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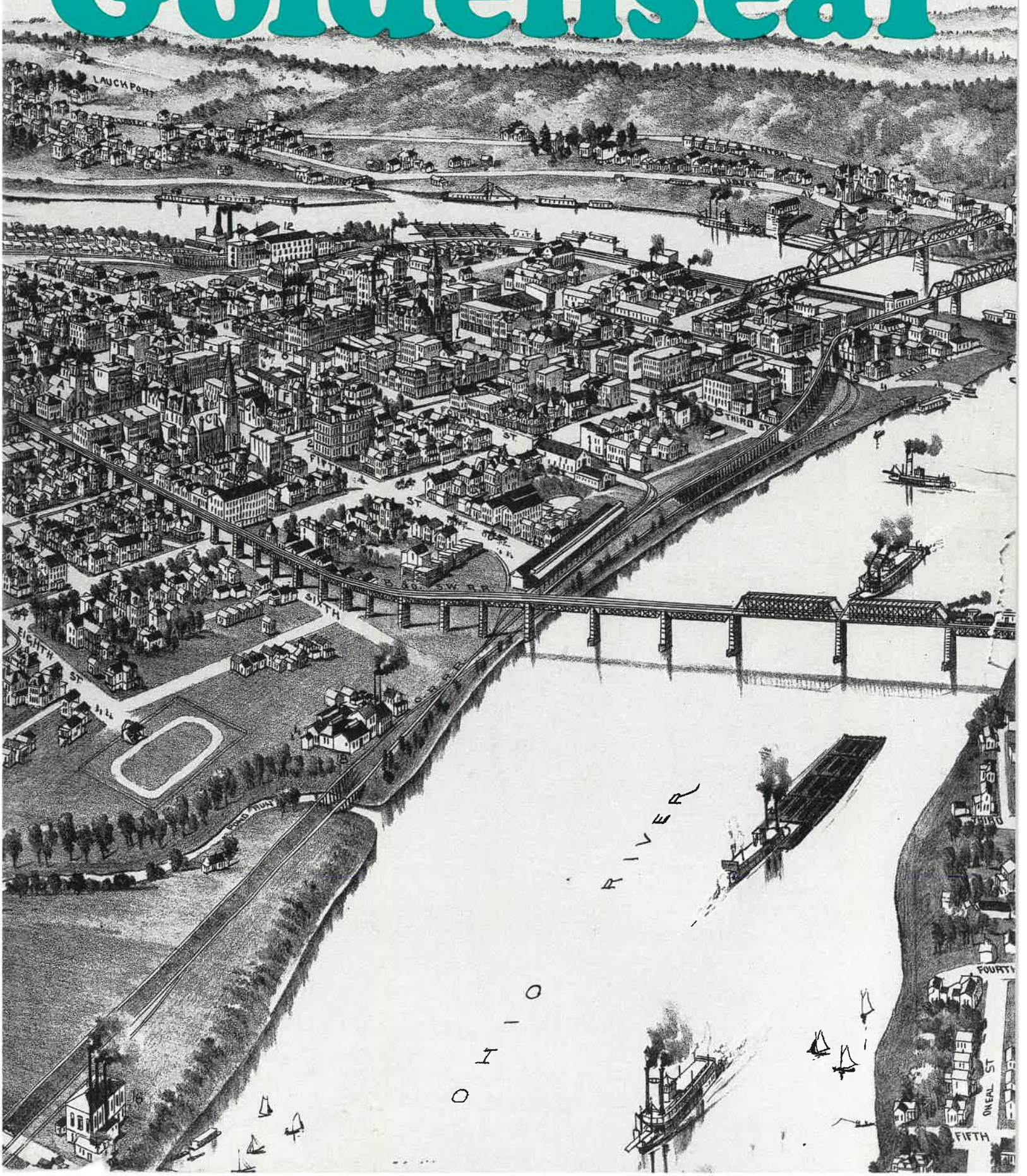
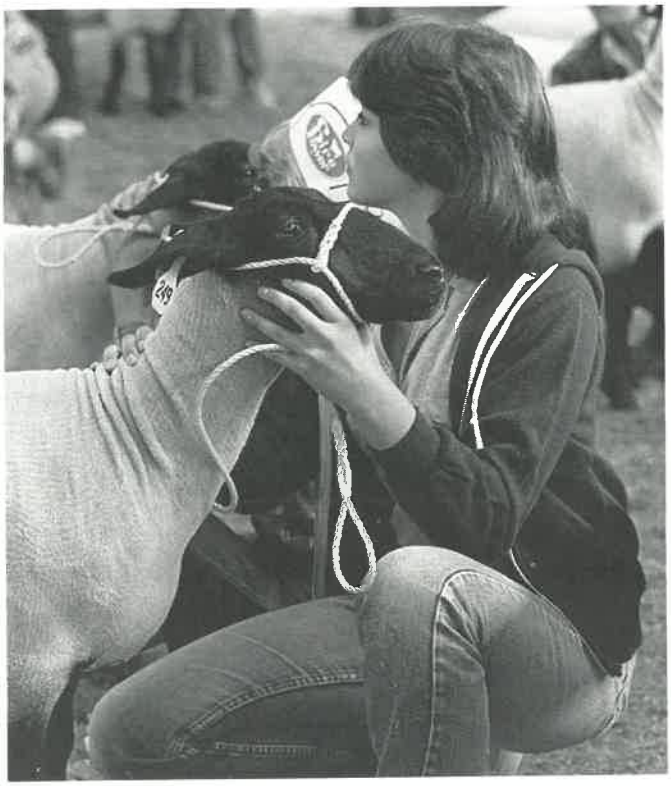
Goldenseal



The State Fair of West Virginia



The West Virginia State Fair is a time of agricultural demonstrations, prize livestock and hopeful young contestants. Both photos by Peggy Powell, courtesy State Department of Commerce.

The West Virginia State Fair traces its origins to a Lewisburg fair started in 1858. The Civil War interrupted the local fair, but not before a certain yearling colt was exhibited there. It grew up to be Traveller, the famous war-horse of General Robert E. Lee.

The first postwar fair was held in 1869, also in Lewisburg, followed by one at nearby Alderson in 1877. In the early 1890's, the fair returned to Lewisburg, where by 1895 it was known as the Greenbrier Industrial Exposition. The Great Greenbrier Valley Fair had emerged by 1921. In 1941, the State Legislature passed a resolution officially naming the Lewisburg event the State Fair of West Virginia. It was interrupted by another war for four years, but in 1946 reopened to record-breaking crowds.

The State Fair of today, now held at the permanent fairgrounds at neighboring Fairlea, is a crowd pleaser. You can see everything from pig racing, sheep shearing and fleece competitions, to hog calling and even a best-dressed cow pageant. There is harness racing on weekday afternoons. One of the most popular events is the pulling contest for draft horses, and there is also an eight-horse hitch demonstration. The fair offers a circus, arts and crafts, traditional music and a petting zoo. This year two new attractions, a lumberjack show and an all-American high dive team, will be featured.

Agricultural exhibits are the heart of the State Fair. Corn, hay and grain are exhibited, as well as displays of canning, baking, candy and cake decorating. The fair has been famous for livestock since Traveller's day. Beef and dairy cattle, horses, sheep, swine, dairy goats and rabbits are brought in from throughout West Virginia and nearby areas. Wool clothing is made, sheep to shawl. There are demonstrations in quilting, needlework and sewing, along with flower and quilt shows.

There is an operating sawmill on the grounds, powered by a steam engine, and a carnival midway open daily. This year children will be entertained by Middle Earth Studios, storytellers who bring the world of author J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbits to life. Other entertainers present animated musical characters for young visitors to the fair.

The State Fair of West Virginia is one of the most popular events in the state. There is nothing quite like it. It is a country fair, offering a good mix of wholesome entertainment and healthy foolishness. Visitors get an exhausting, full day of fun for a few dollars at the gate.

The dates for the 1989 West Virginia State Fair are August 18 through 26. For more information write State Fair, Box 986, Lewisburg, WV 24901, or call (304) 645-1090 during business hours.

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Goldenseal

Volume 15, Number 2 Summer 1989

COVER: Parkersburg was one of many West Virginia bird's-eye maps produced by T. M. Fowler. Our excerpt from his 1899 map shows the bustling point between the Little Kanawha and Ohio rivers, much river traffic, and the B&O bridge to Ohio. The story begins on page 9.

PHOTOS: P. Corbit Brown, Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Arch Ellis, Michael Keller, Peggy Powell, Gerald Ratliff, S. J. Shaluta, Ron Snow.

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.

Dunbar, West Virginia
March 25, 1989
Editor:
I first heard of the GOLDENSEAL magazine at the Care Home in Cross Lanes in the early part of 1988. I at once fell in love with it, so I ordered it for myself and two of my friends. I have never been so thrilled with a magazine in all my life.

A very good friend of mine whose father takes the GOLDENSEAL brought me a few extra issues to read, and was I ever surprised by one of them. It was the fall issue of 1985. In it was a story about Kenna. That is the place of my birth and I know it very well. My aunt, Elva Simmons, and cousins Geneva McGrew and Bonnie Boggess are mentioned. Also Carroll Greene, a man I know well, as

A Kenna family: Geneva Casto McGrew as a baby, with parents Cleo and Verna Casto. Photographer unknown, about 1916.

we were boys in the same school at one time. My father was Otis O. Simmons, the brother of Parvin Simmons.

There are a few errors in the article. One especially is about the Baby Overland car that was used in the wedding of Uncle Parvin and Aunt Elva. It actually was an Overland 90. My father bought it from his father-in-law, John W. Smith, in about 1922 or '23. My uncle Herbert Smith, Mother's brother, drove Parvin to Kentucky to wed Elva.

In about 1925, Father and Parvin together traded in Charleston for two Baby Overlands. I remember that real well, because I was thrilled to get to drive a new car. I was not of age to legally drive yet — I was born in 1910 — but Dad let me drive it when he was with me. I also drove the old Overland 90.

Your stories take me back many, many years. That is the real reason I took the magazine, because it enlightens me on so many of the places in West Virginia that I have been and seen. I also take the *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine, and I read both from cover to cover.
Respectfully,
Arnold O. Simmons

Morris Harvey History

St. Petersburg, Florida
March 7, 1989
Editor:
The article on Morris Harvey College brought back memories. I was a student there for three years in the early '20's. The first year a Mr. Pettis was president, then one year R. T. Webb. Another year R. T. Brown was president.

Mae Lynn Hawkins was dean of women at Rosa Harvey Hall, picture shown in GOLDENSEAL magazine. I even found the window to my room in the picture. Some of the instructors were A. C. Blackwell, Harry F. Toothman, and M. M. Black, Jr. H. R. Beckelheimer was athletic instructor and Mrs. A. J. H. Lewis was matron of Billingsley Hall, the men's dormitory, which was across town from the college buildings. David Kirby and Glenn W. Stewart were teachers also during that time.

I remember Edyth Yoak, Mae Brooks, Pauline Caton and many more. My roommate was Ora Wintz from Clothier. I was from Big Otter, Clay County. I remember many more classmates but can't mention them here. We had to dress up each Sunday morning and march down to church with the dean of women.

Leonard Riggleman was a student there at that time, if I am not mistaken. He was not married then. He later married Pauline Steele, who passed away a few years ago.

I later married a neighborhood boy and became mother to two children. When I-79 was built in the early '70's, we lost our home to that project and moved to St. Petersburg where our children and grandchildren were living.

I enjoy the magazine very much and look forward to it coming.
Sincerely,
Eliza (Ball) Hall

Don West

Harrogate, Tennessee
February 28, 1989
Editor:
I enjoyed your 1988 winter edition of GOLDENSEAL. The article about Don West was of special interest to me as I have long been a fan of his. Lincoln Memorial University is so proud of him and his accomplishments. He is such a giving and caring person who has given his life to help others. I am grateful that you gave him some deserved recognition.

The article on him was extremely well done and I congratulate you and your staff on such an excellent publication.
Sincerely,
Georgia Baker
Director of Alumni Affairs
Lincoln Memorial University

Dating Bill McKell

Cincinnati, Ohio
February 17, 1989
Editor:
In the winter issue of GOLDENSEAL, on page 14 in the Glen Jean article, is

a photo of William McKell dated "about 1935."

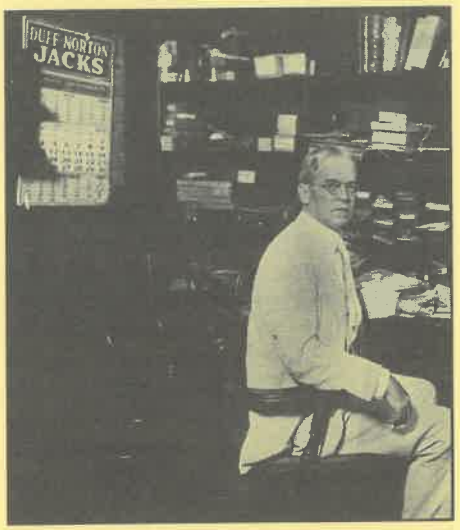
If one knows the approximate year, the month and what day the first of the month is on, by using a perpetual calendar one can usually find what year a photo was taken.

This picture shows a calendar on the wall, and your original photo probably shows the month clearer than the one in the magazine. But it appears that the preceding month — the smaller reference month above the main calendar month — is a three-letter month, thus probably May. So the current month must be June. Also, the man's white suit indicates that it is summertime!

You can see that the current month begins on a Friday. My perpetual calendar indicates that of all the years 1929 through 1940, the only June beginning on Friday was in 1934. So unless your clearer original photo shows it is not June on the calendar, then the photo was taken in June 1934.

Sincerely,
Dave Sharp

A perpetual calendar is one of our favorite tools for dating old photos, and often works with posters as well as actual calendar pages seen in pictures. The original of the McKell photo was not clear enough to get an exact dating, unfortunately. We did not take our detective deductions as far as you, however, and will accept 1934 instead of "about 1935" as the probable date for the picture. — ed.



William McKell at work, 1934. Photographer unknown, courtesy George Bragg.

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.

Storytelling Cassettes

The Hill Lorists, three accomplished West Virginia storytellers, have recently released cassette recordings of their work. The collection, "Lore of the Hills," presents West Virginia oral literature through language, songs and tales. The topics range from mountain humor and origins of the folk tale to the ghostly and the ghastly.

The Hill Lorists are Judy P. Byers, John H. Randolph, and Noel W. Tenney. All have extensive experience in storytelling and Mountain State folklife. Byers teaches English and folk literature at Fairmont State College, and serves as the literary executor of noted folklore collector Dr. Ruth Ann Musick. Randolph, a founder and former director of Fort New Salem at Salem College, now is a visiting professor in WVU's Extension Service at Jackson's Mill. He worked with the famous West Virginia folk scholar, Dr. Patrick Gainer. Noel Tenney is director of Fort New Salem and assistant professor of museum studies and Appalachian folklife at Salem College. Tenney studied mountain culture with both Musick and Gainer.

The "Lore of the Hills" series includes six cassettes that may be purchased separately for $10 each or as a set for $55. For more information contact the Hill Lorists, Rt. 1, Box 150C, Bristol, WV 26332.

Books from McClain Printing

McClain Printing Company of Parsons has released its "1989-1990 Appalachian Review," listing books of state and regional interest. The catalog brochure represents the continuing recovery of the historic, family-owned printing business from the 1985 flood. Many of the 45 titles, primarily history and fiction, were among the books lost to the raging waters.

The new catalog includes classics such as *Bloodletting in Appalachia* by Howard B. Lee, a history of the early 20th-century mine wars in West Virginia. The lavishly illustrated *Tumult on the Mountains — Lumbering in West Virginia, 1770-1920* by Roy B. Clarkson is also back in print. W. E. Blackhurst's colorful novels are listed, including *Sawdust in Your Eyes, Riders of the Flood*, and *Of Men and a Mighty Mountain*. These popular books take readers back to long-ago lumber operations in the Greenbrier Valley.

McClain offers special collectors' editions to launch its new regional book list. The matched collection includes three of the earliest histories of the Mountain State, *Chronicles of Border Warfare* by Alexander Scott Withers, *Early Settlement and Indian Wars of West Virginia* by Wills DeHass, and *Notes on Settlement and Indian Wars* by Joseph Doddridge. Each special volume sells for $14.95.

More recent histories include Otis K. Rice's *West Virginia: The State and Its People, The Monongalia Story* by Earl L. Core, and *An Appalachian Legacy: Mannington Life and Spirit* by GOLDENSEAL contributor Arthur C. Prichard.

For a copy of the "1989-1990 Appalachian Review" contact McClain Printing Company, 212 Main Street, Parsons, WV 26287, (304) 478-2881.

Immigrant Stories Told

During the years before and after the turn of the century, West Virginia industry attracted thousands of immigrants. Many of them were Italians who chose to settle here and raise

their families. Eventually they became the most numerous ethnic group in the Mountain State.

The West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival of Clarksburg recently put together a book to honor and "pay special tribute to the Italian immigrants who sacrificed to bring their families to America, and West Virginia in particular." *West Virginia Italian-Americans* includes family histories, photographs, a short section on Ellis Island, and an index listing hundreds of individuals. The reader will see such prominent Italian family names as Manchin, Vecellio, Basile, Minardi and many others. Dr. Joseph J. Simoni of West Virginia University's sociology department provided editorial assistance for the book.

The Italian Heritage Festival, organized in 1979, preserves and perpetuates the cultural history, sociology, language, myths and traits of Italian-Americans. The festival is held annually in Clarksburg over the Labor Day weekend. *West Virginia Italian-Americans* is available from West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival, Inc., P.O. Box 1632, Clarksburg, WV 26301. The 100-page hardcover book sells for $30, plus $3 postage and handling.

Coal Camp Memories

Karen Vuranch, director of the Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia, is the creator of a one-woman, one-act play titled "Coal Camp Memories." She first decided to do the play when a group of 200 students visited the Youth Museum and nearby Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine. Since only 40 people can go into the mine at one time, Vuranch entertained the overflow.

"Coal Camp Memories" tells the story of Hallie Marie Jones and her memories of growing up in Kayford, an actual company town near Charleston. Vuranch researched the play by talking with those who lived in the coal towns. Hallie's character is a composite of many such people. She starts out as a 10-year-old girl, grows into a demure teenager, then a young wife, and finally an old woman wise with years. Vuranch ages before the eyes of the audience, making makeup and costume changes onstage.

As a little girl, Hallie is tormented by Jimmy Kent, who dips her pigtails in the ink well. As life goes on, she falls in love with Jimmy, marries him and begins a family. After he dies in a mine accident, Hallie is faced with bringing up her children alone. Vuranch sings two a cappella songs during her performance — "West Virginia Mining Disaster" by Jean Ritchie and "West Virginia Friend" by Holly Near — and traditional musicians play Appalachian music in the background.

Karen Vuranch in "Coal Camp Memories."

Karen Vuranch studied theater at Ashland College in Ohio and has performed in professional and community productions in West Virginia and Ohio. As director of the Youth Museum, she develops and presents programs on state and regional culture. For more information on the Youth Museum or to arrange bookings for "Coal Camp Memories," call (304) 252-3730.

Augusta Apprenticeships

The Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins has launched a folk arts apprenticeship program. Coordinator Gerry Milnes says a limited number of the apprenticeships will be offered, enabling serious students to learn from master artists.

A variety of folk arts will be considered for apprenticeships, including fiddling, banjo playing, basketmaking, dulcimer making, boat building, woodcarving, square dance calling, blacksmithing, quilting and needlework. The purpose of the program is to encourage and perpetuate these activities.

Augusta seeks both apprentices and master folk artists for the new program. Arts organizations and individuals are invited to sponsor apprenticeships. The project is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts folk arts program.

Apprenticeships can be arranged for periods ranging from several weeks to one year at the master artist's home or workplace. Any traditional or ethnic folk art or crafts may qualify for acceptance. For more information contact Gerry Milnes, Augusta Heritage Center, Davis and Elkins College, 100 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 26241-3996.

New Thurmond Book

The Eastern National Park and Monument Association recently published a new history of Thurmond, the famous Fayette County railroad town. *Thurmond: A New River Community* is by GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan.

Thurmond, now nearly a ghost town, was for decades the principal boom town in the New River Coalfield. The town served as shipping point for local mines, as a repair and service center for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, and as a regional wholesale distribution hub. At its height, around 1910, Thurmond supplied far more freight revenues to the C&O than its closest rivals, Cincinnati and Richmond.

A rare independent community among company towns, Thurmond acquired a rowdy reputation as a place for coal miners and railroaders to let off steam. Much of the pictur-

esque commercial district survives today, serving in 1986 as the setting for the movie *Matewan*. The town is now the starting point for most New River commercial raft trips and is expected to become a major interpretative center for the New River Gorge National River.

Thurmond: A New River Community is the third in a series of short New River community histories, the first two featuring the towns of Sewell and Kaymoor. The 46-page softbound book, with illustrations, index and bibliography, sells for $6.95 at National Park Service visitor centers at Canyon Rim and Hinton, or by mail from Eastern National Park and Monument Association, P.O. Box 1189, Oak Hill, WV 25901. Mail orders should include $1.50 postage and handling, plus 42 cents sales tax from West Virginians.

Vandalia Album on Cassette

"The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-1987" is now available on cassette tape. All 41 selections from the original double record album are included on the new cassette. It is a release of Elderberry Records, the record label of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History.

"The Music Never Dies" originated from the archival recordings kept of every Vandalia Gathering, West Virginia's statewide folklife festival, held each Memorial Day weekend at the Capitol Complex in Charleston. The selections were chosen from over 100 hours of taped performances.

Listeners will enjoy the broadest cross section of Mountain State music ever recorded. The 65 performers on the double-length cassette represent West Virginia's best. They are the masters, past and present, old and young, from the Eastern Panhandle to the Ohio Valley.

"The Music Never Dies" may be ordered for $7.50 from The Shop, Department of Culture and History, Cultural Center, Charleston, WV 25305. Include $2.50 postage and handling for the cassette. The two-LP record album is also available for $12.50, and $3 postage and handling. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

Wetzel County Regatta Canceled

The 1989 New Martinsville Regatta, listed for July 4-9 in the Spring GOLDENSEAL "Folklife, Fairs, Festivals" calendar, has been canceled. A new event, River Heritage Days Festival, will celebrate the town's river-related history with arts and crafts, sternwheeler events, carnival rides, music, powerboat races and parades on September 22-24. Admission is free. For information call 455-3167.

The Roosevelts at the 1938 Arthurdale high school graduation.

Arthurdale on National Register

The Preston County town of Arthurdale has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official list of America's historical resources worthy of preservation.

Arthurdale was created in the 1930's, the first of more than 100 New Deal "new towns" built across the United States. It was designed to be a self-sufficient community and provide a better life for unemployed coal miners suffering through the Great Depression. The model town's economy was built around farming, furniture making, and such handicrafts as ceramics, weaving and woodcrafts. Arthurdale, one of three such planned communities in West Virginia, was a pet project of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Almost all of Arthurdale has been certified to the National Register, with the exception of some experimental farm lands. The original 165 houses are still there, as well as the Inn, the factories, four of six schools, the pottery, the well house, the cemeteries, several community center buildings, and the original road system.

Arthurdale Heritage, Inc., helped acquire this national recognition, aided by a $1000 grant from the Department of Culture and History. The National Register nomination gives Arthurdale eligibility for tax benefits and protection against adverse effects of federal or federally-assisted projects.

Help for Rare Breeds

With the dramatic changes in agriculture in recent times, much common livestock of the 19th century is in danger of being lost. In 1985, the Minor Breeds Conservancy completed a North American census of sheep, cattle, horses, goats and pigs. The numbers showed that a few breeds dominate modern agriculture, and 80 rare or minor breeds are threatened with extinction. The Conservancy is working to do something about these alarming figures.

Many minor breeds have qualities not found in today's specialized livestock. Milking Devons were once raised as triple-purpose cattle, valued for their beef and milk and as draft animals. Their remaining population is only 300-400 cows. Many rare breeds thrive by foraging on their own, as compared to modern livestock which needs a high protein diet, confinement and much veterinary care. The genetic diversity of minor breeds can play an important role in crossbreeding.

The Minor Breeds Conservancy publishes a newsletter, provides an information clearing house for breeders, and develops educational materials. An excellent source of minor breeds information is the Conservancy's *American Minor Breeds Notebook.* The 71-page softcover publication lists individual breed histories and breeder associations, and has photographs of the rare animals.

It is important that minor breeds be maintained in sufficient numbers so that their unique genetic material is not lost. The American Minor Breeds Conservancy works with the idea that the possibilities are endless, and the future unpredictable. For more information contact American Minor Breeds Conservancy, Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

More Clay County History

The art cultures class of Clay County High School recently published another look at central West Virginia pioneers. The book is *Early History II* and is the 11th volume in the successful series, *Hickory & Lady Slippers: Life and Legend of Clay County People.*

Since 1977, Clay County students have made a name for themselves with the *Hickory & Lady Slippers* books. In 1988, they completed their 10th volume. Art instructor Jerry Stover started his students on the project in order to preserve the past. Through writing, photography, and interviews, the students saved the stories and memories of Clay County's people, and learned a great deal about local history.

The new book has "Recollections of a Lifetime" by Col. D. S. Dewees, short stories of Clay County's early days by original historian Clayburn Pierson, and a history of Oak Hill School by Eloise Boggs with pictures of the school, students and teachers. The 150-page softcover book is indexed.

Volume XI, *Early History II* may be ordered for $6 from the Art Department, Clay County High School, Clay, WV 25043. Include $1 for postage.

Mountain State Mysteries

West Virginia has produced two fine mystery writers in recent years, successfully pursuing their craft from opposite corners of the state. They are Dave Pedneau of Princeton and John Douglas of Berkeley Springs. Between them, the two authors have produced a shelf full of captivating mystery novels.

The latest of the batch is Douglas's *Blind Spring Rambler,* published last fall by St. Martin's Press of New York. *Blind Spring Rambler* is the tale of a green young detective who finds himself on the wrong side of the power structure in a West Virginia company town during the mine wars of the early 1920's. Blind Spring — the coal town's name — appears to be based loosely on such places as Logan during the iron rule of Sheriff Don Chafin, but the story is not closely identified with any part of the state. *Blind Spring Rambler* is a 240-page hardback, well worth the $15.95 price.

John Douglas is the news editor of *The Morgan Messenger,* Morgan County's weekly newspaper. He is originally from nearby Cumberland, Maryland. He set his first book in Shawnee, a fictional version of Cumberland, and the West Virginia countryside to the south of town. *Shawnee Alley Fire* is a modern murder-arson story, unraveled through several days of intensive detective work by gumshoe Edward Harter. St. Martin's published this one as well, first as a hardcover novel and now as a $3.50 paperback.

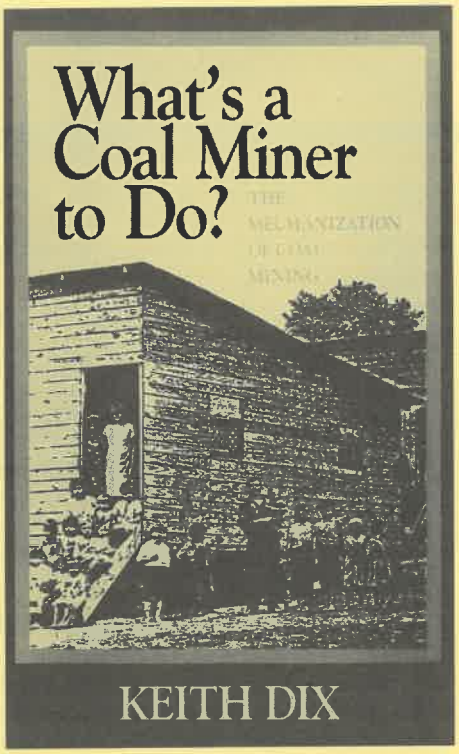
Douglas's books, which have been acclaimed by reviewers, feature the requisite world-weary detectives and beautiful, sometimes conniving, women. They are available in the mystery section of bookstores and by special order.

Dave Pedneau, a former magistrate and law-enforcement professional in Mercer County, draws his material from the grimmer side of police work. Pedneau's subjects are as realistic as today's worst headlines, complete with the gory details that the public normally never sees. The villains have no redeeming virtues and the authorities have plenty of faults of their own. The result is white-knuckle paperback crime fiction, including the 1985 *Presumption of Innocence,* published by Avon for $2.95, and the 1987 *A.P.B.* and 1988 *D.O.A.*. Both the latter were published by Ballantine Books, for $3.95 each.

Pedneau's novels are set in fictional Raven County, West Virginia, obviously modeled on Mercer. Detective Whit Pynchon, charmingly ill-tempered, middle-aged and yearning for early retirement in Myrtle Beach, is the main protagonist in *D.O.A.* and *A.P.B.* The books feature language and graphic violence which may offend some readers.

Neither author is out to hype West Virginia, but each produces a highly entertaining and generally favorable view of the Mountain State. Both enjoy broad national distribution through their New York publishers, ensuring a widespread readership for their tales of rural crime and punishment. Pick up a couple of their books for a glimpse of our mountain region as seen by a growing circle of America's mystery fans.

Book Review



Professor Keith Dix of West Virginia University is a noted scholar of the history of the Appalachian coal industry. He takes a particular interest in coal's sometimes spectacular labor history and in the current state of labor-management affairs. He works actively in labor relations training as a member of the university's Institute for Labor Studies.

His specialty, however, is another sort of labor history altogether — something closer to the history of work itself. Dix is interested in the way miners actually do their jobs. He is especially interested in the way mine work has changed with mechanization and what the changes mean for the miners' power on and off the job. Dix introduced these concerns in his 1977 book, *Work Relations in the Coal Industry: The Hand-Loading Era, 1880-1930*. He has now produced a larger study, *What's a Coal Miner To Do? The Mechanization of Coal Mining*. The new book was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press earlier this year.

Dix's starting point in both books is the hand-loading era, which lasted into the mid-20th century in some West Virginia coal mines. This was a period of backbreaking labor, but also a sort of golden age of the miner's control over his work. Mining was a craft then, requiring much skill. The miner exercised his own judgment and experience in manually undercutting a seam of coal, in placing and firing his explosives to break the mineral loose, in loading mine cars and in maintaining a safe and efficient workplace. He worked independently with chosen workmates, perhaps seeing a foreman once a day. He came and went as he pleased.

Such a situation gave miners great power over their occupation. The ability to mine coal lay in the minds and hands of skilled miners, not in specialized machinery belonging to the company. Miners passed their skills directly to the other men they trained. Management was largely excluded from this process and dependent on the good will of their miners to get the coal out of the ground.

Things changed dramatically with mine mechanization, the subject of Keith Dix's new book. As described by Dix, mechanization had many components, from the replacement of mules by underground mine "motors" to the installation of power fans for ventilation. Such elements as these were already in the domain of management, however, and changed the miner's immediate work very little.

The miner's freedom was affected as mechanization moved into the actual extraction of coal. This was a gradual process, beginning with such individual elements as drilling and undercutting the coal face and loading the mineral into mine cars. Over a long period all individual parts of the work were mechanized, and then all the mechanized parts were combined into modern continuous mining systems.

The coal miner as a skilled craftsman lost ground each step of the way. His work was largely deskilled, and he became a tender of machines. Management owned the machines and thus gained a control over the work that they had never enjoyed when the ability to get the job done lay in the judgment of skilled coal miners. The machines — and therefore the bosses — controlled the pace of work. The miner, formerly paid according to his production, was now put on hourly wages and a strict schedule.

Dix interviews former miners to get a firsthand perspective on these changes. U. G. Jordan, who began mining in 1926, put the complicated matter into a few words.

"When he was loading coal by hand, the harder he worked the more money he made," Jordan said of the early miner. "In hand loading you were your own boss, you worked as hard as you wanted to work." He noted that he had always loaded "whatever I wanted to load," usually averaging six or eight two-ton cars a day, and often left the mine by two o'clock in the afternoon. All this changed with the first Joy coal loading machine when, as Jordan says, the company "started to plan for mechanical mining." The men were put into crews organized around the machinery, and worked full shifts with a foreman with them all the time.

Thus the mechanization of coal mining brought a change in the nature of the work, as well as drastic reductions in the number of miners. *What's a Coal Miner To Do* covers the process in detail, including the evolution and introduction of mine machinery, the transformation of the work, and the resulting changes in labor and management policy.

In mine mechanization, Professor Dix takes on a subject of tremendous importance. Our state's great mineral wealth is mostly owned by outsiders, and West Virginia has traditionally taken its share of the rewards primarily in the form of mine wages. Anything affecting mine work, or the number of miners at work, affects the economy, population size, and other vital underpinnings of the Mountain State. Dix's book is a scholarly study, not light reading, but it will be of interest to anyone concerned with West Virginia's ongoing industrial saga.

— Ken Sullivan

What's a Coal Miner To Do? The Mechanization of Coal Mining *is a 258-page book, with illustrations, appendix and notes. The hardbound book may be purchased for $29.95 in bookstores, or ordered from the University of Pittsburgh Press, 127 Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.*

The Meadow

By Ethel Bolte

The meadow didn't belong to us. It belonged to Amos and "Aunt Mary" Stutler, our nearest neighbors, but it was as much a part of our lives when we were growing up as our backyard.

Our own meadows were far away, to our childish minds, one up the hollow beyond the pasture field and the other farther still, on top of the hill. We didn't often get to play in either. Usually we visited them only at hay-making time or when gathering apples in the fall, for our meadows also served as orchards.

The Stutler meadow was close at hand. It joined our yard and was only about 50 or 60 feet from our house. The line fence that separated our Doddridge County farms was wire and it was easy to creep through to the meadow. We had unrestricted access at all times except in early summer when the grass was not to be trampled, for that would ruin the hay.

Aunt Mary's house, at the other end of the meadow, was in calling distance. Her son Edwore would climb up on their corn crib and play a selection on his fife, and then he would yell down to us, "How was that?" We would yell back, "Good, play us another one." And he would oblige over and over again.

A big day in our lives was when we were considered big enough to go through the meadow to Aunt Mary's alone.

I realize now that the meadow was small, but it provided us with many pleasures. There was a meandering brook which made a sharp turn near the line fence and ran parallel to it for several yards. That was a source of wonder and delight. Small minnows played in and out of the shadowy banks, and occasionally in a larger pool we would spot a fish five or six inches long, which was virtually a mammoth to us.

Now and then the brook would overflow its banks and the water would rise into our yard, sometimes to the corner of our house. At times it flowed over the top of the wooden bridge at the corner of our yard. How exciting it was to wade then, and feel the strength of the rushing water!

One of the joys of summer was when Amos cut the meadow grass and made hay. Often he hired someone with a horse-drawn mowing machine to cut the level parts, but some years when money was scarce, he, his son-in-law Creed, and Edwore would cut it by hand. I can still hear their whetstones on the blades of the scythes. I can smell the wonderful aroma of hay drying in the summer air, and I can see the heat waves shimmering in the hot sun.

When the men would take a breather in the shade, we would take their glass jug to our well and refill it with good, cold water. At lunchtime Aunt Mary would bring a well-filled basket of food to the workers. They would eat under a small tree near our house, and of course we kids were invited.

After the hay was cut, hauled and stacked, the meadow was ours for the rest of the summer and fall. When an electrical storm was brewing and the clouds were black and threatening, we took great delight in racing about in the strong wind, heading for home and shelter with the first big bulletlike drops of rain.

In the wintertime we played Fox and Geese in the snow of the meadow and built snow-block houses there. Sometimes we would lie down and make snow angels. We had snowball fights, although this was frowned upon by our parents.

There was usually a well-beaten path up through the meadow this time of year, which with freezing and thawing became very muddy. Everyone used the meadow as a shortcut to go to the Pleasant Hill Church on the hill when the Methodist "big meeting" was in session. Sometimes these meetings lasted for three or four weeks, and were held every night. Many feet made a muddy path.

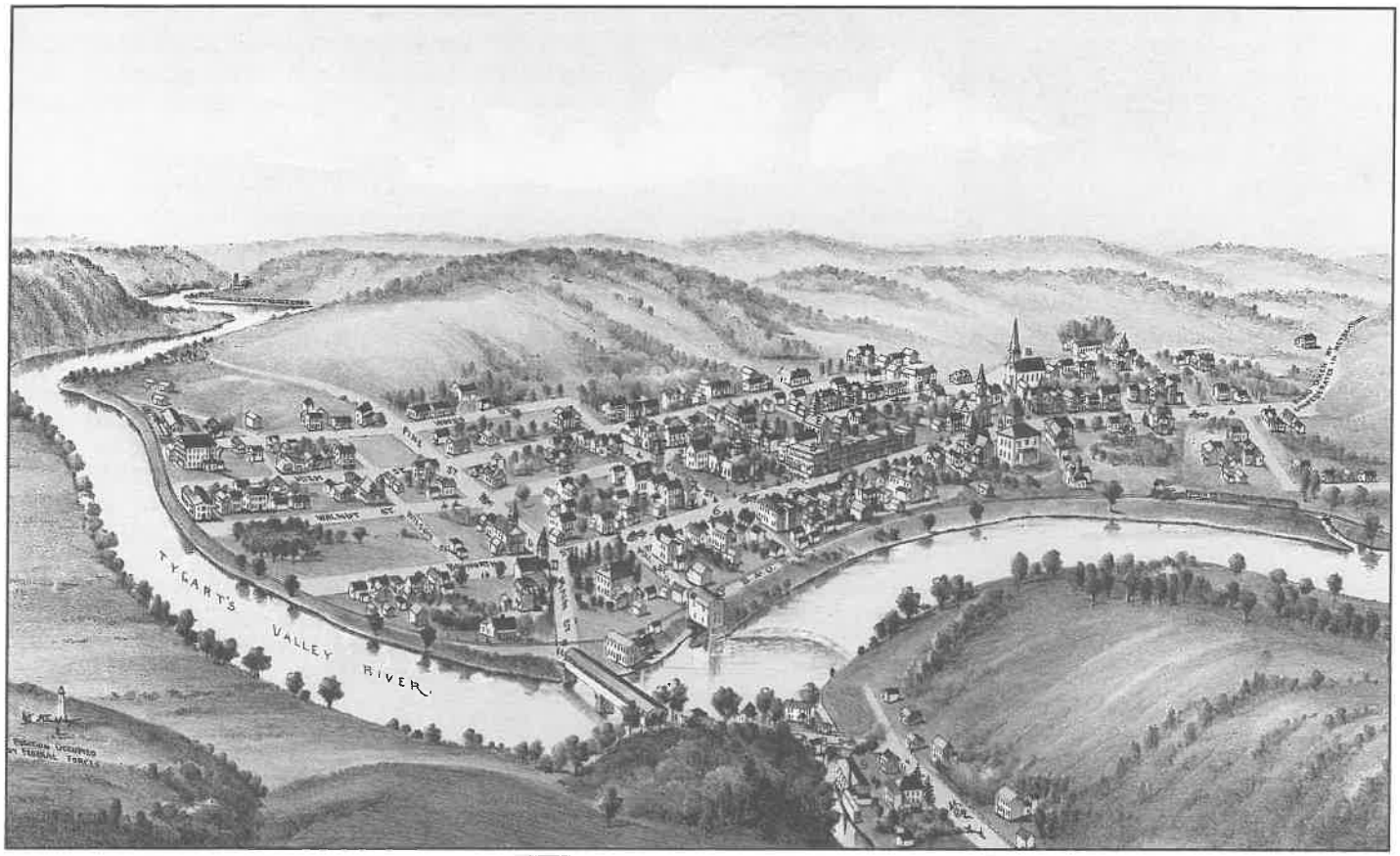
Spring brought the meadow back to life. One of my most pleasant memories is that of the many wild flowers which grew there, especially on the steep slopes below the road. One slope was entirely blanketed with Sweet Williams or pinks, while wild plum trees and dogwoods made a striking contrast with their delicate white blossoms.

There was one particular post along the road fence which had a hole in it, and every spring bluebirds nested in that. It was with great delight that we welcomed back the bluebirds and watched for the first egg. Later on, we were enthralled by the fuzzy baby birds. We were warned by our mother not to touch the eggs or little birds, for if we did, the parents would not come back to the nest. Excitement ran high when the baby birds learned to fly.

One spring day when the weather was moderating, and only patches of snow remained on the ground, I left the beaten path and went exploring on the other side of the creek. As I neared the foot of the slope, I heard a very beautiful sound, like a musical note being played over and over, echoing and re-echoing.

I followed the sound and made a great discovery. There at the base of the steep bank was a miniature cave. The floor of the cave was covered with water several inches deep, and from the ceiling great drops of water fell with musical ker-plunks.

I was thrilled as much as if I had discovered Wonderland, and I didn't tell anyone about my discovery, not even my brother. It was my secret, which I wanted to keep entirely to myself. It was a small thing, but the memory of that day in the meadow has stayed with me always.



T. M. Fowler's 1897 bird's-eye map of Philippi shows the historic covered bridge in the foreground. Fowler was famous for detail, right down to people on the streets. Courtesy State Archives.

A Bird's-eye View of West Virginia

The Panoramic Maps of Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler

By Ed Zahniser

What do Parkersburg, New Martinsville and Philippi have in common with New York City, Boston, and Chicago? All were the subject of panoramic urban maps in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Also called bird's-eye views, aero views, balloon views, and perspective or oblique maps, the panoramas show fascinating three-dimensional detail of their subject cities. They were a popular form of commercial art, which technical developments helped make affordable to many homes of the American Victorian era. With advances in lithography, editions of 100 to 500 prints could be made from one original drawing, and prices came down. Panoramic maps could be sold in the 1870's, for example, for $3 apiece unframed.

Of the more than 30 West Virginia panoramic maps now housed at the Library of Congress, at least 26 were by one intrepid artist, Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler, a Civil War veteran who traveled throughout several states from his home in New Jersey and later Pennsylvania.

Between about 1870 and shortly before his death in 1922, T. M. Fowler produced at least 411 panoramic urban maps. Exact counts are not possible. New Fowler views still turn up in courthouses, museums, historical societies, and the files of real estate firms — and are likely to continue to do so for some time. His painstaking work in West Virginia represents nearly ten percent of the 324 Fowler prints in the Library of Congress. Most of the collection came to the

This portrait shows a middle-aged Fowler, possibly during one of his West Virginia tours. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Library of Congress.

library routinely, as Fowler or his publishers submitted maps to register copyrights.

"The bird's-eye view was a popular method for depicting American life during the latter half of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century," writes James Raymond Warren in a bulletin of the Geography and Map Division of the Special Libraries Association. Warren has been an avid sleuth of Fowler's life and work. "They were not generally drawn to scale, but show in perspective individual structures, street patterns, transportation networks, and major physical features."

Only by examining the maps themselves can you appreciate the painstaking work that Warren's phrase "individual structures" implies. The careful detail was a major selling point. A large part of the appeal of the work that Fowler and his ilk did derived from the pride of ownership of the viewer. You bought the map because it showed your home or business, not just your town. This was civic pride at street level, even lot level. Fowler's Philippi map, for example, shows residences on all the town streets and often even the outbuildings on house lots, as well as more prominent features such as the famous covered bridge.

To us, the old 3-D maps appear as though viewed from a low-flying plane. But in the late 19th century Fowler and fellow entrepreneurs in this artistic branch of cartography did not enjoy the benefits of airplane flight. So far as is known, Fowler himself never went up in a balloon much less in an airplane, although he lived into the early years of manned flight.

Today's panoramic urban maps are often executed from aerial photographs. The information from aerial photographs can be readily translated into crisp line drawings not unlike architectural renderings. Shepherd College, in Shepherdstown, uses such a map as a recruiting tool. The college brochure impresses the parents of prospective students with the expanse of classrooms, library, and sports facilities, and makes it possible for new students to find their way around campus until the pathways become familiar.

Contemporary mapping guru Edward Tufte uses high resolution, black-and-white satellite photographs to produce his bird's-eye maps. "It's house resolution, which means that people can find their own house or the building where they work," Tufte says. He maintains that such maps involve people in "their own personal story." A century ago, Fowler and his cohorts played strongly on this personality factor, combined with civic pride in a rapidly industrializing America.

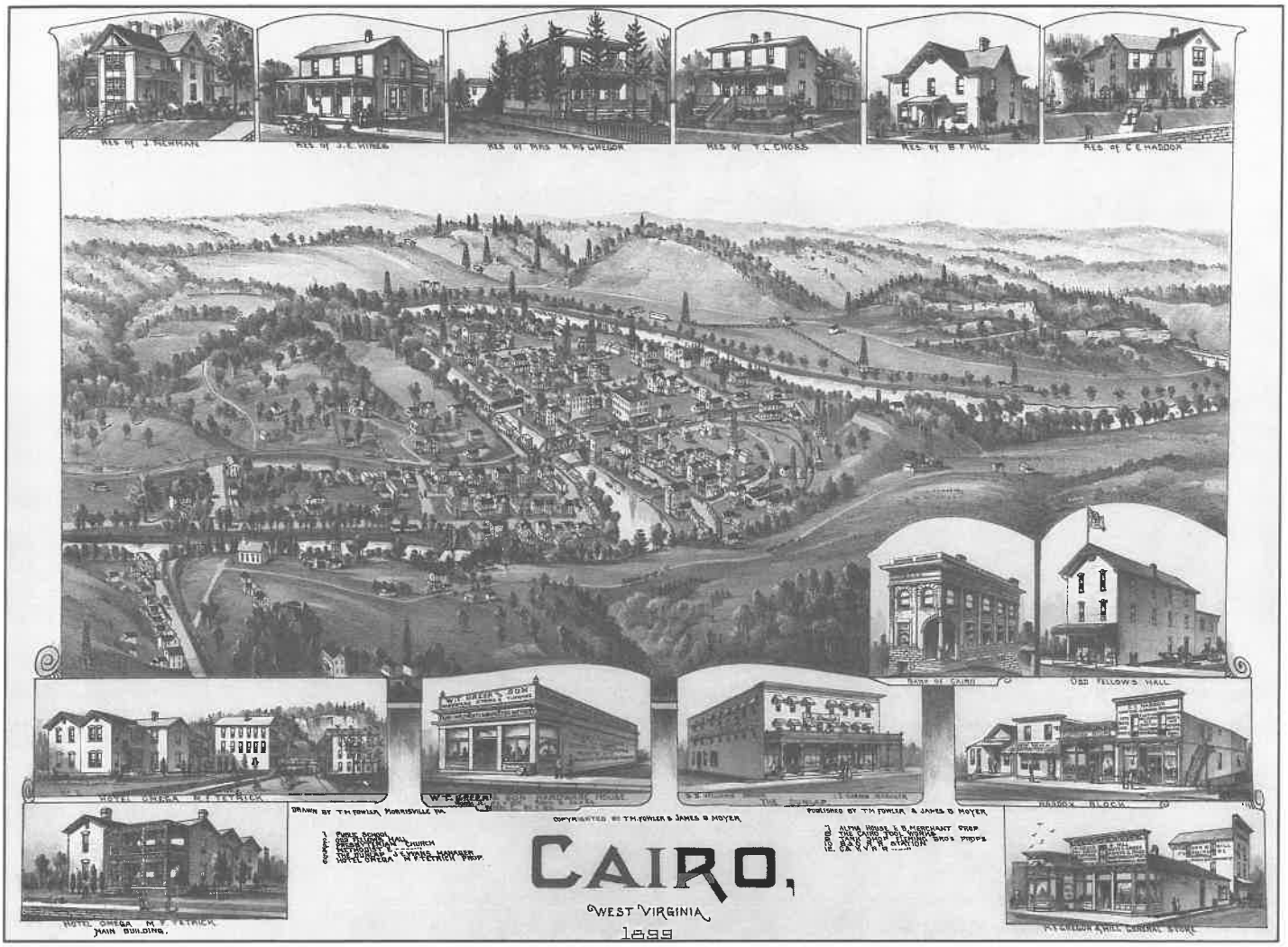
Fowler had to find his own vantage point, having neither airplane nor satellite from which to picture his urban scenes. This was usually a work of the artistic imagination, since nature seldom provided the necessary overlook. Fowler's partner O. H. Bailey indicated that the preferred height of the supposed vantage point was 2,000 or 3,000 feet above ground level. Even if there was a hill of sufficient height nearby to suggest the proper oblique view, it seldom stood at the position that would best show a town's layout — or best show the businesses and houses of prominent citizens who might sponsor the map.

Did Fowler Map Your Town?

In the half century he traveled the countryside, Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler mapped at least 26 West Virginia communities. His bird's-eye views are preserved today at the Library of Congress. Black-and-white photos of these maps are available in various sizes ranging from 8" x 10" to 22½" x 34", with prices starting at $7 each. For more information on Fowler's West Virginia maps, contact Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540.

The Library of Congress maps include all those published in this GOLDENSEAL, plus nearly 20 others. For those we have not reproduced here, check your local library for the *West Virginia Picture Book*, Volume 51 of the West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia series, by Jim Comstock and Peter Wallace. This 1978 book reprints all known West Virginia maps by Fowler.

Additionally, the State Archives at the Cultural Center in Charleston has several of Fowler's original lithographic prints, including maps of Philippi, Buckhannon, Cairo, Fairmont and Palatine, Harrisville, Mannington, Parkersburg, Salem, Sistersville, and Weston. You may order photos of the maps by contacting Archives and History, Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.



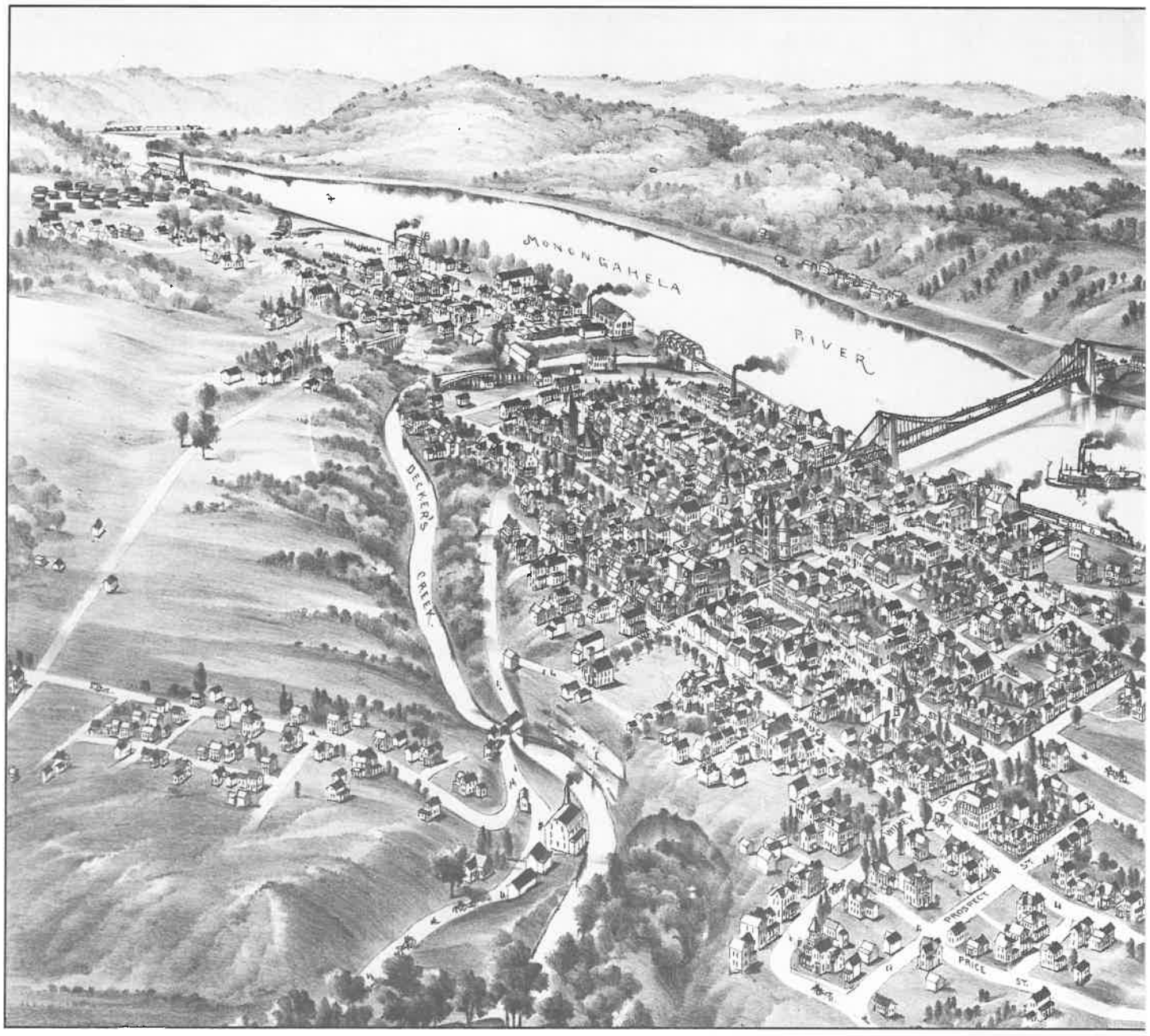
Fowler caught the Ritchie County town of Cairo at the peak of the turn-of-the-century oil boom. Derricks were scattered on the surrounding hills and throughout the town. Courtesy State Archives.

One of my favorites of the West Virginia maps is that of New Martinsville, drawn in 1899, during the second period of Fowler's intense involvement in the state. If you know this city snugged tight to the Ohio River shore 35 miles south of Wheeling, you know there is no hill immediately across the river of the height that the map's oblique view suggests. To define his vantage point, Fowler probably climbed the tallest steeple, water tower, or building in town to get what perspective he could on specific landmarks and structures. The rest of the point of view he would have created from his experience as an artist.

On a smaller scale I have seen such a map being drawn by Shepherdstown artist Lawrence Drechsler. It is a fascinating process. A perspective grid underlies the drawing. Fortunately, many towns have straight streets intersecting at right angles, which can function as a rude grid. Drechsler has demonstrated the technique for Shepherdstown residents as part of a one-man art show at the historic Entler Hotel. Predictably, in a way that would have made T. M. Fowler smile knowingly, people eagerly pointed out their houses, their storefronts, and the town's churches.

Drechsler went about mapping today's Shepherdstown just as Fowler would have mapped New Martinsville, without the aid of any aerial photography or artificial elevation. First, the streets must be walked so that all buildings, trees, and other physical features to be shown can be sketched. These many, many individual drawings are then compiled to produce a rough sketch on the grid of the town's streets, the river, and its bridges, for example. All these elements must be scaled to their proper diminishing perspective as they appear to be systematically disappearing toward — in Fowler's work — two vanishing points. The tools needed are few and simple, in Fowler's case a parallelogram, special yardstick, folding ruler, compass, and a magnifying glass for working up details.

The first impression of Fowler's New Martinsville map is that of a good-sized town set between a large river (whose scale is defined by house size and the large boats in the foreground) and some hills. If you hold the map flat out in front of you and look down over its surface at a very low angle, you will notice that the tributary creek in the foreground appears to sit at a steep angle to the



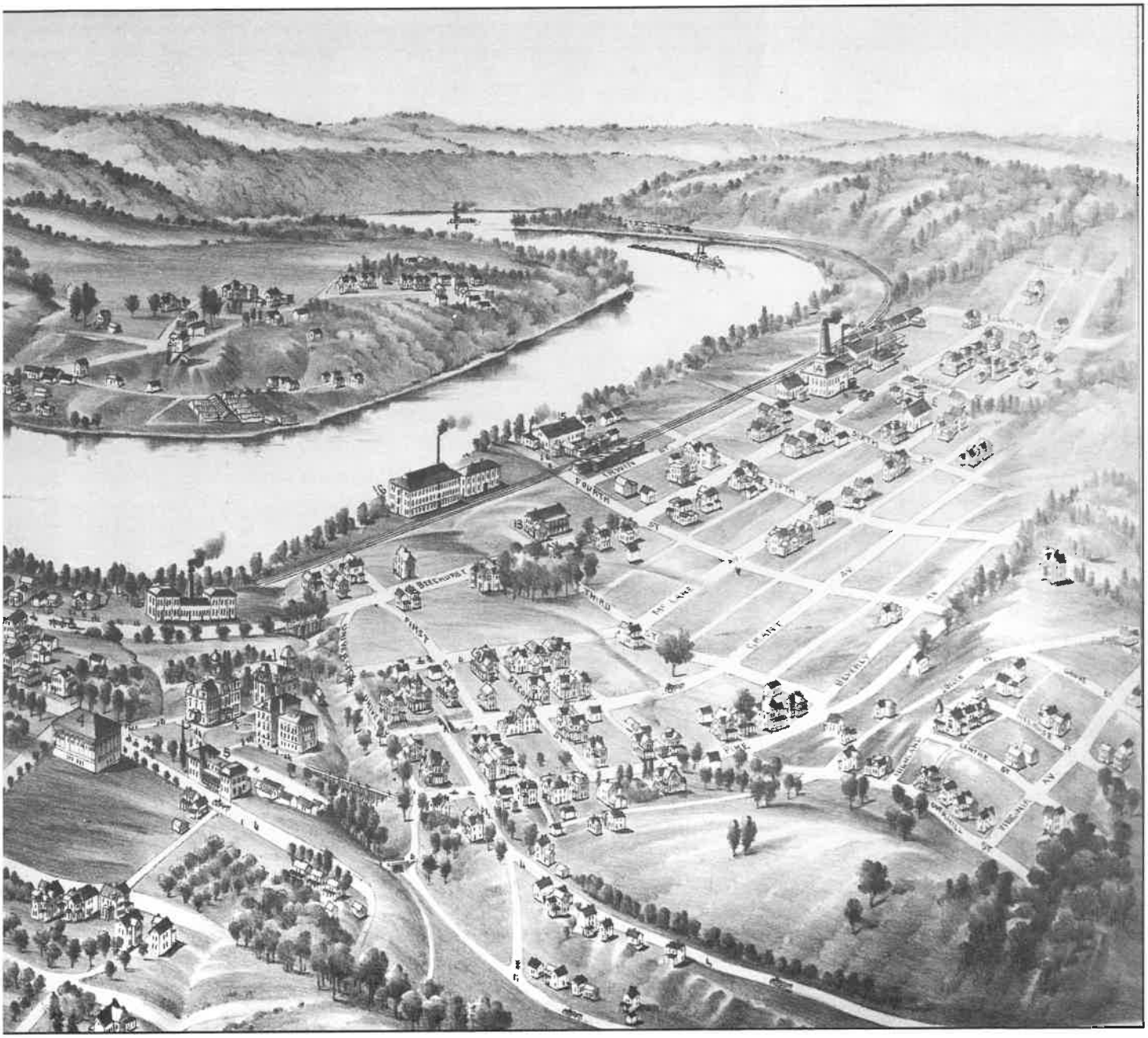
The 1897 Morgantown map shows the original West Virginia University campus, the Seneca Glass plant, the old suspension bridge to Westover, and other major landmarks. Small factories were prominent features of this part of the Monongahela Valley. Courtesy Library of Congress.

river that would not, in reality, hold water. In the overall context of Fowler's presentation, however, the effect is harmonious.

Certain problems and potential pitfalls that plagued panoramic map artists are apparent or implicit in Fowler's New Martinsville. Three riverboats gamely plying the Ohio show smokestack emissions, for example, but the boats' smoke is somehow subject to separate wind direction and speed. Two traveling opposite directions both have vertical stack emissions, but one going the same direction as one of these has its smoke laid out behind. So much for an apparent visual contradiction.

Fowler shows a total of three trains heading into New Martinsville, all separated by safe distances. Panoramic map makers were sometimes less careful. In their zeal to show lively transportation networks serving the fair cities that were the subjects of their maps, panoramic artists occasionally had trains steaming full-tilt toward each other on the same tracks. Excess has ever been a hazard of municipal boosterism.

The New Martinsville map exhibits another feature common to the genre. That string of lovely Victorian houses adorning the bottom of the map showcases the lifestyle of contemporary New Martinsville's rich and famous. Undoubtedly, Fowler sold those prominent spaces for a premium display rate. And perhaps the two hotels shown there were not only paying advertisers but also business sponsors, purchasing extra copies in advance for their own advertising purposes.



When I was about 12 or 13 years old, I stayed in a hotel on the river in New Martinsville — it belonged to grandparents of my childhood chum, Larry Strausbaugh — whose layout I remember as similar to Fowler's depiction of the Elk Hotel. The hotel was located at the old ferry crossing. Just this bit of personal involvement in one map suggests to me what it may have been like for residents of West Virginia towns to pick out their houses, and the houses and businesses of their friends and neighbors, in an artificial view whose parallel in nature they had never seen. Fowler delivered the "house resolution" that wrote you right into the story.

A string of events, happenstance, and hard business realities got T. M. Fowler into the map making profession. He was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, in 1842. At 17 he ran away from home and ended up selling candy and newspapers on trains. As the Civil War loomed, Fowler was living with an uncle in Buffalo, New York. When Union volunteers were first sought by President Abraham Lincoln, Fowler tried to join. He was not successful, being too young and — at five feet, three inches — too short. So determined was he to enlist, however, that he slipped in with a group already accepted for service and enjoyed a surreptitious, but evidently binding, swearing-in. He was assigned to the Army of the Potomac and posted to guard the defenses of Washington.

Fate nearly prevented Fowler from keeping his appointment with the bird's-eye views of West Virginia. During the second Battle of Bull Run, in the summer of 1862, a bullet passed through his ankle and killed the soldier next to him. Doctors at the nearby field hospital wanted to amputate the leg, but Fowler refused. Eventually he was able to hobble around on crutches, which he would depend on

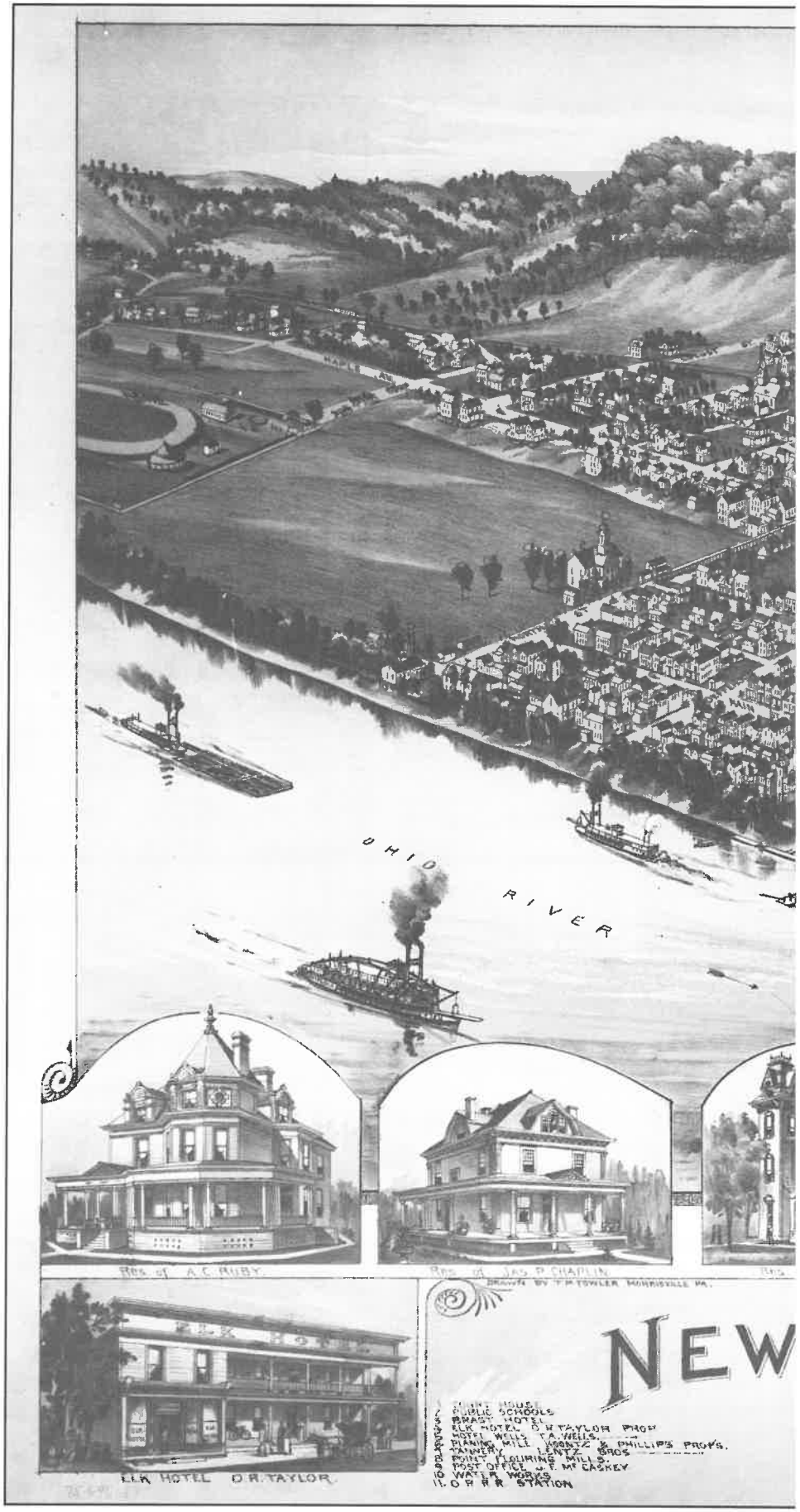
for five years. Following his recovery and his honorary discharge in 1863, Fowler obtained a camera and traveled to various Army camps to take tintypes that soldiers would send home to their families.

After he left the Army, Fowler joined an uncle's photography business in Madison, Wisconsin. There, probably in 1868 or earlier, a man named Howard Heston Bailey came into the studio to have his photograph taken. He was a bird's-eye artist and producer of business directories and business cards. By 1869, the young Fowler and H. H. Bailey were in business together as panoramic map makers. After Fowler's death, his daughter stated that it was Bailey who taught her father how to make bird's-eye views. They worked together either until Fowler married in 1875 or until he decided to go independent around 1880; accounts vary.

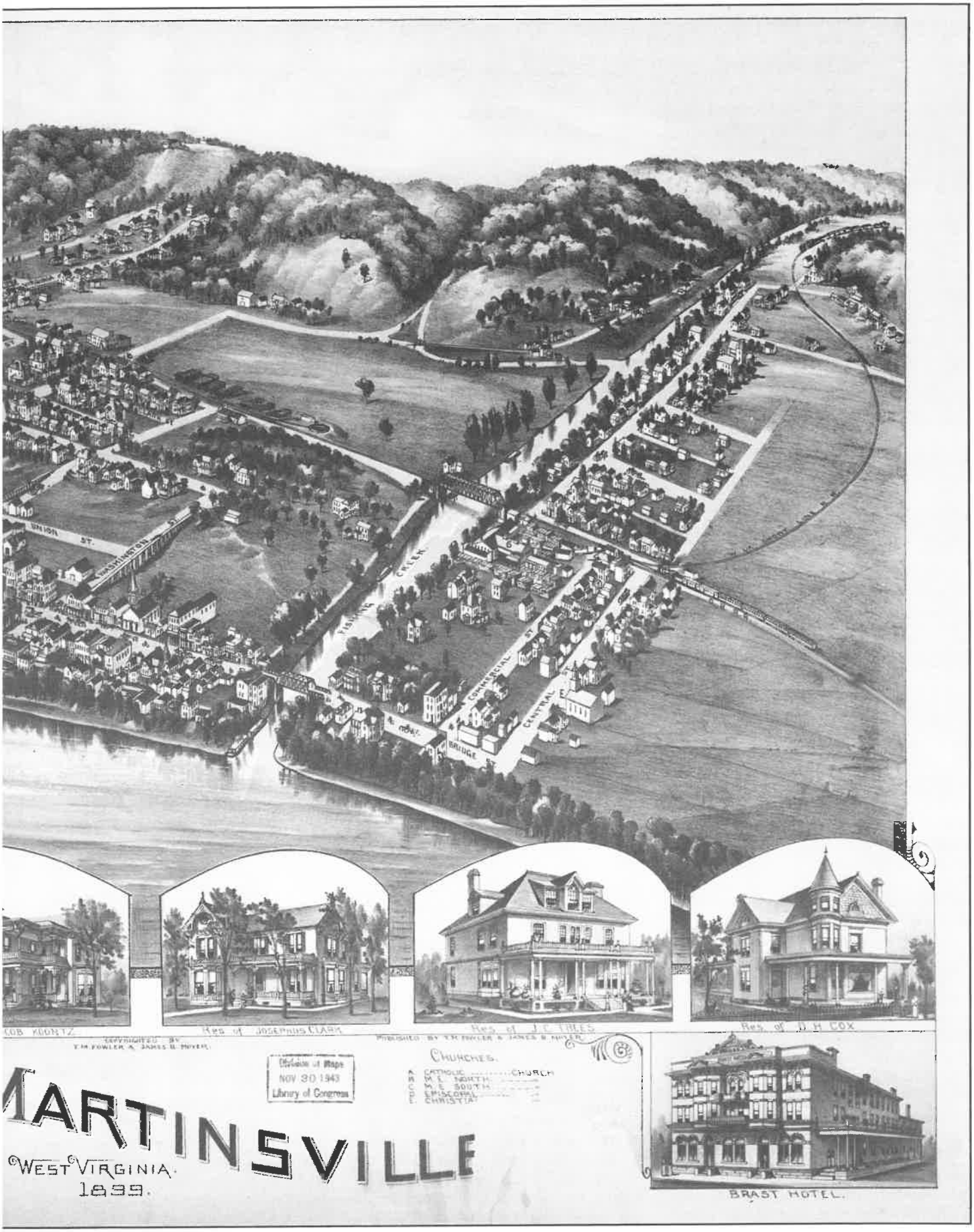
Eventually, Fowler would also work with H. H.'s brother, Oakley Hoopes Bailey, who, by dint of hard work and a long life — 104 years — was perhaps the most prolific of all these entrepreneurial artists. James Raymond Warren notes that Fowler's family claimed that many of the views of the northeastern states published by O. H. Bailey and Company were drawn by Fowler, even though no name appears on them. During the 1870's, according to the Library of Congress, Fowler also worked as an artist for J. J. Stoner.

It was probably in 1880 or 1881 that Fowler decided to go independent. By that time, O. H. Bailey and others pretty well controlled the Midwest markets, so Fowler moved east to New Jersey to establish himself. He had married Elizabeth Anna Dann in 1875, in Madison, and they would eventually have five children. In 1885, the Fowlers moved from Trenton, New Jersey, to nearby Morrisville, Pennsylvania.

By this time, Fowler was ranging farther afield to do new maps, his work eventually taking him into 20 states and three Canadian provinces.



The 1899 New Martinsville map shows transportation methods from walking and horse-drawn vehicles to riverboats and steam trains. The insets of prominent houses at the bottom were typical of Fowler maps. Courtesy Library of Congress.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WASHINGTON ST.
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COMMERCIAL ST.
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Res. of D. H. COX
BRAST HOTEL.
Churches.
A CATHOLIC ..... CHURCH
B M. E. NORTH .....
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MARTINSVILLE
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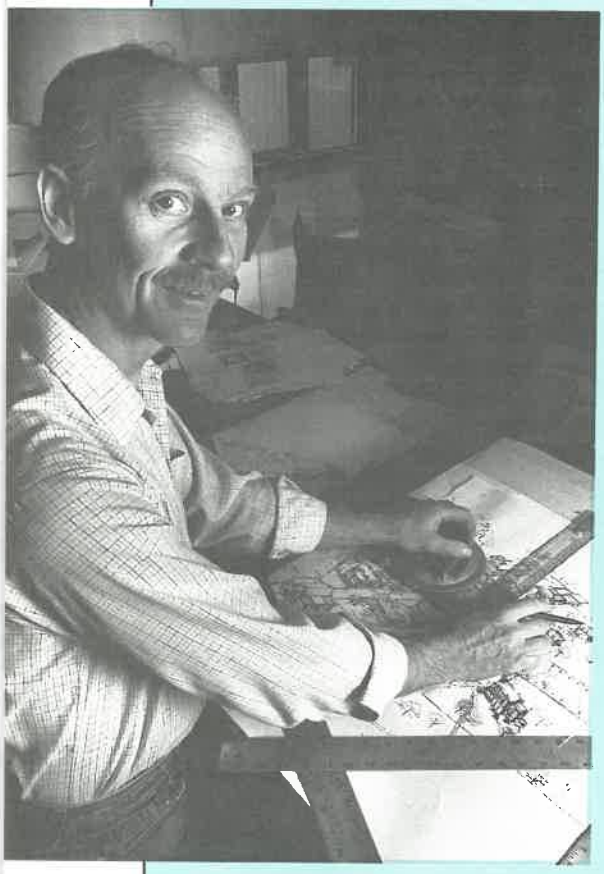
Panhandle Perspectives



Lawrence Drechsler is a current practitioner of old perspective mapping techniques. He works from his studio in Jefferson County. Photo by P. Corbit Brown.

Illustrator Lawrence Drechsler is one of the few artists currently doing bird's-eye maps and similar perspective views. He works much the same way Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler did a century ago, practicing the old art form in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle, where he has lived for the last six years.

Originally from Iowa, Drechsler worked in Virginia for several years before moving to Shepherdstown. He studied art in college in Illinois and at a Swedish school of art, craft and design, but most of what he knows about bird's-eye views is self-taught. Like Fowler, H. H. Bailey, and other bird's-eye mappers of yesterday, Lawrence Drechsler uses no aerial photos in preparing his drawings. The work is all done at ground level, using measuring and observation skills. Drechsler "mentally floats" to gain perspective, he says.

Bird's-eye drawings are used more than one might think, even today, and Drechsler's skills are enlisted by a variety of clients. His three-dimensional views are used in the restoration of historic properties. He has done many drawings for the National Park Service, showing interior perspectives right down to the furnishings in the rooms.

Drechsler's maps have been included on brochures for Virginia Military Institute and Washington and Lee University. His talents helped in the development of the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, when he drew a proposed equestrian facility from the bird's-eye point of view. Before moving to the Panhandle, Drechsler practiced his highly-technical art for the Army, producing among other work an aerial panorama of the Vietnamese countryside.

Today Lawrence Drechsler makes his living as a freelance illustrator. He continues to do a great deal of work for the National Park Service Interpretive Design Center at Harpers Ferry. In a recent one-man show at the Entler Hotel in Shepherdstown, his bird's-eye map of the town delighted residents who could point out where they lived or went to church. Drechsler is also an accomplished woodworker and toymaker.

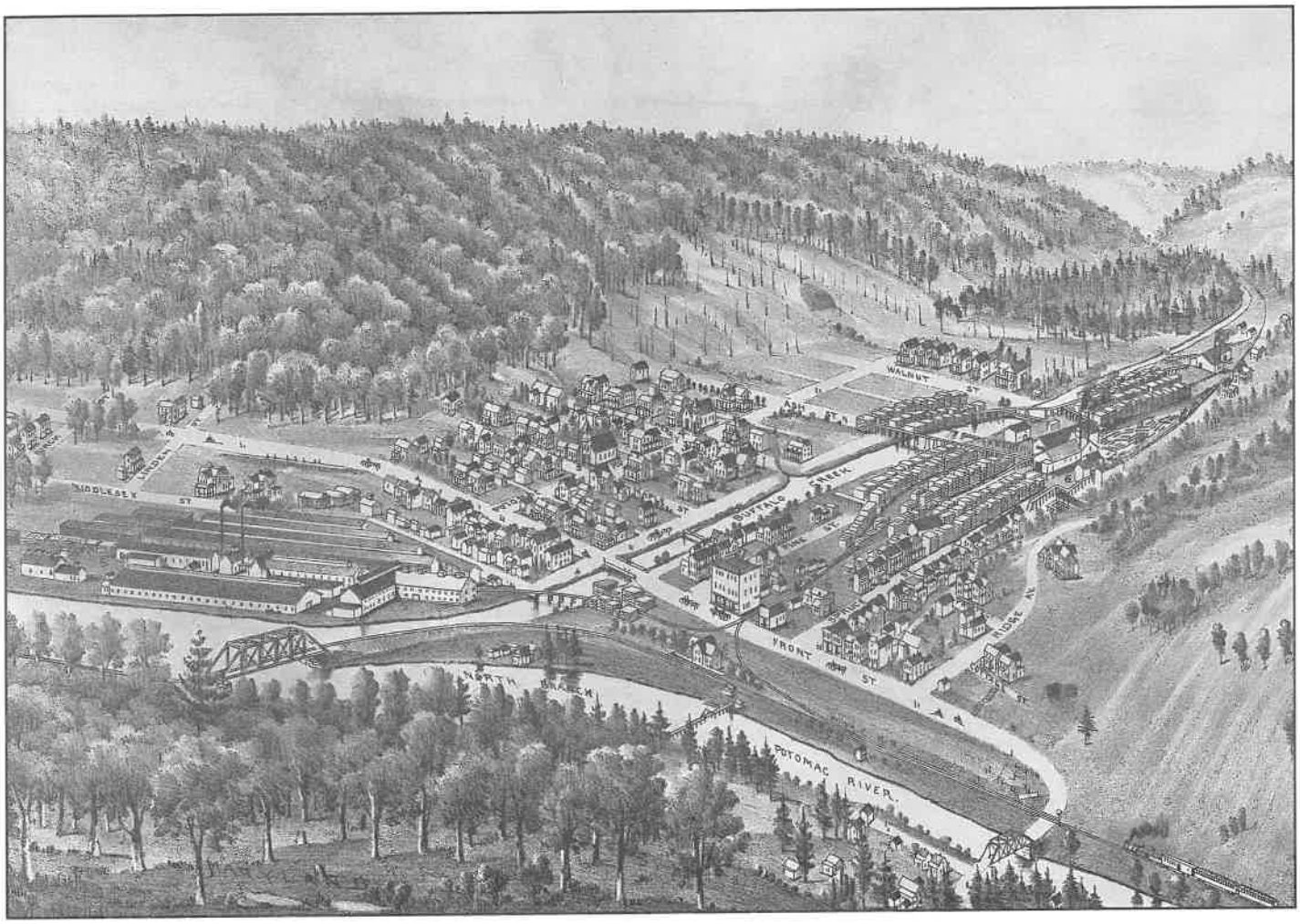
Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler made bird's-eye views his life's work. Though the maps are not as popular today as they were in Fowler's time, it is important that artists like Lawrence Drechsler keep the old techniques alive.

Opening new markets was the bane of this profession, involving much hard travel. On a military pension application, Fowler stated in 1913 that he had been "on the road as Publisher and Canvasser ever since the war." It was the search for new markets that brought Fowler to West Virginia in the 1896 to 1900 period, and again in 1905 and 1910 and 1911.

There was a technique to opening new territory. Enterprising map makers often played off one town against another to fuel civic pride and assure that both would eagerly buy into a mapping project. Cracking the first nut was the hard part. Meeting with businesses and prominent citizens to get one town to agree to have a map made was the opening move. Then Fowler would go to neighboring towns and play on their sense of competition. Thus in West Virginia we see maps of Keystone and nearby Northfork, of Buckhannon and Weston, and so on. Working on several projects in a concentrated area helped keep expenses to a minimum. Based on what we now know to exist in public collections, Fowler averaged about four West Virginia panoramic maps each year that he worked here.

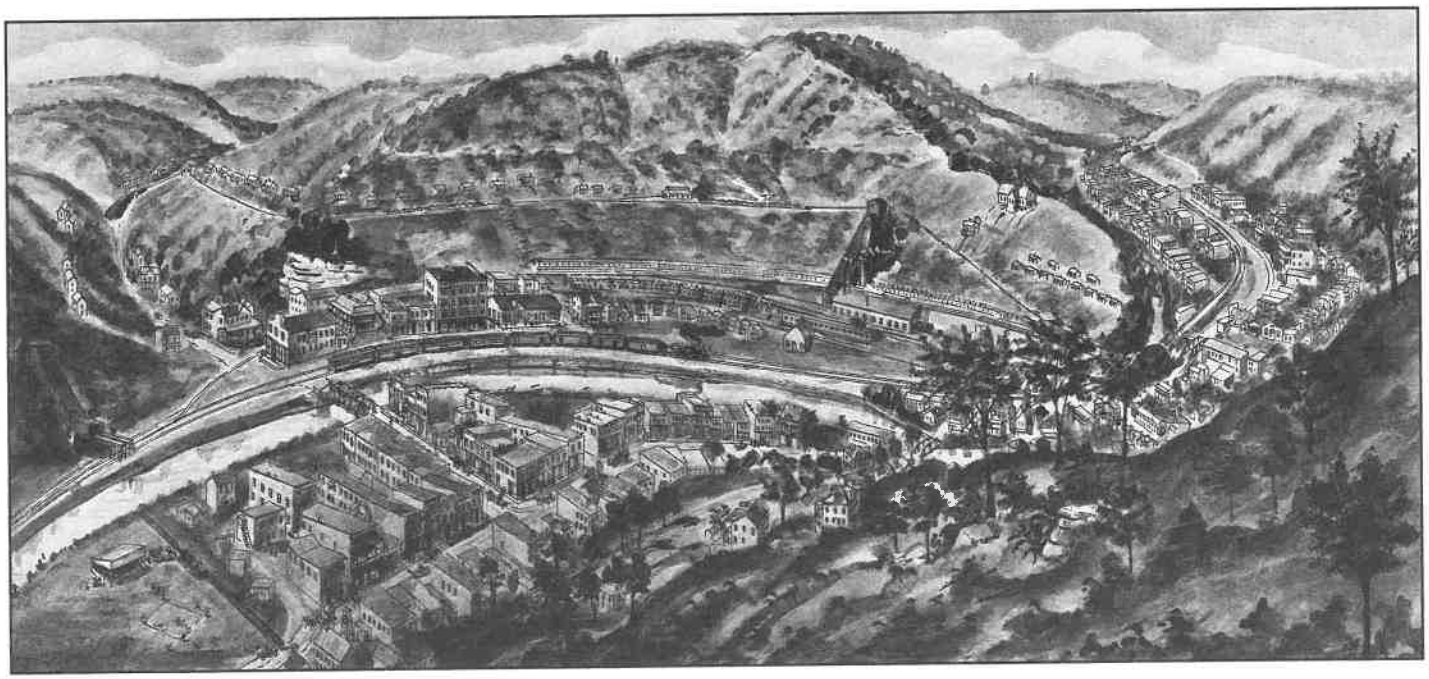
Fowler helped West Virginia communities to view themselves more realistically, which is one of the values of the arts in general. For there are maps and maps. Some show the road system, and others show quadrangles or contours. The maps in your head are probably ribbon-like strips, selectively lined with only a few noticeable landmarks, and definitely not to scale. These have all the defects of the child telling the adult: "I can only show you the way to my house if you take me to school first. That's where I go home from." Bird's-eye maps carry us above that limited perspective, and into full view of the big picture.

Nowadays, Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler's work helps us picture our state as the people saw themselves during a period of rapid change. The pride with which they purchased the city views, some paying extra to have their own Victorian mansions displayed prominently at the bottom, speaks to us as surely as the way they laid out the cities themselves.



Above: Bayard was a small town and quick work for the map maker. We can see that this community on the Maryland border was a mill town in 1898. Courtesy Library of Congress.

Below: This map of Keystone represents a rare foray into the southern coalfields and some of Fowler's last work in West Virginia. The McDowell County community was an important coal town in 1911. Courtesy Library of Congress.



The Hill Farm

Making a Living from Mountain Land

By James Orville Hill

Photographs by Michael Keller

I was born August 13, 1915, on a hilly 42-acre farm in the Island Creek section of Lincoln County. My father was Bruno Caleb Hill and my mother was Mary Jane Hartwell Hill. Our house was located on the western end of what was the most level two or three acres of the entire property. Most of the rest of the place was very rugged.

Looking north, our land dropped off sharply into Spruce Pine Run, which was filled with large boulders, miniature waterfalls and deep pools. No doubt the rocks had broken away from the surrounding high cliffs eons ago and crashed into the ravine through which Spruce Run travels several hundred yards before joining Island Creek, a tributary of Coal River. To the south, the mountain rose sharply to the crest, where our property line ran around the ridges forming the southern and western edges of the little farm.

A small branch drained our farm, forming a steep little valley running back to the southwest. The branch took a winding course down past the house, then emptied into Spruce Pine Run. After a hard downpour, a distinct roar could be heard as the water tumbled down. A large part of the property was made up of woodlands, our source for firewood. Another large portion of the land, looking across the branch from the house, was pasture.

Access to the property was via a narrow dirt road that began at the county road near Island Creek, and wound its way up the far side of Spruce Pine Run. Near the neighboring Trimble farm, the road took a sharp turn, crossed over Spruce Pine again, and ran from there on up to the house. The road had been carved out by picks, mattocks and shovels. The other approach to our place was by a path which twisted up the hill on the near side of Spruce Pine Run. From there, it crossed the pasture field past the barn and on to the house.

Our 42 acres provided most everything we needed. We purchased such staples as flour, sugar, soda, baking powder, coffee, salt, rice, and oatmeal at the local store. Everything else was planted, cultivated and harvested, or found growing wild on the farm. Our father worked away from the place seasonally, as did many hill farmers, but the farm produced a very large part of our livelihood.

Field crops such as corn, wheat and oats were grown on the land that extended up the little valley to the southwest. There were several large benches or terraces with steep banks in between them on that part of the farm. The semi-flat surfaces made cultivation easier.

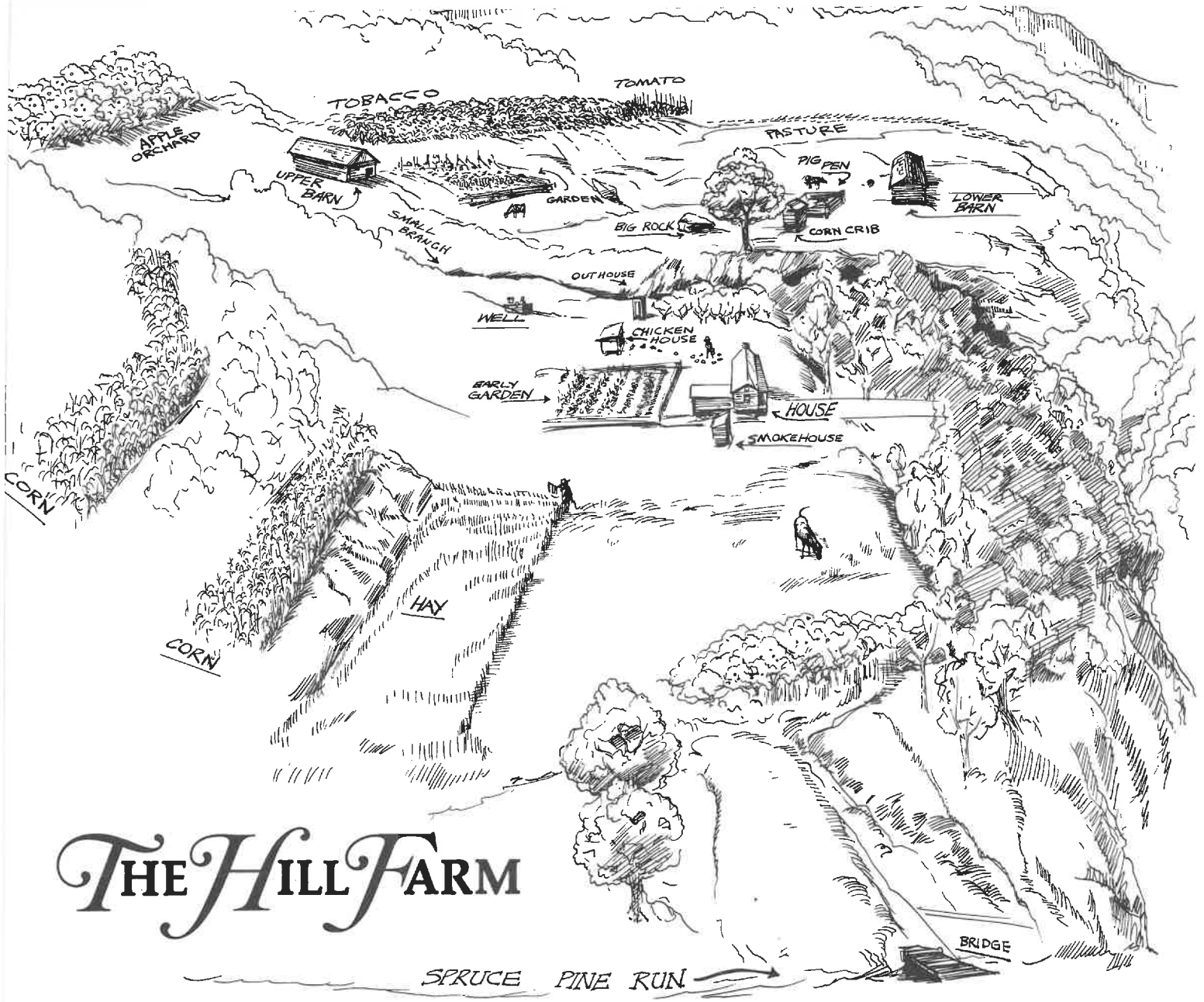
In late summer, our corn was cut and placed in shocks. Four corn plants left standing were tied at the tops. The cut corn was placed around these and then tied securely with a hickory withe. The corn was left in the field for about two months to cure and harden. Then the shocks were taken apart, the ears shucked out and thrown in a pile on the ground. Later in the day, the corn was loaded on the sled and hauled to the corn crib. The fodder was tied in large bundles and hauled to the upper barn for livestock feed during the winter months.

Oats and wheat were easy crops to grow. After the initial ground preparation and sowing, they required little or no attention till harvest time. When the grain turned a yellow or golden color, it was cut and placed in small shocks throughout the field for further curing and drying.

The cutting was done by using a cradle, which was a scythe with a long curved cutting blade and four finger-like curved wooden rods. Papa never let any of us boys use the cradle, as he was afraid we would bend the blade or break the fingers. Swung in a long arc, it cut the grain and gathered it on the fingers in one operation. Then the grain was placed on the ground in a neat row to be gathered into large bundles and tied with a few strands of the plant, twisted and tucked under. If stacked properly, the shock would stand by itself. Two extra bundles were spread out to form a cap, which served as a cover from the rain. After standing in the field for a few weeks, the wheat and oats were stored in the barn.

Orchard grass and timothy grew in the area surrounding the house, especially in the large field on the eastern side. The grass was cut twice during the summer, using a hand scythe, and allowed to lie on the ground for several days to dry. It had to be turned once, so it would dry evenly. We always hoped for good sunshiny weather, so we could get our hay in the barn before any rain fell. It was great fun to ride atop a big sledful of sweet smelling hay on the way to the barn.

Beyond the hayfield to the east, corn and melons were grown. Also, there were several large apple trees located throughout the area, one I particularly remember. It was the Wolf River variety, and it produced some of the largest apples I have ever seen. They were quite sour and not very palatable, but good keepers and very suitable for making apple butter. Then there were the Black Ben Davis variety and the Johnson Winter



Making most of a big family's livelihood from a small mountain farm demanded intensive use of the land. The Hills practiced a mixed agriculture, using a horse for plowing and pulling and hand tools for the rest of the work. Most of the products were consumed at home.

The farm was divided by the small branch leading down to Spruce Pine Run. The land slopes steeply in most places, but is broken up by several gentle benches. The house and its outbuildings occupied the biggest of these benches, along with the early garden and hay field. Corn and other grains were grown on other benches behind and above the house.

The main farm buildings lay across the ravine formed by the branch, at about the same level as the house. The lower barn, opening directly into the pasture, was used for livestock and for curing the tobacco which grew on the hillside.

Gardening supplied a large part of the family's food, and a second garden was located farther up the branch, for late vegetables. The upper barn was located on this part of the farm as well. The orchard was located at the back, highest part of the farm, although individual fruit and nut trees were scattered throughout the property. Surrounding woodlands provided firewood and wild foods.

This drawing by Andy Willis, not to scale, re-creates the farm of about 1930, when Mr. Hill remembers it best.

Above: James Orville Hill heads back to the childhood home he left in 1936. Lawton Posey and Mrs. Hill lead the way.

Below: Bruno Caleb Hill raised six children on the rocky farm. Here he sits with (left to right) sons Woodrow and Ruford and niece Vernita Amick. Our author stands behind. Photographer unknown, about 1924.

(or York Imperial), the lopsided apple. Both of these kept well in the cellar.

In this same field we grew sorghum cane for molasses. Some farmer in the vicinity owned the apparatus for making molasses, and he moved it from farm to farm. A few days before the machinery was moved in, the cane was stripped of its blades and the seed tops lopped off. After drying, the blades and seeds were stored in an outbuilding to be used later for livestock and chicken feed. Very little feed was purchased on our farm.

The cane mill was a simple piece of machinery, with two large rollers geared to turn toward each other. The long stalks of cane were fed into the turning rollers and the sticky juice caught in a large container underneath. The power was supplied by a horse or mule hitched to a large boom. A smaller lead pole was fixed to the boom at an angle, with a rope leading to the horse's bridle. When the job was finished, there would be a big sunken circle where the horse had trod.

After extraction, the juice was carried to the evaporator pan for boiling. The pan sat on a platform about three feet high, and measured about four feet by six. It had upright baffles about six inches apart, with openings at alternate ends, so the juice would slowly proceed along the length of the pan. A good wood fire kept the juice boiling. It was skimmed of all excess foam and stirred constantly with long-handled paddles. Finally, it was drawn off at the end of the last compartment into large crockery jugs. As was the custom among farm people with little money, the operator received an agreed-upon portion of the molasses as his pay.

Our main apple orchard was located on the topmost bench up the valley. It was always there since I could remember, so I suppose that my father planted the trees sometime in the early 1900's. Two rows ran the length of the bench. The varieties were Red June, Yellow Transparent, and Early Harvest, which always ripened in late June. Late varieties were Red Roman Beauty, Winesap and Black Ben Davis, which were the winter keepers.

Some years the apple harvest was more prolific than others. One particular season, with a bumper crop imminent, Papa said that we would have to make an extra storage space,

Chickens

In the spring, some of our hen chickens would answer nature's call to start a family. They became very defiant if we tried to discourage them, so Papa would select 15 nicely-shaped eggs, mark them with a pencil and put them under each hen. In about 21 days the little fluffy chicks would appear. We would put the new family into the extra chicken house and start feeding them on cornmeal mush and chick feed, with corn for the mother. Later, they were let outside, where they could forage for worms and bugs.

Occasionally, an old hen would take it upon herself to raise her chicks unbeknownst to us. She would select a secluded spot among the weeds and brush, lay eight or ten eggs, and sit on them till they hatched. One day, she would strut proudly into the yard, with her little brood following her. We gave them as much care as the others.

After two or three months, most of the male chicks were either used as fryers or traded at the store. The pullets were kept, and eventually became part of the egg-laying flock.

Raising chickens was not without its hazards. Once, when my brothers and I went to the chicken house to gather eggs, we discovered a big blacksnake coiled up in the nest. He had already ingested an egg or two. We ran back to the house with the news. Papa always told us that blacksnakes were harmless, and that they would rid the place of mice, rats, lizards and other small vermin. But an egg-eating snake was different. We grabbed a hoe and pulled Mr. Blacksnake out of the nest, threw him out in the yard and completely destroyed him.

Chicken hawks were common in our hills, always ready to make a meal of one of our young chickens. We would spot one circling or hear his distinctive piercing cry. Now and then, one would swoop in for a kill, but Papa was quite good in discouraging them with his 12-gauge shotgun. Minks, weasels and foxes also raided the chicken house. There wasn't a lot we could do about them, as they usually made their forays during the night. Our dogs discouraged them most of the time.

other than the cellar beneath the house. He decided that we would construct a dugout cellar near the house. We dug an excavation about eight feet by eight feet into the hillside and erected a small log building inside. A gently-sloped roof was made with rafters, wood sheathing and tar paper. The inside was boarded up with rough lumber and dirt was shoveled in around the sides and rear, plus a layer over the roof. We insulated the front and the door and covered them with roofing paper.

Our livestock consisted of one horse, two cows, two hogs, chickens, a dog, and almost always a cat. The horse was used in many ways, such as pulling the plow and harrow in ground preparation, dragging in timber, pulling the sled, and for riding to the store, post office and grist mill. It was housed in the large stall in the lower barn and fed hay, oats, corn and corn fodder. The large pasture provided plenty of green grass and water.

The cows had to be milked twice a day. The milk was strained, put in crockery containers and placed in the coolness of the cellar. Extra milk was put into a churn for a few days and then churned into butter and buttermilk. The cows were fed about the same diet as the horse, plus some soybeans and cow mash. Of course, they also had green grass from the pasture and water from the branch.

Occasionally, there were calves which we sold to a local dealer or kept as future milkers. Normally nature took its course in these matters, but once, when Ruford and I were very young, we discovered one of the cows lying in her stall giving birth. We quickly informed Papa, and we all gave what assistance we could until a nice black and white bull calf was born. He became quite a pet, but in a few months he had reached 150 pounds and had to be sold.

We ate mostly pork and chicken, and whatever wild game was available. In the spring, Papa would purchase two shoats — young pigs — and all through the summer and fall they were fed corn, leftovers from the table, and a daily pulling of hog weeds. By late fall, they were big and fat, ready to be slaughtered.

After butchering, the hams, shoulders and side bacon were hung in the smokehouse, where they were salt cured and smoked by the burning of green hickory wood. The trimmings were ground into sausage, then cooked, packed into glass jars, covered with rendered fat or lard, and sealed and stored in the cellar. A large portion of the pork tenderloin was put aside for frying and we cooked a big pot of ribs and backbones. Since we had no refrigeration, the rest was given to the folks who had come to help with the butchering job.

We always had a large flock of chickens, to be baked, fried or stewed. Usually, a basket of eggs could be gathered at the end of the day. We ate them for breakfast and used them in many other ways. Surplus eggs were taken to the store and traded. Our chickens were fed such home-grown feed as whole corn, cracked corn, wheat, oats and sorghum seeds.

Beef wasn't a major item of food in our family. It was not readily available, except when some neighbor would slaughter a cow or a steer. Most people were generous in those days, and would either give us a portion or sell it for a small price. There were also times when Papa would bring home a long stick of bologna from a trip to town. We considered that a rare and delicious treat.

In the autumn, it was no problem

The Hill children pose by the garden fence. They are Icy, Woodrow, cousin Vernita, Reba, Ruford, Earl and Orville. They lost their mother to the 1918 flu epidemic. Photographer unknown, mid-1920's.

for our father to go into the woods with his shotgun and come home with two pocketsful of nice big squirrels in his overall jacket. Stewed squirrel with white gravy was always a welcome change. There were also plenty of field and woods rabbits nearby, which could be shot or trapped to supplement our meat diet. Even young groundhogs were palatable if cooked properly. Some of this may sound inhumane, but for us it meant food on the table.

I remember my own first experience with Papa's 12-gauge, single-shot, Harrington and Richardson gun. I was about 11 or 12 years old. I slipped very quietly up the steep hill where I had heard a squirrel barking, careful not to step on any dried leaves or twigs. I finally spotted him about ten feet up a little dogwood tree. I pulled the trigger on that old shotgun, and the blast sent me reeling backwards down the hill. It packed a wallop that I have never forgotten. After scurrying back up the hill, I found my first game animal at the foot of the tree. I hurried back to show Papa what I had done.

The whitetail deer were sadly lacking in our area. In all the hunting of my boyhood, and for many years later, I never saw one or heard of anyone sighting one. I understand that the deer have migrated into that part of Lincoln County and are now quite plentiful.

Catching a mess of fresh fish from Island Creek or Coal River was easy. A wide variety such as bass, sunfish, chubs, suckers and goggle-eyes was readily available.

Mink, weasel, fox and opossum were trapped for their pelts only, as their meat was not considered edible. The possums were easy to trap, but their pelts were not worth much money. Trapping the wily fox, weasel and mink was a little more complicated. We had to outsmart them. Traps for mink had to be set underwater, with fresh meat bait. Pelts of these animals were more valuable, bringing up to $6 each. At the end of the season, we boxed up our furs and mailed them to Taylor Brothers Fur Company, maybe somewhere in North Carolina. In a week or two, we would receive a check.

Our main vegetable garden was located behind the house and woodlot, where most of the early vegetables were grown. Usually, we planted four rows of Irish Cobbler potatoes along the back of the garden in late March. As the plants began to mature, small cracks would appear in the earth around the foliage. Then we knew it was time to "gravel" in with our fingers and pull out little egg-sized potatoes, taking care not to damage the plants. They were so good when boiled with flour thickening stirred in with them. In the fall, the rest of the potatoes were dug, allowed to dry, and then stored in the cellar.

The early peas were also delicious when stewed with flour thickening. Our other vegetables were onions, beets, cabbage, tomatoes, radishes, lettuce, beans and corn. Cucumbers were usually grown some place separately, preferably in a damp sandy spot near the streams.

The other garden was across the branch near the upper side of the pasture field. There we planted late potatoes, corn and cabbage. When we had an unusually large potato harvest we dug a large shallow hole in the ground, lined it with a thick layer of old hay, and then piled the potatoes in a large mound in the center. A thick layer of hay was applied and covered with the extra dirt, thus making freeze-proof storage. We uncovered the mound when our other potatoes had run out.

Some of the cabbage was made into sauerkraut and stored in the cellar. The excess crop could also be kept into the winter, holed up like the potatoes. When a fresh head of cabbage was needed, we dug in through the dirt and hay to retrieve one.

Both gardens had to be fenced to keep out the livestock, chickens, rabbits and other animals. Instead of wire fencing, which we couldn't afford, we constructed paling fences. The pales were made from four-and-a-half-foot cuts of oak or chestnut, riven out with the faithful froe. They were about four inches wide and a half inch thick, sharpened to a point on top. After posts had been set in the ground and horizontal railings attached, the pales were nailed to the rails, leaving very narrow cracks between them. The sharp points prevented the chickens from landing on

top of the fence and then flying into the garden. This type of fence lasted for many, many years.

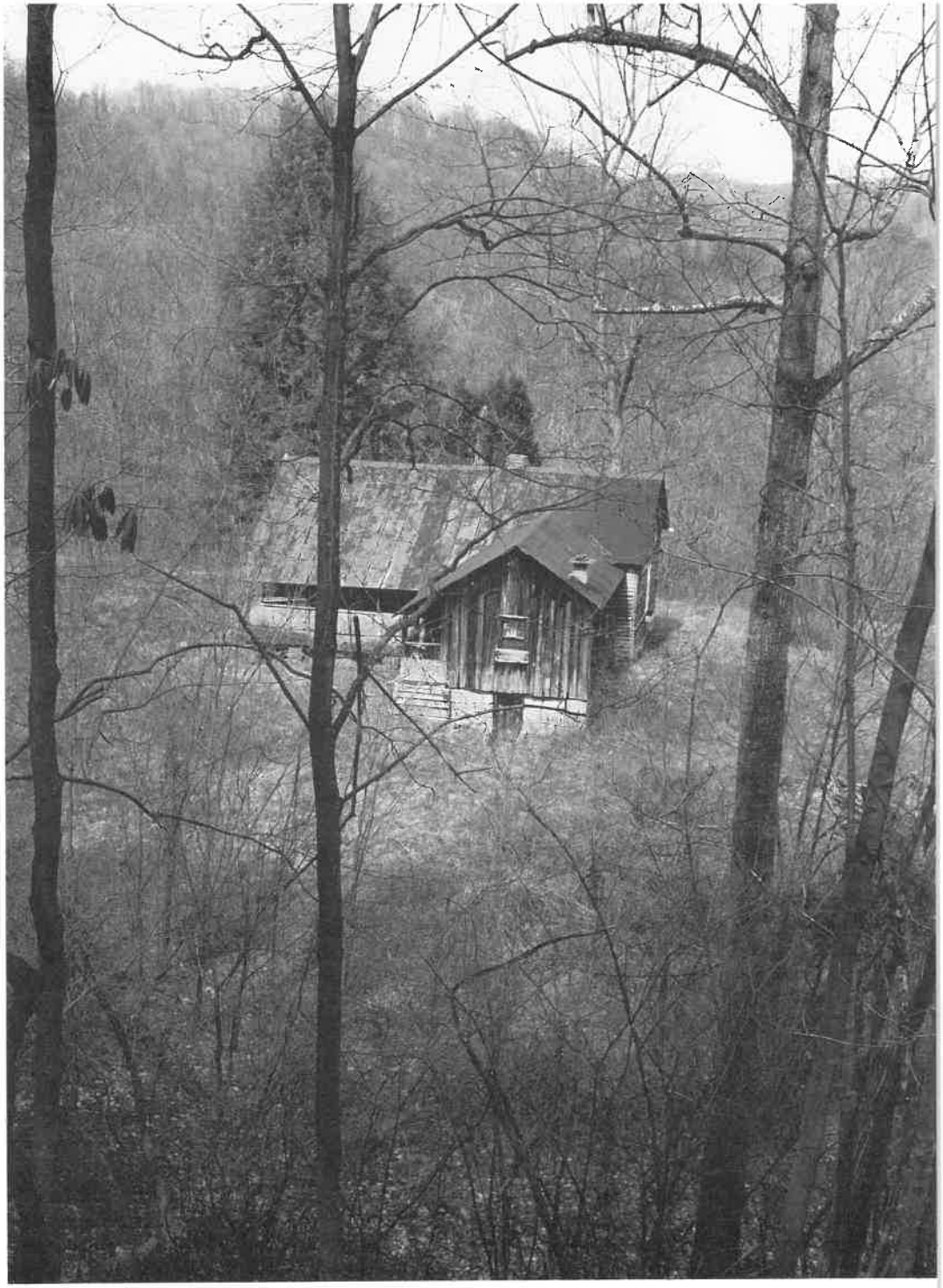
There was no need for commercial fertilizers, for we kept our gardens fertile by a yearly application of well-rotted cow and horse manure. Chicken manure could be used in a limited amount. In those days we didn't have pesticides, so the bugging and worming had to be done by hand. Gardening played a very important role in the lives of a hill farm family, supplying the food for survival.

Much wild food was available on the farm, including raspberries, blackberries, huckleberries, wild strawberries, chestnuts, black walnuts, hickory nuts, creasy greens and other wild greens. When the berries ripened, it was easy to go into the surrounding hills and hollows and pick a ten-quart bucketful in a few hours. No cultivated berries ever tasted as sweet and good. Most of the wild berries were canned in quart or half-gallon glass jars, or made into jelly and preserves.

In the mid-1920's, before the disastrous blight struck, chestnuts were available in ample supply anywhere in the woodlands on the farm. I recall a particular chestnut tree that stood in the edge of the pasture field just across the branch from the house. It was a beautiful, well-shaped tree, and almost always produced a bountiful crop of medium-sized, bright brown, good-flavored nuts, usually three to a single burr. It was sad to see the chestnut trees fade and die.

Black walnuts grew in great quantity. We had a favorite walnut tree that stood by itself on a steep bank just below the lower barn. I'm not certain whether it was by coincidence or the good plans of Mother Nature, but a large rock had been deposited in the field nearby. It probably measured ten by 15 feet and was fairly flat, but slanted slightly downhill. We placed smaller stones in a line along the bottom edge, creating a pocket for walnuts to dry in the sun.

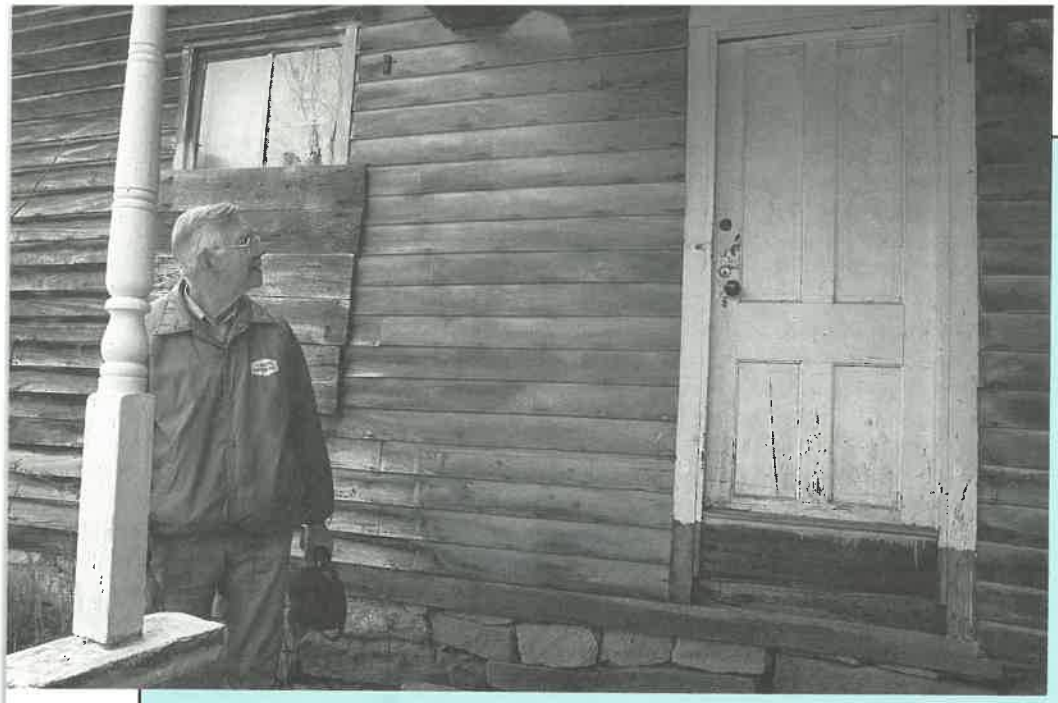
We picked up the nuts in large buckets and carried them to the upper edge of the big rock, where the messy job of hulling took place. We cracked the soft outer hull with hammers and hatchets, peeled it off, and rolled the nuts down to the bottom of the big rock. Walnut hulling produced a very potent stain on our hands that lasted through many soap-and-water washings. In a few days, the walnuts would need to be turned so they would dry evenly. Later, we stored them in the barn or some other outbuilding for winter.



The Hill farm was a place of many steep slopes and a few gentle benches. The house occupies the most level part of the property.

Hickory nuts were bountiful along the top ridges of the mountains, if we could beat the squirrels and chipmunks to them. They needed no particular drying, but a few weeks of curing made them easier to crack and shell out.

I remember with a great deal of satisfaction two gage plum trees that grew on the top of a steep bank, just above the water well. I have never eaten any plums that had the juicy, sweet flavor that these had. They were pinkish red and some were as large as golf balls. When they ripened, some would roll down the steep bank into the little branch, while others remained under the trees in



Our author finds a new lock on the door when he goes back. He has the current owner's permission to visit — and his own memories of a large family on a small farm.

Going Back

They say you can't go back. I suppose that means that you can't relive your childhood, and no doubt that's true. However, Brother Ruford and I have at least had the chance to physically return to the Lincoln County farm where we grew up. It happened last summer.

Ruford and his wife, Clara, flew in on August 11, 1988, to attend the annual Hartwell reunion. The Hartwells are our mother's people. We had the privilege of talking over old times with a few remaining relatives, and enjoying the good food at noontime. This get-together has been held for over 50 years, started under the leadership of our Grandmother (Hartwell) Toney, who passed away in 1943.

The following Monday my brother and his wife, my nephew Charles Freeman, and I left early for the trip to the homeplace. Our first stop was at Cousin Hayward Hill's farm near Alum Creek. Hayward lives in the house that our great-grandfather, Nelson Hill, built. From there, we proceeded up the Coal River road, and then up Island Creek to the mouth of Spruce Pine Run. The Spruce Pine roadway was very rough and rocky, and quite steep in places, so we all loaded into Hayward's four-wheel-drive Jeep for the drive up the hollow.

We located the road that led around to our old family home, but first we decided to visit with Joe Trimble, who lived in the upper reaches of the hollow. Ruford had contacted him by phone the previous day, so he was expecting us. Joe was 86 years old, but his mind was sharp as we reminisced about the old days. When someone asked him for his opinion of our father, he replied, "Well, I'll tell you — there never was any finer man ever walked up this hollow than Bruno Hill."

To be honest, I felt a little apprehensive about entering the little narrow road up to our old home, but I grabbed a big stick and led the procession. The trees from both sides met overhead, forming a cool canopy on this hot and humid day. At one point, a tree had fallen across the roadway, but we were able to get through with little trouble. Our timber bridge over Spruce Pine Run had long since rotted away, and had been replaced with a four-foot steel drainpipe. The road was still well defined, and I'm sure that with a little work it would be easy to get a car or truck to the house.

As we rounded the last curve leading up to the level, there proudly stood the little farmhouse among the weeds and small trees. I had to stand still for a minute or so, while a wave of nostalgia swept over me. I fought back the tears.

My thoughts raced back more than 50 years, as I remembered the happy days of a large family. Back then, the house and surrounding fields were well kept, evidence of a thriving hillside farm. Now, the trees and underbrush were so dense that our view was confined to the small space around the house. We couldn't even see across the branch where the pasture field, the barn and other outbuildings had once stood. Most of the farm had grown up in tall poplar since we left in 1936.

The house was fairly well preserved, even though long vacant. I honestly had expected that it might have fallen in, but the roof line was as erect and straight as ever. Of course, the wooden shingles had long ago been replaced with tin and roll asphalt roofing. The white wood siding had entirely lost its paint, fading to a light gray color, and the front porch floor had been removed completely. The five fancy posts supporting the porch roof were still there.

We spent a few minutes taking photos and talking about the things we remembered. Walking down the Spruce Pine road, Ruford and I rediscovered the mountain spring where we obtained our drinking water during the drought of the early 1930's. There was some water in the old spring, but it had almost succumbed to another long dry spell. We had to get our cool drink from the water Charles had thoughtfully brought along.

We loaded into our own cars at the mouth of the hollow. I made my way back to Charleston, 20-odd miles and a world away from Spruce Pine Run, and Ruford and Clara caught their return flight back to their home in Grand Junction, Colorado.

— James Orville Hill

the pasture field. We ate most of them raw, but I believe some were converted into plum butter.

Seedling peach trees grew in different locations around the house and barns. The peaches were not as large or flavorful as nursery trees would produce, but they were always a welcome treat, raw or canned. Two large pear trees grew in our front yard that produced a very solid, firm fruit. Stored in a cool dry location, they became mellow, juicy and sweet in a couple of months.

Papa knew how to pick wild greens, and a good variety was always available. I don't remember the names of many except poke, Shawnee lettuce and creasy greens. They always made a nice change of diet. Other wild foods that we ate more or less as snacks were black haws, persimmons, hazel nuts and, of course, the pawpaws (West Virginia bananas) which grew in profusion in the pasture field and near the edges of the woodlands.

Our water came from a hand-dug well about 200 feet from the house, near the little branch that flowed through the property. The well was about 20 feet deep and fed by underground springs. It had a boxed-in frame, three and a half feet square. We lowered a bucket through the hinged lid to draw up the cool, clear water. It was evidently good, pure and healthful, as none of us ever became ill from drinking it.

The well was walled up with rough flat rocks, some with protruding edges. Each spring, it had to be bailed out and cleaned to remove the sand and sediment from the bottom. I can remember gingerly making my descent down the sides, sticking the toes of my shoes in the ledges of the wall stones. The bucket would be filled with sediment, and my brothers would pull it up and dump it out. This procedure was repeated till we reached solid rock bottom. Believe me, this was one chore that we were all relieved to finish.

The drought of the early '30's created a water problem for us. The streams dried up and the water in our well dropped so low that Papa decided it might not be safe to drink. We had to get our drinking and cooking water from a large spring across Spruce Pine on the Trimble property.

Orville Hill left the farm to find a job in Charleston and a bride at the office. Betty Bonham Hill says she is a city girl, but she enjoyed a return trip last spring.

It was hard water, with a high mineral content, but it served our purpose during those trying times. We carried laundry water from deep pools in Spruce Pine Run. I can't remember just how the livestock found water, but believe that there were some ponds of water in the small branch.

During the summer months, we cut wood for the coming winter. Most of it came from the steep woodlands that lay to the south. After Papa selected a large oak or beech tree, we cut it down and sawed it into proper lengths for our cook stove and fireplace. This was done with a six-foot crosscut saw. It was considered a pretty hard chore, but we all took turns and got the job done. After cutting the blocks, we rolled them down the hill to the field and hollow near the woodlot. Some lodged against trees and brush on the trip down, and we would have to follow up and dislodge them. Occasionally, one would go awry and crash through the paling fence surrounding the garden.

Eventually, we hauled the chunks to the woodlot, where they were split into the proper size. The stove wood was racked for drying in the sun, while the fireplace wood could be left in thicker pieces and thrown into huge piles. It was rewarding to know that we had sufficient firewood to see us through the cold winter months.

Tobacco was our most important money crop. Tobacco was a year-round project starting in January or February and ending in January of the following year. To begin, we selected a site for the seedbed, usually near where trees and brush had been cut the previous year. A spot about 18 by 30 feet was spaded down to a depth of six inches, and all the rocks, roots and clods of dirt were raked off, leaving a good pulverized surface. Brush, logs, and dried sticks were placed on the bed and set afire. The burning destroyed all the weed seeds, thereby making a sterile plant bed. We had to tend the fire for several hours, to make sure it did not spread into the nearby woodlands. The next day, the bed would be raked again, and fresh-cut five-inch logs placed around the perimeter.

Then came the sowing of the seeds, so tiny that they resembled ground black pepper. Papa knew just the right amount of tobacco seeds required for the bed, maybe a teaspoon or two. He would put them in a partly filled bucket of sand and ashes, stir them thoroughly, and broadcast the mixture over the entire bed. A light raking was required to slightly cover the seeds. Then we tamped down the bed by foot, making sure that we covered every square inch.

We bent hickory limbs in the shape of a bow and inserted them at intervals around the bed to support a light canvas or cheesecloth cover. The cover was made by sewing together six pieces of the material, each three feet wide and 30 feet long. It was stretched over the entire surface and tacked to the border logs. If handled carefully, a canvas would last for several years. Its purpose was to protect the seedbed from heavy rains, late frost and strong sunlight.

In the late '20's, Papa decided that we would raise our tobacco crop on a two-acre strip of land that ran along the upper section of the pasture field. It extended from the branch and around the hill to near the property line. It was gently sloped and well drained, and had never before been used for crop production. Unfortunately, it was covered with rocks. We worked for days moving them to the lower edge of the field. Several huge boulders had to be left.

In early spring, Papa had a Mr. Kinder, a neighbor and fellow church member, come in with his two big horses and heavy equipment to plow and harrow the heavy sod. He did all this in one day's time, and left the ground in good workable condition. Afterwards, all the rocks that had been unearthed by the plow had to be removed and added to our already large piles.

About mid-May, we used our horse to rework the ground, drag it smooth and lay it off in furrows about three and a half feet apart. Handfuls of commercial fertilizer were scattered in the furrows at 30-inch intervals, and hills made up with hoes to accommodate the tobacco plants. By this time, the plants had grown to about six inches and were ready to be transplanted. We usually waited for a rain to dampen the ground, as carrying water would have been out of the question. Early the next morning, we would pull the plants and work like mad to accomplish as much as possible during the day.

From this point on, there was much to do to ensure a successful tobacco crop. The balks between the furrows had to be plowed and cultivated, weeds cut, and the growing plants hoed and slightly hilled up. This had to be done every two to three weeks. We had to be on the lookout for bud worms in early growth, which had to be picked out by hand and destroyed. Later, the much larger horn worm would attack the plant, and each leaf had to be turned up to locate and destroy them. We "topped" the tobacco when it reached a height of about four feet, breaking off the tops to encourage larger leaf growth. Soon after, suckers would appear where the leaves joined the stem. They had to be removed regularly.

And so it continued on through the summer till late August, when the whole tobacco field took on a tinge of golden yellow, an indication that the harvest would soon begin. Each plant was lopped off close to the ground with a large corn-cutting knife, and carefully laid to wilt a few hours. Tobacco sticks, about four and a half feet long and an inch and a half square, were ready. They were made from cuts of oak, riven out with splitting tools and the froe. Each end was sharpened.

To slip the tobacco plant on the stick, a conical metal cap called a spud was used. It was about six inches long and hollow, open on one end and tapered to a very sharp point on the other. It was inserted on the end of a stick, and five or six plants were forced downward over the spud onto the stick, with ample space left between. Care had to be taken not to start the spud too close to the end of the plant stalks, or the end would split out. If this happened, the tobacco stalk was given a quarter turn and redone. Then the loaded stick was forced into the ground, its tobacco plants propping it up, and left standing to wilt further, making it easier to handle. Later in the day, we loaded the tobacco on the sled and hauled it to the drying barn.

The lower barn was of log construction and built in two separate sections. The haymow and the stables were on the left side, with the right side reserved for the tobacco crop. In between was a space about 20 feet wide, into which the sled or wagon could be pulled to load or unload. All of this was under one roof, made of old-fashioned wooden shingles. The logs had wide spaces between them, which aided the curing. The tobacco was hung in tiers, one over the other, to the top of the barn. Large tier poles extended from one side to the other, spaced about four feet apart to hold the ends of the tobacco sticks.

When the tobacco was hauled to the barn, each stick was placed between the tier poles, with its upside-down plants hanging down. We began at the bottom and worked to the top, the hanging tobacco of each tier somewhat overlapping the tier below. I can remember climbing those poles and having the heavy sticks of tobacco handed up to me. This continued till the whole crop had been hauled in and stored away. It would cure to a rich golden brown by December. Our tobacco was air-cured burley, mostly used to make cigarettes due to its good burning quality.

Papa liked to put innovative ideas into practical use. One example was the method he used to transport the tobacco from a field at the top of the hill across the branch to the lower barn. The year must have been about 1919, because my sister, Verna, was his main helper at this time; by the

following year, she was married and living in Charleston. I was not old enough to be of much assistance, but old enough to remember.

Papa's project was to string a strong wire down the valley from a tree or solid post near the field to a hand-cranked windlass near the lower barn. The purpose of the windlass was to stretch the wire till it was taut, and then lock it. Papa would attach an S-shaped hook near each end of a stick of tobacco, place the hooks on the wire and send the tobacco sliding down the cable. This system worked quite well most of the time, but occasionally a stick would lodge and have to be shaken loose or one would fall into the valley below. It was fascinating to watch, and I remember thinking of them as big birds flying down the valley. I believe that Woodrow and I had the job of carrying the hooks back up the hill to Papa.

Tobacco was the main cash crop on the small farm. This is Bruno Hill in the hillside tobacco patch, about 1931. Photographer unknown.

In early December, the stripping began, usually after a rainy, damp or foggy period. The tobacco was more pliable then, or "in case," as it was called. We removed the leaves by hand, starting at the base, and sorted them into the different grades — trash, flyings, bright leaf, wrapper, dark leaf and tips. Most of the time this took place in the barn, but on very cold days we moved our operation to the house. We kept just enough fire to take off the chill, and some days a pot of cornfield beans simmered in the fireplace for our supper.

Each grade was tied into "hands" and stacked separately. To tie a hand of tobacco, the leaves were placed in the left hand, keeping the stem ends very even until a comfortable handful was attained. Another leaf was folded, wrapped round and round the handful of tobacco, and then secured by pulling the stem through the bundle. After the stripping was over for the day, each stack was covered with old quilts, blankets, or tarpaulins. This went on for days if the weather remained right. We would add to the stacks till the job was completed, and then wait for the tobacco market to open around Christmas or New Years.

In the early years, our tobacco was packed into large wooden casks called hogsheads, supplied by the tobacco market. They measured roughly four feet in diameter and five feet high. A large wooden lid slipped inside, where it could be secured if the container was not completely full. Usually, our entire crop could be packed into two hogsheads. Labels were attached and the big barrels hauled to the Upper Falls freight station of the C&O Railroad for shipment to the market in Huntington. They sent us a check, usually in January, ending the cycle that began with the preparation of the seedbed in February.

After the late 1920's we transported our crop to market by another method. Casey Jones would bring his big truck to the barn, where the entire shipment would be loaded and then taken directly to the Huntington market. Some of us would make the trip with Mr. Jones, which usually required an overnight stay in a rooming house. The next day, we watched the auctioneer as he moved among the stacks of tobacco, followed by buyers from the different tobacco companies. After the business office completed their calculations, a check was issued right away. Soon we were on our way home, with the whole transaction taking only two days.

Raising tobacco meant many long hours of hard labor, but it was the main money source for us. The check was usually deposited in the Bank of St. Albans and drawn upon as the need arose. The payment varied year to year, according to price and poundage, averaging near $500. It always seemed to be sufficient to carry us through.

Sometime in the late '20's, a tomato cannery opened for business in St. Albans, and local farmers could apply for an acreage allotment. Papa's application was approved and we were allowed to grow about three-fourths of an acre of tomatoes. Certain specifications had to be followed in regard to size and quality. I believe that we selected the Marglobe variety for its medium size, good color, and firmness. Early in the spring, a well-drained, fertile spot was selected, plowed, and the ground worked down to a fine point. At the proper time, a hotbed was prepared and seeds sown. Just before transplanting, fertilizer or barn manure was applied to the field, and hills made up along the furrows. Tomatoes were fairly easy to grow and didn't have many natural enemies, with only normal cultivation and hoeing required.

We purchased lumber and made crates to pack the tomatoes for shipment to the cannery. As ripening began, the tomatoes were picked, sorted, wiped clean of dirt and

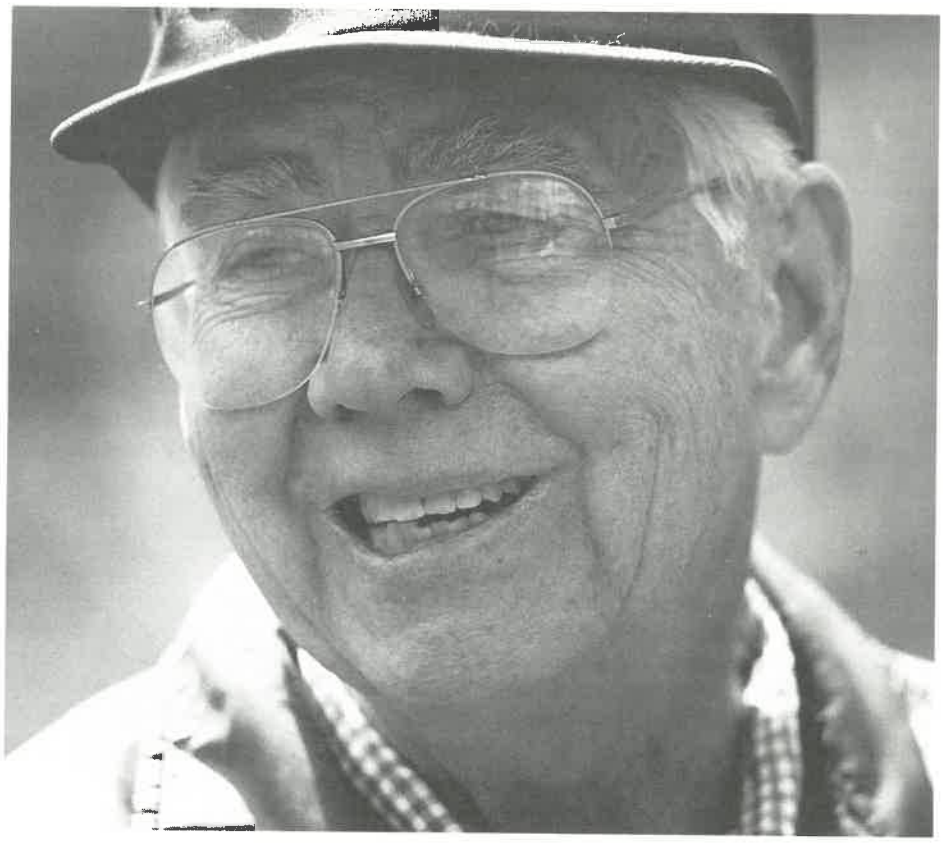
packed. Any rotten fruit was tossed away, and the spotted and ill-shaped taken to the house. Our neighbor, Mr. Jones, came to pick up our crates and truck them to the cannery, bringing back a check. Financially, it was no big deal, but it helped us through tough times.

Another enterprise we embarked upon was the raising of strawberries. We selected a quarter-acre of woodland at the north end of the apple orchard. The large trees and brush were cleared away, and this "new ground" was plowed and harrowed. We set out plants and cultivated them during the summer months. By autumn, the runners had nearly covered the ground. The following spring, the plants blossomed, and soon produced a good crop. In those days, a crate (24 quarts) of strawberries brought $2.50 or $3. By the time we figured in the cost of the crates and baskets, our profit was pretty slim. After about two years, we converted the berry crop to home use.

In the spring, there was an abundant supply of wild mayapple, the roots of which could be dried and sold. The root may be made into a drug with cathartic properties. The large leaves make a patch of mayapple look like many small umbrellas. We washed the roots thoroughly in the branch and placed them on the big flat rock to dry for a week or ten days. Then the mayapple was stuffed into a big coffee sack and carried to the store, where it might be worth eight or ten cents per pound. We had to have a crammed-full sack in order to make a dollar. We used the money to buy fishhooks and line, and maybe a bag of candy.

A more valuable plant was the yellow root, or goldenseal, but that took some searching. This root also is used in the preparation of some medicines. When a piece of dried root was chewed, it helped to relieve the pain of sore throat. I can't remember that we sold any great amount of it, but it was worth about $1 per pound. We usually brought our goldenseal in and reset the plants in a cool shady spot near the house. It soon spread till it covered the ground.

The queen of the medicinal roots was ginseng, the hardest of all to find. We searched the cool, shady hollows for it, sometimes having no



Our author remembers mountain farming as a life of earned independence. The big family worked hard and worked together.

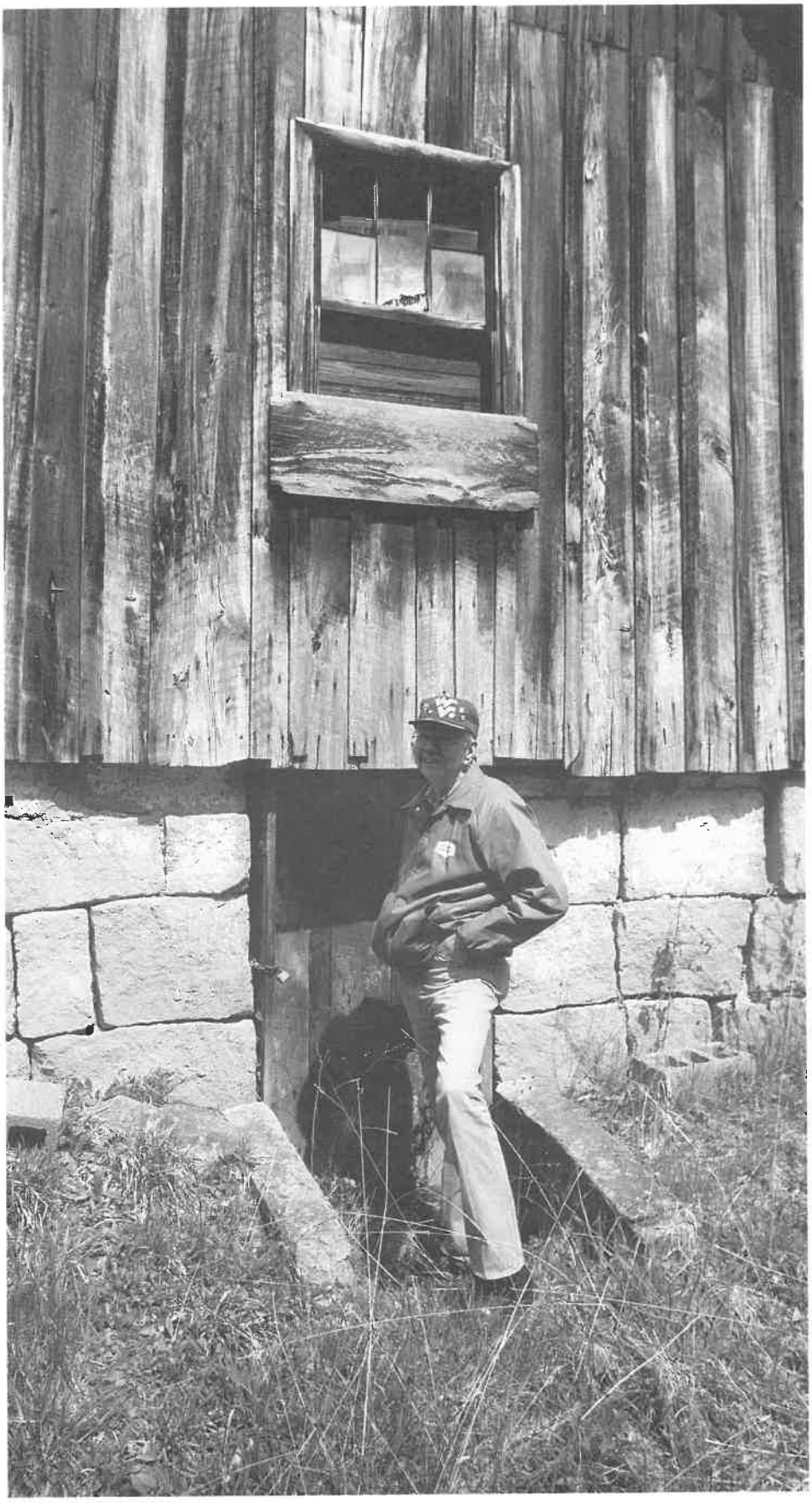
Cider Making

We made scrawny and knotty apples into cider. First, the apples were washed and placed in a long wooden trough, where they were crushed to a pulp with a large hickory maul. From there they were put into the press, a boxlike container about 18 inches square and three feet high, sitting on a slightly slanted platform.

The press was framed on the outside, the wall boards creating a smooth inside surface. Narrow cracks left between the boards allowed the cider to flow through. A press board was placed on top of the apple pulp and forced downward by means of a large boom pole. The boom was secured to a tree behind the press, blocks were piled on the press board and the boom was forced down by one or more of us, thereby squeezing all the juice from the mashed apples. The remains were then dumped out, and the process repeated till all the apples were used.

The cider was drained into large containers, strained and then put into large crockery jugs for storage in the cellar. It was a good refreshing drink, and we had to fight off the yellow jackets, who were also fond of the fresh juice. Papa always said that cider made in the wooden equipment was better tasting than that which was made in the more modern mills made of metal.

In about five days, fermentation would begin. At this stage, cider has a delicious flavor. After several weeks, it would reach the "hard cider" stage, when it packed a pretty good alcoholic punch, as some of the older men could attest. By the following summer, it had been completely converted into a good grade of cider vinegar and was used for making cucumber and beet pickles.



Mr. Hill says the stone cellar was the main food storage place. The family also dug a backyard root cellar and sometimes "holed up" potatoes and cabbage.

luck at all. We would bring in the small plants and cultivate them in somewhat the same manner as the yellow root. But each plant was individual, so it was not a spreading root. It took several years for it to grow to maturity, but when dug and dried it could be sold for up to $5 per pound. Most ginseng is eventually shipped to China, where the Chinese people believe it will cure most any disease.

Our life on the farm continued until the mid-1930's. Mother had died in the influenza epidemic of 1918 and Papa and the older girls raised the family after that. Ruford was only a few weeks old when our mother died, and I was three. By the early '30's we were the last two children at home. Both of us had entered secondary school then and our brothers and sisters were establishing families of their own.

In the late 1920's Papa suffered a serious accident while helping Mr. Jones clear some land. A dead limb broke away and fell from a tree they were cutting, striking him across the head and shoulder. The blow knocked him unconscious for a time, so they took him to the Jones house and put him to bed. Someone came for Ruford and me at the school, and I'm certain that we ran all the way. We discovered that Papa had regained consciousness but was in a great deal of pain. I can clearly remember making a trip to the woodlands that evening to pick up a sackful of dead pine knots to use as fire starters. I was crying and praying all the while, fearful that Papa would die and leave us. Fortunately, he was able to come home in a few days. But from that time on we noticed a difference in him, with a gradual deterioration of health.

The 1930's were hard times, as we were in the midst of the Great Depression. We had never been accustomed to having a lot of material goods on the farm, so we were probably not affected as seriously as folks were elsewhere. Of course, we noticed a drop to rock-bottom prices for our salable products, but the bright spot was that the items we had to purchase were also inexpensive. Adding to the misery of the Depression was the drought throughout the country. There were weeks and weeks with no rain, or any signs of it.

The century-old farmhouse is now abandoned but still sturdy. The main section is of weatherboard logs with the ell added later.

Corn blades curled up in the hot sun, and other crops were stunted. The tobacco never reached full growth, with a consequent reduction in poundage and in our year-end paycheck. Nevertheless, we managed.

After Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president of the United States in 1932, there seemed to be a breaking-off point in the Depression. People began to look forward to recovery and better times.

At home, Papa's health was worsening. He still encouraged me to enter Duval High School in September 1932, when I was 17 years old. There was a three-mile walk across the hills each morning and evening. In the winter months, that meant rising way before daylight to meet the school bus at seven. Another hour was consumed as the bus labored over the graveled roads. The return trip took another two to three hours, riding and walking. Then chores had to be done, sometimes by lantern light. After supper, my homework was finished by the light of a kerosene lamp.

The next fall Ruford had finished grade school, and he accompanied me to Duval. Having my brother along made the trip much easier. After one year at Duval, Ruford decided to stay home with Papa, whose health had not improved. The fall of 1934 saw me enter my junior year alone. That year, I had the honor of being elected president of the student council.

Before that school year ended, Papa became very seriously ill and had to be moved to sister Lena's home in Charleston. Then on June 26, 1935, we lost our beloved father. Two days later, he was buried beside our mother. It was a terrific blow, especially to Ruford and me, as we were the ones who had to return to the homeplace and try to put our lives back together.

We continued with our crops that summer, with the assistance of our neighbors. The Trimble boys helped us harvest and process our last crop of tobacco. Most of the money from the 1935 tobacco crop was applied toward Papa's funeral expenses.

Ruford and I decided between us that I should continue with my senior year in high school in September 1935. From my meager savings, I was able to buy my class ring for $6.95. Near the end of the year I received a letter from my brother, Woodrow, saying that he had found prospective employment for me, if I could come to Charleston for an interview. With permission from my principal, I left school about May 15, was hired and went to work the next day. Two weeks later, my brother-in-law, John Hoy, drove me to Duval for the night graduation exercises with my friends and schoolmates.

After I left the farm in June 1936, Ruford stayed on alone till September of that year. He then came to Charleston to live with our sister, Verna, where he attended Charleston High School for the next two years. Our Lincoln County farm days were over.

Ketchum Caught 'Em

Remembering a Wayne County Lawman

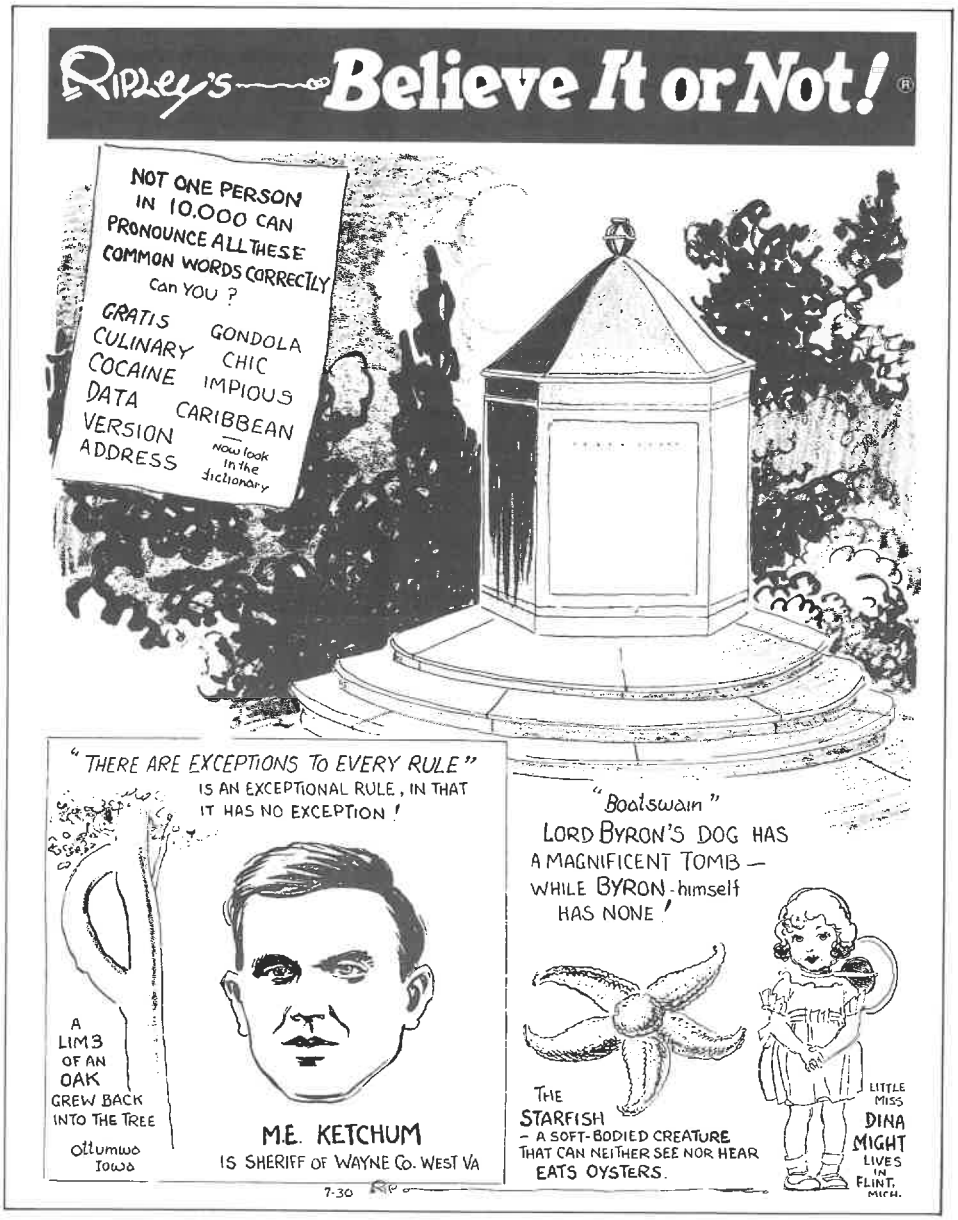
By Joseph Platania

In late 1932, as Menis Ketchum was finishing his four-year term as sheriff of Wayne County, he spoke to a reporter for the local newspaper. "I thank the people for the honor they have bestowed upon me and want them to always know that Wayne County holds a place in my heart and in my life which I shall always treasure," the outgoing sheriff told the *Wayne County News*.

For most of his life Ketchum lived among the people of Wayne County. Because of his work, he was a familiar figure around the county courthouse in the town of Wayne. He served as deputy sheriff, sheriff, and deputy U.S. marshal for southern West Virginia, before going north to be warden at the state pen. During his retirement he lived across the street from the courthouse and often could be found on a park bench in the courthouse yard talking with old friends and political cronies. While they talked they whittled, watching the shavings pile up at their feet.

Although Ketchum was by nature modest, most Wayne residents knew of his illustrious career. After nearly 40 years in law enforcement, he had retired in 1947 as warden of the West Virginia Penitentiary at Moundsville

The Ketchums laid down the law in Wayne County. This early 1900's photo shows Menis at left, his father Wesley in the center and brother Burney at right. Photographer unknown.



Ketchum's catchy name landed him in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" no fewer than three times. This column is from July 1930. Copyright 1930; trademark registered by Ripley International.

and returned to his home county. It was there that he had begun to uphold the law in the early years of this century, first as a town marshal in Wayne. He later served as a county deputy sheriff. During Prohibition he was the chief "revenuer" for southern West Virginia. Still later, Ketchum fulfilled a boyhood ambition when he was elected sheriff of Wayne County in 1928.

The hometown paper was impressed by the lawman's record and his methods. "Sheriff Ketchum, in all his years of service, has never yet fired a gun at anyone and has never been shot at," the *News* reported in the 1932 story. "As far as can be learned, he has rarely ever found it necessary to handcuff a prisoner. Ketchum is a man everyone respects and even violators of the law know that they will be accorded fair and square treatment in his custody."

Due to his name — or rather his name and initials, which a little imagination turned into "Me Ketchum" — Menis E. Ketchum became one of the most widely known law enforcement officers in the country. He was featured three times in "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

Despite his early start as a law officer in Wayne, Ketchum in his younger days leaned more toward making his livelihood with horses. According to a family history written by his youngest brother, Dr. Dorsey Ketchum of Huntington, Menis operated a livery stable in Wayne beginning in 1908. In his day it was a profitable business. Ketchum owned 20 horses, buggies for one horse or a team, and painted express wagons that he leased to traveling salesmen.

Ketchum soon became active in local politics. In 1913, he was elected mayor of Wayne. The livery man could see that the automobile was the ride of the future, and he obtained a franchise for the first Ford automobile agency in Wayne. The first six Fords arrived in unassembled sections at the railroad station. Since there were no mechanics, he hired blacksmiths, carpenters, and anyone who knew anything about machines to help put the cars together. Up until his death in 1969, Ketchum could remember the names of the men who bought those first six Fords, according to his brother.

On July 1, 1914, West Virginia got the jump on the rest of the nation with a law that made the manufacture, sale or distribution of intoxicating liquors illegal anywhere within the state. A few years later Ketchum was appointed a state prohibition agent. In 1919, with the enactment of national Prohibition, he saw the opportunity to advance his law enforcement career. Upon the recommendation of Governor John Cornwell, Ketchum was appointed field chief of the federal whiskey agents in southern West Virginia. After accepting the position, he moved his family to Kenova, also in Wayne County.

Prohibition work was hazardous, and especially worrisome for a man with a wife and six small children. The job was to prohibit the illegal production and sale of alcoholic beverages. This meant tracking down and arresting moonshiners and bootleggers.

Ketchum's Prohibition officers "ranged far and wide over southern West Virginia," according to historian Byron Morris of Kenova. A party of 15 to 20 agents armed with revolvers and rifles would go out into the mountains and search for moonshine stills. They also would flag down coal trains and search for bootleggers

Menis Ketchum was a man of political connections. Here he campaigns with Matthew Neely during Neely's campaign for governor. Photographer unknown, 1940.

transporting liquor in empty coal cars. As they climbed into dark train cars to inspect the inside, the revenuers were acutely aware that many whiskey runners were armed and dangerous.

Dorsey Ketchum relates an incident when Menis and his agents stopped a night train at Ranger, a village in southern Lincoln County. As the government men searched the train, a young bootlegger was shot and killed while attempting to get away. The federal officers arrested several others. Ketchum told his men to stop the next train and take their prisoners to Huntington. He would stay to send word to the victim's family.

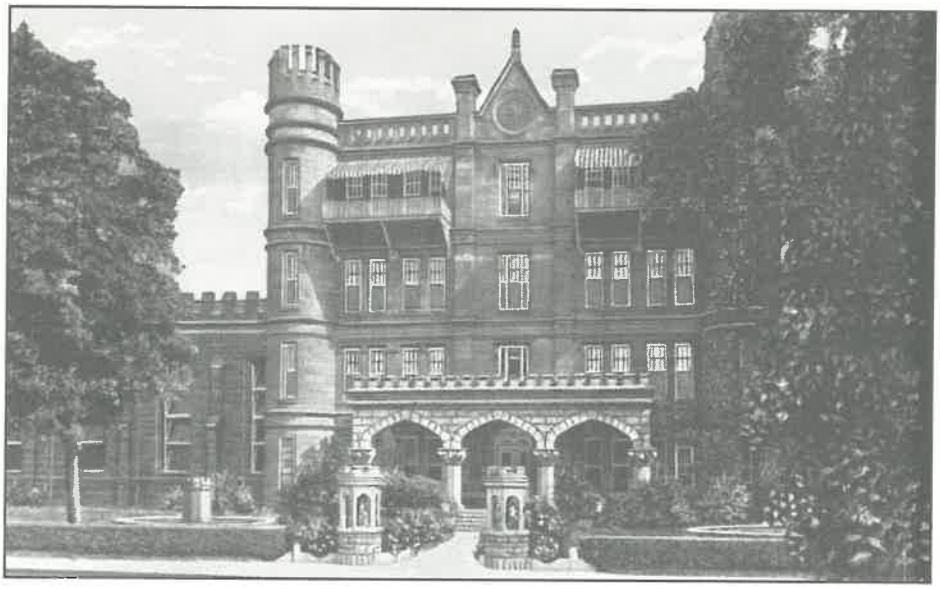
Ketchum sat on the railroad track with the dead boy the rest of the night. Soon after daylight, a passerby brought help and the body was taken to a nearby house. The boy's family was notified and Ketchum remained until the father came. The man was armed and angry, but eventually calmed down. "If anyone else but Menis had encountered the father, I feel sure he just might have killed him," writes Dorsey Ketchum.

Sometimes the whiskey rode in style in the passenger coach. According to a newspaper report, the revenue agents routinely hefted suitcases as they made their search. Unusually heavy luggage was checked for illegal liquor. On one Norfolk & Western train Ketchum came across two heavy suitcases belonging to one man. When they were opened the officers found 32 quarts of "redeye" whiskey. The passenger was immediately arrested and taken before a justice of the peace at Kenova where he was fined $100 and sentenced to 60 days in jail.

All illegal liquor was confiscated and destroyed. In this matter Menis Ketchum, a nondrinker, was incorruptible. Brother Dorsey explains that every bottle was numbered, brought to the county seat, and its contents poured down the drain in the presence of the local sheriff. Plenty of booze went down the courthouse drain. Ketchum confiscated "390 quarts, 2,596 pints and 46 half-pints of whiskey, 177 pints of beer, 480 gallons of cider, and 390 gallons of wine" — in one month — according to a contemporary news report.

Raised in Lincoln and Wayne counties, Ketchum had an advantage in dealing with the local people in the touchy matter of whiskey enforcement. He had been born at Midkiff on June 2, 1882, the son of John Wesley and Alice Adkins Ketchum. The family lived in the timber-rich mountains near the Guyandotte River. "Wes" Ketchum, a farmer and timberman, later moved his wife and their five children to Wayne County.

Ketchum and other officials wait to greet first lady Eleanor Roosevelt upon her arrival at the Charleston airport about 1940. Photographer unknown.



The warden's apartment was on the balconied fourth floor during Ketchum's service at the state penitentiary. Chad Ketchum says his father preferred murderers as household servants because "they would not steal." Postcard view, about 1939; courtesy State Archives.

The Ketchums Come to Town

In the early 1890's the John Wesley "Wes" Ketchum family lived in the Lincoln County foothills near Nine Mile Creek of the Guyandotte River. Wes was a farmer and also worked in the thriving timber industry that floated logs downriver to the town of Guyandotte, the closest market. When insufficient rainfall for several years brought hard times to the timber industry, Wes sold his farm and timber lands and made plans to move.

Early one morning in April 1894 the Ketchum family, Wes and Alice and their five children, bade farewell to friends in the Guyan Valley. They set off for a new home in Wayne County on a 15-by-30-foot flatboat.

Wes, with the help of neighbors, had built a shelter in the center of the boat to house his family and all their possessions. There was a total of nine people on board, counting relatives who came along to help: At the time of the trip Wes Ketchum was a "tall, broad-shouldered man of about 37 with long, coal-black hair," according to his son, Dorsey.

The Ketchums were not bashful in making their way down the river. Dorsey Ketchum and Lincoln County newspaper writer Oneita Adkins agree that the family joined in group songs, accompanied, incredibly, by a pump organ they had brought along. According to Mrs. Adkins's account, "During lulls and smooth water the family organ was rolled out onto the deck and the little band of travelers gathered around." With Alice at the keyboard, they sang old familiar hymns to the astonishment of people who lined the banks.

The second night the boat docked at Guyandotte, a small community just east of Huntington near where the Guyandotte River flows into the Ohio. It was an exciting time, especially for the young Ketchums. "The children had never seen a town, a train or a steamboat," writes Dorsey.

The next day their little raft-like boat floated into the big Ohio River, staying close to the shore as it continued its journey downriver past Huntington and the villages of Ceredo and Kenova. At Kenova they steered into the mouth of the Big Sandy River, dividing West Virginia and Kentucky. The boat had to be pushed up the Big Sandy by long poles.

The Ketchums located near the Whites Creek area where Wes had made arrangements to rent a farm. They were met by future neighbors who came to help them move into their new home. In the fall, after the crops were harvested, Wes walked back to Lincoln County to work in timber, logging and rafting jobs.

Wes moved his family several more times, always closer to the town of Wayne. He began to take an active part in county politics, helping a friend win election as sheriff of Wayne County. In return for his help, Wes was made a deputy and jailer and the Ketchums moved into living quarters inside the jail. Family historian Dorsey Ketchum was born there, delivered by a wayward doctor who happened to be enjoying the county's hospitality at the time.

Wes later served as constable, mayor of Wayne, two more terms Menis, the oldest, was about 12 at the time of the move.

After living at several other places in Wayne County, the Ketchums eventually ended up in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Wayne town, where Wes became active in local politics. In return for helping a friend win election as sheriff, he was made a deputy and jailer of the county jail. It was Wes, a "natural politician" according to son Dorsey, who introduced Menis to the lively world of West Virginia county politics.

No doubt Menis got his first job as town marshal through his father's influence. The young officer built a reputation for getting the job done. He once arrested the town drunk, who was a large man and prone to fighting, by knocking him off his feet and carting him to jail in a wheelbarrow.

With deep local roots, it was natural for Menis Ketchum to turn back home at the important points in his life. In 1924, after five years in charge of the Prohibition effort in southern West Virginia, he resigned the federal post. He and his brother Burney then purchased a large general store in Wayne and operated it for several years.

In 1928 Menis Ketchum ran in a three-way race for sheriff of Wayne County. He won the hotly contested campaign by a comfortable margin. As sheriff, Ketchum moved deeper into local Democratic politics, becoming a real power in the county. Having been around the courthouse from the time his father was jailer, he had little trouble fulfilling his official duties. The experienced lawman did a fine job as sheriff, according to the sympathetic local press. "Since he took the oath of office four years ago there have been 18 murders inside the borders of this county," the *Wayne County News* reported at the end of his term. "And in every case the murderer has been brought to the bar of justice."

Since West Virginia sheriffs could not then succeed themselves, Ketchum left office after a single term. He purchased several farms just south of Wayne, but it was unlikely that a man of Menis Ketchum's connections would remain on the farm for long. Through politics he had become friends with Matthew M. Neely of Fairmont. In 1930 and 1936 he campaigned for Neely's election to the U.S. Senate. The Wayne politician knew every sheriff, judge, and most attorneys in the southern counties, a real advantage to a candidate from the north. Ketchum was instrumental in helping Neely carry the southern part of the state. The grateful senator secured his appointment as deputy U.S. marshal for southern West Virginia in 1934.

Deputy Marshal Ketchum served federal warrants, brought in fugitives, and escorted prisoners from county jails to federal prisons. He later took satisfaction in never having found it necessary to use force in transporting prisoners to 25 states.

Still, the job had the dangers. Dorsey Ketchum tells of one time when his brother went into a hollow to arrest a fugitive. "He got the drop on Menis with a shotgun," according to Dorsey. "Menis told the man, 'Let's make a bargain. If you shoot me you will be given the death sentence. But if you put down that shotgun and come in with me I won't tell the judge that you threatened me.' The man did as Menis asked and Menis did not tell the judge. Years later he told the judge what had happened and the judge said, 'If I had known about that I would have hanged him.'"

In 1940 Matthew Neely sacrificed his Senate seat to run for governor of West Virginia. Menis Ketchum remained a key political ally, campaigning throughout the south. Ketchum's son Chad recalls that his father traveled with Neely, introducing him at political rallies.

In March 1941, recently inaugurated Governor Neely reportedly offered his old friend any of three or four administrative posts. Ketchum, due to his lack of formal education, thought he should refuse them all. He was persuaded to reconsider and accepted the appointment as warden of the West Virginia Penitentiary. Chad Ketchum recalls that his father once remarked that he knew most of the prisoners from southern West Virginia, because as Wayne County sheriff and then deputy U.S. marshal he had helped send so many of them to prison.

At that time the prison warden and his family occupied a large, two-floor apartment over the main entrance to the penitentiary, but not inside the walls. The Ketchums had a cook, chauffeur, butler, and cleaning woman — all of them convicted murderers. Warden Ketchum reassured his family that the servants had all killed in moments of passion and were not likely to shed blood again.

Both Chad and Dorsey Ketchum recall that Menis walked freely and unarmed among the prisoners in the yard and would sit down and eat with them or visit where they worked. However, Ketchum was aware of the risks. He told Dorsey that he had let the word be circulated among the inmates that if any attempt was made to hold him hostage he had given orders to the guards on the walls to forget his safety and start shooting. There were no serious disturbances during Menis Ketchum's years at Moundsville.

Chad remembers his father as a reformer, noting that he abolished the "dungeon" where prisoners had been sent for solitary confinement on bread and water. He also kept regular office hours when inmates could come and see him. The penitentiary was enlarged, with a new residential wing added. A new infirmary was built and a sports field completed. Ketchum improved working conditions at the prison's coal mine near Moundsville and at the farm at the Huttonsville medium security prison. Proper diet and better food were instituted. A Jewish rabbi and a Catholic priest were brought in as prison chaplains, in addition to the Protestant chaplain.

Warden Ketchum put his convicts to work. "Dad never hired a bit of work done outside the prison because the prison had all sorts of

as deputy sheriff and jailer, and as acting deputy U.S. marshal. "Uncle Wes," as he was affectionately called as he grew older, was known as a hard-working, compassionate and religious man. As a lawman, he acquired a reputation for courage and for his humane manner of handling lawbreakers. He was a deputy in the Westmoreland part of Huntington, which is in Wayne County, when he died in 1922.

The children of Wes and Alice Ketchum pursued various occupations. As noted in the adjoining story, son Menis's law enforcement career culminated in his tenure as warden of the West Virginia Penitentiary. Dorsey went on to medical school and later became a prominent eye, ear, nose and throat doctor in Huntington. After his retirement he was elected in 1976 to the West Virginia House of Delegates where he served until January 1983.

The family continues to contribute professional and business people to West Virginia. Later generations have scattered more than their ancestors, but the Ketchums remain a close-knit clan with deep roots in Wayne County.

— Joseph Platania

It was Warden Ketchum's style to mingle with the convicts. Here he poses with the prison's Red Sox baseball team. Photographer unknown, early 1940's.

craftsmen inside the walls — masons, electricians, carpenters, cabinetmakers, barbers, tailors, bricklayers," Chad Ketchum says. "Dad had several tailor-made suits made in the prison from cloth he had bought."

Ketchum's years in Moundsville were a time of professional success marred by great personal misfortune. In 1941 his son, Philip, a college student, was hired for the summer to drive one of the buses that transported prisoners from county jails. As Dorsey Ketchum recounts it in his book, as the bus neared Moundsville on one such trip the young driver leaned forward to adjust a windshield wiper. The convicts were handcuffed and their legs were chained together, but unfortunately they were not completely immobilized. "The prisoner just behind Philip had just enough room to take Philip's gun from its holster when he leaned forward and shot him through the back, killing him almost instantly," writes Dorsey.

The other prisoners subdued the assailant. Philip's body was taken to a Moundsville funeral home and his father notified. When the prison bus arrived at the penitentiary, the warden treated his son's murderer compassionately, according to Dorsey, protecting him from harm by other inmates. Under state law at the time, when a prisoner killed a guard he was automatically sentenced to death. But fate intervened in this case. When the killer was transferred back to his cell, he hung himself with a rope made of bedsheets.

Philip's murder was the second tragedy to afflict the Ketchum family in the space of a few years. In 1938 daughter Lucy had been killed in an automobile accident while she was working in Washington. A close-knit family and strong religious faith helped Menis Ketchum through these dark times.

Another daughter, Harriet Ketchum, spent several summers with her parents in Moundsville. She recalled that her father's two main goals as warden were to get a separate prison for women established and to move the warden's home outside the main prison. He was successful on both counts. A women's prison was opened at Pence Springs in 1947, Ketchum's last year of service, and about 70 female prisoners were transferred there from Moundsville. A separate residence was built for the warden, and Ketchum was the last warden to live at the prison apartment, says Harriet. She recalls that the prisoners called her father "Pop" and her mother "Mom."

Warden Ketchum kept up his political contacts while serving in

Moundsville. He nurtured his hometown connections, bringing his best guards up from Wayne County. He carefully preserved the common touch, as illustrated by an anecdote from brother Dorsey. "His secretary once asked him why he used poor grammar when he spoke but good grammar when he dictated a letter," Dorsey Ketchum states. "He laughed and replied, 'Well, if I got in the habit of using good grammar, when I go home my old friends would think I was putting on airs.'"

Ketchum served as state penitentiary warden during the administration of Governor Neely, from 1941 to 1945, and then under Governor Clarence Watson Meadows from 1945 until the end of August 1947. When he retired he had served for over six years, longer than any warden since the prison was built in 1866. Then past 65, Ketchum returned to Wayne where he spent most of the remainder of his long life.

At 79 Menis Ketchum once again reflected upon his career for a newspaper reporter. "I've arrested or assisted in the arrest of criminals for every crime on the statute books and I've taken tough prisoners over 25 states in my time but I never hurt a man or got hurt." The reporter commented that Ketchum remained active in old age, and that "his eyes sparkle, his step is light, and his heart remains young."

Menis Ketchum is remembered as a lawman of compassion, who handled lawbreakers without force. This portrait shows him as warden. Photographer unknown.

In 1969 a Lincoln County newspaper writer, Oneita Hilbert Adkins, described Menis Ketchum in his last years. He spent winters with daughter Harriet in Florida, she wrote, "and the rest of the time he could be found in Wayne at his home just across the street from the courthouse or about town mingling with old friends." Then 86, Ketchum still drove his car and enjoyed reasonably good health.

Mrs. Adkins found Ketchum "modest in talking of his public and political life." The old man's habit of understatement occasionally had its humorous consequences. One of his favorite anecdotes was of the time his Florida buddies asked what he had done before retirement. Ketchum gave them a quick summary, ending with the comment, "and then I went to the penitentiary."

No doubt the retired lawman had a twinkle in his eye as he brought his story around to its natural conclusion for a credulous newspaper reporter: "One of my friends immediately said, 'Why Mr. Ketchum, what on earth did you do?'"

Myrtle Ketchum, Menis's wife of 60 years, had died in 1967, and after that he was left to the good care of friends and family. "It seemed the whole town of Wayne adopted him and looked after his welfare," writes brother Dorsey. Ketchum died at his sister Zena's home in Florida on March 2, 1969.

Menis Ketchum made the trip home to Wayne County one last time, and he rests there today. Wayne was the place where he knew and was known, where the county newspaper described him as "a friend and neighbor to all." Like the best politicians, he put his faith in the people, and that meant the people of home, especially. "He believes he lives among the greatest people on earth," Mrs. Adkins said in her article. "I am sure the feeling is mutual," she added.

A Convict Writes Home

Menis Ketchum kept a tight lid on the state pen during his years at Moundsville, and other wardens have served before and after with varying degrees of success. Nonetheless, shrewd inmates occasionally outfox the administration, according to the folklore of the place. Jim Comstock of Richwood tells the following humorous tale:

The sheriff thought Ike Vance was pretty dumb to write a letter like he did to his wife from Moundsville where he was serving time in the penitentiary on charges of robbing the Slab Fork Lumber Company office and making away with several thousand dollars in cold cash, which he buried in tin cans somewhere but nobody knew exactly where. The letter said in part, "Whatever you do, don't dig up the garden this year. Wait till I tell you when."

This was plenty for the warden. He called the sheriff and the sheriff sent a posse of men out and they dug that garden from one end to the other. When Ike heard about it, he wrote to his wife, "Go ahead now, honey, and plant the garden."

The story is from Curing The Cross-Eyed Mule: Appalachian Mountain Humor, *recently published by August House. The new book, edited by Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler, is a sequel to* Laughter in Appalachia, *reviewed in GOLDENSEAL in 1987.* Curing The Cross-Eyed Mule, *a 212-page paperback, sells for $8.95. Mail orders, including $2 for postage and handling, may be sent to August House, P. O. Box 3223, Little Rock, AR 72203.*

"I Did the Very Best I Could"

An Interview with Virginia Lipps

By Michael M. Meador

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

Virginia White Lipps at home in Lewisburg. She has deep family roots in Greenbrier County.

Lewisburg is filled with history. Old buildings, plaques and historical markers give evidence of the town's past, from pioneer times through the Civil War and up to the present. Landmarks include the Old Stone Presbyterian Church, built in the 1790's. The Greenbrier County courthouse, built in 1837, is the oldest courthouse building still in continuous use in West Virginia. Old houses are marked with their date of construction, many from the late 1700's and the earliest part of the 1800's.

A Civil War battle was fought in the middle of Lewisburg in 1862 and the John Wesley Methodist Church still has a patched cannonball hole to show for it. Pictures scrawled on the walls of the town library by Civil War soldiers still may be seen.

Despite all its history Lewisburg is a quiet town, except for State Fair week. The community is surrounded by some of the richest farmland in West Virginia. It is farming that has sustained Lewisburg for 200 years and it is farming that has created many a self-reliant, upright individual in Greenbrier County.

Farming and history are both important for Virginia White Lipps, who at age 90 is one of Lewisburg's oldest residents. Her memories of farm life go back to the dawn of the 20th century, and she can relate family stories, as told to her by the actual participants, that predate the Civil War.

Virginia Lipps's background is Scottish Presbyterian. She grew up with a strong sense of the need to work hard and do the best you can with what you've been given. At 90 she still maintains her own home and can bake the finest salt-rising bread that this writer has ever eaten.

Virginia Lipps. I was born Virginia Johnston White on August 14, 1899,

just north of Lewisburg on my family's farm. My father was Robert White and my mother was Maffie Causin Johnston.

My mother's father was named Matthew Arbuckle Johnston. He was from Greenbrier County and during the Civil War he enlisted as a Confederate soldier. He was only 19. During the battle of Winchester, Virginia, he was shot with a minié ball that went clear through and lodged on his spine. He carried that ball to his grave.

He lay wounded on the battlefield and ended up in a Yankee prison camp. It wasn't much more than tents with piles of straw in them. He was severely wounded and lay on a pile of straw while the wheat grew up around him. The Yankee doctor would push him over with his foot and say, "There's nothing I can do for you, you're going to die anyway!"

But he didn't die, mainly because of a Yankee nurse named Maffie Causin that cared for him. He fell in love with her and told her that if he got out of that prison alive, and got married and had a daughter, he would name her Maffie Causin.

The place had a high wall around it with a guard walking day and night. Inside the prison there was a flock of hogs that the prisoners fed scraps to. My grandfather got so he could crawl around and one night he crawled into that flock of hogs. It was dark and the guard thought he was a hog. As the hogs moved, he moved with them. They moved over next to the wall and he escaped. I don't know how he managed to get home. He was so weak and so far away, but he

Above: Matthew Arbuckle Johnston, Mrs. Lipps's grandfather, was a Confederate veteran. He was wounded at Winchester and carried the minié ball the rest of his life. Photographer and date unknown.

Below: Mrs. Lipps's childhood home as it looks today. The house was made of wood taken from Grandfather White's earlier farmhouse.

Denny Lipps came from a strong Methodist family. He is the boy at left here, the oldest of Mr. and Mrs. David Lipps's children. Photographer unknown, about 1905.

would walk a little and crawl a little until he made it home.

After the war he married Elizabeth Crist, also from Greenbrier County. Their first daughter was named Maffie Causin after the Yankee nurse.

Michael Meador. Did your Grandfather White also fight in the Civil War?

VL. No, he was too old. I never knew him because he died the year I was born. His name was Robert White and he married Martha Parks from Lexington, Virginia.

Grandpa White's grandfather on his daddy's side had come from Scotland on a ship named the *Lord Nelson*. The Whites had inherited land near White Sulphur Springs, and they thought they were coming into a big fortune.

They had a time getting here. When they got almost to shore the ship was grounded and they had to swim in. When they got to Greenbrier County they found out that the land was there but it was covered with dense forest. It was in the area around Neola and Blue Bend, north of White Sulphur. They were disappointed but they stayed, cleared the land and built a house. My Grandfather White owned about 500 acres of good farmland.

I was born the third of eight children, six girls and two boys. We were stair-stepped, with about two years between our ages. The oldest was Edna, then Sadie, me, Ruth, my two brothers, Tempest and Forrest, and then Hallie and Verna. I was born in Grandpa White's old house up on the hill above the spring. That house was torn down the year I was born and they used the weatherboarding for our new house.

I guess my earliest memory is of having asthma as a small child. I can remember standing in a baby bed and crying because I couldn't get my breath. I was holding onto a spindle that was painted like peppermint candy. Asthma was called the tisick in those days, and when I got it they'd rub me with Miles Salve.

MM. What kinds of toys did you play with as a child?

VL. We got a doll every Christmas. It wouldn't have been Christmas without a doll. Mama raised 25 to 30 turkeys every year to sell at Christmas to buy us presents with. That's the way we had Santa Claus.

Our first dolls were china and they all looked alike. I didn't like them. Later on we got real pretty dolls with nappy curly hair. They'd go to sleep and say mama. You could even turn their wrists. I loved them.

MM. Did growing up on a farm mean lots of chores?

VL. Oh my, yes! Everyone had a job, such as carrying wood. There was a big box behind the kitchen range and we children kept that box filled with wood. Dad would split the kindling, and we'd carry it in and put it in the box.

My oldest sister, Edna, helped Mama with the cooking and running the house, and the rest of us helped with the farm. We had 18 to 20 dairy cows that had to be milked by hand twice a day. I don't think Mama even knew how to milk a cow.

When we'd milk, we'd sing. I can remember my brother singing "Lord, Keep Me on the Firing Line," while turning the milk separator. Dad would carry the milk to the separator house that was actually an enclosed back porch on the house. We sold the cream to the Lewisburg Ice Cream Company.

Mama was an awful good cook. She'd put the meal on the table and then when dinner was over we'd carry in the dishes. One of us would wash and one of us would dry. I can't ever remember Mama washing a dish.

MM. Can you describe the house you grew up in?

VL. As I said before, it was built shortly after I was born with the wood from Grandpa White's house. It was a two-story frame house with a long front porch trimmed with gingerbread. Dad would come out after a meal, light his pipe and watch us kids play. He'd be the judge to see who won the hopping and foot races.

The front door opened into a big room we called the hall. It was the prettiest room, with hardwood floors that we kept shined up. It was lit with a big hanging oil lamp that had glass icicles all around. The shade was decorated with a fox chase. The hunters in the scene wore red coats. That room had a big mirror and hat rack, an oak secretary desk and a pretty stairway that went up to the second floor.

To the left of the hall was what we called the parlor. It had a black horsehair couch, horsehair rocking chair, pump organ, a Franklin stove and a Victrola that we kept going all the time. It had a big horn and played

cylinder records. This room was for company.

To the right of the hall was Mama and Dad's bedroom, which also served as our sitting room. It had a bed, a stove, dresser and chairs. Mama made up the bed and covered it with a crocheted spread. You didn't dare sit on Mama White's bed!

We children slept upstairs. There was no heat in our bedrooms, either. In the winter we would dress in our nightgowns downstairs by the fireplace. The gowns were made of flannel outing, went to the floor, and had long sleeves.

After we got dressed we'd run up the stairs and jump into a bed that was like jumping into a cold shower. There would be so many covers you could hardly turn over. Temp and Forrest would pull their bed over to the open window in their bedroom. In the morning they'd be snowed under. They thought the fresh air made them healthy. Nowadays, if kids had to sleep in a room without heat they'd have pneumonia!

The dining room was downstairs behind the parlor. It had a large claw-footed round table that had three leaves. We used them all. There were always ten of us, eight children and Mom and Dad, and usually Opie Lancaster, a hired hand that ate with us. He had a place across the road, but he liked to stay with us.

Also in the dining room was a three-cornered corner cupboard that went to the ceiling. It would probably be worth a fortune now. It had beautiful dishes. Mama kept jellies on the table all the time and also a spoon holder filled with spoons. We didn't use spoons with every meal, but they were always there.

There was a long hall that went from the dining room to the kitchen, which was behind Mama and Dad's bedroom. In the kitchen Mama cooked on a Home Comfort wood-burning range, and underneath the house was a cellar that was always cool. We kept food down there. We never had an icebox. The farmers back then raised and put up all of their own food. It was considered a disgrace to serve food out of a tin can to company.

We made our own ice cream, banana pudding, chocolate pudding, breads, cakes, cookies and candy. Mama had a Rumford Baking Powder cookbook and it was a good one. Mother made her yeast bread using a starter that she kept going all the time. It had grated potatoes in it, and I'm not sure exactly what else. The bread was real good.

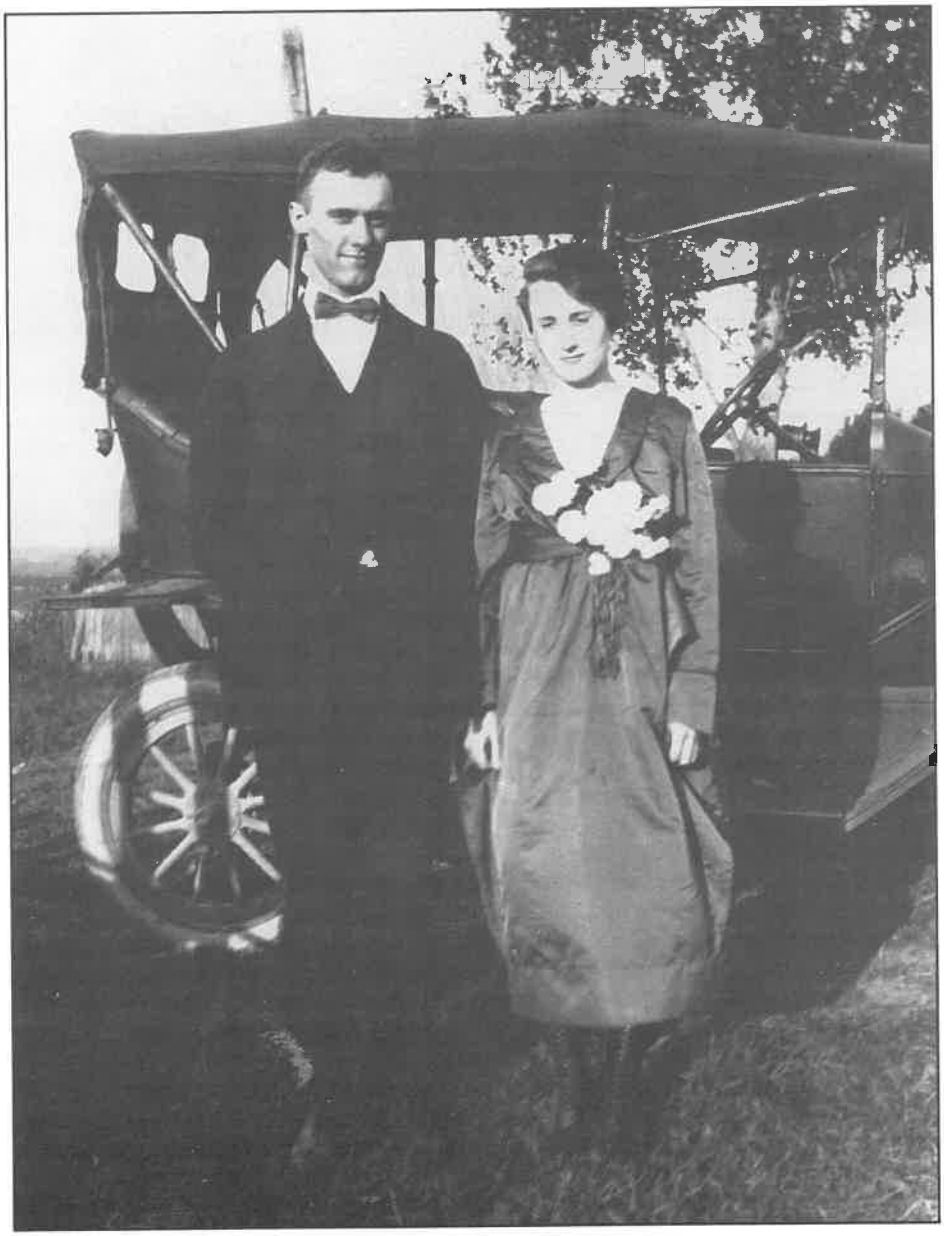
MM. Tell me about your school days.

VL. I went to the White schoolhouse which was located on our farm. It was a one-room school with eight grades in the one room. There were three trustees to the school: my dad, my uncle John White and Joe Ford. There were about 30 students in the school at one time, but we were pretty well behaved. There were the Ford children, the Brants, eight of us Whites, eight of Uncle John White's, and the Legg children.

I loved school. I didn't like to study and I didn't care if I knew anything in the books or not, but I had a ball! I had a different boyfriend every year. My sister Ruth was a good student and made use of her education; the rest of us just got by.

When school started in the fall it meant we had to put on shoes. As soon as the grass came up green in the spring, we pulled off our shoes. The only time we'd put them back on

Mr. and Mrs. Denny Lipps the day after their wedding. Mrs. Lipps remembers the dress as blue satin. Photographer unknown, September 10, 1920.



Denny and Virginia at their golden wedding anniversary celebration. "In all those years we never went to bed too mad to say goodnight," she says. Family snapshot, 1970.

was to go to church. We never went to church barefooted.

We were always busy. In the summer we had parties at different homes. There was always a taffy pulling or party somewhere. We played lots of games. One that we played at school was called "Anthony Over." We'd divide into two teams, get on opposite sides of the schoolhouse and somebody would throw a ball over the roof. We'd all try to catch the one with the ball. Prisoner's Base and Blind Man's Bluff were other games we played. I also remember jumping rope a lot.

The Whites were great party people. We'd just take a notion at anytime that we wanted a party and Mama would make a cake. Maybe also she'd get some bananas or oranges and make some ice cream. The whole neighborhood of kids would come in and we'd have a ball.

We had a lot of fun in the winter. The school was on a hill with a yard slanting down. We had a great big board turned up on both ends, and we'd pile on and ride down on the snow. I remember one year we had a real big snowstorm. The schoolhouse on the upper side had two windows and we rolled a snowball so tall that it covered one of those windows!

That winter the snow was so deep we couldn't walk to school. It was over our heads. Dad brought the two old horses, Jack and Dixie, up to the porch for us to ride to school on. It snowed so much you couldn't see a fence anywhere. They speak of it yet as the winter of the deep snow.

I went to high school in Lewisburg. We had a buggy and old grey mare that Ruth, Sadie and I would ride. We were all in the same grade.

The first day I met my husband-to-be. That night, Ruth, Sadie and I were talking about who we had met that day. Sadie said, "I kind of liked that tall Lipps boy." And I said, "That tall fellow? Well, I didn't think too much of him!" He started coming over to the house to play Rook. I thought for the longest time he was coming to see Sadie.

One day Ruth came home from school and got violently sick with appendicitis. Dad, Mama and she went to Ronceverte, got on the train and went to Hinton to the hospital. She got peritonitis. Ruth was in the death ward for one week. They didn't think she'd live, but she did. We stopped going to school during this time. Ruth couldn't go and Sadie and I were thinking of getting married.

Anyhow, I had missed a lot of school because of sickness. I caught the 1918 flu that killed so many people. I was about 18 and going to high school. There was a girl in the school, her name was Hayes, and during the last class of the day she sat right beside me. She was burning up with fever.

That girl laid her head on my shoulder and by morning I had a fever. I

was real sick. My temperature got so high I hemorrhaged from the nose. It was the blackest blood you ever saw, and I couldn't get it stopped.

It was wartime, you know. Our doctor was in the Army and they called in a strange doctor. They doctored the flu with quinine. There was a shortage of the drug because the Army kept calling for it on account of so many soldiers being sick. The quinine they gave me was a big gray tablet and it was strong. It would cause your temperature to break and the water would just pour off of you. It took a long time for me to get over the flu.

MM. Tell me about your courting days.

VL. My husband-to-be was named Denny David Lipps. He was named for Bishop Denny, a bishop in the early Methodist Church. His family lived in Rich Hollow, up near Clintonville.

When we started courting, he rode horseback or sometimes he'd come over in a buggy or sleigh. Then his dad bought one of the first automobiles around, an Overland; it was a real snazzy car. Denny was quite a sport coming to see me in that. There was a boy I had gone with for years and years who didn't have a car. When Denny and I got married, he said, "I wouldn't have lost out if it hadn't of been for that damned car!"

Denny and I went to church together a lot when we were courting. He was a Methodist and I was Presbyterian. He came from a very religious home. His father was Sunday school superintendent at Calvary Methodist Church in Richland for 27 years. When he got too old, Denny took over and had the job for 43 years. That's 70 years between them! When Denny and I got married I joined the Methodist Church, because I knew there wasn't any use trying to convert him.

We got married on September 9, 1920, in the front yard of my home. I was 21 and Denny was 22. My sister Sadie, who was two years older than I, got married at the same time to Tom Reynolds. It was a double wedding. An uncle from Baltimore decorated. He made an arch covered with flowers and strung Japanese lanterns. We moved the pump organ out onto the front porch and a neighbor, Mrs. Painter, sang "I Love You Truly." Denny almost missed the wedding because he was playing Rook.

I was sick with the whooping cough almost right up to the wedding and the doctor came to see to me. Mama said, "Doctor, don't you think we'd better put the wedding off?"

He said, "Go ahead with the wedding, but no honeymoon." That suited us fine, because with the little bit of money we had we couldn't

Thieving Yankees

The Yankees made their winter camp on a hill near my grandfather White's house, the same house I was born in. They were camped on his Greenbrier County farm for a good while.

The soldiers were cold and hungry and stole anything they could find. They didn't consider it stealing, they just took it. Once they stole some of my grandfather's sheep and he went up to the camp commander to put in a complaint.

"Your men stole my sheep," Grandfather White said.

"They're hungry, they have to eat," said the commander.

"They stole my overcoat," said Grandpa.

"Well, they're cold," said the officer.

"They took $50 in money," said Grandpa.

The commander said, "If you can point out the man that took the money he'll be punished. We don't need Confederate money!"

The Yankees were terrible to just come in and take whatever they could find. One time my grandmother White was baking biscuits in the fireplace when she looked out the window and saw two soldiers coming.

She picked up the biscuits, pulled down the sheet on the bed, laid the biscuits on the bed and covered them with the sheet. She picked up my Uncle Frank, who was only two or three years old, and set him on top of the bed.

When the Yankee soldiers came in, Uncle Frank went to crying. One of the soldiers said, "What's wrong with you, buddy? We're not going to hurt you." Uncle Frank sobbed, "I know you're not going to hurt me, but you're going to get these biscuits I'm sitting on."

The soldiers were amused and left the biscuits alone. As they were leaving the house one of them took his sword and stabbed it into the ash hopper outside the kitchen. He came up with a ham that had been buried there. So they had ham with no biscuits.

The Civil War left a bullet hole in the back of Matthew Johnston's coat and some lasting anecdotes for his descendants.

Family remains important. Here Mrs. Lipps, with son-in-law Paul Burdette and daughter Jeri, show Grandfather Johnston's Civil War jacket.

have gone far anyway. We spent our wedding night at my house. The next day we went over to Denny's place and he went out to the field to chop corn.

We lived with Denny's parents three months while we finished our own home down in the woodland on their farm. We built a real nice house, started out with three rooms and a porch. A few years later, about the time my second baby was born, we added four more rooms.

We had three children. Eugene was born in 1921, Geraldine or Jeri was born in 1924, and Mildred was born in 1926. Today I've got seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

When I got married I hadn't cooked a half-dozen meals in my whole life. I just wasn't interested in it. I didn't know a man had to eat. I knew how to milk cows and how to do a little bit of everything there was to do on the farm. But I didn't know how to cook. Denny's mother taught me how to cook. She was real good to me.

MM. How did you and Denny support yourselves on the farm?

VL. We didn't need a whole lot of money because we could grow most of what we needed to live on. We had over a dozen different kinds of apple trees alone. Most of them you don't hear about any more. We had Russets, Lady Blush, Virginia Beauty (they were dark red), Fallow Water, Macintosh (that was a good apple), Early Harvest, Pippin, Sheep Nose, Milam, Ben Davis and Bell Flower. That's not all of them, but I can't think of the others.

We raised Concord grapes, gooseberries, blackberries and raspberries. We had chickens, pigs, and beef cattle. We had a few sheep, but we didn't kill them. None of us ate mutton. We did eat a lot of pork, though.

We sugar-cured our own hams, using a mixture of salt, brown sugar, saltpeter and black pepper. We'd bury the fresh hams down in that mixture, then we'd wrap them up tight in brown paper and leave them for a few weeks. Then we'd remove the hams, wrap them in bags and hang them up in the meat house. Boy, were they good!

In our gardens we'd raise potatoes, tomatoes, beans, squash, peas, radishes, onions, mustard greens, corn,

pumpkins and lettuce. I always put up lots of canned goods to do us through the winter.

On the Lipps place we had what they called a sugar camp, where the sugar water was collected and boiled. We'd tap hundreds of sugar trees, along about March, as the freeze would go out of the ground. That's the way you'd get the sugar water. The water was collected into a great big tank on a sled pulled by a team of horses. Denny would get that big tank full of water and take it to the sugar camp where there were three big vats, kettles, with a fireplace under them. He would boil down the water until it was syrup.

After it got thick, he took the syrup down to his mother at her house. She'd boil it some more in a big kettle in the fireplace. When it got to a certain stirrage, she'd beat it and pour it into fluted molds. It would be just like candy.

They would take the maple sugar to town and sell it to the grocery store and trade it for other things they needed. Believe it or not, they'd come home with a load of white sugar that they thought was better than the brown maple sugar they'd made.

When Grandma Lipps was boiling down the syrup there would always be lots of people in her kitchen to help her stir. It would take a long time to get it boiled down. Those that weren't stirring would have a party in the kitchen. They would file past Grandma, and she would give them a little bit of the boiled-down syrup on a plate. They said she was chintzy with it, but she was smart — it was pure sugar and you couldn't eat much of it.

The last time that Denny and I ran the sugar camp was on the 7th of March, 1924. I was seven months pregnant with Jeri. That was the day we got word to come home, that my brother Forrest was dying.

MM. Were your three children born at home?

VL. Yes, all three of them. We had an old country doctor, Dr. Harry Beard, who delivered me, all of my brothers and sisters and my three children. My oldest sister, Edna, was the first baby he ever delivered. You could look out and see him going in any direction at all hours of the day and night. He went to places he knew he wouldn't get any pay.

He delivered babies the kindest and easiest of any doctor I know of. He was kind to the women, but he didn't have the patience with the men. When my son Eugene was born, Dr. Beard ran Denny out of the house. He told him to go sit under the sugar tree in the yard with the old sow and her pigs. Denny did it, too!

After he delivered the baby he would use lard as a baby lubricant. Instead of washing the baby, they would grease it! I remember him asking Mama White to go out to the kitchen and get some clean lard without salt and warm it up for him.

In those days they kept women in bed for nine days. When my mama was bedfast after delivering, the women taking care of her would feed her milk toast that was made in a special, pretty tureen. They would slice salt-rising bread, toast the slices and put them in the dish. Then they'd scald milk with butter and a touch of salt and pour the hot milk over the toast. They'd put on the lid and let it steam. It was delicious.

When they'd fix it for Mama, all of us kids would get in bed with her and want a bite. By the time we were through there wasn't much left for Mama. We've always made this when people in the family got sick.

I helped deliver my sister-in-law Glenna's three children. They were delivered at home with Dr. Harry Beard as the doctor. One time I helped another doctor deliver a baby. He wasn't like Dr. Beard, he just let the poor woman suffer. She was tearing all to pieces. I thought she was dying.

I said, "Doctor, you're not going to give her anything?" He was just sitting there and he shoved the bottle of chloroform at me and said, "You give it." I took that bottle, poured some of the chloroform out on a rag, held it under her nose and knocked her out!

I not only helped deliver babies, I also helped fix up the bodies of people in the neighborhood that died. We had to bathe and dress the body before the undertaker would take it. One time another woman and I were fixing up this lady that had died. When we turned her over, all of the air went out of her lungs and she went, "uuuhhhhhh." The woman helping me said, "Let's just cut this bath short!"

MM. Do you remember any old-time remedies?

VL. Yes, a few. We used honey mixed with powdered alum for a cough. It really works. And something that's good for chest colds and croup is a mixture of a cup of white lard without salt, a tablespoon of lamp oil, a tablespoon of camphor and a tablespoon of turpentine. You rub it on, but you need to be careful because it can blister you.

They used to give me Scott's Emulsion that they got out of the drugstore. It had fish in it and tasted awful. It always sat on the mantle and I hated it. I was a puny little old kid and they were afraid I would get TB. They gave it to me a lot.

Yeager's Liniment always sat on the mantle too. It was used to rub on sore muscles. They gave kids with the croup ipecac. Seems like kids had lots of croup in those days.

Rattlesnake venom was used to stop a nosebleed. Once Mama had a nosebleed she couldn't get stopped and Dr. Beard rubbed venom in her nose. It worked! We thought that if Dr. Harry Beard couldn't cure you there was no use to call anyone else.

We kept from getting poison ivy by washing good with homemade lye soap. And for warts we used the milk out of milkweed plants. Once I had warts all over one hand, great big seed warts. I tried that and it really worked.

Back in those days the girls all wanted to have white skin. We thought the whiter you were, the nicer you looked. We'd put on our sunbonnets and lie out in the sun with homemade horseradish-and-buttermilk lotion on our faces. It would make us white. My word! No one would own a suntanned girl. It's just the opposite now.

MM. Were you much affected by the Depression of the 1930's?

VL. We weren't too much affected by the Depression because we raised just about everything we needed. Things in the store were hard to buy at times, but we managed. We supported ourselves on the farm by selling the milk from our dairy herd. We also sold eggs.

I did a lot of sewing and made most of our clothes. I once made Millie and

Mrs. Lipps looks back on many years of accomplishment. "I did the very best I could," she says. "I worked at it."

Jeri suits out of feed sacks that I bleached by boiling in lye soap. I dyed them yellow after I got the letters bleached off. Everybody thought they were linen. Jeri once got the prize in high school for being the best dressed. I was real proud because I was making her clothes.

MM. Why did you and your husband decide to move from the farm to Lewisburg?

VL. We moved in September of 1942. It was wartime. Eugene had joined the Navy, and Denny was trying to run the dairy farm by himself without help. It just got to be too much for him.

It was a real change. Out on the farm we didn't have electricity, ever. We didn't have a refrigerator until we moved to town. We never had electric lights. There was no indoor plumbing in our house on the farm and we bathed in a big zinc tub. Our house in Lewisburg had nine rooms, electricity and two bathrooms. They were both upstairs and side by side.

When we moved from the farm to Lewisburg we brought a milk cow, chickens and pigs with us. We thought we were all set until the cow ate the neighbor's garden. It was sent back to the country. Then Lewisburg passed a law against having pigs in the city limits, so we ate the pigs and didn't get any more.

After we moved, Denny got a job in a supermarket as a butcher, but he got fired because he wouldn't be dishonest for the store. Poor working people would come in and select a good piece of meat for him to grind for them. The store wanted Denny to take the good meat, go in the back room and grind up a piece of cheaper meat that wasn't as good. He refused to do it, so they fired him.

After that, he went to work at the Maytag place for a Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown sold Rusco storm windows and he turned that part of his business over to Denny. Denny had a ball traveling around the countryside installing storm windows, doors and aluminum siding. He loved the job. Denny was a real timid young man, but as he got older he got over that. You can hardly find a home around here that doesn't have some of his storm windows.

Our three children got married after the war. Eugene married Margaret Burdette and Jeri married Margaret's brother, Paul, and Millie married Jim Newman. Jeri and Paul live in Beckley and Eugene lives in a cottage next door to me. We took the upstairs of our house and made an apartment for Millie and Jim and they lived there for several years. Later they moved to Roanoke, where Millie died in the summer of 1987. Denny died in January of 1988.

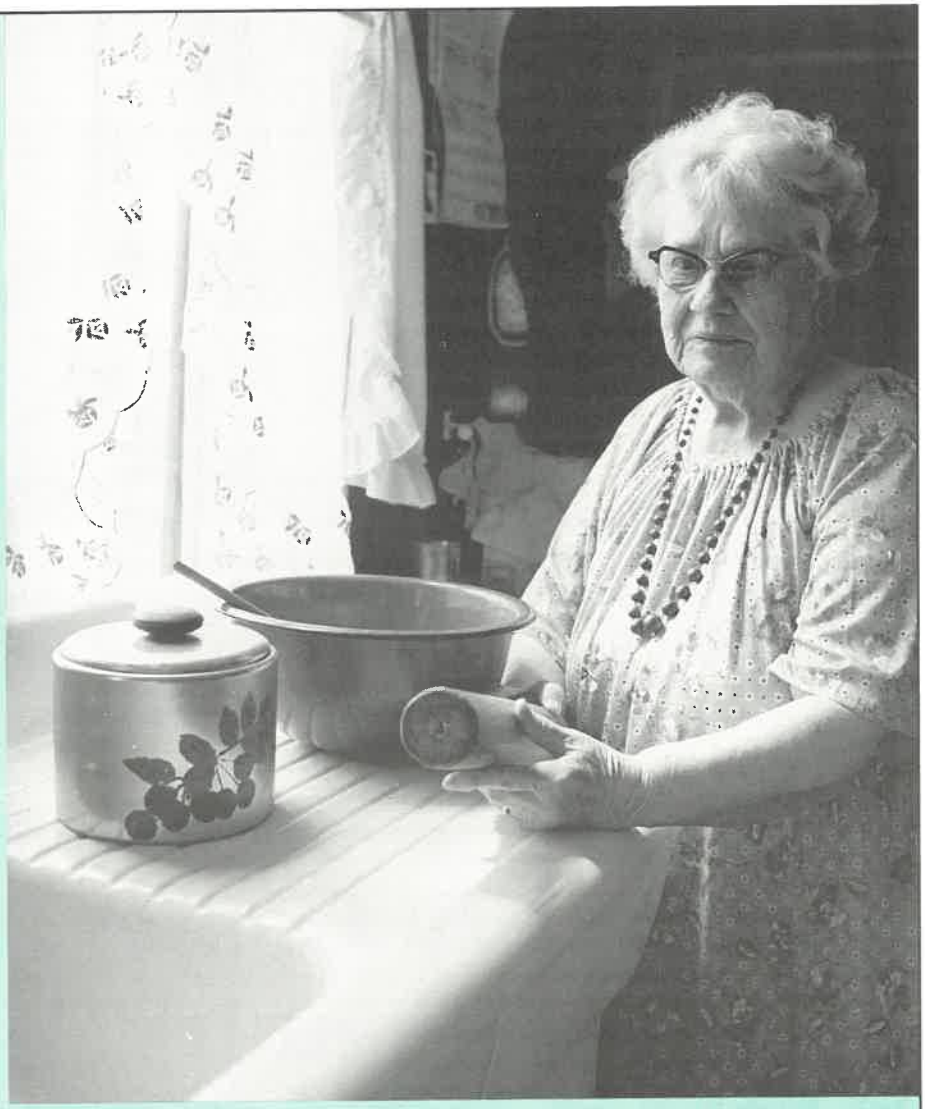
I've been a housewife and a mother and I did the very best I could. I worked at it. Denny and I had differences but we always stuck together. When we had a problem we sat down and talked. In all of those years we never went to bed too mad not to say good night. Never!

I can remember my dad saying that if there's anything worth doing at all, it's worth doing well. I've tried to live like that. You hear people say that the Lord will take care of you. I have faith, but I don't think the Lord expects you to sit down and let him do the whole thing! He'll do his part if we do ours.

Mrs. Lipps's Finest

Visitors to Virginia Lipps's home in Lewisburg enter through the back door to the kitchen, often greeted by the delicious aroma of bread baking. Mrs. Lipps spends a good deal of time in the kitchen, and breads are her specialty. Salt-rising bread and hot rolls are her most popular offerings.

Like many good cooks, Virginia Lipps does not work from written recipes. These were taken down orally and she says they are subject to some variation, depending upon how the bread "feels."



Friends and family often find Virginia Lipps in her kitchen. Our writer and photographer say her salt-rising bread is the best to be found.

Salt-Rising Bread

In a crockery, glass or stainless steel bowl put:

2 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 tbsp. white cornmeal
2 tbsp. flour
1 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 quart boiling water

Stir well and put in a warm place overnight. "I put the bowl in the oven with just the pilot light to keep it warm," Mrs. Lipps says. "My sister-in-law, Grace Hinkle, fills an electric skillet full of water and turns it on low. She puts the bowl in the water."

Next morning, the mixture will be frothy. Thicken with flour. "I can't tell you the amount: You want a thick batter, but one that's thinner than cake batter. Put it back into a warm place until it rises and makes 'that smell.' It will rise up to the top of the bowl."

Mix:

About 2 cups of milk, scalded
1/2 stick of butter, melted in milk
1 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt

Let this cool and then mix with all the other ingredients. Begin adding flour until the consistency is that of bread dough. "The longer you work it, the softer it gets," Mrs. Lipps says. "Knead it until it's elastic. Form into six loaves, place in well-greased loaf pans and let rise until doubled."

Bake at 350 degrees for about one hour. "Sometimes I turn it down to 300 for the last 20 minutes," she adds.

Hot Rolls

Mix:

1 pkg. yeast
2 tbsp. sugar
1/2 tbsp. salt
1/2 coffee cup hot water

Cover and set aside.

Bring to a boil:

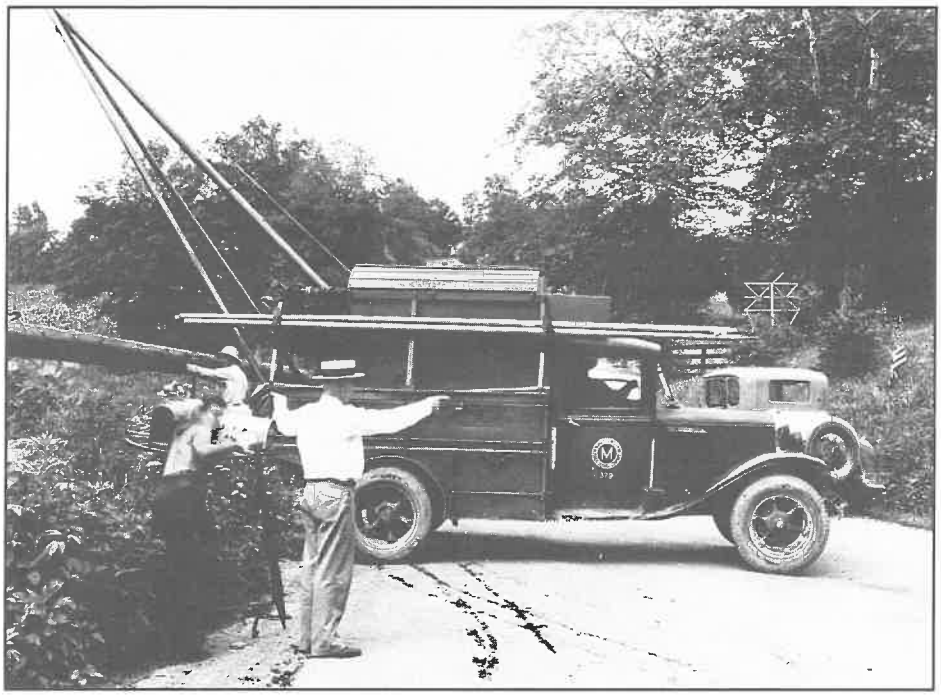
1 pint of milk
1/3 stick butter

Cool to luke warm.

Put eight cups of flour in a bowl and make a hole in the middle. Mix the yeast mixture with the milk and pour into the hole. Whip together well. Work with hands.

Turn out on floured board, knead for a short time. Put back in bowl and put in oven with pilot light for about two hours. Let it rise till double in size.

Pinch into rolls, and place into pan in which butter has been melted. Roll dough in buttered pan to cover good. Let them rise till double. Bake at 350 degrees till done.



The first power truck was a welcome sight, often appearing after an intense struggle between cooperative and commercial power interests. This Monongahela-West Penn Public Service Company truck sets a pole adjacent to the first co-op pole in Harrison County. Photographer unknown, 1937, courtesy Harrison Rural Electrification Association.

Electricity Comes to the Country

Recalling Rural Electrification

By Helen Steele Ellison

Even today, writing this story through the modern magic of a home computer, I cannot quite take electricity for granted. For I can recall a time without it, when the things electricity does for us now were done by other, more arduous means.

My earliest memory of a "without" time is from Pickaway, where I was born in 1913. Our first home was already old when my parents moved there. It overlooked the Pickaway plains, a mile downhill to the Seneca Trail (now U.S. 219) and the Pickaway post office. The post office was located in the Arthur Hawkins general store, where I went with my grandparents and neighbors to hear our first radio, battery operated.

Many farm homes were in sight or sound of each other in that part of Monroe County. My grandparents, J. D. and Eliza Peck Beckett; Aunt Minnie and Uncle Charley Keadle; Aunt Anna and Uncle Jess Parker; and the Beirne Youngs, Dr. Ghilchrist, Milton Dixon, and the McNeers were all clustered together. They were within signaling distance by iron bells mounted on posts in yards, or by waving sheets out second-floor windows. Sometimes the houses were connected by hand-cranked telephones.

There were ingenious ways to get work done without electricity. I remember Mother sending me down the steep path to a fast-flowing "bold" spring in a dark hollow behind our house. My job was to start the hydraulic ram in the spring by pumping the plunger. The power of the running spring water would then take over, and the ram would force water through a pipe to the top of the hill. The ram pump was a life saver, despite its habit of stopping at inconvenient times due to debris washing into the mechanism. Usually water came in constant flow up the hill to a concrete basin beside the "dairy," a half-buried, masonry room in the backyard near the kitchen. This was our cool food storage place.

When I was five years old, my parents moved from Pickaway to Alderson to take advantage of the better school in the Greenbrier County community. In Alderson we had electricity and running water from the town water system.

At first, the electricity was a curiosity. We played games with it. It was daring to stick our fingers into unshielded baseboard electrical outlets to feel the sting, and especially to get an unsuspecting person to do it. We would pass through a lighted room, flick the switch and say, "Where was Moses when the light went out?" The room occupant could get the light back on by answering, "In the dark." These childish games were not universally appreciated and did not last long.

After moving to town, we still spent many summers at Pickaway with my grandparents and other relatives, without electricity or running water. There was no spring or stream on Grandfather's farm. They relied on water caught in a concrete cistern under the back porch. Rainwater was turned into the cistern whenever the rain had been heavy enough to wash the house roof clean. Water was drawn from the cistern by a crank attached to a wheel with a bucket chain. During periods of drought, water sometimes was hauled from a strong spring miles away, but this was rarely needed due to strict conservation. Wells were not generally used in this part of Monroe County because of underlying limestone caves.

With no running water, each bedroom at the farm was furnished with a washstand holding an ironstone washbasin, water pitcher, and cham-

ber pot. The privy was located behind the woodshed, some distance from the house. The dairy in the backyard provided storage for vegetables, fruit and milk. The highland nights kept this underground concrete cellar cool in summer and it was frost-free in winter.

Kerosene lamps and lanterns provided light. Sometimes I carried a half-gallon lamp oil can down the Trail to the Hawkins store. The unpaved road cut through a clay bank, and the cool comfort of that smooth clay on my bare feet after a dusty gravel stretch remains vivid in my mind. At the store Mr. Hawkins filled the oil can, then took a gumdrop from his candy case and stuck it over the spout for a stopper. He smiled, knowing that as soon as I got home I would eat the gumdrop. A little taste of kerosene mixed in with the sweet fruit flavor did not bother me; many times I had taken a drop of lamp oil on a spoon of sugar as medicine for chest congestion.

Grandmother traded at the Hawkins store and sometimes sent me with a bucket of butter which she had made into one-pound molds or "prints," generously rounded over. Mr. Hawkins never accepted the count of Grandmother's prints, but weighed the butter for himself. It always came out to more pounds than the number of prints. He credited the full weight against the cost of the oil and gave change or a credit statement for the difference. Grandmother laughed at his "particular ways" that did not permit her to carry out her idea of good measure.

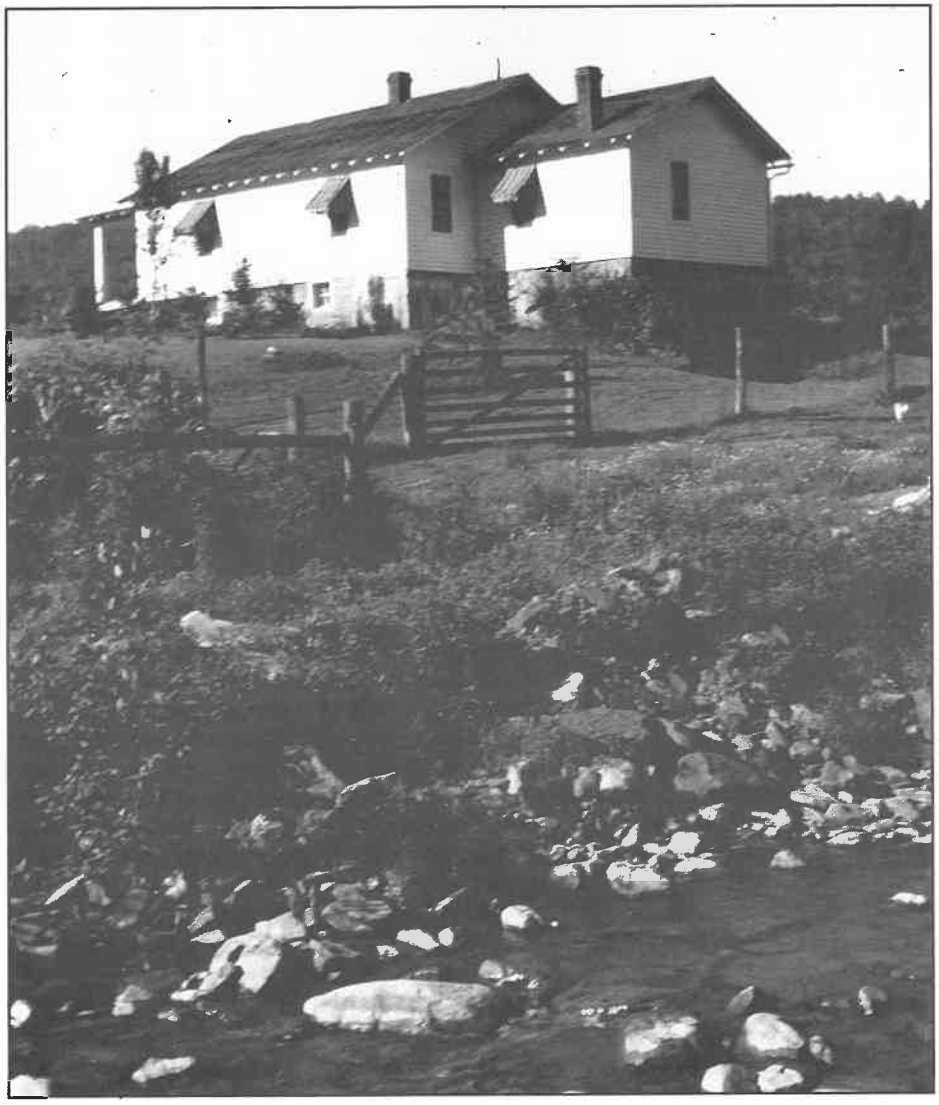
Keeping a supply of kerosene was only part of the job of having light in those days before electricity. The lamps, with their fragile chimneys, had to be cleaned. They were carried from all eight rooms to the back porch for their weekly cleaning, wick trimming, and filling. It was a tiresome, dirty job.

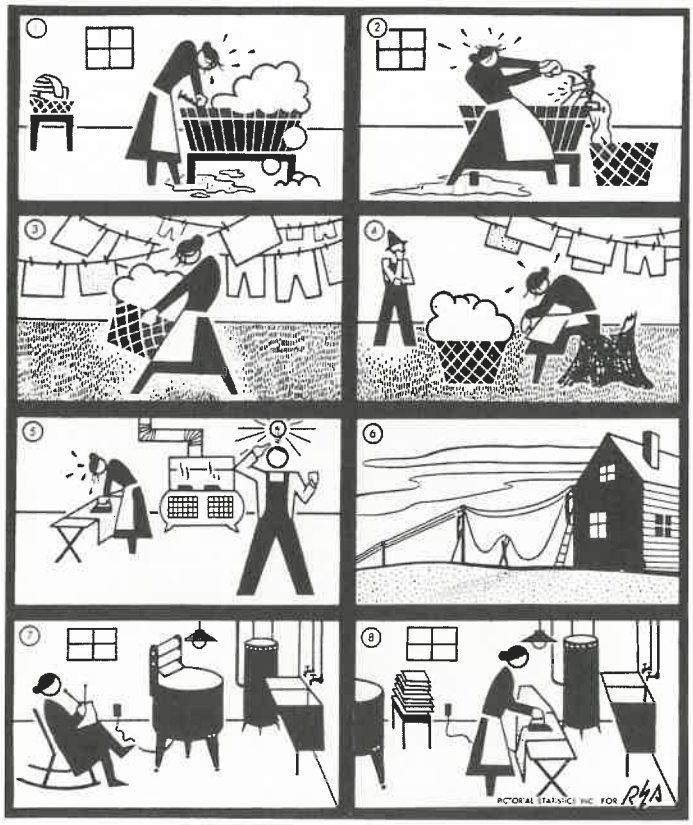
Making light and heat were the first tasks of the day. Grandmother got up before daybreak, went to the kitchen and started a fire in the wood-burning range. Then, lighting a lantern, she gathered her milk buckets and walked about 200 yards to the barn to milk the cows. Returning to the house, she strained the milk into the hand-powered cream separator located by the cellar in the backyard. Then the kitchen stove was stoked again with wood, the coffee pot put on to boil, and biscuits made, eggs and some kind of pork — sausage, ham, or bacon — fried, and the table set with preserves and honey in the comb. The aroma brought everyone to the kitchen. After breakfast, the cream separator was washed and scalded and water was carried to chickens, pigs, and everywhere else water was needed. And so the day's work, almost all done by humans and animals, was begun.

Even had modern improvements been available, money was scarce on the farm. I remember hearing Grandfather say that his total cash income for one year in the 1930's was not enough to pay the land taxes, and Grandfather was a locally prominent man, previously superintendent of schools and president of the county court. After the bank failures of the Great Depression, farmers had to sell anything they could to get money to save their farms from being sold for taxes. Breeding stock was depleted and reduced in quality. People made out by borrowing against their land, and with whatever butter and egg money their wives could save.

The Agricultural Extension Service did what it could to help farmers increase their incomes, but their methods took time while the Depression created an immediate crisis. My husband remembers when county agent Frederick Metze brought Charley Wilson, professor of animal husbandry at WVU, to Hans Creek. They backed their car up to the schoolhouse door, jacked up the rear

Helen and Zack Ellison's Monroe County dream home was a comfortable country cottage — but there were no power lines attached. Family snapshot, 1944.





President Roosevelt's 1935 executive order put the Rural Electrification Administration in business, with orders to promote "the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy in rural areas." The REA launched a propaganda barrage, including posters and cartoons such as these. Courtesy National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Power for the People

Power came to Helen and Zack Ellison's Monroe County farm at a time when many rural Americans were receiving the benefits of electricity through the efforts of a government agency known as the Rural Electrification Administration. The REA was created May 11, 1935, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of many New Deal programs designed to improve American life and ease the hard times brought on by the Great Depression.

The president's executive order called for "a program of approved projects with respect to the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy in rural areas." The man Roosevelt appointed to oversee the big job was Morris Cooke, a Philadelphia engineer who understood the need for cheap power and was willing to fight for it.

Cooke had learned much from previous work for Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot, a forester by training and a reformer by nature, saw electric power as a major way of improving rural life. At his direction, Cooke had spent two years studying means to obtain cheap electricity, producing the so-called Giant Power Survey of 1923. Cooke regarded that as invaluable experience for his work at the REA.

When the REA was created, fewer than 11 out of every 100 farms in America had electricity, despite a dream of universal electrification dating back to Teddy Roosevelt's administration. Cooke believed that electricity must be available everywhere, not just in the areas most profitable to the power companies. Within nine days of the establishment of the REA, he met with top utility executives in Washington. He was disappointed in their response. Cooke saw that the commercial approach to rural electrification lacked two important elements — total area coverage and reasonable rates.

Spurned by the power industry, the REA man looked for other ways to get his agency going. Consumer-owned cooperatives were the most promising possibility. Loan applications had already begun to come in from agricultural organizations wanting to set up power systems, and it didn't take Cooke long to get over his skepticism of farmer-run cooperatives.

The REA had a powerful ally in Nebraska Senator George W. Norris. An avid rural electrification

wheels, looped a drive belt from an AC generator around one of the tires and started the car. The generator powered a movie projector which they used in part of their program on sheep production. Professor Wilson urged farmers to keep their best ewe lambs for breeding, so as to improve the quality of their flocks. But many did not have that choice.

Scarce income and inconvenient power seemed to form a chain that could not be broken. The nature of farm life was soon to change, however. On Saturday, May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 7037, creating the Rural Electrification Administration. The REA made electric power possible for sparsely settled rural areas, by enabling the creation of electric cooperatives in places not served by commercial power.

At that time 75 percent of the farms in West Virginia had no electricity. Many people had had no experience with it, and farmers needed education if they were to use this new resource. It seems strange now that people ever had to be sold on the benefits of electricity, but that was the case. It was mysterious to many, and there was an element of danger. People were sometimes killed by it, and houses burned. Such stories appeared from time to time in the newspapers. Electricity also took cash, and Depression-battered people feared indebtedness. But the Extension Service persevered in teaching farm families how to get electricity and how to use it.

Through the Farm Women's Clubs the service provided lessons to promote the acceptance and use of electricity. Club lessons were prepared at West Virginia University, which administers state farm extension programs. They were written by Gertrude Humphreys of Greenbrier County, then the director of women's services in Agricultural Extension. The lessons were in the form of stories, dealing, for example, with the success of cooperatives in other parts of the world.

One used a story based on statistics from a 1933-34 U.S. Department of Agriculture farm housing survey in West Virginia: "In an imaginary airplane trip over West Virginia you would see about 93,500 farm homes.

Helen Ellison was one of the army of "women with buckets" carrying water in West Virginia. Here she crosses drought-stricken Blue Lick on her way to the spring. Family snapshot, date unknown.

Only 59% of them are painted. 8,000 of them are log, and 2,800 are masonry of some sort. You see something moving — all over West Virginia — moving. It's not an army. When you look closer you see it's

crusader during his 40-year congressional career, Norris authored the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, providing permanence and lending authority to Roosevelt's agency. Also credited with legislation to create the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1933, Norris believed that electricity meant "a hired man for the farmer and a hired girl for his wife."

The door was open, and farmers and rural representatives brought their ideas to Washington. "If you put a light on every farm, you put a light in every heart," became the REA motto, and the time was right to make the dream a reality. Cooperatives sprang up around the country, applying for REA loans at a rapid rate. By late 1936, the rural demand for cheap power had resulted in nearly 100 co-ops in 26 states.

Local utility companies often opposed the new cooperatives, sometimes installing "spite lines" in an attempt to convince public regulatory authorities that a proposed cooperative's service area would soon have commercial power. Utilities might also extend service to the most accessible or most lucrative customers in the area, thus skimming off the co-op's most promising future customers. Utilities denounced cooperatives as a form of socialism and told farmers that if the co-op failed, they would have to repay the loan to the REA.

Some were scared by such propaganda, but when the lights came on, misgivings faded. Towards the end of 1938, more than 350 REA projects brought electricity to 1.5 million farms in 45 states. The way agricultural America lived changed forever as rural electrification put its light on the farms and in the hearts of country people. By the late 1970's, 99 out of every 100 U.S. farms had full electric service.

A special U.S. postage stamp commemorated the 50th anniversary of the REA in 1985.

The REA celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1985. In that half century, the agency proved itself to be one of the most successful New Deal programs. By granting low-interest loans to cooperatives, it provided for the construction and operation of power lines across a nation. The Rural Electrification Administration and its optimistic approach to electricity for America's farmers brought power to people who desperately needed it.

— Debby Sonis Jackson

women — women with buckets. Some buckets are full, some are empty. It is 74,000 women carrying water for all the uses a family has for water."

This dramatic lesson resulted in women all over the state adding up how many miles they walked, how many pounds they carried, how many feet of pipe it would take to supply running water, and what kind of electric pump they needed. Then they figured the cost, and how they could persuade their husbands that running water was more important than another piece of farm machinery. Still deep in the Depression, many could see no way to finance such a project. Others had more pressing problems than running water. But many found a new way of studying their situation and discovered possibilities that they had not known existed.

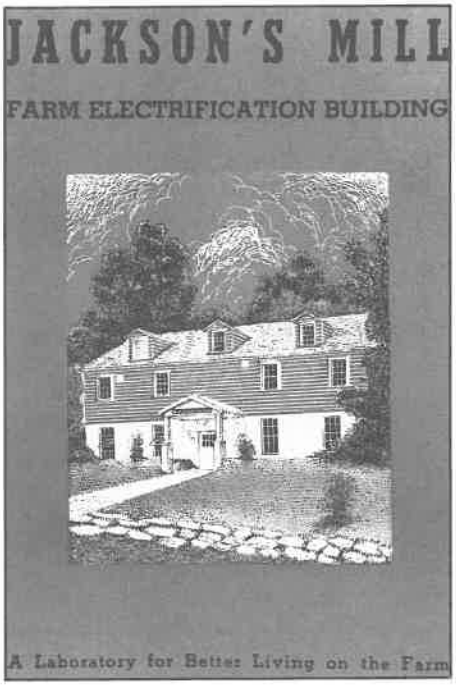
After these stories, information was given on how to form a cooperative and tap REA funds to finance the venture. Gradually cooperatives were formed and commercial utility companies also began to extend their lines into rural areas. Club lessons were then directed to helping farm families plan wiring for homes and outbuildings.

In February 1940 I married Zack Ellison while we were in school at West Virginia University. Both of us were from Monroe County and we returned home to buy a farm where Blue Lick and Hans Creek flow together, a mile beyond the commercial power line. We thought there would be no problem in having the line extended when we were ready. But after December 7, 1941, the beginning of World War II ended all hope of getting electricity. Construction of rural electric lines stopped due to restrictions on the use of manpower and materials.

I was prepared by heritage and experience to step back in time and live without electricity. But summers on my grandparents' farm had not readied me for the day-in, day-out drudgery, made more poignant by the fact that most of my Hans Creek neighbors had gotten electricity by 1938. Still, I took much satisfaction from applying my early learning at Pickaway to the tasks at hand — milking the cow, churning butter, making cottage and cheddar cheese,

lye soap, pork lard, maple syrup, and preserving fruits and vegetables, each thing in its own season. And in all these things, Zack had a hand. The feeling of self-sufficiency was comforting.

Relatives offered help when it was apparent I would have no indoor water or the other things electricity could supply. Aunt Minnie Keadle gave me a 15-gallon cast iron kettle which had belonged to my great-grandmother, Mary Ann Peck, who had lived at Hunters Springs on Indian Creek. We used this pioneer kettle to heat wash water, make pork lard, make soap from waste pork fat, and boil down sap for maple syrup. Putting it near a source of water, Blue Lick, saved much carrying, though the stream did not flow during dry spells. Then water had to be carried from the spring about 100 yards away where we got our drinking water. My



Programs at the Jackson's Mill Farm Electrification Building encouraged the rural use of electricity, as photographs on these two pages show. Extension Service staff trained farm women in the use of modern equipment, convened planning meetings, and showed the rights and wrongs of electrical lighting, while 4-H introduced youngsters to the wonders to come. Photos by Arch Ellis, dates unknown, courtesy Dorsey Resource Center, Jackson's Mill.

husband's parents still had the oil lamps, lanterns, and other items which had only recently been put away. Cousins with a summer home on Hans Creek supplied a mechanical clothes washer, operated by pushing a cradle back and forth in a curve-bottomed tub, and an Icyball-brand refrigerator.

The Icyball was operated by kerosene. It had two large metal balls, containing a gas and connected by a pipe. One ball was placed in a tub of cold water, the other had a kerosene heater under it. Heat was applied for two hours to force the gas back into the ball in the tub. The cool ball was then placed in an insulated square box, with an opening for the connecting pipe. As the gas in the heated outside ball began to cool it drew out the warmth in the box. This operation had to be repeated every 24 hours. Tiny ice cubes would form in a

Local Farm Women's Clubs spread the electrifying news back home. Helen Ellison is the young woman at left in the second row in this photograph of the Hans Creek club. Photographer and date unknown.

little tray inside, and — if the box was not opened often — milk, butter and a small amount of other food could be kept cool. So much for gas refrigeration! The spring, with a year-round temperature of 54 degrees, was more reliable and little more trouble.

In addition to help from relatives, there was also the Farm Women's Club. I remember club meetings with the road too muddy and the creek too high to drive the car, so I would take our Ford tractor, which had a small carrier attached to the hydraulic lift. I would ford Hans Creek, then stop for my mother-in-law and help her into the carrier where she sat on a box. We forded meandering Hans Creek again, and on to the club meeting. Other women walked through fields to avoid the unbridged creek, got a ride with the mailman, or came however they could make it. Lesson leaflets were handed out, we read and talked, and ended with refreshments. We took turns hosting the meetings, always looking to the Extension Service for guidance.

In 1940 at Jackson's Mill, the State 4-H Conference Center, the Extension Service had dedicated a farm electrification building, underwritten and equipped by the electric utility companies operating in the state. Its purpose was to promote the uses of electricity. Here farm women from all over the state gathered for lessons in how to select, use and care for electrical equipment. I attended such meetings, traveling on a Reynolds bus which I caught at Lindside on U.S. 219. Although I had only hopes of electricity for myself, I brought the information back to the Hans Creek club.

It seemed the war would never end. Zack was teaching Red Cross first aid classes at night to public school personnel all over Monroe County. On April 12, 1945, when he got home from a class, I was in bed asleep. He woke me to tell me the news that President Roosevelt had died. I sat up in bed and cried.

Finally peace came, and we expected quick action on extension of the power lines. Then we were told by the power companies that it was "uneconomic" to extend lines into thinly populated areas. Our home demonstration agent, Charlotte Vandiver, told of visiting a family on Flat Mountain, near Alderson, where the woman had tied a light bulb to a cotton string and hung it from the center of her living room ceiling. Some laughed at this, thinking it a naive attempt to claim a style of life she did not have, but I saw it differently. I knew the frustration she felt at seeing the lights of Alderson, nearby but out of reach.

The Rural Electrification Administration was ready, if we could only grasp the help. Bill Kuhn, a public-spirited neighbor who already had electricity, began to visit farms to get people to sign up for an electric cooperative. A date was set for a hearing before the Public Service Commission. Then, late one afternoon, Zack came home and reported that he had seen power company trucks on Indian Draft "throwing power poles like match sticks — helter skelter, crisscrossed, along the road, in fields." We thought they were trying to establish a "good faith" effort before the PSC hearing to forestall the cooperative, and joked that our organizing efforts had held their feet to the fire.

As it happened, the Public Service hearing was never held and our co-op never incorporated. We did not care how the electric lines would be built, just so it was done. In fact we believed that we would be better served by the power company, if they would extend their service. Nonetheless, our elation was guarded. We had hope again, but could not find out how far the new line would come.

As I was driving down Blue Lick toward home one afternoon I saw the large walnut tree in our barn lot in pieces on the ground. It meant the line was coming through, but my feelings were churned between joy at the thought of electricity and outrage that the venerable tree had been cut, unnecessarily I thought. Then began the days of waiting for the line to be strung, transformer installed, and the power turned on.

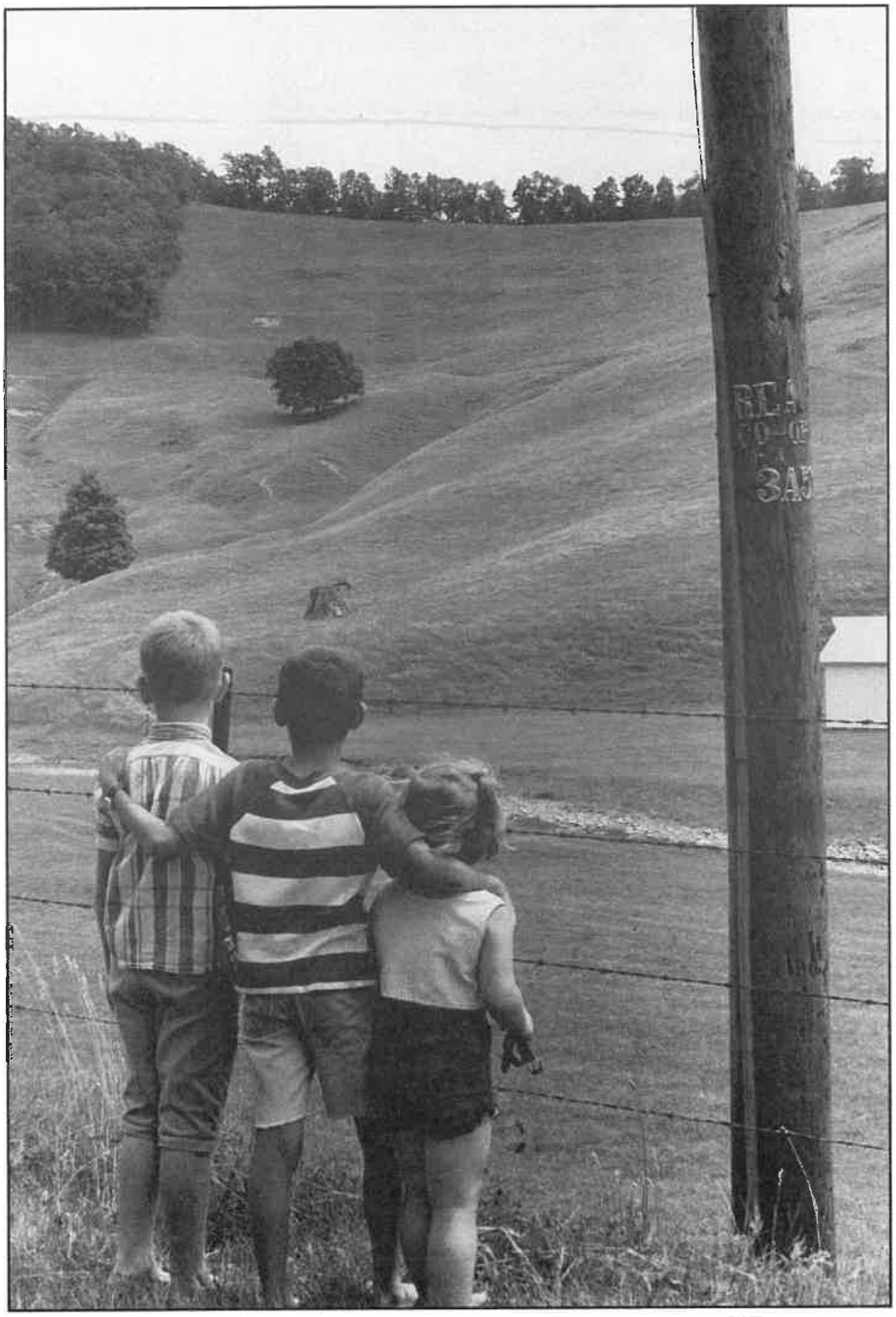
We had wired our house when we knew work on the line was beginning. I unpacked an electric toaster, a wedding present which had been in

storage all those years, and had it plugged in on the table in the kitchen. One day a boy who knew of our preparations came running through the house shouting for a piece of bread. Without a word of explanation he grabbed the bread, dropped it in the toaster, and the heat came on. He had seen the power company truck come in and stayed to watch the house wires connected, all unbeknownst to me. My feeling at the reality of electricity in the house was akin to that when I got my first job, or our first home.

With our dream come true, the first big purchase was a Hot Point refrigerator. After 42 years, it still works efficiently in our Morgantown basement. No other appliance saved me the work and worry that the refrigerator did, although a washing machine was high on the list. The refrigerator ended the countless trips to the spring house and the last-minute preparation of food, now that we had safe cold storage in the kitchen.

Unlike town residents who usually had regular ice service, country people often got refrigerators as their first major appliance. Harvesting winter ice from ponds and creeks was hard work, and the supply dependent on the weather. The natural ice was often of low quality, and too scarce and inconvenient to be used except for special occasions. In my hometown of Alderson we had clean commercial ice delivered regularly to our icebox in the dining room. It was many years after electric refrigerators were available before my father bought one.

Layer after layer of drudgery was laid aside with the arrival of new appliances. After the refrigerator came my Dormeyer electric food mixer. The mixer replaced the butter churn, a stone jar with dasher, and there were more wonders yet to come. My sister gave us a record player for the new long-play record albums, and I danced through the house to the music of Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra playing Straus's Viennese waltzes and Liszt's Hungarian dances. Those were the first LP's Zack could find at Riner's Hardware Store in Union. My appetite for music and reading, now that we had the record player and electric lights, seemed insatiable.



As REA poles dotted the countryside, rural electrification changed the outlook of young West Virginians. Photographer and date unknown; courtesy National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

By 1948 we had a radio and sat up all night listening to the returns of the Truman-Dewey election. It was with great glee the next morning that Zack reported the results to his father, a Dewey supporter, who had gone to bed thinking that his man was safely elected.

Many more electrical wonders came to our house in following years, including television, air conditioning and the trusty Macintosh computer with its chattering printer. I enjoy them all. As I look back I occasionally get satisfaction from the thought that I can do everything myself, but I know that self-sufficiency is largely an illusion, with or without electricity. The REA still functions, and there are those who think it an example of a government bureaucracy that has outlived its usefulness. I don't know about that, only what it meant to farm families in West Virginia.

The flag marked the spot for the first pole of the Harrison Rural Electrification Association. The ceremony took place at Sycamore on July 20, 1937. Photographer unknown, courtesy HREA.

West Virginia's Co-op

The only electric cooperative in West Virginia today is the Harrison Rural Electrification Association. The nonprofit co-op serves members in the counties of Harrison, Barbour, Upshur, Lewis, Doddridge, Marion and Taylor.

One of the original incorporators, Ray A. Williams, had commercial electricity within a mile of his home by the mid-1930's, but could not get an extension at a reasonable cost. He joined with county agricultural agent John Pierpoint and others interested in rural electric service to organize the badly needed cooperative. Pierpoint, who resides in Clarksburg today, recalls the trips to Washington and the countless meetings with the federal Rural Electrification Administration to get the local cooperative going.

Mr. Pierpoint described the Harrison co-op's organizing problems in detail in a 1939 report:

> On the 18th day of March a few of the farmers contacted representatives of the Rural Electrification Administration, Washington, D.C., in regard to rural electrification. A meeting was held the last Saturday in March at which time all farmers interested in rural electrification were invited in to hear a representative of the REA discuss the setup of an REA project. After the group heard this discussed, Mr. Snyder, chief engineer for the utility operating in this territory, was asked if he had anything to present at this meeting. He stated he did not.
>
> Following these meetings a group of around 200 farmers met and perfected a temporary organization, consisting of a chairman, a secretary and two or more directors from each magis-

terial district. These men were given customer survey blanks to present to the rural folks in their districts who were not receiving service from any other source. On this blank a farmer would mark the appliances he expected to use if electricity was made available at reasonable rates, and stated he would give a free right-of-way for the construction of these lines. The group decided to meet the following Saturday and bring in the survey blanks which had been signed. At this time 500 survey blanks from rural families interested in receiving current were turned in. This survey was continued until about 1,100 blanks were signed.

A map was prepared showing the proposed lines and customers, and sent to the Rural Electrification Administration in Washington. The REA approved 196 miles of line and allocated $211,000 to be used in the construction of this project.

While we were preparing the map and getting an approval of the project, a representative of the local utility asked to be allowed to present their proposition to the local REA group when the survey was completed. If they were turned down, they would cooperate in building the lines and furnishing wholesale current. After the loan was approved in Washington a mass meeting was called and the utility was asked to present their plan. The group at this meeting voted to let the committee, composed of two representatives from each of the districts, [decide whether to accept the power company proposal or continue with the REA co-op]. The committee met and the vote was 17-3 in favor of continuing with the REA project. Within a week the utility had men out in the county, making a house-to-house canvass stating to the farmers the advantages of their building the lines instead of the REA.

At the present time the utility has built over 125 miles of rural line, and the REA is building 196 miles. About 60 miles of this line is being paralleled. The REA has been handicapped because of the State Road Commission not giving them permission to cross the highways, but has allowed the utility to build on the road or cross wherever necessary.

Thus while Helen Ellison's neighbors in the adjoining story decided to drop their co-op organizing in favor of power company service, the Harrison County farmers preferred to continue with their REA plans. Despite opposition from the local utility, the Harrison Rural Electrification Association was officially established on June 17, 1937. They set up a base of operations on Pike Street in Clarksburg under the leadership of a board of directors. A stake, marking the location of the first pole to be installed, was driven in a special ceremony at the community of Sycamore on July 20.

The REA financed the initial 196 miles of line for the Harrison co-op. The cost was $211,000 for this original system serving about 743 customers. Today a total of 724 miles of line serves 4,713 customers. The co-op's first rate schedule was based on 6.25 cents per kilowatt hour for the first 30 kwh per month. Rates remained reasonable, with customers paying eight cents per kilowatt hour in 1987 for the first 250 kwh. The average bill for the latter year was about $45, compared to $2.35 in 1939.

Electric cooperatives are most common in heavily agricultural areas, such as Ohio and other Midwestern states. Farming is less pervasive in West Virginia and electricity is supplied mostly by commercial utilities. Two Virginia co-ops provide service to small areas of our state. One, the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, supplied power to a separate Hardy County Light and Power Association until 1949, when Shenandoah took over management of the Hardy unit. The Hardy County Association was sold to the Virginia cooperative in 1954. Today Shenandoah supplies power to about 2,200 consumers in the Eastern Panhandle, in addition to its Virginia customers.

The Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative, another Virginia outfit, has 316 consumers in Monroe County. It serves rural homes around Sweet Springs and in the Back Valley area near Waiteville.

Although the day-to-day user of electricity may not notice it, there are important differences between electric cooperatives and power companies. With a co-op, its users are its owners. Commercial utilities are owned by investors and provide a financial return to them. These owners are not necessarily the users. Members of a cooperative vote on the election of a board of directors and on other decisions. The rule is one member, one vote, although equity shares build up according to the amount of electricity purchased. By law, co-ops must return any money left over after operating costs to the member-owners. Shares are based on the amount of electricity used, so the more power used, the larger the share.

A typical American rural electric cooperative today has nearly 2,000 miles of line and over 7,000 consumers in roughly three counties. The Harrison Rural Electrification Association, one of 1000 cooperatives in 45 states, is spread thinner than that, with about one third the miles of line of a typical co-op. It serves better than half the average number of consumers, scattered over a seven-county area.

Members paid $5 to join the Harrison County Rural Electrification Association in 1937. The fee remains the same 52 years later. Inflation has chewed that down from the hefty sum it represented during the Great Depression, but even then it was a small price to pay for the many benefits of electricity.

Firing on the Grade

A Shay Summer at Cass

By Cody A. Burdette

This is a story of one summer in the life of a steam locomotive fireman on the Cass Scenic Railroad. I was hired in 1972, as a shop hand and extra fireman. I worked about six months in the shop, and then was put on as regular fireman on the short run. This run goes four miles up Cheat Mountain to Whittaker Station, three times a day, with road grades of up to ten percent.

The regular engineer was a jolly sort of man who liked to run fast, with the "Johnson bar down in the corner" — railroad lingo for full forward or full reverse. I knew I had my work cut out for me to maintain water and steam in the boiler. The engine I drew was an 80-ton Shay, No. 4. It had the name of being a good steamer.

My day started long before the first tourist appeared on the property. The first thing I did each morning was to check the water level in the boiler, then blow down the water glass to see if it was working properly. I would open the firebox door and look inside for leaks or any kind of bulge in the boiler. Then I would put the screen on the smokestack, to keep hot cinders from setting the right-of-way on fire. Next I would level out the fire in the firebox, and shake the grates until all dead ashes fell into the ash pan. Then I would go down under the engine and rake the ashes out.

By now, steam pressure had begun to rise. Back in the cab, I would add a little more coal to the fire and check both injectors, which put water into the boiler from the water tank trailing behind. As I waited for steam to build, I would sweep the cab roof and running boards free of cinders. Then if I had time I would shine the bell and number plate. I did everything my father had taught me to do years before. He was a lifelong railroad man, and when he was a fireman he had a reputation for keeping engines hot.

Then it was time for us to make up our train and go to the depot for our passengers. The engineer showed me no mercy on my first trip up the mountain. I fought all the way for steam and water, but I made it without stalling. As I mentioned, No. 4 was a good steamer.

In the days ahead, I got better with each trip. I learned the grade, and I knew what the engineer was going to do before he did it. I would play a trick on our conductor, by being on my seat looking out the window whenever the train was in a long curve and he could see the fireman's side of the engine. He had said one day in the shop that a fireman who had worked at Cass back in log-train days could fire one of these engines and "sit on the seat half of the time." Now he said, "Burdette can fire one of these engines and sit on the seat *all* of the time." What he didn't know was that I had fired before we got to the curve, so in the curve I had a clear stack and would be up in the window watching the scenery go by.

The scenic railroad follows the route of the old lumber railroad that once served the big sawmill at Cass. From the depot the tracks parallel the Greenbrier River to a shop complex near the mouth of Leatherbark Run, then head up that stream toward the mountain. The grade increases up Leatherbark and then more sharply as the road leaves the creek via the first of two switchbacks. The train exits the first switchback in reverse and backs to the second. Heading forward again it passes on to Whittaker Station, the end of the short run.

The all-day long run goes much farther, to the top of Bald Knob of Cheat Mountain. The elevation at Bald Knob is just a few hundred feet short of a mile high, and the train encounters grades as steep as ten and 12 percent to get there. Remember the steepest West Virginia interstate highway grade you've ever encountered, say coming down to New River on the new stretch of I-64 or off Flat Top Mountain on the Turnpike, and then imagine something much steeper than that. Normally, grades

of two or three percent are considered steep for a train.

The heavy grades took their toll. I remember coming out of the first switchback and into Gum curve on one trip when the wheels suddenly began to spin wildly and then the locomotive jumped the track. When we climbed down to see what had happened, we found that No. 4's line shaft had broken just behind the cylinders. That made the drive wheels on the back trucks useless, and the broken line shaft landed on the track and derailed the front end.

When the long-run train came up, heading for Bald Knob, we had the main line blocked. The engineer had to take our passengers with his and return to Cass. We then put down the re-trackers, and with the front set of trucks for power and the downhill pull of the cars, we were able to re-rail No. 4 and take her to the shop on her own power.

The next day I drew Shay No. 5. She was known to be hard to steam, if the engineer didn't give her time. I knew I was in trouble by the time we went by the shop area, even before we headed up Leatherbark. I watched as the engineer opened the throttle wide and my steam pressure went down 25 pounds. No. 5 was a 90-ton Shay, and the safety valve popped at 200 pounds of pressure. I needed to keep pressure near that point to make the grade. I now had 175 pounds of steam pressure, and the grade was getting steeper.

I knew I had to do something and do it quickly. I began to think of things my dad had told me to watch for when steam pressure dropped quickly. I got the fire hook down off the tender, turned it upside down, and began running it over the fire. It didn't take long to discover I had two large holes in my fire in the front of the firebox. I turned the water injector off and raked hot coals back on the bare spots, and then put several shovels of coal in that area of the firebox.

I could not leave the injector gun off too long or I would have low water in the boiler, as well as low steam. I waited until I saw the hand on the steam gauge start to move upward and then I put the gun back on. All the way to the first switchback I would turn the injector off every time I fired; that way I lost no pressure from opening the firedoor. As we pulled into the first switchback and the engineer closed the throttle, No. 5 lifted her safety valves and my water was right on the mark.

Now came the real test. A Shay is harder to fire when it is backing up, and that's what we had to do for about a mile to the next switchback. As we began backing up this section of track, I waited until all of the smoke cleared up in the stack, then I turned my shovel upside down and stuck it in the firedoor and moved it in different directions. This will make the fire lay down and you can see the condition of your fire. This day my fire was level as a pool table.

I waited until we were over the first hard pull. Then I began my firing routine again, never firing against the gun but jerking it on with one sweeping motion each time the last shovelful of coal went through the firedoor. The steam pressure seemed to be stuck on 200 pounds. I would not allow the engine to pop and I would not allow the steam to drop.

But as we backed through what is known as the limestone cut, I could not resist any longer. This is a very hard pull, and most firemen will lose 15 to 20 pounds of steam here. To-

Father Ted Burdette was the man who taught our author railroading. Here Ted poses in Shay No. 4 on the Cass Scenic Railroad. Photographer unknown, late 1960's.

Cass has been a popular attraction since the tourist trains began running in 1963. This photo was made in 1968, courtesy State Department of Commerce.

day, as No. 5 "got down on her knees" through the cut, the valves lifted with a mighty sound, boasting to the world that we had steam to spare.

We backed on up to the second switchback with the safety valve just ready to pop. Now we were looking at the ten percent grade, and the S-curve that leads into Whittaker Station. As we came out of the second switchback, in forward motion now, the engineer opened the throttle wide. I left the injector off, got down, and really bailed the coal into the firebox.

I left the water gun off until we entered the first part of the S-curve, at the base of the ten percent grade. The train was slowing down now as it encountered the steep grade, the engine about to pop off. So I put the gun back on, the steam pressure laying right on 200 pounds. I got up on my seat to enjoy the scenery. It was all up to the engineer now. My steam pressure and water were right on the mark. The engine got down to a crawl and you could feel it shudder as it strained against the load. Whittaker Station was in sight.

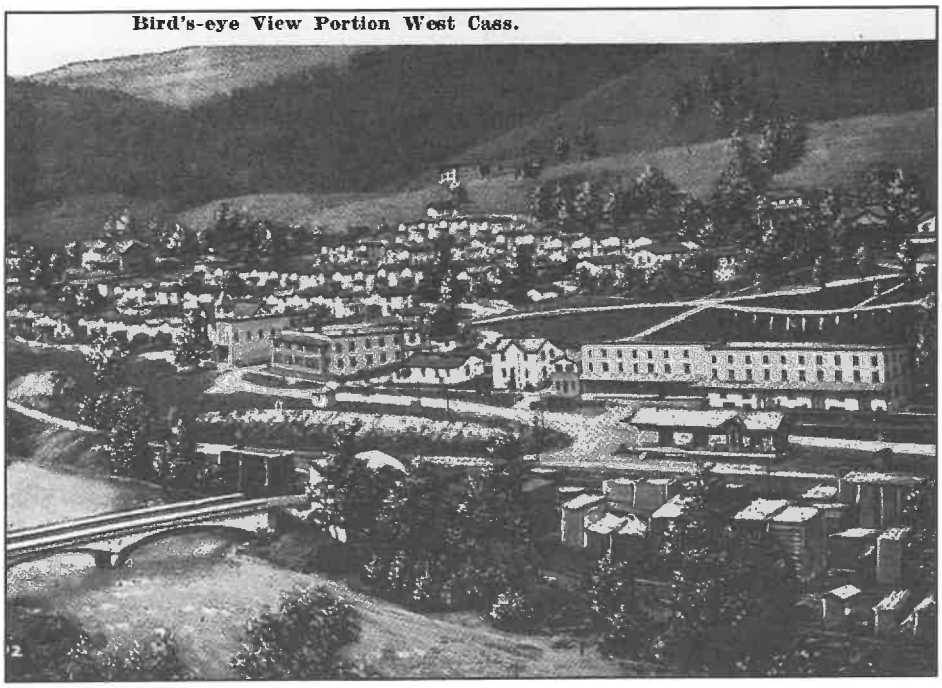
I felt like my father and grandfather were riding with me on that trip. Both were steam railroad men and I was doing just what they had taught me to do. In the days that followed I had no trouble keeping No. 5 hot.

I fired the No. 5 Shay for about a month, then we got No. 4 back. About a week later the No. 4 Shay had to go back to the shop again. This time I drew the No. 6 Heisler, weighing 100 tons. The Heisler had a known history of being hard to steam. It had a very long firebox, and the firedoor was down real close to the floor of the cab. This forced you to bend way over to throw the coal, and it was hard to reach the front of the firebox. In addition to this, No. 6 was easy to flood — that meant too much water in the boiler, overflowing into the cylinders.

On my first trip on No. 6, I lost 25 pounds of pressure as we went around the water tank and by the shop. A mile on up the mountain, at the first road crossing, steam was still down to 175 pounds, and the grade was getting steeper. I fought for every foot of track. I was losing water as well as steam, and the engineer would not ease up on the throttle and give me and No. 6 a chance.

We limped into the first switchback with 150 pounds of steam and low water. I thought the engineer would let me catch up on my water and steam here, but he didn't. He reversed the engine and began backing up the steep grade into Gum Field. We made it to the Gum curve and there we stalled. I made no attempt to raise steam until I had plenty of water in the boiler. I knew he would try to make up lost time once we started to move, and I wanted to have plenty of water so I could leave the injector gun off some. That way I thought I might be able to make it to the next switchback, and there gain a little more water and steam.

We sat there stalled for what seemed like an hour to a red-faced fireman. Actually it was only a few minutes. The engineer waited until steam pressure reached 200 pounds and then we pulled out. We made it to the second switchback with plenty of water, but with low steam pressure. Now I could leave the water gun off and build steam. When we came out of the second switchback,



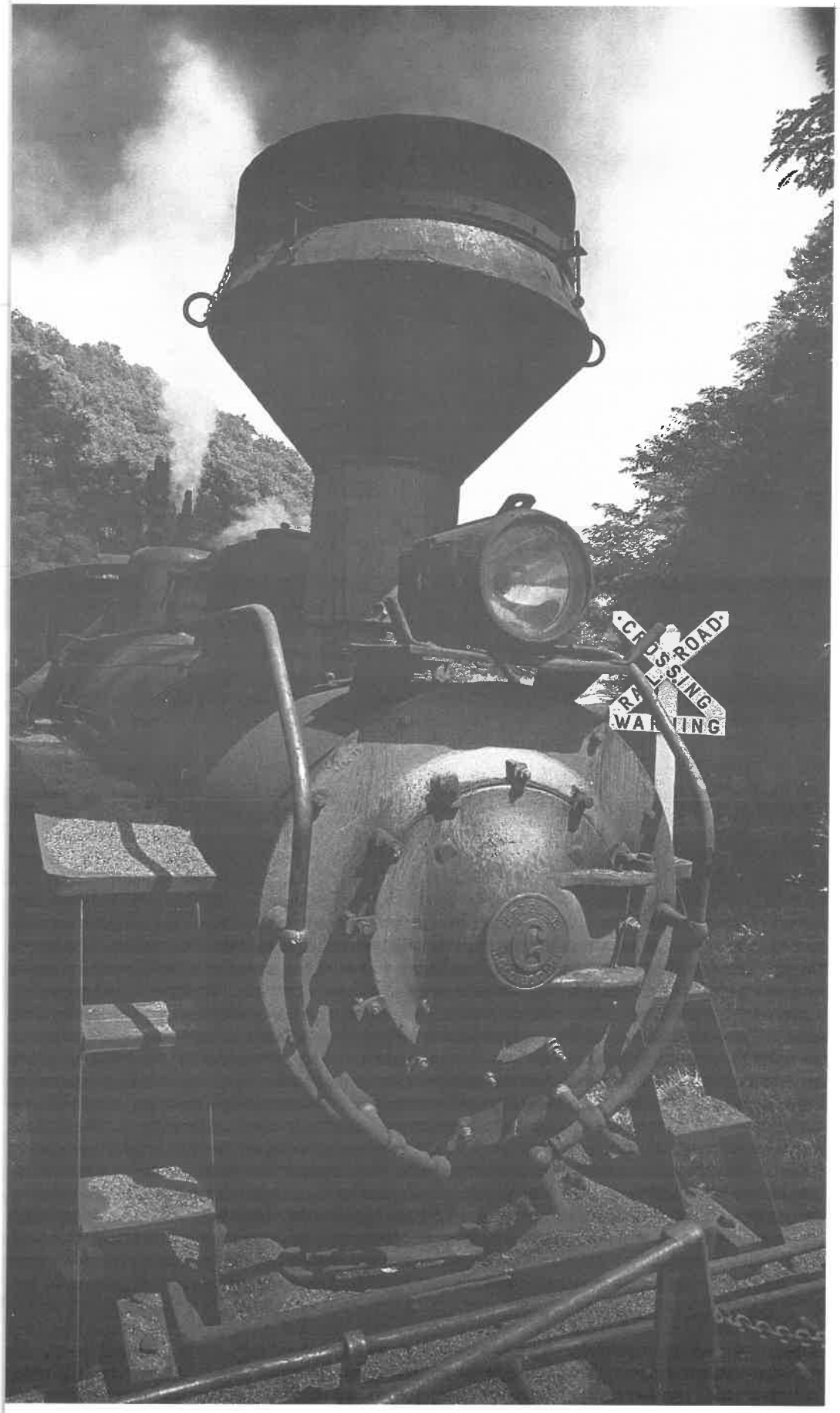
This postcard view shows the residential and business districts of Cass, and part of the lumberyard. The depot, big company store, and many of the houses and other buildings still stand. Courtesy State Archives, about 1921.

now in forward motion, I could see that No. 6 was going to get hot.

As we went into the S-curve at the base of the ten percent grade, No. 6 was trying to pop off. I put the injector on but she still wanted to pop. So I began fanning the firedoor, opening and closing it to let cold air enter the firebox. I kept the pop down until we got up over the ten percent section of track. Then just for meanness I let her pop. I fired No. 6 Heisler many times after this. She was a cranky old lady, but she never did stall on me anymore.

The next engine I fired at Cass was the No. 3 Shay. It was oil-fired and weighed 100 tons. No. 3 was a good steamer and rode real easy. She had a large all-weather cab, and all of the firing controls were easy to reach from the fireman's seat. Water glass and steam gauge were easy for the fireman to see. I fired the No. 3 for a long time before we got our regular engine, the No. 4 Shay, back.

A steam locomotive cab is a complex environment of valves, knobs and levers. The "Johnson bar," the main forward-reverse control, is the big lever rising by engineer Red McMillion's foot. Photo by S. J. Shaluta, 1988; courtesy State Department of Commerce.



One day as I was going to my car after work, the boss stopped me and told me to report for work the next day as the fireman on the lead engine on the long run. That is the train that goes to the top of Cheat Mountain, with grades up to 12 percent. He told me I would be on No. 2, a 100-ton, oil-fired Shay. The engineer would be a man who was retired, coming back to work for one weekend.

The next morning the old engineer bragged that he was going to get the train to the top of Cheat 30 minutes ahead of the regular arrival time. No. 5 Shay was to serve as pusher or helper engine. I got No. 2 ready, and we went to the depot on time. At five minutes before departure, No. 5 coupled onto our coal tender. Up in the cab of the No. 2, I did some last-minute adjustments. My water was right where I wanted it, and the steam gauge read 199. The conductor came out of the depot and gave the high ball signal. I turned and relayed the high sign to the engineer. He reached up and pulled the whistle cord twice, released the brakes and opened the throttle. We left Cass right on time.

The engineer gave the engine her time until we reached the locomotive shop. Then the throttle really came out. No. 2 shot smoke and began to spin wildly. He did not let up on the throttle but just sanded the rail for more friction. The noise in the cab was like I had never heard before. I thought surely No. 2 would tear apart in the middle. I turned the fuel valve almost off and got down in the gangway to put some sand through the firedoor to clean the flues.

I glanced up at the steam gauge, and saw I had lost 25 pounds of steam. I grabbed the oil valve and turned it wide open. I watched for what seemed like forever before the steam started back up. By the time we crossed the first road crossing at Leatherbark I was back up to 185 pounds of pressure, but from there to the first switchback it was a battle to keep water and steam. We pulled

The Heisler was another common logging locomotive, geared like the Shay for steep grades. Our author remembers the No. 6 Heisler as "a cranky old lady." Photo by Gerald Ratliff, 1978; courtesy State Department of Commerce.

into the switchback with 175 pounds of steam, and as we backed between the first and second switchbacks, I was able to hold only 175.

I knew if I could make Whittaker Station we would stop there for about 30 minutes, and maybe I could catch up. Well, he hogged her into Whittaker ahead of time. As we sat there I went back to the pusher engine to see how they were doing. In the cab of the No. 5 Shay, I talked to her crew about what a ride we were taking today. Their engineer joked that No. 2 was pulling the whole train, and No. 5 was just trying to keep up.

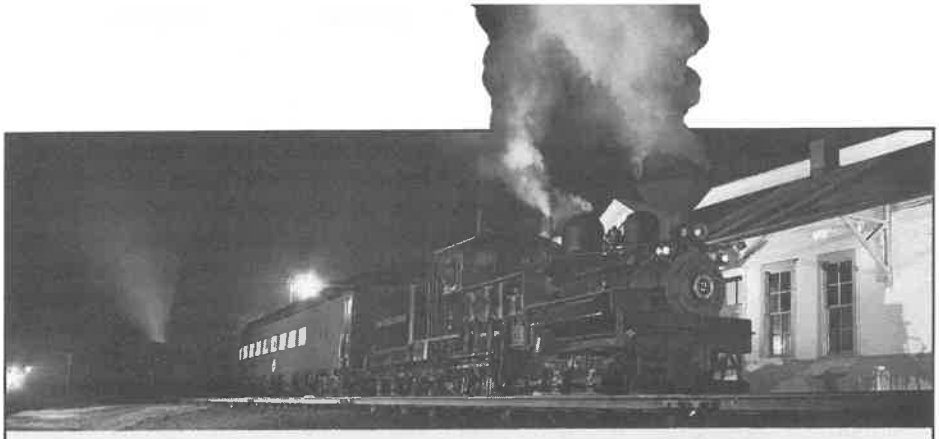
The rest of the trip it was all I could do to maintain water, and I never got above 185 pounds of steam. We did reach the top 30 minutes early, and I knew the engineer would try to beat that the next day. As I lay in bed that night, I tried to figure out why I could not get No. 2 Shay above 185 pounds of steam pressure. No matter how I adjusted the controls it didn't seem to help, but when I sanded the flues it would boost steam pressure a while. So I decided to do more sanding of the flues.

The next morning I made sure that the sand box in the cab of No. 2 was full. We went to the depot on time. I went back to talk with the crew of the pusher engine, No. 5 Shay again, and they agreed that we would probably take an even faster ride today.

I had No. 2 Shay ready when the No. 5 coupled up to her tender. I glanced back at the pusher fireman and he wiped his face as if he was already sweating. We left on time, and again as we cleared the shop area the throttle on No. 2 came out all the way. This time I was ready. I left the oil valve open and got down and put about five gallons of sand through the firedoor. Much to my surprise, I watched as the hand on the steam gauge rose steadily towards the 200-pound mark, which was where the pop valve would lift.

The rest of the trip, whenever steam pressure would lag in one place very long, I knew it was time to sand the flues. Today the record still stands that those two trips to Bald Knob were the fastest ever made. I found out that a Shay locomotive will take a lot of punishment and keep on going.

I return to Cass Scenic Railroad each summer and fire at least one trip



Evening dinner trains are a special feature of the Cass Scenic Railroad.

Cass Train Schedule

Visitors to Cass Scenic Railroad State Park can ride steam trains up and down the mountains of Pocahontas County all summer long. From now through Labor Day the operating schedule is as follows:

Cass to Bald Knob
4½ hour trip
1 trip daily (except Mondays)
Leave Cass at noon
Adults - $11, Child - $5

Cass to Whittaker Station
1½ hour trip
3 trips daily
Leave Cass 11 a.m., 1 & 3 p.m.
Adults - $8, Child - $4

Tickets for Bald Knob and Whittaker Station trips include admission to the wildlife and historical museums. Children under six ride free, and group rates are available on weekdays.

Between Labor Day and the last weekend in October, these trips run on weekends only.

Special Saturday night dinner trains are scheduled for June 10 and 17, July 1, 15 and 29, August 5 and 19, and September 2. Along with a barbecue dinner, passengers are treated to live entertainment, tours of the museums at Cass, and a trip to Whittaker Station and back. Tickets are $22 for adults and $15 for children. Reservations must be made in advance.

On September 9, a senior citizens train will run, and on October 28 a special Halloween train is scheduled. Cass also offers fall foliage trips from October 1 through 15. Ticket prices are the same as above, with the Bald Knob trip leaving at noon, Wednesday through Sunday. Two Whittaker Station trips operate daily, Wednesday through Friday, with three on Saturday and Sunday.

There is a lot to take in at Cass Scenic Railroad State Park. The historic company store houses a large gift shop and restaurant, and the wildlife and historical museums. The depot has a sales shop, petting zoo and toy train museum. Downtown Cass has a new artist colony and specialty shops that feature West Virginia crafts. The second Cass Railroad Festival is planned for June 23-25, promising good food, exhibits, and entertainment.

Those who want overnight accommodations may rent converted company houses with modern plumbing and fully-equipped kitchens. The old lumber town also has bed and breakfast accommodations. For information or reservations call 1-800-CALL-WVA or contact Cass Railroad, P.O. Box 107, Cass, WV 24927, (304) 456-4300.

Above: Ted Burdette was the first engineer to put Shay No. 5 on top of Bald Knob, and it remains a family favorite. The off-center boiler on the Shays allows room for the gearing. Photo by Ron Snow, 1985; courtesy State Department of Commerce.

Left: Silhouetted against the sky, author Cody Burdette draws water for his locomotive. Steam railroading is in its twilight now, kept alive by a few tourist lines. Photographer and date unknown.

up the mountain. I am no longer with the railroad but I enjoy these weekends very much. On some of these trips I have fired the mighty 162-ton No. 6 Shay. They got this locomotive out of the B&O Railroad Museum after I had left Cass. It is the last Shay to be built. It is a good steamer and rides like a rocking chair.

My favorite engine to fire remains the No. 5 Shay, the oldest engine at Cass. No. 5 came there new in 1905 in the timber era and has spent her entire life on Cheat Mountain. She has seen a lot of engineers and firemen come and go in that time. My own father was her engineer for many years, the first to put her on top of Bald Knob. So No. 5 Shay is like family to me. Each summer I try to shovel a little coal into her boiler and listen to her soft exhaust, as she works her way up Cheat Mountain on rails that seem to reach the very sky.

Slow Train

From Huntington to Parkersburg by Steam

By Bob Withers

The day was August 1, 1957. I was 12 years old and about to set off on a railroad adventure in the last days of the steam trains. I had looked forward to it, saved my nickels for it, for months.

The morning sun was already baking the brick platform in front of the Baltimore & Ohio's Huntington station as I stared down Second Avenue at a slowly approaching column of coal smoke. While my mother was inside, handing over $15.09 to ticket agent Wallace Brown for two round-trip tickets to Parkersburg, I had positioned myself for an unforgettable close-up view of an aging B&O steam locomotive, complete with 64-inch driving wheels, clanking rods, glowing firebox, impatient hissing and pulsating heat.

Actually, Huntington was mainly a C&O town, host to the fast passenger trains, numerous manifest freights, and heavy coal drags on the busy Chesapeake & Ohio main line. But the C&O was all business, with no time to fool with a boy.

The B&O's lazy Ohio River Branch was more my speed. Its trains were a little behind the times, and they weren't so numerous, fast or busy as those of the C&O. But what the line lacked in efficiency, it made up in personality. Its crews had time to make friends. A wide smile accompanied an engineer's wave, and children at trackside were often tossed handfuls of candy or chalk as the caboose trundled by.

By the summer of 1957, I had grown fond of the old B&O steamers chuffing by near my home. I could tell them apart merely by their whistles. Trainmen became my friends, and I was invited aboard cabooses, locomotive cabs, and coaches. I was hooked. I would wait for hours on the porch of Bayard Hughes's grocery store or the playground of Guyandotte School, furiously scribbling dates, times and numbers in my spiral notebook when a train finally charged by.

But I had never been to Parkersburg, where the B&O's Baltimore-to-St. Louis main line crossed the Ohio River. My railroader friends had whetted my appetite with descriptions about the big trains up there. I longed to see them for myself, and on this hot August day I would have my chance.

The approaching engine was No. 357, made in 1918 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works and one of a group of locomotives the B&O had renamed "MacArthurs" in honor of the World War II general. Running as train 82 from Kenova, No. 357 ambled up the track, smack in the middle of Second Avenue, crossed 11th Street and at 9:21 a.m. groaned to a stop in front of the station. The engineer was M. J. "Daddy" Reed, a backward kind of guy who always wore a melancholy expression. But he really looked the part with his coveralls, cap and gloves.

Coupled to the 357 was "combine" 1498, a dingy blue half-baggage, half-passenger coach trimmed with a single yellow stripe and overlaid with soot. It was older than the locomotive, made by Pullman in 1916.

Train 82 was the "local." It was advertised as a mixed train, meaning it carried passengers as well as freight and express. Conductor Herb Sammons, grip in one hand and newspaper in the other, chuckled at the sight of real, live passengers for this trip. The last regular passenger run had ended six months before and visitors were rare now. No wonder. The coach was grimy and hot, and the train incredibly slow. Stops at towns and industrial plants up the river would make a ten-hour odyssey of our 120-mile trip.

At 9:29, we jolted into motion as the old steamer coaxed its coach through the yard to the track where 27 freight cars and a caboose waited. We stopped under the spout of a water tower at 19th Street to top off our water supply, the tank being allowed to overflow to ensure it was full. Then we bumped, jostled and rocked for nearly 20 minutes as the engine coupled to the train and rearranged the cars in proper order for setting off at stations up the line.

Such maneuvers were the order of the day, it turned out, with this young passenger recording it all for posterity:

—We left three tank cars at the Gulf refinery and took five loads of gasoline for delivery to Cox Landing.

—Stopped for cans of cream at Glenwood.

—Switched cars in Point Pleasant for more than an hour, unloaded express there (including a corpse), ducked into a siding to let the westbound local pass, and gave the panting engine another drink.

—Stopped at York to retrieve a repaired tank car.

—Stopped at Mason City for orders, and at New Haven for waybills, plus water.

Then we "switched" the Sporn plant and the Vanadium Corporation at Graham. The crew deserted the train and took the locomotive up a hill and out of sight. For upwards of a half-hour, my mother and I sat alone on the right-of-way, listening to the jarflies, pops of metal expanding in the afternoon sun, and the crash of distant couplers. At last the locomotive backed down the grade again.

Next we paused at Letart, for reasons unknown. We welcomed two more passengers aboard at Millwood, an elderly woman and her granddaughter. They were a railroader's dependents, riding on a pass, and knew the crew well. Another MacArthur engine and its caboose waited

on a siding near the Ripley branch, ready to follow us.

Thereafter it was more of the same:

—We waited ten minutes at the Kaiser Aluminum plant for a diesel switching run coming from Ravenswood.

—Moved slowly over a repaired trestle, which had been set afire ten days before by sparks from one of these old steamers.

—Stopped at Ravenswood for coal and water, to load and unload express, and more switching.

—Stopped at Belleville for station work.

—Stopped at Murrayville for cream.

Then we paused for an hour and 40 minutes at the DuPont plant below Parkersburg. The engine uncoupled again and went inside the plant. I was anxious by now to see the B&O main line, whose fast trains I could hear across the river.

We passed time by conversing with the other passengers. They caught on to my interest in railroads and quizzed me to see how much I knew. "You know about the line from Ravenswood to Spencer?" the lady asked.

"Yes," I crowed, no doubt throwing out my chest. "It's called the RS&G."

But she pressed on. "What do those initials mean, sonny?"

I must have deflated in a hurry. I knew that the "R" and the "S" stood for the line's end points, but didn't know then that the "G" stood for Glenville, where the line was intended to go but never did.

"Ravenswood, Spencer. . ." I stammered, as the talkative lady and her granddaughter convulsed with laughter. "Naw," she said, waving her hands. "It means 'Rub Snuff and Grin!'"

As if to torment us now that the end was so near, our locomotive further delayed our journey by catching fire near one of her cylinders. One of my most vivid memories of the trip is the sight of Mr. Sammons and brakeman-baggageman Bill Jones running into the baggage compartment for fire fighting equipment.

By now we had come to understand that this was not the way to travel had we been in a hurry. Fortunately, we were not. To someone content with a daylong diet of smoke, cinders, and peanut butter sandwiches, the trip was a fine one. I enjoyed the day despite the heat, gawking wide-eyed and flat-nosed out the dirty coach windows and scribbling hasty notes in my journal at every move. And no doubt my mother enjoyed watching me.

The crew took me under its wing. Conductor Sammons gave me a stack of green train orders, tissue-thin forms used to record the dispatcher's instructions regarding speed restrictions and meeting other trains. At one stop he walked me to a grocery store and bought me a bottle of orange pop.

Mr. Jones held onto me so I could watch from the baggage door our crossing of the Kanawha River at Point Pleasant and the curving of the entire train around a cornfield at Kroy. The husky, big-boned brakeman had an infectious smile. In one day he taught me that railroaders are a friendly lot who love their profession and like to show it off. Three months later kind Bill Jones was dead, the victim of an accident in Parkersburg's Low Yard.

I was bone tired but enjoying every moment as we finally crossed the Little Kanawha River. We stopped at 7:20 p.m. on the elevated trackage of Parkersburg's venerable Ann Street Station. Ticket agents didn't work in the three-story gabled brick building

anymore, but passengers could still use the platform and steps to ground level.

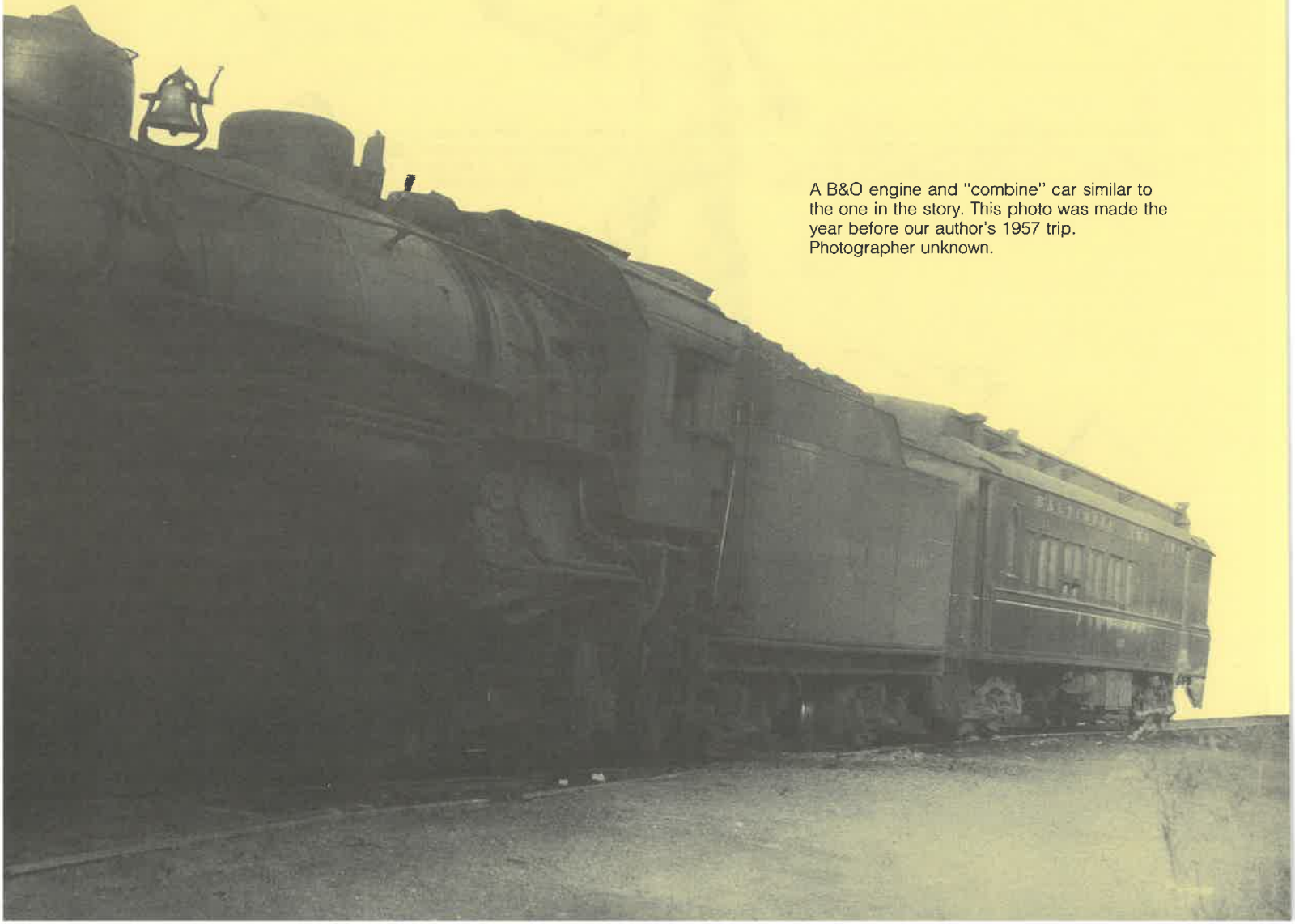
We checked into the Stratford Hotel on Juliana Street. Then came supper at last, at a restaurant across Third Street — I had meat loaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, orange pop and vanilla ice cream — and a visit to B&O's Sixth Street Station to watch main-line trains. Jotting down notes from a B&O crossing guard, I observed the departure of No. 24, a passenger train headed for Cumberland, Maryland, and the arrival of St. Louis 96, a long manifest freight. We were too tired to wait another hour for the eastbound "National Limited."

By 5:30 the next morning, it was plenty warm and already busy at Ann Street. I was wide awake on the high platform, notebook in hand. First came the "high cars," a train routed around the tunnels on the main line, arriving from New Martinsville. Then our engine, No. 357 again, backed into the yard to pick up its train. Then a heavier MacArthur, No. 445, went to pick up train 98 for Benwood.

The trip home on train 81 was uneventful and faster, if you can call eight hours from Parkersburg to Huntington fast. More stops. More switching. More coal and water. More lessons on railroading. And no passengers but us.

We made our big trip just in time. The steam engines were gone in three months and the coaches soon afterward. Now cabooses and the flagmen who rode them are vanishing as well. None of the stations are used for passengers anymore, and most have been torn down. Most of my railroader pals have long since died, retired or been paid to quit. Main-line traffic through Parkersburg is a memory, although long, impersonal freight trains and a few industrial switchers still rattle along the river.

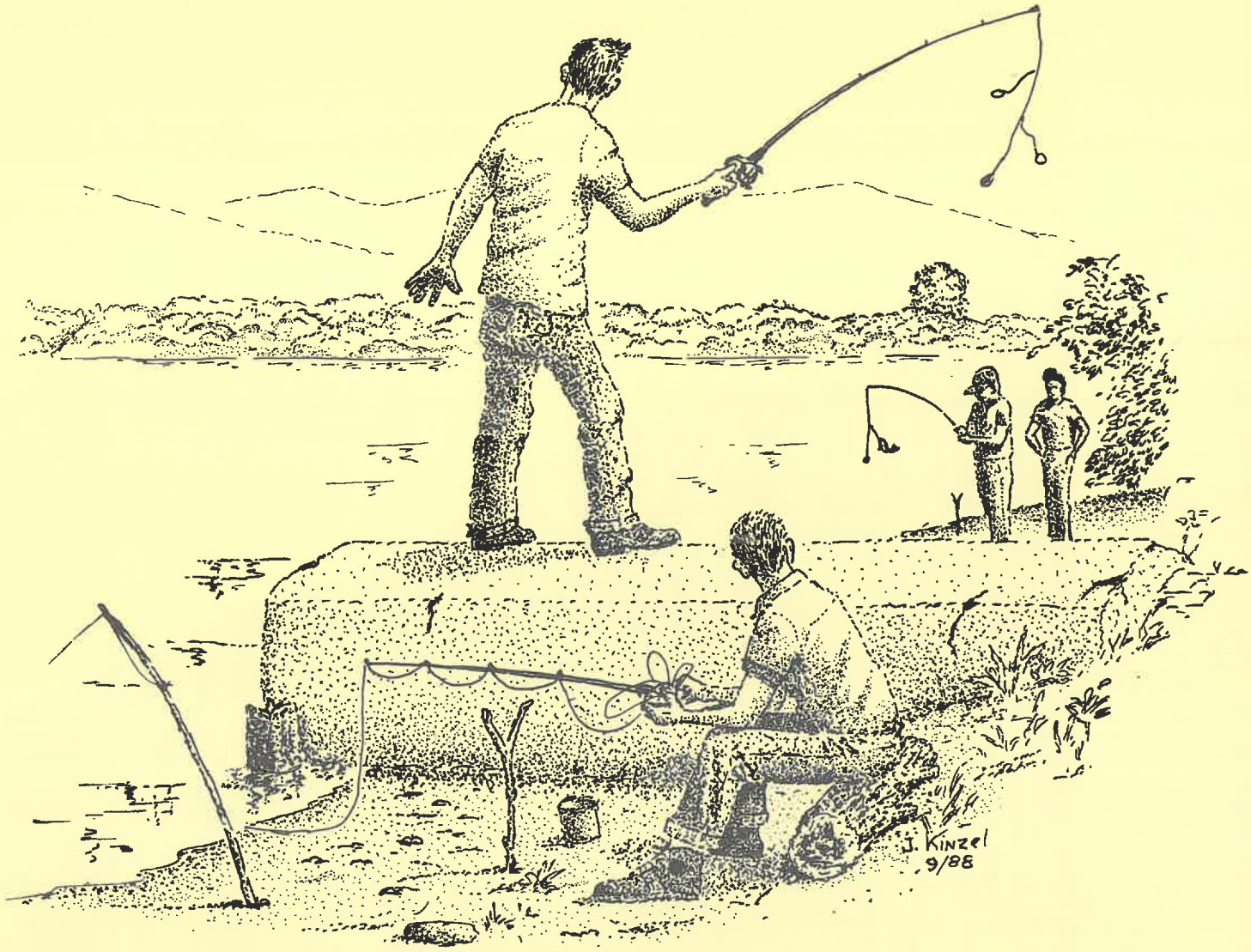
We counted up after returning to Huntington. The trip had cost us $22.99, including $5.10 for the hotel room and $1.48 for supper. Not bad for an adventure. For that sum, my mother and I had purchased a good time together and memories that will never come my way again.



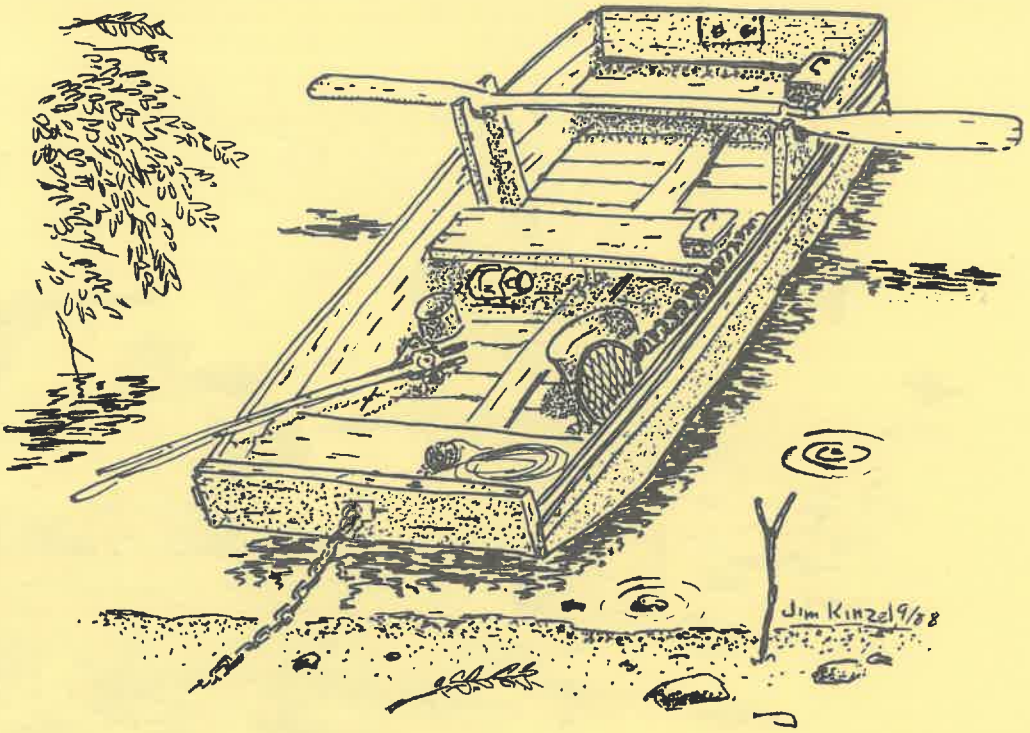
A B&O engine and "combine" car similar to the one in the story. This photo was made the year before our author's 1957 trip. Photographer unknown.

Edge Cover

Text and Illustrations by Jim Kinzel



"If you've never watched a good 'ol boy wind up with a five-ounce sinker, two hooks baited with doughballs big as hen eggs, the click set on the reel to keep it from backlashing and the determination to outdistance the last guy, 'you ain't seen nuthin!'"



"It was a good solid johnboat, about 14 feet long and made of full one-inch boards. It seemed to weigh at least 1,000 pounds, maybe 2,000, depending on how far you had been rowing. Where it came from, we had no idea."

Edge cover is nature's "betwixt and between" zone, that narrow ecological strip where woodland and field overlap or the drop-off from the shallows into deep water. Biologists say this is the best place for game and fish.

Looking back, I realize that my first hunting and fishing experiences were on an "edge." Such a place is hard to find now, and a thing to be treasured if you do have one.

Mine was the Ohio River and its banks where it flows past the East End of Huntington. The boundaries on the West Virginia shore were from the old 26th Street ferry landing to the mouth of the Guyandotte River, and from the ferry landing to the mouth of Paddy Creek on the Ohio side.

If you like to hunt and fish but live in a city with no access to rural areas, it can be painful and frustrating. That was my situation as a boy in the 1940's. Dad worked away and didn't get home but maybe once a month, leaving me stranded. The Ohio River was just a few blocks from home, but Mom, having sole responsibility for my care, decided I was too young to go there. She assured me that my pain would increase greatly if I were to slip off to the river and she found out about it.

Temptation being what it is, I finally gave in. A buddy and I bought some kite string (really strong in those days) and hooks and found some nuts for sinkers; our rods were growing on the riverbank, as was our bait. Our burden of guilt was great, and on our way to the river we felt like we were being watched from every window. And come to think of it, someone must have been watching. Just as we got settled down for some serious fishing, Bill's dad found us and sent us packing. When I got home, it was evident the bad news had reached there before me. With my shirt collar in one hand and a limber switch in the other, Mom showed me the error of my ways.

Of course, as time went by, I gained permission to go to the river. Dad's recollections of the good times of his boyhood helped speed things up, I think.

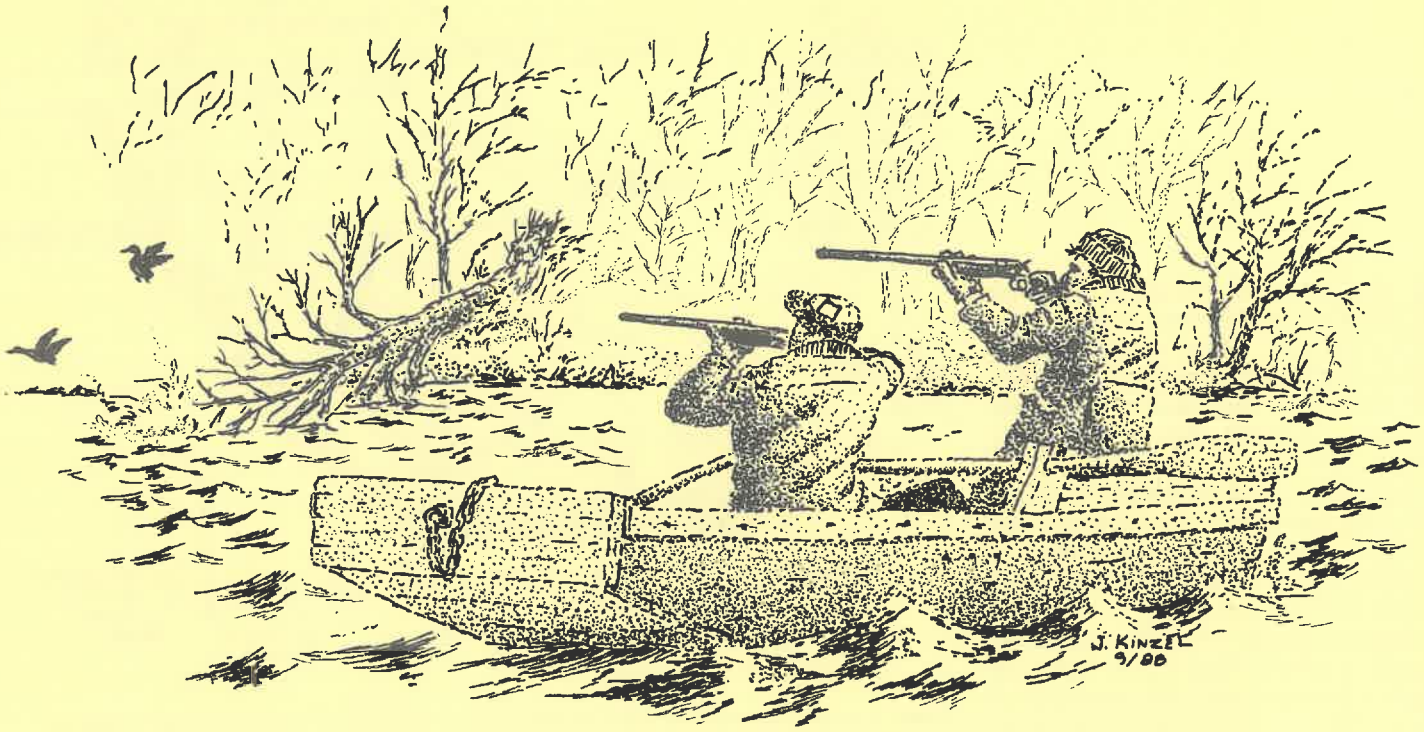
I know somebody owned the land bordering the river, but the riverbanks were abandoned to those who fished and hunted along them. The Ohio River Barge Company owned a parcel of it, and a Mr. Blake leased land for little or nothing and raised his garden there for years. He didn't mind our intrusions.

When we left the street and went over the first bank, we were in a world of our own. It was not a pristine wilderness, but it was all we had. A rabbit darting through Blake's garden was as exciting to me as a buck in a laurel patch in later years, and no fish has replaced the thrill of hooking my first big carp.

Like any of the famous trout and salmon streams, our favorite spots were named. There were the "Big Tree," "The Mouth" (this could mean the mouth of the Guyandotte River on the West Virginia side or the mouth of Indian Guyan Creek on the Ohio side), "The Boats," "The Platform," "The Stage," and the greatest of them all, "The Sewer." This was, in fact, the Division Street sewer, a real honey hole, if you will.

Our tackle ranged from throw lines to fancy steel rods with agate guides and Pflueger Supreme reels. The bulk of the equipment tended toward the throw line end of the scale. A belief shared by all was that the closer you could cast to the Ohio shore, a half mile away, the better your chances. Now, if you were on the Ohio side, the theory was reversed. This belief, coupled with the idea that the best reel was the one that spun the longest when you gave the handle a good turn, promoted some world class backlashes.

I've since seen fly casters who were poetry in motion, the rhythmic movement of the rod and the line floating out to lay a fly delicately on the water truly something to see. We, too, had our episodes. If you've never watched a good ol' boy wind up with a five-ounce sinker, two hooks baited with doughballs big as hen eggs, the click set on the reel to keep it from backlashing and the determination to outdistance the last guy, "you ain't seen nuthin!" First would come the scream of the reel, then the crack of the line



"Our method of hunting was to get above the ducks and try to ease within range. If the water was up in the willows, we'd drift along the shore and try to jump-shoot them. There wasn't anything fancy about our duck hunting, just a lot of hard work and fun."

as it backlashed and broke free, followed by the tracking of the sinker, bait and hooks as they sailed toward the state of Ohio. Sometimes the line didn't break out of the backlash, and we had to dodge the sinker and hooks as they snapped back at us.

The first few seasons, we mostly caught chubs. That is what everybody called them, small silvery fish from three to six inches long, with a mouth that extended out like a sucker's. If you baited with worms, chances were that chubs were all you caught. Of course, we occasionally hooked other species, including catfish, skipjack, perch (drum), jack salmon (sauger), and infrequently a bass. The main prey turned out to be the lowly carp.

The carp picked up a big following among all who fished the edge. There was some huffiness when an old-timer found a rank youngster fishing from his favorite spot or daring to comment on a better way to rig a line or make bait.

To borrow a term from our Pro Bass buddies, the best "structure" for carp was the Division Street sewer. Instead of just running the pipe out to the river, a concrete pier had been built to protect the end of the pipe. This made an ideal platform for fishing. Some liked to fish downstream from it, others off the end, and still others preferred the upstream side. There were some who couldn't stand the thought of it at all. They didn't catch near the fish as the rest of us.

Our use of the edge expanded to the utmost the day we found a boat floating down the river. Where it came from, we had no idea. There was nothing in it, and it had no chain to tie it up. We quickly secured our prize to a willow tree. It was a good solid johnboat, about 14 feet long and made of full one-inch boards. It seemed to weigh at least a thousand pounds, maybe 2,000, depending on how far you had been rowing. When my buddy Glenn bought a little three-horsepower outboard motor, we had really arrived. We were able to dash over the water doing at least four miles per hour.

About the time we found our boat, we were becoming educated by the works of the great outdoor scribes of that era, such as the late Ray Bergman and Jack O'Conner. We were beginning to use artificial lures and actually catching a few bass.

The biggest fish we ever knew of was hooked on a trotline, and we never saw it. We had set our line off the mouth of Indian Guyan Creek, about 50 yards out in the river and running upstream and down. We sank it and got some landmarks so we could use a drag to pick it up. The line was in for several days with no great success. Then we went to run it one evening but couldn't find it. We checked our marks and tried in vain to snag the line. We were blaming everything from towboats to anyone low enough to steal a trotline.

Fussing and cussing, we kept moving out in an arc from where the line had been set. Finally, we caught it. The upstream anchor was a rock of 20 to 30 pounds and the downstream anchor was about half that weight. Whatever we had caught was on the lower end of the line and had dragged it almost 90 degrees out into the channel where it became fouled on something. We could feel the fish surge back and forth, but try as we might, the line wouldn't come free.

We had taken some dangerous chances on the river, but none of us had any desire to try to untangle that line from what we didn't know — not

with a big fish and some hooks thrashing around in the growing darkness. I would have given anything to have had a look at our monster, but we gave up and cut the line. I always hoped he broke loose and might still be swimming around out there.

Our boat opened up another field to us, duck hunting. This was in the days when a hunting license cost a buck, and the duck stamp did too. You could walk down the street with a gun on your shoulder and nobody panicked.

The ducks would float downriver from around Paddy Creek to the ferry crossing. There they would raise, fly back upstream and float down again, a distance of about three miles. Our method of hunting was to get above them and try to ease within range. If the water was up in the willows, we'd drift along the shore and try to jump-shoot them. There wasn't anything fancy about our duck hunting, just a lot of hard work and fun. We might have offended some sportsmen in our methods, but we took our shots as they came, sitting or flying.

Crows gave us a lot of sport, as well as cold feet. This was before DDT, weed killers and treated grain, so there were plenty of crows. A big flock worked the cornfield on the Ohio side and some would fly over and feed along the West Virginia shore. This was best when there was a big snow on and the cornfield was covered up. We had blinds spotted along the bank all the way to Guyandotte. My attempts at calling crows were unsuccessful, for they always turned and flew the other way. Sometimes we would crouch in the blinds for hours waiting for a shot. What a blessing insulated underwear and boots would have been, but they were things of the future.

There was a lot of game on our edge that most city dwellers never realized was there. We had rabbits, possums, squirrels, quail, weasels, and muskrats. Once I saw a fox.

Time passes and things change. So they must, and so it was with us. My friends and I reached the age of college, early marriages, and a chance to travel to Korea at the government's expense. When I came back in the middle 1950's, there was a new group fishing for carp, but the johnboats were all gone. The lonesome blast of a sternwheeler blowing for the locks was being replaced by ugly diesel horns. Gone was the ferry and the duck and crow hunters.

I walked down to the river and watched the changes. The city built a new sewage treatment plant and all of the open sewers were closed off. The industrial plants had to stop polluting the river with their wastes. Those were changes that I welcomed. There were others not welcome at all. By the '60's, the fisherman's fire was giving way to all-night pot parties and beer busts. Finally a fence was put up so the party-goers couldn't drive down on the riverbank.

The next step brought sheer disaster, for someone decided to have all of the trees cut. Within three years the bank was gone, eroded away. Where Mr. Blake raised corn there is now nothing but sand, gravel and scrub willow. The Ohio side declined too. The first step was a drag strip down the middle of the cornfield, followed by the installation of a barge repair facility. That took care of the riverbank. Nothing enhances the peace and beauty of the outdoors like the racket of a couple of drag racers or the sight of a rusty coal barge.

Nowadays the futuristic new East Huntington Bridge straddles the upper limits of my edge, rushing motorists over to Proctorville. It should have been built years ago, but I'll have to admit that I'm glad they didn't put it up when I was enjoying the river.

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In This Issue

ETHEL BOLTE, born at Zinnia in Doddridge County, has lived most of her life in Salem. She taught school in Nicholas, Doddridge and Harrison counties for 35 years. Now retired, she writes for local history publications. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

P. CORBIT BROWN, a native of Fayette County, studies photography at Shepherd College and works as a freelance photographer. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Winter 1988 issue.

CODY A. BURDETTE describes himself as a railroad man, as were his father and grandfather. He worked for the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company during the 1950's, and also as an auto mechanic. A native West Virginian, he now lives in Tennessee. This is his second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DOUG CHADWICK of Pocahontas County was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He attended Reed College in Oregon, Evergreen State College in Washington State, and a school for filmmaking and video in Rome. Chadwick moved to West Virginia in 1970, has been a photographer for the *Fayette Tribune* and *Raleigh Register*, and now works primarily as a freelance panoramic photographer. He has contributed to GOLDENSEAL since our first year.

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

HELEN STEELE ELLISON was born at Pickaway, Monroe County, and grew up in Alderson. A graduate of Marshall University, she earned an M.S. in social work from Columbia University. She is retired from WVU's School of Social Work and lives in Morgantown with her husband Zack. Both are occasional contributors to GOLDENSEAL.

JAMES ORVILLE HILL was born in 1915 in the Island Creek section of Lincoln County. He grew up on the family farm there, moving to Charleston in 1936. He retired from the U.S. Postal Service after nearly 35 years of service. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

JIM KINZEL grew up in Huntington and now lives across Cabell County at Malcolm Springs. He graduated from Marshall, majoring in art. He is retired from Huntington Alloys, but not retired from hunting and fishing. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL M. MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University, graduating with a degree in sociology, and is now finishing his studies at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. Meador, not to be confused with photographer Michael Meador, is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

JOSEPH PLATANIA, a Huntington native, earned his B.A. and M.A. at Marshall. He has worked for the West Virginia Department of Welfare and for the Veterans Administration, and is now a freelance writer. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Fall 1988 issue.

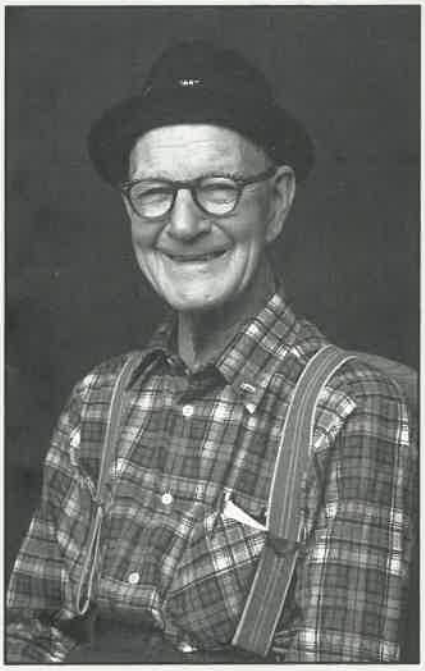
ANDY WILLIS, a native of Pennsylvania with deep roots in the Eastern Panhandle, has lived in West Virginia 15 years. A former chemical industry employee, he now lives in South Charleston and works as an artist and musician. His illustrations last appeared in the Fall 1988 issue.

BOB WITHERS, a Huntington native, is a copy editor at the *Huntington Herald Dispatch* and pastor of Seventh Avenue Baptist Church. A journalism graduate of Marshall, he describes himself as a lifelong railroad enthusiast. He has written for *Moody Monthly*, *Trains*, and *Grit*.

ED ZAHNISER, a native of Washington, attended college in Illinois and graduate school at Johns Hopkins University. He served as a military journalist in the U.S. and Korea. He now writes handbooks and travel literature for the National Park Service in Harpers Ferry, and poetry and fiction on the side. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Farewell to Mitchell and Fluharty

French Mitchell (1911-1989)



Russell Fluharty (1906-1989). Both portraits by Michael Keller.

GOLDENSEAL readers will be sad to note the passing of two of West Virginia's longtime musicians. In March, R. French Mitchell of Buffalo, Putnam County, and Everett Russell "Russ" Fluharty of Mahans Run near Mannington, Marion County, died. Both men spent many years keeping alive the mountain music they loved.

French Mitchell was born in 1911 and learned to play the fiddle from his father, Fred, a musician and violin maker. He and his brother Auvil performed together frequently in the early days of commercial radio. They played as the Buffalo Nighthawks with banjoist Winifred Weaver on WOUB's (now WCHS) "Old Farm Hour" in Charleston and on the "Jamboree" on WWVA in Wheeling. French performed with Cowboy Loye and Buddy Starcher, and other country stars of the day.

After World War II, he continued playing music full-time in places from Fairmont to Oklahoma City. Mitchell kept up his radio performances, but the days of live radio shows were numbered. Eventually he went into other work, closer to home. At the time of his death, he was retired from the Putnam County Board of Education. Mitchell posthumously received the Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest folklife honor, at the 1989 Vandalia Gathering.

Russell Fluharty was widely known as the "Dulcimer Man." He spent his life playing and promoting the hammered dulcimer. He carried the tradition of the old instrument down through his family, nurturing its music in the years before the folk revival of the 1960's. His treasured antique hammered dulcimer was given to him by his Uncle Ezry Fluharty.

The Dulcimer Man made music throughout the state and across the country. He was a familiar face at West Virginia folk festivals, appeared on the syndicated talk shows of David Frost and Merv Griffin, and played the Newport Folk Festival and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. He performed at the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes for 19 years in a row. Fluharty received the 1986 Vandalia Award and was named Distinguished West Virginian in 1988. He was organizer and president of the Mountaineer Dulcimer Club. An avid preservationist, Fluharty helped save Mannington's historic round barn. He made his living as a carpenter, electrician, pottery worker and coal miner.

In recent years, Mitchell and Fluharty reached some of their widest audiences. They were both featured at the first Vandalia Gathering in 1977 and both performed most years after that. In 1983, French Mitchell's "First Fiddle" was released by Elderberry Records, the Department of Culture and History's record label. Both men play on the 1988 Elderberry release, "The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-1987," a double album highlighting the best of the state's official folklife festival.

French Mitchell and Russell Fluharty join other departed Vandalia regulars, most recently including Blackie Cool, a Webster County guitarist who died last summer. Cool's music is presented on an album released by Augusta Heritage Records, and also on "The Music Never Dies." All three were featured in past issues of GOLDENSEAL, and all were memorialized during a special "Music Never Dies" opening concert at the 1989 Vandalia Gathering. The May 26 event honored mountain musicians who have left us, but whose music lives on in the hearts of West Virginians.

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