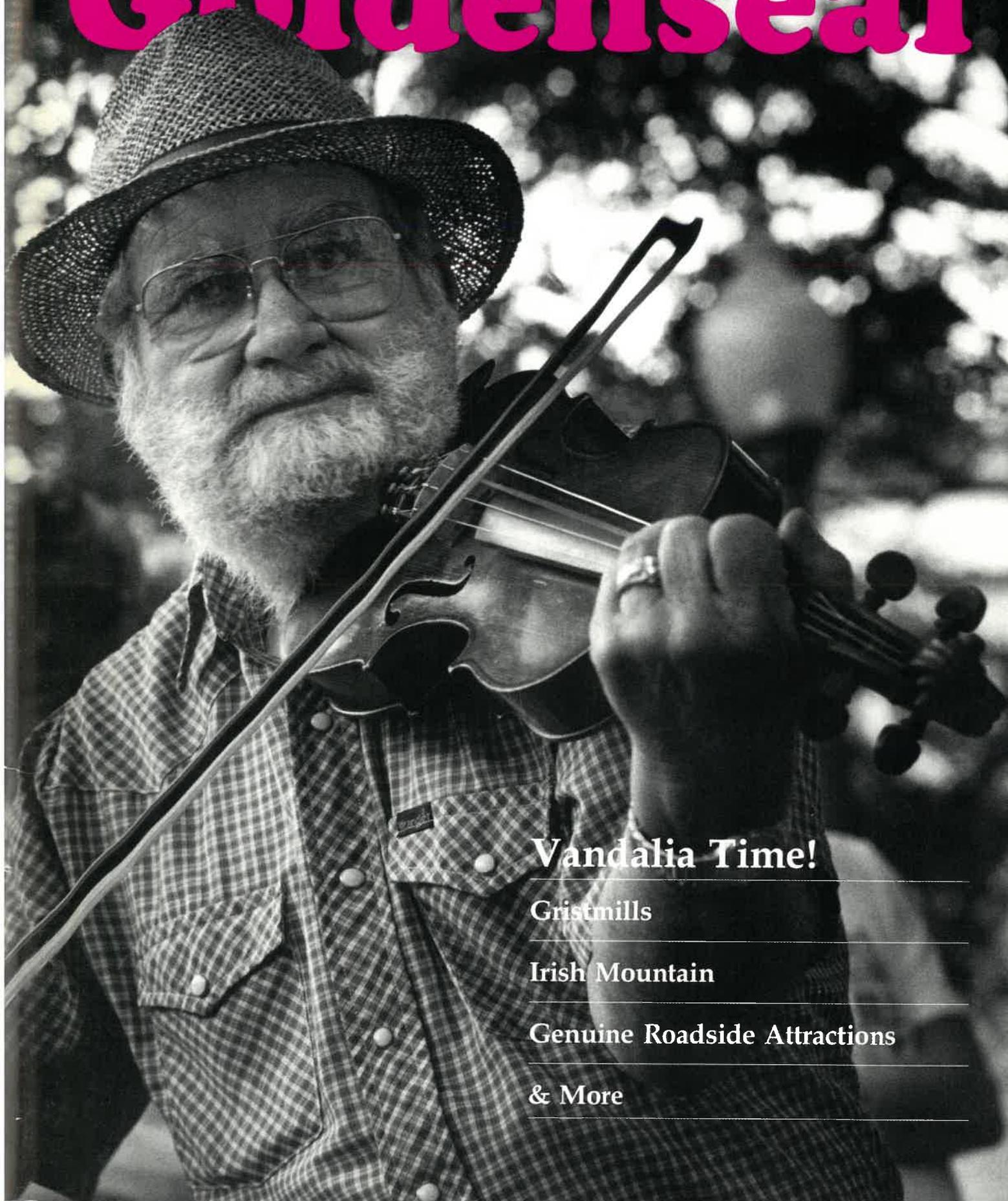


Vol. 17, No. 1 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Spring 1991 • \$3.50

# Goldenseal



**Vandalia Time!**

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Gristmills

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Irish Mountain

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Genuine Roadside Attractions

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& More

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# Folklife • Fairs • Festivals

GOLDENSEAL's "Folklife Fairs Festivals" calendar is prepared three to six months in advance of publication. The information was accurate as far as we could determine at the time the magazine went to press. However, it is advisable to *check with the organization or event to make certain that dates or locations have not been changed.* The phone numbers given are all within the West Virginia (304) area code. Information for events at West Virginia State Parks and major festivals is also available by calling 1-800-CALL WVA.

<b>April 6</b> Feast of the Ramson	Richwood (846-6790)	<b>June 21-23</b> Bluegrass-Country Music Festival	Summersville (872-3145)
<b>April 14</b> 19th Clay County Annual Ramp Dinner	Clay (587-4274)	<b>June 22</b> West Virginia Day	Terra Alta (789-2411)
<b>April 14-19</b> Augusta Spring Dulcimer Week (D&E College)	Elkins (636-1903)	<b>June 22</b> Pearl S. Buck Birthday Celebration	Hillsboro (653-4430)
<b>April 20-21</b> Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show	Gassaway (364-2340)	<b>June 28-30</b> Princeton Summer Fest '91	Princeton (487-1502)
<b>May 3-5</b> Dogwood Festival	Huntington (696-5940)	<b>June 29-30</b> Pioneer Days & Wheat Harvest (Farm Museum)	Point Pleasant (675-5737)
<b>May 10-12</b> Arts & Crafts Show (Tygart Lake)	Grafton (265-3383)	<b>June 29-July 6</b> Pioneer Days in Pocahontas County	Marlinton (799-4315)
<b>May 11-12</b> May Market & Muster Days (Fort New Salem)	Salem (782-5245)	<b>July 3-7</b> Mountain State Art & Craft Fair (Cedar Lakes)	Ripley (372-7000)
<b>May 12</b> 83rd Mother's Day	Grafton (265-1589)	<b>July 5-7</b> International Food & Arts Festival	Weirton (748-7212)
<b>May 18</b> Allegheny Mountain Wool Fair	Mingo 339-2659)	<b>July 7-August 9</b> Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops	Elkins (636-1903)
<b>May 18-26</b> Webster County Woodchopping Festival	Webster Springs (847-7666)	<b>July 19-21</b> Gospel Sing	Moundsville (845-4557)
<b>May 18-27</b> Montgomery Centennial	Montgomery (442-5161)	<b>July 19-27</b> West Virginia Interstate Fair	Mineral Wells (489-1301)
<b>May 23-26</b> Three Rivers Coal Festival	Fairmont (363-2625)	<b>July 20-27</b> Cowen Historical Railroad Festival	Cowen (226-3916)
<b>May 24-26</b> Vandalia Gathering (Capitol Grounds)	Charleston (348-0220)	<b>July 22-27</b> West Virginia Poultry Convention	Moorefield (538-2725)
<b>May 24-27</b> Spring Folk Dance Camp (Stifel Center)	Wheeling (242-7700)	<b>July 26-28</b> Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival	Wheeling (233-1090)
<b>May 24-27</b> West Virginia Dandelion Festival	White Sulphur Springs (536-1755)	<b>July 26-28</b> State Gospel Sing	Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
<b>May 25-27</b> Head-of-the-Mon Horseshoe Tournament	Fairmont (366-7986)	<b>July 26-August 4</b> State Water Festival	Hinton (466-5400)
<b>May 27-June 2</b> West Virginia Strawberry Festival	Buckhannon (472-9036)	<b>July 29-August 3</b> Taylor County Fair	Grafton (265-4431)
<b>May 30-June 2</b> Blue & Gray Reunion	Philippi (457-3700)	<b>July 29-August 3</b> Marshall County Fair	Moundsville (845-3980)
<b>June 1</b> Confederate Memorial Ceremony (Capon Chapel)	Capon Bridge (822-4326)	<b>July 30-August 3</b> Jackson County Junior Fair	Cottageville (372-9292)
<b>June 2</b> Vineyard Blessing	Purgitsville (289-3900)	<b>July 31-August 3</b> Wayne County Fair	Wayne (849-3521)
<b>June 3</b> Rhododendron Art & Craft Festival	Charleston (744-4323)	<b>August 1-3</b> Hughes River Holidays	Harrisville (643-2719)
<b>June 6-9</b> River Heritage Days	New Martinsville (455-3637)	<b>August 1-4</b> Boone County Fair	Danville (369-2291)
<b>June 6-9</b> West Virginia Bass Festival	St. Marys (684-7067)	<b>August 1-4</b> Bluestone Valley Fair	Spanishburg (425-1429)
<b>June 7-9</b> Ronceverte River Festival	Ronceverte (645-7911)	<b>August 2-3</b> State Square & Round Dance Convention	Buckhannon (842-3960)
<b>June 8</b> Fostoria Glass Auction	Moundsville (845-3897)	<b>August 2-4</b> Last Blast of Summer	Welch (436-3113)
<b>June 14-16</b> Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival	Charles Town (725-2055)	<b>August 2-4</b> Appalachian String Band Festival (Camp Washington-Carver)	Clifftop (438-6429)
<b>June 14-16</b> Mountaineer Country Glass Festival	Morgantown (599-3550)	<b>August 2-4</b> Mountain Music Festival (Folklife Center)	Pipstem (466-0626)
<b>June 15-16</b> Old Mill Spring Festival	Greenville (832-6775)	<b>August 2-12</b> Cherry River Festival	Richwood (846-6790)
<b>June 19-22</b> West Virginia State Folk Festival	Glenville (462-7361)	<b>August 3-4</b> Aunt Jenny Wilson Folk Festival	Logan (752-7206)
<b>June 20</b> West Virginia Day	Wheeling (238-1300)	<b>August 3-10</b> Hatfield McCoy Festival	Matewan (426-8740)
<b>June 21-22</b> Civil War Days	Gauley Bridge (632-1908)	<b>August 5-11</b> Tyler County Fair	Middlebourne (652-2528)
<b>June 21-23</b> West Virginia Birthday Celebration	Fairmont (363-8538)		

(continued on inside back cover)

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# Goldenseal

Volume 17, Number 1

Spring 1991

**COVER:** George Phillips fiddles at last year's Vandalia Gathering. There will be plenty more good music at Vandalia 1991. Our Vandalia coverage begins on page 66. Photograph by Michael Keller.

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# 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.*

December 16, 1990

Conroe, Texas

Editor:

In early December I took my newspapers to our neighborhood recycling pickup and met a fellow West Virginian. We discovered that we shared a common relative from the Duffield family in Sutton. My new friend shared her last issue of *GOLDENSEAL* with us, and as a result we are purchasing a subscription for us and one for another family member.

I am not a native-born West Virginian but claim West Virginia as my home since both of my parents were born and raised in the state. My roots are there, my daughter teaches the children of your future in Elkins, and two of my grandchildren are growing up there.

My spirit belongs in the mountains and the valleys of West Virginia. Thanks for bringing a piece of it to my doorstep in Texas.

Sincerely,  
Sallie Hastings

*Sounds like you saved us from the recycling bin and are too polite to say so. Thanks for the rescue! —ed.*

## Rare Plants and Herb Medicine

December 26, 1990

Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Editor:

I found an aspect of the winter 1990 article on "Healing from the Hills" quite distressing. While the article concluded with a warning to protect people from ingesting possibly harmful substances, there was no commensurate warning to protect increasingly rare and endangered plants. I applaud the knowledge of our wild plants and the use of plentiful, non-endangered ones, but the article in your magazine gave no consideration to the fact that because of wild plant collecting for medicinal purposes, at least one plant that your article appeared to advocate collecting is now "quite rare." See page 400, *Flora of West Virginia*.

I hope that in a future *GOLDENSEAL* I will see this issue addressed, at which time I can then give you a pat on the back!

Sincerely,  
Kathy Bilton

*We've checked Flora of West Virginia, the scholarly guidebook by P. D. Strausbaugh and Earl Core, and are embarrassed to find that the rare plant you allude to is goldenseal itself, otherwise known as yellowroot. Your point is well made. —ed.*



Goldenseal. Drawing by Andy Willis.

## Sportsman Paul Hepler

December 14, 1990

Renick, West Virginia

Editor:

Just received and read the winter edition of *GOLDENSEAL*, especially "An Oral Memoir by Paul Ashton Hepler." We thoroughly enjoyed it.

Paul was not only a hunter and sportsman. He was a teacher in that he could explain his butcher techniques, firing a gun, math, and adventures in such a way that we children could understand. We enjoyed his visits with Dad and Mother, usually spring or fall. He wanted to be here for ramp and fish season, and hunting

and butchering in the fall.

He was funny or serious, very sentimental. He always attended church; I imagine I can yet hear him singing old songs like "Old Rugged Cross," "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and "Amazing Grace." His deep, mellow voice filled the air. His death is a great loss in a rare friendship.

Sincerely,  
Cassandria Knicely Perkins

## Quinnimont

November 25, 1990

St. Petersburg, Florida

Editor:

My cousin, William Warner of Parkersburg, sent me the fall 1990 issue of *GOLDENSEAL* because he knew I grew up in Quinnimont. I lived there with my parents and sisters from 1918 until I was called to active duty in World War II in 1941. I attended the Quinnimont Elementary School through the eighth grade, and I knew the author of the article about Quinnimont, Leona Gwinn Brown.

I wish to make a few corrections of the article and captions. On page 29, the two-story house pictured is not the Ashley house but rather the T. R. Wilson house where I grew up. The Ashley house was also a two-story house, but it was located between the George Lawton house and our house. The Ashley house no longer exists.

On page 30, the monument pictured at the top left was not erected to the memory of Joseph Beury, as I believe Colonel Beury was still living when the monument was erected. As I recall the inscription on the monument it is to commemorate the shipment of the first carload of coal from New River.

The picture on lower right of page 31 is the tower of the original schoolhouse, later converted to a residence when the new schoolhouse was built halfway between Quinnimont and Prince so as to accommodate students from both towns.

The family that I recall living in the old schoolhouse was the Lonnie Goins

family, as I used to play with and went to school with his children, Meredith, Juanita, Arnold and Aaron. Wilbur Whitten's family lived down in the bottom where the store and post office were located.

My parents lived in Quinimont for 35 years until Crisp Lumber Company bought the town and wanted our house as a residence for one of their officials. My father, Thomas R. Wilson, Sr., was superintendent of Quinimont Coal Company, which owned the land and houses, and served as postmaster of the fourth-class post office for over 30 years.

Sincerely yours,  
Thomas R. Wilson, Jr.

### Chestnut Blight

December 15, 1990  
Clendenin, West Virginia  
Editor:

On page 22 of your story in the winter 1990 issue of GOLDENSEAL, I question the statement "the blight wiped out the chestnuts in 1923." I was born in 1925 and I distinctly recall gathering chestnuts from under a large tree in the fall of 1932 or 1933 on our farm near Clendenin.

At that time the chestnut trees were dying. Perhaps the blight slowly migrated from east to west and didn't get here until the early '30's.

Anyway, "The Dunkles of Deer Run" is the type of story I like best.  
Sincerely,  
Ottis L. Dilworth

*The year 1923 seemed a little early to us as well, since we have more commonly heard the late 1920's given as the prime years for the chestnut blight in West Virginia. We promise an article on this subject for the future. —ed.*

### The Sisters of DeSales Heights

January 18, 1991  
Spring, Texas  
Editor:

My aunt who lives in Parkersburg recently sent me a copy of the edition featuring the Sisters of DeSales Heights. It was wonderful!

I am a graduate of DeSales and knew all but two of the sisters on the cover. They are all very special in my heart. Some of my great aunts, my mother, my aunt and even my

nephew attended DeSales at one time in their school years, as well as myself.

The education we received was excellent — it has helped in our everyday business, as well as family lives. I'm sure I'm not the only past or present student who remembers my days at "the Heights" fondly and hope for their continued success in the future to come.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Tammy Hardman

### Miners' Band

November 27, 1990  
Tampa, Florida  
Editor:

I read in the fall issue of GOLDENSEAL two names that were familiar — Frank and Stanley Vingle. I worked with a Frank and Stanley Vingle in the late '20's and early '30's at the Weston Glass Company. This manufacturer of hand-blown tableware was located at Homewood just south of the Weston city limits.

Frank was a gatherer and Stanley a foot caster on stemware. Both were from Fairmont or Monongah. They evidently had worked in the mines, as I heard them speak of the mines.

The local American Flint Glass Union formed an orchestra consisting of employees of the factory. Stanley played the clarinet. I don't recall whether or not Frank was in the orchestra.



Love your lore?  
Subscribe today!  
**Goldenseal**  
See coupon on page 72.

I later worked at the Ray-Faye Glass Company in Fairmont with Frank and a son of his whose name I don't recall.

Sincerely,  
Bertram C. Faris

*After checking with family and friends, we can confirm that these are the same Vingles. —ed.*

October 24, 1990  
Shinnston, West Virginia  
Editor:

I certainly enjoy the GOLDENSEAL very much, especially when I read in it about people I know and went to school with more than 50 years ago.

I have been getting the magazine several years now. I have recommended it to several people that come to my barber shop who are now receiving the magazine.

I read in the last GOLDENSEAL about the Monongah Miners' Band and Walter Kloc, who was in my class at Mannington High School — 1932. I also worked in the mine at Williams with Frank Vingle and played baseball against Ronnie and Bernie Vingle.  
Yours sincerely,  
Frank A. Talerico

The Monongah Miners' Band. Photo by R. DeAngelis, 1930.



# 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.

## Romantic Reading

GOLDENSEAL freelancer Irene Brand, a writer of Christian romance novels, recently produced a new book, *The Hills Are Calling*. It is a publication of Mountain State Press in Charleston.

Brand is the author of 14 books and has also published in historical, religious and travel magazines. Her work includes historical novels, contemporary and historical romances, a biography, two church histories, and a family genealogy. A public school teacher for 23 years, she is now retired and lives in Mason County.

*The Hills Are Calling* is the story of Don Jackson, who comes to Appalachia in the 1930's in search of his roots. He becomes involved with his neighbors who are struggling against poverty, and ultimately becomes a part of the community himself. The hills have a powerful effect on him and he realizes a strong love for the land of his ancestors, the people he comes to know, and in particular one special woman.

*The Hills Are Calling* sells for \$4.95 and is available at bookstores and in The Shop at the Cultural Center. It is a 189-page paperback, the author's fourth book for 1990.

## New Banjo Cassette

"Pickin' on the Front Porch" is a new release of Ira "Ike" Southern, an old-time banjo player from Princeton. He is a regular at Vandalia Gathering, both on the music stage and in the Liar's Contest, and frequents other traditional music festivals as well.

This past summer Ike Southern placed third in a national field of banjoists at the first annual Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County. One of the event's organizers, Bob Taylor, says Ike has the ability to make people feel good and is an excellent entertainer as well as a fine musician.

"Pickin' on the Front Porch" is a collection of 19 tunes, ranging from standards such as "Wildwood Flower" and "John Henry" to more obscure material. Most are unaccompanied banjo solos. Two tunes are Southern originals — "Crossing the Creek" and "Flat Footin' It."

Media Productions of Oak Hill produced the new cassette. You may order copies from Ike Southern, 228 Old Bluefield Road, Princeton, WV 24740. The cost is \$7, plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. "Pickin' on the Front Porch" is genuine West Virginia music and a good addition to any mountain music collection.

## Working Women Photo Contest



Editor Jane Price Sharp, a Marlinton working woman. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Women and Employment is sponsoring a statewide photography contest focusing on the working woman. First, second and third place winners will be awarded \$100 and \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds and a \$15 gift certificate. Winning photos will be displayed in a photo exhibit planned for June of this year.

Women and Employment is a non-profit organization that works with

West Virginia women to improve their economic position and quality of life. This year marks Women and Employment's ten year anniversary. Other anniversary activities will include an open house and a review of what the agency has accomplished over the past decade. The photography contest, part of that celebration, began in February and runs through April 30. It is open to any photographer — amateur and professional — over 18 years of age. Photos are to feature "women doing any type of work, anywhere, anytime." A panel of photographers from throughout West Virginia will judge the contest entries.

Photos should be no larger than 8" x 10" or smaller than 3 1/2" x 3 1/2". Photos may be black and white or color, and a negative must be included. For contest rules and an entry form contact Lora Clay, Women and Employment, Inc., 1217 Lee Street, Charleston, WV 25301; (304)345-1298.

## Reading for the Blind

Occasionally we hear from subscribers who can no longer read GOLDENSEAL due to vision problems. Fortunately, there is help for West Virginians with visual or physical handicaps or learning disabilities which affect their ability to read.

The West Virginia Library Commission operates several such programs, including Talking Books, a national library of recorded materials; braille services; large print books and magazines; and the radio reading service. Those who wish to take advantage of these programs must complete an application for the free library service. It takes about a week to get started.

Playback equipment is loaned to readers. Headphones, pillow speakers and adaptations for bedfast readers are also available. For the radio reading service a radio receiver is provided. Local and national newspapers and a wide variety of magazines are read over the air 24 hours a day. The broadcasts are currently available for

listeners in the Huntington, Charleston, Buckhannon, Weston and Beckley areas. Other Library Commission services are available statewide.

GOLDENSEAL is now read on the radio program "West Virginia Yesterday and Today" and is also available on tape as part of the West Virginia regional library for the blind and physically handicapped. For more information contact the Library Commission, Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, The Cultural Center, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)348-4061 or 1-800-642-8674.

### Appalachian Community Fund

Since 1986, the Appalachian Community Fund has funded community projects in West Virginia, eastern Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, and southwest Virginia. The organization is supported by individual contributions and works to improve the environment and to provide a better understanding on issues that affect the way people work and live.

The Appalachian Community Fund has raised and granted more than \$365,000 to groups in Appalachia that are working for social change. The

Fund supported efforts to oppose the dumping of toxic waste within the region, to provide more coal mining jobs for women, and similar projects. Other humanitarian concerns of the ACF include ADAPT, a group that worked to help pass the Americans with Disabilities Act. This piece of legislation provided the disabled with equal access to public facilities.

The Appalachian Community Fund seeks donations to continue its work at the grass roots. For more information or to send a contribution, contact the Appalachian Community Fund, 517 Union Avenue, Suite 206, Knoxville, TN 37902; (615)523-5783. The ACF has registered with the Secretary of State for fund-raising in West Virginia.

### Dulcimer Workshops

The Augusta Heritage Center at Davis & Elkins College will host its fourth annual Spring Dulcimer Week from April 14 through 19. The event includes dulcimer classes, concerts, and guest visits by West Virginia dulcimer masters.

Instruction is offered in all levels of mountain and hammered dulcimer playing. Special workshops in chip

carving, an intricate type of woodcarving adaptable to dulcimer decoration, are also planned. Linda Foley will direct the week's chip carving sessions.

Other instructors are Sam Rizetta and David Schnauffer, for intermediate to advanced classes in hammered and mountain dulcimer, respectively. North Carolina's Betty Smith teaches beginning-level mountain dulcimer and Texas's Linda Thompson will teach beginning hammered dulcimer classes. Tabby Finch teaches advanced beginner hammered dulcimer.

State dulcimer masters include hammered dulcimer expert Worley Gardner; mountain dulcimer player Sarah Singleton, also a noted fiddler; and Joe Fulaytar who plays the Hungarian cymbalom, a dulcimer relative. Special activities are also scheduled. There will be an old-time public dance on April 18, featuring live dance calling, and on April 19 workshop instructors will perform in an all-dulcimer concert.

Accommodations are available adjacent to the college campus. For further information on Spring Dulcimer Week contact the Augusta Heritage Center, Box MN, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241; (304) 636-1903.

## Farewell to Mr. Prichard

We lost a good friend and our most prolific writer when Arthur Prichard died at his Mannington home last December. He was 86.

As Oce Smith noted in the *Fairmont Times*, we had fallen into the habit of referring to the Reverend Prichard as the "dean" of GOLDENSEAL writers. We didn't mean it in the academic sense, of course, although Mr. Prichard was learned enough to grace the faculty of any college in the state. Rather, it was intended as a mark of respect, both for his seniority—he was certainly the oldest of regular freelancers—and his sheer productivity. His 18 feature articles outnumber those of anyone else, editors and staff included.

The GOLDENSEAL years were a footnote to a long and fruitful life,

for Mr. Prichard was already well past 70 when founding editor Tom Screven had the good sense to recruit him back in 1977. He was by that time officially retired from his lifework as a Presbyterian preacher. In earlier days he had worked also as a clerk, oilfields roustabout, coach at a Navaho mission school, and as one of the first Muzak salesmen in 1930's New York.

Arthur Prichard's footsteps turned homeward once he answered the call to the ministry. He pastored his first West Virginia churches in Wheeling and later returned to long service at the First United Presbyterian Church in his native Mannington.

He seemed to be "Art" to just about everyone who knew him. Considering our differences in age



Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

and accomplishment, we never could quite bring ourselves to that level of familiarity. He remained "Mr. Prichard" to those of us on the GOLDENSEAL staff. We won't try to change that now and instead take our leave with a simple and heartfelt, "Goodbye, Mr. Prichard."

## Kate Long Recording

Musician Kate Long released a new cassette late last year. "Pieces of Heart," a production of Dry Ridge Recording, brought together a renowned bunch of West Virginia musicians, including Ron Sowell, Jim Martin, Tom King, Alan Freeman, Bob Webb and others. Martin served also as producer.

"Pieces of Heart" is a mixture of country, blues, rock and folk music. The effort to put Long's songs on tape resulted in what Rounder/Flying Fish recording artist Cathy Fink calls "a collection of beautiful songs that touch the human spirit."

Long is best known as a writer, activist and outspoken commentator on West Virginia Public Radio. Much of the music on her new cassette reflects similar social concerns. Song titles such as "Go Try and Dump It" will need no explanation to those fol-

lowing current West Virginia political issues. Other songs — the haunting "Who'll Watch the Homeplace," for example — speak more generally of the disruption of changing times.

To order copies of the cassette send \$10 to "Pieces of Heart," P.O. Box 2455, Charleston, WV 25329. The price includes postage and a lyric sheet, with discounts for quantity orders.

## Coalfields History

Fayette County historian Melody Bragg has recently completed a new book, *Window to the Past*. It includes columns of Bragg's that were previously published in the *Fayette Tribune*, and other material.

The author says her major source of information for *Window to the Past* was the memories of the people who lived the history she writes about. She found someone who could convey the "feeling of the place or event" and

then went to books to find supporting material. The people shared their firsthand knowledge as well as that handed down from their parents, grandparents and others. "*Window to the Past* comes from the people of Fayette County, both past and present," says Bragg.

The book has 50 stories about such topics as the McKendree Hospital; coalfield photographer Rufus (Red) Ribble; children in the mines; the Cincinnati Reds at Scarbro; gunslinging; and the towns of Minden, Kaymoor, and Pratt. It also includes a section with more than 180 news articles from early editions of the *Fayette Journal* and *Fayette Tribune*.

*Window to the Past*, a large format, softbound book, is 160 pages long. It is heavily illustrated with historic photos and drawings. To order, send \$10, plus \$2 for postage and handling to Melody Bragg, Box 29, Glen Jean, WV 25846.

## Majestic Named Historic Landmark

The *Majestic*, a legendary showboat with a lengthy career in West Virginia and neighboring states, has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the United States Secretary of the Interior. The *Majestic* was built in 1923 by Mason County showboatman Tom Reynolds [GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1983] and is one of only two such boats now in existence, according to research by the National Park Service.

The *Majestic*, an unpowered barge, was pushed up and down many rivers by the paddlewheeler *Attaboy* during a season that usually ran from April through October. Tom and Garnett Reynolds and their family lived and worked on board. They traveled the entire length of the Ohio River, from Cairo, Illinois, to Pittsburgh, and also worked the Tennessee, Cumberland, Green, and Kentucky rivers. The Kanawha was the *Majestic's* home river and regular stops included Leon, Buffalo and Winfield. Each winter the Reynolds and the *Majestic* tried to make it back home to Point Pleasant.



This historic postcard shows the *Majestic* at the Sistersville landing.

The showboat offered live entertainment to riverside communities. Two plays ran each season — most often a western and a drama. In the early days the price of admission was \$.35 for reserved seats, and \$.25 for general admission. By the time the Reynolds family quit showing in 1942, prices had risen to \$1 for adults and \$.75 for children, according to the 1983 GOLDENSEAL story.

After World War II, the *Majestic* was leased to the drama departments of Kent State University and Hiram College in Ohio. Later it

went to Indiana University. It was during this time that Tom Reynolds died aboard the boat that had been his life for so many years. In 1959 while working on the boat he was stricken with a blood clot and fell in the river, dead before he hit the water.

The *Majestic* wound up its career as a floating theater at Cincinnati, owned by the city and operated under lease. With each summer season, beginning in June, the showboat *Majestic* continues today as the theater it was originally built to be.

# Squirrel Tales

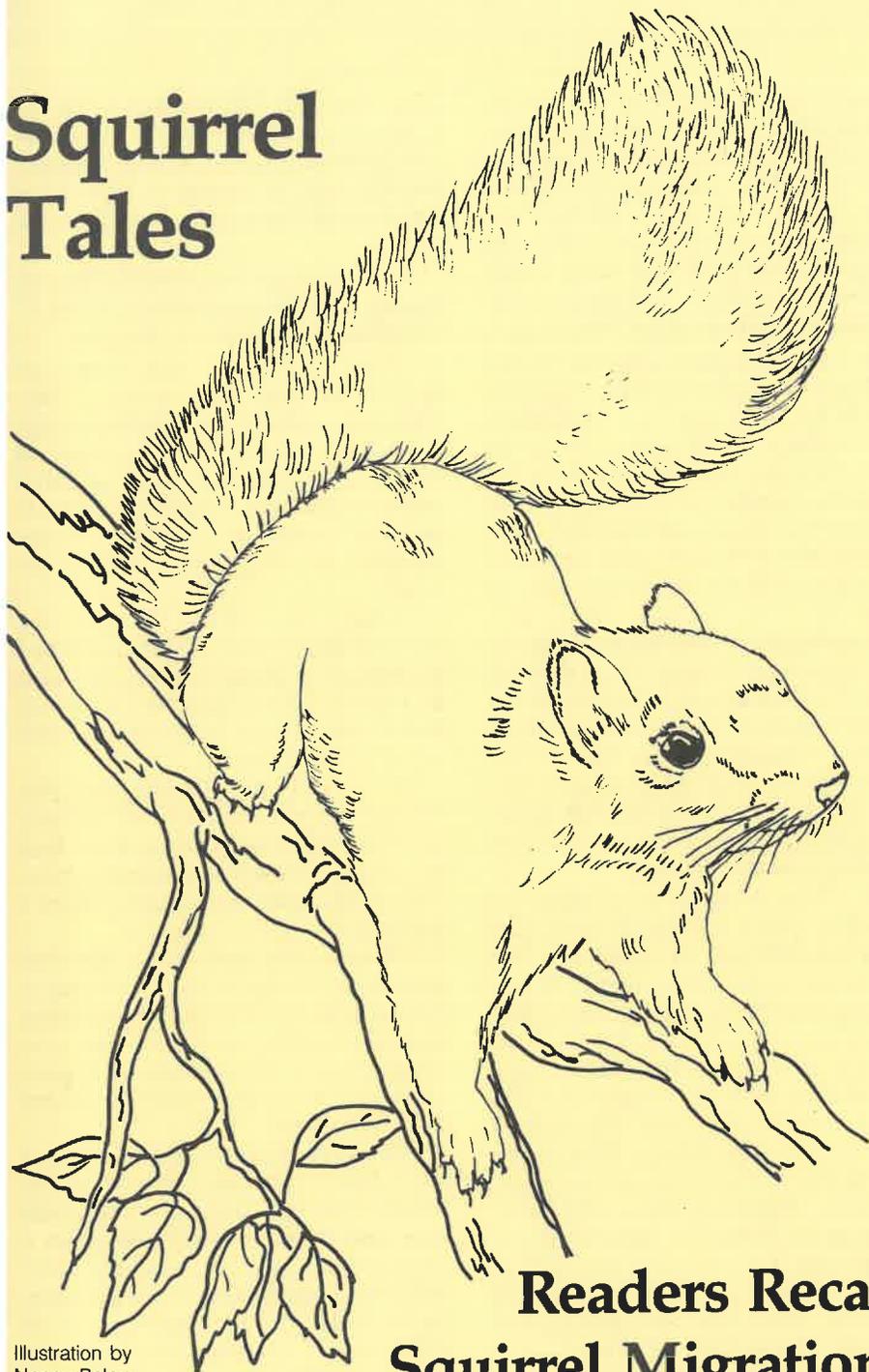


Illustration by Nancy Balow.

## Readers Recall Squirrel Migrations

By Ken Sullivan

**R**eaders came through in a big way in response to the request in the last **GOLDENSEAL** for recollections of massive squirrel migrations. A story in that issue included one such account by the late Paul Hepler, reporting a 1935 migration in Greenbrier County. Mr. Hepler recalled the passage of thousands of squirrels over the course of several days. "They were on the ground. They were in the trees. They were out on all the limbs, up and down," he remembered.

We wondered if similar events had been witnessed elsewhere in the state, either before or after. Evidently so. We received several letters in reply to our query, as well as phone calls and even a visitor or two. We can't attest to the exact scientific veracity of everything that came in, but we have no doubt that such stories make up a significant part of West Virginia woodslore. We'll present the material in that spirit and let the wildlife biologists sort out the details.

Emery C. Harper, one of the first we heard from, reported a migration from Mr. Hepler's old western Greenbrier hunting ground, although more than 30 years later. "I belonged to the Quinwood Rod and Gun Club for over 20 years, and we had hunting and fishing rights leased for all of the headwaters of Big Laurel Creek," Mr. Harper wrote from Robson. "We had 15 permanent cabins at Cold Spring, about four miles from Cold Knob and Grassy Knob. Now for the squirrel tale.

"One year in the late '60's or the '70's, we had a hard late freeze that caused no acorns or nuts of any kind below about 4,000 feet. There were three or four square miles of forest above that height, which was late coming out, so the nuts were not killed. About a month before squirrel season we were up there and saw several squirrels. We told no one.

Opening day we headed out there, and cars were parked for half a mile. Must have been close to 100 hunters in the woods, shooting in every direction. Squirrels were everywhere, you could see a dozen at a time. I shot two and the other fellows with me shot three or four each, and it was so dangerous we went back to camp. I heard later that one man and his son killed 60 and ran out of shells.

"The ones we killed were poor and skinny, they were about starved. I believe that Skip Johnson is right — they don't migrate, just gang up where the food is."

Harry Straley of Charleston called in to report still another Greenbrier County squirrel migration. He says it happened in the late '40's, probably 1947 or '48, and that he witnessed it himself.

Vergil Burris, Sr., of Leon, took us across the state with his recollections. "On the sixth of September 1932 I picked up my 'Stevens Crack Shot' .22 rifle, and started for the Alum Rock woods in Mason County for a mess of squirrels," Mr. Burris wrote. "While climbing the last hill I heard a chattering and running on all sides. I looked around and there were squirrels in front of me, behind me, and on both sides. They didn't seem to notice me or pay any attention to me. I didn't shoot any. They were moving and didn't stop at all, not running but just hopping along.

"I decided to follow them awhile. They went over the hill and down Crooked Creek to a big sycamore that had fallen across it. I believe there were 200 squirrels on that tree at one time. It took them about 15 minutes to cross. I followed them to Sand Hill Road, and up the hill on the Senator Shinn property, going toward Old Town Creek on the C. C. Lewis property.

"They did not seem at all afraid of me and passed through a herd of cattle paying no attention to them.

"They did not seem to have a leader. First, the right would be out in front, then the left, then the center. Yet, they seemed to know exactly where they were going.

"They passed under a sprawling oak tree full of acorns and did not stop to eat.

"I went back to Alum Rock woods and hunted for a couple of hours. I didn't see a squirrel. They must have joined the migration. The next year they were plentiful in that woods, so they must have returned.

"I believe there were between 1,000 and 2,000 squirrels in the migration."

Lacking a logical explanation, Mr. Burris figures the Mason County squirrels were out looking for a good time. "I think they were all going down to squirrel town to join the big fiesta and not in search of food," he wrote.

"I don't tell about this afternoon because no one would believe it," Mr. Burris bashfully added. He went on to say in a postscript that he had "talked to an old-timer here who said he had seen the same thing. He told me if I had looked in the squirrels' mouths, I would have found them full of sores, and they were hunting herbs to cure their mouths and would travel until they found them, and then return."

Jim Costa of Summers County dropped by to say that his grandfather, now dead, often told of once seeing many migrating squirrels swim the New River near Sandstone. That sounded pretty farfetched until we heard similar stories from several others. C. O. Humphreys of Dunbar, for example, related a tale he once heard from Charles Fauber, his Fayette County landlord.

"Charlie was a retired railroad man — conductor or engineer," Mr. Hum-

phreys wrote. "He told me that when he was a boy living in Pratt the women went to the shore of the Kanawha River to do their washing. One fall as they worked they saw squirrels coming out of the river. The river was full of them! The men and boys killed squirrels with sticks and stones and, of course, ate them at the next meal."

Mr. Humphreys recalls that Fauber told him this around 1947. "Charlie was in his '70's, say 73," he figures. "If Charlie were 12 years old [at the time of the migration], the date of the migration would be 1886. It is safe to assume the decade of 1880-90." This is about the date Jim Costa estimates for his grandfather's recollection, as well.

Dave Sharp of Cincinnati, formerly of Pocahontas County, says that his father recalled seeing or hearing about squirrels in the Greenbrier River in the 1930's. "Hundreds were seen swimming across near Marlinton," Mr. Sharp reports, adding that his father thought the migration as a whole was heading toward Virginia.

Mr. Sharp went on to relate an interesting case of squirrel altruism, also from the 1930's. "At about age 16 I went squirrel hunting on the hill and waited near a very large chestnut tree a very long time. Finally I saw a lone squirrel go out on a limb and I shot it in the hips with my single-shot .22, and it hung onto the limb with its front feet and yelled in distress. Surprisingly and unexpectedly, about six squirrels came chattering out on the limbs to assist the wounded squirrel. In my excitement, I wasn't able to reload in time to shoot any of the retreating squirrels after the one fell to the ground. It was then all quiet."

Si Sharp, 83, Dave's brother in Slatyfork, recounted other family lore.

"Squirrels migrated both ways," Si wrote. "Grandma Edith Ervine was standing on the Greenbrier bank at Harter when squirrels filled the Greenbrier River, swimming northwest, probably in the 1920's. They swam right straight up to her, then took off down along the bank, away from her.

"Then later, maybe in the 1930's, squirrels migrated southeast. They crossed the road here and went through the meadow on the other side of the road and went up the hill and across the old dirt county road and

then over the hill toward Virginia. Someone said that they came from beyond Point Mountain — maybe Braxton County. It seems it may have lasted about three days, stragglers and all."

We turned up one notable skeptic among our correspondents, John P. Charlton of Blackstone, Virginia.

"Now, I enjoyed the story but didn't believe one word," Mr. Charlton wrote of Mr. Hepler's original recollections in regard to squirrel migrations. "He has already said that the tree limbs are bending with nuts and the ground is covered, yet the squirrels are migrating, looking for food!

"I have hunted for 66 years for squirrel, deer, coon, rabbit, and killed truckloads of these animals for food and skins. I have watched them for hours with a gun in my hands and never a shot fired.

"Now! Do squirrels migrate? No! When food gives out for two or three years in a row they starve and produce no young. These cycles happen time after time, again and again. There's nothing mysterious about it.

"Once young ones leave the nest they stay close by. If one strays out of the home area it is in trouble of being attacked by the resident of the new place. Nearly all animals and non-migrating birds stay close to where they were born.

"Of course, squirrels search for food when hungry and will move short distances. You see them crossing roads now and then. In early fall when a large hickory is full of nuts, the scent will attract many squirrels from nearby. I killed 17 from a single tree in two days' time. I left some of them barking at me both days."

Mr. Charlton concluded with a little story to put things into perspective.

"A neighbor farmer told me that when going along a sloping pasture one day he disturbed a black snake," he wrote. "It took its tail in its mouth and rolled down the hillside to the bottom and partway up the other side where it dropped its tail to slither off and hide. This old man said it was a 'hooper' snake!

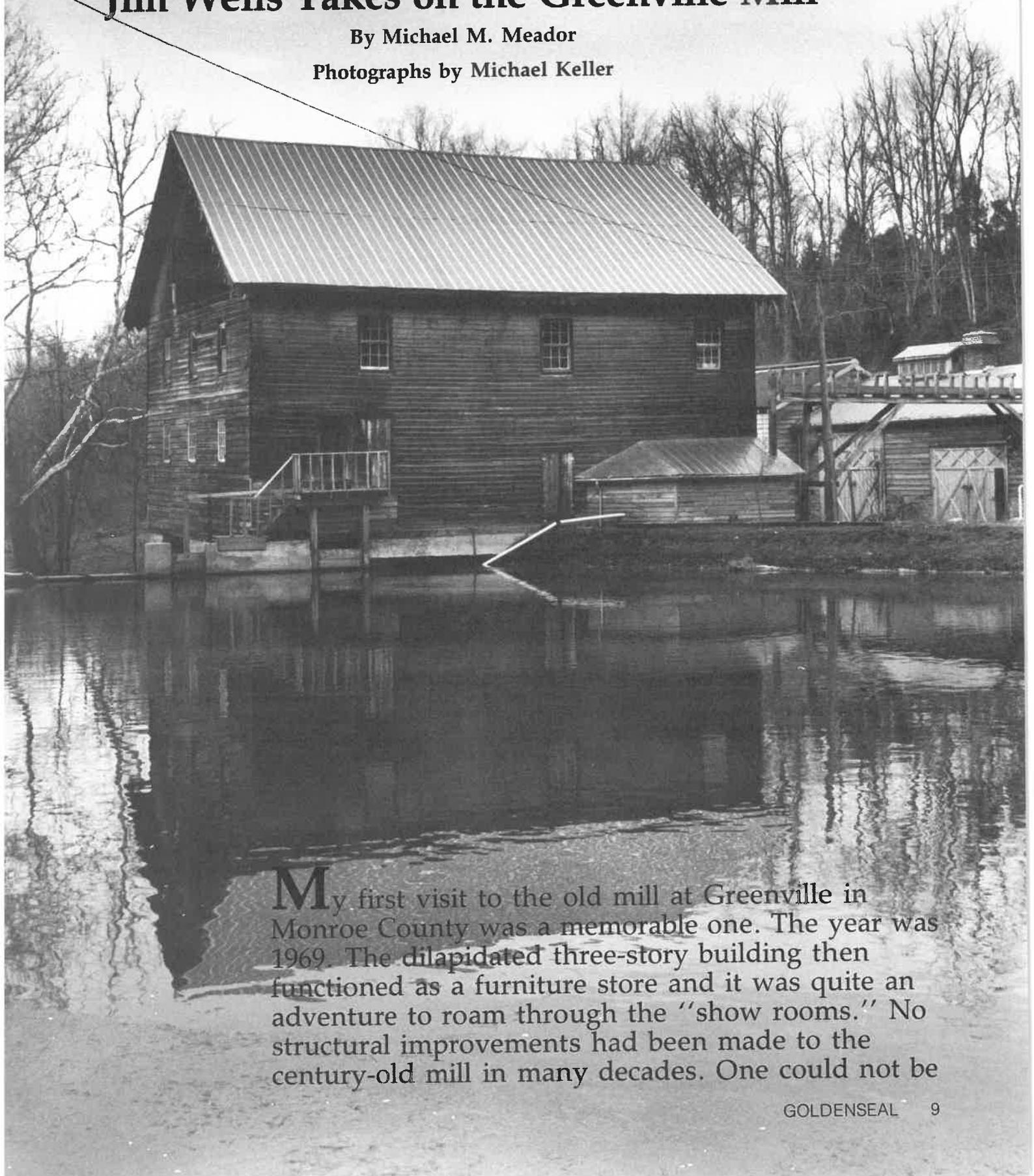
"I can quote you many of these myths and tall tales. GOLDENSEAL is full of them. They make interesting reading but are plain myths and figments of our imagination." ❁

# A Man and his Mill

## Jim Wells Takes on the Greenville Mill

By Michael M. Meador

Photographs by Michael Keller



**M**y first visit to the old mill at Greenville in Monroe County was a memorable one. The year was 1969. The dilapidated three-story building then functioned as a furniture store and it was quite an adventure to roam through the "show rooms." No structural improvements had been made to the century-old mill in many decades. One could not be



The mill as it looked about 100 years ago. This shows the opposite side from the preceding photograph, with a water-powered sawmill occupying the shed. Photographer and date unknown.

*Below Right:* There are no waterwheels on the main mill building at Greenville. Historically, the mill machinery was driven by two submerged turbines. One has been restored and returned to its place under the mill, while the other (shown here) awaits repair.

sure that all the holes in the bare wooden floors were completely covered with couches, recliners and dinette sets.

Furniture stored near gaps in the roof and walls had to be covered with plastic to protect it from the elements. Not much attention was paid to cleaning, and it was not unusual to discover a plastic-draped, velvet love seat nestled in a pile of leaves and anchored to the wall by spider webs.

I made several trips to this unusual store, and, having no desire to transport vermin to my house, I made certain that I only left with non-upholstered merchandise. Owing to

the structural condition of the mill, I was not surprised to hear that the store had gone out of business.

When Jim Wells told me in 1987 that he had bought the old mill at Greenville, I thought he had made a poor investment. When he went on to tell me that he was planning to restore the mill to working condition, build a water-powered blacksmith shop, open a craft school and establish a major tourist attraction on the spot, I feared for his sanity.

Jim has a full-time job and drives over 30 miles to work each day. I couldn't imagine where he'd find the time for such an ambitious project.

## Old Mill Festival

The second annual Old Mill Spring Festival is scheduled for June 15 and 16 at the Greenville mill. Jim Wells has lots of plans for the event, including a large craft show, music, food, and tours of the mill and its adjoining blacksmith shop.

A "rendezvous" is also planned as part of the festival, featuring people dressed in pioneer clothes, shooting matches with early rifles, and similar events. Mill operations will include grinding cornmeal and demonstrations of a water-powered

lathe and a water-powered blacksmith's shop. Craftspeople will sell and demonstrate their work. Traditional music performances are scheduled throughout both days of the event. Foods will run the course from traditional dishes to hamburgers and fries.

The Old Mill Spring Festival runs all day Saturday and Sunday. Admission is \$1 for adults. Children may attend free. For more information contact Jim Wells at (304)832-6775.

And though I didn't know what his financial situation was, I knew that anyone planning to restore the Greenville mill was going to need big money. I even doubted if the old mill that I remembered could be restored at all.

But today the laugh is on me. In three short years, the mill has been restored nearly to working order, a water-powered blacksmith shop has been built, classes are being taught and the project is well on its way to becoming a major attraction in southern West Virginia. As Jim's dream becomes a reality, the story behind this man and his mill are worth telling.

I was introduced to Dr. Jim Wells during my first year as a student at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg. He was one of three anatomy professors that I was to work with for six months studying the architecture of the human body.

Jim was an outstanding teacher. He treated students with respect, he smiled when he talked, he was extremely knowledgeable, and he enjoyed teaching.

During one memorable lecture on the development of the leg, he removed his pants without warning and revealed his own legs upon which had been painted the major muscle groups. The modest professor was wearing shorts. Another time, while lecturing on the muscles controlling the movements of the eye, he brought a large beach ball to class and rotated it through the various movements. Tests were spiced with cartoons and jokes, and Jim could often be found tutoring students on weekends and evenings, always with a smile.

Dr. Wells frequently invited students to join him for lunch, and it was over one such meal in the winter of my second year that he outlined his plans to restore the old Greenville

mill. I listened incredulously to his description of the decrepit building and his plans to return it to working order.

The mill had been stripped of its machinery in the 1940's, and we talked of how one would go about refurbishing a gristmill with the casualness of two mechanics discussing a new engine for an automobile. I had only the vaguest notion of how a gristmill worked and certainly had no idea of where to find spare parts for one. Jim's solution was to bring machinery from other mills, a simple enough idea until one considers that milling machinery often weighs tons. What parts he couldn't scavenge from elsewhere he figured he would make.

Jim invited me to accompany him that weekend on a trip into the countryside in search of gristmill machinery. We explored several mills, none of which had operated since the 1960's. Jim was an enthusiastic guide, teaching me about milling as we explored the buildings. We crawled under muddy foundations, clambered over gigantic machinery frozen with rust and ice, perched on rickety ladders and walkways and nearly fell through several floors.

Mills are fascinating time capsules, and Jim tried to explain to me how each part in the buildings worked. To my inexperienced eye, though, the places remained three-dimensional mazes of wooden chutes, moldy leather drive belts, rickety wooden stairs and rusting machinery.

We found milling machinery in unlikely places. Many front yards sported decorative millstones, and at the edge of a rock quarry we discovered a rusted 12-foot overshot mill wheel. I climbed on top of the colossal wheel and discovered that many of the buckets had rusted completely away. Jim was not in the least deterred by the wheel's condition. He declared it to be exactly what he was looking for, and entered into negotiations to buy it. He casually explained to me that all he had to do was saw the iron wheel in half, load it on a large truck and drive it to Greenville.

The more mills we visited, the more amazed I became at the complexity of the old technology. Gristmills are complete water-powered factories where grain is converted into anything from coarse animal feed to cake flour.

During my trips with Jim Wells I became aware of the importance of the water mill in the life of a rural America not too far in the past. The story of the Greenville mill is representative of the central role the gristmill once played in the communities of West Virginia.

Greenville is located in central Monroe County at the junction of Laurel and Indian creeks. Indian Creek joins New River at Indian Mills, approximately ten miles from Greenville. Native Americans used Indian Creek as a major thoroughfare to cross from New River to the headwaters of the James River.

White settlers moved into the area in the mid-1700's. Sometime before 1777 Jacob Cook built a log fort on Indian Creek less than a mile from the future mill site. The Indian Creek settlements were attacked during the Revolutionary era, and near the fort several settlers were killed. Cook's Fort sheltered over 300 people during one period of Indian raids.

In 1794, with the victory of General Anthony Wayne over the Indians at Fallen Timbers in what is now Lucas County, Ohio, Indian raids ceased in the New River Valley. White settlers quickly moved into the now secure area. Forests were cleared and corn and wheat were cultivated along the fertile creek bottoms. An immediate need arose for a local mill to process the grain.

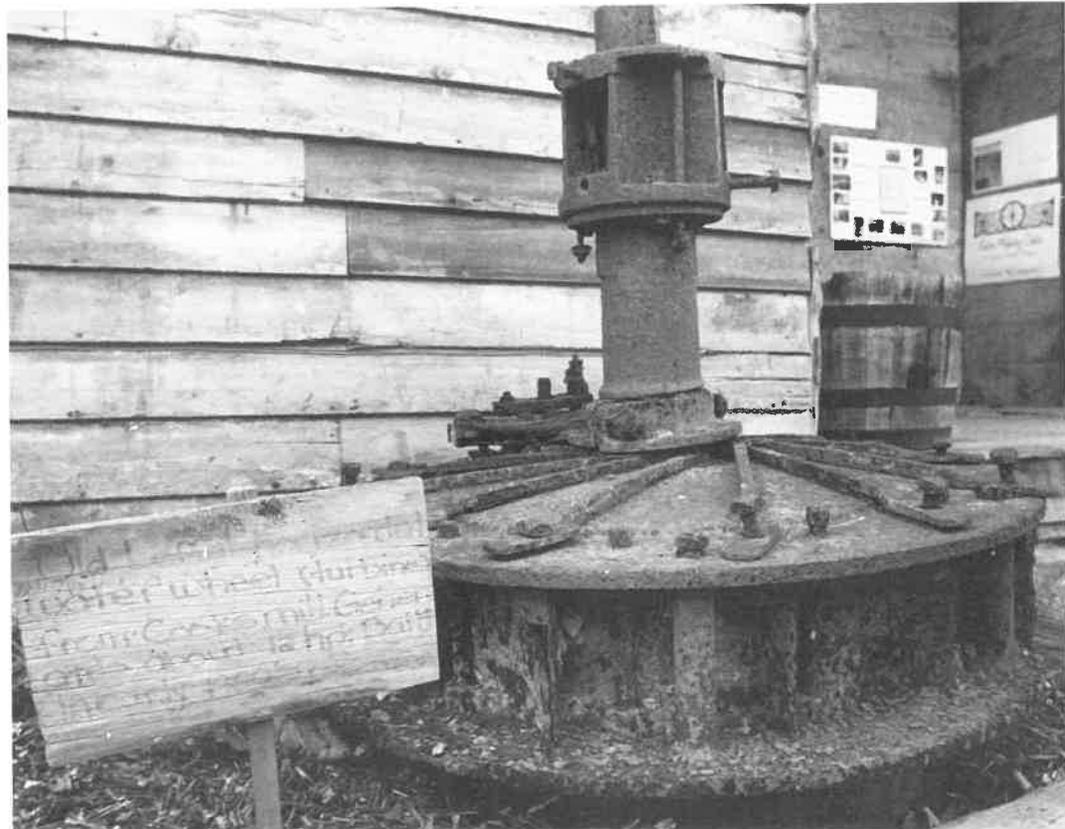
The same Jacob Cook who had pro-

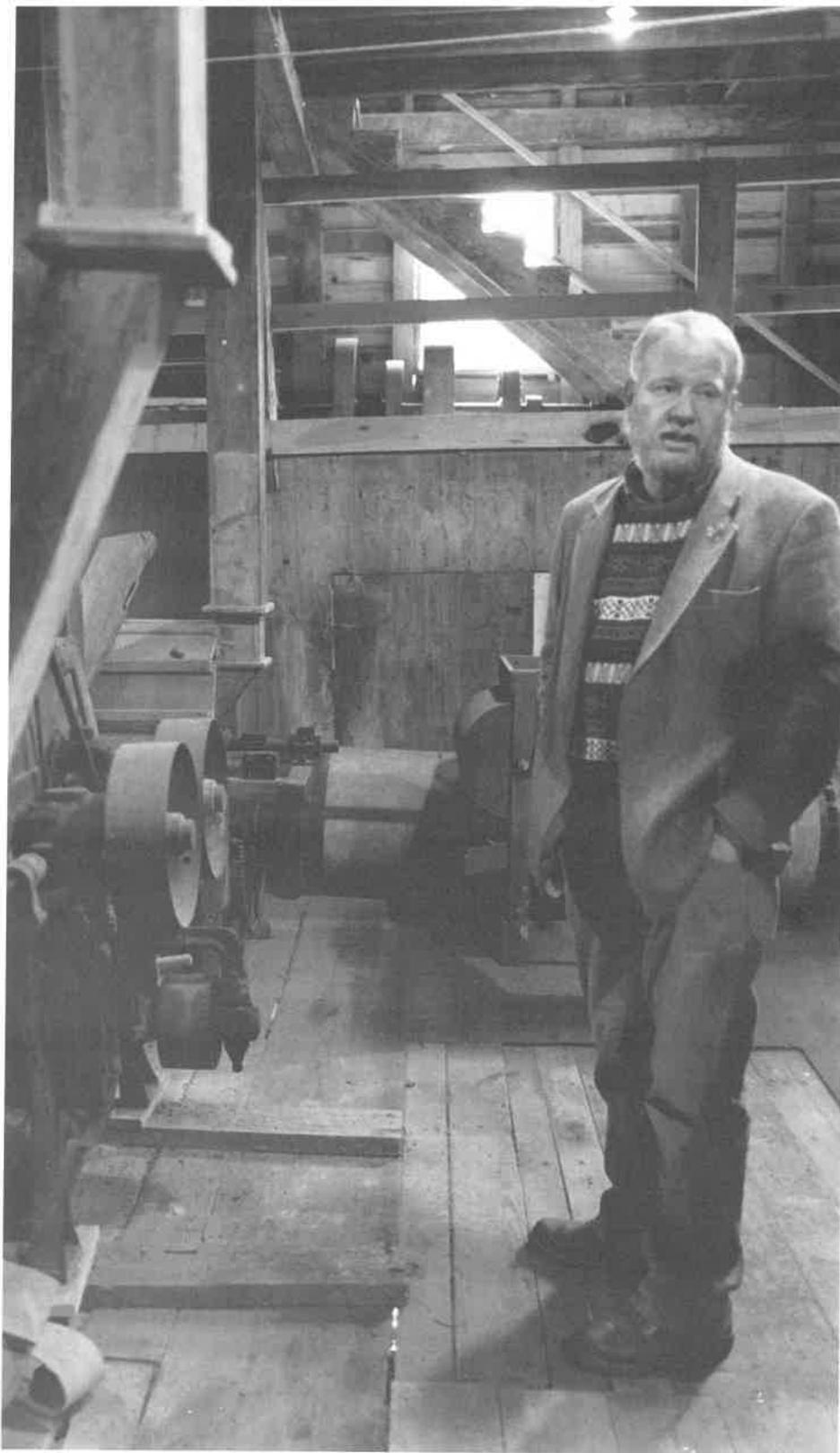


vided a fort for his neighbors constructed a gristmill where the present mill is located. This building, probably constructed of logs, is thought to have been raised in the late 1780's. It is mentioned in Jacob Cook's 1797 will.

According to Jim Wells, Cook's Mill was the center of much activity in the Indian Creek Valley, and the village of Greenville was originally known as Centerville. Jim believes that the mill served as Monroe County's first post office and that at one time stocks for the confinement of prisoners were located there.

In the mid-1800's the original mill burned, and there is in existence an agreement made in 1856 between James Humphries and a Mr. Riley and a later Jacob Cook to rebuild a mill on the same site. This building is the one that Jim Wells has restored. According to Jim, there was no record of a mill dam being built at that time, but a wooden dam was no doubt in existence for he knows that a millpond covered over three acres. Originally





Miller Jim Wells teaches anatomy as a day job. Dr. Wells is also a blacksmith and craftsman.

*Facing Page:* The original Greenville mill used both millstones and roller mills, and the restored mill will do likewise. These twin roller mills came from the Nickell Mill at Second Creek.

federate, through the area, and it is remarkable that the building escaped destruction.

Following the war, the mill passed out of the Cook family. At some point in the late 1800's the outside waterwheel was replaced with two submerged turbine wheels. This allowed for greater horsepower to run the mill's machinery.

Around 1900 the mill's owner replaced the old wooden dam with a concrete one. According to Jim, at the end of each day's concrete pour the owner would go to area blacksmith shops and gather discarded horseshoes. He would insert these into the still wet concrete to insure a strong joint with the next day's pour.

In 1911 an enormous flood swept down Laurel Creek and almost destroyed the mill and dam by sweeping away the foundations. Concrete bulkheads were created after the flood to strengthen the old building.

The Greenville mill ceased functioning as a gristmill in the early 1940's and the machinery was sold. In the 1950's the building was reopened as a furniture store. At the time Jim Wells purchased the century-old building it was sitting neglected, empty, and in serious danger of collapse.

Jim Wells' life story is nearly as interesting as that of his mill. Jim, who is 47, was born in Baltimore County, Maryland, and grew up on the grounds of the McDonogh School, a private military school where his dad worked as an accountant. Mr. Wells, a multi-talented individual, was also an artist, craftsman and boat builder. Jim was to inherit many of his father's talents.

Jim relates that his first experience with water power was at the McDonogh School where a small water-powered mill was located. This mill pumped water for the school.

Jim attended the McDonogh School

this mill was probably operated by an overshot waterwheel.

Greenville was the scene of much activity during the Civil War. The farming region around the town was staunchly Confederate in sympathy. The underlying limestone is riddled with caves in which was discovered a necessary ingredient for gunpowder, potassium nitrate, known commonly

as saltpeter. The largest cave, in which Confederate saltpeter extraction was in operation for much of the war, has an opening practically within sight of Cook's Mill.

Probably the mill was in full production during the Civil War period, helping to supply flour for the Confederate war effort. There was much movement of troops, both Union and Con-

and later received bachelor's and master's degrees in physical anthropology from the University of Maryland. A Ph.D., also in physical anthropology, was earned from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Jim taught anthropology at Kent State for six months before moving to Stony Brook State University of New York where he taught anatomy for six years.

Jim's wife Nancy is a native of Hyattsville, Maryland, and an elementary school teacher. Jim and Nan, avid spelunkers, first came to Monroe County in 1977 to participate in a caving expedition. They fell in love with the area and decided to stay. They purchased a farm near Greenville.

Jim was able to resume his teaching of human anatomy at the newly opened West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg, and Nan found employment with the Monroe County school system. The couple has three children: Amy, Zachary and Megan.

When Jim purchased the old Cook's Mill he had little to work with except a nearly empty building in a poor state of preservation. All equipment and machinery had been sold except for two turbines in the forebay that were completely frozen with rust. There was also some hauling equipment on the third floor.

Reinforcement of the old building's foundation was Jim's first concern. "When I bought the mill," Jim recalls, "I assumed that the back one-third of the building was unsupported, but I was shocked to find that a major sill, 40 feet long, had rotted. The entire back two-thirds of the mill was being held up by the front one-third!" He ascribes the building's strength to its mortise-and-tenon framing.

A deteriorated foundation was only part of Jim's problems. "The roof was in bad shape," he recalls. "Most windows and frames were gone and half of the siding on the rear of the building had disappeared. Soffits and decorative boards were also missing. I had my work cut out for me."

Once the building was stabilized, Jim turned his attention to neglected areas outside. Two feet of concrete was missing from the top of the dam, and the gate assembly was gone. All four buttresses which braced the dam

had eroded to the point that they did not touch the bedrock. Jim's millpond was a swamp in which grew sycamore trees four inches in diameter. An area below the dam had flooded badly and huge piles of debris had accumulated around the foundation. These had to be removed.

Restoration of the old mill and property has not taken place without

considerable cost. Jim estimates that \$50,000 has come from his own pocket, and he has been forced to mortgage his farm twice. Substantial grants have come from the Historic Preservation Unit of the state Division of Culture and History. There have also been donations of equipment.

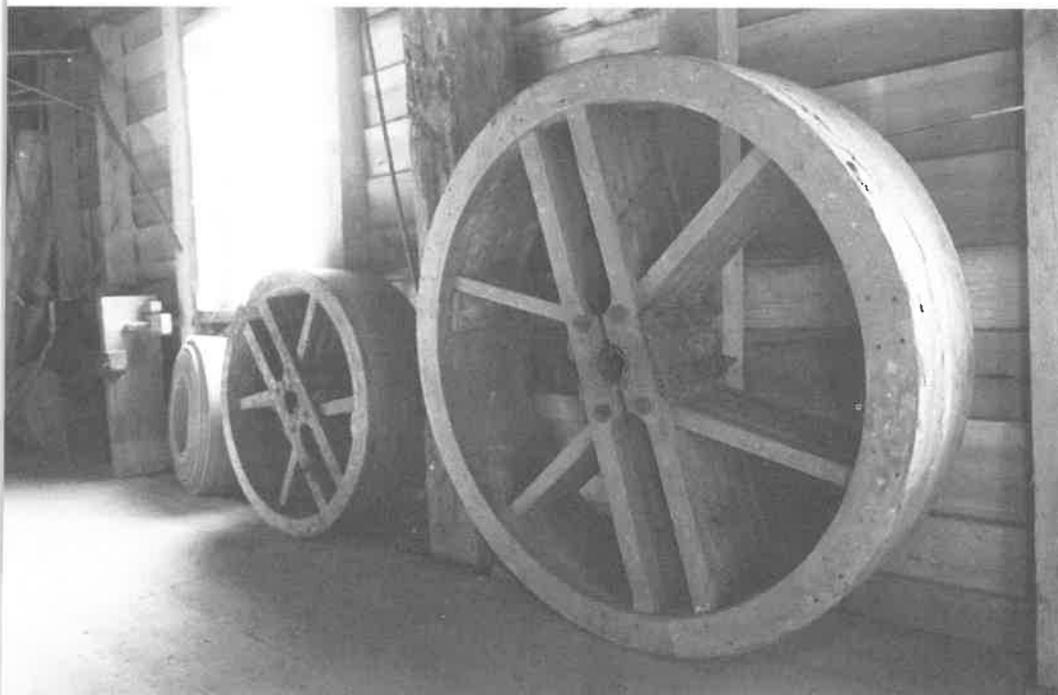
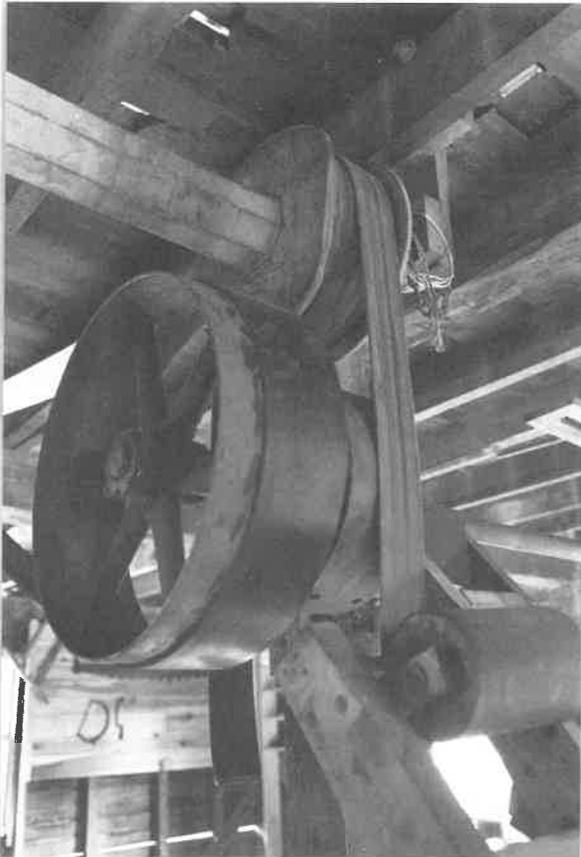
A major acquisition was the donation of the machinery and equipment



*Right:* Stone, steel and timber — and blacksmith Frank Hedgecock's honest wrought iron — are the strong primary materials employed at the Greenville mill. This photo looks toward the over-shot wheel by the forge.

*Below:* Belts and pulleys transmit the power at Greenville. The subsystem shown here drives a wood lathe on the second floor.

*Bottom:* Extra pulleys pass for spare parts at old country mills.



from the Nickell's Mill on Second Creek in northern Monroe County. Unfortunately, much of this equipment had been vandalized before Jim got to it.

"Everything was wrecked," he says. "Thirty percent of the machinery had been vandalized to the point of no repair but fortunately, the remaining 70 percent is repairable. Lots of iron had been taken and beautiful glass doors on equipment and brass fittings had been taken. Much of the equipment had been brutally smashed with a sledgehammer." What equipment Jim cannot restore to running order he intends to repair to the point that it can be displayed.

A major donation to the project was

a 37-ton four-cylinder natural gas engine made in 1911 by the Bruce-MacBeth Company. According to Jim the engine, which is rated at 250 horsepower at 190 rpm's, once pumped four million gallons of water a day at the Clarksburg waterworks.

The addition of a gas engine to the Greenville mill property is in keeping with Jim's present plans. They're bigger than they were. "I initially had the idea of establishing a mill museum," he relates, "but in time, as an anthropologist, I became fascinated with the development of sources of power and the impact of power on society. Now I want to present the entire Industrial Revolution.

"I want to show the initial stages of water-powered industry, take it through its heyday and chronicle its downfall as steam power takes over. Then I want to present the history and uses of steam power and show how steam power was replaced with gasoline and oil-driven sources of power. I don't have any intention to deal with electrical or nuclear energy."

"Water power will be demonstrated in the old mill. Here I want to show how water was utilized in the mid-1800's." Wells adds, "It's amazing how widely water power was utilized; everything from sawmills and gristmills to water-powered trip hammers in blacksmith shops."

Jim intends to build a sawmill, and already has rigged a water-powered hammer for his smithy. To house his blacksmith shop he has constructed a large building directly across from the front entrance of the mill. Many of the stones used in its construction were salvaged from the Erskine Hotel at Salt Sulphur Springs.

To operate the trip hammer, a metal waterwheel has been mounted at the end of the shop. I was surprised to learn that it is the same rusted wheel that I had climbed on at the rock quarry. Now repaired and functional, it will be powered with water transported by a raceway from the millpond.

Steam power will be demonstrated by various engines which will show the different stages of development the engines underwent. More modern internal combustion engines will be demonstrated by the big Bruce-MacBeth engine.

Jim's goal for his property is to have

a working museum to show "the move from a self-sufficient economy where you made everything yourself to an economy where you buy everything."

Building projects are many at the mill. Jim is in the process of erecting a pioneer log cabin in which he intends to house a resident miller who will dress in 19th-century costume, greet visitors to the mill and demonstrate how it works. Also on the drawing board is an ambitious plan to move an old overshot mill from Grant County to the site and restore it to working order.

This anatomy professor is a talented craftsman who specializes in making beds of wood and iron. He is a talented blacksmith and enjoys making decorative and functional iron objects. A complete forge has been erected on the site and it is directed by master blacksmith Frank Hedgecock of Glen Daniel, Raleigh County.

Jim's goal of having craft classes at the mill came to pass last spring. Classes taught at that time included decorative ironwork, decorative broom making, and construction of hand-bent wooden hayforks. Classes continued throughout the spring and summer with an emphasis on iron

gates, quilt making, stenciling on wood, and chair caning.

The Old Mill, as it is now called, had its official grand opening June 16-17, 1990. I visited Jim at the mill the day before. The place was swarming with people, all completing last minute details before the next day's festivities.

In the middle of the activity was Jim, enjoying all the excitement and realizing the culmination of his vision and hard work. He told me that shortly before my arrival that day he had gotten the machinery of the mill turning for the first time in nearly 50 years. One of two rust-frozen turbines had been returned to working order, and Jim showed me how to fill the forebays with water to cause the turbine to spin. I was as excited as he was.

By restoring the Greenville Mill, Jim Wells has saved a bit of our heritage for future generations. His vision and determination have fulfilled a dream that many people thought could not be realized. Jim, however, does not feel that he has done anything extraordinary at Greenville; he has simply done what he wanted to do. He quotes his father to make his point.

"We're all capable of doing anything," he says. "If you want to do something, do it." ❁

The Old Mill complex at Greenville. The historic mill sits at left, with the recently built Laurel Forge in the smaller building at right.



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# Low Tech

## The Workings of a Water Mill

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By Michael Workman

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To understand how a water mill works, the reader is asked to discard all of the romantic images and see the mill for what it is — not for what poets have imagined it to be. See it as nothing more, nor less, than an early factory. It is a building, sturdily built of local materials, where machinery — and human ingenuity and persistence — are brought to bear to harness energy from natural forces and apply it in the production of a valuable commodity.

Although in operation a single, well-coordinated system, upon closer scrutiny the water mill can be seen as having two distinct sets of machinery. The first is the power system, consisting mainly of the dam, waterwheel, and various shafts and gears, which transforms water power into useful rotary motion. The second is the grinding and refining machinery and equipment, the bins, millstones and sifters, which utilize the rotary motion in the reduction of grain into meal or flour.

The gristmill diagram represents the main pieces of machinery and equipment in the typical country mill. Keep in mind that this simple drawing is taken from an early (18th or early 19th century) gristmill. Although several of this pristine type do exist in the state, some being historic restorations, surviving West Virginia water mills are often of a later and more complex design. The diagram is useful, nonetheless, for illustrating the basic components. Using it, let us first explore the power system by following the flow of energy from its source, the stream, to its destination, the spindles of the grinding and refining machinery.

At the outset, it should be noted that the typical mill installation includes several important elements not shown in the diagram: A mill seat on a stream with adequate fall; a dam at some suitable point upstream to divert part of the stream's flow; a headrace, or millrace, to carry the water to the mill

with minimal loss of fall; a wood penstock, or sluice, with gate, to direct water to the wheel; and a tailrace to carry the water, discharged from the wheel with energy largely spent, back to the stream below the mill.

In the diagram, the falling water passes over the waterwheel (No. 1), in this case an overshot wheel. The wheel revolves, thereby transforming water power into rotary motion, causing the main line shaft (No. 2) to rotate at a comparatively low speed, say ten revolutions per minute. The attached face wheel (No. 3), fitted with wood cogs or teeth, engages the cogs of the lantern pinion (No. 4), causing it to rotate at a faster rate (because of its smaller diameter) and altering the direction of the motion from horizontal to vertical. The rotary motion is then transmitted to the millstone through the millstone spindle (No. 5), which spins the attached runner stone (No. 7).

There are, of course, many variations of this basic setup. The waterwheel, the prime mover which sets everything else in motion, can be of several types and sizes. Waterwheels vary in diameter, ranging from three to 30 feet or larger, the size calibrated to the flow and fall of the water found at the mill seat and the type of work being performed.

The simplest type of waterwheel is the undershot, where the flowing water strikes the paddles of the wheel on the underside and passes under the wheel. The undershot is relatively inefficient, capturing only between 15 and 30 percent of the water's usable energy. Probably the most common type of wheel in West Virginia is the familiar overshot, where the falling water is carried by means of a penstock over the top of the wheel, pouring down into the buckets. After a short fall from the penstock, the water acts upon the bucket wheel by force of gravity. The overshot wheel

is between 50 and 70 percent efficient.

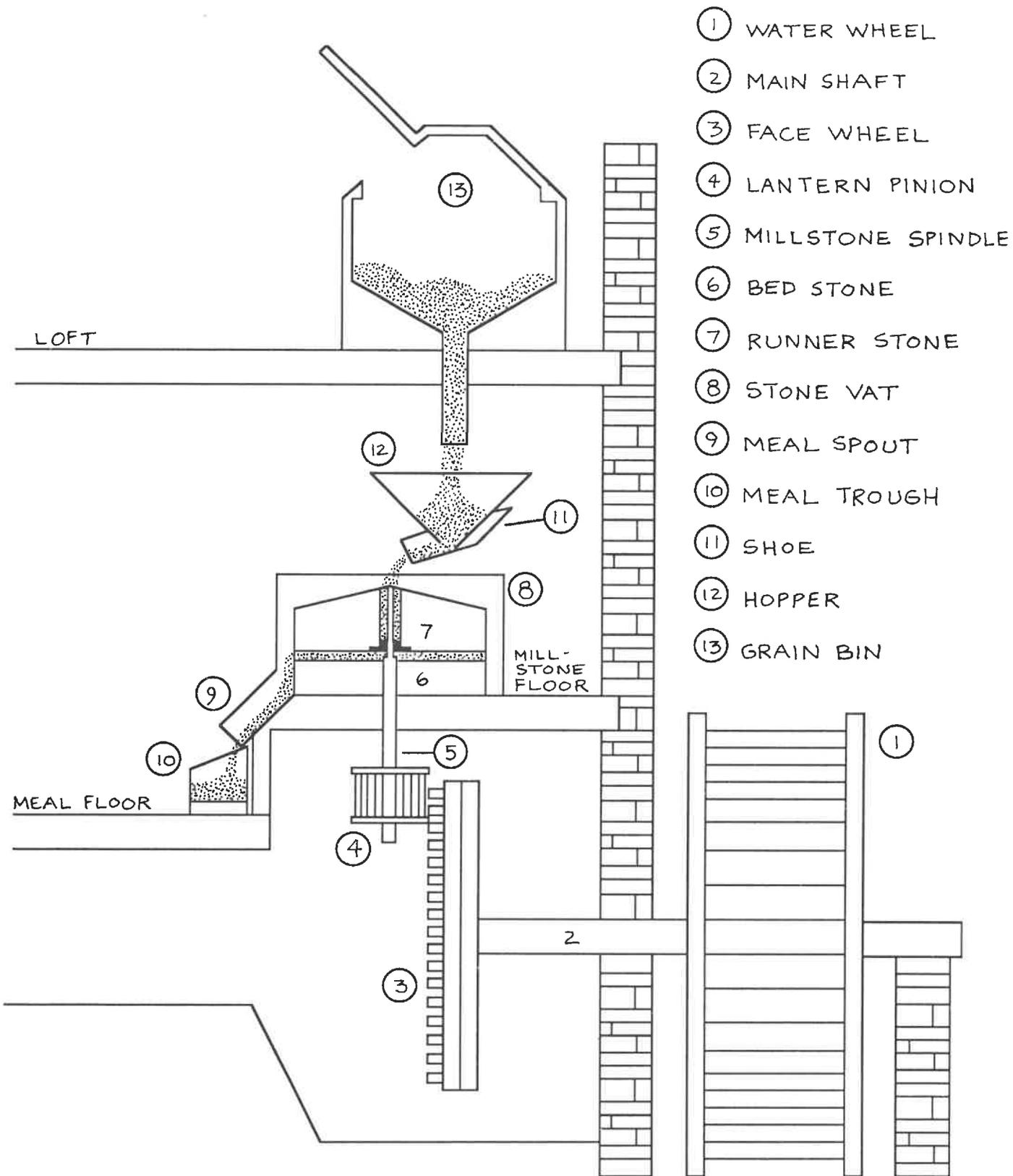
Paul and Janita Giles's tandem-wheel mill at Bunker Hill actually consists of two overshot wheels, each with a separate main line shaft. A single penstock conveys the water to both wheels. One wheel revolves in a clockwise direction and drives the millstone, while the other moves in a counterclockwise direction and powers the refining machinery and elevators.

The water turbine found at Jim Wells's Greenville mill represents a significant advance in waterwheel design. Unlike the wheels discussed above, the turbine revolves horizontally rather than vertically and operates submerged. Developed in France in the 19th century, the turbine is the most efficient of water-powered prime movers, with operating efficiencies as high as 80 to 85 percent. Of course, turbines are still widely used in hydroelectric plants.

Once captured by the waterwheel, the power is transmitted to the spindles of the millstones and to other machinery. In the early mills this was done by a system of wooden gears of various sizes and configurations. Our diagram shows such a system.

Another common means of transferring power, typical of many later mills, is a system of pulleys and belts. The pulleys revolve on the main line shaft and the motion is transmitted to the machinery via leather belts. Many mills that were originally fitted with gears have been converted to the belt-and-pulley arrangement because of the ease it affords in driving a large number of machines from a single power source. Power drive systems are often the most complicated — and in operation the most troublesome — component of water mills.

The second set of machinery and equipment in our typical water-powered mill is, of course, for the grinding and refining of the grain. To understand the working of this sys-



- ① WATER WHEEL
- ② MAIN SHAFT
- ③ FACE WHEEL
- ④ LANTERN PINION
- ⑤ MILLSTONE SPINDLE
- ⑥ BED STONE
- ⑦ RUNNER STONE
- ⑧ STONE VAT
- ⑨ MEAL SPOUT
- ⑩ MEAL TROUGH
- ⑪ SHOE
- ⑫ HOPPER
- ⑬ GRAIN BIN

Adapted by permission from *Where Industry Failed: Water-Powered Mills at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia*, by David T. Gilbert (Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1984).

tem, let us follow the flow of grain — corn, say — from storage bins through the grinding stones to the meal floor.

Using our simple diagram, which omits refining machinery, one can see that after being hoisted to the loft and deposited in a grain bin (No. 13), the grain travels down the chute to the hopper (No. 12). It is then directed to the center of the millstones by the shoe (No. 11). Falling between the runner stone (No. 7) and the bed stone (No. 6), the grain is crushed and the fresh meal discharged by centrifugal force to the meal spout (No. 9), where it falls into a meal trough (No. 10).

The millstone, nearly as much as the waterwheel, is the hallmark of the country flour mill. While the earliest mills used local stones, chiefly quartz or sandstone conglomerate, by the mid-19th century the French buhr, a

quartz of roseate hue found only in France, was widely used. They were typically shipped to America in pieces and cemented together with plaster of Paris and bound around the circumference with iron hoops. The stone was then smoothed off with plaster of paris on the back and the working face dressed with a pattern of furrows projecting from the eye or center of the stone.

In operation, only the runner stone rotates; the bed stone below is stationary. The miller must see that the correct distance is maintained between the two and that the grain is fed to the stones at the proper rate. Typically, in the gristmill setup the millstone was accompanied by some type of refining apparatus, a bolter or sieve which separated the bran and other chaff from the meal or coarse flour.

In addition to the primitive millstone and bolter arrangement, both the Bunker Hill and Greenville mills used a more modern method for grinding and refining grain into flour, the roller mill and dresser-purifier system. The roller mill was developed in Hungary in the 1860's and introduced in West Virginia in the 1890's. It was used to produce fine, white flour for white bread, previously considered a luxury item. In this process the wheat germ and bran are eliminated and the endosperm gradually reduced by repeated passes through the rollers.

The typical roller mill is driven from a line shaft by the pulley and belt arrangement. It consists of an iron or wood compartment containing one or more pairs of steel cylinders, which revolve in opposite directions, much like an old-time washing machine wringer.

Rolling mill technology, with two or more roller mills operating in tandem with several purifiers and dressers, requires the grain to be transferred from one machine to another several times before it is completely reduced. Typically, the flour dressers and purifiers are located on the floor above the roller mills, so a means for lifting the partially reduced grain is incorporated in the system. For this purpose, the elevator, invented in 1795 by Oliver Evans, the Philadelphia author of *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide*, was adopted. It consists of a long hemp belt fitted with metal buckets, enclosed by a wooden housing. In operation, the continuous belt is rotated by a pulley, the grain riding in the buckets.

At this point, equipped with a rudimentary understanding of how the mill factory works, the reader is welcome to reinstate the romantic images that were put aside earlier. A little practical knowledge won't rob them of their charm, and perhaps they will have acquired a new and deeper meaning. ♣

*Michael Workman is on the staff of the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology at West Virginia University. For information about Institute programs, you may write to the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, Bicentennial House on the Mileground, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506.*

## More About Mills

Gristmills are an enduring piece of America, the ingenuity of their simple technology holding a fascination for many people in today's complicated world. GOLDENSEAL readers seeking further information may consult a variety of resources.

The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills is the place to start. The society publishes a quarterly magazine, *Old Mill News*, with articles, photographs, illustrations and ads, covering both water and windmills. The society's purpose is to promote interest in surviving mills and to help in the preservation and rebuilding of them. Write to the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills, 604 Ensley Drive, Route 29, Knoxville, TN 37920. A subscription to the *Old Mill News* is \$8.

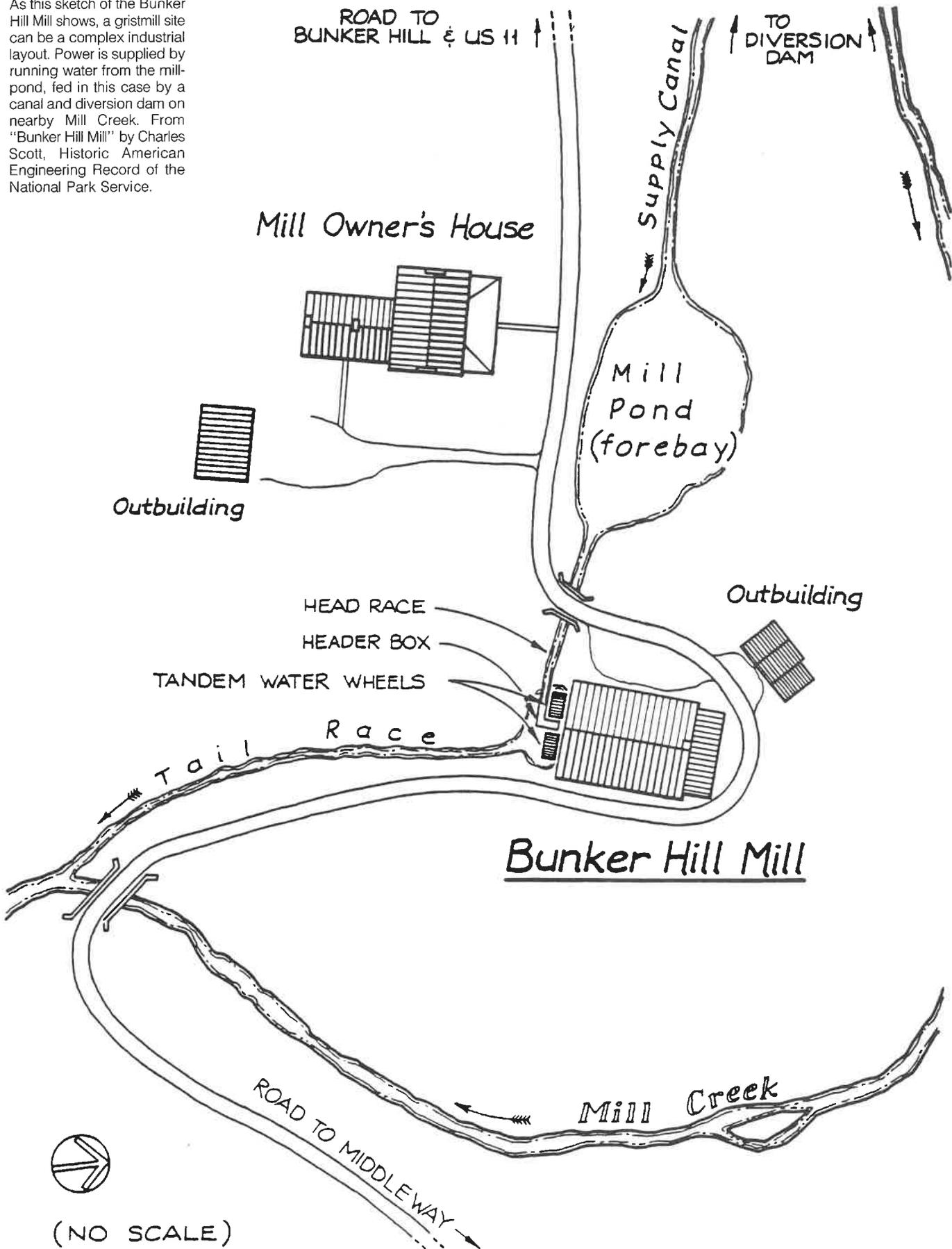
The book mentioned in Michael Workman's article, *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide*, is one of the most important technical books of the flour-milling industry. It was written by inventor Oliver Evans in 1795. Evans entered into milling with his two brothers in 1780, and eventually revolutionized milling by his innovations in automatic machinery. A true Evans mill required only one worker to oversee flour production from start to fin-

ish. His ideas found slow acceptance among conservative millers, but had become standard before his death in 1819.

*The Young Mill-Wright*, published 15 times before 1860, is now available in a handsome new hard-bound edition. This 1990 facsimile reprint may be purchased for \$24.50 from Oliver Evans Press, 204 West Rose Valley Road, Wallingford, PA 19086.

For a comprehensive look at the application of water power to West Virginia's best known antebellum industrial site, see Dave Gilbert's *Where Industry Failed: Water-Powered Mills at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia*. This 1984 book from Pictorial Histories Publishing Company treats the technology in detail while discussing the rise of Harpers Ferry's huge manufacturing complex and its collapse during and after the Civil War. *Where Industry Failed*, an 86-page large-format paperback, may be purchased for \$6.95 at The Shop in the Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. Mail orders should include 6% sales tax for West Virginia residents plus \$2 postage and handling.

As this sketch of the Bunker Hill Mill shows, a gristmill site can be a complex industrial layout. Power is supplied by running water from the mill-pond, fed in this case by a canal and diversion dam on nearby Mill Creek. From "Bunker Hill Mill" by Charles Scott, Historic American Engineering Record of the National Park Service.



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# Stepping Back in Time

## Another West Virginia Gristmill

By Clara Castelar Bjorlie

Photographs by Hali Taylor

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**F**or as long as he can remember, Paul Giles has had an abiding interest in the past. In fact, this Berkeley Countian maintains that given a choice, he would have preferred to live in an earlier era. "I always say that I was born at least 50 years too late," he says.

Paul's chuckle seems to belie any

real dissatisfaction with the 20th century. But still, in 1971, years away from retirement, Giles and his wife, Janita, decided to exchange the hustle and bustle of modern urban life for the old-fashioned, gentler delights of country living.

"I have always liked old buildings, farm machinery, steam engines. I love

the farm life and country people. My daddy was from Nicholas County, and my mother was from Finley, West Virginia," Giles says. "I was born in Williams River, a little logging town in the corner of Webster County, in central West Virginia, where my daddy was a machinist for the Cherry River Lumber Company."





By January of 1936, all the timber had been cut and the family had to leave Williams River. "Daddy bought a farm in Frederick County, Virginia, and us kids — there were five of us, four boys and one girl — ran the farm while he worked as a trucker, hauling coal and peaches for a dollar a day," he says. "We were very fortunate when we bought that farm. My parents sent the check out to pay for it and it cleared in Richmond two, three days before the Depression hit and the bank closed down."

In spite of the Great Depression, Giles has idyllic memories of life in the country, of days spent in a one-room schoolhouse whose rustic playground had none of the newfangled equipment deemed necessary by modern-day educators.

"We played games kids don't play anymore," Giles says. "We played with marbles, we swung from grapevines in the woods near the school, and in winter we played a chasing game called the fox and the goose."

His best memories include a five-mile walk into the countryside to get a Christmas tree for the school. "Only the boys were allowed to go, and we made a day of it," he says with a smile. "By the time we got back to school that tree was a sorry sight, but after we decorated it with popcorn and paper ornaments we made, it looked real nice. We exchanged gifts. Little things — we never spent more than a quarter on them."

In part, it was such Currier and Ives recollections of a rural childhood that prompted Paul Giles to buy Bunker Hill Mill, an historic building on the bank of Mill Creek, on Route 26 in southern Berkeley County. Another important factor in the decision was his wish to return to his West Virginia roots. "There's something about these mountains," Giles muses. "They keep calling you back."



Above: The miller is a man at ease with himself. Bunker Hill Mill was Paul Giles's ticket back to his native West Virginia.

Opposite page: It's easy to see how Paul and Janita Giles fell in love with the handsome stone and wood structure. The earliest mill on this site dates back to the mid-1730's, soon after Morgan Morgan established West Virginia's first settlement nearby.

Heeding the call, Giles and his wife took frequent weekend trips to West Virginia while living in Winchester, where he had a job selling automotive parts. It was during one of these trips that they happened upon the 18th-century gristmill.

"The wife and I had been driving around one Sunday afternoon in 1971, and when I saw the mill, I knew I wanted to live here," he recalls.

There is an undeniable appeal in this weathered wood and stone building, cradled between the gently-flowing Mill Creek and a millpond whose mirror-like surface reflects the glowing orange jewelweed blossoms and the starry golden blooms of Jerusalem artichoke. Down to the swath of Virginia creeper draped over its white door, over whose lintel a faded sign advertises Red Rose Feed, the old mill re-



sembles nothing as much as an illustration for a book on West Virginia's past.

In a sense, that is just what it is. The five-story building is the only remaining tandem-wheel water mill in the state. Its recorded history began in 1737 when Thomas Anderson received a 542-acre land grant from the governor of Virginia. Two years later, Anderson deeded 252 acres and half the mill to his son Colbert. When Colbert died in 1748, his son, Colbert Anderson II, inherited the mill. Subsequently, he sold the building, along with 32 acres of land, to Andrew Waggoner, the patriarch of a Bunker Hill family. The mill has changed hands almost 30 times since Thomas Anderson built it.

Part of the original building was destroyed in a fire which erupted sud-

*Left:* The Giles mill is the only tandem-wheel mill in West Virginia. Water falls from the center to serve both wheels, turning them in opposite directions. Photo by Walter Smalling, courtesy HAER.

*Below Left:* Visitors may be surprised to find that the actual milling mechanism is an unimposing part of the overall operation. The millstones occupy the round wooden housing, with grain entering from the hopper above.

*Below:* The Bunker Hill Mill offered its own brands in times past.



denly in the spring of 1887. At the time, the mill belonged to Kate B. Boyd, the only woman ever to own it. According to an account published in *The Martinsburg Statesman*, "the flames [were] said to be the largest ever seen in this place."

The cause of the fire remains a mystery, though Giles suggests that it might have been triggered by an accumulation of highly explosive grain dust. "Mill fires were common back then," he explains.

Two years after the fire, Kate Boyd sold the burned-out mill to J. B. Cunningham for \$2,000, losing \$4,000 on her investment. By 1919, the mill had been rebuilt, with wood replacing portions of the original stone walls.

Around that time, the original grinding stones made in France had fallen into disuse. Current tastes shifted, and the demand for finer, whiter flour grew. In order to keep up with that demand, millers C. E. Swisher and E. L. Shanholz installed a Midget Marvel roller mill. "Stone-ground flour has a much better flavor," Giles says, "but back then, women wanted white bread. The Midget Marvel could sift the grain, separating it from the hull, producing a whiter flour."

Giles prefers the stone-ground product, and when he occasionally makes flour for his own use he uses the old millstones. He is very proud of the condition in which he has kept

the equipment in the mill. He enjoys giving demonstrations of how the system of grain elevators, chutes and pulleys work, and waxes nostalgic when he looks at the mill's ledgers, in which are recorded transactions that took place as early as 1850. "People bartered in those days," he says. "Even today, some of my customers trade eggs for livestock feed and the like. Coming to the mill is an old tradition for some families here. They come, they look at the ledgers and they'll say, 'That's my granddaddy's name.'"

Saturday mornings are lively, he says, since he converted the lower floor of the mill into a feed store which seems to be expanding into a general store. Miscellaneous items such as buckwheat pancake mix and canned land cress have begun to appear on the shelves, alongside sacks of chicken, horse and rabbit feed.

Farmers tend to linger in the store on market day, swapping news, exchanging information on the care and feeding of farm animals, or simply savoring the sweet smell of grain which permeates the mill.

Giles sits by the pot-bellied woodstove, a newly-acquired Merck Veterinary Manual at his elbow, his collie, Dudley Fitzgerald, at his feet. Close by, half a dozen kittens dance in the milky light that streams through the windows. All around him, there are

bits of the Eastern Panhandle's past, old farm implements, painted signs, photographs. "People bring me these, and soon I will have a museum here," he says. "This fall, I plan to build a one-room schoolhouse by the pond. Later I will build a little church, and a place in which to exhibit my steam engines."

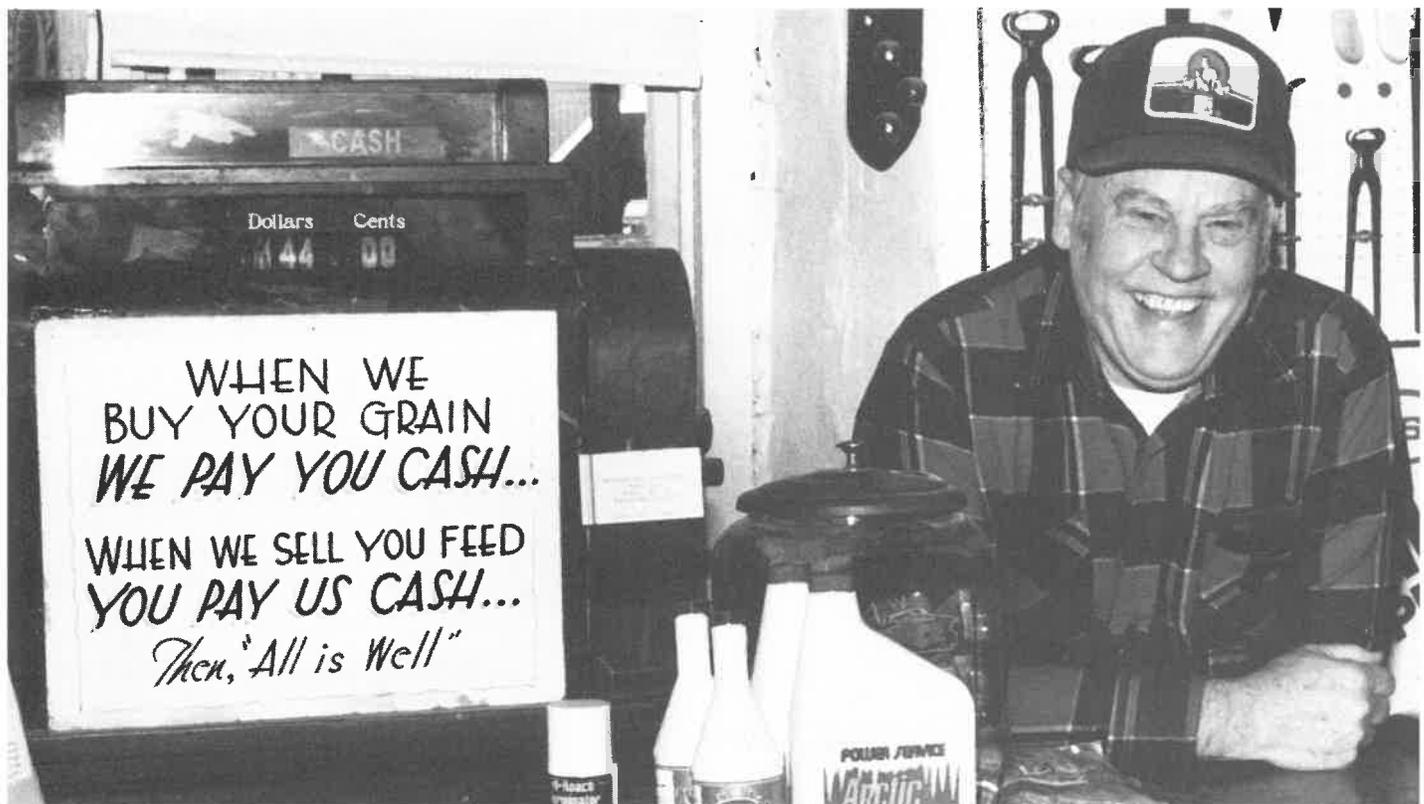
Currently, he owns 11 tractors, dating from 1919 to 1955, antique threshing machines, a clover hauler, plows and two steam engines, of 1905 and 1923 vintage, respectively.

As much as he enjoys giving tours of the water mill, Paul Giles rarely fails to bring up the subject of steam engines. "My daddy was a good steam man, so you could say that steam's in my blood," he says.

In fact, this eclectic miller does not limit himself to any particular subject, and he has been known to dispense advice along with the sardines and crackers he sells to fishermen about to do battle with the feisty Mill Creek trout.

"Kernel corn is an excellent bait for trout," he says, before he reverts to offering information on the number of revolutions per minute performed by the mill's waterwheel — six, to be exact. Watching him, one might conclude that though he could not choose an earlier era in which to live, this country miller has done the next best thing in taking a big step backwards. ♣

The no-nonsense cash register slogan from earlier times seems to contradict the big smile of the current proprietor.



The Reverend Joe Gluck is a gentle man in a fierce bear-tooth necklace.

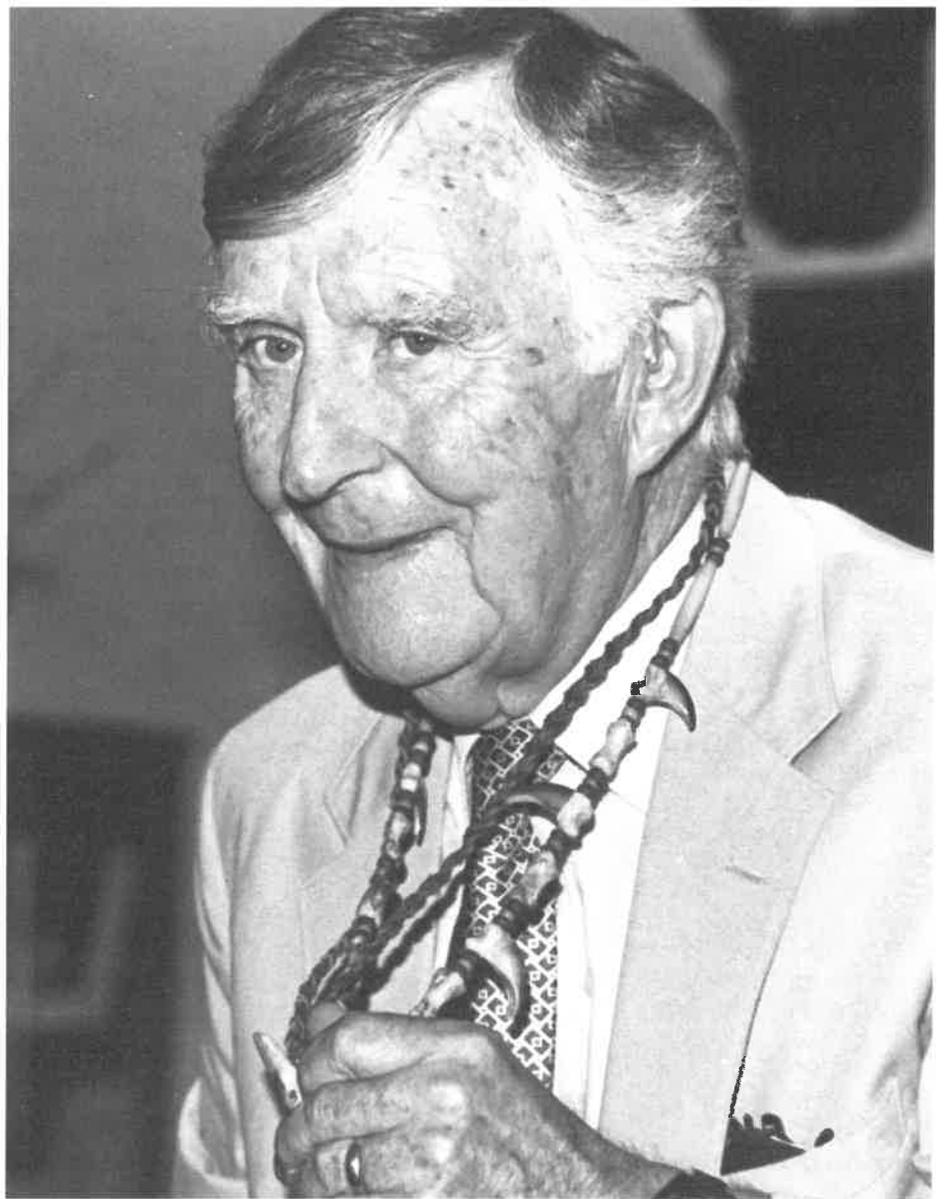
**I** accepted the call to pastor the Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church, one of the oldest churches west of the Allegheny Mountains, in June of 1956," chuckled the Reverend Joseph Gluck, now pastor emeritus of the Monongalia County church.

"I'd escape from my duties as dean of students at West Virginia University and cross the mountain to Stewartstown on Sundays, just like the proverbial bear. I could only go two Sundays each month, and I was very apologetic about this. When I told the church members, one of the deacons said, 'Don't fret about it, son. Two Sundays a month of your preaching will be plenty.'"

Stewartstown, a small community nestled between the Cheat River on the east and the Monongahela on the west, lies north of Morgantown and just below the Mason-Dixon line. It was during Reverend Gluck's pastorate at the Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church that the custom of eating bear was reinstated in 1963 at the annual picnic.

"The reason they decided to serve bear was mainly for a kind of memorial," he recalls. "We know by record that the early members of the church were existing on bear as a staple food before they ever had any domesticated animals. They came over the mountains without any animals. They finally had to import them. Until then, they lived on wild game and what they could garden.

"They used the skin," he continued, "and the bear grease for poultices and to oil their shoes. There were



some friendly Indians around, we know that, and they learned a lot from them. The pioneers learned to plant corn in hills, grow beans around the stalks and fill the spaces with pumpkin vines. This method is still used today."

An early settler was William Stewart, for whom Stewartstown is named.

He was born in Cork County, Ireland, in 1727, and came to the area in 1770, six years before Monongalia became a county. Stewart was granted a title to 400 acres of land by Virginia, as was anyone who built a log cabin and raised a corn crop.

Other early settlers were John Hoard, whose cabin still stands on

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# The Preacher and the Bear

## A Monongalia Church Celebrates an Unusual Tradition

By Linda Hepler

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

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The Union Jack, flown once a year at Forks-of-Cheat, symbolizes the long history of the congregation. The church is one of the few institutions in West Virginia dating back to the days of British rule.

land owned by his descendants, John McFarland, John Weltner, Jacob Conn, Francis Ross, John Sargent and Samuel Llewellyn. Samuel Llewellyn, his wife, Hannah, and John McFarland were among the 12 founding members of the Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church, according to a 1971 Stewartstown history edited by Fred H. Weltner and Harry L. Jeffries.

"This church is very old and has a certain continuity of records," Reverend Gluck points out. "They have the original book made out of sheepskin

that the 12 charter members signed at 7:30 p.m. on the 5th of November, 1775.

"This church has had four different buildings. The first one was made of round logs and was allegedly burned by Indians. The second one was built out of hewn logs in 1803 and was used until 1832 as both a church and a school. The third was a brick building. This structure eventually collapsed, and the present building, also made of brick, was erected in 1884. We added a new wing in 1959.

"Before they had a log church, they met in houses," the retired preacher continues. "The clerk of the church kept this book at his house. One of the women in the congregation said that she had had a dream that the cabin of the clerk was going to be hit by lightning, and the book was going to be burned up, and she recommended that they move the book to somebody else's house.

"Well, they had this discussion, and finally they did move the book, and lo and behold, the clerk's cabin did burn, and the book was saved. The book was kept around in houses of church clerks all these years. There has been a series of long-time clerks, people who kept records for 25 or 30 years at a stretch. Now this book is considered too valuable to be kept at the church, so it's kept in a vault at the First National Bank in Morgantown, and about every ten years they bring it out."

When the Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church was founded, Stewartstown, settled four years earlier, was a part of Virginia and still under British rule. This explains the Union Jack that has flown by special permission of the British Empire Society over the church door every third Sunday in July at the annual picnic.

Church members and friends bring a covered dish to this picnic table loaded down with chicken, ham, salads, vegetables, desserts and, of course, bear meat. After the church service and feast, the ceremonies begin. Joe is the official Bear Master.

"All the people who have eaten bear for the first time assemble on the hillside and get down on their knees, sometimes 40 or 50 in a row, all around the hill," he says. "As Bear Master, I have on a necklace made of bear claws and a chain with a giant bear tooth on it, and I go along saying magic words, usually abracadabra and tapping each one on the head with this giant bear tooth. Then I come back, and each person kisses the bear tooth.

"After this, they are issued a certificate of membership in the World Bear Eaters' Association. The picture on the card is one of a bear like Smokey the Bear with a chef's hat on. These little cards come out by number, like a secret society. One of the jokes is that



Above: Official bear eaters come in all ages and sizes, with Crystal Walker one of the smallest ever. The ritual involves a bear tooth, an appropriate incantation, and the full dignity of the Reverend Joe Gluck.

Left: Chuck Yoke, current pastor at Forks-of-Cheat, gets a little help with the church bell from Whitney Porter and Sheri Yoke.

this little card is one of the credentials that St. Peter asks for at the 'Bar of Heaven.' "

Several years ago the 1,000th member, an American Baptist missionary on furlough from Haiti, was inducted into the World Bear Eaters' Association, according to Joe. "We gave him a special award — a scrimshaw bear tooth.

"We also inducted another missionary into the association who had lived 20 years in Zaire, Africa. He had eaten elephant, lion, python, monkey, grasshopper, all sorts of exotic meat, but this was the first time for bear."

That was the year the meat was from a bear ordered killed by the State Department of Natural Resources because it had eaten 26 sheep in Pocahontas County.

As Bear Master, it is Joe's job to find the bear. "When we first started this about 20 years ago, bear meat was hard to find. Since that time, the bear population has probably tripled. Pocahontas and Randolph Counties are the best places, but we've gotten bear

meat from out west and Canada.

"We learned from people like Roscoe Moyer, a timber man and bear hunter who lives in Bartow, that meat from a two-year-old bear is best. A yearling bear is too skinny, and an old bear is tough. Bears are usually hunted in December when there is some snow to track them and when they are fat.

"We needed a recipe about how to prepare bear meat," continued Joe, "so we ran a short story in the newspaper. This story was picked up by the Associated Press and went all over the place, all over the U.S., later into Canada and Europe. It turns out that bears are in many places in the world. We must have received 40 or 50 recipes.

"One man called from Ohio and gave me his recipe. What you did was cut the fat off, parboil the meat and then put it in a pan and baste it with a combination of honey and brandy. When the meat tests done with a fork, you throw the meat away, and the drippings were great.

"A woman called from somewhere in Pendleton County and said they'd had a recipe in their family for a long time. She said after the parboiling, you go down to the river and get a flat rock about six or eight inches around and put it in the pan beside the meat. Then you start the roasting process. You took a fork and about every 30 or 40 minutes you would stick the fork into the meat and into the rock. You kept doing this until the rock became soft, and then you knew the bear meat was done."

Lena Conn Nicholson, 84, has been the official cook for bear feasts. "I had never cooked bear meat before Reverend Gluck asked me to cook it," she reports. "I'd cooked wild game before, but never bear meat. I didn't cook it this year or last year because I wasn't able. My daughter Nancy cooked it for me. I used to get up at three in the morning to start it.

"The first thing you do when you parboil bear meat is open all the windows and doors because it smells to the high heavens," laughed Lena.

"Then trim off the fat. Next you cover the meat with salt water and parboil it for 15 minutes. Then you pour off the water and boil the meat another 15 minutes in clear water. The water that comes off that meat looks like mud. After the parboiling, you brown the meat on both sides, place it in a roaster with a big onion, a stick of celery, an apple cut in half, a little water and salt and pepper. You cover the pan and cook the meat for about three hours. While it cooks, the meat will make its own broth. You have to baste it often with the broth."

"In the early days," added Joe, "I understand they just cut chunks of bear meat and dropped it into a pan. I've talked to people who have eaten bear meat prepared like that, and they say it's terrible, but it's great the way Lena cooks it. By this method of roasting, bear meat winds up with a taste somewhere between pork and beef — not as greasy as pork but more moist than beef."

"We've served it different ways. Usually they cut it in small pieces so everyone can take as little or as much as they want. Last year we decided that we would have bear pizza, so we had a giant pizza made, big enough to serve 100 people."

Sometimes the festivities include the opening of the "Whiskey Tombstone," a hollow monument of a sort used briefly at the turn of the century, made of cast iron and painted to look like stone. "During Prohibition, this was a drop-off place," said Joe, his blue eyes twinkling. "We know this happened because we've talked to a few fellows who were university students at the time, and they confessed to doing this. You put your money in one night and the next night someone picks up your money and makes the delivery. You came back on the third night and there was your whiskey. You never see the other person. This is called 'blind barter.'"

This is historic whiskey-making country, it turns out. "There's a famous saying," Joe said, "that the American Revolution was powered by Monongahela Rye. It was said that one time along the river between Pittsburgh and Morgantown there were 5,000 separate whiskey operations."

During the Whiskey Rebellion when the government attempted to levy a



After decades of service Joe Gluck is entitled to a little attention from the younger generation. Here he receives a helping of his favorite morsel from Beverly Connors.

tax on homemade whiskey, George Washington had to send troops into western Pennsylvania and Monongalia to put down the resulting uprising. Whiskey was a major cash crop and local farmers took the matter seriously. "Rye and other grains were low in price, and a horse could carry only three or four bushels at a time, but in the form of whiskey this same horse could carry the product of twenty bushels of rye," according to the Weltner-Jeffries history.

"It is thought," said Joe, "that three major stills were operated by members of the Forks-of-Cheat Church. One man, John McFarland, operated a horse train, a line of horses tied head to tail, and hauled whiskey to civilization along the eastern seaboard.

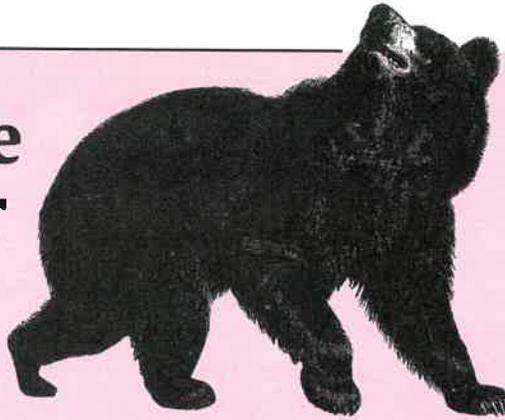
"He'd return with his horses loaded

with salt, sugar, coffee and nails, anything the folks 'out west' needed. Each horse had a bell around its neck. The bells were stuffed with leaves and moss during the day, and the bells were left open at night in case the horses got loose. McFarland made a fortune.

"There never was any reference in the church records about anyone being disciplined for drunkenness until around 1840 when the Methodist church organized," this Baptist avers.

On the 200th birthday celebration, the Whiskey Tombstone was opened to exhibit the Alamo stone given to the church by the Alamo Society in memory of a church member, John Boltinghouse, believed to have been killed at that battle in 1836.

# The Bear Facts



In 1955 Mountain State residents named the black bear West Virginia's official state animal. The beast had come a long way from its previous varmint status, despised for livestock killings and its overall unmanageability.

The black bear is the most widespread and numerous North American bear. Though it is big — males are around six feet long and generally weigh from 150 to 500 pounds — and moves at a slow gait, the black bear have been known to attain bursts of speed of 35 miles per hour when necessary.

Bears feed on fruits, roots and other plants as well as honey, insects, fish and small mammals. They may attack humans when injured or startled. In West Virginia, the bear's habitat is mostly in the southeastern portion of the state — in the dense forests of Greenbrier, Monroe, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Randolph, Tucker and Webster and some small sections of surrounding counties.

The bear's relations with its human neighbors have been a rocky one. In the 1920's, Pocahontas and Randolph counties paid a \$40 bounty for killing a bear, while neighboring Virginia paid \$20. Pendleton County followed suit in 1929, but as the cost of bounties became too expensive, payments were suspended. The late Cal Price, legendary editor of the *Pocahontas Times* from 1906 to 1957 and a GOLDENSEAL subject last year, was an outspoken opponent of the black bear. He saw the bear as "not fitten companion either of man or beast. He is a barbarian and cannot be civilized. . . The man who has to live in the same community

with bears hates him with a cruel and lasting hatred and with good and sufficient cause."

Yet the black bear had its proponents, those calling for its protection and establishment as a game animal. In 1933 *West Virginia Wildlife* magazine published a letter stating that one dog could kill more sheep in a night than all the bears in Randolph County could destroy in a year. By 1934 a black bear protectionist movement was underway. The *Clarksburg Exponent* reported that the black bear was "an honored game animal in such of the other 47 states as can support bears, though it is not recognized by the lawmakers of West Virginia." So in 1935 the first black bear hunting season was established by the State Game, Fish and Forestry Commission. It ran from November 18 to December 31.

The bear was slowly shedding its varmint label. By the end of the '30's, bear protectionists were being heard loud and clear. They attacked the bounty system and called for conservation policies. By 1944, the Commission limited hunting to one bear per hunter.

Sheep kills were still a problem, especially in the mountainous counties of Randolph, Pocahontas and Pendleton. So legislation was passed in 1944 requiring the livestock owner to notify game authorities within 48 hours of bear trouble. From there the law took its inexorable course: "The bear may be trapped by the game protector if such procedure is advisable, otherwise the game protector may form, or authorize the formation of a hunting party to pursue and kill said animal. The above shall apply in all instances except that the bear

may be killed at any time by anyone when seen in the act of killing sheep or other livestock."

The following years saw more laws and further changes. A statewide bow season for bears was opened in 1961 starting in October and closing in December. Bow hunters were banned only from game refuges, game breeding areas and state parks. In 1969 the bear was granted game status and rules were set up for hunting, tagging and reporting. The bounty system was discontinued for good in Pocahontas County.

By the early 1970's, the statewide bear population was estimated at only 500, and there was serious concern for the future of the black bear in the Mountain State. Several measures were adopted to change the situation — bow hunters were restricted to the same areas as gun hunters, bear hunters had to purchase a \$4 bear damage stamp to offset livestock or crop damage done by bears, nonresidents were charged \$1,000 for a bear license, and in 1979 bear season was limited to three weeks in December to protect female bears.

Additionally, two bear sanctuaries were created. They are the Cranberry Bear Sanctuary and the Spruce Knob Bear Sanctuary — 113,000 acres and 39,000 acres respectively. While closed to bear hunting, each is open to other hunting.

As Joe Gluck notes in the adjoining article, bears are easier to come by now than they used to be. By 1989 hunters bagged 510 bears, more than the estimated total population of 20 years before. The season generally runs from mid-October through mid-November and for most of December. Though to some the animal is a fearsome varmint and to others a noble creature, ironically it was the bear's development as a game animal that finally provided it with a constituency and helped make its future in West Virginia secure. The state's official mascot should be in these hills for decades to come.

—Debby Sonis Jackson

"Boltinghouse was about six foot, 11 inches, tall," said Joe, "and an excellent marksman. He had gone to Texas to seek his fortune and ended up at the Alamo with Colonel Travis. Someone making a trip back east passed through Stewartstown and told his mother what had happened to him."

Preachers, like the bears, come and go at Forks-of-Cheat. The current pastor is Reverend Charles Yoke. The church's founder was the Reverend John Corbly, commissioned by the Great Bethel Baptist Church of Uniontown, Pennsylvania, to establish a church in the newly settled community of Stewartstown.

According to the minutes of the Great Bethel Baptist Church in September 1775, John Corbly had arrived in Uniontown before 1771, after a time of imprisonment in Culpepper, Virginia. The bicentennial history of Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church says that Corbly and three other men had been "charged as 'vagrant and itinerant persons,' " apparently for practicing their religion.

During the Revolutionary War, Reverend Corbly preached fiery sermons to encourage local settlers in the war effort. His second wife, Elizabeth Tyler, and three youngest children were massacred by hostile Indians near Girard's Fort on the 20th of May in 1782.

"It's an interesting story," said Joe. "During the famous 1794 Whiskey Rebellion which occurred in western Pennsylvania near the Morgantown area, Corbly was arrested for aiding the local 'Whiskey Boys,' then hauled off to Pittsburgh and later Philadelphia for federal trial. He was set free before trial as a 'framed innocent' and obliged to return home on foot to continue his clergy duties.

"They haven't hauled me off yet," he laughed, "but I did have to return the church key. And I didn't get a key until I'd been here 20 years."

Joe retired as vice president of student affairs at West Virginia University in 1980, where he had worked with five presidents and 47 academic deans. He has served as a special counselor to WVU students for the past ten years.

"I'm what you might call the court of last resort," Joe said. "Faculty members refer students to me, mostly



Charles Yoke, Sr., and Hiram Cox (right) will tell you that no one goes hungry at the annual Forks-of-Cheat dinner. Eating bear is only a small part of it, with tradition and good fellowship topping the menu.

freshmen. I've had several titles since I started in 1946, but I still do basically the same thing: I counsel students."

Of the many hats Joe Gluck wears, one goes with his Santa Claus suit. "Over 20 years ago, one of my children gave me a wonderful Santa Claus suit, and I spend two and a half weeks in it every year. I appear as Santa Claus at the Mountain Lair at the University. I go to children's homes, old folks homes and churches.

"One year at the Forks-of-Cheat Church I made my grand entrance. I had banged on the door and jangled my bells, and everyone was singing 'Here Comes Santa Claus' when a little boy pointed at me and started laughing. My puckering string had broken, and my pants had fallen to the floor.

"I've learned several things as Santa Claus: Dogs do not like you, and children do not forget. Be careful what you promise a child, and don't go back there next year."

Joseph C. Gluck graduated from Bethany College in 1938 and did graduate work at Yale University, the University of California, and Oxford University in England. In 1970 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Bethany College. During the summer of 1972 he was a participant in the first ecumenical seminar sponsored by the Vatican.

His roots are in West Virginia. "I was born in Auburn in Ritchie County. My great-grandfather, Christian, emigrated to that area in 1841, and my grandfather, Joseph, helped start the town of Auburn.

"I've traveled over the mountains as did my grandfather and great-grandfather," the Reverend Gluck concluded. "I officially retired as pastor of the Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church in 1984, but from time to time I do just like the bear: I go over the mountain to Stewartstown and the Forks-of-Cheat Church just 'to see what I can see.' " ❁



An unidentified GI rides a horse and leads a mule somewhere in the West Virginia Maneuver Area. Photo by West Virginia Photo Company, Parsons.

# The Mule School

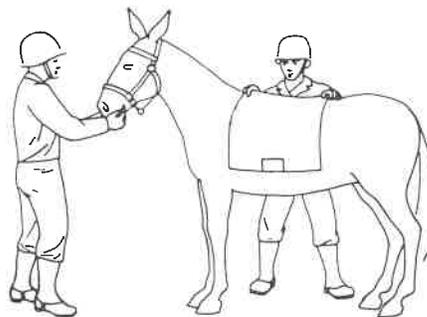
## The West Virginia Home Front in World War II

By H. L. Hames

**I**n 1943, with American troops on the offensive worldwide, army officer H. L. Hames was a long way from the front. In early spring the young lieutenant found himself second-in-command of one of World War II's more unusual expeditions, aboard a trainload of men and mules bound for West Virginia. Their mission was to train fellow soldiers in pack animal transportation, ensuring the survival of ancient fighting skills in a 20th-century war.

Lieutenant Hames later got to the shooting war, serving in Asia and elsewhere, but he says he never forgot his experiences in the mountains of Randolph and Tucker counties. He gives his recollections in the following pages.

All packing illustrations from War Department Field Manual FM 25-7, *Pack Transportation*, 1944; courtesy U.S. Army Military Institute, Carlisle, PA.



At the beginning of World War II, the United States Army still had some horse cavalry and pack artillery in small numbers. The overriding opinion of most army planners was that there was no longer any need for animal units in the army, so the horse cavalry was soon mechanized into armored cavalry — tanks — or retrained for infantry. That left only small units of pack artillery, mule units, at the Mountain Training Center in Colorado, which also trained mountain infantry ski teams.

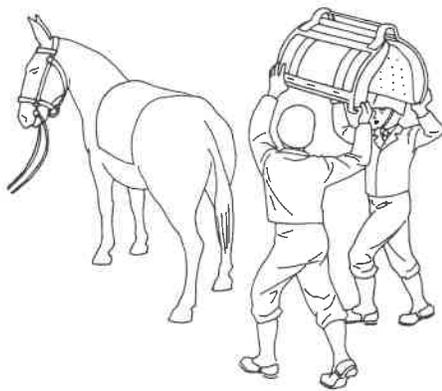
But as U.S. forces began engaging the enemy in the mountainous terrain of Europe and the jungles of Asia and

the South Pacific they found themselves opposing troops who had pack animals and dog teams that were far more maneuverable than American mechanized equipment. It soon became apparent that the United States Army was going to have to return to the use of some animals in certain areas of combat.

About this time, someone in the upper echelon of army planners decided that every division going overseas should have some men who had been trained to pack mules in case the necessity should arise. Due to the lack of such personnel a new program had to be adopted.

Thus it was that mule-packing schools were set up, one each for the eastern and western halves of the United States. Divisions leaving from the West Coast would send their personnel to the army pack school that was established at Camp Roberts, California, and divisions leaving from the East Coast would send their men to the pack school at the West Virginia Maneuver Area near Elkins.

A group of men at Camp Carson was selected to go to West Virginia to be the instructors at the maneuver



area pack school. Three officers, Lt. Moist, Lt. Mutchink and I, plus 50 enlisted men, 300 mules and a few horses, and an unbelievable amount of pack equipment were loaded on the train in Colorado, bound for West Virginia.

We arrived at Hendricks, Tucker County, in the middle of the night, expecting to have a place to unload the horses and mules. The army officers in charge of the maneuver area had never had much experience in the handling of livestock. There were no corrals or pens of any kind to hold the mules after they were unloaded.

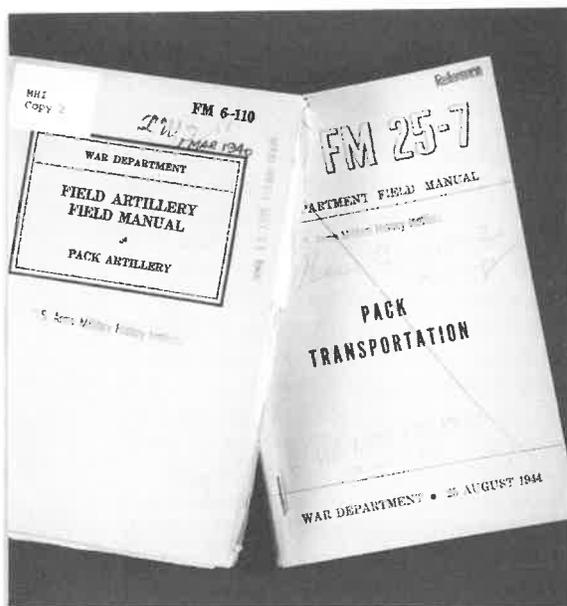
For unloading ramps, they had made some portable chutes, using one-inch boards. They collapsed under the weight of the first few head of stock that attempted to descend, but once we started to unload it was impossible to stop the torrent of mules coming out of the railroad cars. They came tumbling and jumping over each other, and many of them escaped in the darkness. There were some good cowboys in the outfit who managed to rope some of the saddle horses with the aid of flashlights.

Colonel Holman, who was in charge of the maneuver area, had come to see the unloading. He asked me what I was going to do about the mules which had escaped. I assured him that the animals would not go far in the darkness in a strange place, and that we would gather them as soon as it became light enough to see. Sure enough, when daylight arrived we found the mules were not far away. We had very little difficulty in rounding them up.

Using the saddle horses we had in the herd, we drove the mules about 15 miles over a mountain to a flat area along a stream, where the army was

Army tents served as classrooms, mess hall, living quarters and everything else at the mule school. Photographer and date unknown.





FM 6-110 and FM 25-7 were the training bibles at the pack school. Our author still remembered the field manual numbers after nearly 50 years.

establishing a camp for us. The engineers were busy building corrals for the mules and erecting tents for our use. Large tents, like three-ring-circus tents with a high pole in the center, were set up as classrooms. A very large tent to be used as a mess tent for both students and instructors was put up next to the classroom tents. Two other tents were set up for officers quarters and administration. Two-man pup tents were used for both students and enlisted instructors to sleep in, with each man responsible for his own toiletries, sleeping bag and mess kit.

It turned out that that was moonshining country, and it wasn't long until white lightning in glass canning jars began to appear in camp. One evening, Jones, the second cook, offered me a sip of it. He handed me a fruit jar filled with a clear liquid that looked exactly like water. I took a small sip, swallowed, and felt like I



had drunk a ball of fire that burned all the way down to my toes. That was my first and last taste of moonshine whiskey.

I called the instructors together and gave them strict orders to keep their own drinking under control and not allow any liquor to get into the hands of the students, who were restricted to camp at all times. As long as the instructors performed their duties in a satisfactory manner I had no objection to a little off-duty drinking on their part.

Still illegal whiskey continued to circulate widely, and it was only after the war that I uncovered the facts. While visiting in Texas with a man who had shod horses for me during the war, I learned how my men in West Virginia obtained their white lightning.

A stable crew of ten men slept in tents near the mule corrals. These men would get sugar from the mess sergeant. They would then slip away from camp during the night and trade the sugar to the moonshiners for whiskey. Sugar was rationed during the war and very hard to get by civilians. The mess sergeant always requisitioned more sugar than he needed, and I always hurriedly signed the requisition without really checking it closely — so I was inadvertently helping to supply my men with moonshine. All of the enlisted men in the outfit knew what was going on and shared in the booty.

The West Virginia Maneuver Area also had a rock-climbing school at Seneca Rocks, south of us. I was there one time. Several of my men took a pack trip up there to see what a rock climbing school was all about. From the Canadian Rockies of Alberta and British Columbia to the peaks of Colorado and New Mexico, I have seen a lot of the Rocky Mountains. I have also been over the Himalayas, but I do not believe that I have ever seen any mountains that would compare with the beauty of West Virginia in the spring of the year. There are so many flowering trees and bushes that the mountainsides are ablaze with color.

Our classes were to be of four-weeks' duration. The first thing that has to be done in this type of training is to get the men over their fear of the mules. Most of the men selected for training came from animal back-

grounds, some of them farm boys who had been around farm animals, but very few of them had every put a hand on a mule. Mules have a reputation for being stubborn, ill-tempered and unpredictable. They are also known for their biting and ability to kick. For the first two days the students spent most of their time helping to feed and water the mules, petting them and just generally getting acquainted. Confidence in the handling of animals is gained through familiarity.

We trained the students in the equipment they were most likely to find in the field. The army had a pack saddle that was designed more for transporting the 75mm howitzer than for cargo packing. I was told that this saddle was first used in the Philippine insurrection shortly before World War I, designed by a Colonel Phillips who patterned it after a German saddle. We referred to it as the Phillips pack saddle. It had some disadvantages due to its extreme weight. The saddle weighed 100 pounds by itself.

The big advantage to the Phillips was that it could be used both for howitzers and cargo, so the army was more likely to have some of them available at all locations. By doing some adapting on swinging load hitches and a certain type of squaw hitch, the Phillips saddle could be used successfully for cargo packing. By using only one type of saddle the students had only one to learn, and the army could always salvage parts from damaged saddles since all parts were interchangeable.

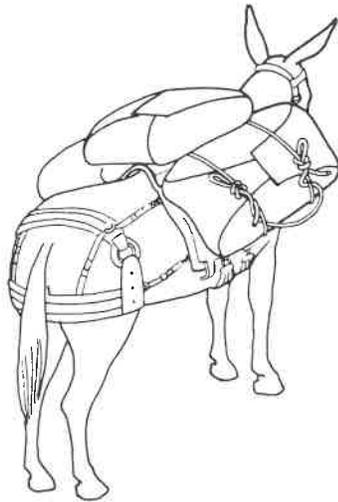
We also demonstrated to the students the foreign saddles that they were most likely to encounter if they should be unable to acquire Phillips saddles. Probably the two most



widely-used types of pack saddles in foreign countries are the wooden sawbuck and the steel-formed arch saddles. The sawbuck has two wooden crosses fastened to the front and rear of two wooden bars that are curved to fit the contours of the animal's back. Loads are tied to these wooden crosses with the use of ropes and lash cinches that are placed around the load in a pattern of diamond-shaped hitches. The steel-formed arch saddle is made similar to the sawbuck except that the crosses are replaced by curved steel rods. This saddle is easy to pack with, using swinging load and basket hitches, and is still in limited use by the United States Forest Service.

We gave instructions in the tying of different knots and hitches and their use in animal pack transportation, and in the preparation and cargoing of loads. The proper ways of packing ammunition and explosives were presented as being of utmost importance. The preparing of camps and the best methods of caring for the animals and defense of position at night were also taught.

Our school was in existence for about three months, with several di-



visions sending 500 men each for one month's training in animal pack transportation. Class groups overlapped, starting every two weeks. For graduation, the instructors took the students on a two-day trip in the mountains, having the students use the packing techniques learned at the school.

When the pack school was discontinued, most of the men who had been instructors were sent to the China-

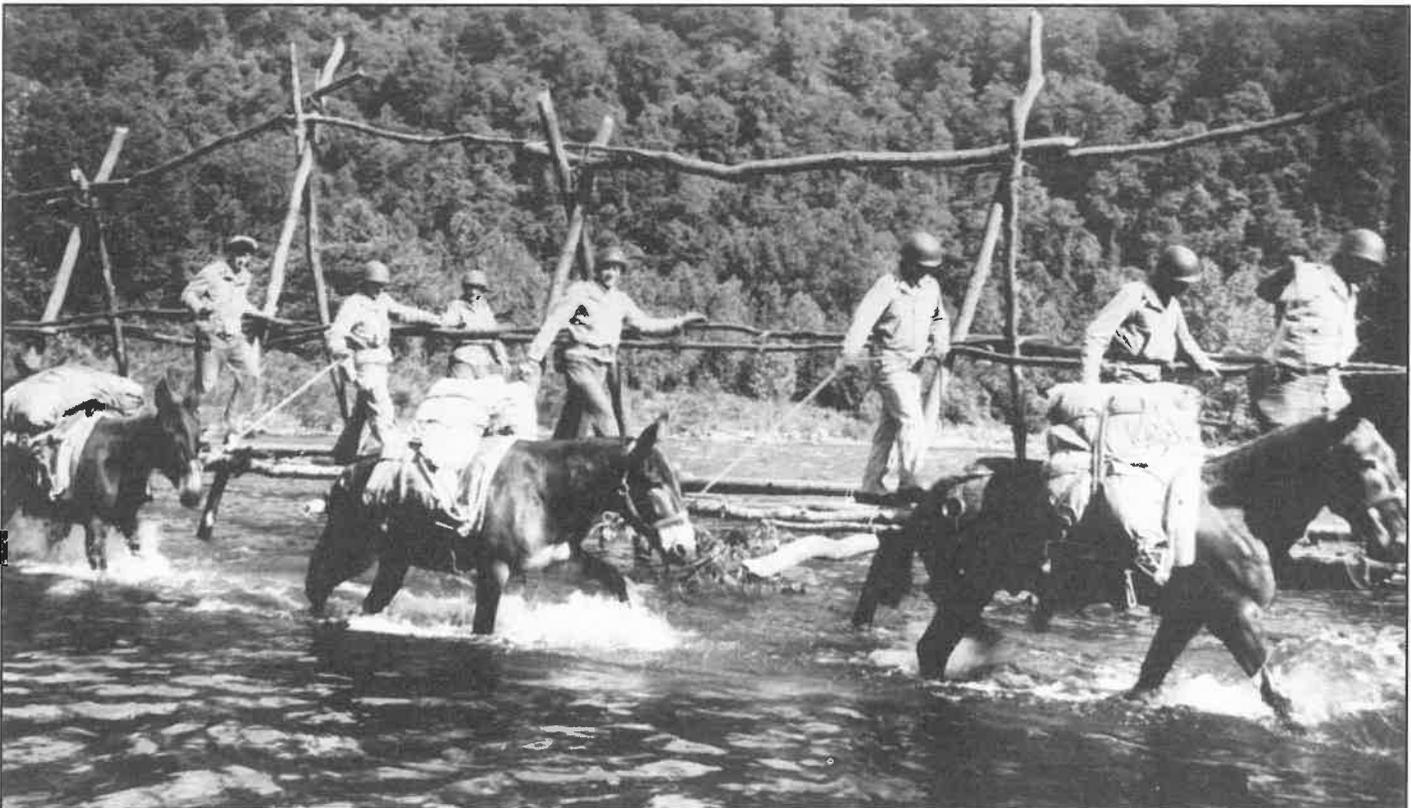
Burma-India theatre. The mules and equipment were returned to Camp Carson. The nearest place that we could find to load the mules on the railroad was a stockyard at Elkins, about 35 miles away.

The mules were turned loose into a large herd to be trailed into Elkins. Sergeant Jack Taylor rode in the front of the herd on a saddle horse leading a horse that had a bell strapped around its neck. The mules single-filed up the road behind Sergeant Taylor. Other instructors on horseback and saddle mules were interspersed at various points in the column. By the time that we reached Elkins, the column of 300 mules was probably more than a mile long.

We must have been quite a sight for the townspeople of Elkins. To reach the loading yards, we had to go down a street and cross a river bridge. I was the last rider to cross the bridge, which was crowded with spectators. When I rode past two older men, I overheard one ask the other, "How many mules were there?"

The other man replied, "Three thousand. I counted them, one by one." ❁

Primitive bridge building was among many skills taught at the Maneuver Area. The idea was to train troops to move supplies over rugged terrain as efficiently as possible. Photographer and date unknown.





This depot scene appeared on a penny postcard mailed from Paw Paw to Shepherdstown on June 20, 1907. The wistful message, from "E.C.K." to Miss Mary Wentling, read: "I have been looking for you on every train." Photographer unknown.

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# Paw Paw

## The Centennial of a Panhandle Town

By Bill Moulden

Photographs by Hali Taylor

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**P**aw Paw. Not your father twice, as some local wits say, but a community in Morgan County. As an incorporated town, Paw Paw is 100 years old this year.

Mayor Helena Moser has friends who refer to her town as "Foot Foot," and the patient townspeople are used to visitors who stop and ask where Maw Maw is. But the town got its name because the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad came up along the Potomac River and had to tunnel through a ridge covered with thickets of the pawpaw tree.

This is a small wild fruit tree found

in the middle Appalachians on down through the southern mountains and in other parts of the country. Of the custard apple family, the pawpaw tree produces a purple-red flower in the spring and an edible fruit in the fall.

Helena Moser says that pawpaw fruit tastes sweet when ripe and is of the color and consistency of bananas. The pawpaw is not cultivated as a commercial fruit, although a national foundation is working to change that [see sidebar]. In the meantime, the big pear-shaped fruits don't go to waste. As the mayor points out, "The little critters come and take them away

before they rot on the ground."

Mary Largent, who at 92 is the town's oldest citizen, makes a face at the thought of eating pawpaws, but the folks down at the Senior Center have gathered and published a half-dozen recipes for making good things from their town's namesake. One of those recipes comes from Dr. Randolph Spencer, a Paw Paw native who has had a notable career in education and music. It is from Dr. Spencer, Mary Largent, Mayor Moser, and local historian Barbara Norton that most of the information for this article has come. I thank them all, and the other

people who talked with me about Paw Paw.

The town site is on the Potomac about 150 miles upriver from Washington, at the narrowest place in the Eastern Panhandle. Cumberland, Maryland, is 25 miles further upriver, and Winchester, Virginia, is 36 miles to the south.

The land here features long mountain ridges, with smaller ridges and hills in between. The low rolling hills and the bottomland make for excellent farming and orcharding. The more rugged high land is covered with oak forests which abound in wildlife — deer, bobcat, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and fox, as well as lesser game. Folks say the black bear is coming back.

The first Europeans came to this territory in 1729, as reported in a June 1987 *National Geographic* article on the C&O Canal. They probably were trappers. A young George Washington himself surveyed the area in the 1740's, and at one time he held title to 249 acres near Doe Gully, an area just south of Paw Paw.

Washington formed a company to provide riverboat transport and shipment of goods on the Potomac. He also laid out the plans for a canal which he hoped would link the Potomac and Ohio Rivers. A century later the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, a struggling and snakebit project from the first, came along the river by Paw Paw, then ended in Cumberland. The railroad was already making water transport obsolete.

Barbara Norton's research has discovered 1799 deeds registered under such names as McDonald, Critton, Easter, House, Gale and Flora. They were farming the land in and around what now is Paw Paw. There is no record of hostilities between these particular settlers and the Indians, although archaeological evidence attests to the fact that Indians lived along the river from antiquity.

These earliest settlers were probably of English, Welsh and Scotch descent. The Easters then owned the riverside land, and documents refer to their "meeting house." Perhaps this is where the town began, where the

farmers met with riverboat men to transact business and where social and religious activities were held.

People of African descent were there too. These farmers owned slaves. An 1854 document lists 19 slaves owned by Thomas Gale. Names, ages and dollar values are included. Perhaps Mr. Gale was trying to sell them. The highest-priced adults were worth \$900, a significant sum in those days. A two-year-old listed as "poor, sickly Henry" carried the lowest price — \$25.

The stark evil of slavery is seen in such lists. But slaves were there, and their descendants helped make the town history and remain a part of it.

It was in 1820 that Morgan County was created. Still a part of Virginia, Morgan was formed from parts of Hampshire and Berkeley counties. Local residents wanted a county seat easier to reach than Romney or Martinsburg. The new Morgan County gave them a county government at Berkeley Springs, no easy trip from Paw Paw but an improvement.

It was 1838 when the B&O Railroad reached Paw Paw, after winding along

Lewis Largent was one of the citizens who incorporated Paw Paw in 1891. His daughter Mary, left, carries much of the town's history in her memory. Old photo by J. Leonard Gates, Charleston, about 1910.

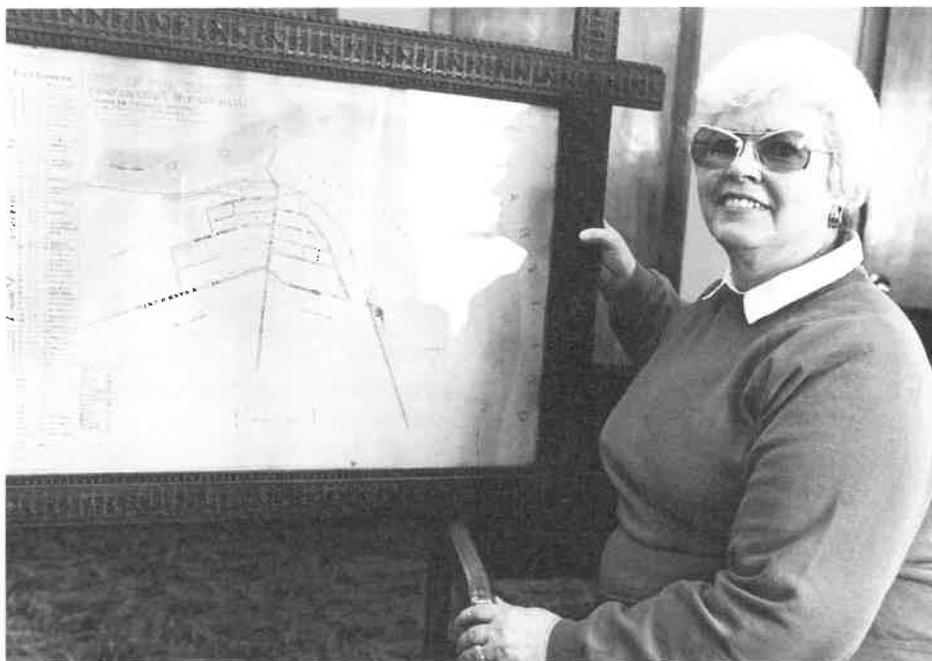


the deep bends in the Potomac just downstream. It found a settlement, generally referred to as "Isaac Baker Store," around the general store of Isaac Baker. With the railroad, the settlement grew and took on the railroad's designation of "Paw Paw Ridge Tunnel." Soon it was just Paw Paw. Mr. Baker became the railroad agent and first postmaster.

The railroad and the canal brought in new people, many of whom stayed. Among them were Germans, down from Pennsylvania, and Irish immigrants. One of the latter was Timothy Norton, who came working on the canal. His name shows first on the 1850 Census. Timothy helped start the local Catholic church, worked on the railroad, and founded a clan of Nortons that comes down today to Brown Norton, former Morgan County commissioner and husband of Barbara.

Now the settlement needed roads so that the region's farmers and loggers could get their products to town for shipment east and west. Leading citizens formed the Hampshire-Morgan Turnpike Company in 1849

Educator Randolph Spencer has deep roots in Paw Paw. He says his town was spared the racial conflict suffered elsewhere.



Local historian Barbara Norton researched Paw Paw's past. Here she holds an early map of the town.

and built a toll road that linked Paw Paw with Berkeley Springs. This is now West Virginia Route 9, and you won't find a more scenic 25 miles anywhere.

About the same time, a road linking Paw Paw to Winchester was completed. Paw Paw was now a hub for regional commerce, and when the Civil War began it was found to be of strategic value. Union troops under General Kelley arrived to protect the railroad and its telegraph lines. A young officer, Brigadier General Frederick Lander, set up a bivouac south of town that was named Camp Chase for Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury. Today it is the town's cemetery, known simply as Camp Hill.

There were also Confederate sympathizers around town, not unusual for a border state. Mayor Moser notes that two Paw Paw streets are named for Lee and Jackson, but none for Union figures. Local tension spilled into action when Jacob Ziler ran a man named Heironymous out of town, reportedly because he would not free his slaves.

Ziler, who owned an orchard and a liquor store, was accused by some of trying to get on the good side of the federal government so that he could take over as postmaster and railroad agent. He did become postmaster, but not railroad agent. Ziler also became

notorious for a series of violent acts. Some say he led a lynching mob that killed an accused murderer in Berkeley Springs, a Dr. Crawford, and he was involved in later shootings as well.

Following the Civil War Paw Paw moved into a stable and prosperous era, based mainly on the employment provided by a tannery, established in 1869 by a New York firm. The Panhandle town had everything a tannery needed — plenty of water from the river, the railroad, and lots of oak trees for the bark that provided the tannin to turn hides into leather.

While the Industrial Revolution made towns into cities elsewhere, Paw Paw developed a nice balance between industry and agriculture.

Cattle, fruit and vegetable farming thrived, with canneries throughout the county giving farm families a chance to earn extra money in the summer. Fruit processing plants opened in the fall. The tannery grew to employ around 400 people, and area population approached 900 by 1880.

That year, an issue of the *Morgan County News* carried a "Business Directory," for Paw Paw. The article cited J. N. Robinson as the "leading merchant." The postmaster was O.W. Wilson, also senior member of Wilson and Fisher, a general store. There were, in fact, five general stores listed



## Perfecting the Pawpaw:

# A Fruit and Its Foundation

**N**orth America's largest native edible fruit is nutritious, delicious — and, sadly, unknown to most Americans today. That situation may change, thanks largely to the efforts of R. Neal Peterson, a U.S.D.A. agriculturalist who has formed a nonprofit foundation dedicated to the advancement of his favorite fruit. The PawPaw Foundation expects to put the pawpaw on the nation's grocery shelves by early next century.

The pawpaw is a true American. The fossil record indicates that the plant's forebears established themselves in North America millions of years before the arrival of humans. Native American Indians were great lovers of the pawpaw and introduced it to European explorers. Settlers from the East Coast westward to Michigan, Oklahoma, and Louisiana named towns, creeks, and islands after the pawpaw. Yet, the only way many people know of pawpaws today is from the traditional song, "Way Down Yonder in the Paw Paw Patch."

Common throughout the eastern United States, the pawpaw is a small deciduous tree whose large, droopy leaves and slender branches give it a tropical appearance. The resemblance is more than coincidental; the pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) is the only temperate member of the custard apple family, which is widespread throughout the New and Old World tropics and includes many Central and South American fruits.

Although its closest relatives are tropical, the pawpaw is a hardy plant. The trees are often found along the banks of creeks and rivers. They like shady forest clearings, too. It's easy to spot them by their big leaves. In spring, look also for small, triangular, dark flowers.

The pawpaw fruit is oval-shaped, often fist-sized and bigger, and greenish-yellow in color. Beneath this rather drab covering, its creamy pulp may range in color from pale to bright yellow. It has a decidedly tropical taste

that is most often compared to bananas. And, according to Peterson, "Not all pawpaws are created equal." Some are extremely sweet and some bitter.

Each fruit also holds a dozen or more shiny black seeds. To pawpaw eaters, seed-spitting is part of the fun.

Pawpaws ripen in early autumn. Most trees bear fruit in September, but a few bear as early as mid-August or as late as the end of October. The ripe fruit yields from the stem with a gentle tug, or may be found on the ground beneath the tree. Because of its thin skin and soft flesh, the ripened fruit bruises easily, although a bruised appearance does not necessarily indicate bad flavor. The pawpaw's flavor



**The  
PawPaw  
Foundation**

is volatile, however, and the fruit does not keep well. Many pawpaw lovers prefer to eat them where they find them.

The idea of a commercial pawpaw is not new. Since the early part of this century, a number of individuals have collected superior samples from the wild and worked at improving the fruit. In 1916, the American Genetic Association sponsored a contest and offered a \$100 reward for information about the largest pawpaw tree and the best fruit. Seventy-five fruit samples and 230 reports of superior trees were received.

Current research by both professionals and amateurs aims to improve pawpaw cultural practices, plant breeding, flavor analysis, and culinary uses. Peterson, a native West Virginian who recalls the fruit from his Kanawha County youth, is among the

most active scientists in the field. During more than ten years of pawpaw research, he has investigated a half-dozen historic collections of pawpaw trees dating from the first half of the 20th century, assembled germ plasm consisting of 1,900 trees now growing at University of Maryland experiment stations, and collected and analyzed data from those trees.

Peterson and Dr. Harry Swartz of the University of Maryland have evaluated and chosen the best trees, which will serve as parents for controlled crosses. In addition to the pawpaw groves at the university's experiment stations, a site has been secured from the National Park Service where thousands of pawpaw progeny from successful crosses may be grown.

The perfect pawpaw, which Peterson expects to harvest within a decade or so, will have sweet, creamy flesh, few seeds, and a skin thick enough to withstand mechanical harvesting.

In 1988, Peterson formed the PawPaw Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to research and development of *Asimina triloba* as a new fruit crop for American farmers and consumers. The foundation seeks to reacquaint Americans with this distinctively native fruit, and to lay the groundwork for a pawpaw revival. The group's eight board members believe that, with adequate research and development in the 1990's, pawpaws will be as common in produce stands early in the next century as kiwis and mangoes are today, and that the pawpaw tree will become as valued a part of domestic gardens as the apple and pear.

— Colleen Anderson

*GOLDENSEAL* designer Colleen Anderson serves on the national board of the PawPaw Foundation. For more information about the pawpaw and pawpaw research, contact the PawPaw Foundation, P.O. Box 23467, Washington, D.C. 20026.



fee while they held bacon on forks over the open fire. In winter they would get someone to take them across the Potomac to the canal, where the still water was more likely to freeze, for ice-skating parties.

The first bridge across the Potomac at Paw Paw was not built until 1927. Before then, there was a ferry. Vehicles were pulled across on a barge hooked to a heavy line. Foot passengers were taken in small boats. Mary recalls a story about a woman who ferried across one night to retrieve her husband, drunk in a bar on the Maryland side. She tied him to the boat and made him swim back. One assumes he was sober when he arrived home in West Virginia.

Mary Largent is a historian of the Paw Paw schools. The first one was built in 1870 on tannery property, then owned by J. B. Hoyt and Company. They paid for the building. Mary graduated from high school in 1916, in a class of three, the first four-year high school class to graduate.

Mary has her 1916 yearbook, and just about every other yearbook since then. Paw Paw High began as an all-white school. A "colored school" was in operation in 1876, taught by Henrietta Dubois, a white woman. Her school had an average attendance of 16.

School segregation did not extend into the broader life of Paw Paw, according to Dr. Randolph Spencer, a black man who was raised in Paw Paw and went on to become a biologist, teacher, minister and musician, among other things. In his memoir *From Paw Paw to Ph.D.*, published in 1976, Dr. Spencer describes his hometown as follows:

"It is true that much social integration began after the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, but the town of Paw Paw was integrated at its founding, and took pride in being the first integrated community in the state of West Virginia.

"There were no 'peanut galleries' for black people in the theatre — they sat together with the whites. They played baseball and horseshoes together, although there were two baseball teams. They attended social functions and dances together; ate at the same table when visiting; and buried their dead together in the same Camp Hill Cemetery."

Spencer completed high school and received his A.B. degree at Storer College at Harpers Ferry [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1990]. He returned to Paw Paw to teach school, becoming principal of the black elementary school in the 1950's. In 1954 he accepted the "Model School Award" from the Morgan County school superintendent. The following year Paw Paw integrated all its schools in acceptance of the Supreme Court ruling.

Randolph Spencer, who later earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, is now a music teacher in Martinsburg. His Uncle Lon Amos was a Paw Paw musician, remembered as an excellent five-string banjo player, who wrote songs and ballads. Other notable musicians have come out of Paw Paw. Current national favorites with local roots are Asleep at the Wheel, a western swing group, and the Critton Hollow String Band, popular old-time pickers.

Like Spencer, Mary Largent also went away for her education, although initially with some reluctance. Going first to Goucher College in Baltimore, Mary says that she became homesick and asked her father to let her come home. He insisted she finish out the year, then she enrolled in West Virginia University, a bit closer home. Mary received her A.B.

degree at WVU and, evidently matured from her homesickness, went on to the prestigious Columbia Teacher's College in New York City.

She left Columbia with a master's in education and teacher's certificates in a number of subjects. This was in 1929, the year the Great Depression began. But back home the tannery stayed open, and Mary says, "We hardly felt the Depression in Paw Paw."

There followed for her a long career in teaching, most of it in Paw Paw, with other stints in nearby Great Cacapon and in Beckley.

Mary tells a story that shows she had an innovative flair in her approach to teaching. A football player was failing her French class and needed the credit to graduate. Mary made a bargain with him. She would tutor him in French and accept his tutoring in football. The boy passed French and graduated, and Mary says she "learned more about football than I ever cared to know."

But having said that, Mary went on to critique the changes made in football over the years. About the game today, she says, "They've ruined it."

Mary became the scriptwriter and director for most of the town and county holiday and festival productions, filling each pageant with her original verse. Remembering her

Mary Largent and the two other members of Paw Paw's first four-year high school class graduated from this building in 1916. The building, serving all 12 grades, was completed in 1914. Date and photographer unknown.





Paw Paw's tannery survived flood and fire but closed for economic reasons in 1951. This aerial view of the great flood in 1936 was made by R.E. Kriesche.

script for a 1940's Morgan County Tomato Festival, the image of Dwan McBee, a local insurance executive, comes to mind. "Dwan was a green tomato," she says with glee. The county is full of adults put through their paces for such events by Mary.

But Mary was serious about education, as attested by the careers she has influenced. "Her work was absolutely perfect," Mary says of Elaine Niner, a little girl she taught at Great Cacapon Elementary School. "I could never find a single mistake." Dr. Niner is now a college dean. Thomas Malcolm received the attentions of Mary Largent and went on to earn a doctorate in education and is now superintendent of schools in Frederick County, Virginia.

John Herman graduated from Paw Paw High and later became a NASA scientist. Dr. Herman represented the United States in International Geophysical Year scientific studies.

He sent Mary a copy of his textbook, *Sun, Water and Climate*, inscribed: "To Miss Largent, who taught me the power of the English language, your faithful student, John Herman, Class of '46."

There were many others. Mary keeps scrapbooks on Paw Paw schools and has the name of every graduate up to the current year. She bristles at proposals to close the high school. Larger schools offer students a broader education, some think, and Paw Paw High is a small school. But to close it would mean that students would face a ride over the ridge to Berkeley Springs High School, 30 miles each way. A strong argument against such a move is the consistently high test scores of Paw Paw graduates.

"Paw Paw is my roots," says Mary Largent. She remembers the tannery whistles that marked the time for the whole town — 5:30 a.m. to rouse the workers, 7:00 a.m. to mark the begin-

ning of the day shift, noon for the dinner hour, and 4:00 p.m. to signal the end of the work day. The whistle of Mary's younger days meant that Paw Paw was working and prosperous.

But if the first half of the 20th century provided Paw Paw's golden years, things began to go downhill in the 1950's. Though it withstood the flood of 1936 and a major fire, the tannery couldn't survive a combination of later setbacks, including a decline in the use of leather products, the aging of the plant and the decline of the railroads. The factory whistles sounded their last in December 1951, with Dr. Spencer recording the last toot. Paw Paw lost nearly half of its population as many moved to other tanneries in Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Smaller establishments have come and gone, but nothing on the scale of the tannery. Vegetable farming also declined in Morgan County with the growth of agribusiness nationally.

There were 36 canneries in Morgan County in the best years. None remains. Last year a roadside stand near Paw Paw offered me tomatoes from Mexico.

Orchards are struggling in this region as well. A large one near Paw Paw was recently auctioned off in small parcels, never to be a working orchard again. Farms still thrive by growing corn and grain and keeping cattle, but people now garden only for their own use.

Mayor Moser doesn't like to talk about the floods, but Paw Paw has seen a few over the years. The last big one was the monster flood of 1985, which brought national publicity to the town and much of the state. The Paw Paw bridge was wiped out and a trailer court and some small businesses were destroyed. The bridge has been rebuilt, but the floodplain land is useless until flood control improvements are made upriver.

In its heyday, Paw Paw had nearly 1,000 residents. The 1980 Census figures showed 640, almost the same figure as when the town incorporated a century ago. The mayor expects the 1990 figures to be lower. The town now is sustained by folks who work elsewhere and commute, mostly to jobs in Winchester, Virginia. Cumberland, Maryland, is closer, but is having its own employment crisis.

The lack of local industry is attractive to one segment of the population, retired people happy to live out the American dream of a place in the country. They are most welcome, Mayor Moser says, but they don't provide the good jobs needed to keep the town's young people. Some natives see the retired people as replacing their own children who must leave for jobs and careers.

But Mayor Moser is fighting for her town. "We don't want to be big," she says. "We just want to survive." She fought to get federal grant money to help establish an industrial park in Paw Paw, high and dry and now ready for occupants. She wants the road to Winchester widened and improved and made into an interstate connecting the growing Hampshire County to the south with the Pennsylvania Turnpike to the north, passing through Paw Paw on the way. One hundred-forty years ago Paw Paw needed a road to make it a town. Now it needs a better one.

Mayor Moser also stresses that the railroad isn't dead, and that Paw Paw remains on the main B&O line with commuter potential into the D.C. area and north to Pittsburgh. In short, Paw Paw is ready for a resurgence. Potential employers will find the hub of roads and the railroad still there, a surrounding wildlife paradise to entice

workers, a tradition of racial tolerance, and a top-notch school system.

I drove to Paw Paw on a Saturday morning to interview Mary Largent. I found myself on streets that reminded me of my 1930's boyhood neighborhood. The modest pre-1940's homes were all of different design and in good repair. Most had wide front porches with people on them or out in the yards, working and talking with each other as kids played on the sidewalk. The good old days are not just in the minds of old folks, I concluded. You don't see scenes like this in our modern fortress-like urban apartment complexes.

I parked in front of a house that was undergoing renovations. I asked the man working there where Mary's house was and he pointed it out. Then I looked over at my car and thought to ask him if it was going to be in his way that morning. "I don't think so," he replied.

Then, in the tradition of American small town humor, he said, "Of course, if it is, I have a chain."

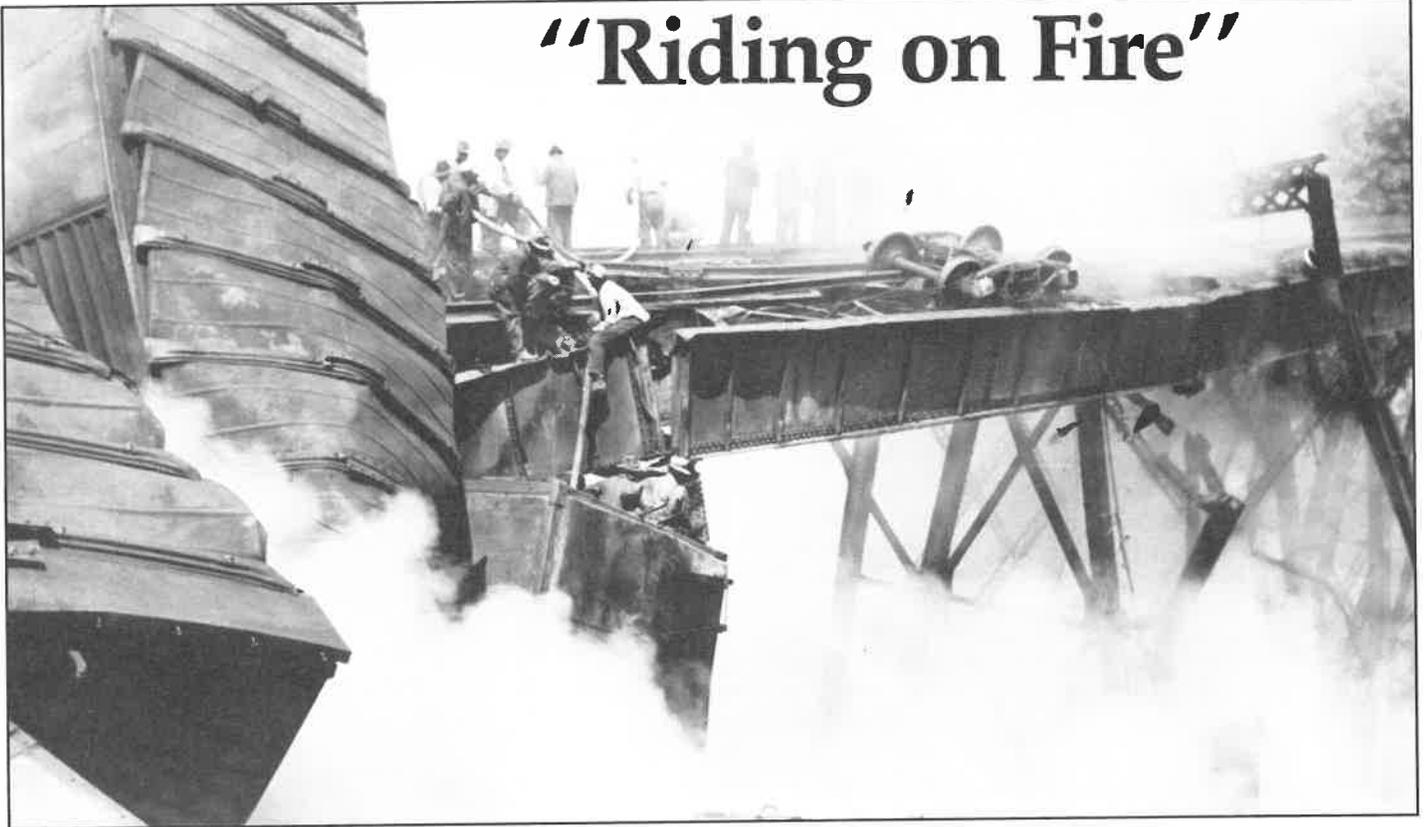
Not to be intimidated, I said, "Well, it's unlocked, so let the brake off and put it in neutral."

We both laughed, and that gives me my final line on Paw Paw: It's a town where you can still leave your car unlocked and know that folks will look after you while they look after themselves. ♣

Mayor Helena Moser in her Town Hall office. She's proud of her town's past and thinks it has a future as well.



# "Riding on Fire"



No photographs captured the train wreck itself, but Bluefield sign painter Bernard Wills left dramatic pictures of its aftermath. His collection now resides at the Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

## The Great Maybeury Railroad Disaster

By Stuart McGehee

Photographs From the Eastern Regional Coal Archives

**A**t 7:15 on the warm summer evening of June 30, 1937, westbound Norfolk & Western time freight No. 85 plunged off the east end of the Maybeury trestle straight into West Virginia's rich railroad lore. Termed "the worst in Pocahontas Division history," the Maybeury disaster claimed four lives, tied up rail and road traffic for weeks, and is forever imprinted in coalfield memories. "A man could live his whole life and not see such a calamity as that," recollected James Harold Sutphin 50 years later.

Fifty-four-year-old Willie Snead was a veteran engineer and a card-carrying member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers for a quarter century. He had no reason to expect impending doom as he eased out of Bluefield's huge natural gravity railway into the coalfields earlier that afternoon. Building steam, his 89-car train of sealed merchandise boxcars bound for coal company stores

groaned as it snaked along the Bluestone and then slowly ascended Coaldale Mountain, which separates Mercer and McDowell counties.

Fireman Ezra McHaffa kept the massive Norfolk & Western Y5 Mallet's boiler stoked nearly to its 300-pound pressure limit. N&W engine No. 2092, only seven years old, was one of the world's most powerful steam locomotives, designed expressly to haul the heaviest freight tonnage through rugged terrain. Mallet compound engines, named for their French inventor and pronounced "Malley," used a single firebox and boiler to power two sets of driving wheels. According to the Whyte system of classifying locomotives by the number of leading, driving, and trailing wheels listed in order, this N&W Mallet was termed a 2-8-8-2, with two sets of eight drivers.

The huge engine, weighing in at 500 tons of steel, could haul nearly 5,000 tons of coal without a pusher. Num-

ber 2092 had been built to exacting standards in the railroad's Roanoke, Virginia, shops in 1930, under the capable supervision of the general superintendent of motive power, R. G. Henley. The locomotive was now scheduled for a complete refitting in the shops of her birth, but No. 2092 would never make that appointment. There was a rendezvous of a different sort, in Maybeury.

Maybeury was located 20 miles west of Bluefield, where a spur line intersected the double-tracked new main line along Elkhorn Creek of the Tug. Maybeury — the name a compounding of the last names of May and Beury, pioneer McDowell County coal operators — was an unincorporated crossroads community serving five mining operations of the Pocahontas Fuel Company. Established in 1887 even before the railroad punched nearby Coaldale Tunnel into the rich heart of the coal reserves of the famed



This peaceful scene shows the Maybeury trestle earlier in the century. Photographer unknown, 1910.

Pocahontas Number Three seam, Maybeury was by 1937 a thriving coal-field town of several thousand. It is often associated with West Virginia coal operator James Elwood Jones, whose magnificent house overlooking the valley — today a bed and breakfast — afforded a commanding view of the sprawling industrial community.

Something terrible occurred that night in the summer of 1937, as time freight No. 85 began the steep west-bound descent through 3,000-foot long Coaldale Tunnel. As the engine hurtled down the mountainside, brakeman James C. Ball, of Raven, Virginia, grew suddenly fearful. "Something was wrong with the train," he recalled the next day. "I knew the train was running away. It was going faster than any freight train I'd ever broke on before." Eyewitnesses reported flames and glowing sparks spitting from the shiny steel rails as the runaway train shrieked toward the Maybeury trestle, racing at 55 miles per hour.

Fifty feet from the bridge, the pony truck — the locomotive's guiding wheels — derailed, pulling the rest of

the huge engine off the tracks and plunging it headlong into the 180-foot ravine. As engine 2092 fell to its fiery death, 53 boxcars followed it off the N&W main line and over the edge. Chaos ensued. Brakeman Hall, riding the tender, was hurled through the air

like a rag doll. "Then I felt myself in the air," he told reporters. "It seemed I would never land anyplace, and then after that I just don't know exactly what happened."

"It happened so quick that it seems like a dream," said Oscar Duff, a

Norfolk & Western Train No. 85 plunged off the eastern end of the trestle, at right in the above photograph. Photo by Bernard Wills.



stunned employee of the nearby Mill Creek Coal & Coke Company. "The engine looked as though it were riding on fire, and then the loud crash was followed seconds later by the explosion," he recalled breathlessly the night of the wreck. "The air was filled with debris and the noise of the crashing cars still hurts my ears."

C. B. Moore, who operated a Maybeury filling station beneath the overpass along serpentine Route 52, told a reporter later that evening, "I knew an awful wreck was about to happen when I heard the engine and cars bumping over the ties. Fifteen seconds after I heard the noise there was a deafening explosion."

Lyle Ratliff, his wife, and their two young children were relaxing after dinner on the front porch of their wood-frame coal company house when train No. 85 suddenly fell into their narrow front yard. Racing from their flaming home, the Ratliffs escaped uninjured. Others were not so fortunate. A hundred yards away, a strolling youth was hit by flying scrap iron and suffered a broken shin. And 20-year-old Clark Maxey was instantly crushed to death by tons of falling steel as he walked innocently under the trestle.

Fred Duff remembers the tragic accident as vividly today as 50 years ago. "I was pitching horseshoes over across from the train station with Wilson Maxey, brother of the fellow that got killed," he recalled. Duff and his friends heard nothing, but "the telegraph wires were a-shaking," he said. Fearful of further explosions in the gathering twilight, Duff's father wisely refused to allow his sons to visit the wreck, and Fred never got near the rubble and chaos of the crash until the next day.

Six-year-old Eustace Frederick thought World War II had been declared in McDowell County when the calamity occurred. Eustace was playing catch with a makeshift yarn baseball when engine 2092 met her doom. He heard "one heckuva thump," and felt the earth of Delta hollow move beneath his feet. Fearing a possible air attack, he and his teammates hit the deck. Frederick, now senior vice-president for mining in Consolidation Coal's Southern Appalachian Division, has no trouble remembering the date of the great



Train 85 was not an outbound coal train, but consisted of boxcar freight bound for coalfields company stores. These firefighters attempt to quench one part of the smoking wreck. Photo by Bernard Wills.

Maybeury train wreck. June 30 is also his wedding anniversary.

When the fully-stoked locomotive smashed into the pavement of Route 52, the boiler exploded spectacularly, hurling the housing down the right-of-way "893 feet by actual measurement," according to the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*. The whistle was blown high onto a nearby hillside, where it eluded souvenir hunters for days.

The first mighty explosion carved a gaping pit in the newly-surfaced two-lane blacktop. Seconds later another blast ripped the air as a Texaco gasoline tanker car erupted in thunderous explosion, shattering windows and blowing in doors a quarter-mile away. Soon the entire Maybeury hollow was ablaze in a hellish inferno of burning coal, ash, and oil. The trestle itself was bathed in fire for several hours into the night. An acrid stench hung over the twisted metal. Precious cargo was scattered everywhere amidst the debris.

"It was carrying bicycles, and they were thrown all over the place. Many of the boxcars were on fire, too," remembered Earl Childress. "It was something that attracted spectators from all over the area."

Other eyewitnesses recalled the sudden rush for the 600 smashed cases of liquor in the ruined train. "I remember seeing railroad detectives

wearing bulky coats as they'd go up to where the liquor bottles were. Those coats would fill up and you could hear the clanking of the bottles," laughed Sutphin, shaking his head. Roasted peanuts and smoldering tobacco stank into the morning hours. Tins of canned pineapple were cooked to perfection by the intense heat, providing impromptu refreshments for hungry onlookers. A carload of Vicks Vaporub oozed mentholatum fumes, the petroleum-jelly salve burning long into the night.

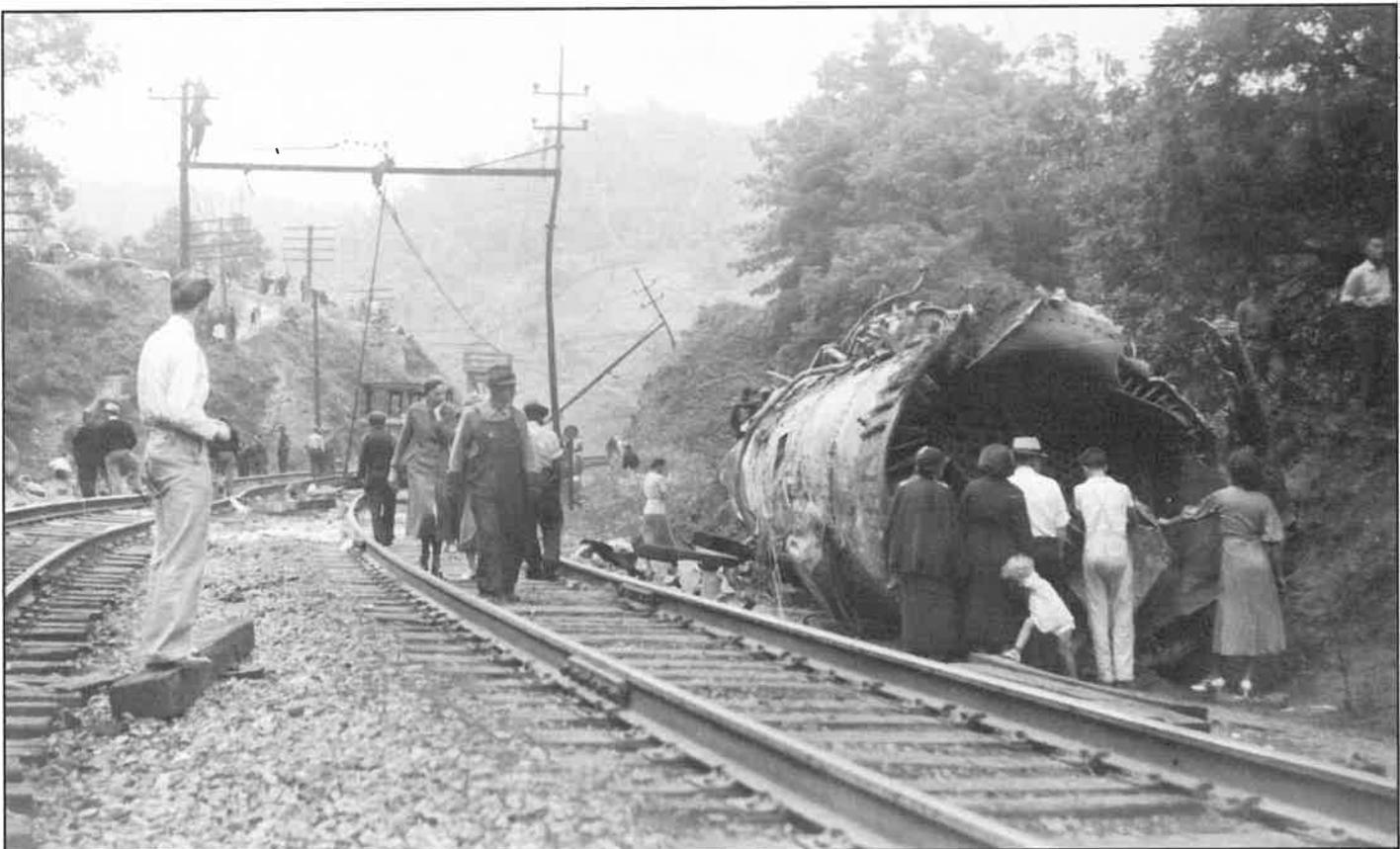
Rescue efforts began immediately. Stunned bystanders braved roaring flames to locate the doomed crew. Engineer Snead's mangled remains were not found until early the next day. Fireman McHaffa, who left two young children mourning in Bluefield, was burned beyond recognition. Incredibly, brakeman Ball still breathed. He was quickly taken back to Bluefield Sanitarium Hospital, suffering horribly from a crushed back and pelvis, mortal wounds from which he would succumb on July 1.

Word of the disaster spread rapidly, and a huge throng gathered that night to survey the remarkable scene of destruction, hampering safety teams. Automobiles lined both shoulders of Route 52 for a mile in either direction. Fire crews from Bramwell, Pocahontas, and Welch battled the searing flames with water pumped



Above: The big locomotive represented hundreds of tons of steel by itself. This picture shows half its wheels, including one of its two sets of eight drivers. Photo by Bernard Wills.

Below: The scene attracted gawkers and souvenir hunters from a large area. Photo by Bernard Wills.





The Maybeury train wreck smoked and steamed for days, and its memory still lives in the minds of surviving witnesses. Photographer unknown.

from Elkhorn Creek. Scavengers fought with N&W security guards for trophies and loot. Detectives tried unsuccessfully to prevent reporters from taking pictures. Spectators lining the hollow included new N&W President W. J. Jenks, who set up a folding chair to oversee the proceedings. The superintendent of the Pocahontas Division scribbled into his diary in apparent disgust, "58 cars altogether wrecks."

Damage repair teams worked night and day to replace the dangling, still-smoking steel trestle and remove the shattered engine from the highway below. Huge steam cranes took almost three weeks to clear the scrap steel and debris from the badly damaged overpass.

"I didn't have time to take my shoes off for 48 hours after that accident,"

remembered crane operator James Harold Sutphin on the 50th anniversary of the disaster. "I almost fell asleep a bunch of times when I was sitting on that crane, particularly when I was working at night. One thing that kept me awake was looking at the crazy-colored sky. The smoke from the explosion would rise into the lights we were using to see at night. That haze was like something out of this world."

What caused the terrible wreck? Before he died in agony the next day, brakeman Ball remembered talking to a hobo who had apparently stowed away in Bluefield for the ride. Blame has fallen on this anonymous transient, whose body, it must be stated, was never found. The authorities concluded that he had trifled with the brake system. The official corporate

explanation thus read "derailment off bridge #861, resulting from excessive speed from closing of an angle cock on a head end by a transient, to render brakes in train inoperable from locomotive."

The Maybeury wreck cost at least four human lives and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Doomed engine No. 2092 was never rebuilt. The hollow smelled of the fumes for months. Some years later the main line was rerouted over the Maybeury cut, but foundations of the infamous old bridge may still be seen today. Although the damage was eventually repaired and order restored, the hellish scene was one none would soon forget. The memory of the awful Maybeury wreck of 1937 lives on, lodged forever in the treasure trove of West Virginia's industrial history. ❁

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# Irish Mountain

## The Story of a West Virginia Immigrant Community

By Lois C. McLean

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God's acre occupies the high ground on Irish Mountain. St. Colman Catholic Church and cemetery perch on Sullivan's Knob, near the top of the 2,700-foot mountain in an isolated section of Richmond District of Raleigh County. They are both revered relics of a once-populous Irish farming community. No one recalls the original name of the mountain, but as early as 1915 a U.S. Geologic Survey map officially identified it as Irish Mountain, the name used by residents of Richmond District to indicate the presence of the strange, prolific immigrant families in that area.

Irish Mountain overlooks the New River just southwest of the new Interstate 64 bridge. A tortuous dirt road goes up the mountain from Richmond's Crossing near Sandstone, but nowadays it's easier to approach from

the other direction. Before I-64, the trip from Beckley was via West Virginia Route 3 and a series of progressively smaller side roads. Today, one can exit at the Bragg exchange and take Route 27 to Irish Mountain Road. It's a solid five miles from there. Then suddenly one sees across from the top of one knoll to another, and there stands the small white building with a cross on its roof.

Parking at the foot of the knoll, one trudges up a steep, rutted incline to the church. To the left and across the lot behind the church is the cemetery. There are about 13 rows of graves, about 64 with markers and probably 30 unmarked. One is struck by the serene isolation of this spot and the wonder of how these people came to rest here.

The first Irish Catholic settlers on the

mountain were Maurice Sullivan and his wife Margaret, both from County Kerry, and their children, John, Margaret, Catherine and James, all born in Virginia. On October 13, 1855, Sullivan purchased from John and Sara Gwinn "for \$800 in hand" a tract of 435 acres.

The Gwinn ancestors, much earlier settlers, came from Scotland, Wales or Ireland, depending on the source. One historian favors the Irish connection to explain John's willingness to sell to Irish Catholics who weren't particularly welcome in Hinton at the time. In any event, the Sullivan deal began a long relationship between Gwinns and the newcomers. In November 1856, John Gwinn sold 175 acres to John Quiline (Quinlan) of County Kerry and his wife Margaret, also from Kerry. These two families

The student body of the Irish School, about 1910-15. The Irish families were in the third generation by this time, and had extensively intermarried with earlier families in the region.



St. Colman Catholic Church, now on the National Register of Historic Places, is more a shrine than an active church these days. The rare early photograph (inset) shows the same building in its earlier board-and-batten siding. Date and photographer unknown, courtesy Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston; new photo by Michael Keller.



were the only local Irish listed in the 1860 U.S. Census.

In the 1860's, Thomas J. McCarthy, migrating from County Clare, purchased 571 acres from John Gwinn; William Dillon, from County Kerry, bought 258 acres from Gwinn and all John Carson's interest in the same; and Martin Nee, County Clare, bought 216 acres on Farley Creek and 100 acres on New River for \$900 from Jackson Bragg. Tim Cullina and family also joined the settlement, and in 1865 Maurice Sullivan sold Simeon (Simon) O'Connor 100 acres. Simon O'Connor and Rebecca Gwinn, daughter of John's nephew Enos, were married the following year at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church at Sweet Springs, one of the first of many marriages between the Irish and local families. The 1870 Census did not list the O'Connors but showed six other Irish families, 42 individuals, on Irish Mountain.

Construction of the C&O Railway brought many more Irish through the area in the late 1860's and early 1870's. Ministering to the workers was the Reverend David P. Walsh, a native of Ireland educated at St. Vincent's Seminary in Wheeling. He had served at Weston and Lewisburg before being assigned to Hinton, where he established St. Patrick Church in 1874.

In 1876, Father Walsh reported to Bishop J. J. Kain that besides his parish in Hinton, he covered missions at Fort Spring, Talcott, Quinnimont, New Richmond (Irish Mountain), Sewell, Nuttallburg and Hawks Nest, all along the railroad, and also at

Raleigh Courthouse (Beckley) and Little Meadows (Spring Dale). He regarded the 60 families making up these congregations as mostly transient, except for those at Little Meadows and New Richmond, where he intended to build churches. To help him, Maurice and Margaret Sullivan on August 14, 1876, for one dollar deeded to the bishop "one acre of land bounded by public road leading from Richmond's Ferry to Raleigh Courthouse and on west by lane leading to house of William Dillon."

Father Walsh and the congregation built the Irish Mountain church in 1877 with logs hewn from parishioners' farms. It is rectangular, 18 by 24 feet, with three windows on each side and a double door with a cross overhead. Space was set aside for the cemetery, with a back corner reserved for "lost souls," those not baptized in the Catholic faith.

The new church was named in honor of St. Colman, a popular Irish saint whose feast day, November 24, was observed throughout the old country. Joseph Hurley, Jr., of Hinton said his family told him that St. Colman Cathedral near Cork was the last building the immigrants saw when they left Ireland.

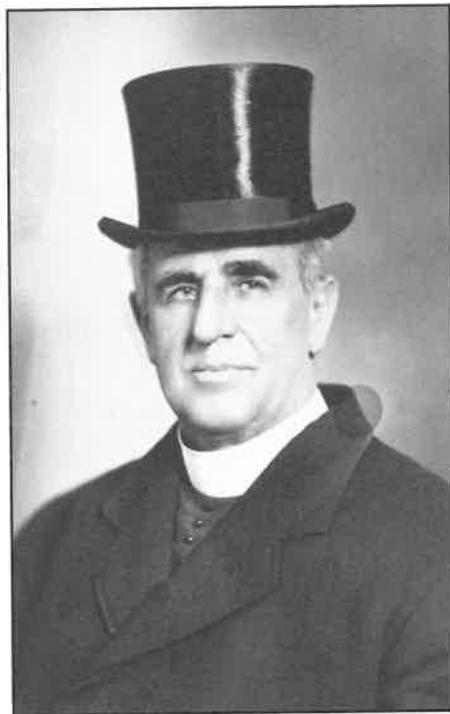
In the late 1870's Enos Gwinn traded Summers County land to a brother for more land on the Raleigh side of New River. Several of Enos's nine children contributed to the Catholic population through marriage with the Irish, including Rebecca to Simon O'Connor, Charles E. to Ellen O'Leary of Spring Dale, and Thornton S. to Mary Dillon.

In response to a question of what the Irish raised on their rugged farms, one descendant said, "Hell." That may have been true, but they definitely raised children as well. The 1880 Census reported eight families with 43 children. These extra hands expanded the community and improved the little church. "Batten board" covered the logs of the church by 1887 or 1888. The late Patrick O'Connor, the only son of Simon to continue the "O" spelling, recalled being sent to Hinton for more nails to finish the job.

By the 1900 Census, the Irish Catholic population was about 69, and by 1910 there were 17 families totaling 82 people on Irish Mountain. Ethnic lines blurred as Braggs and Richmonds

were among those supplanting the Sullivans, Quinlans and Cullinas. Three one-room schoolhouses on and near the mountain provided an elementary education for the children.

Robert Gwinn, one of ten children of Charles E. Gwinn and Ellen O'Leary, was born in 1902. His father inherited half of Enos's holdings, and his Uncle Thornton received the other portion. Robert's family raised sheep, cattle, milk cows and horses, and everything to feed the family and animals including cane for sorghum molasses. His mother did all the cooking and baking, including corn bread from the corn they grew. Grains were sent to Hinton to be milled. Robert attended the Gwinn School at the



Father David Walsh brought Catholicism to Hinton, Irish Mountain, and the surrounding area.

mouth of Farley Creek, where he was joined by Plumleys, O'Connors and Gwinns galore.

Social life centered around church and Sunday school at St. Colman once a month, according to Robert. Dances were held in people's homes. Robert played the banjo and "Uncle Thorny" the fiddle.

When Thomas Joseph McCarthy moved onto the mountain in the early 1860's, he brought his wife Catherine, also from County Clare, and children John, Owen, Mary and Catherine, all born in Virginia. A grandson

jokingly speculated that they sought the isolation to avoid the Civil War. The McCarthys were first cousins to the Maurice Sullivans, the first Irish on the mountain.

Thomas McCarthy was a teacher and built the first Irish School on his property, two miles back from the church site. He offered son John a house and land if he would be a teacher. John instead married Annie Carson of the mountain and moved off to Hinton to become a railroad engineer. Owen and Mary remained single and at home. Thomas McCarthy died in 1889, his wife Catherine in 1906, and daughter Mary in 1909. Owen may have taught at the Irish School. In 1917, he deeded the school acre to the County Board of Education. Owen died in 1926.

The McCarthys joined forces with the Hurleys from the Irish Catholic settlement at Spring Dale when daughter Catherine married Michael Hurley in 1887. They received land from her father and built the typical two-story log farmhouse, later covered with weatherboard and painted white. There were two bedrooms and a living room downstairs, with two small rooms and one large room upstairs. The separate kitchen and dining room were connected to a corner of the house by the porch.

These Hurleys had four children, including Mary, who entered and later died in the cloistered convent of the Visitation Sisters in Parkersburg [GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1990]. Son Thomas died at age 26, and James was an army private in World War I. Joseph L. married Mary Katherine Gwinn, daughter of Thornton and Mollie. Jim and Joe worked on the railroad but returned to the farm when laid off in the 1920's.

Thus Joe's sons, Joe, Jr., and Tom, grew up on the Hurley farm. They attended the Irish School, where their classmates included Braggs, Meadows, Gwinns, and maybe Conners. Joe, Sr., served as a deputy county assessor during the Depression. His dollar a day wages saw the family through hard times. When World War II began, he and Jim went back to the railroad where they retained "rights." Joe's family moved to Hinton in 1942. Uncle Jim, who worked at Thurmond, lived with them.



Above: Maurice Sullivan's fine log house still stands strong on Irish Mountain. The farm built by Sullivan, the first Irishman on the mountain, later passed into the O'Connor family. The detail at left shows the strength and beauty of underlying log construction of the Sullivan-O'Connor house. Photos by Michael Keller.

Joe, Jr., now retired and living in Hinton, recalled that entertainment on the Hurley farm came from a hand-cranked Victrola. Their record collection ranged from classical to railroad songs to Jimmy Rodgers, Joe said. They had the first radio on the mountain, a 1933 battery-operated model.

Jean McCarthy Anderson of Charleston, a distant cousin of Joe Hurley, was born and raised in Hinton. She recalled many family trips to Irish Mountain. They traveled by train

to Sandstone, by ferry to Richmond's Crossing and by car up the mountain. Jean remembered that the car invariably got stuck somewhere and her father had to go to Burk Richmond for help, half of which was the moonshine which Burk produced. Joe also recalled stops by his father and uncle at Burk's before heading up the mountain.

The McCarthy family outings usually came during hunting season. They stayed at the old homeplace, which Jean remembered as a big two-storied frame house with an L porch. The children were put to bed in hand-built wooden bedsteads with rope springs and straw mattresses. The adults meanwhile talked, played Set Back, and undoubtedly enjoyed some of Burk Richmond's juice. When the children woke up in the morning, they found themselves on straw pallets. The adults had taken their beds during the night. Jean herself slept with Grandmother Annie McCarthy who scared the kids with her ghost stories.

Leo Conner is another good guide to this era of local history. Leo's father Charles, the fifth son of Simon and Rebecca's ten children, purchased the Maurice Sullivan homeplace and 101 acres from Maurice's son about 1907 or 1908. Charles married Ethel Hall, and the couple raised seven children in the Sullivan farmhouse across the farm and down the hill from the St. Colman acre. Leo, also a fifth son, was born in February 1915.

Leo recalled there were plenty of people, especially children, in the area. Uncle John O'Connor and his brood of seven lived on the adjoining farm, and there was also Uncle Enos O'Connor with his six. Hurleys, McCarthys, Fitzpatrick's, Carsons, and two Dillon families were a little farther away; and his Gwinn cousins, the children of Charles, Thornton and Andrew, were on the New River side of the mountain. Leo figures he had 31 first cousins on the O'Connor side, 14 on the Gwinn side, and possibly 11 second cousins from the Hurleys and McCarthys.

Life on the O'Connor farm was a busy one. Father Charles was a farmer, carpenter and blacksmith. The family raised horses, cows, pigs and sheep, chickens and turkeys. Charles and his sons hunted squirrels and rab-





**Faces of Irish Mountain.**

*Above Left:* Owen McCarthy was a second-generation Irish-American, the son of Thomas Joseph McCarthy and a cousin to the Sullivans.

*Above Right:* One branch of the Hurley family moved from the Irish settlement at Spring Dale, Fayette County, when Michael Hurley married Catherine McCarthy. This is Michael, probably in the 1920's. Photographer unknown.

*Left:* Joe Hurley, son of Michael, married Mary Katherine Gwinn (right), one of several unions between the Irish and the Gwinn's. Photographers unknown, 1910's.



*The lessons of the past live today in*

**GOLDENSEAL**

*See coupon on page 72.*

bits with the family's two single-load shotguns. There were no deer in the area then.

They planted corn, wheat, sugar cane, fruit and vegetables. They took the corn to be ground at the Richmond brothers mill at the bottom of the mountain. When the wheat was ready to harvest, several families went together to rent a threshing machine which was hauled up from the river. The wheat was sent to Hinton to be

milled and the straw saved for mattress filling. Uncle John saved some of his corn to provide liquor for those with a thirst.

Self-sufficiency was not strictly a matter of isolation by the time Leo grew up, for Irish Mountain was only a few miles from the C&O main line and a relatively short ways from Hinton. As Leo pointed out, the mountain people wore store-bought clothes for family pictures. "They weren't that far

away from everything," he said.

The Richmond School, located at the foot of Irish Mountain, served those on the New River side. It is now a fishing camp for a Richmond daughter. Leo went to the Irish School, on the McCarthy property, where he said he learned four "R's" — reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and recess. The school year began the last of September and ended around the first of April. One year as Leo still recalled with pleasure,

### Irish Heritage Celebrated

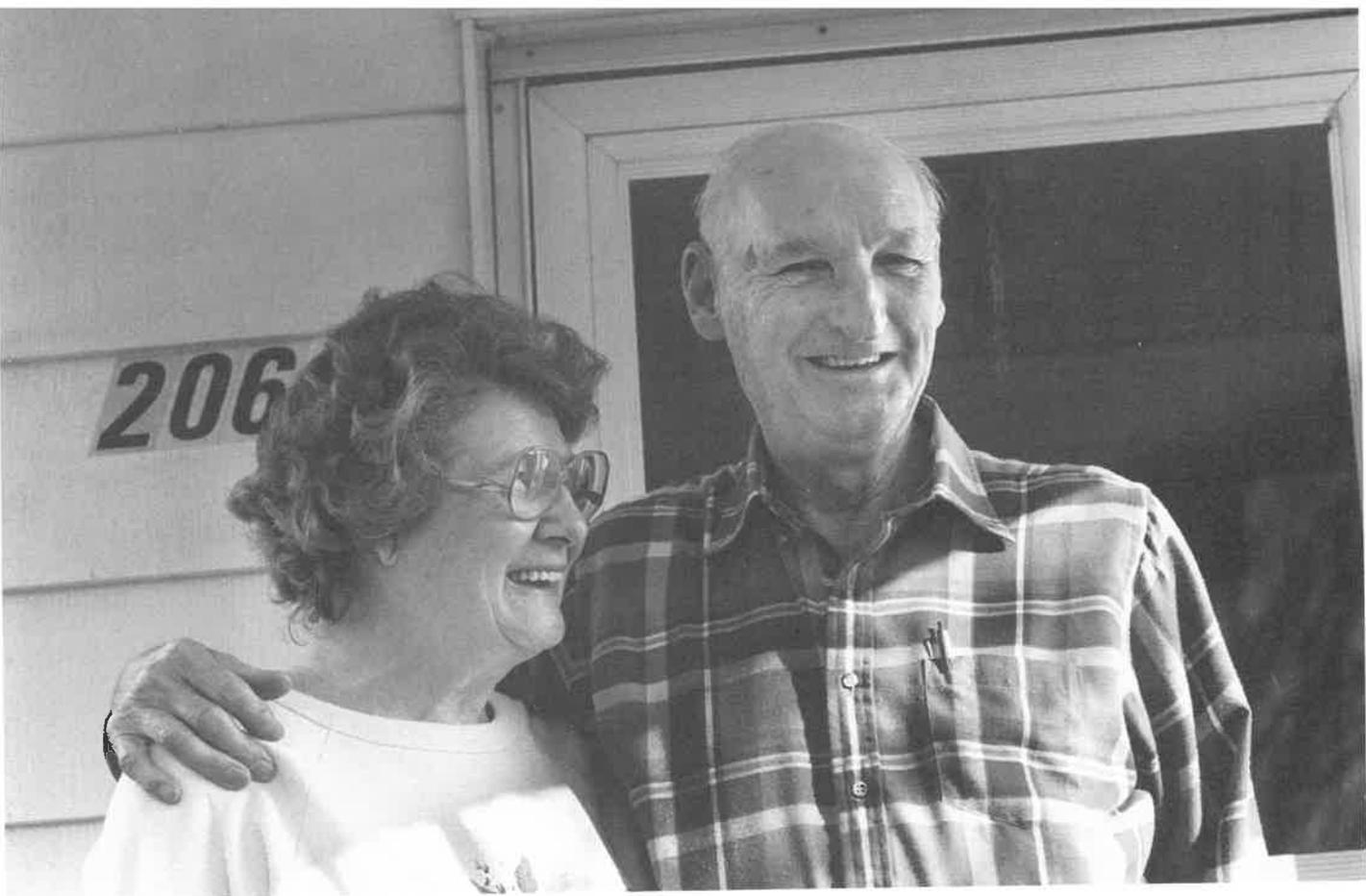
Raleigh County's Irish heritage has been recognized in recent years with Beckley's annual Irish Heritage Festival, held each year on the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day. The event began in 1987 and has since grown into a program of concerts, dance performances and storytelling for kids.

This year's performers were the North Coast Bagpipe Band, Lost in the Woods, and Fannigan's Isle. Lost in the Woods, the only West Virginia group, comes from the southern part of the state and performs traditional Irish music on banjo, guitar, fiddle, bouzouki, hammered dulcimer, and Autoharp. Beckley's Irish Heritage Festival will continue on March 17, St. Patrick's Day, with a special Pub Night. For more information contact the Irish Heritage Festival of West Virginia, P.O. Drawer AU, Beckley, WV 25802; (304)252-5231.

St. Patrick's Day is also celebrated in Huntington where the city has organized a huge "block party" in the vicinity of 3rd Avenue and 11th Street for Saturday, March 16. Festivities begin at 4:00 p.m. with two stages of live entertainment, mime artists, a juggler, magicians, stilt walkers, banjo players and bagpipers. A parade beginning at 7:00 p.m. wraps up the day's activities. For more information contact Huntington Parks and Recreation, 210 11th Street, Huntington, WV 25701; (304)696-5954.



John O'Connor and his wife. Photographer and date unknown.



Above: Leo Conner was born on Irish Mountain in 1915. Leo and his wife Lela will celebrate their 52nd wedding anniversary this year.

Below: Joe Hurley, Jr., also grew up on Irish Mountain. His family moved off to Hinton during World War II.

school did not start until February due to the lack of a teacher.

Religion was a strong and unifying influence in the lives of the Irish families. Non-Catholics marrying into these families usually joined the church, and their children were raised Catholic. St. Colman was the only church on the mountain and Protestant neighbors attended the church when the priest made his monthly visit. Reba Meadows Plumley, a Protestant, remembered going to the church with her mother who packed baskets of food for the socializing after services. Weddings, baptisms and funerals were held at the church.

Leo recalled a social life including card playing, music and dancing. Charles O'Connor played banjo and fiddle, and his son Joseph played the fiddle, too. The dances, mostly square, were held in various homes.

The O'Connor exodus off the mountain began when Charles's brother, Patrick Simon, married the young widow of Jeremiah Dillon. At her insistence Patrick moved Mary and her son to Hinton, where he and she produced five daughters of their own. Charles's sons began to leave when the homeplace could no longer sup-

port them. Young Leo, age 13, left home in 1927 to join his brothers in Hinton. The old folks, Charles and Ethel, also later moved to Hinton.

Charles died in 1945. Before his widow died in 1954, she sold the homeplace to James Conner who, in turn, sold the house and half the land to Edward Conner. Today, Joyce Light Conner, the widow of Edward's son, and her children hold title to the original Sullivan homestead.

Leo Conner married Lela Meadows in St. Patrick Church in 1939. Like his father, Leo sired six sons and one daughter, all of whom were baptized Catholic. Leo and Lela look forward to celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary this year.

Fond memories of their lives on Irish Mountain bring Charles O'Connor's children together every summer, although the reunion is no longer held on the mountain. Leo and brother



Fred, who lives in Hinton, welcome brothers Joe and Clifford and sister Dorothy from out of state. The family has gone through at least two spellings of the name, and only Fred still holds to O'Connor. The rest prefer Conner.

Reba Meadows Plumley recalled the later years of the Irish community. She grew up on the mountain, starting to school in 1941. There were 25 to 40 children at the Irish School then, including Braggs, Conners, Meadows,

Hurleys, Fitzpatricks and Gwinns. Reba later returned to teach for three years. The last year she had only 12 students, all children and grandchildren of Henderson Bragg. When Henderson died in 1962, relatives came for the children. Mrs. Plumley closed Irish School that day, and it was never re-opened.

As early as 1921, a church official reported that the Catholic population had begun to diminish with the deaths of the old and the moving away of the

young. Many went to Hinton, Beckley and farther afield. The Irish girls usually left when they married a man off the mountain.

Father Walsh's little church remained. Sometime during the tenure of Father Edward Jenkins at St. Patrick, 1908-1935, weatherboarding covered the batten boards and was painted white. In Father Thomas Kerrigan's time, 1955-1964, the Irish Mountain church was repainted and reunions were changed from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The monthly mass ended.

The population of the cemetery increased as the community dwindled. The oldest grave with a marker is that of John Quinlan, who died February 7, 1877, and the latest, Martha Stickle's, is dated August 1980. Many epitaphs are carved on the stones. William Dillon's is of particular interest:

Remember Man That Passeth By,  
As Thou Are Now,  
So Once Was I.  
And As I Am, So Thou Must Be  
Prepare Thyself to Follow Me.

When this message was reprinted in Ireland by Reverend Jeremiah McSweeney, now pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Oak Hill, a countryman informed him that the complete old epitaph concluded with these lines:

To Follow You Is Not My Intent  
Unless I Know Which Way You  
Went.

Maybe it was just such Irish humor that helped the isolated community to last so long. The immigrant settlers were not defeated by the transfer from their green and settled island to a remote West Virginia ridge top. When the Irish left their mountain it was to intermingle with the local population and not because of any failure to master the rugged terrain. The Irish Mountain church and cemetery remain to mark their passage, both placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 at the request of the Raleigh County Historic Landmark Commission. Maurice Sullivan's sturdy log house also looks like it's good for more than a few more years, another enduring monument to this remarkable story. ❁

Only the dead occupy the mountain top today. They bear the names of Irish immigrants and the local families with whom they united. Photo by Michael Keller.



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# Recalling an Irish Mountain Farm Family

## The O'Leary-Gwinn Connection

By Leona G. Brown

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Travelers on I-64 West, headed toward Beckley from Lewisburg, may notice on the right, just after crossing the New River bridge below Sandstone Falls, an old barn on the edge of a lovely green meadow, between the tree-lined riverbank and the base of the mountain. This Raleigh County meadow was once part of the farm where Ellen O'Leary Gwinn and her husband, Charles Gwinn, reared their family of five sons and a daughter. Tombstones in the cemetery at St. Colman Church on nearby Irish Mountain mark their final resting places.

Ellen O'Leary's father, James, and his wife rest in unmarked graves at St. Kerren's Church at Spring Dale, Fayette County. No one knows exactly when they left their homes in Ireland to come to America, but it was some time before 1860. Bernard Twohig, local historian and caretaker of the church at Spring Dale, believes they may have come to that area as part of a group of Irish settlers who settled on the "Hurley Tract" in the early 1870's.

The original O'Learys were the parents of four children, Ellen, James, Dan, and Annie. Dan spent his adult life in Pittsburgh. James became an engineer on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. Annie married James Richmond and their descendants still live in the Beckley area.

Ellen is still fondly remembered by her son, Robert Gwinn, who lives at Meadow Creek, and her granddaughter, Juanita Hunter, who lives at Arbovale. Her life illustrates the blending of the Irish culture brought by the Irish immigrants of the 1800's with that of the families already present in this part of the New River area of West Virginia.

On August 11, 1860, the census taker found Enos Gwinn and his family living at Richmond's Falls in Fayette County. Richmond's Falls is now known as Sandstone Falls, a part of the New River Gorge National River. The post office for Richmond's Falls was in what is now Summers County, but in 1860 this end of Summers was still a part of Fayette County.

Five children and William Meadows, a "bound boy," were in Enos Gwinn's household in 1860. Enos was a grandson of Samuel Gwinn, who came to Summers County around 1790, and who is buried at Green Sulphur Springs. Many descendants of Enos Gwinn and other descendants of Samuel worked in some capacity for the C&O, so many that they came to be known as the "railroad Gwinns." It was in this fourth generation of Samuel's descendants, among the children of Enos and his brothers and sisters, that the merger of the "railroad Gwinns" and the "railroad Irish" began. Three of Enos's children married into the Irish families, and are buried on Irish Mountain: Rebecca, who married Simon O'Connor; Thornton, who married Mary Dillon; and of course Charles, who married Ellen O'Leary.

These Gwinns were of Welsh and Scotch-Irish descent, and were traditionally Protestant in their beliefs. The O'Learys, like most of the Irish settlers, had brought their Catholic faith to sustain them in the new land. Soon after they settled in the Spring Dale, Elton, and Hinton areas, a missionary pastor, Father D. P. Walsh, himself a native of Ireland, came to serve them. He founded St. Patrick Church in Hinton, from which were established St.

Colman's on Irish Mountain and St. Kerren's at Spring Dale.

On November 29, 1883, Father Walsh officiated at the marriage of Ellen O'Leary and Charles Gwinn. Richard Twohig and Mary J. O'Leary were witnesses to the wedding.

Charles Gwinn brought his Irish bride to the farm on New River. He had traded his land near present-day Meadow Creek, on the other side of the river, for this farm which had been part of the inheritance of his uncle, Lewis Gwinn, a brother of Enos. Five sons, James, Dan, John, Robert, and

A rare photograph of Ellen O'Leary Gwinn, matriarch of an Irish Mountain family. The picture was found in the Bible Ellen left to her family. Photographer and date unknown.



Charles, and a daughter, Annie, were born to Charles and Ellen. Four of the sons, when they grew to manhood, joined the ranks of the "railroad Gwinns." James left the C&O to become a conductor on the Virginian Railroad, working out of Princeton. John and Dan worked for the C&O, Dan as a conductor out of Hinton.

Robert Gwinn began his career with the C&O in 1919, when he worked with a section force on the Sewell Valley line. He helped to build the "wye" at Meadow Creek, a railroad turning place. In 1924 he became a brakeman, and worked on trains up and down the main line. He married Faye Berry in 1939. Bob was brought up in the tradition of his mother, Ellen O'Leary, and he and Faye are faithful parishioners of St. Patrick Church in Hinton. They live now at Meadow Creek, close to the land his father, Charles, traded for the farm across the river. Now in his 80's, Robert Gwinn loves to talk about the glory days of the railroad. He rents camper space along his riverbank to vacationers who enjoy fishing in the New River.

For his father and mother, Charles and Ellen, the little church on Irish Mountain was the center of religious life. Robert Gwinn has fond memories of Father Edward Jenkins, who was pastor at St. Patrick's from 1908 to 1935, also serving the mission churches at Spring Dale and Irish Mountain. When there was to be a service at St. Colman's, Father Jenkins often came to Meadow Creek on the train the evening before, crossed to the Gwinn farm in a boat, and spent the night. Next morning, he rode on horseback up the narrow road to the top of the mountain to hold services in the church. Then he rode back down to the Richmond farm near Sandstone Falls, where he crossed the river on a ferry, in time to catch the train back to Hinton.

Juanita Gwinn Hunter has pleasant childhood memories of the farm on New River where her father, Dan, grew up with brother Robert and Charles and Ellen's other children. Dan moved away to raise his own family but kept in touch with the old folks. Whenever one of the farm animals required the services of a veterinarian, Juanita recalls, grandfather Charles sent for Dr. McLaugh-

lin, at Hinton, and her father brought the vet out from town. She regarded these trips to the farm as fine opportunities to visit her grandmother. She says that when other children her age shed their shoes for the summer, as children did in those days, she always wore hers, for fear the vet would be sent for, her father would go, and she would miss the trip because she wouldn't be able to find her shoes in time!

Whatever the occasion, visits to the farm were always a pleasure. Often in summer the grandchildren rode the train to Meadow Creek, summoned the boat from the farm across the river with a loud shout, and were set across to be greeted affectionately by the spry, diminutive lady who was their grandmother.

Ellen O'Leary Gwinn's life was full of toil. In addition to her regular household chores, Juanita remembers, her grandmother sometimes worked side by side with the men in the fields. But she always had time for her grandchildren. When someone from the farm made the boat trip across the river to trade eggs and farm products for staples at Garten's store in Meadow Creek, the grocery list always included a small bag of candy, to be kept by Grandma in her cupboard and given out, piece by piece, to the grandchildren.

Juanita treasures her grandmother's Catholic Bible, and a battered fiddle

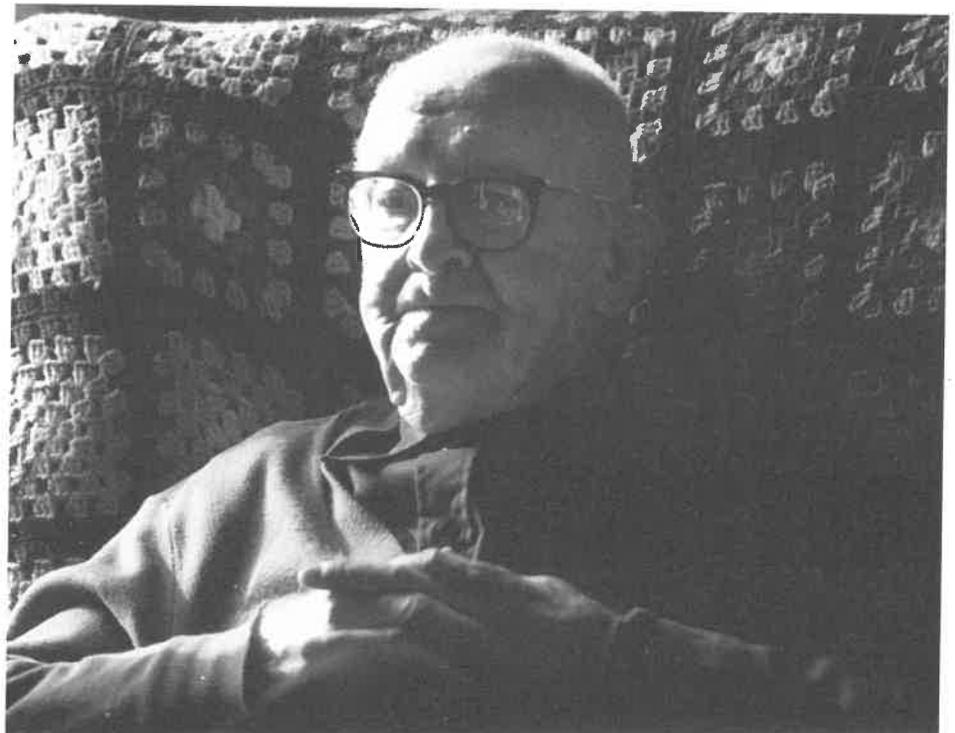
brought to her home in Hinton by her grandmother's brother, Jim, and said to have come from Ireland.

Ellen O'Leary died on February 28, 1936. Father Ewald conducted her funeral, and she was buried in St. Colman's churchyard on Irish Mountain, beside brother Jim, who died in 1928. The inscription on her stone reads, "Ellen, Wife of C. E. Gwinn, Aug. 18, 1860-Feb. 28, 1936. A tender mother and true friend. How sweet to think of her in her new home."

On April 20, 1948, Charles Gwinn died. His coffin was carried on a horse-drawn wagon from the farm to Sandstone Falls, where the hearse waited to carry it up the winding mountain road to St. Colman Church. Granddaughter Juanita remembers walking with the family up the long trail to the top of Irish Mountain to attend the burial service.

The Irish culture became a major ingredient in America's melting pot, contributing an important strand to our national identity. We can see this process at work firsthand in families like the Gwinns, with the Irish Catholic Ellen uniting with Charles, Protestant and descended from the region's early settlers. The product of their long partnership was something uniquely American, a robust family combining the best of both worlds. To the grandchildren and great-grandchildren this legacy is the most valuable inheritance of all. ♣

Robert Gwinn, Ellen's son, is a rich source of family and community memories. He has now retired to Meadow Creek, with a view of Irish Mountain. Photo by Michael Keller.



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# Cool Springs Park

## Harlan Castle Goes Into Business

By Norman Julian

Photographs by Chuck Lantz

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**H**arlan Castle had to travel to Kentucky to see that what he wanted to do was here at home in Preston County. That was in 1948. It took Harlan a while, but now his roadside historical park, general store and museums testify to the do-it-yourself genius of a man whose large vision is matched by copious amounts of energy.

Castle's multifaceted enterprise at the base of Laurel Mountain on curvaceous Route 50 is the proof. Picnic tables under man-made canopies invite visitors to the park, itself under an umbrella of hardwood trees, mostly white oaks. A trout enclosure sits astride Pheasant Run, which meanders through the park and joins Flag Run out near the highway. Machines that date to the turn of the century dot the sprawling, gently sloping land that encompasses the park.

The outdoor museum is a cornucopia of devices that once did the heavy work in north-central West Virginia and other areas — steam engines, tractors, a waterwheel to power a grist-mill, even a railroad. The narrow-gauge railroad track gradually climbs a grade near the back of the park. The waterwheel perpetually rolls, powered by the waters of Pheasant Run, which are fed through a wooden conduit that reaches up to 23 feet.

The store sells hardware, groceries, and taxidermy and hunter's supplies. Outside, you can gas up at any of three Exxon pumps. You can eat at an old-fashioned food bar, which seats 41. Hamburgers are still a specialty,

You can find anything from a railroad locomotive on down at Cool Springs Park. Owner Harlan Castle is partial to steam engines of all sorts.



and foot-long hot dogs the best-seller. Every day there is a special, which may be cornbread and beans, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti and meatballs, or "cook's choice."

Everything sprang from the imagination of a hard-driving Prestonian who built his castle not in the air but in a hollow so cool that ice could be found on the Fourth of July at springs back in amidst the laurel at the base of the mountain where a virgin forest shielded the ground from direct sunlight.

Thus Cool Springs Park.

Proprietor Harlan Castle. Cool Springs lived up to its name last winter, receiving more snow than most parts of the state.



And thus Harlan Castle's crowning work: a monument to Appalachian independence, ingenuity and perseverance.

All this, though, is getting the cabooses (of which there are several here, too) before the locomotives.

In 1948, young Harlan Castle worked on his father's farm three miles east of Tunnelton on old Route 26. Joseph Castle raised cattle, grain, vegetables and fruit on his 400-acre place.

"My father had a couple of steam engines on the farm," Harlan remem-

bers. "That's where I learned to like them." Harlan didn't know then that an upcoming trip to Kentucky would lead him to collect the big engines. He had more practical matters on his mind at the time.

"My oldest brother, Aulton, was going down to Orangeburg, to run a bulldozer on a strip job and he wanted me to go down there and get a job running a 'dozer, too," Harlan tells me as we sit in his office and talk.

About us on the walls are pictures of the park and mounted trophies of bear, deer, caribou and fish. Loren Bowmar of Tunnelton does the taxidermy. The Castles — wife Mary and children Booth, 35, Bradley, 30, and Lisa Sue, 23 — are avid outdoors people. The bear and caribou were taken in Canada.

"We see more bear around here in Preston County than we ever have," Harlan says. "There's no bear season yet, though."

Harlan gets back to the story, recalling that he was just 17 when he went to Kentucky. "I was a young man driving around down there and I saw these places where they were selling hamburgers, hot dogs and pop and had a couple of gas pumps out front. I thought that would be a whole lot better way of making a living than loading coal, so I didn't stay with my brother. I decided I was going into business."

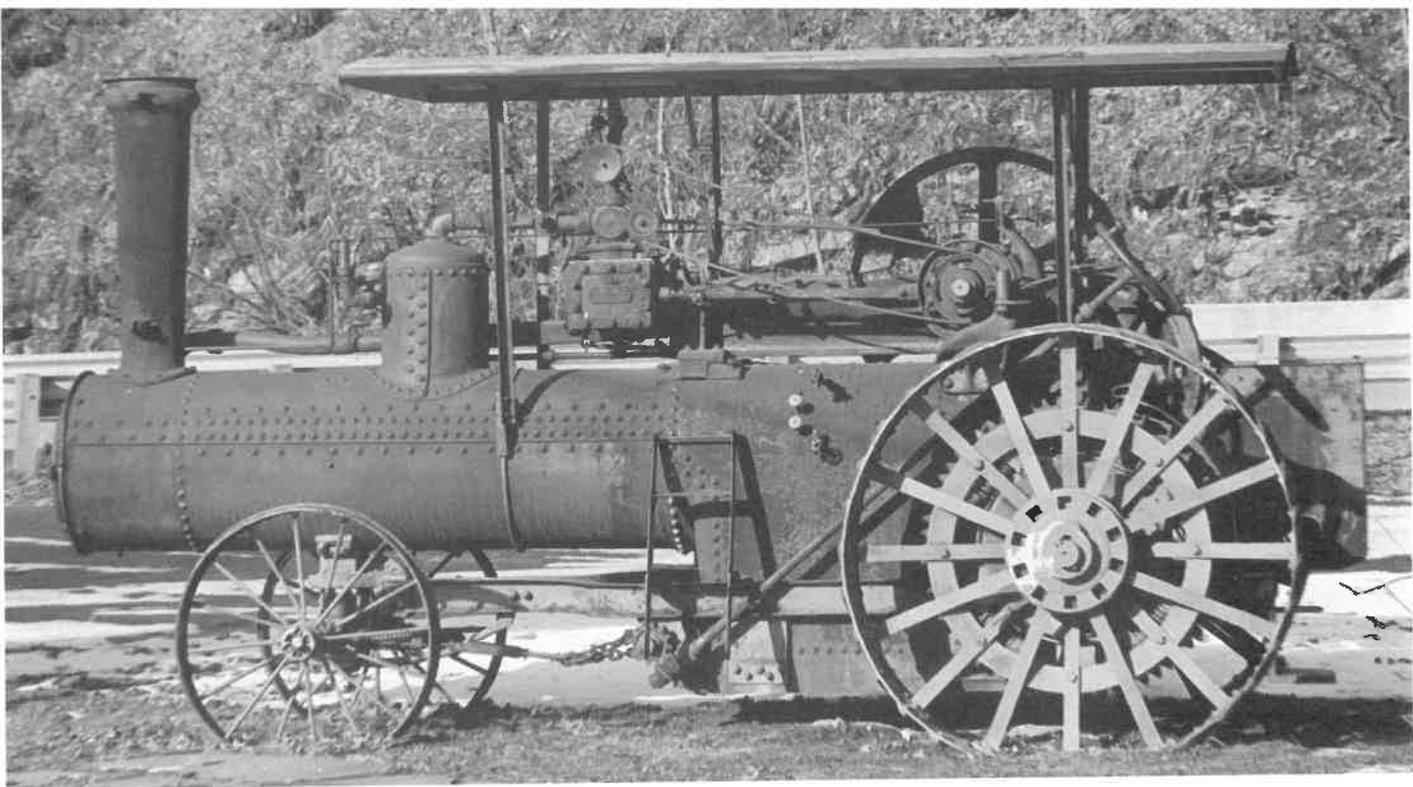
Young entrepreneurs who have the advantage of college educations and helpful government programs could learn a lot from Harlan Castle's common-sense approach. "I wanted to locate on Route 50 because it was a main east-west route across the mountains," he remembers. "It is still a main route around here. I could see it would be a good place for travelers to stop."

On the site he picked was a little log cabin that went with a nearby sawmill. The workers stayed in the cabin. It lacked electricity or gas.

"They'd move the sawmill up one holler and cut and saw and then they'd take it out and move it up another holler," says Harlan, who many years later built his own sawmill at the park.

There was not much else there at the time.

"The state had a small park here with a couple of restrooms," Harlan



A portable steam engine from the Cool Springs collection. Vehicles of this sort served more as mobile power sources rather than true tractors.

remembers. "They used to have a lot of these little parks, but they've taken most of them out. There was a water fountain out front and two or three picnic tables."

Early in 1949 Harlan was able to rent the cabin and go into business. It was so unfrequented a place, it didn't even rate a mail stop. Harlan lobbied for utilities and got them, and in the summer of '49 he began to sell hamburgers, hot dogs and pop. Business was good even at the outset.

"There were none of the fast-food restaurants like you have now," Harlan says.

He wanted gasoline pumps, too, but that posed a problem. Tanker trucks then hauled only 2,000 gallons. "They were reluctant to come that far to sell only that much gas," Harlan says. Eventually, the Pure Oil Company came to the rescue. Then Pure was bought out by Esso, which was renamed Exxon in the late '60's.

As a businessman, Harlan was where he wanted to be. Problem was, he didn't own the property.

We leave his office to walk the land and to get the full feel of the place. As we walk, Harlan points out highlights. A story backs up each one, but now I am interested in the big picture. We'll get to the details later.

"For five years I rented, and then I bought the place," he says. "I had to buy the whole 900-acre tract to get the park area."

At that time, the Greyhound bus went through every two hours. The restaurant was a regular stop. The bus routes gradually faded away, at first cut back to twice a day. Now there is no bus service on this stretch of Route 50 at all.

After he bought the land, Harlan continued to allow people free use of the picnic area. He still does. Reunions occur regularly through the warm months. Everything you need for a picnic is close at hand at the general store and food bar. For the children, diversions as inviting as a toy store keep them busy. The old engines. Trout. Even ponies. Harlan began collecting things for the park in the late '50's, and it shows.

"I built a storage building and my desire was to collect old cars, but I got sidetracked," he says.

Harlan got sidetracked in a big way, in fact. While looking for old cars, he ran across old steam engines that brought back memories of the ones on his father's farm. The first one came from Monterey, Virginia, and he hauled it in on a 1946 Ford flatbed truck, which he borrowed from his neighbor, Russell Nose.

He'd regularly take Route 50 to Winchester and then search down the Shenandoah Valley as far as Roanoke. He also went the other way over Route 50, to the Ohio Valley. Hilly West Virginia was not the best place

to look for the big, clumsy engines, according to Harlan.

"I found the best old machines in areas that had a lot of flat ground that would readily accommodate tractors," he says.

In 1966, Harlan bought his own hauling truck, an old Martin lowboy. Now he hauls with a 1987 International. He can hook a trailer to it for carrying heavy equipment.

That first steam engine was of early 1900's vintage, brand name unknown, and it still operates. "It'll pass inspection right now," Harlan beams, as he gives it an affectionate pat. He does some of the mechanical rehabilitation himself.

The waterwheel also came from Monterey. "I saw it and wanted it, and in 1958 I went back and bought the whole mill." He erected the waterwheel and built a trough to divert water from the stream. The first trough was built of pine, but it rotted out in a few years so Harlan and his oldest son put up a new raceway using treated poplar.

"It'll last 30 to 40 years, I suspect," he says.

Harlan stored the remaining parts of the mill in a new storage building. He was working seven days a week to expand the park. He built an addition to the side of the original cabin. Eventually, he added on 11 different times. He was a man possessed with



The sign outside advertises "souvenirs from 50 states," and a glimpse of the crowded interior will convince you they're all there. This is Harlan with wife Mary.

unlimited ideas and almost as much energy.

He had always admired the covered bridge on Route 50 at Erwin. When it burned down in the 1950's, Harlan constructed a replica over Pheasant Run. By now he had his own working sawmill and plenty of timber right on the place. An old Cummins diesel engine now powers the sawmill, but Harlan envisions hooking it up to one of his steam engines.

His son Bradley developed a passion for trout fishing as a boy. To accommodate his hobby, Harlan built an enclosure above and around the run. When Bradley returned with a catch and didn't want to eat all the fish, the wire fences would keep the fish alive for future use.

High water would sometimes damage or wash out the trout corral, so Harlan shored up the stream bed. At first he hauled in extra rock from elsewhere in the stream. Still, at high water the stream bed would be

altered. Ray Hill, a friend from Elkins, suggested rocking the walls of the stream and covering the boulders on the bottom with cement. Harlan diverted the stream and cemented the boulders on the bottom. He improved the waterway as he went, eventually to a point hundreds of feet upstream from the fish pond. So far the masonry has withstood the fury of the waters. "I did 90 percent of the rock work myself," Harlan says, "along with some boys to mix mortar."

He had bought ponies for his children and needed a barn. He made one, naturally, almost from scratch. The timbers are up to 30 feet long, the ones that couldn't be cut on his sawmill hewed by hand. Others were hauled to the nearby Sanders mill.

Harlan had begun to realize many of his dreams, but what person who has grown up with an affection for machinery hasn't yearned to own his own railroad?

"Ray Hill and I always talked about

the steam engines in here," Harlan remembers. "He liked railroads and I liked railroads, so we started to talk about a park railroad."

He'd been far and wide in five states searching for treasures to bring back to the park. Harlan bought a lot of his railroad from the East Broadtop Railroad near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

The tracks were laid narrow gauge — three feet wide. The grade is fairly steep by railroad standards, and the engine that Harlan purchased wouldn't pull the cars. "We could run the Vulcan engine on the track, but it wouldn't pull the cars," he explains. "We needed a Shay engine with a worm-drive."

He was able to buy several cabooses from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and haul them in. B&O engineers planned a new railroad track for him. Harlan hired men to do it, but soon a lot of his plans abruptly changed.

A fire on July 13, 1981, burned much of the park and ruined many of its

contents. Harlan figures the fire started in the old electrical wires in the original log cabin and spread from there. Many of the lost items are irreplaceable.

"I didn't have any insurance," he laments. "Actually, it makes you cry to see all that effort burned up."

We're outside now, along Pheasant Run, away from the crowd in the restaurant. Harlan struggles to continue. He holds back the tears that cloud his eyes, but a few escape nevertheless.

"I've never got over it yet," he admits.

But Harlan handled the tragedy like he handles everything else. He went back to work.

U.S. Route 48, which crosses the other end of Preston County, became the major east-west road when it was improved to modern four-lane standards. By the early 1980's, 48 began to siphon off a lot of Route 50's through traffic. Harlan responded to a changing market, adding more items for sale. Now the business is a general store with hardware, groceries and hunting supplies, in addition to the eatery and plenty of souvenirs. Laurel, azaleas, vegetable plants and fruit trees are sold in season. Many are raised in a greenhouse at the park.

Harlan says business increases every year. The parking lot will accommodate a couple hundred cars. "I've had people say they would have stopped but they can't find a place," he says. "Especially on pretty Sundays, we're real busy."

So what accounts for his success? "I believe more people have more money to spend and folks like to travel," Harlan figures. "It seems like people have money now who didn't when we started."

"You hear about everybody leaving West Virginia, but this area is holding its own pretty good. We have a lot of new houses. A lot of people keep moving back here after they've worked in Ohio and retired."

But Harlan says Cool Springs Park is nothing like it was before the fire.

"I'd like to see the park fully restored," he says. "My son is talking about putting up a large building in the lower part of the park to be used as an indoor museum. When I look back on how I brought all this stuff in

and built it, and it burned down and I built back, I can't believe I did all that work. I know I couldn't do it from here on out.

"Now as long as my kids want to work, they'll never have to work anywhere else." Harlan glances at the front of the main building where the parking lot is nearly full. "As long as the park is like this, I feel all my work has been worthwhile."

From time to time, a dam is proposed on the Cheat River at Rowlesburg, about five miles away. Since the flood of 1985, interest in the project has revived. Though the water on Pheasant Run was high that year, Harlan has seen it higher. If a dam is built, Harlan says his park will be 50 feet under water when the lake is full. Parts of Route 50 would be gone. Corridor H, the proposed four-lane following Route 33 to the south, not yet completed, then would handle more east-west traffic in the northern mountain areas.

Harlan is not worrying unnecessarily about any of that. "Whatever takes place, takes place," he figures. "That's what you have to live with."

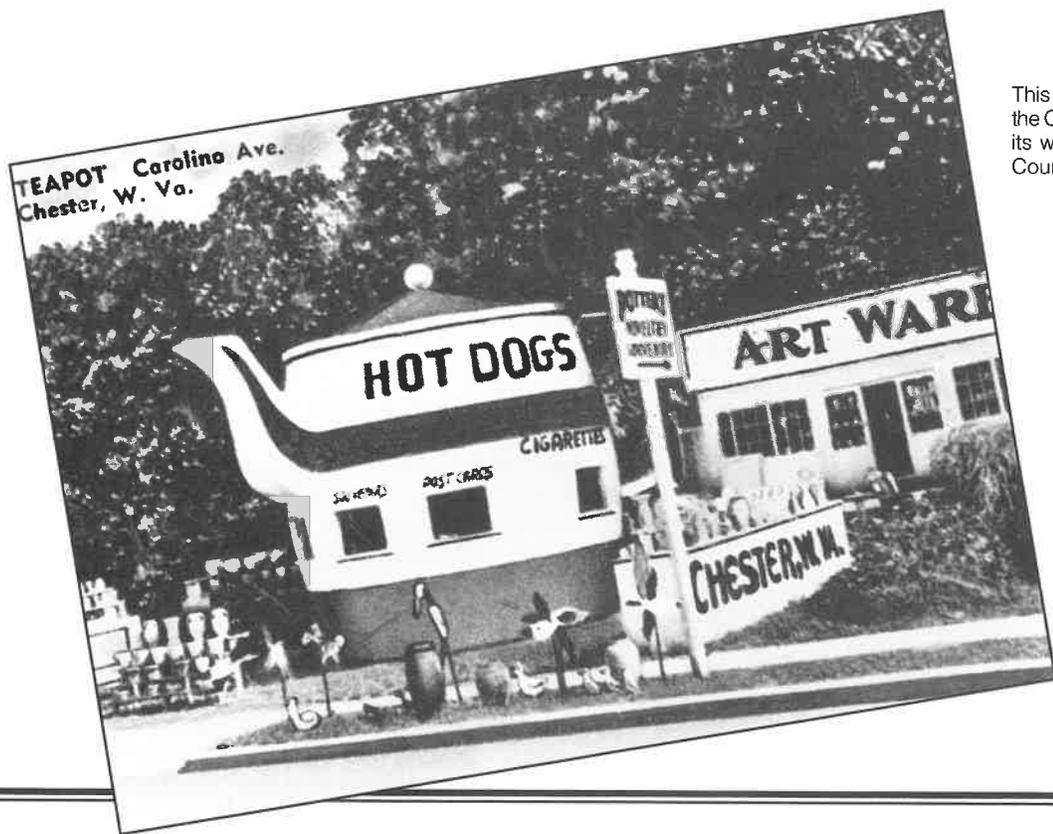
Meantime, he keeps busy at his business, at two farms he works, and occasionally at construction for other people. His heart and his imagination are always here at Cool Springs.

"In the old days, when there was still virgin timber, the old-timers say the sun never warmed the area at the base of the mountain where the streams come out, so you could find ice back in there all summer long to make ice cream with.

"It's changed from what it was," Harlan Castle muses. "It's developed. The State Road erected a road sign calling this Cool Springs Park. The bridge over Flag Run they renamed Cool Springs Bridge. You can't imagine the number and kinds of people who have come from miles away just to look at the park and take pictures." ❁

Harlan Castle is the kind of man who can sell you a nickel — wooden, at that — for 19 cents. Cool Springs wooden nickels are popular with visitors.





This old postcard shows the Chester teapot during its working days. Courtesy Ira C. Sayre.

## *Another Roadside Attraction:* **The Chester Teapot**

By Katherine M. Jourdan

Standing proudly once again in the Northern Panhandle town of Chester is a red and white landmark known locally as "The World's Largest Teapot." To historic preservationists it is a piece of commercial archaeology, a form of roadside architecture rapidly vanishing from our landscape. Many such structures disappear before they reach their 50-year mark, often recognized as the age at which things become "historic" and therefore worthy of preservation.

The 20th century experienced a golden age of highway travel from the 1930's into the '50's, as cars took to the road in great numbers and newly mobile families crisscrossed the country. Commercial structures, often comical in nature, were added to diners, drive-ins, gas stations and motels to catch the eye of passing motorists and entice them to stop. Whole buildings took on the shape of animals, vegetables and various exotic inanimate

objects. These often became landmarks associated with certain towns or bends in the road. Tourists stopped to cure their curiosity and to spend their money.

The Chester teapot was a natural symbol of an important local industry. Hancock County and nearby parts of Ohio were a world center of china-ware manufacturing, with the giant Homer Laughlin China Company and other potteries turning out tableware on a colossal scale. The big, bright roadside teapot represented tens of thousands of smaller dishes shipped from the region daily.

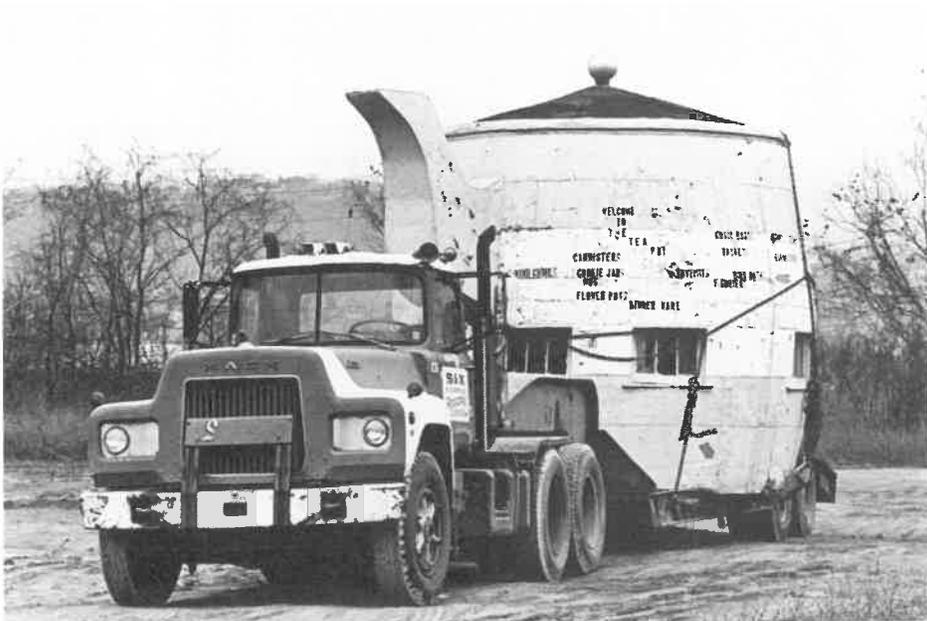
The whimsical teapot first appeared on Carolina Avenue, which is also State Route 2, in 1938. It was erected by William "Babe" Devon. The teapot is reputed to have begun life as a huge wooden hogshead barrel for a Hire's Root Beer advertising campaign. Devon purchased the big barrel in Pennsylvania and had it shipped to

Chester. There a spout and handle were added and the structure was covered with tin to form the shape of a teapot. The knob on the "lid" was a large glass ball.

The perky structure graced the curb in front of Devon's pottery outlet. There was room inside the teapot to sell postcards, ice cream, hot dogs and soda pop. Local teenagers were hired to run the stand.

Devon's main pottery building was a long shed-like structure with the slogan "come in with a dime, come out with a dish" painted over the door, according to local resident Geneva Hill. Standing on the roof was an oversized replica of a china creamer. The creamer, stored in recent years in the basement of City Hall, has been cleaned, painted red and white and placed on a pedestal next to the restored teapot.

The yard in front of Babe Devon's pottery business was filled with shelf



The World's Biggest Teapot made a full truckload. The pot was moved to temporary sites while restoration was being debated. Photograph courtesy *The Weekly Echo*, Chester.

displays during the warmer months. Devon sold a selection of fancy art ware and local table china, including Homer Laughlin's original Fiesta ware [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1985], which was made just down the road in Newell. China from neighboring East Liverpool, Ohio, was also sold, as were souvenirs and novelties.

Mr. Devon's business operated through the 1930's and '40's, closing for two years during World War II when gasoline was rationed and traffic dropped off. Around 1947 the business was sold to Mary Wucherer, who was joined in the venture by Rhelda Cain. The teapot continued to attract customers by its bright colors and large size.

Former employee Mary Ammon recalls that from May to December was the busy period at the roadside operation. Holidays brought heavy traffic, as the business sold seasonal gifts. The teapot continued to sell food up until the late 1960's, when that became unprofitable. The big pot was then converted to selling lawn and garden items. Customers could also purchase china and novelty pieces from its shelves. A popular item was china teapots made by Hall China.

The teapot was sold again in 1971, to Cecil and Alice Fletcher. They continued to sell pottery and gift items. By this time the bright red hot dog

sign had been painted over and the teapot was now blue and white. The Fletchers finally closed the business and shut down the teapot, ending an era of Chester's history.

C&P Telephone purchased the land in 1984. The main building was razed and there was some concern that the

teapot would be scrapped. Geneva Hill has been credited with raising the alarm and bringing other citizens to action. "Everyone made fun of the idea of saving the teapot," she says, but things gradually began to change. When C&P offered to donate the teapot to the City of Chester in 1987, interest heightened. Councilwoman Anne Ford formed a restoration committee which conducted a survey to see if town residents favored restoring the teapot. Following an overwhelming majority in favor of restoration, the committee proceeded with fundraising plans.

Contributions totaling \$3,000 were raised through a beauty contest, a limited edition of 100 china teapots, a quilt raffle — and tea parties, of course. There was also a special Teapot Day celebration, according to Mayor Sally Riley. In the meantime, the teapot was moved first to the IGA Supermarket parking lot and then to property of the Congo Corporation, a local freight handling firm. Some restoration of floor joists and roof timbers was attempted. The exterior tin was sandblasted, unfortunately causing wrinkling.

The final location for the teapot was debated during this time. The resto-

The pot comes to its permanent resting place. The teapot team shown here is (left to right) Geneva Hill, Sayre Graham, Roy Cashdollar, and Mike Riley. Photo by Sally Riley.



# Pottery Festival

This June pottery fans in West Virginia's Northern Panhandle will join residents of nearby Ohio and Pennsylvania for the 24th annual Tri-State Pottery Festival. For three days the area's rich pottery history will be celebrated with carnival rides, bike races, a parade, baby contest, and other events.

The world championships in doorknob tossing and the world's only pottery olympics will also be held. Other events will include demonstrations of pottery skills and free tours at Homer Laughlin China Company on the West Virginia side of the Ohio River and at Hall China Company and Pioneer Pottery in East Liverpool, Ohio. The East Liverpool Museum of Ceramics will be open to festival-goers, with some 3,000 items relating to the pottery industry and the development of pottery communities.

The regional pottery history dates back to 1839 when English artisan

James Bennett and other potters began working with the fine natural clays of the Ohio Valley. Over the next 50 years, East Liverpool grew into a major industrial center with as many as 100 potteries operating at one time. West Virginia's most famous pottery, the Homer Laughlin China Company, was founded in 1872 in East Liverpool but moved across the river to Newell early in the 20th century. For most of its years, Laughlin was the world's largest chinaware producer. It is estimated that a third of all dinnerware ever made in this country came from Laughlin's kilns [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1985].

The Pottery Festival's 1991 dates are June 20 through 22, with events running all day long and into the evening. For more information contact the Tri-State Pottery Festival Association, P.O. Box 17, East Liverpool, Ohio 43920, or call James Waddell at (216) 385-1880.

ration committee ran into problems with the State Highway Department when it asked for property near the highway exchange. Then a spot next to the small city park, Victoria Gardens, was turned down by the city following complaints by townspeople. The teapot suffered through several years of weather, and the repair work was hardly visible. It was at this low point that the restoration committee voted to disband, meeting too many difficulties.

The spring of 1990 brought new life to the project when Councilman Frank DeCapio offered to take responsibility for the rehabilitation of the teapot. The city council then voted to provide funds towards restoration. In February, the teapot was moved to a location next to the Jennings Randolph Bridge ramp. This is a choice place for the teapot, a heavily trafficked area not prone to vandalism. All the red tape was cleared up, with the property and fencing donated by the state. Pittsburgh's Channel 2 News brought

attention to the project. The structure was placed on a concrete pad donated by the Tri-State Pottery Festival Association.

Lending his experience to the project was retired general contractor Sayre Graham. Although he had once told those trying to preserve the teapot to "burn it" because of its poor condition, Mr. Graham decided it was time for someone with know-how to step in and do something. He has spent a lifetime building homes, working on racetracks, and taking part in other community projects, like the gazebo in Chester. Working through the spring and early summer of 1990 with the help of Dick Brown, Roy Cashdollar and other volunteers, Mr. Graham finished the restoration.

The teapot is 14 feet in diameter and about the same height to the top of its ball. Graham removed the old tin because of its poor condition and replaced the vertical one-by-four wooden staves of the frame where necessary. A rolled roofing tin,

duplicating the original, was applied, with vinyl in between the widths of tin to help with expansion and prevent wrinkling. The doors and windows were reframed and sealed shut, and the floor was replaced. The handle and spout were removed and recovered with tin. The form of the spout was cut from new plywood using the original as a pattern.

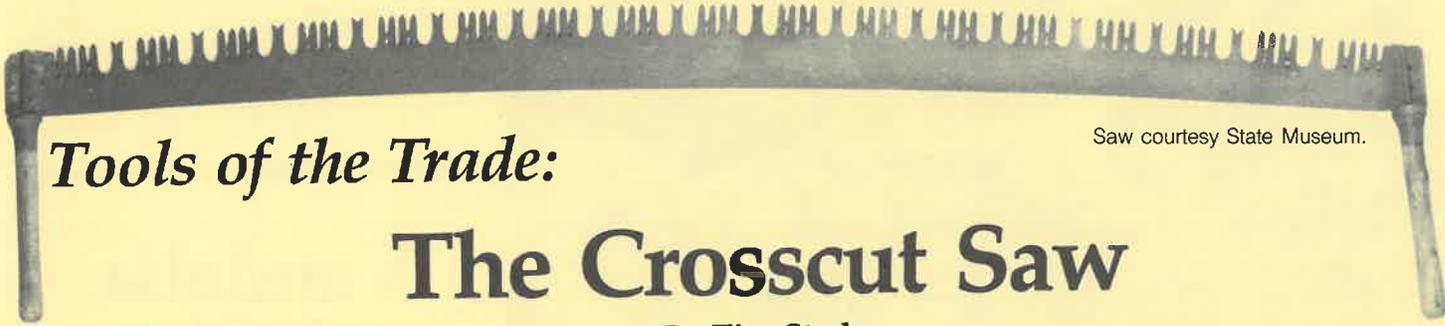
The roof was still in good shape from the first restoration, but one of the more difficult tasks was to find a plastic ball of the proper size to replace the gold-painted basketball temporarily placed on top of the teapot. The original glass ball was long gone.

By late last summer the big teapot was ready to be painted. After priming, the structure received two undercoats of its red and white paint scheme before the red lettering was applied. The ground around the teapot was landscaped with Roy Hart helping with the soil preparation.

A small dedication ceremony was held on October 12th in Chester's community center. Following selections by the Junior High Honor Band, Mayor Riley introduced various speakers who recounted the teapot's history and the dedicated work of those who sought to preserve it. The program also featured several songs from local singer Robbie Chevront, and the auction of the No. 1 china teapot from the limited edition. It was then that the crowd followed the band out into the misty rain to gaze upon "The World's Largest Teapot," once again standing proud by the roadside to put Chester on the map for another generation of highway travelers. ❁

The Chester teapot as it looks today. The smaller pot, also from Babe Devon's old roadside pottery outlet, is known locally as the creamer. Photo by Ira C. Sayre.





## Tools of the Trade:

Saw courtesy State Museum.

# The Crosscut Saw

By Tim Stark

**M**y grandfather's basement is full, and his new shop across the yard nearly so.

The various tools, parts, and projects appear to have grown from every surface, lending more of an organic than mechanical atmosphere to the collection. Coolness, and the mingling smells of earth and motor oil, evoke the feeling that one has entered some sort of post-industrial lair beneath his Wayne County home. I have no trouble understanding why I dreamed of this fantastic place as a child, nor do I wonder at my tendency to imagine the odd, old hand tools as noble in conception and romantic in service. Surely nothing can compare with the harmony of purpose between such a tool and its user.

But Earl Hunter, my grandfather, differs in opinion. "I'd take a chainsaw anytime in preference to the old crosscut," he says, for example. "The only thing about the crosscut is it was just a faster way to cut wood than to chop it."

There's no romance to that statement, and the tool itself is a picture of practicality. A typical two-man crosscut saw from the 1930's and before is a simple marriage of a five- or six-foot toothed steel blade, four to eight inches wide, to a pair of upright hickory or ash handles. The average owner could maintain it himself with a steel file and a wood vise.

The simplicity appeals to me, as does a price amounting to maybe \$12. But Papaw points out that price is a relative matter. "You had to work all day long to get a dollar on a farm then," he says. "Now if you work all day long, you end up with \$40. You could buy a chainsaw easier now."

His vision of the not-so-good old days calls forth my own memories of broken saw chains and fouled carburetors. I ask about maintenance. "You

had to take care of them the same as anything else," he says, but admits that the care of a crosscut saw is not as critical as with a chainsaw.

My grandfather explains the careful beveling and bending of the crosscut teeth in alternate directions to form the proper "set" so that the long blade will not bind while cutting. Sharpening could take up to three hours, and it was easy to injure yourself if you did not pay attention to your work.

"You didn't use any lubrication, that's what the set was for," he elaborates. "But anytime they weren't in use it was better to oil them up. If you didn't have motor oil, which we didn't, you would use axle grease or a meat skin."

In addition, you had to guard the teeth for storage by binding thin strips of wood to the blade, and find six feet of wall space to hang the big saw out of harm's way. One such place in this basement is still occupied by a crosscut long unused. I ask for its history.

"Back in 1924, when I was nine years old, my stepfather was sick and wasn't able to do much," Papaw begins. "It fell upon me to try to keep wood to keep the house warm. I woke up one morning, and seven guys had showed up to help me get my wood for the rest of the winter." This was the saw those neighbors used, surely reason enough for even a practical man to treasure it through the years.

"Two guys would cut the trees down and trim them up and get them ready to hook to a team of horses," he says of the firewood crew. "The team would drag them into the woodyard where there were more men sawing them up and stacking them for firewood." A crossed pair of heavy sticks served as a sawbuck. Here conditions were best for efficient use of the crosscut saw. The sawyers could both stand, use both hands, and achieve a rhythm in their work.

Men felling trees in the woods were not so lucky, my grandfather continues. "You might find yourself on a hillside or up against another tree. You might have one guy standing up above and the other on his knees.

"There was an art to it. It just took a little practice. If one man tried to push down on the saw when it was going away from him it would work the other man to death. We called that riding the saw. If your saw was sharp, the weight of the saw would just about feed it down itself. You had to use a little pressure on the thinner saws."

Choosing the direction to fell a tree was the most critical decision to be made in the woods. Even a careful woodsman would occasionally misjudge the direction a tree was leaning, and find his saw bound tightly in a cut. "A timberman always had half a dozen or so iron wedges," Papaw explains. He would drive the wedges into the cut behind the blade with a one-piece wooden sledge, or maul. This relaxed the pressure on the saw so that the blade, one handle removed, could be drawn out from the side. A large, solid knot of a dogwood tree or similar hardwood made a good maul.

The seven men who helped young Earl Hunter cut the family firewood finished the job in four hours. I can name seven chainsaw companies and as many places to buy or service them, but I cannot imagine gathering seven neighbors to cut a winter's wood. Perhaps that is the difference between a crosscut saw and a chainsaw. ♣

*We invite short descriptive essays for future "Tools of the Trade" columns. Manuscripts may be sent to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.*



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## Vandalia 1991

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The 15th annual Vandalia Gathering gets underway at the Cultural Center on Friday evening, May 24. The event, one of West Virginia's most authentic folklife festivals, began in 1977 as a celebration of the Mountain State's traditions and heritage. It attracts participants from throughout the state and visitors from across the country.

Planners have scheduled the best of West Virginia's musicians and craftspeople for performances and demonstrations. Storytelling, dance, excellent ethnic and regional foods, music contests and exhibits round out the festival. Musicians compete in the popular fiddle, banjo, and dulcimer contests and play informally at jam sessions around the Capitol grounds

until well after dark. The Cultural Center Shop is open extended hours throughout the festival.

After a Friday evening concert, Vandalia picks up again on Saturday, May 25, at 11:00 a.m., when the food booths open and crafts demonstrations begin. The afternoon's activities include the fiddle contest, storytelling, short concerts, and dance performances. That evening, a 7:00 p.m. concert concludes the day's events with the announcement of the winner of the prestigious Vandalia Award.

On Sunday Vandalia offers more food, the banjo contest, stage performances and craft demonstrations. Sunday is also the day for the State Liar's contest, a Vandalia favorite. Tale

tellers from throughout the state vie for cash prizes beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Cultural Center theater. A five o'clock closing concert wraps up Vandalia Gathering for another year.

"Quilts '91," a summer-long exhibit of handmade West Virginia quilts, opens during Vandalia. Dozens of quilts line the marble walls of the Great Hall at the Cultural Center. The state's quiltmakers compete for awards, and one outstanding quilt is purchased for inclusion in the West Virginia Permanent Collection.

Vandalia Gathering is sponsored by the Division of Culture and History. There is no charge for admission. For more information call (304)348-0220.

*Below Left:* Vandalia is a time for swapping tunes and swapping smiles. This is Bob Kessinger and Carl Spears. All photos by Michael Keller.

*Below Right:* Rita Emerson of Glenville gave recitations from the Cultural Center stage.





*Above Left:* The governor brought his lady to Vandalia 1990.



*Above Right:* Chantil McKenny of Appalachian Lads and Lassies performs a Scottish sword dance.

*Below:* Sally Sublette makes music with Carl Rutherford of McDowell County.



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# Ships, Trains, and the Gates of Hell

## The Winning Liars from Vandalia 1990

Photographs by Michael Keller

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**H**eaven help us! Not only was master prevaricator Paul Lepp back to defend his Biggest Liar title at the 1990 State Liar's Contest, but this time he brought his little brother. When the smoke settled and the stage had been shoveled, the Lepp boys emerged as the two top winners. Paul took first place and brother Bill, a West Virginia Wesleyan student, took second. It's beginning to look like it runs in the family.

The Lepps took our favorite subject, the great state of West Virginia, as their topic, with Paul dipping into political allegory more than a little. Jim Costa, a well-known Summers County storyteller who has been absent from the Vandalia winner's circle for a few years, carried off third prize. Jim told a colorful Kanawha County folktale.

Altogether, it was a great time, with an afternoon of serious lying before a full-house audience. We'll do it again this spring. Storytellers who want to try to dethrone the Lepp dynasty may pre-register by contacting Ken Sullivan, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305. You may also register on the day of the contest.

The West Virginia State Liar's Contest will begin at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 26, in the State Theater of the Cultural Center.

**Paul Lepp.** The monster stick — that's my nine-foot surfcasting rod with six miles of brand-new 50-pound Stren carp cord — and I took a short trip into the mountains a while back just to celebrate the season and to waller in the beauty. I caught me a fine string of brook trout and fried them up in a skillet with a mess of fresh-dug ramps. Washed it down with some ice-cold creek water in a mason jar, Grand-pap's spring tonic.

The birds were singing sweetly and a warm, gentle breeze was blowing. I got kind of sleepy so I nestled up into a big patch of May flowers and rhododendrons, right between a

junked school bus and a rusty old washing machine. I laid down beside that peaceful stream and I took me a little nap. Well, folks, I don't know if it was the tonic, or maybe it was the ramps or maybe just the acid from that creek water. But whilst I was laying there, I dreamt me a powerful dream. I dreamt I was the governor of the great state of West Virginia.

I dreamt that the whole state had turned into a mighty battleship, and I was up on the bridge at the tip-top of Spruce Mountain where I could see everything that was going on. I'm here to tell you, it was not a pretty sight. The West Virginia was being besieged by a terrible storm. She was a-going down quick.

I dreamt that the waves were crashing down on the ship. I dreamt that the crew was bailing out on me. The rest of them was getting carted off to the brig. I dreamt that all around us was pirates. And everytime one of those sneaky crewmen would manage to jump ship, why, the pirates would swoop in and dump another carpet-bagger right on my deck to take his place. I dreamt I saw waves of unemployment and debt crashing down, sweeping teachers and doctors and laborers clean to North Carolina and beyond.

I don't know who it was that made me governor, 'cause I can't imagine even in my wildest dreams that I'd ever have enough money to buy my way into that office. But there I was, and I knew something had to be done.

I stepped up to the helm and I grabbed the wheel with both hands, but the West Virginia wouldn't respond. I looked back over my shoulder and I saw why. That ship was hooked solid on rock bottom with an anchor of taxes so heavy it'd sink the sun. An anchor tied to the ship with a crooked chain a mile long, a chain

of lies and corruption and ignorance and blind following. Well now, it made me mad to see my beautiful ship tied down like that. I don't know who sunk that chain down there to begin with, but judging by the rust and the seaweed and the barnacles it had been hanging there for quite some time.

It made me so mad that I scraped up a fire axe and I stomped down to Charleston where that anchor was tied. I chopped loose the whole mess and let it fall to the bottom of the sea.

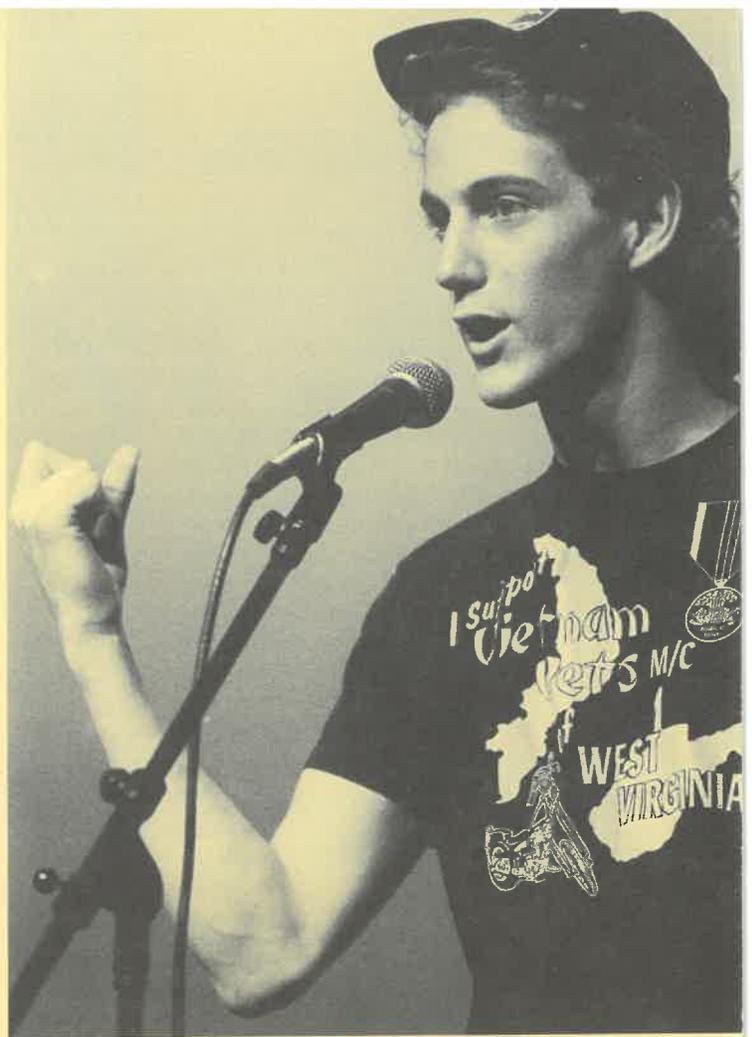
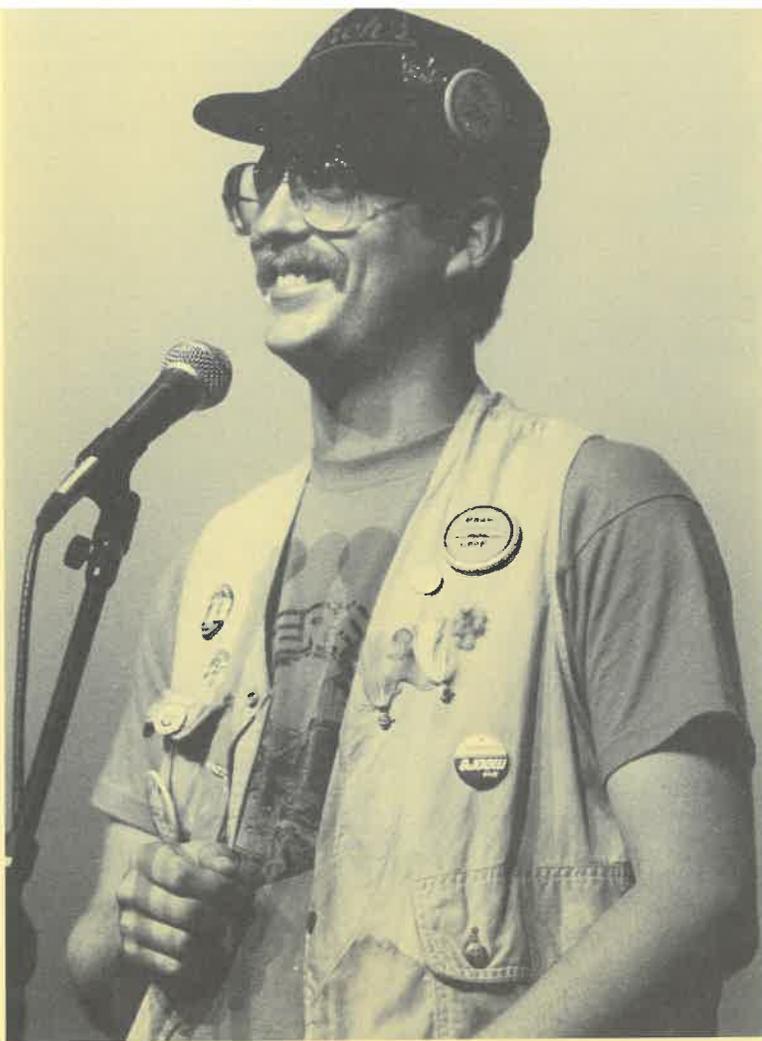
Well, don't you know, the West Virginia just popped right up like a cork, bands starting playing bluegrass music, and I gathered all my passengers together. I issued each and every one of them a mop and a bucket, some trash bags and a couple of votes, and in no time, we had the West Virginia almost heaven again.

We had the whole state shining real pretty and everything was going fine. Someone even climbed up to the top and finally finished putting the gold on top of the capitol dome, that's how busy we were. We sailed back into the fleet under a head of steam, even had enough power to tow Louisiana and jumpstart Arkansas on our way home.

The whole way back, people were flagging us down, wanting to come back on board. We signed up Kathy Mattea as the cruise director, and she kept welcoming them home to West Virginia. About the only trouble we had on that whole trip was just when I got ready to park the state I rammed the Northern Panhandle into Pennsylvania so hard it knocked Penn State plumb over into the Big Ten.

Well, I guess it was that bump that woke me up. Those ramps and that tonic were working on me something fierce. The honeymoon was over, and I wasn't governor no more.

I have one thing to say about my term and that's this: There's been a lot



Champion liar Paul Lepp, left, brought his little brother Bill to the 1990 contest. They carried off first and second prizes.

of governors before me that have left that office with a headache and a bad taste in their mouths, too, but darn few of them knew where they left the ship of state parked.

**Bill Lepp.** I'm from Philippi, but my friends Paul, Steven, and I attend and study at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon. To be perfectly honest with you, mostly we just attend West Virginia Wesleyan College.

But at any rate, not far from our school, there's a railroad tunnel. And a man can climb up into the tunnel right near the far end and lay down between the rafters and the mountain and look down at the tracks 30 feet below. Now, I say a man could climb up into the tunnel, 'cause no woman would ever be stupid enough to.

Well, it was last April and it was a fine sunny day, just about 12 noon. Seeing how Paul, Steven, and myself all had class at 12:30, we figured it was a perfect time to take a walk.

So there we were, laying belly down between the rafters and the mountain looking down at Weirton's world-

famous steel fashioned into the CSX railroad tracks 30 feet below. We heard a train whistle in the distance. We'd done this kind of thing before and knew that soon a train would pass harmlessly beneath us.

But things were different this day. Suddenly we heard a sonic boom. I looked down just in time to see that General Chuck Yeager was at the controls of the lead engine of that CS&X monster train passing beneath us.

When that train hit that tunnel going Mach 1, it made a vacuum old Mr. Hoover could only dream of. Everything within six miles was getting sucked in our end of the tunnel and blown out the other — trees, houses, rocks, lakes, ponds, cattle. The fact is, I ain't seen so much crap blowing so fast since the last campaign. It was louder than 4,000 striking teachers.

It was quite a spectacle for about five seconds. Then all of a sudden the rafter I was laying on gave way and I hit the last car of that train and stuck like a fly to flypaper. And folks, that ain't the half of it, 'cause the minute

that train left the tunnel the vacuum quit and I was sliding down towards the tracks.

It was a classic "between a rock and a hard place" situation. I pulled out my stainless steel Swiss Army knife with 74 functions, loaded the grappling hook into the harpoon gun, lashed a bowline around myself and two half-hitches around that grappling hook and fired it up into the coal car. It took me three or four seconds to clamber up into the car and burrow a hole from the blasting wind in our West Virginia bituminous, but I got up there.

Well, I didn't really have time to rejoice. I figured I ought to get off that train and for the first time in the whole trip, I opened my eyes. Lord, have mercy! The tracks behind us turned bright red and melted away, the creosoted timbers burst into flames, the trees bent over, pulled out of the ground, and stacked themselves alongside the track. The Buckhannon River was swelled up in a 40-foot tidal wave. The rate we were moving, I

guess I was pretty lucky I hadn't lost my hat.

I was going to jump but then it occurred to me that the laws of physics say if that train's moving Mach 1, then when I hit the ground I'd be going at least Mach 1 — and to tell you the truth, I wasn't wearing my running shoes. So I had to figure some other way. I scrambled down the ladder and I picked up all the leaves and sticks and reeds and garbage — of course, the garbage was all out-of-state stuff — that I could reach. I scrambled back up the ladder, then scrambled back down one more time and hooked up an electric turbine to one of the wheels of that train. I ran the wires up to the sewing machine attachment on my stainless steel Swiss Army knife.

I looked up just in time to see one of those burning hot timbers fly off the tracks, smack the Philippi covered bridge and catch it on fire. Darn that Chuck Yeager.

Well, anyway, I took those leaves and that garbage and my T-shirt and wove it into a lightweight nylon-type material, primitive though it was, and then I sewed it into a huge hot-air balloon. Now with the berries I had picked I was able to dye that balloon a delicate shade of purple and it was looking right nice. Then I took the sticks and the reeds and I wove them into a nice big basket and I took off my jeans — and I was wearing underwear — and I shredded them into cords. I lashed that basket to that balloon.

Then I had to make hot air to make that hot-air balloon go. Well, I managed to build an engine out of tin cans and I figured I'd power it by nuclear energy but then it occurred to me that uranium is just so messy. So I thought to myself, I'll use coal! Here it is, and it's in no short supply. But being ecologically-minded, I built a scrubber and cleaned that coal before I put it into my engine. I didn't want to pollute the air of this great state.

All this took about six seconds and on the seventh second I rested. My balloon was full by now, so I just had to wait for a clearing. While I was waiting, I read a little Aristotle for class and I made a diamond by squeezing a piece of coal between my thumb and forefinger. I attribute that mostly to an adrenaline rush.



Although he looks to us like a perfect picture of trustworthiness, Phil Angel was named junior division liar in 1990.

I looked ahead of me and there came a clearing. So I tightened my goggles and threw my scarf around my neck and quickly christened that balloon the "West Virginia Flying America." I scrambled in and just as we came to that clearing, I lifted off and drifted back to Buckhannon for school. All in all, it was a darn exciting trip. If any of you are miners, I have to thank you for the coal. It keeps America flying.

**Jim Costa.** I want to tell a story that comes out of Kanawha County. This came out of an old journal from a fellow down around Greenbrier County, West Virginia. It concerns an area up here called the Burning Springs, not too far from Cedar Grove, that was discovered in a somewhat peculiar way.

There was a whole gang of trappers on the Kanawha River. This was in about 1785 or so. Old Reverend John Alderson and a bunch of them from Greenbrier County had ventured out and come on up into Kanawha County here, and were trapping along the Kanawha River.

Well, it got just about dusk on them and they decided they were going to pitch a camp for the night. They had all of their pelts and everything, got

their traps all pulled. They see this big creek coming down into the Kanawha River and they say, "Well, that looks like a right secure place to put up for the night."

There was still a lot of Indian sign in those days, and they were a bit jitterish about the Indians possibly finding them out. So, they meander up this big creek and they find them a little old sandy bit of a bar there, and they pitch down all their equipment and they start making them a camp. They needed some firewood for their camp fire. So they sent this fellow out, by the name of Ephriam Gwinn.

Now, Ephriam was a typical old woodsman of that day. They wore their linsey-woolsey shirts and buckskin, and they had about six or eight months' worth of hair and beard on their face and head. He was quite a sight, the way he looked.

They said, "Now, Ephriam you go out and bring us up a load of wood for the fire." So he did. He went meandering up along that creek bank, you know. He started picking up branches, anything that looked like it'd burn, where the creek had receded and left all this driftwood. And he'd made him up a torch because it was getting dark on him. They didn't have



## Vandalia Gathering

### Vandalia Poster

Vandalia fans may take home a little of the festival this year in the form of a special commemorative poster. The 24" x 22" poster features traditional musicians Bob and Robin Kessinger, Vandalia regulars. The Kessingers, father and son, are nephews of West Virginia fiddle legend Clark Kessinger, and Robin is a former National Flatpicking Champion.

The Vandalia poster was designed and printed in West Virginia. The Kessinger photo was selected from literally hundreds of Vandalia shots and vividly depicts the passing of a musical tradition from one generation to the next. You may order a copy by mail from The Shop, The Cultural Center, Charleston, WV 25305; (304) 348-0690 for \$8 postpaid.

lamps or lights, so they'd just make them up a bundle of something and light it and that was their torch, you know.

Well, he goes around this bend in the creek, he's about 50 yards away from where the camp was. He didn't know it, but that creek issued from a big spring. And not only was there a lot of water coming out of that big spring, there was a big issuance of natural gas. Those fellows didn't know anything about gas in those days — not that kind, anyway.

He goes around there and that torch connects up with that natural gas and everything caught on fire. The water was burning, his shirt was on fire, all of his hair about burned off his head and face. He came out of there in a

state of terror, to say the least. They had never seen water burn in 1785.

So he comes flying around that bend, and his compatriots there see him and they don't know what in the world was coming toward them. He was putting out all these embers, patting himself and trying to put the fire out. So they all raised their guns at him. He was hollering, "Oh, don't shoot! Don't shoot! It's me, Ephriam!"

They said, "Well, what in the land's happened, what in the world's happened to you?" They says, "Is it the Indians after you?" "No, boys, it's worsor than that," he says. "We've got to break camp and break camp now, for the gates of hell are not a quarter of a mile from here!" ❀

## Back Issues Available

If you want to complete your GOLDENSEAL collection or simply get acquainted with earlier issues, some back copies of the magazine are available. The cost is \$3.50 per copy. A list of available issues and their cover stories follows. To get your back copies, mark the issue(s) you want and return with a check for the right amount to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Fall 1980/Remembering Mother Jones
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- \_\_\_\_\_ Winter 1984/Webster County's Mollohan Mill
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fall 1985/Dulcimer Maker Ray Epler
- \_\_\_\_\_ Winter 1985/Huntington 1913
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spring 1986/Blacksmith Jeff Fetty
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summer 1986/The Draft Horse Revival
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fall 1986/West Virginia Chairmaking
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summer 1987/Camden Park History
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fall 1988/Braxton Craftsman Wilbur Veith
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spring 1989/Printer Allen Byrne
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summer 1990/Cal Price and *The Pocahontas Times*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Winter 1989/Reunion: The Smoots Gather for the 60th Time
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## In This Issue

COLLEEN ANDERSON is one of GOLDENSEAL's graphic designers.

CLARA CASTELAR BJORLIE lives in Shepherdstown, where she writes a weekly column for *The Evening Journal* in Martinsburg. Her book reviews, poems, short stories and articles have been widely published, most recently in *The Washington Post* and the *Washington Business Journal*. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LEONA G. BROWN lives at Arbovale but was born at McKendree in Fayette County, a member of the New River Gwinn family. She has published articles in the *Pocahontas Times* and devotional publications, and written a book on her family history. Her last GOLDENSEAL article appeared in the fall 1990 issue.

GREG CLARK is photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History.

H. L. HAMES, a Montanan, has worked with livestock "ever since he was born." As a young man he followed the rodeo circuit all over the American Northwest and neighboring Canada, and later worked at ranching, logging and packing in the mountainous country he calls home. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LINDA HEPLER is a native of Huntington and graduate of Marshall University. She now lives in Philippi where she teaches English at the middle school and is active in the Barbour County Writers Workshop. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the summer 1986 issue.

KATHERINE M. JOURDAN, a native of Indiana, has a master's degree in historic preservation from Ball State University. She now works under a National Park Service grant as an architectural surveyor in Wheeling. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

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

CHUCK LANTZ, a native of Monongalia County, has numerous photo awards to his credit. In addition to a small freelance business, he works as a stringer for UPI and serves on the board of the Professional Photographers of West Virginia. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the winter 1990 issue.

STUART McGEHEE holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. He is a history professor and chairman of the Division of Social Sciences at Bluefield College, and archivist of the Eastern Regional Coal Archives. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

LOIS C. McLEAN, born in Indianapolis and educated at Purdue, married a West Virginian in Germany and moved to the Mountain State in 1959. Beckley has been her home since 1962 and West Virginia history her avocation since 1963. Lois serves as president of the Raleigh County Historic Landmark Commission. She last appeared in our fall 1990 issue.

MICHAEL M. MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University, and recently graduated from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Meador is now interning at Logan General Hospital and finishing up the second edition of his book, *A Walking Tour of Historic Jackson's Mill*. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

BILL MOULDEN, born in Washington and raised in Maryland, now lives in Morgan County. He has had an extensive career in corrections and now works as a consultant and freelance writer, contributing editorials to the *Hagerstown Herald*, among other publications. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the spring 1990 issue.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native, is chief photographer for the *Morgantown Dominion Post*. He is a member of the National Press Photographers Association and other professional organizations. A collector of old cameras and photographs, he is working on a book about late 19th century black photographers. Ron is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

TIM STARK, a West Virginia native and Princeton University graduate, has worked as a cowboy, as a researcher on a Cape Cod organic farm, and as a cabinetmaker in El Salvador and Guatemala. Tim now works at Trans Allegheny Books in Charleston. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

HALI TAYLOR, a freelance photographer and artist, is the children's librarian at the Shepherdstown public library. She grew up in California and studied photography at the University of California in San Diego. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in the spring 1990 issue.

(continued from inside front cover)

<b>August 6-10</b>	Petersburg (538-2278)		<b>September 13-15</b>	Helvetia (924-5018)
Tri-County Cooperative Fair			Helvetia Community Fair	
<b>August 7-10</b>	Elizabeth (275-4517)		<b>September 13-15</b>	Hamlin (824-7911)
Wirt County Fair			Lincoln County Farm Market Festival	
<b>August 8-11</b>	Ravenswood (273-9372)		<b>September 14</b>	South Charleston (766-6369)
Ohio River Festival			13th Mound Festival	
<b>August 9-11</b>	Elkins (636-1903)		<b>September 14-15</b>	Parkersburg (428-7742)
Augusta Festival (D&E College)			29th Harvest Moon Arts & Crafts Festival	
<b>August 9-17</b>	Lewisburg (645-1090)		<b>September 15-21</b>	Williamson (235-5560)
State Fair of West Virginia			King Coal Festival	
<b>August 12-19</b>	New Martinsville (455-4400)		<b>September 19-22</b>	Franklin (249-5422)
Town & Country Days			Treasure Mountain Festival	
<b>August 16-18</b>	Logan (752-1324)		<b>September 20-22</b>	Morgantown (599-1104)
Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair			Mason-Dixon Festival	
<b>August 17</b>	Richwood (882-2293)		<b>September 20-23</b>	Cairo (348-3370)
Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Camp Woodbine)			Nature Wonder & Wild Foods Weekend (North Bend)	
<b>August 17</b>	Clifftop (438-6429)		<b>September 21</b>	Lost Creek (745-3017)
Old-Time Day (Camp Washington-Carver)			Country Fall Festival	
<b>August 20-24</b>	West Union (782-3126)		<b>September 26-28</b>	Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
Doddridge County Fair			West Virginia Molasses Festival	
<b>August 22-24</b>	Cairo (628-3705)		<b>September 26-29</b>	Kingwood (329-0021)
Cairo Days			Preston County Buckwheat Festival	
<b>August 23-25</b>	Beckley (252-7328)		<b>September 27-29</b>	Charles Town (725-2055)
27th Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival			Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival	
<b>August 24</b>	Daniels (252-3161)		<b>September 27-29</b>	Gandeeville (965-7630)
Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Little Beaver)			Footmad Fall Festival (Camp Sheppard)	
<b>August 26-31</b>	Charles Town (728-7413)		<b>September 28-29</b>	French Creek (924-6211)
Jefferson County Fair			National Hunting & Fishing Days	
<b>August 26-31</b>	Philippi (457-3254)		<b>September 28-29</b>	Moorefield (538-6560)
Barbour County Fair			Hardy County Heritage Weekend	
<b>August 30-31</b>	Pennsboro (659-2926)		<b>September 28-29</b>	Parkersburg (428-5835)
Country Roads Festival			West Virginia Honey Festival	
<b>August 30-September 1</b>	Jane Lew (842-4095)		<b>September 28-29</b>	Union (772-3003)
Firemen's Arts & Crafts Festival			Autumn Harvest Festival & Reunion	
<b>August 30-September 1</b>	Clarksburg (622-7314)		<b>September 28-October 6</b>	Elkins (636-1824)
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival			Mountain State Forest Festival	
<b>August 30-September 1</b>	Erbacon (226-5681)		<b>October 4-5</b>	Wellsburg (737-2787)
Erbacon Days			Wellsburg Apple Fest	
<b>August 30-September 2</b>	Weston (622-4358)		<b>October 4-6</b>	Middlebourne (652-2528)
Antique Gas & Steam Engine Show			Middle Island Harvest Festival	
<b>August 30-September 2</b>	Weston (269-1863)		<b>October 4-6</b>	Milton (743-3032)
Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee			West Virginia Pumpkin Festival	
<b>August 31-September 2</b>	Parsons (478-2424)		<b>October 4-6</b>	Clay (587-2727)
Hick Festival (Camp Kidd)			Golden Delicious Festival	
<b>August 31-September 2</b>	Wheeling (242-1929)		<b>October 5-6</b>	Wheeling (243-4032)
Oglebay Woodcarvers Show & Sale			Oglebayfest (Oglebay Park)	
<b>August 31-September 2</b>	Harrisville (745-5376)		<b>October 5-6</b>	Point Pleasant (675-5737)
State Horseshoe Tournament			Country Festival (Farm Museum)	
<b>September 1</b>	Gandeeville (343-8378)		<b>October 5-6</b>	Burlington (289-3511)
Roane County Homecoming			Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival	
<b>September 2</b>	Logan (752-7259)		<b>October 9-13</b>	Spencer (927-2470)
13th Labor Day Gospel Sing			West Virginia Black Walnut Festival	
<b>September 6</b>	Cowen (226-3052)		<b>October 12</b>	Cameron (686-3732)
State Fiddlers Championship (Camp Caesar)			Big Run Apple Festival	
<b>September 6-8</b>	Romney (822-5013)		<b>October 12-13</b>	Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
Hampshire Heritage Days			18th Apple Butter Festival	
<b>September 7</b>	Huntington (529-2701)		<b>October 12-13</b>	Mullens (294-4000)
Hilltop Festival (Huntington Museum of Art)			Lumberjackin'-Bluegrassin' Jamboree (Twin Falls)	
<b>September 7-8</b>	Winfield (755-8421)		<b>October 12-13 &amp; 19-20</b>	Hinton (466-4971)
Putnam County Homecoming			Railroad Days	
<b>September 8-9</b>	New Cumberland (564-3801)		<b>October 17-20</b>	Martinsburg (263-2500)
Brickyard Bend Festival			12th Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival	
<b>September 9-14</b>	Summersville (872-1588)		<b>October 19</b>	Bluefield (425-2778)
Nicholas County Potato Festival			11th Country Craft Guild Show	
<b>September 12-15</b>	Sistersville (652-2939)		<b>October 19</b>	Fayetteville (465-5617)
23rd West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival			Bridge Day	
			<b>October 20-27</b>	Elkins (636-1903)
			Augusta Old-Time Week & Fiddlers Reunion (D&E College)	

*GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 1992 "Folklife Fairs Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number, if possible. We must have this information in by January 15, 1992, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.*

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## Inside Goldenseal

Page 62 — The Chester Teapot, a roadside attraction from bygone days, sits proudly by the highway again. It commemorates a major Hancock County industry.

Page 30 — Part of West Virginia's contribution to World War II was an unusual pack transportation school north of Elkins. Our writer taught other soldiers to handle mules there in 1943.

Page 47 — Irish immigrants gave Irish Mountain its name, and they built a resilient community there. Their descendants tell the story.

Page 42 — The most spectacular event in Maybeury history happened June 30, 1937. Older citizens haven't forgotten.

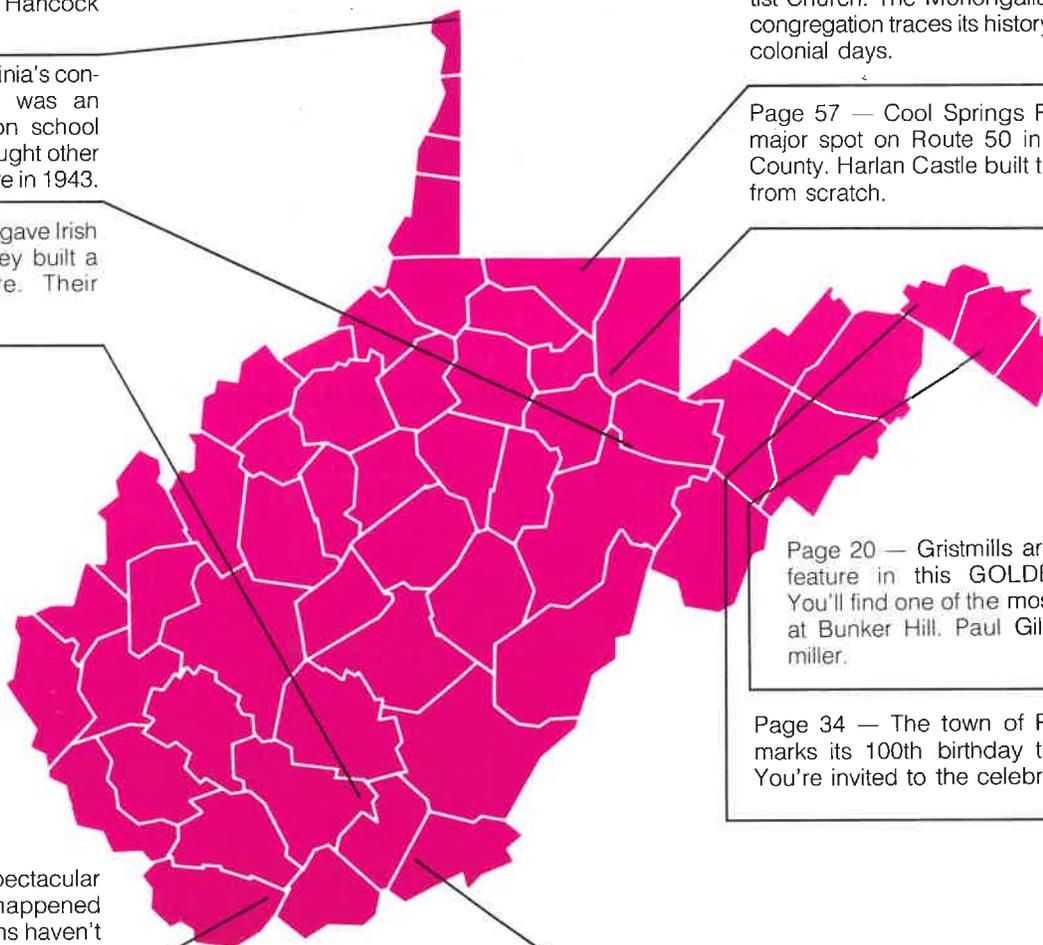
Page 24 — The bear feast is an annual tradition at Forks-of-Cheat Baptist Church. The Monongalia County congregation traces its history back to colonial days.

Page 57 — Cool Springs Park is a major spot on Route 50 in Preston County. Harlan Castle built the place from scratch.

Page 20 — Gristmills are a main feature in this GOLDENSEAL. You'll find one of the most historic at Bunker Hill. Paul Giles is the miller.

Page 34 — The town of Paw Paw marks its 100th birthday this year. You're invited to the celebration.

Page 9 — Jim Wells has nearly restored the Old Mill at Greenville. He expects to make it into a major museum center.



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