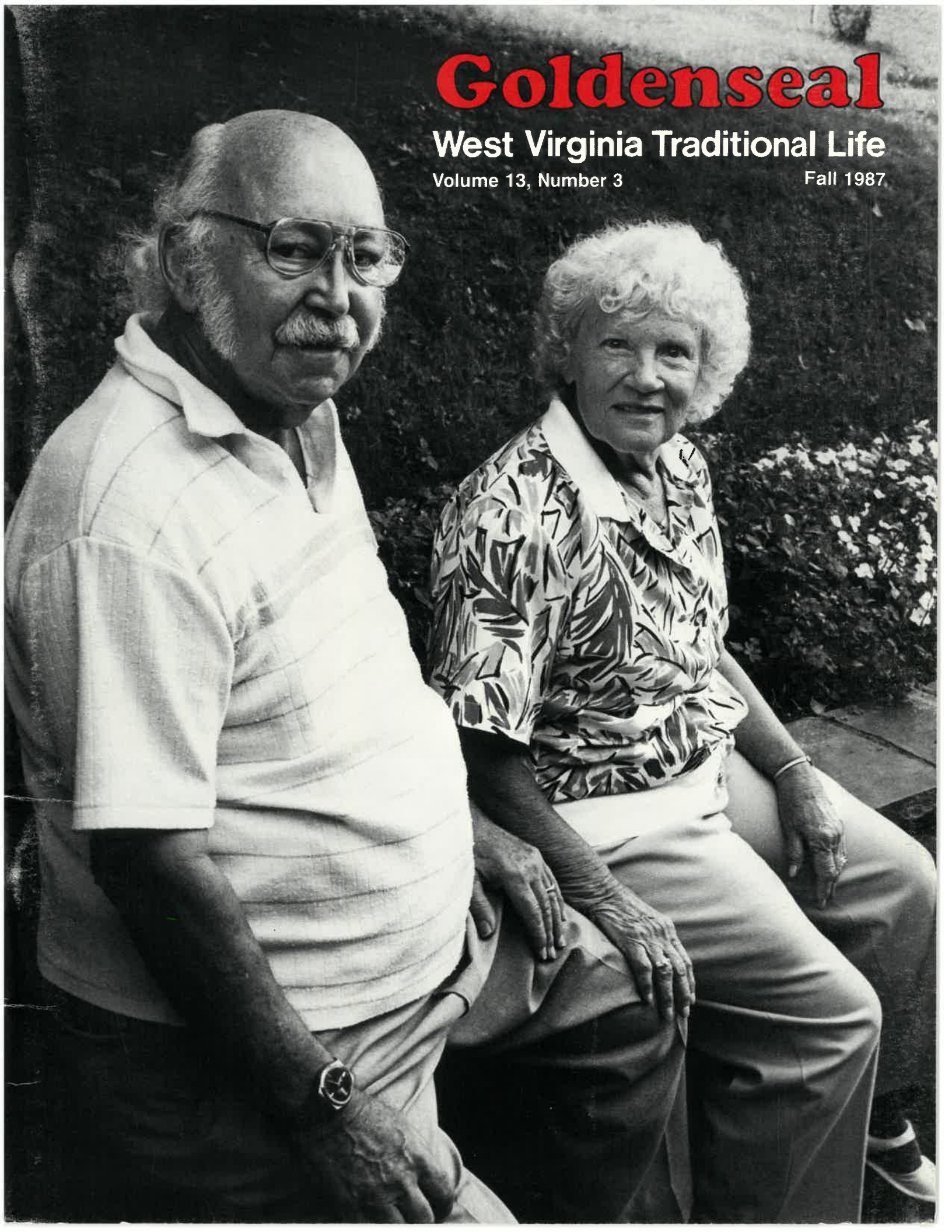

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 13, Number 3 Fall 1987

From the Editor: Renewal Time

The photo you see here is from a recent GOLDENSEAL field trip. The drive took us several miles out a ridgetop in one of the southern counties and, as you can see, it got pretty messy at times. This was one of the drier spots, in fact, and about the only place where photographer Mike Keller could jump out for a picture. In other places the mud was bumper-deep or worse. We mired down a couple of times but finally got through, got the job done, and got home before dark.

Such expeditions don't win us any points back at the State Motor Pool, when we return their Chevy Blazers mud-caked from rooftop to wheel well. (Why do they buy *white* ones, anyway?) We hope our readers appreciate our backroads jaunts a little more, however. We have learned that the good stories are not always found by the side of the hard road.

So we plow the mud, break trail, ford creeks — and sometimes get out and walk. Lest I give the wrong impression, we spend our share of time on West Virginia's fine four-lane highways and city streets, as well. We've graced more than one cool back porch and hospitable kitchen table, too. The point is, we try to find the best of Mountain State traditional culture wherever the search takes us. Any week of the year GOLDENSEAL staffers and freelancers are out combing the state for material to put in your magazine.

That costs money, of course. And publication of the material gathered on such trips costs a lot more. Salaries, overhead, and printing all add up. Beginning with this issue, the entire cost of postage has been shifted to our department for the first time ever. That alone runs several thousand dollars per quarter, adding substantially to our costs.

Readers such as you are our main source of financial support. That brings me around to the point of this editorial. We need your help again. It's time to renew your subscription to GOLDENSEAL or to begin one for the first time.

If you've been with us for long, you know that GOLDENSEAL operates on a voluntary subscription system. That means we ask each reader to contribute to the magazine once each year. Renewal time comes in September, just after the fall issue is published. After that we won't bother you for another year. There are no duns, no discount gimmicks, and a minimum of expensive bookkeeping on this end. It boils down to an honor system, and so far it has worked quite well.

This fall we will proceed as in past years, making things as convenient as possible. You will soon receive a letter from me, asking for your subscription contribution. I will include a coupon, already labeled with your name and address, and a return envelope. Insert your check, drop it in the mail, and you're all set for another year.

That check, incidentally, should be for $12.50, the same as last year. We were able to hold the line, despite overall cutbacks in state government, by doing everything possible to hold down costs. There will be no salary increases here over the coming 12 months. The printing company has agreed to work for the same price, too, and so has our design firm.

Mostly, however, we were able to hold the price line by demonstrating to our bosses the past history of strong and growing reader support for GOLDENSEAL. The Department of Culture and History remains firmly committed to the magazine, subsidizing every issue, but in these lean times we must move toward self-sufficiency. So far, we have made progress. Subscription revenues have grown each year, keeping stride with circulation growth. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. I believe that tradition of reader support will continue this year, but only you can make it so.

That puts it into your hands. If GOLDENSEAL is to continue, you must help out. Please let me hear from you soon.

In the meantime, give this issue a good looking-over. You will find some great reading here, including the long-overdue cover story on Ned Guthrie. The Zickefoose piece takes us back to Randolph County for the first time lately, and the Wellsburg story carries us on up to the Panhandle. With family graveyards on both sides of my own family, the Collins Cemetery struck deep chords with me personally, and I was sorry to have to decline the kind invitation to attend their reunion last month. And, finally, we break ground with the big Joe Savage article at the back, a major eyewitness account of the Mine Wars which has laid unpublished for half a century.

In short, we're proud of it. It's our best work and we think it's the kind of magazine you'll be willing to pay for.

—Ken Sullivan

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

Goldenseal

Volume 13, Number 3 Fall 1987

COVER: Ned and Gladys Guthrie at home in Charleston. "Facing the Music," our story of Ned's career as a musician and union leader, begins on page 9. Photo by Michael Keller.

PHOTOS: Greg Clark, Michael Keller, Robert W. McKinnon, Peggy Powell, Ron Rittenhouse, Bob Schwarz, Chris Spencer.

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.

Columbia, South Carolina
April 23, 1987
Editor:
Please add our name to your list of subscribers. A check is enclosed.

My husband, David Jordan, attended schools in Fairmont and Chester and is a graduate of WVU. I'm from Mullens (actually the coal camp of Itmann) and I especially enjoy reading articles about southern West Virginia. Most other publications seem to ignore that part of the state, and it's refreshing for me to read favorable articles about the history and culture of that area.

We're looking forward to receiving our first issue. We can then return all the "borrowed" issues to our friend!
Sincerely,
Teresa McNeely Jordan

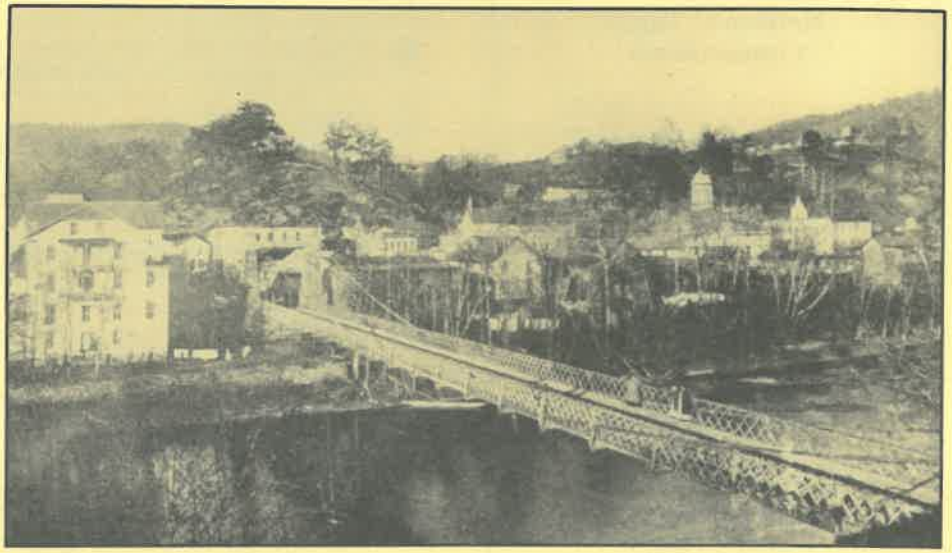
Vandalia Gathering

Keystone Heights, Florida
June 3, 1987
Editor:
Having read in *Southern Living* magazine of your eleventh annual Vandalia Festival, we decided to attend.

This was one of the nicest festivals we've ever been to. You, the people of West Virginia, have much to be proud of in your Cultural Center, your heritage, your festival, your coordinator, the whole project. It was excellent! People were friendly, your city was clean and pretty. Your state capitol grounds offer a top-notch place to host such an affair. What a shame more states don't utilize their facilities for such beautiful happenings.

Each person who had a part in these "goings on" is to be commended. The organization was superb, the talent arrangement left nothing to be desired. Crafts, arts, dances, quilts, "jammin'" sessions, food booths: All offered only your best. It was especially nice to find good food at such reasonable prices. And to think you cared enough to concentrate on things of a time past. No "cokes and hot dogs." Just not enough superlatives in my vocabulary.

Congratulations to the Culture and History staff, to Commissioner Norman Fagan, your honorable governor and to every citizen who had a hand in it. Hope we will be able to attend another year.
Sincerely,
Georgia Bullinger and Earl Mattox, Sr.



Sutton Memories

Philippi, West Virginia
July 22, 1987
Editor:
Imagine my surprise to find the excellent story on "The Engineer As Artist," written by Charles E. Swisher about his father, Thomas Swisher. Having been born in Sutton almost 80 years ago, I remember Tom Swisher, as well as his family.

Also, I have a particular fondness for the late Shelt Carpenter, who taught me many things about Elk River, especially how to gig fish and frogs. I practically lived on the river while growing up, and have been at his home many times. The story brought back many memories, and I thank you for it.

However, I never heard the story about circus people putting lye on the cables to destroy the old bridge, although it might be true. I am enclosing a reproduction of the old bridge, built in 1846, taken from a postcard. The hotel, at left, was built in 1902, and was destroyed by fire in 1906.

The flood of 1918 almost completely destroyed the bridge. Water came over the top, and heavy logs and trees battered the structure. We lived on the side away from town, and our school was not let out until around noon. At that time, water was seeping up through the bridge's planking, continuing to rise until the water was 40 feet deep at that point. For a youngster, that was an experience to remember.

Again, congratulations on a fine magazine.
Sincerely,
Allen Byrne
Barbour Publishing Company

Color Printing

Greenville, West Virginia
June 12, 1987
Editor:
Please don't ruin GOLDENSEAL with color illustrations. I don't believe it's the least bit necessary in the first place or in character in the second place.

Just let the people and the old pictures talk. That letter from Mrs. Greene from Ohio (Summer 1987) was worth 14 and a half color pictures. Her words hit like thrown stones.
Sincerely,
Ken Warner

Timber and Coal

Scott Depot, West Virginia
July 3, 1987
Editor:
I am enclosing a check in the amount of $12.50 for which I would like you to enter a subscription for my sister. While she is now living in Ohio, she is still a West Virginian at heart.

I certainly do enjoy this publication. So many of the articles which you have carried are about those with whom I have been associated or known early on in my life. The article on lumbering in the current issue brought back remembrances of what my mother told me of this industry in McDowell County. Her father sold the timber on his land to the Ritter Lumber Company in the early part of this century and there, for a time, was a booming lumbering industry at what was known as Ritter, West Virginia, and near Avondale (which was the location of my mother's family home).

The articles on the coal industry always remind me of my early years in the coal fields. My father, Charles Henry Sigmon, was sent to Kingston in 1910 by the Solvay Collieries Company to supervise the building of that coal camp. My parents, brother and sister lived in a log cabin (one-room) until the coal company homes were built. Momma said that when it rained she had to move the furniture to one side of the room because the roof leaked. Daddy didn't have time to repair it because of his work in completing the building of the necessary structures to begin the operation of the mine.

I was born at Kingston. Later my father was superintendent at Westerly and was with that company (which later was known as Kingston-Pocahontas Coal Company) until his retirement in 1928, when he went to our farm in Mason County. He died in 1934. In the 1940's, I was a secretary to Walter R. Thurmond, who was secretary for the Southern Coal Producers Association, with offices in Charleston, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Juanita Halstead

Fenwick, West Virginia
June 15, 1987
Editor:
Just received the Summer 1987 issue of GOLDENSEAL, with the Spencer Mountain article by Jim Bloemker.

We were more than pleased with the writeup and photo display. You did us up real proud. Thank you very much, and please pass our appreciation on to the rest of the staff and especially to Jim Bloemker and photographer Mike Keller.
Sincerely,
Glenn Spencer

Mine Wars History

Rocky Mount, North Carolina
June 27, 1987
Editor:
Having just received my summer issue of GOLDENSEAL, I was reading "Letters From Readers." In the letter about the mine wars, Mrs. Etta Greene, Gahanna, Ohio, mentioned a book entitled *Thunder in the Mountains*. Do you have any idea as to the author of this book? Or by whom it was published?

In the article by Carl E. Feather, "First Cutting," Carl failed to mention the other Feather brothers who also farmed in and around Eglon for many years. The eldest, Guy, is still dabbling in the land; younger brother Clifford (my father-in- law), now deceased, farmed in nearby Cash Valley for many years; and brother Willard is quite an entrepreneur in the Aurora area.
Sincerely,
Judith Feather

Thunder in the Mountains, *Lon Savage's history of labor warfare in the West Virginia coalfields, was published by Northcross House. You may order it for $8.85, postpaid, from P. O. Box 357, Elliston, VA 24087.*

Our regards to the other Feathers of Preston County. —ed.

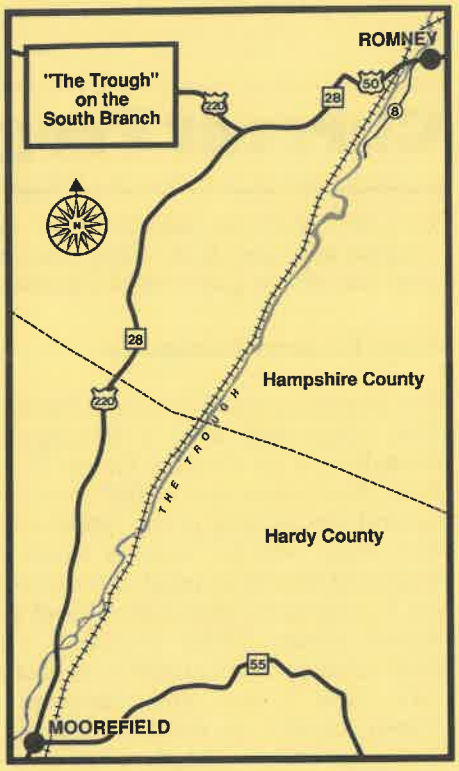
The Trough

Springfield, West Virginia
June 26, 1987
Editor:
I read GOLDENSEAL and enjoy it very much, but you failed to check the map drawn for Mr. Giffin's fishing story.

John Ailes of the *Hampshire Review* and others in Romney will not think much of being placed in Mineral County. No part of the Trough is located in Mineral County.

We all make mistakes sometimes.
Sincerely,
William Milleson

Here it is, again, right this time. We will make no excuses, but do apologize. —ed.



More Games

Wenatchee, Washington
July 18, 1987
Editor:
In Shirley Young Campbell's story "Coal Towns" she mentioned a game where the boys knocked cans about. This could have been the old game we called "Kick the Can." It was similar to soccer, but there was no goal to

it that I know of. It was sometimes hard on the toes of some poor boy's shoes that were badly worn.

It might also have been the old Irish game of "Shinney," also called "Sow in the Hole." There were four to six boys in a circle, each with a six-foot by two-inch green stick with the lower end in a shallow hole. There was one boy in the center of the ring, with a similar stick, and a tin can in a shallow hole.

The fun of the game was to see who could knock the can away from the guy in the center and get his stick back in his hole, before the fellow in the center got *his stick* in it. If this happened, then the loser was can tender. It was quite a trick to get the can back into the center of the ring without someone knocking it farther away. You didn't dare carry it back to the ring by hand; so you learned to be pretty handy with your stick, in guarding a badly battered can.

The name "Shinney" is very appropriate, as in the scramble over the can, you could get whacked in the shin by mistake. I've tried to get modern sports editors to write something about this old game, but you might as well talk to the wall. They just give you a blank stare and hope you leave real quick.

Sincerely,
Walt Thayer

Morgantown, West Virginia
June 15, 1987
Editor:
In reference to the Spring 1987 issue of GOLDENSEAL, as to the game you call Mill Morris:

It is a *very* old game — originating in Babylon, but popular in Periclean Athens and also in Shakespeare's England. We played a German version (called Mooula) in which each player had nine playing pieces instead of 12. I do not know how many pieces are typically used. The game is also known as Nine-Man Matrix. The game was first played with stones, with the lines merely scratched in the dirt.

The only reason I know of this game is because it happens to be my favorite board game. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York often sells a wooden version in which drilled depressions at intersections hold colored marbles.

It is nice to know that other people enjoy this game of strategy.

Sincerely,
Barry Row

Current Programs · Events · Publications

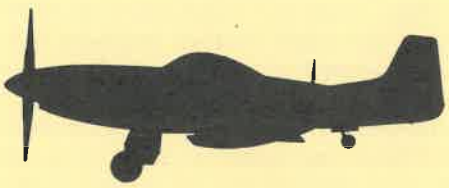
GOLDENSEAL announcements are published as a service, as space permits. They are not paid advertisements and items are screened according to the likely interests of our readers. We welcome events announcements and review copies of books and records, but cannot guarantee publication.

Flood Recovery Conference

The Interreligious Disaster Recovery Task Force will hold a theological consultation at Canaan Valley State Park, November 16-19, 1987, on the second anniversary of the 1985 flood. The topic will be how to develop skills and strategies needed for recovery from community disasters and invidual crises. Those planning the conference include survivors of disasters, care givers and nationally-known experts on death and dying, suffering and theology. A book will be published covering the ideas and resources discussed at the Canaan consultation.

The Task Force is a non-profit organization formed by West Virginia and Maryland church groups. It was created to assist victims of the 1985 flood, which left thousands homeless and jobless. Funding comes from Church World Service, member denominations and individual contributions. Since the flood, the Task Force has assisted in rebuilding and repairing over 8,000 homes in 36 counties. It has also provided staff and support for the recovery.

For more information, contact Kris Peterson or Dick Krajeski, 256 Beechurst Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505 (304) 292-3059.



Air National Guard History

The West Virginia Air National Guard was created in 1946 as a result of the U.S. Army Air Corps' effort to extend its influence into all the states. Photographer and engineering draftsman Jack H. Smith has compiled a pictorial history of one of the Guard squadrons entitled, *The Coonskin-Boys: Men and Mustangs of the 167th Fighter Squadron.*

In September 1946, West Virginia's adjutant general asked J. Kemp McLaughlin to organize and command the 167th Fighter Squadron. Flight training began in August 1947 at Clark Field in Putnam County. The squadron later moved to the new Kanawha Airport at Charleston. Pilots started in P-47D Thunderbolts, but soon switched to P-51 Mustangs. The squadron finally moved to Martinsburg in December 1955, to be replaced at the Kanawha Airport by the 130th Troop Carrier Squadron.

The book uses interviews with the Coonskin Boys to outline the squadron's history and their love affair with the P-51 Mustang. There are many photographs, black and white as well as color, showing the men and machines of the 167th. The book closes with a list of the Mustangs used by the squadron, names of pilots and crew chiefs, and diagrams of the three basic types flown. The subsequent history of the Coonskin Mustangs is also noted here, including the one that was later flown illegally to Castro's Cuba.

The Coonskin-Boys is a 46-page paperback book, well illustrated. It

may be bought from Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue SE, Charleston, WV 25304, for $8.95 per copy, with $1.50 extra for shipping and handling.

Happy Birthday Wishes

Our best wishes to former GOLDENSEAL subject Oscar DuBois of Morgantown, who turns 108 on September 8. Mr. DuBois was featured in our January-March 1980 issue, shortly after his 100th birthday. "The first century is the hardest," he told freelance writer Norm Julian at the time.

Mr. DuBois, the son of a glassblower, was born in Belgium in 1879 and came to America with his family 13 years later. He moved to West Virginia in 1901, among hundreds of French and Belgian glassworkers who came to the state at the turn of the century. He spent 60 years working in the glass industry and a lifetime writing poems.

Oscar DuBois's latest published poem, "To Meagan," appeared in the *Morgantown Dominion Post* earlier this year. Meagan is his great-granddaughter. That's her with him in our photograph, made by Ron Rittenhouse at last year's birthday party. Meagan is 100 years younger than her long-lived relative.

We will be pleased to forward birthday wishes from GOLDENSEAL readers. Send them to GOLDENSEAL, the Department of Culture and History, the Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston WV 25305.

New River Symposium Publication

Superintendent Joe Kennedy of the New River Gorge National River recently announced that the 1987 *New River Symposium Proceedings* have been published. They may be bought at National River visitors centers or by mail.

The publication is a result of the multi-disciplinary Symposium held at Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, last April 9-11. The articles include "Ecological Impacts on Recreational Sites at New River Gorge National River, West Virginia," "Mary Draper Ingles: The Story of a Pioneer Heroine's Captivity and Escape," and "The Town of Kaymoor." There are several more articles about West Virginia, and others about New River sites in North Carolina and Virginia.

The New River Symposium, sponsored by the National Park Service, the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, and others, is held each spring in one of the three states through which the New River flows. The 1988 Symposium will be April 7-9 at the Holiday Inn in Oak Hill.

This year's *Proceedings* make up a large-format paperback book 212 pages long, including 20 articles. It may be purchased from Eastern National Park and Monument Association, P. O. Box 117, Lansing, West Virginia 25862. Cost by mail is $12.50. The book may also be purchased at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center north of Fayetteville or the Hinton Visitor Center for $10.00 plus tax. Copies of *Symposium Proceedings* from 1982-1986 are also available.

Davis History House

The Davis History House is the only log house in Romney still standing on its original lot. It is now a local history museum. Located on Main Street, former Grubb Lane, the building houses family Bibles, Civil War memorabilia and other articles from private collections.

The story begins with an order from Thomas, Lord Fairfax, for the survey of 100 lots near the site of Fort Pearsall in the 1700's. These lots were later incorporated by the Virginia Assembly as the Town of Romney. By 1795, Romney's trustees had sold lot 26, the Davis House lot, to Matthew Montgomery. The log structure was built as a stipulation of this sale to Montgomery. In the 1800's, the house was purchased by William Davis, a blacksmith, and his new bride, the former Mary Magdalin Endler. Strong supporters of the Confederacy, Mr. Davis and his sons enlisted in the service at Romney.

Donated by Mary and Kate Davis in the early 1900's, the Davis History House is now maintained by the Hampshire County Public Library. Open to the public since 1984, the house may be visited on Friday and Saturday afternoons from 1:00-4:00 p.m. For more information, write Brenda Riffle at Hampshire County Public Library, Main Street, Romney, WV 26757, or call (304)822- 3185.

Porte Crayon Collection

A collection of writings and drawings by Martinsburg native David Hunter Strother has been donated to West Virginia University's Regional History Collection. Strother, a mid-19th century artist-reporter, specialized in illustrated travelogues of rural America. The collection, which contains over 500 drawings and 40 journal volumes, was donated by a great-grandson.

Strother became popular in the 1850's after *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* published his story of a Canaan Valley sporting expedition. After a series of similar travelogues, Strother, better known by his pen name "Porte Crayon," became a correspondent for *Harpers Weekly*. In 1859, he covered John Brown's trial at Harpers Ferry. After serving in the Civil War, "Porte Crayon's Personal Recollections of the War" was published in 1866.

In the 1870's, Strother produced a West Virginia travelogue entitled "The Mountains." John Cuthbert of the Regional History Collection said of "The Mountains" that "Strother depicted the domain of the mountaineer as a welcome outpost of nobility and tradition. He found the region and its inhabitants to be equally rugged and unspoiled.

"Strother was a remarkably in-

sightful artist, writer and man," Cuthbert continued. "We are very fortunate to have this collection on deposit for research."

Hill and Valley's Best

Shirley Young Campbell, editor of *Hill and Valley,* has published a new book of choice selections from the magazine's 80 issues. *Best of Hill and Valley: Editor's Choice* is a collection of short stories and poetry from a wide range of the magazine's writers.

Hill and Valley, no longer published, was a small literary quarterly. Its goal was to provide a vehicle to previously unpublished writers. Features were selected from manuscripts submitted by writers from all over the country, although the magazine had a regional flavor.

Humor pervades the new *Hill and Valley* collection. One example is a Linda Cornett poem entitled "Us West Virginians." The poem has a New Jersey reporter talking with a West Virginian about going barefoot, eating "mustard greens and squirrel meat," and inbreeding. Needless to say, the mountaineer comes out on top, setting the outlander up for a snipe hunt at the poem's conclusion.

Best of Hill and Valley is a paperback which sells for $6.50, plus $1.00 for shipping and handling. West Virginia residents should add 38 cents sales tax per book ordered. Send orders to *Hill and Valley,* 4512 Lancaster Avenue, Charleston, WV 25304.

Pricketts Fort

Pricketts Fort was built in 1774 by the people of Pricketts Settlement in what was then colonial Virginia, to protect settlers against Indian attacks. Later, during the Revolutionary War, the fort was used as a military post. It was dismantled in the late 18th century.

In 1976, Pricketts Fort was reconstructed according to traditional descriptions of the original. The fort, located in Pricketts Fort State Park near Fairmont, now offers a "living history" program. Interpreters dressed in authentic costume answer questions and perform tasks of the time such as spinning and dying wool, or blacksmithing. The Park's Visitors Center offers an exhibition of the Monongahela Valley's history, and a gift shop features handcrafted colonial reproductions. Near the fort is a farmhouse built in 1859 by Job Prickett, a descendant of the original settler.

In addition to the ongoing program, special events are scheduled. These include traditional music, crafts, apple butter and militia weekends. The largest is the production of the outdoor historical drama, "Pricketts Fort: An American Frontier Musical." Some upcoming events are: Apple Butter Weekend (October 10-11); French and Indian War Encampment (October 24-25); and 18th Century Christmas Market (November 28-December 20, weekends only).

Pricketts Fort State Park is located two miles off I-79 at Exit 139, north of Fairmont. Admission is $3 per adult and $1.50 per child. An additional fee is charged for the historical play. Group rates are available.

For additional information contact Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation, Route 3, Fairmont, WV 26554, or call (304) 363-3030.

Jonathan Rashaw Walton

A few years ago Calvin White replaced an illegible hand-carved gravestone at his family cemetery in Clay County. The new marker reads:

JONATHAN RASHAW WALTON
DIED 1858
IN MEMORY OF AN UNKNOWN PERSON
WHO APPEARED AT GRANDFATHER WHITE'S
HOME, SICK, AND DIED A FEW DAYS LATER
BEING THE FIRST PERSON BURIED HERE
IN THE WHITE CEMETERY

Needless to say, there is a story behind an epitaph like that, a county legend, in fact. According to the students at Jerry Stover's "Hickory & Lady Slippers" local history project at Clay County High School, it goes like this:

It was October in the year 1858. The hills of West Virginia (then Virginia) were a riot of color — orange, red, purple, yellow, tan, and brown. Lewis White and his four children were outside their mountain cabin, the youngsters running, skipping, and jumping as small children do, and Lewis admiring the scenery. Never could he remember seeing such beautiful autumn leaves.

"Meriba!" he called to his wife, "do come out here and look at the hills around. It's the most wonderful sight I've ever seen. I've been working so hard lately that I've hardly looked at the trees. There are leaves of any color you can name."

Meriba laid down her knitting and came to the door of the little cabin. "Yes, Lewis," she said, "I've noticed how pretty the leaves are this fall. We should take time to admire the beauty around us."

The Whites had moved to this cabin only a few months before. They had migrated from Pike County, Kentucky, several years earlier and in 1857 had bought 784 acres of land along Elk River. Now they were working hard to pay for the farm. There were no neighbors close by, and the site they had chosen for building was in a virtual wilderness.

While they were standing outside their cabin enjoying the scene, one of the children cried out in alarm, "Oh, look Pa, there's a man coming down the path!" Visitors were rare and both Lewis and his wife looked up at the ridge path at the same moment. Sure enough, there was a man coming toward the cabin. "Who is it, I wonder?" said Lewis.

As the man came nearer, it could be seen that he was a stranger. He stumbled along as if he were crippled. "Good day!" he said as he approached the cabin. "Good day!" returned Lewis. "What is you name, my friend?" "Jonathan Rashaw," replied the stranger, as he fell at Lewis's feet.

"Oh, this man is very sick," said Meriba. "Carry him into the cabin and I will bathe down his fever." Lewis carried the man inside and removed his outer clothing and put him to bed. After they had bathed him in cool water and fed him some broth, he revived somewhat.

"Where are you from?" asked Lewis.

"From far away, far away," the stranger mumbled.

"What did you say your name is?" asked Lewis.

"Jonathan Rashaw Walton," the man replied.

All through the night Lewis and Meriba watched over the strange man who kept repeating his name. "Jonathan Rashaw," he would say; then he said over again, "My name is Jonathan Rashaw Wakefield Walton." Early next morning, the stranger died. Lewis made a crude coffin and placed the body inside. "We will bury him up on that level place on the point," he said. "It is a lovely place to start a cemetery."

Lewis dug the grave, and after Meriba had read a chapter from the Bible and they both had sung a hymn he lowered the coffin into the ground. Having filled the grave, he found a long narrow stone into which he cut the initials "J. R. W." He placed the rock at the head of the grave.

Many years have passed and gone since that day, and generations of Whites have been buried around the stranger's grave. Both Lewis and Meriba now lie there. On Memorial Day each year, when members of the clan gather at the White Cemetery back on the ridge near the Clay-Kanawha county line, someone will ask, "Where is Rashaw's grave?" And someone else will say, "He died of smallpox, didn't he?"

But no one knows what he died of, except that he had a high temperature. It could have been smallpox or typhoid or almost any of the frightful diseases of the time. Whatever caused his death, the White family did not catch it. If the risk of contagion crossed Lewis's mind, it did not deter him in his deed. The long narrow stone with the three initials gave mute testimony to his love for his fellow man, and his acceptance of the command that we must comfort the stranger and take him in.

Record Review:

The Big Possum Stirs Again

Harvey Sampson is not a big man, physically, but he's a big possum among Mountain State fiddlers. Technically, he has met his match a few times, at least as judged on the contest circuit. But there are precious few who can claim as close a connection to the early roots of our music. Buy his new record, "Flatfoot in the Ashes," and see for yourself.

Sampson, born in Clay County, now lives in the hilly country where Roane, Calhoun, Gilmer, Braxton and Clay run together. That region of central West Virginia evolved its own music and special style of fiddling. The sound is now diluted by outside influences, but Sampson's playing is a throwback to earlier times when the music was cleaner. He plays the characteristic oldtime style of his area, generally using a cross-tuning (DGDG) unusual among fiddlers today. The resulting sound is strangely wild and free — or "twisty, crooked, even spooky," in the words of his friend, Larry Rader.

Harvey Sampson's father and older brother were both fiddlers. He took his music mainly from them, starting on the banjo. Somehow he kept the tradition pure through the bustling, distracting years of the 20th century. He has never strictly separated himself from the changing world, even living and working in Baltimore for a spell, but records and radio have affected him less than they have many others. In recent times he has come to be treasured as one of the principal carriers of a regional style that dates back a hundred years.

The Big Possum String Band backs Sampson on the new album. The group was formed around Sampson's music and exists to showcase his archaic style. Besides Sampson, the Big Possum members are the banjo picking Rader of Wirt County, guitarist Charles Winter of Charleston, and Frank George of Roane County, himself a master fiddler. Rader is unofficial spokesman for the band and author of the cover notes for "Flatfoot in the Ashes."

The other musicians complement the head possum's fiddling when that is called for, and stay out of his way when it is not. Less than half the tunes on the new record feature the entire band. Other times Sampson plays with a single accompanist, or more often by himself. Seven tunes are fiddle solos, with one vocal cut, the familiar "Jack o' Diamonds." Sampson fiddles in the old style, off the shoulder rather than under the chin, so he can sing when he takes a notion. He closes the album with "Camp Chase," a Carpenter family standard.

Most of the other tunes are from Sampson's own family, as are almost all the stylings. Two-thirds are played in the manner of his father. Some of the tunes evidently are unique to the family, unknown to others in any style. Sampson says no one else plays the devilish "Tom the Booger," so far as he knows, for example. A couple are universally known — "Cumberland Gap," for one — and some others known in other arrangements. Mainly, however, "Flatfoot" is as close to a single-source album as you're likely to find in oldtime music.

The album takes its name from "Flatfoot in the Ashes," one of the tunes the whole group plays. The band itself is named for one of Sampson's many humorous anecdotes. It's about a fiddler who was reluctant to play on a particular occasion, and kept putting his friends off until later in the evening. Exasperated by their persistence, he finally burst out with the comment that "the big possums stir late."

Producing his first record at 77, Harvey Sampson is stirring late, indeed, but mountain music fans are apt to agree that he was worth the wait.

— Ken Sullivan

"Flatfoot in the Ashes" by Harvey Sampson and the Big Possum String Band is an Augusta Heritage Record (AHR 004). It was produced by Larry Rader and Gerry Milnes, with Margo Blevin and Michael Kline as executive producers. It may be purchased in record shops or ordered directly from Augusta Heritage Records, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins WV 26241 for $9.50 (postage and handling included).

The album includes a reprint booklet of "Big Possums Stir Late," the Jacqueline Goodwin article from the spring 1986 GOLDENSEAL.

Ned Guthrie and his Charlestonians at Gypsy Village, located in the Ott Building on Dunbar Street. Here Ned and trumpet player Bob Lamm stand up to make music. Date unknown, photograph by Robert W. McKinnon.

Facing The Music

Musician and Labor Leader Ned H. Guthrie

By Lori L. Henshey
Photographs by Michael Keller

When Ned H. Guthrie's name is mentioned, music comes to mind. And no wonder. The 77-year-old has mastered the B-flat clarinet, the lead alto saxophone, and the baritone saxophone; has played professionally in bands since he was a teenager; has taught music for years; and has owned and operated a music store. He has also, and perhaps most importantly, spent what could have been his retirement years as president of Local 136 of the American Federation of Musicians and as a national official of the AFM.

Ned's story begins in May of 1910, in Charleston, when he was born to Robert Fleetwood Guthrie and Goldie Maloy, both of Scottish origins. The Guthrie ancestors had migrated to the Kanawha Valley, receiving land grants for service in the Revolutionary War.

Ned remembers his boyhood years as sad and puzzling. When he was four years old his parents divorced. Ned's father joined the U.S. Marine Corps in World War I, and his mother worked as a stenographer in the Elk Bank (now Charleston's National Bank of Commerce). With both parents busy making a living, there was no one at home to take care of Ned. So, when he was seven he was sent to boarding school in Grundy, Virginia.

While in Grundy, Ned had an experience which had an effect on him throughout his life. He remembers the incident well. He was playing marbles one day on a basketball court located near a blasting site. Suddenly some older boys on a porch above yelled for him to leave the court. Ned ran up to join them. "When I got up on that porch," he says, "they shot that dynamite off and a rock larger than a basketball sailed right up in the air in a perfect arch and went over there and lit right where I was squatting playing marbles. I'd heard an awful lot about God, you know, and that was more than just luck."

After boarding school, Ned attended military school in Alderson. His father came to visit him there in 1919, dressed in full Marine uniform.

"When my father addressed our class in a speech with all of his decorations on, I was the proudest person in the world," he remembers.

When Ned was 10, his mother died. He went to live with his father and stepmother in Morgantown, where he attended Central School. There he became good friends with the WVU football team cheerleader, Fuzzy Knight, composer of the University's "Fight, fight, fight Mountaineers" chant. Young Ned went to college games with Fuzzy, and eventually became what he calls the team's "unofficial mascot." Often Fuzzy would dress him up as a "dummy" football player representing the opposing team.

In 1923 Ned's father moved the family to a farm at Point Pleasant, and the boy was enrolled in Point Pleasant High School. Ned liked to keep himself busy. He wanted to join the football team, but, at 135 pounds, he was much smaller than most of the other players. So, he joined the school band. The director sold Ned a clarinet for $25 — he had earned the money picking strawberries — and that band, he says, was the first true home he'd ever found.

This, however, was not to last. Two years later, the poor agricultural economy preceding the Depression caused Ned's father to lose his farm. Mr. Guthrie took a job with the government and moved his family to Charleston.

Ned enrolled at Charleston High School in 1925, joining the school's newly organized band. He fondly remembers when "March King" John Phillip Sousa, composer of popular military marches, came to Charleston with his 65-piece band. While there, Sousa directed a Charleston High School band concert.

"John Phillip Sousa was to people then like Louis Armstrong was to my generation," Ned says. "When John Phillip Sousa walked out on that stage he was a diminutive person, I didn't realize he was that small. He got on the podium and the only thing he said was 'Good afternoon, gentlemen,' and he raised that stick up and he came down. I was sitting there just in awe and I missed that downbeat. It took us about eight bars for everybody to get assembled, but with Sousa you didn't stop. And I have never missed another downbeat since then."

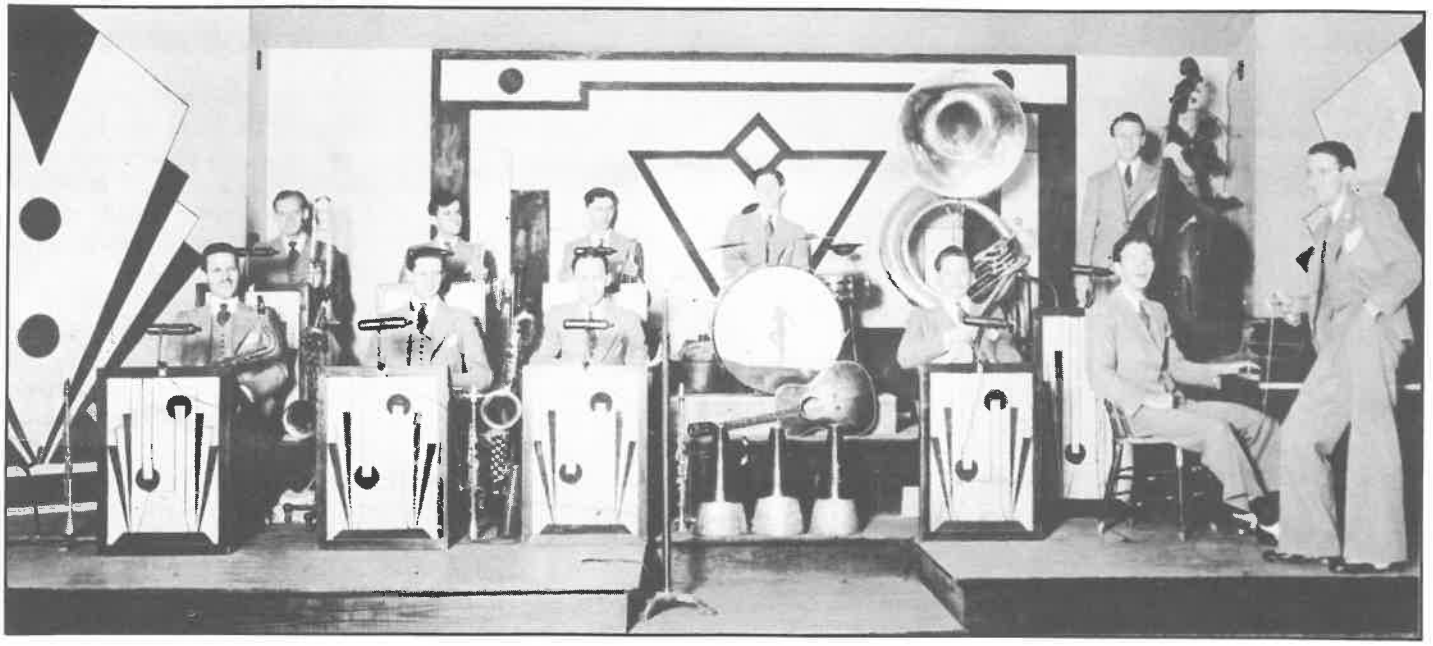
In addition to playing in the CHS band, Ned joined the West Virginia 150th Infantry National Guard Regimental Band; he stretched his age a bit to join.

When Ned graduated from CHS in 1927, he went to work for the New River Grocery Company in Rainelle. He did not, however, stop playing music. He organized a band called the Midland Trail Five. The group played evenings at Lee's Tree Tavern, a small place perched atop Sewell Mountain and named for General Robert E. Lee.

One night Ned made $58 playing a dance at the tavern. It was a turning point for him. As he says, "During

Above: Ned now works full-time for the American Federation of Musicians. As National Legislative Director for the group he lobbies for "equal representation, treatment and recognition for the performing musician."

Below: The early 1930's were Depression days, and Ned says that a musician's goal was to stay on the road. Here he poses with the Jan Campbell Orchestra, third from left, front row, in New York. Photographer unknown, 1931.



that time $58 was like having $600." He quit his job, hitchhiked back to Charleston, and later entered New River State College (now West Virginia Institute of Technology) at Montgomery. At Tech he played in the college's Campus Boys orchestra, earning $50 a semester plus his room and board. The band played for school functions, such as the "Social," a Wednesday night dance held in the gym. Ned also played across the street at the Avalon Theatre, where he accompanied the piano player for the silent films.

In 1929 and 1930 Ned also played with a local band called Charlie and his Vagabonds. They performed on the third floor of the Kearse Theatre in Charleston, and on the Kanawha River dance boat, the "Edwards Moonlight." "The Kearse Theatre was a big vaudeville house," Ned recalls. "They had all the big acts there."

In 1930 Ned joined a traveling band called Del Willis and his Kentucky Wildcats. He worked in Harlan, Kentucky, and played his first radio program there, at a station he calls "a little old 250-watter." The band saved up enough money to go and play at Carolina Beach that summer. "Once I had seen the ocean," Ned says, "and got paid and had a good time — why, that did it. That's when I made up my mind to be a musician regardless."

In the winter of 1930, the Kentucky Wildcats booked a big time job at the Hotel Richmond in Richmond, Virginia. "If you were playing there," Ned says of the Hotel Richmond, "you were playing for the elite." The band lived in the hotel, and also played six times a week on WRVA, a 50,000-watt station.

At this time, Ned received a telegram, forwarded by his father, from Senator Henry D. Hatfield. It was an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. As an old Marine, Ned's father had always wanted him to join the Academy; Ned, however, had other plans for himself. When he told his dad that he was turning down the appointment because he wanted to play music, Mr. Guthrie was not pleased. "My dad says, 'You're crazy, this is an appointment to the Naval Academy,'" Ned recalls. "And I said, 'Yeah, and I got a chance to play the Hotel Richmond and we're going to broadcast.'"

While Ned loved music and bands, he learned very early that a musician without union protection was vulnerable. Three experiences convinced him of that. The first two happened when he was in the Point Pleasant High School Band.

Once in 1924, the director took the band on a river cruise to nearby Gallipolis, Ohio, where they picked up the great orator and three-time presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan. The band played all the way back to Point Pleasant, and then went to the courthouse to play for a campaign speech that Bryan gave for the 1924 Democratic presidential candidate, West Virginian John W. Davis. "Someone said the band director got $50, but our 26-piece band didn't get anything," Ned said. "We got the honor of, 'Gee, don't you want a boat ride? Don't you want to feel important?'"

Another instance was more dramatic. It was summertime and school had been out for a few weeks. Ned and fellow band members were told to meet at the high school at dusk with their uniforms and instruments. The band director then took them to a field used for baseball and football games. By this time it was dark, and, although the kids could hear voices,

Ned Guthrie and his wife Gladys have lived and worked together for nearly 55 years. They were married two days after their second meeting, on January 6, 1933.

they could see nothing. Even the cars they heard driving in had no lights on. They were told to start playing when the lights came on.

"When they turned the light on — what it was was about a 16-to-20-foot cross, right out at the pitcher's mound," Ned says. "Our band was at first base. And all the way around that diamond was a circle of people all dressed in sheets with hoods on. It was a Ku Klux Klan rally. Some of them were on horseback. They scared us to death. We played and after it was over with we left. That was exploitation. I knew something had to be better than that."

Then, in 1930, he was with Del Willis and the Wildcats, and they had booked a concert at Big Stone Gap, Virginia. The boys traveled 60 miles, 120 round trip, to make the date. When they arrived, the local promoter took the band to a park where they began setting up. "Wasn't any crowd, no people," Ned said, "but that happened lots of times. We'd get there maybe an hour ahead of time and we wouldn't see anybody. And our band leader said, 'Well, where are the chairs?' He says, 'Oh, I'll go get some chairs and bring them here.' And we asked him, 'Do you want us to go with you and help?' He said, 'No, I can handle it.'

"That was the first week of May 1930, and that guy hasn't gotten back yet with those chairs. I told the band leader, I said, 'I'm gonna tell you right now, I'm not going anyplace with you. Neither are some of the others if we don't join the union.' That was it. Three times was enough. I joined the union then, and I've never been sorry for it."

As a union member, Ned began playing with many traveling bands. This was the early 1930's, the Depression era, and Ned says bands kept moving, booking all the shows they could. "The main thing," he says, "was not to come home." He played with Mark Goff and his Wonder Orchestra — "I used to say he wondered what it was all about," Ned jokes. He also made music with Felix Ferdinando and Paul Graham and his Crackers, among others. He played in many areas, including West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Florida, New England, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

Ned was playing at the Remo restaurant in D.C. with Hugh Alexander when he met Arthur Godfrey, then a radio announcer and banjo player. "He would go around and want to sit in," Ned says of Godfrey, "but he played his own style and he didn't fit in with bands. And we didn't let him sit in. He played a jazzy style like you would play a ukulele, and dance musicians wanted a different beat."

It was during this time of heavy traveling that Ned met his wife Gladys. Ned prides himself on his alertness, and feels it was well demonstrated when he found her. It was 1933 and, as usual, he was on the road. His roommate and fellow musician, Jack Evans, Gladys's brother, invited Ned and bass player Fats Parrish home for dinner on January

The union label hung beside the "God Bless America" sign when Ned's band played at the Rathskeller in the 1930's and 1940's. The place was located on Summers Street, then "the street" in Charleston. Date and photographer unknown.

The Guthrie band plays in the Blue Room, located next to Charleston's Arcade Building. Up front, left to right, are Ned Guthrie, Dick Fultz and Eddie Stuart. Behind are June Wolfe, who Ned calls the best piano player he ever had, and drummer Steve Kaman. Date and photographer unknown.

4. Ned had been to Jack's North Carolina home once before, on Thanksgiving Day 1932.

Ned recalls the evening. "Fats Parrish owned a car, and he took me out there," he says. "And he went back to town after dinner, I rode with him. Halfway there I asked him to stop the car. He said, 'What's wrong?' I said, 'I've got to go back.' Now, this is where I was really alert. I said, 'I have to go back there, you have to take me back there.' He said, 'What for?' I said, 'Because I've found her.' And he took me back there and I got out of the car. Mrs. Evans, Gladys's mother, came to the door and said, 'What are you doing back here?' I said, 'I came back for another piece of pie.' "

Ned brought Gladys back to Charleston and they were married two days later, on January 6, in a house on the corner of Delaware Avenue and Kanawha Boulevard. The couple will celebrate 55 years together next January. "Now, that's really being alert when you spot that *one*," Ned says proudly. "She went on the road with me and we went through all those things in New York together, all those terrible days."

Ned is referring to hard times on the road, when playing in a band was not always fun and exciting, times when musicians were at the mercy of promoters. Many band members took their families with them, and might run out of money before it was time to draw their pay.

Once, Ned was playing with Jan Campbell's Orchestra, traveling in New Jersey, Maryland and New York. The band had come back to New York to the Mount Morris Theatre in Harlem to play a revue, with Ben Barton and his Californians. In a revue, Ned says, a group of entertainers, usually an orchestra, a comedian, dancing girls and other acts would perform. It was a Wednesday, payday was two days away, and the band members were broke and their families hungry. They had asked for their pay, but were told no. The men were ready to strike when Ned had an idea.

After the matinee, Ned, Gladys, and the band members and their families, 27 people in all, headed to a local cafeteria. "We went into the restaurant, ordered and ate," Ned says. "And when it was over with I just picked up all the checks and went up to the cashier and I said, 'I'm with the show at the Mount Morris, I'll sign these and pick them up tomorrow.' He says, 'Wait right here.' He stepped out the door and called a policeman." The fiasco ended as Ned had planned, with the disgruntled theatre manager paying the bill.

When Jan Campbell's Orchestra played with Ben Barton and his Californians, Ned says that the act opened with the band situated around a simulated camp fire. The music would be the familiar "Get Along Little Dogie." Ned laughs when he recalls what he had to do for that act. "Ben Barton told Jan Campbell that he wasn't going to have a bald saxophone player in his opening act — I started going bald when I was 17," he says. "And he wouldn't let me be up there on the stage unless I put shoe polish and painted me some hair on my head."

The "Blue Room" band played mostly jazz and blues, taking the show on the road whenever they could. Ned stands second from the rear. Date and photographer unknown.

The Guthrie and Beane Music Store operated for over 20 years. Gladys was the store's cashier. In 1973, Ned gave up the business to devote full time to Local 136. Date and photographer unknown.

While at the Mount Morris Theatre Ned had another visit from his guardian angel. He and brother-in-law Jack Evans and trumpet player Johnny Best were on stage. Suddenly one of the large pipes that held up the curtain fell and stuck in the floor amidst the three of them. "It was like the rock that missed me back in Grundy, Virginia," Ned says. "My man was right there again."

Ned was playing in Baltimore in 1935 with Louis Armstrong when Gladys became pregnant with their first child, Ned, Jr. Ned didn't want to start a family on the road, so he quit the band and he and Gladys came home to Charleston. It was a hard decision, but his family came first. "That just killed me that I had to give it up," Ned says, "'cause the band went right away on the first trip across the ocean on the 'Normandie' — that was the big new French boat — and I just couldn't do it. I wasn't going to drag a wife and kid on the road. So that's when I decided to go into business here at home. I started a band in a place called the Rathskeller in 1936."

The Rathskeller was located underneath the Lincoln Hotel at 180 Summers Street. "Summers Street was called 'the street' in those days," Ned says. "There was a lot of night life at the time. There was a section of town that was later taken over by urban renewal, where the inhabitants' night off was Monday. They all ended up down there where we were playing."

Ned Guthrie and his Charlestonians played mostly jazz and blues. In 1938, he was looking for a trumpet player and a friend suggested a fellow named Bob Lamm, but Ned hesitated. Bob was blind, and Ned worried that his handicap would depress audiences. "I called him," Ned says, "and he said, 'You can't tell I'm blind by looking at me. If you'll let me come down for two weeks, I'll pay my own way, and if I'm not satisfactory, I'll come back.'" Ned met Bob and his family at the old B&O Station, on Broad and Smith, and set them up at the Park Hotel, where the Charleston National Bank is now.

Ned remembers Bob's audition at the Rathskeller. "When we got to playing that first night, everybody came to see the new trumpet player," he says, "to see if Ned Guthrie was going to let him stay or run him off. After he played the first tune, everybody was grinning, and they knew that he's got a job." Bob later began singing, with Ned's encouragement. That was the beginning of a successful vocal career. Lamm made Nashville's first million-copy seller with his song "Near You," which he recorded in 1942.

The band also played the Blue Room, located next to Charleston's Arcade Building, and the Gypsy Village, which was in the Ott Building on Dunbar Street.

In the late 1930's, many big-name bands came to Charleston. "They'd play at the Virginia Theatre," Ned says, "and they would play Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Then on Monday they would be in the hotel waiting until they'd go to the next place. They'd ask the bellboy, 'Where's the action?' And he'd tell them, 'Right close.' Then the band comes and sits in with us. Johnny Best came in here in 1939 with Artie Shaw. And he brought Billie Holiday down there with him to sing with

me, and she tore them down. Billie Holiday made them all stand up and scream."

In 1937, Ned began teaching music at the McKee Music Company on Capitol Street, now Herbert Music Company. He gave private music lessons for years, and remembers a certain trumpet player from Cabin Creek. "He took lessons and I taught him for a long time," Ned says, "about 1950-52. One day he came to me and said, 'Mr. Guthrie, I've got to change my lesson to Saturday morning. I can't come in on Fridays.' I said, 'Why is that?' He said, 'Well, I am going to play basketball at the Chelyan Junior High.' I didn't want to lose a pupil and my first reaction was that'd he'd do better in the band. I said, 'Oh, Jerry, you'll never make a basketball player.' Guess who that was? Jerry West."

In 1943, Ned left Charleston to take a job in Nashville. By this time his daughter Diane had been born, so the four Guthries, along with Bob Lamm and his family, headed for Tennessee. He and Bob played in Francis Craig's staff orchestra there and on radio station WSM, the "Air Castle of the South," every Sunday night. "Craig's programs were broadcast on NBC," Ned says. "We had the red network and the blue network, which is now ABC. The red network still remains NBC." They also played at the Hermitage Hotel. In 1945, the Guthries returned to Charleston.

Throughout the '40's, '50's and '60's, Ned played commercially in the Charleston area. He and friend and fellow musician Jim Beane bought the Withrow Music Company (formerly McKee Music Company). The Guthrie and Beane Music Company lasted for over 20 years.

During this time Ned was becoming more and more involved with Charleston Local 136 of the American Federation of Musicians. The AFM represents musicians, protecting them by blacklisting bookers who won't pay, making contracts to ensure fair pay and good treatment, and more. Or, put more formally in the *Encylopedia of the Music Business*, the AFM is "a labor union that represents U.S. and Canadian instrumentalists, orchestras, leaders, contractors, arrangers, orchestrators, copyists, and orchestra librarians in the following fields of work: club dates, lounge dates, and other casual engagements, recordings, jingles, radio, television, motion pictures, theater, and symphonic and concert presentations." It is comprised of local unions and an International Union. Representatives from the locals govern the International Union.

Ned became more active in his local union because he was impressed with the AFM. "I had many good experiences," he says, "like when I played on the steamer 'Washington' one summer. Went seven weeks, going up and down the Ohio River, from Paducah up to Pittsburgh and back. It was an excursion boat, had a crew of 80, including the band. And at that time the band made more than the captain did." Ned cites another example of the union's help to road musicians. "If we played in the Graystone Ballroom in Cleveland, and we needed some assistance, the Cleveland local, Local Number 4, would be right there to help us," he says. "Those things made me want to go to the union meetings in Charleston when I came home. So I became active."

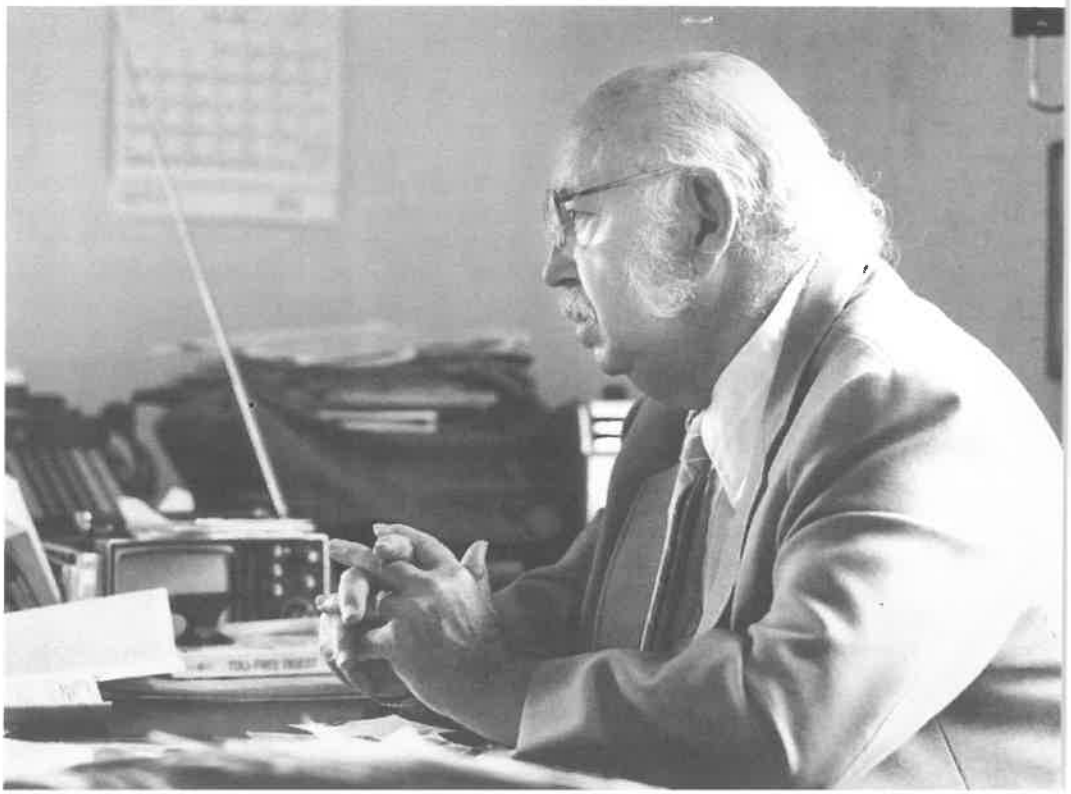
Ned became a leader in the AFM by belonging to his local, and then by being elected by his home local to be a delegate to the International Union. One of his first projects was to raise the pay scale for nightclub acts, then $2 a night. About five years later, the pay was doubled to $4.

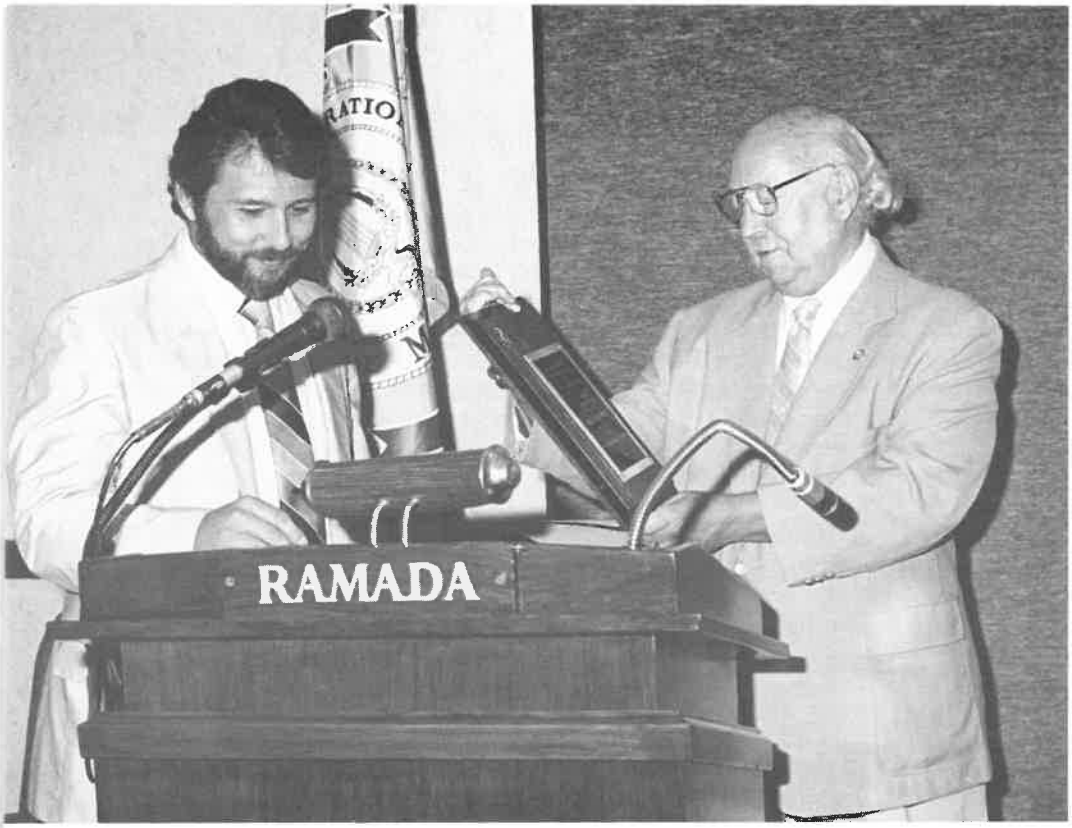
Ned served on his local executive board intermittently after 1942, was eventually elected sergeant-at-arms, and then trustee. Trustee was a four-year term, and at the end of that Ned successfully ran for president of Local 136. He began serving in 1973, when he was 63. He sold the music store that year. The president's job was initially part-time, but by 1974 the local had grown so that they needed a full-time president. It seemed natural for Ned Guthrie to take over that position.

"When I got to be 63 and I was elected president," he says, "I disposed of a going store, because I wanted to devote the rest of my life to something I enjoyed most. I kept on playing shows, but I turned my band over to Mel Gillespie, who was the head of the band department of West Virginia State College. I said, 'I don't need a partnership, you take the band. The union business is too much and I'll play when you need me.'"

One union struggle Ned recalls was the circus strike, which occurred in mid-1970. There were long-standing problems: The circus was using too few musicians in the orchestra; pay was low; working conditions were unsatisfactory. "It's hard

Ned is comfortable behind his desk in the Local 136 Charleston office, where he conducts much of his union business. He calls his work to repeal the Lea Act "a very important part of my life."





In June 1987, Ned Guthrie was inducted into the West Virginia Labor Hall of Honor for his work as a union leader and labor organizer. Labor History Association president Richard Knapp presented the award. Photograph by Greg Clark.

to play for the circus," Ned explains. "You don't just play music, you play music that's been chopped up to fit. If you've ever seen elephants at the circus keeping time with the band, you'd have an idea of how hard it is. Because the elephants don't keep time with the band, the band has to keep time with the elephants.

"The different acts require a change in tempo," he continues. "The orchestra leader has to know the show because the way he moves his stick gives us the tempo, but it's not like it's written down on sheet music. Now if you're going to have to do this, you should be allowed to request a fair enough number of musicians to do the job. One of the things I accomplished being president was to get up from a seven-man minimum to 16. It took years."

The monument to Ned's union work, so far at least, is the repeal of the Lea Act. He calls that "a very important part of my life." The Lea Act, passed by Congress in April 1946, made it illegal to pressure broadcasters to engage in collective bargaining with musicians. The legislation came at a bad time. Improvements in recording technology had put musicians increasingly at a disadvantage, making their need to bargain for live work a desperate one.

Matters came to a head when recording advanced from the 78 RPM single records to high-quality 33 1/3 RPM long-play albums. "In 1937," Ned says, "Columbia Records Company came out with the very first hi-fi records and they were slow plays, just 33 and a third. So, right away the engineers at the radio stations found that they could play them over the local broadcast right through their console and it would sound just like a live orchestra. They started using these, displacing musicians and knocking us right out of work. So we started fighting that, the union did."

Guthrie Enters Hall of Honor

When Ned Guthrie was inducted into the West Virginia Labor Hall of Honor on June 27, someone told the story of the time he "carded" Elvis Presley. It seems Elvis was in Charleston for a concert and Guthrie, then president of AFM Local 136, demanded to see a union card before he let the King of Rock 'n' Roll take the stage. When Elvis complied, the show went on.

It was that sort of scrappy determination that brought Guthrie into the Hall of Honor, West Virginia's highest labor accolade. He joins the state's union aristocracy, past and present, in receiving the special recognition. Prior inductees include Wheeling's Reuther family, the legendary Mother Jones, Paul Rusen, Sr., and Arnold Miller. The Labor Hall of Honor is administered by the West Virginia Labor History Association, with the membership plaques on display at the AFL-CIO Building in Charleston.

Guthrie's induction brought out Hugh McPherson and other old friends from the music business, many Association members, and the top brass of the American Federation of Musicians. Victor Fuentealba, AFM International President, was the lead speaker, followed by International Secretary-Treasurer Kelly Castleberry II, a Charleston native and Guthrie protege. Labor History Association President Richard Knapp presided and George Daugherty, a Local 136 member, led the lively audience participation which closed out the ceremony. Mr. Guthrie was joined by his wife, son and brother.

The West Virginia Labor History Association is composed of union members, labor scholars and friends of the labor movement. Those desiring more information on the Association or the West Virginia Labor Hall of Honor may contact Secretary Richard Fauss, 624 Elk Estates, Elkview WV 25071.

And it was a long fight, too. From 1939 to 1941 AFM President James Petrillo led the musicians in a national strike, refusing to make any records. They won a royalty of 1 1/4 cents per single record and 8 1/2 cents for an album, which went into a musicians' trust fund, and was then distributed by local unions to members playing at free public concerts. But the victory brought hard feelings against the musicians. Petrillo and the union were vilified in the press, according to Ned.

"If you go back and look at it," Ned says, "you'll find that during 1937 to 1946 there was a lot of trouble between the musicians' union, the public, Congress and the record companies and the broadcasters. The National Association of Broadcasters prevailed upon Congress to pass a law, sponsored by Senator Vandenburg of Michigan and Congressman Lea of Indiana, that said it was a federal crime to try to get a radio station to use live music instead of records. It was a crime even to try to make the broadcaster sit down and talk to us against his will.

"Now the only way the law got on there," Ned continues, "was that many people who owned the radio and television stations were congressmen and senators. Senator Taft from Ohio — Taft Broadcasting Company, both radio and TV. Right here in West Virginia we had a congressman who owned a radio station in Bluefield. It was WHIS, owned by Hugh Ike Shott. In Beckley we had WJLS, owned by Joe L. Smith."

Ned says that because of the Lea Act, musicians were denied their right of freedom of speech as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. "We couldn't talk," he says. That point was brought home to Ned when he joined musician Sleepy Jeffers' battle against a Charleston TV station. Ned was the local union president but the station manager wouldn't so much as speak to him about the problem. Jeffers lost, but the victory was to be a costly one for the American broadcast industry. When Ned went to the national AFM convention in California that year, he asked for help in getting the Lea Act repealed. He recalls saying to them, "In West Virginia we got a motto, Montani Semper Liberi. That means mountaineers are always free, and by God, when I get home I'm going to start something to get that law off the books." When he got back to West Virginia, he went to work with Congressman John Slack to repeal the Lea Act.

"Slack had come to my office in Charleston, Local 136, and I told him the history and the problems that the Lea Act had caused," Ned recalls. "And he became very much involved. He realized that it was denying musicians due process under the law, deprived us of collective bargaining under a federal threat of fine and imprisonment, and of course it was denying us our rights under the First Amendment — the freedom of expression, the freedom of speech — while granting all these freedoms to the rest of the United States citizens.

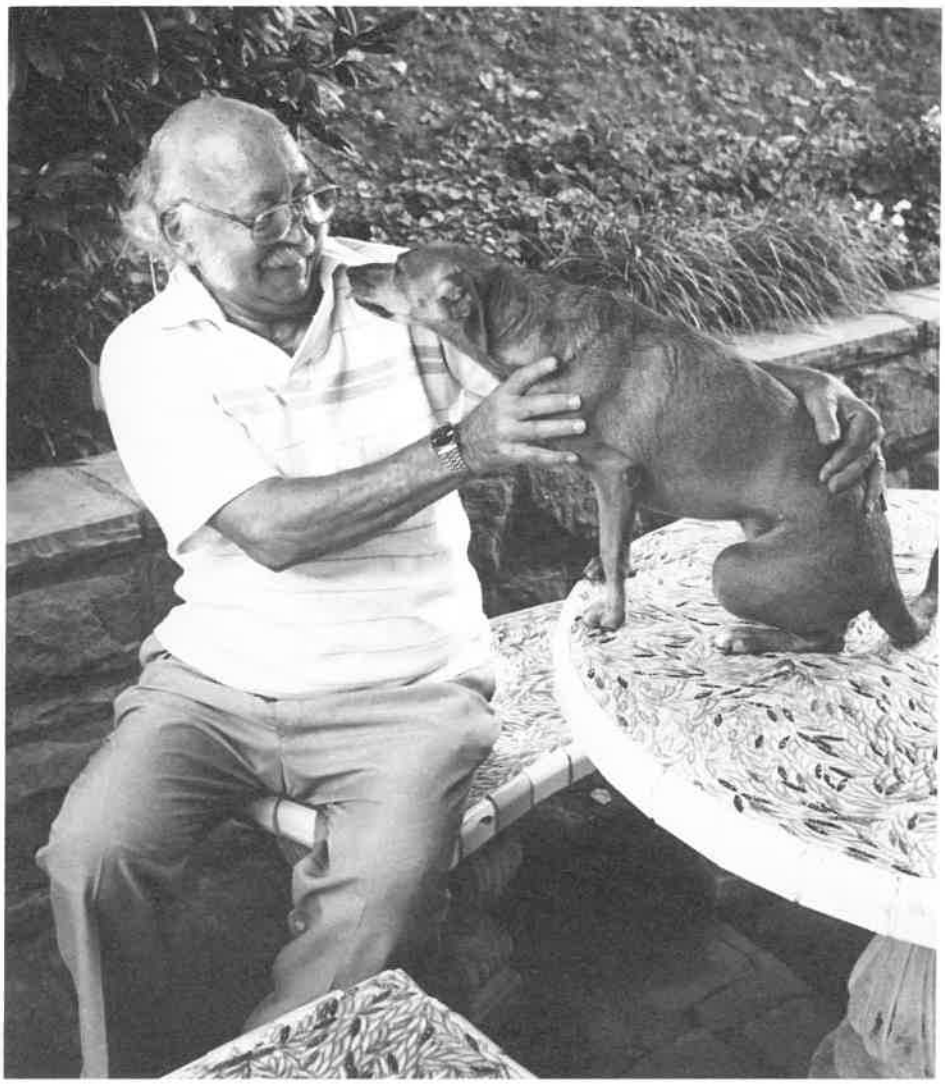
"That was the main thrust of our effort which culminated in absolute success eight years after I first talked to Congressman Slack. President Carter signed the bill repealing the Act, H.R. 4902, into law December 8, 1980."

Ned didn't stop with that success. He has lobbied throughout the years for better pay scales, working conditions and representation for musicians. He is still at it. As the national legislative director for the American Federation of Musicians, he continues to work for "equal representation, treatment and recognition for the performing musician."

On June 27 of this year, Ned H. Guthrie was inducted into the West Virginia Labor Hall of Honor for his accomplishments as a union leader and labor organizer. He accepted the award graciously but lost no time in straightening out the mostly younger well-wishers on one critical point. "This is not a wake," he told them. "I appreciate this honor but I ain't got started yet."

This article is based in part on interviews conducted by Joyce Davis Adams, recorded for the Department of Culture and History in 1983.

Busy as he is, Ned still finds time for leisure. Here he relaxes with dog Tansy on the back patio of his Charleston home.



The Ohio River is peaceful most of the time. As it snakes its way through valley towns, calm and beautiful, one may forget that in other moods it can be an uncontrollable monster, spreading death and destruction. Such a time was in 1936, when Wellsburg, one of West Virginia's oldest towns, was hit with its worst flood on record.

Work To Be Done

A Wellsburg Church Recovers From the '36 Flood

By Lorna Chamberlain

We had had weeks and weeks of heavy snowfall and subzero temperatures in the Northern Panhandle in the winter preceding the '36 flood. The Ohio froze over. I remember waiting at a party one night for some of our more daring bridge club members to arrive. They had planned to cross the ice-covered river on foot, and they did it. They came in shouting with joy about the experience.

When it began to warm up early in March a lot of the ice out along broad Buffalo Creek melted and moved out, leaving its shores still heavy and ice coated. Buffalo Creek flows westward across Brooke County, emptying into the Ohio River at Wellsburg's southern end. Oldtimers watched the creek, saying, "Just you wait and see! That creek will rise again, high enough to float the ice away." And it did.

Around March 10th it began to rain. It rained and it rained and it rained. Then came the morning when we arose to bad news on the radio. This is what we heard, "Warning all Ohio Valley residents! The Ohio River is rising at the rate of 11 inches an hour. Warning all Ohio Valley residents! The Ohio River is rising at the rate of 11 inches an hour!"

The river's rise was so rapid that men who had gone to work at the Beech Bottom power plant and the Beech Bottom mill, about six miles south of Wellsburg, couldn't make it back after hearing the report. The underpass leading into Wellsburg was already flooded. Men who'd gone to

The 1936 flood came with the melting snows of winter. This March 19 view of Wellsburg looks toward the northwest. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia State Archives, Department of Culture and History.

work at the Follansbee mill and at Coketown, a few miles to the north, couldn't make it home, either. Already water had spilled out of Cross Creek, just above Wellsburg, blocking the highway. While men sought roundabout ways to get home, their houses were already being inundated by flood water in many cases.

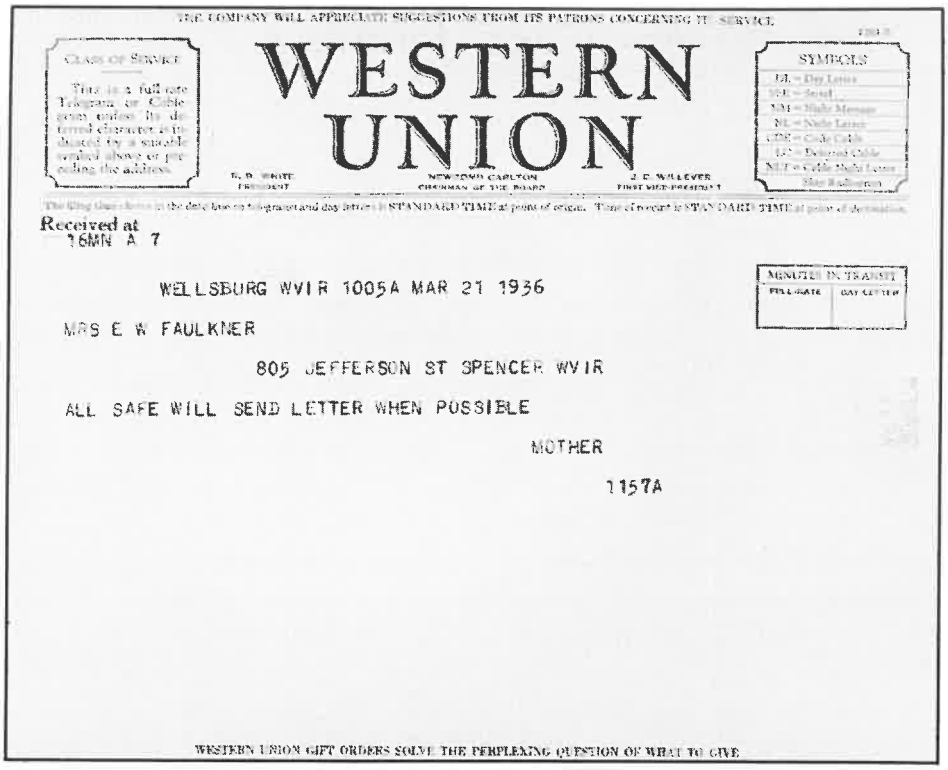
When I got the report that all downtown stores would soon be closed I hurried out to buy groceries. Everywhere I looked there were trucks — trucks emptying stores, trucks emptying homes, trucks caught in traffic. My husband hired a truck and strong men to back close to his barbershop to empty it.

I was able to get groceries and later was thankful that I had. Many came to stay with us. We had a houseful of people, and the electricity went off shortly after we'd eaten our supper. There we were, scared to death by all the radio reports we'd been hearing about the destruction up and down the valley, without lights. But some brave Monongahela Power workers got into hip boots and a rowboat and went to the substation on Twelfth and Commerce streets to raise the transformers. When the light came back on we began to cheer and clap our hands.

Around three o'clock in the morning, my husband and I, and my brother and sister-in-law, lay down to try to sleep on the living room floor. We didn't even have pillows. Every room in the house was occupied. We even had a man sleeping in the basement in one of the barber chairs that had been brought home from the shop.

In early morning I got up and slipped outside to have a look at the river. Nearing the corner of Tenth Street and Franklin Avenue, I almost leaped back. There was that river rising right up to meet me. It had backed up from Twelfth Street, through the alley at the back, all the way over across Tenth Street. I thought, "Wellsburg is about to be washed away." When I came home I tried to eat a piece of toast. It lodged in my throat, halfway down, choking me. I was that terrified.

We still had the radio on. All up and down the river there were catastrophic conditions. Whole towns were under water, even downtown



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WESTERN UNION GIFT ORDERS SOLVE THE PERPLEXING QUESTION OF WHAT TO GIVE

Telegrams such as this went out to anxious relatives. The "Mother" here was Mrs. Gist, a member of the Methodist congregation.

Pittsburgh flooded. People on Wheeling Island, where the entire island had been submerged, were standing on rooftops screaming for help. "Send boats! Send boats! People are in need of being rescued!" the radio blared.

It was all very frightening. I think it helped me to have to get so busy with the work of looking after my houseful of people. I was forced to concentrate on other things. We soon learned that one of our city policemen, Abe Leonard, had been drowned while trying to rescue a mother and her small baby who'd stayed too long in their house. The baby also had drowned. The current was very swift and the policeman had dared to cross. The disaster really hit home when we learned that our church, Wellsburg Methodist, had caved in, its walls undercut by flood waters. This misfortune turned the flood of '36 into a longterm affair for the congregation. We struggled to rebuild for months to come.

Our minister at the time had a sick wife. The flood waters came all the way up to the second floor of the parsonage, and there was the damaged church, which might give way any time, only a few feet away. When the waters subsided there'd be the cleanup of muck and mud and debris, and having to live with outside doors so warped you couldn't close them for six months. The minister must have felt that he was faced with problems he just couldn't handle. He resigned in the aftermath of the flood. That left us with no minister and no place to worship.

Nearby churches were kind. As soon as our plight was discovered, the Presbyterians, Christians, Baptists and Free Methodists — every church in town, in fact — invited us to come worship with them.

We preferred to do for ourselves. At that time we had many stouthearted, dyed-in-the-wool Methodists, men and women of great faith and insight. They picked up their shovels and headed for the church. "A flock must hold together," they thought. "Once it scatters and separates it could be gone forever."

Word soon went out that all Wellsburg Methodists would be worshiping together, every Sunday, at the old high school building on Twelfth and Commerce streets. Church services would be held in the gymnasium. And soon we had word that a new preacher was coming to serve us. He was the Reverend H. D. Rudolph.

You'd have to say that Reverend

The waters reached parts of town seldom flooded before. This is Commerce Street. Photographer unknown.

Rudolph was heaven-sent, just what we needed at the time. He was jolly, friendly and blessed with keen insight. Right from the beginning his attitude was, "You Methodists don't have a problem. You just have a lot of work that needs to be done. I'm here to help you face up to it."

On his first Sunday he said, "I'm new here. I may not be able to recognize all your faces after seeing you only once. But I'll tell you what you do. If you see me on the street or at a store, or anywhere, just hold up your hand and I'll wave to you, knowing you're another Methodist."

Did Reverend Rudolph watch the men at work and stand at their side, wishing them well and praying for them? No, he didn't. He donned a pair of overalls and got right out there alongside the workers.

Nor did the women sit idly by while the men got rid of the muck and the mud and assessed the damage. Mrs. Applegate saw to that. She taught a women's Sunday School class, many of them young mothers with children to be raised. "Girls, you're the ones who'll suffer most, if we don't soon get the church repaired," she told us. "Your children will have no place to meet for youth group training. The church makes a tremendous impact on young lives, and your children will miss that. We must do all we can."

Her class, the Bereans, worked hard for years following the flood. We waged a money-making campaign. Members sold vanilla, chore balls, puddings, rug cleaner, greeting cards; you name it, we sold it. We had bake sales and rummage sales and church suppers and bazaars by the score. Once we had a blanket club, whose members paid money weekly. In the end, everybody received a wool blanket. Some lucky ones, whose names were drawn, got theirs free. But we didn't call it a raffle — a Methodist church wouldn't approve of that kind of thing.

After we'd exhausted the community blanket demand we switched to tablecloths and then to bedspreads.

We had our first turkey supper at the Elk's Club, since the church couldn't yet accommodate a feast. I remember our church organist, Rebecca Rutan, the wife of the county school superintendent, working there in the kitchen with a baby she was minding in a buggy nearby. I can still see Reverend Rudolph hurrying in with an electric roaster, in which a big turkey had been roasted. Evidently he'd promised to do the picking up. Did you ever try to carry an electric roaster with a 20 to 25 pound turkey in it?

When we started having dinners at our church we had to borrow chairs and tables from the Christian Church. The dining room committee would lug them up the street and then take them back again. We had to buy all new everything, because our old things had been lost in the flood. It took time.

For our church suppers we'd serve a crowd of between three and five hundred. In the beginning we charged a dollar for a full turkey dinner, replete with all the trimmings. Later, we upped the price to $1.50. Tickets sold like mad. Edna Tolbert took charge of the kitchen and usually Treva Burdette was her co-chairman. In the dining room Katherine Jacob, Mary Duval or Hilda Chew ran things. In their own homes, these women had maids. But they'd come to the church and expend their full energies, staying until the last dish was washed and the last table carried back.

The Berean Class kept growing. Mrs. Applegate praised and encouraged us, telling us we were the church's greatest blessing. We had suppers, bazaars, bake sales and

Floodwaters surrounded the Methodist Church, undermining the structure of the building. The greatest damage was to the left side, as shown in the photograph below. Photographer unknown.

rummage sales galore. We went from one thing into another. Martha Carman gave a week of her time to each rummage sale, opening up the place where it was to be held, getting the things gathered in, and then staying to sell every last item. Rummage sales went over big in those days.

We worked hard, in the way few people are called on to work for their church. I remember one time I was supposed to bake a cake for a church supper. Usually the dining room workers did the cake baking at home, because the kitchen committee had so many other things to do.

The night before, I went down to help wash dishes and set up tables. Next morning I baked my cake. About mid-morning, Treva Burdette called. Somebody who was supposed to bake a cake was sick, she said. Would I please bake another? I did. Then I had another call from Treva. Somebody else couldn't send their cake. Could I possibly bake one more? Before the day was over I'd committed myself to bake four cakes, which I did. Then I went down to the church and worked on the dining room committee.

Another time, we were having some kind of dinner and I'd been invited to an out-of-town wedding. I was asked to bake tart shells — 200 of them. That way I could compensate for not being on hand to help serve the dinner. I had a time getting ready to go to that wedding, while staying up late every night trying to get 200 tart shells made.

I didn't do more than others did. I didn't even do as much as some. Mrs. Applegate had instilled in all of us that we had to make an all-out effort.

It was not just through the efforts

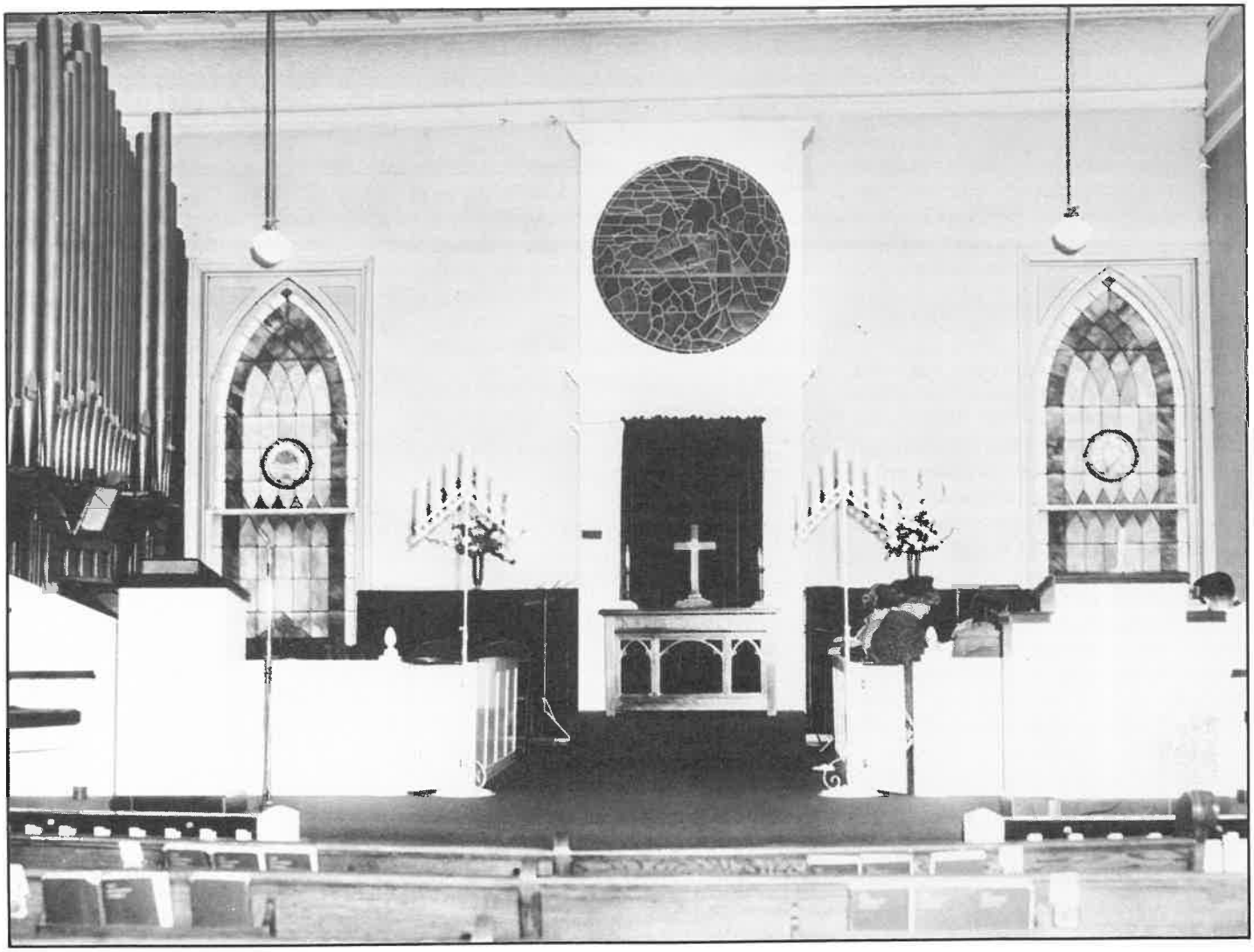
of the Berean Class that our fallen-down church was renewed and restored, but the Bereans were a great asset. Our fund raising helped. Money was not plentiful back then. Those were Depression days and dollars were hard to come by. There'd been no flood insurance on the church building. When it caved in the damage was tremendous. The big pipe organ hung suspended above the ruins and the piano crashed down into the debris, water-soaked and ruined. The men handled the financial problems. Huge sums of money had to be borrowed and paid back. We were fortunate to have more than a few wealthy families and experts with useful skills. Architect "Boots" Whitehead was a church member. He made sure the building was properly stabilized and safe. It was by his careful scheming and efforts that we now have the beautiful sanctuary we have.

The recovery story ended on a sad note. Mrs. Applegate's Berean Class swelled to 120 members, and was still growing when she died of a heart attack. In preaching her funeral, Reverend Rudolph noted that "This past Sunday there were 64 members in the class she taught — a member there to represent each year she lived." And then quite suddenly Reverend Rudolph himself died, leaving us saddened in shock and disbelief.

Had we asked too much of them? Following the '36 flood they had been like shepherds, inspiring and encouraging us to face up to the task of rehabilitating our church. ♣

Above: The Reverend H.D. Rudolph appeared in the congregation's hour of greatest need. He and Mrs. Applegate led the recovery. Photographer and date unknown.

Below: The sanctuary after reconstruction. The pipe organ at left had been left suspended by the flood and a piano had slipped through to a lower floor. Photographer and date unknown.



Doing All Right

Through the Years With Pearl Davidson

By Bob Schwarz

Photographs by Chris Spencer

She had children who became teachers, and later grandchildren. But for Pearl Davidson, getting a high school diploma took 81 years. At 14, at the end of her eighth year at Wolfpen Elementary in Wayne County, she passed the state examination and received a grade school diploma. High school would have meant Huntington, too far away. She was too young to leave school, she figured. So until marriage at 17, Pearl continued to go to eighth grade at Wolfpen. "I guess I got the lessons even better than I had before," she reports today.

Pearl's earliest memories are of birth and death. When she was three her great-grandfather died at her grandmother's house. There was no embalming then, at least not in rural areas. A body was laid out at home one day, and put in the ground the next. Pearl was permitted to view her great-grandfather's corpse. It was a sight she never forgot. "I can see him as if it were yesterday," she recalls. "I can think about him and see him exactly as they had him fixed."

The next year, Pearl's sister was born. "They took us on a visit to my grandparents and, a short while after, they came and told us about having a new baby at our house," she says. "We went immediately to see it. It was tiny, and it had a little red face and a little long dress. They didn't dress babies then like they do now. Back then, they all had long dresses — boys and girls both. Mothers made fancy clothes for their babies then."

The dresses were trimmed with long lace and fancy ruffles. Women worked in the house and garden all day, and then worked at night on things like sewing and making baby clothes. "Everybody wanted their babies to look pretty," Pearl recalls.

Evidence of Pearl's green thumb is all around her Lincoln County home. She grows both flowers and vegetables, and the plants come right onto her front porch.

When Pearl was five, the family moved into a big log house owned by her grandparents. The old couple lived in half the house, and Pearl's family in the other half. She would slip off during the day to her grandmother's half, where she would eat a meal. Pearl's mother would get mad and threaten to put the paddle to her. "But by evening, when Grandma had the next meal ready, I'd slip off and I'd be there to eat again."

Her grandparents were wonderful people, Pearl remembers. Pearl was seven when her mother died in childbirth. The new baby perished too. Pearl was the oldest of three sisters, and her McComas grandparents took charge of all three. Those were busy times and there was plenty of work to go around. Her grandfather, a storekeeper and farmer, would take time off to do his plowing. Once the girls turned eight, they took on major farm chores themselves. "Before we were old enough to hoe corn, we would thin it," Pearl remembers.

Above: Pearl and husband Alfred Davidson. The couple kept store for over 30 years in Branchland. Photographer unknown, early 1970's.

Right: Pearl enjoys time at home with family and friends. Left to right are Charlotte and Era Lucas, and Pearl's daughter Kathleen Sanders.

To Spencer and Emaline McComas, school was important. It was essential that their grandchildren be there. The school year lasted six months, and according to Pearl she never missed a day. Seventy-five or 80 children would gather in the one-room schoolhouse, and the teacher gave lessons to one group and then to another. Youngsters were expected to apply themselves, in school and after. "We studied at home, too," recalls Pearl. "The teacher always made us take our books home with us."

Students behaved, or else. "Those were the days of willow switches if you were unruly." Pearl's recollection is that she was careful enough to avoid any brushes with the switch. She also said she never had to stay after school, or stay in at recess or stand in a corner. "That would have embarrassed me to death," she says.

Spelling bees and ciphering matches broke the tedium of the school routine. Youngsters divided into two teams and competed against each other. Sometimes the contests would be between neighboring schools, and Wolfpen students would travel two or three miles to compete.

School was not all studies, of course. During recess, youngsters played marbles and pitched horseshoes. They also played ball games, with the girls and boys playing together. One such game was Roundtown, played on a diamond under a three-outs-and-the-two-sides-switch rule. It was not so different from baseball, although the two teams expanded to include everyone who wanted to play.

There was another popular ball game, Two-Cornered Cat. "Someone would get in the middle of two bases," Pearl explains. "The pitcher would pitch the ball. Then the batter and runner had to switch bases. If we didn't make it, we were out. Then we went to the field."

Two-Cornered Cat — a game in which after each hit, batter and runner run between two bases — sounds something like British cricket; Pearl, however, confessed ignorance of the origins of any of the schoolyard games. "I don't know who manufactured all these games, but they were there and we had a good time," she says.

After school, when she was not occupied with homework or chores, Pearl liked to read. "I'd slip upstairs and read for hours. My grandparents would get after me for reading too much."

Marriage came in 1922, with Alfred Davidson claiming Pearl for his bride. Alfred taught school for three years in Wayne County. He earned $50 a month for a six-month term. It was not so little as you might imagine. "My, what $50 could buy then!" Pearl exclaims. "It bought everything we needed — our groceries, our clothes — and we'd have spending money left over. Coffee was three pounds for a quarter. Now you can't get a cup for that, can you?"

People had their brand preferences then, too. "We all used Arbuckle Coffee," Pearl says. "It was as popular as Maxwell House is now. You ask any of the old people, and they'll remember Arbuckle."

In January 1927, with the July-to-January school year over, Alfred left teaching for good. The couple moved to neighboring Lincoln County, where he went to work in John Sanford's store in Branchland. Alfred learned the business from the ground up. A country store was very much a trading post back then, and it was not eggs and cream but railroad ties that constituted a farmer's big item of trade. "Farmers would bring in crossties, buy their groceries, and take the rest in cash," according to Pearl.

Storekeeper John Sanford had two sons. Sometimes one worked in the tie yard, sometimes the other. Sometimes it would be Alfred. Assignment to the tie yard, he soon found, was work. "Sometimes he'd only have time to go for his lunch, and then go back in the yard to unload ties again," Pearl remembers.

The crossties collected quickly. About once a week, a railroad car would be backed into the siding and Sanford would hire several men to load ties for a day. "They'd just be men he'd gather up there in the country," Pearl recalls. "They would take a day's work in order to help their families live."

Alfred got out of the store business for a five-year period when in 1929 he obtained a postmaster appointment. Herbert Hoover was president, and Alfred Davidson was a Republican.

But when Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt took over in 1933, Alfred's days as a federal appointee were numbered. The next year he was replaced.

Alfred went back to store work, this time working for his brothers. In 1939 one brother and he opened a store of their own. Five years later, Alfred sold out to his brother, and the next year opened his own store. It was, as Sanford's and the other stores had been, "a general merchandise store," according to Pearl. She was, among other things, the store's dry goods buyer.

"What is a general merchandise store?" she was once asked by a Huntington dry goods wholesaler. Branchland was less than 40 miles from Huntington, but the two places were worlds apart. "I told them we sold everything from a safety pin to a piano," Pearl says. In fact, they never did sell a piano. But they sold a great deal else: refrigerators, washing machines, cook stoves, gas heaters, guns, ammunition, clothing, yard goods, canned food, fresh and packaged meats, frozen foods, produce, buttons, zippers, blue jeans and shoes. They stocked fresh flowers for Memorial Day each year.

Running the store took up most of Pearl's waking hours. She would open at 7 a.m. and close 14 hours later at 9 p.m. An hour later, she'd be in bed. On days when vegetable, frozen food, or meat cases needed to be cleaned, she arose at 4 a.m. Opening was three hours away, when men would come in wanting their cookies and lunch fixings, and she must have her cleaning done by then. Customers would come and go throughout the day. When she wasn't needed out front, Pearl retreated to the rear of the store, where in the family apartment she cooked and served meals.

Storekeeping kept the family on a short leash, according to Pearl. Still, she was never isolated. The store was a community hub and through the front door poured a vibrant humanity. "It was not like stores of today," she says. "Back then, everyone was friends. People would tell me their troubles and I'd sympathize with them. I'd help them live their lives, I guess, and they'd help me live mine."

Pearl mastered the piano after leaving the store business. People "shouldn't think life is at an end just because they grow old," she says. Photo by Bob Schwarz.

Self-service had not yet arrived in Branchland. Ladies would come in with young children and they would look around the store and talk with Pearl — maybe for two or three hours. Only when they were done talking would they tell Pearl what they needed so she could get it off the shelves for them. A morning's conversation with a customer might stretch around half a dozen or more interruptions. "Customers would come in, and I'd take care of them and get what they needed. Meanwhile the person I was talking to would wait until I was done, and then we'd go on with the conversation."

A store was a communications center for the community. There were three stores in Branchland, and each had a telephone. The phones — "they were about four feet tall, and we had to crank them up" — were the only ones in town. They were pay phones, and the operator would announce when three minutes were up."

Pearl answered the phone, and sometimes took messages that had great impact on one family or another. "If someone got sick or hurt, the call would come to us," she explains. "We'd take the message and go tell them. We took death messages, too. Those death messages were the ones that hurt the most — when I had to go and tell the family."

In 1949, the electronic marvel of television reached Lincoln County. It would eventually transform the entire rural culture, but at the start Pearl and Alfred Davidson saw it merely as another opportunity for their small store. "When WSAZ Huntington came on the air, we were ready to come on with them," Pearl recalls.

Not everyone around Branchland was ready for the change. To people for whom reality was horses and chickens, corn and potatoes, TV sometimes stretched belief. An old man who lived about six miles out in the country came to the Davidson store one day. He had never seen a television set.

"What is that thing?" he demanded of son Elba Davidson. "Elba told him that it was a television and that the picture came over the airways," Pearl remembers. "The man told Elba he didn't believe a word of it, and that Elba had something behind the set that he cranked up so it showed a picture."

Early programming went on and off during the day, then ran steadily through the evening, when it had a greater audience. Their workday concluded, people found the new entertainment a convenient attraction. They watched television at the store

before they had sets of their own. "At night, we moved pop cases and boards and made benches. People would come in and watch — some of them from outside the community. State troopers would pull off Route 10 to stop in and watch." In television's early years, programming was suitable for people of all ages, remembers Pearl. "You didn't have all that filth on TV that there is today. All the dope, sex, and murdering puts ideas in people's minds, I think."

Their store sold television sets. To enhance reception, the Davidsons ran a line 1,500 feet up a hill and connected it to an antenna in a big beech tree. Reception was improved, but the method was not without its risks, according to Pearl. "One time lightning hit the antenna, tearing it up, burning the line and bursting the rock at the bottom of the tree. We lost three televisions — burnt up."

So much revolved around a community general store. Once during the Korean War, a young man was drafted and told to report to boot camp. The family was poor. "The army would send a boy a list of things he'd need — change of clothes, toothbrush, shaving kit," Pearl reports. "This boy had nothing. The customers and us got together. We all chipped in and had everything ready for him in the morning."

Even the quietest communities suffered an occasional disruption. One morning when Pearl went to open up the store, she found it had been broken into during the night. "We'd been robbed," she says. "They'd taken some clothes and some money that was in the cash register."

Pearl and her husband inquired around. They found that a man had spent part of the night at a house four or five doors from them. The neighbors had found it suspicious that he was carrying a big sack of things. He had left on the morning bus going south. "When the bus came back, we found out from the driver where the man had gotten off," Pearl says. "The law went to his house and found clothes from our store in his drawers, and saw that the man himself was wearing a new work suit. The constable called the state police in Hamlin, and they brought the man back. He had to go to the state pen. He'd been in trouble before."

By the early 1960's, general stores, particularly those along major roads, were disappearing into history. First the smaller stores disappeared, then the big ones. People were becoming more mobile, and they were taking their shopping out of the community. When husband Alfred's health began to fail, the Davidsons gave up the store. That was in 1964.

But retirement was not to their liking, and when public water service came up the Guyandotte River from West Hamlin, they both went to work for the new Branchland-Midkiff Public Service District. Alfred read meters, installed taps and maintained the lines. Pearl kept the books.

They were a few months short of their 50th wedding anniversary when in 1972 Alfred died. Pearl worked another six years, and then she retired a second time, again with misgivings. She was 74. "It'll be hard on you when you're ready to retire," she advises younger people. "After you've been with the public so much, it just lets you down."

She plays the piano now, mostly church hymns. She says the piano playing is just for her own amusement. Reading music was a skill first acquired in her 60's, when her grandchildren were learning. She bought her own piano still later, after Alfred died. Then in the fall of 1986, she decided to get that high school diploma which had eluded her so many years before. She went to the adult program at the county vocational school, obtained materials and studied, mostly on her own. She received a great deal of encouragement, she says, "from my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren and the girls at church." According to Tom Miller, Lincoln County's testing director, Pearl was the oldest person in the county ever to pass the test, and among the oldest in the state.

"I guess I done all right for not going to school all those years," Pearl modestly admits. "But it made me nervous actually taking the test. I was afraid I wouldn't pass."

She hopes learning the piano and getting her equivalency diploma in her older years can be a "light to people," Pearl says. "I hope what I've done will help other people. They shouldn't think life is at an end just because they grow old. Of course, by nature we know it is. But we shouldn't dwell on that."

Pearl Davidson says she enjoys every minute of her life, or at least tries to. She goes to church three times a week, attends church social gatherings, and sings wherever her choir is invited. She has not escaped the problems of age. She broke her hip last year, but began therapy the very next day. She will not be dependent, she said, as long as she can be independent.

The hip kept her from gardening last year, but Pearl was determined to enjoy this summer's garden, probably with vegetables and definitely with flowers. "If I stay able this summer, I'll get all my flowers out," she told a visitor. "That's when I want you to come over. It'll make a pretty sight then." ✱

Pearl Davidson keeps busy during her second retirement. She earned her high school equivalency diploma at age 81, one of the oldest West Virginians to receive the certificate.

The original Zickefoose farmhouse. Giff was born here and he and Thelma lived here until 1939. Photographer and date unknown.

"Adolph Was Home"

Thelma and Giff Zickefoose

By Marie S. Hosch
Photographs by Michael Keller

Thelma and Giffen Zickefoose of Adolph knew the West Virginia that once was, lived a way of life that is no more. It was a time of relative isolation, but also a busy time. The woods echoed with the hum of the crosscut saw, with the commands of teamsters to sturdy work horses, with the jangle of harness. The mountains reverberated with the long, resounding whistles and the clacking wheels of logging trains. Tall trees fell against the earth that had nourished them for decades but would nourish them no longer.

Thelma and Giff grew up in Randolph County during the time of the felling of the tall trees. Thelma's father, Christopher Keiss, originally from Pennsylvania, was a locomotive engineer for the Moore-Keppel Lumber Company. Thelma, the first of eight children, seven girls and one boy, was born in Pennsylvania. She was two years old when her parents moved to Glady, West Virginia, in 1905.

Giff was born on the Zickefoose farm, two miles northwest of Adolph. It is a large place, 145 acres, now lying fallow and largely overgrown with brush and timber. It consists of three steep hills that emerge into flats of several acres each, and it rises from a small, fertile valley.

Giff was one of three children. One

of his vivid memories of childhood on the farm is of the time he took a hammer to a hive of honey bees. "I almost got stung to death one time up on the hill," he says. "I was just a little kid. I got the hammer out and went to pounding on a hive. Someone saw me and had to run me down to the spring house, quite a little ways from the house. They got the bees off me there."

Thelma's earliest memories are of school. She later taught in Randolph County for 30 years, so both her childhood and adult life are bound up with school days in West Virginia. "The early part of my schooling was spent in Pocahontas County," she reports. "We were living in Rainelle then, and Rainelle didn't have a school, so when I was eight I went to live with my grandparents and went to Cass school. Then my family moved to Ellamore and I went to school there."

Soon she was back at Cass school. "When I was in the fourth grade my dad was seriously injured in a freak accident and we kids, there were five of us by then, were sent to our grandparents," Thelma explains. "While we were there those of us old enough went to Cass school.

"Dad's accident happened right below Cassity. They were taking in water and coal for the train engine. The fireman was pitching the pieces that weren't fit to burn across the railroad track to get rid of them. As Dad came around the train oiling the engine for the trip to Ellamore, the fireman pitched a piece of slate and hit Dad on the head.

"He was home for two days. He didn't know anything. He was lucid for just short periods, and then it would be all gone. From the office in Ellamore they put in a call to Dr. W. W. Golden from Davis Memorial Hospital. He came on over by train and came up to our house and examined Dad. Dr. Golden was pretty sure it was either a blood clot, or a piece of bone had broken off and was pressing on Dad's brain.

"He said, 'Now, he'll linger on a couple of days and then — that'll be it.' Or he said he could take Dad right to Elkins and operate and maybe they could save him. So they gathered Dad up and hauled him on the wagon to Midvale, loaded him on the Coal & Coke [Railroad] and took him to Elkins.

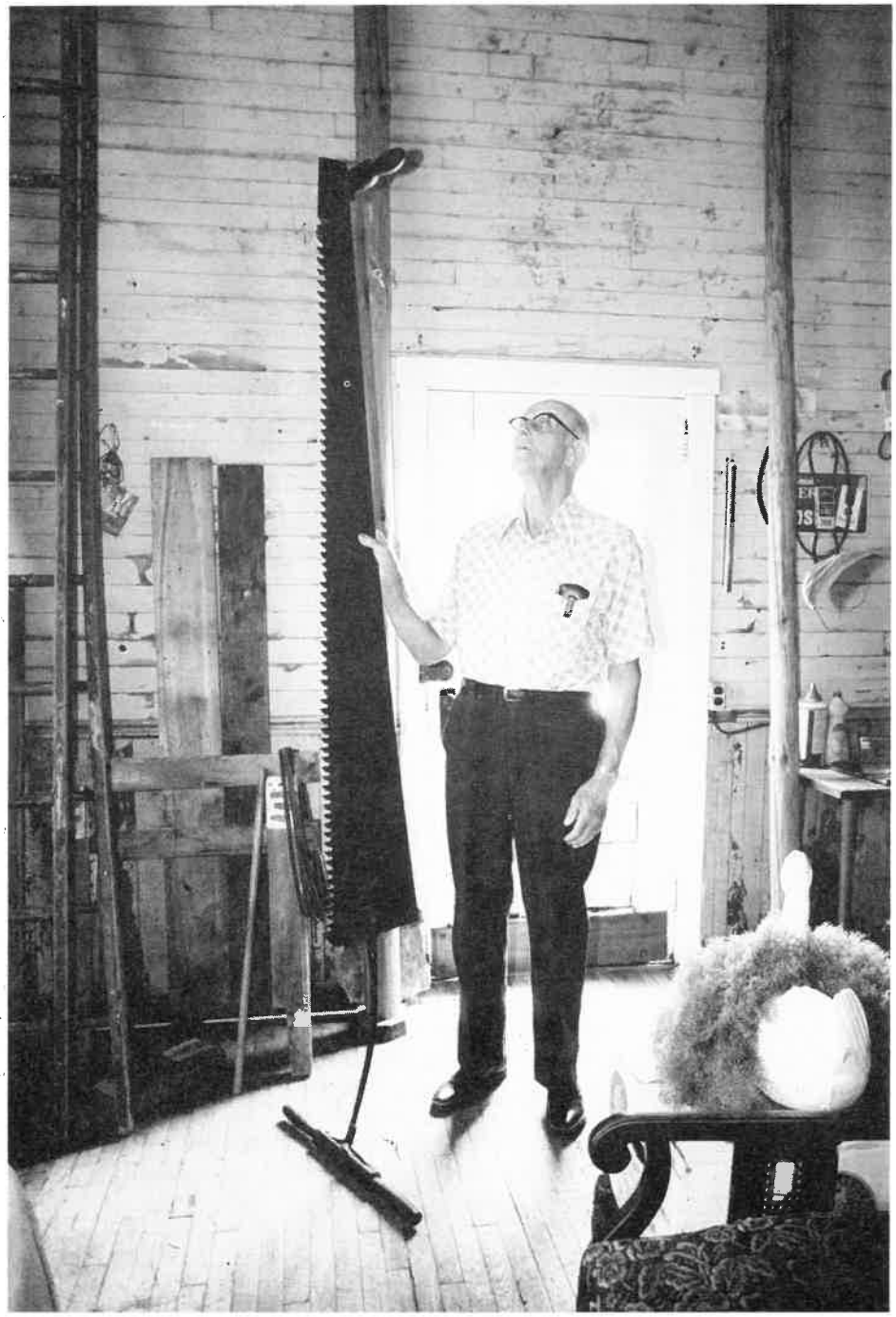
"Dr. Golden operated that night. Dad had a hole from the operation about the size of a quarter in his head, with just the skin over it. Dr. Golden told Mom that he could put a plate there, but with the type of work Dad did a piece of metal could get hot and cause him trouble, so the area was covered only by skin.

"That's why we kids went to Cass to stay with our grandparents for a while," Thelma concludes. "Dad, for quite a little bit, couldn't stand any noise at all, so our grandmother took us to Cass with her. We went right after Christmas and stayed till spring."

Giff attended the original Adolph grade school and helped his father on the farm. "We had a right smart farm machinery," he says. "Horse-powered, of course. Now, oats and buckwheat, you had to cradle them. You'd do that by hand, but we had mowing machines, plows and disc harrow and such as the like."

There was an occasional trip to Elkins with his dad. "Transportation for us out here in those days was horseback and on foot," he recalls. "There was a train from Mill Creek down the valley to Elkins, but we had

Giff's tools reflect his woods heritage. This pit saw was used to cut planks from logs, with one man working above and the other below.



to ride horseback or walk from home to Mill Creek, 'cause there were no cars over here then. Usually we walked. You'd go over to Mill Creek and ride the train down to Elkins of a morning and back up the valley in the evening and then walk home.

"I don't remember much about Elkins," Giff says. "That is, when I first started going down there with my dad. There wasn't near as many people as there are now. I do remember that's where I saw my first motorized vehicle. Me and my dad were at Charles Saffel's house in Elkins one time and one came along. It was some kind of delivery truck or something of that order. That's the first I ever saw. Elkins had a streetcar, though."

"Why, yes," Thelma interjects. "I can remember the streetcar at Elkins. It ran out as far as Norton. The road that goes down toward Belington? That's the old streetcar line."

"The road was built along the old streetcar line," Giff confirms. "The cars were powered by a city generator." The back-and-forth conversation comes natural after more than 60 years together.

When Giff was 12 his father died, leaving him to man the farm at that early age. He shouldered his responsibility while growing up. Thelma's father, recovered from his injury, returned to work. He moved the family about as he followed the timber. From Ellamore they moved to Mabie.

As the 1920's neared, there was still much logging in West Virginia. The fact that the boom was beginning to ebb generally went unnoticed. From 1910 to 1917 West Virginia had led the nation in the production of hardwoods, but in 1918 the state lost first place to Arkansas. Moore-Keppel's lumbering operation moved deeper into the hills of Randolph County to remain profitable. In 1919, Christopher Keiss moved his family from Mabie to Lindale, just a mile south of Adolph.

"I was 16 when we moved there," Thelma says. "That was the first year for Tygart Valley to have a high school. It was held in a room over Snyder's store at Huttonsville. I was going to stay with the Russells at Mill Creek and attend high school. I went to school one-half day and quit. I walked home over the mountain and I stayed home."

Above: Giff at age 10, with father Elias and mother Pleasant. Sister Bessie stands at right. Photographer unknown, about 1913.

Right: Thelma Keiss and Giff Zickefoose were married on May 27, 1923. This picture was made soon afterwards. Photographer unknown.

She met Giff about that time. Like so many young people those days, they met at church, held in Giff's old schoolhouse. He asked to see her home after service and she accepted. "He was 16," she remembers.

Giff, grown up at that age, continued working the family farm. Thelma, staying at her home, helped with the work a large family requires. Logging continued steadily around Adolph. A few coal mines were opening. In the early 1920's more families, attracted by the logging and mining jobs, moved into the area. There was a need for a much larger school and plans were made for a five-room building, housing eight elementary grades and a three-year high school.

A few automobiles began to appear back in the hills. Thelma's family were among those to get one. "When we got a car, my dad and his family," she says, "the roads were still all dirt roads, and when you came back from a trip to Elkins you were completely covered with dust. Your eyebrows were yellow and your eyelashes were yellow. Your hair was yellow from the dust coming in the car."

"Tires weren't good like they are now," Giff adds. "Go to Elkins and you'd have four or five blowouts or punctures."

The road down the Tygart Valley was a little better, perhaps, than the one over Rich Mountain from Mill Creek to Adolph. "There wasn't much difference," Thelma maintains. "They were all dirt roads."

"It was a little rougher over the hill," Giff puts in.

"I expect over the hill it was rougher," Thelma agrees. "Down the valley the road maybe was a little smoother, but still it was just an ordinary dirt road."

In 1923 Mr. Keiss moved his family to Camp 18 in the Blue Rock area on Rocky Run. They lived in the logging camp. Families, and key personnel such as the camp foreman or the sawyer, were sometimes domiciled in small shanties that were moved from camp to camp, piggyback, on the logging train. Men without families lived in the bunkhouse.

The Keiss family had lived at Camp 18 for one month when Thelma, at 20, and Giff, a few months younger, were married. Preacher Laco Lunsford of Adolph walked seven miles to the camp to conduct the ceremony. Christopher Keiss invited the whole camp to his daughter's wedding, and

as it was a Sunday they all accepted. Camp 19 and part of Camp 17 also showed up. Thelma's mother Mary Ann cooked a celebration dinner. "All the tables were filled," Thelma recalls.

After their marriage Thelma and Giff lived on the Zickefoose farm. Giff continued to farm and also worked in the woods. "Oh, I've made crossties," he reminisces. "Cut timber, drove grabs, just about everything except drive team. Never did drive team in the woods."

They had been married for two years when Thelma resumed her education. "In 1925 they opened the high school in Adolph," she says, "and I was in the freshman class, the very first high school class ever held here. I just made up my mind that if I ever had the chance I'd go. So I went."

Those years of the '20's were the brightest in Adolph's history. The economy was based on coal, timber and farming, and all were doing well. For several years after the new school building was completed as many as 150 students were enrolled each year. "Kids walked in from all around," Giff says. "People lived on all these old farms then. Now nobody does."

Adolph, formerly called West Huttonsville, had been renamed for Adolph Pfister, who at one time owned much of the town and the area surrounding it. It was known then as the Pfister farm. A 'main street,' a dirt road along which several families lived, ran through town. Along that road was the church, Pleasant Chapel, and the nearby parsonage. Not far from the church was the general store.

"I believe Adolph Pfister might have owned the first store here," Giff says. "Then my dad put in a store. He sold out to two of his brothers. Then one bought the other one out. He ran it then until about 1929, I believe, when he sold out to Whitescarver."

Across a run from the store, up a slight rise, was a large white building with a screened-in porch. Known as the Pfister home, it had once been a hotel owned and operated by Adolph Pfister. Moore-Keppel acquired the building as it bought up local timber lands, and in 1928 the Keiss family, minus Thelma, moved into it. There were six girls and one boy still at home.

The Adolph store burned only a year or so after it was bought by Mr. Whitescarver. Giff was then working at Hemlock in the woods, and he'd been staying at the camp part of the time. Thelma was down from the farm spending the night with her family. "My sister George happened to notice the light out the window," she recalls. "She woke me up and said, 'The store's on fire!' Boy, we all got up then and rushed over. The whole town was there."

Adolph's general store was gone, never to be rebuilt. Whitescarver had a small building moved onto the same site. He lived in that and kept a few grocery items for sale. "Not anything to amount to anything," Thelma says.

In the fall of 1932 the Pfister house itself burned. Another Adolph landmark was gone. "My dad built the house that is there now," Thelma says. "They were living in the old Pfister house when it burned. Lost everything they had."

Thelma's sister Katheryn and her husband Otto Shannon have since purchased that second house, and they live there now. On Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas it is the gathering place for the clan. The huge, comfortable house can easily accommodate all of them.

One of the jobs Giff held during those early years of their marriage was hooking tongs, preparing logs for loading onto rail cars. The train at that time laid over at Lindale, a mile south of Adolph, and they moved there from the farm. Thelma completed the three-year high school at Adolph, and went on to Davis and Elkins College. Four years later, at age 27, she was the proud recipient of her B.A. degree.

She became what she'd always wanted to be, a teacher. "Not a very high aspiration at all," she says modestly, although there are plenty who would disagree. Her first school was the eight-grade Blue Rock Elementary. By then she and Giffen had moved back to the farm, and Thelma walked to Blue Rock along the old railroad grade, a distance of some three miles. "Oh, yes, I walked," she says. "Through all kinds of weather. Waded snow. A mountain at one end, a mountain at the other end!

"I'd go down the hill from home, walk the old grade to the bottom of the hill at Blue Rock below the church," she elaborates. "Then I walked up that hill to the church and climbed the fence and went a few steps down the road to the schoolhouse.

"Sometimes I'd be a little early, but most of the time I was about right to take up school. When it was cold we always had a good fire going. The Loudin family took care of the building and kept the fire. A few of the children wouldn't be able to make it during bad weather, but most of them were always there.

"There was a big, long recitation bench," Thelma continues. "The stove, a Burnside, stood in the middle of the room. The children farthest from the stove generally froze. A big crockery jar was the water cooler, and it sat on a shelf in the corner. The children furnished their own cups. The broom stood in the corner. The floors were oiled twice a year. A janitor was hired to sweep and dust and to build the fires. He was paid $5 a month at first and then they raised it to $6.

"We always had our opening exercises. No trouble over prayer or flag pledges. Then we took up our regu-

lar daily work, an hour and a half of classes, a 15-minute recess, and then another hour and 15 minutes of classes. We were allowed an hour at noon for lunch and took up school at one o'clock, an hour and a half of classes, recess, then an hour and 15 minutes of classes.

"Teaching all eight elementary grades was difficult at first," Thelma continues. "We taught all the basics — reading, arithmetic, spelling, geography, history, science. Usually reading classes came first. We'd start with the little ones. Before lunch, we also did arithmetic. After lunch, science, history, geography. Health classes were worked in.

Thelma made her career as a teacher. This school portrait is from about 1950. Photographer unknown.

"There was only about five minutes for each subject, so we learned to combine and work out our schedules, and to make special arrangements for certain projects. Much of how we arranged our teaching was left up to the teachers. We had a county superintendent, but he had no assistants or supervisors so he left things very much in the hands of the teachers.

"Finally I got the classes lined out so I could work them all in before four. Then it was the same old walk back, only a different hill to climb.

"There was one place along the old railroad grade where I had to cross over a stream," Thelma says of that long walk home. "The only way of crossing was over a log. There were two logs, parallel across the stream. One day there was a great, long blacksnake on one of the logs, the one I usually traveled. I very carefully took the other log. Oh, I do remember that blacksnake!"

America, during the '30's, was in the grip of the Great Depression. It was worldwide, bringing devastation and ruin. It left nothing untouched. Timber and coal did not escape. West Virginians by the thousands lost their jobs.

In 1932, Thelma's first year of teaching, the Randolph County school system collapsed. "There were nine districts in the county," she says. "The district boards were informed by the county superintendent that the county'd run out of money, that the districts would have to carry on on their own. The county didn't have any money to give them for the school year of 1932-33. Some districts shut down at one month, some at six months. The New Interest District, I believe, stopped at six months but Middle Fork went on for a full eight months. There was for a while no money to back the checks they gave us and no one would cash them. Finally, Middle Fork District made good all the checks. We were paid for the year, except for half of the last month of the school year.

"That was a statewide calamity and after that the educational system of the state was reorganized into county units. In the fall of 1933 the county system was begun with the boards meeting in the county seats."

Logging jobs became scarce, but Giff continued timbering for Moore-Keppel. The job was hard and dangerous but he enjoys talking of it today. He is very knowledgeable of the work done by himself and others. Take skidding, for example. Giff explains that logs were hooked together into a chain by "grabs," two iron hooks joined by links and a swivel. The grabs were driven by a heavy maul into the ends of the logs to fasten them together. The log chain was pulled by a team of horses.

"Foreman Frank Mams skidded a load of logs up here on Mitchell Lick one time," Giff relates. "Good weather and good roads. There were 33 logs in that one chain. Frank had to use three teams to start the logs. The horses were hitched to the chain of logs to get them started, then two teams were jayed-off and one team took the logs clear off the mountain. That's the biggest chain of logs I've ever seen, or heard of.

"To protect the horses they used a jay-grab in the lead log," Giff elaborates, referring to a J-shaped hook designed to disengage when a team stood aside to allow speeding logs to pass. "Sometimes on steep slopes the logs got to going too fast behind the horses for safety. When that happened the teamster turned the horses off the skid road into a jay-hole, a place prepared for the horses to wait while the logs came unhooked and continued on down the skid road."

"There was one teamster the men called Jay-hole Jessie," Thelma says.

Giff agrees. "He'd jay-off when he really should've made the horses speed up a little," he explains. "He'd jay-off, so they called him Jay-hole Jessie."

The lobbyhog kept camp for the loggers, Giff says, continuing his explanation of logging days. "He cleaned the lobby and the bunkhouse. Kept the towels washed and clean. Swept out. And he fought the plague of the logging camps, bedbugs.

"Every once in a while he'd have to scald the bedbugs out of the bedsprings," Giff says. "Then when the bugs got really bad the camp had to be steamed. The clothes were hung around the room, the mattresses taken off the beds. One of the locomotives would be brought up next to the building, and a really hot fire would be built in the engine. The boiler's steam would be blown through a pipe into the building. The steam'd kill most of the bugs — for a while."

Men known as road monkeys kept the skid roads in shape. "A road monkey helped build the skid roads and kept the rock out of the roads," Giff explains. "And if there was a little old stump in the road he'd cut that out. If there was a low place in the road he'd put a couple of poles in to keep the logs from digging into the ground."

They remember one road monkey in particular. "Road Monkey Jim," Thelma says. "He froze to death."

"Up here at Birch Fork Ford," Giff adds.

"He must have been drinking," Thelma continues. "He got that far up the railroad on his way back to Camp 20 and he sat down —"

"—along a little stream there," Giff picks up. "Wes Simmons — he was lobbyhog up at Camp 20 — was going down for the mail. He saw Road Monkey Jim, and he said he believed he was dead. We were loading logs just right above there. We went down — and Road Monkey Jim was dead. He'd froze to death."

After teaching one year at Blue Rock, Thelma transferred to Adolph. She taught the seventh and eighth grades and high school English and history. "We'd had a three-year high school here," she says. "The junior year had been taken away, so when I began to teach in '33 at Adolph there was a two-year high school. Then the next year they brought back the junior year, so for 10 years I taught the three-year high school."

The Depression continued, but a new president had won the election of 1932. Franklin Delano Roosevelt did not hesitate. He sent an amazing number of bills to a weary Congress and his edicts became law. FDR's presidency was characterized by the initials of its "alphabet agencies" — the WPA, NRA, TVA, CCC, and many others. One of these, the Works Progress Administration, brought the first hard road over Rich Mountain from Mill Creek to Adolph and beyond. It ran past the road leading to the Zickefoose farm and on through Blue Rock to Helvetia. The WPA work provided jobs for men who desperately needed them.

Thelma continued teaching at Adolph during those hard years, and Giff returned to farming. "Kept quite a few sheep and had several head of cattle," he says of that period. "I sold sheep. Buyers went through the country every fall and bought sheep. They'd drive them over to Hemlock and weigh them, then they got to weighing them closer to home. They weighed one year up at our farm. There were always cattle buyers around. Never had to take the cattle any ways. The buyers would pick them right up.

"And we sold wool," Giff continues. "Every May I'd have to shear the sheep. That was quite a job. The buyers furnished a big sack. We'd put the wool in the sack, then get in and tramp down the wool. Get, oh, 100, 150 pounds of wool in a sack."

Giff also became a house builder. He built a new home for Thelma and himself, a modern house situated near the old homestead, which was torn down when the new place was ready. Giff had some help from Johnny Swiger, a young man whose family lived in that small, fertile valley from which the three hills of the Zickefoose farm arose, but otherwise built the house by himself. Building is not done overnight, especially if one is farming too, so the house was a few years under construction. Giff used chestnut paneling in many of the rooms.

The Maypole was an important community ritual in southern Randolph County. Thelma says this one was photographed on the grounds of Adolph School. Photographer and date unknown.

"He drew the plans," Thelma brags. "For the bathroom he drew the location of the fixtures and sent the plans to Sears. The pipes were cut to Giff's specifications. Giff installed the pipes. And it worked just fine!"

At Christmas, Thelma became a director and producer of school plays. "When the high school first started, Mrs. Stanley Russell was the principal," she says. "She began a high school play at Christmas time, then the principals that followed after her carried on the tradition.

"The plays were put on at the church. We took up donations and had cake walks and got enough money to build a platform in the church that would raise the players above the audience. A wire was strung across the front and curtains made from white bed sheets were attached to the wire by safety pins."

To the right of the stage was a special alcove. There the Christmas tree, cut from the nearby forest, was set up. The tree was hung with colored bulbs and garland tinsel. Long, silvery icicles, reusable ones made from lead, were hung over the tree branches so that the ends were exactly even. There still was no electricity in Adolph but the colored bulbs, the tinsel and the icicles created their own kind of beauty. The tree would sparkle and shimmer. Bed sheet curtains hid the tree from view until time for it to be unveiled.

The night of the play would often be snowy, huge flakes floating down to create one of Adolph's winter wonderlands. Always the church would be filled to capacity, standing room only. The Burnside stove would glow faintly red. The show would begin with small skits and recitations by the grade-schoolers. Then the play by the high school students would be presented.

Everyone awaited the highlight of the evening, when the alcove curtain would be opened and the tree, lovely and shimmering, revealed. Presents would be spread beneath its branches and around it on the floor, for names had been exchanged. There were boxes of candy, one for each of the children, a gift from the teachers.

Then through the chill night came the sound of jingle bells, perhaps a 'HO-HO-HO.' The church doors would burst open. The adults in the audience and the teachers and older students would smile indulgently, while the younger children stared raptly at a phenomenon in red with flowing white beard and twinkling eyes. Santa would hand out gifts and the evening was complete.

So the days for Thelma, the teacher, and for Giff, the farmer and builder, were full and busy. In 1939 they moved into their new home. But beyond the hills war clouds gathered,

bringing for Giff the only part of his life lived outside the rim of high ridges, a period of 37 months and 20 days by his exact count. The self-taught carpenter joined the Navy Seabees, whose primary function was to build U.S. naval bases around the world. Giff went to Camp Perry, Virginia, then to bases in Mississippi, California, Alaska, and finally to Guam for a little over a year.

Giff was carrying on a family tradition. A list of his maternal forebears reads like a Who's Who of West Virginia military service. His mother, Pleasant Morgan, was the daughter of Lieutenant Charles Morgan, the son of Captain David Morgan, the son of Captain James Morgan, the son of Lieutenant Morgan Morgan. The lieutenant was the son of David Morgan, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, who was the son of the original Morgan Morgan, himself a colonel and West Virginia's first white settler.

The war brought many changes, some to the educational system. Young men and women joined the service and whole families moved away to claim war jobs in city factories, causing a quick decline in the population of country towns. Beginning in 1943, the young people of high school age still remaining in the area were bused to Tygart Valley at Mill Creek. Adolph High was closed. Thelma's teaching career was interrupted and she went home to help sister Katheryn care for their sick mother.

Giff returned in 1945. For a while he farmed full-time. Moore-Keppel's lumbering operation had closed. In 1946 Thelma returned to teaching, at a one-room school at Huff, located halfway between Adolph and Mill Creek. "That winter there were 32 kids in Huff school," she recalls. "You could almost see the building going in and out." Today a stranger would see no signs that a school was ever there.

Thelma remembers the blizzard that struck one afternoon. Just after school one of the boys rushed in to warn her that if she didn't leave soon she'd never make it down the hill.

Thelma keeps busy with house and garden work in her retirement, but takes time out for a sizable collection of stuffed animals.

"I brought him out with me," she says. "We got to the bad, slick turn, and he jumped out of the truck cab and climbed onto the truck bed. I made it around the turn, but if it hadn't been for his weight back there I wouldn't have made it. By the time I got down to the hard road there was five or six inches of snow.

"I wasn't scared. There was no traffic except for one vehicle that had gone by. I followed right in that track. I made it to Adolph, and my husband was just on the point of grabbing a ride to come look for me."

The schools continued to change after the war. "Educational grants by the federal government caused much more red tape," Thelma says. "Forms to fill out for everything, and there was more supervision of the teachers. We had an assistant superintendent and supervisors for the elementary grades and the high schools. A reading program was started. Daisy Martin was the first reading instructor out this way. And music teachers were sent out to the country schools."

In 1948, Giff curtailed his farming to begin yet another career. "I was mowing down on the flat there," he says, "and an inspector from the U.S. postal service came up — well, Thelma's sister Katheryn brought him. They were looking for someone to take the Adolph post office. I told him I would, so I did in the next day or two." Giff continued to farm in a small way, running a few head of cattle and raising a garden.

Under Roosevelt's Rural Electrification Act electric lines had been installed to Adolph, but at first those lines did not extend into the more remote areas surrounding the town. "We didn't get electricity on the farm until 1952," Thelma says. "Now they had it here in Adolph, but we didn't have it. Then we were told by the electric company that if we cut the right-of-way to Blue Rock they'd run a spur line that far, so all the men pitched in and cut the right-of-way. "People hired someone to wire their houses, or if they were capable of wiring a house they wired it themselves," she continues. "Giff ordered a book and wired our house from those instructions. The electric company told us what wire would be best to use. The house we built was a studded house, so Giff could easily run the wires between the walls. He didn't have a bit of trouble.

"We had a minimum rate, something like $8 every two months. Well, everybody was so saving on the electric. Didn't want to run over that $8. I forget now who the person was, but one customer ran over the $8. People just thought that was awful. As we got new appliances, the first thing we knew we were all running over. We enjoyed the electricity and the things it could do."

Thelma, after teaching at Huff for nine years, returned to teach at Adolph in 1956. The old high school building now housed a two-room ele-

Above: The former Adolph High School is home to the Zickefooses today. Thelma attended school in the building and later taught there for many years.

Below: The wide school hallway is just right for antiques and curios.

mentary, first to eighth grades. "I was principal there for eight years," she says. "Then in 1964 Adolph was converted into a one-room school."

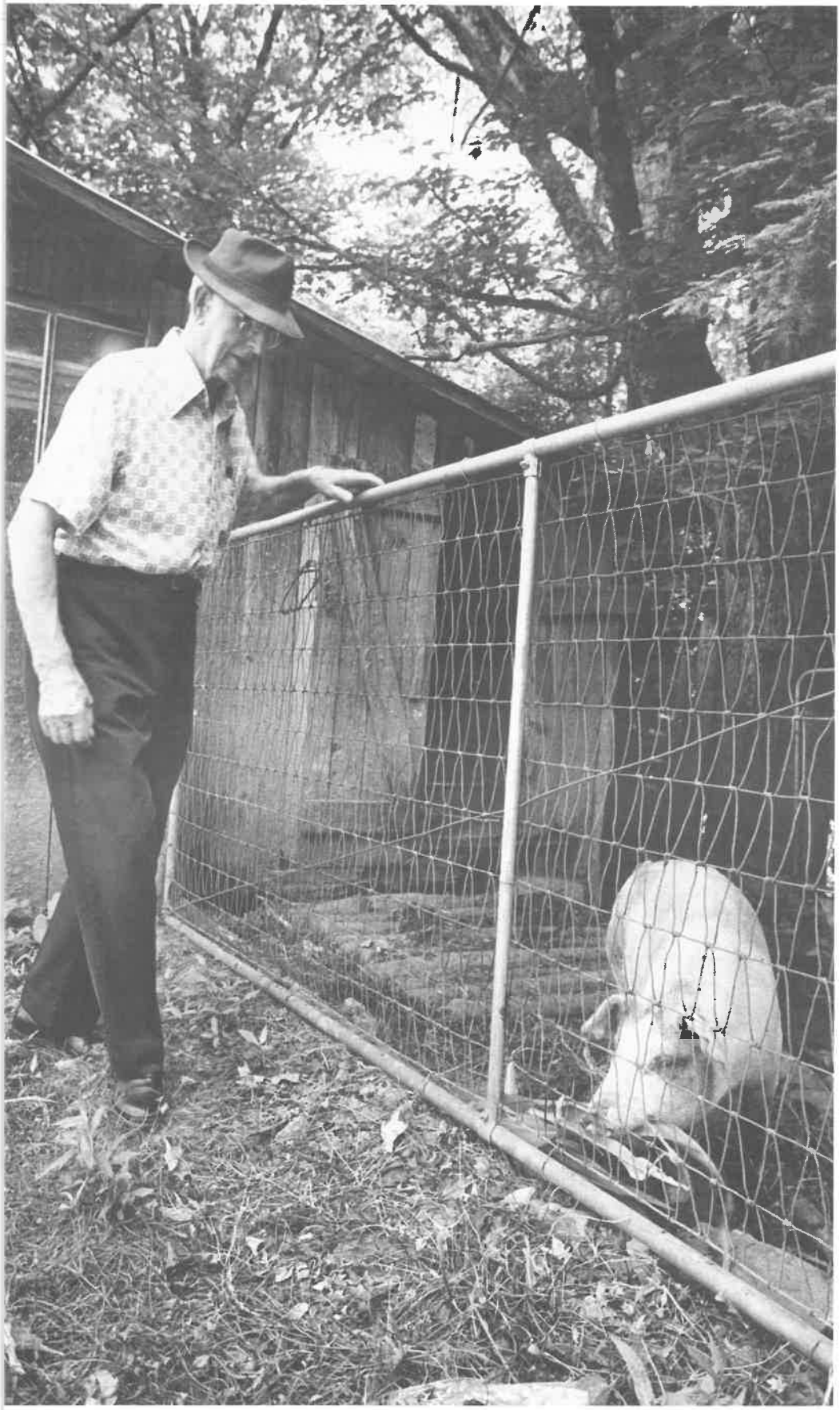
By the 1960's West Virginia's second growth of timber was ready for cutting. The mountains again rang with work, but this time the harvest was more subdued. Some 850,000 acres of land, lying largely in the mountainous eastern counties, had been purchased by the U.S. Government under authority of the Weeks Bill of 1911. Tracts were obtained over a period of years. In 1920 Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the acreage purchased to that time to be the Monongahela National Forest. Timber cutting there is kept under strict control, and the logging of private lands also has been regulated. The old Moore-Keppel lands around Adolph, controlled by heirs, were leased to small sawmill operators in the 1960's.

Modern timbering requires fewer workers. That and the decline in mining jobs reduced local population. With busing and school consolidation, the school at Adolph was slated for closing. When Thelma retired in 1966 it was shut down for good.

In May of 1967 the five-room, white frame building was put up for sale. It was purchased by Thelma and Giffen Zickefoose. "We moved the post office over here," Giff said. "And the small store. Neither one paid enough, the post office nor the store. With both of them together you could make a living out of it."

Giff converted the three big school rooms in the rear of the building into a four-room apartment. Two of the rooms were made over into a living room, kitchen and dining area, and the other converted into two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Snows by then fell deeper at the old mountain farm, or perhaps to Giff and Thelma it only seemed so. In any event they thought it wise to wind up their farming and move to their new schoolhouse apartment by the state road. "Then when I got to be 70, why, they said 'get on for home,'" Giff says of his retirement from his job as postmaster in 1974. That ended another era for Adolph.



Giff Zickefoose has left the farm but the farm hasn't quite left him. He butchers at least one hog each fall.

The post office was closed and consolidated with the one at Mill Creek. Adolph became a rural route.

In the 1970's the timber land once owned by Moore-Keppel & Company was sold to Connecticut Life. Now much of it is owned by Westvaco and is logged for both pulp wood and lumber. Small private sawmill operations continued to expand. There was a regional coal boom as the price of oil, controlled then by OPEC, shot skyward.

By the mid-'70's both Thelma and Giff were retired, but only from their public careers. Although the mountain farm with its three hills, its flats and its small, fertile valley began to grow over with brush and timber, down on the hard road the owners continued to live busy, productive lives. Thelma canned jams and jellies, vegetables, pork and chicken for winter, and raised enough houseplants to fill a small greenhouse. Giff, after closing down his hill farm completely, put in a huge garden every year on the old school grounds.

Today, the Zickefooses continue to keep busy in retirement. Thelma still cans and pampers her houseplants. Giff grows his big garden and every year he raises a hog. Sometime around Thanksgiving, when the weather is cold and clear, he butchers with the help of someone in the neighborhood.

"In my dad's day we used to raise several hogs," he reflects. "But now I keep only one. You always have to have somebody to help. Just get the water scalding hot. Shoot the hog. Stick it to bleed it, then scald all the hair off."

Giff also keeps bees, another link to his very earliest days. "We used to always keep bees up on the hill," he says. "My dad used to keep them. Oh, he'd have 30 or 40 stands every year, and he'd take the honey over to Mill Creek and sell it."

Giff now does not sell any of the honey his bees produce. What he and Thelma don't use, he gives away. He claims not to have much trouble reclaiming a swarm that has left the hive with a new queen, although, wisely, he does take certain precautions. It's been a while since Giff Zickefoose took that hammer to a hive of honey bees, but he hasn't forgotten.

A Stitch in Time

The Needle Neighbors of Monongalia County

By Zana Legan

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

I grew up in Indiana with West Virginia roots, frequently visiting my elderly great-aunt, Nell Liming, in western Monongalia County. I often heard of her quilt club activities. Aunt Nell is gone now, but six years ago I moved to the family farm that she had occupied for so many years. It was a delight to learn that her old "Needle Neighbors" quilt club was still intact, evidently a pillar of this small community not far from the banks of Dunkard Creek at Wadestown. My parents also moved from Indiana to the West Virginia farm, and Mother has been a proud member of the Needle Neighbors since that time. I have been a regular visitor and on a few occasions have attempted my hand at quilting.

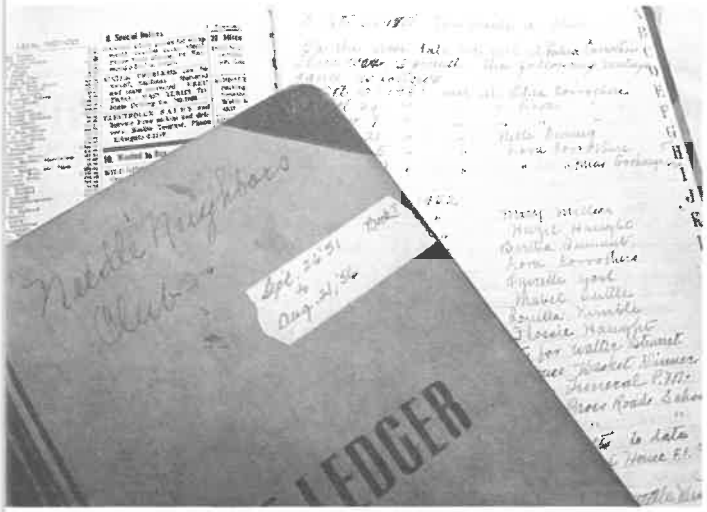
My knowledge of the Needle Neighbors Club is based on books and ledgers kept since the club's beginning in September 1951. As there has been no specific method of keeping books, I have spent many hours deciphering facts and figures in an attempt to put the story in chronological order. Great-aunt Nell kept the books for the first 15 years and four months of the club's existence. She relinquished that job at age 83. Most of the early history of the Needle Neighbors is taken from her reports.

On September 26, 1951, the records show that "thirteen ladies" met at the home of Edna Corrothers near Crossroads to organize a women's club. They voted to make the club

The Needle Neighbors show off their handiwork. Seated in front is Wilma Tennant. Left to right are Mary McKeny, Goldie Price, Martha Jane Gallagher, Mary Jane Woodruff, Mary Pyles and Ogerette Yost.

Right: Lifetime friendships developed between club members, such as Mary Pyles and Nell Liming. "Nell used to call me 'Patch Eye,' " says Mary Pyles (left), "and I called her 'Dead Eye.' " Date and photographer unknown.

Below: "Sept-26-1951 We Create a Club" is the first entry in the Needle Neighbors book of minutes. Author Zana Legan based her article in part on the information recorded in the club books.



one "to help one another" and "to be purely social." Those original 13 members were Irene Lough, Leona Haught, Hazel Haught, Mary Pyles, Lora Corrothers, Nell Liming, Flossie Haught, Margaret Hibbs, Grace Strosnider, Bessie Taylor, Fern Cumberledge, Dorothy Tennant, and Edna Corrothers. Within the first year, a total of 52 women had attended club meetings from an area of about six square miles. Lora had perfect attendance for the year, and Hazel, Aunt Nell and Irene attended all but a handful of meetings.

On October 10, 1951, the club had as a guest speaker Miss Stump, a representative from the Monongalia County Extension Homemakers Clubs. That was the day the ladies named themselves the Needle Neighbors. They evidently decided to keep their club free of any larger organization and it has remained separate since that time.

In the early days the women met in each other's homes. Not only did they quilt but some also brought along their rug making, crocheting and other craft projects to share with one another. At times they met just to exchange quilt squares, work on carpet rags, or to celebrate a member's birthday. To break routine, the ladies occasionally had Dutch Maid or Stanley sales demonstrations. A highlight of each meeting was the noonday meal. These were always covered-dish affairs, with members bringing new favorites or tried-and-true specialties. Present-day member Louella Kimble laughs when she tells of the meeting "when every member brought either cottage cheese or peas to eat."

The Needle Neighbors generally quilted for the member who hosted that week's club meeting. Generally they had two quilts going at a time. Sometimes they finished quilts that the missionary circle at the Crossroads Baptist Church had started. There seems to have been a period when they were going into each other's homes to make friendship quilts. These had a friend's name embroidered on each square. When Ogerette Yost and husband Henry celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, fellow club members ordered special quilt square patterns from the *Grit* weekly newspaper and each woman secretly worked on squares to make a quilt for the Yosts.

Thoughtfulness extended beyond the circle of club members. Once when a family had been burned out in the community, the ladies made five quilts for them. The books show that the club also gave the unfortunate family "sheets, towels, pillowslips" and other gifts. For this, the Needle Neighbors were given the "Hi Waters Award for Community Activity." This was a recognition written on March 22, 1952, in a *Wheeling Intelligencer and News Register* column by W. Harold "Hi Waters" McWilliams, a popular journalist of that time.

The club gave a door prize to one lucky member at each meeting. Items such as egg poachers, painted flour sifters, meat platters, salt and pepper shakers, and get-well cards were given. Another club tradition was that of having a "secret sister." You did special things for your secret sister on her birthday, wedding anniversary or on any other occasion you felt led to do so. At year's end, you revealed your identity. Lifetime friendships developed in the Needle Neighbors. One of those was between Nell Liming and Mary Pyles. Mary still talks fondly of Aunt Nell, saying, "Nell used to call me 'Patch Eye' and I called her 'Dead Eye.' " Their antics were well known to club members.

So that younger mothers could participate, children were made welcome at Needle Neighbors meetings. They played in a corner of the room, or outside on a summer's day. The children weren't always well behaved. Louella Kimble tells of the time "two of the boys played in cow manure and had to be cleaned up before going home." Martha Jane Gallagher remembers when her little boy

"cracked a croquet ball right between his cousin's eyes."

The Needle Neighbors took note of passing holidays. At one Christmas meeting a scripture was read after the bountiful covered-dish meal, the hostess gave another reading, and all sang "Silent Night." Two members gave recitations, another read a story, a member sang solo, two played piano solos, still another read a story, and one danced. Then, "at the end of a perfect day," one of the children gave a final recitation.

In the Wadestown area of Monongalia County, there was always excitement during Battelle District Fair time. Not to be outdone, the Needle Neighbors kept a jump ahead by quilting one or more quilts to be raffled at the fair. The ladies also worked hard on their fair floats and often won honors for originality.

On September 29, 1955, after four years of meeting in private homes, the quilting club acquired permanent quarters. Member Flossie Haught agreed to let the Needle Neighbors renovate an outbuilding on her farm into a clubhouse. They referred to the two-room building as the "sugar camp," because it sat in an area of sugar maple trees and had been used for the boiling of sap into maple syrup.

The ladies slowly domesticated their new clubhouse. One of the first things they did was to buy a used cook stove for the weekly covered-dish dinners. They painted and papered the walls to give the place a homey touch. They paid Flossie for the electricity, which ran from $1 to $4 per month over the years they used the sugar camp. The club also put a new roof on the building. On September 11, 1957, the records report that a regulator had been installed on the gas line when they lost their free gas rights and had to go on Manufacturer's Light and Heat Company gas. The Needle Neighbors paid for mowing the clubhouse grass in the summer.

The club books are a living history of members' illnesses and hospitalizations, community deaths, engagements, and births. Often a new baby in the neighborhood was given a gift of a baby quilt from the ladies. Occasionally, snowfall amounts and temperatures were recorded by the brave women who weathered winter storms to work on their quilts. Poems are included here and there in the records.

Other local quilting groups kept in touch with the Needle Neighbors. The women would, on occasion, visit each other's clubs to exchange patterns and quilt squares. One of these groups was the Farm Women's Club of nearby Hagans.

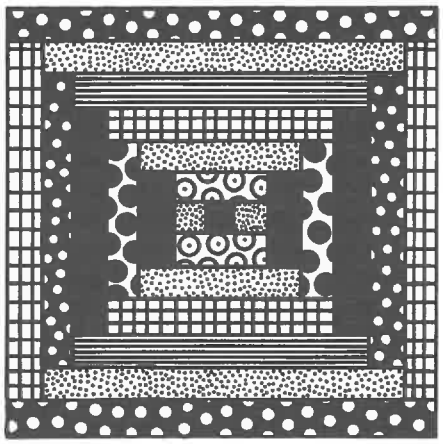
The ladies' quilting skills had been handed down from generations before. Present members tell of being taught needlework by their mothers from the time they were children. Households were organized around the need to produce hand-sewn goods. Martha Jane Gallagher has memories of quilting frames "that were lifted to the ceiling with ropes" during non-quilting hours when the space was needed for family living. When quilting time was available the frames were lowered back to working height, she says. Frames were made in many ways and always constructed of wood. The long pieces on each side had to be moveable so that as the work progressed the quilt could be rolled from the unfinished side toward the finished side. Generally, six to eight women could sit comfortably, elbow to elbow.

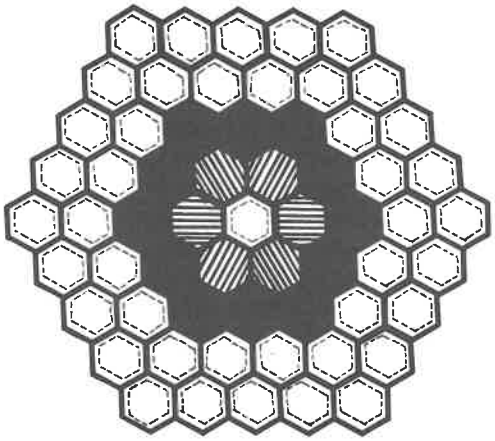
Of course, all the community news and plans for future endeavors were discussed while the work was done. "Some of the men in the community termed the ladies the gossipy club or the hen party," Mary Jane Woodruff admits. The gossip was part of the fun. The fellowship of one neighbor to another and the sharing of friendship were of major importance. Talking did not slow down the women's fingers.

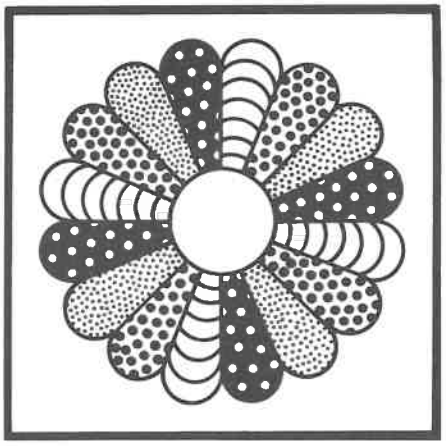
The quilt beneath the busy fingers consisted of three layers — the lining; the batting, called "bat" by the local ladies; and the decorative quilt top. The lining was the bottom side of the quilt, made of plain muslin or a bed sheet of proper size. The bat was the middle layer, the part that gave the quilt its puffy look and provided its warmth. Quilters traditionally favored cotton batting, but today they also use polyester. The quilt top was the fancy part, exhibiting the quilter's originality and style as an artist. These three layers were joined together by the many stitches applied by the nimble fingers of the club members. One identifying mark of a seasoned quilter was her calloused forefinger, purposely stuck by the needle while under the quilt to ensure she had pierced all three layers. A thimble would not do, since the quilter must feel the needle.

The patterns of the quilt tops varied, and there seemed no end to the quilters' creativity. Members agree that Goldie Price has been the most artistic of the Needle Neighbors. "When we were at a standstill, Goldie always came around for us," Martha Jane Gallagher says.

Early members of the Needle Neighbors are shown in this 1950's snapshot. Left to right are Coral Shriver, Ogerette Yost, Dorothy Tennant, Mary Pyles, Flossie Haught, Wilma Tennant and Norma Ammons. The child is Penny Ammons. Photographer unknown.







Above: Log Cabin, Grandmother's Flower Garden and Dresden Plate patterns. Illustrated by Lisa George.

Below: Needle Neighbors club members agree that Goldie Price is the most artistic of the bunch. Here she proudly displays an eagle-and-shield design.

Creativity was anchored in tradition, however. Favorite patterns came down from earlier times. Many of the quilters have antique quilts passed down through the family. They are cherished treasures and models for future work. Familiar patterns from times past include the bear paw, double wedding ring, flower garden, Dutch girl, rainbow, log cabin, and Dresden plate. There are also the less formal crazy patch and strip quilts.

The designs were pieced, appliqued, or embroidered. My favorites are the pieced quilts. Often, women used material from a child's dress or great-grandma's apron for the pieces, adding a bit of family history to the quilt. For appliqued quilts, the pattern was first drawn onto the quilt top. Next, the same pattern was cut from another piece of material, leaving an allowance to turn under for a hem. The applique cutout was then blind stitched to the drawn pattern. Embroidered quilt squares generally had a pre-stamped pattern that was stitched with colored threads by the quilter.

As time progressed, the Needle Neighbors began taking on quilting jobs for others. At first they charged five cents per yard of thread used. Today they charge 15 cents per yard. The amount of thread used depends upon the quantity of stitching done, and therefore roughly indicates the amount of labor the quilting ladies put into each quilt. Also considered in the cost of the quilt was whether or not the club members furnished the bat and the lining and whether they were to bind the outside edges. If a

member took the quilt home to bind, she herself received the payment for binding. Thus the club began to take on an economic side. Some of the women were of limited means and their craft supplemented their income.

Quilting was never without its problems, the club books show. One cold November day in 1958 a "buck sheep broke the gas line at the Club House," according to the records, and at an August 1960 meeting the members were surprised to find a "blacksnake in the Club House." As my mother remembers the story, the snake was in the teakettle. Aunt Nell's minutes of the meeting state merely that Wilma yelled "Wow" and "Lela killed it." Also someone occasionally wanted them to quilt a quilt top that was "crooked and puckered" and a "headache" to work on. Proud of their skill, the Needle Neighbors resented having to bother with inferior work.

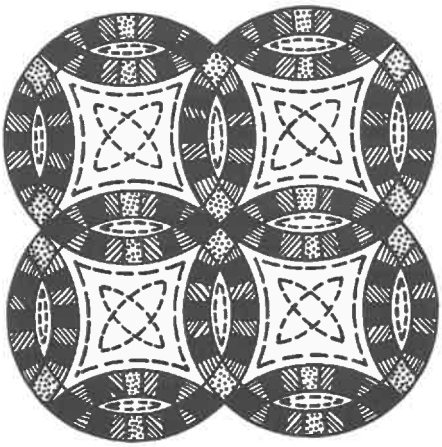
To celebrate or to reward themselves and to spend money earned from their labors, the members would sometimes all motor to Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, or some other regional town to eat out or perhaps shop for the day. They planned occasional picnics for fun and relaxation. These outings often included families.

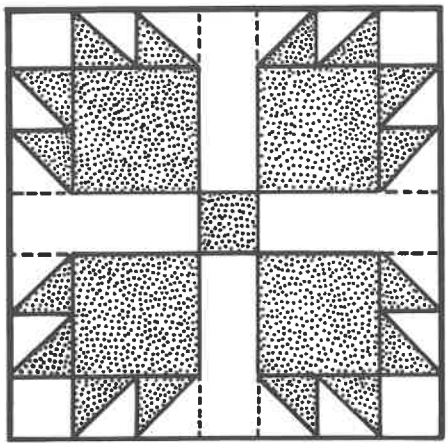
Through the years the quilting club met faithfully unless there was good reason not to. One specific reason for calling off a meeting was the death of a member. As pages turn in the record books, this becomes increasingly frequent. It is sad to read of members taking leave of their friends.

Today the Needle Neighbors again meet at one another's homes. On or about December 28, 1973, they left the sugar camp they were so fond of. The foot bridge across the creek had fallen and the floor of the building was ready to give way. The membership is now down to about eight. These ladies meet weekly with their traditional covered-dish dinners, quilting the day away. They return to the same member's home for the number of weeks it takes to finish that particular quilt, then move on to another house. There they will "put another quilt in," and put the news of the neighborhood up for discussion.

Above: Mary Pyles was one of the club founders. Here she stitches the flower garden pattern, a favorite of the Needle Neighbors and many other quilters.

Below: Double Wedding Ring and Bear's Claw patterns. Illustrations by Lisa George.





"We're In For It"

Early Days at Blenko Glass

By Rick Wilson
Photographs by Michael Keller

Blenko glass has a way of appearing in interesting places. It can be found in the National Cathedral in Washington, the Cathedral of Rheims in France, the chapel of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, at Nashville's Country Music Awards — and in thousands of private homes across the country. Several other glass factories in West Virginia have closed their doors, but the Blenko Glass Company is going strong at age 65. It remains a trendsetter in the national industry and a full-fledged institution in its hometown of Milton.

Indeed, it is impossible to enter or leave the eastern Cabell County town without being reminded by road signs that Milton is the "Home of Blenko Glass." To a sharp observer, however, the signs that one is entering Blenko territory are visible several miles before city limits. They are to be found in the vases, pitchers, decanters, and goblets that are prominently displayed in so many living room windows along the way. Unfortunately, company founder William John Blenko's road to success was not so plainly marked.

The story of Blenko Glass begins before the town of Milton carved its niche on the banks of Mud River, before West Virginia severed itself from Virginia, and even before the average European became aware of new lands beyond the Atlantic. It starts in those centuries between the Dark Ages and the bloody wars of the Reformation. During that relatively peaceful period, a measure of order and civilization returned to Europe. The influence of the Church played a major role and, as if in gratitude, massive cathedrals were erected as monuments of praise and worship. Workers and craftsmen from every trade made their contribution, with a very important part played by the guilds of master glassblowers who fashioned the stained glass to visually portray the great themes of Christianity. In an era when very few people could read or write, stained glass windows constituted a Bible of the poor.

The type of glass made by the medieval craftsmen tended to be uneven in surface and texture and to contain "seeds," or air bubbles, and other imperfections. As years went by, glassmakers labored to remove these apparent defects. Ironically, however, it was the irregularities that gave early glass its unique beauty. By the 19th century, glassmakers began to realize this, and an effort was made to produce "antique" stained glass similar in quality to the medieval product.

Onto the scene came William John Blenko, expert English glassblower. Born in 1854, this son of a London iron worker was apprenticed to a glass shop at the age of 10. Originally working in a bottle factory, Blenko caught the stained glass bug as a young man and devoted the rest of his life to the craft. By day he would polish his skills in the shop while at night he studied chemistry and French, the language of the early glass treatises.

By the 1890's, following his successful innovation of the "Norman slab" type of stained glass (glass that is blown into an elongated square mold and then cut along the corners) for a church in Norfolk, England, Blenko believed that his skills were refined to the point where he could introduce the manufacture of antique stained glass in America. At the time, the industry had taken no strong roots in this country, and native glass artists had either to import the real thing from Europe or to be content with machine-made "cathedral glass." Blenko's American shop would have to navigate between these established competitors, the cheap factory glass on the one hand and the expensive European glass on the other. It would prove to be rough sailing.

After careful consideration, Blenko selected Kokomo, Indiana, as the site of his first plant. The city was chosen for its cheap natural gas, good rail service, and proximity to other glass factories. Immediate success, however, was not in the cards. Blenko arrived in the United States just in time for the depression of 1893, the worst the country had yet faced. The entire glass industry suffered, fuel prices rose, a fire damaged his new shop, and — worst of all — American glass artists continued to import most of their glass from across the Atlantic.

William John Blenko managed to hold out for several years in Kokomo nonetheless, busying himself in other pursuits. He joined the local orchestra as a piccolo player, formed an amateur comedy company, and organized a benefit performance for unemployed glassworkers. It was probably at Kokomo that he formed a lifelong friendship with one of the most colorful and idealistic figures in American history, Socialist and labor leader Eugene V. Debs.

It may seem strange that the fledgling capitalist and the patron saint of American Socialism should become fast friends, particularly since Debs once criticized churches for spending so much money on "steeples, stained glass, carpets, velvets, and gilt edged Bibles that nothing is left for the poor." Blenko may have sympathized with that general condemna-

tion of luxury, but the specific reference to stained glass must have stung. Still, Blenko was a child of the English working class and for most of his life a working craftsman himself.

At any rate, the famous radical and the businessman developed a mutual high regard. In a telegram (now framed and displayed in the office of grandson William H. Blenko, Jr.) Debs tells Blenko that "I can never forget you and always when I think of you the word comrade means more to me and I rejoice that you are in the world. Believe me always, Your loving comrade." Blenko later visited Debs in Moundsville, where he was imprisoned for outspoken opposition to U.S. involvement in the First World War, and after Blenko's death his widow requested that his ashes be scattered on Debs's grave.

Unfortunately, one cannot live merely on culture and comradeship. William Blenko was forced to return to England around 1899 to continue in his craft. Ironically, the same glass artists who ignored his American glass eagerly purchased identical materials from him in England. He kept his sights set on America and continued in the meantime to experiment with new molds, methods and colors.

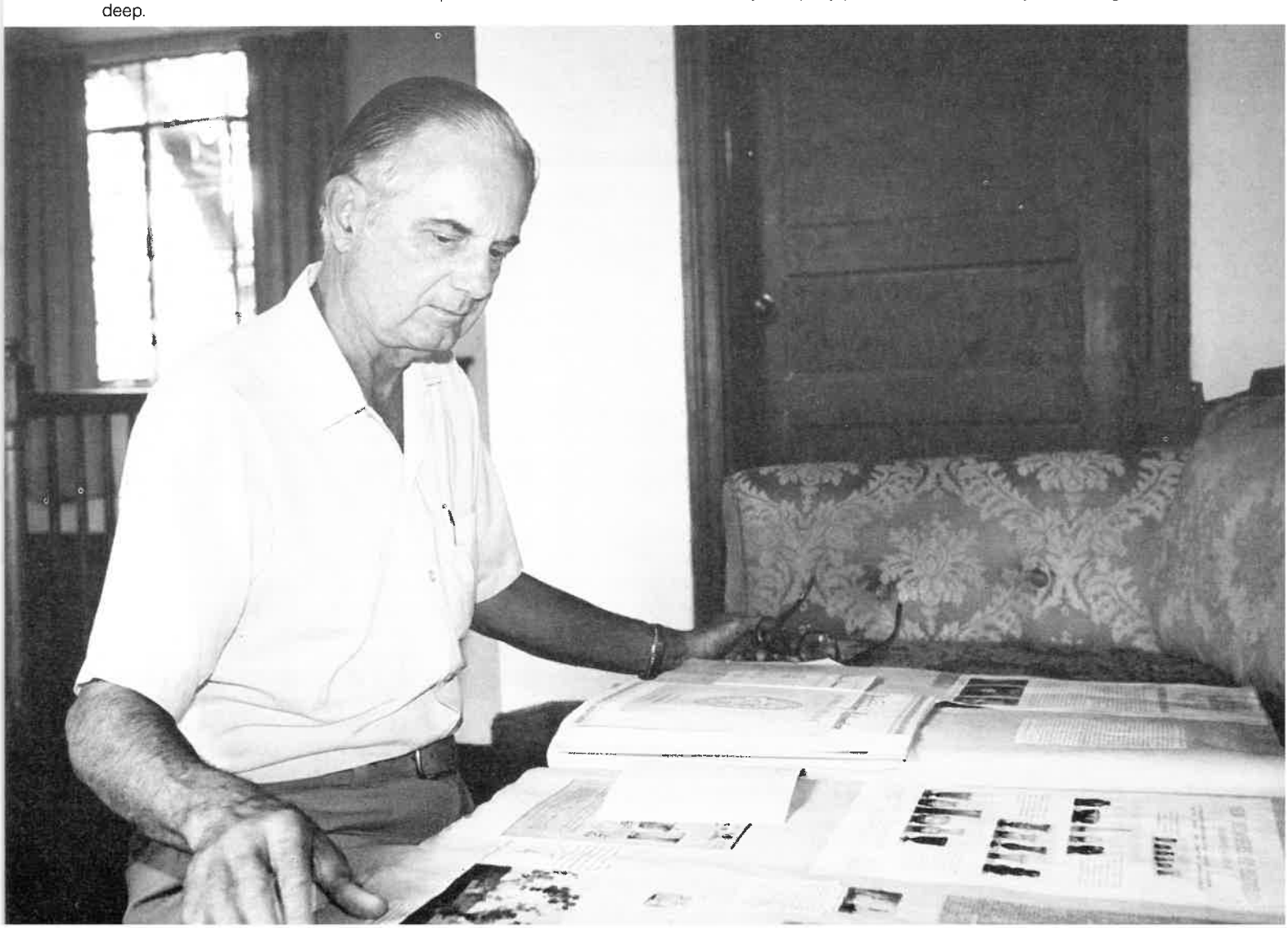
In 1909 Blenko was ready to try again, this time using trained English glassblowers. He moved to Point Marion, Pennsylvania, and set up a glass shop there, but soon was forced to discharge his workers. In 1911 he moved to Clarksburg, West Virginia, and began training local workers for the job. Despite his improvements in molding, color and annealing, the orders did not come in and once again he failed.

Fortunately, Blenko's glassmaking expertise made it easy for him to find employment over the next several years. In 1919, for example, he wrote to his son William H., then serving in the armed forces, that he was working in a glass plant in Bellaire, Ohio, where "they are paying me $40 a week to walk around and look wise." At about the same time, he seriously considered an offer from Louis Tiffany's New York glass shop. Aside from better pay and prestige, the Long Island job offered the aging Englishman something he sorely missed — the sea. "Won't it be great," he wrote, "to just hop across after a bad day and have a dip in a real ocean and salt water!"

While it cannot be verified that he took the Tiffany job, it is certain that Blenko hadn't given up on starting his own shop. Only two years later, he moved to the small town of Milton, ready to make a final stand. Alone and 67 years old, Blenko dug in his heels. "The die is cast and the Rubicon is passed," he wrote, "in other words we are in for it."

Blenko's first Milton plant, long since destroyed, has been called a shack and evidently it was just that.

President William H. Blenko reviews a scrapbook of Blenko memorabilia. The family company prides itself on a history now four generations deep.



Standing about 20 feet by 40, with a steel roof and frame walls, it was largely made by Blenko himself. He also built the furnace and the annealing oven, with financial assistance from sons William H. and Walter, the latter a patent lawyer whose knowledge had proved handy with Blenko experimentations.

As usual, there was trouble along the way. There were delays in construction and problems with the gas lines and the melting pot. Blenko's letters of the period give eloquent testimony to his problems. Late in 1921, he wrote that his frustrations were giving him a case of "what the Englishmen call the 'bloody 'ump.'" During construction he railed about the weather. "Oh boy, talk about Mud!! They made a lot of fuss about the mud of Flanders, but if it has anything on the mud of West Virginia, I'll eat a bushel of it." And, when the pot burst while he was working on his first order, "Can you manage to fire off a few strong cuss words for me? I have about run through my stock. . . anyhow we're not dead yet and perhaps if you can get in a few curses or prayers whichever you think best it may help out, but depend on it I'm not giving up the ghost yet."

Blenko made the best of a bad situation, sleeping in a makeshift cot in the corner of the shop and living on the princely sum of $3 per week. He called his shop the Eureka Art Glass Company. He felt that after his many years of studying the stained glass craft that he could finally say, like the ancient scientist Archimedes, "Eureka! I have found it."

A mutually profitable relationship soon developed between the old man and the young boys of the town. The boys would gather bottles and other glass for remelting as "cullet," or recycled glass. They were paid for their efforts. As one elderly Miltonian put it, "He'd give them a nickel and their eyes would get as big as platters. A nickel then was better than a silver dollar today." Neighborhood boys were especially eager to visit the shop during solar eclipses, when Mr. Blenko gave them bits of colored glass through which to watch the heavenly events.

Nor were the young the only ones to seek Blenko out. Country folk, on their weekly visits to town, would regularly stop by. They watched in amazement as the old Englishman made a glittering product for which they had no earthly use and which few of them had ever seen inside their mountain churches.

Swedish-born Louis Miller and his brother, Axel Muller, were key craftsmen when Blenko shifted most of its production to glassware. Here Louis fashions a goblet. Photographer and date unknown.

In 1923, Blenko was joined by son William H. and daughter-in-law Marion. Formerly Marion Hunt, she was the daughter of a Pittsburgh stained glass artist who had long been associated with Blenko. She is still active in the business. Young "Bill" Blenko was a good glassmaker, able with the blowpipe, but he was an even better salesman, logging thousands of miles on the road. The family operation seemed on the verge of success. In 1927, for example, the elder Blenko received a letter from a London building materials firm stating that "You can take it from me that your glass will go into the Liverpool Cathedral.

Above: Founder William John Blenko, in dark jacket, insisted on making stained glass the old way, in handcrafted cylinders like those here. The cylinders were later cut, re-heated and flattened into window glass. Photographer and date unknown.

Right: Vice-president Richard Blenko continues the family tradition. Here he checks a recent production run at the plant.

The Architect saw the glass last week and has stopped his glass specifications. . . He is altering the whole specification to include Eureka glass." Even the stubborn American market began to yield.

Mr. Blenko moved out of his shack and into a real house, driving to work in a Model T. His bad driving is still legendary in Milton, where he has been called "hell on wheels" and "a menace to the highways." He disliked moving in reverse, for example, and was never known to look behind when backing up. This led to more than one near miss. There is even a tale that the old man met a train midway across a shared bridge while driving to his factory. After several minutes of angry staring, the engineer relented and backed up the train. The squeal of wheels and a thump on the factory's walls were the signs of his arrival. Bill would smile on such occasions and say, "Well, there's Pop."

The fates had one more blow in store for the old glassmaker. That came with the Crash of '29, which virtually halted all construction projects likely to use stained glass. This time, son Bill's business sense came to the rescue. By 1930, he was convinced that diversification was necessary for the company to survive. During one of his business trips, he made arrangements to produce handmade decorative ware for Carbones of Boston. It would have to be first rate, for the Carbones store carried only the finest glassware, importing much of it from Venice and Sweden.

This was a challenge. It was one thing to have orders to make decorative ware and quite another to actually make it. Both Blenkos could make stained window glass to match the ancients, but they were at a loss when it came to vases and goblets. Not to be overcome, they secured the services of two Swedish-born glassworkers, the brothers Louis Miller

and Axel Muller. (Louis had adopted an American spelling of the family name, while Axel retained the Swedish.) The brothers proved to be good teachers as well as craftsmen, soon training local workers in their art.

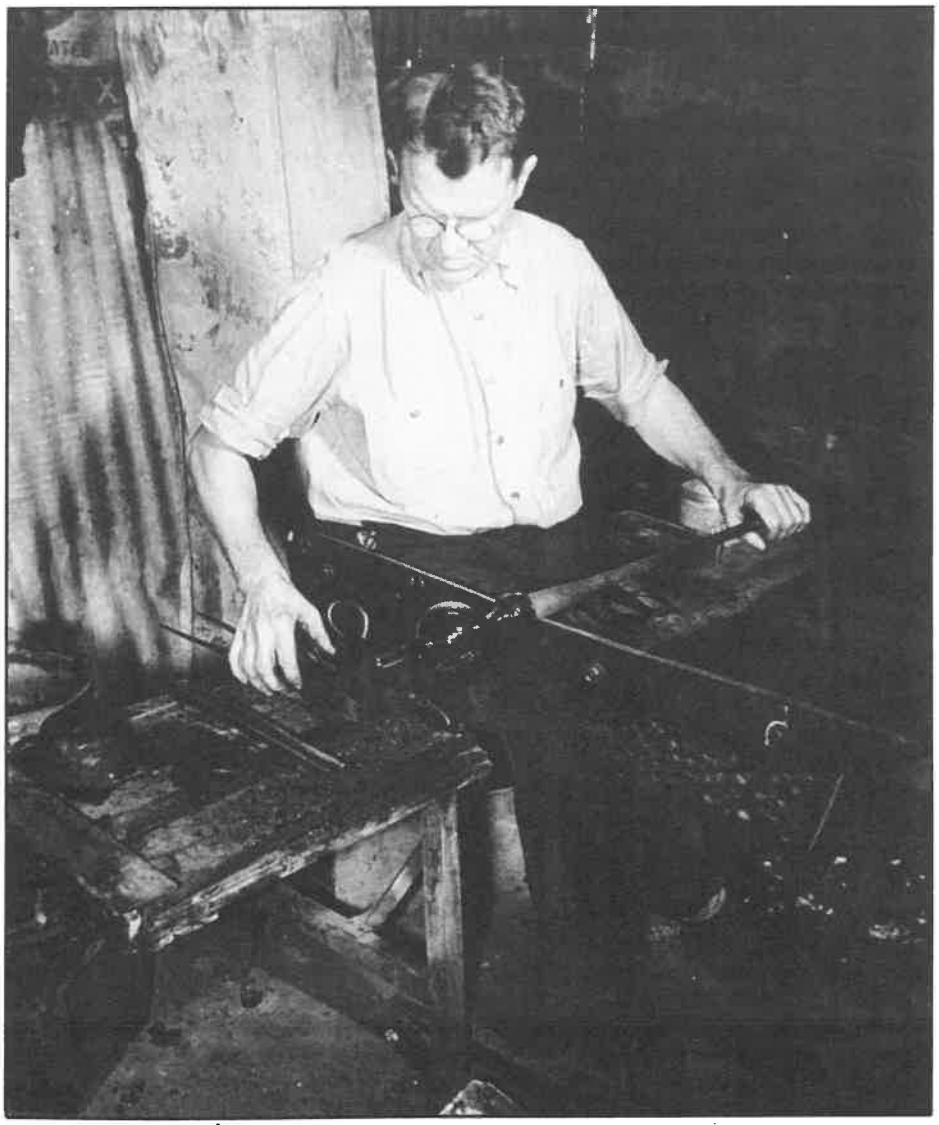
Originally, both Swedes worked on a part-time basis, bringing their tools to the Milton shop in the evenings after they had finished their work at a Huntington glass plant. Quite different in temperament and appearance, both were perfectionists who demanded the best from themselves and others. According to Frank Hunt, brother-in-law to Bill Blenko, they had a brotherly tendency to squabble. Louis particularly delighted in finding some small imperfection and bringing it to Axel, demanding, "Do you call that glasswork?"

William H. Blenko, Jr., the founder's grandson and current company president, recalls Axel at work. "I can still hear him at the end of the day. When the others were trying to shut down, he'd insist 'Get vun more.' And they did. Nobody argued with Axel."

It is one of the ironies in the elder Blenko's life that he was only able to succeed in stained glass by making decorative ware and that his company has achieved its greatest fame through a line of products he never intended to make. His long years of perfecting stained glass were not wasted, however. His influence can be seen in the rich, deep colors that have become a Blenko trademark. And insistence on handmade glass continues to be a company policy. Stained window glass now only accounts for about 25 percent of the factory's production, but Blenko remains one of the leading manufacturers in the country.

Characteristically, the company founder worked up to the last. Shortly before his 79th birthday, William John Blenko developed a cold and severe cough, but he was at the factory on the day before his death. Bill Blenko was by now more than able to take over the helm, soon leading the Blenko Glass Company to national and international prominence.

Demand grew steadily from the mid-1930's onward. Blenko glass was featured at the 1933 World's Fair and was carried by the leading retail out-



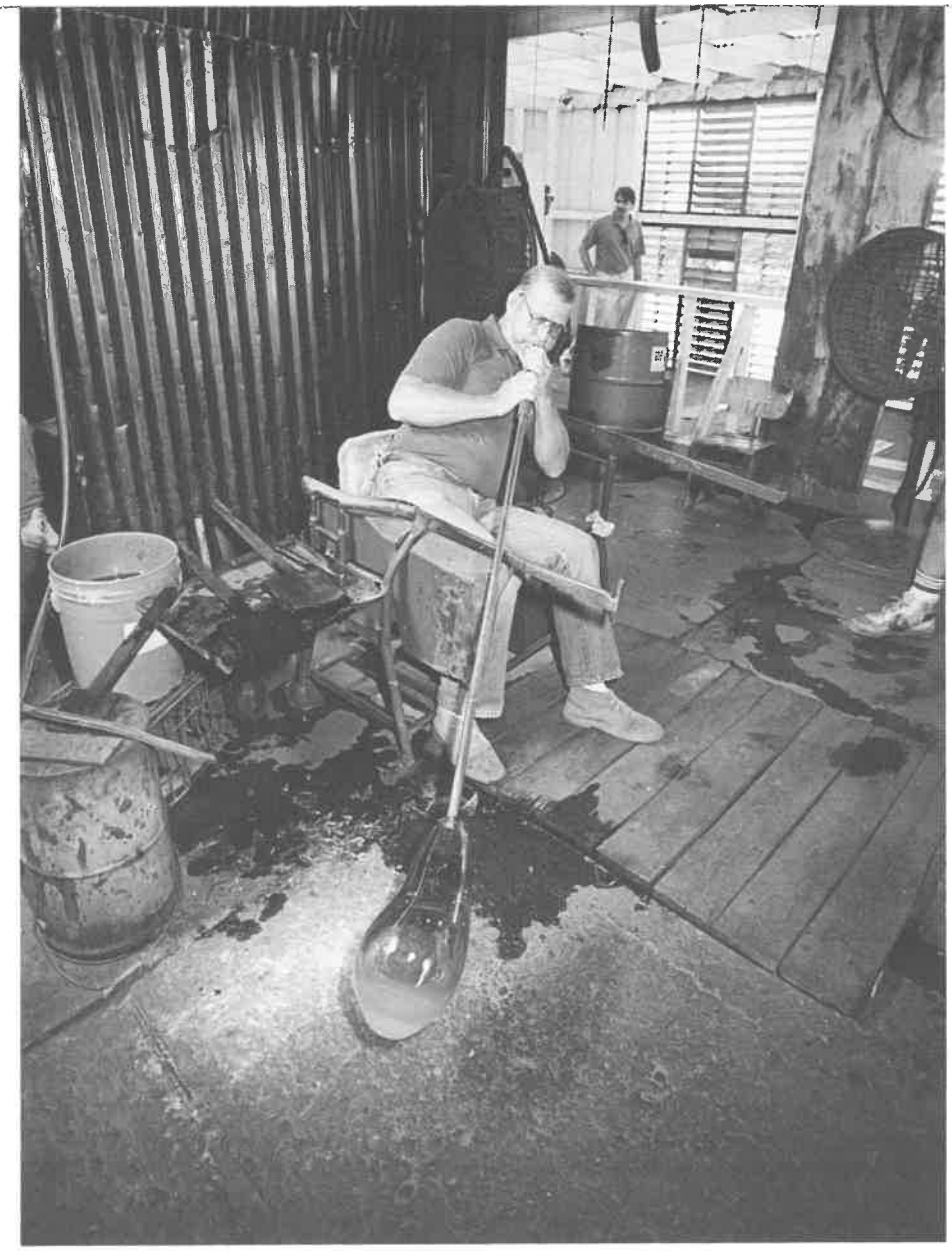
Axel Muller at work. "I can still hear him at the end of the day," says William Blenko. "When the others were trying to shut down, he'd insist, 'Get vun more.' "

Blenko Book

Blenko Glass 1930-1953 was written by Rick Wilson and Eason Eige. It is the first book of a projected three-volume series on the Blenko Glass Company. The book begins with company founder William John Blenko's arrival in the United States, and ends in the early 1950's, with Blenko Glass a successful Cabell County business.

The new book includes 47 pages of color pictures of glassware, collected, identified and photographed by Eason Eige, chief curator of the Huntington Museum of Art (formerly Huntington Galleries). The history of the company was researched and written by Rick Wilson. Richard D. Blenko, vice president of Blenko Glass, also took part in the book's making, contributing research on both the glassware and the company's history.

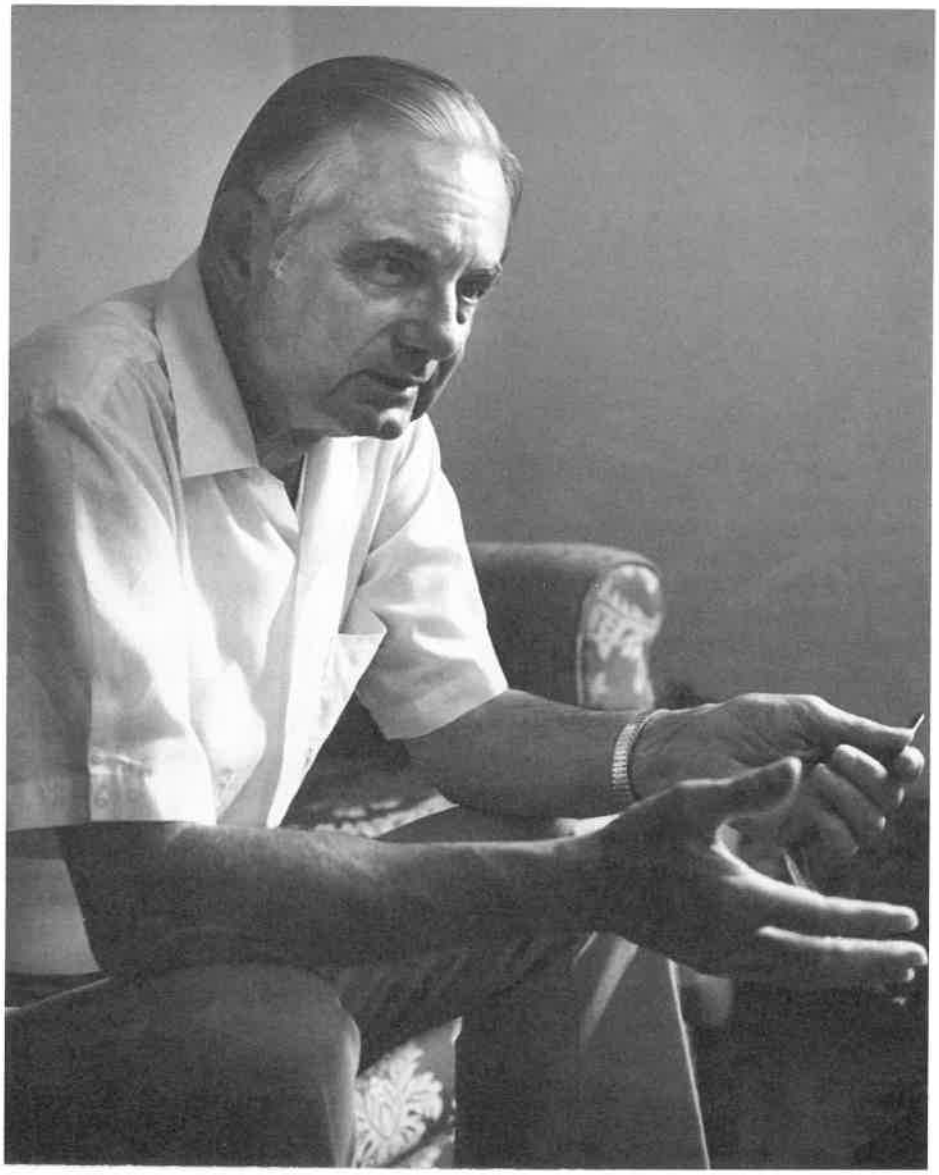
Blenko Glass is for glass collectors and everyone interested in West Virginia history and craftsmanship. The 144-page oversized softbound book sells for $19.95, plus $2.50 postage and handling. There is a limited hardbound edition for $29.95. To order write to Antique Publications, P. O. Box 553, Marietta, OH 45750.



lets. It even became popular among the Hollywood set. Actor Rudy Vallee, for instance, once placed an order for 150 dozen glasses as presents for his friends. Carol Lombard used Blenko tableware to decorate her new home. Between 1931 and 1944, Blenko glass was mentioned in *Time, The New York Times Magazine, National Geographic,* and *House Beautiful.* It made the cover of *House & Garden* in September of 1944.

In 1936, the Blenko company received an exclusive license to reproduce colonial Williamsburg glass. Glass fragments and specimens unearthed by collectors and archaeologists were brought to Milton for study, and soon Blenko was making lead crystal glass good enough to fool the experts. The company struggled through the Second World War, hampered by a shortage of manpower rather than orders. Bill Blenko became too busy to supervise the annual production of a new product line and professional designers were brought in, each of whom has achieved prominence in the field. The list includes Winslow Anderson (1947-53), Wayne Husted (1953-63), Joel Myers (1963- 70), John Nickerson (1971-74), and Don Shepherd (1974-present).

Handcrafting remains the norm at Blenko. Here Lee Bragg blows the glass and then shapes it into a graceful vase with the assistance of Randy Rider.



Above: Richard Blenko opens a recent Blenko exhibit at the Cultural Center, as Gene Jordan, Governor and Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Blenko stand by. From Charleston the show traveled to West Virginia Independence Hall in Wheeling.

Left: William Blenko treasures his company's past while he looks after its future. The rich tradition takes care of itself as he attends to the daily details of business.

Bill Blenko led the company until his death in 1969, having completed the construction of the Blenko Visitor's Center at the factory, a shrine for glass lovers from across the country. He was succeeded by son William H. Blenko, Jr. A fourth generation is now on the scene, in the person of Vice President Richard D. Blenko.

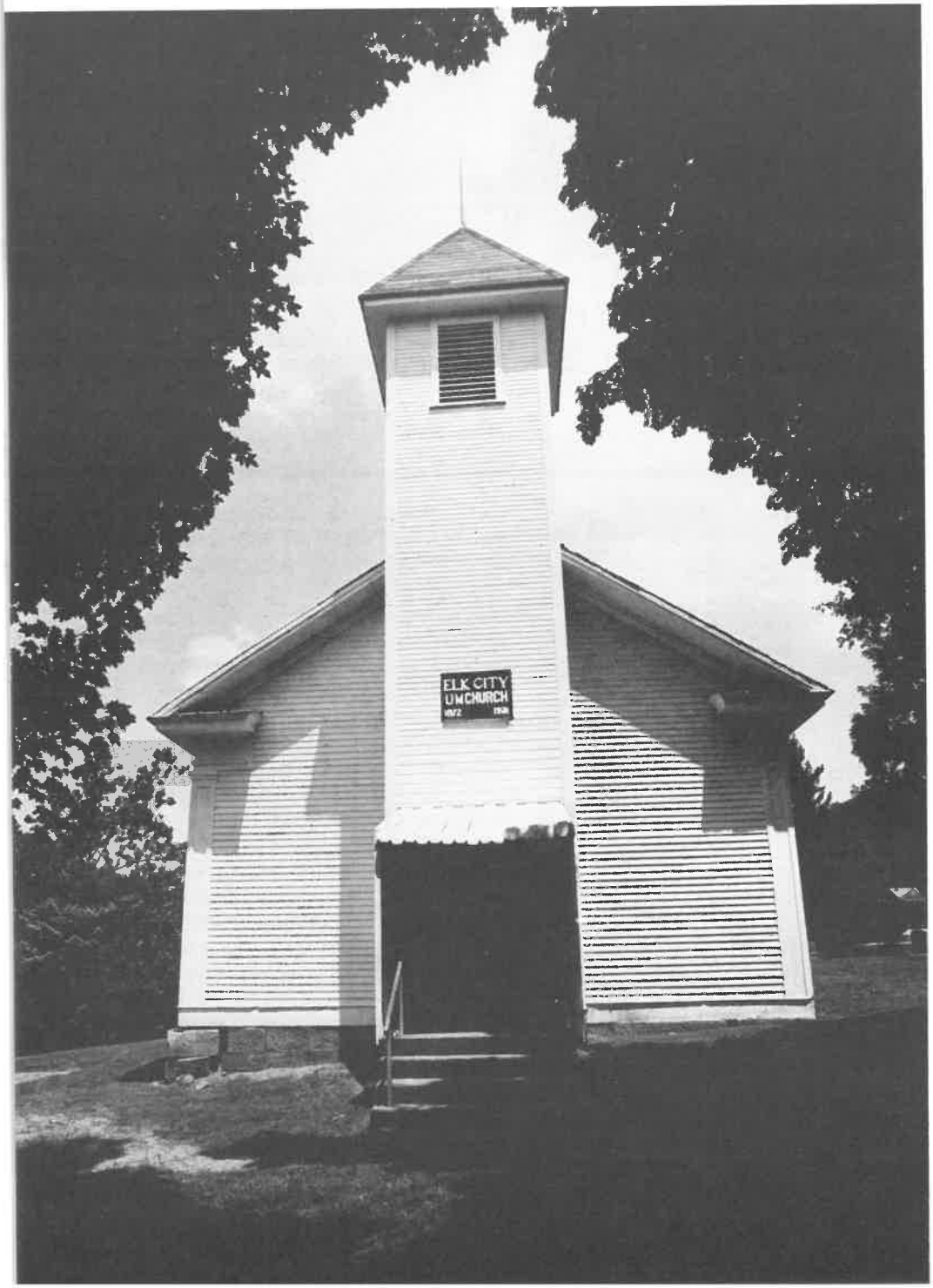
There is no end in sight, as long as there is a market for fine West Virginia glassware and a good supply of Blenkos coming along to help meet the demand. Each will add his own twist to the formula for survival, as Bill did when the Depression came knocking. The family glassmakers are all individualists, as they have to be to make a commercial success out of what remains basically an artistic undertaking. There is one thing they are all likely to agree on, however, and that is that it all goes back to one crusty, bad-driving old Englishman who cussed when he had to and wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

Monuments to the Past

A Barbour County Church Cemetery

By Barbara Smith
Photographs by Greg Clark

The Elk City United Methodist Church is a major local landmark. The church was built in 1872, and the adjacent cemetery's deed is dated 1884.



Five miles west of Philippi on Route 57 is Elk City, named for the animals that once frequented the salt spring covered over when the current road was built. Stories have it that Elk City was established as early as 1859 and that one of its citizens, Washington Dickenson, was the first casualty of the first land battle of the Civil War. Dickenson was apparently shot in the hand while standing guard, watching for Northern troops headed for Philippi and Beverly and points east and south.

The names Dickenson and Dickinson have always been associated with Elk City. The largest building in this Barbour County community is the United Methodist church, built in 1872. Some 50 yards from its front door is a huge stone arch, a memorial to Charles B. and William A. Dickenson, young brothers who died of diphtheria within a week of each other in October 1894. Charles was "23 yrs 6 mos 3 days" old, and William was "26 yrs 7 mos, 21 days." They were the only children of C. W. and Deniza Dickenson, who died in 1904 and 1939 and whose much smaller gravestones guard the big monument. The epitaph on the arch reads:

> They were lovely, they were fair
> And for a while were given
> The angels came and claimed their own
> And took them home to heaven.

Nearby are other Dickensons and Dickinsons, among them Jacob (1827-1909) and his wife Catherine (1822-1907), Samuel (1831-1902), Mary Jane (1832-1925), Emma (1865-1945), and James R. (1852-1953) and his wife Helen M. (1860-1913).

Another epitaph typical of the period is found on Helen and James's grave:

Eyes Looking Down From Yon
Heavenly Home
Beautiful Hands, They Are Beckoning Come.

Here, then, are buried members of a large, many-branched clan that traces itself back through 12 generations in the United States and 14 more in England. The Dickensons claim as their ancestor Walter, "a son of Charles and Rachel Dickenson of London." Paul, who emigrated to Virginia in 1654, is mentioned in the records as a descendent of Walter. Rachel Carter Dickenson is described as a sister of Robert "King" Carter, who emigrated to Virginia in 1635, built a mansion called Nomini Hall, and established a dynasty. Robert E. Lee's mother was a Carter.

Many of the old family still live in Philippi, among them Mary Woofter Dickinson, widow of S. Key Dickinson. He attended what is now Alderson-Broaddus College and earned degrees at Brown University and West Virginia University. Key is recorded as a descendent of Walter, John, and Henry, English Quakers who emigrated to the Potomac River area in 1654. A descendent of theirs, Robert, settled in 1820 on a hill behind the present Elk City church. Washington was one of his three sons. Samuel, another son, was the grandfather of S. Key Dickinson. Mary's father, E. J. Woofter, served as pastor of the Salem Baptist Church for some 30 years, after which he became president of Alderson-Broaddus.

Other families are represented, too, in the Elk City cemetery — among them the Woodses, with graves dated from 1863 to 1941; the Thrashes, dated from 1825 to 1912; the Anglins, dated from 1842 to 1924; and the Browns and the Cutlips and the Sigleys and the McCoys. Many of the graves are those of children ranging in age from infancy to the late teens. One stone marks the resting place of the infant Daniel twins, who died on September 9 and 10, 1878, and their sister Nina Lee, who died on January 26, 1883, at six months of age. Several markers record Civil War service, like "Theodore Nutter, Co. E, 62 VA MTD INF, C.S.A." Some of the families span over a hundred years in and around Elk City.

The Dickenson brothers' arch is the cemetery's most imposing monument. William's death followed Charles' by only two days.

Many of the small monuments were made of native sandstone. Some of these have crumbled and are now illegible. Epitaphs, where visible, give strong evidence of the philosophy of the times and the people. For instance, Jacob and Cansadie Thrash (1825-1903 and 1826-1912) were buried side by side, and their gravestone reads:

In labor and love allied
In death they here sleep side by side
Resting in peace; the aged twain
Till Christ shall raise them up again.

Three other modest stones mark the burial places of Edith and John Britton (died 1892 and 1895) and their son, who died in 1860 at 15. The parents' epitaphs read:

In love she lived
In peace she died
Her life was craved
But God denied

Sleep on dear brother and take thy rest
God called thee home, He thought it best

It was hard indeed to part with thee
But Christ's strong arms supported me.

It is interesting to note that while birth and death dates and very specific ages at death are given for almost all of the dead, the women's maiden names appear on very few stones. Instead, like the children who are described as "son of —" or "darling daughter of —," the older females are identified merely as "wife of —." This, too, is a reflection of the values of the era.

Elk City is a country cemetery, one of hundreds of its kind found across our mountains. Many began humbly when some member of a settler's family died and was simply buried on the farm. Some stayed family graveyards, embracing only relatives of the same name or from intermarried families. In other cases the land was given or sold to a nearby church, or a church was built next to the burial ground. The deed for the Elk City church and cemetery was recorded in 1884 and indicates a transfer of ownership from John and Harriet Hall to the trustees of the church, who included Jacob Dickenson and John Hall himself.

This is a typical rural cemetery, harking back to the time when the responsibilities of family and church and community were so interwoven as to be inseparable. There was no such thing as a generation gap or a separation of responsibility, for everyone shared in caring for the young and the old and the ill, and everyone shared in the marryings and buryings. Those were the days of a strong Protestant ethic and a belief in the natural order of birth and growth and aging and death.

Elk City embraced a healthier view of death and dying than the country had had in its earliest days. The Puritans had looked upon death with fear and trembling, and the gravestones of New England Calvinists reflected these beliefs. Skulls and symbols of torture were common on headstones, as were such epitaphs as "Time and death rule the world." Even children's readers were filled with prophecies of doom and with warnings against misbehavior of all kinds.

Beginning as early as the mid-18th century, the perception softened. Death was viewed as a good and holy transition from earth to a much better life which included reunion with parents, siblings, neighbors and friends. It was during this sunnier period that the Elk City cemetery was established. The Dickenson brothers' arch is typical of the tribute that was felt to be owed to the deceased and its epitaph typical of the faith that characterized the religion of the period. Clearly, this family expected a joyous reunion, when the young sons would be rejoined to their parents.

Left: "Sleep on dear brother and take thy rest" begins the epitaph on John Britton's stone. His family rests nearby.

Right: The open book is a common symbol at Elk City and other graveyards. Eli Hudkins' 1886 marker is one of the cemetery's early stones.

Within what seems only a few years, however, drastic changes came to much of American society. Families left the farm, meaning that fathers began working away from their families for the first time. The responsibility for religion and education was left to those still at home — the women. Children left home as soon as possible, either for employment in the cities or for military service. Many never returned.

Metropolitan cemeteries reflected city life, cold and impersonal by country standards. Legislation had to be enacted to ensure decent burial and graveyard maintenance. Trying to recapture something of the beauty and warmth of the old family cemeteries, cities such as Boston and New Haven established parklike "rural cemeteries" in the 19th century. So popular were these that some became tourist attractions. Apparently the survivors believed that the dissolving bonds of the family could be strengthened in the graveyard. There was competition to see who could provide the most elaborate, emotion-provoking monuments and mausoleums.

The August-September 1979 issue of *American Heritage* has an article entitled "Calm Dwellings," written by David Stannard. The piece features photographs of some of the fancier gravestones of other times. One is a replica of the favorite easy chair of the deceased individual. Another is a model of the mansion previously occupied by the residents of the grave. Others are scenes of affectionate farewells between husbands and wives.

Far more common than these fanciful resting places, however, were the family graveyards and small church cemeteries like the one at Elk City. Here the graveyard stands as an expression of a continuing and unquestioned belief in the heavenly reward awaiting the saints of the community. The bonds of living and dead are strong. Here in August is still held an annual reunion. Family, friends and neighbors wander through the churchyard and the adjacent graveyard, noting new markers and offering comfort and company to each other. Those who come home for the reunion and who will finally come home to be buried, who still visit the graves and plant the flowers and weed the grave sites, will insist that such devotion is not a matter of escape or illusion. It is a matter of real faith in family, church and community, and in a near and loving God.

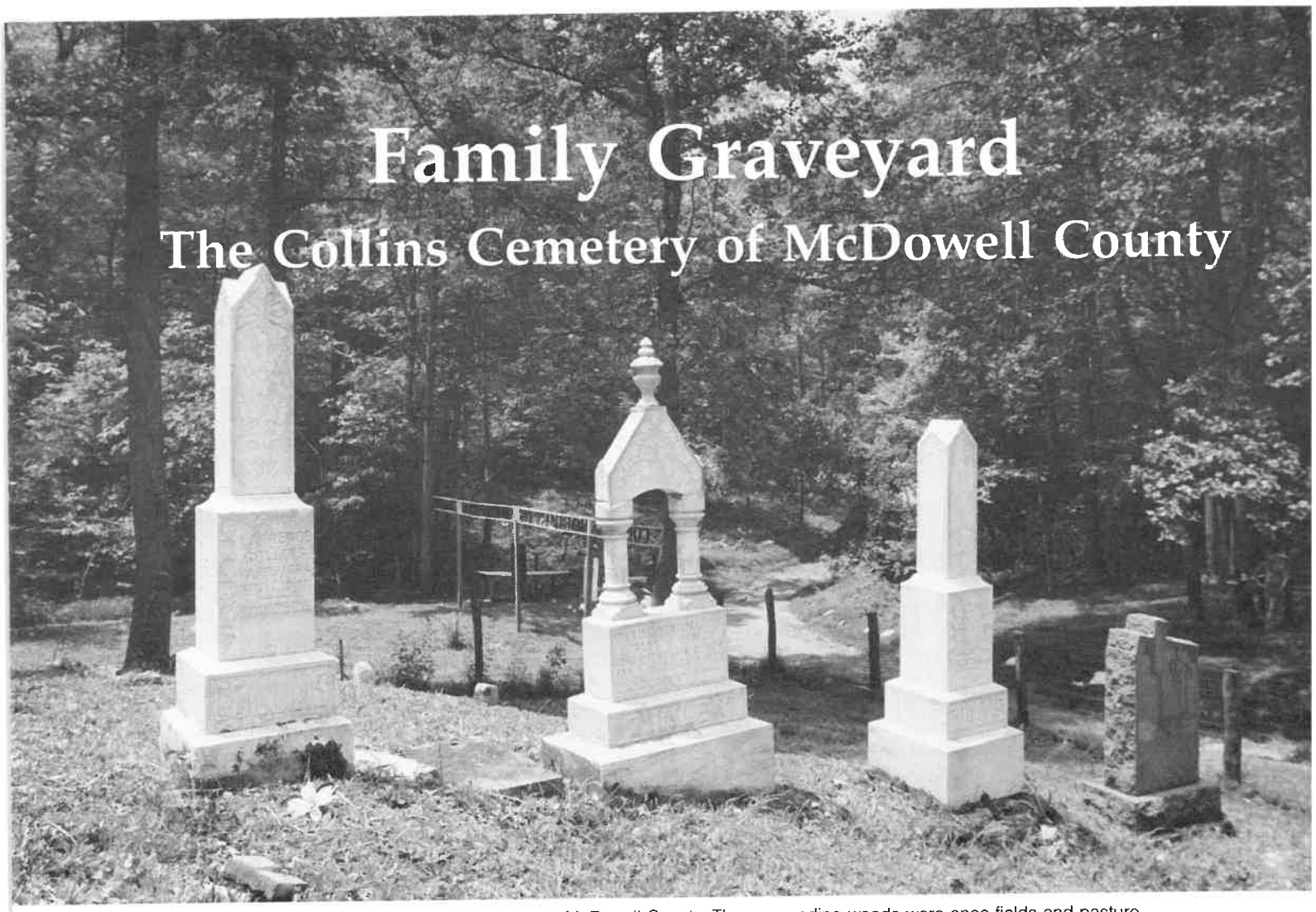
Our modern cemeteries with their ground-level "mow over" markers offer no evidence of family relationships or of the personality of the dead. They stand in sterile testimony to the denial of death, of refusal to recognize either the natural laws of the universe or the presence of the supernatural. How different are such cemeteries as the one in Elk City. Sit under the pine trees and listen to the whispers, and you will hear words of peace and of caring and of deep faith and love.

Left: The clasped hands and chain links identify S.S. Marteney as a member of the Odd Fellows fraternal order. His stone is marked with the name of a Wheeling manufacturer.

Below: Samuel and Mary Jane Dickenson share this substantial memorial. Her life spanned nearly a century.

Family Graveyard

The Collins Cemetery of McDowell County



The Collins Cemetery lies near the Tug Fork in western McDowell County. The surrounding woods were once fields and pasture.

By Charlotte H. Deskins

Photographs by Michael Keller

Family graveyards dot the hills and hollows of McDowell County. Each has its share of love stories, its legacies of greed and sorrow and the enduring strength that makes a West Virginia family. One of these is the Collins Memorial Cemetery near Iaeger, the final resting place of many Collinses and of those bearing related family names.

The graveyard was founded during the last half of the 19th century. This was a time when rural records of birth and death were often ill kept, either written in pencil to fade in the crumbling pages of family Bibles or recorded on burial stones.

Memorial markers were constructed of whatever raw materials were available. Frequently, wood was used. These temporary markers soon rotted. A more durable record could be made by scratching information into a slab of smooth stone. Still, wind and rain rendered them unreadable after a few years. At times families might relocate to another county or state, leaving no one behind to care for these country cemeteries. Some fell into disrepair and were forgotten.

Such is not the case with the Collins graveyard. The grounds are green and well-tended. The cemetery boasts every kind of grave marker imaginable. Expensive, grey granite markers stand next to homemade ones. Tall, pinnacled military memorials rest beside plain ones of stone and metal. All are clean and standing smartly upright. Each is marked with legible name, date of birth, and date of death. Some are dressed with plastic or silk flowers.

This is due to the continuing efforts of Thelma Robinette and of others with an interest in the burying ground. Thelma is the second child of Riley Estep and Florence Collins Estep. She is the widow of John Robinette. The cemetery has been a part of her life for many years and she keeps track of the history of the place. She recalls that it was Hannibal Robinette who first got the idea for a family reunion back in 1942. The idea was to honor Lewis Collins, who founded the cemetery in 1881.

The family story goes back much earlier. More than a century and a half ago Johnny Collins and his pregnant wife, Polly, left Indiana to settle in what was then Western Virginia. They lived the pioneer life, traveling in a covered wagon and cooking their meals by the side of the road in a three-legged pot. In good weather, they slept under the stars.

The trip was a hard one for Polly. By the time they reached Ohio she had gone into labor. They stopped at several farmhouses but were turned away. Finally, one kind-hearted farmer offered them shelter in an old barn. It was filled with hay and rye,

but he told Johnny that if he would clean it out they could stay there. Young John Collins worked furiously to get the place in order. It was there that the couple's first child, Benjamin Collins, was born.

After resting for a short time in Ohio, the Collins family made their way into Western Virginia. They settled on the banks of the Dry Fork River, near present Litwar and Iaeger. The mountainous area near their homestead became known as Collins Ridge as Johnny and Polly filled the countryside with a brood of nine children.

As the children grew up, married and had families of their own, some moved away. Others remained near Collins Ridge. Daughter Chloe married Wallace Compton and they moved off to Whitewood, Virginia. Nancy and her husband, Harve Addair, lived at Horse Creek, West Virginia. They had 12 children, all of whom became schoolteachers. They taught throughout McDowell County.

Johnny's son Lewis Collins became a carpenter and took Victoria Powell as his wife. They had one child, Lawrence. Tragedy stalked the little family. Victoria died in March 1881. Four years later, Lewis lost his son. He was heartbroken. Wanting to keep his lost loved ones nearby, Lewis had his wife and then his child buried on land he had been using as a cornfield. A few years afterwards his brother, Anderson, lost his wife, Amanda. She died in May 1887. Lewis gave his grieving brother a parcel of land near his own in which to bury his dead. This was the beginning of the Collins cemetery.

Lewis's second marriage was to Judy Morgan, a likable woman who ran a boardinghouse. McDowell County was industrializing by now and Lewis held a job with the Little War Creek Coal Company, building coal camp houses for Litwar. Many coal miners and their families stayed with Lewis and Judy while waiting for their company houses to be built. The area around the boardinghouse was known as "the Bottom," with about 13 houses nearby. Most of the inhabitants were miners, farmers or men of trade. There was a mill nearby for grinding wheat and corn.

Today all that remains of the Bottom is the root cellar Lewis Collins built to store food for the winter. Its six-inch walls are cut from the stones of Collins Ridge. It still stands, cool and silent, a few hundred yards from the cemetery. All the other house sites are now bare fields. Redbud bushes and Easter flowers still bloom in places that once were backyards, where long-ago children played and chickens scratched in the dirt.

Lewis and Judy Collins had one child, the beautiful Viola, who was born deaf and dumb. Viola married George Conley. She died trying to give birth to their first child. She and her baby were buried in the same coffin in the Collins family's growing cemetery.

Life's harsh lessons of birth and death were closely intertwined for the Collinses. Lewis's brother, Anderson Collins — also known as "Ann" to his friends and family — first married Amanda Asbury. They had a son, Luther, and a daughter, Rebecca. After Amanda died Anderson remarried, this time to Armenda Lester. They had nine children. Mary is the only one still living. All Anderson's sons are buried in the family cemetery.

Anderson joined them there in 1925. In May of that year his daughter, Rebecca, died of childbed fever. She was living in Whitewood, Virginia, at the time. Anderson rode his mule to the funeral. While there he stayed at the home of his son, Luther. The night after Rebecca was buried

Thelma Robinette spends several days a week working at the graveyard. Many of her relatives are buried there.

Anderson fell sick and he died also.

Anderson Collins would not rest across the state line in Virginia. Luther made his father a coffin of seasoned walnut and lined it with funeral silk as was the custom. He then loaded the box onto a wagon pulled by two large, black mules and transported it back to Collins Ridge. There Anderson was laid among his kin in the family cemetery.

Lewis Collins was well liked in the community, but despite his generous nature his life was cruelly ended. One June night in 1924 he was murdered. He had owned a small store. He would often spend the night in the building to keep an eye on his stock. Lewis was shot five times in the back of the head with a .38 while he lay there asleep.

The case was never solved. George Conley, widower of Lewis's deaf and dumb daughter, was a suspect. By this time he had remarried but was still living in the big house with Lewis and Judy. He knew Lewis's routine and he, too, sometimes stayed overnight at the store. Conley was arrested for the murder of his former father-in-law and held for a short time before charges were dropped for lack of evidence.

Lewis Collins is not the only murder victim lying in the old graveyard. Robert Lambert was shot by Edward Henderson with a .22 pistol. He died a few days later. The two men had had a heated argument. A third killing occurred two decades later. Edward Henderson's son, Darell, was beaten to death with a rock. The name of the killer was Ricky Lambert, no relation to Robert Lambert. Both men had been drinking at the time.

Lewis Collins (left) founded the cemetery. He poses here with friends and neighbors from the Robinette and Cline families. Photographer unknown, before 1924.

The Collins cemetery has its share of heroes, as well. Two war veterans are buried there. Riley Estep served in World War I from 1917 to 1919. Auldie Collins fought in World War II from 1944 to 1946.

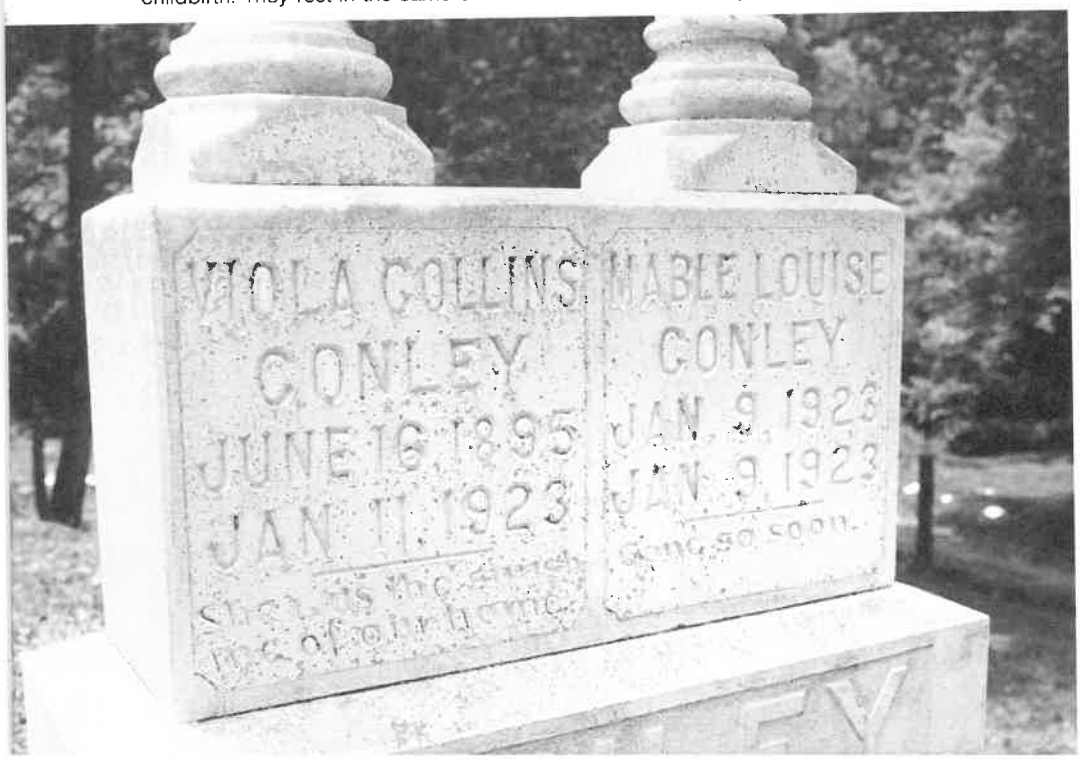
At about the same time that the Collins family was settling in Western Virginia, Nash Robinette brought his family in from Kentucky. They settled near the Dry Fork also. The two families took to one another right away. Both enjoyed the freedom that the mountains had to offer. Together they worked to clear the land and to build their homes. Over the decades the families became good friends as well as neighbors. In time many Robinettes came to rest among the Collinses in the hillside graveyard.

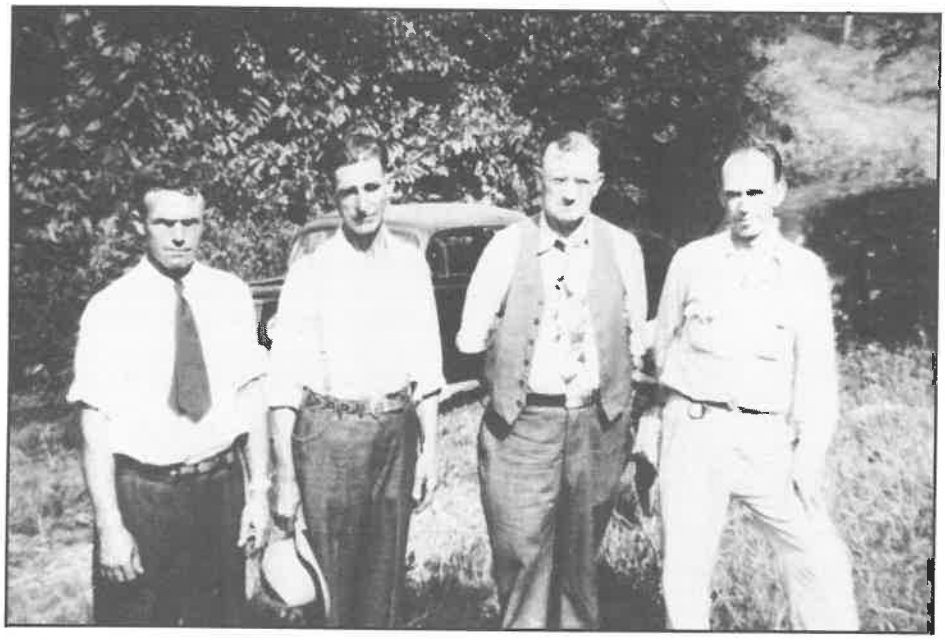
Through the years the cemetery has undergone changes. As in many family graveyards, there are actually several family names now represented. There are 58 members of the Collins family and 14 Robinettes buried there. Other graves bear such local names as Harrison, Blevins, Estep and Morgan. The earliest burial took place in 1881. The most recent one was just this year.

In 1942 Hannibal Robinette planned the first memorial reunion, with the help of Thelma's father Riley Estep and others. For most of the years since then the families have come together on the third Sunday in each August. It is a joyous homecoming and a time for remembering departed loved ones. Relatives travel from Idaho, Rhode Island, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, New Jersey and Washington State to mingle once again in southern West Virginia.

Hannibal Robinette died in January 1952 and Riley Estep passed away in

Viola Collins Conley died two days after baby Mary Louise, both of them victims of a difficult childbirth. They rest in the same coffin and share the cemetery's largest marker.





Auldie, Luther, Arthur and Harvey were all sons of Anderson Collins, brother of Lewis. All four lie in the family graveyard now. Photographer and date unknown.

July 1983, just one month shy of his 90th birthday. The reunion was discontinued in 1949, to be revived by Lyle Collins in 1960. In recent years, Thelma Robinette has taken over as caretaker for the cemetery and chief planner of the reunion.

Thelma is a widow, the mother of 12 children, 11 of whom are still living, and 35 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. So far. She is 65 now, but looks and moves younger. She seems to be always bustling about. Taking charge appears to be the natural thing with her. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious.

It was in April 1940 that Thelma met John Robinette. They were married in August of that year in Pawpaw, across the state line in Pike County, Kentucky. Born in Pike County on August 30, 1915, John was the son of Floyd Robinette and the great-great-grandson of Nash Robinette. Although ancestors on both sides had been there for generations, John and Thelma Robinette's family did not move to Iaeger until November 1931.

Hard work in the coal mines caused John to develop heart problems. In 1954, he suffered his first heart attack while working in a mine at Red Jacket. He had a second attack in 1961, and a third in 1963 ended his life.

After John's death, Thelma raised their children as best she could. She made a big garden each spring and everyone helped work it. She sold ginseng and peddled vegetables. Later on, she went to work outside the home. She first learned to drive a car at the age of 45 and has been going strong ever since.

Up until her retirement, Thelma worked as a correctional officer at the McDowell County jail. This soft-spoken woman likes to write poetry, sew quilts and work in her garden. She enjoys collecting old photographs and stories concerning the Collins and Robinette families. However, her most pleasurable activity is working at the cemetery, along with her two sons, Russell and Robert. Grandson Lyle Belcher often lends a hand, as do others.

The face of the cemetery has been improved since Thelma went to work on it. She started a fence fund to help pay for the wire-and-post enclosure and she sees to its maintenance. She has had two large signs painted, showing each contributor and the amount of the donation. They range from $3 to $200 and Thelma is grateful for each of them. She thinks folks enjoy seeing their names in print and hopes her signs will encourage others to be generous.

Prior to 1984 the only way to get to the cemetery without getting your feet wet was to drive through a running stream. With a $40 donation from friend Joe Lester and volunteer labor from her sons and brother-in-law Alfred Robinette, Thelma managed to get a bridge built across Rock Branch Hollow that year.

Thelma's sons have also contributed in more artistic ways. Robert designed and erected a wooden cross in memory of his grandparents. The cross stands approximately 10 feet tall on a cement and stone foundation. The brothers have also constructed a banner-type sign of wooden letters for the entrance to the Collins-Robinette Memory Garden, located next to the cemetery proper.

Thelma accepts aid from anyone interested in helping her keep the

Lewis Collins' stone root cellar is all that remains of the family homestead. The large house and gardens were within a few hundred yards of the cemetery.

graveyard running smoothly. Many people seem willing to help. She notes with pleasure that the Fanning Funeral Home in Iaeger has lent chairs every August for the past 20 years. Perry Roberts, the mayor of Iaeger, has also helped by lending the tools to make repairs and improvements. Mayor Roberts was instrumental in getting a garbage dump relocated away from the cemetery.

Thelma goes to the graveyard several times a week. She counts her time there as good therapy. "I can be feeling stressed out or just plain lonely," she says. "After I get out here and get to working for a few hours, all that leaves me. I get such a feeling of peace and tranquillity."

To Thelma and her family and the many others with loved ones there, the Collins Memorial Cemetery is not just a resting place for the dead, but a place to come together to celebrate life. It is a way to come home to their proud mountain heritage, if only for a little while.

Above: Alfred Robinette helps with graveyard maintenance. Here he rests on a hot July afternoon.

Below: The Collins-Robinette Memory Gardens share a sun-dappled glade with the Collins graveyard. The annual reunion is held in an adjacent clearing.

Dinner on the Ground

The "all-day meeting with dinner on the ground" is a joyous childhood recollection for many born-and-raised mountaineers, a bygone ritual of family reunion and of communion with relatives both living and dead. The affair was held in high summer, always on Sunday, and always at the family graveyard. The generations gathered in for hours of preaching and singing, abundant good fellowship with maybe a little horse-trading and matchmaking, and endless amounts of the best food mountain cooks could offer.

The tradition has died out in some places, but it survives at the Collins cemetery in McDowell County. Meeting time there comes in late August. Thelma Robinette, who has attended for a quarter-century now, is a good source of information.

"We have a wonderful time," she says of the event. "The whole thing lasts about three days. On Friday people start arriving from out of state. For years many friends and family stayed with me. I had a big, 14-room house until it burned down in 1981. There have been times when I've had as many as 54 people staying at my house from Friday until Monday. As crowded as it was, we enjoyed every minute of it!"

Cooking takes most of the weekend, according to Thelma. "We start our cooking early on Saturday morning, or sometimes we stay up all night Friday night talking and making potato salad or baking desserts," she says. "All the women prepare their best recipes. Everyone has a specialty. We have chicken and dumplings, meatloaf, fried chicken, potato salad, coleslaw, fried apple pies, biscuits, corn bread and just about every kind of cake, pie and vegetable you can imagine! We make up baskets of food.

"Of course, even though it's a 'dinner-on-the-ground,' as we call it, we don't actually put our food on the ground," Thelma explains. "We used to do that, back in the 1940's and 1950's. Everybody did. I have pictures of my mother and her sisters spreading clean sheets out in the clearing and placing bowls and baskets of food on them. These days we are more modern. We have tables."

She points out a series of thick logs joined together to make table legs and the frame of a long tabletop. They stand, heavy and substantial, in a tree-shaded clearing near the river. "We call them our 'flood-proof' tables," Thelma laughs. "Our last ones were donated by the Dollar Store. When they got washed off a few years ago we had these built. These foundations remain here all year long. We have some wide plywood that lies across the top. Cover it with a white cloth and the tables work just fine."

Even more important than the food are the people who attend the reunion. Last year's gathering stretched across several generations. Everyone always looks forward to seeing Susie Neal. The oldest living relative, she is the great-granddaughter of Johnny and Polly Collins, the original settlers. Susie was 90 years old on May 29, 1987. If you go to her house she will proudly show you the old three-legged iron pot Polly used to cook the family meals in while they traveled by covered wagon.

Little Danny Craft III was also present last year. The great-great-great-grandson of Anderson Collins is one of the youngest of the clan. He is an eighth-generation relation to patriarch Johnny Collins. Little Armenda Harmon is a fifth-generation relation to her namesake, Anderson's wife Armenda. Although neither of these children can yet fully grasp their importance in the family chain they are already being told stories of their pioneering forefathers.

Sunday is the day of the reunion proper, and the busiest day of the weekend. Everyone arrives at the cemetery as early as possible. While the men search out snakes and bee's nests the women remove all the plastic flowers and replace them with new ones. The old flowers are washed in the nearby stream and those that still look usable are placed on the older graves that have no flowers. Every gravesite gets at least one memory flower.

At 10 o'clock the preaching begins. Any preacher or gospel singer regardless of denomination is welcome. Country preachers take turns and their exhortations can go on for hours. Three ministers are remembered for faithful service to the reunion. Reverend Clarence Estep of Panther, McDowell County, has preached there for the past 33 years. Reverend Josh Crouse and Reverend Willie Keen attended for about 25 years.

The reunion draws a large and faithful crowd. Last year there were 100 to 125 people present. Four of them had attended the first reunion in 1942. They were Susie Neal of nearby Long Pole, Mary Thornsbury of Rhode Island, and Opal Halsey and Flossie Robinette. Each received a small gift.

The four ladies symbolize the continuity of mountain families. So do the youngsters who play around their feet at reunion time. Such continuity was an easy, natural thing in the past, when related families clustered together on adjoining farms. It's harder now, when relatives must gather in from across the country. That makes the all-day meeting all the more precious, a brief time when the Collinses and the Robinettes and other families related to them can come together as in days gone by.

—Charlotte H. Deskins

Back to School at Big Laurel

By Danny Fulks

Photographs by Michael Keller

Without Big Laurel School, Alivia Sturgill would face a long commute to school. As it is, she is within walking distance.

The footpaths that crisscross the slopes of Big Laurel Mountain are well-established and timeworn. Every school day throughout the season, children from four families — the Baisdens, Pierces, Sturgills, and Grellers — walk these trails. Ranging in age from five to 14, these 12 children comprise the student body of the Big Laurel School. Three teachers, all nuns from Catholic religious orders, provide secular education to the pupils in this school where a Siamese cat named Don Quixote sleeps on the kitchen floor while children with walnut-stained hands tap at computer terminals.

The Big Laurel School sets on a knoll in the northwest section of Mingo County amidst aging beech, sumac, black oak, locust, and poplar trees. Here in this tranquil environment — 22 miles from Kermit on the Tug Fork River — trilliums, wild geraniums, peonies, and dwarf irises are scattered about the school grounds. On both sides of the knoll and around the ridges mayapple, ginseng, elderberry, bloodroot, fire pink, poison ivy, witch hazel, rattleweed, and sassafras add their charms to the scene. The only laurel growing on the Big Laurel grounds was planted, strange as it seems, by Sister Gretchen Shaffer, who along with Sisters Kathy O'Hagan and Sharon Joyer, live and teach there.

The lonesome song of the bobwhite quail hidden among these mountains has effortlessly prevailed for a thousand years. But the efforts of civilized human beings to provide a common school in this isolated community has been a struggle. The big trouble came in 1963 when the old one-room school was closed and consolidated with another attendance area. For the next 12 years Big Laurel children had to walk as much as five miles over jeep trails to meet busses that took them another 10 or 20 miles to the schools on Marrowbone Creek or in the town of Kermit. Often, the students performed below average in the distant schools; more often, they dropped out.

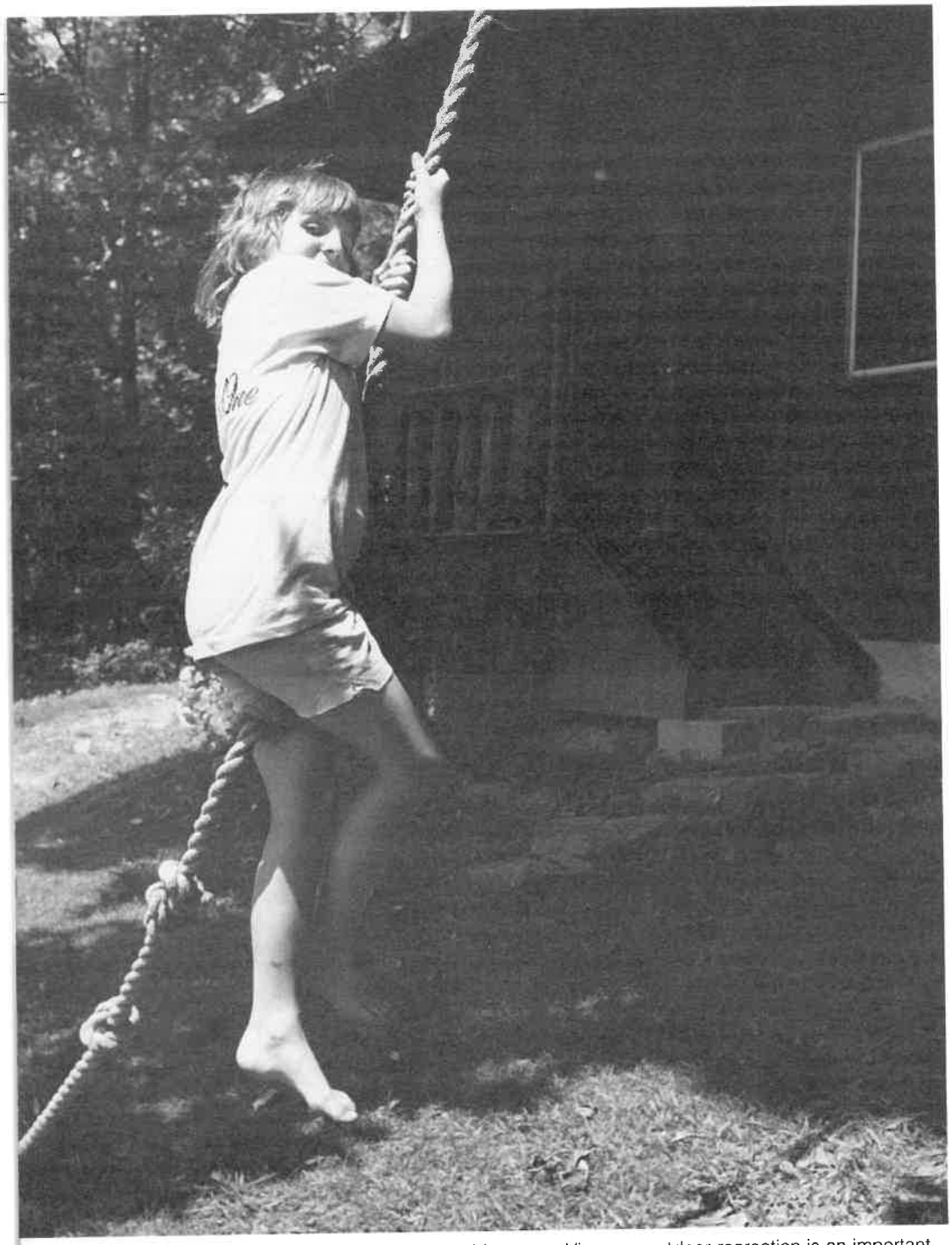
In 1975, Edwina Pepper, a local leader and philanthropist, helped develop the Big Laurel Citizens' Association. A community land trust was formed to manage the lands that Mrs. Pepper wanted to make availa-

ble to people who valued the environment and cherished the mountain heritage. One tract was leased to the community to fulfill the dreams of building a school for local families. Sisters Gretchen and Kathy were called to the scene in 1976, first opening school in a community wood shop. Local initiative led to the building of a two-story schoolhouse and teachers' residence, a wood house, a shelter for horses and an open building, all clustered together for easy access. The school is supported by vouchers from the Mingo County board of education, private gifts from individuals and foundations, and self-help arts and crafts projects.

Gretchen Shaffer is a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and Kathy O'Hagan and Sharon Joyer belong to the Sisters of Notre Dame. Although residents of the Big Laurel Area are mostly Protestant fundamentalists, the three Catholic sisters were well received locally. After assuring the Mingo County Board of Education that their goals did not include evan-

Above: Sister Gretchen Shaffer is in charge at Big Laurel. She is originally from Clarksburg.

Below: Sarah Sturgill, Jim Pierce and Pat Barnes enjoy the informality of an old-fashioned school and the electronic gadgetry of today. The pet is a summertime visitor.



Sandra Pierce tries the schoolyard climbing rope. Vigorous outdoor recreation is an important part of the Big Laurel philosophy.

gelizing, they went to work providing nonreligious education to the children on the mountain. The nuns have never waivered from their intention to teach and serve. Their community service ranges from running the local mail down to the bottom of the mountain, acting as midwives, or bringing up a supply of fresh eggs from Claude Dillon's place on Marrowbone Creek.

Their school has a written philosophy. It states an "appreciation for the rhythm of the environment and the goods of this world," and an intent "to stimulate among the students a sense of responsibility for the wise use of the world's resources." The school has one classroom on the first floor, a library, and a computer room. The second floor contains a kitchen where the students and teachers eat, and living quarters for the teachers. The students at Big Laurel learn the basic academic skills as well as horseback riding, gardening, pet care, and nature lore. A portrait of Mother Jones, the sharp-spoken labor activist of the 1920's, occupies a prominent place on one of the classroom walls.

Sonny Baisden, 14, is the oldest student in school. He walks half a mile daily to Big Laurel from his home on the ridge. There he lives with his mother, father, and five younger brothers and sisters. At home, Sonny's life is a mixture of the old and new. He may watch Bon Jovi's rock video on a television picture brought in by satellite, but one of his chores is to draw water from the deep well and pack it to the house. He milks the goats and reminds his parents when the movie tapes rented

Homesteading at Big Laurel

Saddling the ridges and knobs along Big Laurel Branch of Marrowbone Creek in Mingo County is 300 acres of rugged mountain terrain known as the John A. Sheppard Memorial Ecological Reservation. The Big Laurel School is associated with this social experiment.

Founded in 1975 by Edwina Sheppard Pepper, the Sheppard Reservation's purpose is to protect the land from rampant timbering and strip mining and to hold it in trust so that it can be homesteaded and developed in an ecologically sound manner. In this southwestern area of the state where almost all the land is controlled by absentee corporations, the land trust has leased parcels of land to families who have otherwise had difficulty finding available land. The Sheppard Reservation is dedicated to promoting education, encouraging creativity, preserving the Appalachian heritage, and improving the quality of life for residents, according to the organizers.

Homestead plots are still available. Prospective settlers may contact the organization by calling (304) 393-3436.

for the family VCR are due to be returned to the video store in Kermit.

Sonny has driven a car, been as far away as Staunton, Virginia, plans to graduate from Kermit High School, and thinks it is fine to get married at 18 years old. Each August he participates in the oldest of mountain rituals, the ridgetop meetings at family graveyards. Friends and relatives dine on fine country cooking: fried chicken, gravy, green beans, peaches, cole slaw, pickles, Kool-Aid and iced tea, mashed potatoes, and ham. After dinner, Sonny will slip off to the side of the crowd and behave politely while a preacher chants:

> Now let me tell you something
> 'bout the Lord--huh
> it don't take no great kind of
> people--huh
> to get a blessing from the Lord--
> huh
> Now listen all it takes--huh
> is two or three people--huh
> gathered together in his name--
> huh.

With the citizens of Big Laurel, as it was a century ago in most of the South, loved ones who are dead remain a part of the family. The dead have, however, heard what one Big Laurel child called in a school recitation, ". . .a breeze from the hills that whispered, you're home."

Sonny's father, Bud Baisden, "gins" around with odd jobs as a logger or a helper for a local furniture maker. In an area where jobs are scarce, he feels lucky when he is able to trade some work at the school for the privilege of harvesting trees that have died off after being barked by the horses. Sonny's mother, Rhoda, is a full-time housekeeper and parent.

The school curriculum and the teaching methods at Big Laurel are progressive and accomplish goals which remain elusive in larger schools. The school and the community work together in a relaxed and open manner. If the school runs short on fire wood, Sister Gretchen calls a neighbor and soon the buzz of a chain saw will cut the silence. The teachers — Gretchen, Kathy, and Sharon — dress in conventional clothing and maintain a first-name relationship with the students.

The Big Laurel curriculum is accredited by the State of West Virginia. The fundamentals include reading, writing, arithmetic, social studies, and the arts and sciences. These are complemented by teaching methods that encourage students to be active in learning. These youngsters have no trouble making eye contact with authority figures. With two persons devoting full time to the 12 students and a third available at times, no one lacks personal attention.

The mountain school called Big Laurel and the community that supports it speak much about southern West Virginia. Here is the ancient heritage of independent settlers who came west with a horse and wagon, a few milk cows, and a gooseneck hoe.

Sister Kathy O'Hagan shares the teaching duties at Big Laurel. Both teachers live at the school, in quarters above the classrooms.

Don West, an Appalachian poet and historian, believes that many of these pioneers were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who were seeking high, isolated areas on which to settle. They moved into the mountains in the early 1800's, skirmished with the Indians, and stayed.

Mountain heritage is evident at Big Laurel every day and is celebrated by a picnic at the end of the school year. The annual closing of formal instruction at the Big Laurel School in early June is marked by a traditional Sunday get-together for residents of the area. As noon approaches, the warm summer sun breaks through the foliage. Adults and children walk to the school grounds or ride in on four-wheel-drive pickups, Chevy Blazers or Ford Broncos.

While the children romp the gentle slopes of the school yard, their mothers and other local women unpack picnic chests and prepare "dinner on the ground." The fare, like that at the cemetery meetings, is plain and simple country cooking. The servings of ham and beans with corn bread remind one of the food that travelers seek at restaurants throughout the South. The cost is different, however, for guests eat free on Big Laurel Mountain.

Men and women who have congregated in the open shed break out guitars, mandolins, banjos, and fiddles. They banter at conversation during a tune-up ritual which seems endless. Then the tuning gives way to the sounds of traditional bluegrass. The music — a combination of elements from ancient ballads, popular guitar licks, hymns lined in country churches, and the lonesome Kentucky hill sound of Bill Monroe — drifts easily across the hollows, as much at home here as the people. The music of Raymond Johnson and his band is hard-core Appalachian, evoking the tragedy and beauty of life on earth through the bass rhythm beat, the soulful minor chords at the end of selected riffs, the driving arpeggios and the high-pitched vocal harmonies. It represents a surrender to forces over which no human control is possible. The songs of lost family ties, death, and eternal life are as symbolic of mountain faith as the solemnity of a stained glass window is to students at the Yale School of Divinity.

Jessica Sturgill pauses in the doorway of the school playhouse. Students tired of bookwork one spring day and built the rustic cabin as a lark.

In a few years, Sonny Baisden will probably spend his last summer on Big Laurel Mountain. He, along with many who have gone before him, will enter a large public high school or go into some kind of manual labor. Several alumni of Big Laurel have graduated from high school and a few have gone to college. They speak highly of the personal attention given to them by their teachers and of the caring atmosphere of the school. A few of them feel they were later disadvantaged in the larger schools because Big Laurel provided no opportunity to play competitive sports or to learn to play a musical instrument. But they agreed that the personal autonomy they had at Big Laurel School was helpful to them in their quest beyond the mountain.

Students like Sonny may go on through high school and, as many before them have done, migrate to a city outside the region. They may lead a productive life there. Or they may return, disillusioned with cold winters, crowded freeways, and the raucous, hillbilly beer joints that cater to mountaineers who leave home. If they do come home, the mountain will be there to welcome them back. Big Laurel School, with its mixture of microcomputers and mountain music, will have done its part to prepare them for life in either place.

The Miners' Armed March of August 1921 followed the assassination of Sid Hatfield, a popular hero since the 1920 Matewan Massacre. Thousands of angry miners headed for Mingo County, Sid's home country and a coal strike center. They had to cross Logan County first, however, and Logan was guarded by Sheriff Don Chafin. His men met the miners along a broad front and the Battle of Blair Mountain ensued.

The epic struggle for unionization is usually told from the miners' viewpoint. Recently, however, we have come across two opposing accounts. The first to come in was R. B. Adams' short eyewitness report (page 70), supplied by Mr. Adams himself. The other is by the late Joe Savage, written for New Yorker *magazine but never published. It came to us from son Lon Savage, author of* Thunder in the Mountains.

Neither writer attempts to defend the harsh actions of repressive times, but together they offer a fascinating perspective from the other side of the mountain.

The Armed March in West Virginia

By Joe W. Savage

I first heard of the threatened mine war in West Virginia one sultry summer afternoon in late August 1921, when I dropped into Mr. Sive's pool room in Charleston to get out of the sun. During that eventful summer I was engaged as a bill collector for a lumber mill, biding my time until the state university re-opened in mid-September. This was a crass kind of job which I would normally have spurned, but my father was a partner in the lumber mill and I could not worm out of the assignment without incurring his displeasure. As it turned out, the job was not so bad. I pedaled up and down the business streets on the tall, black company bicycle, wheedled a few dollars here and there from delinquent debtors, and learned to shoot a fairly creditable game of pool at Mr. Sive's establishment. In time I became interested in a friendly young lady, and had saved enough money to purchase a secondhand canoe when the mine war disrupted my tenuous schemes of love-making on the moonlit Kanawha River.

On this particular afternoon the pool hall was almost empty. I sat alone, comfortably ensconced in one of the high, bulky armchairs and puffed away on a Wheeling stogie. Presently Mr. Sive came around from behind the counter and poured water into a smoking cuspidor.

"What has happened to all your pool sharks?" I asked.

"People don't play pool when they got excitement," he replied.

"Excitement?" I queried. "Has someone shot Judge McClintic?" This was a standard gag. Judge McClintic was our federal judge. He made short shrift of Prohibition violators, and there were always rumors of plots to do him in.

"The excitement is at Marmet," Mr. Sive said coldly. "Coal miners are getting ready to take Charleston."

When I attempted to pass off his statement as ridiculous, he advised me that several hundred disgruntled coal miners had set up an armed encampment near Marmet, 12 miles east of Charleston, and were preparing to march on the city. He was very upset and I assuaged his fears to some extent by pointing out that these things were always exaggerated by calamity howlers. When I arrived home for supper, however, I found the afternoon newspaper creased and wrinkled in the porch swing, and smoothed it out to see if there might be a story about this Marmet fiasco. I was somewhat set back to find the front page devoted almost entirely to the miners' assembly; an estimated one thousand Southern West Virginia coal miners had already gathered at Marmet, and more were said to be on the way.

After perusing the various news items about the Marmet gathering I was disturbed that people were taking it so calmly; this was a serious thing. The miners' assembly was well financed, and equipped with modern firearms and machine guns. A physician and several nurses were said to be in attendance. The miners even had worked out a uniform, consisting of blue jeans, blue shirt and red bandanna neckerchief. Also they were preparing to march on Logan County; not on Charleston, as Mr. Sive had believed. Heavy reinforcements were expected from the Ohio and Illinois coal fields. The leaders of the armed assembly had shown considerable ingenuity by locating the camp where it could readily be seen by partisans arriving on freight and coal trains. In fact a Chesapeake & Ohio water tank was nearby, where the big Malley freight engines filled up before hauling coal trains across the Allegheny divide, and this was expected to facilitate the detrainment of new arrivals. There was a report that the encampment was rapidly filling up with out-of-state recruits.

When my father arrived home I informed him of this treasonable assembly within veritable cannon shot of the state capitol. To my surprise he was unusually well informed on the subject. He told me the purpose of the assembly was to build up an

armed force and march across the mountains into Logan County. Once there, the armed marchers intended to establish the authority of the United Mine Workers of America to negotiate wage contracts between miners and mine owners. I learned later that union organizers who had ventured into the Logan Field for that purpose usually returned with blacked eyes and bruised bodies.

The next morning coal miners began to pour in from nearby states, and on August 24 an estimated 7,000 well-armed miners marched on Logan County. The Armed March, as it came to be known, was officially under way. Led by competent officers, the miner's army moved southward along Lens Creek, crossed over Lens Creek Mountain, came down on Coal River, and bivouacked around the baseball grounds at Racine. Numerous coal company stores were reportedly broken into and robbed during the night, and large quantities of food, arms and ammunition were taken. The next morning Brigadier General H. H. Bandholz, former Provost Marshall of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, arrived in Charleston to survey the situation for President Harding.

With the arrival of General Bandholz the Armed March began to falter and many of the miners started back to their homes. However the vanguard pushed on, met up with a force of Logan County deputies on Peach Creek, and five miners were reported killed in the skirmish that followed. Within a few hours the stragglers were back on the Logan trail and a clash occurred near Sharples on Coal River in which seven men were said to have been shot down. Governor Ephriam Morgan of West Virginia wired President Harding and asked that federal troops be sent to West Virginia to put down the armed rebellion. President Harding called on the miners to lay down their arms and go home. "We ought not to have a conflict like that which is going on in West Virginia," he told the War College in Washington. "It is due to lack of understanding." Many West Virginians felt the President was putting the case mildly.

By this time I was quite interested in the mine war, but became handicapped in my efforts to keep up with it. My father's partner in the lumber mill had not been entirely satisfied with the results of my collecting efforts, and had suggested that I give him a daily accounting of debtors upon whom I had called, and a report on what they had to say. This lasted for several days and kept me unusually busy, but after supper on Thursday evening, September 1st, my father let me use the family car and I drove down to Mr. Sive's to get the firsthand information.

When I arrived most of the big arm chairs were already occupied, and all the talk was about the mine war. There was some information that had not appeared in the newspapers. I learned that questionable women had infiltrated the miners' camp, and disease was rampant. Someone said that a fleet of bombers was enroute from Wilbur Wright Airfield in Ohio, to drop incendiary bombs on the miners' march. There were reports of atrocities along Coal River, near the Logan County line. Presently Grant Hall hurried in and said that Governor Morgan was calling for volunteers. Someone asked why volunteers were needed.

"To help Don Chafin," Grant said. "He needs a couple of hundred more deputies on Blair Mountain alone."

Don Chafin was sheriff of Logan County. It was said that he received a rake-off from the mine owners for keeping the union out.

"When does Governor Morgan want these volunteers?" someone asked.

"Right now," Grant said. "He was in front of the YMCA talking to some fellows."

This was startling news. I joined several of my compatriots and we walked over to the YMCA to see what was going on. A rather large crowd of young men had gathered in the second-floor lobby and Governor Morgan was moving about, talking to them. Several lesser state officials were also on hand. Jimmy Kincaid was in charge. Jimmy Kincaid was a World War veteran, and had flown Spads in Italy and France. He sat at a small table, conversed with various young men, and seemed to be writing down their names in a Sit Lux notebook. Presently one of the state officials began tapping on the table with a silver dollar. The crowd quieted down and he introduced the Governor.

Governor Morgan was a well-liked and kindly man. He carefully reviewed the miners' infractions of state law and said it was incumbent upon him to act. He said he knew he could depend on the fine young manhood of West Virginia to support his view; with force if necessary. He announced that a special train had been chartered to carry a voluntary group of defenders to Logan, where they would man the ramparts of freedom. The Governor closed by asking all the red-blooded young men present to assemble at the Chesapeake & Ohio railway station at 11 o'clock; "Ready to go," he said grimly.

When Governor Morgan finished his talk, we were advised that he would like to meet each of us personally. A line formed and I joined in for the handshake. After some minutes I reached the Governor and he placed a fatherly hand on my shoulder.

"What's your name?" he asked with paternal warmth.

"Savage," I said. "Buck Savage."

The Governor looked down at Kincaid, who was writing rapidly in the notebook.

"Got it," Kincaid said snappily, and Governor Morgan shook my hand warmly. "Glad to have you with us," he said, and I was moved on.

Grant Hall and I left the YMCA about 10 o'clock. He had also shaken Governor Morgan's hand, and he knew where we could borrow a couple of pistols from a fellow who had been on the police force. The fellow was still up, and loaned each of us a revolver; mine was a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson. We agreed to meet at the station and I hurried home to change into rough clothes. My parents were both sound sleepers, and I managed to don some hunting garb and get out without waking them.

Grant Hall was already on hand when I arrived at the station and we milled about in the crowd. A few stout-hearted state officials passed among us with words of courage. The night train for Washington roared in, running behind schedule, and discharged and took on passengers while harried porters cleared passageways through the throng. Presently the conductor called "all

aboard," and the train moved off in a blast of steam.

Almost immediately a train of three passenger coaches, pushed along by a yard engine, backed into the station. "This is it," someone yelled, and we clambered aboard. Presently the engine bell rang, the whistle sounded and our phantom train moved off into the night.

For the first several miles there was much moving about from coach to coach; most of the defenders were curious to learn who the other defenders were. Our coach was in charge of Bud Connell, another war veteran. Two or three men in our coach had thoughtfully brought playing cards along, and a stud poker game was about to get in progress when word came that the lights would be doused at Saint Albans. Saint Albans was the transfer point for the Coal River division of the Chesapeake & Ohio, and it was considered possible that snipers from the miners' army might be lying in wait. The lights went off as we approached the town limits, and Bud Connell posted an armed guard at each end of our coach. The train roared through Saint Albans without incident and clicked along the rails at a steady pace until we neared Huntington. Then we were switched over on the Logan division of the C&O, and headed southward along the Guyandotte River toward Logan. When my turn came as sentry I sat on the coach steps, fingered the Smith and Wesson revolver, and watched the dark countryside roll past. Bud Connell came out to inspect the guard and we had a long talk together. I asked him about our movements when we reached Logan.

"Hell, I don't know any more about it than you do," he said painfully, and ducked back in the coach.

A number of deputies were at the station to meet us when we rolled into Logan sometime after midnight. After much milling around outside the station we were formed into units and marched away. My unit was marched to a lodge hall, and we were told to remain there until further notice. We filed into a large, dimly lit assembly room and found the floor covered with mattresses; with hardly room to move between them. The deputy in charge told us to get as much sleep as possible, and be ready to move out on five minutes notice. He then departed.

ILLUSTRATION BY LISA GEORGE

In some places we could look out across the far valley and see the opposite range. Suddenly we heard firing off to the right, far across on the next ridge. At once this seemed a relief; I felt that we had not made the long trip for nothing. At least there was some action, even though far away.

For several minutes our unit moved about, most of us trying to avoid an undesirable mattress mate. There were several pulpit-like rostrums around the walls, and an extroverted defender mounted one and delivered a mock lecture. This took the strangeness out of our surroundings, we began to relax, and presently I dozed off alongside a snoring giant from North Charleston.

Our sleep was of short duration. About two o'clock we were aroused and told to fall out in front of the building. In a few minutes we found ourselves marching in double column along the quiet, dimly-lighted streets of Logan. Presently we arrived at the courthouse and filed in for the issuance of arms. The courthouse was a veritable arsenal, the wide hallways stacked with Enfield rifles and boxes of ammunition. Each of us was issued a rifle, ammunition, and cartridge belt, and when we emerged in the bluish light of a street lamp a dozen or so Ford taxicabs awaited us. I climbed into one with Ben Reber and some West Side boys, and the car rattled off. We plied the driver with questions about our destination, but he was a taciturn character who probably wished he was elsewhere, and we left him to his thoughts.

The car bumped along a dirt road for perhaps a dozen miles, headlights dimmed and the air chocked with dust. Occasionally we could see the flickering lights of the cars ahead, but there was no sounding of horns; no sound at all except the rattle and thump and wheeze of the car as it threaded its way toward the mountains. At last we saw a flash of light waving ahead and came to a halt. A man with a husky voice told us to fall out and move forward. We piled out into the darkness, dragging rifles and other gear. As we shuffled forward in the tense blackness, another taxicab came to a halt behind us. The engine backfired, there was a moment of eerie quiet, and someone ahead called "Take it easy — take it easy."

When we reached the front car there were several flashlights moving about briskly like souped-up fireflies. I heard Bud Connell's voice and moved toward it. He was talking softly with two older men; one wore a silvery officer's badge that glittered when swept by beams of light. The man with the husky voice came forward, prodding stragglers from the last two or three cars. Presently we were assembled loosely around the leaders, and the husky-voiced man

kept prodding us in closer, like herding sheep toward a loading chute. The man with the deputy's badge began talking. His words were low, but clear and distinct in the cold morning darkness.

"Connell will take you up this ravine," he said, nodding backward with his head. "We've got a patrol up ahead that will direct you up the mountain." He looked out over our group and told us to come in closer. We shuffled around into a more compact group; those of us in front hunched down so the others could tell what was going on.

"The password," said the deputy sheriff, "is Holden. Don't forget it."

"Holden," someone repeated.

"Don't say it," the deputy said harshly. "Just remember it."

Presently we moved on, some 30 of us following Bud Connell through the darkness. In a few minutes we stopped while the vanguard felt out the path. In the stillness we could hear the Ford taxicabs rattling along on their return to Logan. We moved on into the cold, quiet night, sometimes inching through shallow water at a snail's pace, often brushed by alder and willow limbs, always listening for whispered sounds ahead. We had just emerged from particularly difficult terrain where thorny shrubs tore at our clothing when a flashlight beamed ahead and a shrill, excited voice called "Halt!"

We stopped at once and waited tensely. No other words were spoken, no command given. The stillness was painful. Across the small creek we heard the metallic click of rifles being cocked ready to fire. The voice called again, "Advance your leader."

Bud Connell moved forward awkwardly with the flashlight shining on his face. We heard muffled voices. Then Bud called softly and we moved up. "Don't be so slow with that password," we heard someone say.

We huddled about and the fellow in charge of the patrol told us we were at the base of Crooked Creek Mountain. "The reason you don't hear any shooting," he said, "they save their ammunition for daytime. You fellows better get up there before it starts."

He and Bud Connell conversed quietly for a few minutes; then we began the long climb to the top. This was more tiring, but less frustrating, than the ravine. The mountain slope was fairly steep, but we were able to follow a well-worn path until we neared the crest. In the half-light of early morning we began to see great trees silhouetted against the sky; giant oaks, pines, chestnut and beech. Tall saplings grew in profusion. There was little underbrush at this elevation, and soon we were able to see the outline of the ridge. We dragged slowly upward. Mitt Tucker broke a shoelace and we all gathered about, glad for the respite, while he fumblingly tied it together in the nebulous predawn greyness.

It was still a long way from sunrise when we reached the mountain crest; Connell in the lead and the rest of us strung out like Sherpa porters approaching Mount Everest. Suddenly the head of the line halted and a tall, weather-beaten man appeared, seemingly from nowhere, and began talking to Connell. Since we heard no rifle bolts clicking into firing position, we moved up and gathered around this gaunt oldtimer. He talked quietly for a minute or two. His name was Gaujot, and he was manning a machine gun, partially camouflaged behind a giant oak. Presently other seasoned defenders appeared and seemed quite glad to see us.

Colonel Gaujot, as he was called, told us to make ourselves comfortable on the sheltered side of the ridge. He said we would be stationed at various possible break-through areas as soon as it got light enough to make our way. In the meantime he said to get what sleep we could. We all dropped our gear and stretched out on the near-level mountain top, but no one slept.

It seemed an unconscionably long time before sunup, but at last the dancing light of morning appeared far off on the Eastern summits, and we made ready to move off. This was a fairly simple procedure; we simply stood up, stretched our aching limbs, and lined up in a single file behind Bud Connell. Crows were calling nearby, and smaller birds flitted about through the sparse underbrush. Far to the westward we heard the mooing of a cow. In this peaceful setting we moved out near the crest of Crooked Creek Mountain. Presently we came upon a trail and followed it for a hundred yards or so. In some places we could look out across the far valley and see the opposite range. Suddenly we heard firing off to the right, far across on the next ridge. At once this seemed a relief; I felt that we had not made the long trip for nothing. At least there was some action, even though far away. Then I heard whining noises, like angry bees. Dirt began to spatter up almost underfoot. Small twigs snapped off sapling limbs and spiraled downward. The man in front of me staggered and fell, and went crawling downward out of range. Colonel Gaujot's machine gun opened up and we suddenly realized we were under attack. We broke and fled headlong down the mountainside to safety.

As soon as we were out of danger, Bud Connell began rallying our forces and presently most of us were together again. The man who had fallen was shot in the buttocks. We helped him maneuver into a not-too-painful position on his stomach, and later he was taken down the mountain, lying face down across a mule.

In the relative safety now afforded us by the mountain crest, our courage quickly returned. We moved along cautiously below the ridge and presently came upon a group of defenders who were comfortably ensconced in a notch, where the crest dipped downward for a hundred feet or more. There were great rocks about, some as big as trucking vans, and a number of our men were left there to reinforce this somewhat vulnerable defile.

The crest of the mountain began to give way a little farther along, and turned inward toward the miners' forces. Some of us moved cautiously along this salient under scattering fire, and suddenly came upon 10 or 12 young men in a long, narrow fissure in the massive rock formation. This cleft was six to eight feet across, and its depth varied from four to six feet. The defenders who were manning this natural fortification were lolling about smoking cigarettes and telling stories, and plainly looked upon the rest of us as intruders. However, Bud Connell had orders to disperse his men among the defend-

ers, and it fell my lot to join these seasoned 24-hour veterans. I was turned over to a husky, confident fellow named Spurlock, who told me to make myself at home.

From the rim of our protective crevice we could look far down into the valley that separated us from the invaders. A desolate farmhouse could be seen in a small clearing; pole beans and corn were growing in the garden. The farmer's cow had been killed by gunfire and the carcass could be seen through the field glasses, sprawled across the well path. Machine guns sporadically sprayed the area, purportedly to discomfort possible enemy snipers, but more likely to relieve the tension on itching trigger fingers.

Throughout the morning there was intermittent rifle and machine gun fire from the other side of the deep valley. We responded in kind, and if the interval between volleys was overly long, someone would fire a few rounds toward the invaders and set off another round of heavy fire. During these outbursts we could hear the comforting tat-tat-tat-tat of Colonel Gaujot's machine gun far up the ridge.

Midday arrived much sooner than expected. I was pumping some lead downward through the trees when a fellow named Jerry Sizemore grasped my arm and told me to lay off. He pointed down the sheltered side of the mountain and I saw two men bringing a pack mule toward us; one leading and the other threatening the animal from the rear. Firing eased up all along the ridge. The two men stopped some 15 or 20 feet below us, extracted a large packet of sandwiches and a dozen or so bottles of pop, and the smaller of the two slithered up to our crevice and delivered our noonday repast. Spurlock called timeout for all but a cadre of riflemen who manned our parapet. The sandwiches were all made with bologna, but the slabs and the bread slices were thick and we made out very well, washing them down with orange, lemon, sarsaparilla and other palatable soft drinks turned out by the Logan bottling factory.

Time slowed up in the early afternoon. Firing was intermittent. Colonel Gaujot's machine gun took a long nap, and something akin to the doldrums settled down on our group; particularly on the seasoned oldtimers. Jerry Sizemore said it was the same the day before; "things slacked off after we ate," he confided. Jerry Sizemore was from Lincoln County, and lived with his parents on a small farm near West Hamlin. He told me about his old man selling their cow for $35.

"He changed it into nickels," Jerry said, "and lost every last one in the slot machine at the Griffithsville pool room."

"Every last nickel?" someone asked.

"It took him two days," Jerry said. "We didn't even know where Pa was."

This story was a good morale builder; everyone seemed to relax and several of us sought out isolated spots in our ravine and tried to sleep. I was fairly successful, but about four o'clock heavy firing began from the miners' ridge and we could hear the whine of bullets ricocheting off the trees. Colonel Gaujot's machine gun got back in business, and we all began firing down the slope through the sumac and sassafras where invaders would be most likely to attempt a breakthrough. There was movement and activity below us, and much excitement all along our ridge. Several of our men called out that they could see miners dodging between trees and underbrush, but if invaders were there, they failed to break out into the open and make a frontal attack. About six o'clock the shooting eased off, but far off to the southeast we could hear heavy firing along the Blair Mountain front.

One pleasing aspect of the mine war was the cessation of hostilities as darkness approached. Firing slacked off before dusk, and soon stopped entirely. Many of us climbed out of our natural defense post and visited other groups of defenders along the ridge. Others scoured about getting firewood, and when the rest of us returned to our bivouac, small fires were burning all along the ridge. Three or four fires were blazing in our ravine, and men were lying about on the ground; some talking, others trying to sleep. I crept between two lanky defenders and put in a restless night.

We were up and about long before dawn, in time to welcome the sandwich men and a handful of reinforcements. The morning was still, moist with dew. Crows were calling down the slope, and westward we could hear the faint tinkle of faraway cowbells. Even our voices seemed to echo from nearby trees. It was the kind of

ILLUSTRATION BY LISA GEORGE

Governor Morgan was a well-liked and kindly man. He carefully reviewed the miners' infractions of state law and said it was incumbent upon him to act. He said he knew he could depend on the fine young manhood of West Virginia to support his view; with force if necessary.

Blair Mountain from the Other Side

By R. B. Adams

Three days before the U.S. Army was ordered into Coal River and Logan to settle the mine war, our engineering crew was in No. 10 mine at Holden. An emergency call came from Logan for ex-servicemen to report to the courthouse in Logan. As our crew chief, Vic Willis, was an ex-serviceman, we came out to report to the mine manager, W. O. Percival. Mitchell Bower and I — we had been junior high school classmates at Bedford, Virginia — told Percival that we were both ROTC trainees, Mitchell at Fishburne and I at VPI. He told us to go ahead.

When we reached Logan courthouse we were told to line up with the others who had reported. We were then told to go to one of the designated stores and get any clothes needed for the mountain and report back in one hour. Edward "Whitey" Bloom had me change boots and fitted me with a naugahyde jacket. We reported back to the courthouse and Harry S. Walker, Logan Elementary School principal, was appointed captain and Charles J. Everett, Logan hardware salesman, was appointed lieutenant. We were then told our mission.

It seemed a shortcut foot path across the mountain between Ardrosson (abandoned mine no. 4 on the left fork above Monclo) and Ethel (actually Keyes) had been overlooked. It was not known what was happening there and must be investigated.

We were loaded into trucks and taken up Bear Wallow Hollow to Keyes on the Logan side of the mountain. We settled long enough to be issued Springfield rifles and clips of ammunition and to load one clip in the rifles. I was also given a Smith and Wesson revolver and led the advance patrol up the mountain. We would advance about 100 feet and signal the next patrols in turn to follow. We reached the top of the mountain without incident and established headquarters. Two-man picket posts were established at about 50-yard intervals along the ridge between Blair on the right and Crooked Creek on the left.

A fellow named John Chapin from New York, whom I have never known before or since, and I were the last post on the Crooked Creek side. We made ourselves a den in the brush and took turns in standing watch. During the evening there was sporadic firing in the valley below, the only noise except the dew falling to sound like footsteps in the leaves. Darkness brought quiet except for an infrequent shot in the valley. At daybreak intense firing began.

We were supposed to have been relieved at 7 A.M. After waiting until after 9 A.M. for relief, we decided to follow the picket posts between us and headquarters to find out the situation. We found all picket posts deserted and reported to Charlie Everett that something was wrong. He replied "Hell, yes. When the heavy shooting began at daybreak they all came into headquarters!"

We spent the next two nights as repetitions of the first, quiet at night and heavy fire during the day. Except for a scarcity of food it was a rather uneventful period, Chapin and I never sighting an "enemy." Each time a man was sent off the mountain to inquire about food he did not come back — and rarely any food. We got enough to sustain us, but sometimes the Alex Rose's Bakery bread boxes contained Beechnut chewing tobacco.

After the third night we were notified the U.S. Army troops were in Logan. Trucks were at the foot of the mountain to take us back to Logan, where we found the troops. It was over. I have never understood why the short path across the mountain was not used to reach Logan, unless Bill Blizzard* did not know about it. The miner's plan may have been to establish intense fronts at Blair and at Crooked Creek, then slip over the shortcut.

All accounts of the Logan mine war refer to the troops as U.S. Army. At the time I thought some might have been West Virginia National Guard units or volunteers from Welch under the command of Colonel William E. Eubank. I do know that one of the men was a man named "Waddy" Chewning, who had a movie date with a Logan girl with whom I became acquainted. Some accounts state that a Logan unit of the West Virginia National Guard was engaged in the Logan defense forces. This is untrue. The Logan unit was not organized until after the mine war, when Company E, 150th Infantry, was organized with Harry S. Walker as captain and Charles J. Everett as lieutenant. I was named 1st sergeant, to do the work. Shortly afterwards, Company M, a machine gun company, was formed with Huntington native Joe Corbely of Micco as captain and New York native Ned Crummy lieutenant. I did not re-enlist after my one-year enlistment expired.

*Bill Blizzard, a militant officer of United Mine Workers District 17, was recognized as the "generalissimo" of the armed miners invading Logan County. Blizzard and other leaders were later tried for treason against the state, and acquitted.

morning one welcomes in farm country, when nature seems at peace.

We greeted the newcomers in high good humor; big bologna sandwiches were distributed, bottles of pop were tossed along from one person to another. One ambitious toss was too high; the bottle went over the parapet and lodged against a sapling. One of the newcomers climbed hastily over the parapet to retrieve the bottle. Suddenly, just like the morning before, we heard the tat-tat-tat-tat of a machine gun from the opposite ridge and the newcomer fell. Jerry Sizemore ran quickly to his side and brought him back under intense fire. The newcomer was pale and apologetic, but unharmed.

In the meantime our defenders all along Crooked Creek Mountain had opened up and a real battle was in progress. Colonel Gaujot was still on the job; up on the ridge his machine gun was barking in angry spurts. We took turns manning our parapet and kept steady fire for at least two hours. Bullets spattered all around us, but we were fairly safe in our natural redoubt.

As the morning wore on, firing on both sides became desultory, and about 11 o'clock the miners' fire stopped altogether. We kept popping away from time to time, but there was no retaliatory fire. I brought out my Smith and Wesson revolver, and several of us took turns shooting at green chestnut burrs in a nearby tree. Word came down from the high ridge that Colonel Gaujot had sent a scouting party down hill, and we were ordered not to fire until further notice. We laid about in the warm sunshine that trickled through the trees and a young man next to me, a fellow named Harless, complained that people were not trustworthy like they used to be. Someone asked him why, and he said he had recently made a deal to sell his car to a mill hand. When the time came to consummate the deal, he said, the mill hand failed to show up. There was silence after this startling denouement, and Harless was nettled. "I had a notion to call him a fine bird," he added, drawing out the word "fine."

Jerry Sizemore, who had appeared humorless in relating his father's experience with the slot machine, was quite different with Harless.

"My God," he said, drawing back, "you wouldn't really have called that fellow a fine bird?"

"The hell I wouldn't," Harless said with vigor.

"That's going too damn far," Sizemore said earnestly, and everyone broke out in laughter. Harless was uncomfortable. He got up, brushed the seat of his trousers, glanced down the mountainside, and suddenly became transfixed.

"In God's name," he cried out. "Does anybody see what I see?"

Two or three of us jumped up, someone let out a yell, and presently pandemonium began to spread all along the ridge. Down the slope we saw a phalanx of U.S. troops toiling up the mountain, accompanied by big, muscular Army mules drawing light artillery field guns. We all jumped up on the parapet and cheered. Everywhere along the ridge, tired defenders came running out of their defense positions and began throwing their hats and yelling. The long crest of the mountain rang with tumultuous shouts of welcome. Old Warren G. Harding hadn't forgotten us after all.

The troops toiled upward and were soon with us. It was a battalion of infantry from Fort Knox, Kentucky. Many of the soldiers were young boys, grinning and asking what happened to the war. A grizzled buck sergeant of about 35 years was in charge of the three or four squads that prepared to take over our salient. A corporal barked authoritatively at several men who were handling pack mules; the field guns had already been moved farther up to the right, where the crest was higher. Presently a young first lieutenant appeared, wearing highly polished cordovan leggings and a battered campaign hat. He announced that his men were taking over, and we crowded around while he talked with Spurlock. The lieutenant asked some very pertinent questions and Spurlock filled him in with a brief summary of our experience. Spurlock was not overly modest in relating some of our exploits. The lieutenant said few of his men had ever been under fire, and expressed the hope that they would do as well as the civilian defenders.

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"I think the miners have cleared out," Spurlock said.

"We'll go get them," the lieutenant said smugly, and Spurlock looked around at the rest of us knowingly.

We milled around with the soldiers, not knowing exactly what to do. About two o'clock a bristly major wearing whip-cord breeches appeared with two of Sheriff Chafin's deputies and we were told that we were relieved, and could start moving down the mountain. Some of us were reluctant to leave so abruptly, but we were plainly in the way of the troops so we gathered up our scanty possessions and started downward.

Pathways down from the ridge fed into a main trail, and as we moved along we began to meet many of our old friends with whom we had made the trip from Charleston. Young men from Huntington and Welch and Bluefield were having much the same experience; the air was filled with greetings, reunions and loud talk, much like campus encounters after a summer vacation. I met up with Grant Hall again, and we traded lies all the way down the mountain. At last we reached the road where we had been deposited by the wheezing taxicabs. A hundred or so defenders were standing about, and we were advised that more cars would be along soon. We milled around in the dust and sweat until late afternoon, when at last our turn came. Only a few taxicabs were engaged in the return transportation effort, but a number of Logan boosters had manned their family cars and were helping out. We rode in with a horse doctor, who told us Billy Blizzard was getting ready to attack the federal troops with grenades. We asked him who Billy Blizzard was. He withered us with scorn and said Billy Blizzard commanded the Miners' Army.

It was dark when we were deposited at the Aracoma Hotel in Logan. Arms were stacked all about the entrance and a guard was at the door. He asked us for the password and for a moment neither of us could remember it.

"You're the only two men in Logan who don't know it," said the guard, and permitted us to enter.

The lobby of the Aracoma Hotel was like a military headquarters. An Army colonel and several lesser officers were moving about, talking with deputies and state police officers. They all said the mine war was definitely over. There was a news bulletin that the miners had begun evacuating the disturbed area about noon, when they learned that federal troops had arrived in Logan. It was reported that they had hastily buried 50 bodies before moving out. A news dispatch said the bodies of two miners had been left on the porch of an undertaking parlor near Marmet. We also learned that a correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, Boyden Sparks, had been shot in the head en route from Blair Mountain to Logan, but was expected to recover.

There was a Red Cross booth in the Aracoma lobby, and after cleaning up in the washroom we paid it a visit. The lady in charge was very solicitous of our welfare and advised us that efforts were being made for a special train to take the Kanawha County men back to Charleston. She filled us up on sandwiches and hot coffee, and we set out to see the town.

It was Saturday night and the pool rooms were full. Logan was overrun with defenders like ourselves, and also with country folks who had come in to the county seat to buy groceries and see the movies. About 10 o'clock we ran into some of our Charleston cohorts. They advised us that the C&O special train had been arranged for and would leave shortly after midnight. By this time the glamour of victory had worn very thin and we arrived at the station long before 12 o'clock. Most of the Charleston contingent were already on hand, waiting glumly for the Charleston special. Many of the men were lying about on the station benches, and some were sleeping on the floor. About two o'clock a train pulled into the station and we were put aboard. I fell into an empty seat and closed my eyes as the train rumbled off into the night. I dreamed we were back on Crooked Creek Mountain; the miners were breaking through our lines, piling down into our sheltered crevice. Hand-to-hand combat ensued. I went for a miner's throat. He yelled fiercely and fought back. It was Grant Hall. "Get the hell out of here," he said gruffly. "We're home."

In This Issue

R. B. ADAMS has been a mine worker, a teacher, a steel worker, and a salesman, among other things, and has worked in both Virginia and West Virginia. He is a native of Virginia, and attended Virginia Polytechnical Institute. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LORNA CHAMBERLAIN was born near St. Cloud, Wetzel County. She studied English at the College of Steubenville after graduating from Warwood High School near Wheeling. She is a freelance writer whose articles have been used in many publications. Her last GOLDENSEAL article, "Uncle Sol and Devil Anse," appeared in the Summer 1987 issue.

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CHARLOTTE H. DESKINS is a McDowell County native who now lives in 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 awards for her writing from West Virginia Writers and Mountain State Press. She is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

DANNY FULKS, born in Ohio, has been a West Virginian since 1968. He is a professor of education at Marshall University, and has written several books and many articles on professional education. He has also written nonfiction articles about Appalachian culture. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MARIE S. HOSCH has lived and worked in Texas, Ohio and Ankara, Turkey. She now lives in her native town of Elkins. She has had several articles published in the *West Virginia Hillbilly, Elkins Inter-Mountain* and *Mid-Atlantic Country* magazine. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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ZANA LEGAN was born in Lumberport, Harrison County, but grew up in Indiana. There she was a caseworker with the state Department of Public Welfare. She returned to West Virginia in 1980, and is now pursuing a degree from WVU. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

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

BARBARA A. SMITH chairs the Division of the Humanities and is an associate professor of literature and writing at Alderson-Broaddus College. She has written poems, short stories, journal articles, and the novel *Six Miles Out*, published by Mountain State Press. She is the editor of the literary quarterly *Grab-a-Nickel* and has edited two anthologies for West Virginia Writers, Inc.

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