

# GOLDENSEAL



*Summertime is festival time, the season to savor our priceless heritage of mountain arts, crafts, and music. This time of year, you may see and hear, even taste, the best of West Virginia anywhere from Huntington to Martinsburg.*

*If you crave a deeper participation, consider a folk arts class or two this summer. Two of the best programs may be found at the Cedar Lakes Crafts Center, featured on this page, and at the Augusta Heritage Arts Center, featured inside the back cover.*

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## Cedar Lakes Crafts Center

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**T**he Crafts Center, located at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center near Ripley, offers workshops three times yearly for artists and craftspeople. From furniture making to blacksmithing, the opportunity to learn technique, design and marketing skills is there for those who are interested.

The Cedar Lakes Crafts Center has been in operation for 13 years. Sessions are held in the spring, summer and fall. While there is an emphasis on traditional techniques, new ideas and approaches are also presented. The workshops are available as weekend or week-long classes. Some are repeated yearly but others change, depending on the individual instructors. Teachers come almost entirely from West Virginia.

Previous workshops have included studies in Windsor chairmaking, wooden decoys, European folk art, weaving, quilted wearables, calligraphy, acrylic painting and white oak basketry. Weaving, basketry and calligraphy will be repeated this summer, along with woodturning, stained glass, and hand-forged cutlery, among other courses. The Crafts Center has well-equipped studios for weaving, woodworking, jewelry making and blacksmithing, plus sev-

eral multi-purpose rooms and a dark-room.

Participants speak highly of the program. "The Cedar Lakes Crafts Center is an oasis for the serious artist or craftsman. There's always time and a place for personal meditation and long walks for either exercise or reorganization of creative thrust," observed West Virginia artist Jan Griffin.

The Cedar Lakes Conference Center serves as the site for the workshops. The Conference Center, operated by the West Virginia Department of Education, is a nonprofit institution. The 400-acre grounds provide many recreational opportunities, including softball, swimming, tennis, fishing, hiking and canoeing. Motel-style lodging or economy dormitory accommodations are available. Home-cooked meals are served in a modern dining room.

Cedar Lakes also hosts the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair, West Virginia's largest outdoor craft event. The fair is a five-day extravaganza of entertainment, food, contests, craft demonstrations and a variety of West Virginia arts and crafts. The dates for this year's fair are June 30-July 4.

The Crafts Center is an important part of the Cedar Lakes operation-

Crafts coordinator Tim Pyles sees the Crafts Center's programming expanding and changing to meet the needs of the region's artists and craftspeople. With the recent addition of a statewide newsletter, *Craftsline*, he hopes to develop a central source for information and the exchange of ideas.

The summer sessions at the Crafts Center are scheduled for the weeks of July 18-22 and July 25-29, and the weekend of July 29-31. All workshops require a registration fee, refundable up to three weeks prior to each class. The cost to West Virginians is \$85 for the week-long workshops and \$45 for the weekend sessions. Out-of-state residents pay an additional \$10 per class. Students are also required to pay a studio fee ranging from \$10 to \$45, depending on the workshop.

Meals and lodging are available at Cedar Lakes for \$18.50 per day for a dormitory room, or \$24 for a semi-private room. A \$10 room deposit is required and meals and lodging are subject to the 5% state sales tax. Since classes are limited in size, early application is suggested. For information, contact Tim Pyles, Crafts Center, Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, WV 25271, (304) 372-7005.



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# GOLDENSEAL

Volume 14, Number 2

Summer 1988

**COVER:** Hugh McPherson has faced many microphones in his time. Here the seasoned broadcaster and band leader drops by the studio of the State Library Commission's Radio Reading Service. Our story begins on page 9. Photo by Michael Keller.

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# West Virginia's Birthday Party

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**W**est Virginia turns 125 years old this June 20, with a celebration to match. The Department of Culture and History plans a weekend of events for Charleston and Wheeling.

Governor Arch Moore will preside over the historic anniversary, inviting all West Virginians to join him in celebrating our rich heritage. A formal observance is scheduled for West Virginia Day, June 20, in Wheeling. The Northern Panhandle city was West Virginia's birthplace, and twice the state capital. West Virginia Independence Hall, the former U.S. Custom House which hosted the statehood debates, will be rededicated by the Governor.

The Wheeling ceremony will follow daylong festivities at the Capitol Complex in Charleston on Sunday, June 19. The big party begins at 10:00 a.m., with the opening of exhibit-

and registration for various contests. Programming begins at 11:00 a.m., with events scheduled throughout the Capitol grounds and inside the adjacent Cultural Center. The busy day will conclude at 10:00 p.m.

Visitors are invited to picnic on the Capitol grounds, but advised to save room for dessert from the official birthday cake. Governor Moore will cut the giant cake with an heirloom sword from the State Museum. The West Virginia-shaped cake, by master baker Ed Rada of Charleston, will feed 20,000 people.

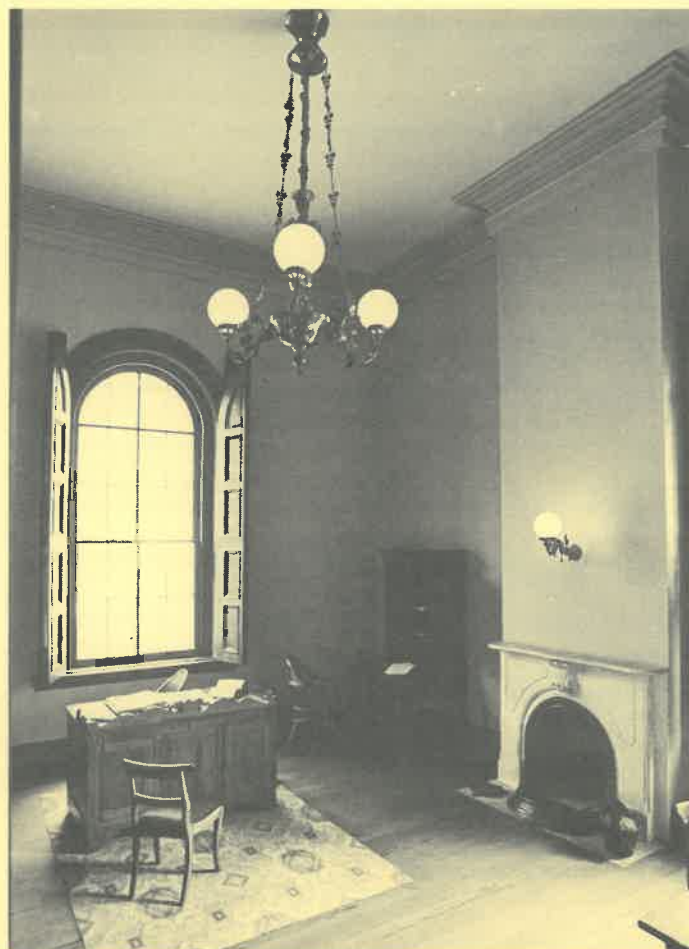
Activities planned for the all-day party include historic troop encampments, band concerts, a military fly-by, dance demonstrations, a historic fashion show, antique auto show, horsehoe tournament, speeches, tours, sports, and historic newsreels and films. There will be a baby pa-

rade, games, and other children's activities. The *P. A. Denny* sternwheeler will offer rides on the Kanawha River throughout the day.

Folk culture fans will be pleased to see performances by West Virginia's champion guitar, banjo, fiddle and dulcimer players. There will also be storytelling, open-stage clogging, and junior musician contests. An outdoor Vandalia Stage will present good mountain music throughout the afternoon.

All events of West Virginia's 125th anniversary celebration are open to the public at no charge, except the sternwheeler rides. Souvenirs will be sold, and contributions solicited for the veterans' memorial. Parking lots surrounding the State Capitol will provide thousands of free parking spaces. Plan to bring the family and make a day of it.

West Virginia Independence Hall, the old Custom House at the corner of 16th and Market streets in Wheeling, is our state's birthplace. The interior view shows the office of Francis Pierpont, Unionist governor of Virginia during the creation of West Virginia. Photos by Rick Lee (left) and Michael Keller.







## West Virginia at Age 125 Mountaineers Speak Up

**A**t GOLDENSEAL, we generally take our history in the form of oral interviews, straight from the living memory of West Virginians. That's the best source possible, in our opinion, but it does limit our historical reach back to about the last 75 years or so.

That posed a problem as West Virginia's 125th birthday rolled around and we

pondered a suitable anniversary feature. We clearly wouldn't be able to do much with the historic events of June 1863 working from our usual sources. The question was whether to alter our habits and attempt a conventional historical account, or do something more in keeping with our traditional methods.

We opted for the latter. We won't try to

provide a scholarly analysis of the issues of the statehood movement, but do proudly offer you the voices of West Virginians reflecting on their individual experiences in the Mountain State. These excerpts are taken from past GOLDENSEAL articles, and we think they say a lot about life in West Virginia at the close of the first quarter of the second century.

My grandfather Costa played the accordion. Now, he played guitar in Italy but he had a hunting accident. He lost his little finger and the next one up on his left hand, had a shotgun blow up on him and cut these two fingers off. He'd played guitar before that time but that limited him, and he just continued from then on to play the accordion.

When I was a child [in Hinton] I started getting interested in music, and there was no music in my family at the time. We knew that my granddad had played the accordion and we bought him one. Dad said, "I'm going to buy him an accordion and see if he can play." So we bought him one in December '64 and Dad gave it to him and he learned to play again. And then I'll never forget, he gave it to me one day and he said, "You learn it to play." And I can play it. I can play a few Italian pieces that he taught me, just learned from ear, you know. And then he died. I was 16 years old when he died.

—Musician Jim Costa

Some years ago in the coalfields of McDowell County, my father tried to teach me to hunt squirrels. It seemed important to him, for whatever reason, so I made a great effort. That is to say, I did my best. Dad was undoubtedly the finest squirrel hunter I've known, but not a very good teacher of squirrel hunters. On the other hand, to do him justice he did not have a very good pupil in me. I was quick and alert to things of the forest, but not to their significance. I romanticized hunting, the forest, and all that went with it. I

Jim Costa. Photo by Jeff Seager.





Doug Divens' squirrel-hunting father, Frank. Family snapshot, 1958. Ernie Carpenter fiddles beneath the shelving rock. Photo by Michael Keller.



was the idealist. My father took a more serious involvement. He was the realist.

The rules were quite clear to me. "Pick out a hickory, beech or oak tree and sit. Make no movement whatever, just sit, wait, look and always listen. The squirrels will come." As a small boy, I remember falling asleep once while hunting with my dad and waking up to see squirrels on the ground all around us. They were everywhere, running across his lap and over his legs. He never moved once. He wanted me to see. I thought it amazing that he got off three shots. He was pleased that I had the lesson, but disappointed that he had only gotten off three shots. We picked up three squirrels and went home.

— Douglas Clyde Divens

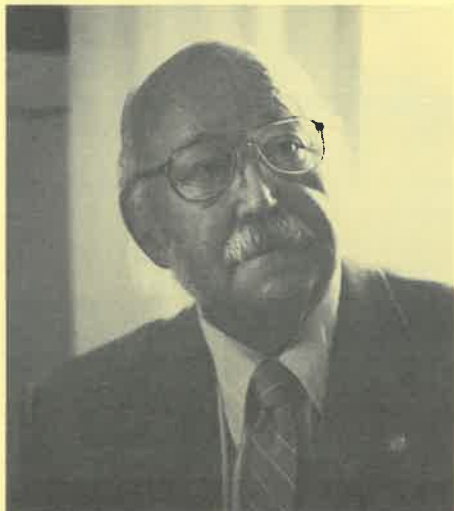
When they was out there cleaning up some ground, getting ready to raise a crop, there was some chips from their axes fell in the Elk River and floated down. Some Indians was a-crossing the river down next to Charleston somewhere and saw those chips floating in the river. And they said, there's white settlers upstream. So they took off up the river.

This big Indian — and I suppose the little Indian with him was a boy — continued the trip up the river, hunting for the white settlers. When they got up there to Centralia at the mouth of Laurel Creek and discovered Benjamin's cabin, he and his wife was out cleaning up ground. The Indians had learnt that the white man kept his rifle laying over his front door, where he could just reach up and get his gun. So the big Indian told the young Indian, said, "You shoot at him, and in case you miss I'll go around. You give me time to get to the cabin. I'll get his gun and hide back in the room. When he comes and reaches for his gun, I'll shoot him." So that's exactly what they did. The young Indian shot and missed. Benjamin knew what it was. It was an Indian attack. So he run for his gun. When he opened the door and reached up to get his gun, the big Indian was hid back in the corner and shot him. And killed him. Then they went out and captured Benjamin's wife and scalped her.

When [Benjamin's brother] Jeremiah came home and found out what had happened, why, he took his wife — and she was expecting a baby then — because he figured they would come back that night. They went up Laurel Creek. They had to wade so the Indians couldn't track them. They had to wade the water after night. He had been there long enough that he knew that country so well he was able to do that. They waded the water up Laurel Creek about two mile to the mouth of Camp Run. It didn't have no name at the time. They went up Camp Run about another mile and there was this big rock there that just hung over, just a big ledge, you know, a shelf rock. They made camp under that rock, hid out until the Indians left out of the area. The next day my great-grandfather, Solly Carpenter, was born under that rock.

— Fiddler Ernie Carpenter

Ned Guthrie. Photo by Michael Keller.



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

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

— Musicians' Union Leader Ned Guthrie



It all began up there at the Marmet locks on the Kanawha River, just right up from Charleston, a few summers back. I was night fishing. It was a fisherman's dream. There must have been a thousand fishermen up there, they all had their Coleman coolers and their Coleman lanterns lit up. In fact, they had that riverbank lit up all the way from the Marmet locks to the 35th Street Bridge.

I was fishing for monster catfish that night and I had my nine-foot monster rod out — that's a surfcasting rod. Had about six miles of brand new 50-pound-test line on it. That thing was the castingest outfit I ever did own. You'd have to haul off and cast that thing and sit down and drink a beer and wait for it to land. If you weren't careful, at night, you'd hang up on the trees on the other side.

Well, fishing was a little bit slow that night, so I reeled in and I was putting a fresh hunk of rotten liver on my hook. As I was baiting up I could hear a droning noise coming from up above the lock and I couldn't quite figure out what it was. But it wasn't bothering me, so I just went ahead and hooked up and gave one of those famous five-minute casts. Hook, line and sinker went flying out through the air.

And then I saw the plane. It was a DC3, and it came up over the lock so low it was pushing a wake. I knew right off what had gone wrong. That pilot had seen all them lights down through there and mistook the river for a landing.

He figured out what he had done, too, and he hauled back up in the air. But it was too late. Well, it was okay for him because he got up just fine, but not before the end of my five miles of brand new casting line had wrapped a triple clench knot around his tail fin.

Well, folks, if you've never been hooked to the tail of a flying DC3 before, I'll tell you things start happening mighty fast.

— Storyteller Paul Lepp

I finished what schooling I got by the time I was 14. I wasn't big enough then to work in the mines. They had an age limit then, but the criteria was if you was big enough. So I worked in the timber a couple of years, and then I went to the mine superintendent and asked for a job. He said, "You're kind of puny to do a man's work." I responded, "If you give me a job and I can't do a miner's work, then tell me and I'll leave."

So he give me a job and I went to work in the mines with my granddad. The third day I heard the foreman severely criticize an old feller that by any standards today would not be able to work. I took issue with the foreman, and he promptly notified me that I could be fired for insubordination. Later my granddad said to me, "Young man, you're gonna have to curb that temper. You'll probably get fired for your action today." And I said, "Well, Granddad, I used my best judgment in trying to halt that act of disgrace to that old man. If he had jumped on you like that, I'd have probably killed him!"

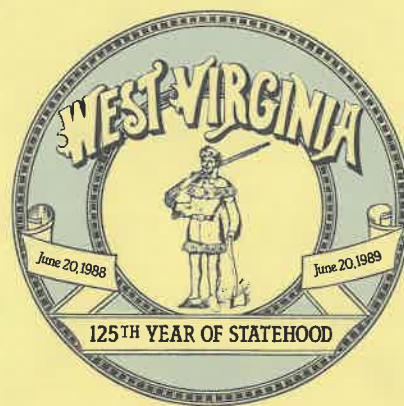
— Former UMW President Arnold Miller

As a child and even beyond that, we've always been self-sufficient. I'm one of nine children raised during the Depression, so that pretty well speaks for itself. We got a pocket knife and from that time on you were on your own.

To sit back here in these hills and listen to the whip-o-wills and the rabbits come up in the pasture almost to your feet. That's freedom. You may not have a lot of money but that's what it's all about.

I've always been in the woods. There's five generations of my people never been out of Wetzel County for a home. Appreciation for the woods? I suppose I was born with it.

— Toymaker Pemperton Cecil



Paul Lepp. Photo by Michael Keller.  
Pemperton Cecil. Photo by Skip Roberts.

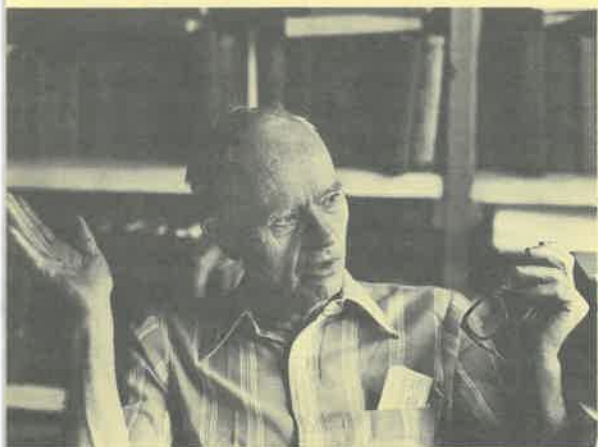




Viola Clark. Photo by Michael Keller.



Sonny Pellegrin.  
Jim Comstock. Photo by Doug Chadwick.



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

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

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

— Gospel Singer Viola Clark

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

My name is really Martino. In my time in this county, you couldn't get a good job with the wrong name, even if you were educated. You had to hide your name as much as possible. Many of the people of my time dropped the vowels on the end of their names to keep from being designated as foreigners. In those days if you had a business you might call it "Joe's Place" or "Frank's Place" but you didn't denote the last name. Today people want to be known as Giuseppe because the Italians have a good reputation as cooks. Shows how things have changed.

— Sonny Pellegrin

The *Charleston Gazette* really suggested the idea, 'cause somebody brought the *Gazette* in one morning and said, "Smell this." Well, I said I had been for years, and they said, "No, no, this is a nice smell. This is the smell of perfume." Well, I opened it up and there it was. Chanel No. 5 or something like that. Some druggist got caught with too much perfume and he goes to the paper, "How do I sell all this perfume?" And they said, "Take a full-page ad." So he took a full-page ad and they said, "We will go to the ink fountain, we will put the perfume in, it'll pick up there, and you can smell it." Well, it worked!

Two weeks later somebody came in with a Beckley paper, and said, "Smell this!" And I was beginning to think, "My lord, illiteracy will never hurt West Virginia. We can smell our papers! We don't have to read 'em." The Beckley paper had a coffee smell — some merchant caught with too much coffee.

So the idea came to me. It was ramp season, and when my partner came in that morning I said, "Look here. Somebody's brought in a paper that you can smell. Perfume, coffee. You know what we should do?" He said, "Oh, no! Let's not do that." Well, I said, "Let's not do what?" He says, "I know. Don't put any smell of the ramps in the ink." Well, we did. I should have listened to him. We got a reprimand from the postmaster general, and we are probably the only paper in the United States that's under oath to the federal government not to smell bad.

They notified me, it was beyond the call of duty of any postmaster to accept a noxious or offensive-smelling thing like my paper. I told them we'd never do it again. And just think what a handicap it is to print a paper in West Virginia and not smell bad, in competition with the other papers.

— Editor Jim Comstock



There was nothing but this tiny train station with mountains all around. There was a group of men loafers sitting around, none of which acted like he was supposed to meet me. I hesitated a minute, then went to the window and asked for the man I was supposed to meet. He wasn't there! In a mix-up, I've forgotten how it was, we didn't make connections.

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

It was seven miles up this long, lonesome [Clay County] valley. In this narrow ravine were the road and the creek, sometimes side by side, often together. In that seven miles you crossed through the creek 27 times. I counted every time we made the trip to the train, which was seldom.

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

— Teacher Ruth Kincaid

## Special West Virginia History

*West Virginia History* will mark West Virginia's 125th birthday with a special issue. Editors plan to have the commemorative edition of the historical journal ready by June 18, in time for the state's anniversary celebration.

The special volume will differ from past issues in featuring more than 200 historic photographs from the West Virginia State Archives photo collections. The illustrations present a visual history of the state with photographic essays on industry, transportation, the Depression and New Deal in West Virginia, communities, and family, social and cultural life. One section features past state capitols and details the construction of our present capitol building.

The 1988 edition of *West Virginia History* also reprints articles by prominent state historians previously published in the scholarly journal. These include classic accounts of the statehood movement and the Civil War by such authors as Charles H. Ambler, Festus P. Summers and Boyd B. Stutler.

The 224-page book-sized publication will be sold during the 125th birthday activities and by mail. For subscription information write *West Virginia History*, Archives Division, Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

I love the rugged individualism of the mountain people. Now I'm not saying that other people don't have it. If you read, you know they do. But I just love the closeness of kin, clan loyalty, and courtesy. I think most of the time West Virginians are a courteous people. We hear so much from outsiders saying, "I like these people." And we are a peace-loving people.

I enjoy going out of state, but I'm always too happy to come home because my roots are here. Joseph's Mill, West Virginia, was named after my great-great-grandfather, and Frank's Run was named after my Uncle Frank Smith. I don't apologize to anyone for my background or heritage and when I hit the mountains I breathe a little sigh and say, "Thank you, Lord! I'm home!"

— Poet Muriel Dressler



Ruth Kincaid. Photo by Fred Miller.  
Muriel Dressler. Photo by Michael Keller.



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# A Visit to Volga

By Marian E. Green

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A way we went over the narrow, winding roads of West Virginia, my mother and I, in our little red roadster. The year was 1927 and we were headed to Grandmother's house for our summer visit. Our home was in Charleston and our destination was my grandparents' farm near Volga, a wide place in the road between Buckhannon and Philippi.

The final stretch of road from Volga to Grandmother's was dirt, the car stirring up lots of dust in the heat of the day. We drove a mile and there it was, the lovely white cottage on a knoll. We opened the gate, then drove over a small bridge crossing a clear mountain stream. Up the hill and we had arrived.

There was Grandmother in her big sunbonnet, working among her flowers. Her dress was a blue and white paisley, with long sleeves. In those days, ladies did not go out in the sun without long sleeves to protect their lily-white arms. I remember the flowers that lined the fence which extended the width of the yard. There were cosmos tall and colorful, and yellow corn flowers with butterflies and bees flitting from blossom to blossom. Grandfather kept the grass cut with a hand mower.

Grandmother and Grandfather also had a vegetable garden, all fenced in and neat as a pin. There were peas, beans, carrots, corn, cabbage, beets, tomatoes, and potatoes in perfect rows. No chemical fertilizers were used, only chicken and cow manure nourishing the plants. Fruits and vegetables were stored in the cellar beneath the house. On one side of the house was a door which you lifted and then walked down several steps into the dirt cellar. The canned goods and produce stored here did not freeze even though the cellar was not heated.

I always enjoyed the milk from their only cow, Old Bossie, and her freshly churned butter and butter-milk and delicious cottage cheese. The milk house was just outside the

kitchen door. Water from a spring on the hill was piped to the milk house, where it ran through a trough. Grandfather devised this system and installed it himself. Large crocks of milk, butter, and other perishables lined the trough, cool and fresh. Even in the hottest weather, the spring water was always cold.

The kitchen sink had running water from the spring also. The big iron cook stove had a reservoir for heating water. Grandfather saw that there was a plentiful supply of firewood.

The toilet was a wooden privy a prudent distance from the house. For baths, there was a large brass tub brought into the kitchen and filled with hot water. My grandparents did not consider these arrangements inconvenient, but for a child from the city they seemed most inadequate.

All meals were set in the dining room. My grandparents never ate in the kitchen. Grandfather always said grace before each meal. He gave thanks for the food and all the family blessings.

I remember Grandmother's drop biscuits with Karo Syrup. I could never get my fill. We did not have drop biscuits at home. Then there was honey, bacon, eggs, oatmeal, and all that good cream — real cream, none of this skimmed milk of today. I believe that the rhubarb custard pie was my favorite dessert. There was ham, chicken, and lots of lettuce, corn, beets, and tomatoes. There was always sassafras for tea. Sassafras tea was supposed to be good for you.

Grandmother had a sideboard in the dining room, with cabinet space and drawers. The leftover biscuits were stored in a covered container in the sideboard. Nibbling one of these delicate, cold biscuits between meals was a treat, with maybe a piece of ham sandwiched in.

Grandfather played the fiddle. We all gathered round to listen to him play the old hymns and jigs. Sometimes he played by firelight, other

times he sat on the meandering front porch and played. Often we all joined in song.

The gentle Shetland pony, Lady, was a new experience for me. Never having ridden a pony, or a horse for that matter, I wanted to try my luck. But Lady knew I was a city kid. She planted her feet and would not budge. Grandfather had to lead her around the barnyard. Sometimes he would hitch her to a small carriage and we would drive the mile to the store at Volga.

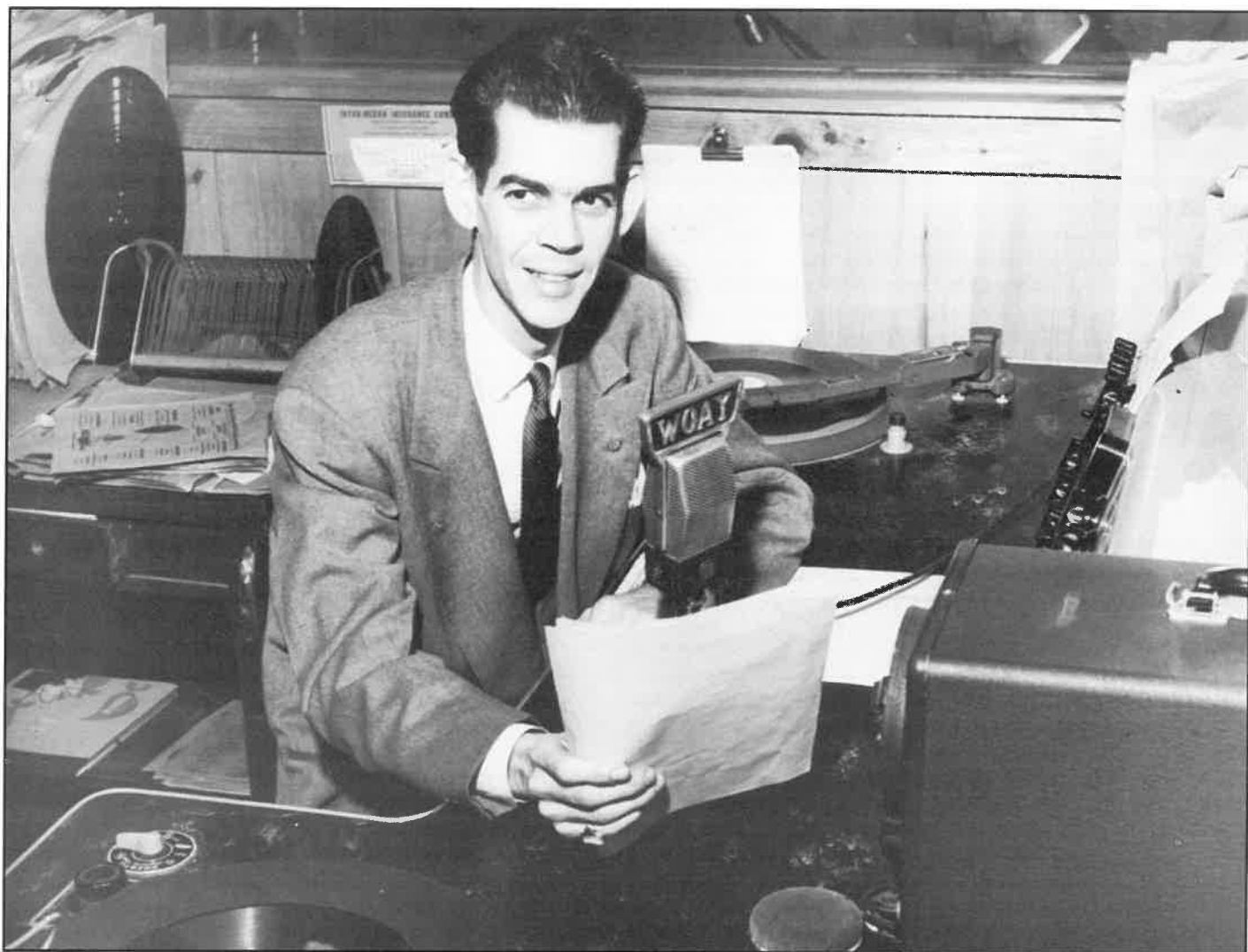
The cow liked to graze in the lower meadow around the creek. One rainy morning my mother asked me to go fetch her. She took one look at me and licked her nose, as cows will do. I ran all the way to the house to say that she had stuck her tongue out at me and I was afraid of her. Needless to say, Mother sent me back. This time I fetched Old Bossie by getting behind and urging her on.

I tried my luck at milking, but nothing happened. I could not get a drop of milk, though Grandmother had no problem at all. The fresh milk was very warm and foamy. It had to be strained and cooled immediately. The milking was done in the barn and there was always a saucer there for the cat.

There was so much to do at the farm, wading in the creek, feeding the cow salt and feeling her rough tongue on my hand, and helping to feed the chickens, gather eggs, and slop the hogs. I picked huckleberries until my hands turned blue, knowing I would soon enjoy a pie. Each day about mail time, it was my job to watch for the postal carrier. I used Grandfather's field glasses so I could see way down the road. When the mailman came into sight, I would run all the way to the road to get the mail.

The day to depart was a sad time. It would be months before we could return to Volga. Mother and I made the best of it. Goodbyes were said and a few tears shed and we were on our way back to Charleston. ♣





Hugh McPherson at WOAY in the early 1950's. The veteran broadcaster began his radio career at the Oak Hill station in 1947. Photographer unknown.

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## Hugh McPherson: "The Prince of Highland Swing"

Interview by Debby Sonis Jackson  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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**H**ugh McPherson jazzed up the West Virginia airwaves for more than 30 years. His blend of music, talk, interviews, and conversation with listeners made him a pioneer of the state's entertainment and broadcast industries. Hugh gave West Virginians programs with topics that made them call in to debate or to share a viewpoint. He was the perfect host. Patient and polite, yet prodding for

more, he was always firmly in control of the show.

The programs had big band jazz as their underlying theme. Hugh has a love of this uniquely American music and he found pure and simple happiness in bringing the very best of it to his home state. He had been a band leader himself and he continued to follow the music and the people who made it. He presented jazz on

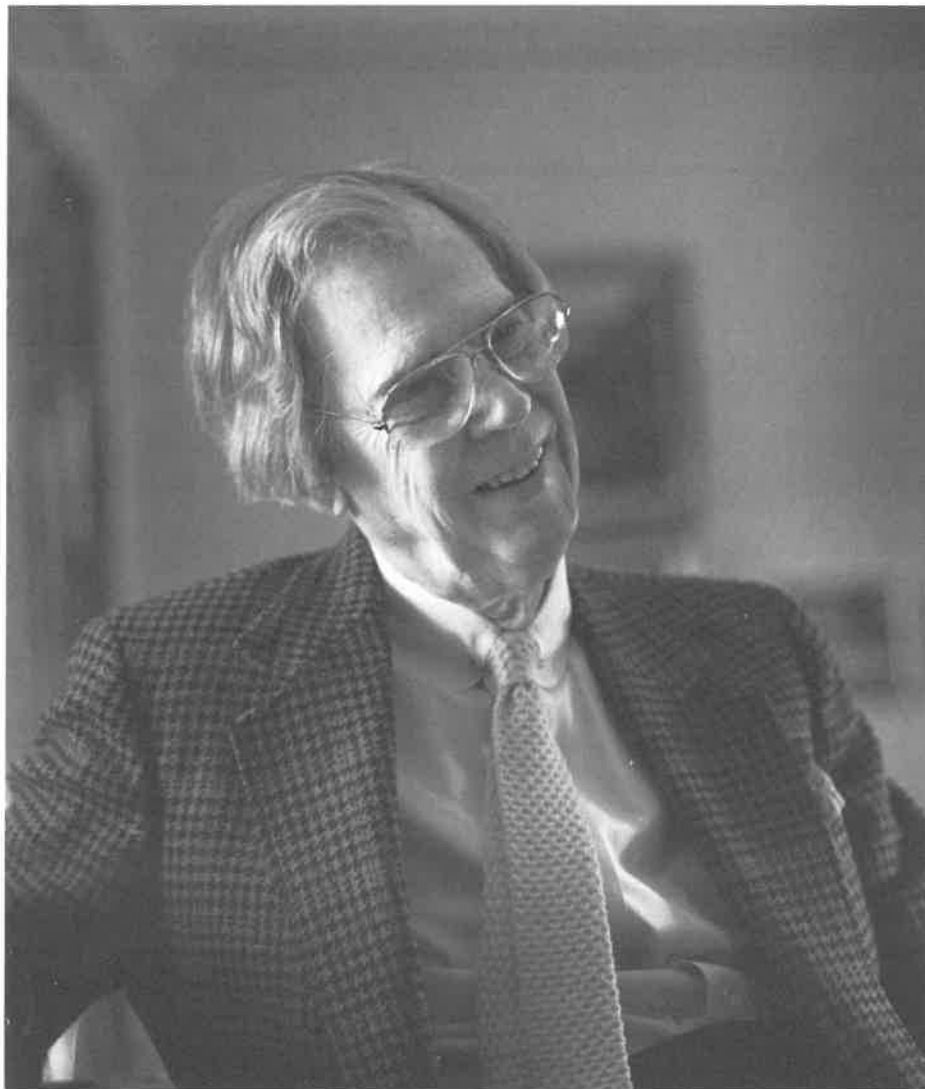
the radio as it should be presented, putting his audience in touch with the musicians' world.

Hugh grew up on Kanawha County's Cabin Creek and attended Greenbrier Military School and East Bank High School. His mother contributed to Hugh's love of jazz, bringing him up on Count Basie, Mahalia Jackson, Duke Ellington and other jazz singers and musicians.

*Hugh's Charleston home offers a look into the busy life he has shared with his wife Myrtle. Among photographs of political leaders and sports and entertainment figures, there are pictures, too, of the many musical West Virginians Hugh has worked with along the way. He has made an impression on them. Charlestonian Butch Miles, an avid teenage fan of Hugh's, recently commented, "Without Hugh's personality and program, I might have become a rock 'n' roll drummer playing the never-ending Holiday Inn circuit." Drummer Miles has since gone on to play with such greats as Lena Horne, Woody Herman, Tony Bennett and Benny Goodman.*

*We heard him on WOAY in the 1940's and again in the 1970's, and on the old WGKV, WCHS (where his graveyard shift earned him the affectionate title "Night Mayor of Charleston"), and WTIP. Most recently, Hugh hosted the popular "Rehearsin' with McPherson" for seven years statewide on West Virginia Public Radio. That show left the air*

At home in Charleston, Hugh looks back on his years on the road and in radio. The former band leader has many memories to share.



*last year. "Everybody thinks I am retiring, but I am not," Hugh said at that time. It was welcome news to radio fans in West Virginia.*

Hugh McPherson. I was born October 17, 1913, in Louisville, Kentucky. My father was a graduate of Louisville University and my mother wrote for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. They were married right across the river from Louisville in Indiana in the year 1911.

They came to West Virginia in 1915. I went to school at Barnes Military School in Montgomery, Alabama, Greenbrier Military School in Lewisburg, and graduated from East Bank High School. I then went to Chicago Musical College, which later became Roosevelt University. Then I went to Northwestern University — their school of speech — which was connected with NBC at that time, in Chicago. After that, I got into radio through the efforts of a good friend

of mine by the name of Robert Thomas, Jr.

Debby Sonis Jackson. Let's talk about your father and what he did.

HMc Dr. Hodges was practicing medicine at Dry Branch on Cabin Creek and contacted my father, who was working as a doctor at East View right outside of Louisville. He brought him to West Virginia and Dad settled at Sharon on Cabin Creek. Dr. Hodges left Dry Branch and went to Kilsyth and established himself at Mt. Hope up there. Dad took over Wet Branch and Dry Branch and Rhonda and Miami and Sharon, Dawes, Ohley, Eskdale. We had a home at Sharon and then moved to Eskdale.

Dad worked for all these different companies — Truax-Traer, Wyatt Coal Company, U.S. Steel. He worked for the C&O as a doctor. He was a country doctor, a coal mining doctor. He was part of the famous Logan March, which I don't remember too much about. The union movement was striving at that time for higher wages. They commandeered the trains on Cabin Creek and Dad was the doctor. They were thousands strong. Dad took care of them.

Dad was the doctor for Ma Blizzard, who had a place at Eskdale. It was a very wonderful place to go in to get coffee and eat hot dogs. Ma Blizzard was the mother of the famous Bill Blizzard, who was a leader of the United Mine Workers. Dad used to take care of Ma Blizzard. Mother Jones would stay with Ma Blizzard and Dad also took care of her several times.\*

Dad saw so many terrible things happen. Doctors at that time didn't have the things to work with that they have today.

DSJ Did you begin your radio career here in West Virginia?

HMc West Virginia. WOAY. I began in radio in the year 1947 in Oak Hill as an announcer. I had a band at that time, too, and Robert Thomas who owned the station played first sax with the band. We did quite a bit of traveling over the country on one-

\*Ma Blizzard was a local leader during the Cabin Creek-Paint Creek period of the mine wars, 1912-13. Bill Blizzard, president of a United Mine Workers subdistrict, led the 1921 Armed March.



nighters. We had what we referred to at that time as a territory band, although before that we had a band that played the big spots in New York, New Jersey and the West Coast. That was Hugh McPherson and his Orchestra. They called me the "Prince of Highland Swing."

My wife Myrtle was going under the name of Bette Barclay at that time and singing with the band. We had some of the top musicians. Johnny Best left my band and went with Glenn Miller and he became one of the top musicians with the Glenn Miller Band. Glenn Miller kept saying, "Well, I like Johnny Best, I like him very well." So he took him from our band.

And then another person who left the band was Malcolm Crain. He went back to Nashville, joined Francis Craig and they recorded the very beautiful song, "Near You," one of the million-sellers. On that was a man playing sax, Ned Guthrie, from Charleston [GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1987, pp. 9-17]. Ned Guthrie had discovered a young singer and trumpet player, Bob Lamm, and brought him to Charleston and introduced him to the public. He sang and played the trumpet. Ned took him to Nashville and he's the one who made "Near You" famous as a vocalist. Today it's one of the great all-time hit tunes.

DSJ What were some of the places you played?

HMc We went into Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. We had a broadcast on Saturday afternoons called "Frank Dailey's Saturday Afternoon." We did that broadcast on CBS.

From there, we went to the famous Arcola Inn, which was owned by the underworld. Working with the underworld was quite an experience. "Wee Willie" Maretti was one of the owners and the "godfather" of Jersey. His brother Sully was his right-hand man and they booked us in. It was a big club, wonderful food and outstanding entertainment. There I met Jimmy Durante on the floor show with us. We worked there one entire winter.

Then we went to Coney Island in Cincinnati, at Moonlight Gardens. We did broadcasting on WLW Cincinnati. And of course, we were on the networks out of the Meadow-



Dr. Hugh Duncan McPherson and Louise Pulliam McPherson with son Hugh on Cabin Creek about 1915. Dr. McPherson was a coalfield physician. Photographer unknown.

brook. We were on CBS and Mutual, and from the Arcola Inn we were on the Yankee Network — the basic station was WNEW out of New York City.

When I got into radio at Oak Hill in 1947, I kept my band and we played until about 1950 or '51. That was the last of the big band sounds that we had.

DSJ Was it a natural transition to go from performing to announcing?

HMc A natural thing. I was announcing with the band between numbers. I would say, "This next number will be 'Stardust,' featuring Bette Barclay. We're very happy to have you with us and this is dedicated..." and so forth and so on. Bob Thomas said, "Hugh, you should be



Bette Barclay in the 1930's. This was the stage name used by Myrtle McPherson during the years she sang with Hugh McPherson and his Orchestra. Photographer unknown.

in radio. Come and announce at our station." And he put me to work. That's how it all started.

DSJ So what do you consider your early influences?

HMc I'll tell you, hearing all those great bands. We had so many outstanding musicians that we met over the years.

Chicago was a great influence. My wife was working for Rudolph Ganz, the director of the Chicago Symphony and world famous classical composer. She was his secretary. I met her there. She was studying at the Chicago Musical College, which later became Roosevelt University. We married in Chicago and we would go to all the great spots in the Loop, all the great hotels — The Stevens, The Drake, The Palmer House. We met Lombardo, Sammy Kaye, all those great bands. That was an influence on me. I wanted to have a band of my own. And I formed my first band in Chicago.

DSJ Let's go back to when you were in West Virginia. I know you've worked at a number of stations in the state.

HMc We left 'OAY about 1951 and came to Charleston to work at WGKV. Joe Farris, who had heard me announcing in Oak Hill, got me a job at 'GKV. I did my first program on a Saturday afternoon, "Spinners Holiday." I did a full hour and I was one of the first to introduce big band jazz to Charleston.

I left 'GKV, went to WCAW and that was the first beginning of "Rehearsin' with McPherson." Then from 'CAW I went to WCHS. I also did a program on WTIP called "McPherson's Journal."

WCHS was the time that I brought on a bird, by the name of "Joe Mynah." And that's when I really started moving in the field of presentation. I branched out from the big band sounds and jazz. I felt that to bring more listeners to our show, how about bringing in a bird? The first bird was "Yako," and Yako was followed by Joe Mynah.

Joe Mynah became one of the most famous birds in the field of talking birds. It became such a part of the show that when we'd follow the news at 11:15, the studios would be filled with people just coming in to listen and watch the bird perform. We



started getting calls from New York, from Indianapolis, from Chicago. We were paid pretty good money for the bird to appear on other programs.

DSJ He went national?

HMc That's right, appearing on TV and on radio. Bill Doggett, a close friend of mine, was the arranger and conductor of Ella Fitzgerald, who made our theme song, "Rehearsin' with McPherson." He did a program at West Virginia State College and introduced a number called "I Want to go Honky-Tonk." They got the idea from our bird, which said "I want to go honky-tonk."

DSJ I bet he said a lot of things.

HMc Yeah, he said, "I want to go honky-tonk," "What time is it, Hugh?" I'd give the time and he said, "How about the weather?" He said, "Look at the beautiful ladies," things like that.

Bringing the bird in brought in a whole segment of listeners who would not listen to the type of music I was playing, jazz. The connotation of the word "jazz" turned off many people, and it shouldn't, because it's indicative of our music, our heritage.



The big band sound in Chicago greatly influenced Hugh and he formed his own band there. This was his first orchestra, with Hugh at far left and Bette Barclay at the microphone. Photographer unknown, 1930's.





Hugh McPherson and Tommy Dorsey, shortly before Dorsey's death, with Cleveland Indians catcher Rollie Hemsley and "Babe" Barna, a Clarksburger who went on to play major league baseball. Hemsley and Barna formed the B & H Club, a popular Charleston night spot, where this picture was taken. Photographer unknown, about 1960.

They thought it was from the brothels and it was, from the brothels of New Orleans. The Storyville district was the home of some of the great jazz musicians' early days. That's how they made their living. Then the navy in the year 1916 came in and closed down the brothels in Storyville.

It was the early '60's when Khrushchev, the big man, the head man of Russia, came to these shores. He made the statement that American jazz was decadent and would never be performed in the USSR. Lo and behold, he goes back to the USSR and who appears but the great Benny Goodman, the "King of Swing." Immediately, I got to work, got my taping equipment together and got in touch with Radio Moscow. We did a 15-minute broadcast.

We asked, "If Khrushchev said that American jazz was decadent, why are you presenting at this moment Benny Goodman?" And so they answered me. They were very vehement in saying that he did not make that exact statement, maybe it was taken out of context. They said that they liked American jazz music, that they had certain musicians that played American jazz.

Not connected with that, I had a call from Frank Edwards, who was head of Mutual Broadcasting news at the time. He said that he had information that Russian cosmonauts had lost their lives in outer space. I immediately flipped him on the air at WCHS. Radio Moscow picked that

up and they answered me on the broadcast. They strongly denied it and they carried the interview I had with Frank Edwards on Radio Moscow. They said, "Hugh, you did an outstanding job in interviewing Frank Edwards, you pinned him down." They would call me Mr. McPherson, then Hugh. It was quite interesting.

That was one of the high spots. I was quite amazed. I was contacted by BBC of Great Britain. They contacted me at WCHS. The AP, UPI, all the news services contacted me in regard to the interview with Radio Moscow. It hit the national wire services. *The New York Times* carried it and all the big papers.

What came in from London, England, was "Moscow Radio says in a message to a Charleston, West Virginia, radio broadcaster that stories alleging seven Russian astronauts died in space shot attempts were a lot of nonsense." Other headlines were "Moscow commends West Virginia interview." "Moscow sends message to West Virginia radio."

We were branching out. We started doing UFO's, quite popular at that time and you're hearing about it today. That type of program built up a lot of interest. We were just starting probing in outer space.

Then we talked to Ivan Sanderson, the world traveler. He wrote all these books about the "Big Foot," the

During the 1950's, Hugh was one of the first broadcasters to introduce the music of black jazz artists to the Charleston area. Here he interviews Lionel Hampton. Photographer unknown.







The West Virginia Jazz Festival features local and national jazz performers. Here Buster Coles of "Just Us" improvises on guitar during the 1985 festival.

## Jazz in West Virginia

West Virginia jazz fans take their music where they can find it. Jazz is offered at some private clubs and occasional concerts throughout the state, and statewide on West Virginia Public Radio. Two organizations dedicated to the preservation of live jazz music are the Charleston Jazz Club and the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Club. Additionally, the Department of Culture and History presents an annual jazz festival at the Cultural Center in Charleston.

The West Virginia Jazz Festival began in 1977 with the purpose of showcasing the talents of the state's jazz artists. It also provides those musicians with the opportunity to exchange ideas and techniques with national and international jazz performers. The event is generally scheduled towards the end of April and runs for five days. Hugh McPherson has hosted the festival during live broadcasts from the State Theater for both public radio and television. The West Virginia Jazz Festival is one of the most popular events at the Cultural Center.

For the jazz lover who wants to make the music a year-round activity, there is the Charleston Jazz Club. This group presents three to

four programs yearly, drawing hundreds of people for each.

The Charleston Jazz Club is one of the oldest in the country. It was formed in 1961 by three couples interested in the music. Mr. and Mrs. Charles McClave, Dr. and Mrs. Earl Best and Dr. and Mrs. George Hamrick had made frequent trips to Columbus's Grandview Inn to see such jazz groups as the Dukes of Dixieland. They decided to bring the music home and arranged for the Dukes to perform at the Charleston Press Club, formerly located on Kanawha Boulevard.

That performance was on August 10, 1961. From then on, many jazz lovers became involved. According to McClave, known to many as Dr. McClave because he owned and operated the old McClave's Drug Store, "It was started out of the back of the drug store with the help of Sol Padlibsky, a Charleston newspaper columnist, Katie Doonan, a WCHS-TV personality, Hugh McPherson, Bob Kirby, J. R. Tuckwiller, and Dr. J.A.B. Holt among many others."

Since that time, the Charleston Jazz Club has gone on to feature the finest jazz entertainment around. They have hosted the

Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Sons of Bix Beiderbecke, the Netherlands Circus Band, Billy Maxted from Manhattan Jazz, and the Bob Scobey Jazz Band.

There is no membership fee to join the Charleston Jazz Club. Those wanting more information should contact the Charleston Jazz Club, 1430 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25301.

The Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Club was founded in 1958 by Clyde Hahn (now deceased) and Harvey Rettberg. It resurged from the earlier clubs that were formed in the 20's and 30's by followers of the Coon-Sanders Orchestra. This group, led by Carlton Coon and Joe Sanders, built a large radio audience across the country. The Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Club is "dedicated to fellowship among club members and enjoyment of the music of Coon-Sanders and all the great bands of the roaring twenties," according to club publicity.

The West Virginia Coon-Sanders Chapter, one of the most active, throws a yearly reunion for "friends and supporters of good music." Originally held in Charleston, the reunion was moved to Huntington in the 1970's. Each year special guest musicians are invited from throughout the United States and club members participate in open jam sessions. Hugh McPherson recalls hearing the good sounds of Spiggle Wilcox, a trombonist who played with Paul Whiteman and Jean Goldkette and is still going strong in his 80's. In addition to the music, the two-day event includes dining, dancing to the music of popular national and local jazz artists, and a sale and swap.

There is a one-time charge for both days or you may attend just to hear the music for a smaller donation. If you are interested in the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Club, contact board of directors member Dale Jones, 32 W. 7th Avenue, Huntington, WV 25701, (304) 525-2137.

"Yeti." I interviewed the man from Duke University, Dr. J. B. Rhine. He was on my program quite often discussing parapsychology, delving into things occult, and the ability to read one's mind, things like that. We did hypnosis on the air. We did Scientology. Some of the top musicians I've interviewed in the past year or two are connected with Scientology.

We got into many different fields. We did different subjects that had never been on radio before in this area. It did build up controversy and controversy means listenership. We were accused of doing certain things just to promote the program, and I'll agree we did. We put the bird on to promote it. We never did get away from our big band sounds and our sounds of jazz.

I might say that I was one of the very first to introduce black music to radio here. WCHS permitted me to

play what was known as "race" music. It had been forbidden on all stations in Charleston. But the time had come to hear Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Earl Hines and all the black singers and groups. I introduced the greats in the field, like Oscar Peterson and Bumps Meyers, one of the great tenor saxists, from Clarksburg, West Virginia. Leon "Chu" Berry, who was with the West Virginia State Collegiates, was from Wheeling. He went on to fame and played with Cab Calloway and with Dizzy Gillespie. He was killed in an automobile accident while playing with Cab Calloway.

We made it a point to take all these very great musicians in the field of jazz and present them here on radio. We introduced Jennie Smith to Lionel Hampton. I have her first broadcast she made with Lionel Hampton, at the Municipal Auditorium. She's a

young lady we discovered that went on to some pretty big shows. She was born in Fayette County near Montgomery, in Kimberly. Also on that program was Iris White, who later became known as Iris Bell. They both received a great hand from the audience and went to Cincinnati with Lionel Hampton from here.

We used to have the big shows brought to Charleston by "Sippie" Coleman. Sippie had a lot of confidence in our program, sponsored our program for years. He brought in the greats like Nat King Cole. All the truly greats would appear here in Charleston at the Municipal Auditorium. We did live broadcasts with Stan Kenton, Nat King Cole, Lionel Hampton.

DSJ You're known for your jokes, Hugh. Would you tell us a couple of stories?

HMc Sonny Davis used to do the early morning show, opening at 5:00 in the morning on WCHS. During the winter months, it's very dark then. I'd leave at 2:00 in the morning and I'd close up and turn all the lights out. Sonny Davis would leave notes with Joe Farris or Bert Files, Bert was the general manager, raising a stink about me turning all the lights out. Evidently he didn't like coming in at that early morning hour, it being so dark. He was a little afraid.

So I thought, well, I'll get Sonny Davis. I wrote a note and said, "Dear Sonny, I had this professor, a herpetologist with his snakes, on our program tonight. During the course of our discussion, a bull snake and another type of snake got loose and crawled into the console." I said, "The professor is staying at the Daniel Boone Hotel and he has to get out of town in the morning. If you find the snakes in the console, just pick them up and put them in this box." I fixed up this elaborate box and everything else.

I stayed up all night long. At 5:00 nobody had come on the air, 5:10, 5:15, 5:30. Finally he comes on, Sonny Davis comes on and he says, "I just don't want to go on the air. I'm just an old country boy and I'm not going on the air with all these snakes in this room!" To this day, he's had it in for me!

DSJ How about the time you got stopped with Joe in the car?

Hugh and Myrtle McPherson at their Charleston home. They enjoy a busy life full of music and friends.





HMc Yeah, Joe Mynah. I. J. Joseph had just recorded a song for RCA Victor. Ike is quite a composer, lives here in Charleston.

Anyhow, we had him on and during the course of the program, we had Joe Mynah on. Joe performed and afterwards we covered his cage. When we got off the air, we put him in the back seat of the car. I was taking Ike home. Ike lived on the West Side, so we were driving down Washington Street, past Summers Street on Washington, and saw the red and blue lights flashing in the rearview mirror. I thought, my goodness, something's happened, so I pulled over.

The police came out, one to the right of the car and one to the left. We rolled the windows down. They started talking to us and asking us questions. This bird says, "I'm a cowboy! Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The policeman says, "Shut up! Be quiet."

And I said, "It's a bird." And he said, "Don't be smart!" And the bird said, "I want to go honky-tonk!" And then the other policeman says, "Alright, both of you come out with your hands up!"

Ike Joseph kept saying, "It's the bird! It's the bird!" The bird kept saying, "I want to go honky-tonk" and all these different words, "Well, blow me down!" We came out with our hands up and they pulled their guns out. We finally got our identification out and got the bird uncovered and showed it to them. It kind of scared the life out of us!

DSJ How did you learn to train these birds?

HMc A German POW captured the first bird I had. He gave it to me. I took it with me to right outside of Rheims, France, and then I lost the bird. But I trained him. The German POW called him "Yako." That was the first Yako. He was a crow. I had him two or three months. That was in France, Mourmelon-le-Grand, near Rheims. They were getting prepared for the invasion of crossing the Rhine. I was in the service four years, in the medics.

DSJ I know you've developed a big library over the years.

HMc Yeah, we started collecting, in fact my mother started collecting.



Myrtle takes a moment with cat Muffin. She cares for three pets of her own and looks out for other animals in the neighborhood.

She was the one who was instrumental in getting my tastes geared towards Count Basie and Duke Ellington, Bennie Moten, the great Kansas City Jazz Band, Julia Lee, who was the great singer from Kansas City. Mother steered me onto those artists when I was very, very young.

I went to school and started saving recordings. In fact, I have an old Victrola where you wind, crank it up, and it plays the real thick disks. They go back many, many years. We started collecting when they came out with 33-and-a-thirds, and we were collecting 78's. Now we're transferring most of it to cassettes, because cassettes don't take up as much room. Our albums were up to around 20,000 or 30,000. That's a lot of albums.

We lost a lot of our albums and interviews in a fire at WOAY in Oak Hill, about 1979. I left the station, signed off at 12:00 midnight. We got a call early in the morning that the place was completely destroyed. I lost 400 or 500 interviews and all those albums. I didn't have all of my albums up there, thank goodness, nor all my interviews. But I lost interviews with Tommy Dorsey, some of

the early boys, Ben Bernie and Bernie Cummins, artists like that.

I had a Fred Astaire album. He was quite a lover of jazz. A lot of people did not know it. And he was quite a singer, too. Of course, we know he could dance. He made this wonderful album and there was only 1,000 made. I had that. He danced on it, he sang. He told of his love for jazz. He had Oscar Peterson and his group to support him. At that time, the album was worth around \$600 and golly, I don't know what it would have been worth today! But we lost it during the fire.

DSJ From what's around me, I can see that you really started collecting again.

HMc Oh, yeah, there's about 500 interviews here now.

DSJ What do you think of radio today?

HMc Far be it from me to criticize anyone for their programming. They program to what they think are the majority of listeners and the people that are desiring a certain type of music. It's, I would say, 95 or 98 percent rock 'n' roll or country. The rest, big band and classical music, is maybe one percent.

There should be room for all types

of music! I listen to all types of music and I've found some good in it. I have listened to rock 'n' roll and I've found outstanding musicians in rock 'n' roll. And country music — Charlie McCoy is one of my closest friends. Charlie has done some outstanding things in the field of harmonica playing. We call it harp playing. And of course, Jim Foglesong, he was raised here. He was born over near Logan. His parents live in South Charleston. Jim is the man who discovered Robert Goulet, recorded Robert Goulet, and the Mills Brothers. He was artist-and-repertoire man for Columbia Records, for RCA Victor, and now he's head man for Capitol and EMI. He is in the country field now and doing quite an outstanding job. He has Anne Murray and some other top stars.

DSJ How do you think the broadcast industry has changed?

HMC I'll tell you. It's changed in this respect: It's formatted radio. In other words, you go into a station,

they format the music and they pull out a certain number of records and play that type of record all through the day. They number the records, and after they play them once, they start repeating it again. It's formatted. You know exactly what's coming.

Most of the announcers are told to give the weather, time, and temperature. And then maybe say, "Here's the tune," maybe "Here's the artist." Sometimes they don't even announce the music. You get all these musicians who make these recordings and spend all that valuable time of theirs to get on the air and then some of the stations never mention their names. It's fast-paced radio, one right after the other.

Of course, time passes by. The morning shows — the "Sam and Denzil Show" on WCHS, an outstanding program, and the morning program on WTIP with Charlie Coleman — the days of that type of program are just about over, I think.

DSJ Why have you devoted your time and talents to West Virginia all these years?

HMC My audience has been loyal, why shouldn't I be loyal to them?

DSJ You've always kept your own style.

HMC Yeah, I did that. I started doing interviews. Charlie Ventura and Spike Jones, they were some of my first interviews in the field of music. Lena Horne did her first telephone interview with me from Cincinnati. She was appearing at the Beverly Hills Club. Duke Ellington with his alter ego, Billy Strayhorn. Billy was the gentleman who played piano and arranged and composed for Duke. He wrote his famous theme song, called "Take the A Train." I interviewed them at the Municipal Auditorium.

I've interviewed Sarah Vaughn, Billy Eckstine, Louis Armstrong, Pearl Bailey, Count Basie and Harry Belafonte. We have a listing of interviews up in the hundreds. I listen to

The mini-studio in the McPherson home is filled with photographs from Hugh's days as a musician and top radio announcer. Hugh's setup helps him enjoy big band music he has collected during a long career.



my interviews and I criticize myself. I don't like to listen to myself.

DSJ Let's go back to when Hugh McPherson and his Orchestra played in West Virginia in the late 1940's.

HMc We had some truly greats in that band. We had Don Boyd, who went on to fame with Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Band. He also appeared in some outstanding sessions with Harry James. Jay Woods was on the "Wheeling Steel Hour," a trombonist from up in Beckley. Frankie Thornton, who tenor-saxed with our band, was from Beckley. After World War II, he went to Australia and was the top tenor saxist there. Brud Moon, Beckley, played tenor sax. Emmett Pugh, his family was connected with a coal company in Beckley, played alto sax and sang.

Mickey Holmes from Montgomery and Wayland Redden, Beckley, played trumpet with our band. Other West Virginia musicians with us then were Bob Thomas on sax, the man who put me to work at WOAY, Roy Schlaegel, guitar, from East Bank, and Byron Beucker from Beckley. He played piano.

Andy Daugherty, the famous drummer and comedian, worked with our band. He worked with the first band and with the second band, too. I had three bands.

DSJ What did you play?

HMc I just piddled around.

DSJ What did you piddle with?

HMc Alto sax.

DSJ And Myrtle, your wife, sang?

HMc Yes, sang. And as I told you, she was secretary for Rudolph Ganz. That's how I met her.

DSJ You mentioned your theme song, too.

HMc Yeah, I'll let you listen to it. Ella Fitzgerald recorded it. Mary Sunshine wrote it. "Rehearsin' with McPherson."

Pat McCarthy, our arranger and rehearsal conductor for a number of years, wrote some very fine tunes. He wrote "Parade of the Milk Bottle Caps," "Three Ways to Smoke a Pipe," "Serenade to Post Position," tunes like that. He was the original hippie of that day. He had long, flowing gray hair. Pat came to visit our family on Cabin Creek many years ago. In fact, he married a woman from Cabin Creek, Fanny Douglas. Pat wrote a tune about



Former *Charleston Gazette* artist Taylor Jones portrayed Hugh with a touch of humor in this caricature.

Young Hugh McPherson was on top of the world at Chicago Musical College in the 1930's. Here he relaxes by Lake Michigan. Photo by Myrtle McPherson.

Cabin Creek called "Cabin Creek Blues." It was recorded, I believe, by Woody Herman. He also composed and arranged for Jimmy Dorsey's Orchestra and was the arranger for Bing Crosby on "Kraft Music Hall."

DSJ Do a lot of the people you worked with still play today?

HMc Yeah, a lot of them work the big bands out in California or New York.

DSJ Do you ever miss those days, playing on the road?

HMc No, I don't. 'Cause it's so tough today. The sounds of the big bands, they always say, are coming back. Well, they have never left. It's just that it's not getting a lot of play. All you have to do is check the albums that have been made. You would be surprised how many big bands have been recorded.

I have my cassettes that I use out in my car. I don't tune in radio anymore, unless it's for sports. I'm a sports fan, I love sports. But otherwise, I turn on the big bands that I have on tape. Because certainly I'm not going to find it on radio. Which is sad, in a way. But who am I to condemn the program directors? They're out to make money. I'm from a different era of music. ♣





Salem College celebrates its first century this year. This is the administration building. It was built in the early part of the century after the original structure burned. Photo by Michael Keller.

**S**alem College may be the only institution of higher education in the country that has a frontier fort on its campus. In a way, Fort New Salem, actually a recreated 18th-century village, embodies what is unique about the small liberal arts college 12 miles west of Clarksburg. Even today, Salem College demonstrates the can-do, seat-of-the-pants attitude of the early settlers.

Salem College, nestled in the rolling hills of northern West Virginia, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. It has been a sometimes stormy century. Salem was founded in 1888 by a group of Seventh Day Baptists. This small denomination exerted in the early years considerable control over the institution, not least in its choice of presidents, seven of whom were members of the faith. According to Dr. K. Duane Hurley, the college's seventh president, the main thing distinguishing Seventh Day Baptists from other Baptists is their observance of Saturday as the day of worship. So strong was their influence in the old days, he said, that the Salem town post office was closed on Saturdays but open on Sundays.

Central to this denomination is an openness to new ideas and an insistence on freedom of religion and conscience. (This attitude was influenced



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## By Faith and Sacrifice

### Salem College Celebrates Its First 100 Years

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By Kim Smucker

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in no small part by the savage persecution inflicted in England on the sect, whose leader was literally dragged one day from his London pulpit by the King's men. The minister, John James, was executed two months later and his body quartered and displayed in various parts of London.) Salem College from the be-

ginning has been an independent institution and encouraged a non-dogmatic, non-sectarian approach to education. The school continues to welcome all who want to learn, regardless of economic circumstances or religious preference. This may be the founding fathers' most important legacy.

In his book *The Light of the Hills*, Dr. Sirus Orestes Bond, sixth president of Salem College, makes frequent mention of the importance of education for the early settlers. "America," Bond notes, "was not peopled by the ignorant or the irreligious. The people who came to its eastern shores came with their Bibles and their



"Hurra! Hurra! Hurree! We're from Salem C.," says the caption on this early postcard. In 1898, President Gardiner defended the college against an angry mob from the belfry of this original administration building, for many years the lone structure on campus. Courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU.

books, such as they had in those days, that they might train their children in the cultures which they had known and in the religion of the Christ."

It was in 1789 that a company of Seventh Day Baptists left their home in Monmouth County, New Jersey, to make the long trek westward into the Appalachian Mountains. This group, known as the Shrewsbury Seventh Day Baptist Church, eventually settled in parts of Pennsylvania and what was then northern Virginia. Several of this denomination arrived in the early spring of 1792 at a spot near the head of Tenmile Creek, which they named New Salem.

The Seventh Day Baptists had always been keenly interested in education. Like other American denominations, they regarded learning as a civilizing tool. Though small in number, they embodied the staunch conviction, perseverance, and hardihood that enabled Christian congregations throughout the country to establish hundreds of small colleges in the American wilderness. Their goal was to provide a liberal education for the common man — a radical concept in that day. From the beginning, establishing a college in the forests of what became northern West Virginia was a top priority for the denomination.

According to Bond, whose book is

liberally sprinkled with biblical quotations, the main force behind the college's actual founding was several clergymen. One was the Reverend Lucius R. Swinney of the Seventh Day Baptist Church at Lost Creek, formerly a professor of Hebrew and other languages at Alfred Theological Seminary, another Seventh Day Baptist institution. Another prime mover was the Reverend Alexander Campbell (a cousin of the Alexander Campbell who founded Bethany College in the Northern Panhandle). It was Campbell, according to Bond, "whose scholarly messages to the churches aroused in the young people, particularly, the desire for higher education." The Reverend John L. Huffman, another Lost Creek pastor who later moved to Salem, added his considerable enthusiasm and stamina to the school's founding. These men showed an almost feverish activism on behalf of college education, at a time when even primary schools were a rarity in the region. Their faith and energy is all the more remarkable given the primitive conditions that prevailed in the 19th century.

Ironically, however, Salem College owes its existence almost as much to the failure to get a Methodist college established in the town of Salem as to the energetic commitment of the Seventh Day Baptists. When the Methodist Episcopal denomination announced its intention to found an institution in West Virginia, many communities, including Salem, put in bids. A committee made up of Methodist leaders quickly narrowed the field to two sites: Salem and Buckhannon. By a margin of one, the Methodists voted to locate their new school in Buckhannon, today the home of West Virginia Wesleyan College.

This defeat quickened interest among the Seventh Day Baptists to establish their own college at Salem. A committee was hurriedly formed to solicit funds for the founding of an institution. One of its members was John L. Huffman.

Dr. Bond, whose tenure as president lasted from 1919 to 1951, believes that Huffman was instrumental in Salem's founding. He describes the preacher as a powerful proponent for his cause. "Dr. Huffman was a rather stocky man. He could not stand



The oil boom surrounded Salem College's single building with derricks and its scholarly professors with the rough men of the oilfields. Photographer unknown, about 1900.

walking very well, so he rode horseback over Harrison, Lewis, Doddridge, and Ritchie counties, speaking when he had opportunity in churches or at any public gathering where he could get an audience. He told of the importance of education to all of the young people. He insisted that parents could do nothing for their children that would compare in value with sending them to college. His messages were heard with much interest by the people. Many families promised a little money and they assured him they would do all they could to send their children when the institution was established." Bond concludes that Huffman "did more than any other individual to make the College possible."

A college document from the 1920's describes Huffman's efforts this way: "Through the long dreary months of the late autumn and winter the real father of the school, John L. Huffman, traveled up and down the mountains, through the valleys, across the turbulent streams, many times in the rain, snow, and slush,

sometimes to the knees of his good steed, seeing people and soliciting subscriptions and money for the starting of the school." Huffman continued to perform this grueling service on behalf of the college during his tenure as Salem's first president.

John Huffman established a tradition of personal sacrifice that contributed mightily to the survival of Salem College. It was rumored that Jesse Randolph, the first president of the college's board of directors and grandfather of Senator Jennings Randolph, often balanced the college budget with his own funds.

"Mr. Randolph's giving was always generous and done without ostentation," according to *The Light of the Hills*. "Not once or twice, but many times, at the close of the fiscal year he would say to his fellow Board members, 'Men, we have tried to solicit the funds necessary to balance this budget, but we have failed. I would like now for you brethren who sit around this table to agree to give what you are reasonably able to give. We ought not to leave a deficit for the

new year. When you have given what you feel you can afford to give, I will try to finish balancing the budget.'"

While the college struggled to secure a foothold in the rugged landscape, a group of volunteers trekked back to New England to raise money among wealthy Seventh Day Baptists. They returned to Salem with the hefty sum of \$3,000. This money, together with funds raised through the efforts of Huffman and others, constituted the core capital of a non-proprietary stock company that became Salem College. Subscription lists were started, and subscribers were invited to invest at \$25 a share. The company was dissolved when the college gained a more secure financial footing. Members of the company's board of directors became the college's first board of trustees.

The institution that grew out of these efforts was initially called the Salem Academy, founded in 1888. By state charter the school was renamed Salem College in 1889.

From the start, Salem set out to serve young people of modest means. The college catalog of 1895 states: "Salem College is the outgrowth of a strong desire on the part of the people to furnish better opportunities for the higher education of their young people. While here and there one among the many was able to seek college training away from home, the great majority in the homes among the hills were unable to meet the necessary expenses. If these were ever to secure college culture, it was clear that it must be brought within their reach. Therefore, the men of the surrounding country, none of whom were men of great means, determined to enter upon the undertaking." The college's location in a hard-edged region and its mission to the underprivileged have made its continued existence an act of will reaffirmed over the generations.

One of the most extraordinary of these acts of will occurred during the administration of the Reverend Theodore L. Gardiner, who served as president of Salem from 1892 to 1906. Dr. Gardiner had the dubious honor of being president during the most turbulent and expansive period of local history.

Around 1895 the town of Salem was seized by a frenzy of oil and gas



development, transforming it from a sleepy village of a few hundred souls into a boom town of 5,000. An oil camp atmosphere soon overwhelmed the once sober and upright little community. The face and texture of Salem also changed as one pine-board shack after another shot up in the shadow of new oil derricks, to accommodate the growing population of wildcatters and speculators.

The latter were hard drinking and loose living, not famous for their love of higher learning. A group of these men hatched the idea of buying the college — then little more than a single frame building — and transforming it into a brewery and beer storage facility to supply the town's burgeoning saloon business. The plan was to buy up a controlling share of the college's stock, but their attempt was foiled when the college divided and issued new stock.

Their second approach — to burn the college down — was more direct. They attempted to carry this out one evening in 1898 after the consumption of much liquor. A rabble of oil-field roughnecks fell together and moved with blazing torches toward campus, shouting "Down with this education bunk!"

News of the mob's approach spread quickly and, with the exception of President Gardiner, the college quickly emptied. Dr. Gardiner, professor of mathematics, the Bible and ancient languages, also sported the title "Scholar of Gunmanship." He prepared to put this latter specialty to work. Armed with a revolver and a double-barreled shotgun, the kindly scholar holed up in the belfry room in the college's lone building, determined to defend his school. To the inebriated mob, now gathered at the campus boundary, he roared out, "The first man who steps foot on this campus dies like a dog!"

This announcement dampened the attackers' enthusiasm, especially when Dr. Gardiner underscored the seriousness of his intent by sending a load of buckshot just above their heads. The mob quickly dispersed, its members drifting back to the assorted saloons, honky-tonks and flop-houses in town. Classes were held as usual the following morning.

(It was rumored that several individuals from the mob later put Sa-

lem's only newspaper office to the torch. The action backfired when the fire spread, destroying a row of nearby saloons, and then, some say miraculously, jumped across to the other side of the street, burning the town's remaining saloons.)

Few of the college's early presidents wanted the job. John L. Huffman, the founder and first president, accepted the appointment with the

proviso that he be president for one year only. The term of Salem's second president, the Reverend Sanford L. Maxson, ran for only four years, from 1889 to 1893. Gun-toting President Gardiner lasted far longer than his predecessors. He said of his stewardship, "It has been literally a walk by faith." President Hurley once spoke of the "sacrificial struggle" that kept the institution alive during its



Patriarch Jesse Randolph stands at left in this turn-of-the-century family portrait. Jennings Randolph is the younger child. Photographer unknown.

## Jesse Randolph

**M**y grandfather was a very colorful man, loved by everyone. He had a little white goatee, and everyone called him Uncle Jesse. He was the man that Salem looked to and he never let them down. He was a member of the State Legislature, director of one of the banks, involved in various businesses, and was a farmer. He taught me how to ride a horse, pitch hay, and milk a cow. He was very close to me.

Jesse Randolph was also the principal founder of the college, and head of its incorporators. When the college was first supposed to open the building wasn't finished, even though they had already announced that registration was to take place. Grandpa took all of the merchandise out of his general store and put it in lofts and barns elsewhere. Then a sign went up in front of that store — Salem College. It was very important to him — always, he'd say, you must keep your word. So even though the building wasn't completed, the college opened. That was his feeling about everything, that your word must be your bond.

— Senator Jennings Randolph,  
from a 1983 GOLDENSEAL interview

early phase and through a depression and two world wars.

As late as 1905 the college was housed in a single building on Salem's Main Street, offered just three courses of study, and survived mainly through subscriptions to the stock company. Nonetheless, the institution continued to provide a liberal education to the youth of the region, many of whom would never have gone to college otherwise. By 1914 Salem College was able to pay its leading faculty the respectable sum of \$800 a year.

The college practically folded in the Depression of the 1930's, debts at one point soaring to \$104,738. An atmosphere of gloom pervaded the institution during this time, as newspapers carried almost daily accounts of the closing of other institutions. Rumors of Salem College's imminent collapse circulated freely in town, forcing President Bond, in the teeth of his own doubts, to express repeatedly his determination to keep Salem going.

True to form, the college experienced yet another dramatic rescue,

originating this time in the generosity of George H. Trainer, a local oil and gas entrepreneur and member of the college's board of directors, and of his wife Viola. Mr. Trainer appeared early one morning in Bond's office and placed before the astonished president a check.

Bond recalls the scene in his book, writing in the third person. "Then Mr. Trainer said, 'Mrs. Trainer and I have talked things over in the last forty-eight hours, and we have decided that we would rather give you a check just now and see it at work in

## Fort New Salem Crafts Classes

**F**ort New Salem of Salem College will offer summer craft and folklife courses through two sessions during June, July and August. The 1988 program is called "a summer in tradition."

Fort New Salem is a replica of a frontier settlement. The Fort is located on a hillside adjacent to the campus and consists of 20 buildings, including a meeting house, blockhouse, tavern, blacksmith shop, printing shop, and wood-working shop. There is also a general store where handcrafted items are sold. The fort is a living museum representing the culture and

crafts of Western Virginia during the period of 1770-1830.

Members of the Fort New Salem teaching staff, crafts people and visiting authorities on mountain culture will be on hand to instruct the various courses offered this year. Among them are West Virginia bird carver Claude Kemper [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1983, pp. 21-25], toymaker Dick Schnacke, tinsmith Dale the Tinker, and folklorist Judy P. Byers.

The "summer in tradition" sessions run from June 27 through July 15 and July 18 through August 5. The first session includes classes

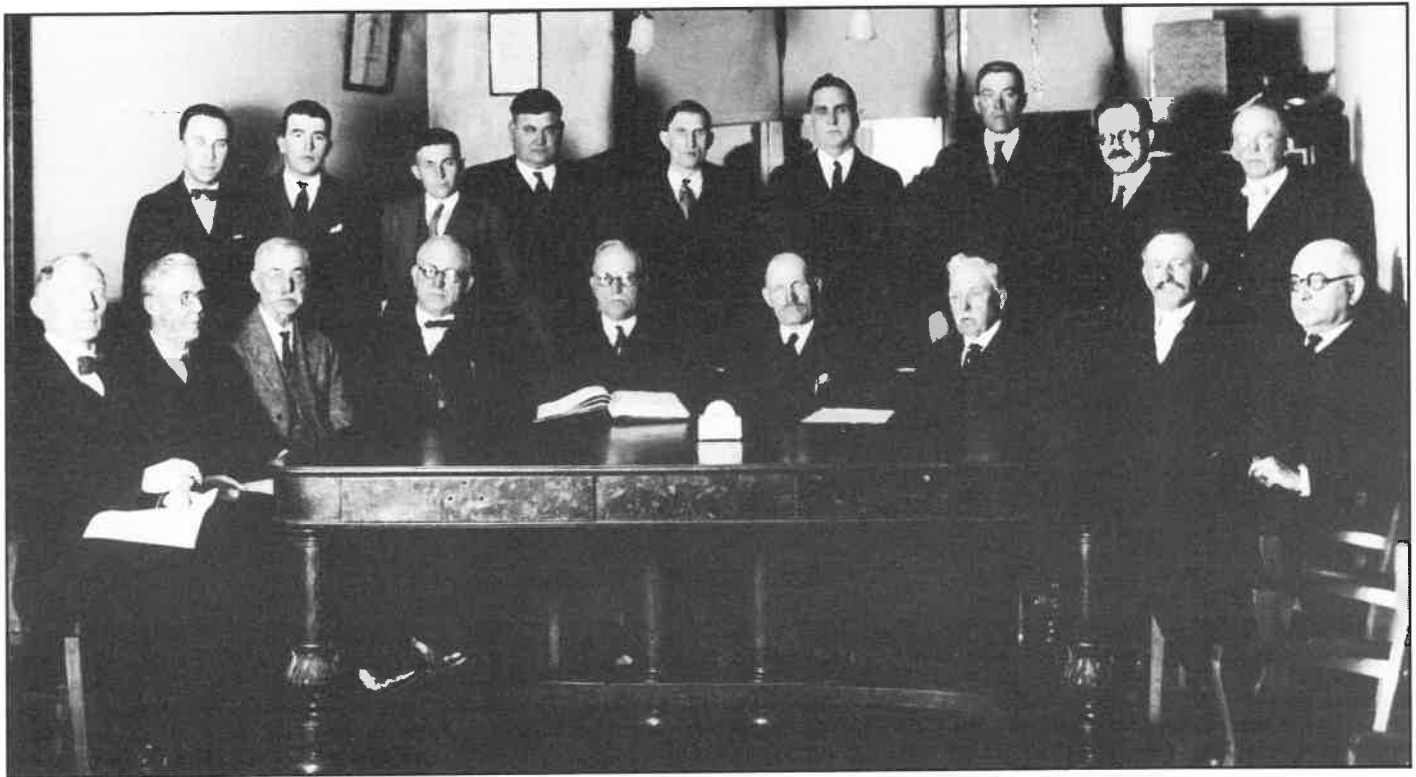
in quilting, decorative arts, bobbin lace, traditional country and farm tools, bread making, rug hooking, white oak and egg basketry, realistic bird carving, and paper quilling. Among courses offered during the second session are needlework, tinsmithing, floor loom weaving, herbal lore, spinning, and basketry. The second session itinerary also includes folk dance, storytelling techniques, folk arts for the classroom, and a folklife sampler featuring toys, humor and dialect.

All courses may be applied towards graduate education credit at Salem College. The summer sessions may also be taken as non-credit craft workshops. A pre-registration form and a one-time deposit of \$25 (applicable to tuition) must be submitted to Salem College by June 17. The cost for the classes is \$75 each, or \$75 per credit hour if taken for credit.

Participants will be registered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Limited dormitory housing will be available for \$5 per night (double occupancy) and \$7 per night (single occupancy), plus state sales tax. The cafeteria is open for cash sales. For additional information contact Fort New Salem, Summer Graduate and Crafts Workshop Program, Salem College, Salem, WV 26426, (304) 782-5245. Noel W. Tenney is coordinator of museum education.

Fort New Salem houses Salem College's museum studies and crafts programs. Photo courtesy Salem College.





The 1923 Salem College board, with President Sirius O. Bond seated at far left. Jennings Randolph, then a student member of the board, stands second from left. Photographer unknown, courtesy Salem College.

Salem College than to try to save it for some future time. I have made out a check. It's from both of us, and here it is. Use it where you think it will do the most good.' The President looked at the check as it lay before him. It was for the sum of \$10,000. He arose and walked over to Mr. Trainer's chair and took his hand, but no words would come. Tears came instead and copious ones. The College balanced its budget that year."

Enrollment dropped as low as 130 students during the war year of 1943, but by the mid-1950's Salem faced more students than it had space to house and educate. Increased visibility had brought increased enrollment. Additionally, the college became a fully accredited four-year institution in 1957, which attracted yet more students. The tiny school, built for some 400 students, found itself with well over a thousand. President Hurley embarked on an ambitious program of building. The young president, who served from 1951 to 1973, worked tirelessly to secure the necessary funding from a variety of sources, including the federal government and the Benedum Foundation. Chester Carlson, the inventor of

photoelectric printing, gave Salem a large amount of his stock in the Xerox Corporation. Contributions came as well from the college's burgeoning — and enthusiastic — alumni and their organizations.

The college, located in the heart of the community of Salem, had outgrown its old boundaries and had no room to expand. It was decided to build, from scratch, an entirely new Upper Campus approximately one third of a mile from the old center of campus. Voices on the board and in the community were raised in protest, claiming that the area chosen had serious drainage and other problems. "Hurley's Folly" was the epithet coined by the doubters.

Undaunted, the president pushed the project forward. Land was cleared, mostly through labor and machinery donated by area contractors, at the end of Pennsylvania Avenue. The first structure to be completed was the Carlson Hall of Science, a classroom, laboratory and faculty office building opened in 1968. The new women's dormitory, Hoffheimer Hall, was completed in 1970, followed by the men's dorm, Montgomery Hall, the same year. The Be-

nedum Library and the Campus Center were also finished in 1970. In 1973 the T. Edward Davis Physical Education Building was completed. The Brewster All-Faiths Chapel, dedicated in 1985, is the most recent addition to this section on campus. President Hurley's efforts led to a grant from the giant Occidental Petroleum Corporation to build the Armand Hammer Equestrian Center in 1978, located on a hill overlooking the Upper Campus.

Fort New Salem was the brainchild of John Randolph, now director of the college's museum studies program. A parcel of land donated to the college in the 1960's contained an old log cabin. Randolph saw in the weathered structure the nucleus of a recreated frontier town that would also house a new academic program, an idea that quickly caught on. As word spread, area farmers began donating similar structures, usually built during the days of early settlement. Trucks carrying the disassembled components wound their way to a spot in the north part of campus. Log by log, the settlement was assembled. By the time of its dedication in 1974, Fort New Salem included 20





The Randolph house, recently moved to the Salem campus, houses the college's public service program and commemorates the long relationship between the family and the institution. Photo by Michael Keller.

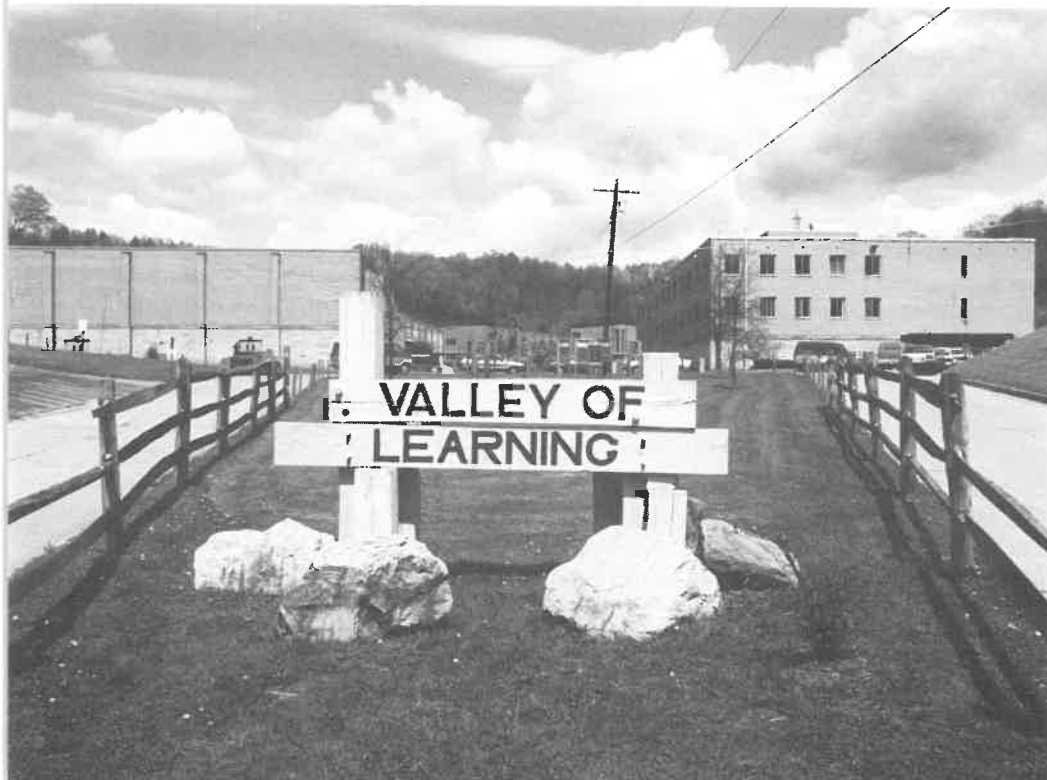
structures, gathered together in a rough rectangle around a central commons.

In January 1985, Senator Jennings Randolph completed his long career of public service. Ties between the Randolph family and Salem College extend back to 1888, when the senator's grandfather, Jesse Randolph, helped to establish the college. Three generations of Randolphs are gradu-

ates of Salem College, including Jennings' father Ernest, the senator and his sister, and his son, Jennings Randolph, Jr. Salem College paid homage to Senator Randolph, whose service to the institution spanned five decades, by dedicating the Jennings Randolph Center for Public Service. The goal of the center, housed in the senator's boyhood home, is to increase the political sophistication of state municipal officials by providing workshops, seminars, and other services. In April 1985, the Randolph house was moved, inch-by-inch on a huge flatbed truck, from its old Salem address to its present location next to the college's administration building.

Jennings Randolph is not the only Salem graduate to have done well in the world. This tiny school has graduated four U.S. senators, two West Virginia governors, four college presidents, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, two presidents of the National Education Association, and senior executives of the Sun Oil Company and British Petroleum. A more recent alumnus, Tracy Prior, '82, graduated from Salem's aviation program and went on to become part of the first all-woman crew ever to pilot a Boeing 727 between two international airports. Ms. Prior was promoted to the position of copilot less than a month after her historic flight.

The Valley of Learning is Salem College's new campus, built during the enrollment boom of the 1960's and 1970's. Photo by Michael Keller.



Alumnus Cecil Underwood exemplifies the pluck and determination to which the college owes its existence. Underwood came to Salem in 1940, virtually penniless but determined to attend college. The young man from the Tyler County hamlet of Josephs Mills hit upon the idea of selling chickens he had raised in a 4-H project to finance his first semester. President Orestes Bond arranged to have the chickens sold and lined up jobs in town for the promising student. Underwood earned his degree in just three years and went on to become, at age 34, West Virginia's 25th governor.

From its inception, Salem College has appealed to those like Underwood, students of ambition and ability who lacked the means to attend college. The college prides itself on the ability to sniff out children of promise and give them the wherewithal to attend college. Salem provides over 90 percent of its students with some form of financial assistance.

Then there is the case of Barbara Harmon-Schamberger, a young woman from rural Doddridge County who had decided at age 16 to drop out of high school. Fortunately, she was discovered by Salem College Upward Bound, a three-year program that encourages regional high school students to stay in school and to consider attending college. Her outlook was so changed by Upward Bound that she decided to attend West Virginia University. But that's not all. At WVU, Ms. Harmon-Schamberger became a Rhodes Scholar, winning the most prestigious student academic award in the world. She is currently completing her third year of studies at Oxford University in England.

Dr. Ronald E. Ohl, president of Salem College since 1983, is proud of such successes and proud to carry on in the tradition of John Huffman and Theodore Gardiner. The institution he heads is as rough-hewn as the weathered boards that make up Fort New Salem and as modern as the computer lab in the Carlson Hall of Science. A one-of-a-kind combination of tradition and forward-looking innovation, Salem College guarantees to its students four interesting and rewarding years. The founders wouldn't have had it any other way. ♣

**P**hysical work is getting to be a rare thing for some of us. Machines do it all. At work and at home, we have devices that save us from having to lift, carry, chop, shovel, or even get up out of our chair. Forklifts shift loads that human muscle used to strain at. Mining machines cut and load coal where men and mules used to sweat. The bucksaw and mowing scythe rust on the shed wall, supplanted by the chain saw and riding mower. Paring knives are strangers in the kitchen where the food processor reigns supreme. There's no need even to get up to change the channel on the television set.

All this reflects our notion that physical work is a dreary business, a backbreaking grind that dulls the soul while it wears out the body. We've come to believe that hard labor makes you old before your time. And in a society where everlasting youth is the ultimate ideal, work has become an activity that many shun at any cost.

But if you happen to travel through Meadow Creek, and chance to meet Elmer Richmond, you'll have to wonder whether hard work and growing old stand related in the way most people think. A tall, limber man, well-built and loose jointed, Elmer appears to be in his early 60's. His motions are strong and sure and he emanates an almost tangible aura of health. So when in passing he mentions that he was born in 1904, you have to try the sum over in your head a couple of times. Anyway you work it, taking four from 88 still gets you 84.

But here's Elmer Richmond, leading you, maybe a half-century younger, up the hill to see his bees, moving easily and talking all the time, while you begin to pant for breath and struggle to keep up. He's not moving fast but he's moving steady, like he can keep that pace all day. Later he tells you he does just that, sometimes covering 12 miles of rough country, hunting ginseng or just walking for pleasure, in that same steady stride. Eighty-four years old and still climbing mountains. You want to find out what made that possible.

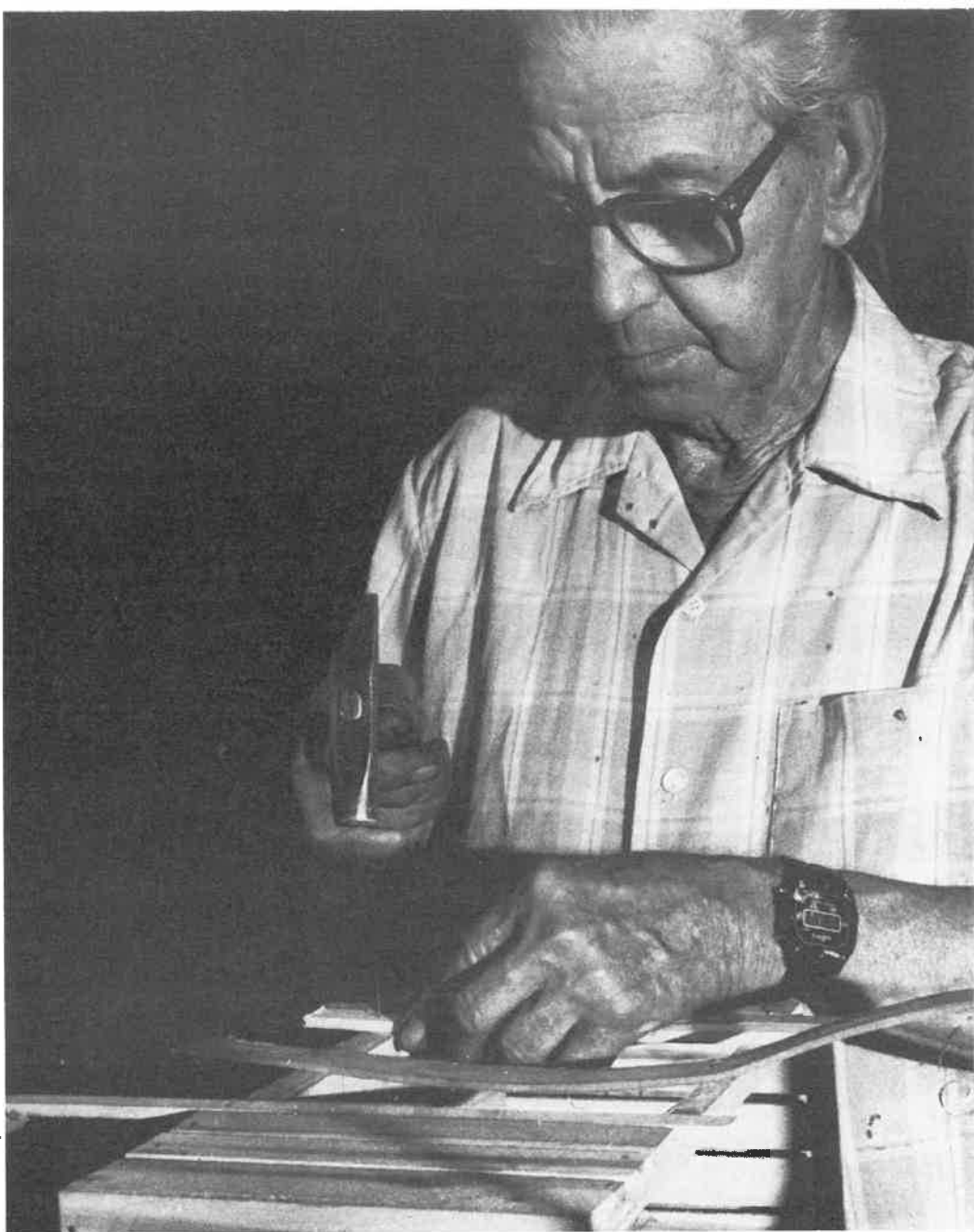
Elmer tells you, no, he doesn't jog or work out with weights or swim laps at the health club. He doesn't eat some fancy new diet full of roots and seaweed, or drink wheatgrass juice every morning. He doesn't feel the need for biofeedback and relaxation techniques to promote longevity and well-being. Elmer tells you he's

never paid much attention to his health. He's been too busy working to make a living.

And not doing what we call work today — not sitting behind a desk, pushing buttons and shuffling paper around. Not spending hours brainstorming new ways to sell people things they don't need.

Working hard — hoeing corn, cutting wood, plowing with a team. Lifting cross ties and shifting rock ballast on the railroad. The kind of work we're so determined to avoid these days, plain old physical labor.

Hard work, Elmer says. Again and again you hear those two words running



Elmer Richmond works on one of his cedar baskets. Mr. Richmond is 84 this year.

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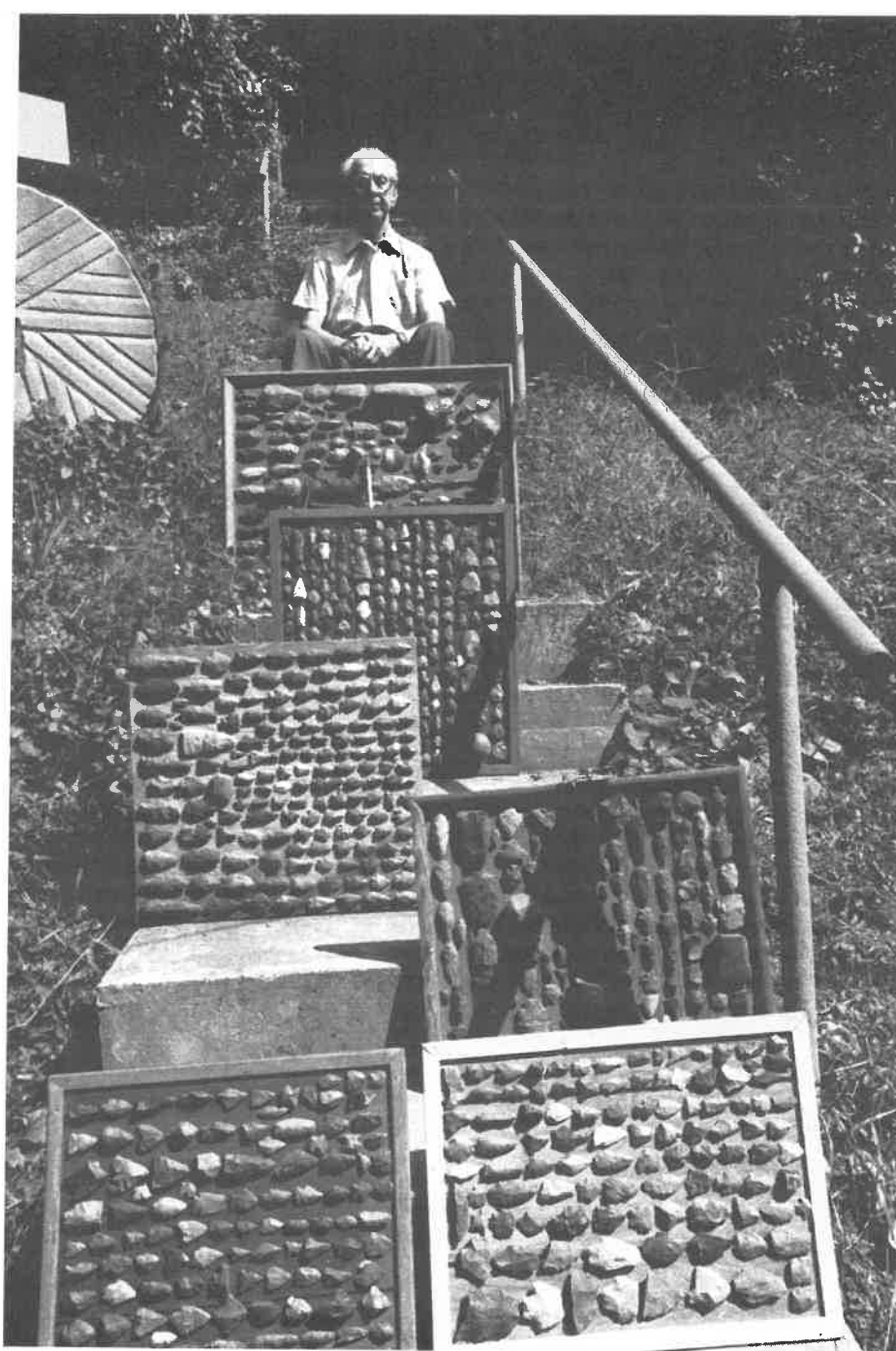
## Elmer Richmond

### "Hard Work Was All We Knew"

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Photographs and Text by Andy Yale

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Summers County is rich in Indian artifacts. Elmer Richmond has found his share.

*like a refrain in his speech, like a thread stitching the pattern whole. Work appears to be a touchstone in his life, a long life that encompasses many changes. It's a life that bridges two different worlds — the self-reliant, independent culture of old-time mountain living, and the closing years of the 20th century, a time in which we are increasingly dependent on technology.*

*When Elmer Richmond was growing up, folks had to feed and clothe themselves. The fruits of their labor were there for all to see. The hay in the barn, the food on the table, the tools to make them both — these were the direct results of your own sweat and skill. Hard work was the*

*center on which life revolved, the unquestioned foundation of all endeavor.*

*When you look at Elmer Richmond today, the thought crosses your mind that physical labor must have some rewards besides feeding and clothing the body that performs it. At 84, he still raises a big garden, keeps 38 stands of bees, walks for miles, makes his baskets. To see a man of his years so vital and alive, still working — and not from necessity, but because he wants to — is an inspiration for those who have learned to fear growing old. It suggests that physical labor has a direct connection to the life of the spirit and that a life spent working hard is a life well spent.*

Elmer Richmond. I was born on a farm about a mile down New River here on the Raleigh side, and about halfway up the mountain. We just had a little hillside farm up there, 52 acres. It was hard to get to. You didn't have no public road in; you just had a private road. It was a good place, but it was hard to get in and out.

When my dad moved in there in 1896, there was a little log house on that place. When he married, that was the first place he lived, that little one-room log house. It had a floor put in there, what they call puncheons, one side smooth. That was your floor. Wasn't a board floor. And he raised 14 children right there on that farm.

When he first went in there, it wasn't very much cleared up. We cleared it up later on. Cleared a lot after I got grewed up big enough to work. We would clear a new ground — raise corn and beans, oats, millet for cattle, you know. Some of it was hillside and some of it was kind of level. You didn't have to use no fertilizer, it was rich. You just plant your corn and beans and hoe them.

It was a pretty good life. There was a lot of wild game then, rabbits, squirrels and turkeys in there. You'd get a lot of wild meat. That was good eating. You take squirrels — my dad always liked to squirrel hunt. If they're fixed up right, they're good eating.

It was hard work, though. That's all we knew, to work. When we got out of school in the spring, we went to work on the farm. And you worked right on up until you went to start school again. Spring came, we'd put out that crop. Gather it in the fall, go right back to school again.

We didn't get to town very much. We went back on top of the mountain, back on the Raleigh side. They had a little country store and a church there when I was growing up. That was most of the places I went, church and store and post office.

Back then, we'd have revivals in our church. That was a big time for us, raised up like we was. Go to revival every day. That was a change from work, you see. Get out, see other people, be with other people for a couple of weeks. We'd always look forward to that. We'd have that



along about the last of August, first of September. That was a big event back in our times.

My dad never worked on no public works, he just raised stuff to sell. He would raise beans and stuff to sell. He would take them to Quinimont — that was a railroad town, you see. And he would sell that stuff down there to get his money. Say he would take 10 bushels of beans down there — he could sell them just as fast as he could deliver them around the houses. Just go house to house.

He had him a trade worked up down there. He would engage his stuff — say, go down there this week, take orders on what he was going to sell next week. And he'd go next week with that stuff and just deliver it around — most of it was already engaged. He'd take his milk and butter down there. Potatoes, apples, rhubarb — anything like that. We would just raise stuff like that on purpose to sell. People liked to see a farmer come in with that stuff. Anything you'd take down there you could sell. You could make a good bit of money.

He would ship his stuff down on the freight train, then he would go down himself. We'd gather that stuff today, and we'd just cross the river down there where we lived, set it here on the side of the track. And then we'd come up there to the station and bill it out. Next morning, about 8:00 o'clock, that local freight went west. He would stop there, pick up our stuff and unload it at Quinimont.

There was a passenger train went down before that local. My dad would go down on that. When that local freight came down with his stuff, he would dish it out. Then catch a passenger train back home. See, those passenger trains, there was four or five would stop right down at this station here. You could get that train and go either way you wanted.

All that started to change back in the '20's, you know. It began to just come gradually. Those supermarkets began to come around in places. That cut out the truck farming. But folks lived around over there on up through the '40's and '50's. Those people lived over there and made a living on those little farms. Of course, some of them would go to the mines or sawmill or somewhere and work



This heirloom rifle was already an old weapon when it passed down from Elmer Richmond's great-grandfather, murdered in the Civil War.

## Arthur Richmond's Gun

**M**y great-grandad, Arthur Richmond, was killed during the Civil War. My folks told me these scalawags that followed the war come through. And he had a horse that they wanted, but he wouldn't agree to let them have it. They just put him up against a tree and shot him. Killed him over that horse. That happened just two miles below Pluto, over in Raleigh County, on Pinch Creek. Not very far from here.

Well, this was his gun. His family gave it to my grandad, Harmon Richmond. That was his son. Harmon Richmond gave it to my dad, his name was Samuel Richmond. Samuel Richmond gave it to me.

It's been used a lot. My uncle said he'd killed many a squirrel with that gun. They used cap lock guns during the Civil War, so this gun comes before that.

I've never been able to find out where it was made. The Kentucky rifle comes the nearest to looking like this. My uncle said a man by the name of Miller made it, but, now, I don't know.

— Elmer Richmond



Mr. Richmond's baskets are patterned after those his father made, although of cedar rather than white oak. The slats, frame, and handle are joined by small nails.

during the winter when they wasn't farming. But some of them didn't, just made it on the farm.

We would raise our hogs, we had our milk and butter, raise our corn, potatoes, and we canned a lot of fruit. The only thing we had to buy was just salt and sugar — some seasonings. We had meat just practically year-round. We just lived right there on the farm.

You mostly stayed right on your place. Our closest neighbor would be, I'd say, about a mile and a half away from us. We would go maybe sometimes a month and never see nobody except just the immediate family. That's right. Go a month and not see none of our neighbors. And then maybe we would go out to some of their houses or they would come to our house. You didn't have much company then.

Hard work was all we knew. We didn't get to loaf around none over there. It's an easier life now. Back then — buddy, you worked! You'd get up in the morning and didn't plan on nothing. One of my neigh-

bors came in a few days before the 4th of July, said, "Elmer, where you going for the 4th of July?" Before I could answer, my dad said, "He's going to cornfield. He's going to cornfield!"

Welfare is what moved most of the people off these hills. If they couldn't get on welfare, they'd still be on those little farms. There wasn't any welfare then. If you didn't work to get it, you just didn't get it.

There were 14 in our family, 16 with my dad and mother. And just as soon as us boys got old enough to go out on public works, we would leave the farm. But we'd go back often. Couldn't just go away and stay — that was home to you.

I first left the farm and came over to Meadow Creek and got a job on the track. I worked on the track awhile and then I had a job as foreman. I worked 23 years as track foreman, all over the whole division, maintaining the track. You had to put your rails down when they needed new rails, or you'd put in new ties, keep the track smooth. It was heavy work,

hard work, all done by hand. Line the track by hand with lining bars. Move those 30-foot rails, just use what they call "rail dogs" on it. Put about six men on each end of that rail, pick it up and carry it. Now it's all done by machine.

I had a section back then, I had 12 men. Back then, they had 13 sections. And now, since the machines took over, they only have about five or six laborers on the whole division. Those machines cut out all those jobs.

I worked 43 years on the railroad and I retired in October 1969. When I retired, well, that's when I started making these baskets.

My dad made baskets back when I was just a kid. He made them as far back as I can remember. He would only make them in the winter, when he couldn't get out and do farm work. I never made any when I was a kid. I just watched him make them. But after I retired, I had to do something, you know. And I just thought I'd take up on that basket making. And I made a good many of them since.

My dad made them out of red oak and white oak — he didn't have much cedar to work with. But I hunted up a bunch of cedar and I make about all of mine out of cedar. They're not as sturdy a basket, they're not as strong. But cedar looks better and it has that smell to it.

They'd use baskets to take produce to market, eggs, tomatoes, beans, stuff like that. Those baskets were nice for butter and eggs — take the eggs to market in those baskets, you know.

Dad mostly made them for use on the farm, but he sold a few of them, too. He made a little smaller basket for a lunch basket and he would sell them to railroaders to take their lunch in, see. They'd get called out and they'd have to take enough lunch for more than one meal, you know, might be gone several days. You see them yet, with railroaders; some of them are still in use yet. I found one that he sold to a man on the railroad — he used that thing for years and years. I bet it's 75 years old. I got that basket back, just to keep it for a relic.

Dad did other woodwork too. He made boat oars, axe handles, pick handles, cant hook handles. Everything was made just by hand. I have a table saw now for some of my

Staats Mill Covered Bridge was built across Tug Fork of Mill Creek in 1887. It was moved to the Cedar Lakes complex in 1983.

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# Spanning Time

## Touring West Virginia's Covered Bridges

By Nan Bolling and Henrietta Watson  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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**I**n the late 1950's there were more than 50 covered bridges spanning the streams of West Virginia. Thirty years later they number in the teens. Fearing that they might all soon be gone at that rate, we set out from the Northern Panhandle last summer to

visit as many as we could find. We were fortunate to locate 17 of these rustic reminders of bygone days.

Bridges were covered to protect elaborate timber framing from the weather in those days before cheap wood preservatives. The resulting





work, but he did all his work just by hand.

He'd whittle out those bands that go around the basket. That's the hard part of making a basket. When you come around that bend there on the corner, some of that white oak will break instead of bending around there. You done lost that work then, see. But you can put it in hot water, get it hot, and that will help it bend around the bends the way you want it to.

There's one kind of white oak you can get, you don't have to put it in water. But it's hard to tell what kind it is. It all just looks alike, you won't know the difference until you go to bend it. I've never been able to tell the kind that bends from the other kind. The bark on it in the woods when you go in there to find the tree, it looks just exactly alike. The wood when you take the bark off it will look just alike, but when you go to bend it, why, you'll see it's a different kind.

I split out my cedar, get it down small enough till I can use it on a table saw, then I saw it out. But now my dad, when he made them, he whittled them out, with a pocket-knife. It would take him two or three days to make a basket. I'd say by the time he got his stuff out of the woods and whittled it out, he'd spend the biggest part of three days to make a basket.

He'd only get two or three dollars for them back then. He made some baskets, oh, about 30 inches long and 18 inches wide, and they'd take chickens in them. Take those chickens to market in those baskets, put a cloth over the top of it. Just take them to market.

He made his baskets mostly the same size at the bottom as they were on top. See, mine are a little bit smaller on the bottom. I thought they looked a little better that way, but I don't know if they do.

In the wintertime, when it gets cold and you can't get outside, I've got a place down in the basement aside of the furnace, and I can go down there and work on those baskets where it's good and warm. I've worked all my life and you know you can't just quit and sit around and be satisfied. You've got to do something. If I ain't doing something — making



Beekeeping is one of several activities which keep Elmer Richmond busy. "Just to sit down and do nothing — I can't do that," he says.

a basket or something else — I've got to get out and walk. I may walk up the holler here three or four miles. I do a lot of walking.

I can go anywhere I want yet. Go up on Hump Mountain — I'd say that's about four miles. Never bothered me at all, I just went right on. I've got a neighbor up here, he's about 81, we cross the river over here and go up on the Raleigh side, clear up on top, up around Abraham and back, the whole round would be

about 12 miles. Yeah, we still do that. But now, we won't just take out and go, we spend all day. We start like this morning, take a lunch with us. That 12 miles don't bother me at all. But just to sit down and not do nothing — that gets me. I can't do that. ♣

*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.*

structures were impressive and they served other purposes than simply to carry traffic across creeks and rivers. They gave shelter in the time of rain, offered a quiet place to steal a kiss, and kept horses from shying at the water. Circus posters were nailed on the sides, as were patent medicine ads. In election years, candidates found their pictures glaring back from wooden bridges as they traveled around the country electioneering.

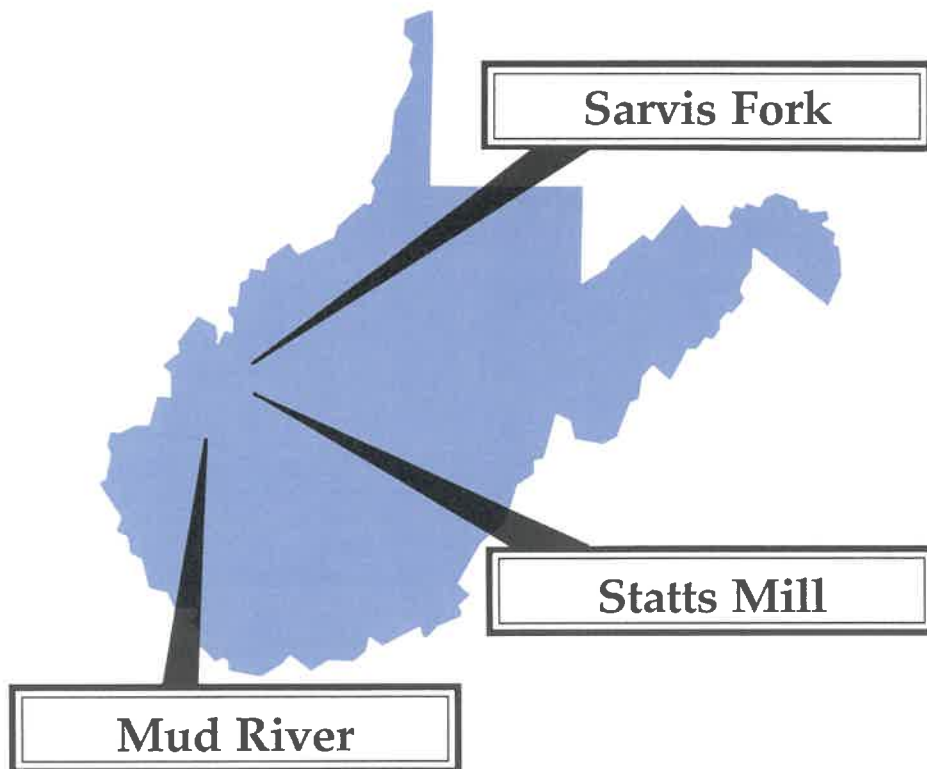
We met in Wheeling one hot day in July 1987 to begin our exploration. We drove by way of Interstate 70 west to Cambridge, Ohio, where Interstate 77 pointed us back to West Virginia. We crossed the Ohio River at Parkersburg and continued south to Jackson County and the Ravenswood exit. There we traveled east to Route 21. Turning left on this road, we continued north to Sandyville and to secondary road 21/15. Sarvis Fork Covered Bridge can be seen on the right. This bridge, built in 1889, is in excellent condition. We drove our automobile across it. A local fisherman informed us that part of the bridge floor had had to be replaced several years ago. He also noted that the bridge had been featured in the June 1970 issue of *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine.

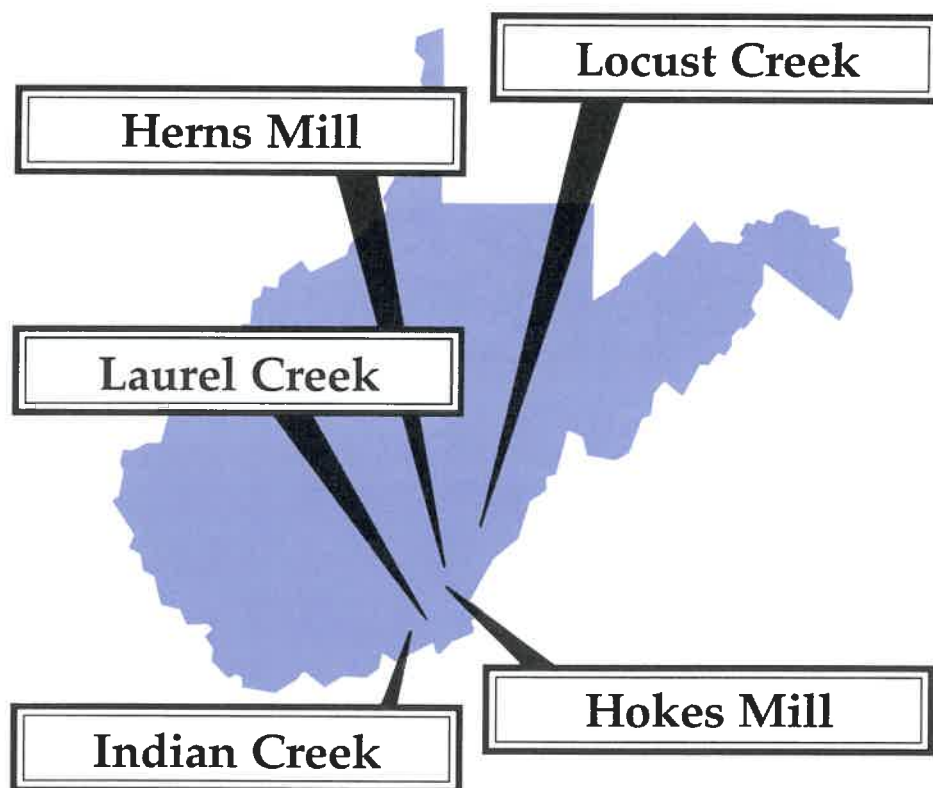
We rejoined Interstate 77 south, following it to the Ripley exit. There we took Route 33 east, following signs to the Cedar Lakes State FFA-FHA Center. We found Staats Mill Covered Bridge on the Cedar Lakes grounds. An historic marker states that the bridge was built over the nearby Tug Fork of Mill Creek in 1887. The 100-foot structure was moved to the present location in 1983. It adds much charm to the Cedar Lakes complex, but to us the bridges are more meaningful when left in their original setting.

We returned to I-77, heading south to the capital city of Charleston. There we took Interstate 64 west to the Milton exit and U.S. Route 60. The Mud River Covered Bridge, built in 1876, is located just beyond the Blenko Glass factory. The Cabell County road is closed to automobile traffic because the wooden bridge is now safe only for pedestrians. A marker told us that this bridge was restored in 1971 through the efforts of the Milton Covered Bridge Club.



The 1876 Mud River Covered Bridge, near Milton, is now closed to traffic.





The West Virginia Department of Highways did the restoration.

From Milton we returned via I-64 east to Charleston and the West Virginia Turnpike (Interstate 77). For \$3.75 we made our way south to Princeton, then took U.S. Route 460 east to U.S. 219, notching through a misplaced corner of Virginia on the way. Route 219 north pointed us toward Union, the Monroe County seat.

There are two covered bridges near Union. The oldest, located about five miles south, is Indian Creek Covered Bridge, built in 1898. We parked our car on the St. John's Methodist Church lot and crossed the road to this bridge in its rugged setting. Inside we saw a maul and mallet, tools used in the original construction, and an old buggy and sleigh. It is interesting to note that this bridge was built by Ray Weikel, age 18, and his brother Oscar, age 16. Indian Creek Bridge, clearly visible from the highway, is not open to traffic. It is maintained by the Monroe County Historical Society.

We next went to Laurel Creek Covered Bridge, built in 1910. This beautifully proportioned little bridge, only 25 feet long, is the shortest in the

state. The turn for this bridge is about one mile from the Indian Creek Bridge. It is hard to find. We looked very carefully for Route 219/7, and turned left onto this narrow road to Lillydale. We continued driving and enjoyed the natural beauty of this crooked road. We saw a few farmhouses and found it necessary to sound our horn at some of the sharpest curves. Eventually we arrived at the bridge, just beyond Lillydale on 219/11, and were able to drive across.

If you are interested in the exploration of caves, the Lillydale road passes by the large opening to the Laurel Creek Cave.

Next day we located two covered bridges in exquisite Greenbrier County. From Lewisburg we took U.S. 219 south to Ronceverte, crossing the Greenbrier River there. Just across the big modern Greenbrier bridge, we turned right onto Route 48 and eventually onto 62. The Hokes Mill Covered Bridge, built in 1897-99, is 62 feet long. It carries Route 62 across Second Creek, just before the Virginia state line. Many old advertisements are still visible, touting "Murphy's All-American Shows" and "Fautz's Horse and Cattle Powder." Nestled among large trees,

with clear water murmuring over the rocks below, it was an ideal location for our picnic lunch.

The second covered bridge near historic Lewisburg is the 1879 Hems Mill Bridge. It spans Milligan Creek. We followed U.S. 60 west from Lewisburg for one and a half miles to Muddy Creek Mountain Road. Here we took a lefthand turn onto State Route 33 and continued for about four miles to find this bridge. We parked our automobile and walked across the 50-foot span. It has a very picturesque setting surrounded by lush evergreens and rhododendron, the state flower of West Virginia.

Locust Creek Covered Bridge was a real challenge to find. It was built in 1870. It is located near the Pocahontas County birthplace of Pearl S. Buck. At one time the original road that linked Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties crossed this 116-foot bridge. We drove the gyrating but scenic U.S. 219 north from Lewisburg toward Hillsboro for 26 miles, until we found a sign that read "Locust Creek Road." We turned right and drove about four miles further. The bridge is situated on the right at the bottom of a hill. It is located in a unique setting of natural and man-made beauty.

The 1861 Walkersville Covered Bridge was the site of our next visit, taking us north to central West Virginia. We again left Lewisburg on 60 west, joining U.S. Route 19 in Fayette County, north of the spectacular and very modern New River Gorge Bridge. We followed 19 up to Interstate 79. We took the four-lane north for about 35 miles, to Lewis County and the Roanoke exit. There we rejoined U.S. 19, heading south this time. We went through Walkersville, turning right to Big Run Road. The West Fork River bridge has separate tire tracks for automobile traffic. It is 52 feet long, spanning time with its impressive structure.

Our next visit was to the Carrollton Covered Bridge, built in 1856. We followed I-79 north to the Weston exit and then took U.S. Route 33 east. When we came to U.S. 119 north, we turned toward Philippi. This bridge is located five miles south of Philippi. We turned onto Carrollton Road (County 36) and continued a mile or so to this Barbour County covered



bridge. It clings to a precarious existence over the Buckhannon River. This is one of the oldest bridges we saw, built by Emmett O'Brien, an associate of bridge pioneer Lemuel Chenoweth. It has an interesting white petal design on the front. We learned that some of the siding was torn off and used to repair the better-known Philippi Bridge before its centennial celebration. Looking very closely, we could read the old advertisements still visible on the side of the bridge.

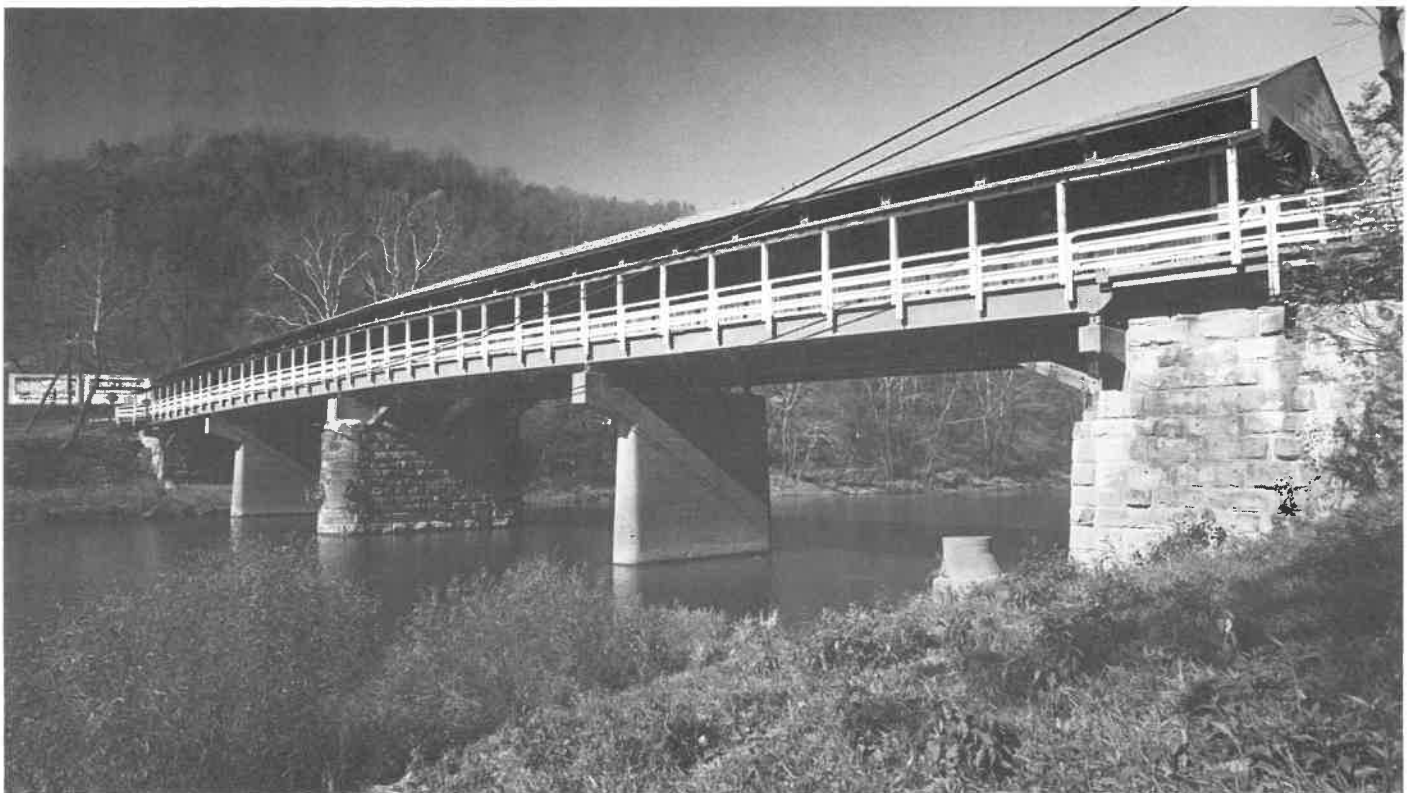
We then continued via U.S. 119 north to the Philippi Covered Bridge, West Virginia's most famous. It was built in 1852. If you can find Philippi you have found this magnificent covered bridge over the Tygart River. Lemuel Chenoweth of Beverly did the wooden structural design and Emmett O'Brien designed the stonework for this majestic 300-foot relic of an earlier day. We had already learned Chenoweth was one of the outstanding bridge engineers of his era. His handiwork still carries the heavy traffic of U.S. 250, a major secondary road, albeit on modern decking and piers. It has two lanes to carry vehicles across the river.

The Philippi Bridge is the longest and oldest covered bridge in West Virginia. The day we were there it



Above: The Carrollton Covered Bridge crosses the Buckhannon River in Barbour County. Like other timber bridges adapted for modern traffic, the 1856 structure has been reinforced with concrete piers.

Below: The 300-foot Philippi Covered Bridge is West Virginia's most famous. The 1852 bridge, now underpinned by concrete and steel, originally was supported by two timber arches connecting the center stone pier to the two stone abutments.



was busy with travelers. In quieter moments it serves as the college town's kissing bridge. This custom is carried on by the students of Alderson-Broaddus College. The tradition is that whenever a freshman girl is walking across the bridge with an upperclassman she is obligated to give the young man a kiss.

Our next find was the Simpson Creek Covered Bridge, near Bridgeport. We took 119 north out of Philippi, and then U.S. Route 50 east to Interstate 79 north. We took the I-79 Meadowbrook Mall exit onto Harrison County Route 24. We continued

on this road for about a mile and a half, finding the bridge on the left. The Simpson Creek Bridge, open to automobile traffic, is 78 feet long and 16 feet wide. It was built in 1881 by A. S. Hugill at a cost of \$1,483, on land owned by John Lowe. It survived the great flood of 1888, but was washed away from its original site about a half mile upstream. There are now two large electric lights installed in the bridge ceiling. It is surrounded by evergreen and maple trees. Simpson Creek provides superb fishing for local anglers.

The Tenmile Creek Bridge was our

next stop, near Wolf Summit in Harrison County. We got there by traveling U.S. 50 west from Clarksburg to the Marshville Road. The bridge is located on the left approximately two miles after you turn onto Marshville Road. Built in 1891, it is often called the Fletcher Covered Bridge. It is a good example of king post construction, a triangular truss system and one of the earliest bridge construction forms. The 62-foot span is open to traffic. As we drove across we realized that while a covered bridge derives its rustic charm and beauty from the side covering and roof, the

## Lemuel Chenoweth

**P**ioneer bridge builder Lemuel Chenoweth was born in Beverly, Randolph County, in 1811. He received little formal education, but developed a local reputation for his mathematical abilities. Early in his life, Chenoweth built wagons, furniture, and several small bridges in the Weston area.

Chenoweth was fortunate to come of age in the time when Virginia's western counties were agitating for roads and other "internal improvements." In the 1850's, bids were taken for bridges for the middle stretch of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike and Chenoweth submitted his plans for consideration.

Legend has it that the backcountry carpenter arrived at the state capital of Richmond with his bridge model packed in his saddlebags. Other bidders offered complicated designs featuring iron structures, wire cables, cantilevers, and stone arches. Chenoweth's was made of native poplar with no nails. His plain model attracted little attention until he placed it between two chairs, stood on it, and challenged the other bidders to put their models to the same test. Not one would try it.

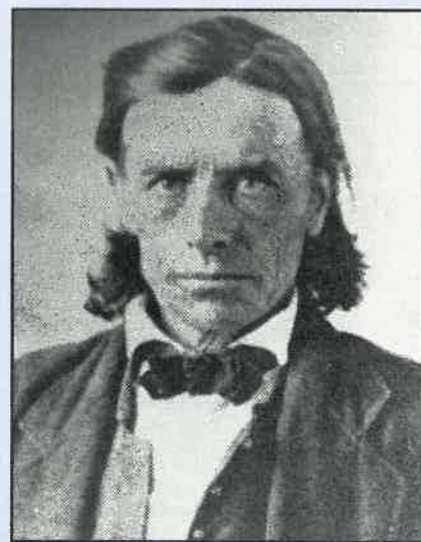
The story has been disputed, but the bid was awarded to Chenoweth to build all the main river crossings for the center section of the new turnpike. He also con-

structed many bridges on smaller routes at the same time. In 1852, Chenoweth built his most celebrated structure, the Philippi Covered Bridge over the Tygart. It was built out of yellow poplar. Chenoweth and his brother Eli also constructed the covered bridge across Buffalo Creek at Barrackville. It was a wide, single-lane bridge.

Chenoweth's major bridges all employed the Burr arch-truss structural design. This framing system, developed by Theodore Burr, improved bridge strength dramatically. Simple truss framing used triangular bracing to stiffen the structure. Burr's design integrated an arch into the truss framework, increasing strength and rigidity for longer spans.

Philippi was the site of the first land battle of the Civil War, but Chenoweth's new bridge survived. Other covered bridges were less fortunate, making easy and strategic targets for marauding troops. With the coming of the war, Chenoweth stopped building bridges. He sat out the conflict at home, knowing that his works were being destroyed by troops on both sides. He rebuilt his hometown bridge at Beverly in 1872-73, seven years after it had been burned. It was his last bridge job.

Lemuel Chenoweth bridged many rivers in West Virginia be-

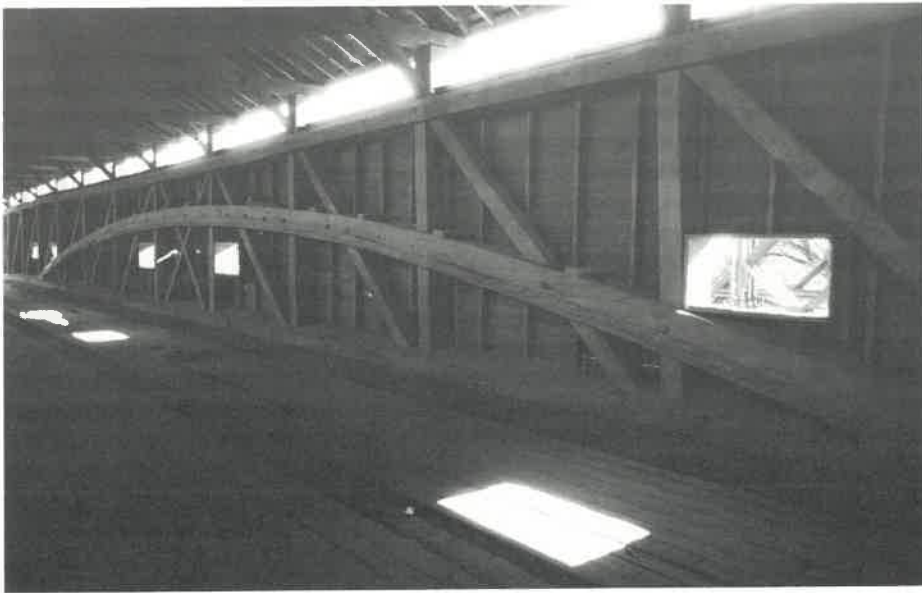


Lemuel Chenoweth, (1811-1884), West Virginia's most famous bridge builder, is known primarily for his covered bridges at Philippi and Barrackville. He also built bridges in Randolph, Lewis, Upshur and Pocahontas counties. Courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU.

tween 1851 and his death in 1884. He has been credited with the construction of covered bridges in Randolph, Lewis, Upshur and Pocahontas counties, as well as his more famous structures in Barbour and Marion. His Barrackville bridge is the only major covered bridge in the state that supports daily traffic with essentially no modern reinforcement. It is a lasting tribute to Lemuel Chenoweth, the Mountain State's most famous bridge builder.

—Debby Sonis Jackson





West Virginia's covered bridges generally used a truss or arch-truss framing system. The Barrackville Bridge (above) features a Burr arch-truss, which incorporates a timber arch into a truss framework. The Staats Mill Bridge (right) employs a Long truss, characterized by X-shaped cross bracing.



real strength is in the sturdy framing inside.

We traveled on to the 1890 Center Point Covered Bridge. This bridge can be reached by taking U.S. 50 west from Clarksburg to Salem. We then drove on County Route 33 north to Center Point, a distance of about ten miles. We saw the bridge on the right as we drove on Pike Fork Road. It is not open to any traffic. It has been restored by the Doddridge County Historical Society. They have been able to maintain its antique look, reminiscent of weathered cedar shakes. We saw deer, squirrels, chipmunks, and groundhogs going about on this very warm day in July.

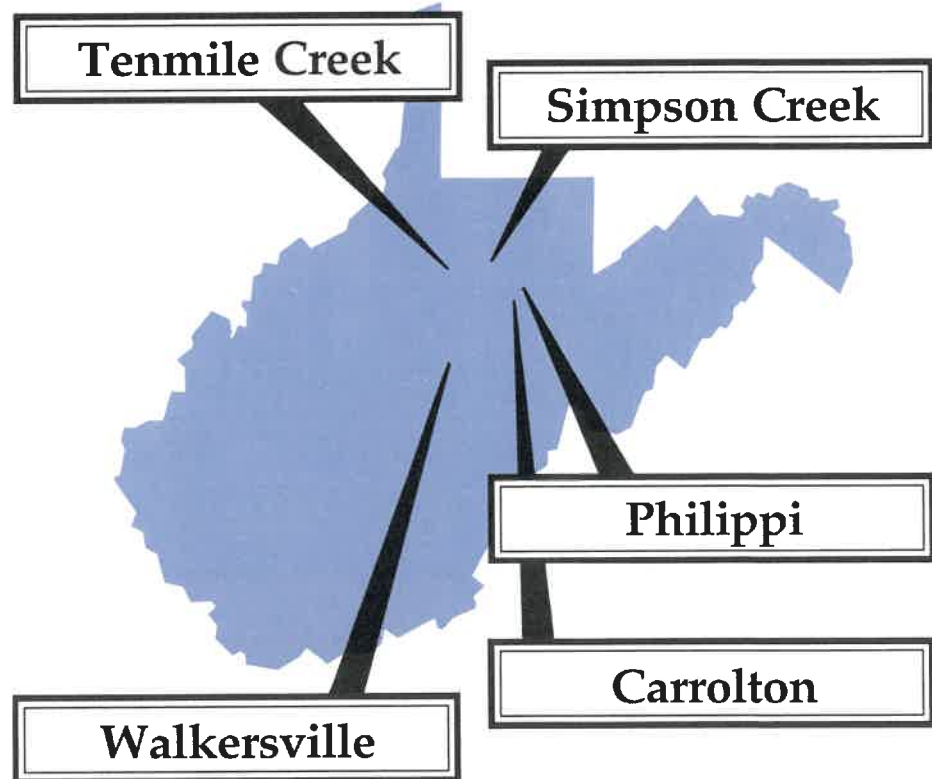
We drove on to the Barrackville Covered Bridge, which was built in 1853 on the old Fairmont to Wheeling Turnpike. To locate this Marion County covered bridge we followed U.S. 250 north from Fairmont to Barrackville. We went through the town of Barrackville, watching for a right turn off 250. The bridge spans Buffalo Creek, and was designed by Lemuel Chenoweth with the help of his brother Eli. The 148-foot structure is in substantially its original condition. The bridge was saved from destruction during Confederate General William E. Jones' raid, April 29, 1863, by the plea of Southern sympathizers residing in the area.

The West Virginia University

School of Engineering has a model of the Barrackville Covered Bridge displayed in their building in Morgantown. They consider it to be an excellent example of bridge engineering for its day. Like Chenoweth's other bridges, it uses Burr arch-truss framing, incorporating an arch into con-

ventional triangular trussing.

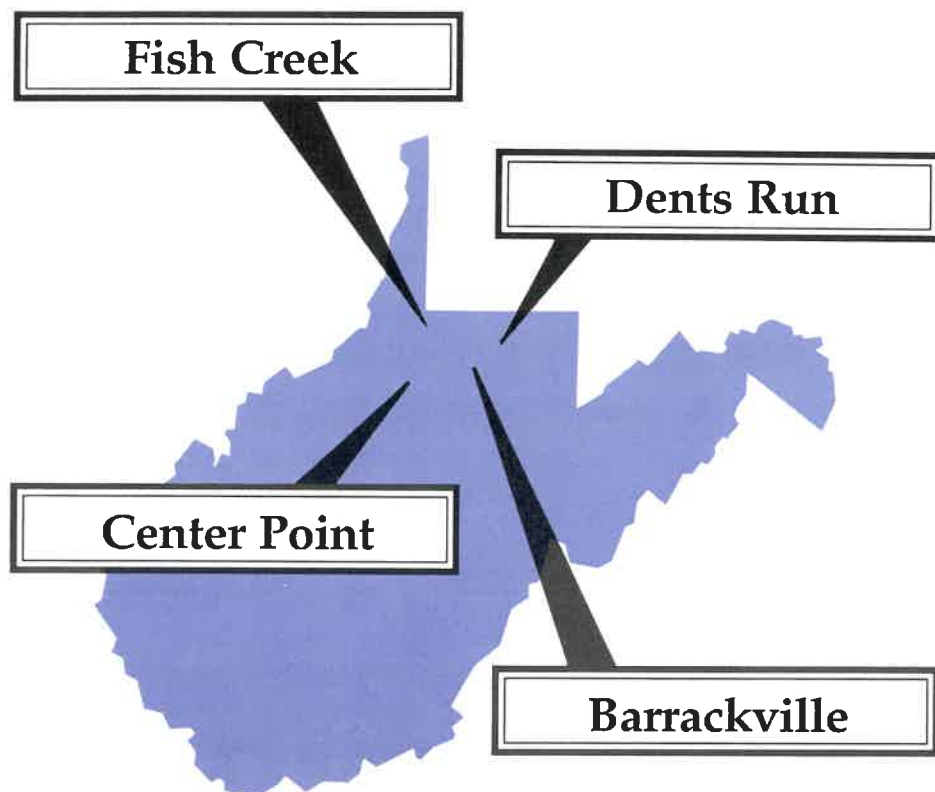
The next bridge we drove to was the 1880 Fish Creek Covered Bridge. We continued north on U.S. 250 from Barrackville toward Hundred in Wetzel County, turned left onto Rush Run Road, County 13, across from the West Virginia State Police build-







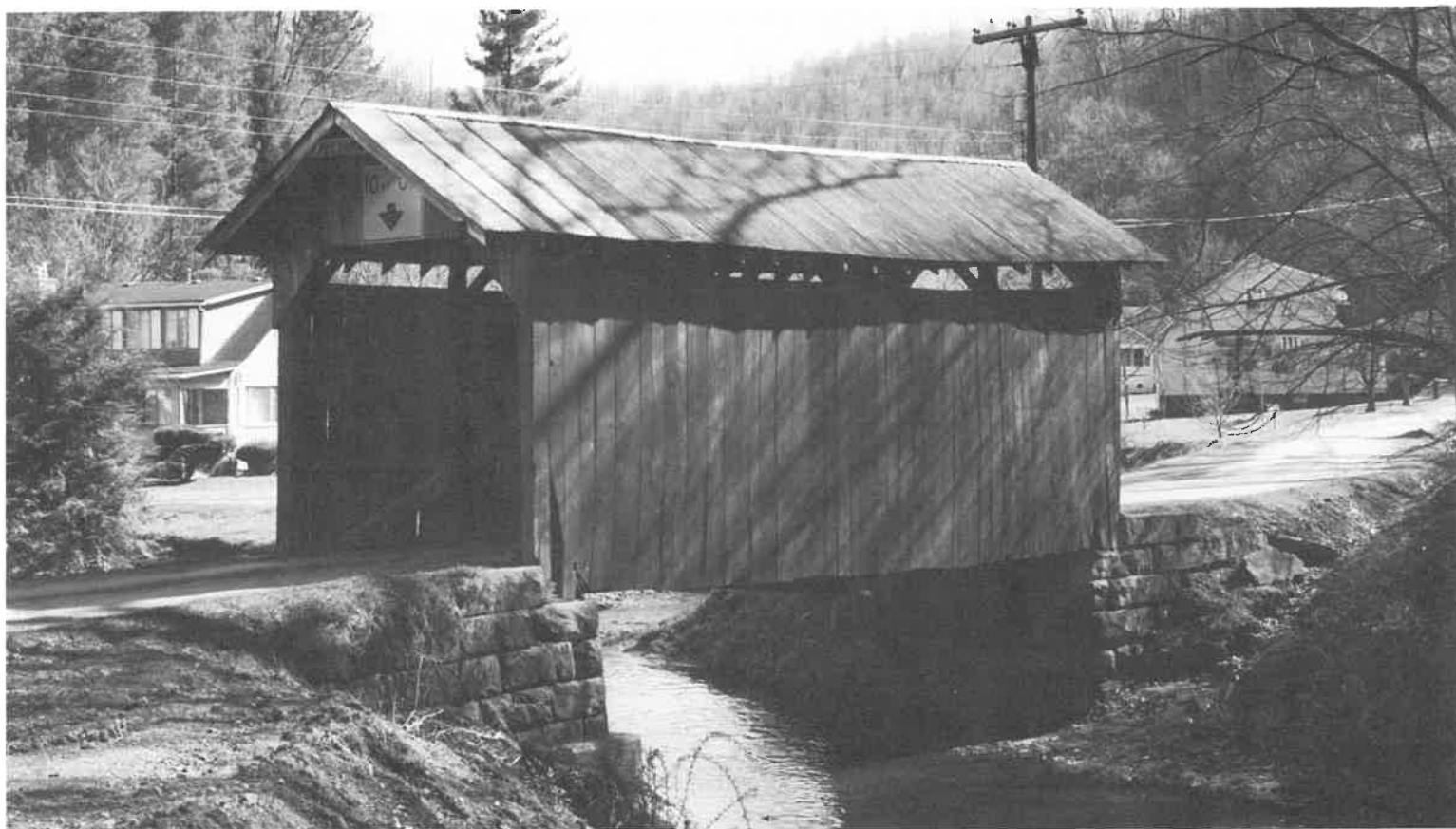
The Simpson Creek Covered Bridge is located near Interstate 79 in Harrison County. The bridge was built in 1881 for less than \$1,500.



ing. This bridge is approximately 24 miles from Barrackville. Relatives of C. W. Critchfield built the 36-foot span over Fish Creek. It is a fine place to relax and take in the scenic view of the clear water of the creek, and the abundance of scrumptious ferns, rhododendron, and mountain laurel.

We drove on to Dents Run Covered Bridge, also built in 1880. It is the only remaining covered bridge in Monongalia County. We retraced our steps down 250 south to U.S. 19, then turned north to Laurel Point. There we turned left at the Kerns farm — actually, the road goes right but we continued straight ahead. Dents Run Bridge has two tracks for automobile tires. It was built by order of the Monongalia County Court at a cost of \$198 for stonework, \$250 for the wooden frame. The bridge is 40 feet long and 13 feet wide. It is another example of king post truss design.

Dents Run was the last stop on our covered bridge tour, nearly closing the big circle we had begun at Wheeling. We had found sprinkled across



the Mountain State 17 delightfully different, and generally well-preserved, wooden covered bridges. One could hardly have chosen a more ideal variety, from the majestic double-laned Philippi Covered Bridge serving busy U.S. 250 to the 25-foot gem carrying a country lane across Laurel Creek near Lillydale.

We encourage others to visit the covered bridges of West Virginia. It will make you more aware of their importance in the growth and development of this region. A deeper appreciation of our rich heritage will result. Since West Virginia did not attain statehood until 1863, many of the bridges are older than our state itself. They epitomize the strength of their builders, who were our ancestors. Some of the bridges continue to serve our daily transportation needs, and they all deserve our best efforts at preservation. ♣

*Top:* The 1880 Fish Creek Bridge, near Hundred in Wetzel County, is West Virginia's northernmost surviving covered bridge. The 36-foot span carries daily traffic.

*Right:* The 1880 Dents Run Bridge employs the classic king post truss system. The Monongalia structure typifies the special beauty of West Virginia's covered bridges.



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# Singing on the Back Porch

## Roy Faulkner of Moundsville

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By Patricia H. Hall  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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Roy Faulkner has put in plenty of time on Northern Panhandle porches. Here he pauses in front of his Moundsville home.



The history of West Virginia is alive with whistlers, singers, yodelers, and any number of instrumentalists. Some played for money, and some for fun. We hear more about the professionals, but the skill and enthusiasm of the amateurs are still remembered by those who enjoyed the big talent shows of the 1930's. Some of the amateurs dreamed of becoming radio stars, while using their talents to entertain family and friends in their own backyards.

One of those entertainers was Roy Faulkner, still singing in Moundsville today. Roy started traveling to amateur contests with his sisters, Clara and Eva, at the age of eight or nine, winning such prizes as groceries, household furnishings, or a pocketful of silver dollars.

He was born March 29, 1919, the ninth child of 11, in Galloway, a small community in Barbour County. The son of Rebecca Maxwell and John William Faulkner, the outgoing Roy affectionately remembers his parents as reserved and private people. "They didn't go out much in crowds," he says. "Mother and Dad were both kind of backward about talking to strangers."

Rebecca and John were married in Clarksburg when both were 17, according to their son. "Mother was born in January, and Dad was born a month later on February 28, 1882," Roy says. "He was almost a leap-year baby. They were both from West Virginia. Dad was of German descent, and Mother was part Indian and part English, I believe. My grandmother's name was White Hair."

In 1925, the family moved to Moundsville, then to New Concord, Ohio, a year later. John Faulkner moved his dependents several times,



looking for work. "We had to move to where the mines were operating, since Dad was a coal miner," Roy explains. They came back to Moundsville in 1929 to stay.

An active 10-year-old by then, Roy busied himself in the community when the Faulkiners made their final move to Moundsville. He remembers Friday nights spent at the B. M. Spurr Memorial Playground. "The citizens' band used to play every Friday night, before the showing of a movie. For a half hour before the movie, they let all the kids march around the roller skating rink. We'd march up and down, pretending to play instruments."

Children's activities were always supervised, Roy recalls. The youngsters would swim, roller-skate, play sandlot football, and play baseball at the playground. "Kids weren't near as wild as they are now," Roy says. "We used to have more snow than we have now. We made our own bobsleds and a track coming out of the hollow over at Center Street."

But no matter what the season, the singing Faulkiners made music. The most vivid of Roy's childhood memories is that of the family singing together. "The whole family sang," he remembers. "We grew up singing. We sat on the back porch every evening to listen to the radio and sing. We knew hundreds of songs."

The music started with John Faulkiner. "Dad had a mouth harp. I kept it until a few years ago when I gave it to my nephew," Roy says. "He also had a Jew's harp. Have you ever seen one of those? It has prongs with two wires coming out from it. Every time I tried to play it, it banged against my teeth. I didn't fool with it too much, 'cause I didn't like it hitting my teeth. But it sounded good when Dad played it."

Mr. Faulkiner played practically any instrument, specializing in the German accordion but also enjoying the mandolin, guitar, and banjo. "All of us played the mandolin," Roy says. "My brother played the five-string banjo and the guitar, another brother played the trumpet. Many of us played the guitar and banjo."

The children loved to listen to the great radio performers of the 1920's. They soon learned the popular songs of the day. None of the Faulkiners

could read music but that didn't stop them. "We would listen to the songs on the radio and write down the words as we heard them," Roy says. "We wouldn't get every word, but we got a few more each time as we listened. By the time we got the words written down, we knew the tune."

Roy smiles as he thinks about it. "I wish I had a memory today like I did then," he says. "People used to come from miles around. They would park in the backyard and listen to us sing." Word spread, and the Faulkiners were asked to sing in schoolhouses and churches all around Marshall County. They sang for weddings, funerals, church services, anywhere they were asked.

Parents Rebecca and John Faulkiner celebrate their 50th anniversary in 1949. John was a coal miner, who moved his family about in search of work.

One of Roy's specialties was yodeling. He listened to the radio, especially to country pioneer Jimmie Rodgers, then tried to copy the sounds. It didn't take long for him to catch on, and pretty soon he could really yodel. Sister Clara could also yodel a little, and yodeling songs became a highlight of their performances.

The Faulkiners heard of their first amateur talent show over the radio. After learning more about it on the radio and in the newspapers, they talked it over and decided to enter.

In those days, many businesses held amateur contests — car dealerships, furniture companies, all kinds of merchants. The talent shows were





Roy learned the music young and likes to pass it on. Here he cajoles writer Pat Hall's son into singing along.

good publicity for the merchants, and inexpensive entertainment for the townspeople during the Depression. As many as 35 to 40 acts would enter each competition. Contest coordinators then held auditions to select the ten who would make it as finalists.

"There were always a lot of singers," Roy recalls. "And you'd hear fiddlers, banjo players, all sorts of musicians. I remember a blind fiddle player who came down to this area after winning a talent contest in Canada."

Doc Williams, country music star and 50-year veteran of the WWVA "Wheeling Jamboree," remembers the blind fiddler as Pete Castle. "There was an amateur contest in Frederickton, New Brunswick, in Canada," Doc says. "The winner won a trip by rail to Wheeling to be on my show. He played the fiddle and guitar with his feet, and he sang. He was good, too."

Typically, three judges, usually professional musicians, would rate the amateur acts. Other times, contestants were judged by an audiome-

ter, an instrument which measured the volume of audience applause. During many of the fiddle contests the judges were seated in a separate room, unable to see the competitors.

Organizers with such names as "Pipeline Pete" and "Harmonica Joe" made their way through towns in West Virginia and Ohio to hold local shows. It was an easy way to make a little money. Adults were charged a quarter to a half-dollar, and children paid a dime or 15 cents. The talent was free. All it took to enter the competition was the wish to perform.

In 1934, the Reichart Furniture Company announced an amateur contest for the Wheeling area. First prize was a set of porch furniture, just perfect for a family who sang on the back porch every evening.

The Faulkiners decided to enter and Roy remembers the show well. "That was a big contest," he says. "As I recall, they had several pre-shows, then radio station WWVA in Wheeling broadcast the final show over the air. We didn't have a live audience for that one."

Roy and his sisters won the Reichart contest, and used the porch furniture for many years. "Those contests offered all kinds of prizes. They gave away everything — furniture, silver dollars, bags of groceries," Roy says.

Perhaps it was their success at the amateur contests that gave Roy's father the idea of having his children sing for the West Virginia Democratic Convention in Clarksburg in 1935. "Dad wasn't very outgoing except for when it came to politics. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat and a politician. If anyone said a bad thing about a Democratic president, he'd fight 'em." Roy pauses a moment before adding, "And he let it be known his kids could sing."

So John Faulkiner arranged for his young singers to perform at the big convention. "We stayed at the old Gore Hotel in Clarksburg," Roy recalls. "It's not there anymore." Their repertoire for that performance included songs like "Way Out There," "You Are My Sunshine," and "Yellow

Rose of Texas." Whenever the family had a place to sing, they prepared 25 to 30 numbers.

One of the highlights of the Faulkiners' amateur career was the time in 1937 when they sang for the "Wheeling Jamboree," then as now WWVA's big show. "We sang old hymns and country music. Everyone did hymns then, quartet style." The family also sang for other WWVA programs, and for rival station WKWK in Wheeling, as winners of amateur talent contests.

Roy remembers how nervous he and his sisters were for the "Jamboree" broadcast. The show had a huge regional audience in the Northeast and Canada, but it was the people in the theater that worried the Faulkiner kids. "The only broadcast we had a live audience for was the 'Jamboree,'" Roy says. "Even after all of our performing experience, we were nervous. We were young. We loved doing it, but we were still nervous."

The Faulkiner children often talked about becoming radio stars, dreaming of fame as popular musicians, but practicality always intruded. "I went to work when I was just barely a

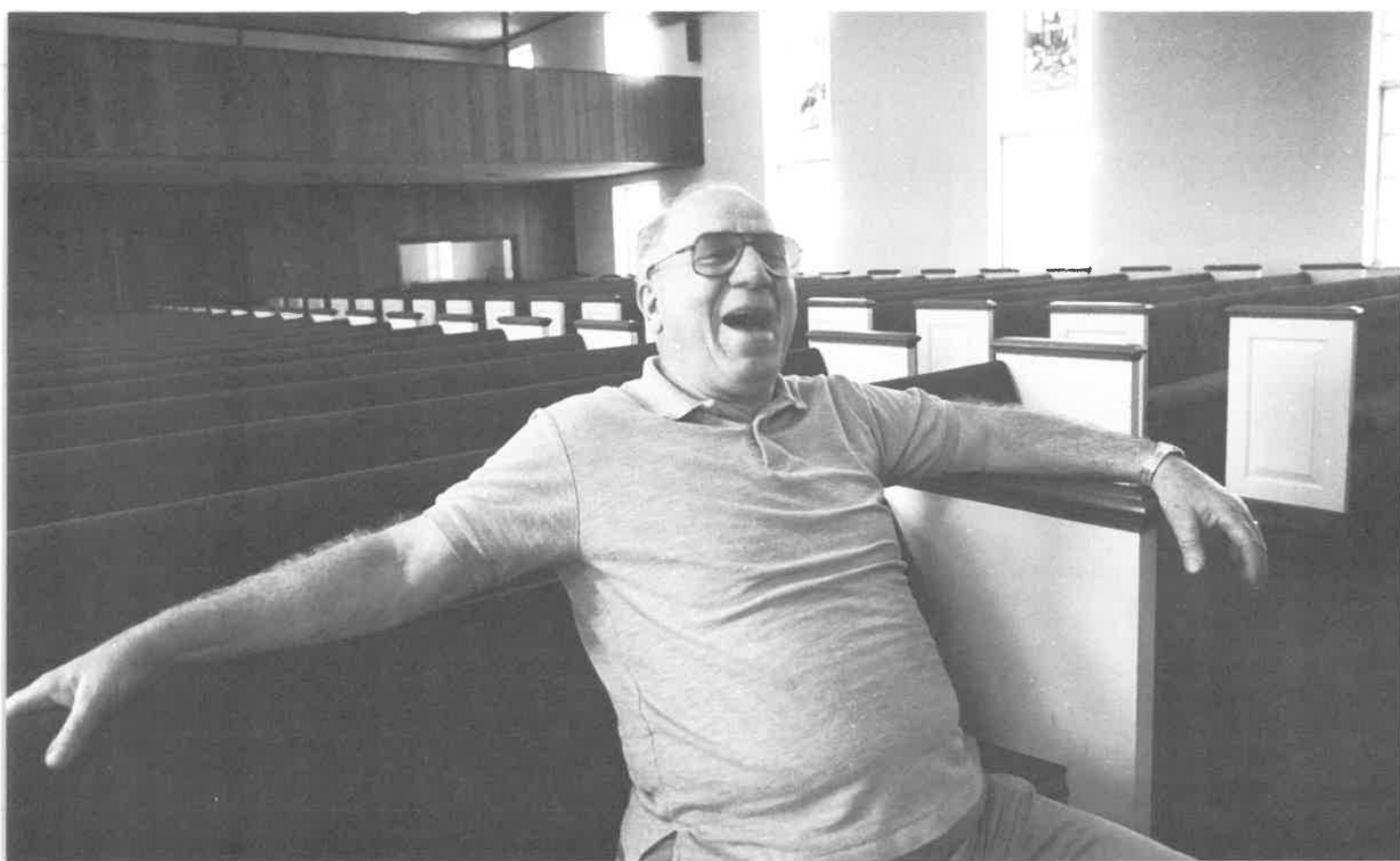


Two West Virginia boys on their way to war. Oscar McCann, left, and Roy pose in Tennessee in 1942. Photographer unknown.

Blackface comedy remained popular in the postwar Ohio Valley. Roy (kneeling, second from right) performed with the Moundsville Male Chorus. Photographer unknown.







Roy is at home in the Moundsville Baptist Church. He's led the singing there for nearly 35 years.

teenager," Roy says. "Most musicians at that time hardly made enough to support themselves, and we had a big family to support."

Roy preferred to work as a mechanic or a heavy equipment operator, but jobs weren't always available. He came of age during the Depression, a time when many grown men were unemployed. He worked at whatever he could find. "When there weren't any jobs for a mechanic, I hoed corn for farmers for 25 cents a day. Of course, 25 cents could buy something then."

In 1936, at the age of 17, Roy joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, a program developed by the Roosevelt Administration to put young men to work. "There were barracks for us out at the east end of Fourth Street then," Roy recalls today. "Men came from all over Ohio and West Virginia. They left their families, just to have work. We built fences, planted trees, cut timber, made diversion ditches to help farmers and correct erosion on the farms. We made fertilizer — did all kinds of things."

On his 18th birthday, after spending one year with the CCC, Roy found

a job with the West Virginia Department of Highways. He continued singing with his family part-time, performing whenever he was asked. Those days came to an abrupt end when he joined the Army Corps of Engineers on July 15, 1942. He married his wife, Helen, while stationed in Georgia on October 26, 1942. Helen worked at the old Marx Toy Factory in Glen Dale, north of Moundsville. In their first three years of marriage they spent a total of two months together, since Roy was with the army in Europe.

Roy had entered the service at Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio. "I took basic training four times," he says. "After taking the training ourselves, we trained three other groups, as what they called a training cadre for other divisions. I got sick of basic training, let me tell you."

The war called other members of the Faulkner family to service. "My older brother, Russell, was a 30-year Air Force pilot," Roy notes. "He flew during World War II, then afterwards in South Vietnam, Cambodia, Guam, and Korea. He flew with the Strategic Air Command for eight years before retiring as a lieutenant colonel."

Another brother, Howard, was in the navy during World War II. "He was in Europe the same time I was, but we never saw each other during the war," Roy says. Howard switched to the army for the Korean War.

It wasn't until Roy was injured in 1945 that he returned to his music. "I was in a hospital in Paris, France, and got hold of a guitar somehow," he recalls. "All the feeling in my hand was gone except for a little sensation in my thumb and index finger." The wounded GI worked away at the guitar, figuring out chords, remembering the old songs his family had sung on the porch at home. Slowly, his hand loosened up. He was shipped home to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., to complete his recovery. Upon his return to the States, Helen found him another guitar and Roy regained the full use of his hand. He still has that guitar, although he hasn't played it in years.

After returning to Moundsville, Roy went back to his pre-war job with the Department of Highways. He remains with the department as a supervisor today. Last year he was

honored by the state for 50 years of faithful service.

Once home, it didn't take Roy long to get back together with his sisters and rediscover the joys of old-fashioned hymn singing. They developed more of a quartet style than they had used during their early country music days.

The interest in hymns went along with an increased involvement in church. In 1946, Roy began singing with the Moundsville Baptist Church choir in the tenor section. After he had served with the choir seven years, the Reverend Fred Dillon, then pastor of the church, asked Roy to lead the congregational singing. In spite of long performing experience, Roy was nervous his first night in front of the church.

"I had never done that kind of singing, leading everyone," he says. But he got used to it. Roy has now led singing at Moundsville Baptist for nearly 35 years.

Church wasn't the only place Roy used his talent. When he got home from the war, he sang for anyone who asked, joining the male choir in Moundsville and the Wheeling Oratorio Society. He took voice lessons from the Oratorio Society's director, Ann Hilton Powers.

After the three-year separation during the war, Helen wasn't happy about music claiming so much of her husband's attention. The couple worked out compromises to suit both partners. "When I was taking voice lessons, Helen didn't want to hear me practicing," Roy says. "I spent at least an hour a day at it. I would go to the back room of our house, put a rug across the bottom of the door so no one could hear, and work on my lessons."

Roy's life was filled with music. He tells about the activities of the Moundsville men. "We traveled to Columbus, Cincinnati, Steubenville. I sang in five or six minstrel shows here in the Ohio Valley. It took a lot of time, but it was fun. We sang in blackface, dressed in stripes and tails. I was an end man. There were six of us; three would come from one side, and three from the other. I was on the end. We sang 'Wabash Cannonball,' 'Mammy,' 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' and 'My Old Kentucky Home.' There were solos and double



quartets. We did a lot of Al Jolson numbers."

Mrs. Powers, Roy's voice teacher, was very encouraging. She tried to convince him to audition for the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, and was disappointed when he said he wouldn't leave his home in West

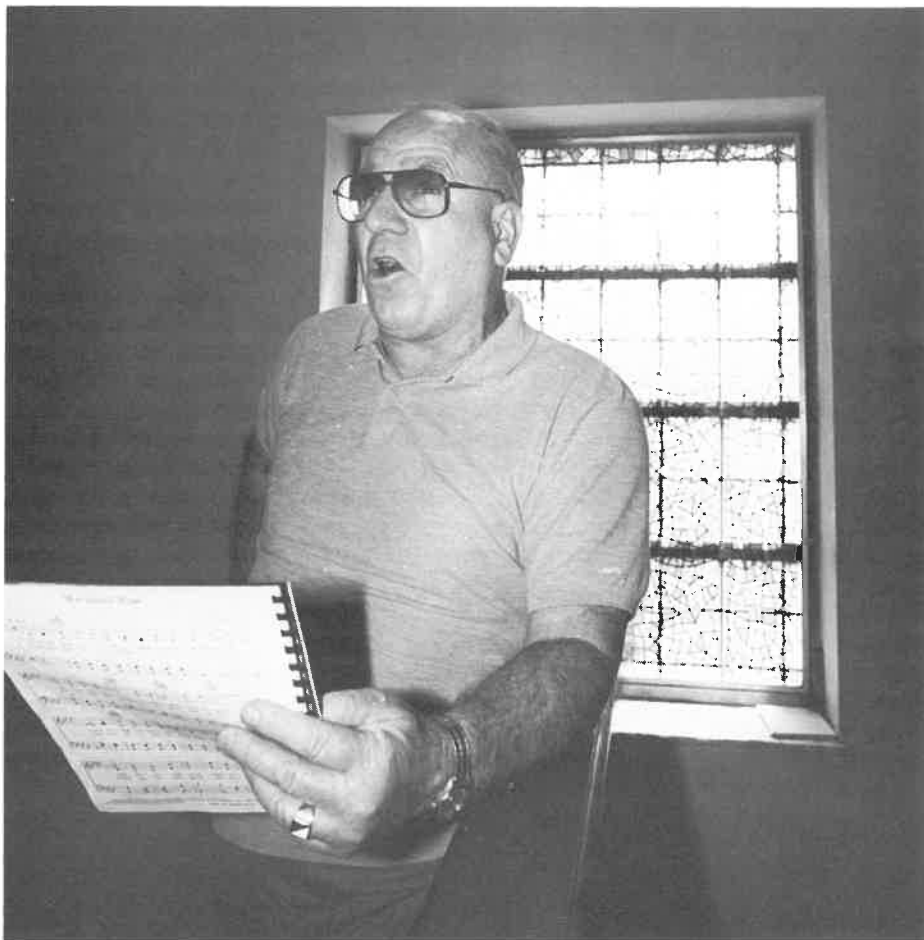
Virginia. Ironically, it was the formal voice training which made Roy lose a prized skill he had developed on his own. After taking lessons, he couldn't yodel.

Roy keeps busy with the song services at church, and special performances of solos, quartets, and duets. Until her death in April 1987, Clara was right there with her brother, joining in on duets of their favorite numbers. This article grew out of Clara's idea to get together and talk about the old days of amateur hours, singing on the back porch, and yodeling on Wheeling radio stations. The subject still brought a twinkle to her eyes. Sister Eva and the remaining members of the Faulkner family are involved with their own families and non-musical projects.

In addition to everything else, Roy Faulkner still enjoys singing in the living rooms and on the back porches of his Northern Panhandle hometown. His neighbors are musicians; he happily reports. "The other night I was over there until midnight, playing and singing," Roy grins. ♣

Above: Helen and Roy Faulkner had been married 40 years when this portrait was made in 1982. Photographer unknown.

Roy lost his ability to yodel when he took formal voice training. His fans think it was worth it.



At 86, Don Neill clearly recalls events in Standing Stone, the oil boom village of his childhood. He attended the one-room school there and played along the Little Kanawha River, collected arrowheads, and generally enjoyed a Tom Sawyer existence during lazy Wirt County summers.

Don's father, William Eugene Neill, worked as a gauger, which meant he measured the oil flow from the wells for the Eureka Oil Company. Born in Oil City, Pennsylvania, near the site of the nation's first oil well, Eugene followed the boom into West Virginia at the turn of the century.

At Jake's Run, a Monongalia County tent village where his sister operated a canvas-covered restaurant

ardent Knight Templar Mason, he often went to nearby Parkersburg for lodge events. As he became more affluent, Eugene bought a boat for his family's enjoyment. One time the Neills found themselves horrifyingly sucked backwards into the spillway of a dam, only to be saved at the last moment as the motor caught.

The Little Kanawha played a big part in the lives of the townspeople of Standing Stone. Steamers ran into Parkersburg, where a full meal could be had for 25 cents. A boy could pick up that much money rounding up escaped logs from the log rafts supplying the mills along the river. A junkboat called periodically to buy all the scrap metal and glass Don and his friends could accumulate.

In 1913 the Neill family settled permanently in Cairo, on the main line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Ritchie County. That was also the year they acquired their first automobile, a shiny new Maxwell. It went up on blocks the first of November and was left there until May, when the roads were still hazardous but might be traveled by the adventurous. Don recalls that traffic could move no faster than nine miles an hour through West Union, up the rail line in neighboring Doddridge County, which boasted the worst roads that side of Fairmont.

Public transportation in the region was very good, however. Besides the railroad with its frequent train service and the river with its boats, there was a local railroad that ran from Buckhannon to Weston, where a trolley connected to Clarksburg and on to Fairmont. Don recalls the thrill of watching the scenery on both sides of the tracks as he sped toward visits with his grandparents in Fairmont.

The World War I years brought many changes. During the influenza epidemic of 1918, Don drove the buggy for a local doctor making house calls. There were many 24-hour days. Often the doctor was so worn out that Don had to help him to bed. So many died that coffins were in short supply.

Like other institutions throughout the nation, Cairo High School accelerated its program during the war, and Don graduated in three years. The Class of 1919 had four students. Each held a class office — president,

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# Home Again

## Don Neill of Buckhannon

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By Roy Watson Curry

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for oilfield laborers, Eugene wed Mary Louise Burris, his sweetheart from Pennsylvania. The occasion inspired a community houseraising, producing a four-room, tar-papered cottage in a day's time. This was the birthplace of their son, James Donald Neill, on October 6, 1901. Four years later, sister Virginia Louise completed the family.

Most people called Jake's Run "Italy," since the original landowner was Tony Minear and everyone mistakenly assumed any Tony must be an Italian. The Neills left there when Don was five, moving to Standing Stone. That was to be home for the next seven years. Eugene Neill continued to serve as an oil gauger, reporting by telegraph to company headquarters. Each Christmas, John D. Rockefeller, who owned the company, wired holiday greetings.

Don remembers his father as a gregarious, public-spirited man, a lover of music who organized a town band wherever he went. Handy and generous, he would turn out a porch swing in his shop or repair a neighbor's telephone free of charge. An



vice-president, secretary or treasurer. With fewer than 100 students enrolled, Cairo High offered Don a full schedule of band, basketball, baseball and clubs. The curriculum emphasized classical learning, including Latin and ancient history. With odd jobs, the Boy Scouts, and regular violin lessons, it was a busy but happy time.

Don had given scant thought as to what he wanted to do in life. He entered West Virginia University in September 1919, little realizing he was embarking on a career which would include truck-farming, oystering, serving as a high school principal and coach, working as a Latin American specialist for Nelson Rockefeller, study at Harvard and professional positions at Rutgers University, and finally retiring from three institutions of higher learning. Along the way he would also become an antique collector, a pilot, big game hunter, landscape painter, and violinist for three different orchestras. Not bad for a young man who ended his first year of college so uncertain about his future that his father decided to send him to the Pierce School in Philadelphia to study something practical — bookkeeping.

It is understandable that a fellow who had had such a carefree youth would find it difficult to choose a career. Don had known the excitement of boom towns. He had even gone several times with his mother to the new oilfields in Oklahoma to visit Grandmother Burris, who ran a hotel. There he played baseball with Indian boys from the neighboring reservation, and mingled with the cowboys who put up at his grandmother's hotel. Once he got himself shot at for passing along the public road in front of the cabin of a local eccentric — who later shot the postman when he brought no mail. Don recalls how his uncle tackled the murderer and held him for the sheriff. Could a young man from such a background settle down as a bookkeeper?

But Philadelphia was a new experience for a country boy. Even crossing the big city was an adventure. It became all the more exciting when an oil millionaire acquaintance of his father looked him up. The older man insisted upon showing the young



Don Neill took up the violin as a youth and has since played with three orchestras. Here he holds a favorite instrument at home in Buckhannon. Photo by Greg Clark.



*Left:* Dorothy Neill with daughter Nancy and son James Donald II in 1935. Photographer unknown.

*Above:* A family portrait from the mid-1950's. The Neills were well established in New Jersey at the time. Photographer unknown.

*Opposite page:* At Rutgers, Professor Neill looked every inch the scholarly intellectual. He retired as a dean in 1966. Photographer and date unknown.

*Opposite page:* Don Neill remained an avid outdoorsman. His major trophy was an Alaska grizzly. Photographer unknown.

West Virginian around town, introducing him to its fine restaurants, theaters, and Main Line parties.

Don found a fellow student to share an apartment near the Pierce School. The roommate introduced him to Dorothy Bateman, a student from Cedarville, New Jersey. Her father was a commercial truck farmer who also operated oyster boats on Delaware Bay. Romance swept into Don's life, changing every aspect of his existence. Even bookkeeping took on excitement, and his enthusiasm spilled over into musical studies on the saxophone, clarinet and violin. Don had his father's gift for music.

After graduating from Pierce, Don kept books for a produce company. The job brought him into contact with the colorful dock life of the Philadelphia waterfront. Later, he transferred to the DuPont Company. He and Dorothy set their wedding date. The week before the ceremony, Don lost his job. But the young couple went ahead with their plans, meeting in Harpers Ferry for the wedding on October 13, 1923.

The newlyweds returned to New Jersey, where Don went to work on his father-in-law's truck farms. He remembers that one year they planted

seven million peppers. They sold the seed by the ton to the seed companies and the pulp to Campbell's Soups. In the fall and winter Don went out on the oyster boats and delighted in learning deep-water navigation. It was a new life for a young man from the Mountain State.

Returning home to Ritchie County one summer, Don decided to enter Salem College and continue his education. That fall he was hired to teach the fifth and sixth grades in nearby Jane Lew. Don liked the work and decided that he was a teacher at heart. Thereafter he taught in the winter and attended summer school at West Virginia University, working towards a degree in education. He was soon promoted to principal and coach of Jane Lew High School, which had an enrollment of around 100 students. His basketball teams lost about as many games as they won, but the real excitement came in directing the learning of students who took education seriously. These were great years for Don and Dorothy.

In 1927 Don's father died, and his mother decided to go to Oklahoma to visit her family. Don, Dorothy and his sister Louise convinced her to go on to California, where Don would

enter the University of California at Los Angeles while Louise took lessons to fulfill her ambition to become a professional dancer. The two-week transcontinental trip was an adventure. There was no paved highway crossing the country in those days, maps were virtually nonexistent, and roads were poorly marked. Great sections of the country were without gas stations or garages.

Don was disappointed in UCLA. At that time, the now-huge university consisted of one building, set in a barren, sun-baked field. Nearby Occidental College, "the Princeton of the West," seemed more inviting. Don enrolled in Occidental's Latin American courses, while Louise found a dance teacher.

Returning to West Virginia the next year, Don continued to teach and work towards his degree, which was awarded in 1931. The next year his son, James Donald II, was born. Daughter Nancy followed later. Don was offered the chance to teach social studies in the WVU Demonstration High School, and to give methods courses in the Department of Education.

The Demonstration High School, with its rich mixture of students from



The Buckhannon cabin houses the overflow from the Neill home. Both Don and Virginia are devoted collectors. Photo by Greg Clark.





varied ethnic and economic backgrounds, was an ideal laboratory for experimental social studies instruction. There were field trips to New York City, to the nation's capital, to brickyards and manufacturing plants, and to local government and municipal institutions. The school had a student government that really worked, morale was high, and performance exceptional.

While teaching, Don took graduate courses in education and history. He became a graduate assistant in the WVU Department of History and helped Professor Charles H. Ambler revise his famous West Virginia his-

tory text. In 1936 he received his master's degree, and sought further training at Harvard's summer school, where he became a protege of Dr. Howard Wilson. After his return to Morgantown, he received a call from Dr. Wilson. Would Don come to Harvard for work on his Ph.D? The prestigious university offered him free tuition and a scholarship carrying a stipend of \$100 a month. The next three years saw the Neill family living in Cambridge.

Harvard was not a satisfying experience. Dr. Wilson headed off to Latin America and was succeeded by three different directors in quick rotation.

Don revised his dissertation to meet the eccentricities of each. Disgusted with the uncertainty of the graduate school, he was elated when offered the chance to work for Nelson Rockefeller, President Franklin Roosevelt's new coordinator for Latin American affairs. World War II was on, and government service promised to be exciting work.

Managing a Latin American exchange program and visiting campuses throughout the country, interviewing applicants for study and research in the field, and traveling on occasion to Mexico to resolve problems made these fulfilling years for

Springtime in the mountains was one of the things which brought Don Neill home. Here he and Virginia enjoy a moment together.



Don. Rockefeller had good relations with his staff, and everyone felt they were engaged in a vital part of the war effort by cementing relations with the nations to the south. But the program ended with the war, and Don's Washington job disappeared.

At the suggestion of his New Jersey brother-in-law, Don next applied for a position at Rutgers University. The dean of education was impressed by his varied background and his Harvard work. For the next 21 years Don taught adult education courses, and supervised and trained classroom teachers, making his mark on education throughout the state. Finally, he

Photo by Greg Clark.



was made associate dean and succeeded in getting Rutgers to require a "B" average of all students seeking to major in education. He still considers that his single best contribution to the improvement of the public schools. Upon his retirement in 1966, Rutgers granted him its distinguished service award.

Don Neill was 65. His children were grown and married. James Donald II was teaching at Michigan State University; daughter Nancy worked in the adult and remedial education program in Louisville. There were nine grandchildren. Don was a widower now, Dorothy having died nine years earlier.

The retired professor still played tennis, hunted, painted landscapes, and piloted a plane. This last activity had developed out of his agreeing to help two war veterans meet the educational qualifications to found a flight school. Don tutored them, and they taught him to fly. It added an exciting dimension to a full life, sometimes almost too exciting. Don remembers once stalling his plane in a steep climb. Like a stone he plummeted towards the earth, to regain control only at the last moment and land somewhat roughly in a plowed field. The next day he flew again.

Retirement didn't last long. Years before, while serving on an education evaluation team at Shepherd College, Don had been invited to come down and help the Eastern Panhandle school restructure its teacher training program when he retired from Rutgers. It took only a letter to have the offer renewed. In the fall of 1966 Don found himself back in his native state, professor of education at Shepherd College. Life at the small college in historic Shepherdstown was pleasant, his colleagues congenial and the townspeople friendly, but something was missing.

In June of 1967, Don Neill married Virginia Mount in Las Vegas. Virginia was a family friend and a graduate of the Women's College of Rutgers, who had been running a real estate business in New Jersey. They returned to Shepherdstown for the year, then Don accepted a call to head the Department of Education at West Virginia Wesleyan in Buckhannon.

Virginia was an avid collector of

antiques. Don had begun a mania for collecting when he found his first Indian arrowhead at the age of seven. He came by this obsession naturally, for his mother collected furniture miniatures and old chinaware. From arrowheads, Don expanded to primitive tools, animal traps, old phonographs and records, coffee grinders, tobacco cutters. He even had 25 handmade quilts, some over 100 years old. Virginia had family antiques and a pewter collection worthy of a museum. The large house they had purchased in Buckhannon overflowed. They set off exploring Upshur and surrounding counties for an authentic log cabin. Finally, in Webster County, they found it, a two-story, pre-Civil War structure that had been only recently vacated. They numbered the logs, had the house removed, and rebuilt it on the back of their Buckhannon property.

The old cabin was soon filled. On the walls they hung Don's hunting trophies — a grizzly skin from Alaska, mounted heads of moose, caribou, and antelope he killed in the West, and beaver and deer skins. Between the trophies he arranged his collection of early farm tools and crafts. The rafters held ox yokes, snowshoes, and traps. Virginia reserved room for pioneer tables, chairs, settles, handwoven rugs.

After two years Don left Wesleyan, retiring for the third time. He continues active in the Upshur County Historical Society and at the county library, and plays a beloved 17th-century Amati violin with the Buckhannon Chamber Orchestra. He and Virginia make the major Eastern antique shows each year. Several winters were spent in Florida, but in 1980 Virginia became coordinator of the local YWCA, precluding extended vacations. Since she left the job last year, they have added another room to house their ever-growing collections.

In 1982 the couple traveled with a Wesleyan College group to China. Don, then 81, ignored the easy route of tourists and dignitaries and instead climbed the Great Wall to the nearest high point. His snapshot from that occasion shows a spry elderly gentleman, staring good-naturedly into the camera. The ballcap says, "Almost Heaven — West Virginia."

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# Miner's Widow

## Sara Kaznoski, Fighter and Survivor

By Barbara Smith  
Photographs by Michael Keller

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On the wall of Sara Kaznoski's Marion County living room is a portrait of labor agitator Mother Jones. Two newspaper articles dated 1969 have been tucked into the picture frame. One of them states that as of that date, 19 bodies had not been recovered from the 1968 Mannington mine disaster. The other is a feature

story published in a December 31, 1969, Washington, D.C., paper. This article describes Sara as a five-foot-two, 102-pound stick of dynamite. This story is headed by two quotations. One is from Ken Hechler, then Congressman from the Fourth District, who characterized Sara Kaznoski as a "very courageous wo-

Sara Kaznoski at home in Barrackville. She is in a quieter period of her life now, after busy years as an activist following the 1968 Farmington mine disaster.

man." The other quotation is from Sara herself: "When we lost our husbands we realized more what the coal miners and their families needed."

Sara is one of the widows of the 78 miners trapped and killed in the fire and explosion which on November 20, 1968, destroyed the Llewellyn Portal of the Farmington No. 9 mine. Ever since that day, she has championed causes to aid miners and their families, particularly Black Lung legislation and development of adequate mine health and safety regulations.

Her activism is nothing new. With a twinkle in her eye and in spite of vocal cords damaged in the trauma that accompanied her husband's death, Sara can still sing labor songs she learned before she was six years old. Her father was president of the local union, and Sara remembers getting up on platforms to sing "Van Bittner\* will win the strike/The scabs will hit the pike/As sure as the world goes 'round." With an even brighter twinkle she can also sing "I'm Looking for a Union Sweetheart." Then she says, "And I really am looking."

"You bet I've been active," she says. "All my life I've fought for the union and for miners' rights. I campaigned for Jock Yablonski and I refused to support Tony Boyle — ever. I helped fight for the Black Lung bills, and I was on the national campaign advisory committee for George McGovern and traveled all over for him. And, along with other No. 9 widows, I was in *Harlan County, USA*, that documentary that won an Oscar."

"You remember when Jock Yablonski and his family were killed? That was on December 31, 1969. I had gotten a Christmas card from them just before that, and there was a note on it that said, 'Another Christmas, and your husband's body has not yet been recovered. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.' And the Yablonskis had signed it, of course."

She thinks for a minute. "I guess I sort of think of myself as a social worker. I don't get any pay, of course, but I receive lots of blessings. I've done all kinds of things like being in the Methodist church and singing in

\*Van A. Bittner was a major state and national leader of the United Mine Workers from early in the century through the organizing heyday of the 1930's.





the choir in my teenage years and teaching vacation Bible school, and I belong to the VFW ladies' auxiliary. I was president of the Fairmont auxiliary twice and was district president and won national recognition for the ladies' auxiliary several times. And I was treasurer for the Eagles ladies' auxiliary.

"And I had EMT training," Sara adds. She looks up, smiling widely. "Do you know, I am a charter member of the emergency squad, and I assisted with the delivery of the first baby ever delivered in the squad car. That baby was born right by the side of the road, and it was such a loving experience! But mostly I've worked for the miners and the widows and the VFW ladies' auxiliary."

She straightens her slender shoulders proudly. "I can remember the night before we went to Washington for the signing of the federal mine health and safety bill. So much had been happening since the accident and I had been working so hard that I was down to 90 pounds. We had been working all night, campaigning and getting things ready and all, and we had had only one hour of sleep, but before we left, I stopped off on a road near the coal mine and just begged the men not to go to work until that bill was signed. And do you know, about 2,500 men returned home that night. They refused to work until President Nixon signed the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Bill. I've still got the pen he used.

"You see," she explains, "helping others started real young with me, but it really hit me when Pete died. God had something for me to do. And I promised Him that if He would sustain me through that awful, awful time, I would reach out with my willing heart and try to carry through to do everything I could. And He gave me the strength and courage and wisdom to do what needed to be done.

"I decided that God wanted us to organize the widows, so we did, Mary Rogers and I. We organized the Farmington No. 9 Widows' Mine Disaster Committee. Some wanted to wait until after the holidays, but we didn't even do that. We organized, and we met regularly and real, real often for over seven years. Our pur-

pose was to give moral and spiritual support to widows and children, as we 78 and our families had suffered the same loss. Our other purpose was to get some decent laws passed. And we did it. We widows did it. Yes, we're fighters. We're fighters and survivors."

Then Sara goes back to tell of the events that changed her world. "Pete and I were married right after high school. He was from here. His parents were born in Poland, but they migrated to America so that Pete's father could work in the shipyards in Philadelphia. But Mr. Kaznoski got injured there — his finger or something — so they moved out here to the coalfields. Pete had one sister who died in infancy, and he was the youngest of three brothers. His family carried on a lot of the old traditions, like they spoke Polish in their home. They kept boarders, and so did my parents. Pete grew up with the mines, and he spent all of his working life in them. He was 59 when he died in that explosion — he'd worked 44 years in the coal mines.

Well, anyhow, I was born here, too. My mother was an only child, and she loved children, so she gave birth to 14. All of them were born at home, and all but two — premature twin boys — survived. I was the 13th child, and I was premature, too, and real little, so they kept me in a shoebox on the door of the oven.

"There are just four of us left now — Edna in Fairview, Mary in Woods Run, and Jack in McLean, Virginia. The sister in Woods Run lives on the old home place." Sara pushes back her curly blond hair.

"So, anyhow, I met Pete when I was working as a maid for the local Methodist preacher, Reverend and Mrs. Greynolds. That's how I earned money for school clothes — working as a hired girl. I was 16 or 17 years old, and I could really cook. Boy, did they love my lemon pies!" She smiles.

"And in the evening, when all the chores were done, I was on a girls' softball team, and Pete was our manager. I was the catcher. All of us girls thought Pete was so kind and gentle and sweet! We used to say to each other, 'If we ever get married, we gotta find us some guy just like Pete.' So I proceeded to fall in love with



This photograph was made during the early years of Sara's marriage to Pete Kaznoski. Family snapshot, about 1938.

him, and I've never been sorry for one single minute. He was so complimentary — not just of me but of all the girls on the team — and he was so appreciative of little things.

"We used to go to dances a lot. He loved to dance, and so did I. He could polka and jitterbug and do all the ballroom dances. We were very agile.

"So, anyway, we got married, and he worked in the mines. He cut coal, and he loaded coal, and he was a fire boss and a section boss and a dispatcher. He had his mine foreman's papers, too. I wouldn't let him [become a foreman and] 'go company,' though. He really needed to stay in



The Kaznoskis on a family outing at the Marion County town of Idamay. Niece Patty stands at left, then Sara, son John, Pete, and Pete, Jr. Photographer and date unknown.

the union because of the protection there. If you're company, they can get rid of you in a minute, and I didn't want him getting into that kind of turmoil.

"The accident? It was too much gas that caused it, but the company has never admitted it. There were so many strange things that happened about that tragedy. I had dreamed the night before about a tragedy in the mine. Yes, I really did. I had dreamed the night before, and I dreamed the same thing that night, the night of the tragedy."

Sara sits forward on her flowered couch and crosses her legs. "I think we both knew something was going to happen. We knew. In fact, Pete had come home that morning, November 19, from the midnight shift, and he had showered downstairs — he always bathed at home, but we had a full bathroom downstairs and he never brought one speck of dirt upstairs to me. Anyhow, he had showered and put on clean clothes. I always put clean clothes downstairs for him, and he always left his work clothes down there. And that morning he said to me, 'That mine is so dangerous, something is really going to happen.'"

"So I said, 'Don't go to work any more, honey. We'll make it. The boys are about raised,' I said, 'and we'll

make it. I'd rather have you than all the money in the world.' That's what we said the morning before the tragedy.

"Anyhow, Pete showered and changed his clothes, and then he went to the post office for me. Usually Pete slept all day, but he couldn't that day because he was so worried about the gassy mine. He did finally lie down and nap a while, but he got up early and ate his evening meal. Then we played cards — 500 rummy — for a while. We both loved to play cards. We'd play hearts and spades and, when somebody else was there, pinochle. We had a lot of fun with that.

"Then Pete turned on the TV, and they were playing the song 'Honey, I Miss You,' and he said to me, 'You know, if you're in the other room I miss you,' and I said, 'Same here, Pete.'"

Sara's eyes are tear-filled, and her voice gets even huskier than usual. "Then 10:00 o'clock came, and Pete asked me to prepare his bucket — you know, his lunch. I said, 'I wish you wouldn't go,' but he said, 'I've got a job to do.' So I made his lunch, and he went down and changed clothes in the basement. Then he walked around the house and knocked gently on the front door to let me know that he was ready to go.

I handed him out his bucket, and he said, 'I love you,' and I said, 'I love you, too. See you in the morning. Be careful, Pete.' Then I went to the den, and I watched his car clear out of sight, never to see him again.

"That was the night I dreamed again about the mine and an accident. The next morning I got up about 7:00 o'clock and decided to finish an afghan I was working on. So I turned on The Today Show, and that's where I heard it. That's how I found out about the explosion — on the TV news!"

Her eyes are dry again now, her mouth tight. "They never sent anyone around, they never did a thing to let us know. We found out about it on a national television show. I was all alone, and I remember every word they said: 'We have just received word that at 5:23 this morning, an explosion occurred at the Llewellyn Portal of the Farmington No. 9 mine above Mannington, West Virginia. Reports are that there are some 119 or 121 men trapped in the Consolidation Coal Company mine, but rescue operations are already underway.' That's what they said, and I jumped up and ran to the telephone and called Pete's brother, Frank, and then I just ran out into the street screaming.

"As it turned out, 21 men got out in a big bucket. Oh, what a time!"

Sara shakes her head apologetically. "I can't remember any more. I've never been able to remember what happened after that or for several days after that. My family and Pete's came. I know that. And there were several nurses. Two of them were my nieces, and one of them gave me a shot of something that really knocked me out.

"Anyhow, my boys came, of course. My son John was living in Columbus, and they were expecting their first baby, but they came right home. And John went with his Uncle Frank up to the mine every day, night and day, for 10 days, waiting for the bodies to be brought out. Every day, night and day, they were there waiting for something positive.

"I went on the sixth day with my family because I wanted to stop to talk to one of the pregnant young widows. She was staying in a trailer right there, waiting for her husband's

body. I wanted to tell her not to have her baby in that trailer, to go to the hospital. I was worried about her. She needed to have that baby right. But she'd already gone when I got there, and the baby was born okay."

The story goes on, Sara's tone sad. "After that I was sort of okay, too. We waited and waited, and they kept bringing bodies out for years, but Pete's was never recovered. Nineteen of them were never recovered. Even though it's been many years since the tragedy, Consolidation could still do what's right and recover the remains of our loved ones, just like the government is doing with the MIA's."

Her tone changes again. "That company! They were supposed to be recovering bodies. That's what they said they were doing, and maybe they were, but they were recovering coal, too. They were mining that coal just as fast and hard as they could. And later we widows tried to get a percentage on that coal. We told them we'd lost everything, and we deserved a percentage on that coal that they mined, but we never got a dime. Not one dime."

Her eyebrows go up. "Compensation? You're kidding. We each got \$90 a month state compensation. That's it. Not one dime more than that from compensation unless we were old enough for Social Security. Then we could receive that. Many of the 78, including me, weren't old enough. I was in my 40's then, so all I got — all I had to live on — was \$90 a month state compensation. That's all."

Sara has brought in tall glasses of iced tea, and she stops to take a drink. "So that's when God inspired me to form the widows' organization. We finally got the Social Security changed so that widows would get it when they were 60 instead of when they were 65 — but it didn't do us Farmington widows any good. We fought through the UMW to get the widows' pension, and they have it now. They get a part of their husbands' pensions. We No. 9 widows never did, but other widows now do, since 1972."

Her face brightens. "We went to Washington lots of times and I made speeches and wrote letters and everything, and we got better health and safety laws. We created a whole lot of

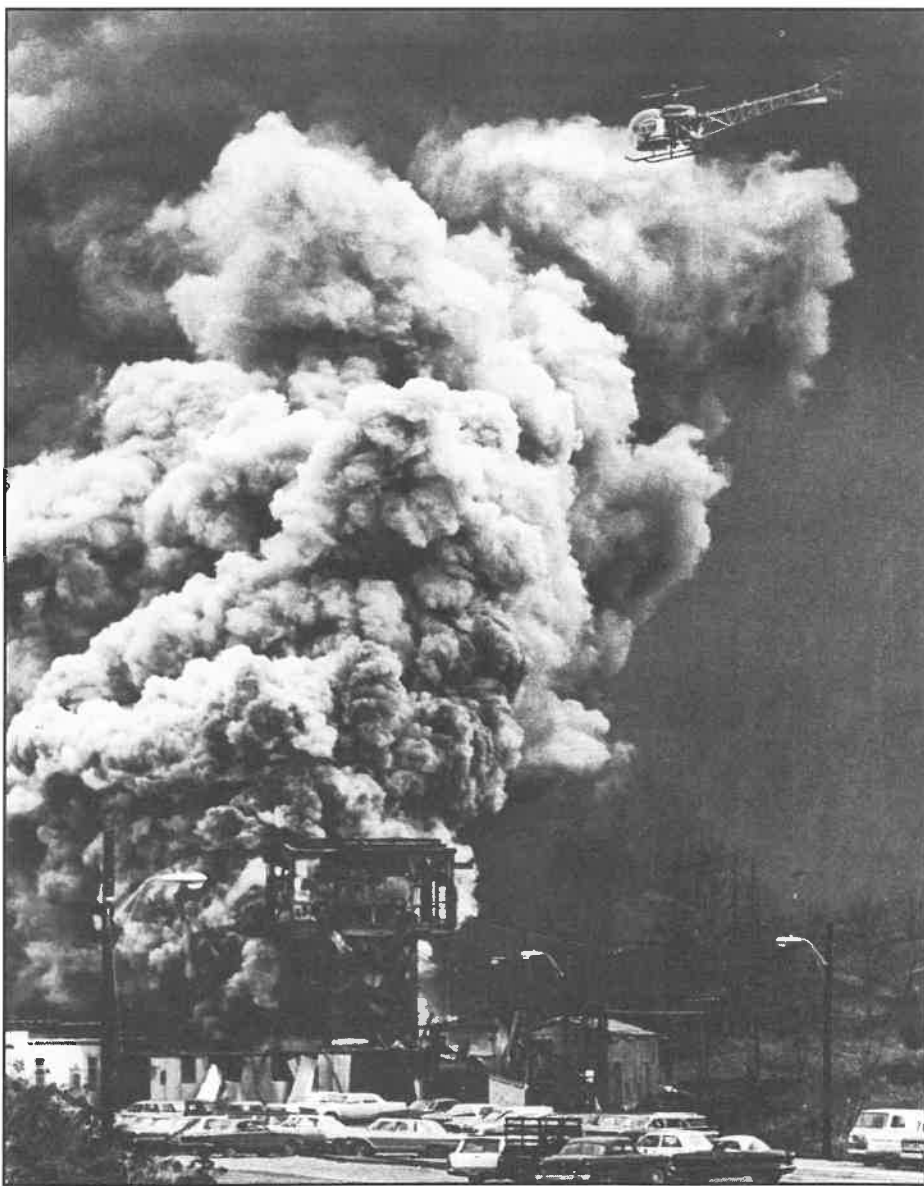
new jobs, too, mostly jobs in safety in areas all the way from the mines to children's toys. The Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Law of 1969 opened many doors. Yes, a whole lot of the safety laws, after that terrible 1968 mine tragedy, are because of us Farmington widows."

She sighs, remembering. "And don't think it wasn't a real fight! We went one time to visit the Secretary of the Interior — Wally J. Hickel — and he and the government made many promises to help our coal miners, but they never kept them. And then that Mr. Hickel wrote a book" — she picks up from the coffee table next to her a copy of *Who Owns America* and

holds it up for you to see — "and there's a chapter in it about the Farmington widows. It's not true, though. It's not true. He said we went to see him 'unannounced and unexpected,' and that's a lie. He said a whole bunch of things that weren't true, and I wrote to the publishers and told them never to print that book again because what he wrote isn't true." She nods and shakes her fist. "I've got the telegram to prove it, too. I've got the telegram that Hickel sent saying that he would be pleased to meet with us. Huh! — 'unannounced and unexpected' — it just wasn't true."

Sara stops to pet her three-legged poodle, and then she continues.

Sara's married life ended on November 20, 1968, with the tremendous explosion at Farmington No. 9. Pete Kaznoski was among 78 miners killed. Photo by Lawrence Pierce, courtesy Charleston Gazette.





"We're good people. We're honest, hard-working people, and we're good." She smiles.

"So anyway, there are a lot of us widows still around," she sighs. "I went to all the funeral homes and all the widows' houses, and I tried to do anything I could whatsoever.

"The last body recovered wasn't brought out until seven years after the explosion, can you believe that? And I went to all of the funeral homes and houses in between. A pathologist performed an autopsy on one of the bodies and tried to tell us widows that the men had been cremated, that

there wasn't any chance of their being able to escape anyway, that they'd been cremated. But that was a lie. That body they examined? It wasn't burned at all but was badly decomposed. The company showed us a piece of the mine belt — I still have that piece — and tried to prove that the men were cremated, but they weren't. They were trapped with no way to escape. Oh, how terrible!"

She stops and frowns. "I started to tell you about the strange things and the accident. What I forgot to tell you was that there'd been a fire in that mine earlier in the week. It took place in main west heading, and one of Pete's friends, Homer, was burned. The only reason Pete was trapped was because he was working on a section other than his regular one. He would have been somewhere else working and would have been able to escape, but he was working there as Homer wasn't able to because of the burns he had received in the fire."

Sara's mouth has gotten tighter and tighter, her eyes squinting in anger now. "The air fan wasn't working, you know. It had broken down. They never said so, but the fan wasn't working, and there were very few escapeways in those days. They have to have escapeways now, but there weren't any then where Pete was working, and the men were just trapped. That's what's so hard — to think about what they must have gone through, knowing they were doomed, that death was upon them, not being able to escape, knowing. It must have been just awful, just terrible.

"Oh," Sara declares, "we've helped to do a lot, everything we could. I've been in documentaries like *Danger Mine* and *What Price Coal?* for CBS and NBC and PBS, and we helped BBC-TV when they came. I had a cookout on my patio for them. I tell you," she insists, "I'm determined to do things for others even though it's too late for us widows. I'm loyal, and I'm honest, and I'm dedicated. That's what Ken Hechler said, and I guess it's true."

She follows up on the thought. "That Ken Hechler, God bless him, he's just a little angel. I don't know what we ever would have done without him. There were some others that helped us, too, but then there were

This striking black monument memorializes the men who died at Farmington. Stars (opposite page) mark the names of those whose bodies were never recovered from the pit.



some others we could have done without.

"Like after the explosion, when the company tried to pay us off. We were each offered a \$10,000 settlement to stop bugging the company. That was three or four years after the accident. Kenny Yablonski, Jock's son, was our lawyer. Seven of us widows refused to accept, so we hired other lawyers. We finally had to settle, but I tell you, I'm awful glad my sons never got to be lawyers.

"And I'll tell you something else, too. There's no justice in West Virginia courts. They don't like honest people. Like when we went to court over the money that was sent in. Money came in from all over the world, you know, and they set up some kind of committee to receive it, but you can bet that there weren't any of the widows on that committee, no way. The judge said we'd just use the money to buy husbands. Can you beat that? We'd use the money to buy husbands, ha! So we went to court over that money, and finally they set up trust funds for the children when they reached 21. Some special cases, though — who knows who decided who was special? — got the money when they were 18. And each widow got approximately \$1,300. That was it.

"Oh, and there was this one widow who had a son with rheumatoid arthritis, and she really needed the money badly, the trust fund money, you know? So she went and took her son so the judge could see how bad they needed the money for a special type bathroom for her son, and you know what he said? He said, 'If you

|                 |                        |                   |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| ARMSTRONG       | ★ PAUL F. HENDERSON    | WILLIAM D. SHEME  |
| S D. ASHCRAFT   | ROY F. HENDERSON Sr.   | ROBERT J. SIGLEY  |
| BARR            | STEVE HORVATH          | HENRY J. SKARZIN  |
| D. BEAM         | ★ JUNIOR M. JENKINS    | RUSSELL D. SNYDE  |
| JOSEPH BINGAMON | JAMES JONES            | ★ JOHN SOPUCH     |
| S BOGGESS       | ★ PETE J. KAZNOSKI SR. | JERRY L. STONEK   |
| BOROS           | ROBERT D. KERNS        | HARRY L. STRAIT   |
| W. BUTT         | CHARLES E. KING        | ALBERT TAKACS     |
| ARPENTER        | JAMES RAY KNICELEY     | ★ WILLIAM L. TAKA |
| CARTWRIGHT      | GEORGE R. KOVAR        | DEWEY TARLEY      |
| E. CURRENCE     | DAVID MAINELLA SR.     | FRANK TATE JR.    |
| DAVIS           | WALTER R. MARTIN       | GOY A. TAYLOR     |
| D. DE REDDY     | ★ FRANK MATICH         | HOY B. TAYLOR     |

provoke me one more time, I'll have you escorted out.' That's what he said to that poor widow and her son. How's that for justice?"

Sara continues. "You just wouldn't believe what we went through. God, it's like yesterday, talking about it. The seven of us who wouldn't settle? We sued the company, but we never even got a jury trial. We went to federal court in Parkersburg, to Judge Haden, and we said, 'Give us the mine, and we'll reopen it and mine it, and we'll recover our husbands' bodies and give them decent burials and find out the cause of the tragedy. Just give us the mine,' we said. But of course they wouldn't give it to us. Instead, they gave us seven widows who sued the coal company over 600 acres of land, and we went to court again to get mineral rights. We did get the land — the trees and lumber

and so on, the surface — but we didn't get the mines under it.

"So now we've got the surface land, and six of us want to sell but the seventh doesn't. We're stuck with paying taxes and we can't even get the coal. Some of it is good land and some of it is hilly and rocky and all, so we can't sell it separately. The land is all over the place. I just pray to God that the seventh widow, who is one of us and is a good person, will change her mind.

"But listen," Sara says, an idea obviously popping into her head, "Have you ever been to the mine? Have you ever seen the memorial?" And when you say no, she says, "Let's go! It's not very far, and I'd love to show you."

So you do. You drive from Barrackville, where Sara lives, past Farmington and A. J. Manchin's home, to

## More on Mine Disasters

West Virginia coal mining has taken a relentless toll on its workers, claiming thousands of lives over the last 100 years. Most miners die alone, or with a buddy or two, the victims of roof falls or other isolated accidents. Occasionally, however, a major catastrophe takes lives by the score and calls public attention to the problem. The early decades of this century

were the worst, with the 1907 Monongah explosion alone killing at least 361 men.

The chief chronicler of this sad part of West Virginia history is Lacy Dillon of Wyoming County. Mr. Dillon's 1976 book, *They Died in the Darkness*, covered the state's worst mine disasters, concluding with the 1968 Farmington blast, in which Pete Kaznoski died. *They*

*Died for King Coal* followed in 1985, documenting lesser tragedies, some of which snuffed out a dozen or more lives themselves.

Dillon's books may be purchased in West Virginia bookstores or directly from the author. *They Died in the Darkness* sells for \$12.95, and *They Died for King Coal* for \$11.95. Send mail orders to Lacy Dillon, Box 222, Ravencliff, WV 25913.



Sara Kaznoski will never forget the events of 20 years ago, but has made a life for herself. She now divides her time between Myrtle Beach and her Marion County home.

Mannington and the mine. The sign still says "Llewellyn Portal," but the former bathhouse and office building was remodeled after the 1968 disaster and is now used as a training and communication center. A warm, friendly supervisor shows the two of you around, demonstrating safety equipment, pointing out escapeway maps, explaining the huge switchboard through which the locations of

all underground miners are recorded during every shift in every Consol mine in the Fairmont area. You wander through the building, and Sara comments, "This was the locker room, and this was the shower room, and this was the super's office. I've been in here a hundred times." The rooms are bright and airy, the paint fresh, the men young and very full of life.

Then you go back outside, and Sara points to several huge concrete slabs just 50 feet or so from the front of the building. "See that?" she says. "That's the seal. That's the shaft — 500 feet down to where the explosion was."

Sara points, too, to the site of the original memorial placed by the company for the 78 dead miners. It is now a patch of weeds. "They decided," she explains, "that was too close to the building." Instead, 10 years after the accident, the company built the beautiful black granite monument that now stands near the entrance to the property. You stop for several minutes, and Sara can't keep from stooping here, bending there, to pull weeds, to straighten flower holders, to wipe the engraving on the front of the monument.

"We really had to fight to get this," she says, "and we still have to fight to get them to mow and keep it nice. Some of us widows took care of the first one ourselves. It was made of wood, and every time the wind would blow the thing would fall over, and we widows would have to repair it and paint it and all. So they finally built this nice one in its place."

She reaches down to pull from one bunch of flowers an index card wrapped in plastic. It is a note which Sara wrote and placed with the flowers on Memorial Day. The note is addressed to Pete Kaznoski, a reminder of how much Sara and their sons and grandchildren still miss him. You notice then that there are other cards wrapped in plastic and tucked in with other flowers at the base of the monument, other reminders of the incredible tragedy and the unending grief.

You climb back into the car to take Sara back to Barrackville and she says, "You know, I've kept a journal of all this, every little thing that happened, and I have a whole lot of tapes and things that tell the whole story. I've started to write my own book." She nods to you and to herself. "I'm going to write it, all right. It will be my book, and it will tell the whole story, and it will be the truth.

"You want to know what the title is going to be?" Sara smiles. "I'm going to call it *I'll See You in the Morning, Pete.* ♣





The Monongalia County castle with the bow-tied master of the house kneeling at center front. Thoney Pietro is surrounded by members of the WVU Circolo Italiano Club. Photographer unknown, about 1935.

# Thoney Pietro's Castle

By Norman Julian

**S**ome build castles in the air and never put foundations under them. Thoney Pietro built a castle imbedded in West Virginia rock and said, "It is like the house in the Bible. It is built to last."

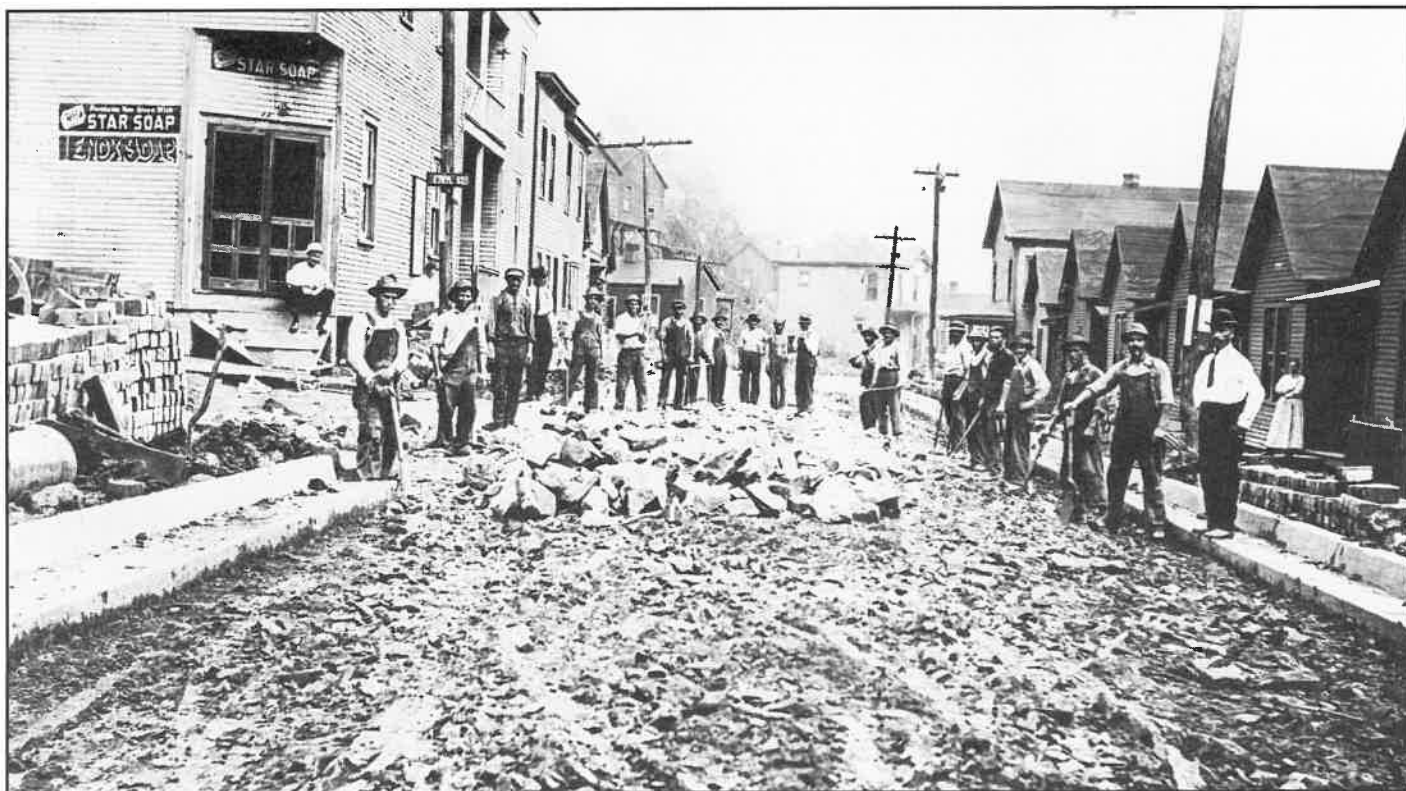
The castle rises above the promontory of a ridge paralleling the Tyrone Road in Monongalia County, about halfway between Dellslow and Cheat Lake. From the top of one of its twin turrets, you can see the lake about

two miles away. A balcony, facing west at a right angle from the lake, provides a view of Morgantown six miles in the distance.

Thoney's masterwork is as much a castle as the ones tourists seek out in European countries. It reflects the Italian styles of architecture that its builder grew up with. Born in Italy in 1878, Pietro came to America 18 years later. He died in Morgantown in 1972. He left a legacy of stonework

that should ensure that he is remembered as a master builder for generations, if not centuries.

Thoney was named Ferdinando Pittassi at birth, according to a 1958 biographical sketch. An American employer changed his name to Thoney Pietro. His grandfather in Genoa taught him the ancient craft of stonemasonry. Thoney's apprenticeship began at age seven. By the time he emigrated to America, he was al-



ready skilled at his trade. He once owned the world's record for brick-laying — placing an average of 136 pavement bricks per minute over eight hours at Homestead, Pennsylvania, in 1900. His fame as a brick paver was such that in 1907, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* sent a writer to do a feature on his skills. He was timed on that occasion at 182 bricks per minute.

The young mason, already a contractor of some substance, came to Monongalia County in 1911. "Like most people in those days, Thoney arrived in Morgantown by boat," says William Fichtner, who lived across the road from Pietro the last 20 years of the stonemason's life. "When he came up the Monongahela River, he said his first look at Morgantown reminded him of the place in Italy he came from.

"Morgantown was a small town when he came here," says Fichtner. "Pietro helped build it. He paved many of the streets in town with bricks. He paved High Street, Spruce Street, University Avenue, Park Street, Brockway Avenue. He built sidewalks and walls. I've seen a lot of the walls he made and I've never seen one that fell in."

Like his castle, Pietro's reputation

has endured. According to Fichtner, a student at West Virginia University came out to interview him when he was 78 years old. She doubted he could lay 136 bricks per minute. Pietro told her to come back in a few days and bring a stopwatch.

Fichtner recalls that Thoney "came over to my house and asked if I had any bricks. I only had about a half-dozen. He went all around the neighborhood collecting bricks. He was only able to find 111."

When the student came out with the stopwatch, Fichtner watched his aging neighbor's performance. "He piled the bricks four in a stack alongside the sandbed he worked on," Fichtner recalls. "He would lay four courses, or rows, consecutively. He'd pick up a brick and slap it lightly in the sand to splash a little bit of sand against the next brick, like dry mortar. Then he'd do the same with the next brick. He had a kind of regular swinging motion. That day he placed the 111 bricks in less than a minute."

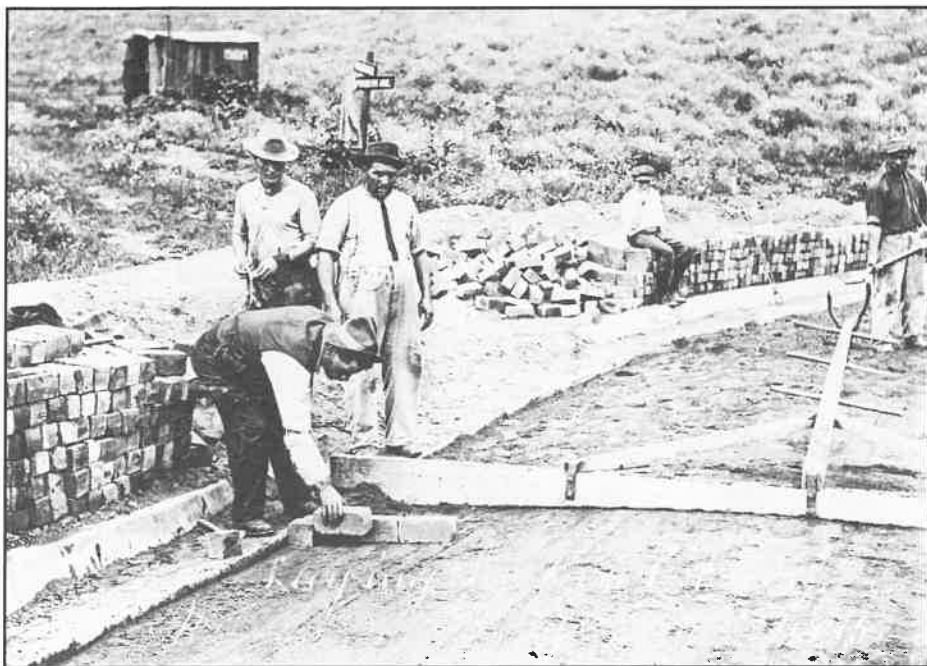
One of the streets in Morgantown officially bears Pietro's name. Countless others do, too, if you know where to look. Many of the bricks Pietro used were imprinted with his name. Though almost all of the brick streets he built have been blacktopped over,

his appellation is buried beneath them.

The street paving was done by the Thoney Pietro Company, the contracting firm that made the stonemason a rich man. The company's roots date back to Thoney's early years in America. By the late 1890's he was undertaking contract jobs in Pennsylvania, according to the 1958 sketch by Morgantown Professor Oscar Lambert. Pietro evidently was already doing some work in the Morgantown area before he moved there. In its heyday the Pietro Company was a sizable general contractor, handling street paving, plumbing, sewerage and excavating in both states. In West Virginia Pietro operated statewide, laying streets from Monongalia to Mingo.

When Pietro had enough money and time, he turned his attention to the castle, his crowning work. Formally, it is known now as the Good Counsel Friary and Christian Renewal Center, but most still call it "Thoney's Castle."

In 1928, Pietro started the job. To finish the 23-room structure required five years and \$200,000. That was a fortune then. "Fallingwater," the Frank Lloyd Wright masterwork constructed about 35 miles away in Penn-



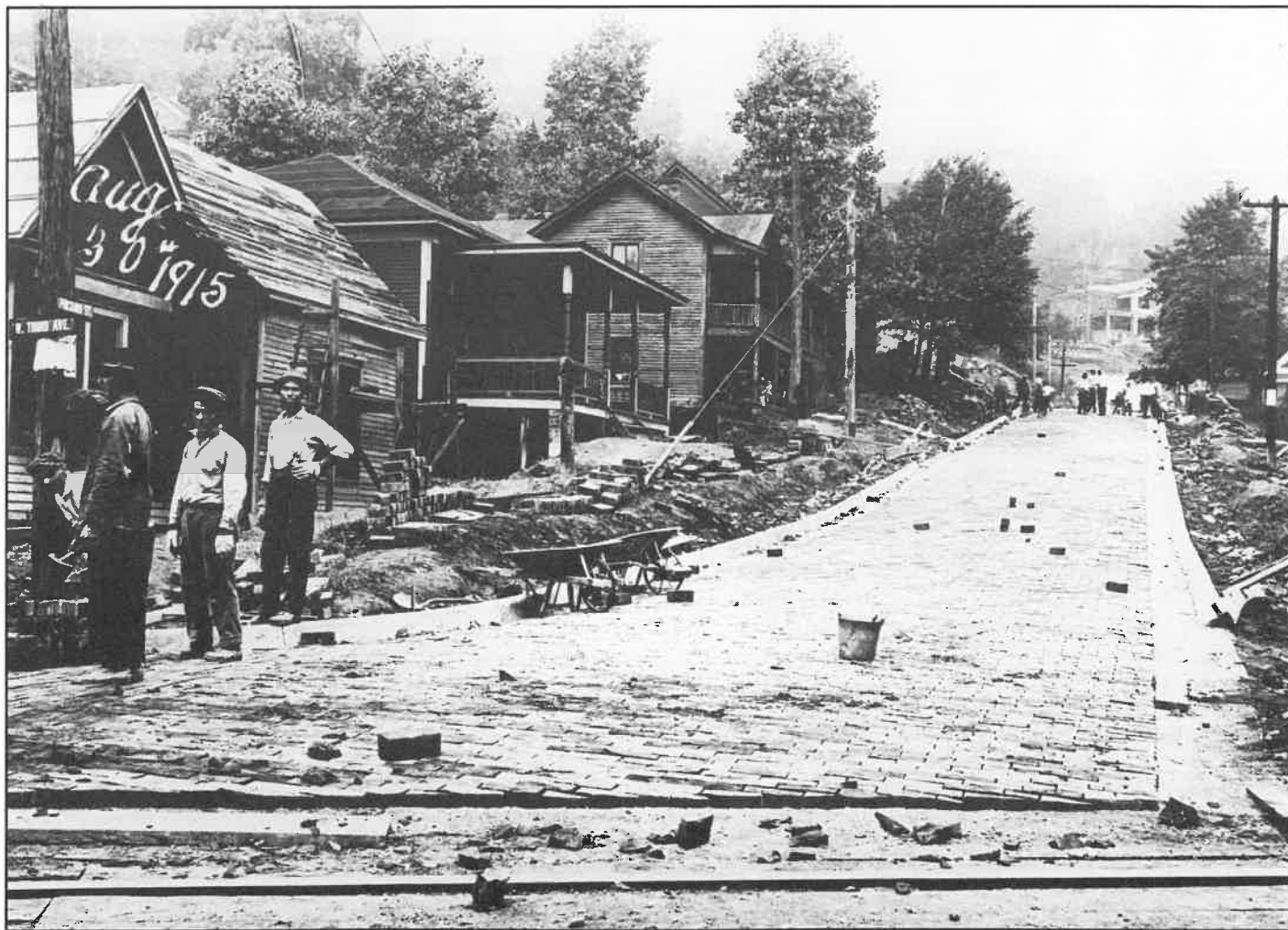
sylvania at about the same time, cost the Mellon family only about \$55,000. The Greer Mansion, built about the same time, too, on a site that can be seen from the castle, also cost \$200,000.

For his monumental work, Pietro hired local men and immigrants from Italy who could not find work in the Depression. They usually were paid \$2.40 a day, good money at the time. Pietro painstakingly taught them how to cut and work the stone.

"He had to be in charge," recalls Fichtner. "If there was a rock laid when he wasn't present, he'd make them take it out and put it in the way he wanted it." Fichtner adds, "People who worked for him never complained."

Fichtner says that when he moved next door, "I thought the neighbors might resent him. He had made a lot

Pietro's fortune was made in part by paving the streets of West Virginia and surrounding states. These photos from a 1915 Williamson contract show the sequence of a brick paving job. The street bed is prepared first (opposite page). The first bricks on Williamson Boulevard are laid on a bed of sand smoothed by the drag in the center of the street (above); note that the drag slopes the sand both ways from the center, for drainage. The bottom photo shows a section of finished paving on Prichard Street. Photos by Clark's Studio, Williamson.







Pietro's Kingwood Street, Morgantown, house was less flamboyant than the castle which succeeded it, but still a substantial structure in the Italianate style he preferred. Photographer unknown, about 1925.

of money in the contracting business, but people in the neighborhood all had good things to say about him."

But there was a dark period in Thoney Pietro's life, Fichtner recalls, a time when his patriotism was questioned. "In World War II, there was a rumor that he was a spy," he says. "Some said he talked by shortwave radio to Mussolini. Maybe part of the reason for the rumor was because Thoney mounted the Italian flag on one of the towers of his castle. Of course, he mounted the American flag on the other one.

"One day the state police came out in a car and came up to him and said, 'Get in.' He was a friendly sort of guy and liked to talk, so he did. He didn't think he was in trouble but they arrested him and drove him to jail. He denied being a spy but he didn't deny loving Italy or the Italian flag. He said, 'How could I love my step-mother if I didn't love my mother?' They let him go."

Pietro's attachment to the land of his birth seemed to intensify as he aged. He took an active interest in Italian organizations in America and in postwar relief and other charitable work in Italy. He received numerous honors from the Italian government. His generosity extended to the Catholic Church, and in 1949 he was given a precious reliquary containing the bones of St. Anthony of Padua. On September 24, 1951, he received the

personal blessing of Pope Pius XII.

The mason spent many hours with neighbor Fichtner over the years and told him how he had built the castle. Pietro said, "It all came out of my head." There were no blueprints or written plans. "When I lived in Italy, everything in Italy was made out of rock. Homes, streets, everything," Pietro told his neighbor. That was what he wanted for the castle. He did not, however, model it after a specific structure. He designed it as he went along.

"He loved stones," Fichtner says. "They were his playthings. That's the way he had fun. There were a lot of them on my place and he was always willing to show me how to work with them. When he found one on my place that he liked, he'd stand back and look at it. Then he'd say he wouldn't do a thing to it if he were building a fieldstone house." Pietro cut stone when he had to, but said it was best to "use each stone as you found it," according to Fichtner. "He said to take hammers and chisels and throw them in the river. He said cutting the rock took the character away."

Fichtner said Pietro by himself could move rocks that weighed 300 or 400 pounds. "He'd move it over the ground by using a fulcrum. He'd get a rock about the size of a soccer ball and lift one end of the big rock on it. Then he could move it the way he wanted without carrying the whole

weight. He'd sort of roll it along."

Occasionally, the rocks were too big to move that way. These had to be cut down to size. "He could take a great big boulder and slice it up like bread," the admiring Fichtner reports.

"He'd start a row of wedges across the stone about 10 inches apart. Then he would strike blows with a sledgehammer. From one side, he would work across, then begin at the starting place again, making a straight row. He wouldn't hit the wedge hard. Just the weight of the sledge falling was all the force he used. After he made the row, he'd go back over it again and chip the line deeper. But he never went deep enough to get the wedge stuck. He'd go across the grain, not with it. He said the sound and vibration was what split the rock.

"When he thought a rock was ready to cut, he would pour water in the groove," Fichtner continues. "He said there were vacuums in the grain of the rock that hindered it from breaking apart. The water would go down and fill up those vacuums and pull in the air so that when he hit the groove with a cutting stroke the resistance would be broken and the rock would cut naturally."

Thoney built his three-story castle without the use of a crane. "He built a ramp all the way around it," says Fichtner. "It was like a corkscrew, a spiral. There was room on it to put the heavy rocks all along the way where he worked. He got the rocks up there with a four-wheel buggy that the workers pushed. There was room all along the ramp to put stacks of them."

In his castle, Pietro brought to fruition all his skills and vision. The castle is the focal point of an estate that originally included gateways, passageways and patios. The remnants of two swimming pools and bathing houses, tables and chairs, water fountains, a palatial doghouse, cannons and lions still adorn the building and grounds. All are made of stone.

Legend has it that all the stone was quarried on the property of 32 acres, but Pietro told Fichtner he had picked up good stones wherever he could find them. "He especially liked river rock, or rounded rock," the neighbor remembers. "When he was building

the castle he lived in Morgantown. Every morning on his way out here he'd stop by Deckers Creek and fill up the trunk of his car with them. He used them a lot."

Thoney also liked giant marbles, or glass reflectors. "He bought truckloads of glass gearshift knobs from the Houze Glass Company in Point Marion, Pennsylvania, and cemented them in the castle and in the walls surrounding the estate," Fichtner says. "With the rounded rocks and the marbles he'd make all kinds of images. Elephants, lions, funny faces. He made all kinds of things. I saw on public television the story of an Italian immigrant who built the Watts Towers near Los Angeles from rock and metal he found. Thoney could have done that."

Most of Thoney's big marbles are gone now. "Kids chiseled most of them out," says Fichtner. It is said their reflections also caused visual problems for drivers traversing the Tyrone Road at night.

In 1949 Pietro turned the castle and about half the estate over to the Cath-

olic Church. While his castle housed men being trained as missionaries, Pietro himself moved into a small, single-bedroom stone house he built next door. It matched the construction of the original castle.

In 1955, the Church erected a stone chapel next to the castle and in 1968, the Franciscans completed a building that today is used for sleeping quarters, offices, library and conference rooms. About the lawns are spotted the statues of saints of the Catholic Church and other religious symbols. Most were sculpted in Carrara marble from the town of Pietra Santa — which means "Holy Stone" — in Italy.

The California mission-style architecture of the new buildings troubled Thoney Pietro because it did not match his original vision. Like West Virginians for ages, he had built from available materials. Instead of quarrying rock from the site or surrounding area, the Franciscans brought in Ohio sandstone for the new buildings. Pietro was not allowed to oversee construction of the additions.

The inside of the original castle was remodeled into larger living areas. Like Wright in "Fallingwater," Pietro had favored smaller spaces built to human scale. The decor that was added inside is in sharp contrast to the original specially-made period furniture which Thoney's ancestors, the Pitassi family, might have used back in the 14th century.

The plan for a training center for priests went astray, with a decline in candidates given as the reason. Now the castle complex is used as a Christian retreat center for non-clergy. A wooden schoolhouse on the grounds contains a "Museum of Accomplishment" of the Pietro family, open by special arrangement.

But no matter what changes around it, the castle belongs. The deep brown, sombre sandstone of the exterior shows little deterioration. In a real way, Thoney's Castle came from the rugged, rocky terrain on which it rests, just as it evolved from the rugged, rock-loving man who built it to endure. ✦

Hard work and love of craft contributed to the immigrant mason's success. Here Thoney Pietro inspects the nearly completed paving of Williamson's East 4th Avenue on July 19, 1915. Photo by Clark's Studio.



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# The June Meeting

By Paul R. Lilly

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The Ballards, my grandmother's people, never missed the June Meeting at the Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church, near Greenville. The meeting takes place each year on the first Saturday and Sunday in June. I don't remember the first one I attended, but it was on June the 3rd and 4th, 1922. I was just a baby in my mother's arms.

My grandfather Lilly's people were always there as well. So were the Thompsons and Chamberses and numerous Lilly cousins. The meeting gave an opportunity for all the old Monroe County families to come home again. I never missed one until I went in service in 1942, and most of the time there were 500 to 1,500 people there, maybe more.

Grandmother Lavelette Ann Ballard Lilly started baking and cooking and making arrangements weeks in advance. She did this from the time she was married in 1882 until her death in 1930. Everything had to be just so. She didn't want anyone to talk about her or her cooking.

One of the first things I remember is the horses tied to trees and fences around the outskirts of the church, the mares with their colts. Very little of the tack matched. One horse might have a Buena Vista saddle, a Kentucky spring seat, or a Wilbourn with a blind bridle, and another an old McClellan army saddle. (That was the saddle General McClellan copied from the Hungarians, easy on the horse's back but hard on a man's rear.) I never saw a cowboy saddle or an English saddle. Some horses had just a feed sack or pad. Some had roses stuck in their brow bands, and some had ribbons tied to the reins.

Wagons and buggies were parked everywhere, and some people brought cars. An old standby was Ike Ballard's 1913 T-Model Ford. It was there every year from 1913 to the late 1940's or early 1950's. In 1955 I saw that T-Model in the Ford showroom here in Lewisburg.

The church sits in a horseshoe curve of Indian Creek, which had to

be forded on both sides. I can remember seeing several men roll up their pants legs, take off their shoes and try to push a stalled car out of the creek. This only happened when there was high water. Sometimes the men got the cars out. If they didn't, a team of horses would be sent for. One has never seen such lunging of horses and splashing of water. One fellow told me years later that part of the problem was that they couldn't cuss the horses or use a big stick on them in front of the congregation.

Ike Ballard's father, Baldwin, lived from 1821 to 1917. For years before and after the Civil War, Baldwin always rode to the June Meeting on a new three-year-old. His family would follow in a road wagon or a hack. My grandfather, Charles H. Lilly, watched to see what Baldwin would be riding. His horses were the best and Grandfather was fond of good horses. From about 1903 to 1916, Grandfather himself rode the same horse, Bob, that was out of a farm mare and a Green Mountain Morgan stallion.

Baldwin was a real pistol. Not long before his death, he sent for two lawyers from Union. They rushed to his bedside. Baldwin seated one on one side of his bed and the other one on the other side. "I've made up my mind that I don't want to die with any more dignity than Christ our Lord did," stated the old man. "So, I'm making arrangements for my death between two thieves and I guess you will have to do." He then had them draw up his will.

Some people dispute it, but drinking was common around the June Meeting. "Back in 1931 I had run off 20 gallons of moonshine and I thought I would have enough for both days," an old gentleman recently told me. "I sold that 20 gallons before noon on Saturday. I had to get in my old Ford and drive back to Rock Camp, where I bought at wholesale another 20 gallons from a neighbor of mine. I sold all this on Sun-

day before we had dinner on the grounds."

One year some of the men of my family went over on Friday. My father, grandfather and two great-uncles stopped at a bootlegger's on Ellison Ridge and bought a gallon of moonshine, so as to be ready. One other fellow was with them. I called him Uncle Jim, but he wasn't a relative. He always carried a folding metal cup in one shirt pocket and a bag of sugar in the other. He would pull out this cup, open it up, put several pinches of sugar in it and then hold it out to receive his drink of whiskey.

When these relatives of mine arrived in Greenville, they stopped at Uncle Nat Ballard's and wanted to leave their whiskey with him. "Lord no," said Uncle Nat. "Alice will throw a fit. What if the law should catch us? But if you can sneak it out behind the house to the stable, I guess it will be all right." When they went back, they found an empty jug. Uncle Nat had played the host with his buddies from the corner store. Those who refused it were few.

The June before I went in service, a relative wanted to know if two or three of us boys wanted a drink. We all wandered down around the creek bank, and slipped into a thicket where each took his turn at the fruit jar. I was the last one to be handed the jar. I looked up on the bank and there stood Elder Lowell Lilly, shaking his finger and promising to call the law. I spilled the moonshine all up and down my shirt and pants. I smelled like a mash barrel the rest of the day.

I went back to the June Meeting in 1985. The old church was clean and well-kept. I thoroughly enjoyed the singing, but I missed hearing "Amazing Grace," my favorite hymn. "Let all things be done decently and in order," the preacher said, and that was the way the meeting was conducted. There was closed communion and then foot washing, the men on one side of the church and the women on the other.

Before I left the grounds, I walked behind the church and took a good look at the oat field out back. My family always checked this field. The oats were doing fine, and — though the crowds are much smaller nowadays — so is the June Meeting tradition at Indian Creek. ♣



# 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.

## Remembering Pickens

Melbourne, Florida

March 21, 1988

Editor:

As one of those transplanted West Virginians, I prize the publication of the *GOLDENSEAL*.

The "Sweet Pickens" article by Mary Lee Sutton touched a tender spot in my heart. The summer of 1938, I spent the first money I earned, along with two other newly-graduated high school friends, riding the railroad train from my home in Buckhannon to Pickens. What was earned haying for a family in Pickens was spent to and from home every other weekend for movies and some girlfriends. The train fare about equalled the income, \$1 per day with room and board.

Work days lost due to rain afforded us room and board only, if you were not gifted in other menial work, such as convincing the two milk cows to give up their treasure. This job I was qualified for and did pursue twice daily for the full wage. I had assistance from my two friends in helping to ward off the one mean turkey gobbler when entering the barnyard.

Having lost my two dear friends over the years and being short of memory, I cannot remember the family name we worked for but recall the womenfolk worked the fields as well as the menfolk. They were of the good old German stock as best I recall.

Thanks for the memories.

Sincerely yours,  
Fred W. Lloyd

## Shay Locomotives

Wenatchee, Washington

March 21, 1988

Editor:

I just received my Spring '88 edition and it's a gold mine of good reading. The stories "Farewell To Steam" and "Sweet Pickens" are of special interest to me because I'm familiar with both. The Shay geared locomotive

was designed by Ephriam Shay and built by Lima Locomotive Works of Lima, Ohio, which also built many standard-type steam locomotives.

The Shay was known as the "work horse of the woods" and was slow, but powerful, and could out pull the other two geared engines — the Climax and the Heisler. The Shay also went around the world. It was used from Alaska to New Zealand, and Europe to Hawaii.

Most of them were only the two-truck type but the one used by Cass Scenic Railroad is ex-Western Maryland three-truck type, and the largest built by Shay Locomotive Works. There was also the Willamette Shay, built by Willamette Iron Works of Portland, Oregon. It was almost identical to the Lima-built Shay, but was larger than even the one at Cass. The extra size and power was needed to haul the giant logs of the Pacific Northwest.

Walt Thayer

## T-Model Tips

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

March 29, 1988

Editor:

I enjoy reading the *GOLDENSEAL* and look forward to receiving each

quarterly issue. In the Spring issue the article "Nothing But a Ford" was interesting, but I noticed one error as follows: The author said that to operate the Model T "you worked everything with two pedals."

I was driving a T-Model Ford by the time I was 12 years old. It had three pedals that consisted of the brake, the reverse and the clutch. By pushing in on the clutch a little you could put the motor in neutral, or out of gear. To put the car in motion, you pushed the clutch to the floor, gave it some gas with the hand throttle, then released the clutch and you were in high gear. When you came to a hill, you pushed the clutch to the floor since it was the pulling gear.

In order to use the reverse pedal, the clutch was pushed in a little to put the motor out of gear, or in neutral. Then the reverse pedal was pushed in so you could back up. Also the emergency brake could be adjusted to put the motor in neutral or out of gear.

When you stopped the T-Model, you pushed in the clutch a little to put the motor out of gear, or in neutral, which kept the motor from stalling.

Sincerely,  
O. C. Hensley

## The Mine Wars

Green Bank, West Virginia

April 6, 1988

Editor:

I have been reading about the miners' march and war in several West Virginia counties during 1921, also about the filming of *Matewan* and the books *Storming Heaven* by Denise Giardina and *Bloodletting In Appalachia* by Howard B. Lee. I have enjoyed the reading very much and hope to see the *Matewan* movie soon.

I want to add some of my experiences during this period. I was living with my older sister and her family in Huff Creek, Logan County, a few miles from Ethel. My brother-in-law, Lawrence Parsons, was superinten-



dent of the mines and had helped to put in this operation for a distant cousin, Mr. J. K. Parsons.

The miners lived in company-owned houses, with very meager facilities, and used scrip to buy supplies at the company stores. Prices were high, wages low. Secret talks and meetings were being held behind closed doors and "yellow paper" being passed about a union as an organization for better living conditions and better wages for the miners and their families. Feelings were running high and neighbors were suspicious of each other or whose side they were on.

I was in my second year of high school at Man and school was delayed three weeks in September until the war was settled and the troops left the county.

A few years later, I was teaching at Blair along with my sister, Pearle, and Lucien Gore. We lived on the Logan side of Blair Mountain and drove across in a Model T Ford. The road had been graded that summer and during the winter it was almost impossible to cross due to deep ruts. Often we would have to leave the car and walk the rest of the way. Later in the day some of the older students would manage to bring it in after the ice and snow melted.

Lucien's brother was killed on the mountain during the miners' war and he would not cross the mountain after dark.

Yours truly,  
Ella Waddell Sheets

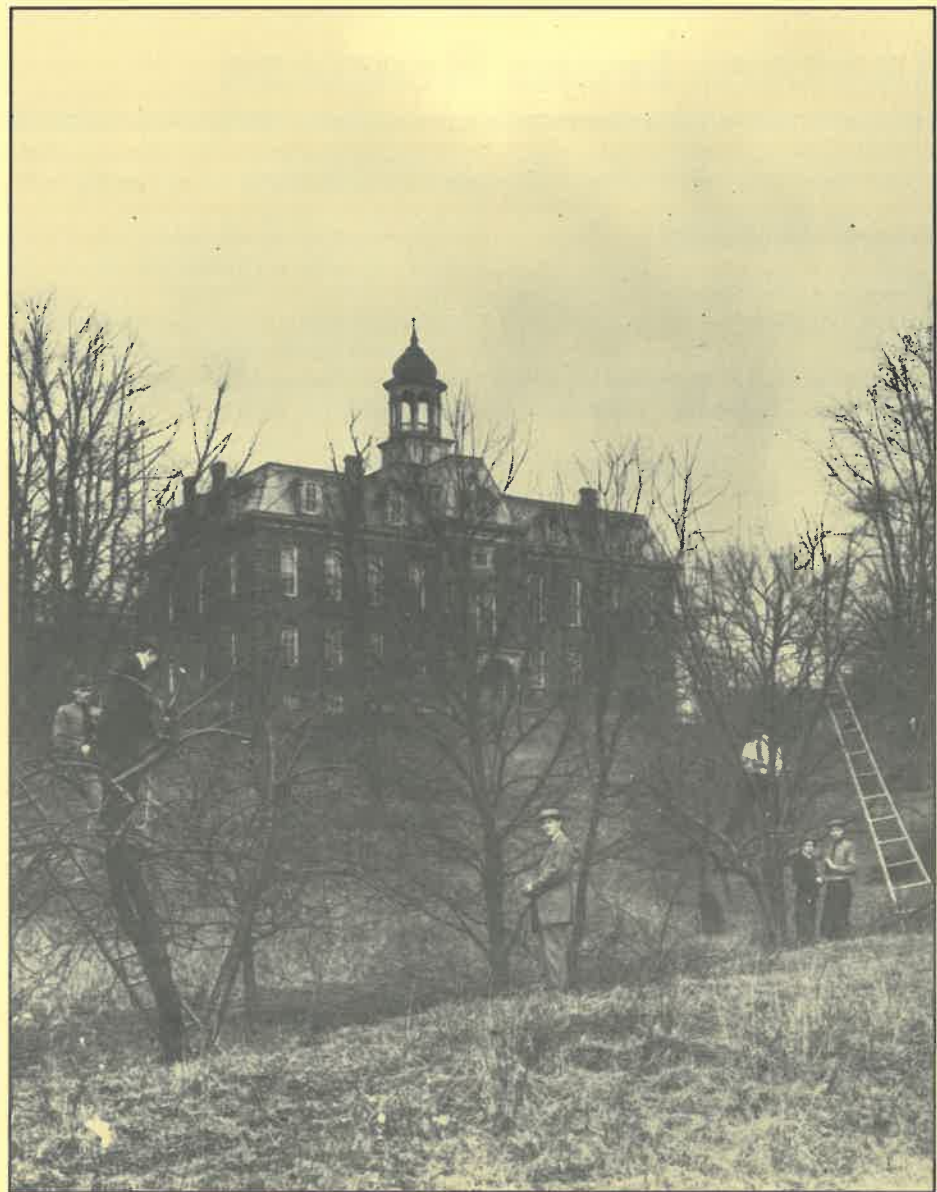
### Correcting the Cover

Morgantown, West Virginia  
March 29, 1988

Editor:

For many years I have been an avid supporter of GOLDENSEAL and appreciate all your efforts in making this a leading magazine of traditional American life. I recently received Volume 14, Number 1, your Spring issue for 1988. The cover shows a photograph at West Virginia University which is described as Chitwood Hall. The building shown on your cover is actually Martin Hall, and not Chitwood Hall as described in the magazine. You may wish to run a correction in the next issue.

Yours faithfully,  
Emory L. Kemp, Professor



New Martinsville, West Virginia  
April 12, 1988

Editor:

Just received Spring issue of GOLDENSEAL and have not read any of the articles contained therein. My hesitation was caused by the sight of the front cover, which was described somewhat inadequately in my opinion.

The picture was taken from a location on what is now called Campus Drive, along the north side of the old Mountaineer Field location. The trees upon which the students are occupied lie in the ravine recently vacated when the old stadium was demolished and removed. The building at the top of the bank at one time housed the University Museum and a num-

ber of classrooms. The spire directly over the building is actually the top of Woodburn Hall, and in the left background is what was once known as Science Hall where Dr. Colwell taught physics.

The picture was probably taken in the early 1920's. Our family traveled Stewart Street which is to the left, and almost an extension of Campus Drive. The dress of the students and their instructor appear to be typical of that period.

I am now 73 years old, and came to Morgantown as a six year old in 1921. Having lived there until 1940, returning many times for athletic events, graduations, hospitalizations, reunions, and any other reasonable excuse, I find records of the progress of



the community, and of WVU particularly, interesting.

Thank you so much for the memories your magazine evokes for me.

Sincerely,  
Herbert W. King

*After some research — we promise to do that before publication, next time — we conclude that Professor Kemp is right. Our Spring cover shows Martin Hall, spire and all. — ed.*

### Another 1924 Teammate

Pennsboro, West Virginia  
March 22, 1988

Editor:

I was on the 1924 Pullman football team [GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1987, pp. 40-46].

I had a job the previous summer carrying water on a 20-inch pipeline and finding places to locate water and springs near the right-of-way. We carried buckets and a dipper for each bucket. Tobacco and snuff users used the same cup. Occasionally someone tossed a cup of water on his head. He was chastised in no small way.

I was my father's hay stacker, so I did not get to apply for the job until harvest was over. I received 45 cents an hour for a nine-hour day (with deductions for rain, etc.). The day's wages were \$4.05 — big money for the time.

I decided to go to school two weeks late. My mother did not approve.

However, I won out and worked two weeks late. I think we worked six days a week, so that was big money for a 16-year-old boy.

During those two weeks, my mother was very happy when she heard that I missed getting in jail with the rest of the team, as described in the Louis Reed story in the Summer 1987 GOLDENSEAL.

Pipeline laying was so different at that time. Pick and shovel were the main tools, helped by the use of hand drills and dynamite. "Fire in the hole" was a real warning. So many things were different at that time.

Bradford Z. Spiker



### Air Service to Air Force

Fairhope, Alabama

January 26, 1988

Editor:

I was lucky to receive a copy of the Fall 1987 GOLDENSEAL. I love it — but on page 4 I found a mistake in the notice about the West Virginia Air National Guard book.

I believe if you check with the Air Force Association or the U.S. Air Force Information Service, you will find that: In 1918 the *Army Air Service*

was set up by Congress; in 1926 the Service became the *Army Air Corps*; in 1941 the Air Corps became the *Army Air Force*; and in 1947 that became the *U.S. Air Force*, with the Navy keeping its own air service separate.

I went into the Army in 1945 when I turned 18. I was put into the Army Air Force after taking two days of tests at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, along with many other young fellows from Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.

Those of us who went into the Army Air Force were sent to Kessler Field, Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic training. The others went to Camp Bliss, Texas, for basic training.

Years later when I wanted to purchase an Army Air Force ring, I had my choice of either an Army Air Corps ring or the new U.S. Air Force ring. I settled for the Air Corps ring.

Occasionally I still hear the old Army Air Corps song on radio stations that play the "oldies." It was played all during World War II, along with other service songs. I guess there must be a current U.S. Air Force song — I just don't know it.

Yours truly,

Arthur C. Carlson, Jr.

*Thanks, Mr. Carlson. Jack Smith agrees with your chronology of the origins of the Air Force. The Coonskin Boys, Smith's history of the West Virginia Air National Guard, may be purchased in West Virginia bookstores or directly from Pictorial Histories of Charleston. — ed.*

## 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.*

### Railroad Festival at Cass

The town of Cass will host the first Cass Railroad Festival at the Scenic Railroad State Park on June 17-19, Friday through Sunday. The event celebrates the park's 25th year and West Virginia's 125th birthday.

Activities include guided walking tours of the town, free concerts, art and craft demonstrations, a woodchoppers' competition, bicycle and foot races and abundant regional

food. The kids can enjoy a crawdad hunt, marbles tournament, hoop rolling contest, and other old-fashioned games. History enthusiasts will be treated to log skidding demonstrations with horse teams and a chance to meet the original loggers and railroaders of Cass.

The Cass Railroad Festival begins Friday at 6:00 p.m., with a program of traditional music followed by classic rock 'n' roll. Sunday's program is bluegrass and acapella gospel music.

The festival will feature storytellers Jim Costa and Virginia Gray, Big Money, the Falling Branch Band, the Black Mountain Bluegrass Boys, the Joyful Noise Acapella Quartet and New World Theatre.

Saturday evening, harmonica player Delbert McClinton will perform, along with "Mountain Stage" host Larry Groce and Piedmont blues musicians John Cephas and Phil Wiggins. A six-piece band will accompany McClinton.



Cass was a lumber town built around the turn of the century. Many of the original buildings are intact, and are being restored. Shay steam locomotives that once hauled lumber out of the mountains now take visitors to the top of Cheat's Bald Knob. Train rides to Whittaker Station may be added to the schedule of activities to accommodate festival-goers.

For information call 1-800-CALL WVA or (304) 456-4300. You may also write to Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, Cass, WV 24927.

### Outhouse Humor Published

Billy Edd Wheeler dedicates his new book to "all those hardy souls all over America, whose feet trod the paths to the little shacks out back." *Outhouse Humor* is a collection of jokes, stories, and songs that pay tribute to the privy and all its accessories.

The publisher, August House, signed Wheeler to the project because of his previous distinction as the singer and composer of the hit song "Ode to the Little Brown Shack Out Back." "It was a protest song,"

Wheeler says of the No. 1 record. "This was in the '60's when songwriters were protesting everything that moved."

Besides establishing Wheeler as a songwriter, "Little Brown Shack" made him an expert on outhouse lore. "People sent me songs and stories and poems about outhouses, paintings and pictures and carvings of outhouses, and even a salt-and-pepper set in the form of tiny outhouses," he recalls.

One of Wheeler's stories comes from *West Virginia Hillbilly* editor Jim Comstock. He cites a 1940 *Clarksburg Exponent* story, announcing that the country's fifty-thousandth Roosevelt bungalow would be dedicated that particular day. President Roosevelt dispatched crews of WPA laborers to replace dilapidated outhouses with new ones. Sometimes the work was appreciated, and sometimes not. "I'll never forget my father-in-law-to-be, Dock Stowers, ordering these philanthropic emissaries off his farm," Comstock says. "He wasn't about to trust his Republican backside to the dubious care of a bunch of Democrats!"

*Outhouse Humor* contains Wheel-

er's favorite outhouse songs, jokes, and poems, with illustrations by Wendell E. Hall and Boyd Carr. The paperback book sells for \$5.95 and is available in bookstores and from August House, Box 3223, Little Rock, AR 72203. For mail orders, add a \$2.00 handling charge to the cost of the book.

### Wood County Civil War History

*Wood County, West Virginia, in Civil War Times* tells the history of Parkersburg and Wood County during the struggle that resulted in West Virginia statehood in 1863.

The new book delves into the everyday life of the people during wartime, from the glittering social life of Parkersburg's aristocratic families to the seemingly endless street and tavern brawls. Stories of daring ladies who spied for the Confederacy, the gunboat battle that stopped a southern general's raid, and behind-the-scenes political struggles are presented.

The author is H. E. Matheny, a native of the Lauckport district of South Parkersburg who spent most of his working years in Ohio. Beginning in the 1930's, Matheny spent three decades amassing a West Virginia collection including books and printed items. He has also published numerous historical articles, and a book on General Thomas Ma-ley Harris. For *Wood County, West Virginia, in Civil War Times*, Matheny researched unpublished manuscripts, old newspapers, and government archives.

The hardcover book features rare photographs and other illustrations. The cost is \$29.95, plus \$2 for postage and handling. West Virginia residents should add \$1.50 sales tax. Institutions may be billed. To order, send a check or money order to Trans Allegheny Books, Inc., 8th and Green Streets, Parkersburg, WV 26101.

### A Study in Stained Glass

The book *Stained Glass at Trinity* is a detailed study of the 29 stained glass windows at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgantown.

The church, built in authentic Early English Gothic style, was dedicated



### Whistle Toot Cancelled

The 1988 Spencer Mountain Echoes and Steam Whistle Toot Reunion, listed in the annual "Folklife, Fairs, Festivals" calendar in the spring GOLD-

ENSEAL, has been cancelled. The Nicholas County event, originally scheduled for September 16-18 for this year, has been "terminated indefinitely," according to a recent letter from the directors.

in 1953. The publication is intended as a guide for the viewer exploring the windows one by one. Scenes and symbolism, design and construction are all explained in *Stained Glass at Trinity*.

Stained glass was developed as an aid to worship. Early windows told the Christian story in a simple manner, interpreting its meaning in colorful scenes. The windows are also credited with helping the worshipper feel the presence of God and to "be still and know."

Author Martha Lewis Manning of Morgantown stresses that the glass at Trinity is entirely a West Virginia product. "Most of it was made by Blenko in the 1950's when they were still using sand from Berkeley County. The church building was financed, to a great extent, by then coal operator Joseph Farland, so the black diamonds beneath the ground had their part in the ethereal beauty of the stained glass."

*Stained Glass at Trinity* contains color and black and white photographs of the windows as well as other illustrations. The cost of the 38-page booklet is \$10.00, including shipping and handling. To order, contact Trinity Episcopal Church, 247 Willey Steet, Morgantown, WV 26505.

### **Pendleton County Pictorial**

In celebration of Pendleton County's 1988 bicentennial, the county Historical Society announces the publication of *Pendleton County: A Pictorial History*. The hardbound volume is due to be completed in June. It will be printed on acid-free paper, with 208 pages and more than 700 illustrations.

Historical photos will include pictures of the county seat of Franklin dating from 1865, the Franklin fire of 1924, county schools and churches, grist mills, Confederate soldiers, lumbering, farming, recreation, early automobiles, horse-drawn machinery and scenic views.

Pendleton County, located in the eastern part of the state, was created in 1788 from parts of Augusta, Hardy, and Rockingham counties. Spruce Knob, the highest point in West Virginia, is situated there. Other attractions include two national forests, Seneca Rocks, and the Smoke Hole

and Seneca Caverns. The county derives its name from Edmund Pendleton, an 18th-century Virginia statesman and jurist.

*Pendleton County: A Pictorial History* costs \$35, plus \$2.50 for postage and handling. Checks or money orders may be sent to Pendleton County Historical Society, Edgar P. Harper, Treasurer, P.O. Box 209, Franklin, WV 26807.

### **Summersville Gospel Sing**

More than 25 gospel groups will perform at Summersville Music Park when the Summersville Gospel Sing gets underway August 12-14. The gospel sing begins at noon on Friday and runs until 5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Performers over the three-day period include The Primitive Quartet, The Inspirations, Chuck Wagon Gang, Rex Nelson Singers, Squire Parsons, and the Singing Cookes. The emcees are Farrell Johnson and D. "Hoss" Williams.

The Summersville Music Park offers hot food for sale, and modern restrooms and camping facilities on the grounds. The public is invited to bring lawn chairs. Admission is \$11 for Friday and Sunday and \$13 for Saturday. Tickets may be purchased for all three days for \$32 at the gate or \$30 in advance, if ordered by August 1. Send a check or money order with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Edgar Kitchen, P.O. Box 96, Summersville, WV 26651. For information call (304) 872-3145.

### **Hurricane Celebrates Centennial**

In the early 1800's, a community began to form around a bridge across Big Hurricane Creek on the James River Turnpike. The community moved west to the new C&O tracks in the 1870's, and was incorporated in 1888 as the town of Hurricane by the Putnam County Court.

Hurricane residents will celebrate their town's 100th birthday August 11 through 14. Music by Elmer Bird, Stark Raven, the Teays Valley Boys, and John Hartford is planned for Friday and Saturday evenings. Arts and crafts, sports from croquet to soccer, fishing, bicycling, an all-day bean dinner, an ox roast, historical tours, fireworks, bingo and an an-

tique car exhibition are some of the activities planned.

Opening ceremonies are set for Thursday, August 11, at 7:00 p.m. Friday's starting time is 3:00 p.m. Saturday kicks off with a 8:00 a.m. distance run and ends with performances by Elmer Bird and John Hartford and a fireworks show. Sunday will feature two gospel concerts with the Lewis Family, a special birthday celebration with cake and trimmings, and the closing ceremonies.

Hurricane High School is the site for many of the activities. Other events are scheduled in town, at the Community Park and city reservoir, and the Valley Park. For information, exact times and locations, contact Karen S. Lilly, Coordinator, Hurricane Centennial, P.O. Box 186, Hurricane, WV 25526, (304) 757-6751.

### **Bluegrass Gospel Autobiography**

McClain Printing Company of Parsons recently printed musician Mac McMillion's autobiography. In *Who'll Sing For Me*, McMillion describes his life, as centered around family, music and religion.

McMillion, born in Nicholas County, has made music since he was 11. He played guitar and banjo with his father and brothers, but soon gave up the banjo. He, his brothers and friends formed country and gospel groups, performing live and on radio. Guitarist McMillion later went to Korea, and there he and war buddies formed a military entertainment band. After returning home from service, McMillion married Marguerite Virginia Kyle.

In the late 1950's, McMillion became a member of the Mountain Four, a regionally popular bluegrass-gospel band. The group performed at churches, revivals, gospel sings and the like, and broadcasted on radio stations WOAY, Oak Hill, and WMNF in Nicholas County. In the late 1970's McMillion was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer, and in his book he describes how his religion served as an inspiration to his recovery.

*Who'll Sing For Me*, a 122-page paperback with illustrations, sells for \$10 plus \$1 postage and handling; West Virginia residents add 50¢ sales tax. Order from Mac McMillion, Box 7, Nettie, WV 26691.





Our writer revisits the site of childhood memories. She recalls a bustling sawmill camp in this Pocahontas County meadow. Photo by Janet Brashler.

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## Back to Braucher

By Edith Kimmell Starkey

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**I** have a longing, not yet fulfilled, to see once more the other side of the mountain," Edith Kimmell Starkey notes at the conclusion of "Over the Mountain," her 1987 GOLDENSEAL story on Pocahontas County timbering. Her father's sawmill camp was on the other side of that mountain, connected to the jumping-off point of Braucher by a ridge-crossing railroad incline. Mrs. Starkey lived at the lumber camp for several childhood years, but hadn't been back since 1910.

She got her wish following publication of the story last summer. The camp site is now part of the Monongahela National Forest. U.S. Forest Service professionals, eager to benefit from Mrs. Starkey's firsthand recollections, took her to the remote site in a government Jeep. "It was wonderful," she later reported, "and these are the events as they came about." —ed.

In the summer 1987 issue of GOLDENSEAL, I wrote of time spent in the great timber region of Pocahontas

County, from the spring of 1907 to the fall of 1910. I wrote of Braucher and of the mountain from which my father, J. W. Kimmell, supervised the cutting of 300 acres of virgin timber.

In July 1987, my daughter, Velma, and I made the trip back into the land of my childhood memories. Early on a Thursday morning, we met with Jake Thompson and Janet Brashler of the U.S. Forest Service, at the Monongahela National Forest ranger station in Bartow. My new friend, Bob



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So, if you want GOLDENSEAL delivered regularly, we'll be happy to oblige. We will be grateful if you can send a voluntary subscription contribution, but want to hear from you regardless. We'll especially appreciate any comments you may have — and we hope we can count on you to share your own GOLDENSEAL with relatives and neighbors.

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Varney, also met with us. Mr. Varney is from Minnehaha Springs, at the other end of Pocahontas County. I had told him about my early years and he had gone to Braucher, located the site of the old lumber incline, and hiked over Beech Mountain to the other side. He was very interested in my history and I was happy to include him in our party.

Mr. Thompson drove us in a Jeep Wagoner over a long-abandoned timber road around Burner Mountain. When he could drive no further, we struck out on foot, looking for some sign of a familiar landscape. We stood, looking out over a meadow covered with lush green ferns standing three feet high. There was nothing to show that a lumber camp had been here from the spring of 1907 to the fall of 1910.

We first began looking for the foot of the incline over Beech Mountain. (Once I thought of this also as Burner Mountain, but have since learned it is Beech.) I knew that once we got to the base of this incline, I would be able to pinpoint exactly the timber camp site. Janet Brashler, my daughter and I waded through waist-high ferns and weeds. Mr. Thompson and Bob Varney took off in opposite directions, hoping to find the right spot. After a while we heard them calling to us. They had found the place at almost the same time and came hurrying back to guide us to it. We had to walk through more ferns and weeds, cross Mountain Lick Creek, now only a trickle, climb a 45-degree hill to another point in an old timber road and walk yet another half-mile before coming to the site. I was glad to get a tow from Mr. Thompson, holding onto his belt as he climbed ahead of me.

Once we stood at the foot of the incline I found myself looking out over a vast meadow. A wave of nos-

talgia gripped me, for I knew we had indeed come to the side of the mountain where I had spent part of my childhood, 80 years ago. Nothing remained of the old camp — only the wind across that empty valley seemed to whisper its secrets.

I knew the approximate location of a spring that our home had stood near. I pointed to where I felt there must be evidence of it. It could be reached only by crossing that meadow and I dared not try, for the wild ferns and grasses here were over my head and the ground wet and marshy.

Again Jake Thompson struck out, plunging through that mass of head-high growth and soon finding the spring at almost the exact spot I had pointed out. From that position I could locate where things had been — our house a little left of the spring, the sawmill camp a little above and to the right of the spring, the loggers' camp off to the left. The schoolhouse would have been to the left of our house, and there had been eight or 10 other houses scattered around. The blacksmith shop once stood close by the "dinkey" railroad track. I tried to envision the sawmill that once straddled Mountain Lick Creek, a lively stream, now barely visible.

I could have stayed on, just looking and remembering, but at last it was necessary for our good friends to return to the ranger station. I took long lingering looks before saying goodbye to my valley of memories. It was a wonderful experience, hard to put into words. I was glad we had found the site and were really there. At the same time I felt such overwhelming sadness. But memories are sweet and I can relive each again and again.

I have one more wish now — to get to the top of Beech Mountain over which the incline ran! ♣

## New To GOLDENSEAL?

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## In This Issue

NAN BOLLING is a librarian and media specialist at Bruce High School in Westernport, Maryland. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

ROY WATSON CURRY lives in Buckhannon and is an emeritus professor of history from West Virginia Wesleyan College. He has written for the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, the old *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* and *Carnegie Magazine*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MARIAN E. GREEN, a Charleston native, is retired from Marshall University where she worked as secretary to the vice president for academic affairs for 17 years. Her hobbies include walking, reading and playing the organ. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

PATRICIA H. HALL came to West Virginia to attend Alderson-Broaddus College, where she earned her B.A. in technical writing and communications in 1982. She has published in the *Barbour Democrat*, *Guideposts*, *Today's Christian Parent*, and the *Baptist Leader*. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the fall 1985 issue.

NORMAN JULIAN is a Clarksburg native and a graduate of West Virginia University. He is a Morgantown journalist and the author of a novel about West Virginia, *Cheat*, published in 1984 by Back Fork Books. He is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

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

PAUL R. LILLY grew up in Thurmond and now lives in Lewisburg. He has written on the subject of genealogy and done articles for *The Meadow River Post* and an upcoming issue of *American Heritage*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

BARBARA SMITH has written poems, short stories, journal articles and the novel, *Six Miles Out*, published by Mountain State Press. She chairs the Division of the Humanities and teaches writing and literature at Alderson-Broaddus College. She is a periodic contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

KIM SMUCKER works at Salem College and as a freelancer for the Macmillan Publishing Co. and Charles Scribners Sons. He moved to West Virginia from Michigan in 1981 and is happy to be in a place where "a ramp is something you eat instead of enter a highway on." This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

EDITH KIMMELL STARKEY was born in Garrett County, Maryland, and grew up in western Maryland and West Virginia. She operated her own beauty shop until retirement, and now lives in Florida. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the summer 1987 issue.

HENRIETTA WATSON, a retired social studies teacher from Brooke High School, now lives in Wellsburg. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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



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# Summer at Augusta

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The 1988 Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops are scheduled for July 10 through August 14 in Elkins. The summer workshops are a program of the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis and Elkins College. The center is dedicated to the promotion and conservation of the traditional arts and folk culture.

Augusta has grown tremendously since its founding 16 years ago. The summer sessions now offer more than 90 intensive classes in the folk arts. More than 1,500 people take part annually and thousands more attend the public concerts, dances, lectures and exhibits at the Augusta Heritage Center each year.

Most of the summer classes are one week long, with some craft courses lasting two to three weeks. Shorter weekend classes are also available. The courses take place on the hilly, 170-acre Davis and Elkins campus. Facilities range from a rustic log cabin to modern air-conditioned classrooms. Most of the participants, instructors and students alike, stay on campus in dormitory rooms or in nearby motels and campgrounds.

The Augusta workshops are divided into four major categories: craft classes, folklore and miscellaneous, dance classes and music classes. More than 25 craft classes in subjects such as fiddle and bow repair, rug weaving, and folk painting are available. You may even learn how to build a log structure, a guitar or a lap dulcimer.

For students interested in dance, there are classes in clogging, Cajun, Cape Breton, and Irish dance. A dance caller's workshop is also offered. The music workshops are numerous, featuring more than 40 areas of study. Instrument classes for advanced students and beginners include autoharp, banjo, bodhran, harmonica, fiddle, guitar, hammered dulcimer, lap dulcimer, mandolin, tinwhistle and string bass. Ballads, Afro-American choral and congregational singing, gospel, bluegrass, blues, Cajun/zydeco, Irish, oldtime

and Scottish/Cape Breton music may all be studied.

The folklore and miscellaneous category covers a variety of folk arts from "Weeds for Your Needs," wild mushrooms, and herbs and woodlore, to the "Native American Week." The latter focuses on the customs and art of the Senecas, a tribe of the Iroquois nation. It is taught by Seneca cultural leaders. There are other courses in Irish folklore, storytelling and performing, audio production from field recordings, and sound systems for acoustic musicians. Augusta offers a special workshop for children's performers and even folk arts for kids.

Participants in the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops can enroll for

only one class per week. Many classes fill early. A non-refundable deposit of \$40 per class must accompany the registration form. The costs for one-week classes range from \$175 to \$185. Two- and three-week workshops are \$370 and \$580, respectively. Mini-classes in several categories are offered at \$25 to \$60. Dormitory housing costs \$128 per person per week. A non-refundable \$30 deposit is required to reserve a room.

If you are interested in Augusta, contact Registrations, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis and Elkins College, 100 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241, (304) 636-1903 ext. 209. For housing information call the D&E housing director at (304) 636-1900 ext. 355.

Olive Goodwin of Valley Bend teaches weaving at Augusta. Here she shows a student how to thread her loom. Photo by Paul Frank.





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## Inside Goldenseal

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Page 52 — Farmington No. 9 still holds the bodies of many miners killed there in 1968. Sara Kaznoski tells how she and other miners' widows fought for the rights of the living and the dead.

Page 20 — Salem College celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. It is there today thanks to the strengths and determination of its early founders.

Page 32 — Covered bridges span time as well as the streams of the Mountain State. Nan Bolling and Henrietta Watson's tour of 17 original structures begins in Jackson County.

Page 9 — Hugh McPherson, the music-making son of a coalfield physician, broadcast jazz to West Virginians for more than 30 years. He reflects on his life and music in our cover story.

Page 40 — Roy Faulkner won big in Northern Panhandle talent shows of the 1930's, performing with his two sisters. He still sings in Moundsville today.

Page 59 — Thoney Pietro built his Monongalia County castle entirely of native stone. The Italian immigrant constructed his three-story masterwork after making a fortune paving Mountain State streets.

Page 46 — Don Neill has tried quite a few things in his life, from truck-farming and oystering to piloting a plane and landscape painting. He's glad to be home in Buckhannon now.

Page 70 — Edith Kimmell Starkey wrote of her father's Pocahontas County saw-mill camp in the Summer 1987 GOLD-ENSEAL. She later fulfilled her wish to return.

Page 27 — Elmer Richmond is living proof that hard work is good for body and soul. The 84-year-old Summers Countian still roams the mountains of his childhood.

Page 64 — The old Monroe County families gathered at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church for the June Meeting. Paul Lilly remembers the fellowship and fun of days gone by.

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