

Vol. 18, No. 1 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Spring 1992 • \$3.95

Goldenseal



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.

April 11 Feast of the Ramson	Richwood (846-6790)	June 27 Pearl S. Buck 100th Birthday Celebration	Hillsboro (653-4430)
April 12 20th Clay County Annual Ramp Dinner	Clay (587-4274)	June 27-28 Pioneer Days & Wheat Harvest (Farm Museum)	Point Pleasant (675-5737)
April 18-19 Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show	Gassaway (364-2340)	July 29 - August 7 Fort New Salem Heritage Workshops	Salem (782-5245)
April 20-24 Augusta Spring Dulcimer Week (D&E College)	Elkins (636-1903)	July 1-5 Mountain State Art & Craft Fair (Cedar Lakes)	Ripley (372-7008)
May 1-3 Dogwood Festival	Huntington (696-5940)	July 3-5 International Food & Arts Festival	Weirton (748-7212)
May 2 May Day Jubilee (Blennerhassett)	Parkersburg (428-3000)	July 3-6 Mid-Summer Music Festival (Tomlinson Run)	New Manchester (564-3651)
May 7-10 31st Wildflower Pilgrimage	Davis (348-3370)	July 4 Country Showdown (Camp Washington-Carver)	Clifftop (438-6429)
May 10 Mother's Day Celebration	Grafton (265-1589)	July 4-12 Pioneer Days in Pocahontas County	Marlinton (799-4315)
May 16 Allegheny Mountain Wool Fair	Mingo (339-2249)	July 5-August 9 Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops & Festival	Elkins (636-1903)
May 16-24 Webster County Woodchopping Festival	Webster Springs (847-7666)	July 17-25 West Virginia Interstate Fair	Mineral Wells (489-1301)
May 19 Battle of Matewan Commemoration	Matewan (426-4239)	July 18-26 Cowen Historical Railroad Festival	Cowen (226-3939)
May 20-24 West Virginia Strawberry Festival	Buckhannon (472-9036)	July 20-25 West Virginia Poultry Convention	Moorefield (538-2725)
May 21-24 Three Rivers Festival & Regatta	Fairmont (363-2625)	July 24-26 Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival	Wheeling (233-1090)
May 22-24 Vandalia Gathering (Capitol Grounds)	Charleston (348-0220)	July 24-26 State Gospel Sing	Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
May 22-24 West Virginia Dandelion Festival	White Sulphur Springs (536-1755)	July 26-August 1 Marshall County Fair	Moundsville (845-3980)
May 22-25 Spring Folk Dance Camp	Wheeling (242-7700)	July 30-August 2 Boone County Fair	Danville (369-2291)
May 22-25 Head-of-the-Mon Horseshoe Tournament	Fairmont (366-7986)	July 31-August 2 State Water Festival	Hinton (466-5400)
June 4-7 Blue & Gray Reunion	Philippi (457-3701)	July 31-August 2 Last Blast of Summer	Welch (436-3113)
June 5-7 River Heritage Days	New Martinsville (455-3637)	July 31-August 2 Appalachian String Band Festival (Camp Washington-Carver)	Clifftop (438-6429)
June 6-7 Confederate Memorial Ceremony (Capon Chapel)	Capon Bridge (822-4326)	August 1-2 Hughes River Holiday & Horseshoe Tourney	Harrisville (659-2755)
June 7 Rhododendron Art & Craft Festival	Charleston (744-4323)	August 1-8 Magnolia Fair	Matewan (426-8740)
June 11-14 West Virginia Bass Festival	St. Marys (684-7067)	August 2-8 Cherry River Festival	Richwood (846-6790)
June 11-14 Ronceverte River Festival	Ronceverte (645-7911)	August 3-8 Tyler County Fair	Middlebourne (758-2511)
June 11-14 Mountaineer Country Glass Festival	Morgantown (599-3407)	August 4-8 Tri-County Cooperative Fair	Petersburg (538-2278)
June 12-14 Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival	Charles Town (725-2055)	August 5-8 Wirt County Fair	Elizabeth (275-4517)
June 13 6th General Adam Stephen Day	Martinsburg (267-4434)	August 6-8 Bluestone Valley Fair	Spanishburg (425-1429)
June 18-20 West Virginia State Folk Festival	Glenville (462-7361)	August 7-9 State Square & Round Dance Convention	Buckhannon (842-3960)
June 19-21 West Virginia Birthday Celebration	Fairmont (363-6441)	August 9 54th Job's Temple Homecoming	Glenville (428-5421)
June 20 West Virginia Day (Independence Hall)	Wheeling (238-1300)	August 10-16 Town & Country Days	New Martinsville (455-2418)
June 20 West Virginia Day	Terra Alta (789-2411)	August 14-16 Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair	Logan (752-1324)
June 20-21 Old Mill Spring Festival	Greenville (832-6775)	August 14-16 Lilly Family Reunion	Flat Top (253-7127)
June 25-28 Bluegrass-Country Music Festival	Summersville (872-3145)		

(continued on inside back cover)

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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA



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Goldenseal

Volume 18, Number 1

Spring 1992

COVER: Engineer Theodore Burdette cleans his Elk River Coal & Lumber locomotive in the Clay County woods. Cody Burdette's "Home to Swandale" begins on page 9. Photograph courtesy Burdette family, date unknown.

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PHOTOS: Paul Corbit Brown, Greg Clark, Perry Cox, Ferrell Friend, Michael Keller, Susan Leffler, Andy Yale.

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 event announcements and review copies of books and recordings, but cannot guarantee publication.

Just for Children

Oglebay Institute's Stifel Fine Arts Center in Wheeling opened "Appalachia Heritage," a major new children's exhibit, in February. It features photographs and panels of historical information on Appalachia, tools common to the region, mining equipment, a typical kitchen from a mountain home, and arts and crafts demonstrations. Craftsmen are scheduled at the Stifel Center throughout the exhibit. Crafts demonstrations in late March include toy making and basket making. Appalachia Heritage focuses on the years 1870 to 1940.

The exhibit will remain at Stifel through March 27 and then begin a two-year tour of the Mountain State. It is scheduled for Pricketts Fort State Park from April 1 through May 31, 1992, and at the Youth Museum in Beckley in the early part of 1993. Plans are in the works for Appalachia Heritage to travel to Charleston, Lewisburg, and Putnam County.

At Stifel the exhibit is open to school groups Monday through Friday, and to the public on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call the Stifel Center at (304) 242-7700 for more information.

Mine Hero Story Reprinted

Bill Derenge of Greenbrier County, credited with saving 42 lives in the Layland mine explosion of 1915, survived two of West Virginia's worst mine disasters. Versions of his story have been published in GOLDENSEAL and other publications, and more recently in a book by Dennis Deitz, *The Flood and The Blood*. Deitz has reprinted this last chapter from his book, and it is for sale as *The Man Who Saved 42 Lives! The Layland Mine Explosion*.

At Layland, Derenge was trapped with the other miners for five days. Since he had survived the explosion at Eccles No. 5 a year before, men working nearby turned to him for leadership and courage. Derenge convinced them to barricade themselves in and not to try to escape through the deadly gasses. When rescue workers finally reached them, the trapped miners learned that 115 other men had died in the Fayette County tragedy.

The Man Who Saved 42 Lives! The Layland Mine Explosion is a loose-leaf reprint packaged in a portfolio cover. It may be ordered from Mountain Memories Books, 216 Sutherland Drive, South Charleston, WV 25303. The cost is \$3.

New N&W Book

Tam Park Vannoy recently published *Along the Norfolk and Western: Olden Days and New Ways*, a book of photographs and historical vignettes drawn from the railroad's history in the Appalachian coalfields. Mr. Vannoy, who grew up in Welch and graduated from WVU, edited *The Norfolk and Western Magazine* from 1969 until his retirement in 1982.

The Norfolk and Western opened southern West Virginia for industrial development when it entered the state in the early 1880's. The line was completed to the Ohio River in 1892 (see the Winter 1991 GOLDENSEAL) and remains today a vital transportation artery for the coalfields counties.

Along the Norfolk and Western is a 90-page paperback, illustrated with historical photographs. The book sells for \$9.95 in bookstores and gift shops in the N&W region. Direct mail order inquiries to The Paperback Exchange, 5301 C Williamson Road Plaza, Roanoke, VA 24012.

Songs by West Virginians

A group of West Virginia folk musicians recently produced a collection of songs

Remembering Doc Harris

We received some sad news at the end of 1991 when a reader called to say that Dr. John Wesley Harris of Shepherdstown had passed away. "Doc" Harris, as most people knew him, spent 45 years teaching. He began his career in the early 1920's in Shepherdstown's segregated schools, and retired in 1966 from the town's East Side Elementary School where he served as both teacher and principal. Harris was featured two years ago in GOLDENSEAL.

Doc Harris was born in 1899. He was a graduate of Storer College at

Harpers Ferry and took classes at West Virginia State College in Institute and other schools. He received an honorary doctorate degree from Ohio Wesleyan University. In 1921 he married Amelia Collins, with whom he shared his life for 55 years. She died in 1976. The couple had two children.

Paul Corbit Brown's photo of Doc Harris and his companion Snowball, pictured here, accompanied the Spring 1990 GOLDENSEAL article by Malcolm Ater.

John Wesley Harris and his dog Snowball in 1990. Photo by Paul Corbit Brown.



in support of the West Virginia Environmental Council's work. Mike Morningstar, Larry Groce, Ron Sowell, Kate Long, Stewed Mulligan, Mountain Thyme, David Morris, Jim Martin, Steve Himes, and Colleen Anderson are featured on "We Are Not For Sale," a cassette recording of original material.

"The lyrics and the music are as varied as the environmental movement itself," says Norm Steenstra of the Environmental Council, who notes that the idea to record West Virginia artists arose out of earlier benefit concerts. Joe Dobbs, host of West Virginia Public Radio's "Music From the Mountains" show, says there is a broad spectrum of sound on the tape and that it is rich in West Virginia heritage.

Proceeds from "We Are Not For Sale" will go to environmental causes in West Virginia. Tapes may be bought for \$10 each from the West Virginia Environmental Council, 1324 Virginia Street East, Charleston, WV 25301. For ten or more cassettes the cost is \$6 each. Add \$1.25 for postage and handling. For more information call (304) 346-5891.

Capon Valley Book

U.S. Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz went looking for a West Virginia weekend retreat in the fall of 1967, seeking an escape from Washington and "from too many Republicans" if they took over.

That proved wise for an official of the

Kennedy and Johnson administrations, who found himself relieved "by popular demand" when Richard Nixon swept to power. And it proved wise for Wirtz personally, landing him and his wife on the "old Davis place," a Hampshire County farm originally surveyed by George Washington. The place gradually became home and the Wirtzes became enthusiastic adoptive citizens of Yellow Spring, their Eastern Panhandle community. One result a quarter-century later is Wirtz's new book, *Capon Valley Sampler*, a collection of local history and lore.

Wirtz organizes his writing around the farm itself and neighbor Caudy Davis, whose family had lived there since 1838. The approach works well

Hill Lore

A trio of native storytellers recently released "Lore of the Hills," a recorded anthology of West Virginia's rich oral literature. The six cassette tapes, designed to educate as well as entertain, include ghostly and ghastly tales, old-time ballads, mountain humor, and rhymes.

The series was produced by the "Hill Lorists," including Judy Byers, an associate professor of English and Folk Literature at Fairmont State College; John Randolph, the founder of Fort New Salem; and Noel Tenney, a balladeer and the director of special projects for the Upshur County Historical Society.

Each cassette begins with a scholarly introduction or analysis of a particular aspect of singing or tale telling. The last part of each section is a selection read from regional literature, to demonstrate the extent to which oral storytelling has inspired mountain poets and novelists.

In between are colorful examples of expressions, words, and superstitions still heard in Appalachia. They are presented through dramatic interpretations often accompanied by music or sound effects.

The Hill Lorists demonstrate that many expressions people from outside of the mountains think are incorrect English are really antique usages of the language. For instance, "she was attacked by a painter" does not mean she was jumped by an artist, but by a "panther" or mountain lion. Someone

who "looked like he'd been sortin' wildcats" probably needed a change of clothes and a shave, and someone with "the hell-roarin' trots" was wearing down the path to the outhouse.

Superstitions and tales that explain how particular places and things were named often have several versions, depending on the location of the teller.

In "The Dumb Supper" Byers tells of a practice young girls once used to predict whom they would marry. In one version, two friends agree to prepare a dinner for four, with the idea that the images of the two male "guests" who would join them would be those of their future husbands. The girls had to perform the ritual in complete silence and serve the dinner at the stroke of midnight. According to the tale, at 12:15 the wind began to blow through the house and two transparent strangers sat down to dine. The girls were terrified and decided they had only imagined seeing a blond-haired man and a tall dark one with a moustache. But as the story goes, six years later each had a husband who looked just like one of the ghostly dinner guests.

In another version of the same general theme, a young woman picks sage on

the first of May and brews a tea which she is to drink with her midnight supper. If she is to be married within the year the image of her future husband will appear. If instead she sees someone with a coffin, she knows she'll soon die.

The oral and written material for "Lore of the Hills" was collected from a variety of sources throughout the state and when possible is attributed to a particular community or county. The performers say the cassette series is designed for use by schools, senior citizen centers and folktale buffs. All three members of the Hill Lorists had presented folklore in the public school system for years before producing the audio series. They say they were surprised to find that almost no educational materials on the state's folklore existed. The trio decided that the best teaching tools would be audio cassettes so the tales and songs could be learned orally, as in the folk tradition.

The six-part audio cassette series, "Lore of the Hills" sells for \$55 plus \$3 postage and handling and 6% sales tax from West Virginians. Write the Hill Lorists, Rt. 1, Box 150-C, Bristol, WV 26332. The individual tapes in the series ("Verbal Lore," "Bigger Than Real Life," "Mountain Humor," "The Ghostly: Supernatural Lore," "The Ghastly: Preternatural Lore," and "As We've Heard It: Origins Of The Folktale") can be ordered separately for \$10 each, plus tax and postage. The Hill Lorists also offer live performances, workshops, and classroom presentations.

— Susan Leffler



for a book of this sort, allowing the author to hang a variety of anecdotes on one topic or the other. The result is a sampler indeed, a cross-section of two centuries of life in this out-of-the-way part of the Potomac Highlands.

Capon Valley Sampler, a 204-page hardback, was published by Bartleby Press, 11141 George Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20902. The book sells for \$14.95.

New River Symposium

The New River Symposium was founded in 1982 to improve understanding of the New River and its basin. This year's tenth anniversary symposium is scheduled for April 9 through 11 at the Beckley Hylton Hotel. The meeting is jointly sponsored by the National Park Service and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

The May meeting in Beckley will include more than a dozen presentations. Don Briggs of Philadelphia will speak on "Coal Dust, Communities in Change: Mining Heritage in Southern West Virginia," Pennsylvanian Lou Athey's "Social Change in Preindustrial Fayette County West Virginia, 1860-1870" is scheduled for Friday, and on Saturday "The Farley Family — A Historical Sketch of Early Culture on the New River" will be presented by Debra Farley and Jody Mays of Raleigh County. Friday evening a banquet is planned with a keynote speaker. Tours will also be offered for Grandview, the Canyon Rim Visitor Center and Nuttallburg Mine.

There is a registration fee of \$51, including refreshments, the banquet dinner and a reception. The cost for Thursday only is \$17.50, for Friday only it's \$30, and Saturday only registration is \$10. Lodging is available by contacting the Beckley Hylton Hotel at (304)252-8661. For more information contact the New River Gorge National River, P.O. Box 246, Glen Jean, WV 25846; (304) 465-0508.

Preservation Alliance

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia will hold its annual meeting in Morgantown at West Virginia University the weekend of May 29 through 31. The Alliance is dedicated to preserving historic structures and buildings.

An Arthurdale interior, photographed soon after construction. Photographer unknown, 1934; courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU.



The theme for this year's conference is "heritage tourism." The Preservation Alliance meeting begins Friday afternoon. Weekend activities include a workshop on restoration techniques conducted by WVU's Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, a keynote speaker, a session on preserving WVU's historic buildings, and a trip to Arthurdale, an experimental "resettlement" town of the Depression era. The Arthurdale trip, planned for Saturday night, includes a barbecue chicken dinner and entertainment.

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia was established in 1981. Its members welcome public participation. Anyone interested in historic preservation is invited to the annual meeting — from those in preservation professions to amateurs and owners of old buildings. For additional information contact Barbara Howe, History Department, West Virginia University, 202 Woodburn Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506; (304) 293-2421.

More Coalfields History

Fayette County historian Melody Bragg recently authored *Window to the Past, Part II*, the second volume in her ongoing study of local history. Again the main emphasis is on Fayette County's rich coalfields heritage, with the first chapter devoted to an account of local episodes of the 1912-13 mine wars.

Bragg's husband George, editor and designer of the new book, is a major collector of regional historic photographs. *Window to the Past* includes dozens of pictures from his collection, some of which have never been pub-

lished before. The book also reprints numerous items from Fayette County newspapers of the 1911-15 era, in addition to 28 chapters of original research and writing.

The Braggs begin their new book with a touching dedication to the late Wallace Bennett, an older friend and mentor "who taught us that the best way to preserve history is to share it with someone else." *Window to the Past, Part II*, a 116-page paperback, sells for \$10, plus \$2 postage and handling. Remaining copies of Part I are available for the same price. Send mail orders to Gem Publications, Box 29, Glen Jean, WV 25846.

Civil War in Cabell County

Pictorial Histories Publishing Company recently published *Civil War in Cabell County*. The new book is by Joe Geiger, Jr.

Huntington, Cabell's political and economic center for the past century and a regional railroad hub, did not exist in the Civil War era. Without it, the area failed to assume the strategic importance of, for example, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia's eastern rail gateway. The war in Cabell County was one of reconciling the split loyalties of a border county. Troops skirmished and blood flowed from time to time, but Cabell was spared major battles.

This is "not the Civil War most of us



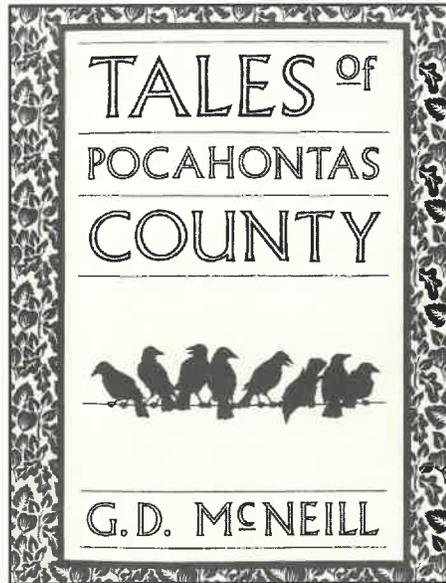
Capture the memories—
in the pages of
Goldenseal
See coupon on page 72.

are familiar with," as Geiger admits, but it is the sort of war that was fought in most of West Virginia and much of America. Geiger does a good job of chronicling its story in Cabell County, relying heavily on documents from the period. His book includes appendixes, extensive notes and an index, and many illustrations.

Civil War in Cabell County, a 148-page paperback, sells for \$9.95 in bookstores. Mail orders, including \$2.50 postage and handling plus 60 cents sales tax from West Virginians, may be sent to Trans Allegheny Books, 114 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301.

Pocahontas Tales

G. D. McNeill is remembered by many as principal at Marlinton High School from 1923 to 1941, and later as a Davis & Elkins College professor. McNeill was also the father of West Virginia poet laureate Louise McNeill and a talented writer himself. Among his



work was *The Last Forest: Tales of the Allegheny Woods*, first published 40 years ago and reissued by Pocahontas Communications Cooperative radio station WVMR in 1989.

Now the station has published a new book of McNeill's writings, *Tales of Pocahontas*, a series of articles he wrote for the *Marlinton Journal* in 1958, four years after he retired at age 77. McNeill wrote his pieces in pen and ink from his homeplace, Swago Farm, land that has been in the McNeill family since before the Revolutionary War.

The recent publication of *Tales of Pocahontas* was supported by the Pocahontas County Historical Society. The 52-page paperback book may be ordered from West Virginia Mountain Radio, Dunmore, WV 24934 for \$5 plus \$1 per book for postage and handling. West Virginia residents must add 30 cents sales tax.

WVMR also has copies of *The Last Forest*. In it McNeill chronicles the destruction of a wilderness of virgin timber along the Cranberry and Williams rivers. The 158-page soft-bound book sells for \$9.95 per copy plus \$1.50 for shipping. West Virginians add 60 cents sales tax.

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.

Fire Watch

November 22, 1991
Tornado, West Virginia
Editor:

The picture on the bottom of page 52 in the Fall 1991 *GOLDENSEAL* is my father, George W. Rose. He worked for the U.S. Forest Service and stayed at Red Oak Knob fire tower during fire season each spring and fall. He was 57 years old when that picture was made.



He lived on Cranberry Ridge. The Coe Post Office was located there. That post office was closed years later, and the area is now served by a route from Camden-on-Gauley.
Sincerely,
Strauca M. Holmes

Point Pleasant Floods

December 28, 1991
Buffalo, West Virginia
Editor:

Your last edition on the floods on the Kanawha River at Point Pleasant was especially enjoyable to me.

Captain Garland and my husband, Captain "Sudi" Rogers, often were on the same boats. My husband had the highest regard for Captain Garland and his wife, often speaking of them to me.

My husband rowed a boat to a tree at Kanauga, Ohio, and rescued five men in the 1937 flood. His son Bob, who was living with the Cam Shaw family at that time, helped. They often told me about this flood experience.

Like the Garlands with their Point Pleasant memories, I have flood memories from up the Kanawha at Buffalo.
Sincerely,
Goldie M. Rogers

Job's Temple

November 5, 1991
Nitro, West Virginia
Editor:

I found James Woofter's Summer '91 article, "Job's Temple: A Gilmer County Landmark," especially interesting due to the fact my son James Kirk, Jr., and Anita Ray were married there on a beautiful day in October 1985.

The marriage was performed by Patricia Jarvis. At that time she and her husband were co-pastors of the Methodist church in Glenville. Both the bride and groom were graduates of Glenville State, had met and were engaged there, and had decided early on where they wanted to be married.

It is with fond memory we recall

Pastor Jarvis as she gave the marriage a full liturgical treatment, shades of John Wesley and the 1928 prayer book. I wonder if perhaps this was the last marriage performed at Job's Temple. James D. Kirk, Sr.

Irish Mountain

January 10, 1992
Hampton, Virginia
Editor:

The Irish Mountain articles [Spring 1991] brought forth fond memories of my childhood, when I lived within one mile of many relatives who were mentioned in your magazine. For example, the picture of John and Fannie O'Connor, shown on page 52, is the only picture I have of my aunt and uncle. And I spent many a night in my youth in the Sullivan-O'Connor house pictured on page 50.



My husband (who was raised in a middle-class family in Massachusetts) and I have spent many moments while I reminisced about my youth spent on and around Irish Mountain. It touched my heart to read about it. Sincerely,
Patsy J. (Meadows) Chalmers

Another Tree Story

December 16, 1991
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
Editor:

I identified with the way Melinda Russell ["One Tree's Story," Winter 1991] felt about her oak tree, for we also have a huge oak in our yard that we hold in great affection and soon must lose.

We were thrilled to discover that eight acorns had sprouted in the outdoor flower tubs under the tree. We have transplanted them into their own tub in

the hope of seeing them successfully through the winter, so that when we move to Kansas this spring we can take a bit of West Virginia with us in the form of lovely oak trees.

Sincerely,
Jane Taylor

Meadow River Lumber Company

January 10, 1992
Crystal River, Florida
Editor:

The picture of the Meadow River logging crew shown on page 17 of the Winter '91 issue shows the cook, who was my father, Ernest W. Smith. Ernest and Ethel Smith were long-time residents of Rainelle, and lived in one of the company houses.



I worked for a number of years in the Meadow River shoe heel department when Clayton Bolton was the foreman. My wife, Edna Henry Smith, was secretary to Guy H. Hughes, sales manager of Meadow River Lumber Company.

You can be certain that the Winter 1991 issue of GOLDENSEAL brought back many happy memories. Sincerely,
Carl C. Smith

Still More on the Model T

December 28, 1991
Fiddletown, California
Editor:

I have just finished my copy of GOLDENSEAL for Winter 1991 and believe it to be the most completely interesting from cover to cover of all I have read, beginning in 1983.

But what I want to talk about is the Model T Ford. In Mr. Fansler's article in the fall issue, he made a statement as to the placement of the Model T gas tank. Then in the winter issue you printed



The gas tank on Doy Maston's 1923 Model T is under the seat. Photo by Michael Keller.

several letters stating that the gas tank was elsewhere.

They are all correct, as far as they go. But the 1926 and 1927 models very definitely had the gas tank in the cowl. The filler cap was recessed in a shallow well in front of the windshield.

I never knew of any of the 1926 or '27 models to back up a hill for lack of fuel to the carburetor. This was the reason "Old Henry" put the tank in the cowl in the first place and continued the practice through the four years of production of the Model A (1928-31).

Also, in Mr. Melton's letter, he stated that he believed that the 1928 was a Model B. It was not! In 1932, Ford introduced the V-8 engine cars. However, you could also get this car with a four-cylinder engine—a slightly beefed-up Model A engine. This was the Model B.

Keep up the excellent work you are doing with the GOLDENSEAL. Sincerely,
George R. Woosley

December 15, 1991
Camden, West Virginia
Editor:

Harold Melton and Sam Keenan said the Model T's did not have the gas tank over the firewall and the filler in front of the windshield. This is not true. I own a 1926 T touring car. I am the second owner. The gas tank is over the firewall with the filler in front of the windshield. Carroll G. Gum

December 26, 1991
Wheeling, West Virginia
Editor:

The Model T Ford, beginning in the fall of 1925, had the gas tank in the cowl between the driver and the motor in the roadster, touring, coupe, and tudor sedan. The four-door sedan retained

the underseat placement until its demise in 1927.

All Model A's had the dash-mounted gas tanks. The Model B began in 1932. It had a rear-mounted tank at the rear of the frame, and for the first time a mechanical fuel pump on the motor.

Sincerely,
Charles Muldrew

OK, OK — enough on the Model T gas tank! We've gone to the definitive source—the Henry Ford Museum — on this one. Their auto historian, Bob Casey, tells us everybody is right—the tank moved around from year to year and body type to body type. It started under the front seat in 1909 and ended up under the cowl in the final years, 1926 and 1927, but also appeared

under the rear seat and under the rear body in some types.

Paul Fansler, the author of our original story, remains unruffled. "After all this time I could be wrong about the location of the gas tank," he recently wrote to us. "But all I know is that the only way we could get that sucker over Third Mountain Hill was to back it up the steep side." —ed.

Fishing Camp

By Albert "Bud" Gaskin

I was born in 1914 and raised in Grafton, a neighbor of Marse Griffith. Marse was elderly and had been injured in a railroad accident. There was no pension in those days and he made his money by raising vegetable plants. His selling season was over by the first of June. All spring I carried water from the pump on Marse's porch to the tubs at each hotbed.

Then I went along to his annual summer camp on Elk River in Braxton County. One reason was to pull him out of the water if he fell in, since Marse was crippled. The other and most important reason was to keep the bait buckets filled.

This was in the late '20's. Marse kept all his camping gear in an outhouse in big wooden boxes — a tent, cooking gear, fishing stuff, and so forth. Along about June 5th, his railroad friends would come for his gear, and he and I boarded the "Charleston Flyer."

We off-loaded all the crates and boxes at Holly Junction. Jack Bridges was the telegraph operator, and he was expecting us. My first trip there, a large gang of men were unloading freight from B&O boxcars to flatcars which operated over the narrow gauge railroad running to Webster Springs.

We were met at the station by a local, Ray Knicely. His family lived back on the mountains behind our campsite, which was located on the river bank at Wild Cat Hollow. Ray had two brothers, Roy and Frank, a mother, and a father who sported a long beard and was a great friend of a collie dog. Saw one, you saw them both.

Anyway, from the station we skidded the wooden boxes on the railroad tracks down towards Hyer until we got below

the riffle to navigable water, then pulled them down over the bank to Ray's boat. We poled down the river to the opposite side. We got out of the boat, went up the bank to the annual campsite and erected the tent which was to become our home until school started in the fall.

We hunted 'seng, yellow root, bee trees. We made bats and pounded on the ground at bumblebee holes and whacked them until all were dead, then dug out the black honey. Ate squirrel all summer. A special treat was to pole down the river or walk the railroad tracks to Hyer and pass a coin to the baggage man to buy a loaf of store-bought bread. He would get off the train at Flatwoods and get it and bring it up the next day.

The Elk River was full of fish. Great pods of red horse suckers cruised near the top of the water. There were gars and lots of rock bass which would strike at anything that moved. I caught my first bass on a homemade plug under the railroad bridge over the Holly River.

We bought potatoes from Mr. Hyer, who was considered well off as he farmed the bottomland along the river. All others scratched out a patch on the side of the mountain. I remember the Knicelys had a house up on poles, and their chickens lived under the house.

The social event of the summer was the sings at the Bakers Run Church. It was several miles each way, but no one minded as the company was mixed and a good time was had by all. Lots of times we sang all the way. Sometimes we had to move to the side to let a train pass.

One of my most precious possessions

was a tiny minnow hook that Tinker Gillispie got for me. You could stand in a riffle and catch a bucket of horny chubs for bait in an hour. I cursed the day that some big bass carried the hook away forever.

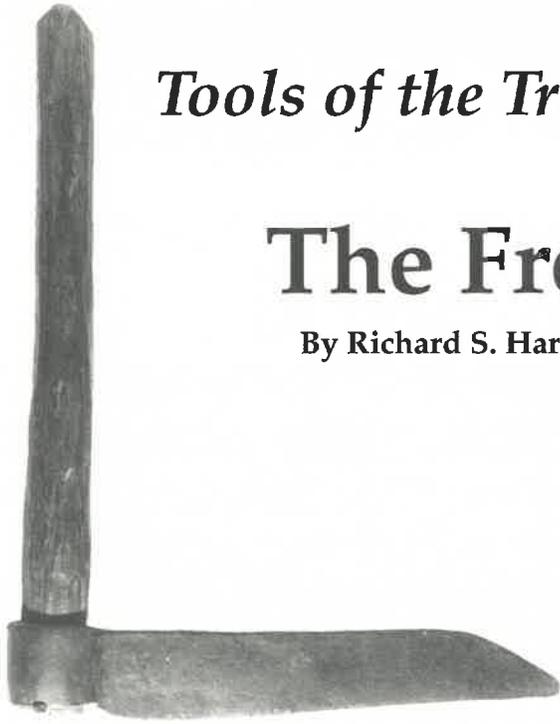
Once one of the grown men packed a piece of pipe with black powder and a fuse, put clay in each end and tossed it in the deep hole below Holly Junction. Then they stood at the bottom riffle and caught the fish as they floated past, mostly suckers. I wasn't there. Marse would have none of that type of fishing.

Years later, I married in Charles Town and soon thereafter joined the U.S. Marines. I served in the Pacific near onto four years, to my sorrow shooting people instead of squirrels.

I came back home, somewhat bitter, and raised a family. Later I brought my boy and my father-in-law to the Elk River area, and with much difficulty located where Hyer used to be. All the trees were down, the river a straight gut. There were no traces of my boyhood. The Sutton Dam — a pretext for flood control, but really it just made jobs for the Army Corps of Engineers — changed everything. They did the same thing to the Tygart River at Grafton.

I could go on. Like the time when the mountains were on fire and a big bear came through our camp and tore down the tent. And I remember that when we closed our camp for the trip home I presented each of three local boys a Clark bar, using my last 15 cents. They vowed to be my friends for life. Those were good times.

Mr. Gaskin recently sent these reflections in response to Mary Stealey's article, "Water Birch: A 1929 Elk River Fishing Camp," in the Fall 1990 GOLDENSEAL. He said Stealey's story stirred powerful memories demanding expression. "It was in me and I had to let it out," he told us. —ed.



Tools of the Trade:

The Froe

By Richard S. Hartley

Froe courtesy State Museum.

Just like the axe, the froe (it rhymes with row) was an essential tool of early West Virginians. It was used in many ways by both the farmer and the craftsman, and it lingered in use in some parts of the state until fairly recent times.

The snap or pop that separates a bolt of wood into two even, straight-grained pieces signals the mastery of the froe. The splitting of wood bolts or billets was quick and easy compared to the laborious use of a pit saw — requiring two strong men — or taking time for a trip to the up-and-down saw at a distant water-powered sawmill. The froe could not produce long, regular planks, but it made excellent shingles, slats, and similar items of split wood.

The froe was a knife-wedge tool that did its work by the striking of blows from a wooden maul or club and the leverage created by the twist of its hickory handle. The sturdy tool was made from wrought iron, the metal of craftsmen in these Appalachian Mountains. The blacksmith would double back one end of a piece of iron about two inches wide and half an inch thick and forge weld it, making a loop or “eye” for the handle. One edge was then hammered out to form a blunt knife edge, the splitting wedge of this tool. The froe’s handle and blade were perpendicular to each other, like an “L,” with the cutting edge facing away

from the handle. The blade — the foot of the “L” — bit downward into the wood being split, with the handle projecting upward.

Froes were made in different sizes, and handles were short or long, depending upon the use. Generally, blades were ten to 13 inches long. Some coopers used a special froe with a curved blade.

This was a simple tool in form and use. It served its owners well. It was used to split shingles for the new log house, barn, and outbuildings. On the farm, the froe was jack of all trades, used in the making of picket fences, garden gates, and wooden rakes and hayforks. Fence palings riven by the froe, some of them surprisingly light and delicate, have survived for decades on mountain farms.

The froe was also a basic tool of many craftsmen. It helped them fashion raw materials into finished products. The cooper split billets to make the staves for wooden containers, such as barrels and buckets. Basket makers used froes in the preparation of their weavers, uprights, and handles. The clapboard maker depended upon the froe in his work.

What made this tool so useful? It was the technique of splitting wood into halves, again and again. The froe, the maul, and a holding device called a brake were used in the riving or splitting

of short log lengths into staves, boards, and shingles. In experienced hands the froe produced a more even split than did wedges, and its handle made it much easier to use. Old-timers, precise in the language of their work, made a distinction between splitting and riving, incidentally, using the former to describe the quick popping apart of shingles and the latter for the more controlled shaping of boards and similar items.

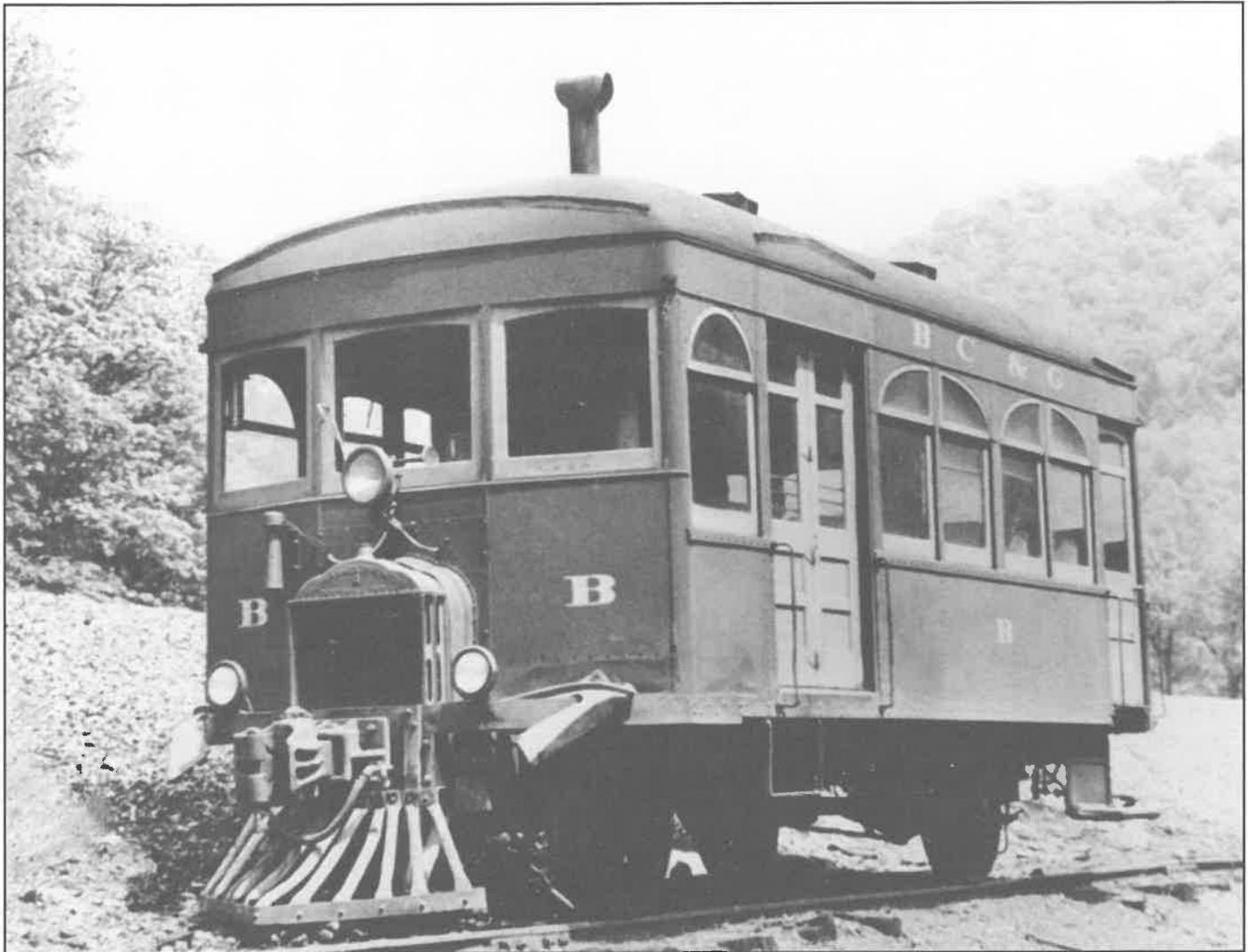
After short logs were halved and quartered into bolts, the sapwood and the heartwood were removed. The remaining wood was then split along its rays or between the annual rings, depending upon its use. Shingles and staves were cut radially, like spokes from the center, while clapboards, hoops and handles were riven between the annual rings. The wood was usually worked green.

The ripping and cracking of wood fibers splitting under pressure is the trademark sound of the froe. The blade was placed in the middle of the top end of the bolt and pounded with the maul, never a hammer. The maul was made of dogwood, elm, hickory or beech, preferably a knot.

Once the blade was buried, the craftsman completed the split by a quick back-and-forth movement of the upright handle. The worker with a feel for his material and his tool could control the split with the use of the brake, often a forked limb which could be used to hold the wood and for leverage. The repeated halving continued until the desired thickness was reached.

The use of this tool declined rapidly during the 19th century, as the Industrial Revolution brought cheap and more specialized manufactured tools to many areas. But the froe was handy at a lot of things, as the subsistence farmer had to be. It remained useful on mountain farms and many older West Virginians can recall seeing froes in practical use. Today the skill is kept alive among craftsmen and may be witnessed at fairs and festivals around the state.

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



People of Swandale traveled by rail bus, according to our author. He says the "B" car usually was reserved for owner J.G. Bradley.

Home to Swandale

By Cody A. Burdette

Writer Cody Burdette recently returned to the site of Swandale, Clay County, where he grew up. He found nothing remaining of the town but memories everywhere he looked.

These are some of the things I remember about my hometown. My family moved there in 1950. I remember my first day in Swandale when I thought it was the end of the world, it was so far back in the country. To make matters worse, it rained for what seemed like a

month. But I gradually adopted my new home, and it left a life-long impression on my mind.

My father was the log train engineer at the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company sawmill there for many years. My first real job was there. Landis Jarvis and I would coal up the log engine each evening. We would shovel eight tons of coal from a coal car into the engine's coal tender. We earned 75 cents apiece.

Then I got a better job, a job that was hard to get. I was hired to clean up the

big bandmill each evening. I earned 85 cents for about an hour and a half of work each day. I remember the good smell of fresh sawdust, mingled with oil and steam.

As I stand here today, and look over the weeds and the old foundations of what used to be a town, the ruins are not what I see. In my mind's eye I see rows of neatly kept homes, a large company store where you could see the things of the outside world, a barber shop, and the locomotive shop. I see a

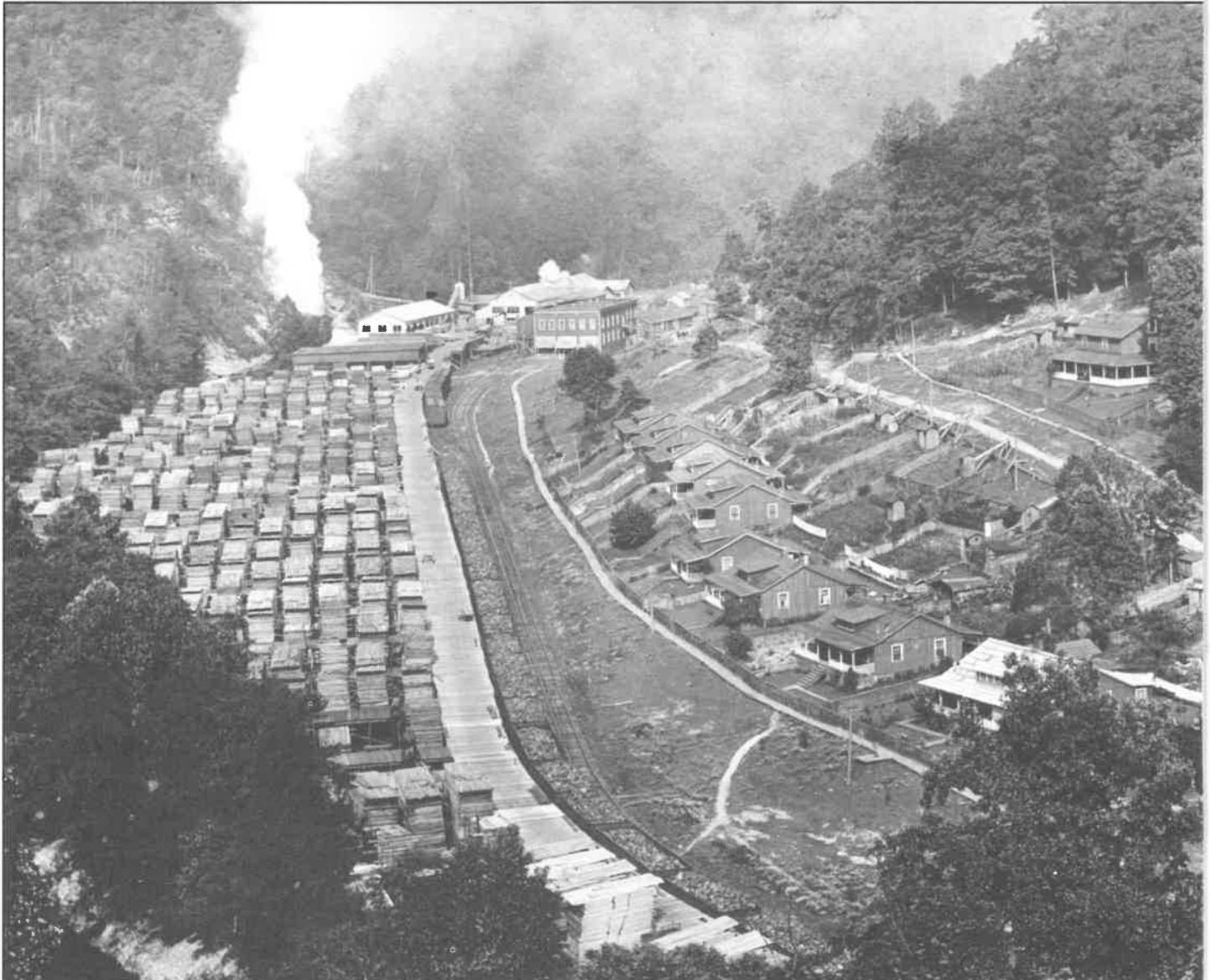


team of horses pulling a wagon, loaded with store goods which they are delivering to certain houses. I see them delivering coal to each coal house in the whole town on other days.

My mind is flooded with memories of cold winters spent here, and joyous sleigh rides, and then the endless summers of boyhood. I remember the sweat, blood, and tears of this little town. I hear the sawmill as it slams and bangs the big logs around and the whine of the bandsaw as it makes lumber out of the logs. I hear the clatter of lumber buggies on the wooden docks, as the green lumber is taken down the docks where it will be stacked in neat stacks. Then the dry lumber buggies bring the cured lumber back up the docks to be loaded in boxcars for shipment.

Through all of these memories run images of girls and boys playing and working and enjoying a much slower life than we have today. How I wish I could return to those days when everyone had time for each other. This was before television and refrigerators, when the battery-powered radio was king. I remember the endless hours of playing "chase" in the mill at night. I remember girls I was in love with who have somehow been lost in time. I recall taking them to the once-a-month movie in the gym. I see and hear the boys with whom I spent long summer days swimming, hunting and sometimes chopping wood for neighbors for 25 cents an hour.

As I look over this old town, now so still, it's hard to believe what all went



Opposite page: Author Cody Burdette found nothing but foundations and a blanket of snow on his last trip home to Swandale. Photo by Ferrell Friend.

Below and right: The aerial photograph of Swandale shows the lumberyard, mill, several residences and the superintendent's house on the hill. The company store stands by the mill, upper left, with the community building in the right foreground. The inset shows a closer perspective on three of the houses. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.



on here so many, many years ago. I wonder what has happened to such friends as David and Frank Truman, Landis Jarvis, Del Frame, Jim Jarvis, Mary Jane Rogers and her sister Margaret, Shirley Smith, Polly Perkins, Diggey Mullins, and Margaret Truman. I know they left to seek their dream elsewhere. I wonder if they ever found what they were looking for, or did they realize they left it behind at Swandale?

I remember that the troubles of the world were settled and put to rest each evening on the porch of the boardinghouse. I remember the time the company hired special men to climb high to paint the three smokestacks at the mill. We boys would talk to them after supper at the boardinghouse. What tales they would tell us!

Some of my fondest memories are of going with my father on the log train to the woods. There I got to watch the men load the train. On the return trip, after Dad got the train out of the woods and back on the main line, he would let me run the Shay engine for a few miles. On Dad's days off the train, he drove the company truck to deliver lumber to the Charleston area. I often went with him to help unload. I was proud of

my father, and it seemed so good to have the privilege to go on these trips with him.

Then all too soon, I was a man. I got my first full-time job with the company. I was hostler and night watchman, two jobs in one, but I didn't mind. As a hostler I had to fire up the log engine each Sunday night and coal it

I remember warm summer nights with a soft rain falling in the early morning hours, the sounds of the night and the sweet smell of the lumberyard as I made my rounds. It was great to be alive. I was doing what I liked to do and getting paid \$1.15 an hour for doing it.



Above: Swandale was a family town, according to the people who remember it. This Bible school class was photographed in the 1950's. Photographer unknown.

up the rest of the week and keep it hot all night. About 5:00 a.m. each morning I would clean the fire and rake the ashes out of the ash pan and get the engine ready for her crew.

I went to work at 6:00 p.m. and got off at 6:00 a.m. As watchman I made a trip each hour, on the hour, to 12 different keys to punch a clock that I carried. The keys were located throughout the mill and at the company store and down the lumberyard. I remember warm summer nights with a soft rain falling in the early morning hours, the sounds of the night and the sweet smell of the lumberyard as I made my rounds. It was great to be alive. I was doing what I liked to do and getting paid \$1.15 an hour for doing it.

I remember passing by the box-cars being loaded for shipment and peeking in their open doors to see if they were about full or not. I always wondered where they were going and who would be unload-

ing them. I remember the long cold winters I spent on this job. My rounds with the clock had to be made in all kinds of weather. I remember the high winds when you had to watch for loose boards and

*I know we cannot live in
the past, but we have no
future if we have no past.
Each of us has a
Swandale to go home to.*

pieces of tin being blown off the lumber stacks. I remember the deep snows I trudged through each hour of the long night. I remember the times I got soaked with cold rain.

But back then it seemed good, and I was proud of my job. After each round I had a little time to loaf in the boiler room at the mill.

It was warm there. I would lay on a board in the sawdust and listen to the three big boilers as they simmered and gurgled through the night.

I remember sitting in the engine cab after taking the engine up the track to clean the fire. I would park it beside the log pond and watch the night turn to dawn. I remember how the fog would rise off the mill pond, and as I sat there in my engine cab waiting for the steam pressure to rise, I was king. Sometimes I would wonder what my life would be like 20 or 30 years down the road. I would think about leaving Swandale for a better job and then returning on weekends to show off a new car to friends and family.

Never once did I think there would be no Swandale to return to. This was Home, and I thought it would be here forever. Enjoy the little things, for one day you may realize they were the big things. I remember how all the young

Serial No. 17 Elk River Coal and Lumber Company

In Account with Swandale, W. Va.,
 Mr. C. A. Burdette

LIABLE FOR ANY SUBSEQUENT INDEBTEDNESS

CREDITS		DEBITS	
Transfers		Transfers <u>Bank of Widen</u>	<u>5000</u>
Cash Collected		Cash Adv.	<u>3000</u>
		Bal. Last Mo.	
		Int.	
		Mdse—Store A/C	<u>2796</u>
		" Inst A/C	
		" Fuel	<u>200</u>
Hours Worked		Rent	<u>600</u>
<u>156</u> at <u>115</u>	<u>17946</u>	Garage	
at		Hospital	<u>330</u>
at		Electric	<u>194</u>
at		Water	<u>175</u>
at		Burial Fund	<u>150</u>
Hours Overtime		Insurance	<u>260</u>
at		SS Tax	<u>114</u>
at		Ambulance	<u>50</u>
		Withholding Tax	<u>870</u>
		Widen Charges	<u>3700</u>
		Dundon Charges	
Month at			
TOTAL CREDITS (EOF)	<u>17946</u>	TOTAL DEBITS (E&G)	<u>17929</u>
Balance Due Company		Balance Due Employee	<u>17</u>

RETAIN THIS STATEMENT

Somehow, Cody Burdette never got around to cashing all of his Elk River paychecks. These ranged from six to 11 cents, with the May 1958 pay stub showing deductions of \$179.29 from wages totaling \$179.40.



NOT TRANSFERABLE

Cut this receipt off and present at the pay window.

Serial No. 17 Swandale, W. Va.,
 Received of ELK RIVER COAL & LUMBER COMPANY, \$ X 11
X X X X X X X X 11/100 DOLLARS
 In full settlement of all claims to and including
 Witness at signing: _____ Sign Here: _____

NOTICE—If this receipt is lost after signing, notice must be given at our office before pay day.

69-391
515

Elk River Coal and Lumber Company
 DUNDON, CLAY COUNTY, W. VA.

AUG 30 1958

No. 11052

PAY TO THE ORDER OF
 ELK RIVER COAL & LUMBER CO., OR
C. A. Burdette \$ Only .094-

EXACTLY 950¢09CTS

TO THE BANK OF WIDEN
 WIDEN, WEST VIRGINIA

M. B. Bower
 PAYMASTER

THIS CHECK MUST BE PRESENTED AT THE BANK OF WIDEN WITHIN SIXTY DAYS FROM DATE OF ISSUE TO BE HONORED. AFTER SIXTY DAYS IT MUST BE PRESENTED AT THE GENERAL OFFICE FOR REISSUE



The remains of a boiler furnace are among the ruins left at Swandale. Photo by Ferrell Friend.

people were going to Massillon, Ohio, to seek their fortunes, and how they tried to get me to go with them. Some of them made it good, I heard later, and some the grass 40 years has been growing on their graves.

I remember my days in the Boy Scouts and the tricks we would pull on the scoutmaster. He loved sweet milk and when we went camping he would always take a supply with him and put it in the cold mountain streams. We would find it and drink about half of it and fill the bottle back up with water. Oh, how he would complain about that old blue milk the company dairy was putting out! I recall the big Scout jamboree at Widen one year. There were many troops camped there, so we could play our tricks and pranks and lay them onto some other group. Late one night David Truman and I cut the big main tent down. The scoutmaster and his three sons were inside asleep. We lay down and laughed till our sides were sore as they fumbled and struggled in the dark.

I remember the night fireman at the mill, a preacher by the name of Guy Frame, who would later marry me and my wife at his home in Swandale. When I loafed at the boiler room at night I would talk to Guy about how Swandale was back in the Great Depression of the '30's. He was a good friend, and years after I left I was saddened to hear of his death.

I remember the time in 1957 that Mr. Currence sent Raymond Davis and me

to Richwood to get the last two Shay locomotives of the Cherry River Boom & Lumber Company. They were to be added to the rolling stock of the Buffalo Creek & Gauley, our local railway. As we came down Cherry River, all along the track at every house people were out in their yards waving their farewells to the old engines.

I was lucky to get in on the tail end of steam power in the United States. As late as 1963 things on the BC&G were done the way they had been done in

Riding the Rails

In the adjoining article author Cody Burdette describes a "slide track," a miniature railroad which brave boys and foolish men slid down on boards. He says his father brought the idea to Clay County from New River.

We've heard rumors over the years of boys riding the steep inclined railways in the New River Gorge on boards, sometimes with tobacco tins nailed on for added slipperiness. We'd like to hear from some survivors to get the facts straight. Write to us at the address on the contents page, telling when and where and describing the approximate steepness and length of the run, as well as the riding apparatus.

my grandfather's day. I remember the daily steam train that would go through town on its way to Widen with 50 or 60 coal cars. Widen was where the company coal mines were. I remember the rail bus that ran twice a day, carrying mail and passengers.

I remember the big coal miners' strike and the night they blew up the railroad bridges, one below town and the other above town. The blast shook the windows and dishes in our house. But all was repaired, and the company operated for many years after this strike.

The memory of the day Dad took me to Clay in his 1937 Chevy to take my operator's test comes back to me as if it were yesterday. After I passed, he let me drive all the way home. I was 16.

I remember the time an old lumber grader by the name of Hayden Golden retired. I was 16 years old and the company superintendent, a Mr. Currence, asked me if I would take the company pickup and take Mr. Golden home to Jane Lew. It made me proud because he would not let any of the other boys close to that pickup.

Swandale was where I first began to work on people's cars, which led to a career as an auto mechanic and later a garage owner. It didn't matter how cold or how deep the snow was, I would jump at the chance to work on a car. I learned a lot that later helped me in some of the biggest garages in Charleston.

Another fond memory is of the "slide track" some boys and I built. A slide track is a miniature railroad made out of wooden rails and ties. We built it on a steep hill and let it end on a flat or field. You would ride on a wide board with two narrow boards nailed crosswise for your hands and feet, one in back and one in front. On the bottom of the board and in the center was nailed a rudder to hold it on the rails. The longer you rode the slide track, the faster it got. The rails became as smooth and slick as a varnished floor. When you put your board on at the top and sat down on it, you'd better be ready to ride.

The slide track was my Dad's idea. He had played on them when he was a boy on New River. Until you learned how to ride, it was best to go only about halfway up the hill and put your board on the track at this point. That way it was not so fast.

Nobody at Swandale had ever seen

one of these things, so it was a new adventure for man and boy. Each evening after supper a large crowd of men and boys would gather at the ball diamond on the hill above town. Some brave soul would try to ride from the top on his first ride. He would usually wind up plowing up the ties with his backside. Finally coming to a stop, he would jump up, check himself all over, and limp off with the seat of his pants missing! But after you met the challenge and learned to ride the slide track, it provided endless hours of entertainment.

I remember the baseball games I played at Swandale. Our bleachers were boards laid down on flat rocks on the moss-covered hill overlooking the ball diamond. To us it was Yankee Stadium.

I remember taking my mother in the 1937 Chevy to Clay to go shopping. That was once a month, when Dad got paid. Sometimes she would go with me to Charleston. This was much later, after I got a 1948 Chevy

pickup and would haul junk to the junkyards of Charleston. We would usually have two or three flat tires on these trips. She didn't seem to mind the delay. I would get out the tire tools, the patching and the tire

This was home, and I thought it would be here forever. Enjoy the little things, for one day you may realize they were the big things.

pump, and we would be ready to go in a short time. Back then we accepted the fact that on a trip a flat tire or two was the way it was. Mom would always pack us some lunch, and we would stop in a shady spot to eat.

Now as I look over this old town that is no more, I feel that much more has died. A way of life in America died here. Here we had time for each other, we cared when someone was sick or had a baby or got married or left town. When a new family moved in we all helped them get started.

As I stand here, a cold wind has begun to blow from the north. Winter snow will again cover the foundations where once tired men hurried home to a warm fireplace and a hot meal. As I turn my coat collar up to protect my face from the cold, I realize I have been visiting a long time with my old friends. My hands, feet and face are cold, but my heart is warm for I have come home.

I know we cannot live in the past, but we have no future if we have no past. Each of us has a Swandale to go home to. We should visit more often to get a better view of where we came from and who we are. 🍁

Swandale's Railroad

The Clay County of Cody Burdette's day was a busy place. J. G. Bradley's sawmill, mining and logging operations provided plenty of work for the people of Swandale and nearby Widen, and kept the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad running full steam. Author William E. Warden takes a close look at this era of local history with his recently published book, *Buffalo Creek & Gauley*.

The 80-page, softcover publication is a pictorial history of the BC&G. After the Norfolk & Western Railroad phased out its steam-powered trains in the 1950's the BC&G became the largest steam rail line in the country, though it covered only 18 long Clay County miles in comparison to the N&W's 2,134-mile network.

Warden gathered an impressive collection of historical photos, many taken by him, for the book. Accompanying text traces the BC&G's history, from 1904 through the mid-60's. The author's enthusiasm comes

through as he writes. "The BC&G was more than a shortline railroad, it was an intense personal experience," William Warden says.

Buffalo Creek & Gauley sells for

\$20 in West Virginia bookstores. It is also available from Ed Crist Inc., 27 DePalma Drive, Highland Mills, NY 10930. Include \$2 for shipping.



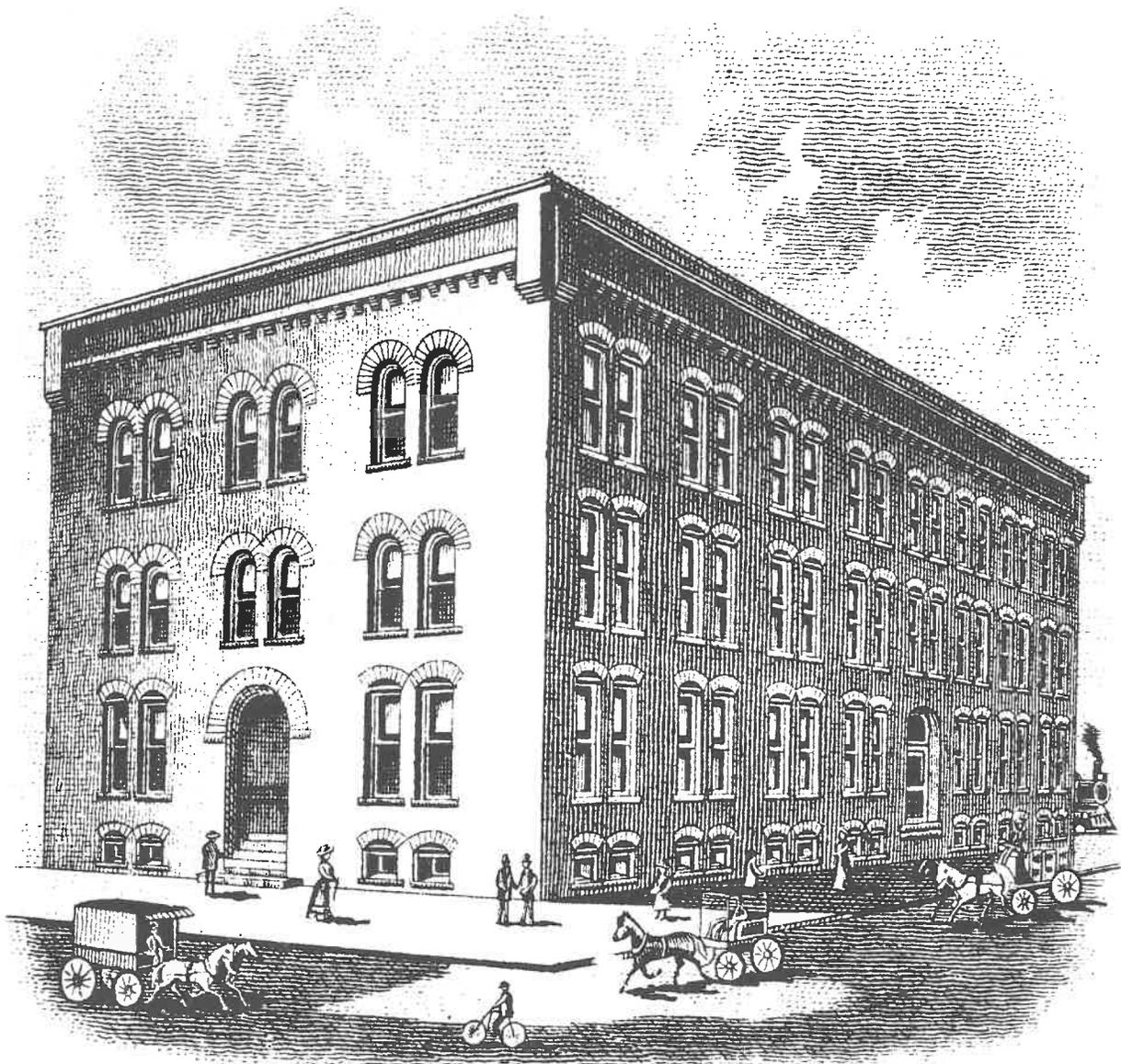
**BUFFALO
CREEK
&
GAULEY**

By William E. Warden

The Golden Rule

Doing Business in Barbour County

By Barbara Smith
Photographs by Michael Keller



This lithograph shows The Golden Rule building early in the century.

West Virginia has been described as having one foot in the past and one foot in the present. Whether or not that description is true for the whole state, it certainly fits The Golden Rule, a general merchandise store built in 1902 and still in operation on Crim Avenue — Route 250 — in Belington. Even as one enters the modern front doors, glass paneled and aluminum framed, the contrast is evident, for the building is still faced by its original red bricks, the upper windows still bordered by the original wood.

Immediately inside the front door and to the right is the cashier's counter, behind which are offices. Across from the counter is a furniture display — a two-piece Bassett sofa and chair set and a Catnapper recliner grouped around a coffee table, on top of which are a linen runner, candles in daisy-ringed candleholders, and two Bibles. On the walls in adjoining showrooms are two dozen or more attractive paintings of local scenes, most of them done by Wanda Shinn Mitchell, a few of them for sale.

Wanda is the manager of The Golden Rule and one of its owners. She welcomes customers as if they were coming into her home. Many of them — especially newcomers who have heard of the most unusual feature of the store — ask to see the water-powered elevator, and she always replies, "Of course!" Then she calls Carl Findley.

Having operated the elevator since 1950, Carl is the expert. He takes the curious visitor down the wooden stairs. He lifts the latch and reaches for a light switch. Then he pauses to point to the ceiling. "Look at the timbers!" he says. "You'll never see any more like that." They are indeed impressive, varying in width from four to six inches and reaching 12 feet or more in length. The interior walls, washed down after the 1985 flood, are the same red brick that can be seen from the street.

Charles Ramsey, who also works at The Golden Rule and who will probably

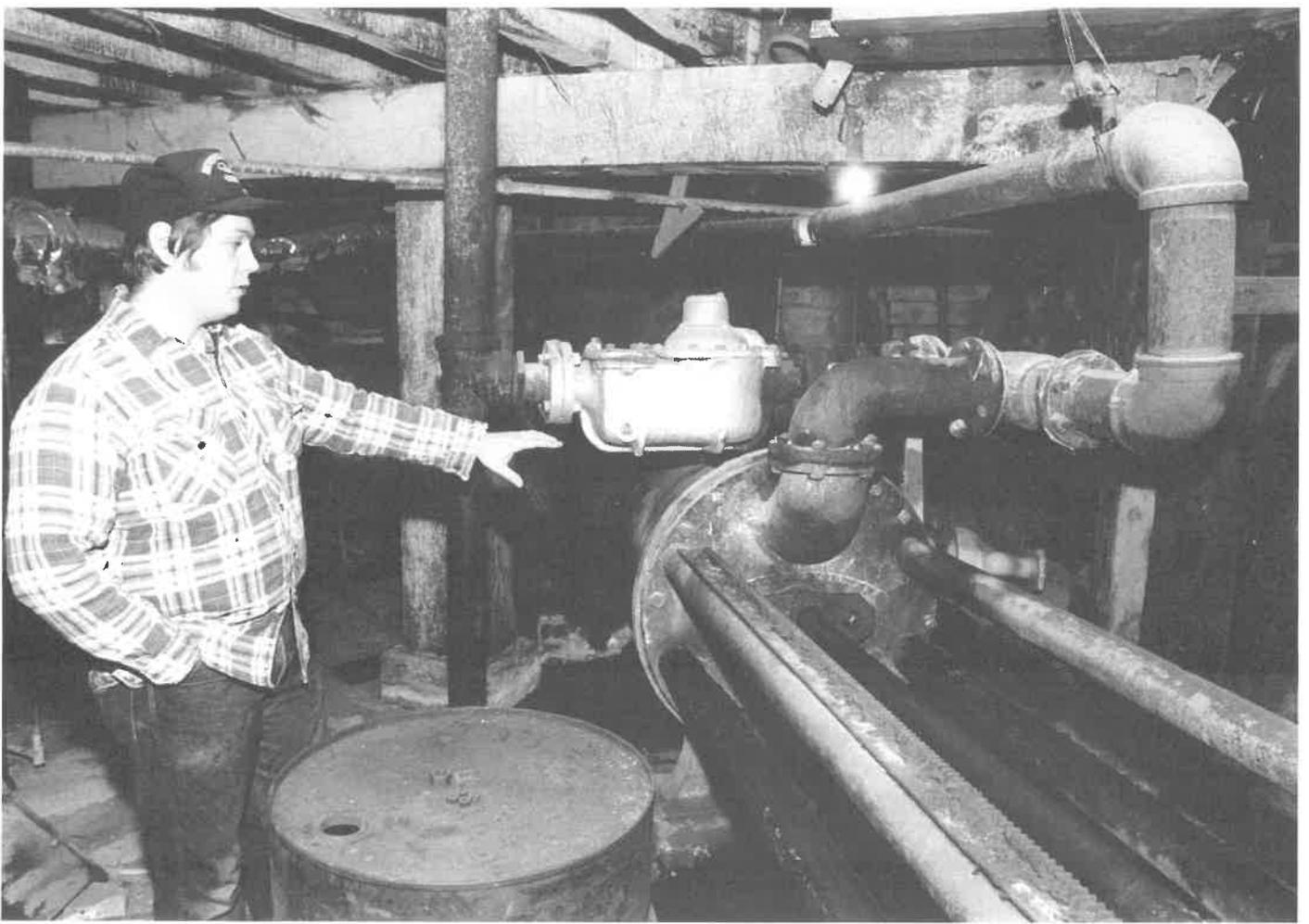
take over operation of the elevator after Carl retires this year, describes the flood as an experience he hopes never to repeat. "All of these shelves," he says, sweeping an arm to encompass the huge basement, "were pushed over by the water. There were piles of stuff everywhere. We took out four truckloads, and we could have taken four more."

Indeed, on almost every shelf are

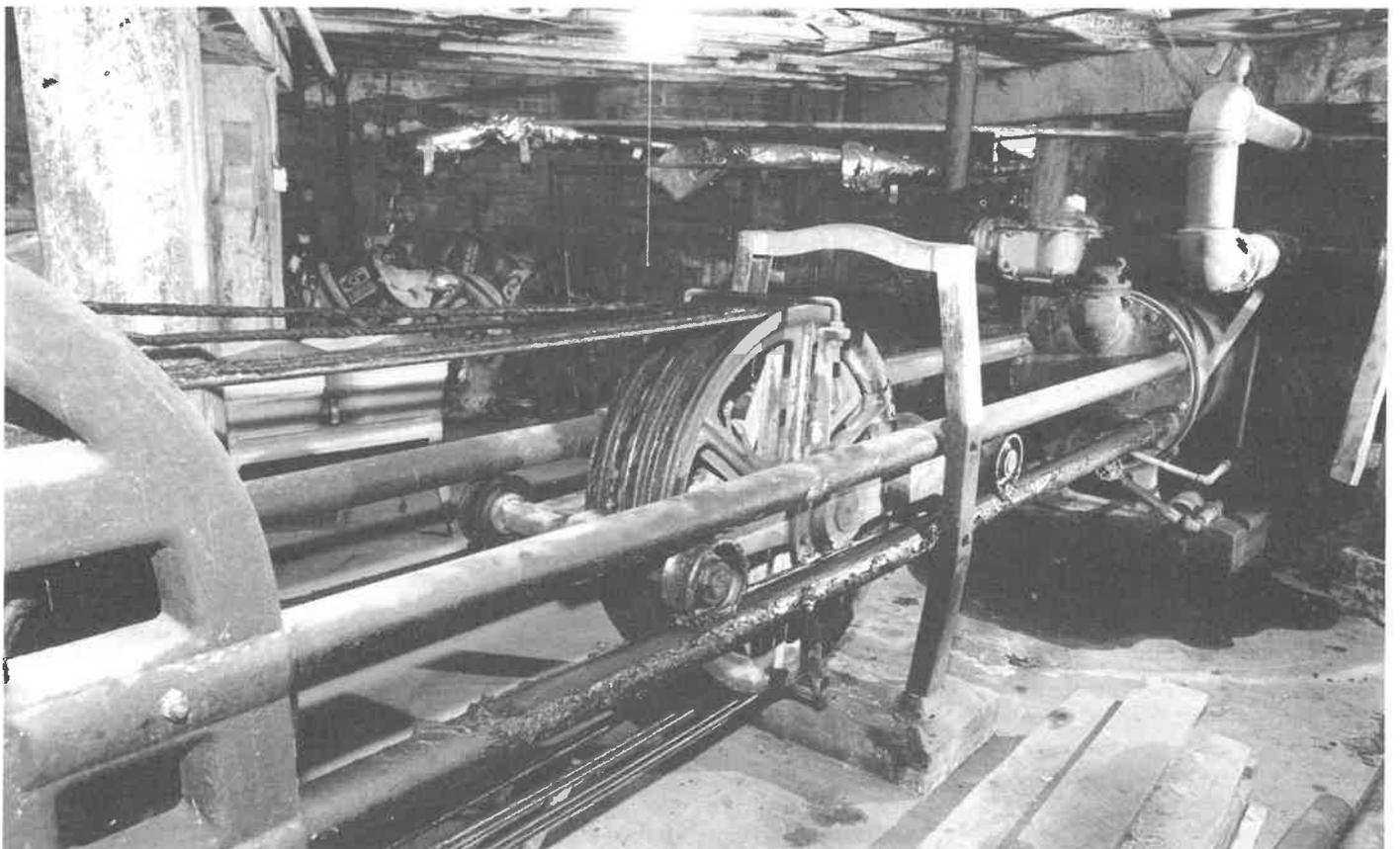
reminders of the big flood, the silt still on stacks of dishes, cases of vinegar and vanilla extract, pairs of never-worn rubber boots, garden tools. Some of the remaining items are valuable, like three crocks — eight-gallon, ten-gallon, 15-gallon — and the canning jars and the brown glass syrup jugs. A few labels still cling to or dangle from other jars and bottles: "Old Witch Am-



Wanda Shinn Mitchell sells a wide variety of goods in her department store, including Red Wing boots.



Charles Ramsey (above) explains the workings of the old water-powered elevator. The water piston, at right rear in the photo below, drives the traveling pulley riding between the long, round rails. The pulley's cables in turn lift and lower the elevator.



moniated Cleaning Compound," "Chlor-White Germicide-Disinfectant-Deodorant," "Golden Star Cleaning Fluid." One jug reads, "Crescent Company: The Mail Order House: Clarksburg, West Virginia."

In the corners of the basement are tools and pieces of equipment that defy explanation. "There's lots of things down here," Charles says, "that you've never seen the like of and never will again."

The elevator is the center of interest, however. The original four-inch water pipe, installed with the elevator in 1915, has been changed to a one-incher in order to save on water and water bills, but Carl says that the only other modifications have been minor — a few rubber gaskets, a gear or two.

Manufactured by Warner Elevator and Manufacturing Company and supposedly the only working water-powered elevator in West Virginia, the contraption is dependent upon cables, a piston, and water pressure. The piston moves only five feet, but the connecting machinery propels the elevator some 30 feet up or down — the distance from the basement to the third floor. A large metal cylinder which holds the water is attached by cables to



two sets of pulleys, which in turn are connected to the elevator car. The right pulley causes the elevator to rise, and the left brings it back down. Maximum load is indicated at 2,000 pounds — one ton — but Carl claims that furniture weighing as much as 2,500 pounds has been lifted or lowered by the old elevator.

Unfortunately, because of insurance restrictions, the curious cannot ride the elevator. They can, however, view the cage. Charles Ramsey folds back two sections of a wall near a display room on the first floor, and then he pulls a rope that lifts a wooden gate. "It works

slow when it's cold," he explains. Charles steps onto the six-by-six wooden floor, so solid that it does not shift or wobble. Cables which connect to the controls in the basement can be seen on each side of the open shaft.

How fast does the old elevator move? It takes some two minutes to lift a load from the basement to the third floor. "But it goes faster going down," Charles says. "It's sure better than carrying everything," he adds.

On one side is a note titled "Elevator Operation," a set of handwritten instructions. "Carl Finley wrote that and put it up," Charles explains, "in case someone has to run this when neither of us is here."

Such continuity is an important consideration at The Golden Rule, which spans several generations. The business was originally a grocery distributorship which served stores throughout Barbour and surrounding counties. The grocery business was gradually scaled down and phased out during the early 1950's. Demands for other types of merchandise led to a shift to men's work clothing and shoes, furniture, floor covering, and bedding. Wanda says that most of the current line of furniture comes direct-

Belington

According to the book *Barbour County, West Virginia*, published by the county historical society in 1979, Belington was originally a crossroads of Indian trails. Elias Barker came there in 1769 or 1770. The settlement bore Barker's name until 1855, when it was renamed for storekeeper John Bealing. Sometime later the "a" was lost from Belington, although the town name is still pronounced as though it were there.

Transportation developments of the 19th century preserved Belington's importance as a crossroads community. Construction of the Fairmont and Beverly Pike helped open the area, which became the junction of the Greenbrier & Belington Railroad in 1887-88. These tracks connected with the B&O main line in Grafton. Later the Western

Maryland Railroad extended its run to connect Elkins with Grafton, via Belington.

By 1890 the town had become the site of a brick plant and a steel mill. The lumber industry was going strong and has continued to be an important factor in the local economy. The demand for coal brought real prosperity, producing Belington's busiest era.

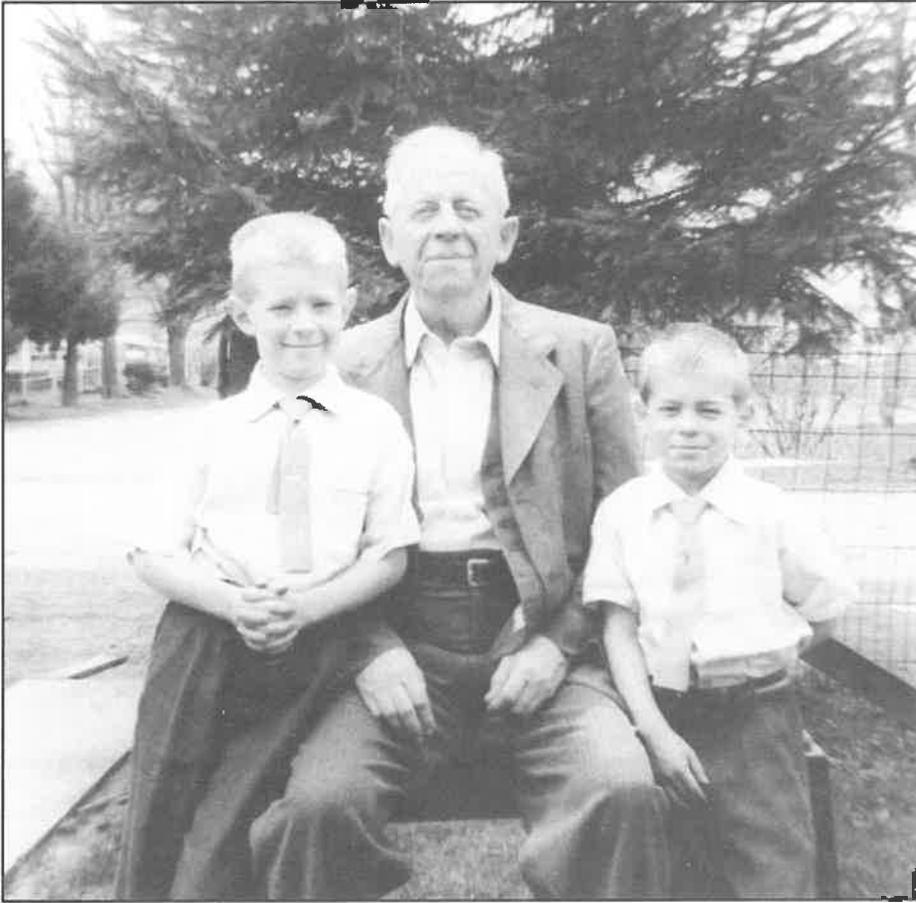
Today, the decrease in employment in the coal industry shows. A number of businesses have vacated their premises, and Belington's population has dropped. Still evident, however, are two major grocery stores, a thriving bank, modern and well-staffed schools, the widely known Belington Clinic, and of course The Golden Rule itself. An industrial park, sponsored by the

Kiwanis Club, was developed to provide space for both business and new housing.

There are also several restaurants. The most interesting to me is the Laurel Mountain Inn. On the walls are beautifully framed copies of old photographs featuring such subjects as lumber camps, an "ice and bottling" company, and a very early post office. In the hallway to the restrooms is a framed document naming "Gall and Baughman" as an agency of the "Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company in Liverpool, England." The parchment is dated 1925.

Belington also has a city park just off Route 250 and a V.F.W. park on the other side of the river.

— Barbara Smith



William Sexton Shinn, Wanda's first husband, with David and Paul. These sons are now co-owners of The Golden Rule. Photographer unknown, 1960.



Randolph County line. Wanda's mother was Nancy Regester Ware. Her father, Daniel B. Ware, was born in a log house in Talbott community. Daniel's father was a farmer, and Daniel himself was a carpenter. Some of the homes that he built in Belington are still in excellent condition and still inhabited. Ray Ware, founder of Ware Lumber Company in Belington and Daniel's nephew, is the father-in-law of Opal Ware, a clerk at The Golden Rule. It is a tight-knit community.

It was David and Paul Shinn, Wanda and William's sons, who after their graduation from high school insisted that the store be remodeled. They did much of the designing and work themselves. The cage-like outer walls were removed, the ceilings lowered, the showrooms constructed, and the new glass doors and the outdoor lighted sign installed. A parking lot was added in the adjoining area. Wanda hopes that The Golden Rule will someday be run by one or both of her sons, although they are now pursuing careers elsewhere. In the meantime she intends to keep going "as long as the Lord gives me health and wisdom," she says.

"Taking over after my husband's death was a big undertaking," Wanda admits. She found more education necessary to do well in her new role. "I had gone to the Chestnut Flat, a one-room school," she says. "The same year my son David graduated from high school, 1970, I received my GED certificate, and I told the Lord that if he would help me with the business, I'd do my best. And now it's been all these years and I'm still at it. I guess the Lord and I did all right."

In 1985 Wanda was awarded a degree by the University of Hard Knocks. This light-hearted organiza-

ly from the factory, keeping Golden Rule prices competitive with those of larger retailers.

Attached to the original grocery business was a corn mill. Shelled corn was brought in by rail, the corn was ground and then shipped back out by rail. Deliveries to nearby stores were made by horse-drawn wagon. The grinding was so loud, witnesses testify, that everyone in town knew when a corn shipment had arrived. The machinery was later donated for use in a historical display and has since disappeared. The mill building has been re-faced and is now used for storage of trade-in furniture, most of which is given to the Salvation Army.

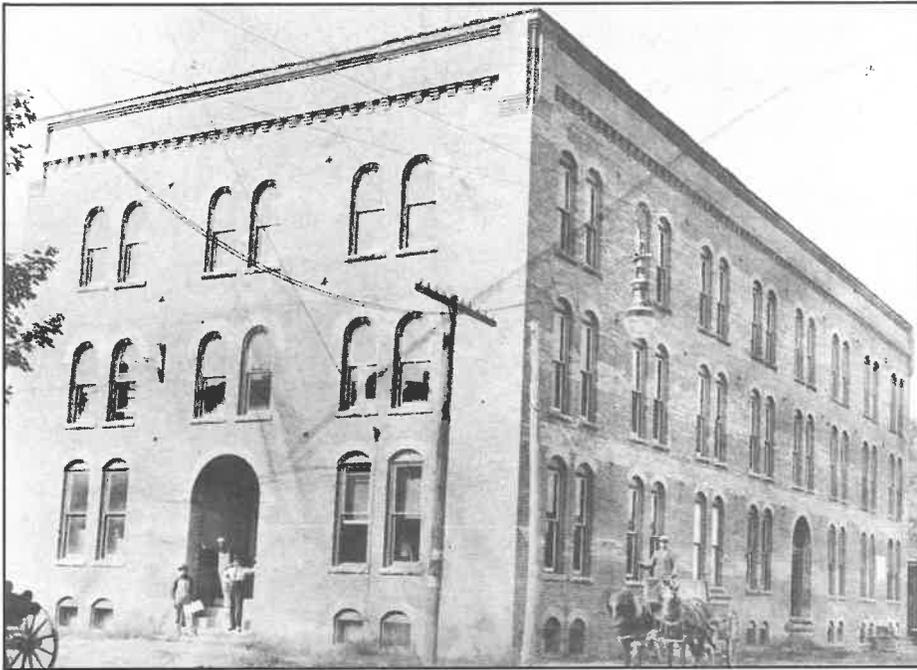
The Golden Rule was incorporated and given its present name in 1928 by Luther Patrick Shinn, who also designed the building. He was the father of William Sexton Shinn, who served as president of The Golden Rule until his death in 1968. Original stockholders were William Sexton Shinn, Luther

Patrick Shinn, Ida May Shinn, and Lola Blanche Shinn, all now dead.

Founder Luther Patrick Shinn had been a merchant in Buckhannon for 48 years. His Buckhannon store was called "Shinn and Sexton." Shinn was born September 25, 1850. A direct descendant of the family from whom the city of Shinnston received its name, Luther Patrick was the grandson of Isaiah Shinn, an early pioneer of Harrison County, and the great-grandson of Levi Shinn. The log house that Levi Shinn built still stands in Shinnston and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Wanda Shinn Mitchell married into the historic family. She and William Sexton Shinn, her first husband, had two sons. Wanda and her sons are the present stockholders of The Golden Rule. In October 1986, 18 years after William's death, Wanda married Roy "Squirrely" Mitchell, a retired coal miner who also worked with the Soil Conservation Service.

Wanda was born in Talbott, southwest of Belington near the



Founder Luther Patrick Shinn built to last, as these two photographs show. The old picture was made early in the building's history, while the new picture shows the structure still solid and its facade basically unchanged.

tion headquartered at Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi recognizes individuals who have done well without benefit of a college education. Successful people like Wanda Shinn Mitchell are just the type Richwood newspaper editor Jim Comstock had in mind when he founded the UHK.

The flood of 1985 was among the personal and business challenges Wanda has overcome. In November of that rainy year the nearby Tygart Valley River overflowed its banks, as did so many streams in the Mountain State. Like Charles Ramsey, Wanda vividly remembers the tragedy.

She can chuckle about it now. "My son Paul called my nephew to come help bring up the rubber boots from the basement — just in case the water came that high," she recalls. "It did — and then some!"

"My house was flooded, as was that of my 81-year-old neighbor, Nellie Queen. We stayed at the store until 4:00 a.m., when the gas fumes began coming up from the basement. The gas shut-off was underwater. I called on the CB, and the fire department came and took Nellie and me out by boat. We were taken to the Civic Center until our folks could get through to take us to their homes.

"There were 12 steps to the basement of the store, and when we left, ten of them were covered," Wanda continues. "I was amazed to find after the water went down that it had not come onto the first floor. It stopped one inch short. We were so thankful and felt so bad about all that other people had lost that we gave a discount to anyone who had suffered from the flood.

"There were 32 inches of water in the house I was living in a block away from the store. After the flood I had a house built on the hill lots I already owned. My niece wrote from Webster Springs that she had heard the saying 'God never takes anything away from a Christian without giving back something better.' That was an encouragement, and it must be true, for I have a nice warm house now for the first time in my life."

Customers of The Golden Rule,



Wanda reports, in addition to those from Belington, come primarily from "up the valley in Randolph County — Elkins, Huttonsville, Dry Fork, Gladys, Alpena — and from Parsons and other parts of Tucker County. We do most of our advertising in the *Inter-Mountain*," she adds, referring to the Elkins daily newspaper.

Directly across the street from her store is a marker which reads "CAMP BELINGTON: Union troops under Brigadier General T. A. Morris advanced from Philippi on July 7, 1861, and established a fortified camp near this site. Battle of Belington took place July 7-11. Confederates were 2 miles east at Laurel Hill." A memorial to the Union and Confederate troops was dedicated on Laurel Hill just last summer.

Belington people are proud of their Civil War history. But they will remind you that right across the road from the Camp Belington marker is another one of the most interesting historical spots in Barbour County, and that this one is still open to customers even on Saturdays. Its manager says that the name says it all, that "62 years of success can be credited to honesty, and to endeavoring to keep the Golden Rule." ❁

Revisiting Al Byrne

While the Golden Rule story was in the works, we had the opportunity to visit with Al Byrne, Wanda Mitchell's fellow Barbour Countian. Mr. Byrne, a senior printer and longtime editor of the *Barbour Democrat* newspaper, was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL cover story in Spring 1989.

The 1989 story, also written by



Al Byrne at the keyboard. Photo by Michael Keller.

Barbara Smith, featured Mr. Byrne's life's work as a Linotype operator. This puts him in the small and dwindling fraternity of printing craftsmen who continue to work in "hot type." The Linotype machine, a marvelous clinking, rattling piece of 19th century technology, casts molten lead into custom lines of type at the command of a keyboard operator. In recent decades the Linotype has been almost entirely replaced by phototypesetting.

Not so in Al Byrne's shop. Although the Philippi printer officially retired in 1975, neither he nor his typesetting machine has shut down operations. He recently told editor Ken Sullivan that he still sets hot type every day.

Now in his mid-80's, Mr. Byrne was seen escorting no fewer than three ladies to the annual Barbour County Kiwanis Club's annual dinner meeting one snowy night in February. He expects to celebrate his 70th year as a Linotype operator in March. We figure that puts him among the oldest active Linotype operators anywhere, and offer him our hearty congratulations.

A traditional round lunch bucket and other mining gear are among the current stock of The Golden Rule.

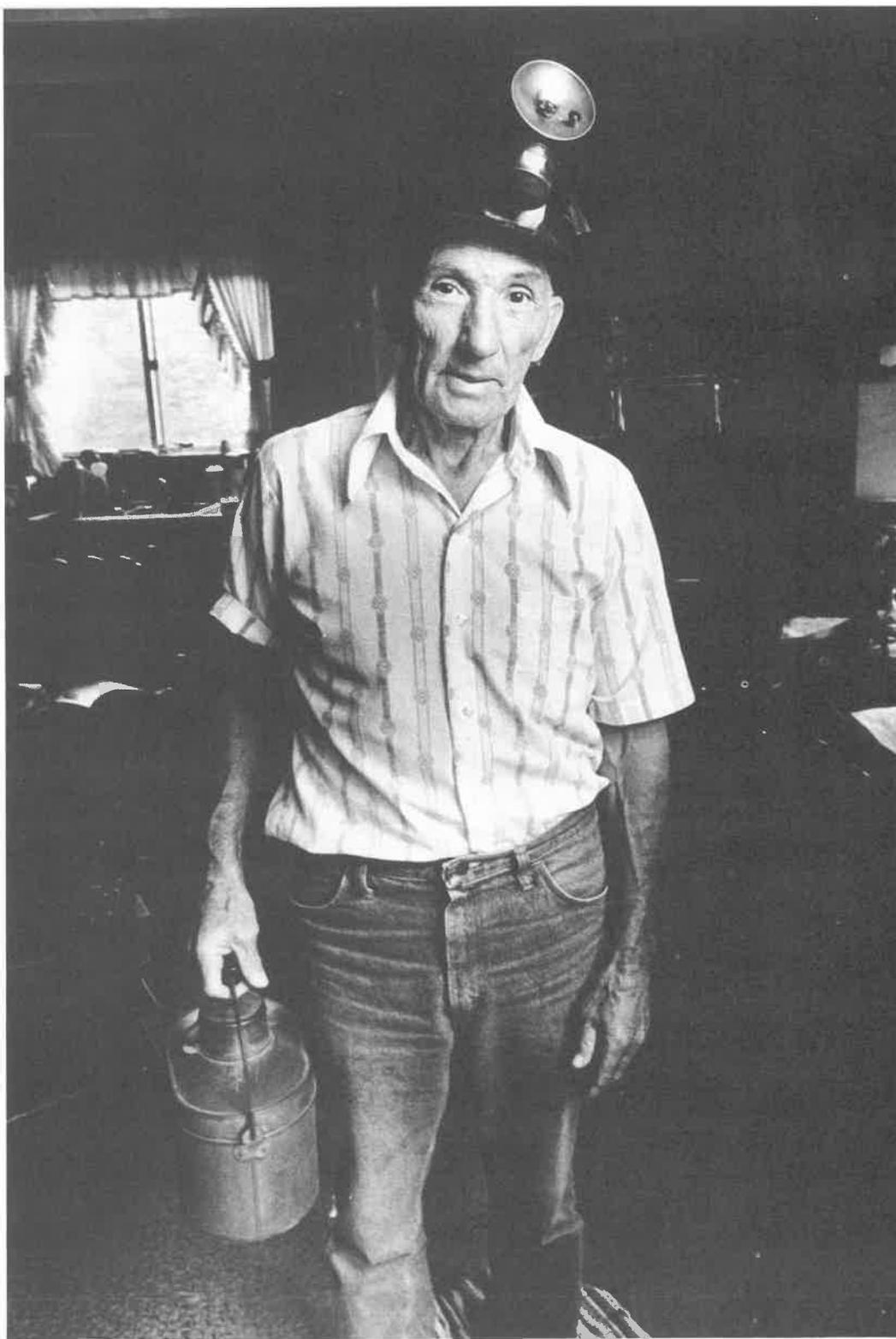


Eugene McGraw dons coal mining gear from his collection. The former miner lives a long way from the coalfields today.

Now he lives far away from it all, from the dust and the noise, the slag heaps and the roads paved with red dog. But sometimes, when he wakes in the night, an old habit, lodged deep in his body, will make him listen for the familiar roar of the ventilating fans. He'll strain his ear into the silence, until the soft sound the wind makes moving in the pasture and the creaking of the big house settling in its season recalls him from the old years to where he now lays. He'll turn over then in the antique bedstead and sigh, remembering where he is: the sweep of the land downslope from the big Victorian house to the untraveled road and behind it the woods breathing, the earth unbroken — a place where no coal has ever been mined.

But simple physical distance has not broken his ties to the work he did for so long. He could not forget even if he wanted to. Coal and hard work have left their signs on his body. The barrel chest, the muscled arms, and the telltale wheeze of dust-clogged lungs that have breathed in too much darkness — all these mark him as an old-time miner. And the mines have left another mark, too, laid deep on his heart — an enduring love for the craft and tools of his trade. It is this love that drives him to collect the tools he remembers using — to gather and preserve all the bits and pieces of a miner's life.

So if you go to visit Gene McGraw in his old house down near the Summers-Monroe county line, he will take you into the room he calls his museum and show you augers and hand drills, powder flasks and respirators and the first tin lamps shaped like little pitchers that men took flaring down into the mines. He'll show you the carbide lamps that replaced those primitive oil lamps, tell you the year cloth caps gave way to hard hats, bring out the squibs



24 Tons Was Enough

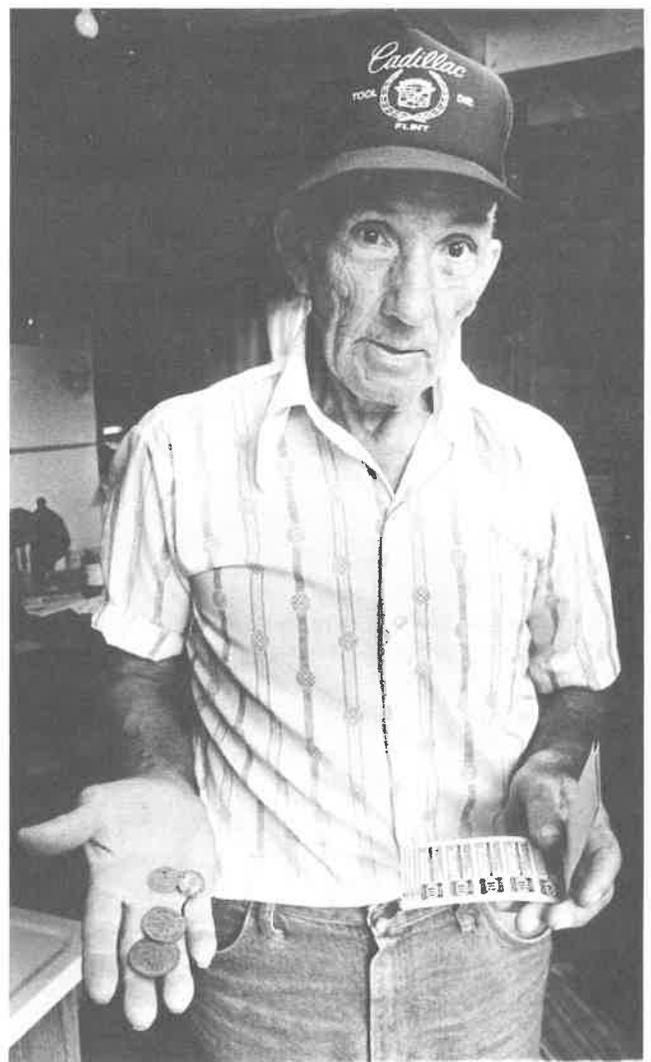
Gene McGraw Recalls Old-Time Mining

Text and Photographs by Andy Yale



Above: Father James Wesley McGraw as a young miner with his wife and first two children. Eugene says that all the boys, including oldest brother Wesley (lower right), followed James into the mines. Photographer and date unknown.

Right: Company scrip makes up part of Mr. McGraw's collection. Here he shows a handful of coins and a booklet of ten cent coupons.



and Davy lights and the scrip that was paid to the men who wielded these tools. And when he's finished showing you his mining gear, Gene will move on to his other collections, antique furniture, glassware and guns, then take you to an out-building full of archaic shop tools and farm implements.

Then, being of a quick perception, Gene will notice you're a little overwhelmed by the rich array of old things he has collected. He'll walk you back into the kitchen for a pause to make sense of all you've seen. He'll fill a ceramic mug with fresh coffee while you take in the display of old kitchen implements that decorate the walls. Then maybe you'll ask him a question or maybe he'll start talking on his own. And as he talks, you'll understand that Gene McGraw has collected a lot more than fine and amusing things in the 78 years he's spent on this planet.

For whether he's relating the fine points of shooting down coal with black powder or recalling hard times and bad working conditions before the union came in, Gene speaks with an authority that seems to give his words physical weight. Listening to him, you understand that he has come

down a rough road and come down it intact. He'll be the first person to say that his life in the mines has not been easy, and "tough" is a word that arises regularly in his speech. That Gene is a tough man there is no doubt. But he also has a curiously refined side that appreciates delicate china and values fine objects for their aesthetic qualities alone. That a life of hard and dirty labor has not stripped him of this appreciation for beauty suggests that the toil that marked his outer body has not laid a finger on the inner man.

Somehow Gene managed to chart a course through the hard industrial landscape of the coalfields that devoured so many without being damaged in his own spirit. He says he was treated like a slave but he never accepted a slave's identity. Instead, he fostered a fierce independence, an independence that still shows in his actions today. For at 78 years old, his breath short from black lung, Gene is renovating the interior of his big farmhouse single-handedly. He'll show you the homemade jigs he's fashioned to hold 4-by-8 panels of sheathing up against the joists while he nails them into place. And then he'll bring you back to the big oak table in

the kitchen for another round of stories about hard times and hard work, and how he survived both, in the days when coal was still mined by hand.

Gene McGraw. Well, I started in the mines when I was 15. Let's see, I guess that was 1928. My dad was a coal miner and us kids, when we grew up, we just followed. Didn't have enough money to go to college — coal mine was all there was. Most all of us went in the mines when we were young — 16 or 17 or 18 years old. Stayed on there until we got killed or retired.

Dad, seven brothers and myself — all was coal miners. I had 41 years in the mines, and two or three of my brothers had more years than I do. I imagine we run close to 350 years in the coal mines, all told. That's a lot of time in the coal mine, buddy, I'm not kidding.

When I first started, I went in trapping. They had trap doors, made the air go around through different parts of the mines. See, the air went in the main entryway, the fan pulled the air in that way and pulled it out where the fan was. I had to keep [my door] shut —

This \$5 token from the New River Company is typical of West Virginia coal company scrip. Courtesy Robert W. Craigo collection.



Coalfields Lingo

Eugene McGraw's story is full of the rich language of southern West Virginia's coal mining counties. For those not familiar with the terminology, we offer the following glossary:

Company work — maintenance, track laying or other support work paid by the hour. In this era, the coal loader was paid by the ton.

Cut of coal — the amount broken loose from the coal seam at a single time by undercutting and blasting.

Monobel — a chemical explosive, similar in that regard to the more powerful dynamite. By contrast, Cardox broke coal loose by the forceful expansion of compressed carbon dioxide.

Motor — a small electric locomotive, used to move carloads of men, supplies, and coal inside the mine.

On the solid — placement of explosives farther back in the seam than the undercutting reached. Shooting from the solid was dangerous.

Red dog — the reddish slag or cinders left by the spontaneous burning of mountainous piles of mine wastes; often used for paving.

Scrip — private currency issued by coal companies as wages in the early days and later as tokens of credit against wages.

Squib — black powder rolled in paper, a few inches long; a primitive fuse.

that forces the air up through the air courses and back in all through [the work] places. If I left it open, all the guys back in there wouldn't have got any air. It would get hot back in there, they'd have to come out. When I'd hear the motor come, I'd open that door. I worked at that for nine months, and I went back to school.

When I was trapping — that was in 1928 — I went in the mines at seven o'clock in the morning and about the earliest I ever got out was eight o'clock in the evening. I had to stay in the mines until everybody cleaned up, or else walk out five or six miles. They wouldn't have the motor run the man trip out until everyone had cleaned up [his work place]. Just have to sit there and wait for them.

When I first went in, you was just about like a slave. Now that's a natural fact, you were just about like a slave. If they said, "go do that," you had to do it — if you didn't, you were fired, you had to go down the road.

It was bad. They had a cleanup system. If you was a coal loader you had to clean that cut up. If it took you until 12 o'clock at night, you cleaned it up. If you came out before that time — say that you had a sick child and you came out to see about your child, take it to the doctor or something like that — they'd say, "Clean up today?"

"No, I had to come out and see about my kid."

"You'd better go back and clean up that cut. If you don't, I got a barefoot man here waiting on the job."

Dad, seven brothers and myself — all was coal miners. I had 41 years in the mines, and two or three of my brothers had more years than I do. I imagine we run close to 350 years in the coal mines, all told.

And they'd send you back — that's an absolute fact. Your wife may be sick, maybe pregnant, baby on the way, and you need to be home. You didn't lay off. You better go to work — if you didn't, you was a fired man.

Let me tell you, it was tough. Well, at one time there was, let me see, one, two, three, four, five of us brothers working and living at home and it took everything we all made to buy groceries and clothes. When Christmas came, we didn't have much Christmas, and we weren't the only ones, everybody was that way. Hard times — kids in the mines working, loading coal. It was a tough situation.

I bought a pair of shoes one time, a pair of Bostonians at the Winding Gulf company store. And I had to work ten days to pay for them. Two dollars a day — Bostonians cost \$20. That's a fact. It was hard on people.

And then a lot of people just didn't have any work, and they were all over the country hunting a job. I've seen people walking up and down the road with a family, and my mother has fed a lot of them. She's fed a lot of people with two or three kids, looking for a job, walking. I know one fellow walked from Oak Hill to Winding Gulf to get him a job. And you know, I figure that must be about 30 miles. Walked all the way. That's the way things were back then — it was tough.

It got a lot better though after the union came in. People got to where they could buy a car, own their own homes. But we had to fight for the union, yes sir. I worked on the tippel at what they call Number 4 Winding Gulf during the summer months while I was going to high school. That's when I



joined the union. The boss — a fellow by the name of Marion Cook — he called us in the tipples one morning, called all the men. Said, "Mr. Summers and myself are not going to have any union. You're not going to be in the union here at Winding Gulf." Of course, I already belonged and I knew several of the other men belonged. And he

said, "Any of you that I catch going to a meeting, I'm going to fire you."

Well, that was in the summer. We had to meet back in the woods, sneaking. By that fall everything was organized, and we began to come out in the open. And later on, Marion Cook had to join the union. They took him off the [supervisory] job and then he had to

join. He didn't want to join, but the boss said, "You either join or go on down the road."

Oh, I tell you, they were hard on the union. My brother Luke was a pit committeeman over there at Winding Gulf, and they got into it about some guy's pay, something or other. Old Man Summers said, "Luke, now, damn it, why don't you quit and leave here?"

"Well," Luke said, "Why don't you fire me?"

"You know damn well I can't fire you. If I do I shut the damn mine down."

That's a fact. There was nothing he could do about it — the union was in. Oh Lord, I'm telling you, he hated the union. He was a tough old guy.

When I quit trapping, I went back to school. Then when I left school, I went over here to Fireco, went to work at Lillybrook. Went to laying track — company work. Then I went to loading, and I liked that better than anything. I've done a little bit of everything in the mines.

As a coal loader, you worked as you wanted to, set your own pace. But if





When I first went in, you was just about like a slave. If they said, "go do that," you had to do it. If you didn't, you were fired, you had to go down the road.

The Lillybrook Coal Company night shift, November 4, 1940. The excerpt (below, left) shows Eugene standing between taller friends. In his mid-20's here, he had begun mining as a schoolboy in his teens.

you were laying track, you had track to lay. They wanted a place done. You had to hurry — you couldn't stop. But if I wanted to sit down and take a rest, loading coal, I could.

I tried to load six cars a day — 24 tons — and that was enough. I seen these guys loading ten or 12 cars a day, and all of them have been dead for years. Man, they killed themselves, wanting to lead the sheet loading coal. They'd get the weigh sheet to see who had the most tonnage. Oh, they made a run for that sheet every morning — wanted to lead the sheet.

Well, they led the sheet all right — all the way to the cemetery. Those guys are all dead and gone. Died young, a lot of them in their 50's. People say you can't kill yourself working, but you can. Too much work will kill a horse.

Well, they must have stopped hand loading around 1960 somewhere. All the mines I worked in during the '60's, there wasn't no hand loading that I know of. The last hand loading that I done was, I guess, about '56. Louis Meadows had hand loading in his mine,

but that was the last one I knowed of. Yeah, all the hand loading went out in the '50's. After that, I ran a motor most of the time.

At Winding Gulf, where I was raised, they had electric motors, battery motors and mules. I don't know why they used mules at the same time they had motors in that mine. Undoubtedly there was some steep grade, and if the rails got wet, it was hard for the motor to pull. But the mules could just keep on going. I imagine that's how it was.

When I was a kid, just a little old boy, I remember them driving those mules into the barn to be shod. And they were mean! I don't know whether it was working the mines or what. See, they'd get shocked all the time, their heads would hit the trolley wire walking out.

And down there at Number 2 Winding Gulf, I've heard my older brother talk about it, they had mules down there in the shaft and they never did come out. When they finally put motors in and brought the mules out, they were blind. Couldn't see, they'd been in the dark so many years. Been in there

12 or 15 years. Had a stable in there and everything.

When my dad was in the mines before me, they didn't even have a cutting machine then. They had to cut with a pick.* They went and put a cut in with their pick — I guess [each miner] must have kept about five or six picks and kept them all sharp. Put a cut in, drill the holes and shoot black powder. Shoot the coal down today, wait for the smoke to clear out tonight, and then tomorrow load the coal. They just got paid for what they loaded — that's all. Made 50 or 75 cents a day, I've heard my mother talk about it.

They bought their own powder and tools back then — the company didn't furnish anything. Always had to buy powder. A powder flask would hold enough for one shift.

They'd drill their holes, take a long iron bar, called it a needle, and shove it back in the hole. Then you put your powder in, then you put your mud or

*Coal was undercut to a depth of several feet so that it would break up when blasted.

dirt [packing] in, whatever you used — they used mud mostly. Then they tamped it around the needle and pulled the needle out. That left this hole all the way back to the powder. You'd put your squib in there, light it and run. Shooting three holes, you had to light those things fast and go. Those squibs were really dangerous.

After squibs, they went to fuses. They burnt slower. The cap went all the way back in [the hole], they put the fuse in the cap and crimped it. Fuse went back six feet — that gave them plenty of time to get away.

And after that, when they stopped using black powder, they used electric caps. Had an old battery about the size of a Prince Albert can, carried it with you, carried it in and out. When you got ready to shoot, run the wire back 100, 150 feet, hook the battery to it. I've had to rewire it two or three times to get the shot to work. Might pull out an old splice when you laid it out — couldn't afford to buy a new cable every time it got cut in two, because it was pretty expensive.

Now, I never used black powder. By the time I started loading coal, we used what they called Monobel. It was less than dynamite but it was stronger than black powder. Used three sticks to the hole — got four holes to shoot, take 12 sticks in. That was it — you knew exactly what you had to have. Shoot your coal, start loading. We used Monobel for a while, then used Cardox in the later '30's.

The Cardox was a long piece of steel, just like a long bolt almost. Some kind of compressed gas in there and you just wired it up. But they were dangerous. You got it back on the solid and it would blow that bolt back out at you. We was working in Glen White once, me and an old boy by the name of Fellow Pittman. And he got it back on the solid. We heard that thing coming out. We went to see where it landed, it hit a timber and tore a chunk out of it as big as your hand.

They gave you a certain number of them and you had to turn them in at night. They'd take them out and reload them and bring them back the next day. I've seen them unload them off of trucks and throw them on the ground and one or two might get to leaking. Whatever it was that was in them, it would be like the frost on a refrigerator, freeze that thing solid white, the gas leaking out.

There was nothing he could do about it — the union was in. Oh Lord, I'm telling you, he hated the union. He was a tough old guy.

Well, after a while, they stopped using Cardox, went to an improved dynamite that was better than Monobel.

By the time I first started in the mines, they were cutting the coal with a cutting machine. They cut the bottom and you went in and dusted out the bottom with a big long-handled shovel — what they call a bug dust shovel. And you always got a car full of dust. There was a car of dust on every cut.

They called it bug dust, and I mean it was *dust* too, it was real fine. So you had this shovel with a seven- or eight-foot handle on it so you could reach all the way in back of the cut, clean all the dust out. If you cleaned it up good, after you shot the coal just broke up. But I've seen the coal sit down on the dust, not shoot good. Then you had to do a lot of digging, or else drill you a little hole and shoot it again, if you had the powder to shoot with. Usually just had what you needed for the day.

Well, you'd take that dust out, drill you a hole and shoot. That knocks your coal down. [Then you'd load your coal.] Next day you come in, lay your track up and dust you a place again. Kept going — about six or seven foot a day. Kind of slow, but we inched on. I know I've been back as high as eight miles in the mines, way back in there, under the

Those guys are all dead and gone. Died young, a lot of them in their 50's. People say you can't kill yourself working, but you can. Too much work will kill a horse.

ground eight miles. We'd be traveling 45 minutes to an hour to get to our places.

The first machines they brought into the mines after cutting machines was conveyors — chain lines with these pans in it, run right up beside the face. Then they went to belts, just load the coal right on the belts.

Then they put in all kinds of machinery — they put in duckbills, tried them, conveyors, tried them, and what they call the German miner. It drove out a 300-foot block of coal. They only had one, brought it from Germany. Had it down here at Helen — Koppers Coal Company brought it in. Then they went to the Wilcox miner, that had big wheels with bits on it, just dug the coal out and brought it right back onto a belt.

Some of the mines don't even have a motor in them now, all belts. You ride the belt in and you ride the belt back. Brings the coal all the way outside. That's all new to me. I never worked in a mine like that. Last I worked, they had conveyors and belts, but they still had motors on the main line.

I drilled with a hand auger when I first went in, up through the '50's. It would take about six minutes to drill a six-foot hole with a hand auger, if you kept it good and sharp. Didn't take long.

They started using electric drills [in places] with the conveyors in the '50's, but the hand loaders were still using a breast auger. It wasn't until I worked on conveyors that I went to using an electric drill.

They were dangerous, the early [electric] drills were. I knew a fellow working at Jonben, he had a sleeve loose. He was drilling and the drill fell and caught that sleeve and pulled his arm off right at the shoulder. Pulled it plumb off. They were supposed to have a clutch in them, but if that clutch went bad, why, they just kept on turning. That's what caught him, see. There wasn't no stopping them — if you had the switch on, you couldn't get it off. But later on they came out with safety features and made sure those clutches were right. Oh, yeah, those drills were something else. They was heavy and hard to hold. You had to be careful with them.

But I was always pretty lucky. Never had many accidents. I had one wreck. I was running a motor and had a wreck,



Eugene McGraw with part of his collection of coal mine artifacts.

busted my lamp, hardcap, fractured my leg — just a hairline fracture. I waited for somebody to come and see about it, but nobody even showed up. I was back in there about, I guess, a mile, with my light busted. A blind person couldn't be in any worse shape. So I felt around and found a cap pole, dragged it along the rail, just like a blind man with a cane. He can feel his way with a cane — you ever watch them? That's the way I was doing.

People don't know what it is to work in the mines. I've only got about 30 or 35 percent of my breathing — at least 65 percent is gone. See, we didn't have the safety things they have now, supposed to have. A lot of the old coal miners, golly, 90 percent of them are dead that I knew when I retired in '72. Very few coal miners get up to be my age.

I knowed old coal miners who didn't have any idea of how many cars of coal they'd loaded. Didn't have *any* idea

how many cars! Every time he'd load a car, he'd go back and put a piece of coal in his bucket. And then that evening, why, he'd show his buddy "Here's how many cars I loaded. How many did I load?" And he'd tell him. That's the way they kept track.

They weren't dumb people. If you wanted him to get out here and do some work for you, he'd know how to do that. Just didn't have no learning, that's all. Had to go to work too early in life. A lot of them started as kids, backhanding coal for their daddies. They would shovel coal out to where their daddies could reach it easy. Nine, ten — well, they said some of them went into the mines at seven years old. It was pitiful. I guess my dad had done that for his dad, too.

Yeah, coal mining was a tough job at one time. Bring a cut or bring your tools — that was the motto. And you done it, too. ✨

*At Number 2 Winding
Gulf, they had mules
down in the shaft and
they never did come out.
When they finally
brought the mules out,
they were blind. Couldn't
see, they'd been in the
dark so many years.*



Paul Chamberlain as a young barber in Wellsburg in 1924. He and Lorna began housekeeping that year. Photographer unknown.

Buying on Time

A 1920's Couple Sets Up Housekeeping

By Lorna Chamberlain
Photographs by Michael Keller



Paul and I were married in 1924 and went to housekeeping in two furnished rooms that cost us \$8 a week. We lived in Wellsburg in Brooke County in the Northern Panhandle, where I still live today.

We had an average-sized bedroom that had a bed, dresser and two chairs, and a tiny little kitchen with a table, two chairs, and a hotplate. The hotplate sat up on a wooden box with shelves. A curtain draped across the front concealed our dishes, silverware and cooking utensils. There was no kitchen sink.

I had to walk down a long hallway to a shared bathroom to get water. I also went there to empty my dishwasher.

"We won't have to live here for long," my new husband said to me. "As soon as we can we'll buy furniture and get a place of our own."

At the time neither Paul nor I was encumbered with many belongings. We'd eloped, and all I had were the belongings I'd hastily stuffed into an overnight bag. There were no wedding gifts to have to stash in our one small clothes closet.

Soon an unforeseen thing happened. I woke up one morning aching all over, and feeling strange, feverish and very squeamish. When I ran my hands over my face it felt enormous.

I had a bad case of the mumps. I'd have to remain in bed. I was sure it was God's way of punishing me for having eloped. Who wants to be a new bride and come down with the mumps in less than two weeks?

As I watched my husband hurrying about, getting his own breakfast, getting ready to go to work, I began to cry. That got his attention.

"I'd better take the day off and stay here with you," he said.

"Go ahead and go," I said to him. "It's just that I look so awful," I honestly admitted.

"Why, if you could only smile you could qualify to be Miss America," he teased.

Trying to laugh, I cried harder.

Paul went to his job as a barber in a downtown barber shop. In those days he came home at eleven, four and then after eight, the barber shop's closing time, save for Saturdays when Wellsburg barbershops stayed open until nine.

Later on that day, the landlady came in to say that there were two men downstairs wanting to deliver a victrola my husband had bought. When he came home from work he told me he'd bought it on the installment plan, at \$10 down and \$10 a month for the next 14 months. It would keep me company, he said.

After we'd been married about three months, we found ourselves still living in the same place. Every time company came either we or they had to sit on the bed, and we spent a lot of time talking about trying to buy furniture. The only problem was we didn't have a bank account. It was taking all my husband made just to keep up with expenses.

Today you hear people say groceries were cheap back in the '20's. Don't you believe it. Bread, always unsliced, might have been only five cents a loaf, eggs might have been less than a quarter a dozen, and you might have been able to buy a gallon of milk for 40 or 50 cents — but for many a working man his grocery bill was the worry of his life. He was forever having to try to borrow money, while pleading with his wife not to buy so much.

Who owed what, where, was whispered about all over town. The biggest grocery bill a family I knew owed was for \$1,700. The father had been out of work for over two years. In those days there was neither welfare or food stamps. The men who owed the two- and three-hundred dollar bills, and were being hounded to pay up, were all over town.

What was wrong was that the grocer had the upper hand. In about every city block there was a neighborhood grocery store. You went to the counter and waited your turn. Then a clerk would come to wait on you. Whatever you asked for you'd be given — no choosing. Your head of lettuce might be the smallest one from those on display. If you asked for a dozen bananas — which was the only way oranges and bananas were sold — you'd be given three or four that were overripe. The pork chops would be weighed so fast that neither you nor the clerk could read the actual weight.

There were no frozen vegetables. A good brand of canned peas was 35 cents. They sold cheaper brands but once you tried them you made up your mind then and there not to try those little bullet peas again. Other vegetables were similar in price. Prepared jams and jellies were about the price they are today.

Chicken was never cut up unless you dressed it yourself. You had it only on Sunday. Turkey you had once a year, at Thanksgiving time. You called an eight-pound turkey a great big bird, and expected it to feast a family gathering. You usually spent half a day picking out the pinfeathers that had been left when the turkey was dressed.

The A&P was the first chain store to come to our town. Local grocers just carried on. They claimed you'd be a traitor to patronize such a place where all the money made would be sent out of town. Buy at home and keep your



Lorna Chamberlain's high school photograph. Photographer unknown, 1924.

money where it can be spent by hometown people, was their preachment.

Your first trip to the new A&P was a weird experience. You looked in all directions to make sure nobody would recognize you. Once inside, when you saw the prices and discovered that you could buy about six pounds of peanut butter for the price you'd been paying for a tiny jar, you thought to yourself, "I'm all for this."

So right from the beginning we ran a grocery bill. I was learning how to buy things. At first I bought only a pint of milk daily. Then a brother-in-law made me a little window box that fitted the outside of a kitchen window. I could keep milk and eggs and butter and such things as needed refrigeration out there in the winter time.

About every day we talked about getting another place. We reasoned that we could start out with maybe a bed and dresser, and a stove and a breakfast set for the kitchen. One day Paul came home to say a man who clerked in a downtown furniture store had been in for a haircut. They'd discussed our situation. Paul said I was to go to the store where the man worked and pick out a few things, and the man would try to help us by talking it over with management.

I went. I spent two or three hours

looking at stoves and breakfast sets and beds and dressers and a rug and linoleum. The clerk was extremely nice. He added up the bill as I left, assuring me that he was pretty sure everything was going to be all right.

When my husband came home for the day he said the clerk had been in, making all kinds of apologies. The store wanted cash only, not 60 to 90 days. My husband was irritated. "That isn't the only furniture store in town," he said to me. "Try the other one."

So once again I went shopping for furniture. And once again we were turned down. That's when I said, "This isn't the world's worst place to live. We're making out all right, aren't we?"

Paul didn't answer right away. When he did, he said to me, "I'm going over to the Wellsburg National Bank tomorrow. Just last year I borrowed a few hundred dollars to help Mama and Papa catch up with their overdue house payment. I've done the same thing twice before. I'll bet my life the National Bank will loan me the money."

When Paul came home for lunch the next day he was beaming.

"The bank president and I had a long talk," he said. "I asked him how much it would take to buy three rooms of nice furniture and right away we reached an agreement. I'm to have the money paid back in a year's time, giving monthly installments to the bank. He even said his brother has a furniture store in Brilliant, Ohio, just across the river. He says he'll call him up and talk to him about us. This time you can go to a furniture store with the sure feeling that you're not going to be turned down."

Going to that store is something I'll always remember. I crossed the Ohio River on the ferry boat. Brilliant was a very small town so I had no trouble finding the store. When I went in I spoke to a clerk. I told him I was from Wellsburg and I'd come to look at furniture. He asked, "Are you Mrs. Chamberlain?"

When I told him I was he told me that Mr. Rodgers, the man who owned the store, had said that he was to be called when I came in. He went to get him.

Soon a middle-aged, fatherly looking man came swinging his way between overstuffed chairs and davenports, eyeing me with a smile of friendliness. "I'm so glad you came," he said.

"I want you to have top quality. In buying furniture it's wisest to get things that will last for years, Mrs. Chamberlain. Look around and we'll start right here with things for your living room. I'll keep prices at a minimum."

The first thing he showed me was a three-piece living room set — a davenport and two chairs, a striking brownish shade with a deep rose background. He said to me, "This is all wool mohair. It'll wear for years and years. Do you like that?"

"I think it's beautiful," I said.

"All right, now let's choose a davenport table to go with it. That solid mahogany standing there is a beauty."

"I don't think I have to have a table."

"Sure you do. To set a lamp on and maybe a vase and bookends. Let's choose the mahogany one."

Mr. Rodgers would lecture me about the quality and the low price of the things we were looking at, and then he'd say, "Now let's choose this one." I'm sure I had a dumbfounded look on my face. I kept saying to him, "I don't want to spend any more than I have to for things," to which he'd instantly reply, "I'm fully aware of that."

He sold me a beautiful five-piece bedroom suite with a Simmons mattress and box springs. The breakfast set he sold me would never have to be repainted, he told me. He sold me a Sellers kitchen cabinet, telling me I'd forever praise him for having sold me such a perfect work center. "You have everything right at your fingertips," he said, as he swung open a door and lowered a 50-pound flour container to the floor. "See how easy it'd be to fill this. You'll love this work center."

Almost against my protests he sold me a porcelain-lined, oak-finished ice box. In all the years I had it, it was a showpiece. Others had ice boxes lined with zinc or some kind of metal always painted white. Mine was a Leonard make with sturdy gleaming porcelain. In the summertime, I used about half as much ice as neighbors did.

He kept telling me, "I may have to stretch things a bit to say we haven't overspent, but I want you to have nice things."

I was so elated that as soon as I got back to Wellsburg I went to the shop where my husband worked and called him outside. I whispered to him, "Mr. Rodgers sold us the most beautiful furniture. Just wait until you see it!"

"Good! Now we'll find us a place to put it," he said to me.

We didn't spend a lot of time house hunting. A customer told my husband about a place on his street where the family wanted to rent out their upstairs. We went to see it and liked it. The rooms were spacious and cheerful, although I still didn't have a sink in the kitchen and I still had to make my way to the family bathroom for water.

Our rent for the new place was only \$25 a month, but right after we'd paid our rent for the second month the woman of the house took her little girl and went south to visit her mother. She'd told us she was going. What she hadn't told us was that there'd be nobody in the house while she was gone. It was in the middle of winter and near zero. We found ourselves in a cold, cold house with the basement door locked and no way to get to the furnace.

We kept the stove burners and oven going in the kitchen, but we still had to wear sweaters and coats. When we learned the man of the house had gone to his mother's place to stay we decided to get in touch with him. His mother told us that he worked turns at the mill, and that she'd have him call when he came home.

He didn't call but his mother did. She



This kitchen work center was among the items the Chamberlains purchased "on time." The flour bin lowers for filling and then swings easily back into place.

A chest and dresser purchased in 1924 remain in service in the Chamberlain household. The salesman told Lorna to emphasize sturdy quality over price.



said he'd said to tell us that he didn't want strangers fooling with the furnace because he didn't use regular coal in it. He used anthracite. Not everyone understood how to use that kind of coal.

Days passed and we were trying hard to put up with things. The owner didn't pay any attention to our plight. We even bought a little gas stove and connected it onto a pipe where it could be used. Windows all over the house froze over solid. As things turned out, I suppose it was good luck. We might have kept on living in that house for years, had things gone better.

One evening when my husband came in from work and found me with my coat on, hurrying about the kitchen, he said, "I hate to have to pay a moving bill so soon, but let's get out of here. That man's attitude strangles me. The least he could do would be to come here and fire up that furnace once in a while."

The only place we could find on such short notice was a little three-room house that set on the back of a lot, close to an alley. The place was old and badly in need of repairs, but the rent was cheap, only \$20 a month. It didn't have a bathroom but it did have a toilet in the enclosed section that had been built onto the back porch. We called our landlord's mother and told her we were moving out. He could pick up our key at the barbershop, we told her.

Now we had beautiful new furniture and an old, old house. We got a rug border and put it around the worn-out, scuffed floors. My husband and his brother beaverboarded the kitchen, which had also been part of the back porch. One Saturday, when my husband left for work and told me he wouldn't try to make it home either for lunch or dinner, because it was payday everywhere and they'd be busy, I had an idea.

My idea was that I could paper the walls in the living room. On the farm I hadn't learned how to cook, but I did know a little bit about wallpaper and how you hung it.

I went to a store and bought rolls of rose-colored oatmeal paper, which was very wide and heavy. I bought paste to go with it. I brought it home, borrowed a stepladder from a neighbor and papered the living room. When my husband came home he just carried on.



Lorna Chamberlain takes her ease in the "new house" she and Paul built in 1929.

You would have thought I had painted the whole place. He set to work and enameled the old woodwork white. There was our new furniture in the right setting.

A middle-aged widow lived just across the alley in a spacious two-story house. She began to drop in now and then. Her son traveled, she told us, and was only home about once every six months. She was lonely and just didn't know what to do sometimes, she said. I always gave her samples of the things I cooked. She got into the habit of coming more and more often.

She invited me over to see her house. It seemed so beautiful. It had a latticed-in back porch and a butler's pantry off the kitchen, with cupboards and shelves everywhere. In the dining room were two big built-in china cupboards. The living room had a red tile mantel and French doors leading into the room-size hallway. The house had an air of elegance.

"Why don't you come over here and live?" she said to me.

"Oh, we could never afford this kind of place," I said, and for a while it was dropped. But every so often she'd talk to me about moving into her house. She began to inquire about how much rent we paid. One day she said, "If you move over to my house I'll rent the downstairs to you for five dollars more on the month than you're paying now."

Who wouldn't accept that kind of offer? We didn't even have to hire a moving van. We carried things across the alley. We lived in that lovely house for the next few years. Our oldest son was born there.

In a year we had the furniture paid for, right on schedule. Then we noticed the beautiful green Dodge on display in the window of the garage about a block away. "Buy this car on the installment plan at \$60 a month and have it paid for in a year's time," said the sign. ❁



The task of "Wheeling West Virginia on the Ohio River" gave this young man no trouble at all. This is one of the later versions of the postcard pun.

Wheeling West Virginia — No Comma

A Postcard Pun

By Louis E. Keefer

"One of the greatest athletic feats ever performed," says a postcard with a cartoon drawing of a knicker-clad youngster propelling, across rippled blue water, an old-fashioned toy hoop larger than himself. Inside the hoop is an outline of the state of West Virginia, depicting its counties and major cities.

The caption reads "Wheeling W. Va. on the Ohio River." With the comma after Wheeling deliberately omitted, we are to understand that the word

"Wheeling" is used as verb, as in "carting" or "carrying" West Virginia. The boy is literally wheeling the state of West Virginia, get it? And doing so on the Ohio River, no less.

Unpostmarked, the card probably was printed in the 1940's. The slightly textured "linen" finish is typical of that period. Thousands of these "C. T. Art-Colortone" cards were printed by the Curt Teich Company of Chicago, Illinois. The one shown was sold by the Phillips News Company of Wheeling.

This card was neither the first nor the last to make the "Wheeling West Virginia" pun. The first is thought to date back to 1904, when four-year-old Nerene Kirk posed for her father, George Kirk, in the photography studio founded by her grandfather, John H. Kirk. The studio was located on the site of today's Capitol Music Hall, home of WWVA's popular "Wheeling Jamboree" radio show, on the next street over from the present Kirk's Studio.

This page: The pun originated with Nerene Kirk's 1904 pose shown here in two variations. The third is the original art board used by the Curt Teich Company, one of the publishers of the popular postcard. Art board courtesy Curt Teich Postcard Archives, Lake County Museum.

Opposite, top: Another version of the pun showed a boy pushing the wheelbarrow. This card, postmarked Wheeling, June 17, 1915, makes the pun plain by putting Wheeling in quotation marks.

Opposite page, below: Modern Wheeling postcards are more scenic if less humorous. These and the historic cards came to us from the collection of author Louis Keefer; old postcards restored by Greg Clark.

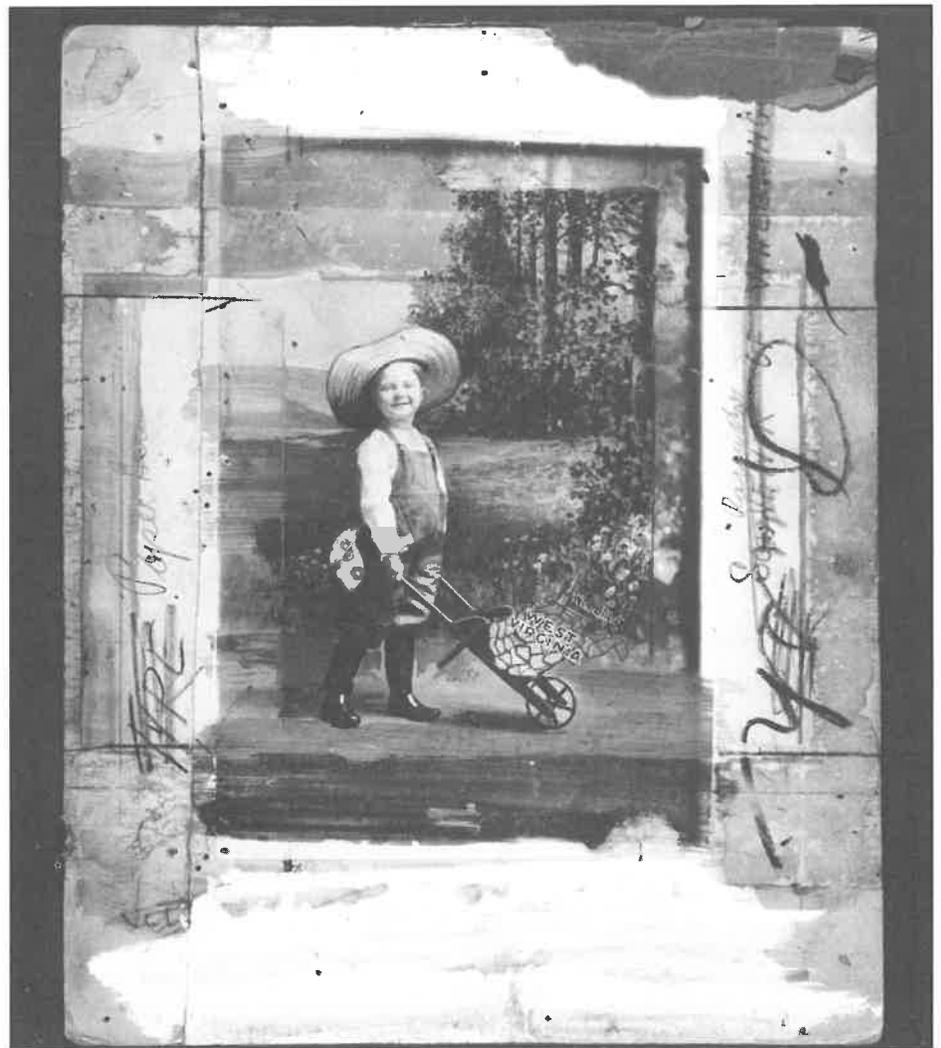


Possibly the most famous of all West Virginia postcards, this one shows the little girl smiling at the camera and trundling a small wooden wheelbarrow loaded with a cardboard cut-out of the state. The innocence of her expression helps highlight the puckishness of the caption, "Wheeling West Virginia."

There are at least half a dozen versions of the card, some printed in black and white, others in color. Sometimes the state is labeled "West Virginia" and sometimes not. The word "Wheeling" generally appears beside the Northern Panhandle but not always. Two variations of the card are illustrated here.

The little girl enjoyed her experience thoroughly. A few years ago, Nerene Kirk Reed, then living in Florida, recalled for her cousin, Martha Miller, some of the particulars about the card for which she modeled 80 years before.

"My grandfather, John H. Kirk, a photographer and artist, approved of this idea, and supplied the 'trappings' for the picture of me," Mrs. Reed remembered. "I recall the wheelbarrow was the hardest article to come by. Except for the bandana, all the other clothing I wore in the picture was mine. I must have been a ham because I loved every minute of the 'sitting' for the picture. I became quite a celebrity. The kids in school asked, 'Aren't you



awful tired after wheeling West Virginia around in that wheelbarrow?

"Each company that published my picture made a slight change," she told Mrs. Miller. "In the original picture my grandfather placed the bandana around my neck, tied very low on my chest. It moved all around me — tied close to my neck, and later appeared in my right side pocket."

Mrs. Reed told of vicariously half-circling the globe when a friend sent her one of her own postcards from faraway China. Since there was no such thing as air mail in those days, the card made its 13,000-mile journey to Wheeling strictly by ship and train.

The popular card was first published by Wheeling's own Kirk Art Galleries, but then by Helmbright Brothers, A. C. Bosselman & Company, Hugh C. Leighton Company, Klever Company, and others. A few of the color cards were printed in Germany, and some became part of Wheeling souvenir folders.

No one knows how many were printed altogether, but since the Nerene Kirk cards can be found postmarked with dates all the way from 1904 well into the 1920's, in those 20 years the total might well reach into the tens of thousands.

Another card, with nearly an identical motif — a little boy pushing a wheelbarrow laden with the state of West Virginia — was issued shortly after the Nerene Kirk card. An early version, postmarked 1908, shows the boy with a ragged, Huck Finn sort of straw hat. The caption to this one inserts a hyphen to make sure we get the point: "Wheel-ing W. Va." In a later version, postmarked 1915, a retoucher has redone the hat and removed its feather and Wheeling has lost its hyphen.

In the 1930's, a more modern version of the little boy postcard was produced by Tichnor Quality Views and distributed by the Wheeling Central News Agency. Wearing knickers, a long-sleeved white shirt, and a tie, the youngster is shown carting a badly misshapen state outline in the now-familiar wheelbarrow. He is moving along a paved road in the sign-posted direction of "Wheeling West Virginia."

Postcards were once immensely popular. Around the turn of the century, when postcards usually cost only a penny and could be mailed virtually

anywhere in the world for another penny or two, many a laboring mailman's delivery bag bulged with dozens daily.

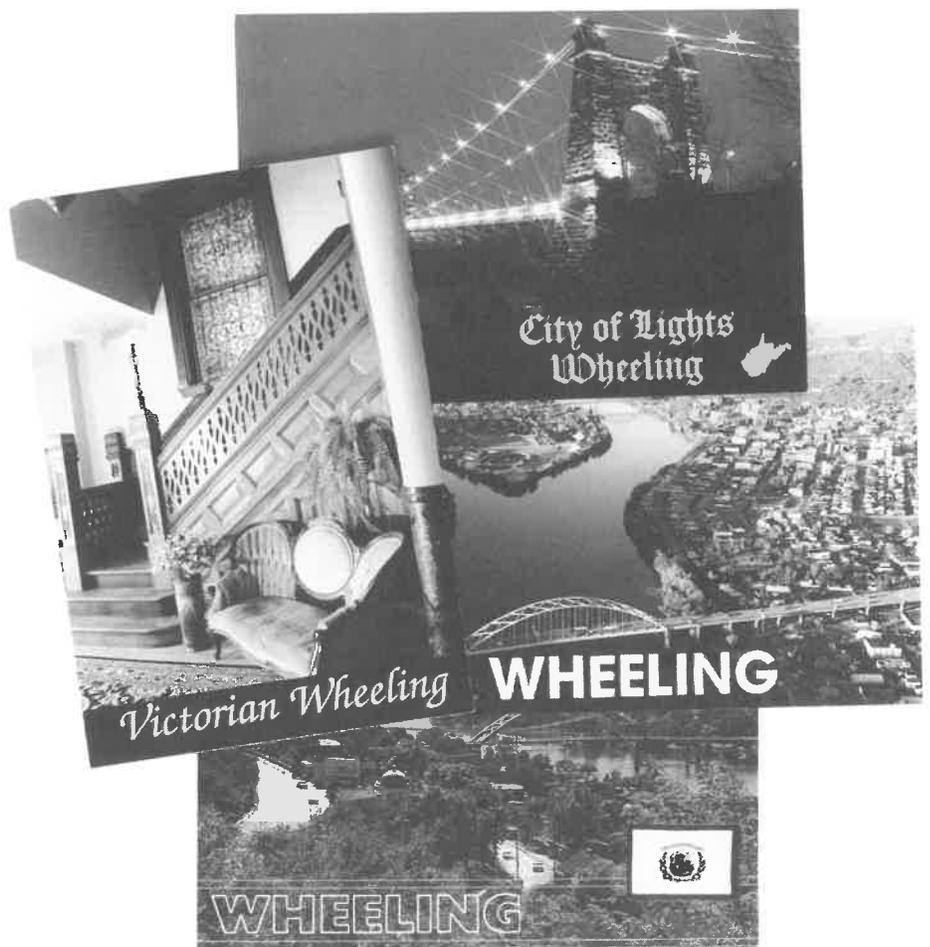
At the zenith of their popularity — from May 19, 1898, when Congress agreed that they could be mailed at less cost than a letter, until the 1920's, when telephones came into common use — penny postcards were the common means of sharing the kind of personal messages that we now pass along by phone.

Katherine Hamilton-Smith, curator of the huge Curt Teich Postcard Collection — over 300,000 original photographs and drawings donated by the now-defunct manufacturer to the Lake County Museum near Chicago — knows this very well. "Postcards recorded anything and everything that could be photographed, printed and sold," she says. "They documented where Americans went on vacation, how they got there and what they saw along the way."

For historical purposes, the people and places pictured are often more



important than the words on the other side. Postcards may have been invented for people who didn't need or like to write letters — people whose messages tended to be short if not always sweet. A "Wheeling West



Virginia" card mailed June 17, 1915, said merely: "Hello folks. How is everybody? Also the chickens? Jim."

By comparison, the writer of another Wheeling card, mailed September 4, 1913, is positively effusive: "Hello. Arrived in Wheeling at 12 P.M. Monday night. Missed connections at Harpers Ferry so had to come by way of Pittsburgh. Like the place very well. Aunt Maude hasn't been very well but is better now. This leaves me well. Hope it may find you all likewise. Tell everybody hello. Will write again soon as I get to _____ ville [obscured]. Love to all. Fondly, Grace."

In addition to the satisfaction of being remembered, recipients found pleasure in a card's imagery and beauty. In those days, before television, colorful pictorial scenes from other states and foreign countries were

particularly prized. Both individuals and families saved and proudly displayed their favorites in scrapbooks.

Today these scrapbooks, as well as many millions of single cards, can be found in dealers' shops and postcard shows in every state. Scarce cards may command prices well into the hundreds of dollars. Well-preserved postcard albums from the early 1900's are sometimes valued even higher.

In fact, the old cards used to illustrate this story were recently found at a regional postcard show held near Dulles Airport in Virginia. There, seated next to the author and poring through a dealer's tray bulging with Wheeling cards, was Ellen Dunable. Dubbed by the *Wheeling Intelligencer* the "Postcard Lady of Wheeling," her collection of 30,000 cards includes more than 2,500 showing scenes of Wheeling.

One thing led to another, and noticing my purchase of the "wheeling" cards, Mrs. Dunable obligingly outlined for me the charming story of Nerene Kirk Reed. Later, she kindly gave me a copy of Martha Miller's record of her postcard conversation with Mrs. Reed.

Although Mrs. Dunable thinks modern postcard manufacturers fail to do justice to her city's attractions, Wheeling remains a popular postcard subject. There are probably dozens of views in print, and now and then a newer version of Nerene Kirk Reed's card may be seen. Surely the task of "wheeling" the state around must remain as difficult as it was in 1904, and certainly it costs more to mail your greetings, but it's heartwarming to know that this innocent and appealing pun retains its popularity. ♣

This scene of Fayette County loggers with their little "Peerless" locomotive is among the postcards published by Thurmond Postcards.

Thurmond Postcards



Postal cards with historic subjects have been around since the late 1800's, and in recent years they have become popular again. In West Virginia the Mingo County town of Matewan has recently issued postcard scenes of its labor history and the local Hatfield-McCoy saga, and the State Archives has reprinted historic images from its holdings. The work of Curt Teich, the world's leading postcard manufacturer in the

early 20th century and a rich source of West Virginia images, is now housed at the Curt Teich Postcard Archives in Illinois.

Katy Miller is the proprietor of Thurmond Postcards, a newcomer to the field, headquartered in the legendary Fayette County town of Thurmond. The standard-sized postcards are made from historical photographs of the New River Gorge

area. A sampling of subjects include Main Street, Thurmond; moonshine still; logging engine on a wooden "pole railroad"; and engine 1041 at Thurmond. The postcards sell for \$.25 each or in sets of four for \$1. Shipping is \$.30 for 1 to 6 postcards, and \$.60 cents for 7 to 20. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax. Contact Thurmond Postcards, P.O. Box 27, Thurmond, WV 25936.



These Dunkard Ridge oil field workers pose at their boardinghouse during the boom. Photographer and date unknown.

Drillers, Shooters and Roustabouts

Oil at Dunkard Ridge

By Donna M. Weems and Norma Jean Venable
Photographs by Michael Keller

Bristling against the sky, abandoned oil derricks still sprout from forgotten hills and hollows along Dunkard Ridge. They stand tribute to a vital industry that brought sudden growth and opportunity to a sleepy farming community. Named for the German-Baptist Brethren, or Dunkards, who visited the area in the 1750's, Dunkard Ridge is located in Monongalia County near the Mason-Dixon line. Underneath runs a series of oil-containing rock formations — anticlines and synclines in geologists' jargon — that extend from Pennsylvania into West Virginia.

As the naturalist and historian Earl Core explained in his books, *The*



Robert Donley grew up in the local oil field. He still lives on Dunkard Ridge.

Monongalia Story and Chronicles of Core, oil wells were drilled around Dunkard Ridge for 30 years after the Civil War, but no petroleum gushed forth. Then in 1888 a well drilled with a steam engine to a depth of 1,800 feet finally struck the black gold. So excited was the owner that he hired a man to guard the new well, equipping him with two revolvers and a brush scythe. The oil boom had arrived.

The new industry was regarded as an opportunity by young men on the farms of Dunkard Ridge. It offered adventure, good wages, and sometimes a chance to strike it rich. The work was outdoors

and largely manual. Often the farm boys already had experience with machinery and sawmills, and they were no strangers to 12-hour days and seven-day weeks. Wages ran as high as \$4 to \$5 a day, an astounding sum at the time. Oil field work was to their liking.

Born and raised on Dunkard Ridge, Robert Donley, now in his 80's, worked the wells there in his youth. Robert missed the original boom but he still follows many of the old ways, living without electricity in a house illuminated by gas light. His recollections are recorded in the book, *Dunkard Ridge*, by Norma Jean Venable.

Robert remembers that a large boardinghouse was kept by a couple named Cobb and their daughter, Toots. Lilly Inghram, Bob's late aunt, occasionally worked at the boardinghouse. She recalled that the men who lodged there worked as drillers, shooters, roustabouts, teamsters and lumbermen.

Some of the oil men lodged at nearby Pedlar's Run and the hamlet of Core and rode to work in large western saddles, with big wrenches and other tools swinging from the saddle horn. One roustabout rode in on his bay mare and stabled her at the nearby Inghram farm and then walked to the wells in Line Hollow. Before her death Lilly recalled that she fed the bay, along with any other horses that were stabled there for the day. Sometimes there were as many as five or six horses to feed at the Inghram place.

When oil was struck and a new field opened, hundreds, even thousands, of men and women found employment. According to Mody C. Boatright, in *Folklore of the Oil Industry*, there was an initial frenzy of development which typically lasted a year or two until a field was "drilled out." That is, the limit of the oil pools was defined, and all the wells needed were drilled. Carpenters who specialized in rig building, boilermakers, drillers, shooters, teamsters, tank builders, machinists, pumpers, and the versatile roustabouts were all part of the scene during this busy period. Men and women from many other professions — bookkeepers, lawyers, accountants, cooks, secretaries, surveyors, housekeepers, telegraph operators and others — could also adjust their skills to meet an oil boom.

The drilling crew were the first to go to work, erecting a rig on the drilling site. Since hardwood was plentiful in West Virginia, most of the early derricks were wooden. Eugene D. Thoenen states in the *History of the Oil and Gas Industry in West Virginia* that carpenters erected rigs with sloping sides that rose from a 12-foot-square base to a top about four feet square. The crown wheel and the tackle used for lifting the drilling tools from the hole were attached to the peak of the rig. It took only 30 days of hard work for skilled workers to place the engine, band wheel, line reels, and bull wheels.

Teamsters hauled everything into

Dunkard Ridge, including boilers, well casings and supplies. Robert Donley remembers how those teamsters worked their teams. One man in particular — Cassidy, a slim, wiry fellow with a black moustache and a squeaky voice — pushed his horses and oxen awfully hard. He drove them relentlessly, through briars and over rough terrain. The result was broken legs and the eventual destruction of the animals. Cassidy drove his brutes uphill without stopping, breaking their wind. Such a hard-driving teamster might get the job done faster but at the expense of his stock and ultimately himself, Robert believes.

Robert remembers another teamster, a woman, who managed her animals more wisely. She worked for the Washington Oil Company hauling cables and casing. She was slim and pretty, had long hair, and wore bib overalls or men's trousers. She always had a good team and also worked in the fields cutting briars. First she lived with Robert's friends Joe and Plezy in a log house, then she lived alone, and later she married a man who was cruel to her. Even as an older woman her skill with scythe, axe, and livestock was well known.

Once the supplies were on hand and the derrick and rig had been erected, the actual well drilling began. Most of the early drilling in West Virginia was done by the cable-tool method. Salt well crews had pioneered this method to drill for salt brine in the Great Kanawha Valley, then the younger oil industry adopted and modified the technology. The early cable-tool drill consisted of a bit or cutting head which was screwed into an auger system and backed up by heavy weights or "jars." The whole assembly was suspended by a large cable and lowered into the well from a system of pulleys on the rig.

Cable-tool drilling was accomplished by an up-and-down pounding and turning action, the weight of the jars providing extra punch on the down swing. Muscle and sweat were the earliest sources of power, but it was the employment of the steam engine which enabled the oil well drillers to reach relatively great depths at Dunkard Ridge. When drillers reached solid rock, they periodically replaced the bit with a "bailor," a device about six feet long which served to clean the tailings from the hole. The introduction of iron well

casing in the 1880's helped solve the problem of cave-ins. Roustabouts lowered the casing pipe into a newly drilled hole by screwing on additional joints as the drilling progressed.

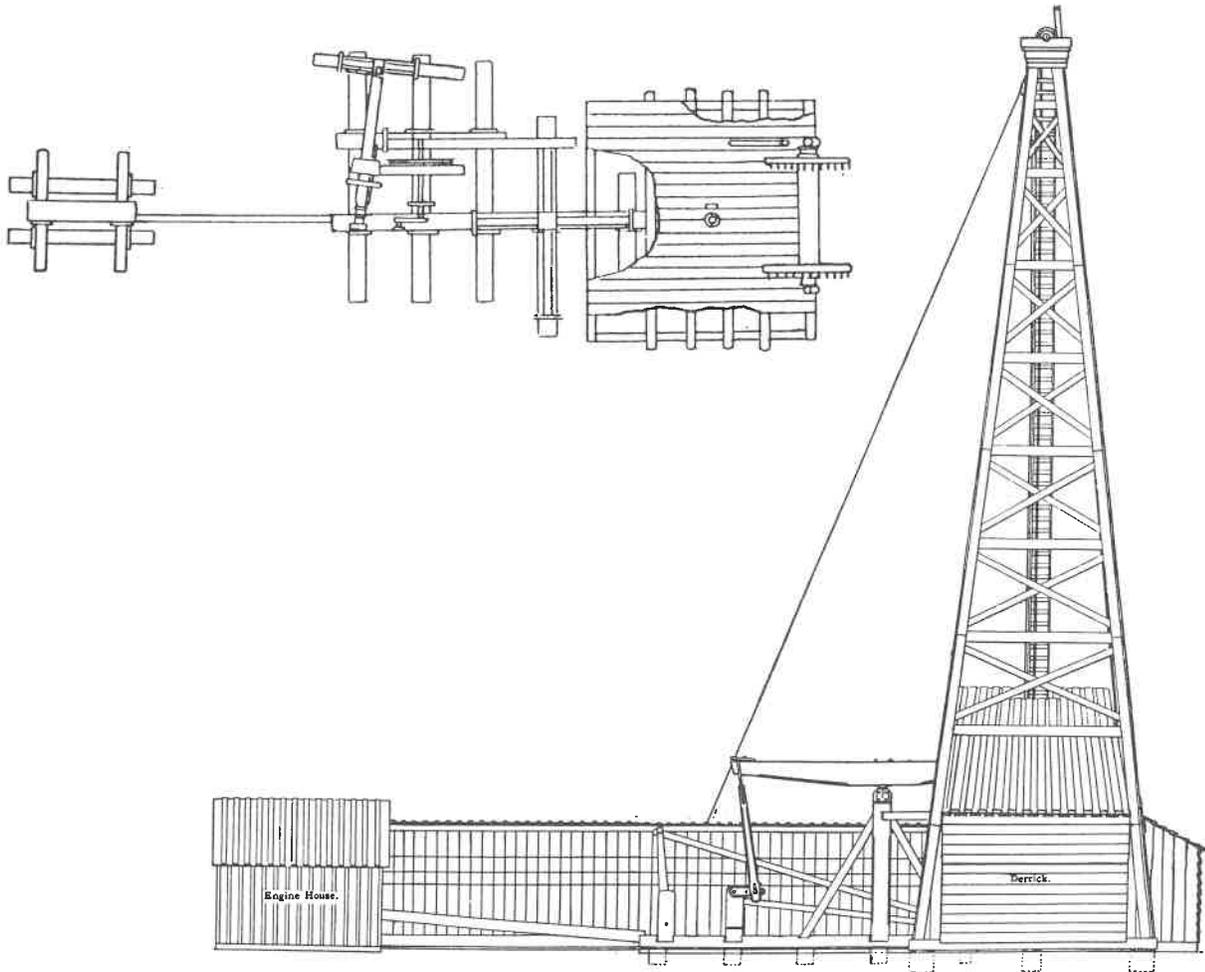
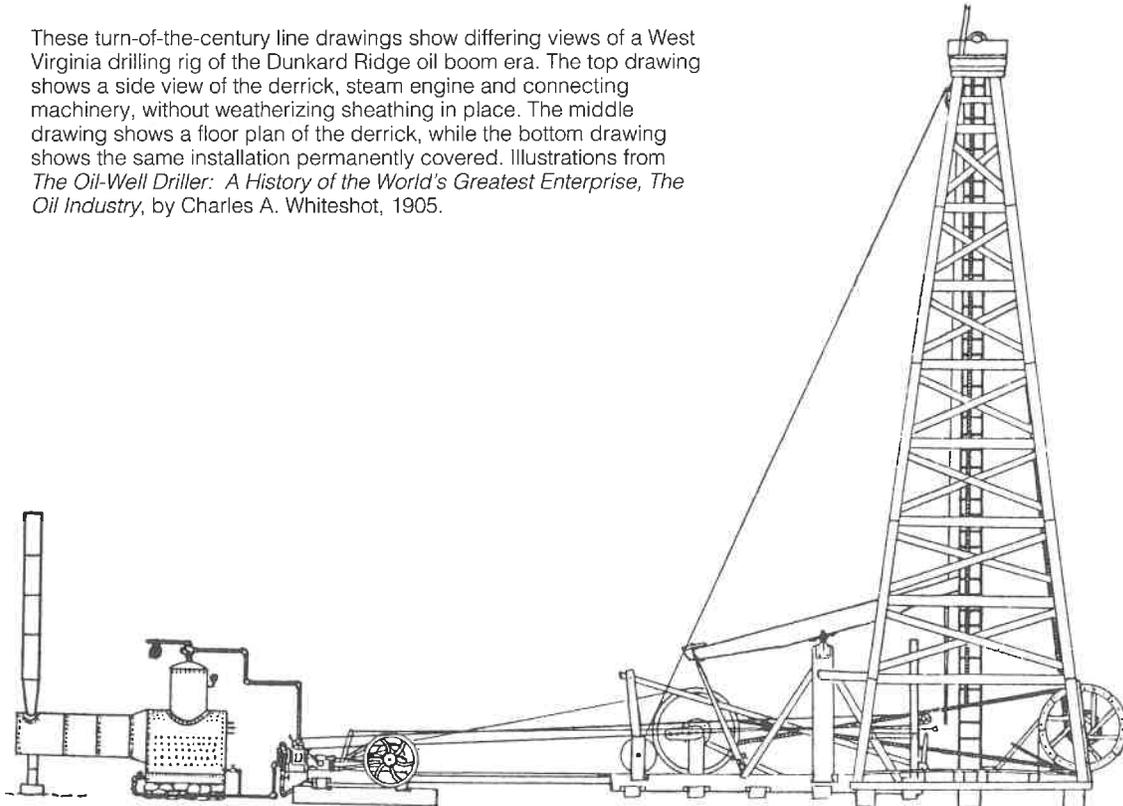
The man in charge of this operation, the driller, was a breed apart. Drillers usually worked around the clock in alternating 12-hour shifts. Robert Donley calls these two shifts the morning and the midnight "working tour," pronounced to rhyme with tower.

The driller had to judge by the "feel" of the cable whether or not the bit was striking solidly at the bottom of the hole. He had to visualize what was going on hundreds or thousands of feet below him and adjust the cutting tools accordingly. The speed at which the well was sunk, and ultimately its success, depended on the lashing or snapping effect of the bit, achieved through the combined action of the weight of the tools and the elasticity of

This metal derrick, of a later variety than the wooden derricks used in the early days of drilling, still stands on the ridge. Modern drillers use truck-mounted rigs and leave no derricks at all.



These turn-of-the-century line drawings show differing views of a West Virginia drilling rig of the Dunkard Ridge oil boom era. The top drawing shows a side view of the derrick, steam engine and connecting machinery, without weatherizing sheathing in place. The middle drawing shows a floor plan of the derrick, while the bottom drawing shows the same installation permanently covered. Illustrations from *The Oil-Well Driller: A History of the World's Greatest Enterprise, The Oil Industry*, by Charles A. Whiteshot, 1905.



Dunkard Ridge Book

Dunkard Ridge, Norma Jean Venable's book, sells for \$4, including shipping and tax. Orders may be sent to her at Route 13, Box 125, Morgantown, WV 26505.

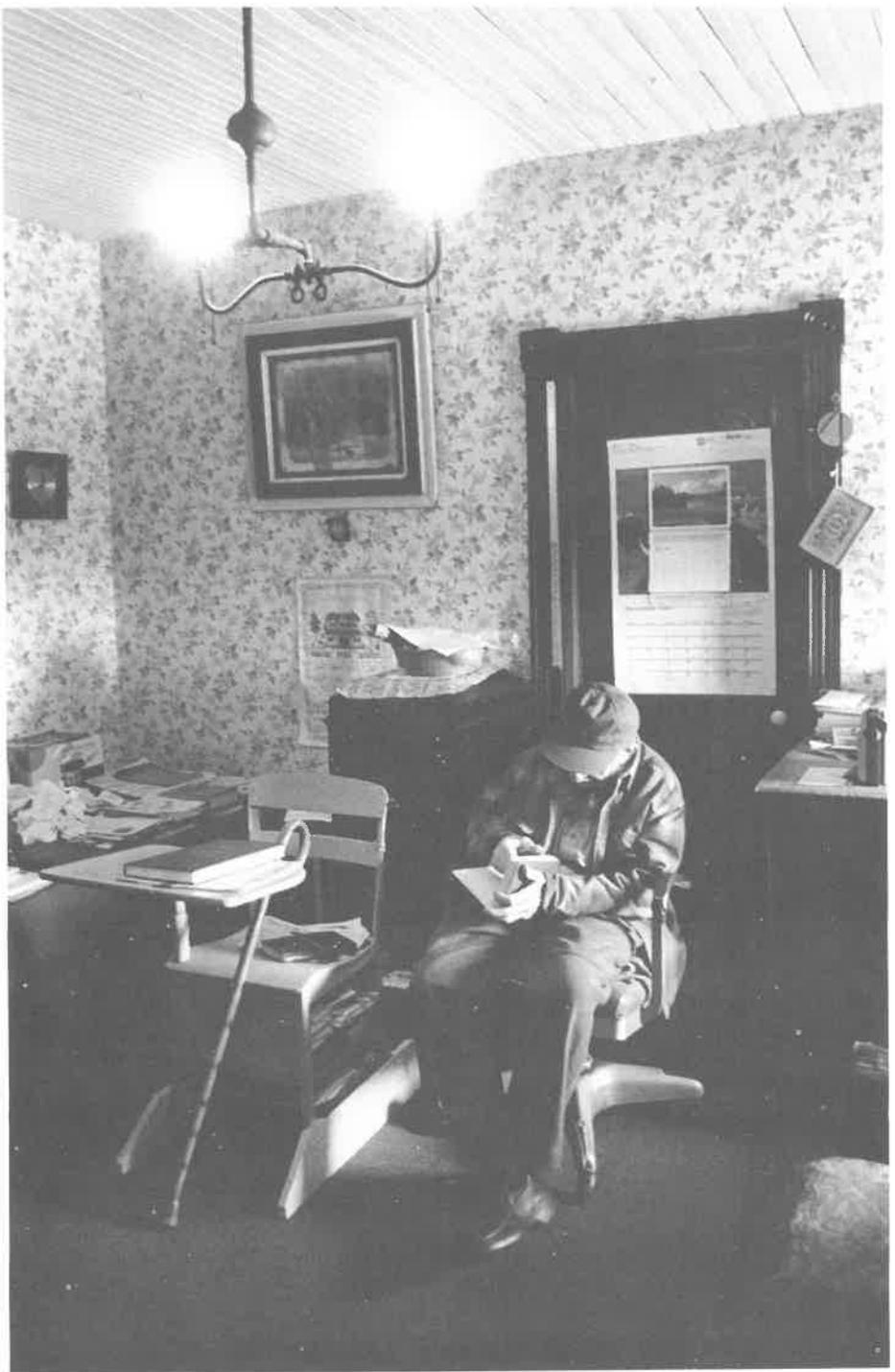
the line. The driller's experience and "knack" commanded some of the highest wages in the oil field.

Being near an oil well when it was drilling was like nothing else on earth. The crew came alive when the tools were pulled from the hole; they ran the casings, changed the bits, ran the bailor, set the cumbersome blocks and pulleys. The men on the drilling tour had to work together, quickly and smoothly. They acquired a kind of rhythm in their work, surrounded by taut and running lines, spinning wheels, heavy wrenches and tools. Some worked high in the rig, often on slippery boards. Overseen by the driller, all hands employed care and knowledge of their job to avoid personal injury and damage to the equipment.

The completion of a successful well was often marked by a natural flow of oil to the surface. In the case of gushers, large quantities surged upward with tremendous force.

Other wells had to be coaxed into production. An innovation which facilitated the flow of oil from the surrounding strata was "shooting" the well. In 1862, E.A.L. Roberts, a colonel in the Union army, conceived the idea of using a subterranean blast to increase the flow of oil. The value of shooting a well was demonstrated in December of 1866 when a dry well was given an explosive charge, making it a producer. The men who specialized in this work and who also fought oil well and gas fires were called shooters. Shooters were folk heroes of sorts, the subjects of lively and sometimes morbid popular interest.

In the early days at Dunkard Creek, nitroglycerine was the most powerful explosive. All it took to detonate nitroglycerine was a 28-pound blow or to subject it to a temperature from 118 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Since "glycerine" could not be shipped by rail, the ingredients had to be mixed locally (sometimes inexpertly) and then



Robert Donley is one of the few West Virginians who still reads by gas light. His Monongalia County house is served entirely by natural gas, with no electricity.

transported to the wells in specially-designed containers carried by wagons. Accidents, often reported in gruesome detail, occurred at the mixing sites, in the wagons, and at the wells.

Robert Donley remembers that teamsters had a hard time moving supplies of any sort to well sites. He said that things were a muddy mess most of the year. Teamsters had to use oxen to pull mired wagons out of the mud. Roads were full of buggy wheels, tongues, shafts, and wagon beds lost during bad weather. Carrying

nitroglycerine under such conditions was an extremely hazardous trade. Many of these teamsters did not live to old age. A 'glycerine wagon bouncing over rough terrain was given a wide berth by oncoming traffic. Robert recounts the story of how one teamster and his wagon were blown to bits. The only items recovered were two shoes from his mules found embedded in a barn wall.

Once the nitroglycerine arrived at the well, the shooter would fill a long tin can the shape of a torpedo with the

explosive and lower it down the hole. He would be careful not to spill any on the derrick floor because one drop could cause a fatal accident. If a large shot was needed, several torpedoes would be strung on a cable. When the shell touched the bottom of the well, the hook that engaged the bail would automatically release. The cable was then pulled up and the shooter could detonate the charge. He most often dropped a piece of solid iron called a "go-devil" down the well. Later, bombs with time fuses or electrically-activated caps were used.

A shooter's nightmare was an unpredictable well. Sometimes oil or water in the well would suddenly rise, propelling the 'glycerine torpedo back

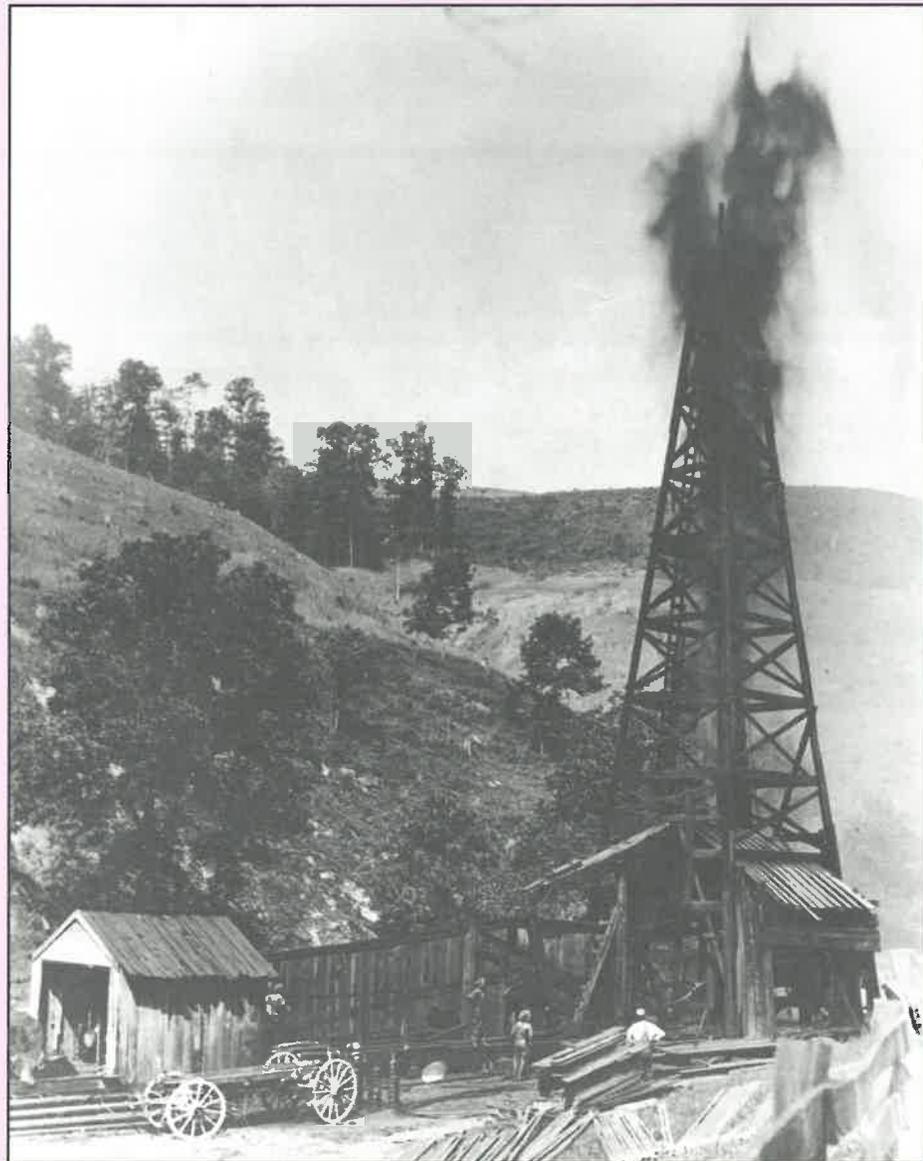
up to the surface. If this happened the shooter had two choices — to run, ensuring the destruction of the rig and derrick, or to stay and try and catch the slippery, oil-covered bomb. If he dropped the shell, or missed, he would be blown up along with the rig and derrick. There are some hair-raising tales in the folklore of the oil fields.

A successful well shooting was a thrilling event. Onlookers heard the deep rumbling of the underground explosion and the resulting spouting of water, oil and gas from the head of the hole. A broom tied to the top of an oil rig signaled a "sweeping success."

If the flow abated or the well didn't produce a natural flow to the surface, the oil had to be pumped out. Workers

lowered a valve pump into the well by long wooden rods. These "sucker rods" connected the pump at the bottom of the hole to the source of power on the surface.

The "walking beam" supplied the pumping action for the well. According to Eugene D. Thoenen in the *History of the Oil and Gas Industry in West Virginia*, the walking beam lay horizontally and was supported midway by vertical posts. One end was centered directly over the drilled well and was attached to the sucker rods which in turn ran to the pump. A steam engine was connected by a belt to a large band wheel, and an arm which ran from the axle of the band wheel was attached to the other end of the walking beam.



Gusher!

Among the works left by West Virginia writer Louis Reed (1899-1979) was *Burning Springs*, a fine historical novel. The book tells the story of the 1860 Rathbone oil well at Burning Springs, Wirt County, the beginning of an important West Virginia industry. The following excerpt from the end of Chapter 8 recounts the dramatic moment when that first well came into production.

All at once the engine skipped a beat. There was a sucking sound as if the tools were stuck, then shouts and the hum of slowing machinery.

"Sounds like they've hit it," Keeler exclaimed. "Sounds like they've tapped the pay."

We all dashed out the door and down the slope to the well. Mr. Rathbone was shouting at the men near the ropes. "Get back. Get back all of you. We don't know what will happen here but don't stand closer than the wharf. Hurry, and don't strike matches."

Hickman and Proudfoot were holding the bandwheel brake. Jacot was working at the walking beam. Raridan and Cooper were sniffing at the top of the hole. I caught a whiff of gas in the air. "Are you in?" asked Keeler.

This Gilmer County gusher came a half-century later than the first one at Burning Springs. Photo by Perry Cox, 1917; courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU.

When the band wheel rotated, the walking beam moved up and down, powering the rods which pumped the oil. Men called pumpers were in charge of raising the oil to the surface and piping it to a tank beside the rig or derrick.

Robert Donley remembers the steam engines used to power the pump. The wood- or coal-fired boilers could be dangerous, he says. One day his aunt, Mag Inghram, was riding her horse past a boiler when the boiler blew up. The frightened horse threw Mag, injuring her for life.

He recalls that "shooting an engine" meant starting or firing it up. "Half-breed" engines ran on either natural gas or steam. These were difficult to

start on a cold morning, Robert says. Wells produced gas as well as oil, and when gas was used for pumping fuel a pipe carried it from the side of the well to the engine.

Originally, natural gas was viewed as a waste byproduct of drilling for oil. When it became profitable to sell the gas, oil companies preferred to do so, but the men who worked the wells wanted to continue to use the gas to run the pump engines. That was easier than cutting wood for the boilers. Company officials had to check on the workers to make sure they weren't using the dangerous and valuable gas.

There is a story of Barney, a lazy fellow, who continued to use gas for pumping fuel. The company man took

his gas pipe fitting and hid it, cutting off the supply of gas. That didn't stop resourceful Barney. He found a piece of hose and replaced the gas fitting, referring to his invention as the "thief." Tom, a fellow worker, apparently was jealous, and wrote "thief" right on the hose in blue chalk letters. Barney never noticed it, but one day the boss did and inquired how Barney's thief was working. "Real good," replied Barney, before he caught himself.

Barney was not the only man to get into trouble with natural gas. Robert recounts that one day Sammy Downy Fox lit his pipe while walking past one of these wells. He struck a match a little too close to a gas exhaust. The match ignited, but so did Sammy, his pipe, the

"Don't know yet," Cooper replied. "She took a hell of a raunch there for some reason. Must've dropped two feet at one swarp."

Raridan continued to sniff at the top of the hole. He passed his hand back and forth trying to feel the rush of gas. "We're close," he said to Cooper, "but I don't believe we're in. Let that brake up a little and we'll see what happens."

Hickman and Proudfoot released the brake but nothing happened. "See," said Raridan, "the bit doesn't sink. That means we've got to prod it some more. Start the engine but turn it over as slowly as you can. Jacot, take a hitch on the beam. Hickman, you and Proudfoot watch that brake. If the line starts slipping, grab it and hold on for your lives."

Cooper started the engine, the line was attached to the walking beam, and the beam began its slow, upward motion. When the beam fell there was a sound as if one drove an axe into a bed of clay. The rig timbers creaked, the bit came clear and descended again.

"Take it easy," Raridan warned. "Whatever this is, it's porous, and we may hit the bottom."

The prodding continued for perhaps fifteen minutes. We lost track of the depth, but the red ribbon dropped out of sight. Raridan ordered the engine stopped and again passed his hand over the top of the hole.

"You can feel it now," he announced, "if there isn't a pure gasser, there's something behind it."

Those of us on the floor of the rig gathered round to feel the gas. The gas

itself was as invisible as air but it had a slightly acrid smell not greatly different from the smell of oil. Jacot thought he could see the gas and that it was slightly blue in color, the gas that comes from oil. We knew that gas is often found in oil wells, but we knew also that gas is more often found alone. We were not interested in a gas well.

While we were trying to analyze the escaping gas there was a cry behind us.

"Look," Hickman shouted. "Look." He was pointing to the drilling line at the place where the line was attached to the walking beam and we saw that the line had gone slack.

"Hell and damnation," Jacot yelled. "The tools are coming out."

This information reminded Mr. Rathbone of the spectators. "Get back from those ropes," he shouted belligerently. "How many times do I have to tell you. If you all get killed here, I suppose your families will want to sue me for damages."

The spectators retreated. "Take it easy," said Raridan, "all of you but Cooper and Jacot get in the clear. You, Hickman, and you, Proudfoot. We're going to pull these tools and see what's behind them. There's nothing to get excited about. Just take it easy."

All of us except Raridan, Cooper, and Jacot withdrew to our front yard. The spectators reached the comparative safety of the wharf. In the moonlight the rig towered like a giant covered with silver. Beneath us we could hear Cooper, Jacot, and Raridan in earnest conversation. Jacot slipped the line off

the walking beam, the bullwheel was reversed, the engine started and the tools began to crawl slowly upward.

"What kind of pressure would it take," asked Keeler, "to move them tools?"

"More than I like to think," Mr. Rathbone replied. "Listen."

Raridan was pulling the tools carefully with frequent stops to note the play on the drilling line. We heard him say, "Cooper, all hell is behind that bit. Get ready to shut her off the instant the bit clears the hole. Jacot, when he shuts her off, slam that brake and run for it. You're going to get wet, I think. Steady. Steady."

The screech of the bullwheel winding up the line told us that the tools were close to the top. Raridan motioned to Jacot and backed off the rig. There was a sudden swish as the tools cleared the hole. The next instant a cloud shot out of the earth and leaped toward the sky, a cloud that broke into a million rivulets and shimmered in the moonlight like a ghost. Tiny flecks of spray touched our faces and hands. The air was heavy, the moon suddenly dim.

"A gusher," said Mr. Rathbone, as he sat down, unable for once to say more.

— Louis Reed

Burning Springs, published in a 1985 paperback edition by University Editions/Aegina Press of Huntington, is now out of print. The summer 1987 GOLDENSEAL, featuring an article about Louis Reed, may be purchased for \$3.95 from the GOLDENSEAL office.



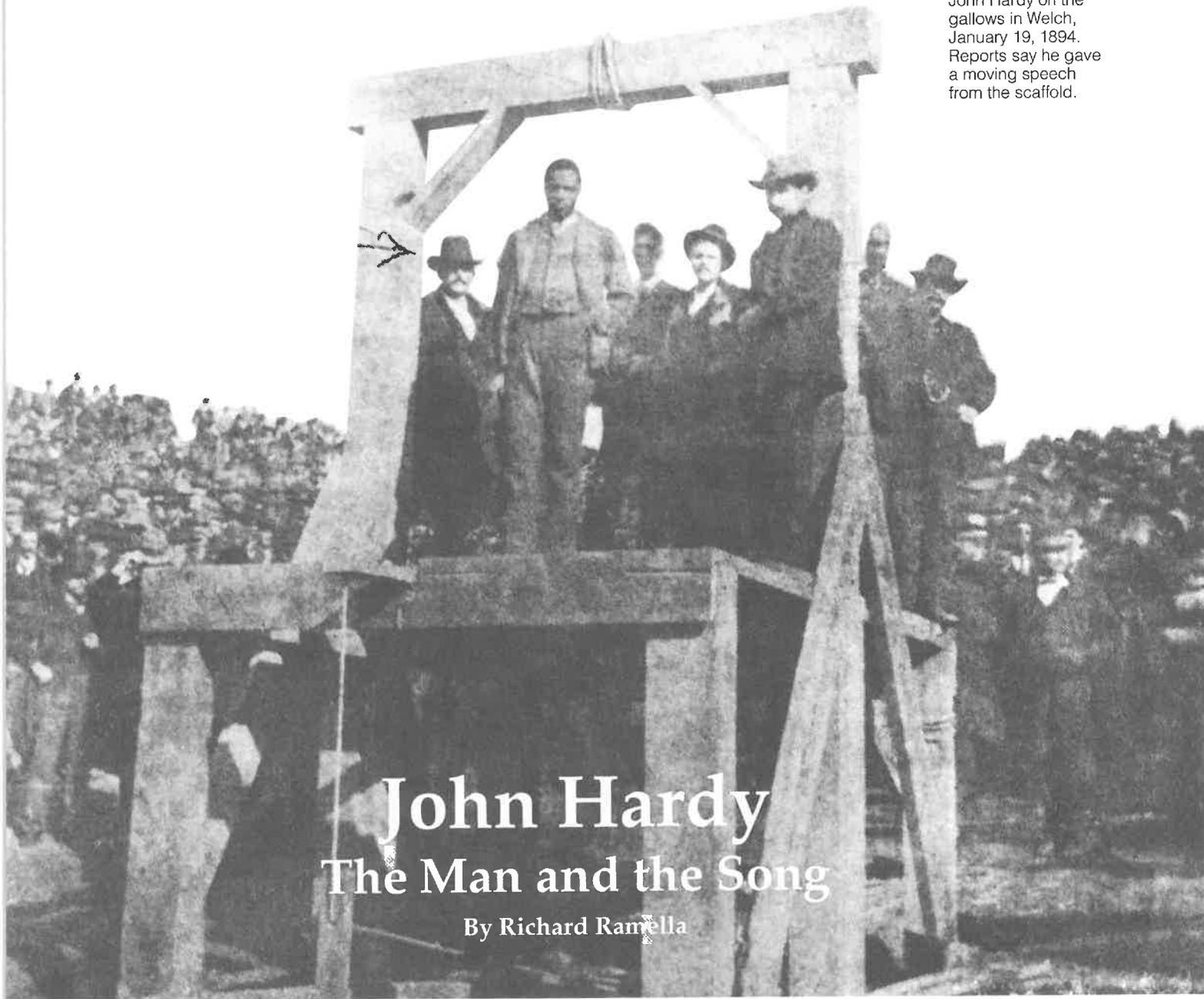
Above: The Donley homestead made a storybook scene late last winter. Robert was born and raised on Dunkard Ridge.
Below: These men were photographed hauling sucker rods on Dunkard Ridge. Photographer and date unknown.

derrick and well. Sammy survived, but the well was a total loss.

Sammy's story is a humorous one, but it serves to illustrate the hazards of the work. As Robert Donley will tell you, the men who worked the oil fields had to take danger in stride. There were no workers' compensation laws. Depending on his employer, a worker might or might not be taken care of in case of an accident. During the first years of this century the derrick man stood on a narrow board and worked without a safety belt. There were no helmets and no steel-toed shoes. With no blowout preventers on the wells, men were often gassed and fires were all too common. These brave men faced risk as a matter of course, as they worked together to build a new industry in West Virginia and a new way of life in the oil fields. ✻



John Hardy on the gallows in Welch, January 19, 1894. Reports say he gave a moving speech from the scaffold.



John Hardy

The Man and the Song

By Richard Ramella

John Hardy was a black railroad worker who killed a man in a drunken gambling dispute over a few cents. He was found guilty of murder and publicly hanged January 19, 1894, from a wooden gallows erected for the occasion in Welch, McDowell County.

His death gave birth to a song. No one knows who originated it, but within a few years after Hardy's execution the song was being sung and played around the world. By 1925 it had been published in collections of folk music, and it continues to be performed to this day. It has been recorded by noted musicians

in blues, jazz, country, bluegrass, folk, and even rock versions.

The song "John Hardy" is the straightforward confession of a killer and his wish for spiritual redemption in the shadow of the noose. Although the lyrics have been changed over the years, most versions remain true to historical events. John Hardy has not been made into a myth; the story remains in song essentially as it happened nearly a century ago in the West Virginia coalfields.

I learned of these events early in life. When I was 12 years old, my great-

grandmother stayed the winter with my family in Maitland, a coal camp near Welch. During that stay she told me her story of witnessing the hanging of John Hardy. Over the ensuing 40 years I have filed away what little subsequent information I recalled from tales I heard as I grew up in McDowell County. In the past two years I have actively researched the story and the song.

Granny — Thursa Harris Mullins Belcher — was born in 1875. Her recollections augment the scant published records I have read, but in

some ways differ from them. I believe her account, for it was told in coherent fashion as the memory of an entire day, including tangential events. It is not a pretty story.

She was 19 at the time. She had heard there was to be a hanging in Welch, about five miles from her home on Belcher Mountain, and resolved to go see it. It was a cold, bright morning. The ground was hard with frost. Riding off the mountain in haste, she fell from her horse. A man she did not know laughed at her. She felt embarrassed and angry.

Granny said Welch was crowded, with "a mess" of outsiders there. She had trouble finding a place to tether her horse, for hundreds of other people had also brought their horses to the village. The mounts were tied in vacant lots and to trees on the slopes above the town.

Early that day, Granny saw a group of men escort Hardy to the Tug Fork, where he was baptized by a white preacher. Then he was taken back to his cell for the few hours before the hanging. Granny worked her way into the crowd that surrounded the gallows, which was located on a shoulder of the hillside above the street that fronted it.

Hardy was brought to the scaffold. He made a brief speech in which he expressed sorrow for his misdeed and hope for an afterlife. Then, said Granny in the only full direct quote I remember with certainty, "He sung the purtiest song!"

After that, John Hardy sailed his hat into the crowd. The noose was looped around his neck, and he was hanged.

Granny said the affair left her feeling "forlorn" for many days. She wished she had not witnessed the hanging. She hoped Hardy had found his way to heaven.

Then she added something she learned a few years after the event. It was widely believed at the time that if a hanging did not produce instant death, it was a sign of innocence. There were several deputy sheriffs stationed beneath the scaffold. Because signs of life remained in the condemned man after the fall, they wrenched his head backward until he was certainly dead. Granny said this was told her by one of the participating deputies, Ballard Belcher, whom she married a few years later. According to family records, they wed in 1897.

When Granny told me what hap-

pened beneath the gallows, she gave a great shudder and said nothing more.

Though Granny Belcher said Hardy sang, I wouldn't want to leave the impression that he was the author of his own ballad. In fact, there is no corroborating record that he sang anything from the gallows.

Overall, my great grandmother's version of the hanging doesn't vary much from other accounts. She didn't report any of the details of the preceding crime, however. What follows is an amalgam of recorded accounts of the John Hardy story. What's interesting is that much of this bare truth survives within the song.

Hardy's murderous action occurred over a small bet in either a dice or card game at Shawnee Camp, later called Eckman, near Keystone. Some accounts say the game was craps and the bet for ten cents; one version of the song says a dollar. The story goes that he lay his pistol on the gambling table and, speak-

*After that, John Hardy
sailed his hat into the
crowd. The noose was
looped around his neck,
and he was hanged.*

ing to the weapon, promised to use it to shoot anyone who took his money. When he lost, he was angered. The opponent returned the money. Still, Hardy shot him. He is quoted: "Man, don't you know I wouldn't lie to my gun?" in *Folk Song U.S.A.*, by John and Alan Lomax.

The victim was Tom Bruce, also a black man.

At the time of these events, Welch was just emerging as a major coalfields center. Mines were being opened and railroad construction was underway. McDowell County was in an intense stage of early development, with workers being recruited from outside areas.

Many black workers were among those attracted to the nascent coalfields, leaving McDowell County with the highest percentage of black residents in the state. In many cases, blacks had begun to assert themselves as individuals and as a group. In 1892, two years before Hardy died, the black

vote helped to replace Democrats with Republicans in county government, and the first recorded sale of property to a black owner occurred. Schools had been established for children of black workers.

It was a rough and crude time, and there was resentment against the black and immigrant population. While an effort was made to follow the letter of the law, court cases against blacks tended to be prosecuted quickly and harshly.

The following account of Hardy's capture, trial and execution draws heavily from an unsigned 1926 article in the *Welch Daily News*.

A North Carolina native named Webb Gudger was implicated in the same crime, the *Daily News* reported in its retrospective article. Hardy hid out for a time, but was arrested. He escaped from custody and fled the area in Gudger's company. Following the railroad line, they first went east into Mercer County, then reversed direction in an effort to follow the rail line into the northern United States. The ballad includes the line, "I've been to the east and I've been to the west."

Apparently informed, McDowell County Sheriff John Effler and Deputy Tom Campbell boarded the westbound train in Mercer County. As the train passed through the Elkhorn tunnel and into Effler's jurisdiction, the lawmen quietly arrested Hardy, jabbing a large pistol in his side to prevent him from signaling Gudger. The sheriff left Hardy in Campbell's custody and found Gudger on the rear platform of the moving train. They grappled and fell from the train. One of Effler's ribs was broken when Gudger landed atop him. Still, the sheriff managed to subdue Gudger.

Some later versions of the story incorrectly credit Hardy for the train fight, when in fact he had submitted to capture without struggle. Hardy's mother attempted to pay bail, but bail was not allowed for persons accused of capital offenses. There were possibly two other women connected with Hardy, his wife and a woman friend.

Hardy's hanging was not a lynching. He was duly charged, tried and found guilty by a jury and legally sentenced on October 12, 1893. At that time, West Virginia counties had the authority to conduct executions by public hanging.

The judge in the case was T. L. Henritze, who had been named to the

Governor MacCorkle on John Hardy

William A. MacCorkle was governor of West Virginia at the time of the John Hardy hanging. The execution was a McDowell County matter, carried out within the local jurisdiction, and MacCorkle does not seem to have been acquainted with the details of the legal case. He clearly cultivated an interest in John Hardy the folk figure, however, as indicated in the following long letter he sent to state archivist Henry S. Green in 1916.

It is interesting to note that MacCorkle seems to confound John Hardy with steel-driving John Henry. So did MacCorkle's contemporary, West Virginia folk song scholar John Harrington Cox, on whose behalf Green had contacted the former governor. Professor Ivan Tribe, a modern authority on West Virginia's music, speculates that in fact the historic John Hardy story may have contributed to the John Henry legend.

Governor MacCorkle's letter reflects racial attitudes of his day, but suggests a sincere respect for the John Hardy story and for its place in West Virginia folklore. The text comes to us courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

February 16, 1916

Dear Prof. Green:

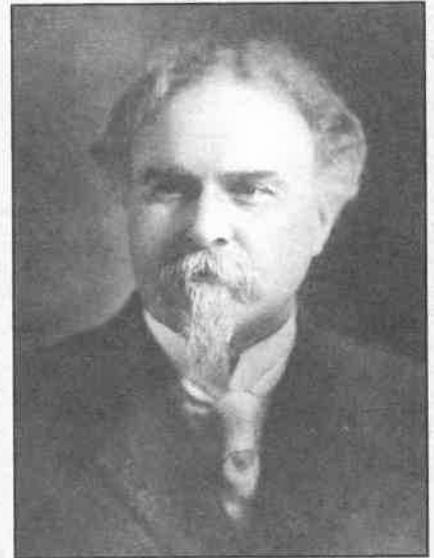
John Hardy was not a railroad man or operator, but he was a steel driver and was famous in the beginning of the building of the C. & O. Railroad. He was also a steel driver on the beginning of the extension of the N. & W. Railroad. It was about 1872 that he was in this section. This was before the day of steam drills and the drill work was done by two powerful men who were special steel drillers. They struck the steel from each side and as they struck the steel they sung a song which they improvised as they worked. John Hardy was the most famous steel driller ever in southern West Virginia. He was a magnificent specimen of the genus homo — was reported to be six feet two and weighed two hundred and twenty five or thirty pounds, was

straight as an arrow and was one of the most handsome men in the country, and, as one informant told me, was as "black as a kittle in hell".

Whenever there was any spectacular performance along the lines of drilling work, John Hardy was put on the job, and it is said that he could drill more steel than any two men of the day. He was a great gambler and was notorious all through the country for his luck in gambling. To the dusky sex all through the country, he was the "greatest ever" and he was admired and beloved by all the Negro women from the southwest Virginia line to the C. & O. In addition to this, he could drink more whisky, sit up all night and drive steel all day to a greater extent than any man ever known in the country.

The killing in which he made his final exit was a "myxtery" between women, cards and liquor, and it was understood that it was more of a fight than a murder. I have been unable to find out where he was hung, but have an idea that it was down in the southwest part near Virginia, but I am not positive about this. In other words, his story is a story of one of the composite characters that so often arise in the land. A man kind of heart, very strong, pleasant in his address, yet a gambler, a roué, a drunkard and a fierce fighter.

The song is quite famous in the construction camps and when they are driving steel by hand in a large camp, the prowess of John Hardy is always sung....Of course you understand that all of this about John Hardy is merely among the Negroes. I cannot say that the John Hardy that you mention was hung is the same John Hardy of the song, but it may be so, for he was supposed to be in that vicinity when he last exploited himself. He was never an employee of the C. & O. He was an employee of the Virginia contractors, C. R. Mason & Co. and the Langhorn Company.



William Alexander MacCorkle was governor at the time of the John Hardy hanging and later a source of information about the song and legend. Courtesy State Archives.

When Henry Spencer and John Bell, two of my colored friends each of whom is a gambler and keeper of a dive, come around, I think I can get some information, but my friends are not always in a condition to be seen by policemen and so I don't know just when I can get this information.

My partner, Joe E. Chilton, who was the counsel for years of the C. & O. informs me that the wreck about which the ballad ["The Wreck on the C&O" — an unrelated song] speaks of was a wreck on the other side of the Big Bend Tunnel in which one of the Alleys was killed. There were three of the Alleys, and all of them were famous engineers, and were all brothers, and one was killed by this wreck by a rock falling down in front of him. The F. F. V. was put on in the early 90's and another famous engineer, by the name of Callahan, was killed at about the same place by a similar accident. This is as near as I can give you the information.

Very truly yours,
W. A. MacCorkle

post after pledging his property as temporary location of the courthouse during construction of a permanent building. On taking office, Henritze swore to fight the criminal element in the quickly growing county.

According to the trial record, after being found guilty Hardy was brought before the court and asked whether he had anything to say as to "why the Court should not proceed to pass sentence of the law upon him." Then, "the prisoner saying nothing," he was sentenced by Henritze to hang on Friday, January 19, 1894.

Hardy was kept in jail through November and December. By mid-January he could hear the hammering of workmen as his gallows was erected. One account says he could see the gallows being built and bragged that he would never hang from the structure.

On the day of Hardy's death, Welch's normal population of about 300 leaped to 5,000 or 6,000. Many accounts mention a special excursion train that ran from Cincinnati to Welch, picking up people along the way. Some passengers stood on the tops of train coaches to get a better view.

Hardy was dressed in a new suit given him by the baptizing preacher, who had befriended him during his imprisonment. The gallows was located on what is now the lawn of the McDowell County courthouse, though that complex was not built until later. Hardy's elderly mother was present for the execution. She sat in a rocking chair.

As he stood on the scaffold, Hardy is quoted as saying: "Don't live in sin as I have done, lest you fill your heart with sorrow." Another account says he blamed drunkenness for his action and warned youth to avoid both alcohol and gambling.

Then Sheriff Effler and his deputies carried out the execution.

John Hardy was one of three men, all black, publicly executed in McDowell County during 1891 and 1894. State law changed in 1899 to require that executions be performed at the West Virginia State Penitentiary.

Hardy's cohort Webb Gudger was found guilty of voluntary manslaughter. After serving four years in the state penitentiary, he returned to McDowell County and later died in a railroad work accident near Elkhorn.

Though less than a century old, "John Hardy" is a true folk song. Its author-

ship unknown, the song remains in the public domain, free of copyright restrictions. The ballad apparently originated in McDowell County after the hanging and traveled swiftly into the wider world.

There is support for the supposition that the originator of the song was black. In the 1926 *Welch Daily News* article cited earlier, the writer rhetorically asks, "Who, living in southern West Virginia, has not heard some Negro strumming a banjo and playing rhythmical homage to the departed hero of the Elkhorn?"

Whether the performer is black or white, a banjo is the common denominator for the song. By the 1930's the song was popular among white country musicians, who delivered it in a driving, poker-faced style that dropped the emotion of the earlier black version. As a sparkling banjo instrumental without the words, "John Hardy" makes a

The story goes that he lay his pistol on the gambling table and, speaking to the weapon, promised to use it to shoot anyone who took his money.

downright merry dance tune.

As the song spread, local geographical references faded. It was reshaped into a story that might have happened nearly anywhere. For example, early versions refer to Hardy being caught "on the Keystone bridge," close enough to be believable. In later versions, this was changed to the "Freestone Bridge," perhaps because of the quickly following reference to Hardy's wish to be "free." By the time the Kingston Trio recorded their version in the late 1950's, West Virginia references were obliterated, and the song might well have referred to some Wild West gunslinger.

Improbable as it might be, the two most famous folk songs about West Virginians concern different black railroad workers named John—Henry and Hardy. The similarities have resulted in a confusing melding of events of one story into the other.

The events of the familiar John Henry song apparently occurred in some form during the 1870-73 construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's Big Bend Tunnel in Summers County. The ballad tells the story of a powerful "steel-driving man" who hammered rods into the rock to drill holes for blasting charges. Beating the new steam drill is said to have killed him. John Henry's story represents the laborer's final heroic stand against mechanization, and its appeal is universal.

Among the first to document the "John Hardy" song was John Harrington Cox in *Folk Songs of the South*, a collection of West Virginia songs published by Harvard University Press in 1925. The book contains several variants of the song, including versions that blend events of "John Hardy" and "John Henry." Most often, the heroic John Henry is incorrectly accused of John Hardy's crime. This confusion was eliminated in later recorded versions, which retain the true John Hardy story nearly intact.

The song has a curious crossover history. It has at times escaped its folk origins. There are blues, bluegrass and even rock versions — some superb, some not. There are recordings by the Kingston Trio, Pete Seeger, Earl Scruggs, Ola Belle Reed, Leon Bibb, Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter), Don Reno, and even Manfred Mann, a popular British rock musician of the 1960's. Duke Ellington gave it a twist with "John Hardy's Wife."

Though comparatively recent in origin, "John Hardy" includes elements that associate it with the ancient tragic ballads in which a killer unflinchingly recounts the exact events of the deed, as gory and vile as they might be. Such songs take a sociopathic viewpoint, in which the killer is emotionally detached from the victim's suffering. The un-varnished retelling of the story through song stands as a cautionary tale to the listener.

There is a strong element of repentance in "John Hardy," and the haunting ballad inspires both pity and the hope for redemption. No one knows if the anonymous maker of the song was a witness to the hanging. But the raw power of the lyrics suggests that the songwriter was a member of the McDowell County community during those days of the crime, its swift punishment, and the lingering sorrow. ♣



"Now I'm on My Hanging Ground"

Some Verses to the Song

I have collected the following verses of "John Hardy" from several sources. In its most economical form, there are only five stanzas — in turn covering the statement of Hardy's character, the crime, the capture, and the baptism and death — but as you will see from the verses below, there is much more to the John Hardy story than that.

The final verse is chilling — and saddest of all.

John Hardy was a desperate little man.
He carried two guns every day.
He shot down a man in the Shawnee Camp.
You ought to see John Hardy get away, poor boy,
You ought to see John Hardy get away.

John Hardy stood at the gambling table
Didn't have no interest in the game.
Up stepped a gal and threw five dollars down,
Said, "Deal John Hardy in the game, poor boy,
Deal John Hardy in the game."

John Hardy threw down a dollar on the board,
Saying, "This is what I play,
And the man who takes my money this time,
I'll lay him in his lonesome grave, poor boy,
I'll lay him in his lonesome grave."

John Hardy drew to a four-card straight,
And the Chinaman* drew to a pair,
John failed to catch and the Chinaman won,
And he left him sitting dead in his chair, poor boy,
And he left him sitting dead in his chair.

John Hardy traveled to the Keystone bridge,
Expecting to be free.
A policeman come and took him by the arm,
Saying, "Won't you come and go with me, poor boy,
Won't you come and go with me?"

John Hardy ran to a big long town.
Thought he'd make a getaway.
When up jumps a marshal and grabs him by the arm,
Says, "Johnny boy, come and go with me, poor boy!
Johnny boy, come and go with me."

John started to catch that eastbound train,
So dark he could not see.
Up stepped the police and took him by the arm,

Said, "Johnny, come and go with me, poor boy,
Johnny come and go with me."

John Hardy had a ma and a pa.
Sent for them to go his bail;
But there ain't no bail for murdering a man,
So they put John Hardy back in jail, poor boy!
They put John Hardy back in jail.

John Hardy had a loving little wife.
And children she had three.
But he cared no more for his wife and his babes,
Than he did for the rocks in the sea, poor boy,
Than he did for the rocks in the sea.

John Hardy had a little girl.
The dress that she wore was blue.
She came skipping to that old jail hall,
Said, "Johnny, I been true to you, poor boy,
Johnny, I been true to you."

John Hardy had a pretty little girl.
She came all dressed in red.
She cried out with a loud little shout,
"Johnny boy, be glad to see you dead, Lord! Lord!
Johnny, I'll be glad to see you dead."

John Hardy stood in his jail cell,
The tears running down each eye.
Said, "I been the death of many a poor man.
And now I'm ready to die, poor boy,
Now I'm ready to die."

They took John Hardy to his hanging ground,
And they hung him there to die,
And the very last word I heard him say —
"My forty-four gun never told a lie, poor boy,
My forty-four gun never told a lie."

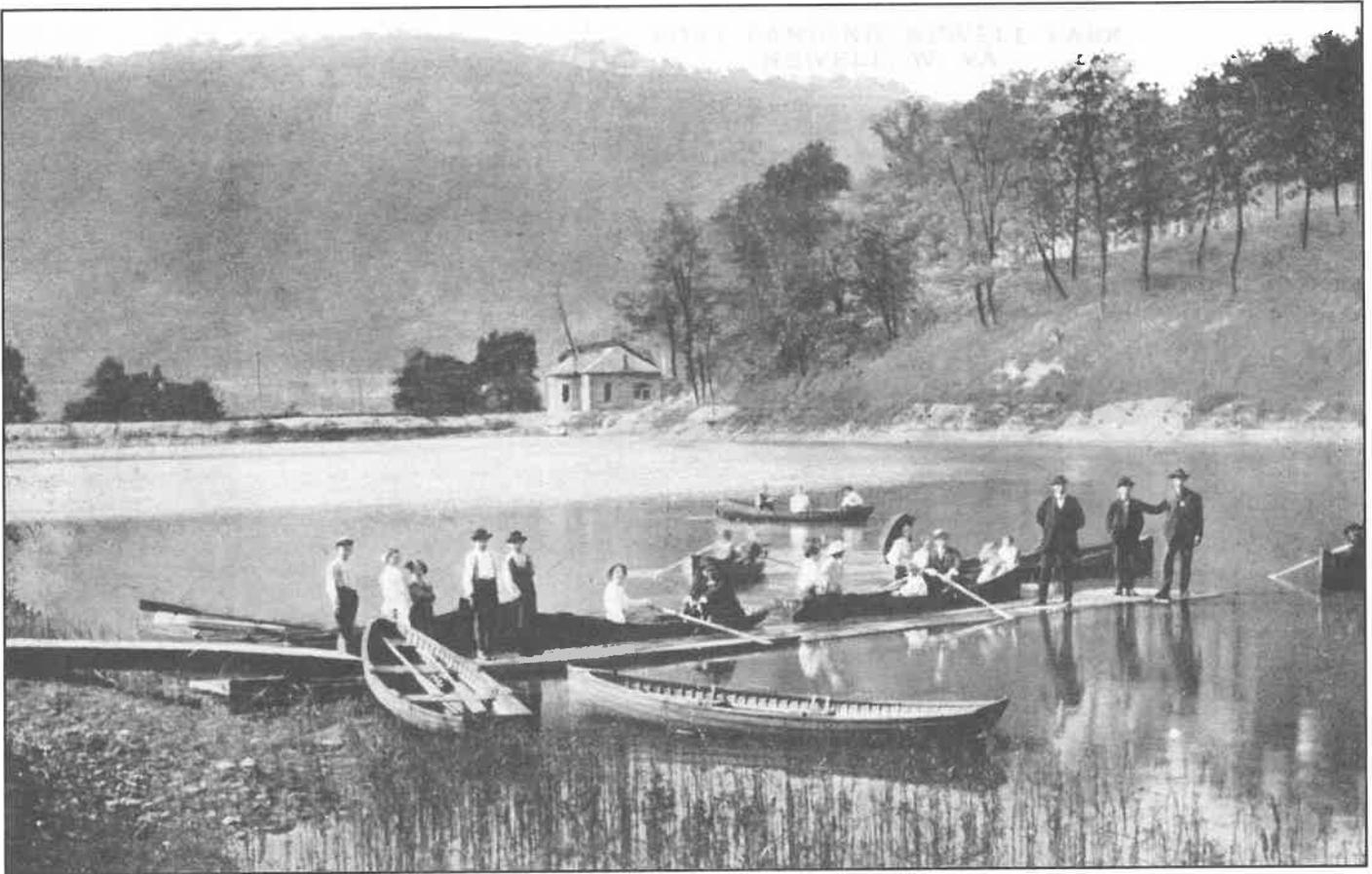
"I've been to the east, I've been to the west,
I've traveled this wide world around.
I've been to the river and I've been baptized
And now I'm on my hanging ground, poor boy,
And now I'm on my hanging ground,
Take me to my hanging ground."

—Richard Ramella

* The "Chinaman" apparently entered the John Hardy ballad after some versions mistakenly changed "Shawnee Camp" in verse one to "Chinese Camp." Actually, John Hardy's victim was black. — ed.



Don't get the idea that my Northern Panhandle hometown was one of those picturesque little villages with green lawns and white picket fences like something out of the Donna Reed Show. It wasn't like that. Newell was an unincorporated pottery town dominated by the Homer Laughlin China Company. Unfortunately, the pottery industry



The postcard view shows the boat landing at the former Newell Park, now the site of the dump. Postmarked January 27, 1913; courtesy Ira C. Sayre.

Wall of China

Recalling the Greatest Dump in the World

By Bob Barnett

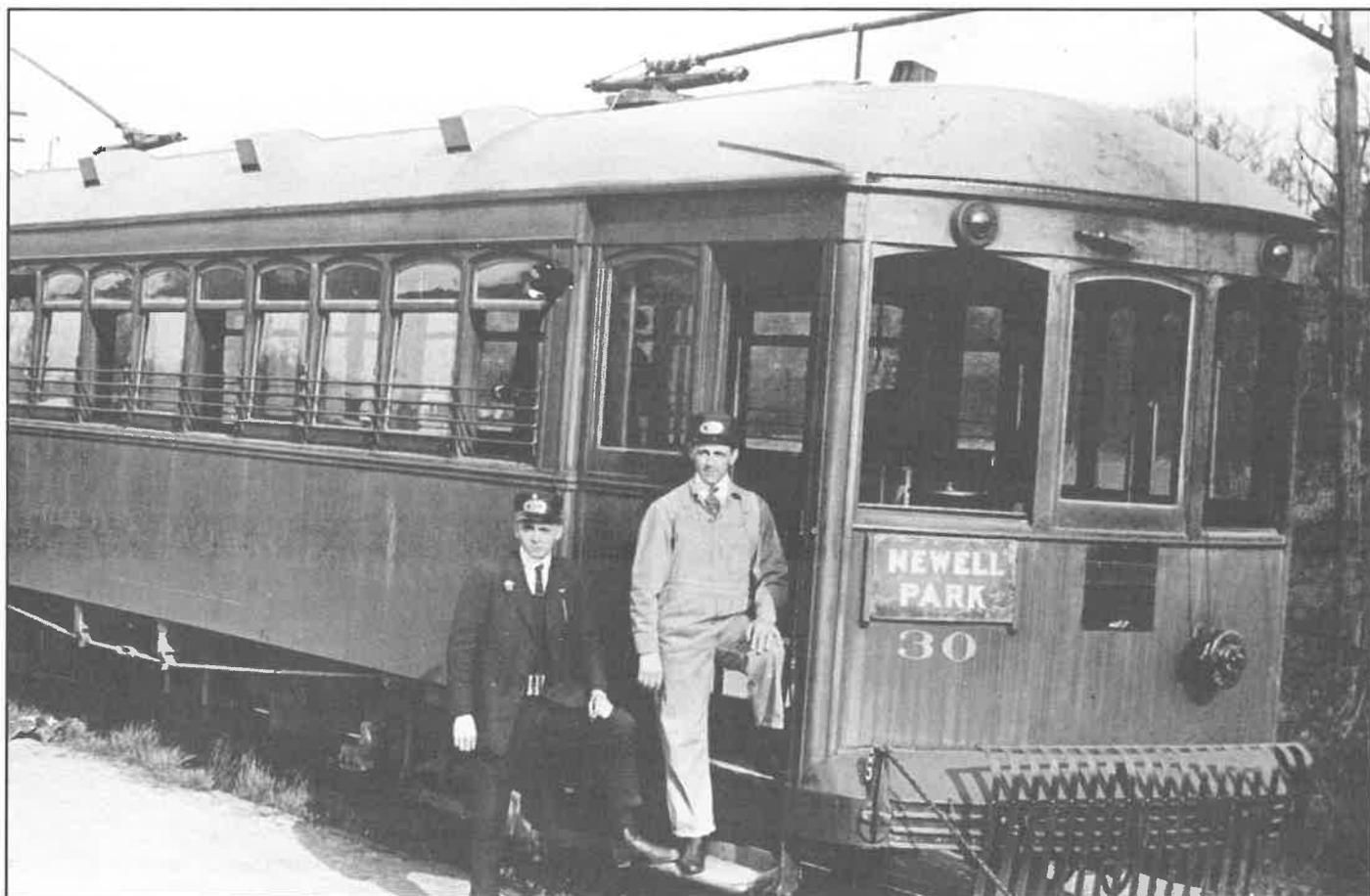
Mounds of discarded dishes make up the wall of china at the Newell Dump. Photo by Michael Keller.

was in decline in the 1950's and so was the town. The tar and gravel streets were full of potholes, winter and summer. Most of the town did not have sidewalks. We walked on dirt paths with plenty of mud puddles.

We kids thought we were growing up in the greatest town in the whole world. We felt sorry for the people who had to grow up in big cities like New York, Pittsburgh or Weirton. We had woods, fields, two nice playgrounds, and our most treasured resource — the town dump.

Most communities hid their dumps in out-of-the-way places far from town, but not us. We were proud of our dump which was located on the "main drag," Washington Street, one block from the only red light in town at Washington and Sixth. In fact, the dump was located across the street from Newell High School and the football and the baseball fields.

We called our dump "the fill" because it was rapidly filling in a small, narrow valley. The contents were not run-of-the-mill garbage, but refuse unique to Newell. The china company



Newell Park was once a popular streetcar destination. This photo of car and crew is from about 1910, courtesy Ira C. Sayre.

used the valley to discard the waste products from pottery production. The fill was not offensive. It didn't smell except with the acrid smoke from an occasional fire. We did not know about toxic waste then and did not worry about it. Actually, the long white wall of dishes that cascaded into the valley was kind of pretty and would have been considered a scenic wonder if it had been located somewhere else — say Dover, England.

But beauty aside, the fill was wonderful for the endless number of recreational activities it could sustain, ranging from mountain climbing, art, and hunting to dish breaking and plate sailing. It was truly a multi-purpose, multi-generation facility, though these terms mercifully had yet to enter the lexicon by the 1950's.

Thousands of rejected dishes, saucers, platters, cups, and pitchers of all sizes and shapes stood in piles four or five feet tall, waiting to be pushed over the edge by a bulldozer. These pieces of ware (Once when I was working the

pottery a foreman asked, "Do you know ware?" I replied, "No, where?") were rejected at various stages of production. Some were completely decorated and glazed with a flaw so slight it was almost impossible to find. Most pieces had been cracked when they were fired so were unglazed, raw, white, and rough to the touch.

The fill was begun some time in the early 1900's when the company opened in Newell and began to dump rejected dishes, molds, clay, dye, and the other stuff used to make pottery in a narrow valley just past Sixth Street. In their first years of operation, they dumped enough waste to build a road along the Ohio River connecting the two sections of their huge plant. Later, they filled in enough of the valley to build a road across its middle — now Washington Street or West Virginia Route 2. When these roads were completed the pottery began to create a wall of china along the south side of the valley between the two new roads.

As ironic as it may seem, the fill inun-

dated a park, an earlier project of the Homer Laughlin China Company. The narrow valley with a little creek at the bottom once held a picnic grove with a small zoo. I can only guess at the time period, but it would seem to be about the turn of the century.

When I first moved to Newell I was taken to the floor of the valley and shown the ruins of the old park, not unlike a guest being shown ancient ruins by archaeologists. Later, my best friend Larry Hutton and I spent a lot of our elementary and some junior high school years exploring and contemplating the place.

As nearly as I can piece together from those observations, stories by oldtimers, and old postcards, Newell Park once buzzed with life. The whole place was probably about three quarters of a mile long and an eighth of a mile wide at the widest. Old pictures show a small lake with rowboats near where the creek emptied into the Ohio River.

The half of the valley near the river was where the fill was located, and the

wall of dishes was beginning to creep out over some of the park remains by 1950. The two main structures in this area were the monkey house and the seal pit. All that was left of the monkey house was a square foundation of natural stone, about 60 feet by 60 feet. We had to imagine the cage over top and monkeys inside. The seal pit was almost fully intact. In the center was a round stone platform about 30 feet in diameter and four feet high. Around the platform was what must have been a moat three or four feet deep and eight or ten feet across, with a wall six feet high on the outside.

The seal pit was fun as a fort for various games ranging from cowboys to World War II combat. We also liked to kneel, slap our hands together, give a hoarse "arf," and pretend to beg for fish. By the mid to late 1950's the wall of dishes had reached the seal pit and somewhere in the early 1960's completely covered it. The last time I looked, the edge of the dishes was getting close to the creek.

The upper half of the valley — the part away from the river — contained the bear cave, what looked to be a pony ring, and the tunnel of love. The pony ring is only a circular natural stone ring, but the bear cave is more interesting. The cave was dug back into the hill, then the inside room was made from natural stone cemented together over a dirt floor. The front wall was also natural stone of about 15 feet high and 40 feet long. The inside room was about 15 feet by 25 feet with a hole in the top so food could be dropped to the bears. There must have been an iron cage for the front yard, but we could never quite figure out how that was set up.

The tunnel of love actually carried the road over the creek. By 1950 the cut stone front of the north end of the tunnel had collapsed, but the south end remained. Inside the top was an arch of brickwork which seemed rock solid. There must have been boats to ride through at one time, as there were small log dams placed at regular intervals. But otherwise, the tunnel did not seem much different from other long creek tunnels.

Our trips through the tunnel were scary. Cobwebs covered everything, it was dark, and a misstep on a slippery rock or log meant a wet shoe and pants

leg. But what an act of courage it was to make the 50-yard trip through the tunnel after accepting a double dare.

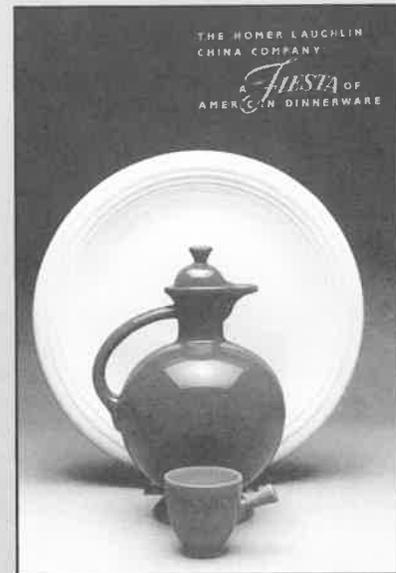
To me, following the creek on up into the hills was a thrilling adventure, and remains so today. Every Christmas when we go to visit Grandmother Alma, my own girls and I make the short hike up the scenic little valley. As we follow the creek the valley gets more and more narrow, damp, and mossy. The hills tower above and civilization seems miles away.

About a mile up the creek the hills come down to the very edge of the water. The creek forms a small but spectacular roller coaster-like triple falls that cascades into a tiny pool. The serenity and beauty of that scene are breathtaking, something out of my own childhood that I love to share with my children.

I don't know when the old park closed; someone recently told me that it was around 1910. It seems a shame for something so idyllic to have come to an end. Still, the remains of the park have sparked the curiosity and imagination of generations of children who grew up in Newell.

My adventures there began shortly after my family moved to Newell in 1951, when I was in the second grade. My cousin, Bob Gracey, who was two years older, and I were drawn from my new house past the playground and across the empty baseball field like proverbial moths to the flame.

We had never seen anything like it — a virtual wall of dishes more than an eighth of a mile long and going down about 35 or 40 feet to the green valley below. It was then that we discovered the first fill activity, mountain climbing. Sure we threw some dishes and broke some cups, but we were in the mood to explore. The wall of dishes was steep but not vertical, and climbing down looked easy. However, we quickly discovered that the broken dishes were slippery and a wrong step could cause a small avalanche. The rough and sharp unglazed dishes hurt our hands and tore our pants. Once on the floor of the valley, the dishes above looked awesome. Nearby were puddles of wet sticky clay, which attracted our shoes. Steel drums oozed strange, dark liquids that bubbled. We only had to knock one over to learn never to do it again.



The GOLDENSEAL Homer Laughlin China reprint. Cover photo by Michael Keller.

Homer Laughlin Booklet

The Spring 1985 GOLDENSEAL cover story featured the Homer Laughlin China Company, the largest dinnerware manufacturer in the world, builder of the town of Newell, and originator of famous Fiesta ware. The article was published in connection with the opening of a major exhibit of Homer Laughlin chinaware at the Cultural Center in Charleston, and was accompanied by an interview with Ed Carson, a long-time employee at the Hancock County plant. "China Colors," a photoessay by Michael Keller, complemented the story, one of the few instances where color photos have been used in a GOLDENSEAL photo spread.

The magazine proved to be a popular issue, resulting in a 16-page reprint of the chinaware feature. Copies of the full-color booklet are available through the GOLDENSEAL office. The cost is \$2.50 each, including shipping. Orders may be sent to GOLDENSEAL Magazine, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305.



Above and opposite page: The 1913 postcard shows the park fountain in its heyday, while the new photo (opposite) shows the remains as of last winter. Photo by Michael Keller; postcard courtesy Ira C. Sayre.

Unfortunately, when we got home we found that clay had stuck to every conceivable part of our shoes and even on one of my socks. A flour-like white substance clung to our jackets. Torn and bloody places marred our pants. We argued that we were not dirty in the technical sense of having any actual dirt on us, but my mother and Aunt Mary seemed unable to grasp our fine point of logic and two solid, old-fashioned spankings followed.

Despite threats and punishments, we returned to the dump year after year, taking part in the full range of activities. These definitely included collecting. Anyone who has ever been to a dump knows the urge, the desire to bring home more junk than you brought originally, some of it your own. Once you saw it laid out at the dump you could not bear to part with it. But that's another story.

At our fill, the collectibles were dishes and my little sister Janie became a master collector. Often, she

found only slightly cracked, fully glazed and decorated dishes and cups which she would proudly present to Mom as gifts. But her prized possession was the full set of unglazed dinnerware she brought home and decorated with crayons. She was surely one of the few little girls in the United States to have her own set of adult-size dishes with a lot of pink and blue designs to use for her dolls' tea parties. Most of the cups had handles, and all had cracks.

Big game hunting, although not my cup of tea, was one of the most popular of the fill sports. On warm summer evenings, more than ten or 15 cars would be parked on the river end of the fill and the sound of .22 rifle fire was nearly constant. A friend of mine who now teaches at Marshall University recalled how her older brother used to sneak off with his rifle to Newell to hunt rats. She used to be able to extract favors from him by

threatening to report his safaris to their mother.

At twilight the hunters would stand on the top rim of dishes and shoot rats as they came out on the pottery below. After dark, they would tape flashlights on the gun stocks to "freeze" their prey before shooting. When is rat hunting season, and is it illegal to spotlight rats in West Virginia?

During my high school years in the late 1950's, I discovered the therapeutic value of the most popular dump activity — dish breaking and sailing. Teenagers in many towns were forced to brood in their rooms, but in Newell we went to the dump to work out our frustrations. After an hour or so, our problems did not seem as fierce. We broke dishes by slamming them on the ground, throwing them against each other, or by sticking them upright in soft clay and then throwing objects at them, shooting-gallery style. It was just crude destruction, but it felt so good.

Sailing dishes demanded more skill. Basically, a plate or saucer turned upside down and thrown out over the edge of the fill sailed somewhat like a modern-day Frisbee. But because other dishes were heavier and less aerodynamic, they required a baseball pitcher's sidearm throw. Glazed dishes were a little slippery. The rough, unglazed ones provided a better grip but would eventually leave a blister on your hand.

The oblong meat platters looked the funniest as they flew over the edge of the fill, but were so heavy that some of them took two hands. No Frisbee dog would ever try to catch one of those babies in his teeth.

Dinner plates were good. Too heavy to travel far, they usually crashed satisfyingly into the side of the wall of dishes below. Salad plates and saucers were by far the best to throw. Under the right conditions they would sail out, catch some rising air current, miss the trees in the valley below, and almost reach the creek 40 yards away.

Bad throws, those which tipped one way or another, would dive like demented kamikazes into the wall of dishes.

The greatest feat of dish sailing was performed by a high school kid a couple of years older than me. Tom (not his real name) once sailed a butter plate more than 80 yards across the fill into the hill on the other side. Actually, Tom was a fine high school athlete, but in the spring of his junior year he quit the baseball team to spend more time at the fill. We watched him throw beautiful sailers over the edge of the dump hour after hour, often well into twilight.

My family moved away from Newell in 1963, and I haven't lived there since. But when we visit my mother-in-law in Chester, the town next to Newell, I sometimes take my girls to the fill. "You're going to take those girls where?" Grandmother Alma asked disapprovingly the first time. She changed her tune when each girl gave her a gift

of a saucer they had decorated themselves.

Then there was that beautiful late summer day when my brother and sister and our families loaded up two cars to head for the fill. Everything was exactly the same or seemed so to us. The kids included my teenagers, Megan and Alexis, and three preschoolers, Janie's Katie and Jim's sons, Beau and Alex. With a little bit of prodding, these children of the video game era took up the ancient sports of breaking, throwing, and climbing. Perhaps all hope is not lost. It is a shame that none of us lives in a town with a good dump.

As we walked back to the cars after a solid hour of fun, we were covered with white dust. Beau's tennis shoe, which had been sucked off in wet clay, was filthy, but at least back on his foot. Janie, who is now Aunt Jane, looked over to me and said, "Do you think Mom and Dad will like these matching cups? You can hardly see the cracks." ❁



She was 12 feet tall, 160 pounds of pure aeronautical engineering genius. Why, it would have made Leonardo da Vinci humble. It would have brought a tear to Ben Franklin's eye.

Long Enough and Strong Enough

The Winning Liars from Vandalia 1991

Photographs by Michael Keller

Paul Lepp was back on top again in 1991, edging out Jimmy Costa for the coveted blue ribbon in the annual West Virginia State Liar's Contest at Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Lepp told a story featuring his trademark Monster Stick fishing pole, while Costa, a well-known Summers County storyteller, took second place with a hunting yarn. Bil Lepp of Philippi took third with an outrageous tale of undomesticated train engines, while young liar Christopher Noe of Mingo County won the special youth award.

The 1992 Liar's Contest will take place Sunday afternoon, May 24, at the State Theater in the Capitol Complex. You may contact Ken Sullivan, your editor and once-a-year lying impresario, to preregister. Write to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, Charleston, WV 25305; or call (304)348-0220.

We are printing only the top two adult stories and the youth winner, due to space restrictions.

Paul Lepp. I got to tell you I'm just mighty glad to be standing on this stage before you today with both my feet planted firmly on the ground. You see, it never ceases to amaze me how the

simplest of ideas — and believe me, I've been accused of having nothing but the simplest of ideas — can get blown all out of proportion and land a man in trouble.

Such an incident happened to me earlier in the spring. I was driving back from Charleston, and as I crossed the I-64 bridge I just happened to look down on Magic Island and there was a couple of fellows flying kites. The thing that caught my eye was that they were flying those kites with fishing poles. As soon as I saw that, the idea came to me that I was going to have to try that with my Monster Stick.

Now you might recall, that's my nine-foot surfcasting rod that's got a reel full of six miles of brand-new 50-pound Stren carp cord. And I realized, of course, that an outfit like that would just rip the guts right out of an ordinary, average K-Mart Ninja Turtle-type kite.

So as soon as I got home I commenced to fashioning a custom kite. I started with a couple of 4x4's and some railroad spikes. And I framed it in with half-inch stainless steel cable. Then I rummaged around in the garage and I

found an old army surplus canvas mess tent, which I carefully stitched on for the skin. I went over to my weird neighbor's house and there was a big set of king-size waterbed sheets, fake leopard skin, hanging on the clothesline. They were just crying out to be born free. I snatched them off there and fashioned a tail and then I stepped back to observe my masterpiece — or my *piece de resistance*. That's French — it means "fancy kite." I stepped back to admire it. She was 12 feet tall, 160 pounds of pure aeronautical engineering genius. Why, it would have made Leonardo da Vinci humble. It would have brought a tear to Ben Franklin's eye.

Well now, one minor technical difficulty arose. And that was the fact that while the 50-pound Stren carp cord will land any fish that swims in fresh or salt water I wasn't sure how it would hold up against this 160-pound kite. I searched high and low for a line that was long enough and strong enough to handle that thing.

One day, by the merest of coincidences I was driving up Cabin Creek and stumbled across all I needed. There

Christopher Noe of Mingo County was among the younger competitors and the winner of the youth award at the 1991 Liar's Contest.

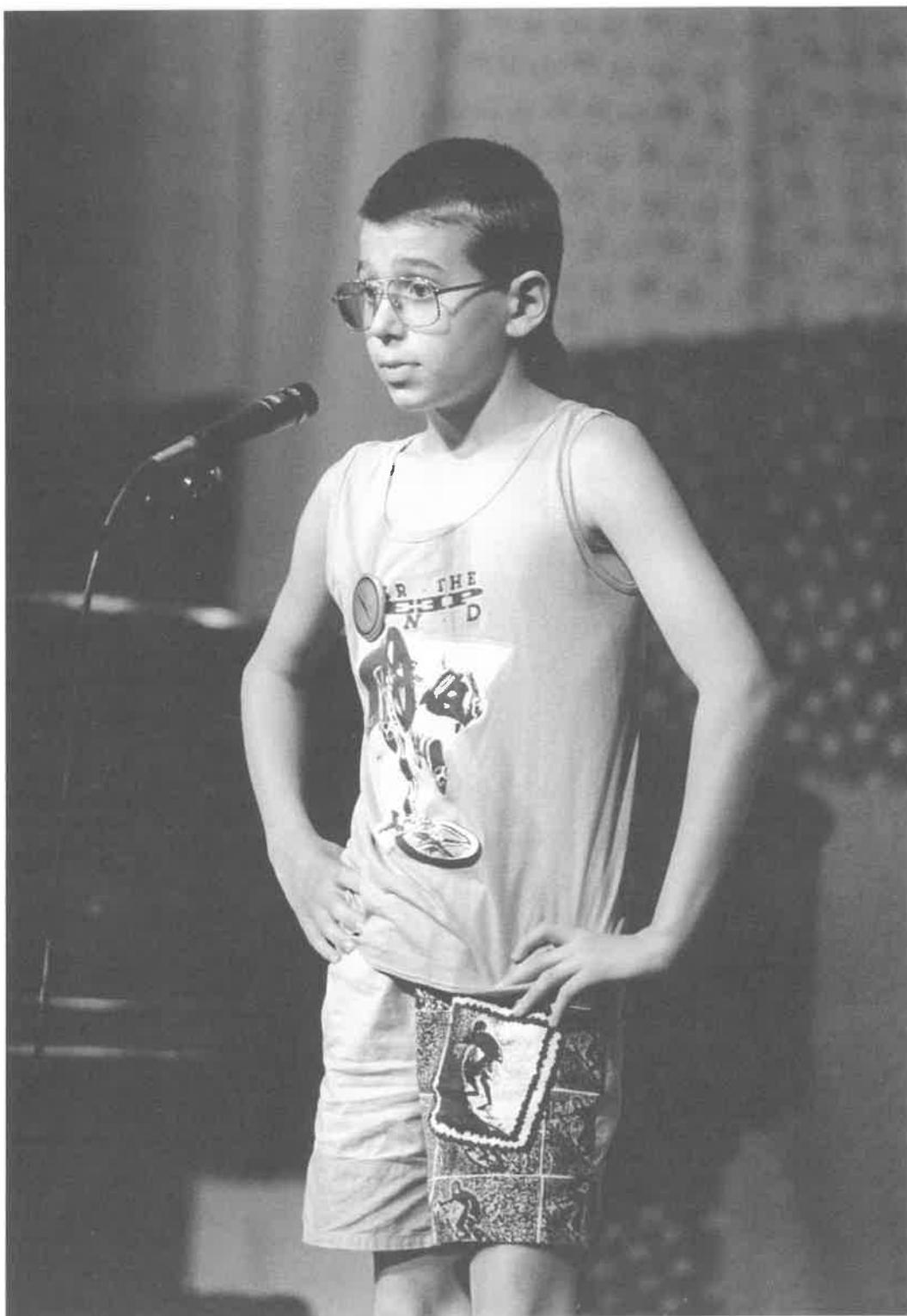
it was, stretched along the side of the road as far as the eye could see — the finest copper-core, rubber-coated, kite-flying fishing line you ever did see. It was stamped "C&P." All I had to do was climb up the pole and pull down enough to fill up my reel.

Now I had my line and the Monster Stick and the kite, and all I needed was some wind. I knew no average puff was going to lift that kite, and the bad news was the governor was out of state again and the legislature wasn't in session. And the Liar's Contest was still more than a month away.

Well, I waited, laid low to see what would happen. Then came the second Tuesday in April, it was the ninth I believe. You might remember we had a bit of a blow here in Charleston. Some said it was a tornado, some said it was a hurricane. I personally believe it was somewhere in between, maybe a Cross Lanes or a Nitro or something. Anyway, I heard the Weather Service calling for this storm and I loaded up that kite and the Monster Stick and away to Magic Island I went.

When I got there, the sky was black and the wind was whipping five-foot whitecaps up on the Kanawha. It was a perfect day for flying kites, and to my great luck there wasn't another kite flyer in sight. I just want to tell you, it was a sight such as you seldom see as that thing soared up into the sky. It was a right proud moment for me.

But a moment was all it lasted, because that's when the storm hit. I know a thing or two about storms, and when the rain and the hail came up the river sideways instead of falling up and down like it was supposed to, I knew that was not good. And when the wind blew the waves plumb off the water 'til the surface of the Kanawha was smooth as



glass in the middle of that raging storm, and the waves were underneath and the fish were riding surfboards on inverted waves, I knew that meant trouble. And then I heard the sonic boom! I looked up in the sky and I realized it had been caused by my 12-foot, 160-pound kite which was now streaking across the sky so fast that it had just broke the sound barrier.

It dawned on me that that kite was probably made of the right stuff. But I knew that was all she wrote for me. I

turned around to kiss my behind goodbye, but it was too late because my behind was already ahead.

Now let me clear that up for you — having your behind be ahead is nothing like having your head be a behind. When your head's a behind, it makes you want to run for political office. But when your behind's ahead that just means you're hauling. . . — well, that just means your behind's going somewhere real quick. At this particular point, my behind and the rest of me



Champion Paul Lepp performs in an NRA cap, with a chestful of fishing flies and an upside-down "Arch Moore for Governor" campaign button. His

behind my behind were heading straight up, behind that kite.

There was nothing I could do but shimmy up the Monster Stick and hold on for dear life as I watched the outline of the city of Charleston grow fainter beneath me. Then the outline of North America grew clearer.

On up we went until directly we came to the ozone layer. We would certainly have been killed if we hadn't managed to slip through the hole. And I'd just like to personally thank each and every person in this room who's ever squirted a squirt of aerosol because contrary to what those environmentalist fellows will tell you, that hole ain't none too big, not when you're going through it real fast, attached to a 12-foot kite.

Well, we broke through the hole and everything got dark and quiet all of a sudden, and I realized I was in outer space. It dawned on me that outer space was not a good place for me to be, at least not without one of those tin-foil suits, or so much as a jar of Tang or anything. I got to thinking on it, and I figured what I'd do is just try and find a shuttle line and hop a ride back when it came by.

But evidently the space shuttle was behind schedule that day. So I thought maybe I'll just catch a ride with one of them Russian commienauts when they come by. But you know, I couldn't find

hide nor hair of them either.

It turns out that outer space is just a little bigger and darker than I imagined it was. I even got so desperate — since I figured nobody was looking anyway — as to click my heels together three times and say, "There's no place like home, there's no place like home."

That didn't work. I reckon I didn't have the right kind of shoes on.

I turned around to kiss my behind goodbye, but it was too late because my behind was already ahead.

So there I was, drifting around outer space for days. It was dark and cold. I was hungry and I had to go to the bathroom pretty bad.

And then one day I was just kind of checking out the rings of Saturn up close when off at a distance I seen a set of headlights. Immediately, my inquiring mind figured out that must be Elvis. I'd heard he lived up there somewhere.

But as the car drew nearer, I could see that it wasn't, because the King wouldn't be caught dead cruising around the Solar System in a 1986 dark blue Chrysler K-car with government

plates. Well, this car pulls on up beside of me and this little fellow — short guy with horn-rimmed glasses, a calculator in one pocket and a bunch of pens and pencils in the other — he rolls down the window and he leans out and he says, "Mr. Lepp, I presume?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "Paul G. Lepp, Social Security number 123-45-6789?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "Mr. Lepp, do you happen to know what today's date is?"

Well, it occurred to me that that was an awful long way for the government to send somebody just to check to see if I knew what day it was. And I hated to disappoint him, but I had to tell him I didn't.

And he said, "Mr. Lepp, it's the 16th."

I said, "Okay."

He said, "April the 16th." He said, "Yesterday was the 15th of April." He said, "Does the term '1040A' mean anything to you?"

I said, "Oh."

He said, "Oh's right, buddy."

He said, "I'm here to tell you I'm from the Internal Revenue Service and my records indicate that you haven't paid up your taxes as prescribed by law." He said, "I'm going to have to insist that you get in this vehicle and return with me right now."

I've always tried to be an upstanding American citizen, conscientious and



body language tells a story in itself.

patriotic, so without further argument I jumped in the car and headed on back to earth with him.

And that's pretty much the story about how I almost didn't make it here today and then I did. The only thing I'd like to point out is — you know them revenuers have taken awful bad knocks here in the State of West Virginia over the years. I've figured on it and I think maybe that's not earned because the best I can deduct, it was that revenuer's interest that done saved my assets on that taxing trip. And here I stand before you today, saved by the grace of God and the IRS. Thank you.

Jimmy Costa. One time I was out hunting, and I hadn't had much luck on that particular day. I was over in a big patch of woods, and I'd been up in there from daybreak until 11:00 o'clock. There was a stand of timber across this big field from where I was. I said, "Well, I'll just hike on over that way and go hunt in that patch of woods for a while."

So I did. I struck out of the woods and went across this big hayfield and I just was near the edge of the woods over on the yon side and, by golly, here comes this old fellow out of the woods over there. I'd never seen him before. As I neared him, I could tell he was quite old — and not only was he old, this fellow was one of the roughest, ugliest-looking people I ever saw in my life. I just

couldn't help but be aware of it, you know; I got two eyes in my head.

As I got over there, by golly, he had the awfulest mess of squirrels I ever saw in my life. He had a hickory withe

Illustration by John Rowe.



and he had these squirrels laced up through their back feet. And he had them on his back like fish, just carrying them there. He had, I'd say, at least 20.

Then I looked around and there wasn't a gun. And I thought, "By Job, this is really interesting. Where'd he get all them squirrels?" I was curious.

I said, "Mister, I got to ask you something." I said, "Did you get all those squirrels in that patch of woods there?"

"Yes sir, indeed I did."

"Well, how did you get them?" I said. "You haven't got a gun. I never heard of trapping them."

"Oh no. I don't need guns nor traps." He says, "I can ugly a squirrel to death."

I said, "What?"

He said, "Yes siree, Bob, I can ugly a squirrel to death."

I said, "Now I've never heard a tale of the like of that." I said, "How do you ugly a squirrel to death?"

"I'll tell you what," he says. "I haven't gotten nigh as many squirrels as I want. There's a big den tree back in there. You come with me," he says, "and I'm going to show you how it's done."

Well, boys, I had to see this, you know.

So I went back in there with him and

"Well, you know," he said, "there can be an advantage to being ugly as I am. And I found out what it was."



Illustration by
Colleen Anderson.

The Big Potato

Russell Barr of Wetzel County never showed up for the Liar's Contest, but we suspect he's got a few tall tales in him. Read this letter he sent to us a while back and judge for yourself:

Why don't we start out by saying these are hills, not mountains. I've been here about 71 years and believe me, they are hills. But there are places where you have to look straight up to see the sun.

I've traveled where you would have to hold onto rocks and bushes to pull yourself up, one step at a time. Then when you got to where you were going, you still weren't there because there still wasn't enough level ground to stand on.

My dad had us boys to clean out some new ground one time, I remember. We planted potatoes in this black soil. Dad said it would raise a good crop. We tried to get the dirt over them potatoes, but as fast as we would pull the dirt up it would slide back down the hill.

Come fall, it was time to dig potatoes. Our dad told us to harness the

old mule, Sampson. But we couldn't get Sampson up to the darn potato patch, so my dad said we would dig them with a mattock. He dug in the end of the row, and them damn potatoes started rolling down the hill, right down to our root cellar — all except one potato which we could not roll over.

My dad said leave it there. He got up one morning and got his chain saw from the tool shed and clumb that steep hill. We could hear him sawing on something. All at once we heard him yell "Look out below!" That potato had sprouted and the sprouts kept it from rolling. When he sawed the sprouts off, it rolled down the hill, crashed into our corn crib tearing it to smithers, and rolled to a stop square in front of our kitchen door.

So when my mom was having potatoes for supper, she would just take the meat cleaver out and chop off a chunk. You know, that potato lasted us all winter.

— Russell Barr

he took me up to a great big oak tree. It was probably about four foot wide on the stump, and we got behind that. And just about ten foot almost in a beeline from that tree was a big hollow chestnut tree.

"Now there's a den up in yonder," he said. "Boy, that thing's just plumb full of squirrels."

So we waited, and sure enough, it wasn't any time at all, by golly, until they began to come out in pairs. Kindly investigating to see if everything's all right and they're in the clear. Then here two of them come, sneaking down.

He let them get just about to the height of a man and, by Job, he ran out of there like a scared haint. He was going "Bah!!!" Like that. And I want you to know those two squirrels just seized up like a rusty bolt, buddy, and off that tree they flipped, flopped, and hit the ground like two dead rocks.

I thought, "Now by Job, I've seen a lot in my time for as young as I am, but I never saw anything like that. Now that is something else!"

I said, "I've never seen anything like it."

"I don't need guns nor traps." He says, "I can ugly a squirrel to death."

"Well, you know," he said, "there can be an advantage to being ugly as I am. And I found out what it was. I can ugly about anything you want."

I said, "Well, that's something."

He said, "You think *that's* something? You ought to see my wife do it."

I said, "Is that right?"

He said, "Yes sir."

I said, "Do you mean she can ugly squirrels like that?"

He said, "Oh Lord no, man. I save her for bear. Hell, she'd tear a squirrel all to pieces!"

Christopher Noe. Now see, I'm from Ben Creek and that's in Mingo County, West Virginia. And all my relatives live around me. The story that I want to tell you happened to my old great aunt, and her name is Aunt Effie.

Now Aunt Effie, she won't say nothing that don't sound right. She won't



Jimmy Costa is no stranger to storytelling fans and West Virginia festival audiences. He won second place last year with an ugly man story.

do nothing that don't make no sense. See, Aunt Effie, she's set her life on one thing. And that's when she leaves this great earth, she wants to be the first Ben Creeker to reach the pearly gates of heaven because of the way she lived her life on this earth.

Aunt Effie, she's married to Uncle Will. And Uncle Will just kind of lets Aunt Effie do what she wants to. She's always the one that's doing all the planning. And that's where they got into a little bit of trouble one time. They'd just got an inside toilet. Aunt Effie vowed that she'd never go anywhere else that didn't have an inside toilet.

They were going to go down to this camp down in Florida. So Aunt Effie, she decided that she'd write to see if they had an indoor toilet. She wrote,

Road Work

State employees, hard-working magazine staffers not excluded, occasionally take a little ribbing from the taxpayers. The following exchange is in that vein.

Jimmy Costa. I love to come down here to Charleston, because I always find out little tidbits that's happening around here. Then I can run back home to Summers County and tell everybody before it ever hits the newspaper.

Well sir, I found out a dandy one today. A fella come up to me and said he works in the Highway Department over here. He said, "You know, I've got some bad news. You a West Virginian?"

"Yes sir, I am."

He said, "You know they're going to lay off 500 workers up here in the Department of Highways?"

"No," I said, "How come that?"

He said, "Well, by golly, the Japanese have done invented a self-standing shovel."

Paul Lepp. I got some more bad news for you, Jimmy. You probably heard where the State of California was going to donate the Golden Gate Bridge to the State of West Virginia. They were thinking about setting it down there at Hinton in your neck of the woods, but we had to turn her down 'cause we didn't have enough of them orange barrels to cover it.

"Dear Camp Director: Do you have an indoor toilet?" She took that in there to Uncle Will and said, "Uncle Will, that just don't look right!"

He just kind of shrugged his shoulders and said, "Whatever you think, Ef."

So, she decided to write again. She put, "Dear Camp Director: Do you have a bathroom commode?" She said, "That don't look right either. But I ain't a-going until I find out."

So, she decided to abbreviate it — "BC." She wrote, "Dear Camp Director: Do you have a BC?" She said, "Since he's a camp director, he'll be able to figure out what 'BC' stands for."

The camp director got the letter. He

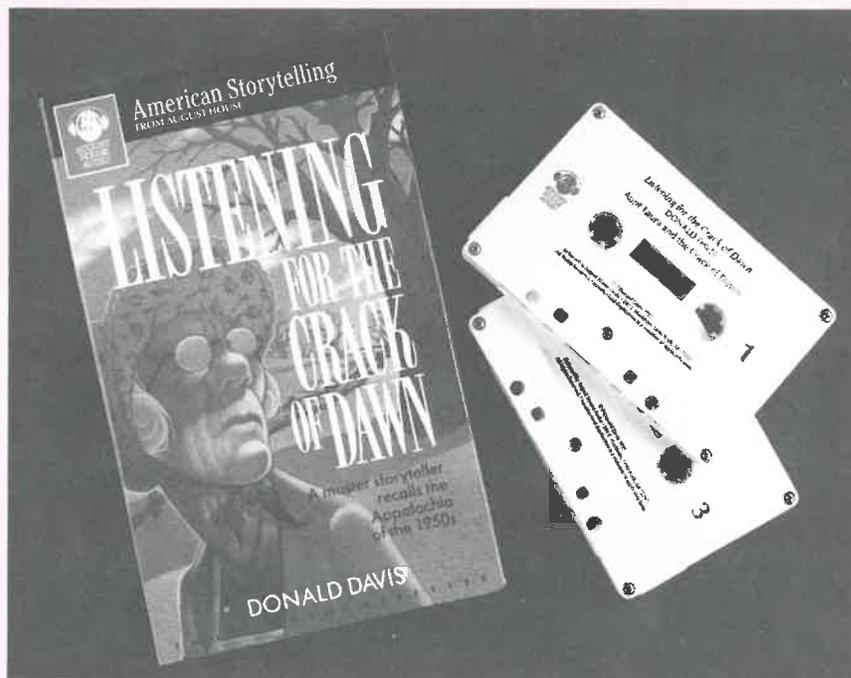
"It is from no lack of effort on my part that I don't go to the BC more often. As you know as we get older, it seems to be more of an effort to go in colder weather."

saw "BC" and about the time he was going to write back for a fuller explanation, his wife come in and said, "Why, she wants to know if there's a Baptist Church in the area."

So he wrote back. "Aunt Effie, I'm sorry for the delay in writing you back, but I'm happy to tell you that there is a local BC 28 miles from the campground. It's capable of seating 250 people at one time. The last time me and my wife went was six months ago. They had a supper in the BC basement to raise money for seats, which are badly needed.

"It is from no lack of effort on my part that I don't go to the BC more often. As you know, as we get older it seems to be more of an effort to go in colder weather. But if you and your husband decide to go to the BC, me and my wife will take you and sit with you the whole time and get you acquainted to all the people. As you know, this is a small community.

"Yours sincerely, Camp Director." ❀



More Good Stories

"Humans are the animals that tell stories," writes children's author Jane Yolen in her introduction to *Best-Loved Stories Told at the National Storytelling Festival*. The book is the first publication of the National Storytelling Press, recently established by the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (NAPPS).

The association traces its beginnings to an event 20 years ago in Jonesborough, Tennessee — the first National Storytelling Festival. High school journalism teacher Jimmy Neil Smith came up with the idea. By 1975 Jimmy Neil Smith was mayor of Jonesborough and the annual storytelling festival was a going concern. Smith called together "a few of the tellers who had supported and nurtured the festival" to think about forming an association. They named a board of directors, set up bylaws, and NAPPS was born.

Best-Loved Stories commemorates 20 years worth of festival storytelling with 37 of the best tales told at Jonesborough over the years. Comments from the storytellers introduce each tale, and an index for

stories and storytellers is provided in the 224-page book. *Best-Loved Stories Told at the National Storytelling Festival* sells for \$19.95 hardbound and \$11.95 softbound. It is available in book stores or from the distributor, August House Publishers, P.O. Box 3223, Little Rock, AR 72203.

August House, best known for its many books of American folklore, also ventured into audio production recently. Last fall the company released its first six tapes, all adapted from previously published storytelling books.

The new recordings include a two-cassette package of Appalachian storyteller Donald Davis reading from his humorous book, *Listening for the Crack of Dawn*; a children's cassette of the Johnny Appleseed legend; and two volumes of "Favorite Scary Stories of American Children." Another cassette, "Ghost Stories from the American Southwest," is plenty scary for older children and adults as well.

The August House cassettes sell for \$9.95 each, \$16.95 for the two *Crack of Dawn* tapes.

Vandalia 1992

The 1992 Vandalia Gathering will take place at the Capitol Complex in Charleston on Memorial Day Weekend. The annual statewide folklife festival is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

Vandalia begins with an opening concert Friday evening, May 22, and continues through the closing awards concert late Sunday afternoon. In between are the popular music contests, ethnic dance demonstrations and clogging, continuous performances from several stages, quilting awards and the opening of the quilt show, as well as storytelling and the annual West Virginia State Liar's Contest. Regional and ethnic foods will be sold from the food booths on the grounds, and there will be craft demonstrations and craft sales.

As always, the main focus of Vandalia Gathering will be the older West Virginians — senior musicians, quilters, storytellers, and artisans — who carry on our traditions and hand them down to younger mountaineers. One special person will be presented with the Vandalia Award, the state's highest folklife honor, at the Saturday evening concert in the Cultural Center theater.

Vandalia will hit the road again this year, with all-day crafts and music scheduled for both northbound service plazas on the West Virginia Turnpike. Members of the Vandalia family of musicians and craftspeople will greet the traveling public with demonstrations and mini-concerts, urging motorists to drive on to Charleston for the weekend festivities.

Memorial Day Weekend is the traditional homecoming time in the mountains, and Vandalia Gathering is the event to come home to. Join us this year to celebrate the best of West Virginia. There is no charge.

The photographs here, by Michael Keller, are from the 1991 Vandalia Gathering.

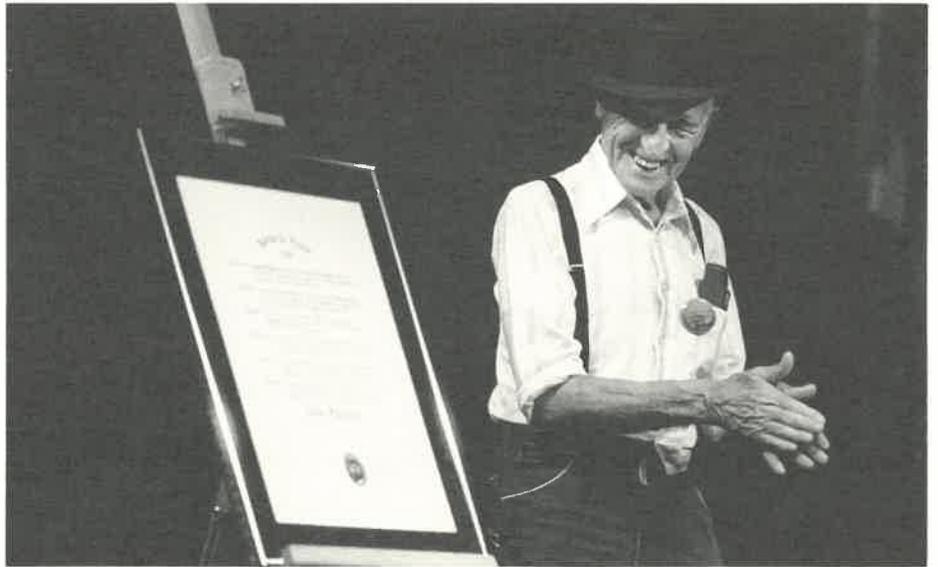
Monica Forbes and Bruce Betler of the Helvetia Dancers perform the music and dance of their Randolph County Swiss community.



Above: Bob Fleming of Charleston was among the skilled craftspeople at Vandalia 1991.
Below: Brooks Smith is a familiar face at Vandalia Gathering.



Below: Lisa Meyers of Appalachian Lads & Lassies, airborne at Vandalia 1991.



Above: Berkeley County banjo man Andy Boarman carried off the coveted Vandalia Award in 1991. The honor recognizes a lifetime contribution toward the preservation of West Virginia's traditional culture.

Below: Some people never leave the food row at Vandalia. Local groups serve regional and ethnic food.





Left: Tom King will tell you that Vandalia is for teaching the young. Here he gets some help with the fretting from nephew Zeke Fowler.



West Virginia Quilts

The Division of Culture and History is planning its annual quilt exhibition for May 22 through September 7 of this year. The summer-long quilt show opens in conjunction with Vandalia Gathering, a festival of West Virginia traditional arts held each Memorial Day Weekend on the grounds of the State Capitol.

Rows of quilts line the white marble walls in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center. Last year, 72,000 visitors saw 34 colorful quilts on display. All of the quilts are made by West Virginians. Particular attention is paid to the quality of craftsmanship — fundamentals such as consistent quilting stitches; piecing with no puckers; corners meeting evenly; and neat applique stitches with edges turned under — as well as the overall appearance of color and design.

The final show of quilts is selected by an experienced quilt judge from the many entries sent in from across the state. Awards are given for first through fifth place, and one quilt each year is purchased for the West Virginia Permanent Collection.

Mountain Music

Compiled by Susan Leffler

West Virginia is recognized as the home of fine traditional musicians. Over the years our fiddlers, pickers, and singers have been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Library of Congress, and other prestigious organizations as well as appreciative audiences at home. Our music includes the haunting harmonies of gospel hymns, the toe-tapping rhythms of old-time bluegrass, rousing Irish reels and more.

All the recordings listed here may be purchased at The Shop at the Cultural Center in Charleston and many of them may be found elsewhere as well. They are listed alphabetically by artist, with the record label, where known, in parentheses. "C" denotes cassette, "LP" denotes record, and — yes — "8-T" denotes 8-Track.

Elmer Bird: "Home Sweet Home" (Recording Services, W.N.C.), C, 8-T; "Elmer's Greatest Licks" C; "Turkey Creek" (Hurricane Records), C, LP; "Bumble Bee Waltz" (Hurricane Records), C, LP; "Banjo Man From Turkey Creek," 8-T, LP.

Andrew Boarman: "Traditional Banjo and Autoharp" (June Appal Recordings), LP. Andrew Boarman was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, January 1979.

Ernie Carpenter: "Elk River Blues" (Augusta Heritage Records), LP. Ernie Carpenter was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, Summer 1986.

Clan Erdverkle: "Just Landed, Winter's Coming" (E. MacGregor Ltd. Productions), LP.

Blackie Cool: "Back Memories" (Augusta Heritage Records), LP. Blackie Cool was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, Fall 1981.

Curmudgeon: "Curmudgeon" (Southwind Publishing), C.

Joe Dobbs: "Old-Time Fiddle Tunes" (Fret 'N Fiddle), C. Joe Dobbs was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, Winter 1991.

The Dobbs Brothers: "Dobbs Brothers and Mary Faith Rhoads" (Fret 'N Fiddle), LP.

Wilson Douglas: "Boatin' Up Sandy" (Marimac), C. Wilson Douglas was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, January 1977.

Ray Epler: "Plain and Simple," C. Ray Epler was a *GOLDENSEAL* cover subject, Fall 1985.

Ray Epler and Sally Hawley: "Something Old & Something New" (Heather & Honeysuckle), C.

Wayne Erbsen: "Native Ground," C; "Old-Time Gospel Instrumentals," C.

Russell Fluharty: "Dulcimer Man" (Page Recording Co.), LP. Russell Fluharty was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, Winter 1986.

Alan Freeman: "Oldtime, Newtime, Ragtime, My Time," C; "Out Of The Cold," (Frozen Sound Studio), C, LP.

Alan Freeman and Robert Shafer: "Back In The Saddle" (Sidetrack), C.

Worley Gardner: "Mountain Melodies," C, LP; "Mountain Melodies II," C, LP.

W. Franklin George: "Swope's Knobs" (Anacronistic), LP. Franklin George was featured in *GOLDENSEAL*, Spring 1983.

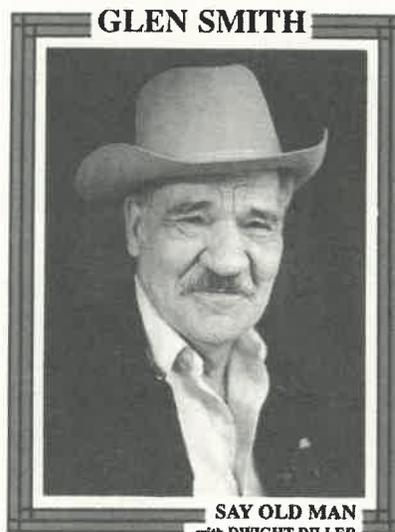
The Goldrush Bluegrass Band: "The Goldrush of '89," C.

Sally Hawley: "Heirlooms and Keepsakes," C.

Kay Justice and Ginny Hawker: "Signs & Wonders" (June Appal Recordings), C.

Wayne Henderson and Robin Kessinger: "Contest Favorites," C, LP.

John Johnson: "Fiddlin John" (Augusta Heritage Records), LP. John Johnson was a *GOLDENSEAL* cover subject, Winter 1981.



AUGUSTA HERITAGE SERIES
TRADITIONAL MUSIC FROM WEST VIRGINIA



Robin Kessinger: "Not for Flatpickers Only" (Fret 'N Fiddle), C; "Groundhog Gravy," C; "Flowers of Edinburgh," LP.

Robin Kessinger and Steve Kaufman: "Star Of The County Down," C.

Tom King: "Green Mountain Cotillion," C; "Dreadnaught," C.

Lilly Brothers: "Country Songs," LP; "Bluegrass Breakdown" (Rounder Records), LP; "What Will I Leave Behind" (County Records), LP. The Lilly Brothers were featured in the first issue of *GOLDENSEAL*, April 1975.

Lilly Brothers and Don Stover: "Early Recordings" (County Records), LP.

Phyllis Marks: "Folksongs And Ballads" I (Augusta Heritage Records), C; "Folksongs And Ballads" II, C.

Gerald Milnes: "Old-Time Music" (Osbow Productions), C. Gerald Milnes was a *GOLDENSEAL* cover subject, Fall 1984.

David Morris: "Song Weaver" (KidTown Traditional), C; "Autoharpist," (KidTown Traditional) C.

Mountain Thyme: "She Moved Through The Fair," C; "Mountain Thyme," C.

Nat Reese: "Just A Dream" (Augusta Heritage Records), LP. Nat Reese was a *GOLDENSEAL* cover subject, Winter 1987.

Mary Faith Rhoads and The Dobbs Brothers: "Take Care of Yourself," LP.

Carl Rutherford: "Look A Yonder Comin'" (Mountain Moving Music Productions), C; "Home to West Virginia," (World Country Gospel Productions), C; "Praise God," (World Country Gospel), C; "Love Can't Fly On Broken Wings," (World Country Gospel), C.

The Samples Brothers with Buddy Griffin: "Hot Music From The Hills" (Braxton Records), C.

Robert Shafer: "National Flatpicking Champion 1983" (Riverside Recording Studio), LP.

Robert Shafer and Robin Kessinger: "Album of Champions," C.

Lefty Shafer: "Mockingbird Hill," C; "W. Va. State Fiddle Champion 1987," C; "Fiddles, Sings, And Whistles," C, LP.
Lefty Shafer was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1984.

Woody Simmons: "All Smiles Tonight" (Elderberry Records), LP.
Woody Simmons was a GOLDENSEAL cover subject, July 1979.

Glen Smith: "Say Old Man" (Marimac), C.
Glen Smith was featured in GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1990.

Bobby Taylor: "Kanawha Tradition" (Sound Trac Recordings), C.

Various Artists: "Banjo Legacy" (Augusta Heritage Records), LP.

Various Artists: "The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-1987." (Elderberry Records), C, LP.

Melvin Wine: "Cold Frosty Morning" (Poplar Records), LP; "Hannah At The Springhouse" (Marimac), C.
Melvin Wine was a GOLDENSEAL cover subject, Summer 1991.

Farewell to Noah Cottrell

West Virginia lost a state treasure when Calhoun County musician Noah Cottrell died December 9th. Cottrell was 91. Both he and his sister Phoebe Parsons were original members of the Vandalia family, a cross-section of traditional musicians honored each year at the Division of Culture and History's Memorial Day folklife celebration.

Best known to old-time music fans as an excellent fiddler and banjo picker, Noah ("Noey" to those who knew him) Cottrell also sang, told riddles, and never missed a chance to have a good time. Many remember him as the man in the felt hat and suspenders who'd click his heels and clog up a storm on the festival stage at the State Folk Festival at Glensville.

Cottrell was raised on traditional Appalachian values, living close to the land, neighbors and his own sizable family. He left 15 living children, 40 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

He spent his adult life cutting timber, laying pipeline, and building roads. He took his fun when and where he could. Neighbors remember his music as well as his kindhearted practical jokes.

When old age and arthritis prevented him from playing the fiddle and banjo Noah kept the music alive by playing the old hymns and reels on the harmonica. His family says that in recent years he never left home

without a half-dozen stuffed into his pockets.

Maybe the best measure of Noah Cottrell was the way his family treated him. Last fall Patty Cottrell, wife of Noah's son Melvin, invited me to visit the Cottrell domain, which stretches up most of Crummie's Creek Hollow. Patty's father Fred, who died several years ago, and Noah shared decades of pranks and adventures, and she was anxious to record her father-in-law's recollections.

When I arrived Noah was returning from a walk with five-year-old Tiffany, his great granddaughter. Everyday she took him by the hand and carefully led him up and down the hollow looking for pop cans. Noah liked to keep the road clean and saw the cans as a good source of pocket money. What he didn't know was that his family had been carefully scattering cans for years as a way of keeping him walking and fit.

Tiffany's mother, Lisa, was raised on "Grandpa's" hunting and camping tales. Although Noah's memory was failing the day I visited, Lisa's enthusiastic retelling of old stories sparked his memory and he slowly began to spin his yarns.

Son Melvin hummed some tunes Noah had written in the 1930's but had forgotten. The old man's face lit up as he remembered a bit and played a few bars on the harmonica. Then daughter Carol started bragging on her father's potatoes



Noah Cottrell, photographed last fall by Susan Leffler.

and convinced him to show me some huge ones he'd harvested a few weeks before.

Noah told Tiffany it was time for her music lesson and handed her a harmonica. As the two played, six-month-old Tyler, one of the youngest Cottrells, kicked his feet and gurgled to the music.

Noah Cottrell will be missed by old-time music fans, friends, family, and neighbors. But his love of the mountains, sense of fun, and the value he placed on family ties will live on in the hearts of the generations he left behind.

— Susan Leffler

A Depression Ramble

By William D. Creasy

It was the summer of 1931, some two years after the start of the Great Depression. I had become bored with life, with working for neighbor Holly Jack Perkins for 50 cents per day or for John Huff for a dollar. My home life was fine, my parents outstanding, my siblings congenial, and there was plenty of food and warmth. But the fact is I was a young man ready for a change.

The jobs that were available were part-time or temporary. There was no assurance that they would last through the week. The work was heavy and some of it not all that pleasant — such things as grubbing stumps, cutting timber with an ax and crosscut saw, and even hauling and spreading barnyard manure. On days when outside work was not available, there was always plenty to be done on the farm at home.

One day as I walked my tired body slowly home, the thought came to me that there must be other ways to earn a few dollars. Because of the way I had been reared, it never once occurred to me to get what I wanted dishonestly. So I told my parents that I was going to take a trip, the future looked bleak for me the way things were going. They wished me well, told me to be careful, and assured me that I would always be welcome at home.

The next morning I went down to the road with only the clothes I was wearing and with a handkerchief, a pocketknife, and \$1.85 in my pockets. Almost immediately I caught a ride, in one of the few cars that passed in any one day. My first ride took me to Summersville, some 15 miles west of where we lived. After walking out of the town I found a suitable place, a rather pleasant spot with a nice spring flowing from the side of the hill, and settled down to await my next ride. It didn't come, and after a couple of hours I started walking.

After two miles, a farmer came along in a little truck and gave me a ride all the way to Gauley Bridge. I walked through Gauley Bridge and on through Glen Ferris, then found a suitable place to try for another ride. Eventually, it came. This time I made it to the bridge that leads across the Kanawha River to Montgomery.

There was another man hitchhiking at the end of the bridge, so we shared the spot. While we were standing there a third man came walking across the bridge. He was looking in a brown paper sack. Just as he came to where we were standing he pulled a sandwich from the sack and swore bitterly, something about mold on his food. He threw the paper sack down the steep bank and onto the railroad track. He then started up the road toward Boomer.

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The man who was hitchhiking with me immediately scrambled over the bank and retrieved the food. He climbed back up the bank and removed the newspaper wrapping from one of the sandwiches. Sure enough, it was green with mold, but he proceeded to eat with gusto. He did not offer me any nor would I have taken it if he had.

I got tired of this spot and headed down the road on foot. Eventually I

caught another ride which carried me to the tiny river town of London. There was work being done on the locks, and I wanted to try for a job. But it was late in the evening, so I had to wait until morning to make application.

Night was coming and there was no money for lodging. I bought a loaf of bread for eight cents and 15 cents worth of cheese for my evening meal. After this I went along the road for a short distance and climbed up the hill above the road. High up against this steep, wooded hillside I found a levelish open spot on which tall grass grew. Taking my pocketknife I cut a large amount of this dry grass and made myself a bed. I had a good sleep, awaking only briefly a couple times.

Next morning, I went back to London to apply for work on the locks. It was very discouraging. "We have 50 men waiting for any job that is available," I was told. They seemed to emphasize the word "men," as though I was not yet fully grown. It didn't take me long to realize that there was nothing there for me, and I turned to leave. I was offered a free meal, which I turned down, and started up the railroad tracks in the direction from which I had come.

Soon I came to a siding on which a train of coal cars was sitting. The locomotive was in an active state, as though it was about to move. Sure enough, it was waiting for another train to pass on the main track. Then it started to roll. I slipped in between two of the cars and took a seat on the metal framework where they were coupled together.

The train proceeded back up the Kanawha River. This was something new and exciting. I felt like one of the hoboes who were traveling over the country at that time, occasionally

stopping at our house for food and lodging.

At the confluence of the Gauley and New rivers, where the Kanawha is formed, the train turned up the New River. After what seemed to be an hour (I had no watch) we again pulled onto a siding. A man came walking along from the caboose end of the train and saw me sitting there. He did not get ugly and order me to get off but rather was friendly, possibly because of my age. He invited me to come with him up to the front end of the train. The engine was on idle and the three or four men who ran it were sitting on some small logs near the tracks.

The man with me said, "Look what I found." They laughed a little, one or two of them spoke, but still no one was ugly with me. It was obvious that they had some time to wait until another train came by. They began telling stories and kidding around, as is so characteristic of men who know each other well. The engineer seemed to be the best "liar" among them.

Eventually the other train passed and our crew began returning to their positions. I started toward the rear end with the man who had found me, and followed him into the caboose. He told me I'd get him into trouble if I stayed there, so I went back to my seat between two coal cars just as the train started.

Up the line we came to a tunnel. This was a smoke-belching coal-fired locomotive, and breathing was difficult as we passed through the confined space. Soot and ashes darkened my face and clothing, imparting a grimy feeling. Not long after we passed through the tunnel we came to the little town of Nallen, and the train stopped again.

At Nallen I left the train and started walking toward Summersville, hoping to catch a ride. Not one single vehicle passed for the rest of that day. After an hour or so it began to grow dark. I came to a little valley of gently rolling land with an oak forest on one side of the road and a meadow on the other. A beautiful stream flowed out of the forest and crossed the road. It was only about two feet wide and a few inches deep with sand and gravel in the bottom. The water was cold, clear and clean. I drank my fill and washed the

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coal dust from my body. There were no buildings in the little valley but several recently built haystacks in the meadow. I went to the back side of one of these haystacks, pulled out some hay near the ground, and made a bed.

Some of my loaf of bread remained and in Nallen I had purchased some bologna. With some apples that I had picked up from under a tree along the road, these made a fairly decent meal. After eating I went to bed and to my knowledge was not awake during the entire night. I awoke just as daybreak was coming. It was quiet except for the birds singing. Everything was wet with dew, like a fairyland. This was not all that far from the Kanawha Valley but the contrast was striking, for even during the Depression there was much industrial activity in the valley.

I carefully replaced my hay and went on toward Summersville. After walking for some time, I came to a small sawmill in full operation.

Again I asked about work, but the operator told me that he didn't have sufficient work to keep his own family busy. Continuing toward Summersville, I walked for most of the day and arrived at about four o'clock. There was more traffic on the east-west highway through Summersville and after an hour or so I caught a ride that took me all the way to my home near Craigs ville. When I arrived my mother smiled and offered me some food and clean clothes.

Somebody in the family asked me where I had been. I said I would tell them all about it later. I never did, not until now. After all this time my parents and several of my siblings have passed away, but those who lived through the Great Depression will know what I'm talking about.

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 \$3.95 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.

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- _____ Fall 1988/Braxton Craftsman Wilbur Veith
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In This Issue

BOB BARNETT, a native of Hancock County, received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University and teaches classes on sport history at Marshall University. He has published more than 170 articles in both academic and popular publications, including *Physical Educator*, *Journal of Sport History*, *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Washington Post*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1991.

CODY A. BURDETTE describes himself as a railroad man, as were his father and grandfather. He worked for the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company during the 1950's, and also as an auto mechanic. A native West Virginian, he now lives in Tennessee. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1989.

LORNA CHAMBERLAIN, a Wetzel County native, studied English at the College of Steubenville after graduating from Warwood High School near Wheeling. She is a freelance writer whose articles have been used in many publications. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1991.

GREG CLARK is photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History.

WILLIAM D. CREASY, a native of Nicholas County, received a B.S. in industrial arts from the West Virginia Institute of Technology. After serving in the Navy, he went on to earn his master's and Ph.D. in botany from WVU and Iowa State, respectively. Professor Creasy taught botany until his retirement. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1986.

FERRELL FRIEND is a native of Ivydale. He is known widely as a news photographer and worked at the *Charleston Gazette* for more than 20 years. He is the subject of a recent book, *The Quicker, The Sooner: The Story of Photographer Ferrell Friend* by Skip Johnson. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1991.

RICHARD S. HARTLEY was born and raised in Monongalia County and now resides in Ritchie County. He is a faculty member of West Virginia University. His interests include heritage education and colonial crafts. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

LOUIS E. KEEFER was born and raised in Wheeling and holds degrees from Morris Harvey College, West Virginia University and Yale. He is a retired planning consultant and now lives in Reston, Virginia. He has published two books and numerous articles. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1991.

MIKE KELLER is the chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

SUSAN LEFFLER is the folk arts specialist for the Division of Culture and History.

RICHARD RAMELLA was born in Maitland, McDowell County. His first writing job was with the *Welch Daily News* when he was 17. He now lives in California and publishes a computer magazine. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

BARBARA SMITH of Philippi has written poems, short stories, journal articles, and the novel *Six Miles Out*, published by Mountain State Press. She chairs the Division of the Humanities and teaches writing and literature at Alderson-Broaddus College. She last contributed to GOLDENSEAL in Summer 1990.

NORMA JEAN VENABLE, a native of New York State who has lived "very happily" in West Virginia since 1964, makes her home on Dunkard Ridge. She works as a natural resources curriculum designer and lecturer with the WVU Extension Service where she has written 15 publications about West Virginia wildlife, birds, plants and unique areas. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DONNA M. WEEMS, originally from Long Island, came to West Virginia in the 1970's. She worked as a whitewater guide on the Cheat, New and Gauley rivers for six years. She has a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York and a master's in education from WVU, where she now works at the National Environmental Training Center. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

ANDY YALE is a native of New York City who lives at Sandstone in Summers County. He works as a psychotherapist and writer. He has published articles and photos in *The Rolling Stone*, *Memphis*, *Spy*, *The Nation*, and *Natural History* magazines, as well as other publications. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1990.

(continued from inside front cover)

August 14-22 Lewisburg (645-1090)
 State Fair of West Virginia
August 15 Richwood (882-2293)
 Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Camp Woodbine)
August 15 Clifftop (438-6429)
 Old-Time Day (Camp Washington-Carver)
August 18-22 West Union (782-3126)
 Doddridge County Fair
August 22 Daniels (252-3161)
 Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Little Beaver)
August 28-30 Cairo (628-3705)
 Cairo Days
August 28-30 Beckley (252-7328)
 28th Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival
August 29 Clarksburg (622-7314)
 4th National Pasta Cook-off
August 29-September 7 Charleston (348-6419)
 Charleston Sternwheel Regatta
August 31-September 5 Charles Town (728-7413)
 Jefferson County Fair
September 4 Cowen (226-3052)
 State Fiddlers Championship (Camp Caesar)
September 4-6 Jane Lew (842-4095)
 Firemen's Arts & Crafts Festival
September 4-6 Clarksburg (622-7314)
 West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival
September 4-6 Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
 Labor Day Gospel Sing
September 4-7 Weston (269-1863)
 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee
September 5-6 Erbacon (226-5681)
 Erbacon Days
September 5-7 Parsons (478-2424)
 Hick Festival (Camp Kidd)
September 5-7 Fairmont (366-3819)
 State Horseshoe Tournament
September 6 Gandeewille (343-8378)
 Roane County Homecoming
September 6-7 Wheeling (242-1929)
 Oglebay Woodcarvers Show & Sale
September 7-12 Summersville (872-1588)
 Nicholas County Potato Festival
September 10-13 Gauley Bridge (632-2645)
 Civil War Days Town Celebration
September 11-12 Fairmont (363-6366)
 Fall Country Music Festival/Sagebrush Roundup
September 11-13 Morgantown (599-1104)
 Mason-Dixon Festival
September 11-13 Hamlin (824-7911)
 Lincoln County Farm Market Festival
September 12-13 Romney (822-5013)
 Hampshire Heritage Days
September 12-13 Huntington (529-2701)
 Hilltop Festival (Huntington Museum of Art)
September 12-13 Winfield (755-8421)
 Putnam County Homecoming
September 12-13 New Cumberland (564-3801)
 Brickyard Bend Festival
September 12-13 Pipestem (466-0626)
 Mountain Music Festival (Folklife Center)
September 12-13 Helvetia (924-5018)
 Helvetia Community Fair
September 12-13 Parkersburg (428-1130)
 West Virginia Honey Festival
September 13-19 Williamson (235-5560)
 King Coal Festival
September 16-19 Parsons (478-3990)
 Tucker County Firemen's Homecoming Fair

September 17-20 Sistersville (652-2939)
 24th West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival
September 17-20 Franklin (249-5422)
 Treasure Mountain Festival
September 18-20 Cairo (348-3370)
 Nature Wonder & Wild Foods Weekend (North Bend)
September 19 Lost Creek (745-3017)
 Country Fall Festival
September 19-20 Parkersburg (428-7742)
 30th Harvest Moon Arts & Crafts Festival
September 24-26 Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
 West Virginia Molasses Festival
September 24-27 Kingwood (329-0021)
 Preston County Buckwheat Festival
September 25-27 Charles Town (725-2055)
 Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
September 26-27 French Creek (924-6211)
 National Hunting & Fishing Days
September 26-27 Moorefield (538-6560)
 Hardy County Heritage Weekend
September 26-27 Union (772-3003)
 Autumn Harvest Festival
September 26-27 Parkersburg (679-3611)
 Volcano Days Engine Show & Festival
September 26-October 4 Elkins (636-1824)
 Mountain State Forest Festival
October 2-3 Wellsburg (737-0801)
 Wellsburg Apple Fest
October 2-4 Middlebourne (758-2511)
 Middle Island Harvest Festival
October 2-4 Milton (743-3032)
 West Virginia Pumpkin Festival
October 2-4 Clay (587-2727)
 Golden Delicious Festival
October 2-4 Wheeling (243-4000)
 Oglebayfest (Oglebay Park)
October 2-4 Gandeewille (722-5874)
 Footmad Fall Festival (Camp Sheppard)
October 3-4 Burlington (289-3511)
 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
October 3-4 Logan (369-2061)
 Aunt Jenny Wilson Old-Time Festival
October 3-4 & 10-11 Salem (782-5245)
 Harvest Festival (Fort New Salem)
October 8-11 Spencer (927-2490)
 West Virginia Black Walnut Festival
October 10 Cameron (686-3732)
 Big Run Apple Festival
October 10-11 Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
 19th Apple Butter Festival
October 10-11 Mullens (294-4000)
 Lumberjackin'-Bluegrassin' Jamboree (Twin Falls)
October 11 Danville (369-6254)
 Fall Festival of Arts & Crafts
October 12 Charleston (348-0220)
 Columbus Day (State Capitol)
October 12-14 Grafton (265-3383)
 Senior Fling (Tygart Lake)
October 15-18 Martinsburg (263-2500)
 13th Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
October 17 Bluefield (425-2778)
 12th Country Craft Guild Show
October 17 Fayetteville (465-5617)
 Bridge Day
October 17-18 & 24-25 Hinton (466-5420)
 Railroad Days
October 18-25 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 1993 "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, 1993, 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 52 — Like other children, the kids of Bob Barnett's Hancock County hometown sometimes spurned the playground for the local dump. Theirs was special, however.

Page 30 — Lorna Chamberlain had to buy "on time" to set up housekeeping in 1924. Her credit woes sound familiar today.

Page 35 — Wheeling — think of it as a verb — was once the subject of a popular postcard pun. Louis Keefer explains.

Page 39 — The oil boom profoundly changed many West Virginia communities in the late 19th century. Dunkard Ridge was one.

Page 16 — The Golden Rule has done business in Belington for most of the century. Manager Wanda Shinn Mitchell says her store tries to live up to its name.

Page 9 — The Clay County town of Swandale is no more, but Cody Burdette still returns from time to time. That's where his heart is, he says.

Page 58 — West Virginia's top truth stretchers turned out for the State Liar's Contest in Charleston last year. We publish the best tales inside.

Page 47 — John Hardy was hanged for murder in Welch in 1894. His death gave birth to a song.

Page 23 — Eugene McGraw took plenty of mining memorabilia when he left the coalfields, but he doesn't miss the backbreaking labor. Hard work *can* hurt you, he says.

