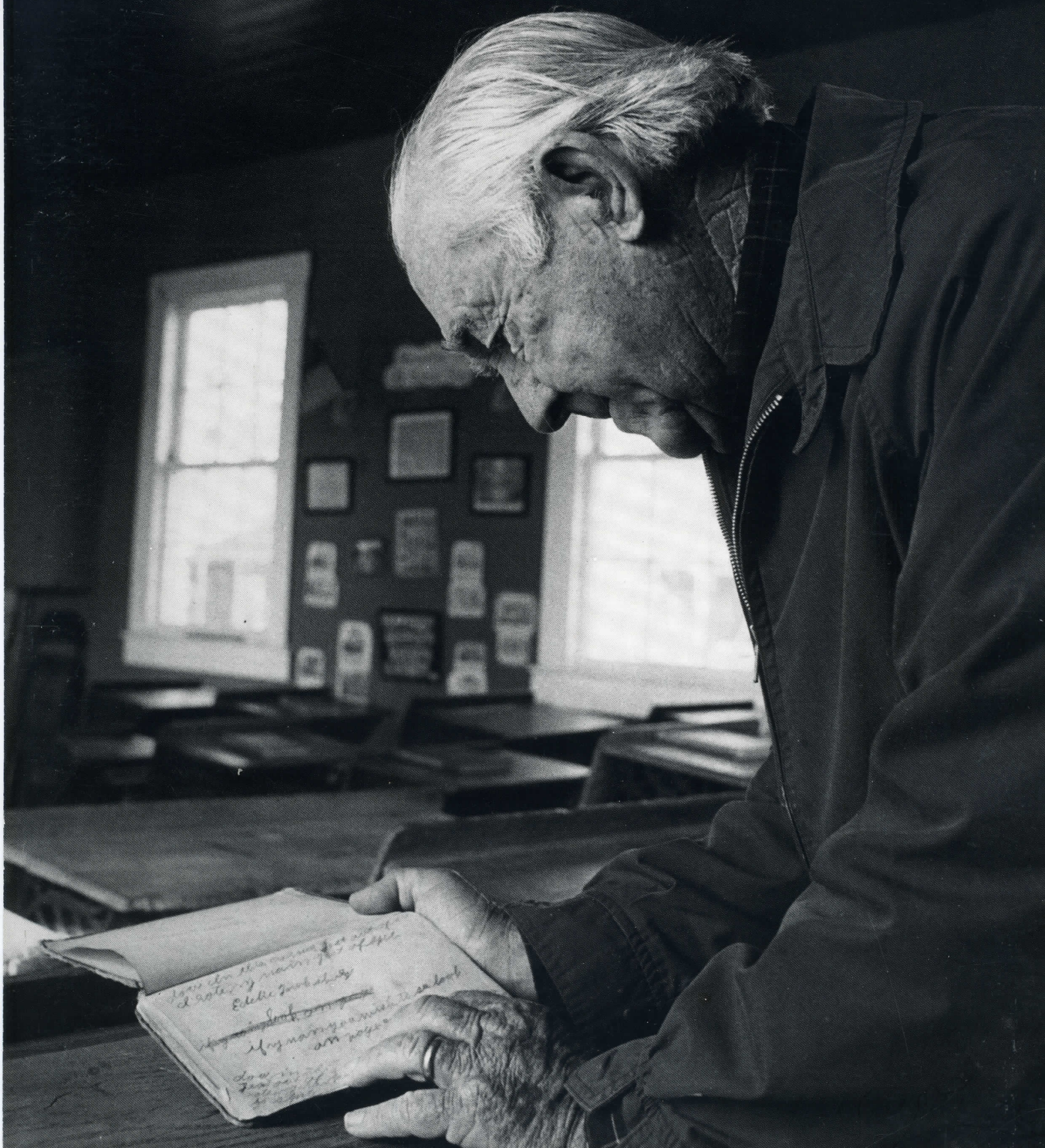


# Goldenseal

## West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 12, Number 4

Winter 1986





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# From the Editor: Thank You

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Thanks. Better make that thanks again, for it's not the first time I have gratefully come to you in this space in the winter issue of GOLDENSEAL. As for the past five years, our readers have again come through when we needed help most, and we really appreciate it.

All that gratitude is for the generous support for the annual voluntary subscription campaign, the support of thousands of people like you and your own personal support, I hope. If not, we would still like to hear from you. Fundraising is a year-round effort and the contribution of every reader counts.

But I'm not here this time to prod those who have not yet made their voluntary subscription payment. Instead, I want to report on the success of the campaign so far. The reminder letters went out in mid-September, with a good response coming in by later in the month. As I write this in November it is too early to make confident predictions for our entire fiscal year, which continues through the end of next June. Thus far, however, contributions are running well ahead of the same time last year.

That is partly due to our price increase to \$12.50, of course. I am relieved and grateful that readers seem to have accepted the raise graciously, without either a massive drop-off in the number of contributors or a flood of protest mail to our office. In fact, our circulation continues to grow at a healthy rate — GOLDENSEAL circulation normally increases at about seven to 10 percent a year, incidentally, or by a couple hundred new readers per month — and we hope to end the fiscal year with a good increase in both paying subscribers and in total revenues raised.

We will see to it that the additional money does not go to waste. It will put us closer to making ends meet — not there, but closer. The break-even point is a moving target, moving ahead with the general growth of the magazine and with every inflationary increase in our costs. We are gaining on it, however, and that is the important thing.

I'll not go into the whole litany of those costs again. Once a year, at the time of my subscription letter and fall editorial appeal, is enough for that. Rather, let's look at the positive side, which is the better magazine your subscription money buys. We try to use your contributions to improve GOLDENSEAL, as well as simply to pay the regular bills.

In this regard, we hope to have hired an extra staff person by the time you read this. Probably the one biggest surprise to people when I give talks around the state is that we create GOLDENSEAL with a full-time staff of only two people. I have always been proud of our ability to do that, for I think it is a sign of a well-organized effort. We have come to the time when pride must stand aside for stubborn reality, however. That reality is a burgeoning workload as the magazine grows, and as my other responsibilities as state folklife director increase.

The bonus for readers, to get back to my point two paragraphs above, is not in lightening our load here but in

the fact that we expect to do a better job with the extra help. The new person will relieve Lori Henshey of much of the daily routine, allowing Lori to take over more editorial work. We foresee significant improvements, especially in our research efforts and in the time we can devote to story development. Give us a couple of issues to get rolling and then let us know whether you think you are getting a better magazine as a result. Your comments and criticism will be appreciated as we make the transition.

They are appreciated at any time, in fact. We were pleased at the many notes accompanying the subscription coupons, for example. We have read them all, and responded individually to those that seemed to need a personal reply. We appreciate the encouragement of the notes of praise, which were the majority, and hope we can do better where problems were pointed out. We are also glad that many readers took the opportunity of the annual subscription drive to help us clean up the mailing list. Your corrections and deletions help make this the busiest time of year for us, but a leaner mailing list results. That means a big savings, with fewer magazines wasted in the mail.

Finally, I have the pleasant obligation to thank our two fundraising volunteers, Archie and Virginia Morris. Having been to France and who knows where all else in between, the Morrisses were back with us for the second year. They again did an outstanding job, working daily down into October and leaving us only when the mail had slackened back to what we can handle ourselves. Thanks, Archie and Virginia — and same time, same place, next year?

That invitation holds for everyone else reading this, too, for we will definitely need your help next year and every other year of GOLDENSEAL's life. Until then, we will go ahead with the day-to-day business of editing your magazine. The immediate future looks very good, with Spring 1987 shaping up to be one of the best issues in a long time. The big Braxton County story we have been working on since early last summer should be ready, featuring a wealth of previously unknown 1930's photographs of Sutton and surroundings. A story by photographer Thomas Hyer Swisher's son will accompany the pictures, with special commentary by historical architect Michael Gioulis. I think the article will demonstrate what several months of development work can do for a story.

Other than that, we've got Wheeling music, Grafton trains, the annual fairs and festivals calendar and — a personal favorite — last year's Vandalia Liars' Contest winners, among other stories coming your way in GOLDENSEAL. With your continued support, we expect no trouble in finding good material to put in your magazine.

In the meantime, my thanks, again, and GOLDENSEAL's best wishes as you celebrate the holidays.

—Ken Sullivan



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# Goldenseal

Volume 12, Number 4

Winter 1986

**COVER:** Walden Roush studies long-ago school work in the one-room school at the State Farm Museum. Read of his work at the Museum and in education in our story on page 9. Photo by Michael Keller.

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**PHOTOS:** Bollinger's Studio, Michael Keller, Fred Miller, Morgan Studio, Gerald S. Ratliff, Hali Taylor.



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# Sixteen Miles

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By Georgia Heaster

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Between Grafton and Philippi there is a 16-mile stretch of road that is unusually rich in our state's history. Starting at Grafton, we first drive past the old B&O station, once the hub of transportation in Western Virginia and now the site of the annual Railroad Festival. At 11 East Main Street we visit the Mothers Day Church. A bronze marker on the lawn commemorates the nation's first Mothers Day, held here in 1908.

The church is open to visitors on weekdays during the summer, with special services on Mothers Day. It is a two-story building of handmade red brick, with a tall bell tower and stained glass windows. In the sanctuary, oil paintings of Biblical scenes, by George Blaney, are hung in massive gilt frames between the windows and beside the altar.

On the second floor is the Jarvis Memorial Room. There are two spe-

cial portraits on the wall. One is of Mrs. Anna Reeves Jarvis, who cared for a large family and yet was a leader in civic and church organizations for the betterment of Taylor County. Beside it is the portrait of her daughter, Miss Anna Jarvis, who spent most of her life and all of her fortune to carry out her mother's wish that someday there would be a special day to honor all the mothers of the world.

The portraits show two beautiful women, but a viewer will sense two very different personalities. Mrs. Jarvis appears as serene, firm yet gracious and lovable. Miss Anna gives the impression of impervious determination, strength and drive. These are women who reached their goals by different methods, and we owe Mothers Day to both of them.

The church is surrounded by a two-acre flower garden full of the same kinds of shrubs and flowers which Mrs. Jarvis grew at her Grafton home. Here are the fragrant old-fashioned roses with which she graced so many important events in the community. Here, too, are the pansies, the mignonette and the clove pinks which she gave to friends and passers-by, and tucked into the baskets of food which her husband, Granville Jarvis, gave to the needy. Mrs. Jarvis knew instinctively what we now pay psychiatrists to tell us, that people need food for the spirit as well as the body.

As we leave town, heading west on U.S. Route 50, we pass the Grafton National Cemetery. It is the only such cemetery in West Virginia and the burial place of hundreds of Civil War soldiers, Union and Confederate. Here lies Bailey Brown, the first Yankee soldier killed in the war. On Memorial Day, special services are held at the National Cemetery. The school children of Grafton put flowers on the graves of both the Blue and the Gray.

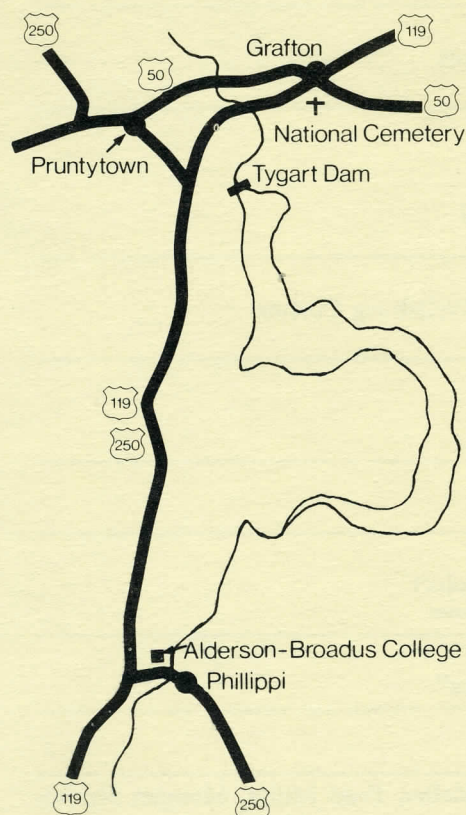
Perhaps some of those unfortunate soldiers had stayed awhile at the Jar-

vis homeplace, which we will come to a few miles down the road. During the early days of the war soldiers were quartered there, sometimes northern boys and sometimes southern boys, depending on who held Grafton at the time. Mrs. Jarvis mothered them all. She and Mr. Jarvis wrote letters for the homesick young men to help them keep in touch with their families. Later in the war, when soldiers of both sides were dying from wounds and disease, General George Latham called on Mrs. Jarvis and her mothers' clubs for help.

But Pruntytown is our next stop, as we continue westward. Best known for the boys' reform school which operated from 1891 to 1983, Pruntytown was also the site of the Mothers Friendship Day. At the end of the Civil War there was great bitterness between families and neighbors of the opposite sides, which threatened to end in serious violence. Mrs. Jarvis was the leader in the program. At an all-day meeting, where Union people dressed in gray and Confederate people dressed in blue, there were speeches, prayers and a singing of both "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Dixie." It all ended with "Auld Lang Syne." Many friendships were renewed and the danger was averted.

At Pruntytown we leave Route 50 for 250, which combines with Route 119 down the road, above Webster. As we head south from there, we are traveling just west of Tygart Lake. Backtracking up 119 and driving two miles off on a secondary road would bring us to the dam and lake, a federal flood control project and a recreational center. Tygart Lake State Park has a lodge, restaurant, cabins and camping grounds. The lake and river provide boating, fishing, swimming, golf, and a large tract of woodland for hiking and nature study.

Coming back to U.S. 250, we drive on south, entering the grounds of Alderson-Broadus College as we come into Philippi. We may wander about the campus, among the old trees and new sculptures, and perhaps stop for a moment of worship at the very modern Wilcox Chapel. From the front lawn of the New Main Building we look down at the peaceful panorama below, with the town of Philippi sitting comfortably between the hills and the Tygart Valley River.





It was not always so peaceful. We are standing beside the replicas of the two cannons which here began the first land battle of the Civil War in July 1861. The Union plan was to cut off the exits to the Fairmont-Beverly Pike, now U.S. 250, and capture Confederate General Porterfield's entire army. A single shot would be the signal that all the northern companies were in place. But a southern sympathizer heard the Yankees placing the cannons, and fired a shot which was mistaken for the starting signal. The two cannons fired canisters and a six-pound cannon ball into Philippi.

The sudden attack awakened the Confederates, and on horseback, in wagons and on foot they sped up the Pike toward Belington. Because of heavy rain and misdirection, the Union men did not arrive in time to close the southern exit. They rushed after the Rebels but it was too late. Some wag called it "The Philippi Races." The *Wheeling Intelligencer* boasted, truthfully or not, that the Union troops got there in time to drink Porterfield's hot toddy still warm.

At the bottom of the hill, at the junction of routes 250 and 119, we come to the famous covered bridge that crosses the Tygart. Built in 1862, it served both sides in the war. Sometimes men and horses were sheltered under its roof. The strategic bridge changed hands several times.

The covered bridge had a narrow escape during the daring 1863 Jones-Imboden raids. Confederate Colonel William Jones had it stuffed with straw, ready to set on fire at the approach of Union men. Elder Joshua Corder is credited with saving the bridge, partly by earnest prayer and partly by the logical argument that the Confederates themselves might need it as an escape route. Jones did not light his fire.

In 1934 the covered bridge was again in danger, after a boy fell through the rotten flooring and drowned in the Tygart. The State Road Commission decided to move it down the river a little way for a landmark, and build a strong iron bridge for practical use. But the people of Barbour County had grown up with their wooden bridge. They didn't want to keep it as a landmark, they wanted to travel through it. They

yelled as only West Virginians can yell, and won. Steel rods were inserted inconspicuously into the yellow poplar timbers. The bridge was moved onto temporary piers, a strong concrete foundation was built, and the old bridge was swung up in the air and settled onto its new foundation. It survived the 1985 flood.

Today, the Philippi covered bridge still carries its share of the heavy traffic of U.S. routes 250 and 119. When Lem Chenoweth built a bridge, he built it to last. On its 100th birthday the people of Philippi gave their bridge a party that went on for three days.

As we drive through the two-lane bridge into town, we see the red tiles of the Spanish roof of the old Philippi passenger depot, now a museum. We walk up Main Street a couple of blocks to the red stone Barbour County Courthouse, whose massive

bulk is lightened and given a Gothic look by its tall bell tower, many windows, dormers, spires and turrets.

We rest on the cool shaded lawn where county programs are held, and then stroll up the street past old houses with their wide verandas. We see the places where Samuel Woods and Spencer Dayton once lived — two lawyers whose friendship was so damaged by the Civil War that they never spoke to each other again. This war story had a storybook ending, when Sam's granddaughter, Ruth Woods, married Spencer's grandson, Arthur Dayton, and they lived happily ever after.

On this satisfying note, we leave the tour while Route 250 climbs up the mountain toward Belington into Randolph and Pocahontas counties. There is more West Virginia history down that way, but that's another drive, for another day. ♣



Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church in Grafton, site of the first Mothers Day service in 1908. Photograph by Gerald S. Ratliff.



# 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.*

Fairfield, Texas  
September 26, 1986  
Editor:

Enclosed is my check for \$12.50 for another one year subscription to GOLDENSEAL.

I was not born in West Virginia and I have never lived there. In fact, I have never been in the state of West Virginia, but when I receive each issue of GOLDENSEAL, then I find myself in the state of ENJOYMENT.

Hopefully, some day I can visit West Virginia. In the meantime I will read every issue of GOLDENSEAL from cover to cover. Keep up your good work.

Sincerely,  
Martin J. Alewine

Santa Monica, California  
August 19, 1986  
Editor:

I was born in Slaty Fork, West Virginia, in 1937. My parents, George and Helen Howell, moved there in 1928 shortly after their marriage. They were both from the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina.

My grandfather, Robert Howell, had moved to West Virginia in the early '20's, and was a supervisor of the logging operation in the area. He had taken my father out of school and taught him the skill of operating a steam skidder at an early age. This was my dad's trade at the time of my birth in Slaty Fork.

We moved to Roanoke, Virginia, in the early 1940's and my dad worked for defense at Hercules Powder in Radford. After the war he worked on various construction projects in Virginia. When I was about 10 we moved to Cass, and my dad was a skidder operator for Mower Lumber until they shut down in 1951, if memory serves me.

Somehow the family ended up in southern Ohio, where I finished high school in 1955. Folks there found my accent and style humorous and my place of birth more so. Something struck them funny about a birthplace named "Slaty Fork." (I did get the

lead part in my class play, however — "Headin for a Weddin," starring Homer Hollowbone — me, of course.)

I stopped telling people where I was from, and if I had to reveal my place of birth on job applications, etc., I always wrote S. Fork, West Virginia, allowing those who read to assume South or whatever. I'll never forget the good times the guys in the marines had when they found out what the "S" stood for. Slaty Fork!

But to shorten the story, I'm older and wiser now. I live in Los Angeles and I'm proud of the fact that I'm from such a special place.

Sincerely,  
Charles Emory Howell

## Broom Factory

Richmond, Virginia  
August 20, 1986  
Editor:

The article "Starting from Scratch" is of special interest to me. Mack Roberts is my great-uncle and the picture on page 24 is of my mother. The article brought back some pleasant childhood memories of playing among the broom racks in the factory. I appreciated the article very much.



This was the first time I have seen your magazine and I think it is great. I am impressed with the fine quality of the magazine and am enclosing a subscription request.

Sincerely,  
Loretta Williams

## C&O Patch

Alexandria, Virginia  
July 18, 1986  
Editor:

I am so sorry I never knew about GOLDENSEAL before. I have taken *Wonderful West Virginia* for a good many years, and enjoyed it so much. I plan to come to Charleston in August for the 50th reunion of Charleston High School class of '36. I'll stay on for a few days and visit cousins in Charleston and Huntington. I love getting back to West Virginia.

The article on the C&O Patch is all about my family on my mother's side. Paul Humphreys is my first cousin, Schuyler Humphreys was my grandfather's brother and several other names in the article were familiar to me. Also, I believe the Cottage Grove School is where my mother taught school before she married and moved to Charleston. I love the whole article.

Sincerely,  
Bernice Stephens

## Picking Shanty

Wenatchee, Washington  
September 25, 1986  
Editor:

The story about Murdie Hall's picking shanty was great. Back in the summer of 1935 I worked with the CCC boys from West Virginia, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky, up in Glacier National Park, Montana. Almost every night and on weekends there'd be a "pickin' session" of some kind in camp. Some of those West Virginia boys couldn't read or write but they could sure make music. Our "picking shanty" was a World War I army tent, with a board floor and a four-



foot-high, 2x4 framework, four bunks and a Sibley stove in the center next to the tent pole. I don't recall very many fiddlers, but those boys made wonderful music with guitars, banjos, mandolins and a few mouth organs and jaw harps. It was in their camp where I met the late Willis Hatfield of West Virginia.

In 1936 I started back to visit these West Virginia boys (by side-door Pullman) but to date I haven't got closer than Chicago.

I also recall when split bottom chairs were very common.

Sincerely,  
Walt Thayer

### Flag Run

Belleville, Michigan  
September 25, 1986  
Editor:

I just got through reading "On Flag Run," by Zera Bartlett Radabaugh, in the fall issue of GOLDENSEAL. It sure brought back memories to me. I was born in 1907 just east of Hurricane, and lived in Putnam County till I was 18 years of age. And that story of Zera Bartlett's could have been about myself. There were 14 children in our family, but there were no more than nine at home at any time. I still go back to the farm where I grew up every chance I get. But it sure is not what it was when I was growing up there.

I am sending you a check for \$12.50 for another year of GOLDENSEAL. It is worth many times that to me, and I wish I could send more. I hope to get to West Virginia this coming spring. If I do I will do my best to visit the Cultural Center.

Sincerely,  
William Rogers

### Ellison Family

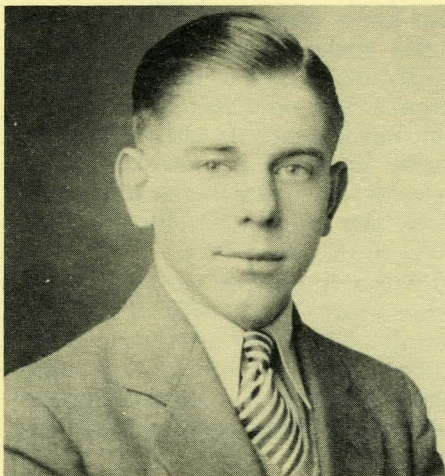
Lindside, WV  
September 29, 1986  
Editor:

The Mann family continues to enjoy and appreciate your journalistic effort with "our" magazine.

The articles by J. Z. Ellison are extremely interesting. I am made to observe that "poor" is indeed a relative term. How rich we would have felt had our father owned a 1929 Chevrolet or even a Model A, and how we

did envy the beautiful fields and great house occupied by the Ellisons as we walked the eight-mile round trip to Dry Pond Primitive Baptist Church on 4th Sundays, or when we fished for red eyes in Hans Creek flowing through the Ellison farm. The Ellisons were fine neighbors, and many a time have I heard my father say that "never a better man walked the sod than Uncle Zack Ellison." J. Z.'s father stood equally in his esteem. It is refreshing to live again the early days with "Little" Zack. Thanks to him, and to GOLDENSEAL. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Elder Norvel P. Mann  
Indian Creek Primitive  
Baptist Church



St. Albans, WV  
September 25, 1986  
Editor:

When Zack Ellison left Hans Creek, Monroe County, 54 years ago for his "Higher Learning" in Morgantown, I as a third grade neighbor looked on his (not the rest of the family's) move as a good riddance. Today I am moved and filled with empathy by his story!

Sincerely,  
Margaret Larew Moore

### Lincoln County Crew

Shreveport, Louisiana  
September 8, 1986  
Editor:

I received the summer 1986 copy of your magazine from a cousin of mine who lives at East Bank. She sent the magazine because of the article on page 46 entitled "The Lincoln County

Crew." The Irma Butcher in the article is a first cousin of mine. The picture on page 47 of Press Blankenship and Sena Jeffrey Blankenship are of my aunt and uncle, my mother (Rena E. Jeffrey) being Sena's sister.

I must say I was thrilled with the article and also the whole magazine. Our three children were born in West Virginia. My husband is from Hurricane, and myself born in Lincoln County. We lived in Logan County for 18 years, moving to Louisiana in 1963, but our roots are in West Virginia, as well as our hearts. Any and all material about West Virginia is of interest to me, and most especially the past. History fascinates me and when it's about a place and a people connected with me personally, it is more appealing.

I'd never heard of the GOLDENSEAL magazine before receiving the copy from East Bank, but now I'd like to receive it regularly. I commend you on a great magazine.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Arthur David Wallace

### Ernie Carpenter

St. John, Indiana  
October 4, 1986  
Editor:

I enjoyed the story of Ernie Carpenter in the summer 1986 issue. Being a Carpenter and a proven descendant of Jeremiah Carpenter, Sons of the American Revolution no. 124610, I must set your readers straight on some facts which Milnes and Kline left out of their story.

They state that "it has been established that there were two Jeremiah Carpenters." This is the first time in all of my research that I have seen this statement. I must disagree. There is only one Jeremiah Carpenter listed in the census of 1810, Randolph County, and 1820 and 1830, Nicholas County, Virginia. This is the same Jeremiah Carpenter who fought in the Battle of Point Pleasant; who married Elizabeth Hamm on March 8, 1875 in Alderson, Virginia; who is listed in *Land Entry Book, Greenbrier County* by Helen Stinson on p. 179, April 20, 1875; who is listed in Harrison County survey records, Vol. 3, August 3, 1786; who is listed in *Randolph County Survey Book*, March 3, 1792.



This is the same Jeremiah Carpenter listed in Sutton's *History of Braxton County*. Jeremiah and Elizabeth were reported by William Carpenter on death report of Solomon, Braxton County Deaths, page 28, as being parents of Solomon Carpenter. This is the same Squirrely Bill who is the grandfather of Ernie Carpenter. Thus I find no credence in the story of Jeremiah's marrying an Indian.

As reported by Sutton and Withers, Jeremiah was captured by a raiding party at Covington, Virginia, in 1764 when he was about nine years, and returned in a trade in 1772. He then joined Captain John Lewis's company, along with his brothers Thomas, John and Solomon, and went to Point Pleasant in 1774. He then returned to the Jackson River area. He is listed on the 1783 *List of Tithables, Botetourt County*. He was shown as purchasing land from Moses Mann in 1779. He is listed in *Land Entry Book, Greenbrier County* as owning 50 acres on Howards Creek (near Alderson). He then went to the Elk River in 1785 with his wife Elizabeth. Benjamin and others of Jeremiah's family followed later. All of the above information is documented. It is not a story handed down from father to son as is the story of Solly's Christmas tree.

I just wanted to set the record straight. Thank you for your magazine. I enjoy reading it.

Sincerely,  
Richard L. Carpenter

### Hoop Snakes

Grantsville, WV

July 24, 1986

Editor:

I am writing in regard to a letter that appeared in your summer issue. It was sent in by Lee Lewis, and described what she thought was a hoop snake.

First, may I say from her description and my knowledge of the hoop snake, that she indeed saw this legendary critter. Few people are left who know about the characteristics of this snake. First, it was the most deadly snake ever to habitat in West Virginia. Secondly, its bite was not lethal, but instead, its tail contained a deadly stinger that could kill almost instantly. The following is an account of my last encounter with the hoop snake in the late 1920's:

I was a young boy working on my father's farm in the hills of Calhoun County, when one afternoon, while grubbing filth on the side of a steep slope, I heard the all too familiar sound of a hoop snake. They take

their name from the way they maneuver around. They put their tail in their mouth and roll like a hoop. This produces a whirring sound that once introduced to the ear is never forgotten. To my amazement it headed straight for me. Having had a great deal of experience with them, I knew I could not outrun him so I decided to stand still and jump at the last possible moment. Just as he got to me I jumped sideways and he missed me with his stinger, but instead stung my mattock handle.

This handle began to swell from the poison and the longer it went the larger it got. About a year later, I moved a sawmill in and cut out a five room house pattern from it and lived in it until 1940. I sold it that year to a gentleman who had just moved into our neighborhood, but forgot to tell him what kind of wood it was made of. He undertook to paint it and the turpentine in the paint pulled the poison out of the wood and it shrank right back to a mattock handle.

To my knowledge the hoop snake does not exist today, but I can assure you that I keep my ear to this whirring frequency just in case.

Please find enclosed my check to continue my subscription. It's a fine publication.

Sincerely,  
Ivy Von Yoak

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## Current Programs • Events • Publications

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*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.

### Barboursville History

*Barboursville* is a new town history written by Francis B. Gunter, a Barboursville resident and a teacher in Cabell County schools for 20 years. Gunter says the book is written for eighth-grade students to use as a local supplement to their West Virginia texts.

*Barboursville* covers the history of the town, from the time of the first local land grants in the Revolutionary War period through the 1930's. Included are an 1814 town plan, the history of the 132-year-old Barbours-

ville courthouse, an account of area Civil War skirmishes, a list of Union and Confederate volunteer soldiers, and information on early churches. A chapter tells of Morris Harvey College, established as Barboursville Seminary in 1888, and moved to Charleston when the town faced economic trouble during the Great Depression. Also discussed are lifestyles in the town during the 1880's, a history of transportation, important landmarks, and short accounts of notable people. A recollection by 75-year-old Barboursville native Linwood McCormick gives a

human perspective on life in the town during the 1920's and 1930's.

*Barboursville*, a 38-page paperback with bibliography and illustrations, may be ordered directly from the author. Send \$7.95 plus tax and \$1 postage and handling, to Francis B. Gunter, P. O. Box 430, Barboursville, WV 25504.

### Mine Wars Book Republished

*Thunder in the Mountains*, Lon Savage's book on the closing period of the bloody West Virginia mine wars, is being reprinted. The book, whose earlier editions quickly sold out, was



expected to be ready for sale by late fall.

*Thunder* is the story of the 1920 Matewan Massacre and the dramatic events that followed, including the murder of Sid Hatfield at the Welch courthouse and the ensuing March on Logan by thousands of armed coal miners. The episode culminated in the four-day Battle of Blair Mountain in 1921, ended only by the massive intervention of the U. S. Army. A decade of stalemate in southern coalfields labor relations followed.

Savage's book, praised upon publication by historian John Alexander Williams, West Virginia Secretary of State Ken Hechler and others, was originally issued in first and second printings by Jalamap Publications of South Charleston. The new edition, improved by the addition of a map, is published by Northcross House.

*Thunder in the Mountains* may be bought in bookstores or ordered by mail for \$8.95 postpaid. Mail orders should be sent to Northcross House, P. O. Box 357, Elliston, VA 24087.

### Humanities Resource Material

The Humanities Foundation of West Virginia is now offering a catalog of resource items developed by projects that it has funded over the years. "Patches from the Living Fabric" is a collection of over 400 items, including audio tapes, video, films, slide/tape presentations, displays and exhibits.

The material covers many subjects related to West Virginia. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," for example, is a film/videotape produced by public television station WSWP in Beckley. The film documents the lives of three generations of coal miners, and explores their religion, motivation and the impact of the union on their lives. Another, a slide/tape package called "Monongalia Women: Traditions and Transitions," was produced by the Morgantown Public Library. This portrays women's often unsung contributions to the economic and social development of Monongalia County. "Recollections," a set of audio tapes from the former West Virginia Public Radio series of the same name, features oral history interviews by occasional GOLDENSEAL freelancer Susan Leffler.

The West Virginia Humanities Re-

source Catalog is available at all public, college and university libraries; or by writing to Catalog, Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, P. O. Box 204, Institute, WV 25112. The Humanities Foundation is a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### Winter Augusta

Augusta is no longer just a summer-time program, as the calendar for the upcoming Winter Augusta demonstrates. Two weeks of workshop sessions get under way at Davis & Elkins College on January 4, with an additional intensive two-week class on West Virginia folk culture to follow.

Course offerings are broad, in the Augusta tradition, with dozens of classes available. Unlike the summer sessions, however, Winter Augusta focuses almost entirely on music and dance. Choices range from dulcimer and banjo, to Cajun, Canadian and New England dance and British Isles song. Appalachian traditions predominate, but Augusta continues to broaden its interests into other folk cultures of America and the world. A series of associated public dances and concerts runs through mid-January, with Jean Ritchie and Hazel Dickens among this year's performers.

Winter Augusta tuition is \$150 per week, with campus room and board available for an additional \$122 weekly. Single public events cost from \$3 to \$6, with \$10 covering the full weekend Winter Festival which closes out Augusta on January 16-17. Payment may be made by credit card.

GOLDENSEAL readers wanting to know more may write to Winter Augusta, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241; or call (304) 636-1903.

### Appalachian Studies Conference

The 1987 Appalachian Studies Conference will be held March 27-29 at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. The theme for the scholarly meeting will be "Remembrance, Reunion and Revival: Celebrating a Decade of Appalachian Studies."

Conference plans were not final as this GOLDENSEAL went to press,

but proposals in a wide range of regional topics were being considered. Presentations are expected to include such subjects as mountain religion, family life, work, history, folklore, politics, music, literature and handicrafts. Research papers, panel discussions, films and other methods of presentation will be used at the early spring meeting.

The 1987 conference will also feature a competition for the best student research paper in the field of Appalachian Studies. Papers must be submitted for judging by January 9, with rules and other information available from Doyle Bickers, 218 Oak Avenue, Carrollton, GA 30117. Cash, books and other prizes will be given to the winning student researcher.

Further information on the 1987 Appalachian Studies Conference may be had by writing to Helen Roseberry, East Tennessee State University, P. O. Box 22,300A, Johnson City, TN 37614, or by calling (615) 929-4329.

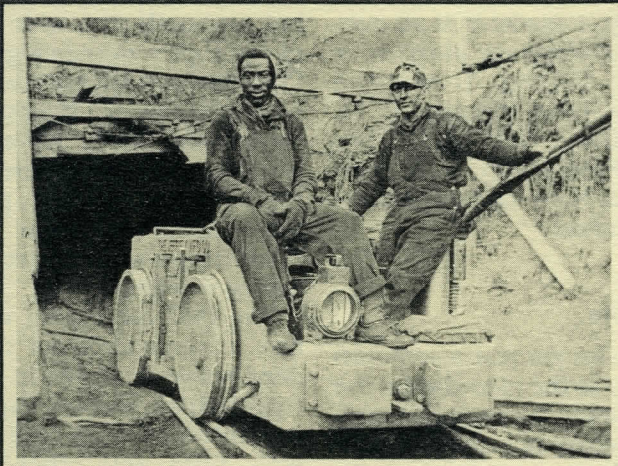
### Good Music in Elkins

The Elkins Country Dance Society still has several folk music concerts left in its 1986-87 series. Singer Bill Staines offers the first program of the new year with his February 21 appearance at the Boiler House on the Davis & Elkins College campus. Staines is the author of "A Place in the Choir," a popular new song with an old feeling and an upbeat message. Rich Kirby and Tom Bledsoe follow Staines on the stage of the Boiler House with their March 28 concert of mountain music and singing.

The Red Clay Ramblers wrap up the series with an April '25 appearance at the Harper McNeley auditorium. The Ramblers, including West Virginian Tommy Thompson on banjo, are among the country's best-known and most durable oldtime string bands.

All concerts begin at 8:00 p.m. For further information, write to the Elkins Country Dance Society at P.O. Box 2436, Elkins, WV 25241. You may join the Society by sending \$5 annual dues to the same address. Members are entitled to discounts at dances and house concerts and receive the Society's "Three Forks of Cheat" newsletter.





## KAYMOOR

### A New River Community

Lou Athey

## Book Review: *Kaymoor: A New River Community*

Kaymoor was one of the last of the New River Gorge coal towns and one of the largest, with more than 1200 people in its heyday. Actually, Kaymoor was two towns or even three or four, depending on how you count. Separate communities were organized around the coal mines known as Kaymoor One and Kaymoor Two, and each of the two communities — Kaymoor One in particular — had distinct neighborhoods on the south canyon rim and at river level below. The Kaymoors were linked to each other by the steel rails that moved coal and sometimes people, and by the shared enterprise of mining coal for a common operator.

That is part of what you will learn by reading *Kaymoor: A New River Community*, recently published by the Eastern National Park and Monument Association in conjunction with the New River

Gorge National River unit of the National Park Service. The new book is by Lou Athey, a history professor at Pennsylvania's prestigious Franklin and Marshall College and a longtime student of the New River Coalfield.

Professor Athey is especially interested in the close connection between Fayette County coal mining and the iron industry of western Virginia. In Kaymoor he finds a perfect case study, for the mining operation there was owned by the Low Moor Iron Company of Alleghany County, Virginia. Kaymoor was founded at the turn of the century for the sole purpose of supplying high grade New River coal to the iron furnaces at Low Moor, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway bridging the miles between the two places. West Virginia coal miners prospered or suffered according to the changing fortunes of Virginia iron workers, in one ex-

plicit example of the integration of the mountain region into the industrial outside world.

Athey's interpretation and firsthand research, particularly in the original Low Moor company records, will be of interest to professional historians. His main intended audience, however, is the non-specialist reading public, including surviving former citizens of Kaymoor. The latter people contributed to Athey's work through many interviews done by him and others, and they will find his book packed with details from their own time and before. Community life, mine and coke-oven work, unionization, sex roles, recreation, race relations and religion are among the many aspects of daily life treated. The book is illustrated with photographs from all periods of town history, as well as charts and an excellent three-dimensional map of Kaymoor One.

*Kaymoor: A New River Community* is the latest of several fine publications coming from New River Gorge National River research, and the second in a series of community studies. Earlier books include *Life on the New River* by William E. Cox and *Sewell: A New River Community* by Ron Lane and Ted Schnepf. Books currently in the works include a natural history of the gorge and a history of Thurmond, New River's legendary railroad town. The publications are offered for sale at National Park Service visitor centers at the New River Bridge and on the Hinton bypass, or by mail order.

*Kaymoor: A New River Community* is a 64-page, large format paperback, with illustrations, bibliography and index. The book may be purchased for \$6.95 at the visitor centers, or by mail for \$8.35 postpaid. West Virginians should add 35 cents sales tax. Mail orders may be sent to the Eastern National Park and Monument Association, P.O. Box 1189, Oak Hill, WV 25901.

—Editor



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# "An Important Part of Our Heritage"

## Walden Roush Recalls Mason County's One-Room Schools

Interview by Tony L. Williams  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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**T**oday, Walden Roush is "Mr. Farm Museum." He is a familiar figure to visitors at the State Farm Museum at Point Pleasant, who see him pitching in to keep day-to-day operations moving along. If they ask around they will find that he is more than just a cheerful volunteer, and in fact the president of the board and one of the museum's longtime supporters.

Visitors will have to dig a little deeper to uncover Mr. Roush's earlier life, his 36 years as a Mason County teacher and educational administrator. They will find him most willing to talk on that subject if they can catch him inside Mission Ridge School, relocated to the Farm Museum grounds. He is at home on both sides of the teacher's desk, having spent both student and teaching days in just such schoolhouses as this. Get him started and he will talk freely of those days, and also of the reasons he considers West Virginia's one-room schools to be "a very important part of our farm life heritage."

Walden Roush. I went eight years to one-room schools, and most of the schools were in Graham District that I went to. There weren't enough children for the home school in the neighborhood that we lived in, so me and my brother and sister had to attend other schools. Usually these schools were maybe several miles from home, but we would walk to school. My father was a school teacher, so I got to go to my father three years and the other years were to other teachers.

I went to Clay Lick School, in Robinson District. Let's see, I went there, I believe, three years. It was a little

Walden Roush poses inside the Mission Ridge School, now located at the State Farm Museum at Point Pleasant.







Above: Probe E. Roush, Walden's father, made a career teaching in Mason County's one-room schools. This portrait of him with his White Church School pupils was made January 18, 1916. Photographer unknown.

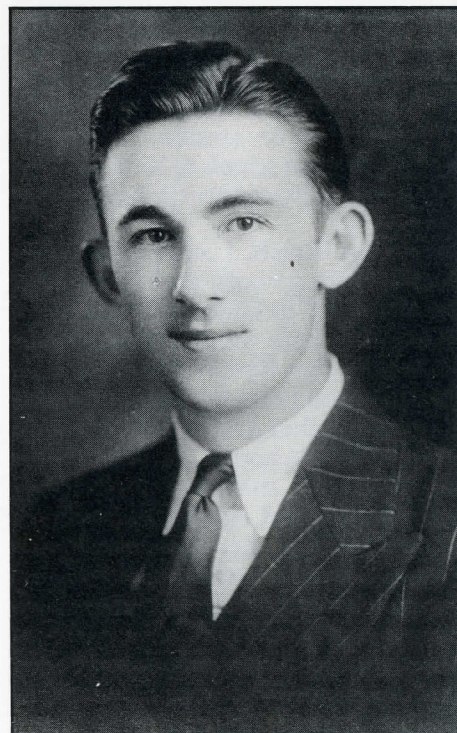
Below: Walden sought a college education so that he could continue the family teaching tradition. This is his 1927 freshman portrait at George Washington University. Photographer unknown.

over two miles from our home. I went to Little Forest School and it was also over two miles from home. My father taught there. I went there, I guess, just one year when my father was teaching and I was in the fourth grade. It was in Graham District, but our home school was closer, about a mile from our home. It was called White Church and it was also in Graham District. Clay Lick has been torn down now. White Church has been torn down, but Little Forest School was sold to some people and converted into a residence. It is still sitting there on the lot, used as a home.

Some of the Mason County schools had rather unusual names. One school that my father taught, farther away from home, was called Poke Grove. It was in Cooper District. I remember quite a lot of names, having visited the schools. One down in Hannan was called Black Jack, and then there was Daisy. I don't know

how Black Jack got its name, but Daisy — I can imagine a field of daisies. And then there was another school there, called White Oak. There was a great big white oak in the yard. All over the county, we had over a hundred one-room schools before World War II. Now, some of these schools would be open one year and then closed the next, if they didn't have any students.

I believe in those early school years when I first started, school was just six months and then later was made longer. When the snow would get deep we never closed, we just kept on going to school. We walked to these various schools even when the snow was deep. I remember one year that there was such a big snow. I was going to the same school where my father was teaching, and he would walk through the snow and break a path and I would come along behind. Then other years, I remember 1917





# The West Virginia State Farm Museum

If you travel four miles north of Point Pleasant, up Route 62, you can see an authentic one-room schoolhouse, and a lot more. For there you'll find the West Virginia State Farm Museum, "a memorial to our farmer and pioneer ancestors, and a window of the past for future generations."

Located on the Museum's 50 acres of land are buildings representative of earlier times in our state. There sits the Mission Ridge one-room schoolhouse, built in 1870, complete with scarred scholars' desks and pot-bellied stove. Near the school is the Barker log cabin, which was built in the early 19th Century and furnished accordingly. Beside the cabin is an herb garden of the sort kept by many farm wives for cooking and medicinal purposes. Another building is a replica of the 1815 Zion Lutheran Church, believed to be the earliest of its kind west of the Alleghenies. The church features a safety balcony for women and children and a musket rack near the door, both in case of Indian attack.

The blacksmith was important to early communities. He fashioned tools and farm implements, and provided farrier services to village residents. There is a blacksmith shop at the Farm Museum, where smithing demonstrations, using turn-of-the-century tools, are held during special festivals. The John E. Green country store, complete with post office, is stocked with corn meal, West Virginia crafts and souvenirs.

Also at the Farm Museum is an extensive collection of farm equipment — a threshing machine, seed cleaner, tractors, cultivators, looms, sewing machines and much more. There is a barnyard stocked with typical farm animals, such as horses and oxen, and even

a railroad boxcar and caboose.

The Farm Museum offers various festivals throughout the year. Wheat grown on the grounds is harvested in June during the Pioneer Days and Wheat Harvest, and each spring there is an antique steam and gas engine show. Also held are hymn sings, barbecues, and even an old-fashioned Southern "pig picking" — a late fall outdoor hog roast where you pick your own choice morsels. During these festivals pioneer crafts such as wood carving, quilting, weaving, broom making and blacksmithing are demonstrated.

The Farm Museum is operated entirely by volunteers. Walden Roush, retired school administrator, is president. Regular hours are 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays; all other times are by appointment. Tour groups are welcome by appointment, and admission is free.

So, if you get a hankering to experience the old days when fami-

lies grew the wheat to make their own bread; when schools taught the "three R's"; and when picking up mail at the country store was a social event, visit the West Virginia State Farm Museum. By advance arrangement, their country kitchen will provide a corn bread and bean lunch, with cornmeal pie for dessert.

The cornmeal pie is a real treat, and simple and cheap to make at home if you can't get to Point Pleasant anytime soon. You'll need: One cup of butter; two cups sugar; three eggs; eight tablespoons of cornmeal; three tablespoons of flour; one cup of milk; one teaspoon vanilla; and, if desired, a cup of chopped pecans. To make: Mix ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, and let boil for several minutes. Pour into two unbaked pie shells. If pecans are used, add them to the mixture before pouring into pie shells. Bake at 375 for 40 minutes.

—Lori Henshey

Amos the donkey is a full-time resident at the State Farm Museum. He lives there with other animals once common to West Virginia farms.





and 1918, we had a big snow and a slight rain and then everything froze. It was icy on top and when we went to school we had to go down a pretty good size hill. We would catch hold of the brush and make sure that there was another one that we could grab or we would slide clear down the hill. We never closed school. The only time I think was during the flu epidemic — they closed down, but I don't recall how long.

Tony L. Williams. How did you get into teaching?

WR Well, it goes way back. My great-grandfather was a school trus-

tee who taught back then. And then my grandfather was a teacher. I don't recall how many years he taught, but he probably taught 20 or 30 years. My father was a school teacher, so I guess it just kind of ran in the family.

I recall that one year I was going to my father's school. I was sitting back there kind of watching what was going on — you know, how when you're teaching and you're getting a point across and you can see how it affects the students. So I wrote on my tablet, "I'm going to be a school teacher." I was in the sixth grade at that time, and I never changed. I had

chances to do something else but I stayed with it.

My first year of teaching was at Little Forest School in Graham District. That was 1929 and 1930. I had 20-some children in school that year. I was paid \$85 per month. I think we got paid for eight months.

The next three years I taught at our home school. They opened up that school, so I taught there for three years. It was still \$85 per month. It was during the Depression, of course, and the Board wasn't able to pay the local increment. In fact, the last year I taught we had to give back

The rural schoolroom is a familiar environment for Mr. Roush. He began his teaching career in such a room in the 1929-30 academic year.





10% of our salary to the District Board in order for them to pay whatever other bills they had. Then we couldn't get our checks cashed. There was no money in the sheriff's office, and they would stamp them "no funds." The banks would discount them. To get your money you could go to the bank and they would discount them 6% and pay you and then they would hold the checks. That made it pretty hard on some of us, trying to get ahead a little bit.

TLW What was your preparation for teaching?

WR I went two years to Point

Pleasant High School, and that was out of our district. We had to come down and board. In fact, a cousin of mine the same age, and I, would leave home and walk into what was Maggie then, a flag station, on Sunday evening. We flagged the train down and rode into Point Pleasant. Then on Friday evening we would ride the train back up and walk back home. It was six or seven miles to our place. But after I finished two years there, I had a sister and a brother ready for high school and Dad couldn't afford to pay tuition and board for all of us. In fact, things were getting so tough, he probably couldn't even afford to apply for it.

So, then we went to our high school at New Haven; only two teachers for the high school, and I had been at Point Pleasant. I took extra work, an extra subject or two. The third year, I had enough credits to get into George Washington University on probation. The teacher at New Haven came over home. I had tried to get a job several places, but couldn't get anything in Huntington or Parkersburg or anyplace I could go to school. So he came to see my father to see if he would let me go to Washington, D.C., because he could get me a job in a drugstore. That's how I got over there to George Washington University. Later, when Mother was getting older, she insisted that I come back home for a while. I had enough credits that I could get a first-grade certificate. I had more credit hours than a standard-normal or a short course — it was 30-some hours for this short course and 60 hours for a standard-normal — but I had gone to George Washington and I didn't meet the requirements here. So I started teaching in Mason County and taking correspondence courses and going to Marshall in the summer, and going whenever there was anything around close by.

TLW What was it like, teaching in a one-room school?

WR You know, it was real enjoyable, having gone eight years to one-room schools myself. I had some real good teachers. I think that my father was a real good teacher, and all of the other teachers that I went to were outstanding one-room school teachers. So with that experience behind me, I really enjoyed it.

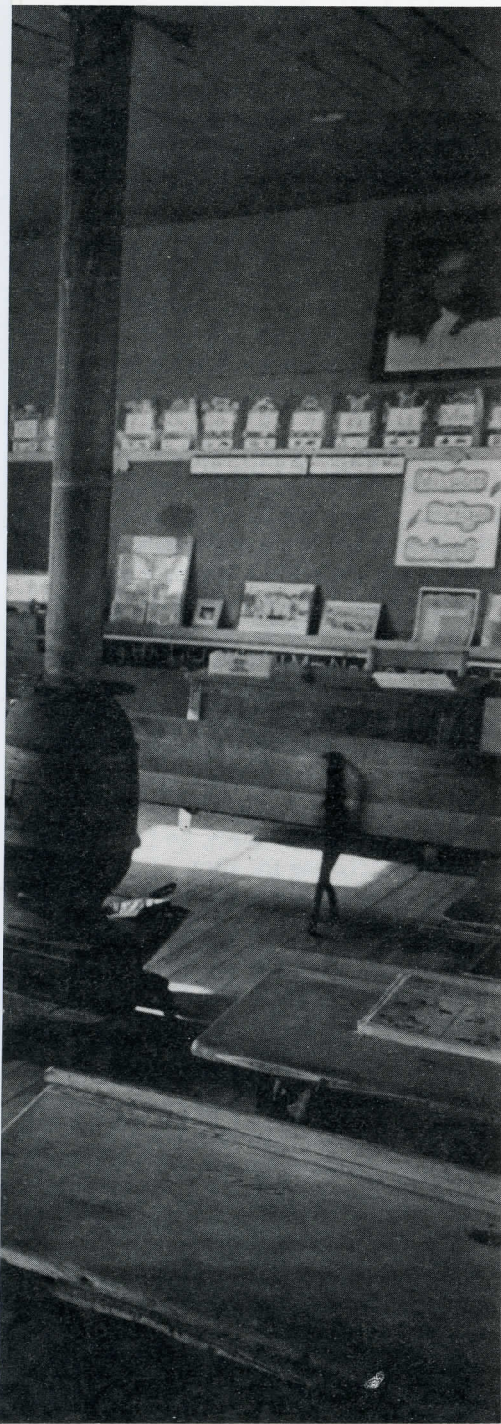
TLW Do you recall any special kinds of school activities, like fairs or socials?

WR When I was going to school we had a last day of school program. The teachers would put curtains across the front of the building and you would have recitations, a play. All of the parents would come in and they would jam the school. It was quite a big day.

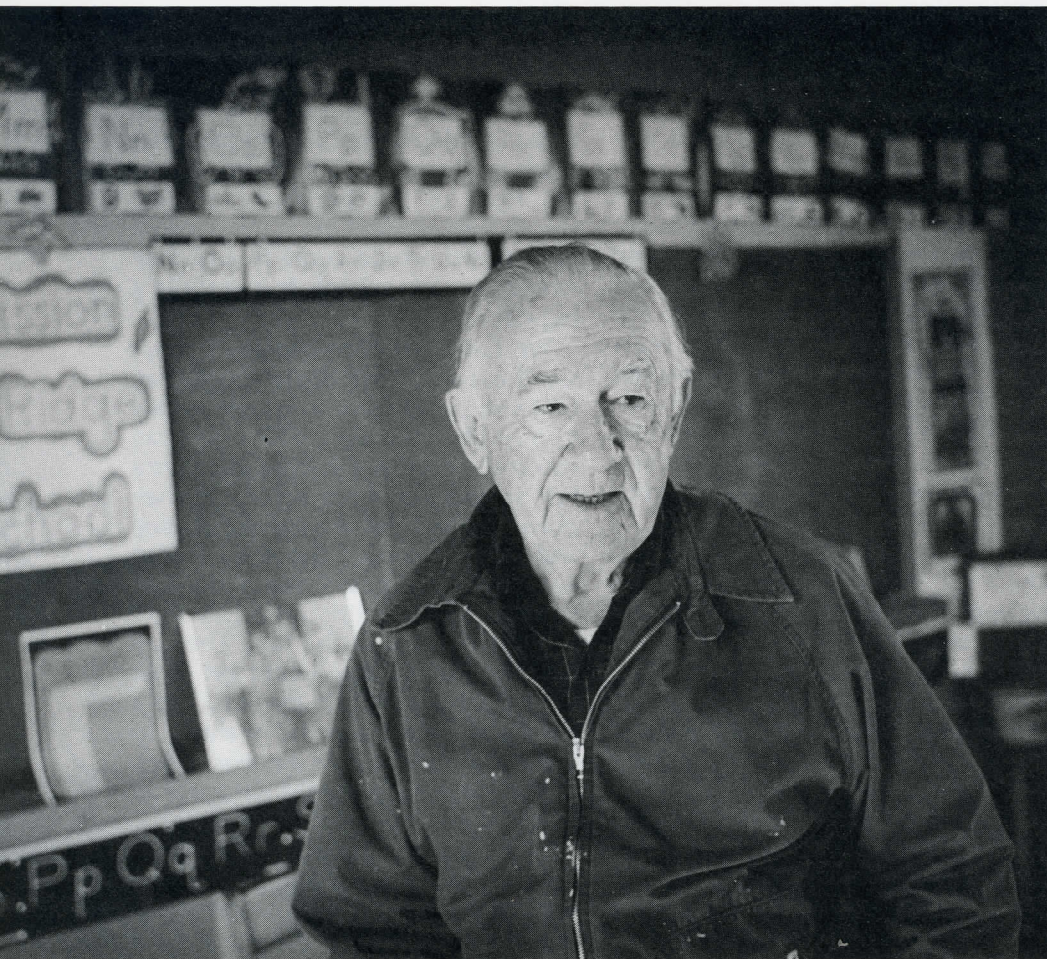
We had very little money. I don't recall ever that the Board would say that you could have so much money to buy library books. The only way you could acquire those was to have a box supper, or a pie social, as they called them, and raise some money and buy books for the school. You have probably heard about the box suppers that the girls would prepare with their name in the box. The guy that bought the box would get to sit with them and eat. If the guy had a girlfriend there and he wanted to make sure that he got her box, some of the other guys would gang up on him and run the price away up.

I don't know whether it was peculiar to our particular neighborhood or not, but usually around Christmas time they would lock the teacher out of the building. He would be out on the playground and they would lock him out. They would do this because it was customary every Christmas for the teacher to treat the children with maybe a few sticks of candy and maybe an orange and some peanuts or something like that — every year, it was about the same. They would lock out the teacher and start negotiating. They'd push paper back and forth under the door. They would ask the teacher maybe for a dozen oranges, then push the paper out and he would mark it off and say maybe "three peanuts," or something. It was all in good nature and a lot of fun. Finally, they would arrive at what he was going to treat.

We couldn't teach music back then. It wasn't customary. We would maybe have a morning program of singing, but not as teaching band or instruments. The parents knew that I played a fiddle and they asked me if I would help some of their kids. They would bring their instruments to school and maybe during the noon hour if it was too bad to get out, we would practice some. We would stay







"The one-room school was a very important part of our farm life heritage," Mr. Roush says. "It was a means of teaching a lot of fundamentals as well as social behavior."

after school, too. I finally got a little band together. I had a girl to sing alto and a girl to sing tenor, and we had guitars and I played the violin. We would go to other schools. This happened the first year that I taught at White Church, so I had two more years with a pretty good band. Anna Lee Douglass, Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglass's wife, was one of the girls.

All of the time that I went to school, and during my teaching years, I never saw the teacher have any real discipline problems. They were all good teachers and knew how to handle kids. People come in the Mission Ridge School now and they say, "Where's your stool and dunce cap?," or "Where's your big whip?" And in all of my years of teaching and visiting schools, I never saw anything like that. I think that one reason was that the parents backed the teacher. I know my father told the teacher to make me behave and if I

got a whipping in school, I would get a harder one when I got home. And that was what the parents told me, so I think that the kids were more afraid of their parents than they were of their teacher. And if you have something interesting going on all of the time, I think that solves your discipline problems. I don't know how it would be today, with the attitude that some of the kids have, but we didn't have any discipline problems.

TLW How were the schools furnished?

WR Well, very, very sparse. There were seats for all of the kids, a pot belly stove, maybe a drinking bucket with a dipper. All of the kids used to drink out of the same dipper. To get the water, at one of the schools, we just went up the road a little piece where there was a waterfall and this creek came down through a pasture field. We would get our bucket of water there and take to the school. Some of the schools had cisterns, and

some of them had to go to a neighbor's house to get a bucket of water.

TLW Do you recall any subjects that you taught then that aren't taught today?

WR When you got to the seventh and eighth grade, you had about 10 or 12 subjects. For example, we taught agriculture, health or physiology, and English. History and geography were separate subjects; there was no such thing as social studies. We had West Virginia history in there too, you know. To get through, a teacher had to group some, like the seventh and eighth grades would have civics or agriculture together and maybe you would have agriculture one day and civics the next day.

The teachers would have some of the older students to help with the younger ones. When the fifth grade was reciting, either up on the recitation bench or working on the board, the fourth graders could observe the fifth graders. The fifth graders could observe the sixth graders, and they would pick up a lot of information. So then, if you were in fourth grade and could read with the sixth grade or fifth grade, there's where you were placed. We didn't hold them back like we do today.

Even though a boy or girl would finish the eighth grade and have their diploma, they couldn't go to high school unless they could afford to go and board someplace. There were no buses. There was no radio to listen to, no TV to watch, so they would come back to grade school. It wasn't unusual to have boys and girls in school who were 18, 19, 20, or 21. For example, one year I was teaching and had a little girl in the first grade and her daddy in the eighth grade. He needed some extra math, so I had an extra math course for him.

TLW In Mason County, when did the one-room schools cease to exist?

WR Soon after World War II. The roads were improved and they began to consolidate, and of course the rural population declined. There weren't as many children in the family as they used to be, so they began to consolidate and then operate buses.

The one-room school was, I think, a very important part of our farm life heritage, because it was a means of teaching a lot of fundamentals as well as social behavior. A lot of the books



that we used had a moral to about every story. I think they had quite an influence on our life and the things that we did.

Of course, the teachers today are maybe much better trained than the teachers of the early one-room schools, and I am sure they're doing an excellent job in teaching the children that go to school today. With the advantage of having one teacher for one class and even a teacher for special subjects, I know that they are getting better educated than in the one-room school days. But on the other hand, when a boy or girl finished the eighth grade in the one-room school, they were pretty well versed in fundamentals — the old story of reading, writing and arithmetic. Some of the subjects were taught all the way through. For example, penmanship was taught through the eighth grade. English was taught all of the way through, and reading and spelling. So maybe those fundamentals were stressed a lot more than we do today.

During World War II, we had in Mason County approximately 90 one-room schools, and it was very difficult to get teachers for these schools. So our county made an agreement with Marshall University whereby we set up six or seven centers in the county out in the rural districts where we could get one-room school teachers together who probably had only a few hours of college work each. The assistant superintendent, Delbert Staats, and I would teach how to make out their register and their monthly reports and scheduling, then instructors from Marshall University would teach the education subjects. So our teachers would get three hours credit and upgrade their certificate. Some of those teachers became so interested that when they had a chance, they went back to Marshall and got their degrees.

Back in the '30's, there were very few teachers in Mason County that had a college degree in the elementary schools. High school was differ-

ent, but in the elementary schools, especially one-room schools, most of them had a first-grade certificate, short course, or normal. Sometime during the late '30's or early '40's, just before the war, the Board passed a resolution requiring each teacher who had below a standard-normal to take at least six hours of work, either during the winter or at summer school. That helped upgrade the qualifications of the one-room school teacher.

TLW Mr. Roush, the old Mission Ridge School is now located at the State Farm Museum. Is the school a very popular attraction?

WR Yes, we have quite a few people coming here to visit the school. In fact, there was one group of folks in Ohio across the river whose one-room school had been disbanded and removed, so for several years they held their reunion here in the Mission Ridge School. It is quite popular. Especially the older folks, they come in and reminisce and it brings back a lot of pleasant memories. ★





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# Russell Fluharty

## The Dulcimer Man

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By Ken Sullivan  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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Russell Fluharty at home in his music room.



"I was born on the head of Dudley Fork, that's a fork of Flat Run." Thus Russell Fluharty begins the story of his 80 years, speaking of the Marion County countryside he loves. Both of the streams he mentions are among the smaller tributaries of the Monongahela River, as is nearby Mahans Run, the most important landmark of his life. The three head up in neighboring hollows in the rolling hills north of Mannington.

This country has always been home to Russell. He has left it many times, ranging far and wide to promote his favorite musical instrument, the ancient hammered dulcimer. But he has always returned. The big move of his life came when he was still a toddler, and it was from one of the creeks to another. "We moved here to Mahans Run when I was two years old," he reports. "And believe it or not, I can remember that move just as well as I can remember anything. A lot of people will say they can't remember when they was five years old or something like that, but I remember that."

Russell has a story to prove the point, as he often does. "I had a little pet groundhog. My dad made a wooden box for me, to keep him in and to move him in. It was made out of heavy, rough, inch lumber, and this old belting they got around the oil wells was the hinges. When the lid opened back, it still had a little pressure on it, wanting to come shut. This little groundhog was maybe a third grown. I was getting him ready to move and he hopped up on the edge of the box and that lid just flapped down there and crushed the little fellow. And of course, that crushed my moving day, too.

"We come from the head of Dudley and a little over halfway up Mahans Run, about eight miles," Russell continues. "It was in the fall of the year, just after corn-cutting time. My dad, as he moved us with the horses and sled, would also bring a load of fodder. That way, he killed two birds with one stone."

On Dudley Fork the Fluhartys had lived at the homeplace of Russell's mother, looking after Grandmother Efaw. "The Efaws had always lived on that side of the hill," he says of his mother's people, "and the Fluhartys on this side." Both families go back a



long way in this part of West Virginia, and Russell has traced the Fluharty side to its European origins. "My people were originally Norsemen," he explains. "They came down into Ireland. The first name I could ever get track of was Flaitbait. When they got into Ireland, they became O'Flahertys, and later on just Flahertys. They got over here and they become Fluhartys."

In America, the Fluhartys headed west early and then worked their way back to the Appalachian region. "When they first landed on this shore, they went west," according to Russell. "I remember my grandfather telling many times about them coming from Iowa back this way."

"In the old days, it seemed like people got around anyhow, whether they walked or rode horseback or thumbed on a freight train," Russell muses. "My mother's brother, when he was a young man, 19 years old, went west to get a job. His name was

Solomon Efaw. He landed in St. Louis, farmer boy, you know, walking down the street. Guy come along, looked at him and said, 'Stranger in town, ain't you, Mister?' And Uncle said yes, he was. He said, 'I'm looking for work.' The man said, 'You're lucky. You just found the right man.' He said, 'You come go along with me.'

"He went along with him a little ways, and a few blocks down there that man pulled a gun out, just shot a man, threw the gun down and run. So Uncle, in a brand-new town and didn't know which way to go, he was just whirling 'round and 'round. The cops got him — the gun laid there, see — and they sent him up. He was 38 years old when he got out of there. The man that did this, on his deathbed confessed."

"I remember my uncle coming in, walking from Mannington over. He had on a suit of clothes that the shoulders come down to his elbows,

and he had one dollar. They give him a train ticket, a new suit of clothes and one dollar. And that was the way he come back home. The thing that impressed me was how fast he eat. Amazing, how much he could eat in a minute or thereabouts."

Solomon Efaw exerted an early musical influence on his young nephew. "While he was in prison, he learned to play the fiddle," Russell relates. "He taught me to play a tune, 'Pop Goes the Weasel.' He was a pretty good fiddler. The only thing I couldn't hardly stand was that he made a horrible face when he played. He rolled his eyes and twisted his face till it looked like it was killing him. But he seemed to enjoy it."

"Of course, most of Mother's brothers played the fiddle," Russell elaborates. "That might have been what got me going." But he recalls that his Uncle Solomon brought back an unusual style from his stay in prison, and also the trait of singing while

This Marion County house is home to the Dulcimer Man. Mahans Run flows out back.







Conrad Fluharty (left) and Bennett and Ruhama Efaw, Russell's grandparents, were all from neighboring families. "The Efaws lived on that side of the hill," he says, "and the Fluhartys on this side."

he fiddled. Russell later adapted the latter habit to his playing of the hammered dulcimer, another instrument generally not accompanied by voice.

Meanwhile, the family had settled into its new home on Mahans Run. Father Arlie Fluharty had been born on the head of the run and moving back was a homecoming to him. He established his family at the old Lewis Cook place, one of the early farms on Mahans. Russell recalls Mr. Cook cautioning his father on the proper care of the old place. "'Arlie,' he said, 'take good care of her. Remember she's over a hundred years old.' He was talking about the house, you know. It was just an old log house, walls about 18 inches thick. You made two steps before you'd get through the door."

The old house continues in use today, although now in other hands. Russell occupies another place, but he is still nearby and still on Mahans Run. He and his wife live in retirement in a small house on the stream's bottomland. Russell busies himself around the place, getting out to make dulcimer music from time to time. The West Augusta Historical Society is a special interest, particularly the spectacular Mannington Round Barn, which Russell and the Society

were instrumental in restoring. The folk strategy game, Fox and Geese, is another pet project, as Russell works to propagate the old board game among modern youngsters. In between, he will sometimes make time to answer questions about the past, as he did at this interview last September.

Life on the Fluharty farm was one of simple abundance but few frills, he recalls. Food was plentiful and money scarce. "For a long time we didn't have any money," Russell comments. "I mean, *any* money. We took butter and eggs and produce to the store, and got a due bill and traded that out. Then we'd take some cabbage, corn or something, and trade it. It didn't seem like we needed money like you do now. You could go out and earn a little money and be happy with it. But anymore, you just can't do any good with a little money. You got to have a lot."

Everyone worked. "Either work or starve, that was the way it was," Russell says today. He considers himself fortunate to have had a father who taught him to work and made the learning fun. "I learned to do most everything. It so happened that my father was a very congenial sort of somebody. Lots of times, I would

rather work with him than go out with kids to play. He made a hard job easy by causing us to enjoy it."

Russell remembers doing the sort of things that other farm boys did. He worked with oxen and other stock, in the hay field and in the woods. His formal education through the first eight years came at the little schoolhouse on Mahans Run, the same school his daughters later attended. Religious training was taken care of at the local Evangelical United Brethren chapel, later affiliated with the United Methodists. The church was the spiritual bedrock of the Fluharty world. Russell's father and grandfather helped build the church, using the wood of two great poplar trees according to family lore, and grandfather Conrad Fluharty was the first superintendent.

Marion County was changing as Russell grew through boyhood. Industry edged out family farming as the economy matured. Oil had been discovered more than 15 years before Russell's birth, sparking growth in lumbering through the demand for oil well timbers. The two extractive industries, plus a local sanitary pottery, offered exciting possibilities to a boy coming of age. Russell's memory



of timbering goes back to his early days.

"When I was a boy, there was big timber in here," he says. "There was virgin timber, a lot of it at that time. I've seen them chop the sides off of logs so that the road wagon wheels wouldn't rub. They'd take the front wheels off a road wagon, and just stand the tongue up like so and drive them dogs in there. When they pulled the tongue down, it loaded right there between the wheels and the truck." Russell pauses to ponder human inventiveness, especially the principle of leverage that allows a slender wagon tongue to raise a massive log off the ground. "The man that invented the pry did something great, because you know yourself a very small man can move a big something if he can get a pry on the thing, the right kind. The front end of the log rode the front wheels and the back end just drug on the ground and went pretty easy.

"At that time, they used oxen, lots of oxen. When we first moved on Mahans Run, the schoolhouse was on up above my father's house. Moving it down here, they got stuck fast between some apple trees right close to the yard fence at home, right up agin the fence and couldn't go any further. They took off four or five pairs of horses and put one yoke of oxen on there and pulled her right through that place."

Russell also has vivid memories of the oil and gas boom, which lured able-bodied farmers into industrial work. "After the oil boom come, many a time we'd be putting up hay or something, and they'd come and want a string of tools moved from one well to another, real important," he says. "Dad would just unhook from the hay rig and say, 'I'll be back in a couple of hours.' Man, when he began to work them horses out there and get two or three dollars a day out of them, then we was in the money!"

The drilling tools were pulled up for moving to the next well site, Russell explains. "My father had a road wagon," he says. "He would come by and they would load what they had. Maybe they just had a bit and a stem, a bailer and a rope. They used a big rope cable which was about two or three inches through." Sometimes the cable could be dragged from one

well to the next. "I've seen them hook onto the end of a cable with horses and they'd run it off the bull wheels and take it to the other well and hook it onto the wheels over there and start their engine up. As they run it off of this one they put it on that one, see. Didn't even load it on the wagon."

It turns out that Russell knows a lot about early drilling, a subject of which he likes to talk. "When I first knew about drilling they just used rope cables to drill with. There's a stem on there, sometimes 25, 30 feet long. You could use a certain size stem on maybe two or three bits. If the drilling got tough, they put a set of jars on. After the bit hit on the bottom, that was just like hitting it with a hammer again, you know. There was so much give, so much stretch in the rope cable, and when they was down pretty deep they'd run that down there and stop it real sudden with the brakes on the bull wheels. When they did that, the rope would stretch out and you'd see the bit hit the bottom. You could feel it if you'd hold to the cable, the stretch of the rope. You had to know just exactly how to do that to make it drill. Those old drillers'd go over there and they'd stand in the hole with that rope.

"They started out with a 13-inch hole, 13-inch bit," Russell continues. "Then about the next step from that was a 10-inch bit. And the further down they went, the smaller it got, till they used a six-inch bit. It depended on how deep they went and where they located the oil and all like that. Lots of times they'd hit real solid, hard rock and drill two or three days, it wouldn't hardly go down a bit.

"A driller had to know his soils, whatever was in there, rocks and the slate and the coal and everything, and know what to do with it when he got to it, see. There was places there was sand and that'd cave in and just muck up the tools till they wouldn't work. I've seen them spend maybe a day or two just a-jerking on a set of tools to get them out of the hole. Sometimes, they couldn't do it. They'd have to run a rope cutter down there, cut the rope in two, drill back down to it and then hook onto it with something and pull it out. And I've seen the time they never got whatever was in there out. They moved the rig."

The drilling rigs were driven by stationary steam engines, requiring a complicated power linkage. "They had the engine in the engine house

David Frost put two of West Virginia's leading folk figures on his national TV show. Here Frost talks with New Martinsville toymaker Dick Schnacke while Russell stands by with football player Alex Karras. Photographer unknown.







Grandson Jerry Taylor worked public appearances with Russell two decades ago. Here they are ready for a job in October 1964. Photographer unknown.

and then they had a belt house with a big wheel in that," Russell explains, his hands moving through the air. "That gave it extra power, the small wheel on the engine and the big belt wheel here, see. It had an arm on the side of it, called the pitman, and this was what they hooked their beam onto. I remember one man kind of stuttered a little bit. He'd say, 'Charlie, pppp-put the pitman on.'"

Russell chuckles at the thought, and goes on to explain that the pitman was a connecting arm that worked similar to those on railroad locomotives. "Same way, see, only this one on the beam hung down on the front end of it and the back end went back in the derrick and was over the hole. The bull wheel sits on behind that, further back. And the cable goes up and over the crown pulley on top of the derrick and comes back down in the middle."

It is an impressive explanation from a man who spent most of his own career in other lines of work. Russell worked some for the oil companies, digging tank grades and such, but mostly his is the intuitive knowledge gained by growing up in the oil fields. Marion County youngsters got to know the oil and gas busi-

ness early, he says, taking the opportunity to tell about another aspect of the industry. After the wells were drilled they were set to pumping, he explains, with steam passing from a central boiler house through steam boxes to the wellhead pump engines. Children found the industrial maze a made-to-order playground. "Us kids would run barefooted in the winter-time on them boxes, because the steam went through there and they was warm, you know. You couldn't hang onto it very good with snow-covered, slick shoes, but you could take your shoes off and barefoot you could run on them warm boxes. Sometimes it would go 25, 30 feet across the holler, big scaffolds underneath."

It was a natural progression from such robust play to the hard labor of a man's work. Russell Fluharty made the transition at a young age. He took his first serious job, carrying water to workers building the road to Rachel, while still a schoolboy of about 10 years old. "Bought my first bicycle working on that road, carrying water," he says. "Every bit of work that was done out there was hand work. They just dug her out with a mattock, put her in the wheelbarrow

and hauled it away someplace."

Soon he was doing heavier work, carrying slabs away from the saw at the sawmill where his father worked at the time. "I drew the same wages as my dad did when I was 13 years old," he recalls. "Buddy, I worked, though — 13 years old and off-bearing on a sawmill. Some of them big slabs were two feet wide on the butt and eight inches deep, anywhere from 12 to 32 feet long." The biggest timbers cut at the mill were beams for oil rigs, Russell says. "Made me feel pretty good, making as much money as my dad," he adds.

Such industriousness brought its rewards, as Russell explains. "When I was 16 years old, I bought my first automobile," he notes. "I paid \$409.17 for a brand-new car in 1922, and I paid cash for it. Model-T Ford Roadster, and it was a beauty. I mean, I *knew* it was a beauty!"

Russell's voice crackles as he recalls that car and what it took to get it. "I had to work some to get it, you know, selling potatoes and whatever I'd raise. Sometimes my dad would tell me, 'Now, pick you out a sheep and it'll be yours. If you happen to get a ewe, you can raise you some sheep next year.' A lot of boys didn't want to work, but I enjoyed working, really I did. Why, I'd still rather work than be sitting here talking." That pops out before he thinks about it. "Not that I'm against talking to you."

By the time he acquired the new Ford, Russell had taken his first steady adult job, at the Bowers Pottery, with the company shaving the child labor law a little to get him in before he was quite 16. He would spend coming years mostly alternating between the pottery and local coal mines. "I worked between Rachel mines and the pottery, whichever one was working better than the other," he explains. "Mine superintendent Rosie Fletcher finally got till he'd say, 'Now, you won't leave me this time, will you?' They knew they could depend on me working. Even though I'd move on sometimes, I could still get a job whenever I went back and asked."

In his heart, however, Russell would have preferred to work outdoors. It suited him better and there were health considerations as well. "I liked the best to be out farming or in



the oil fields, where you was out into the good fresh air," he says. "The coal mines had the dust and black lung, and silicosis for the pottery. In 1944, the superintendent at the mines said that he could get us deferred from the draft on account of we was doing special work. None of us wanted that, but when I was taking the examination they X-rayed my lungs and said, 'Your lungs is 50% gone.' Said, 'You wouldn't be able to retreat as fast as you ought to.'"

Russell enjoys talking of work, but it is clear that there are only two great loves in his life. The first, music, has been with him as long as he can remember. "Every once in a while somebody'll ask me, 'How did you learn to play all these instruments?' I tell them I just grewed up knowing how. That's really the way it was. I played the fiddle and the banjo and guitar early-like in life."

Russell's other love is Marjory Ice Fluharty. "We've been married a hundred years," the proud husband tells visitors, "50 for her and 50 for me." Those years have set lightly on Margie. She is a chipper, vivacious woman whose eyes glitter when Russell is around. Her family is of German extraction with an impeccable West Virginia lineage. Patriarch Adam Ice was the first white child born in the Monongahela Valley, in 1767, and Andrew Ice started Western Virginia's first authorized ferry in 1785. Russell reports that there is Shawnee blood in the family, as well.

It won't do to call Margie his second love, but the fact is that Russell discovered her as a direct result of his music making. Their meeting was almost an accident, as he tells the story. "It used to be, we had Indian medicine shows that went up and down this little valley from Fairmont to Littleton, and also the old summer stock shows that were too old to play around New York," he says. "I kind of sneaked around and got acquainted with one of the fellows. He knew I played some music, so he asked me to come and play for them. A friend of mine was the draftsman for the South Penn Oil Company and he played with me, then I did a few things by myself, just solo. We kind of got off our main route and went out to Joetown one time. And out there's where I met Margie.

"The amazing thing is," he adds with a chuckle, "the first night I met her, I took her cousin home. Then the next time I saw her, she had come into Mannington to go to high school. I run across her there the first day of school. I was looking for her." Russell himself was out of school at the time, working for the pottery.

By the time he met Margie, Russell had already begun a lifelong association with another old friend, the antique hammered dulcimer that shares the couple's home. There is a story to that meeting, too, one he tells with glee. "I had an uncle, Ezry Fluharty, that was a game hunter," he says. The introduction seems a long way from dulcimer playing, but Russell Fluharty always comes around to the point. "During the early part of my life, I game hunted with him quite a bit. After I got interested in music he kept telling me, 'I have an old dulcimer at home in the grainhouse loft that I would like for you to learn to play.' Said, 'It makes beautiful music.' But I'd never heard tell of a dulcimer, never had seen one, and it didn't interest me a bit, you know. But he continued to talk about it.

"One night we'd went to High-

land, over where I had originally moved from, on the head of Dudley. We'd walked out there and it was nine miles. We took turnabout taking the game, and this night we caught a big raccoon out around the Highland Church. When we got back to my uncle's home, I'm wore out, five o'clock in the morning in January. I'm so cold, so hungry, so tired, so sleepy, that when he said, 'Now, about that old dulcimer,' I just says, 'Uh-huh, I'll take it.' So he went up into the grainhouse loft and he ruffled around there for about half an hour, and finally he come down with this old fellow that I'm playing now.

"As I come down the valley, I thought to myself, 'Golly, I'm glad it's dark. If anybody would see me with this raccoon and a dulcimer on my back, they'd think I'm crazy.' But you know, that old fellow became a part of me, really just a part of me. I didn't go anywhere without him."

Russell doesn't know the full history of his instrument, but figures he has it pretty well documented for a century and a half. "I've got it tracked down to where it's 144 years old now," he reports. "My uncle told me that a man named Ira Phillips had owned it. When I went and talked to

Russell and Jim Meade play a double mountain dulcimer — a so-called "courting dulcimer" — at the 1973 West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville. Photographer unknown.







Russell has time now for reflecting on a life of hard work and mountain music. He believes in both, and in the values of patriotism and love of family.

Ira Phillips, he said, 'I got it off of Johnny Koon down toward Farmington, the miller.' So I went to Johnny Koon and I asked him about it. 'Yeah,' he said, 'I owned that thing. Got it off my brother, Charlie.' I took it to Charlie Koon, asked him where he got it and he said, 'Don't know. Just seemed like it was always here.' He said, 'The thing I do know is that they played it at Sissie's wedding.' Sissie's wedding was in January 1842, and come this January this instrument will be 145 years old, for sure. But it could be older than that."

Coming from his uncle's outhouse, Russell's dulcimer was full of mud wasp nests and in bad need of repair. Upon taking it apart, he made another discovery which helped to trace the history of the instrument. "I took the wasps' nests out of it and found a piece of what Mother said was foolscap paper, kind of a brown ruled paper. And on this paper it says, 'Repaired by William Varner in 1878.' I threw that away, just wanted to get the junk out of it. Wish now that I'd

saved it." Varner was an instrument maker of the time, and Russell theorizes that he may have built the dulcimer in the first place.

Whatever its exact life story, the old dulcimer was Russell's to keep only if he could get music out of it. "My uncle gave it to me under a condition," he recalls. "If I'd learn to play one tune on it, he'd give it to me.

"I let it go for a year or two after I got it and one night we was game hunting again. 'About that old dulcimer,' he said, 'have you learned to play it yet?' I said, 'No, I haven't.' He said, 'Now, if you don't learn to play that thing, I'm going to come and get it.' So I thought, 'Well, I'll do something with it.'" There was no one around who knew anything about the instrument, so the young musician had to figure it out as he went along. "I just tuned him like a piano would be, Do Re Me Fa So La Ti Do, see, until I run out of strings," he says with a grin.

Fluharty's inability to find anyone

After the hammered dulcimer, the game of Fox and Geese is Russell Fluharty's special passion. The board game has been played in the mountains of Appalachia for over 200 years. It originated in England in the 15th Century, and was probably brought to America by Hessian and French troops during the Revolutionary War. "During the American Revolution, troops from Europe played the game," says Dick Schnacke, West Virginia toy maker, owner of the Mountain Craft Shop in New Martinsville, and author of *American Folk Toys*. "The generals would use any old slab of wood, and chalk the markings with charcoal. They would use grains of corn — white for the geese and red for the fox."

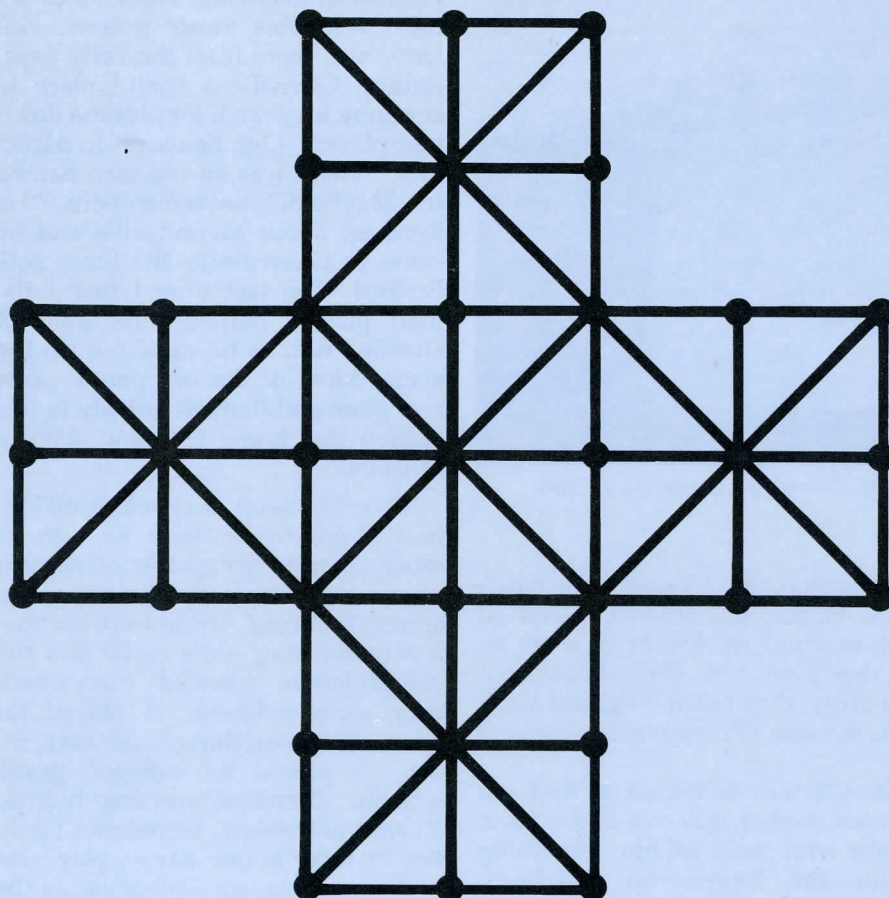
Russell Fluharty has been playing Fox and Geese since childhood, and now is trying to keep the game alive in the minds of young West Virginians. "The Fluhartys have always knowed about Fox and Geese," he says. "But most every place I go, nobody knows anything about it now. I've been trying to revive this Fox and Geese game, like I did the dulcimer. I've left them at schools this past two or three years. Whenever I play my dulcimer, I leave the Fox and Goose board, a handful of corn and some buttons to play with, and the rules. You got to have rules to play most any game."

As with any folk game that has been around for a while, there are several different versions of Fox and Geese. However, as in checkers, the element of elimination is present in them all. Also, there are always at least 15 geese and only one or two foxes. One wonders if the game originated with the idea of safety in numbers of a weaker species facing a stronger one.

Fluharty's game is simple. There are 26 pieces — two foxes and 24 geese. White corn or buttons are used to represent the geese, darker ones for the foxes. A gameboard drawn on just about any surface is made in the form of a cross, composed of five blocks, each divided



# Fox and Geese



by straight lines into eight triangular spaces. The game pieces occupy the intersections of the lines, and play follows the lines. The board is set up with seven vacant places at the top, with the foxes placed so as to flank the entrance to this empty box. The 24 geese hold down all the other intersections on the board. According to the rules, the geese move first. Only the foxes can jump, and they must jump in a straight line. If one of the foxes jumps over a goose, he kills or "eats" it. The game is over when the geese either trap the foxes, so that they don't have a place to move, or all the geese have been eaten.

Dick Schnacke plays the game a little differently. One fox, represented by a red marble in the Fox and Geese game he offers for sale, begins play in the center of the board. White marbles represent 15 geese, who begin the game at the opposite end of the board. The fox may make multiple jumps, move in any direction following the path lines, and must take a jump when one is available. When he jumps over one of the geese, it is killed or eaten, and removed from the board. The fox wins if he jumps over at least eight geese. The geese can move forward or sideways, but not backward, and must also follow the designated path lines.

The geese cannot jump the fox or each other. They win the game if eight of them get to the opposite end of the board, or if any are able to corner the fox.

In his *Encyclopedia of Games*, John Scarne includes a Fox and Geese game similar to Schnacke's. The differences are that there are 17 geese, or white marbles, to the one fox, or red marble, and that the fox must remove all geese to win. The geese begin play huddled at one end of the board, with the fox in any vacant space. The fox makes the first move.

Peg Solitaire is a single-person game played on a Fox and Geese board. To play, 32 marbles are placed on the board, leaving the center spot blank. The player jumps the marbles vertically or horizontally until all but one are removed. The player "wins" if the surviving marble is left in the center position.

School children play different versions of an outdoor game called Fox and Geese. In one, two bases are established on opposite ends of a field about 20 yards long. The players who are the geese take a place near one base. The fox stands in the middle. The geese then try to get to the opposite base without being caught by the fox. The game ends when all of the geese are caught. The outdoor game shares only the name and the central idea of strength versus numbers with the board game.

These are some of the different ways to play an old West Virginia game, which people like Russell Fluharty and Dick Schnacke are trying to preserve. As Fluharty says, "To me, it's interesting, more so than dominoes or checkers or anything of that type of game. I don't know why the game wouldn't keep a lot of youngsters out of mischief."

There may be other versions of Fox and Geese that we haven't mentioned here. If you know of another way to play the game, we'd like to hear from you.

—Lori Henshey





The Mannington Round Barn is a pet project of Russell's. The building belongs to the West Augusta Historical Society.

to help proved typical for several years to come. He agrees that the hammered dulcimer was nearly a "lost" instrument, one which had been out of favor for nearly a generation when he picked it up and which would be preserved for coming generations by only a handful of people such as himself. The present popularity of the instrument was unforeseeable at the time.

"For 40 years I played that thing and I would say, 'As far as I know, I'm the only person playing this kind of an instrument,'" he reports of this period. "I played the Newport Folk Festival, the Philadelphia Folk Festival, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in D.C., and the National Folk Festival and oodles of places for the Commerce Department of West Virginia, as far away as Charlotte, Indianapolis and up to Cedar Point, Ohio, and Harrisburg, New York, Baltimore. No way did anybody ever confront me with another dulcimer player.

"The Smithsonian has a picture of Henry Ford carrying a dulcimer down the streets of Detroit, back in the early 1900's. I was thinking that he might have been trying to revive the dulcimer and come up with the Model T Ford! But from that time on, from the early 1900's, seemed like it

just disappeared. I found some when I first began. But when I would go back maybe four, five or 10 years after, they'd say, 'Oh, the kids threw that away, they burnt it up, did away with it, I don't know what become of it.'

Russell was delighted to find out that his mother was one of the older people who could tell him something about the hammered dulcimer. "Come to find out, my mother had played a dulcimer when she was a girl," he says. "She told me about how they used to play it for square dances and house warmings, and wood gatherings and cuttings, and bean stringings and so on like that." The dulcimer was generally played by itself, unaccompanied by other instruments or singing, Russell learned. "It at one time was real popular," he says.

That popularity was a thing of the past by the time Russell started researching the instrument. "I found probably dozens of instruments and four or five players, but at that time they were all old people," he reports. One of the few knowledgeable people close to his own age was the late Patrick Ward Gainer, West Virginia University's legendary folklorist. "Dr. Gainer played the mountain

dulcimer, the Appalachian dulcimer," Russell says, speaking of the unrelated three- or four-stringed lap dulcimer. "Sometimes we would both be at the same place. He is the first person I ever heard call mine a hammered dulcimer."

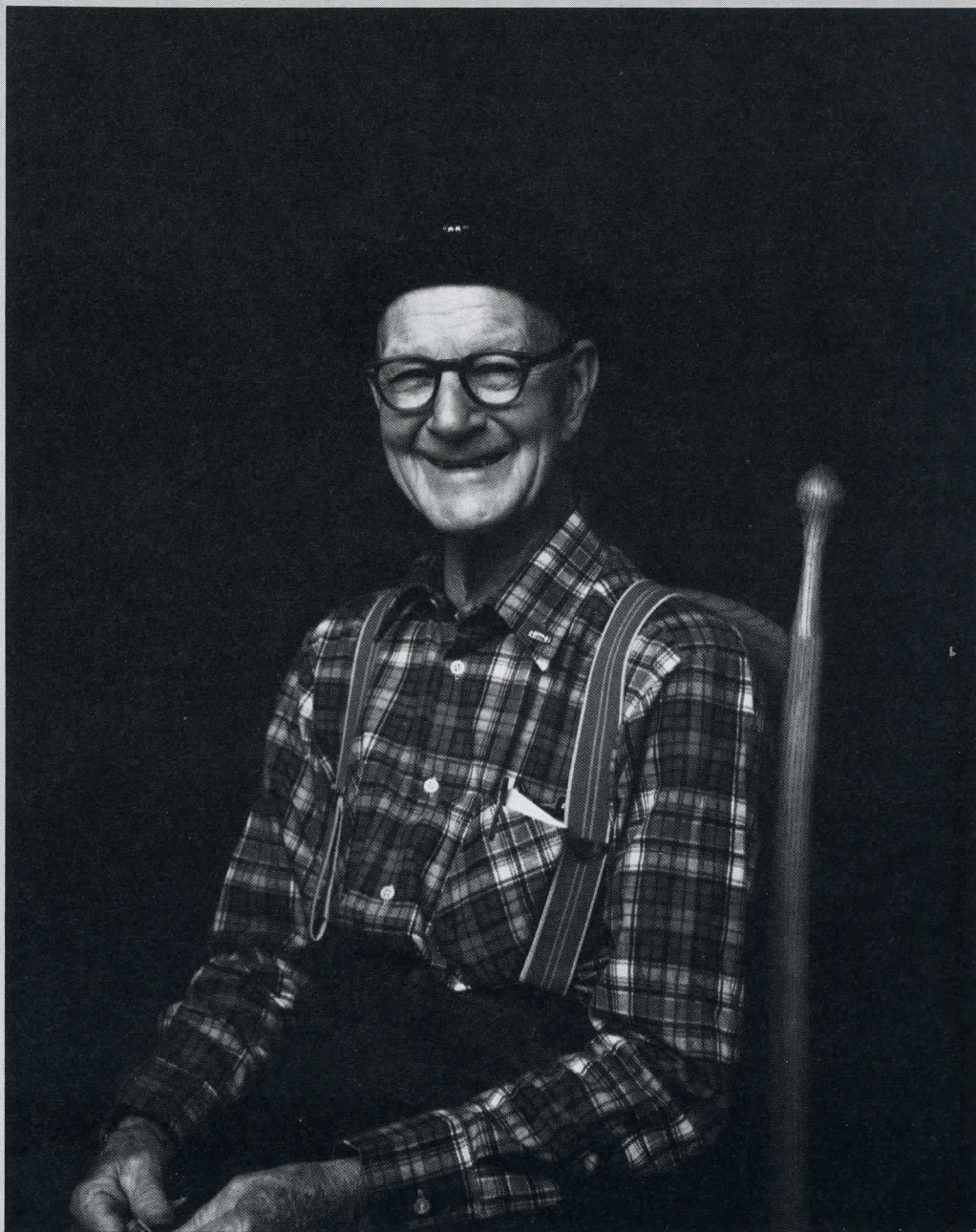
Pat Gainer founded the State Folk Festival at Glenville, West Virginia's most venerable music festival. Fluharty was there from the early days, finding Glenville a useful place to continue his search for oldtime dulcimer players. One he recalls in particular. "There was an old man named Ira Mayfield," he remembers. "He lived up about Moundsville and he came to Glenville to the State Folk Festival. The last time I heard the man play, I helped him, kind of steadied him as he came out on the stage. Most of the old people soon was gone and that left nobody in this section that knew anything about a dulcimer."

Nobody, that is, except Russell Fluharty himself. By then he was as much an authority on the instrument as anyone around and he set out to spread the word. These were his busiest performing years as he and the old dulcimer traveled everywhere they were welcome. "I played for practically everything," he says today. "I played for colleges, grade schools, churches, nursing homes, all kind of festivals. Sometimes I'd do two or three in one day — play here in the morning, someplace else in the afternoon, someplace else at night. And I never went anywhere, only where I was invited."

Grandson Jerry Taylor joined him for a while in the 1960's; before moving on to military service and several years as a house musician at WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree." After Jerry left, Russell organized the Mountaineer Dulcimer Club in 1971, to put the promotion of the old music on a more formal footing. The club has been successful from the first, attracting interest far beyond the Mountain State. "A lot of times we'll have eight, 10 states represented at one of our meetings," the founder reports. "One time we had a member in Tokyo, Japan, two in England and one in Mexico."

Sometimes invitations came to play for the high and mighty. Russell tells





The 1986 Vandalia Award recipient had a winning smile for photographer Michael Keller. Russell Fluharty, the sixth winner of the award, had this portrait made at the Cultural Center last Memorial Day Weekend.

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



of one such occasion. "When Governor Moore was governor before, I was doing travel shows for the Commerce Department and seems as though he asked about me to come to the Greenbrier Hotel and play for the Republican Governors Conference. There was about three or four of us.

They called us 'resource people' — me and Frank George and Dr. Maggie Ballard and Aunt Jennie Wilson. Our audience was the governors and their wives, including Governor Nelson Rockefeller and his wife and the governor of California, Ronald Reagan, and his wife. So, I've played for

a vice president of these United States and the president and his wife." Russell's eyes sparkle at the recollection.

The governors got the same Russell Fluharty that thousands of ordinary West Virginians have been treated to over the years. The act is low-key, consisting of an energetic playing of hymns, patriotic tunes and other familiar numbers. Russell departs from tradition in considering the hammered dulcimer an instrument to sing to, and his high-pitched voice joins in on favorite songs. Audiences can count on some bashful commentary on the ancient instrument, the music and the musician's philosophy of life. As much as anything, Russell's show is a visual treat, the sight of a sprightly man in a plaid shirt and vintage picking hat fussing over a table-height instrument from another age. West Virginia and American flags stand guard at the front corners of his dulcimer.

It was for all these things — for the music and the singing and the enthusiasm, and for the sheer persistence in clinging to an almost-forgotten folk instrument until it could be handed safely into the hands of a new generation — that Russell Fluharty was given the 1986 Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest folklife honor. At the Cultural Center south garden his name joins that of his old friend Aunt Jennie, enshrined among their peers in our state's pantheon of human treasures.

Maybe Russell sneaks a look at the big bronze plaque when he is in Charleston, but at home on Mahans Run things are kept in perspective. The Vandalia certificate holds a place of honor among other awards in the Fluharty music room, but a place secondary to that occupied by the battered dulcimer he carried home from a coon hunt long ago. Russell holds matters in similar perspective in his heart. Looking back, he is not able to sum up a long life in a few words. Work, family and the 50-year love story with Margie crowd each other in his recollections. But it is clear that his contribution to saving the hammered dulcimer ranks among his proudest accomplishments. "I think I had something to do with preserving the dulcimer as it is now," he modestly concludes. 🌿

The Fluhartys have been married a hundred years, Russell says — 50 for her and 50 for him. Here Margie joins him in a favorite song.







No water wheel was ever visible at the Leetown mill, for the big overshot wheel was inside the building. Proprietor John H. Gardner stands out front in this picture, with J. Frank Gardner and R. Coyle by the side door and Glen Gardner in the upper entrance. Photographer unknown, about 1900.

# The Leetown Mill

By George S. Gutsell

The big water wheel made its last revolution on the afternoon of June 16, 1931, ending a 150-year gristmill era at Leetown in western Jefferson County. But the old mill building itself was just too stout to destroy and after more than 50 intervening years of use as a garage, tool shop and feed room, it has been launched into a new endeavor for its third century. Last known as Gardner's Mill, the remaining portions of the Revolutionary-era building are now home to the Fish and Wildlife Education Center of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 400-acre National Fisheries Center.

In 1931, the federal government purchased the mill and other properties for its U. S. Fisheries Experimental Station. Heavily orientated towards fisheries research, the facility, several times renamed and enlarged, has gained national and international recognition for its achievements. In

the past few years, greater emphasis has been placed on involving the public and a new visitor center, nature trails, a special fishing area for the handicapped and other attractions have been developed. This is where the old mill fits in, its product now an informed public rather than ground grain.

For the mill, these modern fisheries activities are but a small part of a long history. The mill was around when George Washington came to town to make peace during his ongoing dispute with the controversial General Charles Lee, for whom the community was named. It was turning out flour and feed when Generals Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, Philip H. Sheridan, George A. Custer and George Crook, and Colonel John S. Mosby, came through the area.

Although spared during the Civil War, the mill went through its ups and downs during the postwar years.

It had fallen into a state of disrepair when John H. Gardner, a millwright from Bunker Hill in neighboring Berkeley County, took over in 1899. It is said that Gardner had previously performed numerous repairs on the mill and in consideration for his labor plus his home in Bunker Hill, he negotiated a trade for the Leetown mill, the miller's house and a parcel of land.

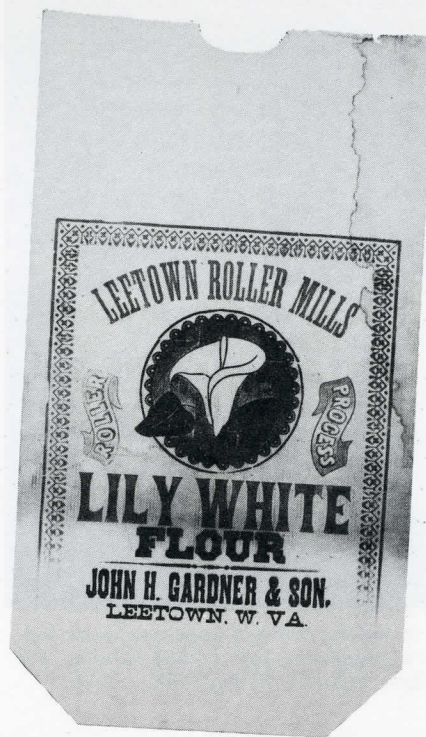
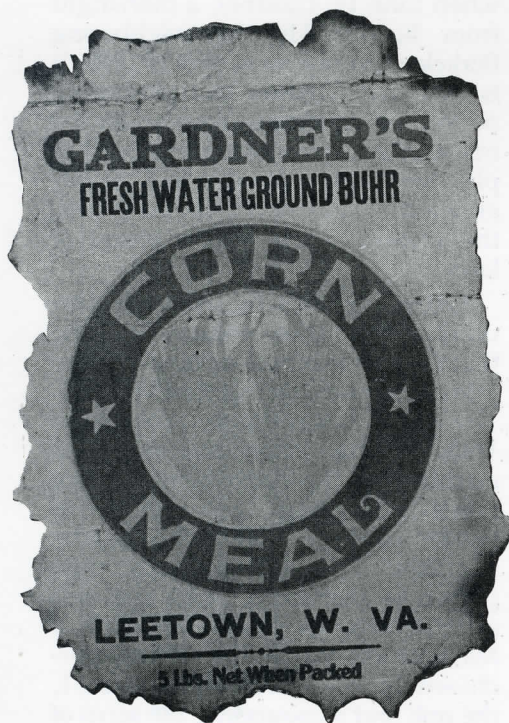
Records are sketchy, but court documents and other sources indicate that the mill was built around 1775 by John A. Wever (later spelled Weaver). The will of Adam Wever, probated in 1845, left his "farm and mills" to members of the Balch family. Judge Lewis P. W. Balch, patriarch of the family, died in 1868 at his nearby mansion. The mill property then passed to Stephen F. Balch and was sold in 1890 to Annie Kendrick of Martinsburg for \$3,164. When purchased by the government in 1931, the mill and surrounding 148 acres of land brought \$39,852.

Many small gristmills failed at the turn of the century, but during John Gardner's 30-year tenure the Leetown mill not only thrived but was considerably modernized.

The four-story, 50-by-46 foot stone and wood structure originally housed a maze of wooden cog wheels, drive shafts, pulleys, belts, conveyors, storage bins and drop chutes, and of course the grinding or burr stones. A unique feature of the mill was an interior overshot water wheel, a wide 22-footer, possibly built by Samuel Fitz of Martinsburg. The 52-inch diameter burrs, made of French stone and scored with lines to resemble a sliced pie, were periodically reconditioned by hand with chisel and hammer, a tedious task that might take two weeks.

In addition to corn shellers, crackers and crushers, and a wheat separator, there was a "Midget Marvel" flour machine with its large steel rollers and sifting cloths. In latter years, the mill owned the area's first cockle machine, for separating out the cockleburrs that are poisonous to livestock. To supplement water power, the Gardners installed a massive Geyer Company 22-horsepower gasoline engine. The original water wheel was replaced with an 18-foot, five-foot-wide steel wheel. The mill





pond, in the past often used for baptismal services, gave way to a utilitarian steel tank.

Upon being dismantled after its 1931 sale, much of the mill equipment was purchased by the Driver family of Amherst, Virginia, and by Luther S. Hale of Winchester. Hale for a time operated an engine-powered mill just south of Leetown. It was in this area that one millstone was unearthed and returned to the Fisheries Center. The matching stone has yet to be found.

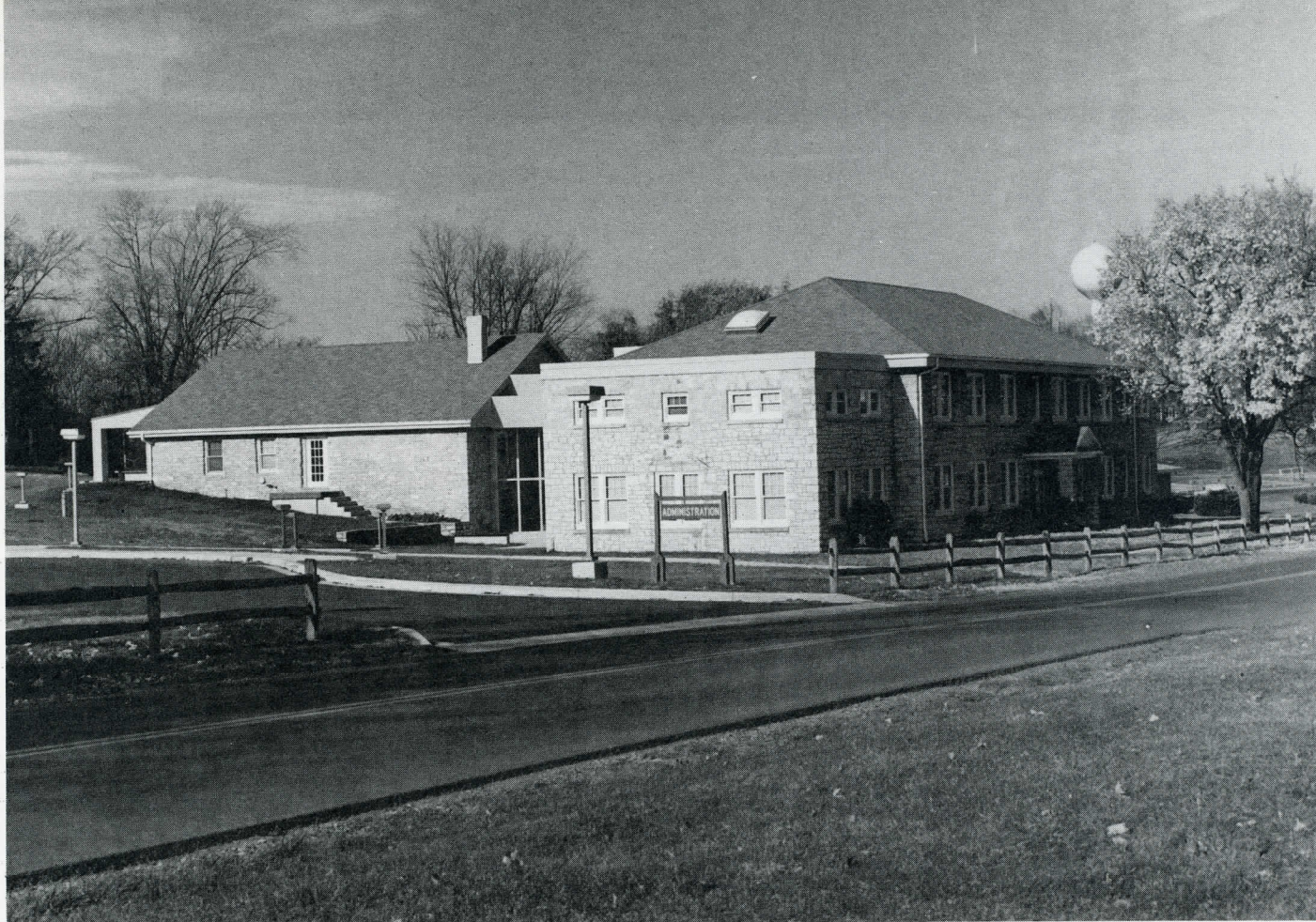
The principal source of water for the mill, and now for the Fisheries Center, is Hopewell Run, formed by Blue and Gray Springs. The water then flows to Opequon Creek, the Potomac River and on to the Chesapeake Bay and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean. It was on Hopewell Run on the Owens property that Jimmy Carter fished for trout after touring the Fisheries Center in June 1979 and September 1980. Soon-to-be President John F. Kennedy passed through Leetown while visiting Epis-

*Above:* "Gardner's Fresh Water Ground Buhr Corn Meal" and "Lily White Flour" were among the mill's products during John Gardner's ownership.

*Below:* The old building was much changed after passing into government hands in 1931. Gone are the mansard roof and the two floors it contained, although the stonework remains intact. This photo was made before the 1984 remodeling.







Nowadays, the old mill (left in the above photo) is one part of a larger complex. Visitors (below) enter through what once was the exterior door where young Glen Gardner took his perch in the c. 1900 photograph.

copal Bishop Robert E. Lee Strider at nearby Rose Hill Farm in 1960.

Hopewell Run also had a second mill, known at different times as Hite's Mill, Hopewell Mill, Strider's Mill and Baker's Mill. It was apparently built prior to 1773 by Jacob Hite, founder of Hite's Town, which is now Leetown. Hite and General Adam Stephen, who owned property in the area, collaborated in this other milling venture. The mill was destroyed by the double disaster of fire and flood in 1889, the same year as the infamous Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania. Thereafter, the Leetown mill was the only one surviving on the waters of Hopewell Run.

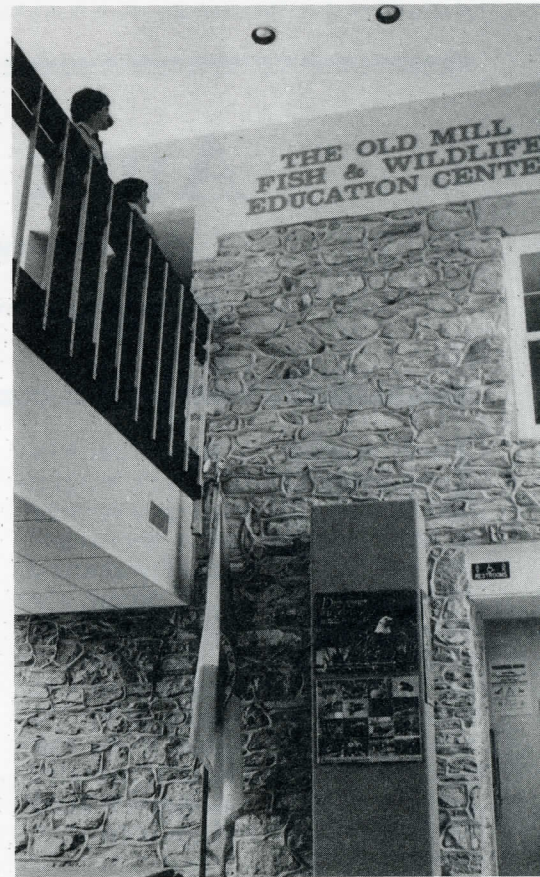
Leetown milling operations and other enterprises had a major influence on road building in the area. A layered, rolled-stone road from Shepherdstown to Middleway and passing through Leetown was constructed as early as 1830. The road eased commercial shipping in the area, including the products of the old mill.

Those products included the usual work of a local gristmill, including

a lot of custom work in an earlier day, grain ground for farmers who brought it in and paid their "toll" off the top. Packaged goods became profitable later on. In Gardner's time two of the most famous products were "Lily White" flour and "Fresh Water Ground Buhr Corn Meal." Corn and rye mash from the mill were said to be highly regarded by those engaged in the production of Leetown 'shine. ♣

*You are welcome to visit the old Leetown mill and to tour the National Fisheries Center. Visiting hours are 8:00 to 4:00 weekdays and 10:00 to 5:00 weekends, May 1 through October 31. For winter hours, holidays and special events, call (304) 725-7061.*

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service describes Leetown as the place "where history and modern science meet." History attractions include the house of General Charles Lee and the nearby homesites of Horatio Gates and Adam Stephen, Lee's fellow Revolutionary War generals. Harpers Ferry, Shepherdstown, Charles Town and other historic areas are within easy driving distance.*







A recent portrait of Ruth Kincaid. "Aunt Ruth's hair is as white as hair can be," our writer says.

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# Aunt Ruth

By Greg Todd

Photographs by Fred Miller

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I can't imagine my Aunt Ruth Kincaid being fooled. I can't imagine her spending a quarter at a carnival to have someone guess her weight and age, to the object of winning a 10-cent prize. Unless, of course, she thought it might be fun — then she'd do it. Or if she saw some spark of worth in the weight-guessing man himself, then she might give him the quarter and get weighed in the bargain. But my Aunt Ruth is nobody's patsy. Aunt Ruth is as wise and quick as she is joyful and good-hearted. She has the kind of unqualified smile

you see on a little boy reaching for a piece of birthday cake, his eyes caught up in fudge frosting, and her healthy laugh speaks of a woman in her 20's, not her 80's.

Aunt Ruth's hair is as white as hair can be, as I remember her mother's hair being, though I was just a boy when my grandmother died. My grandmother also had some of the strength that Aunt Ruth has, as I recall, but I can summon no other similarities between them. I remember my grandmother as a woman wed to her farm, standing at the spring

house or in the kitchen, wiping her hands on her apron and fussing over the wash or whatever was cooking on her iron stove. I'm sure she must have been sturdy, as Aunt Ruth is, though I picture my grandmother as a frail-looking woman with a voice like an old china cup on the verge of breaking. She kept bees and worked an immense garden just off the porch, and she seemed to me to be tied most of all to her chickens, birds of a most disagreeable disposition toward a little boy. In the morning she'd be scattering their feed when I was climbing down off the bed, and her own day followed their schedule pretty faithfully as to rising and going to roost. My Aunt Ruth isn't much like that at all. She's a sturdy woman in body and voice, with a wonderful sense of humor, and she's no more tied to a hen house than I was born on the moon.

Aunt Ruth doubtless drew some of her adventurous spirit from her father's side of the family. Her great-grandfather was a tailor, an immigrant Irishman from Galway, who came to America in the spring of 1830 with his wife and nine-week-old son. He settled his family near Loudenville, in what is now Marshall County in the base of the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia. His reputation, even filtered through the interceding generations, centers on an ill temper and an affinity for Irish whiskey. He apparently became disenchanted with his new country over the 10 years after he arrived. The story goes that he came home one night roaring drunk, gathered his coat, lantern, gun and dog, and set off in a rowboat down the Ohio River, determined to return to Ireland. The optimists in our family, including of course Aunt Ruth, like to think that he made it. His wife, Hannora, strong-willed herself, had refused his calls to return to Ireland and now she set about raising her son and three daughters alone.

The son, Martin, would prosper as a tailor and cobbler and eventually acquire some 1,100 acres of Panhandle land, part of which would become the farm tended by his son George, my Aunt Ruth's father. Martin was apparently a civic-minded man, who raised, equipped and trained a company of militia for the



Union cause in 1861. That civic-mindedness was a feature of his son, as well, and he took pains to instill it in his offspring. Aunt Ruth tells a Christmas story that illustrates the point:

"Our Christmases were unfailingly nice. I don't know how Dad and Mom managed to get us such nice things, but they did. In fact, we had nicer things and better opportunities than any of the other neighboring country children. I had such nice dolls, some with china heads, but for some reason I loved a rag doll.

"One Christmas during this time I received a rag doll. I think Mom had sent away Mother's Oats coupons and got the pattern and made it. I was just in seventh heaven that morning. Later in the day Dad called us all to him and told us we had received so much and that there was a family up on the hill who had received nothing, and didn't we think Jesus would be happy with us if we each gave up one of our toys and took it to them? We all agreed, but I quickly bucked when I discovered that he thought I should give up my rag doll. I remember Dad took me on his lap and told me he was pretty sure that if I was a good girl and gave up my doll that there would be another on the tree at church that night. So I charitably, and greedily, let the doll go.

"At church that night my eyes searched the tree for a rag doll. I didn't see one, but that didn't worry me. There was only the light of the candles, and I was so sure that it was there. So I sat through the songs and recitations fully expecting, hocus-pocus, I would have a rag doll. Came the time for the gifts to be distributed and here came such a lovely doll — I can see her now, blue eyes that opened and closed, flaxen curls of real hair, a beautiful pink dress and bonnet: enough to delight the heart of any little girl but me. I burst into tears and sobbed hysterically while poor Dad just stood there looking at me as if I had just slapped him."

To the lasting benefit of me, my son, and a treeful of our respective cousins, Aunt Ruth has written pages and pages of such recollections of her childhood, the family farm, relatives long passed away, and her career as a teacher. They are family



Above: Martin C. Todd, Ruth's grandfather, ran a large Panhandle farm. He organized a company of Union militia during the Civil War. Photographer and date unknown.

Right: Ruth's parents, George and Ameila Todd. This may be their wedding portrait. Photographer unknown, about 1898.



treasures, and they offer vivid glimpses of a remarkable woman.

In addition to a measure of her compassion, Aunt Ruth also must have drawn some of her love of learning from her father, who worked and spent to provide a formal education for his daughters as well as his sons in an era when that was uncommon. Aunt Ruth graduated from Cameron High School in 1922. Shortly after graduation she took a train south to Marshall College in Huntington. In the next nine weeks of that summer she earned nine hours of college credit, more education than many teachers of the day. It was perhaps nothing compared to the education she would get when she started her first teaching job a few weeks later. She tells of taking the train from Cameron to Moundsville to Huntington to Charleston, and then to what she recalls as "a desolate spot in the hills." She now remembers this as the old community of Warfield, on Little Sycamore Creek in southern Clay County.

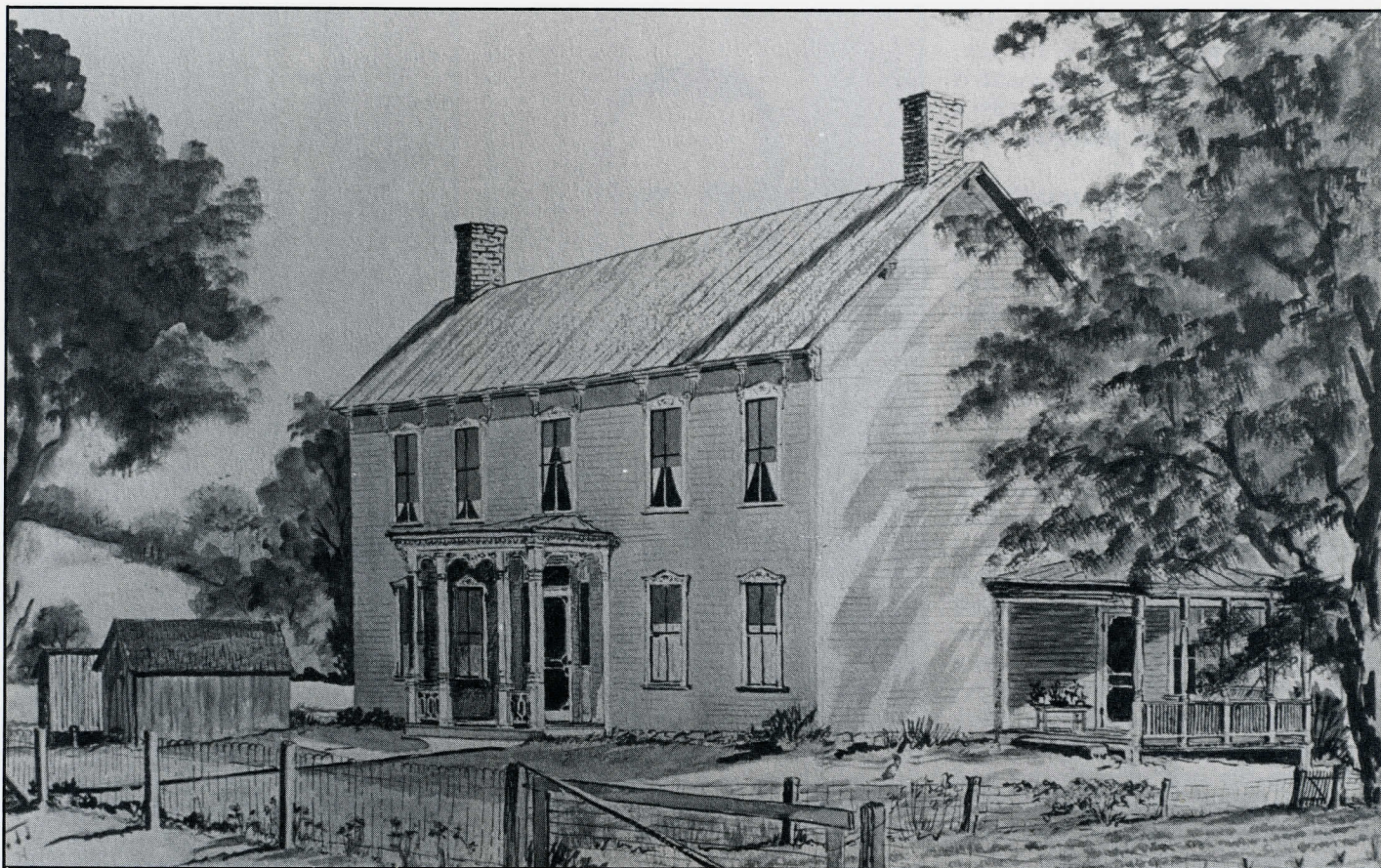
"There was nothing but this tiny

train station with mountains all around. There was a group of men loafers sitting around, none of which acted like he was supposed to meet me. I hesitated a minute, then went to the window and asked for the man I was supposed to meet. He wasn't there! In a mix-up, I've forgotten how it was, we didn't make connections.

"I was just icy with fear. I was about to burst into tears when a man asked, 'Are you the new school teacher?' When I admitted it, he said, 'Can you ride horseback?' When I said I could, he said, 'Well, if you aren't afraid to ride behind me, I'll take you to Mrs. Holcomb. She will take care of you.' What choice did I have? Yet, I still run in chills when I think of the chance I took.

"It was seven miles up this long, lonesome valley. Actually, the valley was just a ravine between the mountains, in most places just wide enough for this narrow road; you really looked straight up to see the sky, and as I remember it there were no homes the entire distance. In this narrow ravine were the road and the





This farmhouse, on the farm established by Martin Todd and later operated by his son, was the childhood home Ruth remembers. Pen and ink drawing by Hazel R. Todd.

creek, sometimes side by side, often together. In that seven miles you crossed through the creek 27 times. I counted every time we made the trip to the train, which was seldom."

Ruth was welcomed into the Holcomb home, which she later described as a crude mountain cabin. She was treated with kindness, perhaps as a treasure that had turned up unexpectedly. For although she never met the man who was supposed to meet her at the train station, nor saw the school where she was supposed to teach, the neighboring school was also in need of a teacher. Ruth was hastily hired at the salary of \$75 a month.

"On Monday morning I began my first job with high hopes. I had to walk more than a mile up the valley to the two-room schoolhouse. This was a beautiful valley between the mountains and I never ceased to thrill to its beauty. But the rude awakening at the end of the walk on this first morning almost petrified me. There were 58 students to be taught, grades one through eight. I had been faithfully promised they would try to get

another teacher, but for two weeks we floundered.

"Finally another teacher appeared. He took the first four grades and I had grades five, six, and eight. There were no children in seventh. I was only four or five years older than my eighth graders, of which there were five, and they weren't about to make it easy for me. But somehow we muddled through. The one thing I am sure about, at least some of those kids had some nice times. The girls and I made drapes for the windows and I bought crayons and art paper for the younger ones, which they loved. They had so little and were so appreciative of anything that was pretty.

"I dearly loved those kids," Aunt Ruth affirms. "Maybe every teacher remembers her first group with special affection. I know I do.

"There are a few events that stand out in my mind. Everyone there lived Southern-style, and the big meal of the day was breakfast. This was new to me and I almost starved at first. Then I learned to eat pork chops, po-

tatoes, and fried apples for breakfast, along with biscuits. The other meals were very light, more of a snack. Always there were biscuits, usually made fresh each meal.

"It was the custom to have the teacher for a meal and stay overnight if there was room in the house. They gave the teacher their best, quite often fried chicken for breakfast. I hope my acceptance was gracious.

"At Christmastime we had a program for the parents. The last day of school before vacation the children brought me gifts: their nicest apples or something they had made. One has always stayed in my mind as one of the most precious gifts I ever received. It came from a little fifth-grader. He was such a solemn child, never smiled, just did as he was told and never betrayed any emotion. I couldn't coax a smile and had decided he didn't like me. But that day he came and said, 'Miss Ruth, I didn't have no money to buy a present.' I told him that was all right, I didn't want him to buy me anything. To my amazement, his eyes lit up and he said, 'Oh, I have somethin fer ya,'





Ruth with her older sister. Photographer unknown, about 1910.

and handed me a greasy shoe box filled with mistletoe.

"I was stunned. I knew that mistletoe is a parasite which grows at the top of trees. So I asked, 'Where did you get this?' He said, 'Do you want to see?' He led me to the porch at the front of the school and pointed to the top of the mountain, pointing out an old, dead-looking oak tree. That dear child had climbed the mountain, then climbed that huge, dangerous-looking tree to get mistletoe for me. Do you wonder that I lugged all my gifts home?

"At this time, in 1923, in West Virginia, you had to pass a state examination to receive an eighth-grade diploma." Aunt Ruth continues her recollections of that first year. "Every child was scared to death of it and every teacher apprehensive. One thing that seemed to be on so many tests was to draw a map of the state, locating rivers, cities, etc. We practiced this thoroughly and sure enough, it was on the test. I was walking around monitoring while they took it and came to one boy's desk to see a most crude triangle

drawn. It made me mad, for he hadn't wanted to take the test and wasn't trying. I snatched his paper, crumpled it, and said, 'You know how to do this; now do it right.' He glared at me with a killing look, but he got at it and passed the test.

"Poor kid, it is no wonder he didn't care. He knew he couldn't go on to school; only one of the five eighth graders got to go to high school. The nearest one was several miles away — and there was no money. If they couldn't go to high school they had to keep coming back and repeating eighth grade until they were 16 and could quit school. Do you wonder at his stubbornness? About a year and a half later both he and his father were killed in a mine cave-in. Even after all these years it hurts me to know he never had a chance."

With spring came the end of the school year, and Aunt Ruth returned to the Northern Panhandle. The fall brought a teaching job closer to home and family.

In 1924 Ruth married. Her husband, Bob, would die in 1958 of heart disease. I was only seven years old

when he died, and I don't remember him at all. He must have been something special to have won Aunt Ruth. I've heard stories about how Bob would sit in front of the radio and defend FDR and swear at the Republicans. I think I would have liked him.

Bob and Ruth operated a grocery store and raised two sons. Their house, where Ruth still lives, is a warm little cottage that sits just across the alley from the railroad tracks in the East End of East Liverpool, Ohio, across the river from her native West Virginia. The garage in back barely accommodates a car. Purple and white crocuses come up by the front sidewalk each spring, and summers usually find a tomato plant along the fence and flowers in the patch of a backyard. The rooms are sized and furnished for simple living. The dining room is warm and gracious at dinnertime. And how a boy's heart races when a freight train rumbles by on those tracks across the alley, a stone's throw from the back door, and the whole house seems to shake and the boy's bones even rattle, or so he thinks, and the whistle





Ruth Todd's high school graduation portrait. Photographer unknown, 1922.

and the engine and the clatter on the tracks fill his ears. I often wondered how anyone ever slept in that house when a train came by in the night.

For several years after Ruth married Bob, she helped him run the store and gave teaching no thought. Years later, when her youngest son was in the fourth grade, she learned at a PTA meeting of the desperate need for substitute teachers. It seemed an ideal opportunity. She could return to teaching, yet be at home when her two boys were. To Bob's dismay, she applied and was accepted. "But as time went on and he saw how happy it made me to be

teaching again, he accepted it and, I believe, grew to be proud of me," she recalled.

Ruth's years of experience as a substitute teacher would serve her well. After Bob died, she returned to teaching full-time. In all, she taught for 28 years, mostly sixth grade. How could anyone ever have taught school better? I remember her grading papers in the evenings, correcting the spelling of kids who would never be able to spell very well, and telling of trying her best to teach kids to read, many of them poor kids from big families who didn't have much chance to make anything of them-

selves. "Bless their hearts," Aunt Ruth would say of them all. And she'd teach them as best she could. No teacher ever cared more.

To listen to Ruth talk of her students is to listen to a woman brimming with love, compassion, and patience. Hear her talk about "one of the cutest first-graders I ever saw," for example. "I don't think he would have been quite so cute had he not been so ill-kept. We had a real 'case' on each other. I tied his shoes, zipped his jacket and pants, wiped his nose. He always met me on my way to school. One day I put my arm around him and stuck fast to the jelly on the back of his jacket."

Aunt Ruth talks most, it seems, of the students you might think she'd prefer to forget, the troubled kids, problem students, kids who crossed the law, and slow learners. She explains, "It doesn't mean I have forgotten all the nice children and good students. They are very dear to my heart, the many, many of them, more than 800, who passed through my hands. I see, with pride, so many who are doing well, good citizens, and I hope I had a small part in molding them. But the poor students did touch my heart. Brains are God's gift to us. We have no power over our abilities, and you look at one who hasn't been blessed with as much and you know that 'but for the grace of God. . . .' It is humbling, and we surely are expected to be compassionate and helpful."

I carry many images of Aunt Ruth. I see her getting her degree in education, having gone to night school to earn it. I see a woman who taught Sunday School at her church and worked as a volunteer at the hospital, a woman who was like a sister to her neighbors but wouldn't hesitate to refer to one as a despicable S.O.B. if he deserved it. She was one of the first teachers in the area to take classes on field trips, and I can see her telling stories about her wide-eyed little companions. I hear her talking to a 12-year-old kid about baseball, commiserating with me about how poorly the Pirates were doing. I see her across a card table, grinning a little girl's grin as she drops the queen of spades on her undeserving nephew in a game of hearts.

Aunt Ruth retired from teaching in





*Above:* The tiny ivory elephants are souvenirs of the African missionary trip.

*Below:* It was a rainy day when our photographer caught Mrs. Kincaid at home late last fall. She has seen fair weather and foul in her eight decades, and come through it smiling.

June 1975, at the age of 70. Less than two months later she boarded a plane in Pittsburgh, bound for England, then Brussels, then Burundi, not far from the geographic center of Africa, to teach for a year in a missionary school. I wonder whether, as her plane neared Lake Tanganyika and the capital city of Bujumbura, she didn't think of an 18-year-old girl traveling on horseback with a stranger en route to her first teaching job.

Not many people have the fortitude at the age of 70 to take on the struggle to educate in the midst of an alien culture. But Aunt Ruth went to Africa, against the advice of some of the less stout-hearted of our family, and taught all of us lessons. I expect she did it to learn, as much as for any other reason. And to give. And when I start feeling timid, I try to remember.

Aunt Ruth is nearing her 83rd birthday now. Throughout her life she has embodied the very best of traits: a love of family, an adventurous independence, a belief in education, faith tempered by tolerance, and an active compassion for others — and all of this with humility and good humor. She is an inspiration to me and the rest of our family, and our love for her is as boundless as her spirit. ♣





# Panhandle Portraits

## Jefferson County People and Places

Photoessay by Hali Taylor



*Last fall, Shepherdstown photographer Hali Taylor prepared an exhibit of 71 photographs of scenes from Jefferson County. The exhibit, sponsored by the Bank of Charles Town, commemorated the 200th anniversary of Shepherdstown's Entler Hotel.*

*We asked Taylor for a selection of the pictures for publication in GOLDENSEAL. She sent them in October, with the following thoughts about changing times in West Virginia's easternmost area:*

The Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia is a place of delicate beauty. It is characterized by long-standing traditions, a colorful history, and a people in transition. The proximity of this area to large metropolitan areas makes it attractive for a growing number of new residents and tourists in search of a more peaceful pace of life.

Along with the influx of outsiders come progress and prosperity for inhabitants of the Panhandle, but it also brings the inevitable changes. As development creeps westward, the subtle features of the area are being irreversibly altered. Farms are being chopped up into subdivisions, traditions are dying out with the older generation, and all-night gas stops are replacing the warm familiarity of the country store.

My photographs are an attempt to depict the people and places of Jefferson County as they exist today, honestly and without passing judgment. They are intended to remind us of the attributes of this special area and at the same time to remind us that this wild and wonderful place is truly fragile.



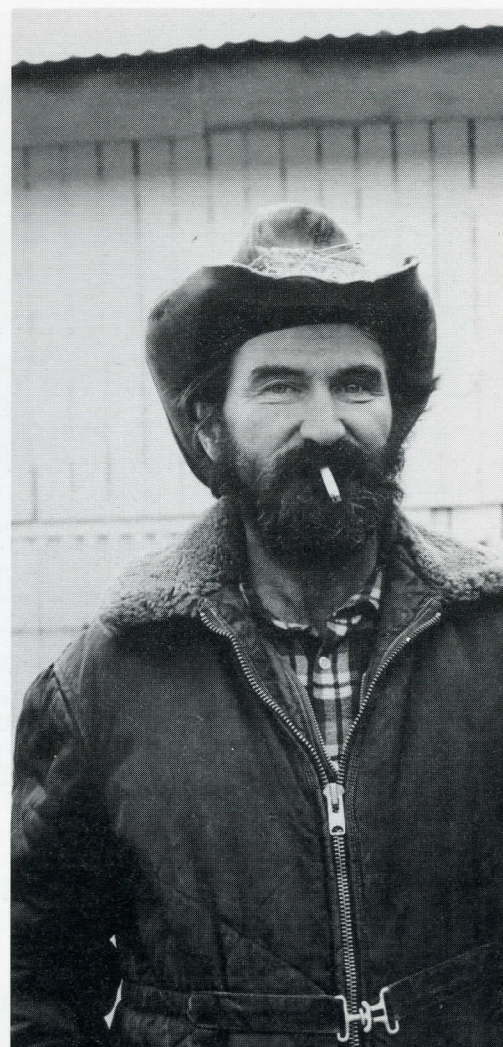
Lewis "Buzzy" Carroll prepares to write another one. Carroll has been the Shepherdstown chief of police for the past five years, and served for 10 years before that. He is a native of Jefferson County.

*Left: The stark beauty of winter in the Panhandle. This field at Duffields belongs to H. K. Daniels. Students at the high school, just on the other side of the road, look upon this view daily.*

*Below: This barn on Ward Clipp Road is located outside Myerstown, at the edge of the county.*







*Above:* Bud Knighten is a farm worker, shown here tending Ned Morrow's cattle. Mr. Knighten is a Shepherdstown native.

*Right:* Charles Town Track is a local institution of long standing. This groom has just finished having his thoroughbred shoed.

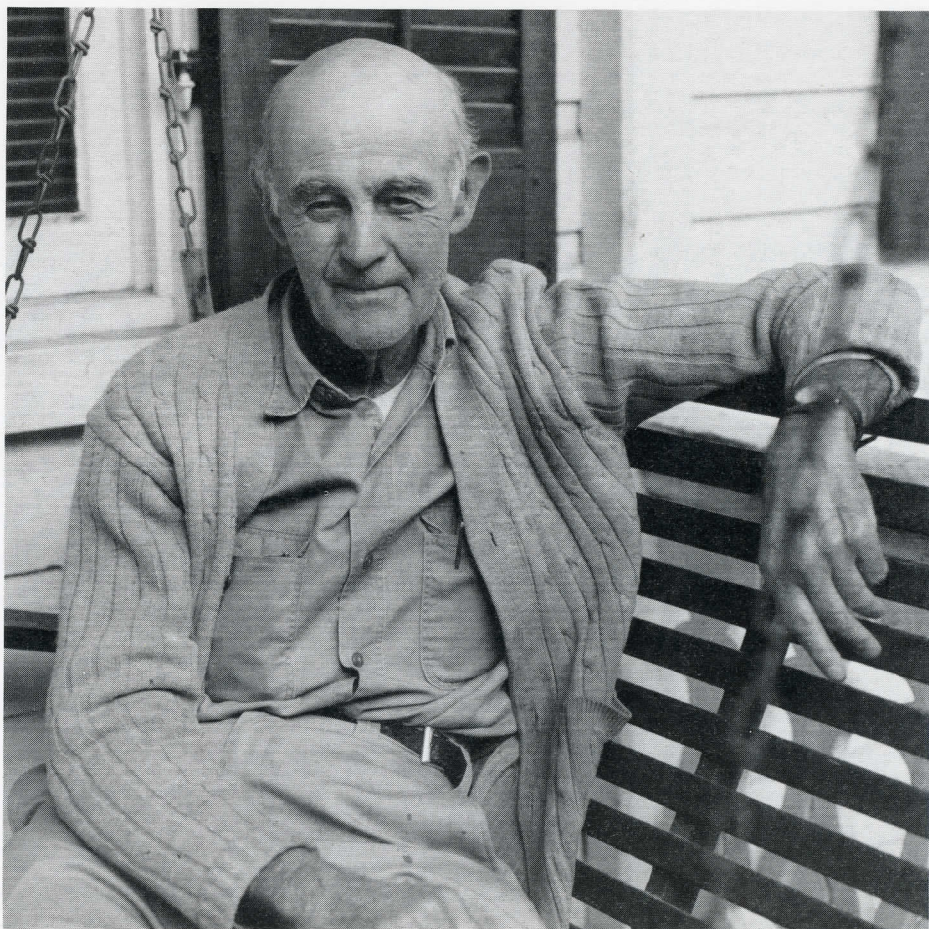
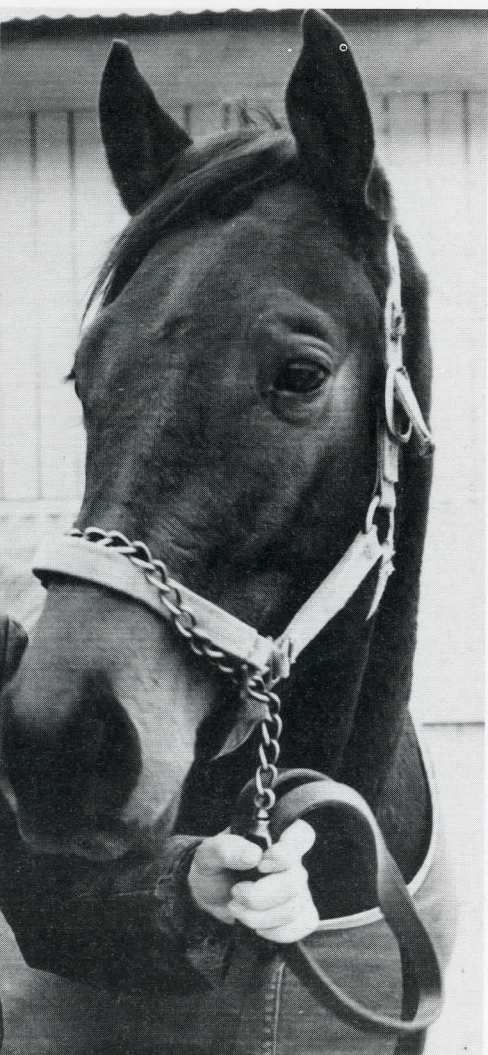




*Left:* The Eastern Panhandle is famous for apples and Wilt's Fruit Market has them in abundance. The market, on Route 340 just out of Harpers Ferry, is noted for one of the best fruit and vegetable selections in the area.

*Above:* Gordie Clark and Clarence Allen. Clark drives for some of the older people in the area, and Allen is his good friend.

*Below:* Harry Hammond lived at this house on Shepherdstown's Main Street for 39 years, but has recently moved to an apartment. Hammond, a retired carpenter, is known to his friends as "Piney."







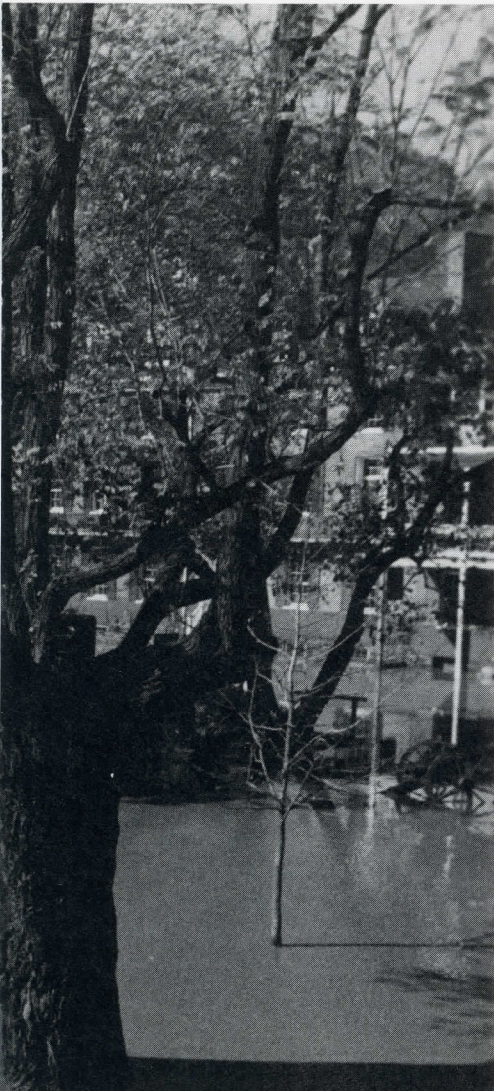


*Far left:* Shepherdstown Fire Chief D. Lee Morgan with Joan Lawson, honorary fire chief, before the Firemen's Parade. Chief Morgan has served more than 20 years.

*Left:* Mr. Kelly is a farmer in the southern part of the county. His portrait was made at Johnson's Grocery. The Kabletown store is run by Marianna Johnson Smallwood, daughter of the founder.

*Below:* Harpers Ferry in the big flood of November 1985. It was the most water the much-flooded town had seen since 1972.

*Right:* Pete Spaulding, here hunting doves, is a Shepherdstown landscaper. The stone building is part of Willowdale, the Shepherd family estate.







Beekeepers burn corncobs and a variety of natural and artificial fabrics in their smokers, but Howard Collins prefers plain burlap. "Polyester makes them meaner," he figures.

Wirt Countian Howard Collins has been a beekeeper for more than 40 years. Stricken with an acute case of "bee fever" at an early age, he has been battling the disease ever since, while trying to juggle his time between running a farm and holding down a job at Borg-Warner in Parkersburg.

The son of Earl and Lilly Collins, Howard traces his love of beekeeping to boyhood, when he was introduced to the ancient art by a neighbor. "I was just running around through the woods, looking up at trees, and I found a bee tree," he recalls.

"It was a real big red oak. I was pretty sure it was a bee tree, because the bees were going in and out. So I went and got Willie Evans. Willie was a real old fellow, just a hermit. Lived back there at the head of Otters Run and Brushy Fork, all by himself in a little log house. I was raised there too, on top of a hill, just as far back as you could get. Now, Willie — he shaved his head because his ceiling was so low and he kept bumping into it. He always had medicine on his head."

Howard chuckles, diverted by the peculiar recollection. Then he goes on. "So he helped me cut down the tree. I let Willie do most of the work, but I stayed with him. We let the tree fall down and then sawed it to about halfway through. Then we sawed it several more times, working the comb until we found the queen. I think I got a couple gallons of honey off it."

Howard continues, speaking of the rationing that made natural sweetening precious during the Second World War. "During World War II and right after, sugar was scarce. There wasn't none to be had. You couldn't even get a pound. You'd go down the street and see a line and get in it, hoping it was something you needed, like sugar or lard. Very rarely it was something you needed or wanted. So we were lucky we had honey. It took the place of sugar."

Times changed, Howard notes, and the public taste switched back to refined sugar as soon as that was available again. Today's honey market is tough, especially for the small producer who must compete with the chain stores. "Now you can't hardly give a jar of honey away, let

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# Keeper of the Bees

## Howard Collins of Wirt County

By Jacqueline G. Goodwin  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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alone sell one. Well, just like a man asked me, 'What do you get for a quart of honey?' and I said, 'Normally I get \$3.' He said, 'Well, I can get it at Big Bear for \$1.99. It's sad. But the man's right. You can buy it cheaper in the store.'

It is quite late in the afternoon when Howard shows me the inside of his work shed. Here is where he keeps his beekeeping supplies, in addition to the other tools and equipment needed on a farm. I learn that bees are very hardy creatures, and unlike cats, dogs, and other domesticated animals, are quite self-sufficient. That is part of their appeal.

"Each worker bee has the same job as the others in the hive," Howard tells me. "The very first job of a worker is to clean the brood cells, since the queen will not lay an egg in a cell which is not clean."

Outside the hive, the workers' job is to gather nectar, using an ingenious system to find their way home. "If you can single out a worker bee and watch it for a while, you will see that it weaves back and forth in front of the hive. By doing this, the bee fixes the location of the hive in its memory so that it will find its way back home after gathering nectar. A bee locates the entrance to the hive by its relationship to other objects, so if you ever want to move the hive to a new location, then it's better to move it a couple of feet per day. In this way, a bee will not be confused and possibly lose its sense of direction and its home.

"A queen bee," Howard says, "is the most important female in the hive. She is larger than the worker bee, so she can be spotted easier. The queen goes on her maiden flight and mates. Then she lays the eggs. Now, workers are infertile females, while drones are fertile males. Drones are looked upon by the workers as no-good, do-nothings whose sole purpose is reproduction. They just eat honey, fly around, and wait to mate with the queen. No wonder the drones are later driven out and allowed to die. In the fall when the nectar flow is slowing down, the workers get those drones by the wings and drag them out of the hive. They won't let any stay over the winter."

Howard explains how the bees provide for a new queen to ensure



Domestic bees which swarm successfully may build disorderly hives in the wild. This bee tree was exhibited at the 1986 Honey Festival.

the continued existence of their colony. "If the queen is old, the worker bees sense this and they'll replace her by feeding the chosen egg royal jelly," he says. "This is a protein-rich substance that somehow makes female larvae develop into fertile adults. The new queen then hatches and the worker bees dispose of the old queen. There's no such thing as two queens. They'll just fight and fight and fight, until there's only one.

"A queen is judged by the amount of eggs she lays," Howard continues. "A good queen will lay anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 eggs a day, but a queen which lays a small amount of eggs should be replaced.

"You can sit and watch the hive and all the bees look the same. But the bees know, and if a strange bee doesn't belong there they'll check it

out. That's the duty of the guard bees." He pauses. "All the hives have guard bees, and bees that try to steal a hive's honey are called robber bees. I've seen honeybees even fight bumblebees — and they'll win. There's no fear in a honeybee. No matter what is trying to get into that hive, a honeybee will come out and sting."

Still, bees are by no means successful against all their enemies, as Howard says. "Now skunks, they'll get over by a hive, especially if it is close to the ground, and they'll patty cake on the boards just to get the bees out. Then they'll sit around there and eat the bees. The reason I know this to be true is I caught one doing it, and he's no more."

In the past, most beekeepers kept their bee colonies in short, upright sections of hollow logs, often cut





Mr. Collins calms his bees with a puff of smoke (above) as he lifts the inner cover from the top super of a hive. Honey is made in hanging frames or sashes, such as the one he holds here. He prefers to use nine frames per super, instead of the usual 10.



from black gum trees. Once a year the owner gathered his honey, either by killing the bees and taking all of their harvest, or by tearing apart the honeycomb. There were disadvantages to these haphazard methods. Honey collected from the poorly tended "bee gums" was from a mixture of nectar sources and often very dark, lacking the delicate flavor common to today's honey. West Virginia's apiary law now forbids a person from keeping bees in a hive which is not equipped with moveable frames, permitting quick inspection of the combs.

Howard obligingly shows me some of his bee gear. "When I first started I didn't have all that fancy beekeeping equipment they sell in those catalogs," he says. "Just sawed the hive out and put it together and didn't know if it was right or wrong." As he talks, he leads me to a large white box. "Now, here is a hive. It's a homemade box. I just painted it." He opens the lid. I notice there aren't any bees inside. "Right now, my bees are up on the point in other bee hives."

Howard explains the layout of a hive. "At the base is a bottom board and on the hive's top is an inner cover and an outer cover, which is the real lid. In the middle of the hive are open wood boxes called supers. The larger ones, or the brood chamber, are stacked on the bottom. They are used by the bees for raising eggs and larvae. The smaller ones, called plain supers, are used for storing honey. Inside each super are hanging wooden frames. Each of these removable rectangles contains a thin sheet of beeswax that's been imprinted with little hexagons the size of worker bee cells. These sheets, called foundation, give the bees starting points for drawing out either egg or honey cells.

"I always leave one super on a hive," Howard explains. He points to a smaller box which contains frames. "This is a super. A super holds about 30 to 34 pounds of honey. Most people use the standard 10-sash box, but I use nine frames. I think the bees will draw it out and more honey will result.

"This is foundation comb," Howard says, showing how the bees get a little help in their engineering from



the factory-made material. He holds up a thin sheet of the pure beeswax, with the impression of a honeycomb already formed on it. "You need this foundation or the bees will build their comb any old way, and boy is it messy," he explains. "This stuff keeps them in straight. When they are making their comb they'll just be hanging there. Just full. I understand young bees eat a gorge of honey and then the flakes from their bodies build this comb." He shakes his head in amazement.

Howard walks over to a shelf and picks up a small canister with attached bellows and a rounded spout. "This is a smoker. You can make the bees do anything you want them to do with a little smoke. They can't stand it. I use burlap, but people use anything to fire the smoker. For example, cotton, corn cobs and polyester. But I think polyester makes them meaner. That's for sure."

I ask Howard to give me an example of when he would use a smoker.

"Well, if you want to transfer bees to a new hive," he replies, "a few puffs of smoke will send the guard bees away and keep the whole colony disorganized. They hate the smell. And if they become mean or excited, just give them some more smoke. That will settle them down real quick."

Howard believes the most misunderstood phenomenon in beekeeping is swarming, which occurs in West Virginia during May, June or July. Swarming is the departure of many or most of a colony's bees with the old queen, leaving behind the other bees and some new queen cells. It can cripple a hive's honey production. "Bees swarm because the hive is overcrowded, or because of bad weather," Howard explains. "They're just trying to find a new home. Most of the time they'll fly around for 10 or 15 minutes and settle on something, until they decide what they want to do. Then they'll look around for a natural home — a hollow tree, for example.

A bee swarm represents a natural prize to a skillful beekeeper. Howard tells how a swarm is captured by giving an example. "One time I was down at the plant and was about to give the mill foreman a break when I

looked out the window. I saw a swarm of bees. I went outside and started clapping real loud. They settled on a wire basket. I got a cardboard box and knocked a few of the bees inside and just tapped it on the back. Eventually every one of those bees went into that box. I put a screen over them so they didn't smother and drove them home after work. Immediately I transferred them.

"Here's how I transferred them," he continues. "I closed them up so they couldn't get out and then took the box and set it on the ground close to an empty hive. I took a newspaper and folded it out and brought it close as I could to the hive. I just gave them a shot of smoke and tapped them to get them going and after awhile they all followed the queen to the hive.

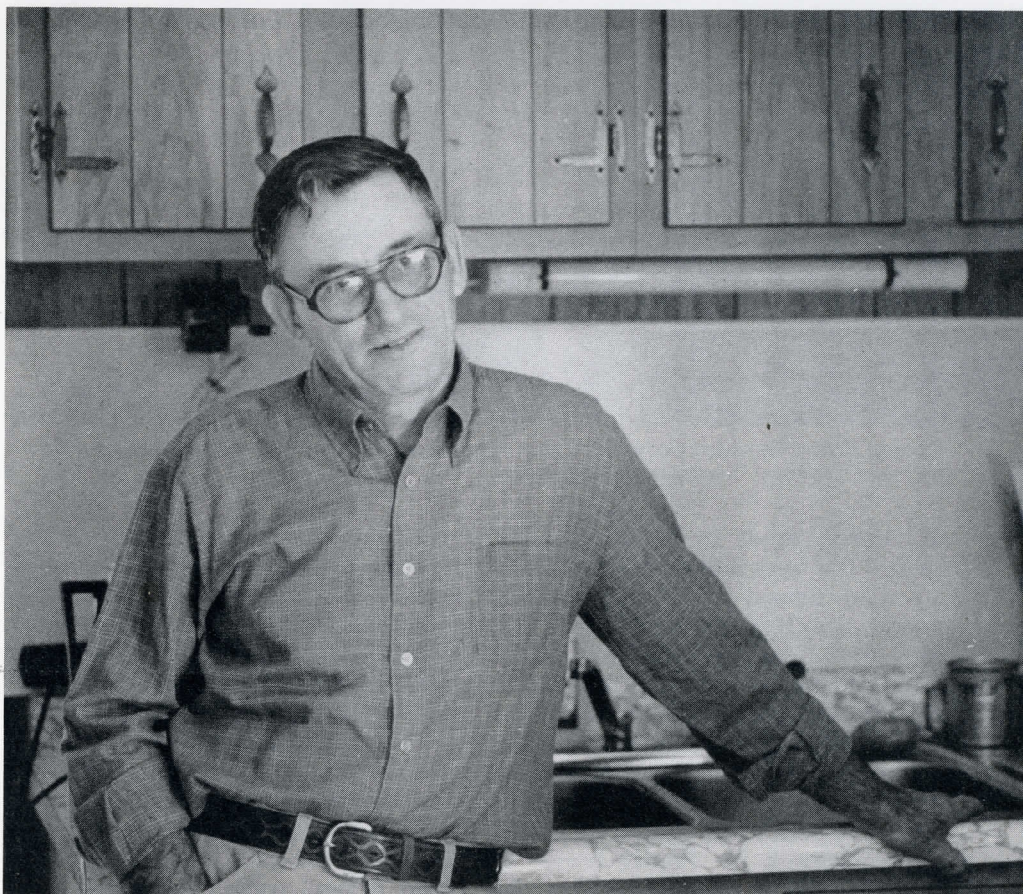
"You can't prevent swarming, but you can reduce it," Howard points out. "Most experts recommend giving your bees extra room in the spring. But this year I was a little slow getting to it. That's why we've had three or four swarms in one day." He recommends caution

around the migrating insects. "People say you can put your hand inside a swarm quite safely, but I know better. I wear my bee suit and other equipment. I'm not allergic to bees, but I know a bee sting hurts. My wife Mary got stung a couple of days ago. When we were transferring a hive, a bee got caught in her hair. She swelled with that one. Campho Phenique usually helps the pain."

Howard says the production of honey fluctuates widely from year to year, depending on many factors, most having to do with the weather. "The state says if you can get somewhere around 60 pounds of honey per hive, then that's tops. But I've gotten as many as 90 pounds and once in a while I've gotten as much as 120 pounds. Yes sir, we've all eaten standing up and in the living room for a week because the kitchen table was full of honey."

In answer to a question, Howard tells me that the color of honey varies according to the season and the source of the original nectar. "Early honey tends to be lighter in color and

Having doffed his bee gear, Collins relaxes in his kitchen. "I'm in this mainly for a hobby," he says of his beekeeping.







Howard Collins works among his hives on a peaceful autumn day. "I spend a lot of time with my bees," he says. "I enjoy everything about it."

fall honey tends to be darker," he says. "The bees will work any flower — even poison ivy. When there's nectar, they'll be there. Now, we like blue devil honey. It's the most delectable. When the bees find those little blue flowers, boy is the honey tasty! Around here, bees also like white clover, sweet clover, sumac and poplar. When poplar trees are in bloom, if you have your hives geared up they'll really carry it in. Poplar honey is dark."

He continues. "Last year all the honey we took was just so clear as it could be. But it wasn't very long before it all turned to sugar. All you have to do when the honey turns to sugar is to take it and put it by a window. When the sun shines through, the heat will warm it up and the crystals will dissolve and it'll turn right back to honey. A lot of times I just put the jar in a pan of warm water. That'll do the trick, too." The granulated honey, sometimes called can-

died or cream honey, is also fine to eat as it is.

Howard says a mechanical honey extractor is too expensive for an operation the size of his. "We just use knives. It's a very sticky job," he says, laughing.

"Last fall I waited until it was chilly and the bees had started clustering. I took the lids off the hives and broke the supers off and carried them into the house. Didn't use a smoker, a bee suit or anything else. Mary and I cut the comb and squeezed the honey out and then put the beeswax back out so the bees could work it over again. Some people send the beeswax back to the companies and they'll redo it into foundation comb."

The Collins family is not in beekeeping for the money. "Well, maybe once in a while I'll sell it, just to pay for some of my equipment," Howard admits. "I'm in this mainly for a hobby. I use the honey in my tea and I eat it. That's all we usually do with it. Take care of ourselves and our neighbors. You know, I've given everybody on Spring Creek some of my honey. I like to see people smile when I give them some." He hands me a jar of honey to prove the point. The sweet scent penetrates the air as I open the lid. I stick my index finger into the sticky treat and find that it's delicious.

Howard tells me that spring is the busiest season for beekeepers. The hives must be opened and inspected for disease and loss of queens. Also, the beekeeper must be sure that there is enough honey left over from the previous year to last his bees until a steady nectar flow is again available. Summer is quiet, but fall is the time for harvest and again a busy season. There is very little the beekeeper can do for his bees in the winter. This is the time to clean up and get ready for spring. "And to eat honey," he adds.

By now Mary Collins and daughter Linda have joined us. We start walking to the hill where Howard has placed his 13 beehives. I learn that in addition to beekeeping Howard likes to raise cattle, graft trees and hunt ginseng. Once on the hill he resumes his explanation about bees.

"During the winter the bees cluster," he says. "That's how they keep warm. When they're eating, down in the cluster the bees are warm. They



eat the honey, which provides energy. Then a warm bee comes up and kicks a cold bee down. He eats the honey and the cycle begins again. A winter's supply of honey should be at least 60 pounds. This assures the bees an adequate amount of food.

"When it snows, you should lift the super a little bit so the bees can get ventilation. Before I knew this it would snow and clog up the entrance. A bee would come down and bore a hole with the warmth of his body. It's really amazing. Those bees are smart. During some really cold winters I lost a lot of bees. One time I had 30-some swarms, but winter kill about wiped me out. I was down to three. Another year I lost 13 hives. Just bang! There's nothing you can do — you can't bring them in the house and warm them up, because if you do you're in trouble."

Like humans and other animals, bees do contract diseases. "The common ones are American foulbrood and European foulbrood," Howard notes. "They attack the young bees before they have a chance to mature. And boy, is it contagious. If a state inspector knows your bees have it, he'll come and destroy your bees," he adds. "And there's a little moth who sits around in the evenings, trying to get inside. It's called the wax moth, but most people around here call it the 'weevil' or 'bee weevil.' This moth will get in there and lay eggs. Then the larvae eats the wax off the honeycomb and destroys it. Pretty soon it just wipes out a swarm of bees, especially if the swarm is weak to begin with."

Howard Collins' knowledge of bee disease and other apiary matters is mostly self-taught. "I used to attend bee meetings for a while," he says. "I did learn a lot, but with shift work and all my responsibilities here I just didn't have the time. For the beginner, the best way to learn is to watch someone who has been at it for a long time."

The tour is over. As we walk back toward the house Howard reflects on his hobby. "I spend a lot of time with my bees, but I enjoy raising them," he says. "In fact, I enjoy everything about it. On a warm sunny day there's nothing better than to watch those bees and smell the warm wax and honey." ✱

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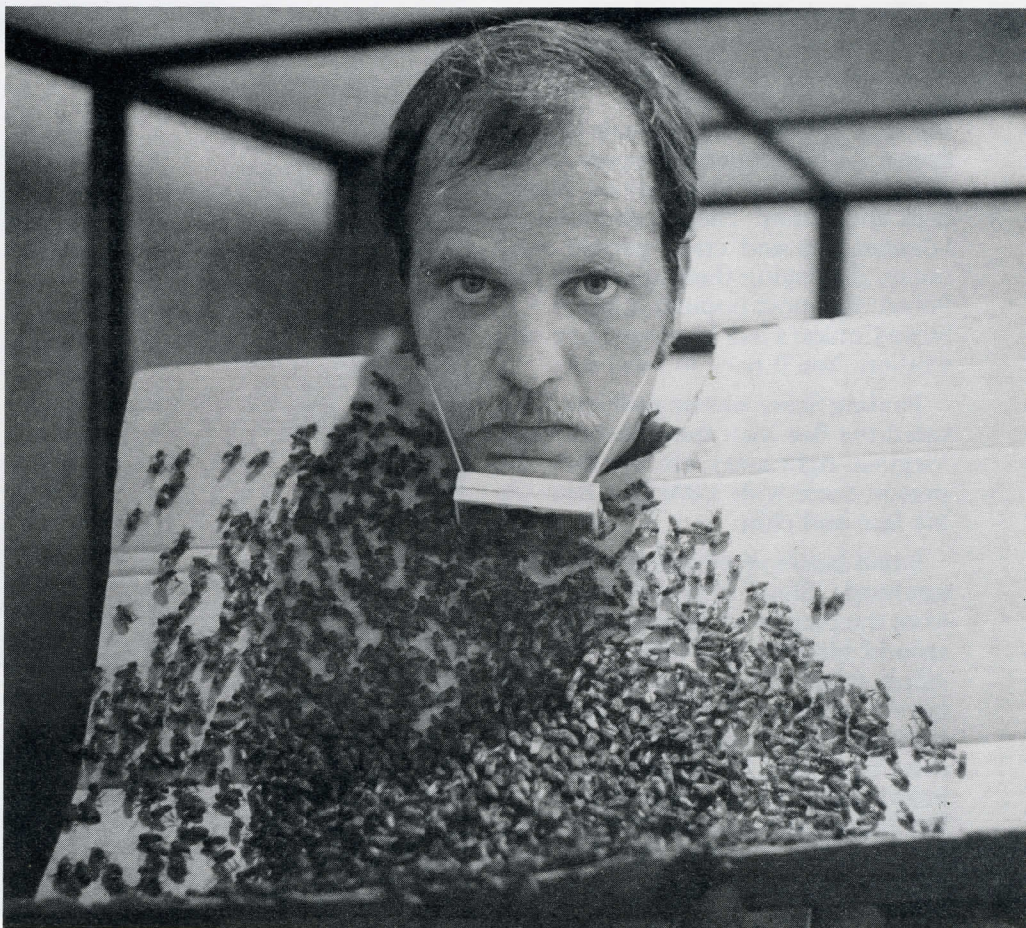
# The West Virginia Honey Festival

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By Jacqueline G. Goodwin

Photographs by Michael Keller

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Sweat beads on Steve Conlon's forehead as bees gather to the queen caged at his chin. Soon he will slip the cardboard out from under a full beard.

The West Virginia Honey Festival is a two-day affair that attracts beekeepers from around the Mountain State, and draws in the general public with arts and crafts, entertainment, and lots of bees and honey. The event, sponsored by the West Virginia Beekeeping Association and the City of Parkersburg, began six years ago.

Held at Parkersburg's City Park in late September, the festival is a bustling bazaar. Brightly colored exhibits

aim to educate the public about bees and to encourage the use of honey. Tables are piled high with beekeeping paraphernalia. There are observation hives, movies about bees, and demonstrations about handling bees and honey.

Presiding over all is Larry Godfrey, festival chairman. During my visit to the 1986 festival he kindly provides information as we walk around, taking in the sights and sounds. At one table we watch as an exhibitor gives



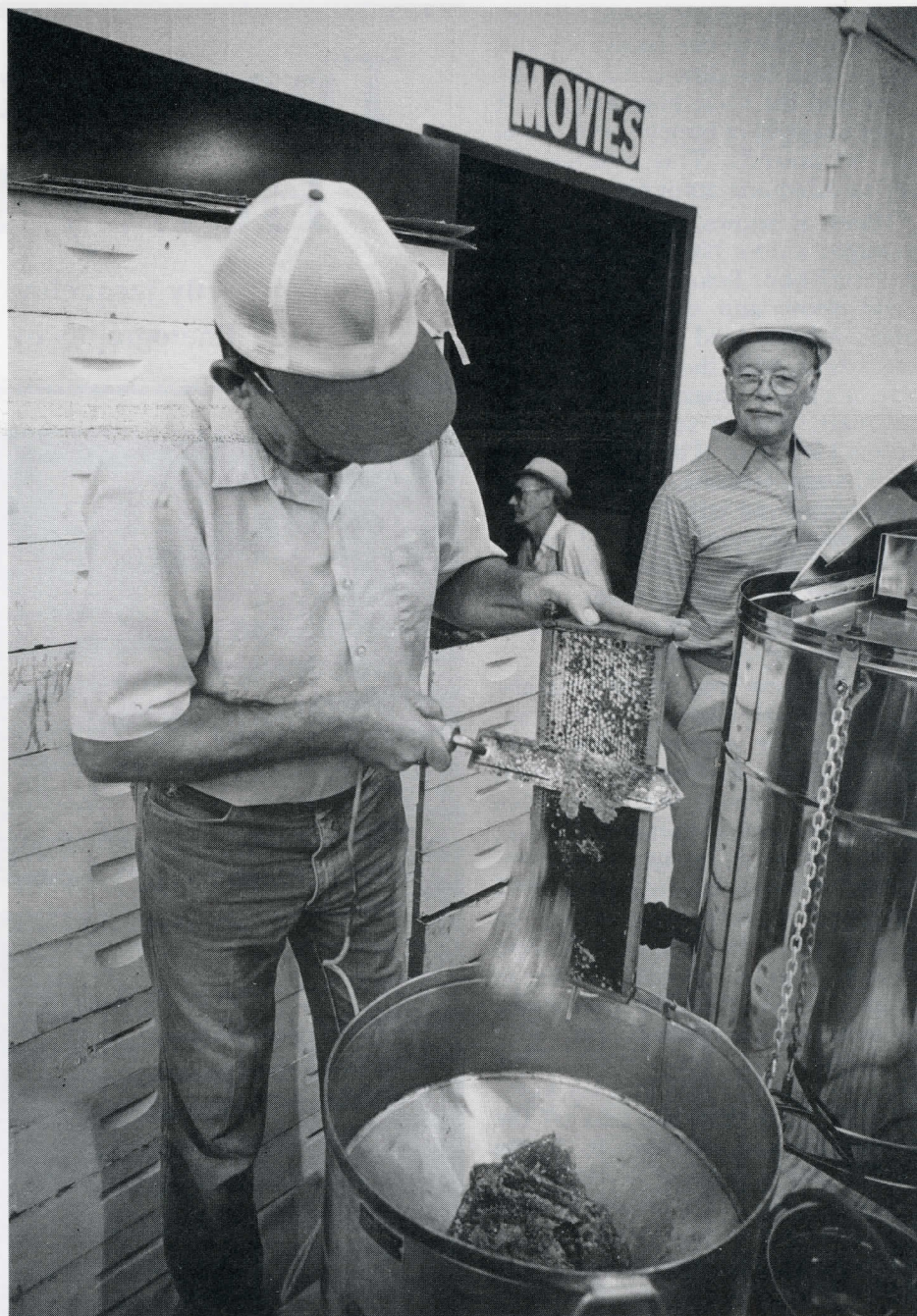
away free samples of his honey. His booth is decorated with posters and bee equipment and his observation hive attracts curiosity seekers. We stop to read, learning that historians believe the word for honey is older than the word for bee since man's earliest interest centered around the golden liquid, rather than the insects which produce it. According to the poster, honey was the first sweetener. Greeks and Romans considered honey the food of the gods and used it in many rituals.

"The goal of the festival is to show the public the value of honey and the importance of bees in West Virginia agriculture," Larry tells me. "This is the type of event that appeals to everyone — beekeepers, farmers, suppliers and those just curious about bees and honey. There's also a lot of talented arts and crafts people here today, displaying their products. But I'd say the most popular attraction is Steve Conlon's live bee beard demonstration. You'll have to meet him."

Finding Steve was no problem. I located the Bee Man from Beebe, West Virginia, right away. He was the only person there with 3,000-plus bees on his face and chin.

Small beads of perspiration on his forehead, Steve answers questions from the people who have assembled around his screened cage on the pavilion stage. He is assisted by Gary Jarrett, a beekeeper from Farmington, who uses a credit card to move bees from the large piece of cardboard under Steve's chin to his face. Holding a microphone as close to his live beard as possible, the Bee Man explains why he prefers young bees for this trick. "Young bees are not as aggressive as older bees. Like young children, they are quite naive. They are also very calm."

Steve continues. "The queen will only sting another queen and bees for the most part do not sting unless they feel threatened." The crowd continues to grow and he fills in the newcomers. "I first placed a queen into what is known as a queen cage. This is a wooden block with strings attached to it so I can tie it around my chin. As the worker bees smell the queen they follow her. Eventually, most of the hive will swarm around the queen, thus forming my bee



The Honey Festival is a promotional event, designed to acquaint West Virginians with beekeeping and honey production. Here C. A. Hutchinson cuts the caps from frames of honeycomb with an electric knife.

beard. It'll take about half an hour for most of the bees to find the queen."

A lady in the crowd asks Steve if he is allergic to bees. "No, I am not allergic to bees," he replies, "but I've been stung numerous times, that's for sure. It really hurts if I get stung on the face, since that part of the body is inclined to swell. I can tell when a bee is going to sting. Its body humps up right before it is going to sting. The rest is history. But for the most part, it's a minor inconven-

ience. Now, you kids out there in the audience, don't think you can go home and do what I'm doing," he cautions. "It takes practice and knowledge to make a bee beard."

Steve, who is an apiary inspector for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, lives on a 157-acre Wetzel County farm with his wife Ellie and their three children. He says his interest in bee beards came through former state apiarist Bardwell Montgomery, who demonstrated the stunt





After uncapping, the frames go to an electric separator, where centrifugal force will spin the honey from the comb. Such equipment modernizes the age-old practice of beekeeping.

at previous festivals but has since gone on to other pursuits. "I watched Bard and then asked questions. He really helped me learn the tricks of the trade. I feel at ease now and feel it's a wonderful opportunity to educate those unfamiliar with bees and bee behavior. It doesn't hurt my sale of honey, either," he adds, a twinkle in his eye.

The honeybees have now formed a large, Rip Van Winkle beard on Steve. He walks from one side of the

cage to another, letting people take pictures through the mesh. It is then time to return the bees to their box. Steve bends over the cardboard container and gives his head a powerful shake. Most of the bees drop in, but some remain on his chin. Returning to his chair, he sits quietly as Gary helps shave the remaining insects onto the piece of cardboard. When the last bee is removed the two men stand up, not making any sudden movements. They leave the big cage

one at a time, making sure no bees escape.

I learn that Steve has set the bee world abuzz with recent accomplishments. He is last year's winner of the annual bee beard contest at the University of Delaware. He was highlighted on "Ripley's Believe It Or Not" television program in January 1986, and almost made a guest appearance on another morning newscast. "I was preempted for a news bulletin concerning an Arab hostage situation," he says as we part.

Off in one corner, the Department of Agriculture has a booth where those interested in beekeeping can find appropriate literature. At the other end of the department's display, C. A. Hutchinson separates honey from frames full of honeycomb. This is his sixth year at the festival. Using an electric uncapping knife, he cuts the wax caps from the long combs, then places the frames in an extractor where centrifugal force will cause the honey to flow into five-gallon buckets. He next pours it through nylon filter cloth into a storage tank. The honey must then set for about three days before it is ready to be put into small containers for sale.

He works as he talks. Hutchinson owns 28 beehives and uses honey at home in cooking and canning. One of the Honey Festival founders, he brims with facts and figures. "People don't realize the importance of bees. Really, honey is second. The bees are number one. If it wasn't for bees, we wouldn't have fruits and other crops. They are responsible for one third of the world's food supply." Hutchinson tells the crowd that for every dollar's worth of honey, bees provide more than \$100 worth of pollination.

"Not that honey isn't important, because it is," Hutchinson adds. "Honey is an ideal sweetener for many things. Plus, honey contains no fat. It doesn't spoil and has already been digested by the bees, so it easily digested by humans. It is perfect energy food since it quickly enters the body's bloodstream."

Hutchinson is quick to point out that the Ohio Valley is one of the important honey production areas in the state. Another is the Eastern Panhandle. "Large honey farms are located in the eastern part of the state



where as many as 2,000 hives can be found at one location," he says. "Because of the many orchards there, beekeeping is especially popular. But the Mid-Ohio Valley is also a large honey production area. However, most beekeepers in these parts have relatively small operations; about 25 to 30 hives, if that many."

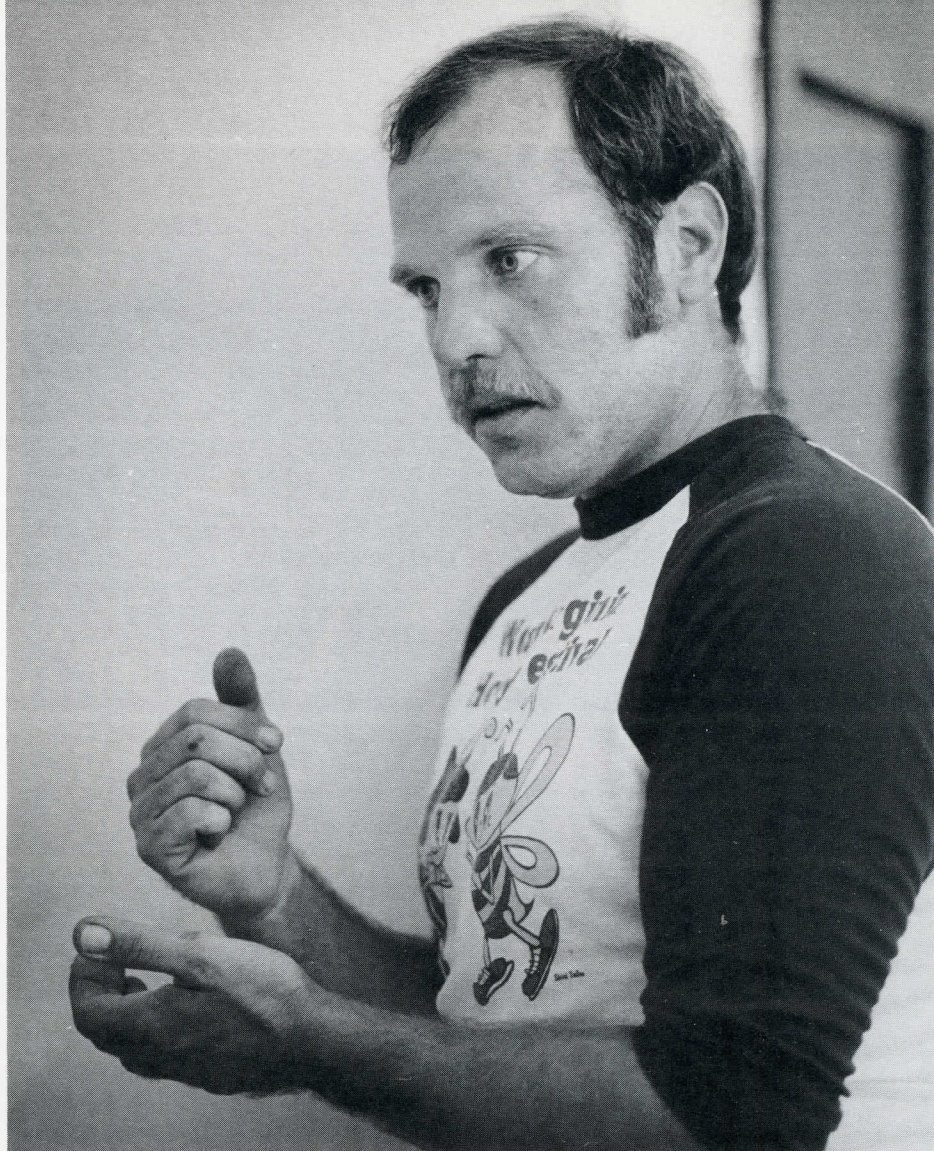
Hutchinson is a busy man. On the road much of the time, inspecting hives for disease, the 61-year-old Ripley resident also takes care of his own large farm. He says that he turned to apiary work for pure enjoyment. "One day I just decided I wasn't going to work construction anymore. I had been a construction worker for 28 years and had had enough. So I applied to the Department of Agriculture and was hired as a bee inspector. I've been inspecting hives for the last 12 years.

"The most common disease in this state is American foulbrood," the inspector says. "It attacks larvae in all stages of bee development and is really contagious. Any hives which I find infected must be quarantined and destroyed. Although there are other alternatives when dealing with this disease, the most common is burning the hive."

Hutchinson's interest goes back to his grandfather's Wirt County farm. "I remember when my brothers and I went to my grandpa's. It was during the Depression and we didn't have many sweet things to eat, so we'd cry, 'Grandpa, give us some honey.' And he would go out back to his gums and rob some honey. He kept his hives in hollowed-out logs, or bee gums as they were called back then. Boy, did my grandma get mad if he wasn't careful and let some of the honey drip to the ground. But they'd always let us eat as much as we wanted."

I also meet Doris and Victor Atha, a husband and wife beekeeping team, who sell wildflower honey from their home in Fairmont and at fairs and festivals. "I've been interested in bees since I was 15 years old," explains Victor. "My neighbor wanted me to help him out with his bees and I learned from him."

Victor attributes his success as a gardener to the pollination of his honeybees. "Our first garden was a



Like other small farmers, honey producers face problems, including the competition of foreign imports. The Honey Festival is one way to inform the public. "It's a wonderful opportunity to educate those unfamiliar with bees," Steve Conlon says of his appearance there.

big disappointment. It just didn't produce like it should have. Everything was so small. The cucumbers were little and knotty. But the next year I got two hives of bees and the garden really improved. We had beautiful, big cucumbers. There were so many of them we had to give them away."

Victor says the main nectar sources in his area are wild flowers and tulip poplar. "Tulip poplar honey has a reddish cast and wildflower honey is on the darker side. But the really dark is from raspberries and blackberries. We mainly sell wildflower honey." He points to one of the amber-colored bottles offered for sale.

Like other apiarists, the Athas are concerned about the cheap imported honey coming into America. "Honey from foreign countries lacks the good flavor that United States honey has," I'm told. "It's sad, but most people

consider the price first and the flavor last."

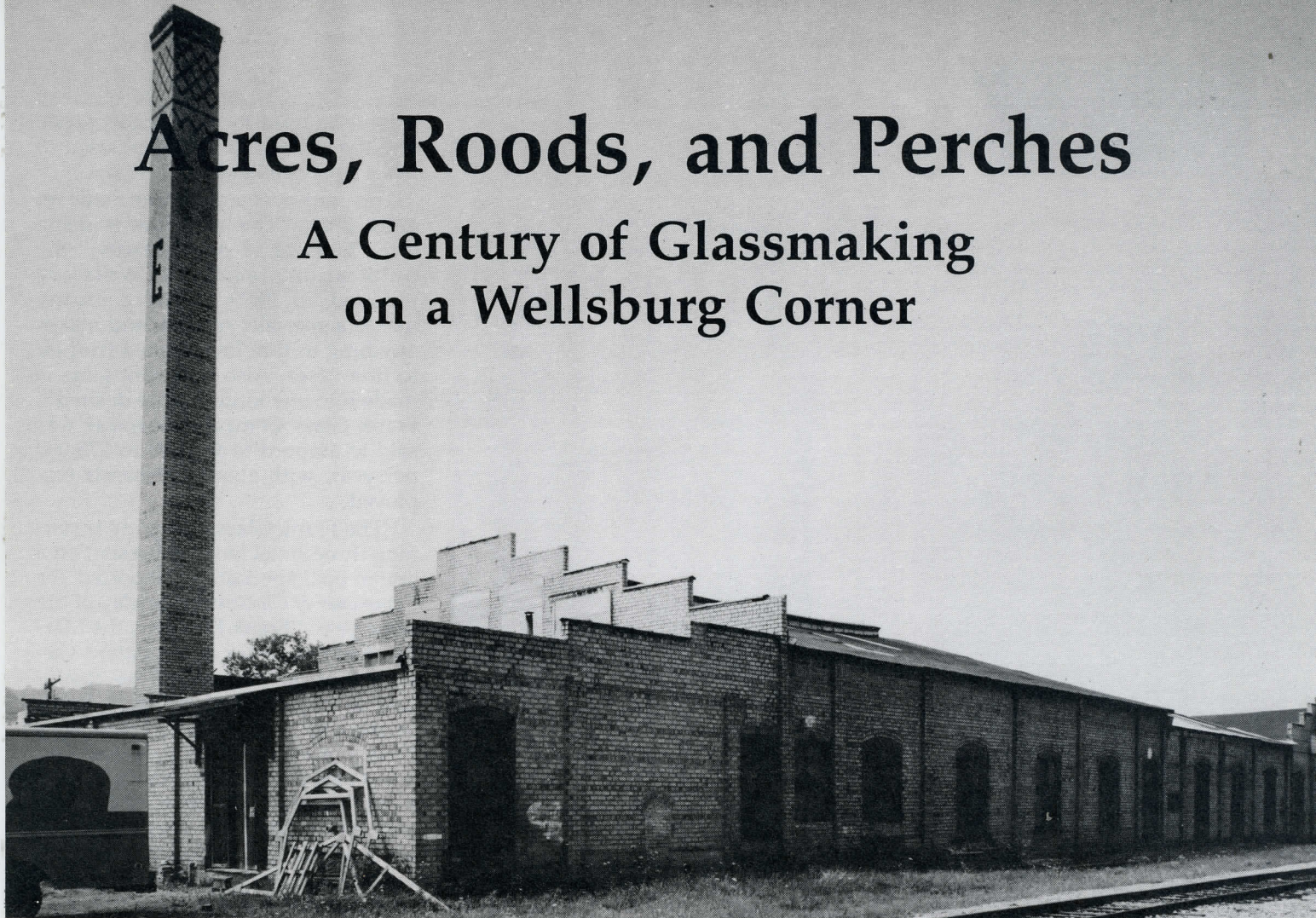
As I walk away from the Athas' table, I again spot Larry Godfrey in the crowd. He motions for me to walk over. "Don't forget to taste some of that honey-flavored ice cream before you leave," he instructs. As I walk out the door I spy the booth. Half a dollar buys me an ice cream flavor I have not tasted before.

Outside, I enjoy my treat. I leaf through my Honey Festival program. Inside the pavilion a cooking demonstration gets under way. Nearby, the "Hot and Cold Running Circus" is performing. For the rest of the day and again on Sunday, visitors will be able to stroll the area and participate in a variety of activities. Those desiring a respite from bees can rest their feet at one of the picnic tables, drink pop, listen to the entertainment, and watch the square dancers do-si-do. ♣



# Acres, Roods, and Perches

## A Century of Glassmaking on a Wellsburg Corner



The old Erskine glass plant stands on a site that has seen a century of glass making.

Two acres, three roods, and thirty perches," that's the way the property was measured in 1904. That was better than two decades after glassmaking started on the corner lot, and the place had shrunk a little over the years. Back in 1883, when a century of glass production first began, the tract was noted on the deeds as 3 379/1000 acres. The plot was situated in the town of Midway, Brooke County, and one corner of its boundary touched the southern line of Lazearville. Both of these towns later became part of Wellsburg.

Midway represented many small towns which opted for industrial expansion after the discovery of natural gas in the area in the late 1800's. The gas was an alternative to the use of wood for glassmaking and other industries with heavy fuel consumption, at a time when much of the East had been denuded of its forests by the insatiable hunger of furnaces and kilns.

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By Tom Caniff

Photographs by

Michael Keller

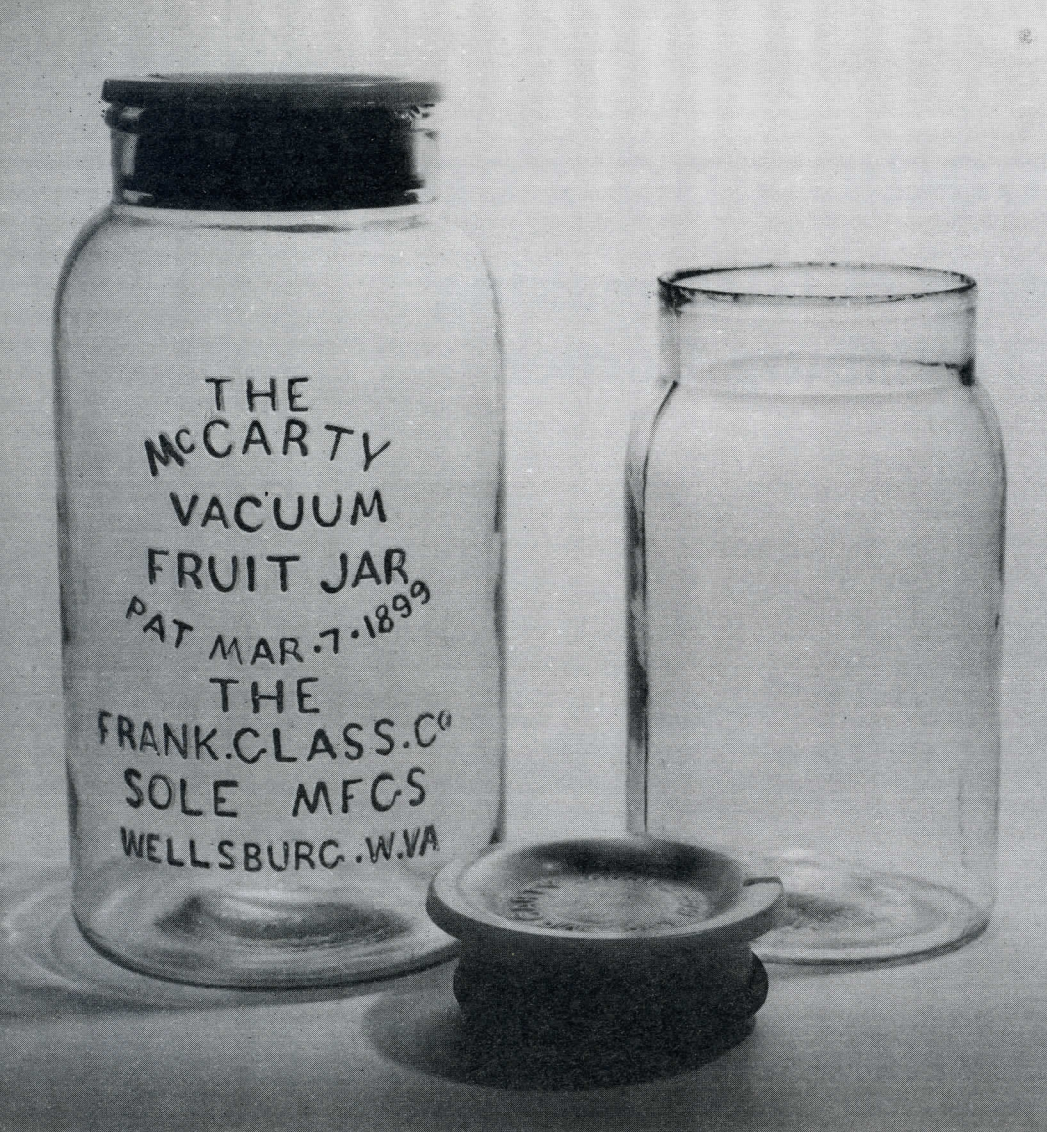
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The first glassmaker to occupy the site at the corner of what would later become 22nd and Yankee streets was James Dalzell, who had previously been president of the Pittsburgh glass firm of Campbell, Jones & Company. After leaving the Pittsburgh concern, James and his brothers, Andrew C. and William A. B. Dalzell, along with Edward D. Gilmore, had rented the Brilliant Glass Works across the Ohio River from Wellsburg. This Ohio factory was soon abandoned, and in August of 1883 James Dalzell purchased from George W. Freshwater and his wife the tract of land then measuring

more than three acres. The deed stipulated that Dalzell must "erect or cause to be erected on said land a building for the manufacture of glassware within one year from this date, and failing to do so, said land shall revert to the said Geo. W. Freshwater."

James Dalzell lost no time in upholding his end of the deal. A week later, half of the property was deeded to his brothers and partner Gilmore. In October an agreement was signed for Wellsburg industrialist Samuel George to sink a well for natural gas. The new glass company's operation was said to have been conducted in large buildings, constructed according to Dalzell's agreement with George Freshwater. Dalzell Brothers & Gilmore manufactured pressed crystal glass and colored wares. At least one patent is credited to James Dalzell, for a pressed-glass covered dish, registered on September 23, 1884.





The Frank Glass Company, an Erskine predecessor, manufactured the McCarty vacuum jar at the turn of the century. The stopper gasket made a tight seal.

Andrew C. Dalzell died in mid-1887, leaving a wife and three daughters. Brother James Dalzell strengthened local ties in December of the same year by marrying Annie P. Duval, daughter of a local glass house owner. The year 1887 must have been a time of decisions for the family glass company too, for early the next April Dalzell Brothers & Gilmore signed a contract to move their factory to Findlay, Ohio, taking advantage of a gas boom and other incentives in that area. James Dalzell served as first president of the new Findlay concern, known as Dalzell, Gilmore & Leighton, with the addition of a new partner.

James Dalzell died in February of 1893 in Wellsburg of "paralysis" at age 38. W. A. B. Dalzell, the last of the brothers, returned to West Virginia in 1901 to become president of the Fostoria Glass Company in Moundsville.

The Dalzell plant at Midway sat unused for glassmaking until 1898. Then it was sold to the Frank Glass Company, which had been incorporated in July 1896 with James A. Frank as the leading stockholder. Frank Glass had operated in somewhat smaller quarters in neighboring Lazearville, manufacturing mainly Mason fruit jars and milk-glass liners for zinc fruit jar caps.

With the purchase of the old Dalzell property for \$3,612, the Frank Glass Company relocated its operations. No mention of buildings was made in the deed of transfer, but apparently there were some, for the new owners were reported ready to put the plant in operation as soon as repairs could be made. *The Commoner & Glassworker*, a trade journal, reported in May 1898 that the Frank Company had one 10-pot furnace in the old Dalzell plant and that they planned to build tanks. The furnace

was to be used for flint (clear) glass, and the new tanks would be used to make opal (milk) glass.

The improvements were made in good time. "The company is using three tanks of 18 pots capacity," the publication *Industrial Wellsburg* reported in 1899. "This company makes a specialty of opal, and makes anything in that line, from a fruit jar to fine vases. Also tank flint glass is made into any kind of ware desired." Frank Glass Company business was said to amount to \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year, with about 100 hands employed.

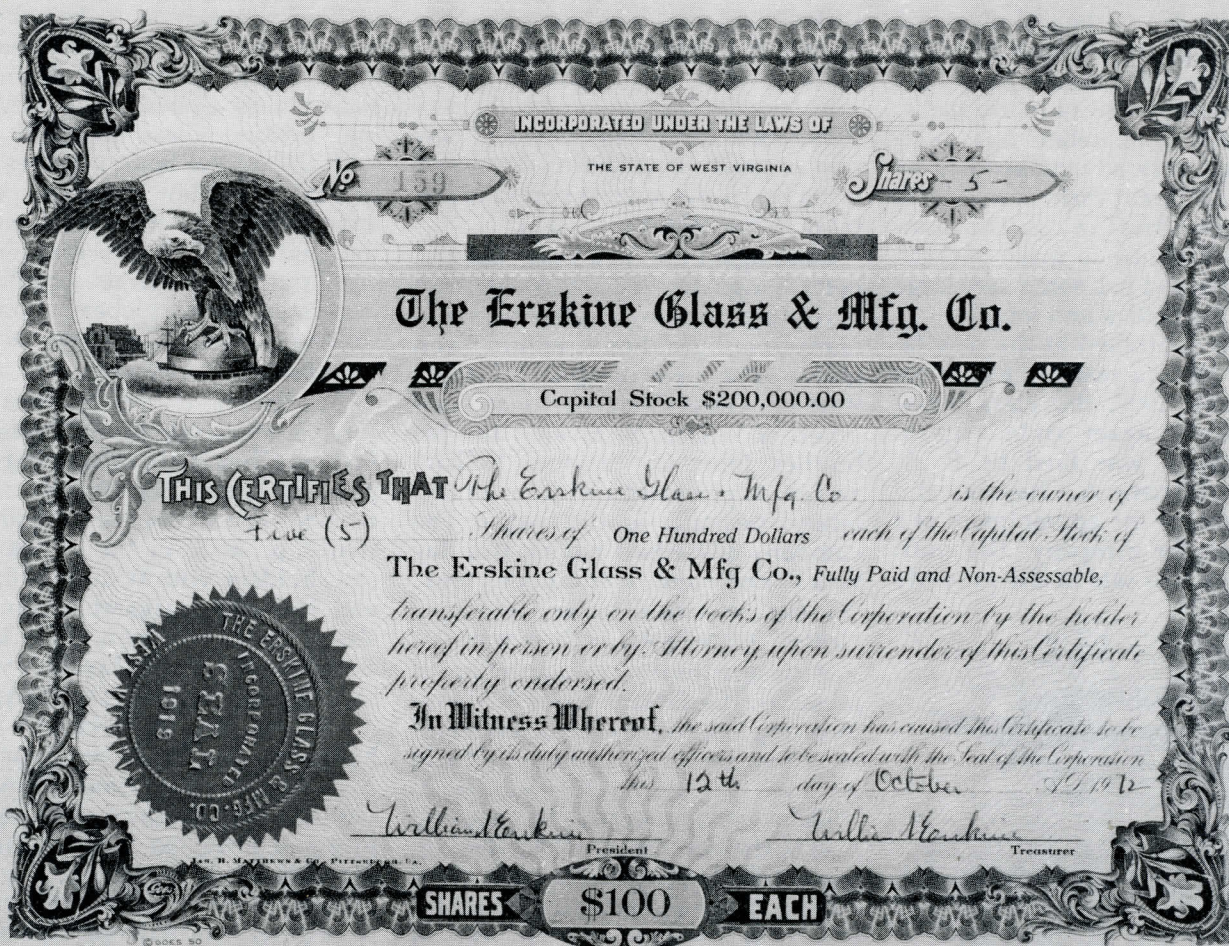
"The Frank Glass Company is running three small tanks at present on a line of opal specialties," reported *The Commoner & Glassworker* in May of the same year. "Frank McCarty, the Martins Ferry inventor of the patent vacuum fruit jar, has placed his invention at Frank's, where it is being worked on royalty. Mr. Frank says there is no question as to its success, and states that he has already booked a number of good orders for it. Plain and embossed tile in opal is also being made at this place for Ohio parties."

Frank McCarty's jar was patented in 1899. McCarty was an Ohio blacksmith with an inventive streak, having already patented a hot air heater, a non-churning milk can and a machine for separating tin plate. His vacuum jar was made of clear glass with a milk glass stopper and rubber sealing gasket. Embossed lettering on the side of the jar read THE MCCARTY VACUUM FRUIT JAR PAT. MAR. 7 1899 THE FRANK GLASS CO. SOLE MFGS WELLSBURG, W.VA. The stopper was embossed MCCARTY PAT-MARCH-7-99. The McCarty jar is worth over \$100 to today's antique fruit jar collectors.

But James Frank's hopes for both the improved canning jar and his company's glass plant were misplaced. Despite McCarty's new vacuum jar and their other wares, on September 4, 1903, the Frank Glass stockholders, including James Frank, initiated action to dissolve the corporation. The company, they stated, was insolvent and law suits were expected.

Once again, the Wellsburg glass plant stood vacant. A receiver was





These five shares of Erskine Glass & Manufacturing Company stock were issued to the company itself.

appointed by the court, and the property, including "a large fully equipped Glass Factory or plant," was ordered sold to the highest bidder. James Frank had previously sold a small section of the original property to the Eagle Glass & Manufacturing Company, and it was for that reason that the plant now measured only two acres, plus some odd roods and perches.

On June 6, 1904, after a previous high bidder had defaulted, the glass plant and furnishings, including "one horse and wagon," were sold to James Frank, acting now as an individual, for \$5,500. Frank immediately resold the plant and property for the same price to Edward C. Flaccus of Wheeling. Mr. Flaccus was known throughout the area as the owner of the E. C. Flaccus Company, a successful packer and wholesaler of mustard, catsup, pickles, and other foodstuffs under the "Stag Brand" la-

bel. [See GOLDENSEAL, April-June 1981.] He may have brought business to his new Wellsburg glass company with orders from his packing company.

A certificate of incorporation was issued on June 11, 1904, to the Wellsburg Glass & Manufacturing Company, with Flaccus as president. J. S. Liggett, F. A. Chapman and C. Grant Fish were the other officers, with James Frank returning as factory manager. Items to be manufactured included food packers' bottles and jars, fruit jars for home canning, lantern globes, and novelties in clear and milk glass.

The community likewise was changing. Midway was by now a part of Wellsburg, originally named Charlestown after its founder, Charles Prather, in 1791. Charlestown was renamed Wellsburg in 1816 after Alexander Wells, Prather's son-in-law.

Like the others before them, the Wellsburg Glass & Manufacturing Company seems to have done well for only a few years. Then it, too, fell on hard times. On May 18, 1907, *The Commoner & Glassworker* reported: "Last Monday fire was discovered in the factory of the Wellsburg Glass & Manufacturing Co.'s plant, Wellsburg, W.Va. and a general alarm was given, but before the firemen could get to the scene the blaze had gained headway and little could be done to save the building which is almost a total wreck. The loss will amount to about \$40,000, with \$10,000 insurance."

Plans were quickly made for the restoration of the plant, and on October 12, 1907, *The Commoner & Glassworker* had better news. "The fine new glass house of the Wellsburg Glass & Manufacturing Co. has been completed," the journal reported. "A burst tank, floods and the total de-



struction by fire of the old plant did not discourage the capitalists back of this enterprise. The buildings and the general arrangement of lehns, tanks, mold shops and office has been worked out very advantageously by Manager C. Grant Fish, formerly of the Jefferson Glass Co. . . . The Company will continue to make packers' ware chiefly and has some very large contracts for bottles and jars."

Business continued in the new facilities for about a year and a half, but on April 24, 1909, the glass house and property again ended up in court. Petition was filed by F. A. Chapman, Christie A. Chapman and J. S. Liggett for the appointment of a receiver for the company. The court agreed, and the sale of the property



Erskine's late 1930's "perfect seal" jar was handy for refrigerating leftovers.

was eventually made to W. T. Emblem of Wheeling, who held a \$20,000 note of the company's. Emblem died before the final paperwork was completed, and in May 1910 the property was conveyed to Elizabeth Emblem, his mother, as stipulated in his will. Two months later the property was sold by Elizabeth Emblem to Samuel and Ida Warden and Sarah Day.

After another apparently idle period, the glass plant was sold in September of 1916 to William S. Erskine.

Erskine had graduated from the University of Pittsburgh school of pharmacy in 1896, and from 1901 until 1921 he was the owner of a chain of Pittsburgh drugstores. In his new role as glass manufacturer he would bring by far the longest period of stability to the Wellsburg plant.

Once again the fires were relit and hefty lungs blew air through iron blowpipes, forming molten glass into many configurations within iron molds. The new company, Erskine Brothers Glass Company, was composed of William S. Erskine and his brother John O. Erskine. William served as president and John as secretary, treasurer and manager. The company advertised having two day tanks and one continuous tank. "Globes, electrical goods, and specialties" were listed as their wares.

With apparently no disruption of business, the Erskine Glass & Manufacturing Company was incorporated as the successor to Erskine Brothers on June 20, 1919. On October 23 William Erskine signed the property over to the new company. Covered in the deed, along with the land, were "the factory building and all machinery, tools, fixtures and apparatus of every kind and description used in the manufacture of glass ware, and all materials and stock on hand and good will of the Erskine Brothers Glass Company."

Business evidently prospered with William Erskine as the moving force of the company. The 1921 *Glass Factory Directory* no longer listed John O. Erskine as an officer of the new company, although he is listed as director of sales in 1934. Brother William, meanwhile, filled many posts, often acting as president, treasurer and general manager simultaneously. He served continuously as company president from the beginning until his death.

Throughout the 1920's the company's products were listed variously as electrical goods, cut glass, opal ware, all-glass lamps, novelties, specialties, and crystal and ruby lantern globes. The making of true ruby glass was a tricky process with many pitfalls, and it's doubtful that Erskine Glass ever really made a true ruby glass of its own. In 1922 the company made an agreement with Raymond Boyle of Wellsburg, allowing him to use part

of their property to make ruby lantern globes to help fill Erskine's orders. Boyle apparently flashed or stained clear globes with a ruby coating. Erskine Glass supplied Boyle with the crystal lantern globes to be treated. Further company correspondence from the 1930's through the mid-1950's shows that Erskine also purchased large supplies of "universal ruby globes" from the Crescent Glass Company, another Wellsburg manufacturer.

*The History of the Northern West Virginia Panhandle* in 1927 listed the Erskine Glass & Manufacturing Company as employing 70 men and 30 women. The 1930's started with 1006 shares of stock in the hands of 23 stockholders, with William S. Erskine and his wife Margaret holding 542 shares between them. The largest stockholder after the Erskines was D. S. Swaney, company secretary, with 200 shares. John O. Erskine no longer held any stock in the company.

The '30's were a time of troubles, with the United States pinching pennies as it struggled with the effects of the 1929 stock market crash and the ensuing Depression. Foreign imports were digging ever deeper into American glass company profits. Imports have been the bane of handmade glassware manufacturers for years, and eventually would be given large credit for the demise of most of the country's handmade glass companies. In 1928 alone, the importation of fancy glassware had amounted to a staggering \$2,904,932, compared with only \$135,411 of American exports of such ware.

Spring flooding of the Ohio River in 1936 put a large part of Wellsburg under water, including the Erskine plant. On May 27, 1936, William Erskine wrote to Ethel Swaney, widow of Erskine's secretary D. S. Swaney: "We are slowly recovering from the flood which has caused more damage than one can imagine. Every day here at the factory there is something different turning up. It will take a lot of hard work to get back in shape." It took money as well, with flood expenses through July 1937 running over \$4,400.

Still the glassware came pouring from the Erskine factory, blown and pressed into molds of infinite variety. In 1937 the company purchased



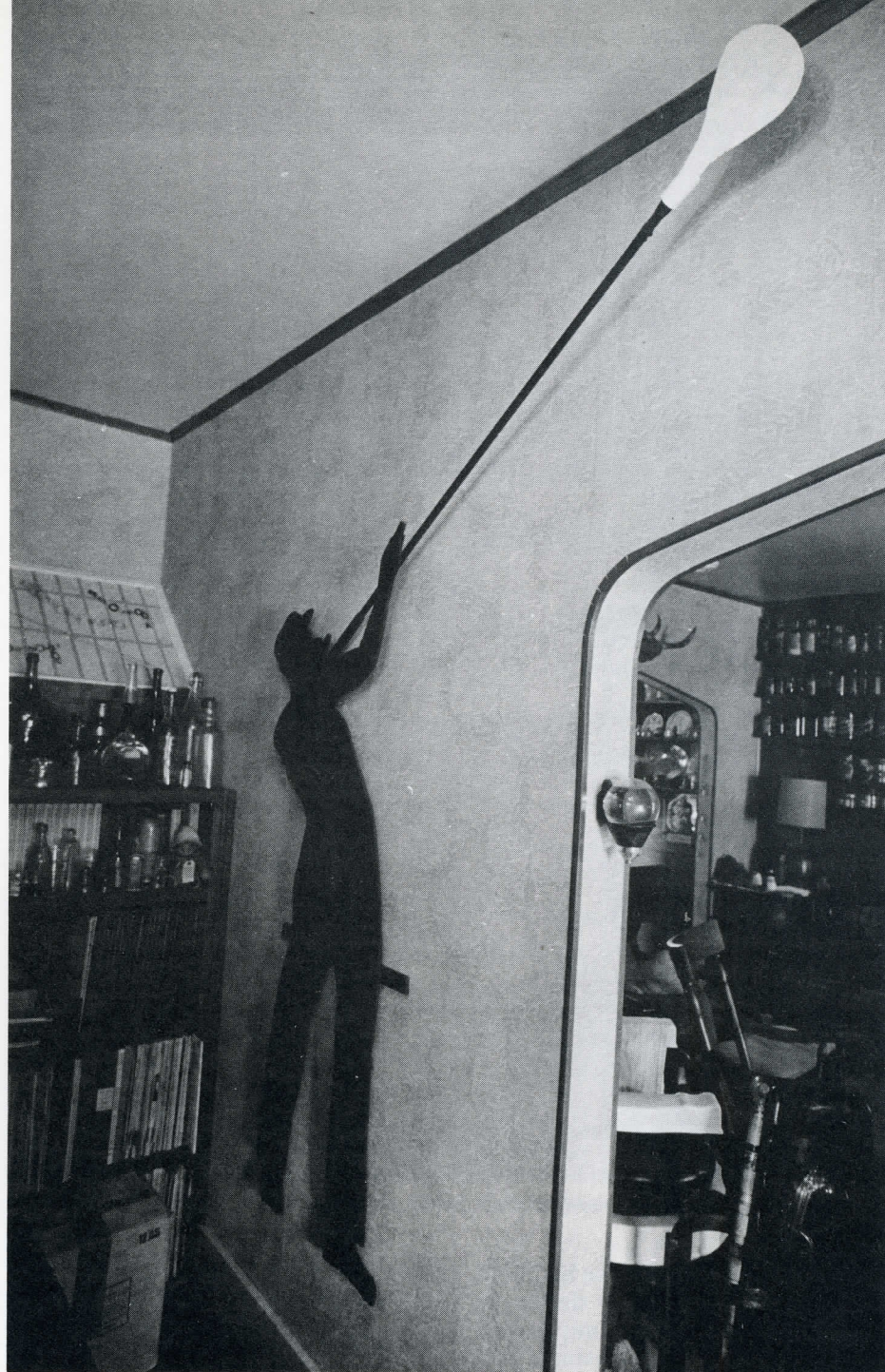
molds for bear, cat, dog, frog, turtle, whale and elephant covered dishes. Many of these have become highly prized collector's items. Records for this period indicate that the company was also making such varied items as lamp bases, seed cups, fish bowls, puff boxes, opal flower pots, lamp chimneys, cocktail and whiskey glasses, shades, a glass lady's head and opal bird baths. Erskine Glass was at this time reported to be making wares in crystal, opal, amber, green and cream glass.

Another, collectible, made by Erskine in the 1939-40 period, was the short-lived jar embossed PERFECT SEAL, designed for home canning or refrigerating leftovers. The wide-mouthed jars were made for the Perfect Seal Company of Youngstown, Ohio. They sealed with a glass or metal-disk lid and rubber gasket, the concept for which had originated with an idea for sealing refrigerators or caskets.

The jars were made in pint, quart and half-gallon sizes in clear glass. Some quarts were also produced in amber, "Depression green," and "Depression pink" glass. The same basic jar was made with the embossing INSTANT SEAL CONSERVA-JAR MFG. FOR PHILCO, as a refrigerator jar. These gasket jars were marketed until the outbreak of World War II, when rubber restrictions forced their abandonment.

The war years left other footnotes in company history. An insurance policy dated July 1943, from the War Damage Corporation, insured the Erskine Glass & Manufacturing Company for \$110,000 against loss or damage "from enemy attack including any action taken by the military, naval or air forces of the United States in resisting enemy attack." Luckily, neither the Germans nor the Japanese ever made it as far as West Virginia.

Acts of nature continued to be more troublesome to the glass plant which had already survived fire and flood. Cold weather during the war years threatened company prosperity by diverting local gas supplies. William Erskine wrote in a January 19, 1943, letter: "Due to the extreme cold weather our Fuel Company has reduced the amount of gas allowed to us, it has therefore been necessary for



This silhouette glass blower was the Erskine company logo. It now adorns the home of our author.

us to curtail our production. We do not expect this condition to last after March 1st."

Profits for 1943 amounted to \$7,413.12, not much compared to the big business profits of the 1980's. Once again high water had eaten into the profit side of the ledger. Flood losses for January 1, 1943, amounted to \$5,812.21, which would have almost doubled the year's profits. Erskine Glass stock was selling for \$25 per share, the evaluation of company buildings, land, and furnish-

ings was set at \$136,480.96, and there were \$22,750 worth of orders in process at the year's end.

On May 20, 1947, following a month's illness, William S. Erskine died at age 74. Management of the company fell to his son, William S. Erskine, Jr., who had been serving as vice president and secretary. The 1948 *Glass Factory Directory* shows an orderly transition, with William S. Erskine, Jr., taking over as president, treasurer and general manager. His mother, Margaret Erskine, was listed





This blocked entry is a graphic reminder that no more glass will be shipped from the old plant.

as vice president, a post she had held in 1934, with additional duties as company secretary. The company always had been a family business and nowhere is this more apparent than in its listing of officers over the years.

As the times and company management changed, so too did the wares. The company had moved away from food preservation items. By the late 1940's Erskine Glass was listed in the *Glass Factory Directory* under "Pressed and Blown Factories" as manufacturers of "illuminating glassware for commercial and residential lighting; also private mold work." The private mold work referred to the exclusive production of specific wares for a particular customer, who owned his own glassware molds, as opposed to general production for sale to any and all cus-

tomers through salesmen, sales outlets and catalogs.

In a 1952 speech to the local Rotary Club, William S. Erskine, Jr., stated that the family factory was now concerned primarily with glass for illuminating purposes. "For the past thirty-five years, we have made globes and shades for lighting in the homes, for lighting in our schools, stores and industries." But, he continued, echoing the lament of glass-makers for decades, "the most disturbing field of competition in the glass industry is due to imports; in fact, the American glass producer has always had the problem of glass imported from Japan, Belgium and Czechoslovakia, to name a few." But at Erskine Glass, no matter what the competition, the boss said they had no thoughts of quitting.

So with greater and lesser periods of prosperity, the Erskine Glass & Manufacturing Company went on. In 1973 the *American Glass Review* still listed "W. S. Erskine, president, treasurer and general manager; Margaret H. Erskine, vice-president and secretary." The company advertised illuminating glassware, decorated glass, lamp chimneys and lamp parts. The ware was still hand-blown or hand-pressed, in amber, opal and crystal.

There had been changes, however. The earlier address of 22nd at Yankee Street had been changed to 22nd and Lamplighter Place. A retail shop, the Lamplighter, had been opened on the west side of the plant, facing Lamplighter Place. The shop featured many one-of-a-kind hand-painted lamps, colonial hanging fixtures, miniature oil lamps, painted lamp globes and other collectibles.

Along with the Lamplighter's retail sales, Erskine Glass offered plant tours five days a week. Tours included visits to the mixing room where special sand and other ingredients were mixed to form the basic glass batch, to the molten glass department where the mixed batch and "cullet" (broken scrap glass) were melted, to the mold shop where the glassware molds were designed and maintained, and to the finishing department where the final grinding, etching, and decorating were done.

In the end, higher operating expenses, declining sales, aging management and foreign imports won out. William S. Erskine, Jr., retired in 1980. For the first time Erskine Glass was run by other than family members. The name remained the same under the new president, Arthur B. Scott, but by late 1981 the company had filed for bankruptcy. In 1984, after all the plant furnishings had been auctioned off, the empty shell was again sold, this time reportedly for its salvage value.

The corner lot stands idle once more. The glass-blowers and other hands have moved on, taking the creative clamor of their work with them. The fires are out and the site that saw glass production for almost a century is again as silent as when James Daltzell first laid eyes on the place back in 1883. ♣



It's just too much publicity for a old lady like me," Stella Gordon chuckles. "Don't know why everybody's so interested all of a sudden. You know, I've gotten a hundred, maybe a hundred and fifty letters, from post office people, from people who used to live here, from all over the country almost. Just too much publicity, I say."

She continues smiling, though, as she talks more about the article which appeared in a recent issue of *Postal Life*, a national publication for postal workers. Why there? Because Stella has worked the post office in Newberne, Gilmer County, for 61 years — ever since she and her husband began working together as postmaster and store clerk in 1925. And since L. D. Gordon died in 1967, Stella has been the postmaster herself.

Stella, now 82, is beautiful. Today she is wearing a bright blue dress that reflects itself in her eyes. Her short white hair is slightly waved and fluffs around her lined face. Her hands are steady as she records a sale in the general store that houses the Newberne post office. This time, it's two stamps and three pieces of gum. The customer, a small woman in her early 20's, slips around behind the counter to help herself to the bubble gum. Her cropped pink tee-shirt is lettered in grayish-purple — "Choose LIFE." Her errand completed, she hurries back out into the bright sunlight.

The store is again quiet. As Stella waits for Janet Sheets, the rural route postal driver, she talks about the past. "Used to be a lot more people around here," she says. "Now we're mostly 'retarded' — you know, 'retired.'" She glances up from the low chair where she sits to make sure that her joke has been understood. Then she continues. "Everybody had a farm. My father and grandfather were farmers, and so were my husband's people. Corn, hay, the usual kind of stuff. We raised what we needed, and what we had extra — like milk and eggs — we sold to the store to get what little bit of cash we needed. Didn't need much," she adds, "just enough for boots in the winter and a pair of shoes now and then. Mama cracked out walnuts and shipped them to some company



Stella Gordon has worked in the Newberne store and post office for 61 of her 82 years. She is in no hurry to quit.

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# "Enough World for Me"

## Stella Gordon of Newberne

By Barbara Smith  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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somewhere, too. That and the milk and eggs, and the selling of some cattle now and then, brought in all the cash anybody ever needed.

"I was born in Doddridge County but raised in Ritchie," she says of Gilmer's neighbor counties to the north. "I had three sisters and a brother. My husband? From right here on Tanner's Creek. Most of his family, five brothers and two sisters, stayed right around, except for the brother that got killed in World War I, of course. L. D. — that was what my husband was called; that or Doy, because his name was Lawson Doy — and his brother bought the store way back in 1921. Then his brother sold out to L. D., and after we were married in March of 1925 I came here to live, too. We were in a different

building then, but it burned in 1933, just after Christmas. New stock had come in the fall, so the store was full. We'd been insured for \$3,600, but they had cut us back to \$1,800. We lost a lot, but we just moved over to this building and started over.

"We had four children, three boys and a girl," Stella continues. "And now I have 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. One son still lives near, at Coxs Mills. He works for the Farmer's Market in Parkersburg — commutes so that he can stay living here. One of my other sons works for the gas company in Charleston, and the other one is with a trucking company in New Jersey. My daughter lives in Pennsylvania. All of them would have stayed around here, I think, if there'd been



work. Our family's been here in Gilmer County for at least five, maybe six, generations, but there's just one son left." She grins. "Somebody asked him when he was going to retire, and he said, 'I can't, not as long as my mother's still working!'"

Stella goes on to talk about the early days of the general store and the post office. "Never had to carry any paper goods back then." She stands to point to the upper shelves beside her. "Pampers, towels, bathroom paper, freezer bags — never carried anything like that. But now we couldn't get along without them, could we?"

Other shelves carry the usual variety of a country store, everything from ant-killer and out-of-season Christmas ornaments to electrical fuses and colic medicine and an old shoebox of men's oxfords marked at \$4.95. Yes, Stella states, she still takes care of the store by herself, "but I'm not keeping up as well as I used to." The store is clean, though, the light green walls looking fresh and inviting. The contrast of new and old, of Kellogg's Frosted Flakes on the shelf right behind the old string dispenser,

seems just right.

Stella talks freely of storekeeping in times past. "There used to be a Hope office here, Hope Gas, and the men would stop in for gloves and that kind of thing. Never bought much lunch or anything — they packed lunches at home. But they'd stop by for gloves. My husband would come in and sweep the store at 5:00 A.M., and we'd stay open until 6:00 or so at night.

"People would come in and buy two or three barrels of flour at a time. This counter," Stella gestures to the 20-foot length beside her, "would be piled to the ceiling with bags of flour. Used to scare me to death. You know how long it would take to sell that much flour, especially after people started buying bread? Our supplies had to be brought in the only way the wholesalers would sell them — by the wagon load or the half-wagon load, and we'd have so much! That's what broke down this floor." Now she gestures to the warped wooden planks under her feet. "The weight of the flour and the feed. It was tremendous.

"Back in those days," she contin-

ues, "everything had to be weighed out." Testimony to that fact is seen in the huge old weighted scales still resting on the porch of the store. "Now everything comes packaged. Don't have to weigh a thing.

"In the early days," Stella reports, her eyes focusing far out the window, "Doy had to haul everything from Toll Gate or Pennsboro. He'd take the horse and the wagon and be gone for two days. Later on, after there were trucks, he'd take the wagon out to the road, what's now Route 47, where he'd meet the trucks and then haul the rest of the way."

The subject changes. "Entertainment? We worked. Didn't have any kind of entertainment except church, and that was only once a week. I think," she smiles, "that most people went to church more for the fellowship than for the worship. It was the only place they had to go. We did have something like work parties now and then, but mostly for people in trouble — sickness or death or an accident, something like that. If you were able, you were expected to carry your own load. And friends? Just the people who lived close by, and fami-

Mail time brings postal patrons in to talk. Here Willard Byrd and Tracy Riddle converse.





ly, of course. There were some family doings now and then. But mostly we worked and we took care of our own.

"When I was young, maybe 16 or 17, there'd be a silo-filling now and then, and I'd go stay for a week or so and help with the cooking and cleaning, and I'd look after the children. A lot of people would come in to help fill the silo. I'd get paid maybe \$2 a week. The money? Of course I'd take it home and give it to my parents. They'd put it to good use, like for clothes or food or shoes."

"School," she continues, ticking off the stages of a long lifetime. "First I went to the Burnt House grade school. That was a one-room with all the grades. There were about 30 students and the teacher. Sometimes the teacher was somebody local, and sometimes somebody was brought in and we'd board them. They were chosen by the school board, and the board, I think, was sort of political. The pupils did the maintenance, of course. One of them would sweep out at the end of the day, and one of them would clean the blackboards. We all helped now and again. We studied arithmetic and reading —

Ray's Readers they were called — and United States history and spelling and English and geography. World geography didn't mean very much until we were older and World War I came along. And we had something called health or hygiene, too. Then I went on to Harrisville High School. That seemed a long, long way from home.

"I never have traveled," Stella smiles. "I've seen the Atlantic Ocean, in New Jersey, but I've never been across the Mississippi." Her arm sweeps to take in the whole room and the Gilmer County hills outside. "This is enough world for me."

The subject changes again, this time to the postal service. "When we started we didn't get any salary, just two or three cents for each stamp we sold. Yes, we got all of the stamp money, but that's all we got. Plus maybe two or three cents for each money order. We made about \$30 every three months. The government kept all the parcel post and money order money. That's how they got their cost, I guess. We'd order our stamps and send our money orders to Richmond, the sectional office back then.



Stella as a high school freshman. Photographer unknown, 1921.

And once a year or so a postal inspector would come around to check us. It was all pretty simple. Now, though, I get a letter almost every day from Clarksburg with some form or another to fill out. They're always asking me for my phone number, for instance, and I figure if that fella would just look in the pile on his desk he'd find my number 30 or 40 times. So many forms to fill out — the government knows lots more

Sorting Newberne's mail is not the chore it is in the state's major cities. Postal driver Janet Sheets is responsible for getting the mail there.







Husband L. D. Gordon with Stella, about 30 years ago. "We both belonged in the hills," she says of the late Mr. Gordon. Photographer unknown.

about you than you know about yourself." She chuckles again, then goes on.

"That's where I make my deposits, too — send them to the Empire Bank in Clarksburg for deposit to the Post Office. They provide all my books for the postal service. I made up my own books for the store.

"Yes, I still hand-stamp the letters. No need for a machine here. I figure I don't average more than 20, 25 pieces of mail a day. It depends upon the time of the month and the season. Still, people need the post office. They go mostly to Glenville and Weston for their groceries now, just stop here for something they forgot. But they still figure they need the post office. It's one of the smallest kind, fourth class. We serve maybe 48 or 50 houses, half on the rural route that Janet delivers and half here in the store. Janet goes down Spruce Creek, and the rest come here to get their mail.

"One good thing, not many around here are on food stamps. That would be a real nuisance," she says, thinking of the bookkeeping involved for the store. Stella figures that a tourist looking for Appalachian poverty would be wasting time on Tanner's Creek. The roads from Weston are lined with clean, well-kept houses snuggled up against the sun-tipped hills behind them. There is no big industry nearby, so the peo-

ple of the area work in a wide variety of occupations. Some are in the mines, some work for the State Highway Department or the Department of Natural Resources, and some commute to Pennsboro or Weston or Glenville. A great many of them own four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Stella is again talking postal work when Janet Sheets arrives, a mail bag dangling from her hands. Stella moves quickly behind the counter and the room divider which reaches from the countertop almost to the ceiling. There are three openings, a large one under the counter, a drop-slot above, and a small window through which Stella pushes the sorted rural-route mail to Janet. Janet re-sorts those pieces into the pigeon-holes on the wall above the big freezer.

As she separates circulars and sales catalogs and the three locally popular newspapers — the *Ritchie Gazette*, *Parkersburg News* and *Glenville Democrat* — Janet reports that she has been driving the route for 15 years. In that time, she says, three rural post offices have been taken out — Goffs and Mahone and Burnt House. Now she makes just four post office stops, at Harrisville, Smithville, Newberne and Hazelgreen. In addition, she delivers the rural routes connected to all of these offices. Stella's, she reports, is the last combination general store and post office on her route.

One of Stella's neighbors comes in to visit and wait for the mail. The three women discuss a series of phone calls received by the neighbor. "Somebody from out west," the woman reports, "trying to find out who ordered a book about making money with horses. I keep telling them I'm not the one, but they keep calling back." She gets up from her chair and leans over an old paint can which Stella has provided for a spittoon. "Can't think who it might have been."

Like Stella, this woman does not know where the name of the nearby community of Pickle Street came from. Stella, grinning, says that she heard sometime way back that somebody there once dropped a jar of pickles. "Don't know that that's true," she cautions. For Burnt House, though, the story is clearer. Years ago a house "way back up in Dead Man's Hollow" burned, the fire providing the source of the community name.

Janet and the neighbor leave after half an hour, and Stella settles again into her chair. "Oh, I couldn't ever live in town," she says. "I did go to school in Harrisville, but that's the closest to town that I'll ever come — and I don't even want to go back there." Living outside of West Virginia is out of the question, she says. "I couldn't. I'd just look at that level land and get so bored!" She gazes out of the front door of the store and across the road to the steep hill that faces her. "That's how L. D. was, too. We both belong in the hills. Always did, always will."

Yes, Stella still takes care of her own house and yard. "I do hire a boy to mow for me now, but that's all. I raised a small garden this year. You know, corn and beans and onions and cabbage. And of course, tomatoes and cucumbers." The cucumbers did best this time, she says. "The flowers didn't do much. It was a good year for weeds, though!

"When I go home? Well, I just fix a little something to eat, and then one night I'll dust, and one night I'll run the sweeper, and one night I'll do a little washing. And on Sunday, the day I'm not open here — unless somebody really needs something, you know — I go to church. Right next door, between the store and my





The store keeps Mrs. Gordon busy six days a week, and she will come in on Sunday if "somebody really needs something." Her son can't retire as long as she is still working, she jokes.

house. It's the United Methodist. I've been a Sunday School teacher, and I play the piano when there's no one else to do it. And I've been secretary and treasurer of the Sunday School." She learned to play the piano, she says, because her father insisted on a music teacher coming to their house. Stella and two of her sisters began playing on a pump organ that one sister still owns. "It belonged to my mother's grandfather," she reports, "so it must be about a hundred and fifty years old."

That was part of growing up as a girl, Stella nods — learning to play the piano and to sew and cook and "do the house things." Everyone worked out in the fields, men and women, and the men helped with the big household chores like canning and repairing and building. But, Stella says, housework belonged pretty much to the women, and the barn and animals belonged to the men.

"That's what I like on television," she says, shifting back to the subject of religion. "The little I do watch is religious programs or music. I like the preaching." It seems as likely that the TV people could learn religion by watching Stella Gordon. She and her world, the store and the church and the hills that surround and protect them all, are a sermon in themselves, a testimony to the beauty and value of work and of the land and the past. ♣



This is where Mrs. Gordon has done business for herself and for Uncle Sam for a half-century. The building is a former lodge hall.





These stills were rounded up in the southern counties during a lull in the 1920-21 labor troubles. Judge R. D. Bailey (marked number 1) stands proudly by, as does Major Tom B. Davis (2). Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

# Moonshine

By Charlotte H. Deskins

**M**oonshine. White lightning. Home brew.

The spirits distilled among the crooks and hollows of West Virginia were called by many names. Most of us don't know one from another nowadays but to the folks who made, sold and drank them there were telling differences. To the people who settled the mountains of the southern counties, my McDowell County ancestors among them, whiskey-making was as much a part of their lives as horseshoeing or gathering in the harvest. To many, moonshining was a source of pride.

There were several grades of spirits manufactured in this area during the

1920's and '30's. Moonshine proper looked as clear as fresh spring water. It was usually allowed to "cure" for up to three weeks before it was sold to nearby bars and clubs. White lightning was a cruder drink. It was seldom cured more than a week before being shipped out. Few whiskey-makers would drink white lightning, as it was not up to their standards of taste, but nearly everyone carried a flask of moonshine in his back pocket. Many families also kept a pitcher of this innocent-looking liquid on the kitchen table to share with visitors.

For special occasions, such as weddings, square dances or holiday celebrations, there was hard and sweet

cider, made from the variety of fruits and berries that grew wild on every hillside. Hard cider had been allowed to "work" or ferment, and had a slight kick to it. Sweet cider was nonalcoholic and usually reserved for the children.

A mountain distiller's crowning achievement was his corn liquor. This very special drink was aged for several years before consumption. Corn liquor was aged through a process called "charring," similar to that employed by some commercial distillers today. Fresh moonshine was stored in barrels that had been charred on the inside by setting fire to them, then washing with lots of clear, boiling water. Some sought a little extra flavoring by frying small pieces of oak or hickory and adding this to the whiskey. In three weeks the whiskey would turn a deep cherry red color. It was reputed to be as smooth as any bonded liquor sold on the open market.

Many of those who settled the wild



parts of McDowell County could not understand the government's desire to prevent the sale of their whiskey. They rejected the excise tax on principle, and otherwise could not see that home distilling did any harm. To them, a man's liquor was as meaningful as his word. There was no chance he would taint his reputation by selling an inferior or dangerous product. Aside from the hazardous occupation of coal mining, or farming, which was not practical on a large scale, moonshining was the next best money maker. Those men who "ran 'shine" were often respected by the community, and made no attempt to hide their work from family and friends. One woman, a dear and trusted friend named June (all names have been changed in this article), even told me of the time her father made moonshine so she and her brothers could see how it was done.

"He had this copper coil — 'worm' he called it," June remembers. "He had made it himself many years ago. When he quit making moonshine he hid it. Many people searched and searched for Daddy's coil, but they never found it. We children kept on begging and begging for him to run us off a batch and finally he said he would.

"Mama didn't want him having anything to do with it," she continues. "Once he made and sold it for money years ago and he had never gotten caught. Now he was 62 years old and she was afraid he would get arrested and have to spend the rest of his life in jail. But Daddy was very careful. He bought his sugar and malt at different times, so as to throw off any suspicion. Finally, Mama relented and let him set up his still in the kitchen.

"He aged that mash for about three or four weeks. At last it was ready to run. I wanted the first drink that came out and so did my brother, Jim. When liquid first started to trickle out I grabbed a cup and stuck it under the spout. Daddy pushed my hand away. 'The first little bit's poison,' he explained. He ran off about a pint and threw it away. After that he ran off another quart. Then because Mama was still so worried he asked the boys to take the rest of it out somewhere and get rid of it." Here

June smiles, "I don't know exactly what they did with it but it all got gone!

"My father had a brother who loved Daddy's moonshine better than anything," she goes on, now traveling further back in memory to her father's days as an active moonshiner. "He couldn't make any of his own because it always tasted horrible! So he would raid Daddy's still. Several times we had to move without telling him, just to protect our income. A few weeks later he would track us down. 'Why didn't you tell me you were moving over here?' he would ask. Daddy would answer, 'Because, you sorry So-and-So, I didn't want you to know it!' Then he would take him in the house and give him a drink."

According to June, most women, including her mother, were violently opposed to moonshining. It was, after all, illegal, and had their husbands gotten caught they might have ended up in the Moundsville prison for years. Still, the men had large families to raise and sometimes little means of supporting them.

"My mother helped him with the home brew," she says, "because he always got it the wrong temperature. She was a much better hand when it came to that. She used her large sauerkraut crock for the mash. I remember one time when I was about five and a half years old they were making a batch of home brew. She cut up some bananas and put into it. I asked Daddy what it was for and he said it would be good for drinking when it got done. He told me how it was supposed to look and then he sat me on a stool to watch it while he went across Laurel Ridge to cut timber.

"Well, I sat there and watched it and pretty soon it got to looking just like he said it would. So I took me a little nip. It was good. So I had another sip and then another. Finally, I decided to make my way over to Laurel Ridge to get Daddy. When I got there I was weaving on my feet. My brother thought something was wrong with me and tried to send me back home. I screamed and cussed at him, which was very unlike me. Daddy heard all the commotion and came over to see what was going on. 'That brew's ready,' I whispered to him.

'Come over by me and sit on this log,' he said. 'Now then, are you sure it's ready?' 'I am for a fact,' I said. 'I tasted it myself to make sure!' Daddy had to carry me home. My legs felt like rubber. When Mama saw me that way, she took a fit on Daddy. That was my first and last taste of home brew."

Moonshiners got their name because they preferred to work by the light of the moon. They felt safer from the law at night. They were aided in the business by "blockaders," who were responsible for carrying the moonshine to its selling point. Most blockaders were members of the family. One moonshiner even employed his nine-year-old son. He would sit the boy on a horse and give him a Colt .45 to carry in his pocket. Six gallon jugs were stashed in the saddlebags. One day the boy met a police officer at the mouth of the creek. He asked him where he was headed. The boy told him he was going to the town of War to get groceries for his mother. The policeman let him by without checking his packs.

An older son I'll call Jesse Harper was carrying 'shine for his father. He had his wife and baby daughter in the car with him and it was pouring the rain when they were stopped by the police. He had hollowed out the front seat and hidden beneath it were several gallon jugs of moonshine. They were on their way to a club in Bradshaw to make a delivery. Jesse got out and obligingly let the lawmen check the car's trunk. They did not search the front seat. After all, they could hardly ask a woman and newborn baby to step out into the storm.

Another pair of young blockaders were even more industrious. They made their runs in a 1937 Ford. They had managed to trade up to a second-hand spray paint compressor. They would make a trip in a black car, rush home and repaint it red or blue or gray. Since they kept the car locked in the barn during the day no one knew they owned one of any description, and the local police were kept busy looking for what they thought were different cars. To further confuse matters, the blockaders made sure the license plates were partially obscured with mud. Both were excellent drivers, adept at executing the



"bootlegger's turn," accomplished by sliding a speeding car until it points in the opposite direction during hot pursuit.

Whiskey made in the old-fashioned way is difficult to find these days. Most people are tight-lipped when questioned. In reality, many recent ancestors made at least a few gallons for family use. Recipes varied, but everyone agrees that it took three certain ingredients to ensure a good batch — a good, thick mash; clear, pure water; and proper temperature regulation.

Mash is a mixture of malt and sprouted, ground grain such as corn, rye or barley, and corn meal or sugar. Sometimes yeast was added to start the mixture fermenting. During fermentation the mash must be kept at just the right temperature or the resulting "beer" will be flat and the alcoholic content will not rise. The type of water used in the mash is important. Some say it should only come from a natural spring or well, and all prefer soft water over hard. One way to check the water for minerals is to look at the banks where it is flowing. If touch-me-nots are growing, the water is hard. If red horsemint is there, the water is soft and good for whiskey-making.

The oldtimer's way of telling the alcoholic content of whiskey was by checking its "bead." When shaken, moonshine will form bubbles or beads on top. A small bead indicated that the liquor was made from corn. The larger the bead, the more sugar had been used. Sometimes a greedy moonshiner would cut his liquor with water to increase his yield. This destroyed the natural bead, so he might use cooking oil to give a false bead. An experienced consumer was not fooled. Beading oil makes a bead that sits high atop the liquor. A true bead rides low, half-in and half-out.

One of McDowell County's finest brewers was Randolph Hankins. Randolph had 12 children and his overworked, worried wife was constantly concerned with the health and safety of her brood. None of the children had learned how to swim because she refused to let them near the water. One day while she was off washing clothes for a sick neighbor their father took them down to the

swimming hole. He had a still in the back of a nearby cave and the mash was about ready to run. When they got there, the mash had made up a lovely, golden beer. He put the older boys and girls to work helping him bottle it. They would cork a few and sip a little. Soon the whole lot of them were feeling no pain. An hour later the wife returned to an empty house. She heard some laughter coming from the swimming hole and followed it. There were her babies, all of them, splashing around like ducks!

There were some for whom drinking proved a bad experience. Some men just couldn't handle it. They drank to excess and became surly and threatening to their families. One such fellow became known as "Turkeyhead" Morgan. Every time he went on a drinking spree he saw and heard strange things. Once he barricaded his wife and children in the barn, claiming that the world was coming to an end. His wife would plead with him to stop drinking. "I'll give it up when the Devil himself tells me to and not before!" was always his answer.

One Saturday night Morgan was coming home from the still with a fresh jug of corn liquor. He stopped in the middle of a wide field and sat down on a flat rock where he began talking to the Devil in a drunken voice. "I've got a jug here that's never been cracked," he said. "If drinking is the mortal sin my woman says it is, then give me a sign and I'll smash it on this rock right here and now!"

He waited. No reply. Only the quiet midnight wind. He uncorked the jug and, raising it in a toast to the Devil, took a big swig. According to Morgan what happened next is the solid truth. He heard a loud noise and looked up to see what it was. That entire moonlit field had sprouted turkey heads! Thousands of them, alive and gobbling! He smashed his jug on the rock and hightailed it for home. After that night you couldn't get "Turkeyhead" within a mile of moonshine.

At times making moonshine could be embarrassing. Once a couple named Aurvil and Dolly Perkins were running a still out in their barn. Aurvil got word that the law was planning to raid his place. He and Dolly quickly poured the mash into

bottles and jugs left open so it could continue to ferment. "Hide these someplace safe and warm," he told her. She got in such a dither she corked them all by mistake and hid them behind a big, overstuffed chair in the living room. Just as she was finishing up, Aurvil saw a rider in the distance.

It was not the sheriff they expected, but the new preacher come to call on them. They were very pleased and invited him in. Dolly went to put on some coffee and Aurvil took their guest into the living room and seated him in the best chair — the overstuffed horsehair one. They sat talking in the warm parlor. The corked mash must have thought it was cozy, too, for it started to roll. Pop! went the first stopper. Then another and another. Corks were flying like bullets and mash was spewing all over. Aurvil managed to get the preacher out in one piece but one wonders how the poor clergyman explained smelling like he had fallen headfirst in a still to the rest of his flock.

Moonshine was more than a beverage. It was also the base for many homemade medicines. Camphor was dissolved in moonshine to make smelling salts. Liquor was held on a painful tooth (and sometimes accidentally swallowed) and it was used to make cough syrup and treat croup. For croup, a congestive problem suffered by babies, moonshine was burned with turpentine. The sick infant was held over the smoke and made to take deep breaths until his lungs cleared.

As a child I suffered with bronchitis. My father made a mixture of moonshine, rock candy and a little glycerine. Peppermint candy was also soaked in it and given to me as cough drops. While modern physicians might not agree with this practice, it did me no harm whatsoever and may have saved my life.

Today the moonshiner and his still have pretty much gone the way of the washboard and buggywhip. Illegal whiskey is apt to be made in old, lead-soldered auto radiators and cut with anything from wood alcohol to bleach, resulting in countless deaths each year. Moonshining as a respected art is on the wane, the victim of cheap legal liquor and more prosperous times in the mountains. ★



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By Susan Beates Hansen  
and Jeanne Grimm

# Salvaging the Past

## The West Virginia Newspaper Project

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This solemn newsboy displays copies of the October 24, 1913, edition of *The Miners Herald* of Montgomery. This paper survives as today's *Montgomery Herald*, but many other West Virginia newspapers have disappeared without trace. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection, WVU.

From the mining towns of the southern coalfields to the rich farm lands along the Ohio River to the historic countryside of the Eastern Panhandle, we have traveled the back hallways and stairwells of courthouses, newspaper offices, libraries, small county museums and the attics and basements of private individuals. We were seeking missing, unpreserved and previously unavailable newspapers from West Virginia's past, as part of a special research project at West Virginia University.

The old papers are worth the trouble. They contain much valuable historical information from all periods of our state's past. *The Potomac Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser*, the first newspaper in what is now West Virginia, began publication in Shepherdstown in 1790. Weekly papers sprang up in several towns as the population moved westward. The first daily newspaper began publication in Wheeling in 1835. By 1855, Wheeling had six different dailies and was also the center for German-language newspaper publication in West Virginia. At least 43 towns had a newspaper press during the 1790-1863 era. Several publications came about as a result of the Civil War. Unionist, Confederate and several camp newspapers made their appearance during these years, though many lasted only a few months. *The Guerilla*, "Devoted to Southern rights and institutions," born on September 28, 1862, in Charleston, is an example of one of the many papers established during what its editors surely thought of as the War for Southern Independence.



# TO THE PUBLIC!

I PUBLICLY PROCLAIM AND DELIBERATELY DENOUNCE

## W. F. Richards.

of the Clarksburg Telegram, as a moral leper,

### A Ditch Delivered Vagabond,

devoid of every manly impulse, moral instinct, or generous sentiment. I openly characterize and execrate him before the people of Clarksburg as an unclean moral and social outlaw---

### AN UNMITIGATED LIAR!

an unutterable coward, and an unblushing villain. And that

## A. L. Hustead,

his filth purveying, pettifogging scavenger, is a shabby

### Second Edition of His Master.

I will deliver a free lecture at the Court House to-night, Monday.

## Matt M. Cooper,

Room 3, Central Hotel, Clarksburg, W. Va.

Clarksburg News Job Room Print.

Newspaper publishing aroused great passion a century ago, as this Clarksburg poster shows. Richards was a Republican who had moved down from Pennsylvania following the Civil War, and Matt Cooper a staunch Democrat. The date was between 1876 and 1891. Courtesy West Virginia Collection.

West Virginia newspaper publishing underwent many important changes following the Civil War, including the introduction of wood pulp paper, cylindrical presses and other technological innovations. The Mountain State's many papers continued to publish the current events of their local regions and of the state and nation. For these and more reasons, newspapers have become a major source of firsthand information for researchers of the past. However, historians and genealogists have often had trouble finding the issues they needed. Clearly, some effort had to be made to make these important papers available to the public.

In July of 1983, the National En-

dowment for the Humanities awarded a grant to the West Virginia and Regional History Collection of the West Virginia University Library, to begin the West Virginia Newspaper Project. West Virginia is one of the first states to participate in this nationwide effort to preserve our country's newspaper heritage. This is the first time a concerted effort has been made to research the history of all the newspapers ever published in West Virginia, as well as to locate, catalog and preserve all of the issues which still exist.

Project staff sent over 400 questionnaires to all of the known libraries, historical societies, courthouses, newspaper offices and private collec-

tors in the state in August 1983, to begin the process of locating all existing newspapers. Ninety-seven percent of the locations which were realistically expected to have newspapers responded to this survey. Despite this incredible response, we determined that for the sake of thoroughness and accuracy we needed to examine all the newspaper files in person. The West Virginia Newspaper Project was the first newspaper project to conduct such fieldwork and has since provided advice to other state projects, such as the Pennsylvania Newspaper Project, in the methods we developed.

Our field trips brought results, as well as much satisfaction and enjoyment. We visited nearly every newspaper office in the state. The differences among the many publishing enterprises intrigued us. Some West Virginia newspaper offices are completely computerized, while others are still using "hot metal" Linotype machines a hundred years old. The floods which devastated many counties in November 1985 destroyed three newspaper offices and caused a considerable amount of damage to several others. One of these papers, the *Pocahontas Times*, was the last in the nation to use some handset type; it now employs a computerized laser system. All the newspaper offices damaged by the flood continued publishing with the help of neighboring newspapers. The spirit of help and cooperation that our project has received obviously pervades the newspaper industry in the Mountain State.

Others helped us as well. The West Virginia Press Association and the West Virginia Library Association both provided space in their publications and time on their convention programs. Members of both organizations have assisted by locating issues, providing historical information and giving us access to their collections. The executive director of the Press Association, Bill Childress, has been particularly helpful as our ambassador to publishers and editors across the state. Numerous individuals, historical society members and librarians also helped the project. Mary Jenkins and the Archives and History Division of the Department of Culture and History in Charleston



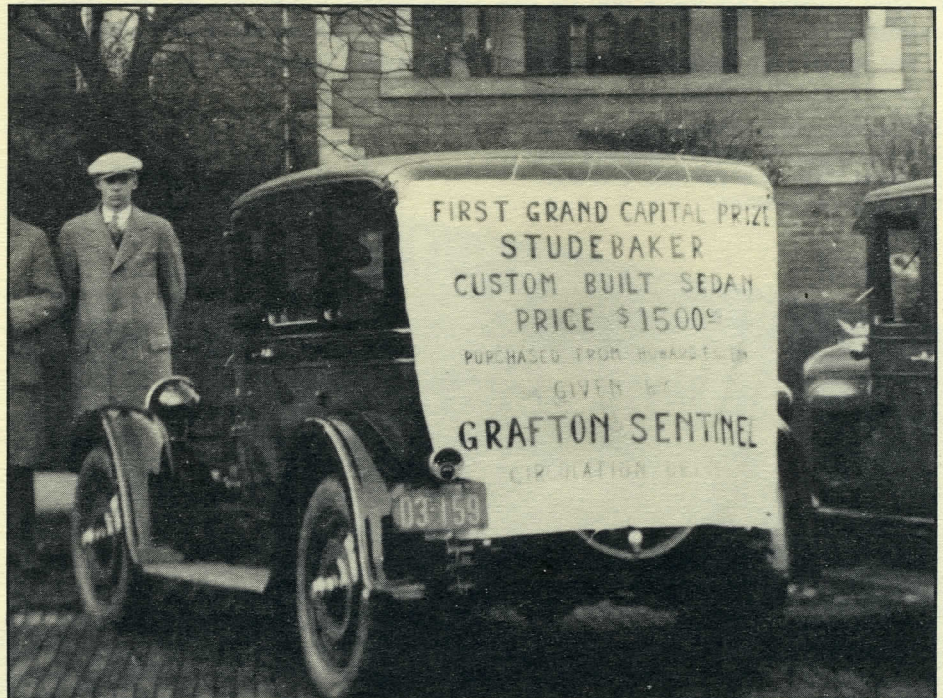


Above: This is the office of the *Upshur Record* in Buckhannon, probably in the 1890's. The woman at left handsets type. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

Below: Few newspapers go in for such expensive prizes today, but this Studebaker sedan was offered as a circulation gimmick by the *Grafton Sentinel*. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

have been of immense help. Meade Dorsey of the *Spirit of Jefferson* in Charles Town, Clinton Nicholas of the *Clay County Free Press*, Jerry and Alice Adkins of the *Cabell Record* and Naomi Pickens of the *Putnam Democrat* loaned volumes for microfilming. So did the Kanawha, Hampshire and Ohio county public libraries, historical societies in Harrison and Mineral counties, and many individuals and publishers.

We found a lot of concern for the preservation of newspapers during our travels. Saving newspapers has always been a problem, partly because of the large size of most papers but primarily due to the quality of the paper itself. Before 1870, newspaper paper was made from cotton rags, which had a low acid content and was also more sturdy than modern newsprint. Wood pulp paper, used since the 1870's, has a very high acid





# Reading the Papers

GOLDENSEAL readers wishing to explore the history of West Virginia in the newspapers of the day will find the largest collections in Morgantown and Charleston. The West Virginia and Regional History Collection at the WVU Library and the Archives and History Division of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History each have extensive holdings of old papers. Both institutions welcome the public during their normal operating hours.

Historic newspapers may also be read at Marshall University, and by interlibrary loan at many local public libraries. The papers must usually be read on microfilm, with each agency's staffers available to demonstrate the use of the machines.

If you know of surviving copies of old West Virginia daily and weekly newspapers, the West Virginia Newspaper Project would like to hear from you. Contact them at the West Virginia Newspaper Project, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Library, Colson Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506; (304) 293-3536.

content and yellows rapidly. Thus, it is not surprising to find a newspaper published during the 1830's which is in better condition than one from the 1890's. The best way to preserve wood pulp newspapers is by microfilming them. This enables people to read the issue without having to turn the fragile pages. With the permission of their owners, all newspapers located during our visits will be microfilmed.

We spent our time between visits

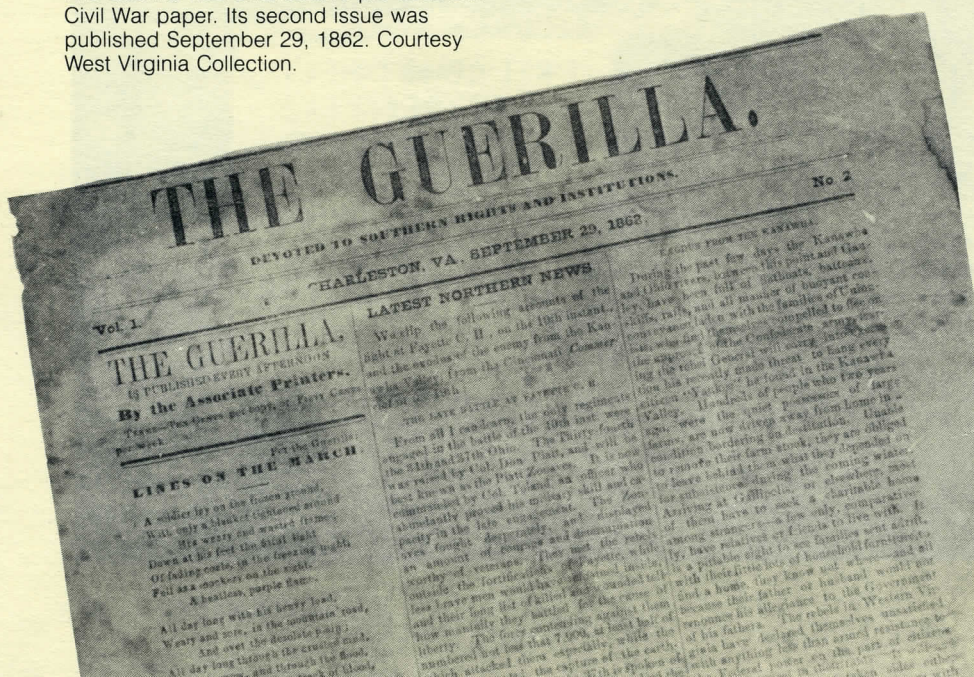
researching the history of all the newspapers known to have existed and cataloging those we were able to locate. The research included reading and searching through county histories, old bibliographies of newspapers, gazetteers and business directories, state blue books, WVU's pamphlet and manuscript collections, and most importantly the newspapers themselves. We discovered that towns such as Cameron in Marshall County and Oceana in Wy-

oming County have had a surprising number of newspapers, and that counties such as Mason, Mercer and Monroe were once publishing meccas. In addition to the 1102 newspapers for which one or more issues have been located, we discovered over 500 newspaper titles for which no issues had yet been found.

We turned up copies of some of those missing titles during our fieldwork. These included a bound volume of the *Mingo Democrat* in the *Williamson Daily News* office; an issue of the *Mountain Messenger* (published in Mason County) at the Virgil Lewis Historical House in Mason; an issue of the *Milton Democrat* at the *Cabell Record* office in Milton; and an issue of the *Ceredo Squedunk* saved from the Rumsdell House in Ceredo by the Gordon family. However, there still remain hundreds of newspapers like the *Farmers Gazette* of Viola (Marshall County); the *Daily Press*, Pondlick (Greenbrier County); the *Mountain Breeze*, Bayard (Grant County); the *Wallace Independent*, Wallace (Harrison County); and the *Yellow Jacket*, Creamery (Monroe County), which have not yet been located. Surely, some copies still exist in someone's attic, basement or an office building's hallway. We would be pleased to hear from GOLDENSEAL readers who know of files or even single issues of any old West Virginia newspaper.

The final goal of our project is two-fold, the preservation of all located issues through microfilming and the publication of the most complete bibliography and publishing history of newspapers ever written for the state of West Virginia. This newspaper directory will include anecdotes, illustrations and an inventory of the known issues of each newspaper which have survived the ravages of time. Information collected during the project has also been entered into an electronic database, the Online Computer Library Center, instantly accessible to over 8,000 computer terminals in libraries across the nation. This means that scholars may look up information about West Virginia papers in major cities anywhere in America, facilitating broader research into the history of the Mountain State. ♣

The *Guerilla* was Charleston's pro-Southern Civil War paper. Its second issue was published September 29, 1862. Courtesy West Virginia Collection.





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# Ernie Carpenter's "Elk River Blues"

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Ernie Carpenter has his first record out. He is not a young man anymore, but after hearing the new album his fans are likely to conclude that the long wait was worth the trouble. "Elk River Blues: Traditional Fiddle Tunes from Braxton County, W. Va.," issued by Augusta Heritage Records last fall, is a fine piece of work.

Mr. Carpenter comes from a legendary Elk River family, his people going back to the days of earliest white settlement in the region. The long family history was outlined in "Ernie Carpenter: Tales of the Elk River Country" in the Summer 1986 GOLDENSEAL, an article based on extensive interviews by Gerry Milnes and Michael Kline.

The article was reprinted for inclusion with the record, for Carpenter's heritage is important to the music he makes. Most of the record's tunes are Appalachian fiddle standards, but the music as played by Mr. Carpenter was shaped by the Elk watershed fiddlers he learned from. His tunes tend to come to him the way his vintage fiddle did, down through the family. Several he learned from his father and grandfather, Shelt and "Squirrelly Bill" Carpenter, one of these tunes dating back to his great-great-grandfather. Most of the others came from Wallace Pritchard, a neighbor, and Uncle Jack McElwain of the Elk headwaters in Webster County. This is Elk Valley music and it is fitting that the name of that beautiful river figure in the title of the record.

This is also very definitely Ernie Carpenter music. Those who have followed his live fiddling will recognize many favorites on the record. "Jimmy Johnson," "Old Sledge" and "Camp Run" are among the tunes familiar to oldtime music fans from Carpenter's too-few public performances, and, allowing for changing accompaniment, their rendering here is largely the way he plays them live.

Family anthem "Shelvin' Rock," commemorating the birth of an ancestor under a cliff during an Indian raid, is given a respectful solo treatment, just as you'd hear it on the Carpenter porch at Sutton.

Mr. Carpenter is accompanied on most other cuts by Milnes and Kline, on banjo and guitar, respectively. The two are outstanding musicians themselves, in this case determined to showcase the talents of an older man both revere. The result is a rich musical offering, from Carpenter and Milnes on the playful opening number, "Flippin' Jenny," a Shelt Carpenter tune recalling a humorous disappointment in love, to the three men racing together on the exuberant "Wild Horses." The musical lavishness of "Elk River Blues" stands in contrast to the starker sound of Augusta's previous fiddle album, where Clay Countian Johnny Johnson played unaccompanied throughout.

I'm not a musician myself, and usually pick my music by the reliable "I know what I like when I hear it" method. "Elk River Blues" I like. However, the Department of Culture and History is blessed with a few fine oldtime musicians on staff and I like to confer with them on musical matters of importance. This time it was Bob Taylor, a champion fiddler and organizer of the annual music contests at Vandalia and Camp Washington-Carver.

Bob confirmed the judgment of my own untrained ear. I didn't take notes on the conversation, but recall comments like "A-plus," and "they couldn't have done it any better." From long personal acquaintance Bob had no doubt about Mr. Carpenter's excellence as a fiddler, and graded the record on Augusta's handling of the musical talent available and the technical quality of the work. He seemed well pleased on both counts.

I believe others will likewise be

pleased. Non-musicians may react to the sheer rushing beauty of old music masterfully played, as I did, while musicians may note the crisp bowing and other matters of the sort that caught Bob Taylor's ear. They are likely to agree on the one important point, that "Elk River Blues" is a well-made, respectful treatment of one of West Virginia's living musical treasures.

—Ken Sullivan

*"Elk River Blues: Traditional Fiddle Tunes From Braxton County, W. Va." (AHR 003) was researched and produced by Gerry Milnes and Michael Kline. It may be ordered for \$9 postpaid, from Augusta Heritage Records, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241. Augusta's other records, "Fiddlin' John," by John Johnson, and "Back Memories," by Randolph County guitarist Blackie Cool, may be ordered from the same address.*





# Goldenseal Index

## Volume 12, 1986

Articles which appeared in Volume 12 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

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The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of the calendar year (e.g., Volume 11, Number 4).

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## In This Issue

TOM CANIFF is a lifelong resident of Steubenville, Ohio, where he serves as a captain on the fire department. Tom and his wife, Deena, have been antique bottle and jar collectors for years, and until recently served as co-editors of the Federation of Historical Bottle Clubs' newsletter, *The Federation Letter*. This is Tom's second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

CHARLOTTE H. DESKINS is a McDowell County native who now lives across the state line in Grundy, Virginia. She received her B.S. in education from Concord College and taught school for several years. Her short fiction and poetry have been published in various magazines, and she has received several awards for her writing from West Virginia Writers and Mountain State Press. Her weekly comic strip, "Fescue," appears in a Virginia newspaper. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

JACQUELINE G. GOODWIN was born and raised in New Jersey, but earned her undergraduate and Master's degrees at West Virginia University. She now lives and teaches in Wirt County. She also freelances, and is currently finishing her first novel. She is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

JEANNE GRIMM was born in Hundred, Wetzel County, and received her B.A. in history from Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio. She is researcher and editor for the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at the West Virginia University Medical Center. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GEORGE GUTSELL is a writer-editor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fisheries Center at Leetown. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

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BARBARA A. SMITH chairs the Division of the Humanities and is an associate professor of literature and writing at Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi. She is the author of numerous works, including poems, short stories, journal articles, and the novel *Six Miles Out*, published by Mountain State Press. She is also editor of the literary quarterly *Grab-a-Nickel* and has edited two anthologies for West Virginia Writers, Inc. She is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

HALI TAYLOR is a freelance photographer and artist living in Shepherdstown. She studied photography at the University of California in San Diego, where she grew up. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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TONY L. WILLIAMS, Associate Dean of the College of Education at Marshall University, was born in Kentucky. He earned his B.A. at Marshall, and his master's and doctorate degrees from WVU. He has published several articles and a college textbook. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



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## Inside Goldenseal

Page 51—A century of glass-making took place on a Wellsburg street corner lot. Erskine Glass was the most successful company there.

Page 42—Wirt County is bee-keeping country, as are neighboring counties in the Ohio Valley. Beekeepers get together at Parkersburg's Honey Festival each fall.

Page 9—Walden Roush is a retired school administrator now educating the public at the State Farm Museum in Point Pleasant. That's him on our cover.

Page 62—Moonshining was once popular throughout the southern counties. McDowell native Charlotte Deskins talks to people who know the old craft.

Page 30—Greg Todd's Aunt Ruth grew up in Marshall County and taught in Clay. He has a warm story to tell about her.

Page 36—Shepherdstown photographer Hali Taylor expresses her love for the changing Eastern Panhandle in pictures. Our "Panhandle Portraits" photoessay is some of her best work.

Page 27—The Leetown Mill was grinding grain before George Washington was president. The building still serves, in another capacity.

Page 16—Russell Fluharty is the Dulcimer Man for many West Virginians. His lifelong efforts to popularize the hammered dulcimer won him the 1986 Vandalia Award.

Page 57—It's a safe bet that Stella Gordon is Gilmer County's oldest postmaster. At 82, she has no plans to quit.

