Vol. 14, No. 4 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Winter 1988

Goldenseal

From the Editor: Thank You

My thanks to all who sent their voluntary subscription payments in reply to our recent appeal. We're still counting as this GOLDENSEAL goes to press, but it looks like we'll run maybe ten percent ahead of last year. That will give us a good start into 1989, and we sincerely appreciate the support.

Having said that, I hasten to remind those who have not yet sent a check that our account books remain open year-round. This fall's subscription drive looks somewhat better than the year before, but we are still short of the break-even point in our annual budget. We're closing the gap, but outgo still exceeds income. That can't continue, as you'll understand from your own financial affairs.

We also appreciate the many notes that came in with the subscription checks. Most were complimentary, a few critical and many suggested ideas for GOLDENSEAL stories. We've read them all and you will see the effects in future issues. I will write to those which seem to require a personal reply, and you can be sure that all the others will be taken to heart as well.

Some new readers were confused to get the reminder letter after having just recently paid for a subscription, and others were concerned that we had sent a request for payment to recipients of gift subscriptions. Our simple fund-raising system depends upon the economy of doing a single mass mailing each fall. We haven't yet fine-tuned it to allow for individual exceptions, so everyone on the mailing list at that time gets the same letter. We don't expect anyone to pay twice, of course, and apologize for any confusion in that regard.

Nor do we expect payment from those who genuinely cannot afford it. Our subscription system is a voluntary one. GOLDENSEAL has many older readers on limited income. Many have contributed a lifetime of service to the Mountain State, and some mighty fine stories to us, and we want to continue to serve them. We must have the financial support of those who can help, but we hope never to have to penalize those who cannot.

Other folks took the opportunity to correct addresses, cancel subscriptions, or inform us of readers who had died within the past year. It hurts any editor to remove a name from the circulation list, but we nonetheless appreciate all information that helps us keep our records up-to-date. We understand that GOLDENSEAL is not for everyone and are not offended when someone tells us that in just so many words. We can then replace that name with someone more interested in the magazine, thus stretching our limited resources a bit further. A saving of that sort is the next best thing to a new paid subscription. I always figured that Benjamin Franklin picked up his "a penny saved is a penny earned" maxim from his publishing experience, for it definitely is true in this line of work.

Please exercise the usual common sense about name and address changes, however. If the change is very minor — the insertion of an initial, for example — it may be best not to bother. Even slight corrections require a complete revision of your label by our staff and then by someone at the state's central computer facility. That's two chances for human error right there, before the computer itself ever gets hold of you. As a general rule of thumb — and I don't know if former Postmaster General Ben Franklin would agree with this one or not — if it's good enough for the post office, it's best to leave it alone. We will, of course, make whatever changes you tell us to, but want you to be aware of the risks involved in cosmetic revisions.

So, a big thank you to those who have contributed and a gentle poke to those who haven't yet. Thanks also to Chuck and Esther Heitzman and the other volunteers who helped process the subscription mail in September and October. The efficient handling of thousands of checks is a nice problem to have, but a problem just the same. We couldn't do it without the help of dedicated volunteers recruited by the Cultural Center volunteer program.

Now that I've "made my manners," as the folks at home used to say, and got my thank-yous out of the way, let me give you the year-end news from the GOLDENSEAL family. I'm afraid I can't report anything like last year's crop of two babies born to staffers, but understand there will be another mouth to feed in photographer Mike Keller's family soon. Those earlier babies took their toll and both their mothers left us late last year. The staff has held steady since then, with Cornelia Alexander recently observing her first-year anniversary with us and Debby Jackson's coming up soon.

It's been a busy time for all of us, old-timers and newcomers alike. Staff and freelancers have crisscrossed West Virginia in recent months, gathering words and pictures for GOLDENSEAL stories. I made the last of several forays into the Greenbrier Valley in late summer and since then have been over to the Tug Fork country three times and up and down the Turnpike more than that. It all comes together in the pages of the magazine sooner or later, and in the meantime we get to visit with a lot of good mountain people.

Altogether, things look good as we approach GOLDENSEAL's 15th anniversary in the spring. I think the magazine is the strongest it has been, both in content and in the management of circulation and reader service. The fund-raising battle is never won, but we're holding our own and gaining a little ground. The number of readers is at an all-time high. We have more good manuscripts coming in than ever before.

Surely we have more than enough to be thankful for, as the old year ends. We appreciate your help and hope it has been a good year for your family as well. Our best to everyone as the holidays approach.

— Ken Sullivan

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Ken Sullivan
Editor

Debby Sonis Jackson
Assistant Editor

Cornelia Crews Alexander
Editorial Assistant

Colleen Anderson
Nancy Balow
Graphic Design

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Goldenseal

Volume 14, Number 4 Winter 1988

COVER: Thomas G. McKell built a family empire around the coalfields boom town of Glen Jean. Our story begins on page 9. Photographer unknown, courtesy George Bragg; custom printing by Greg Clark.

PHOTOS: Bollinger's Studio, W. E. Bollinger, Paul Brown, Greg Clark, Yvonne Snyder Farley, Michael Keller, M. F. O'Brien, William Trevey.

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.

Washington, DC
September 21, 1988
Editor:
Enclosed is my renewal payment plus a small donation. Working for a non-profit division of the Smithsonian Institution that also must pay almost all of its expenses, including postage, I am sympathetic with the seemingly endless costs with which organizations such as ours are hit.

But a word of encouragement: GOLDENSEAL is worth it! I get to West Virginia far too rarely, but the magazine helps by bringing West Virginia to me — and in more depth and breadth than I could ever know it! More than that, GOLDENSEAL goes beyond state chauvinism. It is about humans and human culture and in that regard, its subject matter is universal. I know of no other magazine with such respect for, or ability to present, the treasure that people are, especially the older ones; or that "simple" things like covered bridges, barns, and small towns are.

Which is just to say that GOLDENSEAL enriches my life. Thank you for your hard work and for knowing the importance of the things that you document in your superb publication!
Sincerely,
Karen M. Gray, Ph.D

Cameron, West Virginia
October 6, 1988
Editor:
I'm just an old West Virginia farm boy, age 83. My wife, 86, and I have been married over 61 years. We live in Pleasant Valley. There are seven Pleasant Valleys in West Virginia. The one we live in is in Marshall County, on U.S. Route 250.

This road was declared a drove road by the State of Virginia in 1811 to drive cattle, hogs, mules, anything that could walk to Baltimore, then the largest shipping port in the United States. It was known as the Waynesburg Pike. Out at Wood Hill there was a toll gate; out this other way was a place to stay all night, at Smart's Tavern, to feed the animals and rest. At one time a contingent of mules was backed into Ohio for five miles to cross the ferry.

I had a vision when a little boy. It said "P.C." — preach Christ. Well, the preachers heard me speak, told me that "P.C." meant to plow corn. Me and that mule never did get along very well so I taught school for awhile.

I once visited with people, name of Reichert, at another Pleasant Valley in Preston County. Their hospitality was so good. That lady was thrilled — wouldn't let us pay for meals or lodging. I even offered her $20 to boot and trade preachers. No soap.

Well, the drought is over and the blessed rains came. Good turnip weather. It makes me think what my grandfather told me happened in 1894. He had seven sheep missing. Every day they weren't in school his children had to hunt for the sheep. Well, on February 2, 1895, they went around the hill by the turnip patch. They heard a sheep bleat and found a hole in a big turnip. The sheep were all inside. They were fat and healthy and had three new lambs.

Grandpa and Grandma and their children lived in a log cabin and just had two beds. Grandpa and Grandma slept in one, the ten children had the other one — four in the bed, four under the bed, hung the other two up on nails in the corners. No trouble at all.
Earl Francis

Branchland, West Virginia
October 4, 1988
Editor:
I thank you very much for a wonderful magazine. I always read every page and I really enjoy it all.

I have lived in West Virginia most of my life and I love the beautiful hills and the nice, friendly people. I am a widow now and will be 95 years old if I live until February 22, 1989. I do all my house work. I sew, make quilts, can fruits and vegetables, make jelly and preserves.

The Lord has blessed me with good health and I thank him always for that. I am the mother of 12 children, six boys, six girls. The boys are all still living and three of the girls.
Thanks and God bless you always.
Mrs. Effie Maxey

Boette and Brown

Clinton, Tennessee
September 30, 1988
Editor:
I want to tell you that $12.50 per year is dirt cheap for such a fine magazine. Anyone that has even shallow roots in West Virginia should be happy to receive GOLDENSEAL.

I was born and raised in Parkersburg, graduated from Parkersburg High School, and worked for the State Road Commission District Three office for eight years. I went to watchmaking school in Spring Hill and my first watchmaking job was at Stanford Jewelers in Elkins.

I tell you all of this because this year alone, GOLDENSEAL has done two feature articles on people who have touched my life in a personal manner: Marie Boette and "Red" Brown.

I have always been interested in music and was blessed with a series of fine music teachers, beginning in the fourth grade right on through high school and one year at Potomac State College. In high school, Ms. Boette was my music and voice

teacher. My brother and sisters and many close friends sang in her a cappella choir. Ms. Boette and my late aunt, Martha Morlan Spencer, were friends. She is one fine lady and I'm delighted to know she is still actively participating in the world to which she has contributed so much.

I rented a front room in Red Brown's Hotel (over his restaurant in Elkins) the summer of 1947. Red was there almost every day and would sit at my table frequently. We'd talk sports, business and other stuff while I ate. I liked Red and appreciated his company, for I was a bit lonely in a strange town with few acquaintances and no close friends.

I enjoyed both articles a lot and thank you for including these two fine West Virginians.
Sincerely,
Tom Rollins, Executive Director
Southeastern Outdoor Press Association

Hugh McPherson

St. Albans, West Virginia
September 18, 1988
Editor:
I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed GOLDENSEAL's Summer issue. I found out something I was really glad to know. It was the pictures and story about Hugh McPherson and his dear wife, Myrtle.

I worked for them in the 1940's. Myrtle was my employer at Cabin Creek, where they ran the Rexall Drugstore. The picture of Hugh's father, Dr. Hugh, and mother brought back a lot of fond memories. Dr. Hugh McPherson delivered my baby boy when I lived at East Bank. Then I named him after the good doctor and his son. The boy is now 44 years old.

I have lost all track of Myrtle and Hugh, but I am so glad to hear something about them.
Opal Christy Adkins

Braxton Memories

Candler, North Carolina
September 17, 1988
Editor:
The article "Recasting a Landmark," by Mike Gioulis in the Fall 1988 edition, brought memories of my

brother, Charles Whytsell, who owned a rest home on the upper end of Main Street there in Sutton.

My parents, "Uncle" George and Nancy Whytsell, farmed the steep hillsides of the Little Birch River country for many years. When we were married in 1926, my husband, Roscoe Butler, now deceased, took over the farm. Six of our seven children were born there, in the same house that I was born in. In 1944 we moved away, first to Maryland, later to Tennessee. In 1978 we moved here to a suburb of Asheville.

Thank you so much for bringing West Virginia history alive with each issue of GOLDENSEAL, especially for the many "sons and daughters" of those beautiful West Virginia hills.
Sincerely,
Opal Whytsell Butler

Clay County Lumbering

Summersville, West Virginia
March 14, 1988
Editor:
I feel compelled to register one complaint. I like GOLDENSEAL but when a super issue comes near noon, it makes my dinner an hour or so late. For me the noon-time meal is dinner and the evening meal supper. My good friend Dr. Walter S. Overstreet once told of going somewhere for supper — said they called it dinner, but it had to be supper for it was 6:30 p.m.

I liked "Farewell to Steam" by Cody A. Burdette in the spring issue. He also did a good story a couple of years back on the Swandale mentioned in the spring GOLDENSEAL for the *West Virginia Hillbilly*. It was very thought provoking for me and I wrote my own memories of that place, from long before Cody's time there. I wrote it in the form of a letter and sent it to Editor Jim Comstock. It was not published so I guess he sent it on to Mr. Burdette. Because of ill health, I cannot write it in detail as I did then.

He mentioned Cressmont, a post office until about 1930. I think it's spelled "Crestmont" in the story. I have postcards and letters postmarked there from my Uncle Mark C. Kyle. Two cents for a letter, one cent for cards. I believe it was also two cents per quarter to rent mailboxes. I can see the "box rent due" signs in the windows of mailboxes at the end of the quarter. I have a statement for a month when my father worked for a lumber company in 1908. He worked ten-hour days, $2.50 per day, $62 for a 31-day month, minus 50 cents for doctor, $4.50 to the store.

I liked the picture of the garden around a coal company house in the same issue. I now remember how many years ago there were bags of ground coal on a table at the edge of a tipple, with a sign that said "Free, take a bag for your garden." It could well be that the coal dust kept the bugs off those pole beans we raised. I know it took at least three washings to get them clean.
Sincerely,
Theodore R. Kyle

Thanks for straightening us out on Cressmont. A quick check of the new West Virginia Gazetteer *shows your spelling to be the right one. — ed.*

Growing Up in Gary

Huntington, West Virginia
September 24, 1988
Editor:
I am taking this opportunity while sending in my donation to commend you for the fine article on Gary in the last issue. Gary was the town in which I was born, 76 years ago come January, and lived the first ten years of my life.

My father, Thomas H. Wilson, moved there in 1911 and was in charge of installing the tanks and

Ballard Bryant of Mt. Hope was among those who kept dulcimer music alive. He died soon after this photo was made at the first Cedar Lakes festival. Photographer unknown.

Recalling the Dulcimer Revival

Spencer, West Virginia
October 4, 1988
Editor:
I want to add to Danny Williams's dulcimer article, "Here All The Time," in the spring 1988 GOLDENSEAL. Danny and I talked at the Footmad Festival last fall, prior to his writing his article. I failed to mention some things to him that ought to be told.

Dr. Pat Gainer, whom he mentioned, alerted many of us to the existence of the dulcimer early in the 1960's when we were preparing to celebrate the West Virginia Centennial. Shortly after I was enrolled in Dr. Gainer's class, I became employed by the crafts division of the West Virginia Department of Commerce. Part of my job was to follow up on leads about the folk artists living in West Virginia. I got interested in dulcimers in 1963 at the first Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes. Ballard Bryant, younger brother of Henry, whose dulcimer Dr. Gainer carried with him and played upon, was there making dulcimers.

My son, Tim Cox, got interested too. He was attending the first fair, demonstrating seat weaving, and was fascinated by Mr. Bryant's dulcimer. We later visited Ballard Bryant at his home in Mt. Hope and he encouraged Tim to make dulcimers. Mr. Bryant died in September 1963, following the fair in July, but by that time we had become close friends. When he died, Mrs. Bryant gave Tim her husband's tools and remaining parts of unfinished dulcimers. He became the West Virginia person to lead the revival of this instrument. I continued to make calls on people who had old dulcimers and several of these old models were repaired by Tim.

Between 1964 and 1970, Tim made several dulcimers and still makes one occasionally, although he has a limited amount of time to devote to dulcimers now, living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and operating a woodworking specialities shop.

One early player whom Danny failed to mention was Charles Maxson of Volga, in Barbour County. And a young man from Calhoun County appeared at one of the early fairs at Cedar Lakes with a most unusual instrument of the dulcimer family; perhaps some reader knows him. There was a crippled man from Fayetteville who came to the Cedar Lakes Fair in the 1960's. His chief craft was making looms for weaving, but he also made dulcimers.

Sylvan James from Braxton County was a dulcimer maker in the late '60's and early '70's. He died in 1971 and for a while no one was making any for sale. Ray Epler started appearing at West Virginia fairs and festivals in 1972 and since then there has been a wide expansion of dulcimer makers and players.

By the way, my husband Frank George did not learn to play the dulcimer from Vivian Vest. Frank had seen dulcimers as a young man visiting his mother's family in Tennessee, and in the George family, way back, Henry George owned and played a dulcimer in Greenbrier County.
Sincerely,
Jane T. George

piping system for the various operations that comprised the U.S. Coal & Coke Company at that time. He later was the foreman of the car and motor repair shop at the mouth of the Number Three mine. That was the job that he held when we moved from Gary to Huntington in 1923.

My memories of Gary in its heyday are of a busy, bustling, and sometimes raw and rough town composed of people of many different nationalities from all over the world. One of my earliest recollections is of running next door to Mrs. Mulcahey, our Irish neighbor, to escape from my mother's wrath for something I had done, and hearing "Mulky" as I called her, remonstrate with my mother in that soft Irish brogue of hers about wanting to punish me for such a little thing.

Jim Shanklin's memories of roaming through the mountains bring back many happy thoughts of the same thing. I don't remember Jim too well, but I do remember his father, Dr. Shanklin. He brought me into this world and treated me for the various cuts, bruises, and childhood diseases that children go through in their early years. He was highly respected and well thought of by one and all in "Gary Holler."

I recollect carrying lunch to my father at the mine shop and him showing me a belt coal loader that he was working on for Colonel O'Toole at that time. This undoubtedly was the forerunner of all the coal-loading devices in use today, as it is my understanding that the colonel went on to develop many of them.

Incidentally, if anyone is interested, a model of the town of Gary that closely resembles the picture in the article is on display at the Mining Life Exhibition that is located in the Christie Federal Building in Huntington.

Thanking you again for running this trip down memory lane for me.
Sincerely yours,
J. W. Wilson

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.

Mining Life Exhibit in Huntington

The Huntington Museum of Art is celebrating our coal heritage with *The Mining Life: Coal in Our History and Culture*, an exhibit at the Sidney L. Christie Federal Building in downtown Huntington. Organized originally by the Huntington Museum, the Department of Culture and History, and Wheeling's Oglebay Institute, the show opened in Charleston in 1981 and later toured West Virginia and traveled to the 1982 World's Fair.

The Mining Life documents the social and cultural dimensions of coal mining. Visitors enter through a replica mine of the hand-loading era. Dripping water is heard, while the voices of miners talk about the early days. A crawl-through tunnel for youngsters approximates a 30-inch coal seam. Actual tools, implements and lamps used by miners are displayed.

Mining communities are explored in a second section. A scale model of Gary, McDowell County, shows how that remote town appeared in the 1920's. Visitors learn about company stores, and see a collection of scrip, the paper or metal issued by coal companies that could be used in place of money. A final section traces the history of unionization, strikes, and safety issues.

The Mining Life will be on display at the Christie Federal Building, Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street, Huntington, through Spring 1989 and may be renewed for another year. Hours are 10:00-5:00, Tuesday through Friday. For more information call (304)523-2574 or (304)529-2701.

1988 GOLDENSEAL Volumes

Hardbound copies of this year's GOLDENSEAL magazines will be available in early 1989. The spring, summer, fall and winter issues are bound to match previous volumes in a light golden buckram fabric with the title, volume number and year imprinted in carmine red on the spine. The library-quality binding was done by the Mount Pleasant Book Bindery of Hampshire County.

The limited edition hardbound volumes are a fine West Virginia folklife reference and include an index of all GOLDENSEAL articles published in 1988. To order yours, send a check or money order payable to The Shop at the Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Hardbound volumes from 1980 through 1987, with the exception of 1982 and 1985, are also available from The Shop. Prepayment of $25 per volume, plus $3.00 postage and handling, and $1.50 sales tax from West Virginia residents should accompany all mail orders.

Some individual back issues of GOLDENSEAL from the years 1980 to 1988 are available by contacting the GOLDENSEAL office. The cost is $3.25 each.

State Journalism Review

This summer, the WVU P. I. Reed School of Journalism began publishing a new review dedicated to journalism in West Virginia.

West Virginia Journalism Review is an annual publication that describes and analyzes the state's mass media, with emphasis on newspapers, advertising-public relations firms, and radio and television stations. Volume 1 included an article by Senator Robert C. Byrd titled, "Bringing the U.S. Senate into Your Living Room." Byrd led the fight to allow radio and television coverage of the Senate beginning in 1986.

Other articles told of reporter Bill Case's work on small and large West Virginia newspapers, Supreme Court Justice Richard Neely's view on the media's drive for power, and how state newspapers have become national leaders in utilizing new desktop publishing technology. The first issue also featured book reviews, a summary of journalism research projects in the state, and an update on state libel law decisions. The magazine profiled the news photography of Ron Rittenhouse, chief photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post* and a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

Copies of the *West Virginia Journalism Review* may be purchased for $5 each by sending a check payable to the WVU Foundation-Journalism Review, to the Dean's Office, P. I. Reed School of Journalism, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6010, Martin Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506-6010. The editors also invite letters and suggestions for articles.

Appalachian Mountain Books

Bookseller George Brosi of Berea, Kentucky, is the proprietor of a unique retail book business specializing in books about the Southern Appalachian region, from Northern Georgia through West Virginia. The family business, operated by Brosi, his wife Connie, and their seven school-aged children, offers new and used books to serious readers and collectors of Appalachian literature. Used and rare books are the bookseller's speciality, as well as bargains on publishers' overstocks.

Brosi publishes a catalog of his available stock. For $10, subscribers receive 12 issues of the catalog annually. The periodical is the region's most influential book review publication. It includes profiles of important regional authors, from the new and emerging voices to the well-known writers of the past; reviews; children's book reviews written by children; regional literary news; and articles on Appalachian literature.

Other services of Appalachian Mountain Books include a traveling exhibit of books for sale, a free book search service, and talks or workshop presentations. The traveling exhibit

Vandalia Record for Sale

Music from West Virginia's statewide folk festival can now be enjoyed on a comprehensive folklife recording, "The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-87" [GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1988, p.8]. The album was produced from concerts, contests and other performances recorded since Vandalia's first year.

The editing was done from more than a hundred hours of original archival tape, and resulted in a double album with 41 selections by nearly 70 performers. The album was released by Elderberry Records, the record label of the Department of Culture and History.

Other Elderberry recordings include two fiddle albums, "All Smiles Tonight" by Woody Simmons and French Mitchell's "First Fiddle." They are available from The Shop at the Cultural Center for $7.50 each. "The Music Never Dies" double record may be ordered for $12.50. There is a discount price of $25 for those who order all three albums. Write to The Shop, Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Postage and handling is $3 and West Virginia residents should include 6% sales tax.

attends leading fairs, festivals, and celebrations. The Appalachian Studies Conference, the West Virginia Library Association, and the Augusta Heritage Workshops at Davis and Elkins College have hosted Brosi and his books as well.

The Appalachian Mountain Bookshop, "is open by chance or appointment all year around," according to Brosi. If you're interested in any of the services offered by the bookseller, contact George Brosi, 123 Walnut Street, Berea, Kentucky, 40403; (606) 986-1663.

Tales of a Country Doctor

During a serious childhood illness, Daniel Peck Kessler was put through the uncomfortable remedies of herb doctors. He made up his mind at that time to become an educated, degreed doctor. He did just that and nearly a hundred years later relatives of Kessler's have made the story into an entertaining and informative book.

Doctor Dan, by Thelma and Kent Kessler, tells of Dr. Dan Kessler, who cared for patients in Webster and neighboring counties in the early 1900's. The old-time general practitioner traveled extensively on horseback to wherever he was needed and in the process became "a keen observer of the changes which came to the West Virginia hills," according to the Kesslers.

Dr. Dan began life in Nicholas County, attended country schools, went on to study law and teaching, taught school, and earned the distinction of a professional M.D. at the University of Louisville. The book traces his life as a doctor, and in doing so tells the reader a lot about the mountain people he loved and served.

The 208-page softcover book is illustrated with photographs and drawings. It is in its third printing. *Doctor Dan* sells for $9 per copy and may be ordered from Kent Kessler, P.O. Box 823, Ft. Myers Beach, FL. 33931.

Champion Fiddling

Fiddler Bobby Taylor has produced a cassette recording of his music titled, "Bobby Taylor: Kanawha Tradition." Taylor plays in what he terms "the traditions of Kanawha and Roane counties, and in the vein of world fiddle champion Clark Kessinger." Kessinger and Kanawha fiddler Mike Humphreys were both influential in Taylor's fiddle playing. He credits them and his father, grandfather and great-grandfather with his learning of the fiddle.

The recent release includes "Sally Ann Johnson," "Whiskey Before Breakfast," "Fisher's Hornpipe," "Leather Britches," and "Midnight On The Water," among other tunes. Taylor calls it good dance music. He is accompanied by Mark Payne on banjo and guitar and John Preston on guitar, mandolin and bass.

Taylor plays old-time and bluegrass styles and has won numerous contests in both categories at such events as the Galax Old-Time Fiddlers Convention and Morgantown's Pioneer Days. He retired from contest fiddling in 1977 with the West Virginia State Fiddle Champion title. Since then he has coordinated and judged contests at the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair, the Appalachian Open Championships at Camp Washington-Carver, Vandalia Gathering, and the State Championship at the Elkins Forest Festival.

"Bobby Taylor: Kanawha Tradition" is available from The Shop at the Cultural Center or from Bob Taylor, 417 11th Street, Dunbar, WV 25064; (304) 768-3809. The cost is $8, plus $1 for postage and handling. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

Civil War Saga

Jenkins of Greenbottom: A Civil War Saga by Jack L. Dickinson tells the fascinating story of the life of Brigadier General Albert G. Jenkins. Jenkins, master of the historic Greenbottom plantation in Cabell County, is said to have been the first to carry the Confederate flag into Ohio.

The new book delves into the Rebel raider's genealogy, education, and legal, political and military careers. It also takes a look at Greenbottom plantation, from the time it was built in 1835 to today. The publication is nicely illustrated with historical photographs, maps, letters and drawings.

Author Dickinson has a special interest in the Civil War in the Virginias. He has written three other books on the war. He is a founder and charter member of Camp Garnett, Sons of Confederate Veterans.

The 100-page paperback has an extensive bibliography and index. *Jenkins of Greenbottom: A Civil War Saga* is available for $7.95 from Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue S.E., Charleston, WV 25304, and in area bookstores. For mail orders there is a $1.50 charge for postage and handling. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

Films on West Virginia and Appalachia

Each year, Steve Fesenmaier, director of the State Library Commission's Film Services unit, provides GOLDENSEAL a list of recently acquired films and videotapes of state and regional interest. Library Commission movies are available to the public through local libraries all over West Virginia.

Aftermath
30 min. (VHS) 1986-87
West Virginia videographers Barbara Cox and David Seaman made this documentary about Parsons, the Tucker County town most damaged by the great flood of 1985. The videotape includes interviews with survivors and the workers who came to help.

Agee
55 min. (VHS) 1980 James Agee Film Project
James Agee, a son of Appalachia, was a poet, journalist, film critic, screenwriter and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist. He wrote the classic regional novel, *A Death in the Family,* and worked on the script for the movie version of West Virginian Davis Grubb's masterpiece, *Night of the Hunter.*

Black Fury
95 min. (VHS)
Paul Muni portrays Joe Radek, a likeable, hard-working miner. When his best friend is brutally murdered by the coal company's henchmen, Joe decides on a one-man strike. *Black Fury* was called a "brilliant picture" by *The New York Times.*

Communication From Weber
15 min. 1988 Omni Productions
Albert Michael Weber came to West Virginia with his Gauley Bridge bride, and eventually died from a brain tumor. West Virginians Robert Gates and Lyn Wyatt made this film of Weber's life and art.

Covered Bridges In West Virginia
Slides 1988 WVU History Dept.
This slide-tape show was produced by Barbara Howe and Emory Kemp of the public history program at WVU's Department of History. Printed descriptions are included.

The Dollmaker
140 min.
Jane Fonda won an Emmy for her stirring portrayal of Gertie Nevels in this TV adaptation of Harriette Arnow's novel. The strong mountain woman moves her family to wartime Detroit, where they're virtually overwhelmed by the city and by personal misfortune. Nominated for six Emmies, *The Dollmaker* will charm and captivate your entire family.

Harriette Simpson Arnow, 1908-1986
35 min. 1988 Appalshop
Appalshop filmed Arnow shortly before she died. She tells the story of her life and discusses her three novels — *Mountain Path, Hunter's Horn,* and her most famous, *The Dollmaker.*

Janet Worthington as Mary Ingles in *Mary Ingles: Indian Captive.* Courtesy WSWP-TV.

The Hills Are Alive
20 min. 1980 Dept. of Commerce
This state government travelogue shows off attractions of the beautiful Mountain State.

Long Journey Home
55 min. (VHS) 1987 Appalshop
This film brings the old story of Appalachian migration up to date. A Baltimore family is shown returning to Eastern Kentucky after 17 years in the city. Black migration is also shown, including a gathering in Cleveland of hundreds of Appalachian blacks.

Long Shadows
90 min. 1987 James Agee Film Project
This Civil War film premiered in West Virginia, the only state created by the war. Oral historian Studs Terkel and Jimmy Carter join writers, historians, weekend soldiers, blues singers, battlefield guides, relic collectors, West Pointers, Vietnam veterans, old movie stars and civil rights activists, north and south, to discuss the bloody conflict.

Mary Ingles: Indian Captive
27 min. 1987 WSWP-TV
Mary Ingles was kidnapped during a 1755 Indian raid and carried down the New and Kanawha rivers to captivity in Ohio. She escaped from a Shawnee village and made her way back home to Virginia through 900 miles of wilderness, including what is now West Virginia. Award-winning production from Wayne Sourbeer for Beckley public TV.

Matewan
2 hrs. 10 min. 1986 Cinecom
Filmmaker John Sayles' interpretation of one of the most famous confrontations between labor and management, the bloody shootout on the streets of the Mingo County town of Matewan. James Earl Jones plays one coal miner who joins the union to stop massive abuses. Filmed in Thurmond.

People of the Cumberland
21 min. 1938
Depression-era Frontier Films was the first group of social documentary filmmakers in the world. This film about Miles Horton and his Highlander Folk School was created by such well-known artists as Erskine Caldwell and Elia Kazan. The Cumberland mountaineers of southern Tennessee are the heroes.

Pudd'nhead Wilson
87 min. (VHS) 1985 MCA Home Video
Filmed on location in Harpers Ferry, Mark Twain's tale explores the issues of slavery, justice and the many shapes of human folly. Ken Howard stars as a lawyer with an unusual sense of humor.

Stagestruck
90 min. 1925 Paramount (Eastman House)
The Ohio River town of New Martinsville is the setting for this classic comedy starring Gloria Swanson and directed by film pioneer Allan Dwan.

Statewide
2 hrs. (VHS) 1988 West Virginia Public TV
Public TV host Martin Buchsbaum takes us into the recent Mingo County corruption case; interviews Beckley education critic Dr. John Cannell; and profiles the late Breece D'J Pancake, a Milton resident who wrote dark and powerful stories of life in contemporary Appalachia.

We Dig Coal
58 min. 1982 Cinema Guild
On October 2, 1979, Marilyn McCusker was killed in a coal mine in central Pennsylvania. It had taken her two years and a sex discrimination suit in federal court to get the job. This award-winning film has been called "the best documentary ever made on women in non-traditional occupations."

Gifts From Santa

By Carol L. Fox

For hundreds of families in Preston County the sounds of Christmas include the racket of a four-wheel drive "sleigh" grinding up the narrow, rut-filled back roads of this high corner of West Virginia. For countless children over the years, the arrival of a Jeep bearing an elf in green and a jolly old man in a red suit, black boots and a genuine beard of white, means toys, games, cookies and perhaps a warm coat.

Lou Stouffer and his wife, Lola, known to friends and neighbors as "Mr. and Mrs. Ho Ho," spend much of their personal time and resources working for those less fortunate than themselves. Each spring and summer for nearly 15 years the Stouffers have visited yard and garage sales, auctions and discount houses to find bargains they turn into special treasures for waiting children and their families.

Lola begins with a discarded plastic doll with matted hair and no clothes and turns it into a clean and sparkling curly-haired baby. A bag of silk flowers and a handful of lace means a centerpiece or door hanging for someone who's never been able to afford the prettier things in life. Lou takes a broken and useless metal car or truck, adds some wheels, some fresh, shiny paint, and soon has a nearly-new toy. Sleds, rocking horses, riding toys and fishing poles are transformed from useless castaways to bright, new beginnings. "Just seeing the smiles makes it all worthwhile," Lou says.

This couple's generosity doesn't stop with children, as loads of coal and wood, winter clothing, and baskets of food find their way to the homes they call on. "Most of the families we visit are proud and won't accept charity," says Mrs. Stouffer, "but gifts from Santa somehow seem different."

Many times since their annual holiday treks began, they have distributed the only gifts some elderly residents received. Fresh, homemade cookies, candy and fruit donated by generous Santa's helpers, reading material, slippers, a pipe, a scarf — all are given with the hope that they will find a new and useful home in the backcountry. "Sometimes, just the gift of our time is worth the whole holiday to the older folks," Lola adds.

The Stouffers have friends, relatives, and neighbors who help them on a regular basis, and several churches, both in Preston County and in neighboring Garrett County, Maryland, (where Santa Lou also visits) make it a yearly project to collect toys, household goods and clothing for the yuletide couple. School children in Kingwood gathered a carload of toys one year, and a recent present of shiny black boots complements Santa's bright red suit. Area businessmen donate merchandise and set up collection boxes in their stores during the fall and early winter. One grocery store sponsored "Photos with Santa" in 1986, offering the opportunity for a child to be photographed with Lou in exchange for a donation to the cause.

Cash gifts are used for gasoline and tires on the "Santa Mobile," and for paint, sandpaper, and other supplies needed to refurbish used items. Thousands of miles are driven each year for collection and final delivery, which begins in November and ends sometimes even after Christmas Day and the new year. Many times, the days stretch on for 16 and 18 hours, and supplies too often run out before Santa's list does.

Each year an earlier effort is begun to collect new and used items. Clothing is sorted, divided into approximate sizes and hung in a building constructed by the modern-day Santa to house the many boxes of shoes, boots, outerwear and clothing gathered each year. Severe unemployment in the area, low wages and intense winter weather combine to make the Stouffers' work more urgent.

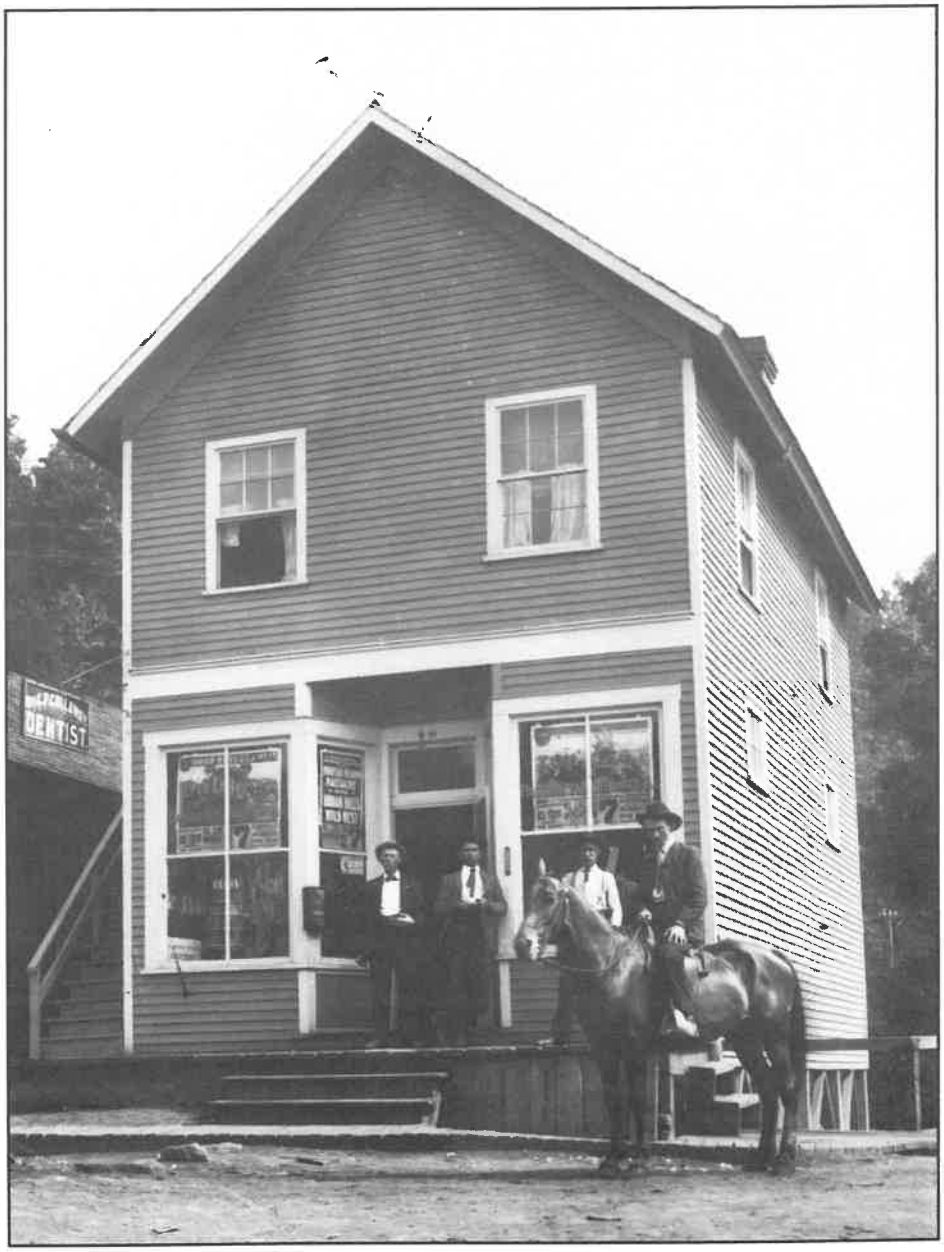
The project has been a part of their lives since 1973, when Lola, then a secretary at the high school in Terra Alta, heard a distressing tale at Christmastime from a student whose family had recently undergone serious medical problems and had no money for food. The father was out of work, and all hope seemed lost. Lola told her husband about the plight of the family and the idea was born to begin some kind of project, now that their own eight children were grown. In a borrowed Santa suit, the first year's visits began.

Later on, a friend sewed a new red suit, and with a sack on his back and his wife by his side, the jolly old elf set out once more. A network of friends on the CB radio aided the early efforts, including rescue from more than one snowdrift and gasoline in a can when Santa's Jeep ran out miles from the nearest town. One year a family had no heat, no food and no money until Santa arrived and alerted his helpers to their plight. They were adopted and given emergency staples until more permanent arrangements could be made.

The Stouffers estimate that since 1973, several thousand Prestonians and nearby Marylanders have been visited during the Christmas holidays, and many more have come for help when a fire or flood has destroyed their possessions. Furniture, clothing, and household goods are all stored at the Stouffer "workshops," just waiting for a call to help.

The usual holiday gift exchange between husband and wife is not practiced at the Stouffer house. Following their bustling holiday season, when all possible deliveries have been made, the tired but satisfied couple travels to a daughter's home for a quiet family get-together and celebration. There, they rest and begin planning for next year.

"Our own personal Christmas is delivering gifts to others, especially the children, and seeing their eyes light up like strings of Christmas lights," says Lou Stouffer, now 66. "We'll deliver as long as we're physically able, since there is always a need. That, and the smiles of the children, is the true meaning of Christmas for us."



The E. B. Bradley Drugstore was a town meeting place, with dentist C. P. Calloway's office above. Photo by William Trevey, 1904.

Glen Jean

Echo of an Empire

By Melody E. Bragg

Photographs Collected by George Bragg

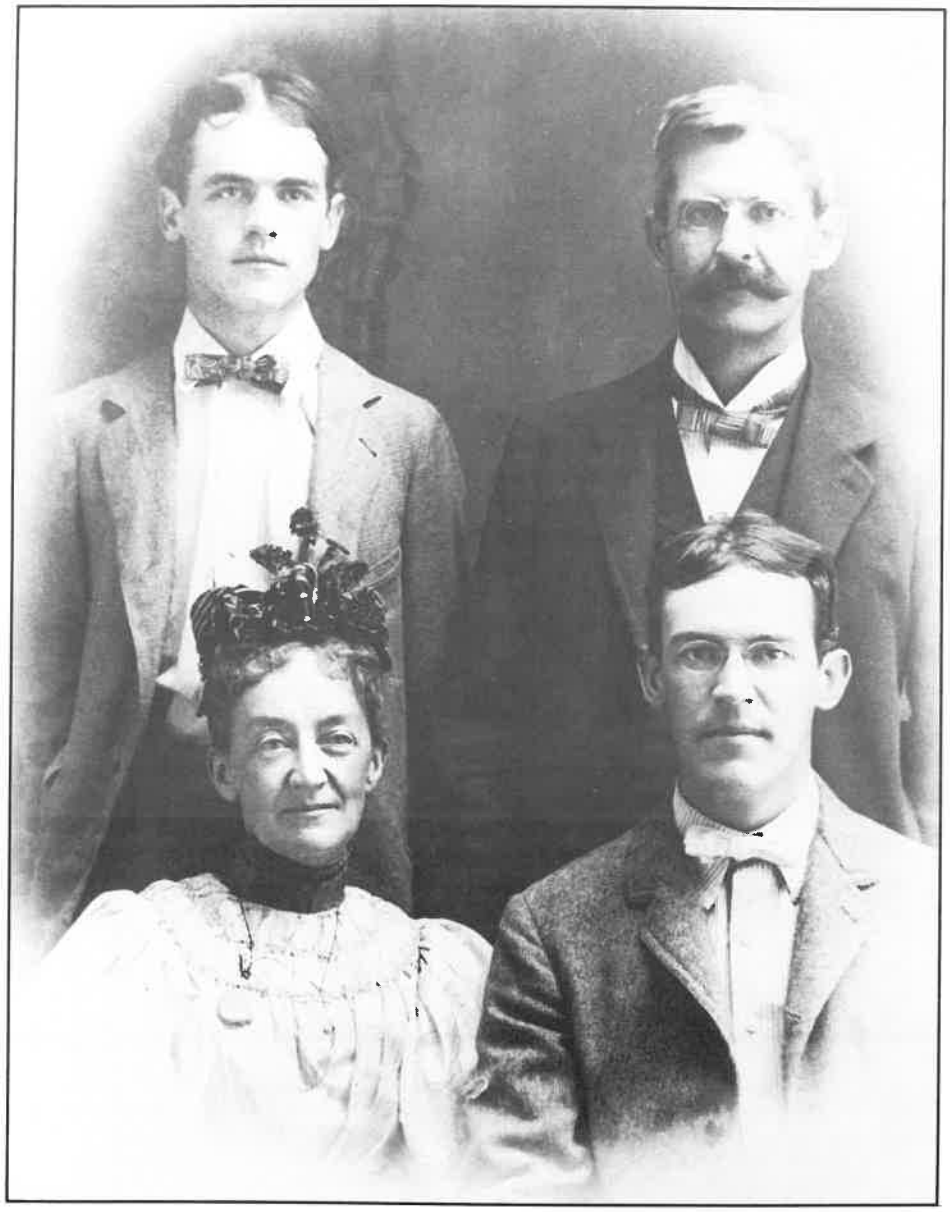
Glen Jean today is a quiet residential area. The only businesses are a restaurant and the local service station. But an observant visitor can still find vestiges of the thriving municipality that the Fayette County town once was. The building which housed the Bank of Glen Jean still stands on Main Street, although it is now empty and deserted. The tracks of the Kanawha, Glen Jean & Eastern Railway still run through town, though now rusted and unused. The Athletic Club building still stands beside the weed-covered lot that once was the town ballpark.

Although the majority of the early citizens have moved on or passed away, there are still a few longtime residents who will be glad to help an interested visitor see the town as they remember it. The Glen Jean that lives in their memories is vastly different from the sleepy little town of the present.

The plateau in the mountains of southern West Virginia where Glen Jean was built saw little in the way of economic development until the completion of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway through the New River Gorge in 1873. In 1845 the future townsite had been settled by a millwright named Jack McCoy and his family, who cleared the land and eventually established a store and a post office named White Oak. However, it was not the McCoys who would bring about the birth of the town of Glen Jean.

The arrival of the C&O aroused new interest. Landowners along the gorge realized that the area was now open for development and began looking at their property with an eye toward harvesting the wealth of timber standing on the land and the coal beneath it. One such landowner was Thomas Gaylord McKell of Chillicothe, Ohio.

McKell's wife, Jean Dun McKell, had received over 12,500 acres of Fayette County land as a wedding present from her father, John Dun. When her new husband had geological surveys conducted and found the property to be underlaid by both the Sewell and Fire Creek seams of high quality "smokeless" coal, his interest



Glen Jean was strictly McKell country. Father Thomas G. McKell, above right, founded the town, which later was ruled by son William, by his side. Mother Jean Dun McKell, seated by son John, gave the place her name. Photographer unknown, 1896.

intensified. After visiting locally during the 1880's, McKell began making plans. He purchased an additional 12,500 acres which included the McCoy property and began the development of his land.

Thomas McKell was a shrewd businessman with big ambitions. His holdings lay along Dunloup Creek, a New River tributary. He foresaw the limitless potential of the area, both in its natural resources and in the growing tide of travelers riding the C&O through the town of Thurmond, which lay across the New River from the mouth of Dunloup.

Once the necessary additional acreage had been acquired, McKell set into motion his plans. Development awaited the building of a railroad bridge across the New River to Thurmond, linking Dunloup Creek to the C&O main line. When the bridge was completed, he signed an agreement with the representatives of the C&O to build a branch line up 'Loup Creek through the heart of his property. This six-mile stretch of track was to be called the Dunloup Branch.

McKell's agreement with the C&O included the shipping of at least 1,000 tons of coal daily down the new rails. To fulfill this stipulation, he leased a section of his property to Justus Collins, formerly a mine superintendent in Mercer County. After acquiring additional financing from outside sources, Collins formed the Collins Colliery Company. He opened two drift mouths, which went into production in 1893, the year that the Dunloup Branch was completed.

Now that the Dunloup basin was tied to the energy markets of the outside world, Thomas McKell founded the town which he envisioned as the nucleus of the empire he hoped to build. He was joined in 1893 by his Yale-educated son, William McKell, who constructed a house on the hill near the site of the original McCoy cabin.

The new town, named Glen Jean in honor of Jean Dun McKell, from the very beginning differed from the coal camps springing up around it. The residences were not the usual rough "Jenny Lind" type of coal company housing. They were well-built, two-story structures set on stone foundations and surrounded by spacious yards. The McKells were building, not for coal miners, but for the mine operators, general managers, bankers, merchants, and professional men they hoped to attract to their town.

As operator of the mine, it was Justus Collins's responsibility to provide more modest housing for his miners. To achieve this, he covered the hillside above his mine with houses for the families of over 100 men who had come to work for him. A large two-story boardinghouse was built for single men and women.

By the turn of the century, the town of Glen Jean was well on its way toward fulfilling the McKell ambitions. A school and a church were constructed to serve the growing community. Like many others in the coalfields, the Glen Jean church was a union church, serving Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. A minister of a different denomination conducted services on each Sunday of the month. This enabled one church to serve most of the Protestants in the community at a common location. Soon after it was erected, the Glen Jean church boasted well over 100 members. The church continued to grow and in 1924 the congregation raised the funds to erect a new stone building closer to the center of town.

New River Gorge National River

Glen Jean is the main gateway to the scenic and historic New River Gorge, and soon will host the permanent headquarters of the New River Gorge National River. Trains once rumbled from the town down Dunloup Creek, carrying coal to the C&O main line at Thurmond. Thousands of visitors now follow the same path each summer weekend, on their way to rafting adventures on New River.

The National River includes a portion of the New River and its narrow gorge as it traverses the southern West Virginia plateau through Summers, Raleigh and Fayette counties. The 52-mile-long, 62,000-acre river corridor from Hinton to the spectacular New River Gorge Bridge near Fayetteville became a part of the National Park system on November 10, 1978. Congress made the National Park Service responsible for natural, scenic and historic conservation of the New River Gorge "for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

Two visitor centers are open. The Canyon Rim Visitor Center, open year round, is on U.S. 19 at the north end of the Gorge Bridge. The Hinton Visitor Center, open seasonally, is at riverside on the Hinton bypass. Both centers offer a variety of services, including the slide presentation, "Discover the New River." The Eastern National Park and Monument Association offers books for sale for more information about the park. Special interpretive programs are scheduled year-round.

For more information about the New River Gorge National River, you may call (304)465-0508. The first phase of the Glen Jean headquarters construction is expected to be finished next spring.

The newly arrived townspeople also had other needs. Like most early coal companies, the Collins Colliery established a store where Collins miners could take advantage of easy credit in the form of company scrip drawn against their wages. The Collins commissary, which opened the same year that the mine went into operation, was a successful enterprise from the beginning. The lack of transportation helped to make mine families only too willing to patronize the nearby company store.

Shoppers in Glen Jean were not limited to the selection of items in the Collins company store. Three Virginians established an independent department store named Davis & Gray in a large double building near the entrance to the town. Davis & Gray, which was operating before 1900, offered everything from clothing to carpets.

Another company store opened around 1916 when Thomas Nichol, a former McKell general manager, leased land for a mine near the town and formed the Nichol Colliery Company. He built his company store on Main Street near the park and constructed a house on the hill near the McKell residence.

While the houses on Collins Hill were filling up with miners and their families, the McKells were attracting more affluent tenants to the residences nearer the center of town. On McKell Avenue could be found the homes of the physician, Dr. Lee, and the local dentist, Dr. Calloway, as

The Clara Craig house, one of three residences occupying the general site of the old McCoy homestead, remains a local landmark. The McKell house itself no longer stands. Photo by Michael Keller.

Early Glen Jean photographs look like scenes from the contemporary West. This is the blacksmith shop, later the bank site, at about the turn of the century. Photo by William Trevey.

well as the county sheriff, Sam Jasper, and the justice of the peace, Pat Malone.

In 1896, Thomas McKell made an effort to provide entertainment for residents and to attract to Glen Jean some of the many businessmen and investors traveling through Thurmond. He commissioned Ohio architect Frank Packard to design an opera house which could hold an audience of 300. Located on McKell Avenue, the finished building included circular dressing rooms and a large stage and orchestra pit. The Glen Jean Opera House was regularly visited by minstrel shows, such as Silas Green's, and was a favorite location for political conventions. The Opera House was famous for the dances held there by wealthy coal operators whose guests traveled by train up the Dunloup Branch. In later years, the Opera House was Glen Jean's movie theater, showing silent and then talking motion pictures.

The Opera House was not Thomas McKell's only attempt to capture some of the wealth rolling through the New River Gorge. In 1901, he constructed a three-story, 100-room hotel on the south side of the New River diagonally across from Thurmond. He christened it the Dunglen Hotel.

Captain W. D. Thurmond, the puritanical founder of Thurmond, incorporated his town in an effort to curtail the gambling and free-flowing liquor at the Dunglen and the less elegant establishments surrounding it at the mouth of Dunloup. McKell responded by gerrymandering the boundaries of Glen Jean to include the six miles from the town proper down 'Loup Creek to the banks of the New River. This placed the Dunglen legally within Glen Jean and therefore under McKell's jurisdiction. The hotel soon became the most famous of the McKell enterprises. Tales of the Dunglen's luxury as well as its notoriety are still told, long after most of his undertakings are all but forgotten.

Glen Jean offered other recreation for citizens who were unable to afford a night at the Dunglen. The town had a fine park and ballfield. The park was equipped with tennis courts and a covered croquet court. The Athletic Club adjoining the ballfield offered pool tables, a snack bar, and a two-lane bowling alley.

The greatest attraction by far was the competition between local company baseball teams. Traveling teams also visited the area, providing fans the opportunity to watch the home team compete against professionals. These traveling baseball teams included The House of David, whose players wore their hair down to their waists, and Green's Nebraska Indians, whose manager peddled his special brand of cough syrup to those attending the game. One memorable game was played in October of 1913, when the Cincinnati Reds competed against the Glen Jean team on the home field.

William McKell took an active interest in the sport and later converted the Glen Jean team from baseball to a form of softball he called "Let-Em-Hit-It" [GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1982, pp. 15-22]. Other companies and towns followed suit and soon softball replaced baseball as the favorite local pastime. The younger McKell was known for his frugality, but spared no expense where his ball team was concerned. He personally paid the full cost of equipment and uniforms. He often paid to transport his team to play an opposing team or financed a

The Coney Island was the most notorious saloon in a town known for its watering holes. Proprietor Charles Ash later converted to religion, and converted his saloon to a church. Photo by William Trevey, new picture (below) by Michael Keller.

visit by an outside team. He attended every game and acted as the rule authority in disagreements.

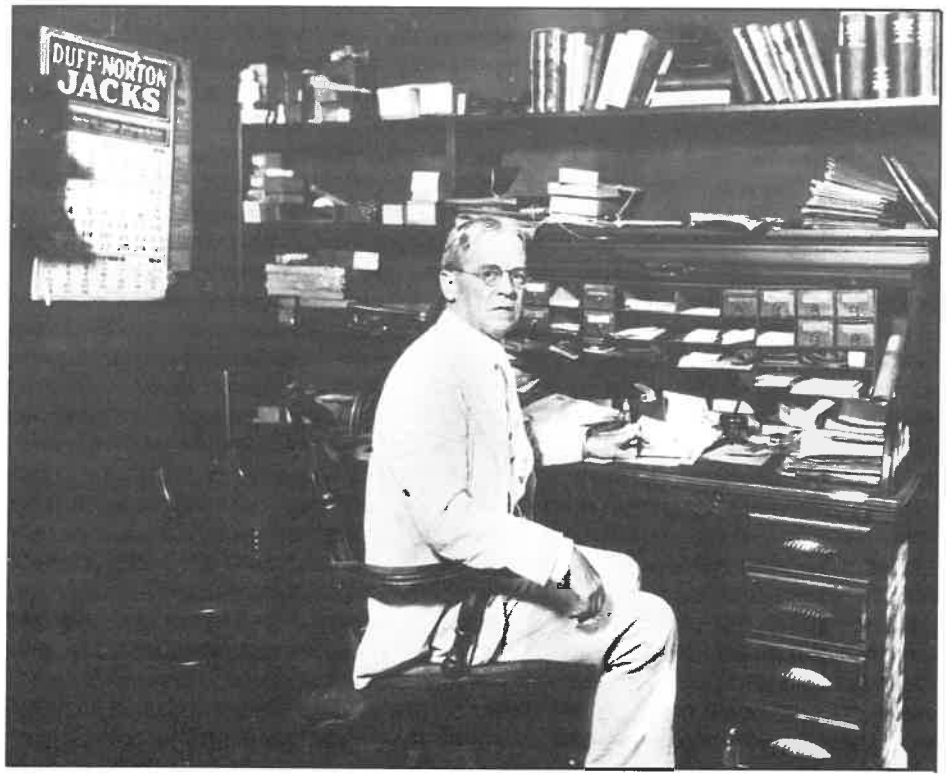
William McKell was not the only Glen Jean fan who took the games seriously. Fist fights and even gunplay often erupted between fans of opposing teams. Glen Jean citizens were not all patrons of the opera or upright members of the Union Church, and they fought over sports and whatever else aroused their passions.

The town was home to several establishments which catered to those with less refined taste in recreation. At least four saloons prospered in or near Glen Jean. The most notorious was the Coney Island, where it was said that you could walk across the bodies lying out front on any Sunday morning. The Friday night train would arrive packed with gamblers and ladies of the evening who came to compete for the miners' pay. Those so inclined could find everything from cockfights to willing companionship on a Glen Jean Saturday night.

Not all the violence which occurred in town was the result of drunken arguments or over-enthusiastic sports fans. Another source of trouble was the conflict between the United Mine Workers and the coal operators. Jus-

Above: Coal operator Justus Colllins brought the infamous Baldwin-Felts agents to town in the 1902 strike. This rifleman posed by the Collins Colliery store. Photo by William Trevey.

Below: Everybody knew William McKell was boss in the town of Glen Jean. Here he pauses during desk work, about 1935. Photographer unknown.



tus Collins and Thomas and William McKell shared a determination to keep the union out of their mining operations. The McKells, who formed the McKell Coal & Coke Company in 1900, chose to combat unionization by offering higher wages. This method proved to be the most effective in the long run, and the McKell mines retained their nonunion status longer than any others in the New River Field.

Collins preferred to fight the union organizers head-on. When a New River strike was scheduled in 1902, most operators decided not to fight because of the low price of coal at the time. They simply closed down and prepared to outwait the strikers. But Collins was determined not to allow the union to interfere with production at his Glen Jean mine. On the morning that the strike was to begin, he brought in 40 Baldwin-Felts mine guards, armed with a Gatling gun and equipped with a searchlight. For four months Justus Collins was the only operator producing coal along New River.

Although Collins Colliery had become one of the largest producers in the New River Field, Collins's opportunities were restricted by the McKell refusal to relinquish ownership of any of the surrounding property. Within a few years, he decided to sell the lease for his Glen Jean mine to the New River Company in Mount Hope. Collins left Glen Jean to establish mining operations where he had room to grow, becoming a major operator in younger coalfields farther south.

Thomas McKell died in 1904. William assumed control of the family's West Virginia holdings and continued to expand. Unlike his father, he made his lifelong home in Glen Jean, and he concentrated his full business energies in and around the town.

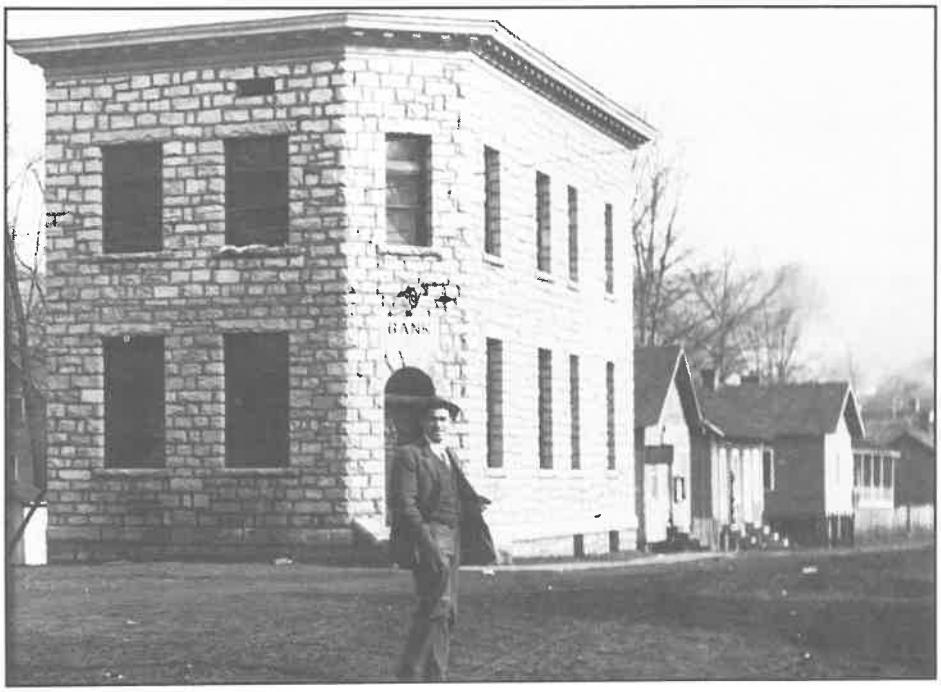
The McKell family had been involved in banking before coming to West Virginia. In 1909 William carried on the tradition by establishing the Bank of Glen Jean. To house the new enterprise he constructed a two-story, native-stone building on the town's main street. The upper story of the bank building contained McKell's office, where he reigned as president of both the bank and Mc-

Kell Coal & Coke. His new endeavor brought even more business to the booming town. In 1917, he added a one-story addition to the back of the bank building to house his coal company engineering offices. The former engineering office had been constructed around the old McCoy cabin, beside McKell's house on the hill.

The McKell expansion did not stop at banking. The contract between Thomas McKell and the C&O Railway upon construction of the Dunloup Branch had resulted in a controversy which was eventually fought through the courts. Because of this long-running disagreement, William McKell decided to build his own railroad to join with the Virginian Railway at Pax, bypassing the C&O completely and opening another outlet for New River coal.

When completed in 1913, McKell's railroad was 15 miles long, running southward from Glen Jean to MacDonald and then westward to Pax. A short branch line ran from MacDonald to the McKell mine at Tamroy. The little railroad was given an impressive name, the Kanawha, Glen Jean & Eastern Railway. Although coal was its lifeblood, the line was also equipped with a gasoline-powered streetcar which stopped at communities along the route. McKell himself was one of the most frequent passengers of the K,GJ&E. He would board the trolley on most mornings to travel to Tamroy, Oswald, Graham or Kilsyth to check on his mining operations.

By the late 1920's, William McKell was one of Fayette County's very richest men. He took an active behind-the-scenes interest in state and local politics, often using this influence to boost Glen Jean. His financial empire was tied so closely to the town that anything which benefited Glen Jean would benefit the McKell businesses. When a new state road was proposed in 1933, McKell used his position on the State Road Commission to make sure the road would run beside his town. This move seemed to insure prosperity for Glen Jean in the future.



The Bank of Glen Jean opened its doors in 1909 and closed down 30 years later. It was a cornerstone of the McKell empire. The central building remains intact today (below), with additions. Old photo by William Trevey, before 1917; new photo by Michael Keller.

The Kanawha, Glen Jean & Eastern was Glen Jean's proudest institution. Owner Bill McKell admitted that his line was short — only 15 miles — but joked that it was as wide as any railroad in the world. Photo by William Trevey, date unknown.

But events were unfolding which neither Bill McKell nor his father had foreseen. The stately Dunglen Hotel fell victim to fire in July 1930, allegedly arson. By the depressed mid-1930's, McKell stood besieged from all sides. The coal industry was faltering and big corporations like the New River Company in Mount Hope were consolidating smaller operations in a push for a bigger slice of a shrinking pie.

In addition to competition from the larger coal companies, McKell, who remained firmly opposed to the UMWA, faced militant miners who were determined to win union representation. The union was bolstered by new rights guaranteed by federal legislation under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The McKell mines remained the final stronghold for the organizers to overcome.

Just when his operation was facing the dual threats of the union and the New River Company, McKell's health began to fail. That forced him to spend more and more time under the care of a cousin in Ohio. In January 1939, McKell and the directors of the Bank of Glen Jean voted to pay off the bank's accounts and close its doors forever. The failure of the bank, like the burning of the Dunglen, collapsed an important symbol of the McKell empire.

It had once been true that what benefited Glen Jean benefited McKell, and it now became apparent that that worked both ways; when McKell faced losses, it brought losses to Glen Jean. When he died in August of 1939, Glen Jean began to die out as well. By refusing to sell any property in the town during his lifetime, McKell had kept Glen Jean almost totally dependent upon the success of the family enterprises. Now Glen Jean stood as the center of an empire that had crumbled around it.

William McKell had never married and left no one to carry on as Glen Jean's benefactor. His will divided the huge estate among five cousins, none of whom had any interest in his West Virginia affairs. His heirs sold the McKell holdings to the New River Company within a year of his death. The new company was after the coal underneath the property and had little interest in Glen Jean itself. The businesses and houses, including McKell's own residence, were sold off and the town was left to live or die on its own.

From the 1940's to the 1980's Glen Jean declined steadily. One by one the community's landmarks fell victim to fire or were torn down. The big house on the hill where McKell had watched over his town was demolished to make way for a new four-lane highway. The Collins and Nichols company stores both burned to the ground. The Opera House and the Davis & Gray department store fell into disuse and were torn down. The once busy tracks of the K,GJ&E were deserted. Few people can remember when trains traveled on them.

Still, some lifetime residents stayed on and recent developments give hope that Glen Jean may continue to live after they are gone. The National Park Service has chosen the lot which once served as the town ballfield as the location for the New River Gorge National River's permanent headquarters building. The Park Service has also purchased the bank building and has plans to use it as a museum. Quiet so long, Bill McKell's old town is once again filled with the sounds of construction. Old-timers don't mind the noise. To them the racket of bulldozers and jackhammers sounds like the roar of Glen Jean coming back to life.

The Reliable Bill Trevey

Glen Jean's Photographer

By Melody E. Bragg

Photographs Collected by George Bragg

In early advertisements for his Glen Jean photography studio William O. Trevey called himself "The Old Reliable." It is unlikely that he realized just how appropriate this motto would turn out to be. After almost 90 years, his photographs continue to be the most accurate and certainly the most reliable visual record of the people and places along Dunloup Creek in the historic coalfields of Fayette County.

Friends and neighbors never thought of Trevey as a recorder of history. To the people who knew him he was merely the local photographer, and he attracted no special notice. No one alive today can remember just when or why he and Mary Trevey moved into their small house on McKell Avenue. Evidently he came

William Trevey did hundreds of portraits in his Glen Jean studio. This group of men-about-town made one of the more intriguing pictures. Date unknown.

to practice photography from the first, for he soon established his studio in a large two-story building near the entrance to town. To provide additional lighting for his portraits, he had a skylight built into the roof. The skylight was an enormous set of windows, measuring approximately 20 feet by 30 feet. This feature makes it very easy to identify Trevey's studio in early pictures of Glen Jean.

Some of his earlier photographs show that Trevey was in Glen Jean as early as 1898. When he arrived, Thomas and William McKell's model town on the former McCoy family farmlands was just beginning to take shape. Trevey and his camera were in time to catch the crowds at the Glen Jean Opera House, the construction of the stone bank building, and the wooden majesty of the Dunglen Hotel. With the trained eye of a photographer, he would document the next 25 years of Glen Jean and the communities around it. The New River country was ripe for his talents. Coal was bringing men with big plans into the area, all eager to have their accomplishments recorded by Trevey's camera.

Although his photographs were in great demand, Trevey and his wife made scarcely a ripple in Glen Jean society. He recorded the lives of rich and poor, but seems never to have been an active part of either class. The wealthy brought their children to the studio to be photographed in his fancy wicker chair and miners willingly posed for him on the job, but Bill Trevey had little in common with either group.

Mary Trevey, as photographed by her husband. Trevey left no known portraits of himself. Date unknown.

Ruby Ash Hickman, who often visited Mary Trevey as a child, remembers the couple as quiet, unassuming people who lived their lives outside the mainstream of the community.

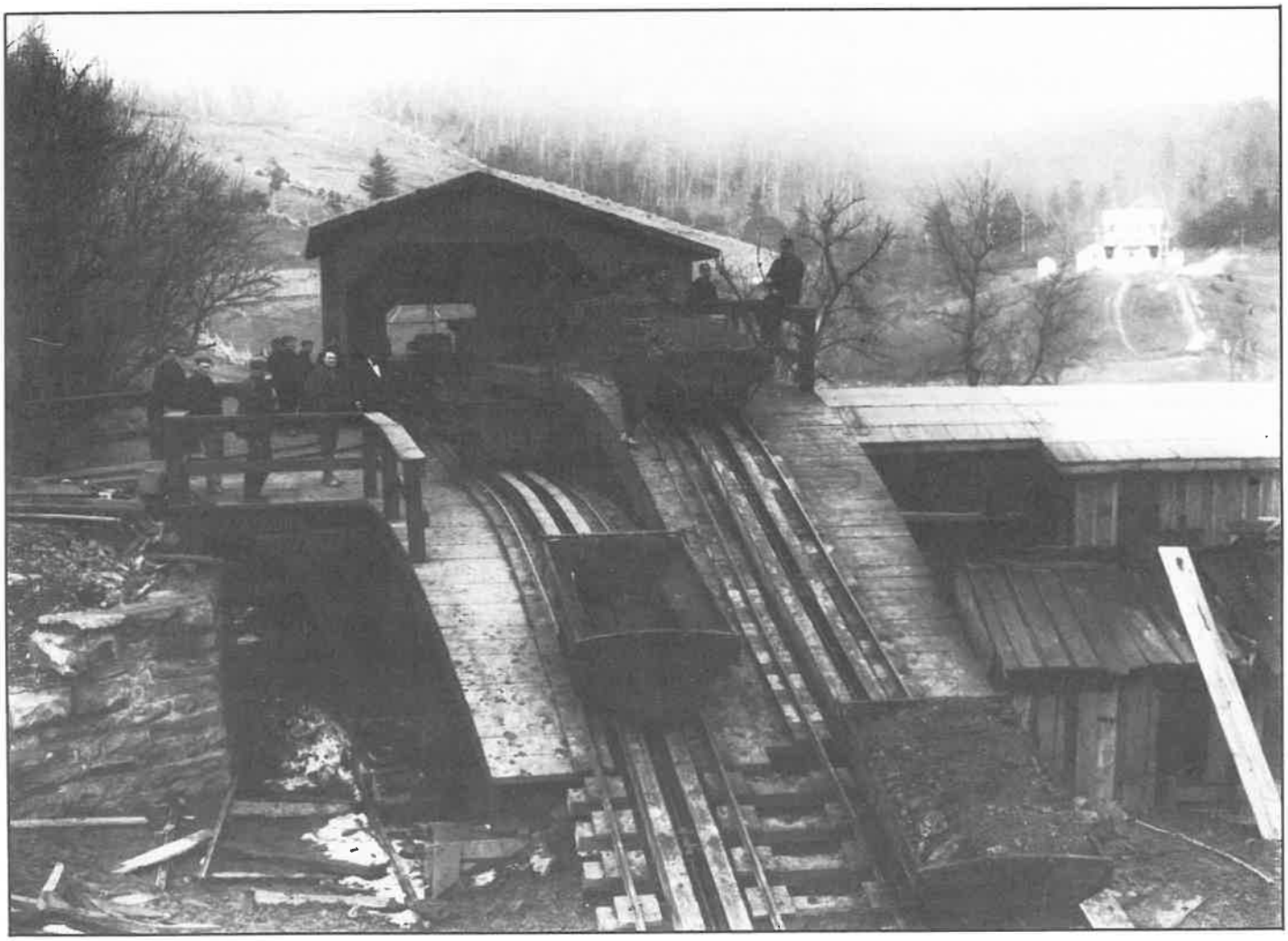
"Mrs. Trevey would send for me to stay with her when Mr. Trevey went hunting," Ruby says. "He would often stay away for several nights hunting raccoons or deer. I was content to stay with Mrs. Trevey as long as she wanted me. I remember that her house was decorated with a bearskin taken from a bear that Mr. Trevey had killed. She used it as a cover on her couch. Bearskin rugs were quite popular in those days, but I think that was the first one I ever saw." Trevey also kept a bearskin inside his studio to sit babies on for photographs.

Like most women of that time, Mary Trevey maintained a garden and kept a cow which was set loose every morning to graze around the town. In the evening it was common to see local boys leading cows home from a day's grazing on the Opera House lot. Trevey kept several hunting dogs, as well as a more unusual pet. According to Ruby Hickman, "I especially remember that Mr. Trevey kept a pet ferret for hunting. If an animal ran to a hole in the ground, he would release the ferret which would follow the animal and chase it out of the hole for him."

The good local hunting often provided Trevey with opportunities to do business. Some of his most striking photographs are of hunters who brought their catch to his studio. These portraits show men posing proudly with their bounty of squirrel or fox.

Mary Trevey was known as a cook. She prepared lunch in her home for several single people working on

The Red Star baseball team played for a community just down Dunloup Creek from Glen Jean. Trevey made this picture about 1915.



Coal fueled the economy of Fayette County in Trevey's day, and he often photographed miners and mine sites. The location and date of this tipple photograph are unknown.

nearby Main Street, like McKell secretary Clara Craig and Bernard Rock of the Bank of Glen Jean. Ruby Hickman remembers Mrs. Trevey's apple pies with special pleasure.

Many questions about William Trevey will never be answered simply because they were asked too late. By the time that anyone thought to wonder where he came from or how he learned his trade, there was no one around to answer. Professional as well as personal facts remain unknown. For example, there is no record of what kind of cameras Trevey used, although he probably had more than one. Because his studio portrait camera was so large and heavy, he most likely had a smaller, more portable model for fieldwork.

Photography the way Trevey did it was vastly different from today's one-step cameras. The equipment and conditions under which he worked bore little resemblance to those familiar to modern photographers. The portrait camera that he used would have been a large, unwieldy instrument set on a heavy tripod. The photographer ducked under a black focusing cloth to set up his picture, the cloth keeping light from diluting the upside-down image projected from the lens to the glass square on the back of the camera.

Perhaps the biggest change has been in the type of negatives. Unlike the roll film that we are accustomed to today, the Trevey negatives were made on plates of glass similar to common window panes. Early photographers did not have enlarging equipment and the glass negatives were the same size as the eventual photograph — usually eight inches by ten inches or four inches by five. The fact that so many of Trevey's landscape shots are of the smaller size supports the belief that he carried a smaller camera for outside work.

The plates of chemically treated glass were bought in wooden boxes, sealed from the light. They were placed in the camera individually after each photograph was set up. After taking his picture, Trevey headed for the darkroom. He used chemicals to develop the negative image on the glass plate. He later placed the finished negative directly upon a sheet of photographic paper, a process known as contact printing. Once the negative and paper underneath were exposed to light for just the right amount of time, the paper was treated with additional chemicals to bring out a permanent, positive image. This may seem primitive by today's standards, but it produced a sharp, clear image equal to any achieved by modern equipment.

By the turn of the century, many photographers had given up glass-plate negatives in favor of the more convenient celluloid film. Trevey apparently preferred the old-fashioned method and continued his use of glass negatives. His choice was a fortunate one for historians, because it is unlikely that celluloid would have survived the years and the temperature variations that Trevey's negatives later suffered in storage. Well-preserved glass plates will still print as clear an image today as they did decades ago.

The majority of Trevey's photography profits probably came from making formal portraits, but he did not confine himself to his studio. He was available to photograph school classes, ball teams, church groups, weddings and any other event which participants wanted recorded. These pictures provide valuable insights into contemporary social life in the New River Coalfield.

Trevey traveled all over the area, photographing buildings, mines, stores, and even entire towns. It is

not known whether these photographs were made on contract or speculation, or whether Trevey simply took them for pleasure. Regardless of how they came about, they now offer a precious record of places like the McKell Coal & Coke towns of Tamroy, Oswald, and Graham. All that remains of many such places are the Trevey photographs and the memories of past residents. Other towns survived but are vastly changed from what they were in Trevey's day, such as nearby Scarbro, Mount Hope, and Kilsyth.

Most of Trevey's photographs were taken between the years of 1890 and 1920, while southern Fayette County was experiencing intense growth brought on by the coal boom. When business slowed down, he maintained his studio but also took other work to supplement his income. During the 1930's he ran a local garage which serviced the automobiles that were replacing passenger trains as the preferred means of transportation. Later he worked for William McKell as the manager of the Glen Jean Opera House, during the time that it featured motion pictures.

Bill Hickman, now of Mount Hope, often visited Trevey's Garage as a young boy. He remembers the proprietor as a man who liked to keep

Above: Blacks could aspire to positions of authority in the boom towns. W. H. Fairfax was a Glen Jean deputy. Date unknown.

Below: Group portraits were a staple of Trevey's work. These men have been identified as 1902 strikers.

William Trevey was a hunter and a photographer of hunters. These men brought the fruits of a 1912 Christmas season fox hunt to his studio.

busy. Hickman says, "He was a great tinkerer. You could always find him tinkering around doing something. If he wasn't taking pictures or working on cars, he was going hunting. Everyone who knew him just called him 'Trevey,' even his wife."

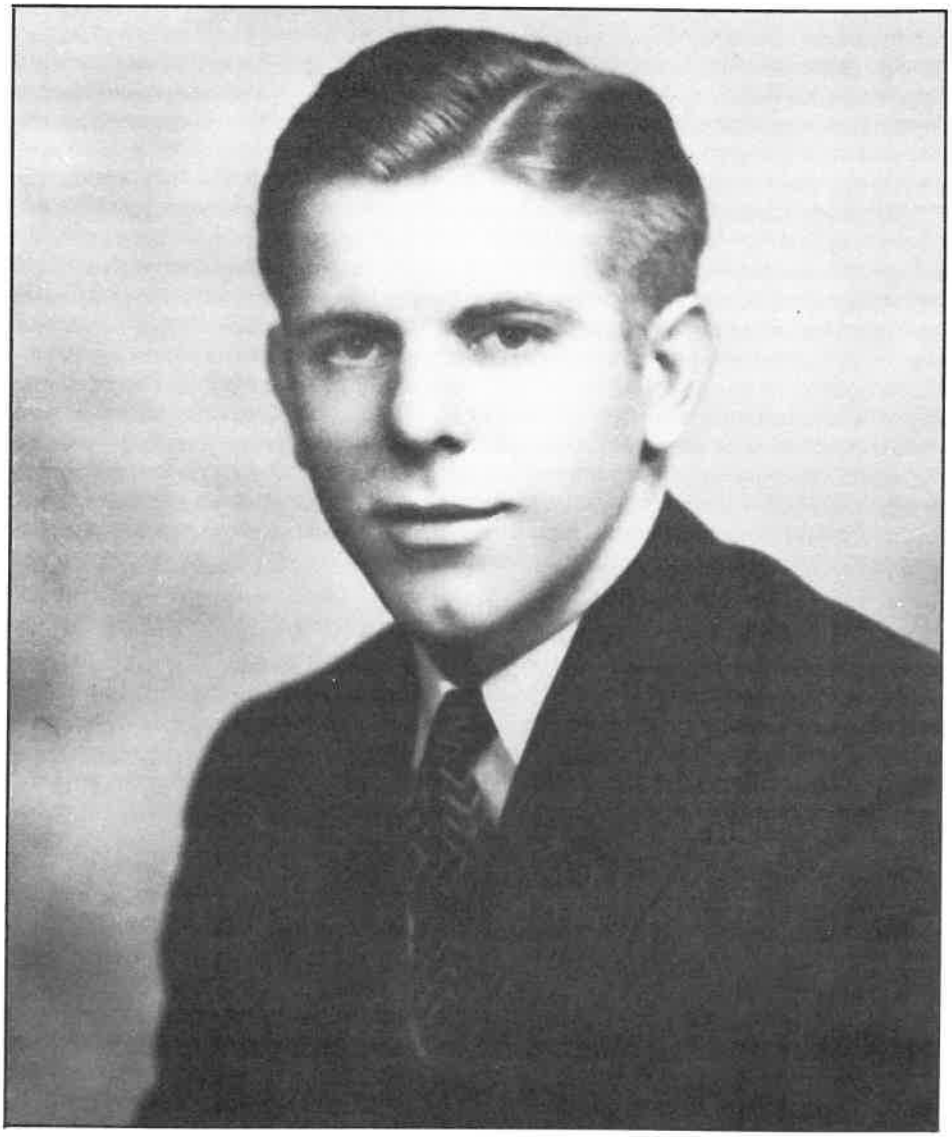
During the late 1930's, the Treveys left Glen Jean for a farm at nearby Pack's Branch. When he moved out of his studio, he took his camera but left behind several large boxes full of the glass negatives of pictures he had taken during his years at Glen Jean. Trevey never returned to claim the negatives and they remained in the building after his death around 1938.

Bill Hickman had never forgotten his old friend, and perhaps partly because of Trevey's early influence had himself grown into an avid photographer. He learned that the Trevey negatives were still stored in the former studio building, later used as a pool hall. When the New River Company took over the McKell holdings in 1940 and began to sell off the buildings in Glen Jean, Mr. Hickman decided to make an effort to preserve the negatives. He approached the owner of the studio building and obtained permission to take the negatives. He and a friend, Fred Frisk, who shared his interest in photography, loaded the boxes onto a pickup truck and agreed to divide the negatives equally.

When the boxes were opened, Hickman and Frisk found themselves the owners of well over 1,000 vintage glass-plate negatives. Through the years, they examined all of them individually and preserved the ones that they felt were the most important. It was an enormous undertaking because the plates had been stored without any type of filing system and with no labels. Most were studio portraits of unidentified people. The landscapes and scenes of mines or buildings were what the two men were most interested in saving. As each photograph of a town or building was discovered they tried to find someone who could recognize it. Fortunately, both had grown up in the area and were able to identify many of the scenes personally.

Eventually they were forced to destroy or give away many of the unidentified portraits because of lack of storage space. They saved and printed as many of the remaining negatives as they could. Today they have narrowed the collection down to about 400 scenes of towns, mines, businesses, and people who were a part of life in the area during the late 1800's and early 1900's. If Hickman and Frisk had not had the foresight to act when they did, it is likely that these important windows to the past would have been lost forever.

During his lifetime Trevey was never as important as the coal operators who were building the New River company towns. He established no mines, he built no great houses, and he accumulated no wealth. However, he left a legacy which has outlasted coal mines and boom towns. His historic photographs have a value which grows as the years go by. While most of the important men of his day are now only names in a history book, William O. Trevey more than ever lives up to his claim of being "The Old Reliable." ✤



J. Z. Ellison from about the time of his service with the Railway Express Agency. He went to work for the company in 1937, after spending a year at West Virginia University. Photographer unknown, 1939.

Fast Express

Riding the Rails with REA

By J. Z. Ellison

Photographs by Michael Keller

By 1937 the economy of the country had improved over 1932, when my mother brought my brothers and sisters and me from the farm in Monroe County to Morgantown to go to school [GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1986, pp. 52-59], but times were still hard. I was glad to get a job, especially with the Railway Express Agency where I could make more money than my schoolteacher sister. In June 1937, after completing a year at West Virginia University, I applied for my Social Security number, a federal requirement after the Social Security Act of 1935, and was employed as a part-time REA chauffeur.

The REA was an outgrowth of the government takeover of the railroads during World War I. Uncle Sam had consolidated the nation's railway express service as well, combining the express operations of Wells Fargo, American Express and other companies into one public corporation. After the war, the railroads were returned to their private corporations but rail express continued under public management until 1928. That year, America's major railroads jointly created the Railway Express Agency to succeed the government monopoly. The REA operated on railroads throughout the country, including the Baltimore & Ohio line through Morgantown.

I had worked around the railroad station transferring mail between the post office and the daily mail trains during my three years at Morgantown High School. With time to kill waiting on trains, I became acquainted with the Railway Express people and other men at the station. One I especially enjoyed was taxi driver Guy Hayes, who always came early to meet the trains. Guy dressed like a railroad conductor in a block cap and dark blue suit. When it was about time for the train to come, he would pull out his big gold watch and say, "Well fellers, according to my watch and chain, she should be right down the track." I believe it was my acquaintance with these men that helped me get the job with the Railway Express Agency.

Chauffeurs did local pickup and delivery, as opposed to the express agents who manned the stations and the messengers who rode the trains. In order to get my REA chauffeur's license I went to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, for the examination. I was required to buy a uniform cap and on it, at all times while working, wear the REA identification badge, a large red, white, and blue enameled brass pin with my number, 17640.

My first assignment was to go to the WVU Woman's Hall to pick up trunks. In 1937 there were 2,625 students at the university and, due to bad roads and few cars, most of them came in by train or bus. Those who came by bus shipped their trunks by

The nation's urgent business moved by rail express during Mr. Ellison's younger days. Here are his REA service badge and his "tightbox" key.

rail express. During final examination week, REA got calls from the dormitories and rooming houses to pick up trunks. This was the first year that REA chauffeurs were permitted to go to the dormitory rooms for pickups. Heretofore, trunks had been brought to the loading dock by the janitor.

This particular day, after I was loaded and ready to leave, I called the express office, as instructed, for any last-minute orders. They said a call for a trunk pickup had just come in, and gave me a dormitory room number. I went right over and knocked on the door. A voice said, "Come in." I opened the door, and there lay a girl on the bed stark naked. She gave out a war-whoop when she saw a man at the door. She hadn't expected such a quick response to her call.

I had another trunk to pick up from a rooming house located behind the General Electric store and Frank E. Connor's dry cleaning place, at the head of High Street. When I arrived, a car was parked in the loading zone. I pulled as close as possible, left my engine running and went in for the trunk. Coming back, I saw a cop writing out a ticket.

He said, "Did you know it's against the law to leave a vehicle with the motor running?" I said I did not know. He asked, "What did you leave it in the middle of the street for?" I explained that while I was back getting the trunk, the car had pulled away, leaving my truck in the middle of the street. The cop said, "Well son, this time is your time. The next time is my time."

I had other duties besides pickup and delivery. One was to service the three trucks, two large Fords and a Diamond T. I washed, swept out, and checked the water and oil. We kept the trucks in good running shape, mainly because an REA inspector from Uniontown would periodically come by, inspect them for cleanliness, little dents, and general upkeep. He had been a peacetime army officer, was ill-natured, and required everything to be exactly right — kind of scared everybody who had to pass his inspection.

After that job was done, about 7:00 p.m. each weekday, a large truck loaded with Grennan cakes came in from Pittsburgh. I delivered those cakes to the six local bakeries, so they could take them out with their morning deliveries to neighborhoods in Morgantown. That's when I got turned against doughnuts. I got to the bakeries when they were glazing hot doughnuts, and the bakers would give me two or three in a bag, adding up to about a dozen in an evening. I ate until I nearly foundered.

Besides the agent in charge, there were two full-time and three part-time chauffeurs in the Morgantown office. The boss was quite a party man and he took a liking to me and one of the other part-timers. We worked by the hour, kept our own time, and were paid every 15 days. After a few weeks we noticed that one or the other of us had more on our paycheck — maybe eight or ten dollars — than we had turned in time for. Then on Saturday following payday, the three of us would go out together, sometimes to Uniontown or to Fairmont to a nightclub, and cruise around, dance, and carry on until the money ran out. The one with the extra wages paid the bills for the party.

During that summer, to pass the time between trains, we played practical jokes, like attaching smoke bombs to the truck engines to scare the drivers when they started the motor. Guy Hayes told us stories. A favorite tale was about finding his stolen Model T taxi in Lewisburg, and the four days it took traveling

Depot neighborhoods made up the working landscape of the young express messenger. This contemporary view shows Grafton's B&O Station, at right, and the grand Willard Hotel. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia & Regional History Collection, WVU.

over the mountains on dirt roads to bring it back.

Once I was assigned as special guard to transport a large amount of money from the First National Bank in Morgantown to the Railway Express office in Pittsburgh. The agent locked me, my pistol, and a metal REA "tightbox" in the back of the truck and drove to the bank. In the bank vault they packed in a large quantity of money in wrapped packets, then locked the box and me back in the truck. The agent signed for the money, and we returned to the depot about ten minutes before the train from Fairmont to Pittsburgh arrived.

I stayed in the locked truck until other express parcels were cared for, then they handed me a sawed-off automatic shotgun. I slid the tightbox into the REA railroad car and got in with the regular messenger, the door rolled shut, and the train started.

The regular man was an older fellow. He said, "Let's see that gun." I handed him the shotgun. He unloaded it, stuck the shells in his pocket, and set the gun in the corner of the car. "There ain't nobody going to ride in the car with me with one of those loaded shotguns," he said. "And furthermore, young feller, if somebody sticks a gun in that car door and wants some money, you give it to 'em. They make plenty of tightboxes, plenty of guns, but they can't make another you."

As the train stopped at stations on the way the old messenger advised me to go to the front of the car and hide, because the presence of a second person in an express car told everybody that treasure was on board. Coming into the yards in Pittsburgh he reloaded the shotgun and laid it on the tightbox. "Young man, be careful," he said. "That's a dangerous weapon."

We pulled into the Pittsburgh B&O station and I was the first to be unloaded, with the tightbox and shotgun. I was locked in a truck as before. We went to the main express office located behind the Pennsylvania Railroad station. There I was unloaded into an area caged in by a chain-link fence. I pulled the tightbox up to a 30-foot hallway that had electrically-locked doors. I was told to bring the box into the hallway, unlock it, and leave my shotgun and receipt book. I was locked out while the agent checked the money, signed my book for the shotgun and cash, pulled the tightbox back into the hallway, locked his door, and opened up mine. I retrieved my tightbox and book and returned to Morgantown.

Although I was classified as part-time, I was able to work regularly during the summer, filling in for workers taking time off. Just prior to the beginning of the fall semester I had an opportunity to go to Parkersburg and work as an REA messenger riding the express cars, so I did not return to school.

In Parkersburg I stayed in a rooming house, the first time I had lived far from my family. I had to learn to manage for myself. I had saved money regularly in my home bank in Greenville, but checks on that bank were impossible to cash away from Monroe County. The express agent in Parkersburg would cash one against my pay, but when that was spent I was out of luck.

The new work was exciting. Express cars were always coupled to passenger trains, in front, as these trains had the right-of-way over freights. The Railway Express Agency was the fastest parcel transportation available after 1928, when it took over from the government's American Railway Express Company.

Express messengers handled everything from envelopes to heavy machinery, including medicine. Valuables were recorded in a "value book," which was a numbered, carbon-copy receipt book. The agent would write up each item, where it was going, a brief description, and the value. Then the messenger would sign the agent's book and take the package. While the train was moving, the messenger went to a little writing desk hinged to the car wall, and wrote everything up in his own book, to be signed by the next man taking over. Any small parcel valued over $50 had to be written up as valuable. All guns, jewelry, and medicine were so classified, and stored in the tightbox with a hatchet, ice pick, and other small items.

While in Parkersburg I worked two different routes. One was between Parkersburg and Grafton on the local "dinkey" train, which had an engine, partitioned baggage car, and caboose. On that little train, express parcels were in the front of the baggage car and passenger seats in the rear. The dinkey left Parkersburg about three o'clock in the afternoon. There were 22 bridges and 21 tunnels between there and Grafton, and we stopped at every little town where there were people or packages to get on or off. I always looked forward to Center Sta-

tion, a village hardly big as a boxcar. There, in a house by the tracks, a pretty girl about my age would come out on the back porch and wave.

When we got to Grafton in the evening, I'd check into a rooming house run by a woman who lived near the Mother's Day Church. Railroaders who slept there got a good clean bed for 75 cents. There was a hired caller whose job was to come by and make sure that train men were wide awake and ready to work, no matter what time of day or night they were needed. He woke me in the morning in time to return to Parkersburg on a regular train out of Baltimore.

On my first trip back from Grafton we were running late with a lot of stuff to handle. When I got on I was told not to disturb the "dead end," the front of the car which was piled solid with packages for Cincinnati. The messenger I was replacing had his value book lying on the desk, and said, "All the valuables are laying right here under this desk. Just sign my book." Being new, I signed. He then left with his book and tightbox.

As we traveled back toward Parkersburg I began to sort the packages. I thought Salem came before Clarksburg, so I set the Salem items out in the door, intending to work on the Clarksburg packages later. I had a lot of shuffling to do when I realized my mistake as we entered the Clarksburg yard. Fortunately, another REA worker saw my predicament and jumped in to help. After Clarksburg came Wolf Summit, Salem, Ellenboro, Pennsboro, and Walker, with parcels and passengers exchanged at each. Between stops I began to check the valuables and write them up. One item on the list was missing, a $1,500 package of uranium going to a hospital in Ohio. I searched the part of the car I was responsible for with no luck. Although I was bonded, I was worried.

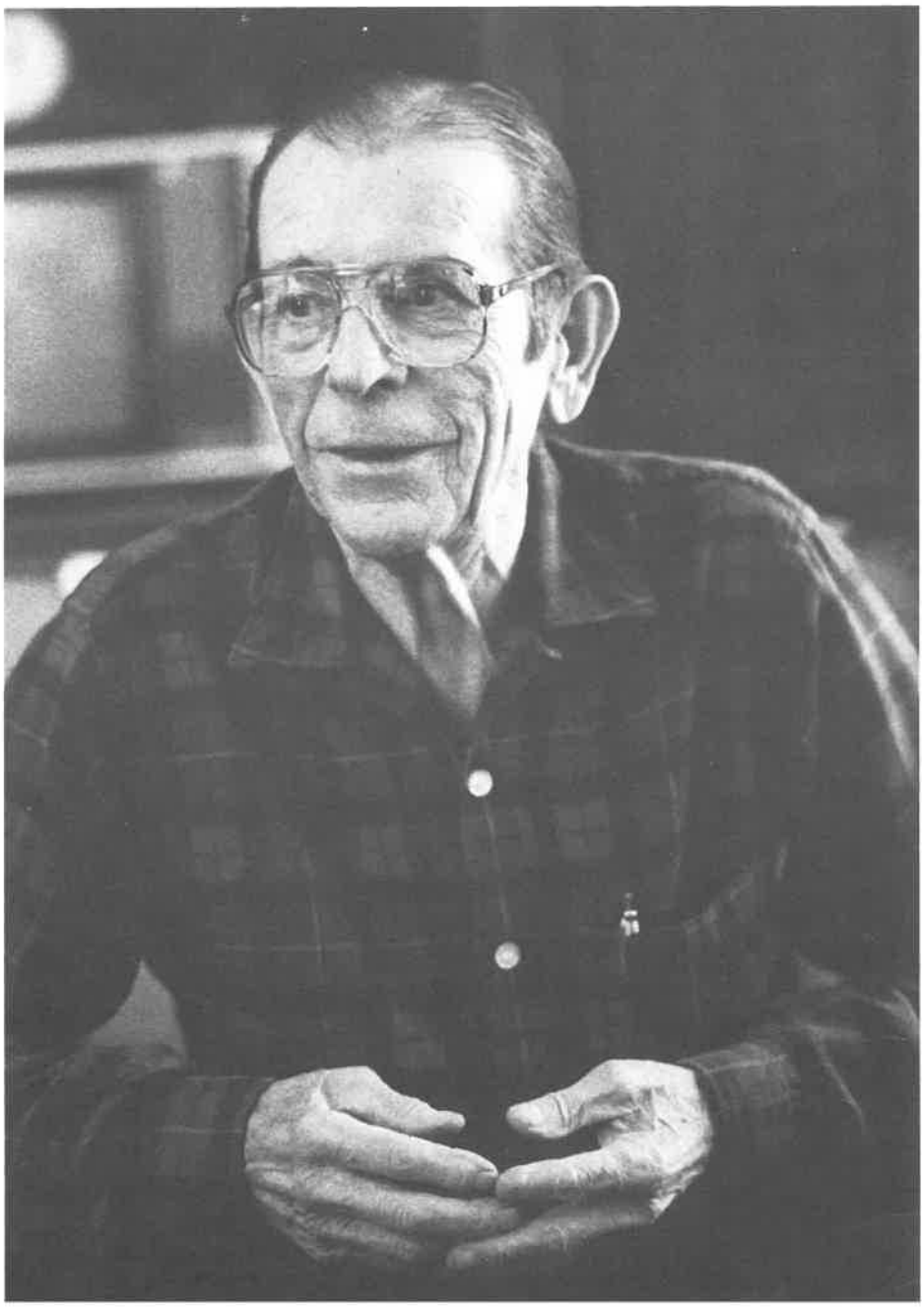
In Parkersburg I told the oncoming messenger my problem. He said, "I'll sign for what's here, but I can't afford to obligate myself for something I don't know anything about. But if it's in that dead end, I'll write it up and come back tomorrow and sign your book." When I came to work the next afternoon he was there and said the lost package had been in the dead end on the floor. The man who had gotten me to sign the book in Grafton could never even have seen it.

My next trip was from Parkersburg to Cumberland, Maryland, the train originating in Cincinnati. The regular messenger went with me on this trip to show me what to do. We worked up to Grafton where we put on a wagonload of newspapers and a pine box containing a casket with a dead body. It was night and the railroad stations were closed from there on to Keyser. The regular man said, "Now fix you a bed when we get the parcels sorted, lay down, and go to sleep. The fellow in Keyser will pull one of the stakes out of an express wagon and beat on the door until you have to wake up." I laid stacks of newspapers over the pine box, got on it and woke up in Keyser at daybreak.

I had a couple of friends in Parkersburg. One night I had been out with them until late and had spent most of the cash I had. I expected no trouble getting a check cashed the next day. About 4:00 a.m. the woman of the house woke me and said they wanted me at the REA office. I got a bite to eat and went to the station and was put in an express car with both ends packed solid. Then two trucks arrived with six bedsprings and six mattresses, filling the rest of the car.

We got about ten miles out of Parkersburg when the lights went off. I had a jumper strap to connect to the

J. Z. Ellison recalls his REA service as an exciting youthful interlude. He learned to fend for himself while traveling West Virginia and adjacent states.



power in the next car if I should need to, but there was no way to get to the end of my car. I couldn't see to do anything. At Ellenboro I was able to see a large crated tombstone near the door. The engineer stopped the train before we got to the unloading platform. I kept waving my hand — the signal that the train should keep moving — but he couldn't see or didn't care.

The local express agent came back and said there was no way he could get the tombstone unloaded, since we were four feet from the platform. I told him I would stop the train after it started again so he got in the car. When the train started and my door was up to the platform I pulled the emergency cord. By then we had the tombstone halfway out. The conductor came running back, mad as a wet hen, wanting to know what we thought we were doing. I said I was not big enough to move the stone and the express man was not strong enough to carry it. That satisfied the conductor.

Between Fairmont and Grafton I discovered a 5,700-pound crane for a steam shovel in the front of the car, to be unloaded at Terra Alta for the Greer Lime and Stone Company. The REA agent at Grafton told me to write a telegram requesting help and he would send it. By the time I got to Terra Alta the packages around the crane had been unloaded and help was waiting. It took about 45 minutes to unload the crane, and the conductor nearly wore his shoes out pacing back and forth, looking at his watch. The crane was unloaded onto a special high wagon, one that was used to move caskets and was level with the train car door. I watched as they pulled the heavily-loaded wagon across another track that would soon carry another train. Just then, the wagon buckled and the crane crashed down on the track. I never heard how they cleared that, for we were long gone.

Our train went down the mountain into Luke, Maryland, by the pulp mill. Between the mill and Keyser there had been a train wreck. Three cars were overturned, one containing wine and booze. They backed us up to the pulp mill yard, where we nearly suffocated from the hydrogen sulfide, and after about three hours

switched us over to the Western Maryland Railway track.

We stopped at McCool, across the Potomac from Keyser, and express parcels were trucked across the river to the West Virginia side. From there we went by way of the Western Maryland station in Cumberland, where we spent some time waiting in the yard to get switched back to the B&O tracks. I unloaded and checked in my tightbox and disposed of my valuables. Being starved to death, I went down to Baltimore Street and — thinking I'd be leaving the next day — invested in a good meal. I found a place to spend the night for 75 cents, with bedbugs.

That evening I went back to the station to see what time the next day my train was due. The agent said, "You're not leaving in the morning, you're leaving day after tomorrow." I'd already paid for my room and was down to a dollar and a quarter. The next morning I ate a 25-cent breakfast, and bought some snacks with my last money. Back at the station I found an express wagon with a new burlap-lined canvas which I doubled up for a bed that night. The next morning, with not a penny to buy breakfast, not a razor nor toothbrush, I was put on the train from Baltimore.

The express car was loaded with six barrels of oysters and three 300-pound blocks of ice for re-icing, which was my job. I found one barrel nearly full of oysters in the shell, the other barrels containing canned oysters. I'd never eaten a raw oyster in my life, but as soon as I saw those, I pulled my tightbox against the barrel, took my hatchet, and cracked oysters for a raw oyster breakfast that held me until I got back to Parkersburg.

Sometimes we worked for the government. Once I had an assignment to take three carloads of U.S. Army horses on the B&O from Parkersburg to Washington. Once a crate of carrier pigeons was put on at Washington by the War Department, with instructions to the express messenger to release them immediately at Tunnelton and record the time. The messenger opened the crate on the platform there. I looked up and saw the pigeons circling the station as our train pulled out of the Preston County town.

One day in Parkersburg I was sitting on the express wagon with a part-time employee. He asked, "Ellison, are you married?" I said I was not. He said, "For goodness sakes, if you get married, marry an orphan." I asked why. He said he'd married into a big family during the depths of the Depression. He was the only one with a job, so his wife's family had moved in with him. He held down one job and moonlighted many years before the in-laws moved out.

About the middle of December I was sent to Pittsburgh to work through the Christmas rush on the run to Youngstown, Ohio. I got a nice room near the University of Pittsburgh with a fellow worker from Fairmont. We would ride the streetcar down to Nulls Restaurant where we ate, then he went to the B&O station, and I went across the Monongahela River to the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railway station, now a shopping center.

On Christmas morning, my first Christmas away from my Monroe County home, I had to move out of my room early. I planned to go to nearby Brownsville, eat Christmas dinner with Aunt Clara Messmore, then go back to West Virginia to see my sister and brother-in-law in Huntington. I phoned Aunt Clara, got my railroad pass, and put my bags in a locker at the B&O station. With several hours to kill, I walked over to the P&LE station. The agent said, "Man, where you been?" He said, "You're the only messenger around here, you're going to have to go back to Youngstown today." I told him my plans, but he said, "It makes no difference. You're the only one we can get ahold of and it's your job." So

I called Aunt Clara about the change, got my equipment and took off for Youngstown.

There was little in the express car except some wooden crates of late oranges and stacks of *Esquire* magazines, which the U.S. Mail would not carry. All my life I had looked forward to Christmas as the one time we were sure to get oranges, and there they were. These oranges were chinked with kumquats, which I thought were much like the persimmons that used to grow on the farm. I lifted the crates and dropped them on end so that the slats shifted enough to let small oranges and kumquats fall out. On that trip I ate all I could stand and read *Esquire*.

In Youngstown I went to the YMCA near the station and, for 50 cents, got a clean cot for three hours and somebody to wake me in time for the return trip.

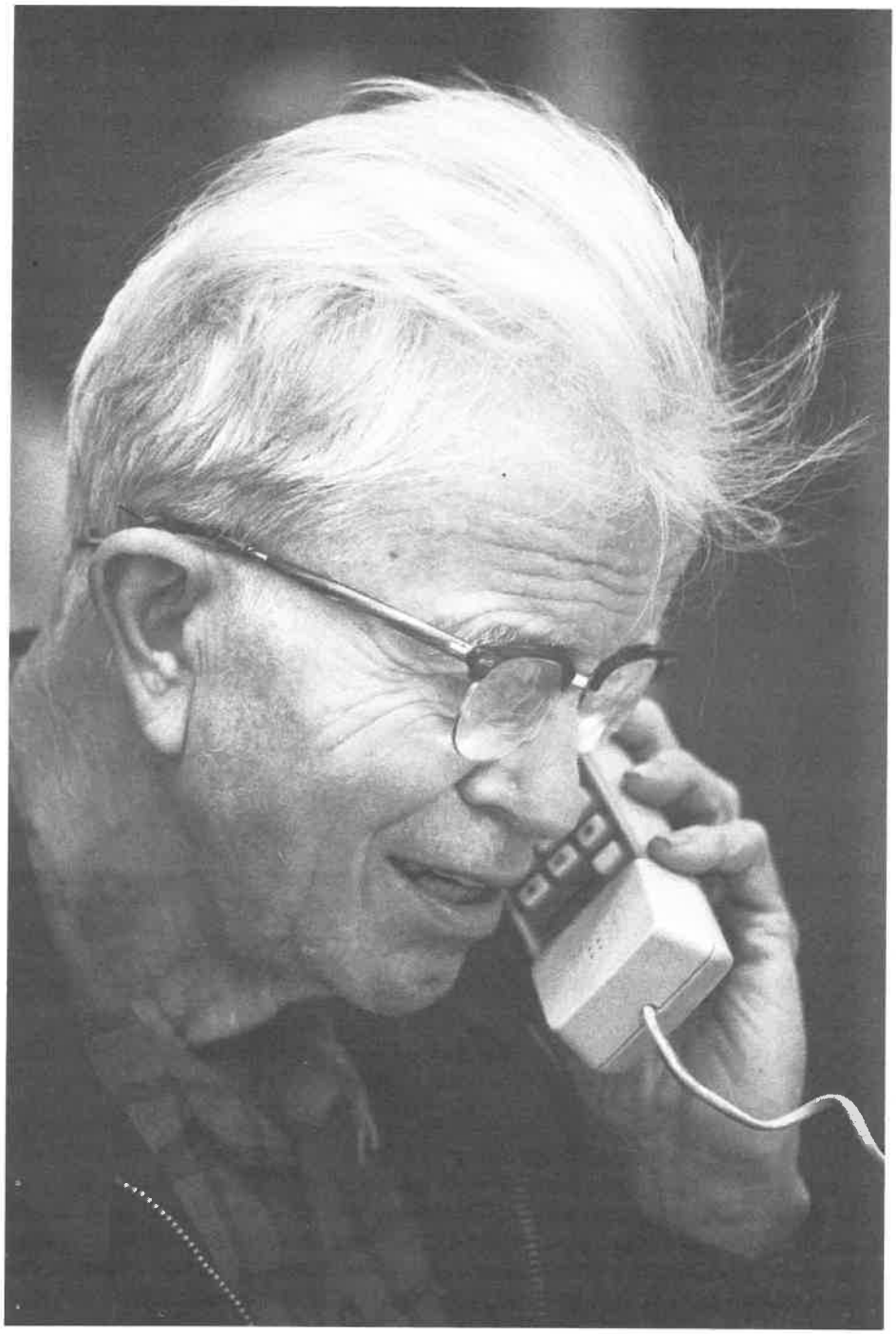
We were stopped halfway between Youngstown and Pittsburgh for a long time on the way back. Nobody could see what was going on. Finally the conductor told us a gasoline tank in a large storage plant had exploded and blown across the track. They were afraid the heat from the fire might explode more tanks. The train moved closer and all the passengers were put off to walk around the area. The conductor, engineer, brakeman, and the express messenger — that was me — all rode through. I could feel the heat of the fire, but I wasn't about to get off that train — I had $20,000 in gold bullion laying up in the front of the express car. We finally got through the fire, picked up the passengers, and went on to Pittsburgh.

I walked back across the river to the B&O station and got a train to Huntington, arriving there about 6:00 a.m. the day after Christmas. Out of money, I called my brother-in-law, Dr. Lee F. Dobbs, and asked if he could rake up enough cash to pay the cab when I arrived at his house.

I worked with the Railway Express Agency for two years, as America eased out of the Depression and the world lurched into another war. In July 1939, I got a special job at the Morgantown station, painting platform wagons at $4 each. I could paint two a day and earn more than at my regular job. I remember painting wagons on the Fourth of July. That was the year the state banned fireworks but someone threw a bootleg spitdevil at me anyway. My head hit the wagon so hard I knocked it off the jack.

I returned to college that fall and the Railway Express Agency had to continue without my talents. The outfit survived up until recent times, when it fell victim to bad management and changing transportation patterns. Bankruptcy trustees shut the agency's doors in 1975, as the nation's fast express moved from the rails to the roads, and into the skies.

Today the Morgantown station sits quietly at trackside, a far cry from the years when the train station was the center of city business and travel.



Editor Sam Shaw is the man in charge. The energetic 75-year-old works six or seven days a week.

Unbiased and Unbossed

Sam Shaw and the *Moundsville Daily Echo*

By Barbara Diane Smik

Photographs by Michael Keller

Sam Shaw, 75, is the third-generation Shaw to edit and publish the *Moundsville Daily Echo*. He is proud of that and proud that the *Echo* remains an independent operation in a time when newspaper chains are taking over small papers as well as big ones. Sam manages that, he claims, "Just by staying alive."

Reporters from other papers make regular trips to the building where the *Echo* is printed to talk with Sam. The Associated Press featured him in an article in 1984 which was carried in newspapers as far away as Taiwan. The *Pittsburgh Press* entitled their 1985 article "The Flying Turtle." Sam's sister and colleague, Alexandra Shaw, 74, explains that he usually comes in last in all the foot races he enters.

"The Voice Behind West Virginia's Indomitable Echo" was the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette's* title for their article in '79. The *Columbus Dispatch* informed its Ohio readers in 1984 that "Everybody Knows Sam." Washington and Jefferson College of Washington, Pennsylvania, wrote up alumnus Samuel Cockayne Shaw, Class of '35, in their student magazine, dubbing him "The Scribe of Moundsville."

The scribe's story goes back to his grandfather, James Davis Shaw, originator of the family newspaper legacy. Thanks to Sam, the Moundsville Public Library, and the Marshall County Historical Society, we have a record of Shaw family history reaching back to these early days. Much of my information on the Shaws was taken from the Society's 1984 *History of Marshall County, West Virginia* and an interview with Sam Shaw at the *Echo* last summer.

I learned that James Davis Shaw and Hannah Jane Shields married and made Clarion County, Pennsylvania, their home. J. D. made his early living building barges, loading them with coal, and floating them

down the Ohio River to New Orleans. There they broke up the empty barges and sold the wood. In the 1880's the Shaws moved to New Martinsville, then on to Middlebourne, the Tyler County seat, where J. D. started publishing the *West Virginia Echo.*

Sam says that he has no knowledge that his grandfather ever previously had anything to do with newspapers. "Somewhere he got hold of a Washington handpress and started printing newspapers." J. D.'s children caught the fever, all five of them going into newspaper work. "Aunt Sallie and her husband became publishers of the *Tyler County Journal* and stayed in Middlebourne, while the rest of the family moved to Moundsville," according to Sam. "Four of their children, my father Samuel, Aunt Bess, Aunt Gertrude, and Uncle Gay [James Gayley] all worked at our Moundsville paper."

The *History of Marshall County* notes that James Gayley Shaw later moved to Pittsburgh and published the *North Side Ledger,* a community newspaper. He and his wife, Bright West, had five sons. Two of them became publishers. Eugene published the *Claysville Recorder* in Pennsylvania, and other newspapers, including a West Virginia wildlife paper, according to Sam. George went to East Liverpool, Ohio, and became publisher of the *Review.*

Sam's branch of the family ended up in Moundsville. He says it was all because Fostoria Glass ran out of gas in the year 1890. "Fostoria Glass Company organized at Fostoria, Ohio, because natural gas had been struck there," he reports. "Then three or four years later, all of a sudden, the gas ran out. So they looked around and made a deal with the Moundsville Mining and Manufacturing Company. It was a coal mine and real estate firm. They made a deal with Fostoria to sell them coal at something like 50 cents a ton and Fostoria came. That is what we call the 'boom' in Moundsville."

The Shaws brought their paper from Middlebourne to Moundsville to get in on the boom. James Davis Shaw published the first issue of his weekly *Moundsville Echo* on October 30, 1891. It became the *Moundsville Daily Echo* on March 17, 1896. Sam's dad, his Aunt Bess, and his Aunt Gertrude lived in Moundsville the rest of their lives. Bess and Gertrude never married. Craig, as Sam's father was called, married Irena Cockayne in 1908, and they had two children: Samuel Cockayne and Alexandra "Andra" Craig Shaw.

Asked whether anyone had traced his ancestors on the Shaw side, Sam replied, "Oh, they traced them but they were too smart, they got away. I do know my grandfather came from Lonaconing, Maryland. I expect the Shaws were possibly English or Scotch-Irish. Long ago, we traced the Cockayne family back to when they first landed in boats at Leonardtown, Maryland. My mother's family descended from Huguenots who centuries ago fled from France to Britain to preserve their religious beliefs."

When the Shaw family moved to Moundsville, they located their business on the second floor of the now-gone Mathews Building on Seventh Street. They later moved to a nearby building, also since torn down, which occupied the current site of the Crescent Print Shop.

The *Echo* moved into its present location at 713 Lafayette Avenue about 1903, according to Sam. "My sister Andra owns the building," he adds. "This used to be an old bake shop. As I was digging out the basement, I found some parts of a brick oven down there.

"My grandfather died in 1917, a few weeks after my grandmother Hannah. I was born in 1913. Granddad was the publisher until around 1914, then Pop took over. Pop used to walk through the county and sell subscriptions from one house to another. He knew where every farmer lived in Marshall County. No one could do that today because there's so much flux in the population. That's how he built up the newspaper — going door to door.

"My sister later carried on this door-to-door tradition," Sam continues. "She used to go around house to house in the summer getting personal news items. She asked each family if there was any news to report. She also edited copy. Andra and I were born in the same house we still live in today. Neither of us married. I was always too busy to get married."


MOUNDSVILLE DAILY ECHO

Plan Moundsville Christmas Parade

Do You Want Name Off that Petition?

City Would Require Certificate from All Landlords

Jr. High Held Mock Election

JOTS

In Courts

Feat Action on

Sealing Loc

The *Echo* has brought the news to Moundsville's doorstep daily for the last 97 years. Local items are preferred.

Sam got his start in newspapering early. "I remember when I was a little boy, I'd hold the light for Pop when he'd fix the Linotype machines on Sunday," he says. "He had a difficult time trying to keep up with all the maintenance problems. My dad worked a six- or seven-day week. I still do.

"The *Echo* has spanned the entire history of printing," Sam states. "We had this old, Gutenberg-style press. And then we had handset type, where you set the type under the plate and the platen comes down on it. And then we tried various typesetting machines, and then we had the Linotype machine. That was the big emancipator."

"Pop went to the Linotype factory in Brooklyn and they had special courses — one week tearing down a Linotype machine and then another week building one up. Pop was very versatile. He could handle many areas in the newspaper business. At one time, the *New York Times* posted an ad listing all the skills it takes to publish that paper. Something like 176 skills. It takes the same skills to publish the *Moundsville Daily Echo* and we've got only ten people to do it.

"Then we got the stereotype press," Sam continues. "And then we were the pioneers in printing offset in the daily newspapers of this area. And about two weeks ago we set our first type by laser beam. Now printing is getting to be everybody's game. You may have heard of 'desktop publishing.' Anybody can now get a computer and a laser typesetter that works like an office copy machine, and suddenly he's printing newspapers. Then he can go to some quick-print shop and have a thousand copies run off.

"Competition in this business is stiff enough without that," claims Sam. "When Pop and the others were plugging along with the *Echo* in the early days, they didn't have television and radio to take away part of their advertising."

Sam Shaw competes by sticking with the homefolks. If there's a choice between printing local news and an Associated Press release, he prints the local item, always thinking of his Marshall County readers. In reference to the stacks of news items piled up around his work area, he says, "There's so much stuff here that's never gonna make it. You think that maybe someday you could print that article on the suffering children in Ethiopia, but you go with the local news instead."

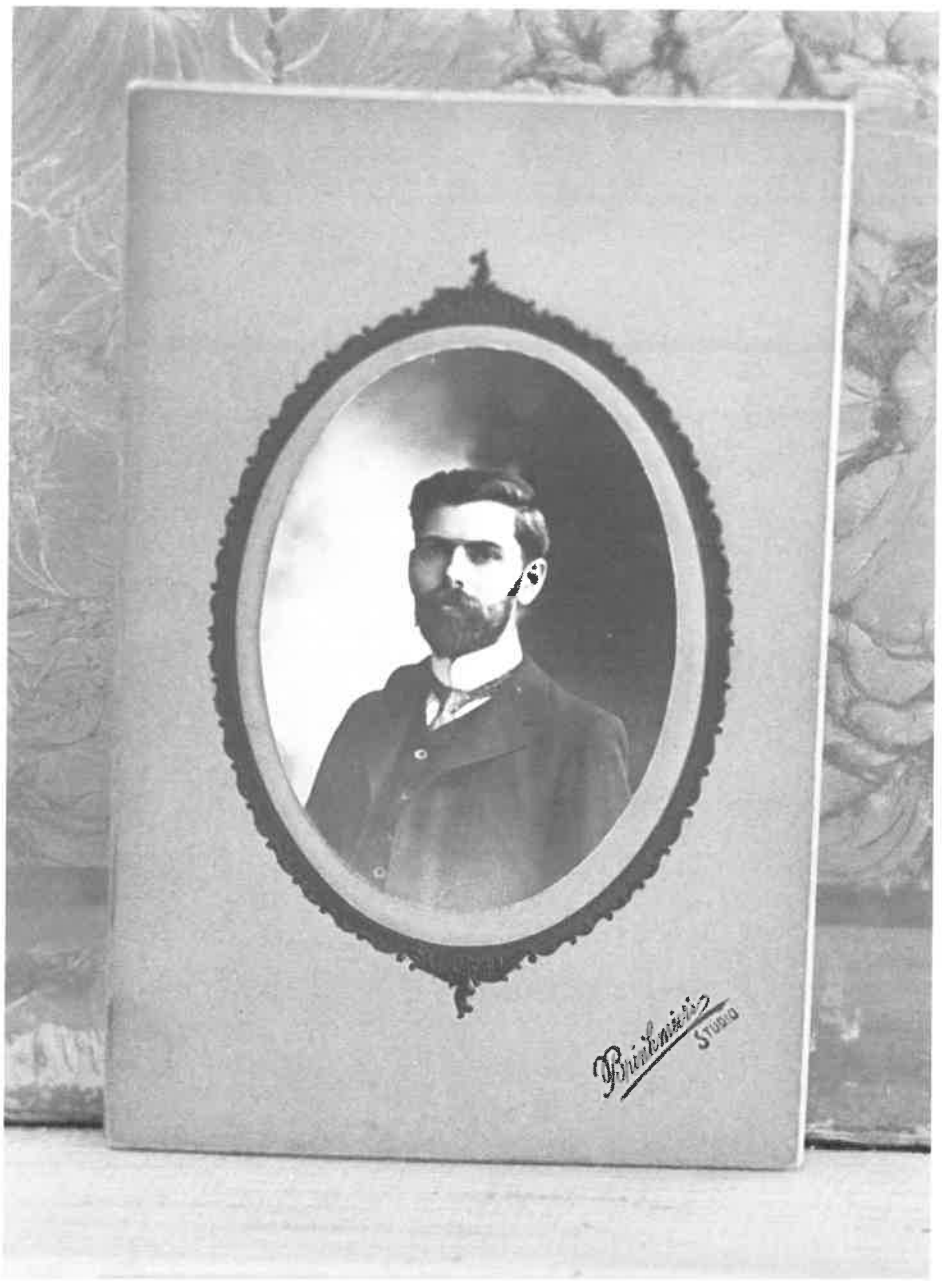
For example, a front page from last July shows two tall time-and-temperature bank thermometers showing temperatures of 101 and 102 degrees. Other items in this issue reflect local interests: The daily magistrate court reports, birth and death notices, a picture of the new Rotary Club officers, a retirement notice, a reunion of the Moundsville High School Class of 1948, a clothing exchange and bake sale, a family reunion notice, and other items crowded onto the front page.

The weekly *Moundsville Echo* in 1891 started out as a four-page, seven-column newspaper, and the *Daily Echo* is about the same size today. There are about 4,800 subscribers, 200 less than when Sam's grandfather had the paper.

"People love the *Echo*," states Sam. "I go to things like class reunions and they say, 'For goodness sakes, keep publishing the *Echo*. It's wonderful to hear about our own hometown.' We ship whole bundles of *Echos* to several states, to people who moved away."

Sam graduated from college with a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics and physics in 1935. He had thought of becoming an engineer, but joined the *Echo* staff full-time in 1935. "I've always been interested in

The Shaws carry on the work of their father, Craig Shaw, shown here as a young man. He inherited the *Echo* from his father. Photographer and date unknown.



electronics," he adds. "I used to be a ham radio amateur. Also photography. When I was in high school, I used to develop my own pictures in dishes down in our coal cellar.

"I could see the computer coming," Sam says. "I've followed the development of computers all along. It was just a matter of starting to read the BASIC language and, I realized in short order, I was either going to have to borrow somebody else's computer or get one of my own. Well, the price came down a bit, and I got one of my own. I write my own programs, for example, to keep track of the newspaper carriers and the advertising.

"We went through a crisis awhile back here at the *Echo*," the editor notes. "The press motor's control system conked out. We've never missed an edition in almost a hundred years, since 1891. I thought for a minute we were going to that night, but we got the press running. Charlie Walton and Roy Leach, who work here, helped me get the thing going, with help from a motor works here in town."

Sam got his press running because he knows his equipment. "I bought the press in 1970," he says. "It was built in 1960. It's a Harris-Vanguard web offset printing press. I got a deal from the previous owners for two-thirds the price, if I'd be responsible for erecting the press and finding out about the electrical wiring. The book has nothing about electrical wiring. The press came in units, so we lined them up and wired them up."

He knows the literary end of the business, too, also from long practice. Sam entered the armed forces on Pearl Harbor Day in 1942 and got out in 1945. Sergeant Shaw later won the Ernie Pyle Award for his writing during World War II. "I was stationed in Eritrea, located in East Africa," Sam recalls. "This was a remarkably good location for intercepting enemy radio traffic. We could teletype that stuff back to Washington and have it decoded in no time.

"I started writing letters back home to the Shaws during my travels. I continued throughout the war years. They were intended to be family letters, but they printed them in the *Echo*, and the next thing I knew I got the Ernie Pyle Award. Copies of the

Above: Alexandra "Andra" Shaw is Sam's sister and his partner at the paper.

Below: Mr. Shaw works with Marian Walton. She and husband Charlie are among several loyal staffers.

Sargeant Shaw Writes Home

Sam Shaw was one GI who faithfully wrote to the folks back home. He composed the first of dozens of colorful letters while on a troop ship heading overseas in October 1943 and continued writing through the end of the war. The stateside Shaws knew just what to do with Sam's letters, printing them on the front page of the Moundsville Daily Echo, *the family newspaper. It added up to a considerable body of journalism by 1945. Sam Shaw wound up his military career with the coveted Ernie Pyle Award, named for the famous civilian journalist who died alongside American forces fighting in the Pacific.*

We reproduce here most of Shaw's 34th letter, complete with the deletions of the military censor. He gives his return address only as "Somewhere in India":

Dear Folks:

Well, they've shipped us out here somewhere [censored] to join the [censored] and Englishmen in the midday sun. We're having a lot of fun looking around and finding that the best is not always like the worst, thank goodness.

You-all back home are sure standardized. We know that now as we look at all these various costumes. If just one of these guys would appear on Jefferson Avenue, the crowd that'd gather would block traffic; but here, nobody is bothered at all to see barelegged Hindus — Parsees in black hats and long togas — beggars in rags — a Hindu woman in that long ancient business that reaches from neck to toes walking with her husband and children who are in modern American clothes — British soldiers from England, Africa, Australia wearing their cool shorts — Mohammedans with those fanlike things up from their turbans — people in modern Western clothes — all jolting together in the crowds. Wood-wheeled oxcarts of the same pattern of 4,000 years ago and modern automobiles share the same street.

This country is the dawgondest thing you ever saw. It's a treat to watch the toy street cars of the [censored] same model as those that first ran into Moundsville 46 years ago, grinding down the street wide open, about 15 miles per hour, the Hindu motorman standing on the front platform stiff and straight, his turban tail trailing out two feet behind on the breeze; humanity of all races and colors and classes and clothes, stuffed in and hanging on outside, and often hopping on or off without bothering to stop the thing.

You see as many autos on the main streets here as you see on the side streets of Moundsville; three out of every four are American-made cars, mostly recent Chevrolets, Fords, Dodges and 1925-30 Buicks, with the steering wheel and controls moved over to the right-hand side.

For the British have brought in all their reverse customs: traffic on the wrong side of the road — soldiers' chevrons upside down — instead of "Signal Corps," it's "Corps of Signals" — all electric switches turn on down instead of upwards as is standard American practice (even the British think our way better).

You take your life in your hands every time you cross the street, looking for the oncoming car and it's sneaking up behind you on the left side of the way.

Enjoy eating in the British mess. The KP's are natives, and since they don't understand so much English, you don't bother to argue with them, and the plan seems quieter than our own chow temples.

The daily schedule of course includes a spot of tea at 4 p.m. These English know how to make tea all right: I drink it because I like it, and not just to be sociable. Coffee this morning must have been made with radiator water.

Love,
Sam

letters, as printed in the *Echo*, are in our files and in the West Virginia University Library."

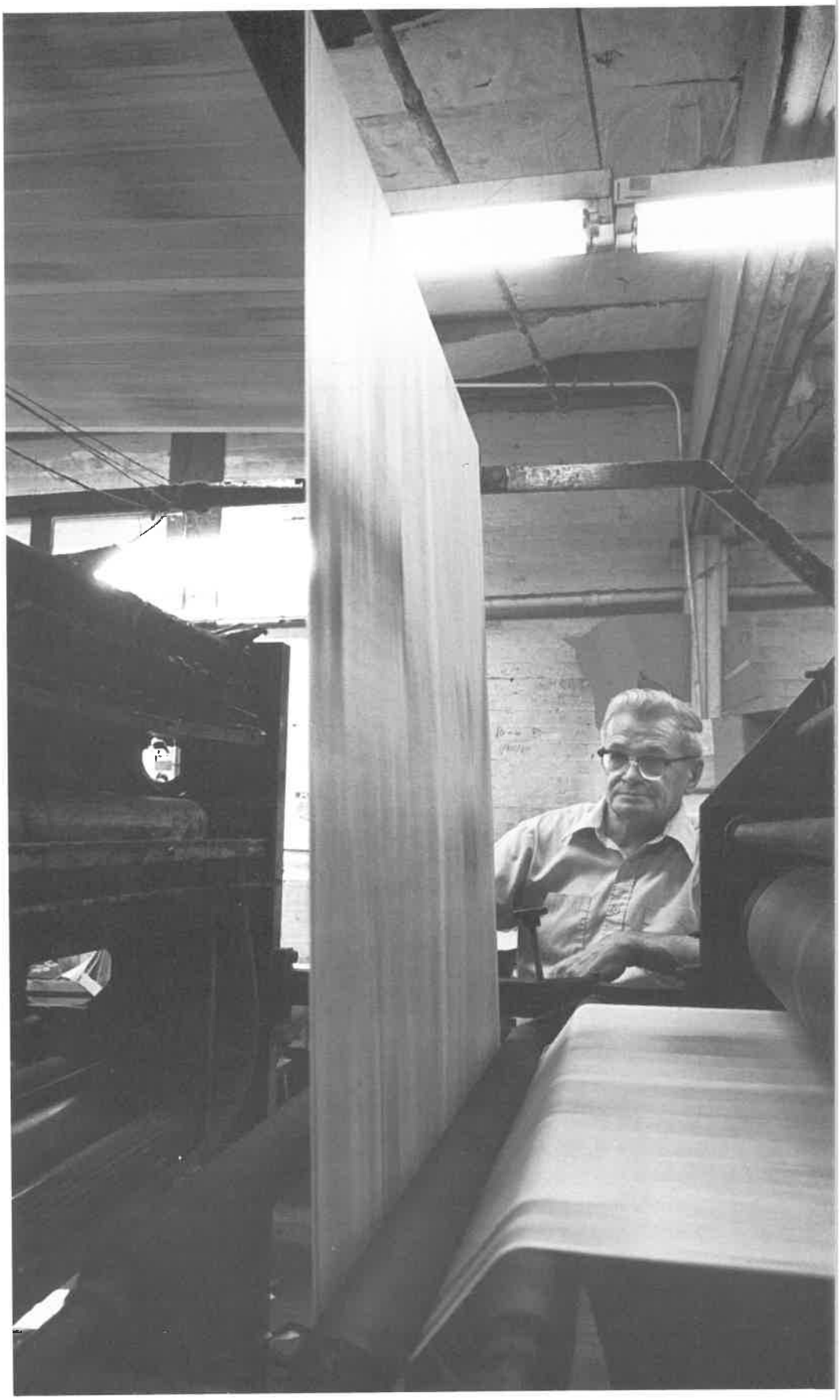
Sam's dad, his Aunt Bess, and Aunt Gertrude had each put in about 60 years with the *Echo* before they retired. There has always been a family environment at the newspaper, which seems to encourage other people to stay as well. Andra Shaw has worked her entire life at the paper. Charlie Walton, with 31 years at the *Echo*, is the fourth Walton boy to work at the newspaper. His mother worked there, and his wife Marian has worked at the paper off and on for 20 years. "Our daughter had a paper route for seven years, and our son for six years," Marian adds. Charlie is a printer, reporter, and photographer, and particularly enjoys the latter work.

Roy Leach joined the *Echo* staff in 1941, the year they did the special 50th anniversary edition on October 30th. Roy says, "I do just about everything at the *Echo*, except reporting." Eileen Clark has been with the newspaper for 20 years. "The *Echo's* a good place to work," she says. "It's local news and people enjoy reading it. I have a daughter who moved to Tennessee and I send the *Echo* to her, because she misses it."

Rounding out the loyal staff at the *Echo* are Betty Stephens, who takes care of the mailroom, and Alleah Fahey, with seven years at the paper. The younger generation, Steve Walker and Brian Sambuco, work after school and summers, and Virginia Frey Parker helps out as a part-time worker.

The boss himself normally puts in a 16-hour day. He claims he has so much energy due to his mile run every morning. "That makes all the difference," Sam says. "You feel like doing something." He's careful about his diet and avoids sweets.

Sam's interests, outside work, are varied, and he approaches each with enthusiasm. He likes to go birdwatching with the Brooks Bird Club in Wheeling. On Sundays, Sam is usually out hiking or biking. "I belong to a Wheeling area club, the 'Hoof and Mouth Hiking Club.' It's named that way because every time Shaw opens his mouth, he puts his hoof in it. There's supposed to be 20 or 30 on



Roy Leach has watched the presses roll at the *Echo* since 1941. "I do just about everything except reporting," he says.

the mailing list, but if we get four or five to actually hoof, that's good."

The editor is also a musician and belongs to the American Recorder Society in Pittsburgh. Once a month, members get together to play their recorders, a simple wind instrument. Sam remembers going to one of the governor's inaugural balls in Charleston and seeing a lady sitting in the lobby playing the recorder. "Shakespeare mentions the recorder in his writing," he adds.

Sam attends the Wheeling Symphony concerts in season, and attends Friday-night rehearsals as a member of the Ohio Valley Chorale. He belongs to a computer club in Pittsburgh. In the winter, he skis. "If nothing else," says Sam, "there's gym classes twice a week, and volleyball. You ought to try to play volleyball with trifocal glasses."

He runs in foot races, too. "The first race I ever ran was ten years ago, the Moundsville Community Day Run. I won two trophies — one for being the oldest runner, and the other

Above: Tom Moore gets the news to the subscribers on time.
Below: The *Echo* has learned a few things about doing business over the years.

for being the fastest in the over-60 age group. As a matter of fact, I was the only runner over 60."

"You know," offers Sam, "one time as I crossed the finish line of a foot race, someone yelled, 'Sam, you're an inspiration to us.' I come in last almost always. But I ran in the Great Race in Pittsburgh with 13,000 people and I told myself, 'I can't be last with all these people,' One of the most beautiful sights there, is to cross the finish line and count 300 people behind you."

Sam wrote glowingly of his mother at her death, recalling Irena Cockayne Shaw as one never concerned with "what everybody is talking about at the minute, but seeing the things that have lasting worth in them." Friends think Sam Shaw carries on his mother's vision in this regard. Sam may more likely view himself in the fiesty tradition of his father and his grandfather, putting out an independent newspaper as he sees fit — or "unbiased and unbossed," as he says.

Tom Barney's First Job

The Hardware Man of Berkeley Springs

By Cliff and Bea Hackett

Photographs by Paul Brown

When Varnell "Tom" Barney was 16, he took a job "for a week or two" at Hunter's Hardware Store in Berkeley Springs, the Morgan County seat. The owners — R. Hunter and his son, W. Jack — liked Tom, partly because he was a local boy and partly for his knack with machinery. Sixty-eight years later, Tom is still working at Hunter's every day. It's the only job he ever really had.

Today, Tom Barney still has a knack for machines. He gives advice on plumbing problems, calculates heat loss and furnace size for new heating systems, and generally watches over things. He has finished two lifetimes of work at one store and still finds challenges and humor in his life. And he's still at the heart of things that happen in Berkeley Springs.

"When I was a kid I repaired bicycles," Tom says. "I had a little bicycle shop. Mostly for the kids. Small scale — wasn't anything fancy. Maybe I'd work half a day on a bike and charge five or ten cents. I did that while I was in school.

"A lot of times in the summer I'd work in the canning factory," he adds. "There were a lot of canning factories in Berkeley Springs then, and there was one right on that back lot where I lived. They farmed their own tomatoes and bought them from others, too. When I was a kid I dropped cans in the chute for the packing machines, filled them up, and got five cents an hour — for ten hours a day.

Hunter's Hardware and Varnell "Tom" Barney have been together for longer than most West Virginians have been alive. He began working there in 1920.

The store was already an old and established institution when this photograph was made in the late 1920's. Tom Barney stands between brother Albert (left) and Tom Morgret. Photographer unknown.

"There were some mechanical things I could take on at the cannery, electrical stuff," Tom continues. "Of course, there wasn't that much electrical back then. One motor operated the whole works. I'd have to go up there and put fuses in, or check out the motor or something. I was just a kid, but I had a gift for things like that."

Born in 1904 in Berkeley Springs, Tom Barney grew up in a town that still had dirt streets, little electricity and few automobiles. The prosperous had a horse or two, the majority walked. One of nine children, with his father a farmer who lived in town, Tom left school at 15. As he says, he worked summers at one of the two dozen tomato canneries which made Berkeley Springs famous a half-century ago. (Two centuries ago, it was already well known to George Washington for another reason, but more of that later.)

Tom went to the district schools in the area. "There was Bath district and Capon district," he recalls. "They had their own schools. Rock Gap and Cherry Run — they were different districts and had their schools. I went to North Berkeley, and later to the high school for Bath district. There were no buses then. We walked even if the snow was *that* deep. The school closed only if the boiler broke down.

"I played on the North Berkeley baseball team. We'd play maybe the Mt. Wesleyan team — that was the old Bath district high school, back where the senior center is now on the hill. Whoever'd win would chase the other team home."

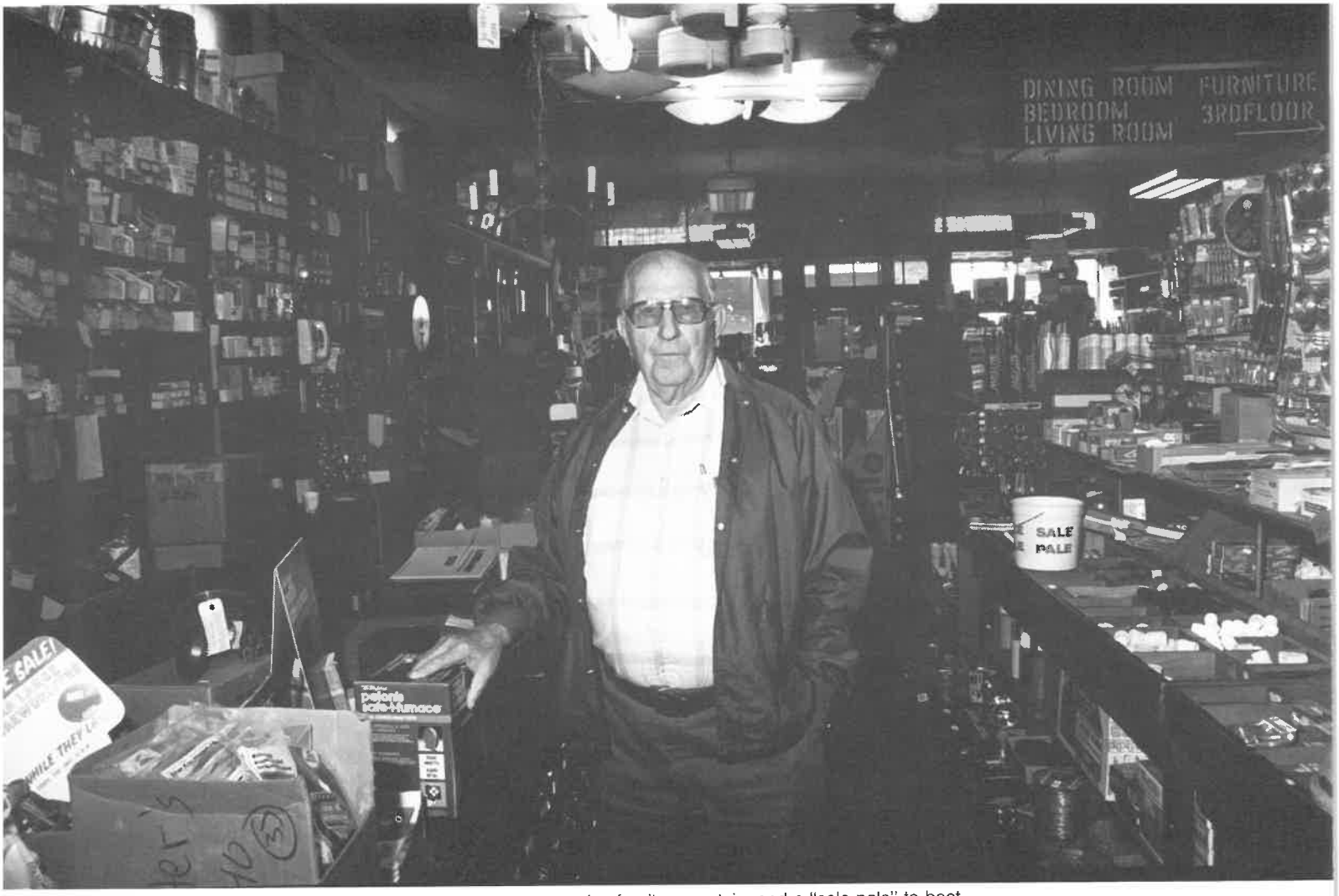
The day in 1920 that Tom took his "temporary" job, he had met W. Jack Hunter as he walked through the alley behind Hunter's Hardware. Tom had left school the year before. The Hunters knew Varnell Barney and his family from the Francis Asbury Methodist Church, which both families attended. Jack Hunter was Tom's Sunday school teacher. So it was not a completely unknown young man to whom old Mr. Hunter addressed the question: "Boy, what are you doing?"

"Nothing," was Tom's honest reply. It was probably the last time he could ever give that answer.

After cleaning up part of the store, the job he was hired for, the new employee began helping in other ways. Not only was Tom good with machinery, he was also orderly. "Old Man Hunter saw that," he says today. "He knew where everything was, and if you didn't put something back where it belonged, he really got after you."

"R. Hunter, the old man, lived in the corner house near the store," Tom continues. "W. Jack, his son, owned these properties, where Hunter's Hardware is now. They were the implement sheds and warehouses. The store catered to mostly farming folks. It depended on farming and the sand mine. But Berkeley Springs wasn't exactly a farm town then. It was a resort.

"My father worked for J. Phillips, the cannery, but we lived in town.



Hunter's has the usual wide selection of a good hardware store, plus furniture upstairs and a "sale pale" to boot.

Phillips had their stables in the town; where part of the hardware store is now was their workhorse stables. They operated out of there, in the back of the store.

"We carried plows and got some new things for horses and buggies," he says of the hardware business. "The farmers would come into town to buy a new harness or something. They'd bring their butter and eggs to the market and they'd stop by for fertilizer or whatever they needed. They'd go off to supper and come back to get their horse and buggy with the new harness. It was like they drove off with a new car.

"My job was setting up plows, buggies, binders, and mowers. Hunter's stocked more farm equipment than hardware in those days. I got 75 cents a day. And I always got paid for 40 hours a week, if you could call it 40. We started at 6:30 in the morning till 11:00 at night. Men from the sand mine would stop by to talk. They didn't buy much but they kept you there until late."

Tom began helping with the plumbing business. He went with salesmen to sell and set up cream separators and gasoline-powered Maytag washers for farmers who lived a long way out. Eventually, he headed a team of plumbers and helpers who traveled north into Pennsylvania and south into Virginia for Hunter's. In 1928 he went to refrigeration school and learned what a bright young man could of the complexities of this new system of cooling food and buildings with a liquefied gas.

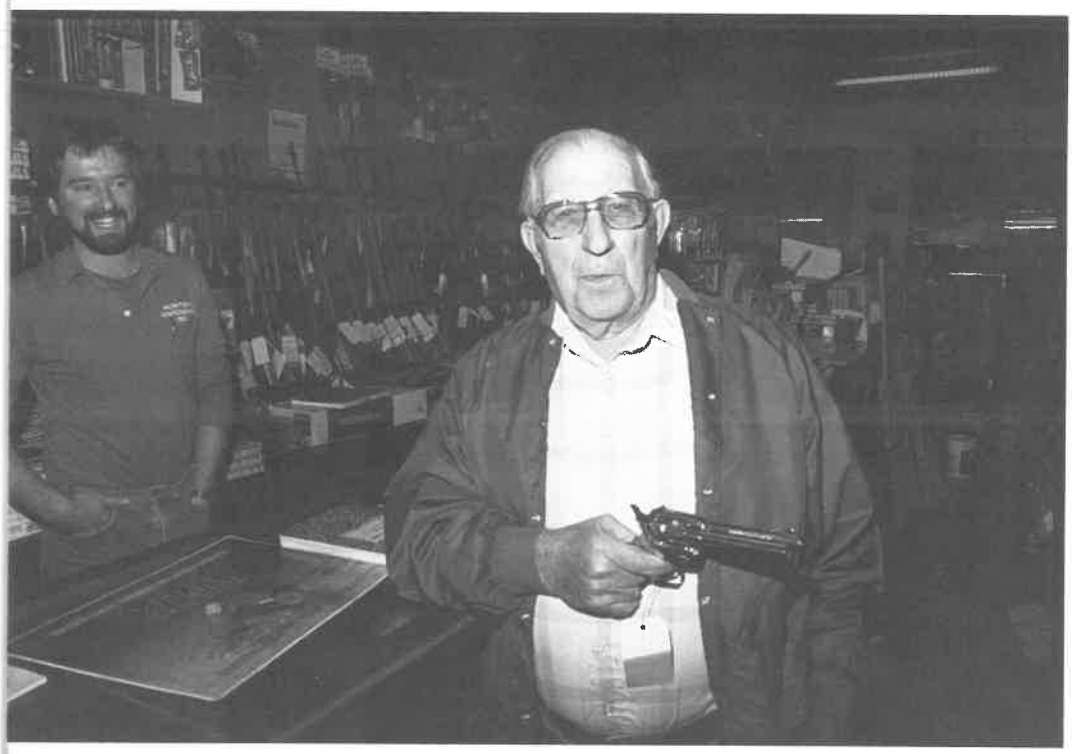
"We did plumbing, heating, and hardware," Tom reports. "Hunter's would take care of everything for you. Sell the equipment, install it, and repair it.

"Nobody else around here can do the estimates. I learned right here. Experience. I had to learn about BTU's. They only sent me to one place to learn, refrigeration school in '28. Refrigeration was just coming in then. I picked up everything else along the way. Plumbing and heating work is bigger now than it used to be. But we don't stretch out like we used to. We don't go to Romney anymore. We used to go and stay weeks at a time, but not now.

"Old W. Jack, it took him three or four sheets of paper to figure out a job — to figure out the heat loss, the glass. You know, measure the glass, multiply by 300, divide by 600, add your mother's age, all that stuff. I can just go through that pretty easy. I could explain it all in two minutes but nobody would really understand. Fifteen hundred square feet? I know that will be a 310 job. That will do the trick."

Tom says that if he'd "worked it right" he could have been part owner of Hunter's by now. But he doesn't think he'd like to run the business. "A lot of headaches," he says. "It takes a lot of money to operate this place."

He had other opportunities as well. Other companies in town knew that Tom Barney was good with his hands. The local sand mine offered him a job as foreman looking after the machin-



You will find hardware of the other kind at Hunter's, as well. Danny Davison keeps a watchful eye on the store's senior employee.

ery, but he preferred to stay where he was.

Besides two-thirds of a century installing and tinkering with the machinery throughout the area, Tom has been active in town affairs. He was mayor for several years and the elected chief of the volunteer fire company. He was also justice of the peace. Sometimes he was all three at once.

And sometimes, he says with a chuckle, it didn't seem quite right to have all those jobs at the same time — for instance, the time of the strike in the early 1950's. There was a factory in town just after the Second World War which made milk coolers and farm refrigerators. When the owners resisted having a union among the workers, a bitter strike ensued. Thirty-eight strikers went into the tiny Morgan County jail in one day for blocking the plant entrance.

"We had the town police, the state police and the sheriff bringing them in," Barney recalls. "I was the trial judge as well as the mayor," he continues. "As mayor, I had to supervise the police, then decide, because I was the police judge, if the police had done the right thing in making the arrests.

"Even worse," Barney said, "the strikers were mostly my friends and neighbors. I had to lay $11,000 in fines that night, mostly on people I knew." But the union appealed the fines and no money ever changed hands. That was probably best for Tom's relations with the small community.

Over the years, Berkeley Springs — or, technically speaking, Bath, the town government's official name — grew accustomed to relying on Tom Barney's good judgment and experience. Elected mayor twice, he could see the job might become permanent. Like working at Hunter's. One lifetime job was enough for Tom, so he did a drastic thing. He bought some land and built a house just outside the town line to make himself ineligible for reelection. "Cost me $15,000 to get rid of that job as mayor," Tom laughs.

The town has certainly changed since Tom first opened his eyes there in 1904. "There weren't any paved streets in Berkeley Springs when I was growing up, just mud and dirt," he says.

"There was a bridge in Hancock below the big one there now. It washed out in '36. There was a five-cent toll to walk across it. We used to walk in the middle because we were afraid to fall off. There was a dirt road at either end and wagons coming in. But there was already train service to Hancock then — a branch of the B&O on the West Virginia side of the river, and on the other side was the Western Maryland line. There was a stage route to Berkeley Springs from Sir John's Run, down the mountain." The river Tom speaks of is the North Branch of the Potomac, and Hancock, on the Maryland side, is the major town in the area.

"People used to talk about George Washington visiting the baths here," Tom notes. Indeed Washington had visited the area in 1748 when he was an 18-year-old surveyor for Lord Fairfax, his benefactor and neighbor in eastern Virginia. Washington liked the area, starting with the friendly Indians who led him to the warm springs. After the Revolutionary War, he came back to Berkeley Springs. Friends and followers were attracted to the place where the war hero chose to spend his summers. A town was laid out around a central square which enclosed the springs. Washington built a summer house overlooking the square. It burned down only five years before Tom Barney was born.

The historic town's fortunes have been up and down a few times, but Berkeley Springs seems to be on a peaceful plateau these days. After George Washington and his friends left town in the early 19th century, the area became a sleepy crossroads until the Civil War. Then West Virginia split from the Confederacy, with Morgan County, like neighbors Jefferson and Berkeley to the east, less sympathetic to statehood than some other areas farther into the mountains. The Eastern Panhandle looked a little more to the Maryland and Virginia piedmont areas for its direction. The Civil War and its aftermath split families here. The wounds have healed, but there are still some scars if you look carefully into family histories and town memories.

Some years after that divisive and bloody conflict, Berkeley Springs had a revival which lasted until late in the 19th century. Several resort hotels were built for visitors from Baltimore and Washington. There was, according to local accounts, some wild liv-

ing in them. Dancing and gambling were known to occur, but most of this had quieted down by the time Tom Barney was born. The hotels were still there, but there were now more boarding houses and vacation homes.

"Around 1910 to 1912, people used to come here a lot," Tom says. "Some even had summer homes here. Some lived in the rooming houses. They would come with their whole families and colored help from Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia. When they arrived in town it was like a big circus. They stayed all summer. My boss used to play in a band at the hotel where the Country Inn is now. He said it was like a little Reno with gambling. Us kids, we would go over to the lower spring. It wasn't closed off then like it is now. We'd have a stick with a wire on it and a cup. We'd dip up a cup, and give it to people and get a tip.

"Growing up, I don't remember that it was a wild town. I was too young maybe. First thing that sticks in my mind was in 1912. There was a big fire that winter and the bakery and all those buildings caught on fire. There were big barns with horses in them. Everybody packed up and got out then."

One of the last of the big hotels burned down in 1954. Eventually a bank was built on the site. Today, a number of bed-and-breakfast inns and one quality hotel exist just off the main square, which is now a state park. Cacapon State Park is nine miles south of town and draws many visitors to its fine golf course, handsome lodge and cabins. But Berkeley Springs is a quiet place and Tom Barney would like to see a little more enterprise and development.

Tom thinks his town has been too slow to respond to progress. Berkeley Springs needs to have its corporate limits extended, the former mayor thinks, to increase the tax base and provide better services. Then traffic should be routed more conveniently so that folks coming to the annual Apple Butter Festival in October, for example, don't mix with the 18-wheelers which use U.S. 522 right through the downtown area.

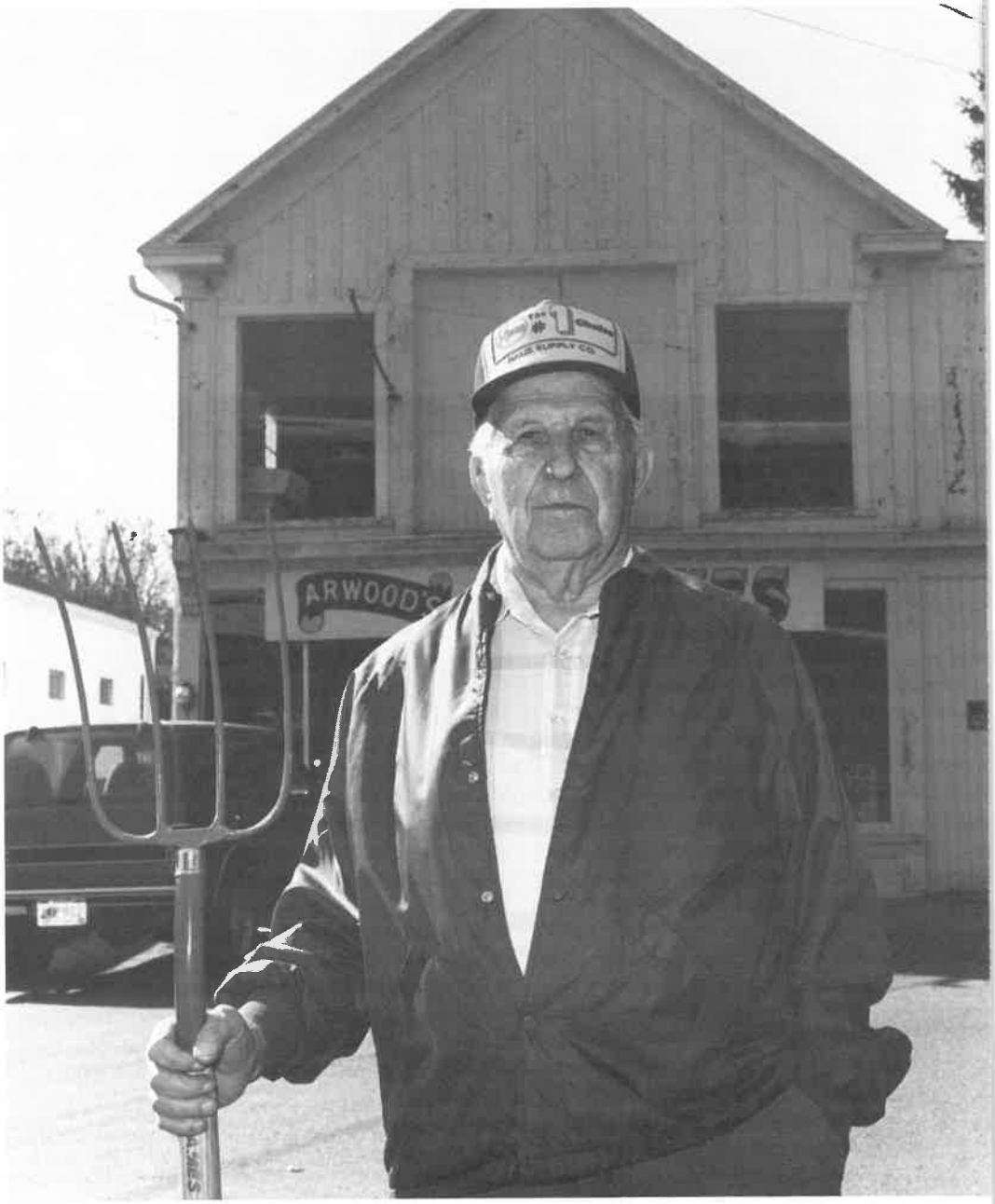
Most of Barney's childhood friends are gone now. But two brothers and a sister, all younger than Tom, still live in the area. Tom and his wife Daisy have been married since June 9, 1922, and had three boys and a girl. The oldest son died in France in the war. Another was a state policeman but now works in Weirton, and a third is a printer with a newspaper in Washington. The daughter lives in Berkeley Springs. Tom and Daisy have four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Tom and Daisy like to travel — but just a little. Mostly they like Berkeley Springs. They have been to Nags Head, North Carolina, a few times. And to Florida to see Disney World. Otherwise, they stay close to home, although they still drive their Oldsmobile out of town occasionally.

Tom Barney, age 84, still loves his hometown. Most of all he likes the people, especially those he can help around the store. When something has to be found in the store, or a tricky plumbing or heating problem arises, Tom is the first one people turn to at Hunter's Hardware.

When you stop in the store, ask for Tom. He has no plans to retire. "I'm too old for that," he says. ♣

Tom Barney can stand proud in the streets of Berkeley Springs. He has served his town in several public offices and throughout a long working career.



The telephone cordboard was a woman's world. Here Esther Conaway oversees the work of operators at the Fairmont toll board in 1946. Photographer unknown; all historic photos courtesy C&P Telephone of West Virginia.

Women at Work

Veteran Telephone Operators Look Back

By Jeri Matheney

Operators traditionally have been the voice of the telephone. They've been a part of phone service here since telephones first came to West Virginia in 1880. For a good chunk of that time, Mildred "Peggie" Blevins of Logan was one of the women who provided cheerful service on the other end of the line. Now retired from C&P, she swears she came along right after Alexander Graham Bell, who invented the telephone in 1876.

"I remember filling out my first voucher. There was a line on there for horse feed, and I thought, what do they have horse feed listed for? I soon found out that when they set new poles, they sometimes used mules and horses to pull the poles and the line over the hills," Blevins said.

Blevins recalls that the phone company had a Model T Ford, "sort of a pickup truck," that the installers used in the town of Logan. "The repairman would sometimes ride a bicycle along the railroad tracks because they were in much better condition than the roads," she added.

Blevins had no plans to join the phone company when she graduated from high school in 1928. "I wanted a job so that I could save money for college," she said. "The Great Depression was coming and things were very shaky, but my ambition was to be a lawyer. My father said I had all the qualifications: I out-talked every-

one in the family and I was the biggest liar he'd ever met."

Despite the consternation of her parents, Blevins accepted a job as an operator with the C&P Telephone Company of West Virginia in 1929. "In those days operators were sometimes looked at askance. Women just didn't work. They were supposed to stay in the home 24 hours a day."

Blevins's independence opened the door for a 35-year career with the phone company that included many years in "traffic," as the operator services department was known. After a few years as an operator, she was promoted to chief operator.

"Back then everything was different. When I started we had the old magneto service. The phones had those cranks on them. I've got the one from the old Guyan Valley Bank building in my basement. I remember it was Number Five, that was the phone number on that phone," Blevins said. "That's when everybody in Logan knew everybody else's business, 'cause they'd just listen in on the line.

"Then they went to common battery, where you'd just pick up your receiver at home and a light would go on at the switchboard. I've got one of those sets, too. First colored set in Logan. It's red. I got it converted to dial when Logan went to dial in 1959." Until that time, even local calls passed through the telephone operators, who made manual connections through cord switchboards.

Though telephone equipment changed throughout Blevins's career, technology has brought even more rapid change since she retired. "I always said I'd like to come back for just one day so I could work under microwave," she said of modern wireless transmission by microwave signals. "That fascinates me. No phone wire at all! And, what do you call it, fiber optics? Such tiny cables, and so many messages on one little wire."

Much has changed, but much about working as an operator has stayed the same according to veterans of the business. "The spirit of service. We lived by that code," said Muriel Fitzgerald of Charleston. Fitzgerald retired from C&P in 1982 with 41 years, most of it as an operator or chief operator.

"The Spirit of Service" was a painting depicting the blizzard of 1888, with telephone lineman Angus MacDonald braving the storm to restore phone service along the New York-Boston-Maine line. Though the storm happened a hundred years ago, the painting is famous among phone workers, and prints of it can be found in almost any telephone office.

"No matter what happened, there was never a harsh word for any customer," Fitzgerald said. "And, of course, we gave out special services, like the time, too." Blevins echoed, "Back in those days, a customer would come on the line and say, 'Hello, Myrt, give me the time.'"

In addition to courtesy, operators had other codes of behavior to follow. Confidentiality was a major consideration. "What we learned about members of the community because of our operator duties was never revealed. And we did learn a lot, because we might have to call the hospital or the doctor for someone. And of course we had all the numbers memorized, so we knew just who called whom," Fitzgerald said.

Blevins added, "I used to have my mother drill me on people's phone numbers while we were doing the dishes at night. When I met people on the street, their phone numbers would come to me quicker than their names. I'd think, 'Oh, there's 719.' But I'd never let on."

Operators also followed a dress code, Fitzgerald said. "We all knew to wear dresses and stockings. Of course, ladies didn't wear pants then, anyway." Old photos of operators show that they did, indeed, follow this code: Rows of operators with neat hair, sensible shoes and stockings with seams, line the old cord boards.

Supervisors like Peggie Blevins enforced the code. "I'll never forget the first time I had to reprimand someone," Blevins said. "I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep for days after that. And you know what the girl had done? She wore socks with her dress, not stockings. I had to send her home to change."

In those days a pay-phone call required special attention. Pay calls were timed by the operator, according to Fitzgerald. "When you saw a red light on your board instead of a white lamp, you knew it was a pay station," she said. "You knew to time the customer — they got five minutes for five cents, then you told them to complete their call or deposit another nickel."

"Of course, we had certain phraseology that we used. We would say, 'Your time is up,' and so on," Blevins said. "I remember a new operator I had working for me one time. She was so worried about timing a pay call that came in that she stared at that red light the whole time. Other people were trying to get a call through but she just ignored them.

"Finally, the five minutes were up and she jumped back on that line and shouted, 'YOUR TIME HAS COME!' at the top of her lungs. It just vibrated in the office, and we were all hysterical."

Peggie Blevins sits by part of her collection of telephone paraphernalia, the old Number Five phone from Guyan Valley Bank. Photo by Greg Clark.

Telephone employees were inspired by the "Spirit of Service" painting, depicting a lineman braving an 1888 blizzard. "We lived by that code," Muriel Fitzgerald says.

Operators in those days were an important part of the community, Fitzgerald said. "We represented the town and we represented the company. So we were treated with respect and we respected those we dealt with." Fitzgerald, who joined C&P as an operator in the St. Albans office in 1939, remembers feeling the weight of that responsibility when she was a new employee.

"I worked night relief at first, and at night the operator had the responsibility of sounding the fire alarm for the City of St. Albans. Oh my, I remember the excitement of my first alarm. I reached up and I blew that alarm and I blew it and I blew it, until finally the volunteer fire fighters started calling in to ask me where the fire was, and I breathed a sigh of relief that my part of it was over."

Fitzgerald said that operators helped in other emergencies as well, contacting the police for customers or talking to police officers when they would call in to find out what was going on in her Kanawha River town.

Blevins felt the responsibilities of the job in a different way. "If you were late three minutes it went against your service record," she said. "I didn't want to be late. So when I would walk to work there were many times that I'd climb onto those railroad cars for a short ride, hoping that the engine wouldn't suddenly spurt forward. Just shows you how youth is."

The operators were then paid 25 cents an hour, or $12 for a 48-hour, six-day work week. "I was so proud of my first paycheck," Fitzgerald said. "It was for $6, because I didn't work full-time at first."

Blevins, too, was proud of her first check, so proud that she went out and spent it, instead of saving it for college. "I was flying high. I called my mother and we went out and got fabric for a dress and new shoes, and pie for both of us at a restaurant," she said. "She had coffee with hers, and I had milk, because I wasn't allowed to drink coffee."

Blevins said that even after the shopping spree she had enough left over to pay for the five-cent hot dogs and ten-cent picture shows she loved. It's easy to imagine Peggie Blevins out on the town with money to spend, sharing her new-found wealth and stories of the office with anyone who would listen. She is an outgoing, talkative woman who enjoys everything she does. She seems a model of the old-time telephone operator as we like to remember her — always ready with a joke or a sympathetic ear.

Yet the warm and caring Fitzgerald, with her soft-spoken voice and

The two-person Gassaway switchboard was typical of small-town West Virginia. This picture shows Leonore Wilson and Mary Carr at work in 1929. Photo by W. E. Bollinger.

perfect manners, her appearance so neat you'd swear she still had perfectly straight seams in her stockings, is also the embodiment of the operator as we imagine her. For all the apparent differences in the two women, they have much in common. Both are from St. Albans, both were operators and later chief operators for most of their long careers, and Fitzgerald, too, had a girlhood dream of going to college that was abandoned due to finances.

"I had always stubbornly hung on to the idea of college. After I graduated from high school, I realized there was no way that I could go, so I came home and cried on my bed for a week," she said. "Finally I got up and looked for a job.

"I had no master plan. I just needed a job. It was right after the Depression and times were still hard. I heard of an opening down at the telephone company, so I applied for it and started to work for the company in 1939."

Fitzgerald worked at the St. Albans office. In those days, the company wouldn't hire an operator to work in Charleston, for instance, if she lived a few miles away in St. Albans. It wasn't considered safe or seemly for young women to travel such a distance to work.

"The office was located on Main Street, or what is now Main Plaza, up over Martin Drug Store," Fitzgerald recalled. "It was a small office. Just five positions and eight operators. Since I was the last hired, I was Number Eight. It was very crowded. The five operator positions, the chief operator's desk, the plant wire chief's desk, and of course, all the plant equipment in one room — and we're not talking about a large room."

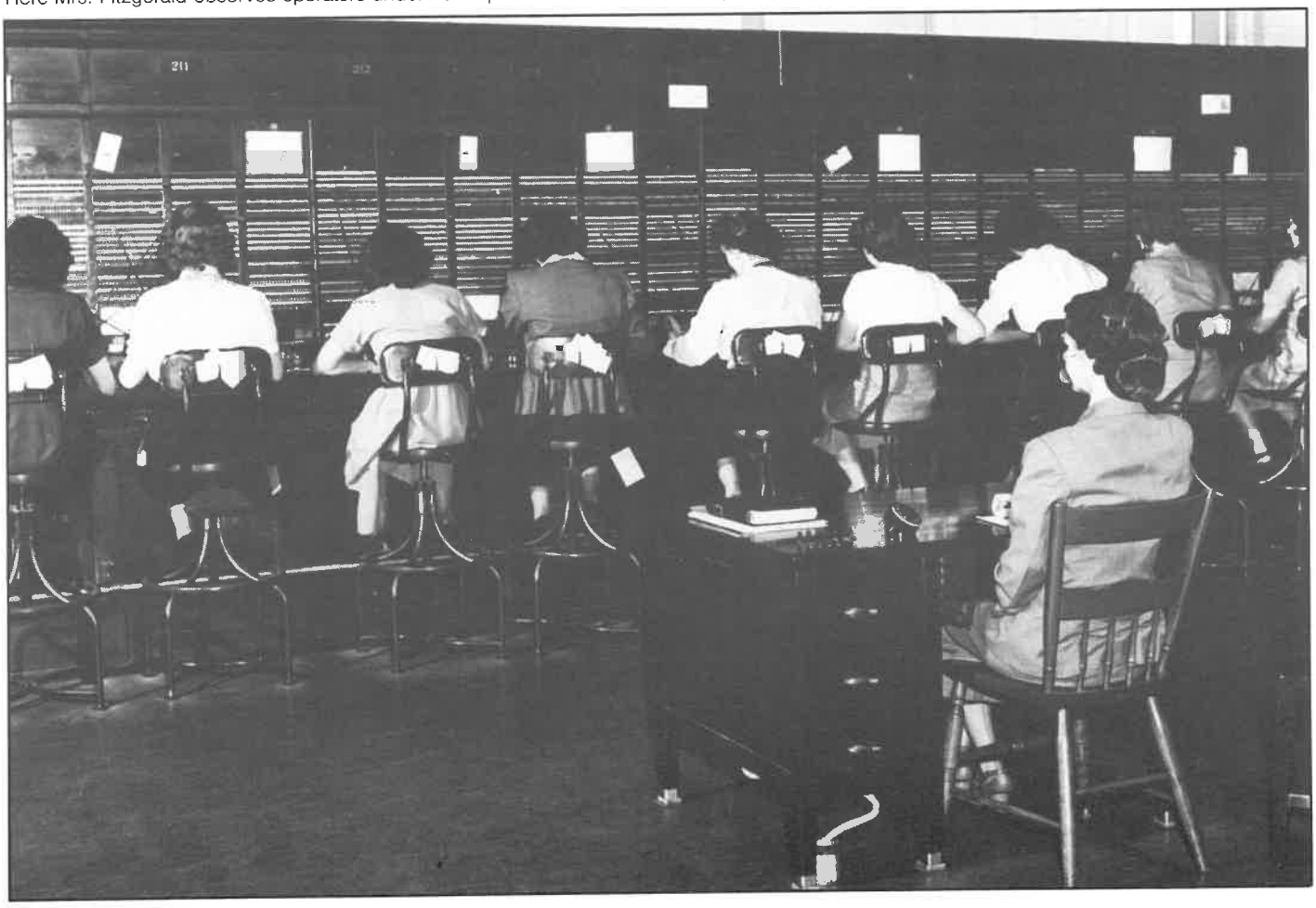
In small towns, it was customary in those days to recognize telephone operators with a little something at Christmas. "Local businesses and other customers would give us small gifts of appreciation, and we were permitted to keep them. They were not elaborate, maybe a box of candy, perfume, or hosiery," Fitzgerald said. "When I was in Nitro, I remember this turkey farm sent all the operators a half-turkey. When we did away with the very small offices, that custom fell by the wayside."

Time off was one thing the operators didn't get for Christmas. "Now Christmas, of course, was a day that everyone had to work," Fitzgerald said. "I went 21 years without Christmas Day off. Long distance calls were manually handled long after people started dialing local calls themselves. It was always a madhouse.

"To call long distance, we would ring manually through the Charleston trunk, then go maybe manually to Pittsburgh. We would verbally pass the call through four or more additional operators before reaching where we were going."

The Depression that kept Blevins and Fitzgerald from going to college affected the telephone company, as it did all businesses. Line growth

Here Mrs. Fitzgerald observes operators under her supervision at the Lee Street, Charleston, office in 1952. Photographer unknown.



Above: Operators took their leisure in the employee lounge at breaktime. These women relax by the radio at the Charleston office. Photographer unknown, 1946.

Below: Muriel Fitzgerald reached out and touched people from telephone offices throughout the state. She now enjoys a busy retirement in Charleston. Photo by Greg Clark.

slowed, then stopped, and by 1931 was going down as people had their phone lines disconnected. By 1932, C&P had only 100,000 telephones in the state, down from 126,000 in 1925. But by the time Fitzgerald began work in 1939, things were beginning to look up. By 1940, the company served about 150,000 customer lines. World War II brought even busier times.

Blevins, who worked almost her entire career in Logan, left town during the war to accept a special assignment in Newport News, Virginia. "The last thing the boys did before they went overseas was call home, and first thing they did when they got back was call home, so it was a very busy place," she said. "That was one of my most fascinating assignments."

Fitzgerald also remembers the war, especially the ending. "I'll never forget the day that World War II ended. We were part of sharing the joy and the tears of victory with the entire

Operators served from switchboards big and small. Elta Miller and Oda Pauley made up the entire shift at the Madison office in October 1927. Photo by Bollinger's Studio.

community. Everybody on the force came into work. The switchboards were completely lit up. When we left that day we were exhausted, but there was a joy — deep in your heart you felt the emotion of the community," she said.

"We all knew that we would always remember that joyous celebration. Later, we were all presented with little victory pins to commemorate the day, and I have mine still."

When her husband came back from overseas, Blevins was glad to return home to Logan. There she has stayed through the rest of her work years and since her retirement in 1965. Fitzgerald's career, however, took her all over the state. After a promotion to chief operator in St. Albans, she transferred to nearby Nitro, then Charleston. She worked in Williamson, Morgantown, Elkins, Follansbee, Weirton, Wheeling, Clarksburg, Fairmont, Huntington, Philippi, Point Pleasant and New Martinsville, and traveled to other cities in her work.

"I have wonderful memories from all the places I worked," she said. "In August of 1954 I transferred to Williamson as chief operator. Williamson was a large office then. The coal and railroad industries were very prosperous. It was a different way of life there. I learned to love the people of Williamson. I met and enjoyed many of the Hatfields and many McCoys. As a matter of fact, there was a service assistant in the office who I knew, a McCoy who married a Hatfield."

"But my favorite memory of Williamson was something that happened one afternoon when a dairy company in town was having some sort of celebration," Fitzgerald said.

"We were all at work, since any day of celebration was a busy one for operators. We worked in the upstairs of an old residence. Suddenly I heard heavy footsteps coming up the stairs, and there appeared at the top a tall, dark and handsome man dressed in cowboy boots and a black ten-gallon hat.

"Before I could speak he came up to me and kissed me! It was Duncan Renaldo, the Cisco Kid. He was there for the celebration. He asked me, as chief operator, if he could say hello to the operators. Here again, the operators were a very prominent part of the town. So, he hugged and kissed all the operators and gave them an autographed picture. We all swore that we wouldn't wash our faces, and we kept our promise for a while, too!"

Fitzgerald kept her picture of the Cisco Kid, and she kept her victory pin, but mostly she just kept the memories of her years as an operator. Blevins has the memories of her career and the people she's known through it as well. "I always said I wanted to write a book. I don't have anything written for it yet, but I have the title, *Phony People I Know — Figuratively and Literally!*" she said.

Blevins, however, is also a self-admitted pack rat. Not only does she have a magneto phone and the first colored telephone in Logan, she has the last operator's chair to come out of the Logan office, an old headset and thousands of smaller memorabilia. These, added to her collection of hats, which numbers close to 300, and shoes, about the same in number, make for a home that's more like a museum.

Again, the differences in the two women are apparent. But their common work history has made them lead similar lives. Even today they carry out the spirit of service by which they lived as operators. Both give thousands of hours of their time in volunteer work for their communities.

Though the telephone business has changed dramatically since they started working 49 and 59 years ago, Fitzgerald and Blevins say they see the same dedication to service in today's operators. It is likely that both would be comfortable working with the women and men occupying the operators' chairs today.

"I'll tell you one thing, though," Blevins said. "If I was making an application for employment with the phone company today, I'd say 'no experience.' 'Cause they don't do anything like we did in my time!"

President Leonard Riggleman (center) and Vice-President Ashley Blackwell had the look of destiny as they landed in 1947 to take possession of Morris Harvey College's new riverside campus. Navy Commander Lafferty accompanies them. Special friends joined the official party by invitation only (facing page). Photographer unknown.

A Grand Move

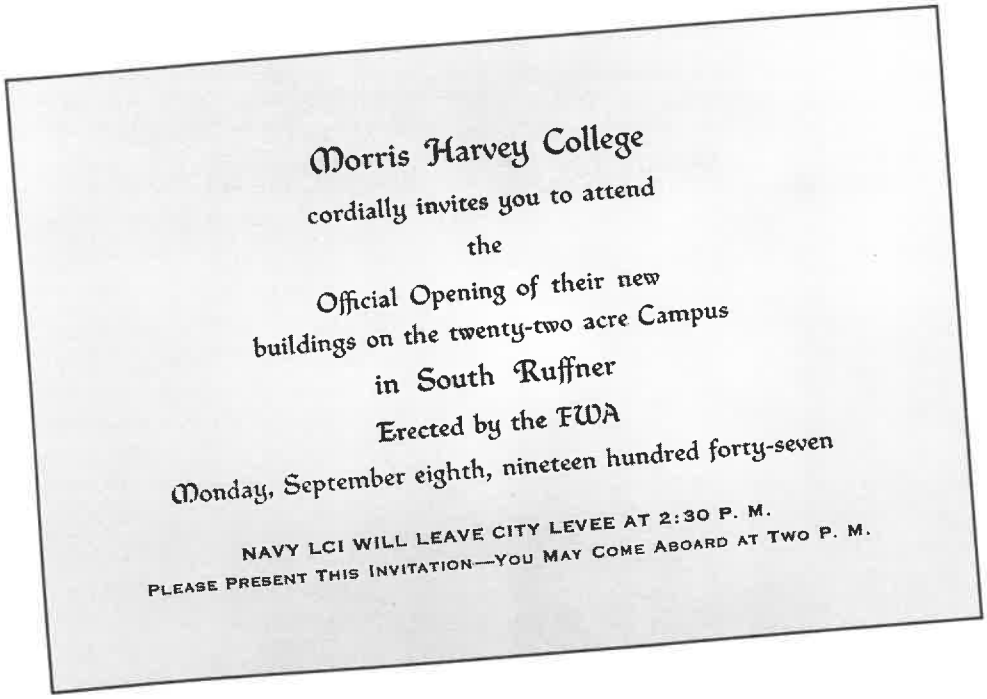
Morris Harvey College Comes to the City

By Helen Carper

Dr. Marshall Buckalew, who became president of Morris Harvey College in 1964, looked back on the big 1935 move from Barboursville to Charleston as one of the greatest moments in the history of his institution.

The president was not exaggerating. In Barboursville, the small, church-supported college had always been overshadowed by the larger and older Marshall College in nearby Huntington. As early as 1896, a move to Charleston was considered as a possible solution to insolvency. The college had not recovered from the depression of 1893, and as fund-raising campaigns failed, the trustees borrowed money to insure operation. A committee was appointed to explore a move to the capital city but did not recommend moving.

In 1902, the college's main benefactor, Fayette County coal man Morris



Harvey, promised the school $100,000 if it would move to Charleston. Plans to buy a vacant hospital building on the outskirts of the city were abandoned when citizens of Charleston questioned the legality of transferring municipal property to the Methodist Church.

In 1924, relocation was again discussed. On June 3, 1925, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce made the college an offer, but negotiations halted in 1926. The Barboursville Chamber of Commerce agreed to raise $100,000 to keep the college at home in Cabell County. Acceptance of the offer by the Western Virginia Methodists in annual conference included a resolution that Barboursville be made the permanent location of Morris Harvey College.

But church promises and college planners reckoned without the crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression. Although enrollment by 1934 was the highest in the history of the small college, it could not pay its debts. The alternatives became starkly clear. "If we go there, we live," said President Leonard Riggleman. "If we stay here, we die."

The Charleston Educational Center was instrumental in luring Morris Harvey College to town. The Center embodied the ideas of Vanderbilt University Professor James E. McCulloch, who advocated the sharing of facilities by independent colleges located in the same general area. Backed by local business leaders, the Charleston Center eventually included Kanawha Junior College and the Mason College of Fine Arts and Music, both later absorbed by Morris Harvey College. The first to accept the Center's invitation was Morris Harvey itself, which made its move in August 1935.

C. Harold Amick was there when it happened. A student at the time and now a valued alumnus, he helped pack up student records, books, furnishings and equipment — items as

Postcard view of the campus Morris Harvey left behind in Barboursville.

large as a piano and as small as a Bunsen burner. When the tangible parts of the college were loaded onto trucks, he or one of the other students helping with the move went along with the load, four hours over bumpy, narrow roads to Charleston.

Like the college, Amick had been dislocated by the Depression. The son of John Adams Amick and Eva B. Herndon Amick, Harold grew up in Clifftop, in the New River Coalfield of Fayette County. His great-grandfather was John Adams Given, a Methodist preacher who rode the Fayette-Raleigh circuit for a number of years. Given was a close friend to Morris Harvey himself, who was more than a friend to the college. Thus the young Amick would have had some knowledge of the school at Barboursville, but he had no plans for higher education.

Above: Harold Amick of Fayette County was among the students who started in Barboursville and graduated in Charleston. This is his senior portrait. Photographer unknown, 1938.

Below: Dr. Frieda Merry joined the faculty just before the big move. She recalls that period as a time of sacrifice and accomplishment. Photo by Greg Clark.

In 1934, Amick was reasonably happy where he was. He had a steady job, ten hours a day, six days a week, in the Number Seven mine of the Babcock Coal, Coke & Lumber Company. His father and grandfather managed the local Babcock operations, and Harold had been working in the mines for three years, starting when he was 15. Two of those years he attended Nuttall High School, working the evening shift after attending classes all day. He was paid $3.37 per day, and though "the air was bad and there was a lot of dust," he wasn't about to leave.

But on Saturday, August 31, 1934, Amick says, he was manning the machines that pumped water from the mine when his "easy street" was jerked out from under him. "The fire boss came and told me, 'Shut the pumps down, take the motor and get the hell out of here. They're waiting to nail the drift mouth shut.'" Number Seven mine was closing down.

The Reverend Frank Plybon, a graduate of Morris Harvey College and minister to Amick's church, encouraged the newly unemployed young miner to go to college, even offering him a ride to the Barboursville campus to look it over. Plybon's car was a Model A Ford and Amick remembers that they had to stop at "every creek and water hole" along the way to add water to the overheated radiator.

It was a six-hour trip from Clifftop to Barboursville. Plybon had ample time to convince the 18-year-old Amick that the college "where the students could work and didn't need very much money" was the best option he had.

With Plybon's endorsement, Amick had no trouble in being admitted and in hiring on. President Riggleman told him to report for the term beginning the next week. Again he would be working while he attended classes. At ten cents an hour the pay was a lot less than miner's wages, and room and board came to $22 per month. "I didn't play much," recalls Amick.

Amick worked under "Pa" Dickinson, who was chef as well as building and construction superintendent.

The young coal miner was surprisingly well trained for the domestic end of his new job. Amick had no sisters and says he had begun helping his mother at an early age. "At six or seven I was helping with the laundry," he says.

His tasks at the college included washing dishes, scrubbing floors, serving tables, helping with receptions and dinners, moving furniture and equipment, mowing grass, feeding and caring for the hogs, and anything else that needed doing. He even became a pretty good "country plumber," he says, and in that role was much in demand. "Boys and girls who grew up in the rural areas didn't seem to understand the operation of modern plumbing," he wryly reports.

Amick learned that going to college really didn't require a lot of money. Bowing to the depressed economy, in 1931 Morris Harvey announced it would accept farm produce in payment of tuition fees. On Saturdays, Amick says, he filled orders from this supply of bartered goods for faculty members and kept an inventory of supplies.

When a 1,000-pound organ had to be moved from the third floor of the administration building to the second floor, Amick rounded up a team of six students to help. He borrowed from his experience in the mines to make the work easier. "We let the organ slide slowly down two-by-eights without a scratch, by scotching it with two-by-four levers," he recalls. "We had moved heavy equipment in the mines with the use of a long crowbar and levers called 'jill-pokes.'"

In May 1935, Amick stayed on to work as students left for vacation and school teachers and preachers flocked in for the summer term. The workday was 12 to 16 hours and he was now paid 25 cents per hour.

When word came in August that the college had four weeks to pack and move, Amick was assigned to help Professor C. Lee Shilliday transfer the biology and botany departments. Amick had already played a vital part in the transition. On the day President Riggleman, Vice-President Blackwell and Dr. Walter Walker were to travel to Charleston to complete the arrangements, Blackwell forgot his briefcase, containing the papers to be signed. He located Amick by phone in the kitchen of Rosa Harvey Hall and asked him to go to his home, get the briefcase, and bring it to the C&O station. "Hurry," urged Blackwell. "The train is due in about five minutes."

Amick says he took every shortcut across town, climbed a hill to the tracks and sprinted from tie to tie to the station. Chasing after the departing train, he passed the briefcase to Blackwell who reached for it from the steps of the last car.

According to Amick, it took 12 days and 18 truckloads to move Morris Harvey College to Charleston. Dr. Frieda Merry, who joined the faculty with her husband, Dr. Ralph V. Merry, in 1934 and retired in 1962, says that some items were still in Barboursville when school opened,

Above: The permanent campus took shape after WW II, as surplus military buildings were moved to the site. The State Capitol looms in the background, across the Kanawha River. Photo by M. F. O'Brien, about 1946.

Below: Grand permanent structures followed the temporary quarters. This shows construction of the west wing of Riggleman Hall. Photographer unknown, 1957 or 1958.

including most of the 15,000-volume library.

The J. L. Birch Transfer Company of Charleston was the mover. The family-owned business, now Birch Moving and Storage, was organized in 1894 by James Leonard Birch and early transfers were made by horse and wagon. Trucks were rolling by the time of the Morris Harvey move, according to grandson James Leroy Birch, now in charge.

"The Morris Harvey move in 1935 was quite likely made by a truck designed by Fisher or a GMC truck," Birch says. "Top speed of either would have been 18 miles per hour." Although the firm now has a modern fleet, the company's trucks probably would have numbered two, certainly no more than four, in 1935, according to Birch. There was a lot of driving back and forth between Charleston and Barboursville.

Asked if the company had any trouble collecting for the move, James Leroy Birch replies that he never heard anything about it if it did. Amick says he doesn't know how the bill was paid. But Dr. Merry knows. "Most of the money that paid for the move came out of the teachers' salaries," says the retired professor. "The college didn't pay full salary to summer school faculty." She adds that Roy Birch, James Leroy's father, moved the college at very low cost. Thomas Lee Birch, representing the new generation in the family firm, is a recent graduate of the institution his grandfather moved to Charleston.

"I think the administrators had a lot of courage to try to establish a school here when things were so bad," says Merry. It took a while for things to settle down, she recalls. "I was teaching an education course in math, and the blackboard was placed on chairs until a more permanent arrangement could be made."

Since the college was not moved onto a campus but initially into buildings scattered across downtown Charleston, the move was a complicated one. A list of everything that went onto a truck, with instructions as to where it was to be delivered,

From Seminary to University: The First Century

The University of Charleston, known for most of its history as Morris Harvey College, is celebrating its 100th year. The founders were circuit-riding Methodist preachers who dreamed and worked for a school to educate boys and girls in the mountainous regions where they ministered. This year the university remembers those founders, and the dedicated men and women who came after them, who believed in the institution and prayed and sacrificed to insure its survival.

Surely those who governed and taught at the original Barboursville Seminary must have wondered if their school would last one year, much less a century. In the beginning, it was housed in hastily converted quarters. Barboursville had lost the Cabell County seat to Huntington, leaving an empty courthouse, a jail, and room to expand on vacant lots. With the loss of the trade county government had brought to town, there were also plenty of sites of faltering businesses.

The Methodists had lost a previous school. Earlier efforts to provide church-supported education included a collaboration with Presbyterians and Episcopalians for the establishment of Marshall Academy (later Marshall College, now Marshall University) in 1837. The affiliation was a casualty of the Civil War and Marshall became a tax-supported state teachers' school when that conflict was over.

But the Methodists had not lost their concern for education. Historian Frank Krebs writes that "the itinerant Methodist ministers felt that they had a 'duty to posterity, to their country, and to God' to help the cause of education." Meanwhile, Barboursville was looking for a school. The town and the church joined forces when the Southern District of the Methodist Church South accepted Barboursville's invitation to establish a school there.

Before the doors of Barboursville Seminary could open in September 1888, the town had to be swept clean to accommodate the Christian students who would be living there. The two saloons had to go. The founders had only a summer to prepare, but on schedule, September 12, the town was spotless, the old courthouse was ready for administration offices and classrooms, and the young men were settling into the former jail and the young ladies into the Blume Hotel.

A name change occurred almost at once. Barboursville Seminary is referred to as Barboursville College in bylaws adopted in 1889. That same year, the Charleston District Conference of Southern Methodists transferred ownership to the denomination's Western Virginia Conference.

While the school became increasingly important to the life of the town, to the state's Southern Methodists, and to the lives of the young people of the region, money was an ever-present problem. Administration and faculty salaries were difficult to meet, and in its first 12 years the institution had seven presidents. Enrollment and contributions rose and fell with the general economy, and in bad times the trustees borrowed money.

It was not until 1900 that the college began to prosper. That was largely due to the election of veteran educator D. W. Shaw to the presidency and to the support of two generous benefactors, Morris and Rosa Harvey of Fayette County. The Harveys helped the college to pay its debts and balance its budget. The sum donated is not reliably known, but it was substantial enough that in 1901 the grateful institution changed

was given to the member of the work crew who accompanied the lot. Most loads went to the old Capitol Annex Building on Lee Street. The Kanawha County Library occupied the first floor, but the Morris Harvey administration offices and the departments of history, political science, language, mathematics, biology and physics were on the upper floors, Amick relates. There was a laboratory in the basement.

The music and art departments went to Broad Street. The second floor of George's Beanery, a large restaurant that stood where the main Charleston post office is now located on Lee Street, was to be used as a stockroom and some men students lodged there. St. Marks Methodist Church, Charleston High School, Mercer Junior High School, and the YMCA and YWCA all opened their doors to the newcomers, providing classrooms, an auditorium, a chapel and gymnasiums. Dr. Merry adds that they used an old courtroom for a library, and as enrollment grew, rented space from Fruth School.

"Reaching the designated building, we would unload the truck," says Amick. "Then we would eat from bags of sandwiches and fruit brought with us, get back on the truck and grab some sleep on the return trip."

Back in Barboursville, members of the work crew would go to the dorm for a shower and then on to the kitchen for a meal. Immediately after eating, they would pack another lunch, get on loaded trucks and start back to Charleston. "The trip and unloading took about ten hours for each load," says Amick. "I don't think we broke or destroyed or lost anything. Everything was well packed, you see."

That was a very good thing, since the property being moved no longer, in a strict sense, belonged to the college. The Columbus Mutual Life Insurance Company had been pledged the assets as surety against loans. The Bank of Milton lent the college money to redeem the assets, and they were leased on an annual

its name to Morris Harvey College.

The nine-year tenure of President Shaw was a time of expansion and stability, interrupted by a depression in 1907 that halted progress and led to retrenchment. Recovery began in 1909 and dormant building plans were reactivated. Indebtedness kept pace with expansion, and by 1920 the college was again in dire straits.

But hopes were high and remained so until the crash of 1929 and its aftermath. A building program financed by pledges, donations, and borrowings left the college more than $280,000 in debt in 1934. On July 12, 1935, the school's trustees faced up to their predicament, reluctantly approving when President Leonard Riggleman advocated moving to Charleston.

At first, Morris Harvey College occupied temporary quarters in downtown Charleston. A search for a permanent campus began with the move and culminated in the purchase in 1940 of 12 acres from the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. The college paid $47,000 for the land, which is directly across the Kanawha River from the State Capitol. Early in 1941, ten adjoining acres were added to it. Over the years other adjacent properties have been acquired, and the riverside campus now encompasses some 38 acres.

By 1942, debts acquired before 1935 had been reduced to $15,000, but the institution faced a different kind of crisis. Unification of the Methodist Church in West Virginia led to a proposal to merge Morris Harvey College with the denomination's West Virginia Wesleyan College at Buckhannon. Morris Harvey officials asked for disaffiliation instead, and the Methodists gave the growing college its independence.

Morris Harvey College adjusted its program to the realities of World War II and put its plans to move to the new campus on hold. In 1946, the war over, temporary barracks-type buildings arrived on the South Ruffner property, and the college built a cafeteria and snack bar. After a ceremonial crossing of the Kanawha, the college took possession of its campus in time for the fall term of 1947. Krebs writes of the arrival, "President Riggleman said, 'Although our buildings are only temporary, our landing is permanent. Moving a college twice in a lifetime is enough. We are here to stay.'" Permanent buildings followed, with the cornerstone for the main building, aptly named Riggleman Hall, laid in 1950.

While landings and buildings may be permanent, names are not. In December 1978, President Thomas Voss announced another name change for the institution. It would be known as the University of Charleston, with some programs changed and graduate degrees introduced.

It was left to Dr. Richard Breslin, president of the university from 1984 to 1988, to achieve many of the goals Voss announced for the new university. The Breslin administration paid off debts, raised faculty pay, opened a new computer center, established new graduate programs, and improved the campus. Former Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates, Lewis N. McManus, succeeded Breslin. President McManus, a Morris Harvey graduate, heads a private, independent, liberal arts institution that is proud to remember the past as it moves into its second century.

— Helen Carper

Mr. Amick thinks the college did the right thing in moving to the city. He helped with the transfer, was president of his graduating class, and now is a valued alumnus. Photo by Greg Clark.

basis to Riggleman and his vice-president, Ashley Blackwell, to operate the college in Charleston. The complicated arrangements reflected the severity of Morris Harvey's financial plight, but nonetheless classes opened on schedule on Wednesday, September 11, 1935.

A faded newspaper clipping from Dr. Merry's scrapbook chronicles President Riggleman's view of the move: "It merely means," he said, "that we are changing our home, and that we have the same equipment, same instructors and same academic status that we have enjoyed in Barboursville."

There were plenty of differences apparent to students. Amick says he was excited about the move and believed "the college took the only course open to it." But there were negatives, he admits. He missed the small Cabell County campus and the togetherness of the students, faculty and staff there. "In Charleston, campus life was completely gone," he notes.

Some missed campus life more than others. Looking back on the move decades later, Claude Ramsey, one of the freshmen who enrolled in Barboursville in 1934 and graduated in Charleston in 1938, writes, "In Charleston the enthusiasm was gone." He cites the loss of familiar campus landmarks, and of the school yearbook to hard times. "Life became serious," Ramsey concludes.

Students had more freedom in the new environment and there were fewer regulations. Church fathers were determined that the young people who came to Barboursville under their care would not be exposed to corrupting influences. "The duties of every day are begun with reading the Scriptures, prayers and singing," a turn-of-the-century college catalog read. Social activities were circumscribed and behavior was expected to conform to a strict code. Rules of conduct were absent from the 1937 Charleston catalog and students were encouraged but not required to attend chapel.

Economically, the move paid dividends right away. Enrollment increased from 545 the last year in Barboursville to 1,391 the first year in Charleston. With classes scattered all over downtown, students had to schedule carefully in order to get from one class to another on time.

Amick, for one, is sure the benefits of a city education outweighed the disadvantages. "We met so many wonderful people up here," he reports. He still obviously treasures youthful friendships with such Charleston legends as A. W. Cox, Wherle Geary, O. J. Morrison, Herb Campbell, and Sooey Brotherton.

"I could go into Mr. Geary's office and sit down and talk with him," Amick says of the noted civic and business leader. He recalls some advice given to him in one of these talks. "Don't ever go into a businessman's office without a briefcase," he says Geary told him. "It might not have anything in it, but it will hold his attention. He doesn't know if you're selling or collecting, and he'll wonder as long as you're in there what you've got in that briefcase."

Asked if he still follows that advice, Amick laughs and says, "You saw the briefcase I came in with, didn't you?"

He once lived in merchant A. W. Cox's house for about two months, Amick says. While Cox and his wife were away in California, he and Raleigh Jimison looked after the Cox house in the 1500 block of Virginia Street. "We had no parties, no visitors. He could trust us completely."

Amick met famed local locksmith Raeburn Judy when Riggleman asked him to work with someone to change or repair locks in the old Capitol Annex. Amick says he was amazed to see Judy open a large walk-in vault in two minutes. "We became fast friends and remained so until Judy's death in 1987," he reports.

Dr. Merry had warm words for one of the college's new friends. "The first few months were hectic, but Mr. Campbell, who was on the Board of Trustees of St. Marks Church, was a savior. He helped the teachers get their salary problems straightened out." Grocer Brotherton conspired with Amick to rid the Capitol Annex of rats and pigeons.

The college's big move was 53 years ago, and students and faculty themselves move on. Amick was graduated from Morris Harvey College in 1938, spent 44 years with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, and in his retirement is now active in alumni affairs at his alma mater. Widowed and living alone, Dr. Merry, from her house near the campus and the vantage point of 91 years, keeps an eye on the institution she and her husband believed in and worked for. The college is now the University of Charleston, and it is not only alive but healthy.

From the beginning, although there were some rough moments, the school fared better financially in Charleston. In 1937, President Leonard Riggleman reported that for the first time in eight years all of the salaries and other expenses of the college had been paid regularly. The Charleston Educational Center ceased to carry on an active program in 1937 and its properties and buildings fell to Morris Harvey College.

Book value of the college assets at the time of the move is given by one source as $6,000. Today, the university campus is a Charleston landmark and worth millions. It continues to provide quality education to students for increasingly complex occupations. No one can put a value on the school's cultural contribution to Charleston or on Charleston's support of the school, but no one doubts the wisdom that brought the city and college together. As Frieda Merry says, "It was a grand move."

Nest Eggs

Glass Egg Manufacturing in Marion County

By Arthur C. Prichard

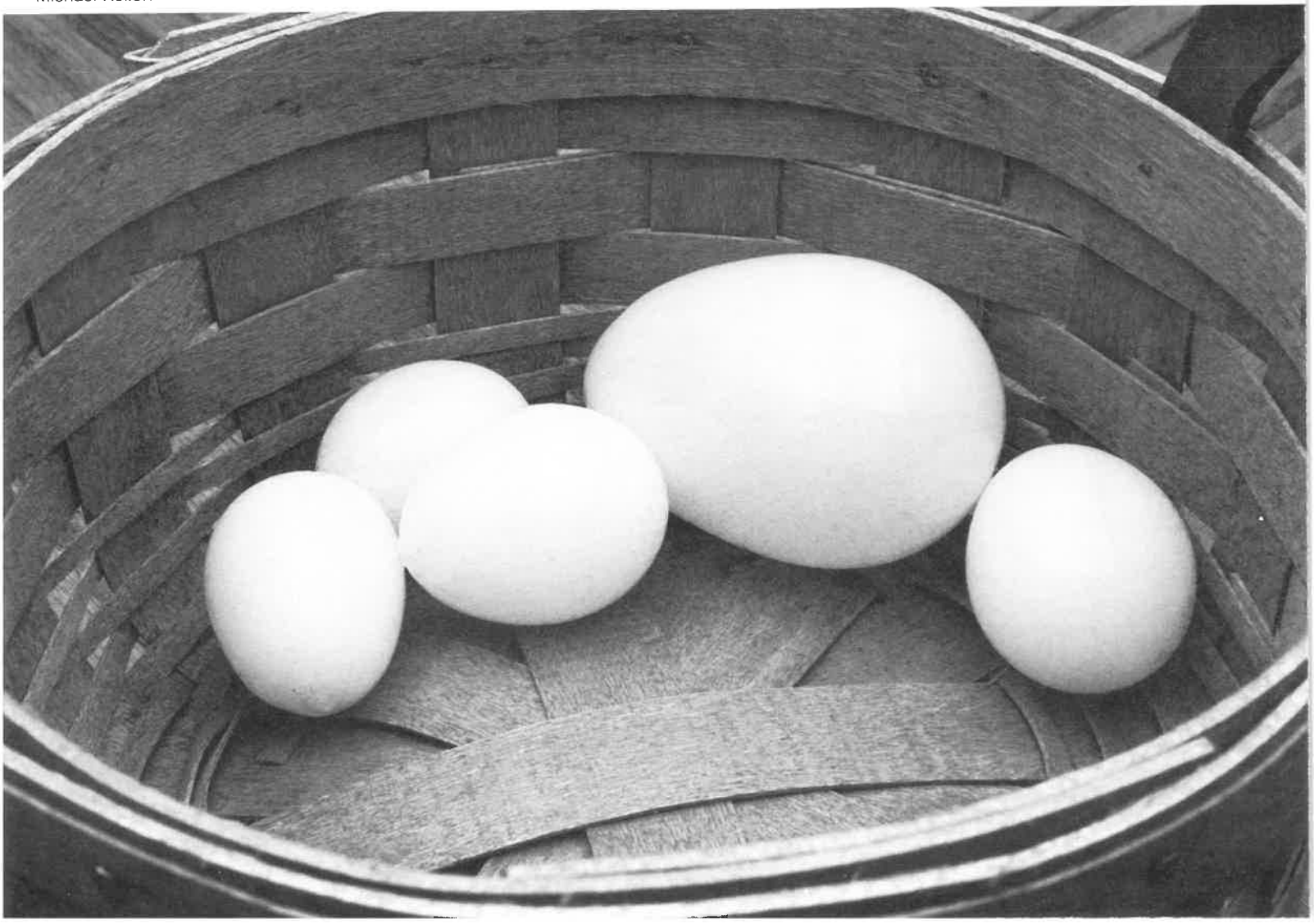
Deception was the basis for an industry which once flourished in Marion County. The product was glass nest eggs, meant to entice chickens into laying the real thing in proper nests in hen houses or barns, rather than just anyplace outdoors. Chicken owners, by putting one or two glass eggs into a nest, tried to fool the hen into thinking her peers had already chosen that nest as a good place to lay eggs. The idea worked, each chicken evidently reasoning, "What is good enough for my sisters is good enough for me."

In the early years of the 20th century several speciality glass manufacturing plants in Fairmont and Mannington contributed to the hoax. The eggs they made were of white or opal glass, mostly the size of chicken eggs. The speciality glass plants made a variety of other articles, some producing blown and others pressed ware, but they gave much attention to the production of eggs. In the days when farmers and townspeople alike kept chickens there was a large market throughout the United States.

Frank Hentzy was one of the first to go into the business. A French glassblower who had labored at his trade in his native country and in Belgium, Hentzy set up a little glassmaking shop along the Monongahela River in Fairmont in the late 1890's. He called it the Fairmont Art Glass Company.

The company remained in business until 1970. During this period it occupied three different sites. A fire destroyed the first plant, and Hentzy moved to a new building on the east side of the river. In 1939 Fairmont Art Glass moved again, going to another

These antique nest eggs are leftover souvenirs of the Marion County speciality glass industry. The small ones are pigeon eggs. Photo by Michael Keller.



Speciality glass was primarily an Italian immigrant industry. Anthony Pacilio, shown here with wife Catherine, was one of the pioneers. Photographer and date unknown.

new building, this time on Bright Street. Hentzy's sons, George and Donald, learned glass blowing and worked with their father. Daughter Agnes, who managed the business details of the company for many years, married Nick Romano, a glassblower. Romano eventually ran the company.

The Fairmont Art Glass Company made such articles as bottles, pitchers, bowls, glasses, vases, and salt shakers, as well as nest eggs. According to Eugene DeVito, who worked there, the company manufactured only free-blown glass, making no pressed ware.

The Hentzys were not the only ones making glass eggs. Early in the 1900's a small building suitable for housing a glass plant was erected in the Homewood Addition of Mannington. The *Fairmont West Virginian* of July 27, 1907, carried this news from Mannington: "It is not generally known, but it is a fact nevertheless, that we have an egg factory in this city. It has been here for some time and is running full time and cannot supply the demand for its product. They manufacture glass nest eggs which are now used all over the country."

Although court records and newspapers lead one to believe the Mannington egg-making partners were A. DeLesia and C. Ciccarilla, actually they were DeLesia and Pasquale Viggiano. For some reason, Pasquale put the property in his wife's maiden name, Carmella Ciccarilla.

Pasquale and Carmella had come to America from Italy, where in Santa Marta, a town near Naples, Pasquale had gone to work at the age of eight in a glass plant as an apprentice. "Only rich children went to school," son Joseph Viggiano says of his father's foreign upbringing. "Dad was in school only a short time and learned to read Italian from the writing on the toilet walls in the factory. He later learned to read and write English."

The company was named the Mannington Art Glass Company. The *Pittsburgh Dispatch* reported that the organization manufactured "opal glass eggs, glassware for gas fixtures, and other special novelties to suit individual purchasers."

Joseph Viggiano writes, "My father was in partnership with DeLesia until 1909 when they split up. My father started his own factory up the railroad track toward Mannington from the pottery owned by a Mr. Bowers. About every spring the river would rise over the track and flood the factory." Joseph notes that his father's main product was the glass egg. "He started making a few novelties in white glass, none of which was a great seller," he added.

"When his five-year lease ran out in 1914, Mr. Bowers would not renew it because, I believe, he wanted the field for a large glass factory that was to be built there. So Dad found the ideal location in Shinnston, high above the West Fork River," Joseph reports. He adds that his father "dismantled the factory board by board, brick by brick, and hauled it by railroad car to Shinnston, and rebuilt the factory. It grew into an $80,000 factory by 1925."

According to Joseph, the Viggiano plant burned in March 1929, and the $22,500 his father received from the fire insurance was insufficient for him to rebuild. "That and the crash of 1929 cooked our goose," says Joseph.

In 1919 DeLesia sold the Mannington Art Glass works, in which Jo-

seph's father had been a partner until 1909, to Anthony Pacilio. Anthony also had learned to make glass in Italy. After marrying, he and his wife Catherine moved to Columbus, Ohio, where he worked at his trade. Hearing that a small glass plant in Mannington was for sale, he investigated and bought the DeLesia operation.

"We made many glass nest eggs which we shipped all over the country," says Pacilio's daughter Minnie, who still lives in Mannington. "We produced Easter eggs and some other decorated eggs, globes for gas lights and egg cups. In addition, we produced pressed glassware — powder boxes, jewel boxes, handkerchief boxes for ladies, cups and saucers." Pressed ware was sent to Hagerstown, Maryland, to be decorated and returned, Minnie says.

She notes that the local glass plants worked together. "When we received orders too big for us to fill in the required time, we got additional eggs from Romano. He was very cooperative. We helped each other."

In the late 1920's Pacilio closed the plant near the creek and built a smaller one across from his home on Third Street, where he continued making eggs. Madelyn Carpenter Lake, moving into a house nearby, said that on her first day in the new location she heard noises coming from the building, clanging sounds "as if people were washing dishes." She asked a neighbor if it was a restaurant and learned she had moved next to an egg factory.

Among those who worked for Mannington Art Glass were Charlie Stafford, Corley Kuhn, Jack Fortney and Arnold Hart. Mrs. Stafford says Charlie told her he began working in one of the glass plants in Mannington when he was 12 years old, and that he was so small he had to stand on a box to do the work.

Arnold Hart, now a Baptist minister, says, "As a young fellow I did all kinds of work for Pacilio's company. My first job was to help him move his plant from the old location by the creek to Third Street. I later learned to work as a gatherer and as a glassblower. Pacilio was a good man."

About midway through World War II Anthony Pacilio closed the Mannington Art Glass plant. His sons Nino and Andrew were in the armed services, and Anthony thought it was a good time to retire.

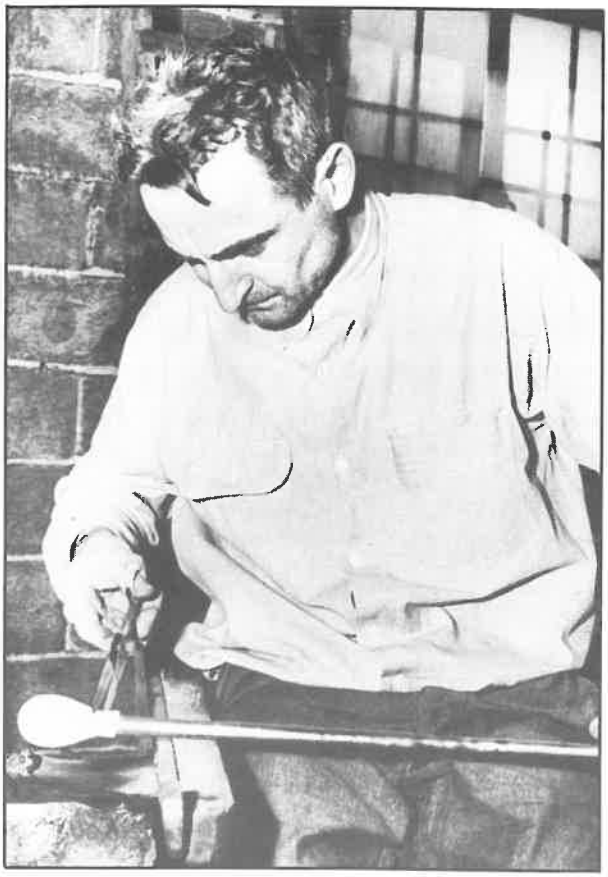
Madelyn Oliverio says her father, Luigi Oliverio, came to this country in 1913 when he was 18 years old. After laboring at several different jobs, he worked in a glass plant. In 1923 he went into business for himself, starting the Opal Glass Company in Fairmont, where he made glass eggs.

Seven years later Luigi, Frank Greco, and Israel Merlin bought the Columbia Glass Company in the same city, and widened the line of products, making both hand-blown and pressed glass. Two years later Luigi bought out his partners and changed the firm's name to the Commercial Glass Company. He continued to operate both Opal Glass and the Commercial Glass Company out of one plant, located at 1033 Indiana Avenue, until his death in 1961.

"My father in his 38 years in the business made a very large amount of glass," says Madelyn. "At times he had three shifts of workers, with as many as 60 on his payroll. I was connected with his operation for a considerable length of time. Other members of our family also worked for Dad."

All the plants followed the same basic steps in creating their product. Making the raw glass came first. Special sand, containing silica, and an alkaline such as lime, potash or carbonate of soda, were mixed together. This mixture was put in a pot of clay

Nest egg factories were not meant to be fancy. This is the second plant of Fairmont Art Glass, founded by Frank Hentzy in the 1890's. Son Donald Hentzy sits by the door in this photo from about 1918. Photographer unknown.



Left: Molten glass was first blown into an egg shape. This is George Hentzy at work at the Fairmont Art Glass Company. Photographer unknown, 1953.

Above: Once blown to shape, the egg was snipped off with waxed scissors. Donald Hentzy demonstrates here. Photographer unknown, 1953.

and then heated in an oven at a high temperature until the ingredients melted, forming thick, molten glass.

A hollow iron rod was inserted into the oven and a glob of hot glass was gathered on the end. Then the glassblower blew air into the other end of the pipe, causing the glass to expand. He turned the pipe as he blew to form the glass into the shape of an egg. After waving the pipe to speed up cooling, he cut the egg free from the blowpipe with scissors, which had been greased with beeswax.

A team of two, a gatherer and a blower, could make several eggs a minute. Often they exchanged jobs every 20 or 30 minutes, the gatherer becoming the blower and his partner the gatherer. Thus spelling each other off, they could continue producing eggs rapidly all day.

The eggs were inspected for flaws and the good ones packed. Minnie Pacilio Roberty tells how they did it at the Mannington Art Glass Company. "We packed eggs in cardboard boxes, generally 144 eggs in a box, and in barrels. Many of the barrels we got from George Bowers, who had the pottery nearby. He sold father used barrels for 25 cents apiece. Material for his pottery came in the barrels. We packed our ware in straw. It was good to protect the glass, but it wasn't good for my father, who was allergic to it. Straw gave him hay fever."

The eggs were shipped several different ways. Some small orders went by mail. For instance, an order book of the Fairmont Art Glass Company shows that in 1955 one gross of glass nesting eggs was mailed to the Howes Drugstore, Parkersburg, with postage costing 59 cents and insurance a dime.

Many eggs were shipped by rail freight as the railroads could handle large or small amounts, a full boxcar or a barrel. Some plants sent as much as a carload at a time. The distance of a plant from the freight office was an important factor, especially in the horse-and-wagon and early truck eras. When Pasquale Viggiano sought a new site for his plant, he selected one across from a railroad siding in Shinnston. It simplified his shipping problem.

At times when the Fairmont Art Glass Company received a large order from the West Coast, it freighted the glass to the East Coast and then put it on board a ship going west via the Panama Canal. This was less expensive than shipping all the way by railroad.

A wide variety of commercial establishments bought nest eggs from Marion County: chain stores, five-and-ten stores, department stores, general merchandisers, hardware stores, seed companies, feed stores, poultry companies, drugstores and others. F. W. Woolworth, S. S. Kresge, and Belnap Hardware Stores were among the customers of the

The Glass Working Class

At the turn of the century, European craftsmen and laborers immigrated by the thousands to West Virginia. They worked the coal mines and elsewhere in the labor force. The glass industry enjoyed the support of many of these immigrant workers. Italian artisans worked in speciality glass making, creating products such as the glass eggs described in the adjoining story. Belgian immigrants provided the essential core of skilled workers in basic glassmaking, supplying trained craftsmen for window glass production and other key segments of the industry.

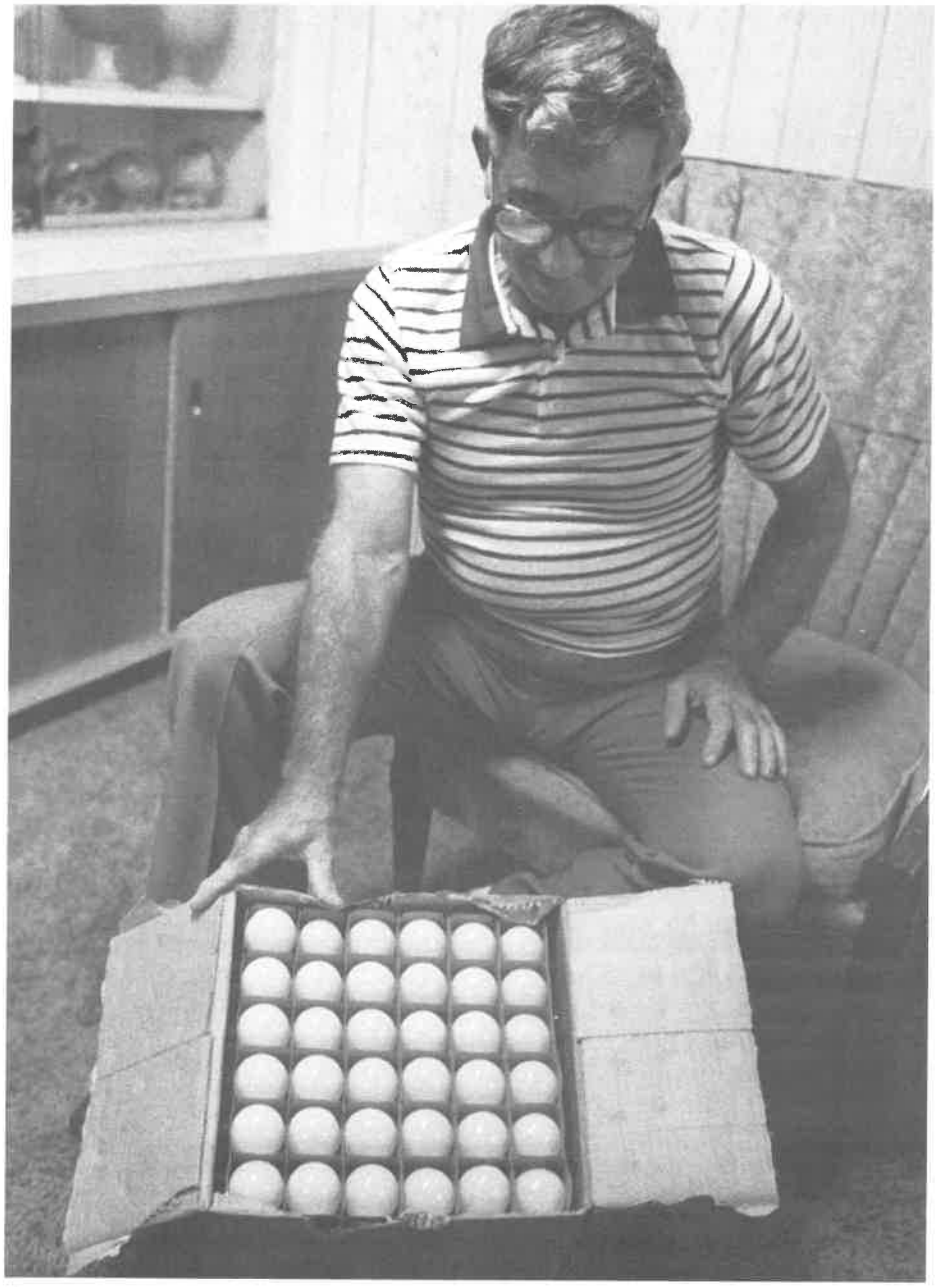
Cinder Heads in the Hills: The Belgian Window Glass Workers of West Virginia, by labor historian Frederick A. Barkey, tells the story of the highly-skilled Belgians. Barkey describes the Belgians at work "in the intense heat of ovens that turned molten materials into sheets of window glass. A job so hot it earned them the nickname of cinder heads."

Cinder Heads in the Hills is a compilation of photographs, interviews, and research detailing the Belgians' contribution to the window glass industry in West Virginia. The immigrant artisans were drawn to communities in Harrison, Monongalia, Marion, and Kanawha counties.

Many Belgians moved to South Charleston to establish the Banner Window Glass Company, discussed in a 1975 GOLDENSEAL story by Barkey. In his book, Dr. Barkey expands his explanation of the lives of the Belgian window glass workers, including their ethnic solidarity, their dedication to trade unionism and worker ownership, and finally the changes they endured with advancing technology.

Cinder Heads in the Hills was published by the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia. The 40-page softcover book may be bought from Dr. Fred Barkey, West Virginia College of Graduate Studies, Institute, WV 25112; (304) 768-9711. The cost is $6, including postage and handling; West Virginia residents should add 6% sales tax. The book may be borrowed from libraries or from the Humanities Foundation, P.O. Box 204, Institute, WV 25112.

Eugene DeVito (right) assists glassblower Nick Romano at Fairmont Art Glass. Two good workers could produce 2,000 eggs a day. Photographer unknown, 1953.



Marion County nest eggs came by the carton — or the train carload. Here Eugene DeVito shows off a gross he saved from the old days. Photo by Michael Keller.

Fairmont Art Glass Company, for example.

Luigi Oliverio sold eggs to some of the same customers and also to McCrory and G. C. Murphy. He sold other products to H. J. Heinz, Lea and Perrins, and Owens-Illinois. Potential buyers learned of Oliverio's wares by reading the *Glass Factory Directory* and the *American Glass Review*, annual publications which listed his companies along with other glass manufacturers. He also distributed a small catalog and sold through sales representatives in New York and Chicago. Much business came to him, and to the other Marion County speciality glass companies, by mail. Rush orders arrived by telegram.

Pasquale Viggiano used several methods to secure customers. Getting from Dun and Bradstreet publications the names of businesses which might buy his glass, he contacted them. He particularly solicited the five-and-ten and other chain stores.

When Viggiano enlarged his plant after World War I and increased the variety of products he manufactured, particularly expanding his line of pet bird supplies, he began displaying his wares at the glass shows in Madison Square Garden and the New York Armory. Joseph Viggiano tells of representing his father's business at one of those shows when he was only 19 years old, and of getting the largest contract the company ever had. It was from a Connecticut bird cage company, for 200 gross of birdseed cups a month.

According to Joseph, the amount received by some glassmakers for nest eggs was less than one cent apiece shortly after the turn of the century. This is in line with the 1906 Sears, Roebuck catalog, which advertised "Opal Nest Eggs," touted as being "perfectly formed, clear and light," for two cents each. This retail price had to cover the cost of manufacturing and shipping, as well as Sears's profit on the egg.

The Fairmont Art Glass Company's records show it sold eggs for $3 to $3.50 a gross (144 eggs) in 1948 and 1949, and for $3.50 to $4 in 1959. Oliverio was charging $3.50 a gross in the 1940's.

Owners of the little glass plants found it difficult to pay high wages for the making of eggs which brought such low prices in the competitive market. That fact partly accounts for the ethnic make-up of the industry.

Belgian and French glassworkers had arrived ahead of the Italians and entrenched themselves in the window glass and bottle unions. Italian glassworkers later had difficulty getting into those unions and took lower-paying jobs in the speciality shops. Maybe that was a major reason for Marion County nest egg makers being largely Italians: Pasquale Viggiano, Anthony Pacilio, Luigi Oliverio, A. DeLesia, Nick Romano, and Eugene DeVito. The exceptions were Frank Hentzy and his sons, who were French.

As the immigrants established their own shops, they hired other workers, also initially at low pay. F. L. Rogers, now an Ohio veterinarian, recalls that as a youth working as an unskilled laborer in a Mannington glass egg plant, he was paid seven cents an hour.

Skilled workers did better than that. Mrs. Charles Stafford says her late husband received a weekly check of $16 to $20 for five and a half days work as a glassblower in a Mannington egg plant in the 1920's. Joseph Viggiano writes, "A good shop of two blowers could produce 2,000 or more eggs in a nine-hour day, for which they each were paid about $5. That was when general labor made $2 or $3 a day — before World War I." He says that about 1921, after his father had enlarged and improved his plant and diversified his products, he sought out good union workers and paid them $60 to $70 a week.

Not all the eggs made by Marion County plants were chicken eggs. A market for glass pigeon eggs also developed. Stores selling supplies to pigeon owners bought such eggs. They were also used in target practice for small arms. When World War II began, Anthony Pacilio was asked to supply glass pigeon eggs for Uncle Sam. "My father," says Minnie Pacilio Roberty, "made these by the thousands for the Navy to be used in target practice."

Local glassmakers also produced eggs other than those for the poultry business. Some were ornaments, made for Easter or to decorate Christmas trees. Local glass plants also made egg-shaped containers: jewelry boxes, powder cases, and the like.

The egg makers formed only a small part of a larger glass industry that expanded rapidly in West Virginia in the 1890's and the early 1900's. Many manufacturers of window glass, tableware, bottles and other glass products came on the scene. Some were new organizations, while others had moved in from Indiana, Ohio, and elsewhere. They came because natural gas had been discovered in the Mountain State and was cheap. The state also had plenty of good silica glass sand and the limestone needed to remove impurities in silica sand.

This rapid increase of glassmaking facilities at the turn of the century was not the beginning of the industry in the state, only the enlargement of it. A government report of 1810 listed a glass plant in Wheeling. In 1813 Isaac Duval, N. Carl and John Carl built a glass furnace in Wellsburg, farther up the Northern Panhandle in Brooke County. Nine years later George Crothers moved a glass plant to Wheeling. John Ritchie and Jesse Wheat in 1829 erected a little plant in Wheeling beside a hill which had a seam of coal.

The upper Ohio region offered a good market for glass products. Not only were settlers moving into the area, but a far larger number of people were traveling overland via this gateway to the West and South. Reaching the Ohio River, many stayed awhile to provision themselves for the rest of their journey. Glass products, especially bottles, sold well in Wheeling and nearby villages.

Egg production was never more than a small part of the overall glass business. The nest eggs sold briskly because they worked well at their primary purpose of deceiving hens. Incidentally, they also fooled egg-eating snakes. I have heard of a black snake being found with an indigestible glass egg in its alimentary system. No doubt that fatal mistake was made by many snakes when the use of nest eggs was common.

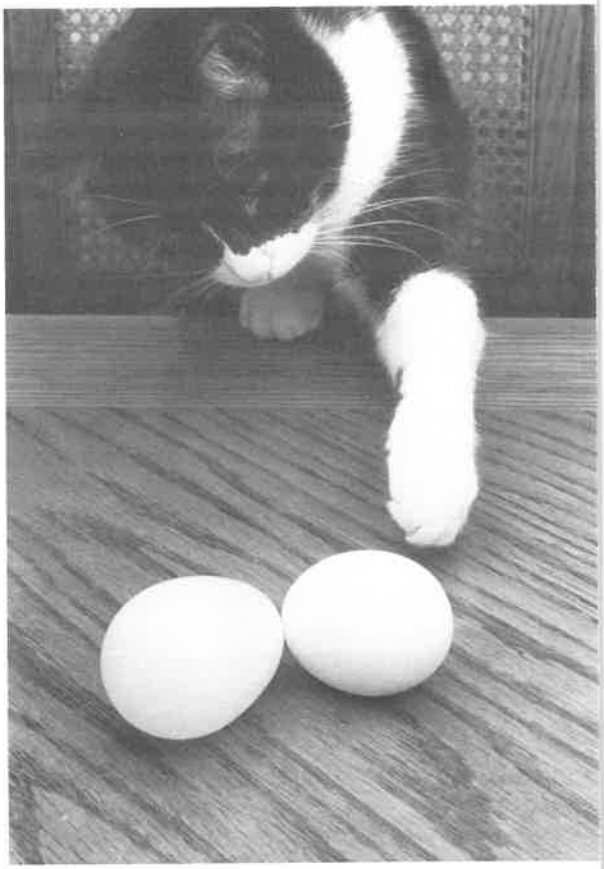
Makers of glass eggs had their first competition when wooden eggs covered with white enamel came onto the market. The wooden eggs appealed to some chicken owners as being more durable than their glass counterparts.

Then medicated nest eggs, made of insect powder, lime and a binder, made their appearance. They also enticed hens to lay, and had the further advantage of helping rid the nests and chickens of lice. With the passing of time, medicated eggs grew in popularity, judging by Sears and Roebuck, whose later catalogs listed them as "improved nest eggs." Sears stopped advertising glass and wooden eggs.

Joseph Viggiano says the introduction of the medicated egg was one reason for the decrease in popularity of the glass eggs his father made. Joseph also believes the construction of modern chicken houses, which prevent hens from ranging freely, contributed to the demise of the nest egg business as a whole.

Whatever the reasons, the local manufacturing of glass eggs is a thing of the past. Farm supply stores now offer plastic eggs instead, if they sell nest eggs at all. Maybe the plastic model fools chickens just as well, but it's hard to imagine that the hens get the same satisfaction as from sitting on a fine glass egg handcrafted in Marion County.

Sarah the cat checks a counterfeit egg against the real thing. Can you tell which is which? Photo by Michael Keller.



Natural Tone

An Eastern Panhandle Family Band

By Donna James

These days, if you ask folks around Grant and Hardy counties about the Barr Band, chances are good that those who remember will be descendants of the Barrs themselves — and there are quite a few Barrs in those parts. However, the same question posed 60 years ago would have brought memories and anecdotes from anyone who had attended picnics, reunions, or rallies anywhere in the area. The Barr Band played at nearly every such event in Hardy and surrounding counties for 50 years, to the delight of people of all ages.

The saga of the Barr Band begins with Captain Hugh Barr, father of the first generation of band members. Born in Winchester, Virginia, in 1839, Hugh showed an early talent for playing the drum. An obituary proclaimed that "when but a boy he beat the rally on his drum up and down the streets of Winchester, the city of his birth, calling Virginians to arms to repel the threatened invasion of John Brown." When the War Between the States erupted, it was a natural move for Hugh to become a member of the band of the Confederate Fifth Virginia Regiment. In addition to their important role in battle, the regimental band served as entertainment at fund-raising events, literally "drumming up" money for tents and gear.

Captain Hugh's wartime exploits later entered into Barr family lore. One story often told has him saving the lives of three Northern soldiers who were wounded. He apparently saw the Masonic emblem on one of their uniforms, and, being a Mason himself, came to the aid of these enemies. They later honored him with a large picture including the battlefield scene, pictures of all of them, and an elaborately penned manuscript detailing his heroic deed.

At the close of the war, Hugh settled in Moorefield, in Hardy County in the new state of West Virginia, with his wife and his son, Marion Beauregard. The boy, named after Southern General P. T. Beauregard, had been born two months after Hugh entered the war in 1861. Hugh saw little of "Beauie," Beauregard's lifelong nickname, until his return from the war when his son was four years old. Hugh had married Martha Sampsell, who reportedly was considered one of the best singers in the area. They eventually had a total of seven sons and three daughters. Family historical research indicates that Hugh and his wife owned several parcels of land in Moorefield, and Hugh operated a shoe shop there for nearly 20 years.

According to an article in *Country Roads*, a local student publication, it was during the latter part of the family's residence in Moorefield that an accomplished musician and teacher, Professor James Nihiser, moved to the area and formed a band. One of his students and band members was Beauie Barr, then in his early 20's. Upon the demise of this band and Professor Nihiser's exit from town, the musical instruments were stored above Hugh Barr's shoe shop. They belonged to the various band members, and over time Hugh would be given instruments to settle their bills,

Above: Richard Alexander Barr, son of Beauregard, was among the second generation to enter the family band. He poses here in the 1920's, photographer unknown.

eventually leaving him with quite a collection.

By 1884 the city of Moorefield had a population of around 500 people, and Hugh Barr decided it was too worldly a place to raise his seven sons. As Ruby Barr, son of Beauie, phrases it, Hugh wanted to "get his boys away from the wild, wild women of Moorefield." He closed his shoe shop and bought a farm as far up Frosty Hollow Mountain as one could travel, over near the Grant County line. Ruby says that Hugh was reportedly a wealthy man in town,

owning a sizable amount of land around Moorefield. He sold it all to buy "the roughest spot of mountain that I've ever seen."

Hugh acquired 75 or 80 acres of mountain land, with only a little of it fit for a garden and the rest too steep to be of much use. He possibly chose the farm because he noticed that the location got the most rain in the summertime, but it was a poor start he gave his boys by moving way back there. Hugh died of pneumonia a few months after moving to the backcountry, leaving Martha Barr to raise the big family as best she could.

It is uncertain whether Hugh ever told his sons to form a family band, according to an article in the *Moorefield Examiner*, but he did suggest that the boys take his collection of instruments and "serenade the neighbors." After Hugh's death, Beauie took this

Above right: It all started with family patriarch Hugh Barr. Captain Hugh, father of the original band members, served in a regimental band in the Confederate Army.

The band's final performance in 1936 came around the time this photograph of Hugh Barr's children was made. They are (left to right) John, Burns, Richard, Myrtle, George and Fred, with Beauregard seated in front. Photographer unknown.

idea much further, organizing his brothers into a formal band and teaching them to play. Regarding Beauie's role as director, Ruby Barr reflects, "None of his brothers questioned his ability to lead, and they all followed." Within two years after their father's death, the boys had become the Barr Band.

The Barrs were a brass band of the sort popular in the late 19th century. There were as many as a dozen members, playing drums and cornets, tubas and other horns. No doubt their repertoire included marches, patriotic numbers and the popular tunes of the day. Brothers went right into the ranks as soon as they came of age, or well before that. The youngest boy, Oscar, was playing slide trombone at the age of five.

Beauregard Barr married Blanchetta Evans around the time the band was formed, and they eventually produced 11 living children. Like his father Hugh, Beauie was a shoemaker and later a farmer by trade, but he would drop everything to go play music, often leaving the responsibility of home, farm, and family to his wife. He trained other bands throughout the area, taking great pleasure in music of all kinds. Son Ruby recalls Beauie walking 35 to 40 miles to Lost River to train a band there. He also went to Missouri at some point, evidently to receive additional training from Professor Nihiser.

Fred Barr, Beauie's brother, also was known to train other bands in the area, including one from Orrs Mountain. Fred played several kinds of horns throughout his 86-year life, and according to a quote attributed to his sister Myrtle, finally "he blew, blew himself away." He also enjoyed playing the violin, although there were no stringed instruments in the Barr Band.

The other sons of Hugh who settled in the Hardy County area and played in the family band were John, Burns, George, and Oscar. Richard may have helped in the band for a while, but he soon moved to Louisiana and Mississippi. One of Hugh's daughters, May, was an excellent singer, although never a member of the all-male band. As the years passed, Barrs of the next generation took their places in the band. These included Beauie's sons Victor, Richard, and Walter; Burns's sons Clifton and Harold; and John's son Hugh. In addition to the Barr family, other members of the band included Anton Eisenhour, Van Sherman, Sanford Simmons, Will Seymour, and Mopey Cornell.

The first generation of Barrs in the band had various degrees of formal musical training and all were endowed with the family's "musical ear," reportedly inherited from their mother. It was a formidable gift, according to Ruby Barr. Ruby was never a member of the band, but he played

The Barr Reunion

These grandchildren of Beauregard and "Aunt Chet" Barr were photographed at the first reunion in 1924. Mary Alice, our author's mother, stands at left rear. Photographer unknown.

The Barr Reunion has been an annual event since 1924, when M. Beauregard "Beauie" and Blanchetta "Aunt Chet" Barr, along with their 11 children, all gathered for the first time at their remote home in Frosty Hollow, Hardy County. The children's ages then ranged from 10 to 35, so some would have been "grown and gone" by the time the younger ones were born. Because the area was so remote, most of the children moved away to go to school, marry, or find work, although a number of them ended up back in Frosty Hollow.

Wherever they were, all of the sons and daughters of Beauie and Aunt Chet returned for that first reunion, as well as their grandchildren and family friends. Family picture taking was the apparent reason for that first reunion, but the event became an annual affair and later included all Barrs in the region, who have a common ancestor, Captain Hugh Barr, born in 1839.

The Barr reunion was moved from the Frosty Hollow homeplace to Scott's Ridge School in 1948, when attendance became too large for a private meeting place. After moving several more times, the current reunion is held at the Petersburg Park in neighboring Grant County. This is a large reunion. Past generations of Barrs having been very prolific, families of eight or more were common. Hugh Barr's ten children have now increased to well over 1,800 descendants.

One function of the reunion has been to preserve the memory of the Barr Band, the family brass band which made music locally for more than a half-century. This has been accomplished through the efforts of many, most notably Mary Louise Frye, granddaughter of band leader Beauie Barr, and Jim Barr, son of Beauie's brother, Oscar Barr. Mary and Jim come to the reunions armed with articles, pictures, and stories about the old band.

The reunion packs the park shelter and picnic area, with people coming from all over the country. Some of the Louisiana branch, descendants of Hugh's son Richard, appeared in 1987. There is generally enough food to feed more than a thousand.

A highlight of the 1988 reunion was a recitation by Ed Barr, one of three living children of Beauie and Aunt Chet, of a poem remembered from his mother's collection. His rendition recounted childhood mischief in verse, much to the enjoyment of all present. Of the other children of Beauie and Aunt Chet, Ruby Barr attended, but Elsie Barr Riggleman was unable to come this year. She was well represented by her children.

The Barr Reunion will continue for as long as family members desire to preserve the legacy of this large and colorful family from "way up Frosty Hollow Mountain" in Hardy County. Judging from the popularity of the reunion for Barrs of all ages, that will likely be a long time.

— Donna James

a little music himself. He recounts an incident at a Sunday school meeting when he mentioned to his Uncle John Barr that his mandolin was out of tune. John asked him what note he wanted, and Ruby said, "A." John said, "OK, pick A," and as Ruby picked, John said, "Little higher . . . little higher . . . STOP." Just like that, "STOP." Checking the note against a tuned piano revealed it to be perfectly pitched. Ruby recalls his brother telling him that "every one of them could do that; they had natural tone."

Beauie Barr's musical sensitivities caused him to be intolerant at times. Ruby remembers him as an avid reader, often engrossed in a book or paper. However, when young Ruby missed a note on whatever instrument he was playing, he would see his father slowly shaking his head in disgust behind his reading material. No sour notes got past Beauregard Barr.

The Barr Band played for the love of music. The musicians lived in near poverty, yet refused to take money for their performances. They depended on friends and fans to supply the necessary gear and equipment. An article in *Country Roads* reports that around 1889 the band was uniformed by Isaac VanMeter, who then took them to play for old soldiers' reunions in Franklin and Keyser.

The 1889 uniforms consisted of bright red jackets and white pants. Ruby Barr says of their homecoming in the new uniforms, "My grandmother said that when they all came home, and the sun was shining on their horns as they walked up that holler where nobody on earth but the Barrs would live, it was the most beautiful sight she'd ever seen." They marched into the house playing "Home, Sweet Home," much to Mrs. Barr's delight.

The Barr Band played at the Grant County Courthouse for the first Tri-County Fair. The band also performed at social functions, tournament riding meetings, political rallies, fairs, picnics, reunions, and nearly any other gathering in the area for years. Always willing to entertain for free, the group had no trouble raising the funds for new uniforms at a number of socials held at Oak Grove around 1906. These uniforms were dark green with black trim, apparently quite striking. When the musicians needed new instruments, citizens of the area also opened their pockets to the Barr Band.

The band died but the music went on. Fred Barr played longest of the sons of Captain Hugh, until he finally "blew himself away" according to sister Myrtle. Here he is in 1947, photographer unknown.

One band story often told concerns a performance at a Winchester fair in 1890, when little Oscar was playing the bass drum. Someone had to carry it for him, because it was taller than he was. He was completely hidden by the big drum he played so well, so printed on the front was a sign proclaiming, "He's on the other side." Oscar was such a hit in the Virginia city that he reportedly was given a $10 gold piece and carried around Winchester on the shoulders of a visiting New York merchant, Charles Rouse. According to *Country Roads*, a wealthy citizen of the town offered Oscar "the finest horse in his stable" if he would go home with him, but the little drummer stuck with his brothers.

There were a number of bands in the Barr's West Virginia-Virginia home country at the turn of the century. Competition among them was a popular pastime. Bands from some of the larger cities would come into Moorefield to take on the small-town yokels, but none could beat the Barr Band's rendition of "Dixie." Perhaps remembering Captain Hugh's Confederate service, the Barrs took great pride in that number. Soon the other band would decide to pack up its instruments and go home, having met their match in the country boys they had come to ridicule.

As the sons of Hugh grew too old to continue their musical pursuits, members of the next generation filled the gaps, and the Barr Band continued for many years through various transitions and compositions. It is not certain why the band broke up completely in 1936. Probably it had something to do with the economy, career and family demands, better transportation and communication with the outside world, and general loss of interest. All members of the Barr Band have now passed away, taking the exact answers with them. The only Barr who performs in the Hardy County area today is Jim, son of Oscar. Jim was too young to be in the band, and now contributes his fine bass to a local gospel quartet. He says that several of his brothers and sisters also inherited the Barr musical talents.

The Barr Band went out in style, closing a half-century of music with a final performance in Moorefield. The occasion was an October 1936 rally for young Congressman Jennings Randolph. As the closing lines of "Dixie," their favorite song, resounded around the Hardy County Courthouse, the Barr Band's colorful musical career ended, leaving residents of the area richer for its existence.

Groundhogs

By Charlotte H. Deskins

Drawing adapted form *Small Animals of North America Coloring Book* by Elizabeth A. McClelland, Dover Publications, Inc.

Some folks love 'em. While cruising the highways they are constantly on the lookout, hoping for a glimpse of one. Others detest them. They consider them garden pests. Still others admire them for their ability to foretell the coming of springtime. Some people even think they make good eating. One thing is certain: Nearly everyone in West Virginia has a story or two about groundhogs.

The groundhog (*Marmota monax*) is sometimes primly referred to as a "woodchuck," or even a "whistle pig" because of its ability to make a shrill, high-pitched sound when upset or frightened. It averages from 16 to 26 inches long, including its short tail. Adults usually weigh from about five to 12 pounds, with the female slightly smaller and lighter than the male. Groundhogs are at their heaviest in the autumn just before hibernation. It is not unusual for one to lose a third to a half of its body fat during the long winter's sleep, which lasts from mid-October to sometime in February.

The groundhog is an attractive animal with its soft grizzled fur that ranges from rusty red to soft brown, its blunt nose, shoe-button black eyes and small, rounded ears. Many West Virginians rank them right up there with cats and dogs as house pets.

One such pet belonged to James H. "Tom" Carter and his wife Beulah of Squire, McDowell County. "My Daddy named him Sam," daughter Lois Richardson remembers. "Even though he slept outside, he would come into the house and join us for breakfast. Mama had him trained not to go past the kitchen. Each morning he would sit up straight and tall beside my father's chair. Daddy would hand him a biscuit and Sam would hold it in his forepaws and turn it 'round and 'round, nibbling at the edges until it was all gone."

Roy Cox, a Summers County native, instilled a love of groundhogs in his family as well. His wife, Uransa, recalls the day her sons brought home Simon, a groundhog only a few weeks old. They made him a nest inside a

dresser drawer and fed him milk from a doll's bottle every four hours. Simon loved milk. He could finish an entire bottle in three good swigs. When he forsook his dresser drawer for the warmth and companionship of her sons' beds, Uransa decided it was time for him to move outside.

Uransa's sister also had a groundhog, a female with a sweet tooth. This groundhog could sniff out a stick of chewing gum hidden in a shirt pocket. Her favorite time of the week was baking day. Whenever a cake or pan of cookies was in the oven, you would find her patrolling the kitchen on her hind feet.

Jacob Hicks of War, McDowell County, recalls that his mother once kept a pet groundhog for several years. Her groundhog was an industrious nest-builder. He used to carry off anything he could find that looked soft and cozy to make a lining for his burrow. "He was really a tame one," Jacob says. "Why, he would climb right up in your lap and look you straight in the eye. He got along fine with all of our dogs. They knew him and just left him alone."

At times a groundhog may become the unofficial mascot of workers at a strip mine site. The men save him tidbits from their lunches and generally look out for him. One such groundhog was known as Lester. Although an elderly fellow, Lester was agile for his years. Unfortunately, his burrow was too near the blasting area and the detonations had left Lester completely deaf.

Still, he knew when his buddies were due to arrive because of the vibration their vehicles made. When he "heard" them coming he would leap from his hole and station himself in the middle of the road, peering first in one direction, then another. When Lester spied the first truck he would scramble to the side and wait patiently for a treat of crackers or oatmeal cake.

While young, a groundhog may make a good pet, depending upon his temperament. Like all wild creatures, however, he never becomes fully domesticated. At about two years of age they begin to feel the mating urge and return to the wild, sometimes coming back once or twice a year to visit their human family.

One of West Virginia's most famous groundhogs is Concord Charlie, who handles the seasonal forecasting from his mysterious burrow located somewhere near the Concord College campus in Athens. Charlie's weather pronouncement kicks off the college's annual Groundhog Breakfast. This celebration was started ten years ago by Professor R. T. Hill, a fan of West Virginia folklife in general and groundhogs in particular. According to Professor Hill, it is one of the duties of Concord President Jerry L. Beasley to observe Charlie at work and to report the result to the other Grand Groundhog Watchers on February 2 each year. This illustrious group includes cultural and political leaders of West Virginia, State Treasurer A. James Manchin among them. Manchin went so far as to declare Charlie the official Mountaineer Meteorologist, no doubt with due respect to Upshur County's French Creek Freddie.

Groundhogs are by nature solitary and territorial animals. They are most active during the early morning and late afternoon, when they spend most of their time munching on tender grasses and an occasional garden patch. A single groundhog can ruin an entire melon crop because he likes to nibble a small hole in each one and leave the rest. Some farmers regard them as varmints and shoot them on sight.

Others shoot them for food. Fresh groundhog was once a staple in the mountaineer's diet. Many folks still enjoy it today. Before you can cook one, however, you must first catch him. Although an easy target out in the open, a groundhog in the burrow is much more challenging. His tunnel is a complex maze with several connecting chambers, all lined with leaves and grass. It may have five separate entrances. It is not unusual for the capture of a burrowed groundhog to take all day.

Those who view them as a delicacy say it is well worth the trouble. Dana K. Allen of Mercer County describes the flavor of groundhog meat as "something between rabbit and goose." Since groundhogs contain a considerable amount of fat, she suggests stewing them down with some carrots, potatoes and seasonings. They are also good baked or roasted. A handful of chopped or whole onions added to the pot will help to cut the "wild" taste, as a groundhog's flavor is often influenced by its food supply and living conditions.

As for me, I haven't the gourmet palate or the heart for eating groundhog. I am one of those sentimental souls who watches for them at the roadside. Seeing one placidly ambling along never fails to make me smile. Long live West Virginia's groundhog!

Groundhog Stew

We take the following recipe for groundhog stew from William H. Gillespie's Wild Foods of Appalachia:

When stewing woodchuck, soak the pieces overnight in 1 1/2 cups of vinegar and 1 l/2 cups of water. Rinse, drain and parboil for 15-20 minutes. Drain and cover with fresh water. Add 2 diced onions, 2 teaspoons salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 3/4 cup diced celery and 6 whole cloves and simmer 1 1/2 hours. Use water to make a thick paste of 1/4 cup flour and add to the stew about five minutes before completing the cooking.

Wild Foods of Appalachia *is a 159-page paperback, published in 1986 by Seneca Books of Morgantown. You may buy it for $7.95 in bookstores or directly from the publisher. Mail orders should include 75 cents postage and handling, plus 6% sales tax from West Virginia residents. Send to Seneca Books, Rt. 6, Box 81B, Morgantown, WV 26505.*

Don West at the Appalachian South Folk Life Center late last summer. He founded the Summers County facility in 1965.

"More Than Butterfly Words"

Don West Comes Home to Pipestem

By Rick Wilson

Photographs by Yvonne Snyder Farley

About ten years ago, I used to haunt the stacks of a second-hand bookstore on the side streets of Huntington. It was one of those magical places where something unexpected could be found on any visit. On one trip, I came across a shelf of softbound books and pamphlets published by an outfit called Appalachian Movement Press. Some had titles like *Paint Creek Miner* or *Songs of Freedom* and told the stories of the mine wars which were left out of the textbooks of my generation, while others might document absentee ownership. Also to be found there were books of mountain poetry and essays by someone named Don West. It didn't take much browsing to realize that this was not John Boy Walton stuff.

West's poetry is a bit like that of Langston Hughes. Like that great black poet, West wrote for and about people who don't ordinarily read poetry, combining a celebration of the common people of Appalachia with an outrage at injustice that pulled no punches. He is unashamedly partisan. "Poetry and other creative efforts should be levers, weapons to be used in the people's struggle for understanding, human rights, and decency," he once wrote.

Don West told the neglected story of the mountaineer's long tradition of struggle. He had no use for the "Gone With the Wind" school of Southern history. Instead, he wrote of long-forgotten Appalachian abolitionists who took up the crusade against slavery while William Lloyd Garrison was still a child, of poor whites helping runaway slaves along the underground railroad, of courageous Southern Unionists who fought the Civil War in their own backyard. Long before it became fashionable, West fought the passive hillbilly stereotype by pointing to mountain labor's traditions of struggle and soli-

The center's annual Folk Life Festival has celebrated grass roots mountain traditions for more than two decades. Here Tex McGuire's band makes music at the 21st festival last August.

darity in the worst of circumstances. More than most, he helped pave the way for what seems to be a current Appalachian historical awakening that can be seen in films like *Matewan* and novels like Denise Giardina's *Storming Heaven.*

But West was never merely a man of letters. The more I learned of his life, the clearer it became that he had taken the road less traveled from an early age and followed it regardless of the cost. In trouble in high school for protesting the racist film *Birth of a Nation;* expelled and reinstated in college for leading a student strike; agitating for a union in the coal camps of "Bloody Harlan" County, Kentucky; working for civil rights since the 1930's — to say the least, he never seemed to miss a trick. He had known kangaroo courts and jail cells, beatings by company thugs, Ku Klux Klan terrorism, governmental inquisitions, but it never seemed to occur to him to give up the battle. Instead, at an age when many people begin to think about retiring, he established the Appalachian South Folk Life Center in the Summers County community of Pipestem in 1965, where scores of camps and conferences have since taught young and old alike to feel pride rather than shame in their mountain heritage.

For years after my first chance encounter with his printed words, I would ask people what they thought of Don West. The answers varied widely, but no one who knew of him was neutral. The 21st Annual Folk Life Festival last August gave me the chance to find out for myself. West, who had retired from day-to-day work at the center in the early 1980's following a massive heart attack, bypass surgery, and a bout with cancer, planned to attend with his wife Connie, an accomplished artist.

In previous years, the Pipestem festival has drawn thousands of people and featured such musicians as Merle Travis and Pete Seeger. This year, the audience was smaller. It had the feel of a country homecoming, complete with mountain music, good food, and friends old and new. Among the performers who donated their time and talents were Summers County musician and storyteller Jim Costa, who was also master of ceremonies, the Acord Family of Wyoming County, Tex McGuire and his band from Monroe County, and Country Grass from McDowell County.

The high point was an evening poetry reading by West, who had mingled with the guests throughout the day. Center Director David Stanley gave the introduction, referring to the poet as "someone who taught me more than I ever thought I had the ability to learn." Though he clearly felt the effects of his struggles with illness, West's voice was loud and clear as he spoke from the outdoor stage. "I've always thought poetry was more than just butterfly words," he said. "It speaks of the deep hope and hurt and needs of the people and particularly of the poor people. I've dedicated my life to them."

West read through a good selection of works written over the past 50 years. In "The Clodhopper," he celebrated the worth of the small farmer: "Oh, I'm the Clodhopper/ Who makes the tall corn grow,/ The artist that smears dignity/ Through the speckled cotton patch./ I'm the man that fills/ The belly of the world,/ and slips a petticoat/ Over her nakedness." The poems were often autobiographical, mileposts over a rugged path. He ended on an upbeat note

with a reading of "There'll Be a Tomorrow," calling for "a clean tomorrow,/ child of hope and hurt and solidarity."

Earlier in the day, I had shared a meal with Don in the Folk Life Center's community hall. He spoke of old run-ins with more than a little pride and an occasional sheepish grin. When he talked of being beaten and twice arrested in 1930's mine struggles in Kentucky, or of having his Georgia farm burned down by the KKK, he showed no bitterness — only a lasting grief for books that were confiscated or burned. Over the years, he says, many things have turned around. "Lincoln Memorial University, where I got expelled for leading that strike, gave me an honorary doctorate later on and put me in their literary hall of fame," he noted.

West is pleased that more West Virginia and regional authors are making their mark nationally. Inevitably, I asked him about Matewan, the movie about the 1920 labor-management shootout in Mingo County. "It was a good film," he says. "I'm glad the story finally came out. It was true to life. I wouldn't want to say anything bad about it, but you know, if I had made the movie, I would have had [Matewan police chief and union supporter] Sid Hatfield be the main character rather than using someone who came into the mountains from outside. We had plenty of homegrown heroes, too."

Remembering the old homegrown heroes and encouraging new ones is what the Appalachian South Folk Life Center is all about. Don West has retired to Cabin Creek, in Kanawha County, but the Pipestem center remains the main monument to his life's work. Located on 65 acres of beautiful Summers County farmland, it offers free summer camps for disadvantaged youth, community outreach services, and group conference facilities. It also features a library which David Stanley hopes will become a research facility for Appalachian scholars and writers.

In recent years, the rustic Folk Life Center has felt the effects of hard times, particularly since the charismatic West is no longer able to travel to universities like Yale and Harvard for fund-raising poetry readings. "It's safe to say that we struggle financially," says Stanley, "but we've also made real good progress. We're a nonprofit operation and exist solely on contributions, and we're certainly open to more of those." ✱

Don and Connie West have worked throughout the Appalachian region. The couple have now retired to their home on Cabin Creek, Kanawha County.

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Goldenseal Index

Volume 14, 1988

Articles which appeared in Volume 14 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

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

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of the calendar year (e.g., Volume 13, Number 4).

Subject

Author

Photographer

Location

In This Issue

MELODY and GEORGE BRAGG are lifetime residents of Fayette County. She writes about county history for the *Fayette Tribune* and presented a research paper at the 1988 New River Symposium. George, a member of the Fayette County Landmark Commission, is a coal miner and award-winning photographer. He has the most extensive collection known of Glen Jean historical photographs.

PAUL BROWN, a native of Fayette County, studies photography at Shepherd College. He works as a freelance photographer and expects to receive his college degree in the spring of 1989. This is his second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

HELEN CARPER is originally from Roane County. She earned an education degree from West Virginia State College and her M.A. in journalism from Marshall. Helen serves on Mountain State Press's board of directors and is a full-time freelancer. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

CHARLOTTE H. DESKINS, a McDowell County native, now lives in Virginia. Her nonfiction, short fiction and poetry have been published in various magazines, and she has received awards for her writing from West Virginia Writers and Mountain State Press. She is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

J. Z. ELLISON was born in Monroe County in 1915. He attended West Virginia University and is a former sales representative for John W. Eshelman & Sons. Ellison has been involved with several agricultural associations, including the West Virginia Poultry Association and West Virginia Farm Supply. He is an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

YVONNE SNYDER FARLEY was born in St. Marys, Pleasants County. She graduated from Antioch College in Ohio, and worked for several years at Antioch's Appalachian Center in Beckley. She now works at the Raleigh County Public Library. She also does freelance writing and photography, contributing periodically to GOLDENSEAL.

CAROL L. FOX is an award-winning freelance journalist and former editor of the *Preston County News* in Terra Alta. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including *Country Magazine, Camper Times*, and *Mature Years*. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

CLIFF and BEA HACKETT, of Washington, D.C., thought of themselves as city folks until they began spending weekends in Berkeley Springs. They met hardware man Tom Barney while building their house there. This is their first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DONNA JAMES, a descendant of the Barr family, has lived most of her life in West Virginia. She teaches special education at Charleston High School and is vice-president of Kanawha Valley's Friends of Old-Time Music and Dance. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

JERI MATHENEY was born in Mississippi, but has lived most of her life in Charleston. A graduate of Marshall University with a degree in journalism, she is a public information specialist with C&P Telephone Company of West Virginia. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

ARTHUR PRICHARD, born and raised in Mannington, graduated from West Virginia University and McCormick Theological Seminary of Chicago. Before he retired in 1970, he served as pastor of churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania, as well as in Wheeling and Mannington. Author of *An Appalachian Legacy: Mannington Life and Spirit*, he writes occasionally for GOLDENSEAL.

BARBARA DIANE SMIK earned a B.A. in English literature and her master's in secondary education from the University of Pittsburgh. The daughter of country music star Doc Williams, Barbara has managed his country store in Wheeling for 11 years. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

RICK WILSON was born in South Charleston and is a graduate of Marshall University. He is assistant director of the Putnam County Library. He is also a freelance writer and co-author of the book, *Blenko Glass 1930-1950*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Spring 1988 issue.

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