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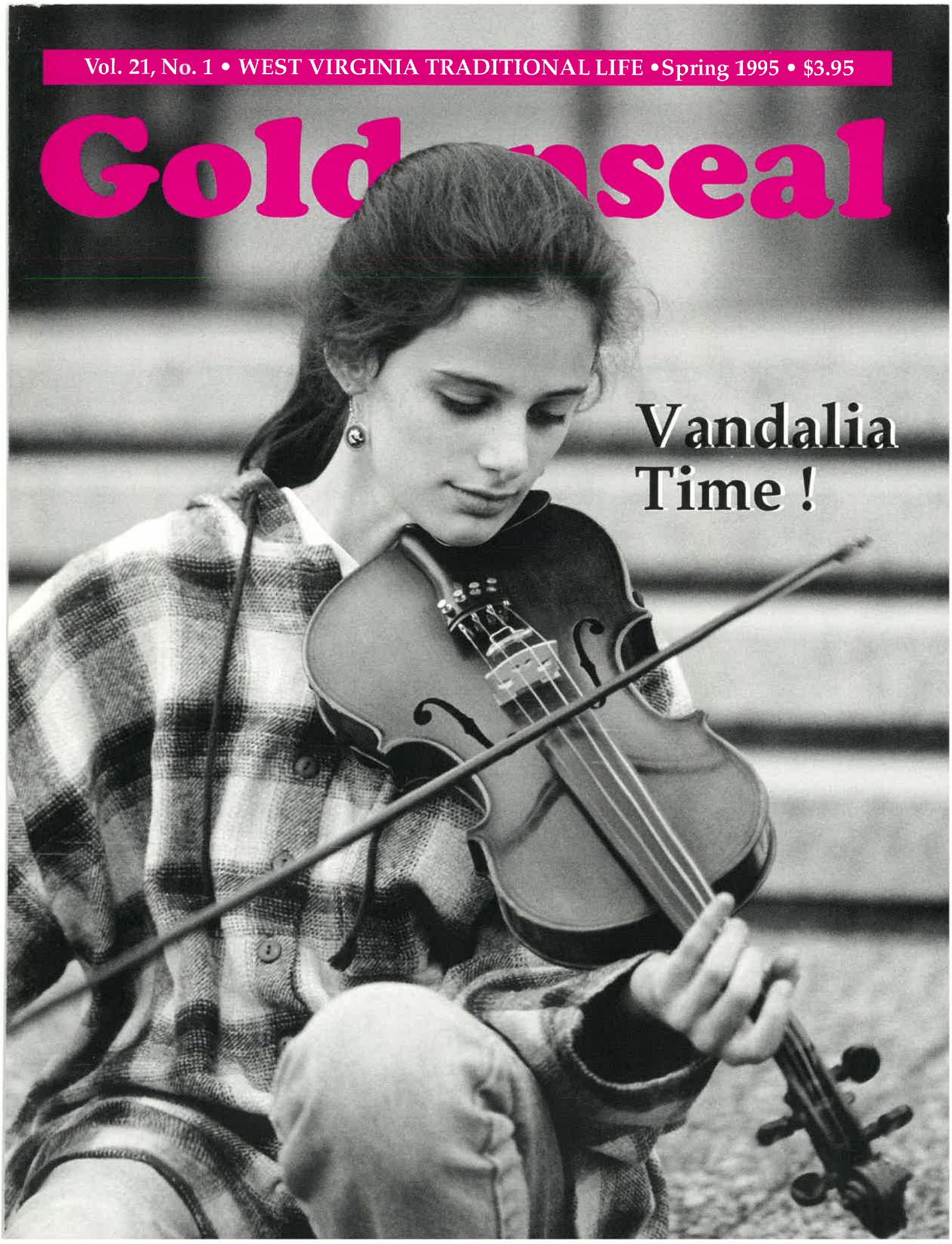
Goldenseal



Vandalia Time !

Folklife * Fairs * Festivals

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

April 15 Sutton (636-1903)
Melvin Wine Birthday Concert (Landmark Studio)
April 22 Richwood (846-6790)
Feast of the Ramson
April 22-23 Gassaway (364-2340)
Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show
April 23-28 Elkins (636-1903)
Augusta Spring Dulcimer Week
April 28-29 Petersburg (257-2722)
Spring Mountain Festival
April 28-29 Cottageville (927-1326)
2nd Sheep & Wool Festival
April 28-30 Huntington (696-5990)
Dogwood Festival
April 29 Salem (782-5245)
Spring Celebration (Fort New Salem)
April 30 Clay (587-4274)
23rd Clay County Ramp Dinner
May 3-7 Mullens (732-8000)
Dogwood Festival
May 3-7 Parkersburg (428-3000)
Rendezvous on the River (Blennerhassett)
May 14 Grafton (265-1589)
Mother's Day Celebration
May 11-14 Davis (558-3370)
34th Wildflower Pilgrimage (Blackwater Falls)
May 19 Matewan (426-4239)
Battle of Matewan 75th Anniversary
May 20 Mingo (338-2996)
Allegheny Mountain Wool Fair
May 20-28 Webster Springs (847-7666)
Webster County Woodchopping Festival
May 24-28 Buckhannon (472-9036)
West Virginia Strawberry Festival
May 26-28 Charleston (558-0220)
19th Vandalia Gathering
May 26-28 White Sulphur Springs (1-800-284-9440)
Dandelion Festival
May 26-29 Bluefield (327-7184)
Mountain Festival
May 26-29 Wheeling (242-7700)
Spring Folk Dance Camp (Oglebay Park)
May 26-29 Fairmont (366-3819)
Head-of-the-Mon Horseshoe Tournament
June 1-4 Philippi (457-3700)
Blue & Gray Reunion
June 2-3 Crum (393-4187)
Bobby's Riverbend Bluegrass Festival
June 3 Martinsburg (267-4434)
9th General Adam Stephen Day
June 3-4 Capon Bridge (822-4326)
Confederate Memorial Ceremony (Capon Chapel)
June 4 South Charleston (744-4323)
Rhododendron State Outdoor Art & Craft Festival
June 5-11 Camden-on-Gauley (226-5026)
Lane's Bottom Days
June 8-11 St. Marys (684-2848)
West Virginia Bass Festival
June 9-11 Ronceverte (645-7911)
Ronceverte River Festival
June 9-11 Morgantown (599-3550)
Mountaineer Country Glass Festival
June 9-11 Charles Town (725-2055)
Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
June 10-11 Salem (782-5245)
Hammer-In Weekend (Fort New Salem)
June 15-17 Glenville (462-7361)
West Virginia State Folk Festival
June 17 Terra Alta (789-2411)
West Virginia Day
June 20 Wheeling (238-1300)
West Virginia Day (Independence Hall)
June 22-25 Summersville (872-3145)
Bluegrass-Country Music Festival
June 23-24 New Cumberland (564-5385)
Hancock County Quilt Show
June 23-25 Wheeling (232-5087)
4th Wheeling African-American Jubilee
June 24 Hillsboro (799-4048)
Pearl S. Buck Birthday Celebration
June 26-August 13 Salem (782-5245)
Fort New Salem Heritage Workshops
June 30-July 2 Weirton (748-7212)
International Food & Arts Festival
July 1 Davis (866-4710)
Celebration of the Arts (Canaan Valley)
July 1-2 New Manchester (564-3651)
Mid-Summer Music Festival (Tomlinson Run)
July 4-8 Ripley (372-7860)
Mountain State Art & Craft Fair (Cedar Lakes)
July 6-9 Marlinton (799-4315)
Pioneer Days in Pocahontas County
July 8-9 Caretta (875-3418)
Mountain Music Festival
July 15-16 Point Pleasant (675-5737)
Pioneer Days & Wheat Harvest (Farm Museum)
July 16-22 Mineral Wells (489-1301)
West Virginia Interstate Fair
July 21-23 Wheeling (233-1090)
Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival
July 22-30 Cowen (226-3939)
Cowen Historical Railroad Festival
July 23-29 Moundsville (845-3980)
Marshall County Fair
July 24-29 Moorefield (538-2725)
West Virginia Poultry Convention
July 28-30 Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
45th State Gospel Sing
July 30-August 6 Hinton (466-5400)
State Water Festival
August 1-5 Petersburg (538-2278)
Tri-County Cooperative Fair
August 2-6 Wayne (272-6839)
Wayne County Fair (Police Farm)
August 3-6 Clifftop (438-3005)
Appalachian String Band Festival (Camp Washington-Carver)
August 3-6 Spanishburg (425-1429)
Bluestone Valley Fair
August 3-6 Danville (369-3925)
Boone County Fair
August 4-6 Wheeling (1-800-624-6988)
West Virginia Glass Festival (Oglebay Park)
August 6-13 Richwood (846-6790)
Cherry River Festival
August 7-12 Bramwell (248-8343)
Bramwell Street Fair
August 7-13 Middlebourne (758-2511)
Tyler County Fair
August 9-12 Elizabeth (275-3101)
Wirt County Fair
August 11-13 Logan (752-1324)
Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair
August 11-13 Elkins (636-1903)
Augusta Festival

(continued on inside back cover)

Published for the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Gaston Caperton
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Goldenseal

Volume 21, Number 1 Spring 1995

COVER: Fiddler Hannah Ross of Harrison County at last year's Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. You will find more Vandalia coverage beginning on page 69. Photo by Michael Keller.

PHOTOS: Bishoff's Studio, Greg Clark, Dan Deibler, Carl E. Feather, Carl Fleischhauer, D. T. Frantz, Michael Keller, R. R. Keller, Ron Rittenhouse, Patricia Sands, Jeff Seager

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.

Mail Pouch Memories

January 1, 1995
Kansas City, Kansas
Editor:
In the Winter '94 issue of GOLDENSEAL I read with interest Tom Screven's story on Harley Warrick the Mail Pouch man. I remember

well the many Mail Pouch barns in Preston County. I return to Preston County every August as I have for near 50 years. Sadly, there are fewer of the old barns than there were in the earlier times.

About 20 years ago I found among my grandfather's papers an old Mail Pouch pouch. I wonder if there are any readers living who remember that originally it was called "West Virginia Mail Pouch." I have no idea when the West Virginia was dropped, it would be interesting to know!

There are three things in the world that I love, Mail Pouch barns, GOLDENSEAL, and West Virginia. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Don Farley

January 18, 1995
Wheeling, West Virginia
Editor:
The Winter 1994 edition brought back a lot of memories — Harley Warrick worked for me for many years and Tom Screven did such a nice job that I read the whole thing over again.
Sincerely,
Stuart F. Bloch

We appreciate hearing from Mr. Bloch of the old Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company family. Mail Pouch, now manufactured by Helme Tobacco Company, was originally made by Bloch Brothers.—ed.

Mountain Swiss Cheese

November 14, 1994
233 Wells Drive SE
Stuart, Florida 34996
Editor:
The story "Bärg Käss" in your Spring 1994 issue has brought back some very fond memories of a time when I was a student at Webster Springs High School in 1941.

Twelve members of the Webster Springs High School Band had formed a dance band called "Walter Cool and the Oaklanders." In-


MICHAEL KELLER

cluded with me as members were my twin brother, Jim, as well as Walter and Henry Cool, Jr., sons of H. M. Cool, who was a sawmill owner in the Pickens-Helvetia area.

We traveled over unpaved roads to play for the Pickens High School Junior-Senior banquet and dance for their Class of 1941. At that time I had my first taste of Mountain Swiss cheese. I have been a lover of quality cheese ever since.

If there are any members of the Pickens High School class of '41 still in the area, it would be interesting to hear from them.
Sincerely,
Robert L. Nichols

Cinder Bottom

January 3, 1995
Chico, California
Editor:
Your recent articles about the Cinder Bottom red-light district called up a joke that was told in McDowell County back in the 1940's and '50's:

Two naive young coal miners heard that for money some unspecified good time was to be had in the Bottom. So they chose one inopportune Saturday morning to knock on the door of one of the houses. It was answered by a huge, grim woman dressed in a bathrobe. "What do you want?" she demanded.

"We're here for some fun," one of the miners said.

"How much money you got?" she asked.

They pooled their ready cash and came up with 17 cents.

The woman took the coins. She shepherded them down a long hallway, at the end of which she banged their heads together and threw them out the back door, locking it behind them.

"What in the world happened?" one of the miners asked.

"I'm not quite sure," said his dazed friend, "but I'm real glad we didn't buy $5 worth!"
Kind regards,
Richard Ramella

December 30, 1994
Huntington, West Virginia
Editor:
I cried and then I was mad [when I

read] "The Bishop of Cinder Bottom."

I was raised in Keystone. I married and raised two girls in Keystone. [Writer] Edward Thomas lived in our town a very short time. He was pastor of the Methodist Church. The Keystone he wrote about was not the Keystone we lived in and loved.

The powdery coal dust — the houses cold and drafty — he may have found conditions as he described in Cinder Bottom, but that is the only place. Our town was beautiful homes, well-kept lawns. We had a youth director. We had a summer camp for our children equal to any of the expensive camps of today. We had scouts, a craft shop, a youth hall for parties and dances. We had a playground that was supervised. Cinder Bottom [itself] was an *ugly sore.*

Someone should write about the beauty of our town. Know that "coal people" are the best people in the world.

Billie Lowman Simmons

Our thanks to both writers. Taken together the two letters illustrate the tricky problem we sometimes face in trying to treat the more colorful aspects of our West Virginia heritage. We don't want to write subjects off as untouchable, so we will continue to grope along on a case-by-case basis and count on our readers to keep us on track. We certainly don't mean to offend, and apologize to Billie Simmons and anyone else whose feelings may have been hurt by our portrayal of Keystone and Cinder Bottom.—ed.

Cash's Hill Lore

December 9, 1994
Hinton, West Virginia
Editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed your article "Out in the Weeds and Briers," in the Winter 1994 issue.

It brought back memories of a trial held in Judge Mark L. Jarrett's court in Hinton during May 1944 against Joe Gore, alias Tom Mann, for first-degree murder committed Christmas Eve, 1912.

A community supper was being held at the Gore home on "Cashier's Hill" (as it was called then), when some trouble erupted and Joe shot and killed one Thomas Agee, Jr., a

Our 20th Anniversary

January 16, 1995
Port Republic, Maryland
Editor:

Thanks for GOLDENSEAL any time — but a special thanks for the 20th Anniversary issue. I remember when Tom Screven "evolved" the Art & Craft Fair periodical *Hearth and Fair* into GOLDENSEAL and it is a great pleasure to take a look back. Tom's launch was terrific and your multiple transformations have carried GOLDENSEAL to greater breadth and depth. Congratulations!

I thought you might like to have a souvenir photograph from a 1975 article Tom and I worked on. We went to Clear Creek to visit bluegrass musician Everett Lilly for an interview that appeared in GOLDENSEAL number 2. The photograph shows Tom and Everett walking the rails (with me just ahead, snapping pictures) as we climbed to a hilltop cemetery where Everett's son Jiles is buried.

CARL FLEISCHHAUER

Have *any* other state governments had the wisdom to bring forth a grass-roots cultural journal? The typical impulse is for a tourism department to produce a slick, color magazine full of pretty but empty pictures. West Virginia has shown genuine leadership by highlighting its greatest resource and attraction: its citizens and the role they play in the ebb and flow of local culture and history. Your writers treat their subjects with appropriate respect and professionalism but never burden the reader with the obscure language of a scholarly journal. And the skillful use of photography makes the overall presentation very accessible. GOLDENSEAL builds a sense of pride among the citizenry, lures the departed back for homecomings, and gives out-of-state "foreigners" the best kinds of reasons to tour the Mountain State.

Best wishes and much good luck for the next 20!

Yours truly,
Carl Fleischhauer

We also received anniversary congratulations from Blue Ridge Country *and* Timeline *magazines, as well as many readers and others, but we thought GOLDENSEAL's old friend Carl Fleischhauer said it best. His hilltop cemetery photograph from Volume 1, Number 2 is an all-time favorite of ours. We appreciate the good wishes of everyone who contacted us.—ed.*

16-year-old youth.

Joe Gore immediately disappeared and after traveling through several states settled down in Lima, Ohio, under the name Tom Mann.

The charge against Joe Gore which was sought shortly after the murder had been dropped from the docket after about ten years and he probably would never have been arrested except for his own undoing. After 32 years he boasted to a friend he was wanted in West Virginia for killing a man. He was arrested and brought to Summers County where a jury of 12 found him guilty of second-degree murder. Judge Jarrett sentenced him to serve five to 18 years in the State Penitentiary, recommending the minimum be served.

Williams Sanders refers to the Gores of Cash's Hill extensively in his excellent book, *A New River Heritage, Volume I.*

Yours truly,
Roy C. Long

Thanks for writing. We have also recently heard that two residents of Cash's Hill perished on the Titanic *and would appreciate hearing from anyone who may be able to confirm that.—ed.*

Roadside Troopers

December 10, 1994
Clarksburg, West Virginia
Editor:

I read with great interest the story pertaining to the school crossing state policeman.

I, as a school safety patrolman in 1939-40, was selected to put out and retrieve a trooper mannequin each school day. They were distributed by the State Road Commission, mostly to the rural schools. Each school received two troopers. As far as I can remember, they were introduced in September, 1939. They were starting to disappear from the highways in early 1950 due to the increase of traffic. After World War II larger trucks, including tractor trailers, began sideswiping them.

There are at least two of these "retired troopers" still in Harrison County. Retired State Police Captain L. J. Trupo, now a U.S. Marshal, has one, and I still have the other one.

Mine has scars in his groin area showing that he was a "hit and run" victim a few times. He also has some

JEFF SEAGER

screws in one of his legs because of a fractured ankle.

Sincerely,
Fred G. Layman

Spelling Dilemmas

December 15, 1994
Scott Depot, West Virginia
Editor:

The Truebada-Trubada discussion goes to the question of editorial policy and philosophy. An editor can omit as he/she pleases and use [sic], quotation marks, brackets, parentheses, ellipsis and editor's notes for the sake of brevity and clarity. However, for a "folk publication" like GOLDENSEAL it would seem that the grammar and spelling are part of the story you are trying to tell.

In the letters column, I would respectfully suggest that you let people say what they want to say the way they say it, not how you think they should say (and spell) it. If we do not say it and spell it like they do in "New York City" that is their problem.

Cordially,
Dwight L. Musser

P.S. By correcting my spelling of Trubada, you embarrassed me in front of my friends who now think I am some kind of weirdo and not a loyal son of Gilmer County.

P.P.S. We don't need no burcrats from Charleston who have never been to Gilmer County telling us how to spel our place names.

Ok, ok — you've made your point. Hereafter, we will treat letters with the lightest touch possible. Burcrats, indeed!—ed.

Film History Premieres

The long awaited film history of West Virginia was completed last winter and premiered in a special statewide television broadcast in early February.

West Virginia: A Film History is the culmination of a $1.6 million project which began in the early 1990's, with support from the State Legislature, the Division of Culture and History, the West Virginia Humanities Council, many corporations and others. The six-hour documentary tells the story of West Virginia from early times to the recent past, using still images, motion picture footage, interviews with historians, and other materials.

The film history was previewed to a live audience in January, then shown in a three-part series on West Virginia public television. The documentary is expected to be used widely in the public school system beginning in the fall of 1995.

West Virginia: A Film History was produced by WNPB-TV, Morgantown, in cooperation with the West Virginia Educational Broadcasting Authority and under the direction of filmmaker Mark Samels. For more information call (304)293-6511.

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.

Still Tooling Around

In 1991 GOLDENSEAL announced a new column, "Tools of the Trade." The idea was to focus on a particular hand tool — mowing scythe, breast auger, whatever — and find a West Virginian who was intimately acquainted with it.

The column, which eventually evolved into "Tools of Mountain Living," has featured the crosscut saw, froe, broadax, grain cradle, shaving horse, and most recently the knot maul in the Spring 1994 GOLDENSEAL. And we've found the tools and photographed them for our readers.

We are still looking, for more about tools and the recollections of people who've used them. Each 1,200-word essay should explain the use of the tool and be set in a West Virginia context. Writers are invited to send their submissions to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

McClain Printing

McClain Printing of Parsons publishes many books about West Virginia, primarily histories and works of fiction. The Tucker County business lists its current titles in the "1994-1995 Appalachian Review," a catalog with more than 100 listings.

Among McClain's books are county histories for Tucker, Randolph, Preston, Ritchie, and Monongalia. Works by West Virginians, many who have appeared in the pages of GOLDENSEAL, include Arthur Prichard's *An Appalachian Legacy: Mannington Life and Spirit; Chronicles of Core* and *The Monongalia Story* by Earl Core; a reprint of *Gauley Mountain* by Louise McNeill; *The Last Forest* and *Tales of Pocahontas* by G. D. McNeill; and *Green Hills of Magic* by Ruth Ann Musick.

Classics such as Otis K. Rice's *West Virginia: The State and Its People, Bloodletting in Appalachia* by Howard B. Lee, and Roy B. Clarkson's *Tumult on the Mountains — Lumbering in West Virginia* are listed. Clarkson's later Cass history, *On Beyond Leatherbark*, is also included in the McClain catalog.

The Tucker County printing company is in the business of producing popular books for the public. Individual copies and matched collections are both available. For a copy of the "1994-1995 Appalachian Review" catalog contact McClain Printing Company, P.O. Box 403, Parsons, WV 26287; (304)478-2881.

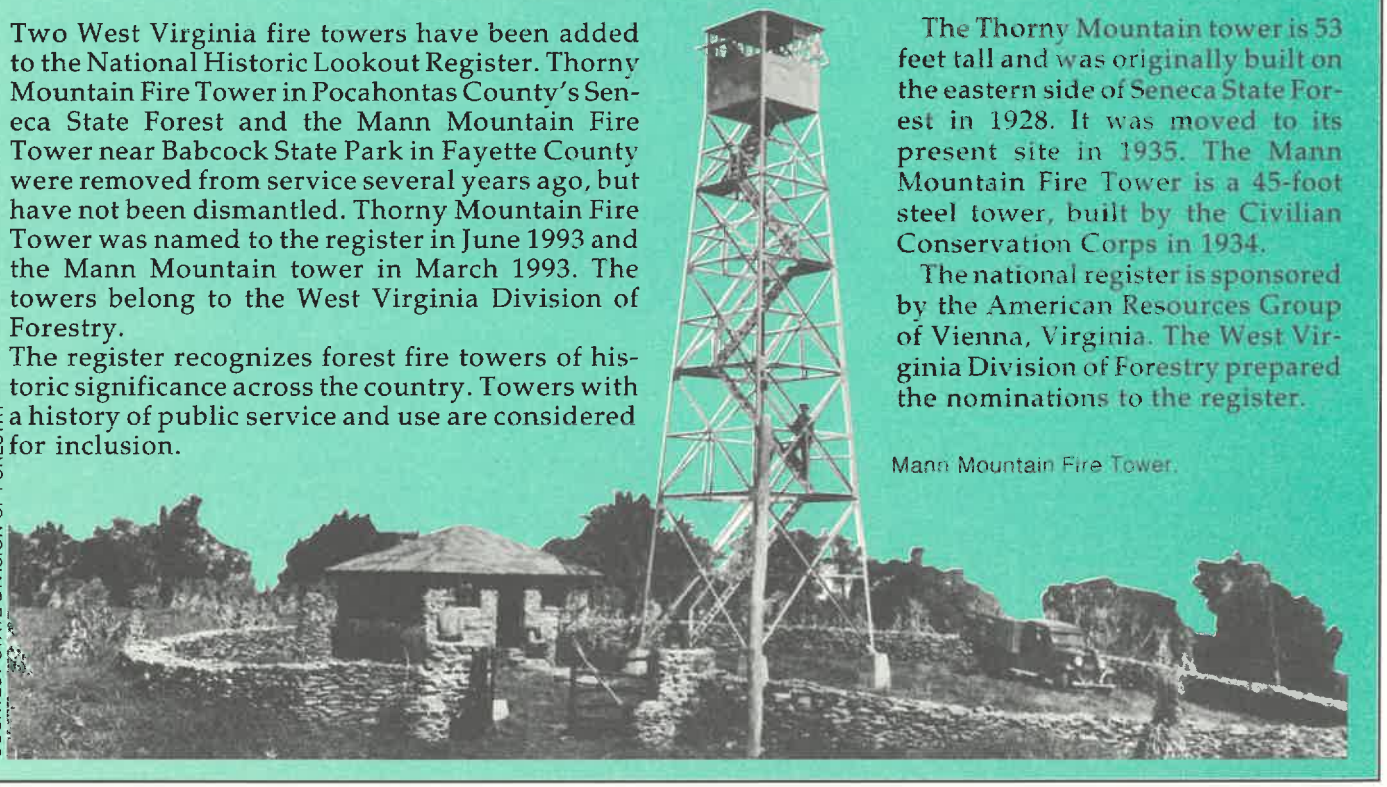
Historic Fire Towers

Two West Virginia fire towers have been added to the National Historic Lookout Register. Thorny Mountain Fire Tower in Pocahontas County's Seneca State Forest and the Mann Mountain Fire Tower near Babcock State Park in Fayette County were removed from service several years ago, but have not been dismantled. Thorny Mountain Fire Tower was named to the register in June 1993 and the Mann Mountain tower in March 1993. The towers belong to the West Virginia Division of Forestry.

The register recognizes forest fire towers of historic significance across the country. Towers with a history of public service and use are considered for inclusion.

The Thorny Mountain tower is 53 feet tall and was originally built on the eastern side of Seneca State Forest in 1928. It was moved to its present site in 1935. The Mann Mountain Fire Tower is a 45-foot steel tower, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934.

The national register is sponsored by the American Resources Group of Vienna, Virginia. The West Virginia Division of Forestry prepared the nominations to the register.



Mann Mountain Fire Tower.

COURTESY STATE DIVISION OF FORESTRY

New River Symposium

The 12th New River Symposium will be held near Beckley on April 7 and 8. The New River Gorge National River, a unit of the National Park Service, and the West Virginia Division of Culture and History will co-sponsor the popular symposium.

The two-day event is open to anyone with a professional or general interest in the New River. The symposium was established to preserve the waterway's natural and cultural heritage. The New River is nearly 250 miles long, from its headwaters in North Carolina through Virginia and into West Virginia, where it joins the Gauley River in Fayette County to form the Great Kanawha.

The program includes a field trip and formal presentations in such diverse subjects as archaeology, botany, folklore, history, geography, and geology. Organizers stress that all presentations are geared toward the general public, rather than specialists. The Friday evening banquet features storyteller and performing artist Karen Vuranch.

The $40 registration fee includes the banquet, refreshments, and all activities, but not lodging. For more information contact New River Gorge National River, P.O. Box 246, Glen Jean, WV 25946; (304)465-0508. Presentations published from previous New River Symposiums are available for purchase at the above address. Proceedings of the 1995 Symposium will be published this summer.

Pure Country Music

Doc Williams of Wheeling is among the inventors of country music, one of those who whipped the sound together from a variety of regional and ethnic styles in the 1930's, '40's, and later. His voice was that of Wheeling's powerful WWVA, second only to Nashville's "WSM" among legendary country radio stations.

Doc and his wife Chickie Williams are still performing, traveling last summer to Maine for a series of concerts with their daughter Karen McKenzie. The result is a cassette, "Doc and Chickie, Live in Maine," recorded by Kennebunk River Music and distributed by Elmwood Station Music. The veteran radio stars and their daughter were accompanied by Allan "Mac" McHale and the Old Time Radio Gang. GOLDENSEAL contributor Ivan Tribe, author of our Spring 1987 story on Doc Williams, says the Maine recording is among the best music the Williamses have put out in a long time.

Doc's own newest release, just out last fall, is "Doc Williams' Family Values, Pure Country." Daughter Barbara Smik says Doc is really proud of this recent recording as it includes many of his old, traditional songs. Doc produced the cassette at his recording studio in the family's Wheeling store.

Both tapes are available from Doc Williams Country, 1004 Main Street, Wheeling, WV 26003; (304)-233-4771. "Live in Maine" sells for $8 and "Family Values" for $9. Postage and handling are $2.50. West Virginia residents must add 6% sales tax.

Kanawha Histories Reprinted

The West Virginia Genealogical Society recently reprinted *History of Kanawha County* by George W. Atkinson, a book the group calls "a gold mine of information." Atkinson's book, published in 1876, was the first comprehensive history of the county. The author went on to become Governor of West Virginia in 1896.

John P. Hale, from his book.

The 338-page reprint is especially useful for family researchers as it includes an every-name index compiled by Doris J. Hunt in 1981. As announced in the Summer 1994 GOLDENSEAL, the genealogical group also has reprinted William S. Laidley's *History of Charleston and Kanawha County*, first published in 1911. A separate index to Laidley's history is available through the society for $20, plus $2 shipping. The history itself sells for $60, plus $5 shipping. Atkinson's history sells for $30, plus $3 shipping.

Orders may be sent to the West Virginia Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 14, Blue Creek, WV 25026. Proceeds go toward the maintenance of the WVGS library at Blue Creek, which is open to the public at no charge. For more information contact Ella Walker May at (304)965-1043.

John P. Hale's *History of the Great Kanawha Valley* also was recently reprinted, in a special bicentennial edition for Charleston's 200th birthday celebration in 1994. The 600-page hardcover brings together two volumes which were originally published separately. Volume I includes chapters on the prehistoric occupation of the Kanawha Valley, early white settlement, early explorers, Daniel Boone, the murder of Cornstalk, the Great Kanawha River, and a history of Charleston. Volume II consists of hundreds of biographical sketches for counties throughout the valley, from Mason to Fayette.

Hale's 1891 history was reprinted by Gauley & New River Publishing Company, P.O. Box 101, Gauley Bridge, WV 25085. The book sells for $29.95, plus $4 shipping and handling. West Virginians should include 6% sales tax.

Bird Atlas

The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas, by Albert R. Buckelew, Jr., and George A. Hall, was recently published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Buckelew is a professor of biology at Bethany College. Hall, professor emeritus at WVU, is the author of the 1983 book, *West Virginia Birds*.

The new atlas is touted by its publisher as the "first comprehensive survey of the geographical distribution of West Virginia's breeding birds." It reflects the contribution of more than 300 volunteer birders who combed the state's forests, wetlands, mountains, and farmlands for more than six years collecting data. The work was supported by the Brooks Bird Club and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources' Nongame Wildlife Program.

The purpose of the project was to inventory and plot the distribution of birds known to reproduce in West Virginia. The atlas recorded a first for the state with its find of a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher nest.

The West Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas includes detailed range maps for each species, with accompanying text about the birds, their breeding range, and population trends. A series of acetate map overlays, tucked into the back of the book, allows readers to compare bird distribution with geographical and ecological features.

Printed on acid-free paper, the high quality publication is 215 pages long. It is available in a hardback edition only and sells for $27.95 at local bookstores or from the University of Pittsburgh Press, 127 North Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. If ordering a copy by mail, include $3 postage and handling.

Children's Book

Marc Harshman of Marshall County has published his sixth book for children. The storyteller, poet and school teacher recently completed *Moving Days*. It is the story of a boy's trepidation when his family moves not only to a different place, but to "a town" to boot. "No more woods; no more Jimmy down the road," he thinks.

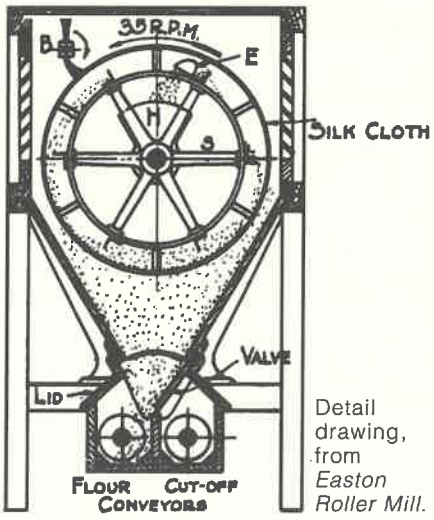
In helping pack, saying good-bye, and getting ready for the new life he will lead, the boy discovers an important part of growing up. The book is beautifully illustrated by Wendy Popp who uses dramatic pastels to accompany Harshman's story.

Harshman's other children's books include *A Little Excitement*, *Snow Company*, *Rocks in My Pockets* (which he coauthored with storyteller Bonnie Collins), *Only One*, and *Uncle James*. Marc Harshman is also a GOLDENSEAL contributor. He and his wife Cheryl interviewed Bonnie Collins at her Doddridge County home for the 1989 story, "Raised Among the Hills: Storyteller Bonnie Collins."

Moving Days is published by Cobblehill Books, an affiliate of Dutton Children's Books. The large-format hardcover sells for $13.99 in bookstores nationwide.

Morgantown Mill History

Norma Jean Venable, a GOLDENSEAL contributor who works for the WVU Extension Service, is the author of *Easton Roller Mill*. The 40-page booklet tells the history of the Morgantown grist mill, a unique



Detail drawing, from *Easton Roller Mill*.

There Will Never Be Another!

The recently published 20th Anniversary GOLDENSEAL was a one-of-a-kind production, representing the best articles and photographs from the first two decades of your favorite magazine.

We won't pass this historic landmark again, and we won't be reprinting the anniversary issue, either. Once it sells out there will be no more.

But for now we have a limited number of extra copies on hand, for sale at the regular price of $3.95 each, plus $1 per copy postage and handling.

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The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars

The West Virginia Mine Wars were a formative experience in our state's history and a landmark event in the history of American labor. GOLDENSEAL has published some of the best articles ever written on this subject.

In 1991, editor Ken Sullivan worked with Pictorial Histories Publishing Company to produce *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars*, a compilation of 17 articles that appeared in the magazine from 1977 through 1991. Dozens of historic photos accompany the stories.

The first printing of the Mine Wars book sold out in 1993. Now it has been republished in a revised second printing. The large-format, 104-page paperbound book sells for $9.95 plus $2 per copy postage and handling.

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historic property that illustrates two grinding techniques — millstones and roller mills — side by side. It is also significant for its use of steam power, since most surviving mills in the Mountain State were operated by water wheels or turbines. The Easton Mill steam engine dates to 1875 and has been restored to operate on compressed air.

The Easton Mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and is maintained by the Monongalia Historical Society. The mill is open for tours, and an annual Mill Day is held for the public. Venable's treatment of the Easton Mill is rich in detail and illustrations. The booklet sells for $7, including postage, and is available from the Monongalia Historical Society, P.O. Box 127, Morgantown, WV 26507-0127.

Venable's work as a naturalist also produced *Seasons of the Spruce: A Naturalist's View of Canaan Valley and Dolly Sods*, a 23-page softbound publication of Dunkard Ridge Press, and the WVU Extension Service guide *Fall Colors*. The latter provides a color chart; descriptions of nearly 70 types of trees, shrubs and wildflowers; and blank leaves for readers to color. For more information on these publications contact Norma Jean Venable at WVU, P.O. Box 6108, Morgantown, WV 26506.

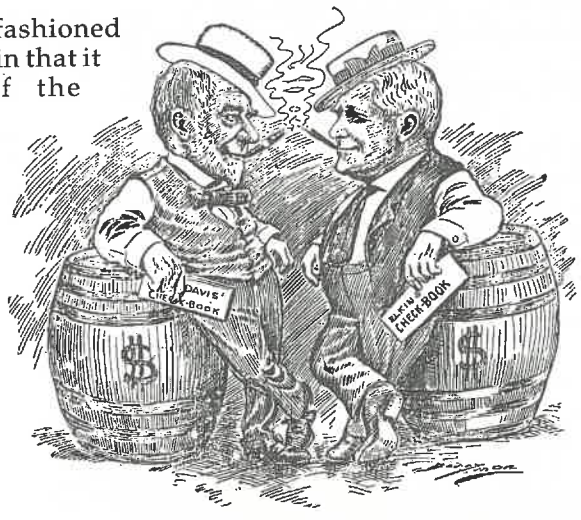
New Davis Biography

Senator Henry Gassaway Davis cut a huge swath across West Virginia in the latter years of the 19th century, leaving his name on churches, hospitals, an orphanage, and of course Davis and Elkins College. Towns were named Henry, Gassaway and Davis — leaving nothing to be done when the Senator's son and namesake came along but to name the next place "Junior."

Davis's latest biographer, retired D&E Professor Thomas Richard Ross, believes that history is largely the sum of the actions of powerful figures such as Davis. He acknowledges that this is an old-fashioned view, and subtitles his book "An Old-Fashioned Biography."

The new book is old-fashioned in another way as well, in that it takes the course of the Senator's life as its main plot line, avoiding the interpretative theorizing that burdens much recent historical writing. The book is as interesting as Davis's own career, which progressed from business to politics and finally accomplished a masterful blending of the two.

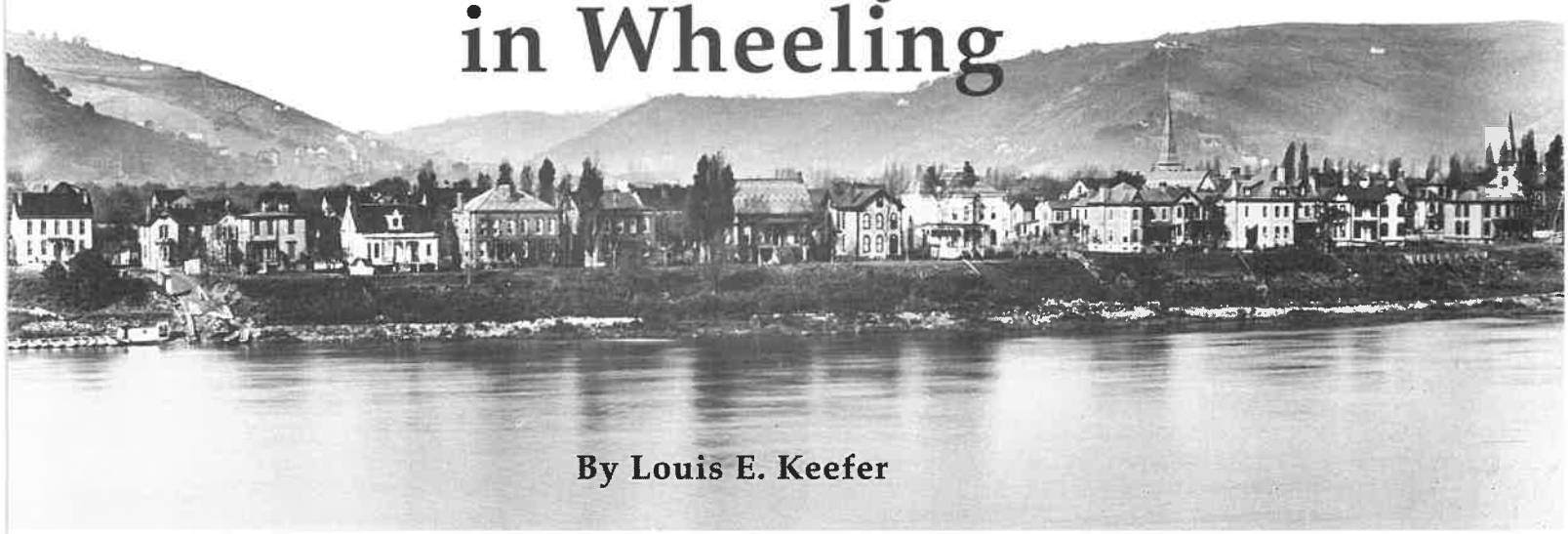
Henry Gassaway Davis: An Old-Fashioned Biography, a 342-page hardbound with illustrations, bibliography and index, was recently published by McClain Printing Company. The book sells for $30, plus an additional $2.50 for shipping and handling of mail orders. The biography may be purchased in bookstores or directly from McClain, P.O. Box 403, Parsons, WV 26287. West Virginia residents must include six percent sales tax with mail orders.



Democratic Senator Henry Gassaway Davis and his Republican son-in-law, Senator Elkins, as portrayed in a 1904 cartoon.

The Island

Surrounded by Water in Wheeling



By Louis E. Keefer

The southern end of Wheeling Island, as seen from the Wheeling mainland. This view shows the mansions of South Front Street. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

Anyone who's ever read Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* or *Huckleberry Finn* will recall the fun everyone seemed to have living on or near the water. And though Twain might not have known it, we West Virginians are among the most water-oriented folks in the USA. Just look at a state map.

All our largest cities are on some river: Charleston on the Kanawha; Wheeling, Parkersburg, and Huntington on the Ohio; Fairmont and Morgantown on the Monongahela, and so on. And when you ask where someone's from, think how often you hear an answer such as "up Elk," or "along Cheat," or "down near Kanawha Falls" or something like that.

But perhaps the ultimate in river orientation is being born and raised on an island in the *middle* of a river, and some West Virginians have done that, too! Count me among them.

I'm talking about Wheeling Island, where I was born and spent my early childhood, and home today to about 5,000 people. In its heyday, from around the 1880's to the 1930's, almost twice that many Wheeling people found the Island one of the town's best residential communities.

Wheeling Island is thought to be the second most heavily populated river island in the country. New York's Manhattan is first.

Had you been with Ebenezer Zane and his brothers, Jonathan and Silas, when in 1769 they founded the town of Zanesburg on the eastern bank of the Ohio River — a settlement soon renamed Wheeling — you might have had trouble seeing that the mile-and-a-half long island a few hundred yards across the water wasn't part of the Ohio shoreline. Covered over by trees and vines, it blended right into its background.

Some say Colonel Zane bought it from the Indians for a keg of whiskey. He called it "Columbia" and divided it between his sons Daniel and Noah, who farmed parts of it. Swept by floods and accessible only by boat, it remained undeveloped for over half a century. Today, Wheeling Island is thought to be the second most heavily populated inland river island in the country. New York's Manhattan is first.

An 1879 history of the Northern Panhandle reports that the first permanent Island settlers arrived after the Zane brothers' construction of a covered wooden bridge to the Ohio shore in 1836. On the West Virginia — or Virginia, at that time — side there first was a horse-powered ferry, then in 1840 one that was powered by steam. When river levels dropped too low during a dry summer, or rose too high during a spring thaw, ferry service was undependable. A real rush to buy Island land began only after the completion in 1849 of Wheeling's famous 1,010-foot Suspension

Bridge. That wooden and steel connection brought the Island 24-hour accessibility in all seasons, something no ferry could guarantee.

About this same time, prior to the Civil War, Wheeling was an important point on the Underground Railway, and hundreds of slaves slipped into the free state of Ohio from there. It was risky because by then most of the Island's wooded areas had been cleared for agriculture, and hiding places were scarce. Many escaping slaves may simply have hidden under the loads of freight wagons creaking across the new Suspension Bridge and destined for points west along the National Road.

Described by some writers as "a charming spot surrounded by a beautiful river and free of the noise and contaminated air of the city," Wheeling Island was soon annexed as the city's Seventh Ward. After that, rapid growth was assured.

By the 1880's, river frontage nearest the bridge was dotted with handsome Victorian mansions. Most had extensive lawns sloping gently down to the water's edge. Families might sit outdoors on warm summer nights to catch the breezes and see the steamboats "a-sparkling by," as Twain might say, making the reflections of Wheeling's streetlights dance on the water. Their bow waves would have lapped softly at the shore long after the boats had passed.

At one time, Front Street was known as "Millionaire's Row," where the rich and prominent lived. According to Dr. William Steger, who grew up on the Island, "all of Wheeling's nicest people lived there." Now in his early 80's, Steger remembers walking with his father past beautiful homes. "The wealthier families didn't begin moving "out the Pike' to Woodsdale and beyond until the 1920's," he told me last year.

Betty Brice, daughter of the late Malcolm T. Brice, editor of the *Wheeling News-Register*, recalls teas and dinners at the homes of dear friends on the Island. "Oh yes, when I was young, the Island was the fashionable place to live. I especially remember the beautiful flower gardens. At one time there were concrete islands in the middle of Virginia Street filled with bright beds of petunias, marigolds, and other flowers."

Wheeling Island property owners make the most of the land available, as shown by these closely spaced houses on North Huron Street. Photo by Patricia Sands, courtesy State Historic Preservation Unit.

Though floods might add new deposits of rich topsoil upon which Island gardens would thrive, they were also terribly destructive. That of February 1884 was worse than any yet; hundreds of residents lost their homes and their household goods when the Ohio River crested at 52 feet. Stubbornly, most Islanders afterwards remained. Cleverly, they created ground-level basements and living quarters that began at a second-story height — much like the stilted summer houses seen along the sea coast, but with the "stilted" areas enclosed by solid foundations.

The Island's residents remained because they loved living there. Two of the things that made it so desirable was its proximity to downtown — the Wheeling business district was only a brisk ten or 15 minute walk away — and its own built-in recreational opportunities: swimming or fishing in the river, boating, ice skating when the channels froze over, and going to the various fairs and festivals held there.

No home on the Island was more than a quarter-mile walk from the water, and once the streetcars came, it was possible to ride from one end of the Island to the other in only ten minutes or so.

Essentially flat, the Island offered particularly good sites for fairs and exhibitions. Long before West Virginia became a state, the Northwestern Virginia Fair Association held its events in a park adjacent to Zane Street, near the bridge to Ohio. During the Civil War, old maps show that the area was called Camp Carlile and soon occupied by Union troops.

The first West Virginia State Fair was held on the opposite end of the Island in 1881, on 25 acres of land purchased for $20,000. A half-mile race track, a grandstand, a carnival midway, livestock pens and stables, and a permanent exhibit hall were constructed and began drawing large crowds.

At first only the two-lane Suspension Bridge had given access to the Fairgrounds from the West Virginia side, but the "Steel Bridge" — it never was given another name — was built in 1890. Now streetcars began providing regular service to all points of the Island. The Fairgrounds remained open all summer, families arriving by streetcar from every part of Wheeling.

Walter Teater's *Our Island*, his recollections of an Island childhood published in 1969, mentions such special thrills as watching several balloon ascensions from the infield of the race track, and seeing America's most famous barnstormer, Lincoln Beachey, fly his Curtiss pusher plane from the same grassy expanse. At other times, fast-paced trotters circled the dirt track to the cheers of people in the wooden grandstand.

Front Street was known as "Millionaire's Row," where the rich and prominent lived. "All of Wheeling's nicest people lived there," according to Dr. William Steger, who grew up on the Island.

As the 20th century began, Wheeling's economy depended far more on water than on rail or highway transport. The raw materials and finished products of its many heavy industries moved in long tows of deeply-laden barges shepherded forward by coal-burning sternwheelers, while the city's residents and visitors traveled up and down the river via smaller packet boats designed for greater passenger comfort.

A regular column in the *Wheeling Intelligencer* reported boat arrivals and departures, as well as river stages up and down the river. While none of this commerce directly affected the Island's residents — the busy Wheeling wharf was at the foot of 12th Street on the other side — the river was always there. Many of America's most famous sternwheelers were as familiar to Island residents as their next-door neighbors.

One of the Island's most popular river amusements was Belle Isle Beach, a sandy stretch of the north shore opposite the North Wheeling Hospital. On summer weekends, there might be hundreds of swimmers and waders, and just offshore dozens of skiffs, johnboats, and canoes. The beach attracted its peak crowds between 1900 and 1915. After the Ohio was dammed at McMechen and Wellsburg in 1911

Islanders: This photograph shows author Louis Keefer as a boy, between his grandfather Walter P. Wickham (left) and uncle Walter W. Wickham. Photographer unknown, early 1930's.

and at Warwood in 1917, water levels rose enough to narrow the beach area, and the numbers fell off.

Bill Brice remembers swimming at Belle Isle Beach and using the rough-hewn wooden bathhouse that stood high on the bank. "The water was pretty clean," he says, "but the river bottom was stony and slippery, and you had to watch your step. Once there was a dance pavilion where couples could whirl around the floor by lantern light. It was romantic, and a popular place to take a date."

Curiously, considering the many floods that have swept it — 16 in the 1800's, and over a score in the 1900's (see "'Give us the Old Mud-caked Oh-ho-ho'" in the October-December 1978 GOLDENSEAL) — the Island is about the same size and shape as it was in the Zanes' days. As much silt has been deposited there as has been swept away.

An Ohio County map prepared by Surveyor John Wood in 1821 shows the Island a mile-and-a-half long by a half-mile wide. These are almost exactly the dimensions shown in a 1992 United States Geological Survey map, as well as by current aerial photography.

Wheeling Island is one of the largest of the many islands dotting the entire length of the Ohio. Neville Island, near Pittsburgh, and Blennerhassett Island, near Parkersburg, are both larger. The first is highly industrialized, and the second is a historical park owned by the state of West Virginia; neither supports any resident population. Many of the Ohio's smaller islands are farmed during the growing season but lay fallow the rest of the year.

The Island is noted for its old neighborhoods, picturesque in all seasons. Photo by Michael Keller.

Growing up on Wheeling Island casts a spell that no true Islander ever quite escapes. I nearly always go back whenever I'm in Wheeling.

What's it like to live on the Island? Well, for one thing it's big — over 400 acres, two-thirds of a square mile — and unless your house faced the water, you'd probably forget you were somewhere in the middle of the Ohio River. My home was the next-to-last two-story frame building on South Huron Street. It's still there, though the house where I was born isn't. In the late 1920s, looking to the west from the back porch, though the river was hidden by trees, I could see the huge "Hancher's" advertising billboard on the hillside above Bridgeport, Ohio. Hancher's was Wheeling's best-known jewelry store and for many years its landmark billboard stood out as starkly as does the "Hollywood" sign above Los Angeles. The owner, Charles N. Hancher, lived on South Front Street, from where, presumably, he may have taken pride in his sign every day on his way to work.

When the circus came to town, there was usually a parade across the suspension bridge to the Fairgrounds. The elephants had to be spaced out, so the bridge wouldn't bounce.

Looking to the south beyond the house next door, there were some open fields, then the West Virginia State Fairgrounds. My grandfather used to walk with me through those fields to go see the circus together. The lions and tigers were very scary to a six-year-old, and I suffered nightmares in which they escaped from their cages and broke into our home to eat us all up. On an otherwise quiet night, after all, I could sit in our front porch swing and hear them roar, they were that close!

"Grampaw" was Walter Percy Wickham, long-time Ohio County justice of the peace, owner of two secondhand stores, and the only licensed auctioneer in the county. He was also a skillful gambler who once shot a man to death, he told me, when the man attacked him with a knife. I know for a fact that he was fearless, and he expected

The flood marker at the corner of Virginia and South Penn measures Wheeling Island floods against the Big One, the March 1936 inundation. Note the March 1945 mark, lower down. Photo by Michael Keller.

Remembering March '45:

Flooding on the Island

That morning when I woke up and looked out the window, my wooden sliding board was floating in the back yard and brown water was lapping at the back porch. In the night the river had come up from down below the garden and now covered everything I could see from the porch to the state of Ohio. Leafless branches rose out of the water. All landmarks of alley and fence and yard were gone. In the front of the house, facing the street, large puddles were beginning to connect with each other.

All day the water rose. While my mother and aunt carried furniture upstairs, my brother and I stood on the front porch and threw slivers from the coal bucket into the rising, flowing, muddy river.

In the afternoon, as water began to roll across the front porch, my mother brought down suitcases. Our next-door neighbor rowed his boat over, we climbed in, and he rowed us up the street and to a bridge that went to town. We walked across the bridge to the mainland and didn't come back until the water went down.

It was March of 1945 and the newspaper said "Germany will fall before the Oh-ho-ho."

When God gave Noah the rainbow sign, promising "no more water, the fire next time," the Ohio River wasn't paying attention. To the long suffering and enduring residents of the Ohio River Valley and especially to the inhabitants of Wheeling Island, it was water the next time and the next time and the next. There were 16 heavy floods recorded in the 19th century and there have been more than 20 so far in this century.

In 1945, my aunt, Marion Haller, stayed in the family home after the rest of us left. She and my mother had carried up coal from the basement and stored it in the bathtub to be burned in an upstairs grate. She cooked coffee and baked potatoes in the embers.

When God gave Noah the rainbow sign, promising "no more water, the fire next time," the Ohio River wasn't paying attention.

"The river eventually came about halfway up the stairs," she relates. "Once I saw a yellow house float down the river. A couple of times a day I would push up a window and call to our next door neighbor, Otty Hustlebee. That was how we checked up on each other.

"One day I heard a loud noise from below. I looked downstairs and saw our cousin, Charles Ray, paddling his canoe in the living room. He said, 'Are you OK?' and I said, 'I thought I locked that front door.'"

— Marie Tyler-McGraw

Excerpted from "'Give Us the Old Mud-Caked Oh-ho-ho': Flooding on Wheeling Island," GOLDENSEAL, October-December 1978.

me to be the same. I was terrified when he put me on the Fairgrounds crack-the-whip ride and left me there, but I daren't let him know it. Even six-year-olds had to be brave according to his lights.

When the circus came to town, there was usually a parade up Market Street from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad station, across the suspension bridge, then to the Fairgrounds. The elephants had to be spaced out, and kept out of lockstep with each other, so the bridge wouldn't bounce dangerously. Even with that precaution taken, I remember you could still feel the deck move up and down. That motion could make you seasick, especially if you looked straight down through the cracks in the sidewalk and saw the river moving far below.

I remember the swimming pool and the amusement park at the Fairgrounds being open all summer. I learned to swim (more or less) in the big pool there, always crowded on a hot summer day. Among the wonderful rides was one where a half-dozen tiny wooden airplanes, with free-spinning propellers, chased each other around a fixed pylon, banking steeper and steeper on flexible tethers as they went faster and faster. Three smaller kids could squeeze into each cockpit to take turns at being pilot and pretending to shoot down the Spad or Fokker circling ahead. I remember the night when I shot the Red Baron and ten of his squadron mates out of the sky in a single ride. (It was always the same Fokker each time, but not in my imagination.)

Unless your house faced the water, you'd probably forget you were somewhere in the middle of the Ohio River.

Then there was the roller coaster, and a big Ferris wheel, and a great midway with game booths and all the usual park attractions. At night, the sights, sounds, and smells were totally bewitching. I remember these things from the early 1930's, hard times when people came in large numbers for an inexpensive evening of gawking. A few came in the hope of winning money as "marathon dancers," desperately trying to stay on their feet long enough — sometimes days or weeks — to win a prize of $25 or $50. Other people just stood outside the Casino watching the sagging dancers, and possibly placing bets on who would last the longest.

But the Island has always been much more than just fun and games at the Fairgrounds and along the waterfront. It's a community — almost a city in its own right, a place where families tend their gardens, have friends over for coffee, send their children to school, attend church, and care for each other. In 1974 the *Wheeling News-Register* ran stories about different neighborhoods throughout the city. Several dealt with Wheeling Island. Most of the dozens of people interviewed there liked living on the Island.

A lot of people interviewed by

Belle Isle Beach was a popular attraction earlier in the century, as this postcard shows. Courtesy State Archives.

the paper reported that riverfront houses continued to be as desirable as when the Island was just beginning to sprout houses and streets. Fred Simon, then a 77-year-old living on North Front Street, claimed the Ohio River water was cleaner and the fishing better than ever. Charles and Arlene Hughes lived on South Front Street and let rooms and apartments. "When you advertise an apartment for rent on the Island," Mrs. Hughes told the *News-Register*, "the telephone never seems to stop ringing."

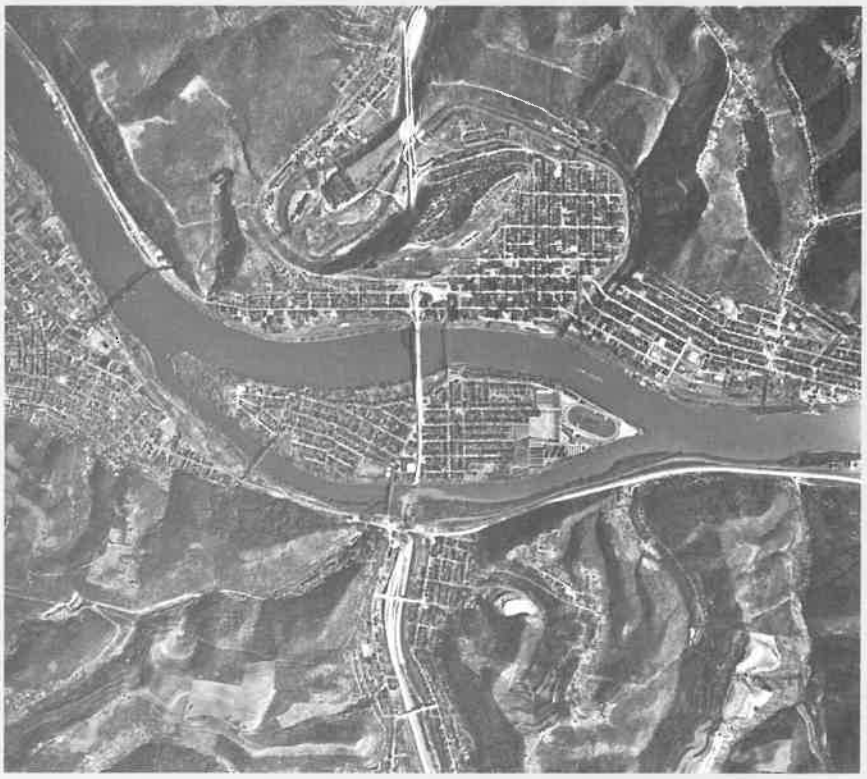
John Gruber and his wife lived on Indiana Street and told much the same story — when apartments became vacant they would be rented within days. The solid housing market was credited to the Island's proximity to downtown Wheeling. Mrs. Lena Campiti, who lived on Virginia Street, reported that her family had never owned a car because they didn't need one.

Many Islanders praised the legendary fertility of the Island soil, where tomato vines commonly grow six feet high. Mrs. Ernest Brambach, also of Virginia Street, said she had once lived across the river on Wheeling's treeless North Market Street. When she again made her home on the Island, it was so verdant that it was like moving back into the country.

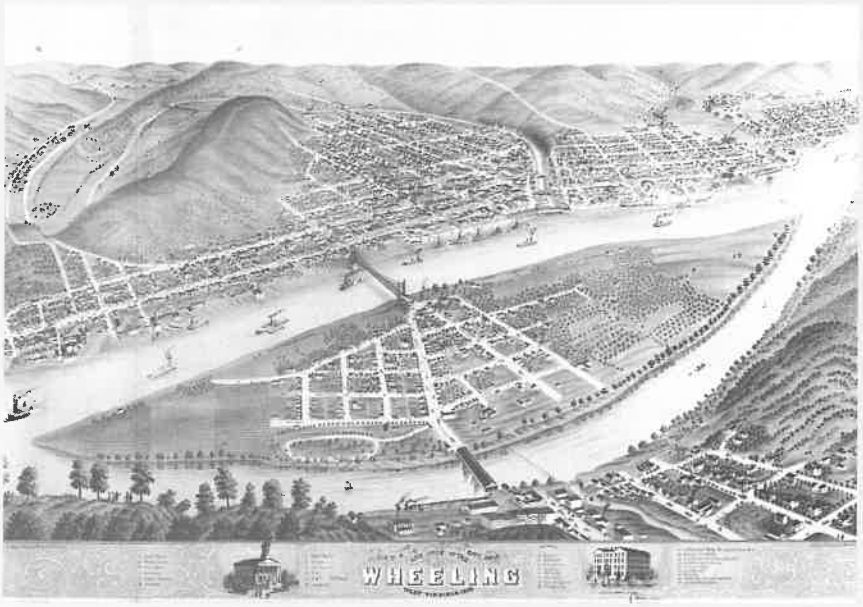
Today's visitors will still find the same tree-lined streets and green gardens that beguiled Mrs. Brambach, and that have attracted residents since the mid-1800's. Though some of its homes may need repairs, and the construction of Interstate 70 has divided the Island into north and south halves, there remains a Victorian-era handsomeness to the place and its flowers blossom as profusely as ever.

My childhood memories of the Island are cut short at 1932, when my family moved to suburban Warwood. Nevertheless, I well remember the flood of 1936, and visiting the Island a few weeks later to see the devastation.

In the early 1940's, I played football for the Warwood Vikings. We



Island overviews. Wheeling Island's place in the world is seen most dramatically in bird's-eye perspectives, as these illustrations show. The 1870's drawing (below) shows sparse settlement at that time, as compared to the mid-1960's aerial photograph. Both show Ohio at the bottom and mainland Wheeling above the Island itself. Note that the I-70 tunnel has pierced Wheeling Hill in the aerial photograph, while the interstate bridge to Ohio is under construction. Bird's-eye drawing by Albert Ruger, courtesy Library of Congress; aerial photo courtesy United States Geological Survey.



played on the Island, in what we always called "Wheeling Stadium" though other teams used it as well. I think the Bethany and West Liberty college squads played there, and a lot of Ohio high school teams did. The first night game in West Virginia high school history was played there in September 1940, Warwood versus Wheeling, and I played in it.

Getting to and from most football games was a nightmare. The Island's principal streets were narrow two-lane affairs with parking on both sides. Add streetcars and throngs of people on foot, and mostly it was a mess. The quickest way back to town was walking. I remember the jostling crowds laughing, shouting and elbowing their thirsty path across the Steel Bridge, heading for the nearest bar.

Both the Steel Bridge and the streetcars have long since passed into oblivion. But Wheeling Stadium has been rebuilt, and the thunk of shoulder pads resounds

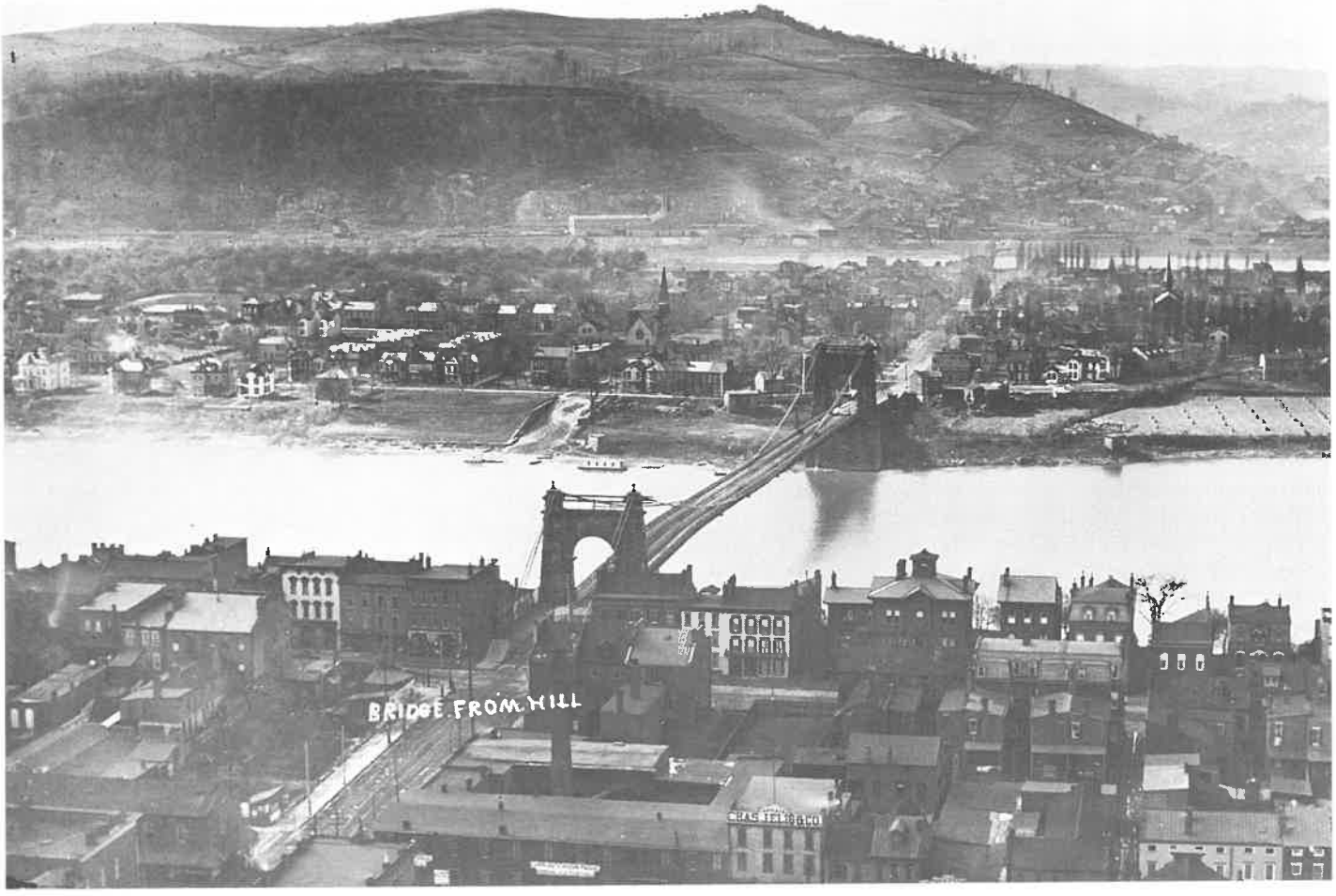
"When you advertise an apartment for rent on the Island, the telephone never seems to stop ringing."

all over the south end of the Island virtually every Friday and Saturday night of the football season. Residents don't seem to mind. Some even enjoy the excitement.

In 1946, after I got home from service, I boarded with the Charles Baker family near North Front Street for about two months. My own family had moved to Charleston. I remember walking across the suspension bridge two and three times a day to hang around at 12th and Market Streets in front of the Walgreen Drug Store. Sometimes old pals would show up, and we would browse through the department stores trying to get dates with the salesgirls.

Those were my good old days. Young men like me were back from military service, and would report once a week to the State Unemployment Service to draw our checks and then go have some fun together, bowling or playing pool or whatever. We called it the "52-20 Club"

The historic Wheeling Suspension Bridge has been a major local artery for nearly a century and a half. The 1849 structure still carries Wheeling Island traffic today. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy State Archives.



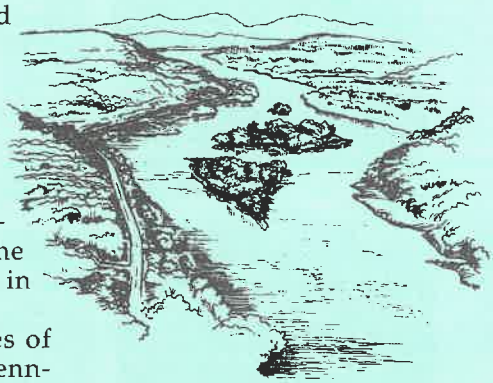
- $20 weekly for 52 weeks, or as long as conscience allowed. Plenty of time to get serious later, we told each other.

For me, all of these thoughts — and others I haven't even touched upon — bring back poignant memories of the Island as I knew it. Should you now be thinking — well, all right, living on an island might be sort of romantic, but is it practical? And should you question why most Wheeling Islanders have always returned to their mud-caked homes following each flood, the real answer may not convince you.

But the upper Ohio Valley's best known author, Moundsville's Davis Grubb, explains the attraction of the river plainly enough for me. He says the people who live where they are flooded out periodically simply love the river and must remain: "Industry and progress may move them. But the river cannot make them budge a foot."

To that, most wonderfully stubborn Wheeling Islanders will say, Amen!

River Islands Refuge



© June Henshaw

Wheeling Island is inhabited by many people, but the islands downriver are home to birds, muskrats, raccoons, and other creatures of the wild. These islands are part of the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and they form the first national wildlife refuge in West Virginia.

The islands span 362 miles of river from Shippingport, Pennsylvania, to Manchester, Ohio. In the early 1900's, 57 islands existed within the current refuge boundaries, but dredging, dams, and the demand for sand and gravel took their toll. Today there are 41 islands, and six of those are fully developed. All or a portion of each of the 35 islands left on this section of the Ohio River have the potential to be included in the refuge, and all but five of the islands are in West Virginia.

The Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, a unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, became a reality in 1990. It started with eight islands. Now there are 18, and Refuge planner Janet Butler says they are working on more island acquisitions all the time. "The Ohio River, unlike a lot of the world today, actually is improving in its ecological condition. The river is seeing a resurgence in wildlife. And what's good for wildlife is good for us," says Butler.

For more information contact the Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 1811, Parkersburg, WV 26102; (304)-422-0752.

Nowadays interstate travelers speed across the Ohio River via the I-70 bridge and Wheeling Island. Photographer Mike Keller captured this twilight view late last winter.

Lincoln and Nellie Cox have kept store and handled the Kirby mail for two-thirds of a century.

Cox's Store

A Hampshire County Landmark

By Jessica L. Cox

Photographs by Michael Keller

Whether they get there by way of the narrow, twisting Grassy Lick Road that snakes over the mountains from Romney or the better known and more frequently traveled Ford Hill Road from Augusta, the first glimpse visitors get of Kirby is of the small green road signs proclaiming that they have, in fact, reached their destination.

Those familiar with Hampshire County know the tiny town's charm. Newcomers may glance over Kirby's scattering of simple homes, three-room schoolhouse, and the cows grazing lazily in fenced-in fields by the roadway and wonder if they have somehow made a wrong turn.

The main road soon leads visitors to Kirby's only business establishment, Cox's Store. To walk inside is like a walk back in time. Despite rapid changes elsewhere, this general store has maintained the quiet dignity of an era long passed.

Patrons take in at first glance the long, narrow room, lined to the ceiling on both sides with wooden shelves, in front of which aisles have been created by an old-fashioned ice cream freezer and coolers for soft drinks and perishables such as eggs, cheese, butter and bacon. The wooden floor, grown dark with

numerous coats of oil, soon gives way to a patch of brown linoleum. One or two regulars may usually be found perched on any one of a number of mismatched chairs, drinking pop and chatting amicably.

Then visitors come face to face with the store's main attraction for more than 50 years — Nellie Cox, or "Miss Nellie," as she is affectionately called by many of the local children who know about her balloon and lollipop treats. Since opening her doors to Kirby in 1940, Nellie has spent most of her time tending her business. Day after day she sits on a tiny stool behind a cluttered counter at the far end of the store. She keeps a pile of old invoices and used envelopes in ready reach, on which to figure her customers' bills.

polyester skirts, blouses, dresses and blazers she attires herself in each day. Her dyed auburn hair closely matches the hair color of her daughter and her middle granddaughter, and a penchant for costume jewelry is played out in strands of beaded necklaces and chunky clip-on earrings.

Despite its simple appearance, Cox's Store has been a profitable business for Nellie and her family over the years, richest perhaps in emotional rewards but with its monetary returns just the same.

"The Davises got this place in 1909, and we got it in 1940," Lincoln Cox says. "In 85 years, it's had two owners."

The Coxes posed for this family portrait in 1958, at a Moorefield dinner honoring Lincoln for having been named the American Legion Department of West Virginia Commander. Beverly and Alan stand between their parents. Photo by Bishoff's Studio, Moorefield.

The years pass, but Nellie Cox seems to stay comfortably the same. Never one to wear "dungarees," her fondness for bold patterns is apparent in the wild combinations of

Nellie's enjoyment of success later in life has had its price. This unassuming country woman knows the secrets of strength and determination, and all about earning things the hard way.

Born on July 11, 1916, at the Loy settlement outside Kirby, Nellie was the third child in a family of six born to Carl and Alice Loy. Herself the daughter of a storekeeper, Nellie helped her father with his business after her formal education in Kirby's one-room Denver School ended with grade eight. In Nellie's day, education often had to take a back seat to earning a livelihood, and her contributions to the Loy family were instrumental in the lives of her siblings.

In 1935, the Denver School acquired a new teacher fresh out of Glenville State Teachers College in Gilmer County. Six years her senior, Lincoln Cox fell in love with Nellie Loy. Following a brief courtship, the couple married on May 25 of that year.

Lincoln's next position, as principal of the old Grassy Lick School, made Kirby an ideal place for the newlyweds to call home. If Nellie ever had any plans to become a stay-at-home housewife, they were soon banished by a twist of fate that changed the Coxes' lives.

Almost before Lincoln and Nellie got settled into their new life together, Kirby's elderly storekeeper and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Davis, began badgering them to take over the business. "Lincoln was principal of the school, and they kept insisting every time he'd come in that we buy this place," Nellie recalls. "They said that I'd had practice because of my dad's store, and this would be good for us."

So on August 10, 1940, the Coxes became the proud owners of their very own country store. "The Davises got this place in 1909, and we got it in 1940," Lincoln says. "In 85 years, it's had two owners."

That doesn't mean nothing has changed. According to Nellie, plenty of things are different from what they were in 1940. Gone is the men's and women's clothing once sold by the Coxes, and while she still tries to keep some penny and

nickel candy on hand for children, she says prices have all gotten higher over the years.

"Everything here in the store was a nickel, like candy, pop, kitchen matches and boxes of soda and salt," Nellie says, as she reflects on how much things have changed in the store business. "And you got nothing in bags or boxes, like sugar or beans or macaroni. You weighed it all out."

When Nellie wasn't tending store and Lincoln's duties as principal and as postmaster of the tiny Kirby post office located in a corner room of the store allowed, the Coxes slipped away. They enjoyed blissful days of lighthearted love and visits with other young couples in the community. But these busy, fun-filled times were shattered as the coming of World War II exposed Kirby to pain and sacrifice.

Lincoln Cox was called away to serve in the United States Navy in 1942. For the next 42 months, he served his country on the Atlantic, with amphibious forces in the Pacific, and as a beachmaster control officer in a scout unit. Nellie was left to carry on without the man she had come to depend on for strength and guidance.

That meant changes in the way things were done. In 1942, women in the workforce were still rare, especially in remote settlements such as Kirby. While Nellie had some work experience from helping father Carl run the Loy family store and in tending her own store while Lincoln's time was occupied elsewhere, there was still much she had to learn in the way of business sense. Determined not to let what they had accomplished thus far in their young marriage slip away in Lincoln's absence, she now set out to run the store alone. She faced rationing and skyrocketing prices and some opposition from the more old-fashioned citizens of Kirby, who were against the idea of a woman pursuing business endeavors in the first place.

But she persevered and she succeeded. Rather than going under, as many people predicted it would, Cox's Store became a mainstay of the community in war time. At the height of the rationing program

Our photographer caught Lincoln Cox dressed up for a Rotary meeting. The Coxes have been community leaders since before World War II.

Nellie made a two-hour journey to Winchester, Virginia, to bring back supplies each week. Kirby depended on her.

With a laugh, she recalls how on one trip back from Winchester she got a flat tire. "I had 200 pounds of beans in 100-pound sacks on the front seat with me and the back seat filled and the trunk," she says. "And I had the only flat tire I've had in my lifetime!"

But no amount of flat tires or strict rations could keep Nellie Cox down. With other stores in neighboring communities raising prices to the ceiling amounts set by the government, she sold staples such as sugar, flour and milk below what she had paid. It was neighborly — and good business, too.

For as word spread, sales soared. From miles around, customers made the journey to Cox's Store to buy Nellie's bargains. Once there, they would often buy other items, such as shoes and clothing, at regular prices, as well. She began raising chickens for more income in those meat-scarce times.

Thrilled with her newfound independence, Nellie began to save money for the day when Lincoln would return from the war. Remembering her husband's dream of someday owning a farm, she soon saved enough to purchase 500 acres of farmland.

"My dad was sitting there in the store and was waiting for some friends of his to go to the Henry Pepper sale," Nellie says, recalling the day she became a landowner. "I said to him, 'Buy me that farm today.' He said, 'You don't need it.' But when he went to go out the door, he said, 'How much do you want to pay for that farm?' and I said, 'Run it to $15,000.'"

Hours later, Nellie said, her father returned home with $1 in change. His bid of $14,999 for the Pepper farm had been successful. Now, for better or for worse, Nellie and Lincoln were farmers as well.

And so, when Lincoln Cox finally returned home in 1946, he found that the pretty young bride he had left behind had become an independent landowner with a prospering business. Delighted with Nellie's accomplishments, he settled back into his educational career and lifted the burden of Kirby's post office from her shoulders. At last, it seemed, their lives could return to normal.

But normal for Nellie did not mean returning to any docile role

"Everything in the store was a nickel, like candy or pop. And you got nothing in bags or boxes, like sugar or beans or macaroni. You weighed it all out."

as her husband's helper. Thereafter she ran the store on her own as Lincoln kept busy with his other duties. In 1947, the couple was blessed with a son, Alan, who was followed in 1951 by daughter Beverly. Taking only a short break following each birth, Nellie was soon back behind the counter, raising her children in the family store.

Today, Alan and Beverly both speak fondly of their childhood. They grew up at the very heart of a close-knit, rural community. In a lot of ways Cox's Store *was* Kirby, and the storekeepers meant for it to be that way. Beverly says that soon after her father returned from the war, he and friends Buzz Shingleton and Chester Bucklew worked together to build a community room on the side of the store.

When Friday night rolled around, Alan and Beverly recall, Kirby came alive. "That was the night people socialized," Beverly says, reminiscing about Friday night hymn-sings with the womenfolk in the front of the store while the men in the back filled each other's ears with tall tales about hunting. Beverly enjoyed a hand or two of rook, with an occasional round of 500 rummy sneaked in back in the store's kitchen.

"You were not allowed to play with playing cards, because they were the work of the devil," Beverly laughs, recalling how the rummy games had to be kept secret from her Granddad Loy.

When the Coxes acquired Kirby's first television — which Alan remembers as "black and white and really snowy" — in the 1950's, watching wrestling on Friday nights became a special treat for the community. But, Beverly is quick to add, the novelty of television wore off, and many an evening passed with the TV screen blank and neighbors visiting as in the old days.

"You picked up most of the news for the week on Friday night at the store," Alan adds, emphasizing the importance of these weekly gatherings.

And the fun didn't stop with Friday. While Beverly favored the sock hops periodically held in the community room on Saturday nights, Alan went more for the movies Lincoln regularly showed on a clattering 16-millimeter projector. In its time, Beverly says, the store's community room saw its share of 4-H meetings, baby showers, wedding receptions and taffy pulls, as well.

Sometimes Lincoln loaded up as much of Kirby as possible for excursions to such nearby towns as Moorefield and Lost River for skating or swimming. "Dad always would take all the community kids," Beverly says. In order to transport them, Lincoln installed benches in the back of an old farm truck.

At the heart of every activity were her parents, Beverly says, smiling at the memory of her mother giving a home permanent to a friend behind the store counter while her father sat nearby and helped a neighbor write a will. "Teach your kid, wire your house, write your will — you name it, he could do it. And if he couldn't, Mom could," she says. Her brother agrees.

"Even to this day, when somebody needs help, they come to the store, even if it's just to use the

The Cox homestead is an attractive haven of the sort that makes the Eastern Panhandle picturesque. The house sits just across from the store.

telephone," Alan says. "They know someone's always there."

And even though people no longer have to rely on the country store for everything from their supplies to their mail and the local news, community spirit persists even today. "Most people still care about where they live and what happens there," Alan says. "People realize that wherever you live is your home, and if you don't take care of it, no one else will."

In the old days, in communities like Kirby everyone pitched in to help when someone fell victim to a farming or timber accident. Many a pregnant woman made it to the hospital on time thanks to the generosity of a neighbor willing to loan his car, and families whose homes were destroyed by fire quickly got a new roof over their heads as community members banded together to erect a new home and collect furniture, clothing and supplies with which to fill it.

Kirby is the sort of place where you can still get your mail where you get your groceries, as the family dog takes his leisure on the porch.

Although times have changed, the togetherness in communities like Kirby hasn't. As the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia becomes subject to an infusion of growth from nearby Virginia, Maryland and Washington, Kirby has not been immune to a tightening at its seams. But at the general store a loaf of bread still sells for 69 cents, and candy is often sold to children for a penny even if it isn't.

The years since that day in August 1940 when Lincoln and Nellie took possession of their store have been happy ones for the Cox family. Alan and Beverly grew along with the family business, and Nellie's flair for commerce and Lincoln's money sense enabled the Coxes to acquire upwards of 1,300 acres of land and some 20 rental properties. But Nellie and Lincoln have never forgotten their beginnings, often giving hard-earned dollars to virtual strangers who stumble into their store down on their luck.

Now a third generation, Nellie and Lincoln's three granddaughters, Julie, Jessica, and Jennifer, and one grandson, Matthew, have been raised in Cox's Store, learning by the example of their grandparents. "It inspires me that my grandmother, who came from a generation of women who were supposed to be wives or motherly figures, has a career even at what most people would consider retirement age — and that my grandfather always supported her," says Julie, 19.

And even today, at the ages of 78 and 85, Nellie and Lincoln continue as the solid foundation of the family, and cornerstones of the community.

Nellie wouldn't have it any other way.

"I've always liked people," she says, looking back to a time in the 1980's when surgery called her away for awhile. "When I had my knees operated on and was in that house for a long time, I almost climbed the walls from not getting to see enough people.

"I like it in here on account of all the people I see."

Mayberry in Harrisville

Sheriff Fred Dotson by his cruiser, 1963. Photographer unknown.

Keeping the Peace in Ritchie County

By Larry Bartlett

The Ritchie County Jail, at 109 North Street in Harrisville, sits on an austere, crew-cut lawn behind the courthouse. It is a squat brick fortress, with an exercise yard that's enclosed by a chain-link fence and coils of razor wire. Designed for security rather than beauty, the modern jail looks out of place among the gracious old houses and commercial buildings of the county seat town.

I remember this block of North Street as it was in the late 1940's. In those days, the street was shaded by a curb-side row of tall maple trees. On the corner lot (now a part of the jail's graveled parking area) sat a white frame house known as the Musgrave house. Next door was a handsome, two-story brick house that was called the Sheriff's Residence.

Built in 1869, the Sheriff's Residence had twin chimneys, a tin roof, Gothic-style veranda and striped awnings. Attached to the rear of the house, discreetly hidden from the street, were double-decker cell blocks. I don't recall that there was a sign in front to designate the building as a jail, and to the casual eye it appeared to be a pleasant home.

On warm Sunday afternoons, I'd often see my uncle, Deputy Sheriff Fred Dotson, lounging on the shady veranda. He'd be standing guard while his star prisoner, the incorrigible Billy (whose last name I had better not use), washed the patrol car. My little cousin, Carolyn, would come out to heckle. She'd call Billy a jailbird, he'd call her a brat, and Uncle Fred would laugh.

Fred Dotson was a tall, genial, tobacco-chewing man, always dressed in a wide-brimmed fedora and a business suit. Beneath his coat

he carried his county-issued equipment — the handcuffs, a semi-automatic pistol, which he disliked, and a blackjack that he absolutely refused to use. Before becoming a peace officer, Uncle Fred had taught for 32 years in country schools at Lynn Camp and Mount Harmony, and he approached law enforcement as a friendly disciplinarian. Routinely, he would go into the men's cell block and play matchstick poker with the prisoners to help them pass the time.

While Uncle Fred watched Billy on those Sunday afternoons, Aunt Hildred would be in the residence's kitchen, chatting with visiting relatives as she prepared an evening meal for the county's prisoners. In addition to being a wife and mother, she was also the full-time jailer and cook. On Sundays she would bake a chocolate layer cake for the inmates to eat with their salad, meatloaf, candied carrots, soup-beans and cornbread.

"I'm not supposed to spoil them," she would say of the prisoners. "But those boys are human beings, and I can't deny them of some comforts."

On Sunday afternoons, Sheriff Horace Britton and his wife, Stella, might stroll up for a visit. They were part owners of the White Hall Hotel on Court Street, also now demolished, and they lived at the hotel with Stella managing the business. That's how Uncle Fred ended up in the Sheriff's Residence even as a deputy.

Sheriff Britton was a short, wiry, lean-jawed man, 13 years younger than his deputy. Like Uncle Fred, he'd had no law enforcement experience before taking office, but he was determined to make the Sheriff's Department more effective and more responsive to the public.

The two lawmen had much in common. Both their families had grown children, and a small child at home. Uncle Fred enjoyed playing the banjo and the fiddle; Horace Britton liked to listen.

"I don't think a sheriff's family and a deputy's family were ever closer," says Stella Britton, now 88 years old and living in Harrisville. "We were like brothers and sisters."

Aunt Hildred, 87 and now living in Parkersburg, agrees. After almost half a century, she says, "Stella is still my best friend." Both women are widows today.

In the old days, the sheriff slept in front and the inmates in back. This photo of the Sheriff's Residence, made shortly before its 1977 demolition, shows the cell block wing at rear. Photo by Dan Deibler, courtesy State Historic Preservation Unit.

In my boyhood memories, the old Sheriff's Department has an amiable, mellow, down-home aura. But Aunt Hildred remembers that there were jailbreaks, murders and mayhem even in Ritchie County.

"I'm not supposed to spoil them," Aunt Hildred would say of the prisoners. "But those boys are human beings."

One violent incident was especially shocking to her. "In the back of the county — on Pine Ridge or Bean Ridge or some such ridge — there used to be a number of bachelors who lived in little shanties in the woods," she says. "They weren't educated, they didn't farm, they just existed. Over the years, several of them went crazy and had to be brought in.

"Andy Hatfield, the office deputy, got a call one afternoon, saying that a man had gone berserk on the ridge. Sheriff Britton notified Fred, and they also deputized Britton's son-in-law, Robert Lewis, to come along.

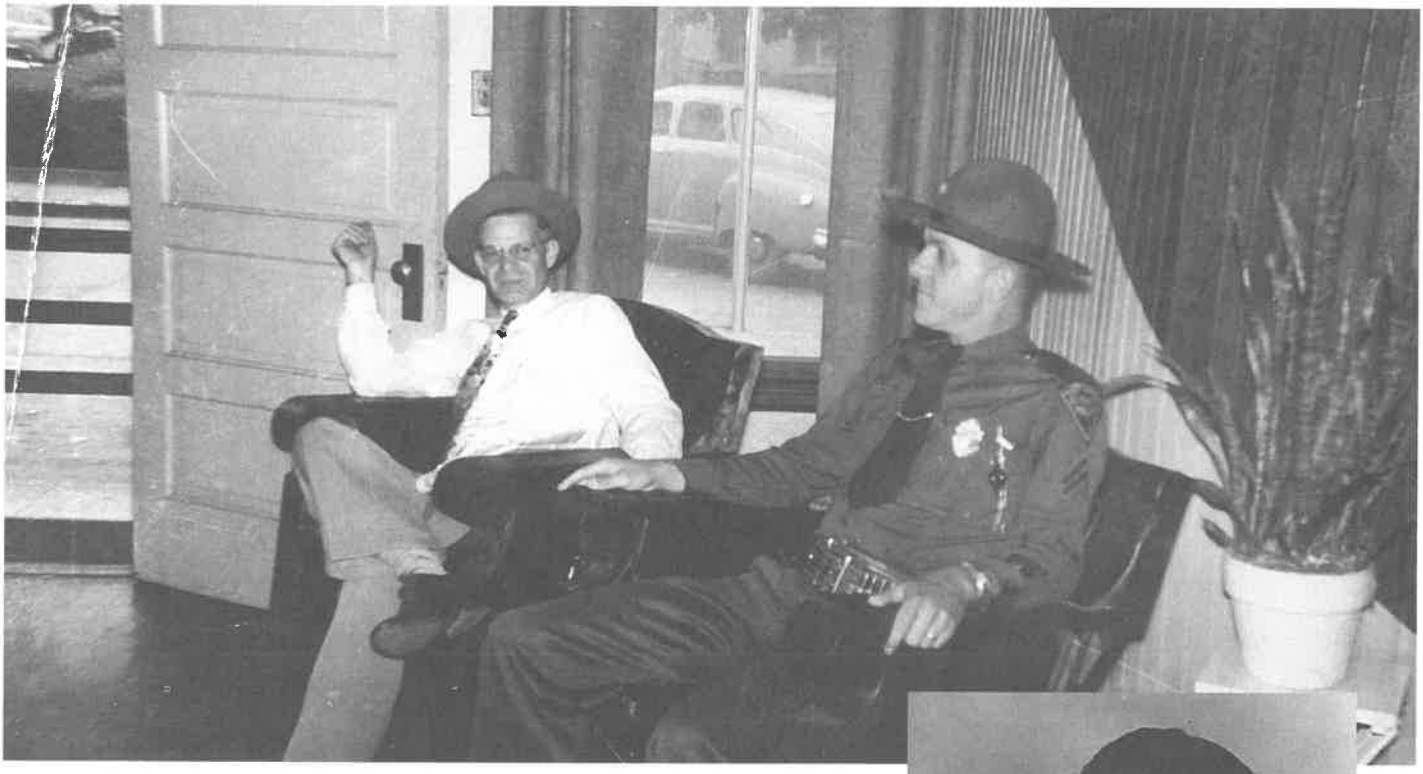
"When they reached the man's shanty, they found him inside, squatting on a huge pile of empty tin cans, boxes and garbage. Fred was good at calming people, so he went inside to talk to the man. But, when Fred got close, that fellow leaped off the pile of trash, waving a butcher knife, and landed right on top of him.

"Fred went down, holding the man's wrist with both hands, trying to keep the knife away. Robert Lewis jumped in and knocked him off of Fred, and Horace Britton tried to handcuff him. But the bachelor was a big, powerful man. He almost tore their clothes off before they could get him under arrest."

Stella Britton keeps a memento of the struggle. "Horace's suit was cut full of holes in the fight," she says. "I still have the coat upstairs in a closet. Do you want to see it?"

Aunt Hildred was appalled when the lawmen brought the deranged man into the jail. "Fred had a bloody slash across his chin, and his shirt was torn to rags. I worried more about him after that, but I didn't say anything. We were in the job, and we had to go ahead with it."

Aunt Hildred's part of the job was tending to the antiquated jail. The



Horace Britton was Fred Dotson's predecessor as Ritchie County Sheriff and his good friend. Sheriff Britton is shown relaxing with Mason Altare of the State Police, about 1950, and in the inset portrait. Photographers unknown.

women's cell block, upstairs, was seldom used. But the ground floor men's cell block had a steady clientele of petty thieves, alimony deadbeats, drunks and brawlers.

The cell block was a large room with a cluster of four cells in the middle, encircled by a walkway or bull pen. Window bars were set in crumbling sandstone, and were so widely spaced that a small man could slip through. The windows were covered with wire mesh, but it was easily pried loose. Due to many jailbreaks, the floors were plated with riveted sheets of steel.

There was no outdoor exercise yard, but the inmates — except for dangerous felons — were allowed out of their cells from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., to walk around in the bull pen. Trusties could go outside the jail, under supervision, to wash patrol cars and do lawn work at the residence. The prisoner Billy was a trusty.

"Billy was a regular customer at the jail," Aunt Hildred recalls, with an affectionate smile. "Billy was a poor boy without a home. He lived here and there with relatives, but nobody wanted him because he couldn't leave liquor alone.

"Drunk or sober, Billy loved to fight," she adds. "I don't know that he was particularly good at it, but he didn't mind getting hit. And he didn't mind getting arrested, either. He had decided that Fred and I were his friends and, when Billy chose you for a friend, you were friends for life."

In separate cars, Sheriff Britton and Uncle Fred made night patrols of the county, from Otterslide to Petroleum, settling brawls at rural taverns.

"I think the roughest beer joint was at MacFarland," Aunt Hildred says. "It was a remote area in those days, and the young men, farmers, had nothing better to do than sit in the tavern and drink until they got ornery. When Fred went in, they'd settle right down. He'd tell them it was time to go home, and they'd cooperate. But first, they'd insist on buying him a bottle of pop, to show there were no hard feelings.

"I think the only time he had a problem was at a beer joint near Ellenboro. A drunken fellow tried to pull a gun, but Fred took it out of his hand."

The patrol cars did not have two-way radios at the time, and a lack of communication was often a problem. Stella Britton recalls one awkward incident. Her husband got a phone call, saying that a house west of town was being burglarized. He telephoned the jail, but Uncle Fred wasn't there. After leaving a message, Britton deputized his son-in-law, Robert Lewis.

Getting into Britton's Mercury sedan, the two men headed for the crime scene, churning up a cloud of dust on the unpaved road. They arrived at the house, arrested the burglar and put him in the back

seat of their car.

At that moment, Uncle Fred came down the road in his Buick. He saw the sheriff's Mercury pulling away from the house, but failed to recognize it because the car was thickly covered with dust. Hitting his siren, Uncle Fred ran the sheriff off the road and got out to investigate. Britton jumped out of the Mercury to identify himself. Meanwhile, the burglar leaped from the back seat and made a dash for the woods — only to be tackled by Robert Lewis.

To avoid such embarrassments, Sheriff Britton got county authorization to install two-way radios in the patrol cars. Aunt Hildred recalls: "With the new radios, we could talk back and forth, all the way to Parkersburg. It was nice — especially late at night — to hear Fred's voice on the radio, saying, 'This is Car Two. I'm on my way home.'

But home might also be a dangerous place. One prisoner tore the wooden frame from a cell block window and removed the heavy iron sash-weight, planning to attack Aunt Hildred with it when she served the noon meal. Fortunately, Billy was in jail at the time. He

The Creed Cox Murder

I went to Creed's house to get some money, and I was going to get it any way I could," said Otha Lee Reed, as he confessed to one of Ritchie County's most notorious murders.

The isolated farmhouse of the murder victim, Creed Marshall Cox, was located on the Isaac Fork of Slab Creek, near Pullman. A newspaper photo shows a warped and weathered two-story frame house, sited amidst trees and overgrown vegetation. Another photo indicates that the interior was sparsely furnished, illuminated by oil lamps and heated by pot-bellied stoves.

On the afternoon of September 13, 1951, Otha Lee Reed sat on the front porch, waiting for Cox to return from a cattle sale in Marietta, Ohio. Reed had already ransacked the house, finding little of interest but a bottle of whiskey and a loaded shotgun. He had already made liberal use of the whiskey, and was waiting with the gun.

The 34-year-old Reed was a tough, dapper man, about five feet seven inches tall, weighing 150 pounds, and wearing a maroon shirt and blue dress slacks. Born on Wolf Pen Run, near Pullman, Reed had occasionally worked as a farmhand for Cox before joining the Army in 1942. He was trained as a mortar gunner, and saw three years of heavy combat. Decorated with the Bronze Star for Valor, the Purple Heart, a Good Conduct Medal, the American Theater Service Ribbon, European, African and Middle Eastern Ribbon, and a World War II Victory Ribbon, he had been honorably discharged in 1945.

Reed led an unsettled life after the war, residing alternately in Parkersburg and in neighboring Ohio. He was troubled by a drinking problem and a shortage of cash. There were rumors that Creed Cox, his former employer, habitually carried $10,000 stuffed into his two shirt pockets, and apparently Reed believed those rumors.

After sunset on that September evening, as Reed drank stolen whiskey on the porch of the lonely farmhouse, he heard footsteps on the dirt road. Through the gloom, he saw Cox approaching. The farmer was carrying a quart of milk and a black satchel filled with cattle sale documents. Reed grabbed the shotgun and ran into the house and out the back way as Cox entered the front door.

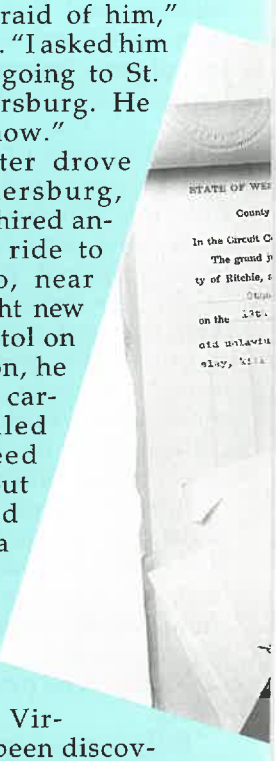
Creed Cox was a 75-year-old bachelor farmer, six feet two inches and 160 pounds. After entering his darkened house he put down the bottle of milk and the satchel, and struck a match.

There was an oil lamp on a stand in the livingroom, beside the kitchen entry, and Cox leaned down to light the lamp's wick. At that moment, Reed stepped through the front door and fired a shotgun blast into the side of Cox's face. Cox died instantly, sprawling headfirst into the kitchen.

Reed took Cox's money — a lot less than $10,000, as it turned out — and also stole two wristwatches and a quantity of raw hens' eggs, which he put into the black satchel. He then ran into the woods, discarding the shotgun and satchel before emerging on the main road. There he hitched a ride with motorist Emerald Cutright and was taken to Harrisville.

Reed had never learned to drive a car, and he was dependent on taxi cabs. In Harrisville, he went to Worthy Webster's taxi stand at 9:30 p.m. and asked — vaguely — for a ride to Parkersburg or St. Marys.

Webster's wife, Bertha, was working as dispatcher, and she vividly recalled the transaction. "I remember the man because, for some reason, I was afraid of him," she later testified. "I asked him twice if he was going to St. Marys or Parkersburg. He said he didn't know."



Worthy Webster drove Reed to Parkersburg, where the killer hired another cab for a ride to Barberton, Ohio, near Akron. He bought new clothes and a pistol on the way. In Akron, he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. Reed bailed himself out of jail, jumped bond and took a cab back to Parkersburg.

During Reed's aimless odyssey across Ohio, his West Virginia crime had been discovered. Brooks Cox, the victim's brother, had entered the farmhouse and found Creed's body lying in a pool of blood that streamed across the kitchen floor.

Newspapers blazoned the slay-

slipped her a note, warning of the impending assault, and the prisoner was disarmed. "I could have been hurt, if I hadn't had a friend inside," she says.

The cell block's security was breached by Otha Lee Reed, who had been arrested for the shotgun murder of Slab Creek cattle dealer Creed Cox. Reed was a World War II hero, with a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and a drinking problem. After being locked up, he improvised a key and unlocked his cell door. He then knocked a trusty unconscious and picked the lock on the cell block door. Aunt Hildred was in the kitchen, preparing coffee for the prisoners, as Reed strolled out the front door and disappeared.

The renegade, who was arrested while hiding in a storage shed beside a Pennsboro tavern, was unimpressed by the old jail. "If the county can't afford to buy good locks, I'll buy 'em for them," joked Reed, who was later convicted of the murder and sent to Moundsville.

The jail continued to show its age, with even the cell block's steel floors beginning to deteriorate. Years of wet-mopping had caused the rivets to rust, and two prisoners had killed the farmer in self defense as they both attempted to grab the shotgun. He also admitted having taken about $200 from the dead man, probably an understatement according to later testimony at the trial.

ing of "the wealthy farmer," although Cox's entire estate was later valued at only $6,621.71. Panic swept the county, as isolated farm families feared there was an armed marauder prowling in the hills. But Ritchie County people tended to be aware of one another's activities, and there was a short list of suspects. The investigation soon focused on Otha Lee Reed, and law enforcement agencies in neighboring counties were notified.

On October 2, 1951, Reed was arrested by Parkersburg policemen at a southside tavern. Although armed with a .32- caliber pistol, he surrendered quietly and made a signed confession. In the confession, Reed claimed that he and Cox had quarreled, and that he had killed the farmer in self defense as they both attempted to grab the shotgun. He also admitted having taken about $200 from the dead man, probably an understatement according to later testimony at the trial.

Reed was returned to Ritchie County, where authorities rejected his story. They pointed out that, while Cox was more than six feet tall, the shotgun blast which struck him in the head had left a pattern of pellets in the wall just five feet above the floor.

At that point, Reed admitted shooting Cox in cold blood as the victim stooped over to light his oil lamp. The second confession was witnessed by State Police Sergeant C. A. Welty, Prosecuting Attorney Avon Elder, and my uncle, Deputy Sheriff Fred Dotson.

Reed underwent a mental examination and was declared to be sane. Awaiting trial for murder, he spent the winter of 1951-52 in the cell block of the Ritchie County Sheriff's Residence. Reed was quiet but busy as a prisoner, slyly fashioning a key from the metal of his jail cot.

In May of 1952, he succeeded in unlocking his cell, opened the cell door, and fled into the nearby woods.

Fear again swept Ritchie County when residents learned the resourceful killer was running free in the hills. Uncle Fred Dotson urged calm, figuring that sooner or later Reed would have to come out for food. "That's when we'll get him," he predicted.

But it was thirst which proved to be Reed's undoing. Several days after the jailbreak, patrons of a beer parlor in Pennsboro — about ten miles north of Harrisville — became suspicious of a man who periodically entered the tavern to buy carry-out beer. They alerted the local police.

The killer was arrested next door to the tavern, in a hideout that was variously reported to be an abandoned building or a storage shed. Again, Reed surrendered quietly, and was returned to Harrisville.

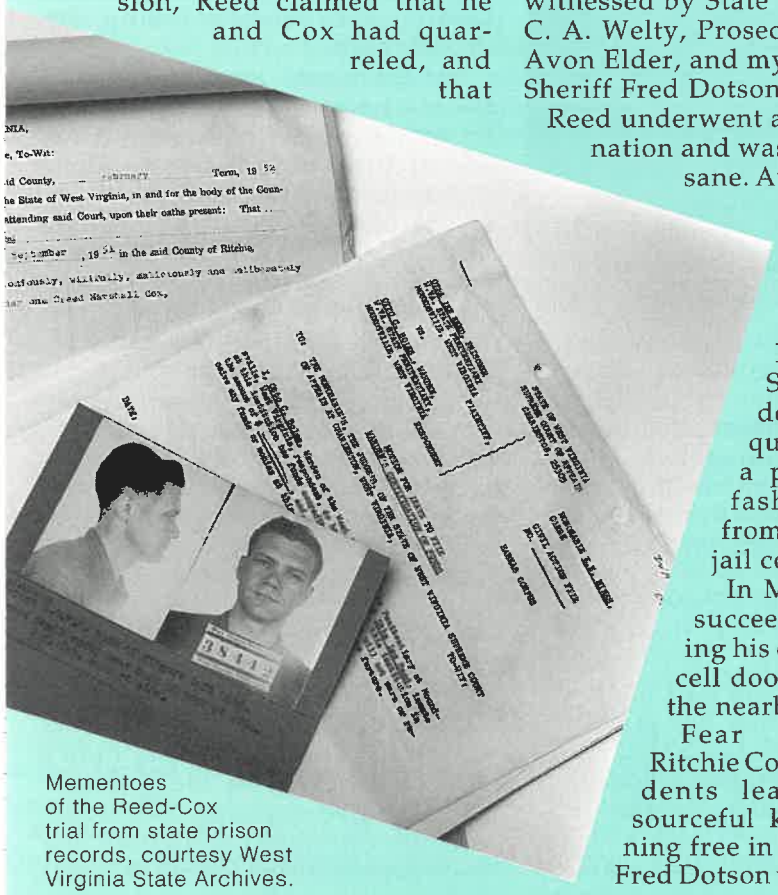
This time, he was placed in solitary confinement in the unused women's cellblock on the second floor of the Sheriff's Residence. Heavy padlocks on his cell door assured that he would remain to stand trial.

In June 1952, trial was held at the stately old Ritchie County Courthouse. West Virginia was then enduring a 98 degree heat wave, and the second-floor courtroom was not air-conditioned. Judge Max DeBerry apologized to jurors for the discomfort, and allowed the men to remove their suit coats.

Otha Lee Reed took the stand in his own behalf. He denied all guilt, saying that he was sick at the time of his arrest and had no recollection of his two confessions. But, after four days of testimony, the sweaty jurymen found him guilty of first-degree murder. Judge DeBerry imposed the sentence.

"It is the judgement of this court," the judge intoned, "that you be confined in the penitentiary of this state for and during the term of your natural life."

— Larry Bartlett



Mementoes of the Reed-Cox trial from state prison records, courtesy West Virginia State Archives.

hind bars, and he told the other prisoners that he was going to give the sheriff a beating.

"The next morning, Fred went into the cell block and unlocked the cell doors so the prisoners could walk in the bull pen. When he turned to leave, the drunk ran out of his cell and tried to hit Fred from behind. But Billy was already in the bull pen. He grabbed the drunk and knocked him to the floor."

Loyal friend and chronic jailbird, Billy was still enjoying the county's hospitality from time to time. Aunt Hildred thinks of him often, and hopes he's had a good life.

During Uncle Fred's term as sheriff, the Dotsons' sons William and Eugene would occasionally bring their families to Harrisville for a visit at the residence. "The *Andy Griffith Show* was popular on TV at the time," says Eugene, now a 63-year-old adjunct professor in North Carolina. "We'd kid Dad about being the sheriff of Mayberry."

And there *was* a Mayberry style of gentleness in Uncle Fred's administration. "For Dad, the worst part about being sheriff was having to seize people's property for back taxes," recalls William Dotson, a 66-year-old retired Air Force sergeant who lives in Ohio. "Whenever possible, he'd pay poor people's delinquent taxes out of his own pocket. Mom raised a fuss when he did it, but Dad felt that everyone in Ritchie County was his friend."

"He'd call on the telephone and say, 'I have a warrant for your arrest. If you want to pack a toothbrush and your shaving gear, I'll come by and pick you up in about an hour.'"

There was even a neighborly tact in the way Sheriff Dotson served arrest warrants. "Dad didn't believe in going to a man's house, unannounced, and hauling him off to jail," says William. "Instead, he'd call the man on the telephone and say: 'I have a warrant for your arrest. If you want to pack a toothbrush and your shaving gear, I'll come by and pick you up in about an hour.'

"There was never a problem. When Dad knocked on the door, his prisoner would come out with a shaving kit and some magazines, ready to go to jail."

The septuagenarian sheriff had a remarkable knack for disarming violent people, bare-handed. Friends recall a number of instances in which he approached an angry person, who was waving a knife or pistol, and calmly took the weapon from the offender's hand. Fearless and friendly in the face of violence, he'd shrug off such episodes. "Just some boys acting up," Uncle Fred would say.

My cousin Eugene remembers watching his father in action. "There was a giant farmhand called Bud*, who used to hang around Harrisville," he says. "Bud was almost seven feet tall, and 300 pounds of solid muscle, but he had the mind of a child. He was a good-natured man, and a tremendous worker, with the strength of a horse.

"Occasionally, Bud would get drunk, and then he'd go wild, smashing everything in sight. No one had ever tried to arrest Bud, because he couldn't understand the law, and he was just physically too much to handle.

Fred Dotson believed that a citizen sheriff should move quietly and respectfully among the people who elected him, using force only as a last resort. He poses here during his deputy days, about 1950. Photographer unknown.

* *Not his real name. —ed*

"Shortly after Dad became sheriff, he got word that Bud was drinking, and that he'd wandered into the basement of the courthouse. He was too drunk to find the stairs, so he was trying to kick his way through the basement wall. Dad deputized me and, as we walked into the courthouse, we could hear Bud rampaging downstairs.

"We walked down to the basement, and I was thinking: 'We won't leave here alive.' But Dad just called out: 'Bud, do you like spaghetti?' Bud said he loved it. So, Dad told him: 'My wife fixed spaghetti for supper, and there's plenty left. Do you want to come over to our house and eat some?'"

Bud was delighted by the offer. He allowed himself to be locked in a cell, and was rewarded with a heaping tray of leftover spaghetti.

"When news of Bud's arrest was heard around town, people asked Dad what he would have done if there had been no spaghetti," laughs Eugene. "Dad just said: 'We'd have put a pot on the stove, real fast.'"

Uncle Fred's term ended in 1964, and the Dotsons moved to Parkersburg. Aunt Hildred managed a series of state-funded group homes for children, and the former sheriff volunteered as the children's tutor. Several of those children, now middle-aged men, still stay in touch with Aunt Hildred.

Horace Britton died in 1966, Uncle Fred in 1972, and the old Ritchie County Sheriff's Residence was torn down in 1977. The jail which replaced it is, to my taste, an ugly building. But Horace Britton and Fred Dotson were practical men. I believe those old-time sheriffs would have admired the modern, high-security jail.

After Uncle Fred died, Aunt Hildred remarried and eventually was widowed again. Still independent, she gets around the house with the aid of a walker. Occasionally, she travels to Harrisville for a visit with her best friend, Stella. But she doesn't want to drive down North Street to look at the new jail.

"After Fred left office, I tried to block all that out of my mind," Aunt Hildred says. "Maybe I'm sentimental, but I hated to see those boys locked up, even if they did deserve it!"

The Ritchie County Courthouse was headquarters to county officials in Horace Britton and Fred Dotson's day, and to a long line of office holders before and after. The handsome limestone building is the centerpiece of Harrisville, the county seat.

Court has been held in Harrisville since 1843, although the current courthouse is considerably younger than that. The construction contract was awarded in late 1922, and the building was completed the following year. The portico and tower were added just after construction of the main building.

The Harrisville Woman's Club raised funds to install the courthouse clock in 1924. The bell from the county's first courthouse occupies the belfry above. This is Ritchie County's third courthouse, replacing earlier brick structures. Photo by Michael Keller.

"Go See Willard"

Selling Farm Machinery in Preston County

By Carl E. Feather

If you could travel back six decades in Preston County, scenes of labor-intensive farming would greet you.

Say it's late spring or early summer, hay making time. Toiling along the windrows kicked up by the side-delivery rake would be one or two young men, most likely brothers, pitching the hay onto a horse-drawn wagon. Standing on the mound of hay would be another boy or two, carefully redistributing the load. The father or older brother might be sitting in the driver's seat, keeping a smart pace that ensured a steady outpouring of sweat from those in the rear.

But advance in time just five years, and the scene changes significantly. A horse-drawn wagon is still negotiating the steep hillsides. But where a couple boys once labored with pitchforks, an automatic hay loader now grabs the grass from the windrow and delivers it to the wagon.

Fast forward another five years and the hay loader is replaced by a baler. Only two men, perhaps a father and son, are making hay where five labored just a decade before. The other three might be fighting in the Pacific, studying at college or working in a factory job out of state. The horses are gone too, replaced by a chugging 30-horsepower Ford or Farmall tractor.

The man who most likely sold the farmer his hay loader, baler, tractor and other farm implements was Willard Feather. In the 1940's, Willard was a Marco Polo of farm machinery. Willard traveled to the east — New Jersey, Pennsylvania, nearby states where farming was declining — and purchased surplus machinery. Back home, he found a ready market for the equipment as World War II and far-off factories robbed West Virginia's family farms of their manpower.

Well over 50 years since he sold his first hay loader, Willard is still in the farm machinery business. Farmers from across West Virginia as well as Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania make the trip to Aurora when they need equipment. In these parts, "Willard Feather" is as much a farm machinery name as John Deere or Allis-Chalmers.

No big sign marks Willard's place of business — the back and side yards of his U.S. Route 50 home, which is a stone's throw from the Maryland state line. The presence of new and used equipment lined up in the front yard is sufficient notice. Then again, after doing business for 50 years in the same location there's no sense in advertising. You probably already know about him if you need what he sells.

Stop during business hours and you will most likely find Willard in the white barn with the corrugated steel roof — his office, repair shop, parts department and sales room. In the rear of the barn is Willard's desk, in a makeshift office cluttered with parts catalogs and overhung by V-belts and a single incandescent bulb. Bathed in the harsh light of that bulb, he shared the story of his success with me — how a farm boy with an eighth-grade education came to revolutionize farming in these parts and make a good living in the process.

Willard James Feather was born March 29, 1910, in Grange Hall, a short distance from Aurora. The fourth child of eight born to James and Estella Harsh Feather, Willard was introduced to farm work early in life, with simple chores like hauling wood and cleaning stables assigned to him at the age of five.

When Willard was nine, the family moved to a 140-acre farm in Eglon, a couple miles east of Grange Hall. It was a basic stock farm — cattle, sheep, hogs, and the hay and grain to feed them. There was plenty of work for the five boys, and farming came before schooling.

"I went to the eighth grade, but I never got to go get my diploma," he said. "I had to stay home and farm, plow and work. Generally, we started going to school at the last of October, after the fall work was done. In the springtime, we had to plow and haul manure and everything. But I would rather stay at home and work than go to school,

Willard Feather demonstrates an antique dump rake. He says he sent hundreds of these to the scrap pile as farmers traded up to side delivery rakes, hay loaders and balers. Photo ©1994 Carl Feather.

anyway."

But farm work provided little in the way of monetary gain, especially for a young man who had marrying on his mind. "I worked for a farmer many and many a day for ten cents an hour," Willard said. "Farmers helped each other."

Electricity came to his part of the country in the mid-1920's, and Willard found work in the woods cutting trees for utility poles. He was paid $5 for each pole he delivered.

That involved finding the tree, cutting it down, trimming the branches off and pulling it out of the woods with a team of horses. The poles were 25 to 30 feet long and 14 to 16 inches in diameter at their base. "They had to be pretty nice and straight for them to use for a pole," he said. If the poles were fairly accessible, Willard could harvest four to six of them a day.

In the early years of the Depression, Willard found work building roads in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He was already experienced in road construction. Willard and his brother Guy, now deceased, had dug the culverts along U.S. Route 50 from Red House, Maryland, into West Virginia — by hand. When the concrete pavement was poured, Willard and another brother, Russel, worked as concrete finishers.

Willard made his first trip to New Jersey in a 1935 International truck. "It ran about 35, 40 miles per hour. I bought it used."

By 1933, after a courtship of three years, Willard felt affluent enough to marry his sweetheart, Alice Blamble of Bayard. They had met at a school box supper. "I bought her box, so we ate together and got acquainted and started going together," he said.

They were married under the oak tree at Gnegy Church. "Pappy" John S. Fike officiated.

"I told the preacher, 'I don't have any money to pay you.' He said, 'You don't owe me nothing.' But I said, 'Yeah, I'll pay you.' And after a few months, I got $5 and went down and gave it to him," Willard remembered. "You didn't have money, that was the '30's."

Work at sawmills in West Virginia and Virginia provided Willard with a small income to support his wife and three daughters during the Depression. Willard recalls starting at 17 and a half cents an hour and working his way up to 35 cents.

He became knowledgeable about the lumber business and its equipment. Despite having only an eighth-grade education, he was hired as a superintendent by several sawmill operations. He also formed a partnership with two other men to purchase a tract of land at Job and set up their own lumber company.

"We were going to go into the timber business," he said. "I bought a truck and I went to New Jersey to get a dozer at one of those Army surplus auctions. Of course, when

we got there, we found out they had everything bought up, and you couldn't buy anything from them except at a big price. They sold it by bulk, they didn't sell one at a time."

Although the auction turned out to be a disappointment, the trip launched his new career.

"I got to looking around and I saw a couple of hay loaders there," he said. "I seen them setting outside the farmer's building and asked if they'd be interested in selling them. They said, 'Yeah,' they'd sell them. They just weren't using them any more.

"We didn't have those at home...so I just said to myself, 'I'll buy a couple of them and take them back with me on my truck.' So, when I got back home everyone wanted hay loaders," he continued. "They went to selling. I hauled over 500 hay loaders down from Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and different states."

Willard recalls 1938 as the year of his first trip to New Jersey. He made it in a 1935 International truck. "It ran about 35, 40 miles per hour. I bought it used," he said.

Farmers in New Jersey and other mid-Atlantic states were selling their machinery to purchase newer, more efficient equipment. Some were selling out to residential and industrial development. The machinery was in good condition and seldom older than two or three years.

A used hay loader could be purchased for $100 to $125 and sold for $175 to $200. Recognizing that there was more money in hay loaders than timber, Willard dissolved his partnership with the other two men and went into business for himself.

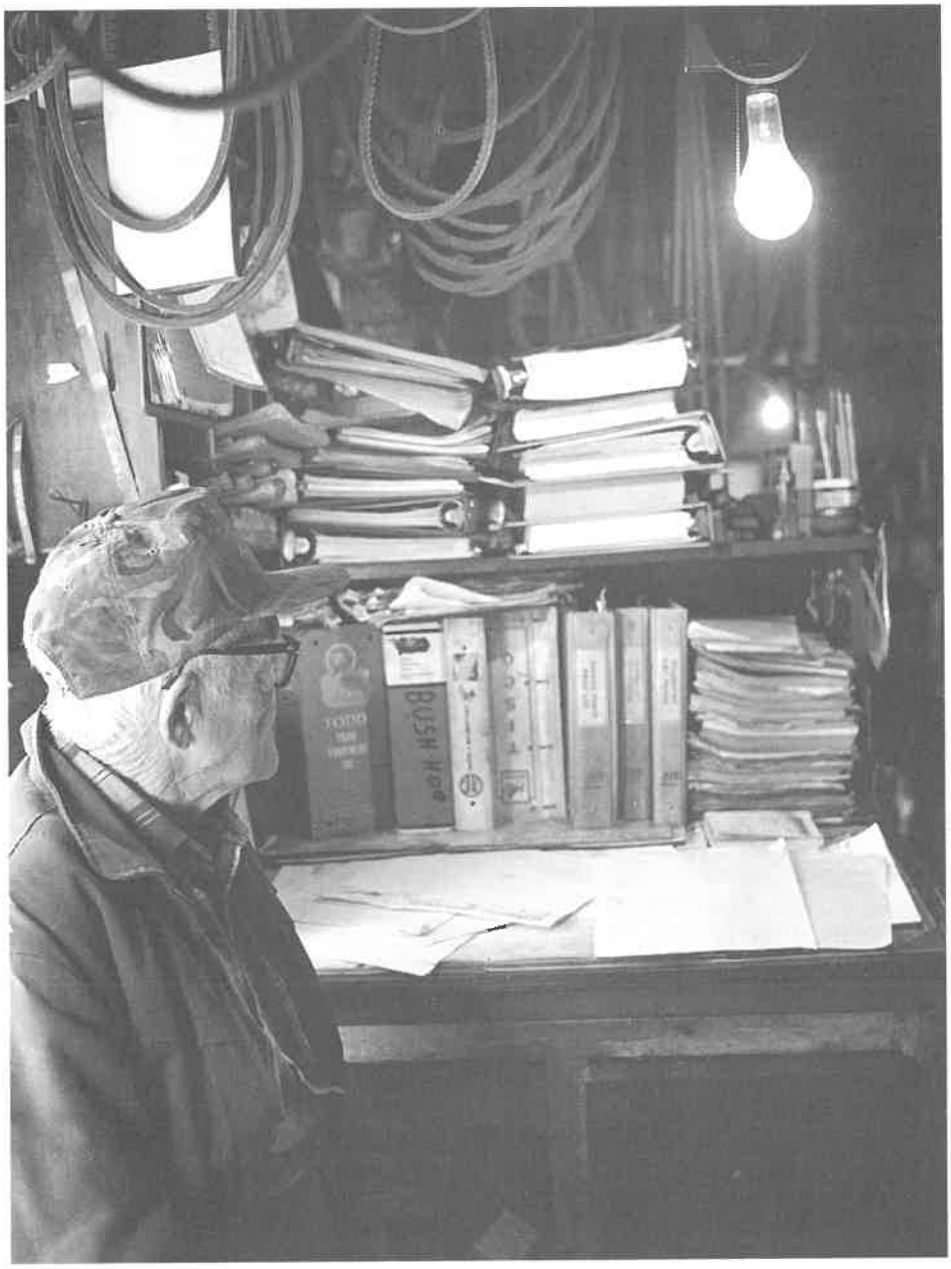
"I worked for other fellas a long time," he said. "Every day the big shot would come out and say, 'Willard, you did awfully good today. Do you think you can do a little better tomorrow?' I said, I'd go in business for myself. That way, if I made a buck, I'd keep the whole thing. It would all be mine."

His first sales lot was at his home in Eglon. The business eventually outgrew that, and in 1956 he and Alice purchased a 50-acre tract east of Aurora. Willard farmed the land, built a stone house on the property and added a sales barn and other out buildings.

"Eight hours wasn't no day for me," he said. "It was 12, 16, even 24-hour days." Willard said it was not unusual for him to drive to New Jersey, purchase equipment and drive back home without any sleep. Despite logging hundreds of thousands of miles in business travel, he has had only one traffic crash, and it wasn't his fault.

Although he had a sales lot where equipment was on display, most of Willard's selling was done on the farms of his customers. A farmer would see his neighbor using a hay loader and want to know how he could get one. "Go see Willard" was the standard response.

"I was the one who promoted the thing in this country," Willard said.



Willard's business philosophy calls for a simple desk and plenty of service manuals. He trained himself in service as well as sales. Photo ©1994 Carl Feather.

Old tractors get better — or at least worth more — with age. This Ford-Ferguson 30, about 45 years old, was worth about $1400 new and twice that today. Photo ©1994 Carl Feather.

"They'd come here and wait for me. I used to come in with a load of hay loaders and there would be like ten guys sitting here to buy them. They'd come from miles and miles to buy them."

Preston County farms were not large in the 1930's and '40's, their size often limited by the number of able-bodied men in a family. Any help in the way of mechanization was appreciated. "The biggest farm around here was probably 125 to 150 acres, and 75 percent of them were less than 100 acres," Willard said.

Willard built his farm machinery business on the progression of second generation equipment replacing first. Hay baler replaced hay loader; threshing machines succeeded grain binders; tractors relieved teams of horses. Although the technology of the used machinery was five or ten years old when he bought it, the equipment represented a significant improvement for the small family farms he served.

"I started bringing tractors in right after the hay loaders," he said. "Most of them came out of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and around New York. They sold those farms to housing developments and for industrial developments."

"I worked for other fellows a long time. Every day the big shot would come out and say, 'Willard, you did awfully good today. Do you think you can do a little better tomorrow?'"

Ford Model 9N, Farmall Model A and H and Allis-Chalmers tractors were among the most popular tractors Willard sold. Most were in the 30- to 35-horsepower range, a perfect match for the small family farms of Preston County.

"You could take that tractor out and work it all day, and you didn't have to stop and rest it," he said. "You came home in the evening, and you didn't have to put it in the barn or feed it and care for it and everything else."

A farmer might sell a cow or two to raise the money to purchase a new tractor or baler, and trade his team of horses in on the purchase. "They farmed with horses. I traded a lot of horses," Willard recalled.

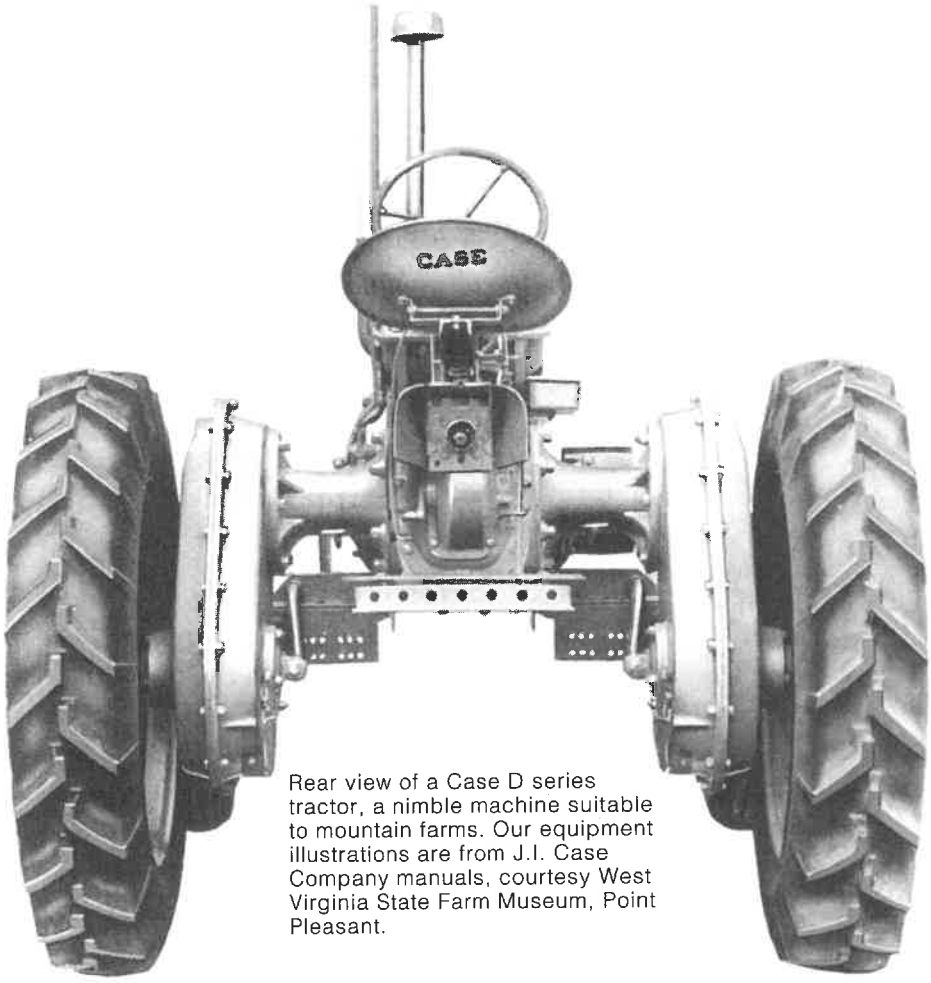
"Sometimes I'd sell them to another farmer and sometimes I'd take them to an auction," he said. "One time I traded a guy a horse for a gun, a rifle. I still have it."

Any machinery taken in trade was repaired and resold if there was a market. Willard often had a buyer for the trade-in even as he made his deal. "In the wintertime they'd stop in here and tell me what they were interested in," he said. "When spring came, I'd have 40 to 50 people's names written down who were looking for stuff."

As for really antiquated equipment, "some of it's setting up in the woods," he said, motioning to the fence row above his house. "Some of it was cut up for scrap iron, some of it rusted up. Now, people go around and take the wheels off those things and set them in the

Tool Quiz: Not everything sold by Willard Feather was tractor-powered or motorized. Can you tell us what this man-sized apparatus is and how it was used? Please write.

PHOTO ©1994 CARL FEATHER



Rear view of a Case D series tractor, a nimble machine suitable to mountain farms. Our equipment illustrations are from J.I. Case Company manuals, courtesy West Virginia State Farm Museum, Point Pleasant.

front of their driveways."

Willard made it a policy not to buy or sell shoddy machinery. "I always said it cost me just as much to haul a piece of junk as it did a good piece," he said.

He also sold new equipment, but was very cautious about becoming a franchised dealer. He preferred to work as a sub-dealer, purchasing equipment through a franchised dealer and re-selling it. "I didn't want the franchise," he said. "I wanted to do what I wanted to do."

Gradually Willard built a network of farmers and dealers who could provide him with whatever a customer needed. "I could get my hands on any kind of equipment the guy wanted," he said. "I could get anything. If a dealer around here didn't have it, I could get it through another dealer some place else."

He made some exceptions on his franchise rule. He has held a New Idea franchise for 40 years, and he was the first dealer to sell for the Stahl Company of Pittsburgh. He sold the first David Brown tractor in the tri-state area and made several trips to England where he met with David Brown himself and toured the factory.

Willard rode changing technology like a mountain ridge and capitalized upon every new opportunity. When a milk route was put in along Route 50, he recognized that farmers would need supplies. He stocked cans, coolers, milkers and related equipment.

"We traded in most everything," he said. "I traded in all kinds of machinery, plows, horses and stuff. I sold a lot of deep freezes and refrigerators when they first came out in this part of the country. I always stuck to the main brands. I never was someone to bring in something people couldn't get service for."

Willard's business included the servicing and repair of farm equipment, which he continues to offer. "I just learned it, that's all," he said of the service work. "I never went to school for it, I just learned. I could take a piece of machinery and make it work."

He also learned to keep his overhead down by operating out of his barns and holding his sales and advertising costs to next to nothing. "I tell you, I spent very little money for public advertising," Willard said. "And we never had no salesmen. Alice sold a lot of it, if I was gone. I'd mark it down in my book, how much I'd have to have for it, and she could look it up and tell you the price.

"What I always tried to do was keep you satisfied so you went home and you told your neighbor where you bought it and he'd come and buy from me. And that's the way it is today."

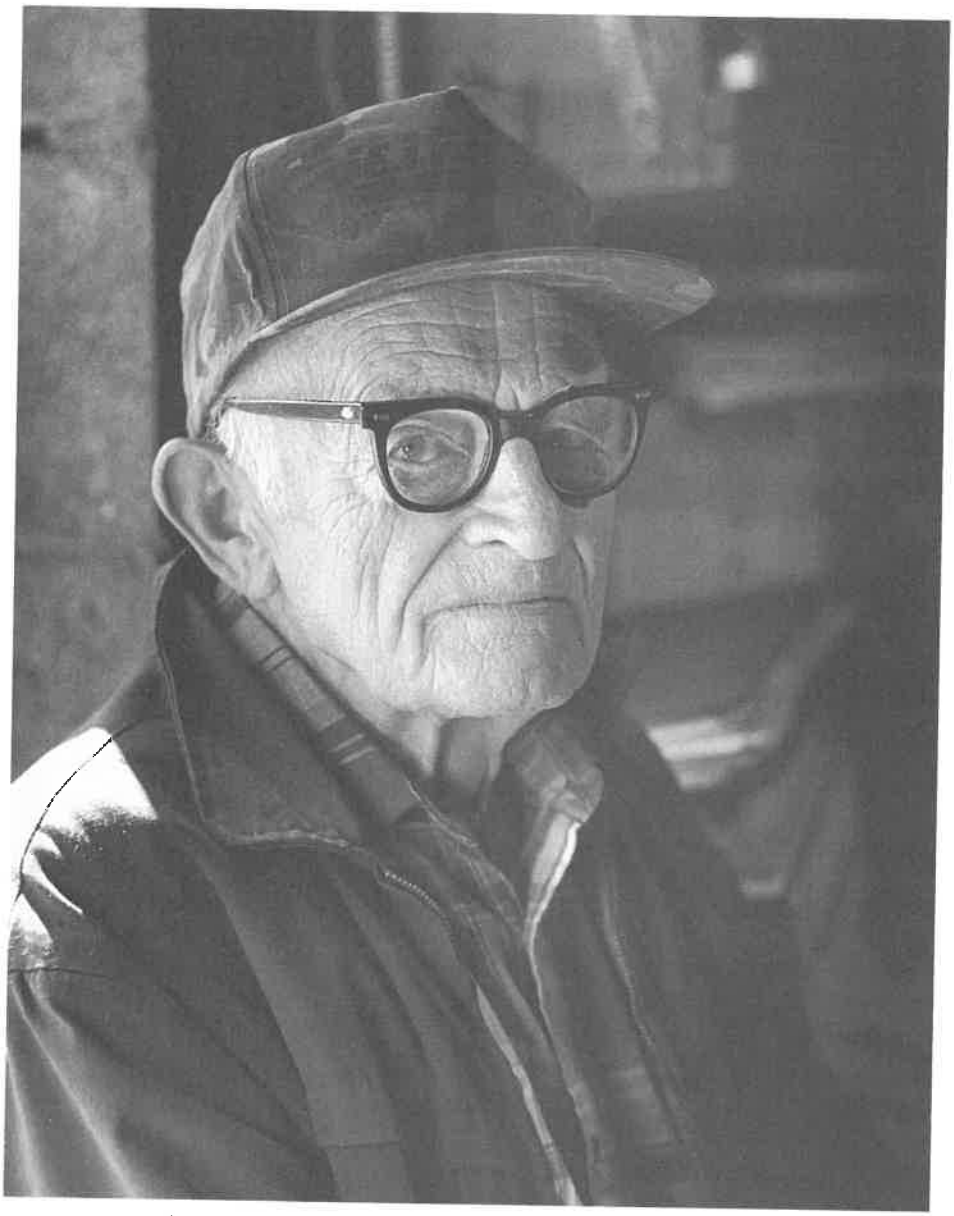
His sales attracted the attention and recognition of the farm machinery manufacturers. Willard and Alice won trips to Mexico, Hawaii, Scotland, England, France and Las Vegas for high volume sales. "They couldn't understand how I could do it without a salesman," he said. "All this business in this little building."

Others saw his success and tried to duplicate it. After all, if Willard Feather could buy equipment out-of-state and make a tidy profit for hauling back to Preston County, why couldn't the next guy do the same?

"Eight hours wasn't no day for me. It was 12, 16, even 24-hour days."

"The thing of it was, there wasn't nobody that had the ability and knew what to do," he said. "After I was into it for a couple of years, some fellows around here thought I was making a lot of money and they'd go into it. They went up there to buy stuff and those dealers I bought stuff off of wouldn't sell them anything."

Willard cemented his business relationships with honesty and fair-



You can still do business on character, hard work and a handshake in Preston County. Willard Feather says he has never written a sales contract in his 84 years. Photo ©1994 Carl Feather.

ness. "I always paid for what I bought and if I told him I was going to take it, I'd take it," he said. He expected the same from his customers and showed his trust by never writing a contract.

"I sold all this machinery and I never wrote a contract," he said. "If you come in here and you bought that baler — for, say $14,000 — I never filled out a contract. If you said you were going to take it, that was good enough."

During the late 1970's, when farm credit became very tight, Willard rode out the storm with local farmers, including those who were just getting established.

"What we did then, with a lot of the farmers, was I just had to trust them," he said. "They just paid me as they could. I helped a lot of farmers through the tough times. If they needed machinery, I waited until they could pay me.

"We helped an awful lot of people get started. A lot of them come in here and say, 'If it hadn't been for you, Willard, we'd never been able to do it.' I was just tickled to be able to help them."

At 85, Willard is not about to change his business practices — or to quit. "I expect to stay on here as long as the Good Lord lets me," he said. "I wouldn't be satisfied with nothing else." He continues to sell both new and used equipment for New Idea, Case, Heston, Bush Hog, Fox and many other manufacturers.

Hay-making machinery, plows and silage equipment are the mainstays of his new equipment sales now. He still attends auctions and buys used equipment, but he says the deals and opportunities are not like they were 40 or 50 years ago.

Indeed, demand for all farm equipment has dwindled, and nowadays much of his business comes from the lawn and garden market. "There's not a quarter of the farms that there used to be," he said.

The farms that remain are larger than the ones of four decades ago and require larger tractors to work them. "Most farms now are 300 to 500 acres," he said. "Some are plowing up to 1,000 acres." The 30-horsepower tractor Willard sold in the 1940's and 1950's is hardly more than a good-sized garden tractor today. Seventy-five to 100 horsepower models are now standard, he said.

Willard confesses to being a workaholic, and has done more than a little farming himself. He cleared much of the 150-acre tract surrounding his house by removing one tree, one rock, at a time. An infant Youghiogheny River flows through the pasture, which resembles a park thanks to Willard's ardent attention. All told, he owns and looks after about 800 acres of farmland, and pastures anywhere from 100 to 150 head of cattle. Consistent with his sharp eye for a good deal, most of his land was purchased at tax foreclosure sales.

His only regret is that Alice is no longer here to share it with him. She died in March 1992. Willard gives much of the credit for his success to Alice, who was also his bookkeeper and business manager.

"I have loved the business," he said of his life's work. "I loved to be with people, meet people and know what went on all around the country. I have lots of friends.

"People say to me, 'Willard, how in the Sam Hill did you ever do so much yourself?' And I say it's just been by people helping me, by people saying, 'Go see Willard. Go see Willard, he'll have what you need.'" ✱

The WHJC travel trailer motto suits Jimmy Wolford just fine. He has spent plenty of time on the road.

A Happy Warrior

Over the Humps with Jimmy Wolford

By Kyle D. Lovern

Photographs by Michael Keller

Williamson native Jimmy Wolford began performing as a child, working Mingo County street corners and World War II troop trains as they traveled through southern West Virginia. Eventually his talent and personality led him to Hollywood and Nashville, to presidential inaugural balls in Washington, and to many points in between.

A lot of it involved politics, especially after Wolford's charm opened the door for him to become an aide to presidential candidate Hubert H. Humphrey. He performed the duties of an advance man for Humphrey's campaigns and often entertained crowds until it was time for Humphrey to make his speech.

During the tumultuous campaigns of the 1960's and early 1970's, this descendant of the McCoy side of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud accumulated a lifetime of memories. And as Jimmy Wolford recalls his past, he always winds up back in his hometown of Will-

Jimmy's boss, Hubert Humphrey, was the original Happy Warrior. He congratulates Jimmy on a new record in the photo below, and speaks his piece while Jimmy stands by to entertain a Kanawha County crowd in 1960. Photographers unknown.

iamson, dubbed the "Heart of the Billion Dollar Coalfield." The streets of the county seat of Mingo County are where he began to learn the showmanship and salesmanship which has put money in his pocket and mileage on his boots.

Jimmy, who lived in the east end of town, grew up beside the big Norfolk & Western rail yard that provided so many Williamsonians with jobs. His father was a conductor for the railroad company. In the 1940's he took Jimmy along on troop trains to Bluefield. The boy would bring his box guitar. Soon a hat was passed among the soldiers, and young Wolford would play and sing for their tips.

Before that, Jimmy had peddled vegetable plants in downtown Williamson. Later, during his teen years, he worked as an usher at the old Cinderella Theatre and sold newspapers to make spending money. He graduated from Williamson High School in 1952 and was presented the Harriet Strong Award as the school's best musician.

In fact, Jimmy was an All-state percussionist, and also played football and basketball in high school. "I would take off my shoulder pads and jersey at halftime, put on a band jacket, and perform with the marching band," the versatile Wolford said recently.

Following graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy with several high school buddies. After boot camp, he went through hospital corpsman school and finished in the top ten in his class. That enabled Wolford to pick his choice of duty.

"I would take off my shoulder pads and jersey at halftime, put on a band jacket, and perform with the marching band."

"I could have gone about anywhere, but as I looked down the list, I saw a job as personal corpsman for retired Admiral Ernest King," he recalled. King had been one of Franklin Roosevelt's top men during World War II, and the idea of working for the venerable seaman intrigued Wolford. Soon he had the assignment.

Although King was retired from active duty during the years Wolford knew him, he had served as chief of naval expeditions during the war, attaining the exalted rank of Admiral of the Fleet by 1944. According to Wolford, King was still called upon for military advice even during his retirement. Wolford traveled to many new places with him, making sure that the aging admiral took his medication and keeping a check on his blood pressure.

Wolford's next tour of duty sent him to North Africa, where he spent 27 months. While there he delivered 27 babies of military personnel, with only his minor medical training to guide him through. He organized a country-and-western band and performed at the PX on weekends.

After his stint in Africa, Wolford

wound up his military career and returned to the States in 1956. His first stop was Tulsa, Oklahoma. By day he worked at Hillcrest Medical Center, moonlighting nights and weekends by performing in nightclubs.

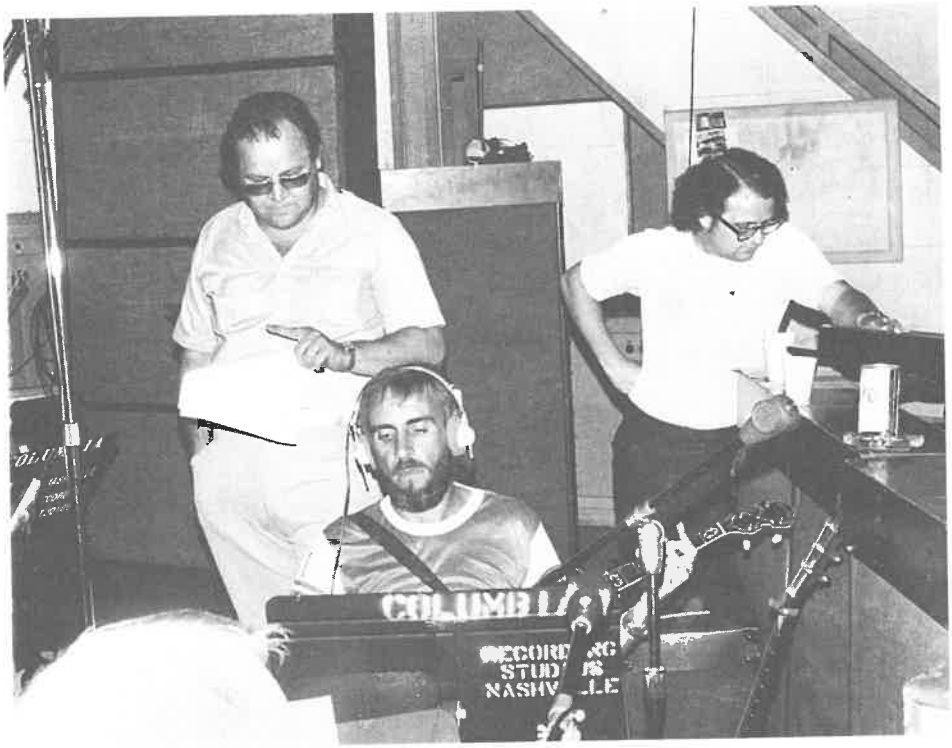
Soon Jimmy Wolford signed his first recording contract, with Four Star Records of Los Angeles. His first release was a song he entitled "Teeny Weeny Man."

"It was a novelty song about a little green man from Mars," he recently explained. The record never made a hit, but the West Coast was good exposure for the young veteran. "While in California, I got to meet people like Patsy Cline, Ferlin Husky and Tennessee Ernie Ford," he recalled. Wolford performed on the local "Hometown Jamboree" television show, and many of his songs made the *Billboard* Top 100 List.

After playing gigs in the Golden State and other western locales, Wolford decided to take a break from performing. He returned to the Tug Valley in 1960 to visit with his parents. It wasn't part of his plans, but he arrived home just in time for the biggest election battle in the history of West Virginia, the Kennedy-Humphrey slug fest in the 1960 primary campaign.

He took a temporary job as a disc jockey and advertising salesman at Williamson radio station WBTH. Then a visit to the station by a Hubert Humphrey campaign worker changed Wolford's life in a dramatic way. "After talking to him and selling him some campaign spots, he offered me $50 per day to help campaign for Hubert," Wolford said. The man who made this offer was Minnesota Governor Karl Rolvaag.

Fifty dollars a day was a lot of money in 1960. Wolford toured throughout West Virginia with Humphrey, building up crowds by playing country music and then handing over the microphone to the Democratic presidential hopeful. Between stops Wolford picked his guitar on Humphrey's "Happy Warrior" campaign bus, while staffers sang along to songs like "I'm Gonna Vote For Hubert Humphrey."



Harmonica man Charlie McCoy (right) was among the musicians featured on Wolford's Hatfield-McCoy album. Jimmy stands at left in the 1976 scene from Nashville.

"I already liked Humphrey before I got the job and would have voted for him anyway," Wolford said. "He was a union man, and I liked that, and he was a strong advocate for the civil rights movement." Wolford had felt strongly about the rights issue since his days growing up in a segregated school system. "I had a good friend who was black, and I never could understand why he couldn't go to the same school as I did," he recalled.

"Humphrey was a union man, and I liked that, and he was a strong advocate for the civil rights movement."

The 1960 presidential primary contest started as a horse race, with several strong Democrats in the field and no incumbent to worry about. Humphrey's campaign had run into a major snag in the young and vibrant John F. Kennedy, however, and the place Kennedy defeated Humphrey was West Virginia. Ours was the first Southern state that the New Englander won in the long primary season, and the victory proved that a Catholic candidate could carry off Protestant votes in large numbers. The win turned the tide for Kennedy, who soon became his party's nominee.

Humphrey conceded the nomination and became a strong supporter of Kennedy in the fall campaign against Richard Nixon. Wolford and Humphrey had become good friends during the West Virginia race, and the Minnesota senator asked Wolford to join his staff when the Humphrey entourage left the state.

"I kept up with his daily itinerary and helped him campaign for reelection to the U.S. Senate," Wolford remembered. It was a busy time. While the Humphrey organization campaigned for their man's return to the Senate, they also helped Kennedy and his vice-presidential choice Lyndon Johnson during their general election campaign.

One of Wolford's fondest memories is of the night he introduced John Kennedy at a campaign rally in St. Paul, Minnesota.

"They turned out all the lights except for one blue spotlight," Wolford recalled. "I introduced him as the next President of the United States, and as he made his way to the podium the blue light followed him. He had such an aura about him — such a charisma — it seemed like he almost floated onto the stage."

Later that year, in Los Angeles, Wolford attended the first of several Democratic National Conventions.

One of Wolford's scariest memories is of the time he foiled a possible attempt on Humphrey's life. "We were in Oakland, California, and Hubert had just finished a speech," he recalled. "We had gotten in our caravan of cars when a man dressed as a priest jumped in the car I was riding."

Wolford had been briefed by the Secret Service to look for suspicious characters in the campaign crowds. Now he had one on his hands. "I told the man that he wasn't allowed to be in the car. He looked at me and said, 'What would happen if I threw firecrackers at Humphrey's car?' I thought, 'This man is a wacko.'"

As soon as the car neared the next destination, Wolford instructed the driver to turn off a block from where Humphrey would be. He quickly notified Secret Service agents, who apprehended the man. The man was carrying a .22-caliber handgun.

Once Kennedy was in the White House and Hubert Humphrey back in the Senate, Jimmy Wolford was on his own. During the next three years, he began performing and recording again. "My next single was a song called 'Impatient Heart,'" he recently recalled.

Impatient is a good word to describe Wolford in this period, as he moved from project to project. During breaks from music and politics, he could always find temporary work at radio stations in Williamson or nearby Matewan.

Wolford found himself on the Democratic bandwagon again in 1964, once more campaigning for Hubert Humphrey, this time for vice-president on the Johnson ticket.

"We campaigned in 47 states," Wolford remembered. The Mingo musician traveled with Humphrey and Johnson to every state except Hawaii, Alaska and Alabama. This was the big time, a full-blown national presidential campaign. Wolford rubbed elbows with movie stars. He recalls meeting Lorne Greene, Henry Fonda, Eddie Arnold, Janet Leigh, the Kingston Trio and Gene Autry.

"This was a big thrill for me, coming from a small town like Williamson," Wolford admitted.

Wolford's man won this time, and the Johnson-Humphrey team rolled into the White House. One of Johnson's main programs, the War on Poverty, had direct impact back home. "National magazines, such as *Life* and *Look*, and press writers had written stories depicting Appalachia as a destitute area. Mingo County was included in these stories," Wolford reminisced.

"I don't think some West Virginians wanted to acknowledge the poverty that outsiders found in our state," he added.

In 1965 Wolford became assistant director of the Economic Opportunity Commission for his home county. He worked for EOC Director Huey Perry, who later authored *They'll Cut Off Your Project*, a book describing the tricky business of fitting national social programs into the tight fabric of southern West Virginia politics.

The Mingo poverty organization, which was designed to help the poor, in fact became a "political football" according to Wolford. "We traveled around to the differ-

Jimmy Wolford Sings

In 1976 Jimmy Wolford made the album, "The Hatfields and the McCoys: The Great Vendetta." The recording told the story of the famous feud between the two mountain families based on Wolford's research and some family information. Jimmy's mother is a McCoy, descended from a brother of feud leader Randall McCoy.

The "Vendetta" album was a first in that it presented the story set to music. Wolford was accompanied on the album by harmonica man Charlie McCoy and other Nashville musicians. Since that time, the original LP records have sold out — 33,000 in all — and cassettes and CD's have been produced. Though the CD's are now also sold out, the original songs are available on cassette for $10, plus $2 shipping and handling. Send orders to Jimmy Wolford, P.O. Box 1233, Williamson, WV 25661.

Wolford says that more CD's will be produced in May, and will sell for $12.

A McCoy on his mother's side, Jimmy slipped the GOLDENSEAL photographer across the Tug Fork into Kentucky for this picture at a McCoy family cemetery. Principal feud victims are buried here.

ent hollows organizing communities. We told them the government will help you, but you first must help yourself," said Wolford.

"I have become a more conservative person with age," Wolford added, and maybe he means skeptical as well. "I think the total greed that existed before will come again. The organization will be back," he said, speaking of the time-tested political apparatus. "You can't keep the machine down," he added. "They'll always have a certain amount of power, especially in rural counties."

In any case, Jimmy Wolford himself had seen enough of poverty warrioring after 15 months. He resigned his position with the Economic Opportunity Commission and ventured back into the world of country music. Then in 1968, he got the call again from Humphrey's camp. This time his friend wanted Wolford to help him campaign for president.

It was a tumultuous year. Lyndon Johnson, in trouble for his Vietnam policy, had declined to run again for president. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in April, and Bobby Kennedy was gunned down in June.

Hubert Humphrey became his party's candidate during the turmoil of a bitter national convention in Chicago, but it was a mixed victory in divisive times. "I believe if Bobby Kennedy had not been shot in Los Angeles, he would have been the Democratic nominee," Wolford said honestly.

But Wolford stood loyally by his own man, and there seems to have been a genuine affection between the two of them. "Hubert asked me one day, 'Jimmy, if I become president, what kind of job do you want?'" Wolford remembered. "I told him simply, if you go to London, England, I want to go, or if you go to Paris, France, or Moscow, I want to go along for the ride."

This did not happen, however, as Richard Nixon squeaked by Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 general election.

"I guess 1972 was the last hurrah for Humphrey," Wolford said. The Minnesota senator made one more try for a presidential nomination, but this time it was George McGovern's turn.

America continued to be a troubled place, sometimes frightening for those in political life. "I was with Hubert in Maryland the day George Wallace was shot," Wolford remembered. "That really bothered us. We went to the hospital and stayed until he was out of danger." The Alabama governor was paralyzed from his wounds, but lived.

Wolford went on to reveal a startling secret that he has never before told. It might have changed the election in 1972, he believes.

"In 1972, Hubert H. Humphrey lost by two percent to McGovern in California," Wolford recalled. "We worked to get our proportion of delegate votes, but didn't. Two years later the law changed, and we would have gotten the delegates we deserved.

"If Hubert had gotten his proportion of delegates, George Wallace was going to throw his support to Humphrey and give up his delegates. Then if Hubert would have won the Democratic nomination, Wallace was going to go on the ticket with him as Humphrey's vice presidential mate."

That notion may jolt those who remember the politics of that era. Wolford compares it to John Kennedy picking Lyndon Johnson as his running mate in 1960, which unified the Democratic Party.

"After the Wallace incident, we took our Hubert H. Humphrey 'Happy Warrior' signs off the campaign bus and blacked out the windows," Wolford said. "You never knew what could happen." Among those signs was one on the back of the bus that read "Over the Humps."

Later that summer, Wolford attended his last Democratic Convention, this time in Miami. Then once

Battle of Matewan Commemorated

Visitors to the Matewan Massacre battle scene may now orient themselves to the historic location by an on-site audio recording recently installed by the Matewan Development Center.

On May 19, 1920, striking union miners led by the town's police chief, Sid Hatfield, battled Baldwin-Felts detective agents employed by the coal company. Ten men died. And the violence continued when Hatfield and deputy Ed Chambers were shot down in cold blood on the Welch courthouse steps in 1921.

The center's director, C. Paul McAllister, says the "Battle of Matewan" audiotape was done as a local project. It includes memories of witnesses to the bloody battle. Produced by Susan Leffler of West Virginia Public Radio, the tape is programmed to play during daylight hours. Visitors activate the tape with a doorbell on an adjacent building from the battle era, and can view the street where the shootout took place as the tape plays. The presentation is about 15 minutes long.

COURTESY STATE ARCHIVES

Sid Hatfield of Matewan

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Matewan. McAllister says a special commemorative event will be held in the Mingo County town. For more information contact the Matewan Development Center, P.O. Box 368, Matewan, WV 25678; (304)426-4239.

again he returned to Williamson.

He had always kept up his connections back home. In 1972, Wolford, along with his long-time friend, Bob Stanley, had organized a country music show with the benefits going to the survivors of the Buffalo Creek flood disaster in Logan County. The show raised $25,000 for the victims.

Over the years, he brought big name country music entertainers to Mingo County, including the late Conway Twitty, Loretta Lynn, Hank Williams, Jr., Tex Ritter and more.

"Throughout my travels, when someone found out where I was from, talk would always turn to the Hatfield and McCoy Feud," Wolford said. That is when he decided to research the story of the world's most famous family feud. In 1976 he wrote, recorded and produced "The Hatfields and the McCoys: The Great Vendetta," an LP album including several original songs about the feud.

This led to an appearance on the television game show *To Tell The Truth*. During that trip, Wolford met producer Bill Goodson of Goodson-Toddman Productions, who produced the popular program. A short time late, Goodson's company came out with the game show *Family Feud*. Wolford later arranged for a contingent of Hatfield and McCoy descendants to appear on that show.

"I introduced Kennedy as the next President of the United States, and as he made his way to the podium the blue spotlight followed him. It seemed like he almost floated onto the stage."

The last few years, the 64-year-old Wolford has tried to "live a normal life," he said. He is currently staying near his mom and dad, a few miles from Williamson on the Kentucky side of the Tug Fork.

"I would like to get back into the music industry, but it's a young man's world," Wolford reflected recently. Still he has plans to write some songs commemorating the Matewan Massacre, the bloody 1920 Mine Wars shootout.

Wolford became a bit nostalgic as he noted the deaths last year of Richard Nixon and Congressman Tip O'Neil. And he fought back tears as he recalled the earlier death and funeral of Hubert Humphrey. Plainly, the passing of these public figures has prompted private reflection on the part of this man who took a smaller role in the political struggles of their era.

"When you are living through times in your life, you take them for granted," Wolford said. "I traveled a lot of places, met a lot of important people, saw a lot of things and got educated on the road."

At times it was a bumpy ride, as Jimmy Wolford will admit, but he always managed to get over the humps and back home again.

Jimmy Wolford is happy to take things a little slower now, as he looks back on a busy life on the road and in his native Tug Valley.

Looking Back on a Busy Life

Phyllis Hamrick of St. Albans

By Helen Carper

Phyllis Pearson Hamrick has removed her birth announcement from her book of memories and had it encased in a block of clear plastic. It is an unusual keepsake. On one side of the postcard, postmarked November 17, 1910, is a picture of her father's bank. On the other side is a message, written by her father, Creed Judson Pearson, informing a Charleston friend of the birth that day of his third child.

"Mother and baby are doing well," he wrote, adding the plaintive line, "I golly, they're all girls."

"I never heard my father curse in his life, but he frequently used the term 'I golly' to express strong feeling," says Phyllis.

The disappointing third of three girls, her sisters Mildred and Eloise preceding her, Phyllis didn't even have a name until the summer following her birth. With her family in Atlantic City, Phyllis was admired by a passerby who asked "What is her name?"

"Oh, we call her 'Baby.' She isn't named yet."

The shocked stranger gave them such a severe scolding the parents were impelled to action. Back home in the Kanawha Valley town of St. Albans, they looked in a baby name book, putting a pencil on a name — Phyllis.

Phyllis explains the delay in choosing a name. "Mother wanted to name me Catherine; Daddy didn't like it," she says.

"Daddy always said we didn't need a middle name," she added. "It would just be excess baggage when we married."

Creed Judson Pearson had made his own name in the world. He was 15 years old when he came to West Virginia from Franklin County, Virginia. His older brother had a farm near St. Albans on Browns Creek, and Pearson joined him there. He went to work with an engineering corps while he studied engineering by mail.

"My father was a self-made man," says Phyllis. "He was wearing his first pair of store-bought shoes when he came to West Virginia."

The son of a farmer who was also a circuit-riding preacher, Creed Pearson surveyed coal, oil, and gas lands in the area. He met Mary Effie Morris, the great, great-granddaughter of William Morris, an early settler in Charleston. They fell in love and married in 1905.

After a honeymoon trip to Niagara Falls, the young couple settled in St. Albans, setting up housekeeping on Fifth Avenue, "a boarding-house kind of thing," according to Phyllis. "Later they moved to Madison where my oldest sister, Mildred, was born," she says. In 1907, Pearson built a large house on Eighth Avenue in St. Albans and moved there with his wife and daughter. In 1908, sister Eloise was born. The year 1910 was a momentous one for the family. Pearson established the First National Bank of St. Albans, becoming its president, and Phyllis was born.

"My father was a self-made man. He was wearing his first pair of store-bought shoes when he came to West Virginia."

In 1913, the family moved to Ravens Court, a house built by Phillip Roates Thompson, considered the first settler of the area, in the mid-1830's. Because Edgar Allen Poe's aunt lived in the valley and he is believed to have visited her, his famous poem "The Raven" is said to have been inspired by the two large bronze ravens that guarded the entrance to Ravens Court. With the purchase, Creed Pearson acquired 250 acres of land that includes today's MacQueen Boulevard.

One reason the Pearsons had left

Eighth Avenue was to acquire a bigger and better house. Their old downtown location was a busy place to raise a family. At that time the train tracks crossed Eighth Avenue at Third Street. The stationmaster's house is still there, on the corner of Eighth and Third. The tracks continued to Pennsylvania Avenue and ran on to join the tracks that now emerge from the Boxley Tunnel.

Once completed, the tunnel opened onto the acreage Pearson had acquired with Ravens Court. Mrs. Pearson felt the trains and their noise were again too close to her. In 1921 the family moved to Virginia Street in Charleston. In 1923, they returned to St. Albans, Mrs. Pearson having found the racket of streetcars as bad as the noise of trains. The old Eighth Avenue property was available, and rail traffic had been diverted to the Boxley Tunnel, so the Pearsons moved back to the house where Phyllis was born. They did major remodeling at that time.

"They sent me and my sister Eloise to Camp Allegheny on the Greenbrier River to get us out from under foot while the refurbishing was going on," says Phyllis.

Creed Pearson was a gregarious man, according to his daughter. "Everybody loved him," she says. "We could hear him laugh up on Eighth Avenue from Main Street. He never drank or smoked, except for cigars the last few years of his life. We just loved our father. We had a lot of fun with him."

Phyllis remembers her mother as the disciplinarian, but a very benign one. The Pearson girls were trained to manage a comfortable household. "For those times we were as affluent as anyone we associated with. Mother always expected us to grow up and marry someone who would keep us in the style to which we had become accustomed."

Father Creed Pearson came to West Virginia as a young man seeking his fortune. He was a surveyor before becoming a banker. Photographer unknown, about 1900.

Phyllis Hamrick looks through the souvenirs of a life lived richly. Photo by Michael Keller.

Ravens Court as it looks today, and with the Pearson girls in front, about 1918. Phyllis, about eight at the time, stands at right. Early photographer unknown, new photo by Michael Keller.

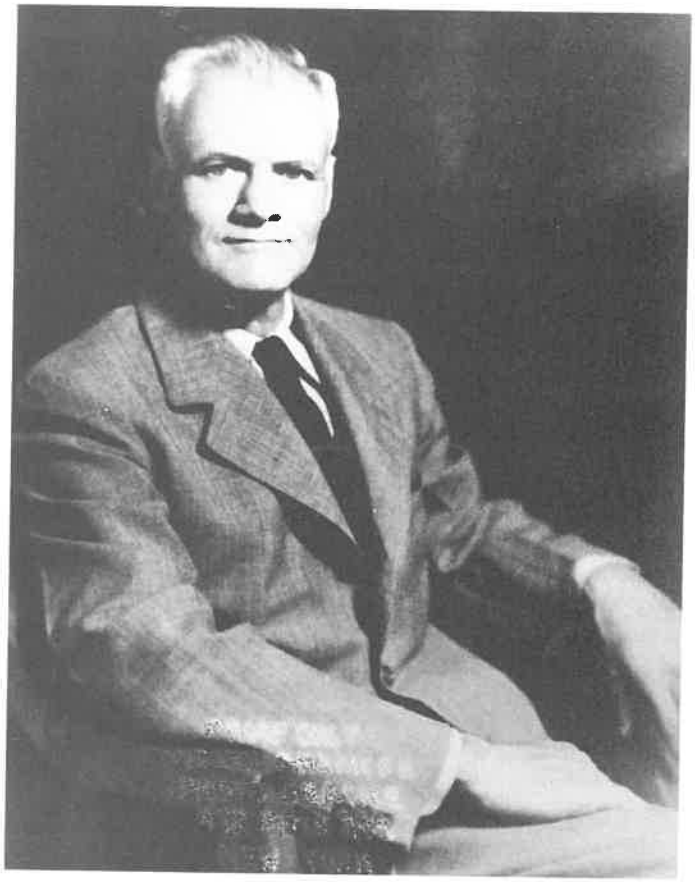
The family had live-in help in Charleston and day help and a laundress in St. Albans. But the girls learned housekeeping just the same. They had to keep their own rooms and dust. "If things got too bad, Mother dumped our bureau drawers on the bed," Phyllis recalls. Looking ahead to when they would be keeping house themselves, Mrs. Pearson would ask, "How will you know what to expect of anyone else if you don't know how to do things?"

Having lived in both St. Albans and Charleston the Pearson girls had a rich social life. "We lived like a banker's family. We had all kinds of friends, did everything," says Phyllis.

Her book of memories attests to that. It is full of programs, dance cards, clippings. There's a program from Charleston High School when the celebrated pianist and Polish patriot, Ignace Jan Paderewski, appeared there. Another, from the Junior Cotillion Dance at Shawnee Club, shows that the Royal Ambassadors from Cleveland played and that Governor Gore and Mayor Wertz were among the guests. Still another is from the Junior League, presenting "A Day at the Edgewood Country Club Links." Phyllis appeared in the chorus line. There's a program from an Armistice Day celebration in Detroit. Phyllis and her date went from Pittsburgh to Cleveland to Michigan, accompanied by a married couple. Bandleader Henry Busse played for the dance there.

A playbill from the Nixon Theatre in Pittsburgh the week of October 29, 1929, attests to the fact that Phyllis was there. Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds" were on the program.

But life was not all play, of course. Phyllis went to school in St. Albans and Charleston, to Lewisburg College for Women, and to Ward Belmont in Nashville. Her parents'



Left: Creed and Effie Pearson with their children, about 1920. Eloise stands at left and Mildred and Phyllis at right, with Creed, Jr., on his mother's lap. Photographer unknown.

Right: Dr. Russell S. Hamrick, about 1950. He and Phyllis married in 1930. Photographer unknown.

lives continued busy. Creed Judson, Jr., was born in 1918, finally giving Creed, Sr., a son and namesake. Before the Pearsons moved to Charleston Mr. Pearson developed Highlawn, laying out and naming the streets and avenues. That area is part of St. Albans today. While in Charleston, he built the Pearson Building on Quarrier Street. The building is known today as the Medical Arts Building.

Phyllis says she remembers her mother as very much a lady. "She had the most beautiful posture. She was erect until she died. She was the matriarch. Daddy just adored my mother. It seemed to us that he did what she wanted."

Mrs. Pearson had lived with an older sister while she went to Marshall College for two years. She was 24 when she married.

"She was quite a horsewoman," Phyllis remembers. Mrs. Pearson drove a two-seated hack to club meetings. She was a member of the Thursday Literary Society and the Delphian Club. She was instrumental in forming the first St. Albans Garden Club.

"One of Daddy's favorite tricks was bringing people home for lunch unannounced. We always had someone as a guest at table. Mother was an extremely good cook. Most of the time she did the cooking, because she wanted to."

"Mother expected us to grow up and marry someone who would keep us in the style to which we had become accustomed."

Phyllis recalls once when her father brought home the new minister and his family from the First Baptist Church, without prior warning. "Mother called us all aside and told us that we dared not ask for extra helpings."

Another time her father bought a communion set for First Baptist. His generosity surprised his wife, and ended up costing him dearly. "In response she went to Charleston to Eisensmiths and bought a sterling silver service for 12. It had butter spreaders, bouillon spoons, everything," according to Phyllis.

"When Mother went to one of her clubs she would be dressed to the nines — a hat, white gloves. I still have my mother's fur muff. I thought it was mink, but one time I had it relined and the furrier said it was sable. It was a gift from my father. She had a neck piece that matched. In cold months she would have carried it to her meetings. She would have thought a fur coat ostentatious. She did have a broadtail coat — a flat fur, some kind of a goat."

Mr. Pearson, in addition to his business activities, was one of the organizers of the Kanawha Country Club. "My sisters and I played

The Thursday Club

When Mrs. Creed Pearson had the horse-drawn hack brought around and took the reins herself it was likely either a second or fourth Thursday afternoon. Hatted and gloved, she was on her way to a meeting of the Thursday Literary Society.

The "Thursday Club," as it is affectionately known to members today, was organized in 1910 and is said to be the oldest club in St. Albans. "On February 7, 1910, six ladies met at the residence of Mrs. Howard Atkinson to organize a literary society," according to club minutes. At the first official meeting, on February 17, 1910, two additional names were proposed for membership. The names were approved at a called meeting on February 23.

Mrs. G. H. Maxon, the president, congratulated the members on organizing the club in her speech of February 23. "In this time of uplift and progress, we must move with the tide, or soon find ourselves stranded upon the shore," she declared. "May this afternoon be but the beginning of many pleasant and profitable ones spent together."

Mrs. Maxon went on to urge the members to adhere to high standards at their meetings — no gossip, no indulgence in personalities — and to display an interest in the topics at hand. The programs would consist of current events, led by one person at each meeting and supported by a membership prepared to contribute ideas. Refreshments were to be held to one course.

By the February 23 meeting the number of members had grown to ten and a membership limit was discussed. The membership was set at 16, with a provision for three associate members. That is still the rule today. When all members are present smaller homes are stretched to capacity, unlike the grand old houses most of the first ladies of the Thursday Club enjoyed.

For programs the ladies researched topics and prepared papers. At the January 12, 1911, meeting Mrs. Atkinson read a paper called "Portrait of Colonial Davis," possibly a misspelling in the minutes of "Colonel," and Mrs. Drew read one on "The Churches of New England."

On November 5, 1914, the membership committee submitted the name of Mrs. C. J. Pearson for membership. On November 19, Mrs. Pearson was elected a member of the club. At that meeting a resolution was adopted to ask the Interurban Street Car Company to again place signs in the cars prohibiting spitting, and calling on health officers in St. Albans and in Charleston to enforce this rule. The committee on civics was asked to present the resolution to the appropriate authorities.

At the December 3, 1914, meeting Mrs. Pearson was welcomed to membership. Current events discussed were "Getting Pure Milk for our Cities" and "Getting Pure Water for our Cities." In February Mrs. Pearson presented a paper on "Achievements of Women," and on April 29, 1915, the Thursday Literary Society met at her home.

As these topics suggest, the ladies seem to have had a difficult time adhering to their purpose of being merely a literary club. They often wandered into public service, giving gifts of money to organiza-

tennis and went swimming there. My sisters also played golf there," Phyllis recalls.

In the early '20's Phyllis's charmed life began to show some signs of change. Her father invested heavily in real estate in Florida, and his presence was required there. She treasures an endearing telegram from that period:

1923 Dec 19/MISS PHYLLIS PEARSON CARE JUNIOR CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL/ CHARLESTON WVA

YOUR DARLING LETTER RECEIVED/AM DELIGHTED WITH YOUR PROGRESS/YOUR TEACHER MUST BE GRAND/ GIVE HER MY REGARDS/AM FEELING FINE/WILL BE HOME SUNDAY/LOVE TO MOTHER JUNIOR AND THE GIRLS/FROM DADDY TO HIS DARLING LITTLE GIRL

In 1925 her father was back in Florida. Police found him half in and half out of his car, unconscious. The police dubbed him drunk and took him to jail. He had several hundred dollars and the name of his doctor in his pocket. When a doctor checked the jail inmates the next morning, he said, "This man isn't drunk, he's ill." He had spinal meningitis and was never well again. A hurricane and a depression in Florida ruined Pearson's investment in Florida real estate. He died in 1928.

In 1930 Phyllis had a problem that led to a happy ending. She took an ingrown toenail to Dr. Russell Hamrick, a 33-year-old bachelor who practiced in St. Albans. On the follow-up call he asked her for a date. They went to a movie in Charleston. The next week Hamrick, visiting his family in Clay, told his mother he had met the girl he wanted to marry.

"On the way back we ran out of gas between Clay and Clendenin. I was too much in love to be very angry."

Phyllis remembers once when she went to Clay with Dr. Hamrick. "Russell had a Chrysler coupe and back then you couldn't buy gasoline on Sunday," she reports. "Russell knew when we went that the situation was a little bit touchy. On the way back we ran out of gas between Clay and Clendenin. Russell got out and walked to the nearest house. They didn't have a car

tions such as the Red Cross and Morris Memorial Hospital. The group seems to have been a part of the West Virginia Federation of Womens' Clubs for many years, although the minutes are hazy about the details.

The Thursday Club, St. Albans's oldest, was organzed in 1910. The minutes shown here were written in 1913. Photo by Michael Keller.

World War I didn't cause much of a ripple in the Thursday Club's minutes. On November 7, 1918, Mrs. Skinner and Mrs. Clarke reported $8,700 subscribed to a "Fourth Liberty Loan." There was only one meeting that November, and no mention is made of the war's end in the December minutes.

Mrs. Pearson was president of the Thursday Club from 1917 to 1919. She served again from 1932 to 1934 and in 1958-59. She took on the less active status of associate member in 1960 and retained that rank through 1967. Daughter Phyllis Hamrick's name appears in the 1983 membership roster.

Times have changed for the Thursday Club. The group no longer meets twice each month. Early members and those in the 1940's and '50's enjoyed a great many luncheon meetings at such places as the Wren's Nest in St. Albans and the Ruffner Hotel and Woodrum's Tea Room in Charleston. They also had luncheon meetings in each other's homes. One of these, a covered dish affair, was held at the Pearson house in May 1942. Fifteen members were present, according to the minutes. Mrs. Hopkins made a motion that the $1.25 for the maid's services for the day would be paid by the club.

Nowadays the club has a restaurant meal in September, a covered dish luncheon at Christmas (usually held at the Presbyterian Church), and a picnic in May. Women took on more roles during and after World War II, and the Thursday Club has undergone a change. Many women no longer have the leisure for such activities, and today the group consists mostly of retired women.

— Helen Carper

and thus no gasoline."

She says she was a little unhappy by the time he found someone with gasoline. "There I was, sitting in the car on a lonely, little-traveled road by myself at ten o'clock at night. I was provoked with him, but I was too much in love to be very angry."

They were married at her home on Eighth Avenue on November 8, 1930.

Her sister Mildred married Nelson Lake, an attorney. Eloise married another attorney, Harold Neff. Mrs. Pearson lived on in the Eighth Avenue house, selling it in time to her son, by now also an attorney, and moving into a garage apartment behind the main house. Later she moved to Charleston's landmark Ruffner Hotel for several years. Following that she lived with her daughters for awhile and finally went to Morris Memorial Hospital until her death at 89 years of age.

Meanwhile, Phyllis was busy making a home for her physician husband and helping him in his office. Dr. Hamrick had been born July 28, 1897, the son of Dr. Robert A. Hamrick and Emma Delaney Hamrick of Clay. He had come to St. Albans in 1929 and established the Hamrick-Gott Clinic. He had patients all the way from Charleston to Point Pleasant, as well as Fraziers Bottom, Teays Valley and Institute.

Dr. Hamrick made house calls for $3, and an office call was $2. "He had no real ambition as far as prestige and money were concerned," Phyllis says. "To him, medicine was an obligation. We couldn't go on vacation because someone was due to have a baby — that kind of thing."

In 1938, with Dr. Ray Bailey of Hurricane, he established the Hamrick-Bailey Hospital at 305 Main Street in St. Albans. "It was a well-equipped, eight-bed hospital which filled a void in medical care in the area," Phyllis recalls.

Phyllis worked with him, managing the hospital, seeing about the food, helping in the operating room, doing lab work, developing x-rays. "I had wanted to go into nursing, and my mother wouldn't let me. Russell always said I was a better RN than many he knew, but I didn't have the letters after my name."

On the home front, which was their house on the corner of Highland and Ninth Avenue, life was busy too. Later they lived over the office and then over the hospital. "Russell was an old-fashioned doctor," she says, one who wanted to be close to his work.

Dr. Hamrick did have one ambition outside medicine. That was to own the old Shelton College build-

ing on St. Albans' Highland Drive, and he bought it in 1941. The couple had the top story and attic removed. They worked on the building all through World War II and beyond. In 1948, they moved into it. They reclaimed an ancient cemetery on the property, and developed the 11 acres around the house, selling off lots and making two streets, Shelton Drive and College Circle. These were private roads, later deeded to the city. The Hamricks built a house nearby, using the bricks from the third floor and the slate roof they had removed.

Daughters Cynthia, Jane, and Susie grew up during this busy time.

Dr. Hamrick died February 29, 1956. Phyllis sold the property in 1958. She worked with the Girl Scouts for ten years. "With Susie through nursing school and married, I went to Washington and went to school for six months, then accepted a job as assistant housekeeper of a hospital in Danville, Virginia, in 1969. I remember thinking as I drove to Danville, 'What am I doing here?' I was 58 years old."

In 1970, she became executive housekeeper of the Virginia hospital. She stayed there until compulsory retirement caught her at age 65. "I loved Danville, it was a challenge. But I always knew I would come back to St. Albans."

And come back she did, picking up her old life, taking on responsibilities as her parents had done before her. She established herself as a community participant, becoming the first treasurer of the St. Albans Library Board, joining the St. Albans Junior Woman's Club and later the St. Albans Woman's Club. She is active in that organization and is an active member and former president of the Thursday Club. She is a member of the First Presbyterian Church where she teaches a Sunday school class. A member of the Historical Society, she says, "I am proud to have lived in two of St. Albans' historic houses, Ravens Court and Shelton College."

"Russell always said I was a better RN than many he knew, but I didn't have the letters after my name."

As busy as she is, Phyllis still has a lot of fun. She enjoys a wide circle of friends, plays bridge and travels. She is hurrying to complete, in her 84th year, a needlepoint rug kit she purchased 18 years ago. The rug is intended for her daughter, Phyllis says.

"Susie says I can't die until I finish it," she adds with a laugh. Those of us in St. Albans trust that Susie is quietly unraveling while Phyllis works, for we want to keep this one with us awhile.

The Thursday Club is a St. Albans tradition which goes back to Phyllis's mother's day. Phyllis sits second from left at this recent club luncheon, with our author at her right. Photo by Michael Keller.

"A West Virginian or Nothing"

Fred McCoy

By Norman Julian

Photographs by Ron Rittenhouse

Fred McCoy is a man with his own steam shovel, and lots of other stuff besides.

I'm a West Virginian, by God, or nothing," retired dragline operator Fred "Curly" McCoy says to me as we tour his place just outside Blacksville. Fred has a half-dozen buildings on his three and a half acres.

Mountain State citizenship is something the mine equipment operator has thought about more than most. The Mason-Dixon Line that separates West Virginia from Pennsylvania runs across the back of his property. If you look due north through the space between two of his old-car garages you can see that the famous, normally invisible North-South demarcation exactly parallels a locust post and barbed wire fence that protects Fred's little patch of corn from foreign intruders.

His land and the outbuildings that dot it are filled with assorted forms of treasure, or "plunder" in Fred's creative lexicon. Treasure, that is, if you're into memorabilia and old machines and like to keep them run-

The past means plenty to Fred. He treasures these pictures of his parents and great-grandparents.

ning.

Fred may be the most famous West Virginian hereabouts primarily because of those machines and the attention they get from the colorful McCoy, a fix-it man supreme.

An F-84 Korean War-era jet pokes its nose into the air out near Route 7, not far from Fred's front porch. Fred, a veteran of that war, bought the plane in 1964 when it resided in degenerating condition at the Morgantown airport.

"I took the wings off it and rode it up here on a rig," McCoy says, fingering his Old Testament beard reflectively. For decades the plane has sat on its steel pedestal that stands almost as tall as three men. "My brother, Tommy McCoy, built that," McCoy says. "He is a welder. He worked for Link-Belt Manufacturers in Chicago for a long time. Now he lives back here at Daybrook."

Fred got to liking Marine jets during combat back there in the war. Maybe an F-84 saved his behind. He doesn't talk much about Korea, except to say, "I was drafted into the Marine Corps. I was tickled about that and went home and told my dad. Then I went for training. I seen a lot of things in the war that I don't want to see no more."

The jet, Fred's principal claim to fame, is an object of affection for people in the western end of Monongalia County. This is primarily a rural area, where personalities can develop freely, according to their natural tendencies and a mostly benevolent environment. No one is molded by the dream-killing sameness of city living.

One summer morning in 1993, students from nearby Clay-Battelle High School surprised Fred by showing up with ladders, soap and paint to clean that jet. They spent the day and left the old plane looking spanking new.

"They started at 9:30 and cleaned it and scratched it and painted the whole thing," says Fred. "They wasn't out of here until about 6:00 p.m. They really done a job."

The celebrity of the plane and its owner has fanned out, too. "There's people in Michigan knows where that jet plane is," Fred declares. "Dave Hamill from here was in Michigan and the guy says, 'You from Blacksville?' And Dave says, 'Yeah, I'm from Blacksville.'

"And the guy says, 'I know where that airplane is.' So clear up there in Michigan they know about it."

Fred is especially taken by old cars. He believes the 1899 Schacht two-cylinder, 12-horsepower he owns is the oldest car in West Virginia that still works.

Even new cars interest him, though his real affection remains with the old ones. One of the days I visited him I had to round him up at the Ford dealership in Blacksville. Fred used to be a used-car salesman. When we got back to his place, he showed me a sign he rescued from the first Chevrolet dealership in West Virginia, at Hundred, up the road a piece in Wetzel County. The sign dates to 1918. He has an Oldsmobile sign from Hundred from the same era.

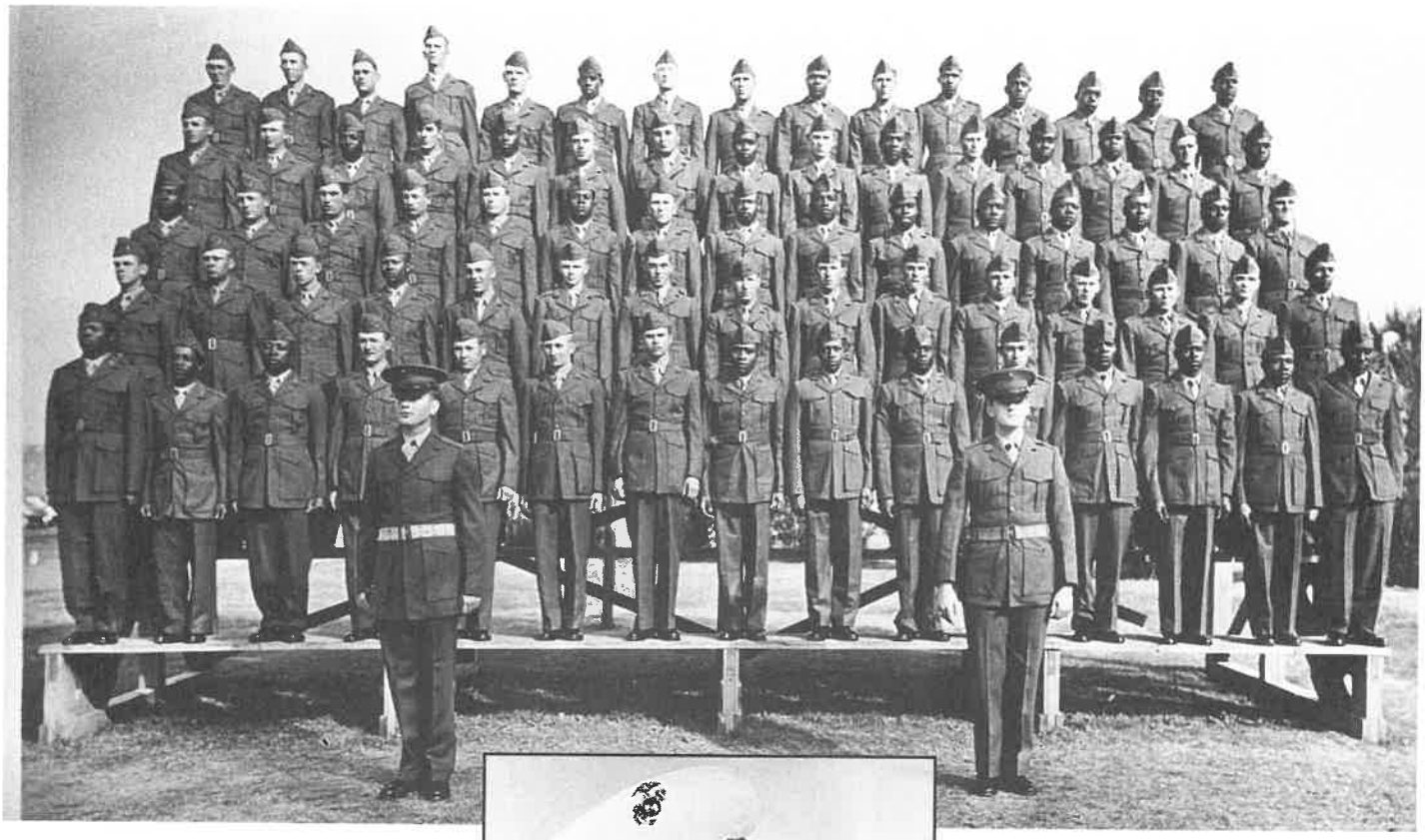
Fred says he "went to Cincy in 1955" to get the Schacht. It cost him $1,250. "I found out about it from a trucker who come though here. He was hauling steel up to Fairmont. It still has the regular upholstery. I taken it apart and cleaned it up."

Normally every fourth Saturday in August Fred drives the old car over to the Dunkard Valley Frontier Days Festival at Mason-Dixonland Park. The facility lies along Dunkard Creek and, like Fred's property, it "rides the line." The park straddles West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

He also hauls his 1755 Conestoga wagon over to the celebration. He bought that in 1977. The wagon was made in the Conestoga Valley in Pennsylvania. Fred believes the one he owns may have been used by General Braddock's Army in the French and Indian War. It has a curved bottom — Fred calls it the "belly" — which encouraged the load to settle in and ride balanced in the middle. Only a few boards have been replaced on McCoy's wagon. The replacements were made of oak. Some of the original boards were made of chestnut. The hubs of the wheels were made of gum, whose interlocking grain resists splitting.

Fred says his Conestoga is valuable, but the Schacht "is valuable'n'er than this wagon."

Inside, outside, attached and unattached but also on view are various other antique machines and devices that McCoy, a great collector and mechanic, has acquired over the years. Like an apple butter maker he picked up at a yard sale in



Fred left boot camp just in time for the Korean War. He is shown here with his platoon at Parris Island (second row, fifth from right) and in his Marine dress uniform (inset). Photographers unknown, early 1950's.

Moundsville. Or like "one of the first milk cans ever made," this one of copper, according to Fred. And like an adding machine "that's away back there."

Almost everything seems in perfect working order. Fred's claim is that if any one of his machines doesn't work, "I'll get down and hassle with it until it does work."

Well, most of them, anyway. Asked about his jet, he says, "No, it don't work, but I've been high enough a time or two that I thought it could fly."

While Fred can fix most things that don't work right, that doesn't include his own heart. For that, he underwent quintuple bypass surgery in Morgantown in the summer of 1994. His weight has dropped 57 pounds from his usual 205.

"The doctor says I ain't supposed to lift anything more than five pounds," he laments. "I'm feeling better, but I can't stand on my feet a whole lot. I got too much stuff to take care of."

Like the 1830 horse-drawn hearse that he got from Somerset, Pennsylvania. Or the 1913 Hudson that he "got up here in MacDale in 1954." Or the Model T racer, also a 1913 model. Or the 1929 Model A.

"That Model A was my first car," says Fred. He clings to things like some folks hold onto reputations made in their glory years. He quit school at age 14 and has made his way in the world ever since. "I mowed yards to get that Model A," he notes.

He learned to be an entrepreneur "when I was just a kid," Fred says. F. M. Chisler used to drive Fred and three or four other kids "down to Grant Town at the gob pile. Chisler had a 1931 Chevy pickup. We'd pick through that coal and get the big pieces and put them in sacks until we got enough to fill the back end of that pickup. Then we'd go over to sell it at Fairview for a dollar and a half a load. That wasn't bad money in those days."

Some days, Fred says, "we only got a baloney sandwich out of it, but that was a big deal for us. I'd come home at night and Dad would whip me good because he didn't know where I'd been all that time, but I learned some things I never learned in school. My dad was a coal miner, too. He'd whip me at times. He'd really line me up."

A few years later Fred began to work in earnest for Mr. Chisler, which eventually led him to his life's work as a heavy equipment man. He obviously enjoyed what he did for a living.

"Ain't everybody can run a dragline," Fred says, reminiscing affectionately about a piece of machinery that is bigger than anything on his own lot. "You can't just jump on it and run it in an hour like a lot

of things. Dragline operators is few and far between. You have to be able to run other machines two or three years before they'll hire you on a dragline. And then somebody has to sit up there with you until you know how."

The dragline he refers to is a big piece of bucketed machinery used around mines and mine storage areas for outside work. It looks something like a cross between a crane and a steam shovel.

"It lets you throw a bucket out 65 or 75 or so feet, and then you drag it back in," Fred says of the machine he got to know as well as or better than any of his old cars. "Some of those way-biggies will go out 100 feet. Mine was a 25-tonner and it would go out 60 feet."

Before he moved up to the big time, Fred learned to run various bulldozers for Chisler. "I always liked machines," Fred says. "I cut my teeth on bulldozers."

Mostly he used the dragline at the Federal No. 2 mine works near Blacksville. "We used it to clean ponds," he explains.

When coal is being mined a lot of fine coal or dust is made that isn't immediately retrievable. Some of this fine stuff becomes mixed with water in the coal cleaning process and ends up in settling ponds. When the ponds evaporate, the coal residue again is transformed into a valuable solid.

Fred's job was to "throw the bucket out over the pond and then drag it back, reclaiming coal that otherwise would be lost." The reclaimed stuff then is mixed with other coal and burned.

"The last 12 or 14 years my job was to reclaim those ponds," he says. "I always liked working the dragline. You were your own boss and could do as you please. All you had to do was get the job done.

"You just set there and pull the levers. It seems simple, but very few can do it right. It's like playing a piano. You have to work at it. You have to get with it. You have to know just when to stop it. You don't learn to run a dragline in five minutes."

Fred, now 65, retired June 29, 1991.

That's also about the time he became a father. The love of Fred's life these days, even more than his plunder, is Daniel, five years old. Fred and his wife Barbara adopted him. Daniel attends the new Blacksville Elementary School.

When you're around the soft-spoken Fred, you get the feeling he's a man of stature, a strong man who could be tough when he has to be. He's thoughtful and wise, too, and the flowing white beard and creative use of the language both hark back to a previous time when, perhaps, people thought a bit differently than we do today.

Though he is steeped in the way things were, especially the machines and artifacts of the environment he grew up in, Fred always has been a forward-looking man. No more so than when it comes to Daniel.

"I've had him since he was six months old," says Fred. "We got the 'deed' to him in September two years ago."

The three of us spend ten minutes examining the ancient "steam" shovel that sits back from the highway a little farther than the jet. It is a 1918 Bucyrus-Erie that used to run on steam, but Fred has outfitted it with a gas-powered six-cylinder engine.

"I got it up beyond Pittsburgh and F. M. Chisler brought it down here for me," Fred says of the big shovel. He and his old boss have kept up a good, friendly working relationship.

Then we go inside one of the buildings, young Daniel anxiously in tow. We examine an 1895 Clip-

Son Daniel pitches in to help polish Fred's 1915 Model T. The old Ford is one of several antique vehicles, horseless and otherwise.

per manual lawn mower and an old-time broom maker as Daniel follows us from trailer to shed, from shed to trailer. It takes a while to get to all the storage areas. Altogether there are two trailers, two garages, a pole building and a shed. At each stop it's clear the little boy adores the old man and his plunder. At various cars, while I receive Fred's historical references, Daniel climbs up in the driver's seat, turns the steering wheel and smiles.

He looks on as we view the old-time pictures of Fred's ancestors, McCoys and Tennants mostly, and the January 14, 1952, pictures of Fred's Marine unit at Parris Island.

It looks like the F-84 has just crashed the trailer as Daniel and Fred make their way to the scene. Actually, the fighter jet occupies its own steel pedestal, out of sight here.

"I'm trying to get that boy a good start so he'll take care of this stuff when his pap's gone," Fred says to me, in Daniel's hearing.

And when you've been through what Fred's been through in the past year, maybe you think a little more about the "Great Plunder Yard in the Sky." He says he's feeling better, but not as good as his dad did at his age. Thomas McCoy lived to age 92. Fred says many of the old-timers drank and chewed and smoked, but they "worked a little bit to get that poison out of them. They burned it right out. They didn't sit around on the couch watching TV and eating potato chips. My dad, right up until his stroke, could run right up a hill."

Fred muses about the way things have changed, even the way we are ushered out of this world. Among his memorabilia is a 1915 advertisement from the DeGarmo Funeral Home at Wadestown. He reads off the pertinent data: "Two complete funerals for $314.25. Two caskets $200. Two vaults $75. Slippers and hose $4.25. Embalming fluids $19. Plus you get a discount of five percent if you paid within 30 days.

"You could spend $314.25 on the flowers alone today," he quips.

Fred is enamored with the old, but when you see the things of the past through Fred's eyes, you see them fresh. He sees connections, relationships, and the way things got to be the way they are, and the way they yet may be.

And if we can get out of our world and into Fred's for a little while, maybe we will pay attention when he puts it into perspective. "The old times are better than the new times," he declares. "Anything old I like. I don't care for anything new. I'd like to see her go back. We live too fast now, way too fast. Everybody needs to slow up.

"They're in a hurry to go to the concert or something else. I wouldn't give you a nickel for all them concerts. That boomity-boom ain't for me. Instead of going there, folks would be better off heading for the wood yard to cut a little wood.

"I think the old-time America was better than today's America."

It was rumored that after Fred's operation, some of his collection might be for sale, but so far he's saving it all for Daniel. "I say to him, 'This is going to be yours one of these days,'" Fred reports, in the words of many another father.

He refused an offer to buy his Conestoga a while back. "A guy said he figured this was the most original wagon in this condition in the world, that was made up there at the Conestoga River," he reports.

So Fred McCoy is a complicated man, something of a contradiction. As he holds onto the past, he enlivens it. By the force of his personality and an imagination that knows no demarcation line, this resident of the Mason-Dixon country makes the past current. You leave his place with the feeling that they don't make machines like they used to. Or men, either.

Preacher Carr

Preacher Carr with his New Hope flock. He stands center right, bare-headed in white vest, with Bob Faulkner, our author's husband-to-be, at his right. Photo by D.T. Frantz, early 1920's.

Remembering a Grand Old Circuit Rider

By Pearl Bratton Faulkner

I remember Preacher Carr, as he was affectionately called. He was a large man, tall and homely. His picture hangs in the hall of Trinity Methodist Church in Bluefield and in the vestibule of Carr Memorial Church at Glenwood, near Princeton.

Daniel Hoge Carr was born in Giles County, Virginia, on July 12, 1838. His family moved to the Glenwood-New Hope community in Mercer County when he was six years old. David Johnston's *History of the Middle New River Settlements* records that the Carr family owned a large acreage in this community. His home was located at what we now know as the Kirby Addition in Glenwood, and their land extended to the Fussy Creek School in the Sandlick Road area. They lived in what was later called the Jim Ed Hale house.

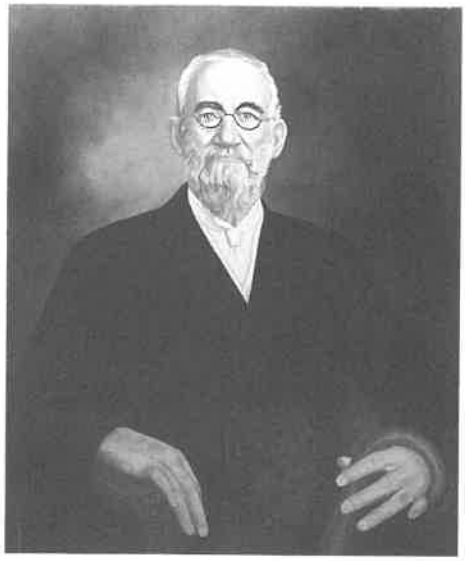
When Daniel was 11 years old he was converted and joined the New Hope Church congregation. It is said he helped in the building of the first church at New Hope. This was a log building that also served as a school. After several years this building burned and was replaced by a frame building that was painted red.

Husband and wife came down the road together, but when they came to the church door he went his way and she went hers.

At 17 Daniel Carr was licensed to preach. His first appointment was at New Hope Church. Later a beautiful white frame church was built on the same spot as the red one. This one was of Southern architectural style. It was very ornate with beautiful windows, fancy scroll trim, and lovely round windows in front and back. One of these windows was preserved and used in the present building, just over the altar.

This building had two front doors. The ladies came in on the left while gentlemen entered through the right-hand door. Husband and wife came down the road together, but when they came to the door he went his way and she went hers. A divider, about four feet high, extended the length of the sanctuary to the chancel.

Daniel Carr served as pastor to



This portrait and a handpainted copy hang in two of the Mercer County churches which Daniel Hoge Carr left behind.

the first three New Hope churches. It was Robert Sheffey, however, who suggested the name, New Hope.

Daniel Carr married Sallie Bane of Tazewell County, Virginia. Preacher Carr was not related to my family but, because of the many connections and associations, he seemed as if he were a close relative. His daughter, Nannie, married my father's brother, Lewis Bratton. His brother William married my father's sister, Victoria Bratton, and his nephew, Dr. Allen Carr, married my father's sister, Sallie Bratton.

Below: Daniel Carr Bratton was named by the preacher, for himself. Sister Pearl says she doesn't know whether that is the reason, but Dan is a "wonderful guy." Photo by Michael Keller.

When my parents went to housekeeping, it was on the farm of Eddie Carr, in what was later called the Wysong house. The Carr and Bratton families were very close, even if not related.

During the Civil War Preacher Carr was greatly missed in the New Hope area while he was serving as chaplain in the Confederate Army. After the war he continued his circuit riding ministry in the area. At one time he went down into Virginia and even to Tennessee. He rode a horse.

When he was assigned as our regular pastor, he came to our church every third Sunday. Because he had so many churches, he could only come that often. Preacher Carr stayed at my uncle Lewis Bratton's place when he was here.

Once when I spent the night with my Uncle Lewis's family, we got up fairly early the next morning and gathered together for family prayer. When it was ended we went to the dining room, except the preacher went down the hall to his room and didn't come to breakfast. I was quite concerned about it, but I didn't say anything until I was alone with Emma, my cousin. I asked her why he didn't come to breakfast. She said, "Oh, this is Friday and he never eats on Friday. He prays and doesn't eat until the evening meal."

I also remember that when he stayed with our family we always had family prayer in the evening. We'd gather in the living room, and he'd read from his Bible. Then he would pray and we'd go our separate ways to our bedrooms.

But if you think Daniel Carr was only interested in spiritual things, you should have heard him while listening to a fox chase.

Once he was spending the night at our house and he and my father were sitting on the porch after supper. A neighbor took his hounds out, as he did each Saturday night, to chase foxes. It seemed those two could tell where the dogs were going by listening to them bark. They were clapping their hands, laughing and urging the dogs on — "Old Blue is out in front!" They were so

excited. My mother had put the smaller children to bed, but all the excitement on the porch awakened them.

One summer day we were just finishing our lunch when we heard the preacher coming down the hall calling my mother. "Lura, Lura, fix me a pitcher of water. I want to baptize the children." Our father gathered up the five of us and lined us up according to our ages. Being the oldest, I was first. We were baptized by pouring. He used about half a cup of water on the head of each of us.

My father was holding the baby, who was about six months old. When Preacher Carr came to the baby he asked my father the baby's name. Father replied, "It seems we have run out of names and haven't named the baby yet." The preacher didn't hesitate for a moment. He reached for the baby, poured the water and said, "Daniel Carr Bratton, I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

If you think Daniel Carr was only interested in spiritual things, you should have heard him while listening to a fox chase.

That is how I happen to have a brother Dan. He is a wonderful guy. I don't know how much credit is due to his name.

Daniel Carr was a preacher, a circuit rider, and a counselor, as well. I remember him telling my father that the children were growing up and that he should be saying the blessing at our meals. There was never a meal after that in our home that my father did not say the blessing or ask some visitor to assume that privilege.

Once when Preacher Carr came to visit us he brought a Bible story book, *Aunt Charlotte's Bible Stories*. It was organized so that by reading a story each day in the summer and two a day in the winter, the Bible could be studied all the way through in a year's time. We children read it from cover to cover many times.

When I began teaching school I took this book with me. It was always on my desk. In my 14 years of teaching I read it through to my pupils 14 times, and I often wonder if they remember the stories today. When the book became so old and worn the pages began to fall out, we had it rebound and gave it to our nieces and nephews in order to serve the next generation of Bratton children. It is now with the fourth generation of Brattons in Phoenix, Arizona.

Preacher Carr's saddlebags were always filled with leaflets and pamphlets from Lamar and Smith Company, the forerunner of the Methodist Publishing House. Before his preaching service he would spread them out on the communion rail and invite people to come, after the service, to select those of interest for their study. He would also have a few books to

Pearl Faulkner with Preacher Carr. She says he had a big influence on her and many other Mercer Countians. Photo by Michael Keller.

sell and give away. The phrase "Christian education" had not been coined in Daniel Carr's time, but he was certainly a devout advocate of that.

I remember so vividly the Sunday at New Hope Church when Preacher Carr announced he would be there for services on July 12. He said he wanted each person to be present for that service, and he wanted us to bring our lunch. We would spread it on the ground and have a picnic. Then after lunch we would have singing and another worship service. The reason for this special occasion? It was his birthday.

So everyone helped to spread the word and it turned out to be a most joyous occasion. People came in their horse-drawn buggies and wagons, on horseback, and on foot. They drove their vehicles up to the paling fence to let the families off and then drove off to tie the horses to a branch of the maple trees that grew just back of the church. Those on horseback rode up to the stile in the fence to let the ladies off. People came from all the neighboring communities.

It was literally dinner on the ground. We didn't have picnic tables. At noon the women spread their beautiful white tablecloths on the grassy ground. Then they piled up the fried chicken and potato salad, apple pie and countless other wonderful dishes of food. My Aunt Easter's white coconut cake was just out of this world.

Naturally, there was a birthday celebration at that church each year after that as long as the preacher lived, and for several years after his death. Another preacher who lived in the same community was invited to share in the celebration. Preacher Carr would conduct the morning service and Elijah Kahle, pastor of the United Brethren Church, would conduct the afternoon service. The annual event came to be called the Carr and Kahle Meeting. People came from far and near. It was the social event of the year. Vacations were planned around this date, and new clothes were in order. It was a real celebration and homecoming.

Around 1920 the Reverend Carr, seeing the growth of the Glenwood community, realized the need for a church there. He began trying to arouse interest in a building project, but his dream was not realized in his lifetime. On May 5, 1938, nearly 11 years after his death, a lot was bought for a church and work was started. The basement walls went up and then the work halted, for the money had run out. In the fall of 1946 work was continued, and in May of 1948 Carr Memorial Methodist Church was open for services.

Another outgrowth of the New Hope congregation was Greenview United Methodist Church, beginning in 1921 with a donation of land by Mint Bailey and a gift of $500 from my grandmother Martha Carper. Many members of New Hope transferred to this new church, which was closer to their homes.

On May 17, 1927, the Grand Old Circuit Rider of pioneer Methodism died. The funeral was held at Trinity Methodist Church in Bluefield. He is buried at Monte Vista Cemetery. He had requested that a brass band precede his funeral to the grave site. It being a warm day for May, the short, stout fellow playing the tuba had a difficult climb up the hill to the grave site. The pallbearers carrying the coffin were puffing, too.

His journey was ended, but his influence lives on. May God bless his memory.

Naming Baby

Two articles in this issue mention the delayed naming of babies in times past. Pearl Faulkner mentions in the adjoining story that her baby brother had not been named when the preacher came to baptize him at age six months, while Phyllis Hamrick in the Helen Carper article says that she was born in November 1910 and not named until the following summer.

We'd like to know how common this practice was and would appreciate hearing from GOLDENSEAL readers who may recall similar cases. Please write to The Editor at the address at the front of this issue.

More Words from Pearl Faulkner

From an Interview by
Margaret Meador

Margaret Meador. Pearl, you mentioned in your description of the New Hope Church that the ladies came in by the left door and the gentlemen on the right.

Pearl Faulkner. Yes, there were two doors. We didn't come in on the right side, and the men didn't come in on the ladies' side.

MM. Where did the children go?

PF. Usually with their mother.

MM. Was there a nursery for the babies?

PF. Whoever heard of such a thing?

MM. And did you have Sunday school?

PF. Oh, yes. From the time I can remember there was Sunday school. It was a big factor in our development. Can I tell the story about the time no one came to teach the girls' class?

MM. This is your story, Pearl. Go right ahead.

PF. Well, our sanctuary was divided off into sections for Sunday school rooms by burlap curtains, and the boys were separated from the girls. We were around ten years old, I'd say, and one Sunday when the curtains were drawn no one came to teach us. We sat there the whole period and looked at each other, didn't even talk.

The next Sunday no one came, and the third Sunday no one came to be with us, and [I said] "Let's just have our own class."

There were suggestions at the end of the Sunday school lesson on how

to conduct the class, so I said, "Somebody take this item, and someone take this one," and so on. Evelyn Willard took the one that said to review the main topics from last Sunday's lesson, and Elsie Smith took one of the topics, and Vera Smith took another and Eva Smith another.

So the next Sunday no one came to be with us, and we had our own class again. We thought it was great, we enjoyed it. At the end of each class we planned what we were going to do the next Sunday, and pretty soon some other people wanted to come into our class.

We stayed together until the girls were grown and left home.

MM. Tell me something about your early life. What did your father do for a living?

PF. He planted corn and raised hay and oats and vegetables. He was a country farmer.

MM. Where did you get your early education?

PF. Harmon School. My first teacher was an interesting person. She belonged to a religious group that was called the Dunkards. Her husband was from a family of Kahles, and she always dressed in a black skirt and blouse and a black jacket with a little black bonnet on her head. She was a most kind person, the most considerate I have ever known. She didn't have any problems with discipline. She loved her pupils to death. I got a good start in the first grade.

When we moved to Glenwood, I was able to walk across the fields and take the streetcar into Princeton. I started to Princeton and then the Board of Education made a ruling that the country children who rode the streetcar were supposed to go to the high school in their district. Since we belonged in Beaver Pond District, I had to go to Beaver High School in Bluefield. I graduated from Beaver High School in 1923.

MM. Where did you go to college?

PF. Concord College. Most of it was by correspondence and extension classes.

MM. What year did you start teaching?

PF. In 1924, and I taught 14 years after that.

Pearl in her Christmas sweater, 1923. She recalls that her future husband gave her the gift. Photographer unknown.

MM. Did you continue to teach after you were married?

PF. Yes, I was married the second year I taught school.

MM. Was there a feeling in Mercer County at that time that married women should not teach school?

PF. Oh, yes. When times became hard those who were not already teaching could not get a school. Even single women had a hard time. My sister, Viola, wanted to teach and couldn't get a job, so I resigned with the provision that they would give her a place. That's how I got out and she got in.

MM. Where did you teach?

PF. I taught in three one-room schools and the rest of the years were at Glenwood Elementary.

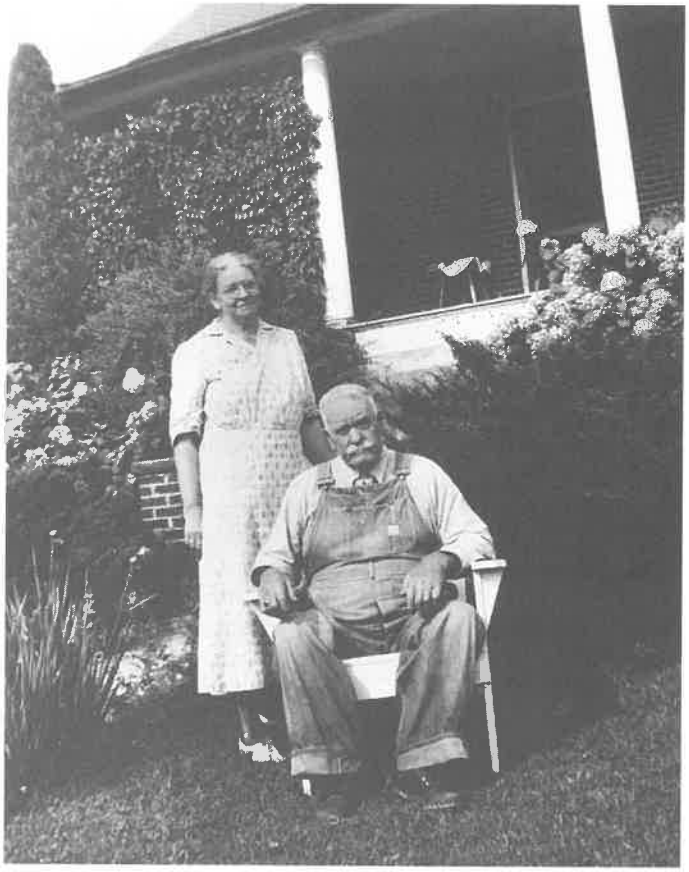
MM. In your story about Preacher Carr you mentioned a Bible story book you read to each of your classes. You are aware of the struggle between church and state today, and the feeling that we should not pray in school?

PF. Yes.

MM. Do you think you could get by with reading the story book today?

PF. I expect I'd read it! I think it's the silliest thing I ever heard of.

MM. So you resigned so that your sister could get a school, and then



William and Lura Bratton, Pearl's parents. Mr. Bratton was a farmer during his working years. Photographer and date unknown.

Pearl Faulkner today. She has worked in the schools, as the cannery instructor, and as school lunch overseer — and in many community service projects. Photo by Michael Keller.

you didn't work for a while?

PF. Well, the first thing I was going to do was give my house a good cleaning, and I had just got started. Then the next week Mr. Bobbitt [the school superintendent] came and asked me if I would *please* be the instructor for the cannery being built out here in Glenwood, that was due to open real soon. I was the only person he could think of with a teaching certificate who wasn't teaching. Modoc McKenzie became the manager. We ran the cannery for ten years.

I used to say I couldn't tell any difference in the school lunch program and church, in the way it helped people.

The cannery was a great help to the people, to put up food. And it was a help to them in another way — it taught them friendliness and helpfulness. They came and got their food into the cans to go to the boiling water vat to reach a certain temperature before they could be sealed. When they were sealed the processing began and this could take three or four hours. While they waited they helped other people get their food ready. Most of the time they were strangers to one another, but they got acquainted and looked forward to meeting at the cannery the next time.

MM. This was like the old-time bean stringing and apple butter making?

PF. Yes, it was.

I remember two things that happened during that time. We had directions for canning most things but we didn't have any directions for making apple butter. We experimented until we learned how to make apple butter in those steam-jacketed kettles. There was one great difference in making it this way and in an open kettle outside: The steam coming up between the two kettles cooked much hotter and faster than a single kettle could. I always explained to the people that we had to put water in the apple butter every 30 minutes to slow down the cooking, or it would get too stiff.

There was one woman who made an appointment to make some apple butter and then couldn't come, so she sent her husband. I don't know why I didn't give my customary warning to the man, but I just didn't. So when I let the water down the vat, he turned to another man and said, "Oh, my God! She's ruined my apple butter!"

MM. What was the other story?

PF. A widow woman who lived somewhere over in the coalfields came with some beautiful slices of

country ham. She had been to visit her mother in Monroe County and had been given this ham, and her son, who was in the army, was so fond of it. She wanted to know if there was any way she could can the ham in tin cans and send some to her son.

Well, I told her we'd try it and see what happened. She opened it up to get it ready, and her ham was covered all over with mold. She cried and cried. I asked, "Do you mind if I experiment with your ham?" She said, "No, it's not worth anything now."

So I scraped off all the mold that I could and got some real hot water and got a clean dishcloth and washed off all the rest and got all the mold off. I placed the slices of ham around the inside of the steam-jacketed kettle, and it began to fry and I've never smelled anything so heavenly in my life. Everybody got hungry. She tasted her ham, and it was fine. So we rolled it up in a roll and put it in this number three tin and got it hot and sealed and processed it. And the lady was so happy.

MM. Can you tell me why the cannery was started, and why it was closed down?

PF. Yes. During the war it was a means of people canning their own food and being self-sufficient. The reason it closed — every year the price of cans went up a little bit more. I think the price was three cents a can when it started and it was up to nine cents a can, or maybe more, when I quit.

MM. Another thing I wanted to talk to you about that I know has been a big influence in your life is the WVU Extension Service.

PF. There's one thing I want to say — I went to Harmon School, Mercer School in Princeton, Princeton High School, graduated from Beaver High, then I went to Concord. I worked at the cannery, I worked with the principals and cooks at the schools, I worked as a member and a leader of the Methodist church teaching classes in all the surrounding area. But I have learned more from the Extension Service than any of these.

MM. You were state president of the Farm Women's Council, I believe?

PF. Yes. And I was on a lot of state committees. I went to Jackson's Mill for all kinds of meetings, six in one year.

One of the things I shall never forget was the day my mother went to the home of Mrs. Sackett, for the organization of the Farm Women's Club. Mother was so delighted with the idea of being able to go out each month to some of the neighbors' homes and learn some of the ways of housekeeping and farm living and child rearing, and the fact that the home demonstration agent would be with them in their meetings, giving them advice. It was an opportunity for the members to grow educationally. And it was an opportunity for the women to get together and have refreshments. That was a new idea.

MM. I understand you left the cannery to work as a school lunch supervisor? What do you remember about that?

PF. The cooks didn't like for someone to come in and tell them what to do, so I had to tread softly there and just suggest things they might do that would be helpful. But after I got started, they looked forward to my coming and treated me with great respect and nicknamed me "Mama Pearl." "Mama Pearl's going to get us for doing it like this," or something like that.

One year at our workshop preceding the opening of schools one of several new cooks said she wasn't going to call me the supervisor, she was going to call me the "snoopervisor." It wasn't very long until she was calling me "Mama Pearl" like everyone else.

I also worked with the principal in making the reports and selecting those that would get free lunch and free milk, or reduced cost lunches. And I worked with the cooks in trying new recipes and encouraging the children to eat all of the federally required foods.

MM. Did you find this a satisfying job?

PF. Oh, yes. Oh, yes! I used to say I couldn't tell any difference in the school lunch program and church, in the way it helped people to enlarge their outlook on life and be worthy citizens.

Methodist Archives

A growing collection of rare documents and artifacts, housed at West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon, is available to the public for research. The collection at the United Methodist Archives Center is patronized mostly by people checking family or church histories and includes more than 4,000 books, pamphlets, journals, documents, ceramic plates and artifacts.

The Methodist Archives tells the story of Methodism in the Mountain State from the historical Rehoboth Church in Monroe County (the oldest Methodist church west of the Alleghenies) up through the 1939 merger of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South and Methodist Protestant churches and a subsequent 1968 merger of the Methodist Church and the Evangelical Brethren Church. This final merger resulted in the formation of today's United Methodist Church.

"The historical collection appears to have begun in 1942 with the creation of the Methodist Historical Society, the first such effort following the unification of the three Methodist churches in 1939," says curator Patricia Tolliver. The Methodist-Brethren merger "brought an avalanche of new materials," she adds.

The archives is open to the public weekdays from 8:30 a.m. until noon. For more information, contact Patricia Tolliver at (304)473-8456, or write to West Virginian Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV 26201.

This Summers County country road curved to the shape of the land. Photo by R.R. Keller, 1920's; courtesy State Archives.

Country Roads

By William E. Stinespring

Have you ever wondered, as you drive or hike West Virginia back roads, how they got to be so crooked? Sometimes it's pretty obvious, for we have plenty of mountains which have a way of getting in the way. But many other times there is no apparent cause. Why all of a sudden is there a curve in what should be a perfectly straight road?

After a little research, I've found one or two good reasons.

When the early settlers came, they measured and marked the land they wanted, then filed their claim with the government, or they bought from someone who had already done so. Usually before obtaining the land, they had chosen a spot where they would build their cabin.

Trees were an abomination, for they meant months — years in some cases — of hard labor, clearing ground for a cabin or a plot for corn patches and the garden. If the family intended to raise livestock there was even more land to be cleared. You can bet there was no such thing as a do-nothing pioneer. Before long the calluses on their hands were as tough as the soles on their shoes. Sometimes a man's hands became so tough he could barely make a fist.

Every tree was felled with an axe, or an axe and crosscut saw. On rare occasions a neighbor would come to help for a day, and sometimes several would come. But mostly the work was left to the family. If the wife was a strong healthy woman, she would help with the two-man crosscut saw, then help pile the brush to be burned. The children pitched in as they came along.

Soon after a site for the cabin was chosen, the family blazed a trail through the woods to the nearest neighbor's place. Since all work had to be done by backbreaking toil, they took the easiest route possible, at times even going around large trees rather than spending the energy to cut them down. The road was always narrow, since an extra foot in width could mean the falling of hundreds more trees.

The road started as a footpath and horse trail. Eventually it was widened barely enough to accommodate a wagon or sled. It was never silky smooth. Often a wagon — even a horse — would become damaged on a stump which had not been cut close enough to the ground.

In any case, wheels were expensive and hard to come by, so every farmer had at least one sled, or a sledge as some folks called them. Sleds were used at all seasons of the year, and not just in snowy weather. They were cheap and fairly easy to build. Hickory was the preferred wood for the runners, as it was tough, would split straight, and took well to the necessary curving of the front of the runners.

Wheels were expensive and hard to come by, so every farmer had at least one sled, or a sledge as some folks called them.

In due time another family would come along and settle on its own tract of land a short piece beyond where the last settler had built, usually just a few miles or perhaps

only a few hundred yards farther on. The newcomer would begin his road at the end of his neighbor's and hack through the woods to his own place.

And so it went, one farmer commencing where his neighbor had left off. Sometimes there was a stream with a rock bottom they could use as a road. And as everyone knows, no stream in these parts runs in a straight line for a long distance.

Roads which ran down creek beds were usually on solid rock with no mud to contend with. When water got too high after a storm folks simply stayed home or traveled cross country, and when the creek froze over in the winter it made for easier traveling.

Creek-bed roads went where the creek went, but others were scarcely straighter. If there happened to be a barn or some other building in the path of a road, the road went around. Even after the building was long gone, the road remained in the same place. As time passed those who never knew there had been a barn wondered why the curve was there, but seldom did they do anything about it.

There is hardly a road in my county that at one place or another didn't swing around someone's house or barn. And there was always that farmer who didn't want a road of any kind running through his property. Country people like to get along, so the public's right of eminent domain was seldom exercised against unwilling neighbors. Instead, the road would curve sharply at the corner post and hug the fence line to the end of that farmer's property.

Before the advent of modern highways, the country roads were left pretty much to their original placement. Slight improvements were made from time to time, maybe moving the path of the road a few yards one way or the other. In some cases a curve was eliminated.

When it was determined that the automobile was here to stay, roads had to be made to accommodate their speed and their inability to function well in mud. Thus muddy dirt roads slowly gave way to gravel and eventually to hard surfacing.

Still, there was no hurry to straighten them. The first automobiles moved along at about the same pace as a horse, so there was little need to remove curves. Then there was the hard fact that roads had to be dug by hand or by horse-drawn dirt scoops which could move only about three cubic feet of earth or stone at a time. A 20-foot cut into a rocky hillside was accomplished with back-breaking labor and sometimes the use of hundreds of sticks of dynamite, with the debris hauled away by teams of horses.

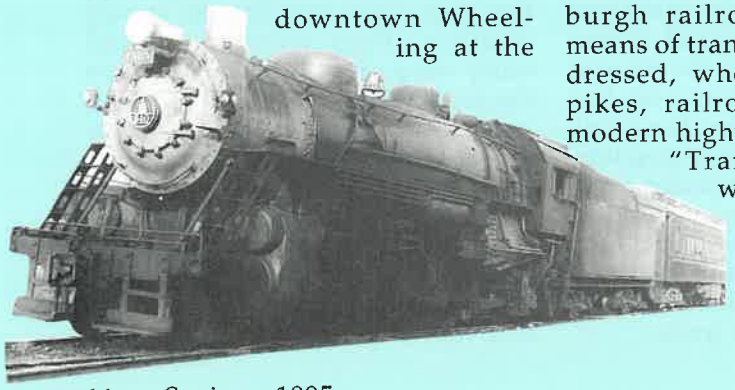
When gas and oil were discovered in the central counties, in my part of the state, everything needed to build the rig was brought in by horse and wagon. This equipment was so heavy that even by using wide rimmed wagon wheels the roads were chopped up so badly they were soon unfit for travel by automobile, especially in wintertime when the ground was wet and soft from constant rain or snow. At times they became no more than a thick gooey river of deep mud, impossible even to walk across. They remained in that condition until late spring when the sun and wind dried them out enough to be scraped.

Some of the early roads were privately owned, and a toll was charged to use them. But most were owned by the public and maintained by the community. There was no state road commission in the early days. Usually one person was designated to see that all dirt roads within his jurisdiction were scraped occasionally, calling on the manpower of the neighborhood to help.

Though there are still bends in nearly all our back roads, they are slowly and surely being straightened out. Let's hope that not all the curves are removed, so that we may go a little slower and enjoy the scenery our mountains have to offer.

Roads, Railroads, and Rivers

West Virginia University's Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology is sponsoring a national conference this spring in Wheeling. "Pathways to American Culture: A Conference on Transportation, Community, and Settlement Patterns in the U.S." will be held at the Custom House in downtown Wheeling at the corner of Market and 16th Streets on April 22nd and 23rd. Many know the historic location as West Virginia Independence Hall, the birthplace of the state of West Virginia.



The "Pathways" conference focuses on the history of transportation, including the building of the Cumberland Road and the Pittsburgh railroad complex. Many means of transportation will be addressed, whether they are turnpikes, railroads, waterways, or modern highways.

"Transportation history will be approached from the fields of social history, political and economic history, the history of technology, environmental history and national and local policy studies," according to an announcement of the conference from WVU. A panel on national parks, heritage corridors, and historic engineering concludes the conference. Speakers from Yale, Purdue, Carnegie-Mellon, Boise State, and the University of Virginia will participate in the Wheeling meeting. Billy Joe Peyton and Michal McMahon will represent West Virginia University.

For more information write to Pathways Conference, Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology, 1535 Mileground, Morgantown, WV 26505; (304)293-2513.

Teeth, Turtles & Tourists

Winning Tales from the 1994 West Virginia State Liars Contest

Photographs by Michael Keller

Nineteen-ninety-four was a big year for lying in Charleston, with the largest turnout in a long time for the annual West Virginia State Liars Contest. When the air cleared, Mr. Bee Murphy of Kanawha County had reclaimed the crown he first won in 1988, with a tale of — well — dentists, dentures, wildcat kittens, and drinking preachers.

Jimmy Costa of Summers County came in a strong second with his story of Yankee tourists and other critters, and Mark Howell of Randolph County came in third with a yarn about his inventive kinfolks. A manure spreader was the only invention they wouldn't stand behind, Mark said.

We expect all these folks back this year. Contact GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan if you want to join them on the contest stage. The 1995 Liars Contest, part of the Vandalia Gathering, will be held May 28, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Cultural Center Theater in Charleston.

Howard "Bee" Murphy, West Virginia's Biggest Liar in 1988 and again last year, looks way too respectable for the coveted title.

Howard "Bee" Murphy. Six years ago I was here and warned you people about watching TV and especially the commercials.

You can get yourself in trouble, and I did. I was watching a commercial for some kind of adhesive to hold your false teeth in, and I glued my teeth to my fingers and I couldn't get them off for several weeks.

The dentists and the biggest part of people, they call them dentures. Well, I said they're not dentures, they're just plain old false teeth.

But after researching this for about six years, I've come to the conclusion that I was partially wrong and partially right. I went out back of Spring Hill where I was born, and I located a man that was about 95 years old. He knew one of my uncles — and that uncle said that he knew another one of my uncles that worked on people's teeth back about the time of Abraham Lincoln.

The old man had a tablet where my uncle had written in all the things that had happened.

One day, he wrote down in the book, he was sitting there waiting for someone to come in to have their

teeth worked on. He heard wildcats down under this rock cliff where he did his dental work. It's the same rock cliff I was born under. There was a wildcat's den under there, too.

When he was sitting there waiting, he could hear those wildcat kittens meowing and carrying on. Finally they were out where he could see them. Then the mother cat came in and brought some kind of a small animal for food for them and put it down and they began to eat.

He wrote in there that they're "den chewers," because they're in a den and they're chewing. And that's how the dentists got this "denture" stuff.

Anyhow, what I want to tell you is that one day there was a pack peddler came through. The pack peddler asked my uncle, "What kind of work do you do?"

He said, "I work on people's teeth."

"Well," he said, "do you have a mirror so you can see the upper teeth easily, without having to get down and look up into the mouth?"

He said, "No, I don't have anything like that."

"Well," the peddler said, "I've got one here if you want to buy one." So he did, he bought one.

And the man told him, "Now remember, you've got to work just opposite of what you think you're going to do with your forceps or whatever you're putting in the mouth — you have to do just opposite of what you think."

So, one day a man came in to get a tooth pulled. My uncle put the mirror back in the man's mouth and got it all set right to where he could see good. And while he was looking in that mirror, he went ahead and put his forceps back in there and got a-holt of that tooth that he thought was the one that ought to come out.

Well, when he was pulling people's teeth he won't turn them loose because he knows if he does, they won't let him get a-holt of them again. So he got a-holt of that tooth, twisting and a-pulling, and he could hear someone a-screaming and hollering. He pulled that tooth out — and then he saw the blood running down all over him where he had pulled his own tooth!

Paul Lepp, all-time champ in the State Liars Contest, was back in 1994. Here he measures off a big one.

He said right then that he'd never use a mirror to pull people's teeth.

There's another little thing that I might throw in. He ran off some stuff he called "pain killer" under that rock cliff, too. There were several preachers lived out in that section. Some of them had a few teeth gone because he would sell them about a half of a pint of that pain killer, then pull a tooth. These preachers would come in and get a tooth pulled so they could drink that half a pint of pain killer.

They would most always buy the other half when they was getting ready to leave, in case they had pains later.

Jimmy Costa. This happened to me in about 1982.

The circumstances were that I didn't have a phone at my home at the time.

I lived out in the country, as I yet do, and I needed to make a phone call. Our county 4-H camp is not very far from my home, it's a mile, a nice leisurely walk down a little one-lane hard road. I thought I'd just trek on down there and make my call.

The way the road lies you've got a mountain, then the road, then there's like about a six-foot drop and you're in a big river bottom on over to the Greenbrier River. Right there at the break-off of the road where the bottom begins it's very marshy and swampy, very wet, cattails.

I was walking along, it was in the heat of the day, I'd been working, just had old work clothes on. A lot

Appalachian Humor

Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler are the authors of *More Laughter in Appalachia: Southern Mountain Humor*. The book is the fourth in a folk humor series by Jones and Wheeler, founders of the Festival of Appalachian Humor in Berea, Kentucky.

The 224-page August House publication is the sequel to *Laughter in Appalachia*, now in its 11th printing. The new book contains outrageous tall tales, jokes, songs, riddles and just about all the Southern wit a person can stand on such topics as rural life, education, politicians and lawyers, religion, doctors and old age. A dose of Billy Edd Wheeler's humor follows:

This old guy got up and shaved one morning, came out and said to his wife, "Boy, that makes me feel 20 years younger."

His wife said, "Did you ever think of shaving at night?"

In all, there are more than 300 contributions by humorists, folklorists, and "just plain folks" from throughout the Appalachian region. Contributors include several West Virginians, George Daugherty, Bonnie Collins and Ken Sullivan among them.

"Loyal Jones and Billy Edd Wheeler *know* funny. They probably have the best ears for humor in the U.S.A.," says guitarist Chet Atkins, also a contributor to the book. *More Laughter in Appalachia*, which sells for $10.95, will be available at bookstores in April.

of ducks frequent this marsh, and I noticed about four mallard males, old drakes there, about 60 feet off in that swampy, marshy place.

Of course, I was moving, you know, and they were frightened by that. They would fly up — but they wouldn't leave. There was this one hen right in the middle of that marsh. They would fly up above her and land, and then they would fly back to her.

After two or three times, I thought, "Well, isn't that strange, that hen has never taken to the air?" They just seemed to be protecting her or something.

I can't tell you what kind of damage that duck left in that car, because all I could hear were people hollering and screaming and thrashing around.

Well, I got curious and tried to see through the brush along the road just exactly what was up with her. And I noticed she was listed all to one side. She had one wing way up in the air, it was outstretched like this. And she was having the awfullest time just keeping her head above water, you know. You could almost see both her feet. It was so curious-looking, and every now and then she would swim in a tight little circle.

I just couldn't understand at all. I never heard of a duck doing a breast stroke with a wing. I always thought they swam with their feet.

Curiosity got the best of me. I struck off the road and went down through all that grade rubble and through the weeds and continued right into the swamp, you know. I thought, "Now, some-thing's got her fouled." Obviously she couldn't get out of that little spot. And my mind was working, I said, "muskrat trap." I knew people trapped there and thought she had gotten hung in a trap.

With that in mind, I started walking out in there. It was that old deep, swampy muck. Every step I'd make, I'd go down about a foot.

I thought, "Boy, I'm liable to get myself out here and never be able to get out of it!" But I felt compelled to save this duck, you know. So I walked right up to her, and I was about up to here in the muck and the water and cattails and the rushes. She was right there. I grabbed a-hold of her and I pulled her up. Attached to her was a snapping turtle, had a head about this big around on him, and he had her by the wing!

What he was trying to do was to drown her, and then he would eat her. Now, I knew they'd get ducklings, but I had no idea that they would deal with a full-fledged adult duck. But there he was, you know.

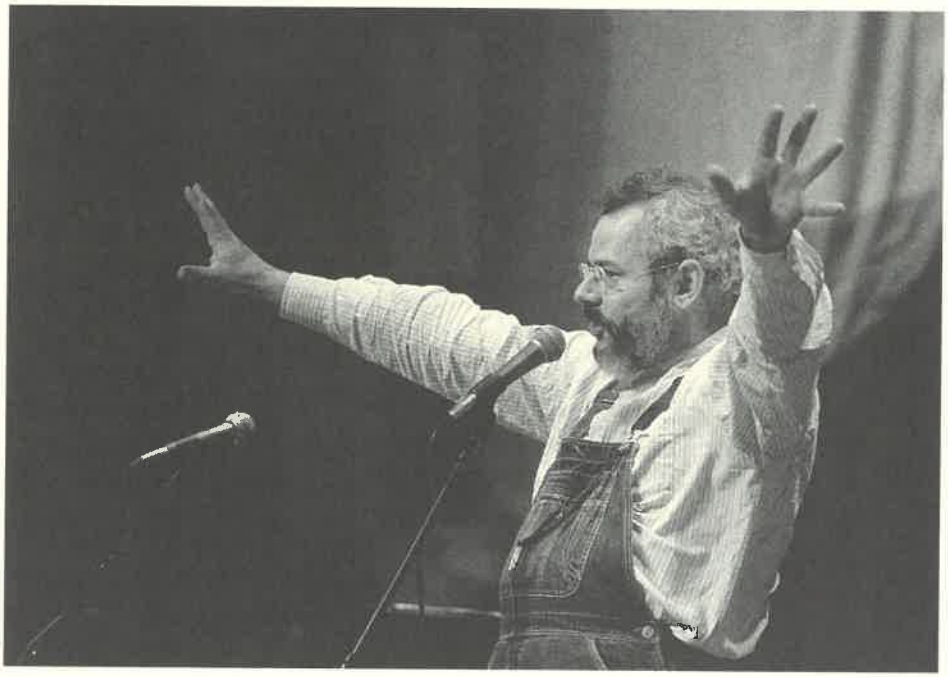
Well, I was as startled as the turtle was for me interrupting his meal. And he ducked down, when I grabbed the duck and threw her up under my arm. I just instinctively kicked in the water, like that, and I hit that turtle. He made a big roll like that, next thing I know I could see his white underbelly, and I kicked him again. That second kick rolled him right up on the edge of the bank, upside down.

He was trying to get hisself all squared away and back to level. And I just — wham! — put my foot right down on his underside and had him pinned there to the ground. He was rolling his head and rolling his tail, trying to get himself upright.

Now, I want you to know this duck was no more concerned about being under my arm, she never made the first struggle. All she wanted to know was, "Where is that turtle?" All the time that I was fighting with this turtle and thrashing with him, she was stretching her neck.

Buddy, she wanted to know where the turtle was. She knew what had had her, you know.

And I'm thinking, "What a strange situation this is!" I said, "This is something that Marlin Perkins should be here to film. I mean, this is really unusual." So I think, well, I'll go down to my aunt's, she has a camera, and I'll take a picture of these two. Write it up and send it to the DNR or *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine.



Jimmy Costa's story started with a turtle ducking a duck and went on from there. It happened, he says.

So here I go, I got the turtle in this hand, the duck under this arm. Down the road I go, all this old gray muck on me clear up to my belt line. The turtle was so big, he was a good 15 or 20 pounds, great big old turtle, that I'd have to throw him down and change arms.

Vehicles start coming by, and here I am walking down the road with the duck under one arm and the

turtle in the other hand. Of course, it was my neighbors, and they know I do strange things. They just threw their hand up and said, "You know, you never can tell what he's going to be carrying down the road."

The next thing I know, I get right in the bend of the road and here comes a great big old Lincoln. It had Connecticut license plates right on the front of it. Well, these people didn't know quite what to do. They just kind of came to an abrupt halt, one of those rocking halts, you know. Then they advanced a little bit.

I thought, "Well, isn't this something? Here's a whole car load of fureigners. I wonder what they think of this fellow carrying this duck and turtle down the middle of the road?"

Well, it was pretty obvious. There were four women in there and this one fellow driving, older folks. And, oh, the gleam on their faces. You could just tell that they had finally run into one of these mystical hillbillies that they'd heard so much about. They finally found one of them, right out there in his element.

I thought to myself, I can handle this two different ways. I could either give them a lesson in the local fauna and say, "Well, you know, this is what we call locally here a snapping turtle. But actually it's *reptilacous horribous*." And I could say, "This duck here, this is a mallard hen, but she's known as *femina mallard duckous mallardous*."

But I thought, "No, they don't want that. They don't want a rational conversation. They want a true hillbilly."

Now I felt obligated to lie to them.

So here they come, the window rolls down, and this woman, real blue-haired lady, she's right up to the edge of the window. This woman says, "Well, what are you doing? What are you doing there with the turtle and the duck?"

I said, "Honey, them's my pets. We've been out there swimming."

Well, she could see all this mud and muck on me, and it was obvious that I'd been there. And she said, "You were out with them, were you?"

"Yes ma'am, I take them out of the house pretty often. We get out as often as we can when I'm not working." I said, "But these two got to frolicking so bad I had to get them out of the water."

She said, "Well, what happened?"

I said, "Well, the turtle was trying to duck the duck. You know, they liked to drowned one another."

Buddy, when she hit the Greenbrier River, that was the end of it!

And so, she says, "Do you have names for them?"

"Yes ma'am," I said, "This is Tommy the Turtle." I held him up right by his tail, those old big claw feet were just a-getting it.

She said, "Well, do you have a name for the duck?" She was going to assume it was "Donald."

I said, "No, no, it's not Donald. This is Donna the Duck."

She said, "Is it a girl duck?"

I said, "Yes ma'am, it is."

She said, "How do you know it's a girl duck?"

That kind of caught me off guard, so I just dropped the turtle and I said, "Well, you can look for yourself."

So I got the duck out from under my arm, and I grabbed her by both wings and I approached the car with her, rear-end first like this, to show the woman up at the window. Well, the old duck stuck her feet out, just straight out like that, you know. She threw her neck out and looked around at that woman and what happened after that — well, the best way I can describe it was, I heard this "Poosh" and I mean it was loud!

And what hadn't gone through the window was on the side of that Lincoln. There was all this organic stuff just dripping and draining on the side of that car.

It just caught me completely off guard, and I let loose of the duck — and the duck went right on in through the window.

Now, I can't tell you what kind of damage that duck left in that car, because all I could hear were people hollering and screaming and thrashing around. And the duck was just mad — quack, quack, quack! Quack, quack, quack!

The next thing I know the duck comes out the window, it goes on the top of the car and runs right off the top, and goes down over the road and tears down through where there's a lot of camps and a few homes. Every dog and cat in that village were chasing that duck. That poor thing she tried to fly, you know, but her wing was crippled. I saw her for several hundred yards making this mad dash — and buddy, when she hit the Greenbrier River, that was the end of it.

Mark Howell looks like a shady character, and is. Randolph County snow storms bring out his inventive side.

And that's a true story, folks.

I just put the turtle off to the side and threw him in the pond. I said, "What's the use to take him and have a photograph made? Half the story's gone."

Mark Howell. In 1993 in March we had a real bad snow storm. I mean, it was a blizzard. You wouldn't believe how much snow.

We were trying to figure out a way that we could get this snow to

benefit the other people in the country, and I'm from a line of inventors. Really, the only machine that we've ever invented that any of my family wouldn't stand behind was a manure spreader. But other than that, they stood behind everything.

So my brother and I took a baler and we took the tines off that baler and we put a snow blower attachment to that and we attached the manure spreader to the baler to the back of the Ford tractor.

We started going down that road, and you wouldn't believe the bales of snow that we was putting out behind that baler. Finally we had to hit the field, started baling out in the field. We were baling the fields around there, and we had them full of snow bales.

And my brother said, "What are we going to do with all this?" I said, "Put it in railroad cars, and we'll ship it out West. They're having a drought and they need it."

And he said, "That sounds like a good idea."

So we loaded up a bunch of cars and sent that train west. Well, wouldn't you know it — railroad strike. There all the cars sat, out in Chicago, out in the Midwest. What happened? The big flood of '93. All the bales melted. They had a great flood.

I said, "Now you just keep quiet and don't tell them, 'cause everybody thinks rain is what caused the flood in the Midwest. We could get in a lot of trouble, boy. Just keep quiet. And we don't have to worry about ever having that much snow again."

I mean, what's your chances of another blizzard?

Well, here it came. In January '94, we had another one. Same as last year. So we started baling. I told my brother, I said, "Now, we're going to have to do something different with all this snow we got baled up."

So we decided. We bought up all of the empty coal mines in our area. And we started packing those bales back in those mines. We got them full of snow.

So, next winter if there's anybody here that needs a job, just come to Helvetia and we will give you a snow job.

Vandalia '95

Memorial Day Weekend brings Vandalia Gathering, a special time of homecoming to West Virginians and a time to welcome visitors and introduce them to our mountain ways. The big Charleston festival begins Friday, May 26, and continues through Sunday, May 28.

As always, Vandalia kicks off with a Friday evening concert. The opening concert is a cultural pulse-taking, an annual overview of the condition of West Virginia's traditions, where the passing of old friends is mourned while the continuing vigor of the things they believed in is celebrated.

Vandalia goes into high gear Saturday, with events continuing from morning until after dark. Highlights include the annual fiddle and lap dulcimer contests, craft demonstrations and sales, dancing indoors and out, the popular regional and ethnic food booths, and more. Saturday concludes with another big evening concert, at which the 1995 Vandalia Award winner will be announced.

MICHAEL KELLER

Carl Rutherford (left) and Howard Armstrong check each other's style at Vandalia '94.

The Saturday concert also recognizes the winners of the annual statewide quilt contest. The winning quilts and dozens of others will remain on display on the marble walls of the Cultural Center throughout the summer, always one of Charleston's most popular exhibits.

Festivities continue all day Sunday, with the resumption of craft, dance and other events from the previous day. West Virginia's finest banjo players will compete in old-time and three-finger categories, and the state's biggest liar will be identified before the day is done. Vandalia '95 winds down with a final awards concert in the late afternoon.

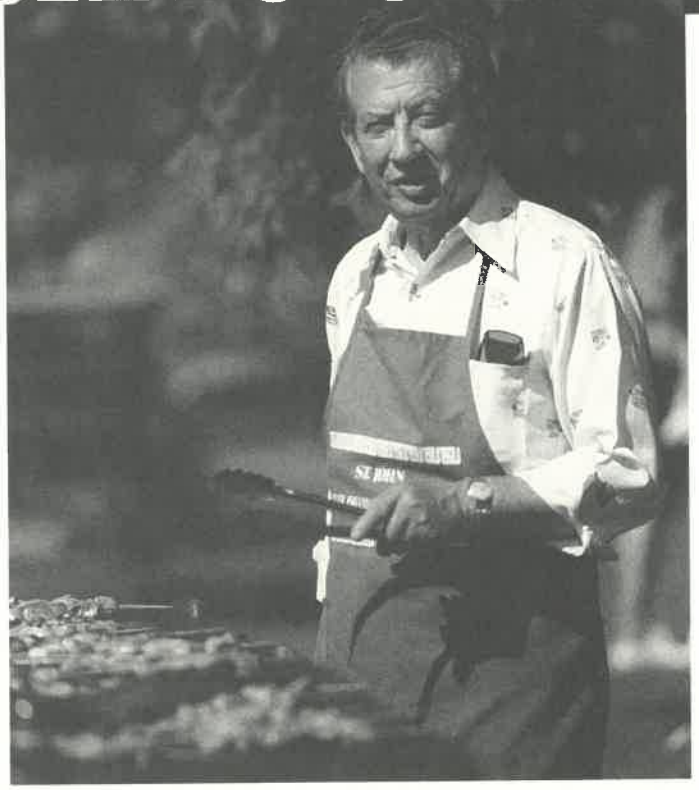
This is the 19th Annual Vandalia Gathering. The sprawling festival takes place at the Capitol Complex, just off I-64/I-77 in Charleston, both inside the Cultural Center and on the adjoining grounds of the State Capitol.

Vandalia Gathering is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. There is no admission charge. The photographs which follow, by Michael Keller, are from Vandalia '94. >>>>>>>

Jim Boggs is a regular in the lap dulcimer contest.

Christine Morris dances for a concert crowd.

Vandalia Time



Left: Food is one of the major attractions at Vandalia. Here Bill Zikkos of St. John Greek Orthodox Church mans the grill.

Below: A young Vandalian, ready for the sunshine.

Growing with the music. The idea of Vandalia Gathering is to help make sure that West Virginia traditions are passed from one generation to the next. We see that most dramatically in the young people who have grown up with the festival. These photos show fiddler Hannah Ross with her family in 1987 (below) and as she appears on the cover of this issue. Earlier photo by Greg Clark.

Bonnie Collins Recording

Storyteller Bonnie Collins of Doddridge County is the subject of a new recording by Braxton Records. "An Evening with Bonnie Collins" is filled with poetry, songs, humor, hymns, and the philosophy of one of West Virginia's best-loved ladies. George Daugherty, an old friend and master storyteller in his own right, joins Bonnie on the tape, helping to draw out memories.

Bonnie says she learned a lot of her humor at her father's knee. "He had a joke for every occasion," she recalls. But Bonnie's original material provides the best entertainment here, and some of it is humor with a point to make. Much of her poetry is based on her own experiences as in "The Goodest Cook," which starts "I fed a hungry child today." Bonnie wrote it for a child who dubbed her "the goodest cook" when she was a cook in a Doddridge County school.

MICHAEL KELLER

Bonnie Collins has performed at West Virginia's state parks, for the Morris Family festival at Ivydale, at Vandalia Gathering in Charleston (where she received the 1990 Vandalia Award), the West Virginia Folk Festival at Glenville, and at the Festival of Appalachian Humor in Berea, Kentucky.

"An Evening with Bonnie Collins" may be ordered from Braxton Records, 621 E. Church Avenue, Berryville, AR 72616 for $10.

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 or money order for the right amount to GOLDENSEAL.

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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_____Winter 1984/Webster County's Mollohan Mill
_____Fall 1985/Dulcimer Maker Ray Epler
_____Winter 1985/Huntington 1913
_____Spring 1986/Blacksmith Jeff Fetty
_____Summer 1986/The Draft Horse Revival
_____Fall 1986/West Virginia Chairmaking
_____Winter 1986/Educator Walden Roush
_____Summer 1987/Camden Park History
_____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
_____Spring 1992/Home to Swandale
_____Summer 1992/Dance, West Virginia, Dance!
_____Fall 1992/Bell Bottoms at Bethany
_____Summer 1993/Fairmont Romance
_____Fall 1993/Bower Homestead, Twin Falls
_____Winter 1993/Monongah Mine Disaster
_____Spring 1994/Sculptor Connard Wolfe
_____Summer 1994/Mortgage Lifter Tomatoes
_____Fall 1994/Boone County Coal Camp
_____Winter 1994/20th Anniversary

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Our Writers and Photographers

LARRY BARTLETT, a native of Wood County, recently returned to West Virginia after being away for 39 years. He earned his Master of Fine Arts at Tulane University in New Orleans and went on to work as a college instructor, reporter, cartoonist, and art director in New York City, New Orleans, and Colorado. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

HELEN CARPER is originally from Roane County. She earned an education degree from West Virginia State College and an M.A. in journalism from Marshall. Helen serves on Mountain State Press's board of directors. She is a member of the Thursday Club in St. Albans, and her involvement with the group led her to prepare Phyllis Hamrick's story for GOLDENSEAL. Her last contribution appeared in our Summer 1993 issue.

GREG CLARK is photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History.

JESSICA L. COX, a native of Kirby, is a senior at WVU majoring in journalism and editor of the college newspaper, the *Daily Athenaeum*. She worked as an intern at the *Hampshire Review* in Romney and at *Newsday* in Long Island. She is the granddaughter of Cox's Store owners Nellie and Lincoln Cox. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

PEARL BRATTON FAULKNER is a native of Mercer County where she now lives in retirement. Educated at Concord College, Pearl taught in Mercer County for 14 years. She also was an instructor at the Glenwood cannery and overseer of county school lunch programs. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

CARL E. FEATHER lives in Ohio, but traces his family back to Preston and Tucker counties and visits West Virginia as often as he can. He is the grand-nephew of farm equipment man Willard Feather. Carl has been a freelance photographer for more than 20 years and a freelance writer for nearly ten. He is now lifestyles editor at the *Ashtabula Star-Beacon*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1993.

NORMAN JULIAN, a Clarksburg native, is a graduate of West Virginia University. He is a Morgantown journalist and the author of the books *Cheat, Mountains and Valleys*, and *Snake Hill*. The West Virginia Press Association named him first-place winner in general column writing in 1992. He has contributed to GOLDENSEAL since 1980, his last story appearing in Summer 1993.

LOUIS E. KEEFER grew up on Wheeling Island. He was educated at WVU, Morris Harvey College, and Yale. A retired planning consultant, he has written for magazines and professional journals and published two books as well. He is currently finishing a book on Ashford General Hospital. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER is chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

KYLE D. LOVERN is a freelance writer and photographer from Williamson, where he formerly worked for the *Williamson Daily News*. He now works in public relations at Williamson ARH Hospital in South Williamson, Kentucky. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1992.

MARGARET MEADOR was born at Gauley Bridge. She earned a B.S. from West Virginia Tech and an M.A. from VPI. She retired in 1989 after 26 years as a county extension agent for WVU. She now works with the West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search. The mother of long-time GOLDENSEAL contributor Michael Meador, this is Margaret's first contribution to the magazine.

RON RITTENHOUSE, a Mannington native, is chief photographer for the Morgantown *Dominion Post*. He is a member of the National Press Photographers Association and other professional organizations. A collector of old cameras and photographs, Ron has contributed to GOLDENSEAL since 1980. His work last appeared in Winter 1994.

WILLIAM E. STINESPRING of Shinnston is a native West Virginian. He left the state as a young man seeking employment. After more than 50 years, he returned home and says he has enjoyed "rediscovering the many beautiful sights and friendly people." Travels on West Virginia back roads inspired his article on country roads. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

(continued from inside front cover)

August 11-19 Lewisburg (645-1090)
State Fair of West Virginia

August 12-13 Salem (782-5245)
Dulcimer Weekend (Fort New Salem)

August 13 Glenville (428-5421)
57th Job's Temple Homecoming

August 14-20 New Martinsville (455-2418)
Town & Country Days

August 18-20 Flat Top (253-7127)
Lilly Family Reunion

August 19 Clifftop (438-3005)
Old-Time Day (Camp Washington-Carver)

August 19 Richwood (846-9490)
Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion (Camp Woodbine)

August 22-26 West Union (1-800-296-2574)
Doddridge County Fair

August 25-27 Morgantown (599-1104)
Mason-Dixon Festival

August 25-27 Cairo (628-3705)
Cairo Days

August 25-27 Beckley (252-7328)
30th Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival

August 25-September 4 Charleston (348-6419)
Charleston Sternwheel Regatta

August 26 New Manchester (564-3651)
Foundation Day (Tomlinson Run)

August 27 Core (879-5500)
13th Dunkard Valley Frontier Festival

August 27 Daniels (252-3161)
CCC Reunion (Little Beaver State Park)

August 28-September 2 Philippi (457-3254)
Barbour County Fair

September 1-3 Jane Lew (842-4095)
11th Firemen's Arts & Crafts Festival

September 1-3 Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
Labor Day Gospel Sing

September 1-3 Clarksburg (622-7314)
West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival

September 1-4 Weston (1-800-296-1863)
Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee

September 2-3 Wheeling (242-1929)
Oglebay Woodcarvers Show and Sale

September 2-3 Parkersburg (428-3000)
American Indian Heritage Weekend (Blennerhassett)

September 2-4 Erbacon (226-5104)
Erbacon Days

September 2-4 Parsons (478-2424)
Hick Festival

September 3 Gandeeville (343-8378)
Roane County Homecoming

September 8-9 Fairmont (363-7132)
Sagebrush Roundup Fall Festival

September 8-10 Huntington (529-2701)
Hilltop Festival (Huntington Museum of Art)

September 9 Clifftop (438-3005)
Country Showdown (Camp Washington-Carver)

September 9-10 Romney (822-5013)
Hampshire Heritage Days

September 9-10 Winfield (755-8421)
Putnam County Homecoming

September 9-10 New Cumberland (564-3801)
Brickyard Bend Festival

September 9-10 Helvetia (924-5018)
Helvetia Community Fair

September 9-10 Parkersburg (428-1130)
West Virginia Honey Festival

September 9-16 Williamson (235-5560)
King Coal Festival

September 10 Flatwoods (744-8372)
3rd Mule & Donkey Show

September 14-17 Sistersville (652-2939)
27th West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival

September 14-17 Franklin (249-5422)
Treasure Mountain Festival

September 15-17 Cairo (558-3370)
Nature Wonder & Wild Foods Weekend (North Bend)

September 16 Lost Creek (745-3466)
Country Fall Festival

September 16 Matewan (426-4239)
Matewan Centennial Celebration

September 16-17 Clarksburg (623-2335)
Black Heritage Festival

September 22-24 Charles Town (725-2055)
Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival

September 22-24 Moorefield (538-6560)
Hardy County Heritage Weekend

September 23-24 French Creek (924-6211)
National Hunting & Fishing Days

September 23-24 Union (772-5475)
Autumn Harvest Festival

September 28-30 Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
West Virginia Molasses Festival

September 29-30 Gandeeville (768-9249)
FOOTMAD Fall Festival (Camp Sheppard)

September 29-October 1 Kingwood (329-0021)
Preston County Buckwheat Festival

September 30 Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
Roadkill Cookoff

September 30-October 1 Burlington (289-3511)
Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival

September 30-October 8 Elkins (636-1824)
Mountain State Forest Festival

October 5-8 Clay (587-4900)
Golden Delicious Festival

October 6-7 Wellsburg (737-0801)
Wellsburg Apple Fest

October 6-8 Middlebourne (758-2494)
Middle Island Harvest Festival

October 6-8 Milton (743-9222)
West Virginia Pumpkin Festival

October 6-8 Wheeling (1-800-624-6988)
Oglebayfest (Oglebay Park)

October 6-8 Point Pleasant (675-7750)
Battle of Point Pleasant Commemoration

October 7 Lowell (466-3321)
Heritage Craft Festival (Graham House)

October 7-8 Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)
22nd Apple Butter Festival

October 12-15 Spencer (927-1780)
West Virginia Black Walnut Festival

October 13-14 Mullens (294-4000)
Lumberjackin'-Bluegrassin' Jamboree (Twin Falls)

October 14 Lewisburg (645-7917)
Taste of Our Towns

October 14 Cameron (686-3732)
Big Run Apple Festival

October 14-15 Logan (752-0253)
Aunt Jenny Wilson Old-Time Festival

October 15-22 Elkins (636-1903)
Old-Time Week & Fiddlers Reunion (D&E College)

October 19-22 Martinsburg (253-2500)
Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival

October 21 Fayetteville (1-800-927-0263)
Bridge Day

October 21 Bluefield (425-2778)
15th Country Craft Guild Show

October 14-15 & 21-22 Hinton (466-5420)
Railroad Days

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 1996 "Folklife Fairs Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number, if possible. We must have this information in by January 15, 1996, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

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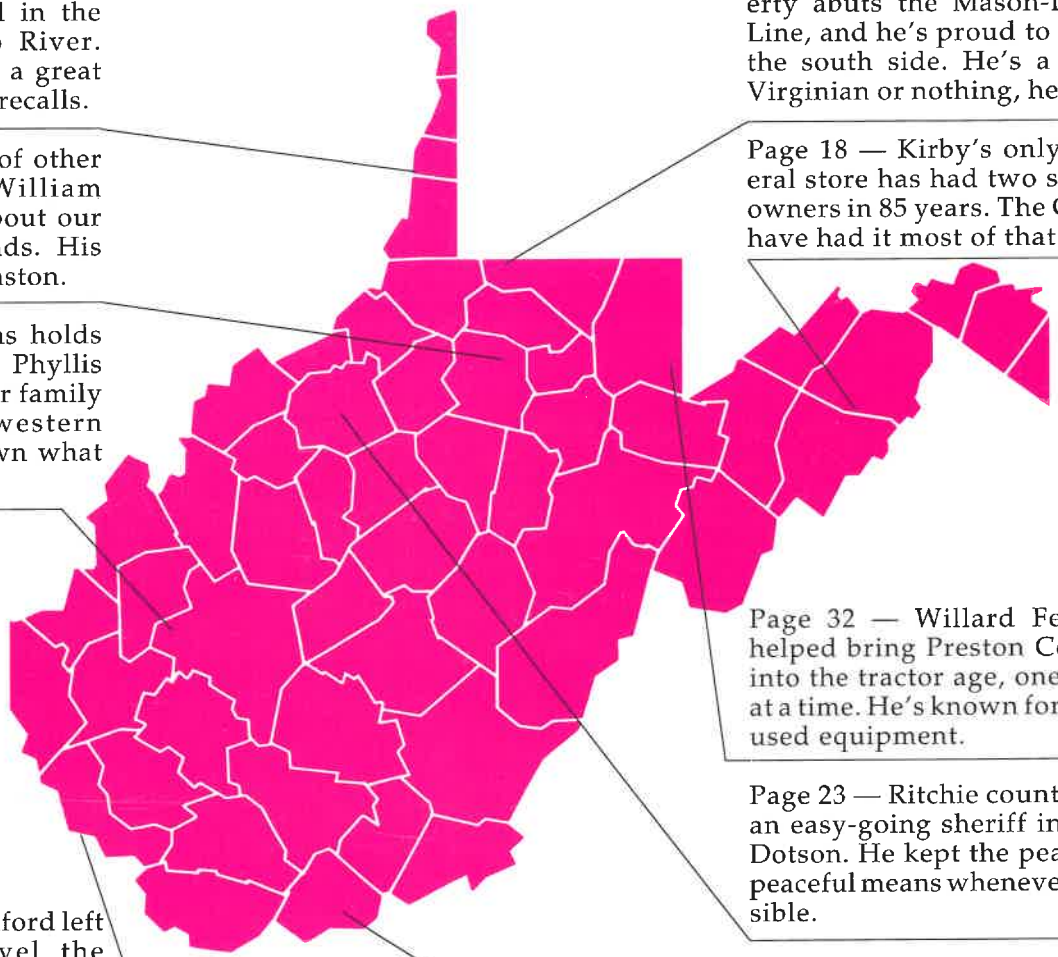

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