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Goldenseal



The Appalachian String Band Music Festival



A new event is planned for Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County this summer. The first annual Appalachian String Band Music Festival is scheduled for August 3 through 5. The event is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History and includes string band concerts, contests, dancing, jam sessions, camping and other activities.

The new festival takes place at a site rich in West Virginia history. Camp Washington-Carver dates back to 1937 when Fleming A. Jones, Jr., a black legislator from McDowell County, introduced a bill providing for the creation of a black 4-H camp. From 1939 to 1942, the Federal Works Progress Administration built the camp from timber, stone and other building materials taken from its grounds.

Officials from West Virginia State College named the camp for black leaders Booker T. Washington and

George Washington Carver, dedicating it on June 26, 1942. West Virginia State continued to run the facility until 1978. The following year Camp Washington-Carver was turned over to Culture and History. In 1980 the camp was named to the National Register of Historic Places and in 1984 the facility had its first full season of cultural programming.

Since that time Camp Washington-Carver has hosted many popular events, among them Doo-Wop Saturday Night which has been expanded to a three-day "Golden Oldies" festival, the Homestyle Dinner Theater series, and Carver Goes Country, featuring three days of performances by country and western stars.

New to the 1990 lineup is the String Band Music Festival. The festival includes three traditional contests for old-time banjo, fiddle and string band,

plus one non-traditional string band contest. Cash prizes will be awarded. Scoring is based on how well the traditional tunes are played in the old-time style. For the non-traditional category, judges will take into consideration instrumentation and technique, among other factors.

Several well-known West Virginia musicians who have done much to preserve and present old-time music will be on hand to oversee the program. John Blisard, Jim Costa, Joe Dobbs and Gerry Milnes are hosting the weekend's stage events. In addition to the contests, seven high-energy string bands will perform. The West Virginia bands are Critton Hollow, Ebenezer String Band, and the Bing Brothers. Other Appalachian bands joining them are Fiddle Puppets, The Red Hots, Spring Gap Hellbenders, and Tunesmith. Special events are planned for "Old-Time Day" on Sunday with a square dance, concerts, traditional Appalachian games for kids, and more contests.

Bands may compete in either the traditional or non-traditional contests, but not in both. Bands and individuals should preregister by July 1 to be guaranteed participation in the contests. Send the contestant's name, address, and contest category on an index card (using a separate card for each entry) to Contests, Appalachian String Band Music Festival, Camp Washington-Carver, Route 1, Box 5, Clifftop, WV 25831. A confirmation and schedule of events will be sent from the festival office.

Camp Washington-Carver is located adjacent to Babcock State Park, just off Route 60 in Clifftop, about halfway between Charleston and White Sulphur Springs. Parking is \$2 per car and rough camping is available at \$10 per person. Good food and showers are available. The concerts are free. For more information contact Camp Washington-Carver at the above address or phone (304)438-6429.

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Goldenseal

Volume 16, Number 2

Summer 1990

COVER: Cal Price of the *Pocahontas Times* was the perfect picture of a country editor. We continue our series on West Virginia newspapers with the story beginning on page 9. Photo by Cummins, early 1950's.

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PHOTOS: Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Michael Keller, Rick Lee, Fred Long, Ted J. McElwee, Ron Rittenhouse, Andy Yale

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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.

New at Archives of Appalachia

The Archives of Appalachia recently acquired an important group of field recordings which will benefit those interested in regional culture. The recordings were made by Mary Barnicle and Tillman Cadle in the 1930's and 1940's.

Mary Elizabeth Barnicle was a pioneering folklorist who married Cadle, a miner and union organizer from Tennessee. The two did their work in the areas of Pineville, Kentucky, and Townsend, Tennessee. They also recorded folk figures in Greenwich Village in New York.

The Mary Barnicle-Tillman Cadle Collection contains more than 500 field recordings including the folk music of Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, Sarah Ogan Gunning, Aunt Molly Jackson, and the Adams family — the first commercially-recorded sacred harp singers. Material on labor history, such as accounts of union activities of the time, is a primary part of the collection. The couple also recorded Primitive Baptist services, ballads, dance music, Appalachian tall tales, ghost stories, anecdotes, riddles, and bawdy songs.

The Archives of Appalachia, a major regional research collection, is housed at the Sherrod Library of East Tennessee State University. The Archives issues a regular newsletter and assists in publishing the Appalachian quarterly, *Now and Then*, a university publication. For more information contact the Archives of Appalachia, Box 22450A, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 37614; (615)929-4338.

Augusta Heritage Workshops

This summer at Davis and Elkins College, the Augusta Heritage Center will conduct five weeks of intensive folk arts workshops. Classes are scheduled from July 8 to August 12. Most are offered for one week with several craft classes lasting two weeks.



Generally, workshops are offered in music, dance, instrument making, crafts, storytelling, and similar subjects. Augusta gives participants a chance to study a wide variety of traditional arts. There are classes in herbs, log construction, songwriting, book-binding, mountain dulcimer construction, Irish lacemaking, whittling, and weaving, among many others.

Special "theme weeks" offer group discussions, films, guest artists, and special presentations. Theme weeks for 1990 include "Blues Week," "Cajun Week," "Vocal Week," "Dance Week," and others.

The Augusta Heritage Center expects about 1800 people will attend the summer classes, which offer beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Planners advise early registration, and require a nonrefundable deposit of \$40 per class. Housing is available both on and off the D&E campus.

For more information, contact Augusta Heritage Center, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241; (304)636-1903.

Appalachian Writers Workshop

The Hindman Settlement School will hold its 13th annual Appalachian Writers Workshop from August 5 through 11. The Kentucky program includes seminars, individual conferences, and readings.

The sessions will feature outstand-

ing faculty. James Still, "the dean of Appalachian writers," will work with several classes. Still is an accomplished poet, short story writer and novelist who first came to the Hindman Settlement School in the early 1930's. He is the author of 11 books, including the novel *River of Earth*.

Other staff members include West Virginian Barbara Smith, a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor, for non-fiction; Jim Wayne Miller, novel and Appalachian literature; Ed McClanahan, short story; Robert Morgan, poetry; George Ella Lyon, children's writings; and Jo Carson, dramatic writings.

The historic Hindman Settlement School was originally a boarding and day school and now serves as a non-profit education and community service center. The Appalachian Writers Workshop costs \$200 and includes room, board and tuition. One scholarship is available. For more information contact the Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Kentucky 41822; (606)785-5475.

A History of The Greenbrier

The Greenbrier at White Sulphur Springs is many things to many people. Long known for its luxury and its healing waters, The Greenbrier has a history that reaches back well over 200 years.

A recently released book, *The History of The Greenbrier: America's Resort* is a beautiful history of West Virginia's famous showplace. It is by Robert S. Conte, who has served as The Greenbrier's resident historian since 1978. He is a familiar figure to Greenbrier guests through his tours, lectures and presentations. Dr. Conte is the curator



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See coupon on page 72.

of the Presidents' Cottage Museum and maintains the archives at the resort.

The History of The Greenbrier is a 178-page large format hardbound book with historical illustrations in both black and white and color. The book is as rich-looking as The Greenbrier's guests, right down to the reproduction of the wallpaper pattern on the inside front and back covers.

This new book gives an entertaining yet comprehensive look at The Greenbrier's growth and development and at the same time acquaints the reader with fashionable society and the many legendary people who have visited there over the years.

The History of The Greenbrier costs \$25, plus \$3 shipping, and is available from The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, WV 24986. It is also sold at local bookstores.

Oil and Gas Research Query

Warren O. Harry is working on a history of the West Virginia oil and gas industry from 1860 to the present. He would like to hear from anyone who has letters, documents, maps, journals, pictures or related items pertaining to the industry. He also seeks information on tools and equipment.

GOLDENSEAL readers wishing to help may contact Mr. Harry at P.O. Drawer N, Pinch, WV 25156, or phone (304)965-5840.

Cedar Lakes Crafts Sessions

The Cedar Lakes Crafts Center near Ripley is for West Virginia craftspeople, both beginners and professionals. For the 15th year the facility will offer workshops conducted by outstanding artists and craftspeople.

Del Stubbs teaches woodturning and Ed Small hand-forged cutlery the weekend of June 15 through 17. The week of July 23 through 27 classes are offered in stained glass; machine applique, embroidery, and quilting; woodturning; and white oak basketry. The weekend of July 27 through 29 workshops are scheduled with fiber artist Helen Dean, blacksmith Jeff Fet-

ty on "floral forging," and Marie Hoepfl for woodworking for women.

Fall workshops include Shaker oval boxes on October 5 and 6 and sessions by artists Susan Poffenbarger and Caryl Toth the same weekend. A holiday wreath workshop is offered October 19 and 20, with sessions on Christmas folk art and Victorian ornaments continuing through October 21.

Tuition ranges from \$40 to \$80 for the weekend workshops to \$100 for the week-long classes. Meals and lodging are available at Cedar Lakes, but are not included in the price of tuition.

Classes are limited in size, so early registration is suggested. Some scholarships are available. For more information contact Tim Pyles, Cedar Lakes Conference Center, Ripley, WV 25271; (304)372-7005.

"Quilts '90"

Each Memorial Day Weekend the Cultural Center opens an impressive summer-long exhibit of handmade West Virginia quilts as part of Vandalia Gathering. The 1990 collection of 31 quilts now lines the 35-foot-high white marble walls of the center's Great Hall. "Quilts '90" will run through October 21.

Quilters from across the state submit their best work to be judged for inclusion in the annual quilt exhibit. Cash awards are presented for first through fifth place. One purchase award is also given, with that quilt going into the West Virginia Permanent Collection.

"Quilts '90" offers an impressive variety of patterns and the successful use of unusual color combinations while remaining strong traditionally," according to Karen F. Moulder, the

This handiwork is from "Holiday Star" by Barbara Lantz. The quilt was the fifth-place winner in "Quilts '90."



juror for the 1990 show. "More quilting is seen in each piece, resulting in quilts that last longer and wear better," she added.

In conjunction with "Quilts '90," other craftspeople will demonstrate stained glass and other work featuring quilt-pattern themes the first weekend of each month from June through October. Their work and many of the quilts in the show will be offered for sale through The Shop at the Cultural Center. For more information or to receive notice on next year's quilt competition, call the Cultural Center at (304)348-0162.

GOLDENSEAL Indexed

The West Virginia Library Commission recently compiled an extensive index for three leading West Virginia publications — GOLDENSEAL, *West Virginia History* and *Wonderful West Virginia*.

GOLDENSEAL is West Virginia's traditional life quarterly and *West Virginia History* is the state's official historical journal, issued annually. Both are published by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. *Wonderful West Virginia* is the monthly magazine of the Department of Natural Resources.

Articles are indexed by author and subject for 1987 and 1988 with plans to complete 1989 and 1990 in the future. The periodical index will be distributed to public libraries throughout the state to assist patrons in research. For more information contact Karen Goff, Reference Services, West Virginia Library Commission, Cultural Center, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)348-2045.

1990 West Virginia History

The annual state historical journal, *West Virginia History*, is due out this summer. The journal's 49th volume honors West Virginia women, featuring eight articles on women's history in the Mountain State.

Articles by professors Barbara Howe, Mary Beth Pudup, Judith Stitzel and others treat women's roles in the industrial and non-industrial

economy, education, and the home. Ancella Bickley contributes a piece on midwifery in West Virginia, and Anne Effland authors an article on women's suffrage. In conjunction with the women's cultural history exhibit, "Traditions and Transitions," scheduled to open at the Cultural Center this fall, *West Virginia History* offers a photo essay by exhibit curator Debra Parson.

Additionally, there are 32 book reviews and a section of "book notes," with short overviews of many other West Virginia publications. As always, the annual journal also lists records, manuscripts, photographs, documents, and non-textual historical materials recently donated to the State Archives. For the first time a list of historical, genealogical, and preservation organizations in the state will also be published.

West Virginia History is a scholarly journal, fully indexed and heavily illustrated. The 224-page book-size volume is sold by subscription at \$12 per copy. Back issues are also available. Orders should be sent to *West Virginia History*, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

Festival of Appalachian Humor

The Berea College campus in Kentucky is the site of the 1990 Festival of Appalachian Humor. The event, hosted by Billy Edd Wheeler and Loyal Jones, will take place July 20 through 21. Wheeler and Jones have collaborated on previous festivals, publishing the popular book, *Laughter in Appalachia*, as a result of an earlier Berea event.

This year's festival offers contests

open to humorists of all ages. Cash prizes will be awarded to first, second and third place winners in the categories of jokes, traditional tales, true humorous stories, humorous routine, and humorous folk or original song.

Featured guests include West Virginia storyteller Bonnie Collins and Vandalia Liar's Contest winner Paul Lepp, along with Joe Bly, Bob Hannah, Al White, and Ramona Jones and Alisa Jones Wall. Scholarly papers will be presented on Saturday.

Performances begin at 7:30 on Friday and Saturday evenings. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children ages 6 to 14. Other events are free. Folk dancing, led by Dr. John Ramsay, will follow the evening performances. For more information contact the Berea College Appalachian Center, College Box 2336, Berea, KY 40404; or call (606)986-9341.

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.

Columbus, Ohio
February 6, 1990
Editor:

A friend of mine gave me one of his *GOLDENSEAL* magazines to read. I enjoyed it very much, but on page 36 of the Fall 1989 edition there is a problem with a picture. Your caption says "photographer unknown, late 1940's," but it looks like a 1954 or '55 Olds in the picture. Something has been overlooked by somebody, don't you think?

Thank you,
Earl T. Duke

Oops — you got us on the date, but will you settle for a Pontiac instead of Oldsmobile?
—ed.



Country Radio

Racine, West Virginia
January 24, 1990
Editor:

Your winter issue tops them all! It has been some time since I had seen a copy of your great magazine, and I'm so thankful I came in touch with this one.

For many years I've asked various people in different areas, "What do you know about Cap, Andy and Flip/Milt?" So how happy I was to see the excellent story done by Ivan Tribe. I've read it several times. They were the first singers I remember hearing on the radio. Their theme song was "Where Could I Go?"

Youthful memories are always vivid, and I remember a cold December night when they appeared at a one-room schoolhouse about two miles from where I lived in Boone County. To make more money for the sponsors, girls were nominated for prettiest girl, votes were a penny each. Milt nominated me. Later, he played the guitar for me when I sang on "The Old Farm Hour." I was 15 years old.

As Barbara Mandrell sings, "I was country before country was cool."

I would like to correspond with anyone who might have tapes or recordings of Cap, Andy and Flip/Milt. Best wishes,
Zella (Nash) Jarrett

Morgantown, West Virginia
March 19, 1990

Editor:
I enjoyed your article about WMMN very much.

Our country music-loving family were there when many of the mentioned musicians performed in the '40's and '50's. Mom still has her scrapbook of glossy fan pictures she collected, attending functions from Wheeling, Keyser and Fairmont. I remember attending them at a very young age.

I especially loved Cherokee Sue and L'il John Graham. They were my neighbors when I lived in Clarksburg. She was a great performer and a fine lady. She rounded up all the neighborhood kids and took us to church with her family. We lost her to cancer in 1967, but not before she had left her

mark on the world. Before I met her at age ten she had taught me my ABC's at three over WPDx radio. L'il John is still alive and performs sometimes.

My Uncle Boogie Bill Boggs never seems to be mentioned in these articles, though he was always there, too. He has played backup for stars!

On March 17 Uncle Bill came in from Cumberland, Maryland, where he now lives, to perform at the Sagebrush on Bunnys Ridge outside of Fairmont. His old friends didn't let him down. He played to a full house, and he got a standing ovation and tears. Among the fans was L'il John Graham who didn't perform that night. Boogie Bill is a victim of crippling arthritis. His music has never suffered as Bill's curled fingers still play painfully but beautifully.

I understand friends are in the process of bringing him back for the summer gigs at the Sagebrush, but March 17 was his night.

Yours truly,
Diana Williams

Jewish Merchants

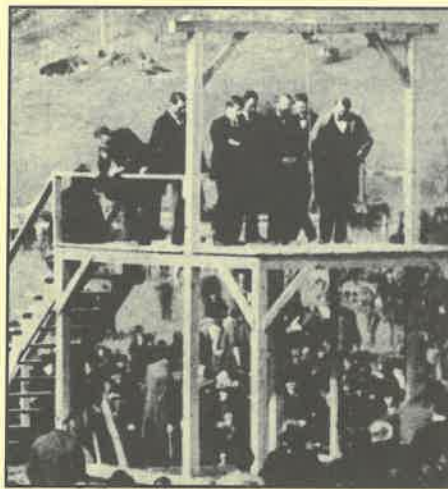
Baltimore, Maryland
March 27, 1990

Editor:
Irving Alexander ["Wilcoe" and "Jewish Merchants in the Coalfields"] has written upon a subject which has caused me to exercise much curious speculation over a long period of time. In one article he has articulated it in an intriguing fashion. The photographs which were put together with it, whether by you or Mr. Alexander I do not know, also added as much to the story as the prose text.

At any rate, the superstar historian of the Jewish European immigration is probably Irving Howe, but he has not, as I recall, in his monumental work written upon the subject of the back-country peddlers-merchants. Mr. Alexander, on the other hand, in his charming and articulate way explicates the whole thing in his several pages, and in an encompassing fashion which tells the whole story.

The editorial composition of your magazine gets better and better. You should feel well satisfied.

Sincerely,
Leonard J. Kerpelman



Where's John Morgan?

Cumberland, Maryland
March 19, 1990

Editor:

In reference to the picture of the hanging of John Morgan on page 19 of the spring issue, the notation below this picture states that he could not be identified.

If you look carefully, he appears to be standing just behind the rope. He has a black hood over his head, but his folded hands as well as his shoes are visible.

The article stated that he was of short stature (5'4"), and this is apparent as the people behind him are all a head taller. The black attire worn by everybody helps to make him obscure.

Sincerely,
Allen Lipscomb

Flatwoods, West Virginia
March 9, 1990

Editor:

I am writing concerning the picture on page 19 of the Spring 1990 issue. In the caption, you state that you are unable to identify John Morgan.

If you look closely, you will notice several unusual things. For instance, the noose is close to the floor, and the rope is stretched tightly at a slight angle. This suggests that the rope is under tension, as if a weight is hanging from it.

Through a magnifying glass, you can make out what appears to be a head with a white cloth around it. All those standing are looking directly at the noose, except the man leaning on the rail, who apparently cannot bring himself to look at the "empty" noose.

It seems a photographer would prefer the impact of a picture with the victim in it, rather than a gallows with a few unknown men looking at the noose.

Could Morgan have already been executed at the time this picture was taken?

Sincerely,
Chris Locke

Thanks for helping, but we're still not sure. —ed.

Pruntytown

Orlando, West Virginia
March 16, 1990

Editor:

I was delighted to read the article by Zera Radabaugh Lough in your Spring 1990 issue. I am enclosing \$4 which I hope you will use to send a copy to Mrs. Camille Robinson, formerly of Fairmont and now residing in Lexington, Virginia. I believe she is now 88 years old. The author mentioned Camille in her writing and I am sure Camille will be so interested in reading it. She also enjoyed the years she taught at Pruntytown. Although Camille and I have seen each other only two or three times in our many years of friendship, we remain as close as sisters through correspondence.

The Pruntytown facility has changed so much over the years. I lived as a little girl in Blueville, Taylor County. At the time as I remember, it was not only used as a place for wayward boys, but also some orphans were kept there until relatives or friends would take them. I remember one family where the parents had passed away and the only girl Mary, 16, wanted to maintain the household and take care of her brothers but was denied because she was too young.

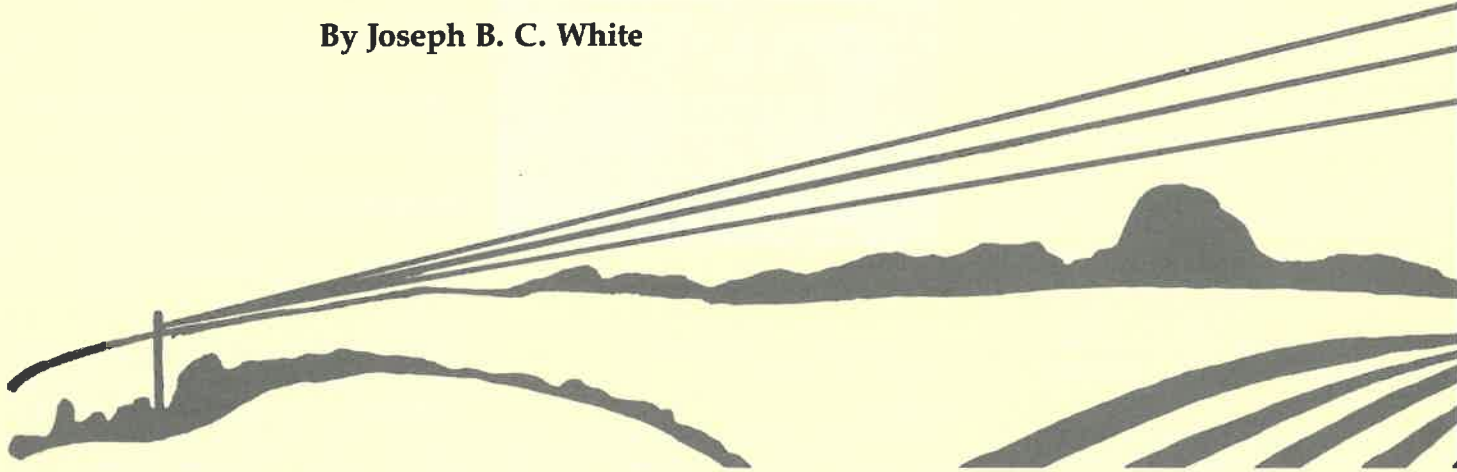
I remember also on Memorial Day they would bring all the "Reform School boys" to Grafton to march in the 30th of May parade. They were all sizes dressed all alike, some of them only six or seven years old. We looked forward to seeing them as they always did so well and were a real addition to the parade.

I want to send Mrs. Lough's address to Camille. I am sure these two would have a lot to say to each other.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Hetty Nye Finster

Electricity Comes to the Farm

By Joseph B. C. White



It was in the spring of 1935 that we heard the news. The power company announced that it was going to extend a distribution line along the hard road within a quarter mile of our Wood County farm. Electricity and all its miracles lay almost within our grasp. The whole family was excited. It was as if a second Christmas had been declared.

In the weeks that followed, giant trucks appeared, crawling slowly along the narrow country road. They pulled trailers laden with long white cedar poles to be dropped off at flagged stakes in the roadside ditch. Crews of workmen in boots and breeches began digging holes and winching the big utility poles into place, then climbed the poles to set wires into porcelain insulators. This was the feeder main line, bringing the electrical current from the faraway generator to the bottom of our lane.

Now it was our turn. We had to wire our house and install our own service line down to the main feeder. That meant building almost a quarter of a mile of line along a steep, tortuous gravel drive which led from the hard road to our place at the top of Windy Knob.

You could see our house from the road, or part of it, a white frame structure with a pillared porch in the federal style, set back in a deep yard and nearly hidden by a brace of

mature maples. Dad and Andy Fankhauser had given the old place its first painting in a decade, so when all this activity started our house sat glistening in its fresh coat of Dutch Boy lead and oil, belying its Civil War vintage.

Dad wired the house himself, putting light fixtures in the ceiling of each room where a carbide gas light system had been used. At least two outlets were set into the walls for each room, with more in the dining room and kitchen. He even installed a flood light over the porch steps, turning the front yard into a favorite family gathering place, a mecca for hop toads and a night playground for the kids in good weather. He lured one of his lodge brothers, a professional electrician, out to check his work with the special incentive of Mother's favorite Sunday dinner — country ham, red-eye gravy, mashed potatoes and home-canned green beans. After dinner the men moved to the porch and planned the service line.

We had to have 12 poles, so we trooped to the woods with axe and crosscut saw. Dad selected tall, straight trees, jack oaks he called them. With Dad and Andy doing most of the work, the trees were felled, the upper branches "swamped" off, then snugged with a log chain and snaked over the hill. Our team of young black Percheron mares, still skittish, broke into an easy sweat as they leaned into

their new harness. Neighbors helped Dad skin the bark from the butt ends of the logs, and we painted the exposed wood with creosote. Dad laid out the service line and we started digging holes.

Our own post-hole diggers would reach down only about four feet. The power company insisted on our poles being set at least six feet deep, and their foreman lent us some long-handled tools so we could get the job done. When the holes were ready we snaked the logs into place with the team, raising them with a block and tackle until they dropped in, standing nearly upright.

Folks came from all parts of the valley to watch. In the press of time, Dad made an exception to his no-Sunday-work rule. The watchers sat in their Model T's, Model A's and Maxwells, white-shirted from church, too dressed up to help. One of the young mares slipped into a hole and pulled a leg muscle. She favored that leg for weeks, but the job was done. The poles were plumbed and tamped tight. It had taken a lot of our precious springtime working weather, but now the poles stood straight and even, almost unseen along the edge of the orchard and a little grove of pines. There was no way that Dad was going to let a line of poles interfere with that view of the house on the hill.



One of my sister's boyfriends worked for the power company. He came out that Sunday, climbed the poles and strung the line to the house. All we needed then was the final hookup. Monday at school seemed endless, but when we jumped from the school bus we saw that the line was connected. We had electricity!

We ran up the hill to the house, then raced through the rooms flicking the lights on and off. It was magic, even in daylight. I think that Mother and Dad were just as excited as we were, for they let us work off our little frenzy before reminding us of the chores to be done.

That evening we gathered oil lamps from the various rooms, preparing to store them in the back porch pantry. Dad suggested that we leave one in each room in case of a power failure. He was right, as usual. We used those old oil lamps often in the years that followed, on stormy nights when the lines went down or when someone collided with a pole somewhere.

It was a remarkable change. That first night we did our homework bathed in more light than we could have imagined. We no longer squinted in the pale yellow glow of kerosene. There were no more wicks to trim on Saturdays, no lamp chimneys to wash, no reservoirs to keep filled. There were lights in a formerly dim

hall. No lamps to carry up the stairs to the bedrooms each night.

We even talked of getting a set of electric lights for the Christmas tree, or a sweeper or a "real" radio to replace the battery-powered Atwater Kent on the piano. But money was scarce. There wasn't enough for all that in one year. When Christmas came we strung the tree with popcorn and cranberries as always, and it looked just fine under the ceiling light in the parlor.

A few years later, as the shadows of the Great Depression shortened, we added electricity in the barn and no longer had to milk by lantern light on dark winter days. Eventually there was a pump which brought running water and indoor plumbing, and no more trips to the spring under the old gum tree for buckets of that sweet water. That pump ran all night a couple of years later when the barn was struck by lightning. Mother stood with the little kids held close and hosed down the house wall in spite of blistering heat, and she saved our home.

Electricity. It was the miracle of light and the power to do work. It changed our whole lifestyle just as it did for thousands of other rural folks in West Virginia and elsewhere. Life down on the farm never was changed so profoundly by any one element as by electricity. It was never the same again, and I'll never forget that day. ❖

Illustration by
Melinda Rawlins.

Aunt Mary's House

By Ethel Bolte

Aunt Mary came to live in our neighborhood in the spring of 1906. She had been married to Enoch Stutler. After Enoch's death, Aunt Mary married Amos Stutler, a brother of Enoch and our next-door neighbor.

Aunt Mary was "Pennsylvania Dutch," or German, and had many quaint sayings and expressions foreign to our locality. She had previously lived in Elk Garden, a railroad town in Mineral County. She often reminisced about her life there and would say she missed seeing and hearing the trains. But she was happy and contented with Amos and her son and daughter.

When she came to live next door it was the fashion to wear floor-length gored skirts and blouses with high necks and stand-up collars, tucked bodices, and puffed sleeves which narrowed to a tight cuff. Aunt Mary wore her gored skirts and fancy blouses for many years, regardless of later style changes.

She never changed her hairstyle, either. She wore it combed straight up with a knot on top of her head. As the years passed it became gray and thin. She was pleasantly plump in her younger days, but she moved with a light step and an easy grace. She had twinkling brown eyes and a sweet smile. She was always ladylike, speaking in a soft melodious voice and never saying ill of anyone. She welcomed all visitors as if she were overjoyed to see them.

When we were small, we ran in and out of Aunt Mary's house as if it were our own. She would give us a large sugar cookie or sometimes a slice of light bread spread with apple butter. Aunt Mary always had a treat of some kind.

Aunt Mary's house had three rooms, two large ones and a smaller one which was the kitchen. The kitchen was papered with newspapers and sparsely furnished, but it sparkled

with cleanliness. Aunt Mary's water pump was in the kitchen, complete with sink and drain, a great luxury in those days.

The house was very old. The two original rooms were logs covered with weather boarding which had never been painted, but instead whitewashed with lime. One side of the house, near the kitchen, was covered with a grapevine. The purple grapes were used by Aunt Mary in making jams, jelly and marmalade.

A woven-wire fence enclosed the house. No chickens or animals could wander in to mar the neatness of Aunt Mary's yard. West of the yard was a well-kept vegetable garden which supplied the family with fresh vegetables during the summer and canned or dried ones for the long winter months.

On the south side of the yard, near the fence, was a swing which provided many happy hours for the neighborhood children. The swing was a manufactured one with a wooden frame and two seats, similar to porch swings, which faced one another.

Aunt Mary had a little dog named Pearl who liked to play in the yard in the summertime. In the winter Pearl spent all her time sleeping on the lap of Grandpa Billy Stutler, whose gray hair was shoulder length in the days when short hair was the style for men. It was said that he was part Indian, and that explained his long hair.

The room next to the kitchen was a combined bedroom and living room. There was a large stone fireplace with a high mantel shelf, but the fireplace was not used. In front of it was a wood-burning stove, which was a thing of beauty. On each side of the open grate were ornamental posts of pink and white porcelain. It was one of the pretty things which Aunt Mary had brought with her from Elk Garden.

In a small alcove beside the chimney was a stand on which rested a dulci-

mer. Aunt Mary's son Ed had many musical instruments. He could play all of them, having been blessed with an innate knowledge of music. He also had a graphophone and many records. It was from them that I learned to know and love such pieces as "The Blue Danube," "Tales from the Vienna Woods," and such popular tunes as "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen."

The door to the other room was kept closed, but occasionally Aunt Mary would let us go in. We were fascinated by the beauty of many of the things in the room. There was a bed with an ornate carved headboard, which was spread with an expensive counterpane and stand-up sham pillows with elaborately embroidered pillowcases. There was a marble-topped table on which rested a large pitcher and bowl. Another table held a winter bouquet of dried flowers and ornamental grasses. On the mantel were many beautiful vases, plates and other treasures. There were figurines of a man and woman dressed in the elaborate style of colonial times.

There was a reason for the closed door, and for the fact that no one ever slept in that room. The room was haunted! It was told that, many years before, earlier occupants of the house had once allowed a traveling peddler to stay the night. During the evening, trouble developed and the peddler was murdered and buried under the house. Occasionally, his ghost was seen or noises heard.

Be that as it may, Aunt Mary Stutler lived calmly and at peace in that house for many years. If Ed complained of walking noises in the haunted room, she would open the door and the sound would stop. Years later, the peddler's ghost supposedly made so bold as to come out of the room on at least one occasion, but in Aunt Mary's day there was no doubt as to who was the reigning spirit in that Doddridge County home. ❖

West Virginia Newspapers:

The Pocahontas Times

By Gibbs Kinderman
Photographs by Doug Chadwick

The Pocahontas Times was started in 1883 by James B. Canfield and Hezekiah B. Marshall, who came to Pocahontas County from neighboring Randolph. That makes the Times, as editor emeritus Jane Price Sharp puts it, the "first paper in the county, and the only one today."

At the outset the paper was published at Huntersville, the original county seat, but in 1892 it moved to the newly-emerging town of Marlinton. Later that year it was sold to William T. Price and his sons, James and Andrew. The Times has remained a Price family operation from that day to this.

William T. was born in 1830 and raised in Pocahontas County. He was educated at Washington College (later Washington and Lee) in Lexington and at Union Seminary in Richmond. In Virginia he met Anna L. Randolph, and they were married on the 12th of October, 1865. After 20 years as a Presbyterian pastor in Highland and Rockingham counties, Virginia, William T. and Anna returned to Pocahontas. Family legend has it that they "crossed the mountain with two wagon loads of books and one wagon load of kids."

None of William T.'s children followed him into the ministry. All but Calvin, the youngest boy, went away to be educated, but they returned to Pocahontas County to live. Jim, Norman, and Susie became medical doctors, Andrew an attorney and Anna a business woman. Dr. Susie later moved away, but the other five lived out their days in the Marlinton area. William T. retired from the ministry in 1900, at the age of 70, and lived until 1921.

The Times, with its turn-of-the-century front page and its National Historic Register office, exemplifies a concern with history, continuity, and respect for the past reflected through five generations of Price family stewardship. On a quiet afternoon I discussed this impressive record with three of William T.'s descendants: grand-

Jane Price Sharp has been in charge at the *Pocahontas Times* for more than 30 years. This photo from a few years ago shows her engaged in a very familiar activity.





Calvin W. Price, Mrs. Sharp's father, was editor for more than a half-century. Here he works at his type case. Photo by Ted J. McElwee, about 1950.

daughters Jane Price Sharp (editor from 1957 to 1983) and Florence Price McNeel, and Florence's son William Price McNeel, the current editor.

We sat in the front room of the house where Jane and Florence grew up, daughters of William T.'s youngest son Calvin, editor from 1905 to 1957. Although they left home years ago to marry, Jane and Florence returned to their childhood residence when their husbands died. The house is just two blocks down Marlinton's Second Avenue from the Times office, and both women are actively involved with the newspaper today, though nominally long since retired. Jane started a new career last year at the age of 70 when Governor Caperton appointed her to fill a vacancy in the House of Delegates.

Gibbs Kinderman. How did your family get started in the newspaper business?

Jane Price Sharp. Well, Grandpa Price was a prolific writer. He had his own magazine in Virginia for a while, and he always submitted all kinds of writings to the church papers. He just wrote and wrote and wrote. He was interested in family history, and such like that.

So anyhow, he and the boys bought

the paper because he liked to write, and he had all the children to educate. There were six, and he didn't make much as a preacher, you know, a couple of hundred dollars a year.

GK. Was your grandfather, William T., the first minister of the Marlinton Presbyterian Church?

Florence Price McNeel. Yes, he was the first. He came here as the pastor, and he served a lot of the churches out in the county. People would come in their wagons from all over the county to his house across the river there, and he would come out and marry them.

JPS. Dr. Jim and Andrew [the sons] put the paper together. Other than write, I don't think Grandpa Price had much to do with the actual putting out of the paper. If he buried people he always wrote a long obituary! He started publishing the histories of the families, that was part of the writing that he did. *Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County* was published there in nineteen-and-one, I believe.

GK. So the county history was published first in the newspaper?

JPS. Yes. Everybody got to read it and check it, before it was put in book form.

GK. Was it printed as a book on the press at the *Times*?

JPS. Yes — with paper from Cheat Mountain, from the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. And of course, all that type was set by hand. Uncle Norman had a lot to do with the history. I expect before he went to medical school he worked more on the book than on other things.

I believe he said it took them six months to print. I believe it was 400 copies. I don't remember what they charged, whether it was \$6 a book or not, but anyhow they thought it was pretty good money, at that time.

GK. So the genesis of the book was obituaries of your grandfather's church members?

JPS. Well, not just church members. He preached at Green Bank, all over the county. He was a native of the county and had grown up here, and he knew everybody. But if he buried them, they always got a longer obituary in the paper! And it wasn't just obituaries, it was things that he knew and that he thought were important to get written down while the Civil War people were still living, and all like that.

Now, my father was the youngest boy, and he started working when he was 16. He was supposed to work until the others got through school, and then he was supposed to go to college. But by the time Dr. Norman had finished medical school and Dr. Susie had finished medical school, and Aunt Anna had gone to art school and it was Daddy's turn — he was ready to get married. So he took over the paper in nineteen-and-five, became editor.

GK. So one aspect of the decision to buy the paper was a project to send the kids to college?

FPM. That was what Daddy always said. Each boy worked at it till they would go to college. But by the time he got the others through, he was too old. He stayed home!

GK. When Calvin Price, your father, started working, was the whole paper put out by family members? Did they have outside employees?

JPS. They always had ladies to set the type.

GK. Why always ladies?

JPS. Because they have a little more patience with picking up type.

And then "Simmie" [L. O.] Simmons came around nineteen-and-four, and he retired in early 1940. He was

a deaf mute. He came out of Virginia, and he was a trained printer. So he did all the printing and mechanical work, like that. He stood there and ran every page through that was printed on that big printing press up there. He stood there and ran this page through, then turned it over and ran it through again. Then we all folded them by hand.

GK. How long would it take to do a paper, to print it up?

FPM. Oh, I don't know — a full day, wasn't it? Or longer? How long did he stand there? Hour after hour.

JPS. When we quit printing on this press, we were printing 5,600 to 6,000 papers, and the press runs 1,200 an hour. But you don't get more than

about a thousand an hour, so it took about five hours each side — each two pages. You could do four pages without any trouble, but every two or three weeks you'd have to have an extra page, so you'd print it up on Friday, and then cut it in two and fold it.

GK. So the paper was usually just four pages?

FPM. Four pages, right.

JPS. At election time and all, you'd have a double paper, sometimes you'd print eight pages. But now with the computers you can set up enough type in one night to fill up several pages. Then, you had to think a long time ahead.

GK. The *Times* is really open now. People write things, bring them in,

you print them. Was it possible to do that back in the days when it all had to be set by hand?

JPS. Well, you just didn't print as much. When you hand set, you think about the words you use. But we still tried to print what people would bring in.

Looking back over the paper, they'd carry on correspondence — mostly family stuff, history sometimes, all different topics. Daddy was interested in everything outdoors, so he always had some nature notes — field notes, he called them — and bear tales and panther tales and things like that. And whenever he went anyplace, a meeting or anything like that, he always wrote a big article on it.

The *Times* office is a working museum of country printing, accommodating everything from antique presses to modern computers.





Left: The younger generation is represented in Margery Jessee and husband Russell, the managing editor. Russell is the grandson of Mrs. Sharp and great-great-grandson of patriarch William T. Price.

Below: The paper has always been a family affair. The current guiding spirits are editor Bill McNeel, his mother Florence Price McNeel, and Mrs. Sharp, Bill's aunt and Florence's sister.



GK. What were your father's main interests, other than the newspaper?

JPS. Well, he's known more for his conservation efforts than anything else, clear back into the early 1900's. He knew Pinchot* and those others, and he went to Washington and testified on starting the national forests and the parks. He was very much for publicly-owned hunting lands, conservation of all kinds. He had a saying that he owned his land from here down to where he met the Chinese coming through from the other side, that it was his responsibility. I say, now, he could tell things very effectively!

About '39 he was picked as a typical country editor and was invited to be on radio with the editor of the *New York Sun*, I believe it was. So he went to New York and was on "We The People," a national radio show at that time. Daddy said he'd bet the other man didn't know all his subscribers by their first names! He said that the best people in the world lived on the Greenbrier River, and the farther up the river you went the better the people were, and he lived among the people at the head of the Greenbrier.

Daddy always said that he grew up in the shadow of other people. Uncle Andy was called the Sage of Pocahontas, and then Daddy was called the Sage of Pocahontas, too, after Uncle Andy died in 1930. Uncle Andy got credit for all Daddy's writing for a long time. Uncle Andy was a better speaker than Daddy was, but Daddy was a better writer — at least more widely read. Uncle Andy got a little lengthy in his writing.

Daddy always told the joke that he was known as Dr. and Mrs. William Price's son Calvin, you know, and then he was Andy and James and Norman's brother. So he thought he was finally going to be on his own, going to get married and be editor of the paper. And he said, lo and behold, he walked down the aisle and since then he'd been known as Miss Mabel's husband!

GK. Florence, what was it like being the newspaper editor's daughter?

FPM. I just read proofs and folded. We worked at it, but I never thought

* Gifford Pinchot, a pioneering forester, was President Theodore Roosevelt's chief conservation aide and later governor of Pennsylvania.

Cal Price

"Nobody in Pocahontas has the slightest doubt but what the name of Cal Price will live on forever after he dies, that is if you can find anybody who believes he will die," fellow journalist Jim Comstock wrote in 1953. "Most Pocahontasites think of him just living on and on like the trees of the forest." Price was the editor of the *Pocahontas Times* for over 50 years, and his name indeed lives on.

Cal Price was a hard-core individualist. He liked the format of the paper when he became editor in 1906 and refused to change just to keep up with fashion. In a tribute written at his death in 1957, a Beckley paper called the *Times* "pleasantly anachronistic." It went on to note that "In the heart of Cousin Cal and many of his friends or readers, there were three great newspapers in the world, the *London Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Pocahontas Times*."

And Cal Price was a conservationist, believing that "you don't grow good people on poor land." Next to his newspaper, his family, and his Presbyterian God, Cal loved the woods of Pocahontas County. As he wrote in 1940, "I have lain with my feet to a campfire so many times I cannot sleep at nights with my feet under the covers. This little weakness has been the cause of strained domestic relations in an otherwise happy, blissful household."

He sang his love of the outdoors in his weekly "Field Notes," a feature of the *Times* second page for decades. "I am a hunter and a fisher who kills less game and catches fewer and smaller fish and talks and writes more about it than any other person in the known world," he wryly admitted.

Cal the naturalist and conservationist made even a bigger mark in the world than Cal the newspaperman. In 1954 West Virginia dedicated an 11,000-acre tract of land in

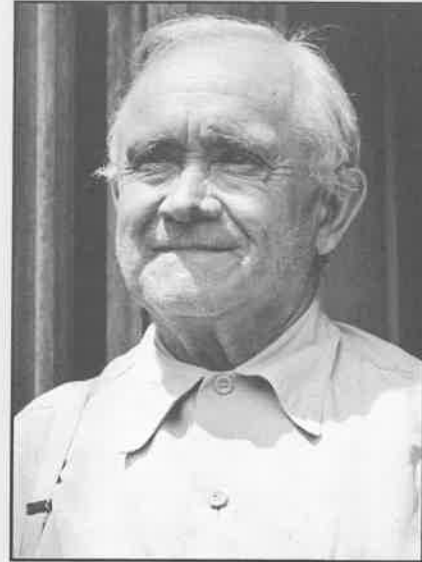
Pocahontas County as the Calvin W. Price State Forest. Cal's response was a masterpiece of his trademark self-deprecating humor: "I'm sinfully proud of it. It's not often a man gets his tombstone before he dies."

Comstock, Price's successor as West Virginia's best-known country editor, studied him from across the mountains in Richwood. "He had three famous theories. The first was that no newspaper should accept liquor ads. Second, America's prime sin was its disregard for precious topsoil. And third, there were still panthers in the West Virginia mountains."

It was not the black panther of the jungle to which Comstock referred, but the great American cat variously known as panther, mountain lion, or catamount. That panthers still roamed the Pocahontas woods was more than a theory for Cal; it was an article of faith. And despite the university professors who claimed that the last panther in West Virginia was shot in Randolph County in 1859, panther sightings appeared in the columns of the *Pocahontas Times* with religious regularity down through the years.

Ironically, the first verified panther sighting in Pocahontas County occurred just a few weeks after Price's sudden and unexpected death — and it was the product of an affectionate practical joke cooked up by friends of his. Dr. William Birt, a Milton dentist, purchased a mail-order mountain lion from Mexico and enlisted Jim Comstock and fabled Richwood outdoorsman Ed Buck to sneak the beast into Cal Price country. Cal died while the animal was in transit, but the conspirators decided to carry out the hoax as a memorial.

The panther was surreptitiously smuggled into Richwood in a shipping crate, and was duly "trapped" on top of Kennison Mountain, just across the Pocahontas line, by



Calvin W. Price was the voice and spirit of the Pocahontas mountains. Today a large state forest bears his name. Photographer unknown, 1954.

Buck. The fabulous feline went on display at the Richwood Fire Department at 25 cents a peek, and Comstock fired off a special report to the *Charleston Daily Mail*: "A huge cat measuring about six feet long and standing an estimated two feet at the shoulders was trapped alive yesterday on Kennison Mountain in Pocahontas County, by Richwood high school teacher Ed Buck...C. O. Handley, chief of the game division of the State Conservation Commission, said in Charleston that the take is unprecedented for this area of the United States in nearly 100 years." The story swept the state, only to be debunked by the crusading *Charleston Gazette* within the week.

Had he still been living, Cal would have probably enjoyed the prank as much as the next fellow, even though the joke was on him. And it would not have shaken his faith in the Pocahontas Panther one iota. As *West Virginia Conservation* magazine noted in 1954, "Cal Price believes that if you don't believe in panthers in West Virginia, then West Virginia panthers will not believe in you."

— Gibbs Kinderman



about it as being anything special.

GK. How old were you when you started working?

FPM. I'd say I started proofreading about the second grade.

GK. In the second grade? They must have taught faster in those days than they do now.

FPM. Oh, Daddy taught me to read before I went to school.

GK. So where did you do the proofreading? Did you do it at home, or did you go down to the paper?

FPM. Every day at noon when we'd come back from school, he'd bring stuff down, and while we were having lunch I'd proofread. It seems like all my life I've proofread.

JPS. I counted the words. All the legal ads, everything like that, always had to be counted. That was my job.

GK. What part did your mother play in the newspaper?

FPM. I never remember her doing anything particularly, other than I guess she helped us fold papers and things. I don't know.

JPS. She read proofs some, later on, after everybody was grown. And she always said she did all Daddy's worrying for him!

GK. Calvin Price wasn't a worrier? JPS. No, no — but she always thought of everything ahead of time for him. She was a worrier.

He always had plenty of help up until, I'd say, the '40's, and then it was hard, after Simmie retired. He struggled along there for a good many years, and he was getting older. Momma would go up with him in the evenings sometimes and catch papers if the kids weren't around. Grandchildren then, my children, got to catching papers, and they all would help.

GK. What does "catching papers" mean?

JPS. I guess if you never went through it you don't know! When you printed, each paper came around this flapper. It would put the paper down, catch another one, take it down, catch another one, take that down — well, somebody had to sit

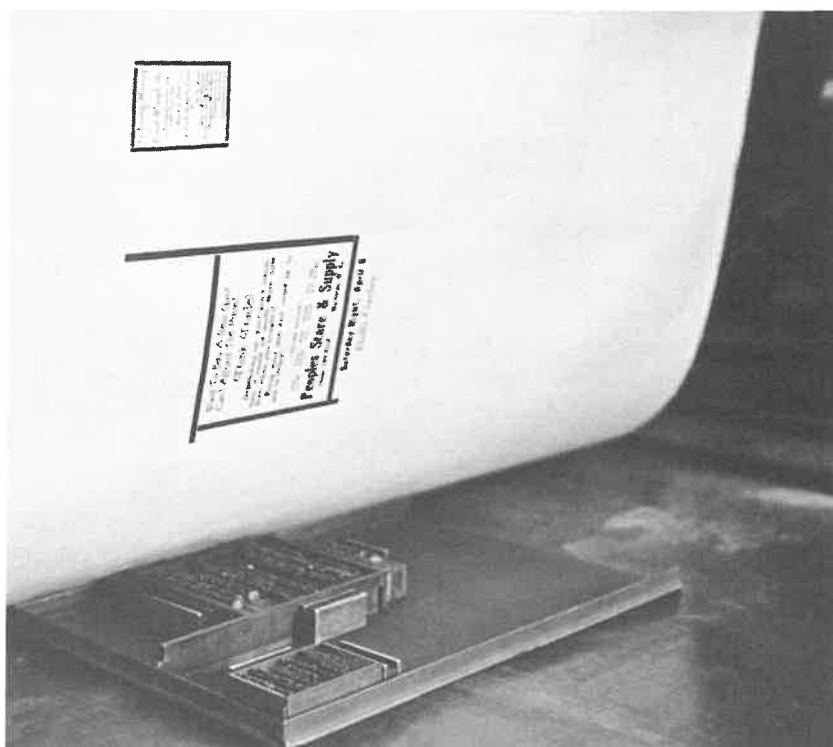
there and straighten the papers out, or else you'd have just a mess of papers. They had to be turned over and printed on the other side.

GK. So once you grew up and got married, that was the end of your active involvement with the paper?

JPS. Well, I kept the advertising books at Hillsboro. I'd come up here at least once a month and help send out bills for ads and things. Mabel Hogsett and the others handled the subscriptions and all. And then Evelyn went to work in '44, I reckon, Evelyn Withers. She took over the books then, been there ever since.

Then I came back home when Basil* went in the Army. After he died I stayed, of course. Simmie retired about that time, so it was first one boy then another. We always needed help. I started running the job press then. They'd fix their jobs up, and I'd go and run them.

* Jane's husband, Basil Sharp, died in Germany in 1944.



Production of the *Times* has now been modernized, but employees made daily use of very old printing skills up until a few years ago. In this series of photos from 1983 Eva Grimes hand sets type at far left. Evelyn Withers locks type in for an ad layout, then positions it on the paper's Babcock flatbed press. The final picture shows the fresh imprint, made by the letterpress process with the type actually touching the paper. The Babcock press and Eva are now retired, but Evelyn continues to do letterpress printing for stationery and other job orders.

Then I started to learn to run the big press. I always had to go and sew the tapes when the belts would break and all like that. Momma would go up there when Daddy was printing, but he'd always call me when anything broke. I knew about the presses and other stuff, but I never learned to set type till after Daddy died. I had never lifted type, made up a paper or anything like that till after he died. I had to learn pretty fast, then.

FPM. Daddy died on Friday, and she went to work on Monday as editor. The paper didn't miss a coming-out.

JPS. We had legals and things that had to come out the next week. I mean, you just don't stop for a week. 'Course, I remember one week we were a little late.

GK. Did you think of it as a permanent thing, or just "Well, we've got to get the paper out this week?"

JPS. Well, I guess I thought it was pretty permanent, or at least we'd see

how we did. We thought about it there for a while, and Evelyn and them said they could get the paper out if I could run the press and handle the money. So we did!

I figured I had about as much sense as some of the others, so I'd just go ahead and do it. We got through. After you've done one year, you think you can keep on.

GK. Were any of your children interested in making a career out of the newspaper?

JPS. Billy [William Price McNeel, Jane's nephew] was the only one that ever showed much interest in it. Mine had to work catching papers and folding papers — Saturdays and Monday nights and Wednesdays. When you have to do that when you're little, you don't think much about making a lifetime work of it, I don't reckon.

GK. Bill, I understand you grew up in Charleston. Did you have anything to do with the paper when you were young?

William Price McNeel. Just the same sort of thing as Jane's children. I was up here a good bit from Charleston in the summertime — catching papers, inserting and stuffing papers. When we grandchildren were around, we had to do that work, yes.

JPS. And he took printing in school. They had a shop class in that in Charleston.

WPM. That was a standard in junior high school, in the seventh grade, the boys all took a year of printing. I don't know why they selected printing, of all things, for all seventh grade boys. In eighth grade we took a semester of sheet metal and a semester of woodwork. I learned to set type in Charleston, not up here.

GK. As a child, did you ever think you'd be involved in the newspaper?

WPM. Off and on, I suppose — earlier rather than later. I made career plans otherwise, went to college planning to do something else. Grandfather died in 1957, the spring I graduated high school, so I worked

full time that summer before going to college.

Once you get out of school you discover you have to work, to find something to do. Marlinton High School needed a math teacher, and I needed a job, so I said, "I'll try teaching math."

GK. And you taught down to the mid-'70's?

WPM. About that time Maxine Dever died suddenly, and the paper needed some help. It took two of us, you see — another lady and I had to jump in to replace Maxine. And then I just stayed on.

GK. Jane, your grandson Russell Jessee is now managing editor. When did he first get interested in the newspaper?

JPS. Well, I don't know. He was catching papers and doing things like that. After he went away to college he started to take journalism, about his second or third year, I reckon. I guess it was last year before he decided that living around here was better than living other places.

GK. Was the *Times* the first newspaper published in Pocahontas County?

JPS. First paper in the county, and the only one today. There were others, but they were short-lived. The *Marlinton Journal* [a Republican paper, 1915-1974] lasted longer than any of the others.

GK. How were legal notices and things of that sort published before there was a paper in the county?

JPS. They'd hang it on the courthouse door. And the *Greenbrier Independent* covered this area.

GK. Was legal advertising a fairly large portion of a newspaper's income back in the old days?

JPS. Well, back in the early part of this century, yes. The law said they had to publish legals in papers [of both parties], so that assured the *Marlinton Journal* of a basic income. And the tax delinquent lists, and all the things like that. It was a pretty steady source of income, but it doesn't amount to much today. A few thousand dollars ran a paper for a year then, so if you had a couple of thousand of that in legals you were pretty well set. Nobody ever made a whole lot of money, but it was a steady living.

GK. When did the *Times* stop setting type by hand?

JPS. Well, we last printed the paper ourselves about '74, but we still hand set at least the front page and a lot of the ads. We'd run through a copy on our press, get a good copy, and then it was pasted up and printed offset. I guess we stopped handsetting altogether after the flood, 1985.

The last part of '74 was when we stopped using our press. We had a problem getting paper. We couldn't get the cut sheets of paper. Everybody's printing off of rolls these days. We'd always gotten paper from R. D. Wilson in Clarksburg, and we'd get a ton at a time — that was about all we had storage room for. They said they just couldn't get the paper any more. Then they said they could get us a whole carload, but that was \$35,000 worth of paper.

And it was just about that time that everybody was changing to offset presses. And also about that time [typesetter] Eva Grimes broke her arm, I remember. We had been going to Lewisburg and getting extra sheets printed. So we just started going down there and printing it all. It was lots easier!

When you were printing on those presses, it took at least a day for each side. Time you'd make up your paper and get it printed and all, and then tear it down, why, you had to start early.

GK. Did you keep hand setting type to such a late date on purpose, or did it just sort of work out that way? Was it a conscious statement, or just that this was how you'd done it and you didn't have a good reason to change?

JPS. Didn't have any good reason to change. Now, we had a Linotype [typesetting machine] back in nineteen-and-one that they used about a year. But they had problems with it, and they finally just sent it back. My father wasn't very mechanical-minded, he didn't like mechanical things. He said all the women didn't break down at one time!

There was Miss Lizzy Waugh, worked there I don't know how many years, and Lura Brill, that had the Brill's store after her husband died, she had started out working at the *Times* office. Different women worked there for several years, until they got married or something or other like that. But Miss Lizzy was an old maid, and she worked all her life there, prac-

tically. And then Mrs. Baker, she was a deaf person, she worked there.

GK. Having births and funeral announcements and church meetings as the front page news, how far back does that date?

JPS. Well, you look back at some of the old papers, they almost always had the obituaries on the front page. They almost always had the church notices on the front page. They sometimes had a little more news on the front page than we do, but then they didn't have as many announcements.

WPM. What type you had set determined the organization of the paper. What you had set, that's what you used.

GK. So the first stuff that was done went on the front page?

JPS. The front page was the *last* thing printed.

WPM. What type you already had set, that's what you printed for the inside pages. If it came in early, it went on the inside.

JPS. When you hand set, you get through printing on Wednesday evening. You throw your type back in on Thursday morning. You have to start setting again for the next paper, as soon as you get through. So while some of them would send out bills and do things like that, the others would start right away at setting type. You'd have to have something written, ready for them to set. What they set on the last of the week, you could use Monday, you see, to print your first side. And then while you're printing that, they could be setting on stuff that went on the outside pages.

WPM. My grandfather's column was always there on the second page.

JPS. Daddy wrote more, and there's more written in the papers, in the 1930's, than in later years, because you didn't have very much advertising to fill up the paper. You had to write a lot.

WPM. After we started getting the paper printed offset, of course we just decided that certain things would still be hand-set type: Your obituaries, your notices and these things were going to be done by hand-set type. Really the middle '70's is when the paper became what it is now. But there have always been obituaries on the front page, and there's always been meeting notices on the front page.

GK. How was the paper delivered in the old days?

JPS. It's always been mailed. Simmie just carried them to the post office. Now, of course, we have about 90-some sacks of mail — we have to divide it up and all. Used to be, you just took it over to the post office and gave it to them. We had an East State sack and a West State sack — east of Deep Water [Fayette County] and west of Deep Water. That was the dividing line for mailing, on the railroad.

GK. When the railroad was running in Pocahontas County, did the papers go up the river and down the river on the same day?

JPS. Yes. Used to, you had two

trains each way — up and down in the morning and up and down in the afternoon, up until '50-some. They didn't deliver it any other way. We take it down to Hillsboro now and to Slaty Fork, and catch the up mail on Thursday morning. We used to try to make the down mail Wednesday afternoons.

GK. How much were the subscriptions back then?

JPS. It was a dollar for years. That was Grandpa Price — he said everybody ought to be able to afford something to read, so it was a dollar. But then expenses and postage and all started climbing there. I was looking through some old cash books here, before the flood of '85, and the total postage bill for the whole year was

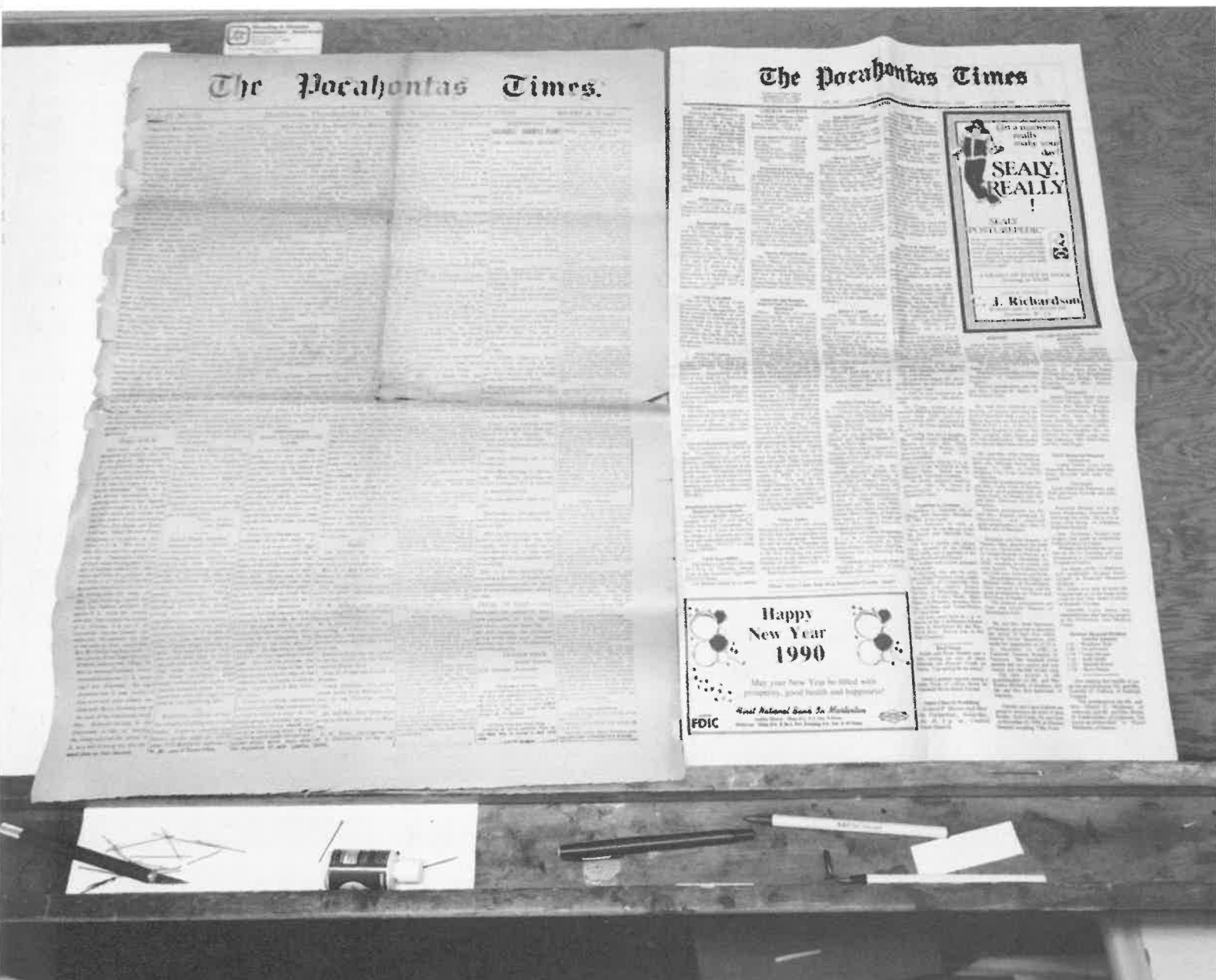
\$258 in '42. That paid all your mailing and all your sending out your statements and everything.

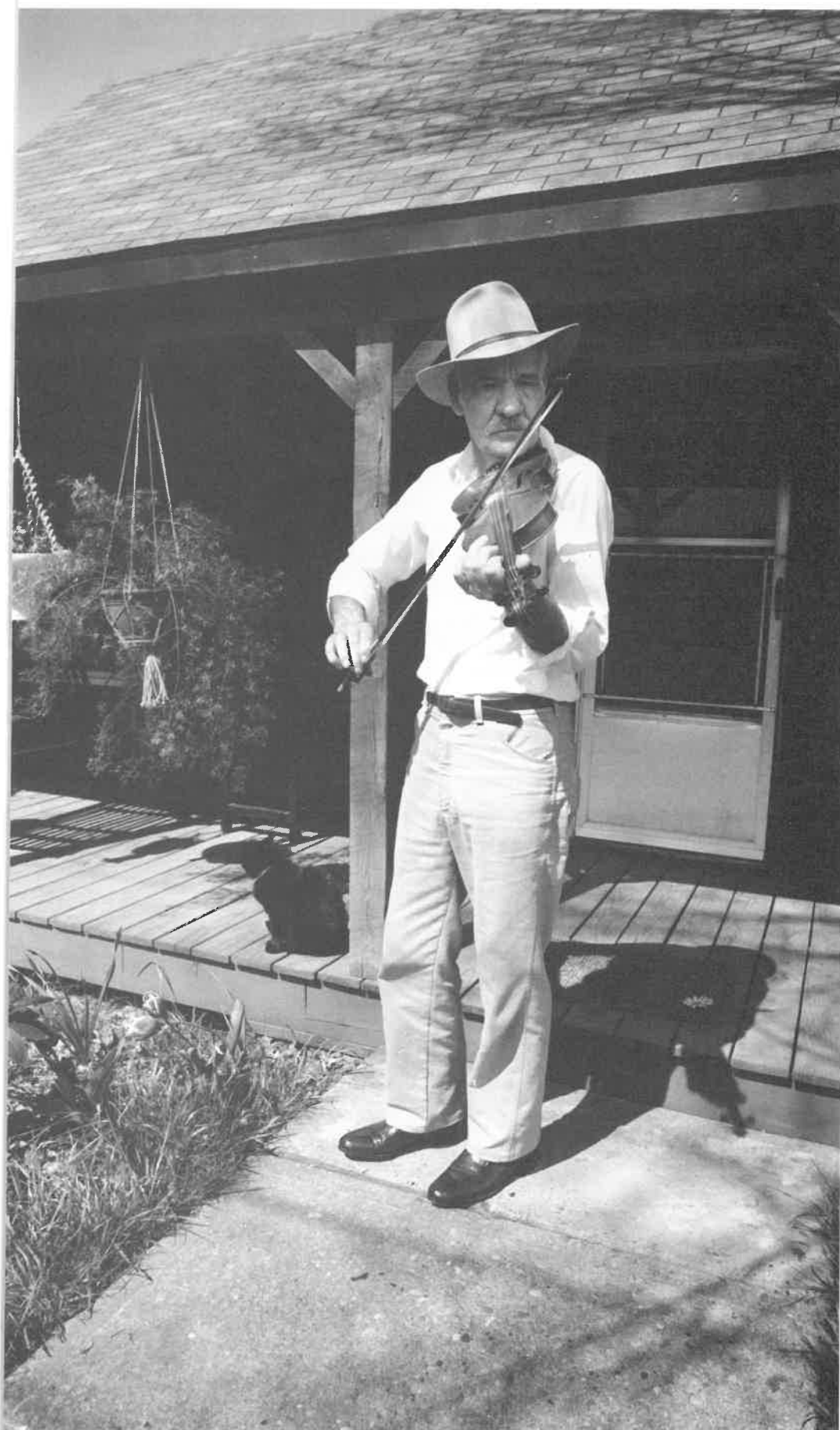
You didn't pay anything in the county, your county mail was free. Not for letters, but for newspapers — free in-county distribution. The government felt they were important enough to disseminate information, that they didn't charge, in the county.

GK. You're almost as much a hometown paper for people who have moved away as you are a local paper now, aren't you?

JPS. Half of it goes out of the county, out of the area. They're Pocahontas people, they just have moved other places and want to keep up. Sure do complain if they don't get their paper on time too! ✱

Things change, but maybe not that much. This photograph shows a 1909 *Pocahontas Times* alongside the first edition for 1990.





Glen Smith takes his fiddling seriously. He has made music in West Virginia for 25 years.

"I started out to be a millionaire, but I found out fiddling was easier and a lot more fun," say Glen Smith, who at 67 is considered one of the best old-time fiddle players in West Virginia.

Though not born in West Virginia, Glen considers himself a Mountaineer since he has lived in the state for the past 25 years. "The people have accepted me and I've become a West Virginian," he says. "Just call me a migrant settler."

Glen, the youngest boy in a family of nine children, is the son of Creed and Lydia Edwards Smith. Born April 11, 1923, in Woodlawn, Virginia, Glen has fond recollections of growing up during the Depression years in a family of considerable musical talent.

"My sister was a great guitar player and another one was a good banjo player," he says. "I used to play the banjo a little, but now I can't do nothing with one 'cause I never fool with one any more."

"Like everyone else during those days we were poor. And like everyone else we had to raise our own food. Back then, there was about 14 different ways you could fix blackberries. It was definitely catch a rabbit or miss a meal. But in all that bunch of family, I was the only Democrat. My daddy even had a picture of Hoover as big as this table on the wall — and at the same time, we were starving to death! And believe it or not, all of them stayed Republican too," Glen says.

"Now my daddy played the clawhammer banjo," he recalls. "But my daddy didn't call it clawhammering though. He called it 'thumbcockering a banjo.' It was like a shot gun. He'd just get that thumb in that shape when he was playing and the rest was amazing. I truly think my daddy was one of the greatest old-time banjo players I ever heard. He could play 'Fishers

"I've Always Loved Music"

Champion Fiddler Glen Smith

By Jacqueline G. Goodwin
Photographs by Michael Keller

Hornpipe,' 'Stoney Point,' and 'Forked Horn Deer.' All the old tunes."

Glen continues. "My Grandfather Mal Smith was an old Civil War veteran. I can remember the old man. He lived to be 107 years old. He played the five-string banjo even after he was up in his late 90's. He died along back in '28 or '29.

"I remember my Granddad and Grandmother Smith's little old home," Glen reports. "I couldn't have been more than five or six. We would go there in the spring and help put out the garden and plant the potatoes. I can still see him sitting in that old rocking chair with his beard that came down pretty near his belt.

"My cousin Howard, who's a lot older than me, says my Granddad Smith fought under General Stonewall Jackson. Now, that war was kind of funny-run. I guess they give my granddad a mount and let him off for a month in the spring of the year to come home to help put out the crop. I think Howard said Granddad Smith rode that horse about 275 miles to come home. But my granddad went back and joined up again. All that old man talked about during his last days was how great old Stonewall Jackson was."

Glen grew up with music in the family and acquired his first fiddle as a teenager. "I was 15 years old when I got my first fiddle," he says. "I paid \$10 for that fiddle. I was working in a furniture factory and I was always whistling these old fiddle tunes. My friend Claude Richardson told me, 'I think you've got talent.' He said he wanted to sell me a fiddle. And that's how it all started. I bought the fiddle and started playing.

"But I only had that fiddle for two years," he continues. "It got burned up in a fire. There was an old office on the property where I was working.

I had that fiddle in there and left it overnight. The office burned down and I lost my fiddle."

Glen doesn't profess to have learned exclusively on the old-time, traditional songs that he prefers today. "The first tune I ever learned to play was 'You Are my Sunshine,'" he admits. "That was the first thing I ever sawed out on the fiddle. And it wasn't a bit pretty.

"After I bought my fiddle I didn't know that my daddy could actually play one. And I worked with that thing for over a year or more. One day I come in from work and he was sitting out under this big cherry tree playing the fiddle just as pretty as you have ever heard in your life. I went up to him and said, 'Good God, I didn't know you played a fiddle.' And he said, 'You never asked me.'"

Hoover politics notwithstanding, Glen remembers his father proudly. "My daddy never went to school a day in his life. But he taught himself to read. He couldn't read real writing, but he could read printing. And spell words out of this world. He died young. He was only 68. But the rest of them Smiths just hump up and let the moss grow on their backs. They're a long-life people," he adds.

"I played my first square dance in Dover, Delaware, around in '42," Glen recalls. "For that dance I got \$5. I also was playing along the road in little clubs. Now, I usually got \$3 or \$4 and all I could drink. That's how they'd pay you back then."

Like a lot of musicians, he took to the airwaves when he got the chance. "Back in '47 or '48 I played on a lot of radio stations in the South. WKBC,

Glen and Helen in 1944. They remain happily married today. Photographer unknown.



North Wilkesboro, North Carolina; WBOB, Galax, Virginia; and the old 'Mountain Jamboree' in Martinsville, Virginia.

"I used to play in a band with Doc Davis," Glen continues. "He's the one who started the fiddlers convention in Galax. The band had two doctors, two lawyers, and me. And we all played on the 'Mountain Jamboree' every Saturday night.

"Now radio was live, all right," he remembers. "When that little light come on, you started playing and you would play for 30 straight minutes. No more, no less. And we got paid pretty good. Not good money now, but good money back then.

"I didn't stay in Virginia too long, though. I went to Ohio first. Began to paint school buses. Now, when I lived there, under no circumstances would I let anyone know I could play a fiddle. They just didn't appreciate the fiddle back then."

Glen points out that he stayed in

Glen Smith On Cassette

Glen Smith's music is available on the recently released cassette "Say Old Man." The tape was produced by Augusta Heritage Records in Elkins and Marimac Recordings of New Jersey. It is the third in a series designed to present West Virginia traditional music on tape.

"Say Old Man" offers 22 selections from Glen's impressive repertoire of fiddle tunes. It includes Smith family tunes and tunes from Glen's days of playing with radio stars of the 1940's. Glen picked up material from his father, Creed Smith, from the radio performers, and from Wilson Douglas and other Mountain State musicians. He continues to swap music with West Virginia's best, and two of them join him on "Say Old Man" — Dwight Diller on banjo and Gerry Milnes on guitar.

Glen plays music at home or away and is a regular performer at fairs and festivals. You may order the cassette from Glen Smith, P.O. Box 493, Elizabeth, WV 26143. The cost is \$8, plus \$1.50 postage and handling.



This photograph was made about 1952. Glen played widely on radio and in public before settling down to the timber business. Photographer unknown.

Ohio for about ten years. "The timber business brought me to West Virginia," he says. "Came to Grantsville first and then I bought me a little piece of property in Elizabeth.

"I got started buying walnut logs down here to start with, and then I found out there was plenty of hardwood timber to go around so I just bought me a sawmill and started sawing. I owned that business for about six or seven years then I sold out to my son, Delano."

After Glen settled in West Virginia he started his own band. "We called ourselves the Mountain State Pickers," he explains. "My son Delano, who I taught the guitar, played with us and so did Kenny Kendall from Grantsville. Hal Cotrell from Elizabeth played the mandolin and Mike Wade from Parkersburg was the banjo picker. I played the fiddle. One time we even played with the West Virginia University marching band in Morgantown, during the homecoming game back in '74.

"But the band broke up and I'm not in one now," Glen discloses. "I just

play with anyone who comes along and wants to play." Picking buddies say Glen Smith puts in his playing time and is in no danger of letting his musical talent grow rusty.

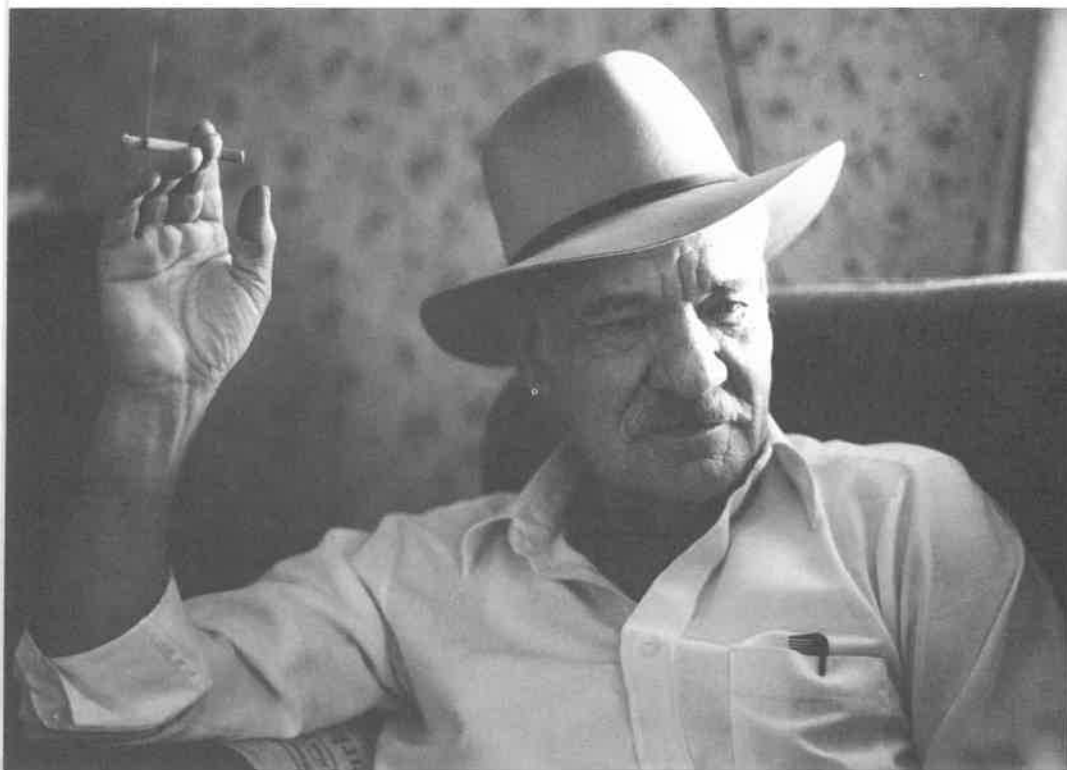
Glen admits he will play music at any time of the day — morning, afternoon, or night. "When someone comes around I like to play music. It doesn't matter if he comes around at eight o'clock in the morning. I'm gonna play," he boasts. "Pickers from all around the state come here all the time. I've played with them all." Glen also travels across West Virginia himself, stopping along the way to play tunes with friends, many of them fine old-time musicians in their own right.

"Now, I play a lot with Dwight Diller, who lives in Hillsboro. I think he plays the closest to the way my daddy played the banjo than anybody I know. Many times I'll get a call from Dwight, and I'll just go play on the spur of the moment."

Glen says he owns five fiddles and proudly places his favorite on the table for me to inspect. "This one is my



Glen Smith's official Vandalia Gathering portrait. He's been at the festival every year since 1980.



"I started out to be a millionaire but I found out fiddling was a lot more fun," Glen Smith says. He's satisfied with his choice.

The Smith trophy corner below attests Glen's success as a mountain fiddler. There are ribbons and mementos from Vandalia, the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair, the Forest Festival and other events.

favorite. I bought it off of Charlie Winter. I swapped him for about 1,500 feet of lumber," the sawmill fiddler announces as he picks up the instrument and begins to play "Smokey Mountain Rag," an old tune from the '30's. When he is done he continues to fill me in about his beloved instrument.

"Now, I just like the tone of it," he explains. "But Jimmy Costa told me, 'A man of your talent playing a fiddle like that ought to be shot.' He didn't like it at all. Since Jimmy is a good friend of mine, I let him tell me that."

Besides playing the fiddle, Glen also does a bit of carpentry work. "I made this table and these chairs," he announces. "I also made the kitchen cabinets. I ought to make a fiddle some time. But it'll probably look like a johnboat when I am finished."

Glen's wife of 45 years, Helen Bedsaul Smith chimes in. "I can break them if he makes them," she says, laughing.

"Now, I've always kidded Glen and many times I've said, 'I'm gonna break up these fiddles.' Well, one day in that back bedroom I had a plant in

a macrame hanger. I thought if I took that curtain down and hung the planter on the rod it would get more sun. How it fell out of that hanger I'll never know. But it fell on one of Glen's fiddles. It broke to smithereens. I called my son-in-law and said, 'Larry, do you still have that extra bedroom? Get it ready. I broke Glen's fiddle.'"



Glen has received many awards and recognitions. His bedroom wall is lined with certificates and ribbons he has won playing his favorite fiddle. Many of the ribbons have faded over the years, but he proudly points to each one of them.

"Here's one for first place, which I won at the Clark Kessinger Memorial Fiddlers Contest back in '75. And here's one for first place I got at the Clay County Golden Delicious Apple Festival one year. Here's another I won at the Pulaski Bluegrass Fiddlers Contest," he says.

But the one award of which he is most proud is the honor he received at last year's Vandalia Gathering. "Yes, sir. I won first place," Glen says as he proudly shows off his blue ribbon and the certificate for the senior old-time fiddler category. "And I won it playing this old fiddle of mine."

And what does the future hold for Glen Smith, champion fiddler? Besides traveling around the state and making music with his friends, Glen says he intends to keep entering fiddling contests and working the festivals. "They'll have me back again at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Ripley," he hopes, referring to the big July event in Jackson County.

But he doesn't intend to overdo it, Glen says. "Well, I'm retired now, you know," he points out. "And I can do what I want, when I want and where I want. But one thing for sure: I'll keep on playing, 'cause I've always loved music." ❀

Roxie Gore

Looking Back in Logan County

By Ronda G. Semrau

Her small frame bends over the piece of embroidery work she is doing. Soft wrinkles emphasize dark eyes. Her waist-length hair, still jet black with only touches of gray, is braided and wrapped around her head. Age hasn't stolen this woman's beauty, only changed it. This past October she celebrated her 93rd birthday.

Pausing for a sip of tea, Roxie Gore displays the pillowcase she is decorating. "Even with my glasses it's hard for me to see the tiny lines," she admits. "But I like to work on it. It keeps me busy." When she's not embroidering, Roxie enjoys crocheting, reading, and — walking about with the aid of her wooden cane — watering and caring for the flowers she grows.

Roxie Gore is at home and relaxed. The warm colors of the room surround her; a faded afghan is draped across her knees. Pictures of family and friends adorn the walls, and baskets of yarn and thread lay at her feet.

Roxie lives with her daughter and son-in-law Lakie and Andrew Dingess on the West Fork of Harts Creek, a rural hollow in Logan County about seven miles from Chapmanville. "I am blessed to have Lakie and Andrew. They have taken good care of me. I love all my family, but these two are special to me," she says. Earlier, Roxie made her home in a log house nestled between two mountains. That was in another Logan hollow, Brashy Fork, about two miles down the road from her daughter's house.

"I read the paper every day, and I like the westerns my son-in-law brings. He reads them, then I do," Roxie says. "He's like a son to me — helps me with my flowers and sees to my every need."

Leaning back in her easy chair, she smiles as she remembers days gone

At 93, Roxie Gore spends her days in needlework by a sunny window. Photo by Michael Keller.





Roxie as a young mother in 1919. The children are Ova, Steffa and Alva. Photographer unknown.

by. "I learned to sew out of necessity, now I sew for recreation. I enjoy giving quilts to family members for gifts," she says. The hours she spends are worth the thanks she receives.

"Times were hard, we washed on a washboard outside and hung the clothes on the line," she recalls of earlier years. "Sometimes in the winter they would freeze and then we would have to dry them piece by piece in front of the fire. I saved every scrap of material I could, even used feed sacks when I could get them to make clothes for my children and quilts to keep us warm."

Roxie has lost count of the quilts she's made. The one she treasures most is one she and Lakie made together. "We used scraps from old

dressess of mine and from the clothes of Lakie's daughters. I guess you could call it my family-tree quilt. Lakie surprised me by embroidering all our names on it — even my grandchildren and some great grandbabies that were born then." Her eyes become misty. "Now that was a labor of love."

She doesn't recall how the hollow came to be known as Brashy. "My father-in-law owned the property and he gave us the log house when the Depression hit. It was called Brashy then, too. We moved here from the coal camps at Holden, when my husband Elza lost his job with Island Creek Coal. The Depression was terrible for everyone. All people had it rough then; necessities were scarce, even food at times.

"Brashy Hollow was a lifesaver for my family, we had a place to go when the Depression hit. There was no money to do with, but we could farm and eke out a little substance to keep us fed. A lot of men had no other means for their families, they depended solely upon the mines — when they closed there was nothing for them and for many nowhere to go. The Depression was one of the worst things we ever lived through," Roxie says.

Island Creek Coal Company had created the ideal community at Holden, Roxie thinks. The company provided schools, stores, hospitals and church buildings. She also spoke of the nice homes that were built for the mine families to live in. "Our house was small, but it was well built. And there was a fence around each yard. Many families didn't try to care for the home they were given, but I couldn't do enough to keep it nice for my family," Roxie says.*

"The company also provided a doctor," she remembers. "If there was sickness in the family you could leave your house number at the company store and the doctor would stop in that day. If it was an emergency, he would come immediately," Roxie explains. A fee was taken from her husband's wages every month to pay the doctor, she adds.

Pack peddlers visited often, adding their wares to those available in local stores. They would walk four or five miles from Logan to the coal camps with huge suitcases strapped to their backs filled with goods to be sold. Bedspreads, clothes, pots and dishes were just a few of the items. "I remember one pack peddler who admired a quilt top that I had pieced together. It was stitched with a briar stitch and made of silk. I sold it to him to send to his mother in Italy. He paid me well, because it was before the Depression," she says.

When it came time to move to Brashy, the Gore family had to sell many of their belongings. "Because we had to move by horse and wagon, space was limited. The necessities could only be taken. The year was 1930, and my husband didn't work in the mine for nearly three years," Roxie recalls.

* See "Miners' Town" in the Winter 1982 GOLD-ENSEAL for more on Holden. —ed.

During those years Roxie and her family were able to farm, and her husband hired himself out as a farmhand and a blacksmith to earn money. "We started the small farm from nothing, not even a cow to milk. It was quite a while before we could really call it a farm; then, after a lot of saving and horse trading about, we finally had enough seed and livestock to breed," she says.

"The old log house was one room with a sleeping attic. We heated the house with coal and wood. I can still recall the snow blowing through the chinks. The children who slept upstairs would often wake up with snow-covered beds. There was no electricity and no running water. We drew water from a hand-dug well," Roxie explains.

The Gores made their living on this small farm. They raised chickens, ducks, pigs, cows and horses for their own use. The livestock was fed twice a day, Roxie seeing to the animals when her husband found work in

town. The cows had to be milked twice a day and the garden needed daily attention during the growing season.

"The children worked too. The older ones helped me and the middle ones tended the babies and the house," Roxie says. "There wasn't time to think about what we were missing, just the daily chores kept us busy," she adds.

"My husband Elza was good with his hands. He loved to whittle. This always caused some arguments between us, because he would whittle away every night in front of the fireplace and drop his shavings right on the floor. Lord, how I'd fuss over it," she says.

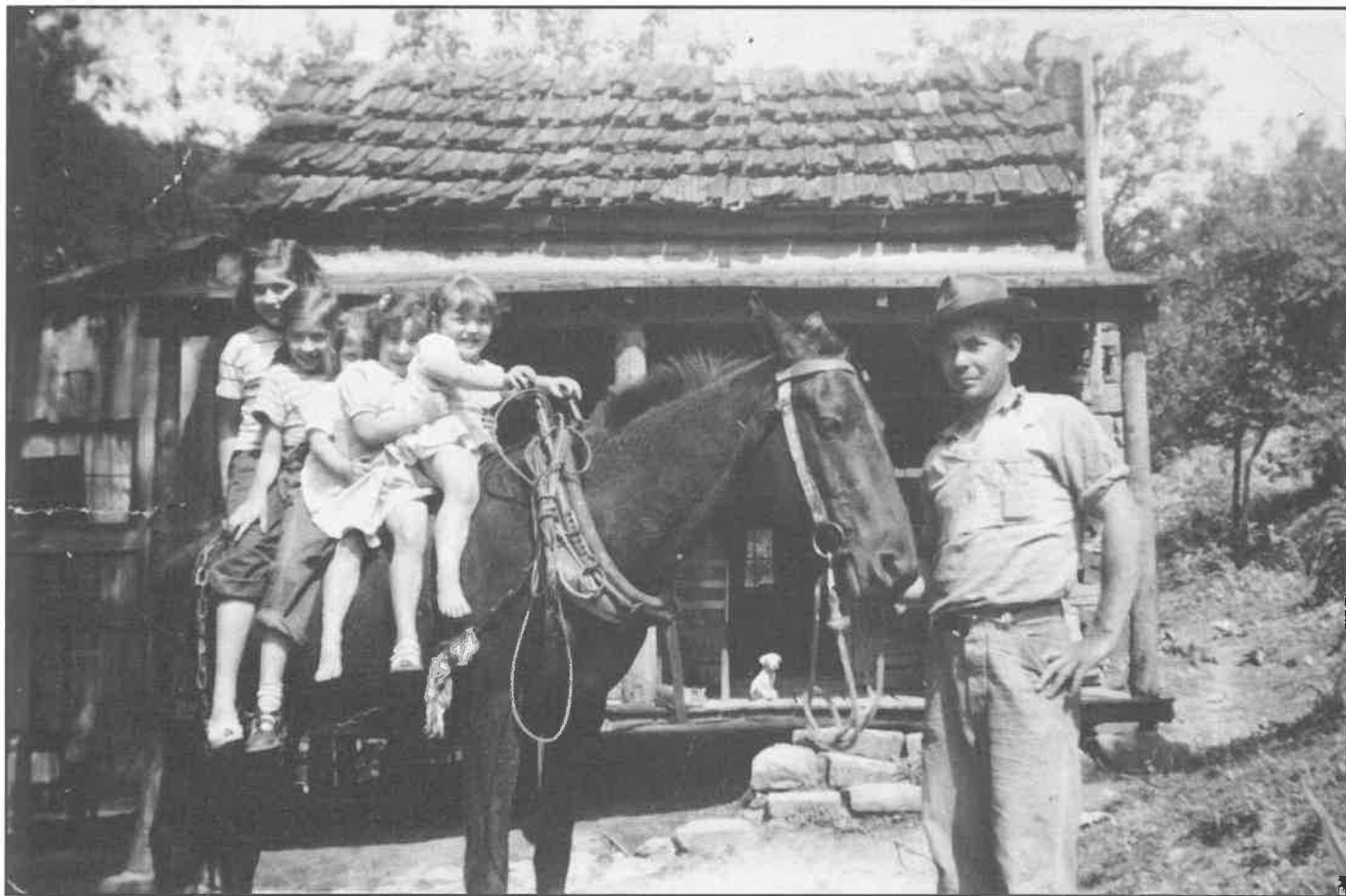
Elza Gore made handles for hoes, rakes, shovels and anything else that needed a handle, his widow recalls. He used hickory wood because it was very strong and would last for years. In his later years Elza would whittle small wooden toys for the grandchildren. "They all loved to watch

their grandpa whittle and listen to him make up songs and sing to them while he was working. The song was always about the child who was going to get the toy," Roxie explains.

Roxie went on to say that she and her family canned or dried all the food they raised. "Plus we picked wild huckleberries and blackberries to make jams and jellies. Potatoes were holed up — that's when you dig a deep hole in the ground and line it with straw to keep the potatoes in. After all the potatoes are in, you cover it with dirt so they don't freeze. You open it up whenever you run low," she explains.

In the late fall a hog was butchered to prepare for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the long Logan County winter. "We put the meat up in a smoke house. It took a few weeks for the hickory smoke chips my husband whittled to flavor the meat," Roxie says. With a chuckle she says that when it came time for slaughtering she would take her hog and trade it to

Facing an uncertain future in the mines, the Gores re-established themselves on the land. Here son Andrew Gore shows off a horseload of Roxie's granddaughters at the Brashy Fork homeplace. Photographer unknown, about 1952.





Roxie had reached sturdy middle age by the late '40's. She poses by a coal company house in Whitman. Photographer unknown.

someone else for theirs because she couldn't bear to eat any animal she had raised. "I always loved my animals, even the chickens and ducks," Roxie admits.

Fall was also the time to make apple butter. Roxie and her family picked the apples from the trees that grew in the hills near them. "It took about 15 bushels of apples to make enough

to last a year," she remembers. "We had apple peelings to get them all done in one day. The neighbors up and down the creek would come with their children and we would all peel apples. It was a good time for all. It wasn't often that we would talk with our friends and family, so these apple peelings were looked forward to by everyone."

The apple butter was made the next day in a big copper kettle hung over an outdoor fire. Roxie says the kettle held about 30 gallons, and a steady fire had to be kept going for the whole day. "Someone always had to be there to stir and to keep adding the sugar as they cooked down. I used oil of clove or cinnamon to flavor the apples," she says. When the raw apples were finally converted into rich apple butter, Roxie sealed it in canning jars.

Like many mountain people of the 1930's, the Gores were struggling to make do in hard times, reverting to earlier ways in the face of national economic collapse. The Brashy Fork farm made the difference for her family, Roxie thinks. "We weren't as bad off as many people were," she says. "We were lucky to have a farm to go to as the Depression became worse. I can recall seeing folks living out of paper boxes and eating from the trash dumpster once when we went to town. It was an awful sight. I know we struggled, but we never went without food."

As she continues to work on the pillowcase she speaks of the afghans she has crocheted for family members and friends. "I've done dozens and dozens," Roxie remarks. "That ain't too bad for an old granny," she says with a smile.

Years ago she never had time to make pretty things. All her work went into the necessities and modern conveniences weren't available like they are today, Roxie says. "We didn't have snack foods or refrigeration. This meant you had to cook three complete meals a day. I cooked on a coal-burning stove that doubled as the heat stove," she says.

Roxie and her children dug the coal out of a hill near their home. After picking it from the seam, they would haul the coal to the house in coffee sacks — a task, she says, that was not easy for anyone.

Doctors were as scarce as food and money during the Great Depression, Roxie comments. "My eldest child was born with the help of a veterinarian. Lee Gore delivered him. I had complications and we thought that a vet was next best thing to a doctor. My son weighed three pounds and I doubled a man's hanky twice to make him a diaper," she says. "I was glad for Lee Gore's help, but now you

wouldn't hear of such a thing."

In her later years Roxie herself performed the role of midwife for several families up and down the creek, working with the aid of a neighbor lady. She even helped to deliver one of her granddaughters. There were no second thoughts about leaving home to help a sick friend or neighbor. "As for doctoring people, I only relied on mountain herbs and home remedies passed down through generations," she says. "Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't."

In the fall of 1934 Roxie and her family moved back to the coal camp at Holden. She was expecting her last child and the rural conditions at Brashy weren't ideal for another pregnancy. The family remained in Holden until the spring, shortly after the baby was born. Roxie then returned to the farm with her children.

Early that year Elza Gore resumed his work at the coal mines, catching the train to Holden and staying there through the week. "Elza spent the weekends at home, and while work



Above: The late Elza Gore worked on the land and in the mines to support the family. This family snapshot shows him and Roxie in 1975.

Below: Now the center of a large family, Roxie is assisted here by granddaughter Anita. Photo by Michael Keller.



was good at the mine he would travel back and forth," Roxie recalls.

Roxie gave birth to ten children, but only seven survived. One was still-born, a second died with whooping cough, and a third child died early in life with spinal meningitis.

"My heart died a little every time I lost a child," she says. "Now I have only three of my children still with me. Three of my sons, my eldest daughter and my husband Elza all passed away in a five-year span. My faith in God was all that kept me going when part of the family I raised left this world, but I'm thankful for the time he has given me."

In order to have coffee and sugar, Roxie traded chickens and eggs at Saunders Grocery. "I traded at the store for many years with the chickens," she says. Corn was also taken to the small grocery to be ground into meal. The storekeeper charged a gallon toll for every bushel ground.

Although work came first, Roxie remembers the games her children played. "Our house was wallpapered with old issues of newspaper. The children would play 'I Spy' on rainy days. One child would find a word on the wall and say 'I Spy,' then the others would have to look for the same word," she explains, smiling. "Pussy Wants a Corner," "Blind Man's Bluff," and "Thimble, Thimble, Who's Got the Thimble?" were favorites of her children, Roxie says.

The children had to make their own adjustments as the Gore family changed homes. "When we lived at the coal camp they attended a large school with many classrooms and hot lunches. The move to Brashy meant attending a one-room school. All ages learned together and lunches were brought from home," Roxie says.

If the weather was cold and snowy or rainy, the children often missed school during the Brashy Fork years. Roxie said they didn't have overclothes for bad weather, nor could they stand the long walk. "They averaged going only two or three days a week during the winter," she said.

Although there was little time or means for recreation, Roxie recalls that a circuit preacher would come by horseback and hold meetings at the Lee Dingess Grade School. During these meetings neighbors had the opportunity to socialize and the young-

sters courted. "I suppose it's called dating nowadays," she says.

Sighing heavily as she puts her embroidery down, Roxie's face depicts her frailness, but her inner strength shines through. She leans back, and announces with great affection that she has over 110 descendants. "Most of them come to see me at Christmas, and I make the youngest something to remember their granny by," she said. The pillowcase nearly completed will probably be given to a great-granddaughter for her hope chest.

Roxie has always been an independent woman, often alone with her family and responsible for the upkeep

of the farm and the care of a household of children. Those years created a strong and willful individual, making life difficult now that she has to rely upon others for her daily care. In her mind Roxie still yearns to do all the things she did before age and illness confined her.

Still she is secure and largely satisfied, confident of her place in the world. Roxie Gore is a woman who has always pulled her weight and more, and she is entitled to take her rest. She is proud to have made her way in good times and bad, and proud to remain the matriarch of a sprawling Logan County family. ❀

Roxie Gore at home in Logan County. Photo by Michael Keller.



A Good Sport

Broadcaster Ernie Saunders

Interview by Debby Sonis Jackson

Ernies Saunders and sports go together. It's always been that way, for this is a man who realized his dreams. What began as childhood flights of fancy evolved into a long career in sports broadcasting, mostly on WCHS radio and television in Charleston.

When Ernie retired in 1980, sports columnist A. L. "Shorty" Hardman called

him "the dean of West Virginia sportscasters." Nobody questioned that. Ernie had put in his time. He came to the state as a young graduate of New York's NBC School of Broadcasting in the early '40's, and took his first radio job with the old West Virginia Network.

In the years that followed, Ernie left West Virginia twice, living briefly in

Phoenix and then in New Hampshire for five years. By 1960 he was back in the Mountain State to stay. He retired 20 years later on August 1, his birthday, signing off the air with the 11,266th edition of the "Sport Page of the Air," his nightly program.

Ernie Saunders still keeps a hand in sportscasting, returning as a special guest on WCHS's "Sport Page Extra" when he is in town. He and his wife of 42 years, Terry, now divide their time between West Virginia and Florida. Ernie recently spoke with assistant editor Debby Jackson about his longtime love of sports and broadcasting.

Ernie Saunders in the early days of his broadcasting career. This promotional photograph is from the mid-1940's, photographer unknown.



Ernie Saunders. I always wanted to be a sports announcer. I remember as a kid that I'd walk along the streets and, nobody around, I'd start doing play-by-play. My idols were Graham McNamee, Ted Husing, Bill Stern, the big sportscasting names in that time. Keep in mind, it was all radio. There was no such thing as television.

I had a scattered childhood, moved around various places in Massachusetts. I was active in little theater groups in high school and all that sort of thing. But Uncle Sam came along when the war broke out back in 1941. I went into the service and was medically discharged. I hit Broadway again, but I was losing my hair — this, I think, was at age 23. They told me when I went around auditioning for stage plays that I was too old to be a juvenile and too young to be a character actor.

So I ended up in radio school in Boston, then moved into New York and went to NBC School.

Debby Sonis Jackson. That was the NBC School of Broadcasting? How long were you there?

ES. Six months, all told. And everybody and his brother were clamoring for announcers because all the guys had gone in the service. Peo-



Above: Ernie with older brother Bert, in the early 1920's. Ernie brought Bert into broadcasting after he established himself. Photographer unknown.

Right: The press box at Charleston's Watt Powell Park is familiar ground to the veteran broadcaster. He was on hand for the Wheelers opener last April. Photo by Michael Keller.

ple would send in requests to NBC asking if they had any students that had graduated.

Howard Chernoff, who was then the manager of the West Virginia Network called me, and I debated "Who wants to go to West Virginia?" I mean, that's really country when you're living in New York and Boston. But I talked to Ed Herlihy, who was the voice for Kraft for many years and still is, I think, and I asked him what I should do. He was one of the instructors. He said, "You go down there to West Virginia, get your experience, and then you head for the bigger market."

DSJ. And what was the first station that you came to?

ES. I thought I was coming to work in Charleston, West Virginia. I got off the train there and they told me to be prepared to go to Parkersburg — this is coming from New York City, and they told me I was going to Parkers-

burg. I'd never heard of that. But I got a bus and I went.

I was really disillusioned. I got there at midnight, the rain was coming down, and I wondered, "My gosh, what have I got myself into?" The next morning, when the rains had cleared, things looked a little brighter.

I started with WPAR in Parkersburg. I stayed there about five or six months, and I heard there was an opening in Charleston. There was a fellow named Bert Sonis, who was my brother, and I figured this is a good time to get Bert into the business — we had similar voices. I pictured Bert staying in Parkersburg and I'd move into Charleston. So Bert came to Parkersburg and he auditioned. And to make a long story short, he ended up going to Charleston and I stayed in Parkersburg. It wasn't very long afterwards that I joined him at WCHS, which was the key station of the West Virginia Network.

Sam Molen, who had been working in Charleston for a number of years doing the "Sport Page of the Air" announced that he was leaving. Howard Chernoff called me to the office and asked me if I wanted to audition.

Before I knew it, I had taken over for Sam Molen — back in May of 1943, I guess it was. I did the "Sport Page" for many, many years. I'll never forget the last number, 11,266. We went back to the original starting date and figured out the exact number. I started numbering the shows and that has since gone on, they're still doing it.

Our ratings for the "Sport Page of the Air" were just unbelievable. I still get people who I think look older than I do, but they tell me how they used to listen when they were kids.

Then one day I got called into the office and Howard Chernoff says, "We're going to do the West Virginia University football games. We want you to do them." And, my gosh, the only experience I had ever had doing play-by-play was audition tapes of Charleston High School football. So my first real play-by-play on the air was at Morgantown, at the old Mountaineer Field. And I still say that the old field at Morgantown was the nicest football field I've ever seen to see a ball game. You were right next to the players. It was home, it was like Fenway Park and the Boston Red Sox.

DSJ. When was that?

ES. It was back in 1944.

You talk about under fire. I got so excited when West Virginia was running for a touchdown, I said, "There he goes, he's up over the ten, the 15, the 20, the 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65 yard line." And then I realized what I was doing. I got a lot of kidding out of that.

Actually, there were two networks doing [WVU football then.] Jack Fleming was doing it for his part of the state. Morgantown was the only station that was doing it with Jack. And then I got ill in 1947 and had to go out west for my health. I was scheduled to do a W&L-West Virginia game at Laidley Field, and the doctor said no way could I do it. So they picked up Jack Fleming's broadcast. That's how Jack originally got the whole state.

DSJ. Were you there when the live



country music shows were going on at WCHS?

ES. Frank Welling had the "Old Farm Hour," and he had all kinds of big names on there. We'd bring them in at the old Middleburg Auditorium on Lee Street. We were in the upstairs and the auditorium was down below. We had the "Old Farm Hour" shows every Friday night. And I announced that, too. And if you don't think it was difficult with my Boston accent, it was much more pronounced than it is now, doing a country music show!

The network started to program these daytime soap operas. We had a lot of live shows like Melva Chernoff's "Miss 580 Club." The country music was the thing in the morning. Then the network started with the "CBS World News Roundup" at eight. As more network shows came, live programming just went out the window.

Those days everybody listened to the radio at night. We had "The Lux Radio Theater" and Red Skelton, Jack Benny; CBS eventually got into a war with NBC to get these big names. Radio, as I say, was in its prime and as good as television is today. I still maintain that people enjoyed themselves more listening to radio, because you could do something. Women could iron, sew, or do whatever they wanted to do. And the man could do what he wanted, work out in the garage if need be, and still listen to what was going on.

DSJ. Tell me about baseball in Charleston.

ES. The Mid-Atlantic League was here in the late '30's, I believe. It came back into Watt Powell Park in 1949 as the Central League. The Cincinnati Reds came with a Class A farm club and they had phenomenal success.

They used to average about 3,000 people a game. We had big names come through here, such as Joe Nuxhall, who does the Cincinnati Reds games. He was a phenom, pitched in the major leagues at age 15, I think. Shorty Hardman and I kid Joe about his days in Charleston because he was pretty wild.

Those days they didn't have the TV competition and people came from Logan, Beckley, all around. Every night we'd have out-of-towners to watch the Charleston Senators.

DSJ. You did the play-by-play?

ES. I worked with the games until 1955, then I got a call from a former radio man in Charleston who was managing a TV station in Manchester, New Hampshire, that was just opening. He made a very attractive offer. I thought I'd never leave Charleston,





Radio was good to Ernie Saunders from the first. This 1940's Plymouth was among the rewards. Date and photographer unknown.

but I went as sports director of WMUR radio and TV.

I went up to Manchester because we were going to do the Boston Red Sox, the Boston Bruins hockey games and the Boston Celtics basketball team. You talk about a dream opportunity for a young sportscaster. The engineers had theorized we would boom into Boston, 50 miles away, but unfortunately their theory was wrong. I had five really good years in Manchester before I got a call to come on back to

Charleston to 'CHS. I came back here in November of 1960.

DSJ. Was the West Virginia Network still going on?

ES. No. No. That was long since gone. I think the demise of the West Virginia Network came about with television. Television hurt radio when it first came on, no question about it. Eventually radio managed to come out of it.

A lot of people don't know this, but for one year prior to WCHS television

going on the air, we did programs just to practice. Every day, we did a show as though we were going on the air. We knew that we were going on eventually. I think we went on actually in '54, '53 or '54. And we all went on live. I remember going in to the boss man, who was at that time Lewis Tierney from Bluefield, who owned WCHS, and I said, "Would you want me to get a toupee?" He said, "No way! I want you to go on as you are." Everybody predicted that with a bald head I wasn't going to be able to do much on television, but fortunately it worked out.

DSJ. I know you've known a lot of famous sports people nationally. What about some of the local people that went on to greater things — like Jerry West?

ES. I remember Jerry in junior high school. He became the favorite at West Virginia University while we were up in New Hampshire. Everybody was talking about Jerry then.

And of course Rod Hundley and Mark Workman. Mark was six-ten and at that time that was an unbelievable height. He was actually called a goon and made fun of because of his height. We traveled around — at that time I was doing West Virginia football games and basketball games — and he'd be ridiculed because of his height, little dreaming that some day this would be the norm.

West Virginia has always been a sports-loving state. There's nothing that makes me feel better than when West Virginia University has a successful season and the whole state rallies around them. We all become focused on one thing — the Mountaineers.

John Dickensheets, who took my place as the "Sport Page of the Air" man, is nice enough to invite me to take part in his talk show every Monday night. Sportswriter Danny Wells and John and I do the show. That's fun. I like to keep my finger in it. Sports is my hobby. I made a living with it for years but I still love it. If I didn't have sports, I don't know what I'd do.

DSJ. Newspaper sports people and radio sports people seem to support each other.

ES. Much more so now. In days gone by I don't think the editors would allow the sports columnists to

mention radio. We were their competition.

Today nobody worries about the scoop. Maybe it's because of news conferences always being called and everybody getting the news at the same time. We'd always try to get the angle that somebody else didn't have.

Shorty Hardman of the *Gazette* and Dick Hudson of the *Daily Mail* fixed me up good once with the Charleston Senators, when we first had baseball here. They got into a conversation, and I said, "I've got to eavesdrop to see what they're talking about." And they talked about how the second baseman, Dean Wood, broke his leg and would be out for the season. Dean was a very popular ball player, a big cog in our machine. So I get on the air and I said, "Here's a scoop! Dean Wood broke his leg and will not be playing baseball for the Senators anymore." And there was Dean playing baseball that night! Those guys have ridden me about that for years.

DSJ. Did you ever go out and do "man on the street" interviews?

ES. That was one of my jobs. I was sports and special events director. So anything pertaining to special events, I covered. We had a "man on the street" show on Capitol Street. On VE Day, I'll never forget, I was up there with the microphone. Capitol Street was a madhouse.

I'd interview all the celebrities that came into town. One of my big thrills was introducing Harry Truman, when he was running back in 1948 against Tom Dewey. Everybody wondered who was going to introduce the president of the United States. I don't know how to this day, but I got it. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, the president of the United States." And I didn't goof, I didn't flop.

One of the things I'm most proud of, I interviewed Marian Anderson, who was a very well-known Metropolitan Opera star and black. She was supposed to sing at Washington and the Daughters of the American Revolution said, "No way." They wouldn't let her sing [at the DAR's Constitution Hall.] At that time there was definitely a race barrier.

Howard Chernoff came and asked me if I would interview her. She was appearing with the Charleston Symphony. And it was really a national story at the time, because she was ap-

pearing before a mixed audience. She gave me one of the best interviews I've ever had.

DSJ. What other memorable interviews have you done?

ES. I've had a lot of good ones. Jerry West was always good, Rod Hundley. I've found that the bigger the name, usually, the nicer the guy or girl. Bob Hope was always nice.

Probably the most memorable broadcast I've ever had is one of the saddest. That was the Marshall University plane disaster. Larry Sonis was on the news at WCHS and Charlie Ryan was the news director. I was

sent on to Huntington. And I remember giving my reaction to the feelings in Huntington the day after the crash. I went into a telephone booth to call back and Charlie used it on the wrap-up of the show. The coverage won the Peabody Award, the overall coverage, Larry and me and Charlie. That was such a sad, sad day, that Sunday, I'll never forget it.

Another event that I won't forget is the National Guard plane crash right outside of Coonskin Airport. Twenty-one people were killed. That happened in the late '40's, I guess.

We thought we had good coverage

Ernie's bride was Terry Wagner, formerly of Logan. They married on Valentine's Day 1948. Photographer unknown.





Above: The "Sport Page of the Air" nightly program was a continuous thread through Ernie's career. The radio show remains popular today.

Opposite Page: "Sports is my hobby," Ernie says in retirement. "I made my living with it for years, but I still love it." Photo by Michael Keller.

for that horrible Woolworth fire on Capitol Street where seven firemen were killed. We didn't have a line, we had to run back to the station with our reports. WTIP, at the time, was in the Scott Building on Capitol Street. My brother, who was manager of that station, put a microphone right down on the street from the second floor. They scooped everybody on that one.

DSJ. How has sports broadcasting changed from the time you first started?

ES. In TV, I think the mistake is made that they talk too much. You're looking at what you see and talking is inconsequential — whereas in radio, you're using your imagination. No radio man wants dead air, you're always filling the time. But it's not nearly as disagreeable as when they're filling time on TV.

Bill Stern was an NBC sports announcer. He did a radio football game

once and he had the wrong fellow running for a touchdown. He had him running ten, 15, over the 15, 20, boom, boom, boom, all the way down, past the ten, the five, touchdown! Then he realized he had the wrong man scoring. So he said, "Oh my, look at that. On the five-yard line, he laterals it off to So-and-So and he runs it in for the touchdown!" That's using the imagination. You have to have that gift of gab.

DSJ. When TV came on the scene, how did radio react?

ES. We thought it was the end of radio. Then we realized that not everything could be televised, especially locally. So radio was still king in sports play-by-play.

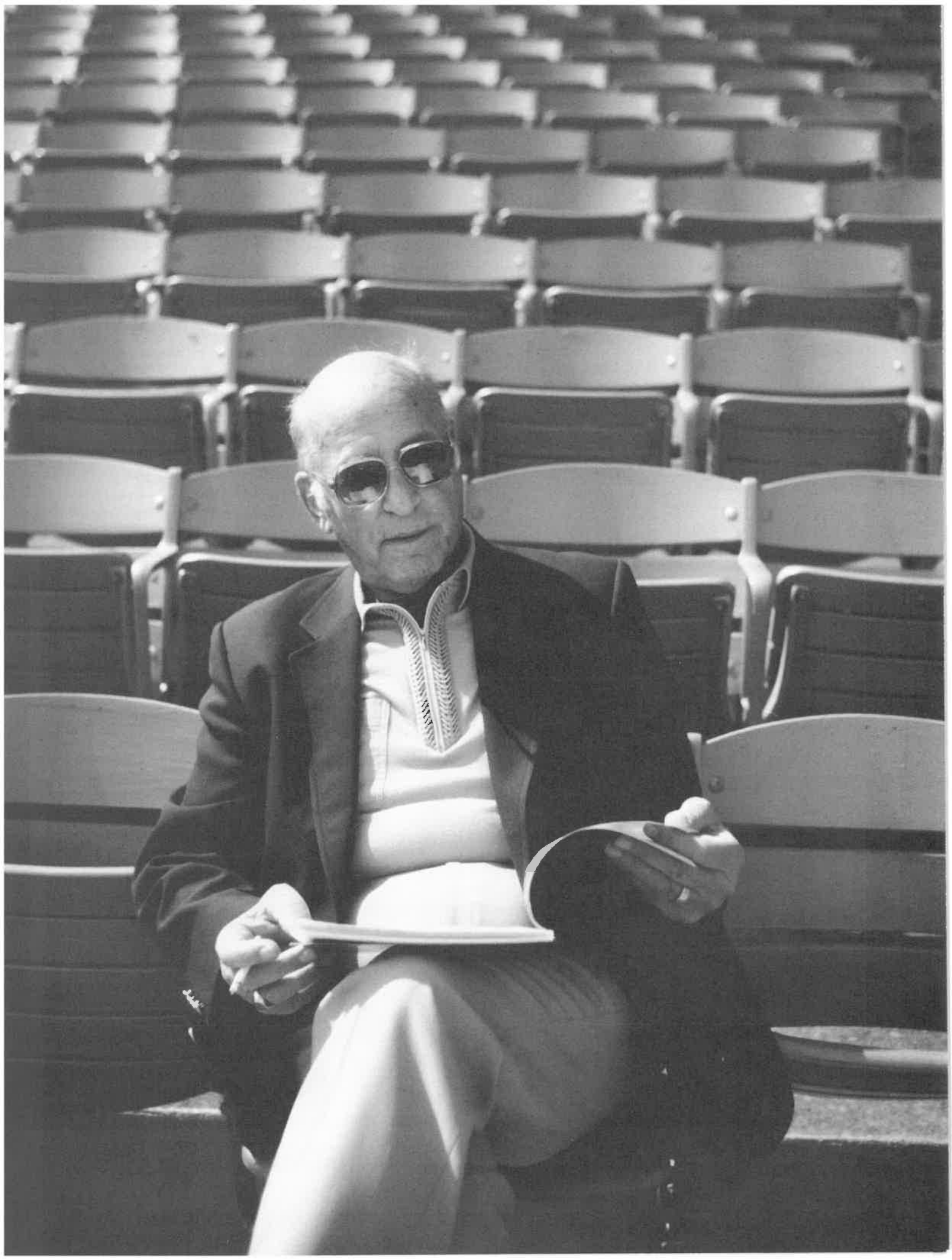
DSJ. What's your favorite sport?

ES. My favorite sport? I'd say football. I think there's more action in football than anything. Baseball's great, golf is great, tennis — but in

football, the score can be 58 to nothing and it's still interesting to watch because all of a sudden there's a big play. And to me, it's the easiest sport to broadcast. You have time in between plays to get in some color. I like basketball, but football is number one.

I'll never forget, way back when I used to work with Frank Lee from WMMN in Fairmont, and I was doing the play-by-play for the West Virginia Network. We went to West Point to play Army. Army had Glenn Davis and Doc Blanchard, two All-Americans, great football players. Army was about a 40-point favorite over West Virginia. We're at West Point, had a wonderful day. They took us all over the West Point grounds. We were just up there for the ride, West Virginia wasn't going to do anything.

I'll never forget going over to Harry Wismer who was then the ABC an-



nouncer, doing the game for the country. And I said, "Is there anything I can do, Mr. Wismer?" He was an older man than me. I said, "I'll be happy to help you with the pronunciation of some of these names." "Aw, I don't have to worry about it, you guys won't have the ball that much."

Well, to make a long story short, Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis, all they were thinking of was Notre Dame the following week and they weren't going to play our fellows at all. They ended up playing almost the whole game because we gave them a battle. We lost 19-7, something like that.

I've known all the coaches through the years — Ira Rodgers, Bill Kern, Dud DeGroot, Gene Corum, Jim Carlen, all of them. My association with the University has always been

a very pleasant one. But I shouldn't say it that way anymore, people criticize me. Now there are two universities, not counting the University of Charleston. But at that time Marshall was a college, so that's where we all got used to saying "the University."

Lots of great people have come through West Virginia. Rod Hundley was a great basketball player, he was a showboat artist. Everybody loved him. He packed the house wherever he played. He moved into pro ball. I'll never forget when I was at Manchester, New Hampshire, I covered the Boston Celtics. I talked to some of the players and they said the great shame was that Rod Hundley was sat on. George Mikan, who was his coach at the Minneapolis Lakers, told Rod he didn't want any showboating.

He moved into broadcasting. Rod

was one of the first to do that. That became a trend when former ball players became announcers. Even today, a lot of the ball players say, "Well, when I retire, I'm going to become a sportscaster."

In some cases it works, in a lot of cases it doesn't. They don't have the flair for filling in and that sort of thing. They drag out things. In my day, it hurt a lot of announcers when all of a sudden the field closed up because you had to be an ex-athlete.

And now the trend, of course, is ex-coaches. It used to be ex-athletes, now it's ex-coaches, especially in football. You have as the analyst the coach. And who knows more? But some of them can't deliver it as well.

DSJ. Where do you think that flair comes from?

ES. You learn the basics at school, but there's nothing like experience. I

Ernie Saunders Talks About...

...Writer Davis Grubb:

He was a hippie before his time.

I had the pleasure of rooming with Dave Grubb. He's the fellow who wrote one of the great mystery novels, *Night of the Hunter*. Dave would be typing constantly. He used to write short stories that he would send in to magazines. He had two or three things going at once. He'd write a story and send it in to this magazine, write another story and send it in to that magazine. He was constantly typing. He had a shift at WCHS and he did all his typing at night.

And I must admit it, it got to be quite a chore. I'd wake up at three or four o'clock in the morning and hear typing going on. Dave would look over and say, "Am I bothering you, Ernie?"

...The Duke of Windsor:

The Duke of Windsor used to come to the Greenbrier every year, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. That was a former king of England. Once I had my tape recorder with me, I'll never forget this if I live to be 1,000. I went into the locker room where the Duke was in a state of undress, needless to say, in his shorts, and I walked over to him and I said, "Your Majesty, may I have an interview?" I had my recorder all ready to go.

He looked at me, and very nicely, he said, "I'm sorry, I just can't do it. I'm under contract to *Life* magazine."

...Jerry West:

I remember Jerry West when he was at East Bank High School. There's a basketball court and you could hardly see. They had very dim lights and there's Jerry West dribbling the basketball. He worked at it, he knew what he wanted to do. To my mind, pound for pound,



Jerry West was among the many celebrities interviewed by Ernie Saunders. "West is the

had a lot of trouble starting. I had a definite Bostonian accent that I had to get rid of.

You have to love it. I have a feeling sometimes that a lot of the fellows are in it just for the money now. Their heart isn't in it, really.

You go to the small market, get your experience, then you move up to the bigger markets. And that's exactly what happens here. People come in — so-called scouts — go into a motel, check into the room at the end of the hall, and they'll monitor every radio station. They'll monitor every TV station, and if they see somebody that they think is great for their station — boom! — they get an offer. You are always on display.

I'll give all the credit in the world to Jack Fleming. Jack's been doing West Virginia games, all told, 37 years. He is definitely the Voice of the Moun-

taineers. And Woody O'Hara who works with Jack — they're a good team. Those are people who've stayed in West Virginia. Ernie Saunders stayed in West Virginia, more or less. Bob Bowen of Channel 3, he's a long-time West Virginian. But a lot of fellows have just moved on, they've gone to other markets.

In the old days, radio figures were as popular as TV stars are today. Wherever we went on the street, any of us on radio would be pointed out.

DSJ. Your family was in the spotlight, too.

ES. Terry and I had twins, Marolyn and Carolyn. I always said if one of them was a boy, I could have taken him over to the press box. In those days, girls weren't allowed in the press box. It used to hurt me that Shorty would take his kids and Dick would. I never could take my kids,

and they resented sports because it pulled me away from them. Marolyn recently delivered twin boys. So I have twin boys now, but I'm out of the field so I can't take them to the press box.

I've often tried to figure out why a man is interested in sports. I think we all visualize ourselves in there playing football or playing basketball. I did play some squad B football and a little basketball but never was any good. I was clumsy like some of my relatives. But I always loved it. I told you when I was a kid, walking home from school or whatever, I'd be doing play-by-play in my mind, emulating the Ted Husings and the Graham McNamees and Red Barber. If it wasn't for sports, I'd be out doing something bad, maybe. By gosh, sports keeps me occupied.

DSJ. And your philosophy has always been...

ES. Win or lose, be a good sport. ❖



greatest ball player I've seen, and I've seen a lot of them," Ernie says.

inch for inch, Jerry West is the greatest ball player I've ever seen, and I've seen a lot of them.

Jerry has been a credit to West Virginia because of the way he has handled himself. There's never been a hint of scandal with Jerry. He still carries a little drawl here and there, but he's a big city boy now.

...Modern Athletes:

The athlete of yesterday played with injuries, he played with hurting, but he played for the game. Money was really secondary, because he didn't make that much money.

Nowadays, if a guy has a two-million-dollar contract, he wakes up with a headache, he doesn't play. He's got the money coming in. He doesn't have to. I'll never forget what Hank Aaron said. He spoke to the Rotary here in Charleston and he said, "There's no way that a two-million-dollar ball player is going to listen to a manager who's making \$100,000 a year." And he had a point.

...Fickle Fame:

One of the funniest stories I might tell you was when I was going to speak at some affair in Wheeling. At that time the warden of the state prison at Moundsville was Oral Skeen from Jackson County. He had often said to me, "Ernie, if ever you find yourself up around Moundsville, let out a yell and I'll be glad to take you on a tour of the prison."

Well, my wife Terry and I were in that area. So I called up Warden Skeen and he said, "Come on over, have lunch." So we go in and have lunch. The fellow serving lunch was a convicted murderer, up there for life, but a real nice fellow. He served Terry and me and the warden, and we had a good time. The warden said, "Now, let's take a tour of the prison." We went on Death Row and went into where they kept all the hardened criminals and all over the prison.

I swear to goodness, my wife will verify this, as we went up and down the cell blocks — "Hi, Ernie. Hi, Ernie." All my buddies who were in jail. They had been watching television or listening to the radio and all the Kanawha Valley boys recognized me.

The Franklins

A Barbour County Family Story

By Barbara Smith

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

Blanche Moore has firsthand recollections of much of the Franklin family story. Here she holds an early photograph of herself.



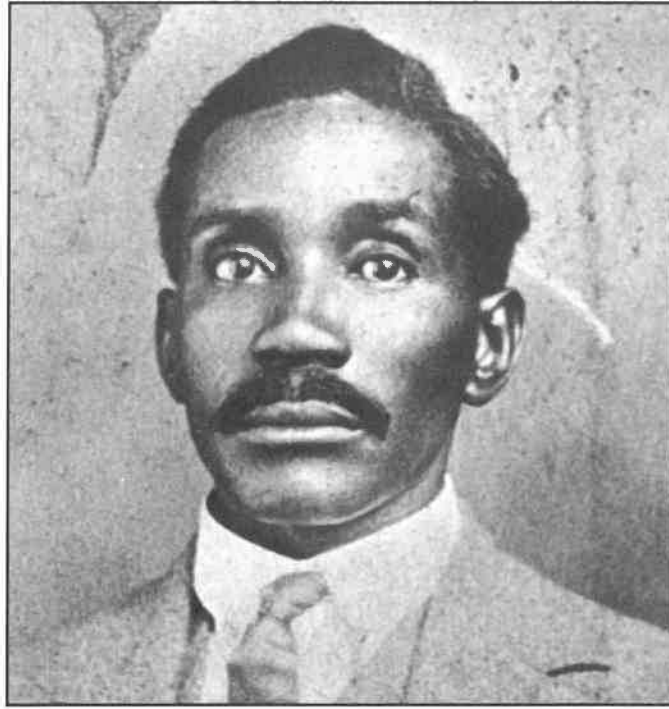
The Franklin saga begins with Henry, patriarch of the West Virginia branch of the family. When he was 12, Henry became a trapper boy in the mines, opening and closing ventilation doors. Already he was the family breadwinner. He had been born in Christiansburg, Virginia, where his father was killed trying to keep peace between neighbors. Income was needed, and Henry was the oldest boy in the family of seven children. It was for this reason that he found himself working in the coal-fields of southern West Virginia.

Henry Franklin was never to return to school, although education became a main concern of his later life. When the first mine job played out, he went back to Virginia, where he met and married Blanche Baine. The couple stayed in Virginia long enough for Henry to earn the money to buy his mother a home in Christiansburg. Then they took Blanche's daughter, Roberta, and moved to Cleveland. It wasn't long, though, before Henry Franklin was back in West Virginia.

The Mountain State suited Henry, especially its opportunity for a man to do honest, hard work underground. Granddaughter Blanche Moore describes him as "hung up on the mines." He found work in the mine at Dawmont in Harrison County, where Blanche herself was born in 1917. As soon as he could, he sent for his wife and step-daughter.

The family bought a house in Dawmont, and Mrs. Franklin found a housekeeper-cook job in nearby Clarksburg. "She also catered fancy dinners," Blanche Moore now says, "for community leaders like the Strathers family and the Wallaces." Somehow, the Franklins also opened a restaurant. Blanche was cared for by a nursemaid so that mother Roberta could help in the family business. The bill of sale for the restaurant, which Blanche still has, is dated 1918. Located across the street from the Waldo Hotel, the business and all of the restaurant equipment were sold to Franklin for \$700, with a \$100 down payment.

"The mines were somewhat unionized," Blanche reports, "and my grandfather was president of his union. That was about 1922, when the mine wars were going on in southern West Virginia and when work was



Henry Franklin was the patriarch and founder of the family in West Virginia. He was a miner and occasionally a small businessman. Photographer and date unknown.

really bad all over." Along with all of the other union men, Henry Franklin was told by the mine owners that he would have to work for non-union wages. The whole group refused and was laid off.

But his family needed food and shelter, so Henry opened a small store in one room of his house. "As I recall," Blanche says, "it was mostly confectionary." As she also recalls, it was during this period that Henry designed and built a model of a coal-loading machine. "He got a patent, but the design was stolen anyway. I still have the original papers. Everybody knew about the machine. In fact, it was used in the mines around here, and they called it the Franklin machine." The patent papers, signed by Clarksburg attorneys Matt Hood and G. H. Duthie, are dated 1919.

"Papa," reports Blanche Moore, "was looking for work all along. He heard of a job in the Cambria mines, so he rode horseback from Dawmont over here to Barbour County to find out about it. I was eight when we moved to Brownston, and we've been here ever since." She looks out the window. "There was only a dirt road back then. You can still see the Cambria slag heap from Route 16, it's still there. There's asphalt all the way now to where the road ends, though —

about two miles further up the hollow at Bear Mountain.

"Back then," she continues, "there were mines and tipples on both sides of the road that's now Route 76. The two big ones were called Galloway Two and Galloway Three." Blanche chuckles. "You know, I don't know where Galloway One ever was. I never heard anything about it.

"Jim Galloway, the son of the original owners of the mines, lived in the first of the three big company houses that are still there. The company doctor lived in the second one, and the company store manager lived in the third. My mother opened a boarding-house in the very next building — the white one that's roped off now. It's going to be torn down soon."

After taking the job in the Cambria mines Henry Franklin boarded "with a black family named Elum," Blanche reports. "They lived in two large tents. It was winter. There were at least four Elum children living in one tent, which was also where the family cooked and ate, and my father and Mr. and Mrs. Elum lived in the other tent."

In the summer of 1924 Henry Franklin moved to a one-room shanty. "My mother and I visited that summer," Blanche says. "Papa was working in a scab mine. He had to if he was going to work at all. The mine



The Franklins were an enterprising family, operating a store, restaurants and boardinghouses. This \$11 meal and lodging ticket was from the Brownton boardinghouse.

owners were still trying to break the unions. I remember Papa had to haul his coal out of the mine in a horse-drawn cart, and he would be shot at by the union men who were up on the hill. Mama and I would have to lie down on the floor every afternoon at two, when the miners would be coming out and getting shot at. I don't think anyone was trying to kill anyone. The union men just wanted the scabs to stop working."

Not long after that, a number of houses were built in Cambria Hollow. Henry Franklin gained possession of one of the log cabins in the area, and he moved his family from Dawmont. "There was only one other black family back then," Blanche recalls. "Their name was McCutcheon, and they had no children. But more black families began to move in, and they had no place to stay, so Papa and my grandmother opened a boardinghouse," the first such accommodation for blacks in Barbour County.

There were seven rooms, three upstairs and four downstairs. "Mama and I had one of the downstairs rooms, and my grandparents had another, and one was the combined kitchen and dining room, and there were boarders in the fourth room. There were boarders upstairs, too. We had 25 altogether, and my mother and grandmother cooked hot breakfasts — biscuits and bacon and eggs — for 30 people.

"They packed 25 lunches six days a week and did laundry for 30 people, too. By hand. The water had to be

brought from the well and heated in the fireplace. We did have a little help, a woman hired from Clarksburg. Some of the men washed their own clothes, but Mother and Grandmother did all the sheets and towels and such — on a washboard. And we had no bathroom, just the outhouse. We all took baths in a Number Three galvanized tub.

"In the meantime," Blanche continues, "my grandfather had been made section boss, 'contractor,' as they called it. He also took care of the horses and the stable. Grandmother was working for the Bogarts, who managed the company store, and she had extra jobs cooking on holidays.

"My mother had opened a boardinghouse in Galloway. I was still living with my grandparents in Cambria, down the road a couple of miles. I went to Kelly Miller School in Clarksburg for part of third grade, but I hated it — I had to board over there. Then Mama found out that there was a school in Galloway, so she brought me to live with her.

"There was a four- or five-room school for white children, but there was another smaller school right near the company store — about a thousand feet from the other school, and we assumed it was for black children. I was still in the third grade because of all the starting and stopping. I went to that school for five days. On the fifth day the teacher sent a note home saying that I wasn't to come back.

"What did you do?" my mother asked. I told her I'd done nothing.

Papa said for me to go back to school. The teacher sent me home with another note. My mother went to talk to my teacher, who was very fair-skinned and had blue eyes. All of the other children were light-skinned, too.

"The teacher never gave my mother a real answer, so my mother went to see the mine superintendent. I remember," Blanche continues, "the whole town was in an uproar at the time. There were armed guards everywhere, because of the union-breaking activities. The mine superintendent sent a trooper with my mother and me, and we went back to the school. Finally the teacher told us that my skin was too dark for her school. 'But this is a black school,' the trooper told her. 'You have to teach her.'

"Then came another note — no reason, just a statement that I was not to come back to school. So my grandfather rode horseback in to Philippi to see the school superintendent, who said that the school was, indeed, supposed to be for colored children, and I could go. The teacher protested, so they paid her off and she went back to Ohio. The school closed down, though. We were told it was because other parents complained about me being too dark to go to school with their children.

"Now you have to realize," Blanche Moore continues, "that we actually needed three schools. The one for whites was there in Galloway, and the one in Berryburg was supposed to be for mulattos.

"While all this was going on, my grandfather was becoming very successful in the mine. He was making good money. Grandmother was doing all right, too, working for the Keyes family in Philippi.

"Then the man who was building this house — the one I have lived in ever since — got sick, and the house was put up for sale. My grandmother told Mr. and Mrs. Keyes about this house, and they bought it for my grandparents with the understanding that Papa would repay them eventually."

Blanche pulls out another original document — a bond which her grandfather bought to help pay the mortgage on the church his family attended, the Pride Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Clarksburg. The bond is dated 1894-1926. Blanche, a church-

woman all her life, now holds membership in the Christian Fellowship Church at Brownnton. It is interracial and nondenominational.

"It's important to know that there were no blacks living in this area back in the '20's," Blanche reports. "The PV&K mine across the road — that stands for the Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky Railroad — was a KKK mine, strictly white. The neighbors didn't want blacks around, so that man next door refused to let the electricity through to us. The power company said all right, they'd go around him, and he would be the one with no electricity."

It was time, Henry Franklin decided, to re-establish a school for black children. Several black families had moved into the area, and there were several school-aged children, including granddaughter Blanche. Henry headed back to Philippi and was told that if he could find ten black children to attend, a school would be opened. The degree of darkness of the skin of the children would not matter, and it would not matter whether all of them actually attended school, just as long as there were ten names on the list. The school board would pay the teacher and the rent and provide furniture, but Henry would have to find the building.

All of the nearby buildings were occupied, so Franklin found another solution. "We'll give them our bedroom," he told his wife, "and we'll move upstairs." They did.

Then Henry was told that he would also have to find the teacher. He did. Several candidates appeared, but most of them had inadequate credentials. Finally Dorothea Brown was given the job. The back bedroom of the house served as her classroom, and for some two years she slept in the front bedroom with Roberta and young Blanche.

Then it was decided that there were enough blacks in and around Galloway to open a black school there. The Franklin school was closed. Pauline Leftridge came as the teacher, and the classes met in the very same building from which Blanche had been expelled years before.

In the third year of this new school, with conditions becoming crowded, Henry Franklin decided to expand. He bought the materials and built a new



Education was a prime concern as blacks established themselves in the local coalfields. This Hanging Rock school portrait, with Blanche in front, second from left, shows black and mixed-race students. Photographer and date unknown.

school building himself, on his own property, right next to his house.

In the meantime, the Cambria mines superintendent had learned that Henry was buying property and starting a school for black children. Henry was demoted to common laborer. He was given a bad workplace in the mines, "a clay vein in a water hole," as Blanche Moore describes it. Working by the ton, he could earn no money there. He quit his job, and the mine superintendent promptly presented him a bill for the grazing that his mule had done on company property. Rather than pay the bill, he gave his mule to the company.

In order to provide for his family, Franklin opened a restaurant in his home, the first black-owned eating establishment in Barbour County. Including Henry's mother and grandmother, there were five generations of Franklins living in the house at the time.

Blanche attended the school her grandfather built for several years before work at the Cambria mines tapered off and the local school census dropped. The school was closed, and the children were sent back to the Galloway school. "It was during the Depression," Blanche remembers. "We were given milk and soup at school because we had so little food at home."

After finishing the eighth grade, the black children had no high school to attend. "A black who wanted high school had to go to Fairmont or Institute or to the Kelly Miller School," Blanche says. "But we had no transportation and would have had to pay room and board, so most of us were out of luck. Several people were working to get a school here. After all, there were white schools aplenty. There was the one at Galloway, and there was one in Berryburg and one in Bear Mountain. And sometime in there, another school was built out on the



Granddaughter Chassidy carries the family story into the future. Here she presents an Easter cake to Blanche.

curve between Cambria and Brown-ton."

The Barbour County Board of Education decided to give blacks a one-room experimental high school in Hanging Rock. "That was a 20-mile ride on the school bus, each way," Blanche recalls. "Both blacks and mulattos were allowed to go, but the mulattos wouldn't sit next to us on the bus. We didn't complain, though. If those mulattos hadn't been willing to go to school, we wouldn't have had one."

"They advertised for a teacher and said they wanted someone with light-colored hair and blue eyes, but they couldn't find anyone qualified who fit that description. Ellen Lacey was still at school in Institute, but as soon as she was qualified, they hired her. She used to laugh and say that she didn't fit the description, but the board was desperate by then, and they hired her anyway."

"She taught us for two years," Blanche remembers. "Then Julia Coles and her brother, Alfred, took over and taught both junior and senior high students. They were with us for two years, too. Then the school closed down — after only four years — and we were told that we would have to go to Fairmont or Institute to finish. I never did, and I've always regretted it."

Grandfather Henry Franklin died in 1956, living just long enough to see the public schools integrated in academic year 1955-56. Blanche Moore, chosen to represent the Mt. Vernon School District, was elected vice president of the PTA that very year. A white man was elected president, but after Blanche's election he never attended another meeting. She filled in as president that year and was elected president for each of the next two years.

"I remember that one year the district meeting was to be held in Par-

sons. I told my executive committee that I would love to go, but I couldn't because there were no restaurants over there that would serve blacks. Bless her heart, Mrs. Adrian Davis just got busy and found a restaurant that would serve me, so I went, after all.

"Thank goodness things are better now. My granddaughter, who lives here with me, is a junior at Philip Barbour High School and next year she's going to graduate. My son, her daddy, wants to go to college, too. Now, wouldn't it just be something if they both went? Wouldn't that just be something?"

Indeed it would be something, but maybe not so surprising, after all. There is a tradition of educational pioneering in the family. Chassidy, the granddaughter about whom Blanche Moore is speaking, has as her bedroom the very room which housed the first school for blacks in Barbour County. ❀

The boardinghouse of popular imagination is all Victorian gingerbread, white clapboard, and rocking chairs on cool, shady porches. Opal Ooten's Logan County establishment is nothing like that. Rather, it's a complicated sort of ranch-style house of her own design, on land that has been farmed by the Ooten family for many generations, long before the region was known for coal. To the right is a house she designed and built specifically for boarders, and to the left is another she added to and remodeled, to accommodate still more boarders.

Opal kept boarders from 1966 through about 1984. She most vividly recalls the summer of 1977, just after a disastrous Tug Valley flood, when the federal government brought in workers to rebuild devastated communities in the narrow river valley. Corridor G was under construction at the time, and the mines in the region were booming. Opal Ooten's hospitality was much in demand, and it is in this happy, hectic time that she begins her recollections.

Opal Ooten. At that time I had so many men they were even camping out, honey. I had 12 that were camping out. When they called me, I said, "I don't have anywhere to put you." But I knew they all had trucks, they'd stayed here before. They had covers on their trucks. So I told them if they wanted to put them a mattress in there, it was summertime, and some light cover, that they could come and have the run of the house. I rented an outside john for them.

They were so many men here you didn't even watch television. They were all talking and mingling. And they were playing horseshoes and getting ready to go somewhere. They were always going and doing something. There wasn't nobody sitting around, everybody was moving.

That was during the flood. These men that camped out, some of them told me they had had to sleep just out, sleep in drain pipes. So they came, they brought their trucks, but they also brought a tent that would sleep 12. And they slept in that tent. I gave them a TV and a radio, and I had that outside john for them, so they just lived like that for a whole summer.

My table was always set. It was always set. I had men that had to be at work at four, some that had to leave at two, and I had men that left at six



Opal Ooten recalls her boardinghouse days as a hectic, happy time. She had overflow customers camping in the yard at one point, she says.

Keeping Boarders

Opal Ooten Remembers

Interview by Rebecca H. Kimmons

Photographs by Doug Chadwick



The establishment was actually a sprawling complex of three houses. The other stands to the left of the two shown here.

o'clock in the morning, and seven. Eleven of my men, the ones working the flood crew, left at nine. They were the ones that came in at 11 at night. I stayed awake so long I can't sleep now.

I kept that schedule up for 18 years.

My husband Mack has been a sick man since '61. In '66 I think it was, our

two youngest sons were finishing high school. They wasn't here much at night, and he slept a lot. And I was awful lonesome. I had been thinking a lot about going to Ohio and working at the university. My son-in-law worked there, and he said he wanted me to go there and cook, to Ohio University.

Her boarders were encouraged "to do like they did at home," Opal says. "If they wanted something, they knew where it was at. I told them to help themselves."



I was thinking about going there, but the new road was coming through. So instead of that, I said "Mack, let me take in three or four boarders, and that way it won't be so lonesome." Finally he agreed to let me take in two or three. So I took in two or three, and first thing you knew, I had a dozen. One man would say, "I got a buddy, or I got a brother." I even partitioned a corner off one time and put a half bed in it, and put a draw curtain all around it to take in a guy's brother.

You want to know how I did when I was keeping the men, don't you? You get up at two o'clock in the morning, and you start. When I would get through packing lunches, that hearth would be lined with buckets, and all across the patio door there. I would start serving breakfast about five, five-thirty in the morning. I had men leaving at different times, so I was constantly serving breakfast until about seven.

I had a lady that came in and helped me of a morning. She came at four o'clock. She was a widow lady and she enjoyed it. She didn't have nothing else to do, and it was a great pleasure for her. She's in a nursing home now.

You put your bacon and your sausage in to cook, to bake — I didn't fry it. I made a huge pan, and I would lay it full of bacon, you know, and I'd put it in the oven. And I'd put a big pan of sausage in the oven. So I'd have that prepared. And I'd have the buckets all prepared. I'd have maybe ten gallons of coffee. I had a big coffee urn like they have in restaurants. I'd have 30-some thermoses filled before they ever woke up. I had all the meat prepared. And I was making biscuits and toast and fixing eggs. And all your other stuff, your juices. I had it all on the table before they was ever up.

After breakfast was over and you have the beds made up, then you start peeling potatoes. Maybe you'll use 20 or 30 pounds, depends on how many men you've got. You have a big container, you put them in water. After you put them in water, you stop and fix slaw. Along about noon, you start fixing salad, but you don't put nothing on it. You don't put nothing on your slaw yet. You've got your whole ham in the oven, and maybe ten pounds of meat loaf you'll be fixing. The ham

cooks all day. When you keep that many men, that's the way you cook. It's always food. It don't seem like I cook now.

But I'll tell you, I loved every minute of it. They was some men that stayed long enough that they really became family. Some men that was the ages of my sons, they became sons, really.

I had raised nine children, and I was used to cooking. Seems like I always had a brother or a sister or somebody staying with me. I had two sisters, one stayed with me until she got married and the same with the other. They all thought I was mother, and I was. I was mother to all of them. I have a brother that lives next door now. I kept my mother for three years before she died.

I'll tell you how I used to cook. I'd make my dough up for biscuits — and I used Martha White flour — and I'd stir the dough up with my buttermilk and my shortening. I always liked drop biscuits. You don't make your dough very thick that way. You just drop them from a spoon. And you grease the top of them with bacon. They love them that way. And I made cornbread. I didn't go by recipes when I was keeping boarders. Hey, when you're cooking like that, you never stop.

Me and my husband used to raise a garden, but you don't raise a garden when you've got that many men. Kroger is your garden. I bought all my garden stuff there. Nearly everything I cooked I bought at Kroger's. You bought lunch cakes by the tray — you know those big trays the bread man brings the cakes on? Three or four of them, and they'd last three or four days.

The men got up and got anything they wanted. I made it plain to them to do like they did at home. If they wanted something, after supper or any other time, they knew where it was at, get up and get it. The same way with coffee or juice. I told them to help themselves.

I found out men wasn't too crazy about pastries. Most men that work like their little drink, you know, and men that drink don't care much about sweets. Or did you know that? Well, it's true.

I always told my boarders, "Now, if you drink, don't come home drunk. And if you've got anything to drink,



Boardinghouse cooking is done in a big way, Opal says. Here she shows off some of the equipment.

keep it in your luggage." You've got to run a house in order that if you have men that don't drink, Christian men, you don't want it flashed in front of them.

I had one boarder who was a superintendent, and he came in so high many times. When he came in the door, he'd just look at us and grin and throw his hand up. And he'd have to

hold to the wall to get to his room. But he'd holler and say, "Opal, wake me up at a certain time." Really, it was just like home to him.

Now, I did have occasions. I had a fellow whose daddy was a dean at a college, and he was in here with a crew that was putting the fence around the highway, and he really got on me. So I said to his boss the next



Opal Ooten greeted dozens of boarders from her front steps, leaving a lasting impression on many of them. "You had the feeling that this is a strong woman, and she's in charge," one recalls today.

"No Other Place to Be" How the Boarders Saw It

A lot of boarders passed through Opal Ooten's house, construction workers, flood recovery workers and miners. Two who treasure the memory of Trace Fork hospitality are teacher Bill Kimmons and artist Charly Hamilton of Charleston. The men were lucky enough to find a place with Opal while working construction jobs in the summer of 1977, and they weren't about to do anything to jeopardize their berth there.

"Anybody would have been a fool to do anything to get thrown out of there, because there was no other place to be," Bill says. "In fact, there was no other place at all."

Charly agrees, and goes even further in his praise. He had come in from North Carolina for a short stint of work and expected to return there. Opal Ooten con-

vinced him otherwise, and he credits her with making a West Virginian of him.

Charly Hamilton. She'd get up early in the morning and start cooking. She had tables that were twice as big as any dining room tables I ever saw, and they were pushed up to each other. She had family-style food. She just put plate after plate of food on. For breakfast, you didn't just come in and get eggs. You had eggs, you had pancakes, you had waffles and biscuits, you had hashbrowns and you had cereal. Applesauce. Anything you could think of that you'd order in a restaurant for breakfast, she'd have already made or was making. Eggs to order as you wanted. And coffee. Drinks. Anything you wanted.

Then she'd pack you a lunch. Two canned meat sandwiches or two ham sandwiches, or whatever she had left over from the night before. Two or three sandwiches. For lunch, there was as much food as I would regularly have eaten all day. But we were working long hours; we'd work 14, 16 hours, stuff like that. So we'd take these bag lunches, and they'd have a Hostess twinkie, three sandwiches, an apple and a banana, maybe a bag of chips, something like that. You'd take it out and eat that all day.

By the time you got back to Opal's, there was all this food again. Just a huge meal. It wouldn't be like, OK, what we're eating tonight is ham. There'd be ham, and spaghetti, and there'd be hamburgers for anybody who just wanted a hamburger, and there'd be lasagne and fried chicken and baked chicken, and some fish. There'd be mashed potatoes and baked potatoes, beans, peas, corn, corn on the cob. Talk about eating. Man, everybody was just eating it up! They were big guys, these guys we worked with. These guys could consume. About nine, nine-thirty she'd start cleaning up.

Everything was great. Opal acted like a mom to everybody. You had the feeling that if there had been any trouble, if somebody said something to another person, she'd have said something to them. You just kind of had that traditional feeling that this is a strong woman, and she's in charge. And you're not going to sit here and cuss.

You drove forever to get there, down this little holler, and down another holler, and then you'd take a road that every time you turned on it, whoever was taking you would look and say, "Sure you ain't got lost?" I remember one of the first times we were there, we'd gone to Charleston and somebody was taking us back. They thought we were lost, because it just didn't seem like there would be anything there.

I didn't know what to think, when I first went down there. I thought, well, they're rough down there. But staying there was what convinced me to stay in West Virginia. I thought I was just here for a month, make some money and go back to North Carolina.

— Rebecca H. Kimmons

morning, I said, "Now, you know I can't keep him any longer, don't you?" Nobody slept all night. He was really out of it. So I told him not to come back next week, and he didn't come back to work at all.

They could have the run of the house whenever they wanted. If I knew one was having a birthday, we had a party. They could bring guests if they wanted to. And that helps you to get more men, too. It's good business. I had a lot of boarders who came that way. They didn't go back to where they was staying. They didn't go back to the motel.

I had women that wanted to stay, but no way would I keep women. You can't keep women and men both.

The men were allowed to bring their wives. If one man had a private place to sleep, or another man was willing to give him his room so he could bring his wife, that was fine. I had several men who brought their wives. I had one man who wanted to bring his wife in real often. She had children, so I couldn't put up with that too often. I finally had to tell him that if she came with the children, to bring her on the weekend when I didn't have men. I didn't allow my grandchildren in during the week.

When I had the heart attack, I was not keeping so many men. I had maybe five or six coal miners. The construction had moved out. When I had the heart attack I had to quit. And a year later I was feeling so good, I thought I'd take in boarders again. I had three men come in who had stayed before. They came to see me, I think it was on Christmas Eve, and they wanted to come in the next week. And I told them to come on. I thought I was able.

The schedule wasn't going to be that bad. It was no more than I'm taking care of now. I have a grandson I raised and I have a son at home, so I thought this ain't going to be no worse than what I'm doing. My daughters were coming in every week and doing the heavy work, so I told them to come on. And the day they was supposed to come, I had another heart attack. It took my whole left side. I've got half a heart now.

My grandfather Brewster first came here during the Civil War. He was 16 years old. He moved to West Virginia after the war. He told me that he had

slept with his overcoat over him and let the snow fall on him to keep warm, and that he had eaten rats. He lived to be, I guess, 80 or 90.

He had brothers that farmed. Farming and sawlogging, a living was hard to make. That's all it was, was farming and timber. All these old people, that's what they said they did. They farmed and they timbered.

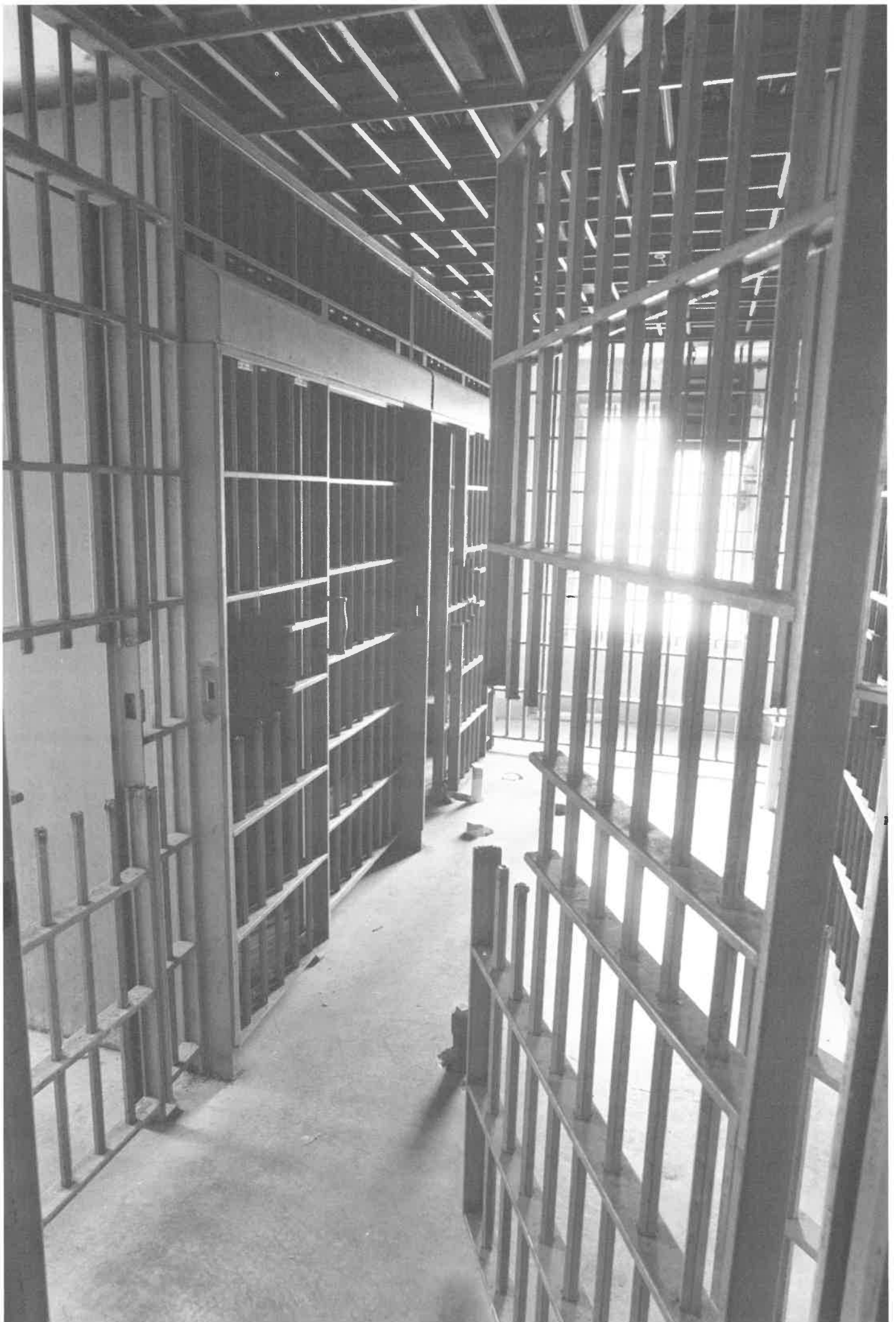
Now as far as keeping boarders, a lot of women wouldn't have done it, they wouldn't have wanted the name of working at that job. But I loved it. I used to sit and think, like of a morning when I'd get up, like at two o'clock, and if I had time to sit down around four, four-thirty. By that time

I done had meat prepared, and everything like that, you know. If I had fried apples or something like that, it was already prepared and keeping warm.

I would sit around maybe sometimes in the morning and I'd have a cup of coffee, and I'd think. Sometimes some of the men, the older-like men would get up and sit too. Couldn't sleep late, they'd just be coming in the door from everywhere, maybe having a cup of coffee. I used to sit by myself and think, what am I going to do when I get old and I'm not doing this? What will I do to pass the time? And now I wake up of a morning and wish I had something to do. I loved every minute of it. ❀

Opal admits there were a few unhappy "occasions," but she misses the hard work and good company. "I loved every minute of it," she says.





Doing Time in Style

The State Prison for Women at Pence Springs

By Maureen Crockett

Women convicts used to do their time at the state penitentiary in Moundsville. In the 1940's the legislature appropriated \$45,000 to buy a closed hotel at Pence Springs to house them. These women's most frequent conviction was for grand larceny; second was murder, often that of a husband. Wife abuse was not considered a mitigating circumstance, as it is now. Forgery was their third most common crime.

Their story is part of a larger story told in the fine *Historic Pence Springs Resort*, by Stephen Trail and Fred Long. The book traces the history of the area from buffalo and Indian times through early settlement, the Civil War, the resort era based upon the famous waters, and finally the state prison for women.

After the Depression hit, the grand Pence Springs hotel closed down. When state officials looked around for a place to house women prisoners, the empty Summers County resort seemed tailor-made. The first convicts headed south in two buses, with an ambulance for an inmate bedfast for two years. She had been sentenced in 1934 to be hanged for murder, then had the sentence commuted to life imprisonment four days before her execution. Since inmates were numbered according to how long they had been in prison and she had been there the longest, she was number one.

State police accompanied the convoy, fortunately, because a bus overturned soon after leaving Moundsville. One injured woman went to a hospital; the rest piled into the second bus for a crowded trip to their new home. What a pleasant surprise the grand old place must have been as

their bus lumbered up the curving driveway.

The inmates were called girls whatever their ages, which ranged from 22 to 50. They wore bright blue jumpers over white blouses. Life was informal and personal; they could make their drapes and choose the color of their walls, then paint them. They visited in each other's rooms. The girls attended a nearby church as a group, walking over and back for Sunday services.

The prison opened in 1946. An 18-foot fence sprang up around the former resort. The hotel lobby became a rec room. The ballroom became a dining room with 12 round pine tables. Basement areas were sewing rooms, a craft shop, and laundry room. The casino building was used for a cannery and the hotel garage was now the milking barn for a herd of

dairy cows. The inmates also raised pigs and chickens in this easy, bucolic atmosphere.

Though the windows were barred, the hotel building still had aspects of elegance. The original guest room doors were kept, but round holes were cut and a glass pane was fitted in each. A flap covered the glass on the hall side of each door so guards could check on the prisoners.

With inmates doing most of the work, the annual cost to the state for keeping a woman here was only \$848. In its heyday, the prison at Pence Springs was considered one of the best and most progressive in the country.

Entering inmates got an ignominious but mandatory three-minute delousing spray, then were quarantined until a doctor's exam freed them to live in the general population.

Most of the prison was much more pleasant than the maximum security cells. Here officer Barbara Angell shows off a work-release cottage in 1980. Photo by Doug Chadwick, courtesy Beckley Newspapers.



Left: The maximum security section is one of the few surviving reminders of the prison era at Pence Springs. Photo by Doug Chadwick.



Above: The Pence Springs dining room was starkly furnished during the prison years. Photo by Fred Long, courtesy Stephen D. Trail.

Below: Maximum security cells were grimly utilitarian. Most prisoners enjoyed homey rooms which had formerly served hotel guests. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Mable Sims, a Summers County native, was an early superintendent. She installed security cells for troublesome inmates and an infirmary to care for the sick. Until then, ill convicts had been locked inside their rooms.

Ashby Berkley's mother worked here as kitchen manager, correctional officer and assistant warden. The inmates were fond of the employees' children and made them rag dolls. Ashby, his sister Rosalie, and the warden's grandson had the run of the prison, and often played baseball with the women in the flat area behind the building.

A difficult inmate called China umpired those games from her vantage point in the maximum security area in the east wing of the third floor. She was undergoing solitary confinement, the most stringent punishment at Pence Springs. The women referred to it as "300," because that was the room number on the door.

When no one else was in maximum security, China had the run of the four

cells and the narrow exercise hall around them. The hall had outside windows. She would lean out and oversee the game below. China was biased in favor of the young lads. If one struck out, she would yell, "Ball four," and the kid walked.

Rosalie played baseball with this group, and once she played cards with some of the women. Once was enough. The inmates turned tense and tetchy over card games.

China had been sent to Pence Springs for murder, and had a personality that flared. She lived in the general population until the day she attacked Superintendent Sims with a pair of gardening shears. Sims carried the scars on her cheek from then on, and China did the next four and a half years in maximum security.

Berkley and his lifelong friend, Ashby Maddy, were allowed to visit China when guards took up her meals. At her cell there was a door with bars, then a solid outside door. At mealtimes, the outer door was open. Twelve feet in front of it was a





Officer Angell chats with an inmate occupying a Pence Springs prisoner's cottage. Photo by Doug Chadwick, 1980, courtesy Beckley Newspapers.

More About Pence Springs

You will find more on the Pence Springs story in *Historic Pence Springs Resort* by Stephen Trail and Fred Long. The book was published as the culmination of two years of work prior to naming Pence Springs to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Historic Pence Springs Resort is heavily illustrated with maps, newspaper clippings, and historic and modern photographs relating to the resort and the local area. It includes a bibliography and index. Eleven chapters trace the many faces the resort has worn from grand hotel and a school for girls to the state prison for women, which closed in 1983.

The hardbound, 120-page large format book is available in libraries or may be purchased for \$30, plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Orders may be sent to Stephen Trail, Rt. 1, P.H. Box 60, Hinton, WV 25951.

line of yellow tape across the hall floor. The little boys were forbidden to cross that line, so they sat on the floor behind it and talked to her. "She loved it when we visited," Berkley remembers.

Though always kind to the children, China was feared by prison employees for her unpredictability and great strength. She was allowed to bathe once a week, and it took five people to guard her as she walked down the hall to the bathing area. Two male guards waited outside the bathroom, two female guards stayed with her inside, and a third female officer guarded the fire escape door.

This past Christmas, Ashby Berkley and I walked up to the third floor, now being remodeled. The frayed yellow line is still there. The 200-pound metal door to maximum security is off its hinges, lying sideways in the exercise walk. I pushed but couldn't budge it.

Ashby talked of China. She went insane a few years after her umpiring seasons, and three officers took her to Weston State Hospital.

The four maximum security cells are still there, similar to ones at Alcatraz. Total metal, even the bunk, basin, and toilet. When I stretched out my arms, I touched both walls. The ceiling is a metal grid, with another grid at an opening in the door. There is no access to the outside from the cells. Over the years inmates etched graffiti. "Bob died here" is scrawled on one wall.

When Ashby Berkley was growing up at Pence Springs there was an annual inmate population of about 90 women, he recalls. Some worked "outside" as trusties at Pinecrest in Beckley, then a tuberculosis sanatorium, or at Lakin or Sweet Springs, other state institutions. Inmates volunteered at local church suppers. Some formed a choir that went outside for concerts.

Ashby Maddy, now a state trooper in Hinton and still close to Berkley, tells stories of the years when the two of them played all over the prison and its grounds. The boys ran through the prison at will. They played canasta with the inmates. Sometimes the women would admonish the lads: "Now don't you go in my room and mess up my bed while I'm gone."

Maddy remembers a murderess named Vonda Jean who had fed her

husband arsenic until he was weak, then strangled him with a sheet, dragged the body to a brush pile and set the whole thing afire. Police investigating his absence got suspicious when the family dog kept pawing the ashes. They got garbage bags and carefully gathered up the charred remains, then put the ashes on a grid and sifted, as archaeologists do. Finally they found a piece of femur with an old break. Comparing the dead man's X-rays of a broken leg to the charred bone put Vonda Jean in prison. Then she escaped.

Some inmates worked summers in the fields near the river. During the hot months they hoed corn and weeded potatoes. At the end of a long day, they and the two Ashbys swam in the Greenbrier to cool off before coming back to the prison for supper.

Not that this was paradise. A suicidally depressed inmate named Robin

should have been transferred to one of the state mental institutions, but Charleston authorities refused, saying she was a discipline problem. Guards had to check her every 15 minutes. After each unsuccessful attempt to end her life, she spent time in maximum security. She drew headstones on the metal walls four times, with her name on the stone.

Each time she tried suicide, the inmates were searched, which they disliked. Eventually Robin found someone's belt and hanged herself. The other inmates were said to have been relieved, because she had caused so much disruption in daily life for them. Robin was 20 years old.

As the years went by, inmates were allowed more visitors, their mail was uncensored, and they could make collect calls. They could smoke and wear makeup. Still, at night their steel-lined

bedroom doors were locked, and the lights went out at 9:30.

Women had three areas in which to work: housekeeping, farming, or the kitchen. They awoke at six o'clock, started work at eight, had a 45-minute lunch break, and ate supper at 5:30.

One old inmate whom Ashby Berkley remembers had a love for crocheting. Sent to do chores around the building, she would quietly disappear. Guards would find her down in some nook or beside her bed, crocheting away.

Evenings the inmates could socialize in the rec room, playing cards or checkers. They had television, radios, a stereo, and a jukebox. Women would dance with each other to the music. Some worked in the craft shop making "black diamond" jewelry. They had a stocked fish pond. In the winter they could ride sleds on the snowy hill. They could write three let-



The spring at Pence Springs. The high-smelling sulfur water still flows but is no longer bottled and sold to the public. The recorded history of the spring, originally known as the Buffalo Spring, goes back to the Revolutionary War era, when the land was taken up by pioneer William Kincaid. It acquired its present name from Andrew P. Pence, who bought the spring and surrounding tract in 1872. Pence began bottling the spring water in 1882 as a sideline to his resort business. His sons later continued the bottling operation, also producing ginger ale and advertising the famous water as "unequaled for all cases of nephritic irregularities depending upon want of proper digestion and assimilation." Ashby Berkley plans to restore the historic springhouse, which remains a part of the resort property. Photos by Doug Chadwick.





The resort building survived in relatively good shape, as the above photo from late in the prison era shows. However, closer examination (below) shows considerable wear and tear at the time of the transfer back to private hands. Photographers unknown, both early 1980's.

ters a week and get solo visits once a month.

Inmates had the freedom of the building except for the basement, which wasn't secure. Also, male employees slept down there.

The women learned bookkeeping, nursing, typing, cashiering, clerking, and accounting. They could earn a GED diploma. One inmate went on to get a counseling degree from Kent State University and now works in the Ohio prison system.

When men began running Pence Springs, its decline began. Male administrators came from prisons where the population was turbulent and the rules hard and rigid. The atmosphere at Pence Springs became hostile and tense. The emphasis on education stopped. The main concern was in keeping criminals away from innocent state residents.

By this time, Ashby Berkley had grown up. With his mother's help, he bought an old house along the Green-



Pence Springs Resort Lives Again



The grand old inn once again dispenses hospitality and fine food at Pence Springs. In 1985, Ashby Berkley, Steve Trail, and Fred Long got the hotel-prison listed on the National Register of Historic Places to preclude its destruction. Then four years ago Berkley bid \$310,999 and bought the place where he had romped as a child. He knew he could do something fine here — after all, the Smithsonian had said Pence Springs was the most restorable spa in the south.

Berkley had a vision that others touring the huge run-down building could not see. Years ago, he led Senator Jay Rockefeller and aides through the structure and explained his dreams. He overheard Rockefeller telling an aide, "This time Ashby has bitten off more than he can chew."

The Senator should come back for another look. Things have changed at Pence Springs. Coach tours come to visit for an afternoon, and people don't want to get back on the bus. The chauffeur stands there, but the tourists are out front playing croquet.

The old place has its secrets. Berkley found a hidden panel in the living room for concealing money during the Roaring Twenties. He also found two hidey holes joined by a tunnel under the front porch. He figures those were for storing liquor bottles in case the law came around during Prohibition.

Berkley has always wanted to be a restaurateur and innkeeper. His friend Ashby Maddy says when they were growing up together on the south side of the river from the state prison, Berkley played restaurant. He mucked out one of the stalls in the family barn, bringing scalding water from the house to clean it scrupulously. Then he served his young friends "wine and roast pheasant under glass." Closer inspection revealed cherry Kool

A view of the main parlor. A few years ago this room was used as a convict lounge.
Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Aid and peanut butter sandwiches under a glass bowl with a towel on top.

Maddy says when Berkley started up the hotel, local people brought china, silver, and furnishings back from the inn's old days. Berkley found other items at auctions, such as a room key with a "postage paid for return" message — that's two cents postage. Berkley knew the 60-year-old china pattern and looked for it everywhere.

Downstairs is a unique bar run by the amiable Fred Ambers who says the marble bartop came from the prison's group shower stalls. Pieces were cut, sanded, and polished beautifully for the bar. Fred talks about Prohibition days when limos eased up the curving driveway, their curtains drawn to protect the revelers' identity.

State prohibition came first, and for a while high-quality whiskey could be slipped in by train from Kentucky, where it was still legal. By the 1920's the drought was national, but moonshiners and bootleggers ensured that the supply didn't trickle to a stop.

A few years ago, Berkley loaned some bar accessories to John Sayles for use in the film *Matewan*. Sayles was surprised to hear the word "loan," figuring he would have to pay. Later, the producer found a case of old Pence Springs bottled water in Huntington, still capped and full, and used it in *Matewan*. Then he gave the case of water to Berkley.

There are 400 hundred acres here, with a mile and a half of Greenbrier River frontage. Berkley plans to use this acreage for an Appalachian garden. Uncle Earl Berkley, an 88-year-old retired botanist, is excited about establishing representative plants within the boundaries.

Besides the maximum security cells on the third floor, another leftover from prison days remains at the Pence Springs resort. Berkley has kept the same guest room doors that once locked prisoners in, but he has redesigned the round observation window in each. Now the flap is on the inside, so that guests can push the flap aside and look out. It used to be the other way around.

— Maureen Crockett

Innkeeper Ashby Berkley realized a childhood dream when he acquired the Pence Springs resort. Here he discusses plans in one of the dining rooms. Photo by Doug Chadwick.





Officer Diane Wheeler checks prisoners' rooms in 1980. The door would soon swing closed on the Women's Prison period at Pence Springs. Photo by Doug Chadwick, courtesy Beckley Newspapers.

brier River and decided to turn it into a restaurant. He left to study at the Culinary Institute of America, then won a scholarship to learn the wines of Europe. He returned to start the upscale Riverside Inn, a haute cuisine establishment.

Berkley lived in a cottage next to the restaurant. One night in 1976 while he was upstairs reading in bed, he heard a knock at the door. A bedraggled young woman stood there with a sad story. Riding in a car with four boys who got too fresh, she had asked to be let out and now needed to phone home so her mom could come and get her. Could she use the phone?

"Sure," said Berkley. Afterwards, she headed back outside. "Wait here where it's warm and dry," Berkley urged her, "it will take your mother an hour to get here." She said she would rather walk along the road. A cold rain was falling and the girl was already soaked. Her slacks were sodden.

She left. A day or so later Berkley was mulling over the tale of his caller.

On a hunch he phoned the prison, less than a mile up the road, knowing two women had escaped a while back. "Did you find those inmates yet?" he asked the superintendent. "Not yet," was the answer.

Berkley described his visitor. "That sounds like one of them," said the superintendent. "I should have tried harder to keep her," Berkley said. "No, she's already killed three. She is not one to be lightly crossed," was the reply.

Years later Berkley hired a woman from the prison to do chores in his kitchen on a work release program. She said she had been there before. As Paul Harvey says, here's the rest of the story: She and the young woman at Berkley's door had escaped together. They stayed in the mountains a while, then cold, miserable, and hungry, they crept down to the Riverside Inn to hide in a lattice-covered space under the garage. They stole out at night and raided the garbage cans for food.

The other girl came to Berkley's

door to get help. They both got away, but the one Berkley hired had turned herself in and finished doing her time. Her companion who had killed three people is free to this day.

Other problems cropped up at the prison. The building, grand as it had been, was aging, so the annual cost per inmate rose, an important consideration with prison administrators. Pence Springs was decaying; the prison could not pass American Correction Association standards. The West Virginia Supreme Court ordered the state to rehabilitate the place, but the cost would have been two million dollars.

When an inmate set fire to her mattress, destroying her room, the damage was left unfixed. Twelve years ago, a concerned delegate announced to the legislature that she wanted "to get those women out of that fire trap." Ten years ago, the state appropriated only \$5,000 for maintenance, an impossibly low figure.

Only 36 prisoners lived there, and no one could justify further expenditure. The women did not want to leave. The worst offenders went up the road to the federal prison at Alderson, and some others went into work release programs in Beckley or Charleston.

By late 1982 only five were left, all living in the former business manager's home near the old hotel. As Trail and Long eloquently describe in their history of Pence Springs, the brick structure looked pretty sorry. Floors sagged. Plaster was cracked. Since the heat was turned off that last winter, pipes had burst. Windows had been left open and autumn leaves skittered across the empty floors on windy days.

The West Virginia Prison for Women closed its doors when the last of the convicts were placed elsewhere. It was a low point in a long story, but it was not the final chapter of the Pence Springs saga. Nobody appreciated the old place more than Ashby Berkley, who had grown up there. He went to work to acquire the historic property, taking possession in 1986. Today he operates Pence Springs in its original role as a resort hotel, again opening to paying customers the grand facilities reserved not so long ago for guests of the state. ❖



The Lebanon Bakery is a family operation. Here baker Ray Fadul works with wife Janice and mother Rose.

West Virginia Foodways: A Visit to the Lebanon Bakery

By Cheryl Ryan Harshman
Photographs by Michael Keller

In south Wheeling above the old brick electrical and auto supply stores, there stands a clock tower still marking the correct time. The words "Wonder Bread" curve around the face of the clock. Bakery trucks hurry to load and unload beneath it, as the smell of fresh bread spreads over the neighborhood.

On the opposite corner of 22nd and Main stands another bakery, the one

I've come to see. The Lebanon Bakery has sat in the shadow of the Wonder Bread clock for 29 years, baking breads and pastries for a smaller but appreciative clientele.

When I arrive and pull open the aluminum storm door, Ray Fadul, owner and baker, greets me with a welcome cup of coffee. I look around the small room where Ray sells his wares. I've been coming here for years

and it's always reassuringly the same. On my left, traditional meat and spinach pies are piled high next to the cash register. They are luscious triangles of chewy bread enveloping meat or spinach fillings. In the glass cases beneath are beautiful mamoul butter cookies dusted in powdered sugar.

Straight ahead are trays and trays of biklawas. Known more commonly by



Founder Rose Fadul can still show the younger generation a thing or two. Here she demonstrates her original rolling pin for daughter-in-law Janice.

the Greek name, baklava, this traditional Middle Eastern dessert is made of layers of tissue-thin filo dough and ground nuts, all soaked in a honey-like syrup. Here too are honey cakes, chocolate-covered balls, and kataifi, a pastry similar to biklava.

Behind this glass case are bags of pita and unleavened breads stacked high like poker chips. And beside these, a refrigerated case cools filo and kataifi doughs for the home baker, as well as kibby, hummus, feta cheese, taboule, and a few cans of pop to go. Ray himself will take us on this epicurean tour shortly.

Finally, on my right are shelves holding boxes and cans of imported items — Greek olives, Moroccan cous-cous, tahini (sesame seed butter), dried mixes, and spices. Sipping coffee and warming my hands, I ask Ray to tell me the history of the Lebanon Bakery.

"It started up approximately 29

years ago," he begins. "My mother, Rose Fadul, started it. Actually, she probably started 50 years ago in her basement at home, baking bread and selling it to people. She worked awfully hard. I remember the smell of the bread coming out of the oven, when I was little. I just loved it. And I used to eat the raw dough; I loved that too.

"It was by word of mouth that people knew about her baking," Ray remembers. "She had special customers. She wouldn't sell to just anybody because it took so much time to make the stuff.

"We've been here at this corner since we started the business, about 29 years ago. Her business at home blossomed into a bigger thing, and so we began this shop.

"Eventually I took over the business," Ray continues. "She taught me everything; I was always interested, so I just picked things up. After I was capable of doing everything, she re-

tired and I took over. I've been running the business for the past 20 years. It has blossomed into a nice business. Of course, it's a lot of hard work. My wife Janice is very helpful to me here. She's my right arm. And she keeps pretty busy at home, too.

"The baking itself is a very simple process, you know. After years of working, you streamline the work, and you work out how it can be easiest for you. I can come at four in the morning if I want to — but that's foolish! I'll start at eight or seven or six. It's all up to me, really. It works out."

Business is steady but unpredictable, Ray says. "Some weeks we sell lots of bread; some weeks we sell lots of pastries. You never know. And you never know what you'll need. But whatever we need, all our flour and things are shipped out of Pittsburgh quickly.

"When this business first began, we

just had mainly Lebanese people coming in, buying things. But now it's an accumulation of everybody in the city plus people in a 45 to 50-mile radius of the city of Wheeling. Word of mouth and good products spread the word. We try to keep everything as freshly-made as possible here, to keep people coming back. We make the grape rolls, kibby, and meat and spinach pies, homemade yogurt, a little taboule and tahini. All the foods are made here. Everything. Nothing like eating fresh food."

Many Maronite, or Christian Lebanese, emigrated from Lebanon to North America at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Their country was troubled then as now. Lebanon had just fought a civil war between the Druze Muslims and the Maronites, backed then by the English and French, respectively. Many immigrant Lebanese settled in the Wheeling area at this time. The establishment of a Maronite church in Wheeling was a welcoming beacon. They followed the steel mills and coal

mines downriver from Pittsburgh. Some came because relatives were already here, and perhaps some chose West Virginia because the hills reminded them of Lebanon.

"Overall," says Ray, "there's quite a few Lebanese families in town. We have our own Lebanese church, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Roman Catholic Church. The priest is recently from Lebanon. And there's the yearly Lebanese church function, the Mahrajan, each August." This is a festival open to the public, with all the Lebanese foods as well as traditional music and dancing that benefits the church.

Thinking of old-world traditions, Ray is reminded of early times. "I remember when I was a kid, all the ladies would get together to make kisk. The base of this is yogurt and bulgar wheat, a combination of the two. They would get together and they would take it up on the rooftops in the sun, and spread it out on real thick brown paper, big sheets of it, and work with it with their hands, to

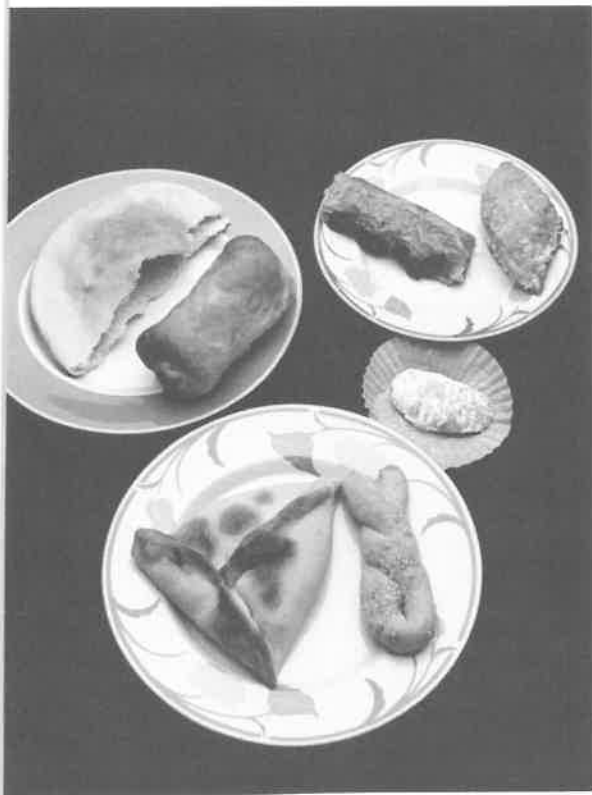
dry it out. They did that for nine days to get it ready. Then they would purify it, the powder, by running it through a screen with their hands. A lot of hard work! Today it's all machine made. All that hard work has been eliminated and it's just as good, and maybe better."

But what a picture, I think to myself. Here in busy, industrial south Wheeling 30, 40, 50 years ago, the river traffic drifting by, the mills loud and smoky and at full production. And up on the rooftops of the old brick houses, these women, their muscular arms working the kisk in the sun, the hills of Bethlehem to their east and Ohio rolling away across the river.

"We eat it for breakfast," Ray says of the kisk. "Add water to it, maybe some nuts and milk. Instead of a hot cereal, you have hot kisk. Eat it with Lebanese bread. Or you can mix a lot of garlic in it. You gotta like garlic, fresh garlic. That makes it good. And you can brown some ground meat and put it in, too — things like that. Lots of ways to eat it.

Ray (left), father George and brother Millet at work in the bakery in 1964. Photographer unknown.





Above: A sampler from the Lebanon Bakery includes (counterclockwise from upper left) pita bread and a pepperoni roll; a meat pie and sesame twist cookie; an ouzo-flavored butter cookie; and two varieties of biklava.

Below: The triangular stuffed pies are a big favorite with Ray Fadul's customers. They come in a variety of flavors, hot and mild.

"It's good, but you've got to acquire a taste for kisk," he concludes. "At times it's very hard to get. It hasn't been available for the past three months. We get our shipments of imported foods every four weeks, and every four weeks we keep trying to get it. Eventually it's going to come in."

"You asked about the different foods that we make. We make our own Lebanese bread here, the pita bread. There's no butter, fat, shortening — no cholesterol in it. It's very low in calories; it's all homemade; and it's a very, very big attraction for us here." This is a round, flat yeast bread, sometimes called pocket bread.

"Of course we sell the unleavened bread with no yeast, too," Ray adds. "That's one of our biggest attractions, more or less a drawing card." This thin bread resembles a tortilla.

"The spinach pies become addictive," the enthusiastic baker continues. "They're good for you. The olive oils I use help cholesterol levels. A lot of fellows pack the meat pies in

their lunches, take them to work. When the coal mines were going full blast, you'd be surprised at the coal miners who came in and bought them. Just put them on the hot motors until they were warm and ready to eat.

"I came up with this meat filling recipe," he elaborates. "Traditionally, our nationality has always eaten meat pies made with ground lamb. They've got a lot of gristle and stuff and I could never go for that, so I devised the beef pies. And the traditional meat pies that our people make are open-faced, but these pack and travel easier."

Kibby is one of the great loves of the Lebanese. It is to the Lebanese what spaghetti is to the Italians. Kibby is a mixture of fine cracked wheat or bulgar wheat, grated onion, and ground lamb or beef beaten to a paste. It is eaten both raw or baked. The Lebanon Bakery sells both kinds of kibby.

Grape leaf rolls also appear on the bakery's menu of homemade goodies. These are the Middle Eastern cousin to the European cabbage roll. Delicate-



ly formed and the size of a finger, grape leaves cover a meat and wheat or rice filling. Grape leaf rolls are usually eaten at room temperature and as an appetizer or side dish, rather than as a hearty main course such as cabbage rolls.

Taboule and foul medames are traditional salads made fresh daily at the bakery. Taboule uses bulgar wheat as its base and balances the light, refreshing tastes of parsley and mint with the tang of lemon juice. Foul (pronounced fool) medames is a bean

salad using little brown fava beans that have been cooked and ground. Garlic, onion, and lemon juice are added. "You can add chick peas," Ray says. "Chick peas and the fava beans go good together in a salad."

Chick peas — hard, round, corn-colored peas known sometimes as garbanzo beans — lend themselves to many Middle Eastern dishes. But probably the best-known and best-loved way to eat them is as hummus, an excellent appetizer or dip with Lebanese bread or raw vegetables. The

peas are cooked and pureed; lemon juice, garlic, and tahini are then blended in to make this addictive dip. Tahini is to sesame seeds what peanut butter is to peanuts. Ray makes fresh hummus as well as his own tahini at the shop.

And saving the best for last — the pastries! Biklawas and kataifi are the grandest of Middle Eastern sweets. They are present at all parties and served on every festive occasion. No Lebanese bakery could be without them. Biklawas is made of filo dough,



Lebanese Recipes

Hummus

3/4-1 cup chick peas, canned or cooked until soft

Juice of 2-3 lemons, or to taste

2-3 cloves garlic

Salt

1/2 cup tahini

Garnish:

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. paprika

1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley

Blend chick peas in a blender to reduce them to a puree, using lemon juice and a little water to provide enough liquid for blending. Add the remaining ingredients and blend to a creamy paste, adding more water if necessary. Pour the paste onto a serving dish and dribble a little paprika mixed with the olive oil over the surface. Sprinkle with chopped parsley. Scoop up this tasty dip with pita bread or raw vegetables.

Taboule

1/4 lb. (2 cups) fine bulgar wheat
4 tbsp. finely chopped scallions or 1 large onion

Salt and pepper to taste

3/4 cup finely chopped parsley

4 tbsp. finely chopped fresh mint or

2 1/2 tbsp. dried mint

5 tbsp. olive oil

5 tbsp. lemon juice

Soak bulgar in water for one-half hour before preparing salad. Drain and squeeze out as much moisture as possible with your hands. Dry on cloth. Mix bulgar with other ingredients; it should have a distinct lemony taste. Garnish with black olives, tomatoes, cucumber, green pepper and/or sprigs of parsley. Scoop up this grain salad with lettuce or grape leaves or pita bread.

Mamoul

2 1/2 cups flour

1/2 lb. (2 sticks) unsalted butter

1 tbsp. orange blossom or rose water

3-4 tbsp. milk or water

Date or nut filling

Sifted confectioners sugar

Sift flour into large bowl. Work butter into flour, mix thoroughly, add orange blossom or rose water, followed by milk and work dough until soft, malleable, and easy to shape.

Take a walnut-sized lump of dough, roll into a ball and hollow it out with your thumb. Pinch sides up to make a pot shape. Fill with either

filling, then press and pinch the dough back over the filling, making a little ball shape. Place pastries on a large oven tray. Decorate tops with tweezers or make little dents with fork. (This will help sugar to cling when they are baked.) Bake in preheated 350-degree oven for 20-25 minutes. Do not let them brown; they will then become hard and their taste will be spoiled. While they are still warm, they appear uncooked, but on cooling they become firm. When cold, roll in confectioners sugar.

Date Filling for Mamoul

Chop one pound pitted dates. Put in saucepan with one-fourth cup water. Cook over low heat, stirring until dates have softened into a homogeneous mass. Allow to cool.

Nut Filling

1 1/2-2 cups walnuts, almonds, or pistachios, finely chopped

1-1 1/4 cups sugar

1 tbsp. rose water or ground cinnamon

Mix nuts with sugar. Add rose water if using almonds or pistachios; cinnamon if using walnuts. Mix well.

a tissue-thin dough placed layer on layer and each brushed with melted butter. Ground walnuts, pistachios, or almond fillings are spread over the sheets of filo. More sheets are layered on top and a syrup is drizzled over all.

"There's an enormous number of different kinds of biklawas," Ray explains, "pistachio, chocolate pistachio, walnut, walnut almond, almond, coconut. A lot of them we made up ourselves. They are all very good and tasty."

He remembers when his mother used to make her own filo dough. "She'd just stretch it out, work all day on it, stretch it out on tables and everything. As fast as it dried, we had to cut it up and use it. It was a lot of work! Now we buy it ready made; makes everything real simple."

The kataifi is very similar to the biklawas, but the kataifi dough itself looks like vermicelli or shredded wheat. It, too, is now bought ready made. The process of making the

dough is very interesting and time consuming. A liquid batter of flour and water is thrown through a strainer onto a hot metal sheet over a small fire. The dough sets in strands which are swept off the sheet quickly and remain soft and white. The same procedure is followed in assembling the pastry as for biklawas; half the dough goes on the bottom of the pan, the nut filling is added and then mounds of shredded dough. A cold syrup is poured over the hot kataifi as it comes from the oven. Both pastries hold up well for days.

There are many other pastries in Ray Fadul's glass cases. Two of my other favorites are honey cakes, made from cream of wheat with ground nut fillings and saturated with syrup, and the stuffed butter cookie called mamoul. These are glorious little pastries that can have many different shapes and fillings, traditionally date or nut.

Each time I visit the Lebanon Bakery, I see something new, something

I have never tried before, an anise cookie, an Egyptian spice melowkhia, zattar, a spice put on pita with oil and sesame seeds. Even the names are a treat. Stepping into this small shop is like stepping out of south Wheeling into a warmer, exotic place. It's like a ride on a magic Middle Eastern carpet.

After talking with Ray and poring over all his freshly made delectables, I make my own choices: some spinach and meat pies, some kataifi, some honey cakes, hummus, and taboule. As we settle up, Ray's brother Tom comes into the store with his three-year-old grandson Ryan in tow. Ryan's big, dark eyes peer out from under a knitted cap. He has come looking for Aunt Janice and for the cookies she gives him each time he visits. Here is yet another generation in Wheeling learning about mamoul and kibby and biklawas and warm distant lands. And after all, why have a relative in a bakery if you can't get a cookie when you visit! ❀

Governor Pierpont's office in West Virginia Independence Hall. The restored building is on the new walking tour of Wheeling. Photo by Rick Lee.

A Walk Through Wheeling

After a visit to the Lebanon Bakery you may feel like a good long walk. If so, you are in the right neighborhood. Ray Fadul's business is surrounded by several Wheeling landmarks, among them the impressive St. Alphonsus Church that dates back to 1859 and the Centre Market, which is the oldest cast-iron market house in the country.

These sites are included in the "Walking Tour of Victorian Wheeling" that was put together by the Wheeling Historic Landmarks Commission to illustrate the rich architectural heritage of the Northern Panhandle city. The skill and craftsmanship of the immigrants who were responsible for much of Wheeling's construction are especially evident in the many fine examples of Victorian architecture that stand there today.

The tour covers nearly two miles and may be walked in sections or in its entirety. There are 67 sites included on the tour, encompass-

ing businesses, residences, bridges, churches, a library and a theater, and historic landmarks such as West Virginia Independence Hall, our state's birthplace. The Historic Landmarks Commission worked with Friends of Wheeling, Wheeling 2000 and Main Street Wheeling to produce the tour. Students from Wheeling Park High School assisted in research and writing for the project.

A booklet is available for those interested in the walking tour. The attractive pamphlet includes a glossary of architectural terms, a map of Victorian Wheeling, an index of sites, and photos and descriptions of the various buildings and structures included on the tour. Copies may be purchased for \$2 at Oglebay Park, Jamboree USA, and many other Wheeling locations, or from the Wheeling Convention and Visitors Bureau. For more information contact the Friends of Wheeling, P.O. Box 889, Wheeling, WV 26003.



Our Lady of Lebanon

The Maronite Church in Wheeling

If you start from the Lebanon Bakery with your back to the Ohio River and walk up the hill on 22nd Street, past Wheeling Centre Market and the Ohio Valley Medical Center parking garage, you'll find your way to Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church. The only Maronite church in West Virginia, this is the spiritual and cultural center for many citizens of Lebanese descent. On entering the sanctuary, now presided over by Father Paul Boackle, one moves from the Wheeling of today to ancient Syria during the early years of Christianity.

Our Lady of Lebanon is one of only 54 parishes and missions in this country which comprise the Diocese of St. Maron, USA. The Maronites, whose mother church is in Lebanon, observe their own special rite, adhering to the eastern branch of the Roman Catholic Church and not to be confused with Eastern Orthodoxy. Maronites claim descent from the first Christians who received their faith directly from the Apostle Peter, founder of the church at Antioch as well as the first pope in Catholic tradition.

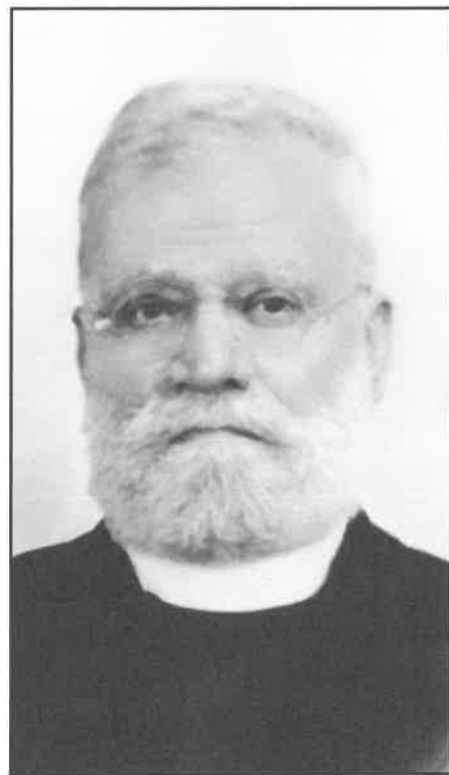
Around the end of the fourth century A.D., a monk named Maron lived in Syria who became known for his teachings, ministrings, and ability to work miracles. He converted a pagan temple into a church and monastery, and the 800 monks who followed him became known as Maronites. These early Christians originally remained separate from both Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church. They retained the Syriac culture as well as Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke. Historically then, it can be argued that this sect which remained culturally isolated for so long is the

branch of Christianity which most directly inherited the first Christians' liturgy and theology.

The Maronite Church was formally recognized in 687 A.D. with St. John Maron as its first patriarch. But as the church grew ever stronger, Muslims were invading their country. In order to save themselves and their culture, the Maronite Christians fled into the hills around Mt. Lebanon and Kadish, the Holy Valley. During the much later Crusades, Maronites served as guides through the region and fought alongside the Europeans in battles against the Muslims.

Over hundreds of years, Maronites witnessed persecution and political upheaval at the hands of the ruling Muslims. During a revolution against Turkish rule in 1860, thousands were killed. And nearly half of the remaining population of Maronites perished during Turkish rule at the time of World War I. It was because of continued persecution that many emigrated from their homeland at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The Maronite story in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle begins at this time.

The first Lebanese immigrant to settle in Wheeling, Roger Saad, came from southern Lebanon around 1888, although a church historian says an immigrant named Bechalani may have lived in Wheeling for a time around 1854. Later years brought more and more Lebanese. Neighbors, friends, and relatives from the old villages in Lebanon came to the Wheeling area and settled together. By the early 1900's the number of southern Lebanese Christians in the city alone was around 300.



Father Abraham founded Our Lady of Lebanon and served the congregation for over 50 years. Photographer and date unknown.

By 1905 the Lebanese Christian population in Wheeling was large enough to attract the attention of the local Catholic hierarchy. Bishop P. J. Donohue wrote to Lebanon for a priest to serve the faithful in their own language and rite. The Right Reverend Paul K. Abraham, a "humble and saintly priest," performed the first liturgy in September 1906 to a handful of people. By 1909 he was celebrating three liturgies each Sunday.

Father Abraham was a remarkable man. Born in 1876 in the district of

Batroun, Lebanon, he was enrolled at the university seminary at the age of 15. He excelled in Hebrew, Syriac, and in eastern Christian history. Ordained in 1901, he found himself in Wheeling only five years later. For 52 years he led his parish through both growth and sorrow. Married to his people, he turned down a 1922 offer to chair the department of Semitic languages at prestigious Catholic University of

America. A noted writer and theologian, Father Abraham translated and published many scholarly works, wrote plays in Arabic, and was frequently called on by the local diocese to assist in their communications with the Vatican.

Under Father Abraham's guidance, the Lebanese Christian community in Wheeling grew and prospered, moving from one building to another. In

1922, they bought the lot on Eoff Street and built a church where the present Our Lady of Lebanon stands. However, when the church was barely ten years old and the Depression was at its peak, a fire on December 19, 1932, destroyed the entire building.

The tragic fire was the occasion for a miraculous rebuilding of faith. According to a report in the *Wheeling News-Register*, "While the rest of the church was engulfed in a raging inferno, the firemen recalled, the life-sized portrait of Our Lady of Lebanon, which was then hanging above a side altar, remained untouched by flames. When firemen attempted to spray water on the portrait, the stream of water parted and did not touch the work of art."

Parishioners and priests were undecided about reconstruction of the church, thinking that the parish might be absorbed into another. But when both Father Abraham and then Bishop Swint had dreams in which the icon appeared to them hanging over the main altar of a church, everyone agreed that such strong imagery meant that the Lebanese church was to be rebuilt.

Although the church was insured against fire, the insurance was not enough to repay the old mortgage and to build a new church. So in August 1933 the first "Mahrajan" was held outdoors at Oglebay Park. This Syrian festival was for years a major social and fundraising extravaganza for the church. Traditional foods, costumes, music and dance were featured at this reunion which drew as many as 5,000 Lebanese-Americans from across the country.

For some in the current generation these memories may only be faded photographs in a family album or anecdotes passed along by an elder relative. Still, there are those born in America who find the rich tapestry of the Maronite history and faith worth holding onto and passing along. Father Boackle himself is one. Turning away from a thoroughly modern career in data processing, Father Boackle is proof that even in this age of technological amazements, the mysteries and the teachings of the old ways still carry immense power and meaning.

— Cheryl Harshman

This painting of the Virgin Mary, depicted as Our Lady of Lebanon, survived the 1932 church fire.





Officially retired, Jimmy Cooper keeps active at his Summers County homestead. Here he poses for the photographer.

Jimmy Cooper

“So Much in So Short a Time”

Interview and Photographs by Andy Yale

There's a man on our Summers County mountain who can talk, and I mean with a capital "T." And unlike some, that's not all he can do, not by a long shot, for he's past master of a passel of trades. He's a horse trader, a bee keeper, a welder, a carpenter, and a veteran of 39 years on the C&O line. I don't think Jimmy Cooper would choose to call himself a storyteller — but go listen to him, then you decide.

He doesn't use any fancy words, just the everyday parts of common speech. And it's

not so much what he talks about as how he tells it. Somehow, he's got the knack of making a story come alive. When Jimmy gets warmed up and talking good, you can see him relive what he's telling, you can join him there in the magic space he creates, where events long past live again.

It's something you won't forget. Suddenly, you are there, partaking of things that took place before you were born, an unseen witness moved back in time by the power of Jimmy's speech. The figures his

tales call up are a little misty, like phantoms always are, but they cast long shadows in your mind, that gather strength with time. The long dead characters in Jimmy's stories take up residence in your memory, become like your neighbors, people you know full well, though you'll never see their faces or shake their hands. For such is the power of Jimmy Cooper's speech, and such is the gift he offers us — to tie us closer to those who've gone before us in these mountains.



Jimmy runs a sizable bee-keeping operation. He makes his own honey frames, supers, and other equipment.

You listen to him and your admiration grows, for the man and for the storyteller. You want to find out how he does it, to name the undiscoverable thing that gives his speech such power. After all, you're a storyteller too, and when you come up against a master, you need to stop and study him a while. But Jimmy's art, for all its simplicity, is subtle, it's woven deep in the fabric of the man, in no way separate from all he's lived and felt. So at the end, after much pondering, you decide that only a man who really knows who he is could tell a story the way Jimmy does. And that says something — that says it all.

So that sometimes I think we should run Jimmy Cooper for President on the Real Life ticket or get him a TV show so he could show the rest of the country how to talk. People would wake up and listen, maybe the whole nation would remember what they seem to be trying so hard to forget — that language has other uses than in the marketplace, that the word is first and last bondsman to the spirit. And maybe they'll remember that an impoverished language is a sure sign of a faltering inner life, maybe they'll look down here in these rugged mountains and see just how rich we are.

Jimmy encourages us. He never denies this country is rugged, but he gives the lie to those who say it's poor. Jimmy tells us about the old times, when you could walk from Sandstone to Hinton in the fall of the year and find every meat house and cellar chock-full of food. He reminds us that this same land once fed all who lived on it — and fed them well. And he points that out as a way that we could go, if we had the grit and endurance of our ancestors. He illuminates the possibility of a future grounded in the past, making use of its wisdom, skirting its mistakes.

And he brings forth the past like a treasure — the land rich with crops, alive with people moving, on foot or on horseback, moving and meeting and speaking with each other, taking their time, unafraid. When gypsies and horse traders and tramps mixed on equal terms with settled folks, sat down in their houses, stayed overnight. A time when the handicapped and the blind asked for no special treatment, when you died at home, knowing your neighbors would bury you. A time that wasn't so long ago, but that seems infinitely distant, as irrevocably gone as last year's snow.

But nothing is irrevocable while people remember. And Jimmy Cooper's stories lengthen our memories, they bring us in

contact with a stream of tradition five generations long. Into that stream some essential element of these hills seems to have entered, something ineffable, always at rest behind the simple words. It is this unnameable quality before which we stand silent and wondering — the living spirit of the land, immutable and timeless, reaching out to us from Jimmy's stories.

Jimmy Cooper. My daddy, he was a horse trader. I've known him to make a thousand dollars in the spring of the year — buying, selling, trading horses — and still do his farming. Now back then, a thousand dollars was a lot of money. So Dad made a good living — I mean a *good* living. His table always was full. After we ate, three or four neighbors could have sat down and eaten.

He killed four or five big hogs in the fall, killed a beef, and canned it all, wasn't no such thing as a freezer. Cold packed the beef and cold packed a lot of the hogs and salted some of it. And he'd make enough lard to last from one year to the next.

Mom canned apple butter, pear butter, pumpkin butter. Dried apples, dried beans — there'd be plenty to eat! There'd be two or three big churns of kraut sitting in the cellar, pickled beans. Just everything to eat.

She had 75 or 80 chickens and was milking four or five cows. And my mother was always awful clean with milk. She could sell *all* the butter she made with a hand churn. She would take her eggs to the store and take gallons of milk. I had a little red wagon I pulled that milk down the road in, setting in a box. And in later years, she got a cream separator; she still sold a lot of milk and butter, but she would separate the cream. They had a cream station down at Sandstone where they tested it. They'd test your cream right there and write you a check for it. After that, they'd ship it by train to Fairmont. Get your cream can back next week.

If you killed a beef, you'd usually sell two quarters and can two quarters.



With an intense gaze and stories to match, Jimmy Cooper recalls simpler times in Summers County.

Maybe can 30 or 40 chickens — cut 'em up, sling 'em in jars, cold pack them. I've seen our cellar down there in the holler have five or six hundred cans of fruit and meat in it when winter come.

But the time has come now — I don't care if you have a pretty good farm where you can run 15 or 20 head of cattle and grow a lot of stuff — you can't make a living on it. The problem is the big man done scrubbed the little man out. The big corporations passed so many laws until the little man can't sell nothing. If I sell a cow, it's got to have the hair on it — I can't kill it and sell it. The little man can't sell milk, he can't sell butter — legally, he can't sell it. So he ain't got no way of making a living like he used to.

Back when they used to plow these hillsides with horses, it wasn't the way it is now. Now everybody farms with tractors. Well, I buy a tractor to put my little bit of hay up. You take a big farmer — now, he ain't bought any more than I bought for his *big* farm. Back in the old days, a man had a pair of horses, a turning plow, and an old mowing machine — he was ready to farm. But that time has done gone now.

I've seen every bit of this mountain plowed with horses. I plowed this field right here when I was 12 years old, with a turning plow and a pair of horses. Julian Cales's field was right up there where that apple tree stands — and a girl plowed it, she was just a little bit older than I was. There ain't very many patches of ground around here that haven't been farmed.

Horse farming will come back, if times ever get hard enough. I'm like Old Man Lon Bragg, over at Brooks. He was setting on the porch. He was *old*, and his mind had got kind of shaky. I came along there one day and we were setting there. And he just raised up and he looked at me and he said, "Jim," he said, "What do you think would ever change the country back like it once was and bring people together, learn them to live with one other like they did, depend on one another?" I said, "Lon, I don't know."

"Well," he said, "I can tell you." And I said, "Well, what is it?"

"Just have a whole lot of hard times, where about a third of the people starve to death, and the rest will learn to live together." That was the words



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he said. And, you know, that just about makes sense.

Years ago when people would run out of — well, just take, for instance, meat. I've known Julian Cales to come down the holler here and get maybe ten, maybe 15 pounds of side meat from my dad. Then he'd pay it back when he killed his hogs. People depended on one another.

I was up here at the funeral home a few years ago, talking about what it costs to bury a man. Some fellas were there and I said, "Well, I helped bury a man one time, it cost \$6 to bury him." And as far as I'm concerned, he was buried as good as a man it cost seven or eight thousand to bury.

Well, they said, who was it? And I said, "Old Man Sam Fox." Lived right over there on the hill, died there.

My daddy had a bunch of big wide poplar lumber. Old Man Silas Cales, a carpenter, took Dad's lumber up to Enfield Cales's barn. They made the casket. My mother and Florence Cales and May Cales covered the casket with black cloth on the outside and white on the inside. The whole lot cost \$6.

They lined it and fixed it and I took a pair of mules, pulled it right around over there to his house. Bill Johnson, my wife's uncle, gave a suit of clothes. My daddy and Bill Johnson washed him, dressed him, put him in the casket.

They had a wake. I bet there were 75 people over there that night. And the next day, we buried him right up there on the ridge. Old Man Ballard Shuck — he wasn't an ordained preacher — he preached there. He preached his funeral. And all the Johnsons sang, the prettiest singing I ever heard in my life. I took the check lines from a mule — those leather lines — and used them to let him down in the grave with. And he was buried just as good as a man that cost \$10,000.

When a man thinks back, years and years ago, he didn't think the world would change so much in so short a time. Well, it started right after World War II — that's when the car world began, the big car world. Back before World War II, there wasn't but a few farmers around here even had a vehicle. I guess Enfield Cales had the first little old truck around here. And Dad and them owned their vehicle after I came back from the Army — a big ton-

and-a-half truck. But other than that, it was all horses.

I can even remember when that road was built, Route 20 there. They had an old steam shovel. A fellow by the name of Jim Rowsey, he was the road boss, he boarded down here with my dad and mother. Everett Mark-

ham, he ran the shovel, he boarded with us — that was the only two boys that ever did. I was so little back then, there's only a few things I can remember about it. I remember that steam shovel, because you know how that would catch a kid's eye. I remember when the steel bridge was



This scene, thought to be Elk Knob, Summers County, is part of the R. R. Keller photography exhibit. Probably mid-1920's.

Historic Photos on Tour

Photographer Robert Ripley Keller was born in Nebraska, but while still a child moved to southern West Virginia in 1899. As a boy he worked in the coal mines for a short time, but it was his interest in photographing the world around him that led to his life's work.

In 1910 he opened a studio in Pineville and ran an ad in the *Wyoming Mountaineer*: "HAVE YOUR PICTURE MADE BY...R. R. KELLER." In 1914 he married Nellie Ruth Hoover, a photographer

herself, and moved to Summers County. Keller practiced his art for the next 50 years, photographing the people of southern West Virginia as they worked and lived.

More than 55 photographs by R. R. Keller will tour parts of West Virginia thanks to his daughter Barbara Keller and the West Virginia State Archives. Barbara worked with her father in his photography business through 1966. She gave the Archives about 1500 images reflecting Keller's long career in Summers, Wyoming and Fayette

built down there, I remember walking across it before it was plumb finished.

And I remember the convicts — they brought prisoners in from Moundsville to rock base the road. Up here in the Jim Hollands bottom they had a camp, big fence around it. I expect they had 200 prisoners there. They

brought them up to Lick Creek Falls. That big cliff up there was where the rock was shot off. And the prisoners broke it up with knapping hammers. They beat that rock out, had what they called a "square" of rock they had to beat every day. Some of them would beat that square of rock by ten o'clock.



counties. Some of Mrs. Keller's work is included in the collection and will be exhibited as well.

Keller created an impressive record of local life in the first two-thirds of the century. Much of his photography centered around important industries of the day, coal mining and logging, but he also caught the fun side of life with shots of fishing and skinny-dipping in the Guyandotte River.

Keller captured rural scenes and country roads, banks and general stores, courthouses, baseball teams and Boy Scouts, and parades. Keller photographed the C&O's experimental engine No. 500, the first coal-burning steam turbine electric single unit locomotive, that arrived in Hinton in 1947. He made photographs of felled logs ready for their spring race down the Guyandotte. There is even a shot of a group of

lawmen breaking up a moonshine operation.

The State Archives prepared the traveling exhibit, which began its trek at the Hinton Public Library this past spring. Other locations slated for the show include the Pence Springs Hotel, Concord College, and various libraries and colleges. The exhibit is sponsored by the Archives and History section of the Division of Culture and History and the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission, with support from the West Virginia Humanities Foundation and the West Virginia Library Commission.

For more information about the Keller exhibit, titled "Local History Shot! by R. R. Keller, Photographer," contact Myra Zigler at the Hinton Public Library, (304)466-4490, or Steve Trail at (304)466-3388.

When one did, he could sit down. And some of them would take all day to beat it. It was just knowing your rock and how to hit it.

Back before that road was ever built, all kinds of folks was coming through here. Gypsies used to come through years ago, with wagons and horses, and camp out at Laurel Creek Church. They'd be up there sometimes for a month or two, in the wintertime. Lived in big tents stretched out up there and we'd go sit with them of a night, they were nice. Well, they'd beg or steal, too.

Now, the old gypsies, some of them were good traders. There was Benny Morrison, he was a real trader, a good trader, and mostly traded in high-priced horses. They married and got mixed up just like anybody else, so the gypsy breed is just about gone. You can hardly tell them from anyone else now. Some of them still trade horses. But all the old ones are gone.

And there was another fellow that used to come through this country trading horses. I don't reckon he ever missed a year. He rode a circle — he would end up around Pipestem and stay part of the wintertime. Then he would come right down through here and go out by Summersville, down through by Weston, on down in the Gauley River, out into Charleston and back the other side. Through the mining camps back of Beckley, all down in the Winding Gulf, and make her back in here by cold weather. That's what he done — he traded horses the whole way. Rode it horseback every year.

I rode with him one time, as far as Summersville. He had a raincoat, blankets. He'd have two saddles, one he rode on and one to carry his stuff. And he'd just pull out there over on the side of the road somewhere, where he could water his horses, feed his horses, tie them on a rope, let them eat grass. When night come, he'd tie them up good, and he'd just roll out his bedroll right there and go to sleep by the side of the road. Sleep all night.

I've seen him many a time when he would come through here and have, oh, between five and ten thousand dollars in his pocket. He carried a good gun all the time. He was just a little humped-up fellow — Old Man Gene Rodge — and in winter, he wore a jacket, carried that pistol right there



Southern West Virginians once took a good living from mountain land, Jimmy Cooper recalls. He thinks they still could, if necessary.

in his hip pocket. But then in hot weather, he carried it in his saddlebag, his right saddlebag. He never was bothered, never had to use it.

All kinds of folks came through here. There was Mike Bragg. He stayed at, I don't know what you'd call it, whether it was an old folks home or a poorhouse — back there years ago they used to call them poorhouses. But he would come in here and visit Enfield Cales or Jess Johnson, stay around maybe two or three months in the summertime. Worked a little on the farm, and fall would come, he'd get his stick, tie his clothes up to it, and head for Braxton County, back to the poorhouse.

There used to be a lot of those old fellas that come around. There was

one by the name of Lee Meadors. I don't know where he was raised at. He worked in the woods, drove team in the woods a long time. And he'd come in and stay with Enfield Cales up there. Maybe stay until way up in the spring, do their plowing for them with a team of horses. Then he'd take off and go back to the woods somewhere.

He was a jolly kind of a fella. One time he was staying with Johnny Bragg on top of Chestnut Mountain. And on Christmas Day, he picked up the axe and said, "I believe I'll go and cut me a good pole of chestnut kindling." Well, he left. And he didn't come back. And somewhere close to next Christmas Day he come back to the woods, got his axe where he hid

it at, put that pole of chestnut kindling on his shoulder — come walking in a year from when he left! Took all year to get that pole of kindling.

Oh, we had all kinds of people in these mountains. Old Man Reuben Bragg lived right over yonder. He had three kids — Lowry, he was blind, Wash was blind, and Nancy Katherine was blind. I have took Wash Bragg many a time possum hunting — he would go with us boys. We'd lead him along.

He'd cut all of the family's wood — he would go to the woods and chop a tree down! He was stone blind! He would take his hand, I can remember it as good as if he was standing here, and he would feel that tree and he could tell which way that tree was leaning. And he would chop that tree and listen. When he heard that tree click, he knowed to get out of the way.

He used to shuck corn for Dad. Somebody had to get his corn shock and bring it to him, but he'd just set right there and feel around and shuck that corn just about as fast as a man with eyes. He used to tie oats for Dad. And I sawed wood with him on many a day.

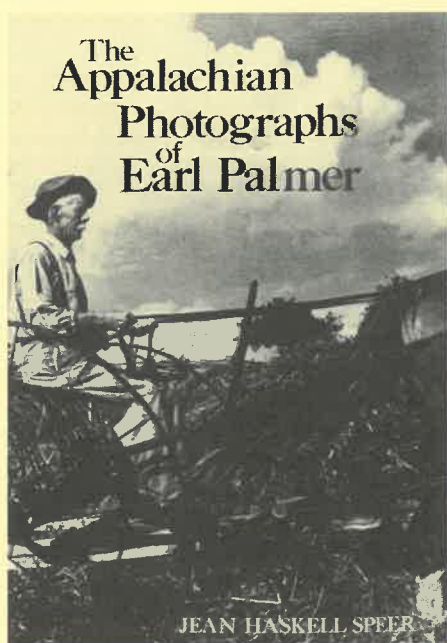
There was an old fellow in this country by the name of Marion Ayers. Just a little old humped-up feller, but he was a good feller. Well, sir, he'd come up there and stay with them people. He was their eyes. He'd go down the road, Wash a-holding to his arm, to the store. Get a poke of flour and maybe even a poke of meal. Wash was a big square-shouldered fellow, Wash would lay that on his shoulder and get Marion by the arm and back up the road he'd come.

Nancy Katherine was as blind as she could be and she done the cooking. She built the fire. I've been to their home many a time and watched her cook a meal. When you got used to it, you didn't even pay much attention to them being blind.

Of course, folks helped them a little. My daddy used to take a horse up there and pull wood in for them. Wash would have it all chopped down and ready and Dad would pull it in there to the wood yard for them. And Wash would get out there with an old saw and saw up that wood and split and carry it in. It's hard for a man to believe, but I've seen it with my own eyes. ❄

Book Review:

The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer



Appalachia has never suffered from lack of attention from photographers. The best in the business — Lewis Hine, Ben Shahn, Walker Evans, among others — have come to West Virginia and other parts of the mountain region, leaving striking images behind them.

The photographers mostly came in response to the nation's social concerns, and this naturally colored their work. Looking for problems, they found them, and it is not surprising that their work shows Appalachia at its starkest. It takes nothing from the seriousness of past and present problems or from the genius of visiting photographers to point out that there is more to be seen than that.

We get a big helping of the other side of mountain life in the work of photographer Earl Palmer. Now a vigorous 85, Palmer has made a long career as a roving camera man. His photography, appearing largely in travel publications, never became

universally known, but it represents a very substantial body of work.

The best of Palmer's photographs have been gathered into an impressive new book, *The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer*. The collection was compiled by Jean Haskell Speer, an Appalachian studies professor at Virginia Tech.

The new book includes more than 100 fine black-and-white photographs. They span half a century, from the 1930's to the 1980's, with the best coming from the '40's and '50's. They are mostly drawn from Southwest Virginia, Palmer's home country, with others coming from Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina.

Earl Palmer made a conscious decision to photograph the positive. His pictures celebrate the shrinking minority of mountain people who have been able to pursue traditional life-styles on the land. There are almost no scenes of industrial Appalachia, or of what he calls "modernity" in general. The strongest photos are those showing craftspeople at work, and many of the portraits.

But if Palmer's view is one-sided, it is a joyous view of the sunny side, to borrow from more famous Southwest Virginians, the singing Carter Family. As a native and lifelong mountaineer, he got closer to his subjects than most of the brought-on photographers. His pictures make a gentle antidote to others which take a more unflinching view.

— Ken Sullivan

The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer, by Jean Haskell Speer, is a 128-page hardbound book, with preface, introduction, index and bibliography. It may be purchased for \$29 from the University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0336.

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In This Issue

ETHEL BOLTE, born at Zinnia in Doddridge County, has lived most of her life in Salem. She taught school in Nicholas, Doddridge and Harrison counties for 35 years. Now retired, she writes for local history publications. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1989.

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 photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History, Department of Education and the Arts.

MAUREEN CROCKETT was born in New York State and attended City University of New York, West Virginia University and other institutions. She lives in St. Albans and works as a freelance writer, photographer and illustrator. She contributes regularly to *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine. Her most recent article for GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1989.

JACQUELINE G. GOODWIN, born and raised in New Jersey, earned her undergraduate and master's degrees at West Virginia University. A former teacher, she is now director of communications for the West Virginia Education Association and a freelance writer. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Spring 1990.

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. Cheryl, a former librarian, is a children's literature specialist. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1989.

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

REBECCA H. KIMMONS, a native of Raleigh County, now lives in Charleston. She has a special interest in oral history and has written many feature articles for regional magazines. She works as a consultant in media relations and tourism planning and development. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GIBBS KINDERMAN lives at Mill Point. He works as general manager of WVMR-AM, a non-commercial station which provides the only local radio service to Pocahontas County, and says he's an active member of the *Pocahontas Times* fan club. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native, is chief photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post*, where he has worked since 1969. He is a member of the National Press Photographers Association and other professional organizations. His hobby is collecting old cameras and photographs, to preserve the heritage of our pioneer photographers. He is now working on a book about late 19th century black photographers. Ron is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

RONDA G. SEMRAU, a native of Logan County, is a senior at Marshall University majoring in journalism. She specializes in magazine writing and has been a member of the Society of Professional Journalists since her freshman year. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

BARBARA SMITH of Philippi has written poems, short stories, journal articles, and the novel *Six Miles Out*, published by Mountain State Press. She chairs the Division of the Humanities and teaches writing and literature at Alderson-Broadus College. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1989.

ANDY YALE, a native of New York City, recently relocated to Sandstone in Summers County. He has published articles and photos in *The Rolling Stone*, *Memphis*, and *Natural History* magazines, as well as other publications, and contributes a regular column to *The Nation*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1989.

CORRECTION: Due to a printer's error on page 23 of the Spring GOLDENSEAL, the first paragraph in the second column did not read correctly. It should read as follows:

Cornwell guided West Virginia through World War I and the coal wars that followed. Though the governor had to call the troops out during mine strikes, Mr. Ailes stoutly denies that his grandfather was anti-union. But he shared a story from his grandfather about a meeting of the governor with the radical labor leader Mother Jones. "My grandfather said that Mother Jones came into his office and immediately began berating and cursing him. He told her that he wouldn't allow anyone, man or woman, to use such language in his office and ordered her out. He moved from behind his desk and went towards her and she got out of there quick," Mr. Ailes says.

We apologize for any misunderstanding due to this misprint.



Our 1985 cover photograph of Ray Epler. Photo by Michael Keller.

Remembering Ray Epler

Ray Epler was laid to rest with sweet music on March 30. Friends gathered for his funeral at Elkview, several of them playing dulcimers of his own making, and they followed him to the burying ground in his Roane County home country. They came together to honor a man who made music possible for many through the fine hand-crafted dulcimers he built.

Raymond L. Epler was born in Wood County on February 14, 1908. He learned about music at an early age from his parents, was self-taught, and played strictly by ear. Ray and his wife Edna made their home in South Charleston, in a house that they built by themselves. Their backyard vegetable garden was one of the lushest in town.

Ray's friend Lefty Shafer gave the eulogy at the funeral. Lefty was kind enough to share the following words with GOLDENSEAL.

Ray Epler and I go back a long way. We first became acquainted in 1930, and this was the beginning of a very close 60-year friendship. If I

wanted to know something I would call Ray, and usually he could answer my question. If he didn't know the answer he could usually find it for me. So, I have lost not only a very dear friend, but a valuable source of information.

Ray and I have done many things together: We have hoed corn together, cut corn, shucked corn, played music together, made hay, harvested wheat, and we climbed rock cliffs together. During the past 30 or so years Ray and I, along with our wives, have done much traveling together in many of the United States.

Ray Epler was a talented person. As you know, there are people who are skilled in working with their hands; and others who are skilled in working with their minds. Ray was one of those rare individuals who could do both. He was a very artistic person.

Ray worked in wood all through his life. I remember back in the '30's he built a barn, a corn crib, and a

chicken house. These buildings needed roofs, so he decided to use clapboard shingles for roofing. The making or "riving" of clapboards was an art that was dying out even then, but he checked with some old-timers in the community and learned to rive boards. Not only did he rive enough boards to roof the buildings, but he rived enough pickets or palings to build a fence around his yard.

At about retirement age he began making dulcimers. Some call them lap dulcimers, some call them mountain dulcimers, but Ray's favorite term was "fretted" dulcimer, since they do have frets like a guitar, banjo or mandolin. When he began making dulcimers he also learned to play them and became very good at it.

I don't know how many fretted dulcimers he made, and I don't believe he knew himself since he had stopped numbering them in the eight or nine hundreds. In the last few years he didn't keep a stock on hand, but only filled orders. During the past five or six years, he has also been making hammered dulcimers, and has made some very beautiful and good-toned instruments. Many of the fretted dulcimers being played here today were made by him.

Now, if I were asked to describe Raymond Epler with one word, that word would be "tolerant." Ray accepted his fellow man as he found him, requiring no change or uplift, but loved him anyway.

Ray Epler was influential in the dulcimer revival that began in West Virginia over 20 years ago. He displayed his instruments at leading fairs and crafts shows, putting music into the hands of some of today's most accomplished dulcimer players. Ray was proud of his work and it showed in the beauty of the instruments he created. He was a teacher and a friend to many younger musicians eager to learn from a master craftsman and skilled dulcimer player. The subject of a 1985 GOLDENSEAL cover story, Ray was honored in a posthumous ceremony at the 1990 Vandalia Gathering.

Mountain Arts Foundation
The Cultural Center
State Capitol
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

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Inside Goldenseal

Page 18 — Glen Smith, a Wirt Countian for 25 years, originally hails from Galax, Virginia, holy ground for fiddlers. Their loss was our gain.

Page 29 — Ernie Saunders is a good sport, win or lose. He made a long career as a Mountain State sportscaster.

Page 23 — Roxie Gore has seen hard times and good times in Logan County. Her family lived on the farm and in company towns.

Page 43 — As a boardinghouse matron, Opal Ooten has looked after miners, Corridor G construction workers, and Tug Valley flood recovery crews. She is retired now.

Page 57 — You can find kibby, taboule, hummus and other Middle Eastern treats at Wheeling's Lebanon Bakery. Ray Fadul is the man in charge.

Page 38 — Black miner Henry Franklin made a way for himself and his family in Barbour County. His descendants remain there today.

Page 9 — Cal Price made the biggest mark, but five generations of his family have nourished the *Pocahontas Times*. They just recently shifted from hand-set type to microcomputers.

Page 65 — Jimmy Cooper is a champion talker, according to Andy Yale, his neighbor and our writer. Jimmy recalls earlier times in Summers County.

Page 48 — The Pence Springs resort recently did time as the state Women's Prison. It has now been restored as a country inn.

