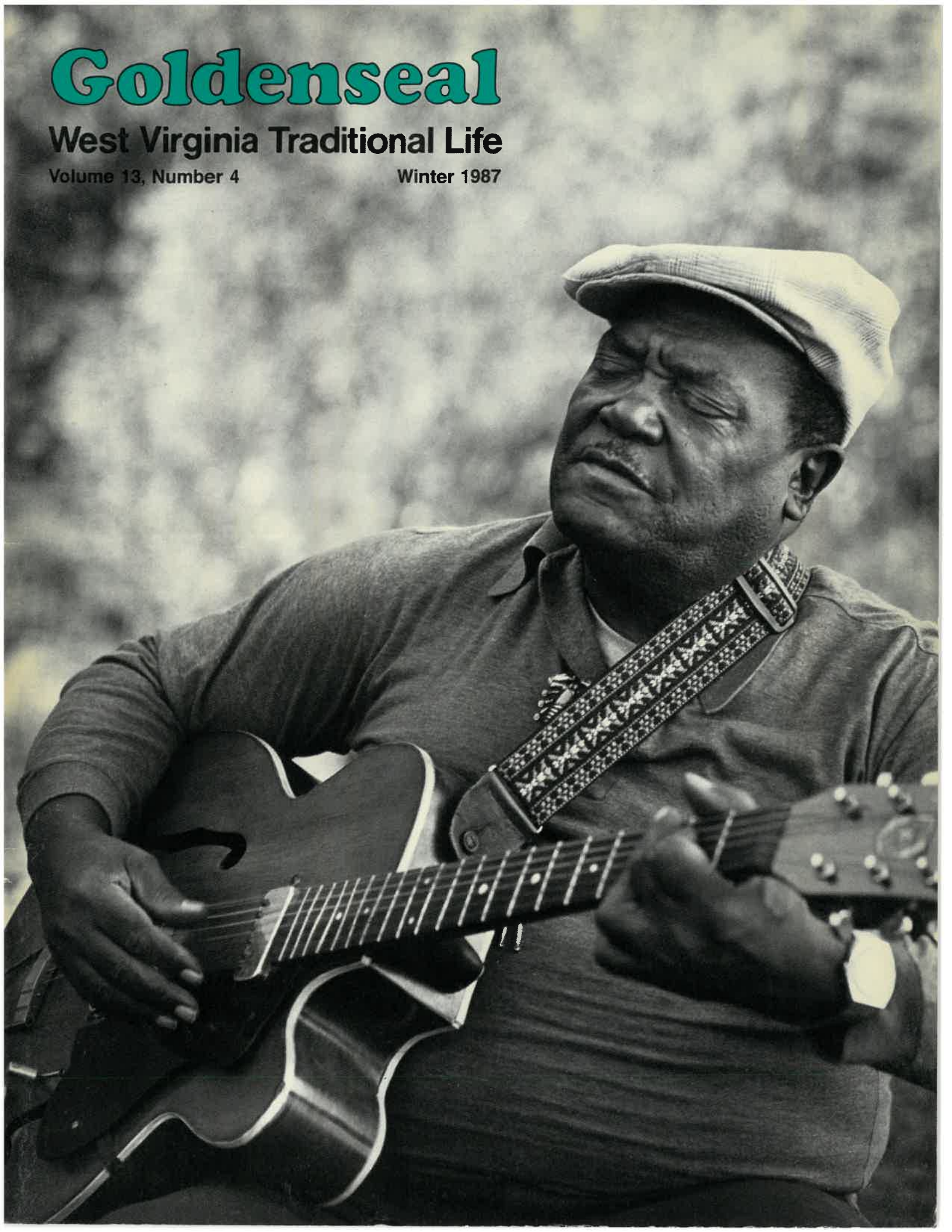
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 13, Number 4 Winter 1987



From the Editor: Thank You

My thanks to everyone who helped get the GOLDENSEAL voluntary subscription drive off to a good start this year. We are still counting as I write this in early November, but it is clear that subscription donations are running at least somewhat ahead of last year.

That's good, because our needs are also running ahead of last year, as you can imagine. GOLDENSEAL now costs more to produce than at any time in its history, and state government is less able to foot the bill. Consequently, your help is more necessary than ever before. You can be sure that each check is appreciated.

Those checks came in from all across the United States, by the way, and some from Canada. We send about a third of our copies outside West Virginia and our out-of-state readers always seem to pay more than their share at subscription time. It is gratifying to see that kind of support for our documentation of Mountain State traditional culture. It suggests to me that we have something precious here, special enough that people elsewhere are willing to pay to share it. They have put their money on the line, as have thousands of West Virginians.

In addition to money, our contributors sent notes, comments and suggestions. We have answered those that seemed to call for individual replies and have carefully read all the others. We appreciate your words of encouragement and advice.

We take your criticism to heart as well, even when one critic seems to offset another. We got a letter from Princeton complaining that we only did stories on the northern counties the same day a reader in Monongalia County suggested we gave too much coverage to the south, for example. I may have contradicted myself in assuring both correspondents that we'll do better, but I surely mean to try.

Many readers also took the occasion of the subscription appeal to update mailing addresses. Those changes should all be made by the time you receive this issue of GOLDENSEAL. Let us know if not — and do, please, let us know of a change in your name or address at any time of the year. Managing the mailing list is a year-round job, and we need your help to do it right. Money saved through a reduction of mailing waste is as good as money earned through new subscriptions.

One exception, however: We prefer that you don't notify us about slight misspellings or minor matters of punctuation if they don't affect delivery of your magazine. To make even a small change involves deleting your listing and re-adding it, first here in our office and then at the state government computer center where our mailing list is kept. There are two chances for human error right there, even before the machine gets hold of it. If the address is good enough for the post office to get your magazine to you with no trouble, I suggest this is one time to follow the old adage and leave well enough alone.

So my thanks, again, to everyone who has begun or renewed a GOLDENSEAL voluntary subscription this fall. And a gentle reminder to those who haven't. There is still plenty of time for you to help. Our bills come in 12 months a year, and we raise funds that way, too. Note that I said in my opening sentence that the fundraising year has just started, for this year's account books are open until the end of the fiscal year next June. Send in your subscription contribution soon, if you haven't already. Use the coupon on page 72 if you've lost the postpaid envelope I sent in September. Early or late, we need your assistance if you possibly can give it.

My thanks, also, to Archie and Virginia Morris, the volunteers who helped process subscription contributions in late September and most of October. The footloose retirees are a credit to the Department of Culture and History's volunteer program, which recruited them for us a few years back. They have helped us since then, cheerfully making sense out of the piles of mail that roll in during the early weeks of the subscription drive. Archie was under the weather at the beginning of this year's campaign, but was able to join his bride at the mail-sorting table before it was over. We're grateful to both, and look forward to their help again next year.

With all that said, let me bring you up to date on a few things around here. The extended GOLDENSEAL family is two babies richer than a year ago, since Lori Henshey and Jeannie Bess both gave birth in 1987. Lori is back with us, working harder than ever, but Jeannie has left for full-time motherhood. (That's Lori bounding down the Winfield Courthouse steps in the Mike Keller photo on page 46, for you cameo appearance buffs.) You'll see a new name in Jeannie's old place on our contents page, that of editorial assistant Cornelia Alexander. Cornelia, formerly a Putnam County church secretary, will be commuting from Hurricane.

Let me also point out some of the highlights in this GOLDENSEAL. Our winter issue covers February, national Black History Month, and we're proud to bring together several stories from West Virginia's rich black heritage. The Bluefield article and interview are the work of Mike Meador, who is grateful for the help of historian John Rankin. Our cover subject is Nat Reese of Princeton, no stranger to Mountain State blues fans. Nat has an Augusta Heritage record album coming out very soon, by the way, so watch for a review in a future GOLDENSEAL. I've heard the master tape and can tell you it's a foot-tapper.

Other favorites of mine in this GOLDENSEAL are the big Red Brown story — we've been holding that one for basketball season — and the articles on mailman Jabez Beard and the Shepherdstown steamboat builders. Altogether, we came out with a good north, south, east and west geographic balance to the magazine. That doesn't happen every issue, but it's nice when it does.

But that's enough shop talk for now. We at GOLDENSEAL wish you the best for the coming holidays, and a fine new year.

—Ken Sullivan

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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Governor

through its
Department of Culture and History
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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 4 Winter 1987

COVER: Nat Reese picks the blues. Nat makes music on regional festival stages or, as shown here, at his Mercer County home. Our interview by Michael Kline begins on page 9. Photo by Michael Keller.

PHOTOS: Paul Brown, Greg Clark, Michael Keller, Bill Kuykendall, Ron Rittenhouse.

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Letters from Readers

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is Department of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Published letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

September 1, 1987
Waldorf, Maryland
Editor:
I sure hope my check is not too late for you to send the issue that's out now. I forgot you don't annoy me with a renewal-a-week reminders until my resistance is worn down and I send a check to get you out of my mailbox! I just don't want to miss the story on the 1987 Liars Contest. I wish I could have heard the fine prevaricators in person but I was engaged in my own form of outrageous comment — writing poetry and such. By the way, what would happen if I sent you a poem or two now and then? Right, my trash can is full of it, too!

My old, dear friends at both ends of West Virginia know how I can't get the mountains out of my system. An infusion of hillbilly blood was permanently bonded to my salty, taste-of-Chesapeake, free-flowing independence long ago. It left me with the tell-tale limp of the mountaineer who has the characteristic of one leg shorter than the other. A few other idiosyncrasies remain, i.e., love of folksongs, stories, crafts, and way of life. I never met an enemy in West Virginia, but I also know some real old coots. I guess I'm one now!

Every time the seasons change I feel this magnetic tug to be in Greenbrier County. As I said, it's in my blood. So's your magazine. I don't want to miss any issues — they are a substitute for my mountaintop.
Sincerely,
Millie Kriemelmeyer

Sorry, no poetry, but you may look for the 1987 winning liars in the next issue of GOLDENSEAL — just in time to promote the 1988 contest! —ed.

Fairmont, West Virginia
Editor:
I enjoy your magazine very much. I didn't even know such a magazine existed until browsing in the West Virginia department in our library, I came upon a whole stack of GOLDENSEAL. Well! I checked out every one of those magazines.

I always was a West Virginia history buff. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
F. George Pasko

Louis Reed

Parkersburg, West Virginia
August 18, 1987
Editor:
I was pleased to read the story of Louis Reed in the Summer 1987 issue of your wonderful magazine. I was a member of the infamous football team at Pullman High School, and I remember the little skirmish at Cairo. Each team had a couple of ringers and they recognized one another. I don't remember whether we finished the game or not, but we players got on the old flatbed truck and got out of town as quick as we could.

Ritchie County was so poor at that time the crows had to carry rations when they flew over. We didn't have enough money to buy uniforms for all players, and we had to trade around when we went in to play.

After I moved to Wood County I kept hearing stories about Louis Reed and decided to try and find him. Someone told me he lived about five miles out of Elizabeth, and his name was on his mailbox on the right side of the road. I found him easily, and we had about an hour's chat. He told me of his work in Washington, D.C., and he also told me of a fishing trip to the mouth of Bone Creek in Ritchie County where it empties into the Hughes River. They didn't catch too many fish, but caught a turtle so big it wouldn't go into a washing tub.

Louis was truly a gentleman and scholar of the old school.
Sincerely,
Clive B. Sutton

Wellsburg Flood

September 12, 1987
Wellsburg, West Virginia
Editor:
I was baptized in the Wellsburg Methodist Church in 1907 and am still a member at age 82. At the time of the big flood my husband and I were living in Spencer (his hometown) where he taught in the high school. The telegram used in Lorna Chamberlain's fine article came to me from my mother in Wellsburg, explaining the safety of my parents. Needless to say, it was very welcome! I was also able to give Lorna some snapshots taken during the flood and later sent to me by my mother.

Mr. Sutton stands at rear, second from right, in this 1924 photo of the Pullman football team. Photographer unknown.

I am now a widow — since 1960 — living again in Wellsburg and attending the old church.
Sincerely,
Louise Gist Faulkner

The Zickefooses

September 29, 1987
Rainelle, West Virginia
Editor:
I read the article about "Adolph Was Home" and it brought back many memories of long ago at Huff. I taught my first year of school there. I lived at Huttonsville and rode the train on Sundays at 1:00 p.m. to Mill Creek and then walked to where I boarded with a Currence family. I walked a mile from there to the school building. I wasn't quite 18 years old but they allowed young people to teach in the emergency as our men were taken to service in World War I.

The school had a round burnside stove, but the coal wasn't first grade so it was hard to get a fire started. On rainy days I took dry kindling wood with me. We had plenty of mud, carried in on the shoes in big chunks.

One day I heard an unusual noise and wondered what it was. I thought one of the boys was playing a trick but when I asked about it the children laughed. One volunteered to tell me it was the hogs under the building and grunting (with pleasure, no doubt) as they rubbed their backs on the sills.

The hogs had been let out of their pens to feed on chestnuts and acorns, which were in abundance. When we were kids at home we used to gather chestnuts and sell them for five cents a pound. We got up early and went to the Hutton farm at Huttonsville. The town was named after the Huttons. There was a big chestnut orchard there and they allowed us to gather them. The folks from Elkins came on Sunday afternoons to hunt some but they had been picked. We sold our chestnuts to them, so they wouldn't go home without any. That time was before the blight that killed all the trees. Children don't have that pleasure now of eating those delicious chestnuts.

I had children of different ages who went to school at Huff. One girl was taller and larger than I was. She was nice and anxious to learn. I brought her some books from home to read. Also I scoured the town for shoes, mittens and clothing for the needy. I had a dual purpose for that, as I needed the children to come to school to keep the average up.

They called me Miss Eva. One little boy couldn't pronounce Edith so we settled on Eva.

One day the large girl came to me and said, "Miss Eva, I can't come to school tomorrow as I have to take the brute to town to get some grub." I saw her when she returned. She had a long clean denim sack with the groceries. She had divided the load and had half on each side of the horse.

My board with the nice family was only $12 a month. I had a second-grade certificate and made $60 a month. That looked good to me, but kept me from finishing school at Elkins. Not long ago a group was discussing dropouts and I told them I was one and had a very unusual excuse: I quit to teach.

The war ended that year. I didn't know it until I went back home after school, as I taught that day. At other places the schools closed and everyone was out celebrating. People made noise with anything they could get and paraded all afternoon.

I didn't get to finish the school term as the flu raged and my quota of attendance went too low. I can remember when some of the family got sick and they sent for a doctor at Mill Creek. He came late at night and was literally frozen to the saddle. They had to help him off the horse and into the house where he was given hot soup to thaw him out. Those good deeds don't happen now.

The next year I got a first-grade certificate and made $80 a month. I taught at Coalton. The school became infested with head lice. We were told to take each one of the children to the cloak room and see if they had head lice. If so, we sent them home and told them what to get to kill the lice. One woman came to the school after I sent her daughter home. She was very indignant and I had to hunt quite a while before I found one to show her. That was one time I was glad to see a louse as she was ready to "beat me up," as she expressed it. I told her what to get to eliminate them but she said she would use coal oil as she had before.

Another interesting article in your magazine was about the Armed March in West Virginia, when they had trouble in the coal mines. My father's first cousin was governor of West Virginia at that time — Governor Ephriam Morgan. My family, like Giff Zickefoose's, descended from the Morgan Morgan who built the first home in what is now West Virginia. The name ran out in our family when my brother, Morgan Morgan, passed away.

I look forward to the arrival of your wonderful magazine, the GOLDENSEAL.
Sincerely,
Edith Morgan Quick

P.S. To save counting, I'm 86 years old.

September 24, 1987
Wenatchee, Washington
Editor:
The photograph of Giff Zickefoose and the old pit saw brings back memories of the one that's still hanging in the shed of our 1910 homestead. We never used it for a pit saw, but for many winters we used it to cut ice on the nearby river. It wasn't until I visited my old home the spring of 1980 for the first time in 25 years and took a picture of my brother and the saw, did I find out it had been brought over from Norway about 90 years ago and later a short piece had been cut off the tip of it.

The summer of 1935 I helped build a log ranger station in Glacier National Park, Montana, with the help of West Virginia CCC boys. We used some half-logs which we ripped with a common crosscut saw by rigging up a makeshift framework in place of a pit. It wasn't a smooth job, but the government was satisfied. In the summer of 1936 a forest fire swept up the valley and burned down the ranger station, but I still remember those West Virginia CCC boys.
Sincerely,
Walt Thayer

Grafton Memories

August 30, 1987
St. Clairsville, Ohio
Editor:
Your very fine publication was given to me to enjoy by my brother-in-law, Wayne C. Hawker of Shinnston. This was this Spring 1987 number and I was so happy since it features Grafton, where I was born and raised.

Mary Ellen Mahaffey's article "Once More Through the Tunnels" was a joy, taking me back to the beloved scenes of my childhood and young girlhood. The fine photograph on page 28 shows the high school from which I graduated and the white pillars on my mother's front porch — five doors from the high school.

I went on from high school to West Virginia University, graduating from that school. I became a high school teacher, married into the Hawker family in Shinnston, lived in our home on Haywood Road, raised three children, traveled, enjoyed life. I left Shinnston after the death of my husband, Marlin Hawker, but have always enjoyed returning to West Virginia. I have enjoyed several Grafton High School reunions.

I am enclosing a check in payment for my subscription to GOLDENSEAL. I shall probably be giving gift subscriptions in the future. Congratulations on your very fine state magazine. I'm so happy to become a part of the "family."

Looking forward to receiving my first copy.
Sincerely,
Virginia Hawker

September 10, 1987
Fayetteville, North Carolina
Editor:
I read with pleasure and nostalgic remembrance the spring issue of GOLDENSEAL. My sister, Mary Ellen Mahaffey, did the article "Once More Through the Tunnels." My picture — the only boy — appeared in one of the supporting photographs. I believe I was three at the time.

She wrote about our father. He was a combination of pluses and minuses and perhaps a few question marks. He was neither rich nor educated. He left school during the fourth grade and started working for the B&O Railroad in 1902 at the age of 13, earning seven cents an hour. Dad railroaded for over 50 years and carried us through the Great Depression of the '30's.

He sired 15 children with one mom. Each Sunday he'd lead his children to the church. He always carried the youngest and had hold of the hand of another. We populated one entire pew. We couldn't afford pew rent so the priest let us sit up front — usually plenty of room up there! Dad sat right smack-dab in the middle and could reach the ones at either end with an arm that seemed to be 15 feet long. He could put a knot or two on the one not paying attention. Not all that unusual for one of us to come home with shaded eye or pink bottom — and we got it right there in church! Some of the older sisters, out of sheer terror, could recite the entire gospel administered that particular Sunday.

Scarlet fever and chicken pox claimed the two youngest in 1926. The remaining 13 started school and graduated from St. Augustine's in Grafton, some with perfect attendance for the entire 12 years. My oldest sister is 76 and the youngest is 53. I'm number eight. In my earliest years I was the only boy among nine girls and for a good part of that time I could go for weeks without seeing inside that one and only bathroom.

Dad never read about Newton's Law or political science and didn't know about child psychology. He did know railroad and family. He could add his time figures for the railroad and complain about the cost of living. He knew it took every cent he earned to raise his kids.
Sincerely,
John A. Daugherty

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.

Women's History Exhibit

As artists and musicians, teachers and politicans, wives and mothers — women have made their mark upon our state's history. Their contributions are known in general but often undocumented in the particulars.

The West Virginia Women's Commission has set out to correct this state of affairs. The Commission is planning "The Governor's Exhibition: Women's Cultural History in West Virginia," scheduled to open in 1989. Nancy Matthews of the Women's Commission heads the planning committee, with Mrs. Shelley Moore and other women from across the state as members.

The exhibit will consist of various items, such as diaries, utensils and other household objects, clothing, paintings, photographs, furniture, and more, all depicting the roles of women throughout the state. These items will be provided through public and private organizations and individuals.

"The Women's Cultural History Exhibit" will be featured at The Cul-

tural Center in Charleston, Oglebay Museum in Wheeling, Huntington Museum of Art, and smaller institutions throughout the state. A book on women's history will supplement the exhibit.

The planning committee is seeking materials pertaining to women's history for possible use in the exhibit. Letters, diaries, family histories, children's toys, household objects, etc., are all of interest. If you have such items, or know where they may be located, contact: The West Virginia Women's Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 6955, Charleston, WV 25311, or call the Women's Commission at 348-0070.

Ritchie County Photo Project

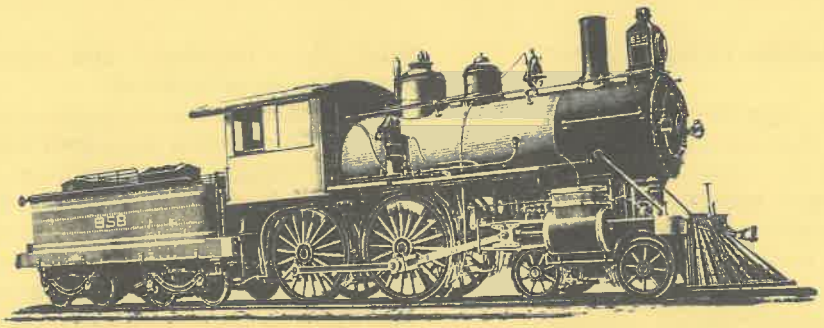
The Ritchie County Historical Society is collecting historic photographs to produce a county picture book. The purpose of the project is to gather as many photographs as possible which show scenes of Ritchie County history.

The Historical Society is seeking photographs of various sorts: old pictures of places throughout the county, including street and town scenes; catastrophic events such as floods, fires and storms; businesses and the traditional activities of farming, logging and construction; buildings and other local landmarks; and any other photographs representative of Ritchie County history.

The project organizers report good progress so far. They have worked extensively with the Archives Division of the Department of Culture and History in Charleston, and have contacted many individuals who own old county pictures. One of the collections obtained by the Society consists of photographs by Grant Luzader, a turn-of-the-century jeweler and watchmaker who lived in Pennsboro. The Luzader collection contains Pennsboro street scenes — including a group of traveling bears who visited the town in 1905 — and the Ritchie County fair.

David Scott, president of the Ritchie County Historical Society, is cataloging the growing collection. The copy work is being done by photographer Charles Stewart. The Society notes that each photograph is copied by Stewart while still in the owner's possession, and no photographs are borrowed. Copies of the photographs will be compiled in a master file kept at Society headquarters in Harrisville, with duplicate negatives placed in several other state preservation facilities.

For further information, contact the Ritchie County Historical Society at 200 S. Spring Street, Harrisville, WV 26342; (304) 643-2217.



New B&O History

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad turned 160 years old last spring. It was the last birthday for the B&O, its current owners, the CSX Corporation, later seeing fit to dissolve the historic railroad as a legal entity. From now on the old B&O system will function as an indistinct part of the overall CSX operation, which also combines the Chesapeake & Ohio and other railroads.

During its prime the B&O set its stamp to a vast region sprawling inland from the port of Baltimore. The railroad profoundly affected the history of West Virginia. The B&O crossed the Potomac at Harpers Ferry, built its Ohio River terminus at Wheeling, and made Grafton and Martinsburg into major rail centers. Even West Virginia's shape — with the Eastern Panhandle jutting eastward along the railroad line — was influenced by the desire to keep the important transportation artery in Union hands during the Civil War. Before and long after statehood, the B&O's economic impact on industry and agriculture in the northern counties has been tremendous. The B&O practically birthed the West Virginia coal industry, both as a mover and major consumer of the mineral.

The long story of the Baltimore & Ohio has been compiled into a book recently published by Purdue University Press. *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad,* by John F. Stover, covers the railroad's history from the early 19th century to the late 20th. Although a Purdue emeritus professor, Stover keeps the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, bibliography, and so forth, tucked out of the way at the end of his book, resulting in a highly readable account of an exciting story.

History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is a big 419-page hardbound book, with notes, bibliography, appendices, and many illustrations. It may be purchased in bookstores for $29.50, or ordered directly from Purdue University Press, South Campus Courts-D, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

Oral History Videotape

A new history how-to videotape has been produced by Sheldon Weiss Productions. "An Oral Historian's Work with Dr. Edward Ives" is the first instructional videotape for oral history, according to the producers.

"An Oral Historian's Work" demonstrates how to conduct an oral history project. Step-by-step, the tape shows basic interviewing techniques: evaluating your equipment; conducting pre-interview research; making contact with informants; interview techniques; and the important final matter of transcription. Included on the tape are actual interviews conducted by Ives, a professor of folklore at the University of Maine. Professor Ives has 30 years of experience in the oral history field.

"An Oral Historian's Work" will be of interest to those who want to learn oral history methods and who prefer to take their information from a video rather than the many books available on the subject. The 33-minute tape is offered in VHS or BETA videocassette. To order send $60, postage and handling included, to Sheldon Weiss Productions, Route 175, Blue Hill Falls, Maine 04615.

Appalachian Fiction Contest

The Appalachian Consortium Press, the scholarly publishing division of the Appalachian Consortium, has begun accepting works of fiction for possible publication. The press recently announced a fiction competition to encourage response among regional writers.

Since its inception in 1973, the Appalachian Consortium Press has accepted only works of nonfiction. With the growing number of Appalachian writers and creative writing programs, however, the press now invites writers to submit manuscripts for consideration in a biennial fiction competition. The first award will be made in March of 1988, provided that a worthy manuscript is identified. The winning manuscript will be published by the North Carolina press.

Novels and collections of short stories submitted for review may come from published or unpublished writers and must deal significantly with the Appalachian mountain region. Complete manuscripts should be submitted to the Appalachian Consortium Press, University Hall, Boone, NC 28608.

The Appalachian Consortium, founded in 1971, is a non-profit educational organization comprised of colleges, universities and other agencies located in Southern Appalachia.

Music and Dance

The Friends of Old Time Music and Dance (FOOTMAD) kick off the new year with a January 16 concert by the Katie Laur Band. The Charleston performance features the return to West Virginia of fiddler Buddy Griffin, Braxton County's favorite son and a co-founder of the bluegrass band.

Other concerts remaining in the FOOTMAD 1987-88 season include Stone Soup on February 27; Moloney, O'Connell and Keane on March 26; the Balkan Rhythm Band on April 9; and the Battlefield Band on May 7. Stone Soup and the Balkan Rhythm Band are American "folk fusion" groups, the latter drawing from Bulgarian and Yugoslavian musical sources. Moloney's group performs the traditional music of their native Ireland, while the Scotish Battlefield Band plays traditional and experimental music of Scotland.

The Saturday concerts begin at 8:00 p.m. in Charleston's renovated Capitol Plaza Theatre. For ticket information, write to FOOTMAD, P.O. Box 1684, Charleston, WV 25326, or call (304) 965-6718 or 988-0702. A $50 sustaining membership includes a season ticket to these and other events throughout the year.

Appalachian Studies Conference

The Eleventh Appalachian Studies Conference will be held March 18-20, 1988, at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. The conference is sponsored by the Appalachian Studies Association, a professional group interested in the history and culture of Appalachia. The conference is held annually in one of the Appalachian states, returning to West Virginia in 1989.

The 1988 conference theme will be "Mountains of Experience: Interdisciplinary, Intercultural, International." The program will study both the similarity and diversity of Appalachia and other mountain regions. The planners expect presentations in such subjects as mountain religion, family life, work, history, folklore, politics, music, literature and crafts. Research papers, panel discussions, films and other methods of presentation will be used at the meeting.

For further information on the 1988 Appalachian Studies Conference write to Dr. Parks Lanier, Box 5917 RU, Radford University, Radford, Virginia 24142-5917. Those interested in the 1989 Morgantown conference may contact Professor Ronald Lewis, History Department, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506.

Forest Festival History

Fifty Years of the Forest Festival is a souvenir book on the Mountain State Forest Festival, an annual fall event held in Elkins. Information for the book was compiled by Elkins native Brad Stalnaker, a staff member of WNPB-TV in Morgantown. Stalnaker designed the book as part of a school graphics design project.

Fifty Years, a 35-page, magazine-style paperback, tells of the Forest Festival's history. In the book, area residents discuss Forest Festival events: the coronation of the "Queen Sylvia," festival queen; former queens and princesses; the huge fireman's parade; arts and crafts; the carnival; the grand feature parade; and the popular woodchopping contest.

"This is not an official documented history of the Forest Festival," Stalnaker says in the book's introduction. "It is just the way people involved remember it. You have to realize that things can slip your mind over the years, but this account is accurate. Besides, it's the memories that are more important than what the actual facts were."

Fifty Years is heavily illustrated with color photographs taken by Stalnaker. To order send $4 to: *Fifty Years of the Forest Festival*, P. O. Box 601, Route 3, Elkins, WV 26241.

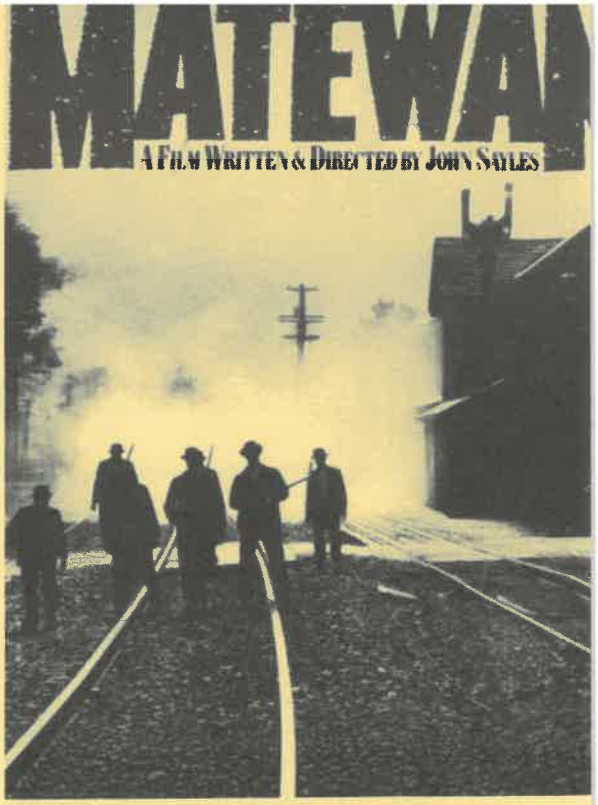
Obituary Book

A new book, *Murder, Mayhem and Hydrophobia*, has been written by Shirley E. Grose of Summersville. Grose is a regional writer who has contributed to several Nicholas County historical projects.

Murder, Mayhem and Hydrophobia is an obituary collection, likely to be of particular interest to genealogists. The book contains over 300 obituaries from newspapers in Nicholas, Braxton, Greenbrier, Webster and Clay counties for 1881-1900. The obituaries tell of the leading causes of death at the time: flux, consumation, hydrophobia, measles, typhoid, diptheria, apoplexy and others. The book also includes marriage announcements and miscellaneous personal notices and information.

Grose's book is taken directly from the pages of the newspapers, with facsimile reproduction of the original notices. This allows the reader to view the obituary as it actually appeared in newsprint. The hardback book is completely indexed, with names of people, places, churches, cemeteries and newspapers. A chronological index of obituaries is included. Illustrations are provided by outstanding caricaturist Boyd Carr.

To order, send $22.55 (postage and handling included) to Shirley E. Grose, Rt. 1 Box 306, Summersville, WV 26651; or call (304) 872-2248.



Movie Review

This was one movie where everyone stayed to see the credits. The atmosphere at Beckley's Crossroads Mall was festive — one person called it a "class reunion" — as cast and crew gathered for a special showing of the film *Matewan*, a fictional portrayal of the real labor struggles that led to Mingo County's 1920 "Matewan Massacre." As in the movie itself, West Virginians greatly outnumbered the out-of-staters in attendance.

Just before showtime, writer and director John Sayles made his appearance. Speaking of his experiences in making the film, which was shot entirely in West Virginia, he said, "It was just great. One of the best things about it was to hear the Matewan story back 100 times — it was good for the actors who didn't come from around here. People knew the stories but they're not taught in schools. A lot of labor history isn't taught in schools."

The stories in question are those surrounding the attempt to organize the mines of the Tug Valley in the early 1920's. Union men and Matewan police chief Sid Hatfield confronted the industrial establishment, particularly "gun thugs" from the hated Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. The film culminates in a climactic shootout which resulted in the deaths of seven thugs, including two of the Felts brothers, as well as two miners and Mayor Testerman of Matewan. That bloodbath came to be called the Matewan Massacre. It brought the retaliatory murder of Hatfield on the steps of the McDowell County courthouse and the famous 1921 Miner's March on Logan and Mingo.

The film opens up in the blackness of a coal mine, really Beckley's Exhibition Mine, where workers make whispered plans for a strike. As the strike progresses, the company imports blacks from the Deep South and Italian immigrants fresh off the boat to work as scabs. Union organizer Joe Kenehan, played by Chris Cooper, arrives to face the hostility of the company and the prejudices separating the diverse groups of miners.

Kenehan, now organizing for the United Mine Workers, is a former member of the Industrial Workers of the World. The "Wobblies," as IWW members were popularly known, were radical and courageous believers in the gospel of "One Big Union" to represent all working people, regardless of race, occupation or gender. Their organization was brutally repressed in the years following World War I. In the film, Kenehan was imprisoned during the war for his pacifist beliefs that the international conflict amounted only to "workers killing workers." In the coalfields his peaceful militancy contrasts effectively and tragically with prevailing violent emotions.

In large measure, *Matewan* is the story of how the miners overcome differences to stand together. In one powerful scene, the leader of the black miners, Few Clothes Johnson (superbly played by James Earl Jones) walks into a startled assembly of all white miners, saying "I got business with the union. . . . I been called a 'nigger' before. They ain't no helpin' that, being how white folks are. But I never been called no scab!" The Italians follow suit, and the miners and their families face hardships and evictions from company housing together. Sayles makes particularly effective use of folk music to make his point, as the melodies of Italian mandolins, black harmonicas, and hillbilly fiddles gradually harmonize.

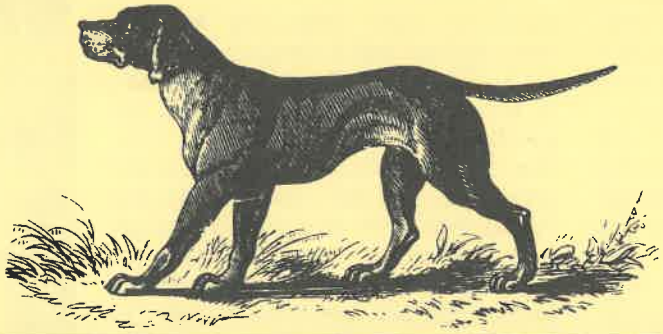
Against this background, many subplots develop. Daniel, a teenaged preacher, grows to manhood in the struggle and departs from Baptist orthodoxy after seeing his best friend murdered by the mine guards. The strikers' solidarity is tested by company intrigues. And finally Sid Hatfield (David Strathairn), who watched in helpless rage while miners were evicted from company housing, draws the line in Matewan. A former miner, Hatfield's attitude is fiercely paternalistic, as expressed in lines like "I take care of my people. You bring 'em trouble, you're a dead man." In one scene, Hatfield warns two mine guards that if either dares to "lift a finger in town limits, I'm gonna put you away."

As the historical record shows, fingers were indeed lifted and people were "put away." When the smoke clears, the unarmed Kenehan lies amid the carnage. The film ends with the voice of an aged miner — who turns out to be the grown-up Daniel — musing over the course of events. He concludes, "It's just 'one big union, the whole world over,' Joe Kenehan used to say, and from the day of the Matewan Massacre that's what I preached. That's my religion."

If the movie sounds unbearably grim, it is not. There are many occasions for the audience to laugh, as the characters display that genuine West Virginia trait of finding humor in the worst of situations. Indeed, the most striking thing about the entire film is its authenticity. Despite whatever inevitable liberties may have been taken with history, the story rings true. Those are our hills, our mines, our people. Traditionally, West Virginians have come off poorly in the media, and the Appalachian region has been as exploited culturally as it has been economically. *Matewan* is a happy exception. It is a film we can take pride in.

One questions remains. Were the mine wars a "blot in the state's history," as a correspondent for the *Washington Star* wrote in 1921, or were they West Virginia's finest hour, as the miners' grandchildren who helped in the making of *Matewan* believe? That depends on how you answer the question in the old miners' song, "Which Side Are You On?"

—Rick Wilson



Ol' Rusty

By Gordon L. Swartz III

You got your rabbit dogs. You got your coon dogs. You got your bird dogs and your squirrel dogs. But you ain't never seen no hound like Ol' Rusty, one I used to have. He done it all.

He knew every nook and cranny where any beast, fair or foul, could hide within 10 miles any direction from Dry Ridge. His nose was so good that he'd howl every time the Widow Magers cooked up her brown beans, ramps, cabbage and ham, clean over on Wolf Run. Widow Magers was a notorious cook in these parts. I don't think there's a man alive that could've stomached her brown beans, ramps, cabbage and ham — and you can imagine the smell. But that was over on Wolf Run, and the Widow Magers's cooking couldn't reach the nose of any ordinary dog that far.

Not only did Ol' Rusty have a nose; he had a brain. He knew my guns as well as I did. When I come out of the house with my 12-gauge, he'd have a grouse on point. I'd come out with my .22, and he'd have a squirrel or a groundhog located. I'd come out with my 20-gauge, and he'd be running a rabbit. I'd come out with my pistol, and he'd have a coon treed.

But what topped it all was when I decided to go fishing down at Wheeling Creek last spring. I come out of the house with my fishing pole, and there was Ol' Rusty — digging worms.

I remember one time the Strope boys was talking about their dogs following a cold trail. I told them that if I was to put Ol' Rusty on a trail, he'd follow it no matter how old it was. Them Stropes didn't believe me. They had seen Ol' Rusty in action, and they knew he was too good a dog to waste time on a cold trail.

So Howdy Strope says, "He's too good a dog. You couldn't make him follow a cold trail."

I says, "He will, if I tell him."

Then I felt I had to prove it. We walked out across the pasture field. I whispered in Ol' Rusty's ear, and he took off kind of winding his way 'cross the field towards the woods. He struck a trail.

I says, "It's an awful cold trail, but I'll let him run it for a ways."

Ol' Rusty ran out over the field till he was about halfway across. Then he jumped about four feet in the air, come back down, and continued on the trail. He went into the woods, and me and the Strope boys commenced to follow him. We'd just entered the woods when Ol' Rusty barked.

We made our way over to the big white oak where Ol' Rusty was barking. There was a coon's skeleton laying in the first forks. Them Strope boys' eyes kind of popped, but they had to believe what they seen.

As we started back to the house, Howdy says, "You proved your point. I never would have believed it, if I hadn't seen it. I only got one question. Why did Ol' Rusty jump up in the air out in the middle of that pasture field?"

I says, "Boys, there used to be a rail fence going across that field."

Bugeye Blake came down one Saturday to see if I wanted to go bird hunting with him. He had him a new dog and thought that maybe it could learn something from Ol' Rusty.

Me and Bugeye had coon hunted together, and he knew that Ol' Rusty was the best coon hound he'd ever seen. But I don't think Bugeye believed that Ol' Rusty could do all the things that folks said he could. And of course, I had to do a little bragging! What's the use of having the best dog in three states, if you can't brag a little?

"When Ol' Rusty goes on point, there's a bird there," I says.

"Even the best dog can make a mistake sometimes," says Bugeye.

"Not Ol' Rusty," I says. "If he points, you can bet the farm there's a bird."

We was standing along Route 250 arguing. We hadn't even made it into the field yet. Here comes a young boy pedaling his bike down the berm.

I couldn't believe my eyes when Ol' Rusty went on point at that boy. I didn't recognize the boy. He must have belonged to that new bunch that moved in at Rock Lick.

I had my doubts. To be honest, I was beginning to sweat. Ol' Rusty had never made me look bad before.

"Hey, kid!" I yelled. "Come over here a minute!" Bugeye just stood there with that simple grin on his face. He thought he had me.

The boy stopped. I says, "Boy, have you got a quail in your pocket?"

"No, sir," he says. I sweated some more, and Bugeye smiled some more.

"Does your family raise birds? Have you been messing with any birds?" I asked in desperation.

"No, sir," he answered.

I hung my head. Ol' Rusty had let me down for the first time.

Bugeye must have wanted to make sure that he had a witness to my humiliation. He said, "Hey, boy, what's your name?"

The kid answered, "Bob White."

I was introduced to Nat Reese 10 years ago by folklorist Joan Fenton, who researched black music in West Virginia during the 1970's. Nat and his wife Bessie have since opened their hearts and Mercer County home to me during several visits. I have always been impressed by how Bessie's warm practicality balances Nat's wandering, artistic nature, and the wonderful ways they have kept each other going through difficult years.

Something to Give

Nat Reese's Early Life and Music

By Michael Kline
Photographs by Michael Keller

Protracted conversations with Nat have revealed his strong grasp of local history, which he views without heavy judgments or bitterness. His story spans a period of great social and technological change, especially during the decades of the 1920's and '30's. This was the wide-open era of boom towns and labor camps, when Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith and many others toured through the coalfields "meeting the paydays."

As a struggling young musician, Nat was in the thick of exciting changes and heart-breaking recessions. His music playing took him to every corner of southern West Virginia, from roadhouses and house parties to uptown "white only" clubs, where "you could play dance music for the people all night, and then the man would refuse to sell you a sandwich on the way out."

And though Nat describes the kind of inhibition that results from such abuses, he met the world around him undaunted, with courageous enthusiasm. You will feel here the warmth in which Nat wraps his stories, and sense his optimism as you smile at his wit and turn of phrase.

The recorded conversation from which this article grew occurred at Nat's home in Princeton in June 1981. That year I interviewed various West Virginia musicians under the joint support of Davis & Elkins College and the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, to better understand the diversity of West Virginia's cultural make-up. A series of 13 eight-minute programs called "The Home Place" was the final product of the project. We called Nat Reese's program "Bird in the Hand." Also present at that visit were Bessie Reese and Doug Yarrow.

Here, Nat relives his experiences growing up in the coalfields and traces his development as a musician. He usually begins his narratives talking about his family, especially his enterprising father, Thomas.

Nat Reese in performance at the Vandalia Gathering folklife festival in Charleston. The blues man came to West Virginia in 1928.

This promotional photo for the Starlight Gospel Singers of Itmann, Wyoming County, shows Nat at the left. He got his musical start singing gospel. Photographer and date unknown.

Nat Reese. I was born in Salem, Virginia, on Water Street, 1924. My dad was Thomas Reese, Sr. My brother, he was Thomas Reese, Jr. My sister is Barbara Lee Reese, which she's a McClanahan now, lives in Mullens. And old Nathaniel, me. Old Nat. N. H. Reese.

Michael Kline. Did your family come from the deep South?

NR See, my father was born in Birmingham. Everybody was migrating, looking for work. He got as far as Salem, Virginia, and he started working for a coal and ice company in Roanoke. So he bought a home in Salem. He would do custodial work in the evening for the women's college there, Hollins College.

He started him a little restaurant there on Water Street, oh, about a block down the street from where we lived. He'd sell soft drinks and had two pool tables there. He paid a guy to run that while he would drive a truck for the coal and ice company.

And then he heard of all the money that people was making out here in the coalfields. You know how rumors go — you can shake money off the trees. So he decided he'd kind of like to shake a couple of these trees. He came out here and worked on the Virginian Railroad for about 58 years, and he still didn't find that money tree.

In '28 he moved us from Salem to Itmann, West Virginia, which is in Wyoming County, down below Mullens. Then we moved back up here to Princeton. And then we moved from here back to the coalfields, and then came back again.

At that time, you know, jobs were pretty plentiful. I'll tell you what was really good about the coalfields at that time: If you could play music or play baseball, you could get a job. They would make you a job. One of the workers, all he had to do was go to the bank boss and tell him, say, "There's a good ball player here needs a job." And they'd give him a job picking bone,* or anything, just to keep him there to play, because the quartets and choirs and baseball teams were the main goal at that time.

All those mines wanted to keep the people happy. And they knew to let them sing and have a good time, play ball. They'd get a bulldozer to push the slate dump off and flatten that slate dump and make a ball field out of it. And on Sunday evening it'd be more people there than you could get into one of these parks you see around here, people all up the side of the hill looking at that baseball game.

And those guys played a whole lot better ball, some of them did, than the major leaguers now getting two and three million dollars a year. I'm not lying. Some of these players now couldn't hold a light to those players, boy! Those guys back there then would run a hundred-yard dash in, oh, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5. They were doing that here in 1935, '36. That's right. It was awful swift fellows, yeah boy. Awful swift.

MK Did you play ball yourself?

NR I played after I got up some size, after we came up here. I never played in the coalfields because I was too small then. I sang in a quartet with the grown guys then. They always needed a tenor and, see, my voice hadn't changed and I had a soprano that they could use. I think that's how I got into that religious singing. They called it gospel music at that time.

Of course my dad, he played the guitar. My mother, she played the accordion. But after he got his fingers all mashed up working in the coal, he quit playing and didn't play any more. He just played long enough to show me a few chords, and I went from there on my own until I moved up here to Princeton. That was in early '36.

I met a fellow called Mitchell Gordon. He was young, too, about three years older than I, and he was just a natural, he was a born musician. He could write it, play it, any instrument. Well, he started me. And he said, "If you're going to play, you could play well by ear, but let's play by music." So we started burning a lot of midnight oil then. We'd work together at the Elks Club down here, and then after the club would close, we'd stay up and practice music until 4:30 and 5:00 in the morning. Then we'd sleep about three or four hours and then we'd open. We'd stay at that club all night long. It'd be in the

wintertime a lot of times, and snow was on the ground. It was warm in there and so we'd just stay there. We had to clean the club up and open it up at 9:00 the next morning. Then he'd go home and change clothes and come back, and then I'd go home and change clothes and come back, and we kept the ball rolling.

MK You're not talking much about hardship through the Depression in your own family. You seem like you got by.

NR Well, I'll tell you, it was rough. It was rough. But it wasn't as hard on my family as it was on a lot of people. Now I remember my dad, he'd work eight to 10 hours, and he wasn't making but $2.64 a day. And he would take part of that and give people dinner and food, and buy food and pack them lunches when they were hoboing. If you came to the door he'd give you a meal and pack you a lunch to help you on your way.

I never can remember being barefooted in the wintertime. I had new shoes in the winter and I *wanted* to go barefooted in the summer. He'd always buy me a pair of shoes for Sunday school. If I didn't go to Sunday school there was no playing.

See, that was one of those things back there then. It wasn't so much what you had. It was what you did with what you had. Most of those people, they had a running account in the company store. You've heard the old Tennessee Ernie piece, "I Owe My Soul to the Company Store?" There's many a man never seen the light out of that deal. They were good workers and they worked for years and years. The company knew that they was good for the money because they prove themselves worthy of working, you know. You could get anything you wanted. And if you needed some money, it was always a way they could fix it so you could get the money, and you'd pay it back in payments. It's just one of those things.

When I came along they didn't have all this machinery and stuff in the mines. We had machines that cut coal in some mines, and in some mines you had to cut coal with a pick. And when you went into the mines the bank boss says, "Bring me a cut of coal or bring your tools." You know what that means. You clean up the whole cut, or you don't have any job. That's right. And he didn't pay for no rock. The time that you took to load that rock and carry it outside and dump it, you didn't get anything for. You just got paid for the coal.

MK So how old were you when you first went in the mines?

NR Oh, I first went in about 17 or 18, somewhere along in there. I would work a while and then I would go to school, and then I'd work a while and then go to the railroad. I guess I had about eight years in the mines, something like that. I worked in a lot of small mines up this way, you know, these little one- and two-horse mines up here in Matoaka.

Back, say, in the early '40's and

Nat takes time out for a favorite pet. He says his cat is deaf, but they have no trouble understanding each other.

Above: After early years in the mines, Nat made a career at Rockwell International's aviation plant in Princeton. Here he accepts an electronics certificate from plant manager Jim Morrison. Photographer and date unknown.

Below: Nat checks old newspapers for press notices. He has stacks of performing memorabilia at his house.

back in there, boy, you had to do your own shooting. You'd blow your holes, cap up your own powder, and boy, that put out a smoke and a gas that was hard to inhale. And you'd have to get that out and move that rock. Oh, you'd have to go back on that powder. You shoot it and then you take your shovel, a No. 4 shovel, and fan the smoke, to go back in there so you can hurry up and start loading, set your timber and start loading, you see.

And you had to do your own brattice work. Brattice is nothing but burlap, you've seen burlap bags. It was cut in great big sheets and you would nail it on the posts, on your timbers, and that's how you got air to the coal face where you worked. And it didn't work good. Now, I'll just tell you, it didn't work good.

Well, now they got a law, said you must have 10 years, or better, or you wouldn't have black lung. Well, two could be loading in a place, and that dust would be so bad 'till I couldn't see you over there. I know you're over there because I can hear you shoveling, but I can't see.

And, oh my God, you cough that stuff up. I bet you the last mine I worked in, it was three years afterwards that I was still coughing up black. And I don't know how many years that it was just brown, just like I was chewing tobacco, or something. Two or three years of that is black lung. I've got it. Now, I passed my test for it.

MK I wanted to ask you a little more about the late '30's and early '40's. Were there a lot of black people from the South coming into southern West Virginia at that time?

NR The biggest part of them was already here. I'll tell you what they were doing. The young ones was growing up and having more children, and they were just multiplying more. The biggest of the migration from the South in the late '30's went to Michigan, Chicago and New York, places like that. You see, those people that run the foundries and steel mills and things like that, would send busses all the way south and bring those people up, because they were hard workers, brother. Now, you take a man that's been working for 75 cents a day, and you give him $3.50 to $4 and $5 an hour, that man's going to really put out some work. You see my point?

Many of the black families here got pretty well established. Now what

they did during that time, they would move around. You'd find them leaving, some leaving the coalfields and coming this way, some leaving here and going to the coalfields. Well, see, some younger ones would marry, they'd leave here to go to the coalfields and go to work, where some of the older heads had worked themselves out.

But a lot of them would drift in here because this is a border. This is the border part of our state, you see. You can just come right across the line from Virginia or Tennessee. I mean, because it's just a hop, skip and a jump. They just easily drift into here. This was called for years the gateway to the coalfields.

It was a lot of people that come in and stayed 10, 15 years, and moved, just kept going, go somewhere else. They would maybe come in here and stay six or seven years and then go on down the line to Logan. And then, maybe seven years later, you'll run into him in Beckley, or somewhere, and he says, "I settled in Logan," or, "I settled in Glen White on the other side of Beckley." Something like that.

But they were mostly musicians. I'll tell you what. We had what they called a dance band, but we played jazz, and then we played polkas. We played blues. It wouldn't be the regular, what you call alley blues, or cotton field blues. It wasn't the regular Delta blues, see. There's a difference

Nat makes music for a Rockwell company picnic. He played professionally with black bands, but often sat in with white musicians. Photographer and date unknown.

An artist as well as a musician, Nat checks through his portfolio of paintings.

in Delta blues and, say, sentimental blues. The original blues did originate in the Delta bottom, between Louisiana and Georgia in different communities down there. When it began to travel through Chicago, different ones would leave from there and come this way. They'd come in here and begin to kind of modernize it a little. They'd make it smoother. Make a lull, or put more feeling in it.

MK By the mid-'30's there was a whole class, I guess, of traveling professional musicians?

NR It was. And they was the poorest bunch in the United States. Man, you didn't make a lot. People wanted to hear, but they didn't have the money. They didn't have the money to pay for the music. Oh, when you made $10 to $12 a night apiece, you have made a lot of money. You have made a lot of money.

MK And yet the famous musicians did come into the coalfields, Bessie Smith and . . .

NR They traveled all around. Now I seen a time when Duke Ellington came over here and played at the Hillbilly Barn, between here and Bluefield, for $500. Well, you couldn't get his band, several years before he died, under $50,000 or $100,000 for a night to save your life. And I think when he was getting the $500 he played better music, really, in a way, because he was in his prime then. Ah, that was Duke Ellington, Tiny Bradshaw, Count Basie, Jimmy Lungford, the Woody Boys, and Gene Krupa. He was with Benny Goodman then.

They came over here to what they called dance halls then. They would come and have dances there, and it would be people all the way from Charleston come in here to hear it. You'd get people out of 18 or 20 counties. You'd see white in there mixed in it, yeah. Yes sir.

MK What were some of the wide-open places in the coalfields then? People have talked to me a lot about McDowell County's Keystone, for example.

NR Yeah, Keystone was open. Wide open. Cinder Bottom. That's where I was playing the night the guy shot through the guitar.

We were playing and the people were having a good time and dancing and somebody got to arguing, a sailor and some guy got to arguing, and somebody shot. I felt a tug and when I looked down it was a hole there, and in the back of it was a hole there. I got up and politely made it to the door and pointed to the guitar and told them, I says, "Someone has shot a hole in it and I won't be back!" I went out and got in the car and locked my door, and I didn't go back any more. That seemed to have been a warning to me. And I tried to heed it. Well, they stood around and tried to see if anyone was hit, or anything. And then they went on and played the rest of the night.

MK Tell us a little more about what people mean when they say Keystone was wide open.

NR Well, someone was killed down there about every week. There was gambling, hustling, numbers playing, prostitution. You could buy whiskey, any kind you wanted: Scotch, bourbon, good moonshine, bad moonshine, almost-good moonshine. And home brew. Every other door, or every three or four doors

there was a house you could buy whiskey, or something else. And if that's not wide open, I don't know what you would call it.

And see, the law at that time was ruled by the biggest company that's there. It was a politician deal. People had no say-so, much. The politicians say, "I'm getting money from that place and that place and that place, so don't you bother them. As long as nobody ain't hurt or nothing, just pass on by." Well, that went on.

There was a lot of places like that in the coalfields here. Lester was that way, over near Beckley. And of course, you know Charleston was that way for years and years and years. And, uh, Logan, Welch, Northfork, Keystone, Bramwell, Switchback. A lot of times, places like that gets a name only according to who's telling it, you know. Logan was as open as Keystone was, really.

MK What kind of music was made in those places?

NR Piano music, mandolin, guitar, and the small bands — three, four, five and six pieces. And the blues, you would hear them at what they called house parties. On Friday nights one house would have beer, home brew and whiskey, and they would hire someone to play, or two people to play guitar. And they'd have one of the biggest house dances ever was, boy! People'd be dancing everywhere. A man'd knock the paneling out of between two rooms and make one great big space. People would get in there and dance just the same as they was in a ballroom, boy, at the Holiday Inn! Yes sir. And they would dance all night long, as long as the music was there.

The fiddle is one of the few instruments Nat failed to master in earlier years. He is now learning from oldtime fiddler Harvey Sampson and others.

Of course, when you seen one house party you seen them all. They were no different, wasn't nothing but a couple of walls knocked out, where you'd have enough room to jitterbug. That's what they called dancing back in that day, it was jitterbug. It was swing, and then jitterbug, and then they went to doing the "Big Apple," and "Susie Q," and all that, you know. And they started doing the shuffle, the slow drag. They did the two-step and they waltzed, and they just kept progressing. Somebody find out they could dance a little bit faster, and there you go.

Everybody knew who they were dancing with at that time. You disco now, and everybody's out there doing their own thing. I don't know who is with who, when you look out there. And I don't think they do, either, part of the time. I think they start with one and end up with another. It does look like that. Of course, I know who they come with, you know, but it does look awful far between.

People would sell fish, chicken, barbecue, chitlins, all such stuff [at the houseparties]. You'd be surprised at the money people have made. People have made their living and got well-off doing that, because, you see, during that time they were building the railroads through Wyoming County and on to Virginia. And they had boxcar loads of people come from east Virginia, work on the railroad. They called them "extra gang men."

Biggest of those people were single, and they'd line those rails and ties and lay track. Those guys made that money, and they spent it just like they made it, brother! It was good money, because they made a little bit better than the average worker at that time, which was $5.18 for 10 hours. That was a lot of money then, because you could get a two-pound box of sugar for seven cents, eight cents.

So that's what made the great difference in the economy at that time.

The first time I ever played anywhere out in my life, I was about nine years old. My father bought me an instrument, it was bigger than a ukulele, but smaller than a regular guitar. They called it a tiple and it had 10 strings. In Mullens, they gave some kind of shindig there. And one of the men who worked for the foreman on the railroad, a white fellow, heard me sitting on the porch singing and playing that tiple. He went down there and told. And they asked me to come down and play on that show and told me, said, "You don't have to play but one song." And I think I played 10 songs before they let me off that stage. I was nine years old then. Me and my little tiple. That's right. The first song was "Corrine, Corrine," because that was a popular piece back then. I can remember he said, "You won't have to play but one song."

My father started me off in the key of C, playing pieces like "Corrine." You remember that old piece. Years ago you heard people singing it. "The Preacher and the Bear," that type of thing, and "Shanghai Chicken," those pieces. Now they are real old pieces, and the biggest of them were played in the key of C.

But we don't play them now, a lot of these pieces, like the people played them originally, because those pieces were given from one person. Then another person got a little different style and he'll play it a little different. And it keeps a bob-

bing, and after a while you got about nine different styles of that one song, and it's about that long, when it was about this long in the beginning. Of course, now, you take pieces like "Stardust," and "How High the Moon," and "Blue Moon," and stuff like that — "Mood Indigo," and "Solitude," and "September Song," and all those pieces — ain't too much variation you can put to them, you know. They really hold their own, because a lot of those pieces never die. Oh, I'll say two centuries from now people will still be singing "Stardust." That's right! One of the beautifulest pieces ever wrote.

But at that time I played a whole gob of songs, you know. I'd keep setting around and go from one song to another. I'd learn a whole lot off the radio, see. Everybody had them old Philco radios. Well, on Saturday nights the only entertainment you had was to listen to the "Grand Ole Opry." And they'd have "Amos 'n' Andy" and "Ozzie and Harriet," Arthur Godfrey, and like that, you know.

And I always was waiting for the "Grand Ole Opry," see. D. Ford Bailey blowing the fox trot, or fox hunt, or whatever he called it. Boy, that guy could blow a harp, one heck of a harp blower. You could almost see that fox running in front of them dogs. And Uncle Dave Macon, he played the old thumb-type banjo, you know, he played like Grandpa Jones do now. And of course, Minnie Pearl. Arthur Smith was a young man. He was playing on there then. And Homer and Jethro, they were going strong.

MK What did you think about programs like "Amos 'n' Andy," about the way black people were portrayed?

NR Didn't think anything about it. It was just something that went on and that was it.

MK Did you think it was funny?

NR Yeah, it *was* funny. It was funny. If I heard it now it would still be funny. But I'll tell you what. It was just like Santa Claus. When I first heard it I thought they was really colored. Really. But they were white, both of them. And, buddy, they had that dialect down 100 percent. If you didn't see them you'd never know. It surprised the heck out of me!

Really, I didn't believe it until they had a newsreel in the Royal Theater down here, and I seen them. I said, "Well, I'll be doggone." That was just one of them things. Now, those guys were showmen. They were really showmen. These people now call themselves show people, but back there then you really had to have something to give, or else it didn't work.

MK What instruments did you take up after the tiple?

NR I went from the tiple to the guitar, and from the guitar to the piano, from the piano to the organ. From the organ I went to the bass viola, and from that to a standard string harp, concert harp.

MK Where did you play that?

NR Over WHIS, Bluefield. I picked it up, first time I'd seen one for years, when I was over there playing one night with Bill Harmer. He played piano with us for years. But every Saturday night from 10:00 to 10:30 Bill would play blues, sentimental music, jazz and like that on the radio. So he asked me, said, "You ought to come on and play with me sometime." Said, "That would give me a great back-up." So I started going with him and I played with him for over two years, every Saturday night 10:00 to 10:30. They had a harp over there, and I asked the announcer one evening, I said, "Is this thing in tune?" And he said, "I guess it is. Got too many strings on it for me, I don't know whether it's in tune, or not."

And I just started playing around with it, and I got so I could play bluesey on that thing, boy. Yes sir, and it just come natural. Just come natural. I could play anything, you could hum anything and I could play right along. Yes sir. I think that is really the beautifulest music you'd ever want to hear.

MK Tell me about the band you played in.

NR I'll start with the guitar, we had a guitar. We had two trumpets. The alto sax player, he would rotate backwards and forth, alternate. He would play the clarinet. And boy, he was some musician, too. We had the bass, the piano player, the drums, and we had a tenor saxophone player, and at one time we had two alto sax players.

We first started out with a stand-up bass, and then we tore a kitchen cabinet out, old kitchen cabinet, and got us some Elmers Glue, took a

Modern cars make the traveling easier nowadays, according to Nat, shown here with grandson Danny. "The old cars run good while they run, but they didn't last," he says.

Nat is a welcome figure at the Cultural Center, GOLDENSEAL's home base. Here he unwinds in Michael Keller's photo lab.

long neck off a guitar and made us a lap bass. We went downtown and bought us a DeArmond attachment amplifier, you know, what you used to add to old flat-top guitars. And at that time you could buy a DeArmond amplifier for about six or seven dollars, and it was made better than the ones you buy now for 20-some dollars. And we hitched that up to that lap bass, and we had a lap bass instead of a stand-up bass. We finally ended up going back to the stand-up bass because it had more volume. That stand-up bass is really beautiful, boy.

Wasn't but nine people in that band. But now we played for the Elks Club, country club, and places like that. Now, these house parties, when they had their little bands they very seldom had a drummer. It would be maybe a mandolin and two guitars, or just two regular guitars and a tenor guitar. And you'd be surprised at the music those guys could make.

We had to sign a contract for most jobs. I'm not lying, they wanted contracts back there then. I know one time we had contracts for a dance hall in Christiansburg, Virginia. We started down there, and there was two carloads of us, and one of the cars broke down. We traveled together and we wouldn't leave the other. And the contract was for $360. That was on a Friday night, and it was hard to get anyone to work on your car. Everybody was out in them beer joints, and you couldn't get nobody to work on no car.

Finally we got a guy to come and pull it in. We was closer back this way than we were to Christiansburg, so we come on back. And we had to pawn our instruments downtown to get the money to pay that contract off. See, that man done sold all them tickets and things. He had to give them tickets back, and he wanted his money, boy! And we ended up paying that $360. Yes, we did. That was a lot of money back there at that time, but we all pooled together and made it. Then we played three or four places, and then it wasn't too hard on nobody, see, because we taken that money and just put it back in there, covered what we borrowed.

MK Was that a totally black band?

NR Yeah, at that time it was. But when we played for the Elks Club or over at the country club in Bluefield, there was a number of white would come up and play with us. A lot of the white ladies, if they wanted to play they come, say, "Let us sit in a little bit with you." We'd tell them to come on.

We played sheet music, we wasn't playing by ear. Back there then you couldn't fool the people. Now a lot of the guys out here, they don't know one side of the sheet from the other. But, you see, back there then you set up and you played for a dance. Somebody liable to come up and bring you a whole full illustration,

got a part for everything in it. They'd say, "Play this piece for me, and I'll give you $50 or $75." Well, now, if you can't read, you don't play the piece, see. We would practice all during the week, at night and in the evenings.

MK Where'd you work during the day?

NR Bartending here in town at the Elks Club. I was a cook and a bartender. Steaks, salads, chiffon pie, marble cakes, German chocolate cakes. And I was a second cook at the MacArthur Hotel in Pearisburg, Virginia, for almost two years. That was years ago, though.

At that time we would practice a lot at the Elks Club because it was the availability of a piano there at all times, see. One man would take care of the barroom while the others practiced. Or a lot of the club members down there, they would say, "We'll take over for you for three hours or so." Because we played for their dances, too. So they was helping theirself when we practiced. The more we practiced, the better we were. It worked out real good.

MK Did you ever play any songs related to coal mines, or were you trying to forget about mining when you had a guitar in your hand?

NR It never crossed my mind. Well, really, to tell you the truth, I was in another world, because when I was playing music nothing else was on my mind but music at that time. You could walk up and say something. You might have to speak to me three times before I'd know you were talking with me.

MK Did you ever think of music as a way out of the coalfields?

NR Well, I'll tell you. At the time I came along, it wasn't what you knew, it was who you knew. If you was at the right place at the right time, you had it made. And if you wasn't, shame on you! And then in your traveling, ah, where you really made you money was at the places frequented more by white people. There was a lot of people there would dance to your music all night long — and the owner of the restaurant wouldn't sell you a sandwich after you got through.

So if you had a place where you can make a living, you wouldn't turn that loose. See, I married young, and you don't just grab a wife and a couple of kids and tear off down the road, you know. It don't work like that.

And, see, it's a lot of rough stories, boy. It's not near like it is now. Transportation was bad. The old cars run good while they run, but they didn't last too long. You could take a piece of baling wire and a screwdriver and a pair of pliers and keep one on the road. But you didn't come by them too fast.

And so many places — where now you can go, you can get your foot in the door, or you can go talk to the manager — you wasn't allowed to walk in then. They had a WHITE ONLY sign up there and you couldn't go in there. So in fact you were, well, inhibited. Inhibited in the beginning. And, so, you'd either have to know someone that's there to help you, or else you're better off staying in the coal mine. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. You mess around and don't have no bird at all!

*"Bone" is the shale or other impurities in coal, which was removed by hand in the days before mechanical processing plants.

Relaxing at home, Nat Reese reflects back over a lifetime in southern West Virginia. The "bird in hand" philosophy was best during the days of segregation, he reports.

Carving a Niche

The Blacks of Bluefield

By Michael M. Meador

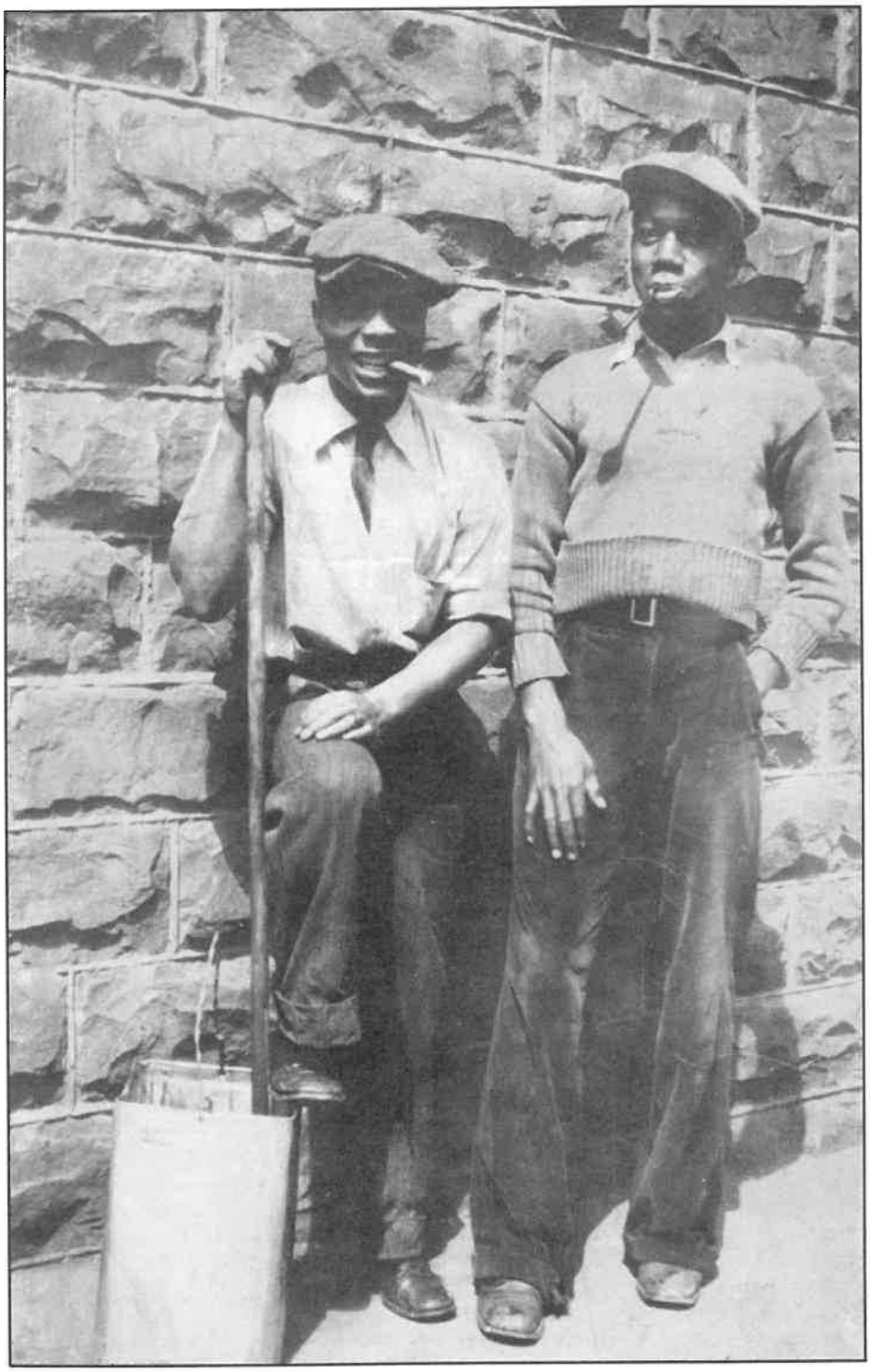
I grew up in the late 1950's in rural Mercer County, about six miles outside Bluefield. About the city, however, I remember little before getting my first pair of glasses in 1960. I was nine then and so myopic that the world was a fuzz of muted colors. My memories of Bluefield the morning I got my glasses are still vivid.

The optician's office was located at street level at one of the busiest intersections of a busy city. Office buildings, hotels, banks and stores, all gigantic to me, towered over Federal Street, jam-packed with shoppers and automobiles.

It seemed to my young, newly-sighted eyes, that people were everywhere and many of them black. At age nine I knew that lots of blacks lived in Bluefield but I didn't know any of them personally. Except on the streets or in the stores our paths had not crossed.

My clearest memory of that morning was seeing for the first time the large mechanized billboards that looked down on Bluefield from Stoney Ridge. The name of a local bakery was on one of the signs and the other, which had some type of revolving circle and sprocket chain arrangement, advertised the power company. One of the billboards had a clock that Bluefielders called the "poor man's timepiece."

If on that morning in 1960 I myself had climbed the ridge and sat under one of the gigantic signs, I would have seen the whole city through my new glasses. Directly below me at the foot of Stoney Ridge I would have seen the roofs of the houses, schools and churches of Bluefield's North Side. Here lived many of the black people who called the city home. This neighborhood was separated from the tall buildings of the downtown by the long, wide Norfolk & Western Railway yard and the shops and buildings associated with it. The N&W railyard would have been jammed with strings of coal cars empty and full. To my rear would have been the low, rugged moun-



Blacks historically have made vital contributions to Bluefield's economy and society. These unidentified men pose on a city sidewalk. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Craft Memorial Library.

Above: The Bluefield black community was literally across the tracks. This aerial photo shows downtown, with North Bluefield, the black community, beyond the railroad. Photographer and date unknown, Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

Below: John Rankin, former professor at Bluefield State College, is a leading historian of the local black community.

tains of McDowell County, where the mineral was extracted by thousands of miners, black and white.

To my right I could have looked down the tracks and seen in the distance the brick buildings of Bluefield State College. Just a few years before it had had an all-black student body. Beyond the college and down the tracks in the distance I could have looked into the smaller sister city of Bluefield, Virginia.

If I had looked straight ahead to the south that morning I would have seen the buildings of downtown, wedged between the tracks and another ridge called Water Tank Hill. This ridge would have been covered with the two-story frame houses of middle-class working families, white and black.

Beyond that hill I probably would not have been able to see any of the fine houses along Oakhurst Avenue where the wealthier white families of Bluefield lived. But from where I sat on Stoney Ridge, I would have seen off in the distance ahead of me the great wall of East River Mountain. I could have taken off my new glasses and still made that out clearly. This long, 4,000-foot-high mountain forms the southern boundary of Bluefield, of Mercer County and of West Virginia.

Eyeglasses finally allowed me to see with my eyes that morning, but they did not help me understand the world around me. I saw black people on the streets of Bluefield and I saw the signs on the restaurants that said "Whites Only" but the signs and

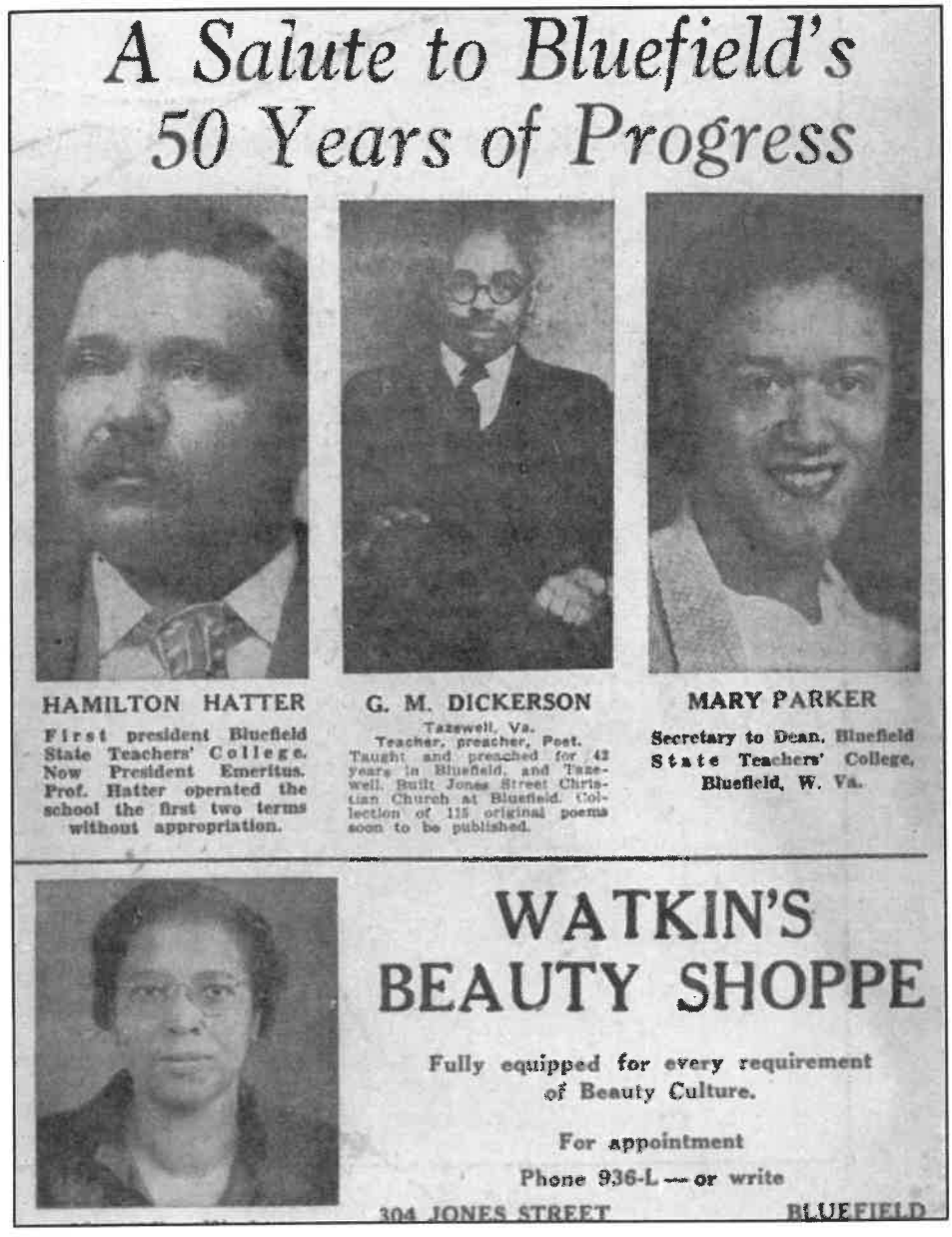
people didn't much affect a white youngster, so I didn't worry about them.

I never wondered why there were no pictures of black brides in the society section of Bluefield's Sunday paper. And it never occurred to me to question why the black children didn't go to my school and didn't swim in the same public swimming pools that I swam in. That was the way things were. I assumed that the black children had their own swimming pools and schools somewhere but I never was interested enough to ask.

Thus it was a white Bluefield that I knew. Black people lived, worked and worshiped in the same town I did, but I never wondered about who they were or what they thought or how they lived. Neither, probably, did most of my white friends.

The history and culture of black Bluefield has not been ignored by black historians, however. Young researchers like Ed Cabbell of Princeton have been busy trying to piece together the sketchy published accounts of blacks in the southern West Virginia coalfields with supplementary oral histories and firsthand knowledge. Cabbell recently co-edited a scholarly history of blacks in Appala-

Watkins Beauty Shoppe, a black enterprise, contributed the advertisement below to a 1939 commemorative edition of the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*. Normally the *Telegraph* carried black news in its "Colored People" column.



A Salute to Bluefield's 50 Years of Progress

HAMILTON HATTER

First president Bluefield State Teachers' College. Now President Emeritus. Prof. Hatter operated the school the first two terms without appropriation.

G. M. DICKERSON

Tazewell, Va.
Teacher, preacher, Poet. Taught and preached for 42 years in Bluefield, and Tazewell. Built Jones Street Christian Church at Bluefield. Collection of 115 original poems soon to be published.

MARY PARKER

Secretary to Dean, Bluefield State Teachers' College, Bluefield, W. Va.

WATKIN'S BEAUTY SHOPPE

Fully equipped for every requirement of Beauty Culture.

For appointment
Phone 936-L — or write
304 JONES STREET BLUEFIELD

NEWS OF THE COLORED PEOPLE

SPECIAL SERVICES

The Rev. Thomas Brooks, Evangelist and gospel singer, and a graduate of Tangloo college in Mississippi will preach tonight at 7:30 at the Tabernacle Baptist church at Bluefield, Va. The services are public.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The World Day of Prayer will be observed today from 10:30 a. m. to 12 noon at the First Baptist church at Pocahontas, Va. Members of all churches are invited.

CIRCLE TO MEET

Junior Missionary circle of Mt. Zion Baptist church will meet this evening at 6 o'clock at the home of Mrs. Victor Easley, Baldwin avenue.

MEETINGS

The Missionary society of the North Side United Holy church will meet this afternoon at 5 o'clock in the home of Mrs. Bettie Phinazee on Carter street.

The Missionary society of the Church of God Apostolic will meet tonight at 7:30 in the home of Mrs. Essie Parsons on Allen street.

The Female Chorus of the Mount Zion Baptist church will rehearse at the church tonight at 7:30.

Eureka Temple No. 339 will meet today at Jones street hall at 6 o'clock.

chia and has published many articles on the subject.

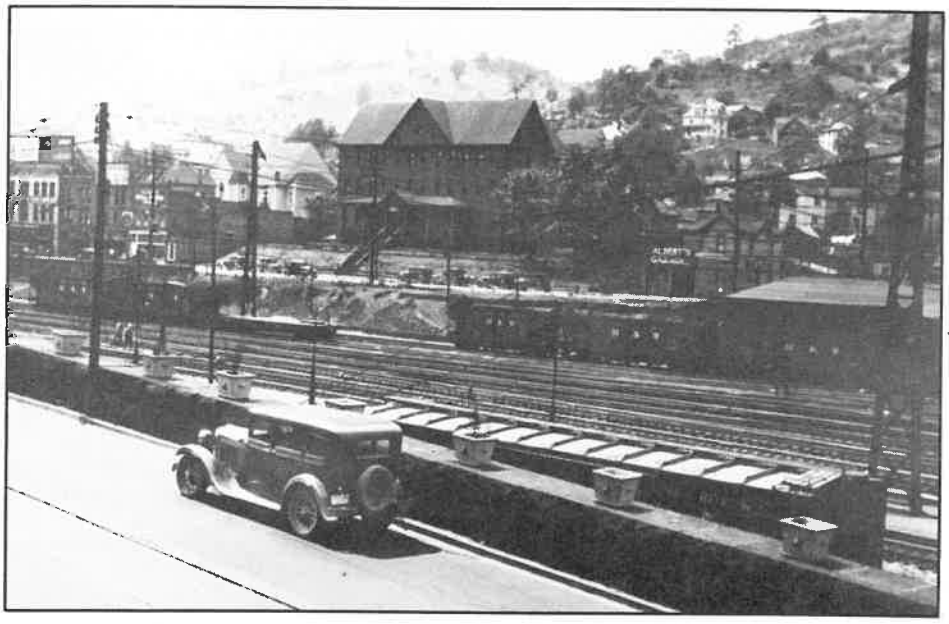
Foremost among the older black historians of Bluefield is retired Bluefield State history professor John Rankin. He has compiled an unpublished history of black Bluefield that weaves together his many personal memories of the community with written records. I learned of Rankin's history through a 1986 article by Garret Mathews that appeared in the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*.

John Rankin was born in Bluefield in 1918. His parents had moved to the area from North Carolina. His father worked for the N&W Railway. Rankin was educated in the city's public schools and earned a bachelor's degree in history from Bluefield State College. In 1946 he had the distinction of being among the first group of black students admitted to West Virginia University. He and the four others were forced to find their own housing in Morgantown. Because of their race they were not permitted to live on campus.

After obtaining a master's degree, Rankin returned to Bluefield State, where he taught history until his retirement a few years ago. He finished his local history after that. He wrote it, he says, so that "somewhere, someday, somebody will have a written record of the struggle of Black men and women to gain their rights and the contribution that these forgotten individuals have made to the city of Bluefield."

Prior to 1881, there was no Bluefield, white or black. In that watershed year for southern West Virginia, the Norfolk & Western began extending its steel rails up East River to John Higginbotham's farm. King Coal brought the railroad to Mercer County. Vast outcroppings of high grade metallurgical bituminous had been discovered. In the 19th century, coal was the fuel that powered industry and railroads, and the tracks were laid to bring out the valuable mineral.

Working for the railroad, laying rails and busting rock, were gangs of black laborers recruited from the large black populations of eastern Virginia. Their arrival was the first major entry of blacks into the area, although black people were not unknown in Mercer County before 1881. The 1860 census lists a scattering of slaveholders. Slave owners were definitely in a minority, however. The rough terrain precluded large-scale agriculture in most places and most families could not even consider purchasing a slave.



Looking across the tracks to the north side. The YMCA at center was a leading institution in the black neighborhood. Photographer and date unknown, Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

Slaves were listed in the census by first name only, with their occupations given as laborers, field hands or domestics. In the office of the county clerk of Mercer County there are supplementary records of the births and deaths of the few black people who lived there before the Civil War. Slave George Hall saved the county clerk's records from destruction when the courthouse along with the greater part of Princeton were burned in May 1862 by Confederates.

Neighboring McDowell County, on the other hand, had almost no black people before industrialization, slave or free.

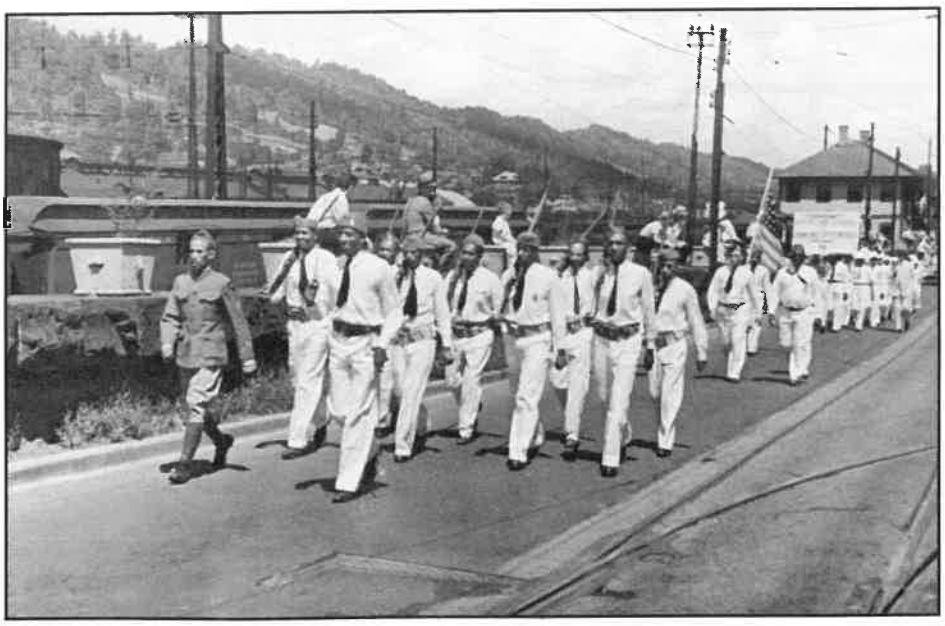
The coming of the railroad and the opening of the great Pocahontas Coalfield altered the racial balance that had existed in Mercer and McDowell for generations. Black laborers went everywhere the railroad went and when coal mines were opened black men were brought in by the trainload from eastern Virginia and the southern states. These men would be followed by wives and families. The work trains also brought immigrants, fresh from Europe and speaking little English, to work in the mines. Their arrival further changed the population mix in the two counties.

In 1886 a post office was established at John Higginbotham's farm and given the name of Summit. The valley where it lay was filled with the camps of railroad laborers. A few houses had already been built, some stores erected. The first church was established in 1887 by a Lutheran congregation. This too was a mark of changing times, for Lutherans had been almost unknown in the region five years before.

By 1888 there were enough black Methodists in Summit to hold a camp meeting. From this meeting the first Negro church in the town would be formed.

The year 1888 was important for another reason. In that year the N&W Railway chose what would soon become Bluefield as the site for its shops and yards. At 2,557 feet, the spot was the high point on the line from Columbus, Ohio, to Norfolk, Virginia, and gravity switching in either direction was possible. Bluefield was established as a division point.

In 1889 the new city was incorporated. By the next year it reported a population of 1,800, a sixth of whom were black. Higginbotham's farm had become a boom town much like those that were springing up at the same time in the mining regions of the western United States. And it faced similar problems.



World War I veterans march on Bluefield Avenue, about 1920. Photographer unknown, Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

The coal companies and railroad had not picked their working men for their manners. There seems to have been constant strife and turmoil among the rowdier laborers transported in on the special work trains. Bluefield newspapers from the 1890's read like tabloids from the Wild West. Mine payroll trains were held up so often that the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency was established in Bluefield to protect the money.

When the payroll got through to the miners there were other problems. Men poured into Bluefield with their pockets full of money, looking for a good time and finding trouble. The front pages from this period are covered with lurid accounts of fighting, gambling, shootings, murders and muggings. There were shootouts on the city's major streets in broad daylight.

Blacks took their share of the sensational reporting. On April 18, 1896, the *Bluefield Telegraph* reported that a Negro by the name of Jim Cloud had been shot on Princeton Avenue in front of the Bluefield train station for resisting arrest. Supposedly Cloud had pulled a gun but was shot before he could fire it. His dying words were, "Why did you shoot me?"

Two days later the newspaper reported that the white man who had attempted to arrest Cloud and who had shot him was actually only a former policeman with no warrant. The newspaper expressed surprise that charges against the ex-officer had been dropped. The editor next informed the citizens of Bluefield that a number of men of the city had warned him to drop the matter. He affirmed that it was the duty of a

Unions and fraternal orders were sources of pride. This parade float represents Black Lodge No. 9 of the Brotherhood of Railroad Carmen, the freight handlers' organization. Photographer and date unknown, Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

Blacks contributed to the city's charitable efforts from the early years. Here Viola Clark leads a skit at a Community Christmas Tree fundraiser in the Colonial Theater. Photographer unknown, 1940's.

newspaper to furnish the news, which he would continue to do. Nonetheless, the *Telegraph* reported nothing more of the Jim Cloud shooting.

Just four months before, the same newspaper had displayed in its office window a rope used to lynch a black man in nearby Bramwell. William Jones had been accused of the murder of a railroad worker. He was reported as having confessed to other murders upon his arrest. The editor of the *Telegraph* actually defended the mob's actions in print when a few days later Governor Atkinson deplored the incident.

Over the next 16 years there would be three other lynchings of black men from Bluefield. They ended in 1912 with the murder of Robert Johnson, held in the county jail in Princeton for a supposed attack on a white Bluefield woman. Johnson was dragged into the streets outside the jail and beaten, shot, stabbed and hanged. The mob reportedly came from Bluefield. It was later proven that Johnson could not possibly have committed the crime. No charges were ever filed against his murderers, as no one would testify as to who had participated in the lynching.

Bluefield's newspapers of this period chose to carry only news about blacks who ran afoul of the law or who were victimized in some spectacular way. The hundreds of law-abiding black families living peacefully in Bluefield in the 1890's never made it into newsprint. These blacks shared many of the same concerns as their white neighbors in building a stable community from a raw boom town. Churches were organized, businesses established and houses erected. Ordinary blacks and whites got along peacefully during the day when their lives overlapped and in the evening went home to their separate neighborhoods.

For nearly 75 years separation of the two races in Bluefield was dictated more by practice than by law. But the schools were legally required to be segregated, by the state constitution of West Virginia. Bluefield

blacks organized and staffed their own schools. It was possible in the 1880's and '90's for black children to receive a primary education through the ninth grade. There were no secondary schools for black youth, however. This problem disturbed black leaders in the city's early days.

In 1894, W. M. Mahood of Princeton came to Bluefield seeking support in the black community for his efforts to gain a seat in the state senate. In exchange for votes he promised to introduce into the legislature a bill for the creation of a black high school in Bluefield.

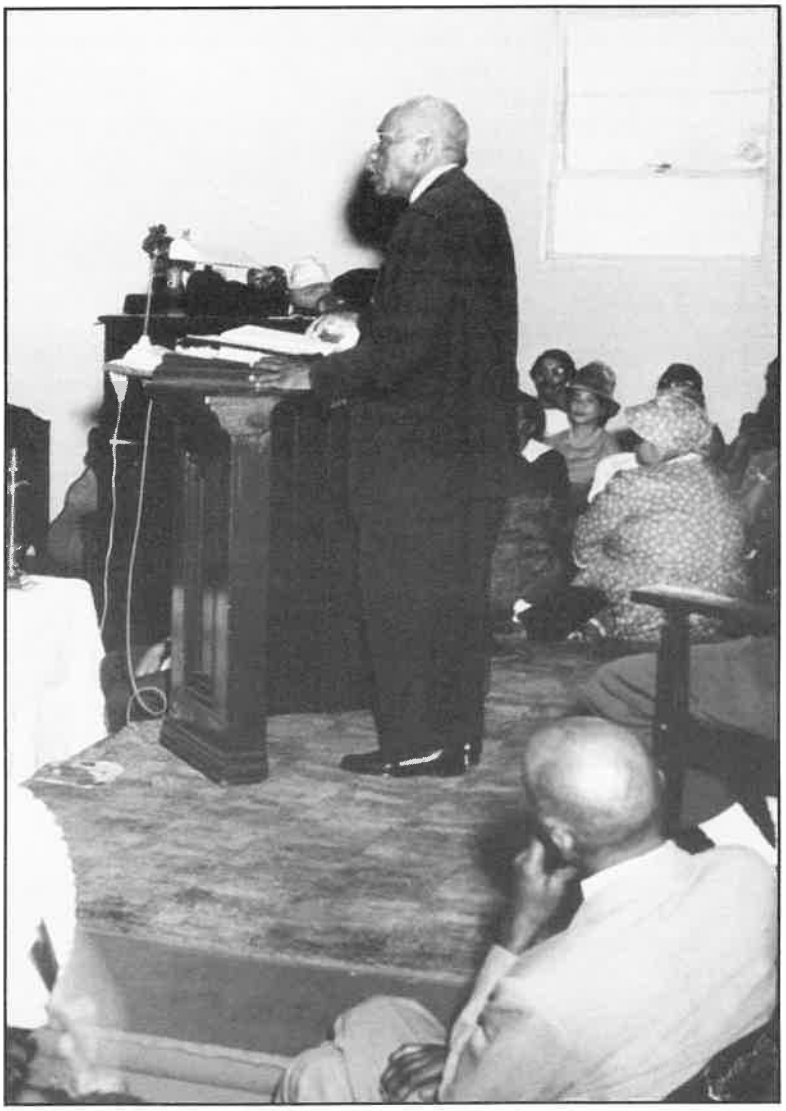
Mahood won the election and in February of 1895 introduced his bill. It passed both houses of the legislature but met trouble when it reached Governor MacCorkle's desk. The governor refused to sign the bill and it had to be passed into law without his signature. The Bluefield Colored Institute opened its doors to students on December 6, 1896. This school, eventually evolving into Bluefield State College, helped make Bluefield the center for education, society and the arts for the black population of southern West Virginia.

The two decades before the First World War were years of growth for the young city of Bluefield. Impressive office buildings, stores and hotels were erected downtown. Jobs were plentiful, especially on the railroad and in the mines.

Blacks found work as Bluefield prospered, but only within certain occupations. John Rankin states in his history that blacks were excluded from key railroad unions and thus could not hold high-paying jobs such as engineer or brakeman. These were reserved for white workers. Blacks were allowed to work as locomotive greasers, Pullman porters, conductors, car checkers and laborers. Blacks were accepted as equals in the miners' union, although job assignment discrimination on the part of employers increased as mechanization specialized the work force.

The period before the war saw a boom in the number of black-owned businesses in Bluefield, some catering to both blacks and whites. Blacks owned a taxi service, barber shops, restaurants, drugstores staffed by black pharmacists, beauty shops, saloons, hotels and grocery stores.

These scenes are from a revival at the Tabernacle Baptist Church. Like the schools and clubs, religion was a source of unity. Photographer and date unknown.



Integration brought changing times to Bluefield. The Bluefield State chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People played a big role. Photographer unknown, 1960's, Archives and History Division, Department of Culture and History.

Negro doctors, dentists and lawyers moved into the growing city. In 1916 a hospital for blacks was established. The two white hospitals either refused to admit black patients or confined them to special rooms. By 1926 Bluefield had two black hospitals, a statewide distinction.

During these pre-war years the Bluefield newspaper finally began to feature regular news about the everyday affairs of the black community. Under the heading "News of the Colored People" were listed obituaries, church and school news, weddings and club reports. The column was usually buried on page nine. Prior to this time the only mention of blacks in the paper was in connection with sensational events or stories that interested the white community. The Negro population of Bluefield now numbered nearly 3,000, many of them potential newspaper subscribers.

Bluefield Colored Institute underwent a transformation in the years before and just after World War I. In 1909 it began a teacher-training or "normal" program. In 1920 the school became a junior college. In 1931 its name was changed to Bluefield State Teachers College. The name was shortened to Bluefield State College in 1941.

Black youth from the coalfields were attracted to Bluefield because of the college. They brought a wealth of talent looking for a means of expression. The years between the two world wars saw a flowering of culture in Bluefield's black community, especially in the performing arts. Partly responsible was the music department at Bluefield State. Outstanding teachers influenced young musicians who would become top-notch professional writers and performers.

Another major influence on the swell of musical talent was the black churches of Bluefield. The newspapers of the 1920's, '30's and '40's are filled with announcements of cantatas, recitals, choirs, singings, plays and pageants in the city's many black houses of worship. Gospel singer Viola Clark came from McDowell County in the early 1930's to perform in local black and white churches and over the radio on Bluefield station WHIS. In the 1950's Mrs. Clark began broadcasting on television and continued to do so until 1986.

Teddy Weatherford, a Bluefield State student of this period, composed the piano solo, "Kitten on the Keys," still a standard offering at piano recitals throughout the world. Weatherford performed for years with Bluefield's Edwards Collegiate Band. Robert "Bob" Benson, the piano player for the famous Inkspots, came from Bluefield. Local dancer Pearl A. Hobson went to Russia as a stage star in the 1930's.

The lyrics to "Sweet Georgia Brown," widely known as a jazz standard and the Harlem Globe Trotters' theme, were written by Bluefield native Manceo Pinkard. He also wrote the words to "Liza," "Sugar" and other popular tunes of the 1920's and '30's.

Several professional dance bands and musical groups of the period got their start in Bluefield. They toured under such names as Edwards Collegiates, Nelson's Nighthawks, The Smalls Sisters and the Harlem Hotshots. They performed in nightclubs throughout the country and were frequently broadcast over the radio.

During the 1920's and '30's civic leaders were busy developing black community centers. A YMCA for black railroad workers, possibly the only one in the United States, was built in Bluefield during this period. The Carolina Community Center was established for women. It provided lodging, meals and social activities for single and transient women.

Many black social and civic clubs were formed in Bluefield. They included segregated Masonic lodges, sororities, Elks, womens' clubs, literary circles, fraternities, railroad associations and veterans groups. Two popular clubs had the enticing names High Hatters and Les Dame. For young people there were 4-H clubs, choirs, plays, sports, bands and a multitude of church groups.

Bluefield was the hub of a vibrant southern West Virginia black culture for many years. In 1930, 15 percent of the city's 20,640 people were black. Nearby McDowell County had a black population of 22,000, 19 percent of the state's total the same year. Within a 100-mile radius of Bluefield lived more than three-fourths of West Virginia's black people.

City blacks were tied economically and socially to the Negro communities of McDowell County during the '30's and '40's. For several years four and five passenger trains a day connected McDowell directly with downtown Bluefield. Many coalfield blacks, according to John Rankin, made the trip up to the big city two or three times a week.

Bluefield, at a time when the discriminatory practice of "separate but equal" rested heavily on West Virginia, had the only black college and hospitals in the area and the only black high school in Mercer County. The city also had the large majority of southern West Virginia's black doctors, dentists, lawyers, morticians, pharmacies, theaters, churches, cemeteries, beauticians, barber shops, real estate agents, meeting places, stores, restaurants and hotels.

The 1950's brought a new era for Bluefield's black population. Some-

time during this decade the *Daily Telegraph* dropped the "Colored People" column from its pages. There was still a special untitled section for news of black interest, which occasionally had photographs. John Rankin remembers that during this period reporters from the city's newspapers occasionally had to be bribed to print things of interest to the black community, such as the ball scores of favorite teams.

Following the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court desegregation decision, Bluefield State admitted its first white students. Mercer County was slow to comply with full integration of its public school system, however. Black high school students were bused from Princeton to Bluefield's black Park Central High School for several years after the decision, passing white high schools on the way. The segregated school systems in Bluefield did not merge until the late 1960's.

The '60's saw racial barriers fall in Bluefield as in the rest of the country. The city's two white hospitals began to admit black patients. After protests, the lunch counter at busy downtown Kresge's Department Store began to serve black customers. The YMCA and YWCA after a wave of protests also integrated. Blacks were permitted to enter the city's movie theaters from the front entrances and sit in first-floor sections formerly reserved for whites. In the 1960's, Bluefield got its first black policeman, fireman, city council member, vice-mayor and police chief.

For some the victory was bittersweet, as the character of black institutions changed as well. Bluefield State College, which for 60 years had provided Bluefield's educated black community a sense of identity, was by 1985 a 90-percent white institution. Its last black president, Leroy B. Allen, retired in 1965. During the late 1960's the school was the scene of student unrest and bombings.

Public schools were no longer located in the black neighborhoods and many organizations and functions associated with those neighborhood schools were lost. John Rankin points out that a generation of black school administrators were demoted with integration. Businesses which had catered to the black community for years quietly shut down in the 1960's, victims of hard times and changing shopping patterns. Today there are few black-owned businesses in Bluefield.

Bluefield has been hard hit by the changing economics in the coalfields. The market for the area's metallurgical coal dropped and miners were laid off. As mines closed in McDowell and Mercer counties, the railroad also began to lay off workers. Both whites and blacks suffered. Thousands of workers, black and white, were forced to take their families and seek work elsewhere.

Ironically, at the time when blacks at last have the potential of fully participating in all levels of their city, the black community is but a shadow of what it once was. What is the future of Bluefield's black community? John Rankin has some ideas. "I do not have a real panacea for the problems that face our community," he writes in the conclusion to his history. "There is one thing for sure, we all, Black and White must pool our best resources and put them to work if we want the community to forge ahead. . . . We must carve our niche in this new economy and move upward." ♣

Community leader and gospel singer Viola Clark remembers the heyday of black Bluefield very well. "Everybody had a job," she says. "There were black schools and black hospitals, black stores, hotels and businesses." Photo by Michael Keller.

Viola Clark

Interview by Michael M. Meador

Viola Clark is known throughout southern West Virginia. For over 50 years she has broadcast gospel music over the radio and television stations of the area. Her ministry is straight to the heart and sincere.

Each performance has been essentially the same: Viola Clark at the piano, singing hymns with the conviction that comes from deep faith. There is nothing showy about it. Viola is usually accompanied only by her daughter. There are no sets or props other than a piano, microphones and choir robes. Her message is plain and her delivery uncluttered.

Viola Clark's goal is as simple as the message she bears. She wants to make people happy, she says, by "singing the songs they like to hear."

Mike Meador. Tell me about your early life.

Viola Clark. I was born Viola Hamlet in Monvale, Virginia. My father was named Jim Hamlet and my mother was Missouri Fuqua. When I was one year old, my parents moved to Jenkinjones in McDowell County, West Virginia. My daddy worked in the coal mines and on Fridays and Saturdays he operated a barber shop. He was the only black barber in Jenkinjones.

MM What kind of a place was Jenkinjones in the 1920's?

VC It was a huge place with lots of people, black and white. Everybody got along real well.

I went to a graded school in Jenkinjones and then went to the black high school at Gary. I had to ride the bus to get there.

MM When did you learn music?

VC Ever since I was a little girl I've been singing. I learned all about music in my home.

We were very musical, but all we did was religious music. My dad played the guitar and the whole family would sing. I had two sisters and two brothers and we'd all join in. Our biggest song was "Amazing Grace." I can remember my mother getting us up out of bed to sing hymns. Mostly we did old-timey songs. Most of us children would be sitting on the floor.

MM When did you start singing in public?

VC Oh, almost from the beginning I was singing in schools and church-

Mrs. Clark speaks at the Bluefield Arts and Crafts building. The occasion was an anniversary celebration for her radio show. Photographer and date unknown.

Viola Clark stopped broadcasting in 1986, after a 50-year career. Here she shows a souvenir videotape at her Bluefield home. Photograph by Michael Keller.

es, black and white. I used to sing in white churches a lot. I had several people tell me in my younger days that I sounded like Marian Anderson. I even had people tell me I should have gone to Hollywood.

Back then I was known as "Boots" and when I would show up with my friends in churches people would say, "Here's Boots and her buddies." I have always loved people and have made many friends through my singing.

MM Did any of your brothers or sisters follow musical careers?

VC Oh, yes. My brother Walter played the piano for a Bluefield dance band in the 1930's. They called themselves the Harlem Hotshots. There was a dentist from Bluefield and an engineer from Bluefield State College in the band with him. Walter lives in Washington, D.C., now.

My sister Ollie May played the piano for a dance band called the Bernett All Stars. My other brother, Billy Ray, sings with a big band in Washington, D.C., at the Club Spar. He has performed with Ray Charles and James Brown.

MM How did you meet your husband, Thomas Clark?

VC When I was 18 I was singing one evening at Elkhorn in McDowell County. At the concert a man came through the door and I said, "Momma, isn't he pretty!" I found out that he owned a home there in Elkhorn and after the concert Momma and I went to check it out.

I got up on the porch and could look through his door into the house. I said, "Momma, that's going to be mine!" And do you know, in one month it was mine! We were married the last day of August, 1934. I lived in that house in Elkhorn with my husband and children for several years before we moved to Bluefield. Thomas had a job in the mines running a cutting machine for the Upland Coal and Coke Company.

In 1934, the same year I was married, WHIS radio in Bluefield had tryouts for its radio programs. At the time the station was broadcasting from the West Virginia Hotel. I was chosen to have my own radio show. Mel Barnett, who broadcast for years on radio and television from Bluefield, was my original announcer.

My husband and I with the children moved to Bluefield in 1944. At that time there were brick streets with streetcars that ran all the way into Bluefield, Virginia. I remember that cabs were 15 cents. There was a population of 22 to 23 thousand people back then and everybody had a job. There were black schools and black hospitals, black stores, hotels and businesses. There's none of that left now.

MM Tell me about your children. Are any of them musical?

VC All of my children have sung with me. At one time we sang together as Viola Clark and the Spiritual Singers. Margaretta sang with me on my television show until it was ended in 1986.

There's also Tony, Patricia, Tommy and Barbara Jean. Patricia [Turner] is an evangelist in Columbus, Ohio, at the Temple of Compassion. When she was a little girl of 10 or 12 she felt the call to preach. Barbara Jean is also a minister. Tommy is a major in the Air Force.

MM How many records have you made?

VC I have only made one record. "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" was on one side and on the other was a song my son Tommy wrote, "I'm Going to Sing When I Get Home."

MM When did you start performing on television?

VC I think it was back in the late 1950's. I was already working in radio. The station had moved a couple of times and was at the time located on the third floor of the Bluefield City Hall. That was where the new television station, WHIS-TV, was started. While we were working there the owner of the radio station, John Shott, brought in TV. He switched me over to television. I had a regular program until February of 1986, when the program ended.

MM You have worked for many years with the "March of Dimes Telerama," broadcast each spring on WHIS [now WVVA]. Who are some of the celebrities that you have appeared with during the "Telerama?"

VC There have been so many. I've sung with Grandpa Jones, Archie Campbell, Charlie McCoy, L. C. Greenwood from "Hill Street Blues," and Arthur Smith. I just can't remember them all.

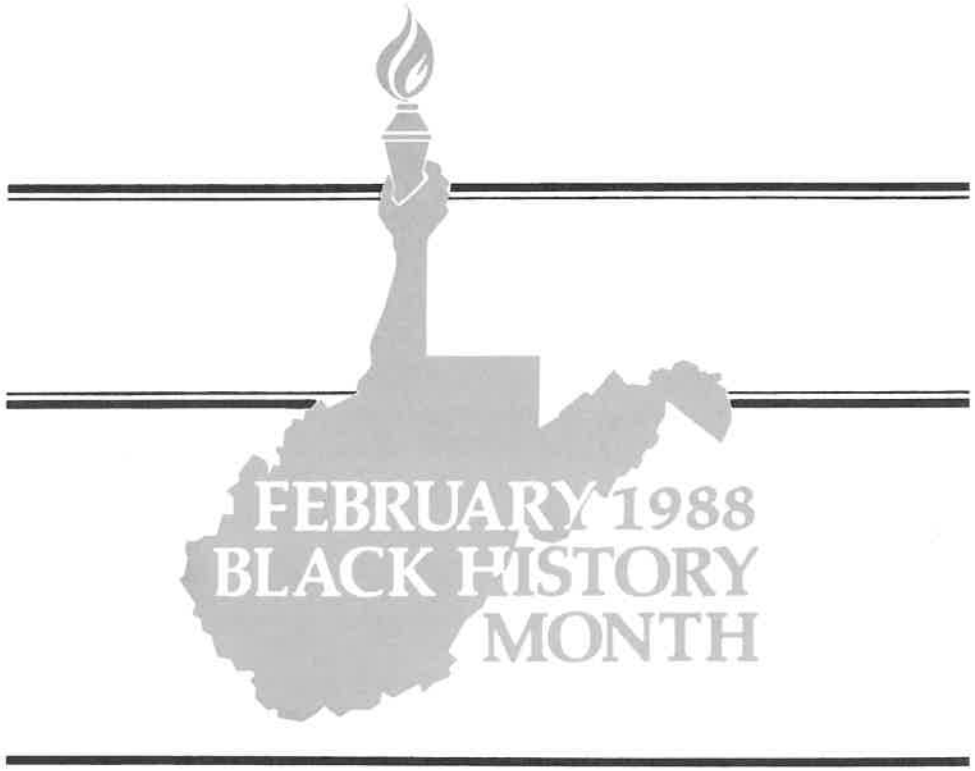
I've really been involved with the "Telerama." I performed on it for many years and for the last few years I've helped to screen talent.

MM Now that you have left your regular television show are you still singing and performing?

VC Since the television show has ended, I've formed a new group called the Inspirational Singers. We still perform in the area. I go up to Columbus and perform at my daughter's church two or three times a year.

MM How would you summarize your long career?

VC I've always trusted God. My greatest desire has been to make others happy by singing the songs they like to hear.



Carter Woodson is recognized nationally as the "Father of Black History," but few West Virginians know that Huntington was his hometown. That historical fact isn't well known even by Huntingtonians.

Woodson's accomplishments as the author and lecturer credited with saving American black history from oblivion have been more appreciated elsewhere. The University of Virginia and the University of Tennessee have built library wings in his honor. In 1984, Woodson was commemorated on a U. S. postage stamp as part of Black History Month, an outgrowth of the Negro History Week he organized in 1926.

Now a group of Huntington residents are determined to set matters straight. Mayor Robert Nelson in 1986 established a Carter G. Woodson Memorial Committee to correct the oversight, after getting a history lesson himself.

"I'm sorry to admit that I didn't know who Carter Woodson was until I attended a Douglass High School reunion," the mayor recently confessed. "I heard a speaker say what a shame it was that Woodson had never been recognized in his hometown, and it made an impression on me. I thought we should do something about that."

The committee, made up of 13 members from a wide cross section of area residents, came back last April with a plan. Their goals include erecting a life-size bronze statue of Woodson, establishing a $60,000 black history scholarship endowment at Marshall University, and founding the Carter G. Woodson Bibliographic Center at Marshall's James E. Morrow Library.

Marshall librarian Nancy Whear, secretary of the Woodson committee, says much of the work on the bibliographic center has already been done. The university owned most of the black historian's 20 books and has purchased others, along with articles and dissertations about Woodson. "What we need most are personal papers and photographs," Mrs. Whear adds. "We want to make this the most complete Carter Woodson collection anywhere."

Committee member Alan Gould, dean of Marshall's College of Liberal Arts, said he thinks Dr. Woodson would approve of the group's efforts. "I don't know what he would have thought of a statue, but I'm sure he would endorse the scholarship endowment and the bibliographic center," Dr. Gould said. "Both are living memorials that promote black history. That's what he devoted most of his life to doing."

Carter G. Woodson

By Tim R. Massey

Carter G. Woodson's 1897 Berea College portrait. The black intellectual spent earlier years in Huntington.

The committee, chaired by Dr. R. B. Conado, has started raising funds to finance its goals. Contributions have begun to trickle through the mayor's office. Conado, a retired college instructor who specialized in black history, is pleased with the committee's work so far. "I think this is the nicest thing to happen in this community for a long time, not only for blacks but for whites, too," he said. "Our committee actually has more whites on it than blacks. I think that's commendable."

The object of the committee's work was born in Buckingham County, Virginia, in 1875. Carter Woodson migrated to Huntington with his parents in 1893. His father, former slave James Henry Woodson, came to the West Virginia city to work on the crew that built the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway shops, according to Woodson's niece, Belva Clark.

Woodson graduated from Douglass High School in 1896. He then went to Berea College in Kentucky to study for a teaching certificate. He had earlier worked for a while in a Fayette County mine and returned to that county to teach elementary school from 1898 to 1900. He went home to Huntington in 1900, serving as teacher and principal at Douglass from 1900 to 1903. He resumed his education at the University of Chicago, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees, according to local historian Dr. W. K. Elliott.

In 1912, Woodson became the second black to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. (W. E. B. DuBois was the first.) Later, he went on to study at the Sorbonne in Paris. Woodson served as dean of Howard University's School of Liberal Arts and from 1920 to '22 as dean of West Virginia Collegiate Institute, now West Virginia State College. He gave up academic life in 1922 to devote himself entirely to the study and promotion of Afro-American history.

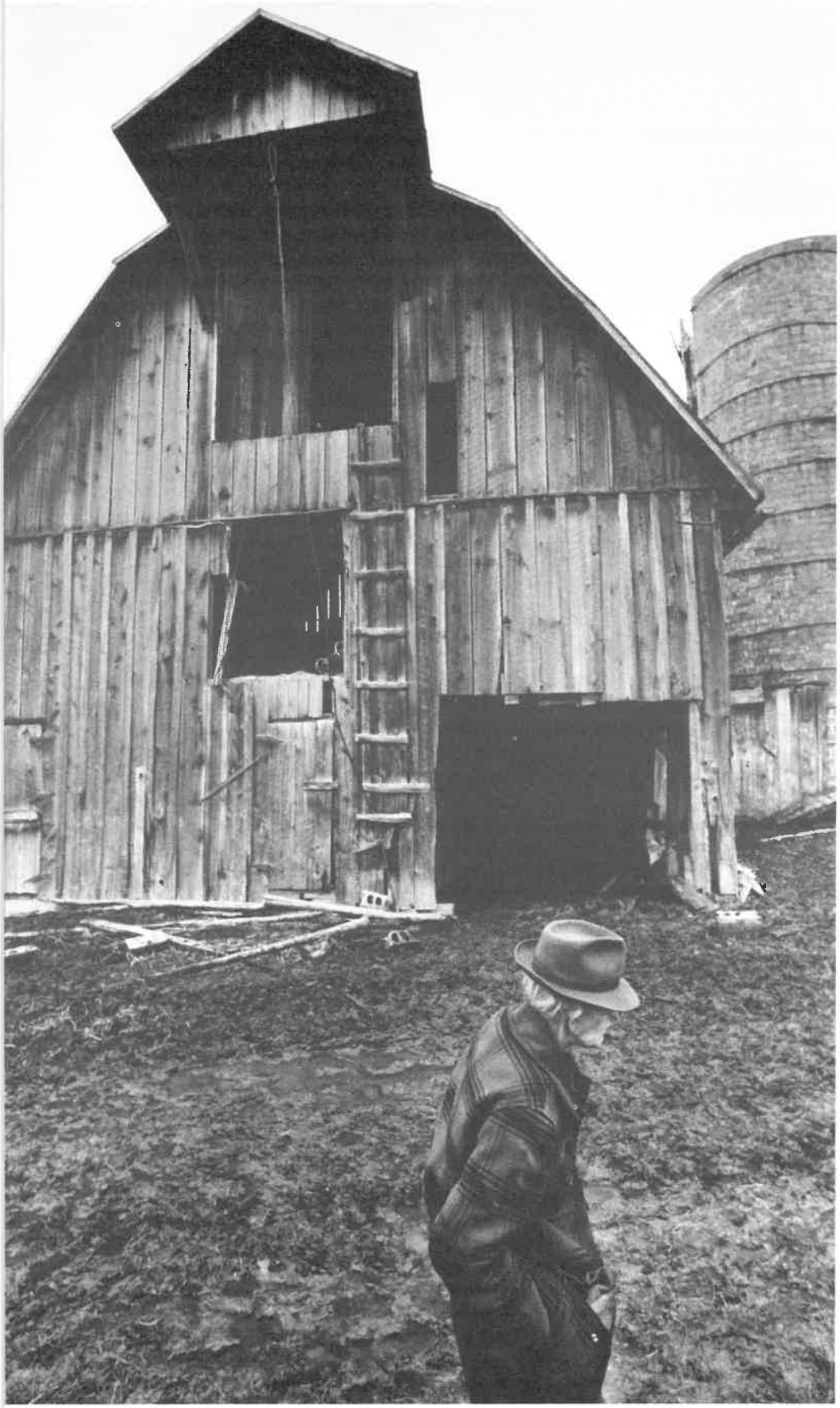
In 1915 Woodson had founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which he served as director, janitor, researcher and editor. He and an assistant spent part of each year selling Association publications out of the trunk of a car, and speaking wherever they found an audience. His most important published work was the college text, *The Negro in Our History*. He founded the influential *Journal of Negro History* in 1916.

At his death on April 3, 1950, Carter Woodson was at work on a projected six-volume *Encyclopaedia Africana*. Huntington attorney Herbert Henderson, who taught black history at Marshall for 13 years, called Woodson "the black intellect of his day. When he could not find anyone in the white-owned publishing business to print his history on black America, he went out and started his own publishing firm. His books on black history are as valid today as when he wrote them. They are quite readable and extremely accurate."

Woodson never married. He spent most of his life in Washington, visiting family members in Huntington from time to time through the years. He purchased the Artisan Avenue house now occupied by Belva Clark for Bessie Woodson Yancey, his sister and her mother.

"Uncle Carter would visit Huntington on his way to speak somewhere," recalled Mrs. Clark, "but the people here never paid much attention to him. He was never asked to speak in Huntington. Uncle Carter gave his life to preserve black history. He was afraid if he didn't do it, our heritage would be lost. I'm glad Huntington is finally recognizing him. He deserves it."

GOLDENSEAL readers wishing to support Huntington's efforts to honor Carter G. Woodson may send contributions to The Carter G. Woodson Memorial Committee, Office of the Mayor, P. O. Box 1659, Huntington WV 25717.



Lawson Kimbrew built barns for many neighbors in Randolph County, and this one for himself. The work was simple and enduring.

"I've enjoyed every day of my life," Lawson Kimbrew told me, at age 93. "I've had a hard life, but I've had a good life. I've worked hard. You hear these young fellers say, 'It'll kill you. It'll kill you,' but work never killed nobody. I've enjoyed every day of my life, and I still enjoy it."

Mr. Kimbrew knew what he was talking about when he spoke of work. He built some 40 barns in Randolph County between 1930 and 1960. He also renovated and moved buildings, including stores and churches, in various parts of central West Virginia. He told of some of his experiences during a 1981 interview at his Huttonsville home.

This interview was a spin-off of an Augusta Heritage folklore program I'd taken at Davis and Elkins College. My parents had suggested Mr. Kimbrew to me as an example of a folk builder. The strictest criteria for folk studies say that a true folk craftsman must have learned his skills from the oral tradition, and his work must not be affected by modern education or innovation. After listening to Mr. Kimbrew, I realized that he didn't qualify under this definition. He had read all that he could find on new methods and materials for building. But my father, Dr. Roberts of Elkins, persuaded me to go ahead and got Bill Kuykendall to go out and photograph Mr. Kimbrew with his buildings.

Now, six years later, both Mr. Kimbrew and my father are dead, and it is time to get the vivid images of the buildings and the memories of the Kimbrew work ethic into print. He lived in rural America during that great period when school books, radio, magazine advertisements, and new cars were smoothing out cultural differences and helping folks share ideas about all types of work.

Lawson Kimbrew had a distinguished West Virginia pedigree. His people had come by covered wagon to Randolph County from Richmond, Virginia, in the early 1800's. Tom Kimbrew, his grandfather, worked with the famous Lemuel Chenoweth, who built the covered bridges at Philippi and Beverly. Arch Kimbrew, Lawson's father, was primarily a farmer, but he built houses for himself and his neighbors. Arch also

worked on a Cheat River log boom, a river-spanning device to recapture timber sent downstream during a log drive.

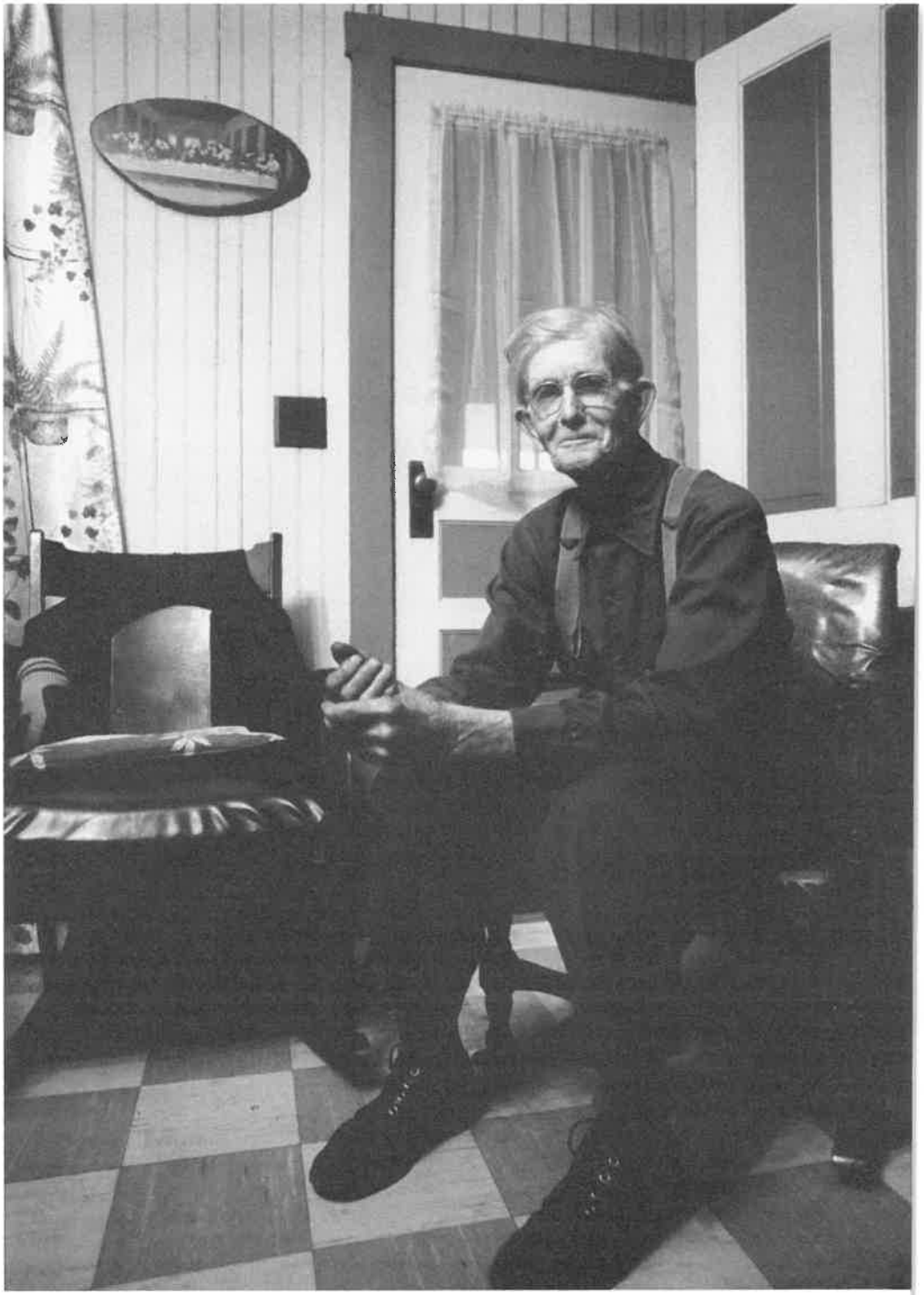
Lawson himself was born in Huttonsville on November 2, 1888. He recalled attending church all day on Sundays during childhood, and walking to a one-room schoolhouse at the turn of the road near his home. He remembered his school masters well.

"I went to school three years to old Thad Pritt," he told me. "When he come, there wasn't no bridge, and he had a pair of hip boots, Thad did. He'd take his boots and go into the river, then take his boots off and lay them down, and in the evening when he'd come back through he'd put them on again. He hunted all the time and trapped all the time. And I'll tell you, you could not stay in that schoolhouse for the skunks. He'd catch two or three skunks on the way, and he'd smell so bad when he was teaching that the students couldn't stay in school.

"And old man Wise," Mr. Kimbrew continued. "There was one of the best teachers I ever went to. I'll not say he was smart, but he was a good teacher. Nobody knows where he came from or where he went.

"Old man Wise, he chewed tobacco, and he just spit any place — you know, in the stove hearth, on the floor. They did not take high pride in them days. I made the fires over there, and there was a girl, the Pritt girl, she done the sweeping. She got $5 for four months, and I got $5 for four months for making the fires. They paid Mr. Wise about $35 a month."

There was nothing fancy about Lawson Kimbrew's education, but he did get a good grasp of the three R's



Mr. Kimbrew's house also was a product of his skilled hands. It went up in 1915 and lasted a lifetime.

Barn Builder

The Working Wisdom of Lawson Kimbrew

By Heather Roberts Biola

Photographs by Bill Kuykendall

Diagonal siding was best, according to Kimbrew, for its strength and good water run-off. This crib adjoins a Kimbrew barn.

before he entered the world of work. When he was 16 or 17 years old, he helped his father build the Hutton house, one of the few brick houses in the Tygart Valley at the time. Mr. Kimbrew did not work on another brick house until he built the home of Governor Herman Kump in Elkins some 20 years later.

One of Kimbrew's earliest paying jobs was with the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company when it set up a sawmill in Pocahontas County. He was hauling logs on the Greenbrier River. "I hate to tell you what the wage was," Mr. Kimbrew admitted. "I only got 98 cents for 11 hours each day. That's what I got. Couldn't even make a dollar. But, you lived a whole lot better than you do now with what you got."

Lawson Kimbrew was 26 when he married Beulah Channell on September 23, 1915. They built their own house where they later raised seven children. Mr. Kimbrew said he learned a hard lesson while building his house.

"This house has been built 66 years," he recalled. "I'll tell you about this house. Every board come from Tucker Ward's sawmill over there. Well, I got the frame up ready to put on the rafters. I didn't know too much about it, and my father, he come up one evening, on a nice day. He says, 'You better be a-bracing this house, or a wind storm will come and blow it down.' I said, 'I'll brace it in the morning.' The sun was shining nice and bright.

"The next day when me and my wife got up to the house, it done blowed away," Mr. Kimbrew ruefully reported. "Well, I had to rebuild the whole thing, put the rafters on and the weather boarding. My wife helped me. She was young then."

Although Arch Kimbrew had to teach his son a thing or two about framing up a house, Lawson said he learned barn building from books. He planned his barns after a book he had on cattle barns in the western United States. He described his methods in detail.

"Oak wood is the best for barns," he said. "I put the boards on the diagonal for strength and so the rain will run off the side. I've built big dairy barns like this one down here at the Huttonsville prison. It's got four rooms in it, four alleys. I put two sheds on each side of it. It's a 60-foot-long barn, 40-foot wide with 16-foot sheds on each side."

Mr. Kimbrew paid attention to the siting of his barns, as well. "The best way to set a barn is facing north," he noted. "The wind comes out of the north here, so you don't have as much strike." He had found that

placing a barn sideways to the wind invites trouble. "You take a barn 60 foot long, you have a big place for wind to strike on. This barn of Frank Ward's was facing west, and a few years ago it blew down."

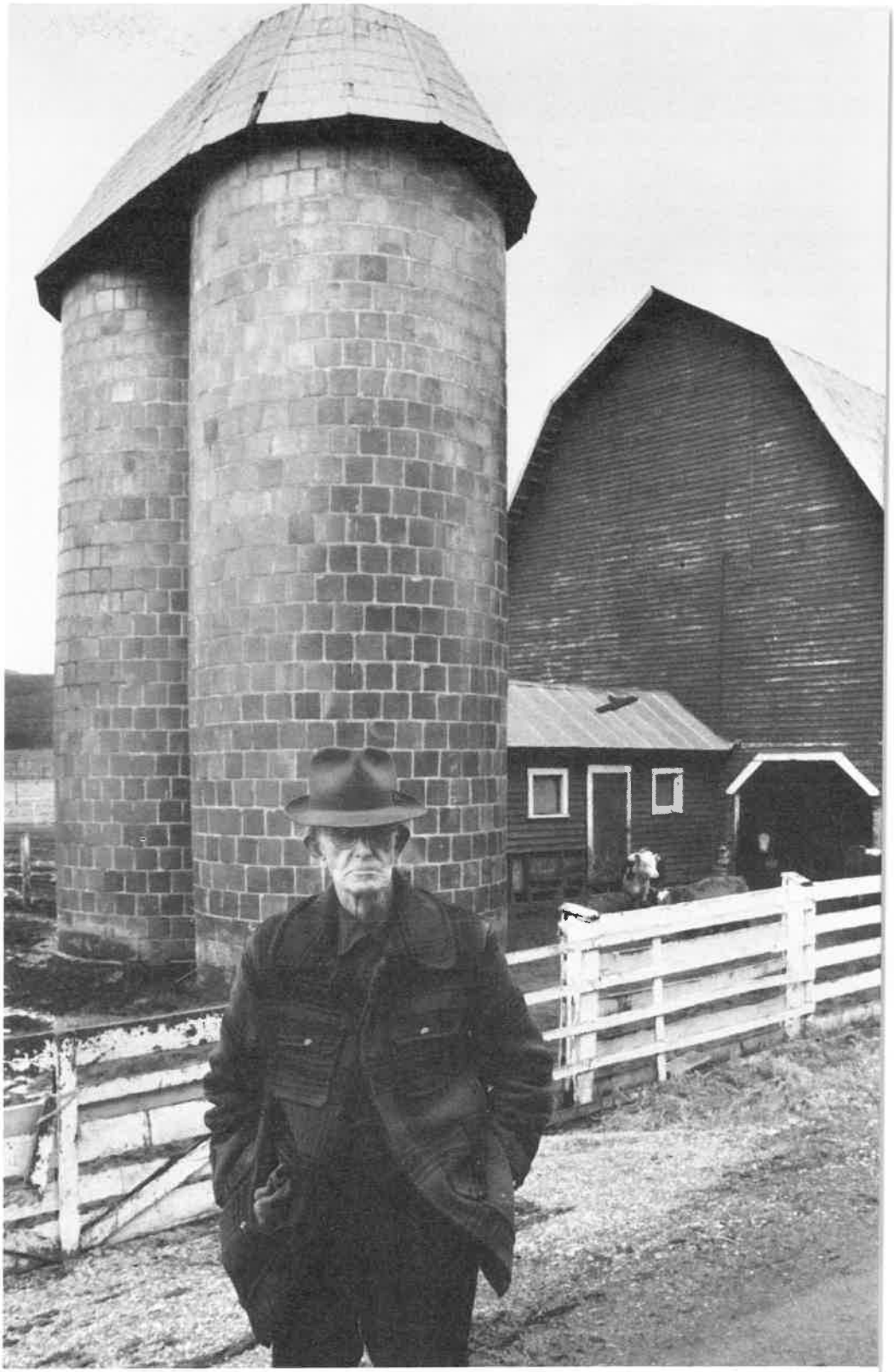
In time Mr. Kimbrew became a highly regarded local barn builder, and a fine silo man, too. "I got the biggest silo in West Virginia down here at Frank Ward's," he boasted. "It was 16 feet in diameter. When I was building that, the university sent a whole crowd over to see me build. It was 42 feet high. I asked Frank Ward what in the world did he ever buy such a silo as that for, and he said, well, he had 22 acres of corn to put in it. It didn't halfway fill it."

The builder took pride in his work and often signed his name to it. He gave one example. "I put in one barn with two 12-foot ones, twin silos, they call them. Climb up on top — my name's printed in there right in the concrete. I put it in there myself there on the left-hand side. I built the silos out of curved tile from Pennsylvania somewhere."

The big Frank Ward silo brought to mind a dramatic anecdote. "Jesse McGee helped me to build those silos," Mr. Kimbrew recalled. "A family of Shiffletts lived down over the hill, and they had a girl. She'd come and jump up on a bank about as high as the silo was. She'd stand up there while Jesse was handing me the brick and would talk to him. One of the Swecker boys'd come along to work, too. I had the shaft up and had boards laid over it. And this Swecker boy come up and moved that there board back of McGee, while I was getting a load of brick, and down McGee went.

"It was 42 feet high, and he fell nearly halfway. Some way his head got to going down, and his feet run through them there rungs in the ladder and his feet held him. He hung there and kept from falling down. It could have killed him as dead as a doornail on that brick floor. That's all that saved him — he was hanging by his toes in that ladder on the inside of the silo. It bruised him up awful.

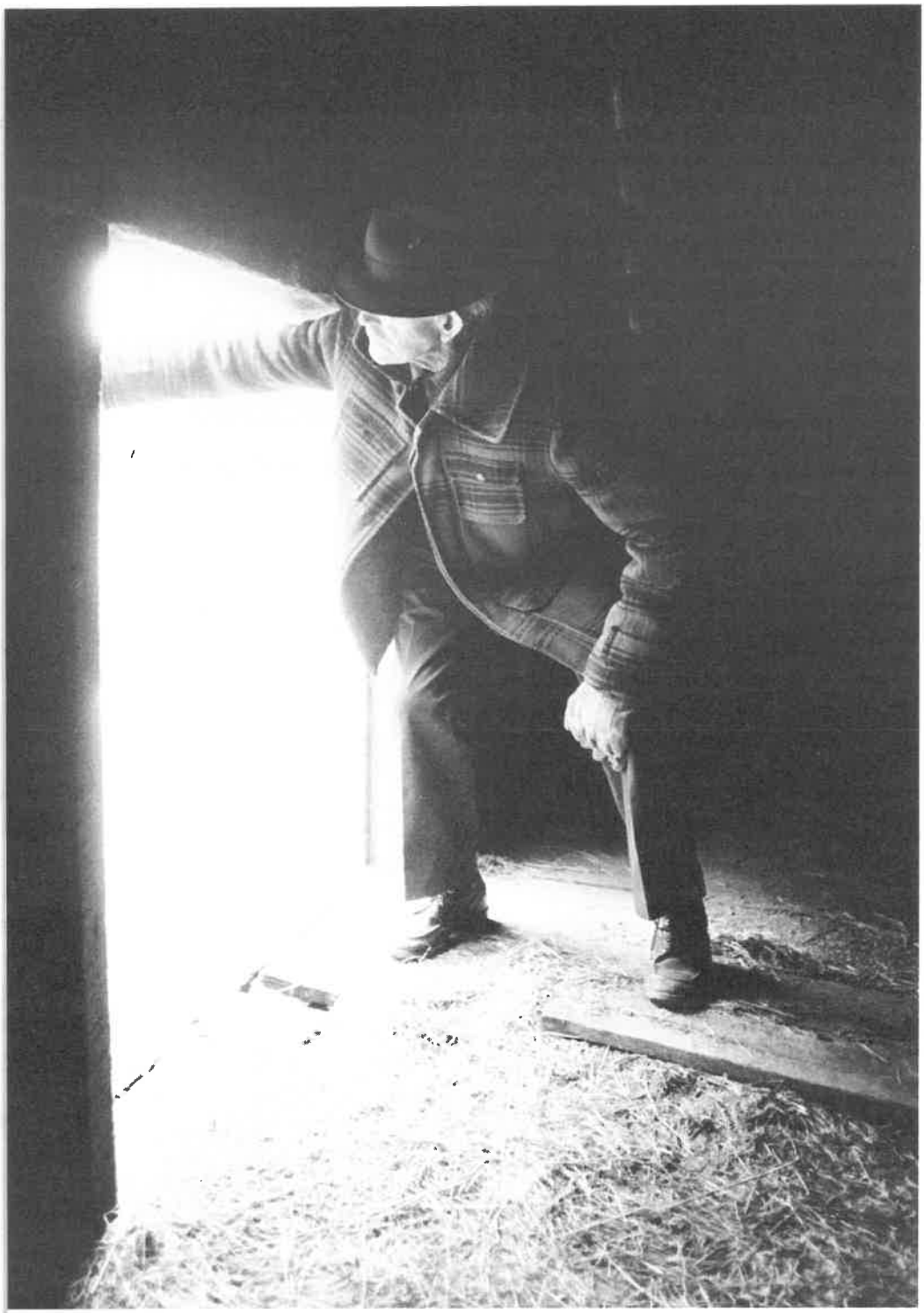
"It was all just because he was talking to that there Shifflett girl and that Swecker boy moved the board when I went to get the mortar," Mr. Kimbrew concluded. "As Jesse fell, he kept knocking at the sides of the silo. It's a wonder it didn't fall down, but it didn't."



Lawson Kimbrew was a silo man, too. He built these twin silos and big dairy barn at Huttonsville prison.

Kimbrew was also known for his ability to renovate older buildings. He did more than one roofing job for local landmarks. "I got interested in roofing later on," he recalled. "I put the tin shingles on the Presbyterian Church at Mill Creek, and I roofed all the way down to Elkins. I put them red tile shingles on the cupola on the Randolph County Courthouse. The others are lead-colored tin. There were no nails exposed. They were all underneath.

"Made my own shingles, too," he continued, going into the details he



The barn builder knew his way around barns. Here he checks the clearance on a hayloft door.

loved. "We had a machine when I got to roofing. I formed the shingles myself on the ground. I cut my length, turned up one side of my tin a half-inch and the other side an inch and a half, and I'd take them up and get on top and put them together. All I'd have to do is to tap it down. I'd get them shingles 24 inches wide and three feet long. When you put them on, there wasn't no nails to show."

A local church job brought another story to mind. "I was putting the roof on the Presbyterian Church in Huttonsville," Mr. Kimbrew remembered, then digressed to add something about the scale of the undertaking. "The bell up there was bigger than a dinner table. You could hear it clear up at Mingo. It was 87 feet up to the top of the cupola.

"I was putting the roof on and the feller that was helping me — I can't remember his name now — he wouldn't go up there every morning without some moonshine." Mr. Kimbrew noted that one of the neighbors was a considerate moonshiner, who "was there with a quart" each day. "Now, I never touched that stuff, but the man helping me wouldn't go up there unless he had that in him. The jars are up there today. Alls you'd have to do is go up there in that cupola, and where it's sealed, he dropped the quart jars down in the church."

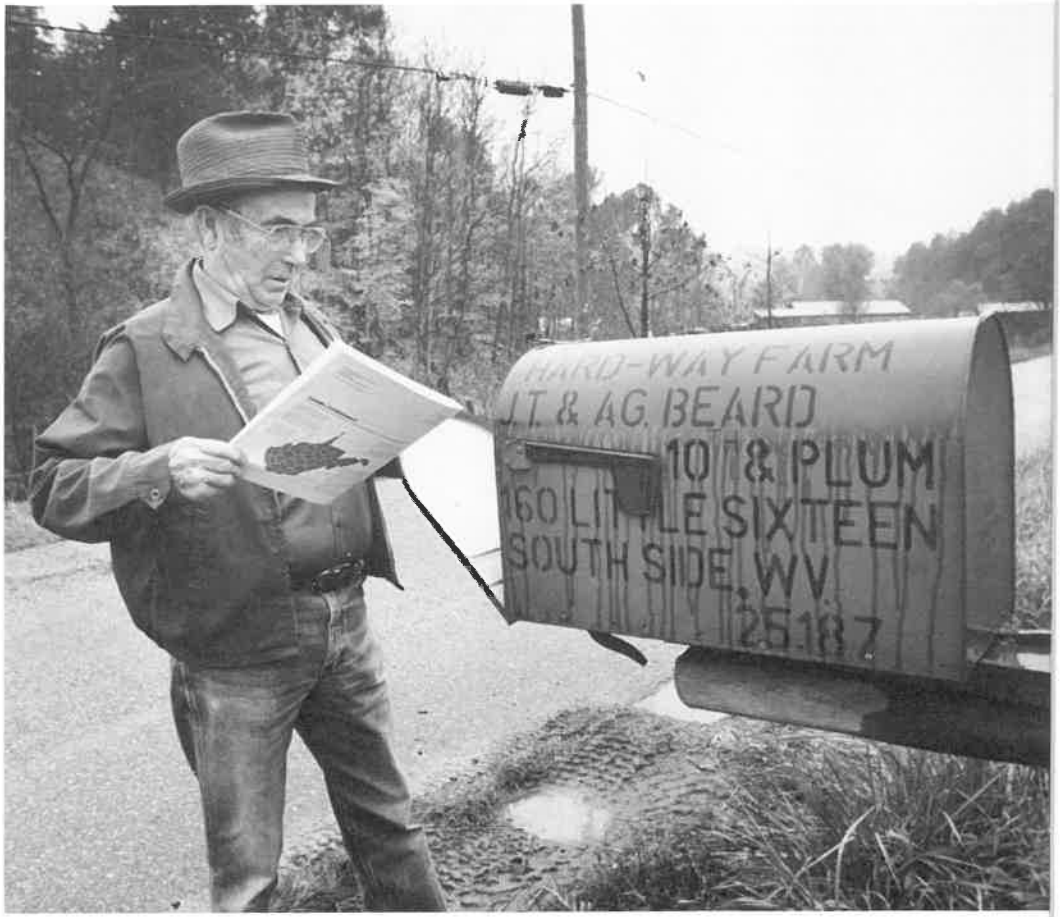
Kimbrew had a humorous run-in with the church's young preacher before it was over, he recalled. "I was up there 87 feet, and I didn't have nothing but a 12-inch board I was standing on. There was a young preacher and they had a conference going on. I was working up there — me and that what's-his-name. He was drunk, 'cause of what he was drinking all the time. I was standing up on top of that scaffold when they came out.

"The preacher come out and looked up at me and said, 'Lawson, you ought to be awful careful up there. That's about as high as you're ever going to get.'"

Kimbrew's next church project was more down-to-earth. "They got me to go down to that Presbyterian Church in Dailey, up on the hill," he said. "It was spread apart. I put a chimney down each side and put rods through and pulled it together and straightened it up. I think I'm the only one in this country that'll straighten up old stuff like that. I used jacks, screw jacks like you use for cars, only bigger. I bought them over at Weston when I moved two big stores and three or four houses for the state."

Mr. Kimbrew lived near Huttonsville from 1888 to 1983. He used the best of what he learned from his father, grandfather, and his teachers in the one-room school. He also read what he could find and tried new ideas from western barn builders and commercial advertisers. He worked from family tradition as well as modern innovation, but always he worked. His labor left a sizable legacy on the Randolph County countryside.

The barn builder summed it all up in just a few words. "I've done nothing else but building for 65 years," he said. "Just built something every year for 65 years."



Jabez Beard pulls a familiar publication from his oversized mailbox. With a mailman's sense of humor, he has painted "10th and Plum" on his box — the 10th house and plumb up the holler.

Rural Route

Jabez Beard Carried the Mail

By Irene B. Brand

Photographs by Michael Keller

Frequent rains had coated the road with hazardous red clay mud. An elderly couple's car slid into a ditch in an isolated area of Mason County. Helpless to get out of the predicament by themselves, their eyes brightened when they saw a red Jeep approaching. The Jeep, marked "U.S. Mail," stopped. With a friendly wave of his hand, the short, slight-built driver hopped out.

Without wasting any words, he reached into the back of the Jeep for a chain. Fastening this to the front of the ditched car, he soon had the old couple on safe ground again.

The lady rolled down the window, and said to their benefactor, "Mr. Beard, do you realize you're an angel of mercy?"

Beard's brown eyes sparkled mischievously, and he said in his usual joking manner, "Well, I always knew it, but I didn't think anybody else did." The lady replied, "I was sitting here praying for the Lord to send somebody to pull us out, and here you came around the bend."

Recalling his 34 years on the Southside rural route, Jabez (pronounced "Jay-bus") Beard says, "This happened countless times, especially in winter when people couldn't get their automobile started. They'd be sitting there with a chain already stretched out in front for me to hook on. Or if they'd got in a ditch — I always had a four-wheel drive — they'd just be sitting there waiting for me to pull them out. All I'd have to do was hook onto them."

It's plain that Beard did more for his patrons than deliver their mail. He served as their chauffeur, he delivered their messages, he helped bury their dead, he was their friend, and he listened to their troubles.

"They'd always want to know what neighbors were doing when I came by. Always wanted to know that. I hadn't been carrying the mail very long, when one man, who'd walked a long way to get his mail, settled himself for a talk."

Beard laughs when he remembers the advice this patron gave. "I want to tell you one thing," the man informed him. "When people come out and want to talk, there ain't much you can do about it, only just talk."

"And I found that out," Beard confirms. "They just wanted to talk so much, ask so many questions, and there wasn't much you could do but answer them and talk. They were always wanting to know about somebody sick, or if somebody died."

Beard received his appointment as rural carrier in October 1951, but his mail carrying days actually started November 22, 1946, when he became the substitute for the regular mailman, Adra Livingston. When Livingston retired, Jabez became the temporary carrier on January 2, 1951.

"I took the test in February 1951, but I didn't get the appointment until October," he recalls. "Five of us took the Civil Service test. I made the highest grade, and that was only 84."

Commenting on the test, Jabez said, "I took a correspondence course. Ad, the regular carrier, had gotten the information on it out of his Rural Mail Carrier's magazine. He suggested that I take it, and I did. That was prior to the test about six months. I passed the course, and they said,

'Whenever you find out when the test is going to be, notify us, and we'll send you a refresher course.' Which they did. Just a short little thing, but a lot of the things they had on the test was in that correspondence course."

The Southside post office has had only five postmasters since it was established September 25, 1886. Kerr Blain was postmaster when Beard received his appointment. His wife, Zora Blain, worked as the deputy postmaster. The present postmaster, Nina J. Bowles, assumed the office in September 1962. Only two carriers had served the rural route prior to Beard's appointment.

When Jabez first started, the mail route was 24 miles long. It began at the post office in front of Harmony Church on U.S. 35, went up Little Sixteen Creek, out Hambrick Ridge, and through the Chief Cornstalk Public Hunting Area. From there the route wound down Pond Branch to the main highway connecting Point Pleasant and Saint Albans, then back to the post office.

"I didn't have no vehicle, nothing but a horse to carry the mail on," he remembers of those early days. "That was an old bald-face horse I had. I don't know whether that horse even had a name or not. He wasn't much good. I bought him for $40. Then I sold that horse and bought the white horse, Nettie. I gave $75 for her, and I used her most of the time."

When Beard began filling in for the regular carrier, Mr. Livingston had been without a substitute for months, and he had accumulated a lot of vacation time. In the winter of 1947 Jabez carried the mail by horseback through the months of January, February, and March.

With a grin, he recalls, "That was one of the times when I was caught in a snowstorm. Old man Bob Fadeley still lived out there on Seven Mile Ridge. I'd go by his house about noon. He came out this one day, I think it was on the second day of February, and he said, 'You're going to freeze to death today.' I said, 'I believe it.'

"The wind was blowing so hard it would stagger the horse. When I'd get up on those high places, it would stagger him over to the side of the road. Fadeley said, 'It's two above zero.'"

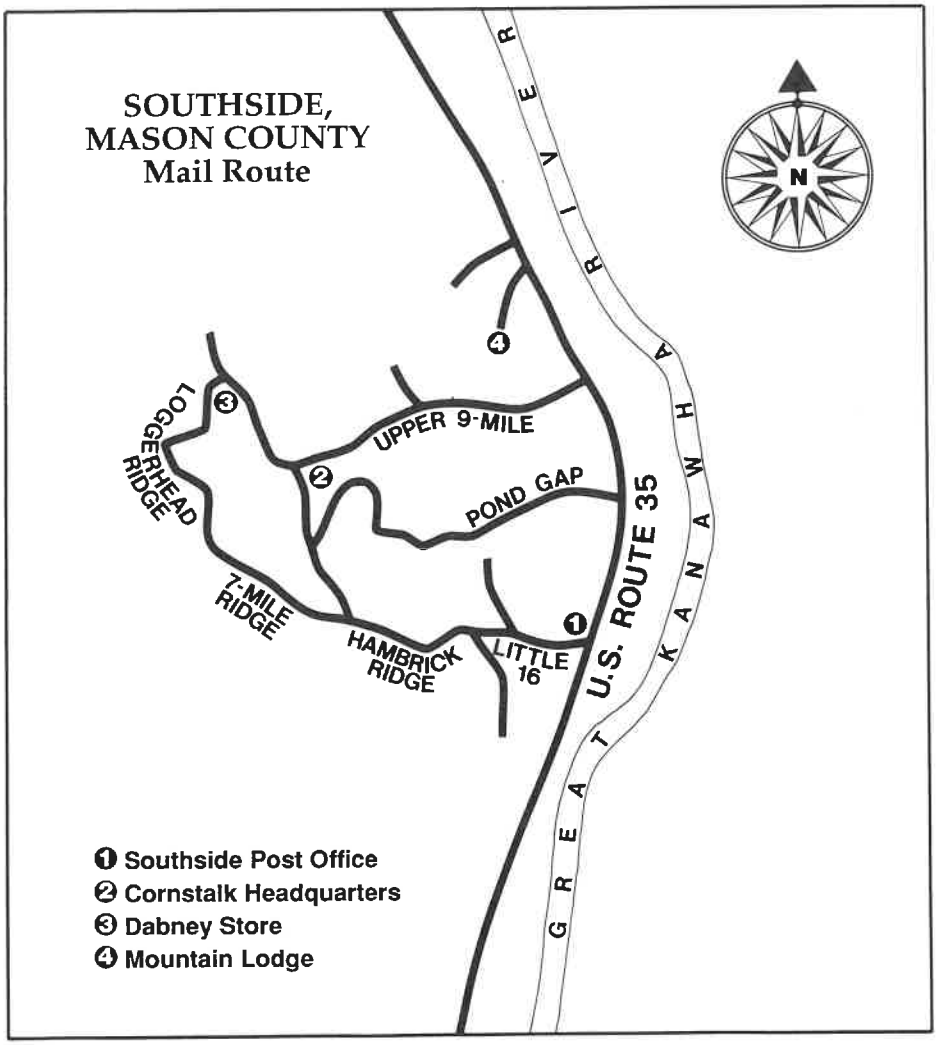
Beard's voice rises in volume, and he waves his arm emphatically. "And it never did get any warmer. Anyway, it was practically dark when I got in. Probably was dark when I got in to the post office. I was ready to agree with him that I was going to freeze to death.

"One other time, I think it was the same year, I was caught in another snowstorm going out that ridge. You'd face right into the wind. I thought I was going blind. I got so I couldn't see. I reached up and rubbed my hands across my eyes, and ice had froze to my eye lashes. I was looking through that ice. That's the reason I couldn't see. Nothing but ice! That was probably about the worst two days I ever had, but I had a lot of them when I was on that horse."

Beard found it difficult to protect himself from the severe cold. He wore wool socks, as well as felt boot liners, but his feet were still cold. In those days, insulated footwear was not readily available. A sheepskin coat gave his body the most warmth. And on rainy days, he wore a gum coat — a slicker that had a skirt big enough to cover all of the mail and the saddlebags. When he got off the horse, the coat dragged the ground.

When it rained, he had to carry an umbrella to keep the mail from getting wet as he transferred it from the saddlebags to the mailbox. "Carrying that umbrella all day long was the hardest job I've ever had. Especially in a wet snow, the umbrella was so heavy I thought my arm would come off."

Thinking about the unusual things he delivered, Jabez recollects the time he had to transport 200 baby chickens on horseback. "There was no way for me to carry them except in front of me on the saddle and let them rest on the saddle horn. You couldn't tie 'em on a horse like you could another



package. So, I didn't know how I was going to make it. It was hard to deliver the mail to the other boxes and keep them chickens from falling off the saddle horn. By the time I got over to where they was to be delivered, the saddle horn had already run through the bottom of one of the boxes.

" 'Course, they were supposed to pay for COD packages regardless of what kind of shape the merchandise was in. Then they'd make their claims later on if a lot of the chickens were dead. Anyway, I had to give these boxes off the horse to the lady who got the chickens. And the first thing she done, she just dropped down there on her knees on the ground and opened them boxes to see if any of the chickens was dead. If a lot of them had died, she wasn't going to take 'em.

"I'd already made up my mind that I wasn't going to carry them chickens back into the post office. I was gonna just pay for 'em myself and throw 'em away. Or give them to somebody. That would have been another 15 miles to take them back in to the post office. That was back in the '50's, and she'd answered one of those radio advertisements and had only paid about $5 for the 200.

"But she took them and give me the money. A few of them were dead, but not many, so she went ahead and took them. That was the worst thing I ever carried. I did deliver lots of honey bees, but they generally came in the spring, and I was back to carrying in the Jeep by that time.

"Catalogs were the heaviest things I delivered," the former mailman continues. "Those old Sears, Roebuck catalogs were heavier than their orders. And there were Montgomery Ward, Spiegel, and Aldens catalogs. I generally took two or three days getting them out when I was on the horse. I'd take so many a day. I'd just put them in sacks and hang them on both sides of the saddle horn, and kinda have in my mind where I was supposed to open the sack and start giving them out."

Beard was amazed how the horses learned the route. "You didn't have to pull them in to the mailboxes. They'd walk alongside those boxes and stop, and the minute they heard me close the box, they'd start again.

Jabez gave up the horse for four-wheel drive, relying on horseback delivery only when the spring thaw made roads treacherous. Here he poses with wife Agnes beside his first mail Jeep in 1952. Photographer unknown.

When I got over on the back side of the route and headed home, that white horse, Nettie, would go to them mailboxes, and she'd stand there until she heard that lid click shut, and she was gone just like that." With a laugh, Beard snaps his fingers. "You didn't have to touch the reins, say giddup, or nothing. Sometimes I'd try to fool her, if I was in a good mood, and I'd close it easy. But you couldn't close it so easy she didn't know it."

In 1948 Beard bought his first vehicle, a used Chevrolet truck. Then when he received the permanent appointment, he started buying four-wheel-drive vehicles.

"I started with a Jeep truck and ended up with a Jeep truck. And I had 15 different vehicles. The least time I had a rig was a year and a half. That was that Scout I got. I didn't get no two years out of it. And the most I ever got out of one was a Jeep station wagon, which was three years. Generally two years, and that was it."

Even after he moved up to four-wheel drive, at times Jabez still had to ride the horse. He would carry the mail along the paved roads in his Jeep, but on back roads he sometimes needed the horse. Usually he could use a vehicle until the first of January, and even then, if the ground was frozen, he might drive. But once the ground thawed, generally in early spring, he had to go horseback.

"I'll tell you just how bad the road was," he says. "The ruts were so deep out there on Loggerhead that when I rode the horse, and she got down in the ruts, I could touch the dirt with my stirrups. That was when the electric company was out in there setting light poles. They made wide tracks, and she could walk right in them, and I could kick the dirt with my toes." He still finds it amusing. "That's how deep the ruts was.

"And another time, I was going out that Loggerhead in my four-wheel drive. I had it down in the lowest gear I had, and I still couldn't hardly go. I had chains on my front, and my back wheels was scooting just like a sled. And the front wheels and chains was balled up in that red clay. I got out and cleared the mud out of the fenders, and I bet I hadn't gone as far as from here to that post," Beard gestures toward a cedar column about six feet from his chair, "before they filled up again. I'll bet I was two hours going as far as from here to the road."

Above: Beard prefers the oldtime ways on the mail route to today's hurry-up pace. "You don't really have time to get acquainted with the people," he says. "I kinda liked that part of it."

Right: Zora Blain was deputy postmaster when Jabez became a regular carrier. "When somebody complained about me, it didn't get no further than Mrs. Blain," he says. "She just told them off proper, right now."

Beard glances toward Little Sixteen Road, about 300 yards in front of his home. "And that was in May! It had rained for about three days, and it was just starting to dry. That red clay mud is just like chewing gum — rolled up, just as sticky as can be. You know how you can't get red clay off your feet. It does the same thing on tires."

In 1957, however, the route changed so that Beard no longer had to travel that road. Loggerhead was located within the borders of Chief Cornstalk Public Hunting Area, a 10,000-acre preserve maintained by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources.

The region had once been heavily populated, but when the government bought the land in 1939, families moved away. Only a few people lived in that area when Beard started carrying the mail. When it was arranged for them to receive their mail at other convenient locations, the postal department approved the route change. With that section of road deleted, Jabez could carry the mail on wheels throughout the year.

But in connection with that change of route, Beard cites his most embarrassing incident as a rural carrier. "The inspector has to come in and look over these routes and approve a change," he recalled. "They don't notify anybody, and the day he came to okay it, I was off, and my sub was carrying the mail.

"The postmaster brought the inspector up to my house. I just dropped everything, got him in the Jeep, and took off. Got out there in the middle of nowhere, and the Jeep quit. I knew exactly what was the matter. I'd run out of gas.

"He was a young fellow, and, of course, he understood. I said, 'I didn't think to check that gas since I wasn't carrying the mail.' I told him I thought I knew the way down through the woods to where somebody lived, but I'd never been there before. He said, 'I'll go along.' We walked down over the hill, and we run into some of those old home sites that had been abandoned when the government bought up the land. That just tickled him to death, to look over them. He found some old pieces of crocks and things like that. He took it all in good humor.

"Well, we come out in the right hollow, and found a boy to take us to get gas. Charged me $5, I remember. That was probably my most embarrassing moment on the mail route. But he approved the changes I wanted to make, and I didn't have to ride the horse after that."

Considering the hardships of his early years, Beard calls those days to mind with a great deal of nostalgia. "This horseback riding wasn't all bad," he says. "I had lots of experiences riding a horse that I couldn't have had any other way, for which I'm thankful. One in particular was my acquaintance with Carl Dabney. Even though Carl was blind, he tended a little family store along my route. He was about the most interesting person I'd ever come in contact with, for he was the only blind person I'd ever known.

"He'd been blind since he was three, but they'd sent him to Romney when he was about 10 years old for a few years. And he'd learned to do lots of things. He could count money

by the feel of it. He kept his pennies wrapped up in his $1 bills, his dimes in $10 bills, and two dimes in a $20 bill, and so on. He could do pretty good clerking — he could get anything in that store that anybody called for."

The family lived on a little hill about 400 yards from the store, on the opposite side of the road. Many times Beard watched Dabney walk down a path from the house to the middle of the road. He'd stay in the middle until he reached the store.

"There was a little porch on the store, and every time, he'd step right up on that porch without a bit of hesitation. Never did he hesitate! He'd step right up on the porch when he got to it, just like he could see it."

After watching several times, Jabez finally said, "I've noticed you walking over here, and you've done it without making a bobble, without a cane or anything. How do you do that?"

"I count my steps," Dabney answered. He knew he'd reached the middle of the road when he encountered a ridge of gravel thrown up by the cars. From that point, he counted his steps until he came to the store, then turned right to the porch.

"Another thing that amazed me about Carl," Beard continues, "was his sense of hearing. He liked for me to come in the store and tell him the news. And I'd always buy a little sack of peanuts, a bottle of pop, or something. When I was carrying in the Jeep, I'd get there along about 11 o'clock, and on the horse it would be about two o'clock in the afternoon. Either time, I was hungry enough to buy a little something.

"One day when I went in and got a bottle of pop, I pulled a handful of change out of my pocket, and something dropped on the floor. I said, 'I dropped a penny.' Dabney said, 'That wasn't no penny.' I looked down, and it was a little tiny key that I had in my pocket.

"And another funny thing happened. Right after I started subbing for Ad, they started advertising these cuckoo clocks. The war hadn't been over too long, and some of the boys had brought them back from overseas. Well, Carl had heard an advertisement somewhere, and he sent and got him one.

"Took about two months to get it, but he started looking for it after two weeks. He looked for it and he looked for it. He was just tickled to death when it come. He said, 'I'll have it working tomorrow, and you come in and see it.'

"So the next day, I pulled up there to the little old store and stopped, and Carl come out. 'It's almost ready. It's about 11 o'clock, and it's almost time for that cuckoo to come out. Come in and hear him.'

"And I went in. It was about two or three minutes till, and everybody was right quiet. He wouldn't let no one say a word. I was expecting some great big calamity of sorts. And here at 11 o'clock, that little door on that thing burst open right quick, and a little teensy, tiny bird poked his head out, and said, just as quiet, 'coo-coo.' And that was all there was to it." Beard still laughs merrily at the memory.

"You got more acquainted with the people when you was on a horse, and they got more acquainted with you. This little Dabney store was a kind of gathering place for people. They'd know about what time I'd be coming along, and they'd come and get their mail right there.

"There was an older couple who lived about a half-mile from the store, and their name was Dabney, too. Sometimes this Mr. Dabney would come down and loaf at the store, then walk back up with me. We'd talk about everything, about the old times, and how things used to be. One day we got to talking about fried apple pies. I had a faint recollection that Mom used to make 'em. Well, I mentioned the fact that it had been years since I'd had a fried apple pie. And Mr. Dabney said, 'Bessie makes them all the time. I like 'em on a cold day.'

"Well, that was in the wintertime, of course, or I wouldn't have been riding a horse. The next day or two it turned off real cold, and when I opened their mailbox, there was a fried apple pie, still warm. And I mean it really tasted purty! Then I could just figure, several times during the winter after that, on a real cold day, on finding a fried apple pie in that mailbox.

"Then another lady on down the road aways would have a piece of warm cake in the box. And numerous older people would bring me out a cup of coffee on a cold day. I remember in particular one fellow, Mr. Woods, and he must have been around 80 years old. He was shaking so bad — he was old and nervous — that the coffee was half-spilt before he ever got it out there. But I drunk it anyway.

"Things like that wouldn't have happened if you were in a vehicle and going fast," Jabez points out.

Contrasting mail delivery today, he says, "They wasn't particular about the time you put in on the route then. That's all changed. You've got to go and get there, and get back in a certain time because they allot you so much time to carry the mail. That was happening before I even quit. They want you back in a certain time, so you've got to get on the ball. You don't really have time to get acquainted with the people. I kinda liked that part of it."

Jabez made many friends, and he enjoyed them. He cites with some amusement the case of a simple young woman who had a crush on him. She'd meet him at the box every day and bring him flowers and other presents. Jabez wasn't married at the time, and she'd tell the neighbors she was going to run off and marry the mailman.

"Of course, that would just tickle them to death. They'd all break their necks to tell me that. Well, this one hot day, she was standing by the road, and I noticed one hand was all closed up. When I stopped to give her the mail, she reached her fist out, and said, 'Here!' I stuck my hand out, and she dropped a whole fistful of melted candy in it. Then she headed for the house on a run."

With a touch of regret, Jabez remembers another incident with the woman. He always gave her some mail, even if it was what he calls a "box holder," junk mail addressed to "Resident."

"But one day it was muddy, and I suppose I didn't talk too plain, or something, and anyway, she just had a box holder. I stopped at the mailbox, and she was standing there. Just to have conversation, I said as I handed it to her, 'It's kinda muddy.' She shouted, 'Full of money!' She turned and went to the house just as hard as

The men who carried the mail were among the most popular citizens of rural America by the middle part of the 20th century. Many patrons waited by their mailboxes not only for the arrival of their mail, but for the wealth of information the mailman was expected to deliver along with it. From the earliest years of rural free delivery, the postal carrier had to be able to discourse knowledgeably upon a diversity of topics: The weather, the price of eggs, the results of the latest election, and the births, deaths, marriages, and occasional elopements along his route.

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The rural mailman was also expected to perform a variety of odd jobs for his patrons, which might range from addressing an envelope to feeding someone's livestock. He sold stamps, postcards, and money orders, delivered packages and accepted them for mailing, and in the early days of the service canceled stamps. He was also often requested to run simple errands for patrons, such as delivering a dozen eggs to a relative in town or picking up a spool of thread. One mail carrier was even asked to pick out some dress material for a lady patron in Wisconsin. His choice proved so successful that she continued to rely on her mailman's good taste in future selections.

Although the early rural carriers did not have to be high school graduates, they were expected to be able to read and write, and many of them were literate enough to publish regular columns in their local newspapers. Patrons often regarded their carriers in much the same light as the local schoolteacher, and in fact, many had actually been country schoolteachers. Others had been farmers, or even fourth-class postmasters displaced by the introduction of rural free delivery.

The men who delivered the mail were expected to be above reproach. The Post Office Department insisted that the carrier live in the community he served, and that he be "a man of character." He could have no criminal record, could drink no intoxicating beverages while on duty (nor to excess at any time), must always be neat and tidy in appearance, and should be a man of high moral standards. Nothing brought a postal inspector running faster than a report that a mail carrier was dallying with one of his female patrons.

Until 1896, there was no rural delivery of mail in the United States. Although more than half the country's 76,000,000 people lived in rural areas at that time, they were forced to call at their local post office to receive or send mail. In 1891, Postmaster General John Wanamaker had conducted a limited experiment in rural delivery service. It was supported enthusiastically by the editors of the country's newspapers, who naturally favored this improved distribution method. However, it was not until William L. Wilson was appointed to the position in 1895 that Congress appropriated funds for a more comprehensive study.

Postmaster General Wilson was from West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. He had been president of West Virginia University and a U.S. Congressman. On October 1, 1896, the experiment in rural free delivery was launched, appropriately enough, in West Virginia, with three carriers operating from the post offices in the Jefferson County communities of Charles Town, Halltown, and Uvilla.

Rural carriers originally were paid $300 a year, out of which they were required to furnish their own transportation. By 1902, the carrier's salary had reached $600 annually, but this was still slightly less than that of a city mailman, who had fewer on-the-job expenses than his rural counterpart. The latter had to maintain at least two horses, with their feed, harness, and veterinary bills, as well as keep his buggy or wagon and, in some areas, sleigh in good repair.

The route which the rural mail carrier served originally was required to be 25 miles long and serve 100 families. But there were always extenuating circumstances affecting the laying out of those routes. Local politics, neighborhood quarrels, and the location of homes of influential patrons contributed to some rather convoluted routes of varying lengths. Then again, a route of 16 miles over rough terrain and poor roads might take longer to complete than a regulation 25-mile route. One carrier might work 10 hours and another three. But if a postal route was shorter than regulation — no matter the number of patrons served or the time it took to serve them — the mail carrier received a reduced salary.

The country mailman also had to contend with the vagaries of the weather. Sometimes he never made it back to the post office at all but had to spend the night at a farmhouse along his route or, on occasion, out in the open. Of course, the rural carrier often fought the rain and sleet and dark of night less from pride in his job than for fear of having his pay docked. It was understood that a mail carrier would at least make an attempt to deliver the mail regardless of weather, or lose a day's pay. The conscientious rural carrier also knew the importance of serving his patrons as quickly as possible, especially during stormy winter weather, since the snowbound farmer then had leisure time to catch up on his reading.

Obviously, not everyone was cut out to be a rural carrier. It took a special kind of man, with a distinct character, ability, and temperament, to derive satisfaction from the job. Many rural mailmen, however, considered theirs to be the best of all possible work, and to these dedicated people it was not merely a job but a calling.

—Margo Stafford

Reprinted from the Summer 1983 GOLDENSEAL.

Above: Nina Bowles, the present Southwide postmaster, says Beard provided much financial help to elderly residents. "Why, he acted as their bank," she says. "He'd give them money to help them out till their checks came."

Below: Jabez and Agnes had their log house constructed after Jabez retired. Much of the building material was taken from the Beard farm, including cedar, walnut, pine, poplar, beech, oak and maple interior paneling.

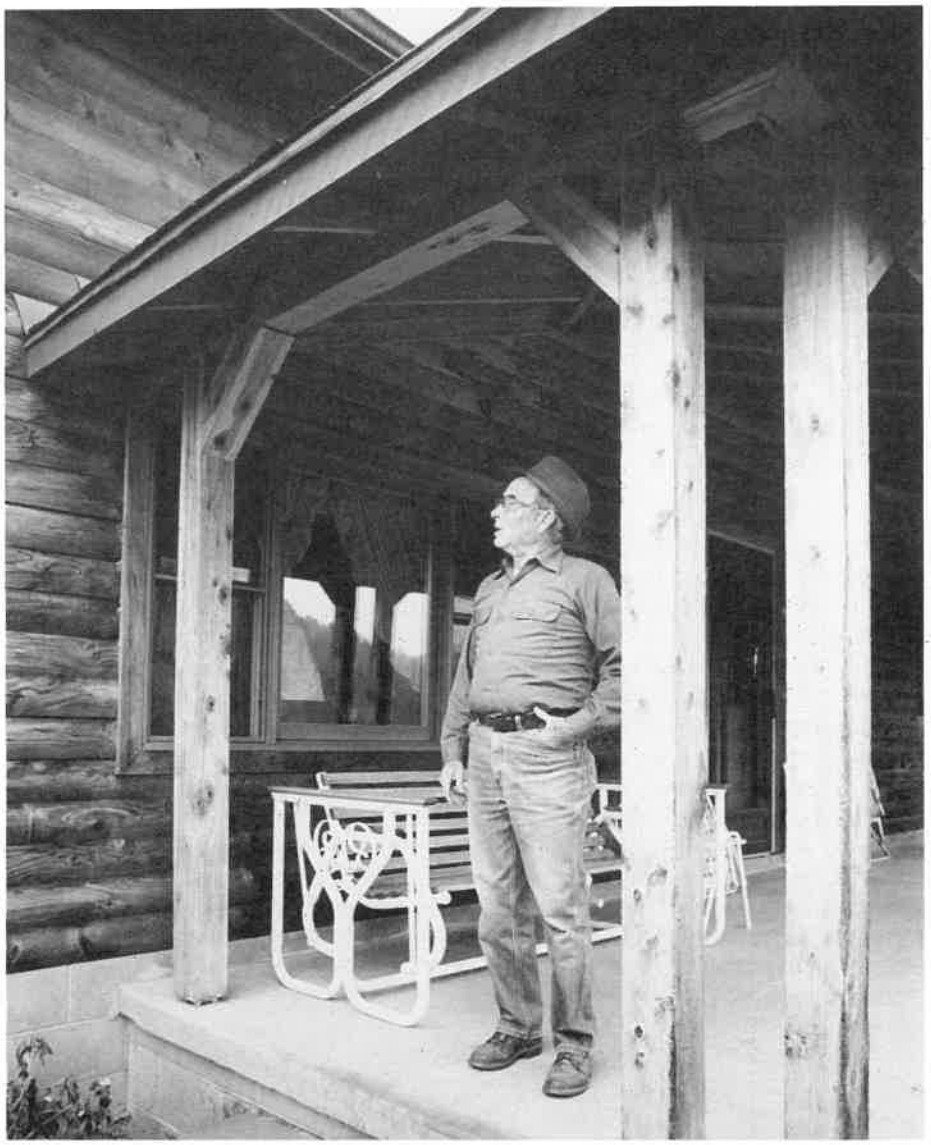
she could go." Although the episode amused him, still Beard regretted it. "She never showed up then for three or four days. She thought I'd lied to her, I reckon, when she got in there and found out there wasn't any money in that thing."

Nina Bowles, the present Southside postmaster, remembers that Jabez gave a lot of financial help to elderly people on the route. "Why, he acted as their bank," she says. "He'd give them money every month to help them out till their checks came."

When asked about this, Beard says with a depreciatory gesture, "Oh, maybe I did, but I've forgot about that.

"There's only one that I particularly remember. This was back in the '50's. A man came out and said, 'Jabe, I don't have money to pay my insurance, and it's due. Are you going to pay it for me?' And I said, 'Yes, I'll pay it for you.' I knew that he'd pay it back as soon as he got it, and he did. I did a few little things like that."

Beard performed many services, especially for old people. Because he was always willing to help, folks didn't mind calling on him. This was especially true during the 1950's when automobiles weren't plentiful. In the



summertime, he'd finish his route by noon, and many citizens thought he didn't have anything else to do.

"I took numerous people to the doctor," Beard admits. "I learned something from them old people. I hated to take anything for doing that, but they would insist on paying me. And I found out they felt better by giving me a dollar. And that's what they'd give me. They'd think they was paying me. And it probably would pay for the gasoline, as far as that's concerned. I just learned to take that dollar for their sake, not for mine. It made them feel better, and that way they felt like they could ask me again."

One Point Pleasant doctor, Roy Eshenaur, made house calls in the country, and Jabez often took him to see families who lived in out-of-the-way places.

"Where people lived on bad roads, especially in the wintertime, Doc Eshenaur would stop at my house to see how the roads were. Well, what he really stopped there for was to get me to take him in my Jeep, and I'd take him. He'd offer to pay me, but I never would take anything from him. And he didn't insist. I went to him if I had a cold or anything, and he always give me some medicine."

Beard says that the strangest request he ever had on the mail route happened at the Chief Cornstalk Hunting Area headquarters. The Department of Natural Resources had brought in several buffalo and elk, and one day when he stopped to leave the mail, he learned that a young elk was sick.

"It was losing its hair, and the caretaker and game warden had penned it up. They wanted to give it a shot, but neither one of them would do it. The caretaker asked me if I'd ever done anything like that. Well, I'd vaccinated lots of calves, so he said, 'Come in here and give it a shot.' Which I did, and needless to say the next morning when I come by, the elk was dead."

Once when the Cornstalk employees were moving the buffalo from one pen to another one of the animals broke its neck, and they butchered it. "The caretaker gave me a mess of it, and it was good," Jabez says. "It was real dark meat, and tasted a little sweet, I thought. Then someone shot one of the elk for a deer. They fined the hunter, but they butchered the elk and gave me a mess of it. That meat tasted more like beef than beef does. It was really good."

Beard treasures some of the things that his eccentric patrons did and said during his years of mail carrying. With an amused smile, he states, "I was well informed on lots of things. One thing I found was that there wasn't going to be no Democrats in heaven. Brother So-and-So come out one time and asked me if I knew that. And I said, 'No, I didn't know that.' He said, 'The Bible don't even speak of them as being Democrats. It speaks of them as being sinners. You know where it speaks of Publicans and sinners.'

"I also remember picking up one letter edged in black. Of course I'd always heard of the Letter Edged in Black. In fact, there was a song about it. Anyone who got a letter edged in black, according to the old people, knew that it was telling them about a death. They'd be forewarned before they opened the envelope." An elderly lady, whose son had died, used this means to inform her relatives of the death.

He also remembers the marital problems of an old couple who'd married in their 60's. It was a second marriage for both of them. Every so often, they'd separate, and the man would go to live with his daughter. After a few days, the wife would write him a letter, and he'd return home.

"They did that several times a year," Beard relates, "but this one particular time, she came down with a letter. He'd left a few days before, and she gave me the letter to mail. With a pert expression in her eyes, she said, 'Now give that a push when you let it go.' She wanted RUSH on that letter. I can still see her doing that."

People never wanted to bother with an empty mailbox, Jabez says. "This one fellow, he played it smart. His house was off of the mail route quite a distance. Every time he got his mail out, he'd put a weed in the lid. Then he could drive by, and if that weed was still there, he'd know I hadn't opened the mailbox and put anything in it. He was a big, heavy-set man, and that way he didn't have to get out of his car.

"It took me a good long while to figure that out. I'd just see that weed stuck in the mailbox every day that I stopped. I'd notice it would fall out as soon as I pulled that lid open. I think I said something to him about it, and he kinda grinned and admitted what he was doing.

"And then I had another embarrassing moment," Beard continues. "I had a registered letter for a family one day. They lived in a big house with two front doors, and I never knew what door they'd use. I'd toot my horn, and whichever door they'd come to, that's the door I'd take their mail to.

"Well, I drove up one March day and tooted my horn. It was a little while before anyone come out, but soon the door opened and this woman headed on out to the Jeep. I didn't have time to get out. You could tell she didn't have much on but her housecoat, which had one button at the neck. It was quite windy, and the wind caught that thing and took it right up over her head. She didn't have a stitch of clothes on! She said, 'Whoops!' and pulled the robe down.

"She was almost out to the Jeep then, and she said, 'I just got out of the shower.' I said, 'Well, you can't pay any attention to a little thing like that.' 'Of course not,' she said, and went ahead and signed for the letter. It didn't embarrass her a bit."

On another occasion Beard spent more than an hour taking a special delivery letter to a woman who wasn't at home. "They lived off the mail route, but I didn't have any idea where. That was when I was substituting for Ad — I was riding the horse. I took out that road, and I went for over a half-a-mile, and I looked way down in a holler and saw an old house with smoke coming out of the chimney.

"Well, I knew somebody lived in there, but I couldn't see no road. A path went over the hill. I tied the horse up and walked down. The old lady who lived there, the mother-in-law of the woman the letter was for, saw me and came up the path to meet me."

When Beard got close enough to tell the woman what he wanted, she

informed him that the addressee had left for Illinios the day before.

"So, I thanked her, and turned around and come back. We had to send the letter back. That took an hour or more. This was on Saturday. I'd rode that horse for six days. It was wore out, couldn't hardly beat him along, and then to have to go that extra mile to take a special delivery letter, and there wasn't nobody there to deliver it to."

Of all the dangers of the job, Beard thinks that crossing flooded creeks presented the worst hazards. "Once when we'd had a big rain, I come through the creek up there at Ed Woyan's. I took the fan belt off to keep from drowning the motor out. I crept through, but the water run right through the Jeep, right around my feet and on out. I had the mail up so it wouldn't get wet. Just when I got out of the water, the motor quit. I had to dry it off, and it started again.

"I hung up lots of times, but I carried a hand winch, what we call a come-along. The come-along had 30 feet of lines on it, and I could reach out somewhere and get a tree and pull myself out. I went over a hill a time or two, but I was lucky, or had presence of mind to keep from turning over. I never did have to call a wrecker. I got a safety award for 30 years of driving without an accident."

Jabez keeps his old mailbag, now full of memories, at the Southside post office. He lives near the tiny building, and often stops by to visit.

When asked what he missed most after he retired in 1980, Beard says, "There wasn't a great many things that I did miss, I can tell you that. When I retired, I was ready to retire. I made up my mind in six months. I knew I could retire with a full pension. I was already in Step 12. I'd gone as high as I could go, as far as my salary was concerned.

"And my farming operations had increased until I couldn't do both things. It just kinda happened all of a sudden that I took a notion that I'd retire. I missed people, but then on the other hand, I have lots of people come around. So, I can't say that there was anything I missed, to tell the truth about the matter.

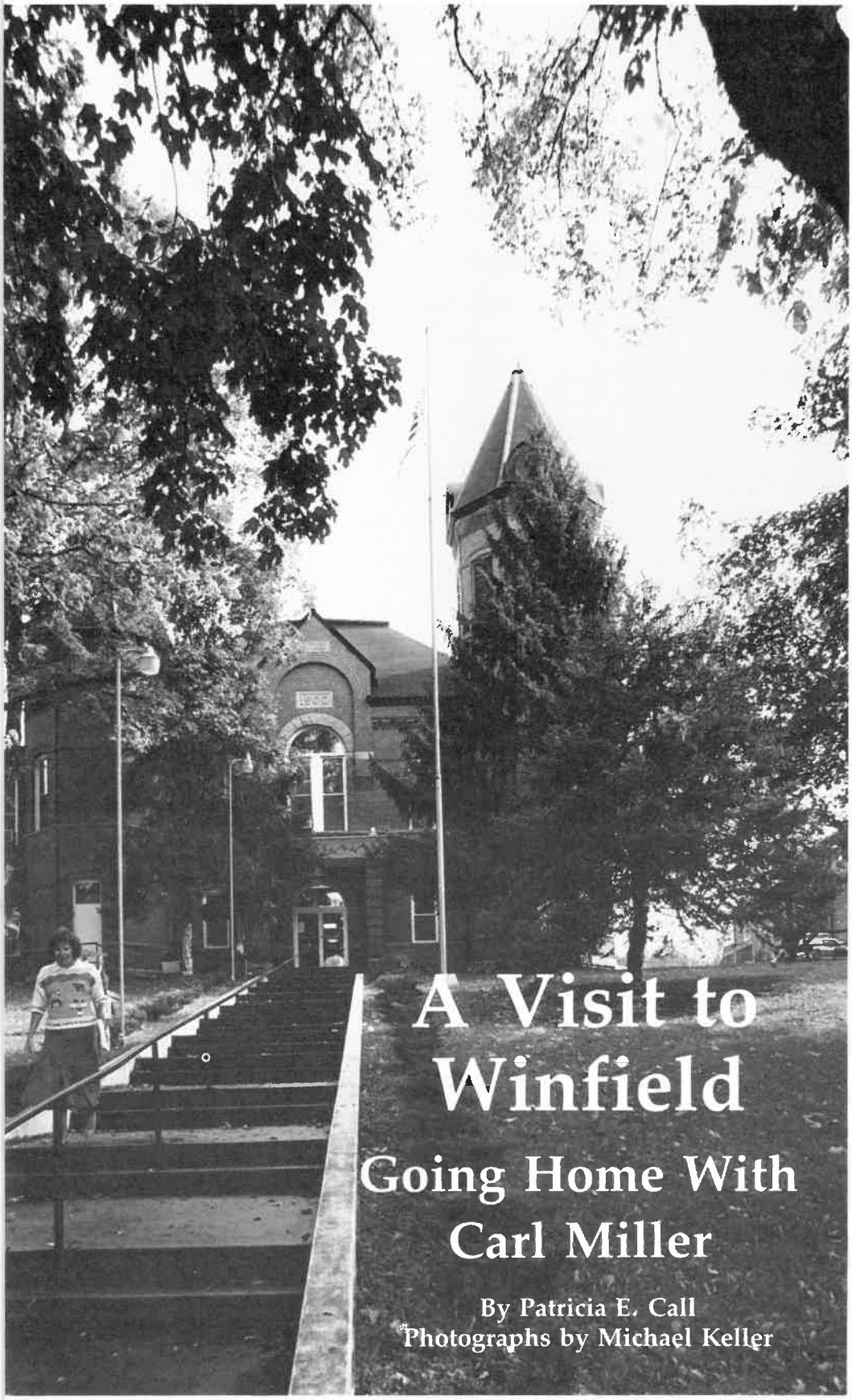
"But it was considered a good job. When I started out as regular carrier, the salary was $2,700 a year. And they paid you eight cents a mile for maintenance. By the time I retired, the length of the route had increased to 60 miles. Most of this increase was due to the consolidation of the Beech Hill route.

"The salary when I quit was around $15,000. It had just gotten to the place where you could make a living on it. But you can't hardly beat this United States government for paying. One time they'd fooled around in Congress and just run out of money. They notified us that the pay might be late, but it wasn't. It came on time. That was the only time there was any hesitation."

After his retirement, Beard sold his house near the post office and moved up to his farm. He and his wife, Agnes, had a house constructed of hemlock logs. The interior, with the exception of the bathrooms, is paneled in lumber cut from Beard's own farm. "I tried to use a little of all kinds of trees," he says. "We used cedar, walnut, several different kinds of pine, two kinds of maple, poplar, beech, and two different kinds of oak."

But Jabez Beard doesn't have much idle time to spend in his dream house. He raises several acres of tobacco each year, grows corn and hay to feed his cattle, and still finds time to help out his neighbors. On Sunday mornings he teaches a Bible class down at Harmony Baptist Church. The Beards' only son died a few years ago, but their grandson, Adam Jabez, spends a lot of time with them.

When asked what he'd change if he had his life to live over, Beard has the ready reply of an untroubled man. "I don't want to go back and live it over, I can tell you that, but I don't know that I'd make a great deal of changes," he says. "It hasn't all been easy, as far as that's concerned, but I don't know as I'd do anything different."



A Visit to Winfield

Going Home With Carl Miller

By Patricia E. Call
Photographs by Michael Keller

Carl Miller spent much time at the Putnam County Courthouse. The main structure was built in 1903, with two annexes added during Carl's 12 years on the county court. "We worked hard to get those," he says proudly.

I listened to my 82-year-old Uncle Carl Miller as we sat in his 1968 Plymouth parked in the middle of Main Street, Winfield. It was nearing Memorial Day, and we had come over from Kanawha County to decorate his Aunt Nora (Nonnie) and Uncle John Miller's graves.

"Where your hometown is, that's where your heart is," Uncle Carl said of the Putnam County town on the banks of the Kanawha River. "I came to Winfield as a boy of three to live with my Uncle John and Aunt Nonnie. So this is hallowed ground to me. I lived here 69 years."

My uncle's mind focused not on the present but on the past. "Winfield was a mecca in the summertime," he said. "Families came from Huntington and Charleston to spend vacations with relatives. Some even rented. Kanawha River was clean then. There was good fishing. We'd boat, swim and picnic. There was a tennis court right there next to E. W. Wick's General Store."

I looked in the direction Uncle Carl pointed, seeing nothing but a vacant lot spotted with tall grass.

"The tennis court was the center of activity when I was growing up. Lots of good games played and pop drunk there. E. W. Wick stretched chicken wire across the court to serve as the net. One rule he enforced was, you had to play honest." Uncle Carl spoke now in a low manner, as if talking to himself, recalling the people and places of the past.

My attention shifted to the opposite side of the street. Framed in the darkened doorway of Burdette's General Store, a stooped man waved for us to come in. Carl looked over with a smile of recognition. "There's Archie, owns the store. Roll your window down," Carl directed, as he motioned for Archie to come chat.

The frail man cautiously came down the steps of the store, walked to the car, and looked in. His wide eyes peered through his spectacles.

"You don't know me?" Carl questioned.

Archie squinted and prodded deep into the crevices of his memory for a minute. Then came, "No, no, I don't."

"Carl Miller here," said my uncle.

"Carl Miller," Archie's voice rose with pleasure. "Swan, I've been

wondering why you hadn't been back lately. Been thinking about you."

"This is my niece, Pat," Uncle Carl explained. "We've come to decorate Uncle John and Aunt Nonnie's graves. I just stopped to show Pat where I grew up."

Archie, as though he hadn't encountered anyone with whom to share the past in ages, took up the conversation nonstop. "Yes sir, Carl," he began, "you and me had the privilege of growing up and growing old here. Winfield's the best place in the world. I went to school the next street over," he pointed for my benefit. "Old schoolhouse is long gone. But I always loved Winfield. Ran the ferry between Winfield and Red House for a long time; worked for Mr. Wick right up there. Been here all my life.

"Carl, you were my Sunday school teacher at the Methodist Church. Remember?"

"Yep, I remember. I taught 37 years."

"You see, Pat," Uncle Carl pointed to the building on the corner. "Used to be L. B. Bowyer's General Store. That ornate front is made of metal and was brought here from Cincinnati by boat. About 1891, I think it was. Uncle John said they had a devil of a time getting that from the boat up Main Street. Street was full of mud holes then."

"Used to have plays and orchestras upstairs, and many a conversation was spun right there on those steps," Archie added. The three of us directed our attention to the frame building, but I was unable to see as much as they did. I saw only a dilapidated structure with scaling paint.

"Brings back mixed memories," Uncle Carl said thoughtfully.

"It's starting to rain," I interjected, seeing raindrops on the windshield.

"Yep, we better go. Archie, you take care now." As the car drifted forward, Archie threw up his hand signaling agreement and good-bye.

My uncle chuckled and said, "We've been parked in the middle of the street and no traffic anywhere. Ain't that something? I've seen a dog lay right in the middle of the street all day, and nobody bothered him.

"There's the *Putnam Democrat* newspaper office," nodded Uncle

Above: Donna Summers is a longtime friend of Carl Miller's. She worked for him at the *Putnam Democrat* weekly newspaper during the 1950's. Here they reminisce about old times.

Below: This building, now dilapidated, was formerly L. B. Bowyer's General Store. Plays and concerts were held upstairs. Carl reports that the ornate front, made of metal, was shipped from Cincinnati by steamboat in the 1890's.

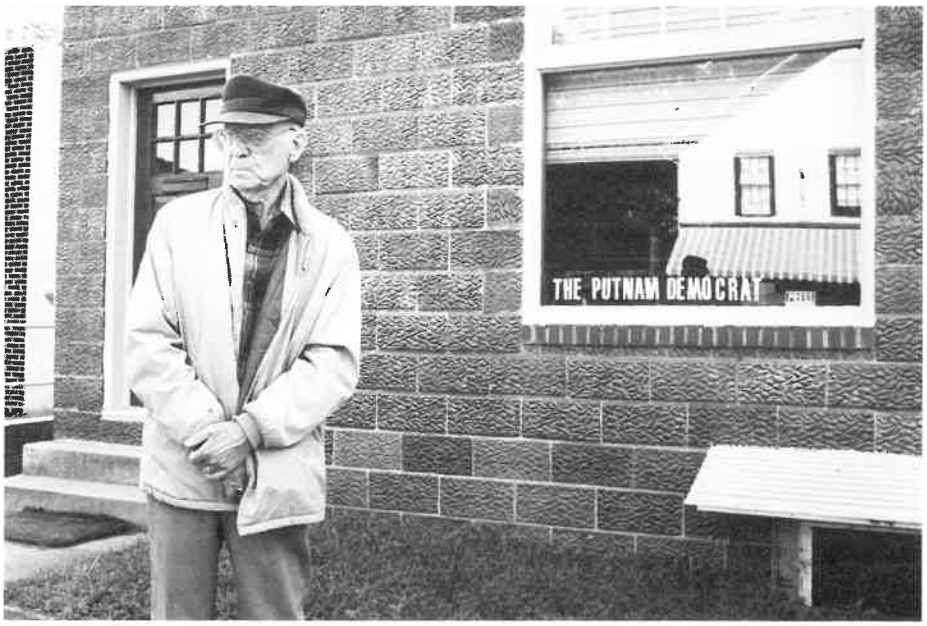
Carl. "Uncle John was owner and editor, then me, for a total of 55 years. That's the new building built in 1930 out of glazed Natco block. First office burned down in 1929. We didn't have a speck of insurance, either."

He paused a second to ponder. "We could go in and get our names in the paper for visiting, but we better hurry on before it rains." Uncle Carl continued talking, as if to himself. "Yes sir, there was a lot of politicking went on there. Some real fine people passed through those doors — some characters, too. Pat Shriver paid a visit when Jack Kennedy was in the primary running for president."

As we slowly moved toward Route 34, I looked up at Putnam County's impressive red brick courthouse framed by maple and oak leaves. It seemed to stand guard over the town.

Uncle Carl noted my interest. "The main structure was built in 1903," he said. "Two of those annexes were built during the 12 years I served on the County Court. We worked hard to get those buildings. Wasn't much money then, but we never borrowed. Managed to stay in the black. If we have time, we'll stop on the way back."

Heading west, I saw silhouetted against the grey sky the Winfield bridge, arching across the Kanawha River to Red House. As a child, I had



The "new" *Putnam Democrat* newspaper office has stood on Main Street since 1930. "There was a lot of politicking went on there," says Carl of his days as editor. The window reflection shows the building across the street that once housed E. W. Wick's General Store.

accompanied Carl to Governor Patteson's office as my uncle lobbied to gain this much-needed bridge. At that time, it was necessary to drive to Point Pleasant or Saint Albans to get from the northeastern part of Putnam County to the southwestern section.

As we drove Uncle Carl spoke of the land. "This part of Putnam County, running along the Kanawha, unlike most of West Virginia, is rich and flat, good for farming. Much of it was first owned by George Washington as a young man." With a sweep of his arm, he added, "All this land here was owned by Aunt Nonnie's family, the Bowyers. The family moved from Pennsylvania and married with the Duddings and Morrises."

Slowly, following his elaborate left-hand turn signal, we turned off Route 34, winding eastward on a secondary road for about a mile. The silence was broken by Uncle Carl's

The Hoag house, nearly covered with foliage, sits along Route 34. It is rumored to be haunted by a headless woman on horseback. During the Civil War, a federal soldier was shot and killed on the front lawn.

commentary. "The Fuel family lived over there in that house," he noted at one point. "They used to farm."

Abruptly we made another left and rolled to a stop. When the sound of the car motor died down, the soft chirping of birds rose up around us. Getting out of the car, we took a potted geranium, a spade and a jug of water.

We walked beneath the canopy of trees into what appeared to be a secret place, a forgotten retreat dotted by silver grey markers of different vintages and various stages of decay. Soft green moss encroached upon the faces of many of the headstones, making names and dates indiscernable. A sweet fragrance, perhaps honeysuckle, hung heavy in the moist air.

No words were spoken as I watched my uncle kneel to place the bright red geranium into the black soil which showed evidence of many such plantings. The two markers on the plots being decorated clearly read: John W. Miller 1867-1936 and Nora Bowyer Miller 1876-1963. Carl watered and I patted down the loose soil. "Bloom all summer," he said. I nodded.

Mission finished, we treaded softly, speaking in hushed voices so as not to disturb the old friends, neighbors, and family who had entered into slumber. We hesitated in front of the headstone which read, E. W. Wick. "Richest man in Winfield at one time," Uncle Carl commented. "But in all due respect, there are bird droppings on his stone same as the rest. Everyone here is equal now." I agreed.

Returning to Winfield, Uncle Carl asked, "Care if we drive through the town one more time?"

"I'm in no hurry," I answered.

As we rounded a corner, a brown frame church with stained glass windows came into view. "I was sprinkled in this Methodist Church." Then Carl pointed the other way. "First church was there across the street, but it was burned by the Union Army during the Civil War. So the federal government gave $1,500 to build this one. It's about 97 years old now.

"Right here in this yard when I was 10 years old, I stood and gazed through a piece of stained glass at Halley's comet, and now it's come back," he mused. "Hard to believe.

"'Hi there, young lady,'" Uncle Carl tipped his cap to a white-haired woman passing through a nearby gate. She smiled and waved without pausing. "She doesn't know me now." Carl shook his head.

Once again the aging Plymouth slowed down. This time we were in front of the telephone company building. "I worked hard to get the first telephone system in the county," my uncle said. "You won't remember all this, but then it's not necessary."

He now drove to the courthouse. "We'll go in here a minute. I want to show you something." We walked into a brick annex where several people sat waiting. Their eyes shifted in our direction, but just as quickly they turned away.

Uncle Carl, cap in hand, looked up at a bronze plaque. I felt proud as I saw his name there, in honor of his part in planning this building.

"Got just another minute?" he inquired of me.

"Sure."

We walked down the corridors of the courthouse which once had been frequented by this man who had served 12 years on the county court, the county governing body, including nine as its president. He also spent six years as president of the Putnam County board of education, 25 years as secretary of the county Democratic executive committee, and 11 years as postmaster.

"Don't see anybody I know," my uncle said. "Let's just step in here a minute." Pushing a glass door open, we stood in front of a woman's desk. She looked to be about 40.

"Young lady, I'm Carl Miller. Used to be on the county court."

The woman stared right past us as he spoke. Then her phone rang. "Just a second," she said, then turned, pressed the phone button, chatted, hung up, and turned her blank gaze back in our direction.

"This is my niece. I wanted to show her a plaque." He held up his hand to show the size.

"All plaques are now down that hall," she said and turned back to her typing.

Again I gazed up at the familiar name, "Carl B. Miller," in recognition of his part in the addition of this wing to the original building. He slowly mouthed the names of other members on the old county court. "Don't seem very long since we were all here," he whispered.

I respectfully waited. Uncle Carl turned and asked, "Getting hungry?" Responding to my nod, he said, "Well, we'll get a bite to eat. Time to head home, I guess."

As we drove from the parking lot, I asked about the stately white house adjoining the courthouse grounds. "Yep, the Middletons owned that house. Old man Middleton had the first bank in town. Winfield being the county seat and situated on the river, there was money about. Captain Wright of the packet boat, 'Evergreen,' and Captain Barrows of the 'Leroy' both lived here." Motioning toward the river he said, "They anchored their boats here on the Kanawha. So there were lots of vendors."

Carl Miller shakes hands with Deputy Frank Mynes on a recent visit to the Putnam Courthouse. The plaque on the wall notes Mr. Miller's contributions toward getting the new county records room built.

As my uncle continued, I knew my guided tour had not yet ended.

Back on Route 34 heading east, both of us automatically turned to look at the big empty lot directly in front of the courthouse where there once had stood another stately white house with a large wrap-around porch and a cupola. "I spent a lot of hours working in that yard, but you know, I'm glad the house was torn down to make way for the grocery store parking lot. It's better that way. Wouldn't want to see the house all dilapidated." Uncle Carl's voice had a positive note.

"That looks like an old house." I pointed to a small brick house on the right side of the highway, almost hidden by green foliage.

He smiled, "That's the Hoag place. People said it was haunted by a headless woman who rode horseback through the yard." He bent forward a little to point out the spot.

"How did such a rumor ever get started?"

"Never heard how. Perhaps some kind of vapor made an image. I don't know. There was a federal soldier shot on the lawn, and Mrs. Hoag had him buried up the holler."

"Is it marked?"

"No, but I could find the grave," Uncle Carl said. "Used to go up there as a boy."

"And over there," he motioned to the opposite side of the road, "Aunt Nonnie said when she was a girl, school was dismissed once to see a black man hanged."

"What for?"

"Raped a white girl, so they said."

"Let's drive through here," Uncle Carl offered as he swung onto the Winfield Middle School property. "I ate a lot of rubber chicken going all over the county speaking wherever I could to get this school building."

I knew his words were true because I had seen the slides used for his presentations. They show school conditions that would boggle the imagination today. While Carl Miller was on the board of education, a bond and special levy passed, allowing Winfield and Buffalo high schools to be built. Additions to Poca and Hurricane high schools were made and Buffalo and Scott-Teays elementaries built.

Carl waved at three young students walking toward the school. They respectfully nodded and smiled in return. "Kids never change," he observed. "Styles change but the kids still look the same, really."

We speeded up as we drove beyond the city limits. Our conversation turned from the past to today and tomorrow. "Nice to visit the past, but we don't want to stay too long," Uncle Carl sensibly commented. "For if we're not careful, we might get hung up back there."

Carl Miller lived in Winfield for 69 years and is part of the town's history. "Where your hometown is, that's where your heart is," he says. "This is hallowed ground to me."

The 1951 WVU basketball team poses with Coach Red Brown. The players are Dave Steindler, Jack Shockey, "Mo" Moore, Jim Coulter and Mark Workman. Steindler, Moore and Workman went on to play in a spectacular game in New York's Madison Square Garden the following year. Photographer unknown.

Red Brown

Tales of a West Virginia Sportsman

Interview by Norman Julian

Robert Nathan "Red" Brown is a quintessential West Virginia sportsman. His career as athlete, coach and sports administrator spans the generations. He has won most of the awards a sportsman is eligible for in the state and region. These include All-West Virginia Conference forward in basketball in 1930, state intercollegiate singles tennis champion in 1929 and 1930, Southern Conference basketball coach of the year in 1952, selection to the Order of Vandalia (West Virginia University's highest honor), and membership in the Davis and Elkins, State Sports Writers and Helms National Athletic Directors halls of fame. When typed single-space on a piece of paper, a list of his honors fills the sheet.

This article grew out of the stories Mr. Brown sometimes shares with newsmen when, since his retirement, he drops in on us at the Mountaineer Lounge in the Coliseum before ball games. I have always enjoyed hearing this self-effacing man recreate the poignant sporting events of his past. I think their behind-the-scenes flavor will interest any student of Mountain State sports history.

So I asked "Red" — all his friends call him that — to explore his experiences more fully. The following reminiscences are culled from many interviews and several tapes.

Red Brown. I was born in the coal-mining town of Thomas in Tucker County in 1907. It was a boom town then. Later on near there an explosion and fire at Coketown became one of the worst disasters in mining history.

My uncles were coal miners but my dad was a conductor on the Western Maryland Railroad. Most of its business was hauling coal, but the train was the main way you traveled, too. All the roads were dirt. Four or five trains a day went through Thomas, some of them going as far as Baltimore. Thomas probably had a population of 500 or 600. It had an opera house. We'd go to the movies on Saturday and see guys like William S. Hart, Tom Mix, the cowboys of the time. All the movies were silent.

I got the "Red" because of my fiery red hair. My mother was from Scotland and one of my grandfathers was from Scotland and the other one from Ireland.

I must have started getting interested in athletics when I was nine or 10. Then it was baseball. We moved to Elkins in 1917. The first time I played organized ball was at the YMCA at Elkins. I played basketball in my bare feet. Later I played in the Boy Scouts. I used to organize track meets, baseball games and tennis matches myself. I was in junior high. They were just pickup games. There were no leagues as such.

My first entree into organized athletics was under Coach Frank Wimer at Elkins High School. He was one of the great coaches in America, no question about that. A couple of years ago, he and his wife were murdered at their home outside Elkins.

I only weighed 130 pounds, but I went out for football. Unless you played football, Coach Wimer wouldn't let you go out for basketball. In my junior year I became a regular on the basketball team and a substitute quarterback on the football team. I remember one year when Marshall "Little Sleepy" Glenn, who became a great player and coach at West Virginia University, was out for football. We played an alumni game in the pre-season and Glenn broke his collarbone. Frank moved me up to play quarterback. I probably wouldn't have earned a letter that year if Glenn hadn't got hurt.

Red and brother Ed, above, in 1910, and brother Mose with Ed and Red a few years later. The boys had a Scottish grandfather on one side and an Irishman on the other, according to Red. Photographer unknown.

Red attended Davis & Elkins during the late 1920's, during Jennings Randolph's time as athletic director. The two men, shown here in later years, became lifelong friends. Photographer and date unknown.

D&E Beats Navy

Jennings Randolph was athletic director at Davis and Elkins College when Red Brown played football there. The former U.S. Senator recalled the D&E upset of Navy very well, as this excerpt from his 1983 GOLDENSEAL interview shows.

" . . . we traveled to Annapolis where we defeated one of the best Navy teams ever, 2-0. It was a great story — no substitutions. Sixteen players in uniform and 11 men played the whole 60 minutes. It was a tremendous upset recognized all over the country.

"After the game a representative of the *Baltimore Sun* was in the dressing room and he suggested that we go to a vaudeville theater, the Gaiety Burlesque, to celebrate our victory. So I telephoned the Gaiety Burlesque and told the manager who I was and that I was calling from Annapolis where the Davis and Elkins football team had just upset Navy 2-0. He says, 'You say you beat Navy?' I said, 'Yes, and we'd like to have, if we could, a reduced rate tonight, perhaps some special seating.'

" 'Why,' he said, 'we'll give you two full rows! Won't cost you a penny! Some of the leading women of the cast will come down and kiss the players on the cheek!' It wasn't always that good."

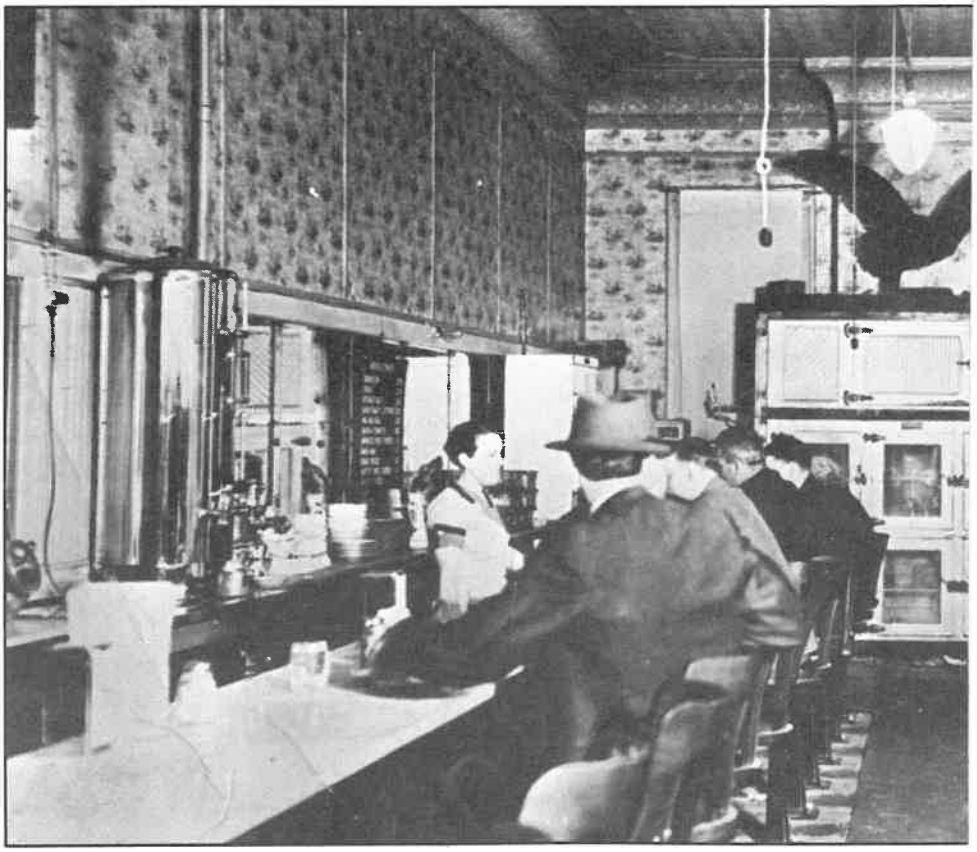
Wimer was a great disciplinarian. If he dropped his hat, you jumped 10 feet. Some coaches you played for because you were afraid of them and some because you liked them. With Frank it was both. Just about everybody loved him. He was a great friend of mine.

I'll never forget the first time it was brought home to me just how much the players and parents trusted Frank Wimer's wisdom. I was out for football and, among other things, I didn't like some of the particular foods he asked us to eat in order to stay in condition. One night at our evening meal at home we were having one of the dishes recommended by Coach Wimer as a bodybuilder, one I didn't care for at all — spinach. So I casually remarked that even if it was good for my wind I didn't like it and wasn't going to eat it. My father looked sternly down at me from the end of the table and said, "I don't know anything about athletics but if Coach Wimer told you to eat that kind of food, you eat it." And I did.

Many years later I was at a banquet in Chicago and sat beside a man. We introduced ourselves and where we were from and he said, "Oh, I know something about Elkins and that region down there. It's famous for coal mines, Bickel's Knob, the Forest Festival and Frank Wimer."

Nobody had much money when I graduated high school and I probably wouldn't have got my college degree if it weren't for an athletic scholarship. I got a tuition scholarship to Davis and Elkins and went on to play some pretty good basketball from 1926 to 1930. My final two years I had a full scholarship. I was named captain my third year on a team which included Fred Christy, Bill Barrett, Rand McKinney and Miles Kochendever. Our teams were called the Scarlet Hurricanes, which is what a sportswriter named us because we used to blow other teams away.

Jennings Randolph was the D&E athletic director and tennis coach then. We had some great teams. In football one year we beat Navy, which was a power then, and we beat West Virginia two of three years. In my graduating class there were 32 students. There were probably fewer than 100 at the school. But Jennings scheduled games all over the coun-



The City Restaurant, later "Red Brown's," came down from Mrs. Brown's folks. The popular eating place was the Brown family's home base in Elkins. Photographer unknown, 1934.

try. We stayed in YMCA's and cheap hotels.

I played for Coach Cam Henderson. He was probably the greatest all-sports coach in the country. He coached football, basketball and baseball. Coach Henderson started the zone defense. Clair Bee, a great coach, who was from Grafton and later became famous at Long Island University, gave Henderson credit for the zone. I was there when he started it. At that time D&E didn't have a gym, so we practiced at Elkins after the high school got through. One night Henderson said, "Let's try something." He said when the other team got the ball we on defense should just go back there and stand. He told us to hold out our hands and wave them. He told us to shift and so forth. A lot of people think they invented the zone, but he did right there. We had only a 3-2 zone. Today it's hard to determine what a zone is.

I used it with a lot of success the first time, many years later, when I was a coach at Elkins High. John Solomon, a 6'7" center at Shinnston High School, was intimidating other teams in the Big 10. I knew he was too tough for us. So we surrounded him with a zone and beat Shinnston. That was in 1937. We won the Big 10 that year.

Cam Henderson was the greatest guy in the world. I was very fortunate in having a great high school coach and then a great college coach. The president of D&E then was Dr. James Allen. In 1935 he became president of Marshall and hired Henderson down there. He won a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics championship there. The NAIA tourney was the big one then. The National Invitational tourney was just getting started and the NCAA wasn't even heard of. When I played for him at D&E we won 40-some games over two seasons before losing to Fordham in New York. Fordham was a power in those days.

When I graduated from college, there wasn't a lot of opportunities. If you were in athletics you were lucky to get a coaching job. One opened up at Tygarts Valley High School. They needed somebody who could teach French and also coach. This was during the Depression. I coached girls and boys basketball, taught physical education, English 1 and 2, French, American history and social sciences for $165 a month.

Our gym was so small you could put up a zone defense and the other team could hardly see through it, let alone pass a ball through it. A lot of the gyms were like that. Sometimes you would have to shoot the ball through the rafters. At one gym — I believe it was at Weston — it was legal to bounce the ball off the walls, which were right on the side of the court. The seats were on one end. The baskets were bolted right to the walls.

Everybody up there then was poor. About that time the president's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, visited a little town near us by the name of Dailey. That was a big thing. Dailey was like Arthurdale.* The president wanted to get the town back on its feet with the help of government programs.

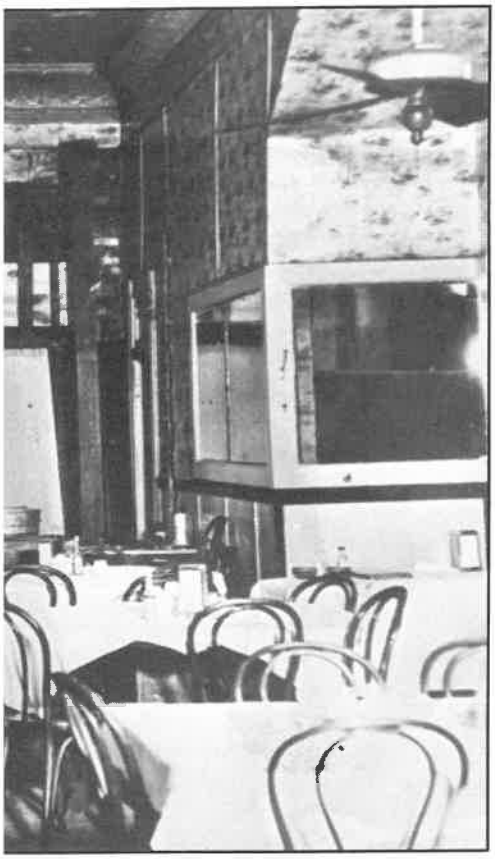
At Tygarts Valley we were so poor we only had one ball and you'd have to lace it up and play with it. I locked it up in my locker and you had to blow it up before each game. We didn't have showers. I helped do the plumbing to put in some showers. Come to think of it, I have lined football fields, swept gym floors, taped hundreds of ankles, painted lines on gym floors and coached all sports.

One year at Tygarts Valley three of my kids played in the first basketball game they ever saw. We had the best teams in the school's history there in 1930-36. One year we won 20 of 29 games.

I organized a tri-county league involving Davis, Thomas, Parsons, Belington, Elkins and Tygarts Valley high schools. That would be Randolph, Tucker and Barbour counties. Travel was a problem in those days, and sometimes it was over dirt roads, so a conference with schools in close proximity made sense.

I married my wife, the former Mary Elizabeth Poling, in 1934. Her family owned a restaurant in Elkins and lat-

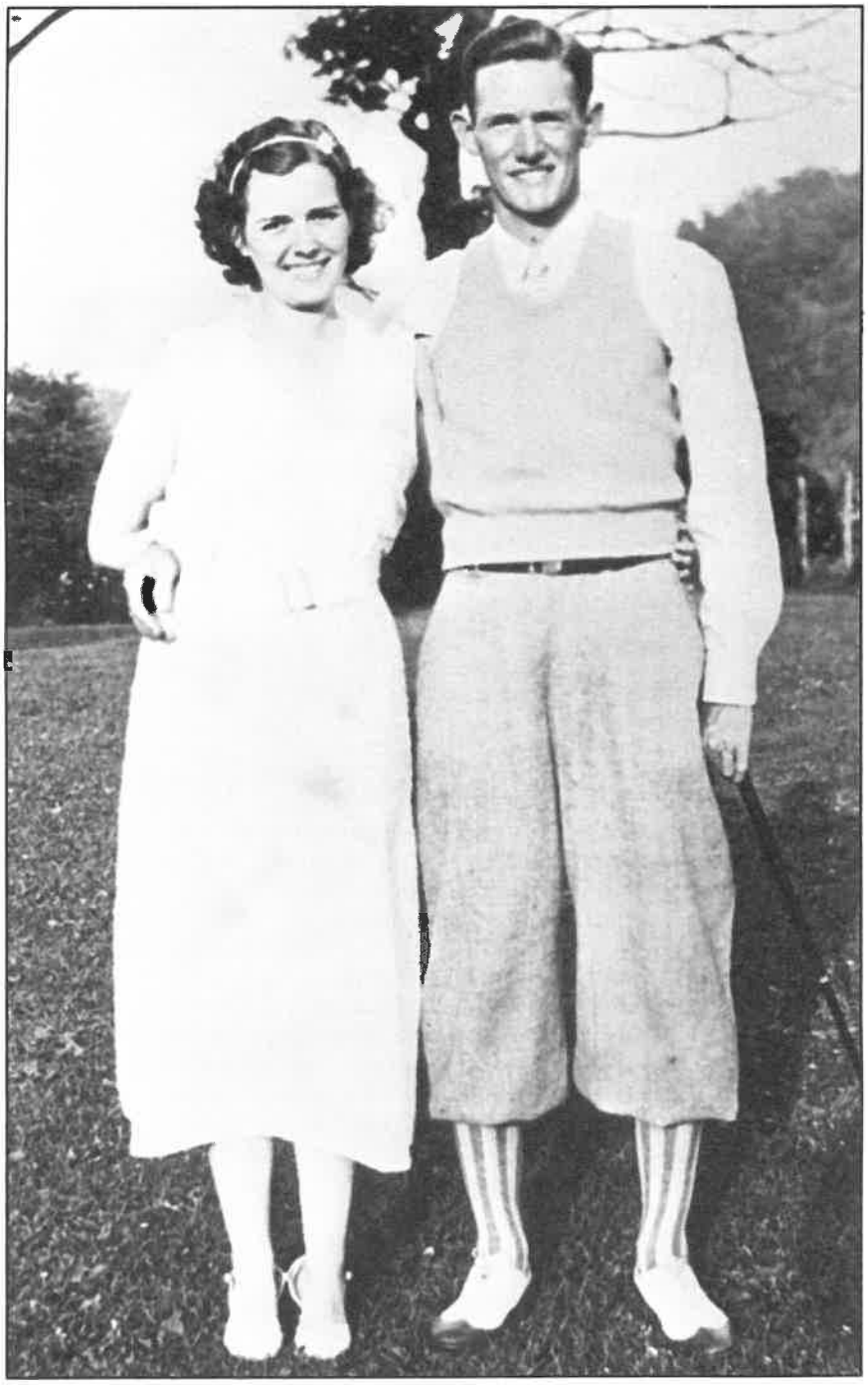
*Arthurdale, Preston County, was the first of the experimental New Deal homestead communities, and a pet project of Eleanor Roosevelt. West Virginia's other two such communities were Dailey, Randolph County, and Eleanor, Putnam County.



er on when her mother died I got into the restaurant business. I bought it. I operated "Red Brown's" from 1942 to 1960.

In 1941 Coach Wimer was an officer in the National Guard and he was called to duty. I was asked to take over as coach at Elkins until he got back. I agreed to take it for one year. That turned out to be four years. The Guard stayed on in the war. I had Elkins' only undefeated football team in 1945. At that time they voted for the state champion and we lost by one vote.

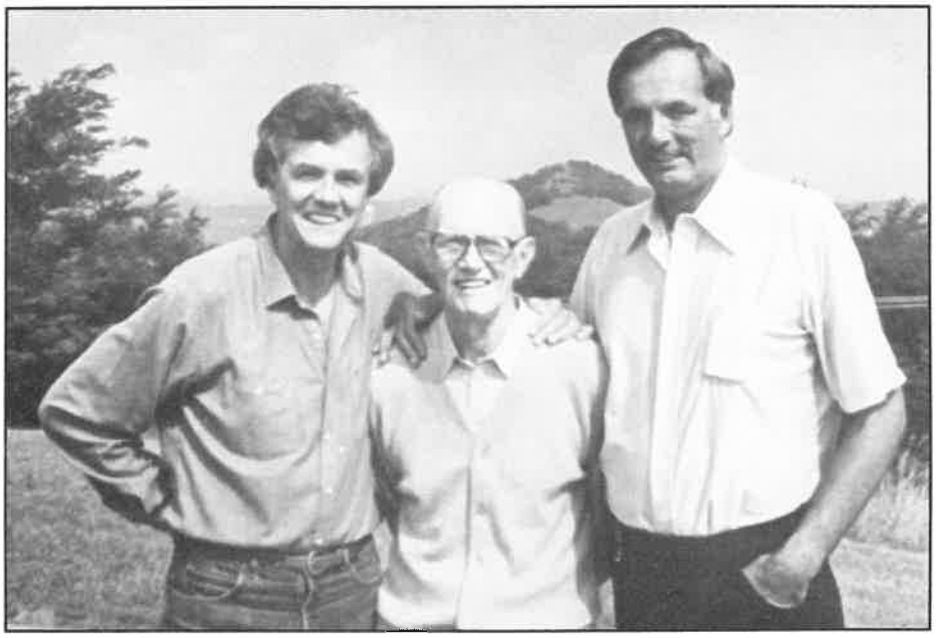
One of the players on that team was Gene Simmons. He was a great drop kicker. That was a technique for extra points and field goals used then, but nobody uses it now. Simmons only weighed 140 pounds, but he was a fine athlete and his brothers were angry when I wouldn't let him play running back. But he was too valuable as a kicker. He never wore pads and I couldn't afford to lose him. He went on to be a great player at WVU from 1945 to 1948. He won many games for the Mountaineers, including a 16-14 victory over Maryland in 1948 when he drop-kicked a field goal in the final seconds.



Red and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Poling Brown. The couple lived in Elkins until Red's career took him to Morgantown in 1950. Photographer and date unknown.

I'd liked to say a word about what I was able to learn as a football coach. After I was already on the job as basketball coach, they came around in May and said, "We want you to be the football coach, too." I wanted to do the best job I could, so I made an appointment with Cam Henderson. I went down to Huntington and spent the whole day with him. He went over the single wing, the only thing we ran then, pulling guards, all the fundamentals. He went over everything. Next fall there were 55 players out and only one coach. Back then there weren't too many things going on and just about everybody went out.

I'm disappointed in what's happening now. All the emphasis on winning. I never got upset if we lost a game. I developed a philosophy of coaching then. I always felt it had to be fun for the players and the coach,



Basketball superstar Rod Hundley, at left here, was a big find for Red Brown. Jerry West also played under Brown at WVU. Photographer and date unknown.

and when it ceased to be that it defeated its purpose. I never took a kid out of a game right away for making a mistake. He felt bad enough. I always waited a couple plays.

The North-South football game at Charleston was big then. Frank Knight ran it. Reporter A. L. "Shorty" Hardman helped out. One year I was an assistant and in 1946 I was head coach of the North.

I was named assistant basketball coach at West Virginia in 1945 and assisted in recruiting, coached varsity tennis and freshman basketball. That freshman team was undefeated. Then I returned to Davis and Elkins in 1947 to become athletic director and head football and basketball coach through 1950. I was happy there. All our home games were sold out. When I was coaching there I used to meet Rod Bush, sports editor of the *Elkins Inter-Mountain,* at the Elkins Bar and we'd go over the day's sports and kind of put out the next day's sports section right there.

We won the West Virginia Conference and represented the state in the NAIA tournament at Kansas City in 1950. We got to the semifinals before we lost. I was out there when West Virginia lost its coach, Lee Patton, in an automobile wreck. I was hoping they would offer the job to someone else. We liked Elkins. We had the restaurant. But we decided few folks get the opportunity to coach at their state university so I decided to take the job for one year and see how it turned out. It turned out I stayed and WVU won 72 of 103 games from 1950 to 1954.

The most exciting event of my coaching career occurred during that span. In 1952 we went up to New York to play the No. 1 team in the country at Madison Square Garden. That was NYU. It was the first time a West Virginia team had ever flown. Usually we drove in cars, or sometimes we took a train. But athletic director Roy M. "Legs" Hawley wanted us to fly first-class for that one.

I felt like a country kid going up to the big city. We had a good team. On it was our All-America, Mark Workman. He was one of the few big men in the country. Also on it were "Mo" Moore, the governor's brother, Mac Isner, Dave Steindler and Jim Sottile, Eddy Becker and "Red" Holmes. Sottile was the only player from out of state. All our All-Americas until the 1970's were from West Virginia.

I was a lousy defensive coach. I paid more attention to offense. I think the fans liked it more. I was afraid of this game, because the year before we got beat and they said Workman was the smallest 6'9" guy ever to appear in the Garden. There were over 18,000 people there that night when we played them again. It was sold out. Basketball was big at that time. That was before the scandals involving gamblers hurt it.

Workman used to drive me crazy as a coach. He was finicky that way. That night he had a great game and so did Moore. Moore had a two-hand overhead jump shot and scored 25 points. We beat them 100-75. It was run and shoot basketball at its best.

After the game we were celebrating in our locker room and this guy came in and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "We'd like to have you at a press conference." All of these sharpies of the big city press were there. This guy asked me, "What kind of man-for-man defense were you using?" All we used was straight zone. He made me feel good. I was just as smart as he was.

I'd like to say something about tennis. It is a great game and I tried to get my basketball players to play it, because it strengthens their moves. I have played it for 70 years and still play it today. The first time I played was at the only court in Elkins, at D&E. It was a private place so one of us would watch for the owners while the others played. Dr. James Allen, who was later hired as commissioner of education by President Nixon, and I teamed to be doubles champions in 1930.

I later coached tennis at WVU and Legs worked it out so when we were to go down and play Washington and Lee we got to stay at the Greenbrier Hotel overnight. It was during the winter, their business wasn't so good and they gave us this price of $5 per day. Most of our players were from poor families and didn't realize there was a place like that in West Virginia.

It was a natural progression for me to go into administration at WVU. When they decided they were going to make a change — Legs had died at the age of 50 — they asked me if I'd be director of athletics. They were looking for someone from the staff and I'd had pretty good success at basketball.

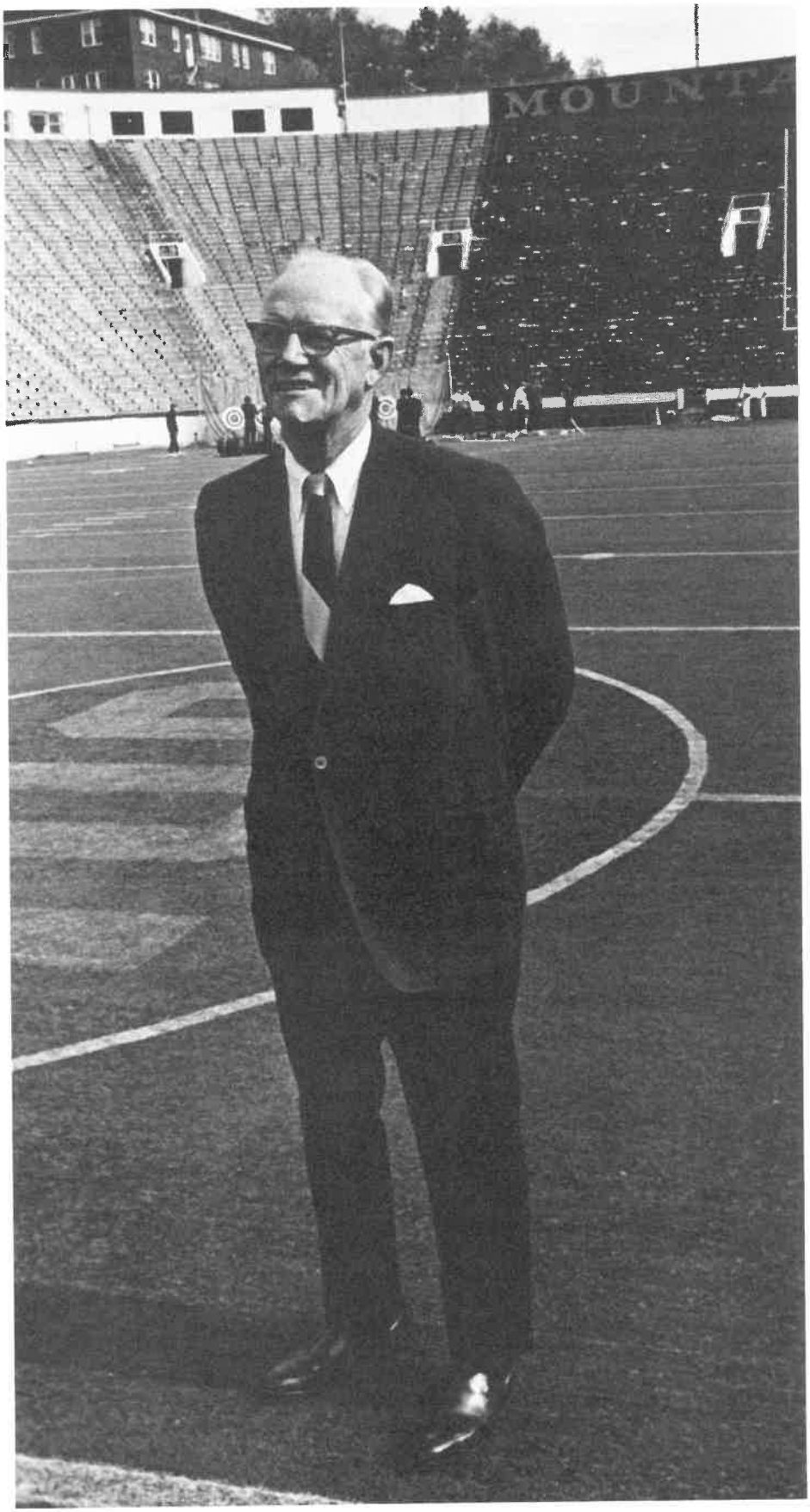
When it came time to pick my successor as coach I had only one guy in mind, Fred Schaus. He hadn't coached a minute, but when he was here as a college player I was impressed with him. He'd come to me for advice and so forth. He was just

about over the hill as a pro, so I made an appointment to meet him and his wife Barbara in Pittsburgh. I offered him $5,500 and he eventually took the job for $6,500. He said later he'd have taken the job for $10. Things are a lot different now, when coaches make more than the college president. College athletics may have gotten too big.

I had just recruited "Hot Rod" Hundley, the greatest player I had ever seen, and I helped Schaus with him. North Carolina State was interested in Hundley so I flew down to Charleston and had lunch with him. You wonder what little thing you said may have turned the trick. I thought Rod had more innate talent than anybody else, even Jerry West. But Jerry worked harder and would be No. 1.

Rod was just a fun-loving kid. He lived with me that summer. Dr. Irwin Stewart, president of the university, saw his high school grades and said he'd never be eligible academically. I said, if you were a betting man I'd bet you. I used to take Rod to class and then wait for him till class was over. He got the grades. He, and later Jerry, helped Schaus win six Southern Conference tournaments in a row. In those days the conference had 17 teams. Hundley was the first player taken in the NBA draft his senior year.

The only time I took an active part in recruiting after that was when George King, who succeeded Schaus, asked me to help recruit Ron Williams. George asked me to go up to his home in Weirton and talk to him and his parents. Ron would become the first black player from the state at West Virginia University and I had to convince his parents that their son would be treated exactly like everybody else. I was in the stands when Jackie Robinson made his major league debut. I felt Ron was the right person to integrate WVU basketball, and he was. Like I say, we were in the Southern Conference and we were concerned that the black athletes be treated well everywhere they went. So I used to have to work in advance so there would be no problems at hotels and the like. Williams handled things with dignity. I would like to see him on the coaching staff at WVU one of these days.



Red Brown directed West Virginia University's sports program during his years as athletic director. Here he stands in old Mountaineer Field, about 1970. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection, WVU.

It has been a rich career and full of memories. Here Mr. Brown holds a treasured photo of the 1952 team that upset New York University. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

As athletic director, one of the big disappointments was that I never got to form an eastern conference. We had Pitt, Penn State, Syracuse and WVU. All we needed was Army and Navy. Navy was willing but Army had a system where they changed athletic directors every three years. The AD there didn't want to change things and didn't go along.

I was a member of the basketball committee that originally formed the NCAA, then I was on the board of directors for four years. Walter Byers, who became then the only director the NCAA has had, and I were great friends. With Peter Uberroth and Pete Rozzelle, he is one of the top commissioners in America. I remember telling Byers that athletics were special in West Virginia. He couldn't believe that we could get so many radio stations to broadcast WVU games. We had practically every one except for Wheeling, which would not preempt the "Wheeling Jamboree."

I was also a member of the committee that selected our Olympic basketball team in 1960 and again in 1964. The 1960 team included West. One of the proudest moments of my life was in Rome that year when they gave out the gold medal. Here we were, 3,000 miles from Cabin Creek, and Jerry West, who captained the team, went out and accepted the gold medal.

When WVU basketball appeared to be outgrowing the old Field House, Dr. Paul Miller, WVU president then, appointed me chairman of the committee to look into building a new facility. I flew all over the country to examine places that had been recently built. The Board of Governors originally wanted to remodel the old Field House but then they voted to go along with the Coliseum. They gave the job to the Silling firm of Charleston. I insisted on individual seats instead of bleachers. The acoustics, the comfort, the access to rest rooms are still as good as any in the country. When we started we thought it would cost $6 million but it finally came in at around $10 million. I am proud of it.

Part of my original intent was to use the Coliseum as a place to bring some outstanding entertainers to West Virginia, so people would not have to go to Pittsburgh or New York. I thought we were on the right track. The first few years we brought in entertainers like Bob Hope, Liberace, Doc Severinsen, Holiday on Ice, but now they mostly use it for rock concerts.

If I've given you the impression I'm 100 percent sold on athletics, you are 100 percent right. Maybe in my career I've been a little bit luckier than most, for which I will always be grateful. When I was in coaching, unless you were in the pros you wouldn't ever get rich, but there are different ways of being rich. I've known 10 millionaires I wouldn't trade places with because of the association I've had with young people and the coaches and the thrills and excitement of athletic contests. These are things money can't buy.

Setting History Straight

Shepherdstown Builds a Steamboat

By Malcolm W. Ater, Jr.
Photographs by Paul C. Brown

It isn't often that a small town decides to honor a local citizen who died nearly two centuries ago, but that's what Shepherdstown did this past September. It was no small celebration, either, comprising thousands of hours of work and planning.

Nestled along the banks of the Potomac River across from Maryland, Shepherdstown lies on the far edge of the Eastern Panhandle. One of the westernmost settlements in the original 13 colonies, Shepherdstown has always prided itself on its rich heritage and its contributions to West Virginia history. Consider these many state "firsts": first land patent (where the town now stands) in 1734; first ferry (Swearingen's) in 1765; first free school in 1773; first printing press in 1790; and first post office in 1792.

Pretty impressive, you say? Well, the townsfolk today think so, too, but they still get their dander up over the slighting of a local boy 200 years ago.

Every school child in Jefferson County can tell you that James Rumsey was the *real* inventor of the steamboat. But does he get the recognition for it? No, indeed. Instead, some chap by the name of Robert Fulton got the credit in 1807 for Rumsey's accomplishment 20 years earlier. Naturally this doesn't sit well with the people in Shepherdstown. They're not partial to someone taking credit where credit isn't due, so they decided to do something about it.

It all started a few years back when Shepherdstown native Jay Hurley, proprietor of O'Hurley's General Store, and Carl Bell, a biology professor at Shepherd College since 1961, began reminiscing with a few friends about the injustice. Sure, they agreed, something had to be done. Hurley has been fascinated with Rumsey since grammar school, and he's not the kind to let things slide. No one had to tell him that he probably wouldn't be around for the 300th anniversary of Rumsey's 1787 steamboat launching, so if he was going to set things straight, he'd better do it on the 200th.

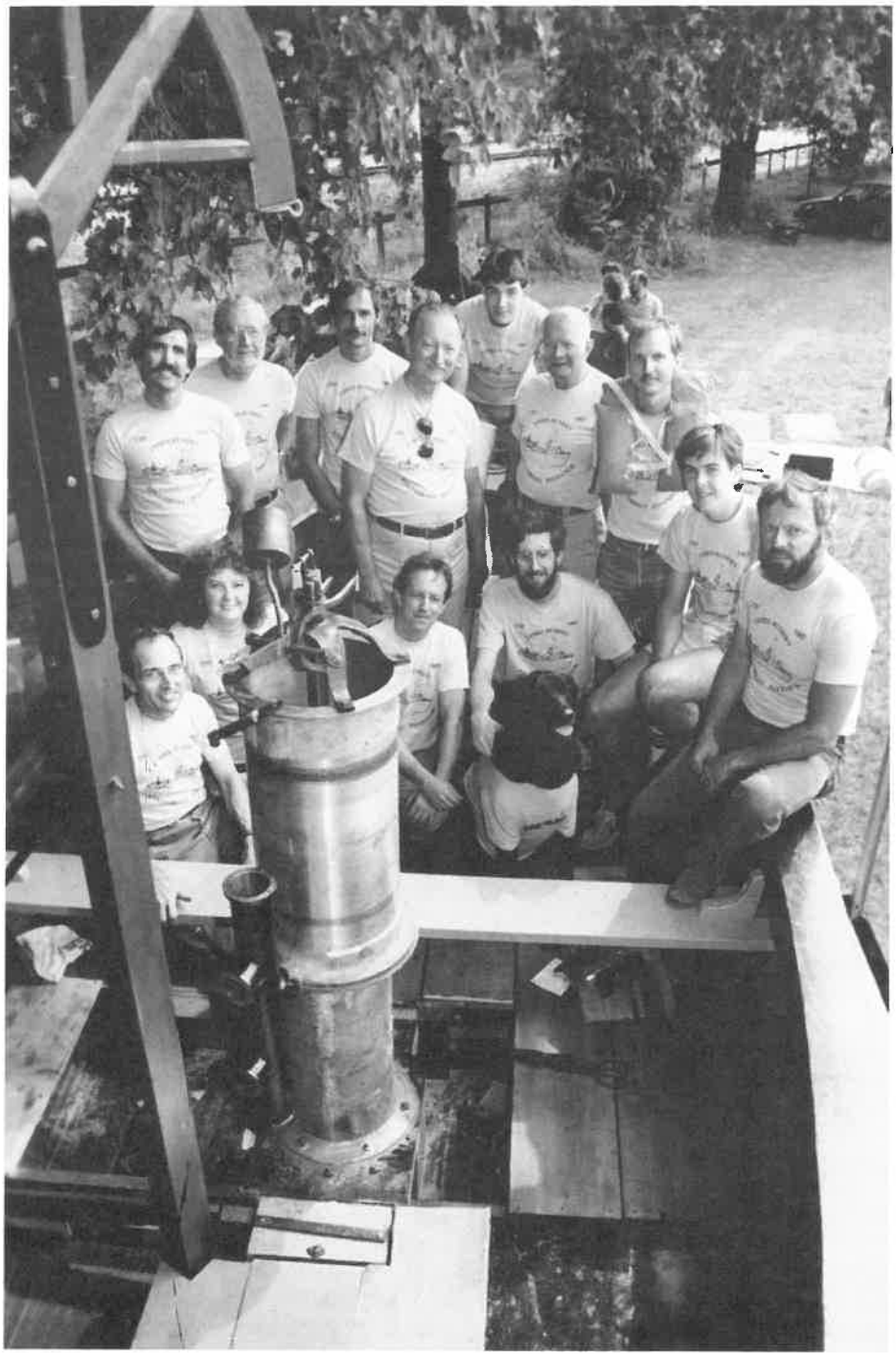
Friends were called. Plans were made. The first order of business was selecting a name for the group, then deciding how far their crazy notion was going to go. Picking a name was easy. They'd simply identify themselves after the big guy and be known as the "Rumseian Society." Deciding on what to do was relatively simple, also. Because Rumsey had built a steamboat, it was only natural that they try and build one themselves —

Tri-corner hats were again in style in Shepherdstown when the *Rumseian Experiment* took to the Potomac River last September. Jay Hurley mans the rope while Jon Ballentine stands by.

a half-size replica of Rumsey's original model. Admittedly, there were probably a few people who thought Jay was a little off his rocker. But as with Rumsey, he was determined to make believers of everyone.

Not that it was easy. The group had received a grant of $6,000 from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, the state branch of the National Endowment for the Humanities, but you just don't go out and build a $70,000 boat on that kind of budget. Or perhaps you do. Talk to Jay Hurley and you realize that, like James Rumsey before him, he never had any doubt about the project's success. All it took was convincing people that some dreams can indeed turn into reality.

Rumseian Society members gathered for a group portrait at Morgans Grove Park in August. Society president John Farrior stands second from left, naval architect Bill Hunley stands at center (with sunglasses), and Hurley sits at right.



Jay began by calling the local media and publishing the goals of the Rumseian Society. He issued a plea for donations and for volunteers who could put in whatever time they had. Word spread, sparking the interest of many. People began calling with offers of help or supplies, and before long a workshop was built behind Jay's general store. A blacksmith's forge was constructed, and a variety of tools appropriate to 18th century technology were collected.

By October 1986 the workshop was beating to the sound of a bygone era, though few of these modern-day craftsmen knew exactly what they were doing. One gentleman who did was Bill Hunley, the retired former chief architect of the U.S. Navy. Living 70 miles away in Alexandria, Virginia, Bill got wind of the project early. Crazy? Sure, but maybe worth looking into, he thought. After spending nearly 30 years designing nuclear submarines for the navy, he felt it was time to add a little excitement to his life.

So Bill Hunley met with Jay Hurley and, as Bill would later recall, "In an unguarded moment I volunteered to help design the boat. It soon became a real challenge, since I found myself working with people who didn't know the first thing about a boat, except that they were supposed to float." Yet Bill was impressed by the way everyone worked, each person doing a particular job and coordinating things together. Suddenly he didn't mind the long drives and the 10- or 12-hour stretches he routinely put in working on what he calls the "vessel."

One of the hardest-working volunteers turned out to be Jon Ballentine, a 26-year-old airplane mechanic from nearby Hagerstown, Maryland. It still makes Jay shudder to think how lucky he was that Jon even heard about the project. You see, Jon isn't much for reading the newspaper. Fortunately, his parents enjoy keeping up on everything. One article they happened to come across last January caught their eye. It told the story of Jay Hurley and how he was seeking volunteers for a farfetched project. They read it, talked it over, and decided it just might be oddball enough to appeal to their son. It did, and Jon soon placed a call across the

river to O'Hurley's General Store. That was 500 donated hours ago.

Nick Blanton, originally from Elkins, also caught the fever. Nick had since moved to Williamsburg, and when he came back home to West Virginia all he had intended to do was settle down and make hammered dulcimers for a living. Then he met Jay. Before long, Nick's wife, too, was keeping dinner warm in the oven.

Nick proved to be a tireless volunteer, working primarily on the mechanical and engine components of the boat that came to be called the *Rumseian Experiment*. When asked at the end of the project how many hours he had worked, he frankly stated, "I don't even want to think about it, because it was way too many. I could have been spending my time making hammered dulcimers to pay for our food and rent instead." Then he'd smile and add, "All I want to do now is spend a little time with my wife."

One local Shepherdstonian who joined up was Ernie Fuss (pronounced "Foos" and, anyhow, he never once made a fuss while working). People had different reasons for joining the cause, and Ernie's was a bit unusual. Seems he had witnessed something back in 1957 that still crawed at him. Ernie couldn't get over the fact that at the 170th anniversary of Rumsey's steamboat run on the Potomac, not only did the reenactment boat look like something out of the 20th century, it sounded "more like a modern-day airplane about to crash." Hardly the type of thing to spur a young boy's imagination back to the past. Ernie never forgot standing on the bluffs of Shepherdstown, watching what turned out to be a U.S. Coast Guard boat playing imposter to Rumsey. So when the chance cropped up 30 years later to really show the kids what it was all about, he jumped at the opportunity. It was a chance to help rewrite history, the right way.

As more and more people got involved in the building of the boat, the citizens of Shepherdstown started getting curious. It's not that anyone is nosy, but people do enjoy keeping abreast of what's going on in town. So folks began stopping by Jay's workshop. A few might have been surprised by the tremendous progress that Jay and the volunteers had made. After all, it entailed a lot of workmanship, and while any of the craftsmen may have been gifted at a particular trade, it certainly wasn't building boats.

The youngest boat builders, Greg and Scott Walter, 15 and 13, respectively, pose with the oldest, George Camplair, 68.

Even designing the vessel was a little difficult for Bill Hunley. He'll be quick to point out that there's a big difference between a 20th-century submarine and an 18th-century wooden steamboat. But the men plugged on, and the boat began to take shape. This didn't surprise anyone who knew Jay well, for he had long been regarded as innovative and industrious. But it did give cause for second thoughts among those people who might have thought Jay was an even bigger dreamer than Rumsey himself. Their chuckles turned to admiration.

Many local merchants were impressed with the savvy of the workers. They began helping out. Howard Butcher, the amiable town baker, regularly sent hot coffee and pastries over to the volunteers at the workshop. Howard strongly believes in old-fashioned business values, and he liked the way the workers demonstrated another set of values from an earlier era. For him, sending over the refreshments was a way to show his civic pride in what they were doing.

The same was true for Pat Simpson, who only recently had opened the Town Run Deli, a small restaurant next to Shepherd College. He wasted little time contacting Jay Hurley, offering to treat the boat builders to thick, homemade deli sandwiches once a week. Said Pat, "When I saw how people were driving from all over the place just to help out with the project, I figured the least I could do was offer to feed them."

Shepherdstown's James Rumsey memorial towered over this fall's boat launching on the nearby Potomac. Townspeople intend to restore Rumsey to his rightful place in history.

Birth of the Steamboat

There has been a controversy for many years over who invented the steamboat. Most historians give credit to Robert Fulton, who first sailed the *Cleremont* on the Hudson River in 1807. Yet it seems to be West Virginia's best-kept secret that the first steamboat was publicly launched in Shepherdstown nearly 20 years earlier. Its inventor, James Rumsey, has largely been ignored by history.

Born in Cecil County, Maryland, in 1743, Rumsey settled in Shepherdstown in 1784, where he began his most prolific work in technology. A lifelong tinkerer, Rumsey was convinced it was possible to use steam power to propel a boat upstream without the assistance of oars, sails, or poles. Applying his theories, he began constructing an engine that would later be mounted in a boat. Working around the clock, Rumsey had the boat completed by the end of the year. He then invited his close friend George Washington for a private, late-night demonstration.

Impressed by the 1784 working model, Washington suggested that Rumsey apply to the Virginia and Maryland assemblies for protection of his invention. Rumsey did so and was granted exclusive rights by both states to develop a steam-powered boat. Confident now that his rights were protected, Rumsey allowed Washington to publish a letter regarding his accomplishment. Unfortunately, there were less than honorable men who read the letter. One who tried to exploit the information was steamboat rival John Fitch.

Calling Rumsey's decision allowing Washington to print the letter "the most imprudent act of his life," Fitch dogged Rumsey for the rest of his days. Apparently without principle, Fitch attempted several times to steal information and plans from Rumsey, once being caught in the act of peeping through the keyhole of Rumsey's Shepherdstown workshop. Still, by 1787 Fitch had made only limited progress in his development of a steamboat. Rumsey, however, had perfected his working model, and announced that on December 3, 1787, he would publicly demonstrate his invention.

Although it was a chilly, overcast day, thousands of people traveled to Shepherdstown to line the cliffs above the Potomac River. The boat was launched from the landing at the bottom of Princess Street, carrying Rumsey, Captain Charles Morrow, a young girl named Annie, and six or seven women "for ballast." For the next two hours Rumsey chugged up and down the river, the spectators cheering him on enthusiastically.

Unfortunately, this turned out to be the high point of Rumsey's life. Lacking the necessary funds to pursue his work, he spent much of his time trying to find sponsors willing to finance him. In 1788, Benjamin Franklin helped organize the "Rumseian Society," which was made up of donors intent on producing a practical steamboat. But progress dragged along, and it wasn't until 1792 that enough funds were raised to send Rumsey and his steamboat to England in hopes of getting a manufacturing company to pay for his costs. Then tragedy struck.

Speaking in London before the Society of Arts on December 22, 1792, Rumsey collapsed on the podium from a stroke. He never regained consciousness and died early the next morning. With no money to ship his body home, James Rumsey was buried without fanfare in an unmarked grave in St. Catherine's Cemetery. Only a few feet away lay the headless remains of another man who helped shape American history, Sir Walter Raleigh.

Ironically, Rumsey's steamboat was successfully demonstrated in London only a few months later on the Thames River. But without Rumsey's determination to guide the boat's further development and production, interest in it soon faded. John Fitch would later have little success with his theories, and it wouldn't be until 1807 that people would again hear about a "steamboat."

That was the year that Robert Fulton's huge *Cleremont* took to the water. This splashing paddlewheeler was the progenitor of generations of sidewheelers and sternwheelers which followed. James Rumsey favored a different system, using his engine to force a stream of water through a box keel and out the stern of his boat. This is the same principle of jet propulsion which drives modern "jet skis" across the water and fast planes through the air. The idea was a technological false trail 200 years ago, but now appears to have been far ahead of its time.

One couple, Ed and Carol Ringoot, owners of the Thomas Shepherd Inn, had the whole crew over for a huge chicken dinner, complete with all the trimmings. The Ringoots figured they "were just giving a little something back to the workers for all they had given Shepherdstown."

Ed and Carol recruited a few boat builders, too. Like other citizens of Shepherdstown, they are proud of their hometown. They love telling guests at the inn about their community, especially its history. Naturally, they couldn't help but go into the story of James Rumsey, and how a local fellow by the name of Jay Hurley and a good many of his friends were doing something just as crazy. Sure, they were building a steamboat, too, and no, they wouldn't mind having a few visitors over to check out their progress, either. Some "one-time" visitors to Shepherdstown found themselves coming back on an uncommonly frequent basis.

Perhaps the most notable of these former weekend guests was Dr. H. W. Fraley of Leechburg, Pennsylvania. It didn't take long for Dr. Fraley to start coming south with increasing regularity, often with as many as 10 helpers with him. These volunteers played a vital role in constructing the boat's engine, making many of the parts in Leechburg and then bringing them down to Shepherdstown for assembly.

Jay had to look no further than just around the corner to find a first-class wood finisher in Dave Wheeler. Dave had just opened his new woodworking business in a large former warehouse, and its size and close proximity gave ideas to Jay. He immediately went calling, wishing Dave luck in his new venture and, oh, by the way, he was building a boat from scratch and would Dave mind milling a few boards? No problem, said Dave, it'd be a pleasure to help you whenever I'm needed. Jay Hurley smiled pleasantly to himself, knowing his milling problems were over. Before the boat was finished, Dave Wheeler would mill over 1,800 feet of oak and white cedar.

The oldest helper was George Camplair of Annandale, Virginia, a chronic volunteer for worthwhile causes. You'd think when a man reaches 68 he would want to slow down and enjoy life a bit. George is certainly enjoying life, but he's not about to slow down. So when his friend Bill Hunley told him about the "Rumseian Experiment," it was natural that George would do a little sniffing around.

All it took was one trip to Shepherdstown to convince him that he had stumbled onto another worthy task. Not only did he find the work challenging, but he found the "clean, healthy environment of the country" a refreshing change from the Washington suburbs. And he liked the historical significance behind the project, too. George found tremendous satisfaction "recreating history with our hands," he said. "It's totally different from using modern-day machinery to make something in hours or weeks that used to take our forefathers months or even years to build." But perhaps the best thing was the camaraderie among the workers. "They were a great bunch of guys to work with," he will fondly tell you. "There was always a friendly banter going on, especially when someone learned a new nautical term. Only Bill Hunley knew the difference between the stern and the bow when we started."

Bridging the generation gap were the two youngest members of the Rumseian Society, Shepherdstown brothers Scott and Greg Walter, 13 and 15. They joined up when their mother told them that Mr. Hurley could use some help building a steamboat behind his general store, and much of their summer was spent in the makeshift workshop. Baseball and fishing will have to wait until next year.

And for Roy LeBlanc, another key member of the work force, toiling on the boat was an unusual way to do something positive for other people. Roy worked 30 years for the Internal Revenue Service. He went out in style this past August 29th, his last official day of work. There was a problem for Roy that day, for the 29th also happened to mark the formal unveiling of the steamboat at Morgans Grove Park outside of Shepherdstown. After some deliberation, Roy did what any good trooper would have done — he called in sick on his last day of work. Somewhere up above, you know that James Rumsey was proud of Roy LeBlanc that day.

After nearly a year, members of the Rumseian Society deemed their boat completed and seaworthy. Although the launch date was pegged for Saturday, September 12, the events leading up to it began a day earlier at Shepherd College. There an afternoon symposium was held on 18th-century technology, featuring a distinguished group of speakers and scholars.

Following the symposium, an evening social hour and testimonial dinner was held at the Men's Club in town. It was something of a family reunion, too, as descendants of James Rumsey met each other for the first time. They came from New York, Ohio and Kentucky, and Anne Oliver and daughter Emily journeyed all the way from Lighthouse Point, Florida. Anne is the great-great-granddaughter of Dr. Edward Rumsey, younger brother of James.

When asked what they thought of the big celebration, Emily Oliver replied, "It's been a wonderful trip. The people of Shepherdstown are fiercely protective of their history," she said with a grin. "But they're also some of the friendliest, most courteous people we've ever met. You can bet we'll be back again to visit!"

Hard working volunteers were saluted during the dinner. While there was a lot of congratulating and friendly kidding going on among the participants, one guest may have been a little sad to see the work finally come to an end. That was Ruth Hurley, Jay's mother. "You know, Jay used to always bring his friends over for supper while they were working on the boat. And now that it's over, I guess I'm going to miss feeding all my boys," Ruth lamented like a true mother.

Unfortunately, one of the individuals most responsible for the group's success was unable to attend the dinner. John Farrior, president of the Rumseian Society, became ill the night before and had to be hospitalized. John had been a guiding force of the project from the first, and between helping to organize the Rumseian Society and working on the boat, he probably put in close to 1,000 hours of his free time. Al-

The half-scale replica floated fine, but the steam engine failed to work. Society members promised to fix that by the time of the official Rumsey bicentennial in December.

though he was disappointed at missing the big weekend, John later said the satisfaction of learning more about Rumsey and working with different members of the community was all the reward he needed. He proudly noted that as many as 26 businesses contributed in one way or another to help the project.

On Saturday, Shepherdstown hosted its annual fall festival, followed by an old-fashioned parade spotlighting the handmade boat. The parade concluded at the bottom of Princess Street, the site of Rumsey's initial steamboat launching. Besides the large crowd already gathered there, many people hoping for a better view watched from the nearby James Rumsey Bridge or positioned themselves along the bluffs overlooking the Potomac. On top of one of these cliffs is a large monument erected in 1915 to honor Rumsey's achievements.

The only problem with the launching was that the boat's engine wouldn't work. "This only goes to show what a truly remarkable genius Rumsey was," Jay Hurley quipped. Actually, some necessary engine parts had not arrived in time to be assembled. This did nothing to abate the enthusiasm of the cheering spectators, for they applauded loudly when the boat was put into the water. Yes, it did float!

There is one thing you can be sure about, however. Both Jay Hurley and John Farrior promised that on December 3, 1987 — 200 years to the day of Rumsey's original trek up the Potomac — the *Rumseian Experiment* will likewise make its own steam-powered voyage up the same river. You get the feeling that Mr. Rumsey would have wanted it that way.

No Ambulances Then

Tales of a Country Doctor

By Barbara Smith
Photographs by Greg Clark

"I've never been one to be very far or very long away from home. Medical school was the longest, in Atlanta, and then Fort Hayes — but I always had to come back. I just had to come back to where I was needed and where I belong."

Ralph Woodford was 81 years old last June 23. Born in Berryburg in Barbour County, then a model electrified mining community, he was the son of mine official Arla D. Woodford. The family moved in to the county seat when Ralph was seven years old. "There was electricity in Philippi, too," he recalls, "but the street lights were gas." After living two years in town, the family moved to a farm on Hacker's Creek Road, "a three-room, shanty-like house which my father remodeled to make livable." Then there was another move, back to Berryburg where Woodford's father spent the years of World War I in charge of the mines. After the war the Woodfords moved back to Hacker's Creek, where they were residing

Doctors did their own lab work in the old days, according to Dr. Ralph Woodford. He's retired now, but still knows how to handle a microscope.

Frankie Woodford met her future husband during college days. "She liked the sciences and math and physics, and she wasn't a sissy girl, so I liked her," Dr. Ralph recalls.

when Ralph finished medical school.

Ralph was one of eight children, and it was his generation which started a family trend toward the medical profession. One of his sisters became a nurse; one brother married a nurse; one sister married a doctor. One of the remaining three brothers became a doctor, and one became the personnel director of Broaddus Hospital. The youngest brother was a regional manager for Magnavox Corporation. The offspring of these six people include a surgeon, a registered nurse, and two licensed practical nurses. Several others are married to medical professionals.

Ralph and Frankie Woodford now live in a very comfortable, attractive home in Philippi. They also own property on the outskirts of town, where they still raise a good, big garden. They have kept the old farm on Hacker's Creek, but the house has been vandalized, and relics and furniture have been stolen. Except for the pleasure of observing the abundant plants and animals on the land and around the pond, there is little reason to visit Hacker's Creek.

The coffee table in their living room holds books on art, on West Virginia, and on the tenor Pavarotti. On the wall are portraits of Dr. and Mrs. Woodford. Also on the walls are pictures and memorabilia of their three sons, born in 1936, 1938, and 1940. The oldest, an administrator of the Health Department of Baltimore, died in 1986. The second son is a pharmacist in Northport, Florida. The third son, breaking the medical tradition, teaches band music in the public schools of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. There are four grandchildren.

The furniture is lovely, much of it antique and all of it polished. One framed certificate recognizes Dr. Woodford as having delivered over 2,000 babies. Another is a Distinguished Service Award presented to the physician by Alderson-Broaddus College in 1979 for 42 years as an outstanding citizen and alumnus. Another certificate was signed by both Hulett Smith, then governor of West Virginia, and Lyndon Johnson, then President of the United States. This paper notes the 25 years that Dr. Woodford spent working without compensation for the military draft system. Still another framed document is the Certificate of Honor presented by the West Virginia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1976, noting "personal contributions to the handicapped."

Photos and newspaper clippings record Mrs. Hu Myers presenting to Dr. Ralph a scrapbook of memories. This gesture was made to recognize the doctor's retirement in 1978. It was not long after that that friends and former patients contributed funds for the naming of a room to honor Dr. Woodford in New Main Hall at Alderson-Broaddus College.

To balance the certificates and photographs are prize-winning paintings done by Mrs. Woodford. Most of these speak of the hillsides and hollows that are, for this couple, home.

Ralph Woodford followed a common pattern. He attended local schools, earning his high school diploma at Broaddus Academy. Premed work was done at Broaddus College. A two-year medical degree — the B.S. — was completed at West Virginia University. Then the young man applied to and was accepted by several medical schools, including the Rush Medical College of the University of Chicago.

One of Dr. Ralph's mentors, Dr. Hu Myers, had attended Emory University, however, and so Ralph Woodford and two of his classmates at WVU were persuaded to head south. "It was in Atlanta," Dr. Ralph reports, "that I learned the niceties."

It seems that a classmate at WVU had married a teacher who owned a Model A Ford. They offered Ralph a ride — three days in the rumbleseat, stopping overnight at tourist homes along the way. Hitched to the car was a homemade trailer which threatened constantly to become unhitched. "We traveled about five miles an hour over the Smokies and into Asheville," Woodford testifies. "After we got to Atlanta and shuffled around a while, I became the steward of the Theta Kappa Psi fraternity house in exchange for my room and board. One of my fraternity brothers stayed in the Salvation Army home, and one stayed in the old Soldiers' Home, the residence of Civil War Confederate veterans.

"I was assigned to the black and white Grady hospitals, which were across the street from each other in the slums of Atlanta, and I did my clerkship in the many and various clinics there. The assignment I remember best, though, was in the psychiatric ward of the federal prison." He pauses and chuckles. "Nobody much knows that I went to prison." His eyes twinkle as he looks up to make sure that his audience has understood his joke.

"Actually, we went with our professor in groups of about eight. We'd

report to the guardhouse to be admitted. Then we'd go down this long, spotless marble-floored hall past the cell blocks. Those floors had been walked on for so long that they were worn down in the middle. I remember going past the cell of Al Capone.

"Then we'd go out the door and across what looked like a college campus, where some of the prisoners would be wearing football uniforms. Then we'd go into the main prison hospital, and I'd get dropped off where I worked — in the office of the chief medical psychiatrist.

"That was in 1933, and on my very first day I talked to a prisoner who complained of migraine headaches. I remember how intense he was and how scared I was. He smoked up all my cigarettes, and I was too scared to protest. That man's first crime had been committed in West Virginia. He robbed a boxcar in Princeton. Apparently his crimes were committed during a state of amnesia.

"Anyhow, we did part of our psychiatric study there at the federal prison, and we would work up the cases and present papers on them to the other students and the hospital medical staff.

"After that stay in Atlanta I did my rotating internship at the Ohio Valley General Hospital, now the Medical Center in Wheeling," Dr. Ralph concludes. "My brother Tom and I both interned there."

Where was future wife Frankie all this time? "That's a long story," the doctor smiles. "My bosom pal and classmate Waitman Gall, Jr., was interested in Ethel Robinson, whose mother was the Dean of Women at Broaddus. I helped Gall steal Ethel. We took her trunk down in the elevator of Old Main, which was then the girls' dormitory, and the two of them went and got married in Belington. Then we all had a big party.

"That Gall fellow's mother was Frankie's first cousin. Frankie was visiting at their house, and she came to our graduation. She liked the sciences and math and physics, and she wasn't a sissy girl, so I liked her. She had to chase me for seven years, though," he chuckles, "before she talked me into marrying her."

Frankie was born in Holly Meadows, Tucker County, but was raised in Randolph County. She went to Davis and Elkins College and obtained her teaching certificate from WVU. "I taught chemistry at Bartley and Van," she explains, mentioning two communities down in the southern coalfields. "I had majored in chemistry and had minors in physics and geology. For five years while I was teaching we saw each other only at Christmas and in the summer. I couldn't teach if I was married, so the clerk sneaked a marriage certificate out, and we got married secretly. That was in 1933. It was two more years before Ralph finished all his training."

Dr. Ralph picks up the story. "When I finally came home, it was to relieve the mine doctor in Galloway. I also worked as a relief for my brother when he went on vacation. He had a practice in Junior."

"Those first years were very hard," Frankie admits. "He was working all the time. I became a joiner. I think I joined half a dozen clubs. He was very, very good to me — let me do pretty much whatever I wanted to."

The doctor continues. "We had to borrow $600 from the bank to get started. Took us a whole summer to get the money. I used $100 to buy a burned out Model A Ford which a mechanic cousin of Frankie's fixed up."

Frankie laughs. "It looked like a coffee pot!"

"The rest," Dr. Ralph says, "was used for office furniture and equipment. B. E. Snyder, Sr., was a friend of my father's. He owned the hardware store in Philippi, and he offered me office space above the store. We moved in on September 1, 1935, and that was my office for 38 years. Then I moved over the First National Bank and stayed there for four more years, until I retired on December 31, 1978."

Dr. Woodford pauses to fill in some background information. "You have to have experienced this country's deep Depression to really appreciate what was happening then, the trials and tribulations of the late '20's and the '30's and early '40's. That's the time we're talking about.

"I was paid $28 per month during my internship, and $6 of that was held out for my uniforms.

"All my life, in my family, we had always felt rich," he adds. "We had very little money, but we always had an abundance of food, most of which we raised. We had enough clothes, and we had a comfortable home and always a secondhand T-Model or A-Model Ford. Poverty didn't really strike us until our college and post-graduate days.

"I was lucky. Frankie's salary was $125 per month, and she sent me part of that for my medical school expenses."

Dr. and Mrs. Woodford examine memorabilia of nearly 55 years of marriage. They worked together in the office and on house calls in the early years.

The familiar black bag was a portable clinic for the doctor with a rural practice. It equipped the physician for anything from a fracture to childbirth.

There is a pause, and then the stories of a long medical adventure begin. "I hadn't been in practice very long when I got a call to do a delivery. All doctors in those days had to start by doing deliveries. I had to go across the river at Junior and then toward Belington, and I ended up having to climb a ladder to get to the woman who was having the baby. Just like the Waltons on Walton Mountain," he nods.

"Then there was a call from Pepper, out on Cherry Hill Road. I was to go out King Knob to Stewart's Run and then on Brushy Fork Road toward Clarksburg. When I got out near the Mt. Olive church, the lights on the car went out. I finally did find the house, though, and it was an easy delivery. I clamped off the umbilical cord and wrapped the baby in a towel. Then I started to take care of the mother. I heard a sound, though, and when I turned around, the baby was gone. One of the little girls in the family had run in and grabbed the bundle and would you believe, she had stolen the baby!"

He laughs softly. "Yes, I delivered lots and lots of babies. That was supposed to be the main job of Dr. Karl Myers, Sr., but obstetricians and general practitioners had to go up into the hills and the mountains, and Dr. Karl had gotten really interested in x-ray and cancer, so I was given courtesy privileges at the Myers Clinic Hospital, and I backed up Dr. Karl in obstetrics." The gray-haired man adjusts his hearing aid and then continues. "I delivered babies from then until my heart attack in 1959."

Dr. Woodford recalls another case. "There was a time when I got a call from the Simon Shaffer's store area in Valley Furnace. Everybody kept giving me directions according to a pile of poles. I found my way to a timber camp and asked where I was supposed to go, and they said to go back down to the pile of poles and take the second road and go from there, so I did, and I came to a schoolhouse, and the woman told me to go back down to a pile of poles and go from there. I finally followed some car tracks up a creek. Turned out that was the first part of the road I was supposed to be on.

"At last I found the big old weathered house built way back when they had lots of lumber. My patient was in a room by a large Burnside stove. The baby had already been born, premature at seven months, and was all wrapped up in the mother's long johns and was crying lustily. The mother was running a temperature of 102 degrees from flu. We ended up lining a box with cotton for the baby, and we fed it evaporated milk formulas until the mother got better. I worked hard to save that woman and her baby, and then I simply had to go home. Naturally, I had every intention of going back to see them, but the snow got too deep. We couldn't get in, and no news came out. But six months later into the office came the mother with a bouncing baby. I don't have to tell you what a joy that was.

"And then another call came that had me working for three days and nights. That was 20 miles out on a mountainside. It was raining real hard, and I couldn't get the car in, so I carried everything up to the house. The patient was in false labor, and I stayed three days waiting through the floods for that baby. Frankie finally sent for me." He pauses to smile at his wife.

"Another time, a Sunday," he continues, "I got called up to the far reaches of the county. It was almost dark, and I got this mysterious call to come attend a woman who had had a baby without a doctor, but now she needed one. Frankie was eight months pregnant, but she rode along and then waited in the car.

"This old crone came to the door and asked what I wanted. 'Nobody needs a doctor here,' she said, 'but you can come in.'

"I did, and there was a woman in a bed. 'Where's the baby?' I asked. I examined her, and I delivered the placenta, but there was no baby. I figured it best not to ask too many questions under those conditions. Half an hour later, I left, but I headed in the wrong direction, and I came upon this man who had been in my office a time or two. 'What in the name of God are you doing out here?' he asked. And he helped me find Frankie and the car.

"When I got to town, I notified the sheriff and the coroner, and there was an inquest. They found the baby in a graveyard. The coroner reported that it had been born dead but had been properly buried in a casket. They had to dig it up and verify all that. Of course I had to be present."

Frankie Woodford fills in a few details. "It was hard times back then. Once we had new tires on the car and ran over a culvert at the cemetery, and one of the tires was cut to pieces. That one trip cost a lot of time and ex-

penses. That Sunday, Ralph got no money for setting a broken leg at the office, and he got no money for delivering the woman's placenta — only $3 for suturing the wound. And a tire cost $25."

"We didn't get rich," Dr. Ralph confirms. "An office call cost $2, and a follow-up call was $1. The charge for a labor case was $25. But," he pauses for full effect, "you have to realize that only a third of the patients were able to pay at all. Thirty-five percent of Barbour County was on direct relief right then. My gross income that first year was $3,000, and most of that had to go for expenses.

"Frankie helped out in the office during the war when all the help left and costs were so high. Dr. Michael in Belington and Dr. Hu and I in Philippi were the only doctors in the county right then, except for an elderly doctor who was ill a lot. I tried to enlist like all the others and was ordered to Fort Hayes in Columbus for an induction examination, but I had a very early hernia and they turned me down. I did do examinations for the draft board, though — the Selective Service. During World War II all of my brothers and sisters were involved in the conflict some way."

Immediately after the war, professional competition became rather intense in Barbour County. "There was Dr. White, and there were all of the Myers brothers and their sister, and there were Dr. Scott Smith and Dr. C. B. Williams — all in Philippi. There was an osteopath in Nestorville, and there were doctors in Century and Galloway and Brownton and Hodgesville and Junior. And there were four doctors in Belington, including my brother Tom."

As for hospitals, there were two in Elkins, one in Grafton, and two in Clarksburg. The Myers Clinic Hospital was open in Philippi.

"Things really changed when World War II came along," Dr. Ralph says. "Before that most babies were delivered at home, but then the government set up a medical plan so that servicemen's wives had to go to the hospital for obstetrical deliveries. Broaddus Hospital opened in 1954, and I was there to deliver the first baby.

"Before the war — like 1937 or 1938 — we had very few ways to treat pneumonia and such diseases. Then came sulfa morizine, which was considered a miracle drug. I remember treating one 86-year-old man down in the Elk City area, for instance. He had lobar pneumonia so bad that he could hardly swallow and was becoming delirious. I had gotten an R.N. to live there with him. But then I put him on sulfa morizine. This was new and the first of this kind of medicine I ever used. I went out three times a day to set up the IV. By the third day he was sitting up, and of course he got well.

"The sulfas and penicillins and the many mycins and other miracle drugs were steadily coming along, as were the cephalosporins. I had seen a lot of pellagra from malnutrition before the drugs came. We'd talk about the four D's — diarrhea, dermititis, dimentia, and death. Then nicotinic acid was developed, and all that ended. We also began to use the isomer isoniazid for the treatment of tuberculosis.

"We had been treating pernicious anemia by prescribing about half a pound of raw liver per day to produce red blood cells, and then we gave liver extract by injection, and finally Vitamin B-12 was developed.

"It used to be that there'd be a flu epidemic, and there'd be six or eight sick in one home at a time," the doctor continues. "All we could do back then was tell our patients to drink plenty of fluids, and we gave palliative medications. But then came the war and all those new drugs were developed.

"I remember once when a woman came into the office like she was drunk, but it was really meningococcic meningitis. Not long before that she would have died of it, but we examined her and treated her with sulfathiazole, and she lived to be 76. She died just last year.

"And what can I say about immunizations? You know what a difference they have made. Yes, the whole system changed almost overnight. Polio was whipped, and most of the childhood diseases can now be prevented."

After all of the years and all of the babies and all of the trips into the night-dark hills around Philippi, how does Dr. Ralph Woodford sum up his career? "It's been a good life. I spent a lot of time with my patients in their homes. I knew how they lived. That's something a specialist and most modern-day doctors never know. When you hear the sirens of the ambulances, you just remember that back then there were no ambulances. It was the doctors themselves who responded to the calls. We hardly ever sent a patient to the hospital, and when we did, we called the funeral home and they'd send a hearse to take the person in."

The old doctor smiles. "I like to think that we made a difference to people," he says.

The portrait is from younger days, but the kindly expression hasn't changed much. "I like to think we made a difference," he says of his long practice in Barbour County.

Goldenseal Index

Volume 13, 1987

Articles which appeared in Volume 13 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

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

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of the calendar year (e.g., Volume 12, Number 4).

Subject

Author

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In This Issue

MALCOLM W. ATER, JR., was born in Virginia and graduated from Old Dominion University. He worked as an academic advisor at Old Dominion until 1983, when he moved to Shepherdstown. He is now editor of the *Good News Paper* there, and is a freelance writer. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

HEATHER ROBERTS BIOLA, whose family lives in Elkins, earned graduate degrees at the University of Tennessee and Georgia State University. She teaches English at Norcross High School in Georgia. She has published articles in the *Tennessee Folklore Bulletin* and elsewhere. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

IRENE B. BRAND, a lifelong resident of Mason County, earned her B.A. and Master's degrees at Marshall University. She has taught at Point Pleasant Junior High School for two decades and has done freelance writing for several years. She is the author of eight books and many magazine articles. She was last published in GOLDENSEAL in the summer 1985 issue.

PAUL BROWN studies photography at Shepherd College, while working as a freelance photographer. He will receive his B.S.A. in spring 1988, and then plans to work on his master's degree. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

PATRICIA CALL, born in Kanawha County, earned her Ph.D. in reading education from WVU. She has taught elementary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate school, as well as continuing education. She now teaches at West Virginia Tech. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GREG CLARK is a photographer for the Department of Culture and History.

NORMAN JULIAN, a Clarksburg native, is a WVU graduate. He was founding editor of *Panorama*, the Sunday magazine of the *Morgantown Dominion Post*, and has been editorial page editor of that paper. His novel *Cheat* was published in 1984 by Back Fork Books. He is a periodic contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

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

MICHAEL KLINE spent childhood summers in Hampshire County. After receiving his B.A. in anthropology from George Washington University in 1964, he moved to Appalachia full-time, working in various poverty programs in Kentucky and West Virginia. Michael served as assistant to the editor of GOLDENSEAL in 1978, and now lives in Elkins where he is the associate director of the Augusta Heritage Center. He is a periodic contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

BILL KUYKENDALL is head of the photojournalism department at the University of Missouri at Columbia, Missouri. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

MICHAEL M. MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University, graduating with a degree in sociology, and is now a student at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. Michael M. Meador, who has written several previous articles for GOLDENSEAL, is not to be confused with photographer Michael Meador.

BARBARA A. SMITH chairs the Division of the Humanities and teaches 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. She is a periodic contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

GORDON LLOYD SWARTZ III, a native West Virginian, is a WVU graduate and a Marine Corps veteran. He is a coal miner at Consolidation Coal's Shoemaker Mine in Marshall County. He reports that he is the father of the largest set of twins ever born in the Northern Panhandle. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the summer 1987 issue.

RICK WILSON was born in South Charleston and is a graduate of Marshall University. He is assistant director of the Putnam County Library. He is also a freelance writer and co-author of the book, *Blenko Glass 1930-1950*. His first contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the fall 1987 issue.

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