Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Volume 14, Number 1 Spring 1988

Folklife • Fairs • Festivals

GOLDENSEAL's "Folklife Fairs Festivals" calendar is prepared three to six months in advance of publication. The information was accurate as far as we could determine at the time the magazine went to press. However, it is advisable to check with the organization or event to make certain that dates or locations have not been changed. The phone numbers given are all within the West Virginia (304) area code. Information for events at West Virginia State Parks and major festivals is also available by calling 1-800-CALL WVA.

April 9 Richwood (846-6790)
Feast of the Ramson
April 16-17 Salem (782-5245)
Spring Celebration (Fort New Salem)
April 16-17 Gassaway (364-2340)
Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show
April 17 Clay (587-2951)
Clay County Annual Ramp Dinner
April 18-24 Elkins (636-1903)
Augusta Spring Dulcimer Week (D & E College)
April 22-24 Mullens (294-4000)
Clogging Workshops (Twin Falls State Park)
May 4-8 Fairmont (366-4256)
Three Rivers Coal Festival
May 5-8 Huntington (696-5990)
Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival (Civic Center)
May 7-14 South Charleston (744-0051)
Freedom Festival
May 7-8 Moundsville (845-9810)
Arts & Crafts Show & Sale (Grand Vue Park)
May 7 Dunbar (766-0223)
Dunbar Spring Festival
May 14 Mingo (339-6462)
Allegheny Mountain Wool Fair
May 14-15 Point Pleasant (675-5737)
Antique Steam & Gas Engine Show (Farm Museum)
May 14-15 Fairmont (363-3030)
Traditional Music Weekend (Pricketts Fort)
May 15 Shepherdstown (876-2551)
Maifest (Bavarian Inn & Lodge)
May 20-22 Cass (456-4300)
Cass Scenic Railroad Railfan Weekend
May 21-29 Webster Springs (847-7673)
Webster County Woodchopping Festival
May 25-29 Buckhannon (472-5674)
West Virginia Strawberry Festival
May 26 Huntington (529-2701)
Senior Citizens Heritage Day (Huntington Museum of Art)
May 27-29 Charleston (348-0220)
Vandalia Gathering (Capitol Grounds)
May 27-29 White Sulphur Springs (536-1721)
West Virginia Dandelion Festival
May 27-30 Davis (259-5216)
Tucker County Homecoming (Blackwater Falls)
May 30 Chapmanville (752-7259)
Memorial Day Outdoor Gospel Sing
June 2-5 Princeton (487-1502)
Princeton Town Fair
June 3-4 Purgitsville (289-3493)
Old-Time Music Weekend
June 5 Charleston (744-4323)
Rhododendron Arts & Crafts Festival (Capitol Grounds)
June 9 St. Marys (684-7067)
West Virginia Bass Festival
June 10-12 Charles Town (725-2055)
17th Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
June 10-12 Star City (599-4850)
Mountaineer Country Glass Festival
June 10-12 Ronceverte (645-7270)
Ronceverte River Festival
June 11-August 6 Huntington (525-8141)
Tri-State Fair & Regatta
June 16-19 Glenville (462-7361)
West Virginia State Folk Festival
June 17-20 Cass (456-4300)
Cass Scenic Railroad 25th Anniversary
June 17-19 Cairo (643-2931)
West Virginia Day (North Bend)
June 17-19 Clarksburg (622-3005)
West Virginia Heritage Celebration
June 18-19 Point Pleasant (675-5737)
Pioneer Days & Wheat Harvest (Farm Museum)
June 18-20 Charleston-Wheeling (348-0162)
West Virginia's 125th Birthday Celebration
June 24-July 4 New Martinsville (455-5060)
New Martinsville Regatta
June 24-26 Summersville (872-3145)
Bluegrass-Country Music Festival
June 25-26 Wheeling (242-3000)
Farm Days (Oglebay Zoo)
June 25 Hillsboro (653-4430)
Birthday Celebration (Pearl S. Buck Birthplace)
June 25 Pennsboro (643-2738)
Ritchie County Railroad Exhibit
June 30-July 4 Ripley (232-5424)
Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
July 1-4 Weirton (748-7212)
International Food & Arts Festival
July 8-10 Marlinton (799-4315)
Pioneer Days
July 8-30 Fairmont (363-3030)
"An American Frontier Musical" (Pricketts Fort)
July 10-August 12 Elkins (636-1903)
Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops (D & E College)
July 15 Williamstown (375-7584)
Volunteer Firemen's Ice Cream Social
July 17-24 Mineral Wells (489-2829)
4-H & Wood County Fair
July 22-24 Wheeling (233-1090)
Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival
July 22-31 Huntington (525-8141)
Summerfest '88 (Harris Riverfront Park)
July 23-31 Cowen (226-5332)
Cowen Historical Railroad Festival
July 24-30 Moorefield (538-2725)
West Virginia Poultry Convention & Festival
July 25-31 Mt. Nebo (732-7151)
Mt. Nebo West Virginia State Gospel Sing
July 31-August 6 Cottageville (372-2011)
Jackson County Junior Fair
August 4-7 Harrisville (643-2738)
Hughes River Holidays
August 6 Jane Lew (884-7500)
Hillbilly Chili Cookoff
August 6 Clifftop (438-6429)
Old-Time Days & Gospel Sing (Camp Washington-Carver)
August 6-14 Moundsville (845-7733)
Summer Festival Days
August 7-14 Richwood (846-6790)
Cherry River Festival
August 8-14 Middlebourne (652-2528)
Tyler County Fair
August 11-14 Spanishburg (425-1429)
Bluestone Valley Fair

(continued on inside back cover)

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Goldenseal

Volume 14, Number 1 Spring 1988

COVER: Horticulture students prune trees near the WVU quadrangle, about the turn of the century. Our story on the centennial of the university's Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station begins on page 46. Photographer unknown.

PHOTOS: Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Michael Keller, Scott Kitchen, Gerald Milnes, Edward Petrosky, Jr., Mary Lee Sutton, William Walters, Andy Yale.

Vandalia 1988

West Virginians and friends of West Virginia are invited to Charleston for the Vandalia Gathering on Memorial Day weekend, May 27-29. The 12th Vandalia will begin Friday evening and continue through late Sunday afternoon.

Vandalia Gathering is West Virginia's annual statewide folklife festival, sponsored by the Department of Culture and History. Scores of traditional musicians and craftspeople from all parts of the state attend as invited participants, and dozens more musicians gather informally for the festival's popular fiddle and banjo contests and outdoor jam sessions. It adds up to a lively sampler of the best of Mountain State traditional culture.

The Friday evening concert, beginning at 7:00 p.m., will kick off Vandalia as in years past. Saturday gets underway at 11:00 a.m., with the opening of the food booths and beginning of crafts demonstrations. A busy afternoon of music contests, storytelling, and concerts and dance follows. Saturday concludes with the big 7:00 o'clock evening concert, always a festival high point with its announcement of the prestigious Vandalia Award.

Sunday's activities also begin at 11:00 a.m., with food, crafts, and contest registration. The banjo contest commences on the outdoor stage at 12:00, anchoring another full afternoon of events. Storytelling begins inside at 1:00 p.m., warming up the crowd for the liar's contest at 2:00. Vandalia concludes with the final awards concert at 5:00 p.m.

Highlights of the 12th Vandalia will include the popular fiddle and banjo contests, open-stage clogging and dance demonstrations, the Sunday liar's contest, crafts demonstrations and outdoor jam sessions. The food booths will offer authentic regional and ethnic foods, and the Cultural Center Shop will be open extended hours throughout the weekend.

Vandalia Gathering takes place at the Cultural Center and on the adjacent grounds of the State Capitol. Join us there to celebrate the best of traditional West Virginia.

Above: Phoeba Parsons won the 1987 Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest folklife honor. Here she makes music with Tom King. Photo by Greg Clark.

Below: Mountain music is a family affair with the Ebenezer String Band of Wetzel County. Here Amos Ross picks the banjo and sister Hannah fiddles, backed by their parents on bass and guitar. Photo by Greg Clark.

Left: Ulrika Browing was one of several craft demonstrators. She is a wood-carver from Buckhannon. Photo by Michael Keller.

Below Left: Vandalia features regional and ethnic dance indoors, and open-stage clogging outdoors. This couple square dances in the Great Hall. Photo by Greg Clark.

Below: Regional and ethnic foods are among Vandalia's big attractions. Here a volunteer chef from Saint John Greek Orthodox Church of Charleston cooks for the crowd during the 1987 festival. Photo by Greg Clark.

Left: Country music star Buddy Starcher presented his father's fiddle to the State Museum at Vandalia 1987. Photo by Michael Keller.

Below: Like all good festivals, Vandalia is an informal gathering place for musicians. Here Robert Hudnall of Kanawha County takes part in an outdoor jam session. Photo by Greg Clark.

The Name Vandalia

If you are curious about the origin of the word "Vandalia," let us take you back to the earliest roots of West Virginia — to the time of British King George and his German queen; of Ben Franklin and his compatriots; of land deals and western settlement; and of the awakening desire for a free government in the mountains.

Vandalia was a proposed British-American colony west of the Eastern Seaboard, one of several land settlement projects from the late Colonial period. These schemes emerged in the general ferment of the years between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, as settlers moved beyond the easy reach of eastern governments. The plans were reshaped by the Revolution, with separate western governments eventually coming to realization in the creation of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. What is now West Virginia, through its long history of dissatisfaction with the government in Richmond, can trace its origins back to these pre-Revolutionary desires for western independence.

The Vandalia Colony had its origins in the land speculation of politically influential Englishmen and prominent Colonial Americans, some of whom became America's Founding Fathers. In 1768 Benjamin Franklin was one of the organizers of the Great Ohio Company, which sought to acquire Ohio Valley lands for settlement. Franklin's group proposed the creation of Vandalia as a 14th colony, with its capital at Point Pleasant. The new colony would have included almost all of present West Virginia, except for the Eastern Panhandle, and much of Kentucky. In 1773 George Washington cited the possibility of the establishment of Vandalia in advertising his own Kanawha River lands for sale.

Vandalia was named as a political gesture to Charlotte, wife of George III, an English queen who proudly claimed descent from the ancient Vandals through her birth to German nobility. The Vandalia promoters brought their plans almost to completion in 1772-74, until deterioration of the American political situation made the British government back off. When those problems were resolved, King George was in no position to authorize governments of any sort in the American West.

The word "Vandalia" is rich in West Virginia heritage, and thus a fitting name for the statewide folk festival sponsored annually by the Department of Culture and History.

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.

Folklife Annual Published

Folklife Annual 1986, published by the Library of Congress in late 1987, includes articles on breakdancing, whalers in the Caribbean, Peruvian Indians on the slopes of the Andes, Finns in their homeland and in America, and a Depression-era logging camp.

The annual is second in a series designed to present a collection of pictures and essays on traditional expressive life and culture, primarily but not exclusively in the United States. It's predecessor, *Folklife Annual 1985*, was named one of the Notable Documents of 1986 by the American Library Association. The 1985 annual features essays on the New Jersey Pinelands, the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress, a lumber camp ballad, cowboy culture, Italian stone carvers, the Watts Towers in Los Angeles, and folk artist Howard Finster.

The publication is edited by Alan Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center at the Library, and James Hardin, the Library's folklife publications editor. The 176-page hardbound volume contains 103 illustrations in all, 34 in color, drawn from the collections of the Library of Congress and other sources. *Folklife Annual 1986* and *Folklife Annual 1985* are available for $19 and $16 (respectively) by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

New Cedar Lakes Newsletter

The Cedar Lakes Crafts Center recently began publishing *Craftsline*, a new quarterly newsletter. *Craftsline* is designed to serve as a source of information and exchange for West Virginia's artists and craftspeople.

Cedar Lakes, the site of the annual Mountain State Art & Craft Fair, is located near Ripley, Jackson County. The Crafts Center has worked with both professional and beginning artists and craftspeople for 13 years. It is operated by the West Virginia Department of Education.

The first issue of *Craftsline* includes information on workshops, professional opportunities, and marketing outlets. Interested persons are encouraged to submit information for future issues on special events, sources for materials, marketing ideas, and constructive comments.

If you would like to receive *Craftsline*, contact Tim Pyles, Cedar Lakes Crafts Center, Ripley, WV 25271, (304) 372-7005.

Flatboatin' News

The Flatboat Project, under the direction of Captain Bela K. Berty, promotes interest in early American rivercraft and the healthy state of the historic rivers upon which they operated. The group publishes a newsletter of the same name, producing at least four issues yearly.

Berty undertook a personal campaign to bring a flatboat to the Kanawha Valley in celebration of Kanawha County's 200th anniversary this year. A flatboat, to be named "Spirit of Kanawha," was recently purchased by the county bicentennial committee.

Preliminary plans call for outfitting the boat in May, visiting towns along the Kanawha River from Boomer to Nitro during the summer months, and embarking on a 265-mile trip to Cincinnati following Charleston's 1988 Sternwheel Regatta. Normally, a float trip to Cincinnati would require just a few days. The "Spirit of Kanawha" schedule will allow 40 days for stops at several towns where visitors will be welcomed aboard for tours.

The project seeks volunteers to crew for a week at a time, carpenters, and musicians. For more information on the Flatboat Project, or to subscribe to the newsletter, write to Captain Bela K. Berty, P.O. Box 2001, Charleston, WV 25327-2001.

Flood Poetry

Pass With Care is a collection of poems written by Cleta M. Long. The book was recently published by the Augusta Heritage Center at Davis & Elkins College.

Cleta, a lifelong resident of Tucker County, has written poetry since she was a child. She and husband Norman Long were living on their farm near Dry Fork River in November 1985 when flood waters ravaged their house and land. Many of their belongings were scattered and destroyed, some family memorabilia lost forever.

In the first half of the book, Cleta Long tells of her childhood and her young adult years and married life in Tucker County. In the second half, she tells about the frightful devastation of the 1985 flood and the community recovery effort. With rhyme and verse, Cleta examines her feelings about the flood, her life and her religion.

Pass With Care is 85 pages long with illustrations, including many photographs by John Warner. Warner is well known for his extensive 1985 flood photograph collection. The book is available in paperback for $6.95, plus $2.35 postage and handling, and in hardback for $9.95 plus $2.50. To order write to Cleta Long, Box 123, Parsons, WV 26287.

Hechler Biography Available

Mountain State Press of Charleston recently published Secretary of State Ken Hechler's biography. In *Ken Hechler: Maverick Public Servant*, author Charles H. Moffat chronicles the career and accomplishments of this well-known West Virginian.

Dr. Moffat was professor of history at Marshall University for three decades, the last nine years of which he served as chairman of the Department of History. He spent more than two years researching Ken Hechler's

voluminous collection of personal papers. The result is a comprehensive biography of over 350 pages, indexed and heavily illustrated.

Hechler himself is the author of six books, including the World War II history, *The Bridge at Remagen* (a best-seller and subject of a motion picture). His political career includes 18 years as West Virginia's Fourth District representative in Congress.

Clark M. Clifford, Special Counsel to President Truman during Hechler's time on the Truman staff and later Secretary of Defense under President Johnson, says "This is an excellent and very readable book about a splendid public servant who has had a fascinating life in government and politics."

Ken Hechler: Maverick Public Servant sells for $20 per copy. It may be purchased at bookstores and from Mountain State Press, 2300 MacCorkle Avenue, Charleston, WV 25304, (304) 357-4767.

1987 GOLDENSEAL Volumes

The 1987 spring, summer, fall and winter issues of GOLDENSEAL are available in a special hardbound volume through The Cultural Center Shop. The limited edition may be purchased by mail or in person.

Volume 13, designed to match the volumes from previous years, is bound in light golden buckram fabric with the title, volume number and year imprinted in carmine red on the spine. The library-quality binding was done by the Mount Pleasant Book Bindery of Hampshire County.

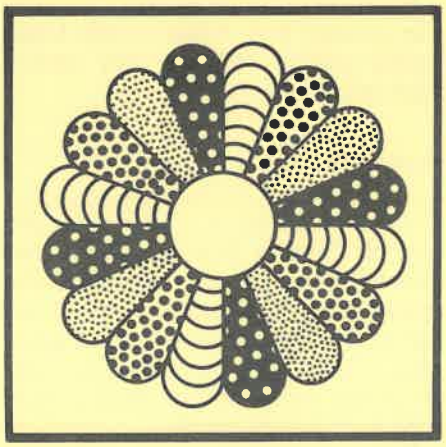
The hardbound volumes serve as a fine West Virginia folklife reference. The winter issue includes an index of all GOLDENSEAL articles published in 1987.

A limited number of the 1987 volumes are available. Some earlier volumes are still in stock and may also be purchased. To order yours, write to The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Prepayment of $25 per volume, plus $2.50 postage and handling and $1.25 sales tax from West Virginia residents, should accompany all mail orders. Checks or money orders should be made out to The Shop.

"Quilts '88"

Plans are well under way for the annual quilts exhibition at the Cultural Center in Charleston. The Department of Culture and History has asked West Virginia quiltmakers to submit their best works for the summer-long show.

"Quilts '88" will feature the finest quilts being made in West Virginia today. The annual quilt show is popular with the state's quilters, and their response has insured a high quality exhibit each year. Planners promise that 1988 will be no exception, with scores of brightly colored quilts hung on the 35-foot-high white marble walls of the Cultural Center's Great Hall.



Quilts chosen for the exhibit compete for awards totalling $3,000. One will be selected for the West Virginia Permanent Collection, the state's official collection of art and crafts. Five quilts will be picked for simultaneous exhibit at Camp Washington-Carver at Clifftop, Fayette County. Camp Washington-Carver, the state's former black 4-H camp now operated by the Department of Culture and History, is open to the public during the summer months.

"Quilts '88" will open in conjunction with Vandalia Gathering, a festival of West Virginia traditional arts, held annually over the Memorial Day weekend.

Kanawha County Book

Pictorial Histories Publishing Company and Kanawha County Bicentennial, Inc., have published a new book to commemorate this year's bicentennial of West Virginia's most populous county. *Kanawha County Images: A Bicentennial History 1788-1988* was written by Stan Cohen of Pictorial Histories, with Richard Andre as research associate.

The book begins with Kanawha Valley's very early Indians, the Mound Builders, and then proceeds to cover county history up to modern times. It is meant, the author explains in his introduction, to be a photographic history, and there are many, many pictures. In addition to the photographs, there are maps and drawings. Often historic photographs are laid out beside current ones of the same scene, giving the reader a good feel for changes over the years.

Kanawha County industries — salt, coal, oil and gas, and chemicals, for example — get much attention. Transportation is highlighted, with chapters on riverboating and railroading, as well as street cars and airplanes. The recurrent "Life in the County" sections reveal county happenings during specific periods of history. The big book covers much more, including education, churches, hospitals and businesses.

Kanawha County Images is a 466-page, oversized hardback, including bibliography and index. It sells for $26.95 and is available in area bookstores, or directly from the publisher. To order by mail, send $26.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling to Kanawha County Bicentennial, Inc., 4103 Virginia Avenue, S.E., Charleston, WV 25304.

Industrial Archeology Meeting

Wheeling will host the annual meeting of the Society For Industrial Archeology, May 19-21. The meeting is open to all those interested in the history of industrial sites and industrialization.

The three-day program will emphasize Wheeling's role as a major industrial city in the 19th century and as a transportation hub joining the Ohio River, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and National Road. Tours are scheduled for the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, the old Wheeling Custom House (now West Virginia Independence Hall), Centre Foundry, LaBelle Nail Works, and J. Marsh & Company (manufacturer of the fa-

mous "stogie" cigars). Several post-convention tours are also being organized.

West Virginia Independence Hall, the birthplace of our state, is of interest to the archeologists for its engineering breakthroughs. It was one of the first buildings in the country to use rolled iron I-beams and box-section girders. This system allowed the weight to be carried internally, rather than on exterior masonry walls.

A Friday evening reception and two special exhibits are scheduled at Independence Hall. "The Best of the Past, West Virginia's Historical Places," presented by the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, will feature photos and drawings of West Virginia buildings representing many important architectural styles. A joint exhibit by the Smithsonian Institution and West Virginia University will concentrate on the history of science and technology.

For further information, contact Dr. Emory Kemp, History of Science and Technology Program, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506, or call (304) 293-3867.

West Virginia Photos For Sale

Photographer John Warner is currently offering a series of limited edition color photographs depicting a variety of scenes from rural West Virginia. The collection is titled "West Virginia: 50 Photographs." All photographs are hand-printed, matted and framed by Warner, who says that with reasonable care they will last indefinitely.

The Hendricks photographer's work is well-known. Many of the scenes he captured on film in Parsons and Tucker County during the flood of 1985 appeared in two best-selling books, *The Flood* and *Killing Waters*. Prints of 100 Warner flood photos are also available for sale.

Warner describes his work as "straight photography." He says, "All photographs are taken under natural available light with standard equipment. I use no flash, filters, special lenses or any gimmicks of any kind. I photograph what I see."

Anyone interested in more information on any of John Warner's photographs may contact the photographer at Otter Creek Photography, Hendricks, WV 26271, (304) 478-3586.

Pence Springs History

Since early white settlement, West Virginia mineral springs have been praised for their healing powers over such ailments as rheumatism and lung afflictions. Large hotels were built near springs to accommodate vacationers seeking healthy environments. In fact, whole towns often arose around a single spring.

The Pence Spring in Summers County is a good example of such a mineral spring, and a new book tells of its rich history. *Historic Pence Springs Resort* was written and published by Steve Trail and Fred Long. In 1983, the two men conducted an archeological and historic survey of the Pence Springs Resort complex, which has since been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The book gives a detailed history of the geology of the Pence Spring region, the area's early native inhabitants and first pioneer settlements. It covers the building of the Pence Springs Hotel and other facilities that eventually made up the Pence Springs Resort, and the later use of the hotel as a state prison for women in the late 1940's.

Historic Pence Springs Resort is a 120-page hardback with appendices, bibliography and footnotes. There are photographs throughout the book, and other illustrations. To order send $30 (postage and handling included) to Fred Long, 1003 Temple Street, Hinton, WV 25951.

Mason County History

A history of Mason County has recently been published by the Mason County History Book Committee.

History of Mason County, West Virginia 1987 is a collection of family histories written and submitted by individuals connected with the county. The book has information on early Mason County families which may be of interest to genealogists. There are photographs and other illustrations throughout the book.

History of Mason County is a 492-page, oversized hardback with acid free paper. To order send $45.50 (postage and handling included) to Mason County Public Library, 6th and Viand Streets, Point Pleasant, WV 25550.

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.

Columbus, Ohio
November 9, 1987
Editor:

I'm a native of Hinton, West Virginia, born and raised in Summers County, and I'd love to read some news about people in Hinton.

I'm the oldest of nine children. My parents were Ernest and Florence Moss. My mother was a daughter of Robert "Horse-trading Bob" Meadows. He had a sawmill on Brooks Mountain and he traded horses.

I'm a relative of the Lillys that attend the world's largest family reunion on Flat Top Mountain in August. My grandmother on my mother's side of the family was a Lilly. She was a daughter of Rufus and Margaret Persinger Lilly. My grandfather Meadows's mother was a Johnson and my great-grandmother Lilly was a Persinger. I've never been able to trace my family tree any farther back

on either side of my family.

I love to read the GOLDENSEAL magazine as it gives me good news from my home state of West Virginia. The first copy was given to me by a Rev. and Mrs. Woods that attend our church. They found out I'm from West Virginia and they told me about the magazine. They gave me a copy and I enjoy it so much.

If you ever get news of anyone in Hinton or anywhere in Summers County, I'd like to see it in GOLDENSEAL.

Respectfully,
Mrs. C. V. Hanning

It happens that we've got a nice Summers County story, on Lillian Mann of Talcott, in this issue. I hope you enjoy it. — ed.

Bethesda, Maryland
Editor:
You really don't know how much I treasure this magazine. I subscribe to *Maryland Magazine*, but only occasionally do they have articles as fine as yours.

You have a marvelous balance of historical and present-day features. As a writer who is particularly interested in rural or isolated communities, I was simply delighted to find articles on small mountain schools, picnics on the church grounds, etc. Your features create so well the "mood" I look for before I begin a novel.

I eagerly await your next issue.
Best wishes,
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Big Laurel

Edgewater, Florida
December 7, 1987
Editor:
The enclosed check is in appreciation for your nice publication on life in beautiful West Virginia. The news from the area is near to our heart, as both my husband and I were born in West Virginia. We lived and worked there until retirement.

We are familiar with the work of Edwina Pepper on Big Laurel Branch of Marrowbone Creek in Mingo County. Also, the magazine has many other items of interest.

We left West Virginia in 1978, shortly after the 1977 flood that ravished Tug Valley. My husband worked and retired from the mining industry. Forty years is a long time to work and breath coal dust, consequently we are now living in Florida due to health-related problems.

I must add our first love is West Virginia. We will never forget our roots, and will always return home for a visit when we can.

Congratulations on your fine magazine.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Harlen Baisden

More on the Zickefooses

Seminole, Florida
December 22, 1987
Editor:
As a transplanted West Virginian, I have been delighted with every copy of GOLDENSEAL and particularly with the most recent copy regarding my old school mates, the Zickefooses.

I was nine years old when I started Adolph grade school. Upon completion of seventh grade, I took a state examination and went on to Elkins High School and Davis and Elkins College. I taught my first school in the building pictured on page 34 of the fall 1987 GOLDENSEAL. I still keep in touch with several of my old school mates and often got together with Miss Cleo Digman until her death a few years ago. She was teaching high school at Adolph and I was teaching the primary grades.

My father was woods superintendent for the Moore-Keppel Company at one of their camps and our family often lived with him during the summer. I remember so many of the events mentioned in the Zickefoose article and it was so good to go back and meet with them again. Aunt Pleesie Zickefoose made the best biscuits, to go with Uncle Elias's honey. And to go home with Giff and Bessie to spend the night was one of the big events of my life.

I am crippled with arthritis and confined to a wheelchair, but hope I'll be able to make a trip to West Virginia some time. I will be 80 years old next month, so I guess my time will be limited.

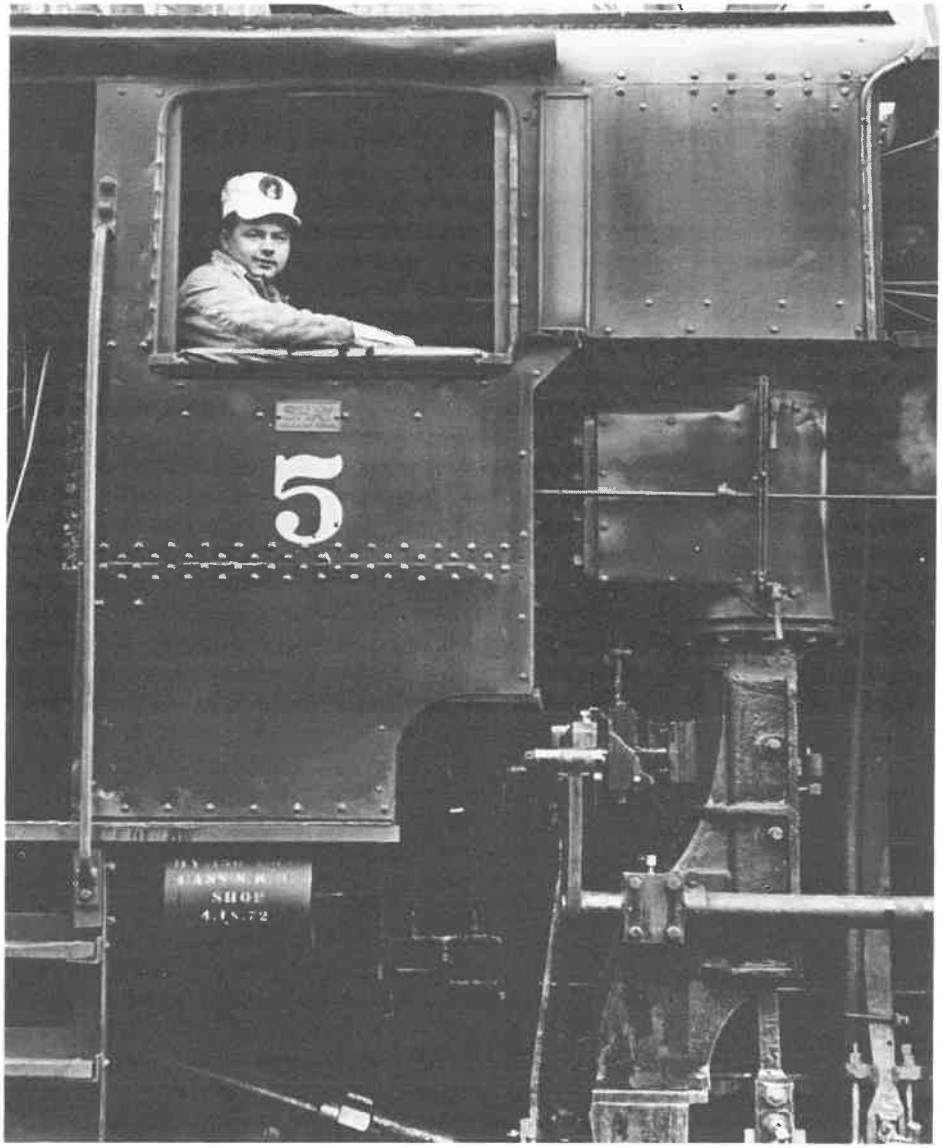
Thanks for GOLDENSEAL and the memories it brings back.
Sincerely,
Ina Hodges Osborne

Red Brown

Thomas, West Virginia
January, 1988
Editor:
I really enjoyed the Winter 1987 GOLDENSEAL issue.

"Red Brown: Tales of a West Virginia Sportsman" was truly a fine story. Red was born in Thomas, my home town. I would like to see and read more sport stories, along with team photos, in the future issues of GOLDENSEAL. The picture on page 51 of the winter issue of the 1951 West Virginia University basketball starting lineup, along with Coach Brown, is a great photo!

Give us more like that in future issues.
Sincerely,
Joseph Sagace



Author Cody Burdette at the controls of Shay No. 5. This is Cass Scenic Railroad's oldest Shay, built in 1905.

Farewell to Steam

Railroading at the End of an Era

By Cody A. Burdette

My story starts when I was in the first grade, and my travels also. My father worked for the New York Central Railroad at the Charleston roundhouse. For some reason lost to time, he decided to quit the NYC and we moved to Hernshaw, in southern Kanawha County. He went to work on a sawmill there.

Hernshaw was a rough-and-tumble place in those years just before World War II. I remember the night when Dad was at work and a drunk man got up under our house, cussing and making a lot of noise. Mother told him to leave but he only laughed at her. With that, she fired a .38 pistol down through the floor. It got so quiet that she thought she might have killed him. But when Dad came in, he checked under the house and there was no blood anywhere, although the drunk was long gone. He never did return, either!

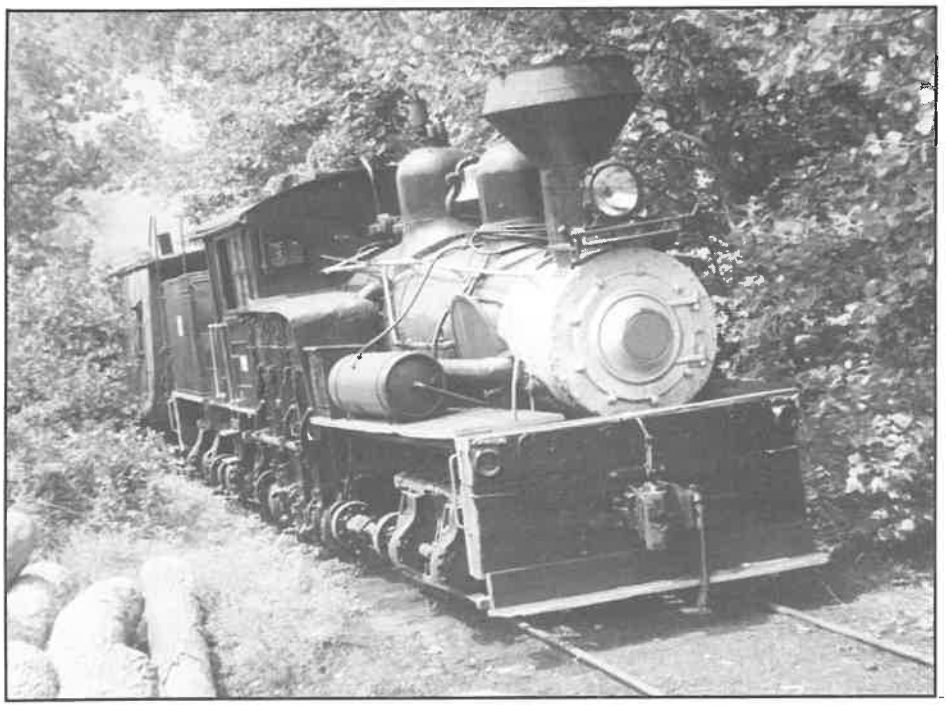
Then one day Dad said we were moving to Cass, and he was going to work in the Cass railroad shop. We left on the night train from Charleston and rode it to Ronceverte. Early the next morning we caught the Greenbrier River train to Cass.

Cass was still a bustling lumber town back in those days. What I remember most were the boardwalks and picket fences. At night as I lay in bed with the window open, the smell of fresh pine lumber drifted through to put me to sleep. I took my father's lunch to him at the railroad shop some days. There I got to see the huge machines he was working on. On my way I passed a line of big steam engines that were worn out and had their cab windows boarded up. I didn't know at the time, but the biggest Shay in the world, the 200-ton No. 12, was one of them.

Then one day low wages and the urge to travel again became too much for Dad. We crated up the things we wanted to keep and sold the rest, and hit the road for Montgomery. Here Dad landed a job as an auto mechanic. We lived at Montgomery four years. I joined the Boy Scouts and went to camp each summer in Greenbrier County. I had a paper route and mowed lawns with a push mower. I spent a lot of summer days in the city swimming pool, which was located beside our house.

The main line of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway went right through the middle of town. The Second World War was going on, so the railroad was very busy. I got to see a lot of steam trains. I remember the large Mallet freight engines and how they shook our house as they rumbled by. I also saw the first streamlined passenger engines the C&O had. They were a sight to see as they came to a halt at the Montgomery depot.

I would loaf around the depot and watch the trains and try to talk to the engineer when he came down from his lofty perch in the cab. Some would talk to me and some didn't want to be bothered. I remember one big engineer on a local passenger train who would always talk. He would ask about my paper route and what I wanted to be when I grew up. I told him I wanted to be a railroad



A Shay in the woods near Swandale. The gear-drive engines, small by locomotive standards, were built for rough work in the mountains. Photographer unknown. Courtesy State Archives, Department of Culture and History.

man and work for the C&O. That seemed to please the old man and each day we talked more and more. Then one day he told me this was his last run. The company was forcing him to retire. I watched as he mounted the cab, turned and waved goodbye. I never saw my friend again, but I remember the patience he showed for the questions of a 10-year-old boy.

Towards the end of the war Dad was getting restless again. I knew we would move before long. On summer nights he and I always watched from our backyard as No. 47, the westbound *Sportsman* passenger train, glided out of town. I remember how bright her headlight was. Through the dim light of the cab you could see her engineer and fireman. The coaches were bright with light and you could see that the train was packed with passengers.

Dad lasted for about one more year. Then he announced that we were moving to a place called Bells Creek. This was up a hollow from the little town of Dixie, up the Gauley River valley.

My grandfather Burdette was a stationary engineer on a bandmill at Dixie, so I knew a little about the place we were moving to this time. But Bells Creek was a lot different from Montgomery. I had been used to city life and now I was in the country. I missed the big steamboats on the Kanawha River and the New York Central on the other side of the river from Montgomery. But most of all I missed my beloved C&O that had run right by our door.

Dad went to work building a road up Twenty-Mile Creek as I gradually accepted our new surroundings. I started school that fall in a one-room schoolhouse in sight of our new home. Along about November or December, the school caught fire one day while we were having classes. A boy who sat in front of me looked up and saw the flames coming through the ceiling, but it scared him so bad he could not say a word. The teacher looked in the direction he was staring and saw the flames. She got us outside to safety before the schoolhouse burned to the ground. We were out of school for about a month before the county built a new one-room school for us.

In the summer I played and fished in Bells Creek. For spending money I would pick blackberries and chop wood and go to the woods and cut bean poles for people. This is the way I bought my first .22 rifle from the Sears, Roebuck catalog.

Along about this time the company Dad was working for finished the road up Twenty-Mile. He was out of work a short time before landing a job as an auto mechanic at the Studebaker dealership in Gauley Bridge. We stayed at Bells Creek but moved into a better house, across the road from the school. Dad bought a '38 Ford pickup to get back and forth to work. I was 13 when he taught me to drive. I was glad to see Sunday come, because Dad would let me drive Mother to the church and back.

There was a very steep hill out of Bells Creek. In the winter with snow on the road, we boys would gather at the school early to watch the show as car after car got stuck on the hill. Soon it would be time for Dad to try. He backed the old truck way up the road and pretty soon we would hear him coming. He would pass the school with the Ford motor humming. When he got to the base of the hill rooster tails of snow flew from under the rear wheels. He would go into a high-speed skid to the right and then to the left, but with the skill of a man who had been there before he always made it over. The boys who had bet against him would mutter a few words and stomp into the school. I had a winner's smile on my face.

We lived at Bells Creek about three years, then Dad said we were moving to Swandale, a lumber town in Clay County. We loaded all of our stuff on a big flatbed truck and said good-bye to our friends. My job was to ride on top of the furniture and to beat on the cab if anything blew off. As we drove on and on, the countryside changed from big towns to little towns and then to deep forest. I thought surely Dad must have made a wrong turn somewhere. But he had not lost the way and we finally arrived at Swandale.

After we unloaded the truck and got a fire going in the cook stove, Mother fixed supper for some mighty tired and — as for me — lonely people. After supper, to make matters worse, it began to rain and I think it rained for a month. But I gradually adopted my new home and of all the places we lived, this is where my roots went deepest. Today there is nothing left, but when I return to look at the ruins of what used to be a town, I feel I have come home.

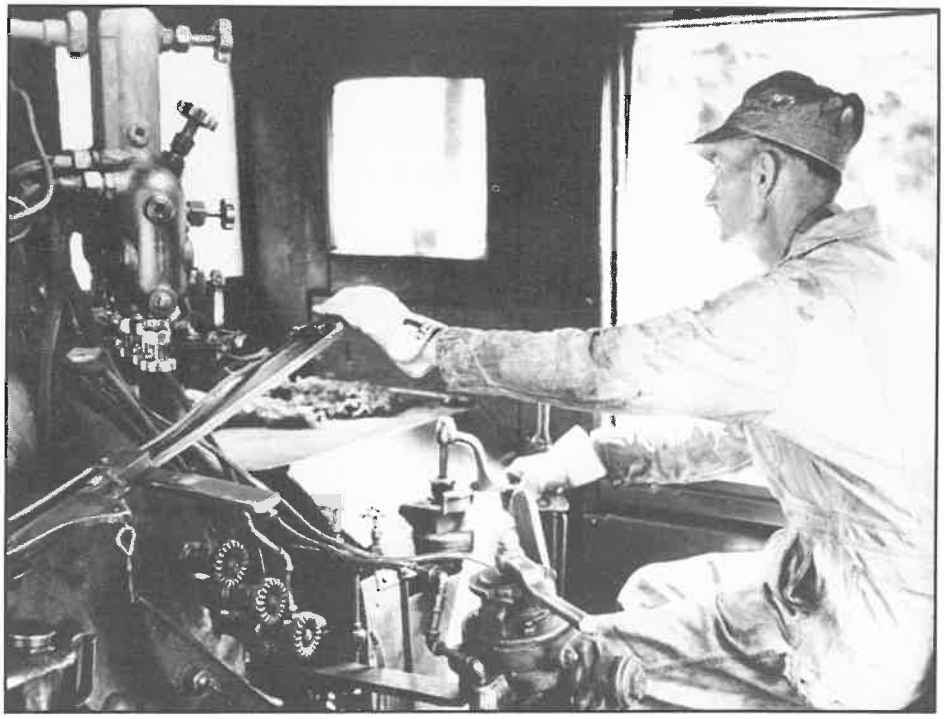
Swandale was like turning back to

my grandfather's day. I had never seen a Shay or Climax engine at work. I had heard Grandfather and Dad talk about these logging locomotives, but it always seemed they were talking about a time when my grandfather was a young man. But as if ghosts from the past, I saw the Shay and Climax steam locomotives hard at work, hauling giant logs to the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company bandmill. And then, to my surprise, came a horse and wagon delivering groceries from the company store to the houses in town.

Dad had hired on at Swandale as a hostler, the man who takes care of train engines at night. But the old man who had the job didn't retire when he was supposed to, so Dad was forced to take hard labor in the dry lumber crew. It was summertime and very hot. Dad would come home from work and fall into a chair completely exhausted from lifting heavy lumber in the heat all day. After about three months of this, the old hostler finally retired and Dad got the job he had come for. He worked from 6:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. I would go up to the mill in the evening, to help him coal the engines and carry wood if he had to fire one up. He in turn would let me move the engine around the yard. I felt like an engineer on the C&O.

There were a lot of jobs a boy could do at Swandale. I worked on other boys' bikes. They didn't have much ready cash and paid me with spare parts. After I had enough parts, I would assemble a complete bike and sell it. I also chopped firewood and picked blackberries and coaled up the log engines. I later got the job of cleaning the big sawmill each evening. With money from this I bought my first new bike, an English racer. No one had ever seen one of those, so I was the talk of the town for a while.

I went to the eighth grade at Swandale. The Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad ran through the middle of town. The schoolhouse was on a slight hill overlooking the tracks. All I had to do was look out the window to see the parade of steam engines that went by each day. In the summer I always positioned myself at the water tank, where the trains stopped to take on water. I would talk to the engineer as he oiled around his engine. Then I would watch as he started the heavy train and headed toward Widen and the coal mine. Swandale was busy back then.



Theodore Burdette, our author's father, in Elk River Coal & Lumber engine No. 19, on Lily's Fork of Buffalo Creek in Clay County. Photographer and date unknown.

Then Dad said we were moving to Bomont, also in Clay County, and that he was going back to work for the New York Central. We only lived at Bomont a short time and then moved to nearby Glen, no more than a wide place in the road with a post office and a few houses. There was not much to do, but I was a sophomore in high school at Clay and had a car now. I was interested in auto mechanics, so every chance I got I was working on a car or studying a book about them.

My father worked the midnight shift at the Dickinson yard, down on the Kanawha River, and I went to work with him. I got to climb into the cabs of the many different kinds of steam locomotives the New York Central kept at Dickinson. The Virginian Railroad steam engines also stayed there at night. The ones I remember most are the Virginian's huge Mallets. I would go from engine to engine with Dad as he checked them for water and added a little coal to their fires. When we would get up in the Virginian Mallets I looked down along their boilers and wondered how anything so big stayed on the rails.

Dickinson yard was busy, and I got to watch the yard engines make up trains all night long. If I got tired of that, I could go inside the roundhouse and watch as men worked on these giants of the rails. Along about this time all of the major railroads in America were doing away with steam power and laying off men by the thousands. As the long line of dead steam engines began to form at Dickinson yard, Dad knew he would be laid off soon. He got on the move looking for a job, returning us to Swandale where steam was still king of the rails. This time he got the job he wanted, fireman on the log train.

During the summertime of these years I had been working for the Oldsmobile dealership in Charleston. When Dad returned to Swandale, I quit my job and came home. I started taking a home course to be a railroad depot agent. Then one night while I was in the boiler room at the mill talking to my good friend, night fireman Guy Frame, the Swandale superintendent, Mr. Currence, came in and talked a while. Suddenly he turned to me and said, "Burdette, how would you like to go to work as the hostler and night watchman for the first part of each week?" That

Elk River Shay No. 12, a familiar workhorse to Theodore Burdette, was due for replacement by the late 1950's. The Shay drive gears are plainly visible in this picture. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

would be 12 hours on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday nights and four hours on Wednesday night. "You've been around your dad enough to know how to handle this job, and a new man like you will make sure there is water in the boiler. An old man is the one who will take chances." He told me to report to work at 6:00 p.m. the next Sunday.

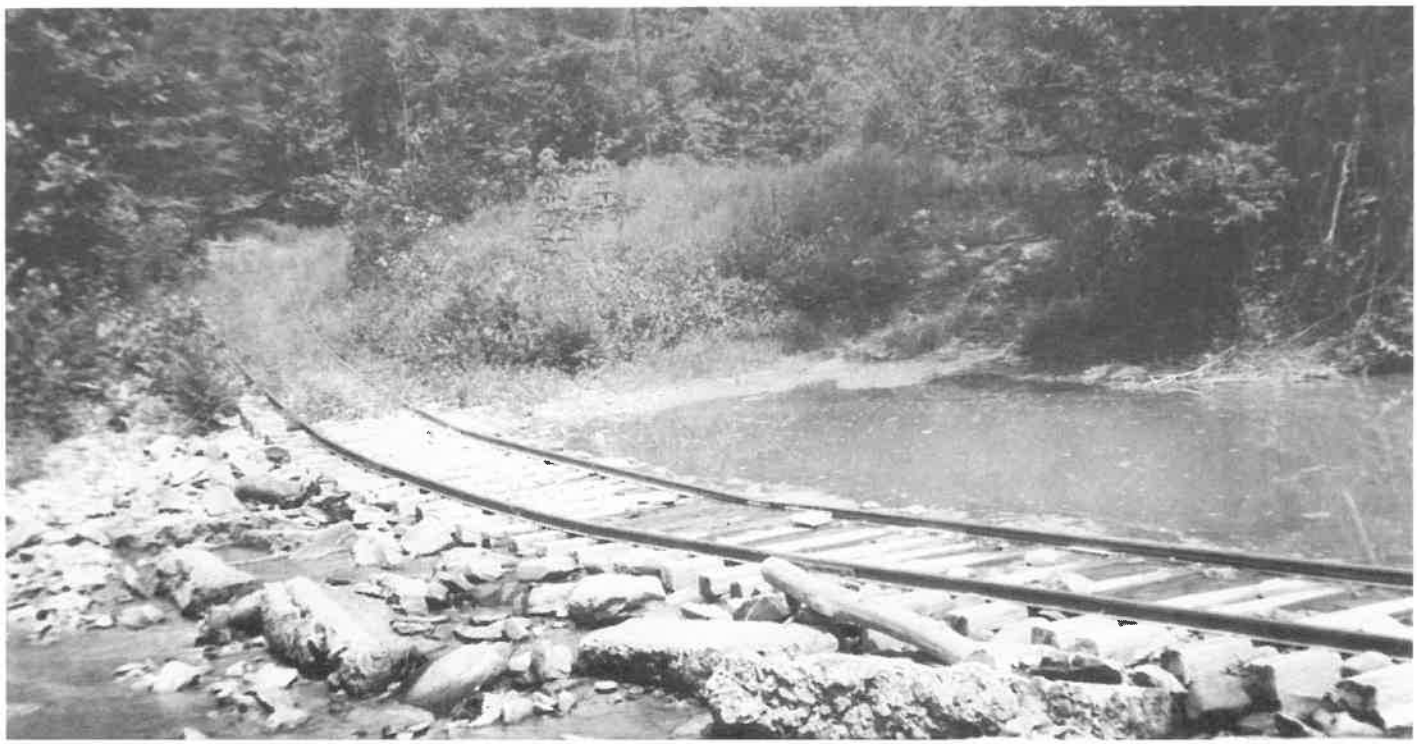
I left the boiler room walking on air and hurried home to tell the good news. The next day I went to the company store and bought a carbide light, dinner bucket and some work clothes, all on my dad's store bill. I would pay him back when I got my first paycheck, one month later. I canceled my depot agent course, for now I was working for the railroad and getting paid for it. It seemed Lady Luck was smiling on the whole family. I had graduated from high school that spring and Dad was promoted to log train engineer. Now at 18, I had a steady job.

As hostler, I got to take care of the same engines I had helped my dad with years before. As night watchman, I carried a time clock each hour to 12 different locations in the mill and the lumber yard, each with a key to insert in my clock. That recorded the time I was at each place.

We moved into a larger house, one of the few two-story houses in town, with a bathroom and hot and cold water. I was off work from 10:00 o'clock on Wednesday night till 6:00 p.m. Sunday. This gave me time to pick up extra money working on cars. I also went to the woods a lot with my father on the log train. The tong hookers and loader man loaded the train from the logs piled high on both sides of the track. Then Dad would ease down the steep and crooked mountain railroad. There were no bridges across the streams. When the railroad reached the creek, the track went right through. This was all right as long as the water was low, but during high water Dad took many hair-raising rides across creeks when he didn't know whether the rails were there or washed away. He was in some bad wrecks but never was hurt and never killed a man with his log engine.

At this time Swandale had been operating about 50 years. Timber was being cut farther and farther from the mill, making the log train crew work 12 and 14 hours a day. I remember making my rounds with the time clock, waiting to service the engine. Along about 9:00 p.m. I would hear Dad blow No. 12's lonesome whistle for the road crossing at Crestmont

"When the railroad reached the creek, the track went right through," our author recalls. "This was all right as long as the water was low." Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.



two miles away, then I would hear him blow for the crossing at Rock Camp, a mile away. I would walk over to the water tower and wait there. Soon I heard him blow one long blast as he entered the lower end of town. On a clear, cold night the sound of the whistle the way Dad blew it was music to my ears.

I would listen to the steady roar as No. 12 drew nearer, and suddenly her headlight rounded the curve. I watched as Dad brought the heavy train to a stop at the water tower, then I boarded the engine and he and I talked as the fireman filled the water tank. I rode as Dad backed the train over to the log pond. He would then uncouple from the train and take the engine to the coal-up dock. Here I took charge. I would fill the coal tender and take the engine over behind the sawmill, where I could bank the fire and look after the locomotive the rest of the night.

The year was 1957. Dad's engine, a 90-ton Shay, was about worn out, so the company decided to buy the last two Shays the Cherry River Boom & Lumber Company had at Richwood. The superintendent took me and Slim Davis to ride these engines over the Baltimore & Ohio from Richwood to Dundon, where the BC&G connected to the B&O. The head machinist for the company went with us to inspect the Shays.

We all arrived in Richwood on a very cold winter day and spent that day helping Mr. Caruthers, the machinist, inspect the locomotives. They were 70-ton engines, Nos. 2 and 7. He found everything okay, so he and the superintendent told us the B&O would pick us up the next day. The super gave us each a $20 bill for spending money and said he had arranged for us to eat and stay at railroad hotels along the way. With that, he and the machinist left for home.

Slim Davis had worked here before he came to Swandale and still owned a farm a few miles from Richwood, where his family lived. He called his son to come and pick us up. We stayed that night at his home and rose early the next morning because we didn't know what time the B&O would pick the engines up. The day dawned windy and very cold. After a hearty breakfast, Mrs. Davis packed us each a big dinner bucket full of sandwiches and plenty of hot coffee. The son drove us back to Richwood. We went into the depot to see if the agent could tell us what time the train was due. He told us that because of bad weather at Cowen yard, the train would not arrive till around noon. We decided to go up to the railroad shop and check on the engines.

As we started toward the shop, we could see that the local log train crew had already set the engines on a track outside the shop. When we got there Mr. Davis said he thought he would take care of No. 2. That left me in charge of No. 7. We put our extra clothes and tools and dinner buckets in the cabs. Then we gathered up all the extra oil cans we could find and headed for the shop to fill them.

My father had told me before I left Swandale that on a dead engine in cold weather such as this to use engine oil instead of valve oil on the journal bearings. These are the main bearings on each end of the train axles, and they must be well-lubricated for the wheels to roll cool and trouble-free. As I began to fill my cans with the light engine oil, Mr. Davis said, "You're gonna have a lot of trouble if you try to use that." But my father's warning was still fresh in my mind, so I went ahead and filled all my cans with engine oil.

I carried my oil cans down to No. 7 and put them up in the cab. By now the wind had really picked up and it had begun to snow. I closed all of the windows and dropped the curtain down between the cab and coal tender to block the wind. There was nothing to do now but wait. We sat there in the cold for hours. Finally I heard the whistle as the B&O engine entered Richwood. Soon the engineer stopped at the water tank and filled his coal tender. Next he came up by us and shifted the yard at the sawmill. Then the B&O engine backed up and coupled onto No. 7, with No. 2 behind. He moved us down to the depot and then uncoupled from us and went on down the track out of the way.

There was a crowd at the depot to see the Shays off. They had the B&O engine move us several times so they could get pictures from different angles, for this was the final day that steam logging locomotives would be at Richwood. After the picture session was over, our engines were put in the train. I was three or four cars behind the front and No. 2 was 10 cars behind me.

We left Richwood late in the evening with the snow really coming down. No matter how cold it was, railroad rules say a man must ride a dead engine. So down Cherry River we came, I freezing in No. 7 and Mr. Davis in No. 2. As we passed trackside houses whole families would be out waving to us. Some of the old men looked long and hard at the departing Shays. I wondered what part the engines had played in their lives.

When we got to Fenwick we stopped and the engine cut off and

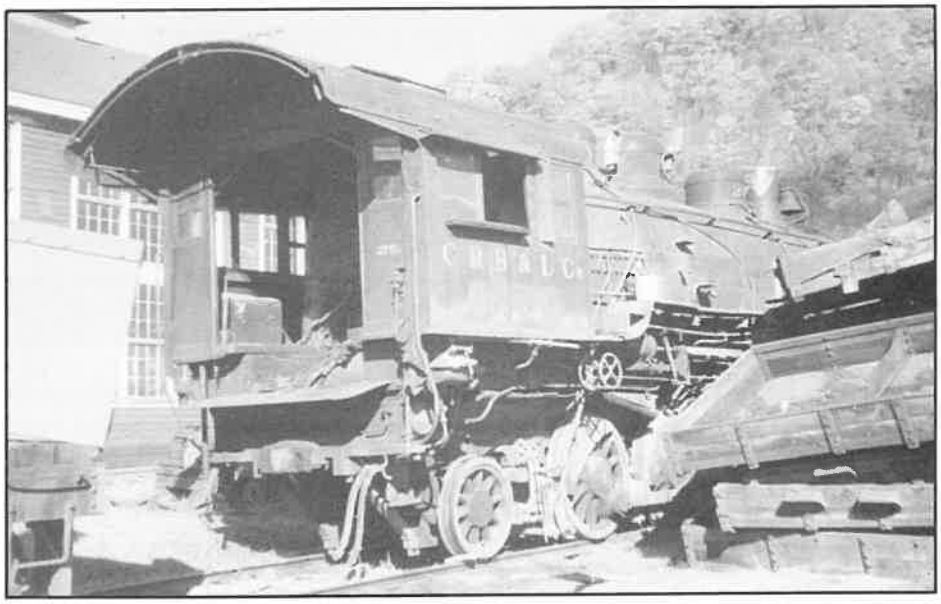
Railroad Logging History

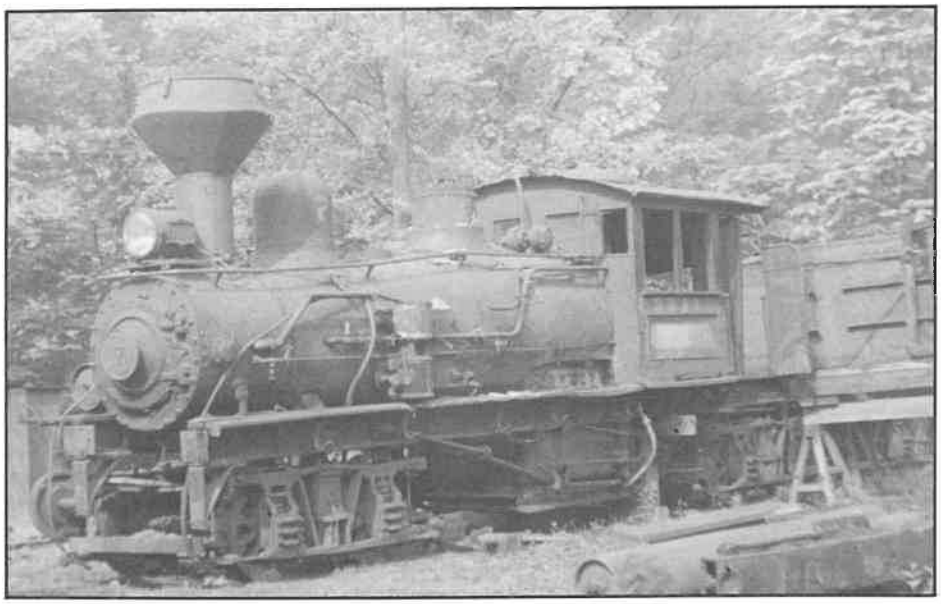
GOLDENSEAL readers wishing to learn more about West Virginia railroad logging may join the Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association (MSR&LHA).

The group is a nonprofit organization headquartered at the historic sawmill town of Cass, Pocahontas County. Members receive a newsletter and a quarterly magazine, *The Log Train*, that publish photos, illustrations and text provided by logging historians. A 1988 calendar with 14 black and white photos of timbering operations and equipment is also available, as well as 35mm slides of locomotives and log trains, and a selection of railroading books.

The MSR&LHA is working towards establishing a West Virginia Museum of Logging History and Technology at Cass Scenic Railroad. Donations of money, photographs, tools, machinery, equipment and other items relating to the logging industry are sought.

For information, contact Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association, P.O. Box 89, Cass, WV 24927.





Top and Center: Shay Nos. 2 and 7, before their markings were changed from CRB&L (Cherry River Boom & Lumber) to Elk River Coal & Lumber. These are the engines Cody Burdette and Slim Davis delivered from Richwood in the winter of 1957. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

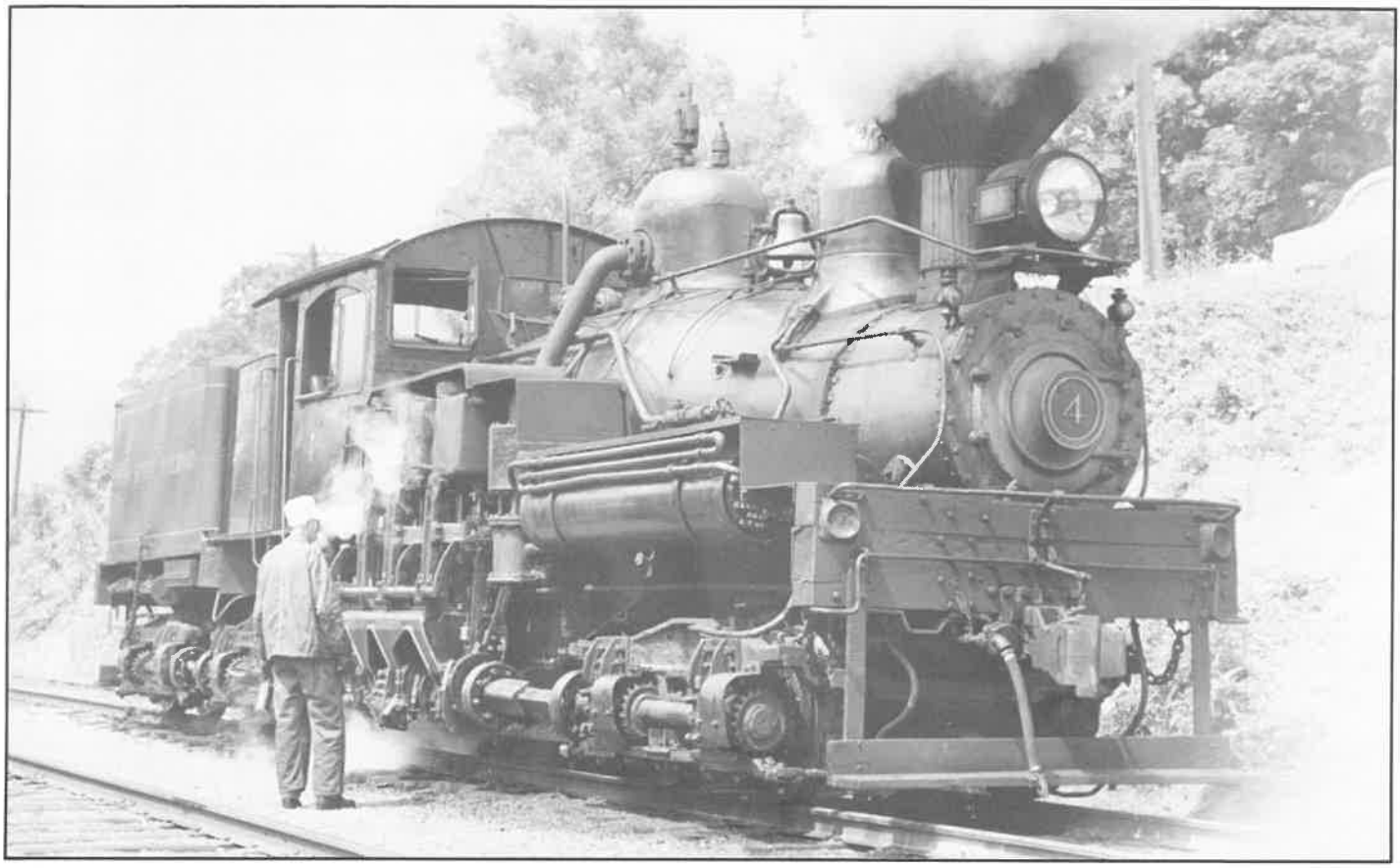
Bottom: This caboose carries W. M. Ritter Company markings. The beginning of the end at Swandale came when the Elk River Coal & Lumber operation passed to Ritter and later to Georgia-Pacific. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

backed over to the sawmill to pick up some boxcars of lumber. With this chore done, I saw the head brakeman walking towards the rear of the train. When he passed No. 2 he said something to Slim Davis and then they both headed for the warmth of the caboose. Thinking how lucky Mr. Davis was, I looked toward the big B&O steam engine and saw the engineer motioning for me to come join him up there. He told me to forget railroad rules and have a seat behind the fireman in the head brakeman's place.

I sank down in the soft seat and soaked up the warmth of the cab. The fireman, a man in his 60's, gave me a hot cup of coffee and we talked about Swandale and the BC&G. Every little bit the engineer would call me over to his side of the cab so he and I could talk. By the time we reached the mouth of Cherry River it was dark. We stopped to call for orders before starting up the Gauley River line to Cowen yard. This gave me a chance to go back and oil No. 7 and see if anything was running hot.

I found my engine was cool on all of the journal boxes, but 10 cars back Mr. Davis was already having trouble with one of the journals on No. 2. After he repacked it we pulled out, bound for Cowen. The night was now cold and clear, with a full moon. I looked back over the train at No. 7 with her big diamond stack looming out of the darkness, leaving home rails farther behind with each mile.

On and on up Gauley we went, finally crossing the river on a long bridge and tackling the three or four miles of heavy grade that led to the high country and the Cowen yard. The B&O engine slowed to a crawl. The exhaust became sharp and clear in the cold night, and I know the moan of the whistle could be heard for miles. As we approached the



Theodore Burdette followed steam railroading from the log woods to the tourism industry. Here he checks Shay No. 4 at Cass. Photographer and date unknown.

summit, the snowfall was very deep and the engine began to slip her driving wheels every little bit, but our capable engineer would stop the spinning quickly. The fireman also was doing his job, keeping the steam pressure right at the popping-off point.

We arrived at Cowen yard about 9:00 p.m. No. 2 had three really hot bearings. My engine was cool on all journals. I knew Dad's advice was paying off. We worked on No. 2 outside in the cold and snow till after midnight, putting new journal bearings in. Mr. Davis said it was too late to go to the railroad hotel now, but I found out he was too bashful to go to hotels and restaurants to sleep and eat. We slept in the boiler room of the Cowen shop. The men were talking about how diesel would replace steam within a month. I watched as they worked on an old-fashioned iron horse with big wrenches and a sledge hammer. They would have to change their working habits when steam was gone.

We left the next morning in bitter cold weather, with Slim Davis still oiling with valve oil. The new train crew was following the rule book, so we had to ride the cold Shays. Our train today had two engines up front. No. 7 and I were 10 cars behind them and 10 cars further back were Mr. Davis and No. 2. The B&O line from Cowen to Burnsville is a scenic run with sweeping curves and high wooden bridges. In the long curves, I could see the steam engines against the snowy hills ahead. I thought how it looked like a Christmas card.

As I was watching the engines in one of these curves, I heard the air brakes go on. Up front, the exhaust got sharp and loud before the engineers closed their throttles. All the men looked back over the train to see what had happened. I could see there was nothing wrong between my engine and the head end, but when I looked to the rear I saw the trouble. No. 2 had a front journal fire. Mr. Davis was raking the burning packing out of the box. He had seen the smoke and put the train brake valve in emergency, thus stopping us very quickly. The conductor headed up from the rear, while I walked back. When I got in hearing distance I could hear the conductor really chewing Mr. Davis out for putting the train in emergency stop. I offered to help Mr. Davis but he said he didn't need any help. So I turned and went back to my engine. I felt all of No. 7's journals and she was cold as ice. I grinned to myself and thanked Dad silently.

We made it into Burnsville without stopping, but No. 2 now had three hot journals. They set us on a sidetrack at the lower end of the yard, about a half mile from town. Here we would wait for the train from Grafton to Gassaway to pick us up. While Mr. Davis worked on his hot journals I walked to town to get sandwiches and coffee. When I returned I helped him repack and oil the journals on his engine. We ate lunch and then waited hour after hour. This was hard on us but good for No. 2, for she had time to cool down. Late in the evening I heard a B&O freight whistle. Shortly, the big steamer coupled onto us and we were on our way to Gassaway yard. This crew let us ride in the luxury and warmth of the caboose.

Cass Scenic Railroad is West Virginia's steam line today. The log engines normally move tourists, but here Shay No. 4 brings a short train back from a work run.

We made it into Gassaway about 10:00 p.m. without any unscheduled stops. No. 2's journals were hot but not smoking.

Around 1:00 a.m. the Gassaway yard came alive. Our home railroad, the Buffalo Creek & Gauley, needed 70 empty coal cars and they put our log engines in the train. Again the crew let us ride the caboose as we started down Elk River on the last leg of our journey. When the train stopped for water, I walked up to No. 7 to oil her bearings one last time. She was nice and cool on all journals, but No. 2 was hot but not smoking yet. We made it to Dundon. Here the company pickup truck waited to take us home, thus ending my last trip on the mainline of any railroad behind steam power.

I stayed with the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company till they sold out to the W. M. Ritter Lumber Company. Then I started my career as an auto mechanic. Dad stayed at Swandale till Ritter sold out to Georgia-Pacific, then worked for them till they did away with the log train in favor of trucks. By now he had built a new house at Procious and lived there. I had a garage at Clendenin. He worked with me in the garage for a while.

Along about this time the State of West Virginia opened the Cass Scenic Railroad, strictly a steam line. One Sunday, Grandfather, Dad and I went to Cass and rode the train. After this it was just a matter of time. I could tell the railroad was calling to Dad once more. He sold the house at Procious and moved to Cass, where he took a job as a shop foreman and extra engineer. Applying his years of experience with steam engines, he helped save some of the oldest locomotives at Cass. As engineer, he taught younger men the art of handling a train on steep mountain grades. As you ride the Cass Scenic Railroad today, your engineer could very well be a man my father trained years ago.

Grandfather Burdette and I spent many weekends with him, riding in the engine cab to the summit of Bald Knob. Grandfather was very old now, but he always managed to gather strength to go to Cass with me. On the trip back home the old man would relive our train ride step by step. I could tell by the tone of his voice and the twinkle in his eyes that his own railroad days were very much alive in memory. The day came when his health would no longer let him go on these trips. I remember him chewing his Brown Mule tobacco on his front porch, talking about trains back when he was a young man. Before his death he told me many stories of how it was at sawmill towns now long gone.

Dad worked at Cass for several years and got all their engines in top-notch shape. Then it was again time to move on. He went south this time, stopping in Boone, North Carolina, to work a while for the Tweetsie Railroad, then on to Tennessee to work for the narrow-gauge Doe River Railroad. I visited on weekends and rode with him on both. The Doe River line was beautiful, built along the edge of a deep canyon.

Dad stayed at Doe River only a short time and then moved to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. He went to work for Gold Rush Junction, a tourist railroad with five miles of track, two steam engines and a steam sawmill. I spent many weekends firing for him and recording the sounds of the engine. Gold Rush Junction sold out to Silver Dollar City and Dad stayed on as engineer in the summer months and shop foreman in the winter. After a few years Silver Dollar City sold the 1890's theme park to popular singer Dolly Parton, who renamed it Dollywood. Dad has been retired several years now, but he serves Dollywood as extra engineer. When problems arise with the locomotives or steam sawmill, they call on him.

Today when I hear a steam-powered excursion train struggle up a grade with her whistle wailing, it takes me back to warm summer nights in the backyard of our home at Montgomery. Dad and I are watching as the westbound *Sportsman* heads out of town and down the Kanawha Valley. Her headlight sweeps the rails and her lonesome whistle cries into the night, telling everyone to clear the track for she is speeding westward. We stand and listen till all her sounds fade into the night, then Dad says, "Time for bed, Son." ✱

Sharp's Country Store

By Elliot Gaines

There are long stretches of highway that wind through the uninhabited woodlands of Pocahontas County. At highway speeds, the mountains and trees fly by, silently hiding the secrets of the past. A clearing with a twisted apple tree and the rusting remains of some old farm equipment beside a fallen-down building give just a hint of the special way of life that existed in these mountains before paved roads, cars, and telephones.

North on U.S. 219, past Marlinton,

Gasoline has risen from 21 cents to a dollar and the gas company has changed its name, but otherwise things are pretty much the same at Sharp's Store. The stamped metal siding was added in the 1930's. New photo by Doug Chadwick; early photographer unknown, 1920's.

is Slatyfork. The road here runs along Elk River's upper stretches, surrounded by thick hardwood forest and mountains. The most noticeable landmark is Sharp's Country Store. Behind the gas pumps is a museum of the region, of the store itself, and of a family that has been there for more than 100 years.

The large windows of Sharp's Store no longer display the fashions of the day, as they did back in 1927. Tools and artifacts are there now — shoes from 1880, a World War I drinking cup, a 1930 foot measure, and a collection of native American chestnuts from trees that were destroyed by disease in the late 1920's. There are other displays throughout the interior. They include stuffed wild animals, among them a golden eagle killed in 1909 at Durbin, a bear trap from the 1800's, old radios, pioneer tools, and Indian artifacts. For each there is a story that can be told by the people at the store.

Sharp's is a working store, and it offers what might be expected in any modern convenience store. But the chips and groceries and general merchandise are surrounded by rich oak wood in a style and dark color that bespeak age. The oiled floors, worn from years of traffic, support beautifully preserved showcases. Curved and beveled glass shows off the fine craftsmanship of the time when these cabinets were made.

Sharp's Country Store is now run by Benny Eduardo and Linda Sharp Eduardo. They are keenly aware of the rich heritage that surrounds them and enjoy sharing their knowledge of local history and the family business. "We take great pleasure in telling our own tales," is the way Linda puts it. She is the daughter of Dave Sharp, a thorough and devoted family historian. He has compiled the family records and a great collection of stories pertaining to his family, the business, and local history.

The store is a natural gathering place. Linda says that the squeaky wooden floors and the warm coal stove provide the ideal setting for the fireside chats of local elderly gentlemen. More often than not, these chats end up to be tales of the old

Store founder L. D. Sharp in the prime of life. This portrait was made around 1910, photographer unknown. All old photographs courtesy Dave Sharp.

Sharp's old desk remains in use inside his store. The 1894 wholesale invoice from Butler Brothers of Chicago (right) was among the many business papers to pass through the hands of the prosperous merchant. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

days. Listening, you can't help but step back 50 to 100 years, when L. D. Sharp stood behind the wooden counters handing over rice and beans at three cents a pound.

L. D. was Luther David Sharp, Dave Sharp's father and Linda's grandfather, who began the family store in 1884. He died in March 1963. His obituary in the *Pocahontas Times* noted that he was over 90 at the time.

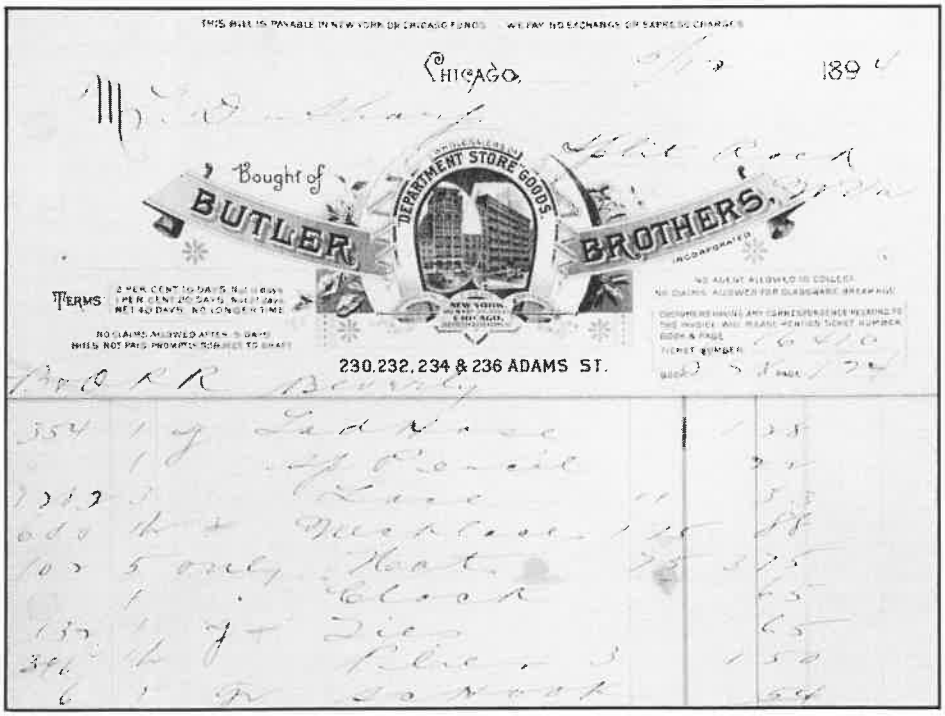
"Mr. Sharp, the only son of the late Silas and Sarah Sharp, was born June 8, 1872, at Slatyfork," the paper reported. "At the early age of 12 he started his mercantile business, buying and selling fur, livestock and merchandise. For many years his merchandise was hauled from Millboro, Virginia, and Beverly by covered wagons. Mr. Sharp was the first Postmaster of Slatyfork and gave it its name when the office was opened. He loved to fish and hunt, killing his last deer at age 89. He was one of the first group of apiary inspectors in West Virginia, and raised bees to produce the famous Pocahontas County white lynn honey."

The area surrounding L. D.'s store saw fantastic changes in the years following his birth in 1872. The railroad, paved roads and automobiles, and the telephone, electric power, radio and television, all came to Slatyfork during the lifetime of this country storekeeper.

When L. D. went to school, he attended a one-room log school where slates were used for writing and arithmetic. He didn't tarry long over his education, however. He began his business career in 1884, after a traveling salesman encouraged him to sell goods to woodsmen cutting cherry logs on Slatyfork and Buzzard mountains nearby. The first merchandise was ink, stationery, tobacco and handkerchiefs, sold from a back room of the family home. One cold winter's night the supply of ink froze and burst. This setback taught the young merchant the important lesson of supply and demand. The ink he salvaged sold at double the original price.

There are many stories about the young L. D. Sharp and his start in business. Dave Sharp recorded his father on many occasions. "I didn't have any money at all and I borrowed $30 to buy three calves from a neighbor," L. D. recalls on one of those tapes. "I borrowed from John B. Hannah for a year and I bought the calves. He wasn't a relative, but his son married my sister later on. Considering money then, he had plenty. He trusted a 12-year-old boy and I invested in those calves and sold them the next year and had a $39 profit."

Young Sharp built upon that first commercial success. "A neighbor boy said 'Let me have part of that money and we'll invest in buying furs.' He said he noticed at the Edray Post Office a price list that was away above what people was getting for furs. So I gave him some money and we both bought furs and I doubled my money. I started buying fur from that day on and I made double on every shipment. I saddled up an old horse about 20 years old and went all over the country buying furs. Believe me, you don't find many boys that would do what I did to get started in life."



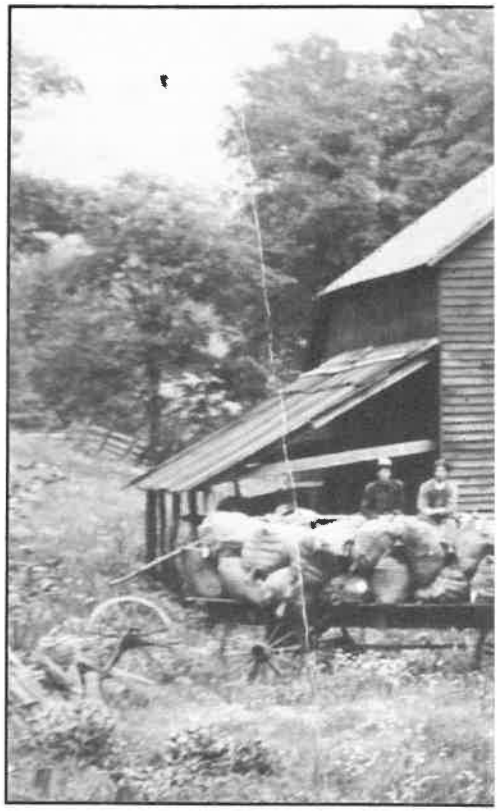
L. D. was not bashful in talking about the shrewd dealings that got him started. "I went about 20 miles on that old horse to my Aunt Melinda Rose's and stayed all night," he says on one tape. "Then I went down further to a home where they had some prime minks. The old man wouldn't sell them to me. He said, 'You've got to go two miles down to the schoolhouse and buy them from the boys. Whatever they take is okay.'

"So I went to the schoolhouse and called out the boys and asked what they wanted for the minks. One said, 'I'll take 25 cents apiece for mine.' I asked the other and he said, 'I'll take the same for mine.' I said, 'What about the coon hides and the skunk?' They asked about two prices for them, more than I could get. I said all right and paid them for the furs.

"I came back and took the hides off the boards and put them in the sack. The old woman asked me how much I paid for them. I said, 'I paid them all they asked.' Ha! I waited till I got the furs in the sack and then I told her I'd paid them 25 cents for the minks. She said, 'You didn't pay them anything!' The old man said, 'Now, you shut up. This boy said he paid them all they asked for them.' Those minks brought me about $3 apiece.

"From then on I bought fur for 25 years," L. D. concluded. "I finally had six men buying fur for me all over the county. That's one way I got my start in business."

When the business outgrew his family's house, L. D. Sharp built his first store building. It was one room, made from lumber cut by loggers working the nearby mountains. The store was located on the old country road where it crossed Slatyfork Creek, the road that had been used



Sharp's business was based on shrewd trading with local farmers. "We have bought the wool from 4000-5000 sheep this year," he noted in a July 19, 1913, letter. This photo shows part of the wool. Photographer unknown.

The Sharp family in the winter of 1901-02. They are Ada, mother Laura with Ivan, Violet and L. D. The elder Sharps were married in 1893. Photographer unknown.

by soldiers of the North and the South during the Civil War. As the one room became too small, a larger two-story building was constructed around and above it so business could continue uninterrupted.

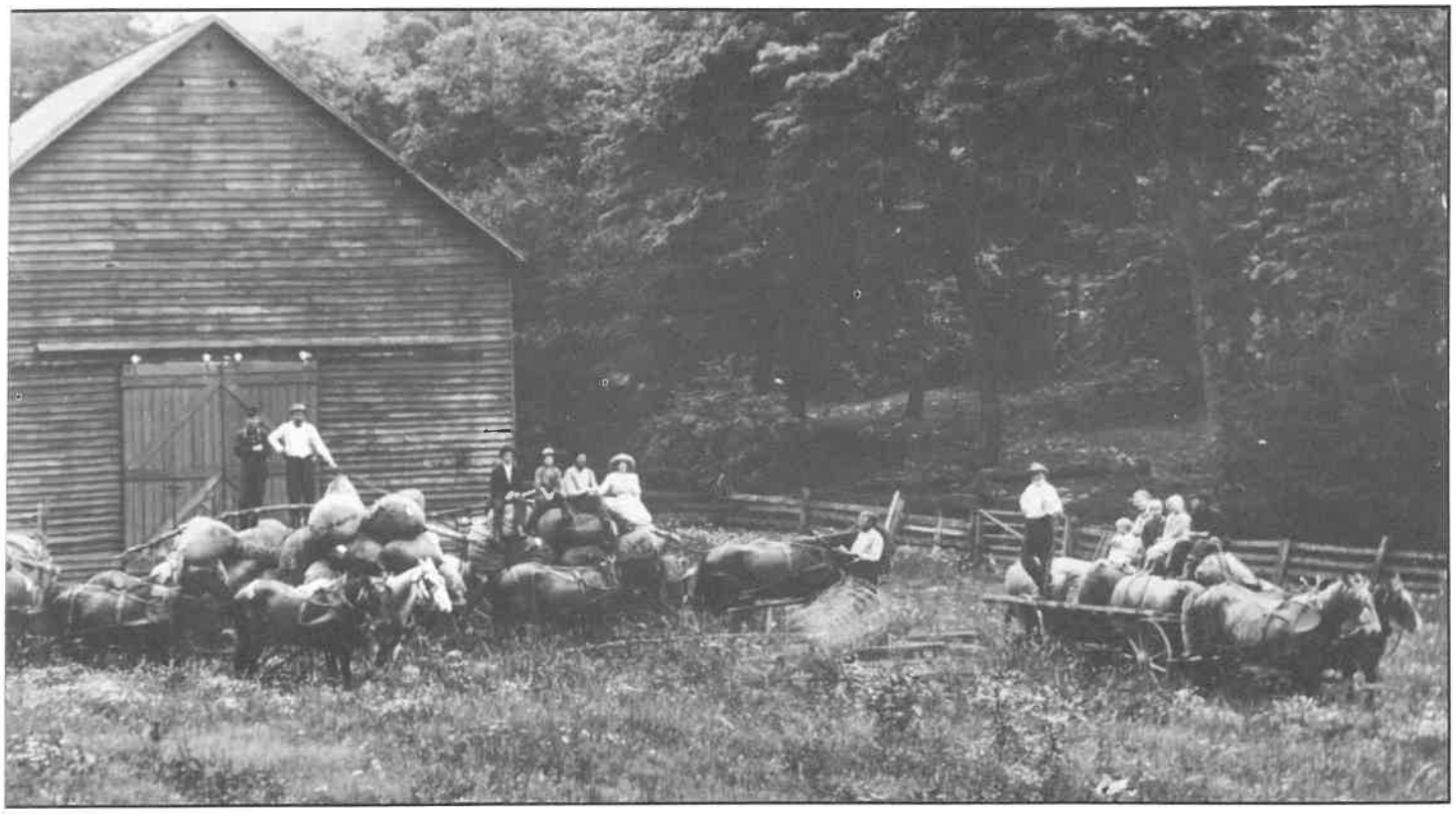
Sharp's Store served an area of 15 miles, from Linnwood to Elk Mountain. This was a large territory, considering travel conditions at that time. Goods arrived by horse and wagon over rutted dirt roads that were often muddy and treacherous. Men got together for the 60-mile journey to the train depot in Millboro, Virginia, or Beverly in Randolph County. They took food for several days, and heavy sheets to sleep on the ground or to cover their wagons in case of rain.

L. D. remembered those trips well. "I went to Millboro, Virginia, when I was 12 years old, with a party after a load of salt for Hugh Sharp," he recalled. "It was the first train I ever saw. There was another fellow along who was young like I was, and he said to the conductor, 'I want to take a 25-cent ride.' He thought he'd go just a few hundred yards, and they said it took him two days to walk back."

After building his store, L. D. generally bought his own merchandise from Beverly. He recalled the misadventure of one such trip, when he had sent a wagon and driver for his goods. "There were two other men's wagons, too, one for the store at Linnwood and one for Sam Woods at Mingo," he related. "Sam Woods had about 4,000 pounds of goods and the other had 2,000 pounds. I had 2,000 pounds, but mine was mostly all wire fence. They had about 25 cartons of jars. They stopped near Elkwater to stay all night and they saw a big storm coming and decided to go up on the hill to stay all night at Old Man Cogger's. So they put the horses in the barn on the hill on the right side of the river and they went over to Cogger's. There was a cloudburst at Mingo and it came down the valley. It picked up all three wagons and carried them all away.

"They had a time getting the wagons back together. They'd find a wheel here and there. But my wire was within a few hundred yards. That got my outfit back together again. People said they saw those jars going through Elkins, floating on the water. Sam Woods lost about 4,000 pounds of all kinds of merchandise. I think I lost a barrel of sugar.

"The wall of water was from one side of the valley to the other," Sharp concluded. "A man who lived up on a hill went over to see about the flood. He heard the roar coming and ran as hard as he could run to escape.



The water was to his knees when he got to the bank. If my driver and the others hadn't gone to that house to sleep that night, they would have all drowned and the horses too."

In 1901, L. D. Sharp was appointed the first postmaster for his community, serving for 15 years. He was responsible for naming the Slatyfork post office and he located it in his store. In 1906, a letter came addressed to the Slatyfork Postmaster, from the American Museum of Natural History. They wanted a wild turkey nest, and they had written to the right man. L. D. sent them a nest, along with eggs, leaves, acorns and all. It was used by the museum and remains with their North American Hall of Birds.

Apparently, local mail service was interrupted sometime after 1916. L. D. was no longer postmaster, but he remained a leader of the community. He got right on the problem, according to an article printed December 13, 1922, in the *Pocahontas Times*.

"L. D. Sharp has been working hard getting up petitions to reestablish a mail route from Slatyfork to Edray," the *Times* noted. "Many years ago the people of Elk had daily mail, but now have no mail at all for a distance of 12 miles. Well to do farmers and heavy tax payers live here and during the war were heavy subscribers of Government Bonds and War Savings Stamps. Yet they have been denied any mail service. We hope that this very important route will be established. Let us pull together."

L. D.'s rolltop desk is still in the store today. So is his telephone, the first in the area. The local telephone lines were completed in August 1899. They were built by Dr. Bosworth of Randolph County and ran from Beverly, just south of Elkins, to Marlinton. The line from Marlinton ended at Sharp's Store, with 20 phones on the line. A hand crank was used to ring the phones and a code of long and short rings identified the party that a call was intended for. Privacy was not strictly observed, however, and any call was of interest to everyone who could listen in. The telephone was a great novelty and general source of news.

Before electricity was available, Sharp's Store was lit with oil lanterns. The store was moved to its present site when U.S. 219 was built around 1927, and at its new location had electric lights powered by a private 32-volt generator. This Delco system ran on gasoline in its own building out back. The generator also powered the "Icy Ball" soft drinks cooler. In front of the store were four gravity-feed gas pumps. Gas was pumped up into large glass tanks by hand, measured, then drained into the car. When the West Penn Power Company brought in 110-volt electricity in the late 1930's, one of the hand pumps was left in case the power went out. L. D. was not one to take chances on losing business to a thunderstorm.

Like other country stores, Sharp's operated by giving long-term credit to its customers. Farmers could pay only once or twice a year. In spring they would shear their sheep, and in the fall they would sell crops or livestock for cash to pay their bills. Throughout the year the store would provide salt, sugar, coffee, grain and flour, cloth, clothing and shoes, lamp oil, nails, tools and supplies such as horseshoes and fence wire. Sharp's Store offered the only access to many essentials that made living better for the people in this remote rural community. It also provided a social meeting place and a local showcase

for the introduction of new styles and fashions.

People naturally drifted into the store to listen to the radio when that electronic marvel made its appearance. L. D. was sure to keep some on display for sale. Some folks found the new gadget hard to believe. Once some men came in and heard a new battery-operated shortwave radio. They left angry, thinking the Sharps had tried to trick them into believing that the sound just came through the air. When telephones were new, some people thought the sound traveled through a hollow wire.

During the 1920's and '30's, L. D. recalled, many of his customers lived along the Elk River and the railroad track to Bergoo. They had no road out to Slatyfork, but pedaled lightweight, four-wheeled vehicles called "speeders" along the railroad tracks. Several people could travel on one and it was possible to haul 200 pounds of feed or groceries back from the general store. L. D.'s older brother, Ivan, used a speeder to go to feed his sheep on top of the mountain. Knowing the railroad schedule, he

Left: Benny and Linda Sharp Eduardo run Sharp's Country Store today. They are joined here by son Matthew, great-grandson of the founder.

Right: The public is welcome at Sharp's Store, as it has been for more than a century. Photos by Doug Chadwick.

would wait for a slow train and catch hold of the last car to tow himself to the top.

In the recorded conversations with his son, L. D. also told of much earlier times in the mountains. He reported that the Civil War had left particularly deep scars on the area and on his own family. Pocahontas County was on the border between the North and the South, and contested by both. In the winter of 1862, General Lee's men camped at Linnwood. One night the general came to the Sharps' house, and with guards posted outside ate supper there. The log house still stands behind the store and the cast iron kettles used to cook Robert E. Lee's supper are on display inside the store.

At the beginning of the war, the issues were not clear and many people tried to avoid taking a stand. Unfortunately, both sides assumed that anyone claiming to be neutral was actually opposed to them. L. D. Sharp's father and Uncle Luther were among those made to pay a price.

"He was living in his house, living a quiet life, harming nobody," L. D. recorded of father Silas Sharp. "The Rebel soldiers came and captured him when he was just in his prime of life. He really wasn't on either side. The people really didn't know which side they should join at the beginning or outbreak of the war. They took him to prison and he served 23 months and 24 days in Salisbury, North Carolina, where they starved thousands to death.

"I had three uncles that were killed during the Civil War, Bernard, Luther and Henry," L. D. continued. "Luther was only 16 years old and the Rebel soldiers came running down the valley. His mother yelled out, 'Look out, yonder comes the Rebel soldiers!' And this boy took to the hill back of our house. Old Jake Simmons was following behind the group of soldiers that were running down the valley and he shot this 16-year-old boy and killed him. It was the same time they captured my father and took him to prison. The other two boys were in the army when they were killed. One was a Rebel and the other was a Yankee."

L. D. is gone now, but his store is very much alive. Its place in history is secure, and the Eduardos are proud that it retains a practical role in Pocahontas County affairs as well. In November 1985, when Marlinton was submerged in a terrible flood, people traveled the 17 miles to Slatyfork for supplies. Increasingly nowadays, Sharp's Country Store also serves skiers and other tourists flocking into the county.

"With Snowshoe and Silver Creek resorts within four miles of our store, the winter brings a variety of customers from nearby metropolitan areas," Linda Eduardo notes. "The majority of these people are used to the modern convenience store where everything is self-service and very impersonal. In our store, the merchandise is behind the counters and it's full-service with a smile.

"We strive to preserve and operate the store as it always has been," Mrs. Eduardo continues. "The country store is an important part of West Virginia history. For 104 years our family has been in business here. If we were to modernize, we would be taking something not only from the store but from the people who stop here."

And of course, there is the practical side of the matter that the store's founder would have understood very well. "The family store is our only source of income, so we try to make it as profitable as we can without changing its unique atmosphere," his granddaughter says. "We hope it will remain a monument to a time gone forever, and a monument to the memory of L. D. Sharp."

Wilkie Dennison

Country Fiddlemaker

Photographs and Text by Gerald Milnes

Wilkie Dennison of Braxton County makes his own fiddles and his own music as well.

At 77 years old, Wilkie Dennison is as spry as a cat and just as curious. He is an inquisitive, inventive bachelor who is usually found at home quietly going about the seasonal agricultural tasks that insure his sustenance. On an ordinary day last August he was drying apples while waiting for some hay to cure. Later the hay would be stacked to make winter feed for his milk cow.

Wilkie still lives on the farm where he was born on January 3, 1911, near Caress in eastern Braxton County. His father, Beldon Franklin Dennison, and mother, Susan Mollohan Dennison, raised seven children there, six boys and a girl. The farm includes 19 acres of the original 2,500-acre Mollohan Estate of his mother's family. Wilkie is the only resident now of the old family homeplace. He helped build the house that he lives in, in 1929.

His distinguished family history holds a keen interest for Wilkie. "The Dennisons were supposed to be Irish and came to Harrison County," he reports. Wilkie says he would like to write a book on the Mollohan side of the family. He relates that originally a George Mollohan came from Ireland and settled on Birch River at the mouth of Skyles Creek, near the modern Nicholas-Webster county line. George had a son James, who settled on the Left Fork of Holly River. [See GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1984, pp. 9-17.] One of James's sons, George D. Mollohan, moved to Caress. George D. had a son, Harrison, Wilkie's grandfather, who fought under Union General John Buford at Gettysburg.

Wilkie points out that his paternal grandfather fought on the other side in the same battle. Salathiel S. Dennison was a Confederate under General Pickett and was wounded in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. Grandfather Dennison told Wilkie he was a flag bearer when he was injured and the person who took up the flag after him was killed. This fallen hero later proved to be a woman in a soldier's uniform, according to family lore. Wilkie heard descriptions of the battle from both grandfathers — but remembers that when the two old soldiers got together they never talked about it themselves.

Wilkie has been outside of West

Virginia just one time. In 1943 he answered an advertisement to work on a large dairy operation in New Jersey. He still recalls details of the long bus trip and the route it took. He remembers that the big farm had 1,500 cows and boasted the world's largest silos. He stayed on for about a year before returning to the family homeplace at Caress.

In the 1930's Wilkie took lessons through the mail from the Zaner Blosser Penmanship School and he has distinctive handwriting to this day. A card tacked to his door proclaims various accomplishments in elegant script: W. G. Dennison, B.D., Gospel Music Writer, Violin Maker, Gospel Tract Writer. Sometime in the 1940's, Wilkie received the Bachelor of Divinity degree after taking another home study course. "It was tough sledding but I made 'er through," he notes.

Wilkie gets a lively sparkle in his blue eyes when he talks about one of his main interests — fiddles. In 1937 he was walking up the railroad tracks below the forks of Holly River when he found the neck and fingerboard of a fiddle someone had apparently discarded. Wilkie resolved then and there to build a fiddle body to fit his new-found neck. The event was to start him on a new venture in life. More than 50 years later, he is still carving homemade fiddles.

He traces it all back to that first discarded fiddle neck. Wilkie recalls that he took that piece to the home of Wesley Harper, whom he remembers as an excellent oldtime fiddler who lived to be 100 years old. Harper was one of 20 fiddlers Wilkie could count within three miles of his home at the time, including two of his own brothers, Glen and Goldman. After taking a pattern from Harper's fiddle, Wilkie made a body to go with his neck, resulting in a fiddle that he still plays today.

Wilkie joined a special fraternity when he became a fiddler and fiddle maker. Fiddles have always been mysterious instruments and tales of their powers abound. Some of this mystique has rubbed off on the fiddle maker, the person who produces sound from trees. Many old ways of thinking, long thought to have been forgotten, survive somewhere in the minds of modern people and perhaps explain the vast amount of superstition and folklore connected with fiddles and their construction.

Wilkie began dulcimer making when someone brought an old one to him for repair.

It is very common to find rattlesnake rattles in the fiddles of oldtimers, for example. When asked why, most will say it makes the instrument sound better. But fiddles have been called the "devil's box" and the "devil's riding horse," and it may be that the insertion of the rattles harkens back to the biblical connection of serpents and the devil. A common tale has the devil offering a young boy a deal where he will have the ability to fiddle if he will trade his soul to the devil.

As a religious man, Wilkie stays away from these aspects of fiddle lore. Nevertheless, many accounts turn up in his area of central West Virginia. An early settler on Williams River, in Webster County, returned home from a dance about daybreak one Sunday morning after breaking a pledge to always stop fiddling at midnight on Saturday. According to the man's nephew, the fiddle started to play itself later that night, and could only be stopped by burning it at the hearth. He said the tune was "The Devil in the Woodpile" and that his Sabbath-breaking uncle never played the fiddle again.

Numerous other accounts have old fiddlers giving up their music and changing their ways. Other musicians, like Wilkie, see no wrong in the fiddle and enjoy playing hymns at home and in church. One notable fiddler from Wilkie's area, "Uncle Jack" McElwain, swore off fiddling at about age 90. When handed a fiddle on one occasion after that, it is said that he just touched "Cumberland Gap" a little in the high places before handing the instrument back. "If I play any more, all my old tunes will come back to me," Uncle Jack is reported to have said.

Fiddles, or violins, took their present shape in the 16th century in Europe, but the instrument is much older than that. Some writers have stated that the violin was known to the Israelites, citing 15th-century translations of the Bible where "the pleasant harpe, with the viol" are mentioned. These old translations have been discredited, but however murky the origins of the fiddle are in the minds of historians, we do know

that there were stringed instruments played with a bow in use at least 2,000 years ago.

Violin making reached its apex in Antonio Stradivari's hometown of Cremona, Italy, around the year 1700. By this time, the wood used in the instruments had been standardized. Spruces and pines were designated for the tops and figured maple, and occasionally pear or sycamore, for the back, sides and neck. Some makers insisted on wood that came from the south side of a tree that grew on the south side of the hill in a certain area. Some wanted only wood cut when the moon was in a certain "sign." Practical theories about woods used in the construction of fiddles get confused with the folklore inherent in a craft long practiced by laymen and master craftsmen alike.

Wilkie himself prefers the trial-and-error approach to instrument making. His fascination with wood and the sound it produces has led him to construct fiddles with maple, birch, poplar, willow, and chestnut bodies, and pine, hemlock and redwood tops. He'll take fiddles apart time and time again to make adjustments or try new innovations that occur to him. To date, Wilkie has 20 numbered fiddles, with several more in various stages of completion.

The fiddles are completely handmade, with the exception of the patent tuning keys that he favors over the traditional friction pegs. Wilkie's construction technique is not delicate. After roughing out his parts with a hatchet at the chopping block, he carves and shapes them using rudimentary hand tools. He has constructed jigs to bend the curves in the instrument's sides, while the back and "belly" are carved from solid wood. No two Wilkie Dennison fiddles are alike. He doesn't sell his instruments, but has given a few away.

The Braxton farmer is not alone as a self-taught fiddle maker. The urge to construct an instrument seems to come to a majority of traditional fiddlers sooner or later. Some produce fine-toned violins of remarkable craftsmanship. Others are more primitive folk instruments with considerable personality. All seem to hold high personal value to the builders and their descendants and are rarely sold out of the family. It may be that the making of an instrument from scratch removes some of the mystique about the music it produces. It certainly makes the music more personal.

After several fiddles, Wilkie experi-

This fiddle features a hemlock top. The unfinished fiddle bodies will receive keys, strings and bridges later.

Both these instruments will be banjos. The one on the right is a typical Dennison experiment.

mented with building other stringed instruments. He has made five mandolins, incorporating fiddle designs into some. In 1978, someone brought him a very old dulcimer to repair. While it was apart, Wilkie took a pattern from it and later built one for himself. He found the fingerboard on the old one was hollow, and believes this is what gives a dulcimer a good sound. He incorporated this feature into his own dulcimer. As with his other homemade instruments, he enjoys playing it.

Wilkie has made a guitar and is currently constructing two banjos. Typically for him, one of his banjos is of a unique design. It has a thinly carved wooden top instead of the usual skin head, and the neck and the head are both carved from a single piece of wood. "Just an idea I had," he comments. Many of Wilkie's instruments are unique and original, yet based on traditional designs.

Wilkie is a good singer and, like his father before him, is capable of teaching a shape-note singing school. "Dad taught singing schools here, yonder, and around the country," he says, while sadly observing that singing the old shape notes is going out of style today. "It's a lot easier and faster learned than round notes," he says. As to his general taste in music, Wilkie adds, "I like good oldtime country style music and gospel music. Now that old rock and roll, I don't care much about that."

When Wilkie plays the fiddle, the music is as innovative as his homemade instruments. Although he'll attempt some fiddle tunes like "Arkansas Traveler" and "Sourwood Mountain," he most likes to play original pieces like "Midnight Train." Of that one, he says, "I was riding a train along about midnight one time and it caused me to make that piece. Being by myself a-playing, I get on to some of them." Wilkie has one called "Fiddler's Waltz" and a hymn he has titled "Waiting Over Yonder." He says, "I wrote one walking along the other day. I just call it 'Walkin' Along.'"

Wilkie has done a lot of walking in his day. Living in a rural area, he has never owned a car or had an operator's license. He still gets along without the convenience and headaches electricity has brought the rest of us. He seems continually shocked by modern news events, and like many older folks with country backgrounds, he doesn't fit in well with the rush of 20th-century life. Wilkie goes about the business of living at his own pace. Current trends and the latest gadgets don't slow him down or clutter his mind. What he lacks in sophistication is made up for in originality.

Every so often you run onto a man who thinks for himself. Getting to know Wilkie Dennison is a pleasure.

Wilkie Dennison lives quietly at his ancestral home, content with the simple things of the country.

"The place was a mud hole," Frank Beheler recalls of his first sight of Eleanor, his hometown for the last 53 years. He figured he'd leave after 30 days.

Happy To Have a Chance

The Founding of Eleanor

By Rick Wilson
Photographs by Michael Keller

In his speech accepting the 1932 Democratic presidential nomination, at the height of the Great Depression, the former governor of New York promised "a new deal" for the American people. "Let all of us here assembled," Franklin Delano Roosevelt continued, "constitute ourselves prophets of a new order of competence and of courage. This is more than a political campaign; it is a call to arms. Give me your help, not to win votes alone, but to win in this crusade to restore America to its own greatness."

West Virginians were ready for Roosevelt's New Deal. They were no strangers to hard times. Depressions often seemed to bottom out a bit lower here than elsewhere, but the big one of the 1930's was the worst ever. In the wry words of William Walters, a retired educator, New Dealer, and former mayor of the Putnam County town of Eleanor, "It used to be that we were poor and didn't know it. Then it got so bad that we were poor and did know it."

Those who remember say that the novelty of the New Deal was in having a federal government committed to doing something about hard times. As Albert Reynolds, a former Works Progress Administration (WPA) worker from Ona put it, "It wasn't like it is now. They didn't look for somebody down and out and then stomp them down deeper; they tried to help the people."

"Tried" is the key word. The New Deal was a series of experiments that turned the entire nation into a laboratory of social reform. Roosevelt, a rich man and certainly no radical, was the ultimate pragmatist, trying one solution and then another in the war against depression. This earned him the hatred of many a staunch conservative, who accused "that Bolshevik in the White House" of "Sovietizing" America. In fact, by pulling the

nation back from the brink of collapse FDR gave capitalism a new lease on life.

The New Deal swept into West Virginia like rain on parched ground. To workers, the collective bargaining provisions of the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act were "a Magna Carta of labor." Miners who had lost union representation following the bloody mine wars of the 'teens and '20's signed up by the thousands as John L. Lewis flooded the coalfields with leaflets proclaiming "The President Wants You to Join the Union." United Mine Workers membership increased nationwide by 150,000 in a single month.

Thousands of West Virginia's young men found employment in the Civilian Conservation Corps at eight CCC camps across the state and at other camps in other states. Many more stayed home and worked for the National Youth Administration, building roads, parks, schools and playgrounds. Approximately eight million American adults found employment in the WPA. Even writers and artists joined in, producing one of the finest books on West Virginia ever published, the classic *Guide to the Mountain State.*

Today, more than 50 years after the hectic One Hundred Days that kicked off the New Deal, the CCC, WPA, NYA and other "alphabet soup" agencies are gone. But the monuments of the massive public works programs survive everywhere in our state. One of the biggest and most lasting is the Kanawha River town of Eleanor, formerly Red House Farms.

As the town's name suggests, Eleanor Roosevelt was instrumental in its founding. Mrs. Roosevelt was the conscience of the New Deal, often serving as the legs and eyes of the president. She was everywhere — in steel mills, in coal mines, on the dried-out farms of the Dust Bowl, traveling over 40,000 miles in her first year alone. Her roaming was the topic of many jokes, even inside the White House. On one occasion, when Mrs. Roosevelt visited a Baltimore prison early in the morning, FDR asked her secretary where she was. "In prison, Mr. President," Malvina Thompson replied. "I'm not

Eleanor Roosevelt took a personal interest in the town later named for her. Here (above) she visits with Mr. and Mrs. Roy Gilreath, Red House homesteaders. Mrs. Roosevelt also visited the Arthurdale project in Preston County (below) frequently. Gilreath photo by William Walters; Arthurdale photo courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University.

The pre-Civil War "Red House" is the centerpiece of Eleanor, originally called Red House Farms. The building was the administrative center for the federal project.

surprised," he quipped, "but what for?"

Mrs. Roosevelt developed a special interest in the problems of the dispossessed, America's newly unemployed and often homeless working class families. One solution which caught her fancy was a proposal for subsistence homesteads. According to historian Kenneth S. Davis, federal pilot projects would show how "economically distressed people could become self-sustaining family units by establishing themselves on small-acreage farms, bought on easy credit terms, on which they could grow most or all of their own food, with perhaps some surplus for sale, while obtaining cash income from part-time employment." The idea, in other words, was to start a back-to-the-land movement, putting people to work for themselves on small farms.

The resulting federal homestead projects were planned communities initially administered either by the Department of the Interior or the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. They were transferred in 1936 to the new Resettlement Administration. Of all such homesteads, the best known is Arthurdale in Preston County. [See GOLDENSEAL, April-June 1981, pp. 7-25.] This was the country's first such effort, begun in 1933, and lessons learned there in prefabricated housing, water and sewer facilities, and experimental schooling, were later applied at other sites. Arthurdale was a labor of experimentation and Red House was one of experience, combining good planning with self-management by the homesteaders.

The experimental community was located on a tract of flat land on the north side of the Kanawha River, downstream and across from the Putnam County seat of Winfield. The site's development possibilities were noticed in the 1920's, when real estate speculators promoted it as "Putnam-on-Kanawha." As luck would have it, no lots were sold in this commercial scheme and the property was later acquired by the state and then the federal government.

The name Red House, which now applies to a neighboring community, comes from the large former plantation near the center of Eleanor. Built prior to the Civil War, the main building is still standing and is held in local folklore to be the site of the brutal murder of a slave. During the homestead era, the Red House served as the administration building and was jokingly referred to as "the capitol."

The project was popular from the start. Over 1,000 applications were received for a community designed for 150 families. Those accepted came from across the state, with perhaps the majority from the southern coal counties. On arrival, the men lived in barracks as they worked building houses and roads and digging sewers and water lines. To ensure ample space for gardens, each house was set on an acre of ground. Made from locally manufactured cinder block and chestnut wood, the houses were built to last — 149 out of the original 150 are still standing and occupied, and they increase in value from year to year. They had from one to three bedrooms, and included a cellar and garage. Rent ranged from $9 to $13 per month, later applied toward purchase of the house.

Construction proceeded at an astonishing rate. For example, the record for September 1 through November 2, 1934, showed 119 footers poured, 141 garages completed, and roofing applied to 55 houses, among

other work done. A single house could virtually be finished in nine days.

But building houses was just the beginning. Like something from a utopian socialist's dream, the big project included a community farm and barn, publicly owned gas and water works, school (first located in the barracks), greenhouse, canning plant, carpentry shop, brassiere factory, market, restaurant, filling station, garage and pool room. The community had its own newspaper, *The Melting Pot*. Homesteaders participated in local government, town-meeting style, in the Red House Association. Employment could be found in community projects, local public works, and private industry. A rich social life included adult education and craft classes, town and private parties, clubs, showers and dances. Community support was provided by home economists, a doctor, and public nurses.

Frank Beheler, an original homesteader born in 1907, was happy to be there. He attributes his good fortune to the collaborative efforts of the Good Lord and the freewheeling Roosevelts. Frank's road to Red House began at Yawkey in March 1935. He had just returned from taking two polio patients to Berkeley Springs when a public health nurse advised him to go to the Peoples Building in Charleston to apply for a Red House homestead. Since he was lucky if he found work three days a month at home in Lincoln County, Frank decided to make the trip. Within a week, notification came by mail that he was accepted. It came just in time, for his landlord had ordered his family to move out.

Leaving Yawkey at 2:00 a.m. on the morning he was to report for work, Frank walked in the dark for four hours to the house of a friend making an early run to Charleston. He got off at St. Albans and walked into a tavern, asking directions to Red House. "You're right on your way," answered a traveling salesman, "I'll ride you down."

"The place was a mud hole," he remembers today. "No trees, no grass, no nothing. I said to myself that I was going to stay 30 days and be on my way. Then, after I got to know the people, the happiest bunch of men I'd ever seen, I said I was going to stay for five years. I've been here ever since, and the place looks prettier to me every day. I feel like it was made for me." In fact, it was.

It was 11:00 a.m. on March 29, 1935, when a worn-out Frank Beheler finished up the paperwork at the administrative building. No sooner was that done than Johnny Miller, a work supervisor, informed him that "you go to work at 12:30." Frank spent the rest of his first day in a nine-foot-deep sewer ditch.

Strong and lasting friendships developed quickly in the barracks, the fellowship of hopeful, hardworking men "thrilled to have the chance to get their own home." For the time being, they slept in army cots and took their meals in a barracks cafeteria. Frank's first acquaintance was bunk neighbor Jim Trowbridge, soon to have the nicknames "Jungle Jim" and "the Old Philosopher." One of Trowbridge's talents was making a liniment for sore muscles (of which there were many) and various other ailments. The ingredients were top secret, and it was even said that if you were single, "it would bring a woman around."

Frank Beheler, however, was no single man, and the day soon came when he applied for his family's new home. The man in the office at the Red House had trouble filling out the proper papers. Finally, he just handed over a key, saying, "I'll let you have the durn thing." Fifty-three

The idea was that the homestead projects would be self-sufficient, with settlers working their own plots and in local industry. These Eleanor men are engaged in plant propagation. Photo by William Walters, date unknown.

Above Left: There were five models of houses at Eleanor, all built for comfort and simple beauty of locally-manufactured cinder block. This is Frank Beheler's home, a small B-1 model on lot 153.

An Acre of Comfort

The Architecture of Eleanor

Photoessay by Michael Keller

Below: Interiors featured plaster-over-masonry walls and generous amounts of exposed chestnut and poplar wood. This is the living room of William Walters' house.

Above: Eleanor kitchens were functional and compact. The modern sink unit in the Beheler kitchen joins original cabinetry at left.

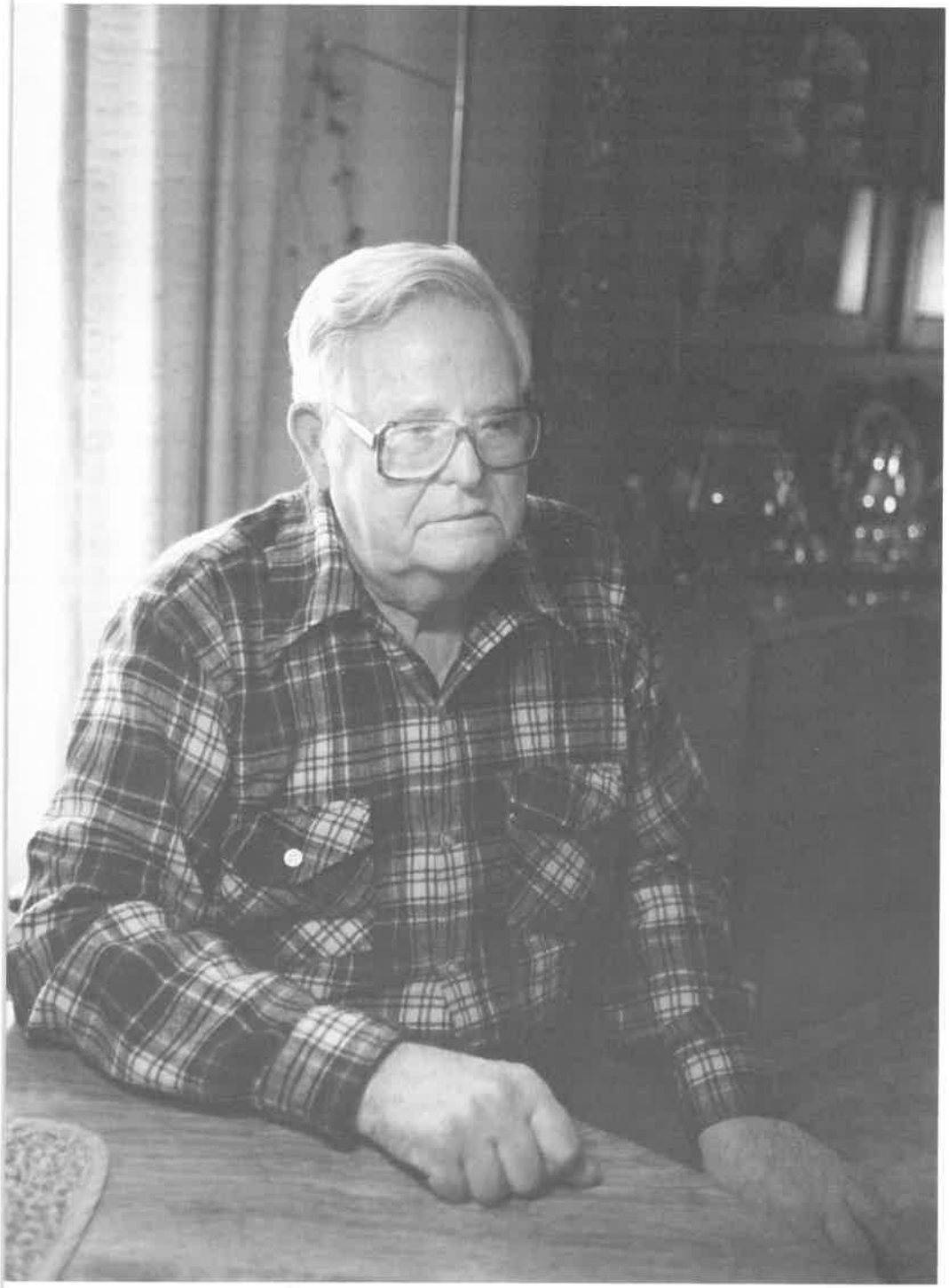
Above Left: The one-acre homesteads were each equipped with a small garage or barn on the back of the lot. The Beheler outbuilding faces the street behind.

Left: The Walters' back bedroom shows the handcrafted doors and beamed ceilings typical of Eleanor construction. The houses, designed by the Charleston architectural firm of Meanor and Handloser, were built by the homesteaders.

years later, Frank still carries that well-worn key with pride. His wife Naomi arrived in May 1935, took one look at the muddy grounds and went upstairs crying. In time, however, the grass grew and the mud dried, and the place became home to her as well.

Mrs. Eula Moxley, the widow of project bookkeeper Bryan J. Moxley, also remembers the mud. "It was only knee deep," she says. When she first heard about the Red House homesteads, she was distributing government commodities to needy families down south, in what was sometimes known as the Free State of McDowell. "We applied through the Welch relief office," she says. "They checked us out and accepted us."

William Walters, early Eleanor teacher and longtime resident, is a former mayor. "It's been an experience I wouldn't trade the world for," he says.



Eula was undeterred by Red House's mud and even her own Republican principles, finding the Roosevelt experiment "so very interesting and so entirely different from what I was used to. Everybody was happy to have a chance."

She especially remembers the community spirit and the active social life. "Nearly everybody went to the meetings and pitched in and helped," she affirms. "We had art classes for adults and a bridge club. On weekends, they'd bring the bus over for us to shop in Charleston. If there was a baby born, everybody had a shower. We'd grow most of our own food and take it to the cannery. If you didn't know how to can, there was someone to show you how. There were parties and dances. It was a very busy life. We didn't let any grass grow under our feet."

William Walters, now 81 years of age, was not an original homesteader, but he was in a position to watch the community grow at every stage and participate at many levels. As an educator, he taught 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th grades in the barracks school. As county administrator for the National Youth Administration, he supervised a variety of local projects. In 1946, he served as president of the Washington Homesteads Association, as the town was called during its transition from government to private ownership, and served as mayor of the recently incorporated town of Eleanor in 1971.

The experience shaped Mr. Walters' thinking. "I've often cited Eleanor as one of the best planned areas that you could imagine," he says of his later work on the Putnam County Board of Education and the Planning Commission. "It shows what can happen if you have a good plan and allow people to develop it. It's been an experience that I wouldn't trade the world for."

In speaking of NYA work in and around Red House, Walters says, "It wasn't just piddling around. We built schools, playgrounds, tennis courts, repaired and painted things. We built the beginning of the Putnam County Park, built footlogs all over the county. We were teaching youngsters to work in different things. We had a greenhouse and a weaving

room where we made rugs, curtains, even material for suits. I've always thought that it was better for people to have the chance to work and learn than to just leave them sitting around."

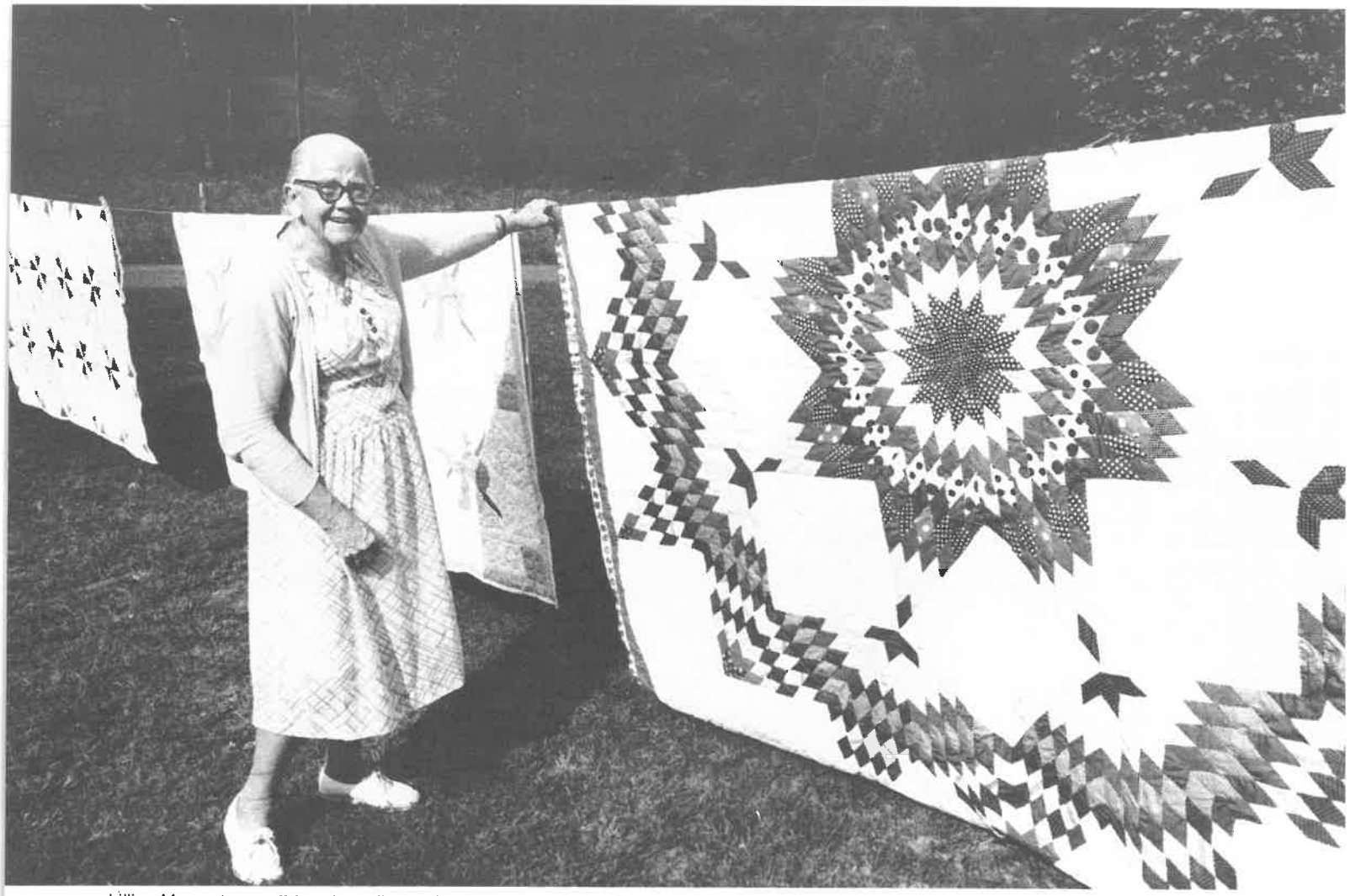
One of the highlights of Walters's Red House experience was designing a monogram to be woven into a towel for Eleanor Roosevelt. She visited the area as many as five times, usually unannounced, to mingle with the homesteaders and observe their progress. Frank Beheler remembers working in the greenhouse one day and looking out the window to see Mrs. Roosevelt. He dropped what he was doing and ran out to meet her. "I've never talked to a farmer's wife any commoner," he recalls. "In a few minutes the place was full of police. Nobody knew she was coming and they wanted to protect her. But nobody around here would have hurt her after all they did for us. That's why when the time came to name the town we called it Eleanor."

The initial government investment of $553,000 gave 150 families the chance for a new life and livelihood. The little town has survived and flourished, and the community spirit of a half-century ago lives on in the 1980's. In July of 1985, the 50th anniversary of Eleanor was celebrated in grand style, happily coinciding with the national centennial of Eleanor Roosevelt's birth. More than 3,000 people from across the country attended the reunion, with David Roosevelt (grandson of Franklin and Eleanor) as special guest speaker. The theme of the event, which was developed by Barbara Kosa, the daughter of an original homesteader, was "Eleanor. . .an American Dream."

In 1986, when *People* magazine asked its readers to suggest stops for Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev's first visit to the United States, local high school student Sheryl Harmon nominated Eleanor. *People* sent a reporter, and the town was featured in the July 28, 1986, issue. In the article, it is stated that "Eleanor was a company town, and the company was the U.S. government." Perhaps a better way of putting it would be to say that Eleanor was a people's town established by a government responsive to their needs.

An Eleanor homestead was one way out of America's worst depression. Frank Beheler picked up his key to a better future in 1935.

For that reason, the town of Eleanor will be as valuable in years to come as it has been in the past. William Walters sums it up best: "It's an example for the future," he says. "People should be given a chance and an opportunity to build. I know it's worked here." ✱



Lillian Mann shows off favorite quilts on the clothes line of her Alderson home. The quilt in the foreground is an example of the Broken Star pattern.

The Old-Timey Way

Lillian Mann of Talcott

Photographs and Text by Andy Yale

It's the kind of place you might drive by without a second glance. Just a small neat house, set in an orderly yard, the same sort you see in small towns throughout Summers County. A front porch holds a couple of chairs and a wire clothesline cuts the lawn in half. You wouldn't look closely enough to see the sheds and garden behind the house, but even if your passing glance took them in, they'd be no grounds for wonder. You'd drive on through, past the small brick post office and the Talcott grocery and cross the tracks onto Route 12.

Nothing about Lillian Mann's home gives any outward sign of the rich and varied life that takes place within its modest confines. To discover that, you will have to stop the car, walk across the carefully clipped grass, climb the porch steps, and rap on the screen door. Lillian will come and greet you, most likely with some sewing in her hand. And if you ask about her life, she will tell you, straightforward, not wasting any words. By the time she's finished, her little place in Talcott will seem as large as the biggest ranch Texas ever bragged on.

As Lillian speaks, you'll marvel more and more. She raises all her food, with the exception of a few staples. She cans it all for winter, filling her storeroom to overflowing with jars of fruit, vegetables and meat. She makes lye soap, she quilts and sews. She tends to her chickens and garden. And she finds time to talk to any passerby who may chance to knock on her door.

It is not just the amount and variety of work that Lillian squeezes into her life that makes her home seem large to a visitor. The strength and conviction of her beliefs seem to broaden the boundaries. She says she is a firm believer in the "old-timey way" and anyone who meets her will soon understand that she is a deeply religious woman. When she talks, be it about some traditional way of managing life or her involvement with her church, it's immediately clear that she has lived what she's talking about. You can sense that she bases her life today on what has gone before, using the past as a solid foundation on which to build the present.

Lillian remembers a way of life that has passed, a time when people made almost everything they used and grew virtually all their food. She remembers it with a clarity and immediacy that make her stories a window into another time. Listening to her speak, one can almost see the sunlight playing on the rough cloth on a weaver's loom or hear the chunk of a

hatchet splitting out churn staves on some brilliant day 50 years gone.

Her memories carry more than just the specific techniques of old-time crafts, they recall an entirely different way of experiencing the world and other people. She calls forth a life in which religion, work and the dealings between people were not separated as they often are today, but part of one fabric. A time when belief didn't stop at the church door, but was carried to even the humblest activity, so that quilting or cutting kindling or preparing a meal became forms of worship. A time when work was an expression of the self and brought its own satisfaction in the doing, and when God and man stood a little closer than today.

Lillian's stories take us back to a time that is gone, but they also ask hard questions about the present. They are painful questions, but, like her vision of the world, they stretch the small limits of the personal and suggest larger possibilities for our daily lives. Let's listen, while Lillian Mann tells us of a different way of living and of what was required of a woman by the old-timey way.

Lillian Mann. I started quilting when I was eight years old. I helped my mother all the time. When I was 10 years old, she told me if I would go ahead and make a quilt for myself I could have it. So I made a Dresden Plate and I've still got it. It's practically as good as it was the day I made it.

My mother would see something and decide to make a quilt that looked like it. She would make her own design. She made a quilt one time of a churn; you know, that you churned up and down. She appliqued it on a square and then joined the squares together. And it was pretty. Then she pieced a Wagon Wheel and a Sawtooth.

She quilted and she made all of our clothes, and made her own clothes and made the boys' overalls. You could buy denim then by the yard. She made all our gingham shirts. It used to be gingham was all we ever had. Gingham and hickory cloth — a blue and white striped cloth. It was like hickory, it would never wear out. It wasn't quite as heavy as overall goods, but it was a tough-wearing piece of material.

Mother would knit our sweaters and socks and caps. She made it all, made all our clothes, and she did the most of her sewing by hand. I can remember when she bought the first sewing machine; I was about six years old, I reckon. She sewed on the sewing machine after that. But she always pieced her quilts by hand, because she said she couldn't piece them to look like anything on a machine. She tried it, a time or two, but she couldn't get them straight, couldn't get them to look right. So she stuck to making them by hand. And I found out too that you can't make them on a machine. It just throws them out of balance and they don't look exactly right.

I tell you, these Lone Stars are nothing funny to piece. They're pretty hard to get to lay flat and not to pucker up on you. And you can't get cotton material no more. All you can get now has got a polyester blend. It's a flimsy-like stuff and when you sew a border on a quilt it wants to flare out like a ruffle, it don't want to lay flat. It's that permanent press that makes it do that.

Back when my mother was growing up, they made their own material and it was beautiful. They raised their flax and raised their sheep and had their wool. They spun that wool into thread and would take that thread and weave it into cloth. Just about everybody had a loom at their house. They did a lot of weaving in the wintertime.

They used to dye their threads different colors. There's roots in the mountains that they knew. Boil those roots and use the juice and put salt and a little vinegar in to set the color. They'd first put the material in there and boil it about 10 minutes, then raise it out and add salt and vinegar, then put the material back down in there to set the color. You had to keep moving your material around, the thread or whatever you were dyeing.

Mother had her loom and she had her spinning wheel. I can remember especially the bedspreads that she made out of the heavy material. It was made out of heavy thread, kind of like a suiting thread. It must have been a wool or some kind of worsted stuff. She would take different colors of that and weave that bedspread. And she would weave in little blocks together. She had bedspreads for all the beds we had and they were all made into that design. Had different colors of thread and they were real pretty.

Weaving commenced fading out before the turn of the century. When I was growing up, just a few of the old people still made their material. The factories commenced making it and they commenced shipping it from overseas. Fine goods, you know, so people got to buying it and laid their stuff aside.

Some of the men would weave and spin. And once in a while one might quilt and sew. My dad won a sewing contest in Virginia, when they had a sewing contest down there. He won $50 for being the best sewer. He hemmed Mother's apron faster than the rest of the men hemmed their wive's aprons. The rest of them didn't come up with him. And he really did a real nice, neat job. Dad could sew. His mother taught him.

Dad would make a lot of things for the place. Cut maple blocks out of a log and take the bark off and smooth them. And he'd take an inshave — we nicknamed it a "cathead" — and dig a holler out in that block. He'd make bowls that way.

"When you're eating that stuff out of the store, you don't know what you're eating," Lillian says. She grows her own food and preserves it herself.

He made our churns out of cedar. They were pretty good- sized churns, held about six gallons. He took a round block for the bottom and cut a groove in it. And he'd set them staves up in there and put them just as tight together as he could get them — drove them in there with a hammer. Jammed them right up tight against each other. And put a wire around that churn, and staple it on there with little staples. I can remember him doing that. And then at the top and bottom of the churn and midways, he put a steel band around it. That held that churn together.

Then he took it down and laid it in a hole of water in the branch running below the house. The water swelled it so it wouldn't leak. Then mother churned every day — we had two cows — so that kept the churn from leaking. It would start to leak if it dried out. Dad made a lid for the churn that fit down so tight you'd have to take the dasher and knock the lid loose when you took it off.

Mother made all our soap. We used ash water to make soap. They had what they called a lye kiln. It was a big wooden box Dad made. And he bored a hole in the middle of that box and put ashes in there, all hardwood ashes. Locust was really the best — well, birch, too, was good, and oak and ash and hickory. And you put them in that big square box as long as a car and as wide, with maybe three holes bored in the middle of it. He had it setting up on blocks of wood, level. Mother went to the branch and got cold water and poured it over those ashes. Them days you could get great big enamel dish pans that held three or four gallons. She would put one of them under there and catch that thing full.

When she got ready to make her soap, she'd strain that lye water that came out of the ashes. Just take a pillow case and pour it through and strain it. Put that into a big iron kettle and put her meat scraps in there.

She had to cook it all day, because that ash water lye wasn't as strong as the lye you get nowadays. She would use about three zinc buckets full of that lye water and a zinc bucket full of soap grease. She cooked her soap sometimes four hours, sometimes six hours. You had to stir it the whole time to keep it from boiling over. You couldn't have a big roasting fire under it. If you did, it would boil out all over creation. You wouldn't have nothing left except the kettle! After it was cooked, she let it set all night, and the next morning she'd take a butcher knife and cut it in chunks, take it out, just like I do. That's how I learned to make soap.

Lillian fears that young people have forgotten the hard lessons of self-reliance. "If they don't learn something now from the older people, the young ones will be in a mess," she warns.

I make two kinds. For what they called cooked soap, I use a gallon of water and four cans of lye and 12 pounds of soap grease. I usually use scraps — old fats, strong meats, you know. I lay my fire in the furnace first and set my iron kettle on that, get it ready to light, but I don't start it then. I put the lye in the kettle and put that gallon of water in there, and dissolve that lye, and then I put in the meat scraps, supposed to be a zinc bucket full. Then light your fire and let it start cooking. You stir it around and that lye will eat that meat up and it will eat *all* that meat up. It will look just like peanut butter in that kettle, looks good enough to eat. It don't take too long to make it.

I like cooked soap better than I do the hard soap. So I make cooked soap most of the time.

Back when I was growing up, most of the people used herbs for sickness. But the doctors was awful nice and good. You could call one and he had to ride horseback or come in a hack, wasn't no such thing as cars. The closest doctor was 10 miles away. It would take him about an hour to get there, but he would come. If you didn't have the money it was all right. He'd take a chicken or a dozen

eggs instead, just whatever you wanted to give him. One time he came there and we was short of stuff and we didn't have nothing except some green apples, the kind you fry. He just filled his pockets full of apples, went on with them and left. He was an awful good doctor.

But they'd use herbs quite often. My grandmother was gifted with herbs. She was half Indian. Her granddaddy raised her and he was a full-blooded Indian. And he taught her all this stuff. We just loved her to come to our house. She'd come to our house and she'd take us to the woods. And she'd hunt them herbs and we'd gather them in sackfuls. She knowed every kind in the book.

They used goldenseal and they used red root. That red root was for inside bleeding, to stop the inside bleeding. Back when I was a kid, they used to have bloody dysentery, the better name for it was bloody flux. They used red root to cure that. And the goldenseal was good for about anything you wanted to use it for.

Then what they call barberry root, that's good medicine. That's all the old people ever used for yellow jaundice. Made a tea out of it. Didn't take but just a cupful or two to cure them up. Then there's a white ash tree that they call sang tree. The roots of that are good to cure pneumonia, if you can find it. It's bitter. There's what they call blacksnake root — oh, just a million little tiny roots in a little clump. That's the best stuff that you ever smelled or tasted. You boil it and make a tea out of it. It's good for just about any sickness.

For backache and when their kidneys got out of shape, they used what they call ratsbane. Grows around here in the mountains now. It's a vine, has a little oblong leaf on it, with white streaks running down the back. It's just as bitter as gall. That's a pretty hard dose to swallow, but once you get it down it'll do the work.

Then there's another tea, boneset. It's good, it has a green leaf and it has a purple blossom. And there's what they call horsemint, has a purple blossom. These are good table teas, you know. Good to drink. But those others are for medicine.

I like the old-timey way. Just like I'm living now. I like to raise what I eat. I can a lot in the summertime, I raise my garden. I raise just about everything I eat, except my milk and butter and baking powder and meal. I don't like stuff that you put in a deep freeze. I like to can my own meats, because I know what I'm eating. When you're eating that stuff out of the store, you don't know what you're eating. You find all kinds of stuff in that canned food from the store.

Young people today are going to have to learn something as the days go by and the years come along, they're going to have to go back to raising their stuff and digging their eats out of the ground. If they don't learn something now from the older people, the older people are going to pass from the scene, and the young ones will be in a mess. They don't know what a hard time is. I've eaten mountain tea and birch bark and survived on it with my family growing up. I've never starved. Look at me now and you'd think I've had plenty all my life. But, believe me, I've done without bread for as high as a week at a time in my house.

I've worked hard all through life. Worked on the farm — plowed corn, hoed corn, cradled wheat, mowed grass with a scythe. Done every kind of work I reckon you can think of, except working on the railroad. I never worked inside the mines, but I worked at the mines on the coal yards. I've screened coal and worked the coal bin picking that rock out of coal. I know what's rock and what's coal when I see it. And I've dug post holes, stretched wire fence, and I have built pole fences. I've dug cisterns, dug wells, dug toilet pits, built houses, mixed concrete. You name it. I've done all kinds of work. And a whole lot of things I forget.

I don't know how people makes it anymore. They get married today and divorced tomorrow. If they wanted to make a go of it, they could. I don't believe they want to, myself. You take them old people, they was happy. Did a lot of hard work and raised big families, but they was happy and went to church every Sunday and every prayer meeting night. The women worked on the farm, helped the men raise crops. They and their husbands would work together and when they had something to do at the house, why, if the men weren't too busy on the farm, they would help their wives at the house. Then the wives would go to the field and help their husbands. They worked like clockworks together. Hard work didn't bother them. They was just as happy as they could be.

The old folks knew what they believed in. And they really lived it — they loved their neighbor as themselves. Their neighbor got sick, they hurt as well as their neighbor did. And they went and did for that neighbor. They did all his farm work and the women did all the housework, washing on the washboard and ironing with stove irons. And never charged them nothing. Never cost them one cent. Because they didn't do it for money. They did it because they were raised to be Christians. That's how they tried to live. ❧

The author gratefully notes that some of the work for this article was made possible by a grant from the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia.

The soap is made from store-bought lye, but otherwise according to traditional methods. Lillian Mann learned soap-making from her mother.

Here all the Time

The Mountain Dulcimer in West Virginia

By Danny Williams

West Virginia probably has more mountain dulcimers and dulcimer music today than at any time in its history. The national rediscovery of the instrument in the late 1960's, led in our state by the West Virginia University folklore scholar, Patrick Gainer, has set dulcimers strumming all over the mountains.

Ray Epler of South Charleston has built and sold nearly a thousand dulcimers, taught hundreds of people their first tunes, coached several accomplished performers, and has played and spoken at schools, festivals, and gatherings of all types. Jim Good of Gandeeville, though not a performer or teacher, has built countless dulcimers — he declines to estimate just how many. Dulcimer virtuoso Alan Freeman, now living in Jackson County, is a popular performer at folk festivals and concerts. Freeman and the others are largely responsible for the fact that nearly every such event now features dulcimer music.

The Heritage Trunk program of the Department of Culture and History has carried the dulcimer, along with other Appalachian handiwork and educational materials, into every county school system in the state. The instrument packed in the trunks is the three- or four-stringed lap or mountain dulcimer. It is picked or strummed, and not to be confused with the many-stringed hammered dulcimer, played by small strikers. Dozens of West Virginians now play the lap dulcimer seriously, hundreds are at least occasional players, and a sizable number build instruments for themselves or for sale. There are now few Mountaineers who fail to recognize the dulcimer.

The Appalachian lap dulcimer is an instrument of simple beauty. This one was made by French Collison of Charleston and the chestnut chair by William David Butler of Lincoln County, courtesy The Cultural Center Shop. Photo by Michael Keller.

This was not always so. When the late Professor Gainer began researching, performing and lecturing, very few residents of the dulcimer's Appalachian home country had even heard of the instrument. WVU folklorist Louis Watson Chappell, who recorded more than 90 folk singers and instrumentalists in West Virginia between 1937 and 1947, captured not one dulcimer with his early recording machine. Some have concluded from its lack of visibility before about 1960 that the instrument had nearly disappeared, or that it had never enjoyed wide currency in the region at all. Such a conclusion overstates the decline of the dulcimer's popularity. The printed and recorded documents of West Virginia music and the memories of current scholars of our music and culture include information on several dulcimer makers and players whose musical roots predate the modern revival of the instrument.

Pat Gainer himself, a Gilmer County native who brought a rare personal interest to his academic work in folklore, was apparently introduced to the mountain dulcimer by Henry Bryant. In his *Folk Songs from the West Virginia Hills*, Gainer writes of meeting Bryant in 1950 and hearing the instrument Bryant called a "rebec," after the Biblical relative of our dulcimer. A tape recording of this meeting, preserved in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at West Virginia University in Morgantown, shows that Bryant was an accomplished player in the limited original style of the instrument, and also reveals that he had long been a maker of the instrument. Unfortunately, Dr. Gainer apparently did not ask Bryant where he had learned his music or his woodworking.

Henry Bryant died before the resurgence of his instrument, but his brother, Ballard Bryant of Mount Hope, continued building and playing the dulcimer long enough to make an appearance at the first Mountain State Art and Craft Fair in 1963. Probably more people have seen, heard, and bought dulcimers at this big annual fair at Cedar Lakes near Ripley than at any other event in the state. It is significant that mountain dulcimers were there from the beginning, and that the maker was a man who had learned his craft through the handed-down folk process rather than through the dulcimer revival of the 1960's. Ballard Bryant died about two months after his one appearance at Cedar Lakes, but revivalist makers such as Epler, Good, Gene Dickinson, Sam Rizzetta, this writer, and others have since shown and played hand-built dulcimers at this most influential fair.

At the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville, a pioneering folklife event founded by Professor Gainer in 1950, the late Basil Blake played his instrument in the evening concerts for many years during the 1960's and early 1970's. The West Virginia Collection has a tape recording of his 1957 concert, and also has one 1973 recording of a session at Blake's Gilmer County home. The tapes show Blake to have been a very good dulcimer player, rendering dance tunes such as "Soldier's Joy" and "Arkansas Traveler" a little more slowly than many players, but with more fiddle-like ornamentation and a firm hand on the rhythm.

Playing in the traditional way, Blake pressed the single melody

string against the fret with a small hickory stick held in his left hand, while strumming all three strings with a flexible pick held in the right hand. He used a piece of the flexible outer layer of a cow's horn for his pick. Though at least some of his dulcimers had frets which extended across the fingerboard, a latter-day modification which makes possible more progressive playing, Blake never adopted any modern playing techniques.

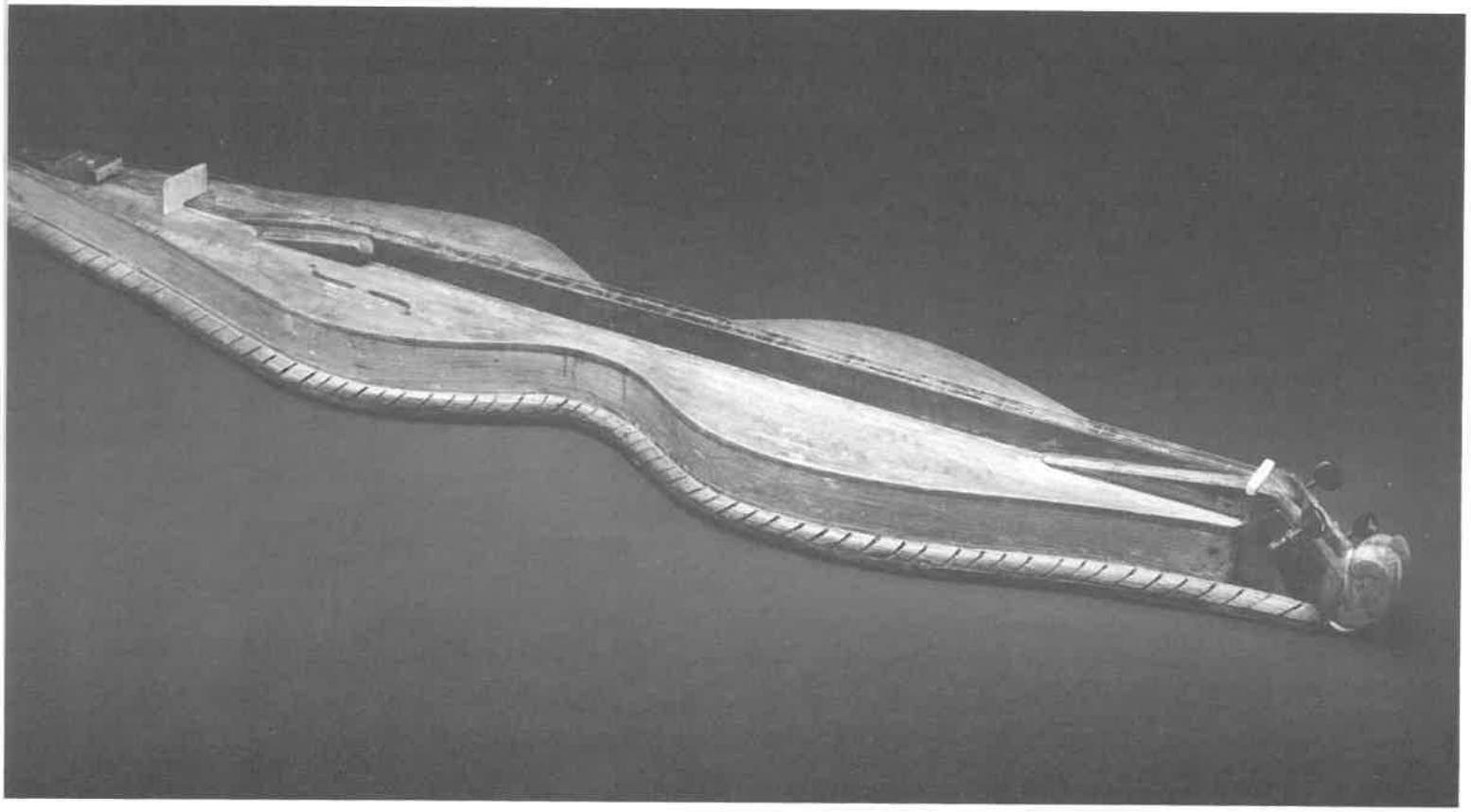
Basil Blake also made his own instruments and, in the folk tradition, he was not as selective with his materials as modern makers can afford to be. Many Blake dulcimers were made from soft, porous cucumber tree (mountain magnolia) wood, and at least a few from wall paneling. Blake's instruments were remarkably loud, and they were accurately fretted. Like Henry and Ballard Bryant he called the instrument a rebec, and sometimes insisted that it "ain't a dulcimer at all." (The Bryants and Blake were correct in a sense; the ancient dulcimer — now called the hammered dulcimer — is not an ancestor of Blake's instrument, and if the term "rebec" were in use today, it would name a family of instruments which would likely include the Appalachian lap dulcimer.) Blake's family had been instrument builders and players before him, and sister Sarah Singleton, now in her 70's, still fiddles for monthly square dances in Braxton County.

Another dulcimer-making family of which something is known is the Honaker clan, famous gunsmiths and instrument-builders of the last century. They came from Virginia, and branched into Summers, Raleigh, and Mercer counties well before 1900. Gun enthusiasts say that the Honakers were more interested in detail work and fine ornamentation than many of their contemporaries. Their surviving dulcimers are distinctively shaped, with sharp curves and points which most of the folk instrument builders did not attempt.

Dulcie Honaker Meadows, granddaughter of a Mercer County instrument builder, began learning the family music in 1900 and played it into the 1970's. Her half-brother, Leonard McComas of Mercer County, built dulcimers in the distinctive family shape at least into the 1940's.

The late Patrick Gainer, eminent West Virginia University folklorist and founder of the State Folk Festival at Glenville, was a major force in the revival of interest in the dulcimer. Photographer unknown, courtesy Charleston Newspapers.

This Kanawha County dulcimer dates from the early 20th century. The three strings are typical of regional dulcimers, but owner Jim Costa says the waist is unusually narrow. Photo by Michael Keller.



The late Basil Blake of Gilmer County, at right, learned dulcimer making by the handed-down folk process. Here he makes music with David Morris at the Folk Festival in Glenville. Photo by Scott Kitchen.

Her music is preserved at West Virginia University in a recording made in 1973. Though Dulcie Meadows's picking was strictly in the traditional manner, there was one striking peculiarity in her technique: Rather than holding the dulcimer in her lap or standing with it flat on a table in front of her, she would hook the head of the instrument over the back of a straight chair and sit facing it, playing the dulcimer nearly vertically. She explained that as a young girl she had been forbidden to take the family instrument from its place on the wall, so she had taught herself to play it in that position.

Fragmentary information suggests that the dulcimer was far from uncommon in West Virginia, especially in the southern counties. Frank George, prominent folk musician and music scholar, learned to play the instrument 30 years ago from a Vivian Vest of Summers County. George reports that his great-grandfather's brother played the dulcimer in Greenbrier County. The builder of that instrument is unknown.

George also recalls a C. E. Bonham of Raleigh County, who made some of the most primitive and authentic 20th-century dulcimers George has seen. Jim Costa, an avid instrument collector, historian, and musician in Summers County, has several unidentified dulcimers and near relatives of dulcimers from the southern part of the state [see GOLDENSEAL, Volume 12, Number 2, pp. 58-64]. Fiddler Robert Barker of Logan County, in a taped 1973 session, mentions a "Price boy" who played dulcimer in the traditional manner — with a pick and noter — 40 years earlier, and recalls an "old man Stallings, Roy's daddy," who had built the instruments.

Jane George has seen the work of a G. C. Mentz from Raleigh County, a turn-of-the-century Huntington builder named Charles Drake, and a Mr. Keadle from the same period in Monroe County. She also knows of a Mrs. Otis Randolph of Point Pleasant and a "Granny Harmon" of Logan County who played the dulcimer before the current revival. On stage at the 1966 Folk Festival in Glenville, Bruce McWhorter from West Virginia

The Different Dulcimers

Two very different string instruments bear the name dulcimer. The mountain dulcimer, discussed in the adjacent article, is unrelated to the hammered dulcimer, a many-stringed trapezoidal instrument played with small hand-held mallets. The two share only a common name and a growing popularity among mountain musicians.

Mountain dulcimers, also known as lap, Appalachian, Kentucky and plucked dulcimers, consist of a narrow fingerboard attached to a larger sound box underneath. They are usually 29 to 35 inches long, with the width varying according to the shape of the sound box. Common shapes are hourglass or oval, though diamond, rectangular and other shapes are found. The fingerboard runs the full length of the mountain dulcimer.

Instruments made before 1940 had three, four or sometimes six metal strings stretched over a fingerboard divided by frets. Frets on these early instruments were only under the first two strings. Most mountain dulcimers made since 1940 have frets extending over the full width of the fingerboard. Dulcimers today generally have three or four steel strings, sometimes more, that run from tuning-pegs on the left to a bridge at the extreme right.

The earliest known mountain dulcimers date from the 1800's. The instrument was in transition until at least the mid-19th century and the modern form didn't become established until the early 1900's. In Appalachia, mountain dulcimers appeared throughout the region but apparently in isolated pockets of families or small communities. The folk music revivals of recent decades introduced the instrument to national and international audiences.

The mountain dulcimer is traditionally plucked or picked. Chicken or goose quills and twigs have been used as picks, and some players strummed with their thumb or fingers. Many modern players also fingerpick, adapting guitar and banjo techniques. The mountain dulcimer is usually placed across the seated player's lap. Some hold it in a guitar position and certain players have a style all their own, such as Dulcie Honaker Meadows mentioned in the accompanying article.

Where the mountain dulcimer is noted with the left hand and picked with the right hand, the hammered dulcimer is played with a pair of small beaters or hammers. The hammers are wood, cane or wire, about 10 inches long and curved upward on the striking end. They are held thumb uppermost, usually between the first and second fingers.

Hammered dulcimers average 30 inches or more in length, 12 to 23 inches in width, and two to six inches in depth. The instrument is placed flat on a table (or suspended by a strap), with the longest side nearest the player.

The soundboard is as much as a half-inch thick, and made of pine, cedar or plywood. Hammered dulcimers are ingeniously laid out so that the notes are within as close reach as possible. Strings vary in number from 40 to 120, the average being about 60. They are arranged in courses of two to six strings each. The sound of the hammered dulcimer has a characteristic ringing quality, because the notes are for the most part undamped. With the hammered strings, the higher harmonies tend to ring on after the principal musical tones have ceased.

The hammered dulcimer was almost certainly introduced to America by English colonists before 1700. A Judge Samuel Sewall wrote of hearing one in 1717 in Salem, Massachusetts. Later in the

Ray Epler plays a hammered dulcimer of his own making. Epler is one of West Virginia's best-known dulcimer makers. Photo by Michael Keller.

18th century, dulcimer players held public performances in several American cities.

During the 19th century a "parlor model" was developed through certain refinements to the instrument such as the addition of legs and hinged lids. Folk craftsmen and commercial makers built hammered dulcimers and dulcimer shops flourished in New England and western New York. The instruments were used primarily to play dance music and were often included in string bands.

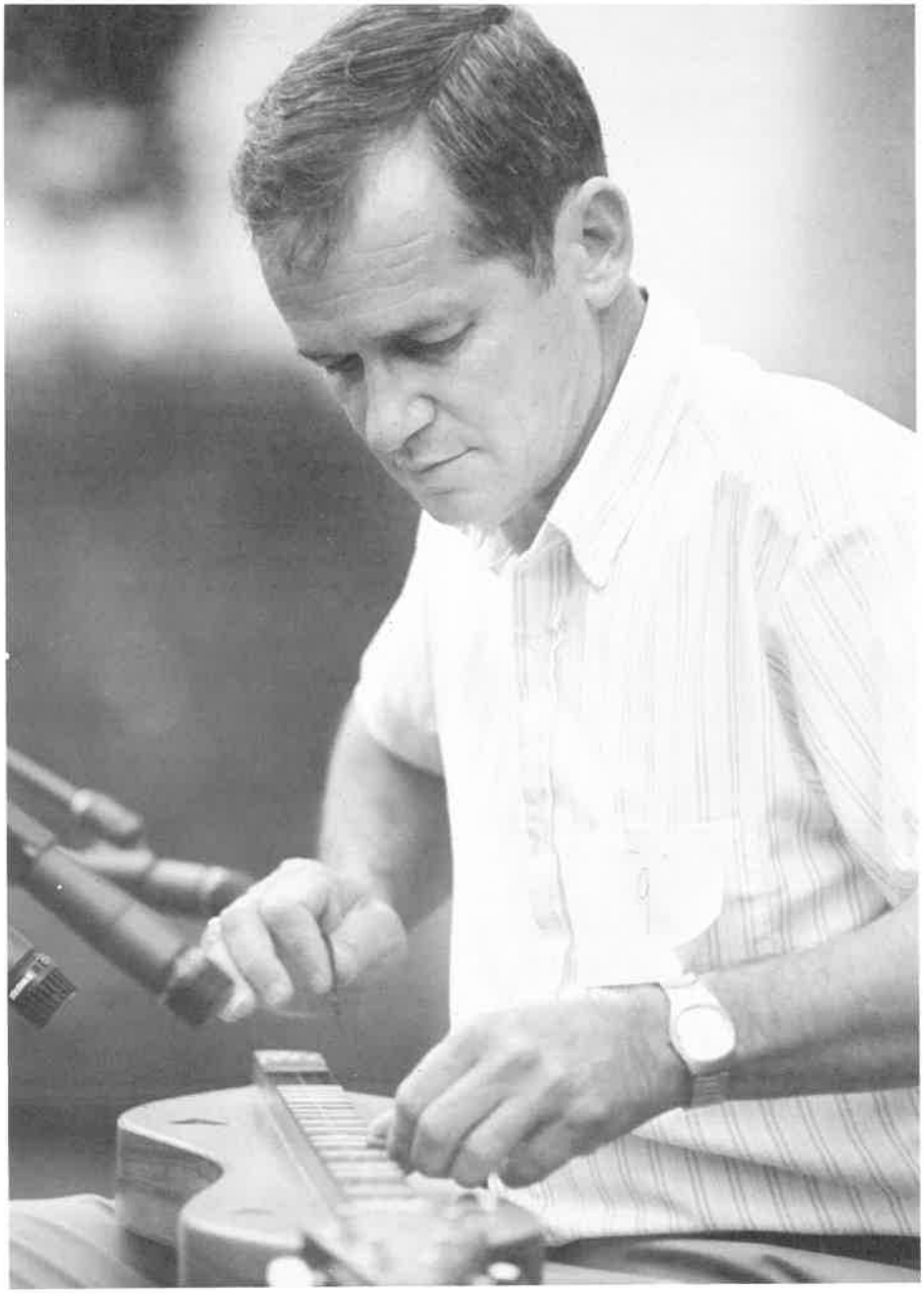
The longevity of the hammered dulcimer is sometimes seen in individual surviving instruments. Russell Fluharty of Marion County, widely known as "The Dulcimer Man," has spent his life playing and promoting the instrument. His own treasured antique hammered dulcimer was given to him by Uncle Ezry Fluharty. The dulcimer was full of wasp nests and in need of repair when he got it. Fluharty says, "I took the wasps' nests out of it and found a piece of what Mother said was foolscap paper, kind of a brown ruled paper. And on this paper it says, 'Repaired by William Varner in 1878.'" Fluharty also discovered that his instrument was played at a wedding in January 1842.

The two different dulcimers have remained primarily folk instruments. Their sound is rooted in the Anglo-American traditions of religious songs and hymns, instrumental dance tunes and ballads. Modern mountain dulcimer players have expanded the traditional repertory and added to the instrument's musical capabilities.

The mountain dulcimer in particular is an accessible instrument, simple to play and easy to build. Summers County storyteller and musician Jim Costa comments, "It didn't matter what they were made out of, they all sounded good."

That fact will keep dulcimer players and dulcimer fans happy for years to come.

—Debby Sonis Jackson



The lap dulcimer is now firmly established at West Virginia festivals. Here Bernard Cyrus plays at the 1987 Vandalia Gathering. Photo by Michael Keller.

Wesleyan College played an instrument made by a Mr. Grenolds. The 92-year-old Grenolds was present that day, and a West Virginia Collection tape preserves the concert and the introduction of Grenolds to the rest of the audience.

This is by no means a full survey of dulcimer activity before the resurgence of the 1960's. Thorough research on the dulcimer's status during this period, research on which detailed conclusions could be based, is a very large task which remains to be done. One general conclusion, though, seems plain even at this stage: Dulcimer making and playing have been lively, unbroken traditions in West Virginia for at least a century.

So why was the instrument nearly unknown before 1960, both to scholars and to average West Virginians? There are several possible reasons: Folklorists may have been prejudiced in favor of fiddlers and ballad singers, and musicians themselves may have preferred commercial instruments over homelier ones produced within the family or the community. The quiet dulcimer also was less suitable for playing in large groups or noisy settings. But whatever the reason for its former obscurity, it is clear that the revivalists of the 1960's and after did not reintroduce the instrument into a state which had lost it. Noticed or not, the dulcimer has been here all the time.

Breaking New Ground

A Century of Agricultural Experimentation

By Bill Case

For 100 years, the scientists of the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at West Virginia University have researched topics ranging from microscopic soil fungi to the design of chicken houses. The station was established by the university's governing board in 1888, when the board accepted $15,000 offered by the federal government to each state and territory willing to set up an experiment station.

West Virginia University gave the station its old armory building, which was expanded at a cost of $4,375. For this sum, a Morgantown contractor provided a three-story brick addition at the front of the armory, 48 feet wide and 30 feet deep. The building was "as simple as possible, with no ornamentation," according to John A. Myers, the first director of the station. A later administration added ironwork frills along the roof and wooden porches. But Maurice Brooks, who came with his father to the station in 1903, today recalls that the building remained "very unattractive."

The scientists hired by Director Myers went to work quickly, turning out a dozen bulletins before the end of 1890. Lacking an experimental farm of their own, they started experiments in farmers' fields across the state. They traveled extensively to record information about animal and plant life.

Experiment Station researchers have collected field data in every corner of West Virginia. In the early years of the station, this often necessitated long journeys through remote areas by train, on horseback, and on foot. Much of what is known about the natural resources, plants and animals of our state has resulted from these studies.

The first entomologist hired by the station, Andrew D. Hopkins, was a self-taught expert on the state's insects. His reports on trips through the wildernesses of the Allegheny Highlands make fascinating reading today. Unlike most 20th century scientists, Professor Hopkins took pains to describe not only the particular subjects of his investigation, but also the general context of his work — the things he encountered on the way to and from his research, the opinions of traveling companions, and his own emotions upon making a discovery.

Hopkins went from Morgantown to a place called Winchester in Randolph County in August 1891, to search for the cause of a decline in the black spruce timber of the region. On the way, he noted from a train window, dozens of sawmills were at work converting thousands of dead spruce trees into lumber. Going to the mountaintop by stagecoach, he recorded that the driver told him where the first sawmill in the region had been located, brought in by Civil War soldiers building a winter camp. The road led to the battlefield atop Cheat Mountain.

"Here an extended view was had of the Cheat mountains extending on all sides with the blue Alleghenies beyond," Hopkins wrote. "Thousands upon thousands of acres of what must have been a magnificent black-green forest of living spruce, was now viewed as an immense waste of dead and decaying trees, presenting a desolate and dreary landscape."

Most of the scientists' work took place in the laboratories back at Morgantown, of course. But this, too, was not without adventure. B. H. Hite, a chemist, experimented with a

An agriculture student checks melons in a West Virginia University greenhouse. Photographer and date unknown; all photos courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University.

high-pressure cylinder to determine if milk could be kept fresh by sealing it under pressure in metal tubes. By subjecting the milk to higher and higher pressures, he reported in 1899, he was successful in keeping it from souring for several days. But the chemist encountered other problems. Sometimes the pressurized milk turned yellow or blue, or appeared to be oily.

Then Hite became curious as to whether or not the pressure apparatus could be used to kill typhoid germs — a disease often spread by milk, and a serious public health problem at the time. "Pure cultures of typhoid germs were obtained," he wrote, "but in the first attempt to subject an inoculated sample of milk to a pressure of ninety tons, the steel cylinder, the lead tube, the tin tube and one of the pistons went to pieces, scattering the germs all over the room. Before another cylinder could be made, a member of the Station staff contracted a violent case of typhoid and it was decided to discontinue this feature of the work."

The interests of Experiment Station scientists were broad. Anything that could affect human or animal health, plant growth, family life or West Virginia farm economics was a fit subject for study.

Many of the early bulletins exhorted farmers to try new ventures. Some of these were exotic. F. William Rane promoted "Electro-Horticulture with the Incandescent Lamp" in 1894, for example. "Why Not Grow Raspberries?" was the more mundane title of a lecture horticulturalist L. C. Corbett gave before the State Horticultural Society in Wheeling in 1896, and reprinted as a bulletin.

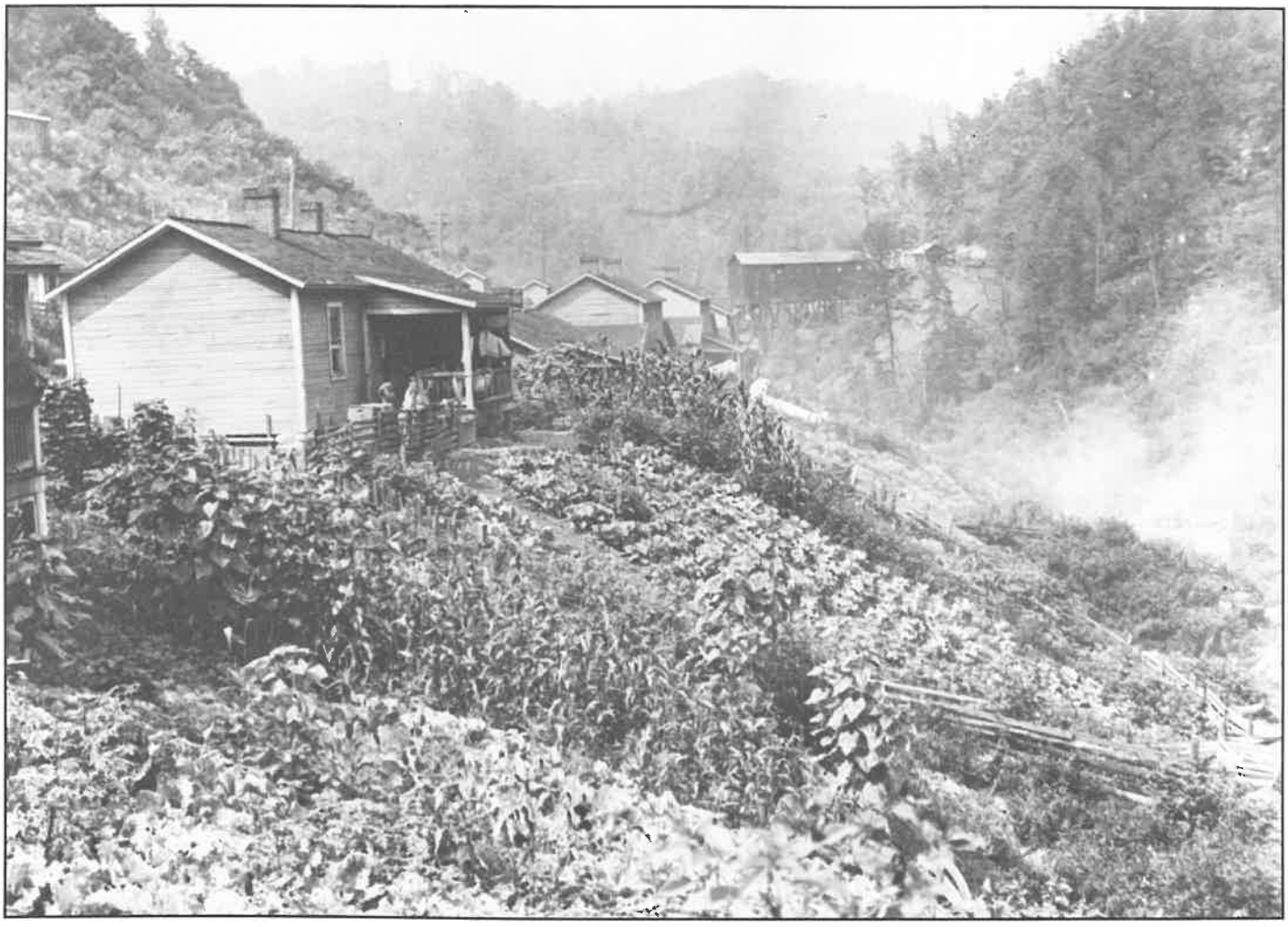
As the state and federal governments expanded their financial support, the station began acquiring land. Several Morgantown farms were purchased in the 1890's, and by 1915 the station owned a total of 687 acres in Monongalia County. A large Hardy County dairy farm was donated to the station in 1917, and in 1930 the Kearneysville Experiment Farm in Jefferson County was added for orchard studies. The addition of land permitted field experiments under more controlled conditions.

J. H. Stewart and Horace Atwood had a 180-foot laying house built for chickens on an experimental farm in 1906. They bought 600 white leghorn pullets for their first experiment in mass egg production. As chickens were for the most part a backyard sideline for Mountain State farmers, this was a large-scale operation by the standards of the times.

"During warm weather, the fowls had free range except for about three weeks in spring when it was necessary to confine them to the house so as to prevent them from scratching up some experimental plats located nearby," the poultry experimenters wrote. The leghorns responded to

Above: The Agricultural Experiment Station on the West Virginia University campus, as it appeared in the 1890's. Professor Maurice Brooks remembers the building as "very unattractive," but says the facilities were good. Photographer unknown.

Below: Agriculture was of interest to almost all West Virginians at the turn of the century, when even coal towns practiced intensive farming. Photographer unknown.



their generous treatment by providing 67,000 eggs over the course of a year.

Station researchers had plenty of opportunity to observe the insects which plagued West Virginia farmers, for the experimental farms and the scientists' own farms and gardens were not immune to pests. Entomologist Fred Brooks often wrote of the insects he encountered near his home at French Creek, describing in detail the habits of the grapevine root-borer, the grapecane gall-maker and the grapecane girdler. He also authored a bulletin on "Snout Beetles That Injure Nuts" and one entitled "Three Snout Beetles That Attack Apples."

The station bulletins had a wide readership among the state's farmers. The researchers in turn depended on reports sent by mail from farmers in outlying districts — often accompanied by a packet of shriveled leaves or dead insects — to keep up with developments in the field.

Concern for the public health was the impetus for a 1926 study by F. D. Cornell, Jr., a member of the faculty in farm economics. Gathering data for "Farm Water Supply and Sewage Disposal in West Virginia" required Cornell to travel through Marshall, Summers and Pleasants counties, interviewing farmers and photographing their privies and springhouses. The professor was appalled by what he found, and his report included a plea for more sanitary facilities. Some farmers objected to the cost of drilled wells and well-built outhouses, so he countered with sober calculations of the average cost of a bout with typhoid fever: $550 if the patient stayed six weeks in the hospital, $395 for six weeks at home with a daily visit from the doctor. "There are other costs, especially the loss of life, which cannot be estimated in dollars and cents," he added.

Nutritionist Hazel Cameron, working in the 1930's and '40's, recruited hundreds of WVU student volunteers for her research into vitamins. Younger brothers and sisters at home likely regretted their cooperation in this experiment, as Cameron concluded that children dosed daily with cod liver oil seemed to have less severe colds over the course of the school year.

THE NATIONAL STOCKMAN AND FARMER.

PITTSBURG. BUFFALO. CHICAGO.

ONLY THE BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE GOOD FARMER AND HIS FAMILY.

Vol. XXI. Pittsburgh, Pa., Buffalo, N. Y., Chicago, Ill., July 15, 1897. No. 14.

AMONG the institutions in this country which are doing good work for agriculture is the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of West Virginia, located at Morgantown, W. Va. In another part of this paper will be found an article by Prof. T. C. Atkeson, Dean of the University, which will well repay perusal.

Experiment Station Plat.

It is our purpose, as far as practicable, to bring our readers into closer touch with institutions of this character, as has appeared from illustrations and special matter on this cover and elsewhere from time to time. The two illustrations given herewith will explain themselves.

Grounds and Buildings of the University of West Virginia.

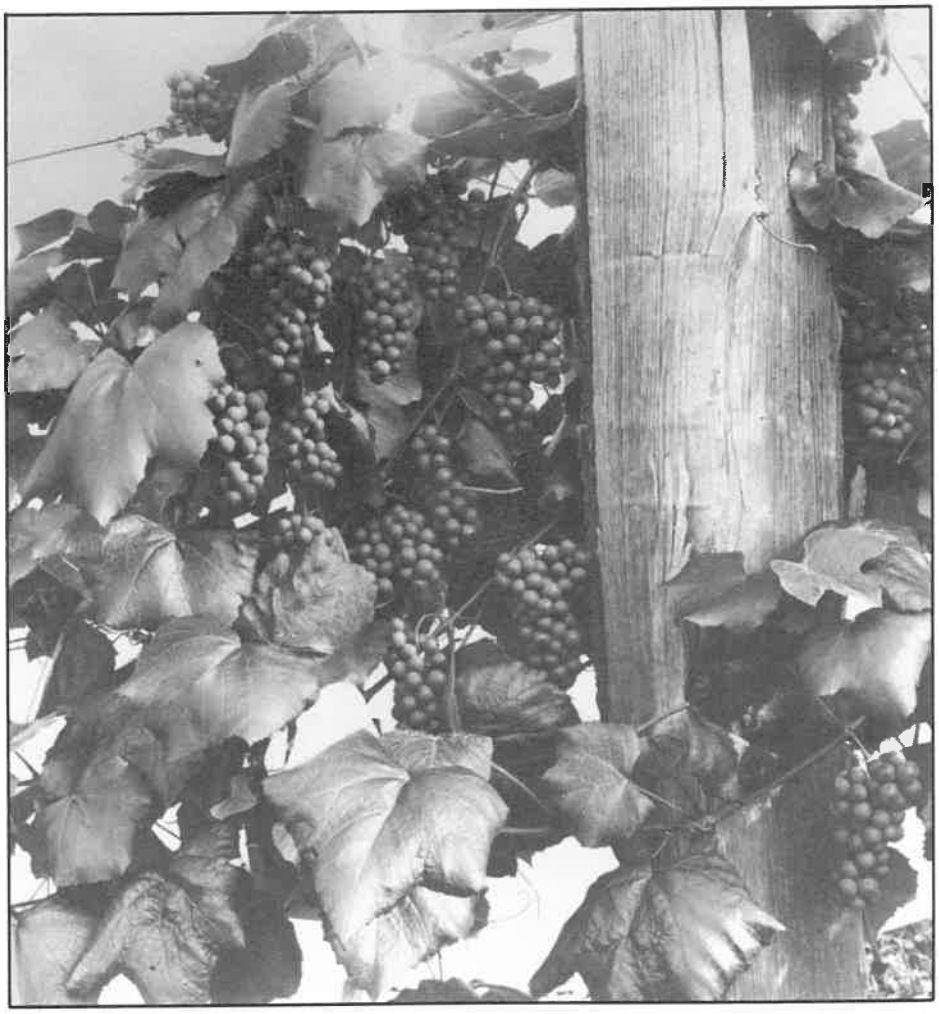
THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST VIRGINIA AND THE WEST VIRGINIA EXPERIMENT STATION.

The station was front-page news in the July 15, 1897, edition of the *National Stockman and Farmer.*

On the university farms, other scientists were involved with improving the state's livestock, testing fertilizers and seeds, and devising means to farm without eroding steep West Virginia hillsides. Some of the state's farms, agronomist G. G. Pohlman wrote in 1937, were on land far too steep and stony for agriculture to survive for long. As he predicted, many of these have reverted to forest over the past 50 years as thick woods creep back across the Mountain State.

Although forest research had been a part of the station's work since the 1880's, the forestry division wasn't officially established until W. C. Percival was hired as forester in 1936. The forestry division launched studies of forest resources and economics, wildlife, and timber use. The state allowed the station use of the northern half of Coopers Rock State Forest outside Morgantown for experimental plantings and studies, and this later became the West Virginia University Forest.

The Coopers Rock location proved fortunate for forestry researchers



The fruit of the station's work was a more productive, varied agriculture for West Virginia. These diamond grapes grew on a French Creek farm. Photographer and date unknown.

E. H. Tryon and Rudolfs Markus in the early 1950's. Facing the task of finding which forest species would grow well on strip mine soils, they visited spoil banks created by the iron-mining boom in the Coopers Rock forest in the first half of the 19th century. In the soil surrounding the 100-year-old ore pits, they found pieces of slag with charcoal imbedded in it, and from this determined the species of trees growing in the area during the mining boom. They surveyed the current growth, on and off the iron-mine sites, to find which trees had established themselves best on the disturbed soil.

The oak trees which are a major part of the forest in West Virginia and other eastern states were threatened by a puzzling disease in the 1940's and '50's. The oak wilt, like the chestnut blight that spread through the East in the first three decades of the century, had the potential of devastating an entire species. But it was stopped, largely as a result of the work of H. L. Barnett, a mycologist — fungus expert — with the station. Barnett devised a method of isolating and culturing the oak wilt fungus in the laboratory, the crucial key to the study which led to its control in the forest.

Another disease which was defeated as the result of Experiment Station work was infectious synovitus, which affected newly-hatched chicks. The illness caused many chicks to die, a potential disaster for the state poultry industry. But Norman Olson of the station was able in 1954 to identify the virus which caused the disease, and breeders were able to eliminate infected birds from their flocks.

In the past three decades, Experiment Station research has moved into new fields. Plant pathologists are at work identifying the subcellular structure of the chestnut blight fungus, in an attempt to return that magnificent tree to the state's forests. A strong program in reproductive physiology resulted in the birth in 1985 of a calf to a cow whose ovaries had earlier been removed. Researchers were able to implant an embryo from another cow after creating the conditions for pregnancy by chemical injections.

Economic researchers continue to probe the strengths and weaknesses of the natural resource economy of the state, making suggestions for future development. The gypsy moth, headed into the state from the north, is being met with a full contingent of entomologists, foresters, wildlife biologists and others who are preparing means of coping with its arrival. New forage crops for cattle and sheep are tested annually. Nutritional risks among the elderly, especially those in nursing homes and hospitals, are being analyzed with an eye toward providing a healthier diet.

The methods used today are perhaps more sophisticated and certainly the staff is larger and the facilities more spacious. But the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station is still working at the tasks set out for it a century ago: Improving the lot of the farmer; protecting the state's plants and animals; preserving soil, water, and other resources; and making life better for West Virginians.

Above Left: Youth work was one of the best means of agricultural reform. This girls' garden club pauses for a lecture on tomato growing.

Below Left: Agricultural and forestry studies were integral parts of campus life. These students prune trees in Falling Run Hollow, with Chitwood Hall behind. Photographers and dates unknown.

Maurice Brooks came to the West Virginia University Agricultural Experiment Station with his father in 1903. He went to work for the university the day after he graduated in 1923. Photo by Edward Petrosky, Jr.

Never Going to Quit

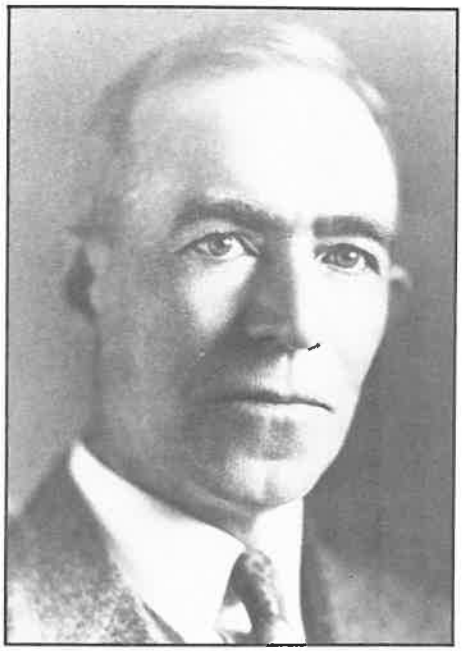
Maurice G. Brooks

By Bill Case

For the past 85 years, Maurice Brooks has been associated in one way or another with the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at West Virginia University. The relationship began when he was three years old, in 1903. "My father [Fred E. Brooks] was planning to put in a fruit orchard in Upshur County," he reports. "He had done a good bit of work on fruit tree insects on his own. He was cutting down a big walnut in order to plant trees, and a neighbor came with a telegram offering him a job as entomologist with the West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station.

"He accepted it and we almost immediately moved to Morgantown," Professor Brooks says. "He wasn't a college graduate, or even a high school graduate, but still stepped onto a college faculty because of his own work."

Fred Brooks and his brother, A. B. Brooks, who graduated from WVU in 1912, both became respected members of the faculty. Young Maurice grew up at the university. "Dad had his office in the old Experiment Station that sat in front of where Oglebay Hall is now," he remembers. "It was a shingled building with metal pipes outlining the verandas. It was a very primitive, very unattractive building, mainly built of wood, with iron railings. It was more or less in the shape of an H. The offices were in the wings, the library at the center.



"The library was really the center of the Experiment Station," he elaborates. "It was for this time a large library, with a perfectly wonderful librarian, whose life was devoted to the Experiment Station. Her name was Miss Mattie Stewart."

Miss Stewart was especially nice to the little boy who hung around his father's office. "She would save all the foreign stamps which came in for me," he recalls. "And they got a lot of mail, from all over the world. That was a place of magic, as far as I was concerned, to get all those stamps.

"I was also interested in butterfly collecting. Dad was responsible for the butterfly collections that they used for teaching, so I did quite a bit of collecting as a kid, collecting and preserving. I was constantly around the Experiment Station."

Although the station had been established only a few years before, in 1888, it already had a reputation as a center for research, Brooks says. "The scientific facilities were surprisingly good," he reports. "But you found out very soon that it wasn't equipment or facilities that made a place, it was the caliber of people you had. And the caliber was superb, by any standards.

Fred (above) and A. B. Brooks (left), Maurice's father and uncle, respectively, were distinguished members of the faculty. Photographers and dates unknown, courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University.

Mattie Stewart was a dedicated librarian, but not too busy to take notice of a little boy, Professor Brooks recalls. Here she works in the station library. Photographer unknown, early 1900's; courtesy West Virginia Collection.

"John L. Sheldon, a bacteriologist, attracted students from all over the country," he continues. "He was six feet, six inches tall, and at that time he was regarded as a phenomenon. People would stop him on the streets and ask how tall he was, and he always resented that. But he was a tremendous scientist.

"Another scientist with an international reputation was M. J. Giddings, a chemist, who was on the staff, I think, into the 1940's. Another was L. M. Peairs, who was the author of a very widely used text in entomology."

"A. D. Hopkins, whose family connections were in Wirt County, was probably the best-known," Professor Brooks says. "He studied the effect of climate on living things, and came up with a proposition called Hopkins' Law, which is still observed in some places. It stated that in spring migration, for example, an advance north of 100 miles or a climb in elevation of 100 feet, would make a day's difference in advancing spring. While it has plenty of loopholes, it still is a good basic principle to apply."

In the early days, Brooks says, farmers across the state enthusiastically promoted the cause of research. "The advance of the Agricultural Station and the College of Agriculture was very much dictated by the farmer's institutes that were sponsored by the Experiment Station," he believes. "The institutes were local meetings in schoolhouses and churches of citizens who would come to listen to speakers and specialists on agriculture or related subjects. This was the forerunner of the Agricultural Extension Service.

"Each community would have local leaders who were interested in advancement, in making better use of the land, trying out new crops, trying out new methods of grafting, bud grafting, crown grafting of fruit trees, all sorts of practical things," Brooks recalls. He takes his own home area as an example. "I grew up in French Creek, where the community was a host to these meetings constantly.

"There were a remarkable group of men in the state who were devoted to pushing forward the agricultural movement," he continues. "They wanted it to be financially profitable and scientifically meaningful. People like W. D. Zinn, who had a farm in Barbour County which was a showplace. In Mason County, a man by the name of Shep Mower was a fine horticulturalist. For some years, the area around Mason County, on the lower Great Kanawha River and Ohio River, was rivaling the Eastern Panhandle in the production of fruit.

"The institutes helped the station in every community where there was any kind of agriculture. People made friends with the specialists. When Shep Mower or W. D. Zinn would come into a meeting, everyone would applaud. They brought the latest methods, started people out to make more money on their land and get better yields on their crops. It made for a warm relationship between the university, the Experiment Station and farm communities all over this state."

Father Fred Brooks took a job with the federal government in 1912, but the family still spent winters in Morgantown. Maurice attended school

A. D. Hopkins (left) was among the outstanding early staff at the Experiment Station, according to Professor Brooks. Photographer unknown, 1894; courtesy West Virginia Collection.

Maurice Brooks (right) remains an active researcher in his 88th year. He has no intention to quit, he says. Photo by Edward Petrosky, Jr.

there, graduating from WVU with a degree in biology in 1923. "I went to work for the university on the day after I graduated, as a 4-H Club agent at Jackson's Mill. I was assistant state boy's 4-H Club agent for three years."

When his father suffered a heat stroke while doing fieldwork in Washington, in 105-degree temperatures, Maurice quit his job with the Extension Service and went back to the farm in Upshur County to help care for the family. "I retained my university connections by teaching in 4-H summer camps," he reports. "I was more or less on the staff at Jackson's Mill constantly.

"I came back to teach freshman biology classes in 1933," the professor recalls. "When the Forestry Division was organized in 1936, I transferred into it, and became part of the Experiment Station staff."

Maurice Brooks taught, researched and wrote about West Virginia's forests from that date on, and his writings have enlightened and entertained several generations of Mountaineers. He has no intention of stopping now. "I'll never quit so long as I can do research," the distinguished scholar affirms. ✱

The farmer's institutes were social as well as educational occasions. These young people at a French Creek institute set out for a hayride. Photographer and date unknown; courtesy West Virginia Collection.

Sweet Pickens

Looking Back at Maple Harvest Time

By Mary Lee Sutton

This jug of syrup comes from Richter's tree farm in Pickens.

It's late winter. The days are warmer, the nights remain cold. Conditions are right for the sap to rise in the maple trees. The trees are tapped and either hung with buckets or connected to hundreds of feet of flexible plastic tubing. The holding tanks begin to fill with the sugar water — hundreds of gallons of it — which then goes on to the evaporator where the boiling begins.

It's maple sugar time in the high mountains of West Virginia!

On the third weekend of March each year this event is celebrated in the community of Pickens. This year, the fourth Maple Syrup Festival will be held on March 19th and 20th. The little town, which calls itself a "haven in the hardwood," is located in extreme western Randolph County. It has a history written in lumber, coal, and railroading, and has had its share of economic ups and downs.

Pickens, located on the right-hand fork of the Buckhannon River, came into being in the 1890's, a child of the industrial age. The first sawmill was located in the town in 1891. By 1892, a railroad was running. (The day rail service began — July 4, 1892 — it snowed in Pickens.)

By the turn of the century, the new town was thriving. There were Presbyterian, Baptist and Catholic churches, a number of stores, a barber shop, a doctor, a newspaper, a funeral home, several hotels, and naturally a saloon. The first fraternal lodge was also chartered in the 1890's. A post office had been established at nearby Florence in 1872, but in 1891, in order to take advantage of the more reliable transport of mail that the coming rail line would provide, a post office was opened in Pickens. The post office in Florence went out of existence at the end of 1893, but the Pickens post office still functions to this day.

The early 1900's saw a dentist established in town, more fraternal lodges, more shops open for business, and a Pickens bank. During this same time, the lodges began their ladies' auxiliaries.

By the late 1930's, Pickens was still very much a lumber town, beginning to cut the second growth from the same areas where lumbering had first begun in the 1890's. Coal mining began to play a part in the economics of the region about this time. While local industry is significantly down from the first half of the 20th century, lumber and coal retain a place in the daily life of Pickens today.

It is not the booming town it once was, but Pickens still maintains a fierce pride in its self-sufficiency. That's with good cause, for the little community has been tested by fire and water, as well as economic adversity. Pickens survived the flood of 1923 and several large fires. The most memorable conflagrations were the school fire of 1936, which saw the building burn to the ground, and Main Street fires in 1903 and 1947, each of which destroyed several businesses.

Remembering both good times and hard times with pride, the people of Pickens a few years ago began looking for a vehicle to commemorate their town's history and spirit. In 1984, a committee representing the various organizations in Pickens was formed to lay the groundwork for the first Maple Syrup Festival, to be held in March of 1985. The initial festival surpassed everyone's expectations. Each succeeding year the event expanded and the public response increased, so that visitors for this special March weekend are now counted in the thousands.

Since maple syrup is the focus of attention, transportation has been organized to take festival-goers out to working sugar camps, Richter's Sugarbush and Hicks and Morgan's Sugarhouse. The tours give people the opportunity to view for themselves the boiling-down of the sugar water. They learn that the average yield is one gallon of maple syrup for every 40 to 50 gallons of sap.

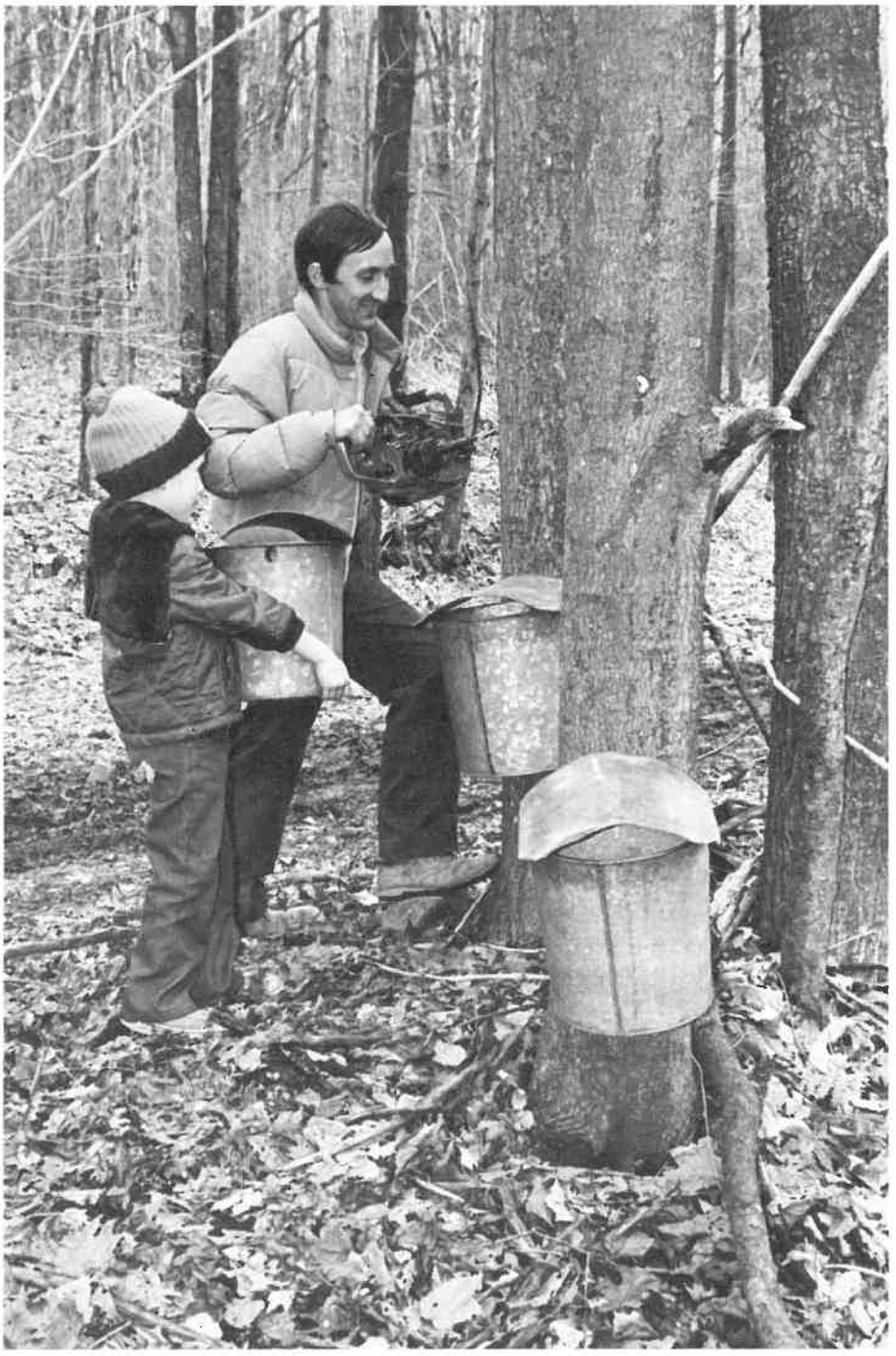
According to "Chip" Hicks, of Hicks and Morgan's Sugarhouse, each year's maple harvest actually has its beginnings many months prior to the tree tapping. He explained how sucrose, a natural sugar, is produced in leaves in summer by photosynthesis. It is stored in the tree roots as a more complex carbohy-

drate. In winter, the subfreezing temperatures cause the complex carbohydrate to break back down into sucrose and carbon dioxide. When the temperature climbs above freezing, the liquid thaws out and the pressure of the carbon dioxide forces it up the tree through the sapwood. If the temperature stays above freezing for several days, the flow tapers and finally stops, until a later freeze produces more sucrose and carbon dioxide pressure.

Ideal conditions for sugar water production are alternating cold and warmth, freezing nights and warm days. A cold wind or cold rain will inhibit the flow, but a warm spring rain will not affect the harvest. Sugar maple trees vary in sweetness, and the sugar content of sap from the same trees varies from day to day.

Maple syrup is classified by several different grades — from Fancy, which is clear or very light amber in color with extremely mild maple flavor, through Grades A, B and C, each grade being successively deeper in color and richer in flavor. Maple syrup can be boiled down further to make maple sugar. This can be molded into various shapes as maple sugar candy, or left in cake form to be shaved onto hot cereal on a cold winter morning.

The sugar water harvest each year lasts an average of six weeks, with the product becoming darker in color and stronger in flavor as the harvest draws to a close. The later stages produce a rich syrup which is favored for the flavoring of gingerbread, baked beans, and so forth.



Pickens goes all out for the Maple Syrup Festival each March. The Pickens Opera House, which serves as the town's Odd Fellows Hall, is opened and a variety of musical talent is offered there on Saturday and Sunday. A large craft sale displays handmade dolls, needlework, sewing, and items of wood, as well as baked goods. Ten percent of the price of each item sold is donated to the Pickens Improvement and Historical Society. This organization has concerned itself with the improvement and restoration of some of the older buildings in town. There is now a move under way to have certain of the buildings nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The doors of the American Legion Hall are thrown open early on Saturday morning for the pancake breakfast, which lasts almost until the ham and bean dinner begins. And the bean dinner lasts until the dance is ready to start. The food is down-home cooking at its best. The square dance in the evening is a welcome opportunity to work off the pancakes and beans. Next morning, of course, you are given the chance to indulge in another pancake breakfast!

There is a quilt show in which the women of the community display their intricate handiwork. Last year the women of Pickens and the surrounding area got together a community quilt. A general maple-leaf motif was designated, but each participant was free to create her quilt square with her own interpretation of the theme. These squares were then assembled and stitched into the fin-

Don Eskridge and son Shannon of Aurora demonstrate old and new methods of harvesting maple sap. At left Don drills a hole for tapping a tree directly into a bucket, in the traditional manner. Above he sinks a spile to connect a tree directly to a network of plastic tubing leading to central collecting tanks. Photos courtesy State Department of Agriculture.

ished quilt. The quilt was raffled at the 1987 Maple Syrup Festival. Since this was such a popular feature last year, the women have designed and sewn another quilt for 1988. The proceeds from quilt raffles go to the Pickens Improvement and Historical Society.

There is also an art and photography show at the high school gym. The art show is open to adults and school children, with ribbons awarded in both categories. The photography show is judged by the public, with each visitor casting one vote for color and one vote for black and white. Ribbons are awarded to the "people's choice" winners.

For the two days of the festival, several of the older buildings in Pickens are opened for visitors. The Opera House, a town showpiece, hosts the entertainment for the weekend. This structure was built in the 1890's. It provided live entertainment for many years, and served as a weekend movie theater until the mid-1950's. The main story is unique, housing a theater that takes many of us back to a bygone era, full of memories. The second floor of the Opera House is the meeting hall of the local chapters of the Odd Fellows and the Rebekahs, and is used year-round. The theater floor is opened only on special occasions.

The Pickens railroad depot has not been a working passenger station since November of 1958, when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad made its final passenger run between Pickens and Buckhannon. The depot has seen the beginnings of some restoration on the interior, and for the festival the waiting room is opened to the public. You can close your eyes and imagine when the sound of the whistle in the distance told you the train would soon be chugging around the final curve and into town.

Another building open for the Maple Syrup Festival is the Roberts-Cunningham Museum, named for Dr. and Mrs. James L. Cunningham. "Doc," the town physician for more than 65 years, became a legend in Pickens and the surrounding countryside. Probably his most famous patient was the leper, George Rashid. A Syrian by birth, Rashid was an employee of the Baltimore & Ohio when it was discovered that he suffered the dread disease. The B&O chose a trackside site on the edge of Pickens as the place for him to live out his days. It was considered remote enough not to endanger anyone in town, but the decision was very unpopular as far as the people of Pickens were concerned.

Rashid arrived in August 1906 and died a few months later. Doc Cunningham provided him with medication to ease the ravages of leprosy, while trying to assure the frightened townspeople that no harm would come to them. When the leper died, Doc was one of a handful of men who helped to bury the body. The grave by the tracks is now marked with a stone and a black iron fence.

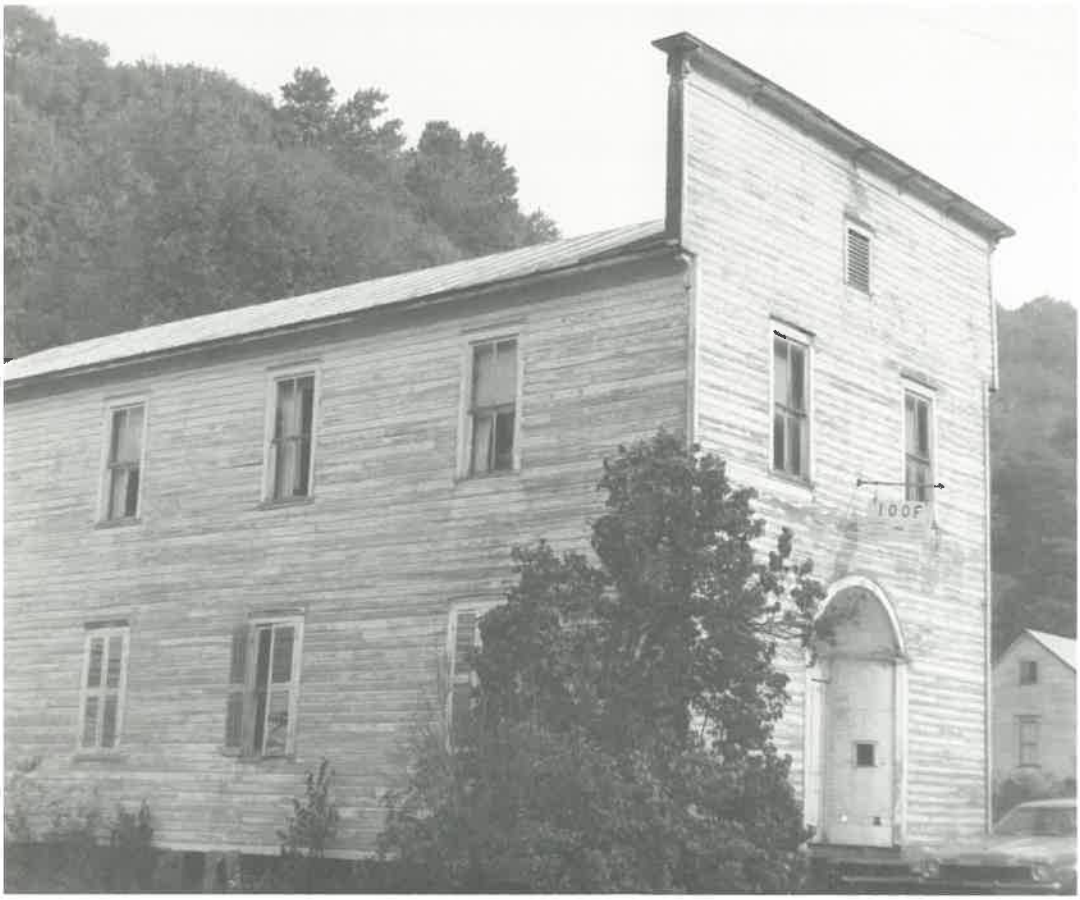
Doc Cunningham had married Mary Roberts in 1894, in the first wedding in the new Presbyterian Church. He died in March 1965, at the grand old age of 101. The Roberts-Cunningham Museum dis-

For More Pickens History

Haven in the Hardwood: A History of Pickens, West Virginia is an historical account of the Randolph County town. It was compiled and written by Drs. Arnold and Rosemary Smith Nelson, and Ozella Smith.

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

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



The Opera House and Odd Fellows Hall has long been a Pickens institution. After a recent face-lift, the building plays a central role in the Maple Syrup Festival. Photos by Mary Lee Sutton.

plays many of their personal and family possessions, much of Doc's medical equipment, and personal and business items of other early inhabitants of Pickens.

There is a wandering Dixieland band to entertain the visitors during the festival weekend, as well as a parade with the Pickens High School band. On Sunday, the Mountain State Street Machine Association has hot rods on display at the post office.

Of course, maple sugar is the star of the show. After you have toured a sugar camp to see syrup making, you can come back into town and indulge yourself in maple syrup on your pancakes at the American Legion and then walk over to the craft sale or the grocery store and purchase a jug to take home for your own breakfast table. And there is plenty of maple sugar candy available at the craft and bake sale.

This year's Maple Syrup Festival promises another sweet time in Pickens. The weekend is a tribute to the heritage of a tough little town and it helps us remember when life was slower and less complicated. With all that syrup and candy and great cooking, you may take home a few extra pounds as souvenirs but you are sure to leave rejuvenated and lighter in spirit.

Pickens is a bit tricky to get to, but worth the effort. It is located approximately midway between West Virginia 20 and U.S. 219/250. From West Virginia 20, turn east at the French Creek Game Farm, and continue through Alexander and Czar. At Helvetia, turn right onto the Pickens Road. From U.S. 219/250, turn west at Mill Creek onto the Adolph-Helvetia Road. Continue to Helvetia and turn left onto the Pickens Road. It is also possible to reach Pickens over an unpaved road west from U.S. 219 at Elkwater, or north from West Virginia 15 at Monterville. The Holly River Road — also unpaved — can be taken east from West Virginia 20 at Hacker Valley.

Overnight accommodations are available at Grandpa John's Country Kitchen and Inn, located on the Pickens Road between Pickens and Helvetia. Make reservations by calling (304) 924-6624.

No Bull, Folks

The Winning Liars from Vandalia 1987

The liars came to Charleston from all over West Virginia last Memorial Day Weekend, gathering at the Cultural Center for the annual State Liars' Contest. The popular yarn-spinning event has been part of the Vandalia Gathering folklife festival since 1983.

The big news for 1987 was a change in location, with the fifth annual contest moving from the State Capitol grounds into the nearby Cultural Center Theater. The move allowed greater comfort for the audience for the Sunday contest and for Saturday's warmup storytelling sessions. Hundreds of spectators viewed the two events, with an enthusiastic full house on hand for the contest itself.

The liars took the stage at 2:00 p.m., bringing together the best of Mountain State humor from places as divergent as Terra Alta and Princeton. When the smoke cleared, the 1986 grand champ, South Charleston policeman Paul Lepp, once again reigned supreme. Lepp's New River bear-fishing story was given the highest score by the judges — professional storytellers George Daugherty of Charleston, Bonnie Collins of West Union, and Marc Harshman of Marshall County — in a decision applauded by the crowd. Second place went to Harvey Sampson of Calhoun County and third to Tom Drummond of Huntington. Phillip Angel of Charleston claimed the special youth prize.

It's a good bet that last year's winners will be back to defend their titles this spring. You may join them — or challenge them yourself — at the Cultural Center on Sunday, May 29. Contact GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan to pre-register for the contest.

Paul Lepp. There stands a bridge in Fayette County, West Virginia, which is the longest single-span arch in the whole world. It's the second highest bridge in the country, and it's a spectacular sight. It's called the New River Gorge Bridge, and if you've never been to see it, you owe yourself a trip. If you do go, there's only one thing you need to know, and that is: Don't stop in the middle of that bridge for any reason. I'm an experienced man, and I'd like to tell you why.

You see, I woke up one morning, it was the second Saturday in May, and it was such a gorgeous day I decided that I was obligated to drive down to the Kanawha River and catch some carp. I kissed my wife good-bye, and I loaded my gear into the great golden carp cruiser, which I call the GC for short, and drove down to the local South Charleston 7-Eleven. I only had $5 so I bought the cheapest six-pack I could find, a little can of Vienna sausages for me and a great big can of Green Giant corn for the carp. I still had a dollar left over, so I bought one of those new scratch-off lottery tickets.

I went back out to the car. I scraped that ticket, and folks, it was my lucky day — that ticket was worth $1,000! Well, I knew right off there was only two things I could do. One of 'em was to take that ticket home to my wife and never see a penny of that money again. The other was to cash that ticket, spend all I wanted to and tell her I won whatever was left over.

I cashed that ticket quicker than a Confederate dollar at Appomattox. I bought a full tank of gas for the GC and I lit out to see "Almost Heaven" with 980 crisp, new dollar bills in my pocket. It was a respectable wad.

I was smiling like a carp in a sewer hole in a rainstorm until I hit that New River bridge. I'd just started across when I heard this ominous sound that went, "Thump, thump. Thump, thump. Thump, thump." I had a flat tire. I eased on the brakes and I coasted to a stop dead in the middle of that 1700-foot bridge, right there 876 feet above the old New River.

A flat's a flat, so I got out and I sweated in that hot sun. And, you know, one of these days I'm gonna buy a tire iron to go with the GC, because by the time I got those lug nuts off with a pair of channel locks, I was hot, tired and mad. I guess I was a little too mad, 'cause I reached down and I grabbed that flat tire and I flung it in the trunk. I reached in with both hands and grabbed that spare tire, and I turned around and I slammed it down onto the pavement.

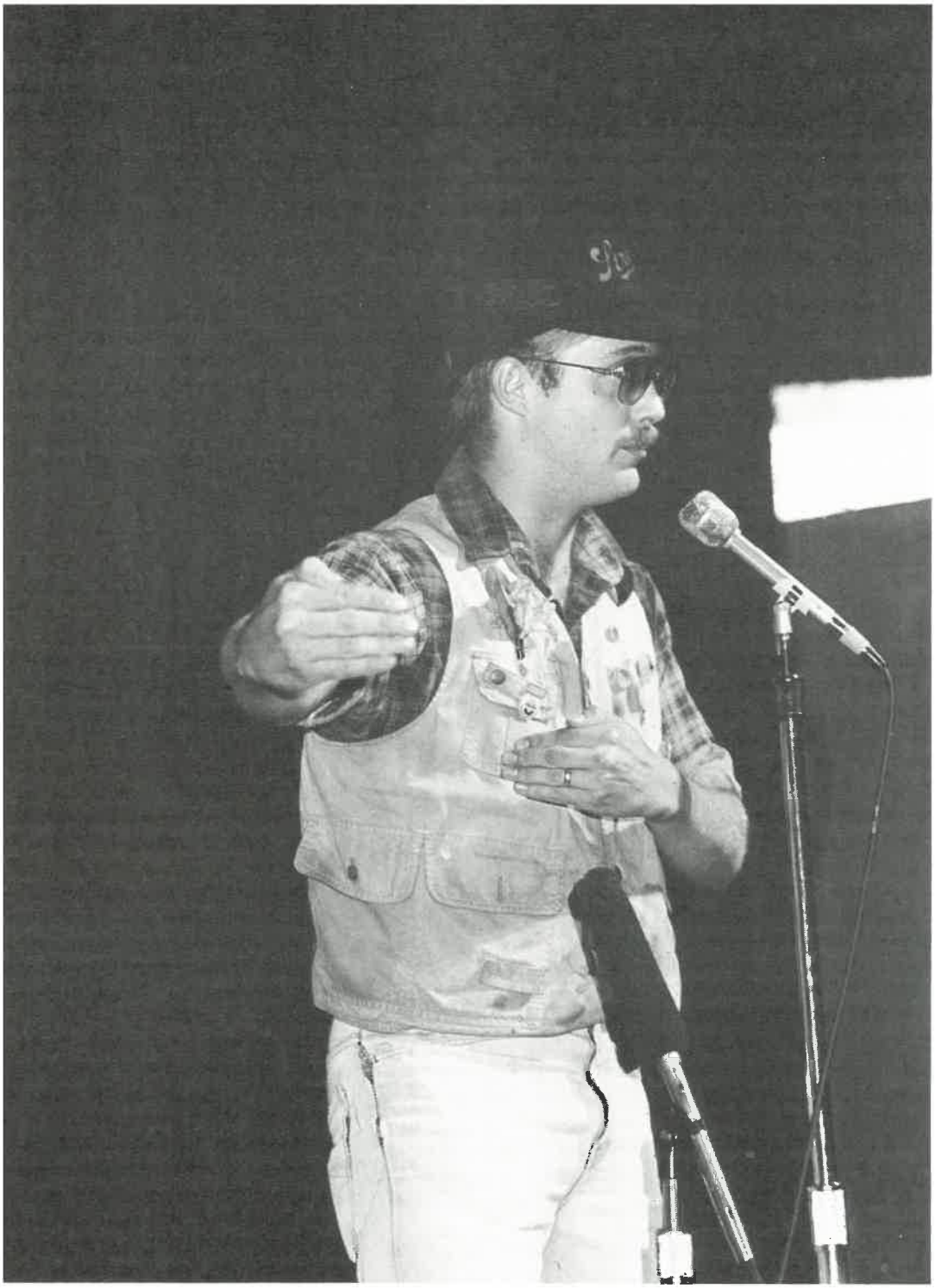
Well, that tire bounced.

It bounced about 20 feet up into the air, and it came down two feet away from the edge of the bridge — which would have been okay, but it was the *wrong* two feet. It was the outside edge of the bridge.

I stood at the edge of that bridge and I watched that tire fall 876 feet down to the New River, where it bounced once or twice and landed standing upright in three feet of water. I looked 850 feet to my right to the end of that bridge, and a half a mile down that gorge. And then I looked 850 feet to my left to the end of that bridge, and a half a mile down the gorge. I did some quick calculating. I decided it'd take me anywhere from nine hours to two days to hike down there and get that tire and bring it back up — and that was providing I didn't break any bones.

And then I thought of the Monster Stick.

Now, that's my nine-foot surfcasting rod. It's got a reel full of six miles of brand new 50-pound Stren carp cord. I could tie a hook to the end of that line, lower it away, snag that tire, reel it up to where I stood, without ever taking a step. Suddenly, I began to feel good. I believe that's



Paul Lepp measures off a big one. The South Charleston policeman is a two-time state champion liar. Photo by Michael Keller.

about the same kind of good feeling that old John Brown had right before he put his Harpers Ferry plan into action.

Well, I tied that hook on, and I lowered away and everything went fine for about 850 feet. And then the biggest red bird I ever saw swooped down, mistook that hook for a spider rappelling off the bridge, snapped it up, and flew into a nearby rhododendron tangle.

I thought about my mother and her bird feeder and I gently tried to coax that bird out of that bush, but it wouldn't budge. And then I thought about my state income tax return. You know that little box, the Nongame Wildlife Fund? Well, I had checked that box, and I thought to myself, "Paul, this is the bird that you paid for. You're gonna have to do what you have to do."

I took the slack up out of that line, and I hauled back on the Monster Stick. That bush erupted into a mushroom cloud of crimson feathers and purple blossoms floating gently down to the river. Out popped my hook, with that bird and a couple of blossoms attached, on a perfect trajectory, about a foot above the water, heading right straight for my tire. This was good.

And then the water exploded, and a four-foot trout jumped up out of the river and mistook that blob for his Fly-of-the-Month subscription, and he paid cash on delivery. He snapped up that blob, splashed back down into the water, swam 16 feet through the river, hit his head on a rock, somersaulted out of the water right through the middle of my tire, and landed up on the bank. And he just laid there, flopping.

I stood 876 feet above him, looking down, and I saw a rustling in the bushes, and the biggest black bear I ever saw stepped out. He went directly to my fish, nosed it over once or twice, and he swallowed it. I began to feel *good* again. I began to feel good again because I knew that there was nothing, not in the woods, not in that river, and not in the air, that was going to try and eat that bear. I started reeling.

I reeled that bear's head right through my tire 'til it settled down on his shoulders, and then I started reeling up. The Monster Stick was bringing him up just fine. I had just barely broke a sweat when, suddenly, I heard a voice.

Now, this was no ordinary voice. This was the kind of voice that would wake you up in the middle of the night and tell you if you didn't raise $8 million, you were going *home.*

The voice said, "Son, what do you think you're doing?"

I said, "Well, I'm, I'm, I'm just trying to get my tire back."

The voice said, "It looks to me like you're fishing."

"No sir," I said.

Well, the man that belonged to the voice stepped around from behind me and looked over the side of that bridge, and I believe it's fair to say he was a mite surprised at what he saw coming up. I was a bit surprised, too, because that man was a ranger. There was nothing I could do but keep right on reeling, so I did. All the fight had gone out of that bear at about 500 feet, so when I brought him up over

the side of the bridge he just laid there. Not knowing what else to do, I reached for my tire.

"Freeze," said the ranger.

I froze.

Well, now, he looked at me like I was crazy, and he looked at that bear, and he looked back at me, and he reached into his back pocket and he got out this little book and reached in his front pocket and he got out this little pencil, and he commenced to writing. He wrote for a long time. All I could see was pages flipping. He'd stop and lick that pencil every now and then.

He wrote for a long time, and then he stopped.

"Son," he said, "I don't know how you done this. I don't know why you done this. I don't want to know. But I do know what you done, and you're in more trouble than the West Virginia State Legislature right now."

He said, "Let's see if we understand one another." He said, "You see that bear right there? That's a black bear. That's the state animal of the great state of West Virginia, which you've taken, illegally, out of season, without a permit. That's a $500 fine."

He said, "That fish hanging out of that bear's mouth, that's a brook trout. That happens to be the state fish of the great state of West Virginia, which you've taken from a no-fishing zone by unlawfully obtained bait. That's a $100 fine."

He said, "That bait that you unlawfully obtained is a cardinal, which is the state bird of the great state of West Virginia. That's a $100 fine." And he said, "Those flowers hanging out of that cardinal's mouth, they appear to be rhododendron, which is the state flower of the great state of West Virginia, and that's another $100 fine."

He said, "To top it all off — and I hate litter most of all — that tire around that bear's neck constitutes litter, which you caused to be tossed into a state scenic river. That's a $150 fine." He said, "Those fines, in aggregate, shall total $950, payable in cash, right now, immediately, on the spot, or you shall be lawfully confined until such time as payment is made."

He stopped for a breath. He looked at my holey blue jeans and my army boots, and he looked over at the rusty old GC, tottering on three wheels, and he said, "Son, you look like the type that will opt to be lawfully confined until such time as payment is made."

I told you he was already looking at me like I was crazy, and when I broke into an ear-to-ear grin, that ranger reached for his gun. But there was no need, because I just dug down into my pocket and I pulled out my lottery wad. I counted out 950 of those 980 crisp, new one-dollar bills and I handed 'em to the ranger. There was nothing he could do but let me go. He was even so kind as to take me to a service station that was owned by his brother-in-law, where they fixed my flat tire for the amazing low price of $28.

As I was in the GC, heading home for SC, I thought back on my day, and I decided if every fishing trip was so expensive, I certainly wouldn't be able to afford to go very often.

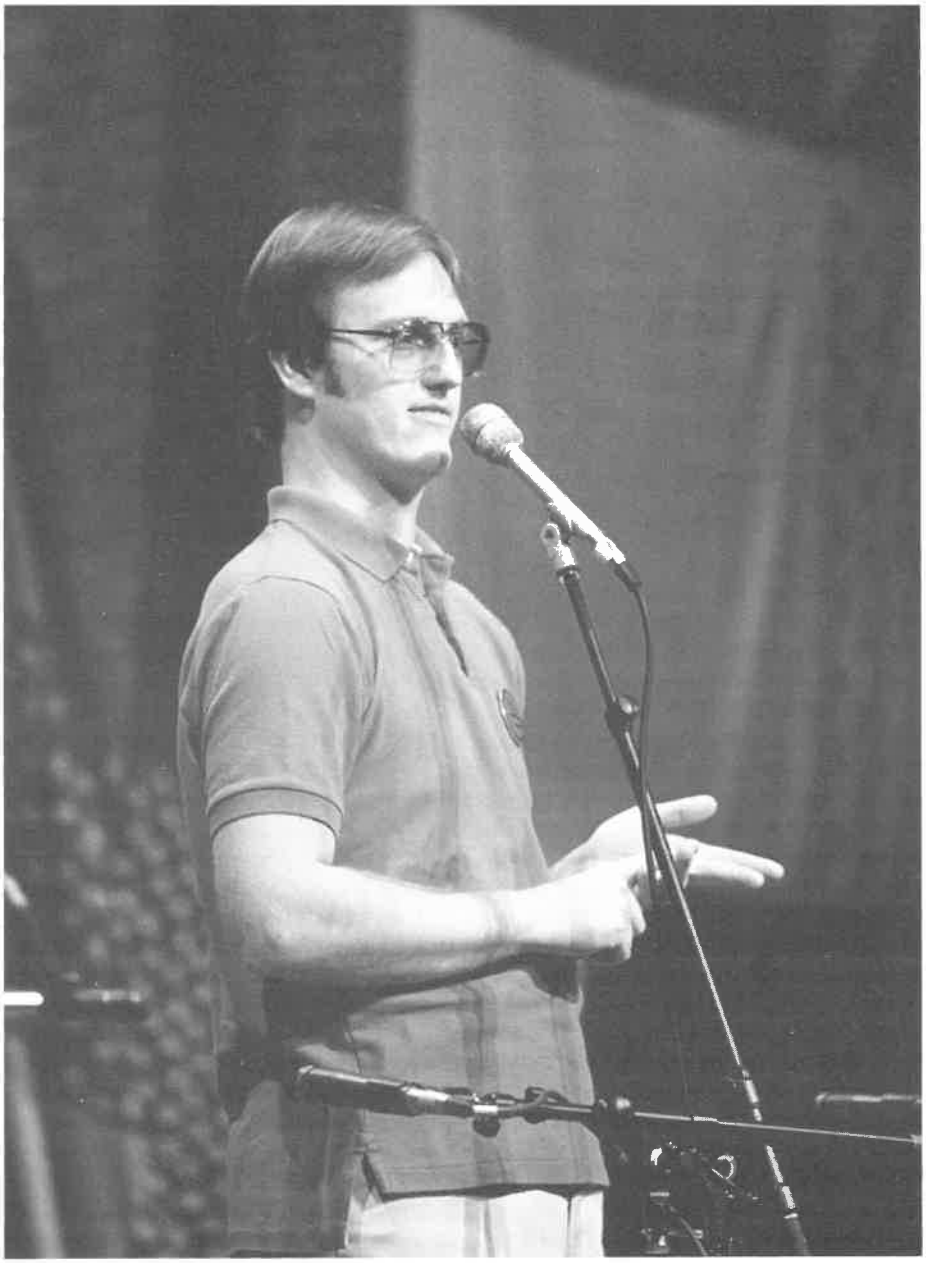
And then I thought about my wife. Now, I've told you people this story,

Collins Conquers Kentucky

Bonnie Collins has helped judge the Vandalia Liars' Contest for the last few years, making her ineligible to compete for the coveted "Biggest Liar" first-place award. This has not dulled the Doddridge County storyteller's competitive edge, however.

She proved that by exporting the best of West Virginia humor across state lines last year, sweeping the top awards in July's Festival of Appalachian Humor in Berea, Kentucky. Collins took first place in the Humorous Story category and another first prize for Original Song.

The first Festival of Appalachian Humor, sponsored by Berea College in 1983, evolved into the currently popular book, *Laughter in Appalachia* (August House Publishers, Little Rock; $8.95). Organizers Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler hope eventually to distill another book from the 1987 festival.



Tom Drummond of Huntington won third prize for a tale of rural misadventure. Photo by Michael Keller.

and I'm sure you believe me, because I'm a reliable man. My wife, on the other hand, is the suspicious sort. If I'd a-gone home that night and told her this story, I can just about bet she wouldn't have believed it. It was against my grain, but I decided to lie to her.

When I walked in the door and she said, "Hi. How did it go?" all I said was, "Fine. And, oh, by the way," I said, and I reached in my pocket and pulled out those last two crisp, new one-dollar bills. "Look what I won for you today in the lottery."

Harvey Sampson. Now, this is a true story.

This old gentleman that once lived in the neighborhood that I live in now was a minister. And he believed in what he read in the Testament, where it says, "Ask, and ye shall receive." And he preached that.

Well, he did that earnestly, but there was one of his neighbors that was all the time hunting for something to get into. He carried a stick with a fork cut on it, and he'd go around them homes and look down in the low chimneys. They just had these chimneys made out of flag rock. He'd climb up there and look down to see if there was a pot hanging on that rod there where they cooked. If they had a pot of meat or beans, whatever it was, and he got one located in any of the neighbors' homes, he'd hook it out and he'd take it home with him.

Well, he was looking down this minister's chimney, from the top, looking for a pot, and he heard the old gentleman praying. He said, "Lord, you know I need some breadstuff and a little lard, but I'm needing a milk cow worse than anything else." He said, "Send me a milk cow."

And the man who was a-listening down that hole said, "What kind of a cow do you want?"

He said, "Lord, I want one with a bag as big as a half a bushel!"

Tom Drummond. This tale begins at the end of a cow named Lucy. Now, Lucy was owned by one Farmer Jess. I'm not sure how he accomplished it, but every evening about milking time Farmer Jess would go out to the barn and he'd ask Lucy, "Lucy, do you have any milk?" If she had any milk, she would just swing her tail up and down to the affirmative. And if she had no milk, she would swing her tail sideways to the negative.

So, one evening Farmer Jess goes out about milking time and and he asks Lucy, "Lucy, do you have any milk?" Instead of a swing up and down to the affirmative, or a swat to the negative, Lucy jerks her tail straight up. Farmer Jess, now, he had never seen the like in all his years of milking Lucy. But he thought maybe she was pointing at something, and, sure enough, Lucy was pointing out the barn door to the chicken coop, to reveal that all the chickens had been stolen.

Farmer Jess was quite upset about it, but he was none the bit surprised. Because, you see, the entire county had been plagued by a chicken rustler for the last 18 months, give or take a year or two. No one had a sneaking, or for that matter, an unsneaking suspicion as to who it was, but I'm gonna let you all in on something early on here: It seems that a fellow named Isaac, up on Two-and-a-half Lick, is the one that was involved in this thievery. And Isaac was the best snitcher of any snatcher you've ever seen. Why, he swiped chickens so good that all the foxes left the county. He was so sly at snitching chickens that he even fooled the eggs underneath, and they'd end up hatching anyway.

Well, of course, all the town folk, just like Farmer Jess, were up in arms about this. They wanted to tar and

feather someone and they were getting on the sheriff real bad. It being election time and all, the sheriff needed to get some action going on this.

So, it just so happens that one night the sheriff was out up around Two-and-a-half Lick investigating. Ol' Issac up there had stolen and had eaten so many chickens in his life that he cackled in his sleep. The sheriff, in his desperate need to get some kind of suspect, rushes in, apprehends Isaac, and hauls him off to the county jail. Well now, that's all fine and good, but in order for the sheriff to prosecute, he either needed evidence or he needed a witness, folks.

Word got out right quick and, of course, Farmer Jess heard about it. Farmer Jess headed right down to the jail, and he told the sheriff that he had a witness in Lucy. Cow or no cow, they figured if they would put Lucy on the stand, they could settle the issue right then and there. And, folks, it was as legal as any law that has ever been loopholed, because the sheriff immediately issued to Farmer Jess a writ of habeas cowpus.

They went out and they got Lucy, and they marched her straight down Main Street. All the town folk are whooping and a-hollering, "Go Lucy, go!" and all that. They paraded her right into that courtroom and set her down a-facing tail forward to the jury. Lucy raised up her right hind hoof, and the bailiff come up and says, "Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" Lucy swatted her tail up, cracked the bailiff across the head, and the place was in an uproar. The judge slams his gavel down and says, "Order! Order in the court!" He thought he hit his pad, but he hit the end of Lucy's tail, and that's when she started to mooing.

Well, folks, city slicker as he was, the prosecuting attorney comes up and he grabs hold of Lucy's tail in the hopes to calm things down. The defense attorney jumps up and says, "Objection, objection your honor. Prosecution is leading the witness." And the judge jumped up and said, "Objection denied, 'cause you can't lead from the hind end."

By now, Lucy was a-mooing real bad. Farmer Jess figures she might need a little bit of relief from her udderance, so he grabs his bucket and runs up and takes the witness stool and sits down. The bailiff comes up and says, "Do you promise to milk the cow, the whole milk cow, and nothing but the whole milk of the whole milk cow?" Farmer Jess said, "Yes," in the middle of a squeeze.

Isaac's attorney, he figured the only way that he could defend Isaac was if'n he could get a messtrial. And folks, let me tell you, when Isaac's attorney approached the bench to ask the judge, that is exactly what he got. 'Cause he stepped in what would have been a darn good cow chip, if it had been left to dry, and he slid across the floor in his wingtipped shoes, past the jury box and halfway up the hall.

The prosecuting attorney figured, "Well, now, this is the best time to ask the big question." So he gets up, looks Lucy straight in the fly, and he said, "Lucy, did you see that man over there a-stealing chickens?" Lucy's tail started going up and

Junior winner Phillip Angel spins his tale of a speedy bicyclist, while the champ looks on approvingly. Photo by Greg Clark.

down to the affirmative like a pump handle going crazy. The jury foreman jumps up and says, "We find the defendant guilty as charged," and the judge jumped up and screamed, "If you're caught with a stolen bird in the hand, it's worth two years in the pen."

And then Ol' Isaac, he jumps up and tries to fly the coop. But the bailiff yelled, "Nab that chicken chicken napper!" The town folk grabbed him and took him out to tar and feather him, but he had stolen all the feathers. So they just tarred him, extra clean.

And folks, let me tell you something. Today you're gonna hear a lotta lies, right here, but you have to agree that there is no bull, at all, in this story.

Phillip Angel. Some of you might know that skateboarding has become a popular sport nowadays. I like to skateboard and so does one of my friends. One day we were out skateboarding and he fell off and broke his leg. After a week, I wanted to visit him. We arranged that his dad would come and pick me up and drive me to their house.

Storyteller Jim Costa of Summers County was among the 1987 contestants. Photo by Michael Keller.

Between our house and their house there's this long two- or three-mile stretch. No hills, just a long straightaway. And my friend's dad has a 944 Porsche, bright red Porsche, awesome car. We were going down there, just got on the straight stretch, when we saw this biker. He was wearing the skin-tight black bike shorts, a racing shirt and a flipped-up cap, and he had a pair of suspenders on.

We were going along and my friend's dad says, "I'm just gonna whiz by him." He had it in first gear, and he took up the speed, about 30 miles an hour, just zipped by him. Looks back in the rearview mirror and that biker's way back there, but he slowly starts catching up. He goes right past us.

So, my friend's dad, he puts it in second gear, steps on it a little more, raises it up to 50 miles an hour, just whizzes by him — I mean straight whiz. Looks back, can barely see him. But that biker just zips back, right past us.

My friend's dad, he's sort of amazed. So he puts it in third gear, steps on the pedal, gets it, raises the speed to about 75 miles an hour, zzzzzzz, right past him. You could barely see him. But, that biker starts moving up on us, he sails right by us again. He's in front of us now.

My friend's dad puts it up in fourth gear, raises it up to 100 miles an hour, passes him. Look back in the rearview mirror, you can just see a black dot. Then that black dot starts coming forward and goes right past us.

My friend's dad has had enough. So, he puts it in fifth gear, raises it up to 135 miles an hour, zzzzz, right past him. We looked back in the rearview mirror, couldn't see him. And then you see this little black dot slowly gaining on us, goes right past us. And now this biker starts riding circles around us, when we're going 135 miles an hour!

He slows the car to a stop, we get out, and my friend's dad asks him, "Man, you should be competing on the USA Olympic bicycling team if you can go that fast. What's going on?"

And the biker, he's really tired. He's got a red face and his tongue's dragging to the ground. "Puff, puff," he goes, "Mister, I had my suspenders stuck to your car!"

Kennedy in Charleston

By Harold McBrayer

On a sunny day in May 1960 Senator John Kennedy came into my beauty salon in the Kanawha City neighborhood of Charleston. The memory of his surprise visit is as fresh in my mind as if it happened this afternoon.

Kennedy entered quietly, hands clasped, uncertain whether to face a bevy of 20 or more females. He was not universally known in those days and the ladies failed to recognize him at first. Absorbed in magazines or chatting with one another, they frowned at the audacity of a male intruding upon their domain. Beauty salons were not unisex establishments in 1960.

Receptionist Sarah Lowe recognized the Massachusetts senator, however. Scarcely believing her eyes, she took his hand and welcomed him. He smiled and asked to see me.

Flush-cheeked, Miss Lowe burst into the area where I was engaged with a client. "Wo-would you like to see Senator Kennedy?"

"I certainly would," I answered, wondering at her question. "You haven't forgotten that we plan to see him at the Civic Center tonight?"

"No, no, not that! He is right here in person, in our salon!"

I wasn't sure I had heard correctly. "Do you mean right now, this moment?"

"Yes, yes," was her answer. "The senator is out front waiting for you!"

My first glimpse of Kennedy, as he stood under the arch separating the reception room from the technical area, convinced me that he was not comfortable among so many strange women. Seeing another man, he broke into a broad smile. We shook hands and I spoke up. "Senator Kennedy, let me introduce you to the ladies."

My clients turned ecstatic at the famous name. The atmosphere loosened and Kennedy was mobbed. Clients and technicians forgot all else. The telephone rang and none heeded. Women just entering the salon crowded in to shake his hand.

When the furor subsided somewhat, our guest asked if there was some place he and I could talk. I invited him into the lounge. Our conversation lasted about 30 minutes, mainly questions about his West Virginia campaign for the presidency of the United States. I quickly discovered that Kennedy had a knack of establishing an intimate, "down-home," rapport.

"Tell me, Harold, what do you think of my chances of winning the West Virginia primary?"

"Very good, I think," I answered confidently. "My clients and friends appear to favor you over Senator Humphrey. The conversation in a beauty salon is a pretty reliable barometer of what's going on out there."

Kennedy knitted his brow. "I am concerned with opposition to my religion," he said. "I've learned that West Virginia is about 95 percent Protestant and doesn't feel comfortable with Catholic politicians. Al Smith, you know, lost the presidency because he was a Catholic."

"But you may recall that Al Smith won the Democratic primary in West Virginia in 1928," I responded.

Kennedy countered, "But Herbert Hoover beat Al Smith in the West Virginia general election."

"That was then, and this is now," I said. "True, many will oppose your religious faith, but attitudes have changed considerably. I, too, am a Catholic, a convert. . ."

The senator interjected, "Yes, I found that out before I came to talk with you. I wanted the opinion of another Catholic, one who knows West Virginia."

"My wife, Helen, was born into a Catholic family," I told him. "When we began dating, I decided to convert. It wasn't quite that simple, but I decided to switch on my own volition.

"But most of my friends are Protestant," I continued. "There just aren't that many Catholics around. You will be the first Catholic I have voted for, not because you are a Catholic but because I favor your idealistic views. Frankly, I also like much of Humphrey's platform, but yours more so."

"And your switch to Catholicism hasn't hurt your business?"

"Not one iota," I asserted.

"You know, I feel at home here," Kennedy said. "The people make me feel good. I'm beginning to love this state, though I initially had reservations about coming."

"I think you'll find West Virginians going all out for you," I assured him.

A member of the senator's entourage peered in the doorway. "Pardon sir, but it's about time for your speech at Kroger's."

He glanced at his watch and confessed, "I almost forgot." He arose and took my hand. "I have to leave, give a speech down the street. You've given me much encouragement. Thank you. Perhaps you will be at the Civic Center tonight?"

"Oh yes," I promised. "My wife and I plan on being there."

Flashing his engaging smile, Kennedy again shook hands with the lilting ladies. I escorted him out with a parting word, "I feel certain that you have nothing to worry about in this state."

He smiled. "I'll see you tonight."

That evening Helen and I entered the Civic Center. There, high above us at the south end of the foyer, was hoisted a huge banner emblazoned with the words: "Baptists for Kennedy."

Following the speech, Senator and Mrs. Kennedy and their entourage formed a receiving line. As Helen and I approached, he introduced Jackie. He commented to her, "Harold appears to be some sort of a prognosticator." And to me, "We saw the Baptist emblem as we came in."

"No prognosticator," I replied. "When one has been in business as long as I have, one learns to listen."

The next day I received a large bouquet of flowers at my salon. The card read: "Thanks. John F. Kennedy." ♣

It Makes the World Go 'Round

A McDowell County Love Story

By Charlotte H. Deskins

To me, they were Aunt Lucille and Uncle Woody. They made their home in Cleveland, Ohio, but would visit us in McDowell County a few times each year. If they came on the Fourth of July we could count on a generous supply of watermelons, firecrackers and sparklers. If the visit fell on someone's birthday there would be enough cake and ice cream to satisfy every aunt, uncle and cousin in the family. They loved a good celebration, the noisier the better.

Woody was a natural showman and magician. He would fashion animals out of balloons or pull a quarter out of your ear and give it to you. He had an easy way of giving that never made us feel embarrassed or obligated.

Aunt Lucille was generous, too. She sent boxes of clothing every fall. One by one, my mother would shake out the dresses, some brand new, others hardly worn, and lay them across the bed like brilliant butterflies.

I didn't know much else about my aunt and uncle, except that they were always smiling and seemed to be very much in love. Then one day my mother told me the story of how on June 10, 1953, Woody Heilman, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Lucille Hicks, of War, West Virginia, had been married while riding a Ferris wheel.

According to Lucille, falling in love and getting married was not in her plans at the time. At 16, she had decided to remain single and join the Women's Army Corps. Still underaged, however, she was having difficulty convincing her parents to sign the papers for her enlistment in the WACS. They had asked that she wait one more year.

In late August 1952 the carnival came to town. United States Shows boasted a midway and several exciting rides. Lucille's niece, Joyce, had gone and it was all she could talk about. She talked a reluctant Lucille into going back with her the following night.

Joyce and Lucille headed for the rides first. After a spin on the Ferris wheel they found themselves stuck. The crossbar on their seat had jammed. Kermit Pauley, the carnival owner, came to their rescue and then offered to show the girls around. As they walked down the midway, Lucille recalls seeing "a handsome man with big shoulders." Normally a shy girl, she nonetheless found herself asking Mr. Pauley who the fellow was.

The man was Elwood Heilman, known as Woody to his friends. He did several jobs at the carnival, including setting up and dismantling the massive roller coaster and seeing to advertising and publicity.

Woody says that his first impression of Lucille was of a pretty girl with long waves of dark hair that hung to her shoulders. She wore blue jeans, an eye-catcher in a decade where most women chose skirts and dresses.

Mr. Pauley introduced the two young people and they talked for a few minutes. On the way home Lucille recalled her father's warning not to get involved with carnival people. Still, she felt Woody Heilman was special.

After the carnival left, Lucille learned that Woody had left U.S. Shows for a job with Oliver Jenkins, a drilling contractor. The Jenkins outfit was from Paintsville, Kentucky, but was then working a job in Berwind. Woody had taken a room at the house of Lucille's Aunt Lou, hoping to catch a glimpse of the young McDowell County girl. Soon the two of them were dating. In those days, that meant sharing a box of popcorn at the movies or taking long mountain walks together.

"I knew she was the one for me," Woody remembers, "because at first she refused to kiss me. I tried, but she wouldn't hear of it — not until we knew each other better."

It was at this time that Lucille became ill with a kidney infection and had to be hospitalized. Woody came to see her, bearing a humorous get-well card and a dozen red roses. He still had not met her parents. Lucille was nervous about introducing him because of his former association with the carnival.

"After Woody left, my pop came to see me," she recalls. "He wanted to know who had brought the roses. Nervously, I explained they had come from Woody. All Pop said was, 'I think that was nice of him.'"

After 10 months of courtship Woody proposed and Lucille accepted. By this time U.S. Shows had returned to McDowell County and Woody had signed on again. It was then that he sprang his big idea — that the two of them should get married on the Ferris wheel. It would be great publicity for the show and the carnival would pay all expenses.

At first, the modest Lucille balked at the idea. No one she knew had

ever been married that way. Maybe it wouldn't even be legal. And what would her family think?

Little by little, Woody calmed her fears. He would talk to her family and gain their approval. They would get a local minister to perform the ceremony. Soon Lucille found herself planning the unusual wedding with growing excitement.

A crowd of 150 gathered to see Woody and Lucille married. Half a dozen state troopers helped them get from their car to the Ferris wheel. Lucille wore a corsage of pink sweetheart roses. Her long hair was swept back and earrings twinkled on her ears. Woody looked proud in his suit and tie. Mr. and Mrs. James Watson served as best man and matron of honor.

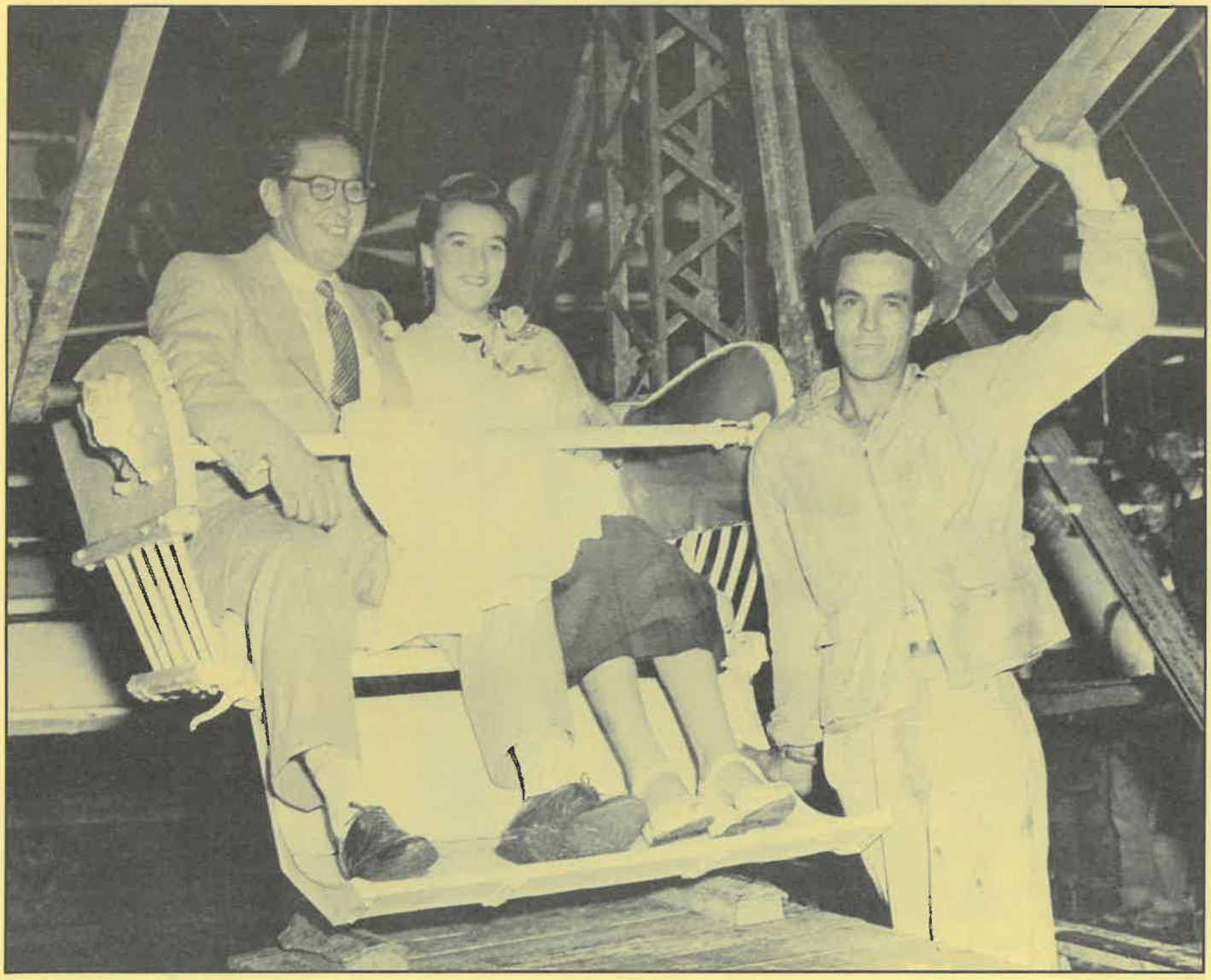
The big wheel went around twice, carrying the bride, groom and attendants. On their third (for good luck) trip around, the Reverend B. F. Overby took his first ride on a Ferris wheel. The elderly clergyman sat down between Woody and Lucille, administered their vows, and pronounced them man and wife. The crowd cheered.

Afterwards, a four-tiered wedding cake was served. The top piece held a miniature Ferris wheel. Aunt Lucille still regrets that in the excitement of the day she forgot to retrieve the souvenir.

After that, the adventure truly began. Both of the newlyweds joined the carnival for a while, working a different town each week, from Pennsylvania to Florida.

The Heilmans later settled in Cleveland and went to work for a hamburger franchise. Since then they have operated their own restaurant. They still enjoy traveling when they get the chance and they enjoy each other. Lucille still thinks Woody has the broadest shoulders, and to him she will always be beautiful.

Woody Heilman and Lucille Hicks were married on a McDowell County Ferris wheel in June 1953. *Bluefield Sunset-News* photo.



There are still a few Model T's on West Virginia highways. Photo by Michael Keller; 1923 Ford courtesy Doy Maston.

The change from horse and buggy to the automobile did not happen overnight in our little farm community in Ohio County. Everyone was a bit reluctant to make the transition. When cars first appeared, horses often became so frightened they would run away. Chickens would scatter and animals in the fields would stampede. It took time to get used to the noise and strange look of the fast moving monster.

My father was a veterinarian as well as a farmer. People said to Dad, "A car is just what you need to get around in." He finally became convinced that it would be a time saver. So a neighbor, who owned a car and had been driving it for a few months, went shopping with Dad.

They went to Elm Grove, a Wheeling neighborhood, to a place where cars were sold. Dad bought a Dort sedan and attempted to drive it home, minus any lessons. That's what all the men seemed to do. Once they bought a car they got it home somehow and then taught themselves how to drive. They'd take it out in the pasture, or if space permitted they'd drive around the barnyard. "There's nothing to it," some bragged. "Just get under the wheel and drive it around until you're used to it. Then take to the road."

Dad and the neighbor headed home on U.S. 40, not the busy highway it was to become but with more than a little traffic on it already. When they were about seven miles down the road Dad failed to negotiate a turn. His new car was ditched. The neighbor was pitched completely out. Dad's head smashed the windshield with such force that it took seven stitches to close the cut over his eye.

Here were two capable men, used to handling cultivators, mowing machines, wagons, surreys, buggies and all sorts of mechanical equipment, in a sudden accident. Each blamed himself. Neither realized that everyone needs experience before getting onto a highway with a car and attempting to drive it.

The Dort sedan was towed to a garage. Someone brought Dad and the

Nothing but a Ford

By Lorna Chamberlain

neighbor home. All day long we kids had been racing up and down the lane at home, waiting to see Dad drive in. But he didn't come, not for hours on end. He must have been in shock when he did come, but he didn't let on.

That car was repaired and brought to the farm to be left inside the hasty garage Dad had fixed for it, a lean-to beside the corn crib. Dad wouldn't touch it. There it sat, the new car he'd bought. No one could talk him into getting it out in the barnyard for driving practice. He'd have nothing to do with it.

World War I ended and my two brothers came home. One was simply fascinated to see a car sitting there unused. He began to tinker. He got the Dort out in the barnyard and began to drive it around. Then he was out on the road, going up and down the lane and all about. And soon he was taking Dad on veterinary calls.

Brother caught on fast, but still there were things he had to learn from hard experience. One day, in coming home from a call he'd taken Dad on, he blew the horn coming down the lane. He wanted us all to see him drive past the house toward the barnyard because he felt so proud of himself.

The car had a collapsible top that you put up when it rained. This day the top was up. My brother drove past the house down to the barnyard and straight into the low-roofed garage, ripping the car's top off as he went.

Dad wasn't the only one who went to town, bought a car and then had problems. Wylie Davis, one of our neighbors, got his new car out in the pasture and drove it around and around. One evening, he ran into trouble putting it away.

Mr. Davis had a big three-story barn built on a slope, as many local farmers did. Ours was laid out the same way. Down below, on ground level, was the place we drove our cows in for milking. Above, on the upper ground level, we had stalls for horses, room for machinery and a place for Dad's office. Still higher, on the third floor, was the hay mow with chutes to throw down the hay.

Wylie Davis had that kind of barn. On the second floor he'd arranged a garage. He drove his car into that garage to put it away for the day. He managed to get in, but once inside he couldn't remember how to stop. He shot right out through the back of his barn, halfway up the wall. Had he not recently threshed, and had there not been a straw pile there for him to land in, it would have been curtains for Mr. Davis.

He survived, badly shaken but with little damage to the machine and no injury to himself. But he got rid of that car immediately. And never afterwards did Mr. Davis own a car.

Neighbors finally coaxed Dad into getting a smaller car, one that didn't have a gear shift. One friend who stopped by to see us every day had a Ford. He told us that Henry Ford was revolutionizing the car business with his cheap, small car. It was easy to operate. After you had cranked it up you worked everything with two pedals. The gas feed was on the steering wheel, only a finger touch away.

So Dad bought a Model T Ford. The next day he was out in it, driving himself everywhere. From then on he never owned any other kind of car but a Ford.

Once Dad had mastered driving he'd say, "That car is just a godsend. I don't see how I ever managed without it." Soon he had the rest of us operating it. I well remember my first experience in being all alone in a car, fully responsible for driving it. Dad was going to de-horn a herd of cattle. It would take a few hours. My older brothers were away from home and the only one there who could drive had field work to do. Dad wanted me to go with him on his call and then bring the car back to my brother, who'd be needing it at a certain time. Later in the day that brother would go for Dad.

We drove through the village which was two and a half miles from our farm. Then we headed down a narrow brick road for about three miles and drove up a lane into a barnyard, where Dad got out.

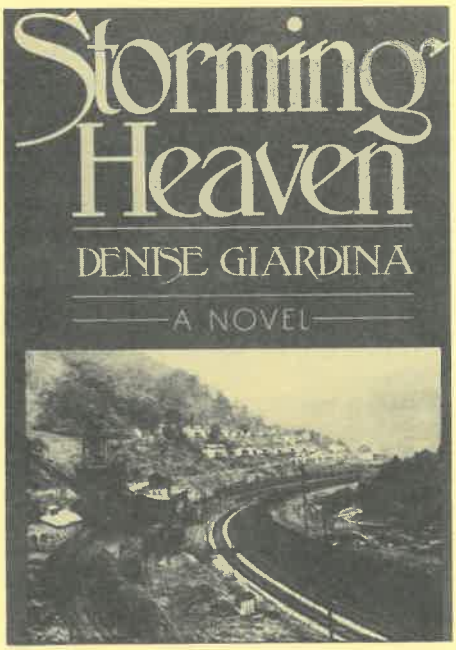
Now it was up to me to get the little Ford home. My only experience had been when one of my brothers would say to me, "Want to drive this car? Go ahead. I'll let you get under the wheel." I'd drive a ways and go home and boast about having driven the car.

After Dad got out and spoke to those who'd called for his services he came to me and said, "Be real careful going home!" That was all.

I couldn't have been more than 15 at the time. I was scarcely breathing as I headed down that narrow, steep lane. Once out of sight of Dad I stopped the car, got out and walked all around it, uneasy and scared to death. What if I'd run off the road when I met another car? What if there were a lot of cars parked on either side of the street in the village and I couldn't steer in between them?

When I got back in the car and took off I didn't blink again until I was safely home. Years later, after I was married and we'd bought our first car, I had to take driver's lessons for six weeks. Brains and willpower and might control a team of horses, but when it comes to an automobile you can't beat experience.

Book Review:



The evening I met Denise Giardina, she read aloud to a group of four of five other writers the beginning pages of what was to become her novel, *Storming Heaven*. For the next three years, we gathered almost weekly. Each week, she read us the latest installment.

Giardina grew up in the West Virginia coalfields. Incredibly, she never heard the story of the Battle of Blair Mountain in her mandatory West Virginia history class in eighth grade, nor in the college-level class that was a prerequisite for a history degree. She first read about the miners' revolt in a book she bought at Major's Bookstore in Charleston. Subsequently, she learned more about early United Mine Workers organizers and the 1921 labor uprising from the children and grandchildren of some of the thousands of miners who took up arms. *Storming Heaven* tells how it happened, and why.

The first chapter of *Storming Heaven* recounts the coal companies' systematic acquisition, often by force or guile, of land and mineral rights in county after county of southern West Virginia. The last paragraph of the book is a single sentence: "The companies still own the land." The story in between is Giardina's contribution to the struggle. For *Storming Heaven* is a war story, and to this novelist the war is not over.

Giardina's story, which takes place in fictional West Virginia and Kentucky counties clearly modeled on Mingo and Pike, is advanced by four narrators: C. J. Marcum, Rondal Lloyd, Carrie Bishop, and Rosa Angelelli. Marcum is the mayor of Annadel, the only town in the area *not* owned by coal baron Lytton Davidson; Lloyd, a coal miner and union organizer; Bishop, a nurse; and Angelelli, an Italian immigrant who works in the household of the company owner. These characters are also four faces of war.

C. J. Marcum embodies the independence of old-stock Appalachians, their deep attachment to the land, and the dignity of the mountain people. In a sense, his is the voice of the generations that lived and worked in the West Virginia mountains before the land was taken. With his friend, black Doctor Toussaint Booker, C. J. forms the *Annadel Free Press*, joins the Socialist Party, and champions free speech and human rights for the miners. Through C. J., the reader gains an understanding of what his family and so many others have lost.

Rondal Lloyd is the anger and the zeal of war. It is Rondal who directly experiences the grueling life of a child in the mines, and the ordeal of an encounter with company terrorists. From his bitterness is born the hard, unwavering energy of a union organizer.

Carrie Bishop illuminates the courage, as well as the compassion, that may arise out of conflict. Carrie's training as a nurse allows this character to convincingly illustrate the poor conditions in the coal camps, and then to lead the reader into a much more desperate scene, that of the tent camps where thousands of evicted miners, along with their wives and children — those who managed to survive the assaults of typhoid fever, flu, and pneumonia — waited out the cold winter of 1920-21. Carrie's strength and stability derive at least partly from her preindustrial childhood in Kentucky, in the days before coal mining took her part of the mountains. This narrator's descriptions of growing up surrounded by loving relatives (including the unforgettable aunts, Jane and Becka) are among the most lyrical in the book.

The very different voices of Carrie and Rondal, who narrate the longer passages in the book, balance one another like a passionate, sometimes discordant musical theme.

Finally, there is Rosa Angelelli. Rosa has been moved from her homeland to a foreign place and a way of life that is not at all what she and her family expected. The reader is introduced firsthand to the unsafe conditions in the mines by Rondal Lloyd, but Rosa's tragedy bears witness to the implications for the women whose husbands and sons work underground. The short chapters narrated by Rosa are haunting, for hers is the voice of grief so overwhelming that it cracks not only the heart, but the mind.

These narrators speak directly to the reader in natural, true voices and they introduce a cast of others. There is the "No-Heller" preacher Albion Freeman, who declares that his church is deep under the earth; the family of prosperous Ermel Justice, whose sons grow up with Rondal; Carrie's gentle sister Flora and her husband Ben; and the deeply principled Doc Booker, through whom Giardina explores relations between blacks and whites in the union movement.

These people are described in loving detail. Their laughter, their frailties, their games, their passions, the food they eat — their lives, in short — emerge clearly in the voices of Giardina's four narrators.

Storming Heaven is a forceful, full-hearted account. The story moves with the soaring rhythm of oldtime music. The people who come alive on these pages will not easily leave a reader's imagination.

The author's first novel, *Good King Harry*, showed her to be as skillful a researcher as she is a writer; and her penchant for accuracy broadens this novel of West Virginia history. The events from the Matewan Massacre to the Battle of Blair Mountain have been absent from textbooks for too long.

—Colleen Anderson

Storming Heaven is a 312-page hardback, published in 1987 by W. W. Norton. It may be purchased in bookstores for $16.95.

Feedback on *Matewan*

Lewisburg, West Virginia
Editor:
I would like to make some comments about the movie *Matewan*. It leaned towards the truth, but it didn't tell the whole truth.

During my whole life and up until the 1950's, I never saw the station at Thurmond with so few people as were seen in the movie. Bridie Mae sure did look lonesome sitting there.

The sand or coal house at Thurmond had 1922 marked or cut into the concrete. This had been covered over.

Many times I have been in that boarding house. The last place of residence of my family at Thurmond was one of the apartments above the old Thurmond Bank. Mr. Pugh, now the proprietor of the Bankers Club hotel and restaurant, gave me a tour of our old apartment not too many years ago.

After Prohibition became the law of the land, it was not only a felony to make whiskey, it was also an additional felony to put the whiskey in the old bottled-in-bond bottles. That's why so many fruit jars were used. The bottles in the movie didn't ring true.

Where in the world did that monster of a rabbit come from? I thought for a moment it was a Kansas jackrabbit.

All the time I was growing up I never saw a cross in a Primitive or a Missionary Baptist church. Was this a scene of the church at Thurmond? I believe that church was conceived and started by the Presbyterians. Later it was made into a community church. The one now standing is the second church. The first one burned. I still have a Sunday school badge for perfect attendance for a whole year at that church.

Some of the coal cars had C&O on them. I believe that the N&W ran through Matewan.

Sid Hatfield was not a Hatfield. He was a Maynard and raised by the Hatfields. I was told this story by a man living here in Greenbrier County. The man was an Italian orphan who was also raised by the Hatfields.

Sid ended up with Mayor Testerman's wife. She and Ed Chambers's wife haven't been dead too long. Not too long after the shootout at Matewan, Sid and Ed were killed on the steps of the McDowell County Courthouse.

As for the company spy, Lively, he died in or around Danese, Fayette County. He drew a United Mine Workers pension for years. I don't know this for a fact but I was told by an old Fayette County miner. When the shooting was over, corpses were riddled with bullets and tobacco juice was spit all over them. All were robbed and mutilated.

One of the thugs in the shootout left Mingo and hid out here in Greenbrier at Frankford for some time. Just recently I was shown his picture taken while he was in hiding.

I'm still looking for a hero on either side.

I saw a miner's family being evicted when I was a child in Fayette County. I believe every piece of furniture was broken. Furniture was even thrown out of an upstairs window. The children and the mother had to stand and watch. The company always liked an audience for these things. It intimidated the other families.

I enjoyed this movie and I hope it lets a little light shine to the rest of the nation on our problems, our culture and our heritage. The coal industry did everything to our state legislature but improve it.
Sincerely,
Paul Lilly

Scenes filmed at Thurmond in the movie, Matewan, *actually depicted the Mingo County town of Matewan.* —ed.

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A lot of people do, and it's something we encourage. We can get more mileage out of our limited budget that way. We've always printed GOLDENSEAL on the best paper we can afford, so that it will stand up to hard use and still come home in one piece.

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In This Issue

CODY BURDETTE describes himself as a railroad man, as were his father and grandfather. He worked for the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company during the 1950's, and also as an auto mechanic. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

BILL CASE, of Morgantown, works for the WVU Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station. He previously worked as a reporter for the *Charleston Gazette*, the *Grafton Mountain Statesman*, and the *Grant County Press*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DOUG CHADWICK was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Oregon, Evergreen State College in Washington State, and a school for filmmaking and video in Rome. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970 and has worked as a photographer for the *Fayette Tribune* and the *Raleigh Register*. He contributes periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

LORNA CHAMBERLAIN, a Wetzel County native, studied English at the College of Steubenville after graduating from Warwood High School near Wheeling. She is a freelance writer whose articles have been used in many publications. Her last GOLDENSEAL article, about a Wellsburg church flood, appeared in the fall 1987 issue.

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

CHARLOTTE H. DESKINS is a McDowell County native who now lives in Virginia. She received her B.S. in education from Concord College and taught school for several years. Her short fiction and poetry have been published in various magazines, and she has received awards for her writing from West Virginia Writers and Mountain State Press. She is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

ELLIOTT GAINES, a graduate of Rutgers and native of New Jersey, lives in Lewisburg. He moved to West Virginia in 1973. Gaines is a professional musician who writes music and performs. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

HAROLD McBRAYER, the owner of a Charleston beauty salon, worked as a coal miner before becoming a businessman. McBrayer died in late 1987. This was his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GERALD MILNES was born in Pennsylvania and now lives in the western edge of Webster County. He is a farmer, fiddler, and staff member at Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop. Milnes is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

EDWARD PETROSKY, JR., is a photographer at West Virginia University. He holds photography degrees from the Rochester Institute of Technology and Pratt Institute in New York. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MARY LEE SUTTON, a native of Ohio, lives in Huntington. She worked as an elementary school librarian for nine years and now freelances as a writer and amateur photographer. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DANNY WILLIAMS, a native Wayne Countian and West Virginia University student, was first-place winner of the 1987 Vandalia Gathering lap dulcimer contest. He works part-time for the WVU *Daily Atheneaum* and the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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 1930-1953*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the winter 1987 issue.

ANDY YALE is a New York writer and photographer, with a special interest in southeast West Virginia and folklife subjects generally. He has published articles and photos in *The Rolling Stone, Memphis* magazine and other publications. He is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

(continued from inside front cover)

August 11-14 Hurricane (757-6751)
Hurricane Centennial Celebration
August 12-14 Elkins (636-1903)
Augusta Festival (D & E College)
August 12-14 Philippi (292-7706)
West Virginia State Square & Round Dance Convention
August 12-14 Ravenswood (273-4157)
Ohio River Festival
August 15-21 New Martinsville (455-2928)
Town & Country Days
August 19-20 Mullens (294-4000)
Appalachian Luau (Twin Falls)
August 19-21 Logan (752-1324)
Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair
August 19-21 Grafton (265-3383)
Arts & Crafts Show (Tygart Lake)
August 19-27 Lewisburg (645-1090)
State Fair of West Virginia
August 20 Richwood (846-9787)
Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Camp Woodbine)
August 25-27 Cairo (628-3405)
Cairo Days
August 26-28 Beckley (252-7328)
24th Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival (Armory)
August 27-September 5 Charleston (348-6419)
18th Charleston Sternwheel Regatta
August 27-28 Charleston (925-3406)
Scottish Clan Gathering & Highland Games
September 2-3 Pennsboro (659-2926)
Country Roads Festival
September 2-4 Pipestem (425-9356)
16th John Henry Festival (Pipestem State Park)
September 2-4 Clarksburg (622-7314)
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival
September 2-4 Jane Lew (842-4095)
Firemen's 4th Heritage Festival
September 2-4 Mt. Nebo (732-7151)
Mt. Nebo Labor Day Gospel Sing
September 2-5 Weston (269-1863)
Stonewall Jackson Heritage Jubilee (Jackson's Mill)
September 3 Lewisburg (645-2718)
Ruritan's Old-Time Farm Day
September 3-4 Huntington (529-2701)
Hilltop Festival (Huntington Museum of Art)
September 3-5 Weston (745-5376)
West Virginia State Horseshoe Tournament (Jackson's Mill)
September 3-10 Summersville (872-1588)
Nicholas County Potato Festival
September 5 Wilkinson (752-7259)
10th Labor Day Outdoor Gospel Sing
September 8-11 Grafton (265-2529)
West Virginia Railroad Heritage Festival
September 9-11 Helvetia (924-5018)
Helvetia Community Fair
September 10-17 Williamson (235-5560)
King Coal Festival
September 11 Winfield (586-3221)
Putnam County Homecoming
September 15-18 Sistersville (652-7881)
20th West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival
September 16-18 Fenwick (846-4252)
Spencer Mountain Echoes & Steam Whistle Toot Reunion
September 16-18 Franklin (358-2809)
Treasure Mountain Festival
September 16-18 Wheeling (233-7000)
Fort Henry Festival
September 17-18 Alderson (445-7730)
Alderson Arts & Crafts Show
September 17-18 Parkersburg (295-5639)
Harvest Moon Festival
September 17-18 Point Pleasant (675-5737)
Chicken Barbecue & Gospel Sing (Farm Museum)
September 18 Shepherdstown (876-2551)
Octoberfest (Bavarian Inn & Lodge)
September 20-22 Davis (259-5216)
Septemberfest for Seniors (Blackwater Falls)
September 22-24 Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
West Virginia Molasses Festival
September 22-25 Kingwood (329-0021)
Preston County Buckwheat Festival
September 23-25 Milton (743-3032)
West Virginia Pumpkin Festival
September 23-25 Charles Town (725-2055)
13th Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
September 24-25 Parkersburg (428-1657)
West Virginia Honey Festival
September 24-25 French Creek (924-6211)
National Hunting & Fishing Celebration
September 24-25 Moorefield (538-6560)
Hardy County Heritage Weekend
September 24 Union (772-3003)
Autumn Harvest Festival
September 24 Logan (752-7259)
1st Chief Logan Day
September 26-28 Berkeley Springs (258-1022)
Autumn Awakening (Cacapon)
September 29-October 2 Kingwood (329-0021)
Preston County Buckwheat Festival
September 30-October 1 Wellsburg (737-2787)
Wellsburg Apple Fest
September 30-October 9 Middlebourne (652-2528)
Middle Island Harvest Festival
October 1 Dunbar (766-0223)
Dunbar Fall Festival
October 1-2 Fairmont (366-6601)
Heritage Days
October 1-2 Point Pleasant (675-3834)
Quilt Show (Farm Museum)
October 1-2 Burlington (289-3511)
Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
October 1-3 Clay (587-2934)
Golden Delicious Festival
October 2-8 Barboursville (736-5271)
Oktoberfest
October 5-9 Elkins (636-1824)
Mountain State Forest Festival
October 7-9 Wheeling (242-3000)
Oglebayfest (Oglebay Park)
October 7-9 Gandeeville (342-8877)
Seventh Annual FOOTMAD Festival (Camp Sheppard)
October 8 Fayetteville (465-5617)
Bridge Day (New River Gorge Bridge)
October 8 Cameron (686-2238)
Big Run Apple Festival
October 8-9 Fairmont (363-3030)
Annual Apple Butter Weekend (Pricketts Fort)
October 8-9 Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
Apple Butter Festival (Berkeley Springs State Park)
October 11-16 Spencer (927-5715)
West Virginia Black Walnut Festival
October 14-16 Mullens (294-4000)
Lumberjackin'-Bluegrassin' Jamboree (Twin Falls)
October 15-16 Salem (782-5245)
Autumn Harvest (Fort New Salem)
October 15-16 Bluefield (425-2778)
Country Craft Guild Show
October 21-23 Martinsburg (263-2500)
9th Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 1989 "Folklife Fairs Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number, if possible. We must have this information in by January 15, 1989, in order to meet our printing deadline.

GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

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