair is by author Gerald Milnes.

"Going once, going twice, SOLD for $4 apiece," I heard the auctioneer say. As he moved on through the yard, crowded with old furniture and tables piled high with china and glass, my eyes settled on the set of old split bottom chairs he had just sold. They were cherry and strikingly handsome, despite the various conditions of the seats and the layers of dust and dirt they had collected from disuse. For a brief minute all eyes had been fixed on these chairs. Now the auctioneer, the crowd and the new chair owner were hotly bidding on an old cupboard enjoying its moment of glory.

As the chairs sat alone, again unnoticed in a crooked little group on the uneven ground, I wondered if anyone there appreciated the thought that had gone into them and the skill of the chairmaker who made them 75 or 100 years ago. By coincidence, I had just finished my own first attempt at making a chair. I had to admit to myself that after 20 or so hours of work, my chair still couldn't compare to these battered $4 models. They were sold at a typical country auction, on Birch River in Webster County. Later in the day, when the dishes, household items and furniture were gone and attention had turned to farm implements and shop tools, I made the winning bid on a drawknife which has since assisted me through several sets of homemade chairs.

American country furniture is as varied as the diverse backgrounds of the people who make up our population. Of this furniture, the chair has produced the greatest number of forms. Through the 18th and 19th centuries, furniture makers of the larger population centers produced fine Windsor, Queen Anne, Chippendale and other classic chairs for clients who could afford to surround themselves with such status pieces. Primitive examples of these styles, especially the wraparound Windsor, were made through the centuries by country craftsmen. They show up today in rural areas, including our Appalachian region. But by and large, the oldtime split bottom chair has been the seat of choice throughout the ages among country folk. Woodcuts and manuscripts dating back to the 14th Century depict the same ba-

sic post-and-rung chair commonly seen on West Virginia porches and sold at rural auctions.

Though usually called split bottom chairs in this region, they may also be referred to as ladderback, slatback, mule ear, bent back, or Shaker chairs. The latter name comes from the religious sect whose communities in New England and Kentucky produced a simple, graceful version of the chair by the thousands.

As with the Shakers, for many mountain people life itself became their art. This is evidenced by the multitude of plainly adorned, utilitarian artifacts that have been left to us. Governed always by functional simplicity, mountain craftsmen still produced an amazing variety of styles of the basic split bottom chair. You will see no drastic differences at a casual glance, but the small personal touches often identify the chairmaker. These subtleties and simple, well-proportioned designs elevate the craft above the basic necessity of satisfying an everyday need.

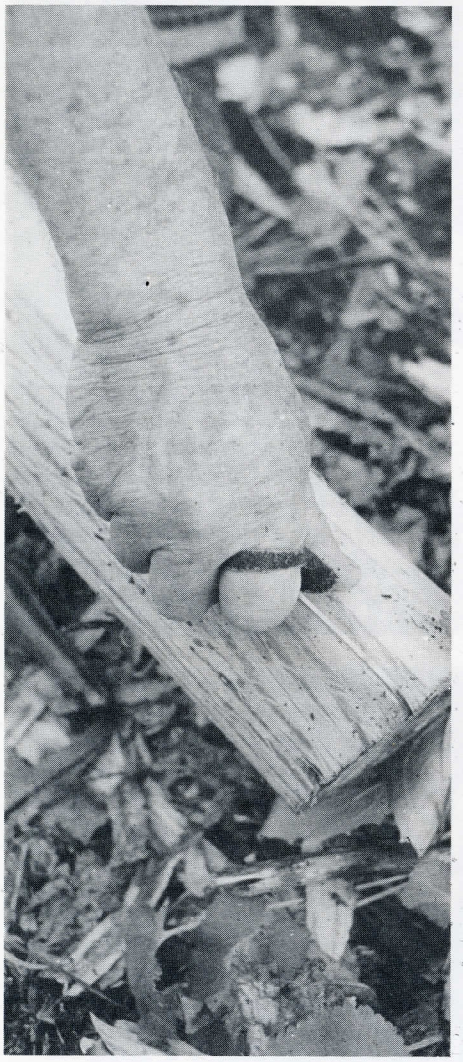
It isn't unusual to find a century-old split bottom chair still in regular service. Lowered height, caused by continuous sliding over floors, is the most common ailment to send the old chair to the attic or barn. Chairs have to be "bottomed" every 15 or 20 years when in daily use. Hickory splits, actually long strips of the inner bark of young hickory trees, are traditionally considered the superior material, though white oak splits are also common. These are usually woven in a herringbone pattern in our region. Arthur Woods of Dry Bread Run, near Cowen in Webster County, is a skilled chair bottomer. Arthur uses hickory exclusively, as did his father before him.

Arthur's seats are woven in the traditional herringbone or "twill" pattern. "I have done them using a square check pattern but I like the twill the best, so I just do them that way," he notes. "You start by going over one, then you step back one. If you miss one, you've done messed up and you have to pull it all out." The twill pattern is maintained by weaving over two and then under two throughout the seat, making sure to "backstep" to get each new strip started right. Using Arthur's technique, if the first weaving strip started out going under one of the opposing or "warp" strips, the next would start out going over two warp strips. Then you start the next row by going over one strip, the next under two, and keep repeating this sequence. After a square section is woven into the seat, it is completed by filling in the small triangles on either side of the chair with weaving strips, being careful to keep the twill pattern.

Arthur prefers young, six-to-eight inch hickory trees for his material. He uses any kind of hickory, although the smooth-barked varieties like the pignut and bitternut are easier to work. He first cuts the tree down and saws off the butt end below the first limb. This pole may vary from about 12 to 20 feet long. The rough outer bark is drawknifed away, leaving the leathery inner bark. This is scored into long strips about ⅝ inch wide, using a sharp hawkbill knife guided by the thumb. These strips are peeled off the log by grasping one end and snapping sharply. If they are thick enough, they are then split "flatways" from end to end, creating two ⅝-inch strips from each width peeled from the tree. These strips are dried and stored, then soaked in water before using. Hickories can only be peeled in spring and early summer, so Arthur gets his year's supply during this period.

Arthur tells a story to illustrate the importance of using good material and doing good work. The incident

Arthur Woods demonstrates how to shave away the rough outer bark with a drawknife. Then the pliant inner bark is scored into 5/8-inch strips with a pocketknife. The strips run the length of the pole, perhaps 20 feet.



involved a chair bottomer who came through his community back in the 1930's. "This fellow was bumming his way through the country and he'd bottom a chair for a night's lodging," Arthur relates. "He came to a neighbor's up here and wanted to bottom a chair for him and stay all night. He said he'd do a real nice job. He carried his bark with him.

"A few days later, some people came in and our neighbor was telling them what a wonderful job this man had done on that chair. He went back and got it in another room where he'd set it away to dry. He came out with it and set his knee down on it and went right on down through it! It was basswood bark. If he could have got a-hold of him about that time, he'd have wrung his neck! Something like that, you're just wasting your time putting it in," Arthur concludes. "Any kind of a job you go at, if you don't do it right, you're just wasting your time."

Although basswood bark would be frowned on everywhere, the material for chair seating varies throughout the country, depending on what nature provides. Rush seating is favored in New England. In the West, where wood materials are scarce, a single piece of unwoven calf hide, sewn underneath, served the old settlers quite well. A Shaker method was to bottom chairs with woven cotton tape. Springy strips of inner tube rubber were used by some bottomers, back in the days when tires had tubes. Clyde Case, a chairmaker in Braxton County, has adopted baling-twine seats as his trademark, although as a basketmaker he is well acquainted with working white oak splits.

Whatever the seating material, a good chair requires a sturdy frame. There are two different methods of shaping the wood parts for a split bottom chair. "Turned" chairs and "shaved" chairs are both commonly seen in West Virginia. Both methods go back centuries, although the shaved chair predates the springpole lathe which itself dates back to the 14th Century and probably produced the first lathe-turned chairs.

The posts and other frame parts of shaved chairs are shaped with a drawknife. Sometimes a spokeshave or even a piece of glass is used to produce the final smoothness. Usually a shaving horse or vice holds the wood while it is being worked. Arthur Woods has a shaved chair his father made from poplar, which utilizes the natural bend of the tree for the curve in the back posts. Though still practiced today, the shaved method was probably used in the more remote areas by craftsmen of earlier times who made chairs for only a few families. The few tools needed to "shave out" a chair would be found on any homestead. Homer Nicholas, a former neighbor, farmer and woodsman, told me before his death that he made his first set of chairs using only an axe, pocket knife and drill.

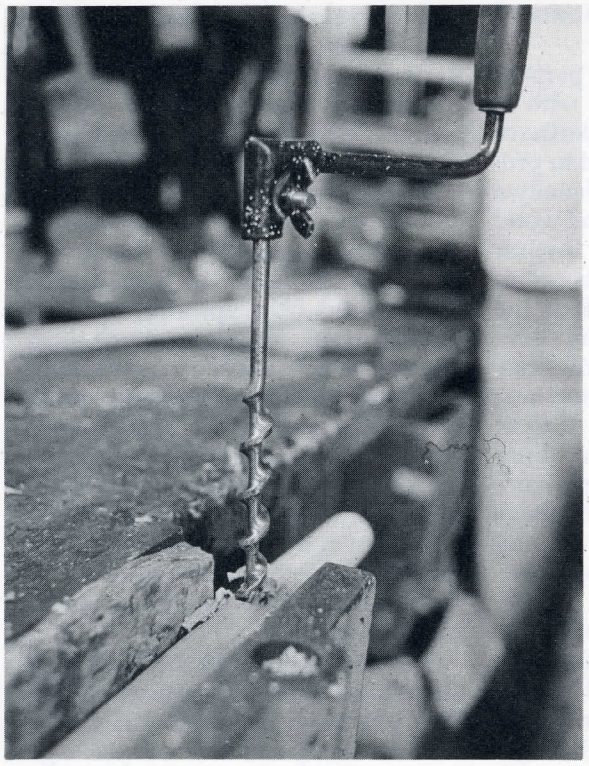
As a chairmaker, I've taken pleasure in dissecting a few old chairs to discover their secrets. Handmade chairs are traditionally shrunk together. The rungs or spindles are made first and thoroughly dried, then the posts are made of green wood. The rungs are driven into holes or mortices bored into the unseasoned posts. These posts shrink as they dry, producing an amazingly strong joint far superior to the glued joints of factory chairs. Some makers cut grooves in the rung tenons and slightly dovetailed them. Once the posts had shrunk around them it was physically impossible for them to come out. After the front and back rungs are in place, the holes for the side rungs are bored above but slightly into the back rungs, so that when the side rungs are driven in, they interlock the others to insure a still stronger chair frame. Another trick technique is to make the top rungs not round but elliptical in shape, when viewed from the end, for extra strength when the hickory seat shrinks on these rungs after weaving and drying.

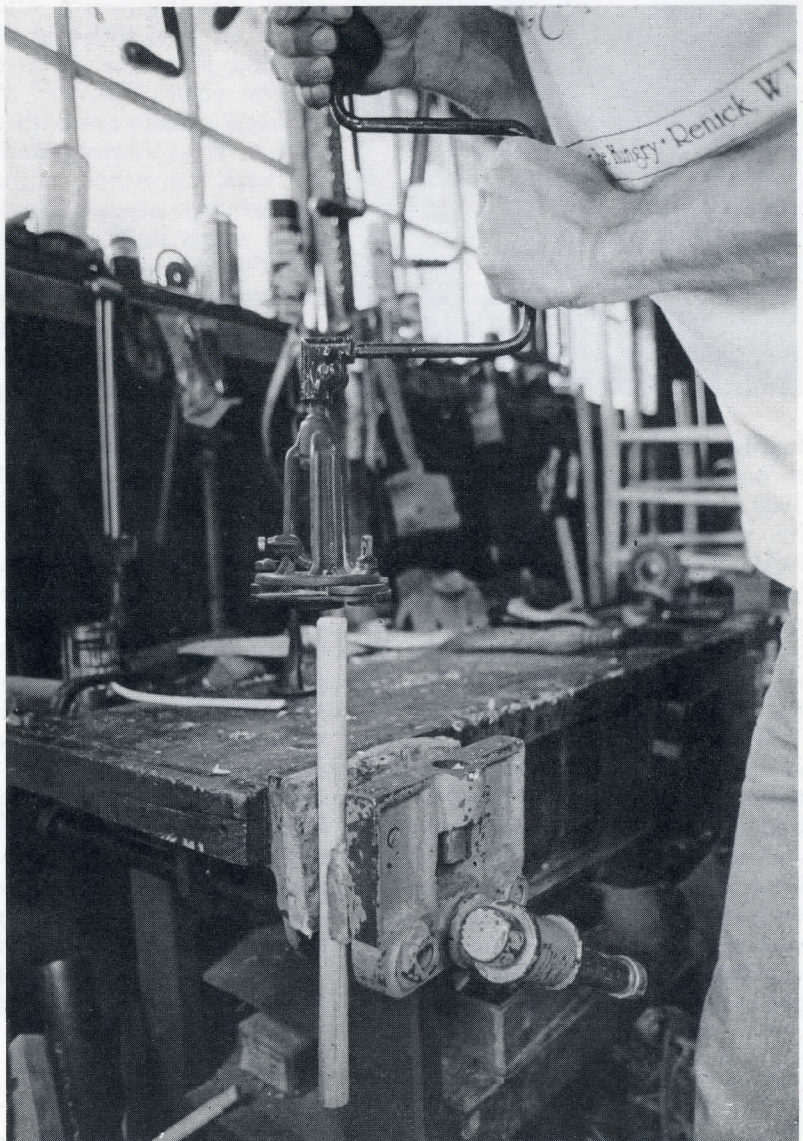
Much has to be learned about the alignment of the wood grain in the posts, rungs and slats to insure the best shrinking and bending success. Straight-grained wood is especially important for the back slats, so they can be worked and bent uniformly. Drawknife shaving usually follows the natural grain of the wood, so a fairly straight grain is also a must for producing the frames of shaved chairs. Burly or wavy-grained wood is fine for lathe turning, as long as it is a tight-grained variety such as maple. Rungs should be positioned with the annual rings of the end grain in a horizontal position, to help prevent their tenons from splitting the posts as the posts shrink around them. Wood shrinks mainly across its annual rings, making a perfectly round piece of green wood become egg-shaped when seasoned. The flats on the dovetailed tenons also allow the post to shrink without splitting. The end grain of the front posts is aligned in such a way that as the posts shrink their mortise holes tighten up on the rung tenons.

The flat portions of the back posts are shaved along the annual rings so they will bend properly. The freshly formed backposts can be put right

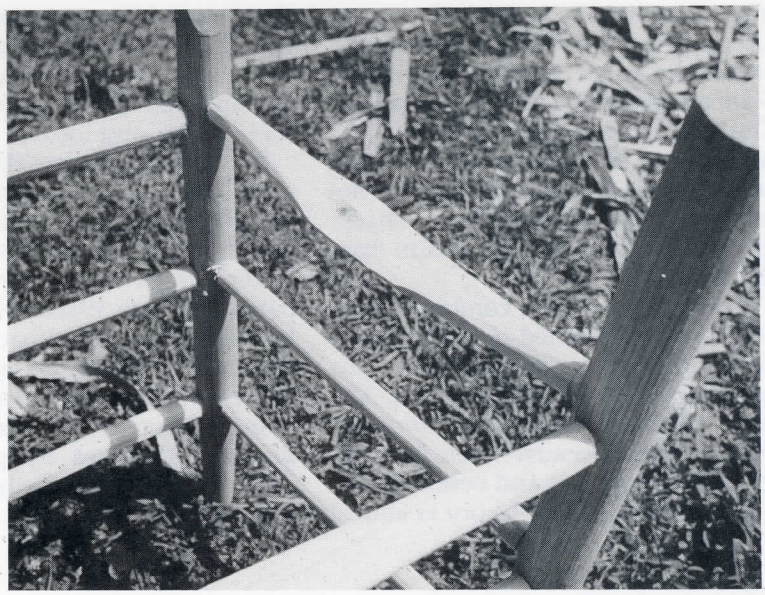
Above: The posts and rungs of split bottom chairs are made by turning on a manual or electric lathe, or shaved into shape with a drawknife. Here author Gerald Milnes shaves out a chair leg, holding his work with the traditional "horse."

Seasoned chair rungs are seated into still-green posts, with the joint shrinking tightly as it dries. Here a post is bored (below), and a rung prepared for insertion by a chamfer bit. This special bit, which works on the principle of a pencil sharpener, slightly bevels the rung.





Among the secrets of oldtime chairmakers was to leave a shoulder on the top side rungs, to provide more support for the seat bottom which will be woven on. Note also that corresponding side and back rungs are spaced so as to interlock with one another once inserted in the post. No glue is necessary.



Chairmaking

Photoessay by Michael Keller

Above: A shaved chair frame, complete except for the back slats. Note that the posts have not been trimmed. This will be done only after the green wood has thoroughly seasoned, to prevent cracking in the final product.

Right: A finished chair and a chair in progress. Milnes' chairs, shaved from hardwoods and bottomed with hickory splits, are strong and surprisingly light.

into a bending jig to form the curve, although it is sometimes necessary to steam the posts to form this bend. Slats are also bent green or steamed. The old chairmaker's many tricks have stood the test of time. When correctly made, these chairs are not inclined to become wobbly or "shackely" like mass-produced chairs from the store.

The most common combination of wood in lathe-turned chairs is maple posts and hickory rungs. Exceptions are cherry, ash or walnut posts. The posts of shaved chairs are normally oak or ash, because their straight grain splits, shaves and bends nicely. I prefer white oak. Hickory is almost always used for rungs on both types, because of superior strength. There are no set rules, however, and I've encountered chairs made from sassafras, poplar and locust.

If a community was able to support a full-time cabinetmaker in earlier days, chances are he would have a lathe powered by a foot-treadle or a water wheel for turning his chair parts. The late Walker Johnson, better known as "Chairback" Johnson, was such a fellow. He used a water-powered lathe and earned his nickname earlier in this century in the Braxton-Clay area by peddling his chairs through the country, carrying them on his back.

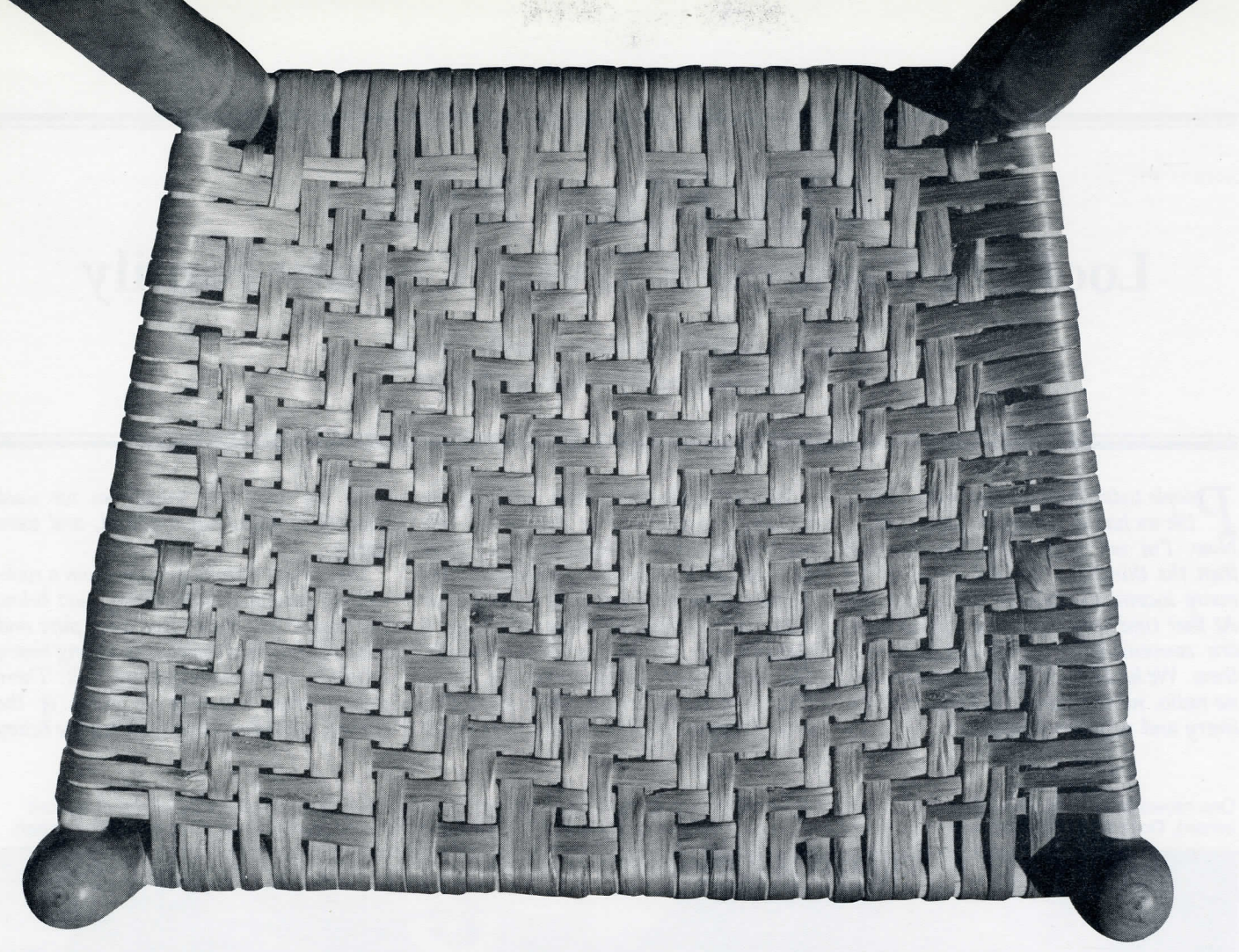
A brisk snap frees the entire "split," or strip of bark, from the hickory pole. The bark may be woven green, or kept resilient by storing in water.

Arthur Woods keeps his family's old foot-treadle lathe in working order. He recalls his father hewing out the lathe's large oak flywheel and remembers that the metal parts or "irons" were his grandfather's. He says the lathe made many a cant hook handle, which the men carried on their backs to sell for 50 cents apiece. Arthur remarks, "If people today had to go back to something like that they'd lay down and die, wouldn't they? They'd just hate themselves to death!"

He doesn't tote hardwood handles on his back nowadays, but Arthur does do a good business in handling — or "helving" — tools. Folks bring axes, sledges, shovels and other tools, as well as the occasional cant hook, for handle replacement. He maintains his father's old blacksmith shop to dress and repair tools. I first heard of Arthur through a neighbor who had taken a chair to him to be bottomed. After becoming acquainted, I discovered his many other craft skills. He is not only a good chair bottomer, but also a chairmaker, knifemaker and woodworker. Every community needs somebody like Arthur Woods.

Arthur uses steel from old crosscut saws and chain saw bars to make his knives, which he grinds out and fits with walnut handles. They are razor-sharp. He sells the small ones for $2 each, if he doesn't give them away first. "The old people had a superstition that if you give a knife away, it'll cut your friendship," he says. "If that was the truth, I'd have nothing but enemies in the whole area because I give away as many as I sell. I've given people knives and they say, 'I've got to give you something. It's bad luck,' and they give me a penny. I've had that happen several times."

On a visit last spring, Arthur offered me some of his spring tonic. "It's a medicine to purify your blood," he explained. When I asked what was in it, I realized I'd discovered still another of Arthur's talents as he described the ingredients, what they looked like, what they were good for and where to find them. Then he produced a paper with the recipe to give me exact amounts. "The purple-topped ironweed root, you take six pounds of them, and the



The woven seat dries to a tough hardness within a few days. This is the herringbone or twill pattern preferred by Mr. Woods and many other West Virginia craftsmen.

sassafrilla six pounds. It looks similar to camphor vine, but don't get as large. It's a beautiful color and so bitter it's a sight. You take one pound and a half of burdock roots and one pound and one half of yellow dock roots. Two pounds of spignet. Rattleweed or black cohosh, it's all the same, you take four pounds of that. One pound of mayapple root, a pound of black root, which is called Indian hemp. Prickly ash bark, a half-pound of that. Dogwood bark a half-pound, and wild cherry bark a half-a-pound. Wahoo bark a half-a-pound. Camphor vine bark one pound, and swamp root four pounds. That's 14 different things. Then boil that in an iron kettle with enough sugar just to make a syrup. Will Wayne gave me the recipe and it's supposed to be from the Indians. It'll take the poison out of your blood!"

Despite Arthur's many skills, it is chairmaking that is at the heart of his craftsmanship. His comfortable chairs are turned from maple and hickory, with a hickory split seat. He also makes assorted sizes of stools, using the same post-and-rung chair frame construction and woven hickory seating. He carries on the craft as did his father and grandfather before him. He showed me a chair he estimated to be 100 years old. The original frame was lathe-turned by his grandfather, Joseph Woods. The back slats had been replaced by his father, Robert Lee Woods, and the latest hickory bottom put in by Arthur's daughter, Vicki Woods Carpenter, making the chair span four generations of the Woods family. It is doubtful that any rich family's Chippendale has so distinguished a genealogy.

If idle hands are the devil's playthings, as the saying goes, Arthur Woods is surely in the right camp. He is always busy with something. Even while carrying on a conversation he will usually take out his pocket knife and whittle something out of a scrap of wood. Arthur is, in fact, a deeply religious man who stays active in his local church.

Arthur has been an honored guest at the Augusta Heritage Arts Festival in Elkins. The craft of chairmaking and chair bottoming has been taught at the Augusta Center in their summer craft program by Jeff Shriver, a talented young chairmaker. Thanks to Arthur, Jeff, and many others, traditional chairmaking is alive and well in West Virginia.

Everyone needs a good seat. From the elaborate, stately, cumbersome armchairs of Medieval times through the highly styled period chairs of more recent centuries, to the low-slung backbusters now seen at the shopping malls, the chair seems to reflect the changing moods of people. Seating, like everything else, varies with the tastes of the time and according to the amount of thought and care people are willing to invest. But fortunately some things, like a true friend or a West Virginia split bottom chair, never seem to change.

On Flag Run
Looking Back on a Taylor County Family

By Zera Bartlett Radabaugh Lough
Photographs by Michael Keller

People today have no idea of the kind of life we had to live in the early 1900's. Now, I'm not saying that we resented then the things we did not have, or the many inconveniences we had to endure. At that time most everyone had no modern conveniences, so we did not miss them. We had no hot water, no bathroom, no radio, no television, no daily mail delivery and very few telephones.

We had only homemade lye soap for laundry; no bleaches or detergents. We washed clothes on a washboard in a large tub and boiled them in a washboiler on the kitchen stove or outside in a copper or brass kettle. We dried them outside on a clothesline or on a line on the front porch. The water was carried from the creek. There was no electricity, thus, no clothes dryer. We got our baths once a week in the same big tub, and sometimes we used homemade soap. But we lived, and were happy.

We got our drinking water from a rock-walled, cemented-over spring, just below our house. The water was cold, pure and good tasting, but sometimes during heavy rains we had trouble getting to it. There was a creek running in front of the spring, and when that was high the heavy

One haywagon had room for the entire Simpson High School class of 1916, with seats left over. The three graduates were Zera Bartlett (seated center), Doris Selvey (seated right) and Forist Selvey (one of the two young men). Principal Cline Koon drives the wagon. Photographer unknown.

Zera Lough (right) with sister Ruth, on her front porch at Simpson.

board we had to cross to get to the spring would be under water. We had to watch and carry in several buckets if the creek began to rise. We also crossed the creek to get over to the milk house. We kept our milk and butter there since we had no other place cool enough to keep it fresh.

My grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and some of my nieces and nephews, seem so interested when I tell them about those times when I was a little girl, growing up on Flag Run in Taylor County. One of them said, "Grandma, why don't you write about some of the things that happened when you were young?" So I thought, "Why not?"

My father was Clay Bartlett. When his first wife, Emma, died, leaving him with two little girls, one four years old and the other two, Emma's father, Richard Selvey, approached him. "Now, I think we had better take the girls into our home and care for them," Grandpa Selvey offered. My father did not hesitate. "No, they are my little girls. My mother lives with me and we will keep them here with us. This will be their home; however, you may take them for a visit anytime you like."

That's the way it went. Grandpa Selvey usually came to our home, about one and a half miles from Simpson, up on Flag Run, on Friday or Saturday. He would carry Neva in his arms and lead Vera down to his house. Then Dad would ride down on horseback on Sunday evening or Monday morning and bring them back. A harmonious relationship lasted through the years between the Selveys and the Bartletts. They harvested together, enjoyed social activities together, and each family ministered to the needs of the other. There were never any misunderstandings.

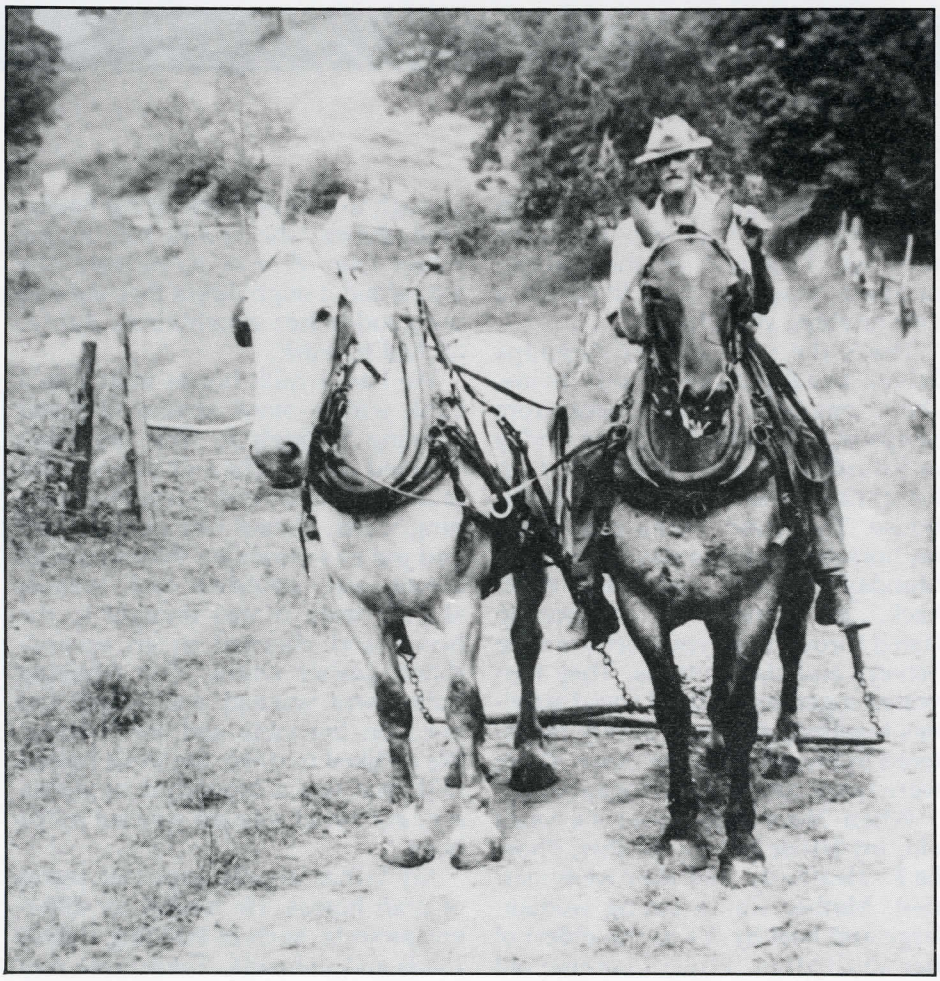
When Neva was about six years old, my father met my mother, Phoebe K. Heatherly, and they were married. Mother was a strong woman, large and healthy. I was the oldest of her 10 children. When I became old enough to take on some of the household duties, she would call on me rather than Vera or Neva since she was afraid it might seem that she was not good to her stepchildren. But we all had to work.

We had a milk house built into a bank with a small stream of water running through it. The milk was strained into crocks and taken to the milk house and set in a trough of running water. Cream was skimmed off and put in a cream jar. When enough cream was collected and became slightly sour, it was brought to the house and churned in an up-and-down dasher churn. The resulting butter was washed and salted and used on the table and for cooking. We all liked to drink the fresh buttermilk that was a byproduct of churning, and what was left was fed to the hogs.

My father usually kept two teams of draft horses. He hauled for different projects, such as building county roads and railroads. There were very

Above: The Bartlett family, about 1903. Zera stands between father Clay and mother Phoebe, with grandmother Servilla Bartlett at right. Hiel and Raymond are with their mother and grandmother, respectively, with Neva at rear. Photographer unknown.

Below: Clay Bartlett supplemented his farming by commercial hauling. Here he is with horses Ben and Mandy in 1938. Photographer unknown.



few trucks on the road at that time in our area. Since my father was away so much, the work at home had to be done by other members of the family. There was a new baby every two or three years who was usually cared for by my grandmother.

We kept our milk cows and some of the heifers, and each year we butchered a cow, and sometimes a steer, for meat. We also kept a brood sow, so we had hogs to butcher. All of this furnished meat for our table.

My father always raised a lot of potatoes, enough usually to do us for a year. And we had large corn fields, corn to feed the stock and white corn which was ground into corn meal for corn bread and mush. In our garden back of the house we raised different kinds of vegetables — onions, cabbage, beets, tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, green beans, and more. About the only things we had to have store-bought were flour, bought by the barrel, and sugar and salt, bought by the 50- or 100-pound bags. Also baking powder, soda, pepper, and so forth, were purchased at the store.

We had no cellar, ice box, deep freeze or refrigerator at the time. Food we could not can or dry had to be buried in the ground. Our garden looked like it was full of hay shocks during the winter. Dad would dig a circle about a foot deep and four or five feet in diameter. Then he would spread hay or straw on the bottom and fill it up with, let's say, potatoes. He built it up into the shape of a hay shock, holding the potatoes in place with hay or straw until it was topped out. The entire mound was then covered with dirt to the depth that the potatoes would not freeze. Apples, cabbage, turnips, and beets were also buried. Parsnips did not need to be buried, since freezing improved their flavor. During the winter we would dig a small hole in the side of the mound, take out what we wanted, and then close the hole. The buried food always remained crisp.

Mother was a wonderful cook. She baked nine or 10 loaves of bread every two or three days. She made gallons of gravy. She raised a healthy bunch of children. We always had plenty to eat and everyone ate what was put on the table. No one ever said, "I don't like this," or "I'm not going to eat that."

Our house at this time consisted of two large log rooms with a wide hall between, maybe seven or eight feet wide. There were shelves and pegs on each side of the hall at the back end, next to our garden. At the front a long porch ran the full length of the house. On the right of this porch was a small kitchen with a cook stove, table, and shelves built along the wall. Beside the stove was a large wood box and space for coal buckets. There were wooden benches on each side of the table.

At the other end of the porch there were stairsteps going up to the attic. In the attic was one finished bedroom, which we sometimes used in the summertime. The rest of the space was used for storage. I remember a spinning wheel and Mother's loom, which she used to weave old rags into rugs or carpets. Also, I remember our grandfather's old Civil War sword and uniform. They also had cheese boxes full of maple sugar up there, hidden from the children. That was to shave on the cooked wheat we sometimes had for breakfast cereal, delicious with good cow's cream.

Our two log rooms each had two full-sized beds. Each year the straw ticks for the beds had to be emptied of the old straw and refilled with new. They were roly-poly for a while until we slept on them and mashed them down. We put a goose feather tick on top of the straw tick, which really made it high. When the straw ticks were first refilled and the beds so high, my grandmother, because of her rheumatism, had to use a chair to get into bed.

That reminds me of a story. One afternoon, after the beds had been redone, we had a thunderstorm. One of our neighbors came in for a short visit, his large collie dog with him. The thunder and lightning frightened the dog and he ran way back under the bed. Sister Neva slept with Grandmother. She had already gone to bed, and Grandmother had undressed and was standing in front of the fireplace with her "shimmy" pulled up behind to get warm. About that time the dog awoke and started crawling out from under the bed, his toe nails scratching the bare floor as he came. Grandmother, not knowing what it was, made it to the bed in a hurry, not even touching her climb-up chair and almost landing on top of Neva.

Following high school, Zera (right) and friend Doris Selvey went to Alderson-Broaddus College. This 1916 photograph was made on the college grounds. Photographer unknown.

In the other room, under the bed in which Mother and Dad slept, there was a full-sized trundle bed. When I was small, two of my little brothers and I slept there. There was a large fireplace in this room, and in the right-hand corner was a big built-in corner cupboard. It extended all the way to the ceiling and had several shelves and two sets of doors, top to bottom. My dad would sometimes set his boots out of the way on the bottom shelf. I remember my oldest brother, five or six years of age, got up one night and not finding the "potty" went to the cupboard and used one of Dad's boots. I have never forgotten that and doubt that he has, either.

The first telephone, which we had in the early 1900's, was on the left

Zera Bartlett was 17 when this student portrait was made at Alderson-Broaddus. She married neighbor George Radabaugh the following year. Photographer unknown, 1917.

wall of Mother and Daddy's room. It seemed a great privilege to be able to turn the crank on this box on the wall and then talk and talk. Each ring was heard on every phone on the party line and one could listen in on a neighbor, if Dad wasn't around. Our ring was one long and one short.

We got a new house soon after this. Our grandfather, Waldo P. Bartlett, had inherited enough land from his father, Josiah Bartlett, that he could have land for all of his children who lived to be adults. Our father inherited about 100 acres for his part. He had some nice timber on his land. About 1910, or soon thereafter, he decided to cut enough trees to build the house. He had a sawmill brought into our "little bottom," on a nice level spot. He and the older boys, with some hired help, cut the trees, trimmed them, and hauled them to the mill. Soon there was lots of beautiful new lumber and great piles of sawdust.

Dad had two tenant houses on the farm, and the man who owned the mill and some of the men who worked for him "batched" in the one nearest us. A man named "Daddy" Bunner cooked for them. When the sawing was finished, and before they moved the equipment out, Daddy Bunner decided to make a feast for all who had worked at the mill. George Radabaugh, who lived on a farm adjoining ours and who later became my husband, had become a good friend to Bunner, so he was invited to the feast. Bunner had mutton with all the trimmings and the men thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I am inclined to believe that they also had a keg of beer, but don't know for sure.

Anyway, after the meal the men were sitting around talking. George Radabaugh said, "Daddy, where did you get that good mutton?" Daddy Bunner hesitated a few seconds then said, "George, I know how hard these men worked and I felt they deserved this feast. I could come up with everything but the meat. I walked out in the yard and looked over on your hill. There I saw the prettiest lot of lambs. I knew they were fat and would make such good mutton. So, I went over and got one." Well, George was so surprised his mouth flew open, but he did not say a word. The men started to laugh and then George did, too. "After all," he thought, "I helped to eat it."

I have heard George tell this story many times and laugh about it. He and Daddy Bunner were the best of friends for many years.

The next year my dad, with some hired help and the help of his boys, moved some of the things from the old house to an outbuilding and the rest to the tenant house on the hill. They tore our log house down and started building a new house on the same spot. My mother and the older girls cooked for the family and the hired help in an improvised kitchen in an outbuilding in the lower part of our yard. In the evening we would all walk out to the tenant house to sleep, and then back in the morning.

Dad and the others built us a seven-room house, with a long roofed porch all across the front. Dad hauled in brick for two chimneys from a house that had been torn down, getting the brick much cheaper that way. One chimney went up between the living room and front room, with open grates in both rooms. The other chimney was between our dining room and kitchen, which served an open grate in the dining room and a flue for the kitchen stove. There was also a smaller porch off the kitchen.

A year or so after our house was built, Dad dug way back in the bank behind the house and built a cellar. He made the walls of large rocks and cemented them smooth on the inside and made a cement floor. Then he built a one-room storage house over the cellar. We could now keep potatoes, apples, canned food, milk, butter and other foods in the cellar. It was partly underground so nothing froze in the winter, and it was cool in the summer. It had a heavy insulated door.

We were a happy family in the new house. For the first time, we had plenty of room. There were several built-in cupboards and closets, which we called clothes presses. Also, there were wardrobes in each bedroom. We had one bedroom downstairs and steps led up from the dining room to three bedrooms upstairs. With all

this and the new cellar close by, living became much easier for all of us.

Our oldest sister, Vera, had always spent a lot of her time down at Grandma and Grandpa Selvey's. She had decided she wanted to become a teacher. They helped her to go to Fairmont State Normal School and finally to take the teacher's examination to get her teaching certificate. Vera taught several terms in and around Simpson and later came back home. She then taught, I believe, two terms in nearby Barbour County and walked across the Lough Hill, more than a mile, to a one-room school called the Lough School.

As we children became old enough, we went to the Flag Run School, a one-room school a little over a mile from home. We could go through the sixth grade, then we had to go to the Simpson School for the seventh and eighth grades. Later, after Simpson became a high school, some of us went there.

There were no hard roads and no school buses, so we walked. We were usually half-starved when we got home. We would, as a rule, eat two or three apples before supper. This kept us healthy. There was never much need for the epsom salts or castor oil, which were commonly used when necessary.

When I think about so many families today, running their children to a doctor for minor aches and pains, and the excessive use of antibiotics, aspirin, Vicks salve and other preparations, it is amazing to recall the few doctor bills we had at that time. Medical insurance was unheard of, so home remedies were a great help. When any of us got a bad cold or "grippe," as it was called, Mother would make "boneset tea" and we had to drink lots of it. This caused us to sweat, and usually reduced our fever. Soon we were up and around.

When the babies or smaller children got choked up with croup, Mother used a mixture of lard, turpentine, camphor and kerosene. She would take them up in front of the open grate and grease their chests, back, and sometimes the bottom of their feet, and wrap them up from head to heels. This treatment usually loosened them up and relieved the choking.

Most families had to make do with home remedies since there was no convenient way to go to a doctor. Doctors, when called, had to ride horseback to get to their patients.

The most serious illness I recall was when Neva had typhoid fever when she was 15 years old. Hiel, the oldest boy, had it when he was nine or 10. In each case, we had the services of a trained nurse and both recovered without going to a hospital. Dad, exposed to all kinds of weather in his work, had pneumonia occasionally, but he was always treated at home.

Healthwise, all 12 of us children were lucky. All lived to be adults, even though we had the childhood diseases, such as whooping cough, measles, mumps and chicken pox. There were no inoculations then to prevent those.

For entertainment the young people went, as a group, to school or church functions. Sometimes some of us would have a part in these pro-

Above: Zera and husband George Radabaugh set up housekeeping in this house adjacent to her father's Flag Run farm in 1918. The couple lived on the same place for 41 years, building a more modern house in 1925. Photographer and date unknown.

Below: The cellar from the George Radabaugh homeplace survives today. The familiar over-and-under style, with stone cellar below and storage room above, is similar to the one Zera remembers on the Bartlett farm.

Seven of the Clay Bartlett children at a family reunion, with Zera between Neva and Ruth. Get-togethers are still important to the family, Zera says. Photographer unknown, 1950's.

grams. In the summertime the boys in the neighborhood would organize baseball teams and get together for games in the evenings. Quite often a farm family would have a party and everyone was invited, including the parents. There would be someone to play a French harp or pick a banjo, and we would "strip the willow" or square dance.

Often a family with young children would go to a neighbor's house to "set 'til bedtime." I can remember big buckets of apples, especially the winesaps. We would consume apples and just talk. It seemed most families had orchards with good apples. We had few pests or diseases that harmed the fruits and vegetables in those days.

As I have said, there were 12 children in our family, but there was never a time when all 12 lived there at once. We three older girls were married before Ruth and Burl, the two youngest children, were born. In fact, Ruth was born the same year as my oldest son, Earl. Two years later, Burl was born in May, and my youngest son, Roy, was born in November.

There was always room at our table for anyone who came hungry. In our dining room we had a long homemade table which seated 10 people. Our daily menu was quite different from what we have today. For breakfast Mother would usually fry thinly sliced pickled side meat, which had been soaked all night to get rid of the salt. She rolled it in corn meal mixed with flour and fried it nice and brown. She would then make a skillet of gravy and homemade bread or biscuits. Once in a while we had eggs and fried potatoes, but most of the time Mother saved the eggs to trade for the store-bought things we needed.

During blackberry time my mother and one or two of us girls would take buckets to the hills and pick gallons of blackberries in the early morning. That afternoon, Mother would cook the berries and put them in gallon jars with caps she had cut from empty tin cans, sealing them all around with sealing wax. The berries would keep until we were ready to use them. Mother often used some of the fresh berries to make cobblers or dumplings, boiled done in water, which we ate with what we called "dip," sweetened cream flavored with vanilla.

We had very few, if any, of the type of canning jars used today, but we had stone jars of all shapes and sizes. In our cellar house there were several five-, eight-, or 10-gallon stone jars. We kept pickled pork meat in 10-gallon jars. The jars were packed full of side meat, ham hocks or jowls, covered with strong salt brine. The tops were then weighted down. This would keep indefinitely.

Maybe another jar would be filled with cucumbers in brine, which were later soaked and fixed with vinegar, sweetened and flavored with pickling spices and sometimes horseradish. Every fall we also made jars of sauerkraut.

Another jar might be filled with what we called "end-of-the-season relish." Mother gathered in all the late cucumbers, cabbage, sweet peppers, onions and green tomatoes. There were cut up or ground in a chopper, soaked overnight in salt, drained, packed in a jar, then covered with seasoned vinegar and horseradish. I believe Mother covered this with grape leaves and weighted it down. It was really an appetizer.

There was always a lot of corn beans, soup beans and lima beans. Some of the corn beans were picked green and strung on strings to dry. Others were allowed to begin to dry on the vine, then picked and strung on strings to finish drying. These were called fodder beans. The dried beans were packed in cotton sacks and hung up in an outbuilding. When Mother wanted a mess of beans she would soak them overnight and then cook them with some pickled meat or a ham bone. Sometimes she added some dried sweet corn. We loved this dish with corn bread.

I also recall the big two-gallon iron pot in which Mother cooked so many meals. Many times she would have it full of vegetable soup when she had a hungry bunch to feed; at other times, a pot full of boiled cabbage cooked with ham hock. Mother sometimes cooked turnips and potatoes and then mashed them. These were very good seasoned with butter or cream.

Dad had some old-fashioned white peaches back on the hill. Some would be dried, some used fresh for the table and the rest mixed with apples and made into peach butter, cooked in the kettle outside. We also made gallons of apple butter, grape butter and sometimes pear butter. We relished these butters on biscuits and warm light bread.

Mother did not make a lot of cakes or pies, but when she wanted something special she would make a three- or four-layer cake and put it together with bananas and whipped cream. It

Above: Zera Lough shows off a favorite quilt. She quilts less now than in the past, but still keeps herself busy.

Below: Zera and George Radabaugh's old place on Flag Run. The hilly terrain is typical of the local countryside that Zera remembers so well.

was delicious. Her special pie was raisin cream pie. I have never tasted raisin pie like Mother's. Another of her specialities was homemade chicken noodles. She would mix the egg noodles, roll them thin, cut them in long strips and let them dry for a while before cooking. One of her special Sunday dinners was a big fat hen and homemade noodles.

Mother made the salad dressing which we used on slaw or potato salad. She kept a keg of vinegar behind the cook stove. This was made from sorghum molasses and any sweet rinsings she had. This vinegar had a flavor all its own, which was probably why her salad dressing was unique. Dad raised cane almost every year, and he had a cane mill which pressed the juice from the cane stalk. The juice was boiled down into a thick syrup. The sorghum and the gallons of maple syrup and maple sugar which we made helped to take care of the sweets for the year.

Talking about sweets, several families kept honey bees back then. When there were two queen bees in one "bee gum," or hive, one would take her workers and leave. She might stop in a nearby tree, where her followers would collect in a bunch as large as a gallon bucket. The farmer would take a new bee gum and put it on a large sheet spread out under the tree. He sawed the limb loose and carefully let it down on the sheet. He then pounded on a tin pie pan and the queen bee would lead her followers into the empty gum. The owner had another hive of bees.

I recall the time a bee tree was found on our farm. A few of the men who were not afraid tied veils over their heads, tied their sleeves and pants legs down, and pulled on gloves. They took a bee smoker, filled with old rags, to smoke the bees out, a tub and some dish pans. They sawed the tree down and carefully drained the honey out. We heated the honey enough to strain it. When we finished we had 17 quarts of fresh, clear, amber-colored honey. It was made that summer from the abundance of clover blossoms.

It must have been around 1911 or 1912 that Peter Doerr came to make his home with us. He was near the age of our older boys, and homeless. He was from Pennsylvania. His

Our author today, a spry octogenarian. "I am now 87 and still keeping the home fires burning," she reported in her most recent letter to GOLDENSEAL.

mother had died and his home was broken up. I didn't know too much about Peter Doerr, but there developed a very close relationship between him and the older boys. I was busy with high school, college and teaching school.

About that time, or somewhat later, a financial crisis arose. Four or five of the older boys, realizing Dad needed some help, went to work in the coal mines. Peter Doerr also went. They were all really too young for that, but since there were no restrictions on age and a need existed, they went to work and soon took care of the situation.

Later, as the older boys married and left home, they stayed with coal mining. At first wages were not too good, but as time went on, wages got better and retirement benefits improved. My older sisters both married, Vera moving out of state before her death in 1948. Neva, now 92 and twice widowed, lives in Philippi today. Brother Harland left home young, eventually settling in Ohio. Willie worked as a builder and contractor and still lives in Barbour County. Brother Paul ended his career as superintendent of schools in Taylor County. Ruth retired from the phone company in Clarksburg, and Brother Burl, the baby of the family, lives now in Ohio.

I, Zera, married George Radabaugh in 1918 and lived for 41 years on Flag Run on a small farm adjoining my father's farm. There we raised our two sons. George died in 1959, after which I moved away from the farm into a small house in Simpson owned by Raymond Bartlett, my brother.

I am thankful for the close relationship my family has had all these years. There has never been any quarreling or bickering. If one was in trouble, all were concerned. Today we really look forward to the family reunions we have each year. It has grown to be such a large group with all the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and others. Sometimes between times we get together, just the seven of us children who are left and perhaps a few more, where we can talk to each other of past events.

In the fall of 1960 I went to work at the West Virginia Industrial School for Boys at Pruntytown, where I taught fifth and sixth grades for nine years. I retired in 1969 and came back home to Simpson. In 1971 I was married to Okey Lough. I owned and drove a car, so we visited around quite a bit. Okey died in 1976 and I am still here at home in Simpson. I have traveled a little and enjoyed visiting with friends and loved ones. Working in the church, the Eastern Star and Homemakers Club, I have kept myself pretty busy.

In the last couple of years I have had to slow down. My eyes have been failing. This past winter I have not done any quilt-making or crocheting. When the weather is bad it is comforting to know that I do not have to go outside and can just sit by my good warm fire. I am now 87 years old, and as the saying goes, I have time to "stop and smell the roses." As I look back on my life I realize that God has been good to me, and I thank him each day for his many blessings.

The author is grateful for the help of Earl and Polly Radabaugh in preparing this story for publication.

Shanty Pickers

Photos and Text by Bob Schwarz

It is almost a story of love, of how much one man can appreciate another man for teaching him a valued skill, the playing of music. The teacher is Merida "Murdie" Hall, and the pupil Jerry Johnson. They are plain people, in the habit of playing old-time music together once every week. They do not play alone. Some of the people they play with are regulars, and some just show up because they have heard that good music is played here and they want to be part of it.

Murdie Hall is 72 years old, and retired. In a shed built with his own hands, Murdie plays music Saturday nights. Into the two-room shed they call the "picking shanty" 12 men with their instruments have crowded on the night of my visit. Two men have come to listen, and there is space for not more than a handful more.

"It's just something we do because we enjoy it," said Johnson. "Murdie doesn't want the publicity. He doesn't want it to get out of hand to where we can't sit down and enjoy ourselves."

"We try to hold it down to what the building can hold," added Murdie. "Open it up and we might have two or three hundred people here, or maybe five."

Behind Murdie's house on the Cabell-Lincoln county line on Route 10, it sits, this picking shanty. When it was built, Murdie wanted to put up every board and drive every nail himself. It is there for one purpose only.

"There's not another thing that goes on here," as Jerry Johnson says, "just picking music." Beer and liquor do not flow at the shanty, and no cigarette smoking takes place. There is a strong odor of tobacco juice from several musicians chewing and spitting all night.

Before there was a shanty the men picked elsewhere, according to Steve McComas, a regular. Except that the

There are plenty of good porches for daytime picking at the Lincoln County picking shanty. The music moves inside after dark.

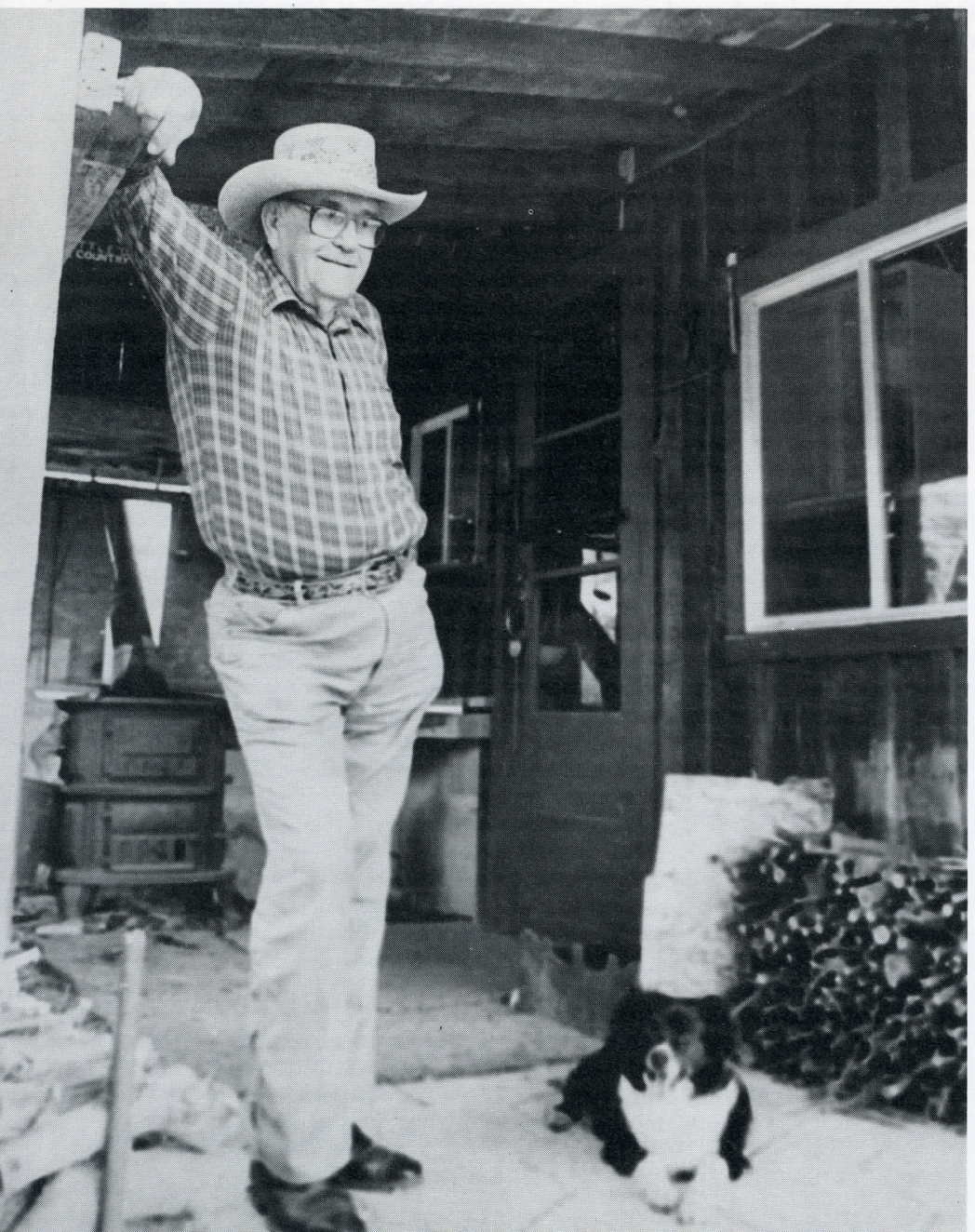
playing took place in the morning rather than evening, he says, the sessions were not much different than now.

"A lot of the songs you'll hear tonight, I heard them first 20 years ago at the West Hamlin water plant," McComas told me. "They don't get old. I love them just as much now as when I first heard them." Murdie had become a local legend, he adds. "I'd heard of Murdie all my life, from my dad and others," says McComas, who recalled that while working construction he and Murdie wound up on the same job. "We started playing music together Sunday mornings at the old West Hamlin water treatment plant. Emmett McCoy was the superintendent there. Emmett played, Buck Duncan — my mother's brother — played, and also Baxter Butcher and Doby Wilkerson. It was just exactly like what you see here — people came in at different times to play and listen."

McComas said he did a lot of trapping in winter then. He would set his traps Saturday evening, and Sunday morning get up before daylight and run the trapline. By eight, he would be at the water plant and the men would play till noon or one o'clock. "It was just like here. We'd play one tune after another."

It is a rich heritage, this music, and it is obvious to an onlooker that the men at the shanty enjoy themselves. They like playing with Murdie, and they like playing this music that has become a part of them. "It's a feeling," says McComas. "I'm sure everybody in the shanty loves that music."

Proprietor Murdie Hall is the man who greets visitors at the shanty. He put up every board by hand.



The music played at the shanty goes back to the music of the '40's. "It's the old country, traditional music," Jerry Johnson explained. It's not slick. The music is reminiscent of old Flatt and Scruggs recordings, or the music of the Carter Family, Stanley Brothers or Mac Wiseman. It is music Jerry Johnson would like to see preserved, and he laments that he has already seen too many oldtimers take their musical knowledge to their graves. Murdie Hall has been generous with what he knows, and Johnson wants to take Murdie's musical traditions, learn them, and then pass them on to the next musical generation.

Johnson's oldest son, Jerry Lee, 11, already plays a little guitar and harmonica. But Jerry Lee is in the school band, and though his interest in oldtime music may yet ripen, Johnson now jokingly calls his son "one of those horn blowers." Johnson himself learned to play the guitar 23 years ago, when he was 17. He had wanted that first guitar for a long time, ironically getting no support from his own guitar-picking father.

"I first wanted a guitar when I was 10 or 12. Dad wouldn't get it for me. Maybe it was because he didn't want me in the places he played at. Dad didn't play in beer halls, but they most always served some kind of drink at the square dances where he did play. Or maybe it was because I was a kid and he didn't want to start me too early," said Johnson. "Maybe he thought I'd get discouraged and find out how hard it was and I'd quit."

Jerry Johnson's early musical interest did fade, but it was more a matter of distraction than discouragement. A few years after he got the guitar, he found himself playing so much softball that he had little time for music. And the quality of his music-making was at a standstill — "till I met Murdie," Johnson said. It was trying to learn a new musical instrument that led him to the older man.

Above: Fiddler Jerry Johnson is a regular at the music get-togethers. Here he and Hall join in on a tune.

Right: Steve McComas says the local picking tradition goes back before the shanty days. He recalls early sessions at the West Hamlin water plant.

The fiddle is the hardest instrument of oldtime music, according to Johnson, and it is the one he now likes to play best. The learning was not easy. "I never had trouble noting one of these things," said Johnson, "but using the bow was like trying to fiddle with a 10-foot two-by-four."

As it happened, Johnson's fiddle and Murdie's picking shanty came along at about the same time. Murdie was still building the shanty when, for Christmas of 1972, Johnson's wife Earlene presented her husband with the new instrument.

"I couldn't tune it, couldn't make a sound on it," Johnson recalled. "I showed it to Emmett McCoy and Steve McComas, who would sometimes play music together. 'What do I do with it now?' I asked. Murdie was still working then, so they said to take it up to Buck Duncan. Duncan was a good fiddle player, and I went to him several times over a year and a half. He taught me to tune it and play a few tunes."

But Duncan was a hard man to catch up with, Johnson remembered. The Center Point Baptist Church in West Hamlin had burned to the ground, and the fiddler was helping rebuild it. Duncan as a teacher was seldom available, and the learning went slowly.

One day Johnson was again talking with McCoy. "Murdie Hall will help you," McCoy told him. "By this time, Murdie was retired," said Johnson, "and the little picking shanty was completed. Emmett, Steve, and Doby Wilkerson were meeting there with Murdie. But I wouldn't go. I didn't know enough about the fiddle and I had lost interest in the guitar. I was bashful, backwards."

His friend Emmett McCoy was insistent. On his way over to the picking shanty, he would stop his truck at Johnson's house. "Get in," he'd say. "And he wouldn't take no for an answer," Jerry Johnson recalled. "You might just as well figure on crawling in."

So Johnson found himself sitting in with the shanty musicians, watching and listening and then playing. "Back then, there were a lot of things I couldn't play," he admits. "I was real limited." Soon his musical abilities ripened.

"Now it's the most relaxing thing I could think of doing," Johnson said of playing the fiddle. "But when I started, it was the most frustrating thing. It looks so easy, and it is, but not to learn. Do you remember when you first tried to learn how to type?"

Although some might call the music the shanty musicians play bluegrass, the men themselves just call it oldtime music. To Murdie Hall, bluegrass is a modern term, carrying suggestions of amplified music played too rapidly. When they play in the picking shanty, Hall takes his time. He has no intention of raising a sweat playing the music he loves. "When I retired," he said, "I didn't want to work again, not playing music anyway."

What the players lack in speed, they make up for in endurance. "We sit around in the shanty and pick music, sometimes for six hours," Johnson said. "People will stretch their legs, get another cup of coffee, maybe eat a snack. Once in a while someone will tell a joke or a funny story about something that's happened."

Their repertory is enormous, according to Johnson. "In a night's time, there's not a chance in 10 we'll play the same song twice," he said. "We have 350 songs we can do. It took several Saturday nights just to write all the song titles down. There's just so many songs we play it's unbelieveable. There's a lot of tunes I know how to play that I couldn't even tell you the names."

On Saturday night, when one song ends, someone will start another. Occasionally, one of the men will make a suggestion of what to play next or hum a few notes of a favorite. Jerry Johnson cannot read music himself, though to hear him play you would never guess it. "If I hear it and like it, I can play it — but only if I like it."

Sometimes, he said, a song will just pop in his head. "It might be a song I tried 10 years ago and gave up on, and now I'll play it."

At home, Johnson has a long shelf of records. "I'll tell you why I have them," he said. "Sometimes it's just for one song I liked." He will later play it his own way. "All I wanted from the record was the tune," he said. "I didn't want their way of playing it."

Johnson is not much interested in listening to music stars. Of the average recording artist, he figures, "If you hear him once, and hear him play it again, he'll play it exactly like that. We don't do that."

The shanty pickers have done nothing to encourage it, but the world is taking an interest in their music. Joe Dobbs, Kanawha County fiddler, instrument dealer and old-time music promoter, is among their fans. Dobbs has asked the Johnson-Hall group to play on his influential Saturday night radio show, "Music From the Mountains," broadcast statewide over West Virginia Public Radio. But so far the musicians have not arranged a date. Perhaps they never will. For musicians proud of the quality of their music, and aware of their musical reputations, they have an odd habit: They do not play out. "We just don't do that," said Johnson.

What they might do is go to a festival like the Vandalia Gathering in Charleston, and stand around in a small group to make music under the trees. Like other festivals, Vandalia is noted for its jam sessions. "That's where your best music is at," said Johnson, "in those small groups."

Last year, Hall and companions went to the Fraley Family Festival in Carter Caves, Kentucky. "We got there on a Saturday," recalled Johnson, "and there were groups everywhere in the parking lot. There was me, Murdie, Steve McComas and Adrien Johnson. Finally we broke out the hardware, and started playing. Within 45 minutes everyone was listening to us. And eight or 10 musicians were playing with us."

A few years back, they played occasionally before audiences, said Johnson. When they used to play out, they called themselves The Buffalo Boys. "Murdie calls that picking shanty The Little Old Opry House, and if we play any place now, we call ourselves The Little Old Opry Band," Johnson added.

Jerry Johnson's connection with Murdie Hall's music goes back beyond the shanty and even beyond Jerry's lifetime, it turns out. When Johnson's dad was younger and playing actively, Hall made music with him. "That was back in the '30's," Johnson says. "Dad worked in the gas fields for years and years, seven days a week, 12 hours a day. When they weren't working, playing music was about all they had to do.

"Murdie played with my dad back then. He's told me about things back then. Dad would never say much one way or the other, but Murdie will sit around and tell you things by the hour. Murdie was a lot more serious about his music than Dad was. He played all over these United States."

It is late, 11:30 on a night when 12 men have come to play: Murdie Hall, Jerry Johnson, his brother Adrien Johnson, Doby Wilkerson, Wilkerson's 19-year-old son Bobby, Steve McComas, Francis Holton, Myrl Gue, Baxter Butcher, Ed Blake, Rex Evans, and Marvin Perry. Some of them have been playing over four hours, and are ready to leave. The hard core remains. In a corner sits Murdie, with Johnson to one side, both on fiddles. Wilkerson sits to the other side of Murdie, and plays guitar. Adrien Johnson stands in an opposite corner strumming the bass fiddle. Steve McComas also stands, playing the fiddle.

Murdie Hall is proud to have them here, and proud of the atmosphere he maintains for them. "We try to run a pretty clean place," he says. "Just tobacco chewing and spitting and letting the boys play their music without much interference."

He is pleased with the shanty he has made. It is plainly built and plainly decorated, but it is still beautiful. The lumber is rough pine, and the shelves and benches and mantels are oak and wild cherry cut on local sawmills. Serving as two vertical corner supports are locust posts, hand-hewn with a double-bitted axe. "I wanted those ax marks on them," said Hall.

"Murdie can play anything with strings on it," says a friend. That includes the five-string banjo, of course.

"There's not another thing that goes on here but picking music," says Jerry Johnson. Here he and McComas (left) add twin fiddles to a typical shanty session.

Murdie keeps a wood cook stove in his shanty. In winter, he bakes potatoes and cooks chili beans there. If he wants corn bread, he has a hand grinder out there to grind his grain in. "Martha White has nothing on us here," he joked of the famous flour and meal company.

The shed is without running water, and a musician using the nearby outhouse returns to wash his hands in a wash basin sitting just inside the entry. Hall has no intention of installing the conveniences, and has kerosene lamps in case the electricity goes out. "A fellow ought to have a place where he can be energy-free," he says.

In the picking room, signs indicate which spot is reserved for each musician, and which are open for guests. Signs also explain the code of behavior Hall expects, which is basically that people respect the music and the men who make it. Respect is important. "Back in the '30's and '40's," explained Jerry Johnson, thinking back to when his dad played some, "musicians were not thought so much of. They were thought of as lazy if they chose to make a living playing music instead of working for a living."

Times have changed. People respect musical talent more today. Murdie himself certainly does. Many of the men who come to his shed can play more than one instrument, he says. Jerry Johnson plays guitar and fiddle, though it is the fiddle he likes best. It is the fiddle that carries the melody a great deal in this kind of music, and it is as fiddlers that Johnson and Hall excel.

Hall says that over an evening most of his musicians will trade back and forth from one instrument to another. Jerry Johnson usually starts with guitar, and finishes with the fiddle. Johnson's brother, Adrien, who plays the bass fiddle this evening, is an accomplished musician on other instruments as well, Hall says.

But in the picking shanty, it is Murdie's show, and he is the star. "Murdie can play anything with strings on it," says Francis Holton. "I've seen him go through four or five different instruments in a night: Fiddle, guitar, mandolin, banjo, bass fiddle."

Hall may well play several instruments this Saturday night, taking time out now and then for his duties as host. Ever the teacher, he offers encouragement wherever necessary. A visitor there for the first time speaks up on his way out. "I'm going to start coming regularly, if you don't care," the newcomer says. "I'm wanting to learn how to play." Murdie is pleased. "Only one way to learn to play," he says. "That's to sit in there and watch those boys and then join right in."

Murdie then says good night to several of the men. It is now close to midnight, and he has been playing continuously for four or five hours. He will play another hour or two yet. An hour earlier, he had looked at his watch. "Well, boys, it's 10:30," he said. "Everybody ought to have their fingers warmed up real good by now."

Bakerton
A Jefferson County Village

By William D. Theriault
Photographs by Frank Herrera

Bakerton is about as far east as you can go in the state of West Virginia. The village is located near the Potomac River in the eastern part of Jefferson County, midway between Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown. Conceived by the Baker family in 1888, it drew its livelihood until 1957 from the high-calcium limestone underlying the area. By the 1940's, it had one of the largest lime-burning plants in the eastern United States. The limestone is gone now and Bakerton is quiet. The water-filled quarry serves as a local swimming hole, and the general store and post office are the only businesses still in operation.

The founders of Bakerton were descendants of a German who immigrated to America in the mid-18th Century. Two of his grandsons, Daniel and Henry Baker, bought George Buckey's tannery at Buckeystown, Maryland, in 1832. During the next half-century, Daniel developed the operation into a flourishing business, and the Baker family became one of the most prosperous and influential in the area. Daniel's sons Joseph, William and Daniel II grew up in the business and entered the company as partners as they reached maturity. When neighbors William and Mary Ann Thomas died, the elder Daniel

Bakerton is a quiet community nowadays, revealing little of its industrial past.

The Standard Lime and Stone Company quarry was Bakerton's reason for being. This view is from about 1910, photographer unknown.

Baker became the guardian of their sons, Charles F. and Franklin C., and the two boys grew up with the Baker brothers. The three Baker brothers and C. F. Thomas were responsible for the establishment of Bakerton.

The Bakers' first venture into the West Virginia limestone industry came in 1883, when they purchased a half-interest in land owned by a neighbor, O. J. Keller, in the Jefferson County area now known as Engle. By 1888, they had formed Standard Lime and Stone Company and acquired a 39-acre tract of high-calcium limestone approximately two miles north of Keller's operation. This place, previously known as Oak Grove, became the heart of the Bakers' quarry. A village quickly grew up around it.

During the next year, the Bakers constructed a railroad spur to connect their quarry with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line at Engle. By 1890, the village had been named "Bakerton." An enthusiastic reporter from the *Shepherdstown Register* predicted "it is more than likely that only a beginning has been made, for there is a well-defined impression that better times are to follow. There are some persons who are so sanguine as to predict that in a couple of years more Bakerton will be a lively town of a couple of thousand inhabitants."

The journalist was too optimistic, but Bakerton did thrive for approximately 70 years. The Baker and Thomas families continued to be closely concerned with the operation of the plant and with the welfare of company employees, but the village took its character from the people who worked there as well as from the founders.

Lowell Hetzel, Bill Flanagan, and Guy Moler are three men with rich memories of Bakerton's past. Hetzel's grandfather, John Welsh, helped build the earliest lime kilns in Bakerton and kept a journal of local events until his death in 1928. Flanagan's grandfather ran a quarry north of Bakerton and one of his uncles was plant superintendent. Moler's people have lived in the area since the 1760's, and many of them worked at the Bakerton plant. All three men attended the Oak Grove School and worked at Bakerton or other Baker mining operations for most of their lives.

Lowell Hetzel, who was an engineer for Standard Lime and Stone and assistant superintendent at Bakerton, described the mining operation. "Limestone, in place in the quarry face, was drilled vertically by steam or compressed-air drills and blasted by dynamite down on the quarry floor, where the stone was further broken by men with sledge hammers," he explained. "Man-size stones, approximately the size of a one-foot cube, were loaded one at a time by hand into wooden cars on four steel wheels. These cars were pulled on railroad tracks by horses or mules to the bottom of the incline which ran from the quarry floor to the top of the kiln building.

Today the Bakerton quarry is full of water. The last limestone was taken out in 1957.

Mules provided the motive power for limestone mining for much of the quarry's history. Cars of stone were taken to the kilns, for "burning" into lime. Photographer unknown, about 1920.

"The loaded cars were pulled by a steel cable up the incline to the level where the kilns were filled," Hetzel continued. "Power for the cable was supplied by a steam engine for years, and later by electric motor. At the top of the incline, the loaded cars were pulled by horse or mules, on railroad tracks, to the individual kilns where stone was dumped into the kilns. Stone smaller than one-man size was loaded in the quarry into separate wooded cars, pulled to the top of the incline, and sent to the screen house for crushing and sizing. Empty cars were lowered back to the quarry by cable for reloading. The procedure was the same for filling either pot kilns or patent kilns."

Growing up and working in Bakerton, Lowell Hetzel has talked to the men who built the earliest kilns and himself helped build the more modern ones. He knows kilns and lime burning well. "Pot kilns, one of the earliest types of lime kilns, were usually constructed in a solid stone structure made of blocks of limestone, approximately 50 feet high with each vertical kiln in the structure lined with firebrick," he said. "To place a kiln in operation, alternate layers of wood and limestone were added from the top of the kiln until the internal chamber was filled. Fire was applied to the bottom layer of wood and, as it burned, higher layers of wood were ignited and the heat turned the stone into lime which was drawn from the bottom of the kiln.

"Newer patent kilns were also vertical kilns but greatly improved over pot kilns," Hetzel went on. "Usually patent kilns consisted of vertical steel cylinders, brick lined, with three furnaces at ground level. Hot gasses from the coal of the burning furnaces passed up the kiln around the limestone lumps, turning the stone into lime which was drawn from the cylinder, one floor below the furnace floor. Adding stone to the top of the kiln and drawing lime from the bottom of the kiln were intermittent operations.

"Lime was drawn from the bottom of the kilns and dumped on the floor in a large building," Hetzel continued. "Not all of the stone was burned into lime. So there were men called pickers who went over those lumps of lime, and they could tell by hitting a lump with a hammer whether it was good quality or unburned. They would throw out the unburned. That could be taken back up and fed through the kiln a second time. When it went through the second time, it was completely calcined."

Many of the Standard Lime and Stone employees lived in low-rent company housing and bought their supplies at the company store. But several independent general stores were also located in Bakerton, and employees were free to shop where they chose. Bill Flanagan's first job was as a clerk in the company commissary run by M. S. R. Moler and Preston S. Millard, a brother-in-law of the Baker family. "They ran it for their own profit, but they sold to the company," Flanagan remembered. "The company insisted that they let the people have their products at a reasonable price on credit, and their bills would be deducted from the payroll. Of course, the law came in later on and they couldn't do that."

Flanagan recalled that "several people ran up bills that they couldn't meet. There was one in particular. He had a large family, and he bought all his groceries there at the store — boots, shoes, gloves, hats, most all things that were necessary. Some of the people at the plant never even knew how much money they'd made, because it took all they had made to pay their bill and there was nothing coming to them. And Mr. Millard, I heard him say several times, maybe about in July or August of the year, 'Charlie, you're getting a little behind.' Charlie would say, 'No, Press, I'm sorry to say *you're* the one a little behind.'

"At the end of the year," Bill continued, "Mr. Millard would go to the account register and take those accounts and tear them up and throw them in the waste barrel. And tell them to start over new the first of the year and try to keep their accounts within reason to where they could handle their accounts, and at least draw a little bit of money."

Above: Bill Flanagan has memories of earlier times in Bakerton. His family roots in the limestone industry go back to his grandfather, who ran a quarry north of town.

Left: Flanagan started as a clerk in the Bakerton company store, shown here. The building has been converted to a residence.

Daniel Baker II and C. F. Thomas both died in 1921 and William Baker I died the following year. The next generation of the Baker-Thomas family assumed control of the limestone company. After leaving World War service in 1919, Daniel Baker III became vice president and C. F. Thomas' son Frank became general superintendent. Joseph's son John H. Baker became president in 1921 and left the position to Daniel III when he retired in 1944.

"Mr. Thomas was an outstanding supervisor," Guy Moler said. "At that time, it was a closed circuit in the Baker family. And he was on the board of directors. He knew what was going to happen and what could happen ahead of time. He'd come around to the plant and walk around and talk to the superintendent and get his problems and so on. And before he left, he'd give him answers. I

The 1913 Oak Grove student body photograph shows teachers Jesse Engle and Ethel Moler at rear. Bill Flanagan is seated at center front, with tie. Photographer unknown.

Bakerton's Oak Grove School

The area was first known as Oak Grove, and the Oak Grove School was built in 1879 in the center of what would later become the quarry village of Bakerton. The Zion Presbyterian Church, built in 1837, had previously served as the local schoolhouse. The church and then the Oak Grove School were the only local buildings suitable for meetings and social gatherings until the Methodist Episcopal Church South was erected in 1894.

The one-room schoolhouse was originally built to serve the few students of a small rural community. A second room was added in the 1890's, after the Bakerton quarry opened and industrial workers began to settle in the area. Although the school has been gone more than half a century, it is clearly remembered by former students Bill Flanagan, Lowell Hetzel, and Guy Moler.

"There was at least 40 or 50 seats in each room," Flanagan recalled. "It had pot-bellied stoves, back to back, where the two rooms came together. School started the first day after Labor Day or the first Monday after Labor Day. A lot of them didn't even go to school until winter set in, because they were helping on the farm — until the superintendent of schools set down the laws. Then they had a truant officer and you had to go to school or else your parents paid a fine."

During the first two decades of this century, Oak Grove teachers earned approximately $70 to $85 per month, depending on their experience and the scores received on an examination. Workers at the Bakerton quarry probably earned about twice that. Most of the teachers were graduates of Shepherd College in nearby Shepherds-

town. Discipline at Oak Grove was strict, and the subjects taught were the basics — reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Rural education had its lighter side. "Everyone," said Bill Flanagan, "was scared to death of Mr. Jesse Engle, the school superintendent, because he could really bring the switches in. He always cut them down in front of my house. But then some of the kids would notch the sticks and when he would go to whip them down across the shoulders, why these sticks would break and just fly all over the place. It was a good while before Mr. Engle found out what was going on. The other teacher, Miss Ethel Moler, would never whip the children. She would correct them."

"The eighth-grade students at the end of the year had to take a county examination," according to Guy Moler. "All the kids in the district would assemble into Charles Town in the old Wright-Denny Grade School. It was usually a two-day affair, and if you didn't pass the county examination, you washed out. If you did, you went on to high school or whatever you wanted to do. I think the percentage of students who passed in Bakerton was comparable to any of the other schools around here."

For many Bakerton children, the eighth-grade education provided at Oak Grove School was adequate, and graduates went about the business of farming, mining or raising a family. However, some of the early Oak Grove students went on to high school and college. Flanagan, Hetzel, and Moler were among those few.

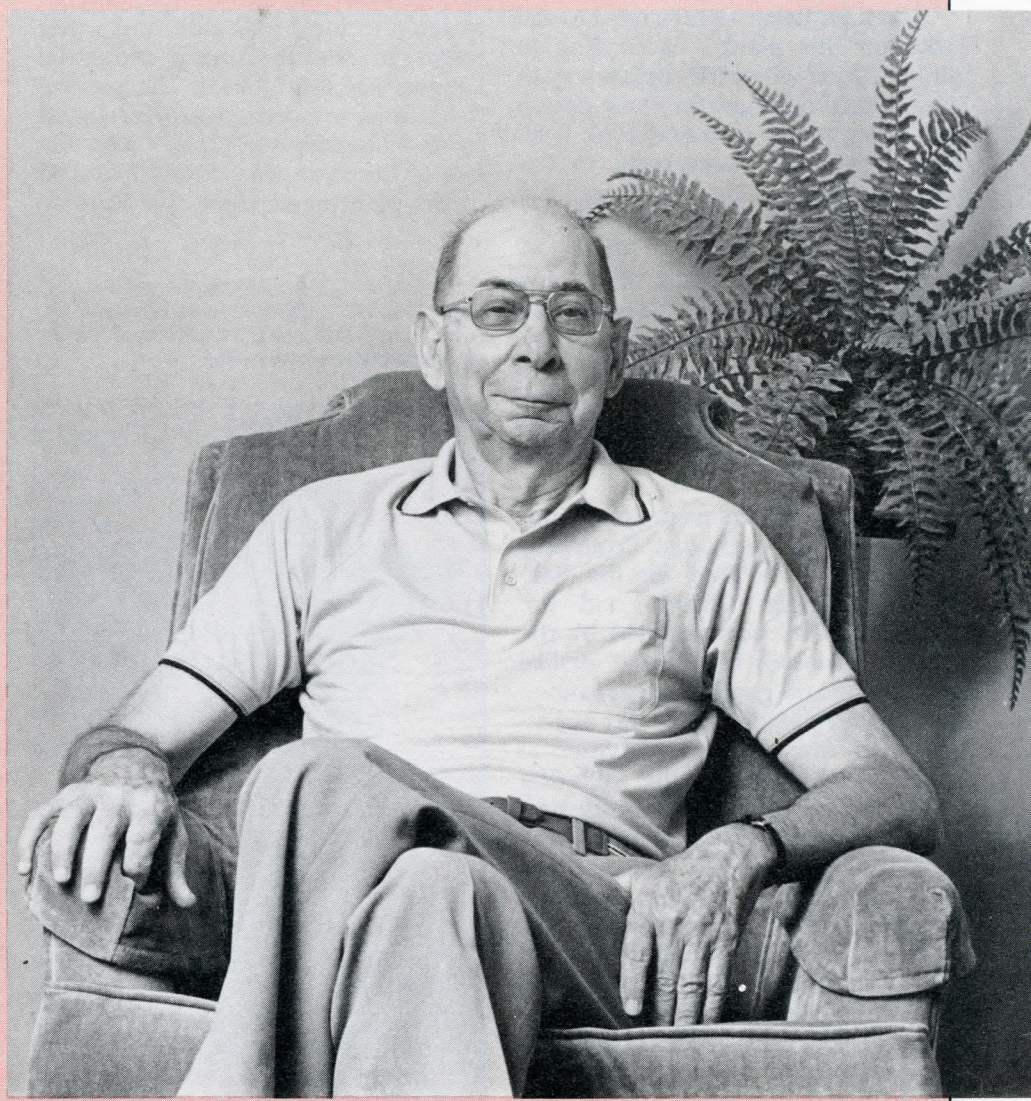
Lowell Hetzel said he "started down at Harpers Ferry High School in '24. The county didn't provide any transportation, and a local operator supplied buses under contract to the school board. For one year, possibly one and a half, I drove a school bus. I went home in the evening, dropped the kids off, come up through Engle and all along the way and took the bus home at night. We came from Harpers Ferry to Halltown and then we started dropping kids off on the way back. And in the morning, we picked up at Bakerton first and picked them up all the way into Halltown."

All three men returned to Bakerton after finishing their education and eventually took jobs with the Standard Lime and Stone Company, the corporate owner of the town. Bill Flanagan and Guy Moler became foremen at the plant. Lowell Hetzel became an engineer and manager and worked at several of the Bakers' operations in West Virginia and Maryland.

Oak Grove School was bought by a relative of Hetzel and dismantled after the Bakerton Elementary School was constructed in 1923. Traces of the old school remain in the community today, for the lumber and large schoolhouse windows were used to build a house near the general store.

—William D. Theriault

Guy Moler remembers Oak Grove School very well. Teacher Jesse Engle cut switches in front of his house, Moler says. Photo by Frank Herrera.



mean, right then and there. As a rule, whatever rope he'd give the plant, the board of directors in Baltimore went along with. And his word — boy, I'm telling you, he'd tell you something and that was just the same as a lawyer drawing up a contract and you signing your name to it. If he told you something, that was it. He had that reputation.

"Brian Houser's daddy, D. R. Houser, was superintendent there for a long time," Moler continued. "Mr. J. H. Baker and Mr. Houser used to be real close. At that time, when anybody out of the Baltimore office would come to Bakerton, they'd come to Harpers Ferry on the train and hire a horse and buggy and drive out to Bakerton, and sometimes they'd go to Mr. Houser's house for lunch.

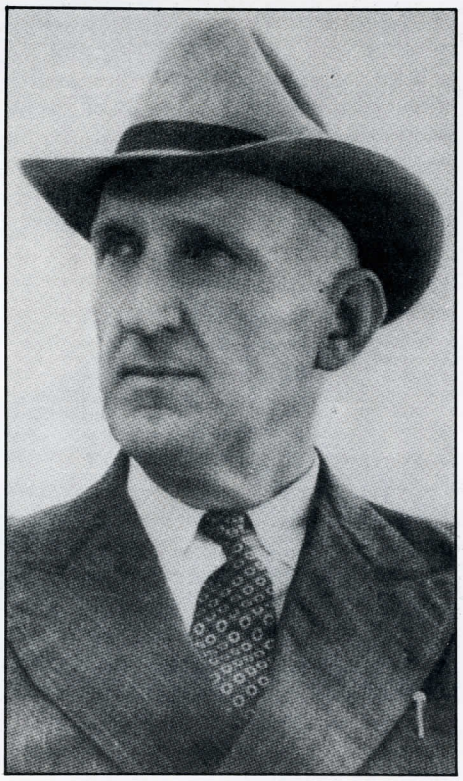
"Mr. J. H. Baker always used to call Bakerton 'his plant,'" according to Moler. "And when Mr. Baker was in the hospital one time for some operation Brian got a card and took it all around and got everybody in the plant's signature on the thing and mailed it down to him. The day he got out of the hospital, Mr. J. H. come back to the main office and went from one office to the other and showed them the card he got from his plant. He really got a thrill out of it. When they were notified that the Bakerton plant had voted to join the union, they say that just about killed him."

Most of the Bakers were active supporters of the Methodist Protestant Church, and the land for the Bakerton Methodist Church and the Church of God was donated by the family. Although the Bakers' dislike of drinking and gambling was known throughout the area, they did not attempt to thwart these activities at Bakerton. Inevitably, the differing moral values in the community produced some conflicts. Chuckling, Bill Flanagan remembered one of the more amusing situations. "We belonged to what was known as the Young Adult Sunday School class at the Methodist church, and we used to have meetings at different homes," he said. "This particular night was at my home, and they had a juke box going over at this beer joint while the meeting was going on. Well, we said we were going to have a prayer now. 'Brother Lowell Hetzel, will you please lead us in prayer?' And just as he started praying, the juke box started over at Bud Rowe's beer joint and one of the records was 'Makes No Difference Now.'"

Other forms of entertainment caused less controversy. Carnivals, tent shows and circuses came to the quarry village for many years. "Hunt's Show was a big traveling show, with animals and all like that, that came to Bakerton by rail," Lowell Hetzel remembered. "If we hadn't had that railroad, I guess we wouldn't have had a show. And when a show came to town, they needed water. We had a cistern up there, so they carried water from our cistern and we got tickets to the show."

For decades, baseball was a passion in Bakerton, and competition between the local ball club and other teams in the Bi-County Industrial League was often fierce. The playing fields and uniforms were furnished by the limestone company and the fate of the team was closely followed in the plant newspaper, *The Bakerton Safety News*, which also covered church and social events as well as company news.

Frank C. Thomas was among the second generation of the Baker-Thomas family to control local operations. He became general superintendent following World War I. Photographer unknown, about 1948.

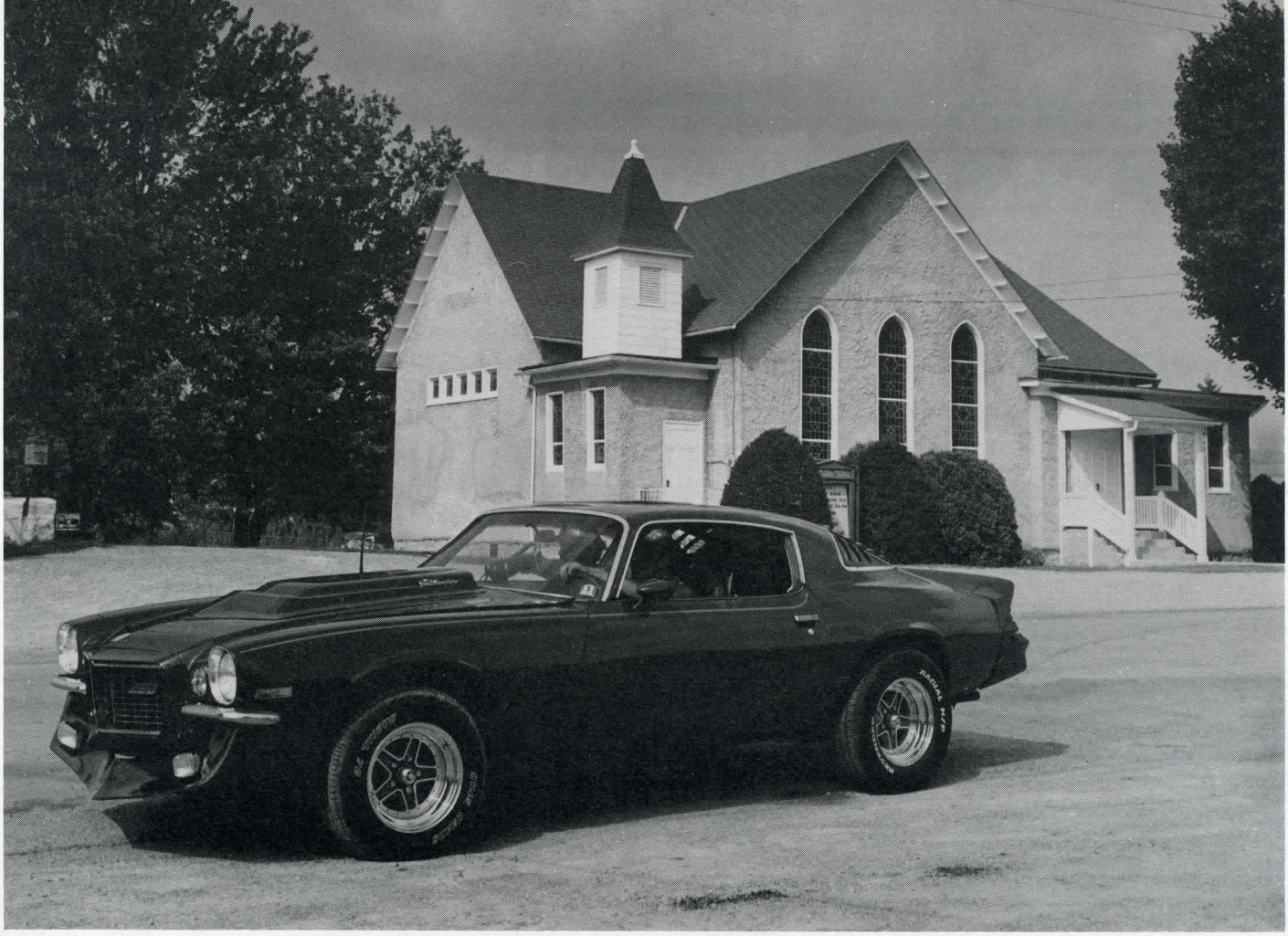


Bakerton life had its somber side as well. Several smallpox epidemics swept through the village early in this century, and the influenza epidemic of 1918 claimed a number of victims. In the winter, men frequently drowned crossing the ice-covered Potomac River between Bakerton and their homes on the Maryland side.

Although the Standard Lime and Stone Company had an active safety program, accidents killed or seriously injured scores of workers at Bakerton. "I guess the worst of the first accidents at the plant that I remember, even before working there, were loss of fingers, crushed hands, feet, things in the eye, things like that," said Bill Flanagan. "But some of the worst accidents happened after the plant was fully mechanized. Bill Williamson and Mark Horn were doing some welding work on the screen in the stone sizing plant and the electric control was tripped accidentally. Of course, it beat these two men up. I guess Mark Horn had 40 or 50 bone breaks in his body. He laid in the hospital, I don't know how long. And Bill Williamson was pronounced dead."

Flanagan recalled a similar accident with Strother Lynch. "Somehow or other he got in the stone sizing plant and they found him with the stone down on top of him. I was in the room there. His scalp was split back over his head but he still talked to you, asked for something to drink and a cigarette. They hauled him into Charles Town but he died the same day."

Like many mining towns, Bakerton was hit hard by the Depression. "It was *bad*," said Guy Moler. "I mean, people were on hard luck. That was before the union days. And every morning there'd be a group of people assembled down there around the plant office, looking for a day's work or something to do. And you'd need three or four, or maybe five. You'd look around and call this man and that, and the others would turn around and go home. I've seen them leaving with tears in their eyes. There wasn't Social Security, no relief, no nothing."



Vehicles change, but Bakertonians get around as stylishly today as they ever did in the past. This sporty auto passed in front of the Methodist Church, founded with the support of the Baker family.

During the next decade, however, there was almost more work than the employees could handle. Bakerton increased its production to support the war effort at the same time local men were being called away to military service. Women began working at the plant in this period.

Bakerton had unionized late in the 1930's. Hetzel, Flanagan, and Moler held management or supervisory positions at the time and thus were not union members. Bill Flanagan thought voting for the union represented poor judgment by his workers. "A union was formed but it wasn't recognized for a good many years," he said. "The reason they got the union in was because our customers were unionized. We shipped to a lot of steel mills and paper mills, and they were all unionized, of course. But it was a long time before the employees would recognize the fact that the union had nothing to offer to them that they were not already getting from the company."

Bakerton's wartime prosperity was not to last. The exhaustion of the local high-calcium limestone led to the closing of the Bakerton plant in 1957. The end did not come as a surprise to veteran employees.

"Bakerton's deposit was limited," Lowell Hetzel said. "They knew that in the mid-'40's, I guess. They knew the extent of the high-quality stone. And the operation at Bakerton was dependent on the high-quality stone, not this medium-quality stuff that's still here. There's plenty of what they call magnesian stone around here, but they only use that for the steel mills. It is not high-quality stone. This limestone was one of the highest purities in the world. There was kind of a pond of it here. And they came in and opened these quarries, and quarried as much as they could from the surface, and then the stone began to dip. So they went underground and followed the seam, and there's only so much here."

"I'd say it was about two years before it phased out completely," Flanagan observed. "They had at least a year's warning before it started to close down."

"I guess people were shook up at first," Hetzel added. "A small community like this, there weren't too many opportunities for employment. Some went to Millville and a few to Martinsburg. I expect the average age of the employees was getting up there. They had Social Security."

Although life in Bakerton was not always easy, people have fond memories of living and working there. The good feelings evidently spilled over to the founding family. "They thought there was nobody like the Bakers," foreman Bill Flanagan said of the villagers. Looking back over Bakerton's 100-year history, Lowell Hetzel contrasted the village to what he felt was a harsher situation in the coalfields. "They couldn't compare Bakerton with a coal mining town. The only similarity, really, was that the company owned many of the houses, which were occupied almost without exception by employees. They looked after their employees."

"Actions Louder Than Words"

Remembering Stella Fuller

By Joseph Platania
Photographs by Jeff Seager

In March 1981, people from all stations in life crowded into the chapel at the Stella Fuller Settlement to bid farewell to the little woman known to many as the "Angel of Huntington," dead at age 97. The minister eulogized that she had helped thousands of people because "they were the people she loved." He added, "She wanted no higher reward or no greater esteem than to live among the people she cared for."

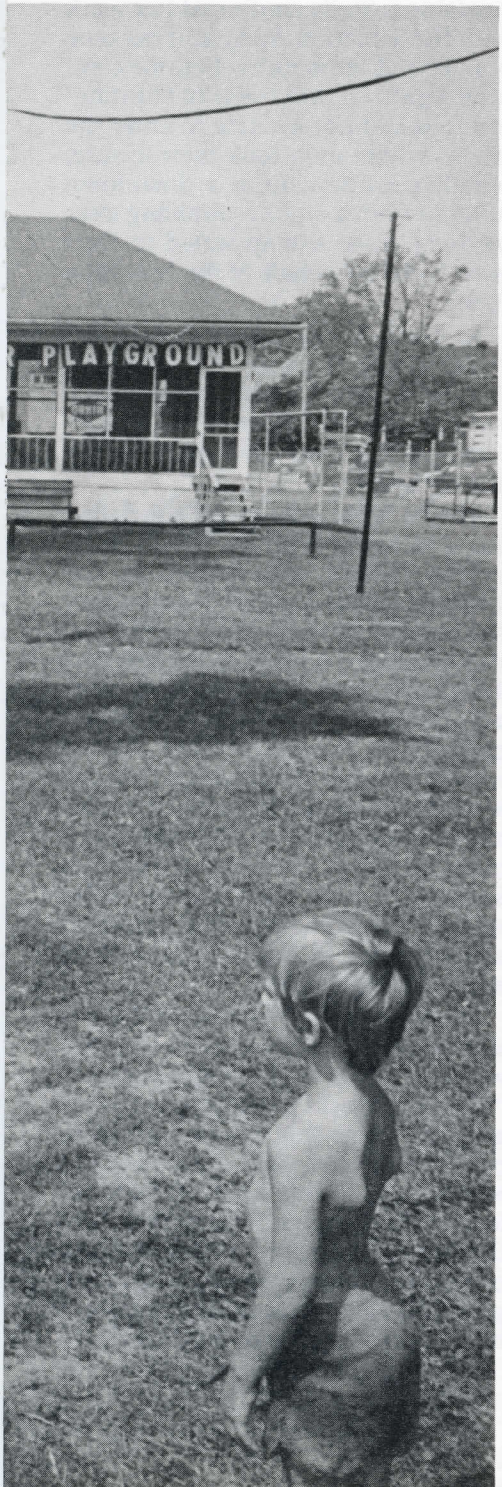
Stella Fuller, with her midnight blue bonnet and trademark tambourine, had been a familiar face in

Huntington for almost 70 years. Those who lived here knew that the money they dropped into her or her volunteers' tambourines or into the street corner kettles at Christmastime would go directly into the good works the Stella Fuller Settlement performed each year. This home-grown charity assisted countless thousands in need, and also gave many hundreds the opportunity to help by working at the settlement.

She was born as Stella Lawrence Cremeans, on December 4, 1883, in Point Pleasant. Her childhood home was a comfortable farm on Guyan Creek near the village of Bryan, about six miles southeast of the Mason County town of Glenwood. At the age of 19 she left the security of her family and went to Huntington where she enrolled in the Marshall Business College.

After business school Stella Cremeans moved to Welch, where she supervised a large group of stenographers for an important coalfields law firm. She also met Elmer Fuller, a Huntington bakery employee, sometime during this period. They were married on July 20, 1907, and settled in Huntington to begin a stormy relationship. Their son, Robert, was born on October 24, 1908.

Stella's conversion to her life's work was dramatic. According to a biographical article by Nancy Whear: "One night in 1916, on a Huntington street corner, Stella held little Bob's hand while she listened to the testimony of the young brother of a Salvation Army officer as he proclaimed the dedication of his life to the service of God." Stella was receptive to the young man's story, having reached a



Left: Huntington children have enjoyed the Fuller Settlement playground since the founding of the settlement in 1943.

Above: Stella Fuller's charitable work depended upon the support of the community. Here she receives a check for the 1963 Christmas dinner from the local Elks Club. Photo by Barta Studios.

Top: Mrs. Fuller with children of the Great Depression, during her Salvation Army days. Salvation Army photo, 1930's.

Above: Young musicians from the West End outpost pose with Fuller and others from the Salvation Army. Recreation was a prime goal of the outpost work. Salvation Army photo, 1937.

crossroads of her own. Her time with Elmer had been an unhappy period of marriage, separation and remarriage, and the possibility of another sort of life stirred something within her. The Salvation Army Citadel, the organization's headquarters, was just two blocks from her home. Attracted by the Army's religious and charitable programs, Stella began attending services and volunteering her skills. Eventually she was hired as a part-time secretary to the Salvation Army adjutant. As her family situation worsened, she devoted more and more of her time to the Army's activities, including home visitations and taking up tambourine collections in downtown Huntington.

Stella Fuller's humanitarian instincts blossomed during October and November 1918, when the national influenza epidemic paralyzed Huntington. Doctors, nurses, church women and able-bodied volunteers worked around the clock to help the thousands stricken by the deadly disease. But although many worked valiantly in this desperate time, Stella Fuller outdid most. She became a heroine for her ministering to the sick, finally falling victim herself. Robert and Elmer succumbed as well. The picture of the courageous young Salvation Army woman and her husband and son battling the flu together captured the imagination of the community.

The Fuller family recovered from influenza, but Stella's marriage had all but ended. In 1919 she and Elmer legally separated, Elmer charging her with pursuing religion to the point of neglecting him. Despite financial hardships, Stella continued her work with the Salvation Army and her blue bonnet and tambourine became common sights on the streets of Huntington. She did not hesitate to enter the places where men took their leisure, whether a fine club at a downtown hotel or even a smoky gambling den. In every place she appealed to their generosity on behalf of the Salvation Army.

As Stella Fuller became more devoted to her Salvation Army career, she and her son moved into an apartment on the third floor of the big Citadel building. She lived there for the next 20 years.

In 1933 Stella, now with the Salvation Army title of Envoy Fuller, headed the Army's new branch in the Johnson's Lane part of Huntington. The terrible poverty, mud, outhouses and shanties of Johnson's Lane had drawn the attention of citizens during the 1918 flu epidemic. A major goal of the "outpost" there was to combat juvenile delinquency through recreational and religious activities for the young people. With assistance from the WPA program of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, Envoy Fuller set out to build a recreation program, a major part of which was softball and basketball teams.

Dr. Sam Clagg of Marshall University recently remembered Fuller's work in his old neighborhood. "Down in West Huntington, where I grew up, came this dynamic woman, one Stella Fuller, and she was going to organize some kind of baseball league down there," he recalled for the Whear biography of Fuller. "She came with no equipment, no place to play. She came with what she always had, and that was enthusiasm."

An annual Christmas toy shop was one technique adopted by the Fuller Settlement. Here a worker repairs donated toys at the settlement. Photo by Barta Studios, date unknown.

Johnson's Lane was "a tough neighborhood," even "a place that God forgot," according to Dr. Clagg. "It took a lot of courage to move in there, but that was one thing Mrs. Fuller had a lot of."

Unfortunately, problems developed between the courageous Fuller and her sponsoring agency as her West End work prospered over the next few years. As her 25th anniversary with the Salvation Army passed, the relationship had strained to the critical stage. In the eyes of the highly disciplined charitable organization her independence as head of the thriving Johnson's Lane outpost bordered on insubordination. The confrontation came to a head over the West End softball program, which had been breaking the Army's strict Sabbath rule by playing Sunday games. In January 1943 Fuller was offered an unacceptable contract and she resigned her position.

Stella Fuller, with her years of experience in social work and fund raising, did not let her career languish. While serving under at least 10 Salvation Army commanders she had built her own base of community support. Within days of leaving the Army, she opened a settlement of her own in a location near the Johnson's Lane outpost. When word of her new plans became public, she had little trouble recruiting a group of prominent citizens to become the incorporators (later the board of directors) of her settlement. The board was unanimous in the selection of the new organization's name and the Stella Fuller Settlement thus was officially born.

On January 10, 1943, the new settlement opened its "door of hope and

friendship" in a storeroom at 128 Washington Avenue, near 3rd Street West. At the time this was on the edge of one of the worst slum districts in Huntington. The downstairs of the rented building allowed only space for a chapel and kitchen, but with the help of Fuller's supporters and son Robert a beginning was made. Stella Fuller had her experience as the "oldest social worker in Huntington," as measured by her quarter-century of Salvation Army service, to guide her, and with the goodwill of the neighborhood the door of her settlement stayed open.

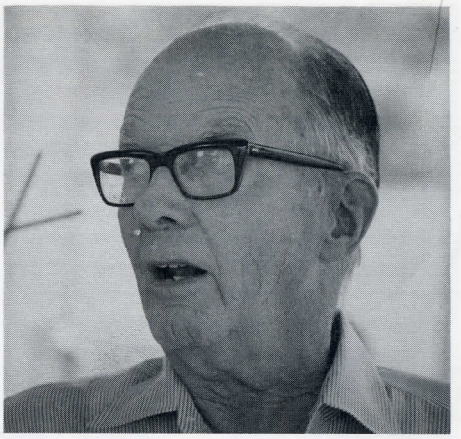
That door was open to everyone, as Stella Fuller made clear. "We welcome anyone who wants to join us," she once said. "All races, sexes, ages, religious backgrounds are welcome. This is truly a community settlement." The settlement's first annual report was published as an advertisement in the Huntington newspaper, revealing a wide array of services provided at a cost of less than $9,000. The annual budget today has increased more than tenfold to $94,500, with a two million dollar value placed on the services and benefits provided to the community.

Robert Fuller, now the Stella Fuller Settlement's executive director, is a slight, bespectacled, 77-year-old who inherited his mother's cheerful enthusiasm for a demanding job that puts him on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mr. Fuller, an ordained minister, had helped with the settlement since its first day, but initially remained in the real estate business as his personal career. In 1962 he joined the settlement as a full-time assistant director and chaplain. He was acting director for several years prior to Stella Fuller's death.

"It was unusual that Mother started her settlement in her 60th year, an age when most people are ready to retire," Fuller recently mused. "She was an acute businesswoman. She cashed in her small life insurance policy for seed money to start her settlement and then began collecting on the streets with a city permit for soliciting for her charity.

"She was always interested in progress; first in buying the building, having the gym built, and buying property for our playground," Fuller continued. "I just wish there were 10 or a hundred like her. That would really be something, wouldn't it?"

Under Stella Fuller's skillful leadership the Washington Avenue settlement expanded into the area's largest haven for the deprived and homeless. In addition to its two-story building with a kitchen, chapel, offices and library, there is also an adjoining gymnasium and a nearby fenced-in public playground. Today the settlement provides nondenominational religious services, a teenage club, a glee club, Scout groups and Camp Fire Girls, a senior citizens club, and various sports teams, among other programs. There are also family relief and rehabilitation services, transient relief, and a free employment bureau, as well as visitation, sickness and welfare services, prison, parole and probation work.



Robert Fuller now directs the settlement. It's a tough job demanding full concentration and commitment to the community, he says.

The settlement has used music and musical activities almost from the beginning to involve people in its programs. The Stella Fuller Settlement Band, formed the same year as the settlement, has become a fixture in the community. Over the years almost every band musician in Huntington has sat in, and many Fuller Band members have been with it for years. During the summer the 20-piece band gives weekly concerts at an outdoor bandstand on the settlement's playground.

Thanksgiving is a special day at the Stella Fuller Settlement. Each year brings more than 400 guests to a bountiful table for a sit-down meal with turkey and all the trimmings. This tradition has a story attached to it, since the dinner was financed for 29 years by an anonymous businessman who died in 1974. Several years ago it was suggested that the benefactor was in fact a bookie and the operator of a gambling house in Huntington. He wanted to anonymously sponsor the Thanksgiving dinner as his way of helping people.

The story was partially substantiated in a newspaper article after the benefactor's death. "Stella used to come into Clark's place of business with her tambourine to collect for her charity," said the man's brother in a 1979 Huntington newspaper interview. "One day he asked Stella Fuller why she didn't have a Thanksgiving dinner for the needy. She said she

Clothes fly, as settlement workers process used items for distribution to those in need.

didn't have the money. He asked her if they would organize the dinner if they had a sponsor, and she replied they would. So Clark said, 'you've got one.'"

That was 1944, and for the next 29 years this benefactor paid for the big dinner, according to his brother. Director Bob Fuller now refuses to confirm the dinner's sponsor for those years, and his mother was sworn to secrecy. There has been no secret about the dinner in recent years, however. The Huntington Jaycees Young Businessmen's Club stepped into the breach in 1974, and took over the sponsorship of the Thanksgiving feast.

Bob Fuller took me through the large kitchen where holiday meals are prepared to be served in the adjoining gymnasium. "We prepared for 400 for the 1985 Christmas dinner but only 350 showed up due to the very cold weather," he noted. "All our dinners are open to the public. President Reagan could come in and he'd be served. The only requirement for the dinner is an appetite."

The settlement has had a long-term special relationship with the Huntington Police Department. The police called on Stella Fuller day or night in an emergency. The telephone by her bed in the upstairs apartment might ring at any hour with a call from the police asking for help. It might be aid for transients, or for families stranded without food or money, the homeless or the hungry. She was called upon "many, many times," a former dispatcher and desk sergeant confirmed for the Whear research. "It happened in my own experience and later I instructed the new dispatchers to call her. Anytime — two, four in the morning — she took them, fed them, clothed them, did whatever was needed. She came through like gangbusters." For the rest of her life, Stella Fuller was the settlement's moving spirit as well as its hardest worker. Even in her late 70's and 80's she would regularly help collect donations for her mission.

In an April 1982 interview a prominent Huntington businessman and settlement board member recalled, "I don't think Stella Fuller ever approached me with a problem that I didn't say, 'Stella — how much do you need?' I'd give her something towards it and try to get her some others. She had the respect and admiration of the more substantial people in Huntington. Her industry and her constant effervescence and enthusiasm to help people wore off on you, and you contributed. Her actions spoke louder than her words."

Stella Fuller remained an energetic woman into her early 90's, not wanting her age made public for fear she might have to relinquish some responsibilities. "Charitable work and Christian service marked her entire life," said her son Robert, who attributed his mother's longevity to "clean living, hard work, and the miraculous powers of the Lord."

In her own pleasant yet determined way Stella Fuller acted as her city's conscience, reminding that there are disadvantaged, homeless and hungry people among us who need daily help. Her contribution was summed up and simply expressed by a minister at her funeral who said, "Huntington is a better place because she lived here."

For further reading: "Stella Lawrence Fuller," by Nancy Whear, in Missing Chapters: West Virginia Women in History *(West Virginia Woman's Commission and The Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, 1983).*

Director Robert Fuller regards the thriving settlement as a monument to his mother's tireless work. "I just wish there were 10 or a hundred like her," he says today. "That would really be something, wouldn't it?"

Kingmont was the first American home for hundreds of southern and middle Europeans who emigrated about the turn of the century. Near Fairmont, the town today resembles its beginning only in terrain, the street layout and the placement of the dwellings, mostly "company houses" made over. The older residents point with pride at the sign "Kingmont" designating the I-79 interchange that opened in 1985. This fondness for place is one reason some of the original inhabitants and their descendants continue to call Kingmont home long after the coal mine that was the town's reason for being shut down in 1957.

Most of the following recollections were taped at the annual Kingmont Reunion, a gathering begun three years ago in a new Community Building built where the old white clapboard schoolhouse once stood. The taping was informal, sometimes interrupted as interviewees broke off to become reacquainted with old friends. Friendship naturally took precedence over these recordings so I got less tape of some people than of others, and some I missed altogether. But the ones here are all authentic voices of Kingmont, telling in their own words the story of home.

Kingmont

The First Place They Called Home

By Norman Julian
Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

My father, Rocco, came to Kingmont from Italy in 1912 at the age of seven. His father, Sebastiano, had been recruited to work in the mines, following others from his village of Atessa who already had made the daring voyage to seek a better life in the new country. My father, too, worked for awhile in the local mines. After he married and moved away, he continued to visit regularly. My sister Mary Ann and I were always in tow, and many of our earliest and best memories are of Kingmont and its unique personalities.

In my grandfather's house, there was constant chatter. Much of it was in Italian and broken English around a bottle of homemade wine on the red and white checkered oilcloth on my grandmother's kitchen table. Today, the storytellers are dying off. Each time I return, it seems, another of the oldtimers has departed, those recollections gone forever. The character of the town as they, and even I, first knew it is not recorded in print anywhere. One of the most comprehensive histories of Marion County, Now and Long Ago, *by Glenn Lough, does not even mention the place, although the Kingmont mine once was one of the biggest employers in the county. Nor do many photographs exist. As one resident said: "In those days nobody had any money to take photographs. It took all we had just to stay alive."*

The first to speak was Sonny Pellegrin, a retired coal miner. A bachelor, Sonny is sometimes called "The No. 1 Citizen of Kingmont." He has donated thousands of dollars to build the Kingmont Community Building, which displays a life-size oil painting of him.

"I was born in 1903 in Kingmont in the house I still live in," Sonny said. "At that time things were tough. The Kingmont mine opened in 1890 and closed in November of 1957, so I've seen a good bit of it. I'm the resident who has lived the longest in Kingmont, all my life.

"My name is really Martino. In my time in this county, you couldn't get a good job with the wrong name, even if you were educated. You had to hide your name as much as possible. Many of the people of my time dropped the vowels on the end of their names to keep from being designated as foreigners. In those days if you had a business you might call it 'Joe's Place' or 'Frank's Place' but you

The Fantasias were among the immigrant families to make Kingmont their home. Nick Fantasia, future state legislator, stands between his parents. Photographer and date unknown.

didn't denote the last name. Today people want to be known as Giuseppi because the Italians have a good reputation as cooks. Shows how things have changed.

"My mother and father came from the Old Country and couldn't read or write. My dad, Angelo, was one of the first guys in the mine. They hauled the coal from the other side of the Tygart River to the railroad cars by buckets on a cable.

"Mr. R. M. Hite was the owner of the company. He used to tell me the story about him and his father coming from Germany here, how they walked from Baltimore with their belongings on their backs. Mr. Hite became a very successful man, was among the finest of men. He lived in the town and kept care of his employees. They were his people. His wife used to come to my home a lot. I used to take a gallon of tomatoes or something from our garden up to her house and she'd give me a pie. They were just like ordinary people. They grew up among us. When new owners took over the mine, things began to change drastically. The new owners had only one thing in mind: money.

"At the age of 15, in 1918, I started working in the coal mines. Back at that time I hand-loaded coal. I walked eight miles a day to and from the working surface and got paid $1.50 for 10 hours work. You didn't have such a thing as 'portal-to-portal,' where you got paid from when you went in the mine until you left it. So you walked the miles to where you worked with a load of tools and you walked back, without pay. When I was 20, a mine car ran over me and broke my shoulder bone and fractured my spine. But it was many years later before I got a job on 'the outside.' Around 1940 I was the check weigher on the tipple. In that job I counted the coal that others dug.

"They've named the paved street I live on after me but in my youthful days there was nothing but dirt roads. These were often muddy roads. You couldn't run cars into Kingmont. In 1922 they built Rt. 250 across the river and redid it in 1932. I helped build the road from Fairmont through Pleasant Valley into Kingmont in 1929. We built a 14-foot-wide paved road and that got rid of the mud.

"Many of the old houses have been renovated. People who own their homes have spent thousands of dollars. Everything is different today. Hard to tell what might happen to Kingmont when all the old people are gone."

Lou Julian, former coal miner and retired college teacher, also offered his recollections of earlier times.

"In the '20's Kingmont was a booming town," he said. "The years 1925, '27, '28 were dramatic times. There were lots of fights because of the friction between the union and the coal mine owners. There was only one road in or out and the state and county police stayed right there along the road at the post office with rifles, night and day.

"'Union' was a bad word. There was no ethnic trouble whatsoever, just union trouble. The company tried to suppress all union activity. This was before we organized in 1930 and '31. I remember Tony Boyle coming in here about that time. Kingmont was an organizing challenge. It was the kind of coal town the union wanted to get. In sending Tony Boyle, they sent a tough cookie. I mean, he was tough. If it weren't for

The Community Center (left), now a Kingmont rallying point, stands where the clapboard school once was. Sonny Pellegrin was a prime supporter of the building project and his photo (below) hangs inside.

him I would have been in deep trouble. I was about 20 and didn't take any crap off of anybody. I was out of work one time about a year and wanted to get back. The company people said, 'You don't have no job here, son.' And they tried to stick me with a doctor bill and the hospital bill because I had gone to a union hall meeting.

"I talked to somebody in the union and he called in Tony Boyle. He told Tony, 'I want you to hear this boy's story.' I told him what happened. He took me in his car up to the tipple and said, 'Stay right here.' He went into the shanty where the mine superintendent stayed. In about an hour the mine boss came out and told me, 'You come out to work in the morning.' So I came out the next morning and the mine boss said, 'What are you doing here?' I said, 'You told me to come out in the morning.' He said, 'Not in the morning. You get the night shift.'

"There were bitter battles in those days. People got shot at. Then in 1935, '36, '37, after the union strife was settled, things were very good. Kingmont was a thriving community. Everything depended on coal in those days. Not like today, with competition from oil and other fuels. Kingmont always had a steady market for its coal. Fifteen or 20 steel hoppers a day went to the power plants in Philadelphia and New Jersey. We worked six days a week.

"We didn't have black people in our mines in those days. But the Italians and the Polish were treated as bad as the blacks were later. There was discrimination. The ethnics worked underground while the company people — we called them dogs — worked on the tipple. The company kept the ethnic groups in line because there was fear of losing their jobs. The reason they got the Italians was because they worked hard. The company guy used to say, 'We'll take all the Italians we can get and put 'em to work in our coal mines.'

"Jim DeCarlo was the first Italian to work in this mine. He was the guy who then brought the other Italians here. He would go to Philadelphia where he had contacts. There was a lot of immigration going on. Most of the Italians were on the farms in New Jersey and Delaware. He'd get them there. The mine owner used to treat him very good. Called him by his first name, Jim.

"They were herded in boxcars. My mother came here in a boxcar. Everything you owned that you could carry was packed up in bed sheets. Only your personal belongings. Those people had no choice. On the trip here from Philadelphia, they didn't have any beds, any restroom, nothing. The journey took three days. She came here with three of her children. Pop was already here working.

"I remember when I was a kid the company brought in some scabs and it was a pitiful scene to see. They'd come out of those boxcars, poor people, without anything. The company settled them up the hill and that's how it got its name, Scab Town.

"Kingmont was very fortunate in one way. The miners were getting paid 23 cents a ton. Some places it was only 16. But you didn't buy anything with what you earned. You paid it to the company store. You weren't allowed out to buy anything. Everything came from their store. That's what brought the union on. Everybody was getting farther and farther in the hole. I remember miners who were over $1,000 in the hole. In those days that was a lot of money. Nobody, up until 1940, ever made more than $700 per year. I could name you over a dozen people who lived their whole lives and died without ever owning a nickel of U.S. money, unless it was from Social Security. All they ever had was scrip from the company.

"Conditions in the mines in the early days were horrible. Water everywhere. The air was so bad you couldn't see the coal in front of you. The most deplorable conditions you could imagine. No regard for human safety. If a mine caved in, the first thing they asked was: 'Did you save the power?' or 'Did you save the mules?' Not the human being. They could replace the human being free — there were always people looking for work. It was harder to replace a mule.

"What made it so difficult was that there was no law and order for the common people, just for the company. The police were all controlled by the company. And when you voted, they had people at the polls to watch where you placed your X's. They controlled everything.

"It was a form of slavery, but we heard of places in other camps that were worse. Just like concentration camps. In order to get out of them, a man would have to take his wife and children and what he could carry on his back, sneak out of town over the hill at night, leaving everything else behind," Lou Julian concluded. "The only other way you could get out of that system was to commit suicide."

Katy Gallozzi, housewife, spoke next.

"When we lived in the company house, there were four rooms — a kitchen, dining room and two bedrooms, one for Pop and Mom and the other for the kids," she recalled. "The house had four walls, nothing in it but wall boards. Rough boards. No rugs on the floor. No wallpaper. I used to wash those boards down like it was my own house. We heated with a coal stove and cooked on that, too. I used to carry the coal. We picked it up along the railroad. The toilet was outside.

"The company houses were all alike — fresh air taxi! They didn't

have a basement so we had to build one. We dug it all out and that's where we kept all our fruit and vegetables. Poppy insulated it outside with boards and put up posts in there.

"We'd bake bread in an outside oven. They were round and made out of brick. We used to make bread pans out of gallon Contadina oil cans. We didn't have any store-bought pans. Sometimes Mom would throw corn meal in the oven to see how it was first, how it baked. All we ever used was corn meal and Daniel Webster white flour. After we put the dough in, in about an hour, it would be ready. When we were done we'd mop the oven out. Once a week we'd bake stacks of bread. You could smell it all over town.

"I started washing clothes when I was six. I washed clothes for the whole family by hand, on a washboard. I never even saw a washing machine until I got married. When I got older my hands used to go numb and the doctor said it could have been because of all the washing I did, wearing out nerves in my wrists.

"We used to carry the water from the one hydrant that served the town. That was for wash water. It was muddy. You'd have to wait until it settled out some. That way you could wash your white clothes. We'd go to the spring to get the drinking water. We scrubbed the floors until they were white as snow.

"We made homemade soap out of lard, from pieces of fat. My mother used to keep them. She'd put lye in it. Then at night she let it ferment. They'd put it outside next morning and cook it. Soap would come out of there. We'd even wash our hair with it. Now it's shampoo, can't use nothing but shampoo.

"Pop dug up the whole yard around the house for a garden. Sometimes he'd start the last of February. We had two or three lots around our house. We had a big garden. He dug all the way to the porch. We all worked in that garden, all the kids. Everybody had a job.

"We didn't have no radio, no telephone. I mean to tell you, nothing. When I went to school I had only two dresses. I'd change into one dress and wash the other one. We had holes in our shoes. In the summer we didn't wear any. The boys, some of their shoes were homemade. My brother Rocco — he was a genius — made them out of automobile tires. That was a long time before they started using tires on some of the sandals, like they do now.

Brothers Lou (left) and Tony (below) Julian were among local men serving in World War II. Today both (right) have proud memories of growing up in Kingmont. Early photographers unknown.

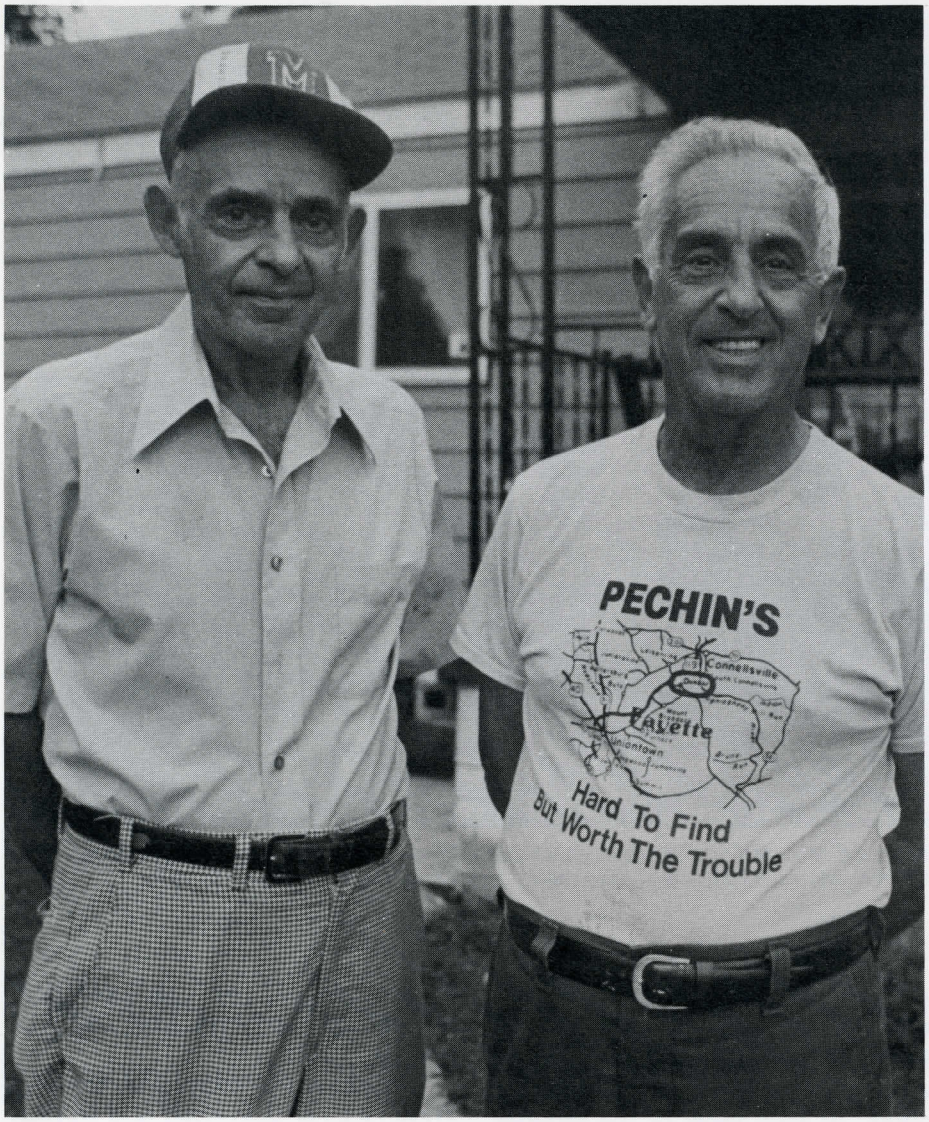
"We didn't eat no breakfast. We had a cup of coffee and went to school. When we'd come home at dinnertime, Mom would have those little 'cubatines' — what we called them — cooking, and we had bread and jelly. We didn't have no butter or milk. Nobody could afford it. For supper we ate macaroni. Macaroni. That's all. We made it every day. Every day. We made homemade macaroni every doggone day. We had meat once a week, on Sunday, that's all. But we didn't starve.

"In the fall Pop would butcher our four hogs and we'd make our lard and sausage and pepperoni. We'd buy many cans of oil and put the meat in a crock and keep it under oil for the winter.

"One of the best times was when we were kids, all the kids were there, and I'd make a big tomato salad. I'd put everything in it — celery, peppers, onion, oil, salt. We'd eat two loaves of bread a night. The kids would dip the bread in that oil. It still makes my mouth water.

"In the winter Rocco made homemade sleds, but the girls weren't allowed to ride them. Pop was strict. Just the boys got to ride on the sled, up and down the Kingmont streets.

"We had an old organ in the cellar. I scrubbed it so much it used to shine like a stone. Pop put it down there because we didn't have room upstairs. We'd go down there and play that old organ and dance. Even



though it was a dirt floor, we had fun.

"When we went to town we walked the railroad tracks four miles. Sometimes we'd take the ferry across the river. When Mom got sick that's where the ambulance was waiting for us. Across the river. They put Mom on a cot and crossed the river and carried her to the hospital. She had double pneumonia and that was when Tony was born. I had to take care of the family. The only doctor was the company doctor. He was good to us. When miners got hurt, he went to Miner's Hospital and set their legs or whatever. That's Fairmont Emergency Hospital now.

"We had a hard life, especially the oldest ones. And then things got better as the little kids grew up and Rocco went to work at the Monongah Glass Company and brought his pay home. Pop had some help. Poor Rocco has been working at a regular job since he was 11. He's a hard-hard-working man, I'll tell you. Kids don't know what it is to have a hard time nowadays."

Nick Julian is a retired merchant, a decorated veteran of the Normandy invasion where he was wounded and taken prisoner, and a barber who gave many generals their last haircuts before they died in World War II. But his proudest accomplishments are those as coach of the Kingmont baseball team.

"Baseball used to be the main recreation in Kingmont," he said. "I used to manage the team. Spider Vincent had it for awhile, then there was a break during the First World War. After that they started playing again. There was a new generation and I managed that.

"One summer, 1939 I think it was, I wrote to each and every surrounding town — like Elkins, Clarksburg, Morgantown — and we played. We'd start about the first of May and play until September, every Saturday and Sunday. Later we had a coal league with teams like Watson, Baxter, Carolina, Dakota, Monongah, Four States, Farmington, Osage. Every one of those towns had a mine and a ball club. We'd go down to play Osage a doubleheader on the Fourth of July. That was our annual Big Deal trip. We'd pile everybody in two cars — and the cars were damned hard to come by, too, I'll tell you that. The moonshine would come out. There'd be big doings.

"The ball players paid their own way in everything. Sometimes we'd get a donation in the mines. Folks would give a dollar on payday. We'd pass the hat. Uniforms were about $24, heavy wool like they used in the big leagues.

"We built our own ballpark. We dug it by hand. We built a grandstand. The company would clean up the town and dump it in a low place where the ballfield is now — washtubs, old wire, salad oil cans. There was all kinds of stuff we covered up. We dug out the hillside and covered it up, leveled things out. Picks and shovels, wheelbarrows, at one time we had coal cars like they use in the mines, running on wooden tracks to haul the dirt. East Fairmont High School plays its games on that diamond now.

"We played against some pretty good ball players, guys who came down from the minor leagues. Joe Honce, Kady Thompson, Johnny Provola, Lefty Grimes, Dean Morrison — he beat the Chicago Clubs. I saw that game. We had several guys who could have played in the major leagues. Joe Pellegrin could have made it. He was a natural hitter.

"Sometimes for a game we had 2,500 people, every bit of that. We usually got the big crowds for the colored teams, like the Fairmont Elks. Back in those days if you got a colored team, why, you played somebody, because they were always good. Sugar Bowl Davis played with the Fairmont Elks and with the Homestead Grays. Kenny Parker the same thing. The Grays played down

Pellegrin, Pasquell, Robonski and Catefesta were among the solid ethnic names predominating on the Kingmont ball club roster. Nick Julian (rear, second from left) and Nick Fantasia (rear, fourth from left) are among the players shown here. Photographer and date unknown.

here, too. Made the round trip from Pittsburgh in one day because there was the color barrier and there was no place for them to stay. But there was no prejudice on the ballfield. At least, we never saw it.

"The war broke it up again. It went downhill after that. It became sandlot ball. Before that it was a much better game. I seen it coming when you'd have to go around and knock on the door and ask his mother whether he wanted to play that day and he was still in bed."

Nick Fantasia, high school principal, radio station owner, and former vice chairman of the House Finance Committee in the West Virginia Legislature, had his own remembrances.

"Kingmont in the old days was one big family — the Fantasias, the Gussos, the Julians, the Catefestas, the Martellis, the Pellegrins, the Cirancias," Mr. Fantasia began. "Everybody knew one another. Most of the Italians came from the province of Abruzzi in the central mountains. I've been there. It's rough country, like West Virginia.

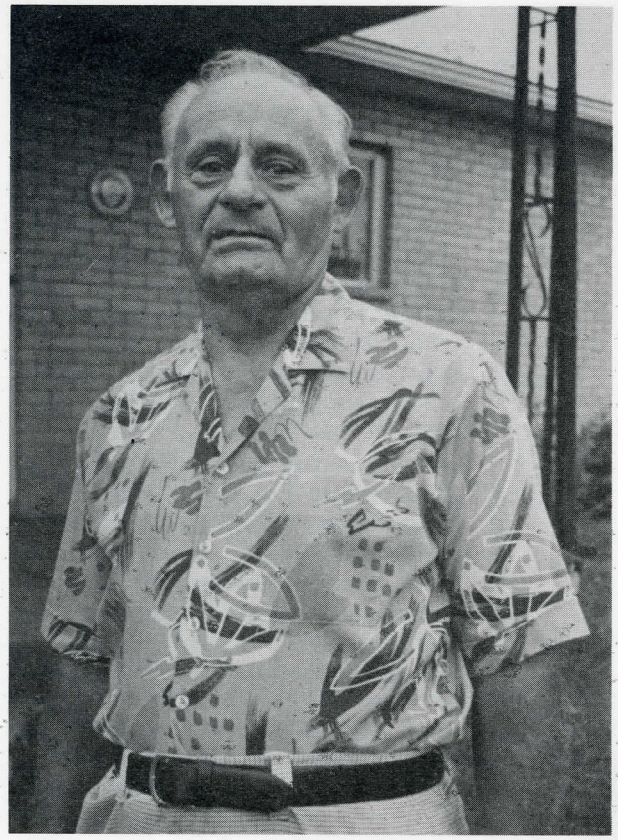
"When we came to Kingmont you could see the moonlight through the boards of the houses the company built. But here we had different rooms. In Italy most of the families lived in two rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. This life in America was much better.

"I stayed here because I always liked Kingmont. I moved over two houses and up one corner and bought the house R. M. Hite lived in. He didn't charge me interest and said, 'Son, take care of it.' I've remodeled and expanded it. People ask me why I built my house here — it's kind of expensive — and I answer I built it for *me.* I always say when they plant me, they'll plant me from Kingmont.

"R. M. Hite was a good businessman and seemed to me a compassionate man," Fantasia said of the former Kingmont mine operator. "During the big strike in 1925 he gave everybody a dollar a day. When they went back to work they were in debt to the company store. People who left here and came back 30 years later, he gave them a job. And when they came back, the company store got its money.

"I started out here and went to West Virginia University and worked in the coal mines at the same time. That was interrupted when I had to go to the war. When I came back I worked in the mines. You know, we made a lot of money in the mines then; $125 a week was a lot of money. It was pick work. When I came home I went back to work because I wanted a car and this and that. I must have been 24 when I went back. But I wondered how these people would live when the mine was worked out and so I went back to school. It was the best thing I ever did.

"I got into politics when some people asked me to run. I won by a good margin and went to the House of Delegates. We floor-managed the biggest change in mine health and safety in 1972 and the only change since 1933. I'm proud of that. My father said, 'If you get to the Legislature, don't forget the coal miners. If you do, don't bother to come back home."



Above: Nick Julian was the main spark behind Kingmont baseball in the pre-World War II years. "The war broke it up," he now says. "It went downhill after that, became sandlot ball."

Right: Nick Fantasia, shown here with Mrs. Fantasia, has prospered from a lifetime in Kingmont and figures he will stay there. "When they plant me, they'll plant me from Kingmont," he says.

Tony Julian, retired Marion County school board employee, spoke of his childhood in Kingmont.

"A typical summer day for me when I was a kid went something like this: In the morning at five o'clock I'd go blackberry picking. After that I'd go down to the tipple with a wheelbarrow and get coal and put it in the coal house at home. Then in the evening, hoe peppers and tomatoes. We did that seven days a week.

"The kids used to take sacks and go across the river to where they kept the horses and get manure and carry it back for the garden," Julian continued. "We'd sometimes wait for those horses to poop! You think I'm lying to you. It's true. We'd put the sacks under their tails! Then we'd carry it over the tipple to the wheelbarrow to take it home.

"Then when the B&O Railroad changed the ties on the tracks we kids would take the old ones and put them on our shoulders and carry them home to cook bread with and when you butchered pigs, to make scalding water for them.

"In the '30's we used to go down to Spider Vincent's store and listen to the radio, to "Amos and Andy," "Gangbusters," the fights.

"I only worked in the coal mine one year. When I got my vacation pay I quit. They said, 'You can't,' and I answered, 'I didn't put that coal in there and I ain't taking it out.'"

Ruth Hunsaker, retired elementary school teacher, had her memories as well.

"I was born and raised in Kingmont and went to school here until the eighth grade. My dad worked in the company store. Later I taught here 25 years — 1933 to whatever.

"I taught first, second and third. We had three teachers in the school most of the time. Sometimes we had four. We had from 30 to 35 students in each room. We had a big potbellied stove in each room. We didn't have many facilities for the children. Language was no problem. Everybody spoke English. The earlier teachers might have had language problems but by the time I began teaching here there was no problem.

"Kingmont has the distinction of being a friendly town. Back then you didn't even have to lock your doors. You couldn't do that today. We locked the school, however. That's a little different. It was public property. We kept a good school."

Louie "Cheech" Julian, retired coach and principal, spoke last.

"I used to deliver *The Fairmont Times* in the morning in Kingmont. You could almost tell the ethnic group by the smells, especially on Sunday morning. In the Italian section, you'd smell the tomato sauce for the day's meal of macaroni. The middle Europeans, like our friends the Kovaches, had their sausage. On the other side of the river, which we called Scab Town, you'd smell hotcakes cooking.

"Kingmont always had a special community pride. The only reason they didn't put a bridge across the Tygart River to Kingmont in the past was because Fairmont was afraid Kingmont would absorb it and make it a suburb."

We last saw author J. Z. Ellison as a Monroe County grade school boy in the late-1920's. By the 1930's he has become a well-dressed young man attending high school. Morgan Studio.

Hard Times and Higher Learning

Education on the Family Plan

By J. Z. Ellison

Nineteen-thirty-two was a year of disasters. It was the second year of severe drought, the country was deep in the Great Depression, and our schoolhouse at Greenville, Monroe County, burned in July. Hans Creek, which powered my grandfather's gristmill, had gone dry except for occasional small pools. The Greenbrier River had stopped flowing. Many banks had closed and money was scarce.

After the schoolhouse burned, The Springfield District Board of Education decided to scatter classes among the churches and lodge halls in Greenville. Daddy wasn't satisfied with that arrangement. He decided Mother should bring five of us who were to attend school to Morgantown, 250 miles from home. He had got the idea from his own student days at the University in 1900-05. He and his brother Charles were friends of the Frank Tuckwiller family of Lewisburg. Mrs. Tuckwiller had bought a house at 220 Prospect Street where she brought her family and kept house while they attended school, supported by Mr. Tuckwiller back on the farm.

Also, Daddy had learned the cost of dormitory living the year before, when sister Harriett had entered the University. Rather than spend so much for one, he thought it best for Mother to come to Morgantown, run a boardinghouse, and put us all through school. My oldest sister Anne would help Mother; her husband, Richard Maddy, would enter as a freshman; Harriett would be a sophomore; Julia and I would go to Morgantown High School, and my younger brother, A.D., Jr. — nicknamed "Deacon" — would enter Seneca Grade School in the fifth grade. Daddy rented a partly furnished house for us at 56 Campus Drive.

We traveled to Morgantown in our 1929 single-axle, stake-body Chevrolet truck. For two days before and late into the night we worked loading the truck. We packed farm produce — canned fruit, vegetables, meat, potatoes, butter, eggs, flour and meal — as well as bedding, some furniture, and personal items. Richard was the chauffeur. Mother and Daddy rode in the cab with him. The rest of us rode in the back on boxes and sacks. We left Hans Creek about 3:30 that September morning.

Our route took us five miles up the rocky "unimproved" Blue Lick road to Lindside, where we reached the "improved" Seneca Trail. The Trail was regularly scraped, keeping the dry dirt loose and dusty. We thankfully left the dust behind 14 miles later below Salt Sulphur Springs, where Grover Mitchell lived. He was a state senator and the road was macadamized to his farm. At Ronceverte we crossed the Greenbrier River and looked down on the dry rocks. The *Monroe Watchman* had published re-

Father A. D. Ellison decided to send the entire family to Morgantown for an education, with mother Emma Kyle Ellison in charge. These photographs were made several years later, back home on the Hans Creek Farm. Photos by Dr. L. F. Dobbs, Jr., about 1940.

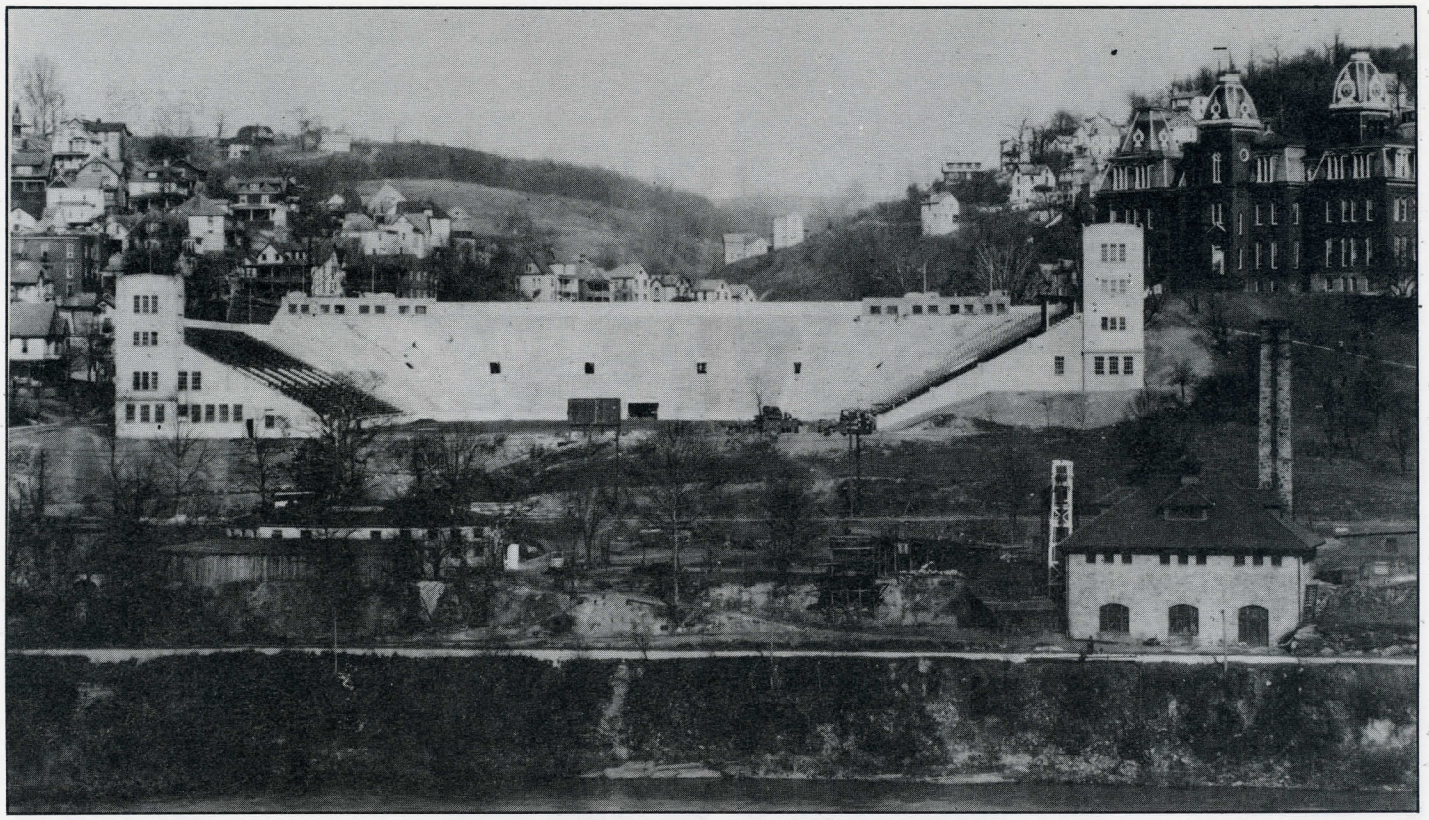
ports that the Greenbrier had mile-long stretches where no water could be seen, but this was our first view of its desperate state.

We traveled on through Lewisburg, Marlinton, and Elkins. The smooth hard road was not the end of the tire problems which were so common on the dirt roads. We had left home with good rubber, but tires were not as good as they are now. Every car was equipped with hand pumps and inner tube patching kits. We had two flat tires, and on one such stop ate the lunch of ham and bacon biscuits, buttered light bread and jelly sandwiches we brought from home. Flat-fixing was a welcome change, because time dragged. The truck had little power and we climbed Renick, Droop, Elk, Airy, and Cheat mountains in low gear, sometimes going so slow that I got out and walked. Coming down was almost as bad. With such a heavy load, we descended in low gear to keep from burning the brake linings. With the mountains behind us we went on to Belington, Philippi, Pruntytown, Fairmont, and across Route 19 into Arnettsville.

We reached Morgantown a little after six o'clock, backed up against our strange house and unloaded the truck. Near midnight my brothers and sisters and I finally found a place to lay down. I had entered a world of electric lights, crowded houses and brick streets, from my world of kerosene lights, dirt roads and wide open country. I had to start in a school with more students than our entire home country had — and three days late. I felt sick, tired, worried.

Daddy woke us early the next morning. He took Julia and me to the high school in the truck. We went to the office of the principal, Arthur VanGilder G. Upton, later the superintendent of Harrison County schools. We had some complications with registration, because my records had been destroyed when our school burned. When we finished we went to see a teacher, Elizabeth T. Peck, one of Daddy's old girl friends when he was a student at the University. She met us graciously and was the first friend I had in Morgantown High School or Monongalia County. I saw her often. She was always pleasant and tried to help out.

To top off that first long, lonesome day, I found that I wasn't going to be living with my family, but was to stay at 225 South High Street with Simon and Mary Garrison, friends of my parents. I was to come home to Campus Drive for lunch and supper, but



The WVU neighborhood of Morgantown was far different from the "world of kerosene lights, dirt roads and wide open country," which the Ellisons had come from. This photo shows the old stadium with 56 Campus Drive — the Ellison's Morgantown home — just behind the left corner. Courtesy West Virginia Collection, WVU.

would eat breakfast with the Garrisons. In return for room and breakfast I was to keep the yard clean, carry water, and bring the groceries which Mrs. Garrison ordered. I had a private room facing the street and would have been very comfortable had I not been so lonesome.

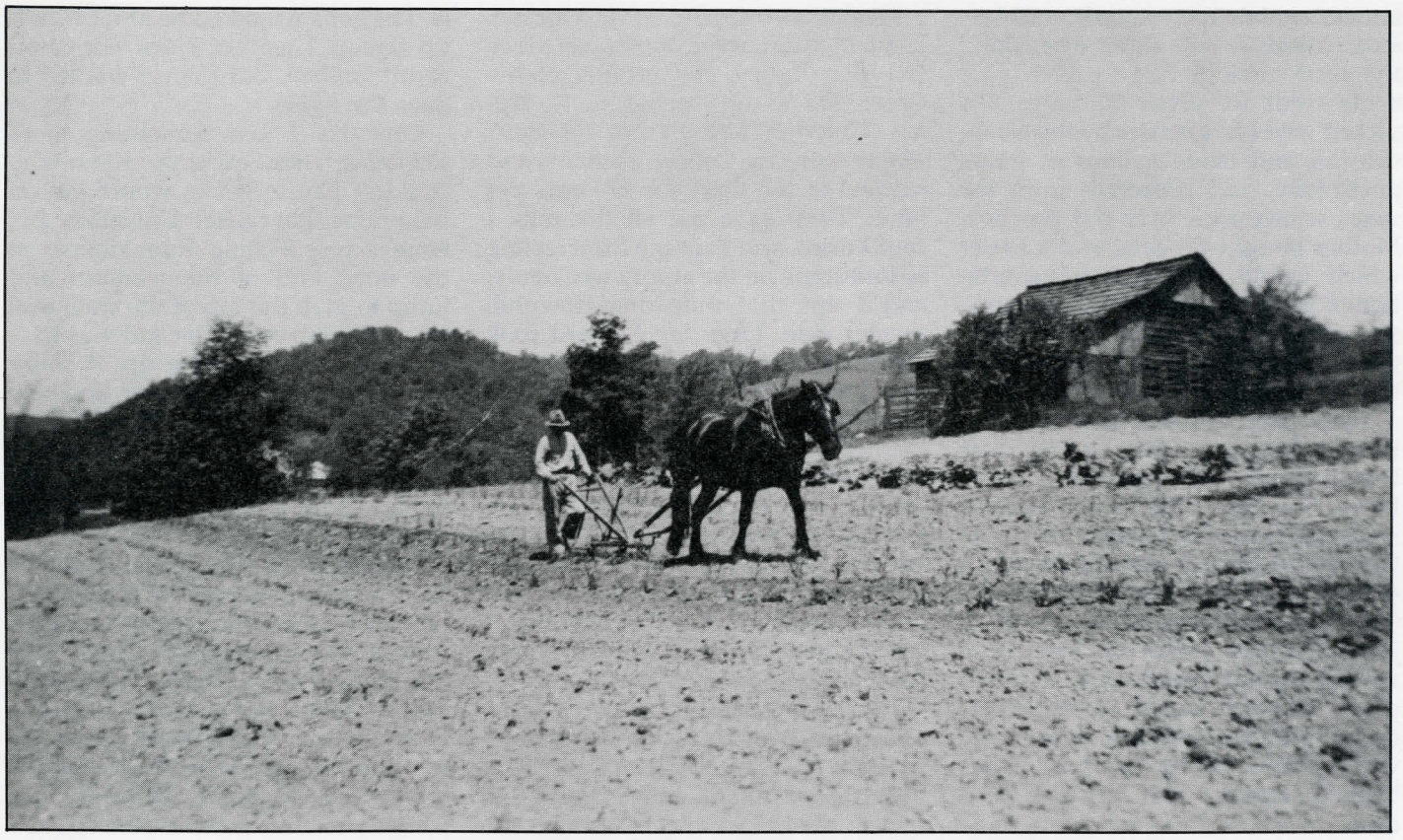
Mr. Garrison kept chickens, because Mrs. Garrison did not like eggs from the store. Each fall he would buy six or eight Rhode Island Red pullets which were about ready to lay. He rigged up orange crates in the backyard for the chickens, insulating their crates with blankets on cold nights. We always had fresh eggs for breakfast. Neither did Mrs. Garrison like city water for cooking, so I carried a bucket of water from a well on Wagner Road each morning.

Simon Garrison was the Republican Sheriff of Monongalia County, and had other interests. Every Saturday morning he and Mr. Tennent, who owned a mill on Clay Street down close to the bottling plant and bakeries, would travel in a Model A Ford to Reedsville to the Farmers and Merchants Bank. I never learned their business. One Sunday morning High Street was blocked off and I got as close as they would let me to watch men sand blasting a large stone building. The Farmers and Merchants Bank later moved there, and Mr. Garrison's trips to Reedsville ended.

Mr. Garrison once asked why it took me so long to get to his house after supper. I think I was just standing on the bridge across Decker's Creek thinking about home. The decision to come to Morgantown had affected me deeply. I learned of it only a week before, and knew it meant leaving my lifetime friends and 90-year-old grandfather and going to a strange place. I had no choice but I would have preferred to live at home with Granddaddy, a Civil War veteran who taught me more about the war than any other person. As it turned out, that might have been possible for a while. Sister Catherine got the job teaching at the Sulphur Spring School, so she lived at home and kept my youngest brother, Warren, with her. He was just starting the first grade. However, the School Board ran out of money before the term ended, so that Warren also had to join us in Morgantown and Catherine left to teach in Virginia. Then Daddy got a woman to come to take care of Granddaddy and keep house.

At least I got to spend part of every day with my family in Morgantown. After eating breakfast with the Garrisons, I walked to school. I met my younger sister Julia in the hall to find out any gossip from Campus Drive. At noon we walked there, ate lunch and ran back to school by one o'clock. After classes I often loafed around school to watch boys practice basketball or football, whatever was going on, then walked to Campus Drive for supper.

Returning to Garrisons' after supper one night, I heard a pistol shot. The next morning, Mr. Garrison said a prominent neighbor had shot himself. Many people were having a very hard time in the Depression. In Greenville I had known that things were bad, but on the farm we had plenty to eat. Nothing back there had prepared me for what I saw and heard in Morgantown. I saw people standing in a double line extending from the old Palace Hotel (where Biafore's Clothing now is on High



A. D. Ellison supported his absent family by working the Monroe County farm. Here he cultivates the vegetable garden. Photo by Anne Ellison Maddy, date unknown.

Street) up to the present location of the Episcopal Church, waiting to get the bags of flour which the Red Cross distributed. We had flour brought from Monroe County, from wheat we had grown and had ground at the Rich Creek mill, one that still had enough water for power. The people in the Morgantown lines were not free loaders, but hungry people without jobs. Mines had closed and banks had failed, and they had no farms to rely on.

Our farm in Monroe County was a source of pride, as well. My father had gotten a B.S. degree in agriculture and chosen to return to operate the farm which our forebears had settled in 1771. I was surprised at the reaction when I let the word out that my father was a farmer. Many people in Morgantown thought that farmers were the out-of-work people who tried to raise a little money by selling garden produce on the courthouse square. Brother Deacon made friends with "Bud" Lowall, son of University President Charles E. Lowall, and Mother gave him permission to accept an invitation to dinner from Bud. When Bud introduced him to his parents he added, "He's from a poor family, but I like him." We never thought we were poor, because we had the farm and could work.

Mother and Anne found six girls to room and board at Campus Drive. Two Monroe County boys came in for meals; Marion Dunlap, a cousin from Greenville, and Grady Allen, whose father had a general store at Wayside. There were 15 in all to feed. The produce we brought with us was supplemented by mailings from home. Daddy sent dressed chickens, turkeys, pork and butter. Eggs were shipped in metal six-dozen mailing cases. Like Mary Garrison, Mother did not like eggs from the market. They usually had been stored for long periods without refrigeration — or worse yet, left too long in the nest in some careless farmer's hen house. Our egg cases were returned promptly, egg compartments often holding goodies for those at home, and another would already be on the way to Morgantown. Heavy laundry also was sent back in expandable fiberboard mailing cases, for the housekeeper to wash and iron. The many trains handled mail cheaply and efficiently.

The farm on Hans Creek could not furnish all the food required for the boardinghouse. The University dairy was located in the basement of Oglebay Hall, a short walk across the stadium bridge from Campus Drive. There we got the best available milk, cream, ice cream and cottage cheese. Skim milk was 10 cents a gallon if you furnished your own container. I went for a gallon the day the penny sales tax first was added, handed the man a dime and he refused it. I had to walk back across the bridge for the penny before I could get the milk. I never again forgot. An A&P grocery was located at the point of Stewart Street, University Avenue, and the stadium loop. Nearby were Raese's Grocery, which would both charge and deliver, and Harner's Grocery. From these we bought the fresh vegetables and staples we needed.

Every summer was spent canning and preserving hundreds of jars of fruits and vegetables for Morgantown. By the time we got home for the summer Daddy had the garden planted with tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, lima beans, green snap beans, beans for drying, onions, po-

tatoes, cantaloupe, squash, turnips, kale, chard — just about everything the seed catalogs had to offer, plus some seeds we saved ourselves. We picked wild blackberries by the washtub full and made gallons of grape juice, jelly, and preserves from the vines which grew over our porches. Mother bought tin cans and a sealer which would make the transportation of food easier than the glass mason jars we normally used. Every time the truck or car went to Morgantown it was loaded with produce.

Years later, Mother said the only thing that kept her going was thoughts of our Monroe County farm. She did what she could to make us happy in Morgantown. We were short of cash but she bought a scooter which Deacon and I shared. Our usual track was from the hill on Jones Avenue. Down the steep part we got up our speed, then swerved down Stewart Street, jumped the curbs onto the sidewalk along University, flew down Campus Drive, banked around the stadium and came to a shrieking halt on Beechurst. We used our shoe heel for a brake and all our shoes had tire grooves. Another good ride was from the University dairy farm down College Avenue and around the stadium bridge.

Weekends were the hardest for me. I usually went to the dairy farm to see Graydon Ripley, the brother of my Greenville Vo-Ag teacher, C. R. Ripley. Graydon and Byron "Whitey" Moore were Ag College students and worked at the dairy for 17 cents per hour. They gave me all the milk I could drink and kept me from feeling so lonesome on the empty weekends, and I got that mile-long downhill scooter ride. One day Richard took me to a baseball game on the University athletic field, located where the Mountainlair parking garage is now. During the game a new ball was knocked onto the roof of the old library (now Stewart Hall) at the corner of University and Prospect streets. Afterwards, with Richard giving me a boost, I climbed up the down spout and got the ball out of the trough. That ball was worth three days' work.

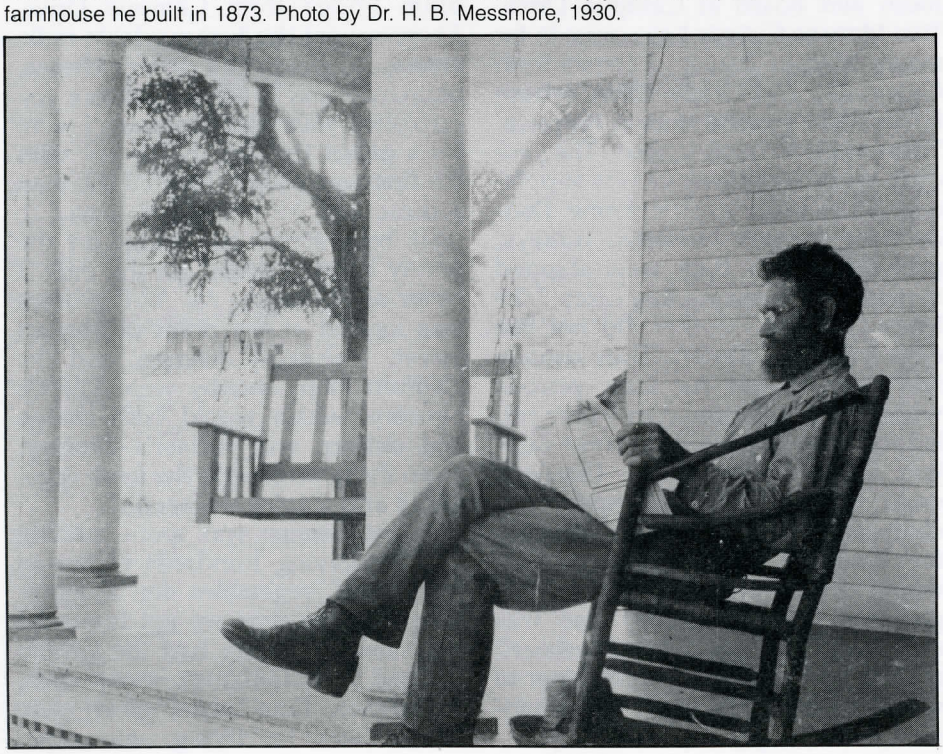
The most exciting weekends were when the University football games were in Morgantown. I climbed up the slate roof at 56 Campus Drive, sat astride the ridge, and could see the student side and about half the field. When the crowd began to look toward one place in the stands, I knew a fight was starting. Soon it blossomed until it looked like the whole side of the stadium was getting into it. The cops would come and break it up finally. I neither knew nor cared about football, but I never wanted to miss the fights.

One day I saw something more sickening than exciting. Kids who couldn't pay to get in would get on the bridge that carried University Avenue across Falling Run Hollow at the bowl end of the stadium and jump to grab the top of the wall, pull up and climb over. One kid was having a hard time pulling up. A stadium cop saw him, came over, and beat his fingers until he let go. The kid fell through the gap between the bridge and the wall, 40 feet to the ground. He lay there a short while, then got up and walked away.

I managed to struggle through until Christmas recess. Granddaddy was never far from my mind, and I looked about for what I could take him from Morgantown. I knew he liked to take a nip everyday when he had whiskey. Prohibition was in effect and the only way to get whiskey was from a drugstore with a doctor's prescription, or from a bootlegger. I worked for the money, getting 10 cents per trip carrying suitcases from the Blue Ridge Bus Station, located where the Warner Theater is now on on High Street, to Woman's Hall on Maiden Lane. I picked up other odd jobs and managed to save the $3 for a pint of 100 proof bottled-in-bond. A cab driver gave me the name of a boot-legger and two days before we left for the holiday I walked to Greenmont and got the whiskey. I took it to Garrisons', hid it in my suitcase and took it to Granddaddy for Christmas. Later, I worried about what I had done. Granddaddy died the next year and I wondered if the whiskey had contributed to his death. Daddy was a teetotaler and had preached the dangers of alcohol, but basically I have sided with Granddaddy all my life.

Daddy came for us in our 1929, four-door Chevrolet sedan. It had a luggage rack on the running board, opposite the driver's side as it blocked the car door, but no heater or windshield defroster. We heated bricks and stones to lay on the floor for our feet, had the old mohair lap robes once used in the surrey, and whatever blankets were needed. On the way down with seven people in the car, the frost got so bad that Dad-

Grandfather J. Z. Ellison also remained at home. Here he enjoys the front porch of the farmhouse he built in 1873. Photo by Dr. H. B. Messmore, 1930.



dy bought some antifreeze to wash the windshield occasionally. For all the trouble, we never failed to go back to Monroe for the holidays.

I had a lot of difficulty in school, particularly in English. There were several English teachers, with Helen Hunter one of the tougher ones. She was young and nice looking and taught English 7. I made my English project, a scale model Elizabethan stage, in woodworking class, where I did very well. It was a nice one of oak, with the columns turned on a lathe. I spent two months in my spare time working on it. After the projects were turned in, Miss Hunter said that none would be returned. I believed she had robbed me of my treasure.

Then there was the mechanical drawing teacher. He was about 30, two-thirds bald, had a little moustache, and stalked like a stallion in front of a bunch of mares. Some students took mechanical drawing because it was considered a snap course, but I took it because it was important to me. My ability to draw and read a blueprint depended on that class. The room had desks for 24 students, and the first day 26 or 27 turned out. The teacher began class with, "We got too many students. Somebody is going to have to go back and change his schedule." The class met three times and no one dropped out. The teacher said, "Now if this is the way you want it, we'll have it this way," and threw his T-square down against his long drawing table with a crack like a high-powered rifle. "Sit down and we'll start." When the class showed up for the fourth session, there was one desk left over.

Physical education was a required course, taught by Mr. Radford. The janitor who had charge of the locker room was one of the crabiest men I ever ran into, always snarling. I dreaded facing that brutal man. One day I found him bent over, looking through the keyhole into the girls' dressing room. I kind of hit the door to let him know I was there. I never had any more trouble from him as long as I took gym.

School work did not become easier for me. The second year I moved to Campus Drive with the family, to help with the work. One job I hated was carrying the egg crates to the post office — it was embarrassing, because other people didn't get eggs that way. Then Richard got the contract to carry the mail between the post office and the railroad. Daddy furnished the truck, Richard bought the license and gasoline, and received $40 per month for the job. He paid me $10 to help. Mr. Upton allowed me to set my schedule to jibe with Richard's University schedule, so that between us we could meet all five mail trains. When we both were free we worked together. We left the truck at the post office because we could not afford the gas to ride home to Campus Drive.

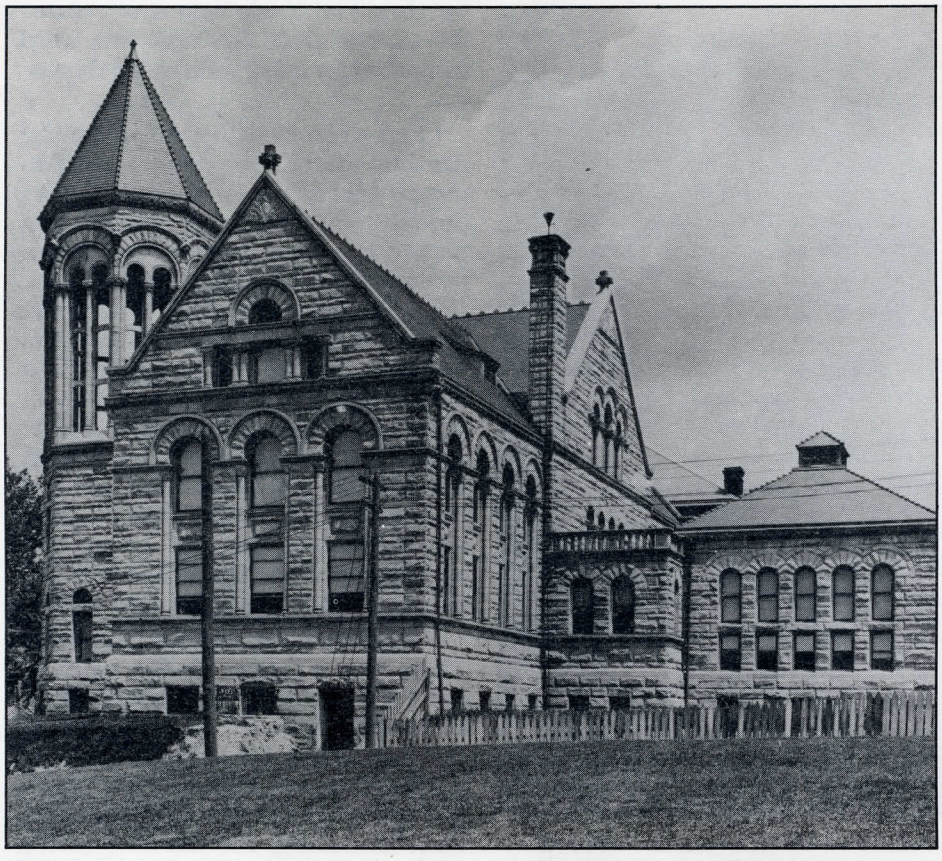
Anne Ellison Maddy helped her mother run the Morgantown boardinghouse, while her husband and siblings were educated. Photographer unknown, 1927.

The mail bags were made of heavy canvas, closed by a draw cord. Third-class mail came in bags about the size of a garbage bag, with the cord tied. First-class came in a smaller bag, with the cord tightened through a lock. The canvas picked up cinders and soot, the bags were very heavy, and our pants did not last long. In order to save our clothes we wore shop aprons. Later, when I entered the University and took required military training, I let Uncle Sam worry about the clothes since our uniforms were furnished for a $10 refundable deposit.

I had a run-in with the mechanical drawing teacher one day when rushing to meet the 11:30 train. I had brought the truck to school and parked it on the sloping curb by the Industrial Arts Building near his new 1932 eight-cylinder Ford Coupe. In starting the truck, I let it roll back and bumped his grill just under the Ford name. You could not have laid half your little finger in the dent, but he demanded a new grill. The man at the garage said there was nothing wrong that he couldn't take a hammer and straighten out so no one would ever know the difference, but Richard had to pay for a new grill.

Another mishap ate into our profit. There was a fellow by the name of Lee from up near Mt. Morris, Pennsylvania, who used to hang around the post office. He would bum rides while we carried the mail. Once I was going to meet the Monongahela train with him along. He started messing with my .32 pistol, which we were required to carry with the mail. He unscrewed the barrel, removed it, and — I thought — unloaded the gun. While crossing the Westover Bridge I asked to see it. He handed me the pistol without the barrel. I pointed it and said, "That'd be a hell of a thing to shoot a man with," and put a hole through the windshield. I lied out of it, but the windshield had to be replaced.

Carrying the mail was not all hard work and accidents. Once we had a box seat when Franklin Delano Roosevelt came into Morgantown to make a speech from the rear of a B&O train. A huge crowd gathered but because we had the mail truck we parked by the tracks, not 50 feet from where he spoke. That is a memory I treasure. At the time my opinion of FDR was colored by my father's hatred of him, but Richard was his ardent supporter. Later we walked to Arthurdale to see the construction of the federal resettlement project, a special interest of Mrs. Roosevelt. We had heard that my first Vo-Ag teacher in Greenville, Kenneth Stone, was working there. We found him in hip boots in a swamp, digging a drainage ditch. He stopped to talk a few min-



West Virginia University's old Library stands out in Mr. Ellison's mind. In 1932 he climbed a downspout to retrieve a lost baseball from the building's gutter. Courtesy West Virginia Collection, WVU.

utes and we felt our long hike to Preston County was worthwhile.

While I had my troubles with school and work, Mother had hers with the dean of women. The University had very strict rules for girls. They had to be in by 11:00 on week nights and by 12:00 on Saturday and Sunday. Boys were not allowed in the girls' rooms. Mother was responsible for seeing that these rules were observed by her boarders, and surprise inspections were carried out by a committee headed by Dean Ruth Noer. On one such inspection the committee found a popular girl and her date parked out front a few minutes after curfew. Mother was lenient when her girls were near the house. Dean Noer scolded her for this infraction and as a consequence she later decided to keep boys. They had no restrictions.

I had my worst time in school with English 8 my senior year. The teacher was a Shakespeare woman only, and expected you to love Shakespeare whether or not. She insisted we go to every Shakespeare movie or play in Morgantown, and that we memorize this and that and speak in a certain way. I couldn't stomach it. I ended up flunking English 8, and that was probably the best thing that happened to me at Morgantown High.

To graduate, I had to go to summer school at University High. There I took English 8 under Miss Suppart and a couple of real attractive student teachers from the School of Education. We didn't study Shakespeare, and I don't know that his name was mentioned. You could come to class or not, as you chose. We put out a little school paper. I worked many hours selling ads. The practice teachers helped type the paper and another student and I ran it off on the mimeograph, stapled it, and distributed it. The main course consisted of reading magazines such as *Harpers*. We also studied advertising. I got a "B" and it was about the only pleasure I had in high school.

I had to stay in Morgantown with Richard that summer. We had a friend, Guy Stevens, who owned the farm which is now the University horticulture farm. The three of us moved our furniture out to the farmhouse. Richard carried the mail and took some college courses, I went to summer school, and Guy took a full summer program at the University. On the farm Guy had a Jersey cow with a new calf. Richard and I gave the calf only half the milk, except when we did not want to milk the cow. We had plenty of milk, butter and heavy cream. We picked wild strawberries and blackberries to eat with the cream. One time, we had plenty of other fruit. I saw a sign on High Street advertising bananas at five pounds for a quarter, so I bought five pounds. Richard saw the same sign and did likewise, and when we got home we found that Guy also had five pounds of bananas. We ate bananas and cream until they were gone.

My education that summer included a trip to Washington. The B&O offered excursions for about $4.50 on Saturdays, returning Monday morning. A young fellow named Arlie, from near Mannington, helped Guy on the farm. With permission from Richard and Guy, he and I took the trip. At Fairmont a black man got on the train with whiskey to sell. I thought we ought to buy some. Arlie agreed. It was a dollar a bottle and we each contributed 50 cents. I walked by the bootlegger's seat and dropped the money in his lap, went back and sat down. In two or three minutes he came by and threw the bottle in a tightly rolled newspaper between us and kept right on going, looking neither right nor left. Officers took him off at Grafton, but he'd sold his suitcase full of moonshine. It was the worst I ever drank.

We arrived back in Morgantown about six o'clock Monday morning and walked the six miles to the farm. Richard had to leave by 7:00 to carry the mail, and I had to go with him to get to summer school. That afternoon I was to wait for him on the lawn in front of Commencement Hall. I walked down from University High, stretched out on the grass where he could see me and went to sleep. An old night watchman woke me to say I couldn't sleep there because the Board of Governors was in town that day. Tired and sleepy as I was, I managed to walk down to the post office to catch Richard for the ride home.

When we got to the farm I stretched out in the yard. When I woke up my lips were swollen and my eyes nearly shut. I was in bad shape for four days. I had slept with my face on the grass, but I never knew what bit me.

I never received a diploma in Commencement Hall but got part of my education there. It was where Mother took me to hear Madam Schumann-Heink, world famous operatic contralto, on her last concert tour. And it was where I saw my first demonstration of television. There was a large screen on the stage, with a man who explained it all. You had to use your imagination to see anything on the screen, and I never believed a word the man said.

Mother stayed in Morgantown for four years, then Anne ran the boardinghouse with the help of a hired woman. Richard received his degree, got a job teaching mechanical arts in a Fairmont high school and gave up the mail contract. I enrolled in the College of Agriculture and got a job with Railway Express. I reported at 4:00 P.M., cleaned and greased the trucks, and about 7:00 a Grennan Bakery truck from Pittsburgh would arrive with cakes for me to distribute to the bakeries. When I arrived with the Grennan cakes the local bakeries were making doughnuts for door-to-door delivery in the morning. The bakers would be up to their elbows in flour, sweat pouring from their faces and down their arms. They gave me all the doughnuts I could eat. Railway Express employed me full-time during the summer and I stayed out of school the next fall to keep my job, but later returned to school for a while.

We continued to return to Monroe County for every major holiday. During those years, the Seneca Trail was paved and became U.S. 219. Electricity came to Hans Creek community. During the 1937 Christmas holiday Richard and I helped wire the house and outbuildings, though the power lines were not yet connected. When we returned for the 1938 Easter holiday we traveled the new road to Lindside, where we took the still unimproved Blue Lick road for the last five miles. Late that evening, as we rounded the hill near home, we saw ahead a glow like the lights of a city.

As the students left school, the family's Morgantown era ended. For brother-in-law Richard Maddy that meant Fairmont and a job teaching school. Here he poses proudly by a 1937 Chevrolet bought during that first year of work. Photo by Anne Ellison Maddy, 1937.

To welcome us, Daddy had turned on all 385 light bulbs on the farm.

By now, Harriet had graduated and married Lee Dobbs, a medical student. Julia graduated and got a job teaching at Hundred in Wetzel County. Brother Deacon transferred from the University to Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia to study for the ministry. Warren transferred to high school in Salem, Virginia, where he lived with sister Catherine until he graduated, then went to the Army.

Daddy's plan for getting us educated, with hard work by all, had succeeded.

Metal engraving demands a good eye, good hands, and total concentration. "An engraver just can't make a mistake," Norris Sperry says.

"Wonderful Hands"

Metal Engraver Norris Sperry

By Tim R. Massey
Photographs by Jeff Seager

There are occasions when Norris Sperry must feel he was born in the wrong time and place. A man with his rare talents would have been well known in the Wild West of the late 1800's. Sperry, you see, is an arms engraver — an artist who enhances the beauty and value of rifles, handguns and knives. In those rowdy days before the West was tamed, men had love affairs with their guns, and a skillful engraver with hammer and chisel in hand could give a gun a one-of-a-kind personality.

Still, there are thousands of gun fanciers in the United States today looking for artists like Norris Sperry to bring an added dimension to their weapons. The problem is introducing the gun collectors to the engraver. The 39-year-old Wayne County native had been wrestling with the recognition problem for the several years since he became aware that his work is worthy of notice. Even though hundreds of gun and knife collectors around the country have examples of Sperry's chiseled artistry in their possession, only a few have taken the time to find out who did the work.

In an effort to get the word out last year, Sperry decided to do something different. He engraved a handcrafted pocketknife and sent it to President Ronald Reagan in a specially made box. The gift proved to be something the president couldn't resist, and the story was featured in a Huntington newspaper. As a side effect, Sperry's engraving business has picked up dramatically this year.

"I'm covered up right now," Sperry said recently, picking up a package containing two knives he had just received from a mail-order customer. "I get 90% of my business by mail and from other states. Most of my handguns come from states west of the Mississippi. I've been getting a good response from my ads in *Guns and Ammo*, *The American Rifleman* and *The Blade*."

Still, Sperry feels he has only scratched the surface of his potential as an engraver. He still practices his artistry around a full-time job at U.S.S. Chemicals, shiftwork that has helped support his wife and two daughters for the past 17 years. They live just outside Kenova in a house he built in 1970. Sperry can drive to the

plant in five minutes, and he conducts his engraving and gun-making business in a rustic shop next door to his house.

"I can see my engraving work improving all the time," Sperry said during a break at his workshop. "I don't even like to look at the things I did when I started 10 years ago. My work is 200% better than it was back then. The only way you improve is to practice. The greatest engraver this country has ever seen, Rudolph Kornbrath, said you needed 30 years to become a master engraver. I'd say there are about 200 good engravers in this country, and I would place myself in the top 50. I still have a few years to go until I get into the top class. There are about 10 engravers, like Alvin White and Winston Churchill, whose work is almost photographic."

In the Huntington area, however, Sperry operates almost in anonymity. He's known by a few gun collectors and has established a reputation locally as an artist and craftsman. In addition to engraving, Sperry paints portraits, produces some scrimshaw (carved artwork on various kinds of teeth and bones) and makes muzzle-loading rifles. In his spare time he also likes to hunt and fly airplanes. In earlier days, he fancied racing cars and motorcycles.

It was his interest in making 19th Century rifles that led Sperry to try his hand at engraving. "I've always been interested in guns, and I began learning to make muzzle loaders under Glen Napier of Kenova," Sperry related in the slow, deliberate manner common in this part of western West Virginia. "Glen Napier apprenticed under Bill Large of Ironton, Ohio, who was one of the best-known gunsmiths in America.

"Glen is probably the best barrel-maker in the country today, but he doesn't do that much work anymore. When I made my first gun back in 1976, I tried to get Glen to do some engraving on it. He didn't care much about engraving but he showed me the basics and I took off from there. I got a book and started. I wasn't all that happy with that first gun, but I saw I had some potential. I began practicing on scraps of metal until I got better. I gave up making muzzle loaders and took up engraving."

The tools of the trade clutter Sperry's work bench. A power tool is used to "hog out" some of the course work, but otherwise the engraver uses age-old hand tools.

Napier recalls that he showed Sperry the basic engraving strokes — long arc, short arc and the straight line — and introduced him to the tools. He also gave him some advice. "I told him, 'Boy, you'd better know what you're doing when you go to cutting up a man's gun. He'll get real upset if you butcher the job,'" Napier related. "Well, Norris had a gift. God gave it to him. He's an artist and he's practiced a lot. There's no doubt in my mind that he's one of the best engravers in these parts."

Sperry's first muzzle loader hangs in his workshop. It isn't something he shows potential customers as an example of his artistry, but the old-time rifle serves as a reminder of how much he has improved over the last decade. Also an amateur photographer, Sperry brought out two albums of pictures to illustrate his work. Inside are photos of guns and knives of

Above: A pistol is stripped of grips and cylinder before engraving begins. Sperry engraved this Smith and Wesson .357 magnum for Wayne County Sheriff Bernie Crabtree. Photo by Michael Holland. *Right:* The finished product rests in the hands of Sheriff Crabtree.

all descriptions. All bear the distinctive scrolls and intricate pictures of animals cut out by the hand of Norris Sperry.

"There's no use to try engraving if you can't draw," Sperry said. "I've been interested in art all my life. I've done portraits of people in ink, water colors and pastels. I especially like to paint pictures of women." Most of the pictures Sperry engraves on pistols, rifles and shotguns are animals such as rabbits, squirrels and deer. Most of his customers like the traditional American scroll to improve the appearance of their guns, he said.

"The design the owner wants depends on what he intends to do with the gun," Sperry elaborated. "If it's a 12-gauge and he plans to hunt birds with it, he would probably want geese, ducks or grouse engraved on it. If it's a smaller rifle, like a .22, he would probably want a squirrel on it. I just got an order to have a gold squirrel inlaid on the butt plate of a bolt-action .22. I get more calls for deer and birds than anything else."

Most of Norris's customers send him knives and pistols that need a special touch. However, his work isn't limited to weapons. Sperry has engraved everything from a banjo armrest to a dog collar, from powder horns to silver bracelets. Recently, he completed a special job on a cue stick for world-famous pool player Willie Mosconi. "A man from Baltimore sent me a stick and asked me to put a 22-carat gold inlay around part of the stick that screws together. That meant installing a gold wire about 1/16 of an inch around the cue. It took me about 10 hours to do that and the engraving. That was a tough one."

For the engraver, time is money. Sperry says he usually can tell how long it will take to complete a job from previous experience. The intricate work of chiseling away metal with traditional metal-working tools such as burins, scribers, punches and a chasing hammer is difficult and strenuous. Because most of the artwork is done on a small area and the designs are minute, the engraver uses magnifying glasses to amplify the subject.

Sperry uses an air-powered tool called a Gravermeister to help speed up the tedious task of "hogging out" the 10/100 to 15/100 of an inch of metal around the artwork he has drawn and cut out on the weapon. "The Gravermeister has almost replaced the chasing hammer," Sperry explained. "It has really cut down on the time it takes to finish a job. It's like using a small jackhammer. Still, I can't stand to engrave more than four hours at a time. It's unbelievably strenuous because it takes almost total concentration. An engraver just can't make a mistake."

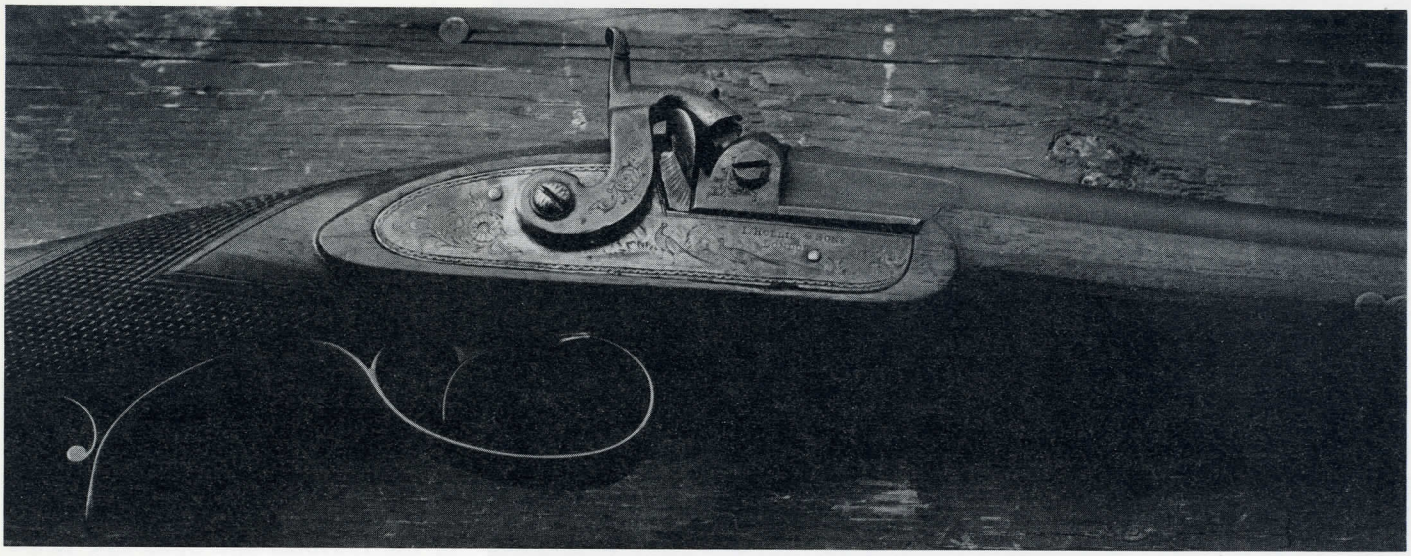
An added reason for concentration is the danger involved in working with diamond-hard and razor-sharp cutting tools. Sperry's scarred hands show the results of past slips. "I got this one when I slipped and ran a burin this deep into my left hand," he said, measuring about an inch with his thumb and fore finger. "Cuts just go with the work."

The craftsman also uses a power lathe to sharpen his cutting tools to just the right 55-degree face angle. "You can't sharpen these chisels and punches by hand because you just can't judge the angle. You know it's sharp enough when the point sticks to your fingernail," he said, demonstrating the technique. But using the tools is just one test for the engraver.

"The heart of engraving," says *Gun Digest* editor John T. Amber, "is art. The mastery of these tools, hard as it is to achieve, is as nothing without a matching artistic ability: The ability to translate the picture in the mind's eye of the artist-engraver to metal, whether steel, gold or silver. These twin skills fully complement each other. The art is in how the engraver plans the work, the design and pleasing layout; it lets him carefully control the dexterity of his wonderful hands. The final result has an artistic unity that is irreproachable."

Norris Sperry doesn't make any such fanciful claims about his own art, but he does admit that he enjoys looking at the finished product "just like everybody else." Design now comes easy, he says, after the countless pieces of work he has done.

"I keep a lot of gun magazines around for customers to look at when they come to my shop," Norris says. "They'll see something they like and ask, 'Can you make mine look like the gun on page 8 of *Gun Digest*?'



Sperry takes inspiration from the work of earlier engravers. These pheasants adorn his own favorite weapon, a .51-caliber gun that saw service in British India.

Chances are, I can. Now, sometimes I design a gun to look the way I think it should. When I do this, I'll draw the gun on a sketch pad and let the customer see what it will look like. Most of the time they like my idea, but I've lost a few customers that way, too. I like to keep my designs simple. Nothing messes up the looks of a gun like clutter."

The more intricate the design, the more time Sperry puts into the preliminary drawing, he explained. However, if the design is something he has done often, Sperry draws the scrolls and other decorative figures directly on the gun or knife. He does this by laying a nearly translucent "Chinese White" base paint on the area, and then applying the artwork with an artist's brush. The hard work — the actual cutting — begins after the preliminary drawings have been applied to the area that is to be engraved. Today's hard tempered steel makes the task even more difficult.

"For some reason, Smith & Wesson pistols have the softest metal of any I work with," Sperry said. "Ruger's steel is so hard that you can hardly make a dent in it. In the old days, the factory engravers did their work before the steel was tempered. That made the task a lot easier. Some engravers in Europe still use that technique."

Sperry says his most difficult engraving assignment came last year when he was asked to decorate two identical Colt Buntline Specials. The long-barreled pistols, made famous by Wyatt Earp and designed by dime-novel western writer Ned Buntline, were bought by Milton gun dealer Johnny Morris and brought to Sperry to add a distinctive touch. "What made the job difficult was that the artwork had to be identical on both guns," Sperry said. "It's really difficult to do exactly the same thing twice from scratch. That was a real challenge, but I was pleased with the way they looked when I finished the job."

Through the years, Sperry has engraved weapons for owners all over the world, from Germany to Japan, from New York to California and points between. While he himself chose to send President Reagan an example of his work, many other customers have asked the skilled craftsman to personalize guns and knives as gifts for famous people. In addition to Mosconi's gold-inlaid pool cue, Sperry has engraved putters for dozens of golfers and even added artwork to a knife presented to Arnold Palmer. "Two men who worked for Palmer at his golf course in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, heard about my work somehow," Sperry recalled. "They bought a knife and had it delivered to me through my brother, Larry. I remember it was a Hen and Rooster pocketknife."

Currently, Sperry is working on a pistol for Wayne County Sheriff Bernie Roger Crabtree, and he's thinking of doing a knife for West Virginia's most famous pilot, Chuck Yeager. "Yeager collects knives," he said. "I saw an article on his collection in *Blade* magazine. I really admire him, partly because he's from this part of the state and partly because I like flying myself. From what I hear, he's a down-to-earth guy. I'd like to do something special for him, like engrave the Bell X-1 on the blade."

Norris Sperry is always thinking about a new project. And he gives his wife Rachael much of the credit for encouraging his imagination and for helping him carry off his plans. "Rachael's my right arm," the engraver said. "She helps me with everything — makes my phone calls, types my letters and even sands down the stocks on my rifles. She supports me in everything I do."

The Sperry family — Norris and Rachael and daughters Crystal, 17, and Jane Marie, 14 — live in a white frame house atop a hill overlooking Norris's birthplace. His father, Claude Sperry, still lives at the homeplace where he and Norris's mother moved in 1946 and raised six children — three boys and three girls. Norris's brother, Larry, lives across the hill from him. "I know every inch of this land," Norris said, looking over the rolling Wayne County expanse near the Big Sandy River. "I've lived on Dock's Creek all my life, except for two years I was in the Army. I love it here."

While Dock's Creek Road is just a 15-minute drive from downtown Huntington, it is still isolated enough for a person to go hunting for rabbits, squirrels and deer in the nearby

A fan of Sperry's says that the secret to masterful engraving is a good artistic sense complemented by "wonderful hands" to execute the work. Sperry's hands have taken a beating from razor-sharp tools.

fields and woods. The surroundings are tailor-made for Norris Sperry's lifestyle. There's plenty of room for him to test one of his muzzle loaders if he takes a notion.

Sperry pointed to the skeletal deer head hanging on the front of his shop to tell one of his favorite stories about the pleasures of hunting close to home. "I didn't go deer hunting last year," he said. "I had a lot of work to do and the weather was so bad, too. I told my wife, 'Let's just drive around and see if we can see some deer. I'll take my 35-millimeter along and we'll take some pictures instead of shooting one.' We went out the creek near here and the I saw a big ol' buck standing on a hill. I took some pictures and the deer just stood there and wouldn't leave. I went back to the house and got my rifle and loaded it up.

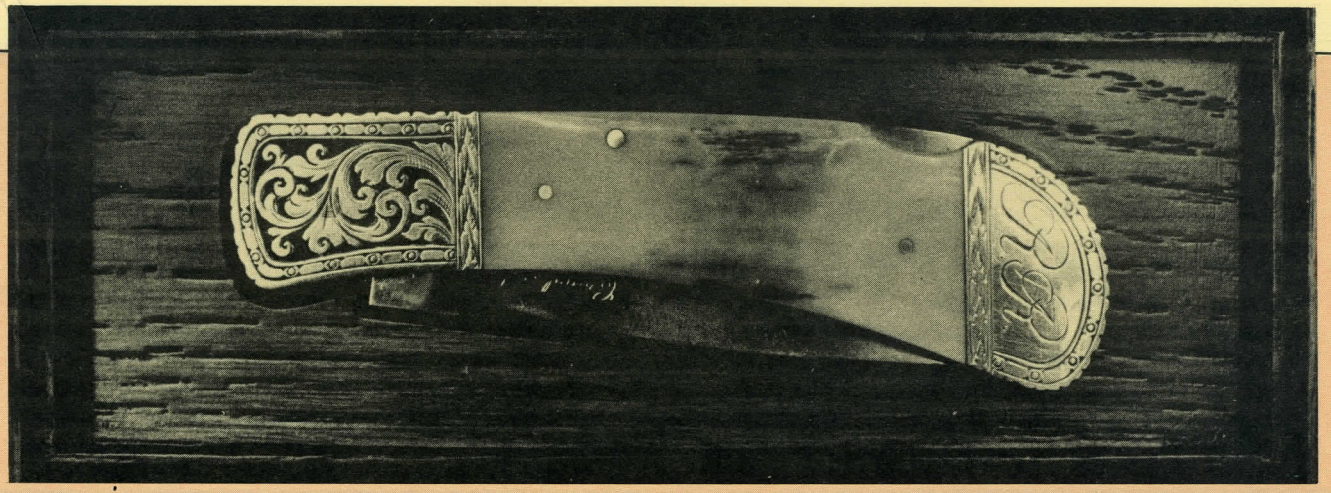
"I said, 'It won't be there when I get back.' But when I got back down there, that buck was still standing there in the same place. I got out my gun and shot that deer, got it with one shot. Nobody believes that I take pictures of my deer before I shoot them."

Sperry's favorite rifle is an old English-made .51 caliber muzzle loader he bought at a Columbus gun show in 1980. "I bought it from a fellow who hunted bear with it in Canada. He killed two black bears with it. I enjoy looking at it and imagining where this gun has been. The owner was a British soldier who was stationed in India."

A tiger engraved on the cap plate of the I. Hollis and Sons rifle helps illustrate the story. The gun hangs on the wall of the front room of the two-room structure. Nearby hangs a poster that quickly catches a visitor's eye. It reads: "Untold. Unshown. Unsold." "I did a job for a gun collector who had a sign just like that one," Sperry said. "I liked what it said so much that I had him send me a copy."

The message serves to remind him that being among the 50 best arms engravers in America isn't enough. Getting that message out to people who have need of his rare skills is the real art. Right now, Norris Sperry is working on it.

Take away the aluminum rocking chair, the jogging shoes and a few other modern details and this scene could be from a much earlier time. This is Sperry's rustic shop, near his home in Wayne County.



Norris Sperry engraved this handmade pocketknife as a gift to President Reagan. The 98%-pure silver bolsters "cut like butter," he says. Photo by T. Grobe, *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*.

A Knife for the President

Picture this: It's 1990 and Ronald Reagan has retired to his California ranch. During a short rest from chopping wood, the retired president sips a cup of tea brewed by Nancy, flips back his big white cowboy hat, pulls out his pocketknife and begins to whittle. He looks at the beautiful knife with its mastodon ivory handle and his initials engraved on the crafted silver bolsters, and breathes a silent thanks to the craftsmen who made the prized possession for him back in 1985.

"Well, Nancy," Reagan says to his faithful companion, "wasn't it thoughtful of those boys from West Virginia and Arkansas to send me something I could appreciate all my life?"

Now, the famous one-time actor may never play this scene, but very well could. If he does, Norris Sperry of Dock's Creek Road near Kenova should be mentioned prominently in the credits. The skilled engraver mailed the knife to Reagan in a registered package last October, and the president sent Sperry and the two other craftsmen autographed pictures to show his appreciation. While Reagan didn't say if he planned to carry the knife, he evidently liked it well enough to pay the taxes on the item valued at $3,000. Less-favored gifts are turned over to the government and never accepted by the president personally.

Sperry saw the present to the president as a way of advertising his engraving work, as well as the artistry of knife maker Pat Crawford and wood craftsman Danny Francis. "I've been looking for a way to promote my work and I thought 'Why not let the president see it?'"

From that point, the 39-year-old artist put his plan into motion. First, he called his friend Crawford, of West Memphis, Arkansas. "I had done some engraving for Pat and knew his work as the best anywhere," Sperry said. "I designed the knife that I wanted and asked him how long it would take him to make it, and he said about three months." To show off the gift, Sperry began looking for a woodworker to make a special display box. Last spring at Huntington's Dogwood Festival, he found Francis. "Danny makes the most beautiful grandfather clocks I have ever seen," Sperry said. "After I saw his work, I told him about my idea."

Even though Danny Francis, who resides in Fort Gay, is a Wayne County Democrat, he agreed to make a box of red oak for the presidential knife. For his part, Sperry engraved the silver bolsters with fancy western-type scrolls that emphasize the "RR" initials. If one looks closely, he can also see the "N. Sperry" in the 98%-pure silver. "Silver cuts like butter," Sperry said, "so the engraving part wasn't nearly as difficult as some others I have done."

Cutting through the red tape and getting the gift to the president was another obstacle. Sperry first contacted Representative Nick Joe Rahall, and was told to mail the knife to the congressman. It would then be sent on to Reagan's office with a letter from Rahall. Instead of going through the 4th District congressman, Sperry decided to mail the knife directly to the White House. Included with the gift was a certificate signed by the three craftsmen, praising Reagan's efforts to "restore confidence in American made products."

Sperry explained the present in an accompanying letter., "It is made to use, made from the finest materials and should last many years," the engraver told the president. "I had in mind that you should carry it and have some use for it while you were at your ranch and away from the pressures of the White House." Ronald Reagan made no promises in return, but we can certainly imagine him in a few years from now, gratefully whittling away his retirement in the California hills.

—Tim Massey

"What Made You Kill Poor Jay?"

A Clay County Murder Ballad

By Christine D. Fenn

In early 1904 Henry Ford's mass production assembly line was still brand new, less than a year had passed since the historic first flight of the Wright brothers, and Teddy Roosevelt was president of the United States. On February 10th of that same year, Sarah Ann Legg shot and killed her husband, Jay, in their home in Harden's Lumber Camp in Clay County.

The *Nicholas Chronicle*, dated March 8, 1904, reported in part: "Jay Legg, of Ira, Clay County, lies dead with a Winchester rifle ball in his breast, while his wife is in jail at Clay Court House charged with his murder. According to her story, Legg came home in a quarrelsome mood, and a family row ensued." Unfortunately for Sarah, a different story was told at the trial at Clay.

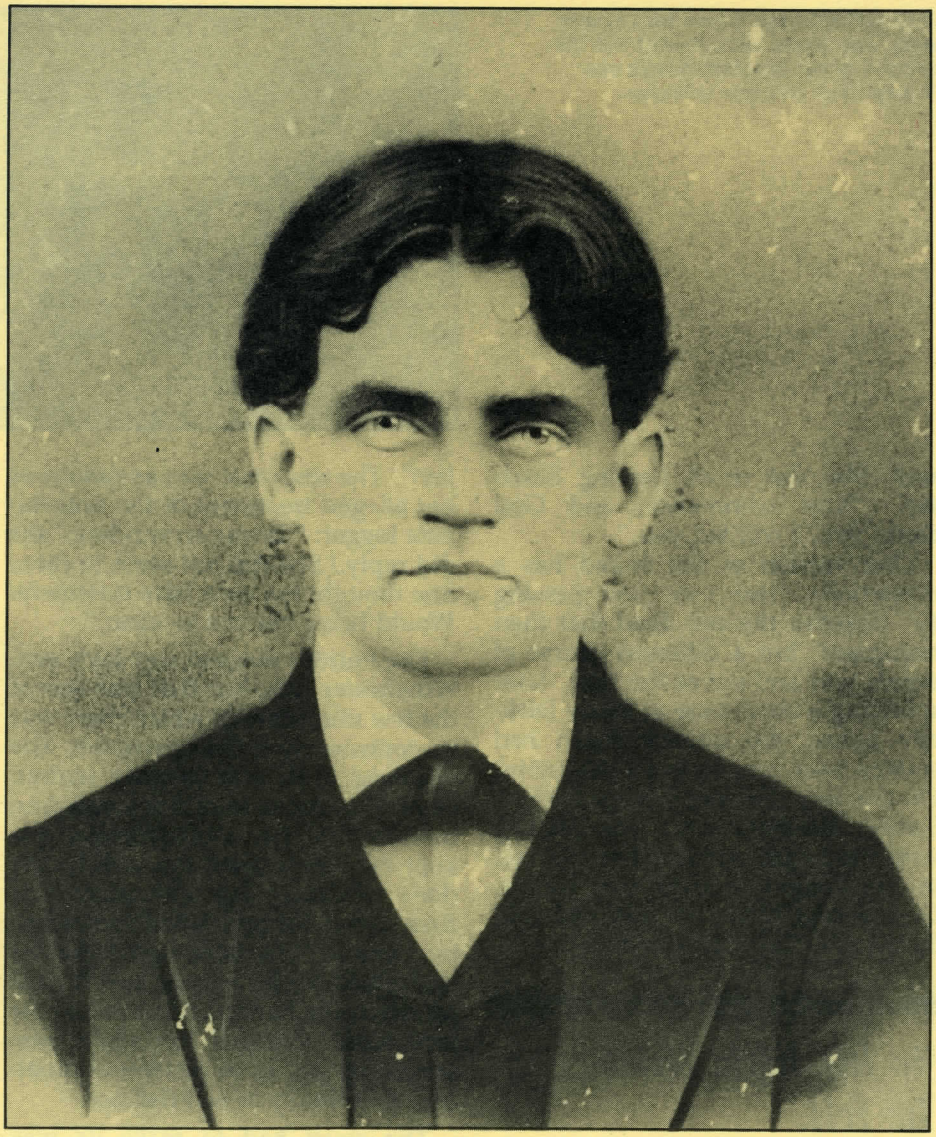
Every region has its folk stories, tales that catch the attention of people and live on, either in the spoken word or in song. The murder of Jay Legg is this type of story, and it has been preserved in ballad form. There is some disagreement as to who wrote the song, and variations in its words, but no doubt as to the basic story it tells.

My interest in the Legg killing began when I stumbled upon an account while researching another topic in the book *Haunted Valley and More Folk Tales*, a collection of mountain lore by Professor James Gay Jones. I made a note to investigate later, and set it aside. The tragic events stayed in the back of my mind, and I wrote to the Clay County Courthouse to see if records of the Legg trial were available, after no success at our local libraries. The murder was just too old to trace here in Monongalia County.

The transcript of the trial (over 200 pages) was available, but at 50 cents a page, and I almost let it drop again. Then I received a phone call from Bess Dickey of Strongsville, Ohio. A relative working at the Clay County Courthouse had told her of my interest in the Legg case. Mrs. Dickey is related to Jay's side of the family, and is the family historian. We joined forces to find out what we could.

We learned that Jay Legg was a logger by profession. He worked on the Elk River, "driving" logs downstream to Charleston. It was the custom for loggers to catch a seasonal "tide" of high water to assist them in floating their timber to market. This was the case on Jay's fateful last trip,

Poor Jay come home one cold winter night
Both cold and hungry, too.
He never got to set down and warm
Till a bullet pierced him through.



Jay Legg, within a few years of his gunshot death in February 1904. Legg was 25 at the time of the tragedy. Photographer and date unknown.

as noted in the words of the ballad: "He started out all on a tide/ As oft' he had done before/ Not knowing that it was his last, long ride./ He will never start no more."

Unfortunately, Elk River timber occasionally jammed against rocks or other obstructions, sometimes staying jammed. This evidently is what happened on Jay Legg's last drive. We know that his log raft was hung up in the river a few miles below his home. Loggers worked six long days a week, and Jay may have been glad for the chance to return home early. That proved to be a mistake, for he was dead within a half hour of walking through his own door. "He never got to set down and warm/ Till a bullet pierced him through," as the ballad starkly puts it.

Wife Sarah was the only suspect. Her trial began in April 1905, and when it was over the verdict made headline news. The front page of the *Braxton Democrat* on April 14, 1905, read: "Sarah J. Legg who shot and killed her husband at Ivydale about a year ago, mention of which was made in this paper at the time, was convicted of murder in the first degree in the circuit court at Clay last Saturday. The jury made no recommendation for mercy and she will be hanged."

But Sarah didn't hang. Her attorneys appealed, and she was retried in Lewis County. Convicted again, she appealed to the State Supreme Court. When her conviction was overturned there on errors, Sarah Ann re-married and moved away. She left behind much bitterness, especially on the part of her mother-in-law, Susan Legg. Susan did not feel justice had been served in the death of her son and she remained an unhappy woman until her own death around 1940. According to Bess Dickey, Susan Legg was so upset with Mr. Horan, one of the defense lawyers, that she wished his tongue would fall out for helping to set Sarah free. She was reportedly happy when Horan suffered a stroke after the trial.

It was a complicated story that emerged from Sarah's trials. As a logger, Jay Legg had often been away for days at a time on those downriver trips to Charleston, a distance of more than 50 miles. I learned from his niece that the men had to walk back to Clay County, extending their time away from home. In Jay's case, his final homecoming was to an allegedly unfaithful wife.

In *Haunted Valley* I read that Sarah's reputation was not the best, and she was thought to entertain other men during her husband's absences. Some people were of the opinion that Sarah and a secret lover even planned Jay's murder, although this was not proven and no accomplice was ever brought to trial. The accusation, however, is preserved in the ballad. Several versions include the following stanza: "There was a man stayed with his wife,/ 'Each night while he was gone;/ They laid a plot to murder him/ As soon as he came home."

Witnesses filled in details of the couple's life and marriage at the original Clay trial. Sarah's uncle, Ellery Dickey, was asked by one of the prosecuting attorneys to testify in detail concerning the Leggs' house. Ellery said they lived in a style of dwelling called the Jenny Lind, in which the planks of the exterior siding stood on end. The cabin in which Jay died was approximately 14 feet wide and consisted of only two rooms. The inside

Jay's mother Susan, shown here in later years, was bitterly disappointed with the outcome of her daughter-in-law's trial. Photographer and date unknown.

was not plastered, but rather the wall boards were papered. They were obviously not rich people.

This Jenny Lind cabin is the house that Jay Legg returned to. His reason apparently was related to the log jam mentioned earlier, but he might also have been checking up on Sarah Ann. Or, as told in *Haunted Valley*, he might even have been responding to a troubled vision he had had of himself at the place on Elk River known as the World's End. This spot is located between Clay and Clendenin, where the Elk makes a sharp turn against a hill. Professor Jones's book reports that Jay was shaken by a vision of himself against this hill, obviously in great distress.

He turned his face to his little child
But nothing could he tell.
He fixed his dying eyes on him
To bid him last farewell.

However he came to return early, it is known that Jay Legg and his mother walked together to his house on the afternoon he was killed. He must have stopped at Susan's house first, or met her on the way, for them to have been together at that point. It was not clear from her testimony.

Susan Legg claimed to have left her son at his house with his wife and continued on to the home of Ellery Dickey. As she walked away from the Legg cabin, Susan said, she heard Jay and Sarah arguing. She was vague about the content of the argument, claiming she didn't hear what Jay said. She did recall hearing Sarah say, "Now commence, and God damn you, I will kill you."

One version of the ballad has a mysterious "two men just passing by" discover the evil deed that then transpired, but a different course of events was laid out at the trial. After spending a short time at Ellery Dickey's house, the uneasy Susan had walked back toward her son's cabin. On the way she met George Dickey, Sarah's brother, who was staying with the Leggs and had been in bed in the second of their two rooms. George had blood on him and told Susan that "Jay was killed."

When Susan arrived in the cabin's doorway she saw her son laying on the floor in his own blood. She recalled that her young grandson told her, "Shanny [his name for Sarah] killed poor Jay." All accounts agree that the four-year-old boy was at home and was believed to have witnessed the killing of his father by his mother.

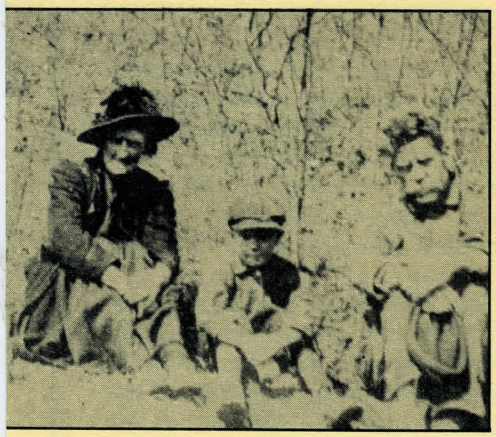
The boy must have been considered too young to testify and was not called at the trial. The ballad writer was under no such legal restraint and made the most of the tragic situation. The song has the child holding his dying father's head, while asking Sarah "What made you kill poor Jay?" The response was as callous as her alleged treatment of the unfortunate logger: "'It was an accident,' she did reply./ She did not seem to care./ She thought her own false statement/ Would bring her out so clear."

The murder weapon was Jay's own Winchester rifle, but that was one of the few things about which there was no controversy in the courtroom. The shooting itself was another matter. James Gay Jones says that Sarah Ann initially told her mother-in-law she kept the rifle against the wall by the door whenever Jay was away. She first said it fell and killed him when he came in. She later stated that he had asked her for his rifle and it went off when she handed it to him. At the trial Sarah changed her story from suicide by Jay, to an accidental shooting, and finally to self-defense.

The court had to make its way through a tangle of often imperfect testimony and evidence. The testimony given by Dr. R. A. Hamrick, who had examined Jay after he was shot, fell far short of today's forensic standards, for example. When asked by the state's attorney where the gunshot wound was, he responded, "In the chest." When pushed for a more exact location, he answered, "I do not know as I could just describe the exact location."

A Mrs. Tanner gave damaging testimony against Sarah Ann, saying that after Jay's death she had heard her threaten Susan Legg, who was not present at the time. Mrs. Tanner reported that Sarah said she would kill Susan if she bothered her, as she had already put one of them out of the way.

Sarah's attorney discredited Mrs. Tanner's testimony. He noted that al-



though she claimed to believe Sarah's threat on Susan Legg's life was sincere, she made no attempt to warn the elder woman and did not report the threat, nor discuss it with anyone. He tried to get Mrs. Tanner to admit to making up the story, but she would not make that admission.

There was additional testimony by Jacob Eagle and Cary Hays, who were at the Legg cabin the night before Jay's death. They had spent the night and left around four in the morning. Jacob said he had slept in the same bed as George Dickey, Cary Hays was in the other bed, and Sarah Ann was sitting on a chair talking to Cary. The state sought to darken the reputation of Sarah Ann with this testimony of men who had spent the night at her cabin in the absence of her husband, despite the fact that both her brother and child were home at the time.

There were many objections by the defense attorneys and overrulings by the judge at this stage of the trial. The judge cautioned the jurors about the manner in which they were to regard what might or might not have taken place between Sarah and her male visitors. They were to consider this testimony only if they thought it was a motive for the killing. Otherwise, they were to disregard it.

Each side presented a witness with an opinion as to whether the rifle could have discharged accidently, as Sarah claimed at one point. The prosecution's witness naturally said not, while the defense witness said the gun had in fact gone off accidently on other occasions, when he himself used it hunting.

When Sarah took the stand in her own defense she denied that any quarrel had taken place between herself and her husband, saying that Susan Legg's testimony was untrue. Her response to questioning by her attorney was, "I never remember saying no such stuff."

With no adult witnesses to the actual shooting, there was only Sarah's word that it was an accident. Jay's mother and others testified that the Leggs quarreled often, with the final argument taking place on the day Jay was shot. Several witnesses reported hearing the defendant arguing with her husband, although she denied this repeatedly.

Sarah Ann testified in part:

Q. Now you state to the jury, did you and your husband have any quarrel on the day that he left or came home?
A. No, sir.
Q. There was no quarrel?
A. No, sir.
Q. He was shot, was he?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. You explain to the jury how he met his death, and speak loud so the jury can hear — how he got shot?
A. Well, he called for his gun, and I aimed to reach him his gun and the gun fired.

Tom West was called by the state to report on another incident a year before, when Sarah Ann had supposedly shot at, but missed, her husband, with the bullet going into the fireplace. In the end, the state was able to convince the court that beyond any reasonable doubt Sarah Ann Legg was the kind of woman who would shoot her husband. The guilty verdict probably surprised no one present at the Clay County Courthouse.

Sarah Ann did time in jail while fighting to have her conviction overturned. On June 24, 1907, she petitioned the court to regain custody of her son, who had lived with his grandmother, Susan Legg, since his father's death. Sarah's second trial and later acquittal came in 1910.

His little child held up his head
As his life blood ebbed away;
And to his mother he did say,
"What made you kill poor Jay?"

Sarah was a free woman thereafter, free to marry again and try to make a new life for herself. This she did, although it is doubtful that things ever were the same following the shooting and subsequent court battles. The Jay Legg ballad assured that the story lived on in the popular imagination and that Sarah remained a prisoner to the tragic events of February 1904. No physical bars restrained her but it is likely that the climactic stanza of the ballad held an ironic truth for her, whenever she had the misfortune to hear it: "And now poor Jay lays in his grave/ His toil on earth is done./ His wife lays in the county jail,/ Her troubles just begun."

The Ballads of Jay Legg

Given the nature of the case, it is not surprising that the story of Jay and Sarah Legg has been preserved forever in a song. The killing took place in a tiny community where everyone knew everyone else; a woman was accused of murdering her husband; and there was already gossip about the woman's reputation. It added up to a sensational story ripe for the moralizing medium of the folk ballad.

The ballad may have been written as early as 1904 or 1905, but since the case was well documented in court records and newspaper accounts, it could as easily have been done at a later date. The author of the original song is uncertain, with one source stating that Charlie Rattigan, a Cherry River Boom and Lumber Company employee, claimed the honors. Bess Dickey believes that Ellery Dickey, Sarah Legg's uncle and a witness at the trial, deserves the credit.

There are at least five variations of the lyrics, with the tune remaining basically the same. Two versions were recorded in Roane and Braxton counties as early as 1939, and are preserved in the tape file of the West Virginia Collection at Colson Hall on the campus of West Virginia University in Morgantown. Maggie Hammons Parker recorded a version called "The Ballad of Jay Legg" in 1970.

The 1939 Roane and Braxton recordings were shortened versions, containing six and five stanzas respectively. Information in all the written versions appears to be generally accurate, but the 14-verse ballad from the singing of Laurie Boggs Drake of Ivydale, called "The Murder of Jay Legg," includes the story presented in the other ballads, with some additional material. The Drake version is reproduced here.

The Murder of Jay Legg

Come all of you brave river boys,
Some shocking news you will hear.
We've lost one of our brave river boys
And one we loved so dear.

He started out all on a tide
As oft' he had done before.
Not knowing that it was his last, long ride.
He will never start no more.

There was a man staying with his wife
Each night that he was gone.
They laid and planned to murder him
As soon as he come home.

Poor Jay come home one cold winter night
Both cold and hungry, too.
He never got to set down and warm
Till a bullet pierced him through.

His gun was loaded, laid away,
Just as they made their plot.
And by his own Winchester gun
He received a fatal shot.

He throwed his hands up to his chest
His mouth with blood was filled.
The only word that he did say
Was, "Lord, O Lord, I'm killed."

He turned his face to his little child
But nothing could he tell.
He fixed his dying eyes on him
To bid him last farewell.

He then sunk down all on the floor
And yielded up his life.
And there he lay, a murdered man.
He was murdered by his wife.

Six lonely years he lived with her
In trouble and distress.
She brought him to his lonesome grave
With a bullet through his breast.

His little child held up his head
As his life blood ebbed away;
And to his mother he did say,
"What made you kill poor Jay?"

"It was an accident," she did reply.
She did not seem to care.
She thought her own false statement would
Bring her out so clear.

They was two men just passing by
They stepped up to the door.
And there they found his body laying
Bleeding on the floor.

And now poor Jay lays in his grave
His toil on earth is done.
His wife lays in the county jail,
Her trouble just begun.

No more on earth we see his face;
No more his voice we hear.
He had gone to a murdered grave
And left this world of care.

Book Review: *Wild Foods of Appalachia*

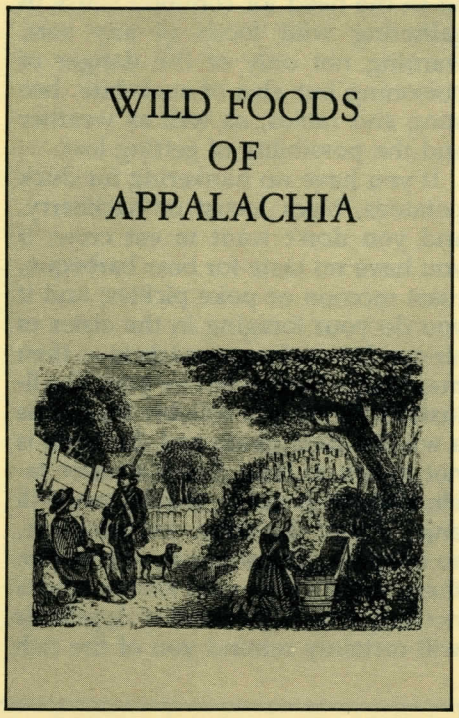
I figured Bill Gillespie out to be an all-around West Virginia Renaissance Man at last spring's New River Symposium. Gillespie wasn't there, although he has spoken to the group in the past. Instead, a U.S. Geological Survey official was describing the recent discovery of a unique fossil fish in Mercer County. It seems that a group of American and visiting Chinese geologists were examining the strata of a Turnpike road cut, with Gillespie a member of the party. Someone took a half-hearted whack with a rock hammer, tossing the resulting stone fragment aside. Gillespie picked up the discarded rock, looked it over and pronounced it to be a find totally new to the world of science.

So it proved to be, after the scientists took it in and went to work on it. Through acid baths and other laboratory magic, they produced the brilliant specimen presented in slides and photographs at the 1986 New River meeting. Officially the long-extinct beast was named *Tanypterichthys pridensis,* although it looked something like a giant blue gill to me.

Prior to that, I'd known of Bill Gillespie as an assistant commissioner of the State Department of Agriculture. Most recently, he has become head of Agriculture's new Forestry Division, and thus West Virginia's top tree man. In his official capacity he has aided GOLDENSEAL on more than one occasion, incidentally, providing information of an agricultural or outdoors nature. Our recent Beaver Creek story and a scarecrows feature of a few years ago come readily to mind in this regard, and we may have to consult him on a beekeeping story now in the works.

Having established himself as a farmer, forester and fossil fish expert, Gillespie enters now with boots and apron on as author of a wild foods cookbook. His *Wild Foods of Appalachia* was published earlier this year by Seneca Books of Morgantown, a small publisher with a nice list of West Virginia titles.

Wild Foods is a catalog of most edible wild plants and animals likely to



be found in our mountain region. Each entry is described and pictured, with particular food uses suggested. These ideas may be no more complicated than the salad greens suggested for many of the plants, but elaborate preparations are given for popular game animals. There are four recipes for rabbit, two for possum, five for venison, and three for squirrel — including squirrel gravy, of course. The author's tastes are sometimes startlingly elegant, as in suggesting pokeweed with white sauce. We always just fried it to death, down home.

Gillespie intersperses his recipes with practical information, from tips on the field dressing of game to the advisability of wearing gloves when gathering stinging nettles for soup. His observations run to the philosophical at times, as when he waxes eloquent on the subject of *Allium triccocum,* or common ramps.

There are few omissions in *Wild Foods of Appalachia.* Fish are passed over on the reasonable grounds of being beyond the scope of the book. Only crayfish and eel are discussed specifically, and we are advised to eat the latter hot. Mushrooms are given a

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terse three-line entry to the effect that you had better not mess with them until you have been trained by someone who knows. In the latter vein, the final section of the book is devoted to the need for common sense in gathering wild foods of any sort, warning not only of the danger of poisoning but also of snakebite, bee sting and rabies, as well as weather and the possibility of getting lost.

If you have no hankering for duck potatoes, black locust or hackberry, and you don't want to eat crow; if you have no taste for bear barbeque, roast raccoon or poke pickles; and if you do your foraging in the aisles of air-conditioned supermarkets — then maybe this book is not for you. The illustrations are not suitable for use as a wildlife field guide and the book is not meant to hold down a coffee table. But, then again, maybe you will enjoy it just the same, for browsing, so to speak. There is a wealth of lore there, from a man who knows, and if nothing else, *Wild Foods of Appalachia* will certainly remind you of the rich abundance of the mountains around us.

—Ken Sullivan

Wild Foods of Appalachia *by William H. Gillespie, is a 159-page paperback. It may be purchased in bookstores for $7.95, or by mail for an additional 75 cents plus 5% sales tax from West Virginians. Send mail orders to Seneca Books, Rt. 6, Box 81B, Morgantown, WV 26505.*

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Bill Gillespie on Ramps

It's an understatement to say that the ramp is one of the Appalachians' best known plants. They are eaten by the thousands of bushels — raw, boiled and fried — either alone or with eggs, meats or other vegetables. They are often parboiled and then frozen or canned for winter use.

When eaten raw, the ramp tastes somewhat like a raw, young onion with just a hint of garlic. The musty aftersmell is very penetrating, and abstinence is necessary for one or two days before the eater can face his colleagues without having them flinch or turn away.

To the early settlers and following generations, who lived in isolation before the days of refrigerated foods, the sight of succulent green ramps growing through the snow encrusted leaf mat on the forest floor was truly like manna from heaven. All winter long the settlers had subsisted on a restricted diet of game, salted pork, dried or pickled beans and withered or dried apples, and then suddenly a vitamin loaded, good tasting, plentiful, free-for-the-digging crop appears and they took full advantage of it. It's no wonder that such a tremendously welcome plant would build up a following and folklore unrivaled by other equally common foods. Yes, the ramp, not the robin, is a certain sign of spring in the mountains, especially in Pennsylvania, North Carolina and West Virginia.

Ramp eaters form a strong alliance and there are dozens of outstanding citizens who will swear that anyone who has not enjoyed the music of a swift flowing mountain stream while eating a "mess" of ramps and native trout, prepared over an open fire and enjoyed with a skillet of corn bread and a bucket of boiled coffe still has one of life's most tantalizing moments ahead.

From *Wild Foods of Appalachia*

In This Issue

HARRY M. BRAWLEY, a Charleston native, was born in 1909. He earned an A.B. in 1931 and an M.A. in 1932 from WVU. He has worked for WCHS in Charleston, as a teacher and principal at Kanawha County schools and as a part-time associate professor of political science and geography at Morris Harvey College. He has published widely and is now a member of the Charleston City Council. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Spring 1986 issue.

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. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL, on Monroe County school life, appeared in the Spring 1986 issue.

CHRISTINE D. FENN, a native Ohioan, lives in Morgantown and works at West Virginia University. She has done volunteer work, attends classes at WVU, and freelances. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

FRANK HERRERA, a native of Beckley, received a B.A. from West Virginia University, and a Master's degree from the University of Maryland. He worked as a Spanish teacher and as head of photography at Shepherd College before 1970, and has been a freelance photographer since then. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Spring 1986 issue.

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MICHAEL KELLER is the chief of photographic services for the Department of Culture and History.

ZERA LOUGH was born on Flag Run, Taylor County, in 1899. She attended Alderson-Broaddus College, where she received a teacher's certificate. She taught at Simpson Grade School, and later at the West Virginia Industrial School for Boys at Pruntytown. Since retiring, she has done church and volunteer work. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

TIM MASSEY, a native of Price Hill in Raleigh County, has 25 years' experience as a newspaperman. He first worked for the *Raleigh Register* in Beckley, later moving to the *Baltimore News-American,* UPI, and the *Charleston Gazette.* He holds a B.A. and M.A. from Marshall University, and now works for the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch.* He is a periodic contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

GERALD MILNES was born in Pennsylvania and now lives in the western edge of Webster County. He is a farmer, fiddler, and staff member at Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Summer 1986 issue.

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

BOB SCHWARZ is a New York State native who farmed in Wetzel County for over 11 years before moving to Lincoln County. He has taught high school and college and does freelance writing. He is now a reporter for the *Lincoln Journal.* He is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

JEFF SEAGER is a photographer for the Department of Culture and History.

WILLIAM THERIAULT, a six-year resident of Bakerton, manages a company that performs biomedical research and writing. He earned a Ph.D. in American literature from George Washington University and has published several articles on the history of the Eastern Panhandle. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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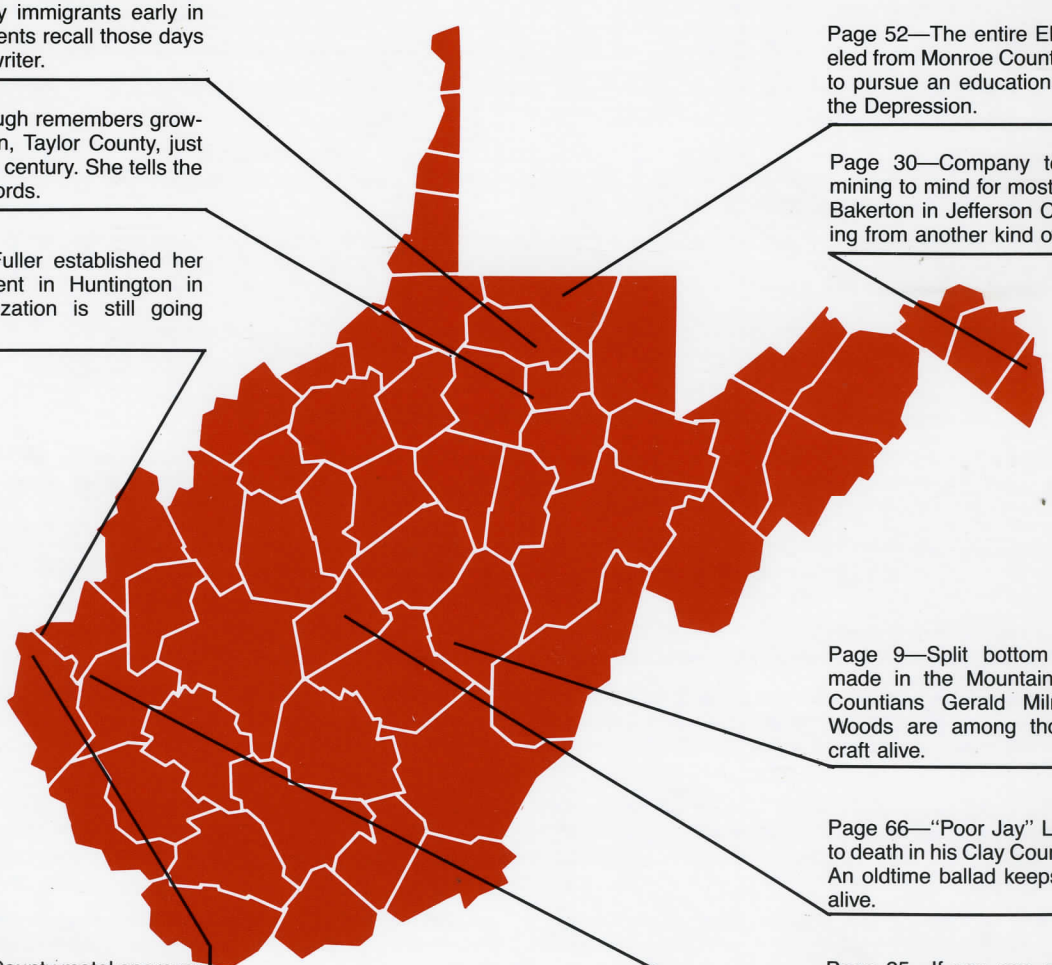
Inside Goldenseal

Page 44—Kingmont was the first American home to many immigrants early in this century. Residents recall those days with pride for our writer.

Page 16—Zera Lough remembers growing up on Flag Run, Taylor County, just after the turn of the century. She tells the story in her own words.

Page 38—Stella Fuller established her charitable settlement in Huntington in 1943. The organization is still going strong.



Page 52—The entire Ellison family traveled from Monroe County to Morgantown to pursue an education in the depths of the Depression.

Page 30—Company towns bring coal mining to mind for most West Virginians. Bakerton in Jefferson County dug its living from another kind of mine.

Page 9—Split bottom chairs are still made in the Mountain State. Webster Countians Gerald Milnes and Arthur Woods are among those keeping the craft alive.

Page 66—"Poor Jay" Legg was gunned to death in his Clay County cabin in 1904. An oldtime ballad keeps the tragic story alive.

Page 60—Wayne County metal engraver Norris Sperry has done a pistol for the county sheriff and a pocketknife for President Reagan.

Page 25—If you can wangle an invitation, you'll find good music at a certain shanty on the Cabell-Lincoln line most Saturday nights. Murdie Hall presides.