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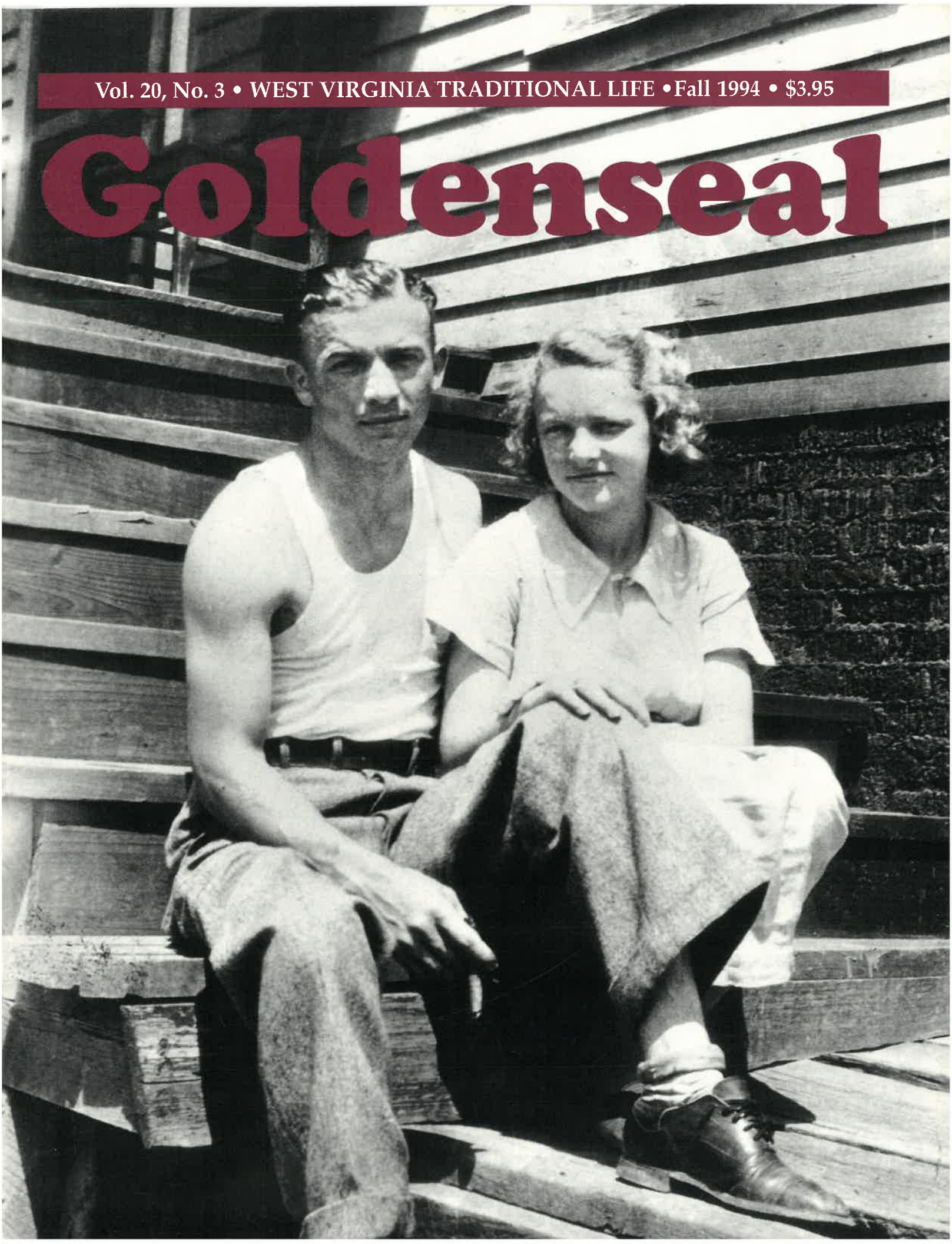
Goldenseal



From the Editor: Renewal Time

We got a long letter from Morgantown the other day, telling of the death of a Tucker County friend of GOLDENSEAL, a fine old gentleman featured in the magazine a couple of times over the past 15 years. News like that comes to us often enough, working as we sometimes do with some of the oldest West Virginians. I can't say I've ever gotten used to it, nor that I want to, but in a way it is part of the job.

What touched me in this case was the fact that our letter writer had the generosity of spirit to say some kind things about GOLDENSEAL while informing us of the loss of her grandfather.

"I think the article and my grandfather's passing do much to underscore the need for a magazine like GOLDENSEAL in West Virginia," she wrote in her late summer letter. "For all those who have been touched by one of the publication's wonderful articles, it drives home the simple truth that without this collection of oral history, all these precious memories and recollections would disappear with the passing of each generation.

"For that reason alone, this magazine deserves to continue to be, and I encourage all those who have roots in West Virginia to support a very essential part of our heritage through GOLDENSEAL."

Coming just before the big fall subscription renewal season that letter was quite a morale booster, as you can imagine. I won't try to state our case any better. Yes, we're in the business of preserving memories from one generation to the next, and yes, that does require support.

Lots of support, in fact, and nowadays all of it has to come from our readers. GOLDENSEAL must live off subscription income, with no subsidy from the taxpayers. That is an absolute necessity in these times of tight government budgets, no joking about that, and also something that we take considerable pride in. I think it is the fair thing as well, since folks expect to pay for other magazines they receive.

And here I had better add a few words, for GOLDENSEAL has never quite operated like other magazines. We started off as a free publication, years ago, then shifted to a "voluntary subscription" plan, and we still carry some traces of all that in the way we do business today. Not that GOLDENSEAL subscriptions are free any more, I hasten to add, or even voluntary. But we have found it useful to continue some of our earlier practices, especially the bulk mailing of subscription letters in the fall. It's cheaper to notify as many of our readers as possible at one time, cheaper both in postage and in the saving in staff time in preparing one big mailing rather than tracking thousands of individual subscriptions.

That's where we are right now, with the big fall subscription mailing. That means I'll be writing to you soon, asking you to renew. After a lot of soul-searching, we've decided to hold the subscription price at $15 again this year, although an increase is likely in the future.

We operate strictly a no-frills subscription system, designed to save money through the cooperation of everyone involved. Problems are rare, and usually minor, but occasionally they occur. Sometimes our fall letter inadvertently reaches people who have just subscribed, for example, or goes to the recipient rather than the giver of a gift subscription. Bring any such problems to our attention, and we will do our best to fix them to your satisfaction. Like most folks, we can straighten out anything we mess up, given the chance.

I'll not lecture any further on that, but merely leave you with this request: Please watch for my letter in your mail and send your $15 renewal payment as soon as possible. Thanks.

As for other news, it seems that things get busier and busier around here, with several exciting projects coming at us this fall. I hope Eastern Panhandle readers will note the announcement on the inside back cover of this issue about the GOLDENSEAL photo exhibit at the Martinsburg public library, which runs from now through the end of October. I'll be giving a talk at the library at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 9. Come see me if you have the chance.

And of course there is the big GOLDENSEAL bus trip. That was a quick sell-out, I'm pleased to say, and I hope everyone who signed up is looking forward to it as much as I am. We'll climb on the bus in Charleston early Friday morning, October 14, for points south. If this trip is all the fun we expect you may certainly watch for others in the future.

As for the photo — hey, it's not that bad. Is it? Somebody said to put a picture on the editorial page — or maybe "be less wordy" is closer to what actually was said — and this particular one was photographer Mike Keller's idea. That's the summer GOLDENSEAL I'm holding, the one with the tomatoes on the cover, and he figured it would go well with Cucumber. No doubt he had a salad in mind, or something equally clever.

MICHAEL KELLER

It'll probably come out too small here for the tomatoes to show, so I'll just offer the picture as further evidence that we do get around as much as we can as we work to put together the best West Virginia magazine possible. Cucumber is not exactly the southernmost point in the state, but only you and me and the folks in Squire and Bishop know that.

I hope to receive your subscription renewal check soon.

—Ken Sullivan

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Goldenseal

Volume 20, Number 3 Fall 1994

COVER: Alex and Evelyn Kelemen were just beginning family life in the Boone County town of Nellis when this picture was made in the 1930's. "Coal Camp," their daughter's story, begins on page 9. Photographer unknown, restored by Greg Clark.

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Letters from Readers

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Published letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

Douglass High

May 16, 1994
Dayton, Ohio
Editor:
As a recent subscriber to GOLDENSEAL, I read with much interest the article by Joseph Platania titled "Getting Ready for Life: The Douglass High School Story" (Fall 1993).

Douglass High students, 1955.

I attended Douglass High briefly in 1948, and, as Bunche Gray stated, "A Douglassite isn't only a graduate, it's anyone who walked the halls." Many of my peers from the Greenbrier Elementary School, Marlinton, attended there. I later moved to Ohio.

Douglass and other high schools like it did not just serve their local areas, but other counties that did not have high schools for black children. The state subsidized our attending school outside our counties where there were high schools for blacks.

I have since gone on to acquire college and post graduate degrees in California, but never received a high school diploma. I was also a Golden Horseshoe recipient from Pocahontas County.
Sincerely,
William Lindsay

B&O and Oak Park

July 14, 1994
Masontown, West Virginia
Editor:
I read with great interest the article "Echoes of Things Past: Preston County's Oak Park" in the Summer 1994 edition. I forwarded a copy of this article to Ms. Anne Calhoun who is the assistant archivist at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore. Anne has helped me in the past with information and pictures concerning Oak Park.

In her reply to me she pointed out that in the article Mr. Bishoff refers to the railroad president as "Mr. Murphy." However, at this time the B&O president was Oscar G. Murray.

I hope that you find this information helpful, and I look forward to many more issues.
Sincerely,
Eric B. Belldina

You're right, and we appreciate the correction. John Stover's fine History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad *says that Oscar G. Murray served as B&O president from 1904 to 1910. Stover describes Murray as a "picturesque traffic genius," popular with employees. The book was published by Purdue University Press in 1987 and reviewed in the Winter 1987 GOLDENSEAL.—ed.*

Old Goldenseals

June 23, 1994
Fayetteville, West Virginia
Editor:
Thank you for the recent notice in GOLDENSEAL concerning our rare and used book business and catalog. We'd like to let your readers know that there is a $3 charge for the catalog, refundable on the first order.

Concerning people who contact you for past issues of GOLDENSEAL, please feel free to refer them to us. Although our primary goal is to assemble complete sets, we would be willing to sell certain issues if our inventory exceeds our needs. Since we are constantly securing back issues, we will cooperate with you and your subscribers in any way that we can.
Sincerely,
Donnell B. Portzline
P. O. Box 63
Fayetteville, WV 25840

Will Keyser Identified

June 12, 1994
Roanoke, Virginia
Editor:
My mother sent me a copy of your always interesting publication with the article on my grandfather, "Politics and Presbyterianism: Editor Will Keyser." He was a remarkable man, and evidently influenced more people than we'll ever know about.

I would like to make a correction in the photo identification. My grandfather is seated along the right-hand wall, with my father and my mother, David and Grace Tuckwiller, to his left.
Sincerely,
Carol Tuckwiller

Little Kanawha

June 17, 1994
Joppa, Maryland
Editor:
I am writing in reference to the summer GOLDENSEAL story about paddlewheelers.

My father, Rodney James Reed,

who is now in a nursing home in Maryland, used to live on Cedar Creek and, many times, piloted the paddlewheeler, *Gainer*, from the Little Kanawha up Cedar Creek to the town of Cedarville. My father said the worst part of the trip was at Reeser Forge and at the swinging bridge. My father worked for Blair Gainer and made the trip from Glenville to Parkersburg and back many times, but not as the pilot.
Sincerely,
David E. Reed

If we were surprised that sternwheelers traveled the Little Kanawha all the way to Weston, you can consider us flabbergasted that some boats pushed their way up Cedar Creek. We used to go to Cedarville occasionally to see the late Basil Blake, and always found it plenty remote even by car. — ed.

June 27, 1994
Scott Depot, West Virginia
Editor:
When I heard that the summer issue of GOLDENSEAL had an article on Little Kanawha River paddlewheelers I could hardly wait to see a copy.

In November, 1926, my father, mother, two brothers and I came down the river from Gilmer to Glenville in what was almost certainly the *Gainer I*. Our family was moving to Glenville where my father was to be pastor of the Baptist church for the next 14 years. I was only six months old at the time. Of course I do not remember the trip, but years later my mother was still lamenting the fact that some of her china was broken when packing cases were sent down a chute from the bank to the boat.

The boats were all gone within a few years, but some of my earliest memories are of hearing approaching engines and running to a spot in our yard where I could see the boats pass a few hundred yards away. I remember that a "junk boat" came from Parkersburg and bartered cheap glassware for scrap metal.

In the piece by Joy Gilchrist, when Bo Shuman was listing the riffles between Glenville and Gilmer, the author understood him to say True Beatty. I suspect this was actually Truebada, in later years the site of a large gas compressor station.
Cordially,
Dwight L. Musser

July 20, 1994
Vincent, Ohio
Editor:
I read with delight your summer GOLDENSEAL article, "It Was Crowded Up There, Paddlewheelers on the Little Kanawha," since I am a Floyd and it was my grandfather's (and later my father's) house behind which the Floyd Riffle

The gasboat *Chase* landing at Elizabeth, 1918, G.W. Sutphin Collection.

churned.

By the time I was born (in 1938) and old enough to know anything, the river bed had filled in and, like a lot of us oldsters now, was a mere shadow of its former self. But my father made sure we knew of the salad days of the fabled riffle. One of the anecdotes he pleasured in telling concerned a relative by marriage, Dolph Moffet.

Seems as though Dolph had brought his boat up the river and failing to get over the riffle he tied up to the bank. He was there two or three days when someone called out to him, "Dolph, how you doin'?" "Holdin' my own!" Dolph replied. "Holdin' my own."

I had a good belly laugh when you wrote "Truebada" phonetically as "True Beatty." I'm sure Bo Shuman pronounced it just that way, for we all pronounced it that way. I suppose it was the Scotch-Irish influence that caused us to put a "ie" or "y" sound on words ending in "e" or "a." Thus, Dave became Davey, Bertha became Berthie and Truebada became Truebadie. The Floyds are of Welsh descent, but the Scotch-Irish are well represented in the area, as I'm sure you know.

My thanks to James Woofter, a West Virginian displaced to Arizona, for making sure I didn't miss this article.
Warmest regards,
Patty Floyd Johnson

We appreciate everybody's understanding of our phonetic rendering of Truebada. We try to hold our own on the fact checking, but don't feel we have done too badly if we occasionally end up writing like West Virginians talk. — ed.

Travel the country roads of home with —
Goldenseal
See coupon on page 72.

Cinder Bottom

June 21, 1994
Davie, Florida
Editor:
As always, I eagerly perused the summer GOLDENSEAL upon arrival. A smile appears on my face each time I see an article regarding McDowell County, since I spent the first 18 years of my life in Welch. Imagine the grin when I saw the title "Cinder Bottom."

The Bottom was still in business during the mid-60's. At that time, my father worked for the Tax Commissioner. I remember one particular day when he came home laughing. His boss told him to investigate the possibility of collecting taxes on Cinder Bottom's activities!

I wish you continued success with "our" magazine. Although living out of state for the last 28 years, West Virginia will always have a special place in my heart.
Sincerely,
John E. Stafford, III
Administrator, Broward County Public Schools

Railroad Recollections

May 20, 1994
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Editor:
I was absolutely delighted with the railroad articles in your Spring issue, especially Roy Long's "Teleg-

rapher at Thurmond: A Day's Work on the C&O." I happen to be "one of the school children (now 73 years old!) on their way to Montgomery High School" that he mentions. I boarded passenger train No. 7 at Deepwater five days a week for most of elementary school, junior high, high school and college. It was New River State College at that time, now West Virginia Tech.

My dad, Walter Ray Cosby, was telegraph operator at Cotton Hill at the time of my birth, but moved to Deepwater so that my brother, Cecil, and I would have easier access to schools. I think more children boarded at Deepwater than at any other station.

My dad was crippled at birth and walked with a cane. He mostly worked third trick and had a hand car that he could put on the rails and ride back and forth the mile from our home to the depot. Every Halloween it would go on top of the depot, and Dad loved it!

I can vividly remember the many mornings when he'd come home from work and, upon opening the back door, would pitch his cane in across the linoleum floor to see if my mother Annie would pitch it back — if she didn't, it was safe to come in! Our home was on a steep hillside and when he'd be digging his potato crop, a sign would be posted along the road below, "Digging Potatoes — Proceed at your own risk!"

It was great fun growing up in that home, and it was great fun riding passenger train No. 7 two times a day. The worst thing we girls had to fear was getting hit by one of Melvin Thompson's spitballs. Those were the days.
Sincerely,
Mildred Cosby Hunter

April 6, 1994
Kingsport, Tennessee
Editor:
Ordinarily I look at GOLDENSEAL as soon as it gets here but this time I didn't pick it up until last night, and it certainly was a pleasant surprise to find Roy Long's article, "Telegrapher at Thurmond: A Day's Work on the C&O."

Thurmond is of particular interest to me because of a family association with it; my great-grandfather was W. D. Thurmond, the man the place was named for.

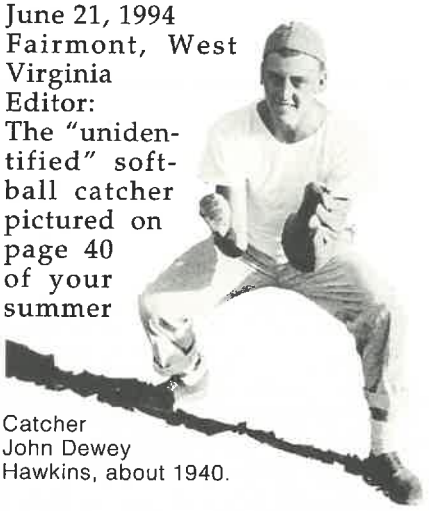
I don't think I have seen anywhere before just what the crew assignments were at Thurmond, and I'm grateful to Mr. Long for putting them in his story.

A well-written railroad piece is always welcome reading, and not just by rail fans. I hope we'll be seeing more of them in GOLDENSEAL in the future.
Robert L. Harvey

We appreciate all the response to Roy Long's "Day's Work" essay and hope to publish more of his writing. In the meantime, look for his regular railroading column in the weekly Hinton News.*—ed.*

Fairmont Softball

June 21, 1994
Fairmont, West Virginia
Editor:
The "unidentified" softball catcher pictured on page 40 of your summer issue ("In a League of Its Own: The Golden Era of Fairmont Softball") was John Dewey Hawkins. It was taken about 1940.



Catcher
John Dewey
Hawkins, about 1940.

Hawkins, one of several fine three-sport athletes turned out prior to World War II by coach Paul B. (Biz) Dawson at Fairmont Senior High School, caught for the crack Knights of Pythias team cited in your excellent article.

As mentioned by writer Louis Keefer, Neil Shreve's Knights of Pythias team included several outstanding three-sporters, including Buzzy Fultz, Deacon Duvall, Bob Pence, and Dick McElwee, WVU's top running back immediately prior to the outbreak of World War II.

Hawkins was a football quarterback, all-state basketball guard at West Fairmont and star basketballer at Fairmont State College. A retired Air Force officer, he died several years ago, a few days after attending the 50th reunion of his high school graduating class.

Your GOLDENSEAL magazine is a gem. It reflects credit on the State of West Virginia and all its residents. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Norman Laughlin

Half What?

June 18, 1994
Radcliff, Ohio
Editor:
In a discussion of "Half and Half," a new cassette by the Country Siders, Danny Williams states he wasn't sure where the name of Half and Half tobacco came from. Oldtimers used to jokingly say it meant half tobacco and half [horse manure], but the name really referred to the tin can it was packaged in. The can was made so as you used the contents you could slide the top part down and make a smaller tin. The top part would slide down halfway so the tin was only half the size and was less bulky to carry.

I haven't seen an original Half and Half tobacco can for years, but I'm sure they are good collector's items now.
Sincerely,
Meryl F. Houdasheldt

Bus Trip Sells Out

GOLDENSEAL's fall bus trip was a quick sell-out. We heard from many readers after the announcement of the trip appeared in the summer issue, and within a few days the bus was full.

We hope to repeat the trip in 1995, to other sites straight out of the pages of GOLDENSEAL. Watch for future bus tours in upcoming issues of the magazine.

And thanks for taking the bus!

Huntington Buses

June 20, 1994
Virginia Beach, Virginia
Editor:

I read with great interest the article, "Taking the Bus in Huntington," in the Summer 1994 issue.

In the fall of 1961 I came to stay with my dear aunt and uncle, Eva and Kyle Hill, on 17th Street, to begin my studies at Marshall University. Uncle Kyle was a driver with Virginia Stage Lines Trailways, having come to Huntington to be the dispatcher for the Consolidated Bus Line headquartered in Logan. One of my early childhood thrills had been to visit Aunt Eva and Uncle Kyle and go to the bus garage with Uncle Kyle as he checked the buses each night.

After I moved in with the Hills in late August 1961, I got to Marshall each day via the Ohio Valley Bus Company and their fleet of vintage GM coaches. That is, until the strike began that fall. It was then that I learned what every teenager should learn, and what my father John Raymond Halley had always told me — walking is not crowded and it's free! That winter, 1961-62, was the coldest in Huntington's history, or at least it felt that way.

As I continued to Marshall, I happened to be downtown on Fourth Street near the courthouse in 1964 when I witnessed a parade of brand new gasoline GM buses which had been purchased by the bus company. The last bus had a sign on the back window, "You ride more, we'll buy more!" I remember the shade tree mechanics debating whether those gasoline engines would hold up to the rigors of urban bus driving. I don't know how long those coaches were in service.

I had migrated to the 20th Street Baptist Church while at Marshall and, among other dear friends I met there, Lacy Patton came into my life. Lacy was a driver for Ohio Valley Bus Company and made the Huntington-Ironton trek, what may have been the longest route on the line.

Lacy and I often talked buses. I was a real "bus nut," and I just loved them. Every time I had occasion to go to West Huntington I insisted — much to the chagrin of my girlfriend/fiancée/wife Carmen — that we drive through the bus lot. I saw buses inside getting serviced; I saw the Gospel Harmony Boys' old Greyhound bus parked there. I even remember when the bus company bought a fleet of old coaches from the Pittsburgh Transit Company for parts! I could not for the life of me figure how they got them to Huntington, for by that time they were already cannibalized a great deal.

I remember the shade tree mechanics debating whether those gasoline engines would hold up to the rigors of urban bus driving.

Unfortunately, Lacy died earlier this year, and I realize more and more how much he meant to a wet-behind-the-ears young man like me. Now, though, I can tell the "real" story of our grand adventure:

One day he made me an offer I could not refuse. He agreed to pick me up at a designated point on his route and let me ride to Ironton and back with him. I accepted the offer very quickly, before he changed his mind. I sat up front and was the only one on the bus that day authorized to talk to the driver. We hadn't gone very far before Lacy tore off a transfer pass and handed it to me. He said this would keep me legal in case any of the supervisors decided to check on our tickets. Wow, not only a great bus ride but a little conspiracy, too! I am positive that my free ride did not put the bus company in its later financial jeopardy, and besides, I had been a goodwill ambassador for buses for a long time.

Through the years I have indulged my love of buses — again to the chagrin of my dear wife — by taking photographs of buses all over the world. The last time I rode urban transit on a regular basis was in Gaeta, Italy, when I was stationed there onboard *USS Puget Sound* with the U.S. Sixth Fleet. There, passengers board from the rear, buy a ticket from a machine there, and exit from the front. Very nice Fiat coaches, too.

Mechanics behind the scenes kept Huntington buses rolling. Courtesy *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, 1954.

Thank you for including the bus article in your fine magazine.

Sincerely,
Michael D. Halley
Retired Naval Chaplain

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.

Appalachian Conference

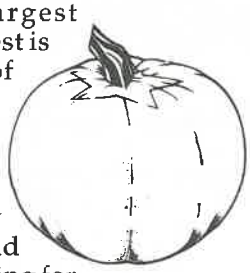
The Ninth Annual Conference on Appalachia is scheduled for November 3, 4 and 5, Thursday through Saturday, at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Sponsored by the Appalachian Center and the Women's Studies Program of the University of Kentucky, the 1994 conference will focus on "Women in Appalachia."

The conference is both a celebration of Appalachian women and a discussion of the realities of life in the mountains, according to the Appalachian Center. Topics include women in leadership roles, healthcare issues, filmmaking, writing, environmental activism, and community development.

Activists, academicians, policy makers, community organizers and advocates will attend the annual conference. For more information contact Phyllis Braun, Appalachian Center, 641 South Limestone, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 40506-0333; (606)257-4852 or fax (606)257-3903.

Big Pumpkin Event

Cabell County's West Virginia Pumpkin Festival is held three days each fall at the Fairgrounds in Milton. The "Largest Pumpkin" contest is a popular part of the big event. Organizer Billy Meadows says last year's winner was a hefty 367 pounds and that "we're looking for something bigger this year."



The weighing-in falls into two categories: West Virginia residents and out-of-state competitors. Mountain State pumpkin growers win a prize of $1 a pound for the largest pumpkin with a second place prize of $100. Third place is $75, fourth place is $50, and $25 prizes are given for fifth, sixth, and seventh place winners. Out-of-state pumpkins, which must weigh a minimum of 200 pounds, are awarded $100 and $50 for first and second place winners.

Pumpkins may be entered from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursday evening, October 6, or from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Friday morning, October 7, at the Fairgrounds. Winners are announced Friday evening.

A special category for children's pumpkins is also included. Mr. Meadows says all it takes is a lot of tender loving care to grow a prize-winning pumpkin, and encourages folks to "bring 'em in." For more information contact Billy Meadows, Rt. 1, Box 182, Glenwood, WV 25520; (304)762-2452.

Rambling Writers

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the West Virginia Humanities Council. In honor of the occasion the nonprofit agency is sending 20 West Virginia "Circuit Writers" to 20 towns and cities across the Mountain State during 1994.

Poets, mystery writers, children's authors, non-fiction writers and novelists will read from their works and discuss what it's like to write professionally. Trans Allegheny Books of Parkersburg and Charleston is co-sponsoring the program.

The Humanities Council describes the writers as all having "their cultural roots firmly in our state." They include both native sons and daughters and those who have adopted West Virginia as home. Some are GOLDENSEAL contributors, such as Marc Harshman and John Douglas, who have made presentations in Kingwood and Keyser.

In September and October, six writers including novelists, poets, and a mystery writer will complete the year of writers' programs. In September short story writer Gail Galloway Adams will be in Oceana on the 26th, and novelist Meredith Sue Willis travels to Lewisburg on the 28th. Novelist Denise Giardina, author of *Storming Heaven* and *The Unquiet Earth,* is in Logan on October 4th. Mystery writer Carlene Thompson is in Sutton on October 14. Poet Maggie Anderson is in Elkins on October 16 and 17, and West Virginia's poet laureate, Irene McKinney, finishes the year in Franklin on October 20.

For more information call the Humanities Council at (304)346-8500; or write to Suite 800, The Union Building, 723 Kanawha Boulevard, Charleston, WV 25301.

West Virginia Writers Award

West Virginia Writers, Inc., recently presented writer Shirley Young Campbell with a lifetime achievement plaque and named their young writers scholarship for her. Campbell is the author of the nonfiction book, *Coal and People,* which was published in 1981, and recently wrote *From Black Dirt,* a fictional work.

Campbell edited and published *Hill and Valley* magazine from 1977 to June 1985. She has written much fiction, poetry and non-fiction, as well as the play, "Flowers Grow in Coal Dust."

From Black Dirt is the story of four women representative of three generations in the coalfields during the Great Depression. Campbell writes that the women "stood firm, walked straight, worked each day and watched darkness come with faces composed. They were not slatterns standing in doorways, yelling at coal-blackened children. They were not stupid. They spoke quietly, listened and thought, waited and worked. These were not the women of the Saturday night brawls, not the women forced to hide from bullets in strikers' tents, not the women in the news, but others, unheralded,

unsung, but very real. They were women who could be strong when strength was needed, each in her own way."

Shirley Young Campbell grew up in a coal community and no doubt drew on her experience in writing *From Black Dirt*. Look for it in West Virginia bookstores.

Grafton Preservationists

Grafton is a famous West Virginia railroad town, a once thriving center for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. The main street is named Railroad. One of the town's most prominent landmarks is the magnificent Willard Hotel, named for former

The Willard Hotel in times past, courtesy West Virginia Collection, WVU.

B&O president Daniel Willard.

In a Spring 1987 GOLDENSEAL story, writer Mary Ellen Mahaffey described the Taylor County town: "Grafton was river, railroads, and hillsides. Seventeen tracks, the Tygart River and a six-tiered slope hemmed in the business street. The few cross roads served merely as paths to get to the next level up or down."

A group of Graftonites have joined together to preserve the town's railroad history. Citizens for Grafton Railroad Preservation formed to "foster and encourage the preservation and upkeep" of the Willard Hotel, and the old B&O passenger station which now houses a few CSX offices. Plans are to establish a railroad museum, a fine restaurant, and a "railfan" hotel where people can watch trains from their windows. The hotel's ballroom will be restored to its former splendor and the passenger station will house offices and shops featuring West Virginia products.

For more information write to Citizens for Grafton Railroad Preservation, P. O. Box 492, Grafton, WV 26354.

Capital City Craft Show

The 26th annual Capital City Art & Craft Show is scheduled for November 18 through 20 at the Charleston Civic Center. The event is sponsored by the Kanawha City Lions Club and features exhibits and demonstrations by more than 150 artists and craftspeople from West Virginia and surrounding states.

Each year the Lions Club seeks new talent for the non-juried event. Exhibits include jewelry, furniture, stained and beveled glass items, weaving, pottery, leather accessories, toys, tole painting, dulcimers, candles, brass and pewter art, appliqued pillows, and more.

Food is a big part of the event. Visitors can buy chili, hot pepper butter, peanut brittle, fudge, funnel cakes, cookies, buffalo jerky, honey and maple syrup.

The Capital City Art & Craft Show is open 4:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Friday,

West Virginia Politics

"In West Virginia, everything's political except politics. And that's personal." So goes the quote — described as a West Virginia saying — that introduces a new book, *Just Good Politics: The Life of Raymond Chafin, Appalachian Boss*, by Raymond Chafin and Topper Sherwood.

Sherwood, a Charleston writer, collaborated closely in preparing Chafin's memoirs. He confesses that at first he was hesitant about taking on the life story of a man known as a savvy, free-wheeling Logan County political boss. Chafin pulled strings in many elections, including those of several state governors, U.S. Senators, and in 1960 for John F. Kennedy.

But Chafin quickly won over his younger co-author, and Sherwood says that he soon fell in step with the man who had witnessed political history from an inside perspective. Sherwood acknowledges that plenty other politicians have tried to tell their stories and still others have had their stories told unwillingly, through prosecutors and grand juries. He holds up Chafin's account as one told freely, and with color and candor. Apparently few punches are pulled, as Chafin tells of behind-the-scenes deals, polling-place maneuvers, rigged elections, and votes bought with cash and whiskey.

Both men share an understanding that in many places politics is a vigorous part of rural life, engaged in zestfully by a sizable part of the population. Sherwood calls it "traditional political culture." Chafin has a better phrase, speaking of "fist-and-skull" politics.

"Everything you've read here is true," Chafin says toward the

Logan politician Raymond Chafin in 1959. Johnson Studio, Logan.

end of the book. *Just Good Politics* is an intimate account of a way of life in West Virginia which may be disappearing. The 197-page hardbound book is printed on acid-free paper, fully indexed, and illustrated with photos from Chafin's glory days. A University of Pittsburgh Press publication, it sells for $24.95.

10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, and noon to 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, the last day of the show. Tickets are $2.50 for adults, $2 for seniors, and $1 for children 12 and under. Proceeds from the show go to Lions Club charities.

Books about Railroads

Many West Virginians remember when railroads were a way of life in the mountains. TLC Publishing sells a variety of publications about railroads by mail order, many of them about Mountain State railroads and the industry they supported.

West Virginia Logging Railroads by William E. Warden tells of West Virginia's largest and last five logging railroad operations from the 1940's through the 1960's. Over 200 photographs were used in the book. The 112-page hardbound book sells for $19.95 plus $3 shipping. The companies included in the book are the operations of West Virginia Pulp & Paper (and later Mower Lumber) at Cass, as well as Meadow River Lumber Company, Elk River Coal & Lumber, Cherry River Boom & Lumber, and Ely-Thomas Lumber.

Other books include a half-dozen Chesapeake & Ohio titles and several about the Baltimore & Ohio, the Norfolk & Western, and other West Virginia railroads. *Appalachian Crossing, The Pocahontas Roads* is a 64-page history of the C&O, Virginian, and N&W in the Virginia and West Virginia mountains from the 1940's through the 1960's.

The publishing company also offers books about industries related to railroads, such as Roy B. Clarkson's *Tumult on the Mountains*, "the standard book on West Virginia logging." It is now in its eighth printing and sells for $21.95 plus $3 shipping. Clarkson's *On Beyond Leatherbark*, a history of Cass and its lumbering operation, is also available.

For a complete selection of railway publications contact TLC Publishing, Rt. 4, Box 154, Lynchburg, VA 24503; (804)384-8761.

Happy Trails!

The West Virginia Scenic Trails Association is devoted to enjoying the beauty of the Mountain State the old way, on foot. The group sponsors numerous trail events in the form of backpack trips, hikes, tours and guided walks.

Its newsletter, *Whoop 'n' Holler*, keeps members in touch. It includes a calendar of events, upcoming meetings, columns about nature, and helpful information such as a hotline number for reporting rare or unusual bird species. Recent newsletters offered wildflower walks, native plant study, a salamander hunt, pond study, and learning about wild edibles among things to do.

The newsletter editor is George L. Rosier of Morgantown. West Virginia Scenic Trails Association held its 1994 annual meeting in Monongahela National Forest at historic Middle Mountain Cabins in Randolph County. The Association often meets cooperatively with federal or state agencies and private landowners.

In addition to the serious business there's always some fun to be had. The "Walk-A-Mile" contest, usually held on the Allegheny Trail, challenges members to walk an exact mile using only their best judgment. It's often the novice hiker that comes closest to the mark, as opposed to someone who hikes regularly, according to Rosier.

For more information, contact the West Virginia Scenic Trails chapter closer to you: Northwest Passage Chapter, 633 West Virginia Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505; (304)296-5158 or the Mary Ingles Trail Blazers, P.O. Box 780, Poca, WV 25159; (304)755-0440.

Folk Arts Program

The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation recently announced a new regional program in folk and traditional arts. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts will enable Mid Atlantic Arts to conduct a study of folk and traditional arts organizations, agencies, and programs in the Mid Atlantic member states of Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and West Virginia.

Mid Atlantic's study will focus on how it can assist in the preservation, expansion and support of folk arts in this region. Ideally, additional funding will result.

Elizabeth E. Peterson is the folk arts consultant to Mid Atlantic Arts. She will conduct her study by traveling to folk arts centers, conducting field surveys, and meeting with folk arts professionals. She came to West Virginia in June, visiting the Cultural Center in Charleston, the State Folk Festival in Glenville, and Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins.

Peterson will collaborate with the Mid Atlantic Arts Folk Arts advisory committee. The group is chaired by Lakin Ray Cook, director of the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Section at the Division of Culture and History. GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan also serves on the advisory committee.

Storytellers Needed

The Marshall County Extension Homemakers is holding its first Liars' Contest this fall as part of the Festival of Ideas. The event takes place in Moundsville on September 16, Friday, at the "Barn" located on eastern Fourth Street, one mile from the city limits. The barn, originally a working farm barn, was restored over a 20-year period and is used for 4-H and Homemakers activities.

The fall festival includes exhibits by more than 50 craftspeople; educational demonstrations in quilting, canning, freezing, and the art of homemade ice cream; a health fair; fiddlers contest; chicken barbecue; and an auction. The Festival of Ideas is sponsored by the Marshall County Extension Homemakers and the WVU Cooperative Extension Service.

Storytellers are needed for this year's Liars' Contest. The event is "something new," organizer Juanita Fitzsimmons says. "We're getting our feet wet on this one." For information or to register contact Fitzsimmons at R.D. #4, Box 200, Cameron, WV, 26033; (304)686-2192.

Coal Camp

Remembering Life in Nellis

By Sylvia Kelemen Yost

"Most of all I remember the miners," our author says of growing up in Nellis in the 1940's. This is motorman Everett Walker, about 1950. Photo by Frank Elam, courtesy Jack Eagan.

My grandmother used to say, "Law, how time flies." Her words didn't have much meaning to me back then, but as my own children grew into adulthood, I realized the years really do pass as effortlessly as a night sky swallowing the golds and pinks of sunset.

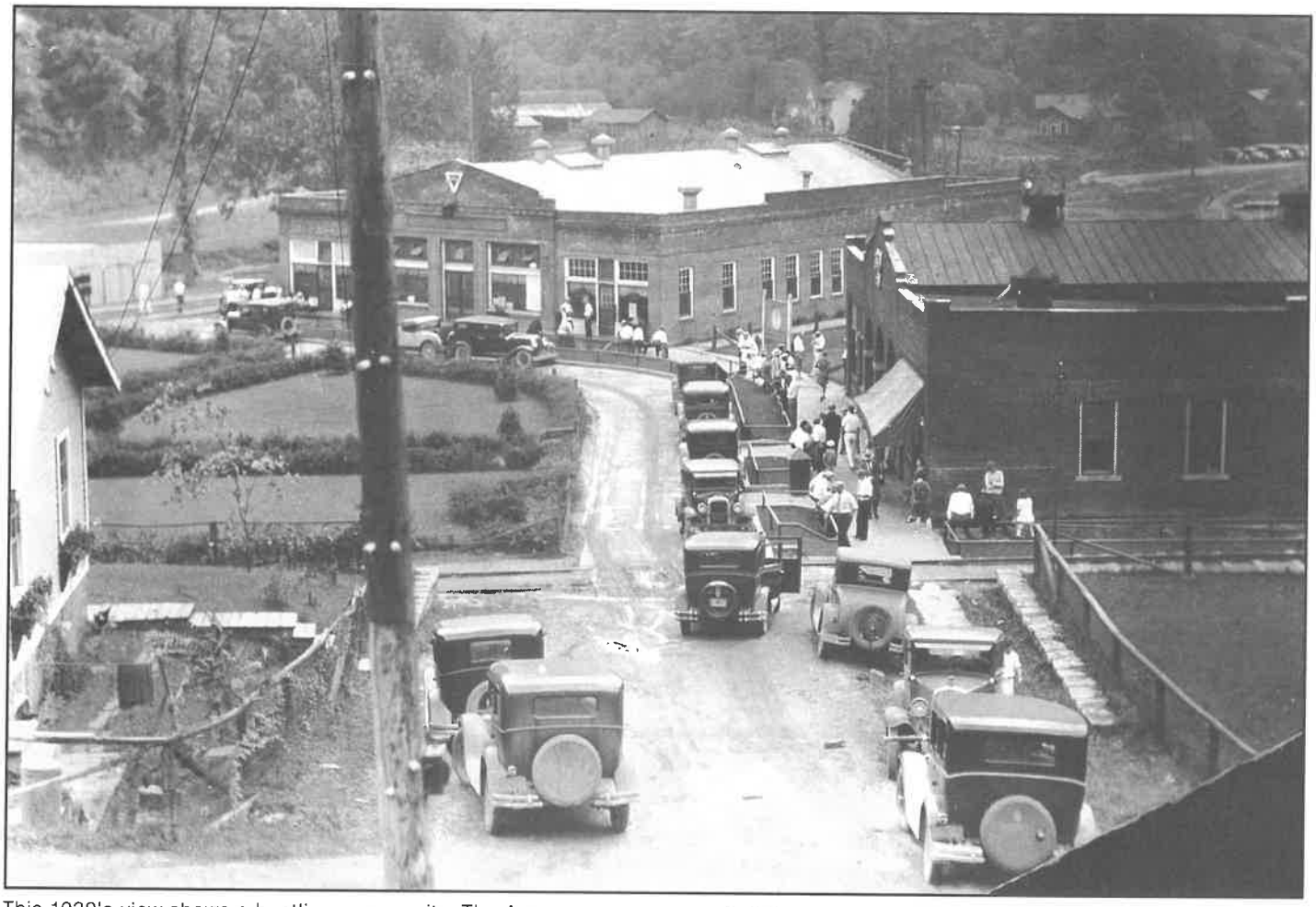
But when we were young, as I was when my family lived in Nellis, we thought ten minutes was an eternity. The thriving coal camp of the 1940's is now only a dim memory for those still around who were the adults of that day, working the coal and raising the children during war time. But those were the formative years of my childhood, and my impressions are lasting and vivid.

I can relive scenes, smells, sounds, and feelings that were part of life in the coal camp. The smell of smoke from the coal fires as it hovered around the house tops on those first cool days of fall, for example, or those summer evenings when the singing of crickets along the highway grew louder the closer to home we got. And I'll never forget the way our breath caught, just for a second, as we hung suspended in space at the end of a grapevine; the scent of honeysuckle that permeated the air, especially at night; the way those giant icicles decorated the houses in winter — and, best of all, the homemade fudge loaded with black walnuts from the burlap bag on the back porch.

Those are only a few things I remember about Nellis. In truth, there seems to be very little that I've forgotten.

Imagine that you are standing on top of the highest mountain around and looking down on the camp itself. You would see the neatly spaced homes winding around the hills and nesting in the hollows. The yellow frame houses contrast with the red brick dwellings of Brick Town, the school, the business district, and the neat white church with a steeple.

Nellis was anything but drab and lifeless. Armco, Dad's employer, made sure of that. Maintenance men were kept busy sprucing up, and repairing anything that even looked as if it were beginning to show signs of wear. Houses were painted ev-



This 1930's view shows a bustling community. The Armco company store building, at center, still stands today, as does the house at left. Jimenez/Maggard Studio, courtesy Jack Eagan.

ery two years, so there was little chance of that bright, mustard yellow with its white trim staying dingy with coal dust for long. Those who expected the worst would have been disappointed with Nellis.

Words such as deprived, poor, needy, weren't in our vocabulary. We thought we had it all. If there was anything missing from our lives, we didn't know it. We had a church to go to on Sundays and on Wednesday nights, a school, a working father, coal company scrip and the company store. And if children were dirty, and they usually were, it wasn't from neglect. It was from the sheer joy of being allowed to play in dirt, to climb trees, to slide into home base, to get down on all fours around a ring of marbles, or dragging junk to build a playhouse.

Today, little remains of the life we knew on that little patch of earth along the highway in Boone County. Oh, many of the houses are still standing, but they aren't the bright "Nellis Yellow" they once were. Now they sport varying shades of green, blue, and even pink. Nellis changed rapidly after the coal company closed the mines. It's very different now.

To reach the heart of Nellis, when it was a coal camp, one made a right turn off the main highway and drove over a small knoll, crossed the railroad tracks, and followed the road as it wound its way through different areas of camp, all the way to Brick Town. After crossing the tracks, to the right was a triangular park, bordered by shrubbery, one of two parks in town. The focal point of both were large flower beds with bright red cannas. I didn't particularly like them then, but in later years I have never been able to look at a canna without being reminded of the little parks in Nellis.

Today, little remains of the life we knew on that little patch of earth along the highway in Boone County.

Across the road from the park were two long brick buildings. The first building was closest to the railroad and housed the confectionery to accommodate those arriving or leaving by train. It was a cool place to wait for time to pass, to eat a ten-cent sandwich made with the freshest Purity Maid bread anywhere, drink a nickel coke, or have the most generous cone of raspberry ice cream imaginable, with real raspberries, also for a nickel.

Next door was the company store, which was like company stores everywhere. The wooden floors were kept "clean" with an enormous oily mop, used primarily to keep down the dust. Overhead, there were ceil-

"Five rooms with bath" were typical accommodations in Nellis. Many of the houses still stand today. Photographer unknown, 1930's; courtesy Jack Eagan.

ing fans which never stopped. To the right were the sewing supplies, yard goods and a few clothing items, and in the back was a small perch where the office was. To the left were the groceries.

And all the way back was the butcher shop, which had very little on display during the war except a kind of "ham salad" made by the butcher with bologna. With meat rationed, the coal camp was limited to one delivery a week. Word would spread through camp the day meat was expected. Almost immediately, the store would be packed with people willing to spend all day for perhaps a few wieners or a small slab of bacon. Often, demand exceeded supply and people would leave hot, tired and disappointed. If my mother was busy, I was the one delegated to stand in line at the store. Nudging one's way to the front required a certain amount of nerve and competitiveness. More often than not, I went home empty-handed.

But thanks to Dad, our family wasn't totally deprived of meat during those years. There were always those around with chickens to sell, or we would go to a little store near Ashford where we had better luck buying meat. There was a lot of bartering in those days, too.

While Mom and Dad were trying to feed the family, I tried to get my hands on some real honest-to-goodness gum. The one thing I craved most during the war years was chewing gum, and bubble gum especially. If the store did get a supply of gum, it didn't last long. By the time word spread through camp that the store had bubble gum and every child within hearing distance made a mad dash in that direction, it would be gone. But one day as I entered the store I could see Melissa, the office manager, motioning for me to join her in back. There in her hand was an entire pack of gum which she had saved. Lucky for me, she happened to adore my uncle who was stationed in Germany.

Beside the store was the post office where we waited for V-Mail letters from my two uncles. I can still remember the hushed anticipation of those waiting for letters from overseas, the smell of the post office, the cool breeze from the fan overhead, and the way I had to stretch on barefoot tiptoes to peek into box 44. Sometimes, when we did receive one of those long-awaited letters, there wouldn't be much to read after the censor had done his job. The important thing was that my mother had finally heard from one of her brothers.

Between the two buildings was another neatly manicured park. Here an outdoor bulletin board listed our young men who were serving in the military. Grown men would congregate around the board, almost reverently, passing along bits of information they had heard since the last time they met there. Occasionally, a gold star would be added beside a name, which meant that one of Nellis's

Labor History Association

The West Virginia Labor History Association preserves and studies the worker's history, in the Mountain State and the surrounding area.

The association honors labor's leaders through its Labor Hall of Fame. Inductees include Mother Jones, Wheeling's Reuther Family (Walter Reuther was president of the United Auto Workers and the CIO in his lifetime), the late UMW President Arnold Miller of Cabin Creek, and the American Federation of Musicians leader Ned Guthrie of Charleston.

The labor history group works to "uncover and preserve all oral or written materials which help to establish or illustrate the history of the state and the region." Specific attention is given to local unions and labor organizations that have played a role in the history and culture of West Virginia and the region.

The Labor History Association is composed of union members, labor scholars and friends of the labor movement. One goal of the group is to increase public interest and understanding of the significance of the past in relation to the present, to produce a useable history for the current generation of unionists. The association motto is "Working together to preserve the past and ensure the future."

Memberships are available for students, individuals, and organizations. Membership fees are $2, $10, and $100 per year, respectively. For more information contact West Virginia Labor History Association, P.O. Box 2502, Huntington, WV 25725.

own had been killed in action. I recently visited Nellis and was surprised to see the two yellow brick pillars which held the board still there.

The long building on the right housed a barber and beauty shop, the theater, the inevitable beer joint with pool hall in back, and a doctor's office at the far end. The little theater was where I saw my first movie, with my cousin Sonny. It was called *The Bowery Boys*. I remember the chase scenes, the sirens, squealing tires, and gunshots so loud I had to cover my ears. Sonny relished every moment, but I just remember being confused and bewildered by the whole thing.

Behind the brick buildings, on a knoll, sat the white stucco church where our family spent so many hours. Every Sunday, almost without fail, we would be in church both morning and evening. We would also be there for Vacation Bible School, revivals, choir practice, church plays — everything.

I remember the visiting preachers, who usually brought along a wife and one or two small children when they came for revivals. Since Dad was in charge of organizing the Sunday school, I would often come home and find him carrying around a strange toddler, talking about the Bible with a young preacher who was himself trying to pacify a colicky newborn. Mom and the preacher's wife would be in the kitchen preparing an early supper so no one would be late for service.

As with most coal camps, Nellis had a rowdy district. Ours was just up the road from the church. Almost side by side were two wild beer halls which in those days were frequented by young studs, straying husbands, and painted ladies who weren't above a striptease in the wee hours of the morning.

There is a story about a new company doctor who arrived in Nellis after midnight on a Saturday. As luck would have it, he bypassed the main turn-off into camp and continued up the road until he found the only place with signs of life. His introduction to our community was the sight of a no-longer-young redhead, without a stitch of clothing, doing her Sally Rand impression on the bar. There were other stories that spread through camp. Some we learned about from other children, and some we heard years later.

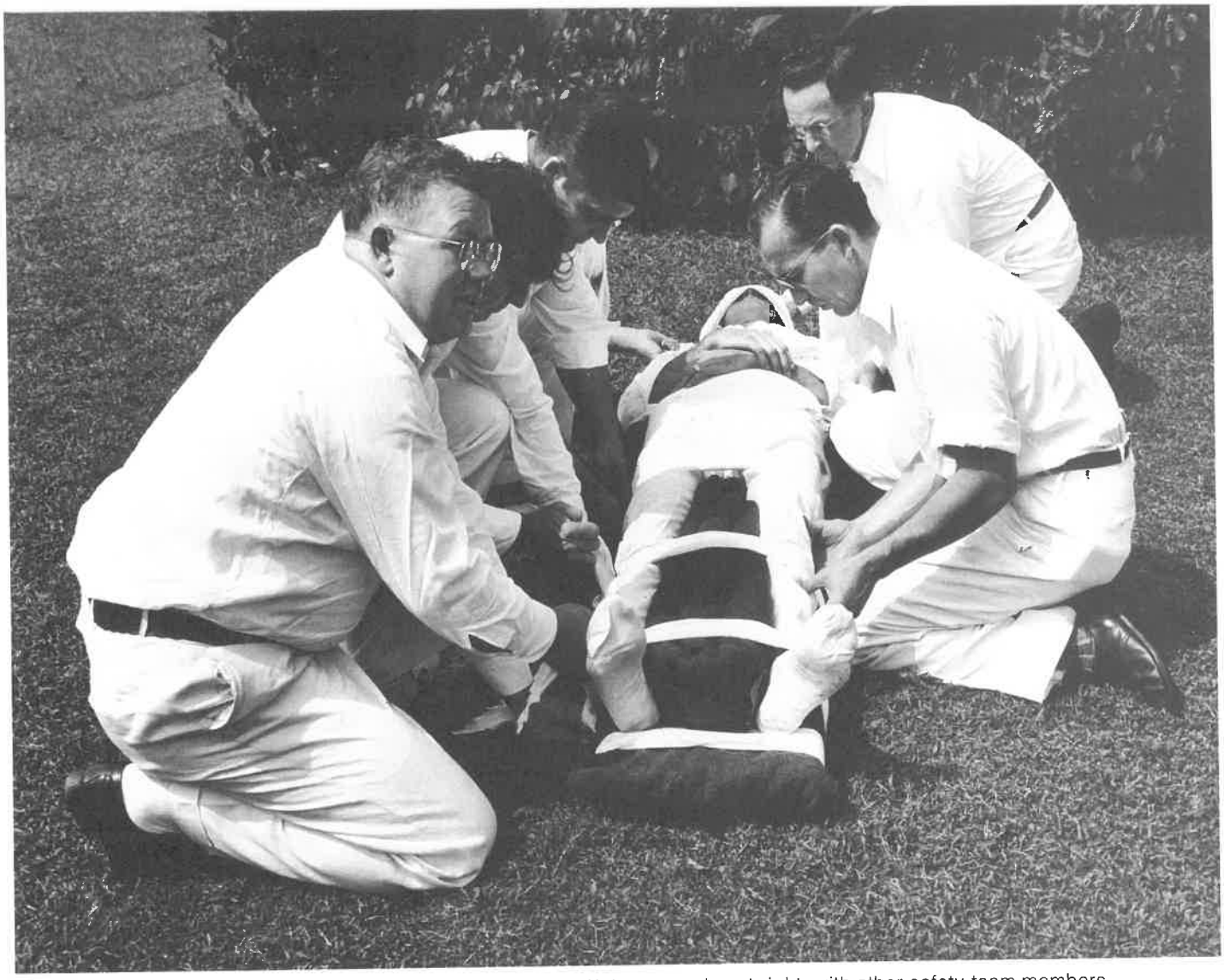
Above: Coal miner's daughters. This is author Sylvia Kelemen with little sister Judy. Photographer unknown, 1940.

Below: The war was a big part of growing up in the 1940's. This is Uncle Claude Griffith, on leave from the U.S. Army. Photographer unknown, courtesy Jack Eagan.

All considered, Nellis had everything necessary for day-to-day life. Residents could remain in camp for weeks or even months, never seeing the big city and never giving it much thought one way or the other. There were few automobiles during the war years. If it was absolutely necessary to go to Madison to pay taxes, or to Charleston to buy clothing or a new appliance, people usually passed the word that they needed a ride, "if anyone happened to be going." And, of course, there would always be someone willing to go, providing he had enough gas stamps to make it there and back.

Nellis was comprised of various hills and hollows, each with its own name. There was Brick Town, Hunkie Hill, Walker Holler, Easley Hill, John's Holler and just "those houses near the store." Some places were a little nicer than others, but since the company was in charge of assigning houses there wasn't much anyone, especially a newcomer, could do about where he lived.

Hunkie Hill was the worst of all, winter or summer. The houses were located on the side of a steep, almost bare mountain which caught the full blast of the mid-day sun during the summer and was often inaccessible in winter. The name reflected prejudices of the day. Coal camps in the '30's and '40's included many foreigners from eastern Eu-



Safety Day was a big annual event at Armco mines. Here Alex Kelemen works, at right, with other safety team members. Photographer unknown, 1940's; courtesy Jack Eagan.

rope, my father's family included. In Nellis, the majority lived on Hunkie Hill.

It could be a hurtful name. Many years later, after my uncle had been killed in the mines and his family was living in Virginia, cousin Sonny made a joking comment about having lived on Hunkie Hill. He was told by his very angry mother that he was never to refer to that name again. Nowadays there is no more Hunkie Hill in Nellis. All the houses are gone.

The one building I have not mentioned was the red brick schoolhouse. It recalls memories of the school principal, who caused fear in the students. From a small child's perspective, the principal was a shadowy middle-aged figure, unsmiling, angry, with a straw hat and white shoes. He gave no slack, and wielded his thick paddle for as much as a whisper or a tiny scrap of paper beside a desk.

Every Friday, the entire school would line up two-by-two and march — solemnly, silently, and in step — to the church next door for singing. The principal would become angry when we weren't singing loud enough, even angrier when he saw one that he thought was only mouthing the words, and absolutely enraged when he heard whispering. Singing was not a pleasurable experience on Fridays. On other occasions, we would line up and march to the theater for a program or a movie. The principal would walk back and forth down the aisles the entire time, looking for anyone he thought was misbehaving. There would always be one or two.

Years later, when I heard he had died, I could only ask if anyone had shown up for the funeral.

I remember many things about Nellis, but most of all I remember the miners. My mother's father, a quiet, introspective man with sandy red hair, died of a heart attack years before retirement. He always had gardens, and when meat was scarce he raised hogs for butchering, always making sure the children and grandchildren got their share. According to my grandmother, who

Coal mining took many lives before their time, but on the other hand it gave many men a sense of purpose and achievement. My father only had one job in his life, remaining with Armco for 44 years.

Above: The company store on a quiet day in 1954. Photographer unknown, courtesy Jack Eagan.

Below: The store building still anchors central Nellis today, although no longer a company store. The post office occupies the left end of the building. Photo by Michael Keller.

outlived him by more than 35 years, she and Grandpa had met at an apple peeling. I'm sure it was much more fun than just peeling apples. This was around 1910, about the time my father's parents were arriving in America from Hungary.

To say that a coal miner's life was not easy would be an understatement. Mining meant long, back-breaking hours, sometimes in a coal seam only waist-high. It meant strikes, emphysema, black lung, and coal dust that seemed to grab hold and cling until some must surely have felt it in their veins. If you were a young man starting out in the 1930's, it meant being paid 50 cents for each ton of coal you loaded.

Coal mining took many lives years before their time, but on the other hand it gave many men a sense of purpose and achievement. My father had two serious mining accidents. He lost the sight of an eye and suffered numerous broken bones and internal injuries from a slate fall before the age of 30. But he had only one job in his entire life, remaining with Armco for 44 years until his retirement. He spoke often of the Company and how good it had been to him.

I remember always finding something in Dad's lunch bucket when he returned from work. Most of the time it was a lunch cake, or maybe a piece of fruit. With a little help from Dad, I concluded there must be someone very much like Santa who lived in the coal mine and was always sending me treats. He must have liked me a lot to put things like that in my father's lunch bucket. It never occurred to me that the things I ate were intended for Dad's lunch.

And I remember hearing Dad stoking the fire in the middle of a freezing winter's night while I lay snug and warm under a mountain of blankets. He would do that before he left for work. Back then, we had snows which would lay knee-deep for days. That meant a long, bone-chilling walk to the mines. As I lay listening to Dad finishing his final cup of coffee, I knew instinctively when he would put on his coat and the woolen stocking cap he wore over his ears. Next would be his gloves, and then he reached for his lunch and was out the door. By that time, the house would be warm as toast. Dad never left a cold house.

I remember always finding something in Dad's lunch bucket when he returned from work. I concluded there must be someone very much like Santa who lived in the coal mine and was always sending me treats.

My Uncle Julius, Sonny's dad, lost his life at the age of 34 in a 1943 mine explosion which also killed ten others. He was a funny and handsome Hungarian who adored children. He would often stop by our playhouse before going to work for a goodbye hug and to hear my three-year-old sister sing one of those catchy little tunes that were so popular in the '40's. Judy's rendition of "Pistol Packin' Mama" always brought a huge grin to his

A Model Town

Sylvia Yost remembers her Boone County hometown as a "coal camp," common terminology for any Appalachian coal company town. In this case, however, the words shouldn't be taken to mean shoddy or impermanent. In fact, Nellis was a model company town. It was built to last, and a large part of it is still standing and still in use today.

Mining began at Nellis in 1917, under coal operators T.E.B. Siler and Mathew Slush. They named both the new community and their Nellis Coal Company for Frank Nellis, a Michigan newspaper editor.

The big change at Nellis came three years later, when the operation was bought out by Armco, the American Rolling Mill Company, a major Midwestern steel producer looking to expand its metallurgical coal reserves. The newcomer had the financial resources to plan for the long run. The town that Sylvia Yost recalls was built and administered by Armco, and was in its robust heyday during her family's time there.

Like other company towns, Nellis was organized strictly for the purpose of extracting coal from West Virginia mountainsides and loading it onto the railroad for shipment out. Such towns typically consisted of the industrial plant, mainly the mine, tipple, rail sidings and associated structures; a commercial and civic area, including the company store, post office, church, school and recreational facilities; and its residential neighborhoods. Nellis had all these, laid out in such a way as to facilitate the business of the company which owned the place.

Tenants like Mr. and Mrs. Hallie Miller made showplaces out of company houses in Nellis. Photo by Okey DeRaimo, 1950, courtesy Jack Eagan.

Armco went to work on its new property right away, adding 50 miners' houses in 1920 and 25 more in 1921. Armco contracted with Minter Homes, a Huntington manufacturer, to supply most of the buildings in Nellis. Minter houses, prefabricated in Huntington and shipped by rail, were used in other southern West Virginia company towns of this era. The Nellis dwellings were very good for the time and place, all with electricity, running water, and indoor toilets. Some of the town's houses were made of brick, very unusual for company town construction, though most were of wood painted in the distinctive "Nellis Yellow."

The development of Boone County coal came late in the industrialization of West Virginia, at a time when major mines were being opened more often by large corporations than by one-horse pioneer coal operators. Companies like Armco planned their mining towns as carefully as they planned the rest of their corporate operations, aiming for efficiency in the town as in the mine. The idea was to make money for the stockholders, of course, but it often made for better living conditions as well. A sound house, built and maintained as a long-term investment, made a better home than a shack thrown up on the cheap.

As our writer recalls, Nellis was a sizable place, winding through nearby hills and hollows. Today some of the old neighborhoods are more intact than others, and some places entirely vacant. But a lot of the original structures remain throughout the town, testimony to the work of the original builders.

Nellis is no longer the bustling town of its coal camp days, but the houses of Brick Town sit solidly on their foundations. Many look like they are good for a long while yet.

— Ken Sullivan

face.

I remember the days after the explosion. The quietness just broke your heart. First there were the hearses and mourners making their way to the little white church at regular intervals throughout the days following. Then there were the monstrous moving vans coming to take the families away. It was a time of empty chairs at school, of walking past houses where our friends and relatives had lived, and cold, bleak November weather.

It's strange how certain events become unforgettable experiences. Like the time Elden Allen returned to Nellis with Cap, Andy, and Milt, a group which played music on the radio. The theater was jammed the night they appeared on stage. Elden had been somewhat of a loner during the time he lived in Nellis, but the crowd went wild when Cap introduced him as "Nellis's own...Elden Allen!" I remember clapping until my hands were red

and burning, and I didn't even know Elden Allen. That was just the way it was in coal camp days.

There were a few girls and many more boys who played stringed instruments. In fact, most boys in the coal camps fell into two categories back then, the ones who played sports and the ones who played bluegrass music. One either loved bluegrass or hated it with a passion. My parents preferred the radio comedy shows like Amos and Andy, Burns and Allen, and Edgar Bergen and Charley McCarthy.

I can still see, in my mind's eye, a weary old pack peddler slowly making his way through camp in the mid-day sun. At his heels would always be a dog, with two or three curious children a few paces behind. I often wondered how far he had walked that day, where did he come from, who was he? He would stop occasionally beneath a shade tree, set his burden down, and wipe his brow with a large, damp handkerchief. He always called the ladies "Missus," nothing else, just "Missus." "Could I trouble you for a glass of water, Missus?" he would say.

I don't know of anyone who had the heart to refuse. Besides, his visits were eagerly anticipated. He had dresses with him to order for $1.50 or $2, and the ladies would either buy them or examine them for a possible dress pattern later on.

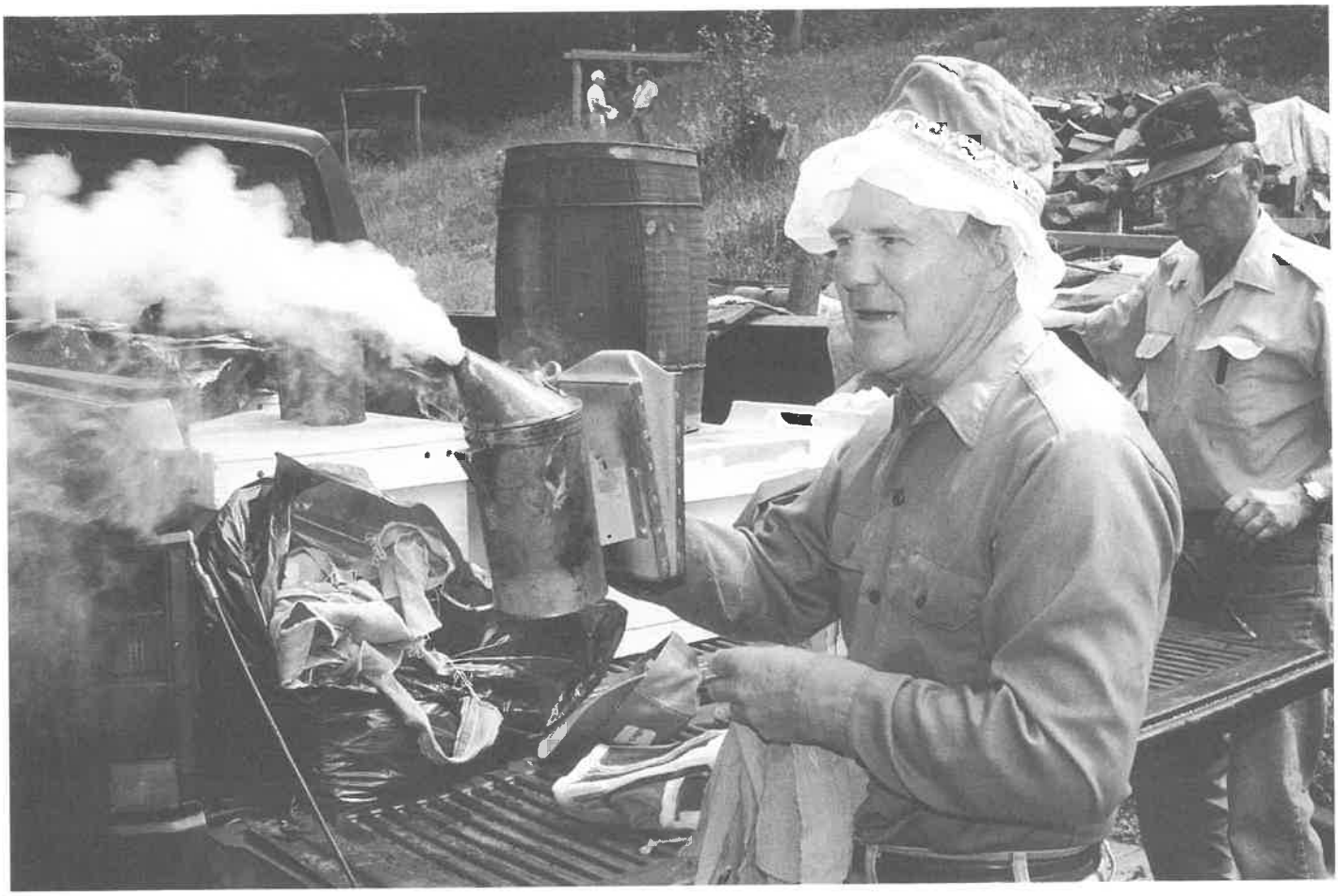
On my recent return visit I drove around Nellis looking at every house. I wanted to find just one still in its original state. The best I could find was one in Brick Town, which seemed to be unoccupied, but it had been covered entirely in barn green paint. Nevertheless, I was still glad to see it.

Today, cars still navigate through camp, but the roads aren't covered with "red dog" as they once were. My, how we children hated that red dog. It took several rains and much traffic before those jagged edges became tolerable to bare feet. And just when we finally got the roads all nice and smooth so we could jump rope or play hopscotch, along came those hateful trucks with more red dog. You could hear kids yelling to high heaven as they hobbled home with raw, bleeding toes.

It would be hard for an outsider to imagine the thousands of times those roads were used over the years — miners walking back and forth to work, kids going to school, relatives coming for Sunday dinner, revival preachers and missionaries, neighbors visiting back and forth, delivery men, and company coal trucks hauling the next ton to someone's coal house. Today, so many wild bushes and trees have sprung up that parts of Nellis are reverting to the original wilderness state. There are still plenty of people living in the Boone County community, but it is no longer the coal camp I remember.

The author dedicates this article to the memory of her father, Alex Kelemen, who died on September 22, 1993, of Lou Gehrig's Disease.

The old Nellis church stands as a sentinel from times past, although the windows are now boarded over. Photo by Michael Keller.



Vaden Young suits up. The smoker is a bee man's principal tool, used in cutting bee trees, retrieving swarms and in routine beekeeping chores.

Bee Tree

On the Trail of Wild Honey

By Skip Johnson

Photographs by Ferrell Friend

The dead locust looked like any other of thousands of such trees in the West Virginia woods, except that this one was alive with the coming and going of honeybees.

We were there at the invitation of Roma Bailey, a retired builder at Richwood. Roma figures that he has found more than 400 wild bee trees in his lifetime and remembers from his childhood on Hinkle Mountain his family gathering honey from the woods.

Finding bee trees has been a West Virginia tradition since the early settlers brought honeybees with them. The bees may have gotten here first, in fact. When the colonists brought honeybees from Europe the bees took to the American woods like natives, some of them escaping to lead the settlers westward on their migration into the rugged Appalachians.

This particular tree was located on a hillside just off Greenbrier Road, which leads south out of Richwood toward Williamsburg. It was found by the property owner, Alva Gwinn of Richwood, who gave permission to cut it, gather the honey and "hive" the bees.

The cutting would be done by Vaden Young and Jack Chambers, who are neighbors on Fenwick

Mountain near Richwood and who share an avid interest in bees. They immediately liked what they saw in this particular tree, with its bee cavity located only a few feet off the ground. If it had been situated high up in the tree, they explain, the crash could scatter the honey and smash the bees.

They fitted veils over their faces and prepared to go to work, looking like those old NASA pictures of astronauts walking on the moon, with the cratered, barren moonscape replaced by a typical steep and lushly wooded West Virginia hillside. Long-sleeved shirts and gloves completed their special attire to protect against stings.

But, Chambers points out, protection is not always necessary. Like people, bees come in different temperaments. Some colonies are easily irritated by any intrusion, while others display little if any hostility. Soon enough they would find out which way this particular colony leaned.

The chainsaw bit into the wood, and after a few minutes of flying sawdust and pauses to gauge the reaction of the bees, the tree came crashing down — almost. The top lodged in a nearby maple, and the bee tree hung there, suspended between heaven and Nicholas County. Well, the cutters judged, that would be all to the good. The suspended tree would give them easy access to the bee cavity.

The bees, meantime, were proving to be user-friendly. They buzzed around a little more than usual, perhaps, but that was just about their only reaction to all that was happening. Soon Young and Chambers were working in their midst without the protection of veils or gloves.

When colonists brought honeybees from Europe the bees took to the American woods like natives, some of them escaping to lead the settlers westward into the rugged Appalachians.

They used an axe and wedges to open the portion of the tree that contained the honey, exposing a cavity that was alive with a mother lode of bees — "a nice bunch of bees," says Chambers. Wild bee colonies vary in size, depending on the size of the tree cavity. This one was moderately large. Carefully, Young and Chambers began removing the honey, and before long they had collected a panful of the sweet stuff. It was dark honey, probably the result of having been made from the bloom of yellow poplar, which is common in most West Virginia woodlands.

It tasted, well, like honey, which

Jack Chambers opens up the hollow tree trunk as Vaden Young stands by. The beehive will provide a new home for the bee colony.

is to say deliciously sweet. Although some people claim they prefer the taste of "wild honey" over that made by domesticated bees, there is in reality no difference. Honey is honey. As to color, that depends on the bloom that a particular colony of bees is feeding on. Surprisingly, black locust makes light honey. And white clover, which grows in most lawns, produces dark honey. It also produces two kinds of bees: the quick and the dead. Bees on clover display an amazing reluctance to depart the blossom, even in the face of a monstrous, whirring lawnmower.

Bees, whether wild or domestic, gather nectar — the sweet liquid from plants that is the chief raw material for honey — from a wide variety of sources: red maple, sumac, black locust, aster, alfalfa, goldenrod, basswood (also called linden or linn), yellow poplar, clover, apple, sourwood, soybeans, stickweed, Spanish needle, buckwheat, corn bloom, the list goes on and on.

Young and Chambers came prepared, as all cutters of bee trees should, to give the evicted bees a new home. They brought a hive with them, and while taking honey for their own use from the tree they also transferred combs of honey and brood bees (the unhatched young) into wooden frames in the hive. Chambers used a large spoon to literally spoon gobs of bees into the opening at the base of the hive, while Young employed a smoker to guide them away from the tree and into their new home. In a short time, most of the bees were in the hive and appeared to be adapting well.

The smoker is the traditional tool of beekeepers and bee-tree cutters to control and calm bees. It is a metal container stuffed with rags — blue-jean fabric is excellent, as is burlap. The rags are set afire and the lid closed. The bellows at the top of the container are then pumped to produce smoke.

Young and Chambers gave these bees additional incentive to enter the hive by placing green leaves in the now nearly vacant tree cavity. They say that bees dislike the fragrance of green leaves.

There are, of course, always stragglers. To corral them, the bee men left the hive on the tree stump and returned that night to take it home. That is the dicey part of turning a wild bee colony into a domesticated backyard colony living in a hive. Sometimes the process doesn't work, particularly if the queen bee gets lost in the shuffle. In this instance, the queen was not found, but that doesn't necessarily mean she didn't make the transfer. In hundreds or thousands of bees, one, even a queen-sized one, can be overlooked. If there is no evidence of egg-laying after a few days, beekeepers will "re-queen," or order a new queen from a company that sells bees.

A retired coal miner with 30 years

Jack bends to check the exposed wild bee colony. At this point the tree cavity is a mass of honey, honeycomb, and countless honeybees.

Sometimes a big spoon and a steady hand are the best ways to move bees to their new home. These bees were gentle enough that protective clothing was unnecessary.

in the mines, Young became interested in bees while helping his father with bees when he was growing up on Fenwick Mountain. He recalls that they assisted neighbors in establishing colonies by giving them swarms of bees.

Bees swarm as a natural instinct. It's how they begin new colonies when their old quarters become overcrowded. The queen leaves with a portion of the bees to find another home. In the ordered world of bees, they provide for those left behind: a new queen that will soon hatch and assume leadership of the old colony. Several queen cells are waiting to provide the successor to the throne, although only one will make it. One tale common among beekeepers is that the first queen to hatch will sting the others to death.

Beekeepers prefer to head off swarms before they can set up independent housekeeping in the woods. They watch for swarms and smoke them into hives to begin new colonies. Once Young was standing on a ladder removing a swarm which had temporarily settled in a tree. His intention was to take the bees, limb and all, down the ladder. But he slipped, and, covered with bees, received 24 stings. He says he felt faint for a time, but suffered no more serious reaction.

Unlike wasps, yellow jackets and other stinging insects, bees sting only once and then die from the trauma of being separated from their barbed stinger, if it remains in the victim. But the life of a honeybee is like a vapor anyway. In the summer they live only six to eight weeks — worked to death, some would say.

Young drifted away from keeping bees for a time, but gained renewed interest as a result of discussing bees with Roma Bailey, who qualifies as one of the most prolific of wild bee tree finders in West Virginia.

"I grew up in the 1920's on Hinkle Mountain, one of a family of 12," Bailey recalls, "and times were hard. We farmed, but we rarely had enough money to buy luxuries like sugar. So every bee tree we found, we would cut it. When I got older, my brother Kermit and I would search for bee trees as a hobby. We would watch the springs and creeks for watering bees and follow them to their trees." Bailey and his brother once found 28 bee trees in a single year.

One of the many fascinating traits of bees is that they gather water in their mouths and return with it to air-condition the hive or tree cavity. They light on the threshold and fan their wings, thus ventilating and cooling the interior, particularly for the benefit of the brood bees that will hatch and perpetuate the colony.

And Bailey discovered that the

Our bee hunters gather after the job is done. They are (clockwise from lower left) Young, Roland Ward, Roma Bailey, and Chambers.

ancient Egyptians, who mummified their dead, had nothing on bees. He and his father found a dead mouse mummified in wax in a bee tree they cut on Camp Splinter Road in Nicholas County in 1929. He surmises that the mouse had made the fatal mistake of venturing into the cavity and was stung to death. It was too large for the bees to remove, so they simply waxed it over so there would be no odor from the decaying mouse.

Finding a bee tree requires either blind luck or patience. The patient way, says Bailey, is to watch for watering bees and then track them to the tree. When the trail grows cold, it can be revived by putting honey on flower bloom or leaves along the last-known track, waiting until the traveling bees find it, watching the direction in which they fly, and continuing the process to the tree.

The amount of honey in a tree depends on the size of the colony, which as previously noted depends on the size of the cavity. Bailey once found 80 pounds of honey in a gnarled black gum that was hollow from top to bottom.

Although some people claim they prefer the taste of "wild honey," there is in reality no difference. Honey is honey.

Bailey's interest in bees was kindled by the proximity of the John Russell farm to his family's place when he was a youngster. "Russell's farm was called 'the honey bee farm,'" he explains, "because he had over 100 hives, and it was known to people far and near.

"Back then, the price of honey was five cents a pound, but Russell would give us honey, and we had enough to last through the winter. We put it in 12-gallon crocks for safekeeping."

He recalls that Russell would routinely lose several swarms of bees that escaped to the woods when they left the hive.

Bailey, a bee admirer for 70 years, has given plenty of thought to their ways. He says there is no such thing as a bee-line. Bees will circle, gradually gaining altitude, until they can see over obstructions such as tall trees and find their way home even in conditions of poor visibility. He believes they identify and use landmarks along the way, such as large trees or rocks, whirring along at bee speed of about 12 miles per hour.

He has a theory that most tree swarms settle on the south side of

the hill. He contends they gather there for the warmth of the sun.

Roland Ward, a retired construction worker at Richwood, remembers cutting bee trees in the hard-scrabble times of the 1930's. His favorite hunting ground was Sugar Knob on the South Fork of Cherry River, which had a wide variety of hollow trees. The kind of tree doesn't seem to matter, says Ward, as long as it has a cavity. For that reason, beech trees, which are famous for becoming hollow as they age, are quite commonly used by bees. They rarely pick a "bad" tree either, meaning one that is small, watery or weak.

A strong colony will have 50,000 to 60,000 worker bees at the height of the season, each bee's particular job dictated by seniority. There are scouts whose job it is to search for new trees, housekeeping bees (usually the young) who clean the living quarters, guard bees who watch the cavity entrance for intruders, foraging bees who gather pollen and nectar, and of course, the queen bee who lays eggs. One queen will lay 1,500 to 2,000 eggs per day for a short period of time, and outlives the other bees by far. Queen bees, with their long abdomens, look more like a wasp than a honey bee. Their brood cells in the comb resemble peanut shells.

There are also the drones, whose only function is to mate with the queen, performing this act of species-perpetuation in flight. Once that is accomplished, alas, they die. Those that remain in the colony are thrown out. Paul Davis, a beekeeper of Canfield, Braxton County, has observed drones being escorted out of the hive — one worker bee on each side of the doomed drone — and dumped over the edge. He suspects their wings have been cut off so they can't fly. Nobody ever said life was fair, even in a bee colony.

For something as much a part of traditional life in the Appalachians, and as important to gardeners and fruit-growers as honeybees, it is easy to forget that honeybees aren't native to North America. They were brought from England to Virginia in the 1600's, and later from other countries in Europe. The two most common strains of bees even have names of European origin — Italian and Caucasian.

What would we do without them today? Bees pollinate the crops which produce the food we eat, carrying the pollen in tiny baskets on their hind legs. Their purpose in gathering pollen is not to make honey, but to feed their young a substance called "bee bread." They provide honey, which some people prefer over sugar as a sweetener, and they provide beeswax for candles. They secrete the wax from special glands, the tiny secreted flakes being chewed by the worker bees and used to build their combs.

But there is trouble in the form of parasites that pose a serious threat to wild bees. Matt Cochran, bee specialist for the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, says the number of wild bee colonies has been greatly reduced as a result of the parasites. One is called the honeybee trachial mite, which dwells internally and transmits viruses, and the other is an external, tick-like parasite called the varron mite.

Both can be treated and controlled in domestic bee colonies — the traditional backyard hives that are common in West Virginia — but there is no practical way of treating wild bees.

"I believe we have lost many wild bee colonies already," says Cochran, a native of Shady Spring, Raleigh County, whose father kept from 100 to 150 bee colonies in several counties in southern West Virginia. "There are still plenty of hollow trees out there for bees, but the parasites are very much threatening the population."

The Richwood tree cut by Young and Chambers contained some bees that were dead in the combs, which, they agreed, was unusual and puzzling. They speculated it may have been the work of a parasite.

Fruit-growers, especially the large orchardists in the Eastern Panhandle, are alarmed, because they depend primarily on wild bees to pollinate their trees. Some have begun to rent bees from domestic sources since the die-off was first detected in 1991-92.

Severe winters take a toll as well, although Cochran believes the parasites are more of a threat. The winter of 1993-94, when temperatures reached 25 to 30 below around West Virginia, caused as high as a 50 percent loss in domestic bee colonies. Paul Davis, the Canfield beekeeper, lost nine hives to the severe winter.

Roma Bailey's theory is that warm winters are harder on bees than cold ones, unless the cold is extreme like last winter. In warm winters, he theorizes, the bees are more active and consume their supply of honey faster and therefore may starve to death.

Cochran doesn't think that the cutting of bee trees over the years has hurt the wild bee population much, particularly in recent years. "It's a novelty anymore," he says, "and not as successful as people think. Besides that, it's hard work."

Indeed it is. Chambers took note of that fact while cutting the Nicholas County tree in hot, humid weather. Sweat rolled freely down his face, and Vaden Young's face as well. Chainsaws make the cutting easier, but they have a drawback. They create more sawdust than the old-time crosscut saw, and some of it inevitably gets into the honey. But a little sawdust in wild honey was never known to kill anybody.

One tale common among beekeepers is that the first queen to hatch will sting the others to death.

Chambers compares locating and cutting a bee tree to the appeal of hunting and digging ginseng. "It gets in your blood," he says.

Becoming a bee person does seem usually to stem from having a father who was interested in bees. Chambers, a retired coal miner with

Vaden Young takes a good look at the downed bee tree. The bees were later moved to his Fenwick Mountain backyard.

over 23 years in the mines, is no exception. His father was a beekeeper at the family homesite on Spring Creek near Renick, Greenbrier County. When his father and a neighbor went bee-tree hunting, Chambers tagged along.

"I moved to Richwood in the late '40's," relates Chambers, and Tom Smith and I began hunting bee trees on the South Fork of Cherry. That was always good bee country. We hunted mostly in the early spring and late fall, when bloom is scarce, because bees can be more easily baited then." Another fertile bee tree area for Chambers was the Big Laurel Creek drainage, which empties into Cherry River at Fenwick.

Once Chambers found two bee trees on Beck's Run of the South Fork of Cherry, but decided to wait until spring to cut them. One had fallen across a large rock, the other was standing. When he returned next spring, he discovered that a bear had cleaned out the honey from the fallen tree, and the colony in the standing tree had failed to survive the winter. It wasn't the first time a bear foiled a bee man. The black bears of the Appalachians have a sweet tooth that attracts them to bee hives and puts them on a collision course with beekeepers. The State Division of Natural Resources pays thousands of dollars in damage claims every year to beekeepers.

More challenging (and ecologically more important) than finding a wild bee tree, cutting it and successfully retrieving the honey, is saving the colony. Cochran says that adapting to a hive is difficult for wild bees, and often they don't survive. He recommends taking the whole section of tree home, if possible, and gradually weaning the bees away from the tree.

Vaden Young has four hives in his backyard. Two are from bees that swarmed in the vacant Richwood tannery building this past spring, one is from a tree that he and Chambers cut on Twenty-Mile Creek west of Summersville several years ago, and the fourth is from the Richwood tree. In each case, the bees were transferred to the hive onsite, and in each case the transfer was successful, although it doesn't always turn out that way.

Anyone who is contemplating cutting a bee tree should first determine who owns the land, and ask for permission. As to lands in public ownership — U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, state parks and forests — contact the appropriate agency to determine whether it is their policy to issue a permit. Then gather your courage if you want to give it a try. Bring a hive for the bees, a bee suit for yourself, and the willingness to trade plenty of sweat for a taste of West Virginia wild honey.

"What I Believe"

Frank Rushden in his garden in Logan County.

Frank Rushden's Life and Faith

Interview by Michael Meador

Photographs by Michael Keller

Young Frank stands at left in this portrait showing his mother Handy, father Omar, and siblings. This photo was made about the time the family returned to Syria from West Virginia. Photographer unknown, about 1919.

Like many retired West Virginians, Frank Rushden of Mitchell Heights, Logan County, likes to garden. A large part of his backyard is devoted to his hobby and he likes to show his trees, flowers and vegetables to visitors.

There are grapevines, fruit trees and figs scattered over the property. The garden is well-tended, with long straight rows of corn, beans, tomatoes, squash, melons, okra and mlukhia. In fact, several rows of mlukhia. Frank smiles when asked why he has planted so much of the spinach-like Syrian vegetable (pronounced "mlu-hee-ya"). "I don't particularly care for it," he says. "I'm raising it for some Syrian friends of mine."

Frank Rushden's life is like his garden, a rich mixture of cultures, planted firmly in West Virginia but with deep Syrian and Moslem roots. His life spans nearly the entire 20th century and as a devout Moslem and proud United States citizen he has served both his religion and country with honor and distinction.

"I have spent my life in service to my God and my country," he says, when asked to summarize. "I feel that I have done the best that I could do."

Michael Meador. Where did your family originate, and how did they end up in West Virginia?

Frank Rushden. My father's family came from Syria. They were from the small village of Saida which in the early 1900's had about 1,000 people. It is located in the state of Houran about 100 kilometers south of Damascus, near the Jordanian border. My father's people were wheat farmers.

My mother's family was from what is today Lebanon. Before World War I, Syria and Lebanon were part of the Ottoman Empire. My mother came to the United States with an uncle before 1905. They were in Michigan for awhile and then moved to the Ashland, Kentucky, area. They peddled door to door. For some reason my mother returned home to Lebanon. While there she met my father and they got married. There wasn't a whole lot to do over there but farm, and my mother talked my father into returning to the United States. They came over in 1907 or 1908.

MM. Where were you born?

FR. I was born in Huntington on November 9, 1909. My parents had settled there for a time and my father was peddling door to door. He didn't like that though and moved to Logan to open a store.

MM. What attracted him to Logan?

FR. The coal mines were booming back then and lots of Syrians had settled in Logan. My father opened a confectionery store on Stratton Street where G. C. Murphy Department Store is now. He sold ice cream and candy and was doing fairly well with the business until World War I ended. That's when he sold the store and took the family back to Syria.

When I went to Syria I couldn't speak Arabic, when I came back nine years later, I had forgotten English!

MM. Why did he do that?

FR. After the war ended in 1919, the Ottoman Empire, which had fought alongside of Germany, was defeated. The old empire got cut up into small countries under the control of the winners. France took over Syria and Lebanon. Palestine, Egypt and Iraq were taken over by England. No one took over Saudi Arabia. The French split Syria into two countries, Lebanon and Syria.

My grandfather Rushden had died, and my grandmother wrote for my father to come back and help her. My mother didn't want to go back and when my father was slow in returning, Grandmother went and pleaded to the Moslem religious leaders and they ordered my father to come back home. He sold his store and took us to live in Syria.

MM. What was it like for you to move from Logan to a village in Syria?

FR. It was different! I was eight and couldn't speak Arabic. I had started grade school in Logan and the schools over there were totally different. All they taught in the schools was the Koran, which must be taught in Arabic. Once you learned to read the Koran you learned to write by copying passages from it. There was no math. Once you learned the Koran you graduated! I learned the Koran in three months and the next year I started into a regular school. Later I was awarded an ROTC scholarship and went to military school in Damascus.

MM. When did you return to the United States?

FR. It was in 1928 when I came back. I was in military school in Damascus when an epidemic of malaria went through the country. In my village over one half of the people died from it. I was sick with malaria fever for seven months.

My mother had died in 1925 and my father remarried in that same year. I had an aunt in Huntington that I was close to. After I recovered from malaria, I wrote to her and she sent me my passport.

MM. When you returned to the United States what did you do?

FR. When I went to Syria I couldn't speak Arabic, when I came back nine years later, I had forgotten English! For a time I stayed with my aunt in Huntington, and then I came to Logan County to work for the Shaheen brothers. They were Lebanese and had several general merchandise stores. I eventually bought their store at Switzer. We sold everything for the miners and their families. Our stores carried groceries, clothing, some hardware, cattle feed, hog feed, carbide, hard hats, lunch buckets. You name it, we had it! Just about everything miners might need. In the 1930's I sent for my brother Fred, who was still in Syria, to help me with the store.

I kept that store at Switzer until it burned in 1937. In the meantime I bought a store at Rossmore. I worked out of there after the Switzer store burned. I ran that store until I went into the navy during World War II.

MM. What was your military experience like?

FR. It was real interesting. I was put in naval intelligence because of language skills. I entered the navy in 1942 in Norfolk, Virginia. Shortly after getting there, I got a letter from my father which was written

Mr. Rushden "married a local girl," he says, Logan Countian Eathel Mae Cooke. The Rushdens celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1992.

in Arabic. The platoon chief came around and said, "If you can read that we can use you." The military was planning to go into North Africa and needed Arabic interpreters. So that's what I did during the war. I was discharged on September 10, 1945, when it was all over."

MM. After being discharged from the navy, when did you return to Logan County?

FR. I came right home. I had gotten married in 1942 just before going into the navy, and I returned to Logan to find work and to start a family.

MM. Was your wife Syrian?

FR. No, I married a local girl, Eathel Mae Cooke. She had been born at White Oak in Logan County and raised in Boone County. In 1992 we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. We had three children. They've all done real well. Freddie is a research engineer and lives in Syracuse, New York, Raymond is a surgeon and lives in Logan. My daughter Evelyn married Larry LaFon of L&S Chevrolet. They live in Charleston. I also have three grandchildren.

MM. What kind of work did you do after being discharged from the navy?

FR. When I first got out of the service I built houses. Then in 1947 I got involved with the Culligan water conditioning business. I was with them until 1958. In that year I bought out a car dealership in Logan from H. H. Hartman. And 1958 was the year everybody built lousy cars! I did okay, though. We sold Fords, Lincolns and Mercurys. I sold the dealership in 1986.

MM. Tell me about what it has been like to maintain your Moslem faith in Logan.

FR. It has not been easy. There have never been many Moslems in the area, but there have always been a few of us. In the early days there were a few families, and we would get together in different homes on holy days to pray together. We'd also get together on Sundays. Friday is the Moslem holy day, but we'd meet together on Sundays. A devout Moslem is supposed to pray five times a day. It's possible to maintain the faith all alone, but it's much better to pray in congregation than alone.

Today there are more Moslems in Logan and in Charleston and Huntington than in the old days. We've even established a mosque in South Charleston where we can meet together. We have an interfaith council which is made up of Christians, Jews and Moslems which meets at the mosque.

Our stores carried groceries, clothing, some hardware, cattle feed, hog feed, carbide, hard hats, lunch buckets. Everything for the miners and their families.

I came from a very devout family. My father and grandfather were both respected religious leaders who went from town to town teaching about the faith. They were given the title of "sheik" which means chief or leader of the tribe. My father's family name was originally Dabis [pronounced like Davis]. My grandfather's first name was Rushden and he was so well-known

"A Wonderful Trip"

Frank Rushden's Pilgrimage

Frank Rushden is perhaps the first native-born West Virginian to have made the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. This pilgrimage is required once in the lifetime of all Moslems who are physically and financially capable of making the journey.

The holy pilgrimage, or Hajj, takes place during the 12th month of the lunar year.

I made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1975. There were millions of people there from all over the world. Only two percent of the pilgrims were Arabs. The rest were from Indonesia, China, Africa, Russia, India, Pakistan, the United Kingdom and even the United States. There were people from all over.

Mecca is the holy city to Moslems, and the holiest spot in Mecca is a square stone building called the Kaaba. It is ancient and was a holy place thousands of years before Mohammed. It was visited by Abraham and was used as a place of worship by him.

When Mohammed was growing up it was a pagan temple and a place of pilgrimage. Mohammed cleared the pagan idols out of the Kaaba and dedicated it to God. It is toward the Kaaba that Moslems face when they pray. It is so holy a place that pigeons won't fly over it. They always veer to the right or the left, but never over it!

There are certain steps that must be followed in order to properly make the pilgrimage. The first thing that we did was to remove our clothes and to wrap ourselves in two white cloths that look like sheets. We wore these during the entire pilgrimage. They are to remind us that in the sight of God all men, rich and poor, are alike. The cloths are belted around the waist and a long piece is thrown over the shoulder. During the pilgrimage we can't shave or cut our hair. Women who make the pilgrimage must dress very conservatively.

The pilgrimage takes nine days to complete. We start it on the first day by circling around the Kaaba seven times. In the corner of the Kaaba is the black stone which is supposed to be a meteorite. Pilgrims are supposed to circle the Kaaba seven times, three times quickly and four times slowly. Each time you go around you're supposed to kiss the black stone. It was so crowded when I was there that you were lucky if you could put your finger on it! The area around the Kaaba was really crowded.

After we circle the Kaaba we repeat the journey that Hagar made with Ishmael. They had been taken out into the desert when rejected by Sarah. They were dying of thirst. Hagar ran from sand dune to sand dune looking for water or a passing caravan. She finally found water bubbling up through Ishmael's feet. The water still flows today and is called the well of Zam Zam.

Part of the pilgrimage is to repeat Hagar's run. Pilgrims are supposed to run between two small hills which are connected by a concrete walkway. The walkway is only 400 to 500 feet long, but we can't wear shoes and we're supposed to trot. It was rough on the feet! A pilgrim can drink from the well only after circling the Kaaba. The water from the well is very holy, and some people when they die have the water sprinkled on their body.

On the final part of the pilgrimage we traveled 15 miles out to Mount Arafat. The place looked like one big tent city. We stayed there all day praying. There is a hill there called the Mount of Mercy where Mohammed preached his last sermon. Pilgrims climb that hill in the hot sun and can't cover their heads. They can carry umbrellas, though.

Before the ride back to Mecca we gathered small stones, and on the way back we were supposed to throw them at three stone pillars where Satan was stoned by Ishmael. This is in a place called Mina. Also it is tradition that we sleep a night outdoors when making the journey back from Mount Arafat.

When we got back to Mecca we circled the Kaaba one more time and ended the pilgrimage. It was a wonderful trip, and I am thankful to have been allowed to make it.

— Frank Rushden

in Syria and Lebanon as a religious leader that my father was known as Omar Rushden in honor of his father.

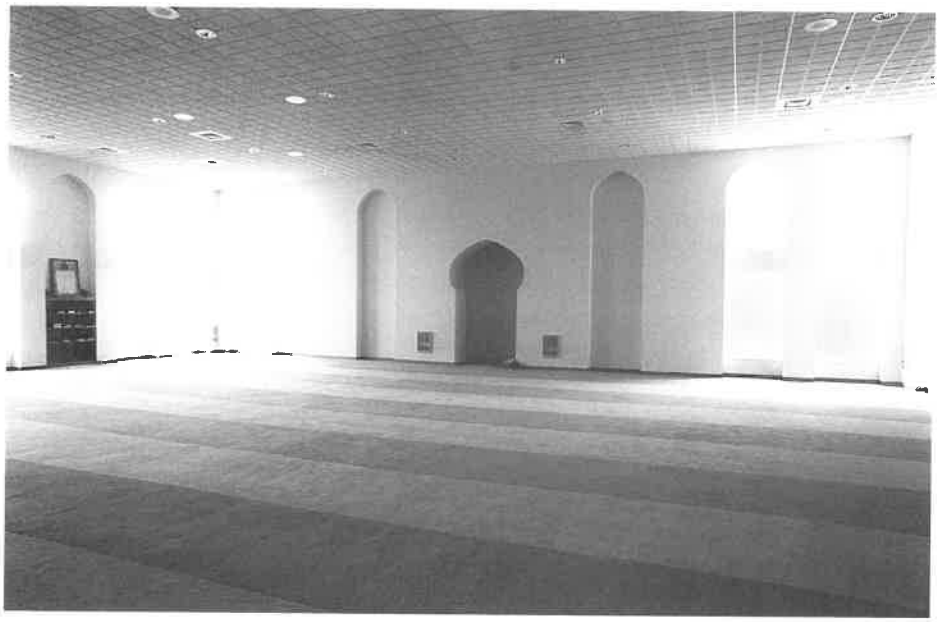
One thing that has helped me to maintain my faith has been my involvement with the Federation of Islamic Associations.

MM. I understand you were instrumental in getting the group started.

FR. Yes, I had a part to play in its organization. An important part of the Moslem religion is to pray together in houses of worship. In 1945 when World War II ended there were only three Islamic places of worship in North America. They were located in Canada, Dearborn, Michigan, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The military brought many of us together during the war and after it ended we started meeting together in different states. Our first convention was in Cedar Rapids. In 1953 I helped to found the Federation of Islamic Associations in the United States and Canada. At the time of the founding of the Federation there was no "Imam" or religious leader in North America. Unlike the Christians and Jews who had plenty of ministers, priests and rabbis, we had none. Today we have several religious leaders and over 650 places of worship in North

The Islamic Center of West Virginia is Frank Rushden's place of worship. The building is located in South Charleston. Congregants pray in an unadorned room (below).



America.

I feel that the Federation was instrumental in the growth of the Moslem faith in the country. When we founded the Federation I became a better Moslem.

MM. I understand that you served as president of the Federation.

FR. Yes, I was president of the Federation in North America in 1957, 1958 and 1959. I was also treasurer of the organization. One thing that we accomplished when I was president was the establishment of the Moslem Boy Scout religious award, "In the Name of God." Moslem Boy Scouts can still earn it. I also was able to obtain medical scholarships from the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs in Cairo, Egypt. My son Raymond attended medical school on one of these scholarships.

MM. Isn't there also an Islamic organization in West Virginia?

FR. Yes. The Islamic Association of West Virginia. I helped get it organized and served as president for two years. Its headquarters are in South Charleston and we have branches in Huntington, Princeton, Morgantown, Logan and Beckley.

Our first headquarters were in a converted church in Nitro. About six years ago we built an Islamic center in South Charleston right off of Valley Drive and the Kanawha Turnpike. We don't have missionaries in Islam, but we do accept converts. We have lots of converts in Charleston.

MM. What holidays do Moslems observe?

FR. We only have two major holidays. The one which most people are familiar with is Ramadan. During Ramadan we fast for an entire month from dawn to sunset. We can't eat, drink, smoke, hardly do anything until sunset when we can eat and drink.

The purpose of Ramadan is to make us realize that there are hungry people in the world. We give a lot to the poor, to hungry people during this period. We consider it sacrifice for the sake of worship.

MM. When does Ramadan occur?

FR. Usually in the spring, but it occurs at a different time each year because we use the lunar calendar to start it. The Koran says that in order to start the lunar month, the moon has to be sighted. Orthodox Moslems will not allow calculations. Three or four years ago the new moon which would have started Ramadan occurred at five o'clock in the afternoon and we couldn't see it. We had to wait until the next day to start Ramadan, when we could actually sight the moon. If we had used calculations the holiday would have started a day earlier. I'm more liberal than most about this, but I go along with the tradition.

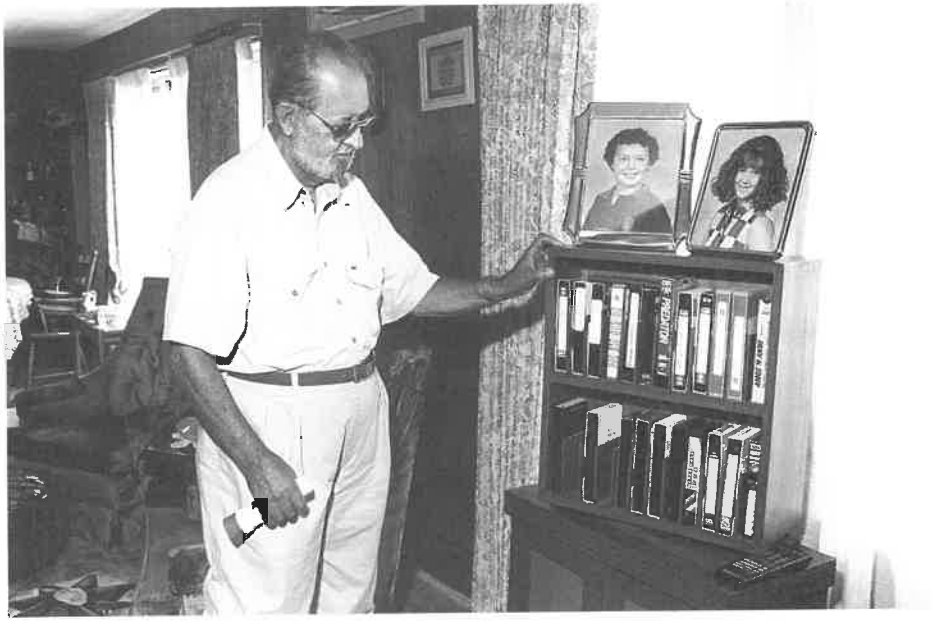
The second holiday that we observe is Al'Adha, "the sacrifice." It occurs 70 days from the end of Ramadan and commemorates Abraham's sacrifice of Ishmael.* We can't put this holiday on the calendar either because we still must sight the moon to start it. It is during this time that the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca is made. All Moslems are supposed to do this at least once in their lives. I made the trip in 1975.

MM. How do you see the future of Islam in the United States?

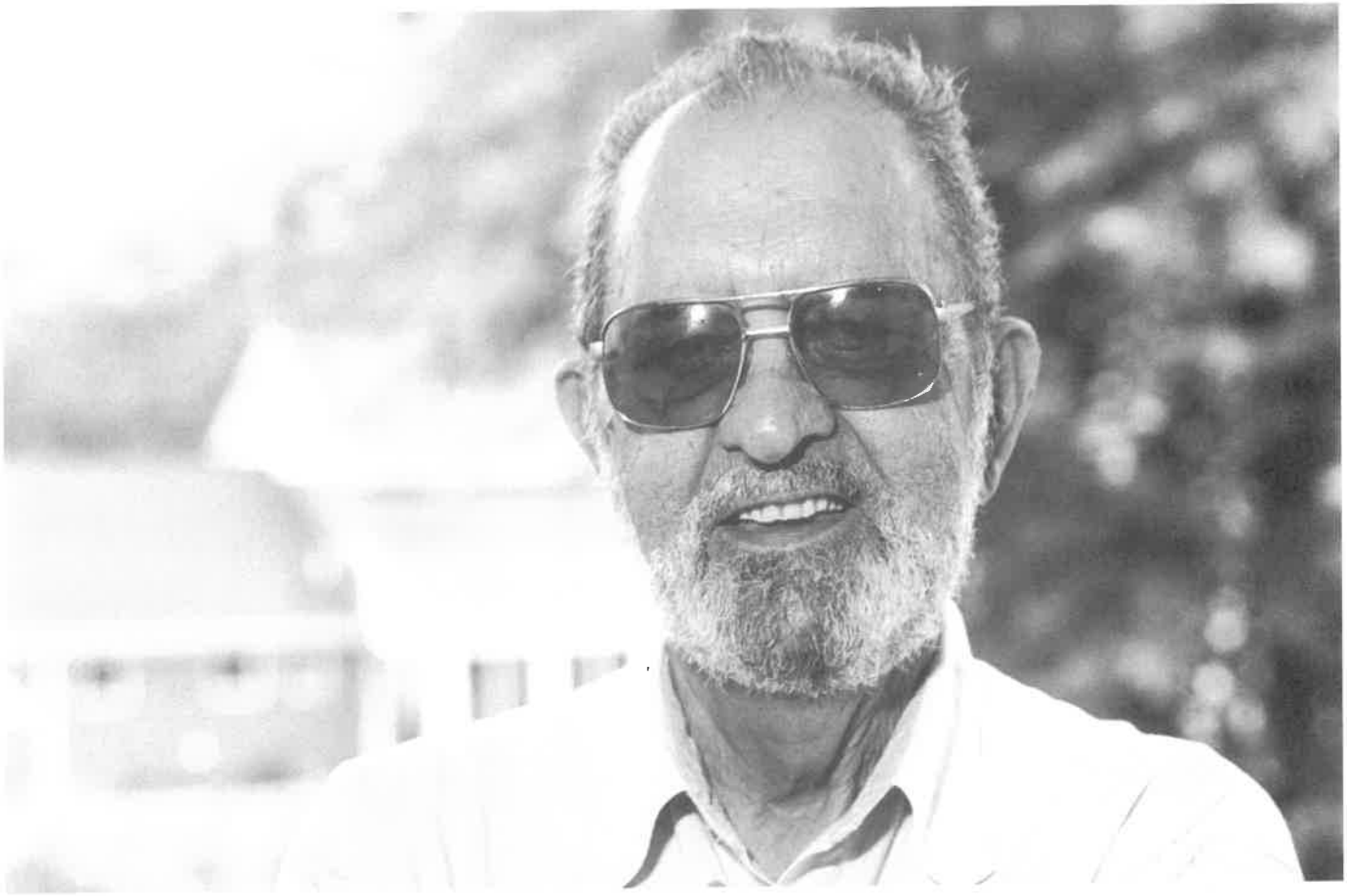
* The Moslem Koran differs here with the Biblical account in Genesis. The Koran says that God challenged Abraham to offer his first son, Ishmael, rather than Isaac.

FR. Islam is the newest major faith in the world, and I made a prediction a long time ago that in 200 years the United States will be half Moslem. There are some problems, however. Americans want everything translated, and you can't translate the Koran and get its true meaning. In addition, it is required that the Koran must be taught in Arabic. It will always be taught in Arabic. This is a problem for a lot of people who don't want to take the time to learn Arabic.

Islam has a great deal in common with Christianity. I believe that we worship the same God. Moslems don't believe, however, that Christ is God. We believe that he is one of the major prophets along with Noah, Abraham, Moses and Mohammed. They all came to teach the oneness of God. We believe that Mohammed is the "Seal of the Prophets," the last one. He taught that the most important concept of Islam is submission to the will of God. This is what I believe.



The shelves are a product of Mr. Rushden's woodworking shop. They hold videotapes and family portraits.



Frank Rushden is a robust octogenarian, a man comfortable in his accomplishments and firm in his faith.

Carl Rutherford

Music from the Coalfields

By Jim McGee

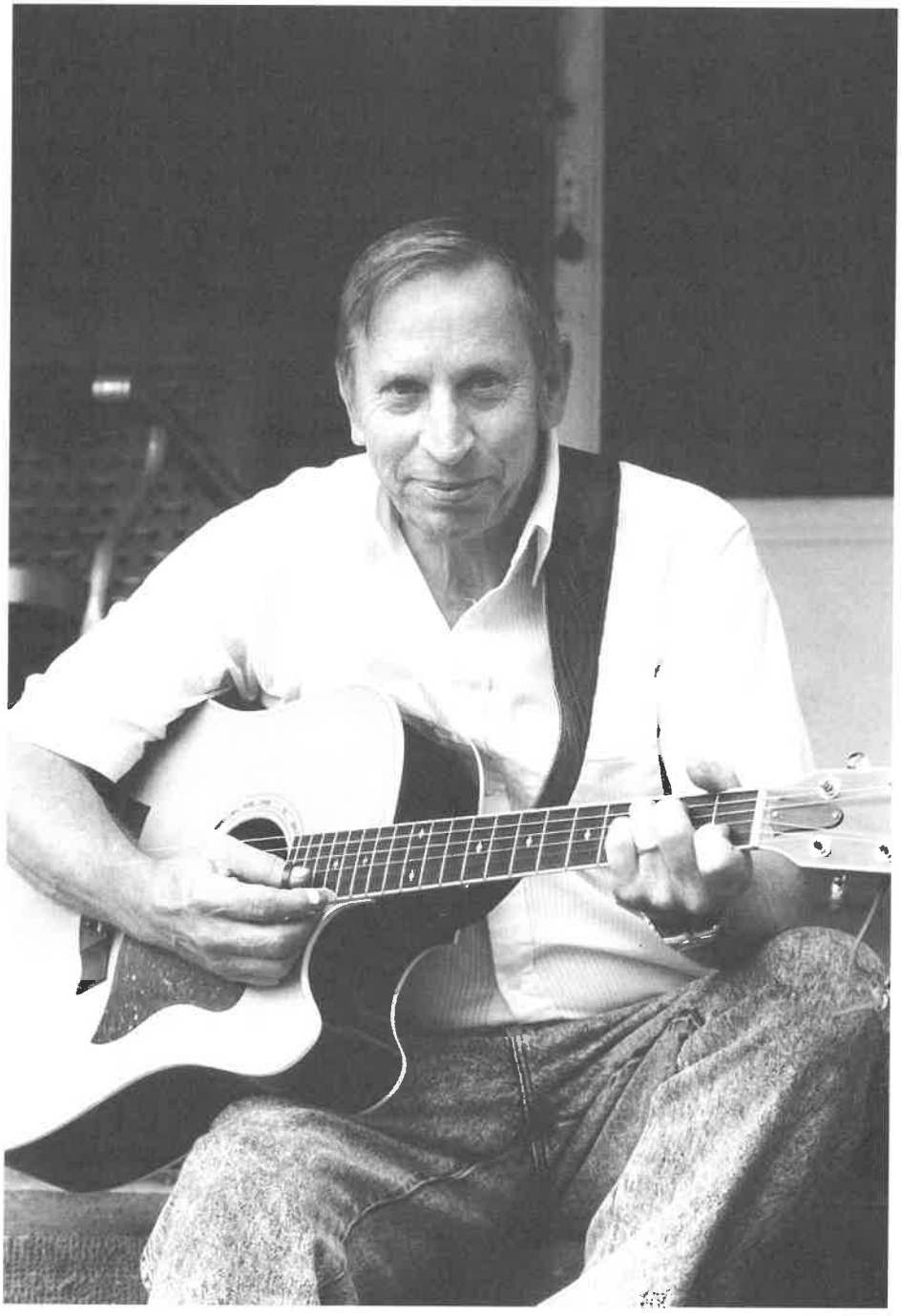
Photographs by Michael Keller

When Carl Rutherford performed at the 1978 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston, the audience was spellbound. "You are about to hear an incredible guitar player, singer and songwriter who recently moved back home to West Virginia," the master of ceremonies announced. "Straight from McDowell County, give a big welcome to Carl Rutherford."

Carl's guitar rang out with fancy finger-picking as he hypnotized the audience with his own instrumental, "West Virginia Breakdown." There wasn't a sound in the place until the last note sounded — and then the audience roared. Later on Carl did a set with Hazel Dickens, a nationally known singer from West Virginia. With his deep resonating voice, Carl put ineffable feeling into a country blues version of "Amazing Grace." The MC had to send Carl and Hazel back on stage. They played five encores, and the audience shouted, "More! More!"

After Carl Rutherford moved from California back home to the McDowell community of Warriormine in 1975, he brought back to the mountains a style of guitar picking that people had virtually forgotten. Carl plays a finger-picking style that was popular in the coalfields of southern West Virginia during the 1920's, a style which his family had preserved and passed on to him.

In 1950 Carl had moved from the coal mines of southern West Virginia to the logging camps of north-



Guitarist Carl Rutherford on the front porch of his home in the southern McDowell community of Warriormine.

West Virginia festival stages are Rutherford's second home. This photograph from the GOLDENSEAL files was made at the 1988 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston.

ern California, where he continued to develop his guitar playing and songwriting in the honky tonks around Redding. When Carl moved back home a quarter-century later, his song style was a highly artistic blend of mountain ballads, old-time music, big band tunes, bluegrass, country, honky tonk, blues, and gospel. Not only does Carl perform traditional songs with deep pathos, but he writes new, innovative songs about coal mining, his home in West Virginia, his faith, romance, and love gone bad.

His songwriting reflects the inner conflict that people face when they migrate out of West Virginia — a feeling of love for home mixed with the necessity of finding steady work out of state. When Carl moved away, he did not intend to reject his mountain roots. To know why Carl left West Virginia, you have to listen to his coal mining stories.

He recalls the pride he felt when he started to work at the Olga Coal Company mine after earning his miner's certificate in 1948 at the age of 18. "Got me a job in the big mines," he says. "Got someone to pass the physical for me, because I wasn't physically capable. Paid 'em to do it."

But after two weeks digging coal, Carl witnessed a disaster that demolished his aspirations of being a miner. A string of mine cars overloaded with rock, coal, and heavy batteries lost its brakes and barreled down the track. Ahead of the runaway was a double-header mantrip carrying 60 men, putting along at 12 miles an hour. Some distance from the bottom the runaway caught up with the mantrip. Carl vividly recalls the collision. "All this acid and all this steel and all this rock, all this weight — rock and steel and acid — all this hit and went all over everybody," he says. "We went to funerals for a whole week."

"All this weight — rock and steel and acid — all this hit and went all over everybody. We went to funerals for a whole week."

Following that week of funeral services, Carl stood on the mine elevator cage ready to go back to work. But something made him stop and say, "I ain't going."

Carl's father was on the cage. He said, "Son, if you don't go down now, you never will be able to again." Carl stepped back on, and as they were about ready to go down, he hopped off again. He stepped on and off until everybody was fuming mad.

Finally he said to himself, "All right, I'm going to go back into this mines and I'm gonna work in this mines till I save up enough to leave here. And then I'm out of here. It took me about two or three years to do that." In July of 1950 Carl moved to California to seek his fortune.

Leaving was not easy. Some of Carl's buddies had left to find construction jobs in Virginia, but they always came straggling home to ride the cage back down into the black hole of the mine. Carl headed for the other side of the country to make a clean break. "I got far enough away," he explains, "that during a short financial depression I wouldn't head back to the coalfields. It would take a massive move to get back 3,000 miles."

So Carl told P. D. Turner, the gen-

eral superintendent of the Olga Coal Company, that he was not coming back to work after his miner's vacation. "I'm going to California," he announced, "relocating and starting me a new life in a different kind of trade."

The super was not going to let a good worker go that easily.

"If you get out there and get you a job, you drop me a card and let me know," Carl recalls him saying, "and I'll give your job to somebody else permanently. Otherwise I'll keep your job open for ye one or two weeks extra." Carl said he appreciated that but didn't think he'd need it.

Three days after he arrived in Redding, Carl wrote a letter to Turner saying that he had a job making $2 an hour, the same wage that coal miners made, and that everything was beautiful. In actuality, Carl was out of work for six to seven weeks until he found a job making $1.25 an hour at the Knotly

"I'm going to go back into this mine and I'm going to work in this mine till I save up enough to leave . And then I'm out of here."

Box Factory. After six months, he received a raise to $1.30 an hour. Fortunately, he landed a better job for $2 an hour working as a logger, a choker setter — the man who fastens cables to logs — and running a D-8 Cat. He began to live his own life the way he wanted to.

Carl can tell you exactly why he left the coal mines. "Somewhere in that phase of time I learned that a mule was more valuable to a mining company than a human being," he told me. "Because when a human being gets killed, it costs you enough chalk to go out and write up on the board, 'Need another hand.' But if you lost a mule, you had to go pay the *money* to buy another mule. So I'd seen the value and worth of a human being in a job like that – wasn't quite my bag of apples. I count myself worth a little something, more than a mule anyway."

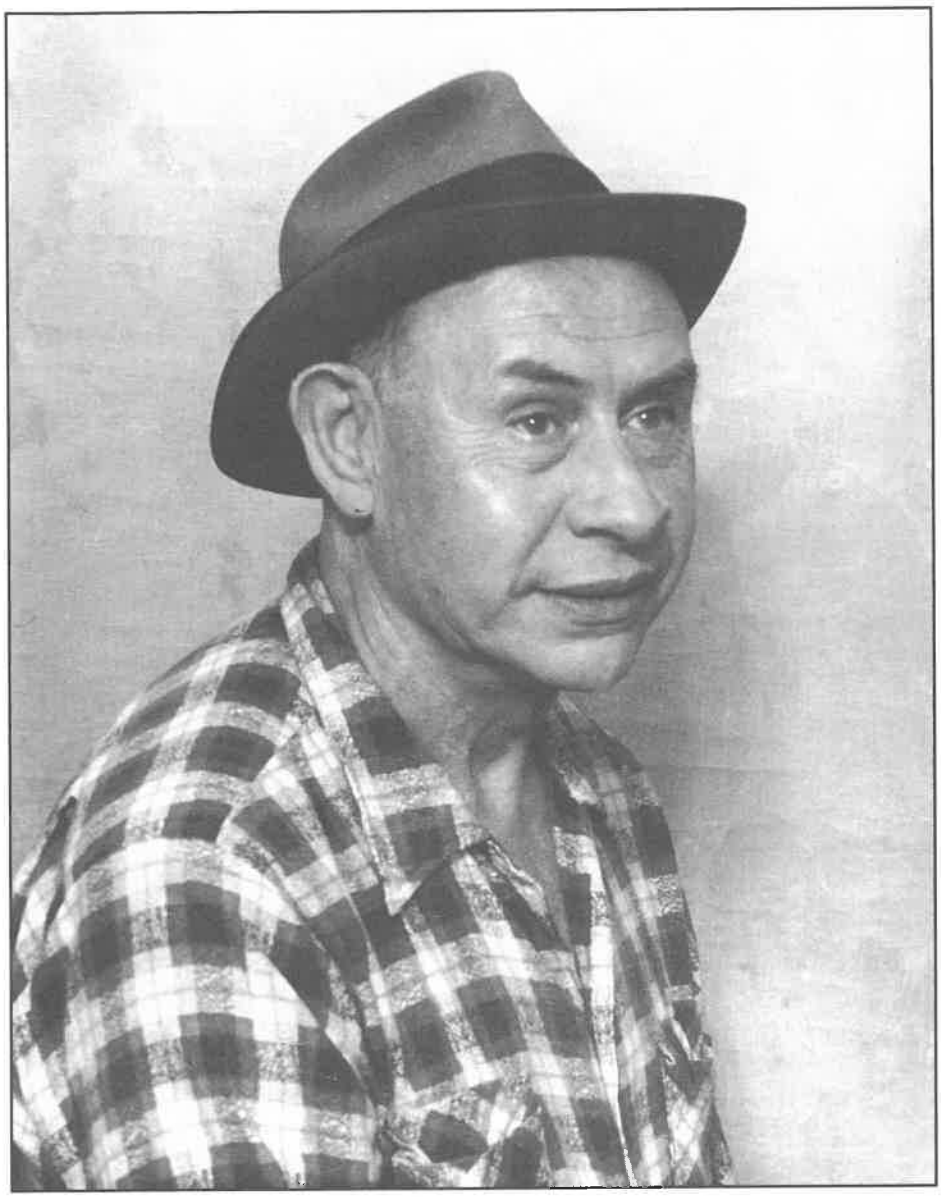
Mother Clara Muncy Rutherford poses with Larry, the baby of the family, in the portrait above. The inset shows young Carl Rutherford. Photographers and dates unknown.

Carl was raised with a strong work ethic, and he is not afraid to protest practices that are degrading to workers. His "Coal Miner's Song" contains a subtle yet powerful tone of protest in the second verse:

"No a man's life ain't nothing/Lord that's how it seems/ They're just muscle and guts down here working these machines/And when the rock it starts falling/The boss man says, 'Son, you got to bring out my machine/Don't you leave it and run.'"

To the boss in this verse, the mining machine is worth more than the life of the worker, just as in older times the mule was more important than a man. Some workers tolerated harsh working conditions because they were dependent on the company for their income, housing, and groceries. Carl Rutherford headed for California.

When Carl moved from Warriormine to Redding, he had keenly felt the conflicts and problems of the mining community. But he wasn't about to throw out the good with the bad. He preferred to retain his



The Muncys, Carl's people on his mother's side, helped to make him a musician. This is Uncle Will Muncy in the prime of his life. Photographer and date unknown.

identity by playing the music he had learned from his family, which represents a deep and vital musical tradition.

As a boy in West Virginia, Carl learned to play guitar from his Uncle Will Muncy, who picked the guitar like a dobro tuned to an open-E chord. Uncle Will used a knife handle to play slide guitar. Since the action on Carl's guitar was too high to let him press the strings down easily, he learned to play slide in an open tuning.

Earlier West Virginia guitar players in the coalfields had used the same open tuning that Carl learned. Among them were Frank Hutchison from Logan County, who recorded "The Train That Carried My Girl From Town" in 1927 and "Worried Blues" in the same year (now on Rounder Records 1007). From Beckley, the duo Roy Harvey and Leonard Copeland used the same open tuning in their recording "Weary Lonesome Blues" (County Records 523).

Though Carl never heard the music of Frank Hutchison or Roy Harvey, he picked up a similar style not only from Uncle Will but from his aunt's brother, Lee Altizer, who also played "The Train That Carried My Girl From Town." Some of Altizer's guitar licks, as Carl demonstrates them, resemble the guitar picking in "Brown Skin Blues" (County Records 511), which Dick Justice from Logan County recorded in the 1920's.

Carl also learned a lot of music from his Uncle Iser Muncy, who picked the banjo with two fingers and played finger-style guitar. Carl recalls seeing Iser pick his banjo after he came in from the mines, black all over except for white feet, white teeth, and white eyes.

Carl's mother, who played the banjo, taught him square dance tunes, mountain songs, and ballads such as "John Henry," "John Hardy," "Rovin' Gambler," and "In the Pines." His mother picked the banjo with her thumb and first finger, as did most of the banjo players where Carl grew up. Coincidentally, Carl also picks his guitar with his thumb and first finger. In California, when he was homesick, he would sit out on his front porch and sing songs he learned from his mother — songs that turned his fancy back to the beautiful hills of West Virginia.

Out there, he also remembered the popular tunes he had heard while growing up during the 1930's and '40's. At 17 years of age, Carl had worked in the Villa Vista Cafe in Abingdon, Virginia, where he listened to popular music on the jukebox. The pieces included mostly big band tunes like Glen Miller's "In the Mood" and Artie Shaw's "Summit Ridge Drive," which inspired a tune Carl later wrote in California. On the jukebox Carl also liked to hear Ernest Tubb's honky tonk hit, "Walkin' the Floor Over You," and Eddie Arnold's "It's a Sin."

Carl took all of these musical influences to California, where he bought an amplifier and a National electric guitar made out of a two-by-twelve. In the logging camp, he perfected his guitar-style in Uncle Will's open-E tuning, which allowed him to play lead and rhythm simultaneously. He applied, in other words, his two-finger mountain guitar style to honky tonk music. He was playing in beer joints where people wanted to dance to the honky tonk sound rather than the mountain songs of Bill Monroe.

Near Orick, California, Carl played guitar in honky tonks four

People familiar with the exuberance of Carl Rutherford's music won't be surprised to learn that the man is a dreamer as well, with schemes as wild and free as his mountain home country. He makes a point (above) and shows off a hand-crafted sports car in a shed near his house.

The serious side of the music man is a community activist, troubled by hard times in the coalfields and proud of a long heritage of struggle.

nights a week. He says that he ran a dance hall for a year in Pine Grove, where he lived, outside of Redding. During the winter, when logging work was slack, Carl would draw unemployment and pick up a little money in the joints and bars, playing music along with a steel guitar player and sometimes a bass and drums. Somewhere around 1954, he went totally blind because of an infection in his optic nerve. After overcoming the infection, he partially regained his vision two years later. During his blindness, he played for a year at a honky tonk called the Green Derby for $20.92 a week.

The need for loud, rhythmic dance music in the honky tonks inspired Carl to write many songs and instrumentals. Once while he and his steel guitar player were tuning up to play at the Green Derby, they composed a honky tonk dance tune on the spot, based on Artie Shaw's tune "Summit Ridge Drive," which Carl remembered from the Villa Vista in Virginia. They called the tune "Mr. Rhythm." When Carl recorded the song for the first time in 1991, he changed the name from "Mr. Rhythm" to "Blue Ridge Drive." Most of all, the tunes that inspired Carl's songwriting were those that helped him feel connected to his home in the mountains. And the music he had learned as a young man helped him make a meager living in the honky tonks.

Country music historian Bill Malone points out that honky tonk music, which combines the rural sound of country music with the urban sound of the electric guitar, became popular in the 1940's among rural people who moved to the cities. That makes sense in Carl's case. Honky tonk music allowed him to adapt to northern California while preserving his mountain heritage. Carl lived three miles north of Redding in a semi-rural community called Pine Grove. Situating himself between the country and the city, he could keep up his rural ways, yet still accommodate the culture of an urban area.

By keeping one foot in the country, Carl was carrying on a deep tradition in his family. All of his grandparents were farmers who stayed connected to the land instead of working in the coal mines. Riley Muncy, Carl's maternal grandfather, was born around Inez, Kentucky, close to the West Virginia line. Carl says that Riley was half Irish and half Cherokee. Somewhere during the 1890's Riley migrated to McDowell County, where he married Patsy Hagerman of Bradshaw. They had eight children, among them two sons, Will and Iser, and a daughter, Clara.

The Muncys leased land in Shop Hollow just north of Warriormine, where they grew corn and ground

Mountain Moving Music

Carl Rutherford has been making music a lot of years, and lately he has been making cassettes. First is the 1990 release, "Look A'Yonder Comin,'" that features Carl and GOLDENSEAL writer Jim McGee. It includes original songs, notably "West Virginia Breakdown," and a traditional tune or two such as "Barbara Allen." This tape was released by Mountain Moving Music.

Next came two releases in 1991, "Praise God" and "Home to West Virginia." On the "Home" tape Carl plays no less than rhythm guitar, lead guitar, bass guitar, lead Dobro, backup Dobro, and 5-string banjo. He also does the lead vocals. All the selections are original compositions. Carl's "Gonna Let My Guitar Play You Out of My Mind," the love song mentioned in the adjoining story, is featured along with the sentimental title song, "Back Home to West Virginia." "Praise God" emphasizes the gospel side of Carl Rutherford with titles such as "I Don't Have to be Judged by You," "Streets of Gold," "God's People," and "Praise God," the song that opens and closes the recording.

In 1992, Carl produced the popular cassette, "Blues & S'more, with Carl's West Virginia Waltz," his first blues release. Carl writes that he did the songs after friends requested a blues tape, and he finally realized it was all right to "share my blues with others." And he does a wealth of sharing. "Blues Purty Blues" had so many verses that Carl put it on side A as No.1 and Side B as No.2, and still had to leave out a lot.

Check West Virginia music stores for the cassettes listed here. The Shop at the Cultural Center has all four. For mail orders, send $10, plus $1 handling for one and $2 handling for two or more cassettes, to Carl Rutherford, World Country & Gospel Productions, P.O. Box 30, Warriormine, WV 24894.

Earlier Pickers

Aunt Jenny Wilson Remembers Frank Hutchison and Dick Justice

As Jim McGee notes in the adjoining article, other hot pickers came out of the same coalfields tradition as Carl Rutherford and employed similar guitar styles. Among those McGee mentions were Frank Hutchison and Dick Justice from nearby Logan County.

Both men were from an earlier generation than Rutherford. He has no memory of them or their playing, but Hutchison and Justice were well remembered by Logan's best known traditional musician of recent times, the late Aunt Jenny Wilson. She recalled them for GOLDENSEAL in 1984, in the following excerpt from an interview with Robert Spence.

They began by talking about Hutchison. "He was real outgoing, a real friendly fellow," Wilson recalled. "And he was a real fine looking man."

Robert Spence. Was Frank very much interested in the old ballads, the English and Scottish songs?

Jenny Wilson. That was a strong interest that he had. Everybody around loved those songs like "Barbary Allen," and he could really play them. He sang those songs as well as the ones he wrote. He loved those songs.

RS. Did he ever tell you who taught him to play the guitar?

JW. No, I don't believe he ever did, but I thought that he just taught himself how to play, like so many people did, by just practicing and fooling around with it himself.

RS. Frank is supposed to have been one of the first white musicians who started working the sounds of black songs into his music.

JW. I think that was probably true. Both Frank and his friend Dick Justice loved the blues, though Frank probably didn't love them as much as Dick did.

I knew Dick right well. He worked in the mines down at Kitchen and up at Ethel and MacBeth. He played the guitar like Frank did, and the fiddle. They'd go to dances together and play half the night. Chet Atkins couldn't do anything with a guitar that Dick Justice couldn't do.

They went down to Cincinnati once. That was the place where a lot of musicians went to record, like Nashville is today. A representative of a company told them he would pay their expenses to come and make a record there. I never knew exactly what happened, but they never made a dime off the recordings.

Chet Atkins couldn't do anything with a guitar that Dick Justice couldn't do.

RS. Did Frank ever tell you about the trips he made to record for the Okeh Company in New York?

JW. Yes. When he came back I asked him how it went, and he laughed and said he messed up the first sessions because he tapped his foot too hard. I used to have a lot of their records on the old 78's, but through the years they all got lost or broken.

RS. Do you remember anything about the shows Frank put on in the 1920's?

JW. He'd play a lot of songs, of course, and tell stories in a very funny way. He always told one about a cross-eyed man and a near-sighted man who bumped into each other. The cross-eyed man said, "Why don't you watch where you're going?" And the near-sighted man answered, "Why don't you go where you're watching?" It would be so funny the way he'd tell it.

I never knew too much about him after he married. He married Minnie Garrett, and they had two children. But I heard that Frank took to drinking. Then they left here and I didn't know his children. I heard that he kept a little store down at Lake and for a while kept the post office, too. I can tell you where he is buried — it's over on Hewitt's Creek.

Frank was very original. I've heard any number of people since his time use the guitar like he did, but Frank was the first one I knew who played like that. I think it is a good thing that people are getting interested in his music again.

From an interview by Robert Spence, reprinted from GOLDENSEAL, Volume 10, Number 1, Spring 1984.

it in their mill to sell and trade. They also dug roots such as ginseng, polk root, lady slipper, yellow root or goldenseal, and cohosh, which they sold to a medicine manufacturer in St. Louis, Missouri. Patsy made lye soap to trade and sell as well as for the family's use. Pap Riley, as Carl calls his grandfather, cut timber out of which he made mine props to sell to mining companies, but that was as close as he came to the mines. The Muncys had no reason to work underground.

Fred and Ruthie Rutherford, Carl's paternal grandparents, farmed throughout their lives and ran a boardinghouse for railroad workers near Coal Creek, Tennessee. Fred never worked in the mines. Carl's father, Robert Bruce Rutherford, hoboed on trains during his teenage years. He finally settled down in Warriormine, where he married Clara Muncy on April 11, 1926, and began working in the mines. After they were married, Robert and Clara rented a company house near the company store, but in 1939, they moved outside of town to Shop Hollow, just down from Pap Riley, on land that they leased from the Berwind Land Company. By leasing land, Carl's family enjoyed a degree of indepen-

dence from the coal company, which could control residents of the town with the threat of eviction.

Carl carried on his own version of the family strategy in Pine Grove, California, by purchasing land cheaply and building a house out of wood scraps from a lumber yard where he worked. He adjusted by learning new ways, keeping some old ones, branching out while maintaining his roots, being rural and urban simultaneously.

All that showed in his music, especially. In California, Carl began writing innovative songs, not just singing old-time songs from the southern mountains. His big move encouraged Carl's songwriting by putting him in honky tonk beer joints where he needed to compose instrumental tunes for people on the dance floor.

"I'd seen the value and worth of a human being in a job like that. I count myself worth a little something, more than a mule anyway."

He wasn't the first mountaineer to find his creativity sparked by a change of scene. Sarah Ogan Gunning, a radical singer from eastern Kentucky, began writing her songs after leaving the coalfields and moving to New York City. Hazel Dickens, with whom Carl performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 1978, as well as at Vandalia that year, wrote a bundle of songs after she moved from West Virginia to Baltimore. Carl says that in California he wrote 20 to 25 new songs, though he has recorded only 12 of them. Before he left West Virginia in July of 1950, Carl only wrote one song, "All Because of You," composed in the spring of 1950.

Why hadn't he written more songs in West Virginia? Maybe the energy which had gone into escaping the mines now found a new outlet. After working himself out of the coal camp, Carl could channel his creativity into his music and his songwriting.

By moving to California Carl also gained new experiences which he could use for songwriting material. His writing blossomed when he got married and had a family. Many of Carl's songs are about the excitement of finding a woman companion, his eventual frustration in romance, and then finally bidding each other farewell. He married in 1957 and tried to make the relationship work until 1975, when he and his first wife were divorced.

Carl says that he wrote 85 percent of his songs as a way of dealing with problems with women. "That woman was rough on you," as his daughter Deb remarked on one occasion, "but she made you write some good songs."

By writing songs about the loss of love, Carl was able to put it behind him and to try again. "Gonna Let My Guitar Play You Out of My Mind," the title of one song suggests, while another is called "Gonna Give Love One More Fling." And after coming back to West Virginia, he did. In 1991, Carl married Frankie Patton, a native of Caretta, a coal camp north of War. They reside in Shop Hollow, on the leased land that Carl's family passed on to him.

Now Carl Rutherford uses his music to enrich the culture of his own community. In 1994, he did 18 performances for children in the Head Start program and at War junior high and elementary schools, on top of his steady schedule of church revivals and family reunions. Carl is the founder and president of the Mountain Music Association in McDowell County, which sponsors a folk festival the second Saturday in July.

"The biggest thrill of my life," Carl recalls, "was to come back to West Virginia and play at folk festivals for whole families — parents and children." People enjoy hearing his music not only at Vandalia but also at the West Virginia Folk Festival at Glenville, the Appalachian String Band Festival at Camp Washington-Carver, the Augusta Heritage Festival in Elkins, and the Stonewall Jackson Jubilee at Jackson's Mill. He has recorded four cassette tapes of original songs, which include a variety of blues, gospel, honky tonk, country, and mountain guitar picking. In the summer of 1993, he entertained visitors at welcome centers on the West Virginia Turnpike.

Carl's music allowed him to keep his roots in the mountain soil of McDowell County while moving across the country and branching out in all directions. Perhaps the beauty of his music is in the way it speaks to everyone who tries to negotiate the transitions of life by making grand changes while hanging on to the best of tradition. Strong branches do grow from deep roots.

Carl Rutherford with writer Jim McGee. The two had just taken part in the local Mountain Music Festival at the time this photograph was made.

Annie's Story

A Life in Lewis County

By Angela Kraus

Born with the century, Annie Dempsey Shearer views the world from the standpoint of experience. Photo by Michael Keller.

Annie Dempsey was born at home in the year 1900, the baby of the family, following five brothers and three sisters. Home was on Crooked Run, a small tributary flowing into Leading Creek from the south, about 14 miles west of the city of Weston in Freemans Creek District, Lewis County. Annie's Irish grandparents settled near the head of Crooked Run in 1848. Annie still lives there today.

As a child, Annie had about equal amounts of freedom and responsibility. Toys were unheard of, except perhaps a rag doll now and then, or a sock doll. There were playmates aplenty, however, and Annie got more than one strapping for coming home late from play. The strap was always administered by her mother, never her father. Annie's mother also laid out the chores for each child — getting the cows, bringing in wood and coal, carrying water from the spring, helping with supper.

School in the little one-room schoolhouse less than a mile from home was more frolic than serious study. Before the 1930's West Virginia schools existed independent of any centralized authority. With no close supervision, teachers were on their own. Annie says that she had a few strict teachers. But over-

all, she figures, "There wasn't a great sight of learning going on."

Older boys chewed tobacco in school and were known to cut themselves a hole in the wall for spitting. Annie and her friends would sometimes sneak back up the hollow and with old newspapers or leaves roll cigarettes of field blossoms.

Sleigh riding or creek jumping were the order of the day, depending on the season. Students sent after the teacher's horse near dismissal time would go galloping through the meadows, taking advantage of any chance to have a good time.

Above: Annie and husband Joe Shearer made music together, often performing with another musician as a trio. This photo appears to have been made at a school program. Photographer and date unknown.

Annie was not above a little school skipping, given the opportunity. "Lizzie would play off sick and I'd say, 'Let me go home with her, don't let her go home all by herself,'" she recalls. "There was a great big walnut tree down in the meadow. We'd sit down there and crack walnuts. Lots of times we'd still be sitting there when the other kids got out of school. Boy, if we wouldn't hightail it when we heard them a-coming!"

But Annie stayed in school till she was 16, as required by law. She would have quit at ten if she could have. She says she considered school "wasting time and shoe leather." She opted not to take the eighth-grade examination that might have allowed her to go on to high school, because she knew no money was available for such luxuries.

So Annie's carefree school days soon gave way to work days. While still a teenager, she first hired out as a companion and helper to women in the area who were themselves employed by the Hope Gas Company as cooks. These women worked in the camps for the bosses on the pipeline being laid near Annie's home. Annie remembers these bosses as red-haired, red-faced Irishmen, every one, while all the workers were Italian.

Below: Joe and Annie, both seated here, produced a sizable family. They all got together for this snapshot in the 1950's. Photographer unknown.

After her school years, Annie engaged in domestic service to neighboring families. Her first employment was with Lot Woofter and his wife, Ettie. When they had their first baby, Annie went to their house at the end of the run and lived in for 75 cents a week. She baked, washed on the washboard, made beds, emptied chamber pots, and helped with the new baby. Annie was always relieved to see Ettie's mother leave. She made it her business to keep Annie busy, bringing her every piece of clothing in the house to wash.

Annie's work brought a little money to her family, and she was useful in other ways, too. She quickly mastered horses. Her family owned a handsome team and wagon. During World War I, the women of Crooked Run enlisted Annie to haul them to the Modern Woodmen Community Hall in Alum Bridge. Here they would stay, having come after supper, till nine or ten o'clock at night, knitting wristbands, sweaters and socks for the soldiers. Then Annie would return them home safe and sound. She often rode her horse to the gristmill to have corn ground, as well.

Though hard work began early for Annie, she was not averse to having a good time. The West Virginia countryside was full of people in those days, a lively place providing a young lady with many opportunities. Since childhood, she had always enjoyed the family festivities of Crooked Run. Almost every Sunday afternoon in pretty weather, the inhabitants of the run, their relatives and friends, perhaps 50 or 60 people, would gather in the shade of two big oak trees at the forks of the road to dance, sing, play games and enjoy each other's company. Often Annie's beau would visit her on such occasions.

Her social life included square dances, schoolhouse "literaries," box socials, taffy pulls, bean stringing and more. The dances were held in private homes as well as community halls. Annie would ride double

"With Giant Steps I Hurried"

Building Church and Community in a New Land

Our ancestor's diary begins in May 1841, happily noting the "most beautiful weather in this world." Not all the Old German writing has been deciphered and translated, so we don't know his name exactly. He was one of the three Kraus brothers — John, Bernard or Andrew — who are the forebears of our line of West Virginia Krauses. Plainly it was a big day in his life, as he prepared to leave Germany to come to "Amerika!"

"With giant steps I hurried toward the place where I was expected at the bank of the main river," continues his diary. Here 14 men and women were ferried to a smaller boat, later to board the sailing vessel which would carry them across the Atlantic Ocean. The diary describes the latter as the "huge ship *Meta*, which is the nicest ship in Bremen and is brand new...132 feet long, 42 feet high and 30 feet wide and holds 250 passengers." It would be home for the long ocean crossing.

"On the 20th at 8 a.m. the anchors were lifted and green passage given. By 10 a.m. we left the harbor accompanied by the merry-making and shouting of the sailors," the diary continues.

It was an auspicious start. But by evening of the same day, this hopeful, happy German immigrant would fall ill with seasickness. He was by no means alone among the landlubber passengers on the *Meta*. "The first which got sick were ridiculed and made fun of but this did not last long until the rest of them got sick," the diary notes, perhaps with a little grim satisfaction. And so it would be for the rest of the journey, as the diary continues a detailed description of a miserable passenger hardly able to leave his bed.

It made for a voyage of mixed tedium and fearful excitement, at least as seen through seasick eyes. "And so we crept, with sometimes very strong winds and sometimes no wind at all," the diary notes at one point. The ocean finally turned loose of them with one last severe storm just before landfall. "The ship was thrown back and forth but toward morning the storm subsided and favorable wind conditions followed it [so] that we could see land with our bare eyes," our ancestor wrote.

Thus ends a diary that speaks of the hopeful, meager beginnings of German Catholic people seeking a better life than what their homeland had to offer in the 1800's. Landing in New York harbor, Kraus would eventually be one of many

with her date on his horse or go by horse and buggy to square dances at the Modern Woodmen Hall over Jake Gissy's store in Alum Bridge or at the Back Fork hall on the McGloughlin farm.

Of one such night Annie recalls, "It was storming! It was lightning! I never saw such a night. We had to go down over this little creek. It was so dark, and we upset over it. I thought, now I'm not going out of this buggy unless you go. I just grabbed a-hold of him, and we both went out. And oh, I was wet! So we went to the McGloughlin girls and they dressed me out in some of their clothes and we went on to the dance at the hall."

Annie walked to literaries at Mid-Way School on the coldest of winter nights. Alvie Bailey and George Dennison might debate the political issues of the day. Others might tell jokes, recite poetry or present a reading.

All travel was by horseback, wagon or foot in those days. Before the Pike — the old Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike, now U.S. Route 33 — was paved in the 1920's, one might find oneself in mud "belly deep to a horse" and prefer walking the meadows to church or to Woofter's post office and mill or Jake Gissy's store. Places of business built short boardwalks by the road, a welcome relief from the mud and dust.

Travel for a country girl was generally limited to the community.

School in the little one-room schoolhouse was more frolic than serious study. Overall, Annie figures, "There wasn't a great sight of learning going on."

Vacations were unheard of, although Annie does remember making one trip with her mother on the train to visit relatives. At times, she and her friends might thumb to town. On one such occasion a stranger stopped for Annie and her younger companions, the Garton sisters. She remembers worrying all the way over the out-of-state license plate she had noticed on the back of the truck. Relieved when the driver willingly dropped them off at Tucci's store, Annie gave her friends a good sermon about the dangers of riding with a stranger — and an out-of-state stranger at that!

A hat was the prize possession of any young woman of Annie's day. If you didn't have a hat, you weren't anybody. And as a Catholic woman, Annie was not allowed inside the church without her head covered. She remembers the excitement of once ordering herself a very special hat with colorful ribbons. Her neighbor, Lot Woofter, knew she had ordered the hat. When it was

immigrant Catholics to find their way to the wilderness along Crooked Run and Leading Creek, in what was then Lewis County, Virginia.

John Moneypenny was the first settler there in 1835, to be followed by Germans with names like Stark, Shutretter, Shearer, Mertz, and lots more Krauses. They were joined by a good number of Irish, having such names as Dempsey and Kenney. The immigrants were united by their religion, and they built something which has survived as a rarity in West Virginia, a rural Catholic community complete with parish and church. This is the community which nurtured Annie Dempsey Shearer in the adjoining story, as well as generations of us Krauses.

It was the promise of land then being sold in 100-acre plots by big speculators like J. N. Camden, as well as the promise of work, that brought the immigrants to settle in this hilly country. Settlers spent the winter months clearing the land. When spring came, they left to work at the hard physical labor that built this state — in the oil fields, on the railroads, or on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike. The women maintained the gardens and the farm animals as the men pursued lucrative employment to supplement their subsistence farming.

As time passed and wilderness began to look like settled country, the immigrants pined for the church community of their homeland. For many years the priest from the nearby town of Weston would ride horseback to Leading Creek and say Mass in homes or at a centrally-located log cabin used for that purpose. Records show that in 1852 Bernard Kraus deeded some of his land to the Church of St. Boniface. The October 20, 1877, issue of the *Weston Democrat* describes the St. Boniface Church dedication by the Right Reverend J. J. Kain, Bishop of Wheeling.

St. Boniface became the focal point for the immigrant Catholics who had followed one another to the land. They and their descendants would lovingly improve on their church home in years to come. In 1891 the 14 stations of the cross were hung on the walls on either side of the church, with individuals and families donating the ornate stations. In 1922 the front vestibule, twin towers and choir loft were added. And in 1944 the stained glass windows were donated by parishioners, mostly still bearing the old Irish and German names.

The parish became famous for its annual chicken supper and square dance, a tradition begun by the women's Altar Society in the early '30's when Nora Kraus was president. Many families plan their vacation around this first Saturday in August. It serves as a source of economic support for the parish and a reunion time for former parishioners, as well as good fellowship for the present-day church family and friends.

Today, as history returns much of our countryside back to nature and small rural Catholic churches are forced to close their doors, St. Boniface survives. It remains a living, breathing monument to the past, a source of strength for the present and of vision for the future. Here, betwixt the hills, parishioners continue to offer hymns of thanksgiving as did their ancestors, who lifted their voices more than a century ago to dedicate this church and solidify the community it represents, as they sang, "Der Grosser Gott."

— Marjorie and Angela Kraus

delivered to the post office, he graciously offered to pick it up for her. Removing the elegant new hat from its box he replaced it with an old straw one, to Annie's dismay. Not able to keep a straight face, Lot soon let the cat out of the bag. Annie still laughs at the prank.

Hair was also important to a young girl, then as it is today. Annie's was thick and becoming more difficult all the time to put up under a hat. No longer willing to tolerate the discomfort, Annie made a trip to town to the barber, Tom McGann. When she came home carrying a half-pound plait of hair her father was furious. Never had she seen him so angry. "He stayed mad for ever so long," Annie said, but she has worn her hair cropped short ever since. "I just couldn't take care of it, and the doctor said all of my health was going to my hair."

In 1927, on the 21st of January, Annie Dempsey married, but not to her longtime beau, Crell Kaiser. Instead she chose an old friend and neighbor, five years younger than herself, Joe Shearer.

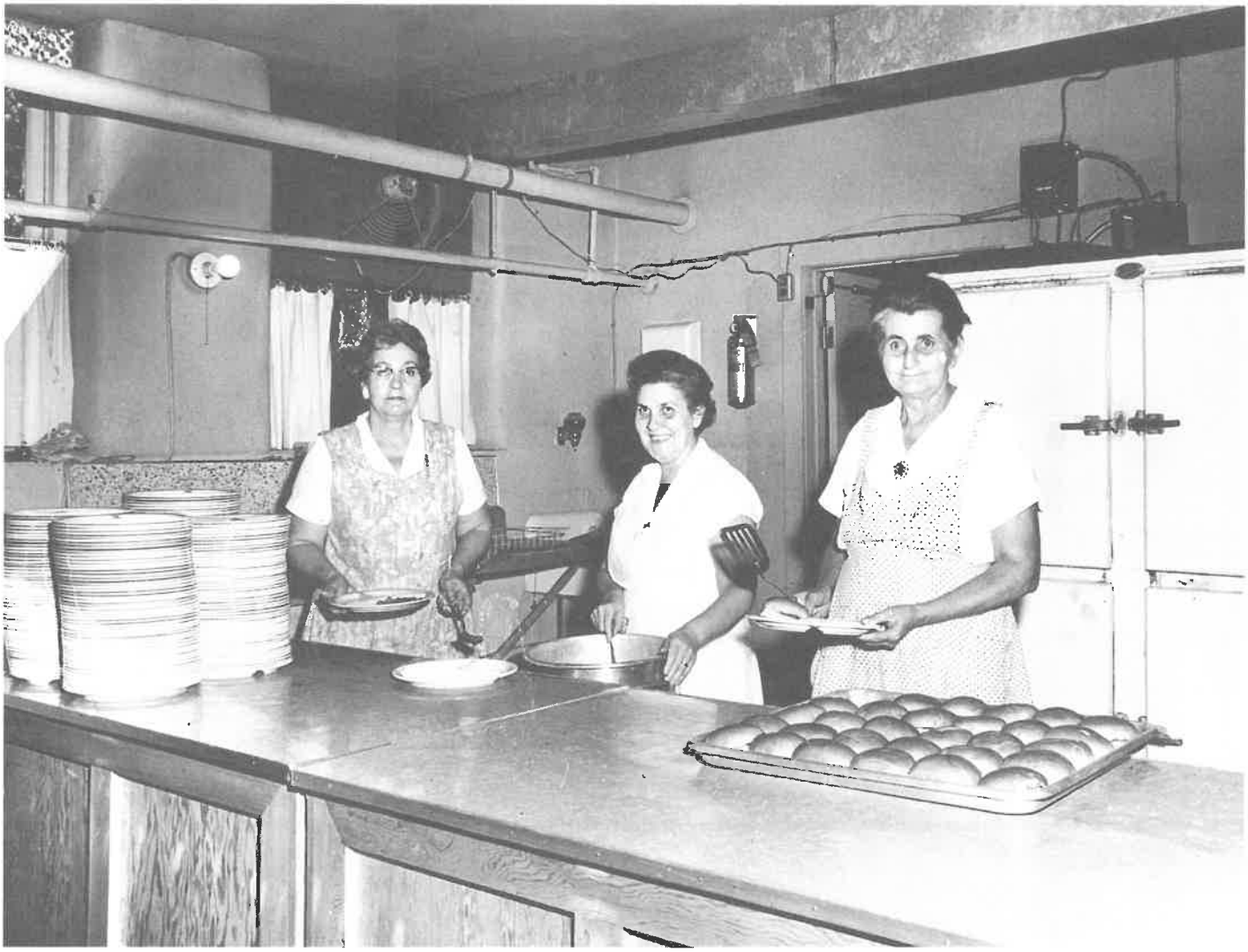
Annie had not been willing to "give up her religion for any man," she says. Joe was a Catholic like herself; Crell was not. And Joe was a hunter and the fiddle player for many a square dance. He worked in his younger days for the timber companies cutting up the hollows, or for the state and the WPA knapping rock for the Pike, or as a farmhand for the neighbors.

On their wedding day, best man Lawrence Kraus chauffeured Annie and Joe across the hill to St. Boniface Church. In an attempt to miss a stump in the path, Lawrence broke the buggy's singletree. "There we were sitting and waiting," Annie recalls. "So Pat [Annie's brother] came along and went over to Mike Gissy's and borrowed a singletree and put it on the buggy and we finally went on to the church."

Having gotten permission from the owners, Joe and Annie set up housekeeping in the vacant homeplace of the Garton family. Full-time wife quickly became full-time mother as Annie gave birth in her first year of marriage to a daughter, Mary Ann. Annie says that she knew nothing about having a baby until she had one, but she doesn't recall being frightened. Mary Ann's birth took place at home with the assistance of Dr. Rohr, the community doctor. Infants were baptized as soon as possible, for fear that they might die without the graces of the sacrament to insure the removal of original sin and entrance into God's heaven. So Mary Ann was baptized at the church even before Annie was able to attend.

After a short stay in another vacant house over the hill, Annie's family homeplace became available. She and Joe bought out the remaining heirs and made the old Dempsey home their own. Children Agnes, John, Regina and Patty increased the Shearer clan to seven between 1927 and 1937.

With her husband finding only



Annie is perhaps best remembered as a cook and baker. Here she poses (right) with other cafeteria workers, ready to serve those famous sloppy joes. Photographer and date unknown.

occasional work, especially in the Depression years, Annie began walking across the hill to the Pike and then thumbing to town to work to help make ends meet. A neighbor might pick her up, and she often rode the school bus.

Falling back on the skills she knew well, Annie hired out as a general cleaning woman for 50 cents an hour. She would work each day of the week at a different home — one day for Mrs. Tucci, another for the dentist's wife, Lou Riley, the next for Roberta Sweeney. Though most of her tasks involved cleaning, Annie sometimes ironed or helped cook when her employers were entertaining guests. She recalls once helping Mrs. Sweeney with a "coon feed" — her husband Joe having shot the coons, Annie cooked them for the Sweeneys.

Annie relied heavily during these years on Mary Ann and John, to help with the other children and the house and farm work. Annie nursed her babies as they came along, and would pump from her breasts milk for the baby while she was in town.

A hat was the prize possession of any young woman of Annie's day. If you didn't have a hat, you weren't anybody.

Between 1937 and 1945, Annie and Joe conceived four more children. Betty was born in '38; a son, Robert, not carried full-term, died in 1940; Andrew, the baby of the family, was born in 1943; and a final pregnancy ended in miscarriage in 1945.

During these years the old community halls fell into disrepair, and a new dance hall opened up in the '40's at Camden, Martin Mertz's place. Here Joe provided fiddle music, Annie played second after the fiddle on the piano, and Jim Garton played the banjo. They might receive $5 a night. All were self-taught.

Annie remembers many a good dance at Mertz's on Saturday night and many a wild one, too. I have my own faint memories of the sights and sounds of this wonderful, happy place — my tiny shoes sliding in the sawdust as I inched around the edges of the floor, trying to dodge the flying skirts that kissed my cheeks.

In 1946, Joe found a permanent job with Sun Lumber Company in Weston, running the molder to make furniture. With her husband in town on a regular basis, Annie became depressed up the run with the children. She decided she was moving to town, too. After short stays in various apartments, Annie and Joe and their younger children settled in a Main Street apartment with Annie's brother. It was located over Keystone Shoe Store and rented from Anna Davisson for $30 a month.

Annie's work after moving to town

St. Boniface Church has been the spiritual home to Annie and generations of others in the Irish-German community she represents. Photo by Michael Keller.

sharpened her skills as a baker. She was hired as a cook for the Catholic school, where she received $7 a week, and later for the public school, where she received approximately $20 a week. Her sloppy joe buns and hot rolls were the high point of the cafeteria lunch for many a school child, including me.

In 1959 and '60 Annie worked as a baker for a restaurant on Main Street. Just what the proprietor was looking for, Annie's pastries, pies and rolls attracted many customers to the corner restaurant. Few were aware of the origin of their mouth-watering delights.

Annie was always glad to get work and grateful for whatever pay was offered, but she was not without her pride. When the restaurant owner questioned Annie and another cook about some meat that had come up missing, she abruptly told him, "When I need to steal for a living, I'll let you know!" Attempts to placate Annie were to no avail, as she felt her employer had "come out pretty damn plain with his accusation." Later he came to see Annie and apologized again, and she did return to work for him.

Though Annie speaks of her husband's retirement at age 62 from Sun Lumber Company, her own retirement is a little more difficult to discern. She officially retired at age 62 from the Central School cafeteria upon the advice of the principal. At this time she began receiving a Social Security check for all of $32 a month. Annie continued after that, however, to work some at the Catholic school and to clean, iron and cook for those wishing to employ her.

After Joe's retirement, he and Annie moved back to the farm on Crooked Run. Together they shared a calmer life of hunting, gardening, butchering and making apple butter. They enjoyed frequent reunions with their children, their "40 to 50 grandchildren, more or less," as Annie says, and their 13 great-grandchildren, "with more on the way."

At one of these lively reunions, as the children sat on the bank looking down on the old Dempsey homeplace, realizing it was caving in, they all voted to go together and buy their parents a house trailer. Their father's enjoyment of the new home would be brief, however, as shortly thereafter he became ill. Diagnosed by a local physician as having sugar diabetes, he continued to fail in health. Later it was discovered he had cancer. Annie nursed Joe in his illness and was by his side through a peaceful death at their home on July 7, 1981.

Since their return to the country, the parish church has had the benefit of Annie's baking. She supplied, for many years, the bread for their annual chicken suppers. The Country Store in Alum Bridge also bought pies, cakes and bread from Annie and sold them faster than she could turn them out. Neighbors, too, have benefited from Annie's love of baking.

At age 83, when our conversations first began which led to this article, one might have found Annie sharpening her hoe, baking hot rolls and making marmalade, calling to check on her son, John, by then also ill with cancer, or crocheting a tablecloth for someone in town. At that time Annie received $316 in Social Security and $10 worth of food stamps — a small reward for someone who had labored as long and hard as she.

So it has been ten years since I started this piece on my friend Annie. In that time much has happened in her life and mine. Annie is now 93 and still maintaining her independence. I am 42 and just finding mine. She has now lost son John to cancer, whereas she and I have survived it.

She told me this moving story about those days when she helped nurse John, as she had nursed his father, to the end of his journey on earth: As John lay weak in his hospital bed, the hospital staff came in one day to bathe him. The staff was young and new at their jobs and John found their methods harsh.

Since Annie was present at the time, he said to them, "If you wouldn't mind letting my mom do this, she could show you."

So the staff relented, and Annie demonstrated from her many years of experience how to gently bathe a dying loved one. She remembers this moment with bittersweet sorrow. John was a young 52.

Annie says she's "working still," piecing quilts, tending a small garden, keeping up with her flowers and pet dogs. The last time I visited she was tired from having canned meat all day the day before.

Her trailer on Crooked Run has been enhanced by the work of a talented friend and neighbor, Rose Hughes, who lightened up the dark paneling with pretty wallpaper. Now sunbeams bounce off Annie's walls. A drawing of Joe, done by her neighbor Myra, hangs on the living room wall above the couch. She still attends church on good days and keeps in close touch with the other widows of Crooked Run, Marjorie Kraus, my mother, who lives down the road, and Bernice Garton, who lives up the road. They try to watch after each other. It was Bernice who became concerned when Annie didn't answer the phone and subsequently found her lying on her living room floor after a fall. That was in 1989.

On my last visit Annie told me that she is ready, now, to die. She said, eyes brimming with tears, that though she knows to value life she misses "the men." She misses her good neighbor, my dad, who passed away last July, and she misses her son John. And of course she misses Joe Shearer. For a strong family woman like Annie life just isn't the same without having men around.

Recently, my mother told me that Annie's youngest son, Andrew, has married and moved in near his mom. Perhaps this will give Annie the extra boost she needs, just having a man around to call on and to give back a little of all that she has given.

I am struck by several themes that run through Annie's life: An acceptance of limitations, with a simultaneous fierce determination to make the most of things and still manage to have a good time; a steady work ethic; and an ability to define her own femininity, the practical always outweighing the cosmetic.

Annie is now 93 and still maintaining her independence. I am 42 and just finding mine.

One is reminded of the parable of the loaves and fishes, of creating so much from so little. One wonders if Annie herself is aware of just how much she has achieved in her lifetime. One could hardly venture a guess at how many people Annie has fed, to say nothing of the countless other ways in which she has lightened the burden of others.

In the 1930's, Governor Herman Guy Kump spoke of the strength of the sturdy manhood and the glory of the matchless womanhood of West Virginia. Perhaps he should have reversed his gender descriptions. It is on the strength of Annie Dempsey Shearer, and so many women like her, that the strength of our society has rested.

Annie maintains her independence as she approaches her mid-90's. She is still working, she says, keeping up her home and garden. Photo by Michael Keller.

Henry Hammett points out the location of the old poor house. The big trees at the roadside park mark where the house stood. Photo by Michael Keller.

A Home for the Homeless

Remembering the Pleasants County Poor Farm

By Richard Brammer

Robert T. Parker was connected to the same Parker family who founded Parkersburg, but he preferred to live in the upper end of old Wood County, 20 miles above the city and one mile below the mouth of French Creek. Parker was attracted to the area by cheap land, cheap timber, and cheap labor.

He settled on the banks of the Ohio River, in what is now southern Pleasants County. The farm ran from river to hill, about half level ground and half hillside. Sometime in the 1840's, Robert Parker erected a mansion near a corner of riverbank, directly overlooking First Brother Island and a straight stretch of the Ohio. Second Brother Island could be seen in the distance downstream. The Parker farmhouse sat on a foundation of cut stones, supported by heavy beams. All together, there were 14 rooms, all with high ceilings.

Poor-farm caretakers represented the institutional charity of the county. The family of Demillion and Minnie Hammett, shown at left in 1938, were the last caretakers. Benjamin and Lydia Brammer (right), our author's grandparents, served earlier.

An act establishing Pleasants County was passed by the Virginia Assembly in the session of 1850-51. Robert Parker's end of Wood County was included in the new county. On May 16, 1851, the new county court marked out four districts for overseers of the poor and school commissioners. Parker was appointed the overseer of the poor and school commissioner of the fourth district, running roughly from the lower half of St. Marys down to Cow Creek.

It was the duty of the overseer to see that the poor were supplied with necessary food and clothing and that they received proper medical attention. Able-bodied paupers were hired out to responsible citizens for their board and keep, in exchange for the work they were able to do. School-age children were required to attend school.

So up until 1885 Pleasants County got along without a poor farm or similar institution. Care of the poor was left to the overseers, but that proved to be a haphazard way of doing things. Reports of maltreatment were occasionally confirmed, eventually condemning the entire system.

Finally the county commissioners bought Parker's house for an infirmary for the poor. Soon after this happened, several homes sprang up in the neighborhood, and the hamlet came to be called Parkerville, a way station on the Ohio River Railroad. According to Blair Core, local historian, Major Robert H. Browse bought a tract of local land in 1887, laid it out into city lots, and changed the name to Belmont.

That was just before my family entered the scene. In her book, Life in the Hills of West Virginia, *my aunt Olive Boley depicts life in the early 1900's when Benjamin and Lydia Locke Brammer reared their family on a small farm near Nine Mile, Pleasants County. Ben Brammer, my grandfather, was an orphan whose mother died when he was two years old. His uncle and aunt, Jacob and Clara Brammer, provided a home for him and cared for him until he turned 14. Ben then*

No More Poor Farms

The poor farm is now a thing of the past, the stuff of oral history, folklore and a pretty good bluegrass tune. The song, recorded by Mack Wiseman, Lester Flatt, and others, has an old man musing on his hardhearted children, casting him aside at the end of a long working life. He has signed the farm over to them, and now that he is "old and helpless and feeble" they are sending him "over the hills to the poor house."

One hopes that such ingratitude was uncommon, but when it happened the county poor farm was there to offer cold charity. The institution was once common in rural America, including West Virginia. The idea was to provide public help to the indigent as efficiently as possible, with the farm to provide part of the paupers' food and healthy country living.

A 1979 GOLDENSEAL article on the Cabell County poor farm describes an institution which seems to have been similar to the one in Pleasants County. Both had a large central house with outlying cottages and surrounding fields, and in both cases the county contracted with a succession of caretakers, whose families ran the farm and cared for the inmates. Probably other West Virginia counties operated their poor farms along the same lines.

At its best, the county farm system provided family life for helpless people who otherwise would have lacked it. At its worst, it was subject to all the abuses possible at small, isolated institutions, poorly funded and whose operations seem to have been only loosely supervised. Whatever its advantages and disadvantages, it is doubtful that the poor, at least, mourned when the county farm system gave way to old-age pensions and the modern welfare system.

The token of another era, this pauper's cabin at the Cabell County poor farm survived until at least 1979, the date of this picture. Photo by Jack Burnette.

worked for neighbors for his board and keep until he finally managed to get a home of his own, marrying Lydia Locke when she was 17 and he was 19.

Eventually Ben and Lydia had nine children. After Ben sold the farm, the family moved to Belmont where the Brammers became caretakers of the county farm. There were four children now. Olive looked after Earl, who was her younger brother and my father.

Recently I had the opportunity to ask Olive about her recollections of those days when her family ran the Pleasants County poor farm.

Richard Brammer. It's not every day that you have strangers to come into your home and live around you. Do you have any stories?

Olive Boley. The main house was a large, two-story, frame house. Then there was a two-room cottage that stood out in the yard. Finally, there was a washhouse that could be converted into a bedroom if necessary.

The inmates lived on the first story and the caretaker and his family lived on the second. There were four rooms in the inmates' quarters and six rooms in the family's living quarters. Each of the bedrooms contained two beds. There was a very large kitchen that ran clear across the back of the house. Mom had to make meals for everybody.

It was a home for the homeless.

It was a home for the homeless. People who had no means, no family. They were wards of the county.

People who had no means, no family. They were wards of the county. The county had to provide.

RB. You called them inmates?

OB. That's what they were called. Dad met with the county commissioners once a month, more often if necessary. He'd have to take physical custody, so in that sense they were inmates. But we could go around them, and we were supposed to treat them like family.

RB. What kind of deal did Grandpa have?

OB. All of our expenses were paid. He received an annual salary of $700. In the three years that we stayed there, we saved $2,000 and spent $100. Mom could get a few bolts of cloth and sew our clothes for us. We just needed money to buy the few things that we really needed, like coffee, sugar, chewing tobacco. Anything else was considered frills.

Alex Reed and Anthony Boley lived out in the cottage. They both walked with a cane, and every now and then they'd get into a squabble and use their canes on each other.

Old Man Westfall would get a newspaper each morning, and a lot of times I'd go down to visit him because he'd read the funnies to me. Westfall had a roommate by the name of Jim Crow. Jim Crow was one of those dressed-up dudes. He just knocked around the countryside, living wherever he could.

Westfall was sitting in his chair in one corner of the room [one time], reading. In the other corner of the

Olive Brammer Boley has extensive memories of the years when her folks were caretakers at the farm. "We were supposed to treat them like family," she says of the impoverished tenants. Photo by Michael Keller.

room, there was Jim Crow's bed, with his clothes hanging on the wall right beside it. Right away I noticed something on Jim Crow's good suit jacket. "What's on that coat?" I said. "Lint," he said. "It's a-running," I said.

The old man, he got up to take a closer look. Then he shouted, "Lice! Me God, lice! Come on. We got to tell [Mrs. Brammer.]" So off we went.

Mr. Westfall was there when we came there, and he was still there when we left. And then Alex Reed and Anthony Boley came. These three were there the greatest part of the time. At the most we had six people.

Then we got the kid in — Henry. He was four or five years old. I don't remember of him speaking. His parents were hoboes. They slept around in barns, stole what they ate. The court had taken custody of him and he was placed with us for about ten days until arrangements could be worked out to get him into the children's home in Huntington.

And, I will never forget, [once] after Dad went to meet the county commissioners for his usual meeting, he returned with this kid who acted like a wild animal turned loose. Anything he could get hold of, he'd grab.

He was wild. So we took him in the living room, moved everything out of his reach, put a staple in the back wall there, and tied him to a clothesline. He was given just so much space to operate in.

It was Mom and I that would take care of him. I'd feel sorry for him, so I'd scoot a rocker over to him and get him up in my lap and rock him. That pleased him. At night they put a cot in Mom and Dad's bedroom for him, on Mom's side of the bed. Dad and Sylvia, neither one could stand him. Mom gave him a bath and discovered head lice on him. She figured I was polluted with them, too, because I had spent so much time with him. But Dad had 'em, Sylvia had 'em, and Mom and I didn't.

Others followed my grandfather's family as caretakers at Belmont. Demillion W. (Mel) and Minnie Stackpole Hammett, the parents of eight children, three boys and five girls, were the last. Mel was a corn farmer and a teamster, for many years having farmed Broadhead Island, then owned by the Greenwood family of Newport, Ohio. Broadhead Island lies well out in the Ohio River, across from Belmont.

A dam once extended from the head of the island to the main shore just below French Creek. In the afternoon of September 25, 1916, an expectant Mrs. Hammett and her attending physician walked across the dam from Belmont to Broadhead Island where, in the evening of the same day, Mrs. Hammett was delivered of her third son and seventh child. She and her husband later named him Henry.

The Hammetts eventually left their island residence, crossing the frozen Ohio one winter in a wagon pulled by a team of horses. They first occupied a house on the river bottom, which had survived a great flood. They continued there until 1937, when Mr. Hammett got the job of caretaker of the county farm.

Henry and brother Homer helped Mr. Hammett with the farm work. Mrs. Hammett, along with her daughters Helen and Christine, was in charge of caring for the inmates, who were housed at that time in the main house and in cottages nearby.

Helen Hammett Roby and Henry Hammett were 16 and 21 when their family moved to the county farm. On March 24, 1994, I met them at Helen's home to talk about their recollections.

Richard Brammer. Your father was a caretaker of the county farm, right?

Henry Hammett. Yes. He was the last one. He died while we were still living at the county farm.

RB. How many people lived with you?

Helen Roby. It would vary. Those cottages outside had four rooms, and they were usually always full.

Lots of people didn't want to be there, because it was considered a disgrace to have to go to the county farm. It wasn't as bad as they first believed, and in time they got used to it.

And then a couple of rooms in the main house were used. We had at least eight or ten people, I'd say.

RB. And these were poor, mostly elderly, mentally or physically impaired individuals, is that correct?

HH. Yes. Couldn't take care of themselves, or their families wouldn't take care of them, one or the other. Paupers is what we called them. We had one family. There was a mother and father and their son. They were pretty much retarded. That was the only intact family we had.

RB. Did the inmates have chores?

HH. Some of them could help a little. They would have a few little chores, like feed the chickens, slop

This rare surviving photo of poor farm days shows a tenant by one of the cottages. The passing boy is a relative of the caretaker. Photographer and date unknown.

the hogs. A few able-bodied men would work out in the field, harvesting hay, for example. But generally there wasn't much they could do.

RB. Did you have anyone to run away?

HH. Once or twice. They didn't go far, nor would they stay gone for long. Sometimes their own families would decide to take them back. They would come and rescue them.

Lots of people didn't want to be there, because it was considered a disgrace to have to go to the county farm. They felt pressure at first, but they really needed to have a place to stay. It wasn't as bad as they first believed, and in time they just got used to it.

HR. Did you tell him about Evie and Johnnie getting lost?

HH. They were both inmates, and they'd always gather walnuts in the fall. The man, we called him Johnnie Schoonover, he was 90 percent blind, and the woman, she had limited intelligence. They were on the hillside farm and got lost one night, didn't come in. So we had the fire department out there hunting for them. We hunted for them all night. Next morning, somebody found them in an old abandoned house that they had taken refuge in. It was a pretty cold fall evening, too. They had on the gunnysacks that they had kept their walnuts in, and that's how they kept warm.

RB. Was there a religious aspect to inmate care?

HH. No. Several people would attend local churches, but they didn't have to.

HR. They were always well-received.

RB. What all would a caretaker have to do? What were his duties and responsibilities?

HH. He kept track of the daily living expenses and presented a financial statement to the Department of Public Assistance each month. He made sure that the basic needs of the inmates were being met. And sometimes he'd receive physical custody of a person or persons through an emergency court order.

Otherwise, he ran the farm. There was hay to cut, corn to raise, potatoes to dig. That's about all he did. The wife generally took care of the inmates, doing the cooking, the cleaning, and the laundry.

HR. I bet I made ten million buckwheat pancakes.

HH. My, they loved pancakes!

HR. Especially the buckwheat ones. They wanted them big.

RB. Doing laundry must have been something.

HR. Never-ending.

HH. I can remember when we got our first washing machine, the old-fashioned Maytag. It made a sound: Putt-putt, putt-putt.

RB. Gasoline engine?

HH. Yes. We thought that was a luxury then. And it was!

HR. Sure it was, compared to the scrub board.

HH. The next-to-last caretaker was a regular scallywag, and a preacher to boot! He stole the county blind. Dozens of his friends came in there and lived off the county. Of course, he'd have unlimited store privileges.

RB. Where would the main house have been?

HH. In the Belmont Recreation Area, about where the old roadside park is. It faced the river. Northwest, I believe. Two trees still standing formed the southern bounds of

The potter's field, a pauper's graveyard, is a lonely vestige of the Pleasants County poor farm. Photo by Michael Keller.

the old house. A pear tree marked the southwest corner of the house and a weeping willow tree the southeast corner.

RB. What became of the house?

HH. It was vacated in 1962, and then razed in 1963 to make way for the roadside park. [The park] used to be popular, but not anymore. People seem to prefer the newer, bigger picnic facilities on the other side of the access road.

Have you heard of a potter's field?

RB. Yes, I'm familiar with the idea.

HH. Well, they buried [the paupers] on the lower end of the county farm, right in front of what became the Belmont Elementary School and just before Triplett Street. When they built the school, they had to take out those graves and relocate them further up the hill, on the hillside. They had 25 wooden boxes that they put the remains in — you know, skulls and bones. Various bones.

One [of the original coffins] had a glass top in it. And there was one or two, I suppose, overcoats. They were made of wool, and they hadn't decomposed. Nobody had been buried there since 1917. You could recognize the coats; it was sandy ground and they were kind of preserved. One set of remains was in a painted pine board box. That was back in 1950, when they built the school.

HR. We watched them take out those graves.

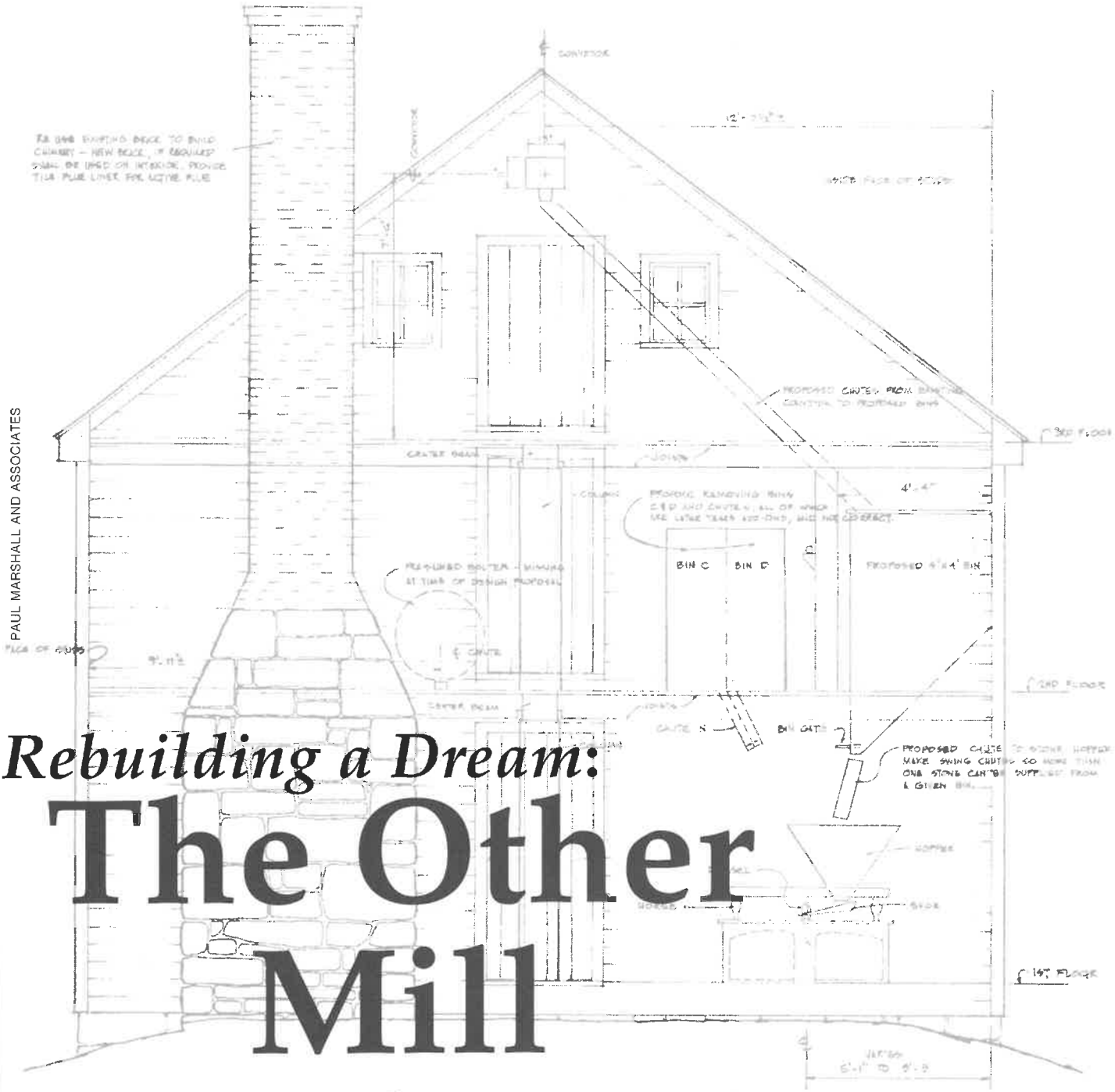
HH. Almost the whole town was there. Of course, this town was only half as big back then.

There wasn't any markers when they were exhumed. There was an occasional rock. I suppose somebody in the family had put a rock there just to mark where the grave was. When they dug up the remains, they placed them in two-foot long boxes. No records were kept. They were just inmates from the county farm.

Helen married Morgan Roby in 1939. She moved out but continued to live in the neighborhood, so she was still able to help with the inmates at the county farm. Homer and Christine and Henry continued to live with their parents at the farm. The inmates stayed on, in the house and in the cottages, despite Mr. Hammett's death in 1940, Christine and Homer's moving away (by 1942), and Mrs. Hammett's death in 1950. Finally the old house was vacated by Henry and by any inmate who might have been there in 1962, and it was demolished in 1963. The cottages remained until 1973.

When Henry moved out he took up residence in the immediate area, continuing to raise mostly corn and wheat on the county property. Helen provided care as usual. People aged and things changed. The two parents in the farm's one pauper family died, and their son went to live with relatives. One final tenant, a woman, came to stay at Belmont.

In 1973 the Pleasants County Board of Education purchased the property. Of the old inmates only Evie and Johnnie were still alive and still wards of the county. They and the new woman went to stay in the private home of Charles and Ruby Alderman, who lived just a few blocks away. That left them in familiar surroundings and in the same neighborhood with Henry and Helen. The three paupers and their former caretakers were able to see and hear from one another from time to time, but the Pleasants County poor farm was no more.



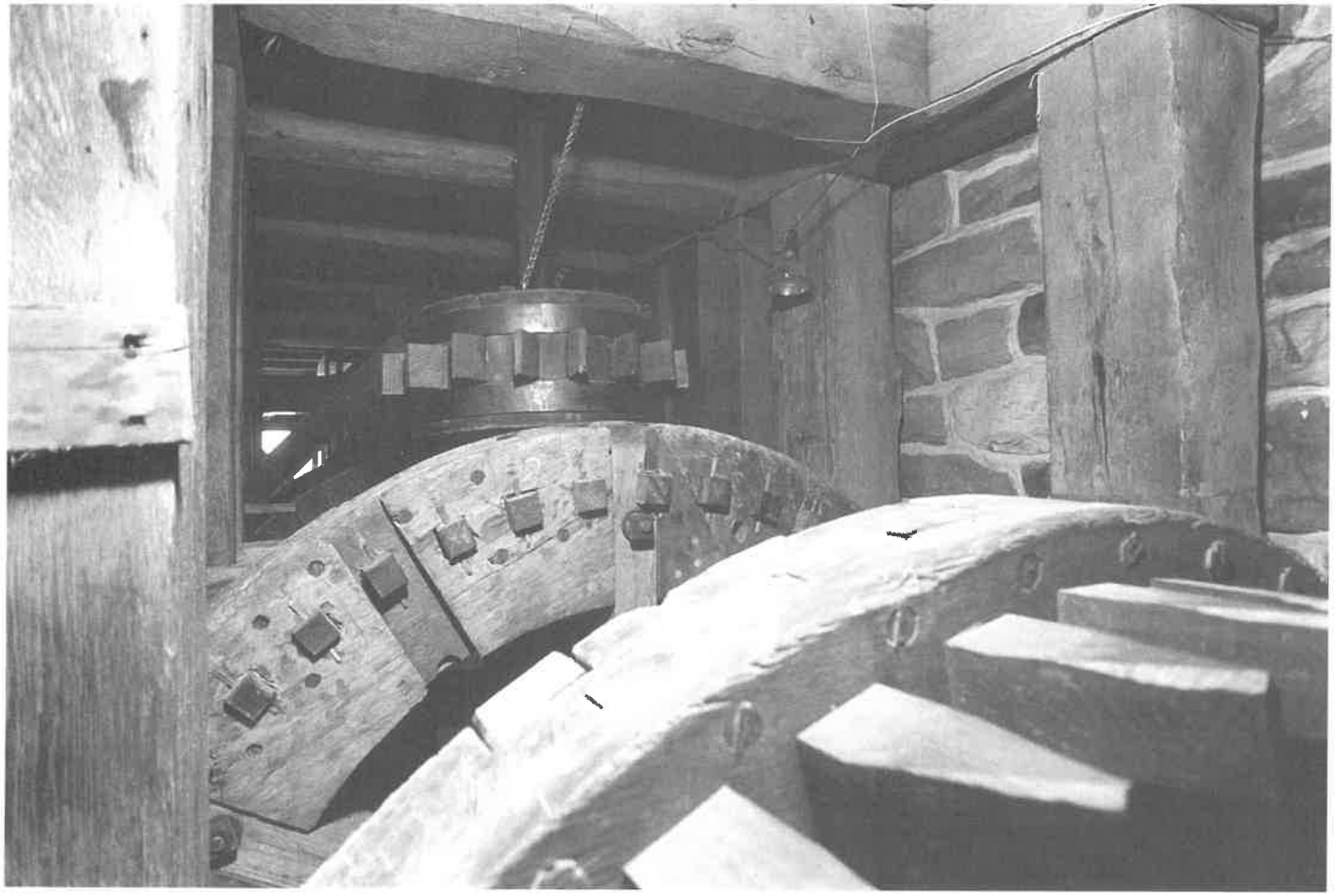
PAUL MARSHALL AND ASSOCIATES

Rebuilding a Dream:

The Other Mill at Jackson's Mill

By Joy Gregoire Gilchrist

There are two mills at Jackson's Mill. The Jackson mill proper, the familiar landmark building for which the Lewis County 4-H complex is named, was itself the third constructed on the Jackson family land. It was built about 1840 by Cummins Jackson, a son of Colonel Edward Jackson and the uncle of the boy who would later be immortalized as



The mill's working innards are a maze of low-tech ingenuity. Wooden gear teeth are removable, so that they can be replaced individually. Photo by Michael Keller.

"Stonewall." It seems probable that young Tom Jackson helped his uncle build the surviving mill, since he was living in the household at the time.

But this is a mill in name only, a mill building rather than a working operation. No one knows when the last grist was ground in the Jackson family mill, but estimates place the date in the 1880's. Joe Rumbach of Jane Lew remembers his grandfather, June Ervin, telling about taking grain there; and Hazel Ramsburg Long of Weston says that her grandfather, John Wesley Ramsburg, was the miller there in the 1880's.

According to Bill Frye, the director of the Jackson's Mill complex, some of the milling equipment was removed from the mill in the early 1900's and taken to New Orleans for an exposition. It was never returned.

That's where matters stood when the Jackson farm was turned into a state 4-H center in the early 1920's. Of course, the main idea was to provide a youth camp, but a large part of the dream for Jackson's Mill was to again operate a mill as part of the overall historic presentation of the Jackson family homestead.

William H. "Teepi" Kendrick, the first camp director, took his responsibilities toward the historic site seriously. One of his earliest acts as director was to repair the dilapidated mill building. He replaced the siding, fixed the roof, and refloored the interior so it could be used as a dormitory and crafts center for the camp. But Kendrick was not able to put the mill into service.

Jim Morris of Enterprise, Harrison County, a longtime 4-H supporter, first came to Jackson's Mill in 1925. He remembers those days. "The raceway was there and so was the mill wheel," says Jim. "The wheel was horizontal, not vertical. Times were hard and there was no money. Teepi said it would cost $5,000 to put the mill back in production. He might as well have said it would cost a million dollars."

Dick Martin of Weston worked at Jackson's Mill in the mid-1930's. "An architect from New York was doing a study to see if the mill could be used again," he recalls. "Ralph Myers, the grounds superintendent, had us boys dig around under the mill looking for the rock bearing that the wheel sat on. We didn't find anything.

"We soon learned that the Russians were the only ones with a helicopter big enough to move the mill, and it was the middle of the Cold War."

"Later we were sent over to Barbour County to tear down a couple of old mills," Martin continues. "That's where we got the grindstone and shaft that are on display on the second floor of the museum now."

Teepi Kendrick died in 1937. Then came World War II and the camp was turned over to the United States Navy for the duration. There was no money for restoration, but the dream continued to flicker. In 194

water-powered sawmill equipment from Pendleton County was brought to the old Jackson mill. Jackson's Mill historian Michael Meador considers this equipment "inappropriate because the mill had always been used to grind grain," although noting that sawmilling had been done nearby.

Gradually, the mill building became a museum for the enjoyment of campers and visitors. Items related to early West Virginia farm life, milling, and the Jackson family were put on display. I remember visiting the old mill several times while attending 4-H camp in the early 1950's. Our trips there were special. We entered the building with a feeling of deep respect, mixed with wonder and awe.

But still the dream of milling at Jackson's Mill lived on.

Finally, in 1980, the Jackson's Mill Restoration Committee was appointed to restore the mill building and Jackson homestead. Another study was conducted. This time it was determined that too many alterations had taken place to the original building and that it could not withstand the strain of grinding grain.

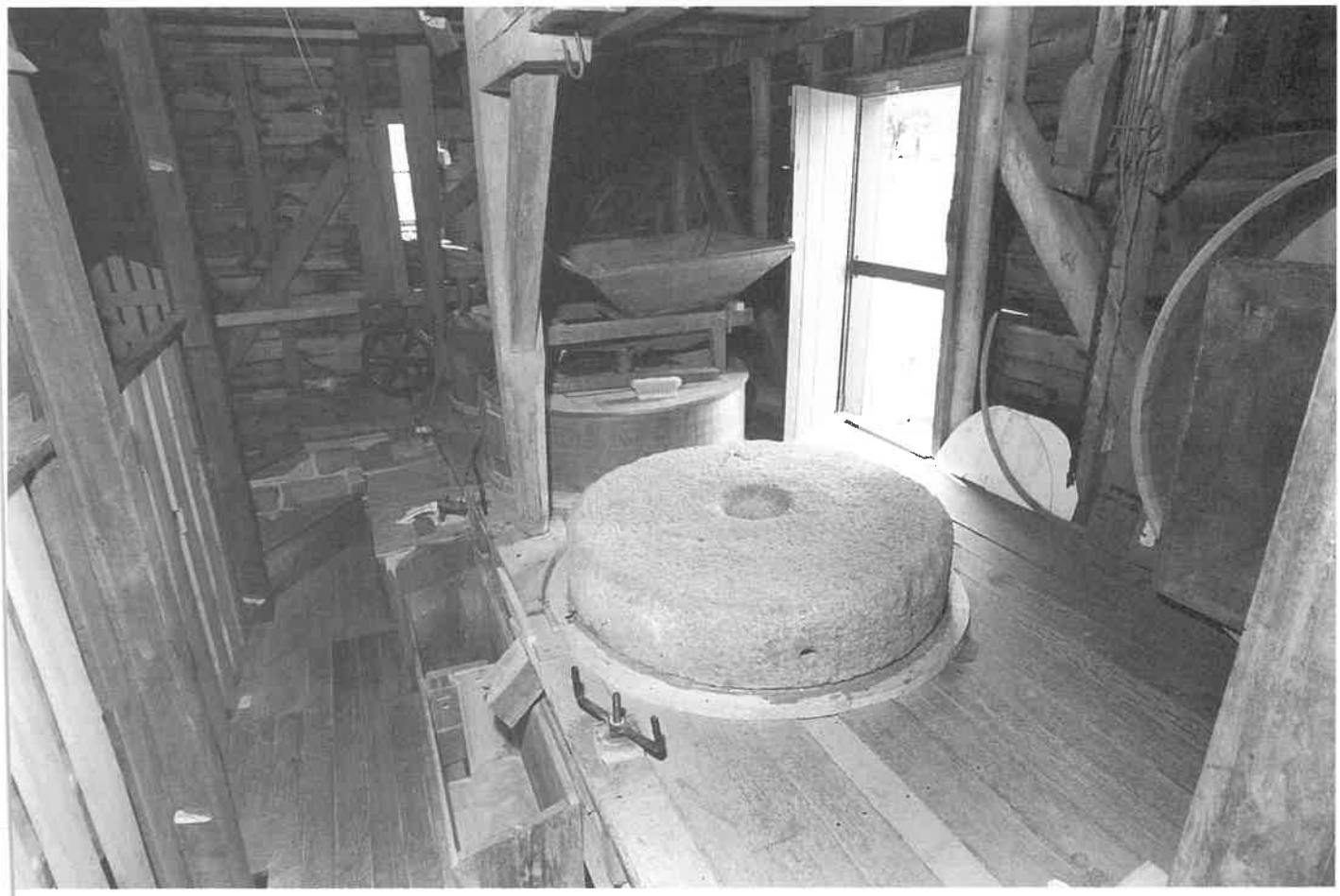
About the same time, Dr. Robert Hockman Blaker of Wilmington, Delaware, was having his own dream. He wanted to preserve an important part of his family legacy, the Hockman-Blaker mill that had produced cornmeal and specialty flours in Greenbrier County from 1796 until the 1950's.

Jacob and Mary Hockman erected the gristmill at the confluence of Mill Creek and Muddy Creek at Alderson in the early 19th century. In 1842, about the time that Cummins Jackson was building his mill in Lewis County, the Alderson mill was inherited by one of the three Hockman daughters, Susan, and her husband, George Lewis. They hired John Blaker, from Loudoun County, Virginia, to work the mill.

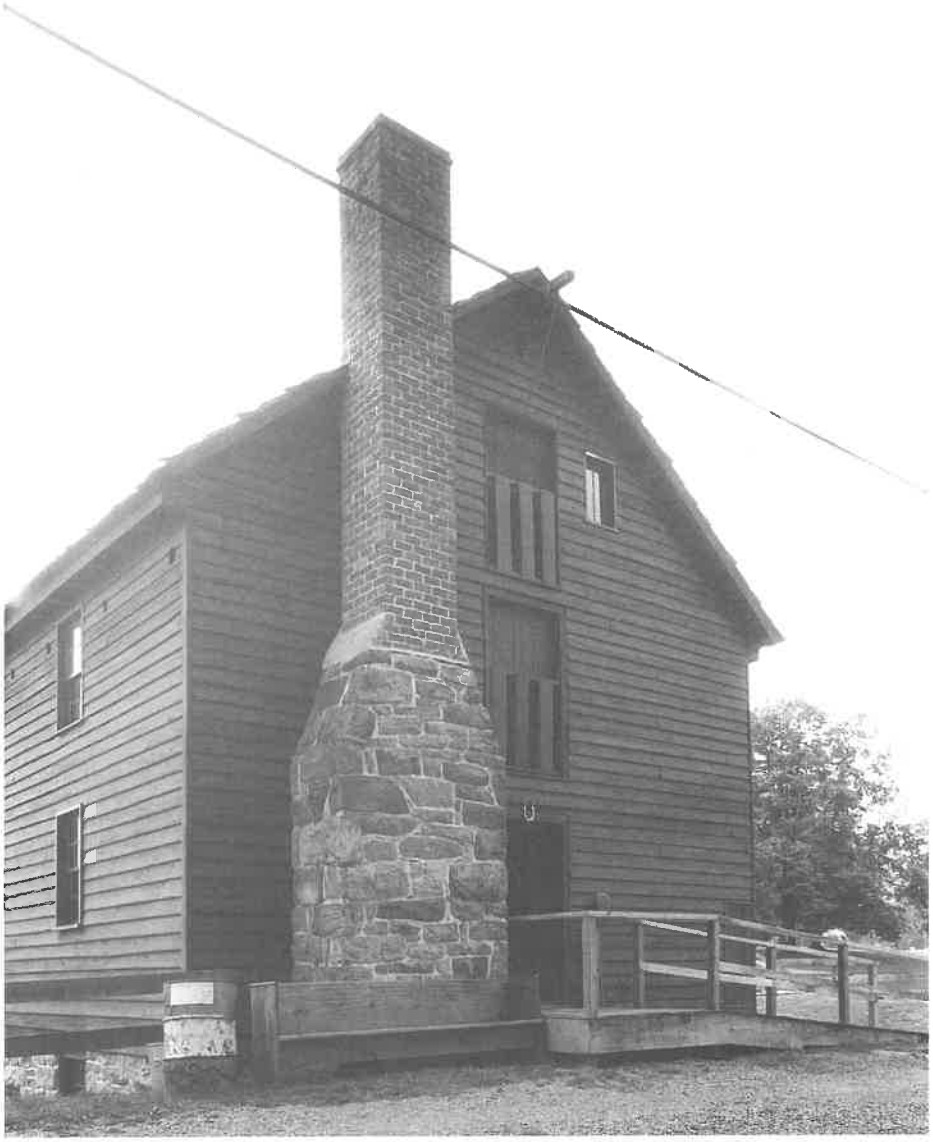
Blaker eventually married another Susan Lewis, probably the granddaughter of George and Susan Hockman Lewis. The Blaker family operated the mill until it closed in the mid-1950's. The last of the millers was the colorful James Blaker, a fiddler known as "Mr. Jim." After John Blaker's time the mill came to be known as the Blaker mill and the community itself as Blakers Mills. Dr. Robert Blaker is John's descendant.

Jim Johnson, Greenbrier County 4-H agent, knew of Dr. Blaker's dream. He arranged a meeting, and, in December 1981, Dr. Blaker and his wife Lita officially gave the old Blaker Mill to Jackson's Mill.

A look at the map will suggest the next problem faced by the planners: About half of West Virginia lay between the Blaker mill in the Greenbrier Valley and its new owners on the West Fork River. Dr. Ed Rapking of Good Hope, Harrison



he mill has three sets of millstones, including this set and the two behind it. Photo by Michael Keller.



County, was involved in those first meetings and many others which followed through the years. He remembers, "We considered moving the building intact. There were too many power lines to move it by truck. Then we talked about moving it by helicopter."

Chuckling he says, "We soon learned that the Russians were the only ones with a helicopter big enough to do the job, and that was out. It was the middle of the Cold War."

At last it was decided that the building would be dismantled and moved in pieces. Volunteers working under the supervision of an historical architect could take it down and then reconstruct it at Jackson's Mill.

The West Virginia Extension Homemakers were asked to help raise money for the architect and other expenses. Erseline Rumbach,

Before and after: Like a lot of restored buildings, Blaker's Mill looks fresher the second time around. The photos show the building as it looked (below) in Greenbrier County before the 1985 move, and (left) as it appears today. Early photo by Paul Marshall, recent photo by Michael Keller.

who was division leader for 13 counties for the Extension Service and is now the assistant director of Jackson's Mill, remembers the effort proudly, "The Homemakers came through with $150,000, raised penny by penny and dollar by dollar," she says.

"Women all over West Virginia contributed recipes for a cookbook, and women all over West Virginia bought them. We passed cornmeal boxes at meetings for donations. A big share of the credit goes to these women."

The architectural firm of Paul Marshall and Associates of Charleston, well-known specialists in historical restoration, was hired as the architectural consultant. Richmond "Sam" Houston was named on-site supervisor. Blueprints were made, and each board and each stone of the old Greenbrier County mill was meticulously marked according to a system devised by Paul Marshall.

In the summer of 1985, with help from a small crew from Lewis County, nearly 100 volunteers from Monroe and Greenbrier counties dismantled the old Blaker mill building. Richard Hardman of Skin Creek, Lewis County, trucked the pieces to Jackson's Mill. Marshall says that the resident black snake came along, to everyone's surprise. Jane Lew artist Linda Turner was one of the volunteers who helped unload jumbled masses of logs and stone. She says, "It reminded me of a big pile of Lincoln Logs, except that it was going to be a lot harder to put together."

Over the next nine years, money was spent on historical architects and consultants, but the backbreaking labor and, ultimately, the major part of the reconstruction was accomplished by volunteers. They came from cities and villages and from hills and hollows up and down the state. Many worked a few days, several worked a few weeks or months, and a handful worked for years to realize the dream of milling again at Jackson's Mill. Of that handful, most were from Ohio County and the rest were from Lewis County and nearby communities.

The workers reconstructed the Blaker mill pretty much as it had originally been built, with hand tools and the sweat of their brows. They carefully whittled pegs to hold it together while resting on the porch of one of the camp cottages after a hard day's work. They split the red oak shakes for the roof when the moon was in just the right phase. They precisely shaped hundreds of new wooden gear teeth from measured drawings that Linda Turner made from the originals.

While Linda and others recorded the slow progress on the mill in photos, 86-year-old craftsman Carl Bryant of Wheeling stored the details of the painstaking reconstruction in his head. He became something of an unofficial oral historian of the project.

Carl, whom Linda calls "the heart of it all," especially likes to tell his listeners about the day they raised the massive central roof beam. With a twist of a grin in his craggy face, he says, "We did it the hard way, just the way it was put up there when the mill was built in the 1790's. There was a cherry picker truck sitting there, but Sam Houston wouldn't let us use it.

"There was a bunch of United Mine Workers in camp that week. We asked them to help. There was about 30 of us.

"We got the beam all the way up

"Women all over West Virginia contributed recipes for a cookbook, and women all over West Virginia bought them. We passed cornmeal boxes for donations."

Touring Jackson's Mill

Historic Jackson's Mill: A Walking Tour by Michael Meador takes a look at the history and beauty of one of West Virginia's best-loved institutions. This handy 73-page softcover book is the perfect tool for a comprehensive walking tour of the state 4-H facility, also the boyhood home of General Stonewall Jackson.

Upshur Cottage

The text is supplemented by handsome pen-and-ink drawings by Meador. The guide offers two tours. Both begin and end on the porch of the Mt. Vernon Dining Hall. Tour I is of the Lower Camp going back toward the Old Mill at the entrance. Tour II is of the Upper Camp behind the dining hall. Meador, now a practicing physician, has known Jackson's Mill since his own days as a camper there.

West Virginia Building

Historic Jackson's Mill: A Walking Tour is sold at the gift shop at Jackson's Mill for $9, plus shipping. All proceeds go to the West Virginia 4-H Foundation. Contact the State 4-H Conference Center, Jackson's Mill, P.O. Box 670, Weston, WV 26452; (304)269-5100. West Virginians may call toll free, 1-800-287-8206.

there and realized we had it turned the wrong way. We turned it around, end-for-end, three inches at a time, right up there on the scaffolding."

Carl's grin widens and he ends his story with one final sentence, "Nobody thought we could do it, but we did."

Blaker's Mill differs from the old Jackson Mill in that the milling machinery remained intact. All this was put back together as carefully as the building itself. It was not possible for Blaker's Mill to be powered by the waters beside its new home on the West Fork, so a millpond was dug to hold the water which will rush out to turn the three grindstones. Water is pumped to the pond from the nearby river and returned to the river via a specially-made drain.

One day in April 1993, the old dream finally began to come to-

"We got the roof beam all the way up there and realized we had it turned the wrong way. We turned it around, three inches at a time."

gether. The sluice gates were opened and the stones began to turn. The mill ran for a few minutes before it was shut down. The grindstones had to be dressed and adjustments made.

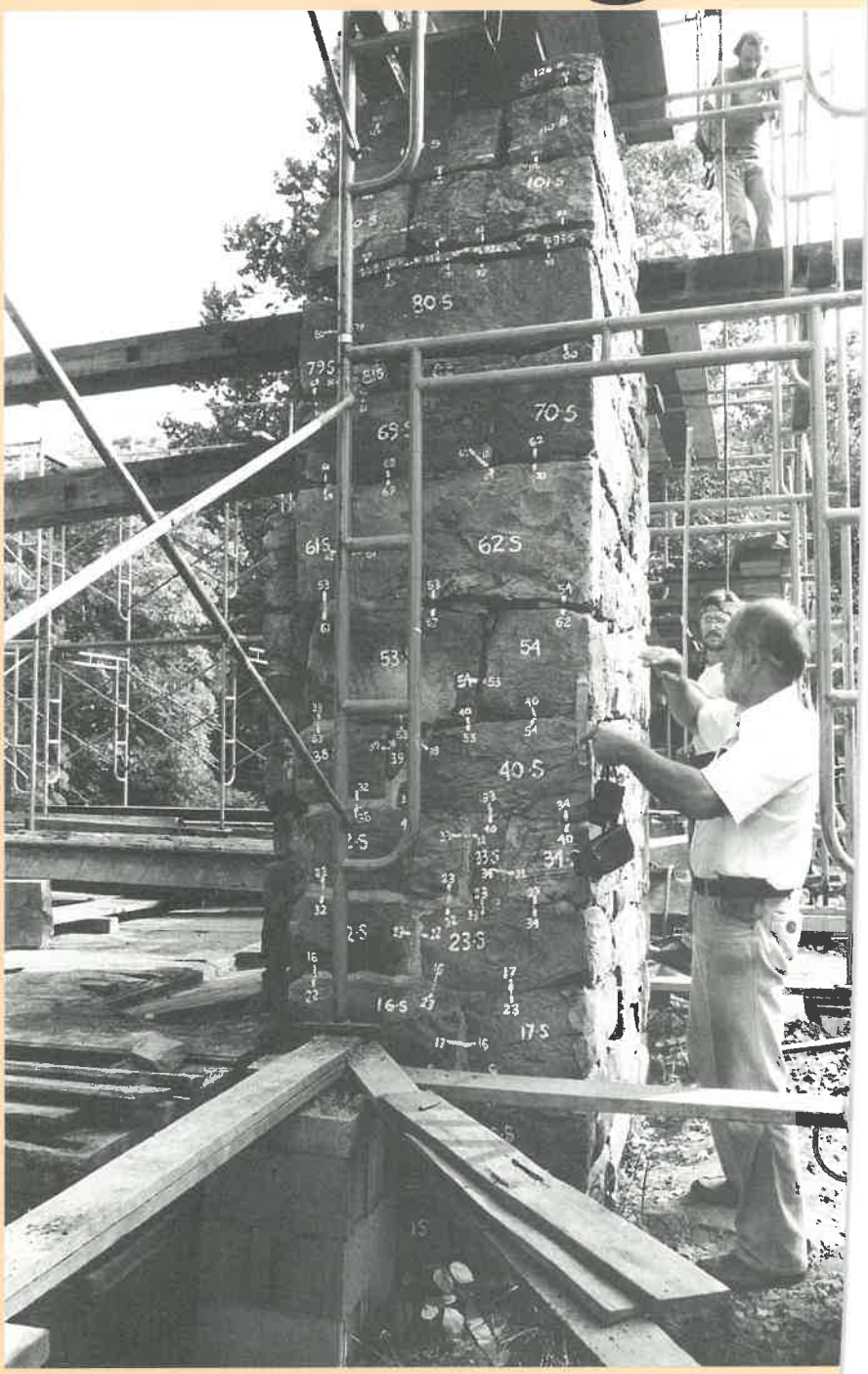
At last, on August 5, 1993, the wheels began to turn in earnest. Although there were still more adjustments to be made and work to be done, they were milling again at Jackson's Mill.

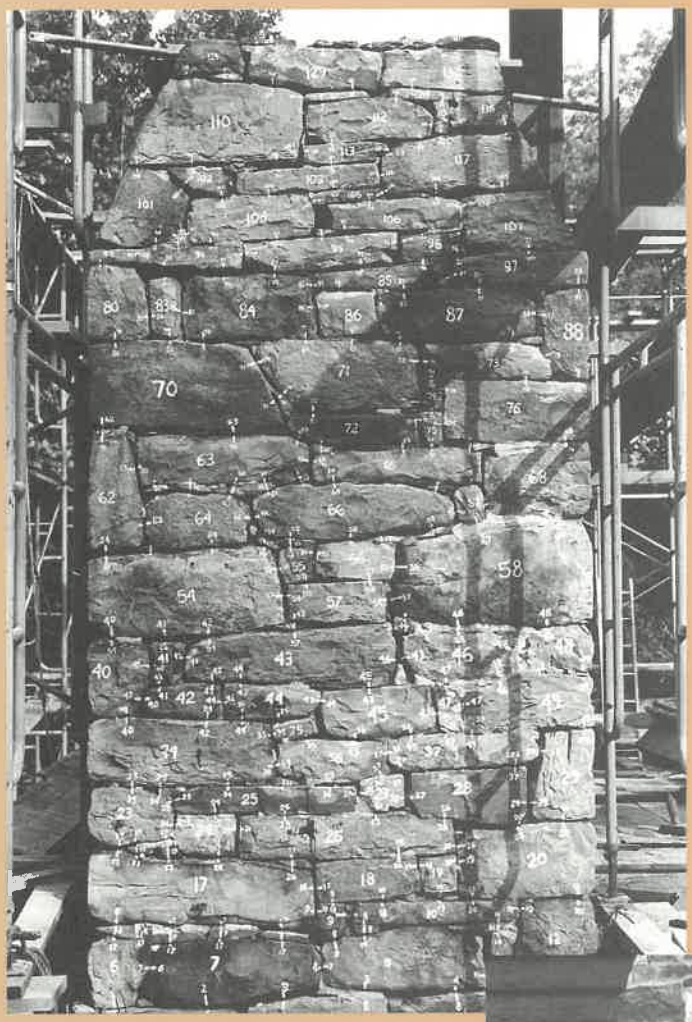
Christmas is coming ! Give the gift of –

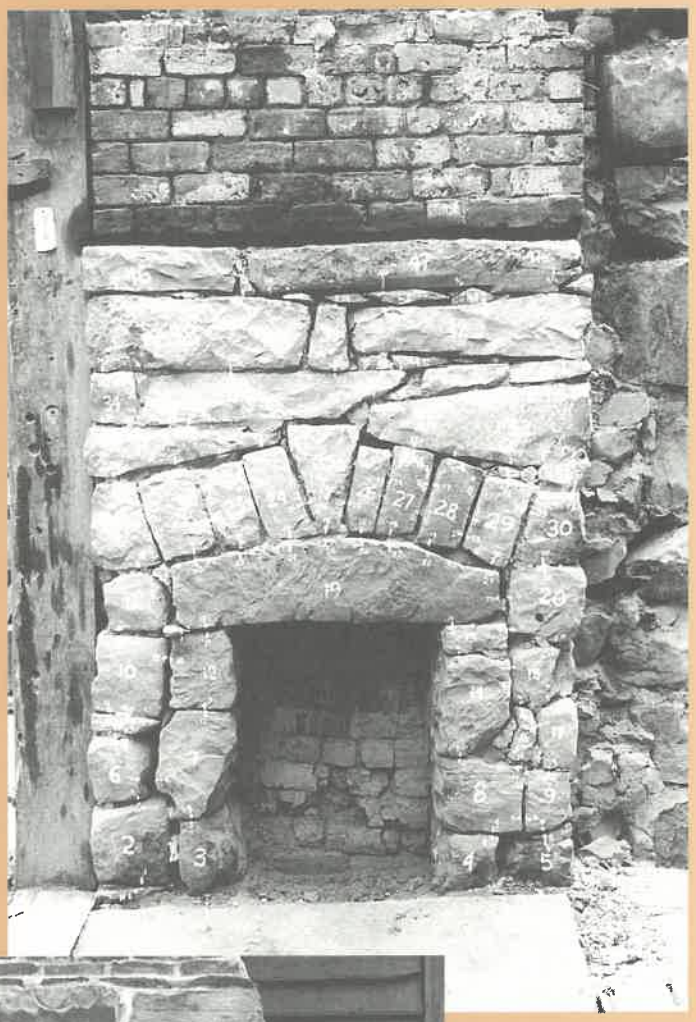
Goldenseal

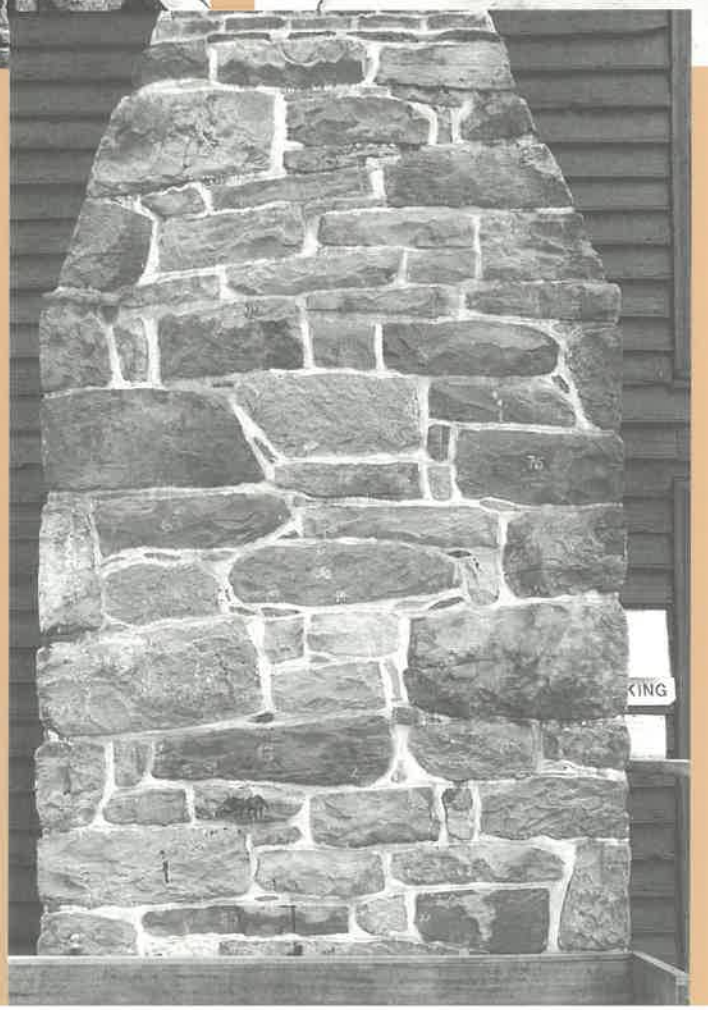
See coupon on page 72.

Moving It









Stonework poses a particular challenge to the movers of historic structures, involving many pieces of various sizes and shapes. The Blaker's Mill movers carefully labeled each stone in the chimney, showing its number and its location in relation to other stones around it. The photos show site supervisor "Sam" Houston at work (left), and the back of the chimney (above) after numbering. The fireplace inside (top right) was numbered according to the same plan. These photos were taken before disassembly. The proof of the system may be seen in the reconstructed chimney (right) as it now stands in Lewis County.

Early photos courtesy Paul Marshall and Associates, recent photo by Michael Keller.

North-South

The Big Game of '43

By Louis E. Keefer

The 1943 North-South football game, played in Charleston's Laidley Field, was a heartbreaker for the North. Behind by 19-7 at halftime and by 25-7 at the beginning of the fourth quarter, the North then scored twice to make it 25-20. With only minutes left, but the South giving ground, it appeared that the North might pull it out. I'm sure that if we could have stretched that clock just a little more, we would have won.

played the whole game at left tackle — in those days of mostly single-wing attack, a position often handled by the biggest and dumbest ox on the field. The coach took me out for one play — an extra point try. It took more energy to run to the bench, sit down, get up, and run back in than if I'd stayed in the game. But at least it gave my substitute a chance to say he'd played. I was so exhausted I wouldn't have minded sitting on the bench a while. I lost about ten pounds during the game and ached for three days afterwards.

On defense, I remember playing opposite Northfork's Buddy Pike, the South's right end, and Huntington Central's Bill McComas, the South's right tackle. The program listed Pike at 198 pounds, McComas at 186, and me at 185 — which shows how untrustworthy football programs are. Those guys weighed half a ton each! They pounded me flatter than a hamburger patty. I saw most of the game from approximately the level of a blade of grass. A tall ant would have had a better view of the field than I had.

A bunch of the North-Southers, including Pike and McComas, played that fall for West Virginia University. According to Morgantown sportswriters, Pike pulled off the most thrilling play in WVU's entire 1943 schedule when he scooped up a Maryland fumble at his shoelaces and raced 55 yards for a score. WVU won 6-2. Among the other North-Southers who played for the 1943 Mountaineers were Tom Jochum, Chuck Boyles, Russ Lopez, Dick Pence, Dewey Romine and Jack Kemper, and maybe one or two more I can't remember. I also might have played football that fall, but I'd already been drafted and would report to the Army a few days after the game. World War II was on, in a big way.

The North-South All-Star Football Game, finishing its first decade the year I played, now dates back 60 years, although its history is not a continuous one. The first game, played on a half-muddy, half-frozen Laidley Field on New Year's Day, 1934, ended in a scoreless tie. Played before 3,500 subdued, drizzle-soaked spectators (8,000 had been predicted), the game was described the next day by *Charleston Gazette* reporter Frank Knight as "one of the greatest defensive combats in the history of scholastic sports in West Virginia."

I saw most of the game from approximately the level of a blade of grass. A tall ant would have had a better view of the field than I had.

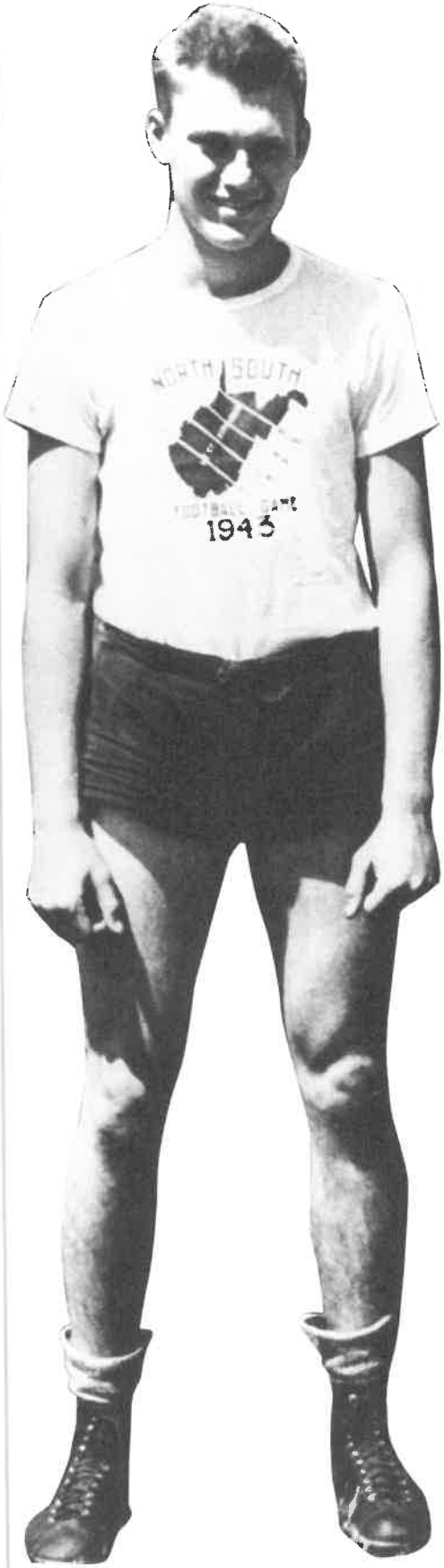
Considering the publicity that preceded the first game, the sparse crowd was a disappointment. Everyone thought the game was a great idea. Governor Kump endorsed it; by their joint resolution the West Virginia House and Senate endorsed it; and Charleston Mayor R.P. De Van opined that he expected "the greatest athletic event ever staged in Charleston."

A *Gazette* sports page editorial was even more lyrical: "It's more or less a dream come true. Mythical teams banded into real ones...No worry of a weak spot at one place in the line or a lack of good passing and kicking — just smart football from the very start."

Both the players and coaches were selected by a "neutral" committee composed of Harry Stansbury, Director of Athletics at West Virginia University; Larry Boggs, of the *Fairmont West Virginian*; Malcolm Brice, *Wheeling News-Register*; and Rocco J. Gorman, former member of the board of the state high school athletic association. The Knights of Columbus financed the game, and distributed the proceeds to charity. Reserved seats cost $1, all on the south side of the stadium. The north side was held for high school and grammar school students, with tickets set at 50 cents and 25 cents, respectively.

The players and the coaches were tops. Players had to have been first, second, or third team "all-staters," and coaches had to have successful records. For the first game the head coach of the North was Farley Bell of Clarksburg Victory, the head coach of the South, Bill Calvert of East Bank. The rivalry between teams was intense. An assistant coach for the South, "Big Sleepy" Glenn, then Charleston High School's coach, described the game as no "pink tea party," and indeed none of them ever has been.

I'm not trying to write a history



Our author, though better than six feet tall, was not the biggest guy in the world without pads. He says football players were smaller in those days. Photographer unknown, 1943.

of the North-South game (though someone should), but I believe that every game has been played just as fiercely as that first one. It took the North some years to win — until 1942, in fact, when the final score was North 25, South 7. Our 1943 game was the ninth in the series (there was no game in 1939) and had the distinction of being the highest scoring up to then.

There were some darned good players in the '43 game, and some good coaches as well. Sam Mazzie of Clarksburg was the North's head coach, with Bill Jackson of Arthurdale and "Red" Crites of Buckhannon assisting. The South's head coach was Lyle Rich of Charleston, and his two helpers were Eddie King, also of Charleston, and Friel Cassell of Wayne.

Eddie King would become the best known, later coaching football and basketball champions for Morris Harvey College. After the coaches and players had been selected, we all reported in at Fort Lee, on the Four-H Fairgrounds between Dunbar and Institute. Everyone was supposed to show up on Sunday night, the 8th of August, or on Monday morning, the 9th.

The North-South Football Game, Inc. (Yes, it was a regular non-profit corporation with officers, and a board of directors, and all that.) paid all our expenses, but plainly it was not luxury accommodations they were bringing us to. We were advised to come well prepared to look after ourselves.

My invitation letter from Frank Knight said to bring: "an extra sweat shirt, two extra pair of socks, extra athletic supporters, extra T-shirts, walking shoes in addition to football shoes, one cotton and one wool blanket, towels and linens (pillow and pillow case to be brought if you want same), wool sweater, recreation clothes and no more than one dress outfit."

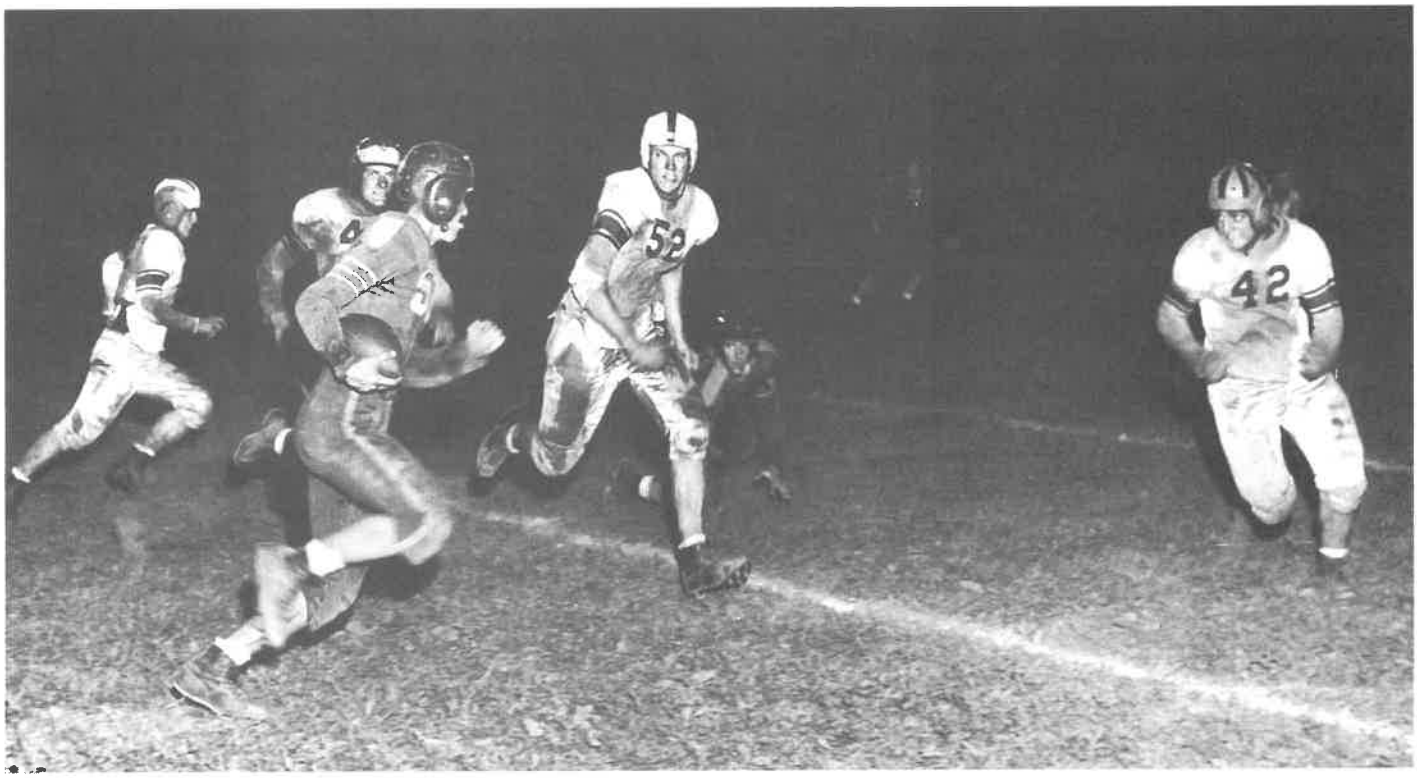
I guess someone must have thought it might snow in August — hence the need for a wool blanket and wool sweater — and that we were all so tough we probably didn't need pillows.

Fort Lee and the old Four-H Fairgrounds are long gone now, and in their place is a golf course. I especially remember the swimming pool. That's where the girls congregated, and between practice sessions, and in the evenings, some of us went there. I painted my scrapes and bruises with liberal doses of reddish-brown Merthiolate to make sure those girls recognized me as a prize North-South football player. I may as well confess my strategy failed. I wore my glasses to swim, didn't look at all like Charles Atlas, and lacked any skill at casual conversation. Had a girl actually said "hello," I'd have fallen into the water and drowned.

There's a certain smell to a big grassy football field in the evening. The day has cooled off and you feel invigorated. With the lights on, it seems like you've come onto a stage.

The football squads lived in log-cabin huts, eight or ten fellows to a hut, sleeping in double-decker bunks. We held twice-a-day drills, morning and afternoon. Most days got up into the nineties, and several scrimmages were cancelled or postponed because of the heat. We swallowed salt tablets by the fistful, but kept on eating steak and potatoes like the young bulls we thought we were. Compared to today's North-South players, some of whom are bigger than any Washington Redskins lineman, none of us were exactly monsters, though we ate like it. (Well, maybe Frank Thomas, Charleston's huge tackle, was a monster. He scared me, anyway.)

One day "Rat" Rogers, WVU's first All-American and then the



Louis Keefer (No. 52) moves in, but Huntington's Bill Chambers still managed a 13-yard gain for the South in this play from the big game. Foe Sperlazza of Wellsburg is No. 42. *Charleston Gazette* photo, August 1943.

WVU coach, came around recruiting. The only thing he asked me was, "How old are you?" That was the big question for a young man in war time. When I told him I'd already been drafted, he turned to somebody else, without wasting another word on me. It seemed to me that he might at least have wished me good luck, but he was all business.

The South, well, they had some guys get lucky, but why the heck should I brag on them? Let them write their own reminiscences.

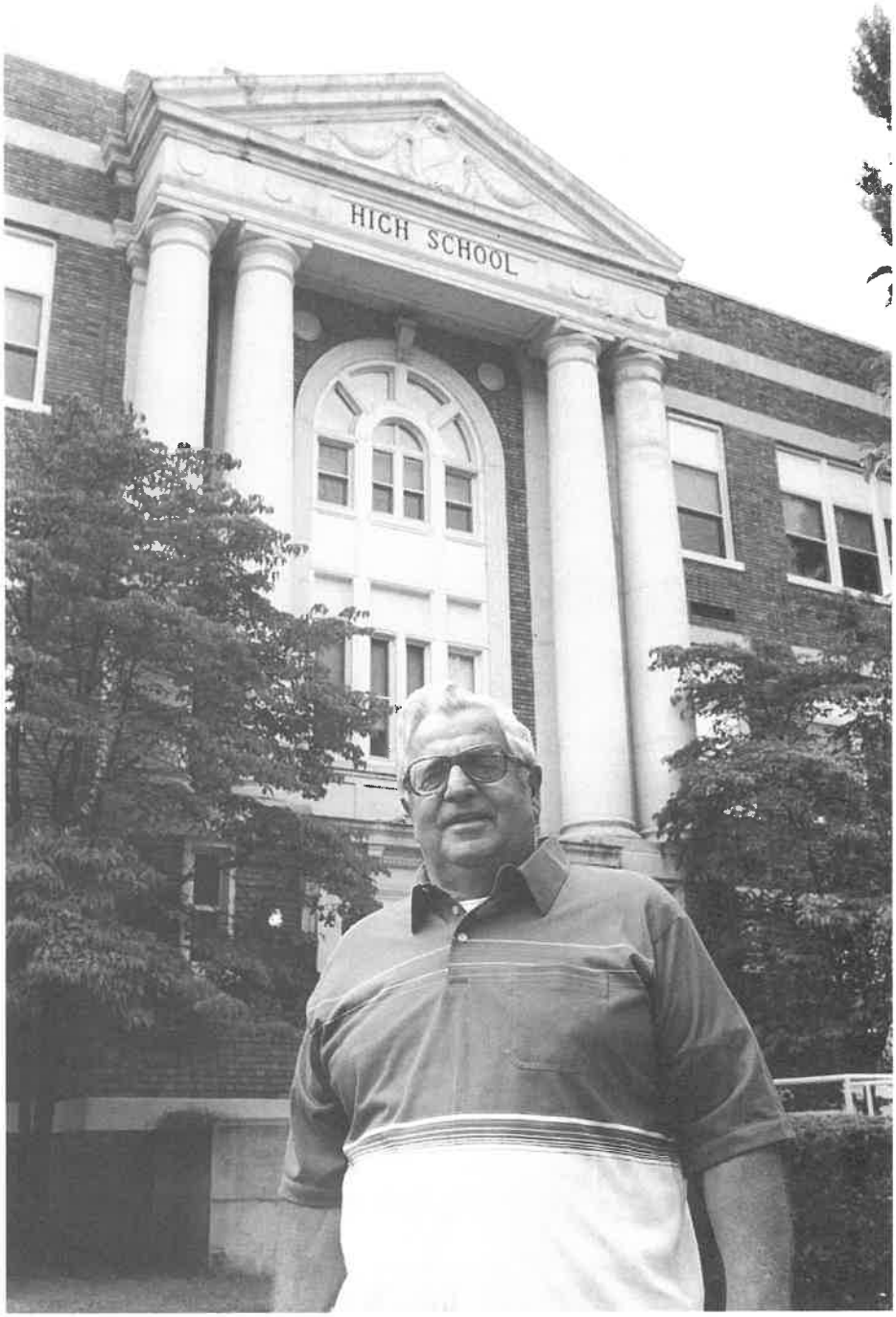
My being drafted was just the luck of the draw. At that time, if a young man made it into college before he was drafted, then he might obtain a deferment until he finished his first term — in which case the college would have one season of play from him before he was taken. That was probably the situation for those other fellows I mentioned earlier who played at WVU in 1943. I missed that chance by turning 18 two months too soon.

During the first week I believe the two squads were taken to the movies in downtown Charleston: the South to the Kearse, the North down the street to the Capitol. During our second week, each squad got in one or two evening practices at Laidley Field, so we'd know what it looked and felt like — wonderful after all the torrid daytime scrimmages! There were plenty of people taking pictures, and I think there were beauty contests to pick a "Miss North" and a "Miss South."

On game night, I recall groups of two or three of us, toting all of our gear, being chauffeured to Laidley Field in various cars. Out on the field the grass was green and deep, a welcome treat after two weeks on our baked-adobe practice field.

There's a certain smell to a big grassy football field in the evening. The day has cooled off and you feel invigorated. With the lights on, it seems like you've come onto a stage, but you can't see the audience. You feel strong and proud, and maybe there are some butterflies in your belly too. Coaches always say that if you aren't nervous, you aren't ready to play. By that rule, I was more than ready. The standing-

Eddie King, one of the South coaches in 1943, photographed several years later. Our author remembers everyone associated with the game as tops in the field. Photo courtesy *Charleston Daily Mail*.



Foe Sperlazza, recently photographed at the old school in Wellsburg. Photo by Michael Keller.

room-only crowd of 11,000 jamming Laidley Field that night helped to pump everyone up.

I can't remember that much about the game itself. Because our coaches feared the South's passing game, they expected us tackles to hold up the South's ends at the line of scrimmage so they couldn't get into their patterns properly. Delaying an end meant crashing into him bodily, or "hand-fighting" him, or whatever else worked, short of drawing a penalty. Nobody wore face masks then, and it was pretty easy to bust someone's nose with a forearm. Since we also didn't tape our hands and arms with yards of bandages like many linemen now do, this kind of naughtiness produced some lovely black and blue forearms.

I also remember getting held a lot on running plays. That big South end — Buddy Pike, where are you now? — held one leg, and I'd be jumping up and down on my free leg hollering at the linesman and pointing to Buddy and what he was doing. They should have got him for holding half a dozen times. It may seem ludicrous now, but at the time I was damned mad. It's funny, the things you remember (or think you do) about some game played over half a century ago.

The game saw a lot of good plays and individual heroics. On our side, New Martinsville halfback Bud Leu scored our first touchdown. Wellsburg halfback Foe Sperlazza caught a pass for our second score. Buckhannon guard Jim Cumrine scooped up a blocked punt and ran 26 yards for our third. Wheeling Linsly's fine center, Tommy Jochum, booted two extra points.

The newspaper account said "the whole left side of the North line broke through" to block the punt Cumrine ran back. Hey! That included me, Warwood High's very own. I must've been in on that play. Way to go!

As for the South, well, they had some guys get lucky, and do some good things, too, but why the heck should I brag on them? Let them write their own reminiscences. Doubtless they'd exaggerate everything in their favor, too.

After the game, there was a "Victory Ball" at the Casa Loma nightclub on MacCorkle Avenue in Kanawha City. I think that each player was paired up with a date, but I honestly don't recall. After the dance, I have some sense of walking along the street with a couple of girls, all us laughing at how funny we looked in the yellow glare from the sodium vapor lamps. The North squad slept in style that night, two or three to a room at the Daniel Boone Hotel. That is, we tried to sleep. We were too keyed up, too anxious to see how the next morning's newspapers reported our almost-win, and too beaten up to sleep much.

I headed home the next morning on a Greyhound bus. My seat mate was the same Raymond "Bud" Leu who'd played halfback for us. He got off at New Martinsville, and I

continued on to Wheeling. Bud spent three years in the Navy, and when he got out played some football for Cam Henderson at Marshall College. Bud still lives in New Martinsville, where he was a building contractor for 43 years.

Another North player, "Foe" (short for Alphonse) Sperlazza, also went into the Navy where, for a while, he played for a team in Hawaii coached by the former University of Michigan great, Forest Evashevski. After the war, Foe played a year for Weirton Steel's semi-pro team, the Weiritors. He still lives in Wellsburg, and he and I may put together a reunion for all of the North guys who live up that way.

It's funny, the things you remember (or think you do) about some game played over half a century ago.

In recent times, attendance at North-South games has fallen off somewhat. There's too much competition from television and a host of other entertainments. In the 1930's and 1940's, of course, there were only half the number of colleges that there are today and professional football was yet to become particularly popular. Much more attention was paid to high school football then. Every town had its high school heroes, and the North-South game was a real showcase for them.

Ernie Saunders, one of the Mountain State's great sports announcers, now retired and living in

South 28, North 11

A Short History of the North-South Classic

The man who conceived the idea of the North-South football game was Bill Calvert, the head mentor of Cabin Creek district high school at East Bank. The first game was played on Charleston's Laidley Field, on January 1, 1934.

Bill approached Frank Knight, the Sports Editor of the *Charleston Gazette*, with his brainstorm and together they worked out the details of staging the initial game. The *Charleston Gazette* and the Charleston Knights of Columbus agreed to sponsor the game. Jimmy Duggan of the KC's and Frank Knight of the *Gazette* were named co-chairmen. Russ Parsons, who was coaching at Oak Hill, and Bill Calvert served as game directors. Parsons also coached at Charleston Catholic, Stonewall Jackson and Parkersburg during his coaching career.

Charleston High football coach Albert (Big Sleepy) Glenn was selected to coach the South team, and Farley Bell, coach at Victory High School in Clarksburg, was named to coach the North. Glenn's assistants were J. R. VanMeter of Beckley, [and] Rat Thom and Happy Burchardt, both members of Glenn's coaching staff. Bell named

The North-South Football Classic became a major event during its prime years, with a full week of surrounding festivities. This is the 1952 North-South parade. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

Ted Leader and Harry Mintor, both successful coaches in the Clarksburg area, as assistant coaches.

The North squad was assembled at Clarksburg and was quartered at the Gore Hotel. The South squad was quartered at the Holley Hotel in Charleston. Only 22 players were named to each squad in the first game, compared to 33 on each squad today.

The North held daily practice sessions in Clarksburg during the Christmas holidays and came to

Florida, told me in a recent interview about the excitement that surrounded every game. "It wasn't just on the day of the game, but over the whole week. There were promotions like beauty contests, and parties galore, visits by the teams to the state capitol to meet the governor, and lots of newspaper publicity. For its time, and I mean especially the 1940's and 1950's, the North-South game really was West Virginia's biggest sports event of the year."

For our hard work in Charleston, every North-Souther got the usual sports jacket with a "1943 North-South Football Game" football emblem sewn over the heart. My mother saved mine for me, and when I came home after the war, I wore it a lot. It was blue sateen, and the six-inch football emblem on the front was red, white and blue. Eventually I discarded the jacket, but kept the emblem and mounted it in my scrapbook.

I guess we got a T-shirt with a North-South logo on it, too.

Everyone also received a fancy certificate saying we played in the game. I've lost mine, but Bud Leu and Foe Sperlazza still have theirs.

If memory serves, someone said we'd get small engraved gold footballs after the war, but maybe the game sponsors just forgot. No hard feelings, okay? We were young and we had good fun. By the time I got out of service in early 1946, I'd lost my zest for playing football, and because I could now go to college on the G.I. Bill, I said to heck with it. But I still watch the pros every Sunday and talk a good game, and I'm always ready to tell anyone who'll listen how the North really should have won that 1943 game!

Charleston on December 31, the day before the game, to hold a final practice session. In the meantime, Glenn and his assistants were putting the South players through daily paces at Laidley. Weather was a key factor, as light snows and subfreezing temperatures hindered practice sessions and the game.

On January 1, it was a cold, freezing, windy day, and both teams found it difficult to get any kind of offense in motion. As a result, it became strictly a defensive battle with the game ending in a scoreless tie.

January 1, 1934, was a cold, freezing, windy day. Both teams found it difficult to get any kind of offense in motion.

The Knights of Columbus and the *Gazette* sponsored the 1935 game with Frank Knight serving as game director. In 1936 several newspapers, along with the Charleston Elks Club, sponsored the game with A. L. (Shorty) Hardman, sports editor of the *Gazette*, and Duggan serving as game directors. Irish Garrity, former Hinton and Charleston High coach, was coach of the South team, and Art Clyde of Morgantown was coach of the North All-Stars. The game ended 0-0.

In 1938, the date of the game was changed to August. This was a wise move and soon the North-South Game "caught fire" and became an annual event of many activities and a sell-out game crowd. The North-South game became a North-South Week with many sideline activities added — including a tennis tourney, golf tourney, spectacular parade, crowning of North-South Queen — plus a dazzling display of fireworks during half-time.

Hardman, who served as game director until 1940, entered the U.S. Navy, and Knight took over as game director until the series ended in 1955. It was under his leadership that the game became one of the annual highlight sports events in West Virginia. During this successful period, the North-South game was played before record crowds of 18,000 to 20,000 fans packed into Laidley Field.

However, in 1955, when everything seemed to be moving along in great style, the series suddenly came to an end. Reason: a ruling by the NCAA in regard to senior high school graduates playing in summer all-star games. As a result, the West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission withdrew its sanction of the game.

Then in 1976, the North-South All-Star Game was revived when the Charleston Lions Club and the West Virginia Coaches Association voted to sponsor the contest.

During the original series, 1934-55, the South dominated by winning 14 games, losing five and three resulting in ties. The North won three in a row, beginning in 1949, taking the South 14-9, 12-9, and 27-0. The South won the next two games to run its total victories to 13 before the North won again in 1954. The South won the last game in the original series in 1955, 40-2. This was the most points scored by either team during the 22-year series.

When the classic was resumed in 1976, the North won 8-6. The game was played in Parkersburg in 1978 due to the fact that the new Laidley Field stadium was under construction. With the completion of the stadium in Charleston, the series was returned to its original site in 1979.

The current series, since 1976, is 12-7 in favor of South. The first overtime game in the history of the series was won by the South in 1984 when the regular game ended in a 7-7 tie. Both teams got four plays to score from the opponents 10-yard line in the extra period.

In the 1986 game the South scored a 39-0 victory over the North which was the most topsided victory in the history of the series.

The overall series results of 40 games played since 1934 now stand — South 28 wins, North 11 wins, three ties.

— Rat Thom

Excerpted by permission from the program booklet of the North-South All-Star Football Classic.

Sporting Goods

By G. Curtis Duffield

The morning air is getting muggy, and the sun is starting to feel warm on my neck. I have just released the second bream caught on the little No. 12 black ant fly. As I turn the fly over in my hand I think about the man who tied it so many years ago and so far away. It is good to remember him now, how he added a dimension to my life that goes way beyond fly fishing.

Charleston is a small town compared to my present home of Orlando, Florida. The town was large enough when I was growing up to have two major sporting goods stores. The largest was owned by a gentleman by the name of Harry Frank. Harry was an institution in our family. He was about ten years older than my dad and had never been married. Harry lived with his sisters about a block from our house. He had been a friend of my grandfather and his Capitol Street store was a block from my father's law office.

From as far back as I can remember, I had been going into the sporting goods store. When I was small Dad would take me to the office on Saturdays, and we would go to lunch only after stopping at Harry's. As I grew older this was the place to be. There was fishing tackle, guns, and equipment for baseball, basketball, football, and tennis.

Even better, the shoe department had several couches and a television. Some shoes were tried on here, but mostly it was a place where lawyers, judges, bank presidents, golf pros, washed-up football heroes and a few police officers killed time talking about sports, politics, and the fairer sex. I didn't realize until I became a teenager that sometimes there was a bottle under the counter and sometimes a few bets were placed. This was the absolute center of my world.

In time I was employed by Harry. Early on, I worked as a tennis racket stringer, although my tennis game was anything but enviable. Later, when I got a driver's license, I made deliveries to pro shops and schools, picked up peanuts for the couch gang, and generally got the use of the car.

Somewhere about this time I had discovered girls, and I did my best to help them pick out their swim team suits. This was largely a waste of time. No mother would let her daughter go to the sporting goods store alone, especially since the team suits were in the shoe department and there was generally a collection of experts sitting there.

I put plenty of customers' money in the register, but I never seemed to have any pay to take home. My salary was always owed for fishing tackle, guns or archery equipment. Try as I would, I was never a super star at baseball or basketball and only fair at tennis. For expenditures on these sports my parents were happy to hand over cash, hoping of course that respectable team sports would encourage me to go to law school and become a pillar of society.

I had to pay for the bullets, plugs and fishing poles, but the gambling, drinking and swearing lessons were free. I excelled in my studies.

Unfortunately, my idea of a career was more like something out of Ernest Hemingway. For this career I needed lots of plugs, fishing poles, and bullets, and to know how to gamble, drink and swear. I had to pay for the bullets, plugs and poles, but the gambling, drinking and swearing lessons were free. I excelled in my studies. At 16 I was an accomplished fisherman and a pretty darn good hunter. And I could consistently bet on the wrong football team and down a gut-wrenching swallow from the fifth of vodka hidden behind the counter, if nobody was watching.

One of the characters who visited Harry's on a regular basis was Jess. He had an old dog that walked with him and a bag over his shoulder like a hiking sack. Jess lived behind Watt Powell Park, Charleston's minor league baseball stadium, in a broken down shack. He made a living cleaning up under the stands. One year Harry had given Jess a flytying kit for Christmas. After that Jess would come in the store with a box of flies, puffing on his pipe and telling how his No. 12 black ant fly had caught 20 nice rainbows up on the Cranberry.

Harry would listen to the story and finally ask Jess if he would like to sell some of those hot little buggers. Then the haggling would start. The most I ever remember Jess getting for them was about 50 cents apiece. Sometimes Harry would give Jess a commission to tie some flies like No. 14 coachmen or black gnats.

I don't think Jess ever fly fished a day in his life, but he tied a good fly and told an even better story. When I was ten he had me convinced he had fished the famed Au Sable River up in New York State. By the time I was 16 I would laugh at his stories. But Harry stopped us from picking on Jess by reminding us that the flies were his tobacco money. He always said that we could go anywhere or be anything, but Jess was just the fly man.

The last time I saw Jess I was home on leave from the Marine Corps. He was old and crippled from too many winters in the damp cold, and his dog had died. As my wife-to-be and I sat and listened to him tell about all the fish he had caught on those flies I remembered his old stories. He said he couldn't tie flies anymore because his hands didn't work so good. We said goodnight and went our way.

That was about 22 years ago. Harry and Jess are both gone, but I still have a dozen No. 12 black ants that just tear up the bream.

Yes, Jess, they do catch fish.

Folk Humor for Fall:

The Hog in the Road & Other Tales From Trout

By Martha J. Asbury

My friend Cecil is a natural born storyteller, with no affected mannerisms — just pure Cecil. He would be Cecil regardless of where he was, even if President Bill Clinton invited him to the White House in Washington.

Cecil Faulkner is a practical man. He keeps abreast of the local and national news, although he says it tears him "all to pieces." I especially like to hear him talk about the local events, some of which go back a ways.

My favorite Cecil story is about the hog in the road. This happened in the late 1930's. Cecil and Brother George had been out hunting all night, like they used to when they were young. George was driving a big old Studebaker with a high road clearance, and Cecil was "setting back sort of relaxing" when he spied a hog in the road.

He glanced at George to see if George was aware of the hog, but George just kept on driving.

Cecil said, "George, there's a hog in the road." George never said nothing, just kept on driving.

"George, there's a hog in the road."

And about that time the Studebaker hit the old hog, "knocked hit down and stunned hit, went plumb astraddle of hit."

George looked at Cecil and said, "Why, Cecil, there was a hog in the road."

Cecil said, "George, if I'd knowed you was a-sleeping, I'd a-drove."

The Faulkners gather for a family reunion at the Greenbrier County homeplace. George stands at left rear, beside (from left to right) Cecil, Glenn, Oswald and Merle. Sisters Nancy and Margaret stand in the middle row, by Mrs Faulkner. Gordon, Clyde and Ted kneel in front.

Then to top it off, the farmer "what owned the hog" came out. George said, "Your hog was in the road."

The farmer says, "Yup. They'll do that sometimes."

These boys and their brothers and sisters were raised in Trout, up in the less inhabited end of Greenbrier County. The Faulkners (George spells it Faulknier, with an "i") were one of the major families in the area, and they still keep up a sizable farm.

Cecil says growing up in Trout left some time for exploring, and he was a pretty good guide for the knobs around Greenbrier County — Cold Knob, Charley's Knob, Job's Knob. One day he took a party of young friends up on Job's Knob to the Old Field Spring. Well, "hit came up a sudden fog," and Cecil reckoned they'd better head back home. They walked a "fur piece" around the mountain and wound up back at that same spring.

Cecil never said nothing about it — just kind of played it cool, didn't want to let on that he was "plumb tore up" to be lost. But someone

noticed, so Cecil said, "Well, fellers, I reckon as long as we're here we might as well get another drink."

And, speaking of drink, one time Brother Ted and two friends of his (a young man and young woman) were walking across the mountaintop to church, when they came across a moonshine still — and no guard around. Those quart jars of moonshine looked pretty tempting to the young men, so they took one and commenced sipping on it as they walked. By the time they got to church, Ted says, "We couldn't a-hit the ground with our hats if we'd a-tried."

Recently Ted ran into that old friend from the moonshine walk, and they got to talking about it. Ted says, "Who was that girl with us?"

The other fellow says, "What girl? I don't remember no girl."

At that time, it was the custom for people to turn their hogs loose in the spring to fatten up in the woods. Frequently a few would escape the fall roundup and revert to the wild.

So I asked Ted, "How come you remember there was a girl when he doesn't?"

"I don't know," says Ted. "I remember he was walking in front, with the girl behind him, and me behind the girl."

"That explains it," I said.

Ted also told me about the time, when he was still quite a little lad, he and his father were out walking in the woods and came upon a bunch of hogs staggering around and acting funny. Some of them were sound asleep and couldn't be awakened.

Ted asked his dad, "What's wrong with the hogs? Are they sick?" His dad replied, "Don't worry about it, Son." Although the family did not run moonshine, apparently the woods were frequented by those who did. The hogs had gotten into some mash, and it took Ted a few more years to realize what was wrong with them.

At that time, it was the custom for people to turn their hogs loose in the spring to fatten up in the woods. After the fall crop of acorns — which really fattened them up — the hogs would be rounded up for slaughter. Frequently a few would escape the roundup and revert to the wild. Hunting parties had to be organized to kill the sometimes dangerous wild hogs. It hasn't been but a decade since the last wild hog was killed by Brother Glenn.

The family of ten boys and two girls had a long walk to and from the one-room school. When the weather permitted they took shortcuts across neighboring fields. Nancy and Margaret, the two sisters, described to me the cooling wonders of a particular spring under a big shady oak that was a godsend to them on their long hot walks home in the early fall school days.

Normally, Margaret was not too fond of springs. Being one of the younger children (and tiny to boot), she tells of being sent to the spring to fetch water. The spring was at the foot of a hill behind the house. Well, she climbed down with her water bucket, filled it, and started back up the hill — and started back up the hill — and started back up the hill. Eventually someone in the family went to check on her and see what was taking so long. They discovered a very agitated Margaret swearing up a storm and struggling to climb back up the hill with a full bucket of water.

One year the one-room school had a pretty young school teacher who decided to put on a musical production. She said, "If you want a passing grade in English, you'd better be in the play." So Brother Ted tried out. He remembers that the teacher tickled a few keys on the piano and nodded at him. He nodded right back.

She said, "Theodore, I wasn't speaking to you. I was introducing you. That's your cue to start singing."

So she tickled a few keys again and nodded at him. This time he started singing. After a few notes, she quit playing and said, "I'll tell you what, Theodore. If you promise not to be in the play I'll give you a passing grade in English."

When those boys were growing up in Trout, some people were kind of clannish. They tell about how when they walked to town and back they were frequently rocked. And no, I don't mean by a rocking chair; some of the neighbors actually threw rocks at them. Ted says it got so bad that one time he went to church with a "hog-leg" gun stuck down his trousers. Said he was not about to get rocked on the way home.

But that night he had no excuse to use the hog-leg. Reckon word got around?

The father in the family liked two things: reading and horses. He got his two main interests pretty close to tangled up the time he traded horses and came home with a horse that had been used for mail delivery. Every time they rode that horse to town, it stopped at every mail box. They'd have to get off and get back on before the horse would go ahead.

I don't know if that was the same horse that stumbled and fell with Ted once, causing him to fly head over heels onto the dirt road. Momentarily knocked out, he opened his eyes to see a neighbor lady standing over him. "Are you hurt?" she asked.

"No," Ted said.

"By God, it ought to have killed you," she retorted and turned and walked back into her house.

You never know how to take a remark like that.

Then one time the boys were "a-painting a neighbor's roof, a big old steep roof." George was up on the roof, with ropes tied around his middle, with Cecil on one side on the ground and Ted on the other side on the ground, each "a-holding a rope." Whenever George signaled them, they raised or lowered him accordingly. Talk about brotherly trust!

Let me throw a little light here on modern-day Trout. Things haven't changed that much. They did close the post office in 1990. It was a big one — at least twice the size of the flag flying by the front door. Actually, it was listed as the second smallest post office in the United

States. If you drove by during work hours you could see that sometimes the post office would be crowded, with as many as two people sitting inside catching up on the local gossip as they checked their mail. Progress hurts — especially when it cuts out your social life.

I remember when Ted first gave me directions to the family farm, he said, "Turn left at the post office." I never saw the post office, only this unpainted building about the size of a three-holer. But there was a flag flying by the door, and I had to turn either left or right, so I turned left.

But, getting on with a modern-day Trout tale, a couple years ago Ted was staying up at the old homeplace, and while hanging laundry on the line — my, how things have changed — he heard some dogs "barking treed." To the experienced hunter, that means that the dogs had been chasing game and now had cornered it or chased it up a tree. So Ted got his pistol and strapped it on and walked over to where the sound was coming from. What he found was that two dogs had chased a bear up a tree.

Ted didn't see any sign of bear hunters, and neither did the dogs. "Them dogs was a-pleading with me to do something," he said. "They ran to the tree and back to me, a-pleading with their eyes. They said, 'We've done our part, man, now you do yours,' and kept a-begging me to help them."

Well, there was nothing Ted could do. No bear gun and no help and, in fact, not even bear season, but the bear didn't know that. He was more scared of Ted than of the dogs, so he "clumb down out of the tree and hit the ground a-running, with the dogs right after him." Ted says, "Them dogs stretched that bear out for a piece before he broke loose and got away."

So you see, life is still exciting up that way.

Cecil's family is a close-knit group, considerate of one another. The farm is mostly a seasonal thing now, but several of them keep second homes there. They get together whenever they can. In 1991, at the family reunion, Merle announced he had to go in for surgery on his sinuses in a few weeks, and he just knew he was going to die. He figured he wouldn't survive the surgery.

Well, Brother Gordon, who had recently had open heart surgery and had made the trip up from Georgia for the reunion said, "Yeah, that trip up here like to have killed me. And the trip back home will probably finish the job.

"So you boys just put my body in the freezer and wait until Merle dies, and then you can have a double funeral and everyone won't have to make two trips back here.

"It'll be a lot easier that way."

EcoTheater

Martha J. Asbury, playwright, director and performer at EcoTheater, makes people her business. For it's the people in her rural Greenbrier County community who act in and provide much of the material for EcoTheater productions. The adjoining article is based on "Tales from Trout," Faulkner family tales which have been performed since 1991.

EcoTheater began in 1971 when founder Maryat Lee brought street theater from the city to the country by moving from New York to a farm in Summers County. Working with teens from the Governor's Summer Youth Program, Lee put together two plays in six weeks that summer, performing on a converted hay wagon.

By 1981, Lee was encouraged to try her theater with an adult company. She enlisted descendants of miners and railroad workers and created four major productions — *John Henry, Ole Miz. Dacey, Four Men and a Monster,* and *The Hinton Play.* EcoTheater's philosophy is that theater is a natural, simple, and universal ability in everyone.

Asbury worked as Maryat Lee's secretary, arriving in 1989 just a few months before Lee died. Asbury began performing and writing in the summer of 1990, and in 1994 she founded her own EcoTheater troupe. EcoTheater now has four troupes in the West Virginia counties of Greenbrier, McDowell, Summers, and Wyoming, with additional performance companies in Kentucky, Illinois, Virginia and Texas.

The emphasis remains the same as in the beginning — writing and performing scenes from individual communities in the oral history tradition.

EcoTheater troupes are available for performances year round. Fees are negotiable depending upon the length of the performance and travel time. On October 1 the Greenbrier troupe will be in White Sulphur Springs to perform *The Last Picture Show in White Sulphur Springs,* based on stories told by local residents. And each summer since the early 1980's EcoTheater has performed every Thursday at Pipestem State Park, rain or shine. For more information contact Martha Asbury at EcoTheater, 343 Church Street, Lewisburg, WV 24901; (304)645-2443.

An EcoTheater performance of the play *John Henry.*

Mountain Music Roundup

By Danny Williams

Mack Samples leads a double life. As president of the State Folk Festival, Samples celebrates the "pure" mountain heritage of our music, unmixed with the more modern sounds. But when Mack picks and sings with brothers **Ted** and **Roger Samples**, any good music will do. "Elk River Landing" is the second recent recording from **The Samples Brothers.**

These men grew up on the Elk River when the old mountain styles flourished alongside country, bluegrass, and rock-and-roll. The Samples boys all played, sang, and danced to whatever music they heard, and didn't worry about where it came from.

This tape reflects the brothers' broad musical background. "Greensleeves" is here, along with some of the oldest dance tunes and mountain ballads. Songs from the Carter Family and Merle Travis represent the bridge between folk and commercial music. Johnny Cash's "I Still Miss Someone," the pop standard "Misty," and the rest of the songs on the recording span a lot of years.

Buddy Griffin, an honorary Samples by now, joins the three brothers on "Elk River Landing." Each of the arrangements features a fine guitar or two, with banjo or fiddles added to suit the tune. Whining fiddles dominate the hoedowns, and lightly twanging guitars carry the more modern material. The only way to pigeonhole this collection is to say that all the songs in it are favorites of the Samples family.

"Elk River Landing" is available from Braxton Records, 621 East Church Avenue, Berryville, AR 72616, for $10 plus $1.50 shipping and handling.

***

Finally, you can buy a **Jenny Allinder** tape. Allinder has for years occupied a place all her own among West Virginia's fiddlers.

MICHAEL KELLER

Fiddler Jenny Allinder.

This first recording shows why.

Allinder pulls her bow smoothly over the strings, producing a warm, breathy tone. She never pokes or jabs at her instrument. Allinder plays with emotion, and she draws emotion from her listener. Allinder's style is distinctive. Listen to this tape, and you would recognize her fiddling anywhere.

When Mack Samples picks and sings with brothers Ted and Roger, any good music will do.

On this recording, Allinder leans toward the Irish side of her repertoire. She's especially fond of the slow, dramatic Irish sound. "Women of Ireland," with **John Blisard** on Irish harp, is itself worth the price of this tape. Blisard also does most of the guitar playing on the recording. Four other musicians add their skills to some of these intricately-done tunes: **Bob Shank** on hammered dulcimer, **Alan Freeman** on mountain dulcimer, **Jack Bowman** on cello, and **Robin Kessinger** on guitar.

Three of the pieces on this tape, including the haunting "Shade" which closes the recording, are Allinder's own compositions.

This tape is a Jim Martin production, and should be available wherever real mountain music is sold. See the ordering information at the end of this article.

***

Marion County hammered dulcimer player **Patty Looman** spent a lot of years making music both with

Russell Fluharty and with Worley Gardner. These two gentlemen, both now dead, were for decades the most active promoters of the hammered dulcimer in West Virginia. Their styles, and Looman's own, live in her new recording, "Nothing Fancy."

The title is a good one. There's nothing in here but good old-time tunes, played on the hammered dulcimer with help from **Betty Mattingly**, **Tom Tressler**, and **Hollis Wilt** on autoharp, guitar, and upright bass. The tunes are varied, but Looman handles them all with a deft, light touch on her instrument and a firm sense of the rhythm.

Fluharty's older style is apparent in "Golden Slippers." There is very little harmony, only a constant drone behind the familiar old melody. Most of the other tunes show the Gardner influence, with some chords and arpeggios added for a fuller, more "modern" sound. "Birdie" is one tune especially associated with Gardner, and Looman's arrangement comes straight from the master.

Looman plays mostly old favorites on this tape, including "West Virginia Waltz," "Chinese Breakdown," "Ragtime Annie," and a Carter Family medley.

Looman's tape may be hard to find in stores. You can order it from Patty Looman, 228 Maple Avenue, Mannington, WV 26582. The price is $10, plus $1.50 for shipping and handling.

***

The cover of "Don't Try This at Home," the new **Robin Kessinger** guitar tape, answers a question which has baffled many a picker. In the photograph, Kessinger has three left arms and what looks to be a three-necked guitar. That's as believable a way as any to explain the sound Kessinger gets out of his instrument.

Kessinger is a former national guitar champion, and this recording contains plenty of tunes in the "flatpicking" contest style. "Bye Bye Blues," "Arkansas Traveler," and "Alabama Jubilee" feature the dazzling, inventive musicianship which wins the prizes. If you buy this record because Kessinger is a national champion of the hot guitar, you won't be disappointed.

But Kessinger also devotes much of this recording to some more melodic, gentle picking, and it turns out he's just as good at that style as he is at the hot stuff. "Shebeg an Shemore" is a hypnotic Irish waltz. "Waynesborough" is one of our finest Appalachian fiddle tunes. On these and other pieces, Kessinger's arrangements show a fine sense of melody.

Whether you're a guitar picker looking for inspiration or a music lover listening for joy, guitar playing doesn't get any better than this.

Kessinger's tape is produced by Jim Martin Productions. See ordering information at the close of this article.

* * *

In addition to his solo work, Robin Kessinger plays guitar with a top-notch trio known as **The Kessingers**. Mandolinist and father **Bob Kessinger** presides over this band, which includes **Robin** on guitar and little brother **Dan** on guitar and fiddle.

On "The Kessingers, Family Tra-

Footmad Fall Festival

Each September the Friends of Old Time Music and Dance (FOOTMAD) celebrate traditional music and dance at Camp Sheppard in Roane County. There's plenty of camping, cabins, and food for those who attend the two days of dancing, jamming, and performances. This year's dates are September 23 and 24, Friday and Saturday.

Contras, New England Squares, and Southern Squares are among the dances to be taught on Friday evening and Saturday. Music will be provided by Curmudgeon from Morgantown, the Hot Point String Band from Athens, Ohio, and FOOTMAD's own Trusty House Band. Workshops are scheduled for Saturday in dance, music and vocals, including instruction in both lap and hammered dulcimers, as well as ballads, gospel music and songwriting.

There's also a children's workshop taught by Linda Zimmer and Friends. The dance callers will be Steve Ballman, Rich Cobos, Donnie Herr and Beth Molaro. Saturday features ongoing performances by many favorite West Virginia musicians including Wilson Douglas, Kate Long, Ron Sowell, Bobby Taylor, Bob and Becky Webb, Colleen Anderson, Melvin Wine, Stewed Mulligan, The Kessinger Family, Elmer Bird, Jim Costa, Gerry Milnes, and Robert Shafer among them.

Admission is $11 for FOOTMAD members for the entire weekend, $15 for nonmembers, with lesser daily fees. For more information contact the Kanawha Valley Friends of Old Time Music and Dance Fall Festival, P.O. Box 1684, Charleston, WV 25326; (304)768-9249.

dition," the family offers up some of the tunes pickers most love to play. "Soldier's Joy" is the best-known Appalachian dance piece. "Beaumont Rag" and "Whistling Rufus" are from the newer minstrel and contest traditions. West Virginia fiddling legend Clark Kessinger, Bob's uncle, composed "Turkey Knob" and "Mexican Waltz."

Robin and Dan occasionally take off on a wild instrumental ride, but the emphasis of this recording is the fine old melodies.

On the liner of this recording, John Hartford writes a sentence or two on the origin or history of each tune. Like most "mountain" musicians, the Kessingers perform material drawn from a wide range of times and traditions. They have thoughtfully provided their listeners with a little information linking the music with the people who invented it.

A Jim Martin production. See ordering information below.

***

Mountain dulcimer virtuoso **Alan Freeman** is known to West Virginia music fans from his prominence in contests and on stage.Freeman is even better known to his fellow pickers as a fearless jamming musician. Armed only with a "quaint" old dulcimer, Freeman can jump into any music session and play along with the best of the guitar, banjo, and fiddle.

On Freeman's new recording, "Bonnie Annie," he invites the guitar, banjo, and fiddle to jump in with him. Fiddler **Dave Bing**, banjo picker **Mark Payne**, and guitarist **Robin Kessinger** are all masters of their instruments, and Freeman showcases their abilities nearly as much as his own. The arrangements are not the familiar soloist-and-accompaniment sound, they are exciting collaborations between instruments.

The ubiquitous Kessinger — he plays on four of the six recordings in this Roundup — performs on most of the tunes, backing the dulcimer, trading licks, or doubling the melody on pieces including "Blackberry Blossom," Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" and a Bob Wills medley. There are more hot picking pieces, the banjo and fiddle join in on some old dance tunes, and Freeman wrote one sweet waltz himself.

"Bonnie Annie" is also from Jim Martin Productions.

***

Recordings like these should be available in your local music shop. If they are not, please let the owner or manager know that you would like to see real West Virginia music in the store.

Jim Martin Productions, producer of four of these tapes, will fill mail orders at P.O. Box 152, St. Albans, WV 25177. The price is $10 each, plus $1.50 shipping, and six percent sales tax for in-state orders. Get on the company mailing list to learn of many more titles.

One year ago we featured Glen Smith's "Four Miles to Cumberland" cassette in "Mountain Music Roundup." Some have reported trouble finding this recording, so we suggest you order it directly from Glen Smith, Box 493, Elizabeth, WV 26143.

Novelist Mack Samples

Remember what it was like to be a West Virginia teenager? Mack Samples does. In his first novel, *Doodle Bug, Doodle Bug, Your House Is on Fire*, Samples writes an honest, perceptive story on one year in the life of young Corley Malone.

Samples and his character have a lot in common. The story of Malone's 18th year takes place in the mid-1950's on a central West Virginia river that sounds a lot like Samples' native Elk River. He writes with an insider's understanding.

Samples tells his story truthfully. Corley and his buddies pull some pranks, have a fight or two, sneak some beers, and occasionally go into Charleston for adventure, but no great events occur to them.

Doodle Bug is much more about the joyous and frightening business of growing up. Corley gets his first car, his first job, and his first few girlfriends, but can't quite leave the boy behind. He takes a girl to the swimming hole, then ignores her while he roughhouses with the boys. After a girl tells him she is seeing someone else, he goes out shooting road signs. Corley has no idea how an adult is supposed to feel or act, and he is disappointed to learn that the answers are not going to come automatically as he gets older.

Samples is a musician, and it's no surprise *Doodle Bug* is full of music. The year 1955 was an exciting time of musical transition in rural America. Young Corley Malone, a pretty good picker and singer, is equally at home picking guitar with elderly square-dance musicians, singing Hank Williams numbers at the local tavern, marching with the high school band, or playing in Charleston with the "River City Rockers." These are some of the most vivid scenes in the novel, and they are important material for Samples as he builds the very believable world of Corley Malone.

—Danny Willimas

Doodle Bug, Doodle Bug, Your House Is on Fire *is distributed by Trans Allegheny Books. Ask your local bookseller to get it for you, or order directly by sending $10, plus $3.50 postage and handling to Trans Allegheny Books, 118 Capitol Street, Charleston, WV 25301. West Virginia residents add six percent sales tax.*

Where Oil and Gas History Began

West Virginia oil and gas has always been overshadowed by coal in the colorful story of our state's energy resources, and had to play second fiddle to Pennsylvania in the history of its own industry. Influential Parkersburgers are now working to change that. The Oil and Gas Museum was established there a few years ago, dedicated to a rediscovery of the industry's heritage. Now the museum has cooperated with local authors David McKain and Bernard Allen to publish a new history of Ohio Valley oil and gas.

The book is called *Where It All Began: The Story of the People and Places Where the Oil & Gas Industry Began — West Virginia and Southeastern Ohio*. It's a big title for a big book, more than 200 pages of text, followed by a full index, bibliography, and more than a dozen extensive appendices, the latter including huge amounts of original historical material. Put all this together between oversized hardbound covers and it makes for a very hefty volume.

The lengthy subtitle underlines a major goal of the authors — to unseat Pennsylvania as the recognized birthplace of the industry. "Pennsylvanians wrote the early oil and gas history, albeit inaccurately, and it has stuck," the new book asserts. McKain and Allen note that oil from Western Virginia drilled wells was being sold as both a light source and lubricant as early as the 1820's. Edwin L. Drake's famous well in Titusville, Pennsylvania, began production in 1859.

The book goes on to point out that the drilling technology underlying the new industry originated with Kanawha Valley salt-well drillers, probably of more ultimate importance than the question of where the first well was sunk. The authors then proceed to give a blow-by-blow history of the local industry, from early times until the recent past.

Wig Bickel drilling rig, from the cover of *Where It All Began*.

Those seeking a working knowledge of the oil and gas story will find the book's text most useful, while historical specialists will be more interested in the documentary material which follows the text. *Where It All Began* may be purchased for $30 from Trans Allegheny Books in Parkersburg and other regional bookstores, or ordered from the Oil and Gas Museum at Box 1685, Parkersburg, WV 26101. Mail orders should include $3 shipping and handling, plus six percent sales tax from West Virginia residents.

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, plus $1 for postage and handling for each order. 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, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

_____Fall 1980/Recalling Mother Jones
_____Fall 1981/Myrtle Auvil of Grafton
_____Winter 1984/Mollohan Mill
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_____Winter 1985/Huntington 1913
_____Spring 1986/Blacksmith Jeff Fetty
_____Summer 1986/Draft Horse Revival
_____Fall 1986/West Virginia Chairmaking
_____Summer 1988/Hugh McPherson
_____Fall 1988/Craftsman Wilbur Veith
_____Spring 1989/Printer Allen Byrne
_____Winter 1989/Smoot Reunion
_____Summer 1990/Cal Price and *The Pocahontas Times*
_____Winter 1990/Sisters of DeSales Heights
_____Summer 1991/Fiddler Melvin Wine
_____Winter 1991/Meadow River Lumber Company
_____Summer 1992/Dance, West Virginia
_____Fall 1992/Bell Bottoms at Bethany
_____Summer 1993/Fairmont Romance
_____Fall 1993/Twin Falls State Park
_____Winter 1993/Monongah Mine Disaster
_____Spring 1994/Sculptor Connard Wolfe
_____Summer1994/Mortgage Lifter Tomatoes

You may also order bulk copies of current or past issues of GOLDENSEAL, as quantities permit. The price is $2.50 per copy on orders of ten or more copies of the same issue (plus $3 for postage and handling for each order).

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Bill Lowther Dies

William H. Lowther died in July at the Veterans Hospital in Clarksburg, at age 105. "Uncle Bill" Lowther was featured in the Summer 1993 GOLDENSEAL.

Mr. Lowther, born in 1888 in rural Lewis County, was a World War I combat veteran. Married for the first time at age 67, he was a widower in his later years. He lived independently until late 1992, when a fall sent him into a Buckhannon nursing home.

He was known for his keen sense of humor, exemplified by the following anecdote from his 1993 interview with writer Joy Gilchrist. The tale is about a young man who wanted to go into preaching, and it seemed just right coming from the oldest man we knew.

"He got himself in a circuit and got him a church," Uncle Bill said of the young preacher. "He decided to have a protracted meeting for two weeks. By the end of the meeting, he had lots of converts.

"Several people rose to praise the preacher for the job he had done, and to offer their thanks to the Lord for what He had done for them. An old man who attended every meeting stood up and said he was thankful that he didn't have an enemy in the world.

Uncle Bill Lowther gets a little help with his headgear last year at age 104. Photo by Michael Keller.

"The preacher asked him how that happened to be.

"I outlived them all."

We're confident that Bill Lowther died with no enemies, and we don't know that he ever had any. We'll miss him.

Correction: Bayard Young of Glenville contacted GOLDENSEAL shortly after the summer issue was published to offer the following corrections to Joy Gilchrist's sidebar,"*Riders Remember*: Taking the Boat," in the Little Kanawha feature. Mr. Young says the passage quoting him in the third column of page 24 should read as follows:

"It was 1915 and I was seven. My grandfather, Aaron Bell Young, had died in Palestine, West Virginia. We were going to his funeral.

"We got up before daylight and walked over the hill at Northview above Glenville. We flagged the boat down with a lantern. We rode to Gilmer Station where we caught a train for Orlando and rode to Clarksburg. There we boarded another train for Parkersburg.

"We spent the night in a hotel in a little town above Parkersburg. The next morning the hotel people ferried us across the Little Kanawha. We went to the funeral and then went through the whole process again, in reverse.

"Today we would make the trip by car in three or four hours," emphasizes Bayard. "Then it took two whole days."

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Thanks—and welcome to the GOLDENSEAL family!

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Our Writers and Photographers

MARTHA J. ASBURY administers EcoTheater in Lewisburg and is a playwright, director and performer with the theater company. A native of Berwind in McDowell County, she was the only girl of eight children. She also writes poetry, reflective stories and oral histories. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

RICHARD BRAMMER, a native of St. Marys, is a graduate of Marshall University. He now lives in upstate New York where he is a vocational counselor for adults with mental disabilities. Brammer says his poor farm story shows that "people did the best they could, and they deserve a lot of credit." This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GREG CLARK is photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History.

G. CURTIS DUFFIELD now lives in Florida, but says he gets much satisfaction in writing about his youth in West Virginia. He remembers with special fondness the Charleston sporting goods store he writes of in this issue, a "regular gathering place" for sportsmen and politicians. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

FERRELL FRIEND, known widely for his news photography, is a retired photographer for the *Charleston Gazette*. He lives at Ivydale, Clay County. His photos appear frequently in the *Clay Free Press*. He is the subject of the book, *The Quicker, The Sooner: The Story of Photographer Ferrell Friend* by Skip Johnson. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1992.

JOY GREGOIRE GILCHRIST of Lewis County is a founder of the Hacker's Creek Pioneer Descendants and a member of the state Archives and History Commission. The author of six books, most recently *A Pictorial History of Old Lewis County*, she has published articles in many state newspapers. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1994.

SKIP JOHNSON is the retired outdoor columnist for the *Charleston Gazette* and *Sunday Gazette-Mail*. He lives at Herold, Braxton County. He has written three books — *The Braxton Connection, The Quicker, The Sooner*, and most recently *Woods and Waters*, a collection of his columns for the *Gazette*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1991.

LOUIS E. KEEFER was born and raised in Wheeling and educated at Morris Harvey College, WVU and Yale. He has written for magazines and professional journals and published two books as well. "Jerry" Keefer was a 1942 second team all-stater who played right tackle for the Warwood High School team that compiled a 26-1-1 record over three years. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

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

ANGELA KRAUS was born in Lewis County and graduated from St. Patrick's High School. She studied history at Glenville State College with Professor John Hymes, who she says "taught me to be proud of my hillbilly heritage." She now teaches at Romney Elementary in Hampshire County. Her mother **MARJORIE KRAUS** came to Lewis County in 1941 from Harrison County following her marriage. She is well known for her oil paintings and flower arrangements. This is their first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

JIM MCGEE is a Presbyterian minister now continuing his education in the graduate program at the University of North Carolina. He is a former pastor of two Fayette County churches, not to mention a past winner of the West Virginia State Liars' Contest. An excellent traditional musician, McGee is a familiar figure at West Virginia fairs and festivals. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL MEADOR was born in Hinton and grew up in Princeton. He attended Concord College and Marshall University. A graduate of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Meador now practices in Southwest Virginia. He is the author of *A Walking Tour of Historic Jackson's Mill*, and an occasional contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

DANNY WILLIAMS is a native of Wayne County and the former folk arts specialist for the Division of Culture and History. He has worked as an English professor, music teacher, and an archivist at WVU's West Virginia and Regional History Collection. He holds an M.A. in English Literature and Language. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

SYLVIA KELEMEN YOST, who now lives in North Carolina, has always wanted to write a story about the Boone County coal town where she was raised. She says she never got around to it until her late father's illness prompted her to take a trip back home with him. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GOLDENSEAL Photos to Travel

"GATHERED FROM GOLDENSEAL: Recent Images from West Virginia's Traditional Life Magazine" is going on the road to the Eastern Panhandle this fall. The Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library will host the photo exhibit from September 1 through October 31. GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan, who knows the stories behind the photographs, will speak at the library on Sunday, October 9, at 2:00 p.m.

Twenty large format black and white photographs, both old and new, will be on display with accompanying text from past issues of the magazine. For more information contact Diana Abshire, Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library, 101 West King Street, Martinsburg, WV 25401; (304)267-8933.

MICHAEL KELLER

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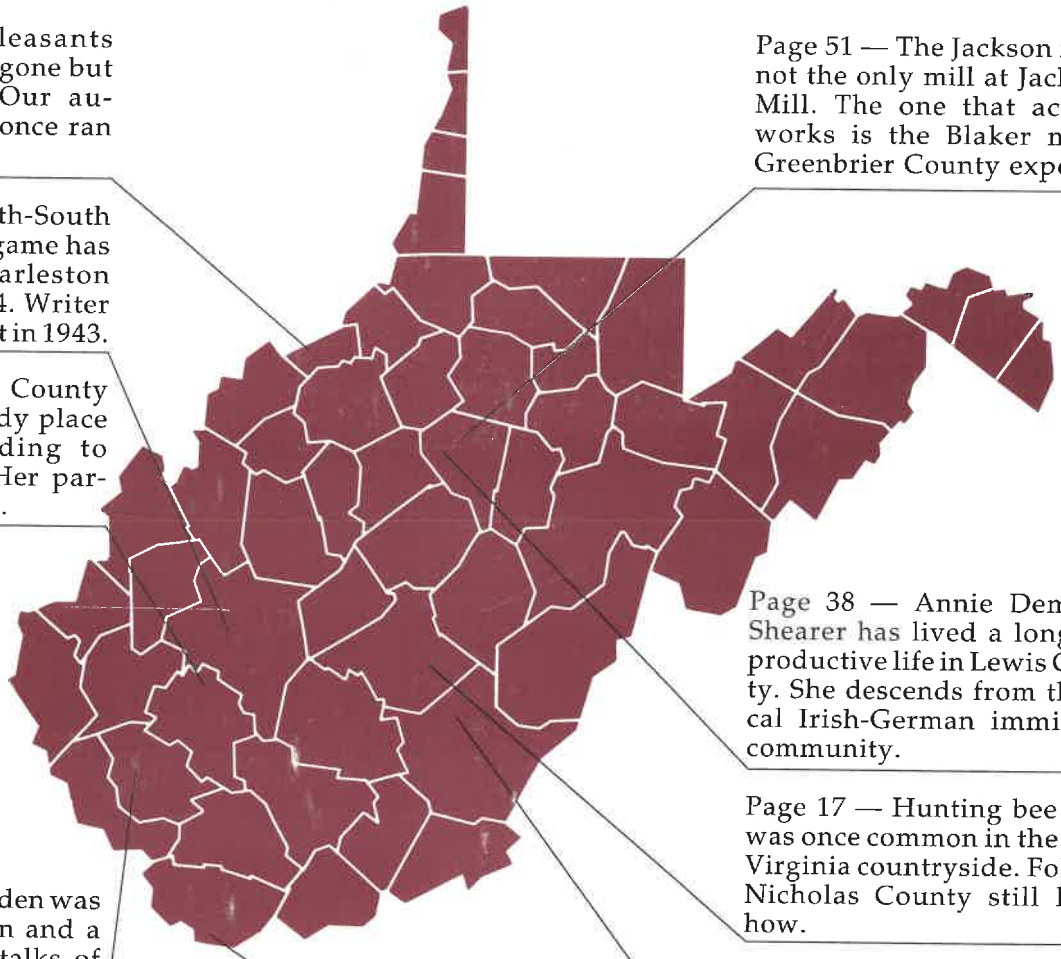
Inside Goldenseal

Page 45 — The Pleasants County poor farm is gone but memories remain. Our author's grandparents once ran the place.

Page 58 — The North-South high school football game has been played in Charleston most years since 1934. Writer Louis Keefer took part in 1943.

Page 9 — A Boone County coal town was a dandy place to grow up, according to writer Sylvia Yost. Her parents are on our cover.

Page 24 — Frank Rushden was born a West Virginian and a Moslem in 1909. He talks of holding to his religious heritage among people of differing faiths.



Page 51 — The Jackson mill is not the only mill at Jackson's Mill. The one that actually works is the Blaker mill, a Greenbrier County export.

Page 38 — Annie Dempsey Shearer has lived a long and productive life in Lewis County. She descends from the local Irish-German immigrant community.

Page 17 — Hunting bee trees was once common in the West Virginia countryside. Folks in Nicholas County still know how.

Page 65 — The post office is gone, but Trout, West Virginia, still remains at least a state of mind. Nobody knows that better than the Faulkners.

Page 30 — Carl Rutherford is a hot picker with deep roots in McDowell County. He came home to stay nearly 20 years ago.

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