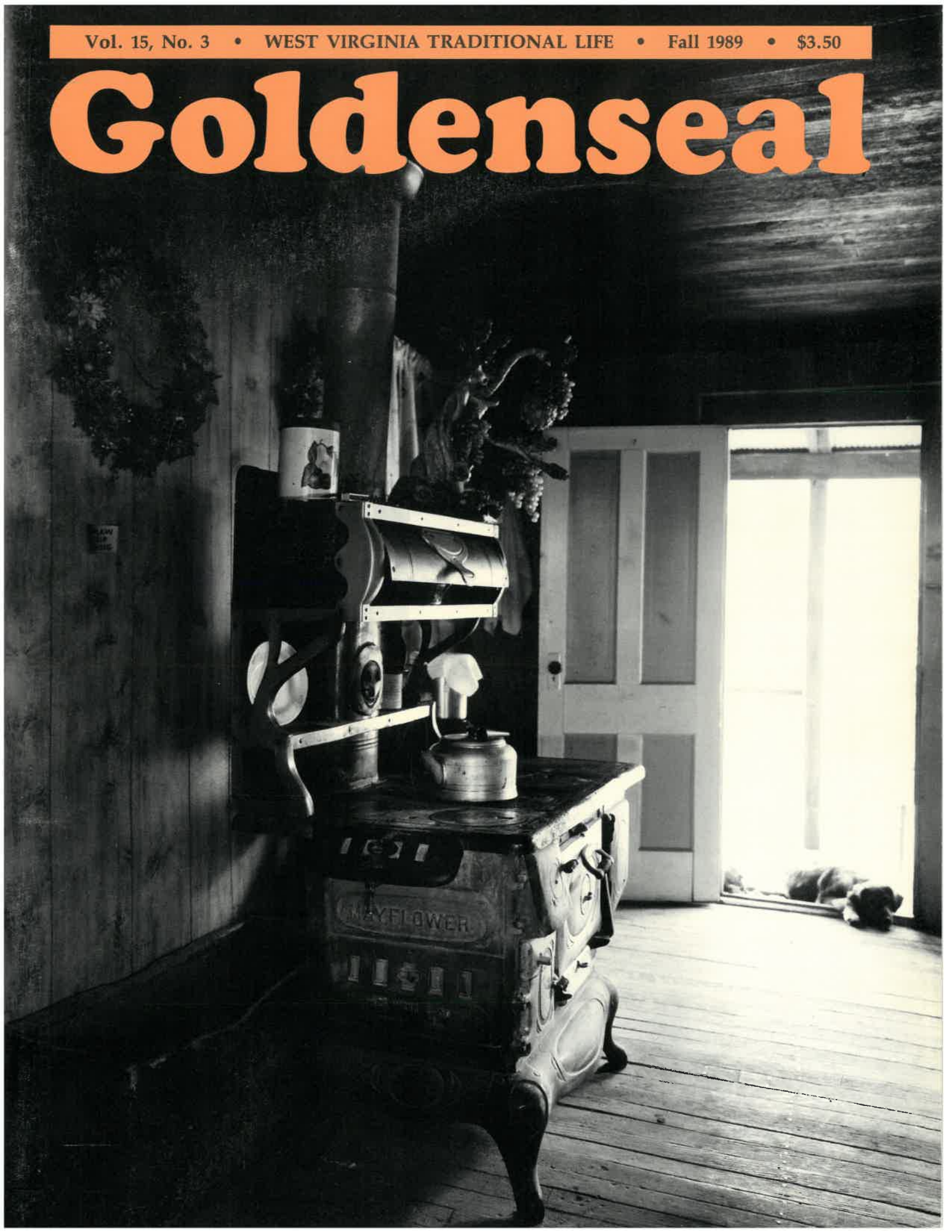
Vol. 15, No. 3 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Fall 1989 • $3.50

Goldenseal



From the Editor: Renewal Time

That is Sylvia O'Brien's cookstove on the cover of this magazine. The picture says a lot about what we do here at GOLDENSEAL, and I'm glad to have it on the front of the fall fund-raising issue.

Sylvia has turned out a lot of good meals on that classic stove. It represents a simpler way of life, a life that a few West Virginians still hold to. Sylvia is one of them, and we're proud to have her in the pages of GOLDENSEAL.

Our job is to document the vanishing life-style she follows, as well as the generally more hectic lives other West Virginians have found in coal mines and sawmills, in factories and on farms, and in our state's cities and towns. We get it all down on paper, in the best writing and photography available, and we put it in your mailbox on time.

All that costs money, lots of it. That money must come from you and other readers. There is no point in beating around the bush about that. We need your help and we need it soon. It's time to renew your $12.50 subscription for another year of GOLDENSEAL.

Let me tell you where we stand and what we need to do about it. Take printing, for example. The magazine you hold in your hands cost more than 25 percent more to print than the last one you received. That's because our printing contract, which we had successfully renewed at the old rates for three years, finally ran out of extensions. The new contract will cost us around $28,000 more per year, putting our total printing costs at well over $100,000 for the first time ever.

Printing is our single biggest expense, but by no means the only one. We foresee no increase in postal rates in the coming year, and our new postal classification saved us from the disastrous effects of last year's increase, as reported here a year ago. Nonetheless, our postage bill will rise along with circulation. We've budgeted $25,000 for mailing this year, another all-time high.

And then there are staff salaries, designer and freelancer pay, office expenses, mailing list and fund-raising expenses, and so forth and so on. All these will creep upward despite our best efforts to hold down costs. We expect a modest staff pay raise soon — the first in three years — and the cost of our design contract has just jumped more than ten percent.

Altogether, the coming 12 months promise to be our most expensive year ever. That comes at a time when state government is cutting back, including cutbacks in the subsidies available to publications such as GOLDENSEAL. For us, that means we must put the magazine on a self-supporting basis. That's not news, for we've been working toward that goal for several years. What's new is the schedule. Practically speaking, we have until next fall to break even.

Can we do it? Sure we can. If we hadn't been able to raise most of the magazine's budget in recent years, we'd have been out of business long before now.

But our past success is behind us now. That money is all gone. It was put to good use in the many articles we have published for your enjoyment. Like a family budget, we start over every year. And like a family budget, we must have a reasonable flow of cash coming in.

That part depends on you. GOLDENSEAL is your magazine. We work for you and we must have your support to continue. I will write to you soon, enclosing a subscription coupon and a postpaid envelope for your reply. I hope you will put your $12.50 renewal check in the mail right away.

Please note that this is not a price increase. As you know, GOLDENSEAL operates on voluntary subscriptions. We ask readers to contribute once a year and save considerable money by avoiding the bookkeeping necessary for a regular subscription program. You save as well, for the best way to raise more money under a voluntary plan is not to raise prices, but to raise the number of people contributing. Twelve-fifty is a fair price for GOLDENSEAL, as long as most people contribute their share. If you have been doing so, thanks. If not, please begin.

In the meantime, we'll continue to work for you. And I promise we'll work hard. My trip to interview Sylvia last summer was the beginning of a week which saw me travel a thousand miles in West Virginia, from Clay to Randolph to Mingo counties — and twice to Pocahontas. I've since spent time in Hardy and Grant, gone to Pendleton, Jefferson and Berkeley, been to Logan and Cedar Lakes, and dashed up and down the Turnpike as usual. My advice to anyone who says West Virginia is a small state is to buckle up and start driving.

I do just that whenever possible, and GOLDENSEAL writers and photographers cover more ground than I do. Our freelancers are out now, gathering material for the winter issue and for spring and summer of next year. Mushroom hunting, Bluefield baseball, storytelling, and maybe an upper Ohio River island are among probable story candidates at this point. Perhaps we can work in a Boone County family reunion I know of, and another good Eastern Panhandle article or two.

Whatever materializes, you can bet it will concern the extraordinary lives of ordinary West Virginians. There is no shortage of good subject matter, as I point out every year at this time, and we'll do everything possible to get the best of it together for each issue of GOLDENSEAL. We've got the people to do the job, and we've got a good magazine to carry their work. All we need is you behind us.

So please watch for my subscription letter. Give it prompt attention when it arrives, putting your check in the mail as soon as possible. Then settle back for another year of good reading. We'll do the rest.

— Ken Sullivan

Published for the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Gaston Caperton
Governor

through the
Mountain Arts Foundation
in behalf of the
Division of Culture and History
William M. Drennen, Jr.
Commissioner

Department of
Education and the Arts
Stephen E. Haid
Secretary

GOLDENSEAL (ISSN 0099-0159) is published four times a year, in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. The magazine is distributed for a $12.50 yearly contribution. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Phone (304) 348-0220.

Goldenseal

Volume 15, Number 3 Fall 1989

COVER: The dog comes to the door, and no farther, at Sylvia O'Brien's Clay County home. The fine Mayflower cookstove represents the simple life Sylvia prefers. Our story begins on page 9. Photograph by Michael Keller.

PHOTOS: Norman Alderman, Becker & Fell, Bollinger Studio, P. Corbit Brown, Gregory Case, Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Bill Exler, David Fattaleh, Richard Gross, Michael Keller, Rick Lee, Builder Levy, Gerald Ratliff, Stephen J. Shaluta, Jr., William O. Trevey.

Letters from Readers

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

Morgantown, West Virginia
June 26, 1989
Editor:
I would like to donate to any public library wanting to acquire early issues of GOLDENSEAL, my collection. I have most of the issues from the first seven volumes to provide to a deserving library interested in preserving West Virginia's culture and history. The entire copies should be bound and not clipped in any selective way. Any takers?
Sincerely yours,
Bob Burrell

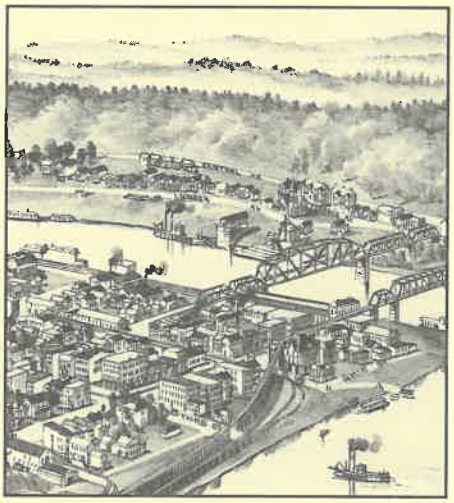
Interested librarians may write to Mr. Burrell at 1412 Western Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505. —ed.

More on Map Making

Clarksburg, West Virginia
June 12, 1989
Editor:
I'm writing to let you know that I was tickled to see Ed Zahniser's article on bird's-eye maps. In addition to being of personal interest to people whose homes and businesses are depicted on the maps, panoramic views are valuable resources for historians and preservationists. Architect Ralph Pedersen and I became intrigued by panoramic map production several years ago when we first stumbled on T. M. Fowler's maps. We found his views of Weston and Clarksburg especially useful in preservation work, since they help to date buildings to a specific period.

I was a little disappointed, however, that Mr. Zahniser chose not to devote more space to the history of panoramic map making, although I realize your mission is to concentrate on West Virginia. Panoramic mapping is an art that dates back at least to Crusader and Arab maps of the 12th century, although city views surviving from that period are somewhat crude in comparison to 19th-century views.

Bird's-eye views of urban areas were made throughout the Middle Ages, but perspective mapping really began



to develop in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, thanks to the work of Mathias Merian, George Braun, and Franz Hogenberg, among others. Panoramic views also enjoyed a distinct popularity with a wide audience throughout much of the 19th century, due in part to advances in printmaking techniques.

I imagine that Mr. Zahniser has a copy of the Library of Congress's 1984 publication, "Panoramic Maps of Cities in the United States and Canada." The Introduction discusses the best-known panoramic artists of the late 19th century and their work. It's also possible that much of this information is duplicated in Jim Comstock's book, which I haven't seen, since the Library cites it for further reading. The editor of the Library of Congress book does tend to differ with Mr. Zahniser on a couple of minor points, stating that Thaddeus M. Fowler ran away from home at the age of 15 rather than 17, and that Fowler's work included cities in at least 21 states, rather than only 20.

In addition to his extensive work in West Virginia, Fowler completed 220 views of 199 Pennsylvania towns which are presently in the Library of Congress, plus another 165 views in the Pennsylvania State Archives. During his 54-year career, he was associated with other panoramic artists, apparently most productively with James B. Moyer of Myerstown, Pennsylvania. Fowler also published views under the imprints of Fowler & Albert E. Downs, Fowler & Browning, and Fowler & Kelly. He was also associated with Oakley H. Bailey, mentioned by Zahniser. Despite his enormous output, he never seems to have become bored with his chosen profession. In a 1920 letter to his granddaughter, he claimed that he felt "an unadulterated joy" in the work he was then executing.

The number of prints made of each city view and the cost of the prints seem to have varied. Prices, of course, were determined by the market. Bailey's 1872 view of Milwaukee, printed in several colors, sold for $3, with simple framing an additional 50 cents (black walnut framing would cost you an exorbitant $2.50 per print). Smaller prints and prints in only two tones would have sold for less. Fowler's daughter-in-law reported that he occasionally accepted "quantities of beans and flour" for his views.

The panoramic map never seems to have achieved the popularity in the far West and the South that it enjoyed in other parts of the country. After the Civil War, Southern cities were probably unable to provide the necessary financial support, and the primarily Northern artists may not have received a particularly enthusiastic welcome. Also, the focal point of life in the South remained the farm or plantation rather than the town or city as in the Northeast and parts of the Midwest, and few Southern cities enjoyed the industrial development and booming economy experienced by the North in the decades following the war.

In the far West, the problem may simply have been a matter of geography — fewer towns spread

much farther apart. Bird's-eye views were also never especially popular in Canada, although Fowler and others produced panoramic maps of at least 36 Canadian cities.
Sincerely,
Margo Stafford

Margo Stafford is a former GOLDENSEAL assistant editor and we thank her for this latest contribution to our efforts. —ed.

State Fair at Wheeling

Middlebourne, West Virginia
June 15, 1989
Editor:
The Summer 1989 GOLDENSEAL issue is another gem. I especially enjoyed the article by Ed Zahniser on Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler's bird's-eye maps of West Virginia. I love those maps and am writing to both the Library of Congress and the West Virginia Archives to see if I can get copies.

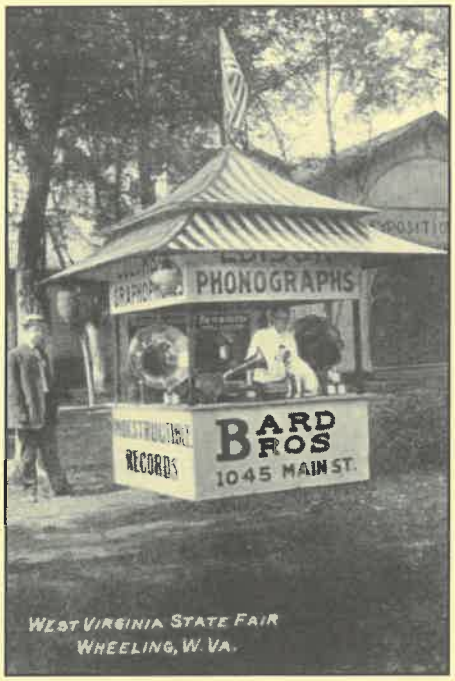
Your comments on the history of the State Fair of West Virginia reminded me of this old postcard. I've long been curious about this photo because it clearly shows a "West Virginia State Fair" at a Wheeling location. Was the West Virginia State Fair ever moved to Wheeling or is this possibly a competing fair?

I called an acquaintance familiar both with postcards and the history of this area, Clarence W. Erlewine of New Martinsville. Clarence indicated that this card is quite common and is, in fact, one of a series depicting the West Virginia State Fair on Wheeling Island. He believes that the State Fair was held on Wheeling Island from Civil War times up until the 1920's, when repeated flooding forced it to be moved. The Exposition Hall was on the island along with a race track, later known as the Wheeling Downs.

I've also looked in *Wheeling, an Illustrated History* by Doug Fetherling and there are references to and pictures of the West Virginia State Fair. Fetherling states that the fair was first held in 1881 on 25 acres on the island and was discontinued in 1940. The property was sold to Wheeling Downs, Inc., in 1945.

The fair is also mentioned in a booklet, *Wheeling Bicentennial, 1769-1969,* published by the Wheeling Bicentennial Commission. Here it is mentioned that the Northwest Virginia Fair Association conducted fairs on the north end of Wheeling Island prior to the formation of the West Virginia Exposition and State Fair Association in 1881.

Of course, all this seems quite likely since Wheeling was a major center



of transportation and commerce, and in fact, at one time the capital of West Virginia.

I don't know if the Wheeling venture was operated by the state government of West Virginia. The present State Fair of West Virginia is a private corporation licensed by the state.
Thanks again for a fine issue.
Sincerely,
Bill Warren Mueller

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.

Geological Survey Catalog

The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey's *Catalog of Publications, Maps and Services* explains the wide assortment of services and information offered through the Morgantown facility. Whether you're a hiker, historian, or farmer, the Geological Survey can help you with your particular area of interest.

The catalog is distributed free, and includes a price list and order form. You'll find publications on archeological investigations, river basin bulletins, the coal industry, the geology of state parks and forests, and field trip guides. The Survey's services are available to private citizens, industry and government, and for some topics they can provide speakers, displays and other assistance.

Whether you want to know about clay mining in Hancock County or fossils and earthquakes throughout West Virginia, the Geological Survey can help. You can order reports on radioactivity or trace an old cemetery in your county. The Survey is well known for its distribution of detailed quadrangle maps covering all parts of the state. The topographic and raised relief maps include elevations, towns, roads, streams, buildings, and boundaries. Other types of maps are available as well.

Mountain State Geology is the Geological Survey's annual magazine. It is available free of charge. For more information write to West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, P.O. Box 879, Morgantown, WV 26507 or call (304) 594-2331.

Wild Foods at North Bend

If you enjoy feasting outdoors on wild foods, head for North Bend State Park for the annual Nature Wonder Weekend, September 15-17. Edible wild foods are a major part of the event.

This year's theme is "Wild Foods of the 50 States," according to Edelene Wood of Parkersburg, president of the National Wild Food Association and one of the planners.

The weekend offers five conventional meals plus the wild feast. The $66 fee also includes accommodations in either a cabin or a lodge room. Participants enjoy walks in area meadows and woods led by wild food experts and botanists. Those who wish may help with the cooking. The feast includes hors d'oeuvres, soups, salads, meats, breads, vegetables, fruits and wines, all from the outdoors.

Adventurous folks may enjoy the rattlesnake canapes professional chef Bill Faust always brings from North Carolina. Timid people stick with the varieties of ice cream. Those who come for the first time watch a lot, eat a little, and think about it, according to longtime participant Maureen Crockett.

This popular event started years ago when wild foods celebrity Euell Gibbons began coming down to North Bend from his Pennsylvania home. He suggested an association for those who enjoyed gathering food from the wild, and Edelene Wood took it from there.

North Bend State Park, near U.S. Route 50 in Ritchie County, may be called at (304) 643-2931. For information on the wild foods feast contact Edelene Wood, 3404 Hemlock Street, Parkersburg, WV 26104, (304) 428-9590.

Helvetia History

The settlers of the tiny Randolph County community of Helvetia were German-speaking Swiss immigrants who spent their first years in Brooklyn, New York. An advance party was sent to look for a permanent home and after traveling by train to Clarksburg, the group went by wagon, on horseback and on foot to the site of the present village. About 150 descendants of the first settlers now live in Helvetia. Through food, crafts, festivals, and traditional celebrations, Helvetians keep alive the customs and culture of their ancestors.

A new book about the village is now in production. Helvetia native David H. Sutton is the author of *One's Own Hearth Is Like Gold: A History of Helvetia, West Virginia.* It will be published later this year and is the story of Helvetia's founding and subsequent development up through World War II. During Sutton's research for the book, he uncovered previously unknown sources in Switzerland and the United States. Oral interviews, documents, maps, illustrations and more than 40 photographs will tell the history of Helvetia.

One's Own Hearth Is Like Gold is a large-format softcover book. It may be purchased at the pre-publication price of $18 plus $2 postage and handling by writing to Helvetia Historical Society, P.O. Box 57, Helvetia, WV 26224.

MATEWAN

Matewan Walking Tour

Matewan in Mingo County, which holds a distinct place in the folklore and history of West Virginia, now proudly offers its past to interested visitors. The town has organized a walking tour that includes many historic buildings and a nearby cemetery.

The famous Hatfields and McCoys feuded for nearly two decades in the Tug Fork Valley in and around present Matewan. Ellison Hatfield died at the Anderson Ferrell house in Warm Hollow after a brutal attack by three McCoy brothers. His brother Devil Anse then executed the three McCoys just across the Tug Fork in Kentucky.

In the early 1920's the area was the site of intense labor struggles, as dramatized in the recent film *Matewan.* Tug Valley miners wanting to join the United Mine Workers were evicted from company houses by Baldwin-Felts agents working for the coal operators. The conflict led to the "Matewan Massacre," an exchange of bullets that left the town's mayor, seven Baldwin men and two miners dead. A year later Matewan's unionist police chief, Sid Hatfield, was gunned down on the Welch courthouse steps, along with his friend and fellow Matewan Massacre defendant Ed Chambers. Both were unarmed. Miners rallied in a march through the southern coalfields that culminated in the spectacular Battle of Blair Mountain in Logan County.

Matewan kept its controversial story under wraps for decades, but now actively promotes its history. For more information contact the Matewan Development Center, P.O. Box 368, Matewan, WV 25678, (304) 426-4239.

Appalachian Vietnam Veterans

Caught Up In Time by John Hennen is a new book of oral history narratives by Appalachians, mostly West Virginians, who served in the Vietnam War. Their stories were collected by Hennen during his work with Marshall University's Oral History of Appalachia Project from 1984 to 1986.

Seven hundred and forty-eight West Virginians were killed in combat in the Vietnam War, the highest per capita of any state in the Union. Hennen's book is devoted to the men who made it back. He interviewed more than 30, most of whom served in Vietnam between 1966 and 1970. Hennen says the interviews reflect the broad experiences and wide range of perceptions the veterans have, whether the war left them political or apolitical, employed or out of work, cynical or hopeful.

John Hennen continued his regional oral history research this past summer when he worked as an interviewer for the Matewan oral history project. Now a student in Appalachian history and culture at WVU, Hennen earned his master's degree from Marshall.

Caught Up In Time, a 138-page paperback, may be ordered from Aegina Press, a Huntington company specializing in regional publications. The cost is $8 plus $1.25 postage and handling. Mail orders should be sent to 59 Oak Lane, Spring Valley, Huntington, WV 25704.

Vandalia Album Second Pressing

The 1988 Elderberry Records release, "The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-1987," is now in its second pressing due to unexpectedly high sales. The double record album is popular with West Virginians and other lovers of traditional music.

The first run of albums lasted through this year's Vandalia Gather-

ing, West Virginia's statewide folklife festival, held annually on Memorial Day weekend at the Capitol grounds in Charleston. Festival-goers purchased most of the remaining Vandalia albums, as well as the cassette version of "The Music Never Dies."

Selections for the recording were taken from more than 100 hours of taped performances over the first 11 years of Vandalia. The album represents the best of Mountain State music, with more than 65 musicians performing a broad cross-section of tunes.

Both the record and cassette tape may be ordered from The Shop, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. The album sells for $12.50 plus $3 postage and handling. The cassette costs $7.50 plus $2.50 postage and handling. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

New River Railroading Book

The Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society recently published *Riding That New River Train*, a history of railroading in the New River Gorge. The new book is by Eugene L. Huddleston, who grew up riding trains on New River.

The industrial history of the New River Gorge began with the completion of the C&O in 1873. The New River line is the main trunk of the C&O system and carried a heavy load of through traffic from the first. More importantly, the arrival of the steel rails allowed the development of the local coal industry, which began shipping coal soon after the final spike was driven at Hawks Nest.

Huddleston's book chronicles the industrial era that followed, giving particular attention to railroading. This is not just a "rail fan" book, however, for the author is careful to set the railroad in a larger historical context. *Riding That New River Train*, with its business underwriting, and contributions of volunteer time. WVMR is not affiliated with the Public Radio network, and instead offers a wide range of homegrown programs hosted by its listeners. The station celebrated its tenth anniversary earlier this year.

WVMR Hunter's Cookbook is a soft-cover book of 170 pages. It sells for $7 plus $1 postage and handling, and may be ordered from WVMR, Dunmore, WV 24934. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

A Hunter's Cookbook

Radio station WVMR in Pocahontas County is responsible for an unusual cookbook written for those with adventurous tastes in food. Alligator sauce piquant, elephant stew, and charred moose nose are mixed in with over a hundred native game recipes, many of them handed down through local families and some sent in from across the state's borders by former residents.

WVMR Hunter's Cookbook is a natural for Pocahontas County, a wildlife paradise. Hunting and fishing buffs contributed the creative recipes, hunting stories, plain lies and tall tales, proverbs, helpful hints, and old cures that fill the book.

Bob Keller's gang from Camp Broken Antler recommends Shirt Tail Soup, a low-sodium, sugarfree dish. The recipe is so simple a crying hunter can follow it, says camp cook Bob. Cut the shirt tail from any deer hunter who misses a shot. Add a half gallon of water per shirt tail, and cook at low heat while the hunters gather around. Both soup and hunters should brew until those who lost their shirt tails can no longer stand the kidding and bragging of the others. At this point, the cook should throw out the soup and see if he can find any good leftovers.

The new cookbook is full of serious game recipes as well, and illustrated with drawings and old and new photographs. Recipes are categorized by animal and are more or less in alphabetical order. Whether you're looking for tasty ways to prepare rattlesnake or grouse or just need a quick refresher course on how to fix fried frog legs and venison barbecue, you'll find it in this hunter's cookbook. Recipes were submitted from such Pocahontas County places as Frost, Arbovale, Minnehaha Springs, and Slaty Fork.

WVMR stands for West Virginia Mountain Radio, Pocahontas County's only radio station. The noncommercial AM station is supported through private donations,

Pocahontas hunters George McPherson and Ed Wooddell, early 1920's. Photographer unknown, from *WVMR Hunter's Cookbook*.

WVMR

HUNTER'S COOKBOOK

attention to gorge towns, trackside architecture, and topography will be useful to everyone interested in New River Gorge history.

Riding That New River Train is a 132-page, large-format paperback, lavishly illustrated with photographs, maps and drawings. It may be purchased for $18.95, plus $1.50 postage and handling, from C&O Historical Society Sales, 12973 Wesley, Southgate MI 48195. Membership information is available from C&O Historical Society, P. O. Box 417, Alderson, WV 24910.

Cedar Lakes Crafts Classes

The Crafts Center, at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center near Ripley, has been in operation nearly 15 years. The facility offers workshops in the spring, summer and fall for artists and craftspeople.

The Cedar Lakes Conference Center, operated by the West Virginia Department of Education, is located on 400 acres dotted with small lakes and an abundance of cedar trees. Recreational facilities include softball, swimming, tennis, fishing, hiking, canoeing and miniature golf. Cedar Lakes is the site of the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair each summer, the annual West Virginia Writers Conference, and other events.

The Cedar Lakes crafts workshops are limited in size and early registration is suggested. Crafts coordinator Tim Pyles says the workshops teach technique, design and marketing skills. Instructors come mostly from West Virginia. The fall classes are:

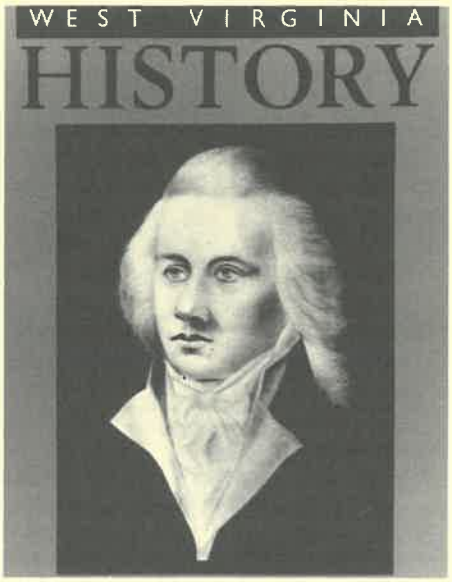
September 29–October 1
- Belt Weaving
- Tole and Decorative Painting
- Quilting: White on White
- Woodworking for Women

October 13–15
- Basketry: Designs with Color

October 20–22
- Wood: Carcase Doweling
- Dried Decorations
- Stained Glass Jewelry
- Watercolors

The fall workshops offered at the Crafts Center require a registration fee, refundable up to three weeks prior to each class. Tuitions usually range from $45 to $60 for the weekend workshops, and students pay a studio fee based on the class selected. Meals and lodging are available at Cedar Lakes, but are not included in the price of tuition.

The Crafts Center also distributes a newsletter, *Craftsline,* that serves as a central source of information for state artists and craftspeople. For more information on the Cedar Lakes crafts program contact Tim Pyles, Crafts Center, Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, WV 25271, (304) 372-7005.



New *West Virginia History*

The 1989 issue of *West Virginia History* is now available. The 48th volume of the state's official historical journal features articles, documents, and book reviews on the economic, political, social and cultural history of West Virginia and the Appalachian region.

The new edition includes several articles on James Rumsey, best known for his steamboat innovations; Friend's Orebank in Jefferson County, probably the earliest and longest-operating iron ore mine in the state; and histories of the fight for women's voting rights and the building of the DuPont plant in Nitro. *West Virginia History,* published by the State Archives, is illustrated with historic photos and documents, drawings and maps.

This year's issue includes nearly 30 full-length reviews of books dealing with subjects ranging from racial segregation and New Deal labor policies to the Lewis and Clark expedition and the perils of writing history. Additionally, a "book notes" section gives brief descriptions of almost 40 other books mainly about West Virginia. A final section of the journal lists state records, manuscripts, photographs, special documents, and non-textual historical materials recently acquired by the State Archives.

The fully-indexed, book-sized volume has 229 pages and is available by subscription at $12 per copy. Back issues of the journal are also available. All correspondence and subscription orders should be sent to *West Virginia History,* The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV, 25305.

Doc & Chickie Celebrate 50

Country music legend Doc Williams marked 50 years on WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree" radio show in May of 1987. This fall he will celebrate another golden anniversary, this one with his wife and fellow performer Chickie.

Doc Williams is one of the state's most celebrated hillbilly musicians. His involvement in the early days of live country radio shows earned him an important place in West Virginia's musical history. He came to the Mountain State from Pittsburgh in 1937 and within a year his band was recognized as WWVA's most popular act.

Doc Williams sees country music as clean family entertainment, and his own career has long been a family affair. Doc and Chickie were married in 1939. Chickie has shared the limelight with him since, performing over the years both in radio and on the road. Today they operate the Country Store across the street from WWVA's Capitol Music Hall with the help of daughter Barbara Smik, an occasional GOLDENSEAL freelancer. It is a gathering spot for traditional music lovers and fans of the "Jamboree."

Doc and Chickie Williams will celebrate their golden anniversary on Sunday, October 8th, with a three-hour concert beginning at 2:00 p.m. at the Capitol Music Hall. Former band members are scheduled to participate. Tickets may be purchased for $10 each from the Capitol Music Hall Box Office, Wheeling, WV 26003, (304) 233-5511.

A Death in the Family

By Lora Lea Hager

I remember the day Mamaw Valley Hager died as a day of confusion. She had had a stroke and was hospitalized at Boone Memorial Hospital in Madison several weeks before she died. The youngest members of the family had not been allowed to visit her while she was in the hospital. So none of us knew how seriously ill she was until my mother came in one February afternoon with the shocking news that our grandmother had passed away.

I did not believe it at first. I had thought Mamaw would always be around and that she would never die, if I had thought about it at all. I remember running to my playhouse and locking the door. It did not seem right to be playing, but at the age of ten I did not know how to mourn. I stayed there all evening, until Mother called me in.

There would be no school the rest of the week for me or my brothers and sister. My mother woke us very early the next day and gave each of us chores to do. None of us were to speak of Mamaw's death, and we were to help our relatives with anything they wanted us to do. My brothers were sent with male cousins and uncles back to the Hager graveyard to dig the grave, a task that would take them all day. My sister and I went to Mamaw Valley's house along with my mother and aunts and girl cousins to clean and prepare for the wake. Anytime a close relative died, the women would always clean the house whether the body was to be brought home or not. It was a ritual to them.

There were no idle hands that long day. Everyone was busy doing something. The mattresses were pulled off the beds and aired in the sun, curtains changed, the fireplace swept, rugs beaten, floors scrubbed, and windows washed. By the time we were all finished, I was convinced that that was the cleanest house on Six Mile Hollow.

Early the third day, a big black and silver hearse pulled up in the front yard. Once again I ran to my playhouse and locked the door. When I did venture out, the hearse had gone, leaving on the ground a few broken flowers from the wreaths they had brought with them. I went into the house knowing what I would see. There had been wakes at this house before, and I did not suppose hers would be any different from the rest. There in the sitting room was a white casket draped with lace, and my only

"Mamaw" Valley Hager, third from left, at the family graveyard at a long-ago Decoration Day. Photographer and date unknown.

Mamaw lay inside. The tears began to trickle down my face as I thought of her.

Mamaw Valley had been a kind and loving grandmother. She always remembered the younger grandchildren on her occasional trips to Madison or Danville and brought back candy and trinkets. Those of us who lived near her would go to her house every morning for a breakfast of biscuits with syrup and butter. We were welcome anytime.

My grandmother was going to her rest where she had lived her life. In 1912 Valley Stollings met and married Roy Hager and they lived all their days on Six Mile Hollow in Boone County. After raising her own seven children, she brought up several grandchildren there. Many times she took in relatives or friends who needed a place to stay. She expected nothing in payment for her kind deeds. When someone in the community needed help, she was generous with her time and talents. From canning to quilting to delivering babies, she was always willing to help.

Mamaw Valley was a religious woman. Though she claimed no denomination, she attended the Six Mile Methodist Church when she could and was an avid member of the Ladies Aid group there. It was at this church that we would have her funeral.

The wake began as the relatives and neighbors started to arrive, bringing trays of food and arrangements of flowers. My mother and aunts buzzed about. They served food, chatted with company, and quieted children. They laid the sleeping babies, five of them, on Mamaw's bed. Their lives had just begun and hers was now over. Men stood outside drinking around a fire, not enough to get drunk, just good strong swigs to chase the cold away. Almost everyone stayed the night, taking turns watching and sleeping.

The next day the hearse came back to Mamaw Valley's house, and they took her to the church for the funeral. Unlike the night before, when people had been talking, eating, and visiting with each other, everyone was now quiet and somber. The family, itself almost enough to fill the small church, was the last to enter. The smell of funeral flowers filled the air, and to me that was what death smelled like, a sickening sweet odor that almost made me nauseous. As the funeral started and the preacher read off the names of the survivors, a few wails of sorrow could be heard. The sad songs of wayfaring pilgrims and amazing grace were sung. Everyone was crying.

After the service was over, we all made our way to the small family graveyard. It was February 1969, the coldest part of winter. Snow flurries began to fall as the pallbearers carefully plodded up the hill. But there were a few rays of sunshine as well. We took both, the good and the bad, the snow with the sunshine, as Mamaw Valley had always done.

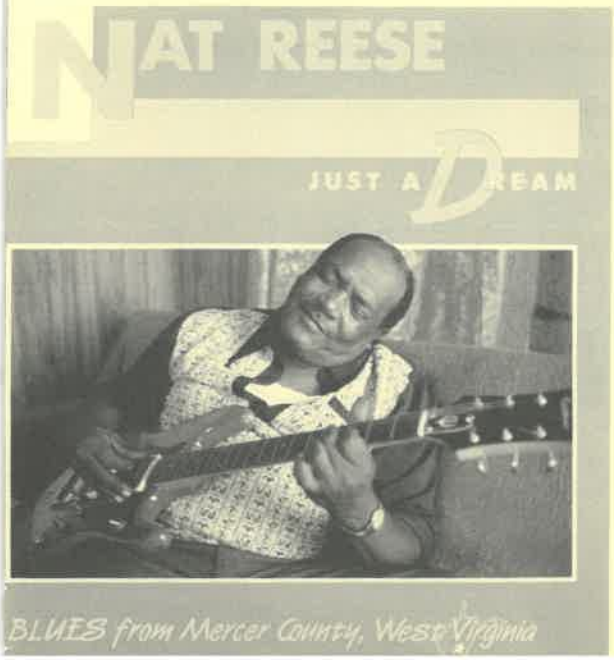
New Mountain State Music

There is a wealth of music in the Mountain State, as everyone knows, and a surprising amount of it is now being released on record and cassette. Many of the state's best performers have recently put their favorite tunes on the market.

Nat Reese, the Princeton bluesman, released his long-awaited "Just a Dream" on the Augusta Heritage Records label last spring. Nat has made music in the southern coal counties since the late 1930's, and is known for the mix of music he plays. Legendary bluesman Howard Armstrong wrote the liner notes for the new record. Armstrong has many memories of working with Nat in the early days and calls his music "coalfields blues," a product of many cultural influences.

The record is a collection of blues tunes and pop standards. Armstrong lends his soulful fiddling to "You Left Me," recorded live at Augusta and probably the best cut on the album. "Just A Dream" also includes Nat's crowd pleasing "Preacher and the Bear," and fine versions of the title song, "Ain't Nobody's Business," and other numbers. A reprint of Nat's 1987 GOLDENSEAL cover story is included in the album. "Just A Dream" may be ordered from Augusta Heritage Records, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241 for $9, plus $1.50 postage and handling.

Augusta recently joined with Marimac Recordings of New Jersey to market cassette tapes of traditional music from West Virginia. The first of Marimac's Augusta Heritage Series are two tapes by old-time fiddlers Melvin Wine and Wilson Douglas. Unlike most cassettes, the Marimac tapes have fold-out flaps offering extensive documentation on the music and the musicians. The company has a large line of traditional recordings from other parts of the country, as well, including mountain music, fiddle tunes, blues and gospel. Most are available for $7 to $8, including postage and handling, from Marimac Recordings, P.O. Box 5, Little Ferry, NJ 07643.



Melvin Wine's "Hannah at the Springhouse," with a full 24 tunes, is the second and longer of the Augusta-Marimac cassettes. Melvin, who has carried musical skill and vigor into old age, celebrated his 80th birthday last April at a big party at Sutton. A native of Braxton County, he was the recipient of the 1981 Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest folklife honor.

"Hannah at the Springhouse" features standard tunes such as "Jimmy Johnson," along with less-known material passed down through the Wine family. Much of Melvin's music ultimately came down from his great-grandfather, "Smithy" Wine. Melvin in his turn is passing on the music, and is accompanied on the cassette by younger musicians Gerry Milnes of Webster County and Ron Mullennex of Bluefield.

"Hannah at the Springhouse" is available from Augusta Heritage Records for $8, plus $1.50 postage and handling, or from Melvin Wine, Rt. 2, Box 7, Copen, WV 26615. Melvin says that he still has copies of his earlier record album, "Cold Frosty Morning," as well.

The other Augusta tape from Marimac Recordings is Wilson Douglas's "Boatin' Up Sandy." This fine traditional fiddler learned music on a Sears, Roebuck fiddle bought with quarters he'd saved in a mason jar. Grandmother Rosie Ann Morris helped him with his fiddling, but his main musical mentor was legendary Clay County fiddler French Carpenter. "Now Wilson, you come up," he quotes French as saying, "I'll make a fiddler out of you or else." That was in 1960. After that they played every few nights for at least five or six years.

Many Carpenter family tunes are included on "Boatin' Up Sandy," such as "Camp Chase," "Little Rose," and "Shelvin' Rock," a tune that commemorates the birth of a Carpenter ancestor under a Braxton County rock overhang during an 18th century Indian raid. The tape also includes such old-time standards as "Temperance Reel." Like Melvin Wine, Wilson has his following of younger musicians, and is accompanied on the tape by Kim Johnson on banjo and Mark Payne on guitar. The producers were Larry Rader and Gerry Milnes.

"Boatin' Up Sandy" may be ordered from Augusta Heritage Records for $8, plus $1.50 postage and handling, or from Wilson Douglas, 143 Spencer Road, Clendenin, WV 25045. Wilson has a previous album, "Right Hand Fork of Rush's Creek," on the Rounder label.

Less traditional is the new tape from two outstanding hot pickers, Robert Shafer of Roane County and Robin Kessinger of Mason. Both have won the National Flatpicking Championship, and they aptly call their new cassette "Album of Champions." Ron Sowell, who produced the new album at SoundTracs Studio in South Charleston, says, "If you love acoustic guitar music, it doesn't get any better than this!"

"Champions" includes such standards as "Whiskey Before Breakfast" and "Dill Pickle Rag," as well as original compositions by Shafer and Kessinger. The picking is breathtaking throughout, demonstrating what West Virginia's best are capable of. "Album of Champions" may be ordered from Burning Springs Publishing, P.O. Box 148, Culloden, WV 25510 for $8, plus $2 postage and handling.

Folk and traditional music is not carried in all stores, but a few specialize in it. You may want to check your local music store or contact Fret 'N Fiddle, 809 Pennsylvania Avenue, St. Albans, WV 25177 or The Shop at the Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

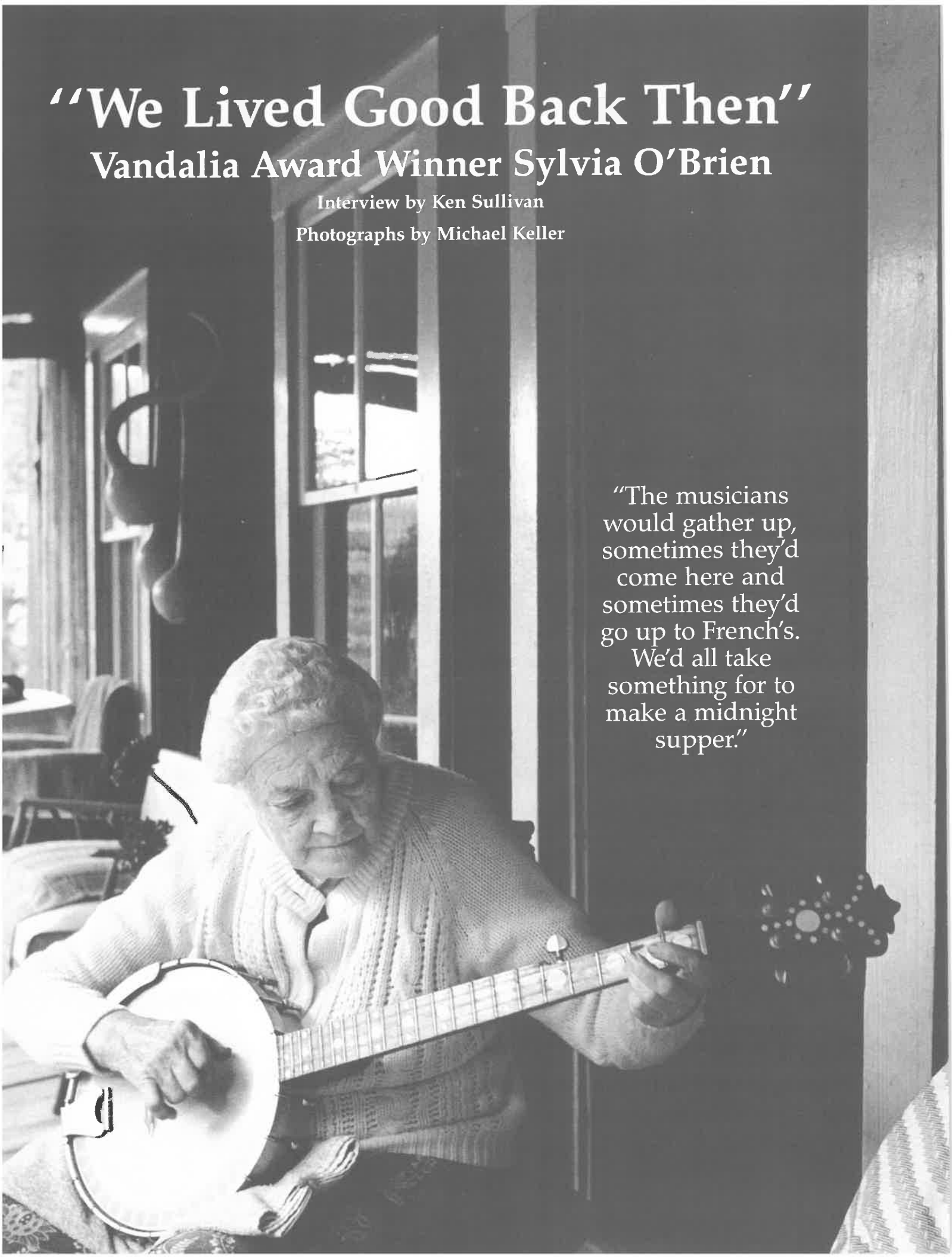
— The editors.

"We Lived Good Back Then"

Vandalia Award Winner Sylvia O'Brien

Interview by Ken Sullivan

Photographs by Michael Keller



"The musicians would gather up, sometimes they'd come here and sometimes they'd go up to French's. We'd all take something for to make a midnight supper."

Sylvia O'Brien makes a home for herself in an out-of-the-way part of Clay County, with a million-dollar view and a rough road out. She has lived on the family farm there all her life, leaving only for a spell of war work in Baltimore and a brief marriage. Widowed early, she ripened into old age with bachelor brother Jenes Cottrell back at the homeplace.

Sylvia and her brother grew up before the modern conveniences and developed no affection for them when they did become available in rural Clay County. The house today is just as it was built at the turn of the century, without electricity, central heat or running water. It is a matter of personal choice, not poverty, for the Cottrells are independent landholders and have been for generations.

Jenes has been gone for several years now, and Sylvia carries on alone. She remains true to the pre-industrial lifestyle her family chose, cooking on a wood stove and drawing water from a well by the kitchen door. For thus preserving a glimpse of early mountain ways and for sharing her music and wisdom at fairs and festivals, Sylvia received the 1989 Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest folklife honor. This interview was conducted at her home soon afterwards.

Ken Sullivan. Sylvia, tell me about your life here on the mountain.

Sylvia O'Brien. Well, I'll do the best I can. I was born down there in the bottom in a little white house. Daddy and Mommy wanted a house up here on the point. They had timber and they had the timber cut, and the logs hauled to a mill down here in this same bottom, and cut this house pattern that we're in right now. My brother, Jenes, and a carpenter and my father, they put this house up. I drove the team that hauled the lumber up the hill when I was seven years old.

This land was all owned by the Tidewater Lumber Company at one time. They come in here and they took the best of the timber. Dad come down in here and worked for them. When the Tidewater sold this property, they sold it for $5 an acre. And

Right: The O'Brien home is a solid cabin of a sort once common in the mountains. The T-shaped floor plan includes three rooms across the front, a rear kitchen with small side porches, and a full half-story above.

Below: Many of Sylvia's fondest memories involve good times with brother Jenes Cottrell, now dead. In this picture from several years ago, she plays for Jenes's stomper doll. Photo by Richard Gross.

Daddy bought this farm here from the lumber company.

KS. Do you know about when he bought it?

SO. I'm 80 now, so it's been every bit of 85 years ago.

KS. Where was he from originally?

SO. Well, in a way I can tell you. As far back as we can get the Cottrell race traced, they was a colony of Cottrell people lived in Ohio, way back in the Indian time. And the Indians went in there and they destroyed all these people but one little girl. The chief took her and kept her for his squaw, like a wife would be today. And she raised

a baby and it was a boy. She watched her chance and she swum the Ohio River by the help of a horse and made her way back through this country to Hackers Valley, where there was a settlement of white people. Of course, that baby growed up under the name of Cottrell, and he drifted down this way. That's all we know about it.

KS. By the time your dad grew up, where was the family living?

SO. Way back in Braxton County, back in Braxton and partly Pocahontas. They come down when the Tidewater was coming here, come to work. He bought this place and he met Mother over here on the West Fork, Calhoun County. She was a Metheney, Melindy Metheney. And they married and settled here and lived here 'til they both died.

KS. What was your father's name?

SO. Andrew Cottrell.

KS. Why do you think your folks decided to leave the bottom and come back up on the hill here and build a place?

SO. Well, it was more convenient. You can see around. There was other people lived in this holler at the time, and they just wanted to be up here. They owned cattle and horses and they wanted up here where it'd be more convenient for raising them and taking care of them.

And up there in Braxton and Pocahontas, most people lived on the hills. Way back up, you know, on the level-top mountains. So my father just wanted to be up here.

KS. What kind of farming did your family do?

SO. They raised corn and oats and wheat. They had to raise their living. They had to mill corn for their meal, take the wheat to the mills and get flour, and they raised cattle and hogs. We had horses and chickens. They

Sylvia traces her background through the ancient family bible and through recollections handed down to her. The Cottrells were among the first white settlers of central West Virginia.

had to raise the feed for them. We kept Hereford cows and sold the calves when they was six months old.

KS. Did you grow any kind of crops for market?

SO. We got to raising tobacco. They raised tobacco for several year and sold it at 25 cents a pound. Handed-off tobacco, dry and ready for market, or ready for to chew or smoke.

KS. How did you get the tobacco crop out of here?

SO. People come and bought it. I've knowed four and five people to ride their horses up out there and hitch them and come in and buy five and six pound of tobacco and take it off to their homes. They would stem that tobacco, take the stems out of it, then they'd twist it and make these tobacco twists. They bought that tobacco the year 'round. And agin one growing season was over, the old tobacco was gone, and we was ready to go in on a new crop.

KS. Did your father take any of it off to a market or warehouse?

SO. No. He never done that. But we'd raise four and five thousand plants at a time. This big Roanoke, Sweet Roanoke. It growed, oh, it growed over my head and I'd work in that tobacco a whole summer through, as did Jenes and my daddy.

If everbody knowed as much about tobacco as I do, nobody would chew nor smoke it. I'd have to pull tobacco worms off of that stuff as big as my finger. Just reach up and take a-hold of them and pull them off and throw them on the ground. Stuck my foot on them, never looked down, go ahead looking for another one.

KS. I bet you were barefoot?

SO. No, they kept me shoes. The ground was rough.

And I had to sucker that tobacco, pull the suckers off. And I had to reach up there and pull the top down and break that seed stalk off.

Then when cutting time come, Dad and Jenes, they had knives. They'd go and they'd split them stalks plumb down to about two foot of the ground. Then they reached down there and they'd cut them plants off and lay them on the ground. And I'd harness the team, put the tobacco in the sled, and haul it out. They'd help me load it. I could reach down and take two of them big plants and lay them up across my shoulders, but that's all I could pack.

KS. When you took it to the barn that way, how did you hang it? Did you say they split the stalk?

SO. They split the stalk down to about, I expect, a foot and a half or maybe two feet. And then they had tobacco poles at the barn, some of 'em's at the barn yet. They'd take the tobacco stalks and they'd hold them apart and they'd reach up and they'd put them over them tobacco poles and push them back. They'd just keep that up 'til they could get a whole tobacco pole full of tobacco.

KS. So you didn't put the plants on sticks in the field?

SO. No, no.

KS. Did you use the sled for all your hauling on the farm?

SO. Yeah. It's out here now, hanging up under the building. They didn't use wagons to amount to anything. It was too steep and rough. If the wagon would get started down the hill with a team, why, the horses couldn't hold it back.

KS. Where did you go when you needed to go to the store?

SO. There was some little old stores down around the mouth of the holler. That was pretty handy. But I rode a horse four and a half miles to get corn

The kitchen end of Sylvia's house shows the vertical plank siding used for all exterior walls. The short ornamental columns (below), among many around the house and yard, are made of inverted washing machine tubs surmounted by steel wheel rims with core-drill rock samples in a ring at the top.

meal ground up so we could eat it. There was always one or two millers there and they'd come out and take the grist off from the horse. I'd get off and they'd take the horse and tie it up 'til they got the meal ground. Then they'd put it back on the saddle and I'd get on the horse and go back home. The wheat, they had to send it further. There wasn't too many wheat mills in the country.

KS. What about your garden? What kind of vegetables did people grow at that time?

SO. They growed most anything they could get to grow. They raised sweet corn, and they raised beans, they raised taters, and cabbage, lettuce and onions. Just most like gardens now, but they raised more of each vegetable, had to save them up for winter.

We done a lot of canning. We'd can beans, we'd can apples, we'd can tomatoes, and most anything we could keep in cans. And what wouldn't save in cans, we dried. We dried beans and we dried apples. And we would also keep apples in our cellar, dig taters and put in our cellar, and put all stuff like that in our cellar.

We had two good orchards. After we'd get done picking, why, we'd let other people come in and gather apples, to keep them from going to waste.

KS. Where were your orchards?

SO. Back here on the hill. It's prettier back there on the hill than it is around here.

KS. Seems like people generally put their orchards back on top.

SO. They did. It's cooler back there and it kept them from coming out longer. If they was late about coming out in the spring, the frost didn't kill the blossom. It would be colder back up there, and it'd keep the bloom from coming out as soon as it would down here.

Mother had big jars, ten and 20-gallon crocks, stone, I reckon it was, that they done their pickling in. I got one in here yet, a 20-gallon one. They made pickles, they pickled corn, and they pickled beans.

KS. Did you pickle in vinegar or salt?

SO. We pickled in salt.

KS. What kind of meat did you generally eat?

SO. Well, we mostly lived on hog meat. We'd fatten two or three big hogs that we'd smoke and keep, you know, and pickle a lot of it for summer. Keep meat down under salt brine — take it out and it's just like fresh meat. We'd can the ribs, and make sausage and can that. We lived good back then.

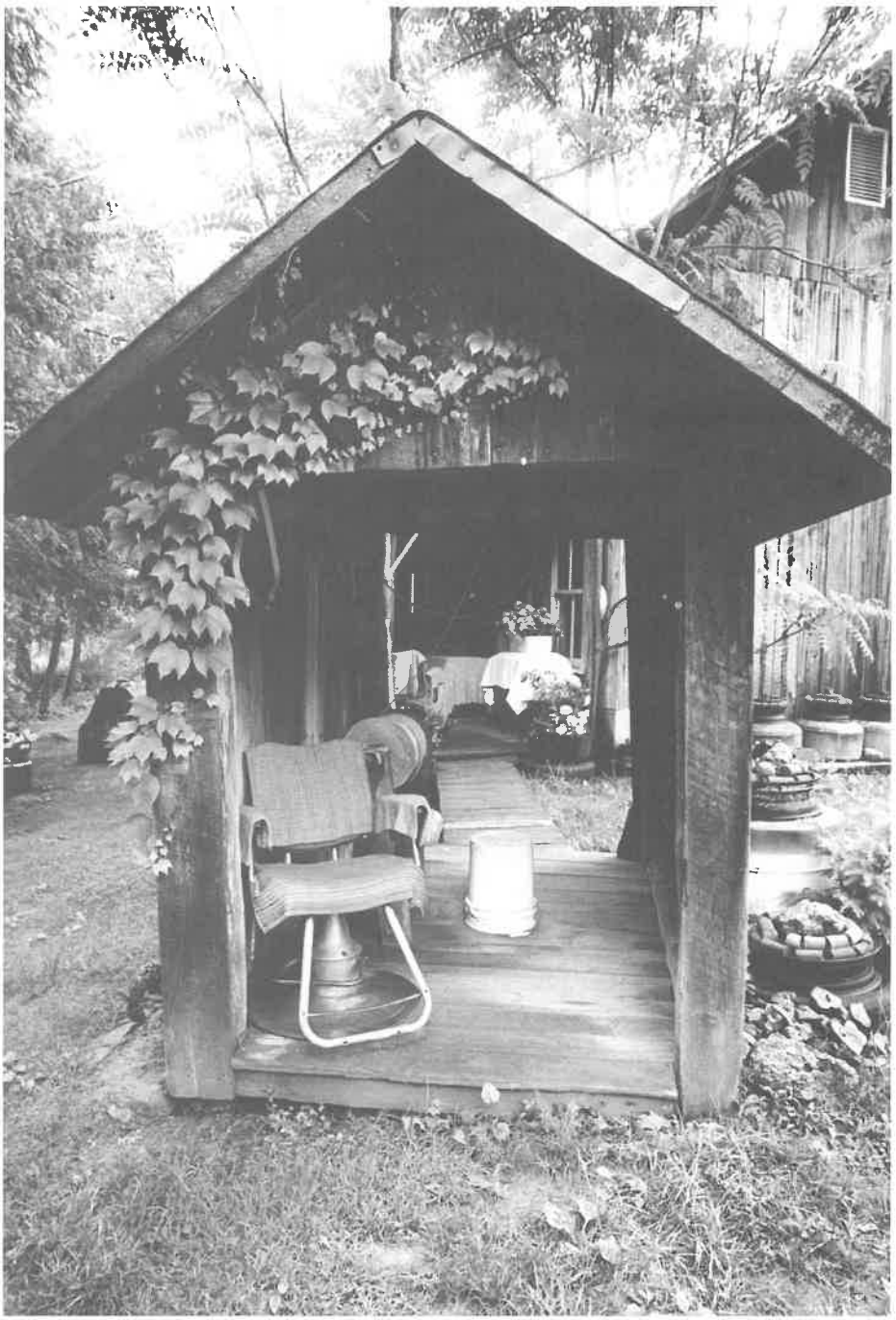
KS. Did your family do any hunting?

SO. No. Never was no hunting. They didn't like hunting, and they didn't like anybody else to hunt. My family just didn't like to take the life of something they didn't help to live. And they didn't like the meat of the wildlife. They just let stuff live and raised and put up their own meat. And we had meat the whole year 'round, we never lacked for any kind of meat. We had chicken and hogs and stuff.

KS. What would have been a typical meal? What would you have eaten, say for breakfast, back then?

SO. Well, we liked corn bread for breakfast, and cow butter. We made our own butter. They liked a good, hot pan of corn bread, mixed up good and baked. Quarter that and eat butter over it, and coffee and meat and eggs and other stuff like that. That was mostly our breakfasts.

Water comes from the well house near the kitchen. The well opening is covered by the white bucket.



Mountain Lions

The notion that mountain lions or panthers survive in West Virginia remains controversial, but you may count Sylvia O'Brien among the believers. She had a close encounter not many years ago, and she believes the big cats still occasionally roam the woods near her cabin. This excerpt was taken from our larger interview.

Worst ever I was scared in my life, a mountain lion done it. Right back up here on the hill. It was in March. Jenes was here working in the house and I took a notion I'd go back on the hill. We had a dog, he was one of these big kind of beagles, we'd got him from the Ohio kennels. Well, I took him up, he was about eight months old. And I couldn't get that dog out from under my feet. I couldn't walk for him.

At the last flat up, above some rock cliffs, I could smell the odor of a wild animal. I thought it was a fox or polecat or something, didn't give it no mind, or maybe a deer. But that dog, he just wouldn't believe me.

And all at once I seen something's shadow just leap down the hill and behind some bushes that was there. And I thought, oh, now here comes a big deer. But the next leap, that thing leaped out from behind there and just fell down behind some logs and some rocks. It stretched its head up and looked right over at me and I thought, no deer!

I looked around for the dog, and I just seen the tip end of that dog's tail going down the hill. Well, I thought I'd better go too! I turned around and started around the hill, and when I'd look back, why, that thing would turn his head and look at me. It didn't take me long to get off the hill.

I come down to the barn and hollered at Jenes and told him, I said, "You bring the guns up here, there's some kind of animal up here." "Yes," he said, "I expect it's a polecat or a fox or something." But he fetched the guns anyhow. We went back but we couldn't get that dog to track that animal at all. It would not do it.

He was a mountain lion. I didn't know it at the time, but afterwards I've seen them in zoos. Boy now, he looked wicked! I was close enough that I could see his old yellow eyes, too. That was, I expect, ten year ago, while Jenes was a-living.

A mountain lion, he'll kill a dog. I think I heared a dog killed right back over on the hill one morning about two o'clock. I never heared a dog holler and scream like that in my life. And he was a big dog, a big redbone foxhound. He had run something all around over here and he treed it back out on the flat. He barked at it and all at once, why, he quit barking and he went to hollering and nobody's ever seen that dog since.

— Sylvia O'Brien

KS. What about the midday meal? Is that what you called dinner?

SO. Yeah. That'd be called dinner. We'd cook beans, we'd cook taters and we always had meat, milk and butter, just pretty near any kind of stuff like that. We'd cook it up and have dinner.

That was our biggest meal, was dinner. And then for supper, if there was no bread left over, we'd bake bread and we'd eat bread and milk. And whatever else was left, you know, from the dinner table that we wanted to eat.

KS. Did your eating habits change at different seasons of the year?

SO. Not too much. Of course, we couldn't get green stuff like tomatoes and cucumbers, only in the summer season. But in the winter, we had pickles canned and we had tomatoes canned. They wasn't fresh like getting them out of the garden, but we had them anyhow.

KS. What were the first fresh greens you had in the spring?

SO. It'd be creasy, dandelion, and wild beet and wild lettuce, something like that. We'd just gather it wherever we wanted. It'd grow wild, you know.

And people would raise beds of lettuce and they'd go and pick that and they'd fix it up. They'd cut it up good and fine, then they'd pour milk over it, and pepper and vinegar. And they'd mix that all up together and they'd put it in a skillet and they'd kind of wilt that down a little bit. Then they'd put it back in the dish. Now, it was good eating.

KS. Where did you go to school?

SO. I went to school a little, not too much, down here at a school that was called Otterville. Nettie Chapman was my school teacher. Outside of that, I got my education here at home.

KS. Was that down on Big Otter Creek?

SO. Right down here on Big Otter Creek, then up the creek a little bit. There was no state road then. Nettie lived across the hill and she rode a horse to the schoolhouse. I'd walk down and then up to the schoolhouse. Kids had 'til nine o'clock to get there. They give them a hour's rest and play at noon, and then turned them out at four in time to get home before it'd get dark.

KS. Did your family go to church?

SO. Well, there wasn't no church, only in the schoolhouses. They'd have Sunday school in the schoolhouse and they'd have church and sometimes a protracted meeting in the schoolhouse.

KS. A protracted meeting was something like a revival?

SO. Revival meeting. They'd call it a protracted meeting at that time. A preacher would come, he'd preach, and people gathered in.

KS. Was Jenes the only brother that you had?

SO. The only brother that I had. Me and my brother was the only children. Just Mother and Dad and me and Jenes. He was seven years older than I was.

KS. As a young woman, after you came up a little later in life, did you

ever work outside the home anywhere?

SO. No. I never worked. Well, too, I went to Baltimore and kept a boardinghouse during the Second World War. One of Dad's brothers and his wife come through and they wanted to go out there. He wanted to work in the shipyard and she wanted to work at something else. And there wasn't no place to stay. So they got this boardinghouse and wanted me to come and do the cooking. Well, I went and I took the boardinghouse over and kept it there for over a year. I was about 40 at the time, maybe not quite that much.

KS. How did you travel to Baltimore?

SO. On the train and the bus. I catched the bus down there at Ivydale, rode the bus to Clarksburg, and changed there to the train that went on in to Baltimore, Maryland. Where the train stopped it wasn't very far from the boardinghouse, and I walked from the train to the boardinghouse.

KS. How did you like the big city?

SO. I didn't like it. Most of my life was right there in that building. I had, let's see, 17 boarders to cook for and take care of. Some of them went out at about six, and some of them come in about four and it just kept me busy.

KS. You were married at one time, weren't you?

There is no electricity on Deadfall Mountain and natural light and shadows interplay throughout the house and outbuildings. This work jacket hangs in the coal house.

SO. Yeah, I married a man that come from Montana. That was shortly after I quit the Baltimore job. And he lived three year and died, right here on this bench where I'm a-sitting. He just took a heart attack. We were going to travel, was planning on going back to Montana and back in that country. I just took up where I'd left off and have been here ever since.

He had come from Montana. A lot of people went to Baltimore for that big work, and they was froze to their job. Pretty near had to stay there until the war ended. I met him in Baltimore.

KS. Did you ever live in the West yourself, in Montana?

SO. I went there and stayed two year, among his people. But he was gone. They wanted me to stay longer, but Jenes got sick. Murray Smith [of the Clay County Bank] sent me a telegram, to come home and help Jenes fix up his business. I knowed what that meant, and I come home. And I've been here ever since.

KS. And your husband died here?

SO. He died here. During the three year that he lived, I got acquainted with his folks and all like that. And I liked Montana. I'd rather be in Montana right now as to be here. But that's over, too far back, I can't go there now.

KS. Were you here on the farm during the Depression?

SO. Yeah. That's when we was selling that tobacco. We never wanted for nothing. We had tobacco, you know, that they'd come and buy. But now, there was people that just almost perished. We were able to go through it without want of much of anything.

KS. When did your mother and father die?

SO. Well, I don't know just exactly the date. But Daddy's been gone 30 year or over. And Mother's been gone, I expect ten or 12 year. She lived right here and she fell in there in her room and broke her hip. She died down at Charleston in the hospital. She lived seven days. She was right around 90 when she died.

KS. Where were her people from originally, the Metheneys?

SO. They were originally Dutch, Holland Dutch or something like that. It took them a long time to come across the water. I think it took 17 months or something. They come in

The 1989 Vandalia award recipient is a favorite of Vandalia Gathering staff and volunteers. Sylvia O'Brien, the ninth winner of the award, had this portrait made at the Cultural Center at Vandalia 1986.

The Vandalia Award is given annually to a West Virginian who has made outstanding contributions toward the continuation of our state's folk heritage. The award recognizes a lifetime of achievement in the performance, perpetuation or creation of the traditional arts. It is presented by the Division of Culture and History, to those who exemplify the spirit of folklife in West Virginia.

a sail ship and they said that some days they could travel far, and that there was other days the wind would maybe take them back further than they had traveled the way they wanted to come.

KS. So you were still hearing stories about that when you were growing up?

SO. Yeah. I have heard that from Mother and Daddy, about Mother's people. And when we'd ask Granny, Mother's mother, she would sing in Dutch.

KS. Was there much music in your family when you were coming up?

SO. Nothing, nowhere. No music.

KS. Well, then, where did it come from? Where did Jenes learn to play music? Where did you learn?

SO. I don't know, unless it was just a gift of talent. Now, Jenes could pick up a banjo, play most anything he wanted to and he didn't know a note in a songbook nor a chord in a music book. And I'm the same way. I don't know a note in a music book and I don't know a chord, nothing like that.

KS. Did he associate with other musicians where he might learn?

SO. Mostly, it was French Carpenter. French Carpenter's gone now. French Carpenter had no home and he come here and stayed quite a bit. French could play, and he could sing. And he done a lot to help Jenes, but I think Jenes's music mostly was his gift of talent. I know my talent was gifted.

French'd stay for pretty near a month at a time, maybe longer. He'd help them around. He didn't have no

Friends treasure the giggles which punctuate Sylvia's conversation.

home. And he just pretty near had to grow up staying with other people. He was about the same age as Jenes. He'd help around the place.

KS. I've heard you talk, Sylvia, about the midnight suppers that you used to have here.

SO. Well, that was quite a while back, not too long. Jenes was a-living then. I expect it's been 15, 20 years. That started back when we first got to getting together traveling, going on these trips, French Carpenter was a-living then. The musicians would gather up, sometimes they'd come here and sometimes they'd go up to French's. We'd all take something for to make a midnight supper.

The music players would gather in, the Morrises, and most all of them around. They'd play music 'til midnight and us women would go in the kitchen and we'd cook a meal and have it sitting on the table. And when the clock would strike midnight, we'd go and tell them that the midnight supper was ready. Well, they'd all lay their music down, they'd come in, they'd go around that table and they'd eat. And then they could play as long as they wanted to. Some of them would stay and play, and some of them would go home. People liked it very well. Other people would come, you know, sit and listen.

KS. Was there any particular reason that you had the supper at midnight?

SO. No. Only they wanted a night session of playing. Some of them would play from when dark had almost set in, and when they'd play right on through about half a night they was wanting something. And we just fixed up a supper for them. No special reason, we just done that.

KS. What kind of things would people eat for a special meal like that?

SO. I usually would take fried chicken and I baked pies and stuff like that. And I always had a lot of good pickled beans, so I'd take a cooker of pickled beans. The rest of them would all fetch something, and they'd bake fresh bread and have hot coffee. If there was meat, they'd fry meat up and fix it good. It was a delicious meal.

KS. I want to hear you play a tune, if you will, before I leave here. And I want to ask you about two or three tunes. "Minner on the Hook" — where did you learn that, for example?

SO. Well, I'd heard Jenes play and sometimes I'd just play it to suit myself. "I fished all summer and I fished all spring, I catched one minner — poor little thing!"

KS. And you also play "John Brown."

SO. I don't know too much about that tune. But I read a book one time about John Brown. They hung him in Old Virginia. He was coming across over to Harpers Ferry. I thought that they treated him bad, that he didn't need that kind of treatment, for the slave man was set free, anyhow. And I just kind of worked that up myself.

KS. Jenes was known as an outstanding craftsman as well as musician. When did he begin doing craftwork, woodwork?

SO. Well, he always had that idea. When he was just a little feller, he was making sleds, he was making wagons. They had to watch him to keep him from driving nails in the house. And [when he got older] he about put up this house. He done pretty near all of this work. After the carpenter quit and left, he put up the ceilings and he laid the floors and he just worked and worked. He was 17 years old.

He made these chairs here. He first started by making chairs and cabinets and tables. And he made them for several years and then he got to making this craftwork to go to these craft fairs. And he got to making banjos. He started off in making chairs, but first he made a banjo out of a holler gum tree. It played pretty good, but he sold it and I reckon it was destroyed. I wished that I had it now, but I don't have.

KS. Did he sell the chairs that he made?

SO. Oh, my goodness, they'd come here with wagons and take off wagonloads of them. Took them to their houses, to sit in.

KS. He had his shop set up with hand-powered tools, a full setup. Do you know where he got the idea for that, was there somebody else that had such a shop?

SO. Yes, one of his uncles had a turning shop, and he learned how to make that from him. You know, a turning lathe [powered by an overhead pole] that would come down and go back up. And it has to be a poplar pole. They'll come down, they'll go back. But a hickory pole or anything else, it'll come down and stay down. It won't go back.

KS. So you want something that's got a pretty good spring in it?

SO. Yeah. You have to.

KS. You say Jenes started making craftwork to take to the festivals. Where did he go?

SO. Cedar Lakes is the first craft festival he went to. And from then, he went on to other places. He went to Glenville. I went to Glenville with him, different times.

We both went together [to the festivals]. It took us both. See, we'd have a booth and when he would have to go to his meals or somewhere, why, I had to stay there. So many people, somebody had to be in the booth the whole time.

KS. Jenes was kind of famous for the banjos he made out of auto transmissions.

SO. Yeah, I've got two of them in

This log barn has stood on the Cottrell place since early in the century. This is a classic "double-pen" design, with one of the log pens shown in the interior photograph. The bottoms of the two pens were used as livestock stalls, and the open breezeway between them offered easy access to the building. Sylvia says the barn was hung full of curing tobacco in season.

there yet that he made. It was made out of a Buick transmission, a '56 model. And that's been back quite a way. They quit making them kind of models before he quit making banjos. And then the transmission was hard to find.

KS. How did he ever get the idea of making a banjo from part of a Buick transmission?

SO. He was down here at Everett Drake's one time. Everett Drake is a junkman and he had one of them a-laying out. Jenes picked it up and looked at it. You know, he was craft minded. And he told Everett, said he believed he could make a banjo out of that. Everett looked at him, he said, "Well, if you can make a banjo out of that, I'll give it to you!" And Jenes fetched it home and he made as good a banjo as he ever made out of it. Then he got to buying them, but they got so scarce he couldn't get them.

KS. Now, what he was using was actually just a ring out of that transmission, wasn't it?

SO. Yeah, the inside. It was something on the inside of that transmission.

KS. What was his best seller around the fairs and the festivals?

SO. Canes. There's one a-hanging up here yet.

KS. I think I bought a rolling pin from him somewhere, years ago.

SO. Yeah. He's been gone nine year.

KS. Jenes has been dead nine years? I bet that changed this place, didn't it?

SO. Changed it, my goodness. But still, he seems near.

KS. Are you doing any gardening up here now?

SO. No, not any more. I rent my bottoms to this woman down here, she raises them. She gives me what I want. Of course, I don't need much.

KS. Do you remember any superstitions about living in the country back when you were young? Any kind of ghost stories, things on that line?

SO. I can remember, we had a house over here on the point, for renters. And the night their little baby died, I heared something out among the chickens and I walked out that-a-way and I seen something come down, just looked like a big white pillow and laid there on the ground. I was too afraid of it to walk down closer. And I stood there a little bit and that, whatever it was, just disappeared. Then in a little bit, why, that little kid's brother come over and told me that the baby had died. And if that wasn't a token or something, I wouldn't know anything.

KS. Do you know of other tokens?

SO. Well, on the night that Homer died, that's my husband, why, I thought I heared a woman a-hollering back here on the hill and she just hollered and hollered. I even answered her and asked her what she wanted. And she quit. That next morning about seven o'clock, why, Homer died. I thought right on that it was the woman across the hill that got up in there and maybe got lost. But I asked her if she done that hollering and she said she hadn't.

KS. Did you ever hear about anybody finding a feather cross in a pillow where an infant had died?

SO. Oh my, yeah. I've found them, just a crown of feathers, just works together. And you can pick them up and you can't hardly pull them apart. But I don't know that it's somebody dying or whether it's just the feathers work together like that, sleeping on them so much. I've seen crowns of feathers in pillows but as far as why they was there, I don't know.

KS. Did you ever know any witch stories, anything like that, in the early times?

SO. Ah, I don't know. I've heared some talk about witches taking milk from cows. And I think they did do that. [The victims] would put a 50-cent piece in their churn and churn it, and they wouldn't be bothered no more. The 50 cents always had "In God We Trust." And they'd churn a 50 cents in their churn and whatever was bothering them would quit.

KS. Did it have anything to do with the silver in the coin, or was it just the motto?

SO. What was on the silver.

KS. Sylvia, you showed me a picture of your dog a while ago.

SO. He was a Johnson black wolver. They had them out there in Montana [when I was visiting] and I liked them. They had no pups at the time but about two years afterwards, I found this dog out here in the yard and a note that told me where he was from and who fetched him. And says, "I hope he survives 'til you get back home." He was sent from some of Homer's relatives in Montana. We was over there at Cedar Lakes at the time.

Well, I took him in and raised him. That dog had a 500-pound grip in his jaws, and I couldn't lift him, only one end at a time. I wasn't afraid of man nor beast while that dog was with me. But there was some people had some gyp dogs down here on the creek and he was lovesick and, of course, he went down there and got out on the hard road and a man in a truck or a car hit him. They said he was killed instantly. That's been about a year ago and I don't want no other dogs. That's the only dog that ever I want to claim, is Buster.

KS. You've got a beautiful, beautiful place here on this point.

SO. In a way I'm happy, and in a way I ain't. I get lonesome and I have most all of my memories back behind me.

Once upon a time, a wood-burning range was the center of most West Virginia homes. Sylvia O'Brien keeps it that way on Deadfall Mountain.

The Cottrell Banjos

The banjo Sylvia O'Brien plays is one of many made by her late brother, Jenes Cottrell. The prized instruments represent an ironic blend of fine handicraft work and industrial technology, incorporating the aluminum torque converter ring from 1956 Buick transmissions as the banjo tone ring. This is the flanged ring under the head of the banjo, visible in the photographs here. The banjos, shown in the close-up against an antique swing crafted by Jenes as a young man, were made in the shop (above left) at the family homeplace. Banjo photos by Pam Lohan, Sylvia photo by Michael Keller.

Jenes Cottrell

By W. Murray Smith

Jenes Cottrell at the 1979 Vandalia Gathering. The instrument is one of his famous Buick banjos. Photo by Rick Lee.

Sylvia O'Brien's brother, Jenes (pronounced Gene-us) Cottrell was memorialized at the 1981 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. The following account of Cottrell's life and ancestry is adapted from a speech on that occasion by the late Murray Smith of Clay. It has been edited for publication. — ed.

The ancestors of Jenes Cottrell, while not specifically known, seem likely to have come over the mountains with joy in their hearts at the ending of their enforced servitude to the rich tobacco planters along the eastern seaboard of Virginia.

These planters had made it possible for them to migrate from the Old Country in the first place. They came from jails, debtors' prisons, or the poor slums that existed in European cities. For payment of passage, these people agreed to work for their benefactor for a certain length of time in order to repay the passage money. They never made claim to have come from the rich or mighty. The planter aristocracy treated them as slaves and it took them from five to ten years to work out their indebtedness.

With the ending of this term of hard labor they left, and many started for the "promised land" which they had been told lay across the Blue Ridge Mountains. These pioneers had no mules, no ox team, and no cattle. They carried all their worldly possessions on their backs. A few of them were married, but for the most part they were men only. When they came to some land that suited them, they would "tomahawk" it, staking their claim by leaving marks with an ax or tomahawk on surrounding trees. This practice went on for many years.

Thomas Cottrell, the great-great-grandfather of Jenes, was among the first of these groups that came to this area. He came with others like himself, who were interested in the abundance of game, both for food and the value of the fur. Moving meant very little to them. In an hour's time, they could put up a lean-to or easily find a rock cliff or a cave.

With Thomas Cottrell came others with such names as McCune, Cogar, Turner, Parsons. Life was not easy for these people, and the settlers who followed them made it worse, as the game had to be shared. As a matter of self-preservation, Thomas Cottrell banded his followers together in a group known as the "Hell-Fire Gang." They tomahawked thousands of acres of land in parts of what is now Braxton, Clay, Calhoun, Gilmer and Roane counties, claiming it as their own. They were successful for some

years in retaining this land, but with each passing year new settlers arrived.

The Hell-Fire Gang apparently accepted two Indian fighters and fur-hunters by the name of Adam O'Brien and Mike Fink. This Mike Fink is the legendary keelboat man, half man and half alligator as the story goes. He and Adam O'Brien were ambushed by Indians. Mike decided that he could hold them off for a while and he sent Adam O'Brien to find help. Today, a historical marker stands just north of the I-64 Big Otter interchange to mark the spot of the supposed ambush and Fink's nearby grave. Thomas Cottrell married a daughter of Adam O'Brien, as did Peter McCune, and both reared large families.

By the 1800's, increasing pressure was being put on the Hell-Fire Gang by the many new settlers coming to establish homes. The gang would at first go by and notify the newcomers to move on. If the settlers refused, the cabin would probably be destroyed, and if that wasn't enough in many instances they were murdered. But still they came, and with them came the strong arm of the law, all the way from Richmond.

One of these new settlers was a man by the name of Jonathan Nicholas. He was very obstinate, to the point that he was murdered. Charged with this murder was Daniel McCune, Joseph Parsons, Alexander Turner and young Jackson Cottrell, a lad of 17. The nearest court was at Lewisburg, Greenbrier County, and they were taken there for trial. They were convicted of this murder and sentenced to a term of 17 years in the Richmond penitentiary. One of the gang died in prison at Lewisburg. The others were taken on to Richmond, with the single exception of Jackson Cottrell, who was pardoned after serving five years. The others all died in the Richmond prison. Jackson Cottrell returned to the West Fork in Calhoun County where he spent the rest of his life. Jackson was the grandfather of Jenes Cottrell.

Jenes Cottrell himself was a quiet man with simple wants and a simple life. Jenes was very proud of his heritage and most proud to claim that he was part Indian. I have spent many hours visiting with Jenes on his memorable front porch, talking about his life and ancestors.

He always got a chuckle when we got around to discussing what an early West Virginia historian had said. For you, as he always did for me, I will quote: "Down on the West Fork of the Little Kanawha River, near the confluence of the counties of Clay, Calhoun, Roane, and Braxton, there lived a community of people composed mainly of the Cottrells, McCunes, Cogars, and Murphys, who were known for their native shrewdness and their repeated violations of the law."

Jenes liked the story of the sheriff who had a capias* for a man named Murphy and came to the West Fork to make the arrest. When the sheriff tried to make the arrest, Murphy ran around the dining room table and kept it between himself and the sheriff, keeping the sheriff from placing his hand on his person. Without touching him, there was, of course, no arrest. The table had plenty of food on it and finally the sheriff, being quite hungry, suggested that they sit down to eat. This they did, after which Murphy made his escape.

So far as I have been able to find out, very few of the Cottrell family lived by farming alone. They were tradesmen of one kind or another. Many of them worked with wood, as did both Jenes and his father. Simple as it was, they made many things with their spring-pole lathe. When I first met Jenes, as a very young man, he was traveling through the country with a pack of wood splints on his back, stopping at homes and putting new bottoms in people's chairs. Many of these chairs either he or his father had originally made. Then I began seeing him at cattle sales where he would be selling cattle canes to the farmers. He was always looking for something new to make, and so it was that he eventual-

* A "capias" is a legal document ordering the arrest of the person named.

Banker Murray Smith at work. The late Mr. Smith, our author, took an interest in local lore throughout his long career in Clay County. Photographer unknown, 1952; courtesy Charleston Newspapers.

ly made banjos from the transmission of a 1956 Buick automobile.

Norman Fagan, later West Virginia's Commissioner of Culture and History, discovered Jenes and brought him to the Grandview amphitheater near Beckley for a performance. I was ordered by Norman to fetch him there, and he was a great success.

This was the beginning of my very close association with Jenes and also the beginning of our treks all over the country to carry him to meet his public. If you will pardon me, I would like to say that he soon became a "prima donna" and he loved it. While Jenes lived 20 miles up in the country on Deadfall Run, with no telephone service, he would without any hesitancy give you his telephone number. It was really the number of the Clay County Bank and we at the bank were expected to deliver all his messages promptly. The delivering of these messages was a delight to both my wife and me. Jenes Cottrell was our friend.

I think often that Jenes and I had an affinity for like things and like places. One of the places that he always held uppermost in his mind and liked to talk about was Berea, Kentucky, and what the college there did for the underprivileged Appalachian mountain youth. He would never admit, however, that their craftwork was any better quality than his; only that they polished it more. Jenes made many visits to Berea College to their festivals, and always came home bubbling with enthusiasm. I, too, go there as often as I can. On my last visit to Berea I experienced a big surprise. Now, when you walk into their briefing room, before making the formal tour, you are favored with some of the most wonderful slides of Jenes, his home, and his shop.

The drawknife was a precision tool in the hands of Jenes Cottrell. Photo by Gerald Ratliff, State Department of Commerce.

Once, when Jenes came home from a trip to the Cumberland Gap area, he had some tall stories to tell. He had learned of the "long hunters" and he liked to think in his own mind that they were as he was, masters of the mountains. Like his ancestors of the Hell-Fire Gang, they too had traveled the mountains, having to be resourceful to keep alive.

Like Jenes, some were craftsmen. One, along with his hunting and trapping, had taken up the blacksmithing trade. He boasted that he feared no beast, he could shoe them all. One day a neighbor brought him a very vicious mule. The mule made contact with the blacksmith and he landed some 20 feet away in a brier patch. He was carried to his cabin and placed on a bed. He died three weeks later, insisting all along that he had had typhoid fever. Jenes was a man of such temperament, fearing nothing — with the exception that he believed in "haints" and sometimes broke out in a cold sweat when they were mentioned.

Jenes had some little aversion to buying food, as he had grown up in a self-sufficient home. Many years ago, when the first sales tax was enacted, it was called by many the "Kump tax," after Governor H. Guy Kump. This was just too much for Jenes and he usually found a way to beat it. The following is as he told it to me: "I go down to Ivydale on Saturday afternoons. If I am hungry, I go to Guy Boggs's store and buy just a nickel's worth of cheese. Then I go across the road to J. C. Cruickshank's store and buy me a nickel's worth of crackers. By gosh, I don't have to pay that Kump tax!"

Jenes drew people as flies swarm to sugar. They ranged from peons to the great and the near great. He loved them all and they loved him. I recall that once I had a call from the governor's office to inquire if I might be free that afternoon to drive the art director of a large university, in my pickup truck, up to Deadfall Run to visit with a man that he had heard a great deal about, Jenes Cottrell. I did have the time, of course, and I went. That scholar was still sitting on the front porch marveling at the beauty and grandeur of Pilot Mountain at 7:00 p.m., the very moment that he was supposed to have been speaking to a group of ladies at Sunrise Museum in Charleston.

In 1964 I got a call from *West Virginia Hillbilly* editor Jim Comstock and songwriter Billy Edd Wheeler asking that I bring forthwith to Charleston Jenes and his shop to be set up in a store window where Jim, who was a candidate for Congress, had his headquarters. I complied with their request, taking one of Jenes's neighbors with me to assist in setting up the operation. When we had finished, we drove over to one of Charleston's finer restaurants, the Sterling, to have dinner. Jenes looked the place over and said, "No, sir, I won't eat in there. You know that I always eat over on Summers Street. They have the best hot dogs in town and they are only 25 cents for two."

I didn't argue with Jenes and took him over to Summers Street. We stopped to have strawberry pie that night on our way home. When the bill came, I asked the waitress to give it to Jenes. He looked at it and asked me what it was for, and I explained to him that it was the bill for what we had eaten and that he should pay the amount on the paper to the young lady who was standing near the door. I then asked him if he had 50 cents in his pocket, and he said that he did. I said that he should leave it by his plate. "What for?" he asked, and I replied "for this young lady who carried the food to us." He said, "You don't pay twice," and I remarked to him that "you do in this place."

He shuffled the bill for a moment or two and then threw it to me, saying "I am not going to pay this. I didn't call it up and the man that calls it up always pays for it!"

Emmanuel Tsitsilianos stands before a southern wall of the West Virginia capitol building and gazes at the straight, solemn lines of stone. Tsitsilianos, a Greek artisan commissioned to apply gold leafing to the capitol dome, admires the work of past artisans — the stone-cutters and designers — and marvels at their talent.

"They had time," he says. "They had more time and they had a lot of dedication. They were *here,* and *this* was their work. They applied themselves to it. Do you know what I mean?"

Although he's lived in the country since 1964, Tsitsilianos (pronounced Chi-chili-ahn-os) still struggles with the language. He speaks in Greek to family members who are on the job with him in Charleston.

He paces around the building, occasionally stopping to look at the dome or speak into a walkie-talkie linking him with members of his crew. They are 300 feet overhead, cleaning the steeply arched copper-and-lead surface, preparing it for regilding.

"This is like going back in time," says the restorer, looking up at the egg-shaped edifice. "Maybe that's why I like this work. I prefer the things of the past."

It's a nice thought. But the dome's past hasn't been all gold leaf and romance. Fact is, the structure has had trouble hanging onto a surface — be it gold or paint — since 1931. That was the year architect Cass Gilbert, the famed designer and builder of the Renaissance-style capitol, oversaw the application of the first gold leaf.

Gilbert, known for his designs of public buildings across the country, had been commissioned by the 1921 legislature to build an entire new capitol building, replacing the old one which had been destroyed by fire earlier that year. During the next decade, the east and west wings went up. Construction on the main section of the building began in 1930 and was completed two years later.

For the dome — the centerpiece of West Virginia's new capitol — Gilbert borrowed a design from the church at Les Invalides, in Paris. Les Invalides, a complex built in 1791, is where Napoleon is entombed. The West Virginia and Paris domes are very

Charlestonians have become accustomed to a state capitol with scaffolding at the top, ropes down the side and a mottled dome. The classic structure will soon show a new face to the world.

Capitol Cover-up

Gold-leafing the Dome

By Topper Sherwood

Photographs by Michael Keller

similar, according to architectural historian Rodney Collins of the Historic Preservation Unit at the State Department of Culture and History; both include decorative banding with the Roman insignia, helmet and imperial eagle.

By April 1931, the dome was completed and state officials were ready to approve a $23,700 bid for the gilding. The contract was awarded to the company of Mack, Jenney and Tyler, a New York firm.

The gilding took place just six months later in October. The first problems were soon spotted by Bonner H. Hill, the eagle-eyed secretary of the Capitol Building Commission. Hill wrote to Gilbert that some concrete on the "lantern," a ring of pillars atop the dome, "has dropped off, leaving the metal practically bare."

"This work was done in the lantern after the grill work... had been coated with gold leaf," Hill wrote. "In fact I think a part of the grills should have another coat of gold."

Gilbert took several trips to Charleston to check progress and address the questions and doubts harbored by secretary Hill, who kept him on top of the situation. "While here Sunday and Monday, I trust you saw the spots on the ribs of the Capitol dome where, if there was ever any gold leaf, the scaffold destroyed it," the secretary wrote in December. The state official commented that the dome's surface looked "as if a man had walked up it with mud on his boots."

"I have positive assurance," Gilbert responded, that Mack, Jenney and Tyler "have completed their work in accordance with their contract requirements. I suggest, on account of the inaccessibility of the work, that the contractor be ordered to erect a scaffold to give access to the areas noted, so the work can be properly inspected. If it is found that the areas have not been covered with gold leaf, the contractor should be required to do the work without expense to the state, including the cost of the scaffold."

While these early incidents might have been relatively minor, they were a sign of things to come. The gilding, expected to last 20 years, showed substantial wear after five or six.

In addition to the technical problems, Gilbert had a bout with West Virginia-style politics. Broad questions were posed by critics of the gilding project. Newspaper editors called the gold unusual and extravagant, forcing the architect to come to the defense of his design.

"As a matter of fact," he said in one letter, "it is not at all unusual. The dome of the State House on Beacon Hill in Boston, Massachusetts, is all gilded. The dome of the Library of Congress in Washington was largely gilded. There is more than an equal amount of gilding on the tower roofs of the New York Life Insurance Building and the New York Central Office Building. It is not at all unusual."

Responding to the issue of the gilding's cost, Gilbert said he originally had hoped to create a marble dome, but the bidding ran too high, forcing him to draw a metal dome into the design. The architect said that, even with the gold, a metal dome had "reduced the cost to a minimum."

"If we had built the bell of the dome of stone," he told Governor William Conley, "or of marble, as in the Minnesota State Capitol or the Rhode Island State Capitol, it would have cost five or ten times as much money and probably would not have excited any comment whatever."

Further, West Virginia's climate would make a stone dome "susceptible to expansion and contraction," the architect said. "The joints would have to be constantly repaired in order to preserve it," he told the governor.

Critics of Gilbert's time also suggested the copper dome simply remain unpainted, but the sensitive master architect argued that the bare

Contractor Emmanuel Tsitsilianos, a veteran of restoration projects worldwide, is the man in charge. He says the key to success is painstaking work.

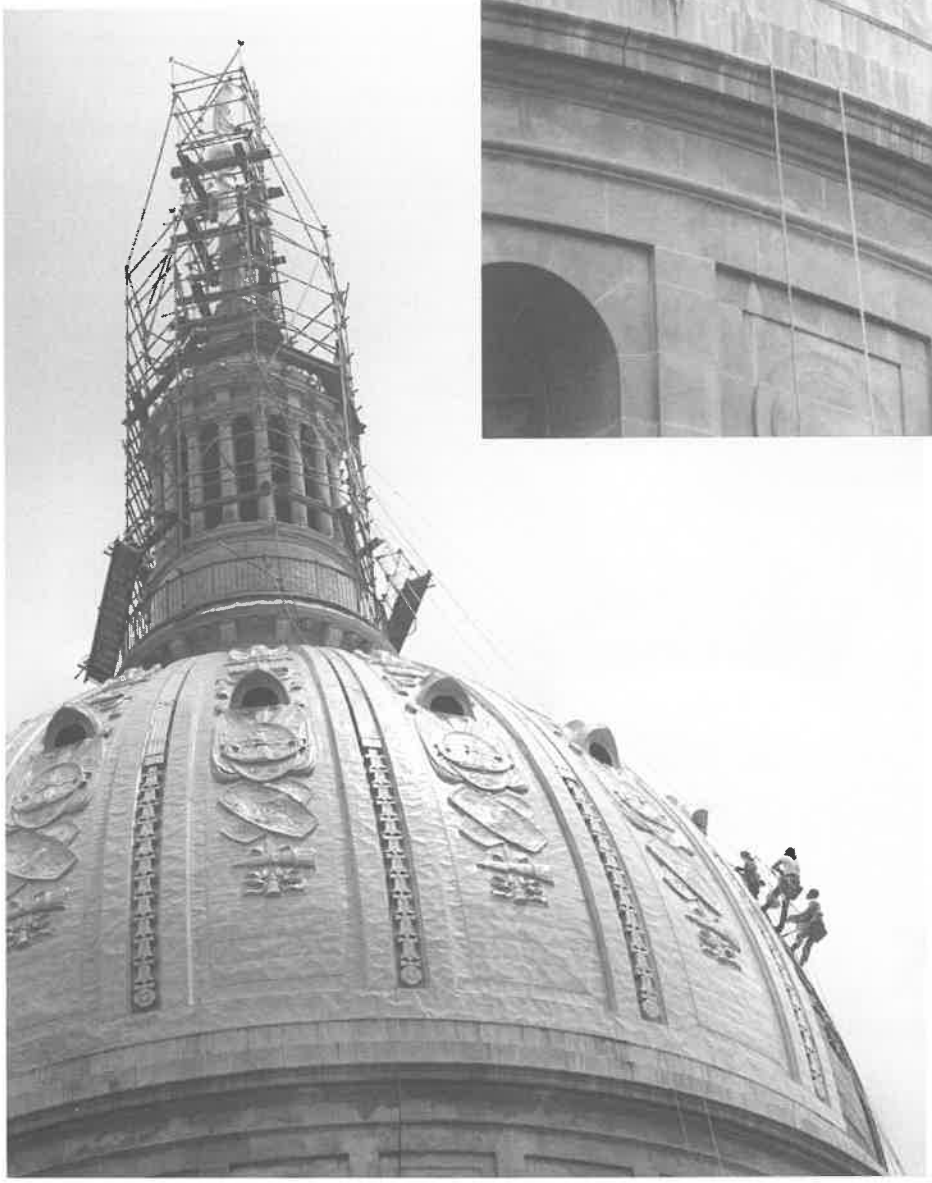
metallic color would have "interrupted" the lines of the building "with shocking abruptness." A copper dome, he said, "would lose entirely that graceful upward soaring quality which gives it a large measure of its charm and beauty."

"If, then, such a metal surface were painted, say gray to match the color of the stone work, to keep the effect of the proportion rising upward, it would be a cheap pretense of being stone, and the painting would have cost at least $12,000." Further, he wrote, the metal would have required painting every two or three years "to keep it in condition."

Gilbert told Conley the new copper dome, with a gilded lead surface would eventually "turn a soft silver gray, not unlike the color of the stone but not an imitation of it."

"The gilding acts to illuminate it and carry the eye up so that the proportions are preserved and accented," the architect wrote. "The difference between the painting and the gilding therefore would amount to perhaps $11,000 or $12,000 and the life of the gilding should be approximately twenty years."

But such was not the case. The gold leaf began to flake within only a few years. Gilbert died in 1934, but his son, Cass Jr., continued to monitor the project and had a chemical analysis performed in 1937. The study show-



The dome's "lantern," and the eagle and column atop that, were trussed in scaffolding early in the project. Work on the actual dome proceeds downward from that level. The closer view (right) shows the workers rigged in safety lines as they prepare the dome for the gold leaf. Here they apply the undercoating paint.

Paul Marshall, an architect specializing in historic preservation projects, monitors the gilding of the capitol dome from his Charleston office. Photo by Greg Clark.

Making It Stick

Paul D. Marshall, inspecting architect for the dome gilding project, recently took time to talk about the big job of gold leafing the state's major landmark. He said the West Virginia state capitol has the largest dome ever to be gilded anywhere in the country, and explained why he is confident that this time the gold is here to stay.

Marshall acknowledged that past coatings of the big top have failed, including past paintings and the gold leafing originally applied to most of the dome's surface. He says the problems apparently originated in the underlying construction. The dome was built of copper, coated in lead. Subsequent sandblasting removed lead from the copper and left some areas lead, some areas copper and some a mixture of the two. The interaction of water with the metal material of the dome produced sulfates that attacked the paint, which also lacked the flexibility to stretch when the metal expanded.

Why the first gold leaf failed is a question still in debate. Rodney Collins of the state Historic Preservation Unit says that correspondence he has read from the time the first gold started showing problems tells of a chemical analysis which found that the metal in the dome interacted with the gold to produce an adverse effect. Problems with adhesion have persisted from the time of the original gilding until now.

According to Marshall, the present procedure promises to be successful for several reasons. He notes that the old paint has been completely removed and the surface has been prepared for gilding with the application of two layers of paint. The new paint is an improved modern product that will provide a better coating than paint used in previous attempts to cover the dome.

Perhaps most importantly, Marshall has confidence in the dome contractor, Emmanuel Tsitsilianos. "He is a careful, knowledgeable person who has great respect for the dome," the architect says. "He treats it with reverence and makes sure the workers are as careful as he is. He gets really wrapped up in his job." Tsitsilianos is more of an artist than a contractor, in Paul Marshall's eyes.

Following the painting, the actual gilding starts with the application of a liquid "size." The size for the dome is manufactured in France. Once applied to the surface, the size cures and turns into tack. The gold is laid into the tack, burnished by hand, and then rubbed down with cotton. The only pressure applied is the pressure of the hand. The tissue-thin gold leaf comes in sheets about 3 3/8 inches square. At 23 1/2 karats, it's almost completely pure gold.

Preparation is the most important part of the process. Last year when the old paint was removed, chemicals were put on the dome and the surface was scraped. This was done more than once. Marshall points out that the entire surface of the huge dome was scraped with putty knives.

The prepared surface was then covered with a primer and top coat. The school-bus yellow paint that was on the dome during this past summer is the top coat. Then the size goes on and finally the gold leaf. Weather conditions affect the progress of the gilding. Moisture from rain, fog or dew is extremely detrimental to the sizing work. Other complications have arisen from Kanawha Valley pollution, as Tsitsilianos watches daily for a telltale oily appearance on the surface of the dome. Pollutants are constantly cleaned from the dome's face.

Like Tsitsilianos, Marshall believes that the careful regilding is the most economical treatment available. "It will last longer than anything has up there," the Charleston architect figures. The work is guaranteed for ten years, and expectations are that it will last longer. But there is more to it than economics, as far as the men working on the dome job are concerned. They promise a product that will make West Virginians sit up and take notice. "On a sunny day, the gold will hurt your eyes," Paul Marshall predicts. "It will be dazzling!"

— Debby Sonis Jackson

ed problems caused by air and water getting between the lead and gold layers. The trouble was perceived to be worsened by sulphuric acid, a pollutant from Charleston industries of the time. In any case, no further action was taken following the study, possibly because of World War II.

In 1986, after years of failed paintings, Swanke Hayden Connell Architects — the firm that designed the restoration of the Statue of Liberty — was commissioned to do more complete research. The architects concluded that the capitol dome's failure to hold a surface had been caused, in part, by the lead coating on the copper.

"While many domes have been leafed successfully, the majority are copper," the firm commented. "While some lead objects have been leafed, they are all much smaller and in less exposed locations."

Problems caused by the lead can be overcome, according to the restorationists, but the conditions must be right. During the original gilding in 1931 — and during subsequent paint jobs in 1946, 1963 and 1977 — conditions apparently were wrong. A test on the 1977 paint illustrates the historical problem between the lead and all applied coverings.

"The test does show that the first prime coat has become cracked, allowing moisture to penetrate to the lead," Swanke Hayden reported. "This has caused the formation of lead sulfate which is causing the paint to lift. The paint cracking has probably been caused by the too-rapid evaporation of the volatile dryers."

Authorities point out that the dome gets hot in the sun and many of the paint jobs, including the 1931 priming for gilding, likely dried too quickly. Windy conditions on the dome could also have caused the paint to dry prematurely. Swanke Hayden took these and other elements into account in designing the cleaning and gilding process currently being performed by Tsitsilianos under the supervision of Charleston architect Paul Marshall.

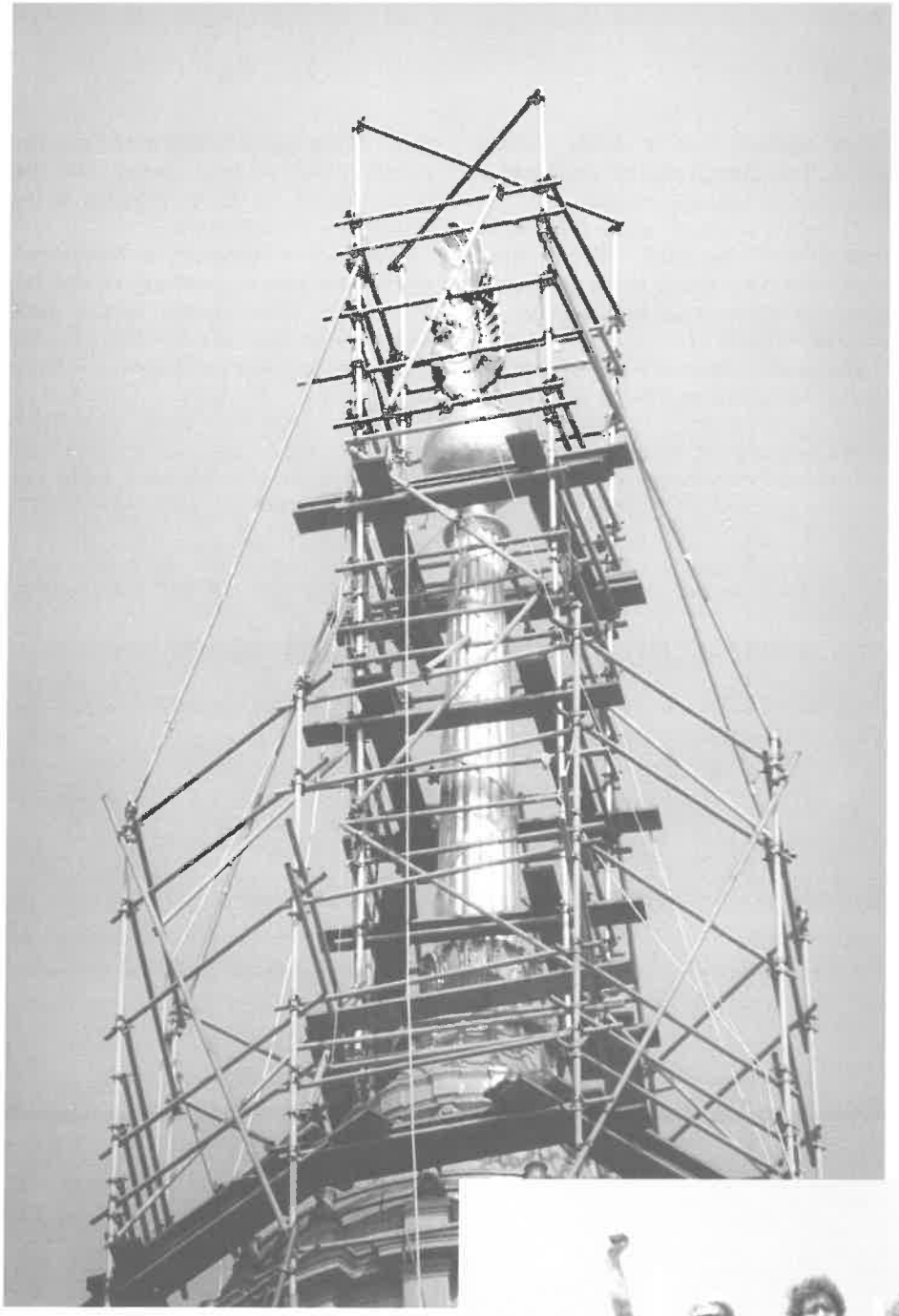
The copper-and-lead roofing — having suffered through storms, sandblasting, and the many ill-fated paint jobs — remained intact, but had oxydized and weathered. When the Greek artisan arrived, the pocked and worn surface was a sickly yellow-green. Tsitsilianos and his crew busied themselves making repairs.

"There's a lot of areas that needs remolding," he said. "We're here. And nobody's going to be getting up there for between 20 and 50 years. So why not fix it?"

The gilder obviously enjoys the historical restoration. "What you see up there is a treasure," he says. "If you don't preserve it, you lose more than you would ever hope to have. Every inch of that metal is important and the preservation of that metal and the preservation of that treasure is so important to this state."

Tsitsilianos becomes a Mediterranean poet when speaking of the big Mountain State dome, which he's agreed to restore at a fraction of what others would have charged. "It's the intangibles," he says. "That's why I'm here. God didn't put us on this earth to say 'One dollar plus one dollar makes two dollars.' I did not

"Manos" Tsitsilianos is no armchair contractor. Here he takes a hand in work on the eagle, at 292 feet the capitol's crowning ornament. Photo by David Fattaleh, courtesy State Department of Commerce.



silianos sighs. "But when it's done, it's gonna be breathtaking. I can just look at it for hours."

When he finishes the gilding, he says, it will have "egli," a Greek word he has trouble translating. Later, he recognizes the answer in a passage written by Cass Gilbert in 1929, when the architect described the way he thought capitol buildings ought to be designed.

"There, the rich and the poor alike may find the history of the state and the ideals of its government set forth in an orderly and appropriate way," Gilbert wrote. "It is an inspiration toward patriotism and good citizenship, it encourages just pride in the state and is an education to oncoming generations."

"Right," says Emmanuel Tsitsilianos, smiling. "That's 'egli.' Most definitely."

Left: This photo shows the state of the work as of mid-summer, with the eagle and supporting column fully gilded. Officials expect to finish the job in coming months.

Below: The dome job has been a challenge to Charleston photographers. Jay Wildt and David Fattaleh of the State Department of Commerce were two who made it to the top. Photo by Stephen J. Shaluta, Jr.

Opposite Page: The capitol dome was originally gilded over much of its surface, as this construction-era photo shows. The original gilding, though spectacular, soon failed. Workers expect better results this time. Photo by Bollinger Studio, courtesy State Archives.

come to America to cook hamburgers, make $200,000 and then go back to Greece."

It's a beautiful day and grey squirrels are working the statehouse lawn. Traffic along Kanawha Boulevard is heavy. But none of these, nor his thoughts about the past, distract the artisan from watching his workers as they clean the dome of all gold and old paint.

The crewmen, dressed in bright-yellow latex suits, are suspended from lines that extend from the skeleton-like scaffolding at the top of the crown. They look like tiny spiders crawling on an old relic.

"Even undone, it's beautiful," Tsit-

Capitols: Past and Present

This is the downtown Charleston capitol which burned in 1921. The building is shown here under construction, probably 1886. Photo by Becker & Fell, courtesy State Archives.

Pictorial Histories Publishing Company recently published *Capitols of West Virginia: A Pictorial History* by Stan Cohen and Richard Andre. The book closely details the succession of capitols West Virginia has had, from the 1863 Wheeling location to the present state capitol in Charleston.

Six chronological chapters tell the story behind each capitol building. From the time West Virginia achieved statehood in 1863, its northern citizens wanted the capital in Wheeling. The city had played a major role in the statehood movement, and it served as the state's capital for the first seven years.

Political and sectional battles soon arose, as southern residents fought to move the seat of government to Charleston. In 1870, they won. Charleston became the new capital, but only until 1875, when the legislature voted to move back to Wheeling. In 1877, a statewide election was held to name a permanent capital city for West Virginia. When the results were in, Charleston was chosen, effective after eight years. Thus on May 2, 1885, the capital moved down the Ohio River to Charleston.

Much of *Capitols of West Virginia* is devoted to changes that took place after the final move south, with extensive coverage of the 1921 fire which destroyed the Victorian-style capitol that had served state government for 36 years. The book includes eyewitness accounts, newspaper clips from the time, and photos of the disaster.

Within a week after the blaze, construction of a temporary capitol began. Because of its flimsy construction, the temporary structure was known as the Pasteboard Capitol. It too was destroyed by fire, in 1927.

Plans were already underway to erect a permanent and enduring monument to West Virginia's statehood. A State Capitol Commission, organized in 1921, had been working to find an architect and choose a location for a complex of buildings that would serve the needs of state government for a long time to come. *Capitols of West Virginia* provides an in-depth look at the planning and construction of the present capitol. A biographical sketch of architect Cass Gilbert tells of the man behind the building, completed in 1932 at a cost of $9,491,180.03.

The new book winds up with a summary of facts concerning the capitol, photos of capitol architecture, a chapter on the governor's mansion, an appendix on capitol statuary, and a table of state capitols across the country. *Capitols of West Virginia* is illustrated with letters, flyers, telegrams, architectural sketches, and an abundance of photographs, some published for the first time.

The 106-page softcover book sells for $9.95 in bookstores. Mail orders, including $2 postage and handling, should be sent to Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue S.E., Charleston, WV 25304. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.

"Why Retire, Anyhow?"

Berkeley Postmaster Truman McCauley

By Malcolm W. Ater, Jr.

"I guess you could say 1935 was a good year for me," says postmaster Truman McCauley of Bunker Hill, over in Berkeley County. That was the year he began married life and his long career with the postal service. Both are going strong after 54 years, and they've kept him busy. "Guess I never knew what I was getting into back then," he laughs.

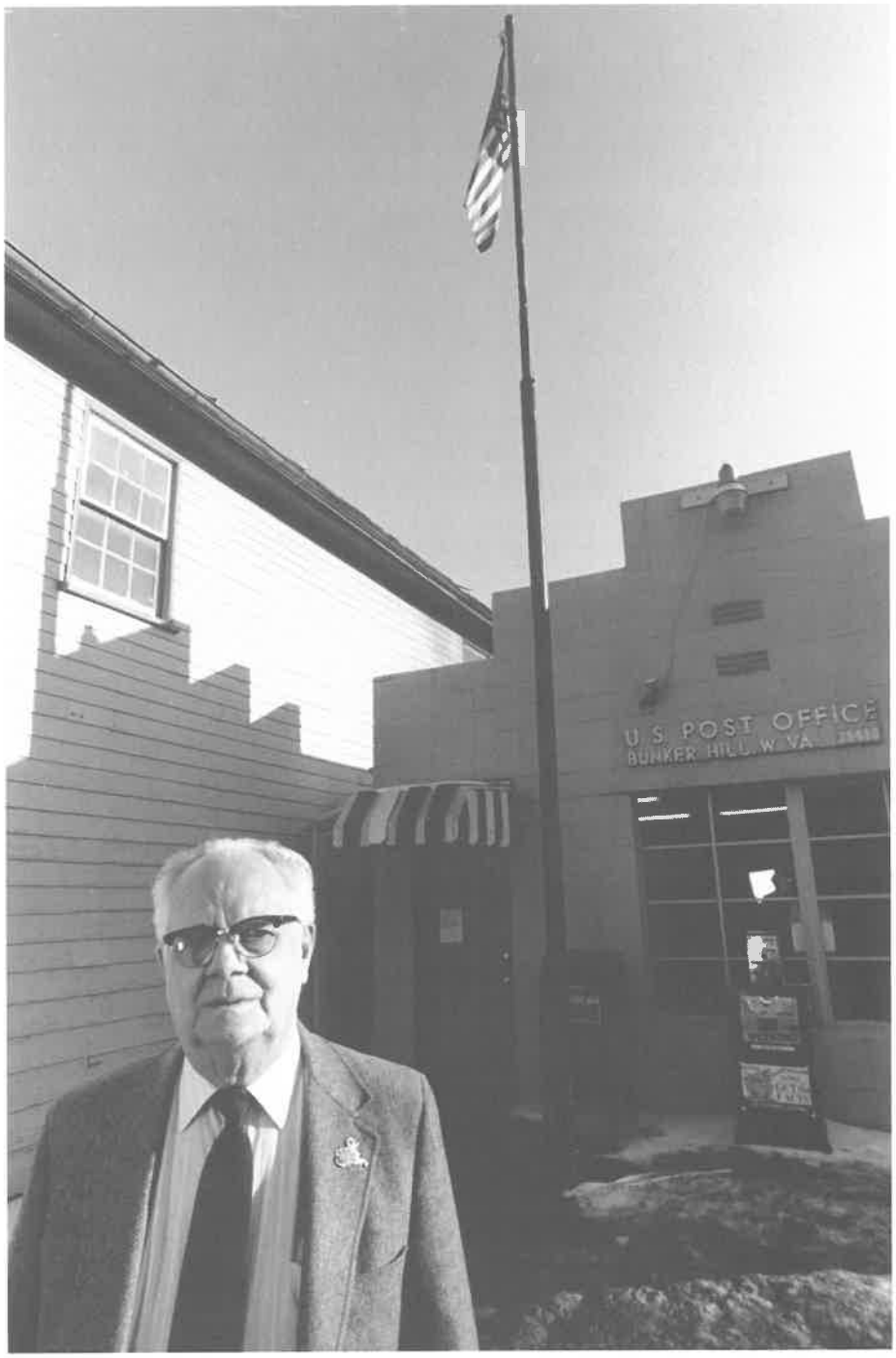
Actually Truman knew long before 1935 that he was interested in the mail service. One of his earliest jobs (other than working on his father's farm) was in 1927, when as a 16-year-old high school student he had his first taste of handling the mail.

"I'd work from 3:30 to 7:30 each day after school, carrying the incoming and outgoing mail back and forth from the railroad station in Bunker Hill to the town post office," Truman recalls. "Reckon it must have planted a seed in me somewhere, 'cause eight years later I got with the postal service as a substitute mail carrier."

Born on January 10, 1911, in Hampshire County near Pleasant Dale, Truman's family moved to Bunker Hill in 1925 when his father gave up his work as a local timberman and began farming. 'My father had a 250-acre farm where we raised hogs, chickens, and milk cows," recalls Truman. "And since I was old enough to help with the chores, you can guess who got up at 4:00 a.m. to do all the milking. Then I'd walk to school, and later do the milking all over again when I got back home. I remember I always missed a month of school in the fall for harvesting the crops and hog butchering, then another month each spring for planting and plowing."

Truman remembers that there were originally 32 students in his freshman class in Bunker Hill High School, only ten of whom would later graduate. "There was always a high dropout rate because of family or personal

Truman McCauley has outlived three post offices and is now in his fourth. This is the building he left last April. Photo by P. Corbit Brown.



reasons,'' he reflects. ''But the ten of us who did graduate in 1931 still represented the largest graduating class in Bunker Hill history up to that time,'' he adds proudly.

Located within close walking distance of the high school were two of the most important institutions in town, the post office and railroad station. ''You could say they were the bloodlines of the community, because everything revolved around them,'' Truman says. ''We had eight passenger trains arriving daily, along with two freight trains. We depended on the trains for our mail and transportation, and also for shipping and receiving virtually all of the town's supplies. And, of course, the hub of all town news and gossip centered around the post office,'' he concludes with a wide grin.

After several years doing odd jobs during the Depression, Truman landed a position with the postal service as a substitute mail carrier, starting on June 8, 1935. The post office was a 15-by-25-foot wooden building, staffed by the postmaster and one regular carrier, plus the substitute. ''Back then we had 189 families who walked in to

''The main road in town was two lanes wide, so when people came to get their mail they'd simply park in the middle of the road,'' Truman says of Bunker Hill's old post office location (above). The scene hasn't changed a lot today, as the lower photo shows. Early photographer unknown, new photo by P. Corbit Brown.

Bunker Hill is one of our state's most historic places. Pioneer Morgan Morgan is generally recognized as West Virginia's first white settler. Photo by P. Corbit Brown.

pick up their mail. We used to stay open until 7:30 p.m. because the last train didn't arrive until 7:15, carrying yet another load of mail. We'd sort the mail quickly and have it ready for pickup in case anyone stopped by before closing," he says quietly, looking back through the years.

Besides bringing mail four times a day, the trains served as a shuttle service for students attending Bunker Hill High School. "Students came on the train from Tabler Station, Inwood, Gerrardstown, and even from neighboring towns in Virginia because it was close. I think it cost ten cents each way, which was pretty expensive since laborers in the area only made 75 cents or a dollar a day," he muses. "I'm glad they thought their children's education was so important."

Truman remembers that after school was over the post office would fill with children of all ages. "All the kids stopped in to pick up their family's mail," he says. "The kids from Bunker Hill High would stop in, and so would all the kids from the colored elementary school down the road.

"It was always interesting to hear what was going on at the schools," Truman says. "They weren't shy about telling you anything that was on their minds."

He has plenty of examples. "Why, if they were making good grades, you knew about it. If they were making bad grades — usually with the understanding that it was the teacher's fault, mind you — you knew about that, too. If one of the kids had a secret admirer, we usually knew about it before they did. And naturally, if one of the kids was mad or irritated with someone else, we'd know all about that, too." Truman rolls his eyes at the memories. "But you know, things haven't changed that much around here, because we still hear all that sort of stuff from the adults today."

For eight years he worked as a substitute carrier. Because the regular carrier had frequent back problems, it wasn't unusual for Truman to work for several weeks straight. The eight years hold some of his fondest memories as a postal worker.

"Things were a lot different back then," he'll tell you right off. "The mail always went out, regardless of the weather. Nowadays mail carriers don't have to go out if the weather is particularly bad, but not back then. We took pride in our work — and of course I know mail carriers today take a lot of pride in their work, also — but we always made sure our mail was delivered, six days a week, regardless of what we had to go through.

Truman warmed to the subject of delivering mail during the winter as he leaned back in his chair, an easy grin crossing his face. "Yes sir, when I was delivering mail to a farmer's house I'd drive my vehicle as far up the lane as possible, then get out and walk the rest of the way to the mailbox. I'd get stuck pretty frequently, and I often found myself not only walking all the way to his house to personally deliver

Snow never stopped Bunker Hill's mail, even if Truman McCauley and Smith Pine (driving) had to use a farm tractor. Some West Virginia carriers were less tenacious, according to the poem below. Photographer unknown, late 1940's.

The Gauley Mail

Rain or snow, the mail went through under Bunker Hill Postmaster Truman McCauley, but it has not always been so in the history of West Virginia postal service. Bad roads and worse weather sometimes stalled delivery for months, leaving remote areas without mail through long hard winters. State Poet Laureate Louise McNeill cites one such case in the humorous poem "Jed Kane," first published in her 1939 poetry collection, Gauley Mountain.

Jed Kane

The Gauley Mail was overdue
When Jed who was to drive it through
Cheat Mountain Pass to Staunton Run
Got special word from Washington —
In which a postal clerk inquired
Why Mr. Kane who had been hired
To drive the course at post haste rate
Was not in yet, though three months late.

And now on a high-glazed marble wall
In the postal building Jed Kane's scrawl
Hangs framed in silver: "Respected sir,
You ask the reason and this be her —
If the gable end blowed out of hell
Straight into the drifts of a snow that fell
Last fall on the ram's horn point of Cheat
It would take till Easter for brimstone heat
To melt a horsepath. So I remain,
Your obdt. svt., Jedson Kane."

From the book Gauley Mountain *by Louise McNeill (Harcourt-Brace, 1939), reprinted by permission of the author.*

the mail, but also to ask him if he could help pull me out of a snowdrift. The farmers would never hesitate — they'd promptly go out and hitch up a team of horses and get me on my way."

Call it stubbornness, tenacity, or just plain pride, but Truman was willing to go to any lengths — or distance — to see that the mail was delivered. "Once when I was a carrier I was at the end of my day, having delivered mail to everyone except for two families. Well, I was still a mile away from their homes when I came to a place where the wind and snow had blown a tree across the road.

"Believe me, I tried my best to get my car around that tree, but it was nothing doing," he continues, shaking his head. "I knew there was only one thing to do, so I got out of my car, locked the doors, and slung the mail over my shoulder in the mail pouch. Then I walked a mile through the snow to deliver their mail and another mile back to the car. But it was worth it."

For Truman, it was the little things that people did to show their appreciation for his daily 72-mile round-trip that made the extra effort worthwhile. "When you left the post office early in the morning on cold winter days and sometimes didn't get back until dark, your bones could get mighty chilled," he laughs. "All I can say is thank goodness for the many kind people who left a bowl of hot soup or steaming coffee in the mailbox for me when I was making my rounds. Other people would watch for me and invite me in to warm up to their fire. It was okay to do that as long as the mail was safely locked in the car and you could keep an eye on it from the window," he adds quickly, lest anyone think he was being careless.

In 1943, still working as a substitute, Truman was promoted to postmaster upon the retirement of Miss Daisy Swisher. His salary rose to $1,100 a year. Although local postal service was first established in 1828, only three of the 23 previous postmasters had served as many as ten years. Truman is the 24th. He is now in his 46th year as postmaster of Bunker Hill, and his 54th year of postal service. During his time he's seen much growth come to this once sleepy West Virginia border community.

Above: The U.S. Mail came to town by train in Truman's early days, and later by a variety of other means. Highway post offices such as this, which sorted mail en route, were a familiar sight by around 1950. Photographer unknown.
Below: Steady, hard work has its rewards, as Truman's fine 1937 Buick coupe attests. Here it's parked in front of the second post office Truman recalls. Date and photographer unknown.

Bunker Hill was first settled sometime in the 1730's by Colonel Morgan Morgan, about the same time that Romney and Shepherdstown were settled. All three Eastern Panhandle towns claim to be home of the first white settlement in West Virginia.

One thing that is agreed upon, however, is that Colonel Morgan played an integral part in the westward expansion of what was then Virginia. It was Morgan who built the first road leading from Winchester through Bunker Hill, all the way to Charles Town, a distance of about 30 miles. He also built the first house in the area. In 1740 he constructed one of the first churches in present West Virginia, the Old Christ Episcopal Church, which was also known as Morgan's Chapel. Originally called Mill Creek because of the number of grist mills located on a stream that ran through town, the community formally became Bunker Hill in 1879.

The Eastern Panhandle, especially Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan coun-

Bunker Hill moved into its spacious new post office last April. Neighboring postal officials look on as Truman accepts a flag from Marshall J. Beverly. Photo by Gregory Case, courtesy Martinsburg *Evening Journal.*

ties, is the fastest growing area in West Virginia today. In the last five to 20 years there have been pronounced changes in both the economy and the population throughout the region. Many of the small towns and villages that dot the countryside are finding their local farmland now turned into residential or business developments. Bunker Hill is no exception.

"Back in the '30's, Bunker Hill was almost all farm and orchard land," relates Truman. "The railroad was still the main source of transportation for most people, even if they were just going from town to town visiting for the day. We had four churches, which was plenty for the number of people living in the area," he says matter-of-factly. "We had a general store, a flour and feed mill, a woolen mill, a garage, a meat shop, a barber shop, and a small restaurant and local tavern. And Lester Hoffman, he operated a stockyard where he regularly shipped out livestock, hay and wool."

In 1944 the Bunker Hill post office was moved to a new location off the main thoroughfare, though at 15-by-30-feet it was hardly bigger than the matchbox that had previously served as the postal headquarters. "It wasn't so much that the building was too small as it was that the road in front of it was too small," laughs Truman.

"You see, the main road in town was two lanes wide, but there wasn't any place where you could pull over and park in front of the post office," he explains. "So when people came to get their mail they'd simply park in the middle of the road. Of course, once they got inside they'd start gossiping and catching up on all the town news, and before long the road in front of the post office would be clogged with cars and carriages."

As postmaster, Truman remained determined that the mail be delivered each day, regardless of how it got there. He has an anecdote to illustrate the point. "It was snowing real hard one day, and by the time the regular carrier, Smith Pine, had finished with his home deliveries around town the snow was already drifting up to the mailboxes in some places," recalls Truman with a shake of his head. "Well, he came in that afternoon half frozen with still another four-mile stretch to go, and we just both looked at each other, knowing the mail had to be delivered some way.

"Finally I said, 'Smith, you got a tractor at home, so why don't you go get it?' Before long he returned with the tractor and we both got on it, him driving and me next to him holding the mail. He just plowed through the snow, and every time he stopped in front of a mailbox I'd jump off, wade through the white stuff carrying the mail, then turn around and wade back to the tractor."

Truman eyed me with satisfaction. "Yes, sir. We did that for four miles, but every bit of mail got delivered that day."

Sadder duties came during World War II. Again he elaborates with an example. "I got a call about 11:00 p.m. from the army, informing me that one of our local boys had been killed in the war," he says slowly, thinking back to the time. "I had to go over to the boy's house and tell his parents that their son was dead."

After moving into his third, slightly larger, post office in 1961, Truman McCauley was finally rewarded with a modern, spacious building just this year. "It's not often you see someone outlive three post offices and move into a fourth," he says proudly. "But I guess the way everything keeps growing you have to keep up with the times." Indeed, the new Bunker Hill post office serves 1,100 patrons for home delivery and another 375 who walk in to pick up their mail, with an additional 800 to 1,000 families projected in the next five years.

When asked about the growth and changes he has seen over the years, Truman thought long and hard and then chose his words carefully. "The biggest difference was the way everyone used to pitch in together in the old days. Everybody knew everybody else, and everyone helped everyone else out. During harvest and threshing time, all the neighbors would go over to someone's farm and help the family with all the necessary chores until the crops were in. Then everyone would go over to someone else's farm and help them out, then on to someone else's farm, and so on and so on.

"I guess you could say we were like a big family," the old postmaster observes. "If someone got sick,

especially the man of the house, all the men in the area would come over and take care of his crops and livestock and be sure all the chores got done. You didn't need any money, either, 'cause no one would accept payment anyhow. It was a good feeling knowing that you could always count on your neighbors if you needed help."

Then Truman's face turned stern for the only time during our many discussions. "And I'll tell you another thing, too. One thing that kids didn't have when I was growing up that kids have today is drinking and drugs. Kids back then didn't drink, except maybe once in a while when someone got a-hold of a cider barrel. And the only thing we smoked was rolled corn silk."

Today Truman McCauley looks far younger than his 78 years. With his neatly combed white hair, eyeglasses and infectious smile, he could easily pass for a 65-year-old grandfather. He has no plans for retirement. "I love my work and I love talking with my customers. Why should I want to retire, anyhow? It's when you stop doing things with yourself that you stop being happy with yourself."

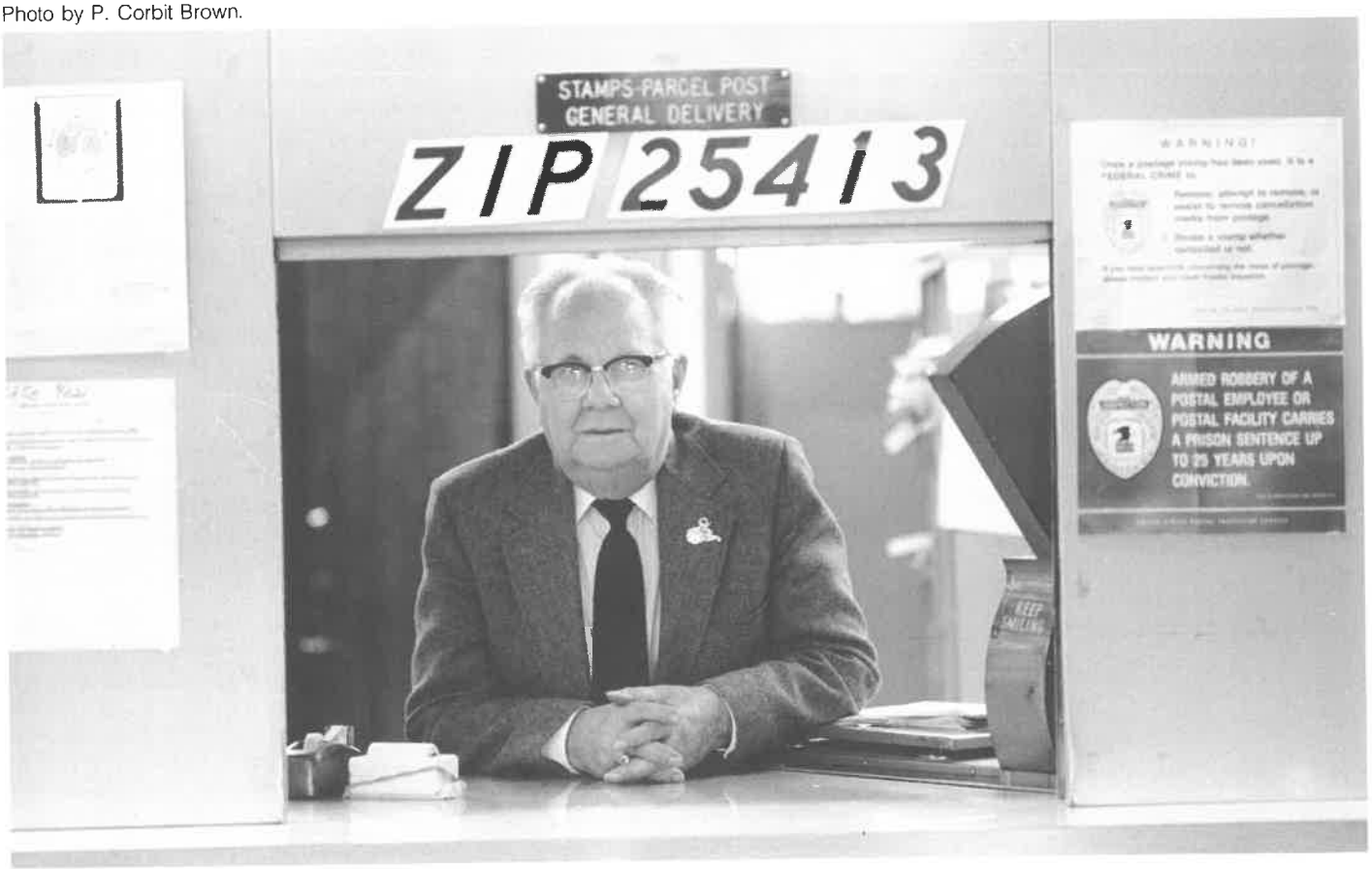
Truman has plenty of things to do with himself as he sets all sorts of records for dedication and length of service. He's been a charter member of the Bunker Hill Lions Club since 1945, and hasn't missed a single meeting. He has served as club treasurer for 42 years, and as first vice-president and president the other two years. While treasurer, he's even found time to simultaneously preside as post district governor (with a 100% rating) and sit as a member of the executive board for the Sight Foundation in West Virginia.

A dedicated Christian, Truman has served his Methodist church as treasurer "for years," and is secretary of the Sunday school. He has also sung in his church choir for 60 years — "because I enjoy it, not because I know how to sing." And it's a safe bet that when he's not busy working, going to a Lions Club meeting or involved in a church activity, then he and his wife of 54 years, Irene, are probably out visiting with their three daughters, Delores, Nancy, and Debra. "They're the ones that really keep me going," he says affectionately of the women in his life.

When asked for the secret of his longevity, Truman didn't ponder for a moment. "I like people, and I like to work with people. I think the key is being a good listener. If someone has a complaint, whether it's personal or about the postal service, I listen to them. And if they ask for advice I'll give them the best I know how. It's always been like that. I've found that if you treat the public the way you'd like to be treated, then you won't have any problems."

Pausing for a moment, Truman McCauley quietly summed up his life's work with the Bunker Hill post office. "You have to remember that the only product the postal service has to offer is service itself, and that's what I always strive to do. If there are times when you get irritated, you must remember never to show it. Because if you treat people with courtesy and respect, then 99 out of a 100 times they'll treat you the same way."

All mail to ZIP 25413 gets Truman McCauley's special attention. It's been that way since long before the ZIP code system was born. Photo by P. Corbit Brown.



"And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you. . ."

Genesis 6:19

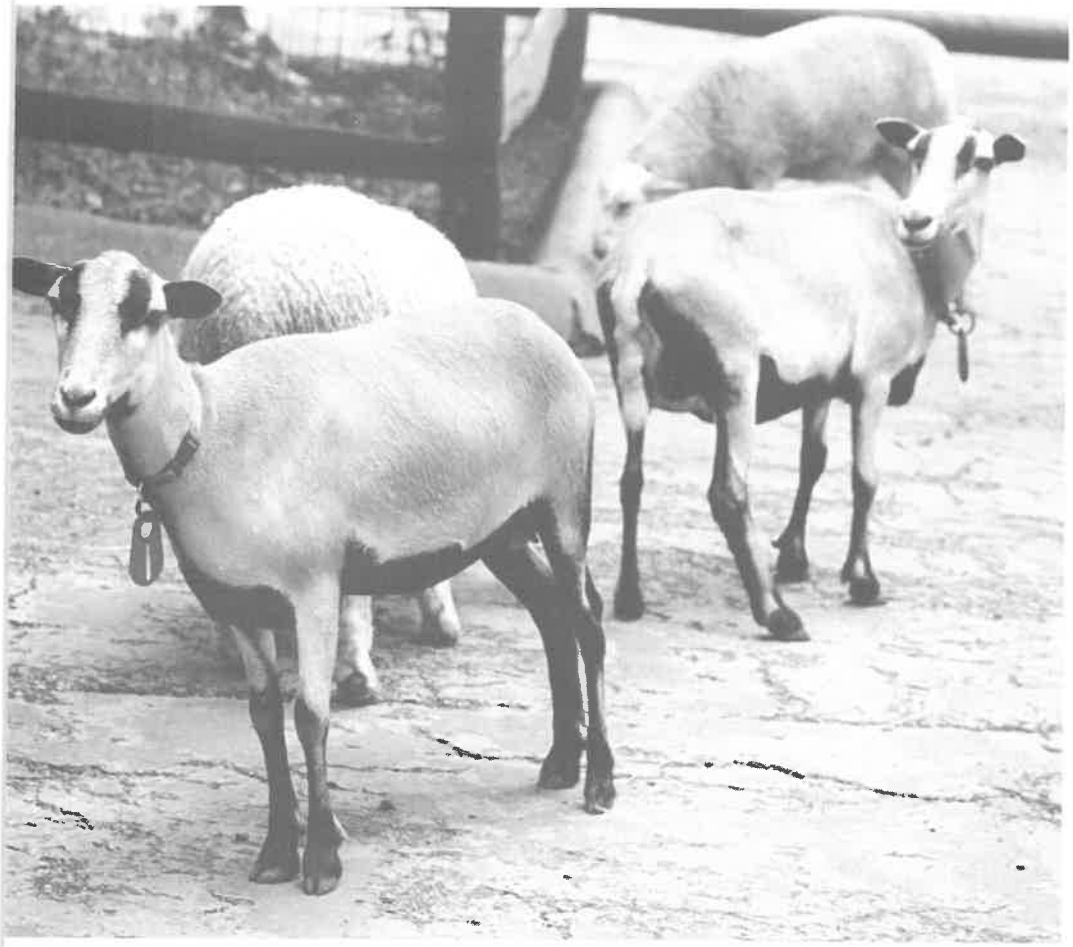
A Modern Noah

Penny Miller of Wheeling

Interview by Cheryl Harshman

Photographs by Michael Keller

These rare Barbados sheep are among the animals at the Good Zoo at Oglebay.



Spring 1989 was one of the wettest springs on record here in northern West Virginia. Folks joked about building an ark. Actually, the sun was out the day I visited Oglebay Institute near Wheeling, but there at Oglebay's Good Zoo I found a modern-day Noah. Not a biblical patriarch, but still a hard worker trying to save animals from certain extinction.

Penny Miller is the zoo's curator of animals. She doesn't look at all like I imagine Noah did. Instead of a brawny builder of ships, Penny is tall and lithe, with the graceful stride of a ballet dancer. She wears a T-shirt and khaki shorts. One of her long legs sports a purple bruise which probably came from a bump in a barn or a tussle with a four-legged creature. We joke about being able to wear shorts to work on such a lovely day.

Penny's life and that of her veterinarian husband, Dr. Michael Miller, revolve around animals. When she leaves the zoo at night, it is to go home to a farm where she keeps Belgian horses, llamas, and Lincoln and Border Leicester sheep. It is her work with the Belgians and the sheep that has drawn me to Oglebay today, past busloads of school children taking advantage of the only sunny day we've had this spring.

Penny's sheep are unusual to me, their names unfamiliar to my ear and unlike the Suffolks I see grazing down the ridge from my Marshall County home or at the county fair in July. But there was a time not so long ago that these and other breeds of sheep were well represented in West Virginia, a rugged farmland similar to the hills and mountains many of our ancestors left behind. Today, many livestock breeds have all but vanished from our landscape.

Penny Miller and a handful of others are trying to save these animals from the flood of extinction brought on by an agriculture married to business. They are members of an organization called the American Minor Breeds Conservancy. We've all heard about saving endangered wild animals — the bald eagle, the whales, the seals — but the Conservancy is dedicated to preserving minor breeds of cows, pigs, horses, goats and sheep.

I was surprised to learn from Penny that a minor breed is not necessarily an exotic animal or one with an odd name. A minor breed, according to the Conservancy, is any breed that was here in North America in 1900 and whose numbers are declining. These breeds are "minor" in name only, not because of lesser quality or inferior traits. Penny's Belgians are considered

Zookeeper Penny Miller also runs an Ohio County farm with her husband, veterinarian Michael Miller. The couple are committed to livestock conservation.

minor as are such other well-known breeds as Clydesdale, Lipizzan, Percheron and wild mustang horses; Ayrshire and even Guernsey cattle; various donkeys, asses and burros; Poland China and Berkshire pigs; and Cheviot and Polled Dorset sheep. Ayrshires totaled 9,664 registered cattle in the United States in 1985, down from 15,069 in 1970; Lipizzans number fewer than 2,000 in the world.

The losses are due in part to modern agricultural practices. Breeds which cannot grow with machine-like efficiency are being forgotten, in favor of those offering short-term profit. Some breeds dwindle and some are eliminated completely. With a sharp decline in the number of commercially important breeds, there are fewer distinct genetic strains. Thus domestic livestock is becoming more and more the same. A case in point are laying hens. Nearly all are bred from a common relative, the Mt. Hope White Leghorn, so most of the laying hens in the world share the same genes.

Minor breed conservationists ask disturbing questions. Where are the animals that led to the development of American agriculture? What if the cost of energy becomes so high that farmers are no longer able to continue using heated and air-conditioned barns and cages for the specialized animals now dependent on such care? What if artificial insemination and central semen banks so limit the gene pool that an epidemic might eliminate, say, the entire dairy herd in North America? That herd, for all intents and purposes, is now one single, specialized breed, with Holsteins outnumbering all other dairy cows combined by four to one.

Scientists tell us that a breed or strain is weakened eventually by such inbreeding as must occur with the laying hens mentioned above. They also tell us that genetically transmitted diseases can wipe out an entire population or crop. The Irish potato famine in the 19th century is the most famous epidemic. Because the Irish grew only a few potato varieties (as opposed to more than 500 varieties grown by Indians in Peru), there was no diversity to draw on. The potatoes were closely related and none were able to withstand the blight. In more recent times, there was a disastrous Southern corn leaf blight in the Midwest in 1970 and the citrus canker in Florida, both causing extreme damage to a major portion of national production because the crops planted were almost exclusively one variety.

Penny Miller is one West Virginian interested in these problems. "I've always been very active in the conservation of wild and exotic animals," she says. "With my work here at the zoo and recently acquiring a farm of my own, well, it all just sort of fell into place." I interviewed her at Good Zoo.

Cheryl Harshman. Penny, you're surrounded by animals. Has it always been this way with you?

Penny Miller. Even as a small child I've been around animals. My mother was interested in animals, and we always had some in the house. Pets, primarily. Then I started working at the Pittsburgh Zoo in 1971 as an animal keeper. Kind of worked my way up and gradually ended up here.

CH. And you married a vet?

PM. We met here at the zoo, as a matter of fact.

CH. What did you think of livestock conservation, when you heard about that?

PM. Being as involved as I am with the conservation of wild animals — I don't really have a strong background in domestic animals, or I didn't until a couple of years ago — I never stopped to think of domestic breeds as being endangered. But the more I looked into it, the more I saw that they face the same problems that are faced with

exotic animals and with lots of different types of fruits and vegetables — the lack of genetic diversity which is so critical right now. The same concept applies to domestic breeds. We've got to protect and maintain those genes. We're losing them at an incredibly rapid rate.

Then we got a farm, finally, and some animals of my own, and at the same time I started spinning and weaving. I was looking at different sheep and the different weaving qualities, and it just all came together at the same time.

CH. A lot of the minor breeds are kept alive by hobbyists, small farmers, and historical farm museums. You wear all three hats.

PM. In a very small way with domestic animals, so far. But it's something I would like to do in the future, especially here at the zoo, because I think it's an important thing for us to do.

The zoo is going to deal with domestic animals, anyway, and this being a very rural area where a lot of our visitors are farmers, I think we should be showing them things that they are not familiar with and at the same time, breeding something that's rare and decreasing. But we haven't really started to do that with anything but the Barbados sheep right now.

We tried the Jacob sheep, but it didn't work for us because of the horns. Not only do they have two, they have four! And they know how to use them! The particular animal that we got did not work out for us. I don't know that animals with horns like that will work in our contact situation.

They're white and black. They're really kind of pretty. Their horns are just incredible — very beautiful! In fact, the male we had was a very good quality ram and I really didn't want to part with him. And the fleece is very good for spinning and it's got very distinct groupings with dark hair and light hair. You can blend them together so you get a beautiful yarn.

It was nice to have one here over the winter. Actually, he was in a biblical display, so it was kind of appropriate in that context. But the Jacob, I think, is not a breed that would work for us here at the zoo, so we'll try something else.

I'll have to take a couple of things into consideration. One is how well

Scottish Blackface sheep are among the breeds maintained at the Miller farm.

The Good Zoo

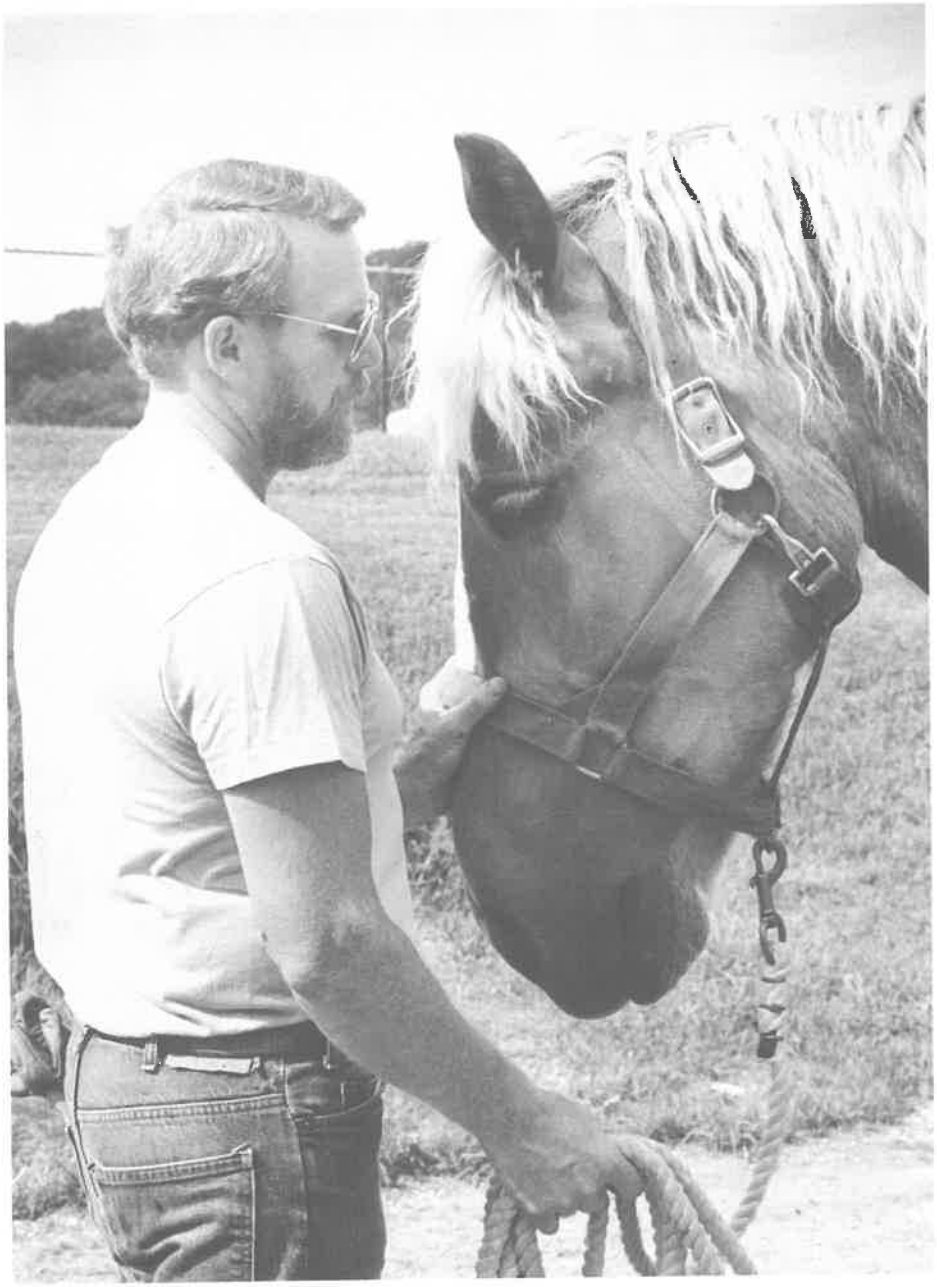
Oglebay's Good Zoo in Wheeling, named as a memorial to seven-year-old nature lover Philip Mayer Good, opened in 1977. The zoo occupies 65 acres within Oglebay Park and exhibits well over 200 animals representing 75 North American species. Visitors may see wolves, deer, otter, bears, and elk. Wild animals are the primary inhabitants of the zoo, but nearly a quarter of the acreage is devoted to domestic animals such as goats and sheep.

Relatively young compared to most zoos, the Good Zoo emphasizes modern naturalistic exhibits including a 3,000-gallon aquarium of native game fish, an 8,000-gallon otter tank, desert and snake exhibits, and song and marsh birds. Zoo curator Penny Miller says they have everything from the bison to the honeybee. Children may feed and pet the domestic animals on exhibit.

A mile-and-a-half train ride is also available at the Good Zoo. The train follows a course through the zoo, the bison range and near a waterfall. There is also a mini-train village featuring an O-gauge model train exhibit in a handcrafted West Virginia countryside setting.

Oglebay Park was formerly the summer estate of Colonel Earl Oglebay, an industrialist who willed the property in 1926 to the citizens of Wheeling for recreational and educational purposes. The resort includes 1,500 acres with facilities for golf, tennis, swimming, and skiing. A nature center and greenhouse are open to the public, and tours of Colonel Oglebay's mansion are available. The mansion is an accredited museum with changing art exhibits and a major glass collection. Oglebay also offers dining, entertainment and overnight accommodations in cabins or the lodge at the park.

From September through April the Good Zoo is open 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with the hours subject to change. May through August hours are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sundays and holidays. Admission is $3.50 for adults and $2.50 for children two to 17, with those under two admitted free. For more information contact Oglebay at (304) 242-3000.



The Millers have a stable full of Belgians. The big horses are making a comeback, but still concern livestock conservationists.

they will blend together with the animals we already have and with the public. And also, what resources are around as far as breeding animals, especially the males. We're not equipped to keep males here. I'll have to keep a breed that has a male relatively close by that we can use every fall for breeding. So we'll see.

Some of the zoos right now have the Cotswolds. We've looked at some at other zoos, and that looked like a good avenue for us to pursue. They're white, as far as I know. I don't know if they come in other colors or not. But theirs is a very fine fleece. I guess they are a good carcass animal, too. That's something we're looking into. Definitely the Barbados, and possibly some Lincoln sheep. They're not really hard to come by, but they are declining in numbers.

I have Lincolns at home, but I don't have any here at the zoo. They're a real pretty sheep with a really beautiful, lustrous, wavy coat. Spinners like it very much, too.

CH. Tell me about your own animals.

PM. Right now I'm torn between two different directions at the farm. My husband and I raise llamas, which there is a good market for right now. That will help our farm, the income produced from them. And at some point, ultimately, the farm must make a profit.

I don't sell market lambs, for personal reasons, so I raise sheep strictly for breeding, and I breed only the animals I know I can sell as breeding stock. I really limit my potential for getting money out of it. I'm not planning at the moment to expand the sheep that I have. But the minor breeds that I have, like the Scottish Blackface, the Border Leicester, I breed only to Blackface and Border Leicester because I think the lines should be kept pure. So I will maintain those two breeds at home.

CH. Do you breed them just with the ones you have at your farm?

PM. No, I breed them outside. Luckily, there's a very good Border Leicester around. And for a Scottish Blackface I have to go a little bit further, into Ohio, but there's a ram over there. In fact, the owner also has Scottish Highlander cattle, very good stock.

CH. You also raise Belgian horses. Why are Belgians called a minor breed?

PM. Well, there's probably a lot of breeds that people would say, "Oh, I know what those are. They're not rare." But if a breed's numbers are dropping, they don't have to be rare [to be termed minor.] The Conservancy has four different categories. "Watch" is for a group or breed that is in steady decline, but they're not currently in trouble. Like you'd better watch this breed because the numbers are declining, and stand at less than 5,000 registrations per year. That's currently where the Belgians stand. They're not in any trouble, but they are declining.

Then there are the "feral" animals. Those are the wild goats, the mustangs, things like that, where they've been running free for over a hundred years. The breed is not managed and no new genetic material is coming in — no new blood. Perhaps it's not necessary, if there's a large enough number, or perhaps there is a danger.

"Minor" breeds are less than a thousand registrations a year, and those are going to be the ones that

people are probably not familiar with. And a few hundred a year or less registered makes a breed considered "rare."

To give some examples of rare sheep, and some of these are probably going to surprise readers, would be the Barbados, the Border Leicester, the Cotswold, the Lincoln, the Navaho out in Utah, the Tunis, and the Karakul.

And as far as rare breeds of horse, the Shire. There's only one man in this country that I know of who has them, and he's making a very conscientious effort to save and promote this breed in the United States. They're a very beautiful draft horse, solid black. They also come in gray that lightens as they get older. Also they have what's called the feathered feet, which are usually white. So they're black with white feet, or very beautiful shades of gray. Very impressive.

People will be familiar with the Clydesdales, which are considered a minor breed. The Percheron and the Belgians are in the "watch" category. They aren't in as bad shape, and they've been pretty well promoted in this part of the country with Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales and now Heinz with the Percherons. Heinz has an eight-horse hitch. They are headquartered here in Oglebay now. Oglebay has turned over their stables to the Heinz Percherons. So sometime when you're here, you might want to stop in and see them.

CH. What are some of the traits of the animals you work with that might make them important to breeders in the future?

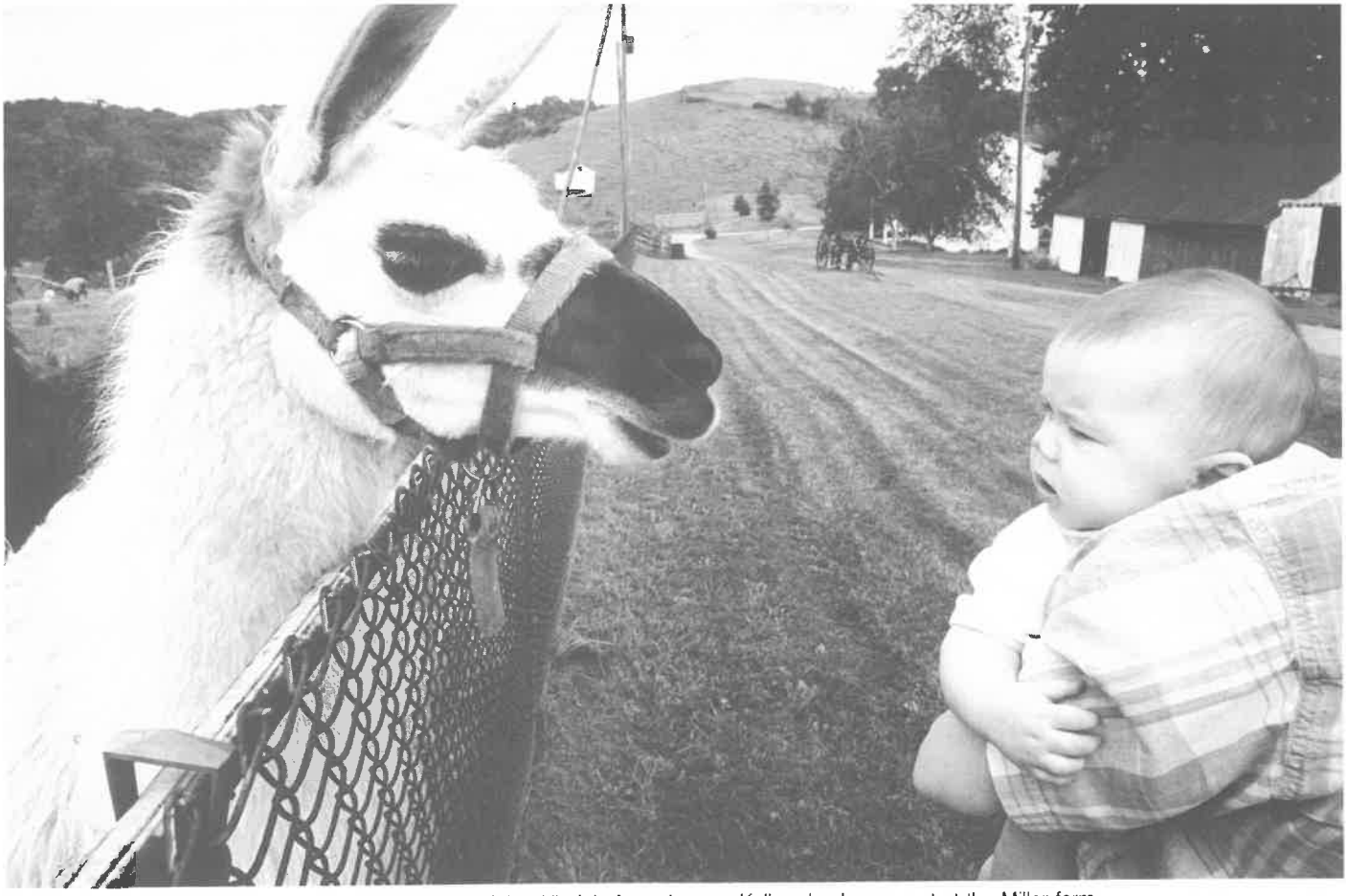
PM. Well, first of all, you can always go back to that gene pool and breed for crossing. Then you get what's called hybrid vigor, which carcass producers especially are looking for — a good growth rate for the amount of feed that they give the animals. And a lot of these breeds we've been talking about are not represented at all in some of the commercial breeds. If you cross [with these new genes], you get a very strong production animal.

Secondly, some of the minor breeds can serve a dual purpose — in cattle that means draft and milk or beef, for example. And some of them are very attractive in their own right, very different looking. There are a lot of different characteristics like color, staple length, crimp and things like that in sheep that you're not going to find in the sheep that are commercially kept. Hand spinners look long and hard for a good fleece that they don't have to labor over like the ones from a Suffolk or others available around here with a shorter, finer staple. And the hand-spinning market has really increased in the last few years. There are a lot of spinners looking for a good fleece.

A lot of animals, too, like the Scottish Highlander cattle — they're the long-haired, shaggy ones; they're incredible — make good utilization of very poor feed and pasture. They're able to have a rapid weight gain on a really low-quality forage that another animal could not use efficiently. So a lot of these minor breeds are very efficient.

Almost all of these minor breeds were bred for fairly rugged conditions, not for all the commercial, high-protein feeds we have now. They grow very well on low-quality feeds;

Vicki Hunter of D & H Farms shows Jim, one of the Heinz Percherons lodged at Oglebay stables. The Heinz show hitch works parades across the country.



Llamas are not endangered, but plenty unusual on a West Virginia farm. Lauren Keller checks one out at the Miller farm.

Penny's shirt carries the livestock conservation motto, a quote from naturalist William Beebe: "When the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another Heaven and another Earth must pass before such a one can be again."

The Heinz Percherons at work. Photo by Bill Exler, courtesy H. J. Heinz Company.

Heinz Horses at Oglebay

Oglebay Park is home to many animals, few of them more pampered than the Heinz Percherons. The horses, housed at Oglebay's stables, work in eight-horse hitch teams. The Heinz food products company of Pittsburgh keeps the Percherons at Oglebay when they are not on the road at fairs, parades and special events.

Percherons are among the most handsome of horses, the only draft breed with some Arabian blood. They are known for their beauty and spirited, yet gentle, disposition. Ninety percent of the breed are black or gray. Each horse weighs 1,900 to 2,100 pounds, as much as a small car.

Percherons were developed in France and used during the Crusades eight centuries ago. Flemish plow mares were mated with Arab stallions to create horses that could carry the weight of armored knights into battle and still move reasonably fast. During the 17th and 18th centuries they became general purpose animals for riding, driving and farm work. When Percherons first came to North America in the 1850's they were the most popular draft breed for decades, especially for use as carriage horses.

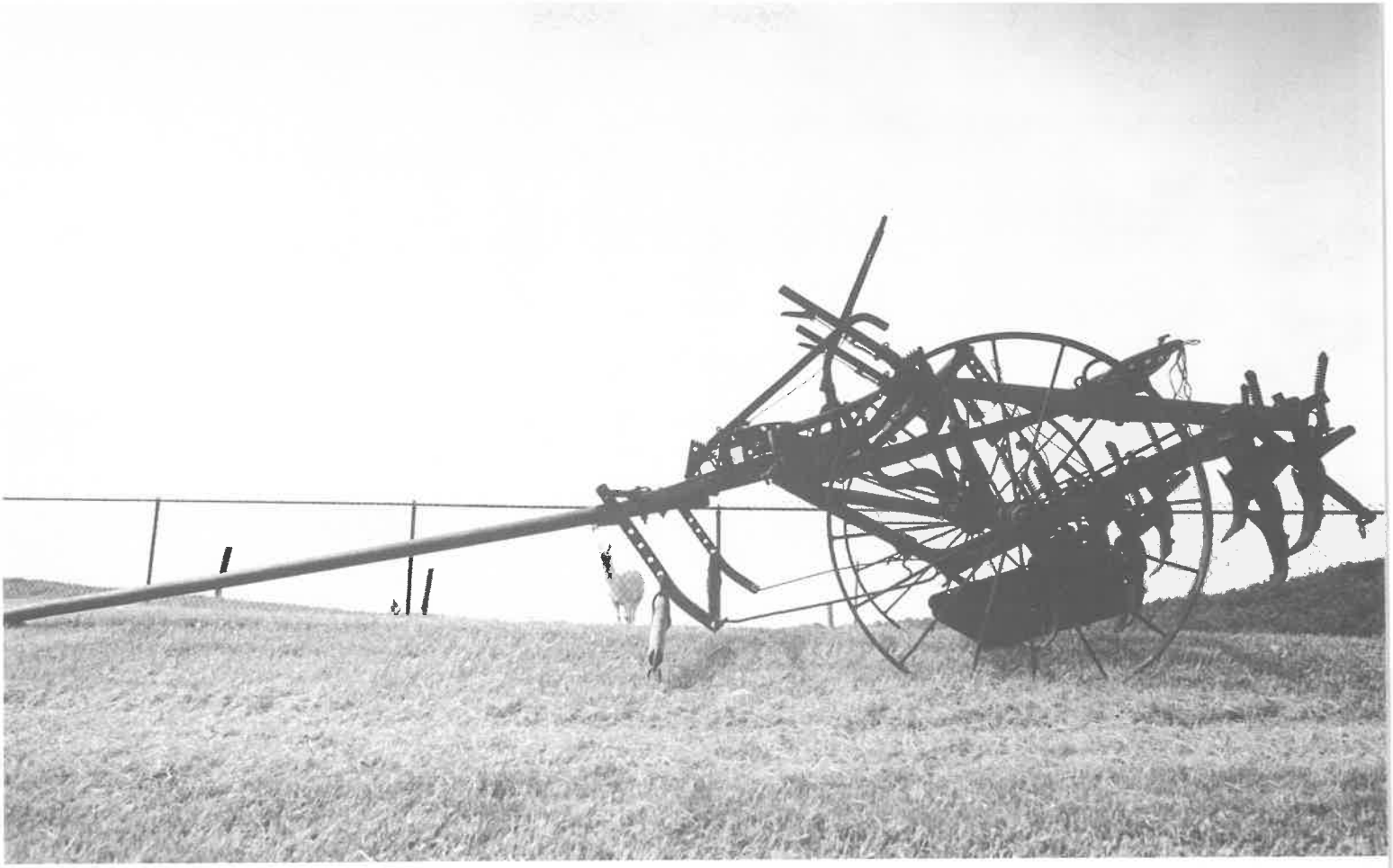
The Heinz Company used Percherons at the turn of the century when its famous "57 varieties" were delivered by horse-drawn vehicles. The company had 150 teams of matched black Percherons to pull the delivery wagons. Eventually, as electric and gasoline vehicles became the preferred form of transportation, the Heinz wagons were phased out.

The company took care of its livestock. In the biography of founder Henry J. Heinz, it's reported that "there was a hospital for horses that were sick, a Turkish bath for horses with colds, a warm foot bath for horses with sore hooves, a jail for horses that kicked and a roof garden for horses that needed airing." The company's model stable was fireproof, heated by steam, lighted by electricity and screened at the windows. The horses were fed, watered and brushed by electric machinery.

Today, Heinz has 21 black Percherons, anywhere from three to ten years old. The company still takes great care of these magnificent animals. Three hours of bathing and grooming precede each special appearance. The Percherons' manes are braided in French rolls, their tails tied in buns, and their hooves cleaned and painted with a special compound. They are then dressed in patent leather and chrome harnesses that weigh about 125 pounds each. The teams pull authentic delivery wagons, handpainted by an Amish artist. The newest wagon weighs more than 6,000 pounds and is the largest of its kind in the country.

The Percherons, as a minor breed, are currently on "watch" status according to the *American Minor Breeds Notebook*. In 1954, only 85 registrations were recorded in the United States, but thanks to the efforts of dedicated breeders, Percherons have recovered substantially. In 1985 there were 1,500 registrations, up from the 280 recorded in 1970.

The Percheron generally stands about 16 hands high at the withers, just over five feet, though some show horses may be larger. Their disposition is well suited for the crowds of people who visit them at their home stable or on the parade route. The big Percherons may be seen at Oglebay Park and at many county and state fairs across the country. The Heinz Hitch has also been seen at such special events as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Fiesta Bowl parades, inaugural parades in Washington, and NASCAR's Atlanta 500. The Percherons at Oglebay are available for trolly and hay rides by prior arrangement.



The Millers' horse-drawn cultivator symbolizes earlier times, when agriculture was simpler and more varied, employing a variety of plants and animals not seen today.

a lot of them don't need heated facilities. The man that keeps the Scottish Highlanders over in Ohio doesn't grain any of his animals except his young calves — the adults are never grained. One group has a barn they never use, and the other herds don't even have barns. They're bred for rugged conditions — they have the coat for it. They don't need to have expensive buildings put up, and they don't end up costing the farmers very much.

All that made sense, but I asked Penny why there was such a need to preserve more unusual farm animals. Some, like the Poitou Ass, a long-haired animal whose ringlets may fall in mats to the ground, are very strange and have never been seen in West Virginia. She explained that it is the genetic diversity which must be preserved, that many bloodlines are needed. It is frightening to think that the breeds that North American agriculture depends on to feed us all are becoming genetically more and more closely related and thus are exposed to greater, more catastrophic risks.

Each of the minor breeds have characteristic traits which make them distinct and for which they were developed by our ancestors. For example, the Texas Longhorn was bred for use on arid pastures in the Southwest, and are able to turn a foraging diet into a good beef carcass. The shaggy Scottish Highland cattle Penny mentions were developed to graze on a meager forage and to withstand the cold, rugged climate of the Scottish highlands. They can survive without much veterinary care, heated barns, or a costly, high-protein, medicated diet. Common to most of these rare domestic breeds are their hardiness, resistance to diseases, and strong mothering instincts. For the small farmer they make thrifty animals.

Ironically, some may also aid modern agribusiness. Today's agriculture depends on confinement raising, which has its own set of problems. For instance, hogs raised in confinement often develop splayed feet due to standing on concrete or slatted floors. Breeders may be able to correct this deformity with the help of the Carolina Mulefoot hog, a medium-size black pig named for its most distinct trait, its fused toes. Rather that having a cloven hoof, this breed has a foot like a mule or horse. It is a hardy outdoor pig raised primarily for bacon and lard on a high-forage diet. One of the rarest breeds in America today, only one small herd is known.

Like the dark Mulefoot, other old breeds like the Tamworth, Large Black and Wessex Saddleback hogs could present alternatives to current hog-raising practices. When energy becomes too costly to continue confinement raising and high-protein diets, these animals, because of their extreme hardiness, dark protective skin and ability to forage, may be bred with Yorkshires or used alongside them in pork production.

Conservationists believe the preservation of these minor breeds is vitally important to all of us. From their blood lines may come better hybrid stock for the future. But even more critically, in their genetic diversity we have insurance against a future where today's popular breeds may succumb to a variety of potential catastrophes.

This is an insurance necessary for the future economic survival of agriculture and the nutritional sustenance of a nation. In a world where extinctions among both domestic and wild plants and animals have increased at staggering rates, it is good to know that we have a few modern-day Noahs such as Penny Miller. They set the example of devoted husbandry for all the right scientific reasons, and simply because it is good to do. Or because, as the ancient book says, it is right "to keep them alive with you."

Russell Foglesong

A Boyhood in the Coalfields

From Interviews by Barbara Beury McCallum

Russell Foglesong, born on a southern West Virginia farm in 1895, grew up in the coalfields of Kanawha and Fayette counties. He was raised in a middle class merchant family and viewed the bustling years following the turn of the century from that perspective. Mr. Foglesong died earlier this year, while this story was in preparation.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Dad investigated the coalfields of Kanawha County. I am not sure who was responsible for his checking into the Paint Creek situation, but he found out that there were probably eight or ten companies, each with one or two mines on the creek, and each with its own company store.

None of the stores handled fresh meat because of refrigeration problems. In those days there was no electric refrigeration, and ice had to be shipped in boxcars packed in sawdust. This was too much trouble and too expensive, so Dad contracted with all the coal companies operating on Paint Creek to furnish fresh meat.

He had a headquarters about midway up the creek at a place called Tomsburg, later Whittaker. He maintained a branch shop at Mucklow, five or six miles down the creek, and another one at Burnwell, some five miles up the creek, with peddling wagons traveling between communities.

Although we had a large walk-in refrigerator in Tomsburg and smaller ones at the branch stores, the meat was not refrigerated on the wagons but covered with netting to keep off the flies. The wagon driver would pull into town and ring a large dinner bell to summon the housewives. He would take the various companies' scrip, which we could redeem at a discount. We did our own killing and dressing of the beef under what today would be considered primitive conditions.

In the summer of 1903, we moved from our farm at Gap Mills, Monroe County, to Tomsburg. The first house in which we lived was a two-story house with no paint or other frills, now covered with brick siding and located on the west side of the West Virginia Turnpike at the upper end of Whittaker.

The first building constructed in a mining town would be the company store, accessible to the railroad. All the houses, except a few for the officials, which were larger than the miners' houses and had a little more ground around them, were of the "Jenny Lind" type. In the case of Tomsburg, in the larger houses were the superintendent, the bookkeeper, the store manager, the doctor, and our family.

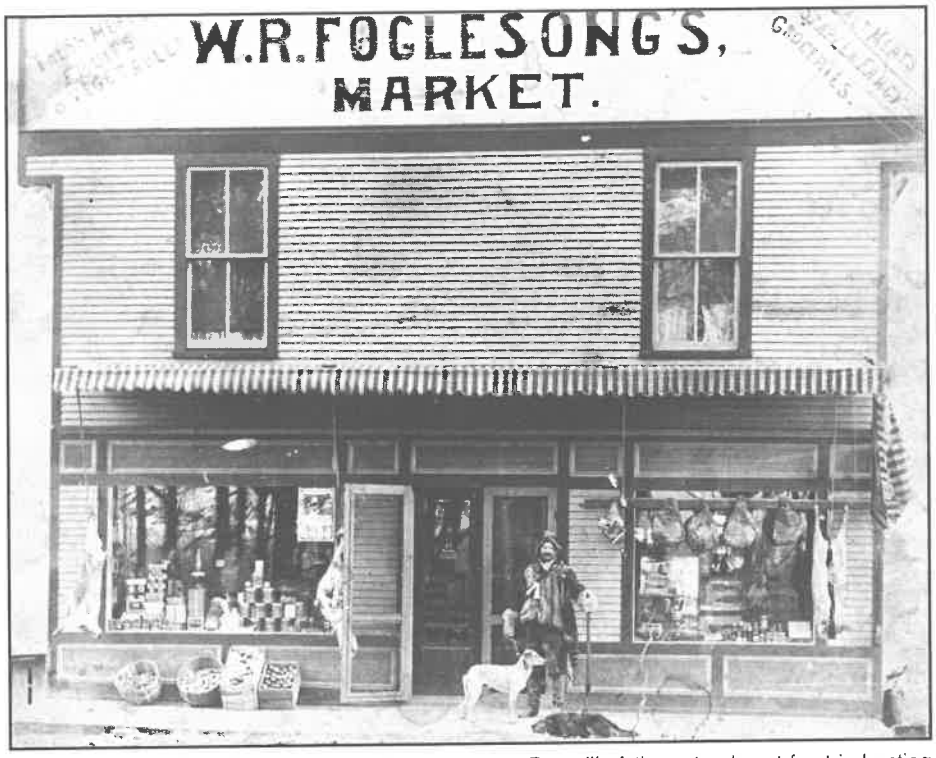
I was eight, and my sister Mabel was three, the summer we moved to Paint Creek. As I said, we first lived in an old house at the end of town, but when Tom Townsend quit as store manager and moved to Charleston to study law (later to become state tax commissioner and general counsel for the United Mine Workers of America), we moved into his house which was very convenient to the store. It was in this house that my sister, Christine, was born in 1905.

For those interested in the early history of the area, the company stores were supplied almost entirely by local freight trains. The wholesale house would load the boxcars, and it would be the job of the train brakeman to unload the cars on the station platform, always fronting the company store. On reaching the station, the train would first pull up to the platform to unload the passengers and baggage, then back up and pull one car at a time to the freight unloading point. The passengers still aboard just waited. As the mines and population increased, regular passenger trains traversed the Creek, one starting early from each end and returning in the afternoon to its resting place for the night.

Russell Foglesong as a teenager, around 1910. He grew up on Paint Creek and in the town of Oak Hill. Photographer unknown.

Momma used to take us either to Montgomery or Charleston twice a year to buy our clothes. This was a great event, but Momma always paid a high price. Riding the train made her violently ill, and she would have a sick headache for several days after we got home. There were no roads passable to anything except for horse- or mule-drawn vehicles, and the road changed every time the water raised in the creek.

In that period there was a great movement for young men from farms all over the state to go to business college, usually in Staunton, Virginia, or Parkersburg, and then obtain jobs such as scrip clerks or some other office position at the mines. The miners' boardinghouses were very rough and very crude, to say the least, so Momma always had a great deal of sympathy for these young men who were accustomed to a good home and good



W. R. Foglesong's Market in Oak Hill. Mr. Foglesong, Russell's father, stands out front in hunting gear. Photographer unknown, about 1912.

food. She kept several "table boarders" as long as I can remember.

It never seemed to bother her how many she had to feed. Dad would nearly always get one or two people off the noon train and invite them to come over and have dinner with us. Momma never made any apology for the meal, and just put another plate on the table. I suppose she made biscuits three times a day for 40 to 50 years. She also baked excellent loaves of homemade bread and made rolls. We lived out of the butcher shop, so we had the best beef. There was always plenty of food on our table.

Momma usually kept a young woman to help with the work. I can plainly see our table on Paint Creek with Grandmaw Legg in her shawl, Momma with her glowing good health, and us children gathered around, along with anywhere from four to six men, outsiders, who would be sharing the meal with us. Dad's hours were so irregular it was a little unusual to have him with us, but even that worked out sometimes.

In those golden days of no television, no radio, few newspapers, practically no magazines, about all we had to spend our time on was reading. The Sears and Roebuck catalog and the weekly issue of *Grit* newspaper always formed an important part of the library.

Paint Creek wasn't much of a stream in the summertime, but we had a pretty fair swimming hole just below the tipple at Tomsburg where we boys used to swim "skinny." It was common for the men to go up there in the evenings and swim and make a sort of bath routine out of it.

We played very crude baseball, but the kids' main activity was marbles. I remember during the long summer evenings several of the younger grownup fellows would take over the marble ring in back of the store. We kids would stake them to marbles, and they would play for us. Some of them were very good. We had exciting times there, and the games would run until dark.

A group of the miners had what they called a "beer club." Every Saturday night they would get a keg of beer shipped to them on the evening train, and it would be borne on their shoulders to a place that they had rigged up with a stand for the keg surrounded by benches. Tin cups were provided, and they would drink beer until late in the evening. Their place of celebration was located on the creek bank, a considerable distance from any houses, and created no problems for anybody.

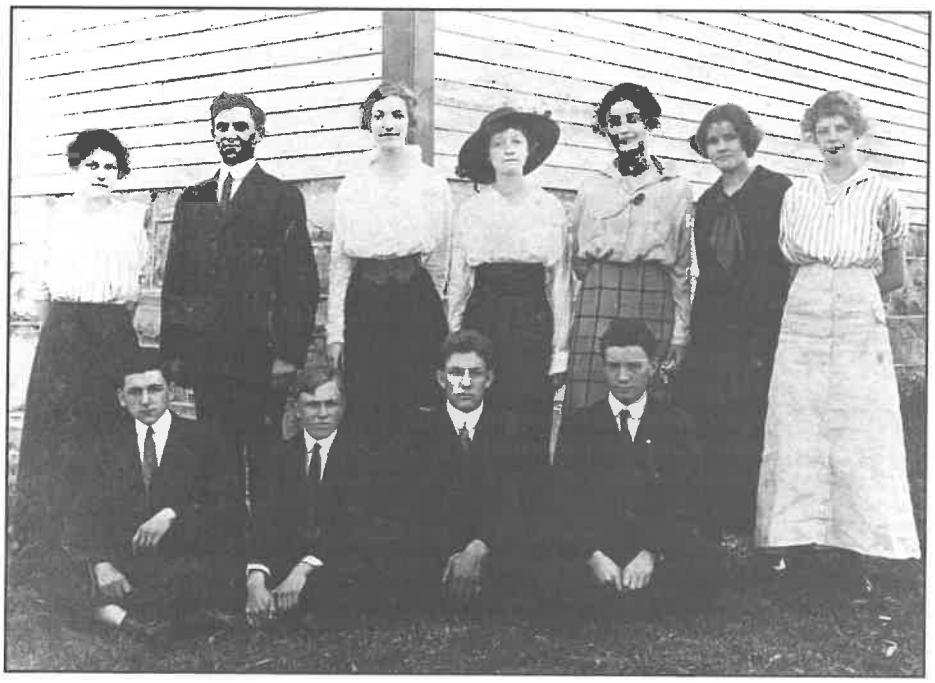
One of my early recollections is a Sunday school class held in our schoolhouse at Tomsburg. For a time, I remember, my dad taught a class of boys. This was the only time I remember him going to church regular or taking any part.

Preaching services were rare and consisted, in the very early days, of revival meetings preached by itinerant evangelists of various types prevalent in the mountains in those days. Some of these men left under rather strained circumstances, and there was considerable doubt hanging over the general run of this type of preacher. However, services of any kind were always well attended because there was really nothing else to do, and thus they became social events. The boys would line up on one side of the tent entrance, and as their favorite girls came by, they'd all repeat the same line, "May I see you home?"

In a few years we built a very nice little church at Tomsburg. I have no idea where the money came from to build it, but a Reverend George Huddleston of the Baptist church was our minister. As I recall, he visited and preached perhaps once or twice a month. He always came to our house, and he nearly always had meals either with us or with the Light family nearby. My mother never missed a service any time the church doors were open.

I recall very distinctly many of the individual personalities who crossed my childhood on Paint Creek. My dad always had several butchers and other men working for him, most of whom boarded with us, and I spent a lot of time with them. I had a very great admiration and respect for the officials of the company and remember a great number of them.

The family that I remember best were the Lights. Mr. A. P. Light came to Paint Creek from Fayetteville and was on Paint Creek when we first moved there in 1903. They had a large family, eight or nine children. One of the girls was grown when I first remember them and she was married there at Tomsburg. They had a boy named Ora, who was a little younger than I, but was perhaps my closest associate during that period. The Lights' daughter, Ruby, was about



The Oak Hill High School class of 1915, with Russell sitting at right. Sweetheart Norma Staton, wearing hat, later became his wife of 66 years. Photographer unknown.

Mabel's age. They were inseparable with their dolls and masquerades and so forth.

Mr. Light was a droll, quiet man who ran the company store. He dictated everything everybody had to eat or wear or any other necessities, because there was no convenient transportation to any other place to buy anything. The entire population was completely dependent on the company store, except for occasional excursions on the train to places like Montgomery or Charleston.

Mrs. Light was a wonderful mother and a hard-working person. I can see her and my mother under the big trees by the creek bank on pretty Monday mornings with the fire going under the washtubs, bending over their washboards. The Light family had plenty of washing, and they always looked clean and neat. The Lights moved to Kingston from Tomsburg after we left the creek and spent a good many years there, then the "old folks" later moved to a farm in Mason County.

In the summer of 1908, Dad sent me to Huntington for a six-week course in a model secondary school at Marshall College. I lived with one of Dad's sisters and her family. That fall he put me in Randolph Macon Academy for Boys at Bedford City, Virginia, but by the end of the semester, Christmas-time, Dad had lost all the money he had invested in the Welch Ice and Cold Storage Company. We moved to Charleston, where I attended the old Patrick School.

After a year in Charleston, Dad got back the fresh meat concession on Paint Creek, and I went to the two-room schoolhouse there. The very small kids were in one room and the older ones in the other. As soon as a boy reached 13 or 14, he would quit school and go to work.

I had the good fortune to be taught by Gordon Rader. Gordon had made a speciality of learning very fancy penmanship, and since the class material was practically the same that I had encountered when we first moved to Paint Creek, another boy and I spent most of our time practicing penmanship.

Gordon, being the local teacher, had finer clothes than most of the young men of the area, so he was always asked to escort any of the fancy girls from Charleston who came to visit. One evening when he was all dressed up and trying to impress his date, one of his big, burly brothers came running up to the group and said, "Go on home now, Gordon. Paw wants his shoes!"

During this period I also became especially interested in the study of poetry and the classics. I found a good foundation in the Jones Sixth Reader, which included passages from Shakespeare, some of which I can still recite, and some of the classic poems, mostly by New England poets such as Whittier and Longfellow. I have always considered that year as the most outstanding as far as my education was concerned. Part of the year I had the one teacher in my whole school career whom I thoroughly disliked, but that bad experience was far overshadowed by the time in Gordon Rader's class.

Our family had moved from rural Monroe and Greenbrier counties when I was eight years of age. Cabin Creek, the next creek to the west of us, had been developed considerably, but we were among the pioneers on Paint Creek, where the C&O had constructed a branch line originating at Pratt, later called Paint Creek Junction.

As the railroad progressed up the hollow, small mines were installed. The first coal movement was largely in "buck jimmies," 40-ton wooden cars suitable only for shuttling from the mines to a point about where Hansford is located. There they were dumped into river barges. This was of short duration, and later the coal all moved in C&O cars. There were two types of cars, one the self-clearing hopper which could be unloaded at two bottom openings by loosing the latch with a crowbar or large wrench. The other was the flat bottom, from which the contents had to be shoveled when there was no dumping facility for turning over the car.

Practically all of the small mines first opened were in "drift" seams located more or less high on the slope of the hill. The mine cars were lowered [from hillside mine openings] to the tipple by a heavy rope on a drum, and the weight of the descending loads would raise up the empty cars. Early tipples were constructed of heavy wooden pieces, with only one loading track on the railroad. "Run of mine," or unprocessed coal as it came from the mine, was loaded directly into the railroad cars. Advances were made when electricity became available to operate shaker screens at the tipples, separating the different sizes. As they could afford to install them, each mine put in its own power plant, and it was many years later that Appalachian

Power Company succeeded in adding these plants to their system.

Mines were usually opened with very limited capital, and often stockholders were found working on the job. The payroll office was always in the store building, and scrip issued by the company was the local legal tender. Paper scrip cards, with amounts punched out as purchases were made, were later replaced by aluminum coins of the usual denominations.

Our arrival on Paint Creek in 1903 was just a year after the big strike of 1902, which was a long and bloody one, finally won by the union. I recall the pay for nine hours work, six days a week, was at the rate of $2 a day, except for the coal loaders. They were paid by the mine car and docked if the car was not loaded as high as required, or too much slate was visible.

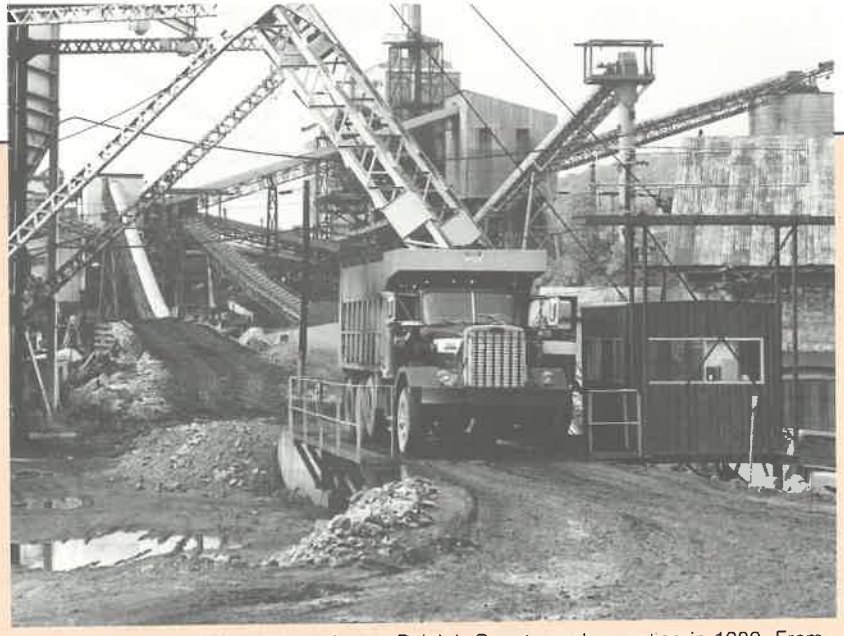
Insufficient local labor being available, a system developed whereby labor contractors would round up immigrants just as soon as they left Ellis Island, herd them into chartered train coaches and transport them to the coalfields. The contractor, or one of the more intelligent immigrant men, would be the "labor boss," quartering the men in large boardinghouses. Central Europeans were the preferred type. By traveling and settling together, language difficulties were minimized. Many Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and others did well in their adopted country. They raised large families, usually with wives imported from their homeland, and their names have endured.

Trains were the sole method of travel, except for horse and mule teams for relatively short distances, and this prevented miners from changing locations much at first. But the opening of a new mine would usually draw men, because new mines had a shorter haul from the outside to the face of the coal. As more new mines opened, there was much shifting from place to place. One of our witticisms was the story that when the chickens heard a wagon coming, they would lay on their backs and hold their feet together to be tied — ready to move.

I have a very clear recollection of a new mine called Detroit that was opened approximately where the Morton Turnpike rest stop is today. Some eight or ten families from Tomsburg moved there. A few weeks later there was a terrible dust explosion in the mine, killing, I recall, 18 men. Dad took me down there, riding behind him on his horse. We made a trip through a boardinghouse that had been turned into a morgue, seeking familiar faces. It was strange. There was no mutilation whatever, since their death had been caused by afterdamp* and each man looked as natural as life. This made a great impression on me.

Later, after we had left Paint Creek,

* Afterdamp is a toxic gas sometimes remaining after mine explosions.



Builder Levy made this photograph at a Raleigh County coal operation in 1982. From *Images of Appalachian Coalfields.*

Coalfield Photography

New York photographer Builder Levy has published *Images of Appalachian Coalfields,* a striking collection of regional photographs. The new book, recently issued by Temple University Press, consists mostly of pictures from southern West Virginia and neighboring eastern Kentucky.

Levy's masterful images are in the warts-and-all "social realism" style of photography. They show a stark view of the region and its people. Levy's subjects are hard-up but they haven't given up, for they are shown as purposeful and determined, often engaged in struggle. Some of the best photography shows miners at work underground, confident men (and a few women) at home in their dangerous work place. Activist Helen Matthews Lewis contributes an informative introduction to the book.

The printing and binding are of excellent quality. The 93 black-and-white photographs are reproduced by the duotone process, the painstaking and expensive printing method used for most GOLDENSEAL covers.

Builder Levy is a teacher at a New York City alternative high school. His photographs have been exhibited in museums and galleries, and included in permanent collections and numerous publications around the world. Cornell Capa, founder and director of the International Center for Photography in New York City, praises Levy's Appalachian series in the foreword to the new book.

Images of Appalachian Coalfields is meant to convey the dignity of the people who live and work in America's coalfields. The 124-page, large-format hardbound book sells for $24.95 in bookstores. Readers may also contact Temple University Press, Broad & Oxford Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19122, (215) 787-8787.

Norma and Russell Foglesong went on to produce a sizeable family. Here Mr. Foglesong stands between their sons, while Mrs. Foglesong sits with their daughters and daughter-in-law. Photo by S. H. Benton.

So What's a Jenny Lind?

In the adjacent article Mr. Fogelsong mentions a "Jenny Lind" house, a term we often encounter in stories about the coalfields. We know who Jenny Lind herself was, the so-called "Swedish Nightingale" who took America by storm in a mid-19th century singing tour arranged by P. T. Barnum. She evidently made a big impression, leaving her name on everything from a style of furniture to a town in Arkansas.

But we don't know just *what* exactly a Jenny Lind house is, since the definition seems to vary from person to person. As best we can tell, it is a small, cheap coal company rental — maybe the familiar three-room "L" with vertical board-and-batten siding?

We'd like to hear from you if you have your own idea of a Jenny Lind house. Write to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

the Hanna interests of Cleveland, I believe it was, formed what they called the "Combine" and bought most of the small, original mines. Notable exceptions were Standard Coal Company and Imperial Colliery Company.

In our earlier days on the creek the railroad extended only to Mahan, some four or five miles beyond Burnwell, Imperial's mine. Later a large mine was put in between Mahan and Burnwell. At Mahan there was located a band mill sawmill for processing the plentiful timber in the area. The band mill operated a dam to float logs down from the upper reaches. When they released water from the dam to float the logs, the creek would always raise along its length. We kids used to swim a few hundred yards below the tipple, the banks being shaded somewhat by willow trees. The cry, "Creek's rising!" would make us get out of the water and hustle into our clothes.

Dad used to go up into Raleigh County and buy such local beef as was available, and at times he would go to the Cincinnati stockyards and buy a carload of prime Western cattle. I remember one night we unloaded a carload of these steers and, thinking they were too tired to wander much, we drove them up a hollow and left them for the night. We were wrong. Several of them made their way down the hollow and made their bed on the railroad track. The Burnwell mine did not have turn-around facilities, so their supply of empty coal cars had to be pushed ahead of the engine and the rest of the train. The brakeman riding the front car that night failed to get the train stopped, and four or five of our cattle were either killed or crippled so they had to be butchered immediately.

When I grew older, one of my chores was to go up to the slaughterhouse, a distance of a mile or so, and feed the cattle penned up there. The butchers had stacked a pile of hooves and horns in one corner. I waited until almost dark before making my trip one day, and when I got within a few hundred feet of the slaughterhouse I heard a great commotion. I was really scared, thinking of the ghosts of cattle that had died there. Finally, I screwed up my courage and went into the house, where I found that hogs had gotten into the building and were having a great time rattling those bones.

In 1910 Dad bought the meat and grocery business of G. Elmer Crotty in Oak Hill, and we lived for the next several years in the back and second story of the store building. As long as we had our business in that building we never locked the back door of the store. Things have changed since then! There was no running water though we had a pump on the back porch, a luxury not enjoyed by most people.

Behind our store was a steep grade of about 150 feet. Steps led down to outbuildings, including the barn, which connected to a pasture field of perhaps a couple of acres. At one end of the barn we built a small slaughterhouse. A buddy and I went down there to "swing up" a beef after school many, many times. We kept around four cows, and it was my duty to milk them each morning and eve-

ning. It was at the gate leading down the steps to the barn where I sustained the injury to my spinal cord from which I never fully recovered.

I was always a healthy child, inclined to be overweight but with no sicknesses except the usual diseases like mumps and chicken pox. I had finished the eighth grade that year, 1911, and on a May morning following school's closing I proceeded with my morning milking chores. I had two water buckets of milk to carry up the steps and turn over to Mother in the kitchen. This morning I was a little late with the milking and scheduled to work in our new store in the Lewis block, a few hundred yards up Main Street from the old shop.

On my way up the steps with a two-gallon bucket of milk in each hand, the weighted gate closed while I was passing through, and I hooked my left foot in the gate to push it back open. I deposited the milk in the kitchen and hurried up to the store.

I had started to sweep the floor when I noticed my feet were not working properly. I abandoned the sweeping and walked down the street to the post office where the morning mail was just being distributed. I secured our mail and walked, as best I could, back to our home where I sat down on a porch swing. After sitting a few minutes, I found that I could not walk. The area above my knees was not affected, and I managed to crawl into the house and up the stairs to my bedroom.

Our good old friend, Dr. Rupert W. Quaintance, was summoned. He could assign no reason for my paralysis. A trained nurse from the neighborhood came to stay with me night and day. Dr. Quaintance tried electric shocks without results. I was in no pain whatever until Saturday of that week, when I began to have severe pain in both my knees. The pain was so great that they couldn't get me quieted down. I think my parents thought I was a goner. However, the pains left as suddenly as they had come. To this day I have never had a similar pain in the knees or any other pain that I can trace to the paralysis, except for the last two or three years when I have had intermittent pain in my left leg, which is the weak one.

After a month or so in bed, and sitting up a little bit, I got out and made my way around on crutches for a while. Dad took me to see a chiropractor in Huntington, a Dr. Montgomery, who was sure that he could help me. I stayed a month but the treatments never did me any good, so I came on back and went to school. I used a cane for a while and later I was able to operate even without a cane. The right leg regained all its functions, although it was not as strong as it should be. I never got the full use of my left foot and was left with what they called a dropped foot.

The following summer, 1912, I used our good mule "Champ" and a buggy, and young Bill Hill and I tacked up posters for the Fayette County Fair around towns near Oak Hill. Herbert Jones was president of the fair, so that was the first work I ever did for the Joneses.* The following summer Bill Hays and I were partners in a hamburger stand at the fair which was not much of a financial success but gave me some good experience.

At age 15 I was placed in the eighth grade again. In the following five years I progressed to high school graduation in 1915, a few months before my 20th birthday.

This was to comprise my entire school education. I was fortunate later to be thrown in with college graduates, mostly from Princeton University, so I am indebted to these contacts for whatever else I have achieved along this line. As much as I would like to have gone to college, the best I have ever received was a diploma from the University of Hard Knocks, a very loose organization of West Virginians originated by the greatest hillbilly of them all, Jim Comstock, and headquartered at my favorite college, Alderson-Broaddus at Philippi.

Russell Foglesong was blind in later life, but still able to touch-type. He died while our story was in preparation. Photo by Barbara Beury McCallum.

* The Joneses were later Mr. Foglesong's employers at Amherst Coal Company, where he made a long and distinguished career.

Sheriff Don Chafin ruled Logan County on behalf of the coal industry. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy West Virginia & Regional History Collection, West Virginia University.

The Don Chafin Era

After growing up in Kanawha and Fayette Counties, Russell Fogelsong spent his early working years in Logan County. There he was an eyewitness to the last episodes of the mine wars, viewing events from the anti-union side. He offers the following first-hand account of the notorious Don Chafin reign in Logan.

Don Chafin was the perennial sheriff of Logan County, from about 1910 until after the United Mine Workers of America succeeded in unionizing the Logan District.

Don was a native of Logan County. He was fearless and exercised practically perfect control over every inhabitant of his area. His headquarters were in the town of Logan, his deputies consisting largely of men related to the Chafin clan, either by birth or by marriage. The deputies were spread out, probably one to each of the larger coal camps and one to each group of smaller mines. One squad was maintained in Logan, centering around the courthouse, with each deputy heavily armed and in constant communication with Don's headquarters.

The Logan County Coal Operators Association, of which C. W. Jones of Henlawson was treasurer, was supplemented by a certain amount on each ton of coal mined. I can recall checks going out regularly for the maintenance of the "super-government" headed by Don Chafin. It was Chafin's duty not only to maintain peace and arrest law breakers, but also to keep a careful ear tuned for any "agitators," meaning union sympathizers, who were promptly fired from their jobs and removed from the Logan District.

The Kanawha District had been unionized after the 1902 strike, and the Cabin Creek area was probably the hot bed of UMW activities. The union, headed by Bill Blizzard for most of the time, was just about as efficient in locating and routing anti-union individuals or groups as was Don Chafin in stopping union activity along the waters of the Guyan River.

The unionized Kanawha River area was separated from Logan County's Guyan River area by high, rugged hills. The Big Sandy drainage, including Mingo and McDowell counties of West Virginia and the border areas of Eastern Kentucky, was even more isolated. The C&O Railroad served the area drained by the Kanawha and Guyan rivers, and the Norfolk & Western served the Big Sandy country. The N&W area was strictly non-union, as was Logan County.

There were no passable highways across the mountain ranges, and no roads suited to auto traffic even between Charleston and Huntington. Such roads as existed washed out with every heavy rain. Automobiles began to make their appearance early in the century, mostly Ford Model T's with another type here and there. All of this, especially the terrain and roads, serves to indicate why union and non-union areas could be located within a few miles of each other.

One outstanding incident was when the American Civil Liberties Union interested itself in the "desperate plight of the Logan County miners" and dispatched a day coach filled with union sympathizers and trained organizers from New York City. They made it to Huntington and their car was switched onto the Logan passenger train without being detected. But it happened that one of our prominent coal operators, John Kelley, while riding in the chair car on the rear of the train, got wind of the ACLU group.

Sheriff Chafin, front and center, with deputies at the Logan Courthouse. The huge force was subsidized by the Logan County Coal Operators Association. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

Mr. Kelley had the train stopped at a small station not far up the Guyan, where it was held until he could communicate with Don Chafin. Don assembled probably 50 of his gunmen, and when all was in readiness the train proceeded to the Logan station. It was allowed to stand there until Don's men could get aboard, spread themselves through the aisles and on the car platforms, and make themselves obvious. It didn't take long for the New York group to realize what was going on and as the train proceeded beyond Logan, windows were raised and all the firearms in the possession of the ACLU were thrown out the windows. Not a man made any attempt to get off the train, which made its turn around as usual and headed back to Huntington. I assume their car was attached to a train going east, minus the Chafin men who had shepherded them so faithfully along their sojourn into Logan County.

In this connection, I am glad to say that so long as people kept their union ideas to themselves they led a very peaceful life. Of course, a feudal system existed where the companies reserved the right to hire and fire at will, but wages were comparable to the unionized areas, and schools and overall living conditions were good at most mines.

The Logan and N&W areas were, of course, continual irritants to union headquarters in Charleston. In the early 1920's Mother Jones, who was a fiery speaker and agitator, appeared on the scene. She was welcomed by the union and immediately set to work to inflame the minds and hearts of all union men. Meetings were held throughout the Kanawha District, but centering on Cabin Creek. The flames were fanned to the point that a ragtag army undertook to unionize the Logan District by force of arms. The miners all wore red handkerchiefs around their necks, thus giving rise to the term "red neck" being applied to any union sympathizer.

When Don Chafin got word of the approaching invaders, he not only assembled his deputies, but also every company man, foreman, and office worker. All took their positions on Blair Mountain. The larger coal companies, including our own, maintained a well-stocked arsenal of rifles and ammunition, presided over by an ex-West Virginia state trooper in the company's employ. I was visiting relatives in Greenbrier County when I got the message that all hands were needed on the job, notwithstanding that I was a cripple and not a fighting man.

Accounts of the fighting were greatly exaggerated, but I believe that one or two men on our side were slightly wounded. There was a considerable amount of shooting, but I don't think either side had the stomach for out-and-out battle. Anyway, Governor Morgan asked for federal troops to be sent in on the Logan side, whereupon the army of red necks beat a rather hasty retreat. That according to my recollection was the sum total of the Battle of Blair Mountain.

Early in the 1930's, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president, and he immediately made a deal with union president John L. Lewis. The backing of the federal government took all the wind out of the sails of those opposing the union, and District 17 of the UMW was handed to Lewis on a platter. This was the end of the Don Chafin era.

— Russell Foglesong

John J. Lincoln (1865–1948) came to the southern coalfields on a "temporary" assignment in 1892. He spent the rest of his life there. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

A Busy Time in McDowell History

Looking Back with John J. Lincoln

Compiled by Stuart McGehee

"To many of you, this may appear right now of no great interest," concludes coal operator John J. Lincoln's lively 1938 memoir of the early McDowell County coal industry. He may have been right at the time, but could not have been more wrong for the long run. Surviving autobiographical reminiscences by prominent West Virginia coal men are now few and far between.

Lincoln's pithy memories are especially welcome. Born in 1865, the only child of prominent parents in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Lincoln graduated from Lehigh University in 1889. The bearded young survey engineer took a position with the federal government until fate intervened. An 1892 job offer from the Crozer Land Association prompted Lincoln to come south just as the booming Pocahontas Coalfield exploded through Bluestone Tunnel into the Elkhorn Valley of eastern McDowell.

Lincoln became chief engineer, vice-president, and ultimately general manager of the Crozer, Upland, and Page Coal & Coke companies. He also served as chairman of the board of the American Coal Company, president of the Pocahontas Operators' Association, 30 years as vice-president of the Bluefield Telephone Company, and performed public service as president of the McDowell County Court, the West Virginia Tax Commission, and the state's World War II Selective Service Board. His mines at Elkhorn were among the most sophisticated in West Virginia, employing Jeffrey cutting and drilling machines as early as 1896.

Despite this staggering business load, Lincoln found time for family life as well, marrying Swarthmore graduate Rachel Lloyd Henderson in 1899 and ultimately raising four children in the mountainous wilds of southern West Virginia. Moreover, John Lincoln was a prominent McDowell County Republican — a rare breed indeed! — serving as a member of the Electoral College in the Hoover victory of 1928.

It is difficult to generalize about West Virginia's notorious coal operators. Few sources are neutral. Nevertheless, Lincoln is universally regarded as a genteel, paternalistic mine manager. Raleigh County coal operator Major W. P. Tams remembered Lincoln as "an extremely polite and affable man in personal intercourse, a somewhat rare quality in coal operators of that era."

Residents of Elkhorn recall Lincoln's support for schools and for cultural ac-

Mr. Lincoln's task was to extract coal from the thick, rich seams of the Pocahontas Field. This photograph shows his men at work underground. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

tivities such as the Elkhorn Orchestra, which annually performed on the lawn of his huge house in Elkhorn. He left trees intact in the town, which made it a greener coal camp than most, and the church he built along the banks of Elkhorn Creek still stands. A coalfield journalist described Crozer as differing markedly from other operations, "where the custom too frequently prevails of acting upon the principle that a dollar invested in the comfort of employees or the lightening of their labor is a dollar thrown away."

John J. Lincoln's benign approach may have been shaped by his Quaker upbringing. Precious few West Virginia coal operators were gentle, community-minded "Friends." Lincoln died at a grand old 83 years of age in 1948, leaving behind this remarkable memoir, written ten years earlier. The Lincoln home still stands in Elkhorn, as a memorial to its founder. The current owner, Robert Beasley, president of First Clark Bank in Northfork, wants to see the house and the adjacent school recognized as historic West Virginia sites.

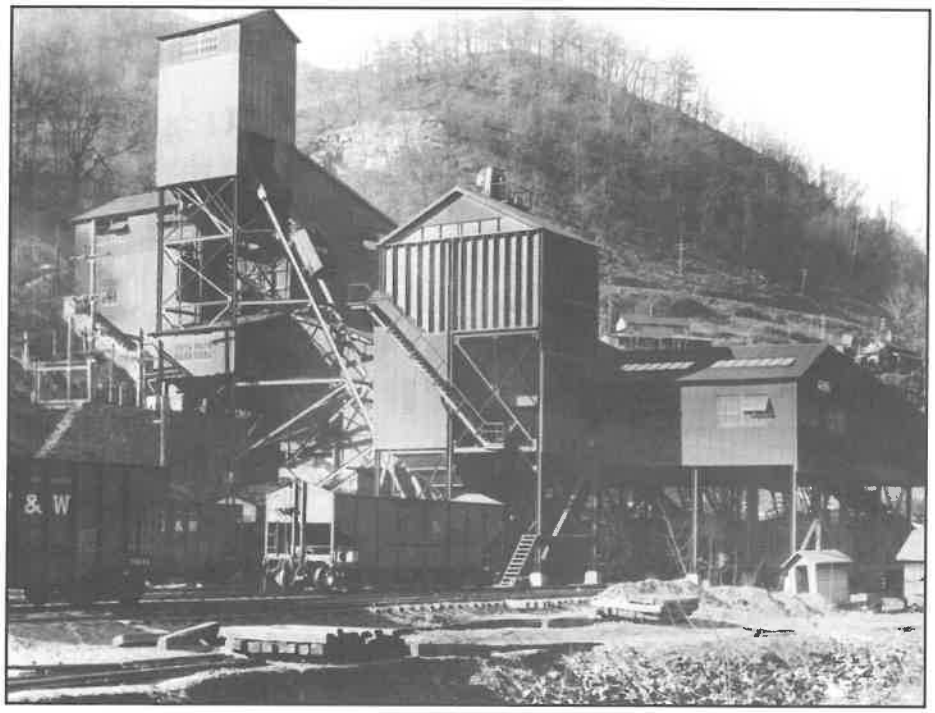
Coal's colorful glory days are gone forever. That is why such accounts as this must be published, so that West Virginians can know and appreciate their remarkable industrial past. An original typescript of Lincoln's memoirs, written for a May 1938 speech before the Welch Chamber of Commerce, was recently donated to the Eastern Regional Coal Archives in Bluefield. The text has been edited for publication. The story begins as Lincoln enters the coalfields from Pocahontas, Virginia, coming on the scene just as the Norfolk & Western was pushing its "Ohio Extension" westward toward the Ohio River.

When, as a young fellow, I came down from Washington in the spring of 1892, it was with the sole idea of helping a college classmate out on some engineering and construction work on coal operations in the vicinity of Elkhorn. The U.S. Geological Survey, for which I was then working, had granted me leave of absence for three months for this particular purpose. These three months have lengthened to nearly half a century, and I am still here.

Naturally, I was quite anxious to see what I could of this new region being developed in such a large way for that time.

I could hardly have been classed as a "tenderfoot" as I had seen quite a bit of the West and roughed it in several places, but when I finally arrived at Pocahontas, after a very tedious and broken train trip, I waited there nearly a half day for the local train to take two full carloads of drinkables — mostly beer and whiskey — for the railroad construction and coal mining camps beyond the tunnel. This gave me ample time to see something of the tipple and coke ovens there, also the town — about every other building a saloon — and its inhabitants. I concluded Pocahontas was the toughest little town I had yet seen in my travels from Maine to Texas.

Elkhorn, I found, was practically the end of the division. The passenger trains ran no further. There was a turntable for reversing engines for the return trip. The little clump of houses and other buildings still standing just south of Elkhorn station had been hastily built by the Crozer interests to care for the N&W's construction engineering force then in charge of the Ohio Extension. Steel had recently been laid as far as Northfork, though little ballasting had been done, and the

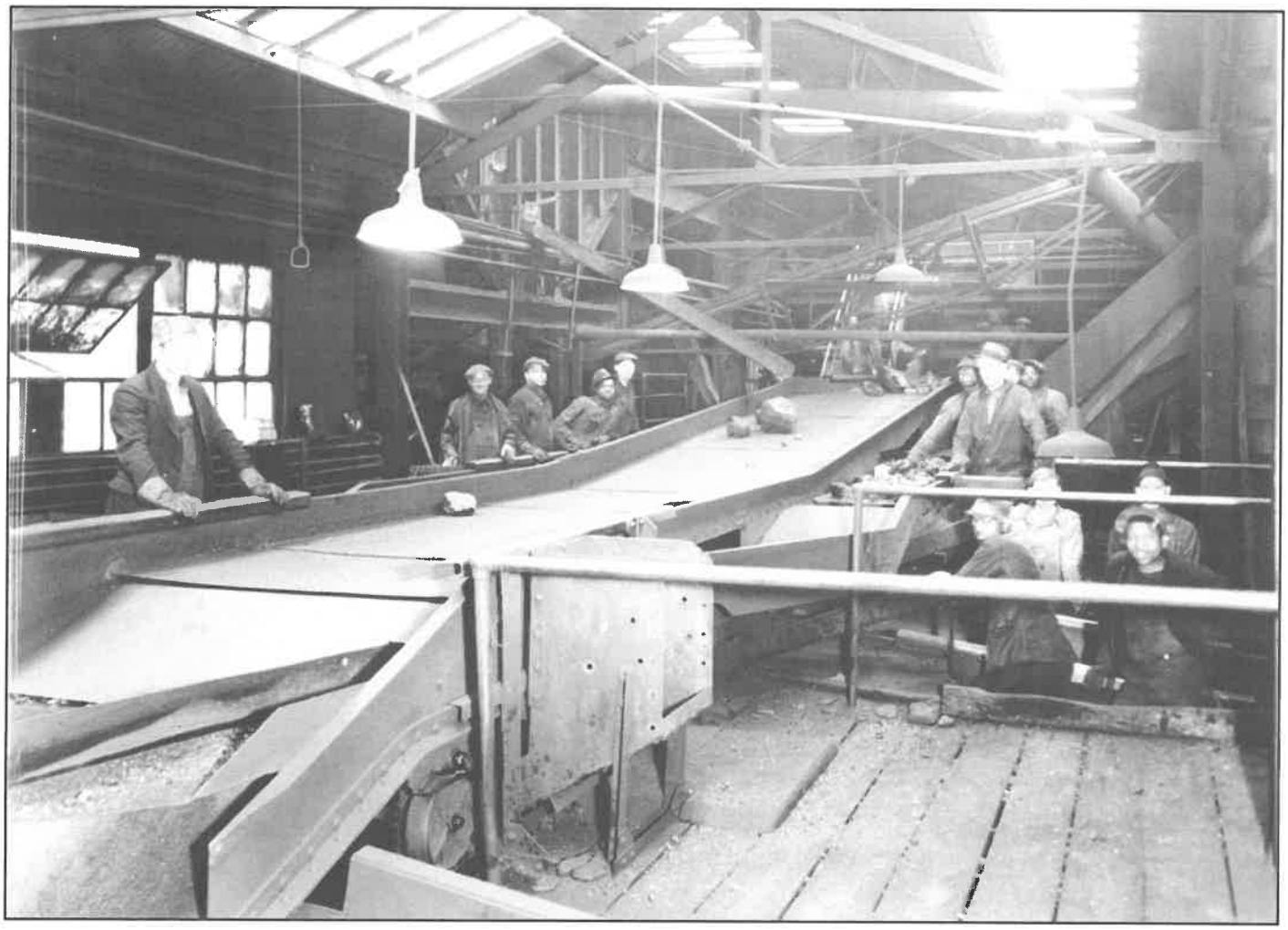


Engineer Lincoln built solidly and well. The Crozer Coal & Coke tipple, constructed in 1924, combined modern mechanical methods with old-fashioned hand picking of slate and other impurities. The interior view shows men at the picking table. Photographers and dates unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

construction trains were pushing their supplies on to this point where they were unloaded and placed in temporary warehouses and hauled on down the grade as fast as possible by mule teams. It was a busy time and place.

All down the line, and clear on through to the Ohio, as fast as the territory could be opened up, were strung the contractor's camps on the various sections. The hardest problem was to get supplies and food for men and mules through to the camps in the central section. Miles of temporary roads had to be built in several sections as there were no roads and much of the region was still a primitive wilderness.

Attracted by the building of the railroad and the opening of the mines, men were here from pretty much all over — from the C&O fields, the Pittsburgh district and the anthracite region of Pennsylvania, and even from the gold and copper mines of the far northwest and the gold and diamond mines of South Africa. Negroes from



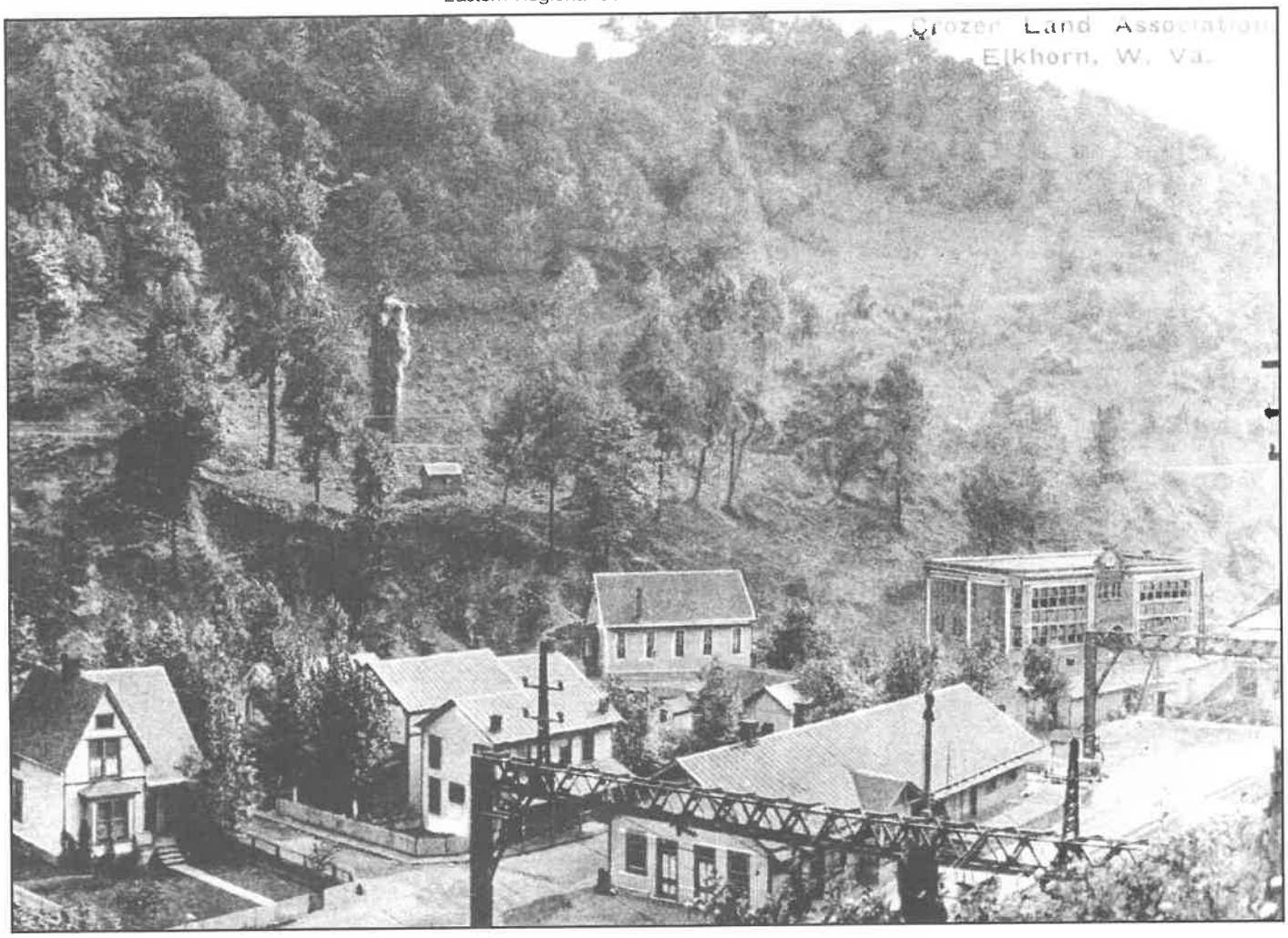
Virginia and the Carolinas did most of the work on the railroad grade and were working, too, as miners. They were paid a "dollar and a dime for ten hours time," as they chanted it. Later this was increased to $1.25 per day.

Foreigners were coming in, principally Hungarians, Slavs and Russians for the mines and North-of-Italy men for the masonry work on the coke ovens.

There was the usual sprinkling of professional gamblers, both white and black, among the men in the construction camps of the railroad and among the camps of the coal companies. Some of these were very quiet and quite gentlemanly. A few were of the loudmouthed, bragging type. Seldom a weekend passed without several shootings and sudden deaths.

Virginia had licensed saloons for the sale of liquor. Pocahontas was the chief source of supply for this region. West Virginia had local option. It was very local and very optional — par-

Elkhorn miners occupied rental houses owned by the coal company. There was no escaping the grimy industrial environment, but as the postcard (below) shows Elkhorn was more comfortable than most southern West Virginia company towns. Photographers and dates unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.



As elsewhere in the coalfields, the company store was the center of the community. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

ticularly in the southern section of the state.

The new line to the Ohio was completed so that trains could be gotten through in the late fall of '92. This whole region when under construction was often referred to as "the last frontier" and usually lived up to its reputation. Old Lewis Hall, the leader of the Hall clan, lived near Roderfield. There was an amusing little set-to between him and the chief engineer of the Ohio Extension, also named Hall. The engineer was commonly designated by his subordinates as "Peg Leg" — of course, not in his hearing — because he had been unfortunate and lost a foot.

The two Halls met one day on the grade down near Roderfield. Lewis, who had been drinking a little too much, jocularly saluted the other in the vernacular with "Howdy, Stranger." The chief engineer was an old West Pointer, quite stern and a stickler for discipline. He ignored the salute. Lewis repeated it. Still no sign of recognition.

Lewis felt that he had been insulted, so he at once unlimbered his battery of Colts with the curt remark: "Dog-gone you, Stranger, if you can't talk, let's see if you can dance!" and bullets from one of the Colts began kicking up dust spots entirely too near the other's feet to be further ignored. It was said that chief engineer Hall could understand that language and that he gave a good exhibition of capering about, to the huge delight of Lewis and the few other men who happened to be in the vicinity.

The chief engineer was unhurt but he had been humiliated. The N&W could not allow such an incident to pass. A warrant was obtained for Lewis and a day set for his trial. Lewis promised to be on hand and he was. The trial was held at Bottom Creek before a local justice. I happened to be there at the time, trying to push the construction work on the tipple and ovens we were then building. We got no more work done that day. The small temporary building in which the trial was held was crowded. I was well content to be on the outside looking in. The place was quite silent and tense when the trial began.

No guns were visible except Lewis's brace of faithful Colts. The justice at once spotted these and appointed one of the railroad detectives, Sam Dock Smith, to disarm Lewis. Right then I expected fireworks and was ready to beat a hasty retreat, but nothing tragic happened. Lewis smiled, unbuckled his carry straps and Sam Dock brought back the guns in their holsters and piled them on the table. The atmosphere was no longer surcharged and the trial proceeded.

Lewis claimed that the little set-to with his namesake was only a joke. It could not be proven that he really tried to injure anyone. He was given a light fine — which he promptly paid — and

The Lincolns lived graciously in their large house at Elkhorn, which still stands today. Young Betty Lincoln (above) was at home there. House photographed for N&W Railway, 1937; Betty Lincoln photographer unknown, 1908. Both courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

bound over to keep the peace. His guns were given back to him and he departed really more like a vindicated hero than a culprit.

Later on I met Lewis on two or three occasions. He was always very nice to me. Once when he had again had a few drinks, he showed me in confidence the eight small notches, each representing a man's life, on the handle of one of the Colts.

This year the railroad celebrates the 100th anniversary of its existence. Doubtless, as has been so often said, "the first 50 years were the hardest." However, for some ten years or more of the beginning of the last 50 it did not have a bed of roses by any means.

After the Ohio Extension was finished and western connections established and the various branch lines which now complete the system were added, one by one, the problem of finding freight enough to pay operating expenses, not to mention bond interest — and entirely ignoring dividends which it had been fondly hoped the road would eventually pay on its stock — became acute. The "Gay Nineties" were not so gay financially.

The financial doctors of that day attributed the N&W's distressing and very serious "growing pains" to overexpansion. In a general way, they were doubtless correct. Times were very dull for quite a while and we had no army of New Dealers to lead us out of that depression. Francis Kimball, then president of the N&W, was a charming man personally and the present N&W system is really his dream, but it took many years of hard work and much sacrifice by many men to make this dream come true.

In those dull and seemingly hopeless days when less and less traffic was available and more and more red ink showed on the monthly statements, the railroad was naturally overmanned. At last in desperation, the road went into receivership and Major Fink, a hard-boiled realist, was sent down from New York to see what he could salvage from the wreck. His ideas of life in general, and the operation of a railroad in particular, were just the reverse of those of the genial Mr. Kimball.

On the Saturday afternoon after his arrival in Roanoke,* as he stood on the porch of the Hotel Roanoke, he saw the clerks file out of the N&W offices for their afternoon holiday. He asked, "What is that?" (He spoke with a decided German accent.) On being told, he said, "We will change that." And he did. Not only did he cut out holidays, but he began drastically to trim the payrolls. He also made a decided wage and salary cut. As these did not, after a few months, bring operating figures out of the red, he still continued to prune the payrolls and later made a second wage cut.

A story is told of a harassed little clerk who got an interview with him after the second wage cut and protested that he could not possibly keep

* The Norfolk & Western Railway headquarters were in Roanoke, Virginia.

his family on his reduced salary. Major Fink was sympathetic in a way, "Oh, you have a family?" The clerk said he had a wife and three children. "Well, that is just too bad. Don't you know that a railroad man should be like a soldier — never marry? Keep a mistress if you like, but that is all."

Needless to say this advice did not endear the Major to the feminine portion of the population — but little he cared, as he was a bachelor and financially quite independent. He kept on hammering — weeding out the drones and incompetents as fast as he could find them, setting the whole organization an example of hard and honest work, and putting more and more work on the men who remained. It was drastic treatment but it succeeded.

Once he went down to Norfolk with the division superintendent and some of the engineers. On the way down they pointed out to him numerous things they wanted — a new passing siding here and there, extension of others, etc. — and told him if they were given these improvements the road would be able to haul a million more tons of coal a year to Tidewater. His final answer was, "Yes, I don't doubt it, but when you get it there what will we do with it? The coal people can't sell what we are hauling now. You can't eat it. What will we do with it, dump it in the harbor?" No money was forthcoming for these improvements for some time to come.

Conditions improved, but slowly. In the meantime here on the Pocahontas Division, where the bulk of the coal

Another Coal Man Looks Back

A 1901 Interview with W. D. Thurmond

Eighty-eight years ago, the Fayette Journal *celebrated the end of the first year of the 20th century by reproducing the minutes of the Fayette County court for 1834 and 1835, reviewing the innovations of the 19th century against expected developments in the 20th, and interviewing elderly residents of the county. One of the latter was Captain William Dabney Thurmond, whose interview appeared on page one of the January 3, 1901,* Journal.

To Fayette Countians there was no need to introduce the early settler, notorious Confederate guerilla leader, surveyor, and developer of the bustling town of Thurmond in the New River Gorge. Instead, Editor George McIntosh merely noted a few facts about W. D. Thurmond's current condition. "Captain Thurmond is eighty-one years old," the newsman stated. "He is now enjoying vast fortune, in health and happiness."

Thurmond began his interview by talking about the building of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad through the New River Gorge and the changes that the steel rails brought to Fayette County. The railroad was completed in 1873.

W. D. Thurmond. "I came to this county fifty-six years ago. I had faith in the future of this territory, and believed that the opportunities of its development would not be long delayed. I believed that it would be a question of only a few years until a railroad would be built and that then property would take on a value and the chances to make money would abound.

"The man who, perhaps, is most responsible for the location of the railroad was Mr. H. E. Caperton, of Monroe County, whom I knew well. He made three trips to New York for the purpose of inducing capitalists to investigate the resources of West Virginia. He was finally successful in interesting Mr. C. P. Huntington in the project of building a railroad, and Mr. Huntington designated a gentleman named Fisher to make a personal investigation of the territory and report. Mr. Fisher's report was naturally favorable, and it was followed by a more detailed investigation by Mr. Huntington himself, which took tangible form. Mr. Fisher was sent again, and with my aid made purchases of a vast amount of land. This land was procured at a very small price. One tract that I remember was one in controversy between Wm. G. Mann and John Gwinn. They had been 'lawing' over it for a great many years. Mr. Fisher bought it from both of them, paying in the aggregate $3.50 per acre.

"In 1870 the construction of the Big Bend tunnel was begun. A year later the contract for the entire road was let, and work was begun at both ends.

"Coal companies were projected, and almost immediately coal exportation was begun on a small scale, the first mine to be operated being at Coalburg, on the Kanawha. The first one to be operated in the New River field was at Quinnimont, and I think the next was by the Longdale Company. The first coal exportation that was made was in cars having a capacity of ten tons and twenty of these cars was the load for the small engines of that day.

"The building of the railroad was hailed with great delight by the people of the county. It was the first important event in its history and was the basis of everything that has followed. There was little of importance preceding it, aside from the

business originates, N. D. Maher, as superintendent, was doing his work quietly and well. With him he had a corps of able assistants. In spite of all trials and tribulations tonnage was handled effectively and through service maintained.

Most of the ballast* at that time in this section was coke cinder. It had only one thing to recommend it — it was plentiful after the coke yards at the coal plants got in operation, and consequently cheap. Wrecks naturally occurred and after a hard rain and a small or larger flood, washouts added to operating troubles as section after section of this cinder ballast let go and started gaily down to the Ohio. Tunnels caved in, bridges went out, bad wrecks tore up whole sections of track and ruined badly needed equipment, and cost lives at times.

Through it all undaunted toiled Maher and his men. A large caboose was fitted up for temporary living quarters and given the unique name of "The White Swan" by Arthur Needles, Mr. Maher's right hand man, who was always something of a joker. Especially for a few years during the '90's, it proved a god-send to the tired man on duty for days at a stretch.

The development of the mines in this region kept pace with the railroad and the demand for coal, and ran ahead of both at times. In addition to what a bountiful Nature did for this section in the way of such large and

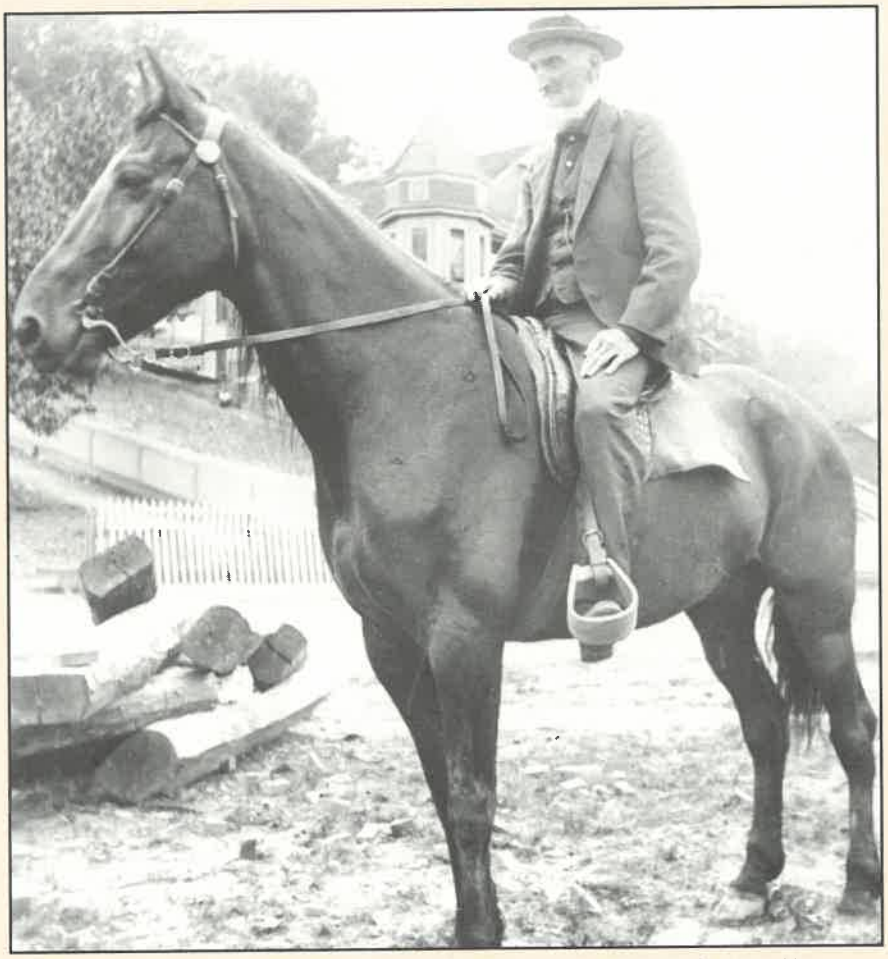
* Ballast is the material, usually crushed stone, upon which train tracks rest. Cinder was a poor substitute, according to the author.

presence here of soldiery during the late rebellion.

"Until the constitution of 1852 was formed the county government was conducted almost entirely by the magistrates. They administered the law, and as I recollect, without compensation. These magistrates were selected by the legislature, and besides performing the functions of the present day magistrates, formed also the fiscal body of the county...The eldest magistrate in point of service was entitled to be the sheriff of the county, for the term of two years. At the expiration of that service the next oldest magistrate succeeded, and so on. The sheriff was permitted either to serve or sell the office to someone else.

"There was no money in the country in those days. I have no doubt that I might have made a trip about the section of the county in which I lived, for ten miles square, and had I been able to get every cent that everybody had, it wouldn't have amounted to ten dollars. Men received for their work a heifer, a hog, a quantity of corn, salt or whatever else might have been bargained for. Ordinarily, men or families did their own work, and it was not usual, except in rare cases, for one to need help from the other.

"The money that they happened to have was procured from some slight service to the occasional traveler that went along the roads, usually from the stages or their passengers.



Captain W. D. Thurmond was past 80 when this photograph was made in 1902. He roamed Fayette County on horseback until just before his 1910 death, according to an obituary. Photo by William O. Trevey, courtesy Bill Hickman and George Bragg.

"Taxes were paid, not often in money, but usually in hides of one sort or another. The sheriff returning from a collecting trip would be laden down with the hides of foxes and deer. Many of the people living here, did not own land, and did not, therefore, pay taxes. They preferred not to own the land. It was almost as free as it was wild, and they would build a cabin, make a clearing and live there for years without molestation."

— Compiled by Lou Athey

Mr. Lincoln was a respected industry leader throughout his career. Here he confers with W.E.E. Koepler, secretary of the Pocahontas Operators' Association, at the Bluefield Coal Show. Photographer unknown, 1930's; courtesy Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

easily mined deposits of "the best steam coal in America," a high class and very successful selling agency, Castner, Curran and Bullitt, made the name of "Pocahontas" well known all over the world. Those were the days when the U.S. Navy would consider no other fuel at all but Pocahontas for our battleships — when the Cunard line, fueling her finest and fastest ships with Welsh Swansea coal for the western passage, would have nothing at all but Pocahontas for the return trip to Europe. Small wonder that the producers of this peerless coal began to feel somewhat "chesty."

But like all things human it was not to last for long. As with anthracite there came to Pocahontas the surprising and discouraging feeling that it was not really indispensable — if forced, the world could and would get along without either. The substitution of fuel oil, natural gas, and electricity was rather slow and practically unnoticed at first. But their use has increased steadily until in March of this year the amount of fuel oil used — in the equivalent of tons of coal — actually surpassed coal for the first time on record.

Further, in the last few years the efficiency of all large power plants, particularly those of the larger utilities, has so improved that they can now extract as much energy from one pound of coal as they did from two or three some years ago. This in itself accounts for a lessened demand for at least 30,000,000 tons of coal per year. And all the improvements made in the past 15 years in the equipment for burning coal — with one exception — have benefited the so-called cheaper, high volatile coals.

In spite of all this, the producers of Pocahontas coal have managed to keep up their output pretty well.

Last year the national government made an effort to help the coal industry. The only visible effect thus far has been to "make confusion worse confounded" — and to furnish cushy jobs for over a thousand faithful New Dealers, of course ultimately at coal's further expense. Small wonder that the still remaining consumers of coal are sore and disgusted and that the output of the mines for 1938 thus far has fallen to considerably less than half the recent average.

As the season advances but the demand for coal does not improve many persons connected with the coal business are anxiously asking: "Will it ever come back?" One guess is as good as another. Personally, I believe that it will — but slowly.

To many of you this may appear right now of no great interest, as you are not directly in the coal business. But in a larger and very real sense all of us who live here have a vital interest in coal. Coal is our one and only item of export. It furnishes all of us our bread and butter, and any jam and other luxuries we may be fortunate enough to get.

Baxter Presbyterian Church contributes to the beauty of rural Pocahontas County. The church is supported in part by its annual Harvest Day auction.

The Harvest Day Quilt

A Pocahontas County Tradition

By Mary Margaret Barlow

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

Dunmore's first Harvest Day quilt was pieced and sold in the early 1950's, so the women of Baxter Presbyterian Church have been presenting quilts for sale for at least 35 years. Harvest Day itself is much older. The special day of worship, socialization, and the sale of people's gifts for the upkeep of the Pocahontas County church began in 1938. It is held annually and has continued without interruption through the years.

The goods sold at auction on Harvest Day are provided by members of the church and by others in the community who care to keep the doors of Baxter Presbyterian open. This lovely, utilitarian old church observed its centennial in 1958. It continues to serve the hamlet, surrounding farms, and smaller home sites which comprise the crossroads community of Dunmore.

The products sold on Harvest Day include farm and garden produce; canned foods, jams and preserves; breads, cakes, and candies; along with crocheting, knitting, weaving and other crafted items. Among the latter is the Harvest Day community quilt. This quilt is actually a non-denominational project, made by most of the women in the community, especially the Methodists and Presbyterians. Its pattern is that of the traditional crazy quilt, but it is made from new cloth, rather than workbasket scraps. Each square is heavily embroidered and initialed by the craftswoman who made it, in the tradition of the friendship quilt. The year of the sale is also embroidered on the quilt.

A quilt is made by sewing layers of material together to give thickness and extra warmth. This method of forming warm covers and sometimes clothing has been used through the ages. Ordinarily there are a decorative top and a plain backing, with an insulating cotton batting sandwiched between these two layers, all joined together by intricate lines of stitching and bound at the edges. The Dunmore ladies point out that, strictly speaking, their product is not a quilt in this sense, since it lacks the inner batting and connecting stitchery. They make a decorative quilt top with backing.

The quilt, as a utilitarian piece of bed clothing made from recycled garments, is an American tradition. The crazy quilt was most popular in this country in the 19th century. Late in that century these quilts came to be made from finer materials and embroidered with silk. Every crazy quilt is an original piece, and many are true works of art. The older quilts in this genre are very heavily decorated with fancy intricate embroidery.

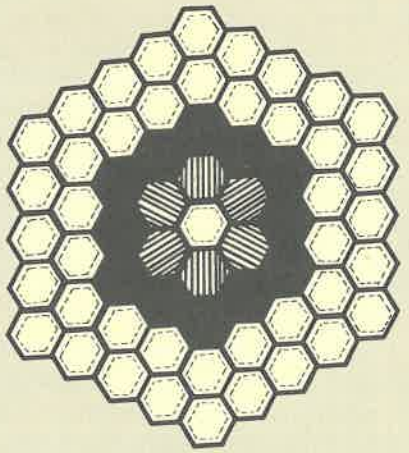
The Harvest Day crazy quilt consists of many finished squares, prepared individually by ladies of the community and then assembled into a cover large enough for a bed. The only attention to pattern is that given to the contrast of light, dark, and color. The basic squares are of uniform size, but these may have smaller scraps of

Above: Nellie Wyatt (left) has been the hub of the Harvest Day quilt project in recent years. Here she works with Estie Purkey (center) and Georgie Taylor.

Below: Church work has always been important to the strong women of Pocahontas County. This is early Harvest Day quilter Ada Grimes, her daughter Gray Hiner, and granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Photographer and date unknown.

many sizes sewn onto them. Odd-shaped pieces of material may be sewn on just as they come from the scrap basket. These pieces are fitted together by laying the turned-under edge of a new piece over the unfinished edges of pieces already attached to the basic square. The overall square is then embroidered with colored thread. Finally, all the squares are put together and backed with a large piece of material and given other finishing touches.

My regular winter quilt is a Harvest Day quilt. I grew up in Baxter Church and the quilters made mine as a caring favor, as well as to make money for Harvest Day. They also made the usual quilt for auction that year, 1980, and it was neither the first nor the last



New Quilt Book

West Virginian Hazel Ferrell shares her knowledge of quilting in the recently released book, *Down Home Needle Art to the Museum Walls.* The new book has helpful quilting hints, quilting and applique designs, and a special chapter of old patchwork patterns from the 1700's and 1800's that were handed down through Ferrell's family.

Hazel Ferrell learned to quilt from her mother and grandmother and enjoys teaching the art of "quilt construction" herself. She has won several awards for her work. Her quilts are in the West Virginia Permanent Collection, the state's official art collection, and at museums in Michigan and Kentucky. Her "American Symbols" quilt won first place for the state in a Museum of American Folk Art contest in 1986. "Hawaiian Sampler" won best of show in the 1981 West Virginia Culture and History quilt contest, and "Natures Walk" was purchased by the American Quilters Society for their museum in Kentucky.

The champion quilter says her book is designed for all quilt makers, experienced or amateur. Most of the book is a collection of patterns and designs that may be traced or cut out and put to practical use. *Down Home Needle Art,* a 68-page staple-bound book, sells for $14.95. It is available at The Shop at the Cultural Center or from the author, Hazel Ferrell, Route 1, Box 144, Middlebourne, WV 26149, (304) 758-4875.

year that two quilts were made by the Dunmore women. My quilt is made in the early crazy quilt tradition from my recycled clothes. There are pieces of a teaching skirt first worn in the 1950's, two beloved party dresses, many parts of leisure clothing, and clothes from when I was fat and those from when I was thin.

Most of the pieces are sturdy wool, wool blends and corduroy, with some polyester. For symbolic reasons I also added new velvet for my quilt. The quilters inserted pieces of Kitty Smith's outdated white Sunday dress because they felt more contrasts of light and dark were needed in the overall pattern. The quilt is backed with blue velour. Each square is initialed by the woman who embroidered it. It is an enduring work of art and a treasure to me.

No one quite remembers exactly when the first fancy community quilt was sold at the Baxter Presbyterian Harvest Day. Since quilting is ubiquitous in Appalachia, no one paid much attention to the presence or absence of a quilt at a church sale. However, the women do not believe that a special quilt was a recognized part of the Harvest Day festivities before about 1953.

Quilting as a charity project has a local history of its own, dating back before Harvest Day itself. In 1934, the women of Baxter Church pieced and quilted two quilts for which they earned $6. In the early 1940's, they made two quilts as their annual gift to the Davis Stuart School, the Presbytery's home for children in Lewisburg. The meeting minutes of the women of Baxter Presbyterian Church also show that the first crazy quilt sold at Harvest Day was not embroidered, and was made solely by Ada Grimes, who was at that time one of the older craftswomen of the community and a member of the church.

The special quilt soon became a community project for the women of Dunmore. Each woman pieced and embroidered one or more entire square. She would use any kind of material that was available for the piecing, embroidery, and backing. Later on, all the piecing of squares for the quilt was done by one woman. Nellie Wyatt does this now. She gives these pieced squares to other women who embroider them.

Harvest Day 1989

Harvest Day is always the last Saturday in September. The 1989 date is September 30th, at the Baxter Presbyterian Church on Route 28 just south of the Dunmore crossroads.

Harvest Day officially begins at 11:00 a.m. with a preaching service by a visiting minister. A midday dinner follows with people from the community supplying covered dishes for a real church feast. Activities then move outside, if the weather is good. Chairs are set up in the church yard, the auctioneer takes his place on the steps, and the fun begins. Nellie Wyatt says the auction usually lasts about three hours.

Goods for auction include "just about anything anyone wants to bring," according to Wyatt. The official Harvest Day quilt is a big draw, but other quilts, produce, candies, cakes, embroidered pillows, and pillowcases are among the items up for bid.

Harvest Day quilts are known for intricate embroidery on the basic crazy quilt pattern. This detail is from the 1989 quilt, to be sold this fall.

Many of the women who worked on the quilts for early Harvest Days are no longer living, but their contributions are remembered. "Mrs. Grimes was such a worker," my mother recalled of Ada. "She not only provided part of the crazy quilt, but also brought one or two tied patchwork comforts to the sale." And Gray Hiner says that Mabel Galford Taylor embroidered 30 squares the year she died, "in order to have something to do in that nursing home in Elkins."

Other aging quilters were also reluctant to lay down their work, the church women remember. "When Onie Campbell's eyes got too bad to embroider, she used to piece the quilts," according to Georgie Taylor. "I know because I used to go up and thread her sewing machine for her." Sophia Pritchard, who along with Onie Campbell did the first embroidery work on the Harvest Day crazy quilts, contributed her artistic talents for many, many years.

Today's quilters are proud to follow these earlier women. The stitches and designs used in the embroidery work are old, passed along from mother to daughter, with each woman making her own variations. The embroidered motifs are as varied as the nature of the Appalachian mountains — flowers, vines, fish, birds, spider webs, and geometric shapes. Some of the stitches used are brier stitch, lazy daisy, fence row, fish bone, and feather stitch.

Harvest Day always brings out big produce and a fair-sized crowd. A variety of farm products are sold, in addition to the quilt and other handmade goods. Photo by Norman Alderman.

The traditions are ever changing in the creative hands of craftswomen. All the quilters I talked with described how to make different stitches from the basic ones. "You can take fence row, add some lazy daisy out on the ends, put in a few French knots, something like that, and you have another stitch," one woman told me. Another said of the motifs, "I like to draw my own pattern and embroider it out." Gray Hiner said of the overlapping rings that appear on many squares, "I have a little glass here that I set on and draw around, then set it overlapping the first ring and draw around again." The colors used for the embroidery are as varied as those used in the piecing of the squares.

The thread used for embroidering is crocheting thread, usually purchased at the dime store in Marlinton, the Pocahontas County seat. The women use large, round-eyed needles. These are harder to find locally, so they "keep an eye out for them" when they are in larger towns. These needles are more satisfactory for the embroidery work than regular tapestry needles. The fabric used today is all new, donated by supporters of the Harvest Day quilt project, including people who vacation in the area.

The time given to the quilt varies for each woman. Nellie says that on some winter days she has pieced four or five squares, prepared an early supper for her husband, and then "embroidered another square out by bedtime." Estie Purkey and her daughter, Linda Bennett, report that they usually spend a week planning a square and doing the fancy work. Each of them always does two or more squares. Georgie Taylor and Nellie Wyatt do five or more squares for each quilt. Two squares per quilt is the average number contributed by each woman.

The squares of the quilt are designed to measure "a big 20 inches so that when they are assembled they will measure 20 inches, for sure!" Gray Hiner says. Nowadays, Nellie Wyatt is the hub of the project. She distributes the squares for embroidering and

then collects them all for assembly at her log house on Route 28. The resulting quilt top is then ready for the backing.

"Now, that's a most particular business," Nellie says of the backing process. Georgie Taylor put the backing on for years. In 1985, Georgie was not able to do this work so Nellie, Estie Purkey, and Linda Bennett met in Nellie's weaving house to assemble the quilt. Nellie said, "We had a right good time, had a pot of soup and worked the day through."

No record has been kept of how many Harvest Day quilts have been made, who bought them, and how much was paid. Several women told me that the first quilt brought $35 and that the 1987 quilt sold for $300. Through the years, Georgie has bought one for each of her six children; her son Hubert Taylor, who taught in New Jersey, bought them for several years. Almost all of the other sons and daughters of the small community own Harvest Day quilts, too.

While talking about the church quilt, the Pocahontas County women mentioned other quilting experiences. They spoke of earlier days when their children were small. Back then they would meet for a day at one woman's house for quilting. There they would stitch together the layers of an already pieced quilt. The quilt frame was set up on trestle benches or placed on chair backs, if there were enough chairs. The visiting women would stitch and chat while the owner of the quilt prepared the noon dinner and did all the cleaning up. Almost every home in Dunmore has quilts which were made at such parties.

The Harvest Day quilters do not ordinarily work together in a quilting bee of that sort nowadays. Instead they labor alone or with a friend or two, maybe mother and daughter together, each contributing her artistry to the final product. The result is the same, as these craftswomen piece together a work of beauty while stitching more closely a mountain community.

Gray Hiner and Linda Bennett are among the regular quilters. Linda always contributes two or more embroidered squares to the project.

Huntington Quilting Club

The Creative Quilters Guild of Huntington, founded eight years ago, will hold its third biennial quilt show September 22 through 24. The group grew from an interested class of quilting enthusiasts who recognized a common bond in their love for the traditional art.

The quilt show is a way for guild members to display their creations. Throughout the year members work on a special quilt to raise money for the club and the show. The 1989 quilt was two years in the making and has already been sold. Guild quilts are also donated to community projects such as the River Cities Ronald McDonald House. Creative Quilters meet monthly to discuss their art and compare notes on patterns or the history of quilts, helping one another with ideas, advice, and extra fabric.

One Creative Quilters member recently opened a quilting shop, The Cherry Tree, in the East Pea Ridge section of Huntington. Quilters may take classes at the shop or find supplies and material.

This year's show, titled "Pieces of the Heart," is at the Barboursville Community Center. Nearly 100 quilts will be on display, with many for sale. Quilting clubs from Charleston and Ashland, Kentucky, will have their work on display as well. For more information contact show chairman Sue Ann Moore at (304) 736-6758.

Ada Grimes made the first Harvest Day quilt and contributed to the Dunmore community in many other ways. This photo shows her as a young woman, about 1910. Photographer unknown.

Quilter Ada Grimes

Ada Virginia, the daughter of James and Emma Turner, was born at Back Creek, Virginia, on December 12, 1880. She was the eldest child of what was to be a very large family. Ada was still a youngster when they moved to near Stony Bottom, Pocahontas County. Her education was just through the third grade, but she could read, figure and spell better than many of our high school graduates today.

Ada Turner was married at age 17 to Henry Hayse Grimes of Dunmore, on January 12, 1898. The young couple settled on a small farm near Dunmore. Much later they sold the place, which is now part of Senator Jay Rockefeller's farm. Eventually the Grimes family grew to five daughters and one son. I am one of the daughters.

Ada was a strong-willed woman, always on time at meetings, church and any place she was supposed to be. She got very aggravated when a meeting was delayed because someone was late. Her time was precious, for she had things to do at home.

When the family was able to buy a Model T Ford, Ada drove it. Hayse would hold onto the door handle as they sped down the road. She drove on trips to Philippi, Clarksburg, Buckeye and Marlinton. But she never drove the car to the local store or post office, because she said she could walk in less time than it would take to get the Ford out.

Ada sewed all the dresses, coats, underwear, and shirts for the family on a White treadle sewing machine. When other families needed clothing, she would sew for them. When the Baxter Presbyterian Church started its Fall Harvest Day, she made the first quilt sold. She also made comforter tops, crocheted pieces, aprons, pot holders and many other articles for the sale each year.

One of Ada's greatest joys was doing for the church. She collected used clothing to be sent in the church's name to the Mountain School in Crossmore, North Carolina. She made twin-size comforters for the Davis Stuart School in Lewisburg and helped other ladies peel apples and stir apple butter, which was put in quart jars and sent to the school.

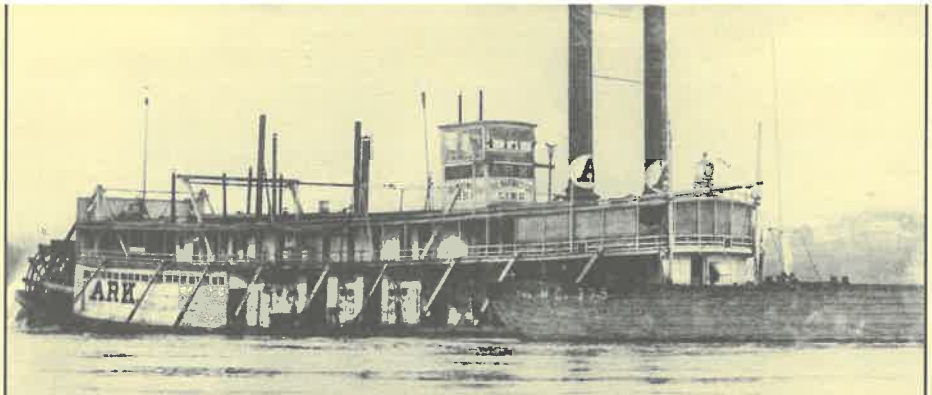
Ada sat up many nights with the sick in the community. If someone died, she helped bathe and dress and lay the body out for the undertaker to come. Or there'd be a knock on the door or three shorts and a long on the telephone and a voice would say, "Can you come, we think the baby is going to be born." Quickly, catnip tea in hand, Ada was on her way to help the local doctor at the birthing and attend to the needs of mother and baby. It was all volunteer work and she was happy doing it.

As the girls grew, each of us did her share of the housework, gardening and working in the fields. Besides all the other things, we did some washing and ironing for elite families in Raywood and closer home. The daughters helped with that. There was no washing machine or running water, just three tubs and a washboard.

Ada's last years were spent with her son in a new house at the family homeplace. She died at home on a Sunday morning, February 10, 1962. Hayse had died March 10, 1957.

Times have changed since Ada Grimes's day. People now go to the hospital when babies are born or someone becomes ill. And the old go to nursing homes, many left there and forgotten.

— Lolla Gray Hiner



The Great Kanawha

By Harry M. Brawley

The Ark was one of the sternwheelers frequently seen on the Kanawha in the 19th century. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

The combined Kanawha-New River system is generally recognized as the second oldest river in the world, younger only than the Nile. Starting in North Carolina, the river flows north through the mountains into Virginia and then into West Virginia. So far as we can tell it was originally called Kanawha throughout its entire length, named for an Indian tribe living near its origin. But when an early explorer, Captain Abram Wood, wrote "New River" — it was new to him — on his map in 1654, the name stuck for all of the upper stream. For a time it was also known as "Wood's River," but most map makers listed it as the New.

Flowing into West Virginia the river takes in the Greenbrier at Hinton. It then follows a tortuous path through the famous New River Gorge, called by some the "Grand Canyon of the East." Then the Gauley River comes in just above Kanawha Falls, and from that point on the New River becomes the Great Kanawha.

The pronunciation of the name, and its spelling too, have caused some difficulty. Apparently the Indians, like old-timers even today, preferred something that sounds like "Ka-NAW-ee." The spelling in some early books and journals was sometimes "Kenhawah" with variations. The name still bothers outlanders who insist on saying "KAN-o-wah," instead of the local "Ka-NAW-uh."

After receiving water from nine major creeks with distinct personalities of their own, and many smaller ones, the Kanawha picks up the Elk River at Charleston. This tributary, like the Greenbrier and the Gauley, has its own story. Rising in Pocahontas County only a stone's throw from the headwaters of the Gauley, the Elk flows west-by-south. In Webster County the Elk and the Gauley almost touch again, with only a mountain between them.

Big dams have been built on both streams, at Sutton on the Elk and at Summersville on the Gauley. Both lakes afford great recreation and fishing, but do nothing for navigation. Steamboats of various sizes tried to use the Elk River without success. The *Little Kanawha* did make it to Queen Shoals once about 1838. Small boats, flatboats, and canoes were the only reliable modes of transportation until modern dams on the Kanawha opened the final stretch of the Elk to barge traffic.

Leaving Charleston, the Kanawha River takes in Davis Creek, the Pocatalico River, and the famous Coal River at St. Albans. The Coal drains one of the major coalfields in the country, and during the middle years of the 19th century attempts were made to improve its navigation. Julius deGruyter in his *Kanawha Spectator*, Volume I, says that the Coal River Navigation Company erected a series of locks and dams from Peytona down to St. Albans. Repairs were made after the Civil War and navigation continued into the 1870's, according to deGruyter.

This work on Coal River preceded attempts to improve navigation on the Kanawha itself. The bigger river needed less work. Early writers were lavish in their praise of the Kanawha in its natural state, local historian W. S. Laidley characterizing it as a succession of "pools, deep places, and shallows."

The early settlers in the Kanawha

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Valley had made good use of the river just as it was. Hollowed-out logs or "pirogues" served as rough canoes, and the making of flatboats became a thriving business at Kellys Creek and Paint Creek. The flatboats were enormous even by today's standards, ranging in size up to 25 by 100 feet. They were great — going downstream!

The first really organized navigation was by the army of General Andrew Lewis in 1774. Lewis's men had marched down from Lewisburg on their way to fight the Indians at Point Pleasant. They camped at the mouth of Elk River, made huge rafts, and floated off to do battle. George Clendenin was a member of that army. He fell in love with the site and vowed to make it his home, thus founding the city of Charleston.

The coming of the steamboat greatly increased the use of the Kanawha, especially when the water was high. The *Roger Thompson* made it to the Putnam County community of Red House in 1819, but was foiled by the shoals. Some say the *Andrew Donnally* was the first to get all the way from Point Pleasant to Charleston, in 1819, but others maintain it was the *Eliza* in 1823. Andrew Donnally himself was the pilot on the *Eliza,* and that may account for the confusion. There were no regular refueling stops on the Kanawha, and the early steamers had to put to shore and buy old fence rails along the way.

The first steamer to make its way from Charleston to Cincinnati was the *Fairy Queen* in 1824. The first steamer to reach Kanawha Falls, above Montgomery, was the *Lelia.* Other boats frequently seen were the *Paul Pry,* the *Tuckahoe,* and the *Ark.* Enterprising citizens of Charleston also tried their hand at boat building. Andrew Ruffner built the *Tiskelwah,* borrowing the Indian name for the Elk, and the Summers brothers built the *Texas* in 1837.

The Kanawha carried enough water much of the year for early steamboats, and improvements were pushed only as the desire for year-round navigation grew. The federal government sent a group of engineers to France to see how successful the French had been with the moveable — actually collapsible — dams designed by engineer Jacques Chanoine. The report was favorable and the French system was adopted for the Kanawha River.

The object was to provide at least six feet of water all the way from Kanawha Falls to Point Pleasant, where the Kanawha joins the Ohio. The original plan called for 11 dams, but No. 1 above Montgomery was eliminated. The completed project, begun in 1880, included permanent dams below Montgomery and below Paint Creek; and collapsible dams above Cabin Creek; at Marmet; below Charleston; below St. Albans; below Raymond City; above and below Buffalo; and one last one nearly two miles above the mouth of the river.

Moveable dams stayed on the river bottom for an average of 165 days a year. When the water was low the dams were raised to make the depth sufficient for coal barges. The moveables were raised and lowered five to 12 times a year. The construction work was completed in 1898, the project taking 18 years to complete and costing about $4,500,000. Numbers 4 and 5 were the first moveable dams to be erected in America.

Cars were scarce around Charleston in the early 1900's and there were few paved roads, but one led downriver to Lock 6 and one upriver to Marmet and Lock 5. Since the dams (when they were up) were great sights to behold, almost everyone with transportation went to see one dam or the other from time to time. Snapshots of the era show the dams, usually up, with girls dressed in their Sunday best. Others show young men gawking at the river. All had hats on, boys and girls alike.

Passenger travel improved, but on the river travel retained its mysteries. An anecdote popular in the early 1900's was about a traveling salesman riding a steamer from Point Pleasant to Charleston. The Kanawha was at low water and the dams were up as he rode through six locks. Five days later after heavy rains the dams were on the river bottom when he boarded the boat for his return trip to Ohio. When he realized they were not going through locks, he asked a crew member, "What happened to those dams I saw coming up?"

Realizing he had a greenhorn on his hands, the crewman answered, "Those heavy rains we had washed them all away." The aghast passenger was reported as saying, "Boy! Won't I have a story to tell when I get back to Columbus!"

In This Issue

MALCOLM W. ATER, JR., was born in Virginia and graduated from Old Dominion University. He moved to the Eastern Panhandle in 1983 and now teaches students with learning disabilities at Harpers Ferry Junior High, works as a sportscaster for WRNR in Martinsburg, and edits the *Good News Paper* in Shepherdstown. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1987.

LOU ATHEY, a native of southern Illinois, teaches history at Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania. He has a B.A. from Trenton State College and a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware. He has had a research interest in Fayette County since first visiting Ansted in 1964. His book on the New River town of Kaymoor appeared in 1986. This is his second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MARY MARGARET BARLOW, who says she grew up in the Baxter Presbyterian Church of Dunmore, has loved quilts since early childhood. Barlow attended Marshall University and has a Ph.D. from George Washington University. She has published articles in professional journals, trade magazines, and the *Washington Post Magazine*. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

HARRY M. BRAWLEY, a Charleston native, was born in 1909. He earned an A.B. in 1931 and an M.A. in 1932 from WVU. He has worked for WCHS in Charleston, as a teacher and principal in Kanawha County, and as a part-time associate professor of political science and geography at Morris Harvey College. He has published widely and was a member of the Charleston City Council. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Fall 1986 issue.

P. CORBIT BROWN is a native of Fayette County. He works as a freelance photographer in the Eastern Panhandle and Washington area. His photos have appeared in *Washingtonian* magazine, among other publications, and he recently exhibited his work at the Washington Center of Photography. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the Summer 1989 issue.

DOUG CHADWICK of Pocahontas County was born in North Carolina and grew up in Maryland. He was educated in Oregon, Washington State, and 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 Division of Culture and History, Department of Education and the Arts.

LORA LEA HAGER, a native West Virginian, lives on Six Mile Hollow in Boone County. She is a student at Southern West Virginia Community College. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

CHERYL HARSHMAN lives on Bowman Ridge in Marshall County. She and her husband, Marc, are both accomplished storytellers and regular participants in the Vandalia Gathering. A new mother herself, Cheryl is a children's literature specialist and conducts workshops on the subject regularly. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LOLLA GRAY HINER, a native of Dunmore, was postmaster there for nearly 30 years. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER is the chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History, Department of Education and the Arts.

BARBARA BEURY McCALLUM is the great-granddaughter of Colonel Joe Beury, the first coal operator on the New River. She serves on the Mountain State Press board and as a VISTA worker with the Kanawha County Adult Reading Program. She has published freelance work in the *Chicago Tribune* and other publications. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

STUART McGEHEE, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, is a history professor and chairman of the Division of Social Sciences at Bluefield College. He is also archivist at the Eastern Regional Coal Archives and says he's "nuts about the history of southern West Virginia." This is his second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LOUISE McNEILL is poet laureate of the state of West Virginia.

TOPPER SHERWOOD, a Charleston freelance writer, came to West Virginia when he was less than a year old. He was educated in Ohio and West Germany and served in the Peace Corps in Africa. He has worked at the *Charleston Gazette* as a copy editor and for the *Charleston Daily Mail* and the Associated Press as a reporter. He has published in *Time*, the *Boston Globe*, and other publications. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

W. MURRAY SMITH, the late president of the Clay County Bank, was born in Roane County but lived most of his life in Clay. Smith had a deep interest in the folk culture of central West Virginia, and counted Jenes Cottrell and Sylvia O'Brien among his many friends.

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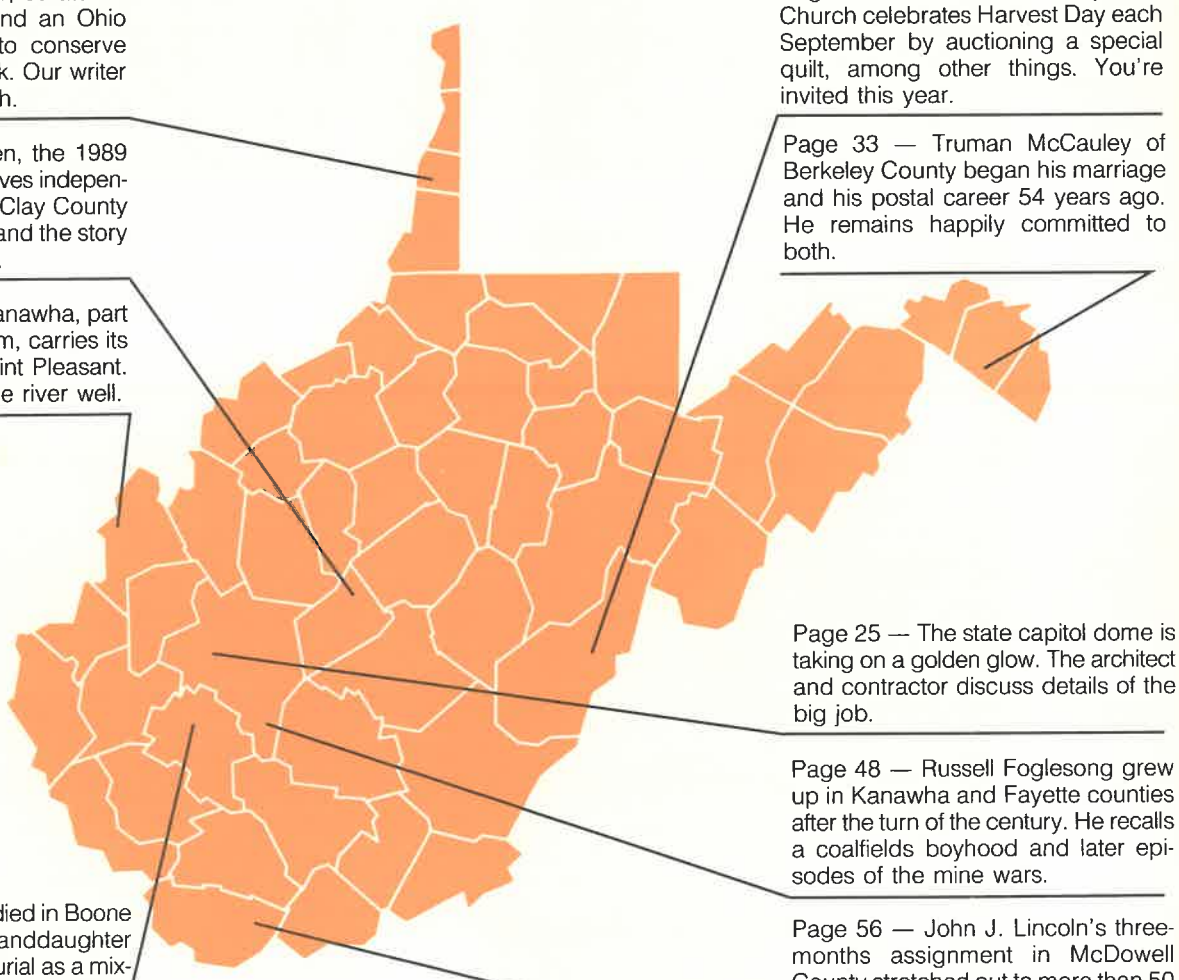

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