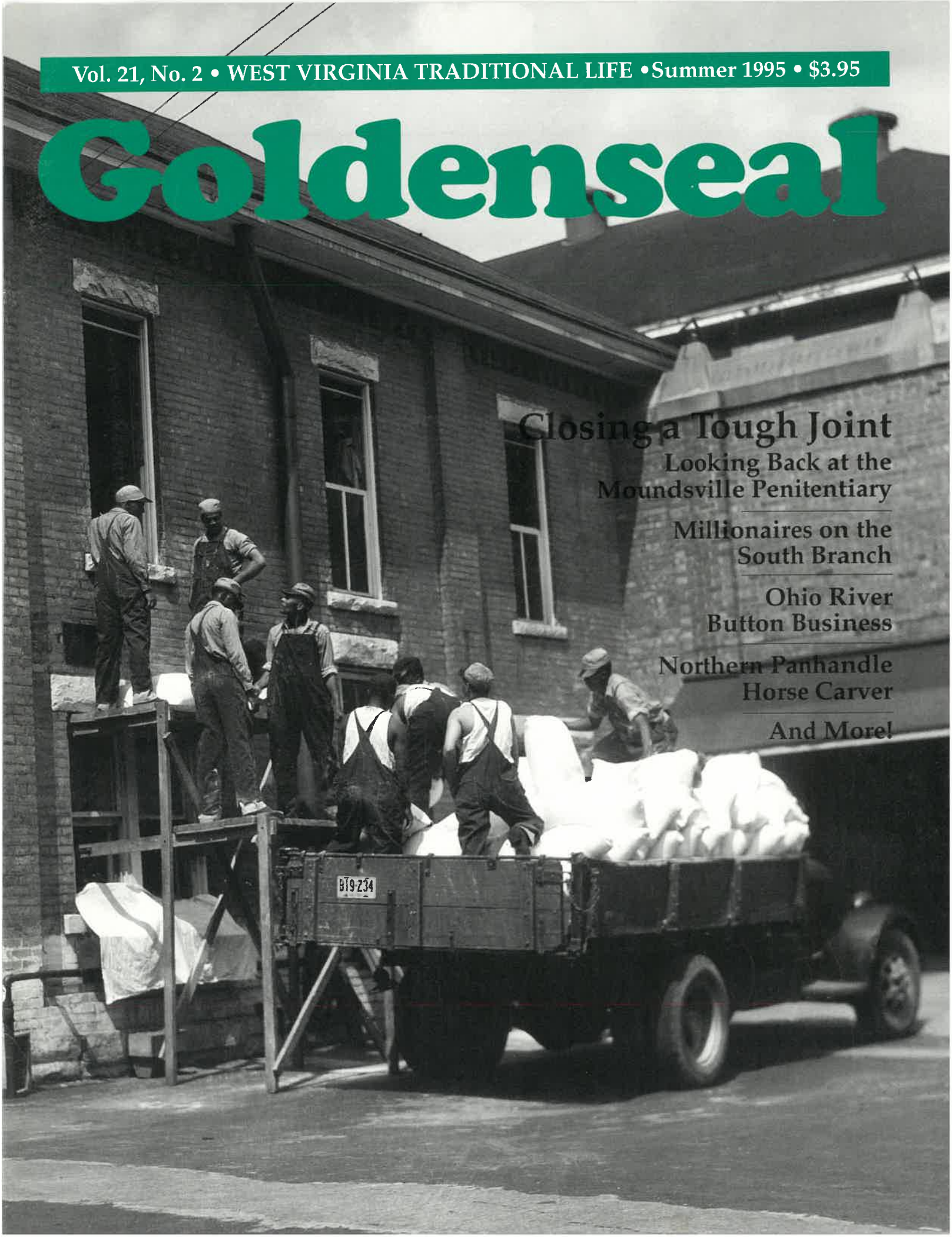
Vol. 21, No. 2 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Summer 1995 • $3.95

Goldenseal



Closing a Tough Joint
Looking Back at the Moundsville Penitentiary

Millionaires on the South Branch

Ohio River Button Business

Northern Panhandle Horse Carver

And More!

From the Editor: On The Road Again

Last year's Big Bus Trip was so much fun that we immediately decided to do it again.

That's right. Call it Bus Trip II or Son of Bus Trip, or just Road Trip, the Sequel — any way you put it, we're going on the road again, to borrow a line from Willie Nelson. Mark October 19 and 20 on your calendar.

We had a great time in southern West Virginia last fall, but it's a big state and this year we want to head out in another direction, into the Eastern Panhandle. There is no way to get over there from Charleston on a two-day schedule and still have the necessary time for loafing, so we are going to originate this trip in Clarksburg.

As before, the idea is to bring GOLDENSEAL alive by visiting some of the people and places featured in the magazine over the years. We'll make our first stop in Elkins, to take in the Henry Gassaway Davis and Stephen Benton Elkins mansions at — where else — Davis and Elkins College.

Then we'll travel on to Pendleton County, via Seneca Rocks. Iris and Glen Hofecker have promised to host a lunch for us at McCoy's Mill near Franklin, and we'll tour Glen's furniture workshop while there. McCoy's, an inn now instead of a working mill, sits where Thorne Creek empties into the South Branch of the Potomac. It is one of those magic spots blessed by nature, and now blessed again by hospitality and fine craftsmanship. We expect a great time.

From Franklin we'll go to Moorefield, where editor Phoebe Heishman will give us the low-down on weekly newspapering as practiced at the *Moorefield Examiner*. Phoebe's family has run the *Examiner* for three generations now. Surely that makes her an expert on the general run of local affairs, so we figure we'll be well acquainted with Hardy County doings by the time we pile back onto the bus.

We'll go on from there to our overnight lodgings at Capon Springs and Farms, nestled up near the Virginia line in the mountains of Hampshire County. This little-known haven, operated now by the grandchildren of the people who founded the place, is a perfect vision of turn-of-the-century resort life. The folks there have promised us an outdoor steak banquet, a speciality of theirs, and we look forward to a hearty country breakfast before departing the next morning.

After breakfast we roll out to the Giles family gristmill at the historic Berkeley County community of Bunker Hill, site of West Virginia's oldest white settlement. We'll go on to Berkeley Springs after that, for lunch with freelancers at the elegant Country Inn, next door to the state park and in sight of George Washington's own mineral bath at the ancient springs.

Next comes a tour of the old Hampshire Club, now the Peterkin Center, just up the South Branch from Romney. We expect to be joined by the Pancake sisters, whose family connections there date back to colonial times. Then we'll close the circle by rolling home to Clarksburg, with maybe a surprise stop along the way.

It all adds up to a doggone fine West Virginia trip, if I say so myself.

The Hampshire Club is as fresh as this issue, while the earliest story we'll cover (the Davis and Elkins mansions) goes all the way back to the Summer 1979 GOLDENSEAL, so this is a trip across time as well as across the state. We'll reprint all the articles in a special souvenir book for our travelers, and send that out before the trip.

Last October's trip sold out quickly, so if you are interested in this one please send your deposit as soon as possible. You will find a reservation coupon on page 72.

That's all I'll say about traveling plans, other than to direct your attention to the adjacent photograph of last year's group. This was made at Pence Springs Resort after breakfast on our second day out. These folks were just as cheery as they appear, marvelous traveling companions, and we expect another great group this fall. I hope you can join us.

MICHAEL KELLER

In parting, let me put in a few words in defense of the subscription price increase, from $15 to $16 yearly, which is announced on page 7.

This is our smallest price hike ever, but necessary nonetheless. We've suffered a one-two punch in our own expenses lately, in postage and paper. Skyrocketing paper prices will hurt us most, bringing a five-figure increase in our cost of doing business over the next 12 months. All considered we definitely need the extra dollar, and I hope you'll stand by us on that.

In the meantime, we will continue to develop extra sources of revenue wherever we can. In that regard, we appreciate all the orders for the *GOLDENSEAL Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars* and want you to know we still have plenty of those in stock. There is a coupon on page 5.

We also continue to bring in a steady if modest income from back issues, reprints, newsstand sales and so forth — even bus trips. All of it helps, both financially and also with our mission to explore West Virginia's heritage for the benefit of the folks most interested in that fascinating subject.

That's what we're here for, after all.

—Ken Sullivan

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Goldenseal

Volume 21, Number 2 Summer 1995

COVER: Convicts worked hard at the old State Penitentiary at Moundsville. Our article begins on page 39, with a related story on page 48. Photographer unknown, 1938 or 1939; restored by Greg Clark.

PHOTOS: Bruce Burgin, Greg Clark, Carl E. Feather, Frank P. Herrera, Michael Keller, George James Kossuth, Ron Rittenhouse, Dave Savage, Charlie Walton, Bob Wrobleski

Tool Quiz: The Stump Puller

There is no stumping GOLDENSEAL readers, to judge from the ease with which people identified the mystery tool demonstrated by Willard Feather on page 35 in the Spring issue.

John McQueen of Summersville was the first to send the right answer to the tool quiz, contacting us within a few days of publication. "I believe this apparatus is a stump puller," he wrote. "If I'm correct, let me know."

We did let him know, then we had to tell Francis Austin of Grafton, who called in his answer a little later, that he was not the first to get it right. Mr. Austin is a longtime friend and supporter of GOLDENSEAL. He calls himself an old CCC boy, meaning the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, and we've learned that he knows about most things having to do with woods work.

At least a half-dozen people eventually identified the stump puller, including Mary Wickline of White Sulphur Springs (crediting her brother-in-law Leo for the information), Arlice Rose of Webster County, and Theodore Kyle of Summersville. Mr. Kyle said that the one his cousin used on logging jobs had a cant-hook handle, which looks like what Mr. Feather has on his in the photograph.

Some other folks came pretty close, recognizing the working principle but failing to figure just what exactly was done with the cumbersome device. "The mystery implement is a comealong," wrote Harry I. Miller, a Preston Countian like Mr. Feather. "True, it's the largest comealong I've ever seen, but that's what it is, all right."

A comealong, for the benefit of those who have never made the acquaintance of one and who consequently may still have all their fingernails and knuckles intact, is a hand winch of the sort commonly found rattling around under pickup truck seats throughout our great Mountain State. It has a cable or hook on each end, with a balky ratchet in between. These gizmos are strong enough to get you into trouble with all kinds of heavy lifting and pulling jobs, but not nearly powerful enough to uproot mature tree stumps.

This big one ultimately left Mr. Miller in doubt as to its use, but he had imaginative ideas: "It appears to be capable of moving the Washington Monument about five feet in any direction," he concluded.

CARL E. FEATHER

Now we know: It's a stump puller.

K. K. Keenan, now living in Melbourne, Florida, said a buddy of his once used a stump puller for a slightly less outrageous exercise in landmark moving. "It was very handy," Mr. Keenan testified. "I saw a teenage boy pull down a 50-foot steel water tower with a 100-barrel tank on top."

Identifying the stump puller as "the daddy of the comealong and coffin hoist," Mr. Keenan said he'd seen the implement put to constructive use as well. "Many times I've seen a man of small stature move 70-ton cars of coal up a slight grade with little effort," he reported.

All that still leaves the troubling question of what you attach the *other end* to, in order to get enough leverage to jerk coal cars around or wrench stumps out of the ground. Arthur Mollendick cleared that up in a succinct letter from Lancaster, Ohio. "Wrap each cable around a stump with ratchet in center," he explained. "Work ratchet back and forth until one of the stumps comes out."

Easier said than done, no doubt, but it makes sense: Pit one stump against another until the weaker one gives way. Then hitch up two more, and repeat the process.

It makes sense as far as it goes, that is, for this plan of attack will eventually leave you with one stump standing all by itself. Having bested all the others, that one is bound to be the stoutest stump on the place. None of our writers addressed the problem of getting the sturdy survivor out of the ground, so we will just assume it is one of the little challenges that make farm work interesting.

Our thanks to everyone who took part in GOLDENSEAL's first tool quiz. It was fun, and we hope to do it again.

— Ken Sullivan

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.

March 23, 1995
Portsmouth, Virginia
Editor:
I have just received and read my spring issue of GOLDENSEAL. I particularly enjoyed the article on Preacher Carr and congratulate author Pearl Faulkner. I grew up on the Princeton Road not far from Glenwood and remember well Mrs. Faulkner, her husband, Bob, and her sister, Viola, and many other Glenwood folks.

My husband and I and my mother, Mrs. Bertie Byrd, all belonged to Carr Memorial Church at Glenwood. [Like Mrs. Faulkner] I also was attending Glenwood School when the district change was enforced. I had to go to Princeton Schools from sixth grade through high school, since we were in East River District.

We moved from the area in 1942, first to Radford, Virginia, then to Pulaski. My husband, Orba D. Light, started to work here in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, March 23, 1943, and retired after 35 years in 1978. He is a native of Summers County. My mother moved with us and lived with us until her death in 1973 at age 92.

I may be a Virginian by adoption, but I'll always be a proud West Virginian by birth.
Thank you,
Mrs. Elsye Light

West Virginian Hotel

April 3, 1995
Mt. Nebo, West Virginia
Editor:
Someone gave me your Summer 1993 issue, and I read your most interesting article on the grand West Virginian Hotel.

During World War II I was the chief petty officer in charge of transportation in the Fifth Naval District Shore Patrol, in Norfolk, Virginia. My men who rode the N&W Railroad stayed overnight in Bluefield at the West Virginian Hotel.

The article "Champions with Dirty Knuckles" was in that same issue. I was once the marble champion of Harrison County, and I always said that was my only claim to fame.

I am a retired West Virginia state policeman.
Sincerely,
C. C. Stewart

Remembering Old Iron

March 26, 1995
Wenatchee, Washington
Editor:
I took one look at Fred McCoy's old steam shovel [in the Spring '95 issue] and said, "It's either a Michigan or a Bucyrus-Erie." They were built in the same general area and looked a lot alike.


RON RITTENHOUSE
Fred McCoy's Bucyrus-Erie.

I grew up around all kinds of "old iron," as the collectors call it. One of my uncles worked many years where the 30 and 60 horsepower Caterpillar tractors were built, and we thought it was big machinery. Now there are giant shovels and draglines that can pick up Fred's whole shovel in their buckets.
Walt Thayer

My Nephew Norman

March 29, 1995
Brockway, Pennsylvania
Editor:
I want to order ten copies of the Spring 1995 GOLDENSEAL. I've been reading all night (or so it seems). What a wonderful publication! It always is, but especially so when it brings another piece by my nephew, Norman Julian. Boy, am I pleased with him! I like to think I had some small part in his progress when I gave him an ancient typewriter that had belonged in the family line of my in-laws. The original owner would have approved, I'm quite sure, even though the bloodline is through mine and not my husband or in-laws.

I grew up in Millersville (near Fairmont) but though I'm now an old lady, GOLDENSEAL reading can almost bring back the earthy fragrance of being young in West Virginia. It is closer than I'll ever again get to trompin' barefoot on those cool, sweet country roads. I want to share the experience through the copies I'm ordering.
Anna P. Graham

Ten copies — doggone! We're pleased with him, too, Mrs. Graham, and hope that more of our freelancers have doting relatives. —ed.

Tractor Trouble

March 22, 1995
Chandlersville, Ohio
Editor:
I'll bet Henry Ford II is spinning in his grave.

In the Spring '95 issue, in the story "Go See Willard," the picture of the Ferguson 30 tractor was incorrectly identified as a Ford-Ferguson 30. In 1939 Ford joined up with Harry Ferguson to launch the new Ford-Ferguson 9N three-point-hitch tractor. It was Harry Ferguson who provided the hydraulics for the tractor, known as the "Ferguson

CARL E. FEATHER

Mr. Feather checks over his Ferguson 30.

System."

In 1947 the last Ford-Ferguson three-speeds-forward tractor was made because Harry Ferguson went his separate way after settling up with Ford following a lawsuit, and made his first TE20 "Ferguson" farm tractor in 1948. Also in 1948, Ford dropped the Ferguson name and introduced the Ford 8N four-speed tractor, commonly known as the "Red Belly" Ford tractor. The Ferguson tractor was painted a solid gray color and had four speeds forward also.

In about 1951, Ferguson brought out the TO30 (30 horsepower), which is the one pictured with Willard Feather on page 35. These were made until 1954 when Ferguson teamed up with Massey to make the first Massey-Ferguson tractor in 1955. Incidentally, the first Ford-Ferguson prototypes in 1939 did have the horizontal bar grille, as did all later Ferguson tractors, but apparently, these were not in the first production tractors. Instead, Ford always used the familiar vertical bar grilles.

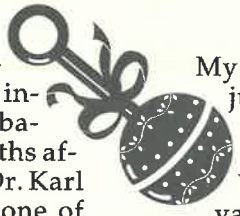
I enjoy GOLDENSEAL immensely.
Sincerely,
Rick Taylor

You're right -- and we apologize to Henry Ford II and Harry Ferguson too. Willard Feather confirms that the tractor is a Ferguson 30, rather than a Ford-Ferguson. —ed.

Harrisville

March 14, 1995
Parkersburg, West Virginia
Editor:
"Mayberry in Harrisville" [Spring '95] brought back childhood memories. In the late 1940's, early '50's, while I was growing up in Harrisville the courthouse lawn was a gathering place for young and old alike.

Naming Baby



March 24, 1995
Philippi, West Virginia
Editor:
In the Spring 1995 copy of your magazine a note mentioned that you would be interested in knowing about babies who were named months after being born. My father, Dr. Karl J. Myers of Philippi, was one of these babies. In an autobiographical sketch he wrote:

"Born July 17, 1899, at Nestorville, West Virginia. My mother wanted to name me after my father, but he did not like the name of Jehu — so I did not have any name for some months. At my first Christmas my father put a piece of paper with 'Karl' on it in my stocking, so my name was my first Christmas present."

Dr. Karl J. Myers was the oldest child of Dr. J. W. Myers and Lennie Crim Johnson Myers. His parents had five children, all of whom became physicians. He was one of the founders of the Myers Clinic Hospital in Philippi, founded in 1933. All of these persons are now deceased, but a son, Dr. Karl J. Myers, Jr., still is in practice at the Myers Clinic.
Sincerely,
Evangeline Myers Poling

April 5, 1995
Melbourne, Florida
Editor:
My brother is five years my junior. When he was born all the family labored over a suitable name for him. While playing in our backyard I saw a wash tub which was my inspiration. I ran into the house and told my mother we should name him "Tubson." She politely vetoed that suggestion but he would have been better off had she accepted it, for he went 44 years without a name.

Having been in the courthouse at Summersville checking on a birth certificate for myself I looked up the record of my brother's birth. The date and the name of the attending physician were correct but he was listed as "unnamed male child."

After going through World War II and Korea, helping General Dynamics build the B58 bomber and siring five children, it became necessary that he have a birth certificate. He called me from Louisiana and asked that I get one for him.

I took my mother to Summersville, where she was to name him. I wanted to name him Theophrastis Leviticus, and I'm sure I could have completed the form accordingly and my mother would have signed it without checking. But realizing that this would not conform with his army records, Social Security, marriage certificate, etc., I filled in the name he'd gone by all those year, Edgar Buhl.
Sincerely,
K. K. Keenan

April 27, 1995
Princeton, West Virginia
Editor:
In the last issue of GOLDENSEAL I read that you wanted to hear from people if they knew of babies that weren't named right away or if people put off giving names to their children. Well, my mother and her twin sister were not named until they were almost a year old. Twins weren't expected, so as a result they didn't have names.

Mother told me Mrs. Taylor, the midwife, came out to their house one day and told her mother (my grandmother), "Jenny, you're going to have to name these girls. They are almost a year old." So they named them Flora and Florence. Flora's full name was Flora John (after Grandmother's father, John Leap) and Florence's full name was Florence Margaret Leap.

My mother was Florence, and she and her twin were the daughters of Frank and Jenny (Virginia) Leap Palmer. They were born at New Dale, Wetzel County, on July 17, 1902.
Sincerely,
Carol Lohr

MICHAEL KELLER

In the summertime I've spent many Saturday afternoons roller skating around the walkways in front of and encircling the courthouse. At night we'd play hide-n-seek. Any place within court square was game; the trees, the shrubbery, the iron fire escape in back. One time Robert Kincaid, Paul Cowan and Frank Tanzey hid under Berdine's Five & Dime. All the rest of us together never did find them.

In the wintertime when snow was on, the sheriff would rope off North Street behind the courthouse. His only restrictions were safety and no coal or tires in our bonfire.

I still enjoy going to Harrisville occasionally but love living in Parkersburg.

Respectfully,
Jay B. Wilson

Wheeling Island

April 8, 1995
Wadesboro, North Carolina
Editor:

Louis Keefer's story of Wheeling Island in the spring issue brought back pleasant memories of the 16 years my consulting engineering office was in the Hawley Building on the river side of Main Street in Wheeling. This location, between the Suspension Bridge and the approach to the old Steel Bridge, offered a panoramic view of the river and the Island, a view that never failed to impress visitors, particularly those from out of town.

There is an error of fact in the story, however, in the author's reference to the first night football game in West Virginia having been played in the Island stadium in 1940. I graduated from Princeton High School, in Mercer County, in 1937. During my four years there we played all of our games at night with the exception of our annual game with Beaver High of Bluefield. Also Mitchell Stadium, built in the 1930's, was lighted. I covered games there for the *Bluefield Daily Telegraph* in 1939 and 1940.

Also, I believe there is an error of identification for the bridge shown on page 17. From my examination of the terrain on the Ohio side of the river, this is the I-470 bridge between Benwood and South Wheeling instead of the I-70 bridge north of 10th Street in Wheeling.

Being a transplanted West Virginian, your excellent magazine

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

holds a place of very special interest for my family and me.

Sincerely,
Don Barksdale

Louis Keefer says that he was relying on his recollection of what his coach told him at the time, and maybe the coach meant to say it was the first night game in the Ohio Valley. We'll have to stand by our bridge identification, however, since the I-470 bridge does not cross the Island. Thanks for writing. —ed.

More Old Gold

February 26, 1995
Lewisburg, West Virginia
Editor:

We may want to dispose of our complete collection of 20 years of GOLDENSEAL. If you know of anyone who would be interested in obtaining these we would like you to have them get in touch with us. They are in excellent condition.

Sincerely,
Edward D. Mattox
R. D. 4, Box 284
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Now That's Reader Service!

Along about tomato planting time last spring, a reader from the Northern Panhandle wrote to us, wanting seedlings of the Mortgage Lifter tomato featured in GOLDENSEAL's Summer 1994 cover story.

Check the map. Our reader's Benwood home is across the state from the Mortgage Lifter's Cabell County home country, but no need to worry; Editorial Assistant Cornelia Alexander arranged a rescue. She called Joyce's Greenhouse of Huntington, forwarded the check, and had them ship $6 worth of tomato plants north.

We will take no responsibility for how the garden turns out, but we think we did our part. And we need you to do yours, too. Each uncorrected address returned from the Postal Service costs us 50 cents, plus the undelivered magazine, which is destroyed and not returned to us. That means an interruption in magazine delivery, as well.

Help us serve you by using the Address Change coupon if you plan to move. Thanks.

ADDRESS CHANGE?
Please enter old and new addresses below and return to us.

OLD

Name

Address

NEW

Name

Address

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.

WW II Homefront Book

GOLDENSEAL contributor Louis E. Keefer is the author of a new book about West Virginia during World War II. *Shangri-La For Wounded Soldiers: The Greenbrier As A World War II Army Hospital* is the culmination of years of research.

Keefer authored a GOLDENSEAL article on the same subject in Fall 1993, "Ashford General Hospital: The Greenbrier Goes to War." For *Shangri-La For Wounded Soldiers* Keefer talked with dozens of men and women, not only about their experiences at a hospital that was formerly a luxury resort, but also about how they got there.

Robert S. Conte, historian at The Greenbrier, called Keefer's story "a gripping collection of unique stories showing how the war affected thousands of lives." Keefer's research and personal touch with people are evident from the illustrations he collected for the book. Numerous black and white photos graphically portray the healing that took place in White Sulphur Springs during the 1940's.

The 322-page softbound book is fully indexed. It sells for $19.95, including shipping and handling, from COTU Publishing, P.O. Box 2160, Reston, VA 22090. For two or more books the price is $16.95 each.

Louis Keefer was born and raised in Wheeling and served in the Army between 1943 and 1946. For 35 years he was a transportation planner for public agencies in the United States and several foreign countries. This is his third book.

Outdoor Dramas

The summer of 1995 promises another big season for Theatre West Virginia, whose popular outdoor dramas open in mid-June. The theater company will perform both its workhorse productions, *Honey in the Rock* and *Hatfields & McCoys*, throughout the summer this year. These are West Virginia history plays, the first dramatizing the creation of our state and the latter depicting the world's most famous feud.

Devil Anse's baptism in *Hatfields & McCoys*.

Theatre West Virginia will offer a fireworks display and a 35th anniversary performance of *Honey in the Rock* to commemorate West Virgina Day, June 20, and a special "Music in the Mountains" old-time music concert on July 3. In July and August, *Bye Bye Birdie* will alternate with the two historical dramas.

Another part of West Virginia's history will be told in Logan when *The Aracoma Story* gets underway in early August. This drama, celebrating its 20th season, treats the story of a legendary Indian princess. Aracoma, whose people occupied the Logan town site in Revolutionary War times, was the daughter of Shawnee Chief Cornstalk. The musical *Peter Pan* will be offered earlier in the season, June 28 through July 16, with *Aracoma* to follow, August 2-19. Both plays are performed five nights a week, Wednesday through Sunday.

The Aracoma Story is performed at the Chief Logan State Park amphitheatre, just north of the city of Logan; telephone (304) 752-0253 for more information. Theatre West

Virginia performs at Cliffside Amphitheatre, at Grandview near Beckley; telephone (304) 256-6800. Showtime for both is 8:30 p.m.

String Band Music

This year marks the 6th Annual Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Camp Washington-Carver at Clifftop. Billed as a "four-day mountaintop gathering for string band musicians and friends," the popular event includes concerts, contests, dancing and workshops.

Cash prizes are awarded to the best fiddle and banjo players and traditional and non-traditional bands. In addition, two top-scoring senior fiddle and banjo players are awarded Senior Honors, making them eligible for prize money. Three categories have been developed for dancers — age 15 and under, 16 to 49, and 50 and over — with the top three dancers in each receiving prizes.

"This festival is perhaps the nicest gathering of old-time musicians from all over the United States and abroad. It's very homespun with

people of all ages learning and sharing the music," says fiddler Bob Taylor, coordinator of contests.

The 1995 Appalachian String Band Music Festival will be held August 3-6. Admission is $4 for adults and $3 for seniors and children. Rough camping is available and food is served in the Great Chestnut Lodge's dining hall.

For more information contact Camp Washington-Carver, HC 35, Box 5, Clifftop, WV 25831-9601; (304)438-3005.

State Fair Pictorial

Backward Glance, State Fair of West Virginia, a pictorial history of West Virginia's big summer event, is now

A 1960's State Fair midway scene, from the book.

available by mail order. The soft-cover booklet is all pictures, from the earliest days of the fair to recent times.

The West Virginia State Fair is a favorite of Mountain State residents and draws a large out-of-state crowd as well with its grandstand shows featuring big-name musicians, agriculture displays of every kind, food, and a huge midway. This year's performers include George Jones and Lari White, the Statler Brothers, Martina McBride and Marty Stuart, Aaron Tippin and Little Texas, and Merle Haggard and Alison Krauss. The 71st State Fair of West Virginia runs from August 11 through August 19, 1995.

Backward Glance will also be sold during this year's fair.

In the pictorial history, author Debbie Schwarz Simpson compiled 56 pages of State Fair photos with extensive identifications and a brief historical text to introduce the book. Marlene Ferguson, assistant manager of the State Fair, describes the book as a "kaleidoscope of people, entertainment and agriculture."

Mail orders for *Backward Glance* may be sent to State Fair of West Virginia, P.O. Drawer 986, Lewisburg, 24901. The cost is $10, plus $1 postage and handling. For more information on the 1995 State Fair call (304)645-1090. Ticket sales are already underway and telephone orders are accepted Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by calling (304)647-FAIR.

GOLDENSEAL Price Increase

The price of a year's subscription to GOLDENSEAL will increase from $15 to $16, effective with the Fall 1995 issue. The increase is due to rising costs of paper and postage and other items of production. The price of GOLDENSEAL was last raised in 1991, and the upcoming increase is the smallest in the history of the magazine.

Calling All Dobro Players

Carl Rutherford says the McDowell County Mountain Music Festival is seeking dobro players who want to add *The Guiness Book of World Records* to their resumes. "All us dobro players will at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, July 8, 1995, begin playing ('The Great Speckled Bird') and will keep playing until we have a guaranteed spot in the record book," Rutherford announced in a recent Mountain Music Association newsletter.

For more information contact Carl Rutherford at P. O. Box 30, Warriormine, WV 24894; (304)875-4483.

State Historical Society

The West Virginia Historical Society is working to bring new members to the group. The organization offers "a unique opportunity to be informed and participate in the preservation and interpretation of our state's history," according to a recent newsletter.

Regular membership dues are $10, with "contributing members" paying $25 or more. The society newsletter includes news from local historical groups throughout the state, a book notes section with information on historical publications, and articles about historic events in West Virginia.

Members have an official voice in

setting state historical policies through representation on the West Virginia Archives and History Commission, which oversees the activities of the State Archives, State Museum and the State Historic Preservation Office. A statewide information network informs members of historic preservation efforts through county and local historical groups and organizations, as well as presentations and lectures by historians and authors. This network also provides access to speakers available for historical society meetings.

The group invites all those who want to become part of a growing effort to preserve and promote the history of West Virginia to join. Contact the West Virginia Historical Society, P.O. Box 5220, Charleston, WV 25361.

American Folklife Festival

Since 1967, the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife has highlighted our country's folkways. The unique event brings people together on the National Mall in Washington to enjoy America's diverse culture. Fiddler Melvin Wine and folk sculptor Connard Wolfe are among West Virginians who have appeared at the festival in times past.

The Smithsonian views the annual event as "the tip of the iceberg." Research for the festival translates into a wealth of residual materials which have been used for exhibits, Oscar-winning films, scholarly publications and school curriculum packets. The Smithsonian uses music from the Festival to produce recordings under its Smithsonian/Folkways record label.

The Smithsonian seeks public support for these activities and is asking people to join its Friends of the Festival organization. Friends support the Festival of American Folklife and other Smithsonian folklife programs. Memberships are available from $25 to $500. Different incentives are offered for the various levels, including a newsletter and discounts on recordings. A special membership category, Rinzler's Circle, was just added to honor Ralph Rinzler, the longtime director of the festival who died last year during the event.

The 29th annual Festival of American Folklife will be held June 23-27 and June 30-July 4. For more information on Friends of the Festival contact the Smithsonian Center for Folklife Programs, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 2600, MRC 914, Washington, D.C. 20560; (202)287-3210.

Summer Workshops Offered

There are plenty of places to learn about the traditional arts in West Virginia.

The Crafts Center at Cedar Lakes near Ripley runs workshops from February through October for the study of traditional, and some contemporary, crafts. The rural crafts program prides itself on its outstanding master artists and crafts instructors, and its variety of classes. Blacksmithing, quilting, jewelry, chairmaking, wood joinery, stained glass, watercolors, white oak basketry, figure carving, and metalsmithing are just a sampling of the workshops at the Crafts Center. For a schedule and information on fees, meals, and lodging contact the Crafts Center, Cedar Lakes, Ripley, WV 25271; (304) 372-7873.

DAVE SAVAGE

Charlie Heartwell teaches fly tying at Augusta.

Cedar Lakes is also home to the granddaddy of West Virginia outdoor craft fairs, the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair. The dates for 1995 are July 4 through July 8.

Fort New Salem in Harrison County runs a heritage crafts program for the public. Located near Salem College, the Fort is a recreated West Virginia historic community. The log house settlement is a collection of period buildings and emphasizes lifestyles and working skills of early rural communities.

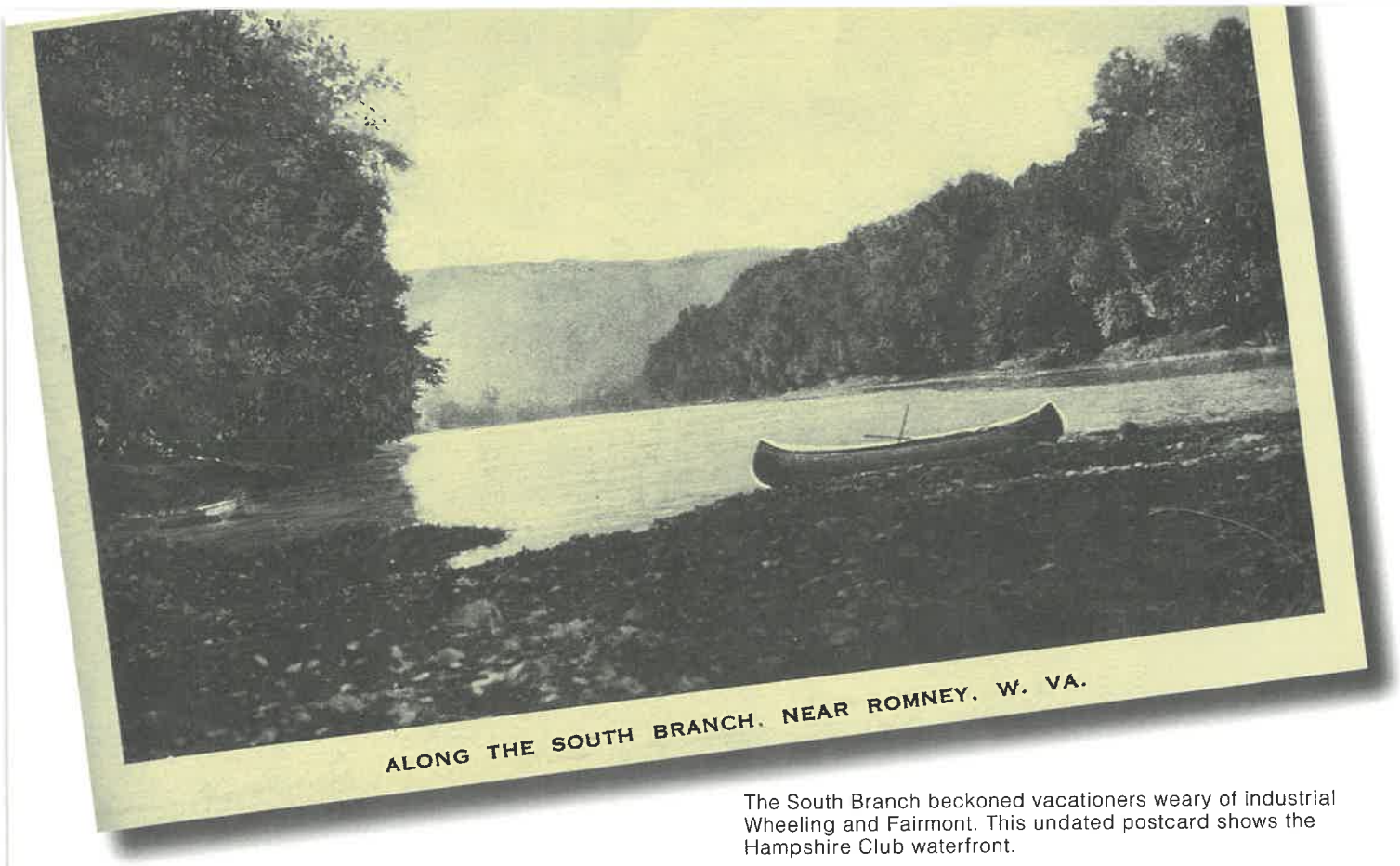
The 1995 Fort New Salem Heritage Workshops are held from June 26 through August 13. One-to-five-day heritage arts workshops are offered in tinsmithing, textiles, blacksmithing, needle arts, hearth cooking, and traditional folk ways — just to name a few. There are history and heritage classes for children during June and July, as part of the Children's Heritage Sampler Camp.

For a schedule and rates contact Carol A. Schweiker, Fort New Salem, Salem-Teikyo University, P.O. Box 500, Salem, WV 26426; (304) 782-5245. In addition to its heritage workshops, Fort New Salem has many events throughout the year that are open to the public.

The Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College offers the most extensive lineup of traditional arts workshops with its Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops. Summer classes are held from July 9 through August 13, and more than 100 week-long sessions are scheduled. Now in its 23rd year, Augusta's curriculum includes traditional music, dance, crafts, and folklife for people of all ages and backgrounds.

This year Augusta has taken "Focus on Folklore" as its theme. Classes in Appalachian folktales and ballads, Swiss traditions in Appalachia, documentary photography, herbs, storytelling, Irish folklore, Gaelic language and songs, African-American culture and lore, and folklore for kids will be offered. Crafts classes in mountain rifle construction, Celtic stonecarving, quiltmaking, stained glass, sweetgrass basketry, and fly tying are there for the taking, too.

For a complete schedule, tuition information, and a free 1995 catalog, contact the Augusta Heritage Center, Box GN, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241; (304) 636-1903.



The South Branch beckoned vacationers weary of industrial Wheeling and Fairmont. This undated postcard shows the Hampshire Club waterfront.

The Hampshire Club

Where Millionaires Relaxed on the South Branch

By Louis E. Keefer

Today, when folks feel a need to get away from it all they can just go out and board a convenient flight to whatever exotic locale they can afford. A hundred years ago, and even as late as the 1920's and 1930's, it wasn't so easy to leave the everyday humdrum behind.

That's why, in 1902, a group of wealthy Wheeling businessmen got together to create their own special getaway spot in Hampshire County — a 1,200-acre tract of wooded hills situated on the beautiful South Branch of the Potomac River. There, freed from the distractions of the city, they and their families and friends could enjoy swimming, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and great country cooking.

The Wheeling people named their retreat the Hampshire Club. To citizens of the South Branch, like Manning H. Williams of nearby Romney, the place was known simply as the clubhouse.

Born in 1914, Williams remembers high school years when he'd go down to watch the club visitors paddle their canoes in the shallow water of the South Branch. "No one around here had canoes, at least

The millionaires' retreat was no rustic cabin in the woods. The inset photograph, made earlier this year, shows that the elegant clubhouse hasn't changed much since early in the century. Early photographer unknown, recent photo by Frank P. Herrera.

none of my friends," he recently told me. "They were kind of a rarity and curiosity, and it was fun to see them gliding around. I practically drooled when I looked through the windows of the club's boathouse and saw all those beautiful canoes inside.

"I was never invited to any club activity," he added. "It was pretty much what I'd call a closed society. They were all rich businessmen and coal barons."

Mr. Williams certainly has that right. The club's charter members included Charles W. Franzheim, president of Wheeling Potteries Company and vice president of the German Bank of Wheeling; C. N. Brady, president of the Hazel-Atlas Glass Company; Alexander Glass, vice president of Portsmouth Steel and secretary of Wheeling Corrugating Company; George Laughlin, Wheeling newspaper publisher and past president of the Wheeling Board of Trade; and George E. Stifel of the Stifel foreign and domestic dry goods stores.

Every Fourth of July roman candles traced their colors against dark, silent mountains, and firecrackers reverberated across the river valley.

The Hampshire Club was founded by members of West Virginia's economic elite. The founders included Wheeling merchant George E. Stifel (left) and George A. Laughlin, publisher and industrialist. Both pictures from the 1916 *Who's Who in West Virginia*.

Later, these charter members were joined by similarly eminent Fairmont businessmen. Both Wheeling and Fairmont are located on the old Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line, which crosses Hampshire County on its way eastward.

The club members bought their triangular tract of West Virginia mountains on March 25, 1902, from Susan Pancake, widow of Joseph Pancake, one of the descendants of the Pancake who first settled the valley about 1749. Most of the extensive acreage from which the Hampshire Club holding was carved remains in Pancake family hands today, the bottomland now being used to pasture beef cattle or for crops.

Susan Pancake's son, Joseph Andrew Pancake, and his wife, Mary Howard Pancake, reared eight girls, and I had the pleasure last year of talking with two of them. At 75 years of age, Miss Anne Pancake is the oldest at home, and Sally is the youngest. Their house stands on bottomland a hundred yards or so from the boundary of the tract deeded over 90 years ago to the Hampshire Club.

Anne Pancake remembers that as a child she saw the fireworks that club members shot off every Fourth of July in the big field across the road. With no city lights in the background — Romney was four miles away — the roman candles and other pyrotechnics traced their colors against absolutely dark, silent mountains, and the booms of the giant firecrackers reverberated across the river valley.

Club members enjoyed the show from the broad porch that swept around the front side of their elegant clubhouse, a rambling two-story wooden building with lots of windows and green shutters. When it was quiet again, they might listen to the murmur of nearby Mill Run in which next morning they could go after brown trout if they wished.

The lodge had enough rooms to sleep 30 guests and a huge family room redolent, except in mid-summer, with the woodsy scent of the logs burning in a big fieldstone fireplace. The clubhouse generated its own electricity, ran its own water system, and possessed a cold cellar for the preservation of perishables. A few cows were pastured up the Mill Run valley so that guests might always have fresh milk.

"Mr. and Mrs. Frank Turley were employed as the host and hostess," Anne Pancake told me. "Everyone remembers Mr. Turley as a warm, outgoing man who made people feel at home, a perfect host. I think I missed a lot by never knowing him.

"They were the only managers the club ever had, and were quite young when they came up to take over," Miss Pancake continued. "They were from Moorefield, and after Mr. Turley died in 1923 he was buried back there. Mrs. Turley stayed on for years and years — I *did* know her — and was in her 70's when she died. She's also buried in Moorefield. They never had any children. The club stayed open only

Railroading the South Branch

You can ride the same rail line the millionaires once took on their way to the Hampshire Club, although the railway company is not the same one as in their day. The old South Branch extension of the Baltimore & Ohio Railway, running through Hampshire, Hardy and Grant counties, is now the South Branch Valley Railroad of the State Rail Authority.

Excursion trains travel 32 miles of the South Branch from May 15 through September 26. The Potomac Eagle sightseeing train runs from Romney, soon passing the Hampshire Club site and proceeding on through the famous Trough of the South Branch into Hardy County. The Trough, known for its clean waters, river views, and wildlife, is where the Potomac Eagle meets its namesake. Sightings of the American bald eagle are common.

POTOMAC EAGLE

The train is made up of restored railroad passenger cars dating from the 1920's. For complete schedule and fare information contact Potomac Eagle, P.O. Box 657, Romney, WV 26757; 1-800-223-2453.

The Pancake family has been associated with the property since colonial times. Sally Pancake Kuykendall (left) and Anne Pancake remember Hampshire Club doings very well. Photo by Frank P. Herrera.

in summers and into early fall, but the Turleys lived there all year round as caretakers."

In the early years the sojourners mostly came to the Hampshire Club by railroad. The men, many of them laden with fishing rods and guns, and their families, laden with their own summer gear, would leave Wheeling from the grand B&O terminal. They rode the main line to Green Spring, then transferred to the Romney branch line, which had opened in 1884. A smoky passenger train made three trips up the South Branch daily, morning, noon, and late afternoon.

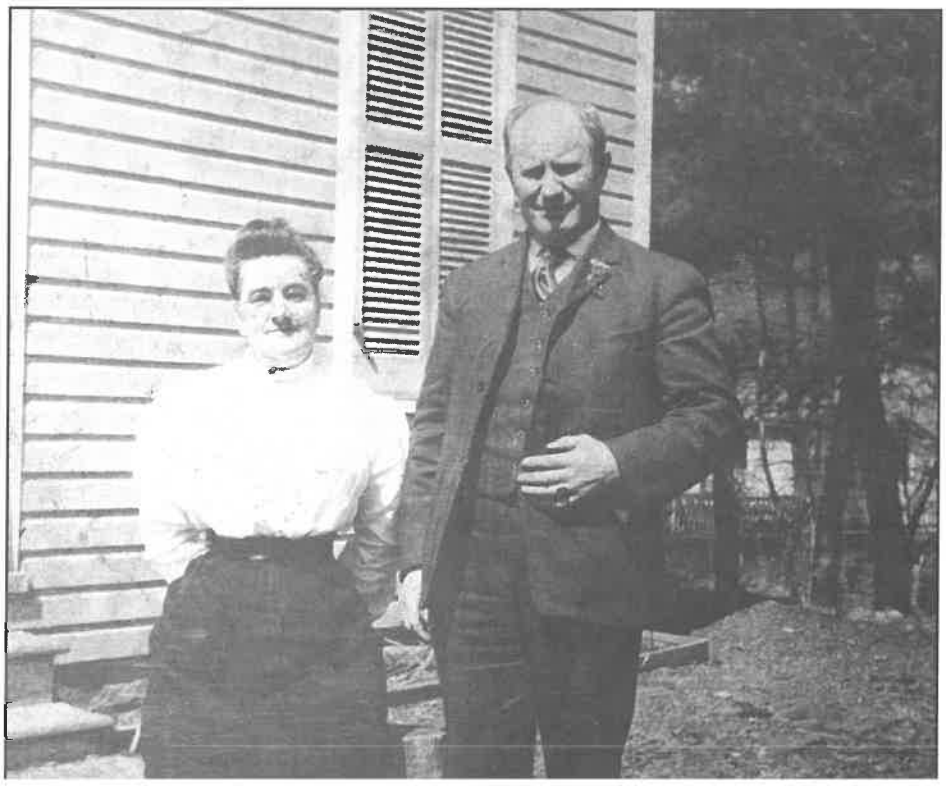
At Romney, the vacationers would be met and driven the final five miles up the winding River Road. When, in about 1910, the B&O branch line was extended from Romney to Moorefield, club members could arrange to detrain at the Hampshire Club's special stop on the west bank of the South Branch. From there they'd be rowed across the river to the club. How many club members tipped into the water halfway across is unknown, but it would have been a cold dip.

By the 1920's well-to-do Wheeling and Fairmont people owned cars and either employed chauffeurs or took the steering wheels in hand themselves. From then on, those who didn't go by train usually drove to Hampshire County in big, high-clearance touring cars. The journey, over twisty and mostly unpaved roads, took most of a day. On hot, dry days, the boiling road dust might be stifling. On rainy days that dust became a slippery, muddy mess.

So getting there was not necessarily half the fun, but the destination was worth it. One traveler wrote that "the scenery about Romney is unsurpassed—the mountain ranges all adorned with rocky cliffs and huge boulders where ferns, rhododendron and mountain laurel grow with a tropical luxuriance. The silvery waters of the South Branch are glimpsed when the motorist is but four miles from the clubhouse and then even more dense and secluded grows the view."

The most important diversion for male guests was probably fishing, rambling the creek and river and bringing their catch to the kitchen for Mrs. Turley to cook fresh for dinner that night. Some gentlemen stalked quail and partridge. The ladies preferred boating or sunning about the small swimming pool next to Mill Run. There were two bowling lanes in a one-story frame building beside the swimming pool. Bridge was popular with the ladies, while the men might enjoy a late evening poker game.

For many, just the clarity of the Hampshire County atmosphere was



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Turley worked as year-round caretakers at the Hampshire Club. Sally Turley ended up owning the place after the Stock Market crash. Photographer and date unknown.

A Lucky Break:
From the Pool Hall to Prayer Hill

In 1990, the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia published The Peterkin Story, *a pamphlet history of the Peterkin Conference Center, formerly the Hampshire Club. The author was Wilburn C. Campbell, first director of the center and later Bishop of West Virginia. Among the anecdotes he recalled is the following account of building an outdoor altar, a project proposed to him by a group of summer campers:*

I wanted to see the place the group had selected. With them I scrambled on hands and knees through blackberry briars and jungle growth to the top of the hill overlooking Peterkin. The view made me gasp in wonder and in joy. It was the magnificent view one can see now when one looks over the Altar to the mountain range beyond.

The campers began to dig out a path and to clear out the underbrush. A temporary Altar was erected. We had our first closing candlelight service on Prayer Hill and our first traditional closing Eucharist the next morning.

During the winter the Peterkin "grapevine" went into full swing. It was agreed that the Senior Campers would each bring a stone from their home towns which would be used to erect a stone Altar. The Rev. T. Hudnall Harvey, then rector of St. Matthews, Charleston, was foreman of the construction....

So, in the summer of 1952, the Senior High Campers came with their stones. They formed a "stone brigade" and passed the stones up one by one. They mixed the concrete mortar, and the stones began to take the shape of an Altar. If the columns seem a bit off line and wobbly, do not worry. There was not a stone mason among the lot and probably no one knew how to use a plumbline.

The campers also solved the problem of a suitable weatherproof Altar top. One of them discovered that the poolroom operator in Romney had decided to scrap a pool table. So a delegation went in and talked him into donating the slate pool table top for the Altar. The pool room operator was dumbfounded and could not believe what he had heard. He probably did not even know what an Altar was! In a state of shock, he gave the campers the two slates that now serve as the top of the Altar. I often used the pool table slates to illustrate "living under grace."

By the grace of God, a pool table can be used for the glory of God.

Excerpted from The Peterkin Story, 1945-1975, *copyright 1990 by the Right Reverend Wilburn C. Campbell, D.D.*

a treat. The wonderfully fresh mountain air attracted those in need of relief from hay fever and the sultry heat of the city, and those who were just plain tired of the soot and smog of city factories.

Anne Pancake recalls that members of her family often went up to the clubhouse to see Mrs. Turley, sometimes to lend a hand in the kitchen. "When she had a crowd, and would be short on help, my mother and aunt would go up and help her. They all became good friends. This was after Mrs. Turley couldn't get around so well. But she always knew what was going on and managed everything well right up until she died."

Anne's younger sister Sally, now Sally Pancake Kuykendall, was actually named for Mrs. Turley. "My next sister and I went up sometimes to play with one of the guest's daughters," Sally says. "The meals were out of this world. Mrs. Turley did some of the cooking, but mostly she just supervised from the back porch. She had several girls and women as maids and waitresses, and somebody else did laundry. There were usually four or five filled tables in the dining room, and I still can hear the girls' starched aprons rustling as they moved. And they served *so many* side dishes."

As Anne and Sally remember it, the club's owners — many of whom had lost heavily in the 1929 Stock Market crash — deeded the entire property to Mrs. Turley sometime during the 1930's in return for her paying certain back taxes and agreeing to maintain the club for members' continued summer use. In 1942, Anne and Sally's father, Joseph Pancake, together with a partner purchased the property from Mrs. Turley's estate in order to timber it off. In 1945, they sold 40 acres of the property and leased another 1,000 to the West Virginia Diocese, Protestant Episcopal Church.

This brought a change. What had been the Hampshire Club became the Peterkin Conference Center, a summer camp and meeting place that has now been used for 50 years by Episcopalians from all over the state. Following the purchase, the Reverend Frank Rowley, rector of Grace Church, Elkins, toured the property with a group of younger people on an inspection trip. The Reverend Rowley told Diocesan headquarters in Charleston that they hiked for over an hour up the trout stream "without ever finding the end of the property. We all felt quite pleased with the place, and also being the first Episcopal lay group to visit the new conference center."

The Episcopalians commemorated their most distinguished forebears at Peterkin. The conference center was named in honor of the Right Reverend George William Peterkin, D.D., first bishop of West Virginia, while the central building was named Gravatt Hall after the Right Reverend William Loyall Gravatt, D.D., second bishop of West Virginia.

When I dropped by the Peterkin Center unannounced late last fall, its resident director, Joseph B.

Dick Hord runs the property today, for the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia. The old club is now a church conference center. Photo by Frank P. Herrera.

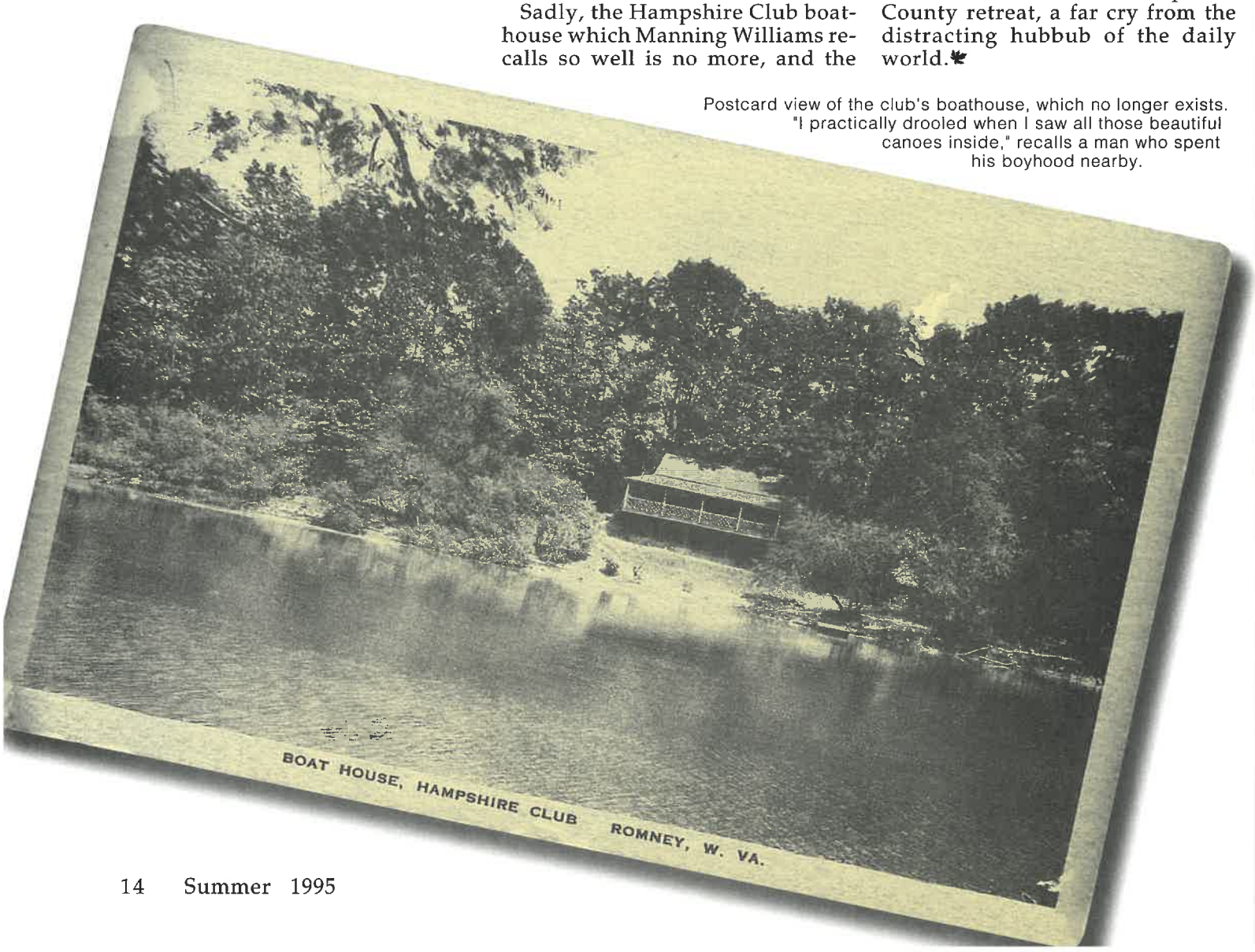
"Dick" Hord, Jr., kindly put aside his other business to give me an impromptu guided tour.

Though completely renovated on the inside, many of the original Hampshire Club buildings seem to remain outwardly the same. The main building has been extensively redone, and now houses several modern offices, each complete with the computers and other equipment needed to run a busy conference center. A rebuilt stone fireplace still dominates the central hall, and one can easily imagine several tables of bridge being played there by ladies and gentlemen well dressed in the casual wear of the turn of the century.

Some buildings have been added, including a home for Director Hord and his family, while other buildings have been converted for new uses. The long, narrow building that was once the bowling alley now offers sleeping quarters for summer staff.

Sadly, the Hampshire Club boathouse which Manning Williams recalls so well is no more, and the swimming pool across Mill Run has been filled in. But the pool's concrete outlines remain, and the silent echoes of the laughter and screams of frolicking children seem to bounce back from the overhanging trees. Dick Hord pointed out the picnic grounds further up the little valley, and showed me where the Hallelujah Hiking Trail begins. It was easy to imagine the fun of climbing in a happy group to the apple orchard at the head of Mill Run to view the town of Romney, about four miles to the north.

I left sorry I hadn't time to hike up there on my own but grateful for Dick Hord's hospitality. It seemed in the spirit of the place, in both its earlier and later roles, reminding me that those who founded the club may not have been much different from the modern-day West Virginians who visit Peterkin Center. Besides fresh air and healthful sleep, they likely discovered a deep spiritual renewal in their Hampshire County retreat, a far cry from the distracting hubbub of the daily world.



Postcard view of the club's boathouse, which no longer exists. "I practically drooled when I saw all those beautiful canoes inside," recalls a man who spent his boyhood nearby.

Thurmond's business block will look familiar to those who saw the 1987 movie *Matewan*. Thurmond represented the 1920's Mingo County town of Matewan in the film. All photos ©1995, Burgin Photography.

Thurmond

Change Continues in a New River Town

By W. Hodding Carter
Photographs by Bruce Burgin

"I just don't understand why they want to shut it down," Mrs. Wells wonders aloud, pushing back an errant strand of hair. "They haven't even given us a chance."

I've just broken the news to her. The Postal Service is threatening to close our town's post office.

Our town is Thurmond, on the New River in Fayette County, population 14 and counting down. Besides being an historical gem, Thurmond is West Virginia's smallest incorporated town. It began dying years back, even before I knew it existed.

The few remaining citizens, at least the ones who care about such things, debate Thurmond's

decline. Some say it was caused by the railroad company, the C&O, pulling its operations out. This was a rail town, heart, soul and payroll. Back in the late '20's, when the population topped 460, Thurmond handled more railroad business than Richmond and Cincinnati combined.

Others blame it on coal. There used to be dozens of mines and nearly as many company towns along a 50-mile stretch of the New River north and south of Thurmond. When the coal companies moved back to deeper mines on the surrounding plateau, and to strip-mining the hilltops, New River coal towns like Kaymoor and Beury were abandoned. Their remains rotted into the steep hillsides, and Thurmond lost its economic hinterland.

And our town suffered a series of bad fires that helped to do the place in. A big one in 1922 destroyed a dry goods store, a grocery, the Collins mortuary, the Lykens drugstore, Stanley Panas's shoeshop, and the local movie theater.

So no one really agrees on just what laid Thurmond out, but most of us believe that the National Park Service hasn't helped much. In the late 1970's, the Park Service made a 53-mile stretch of the New River Gorge into a National River to preserve the region's history and heritage. The New, ironically the second oldest river in the world after the Nile, flows right by Thurmond. The government's tactics are not to strong-arm people but simply to wait them out or entice them out, standing ready to buy property from anyone who wants to sell.

Originally, folks understood that the Park Service was going to buy and restore many parts of the town: the C&O buildings, the entire downtown of Thurmond, and some of the homes. So far, they've been buying. The only building they have renovated is the old depot, built in 1904. It will become a tourist attraction in June of '95.

Her Honor Dorothy Wells, mayor of the New River town of Thurmond.

Having a park here, though, was and is a good idea. Thurmond and the New River Gorge are thick with history and if the National Park Service will just expand its vision enough to incorporate people into its plans — the people who made the history they are trying to preserve — then they will have a much richer park.

Our town is Thurmond, population 14 and counting down. Besides being an historical gem, Thurmond is West Virginia's smallest incorporated town.

Our history goes back more than a century. In 1873 a local Confederate veteran named Captain William Dabney Thurmond surveyed the surrounding area for its landowner. His payment for the survey was 73 acres along the New River. The steep, scraggly land appeared worthless. There was hardly any land flat enough to build a house on and certainly none level enough for a farm.

But that same year the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway finished its line through the New River Gorge, instantly increasing Captain Thurmond's property value. When the railroad bridge was built across the river in the late 1880's, Thurmond became the central point for a booming coalfield. Homes, offices and railroad buildings sprang up in the growing town, among them hotels, saloons, churches, two banks, and stores of all kinds. By 1900, at the time of its incorporation, nearly 200 residents called Thurmond home.

It was a boom town, with boom town stories to match, stories of murderers, sheriffs and lovers. People say that the Dunglen, the rowdy hotel built across the river from Thurmond proper, held the longest-running poker game in the world, clocking in at 14 years.

"Oh, you should've been here back then," says Dorothy Wells, our mayor and probably an octogenarian (says she's 47). She boarded at the Dunglen Hotel with her husband Charlie, a clerk for the railroad, before it burned down in 1930. "We had socials, all sorts of people. You wouldn't believe the things that happened here," Dorothy says.

When I ask her to elaborate a little, though, she smiles and says, "Someday, maybe."

Actually, the town had started to die by the '30's, after the big fire of 1922, really. Then, a generation later, diesel locomotives took over and Thurmond's fate was sealed. Ours was a steam town, and after the advent of diesel the trains didn't have to stop here for fuel and water anymore. Diesel equipment required less service, as well — bad

Faces of Thurmond: Photographer Bruce Burgin has made portraits of many of the residents of Thurmond, including most of those in this story. They include (left and center) the "two Dremas" our author speaks of, Drema Young and Drema Ashley. Billy McGuffin (right) is a walking repository of Thurmond memories.

news for Thurmond's shop crews.

Thurmond had existed for trains and coal. The town had no other reason to live.

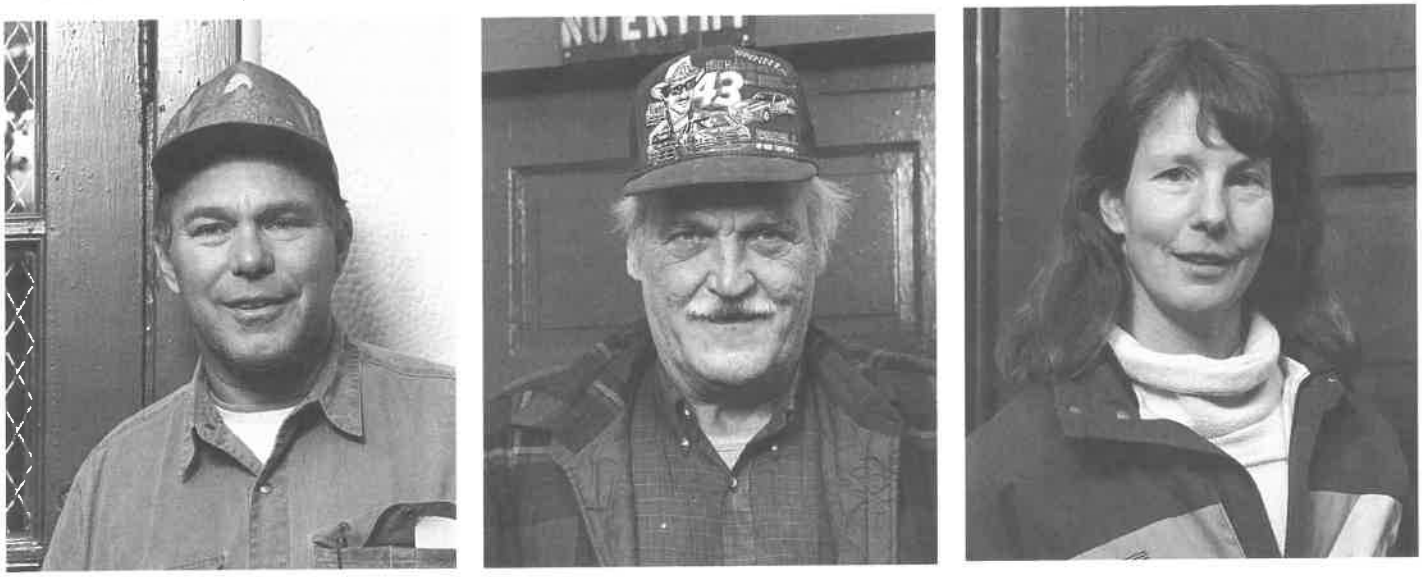
Or so the story goes. The town of Thurmond that I love, though, began in the death throes of the old Thurmond. In its place, a determined village took over. It's not that new people moved in; it's just that a lot of old families refused to move out. Families like the Kellys, the McGuffins, the Ashleys, the Searses and the Wellses stayed behind.

I've come to know them and their descendants fairly well because I've run the community post office in Thurmond for the past year. I would call myself the postmaster, but the Postal Service says I can't. For the last year or so, Thurmond hasn't qualified for a real post office or a real postmaster. In bureaucratic jargon, the Thurmond post office and I are a CPU — a Contract Postal Unit, but the town uses it as a meeting place, gossip hall and welcome center all rolled into one.

But whatever I call myself or the post office, all of it is coming to an end. The Postal Service informed me recently that we're not generating enough revenue.

The Thurmond post office will probably no longer exist by the time you read this. The loss takes away part of our identity. The town got its name with the opening of the first post office in 1889, when one of Captain Thurmond's sons offered the family name so the post office could be established. That began an era which the closing of the post office finishes. Old Thurmond will be put to rest with the closing of the last post office box.

Except, that's not entirely true. The spirit of the town will survive in the minds of those who continue to live here. And certainly the people I make coffee for and talk



Jon Dragan (left) and Thurmond go way back, to the days when Dragan pioneered the whitewater rafting industry. J. D. Sears (center) is all business at the post office, saving his socializing for his own front yard. Katy Miller (right) is among Thurmond's younger citizens, representing those who stand between the town's historic past and its future in recreation and tourism.

More on Thurmond

Ken Sullivan's book, *Thurmond: A New River Community*, was recently reprinted by the Eastern National Park & Monument Association.

The paperback book, part of the "New River Communities" series sponsored by the New River Gorge National River, is a short history of Thurmond from early times to the recent past. Nearly 40 historic photographs and illustrations add to the story.

The book sells for $5.25 at visitor's centers in Canyon Rim, Thurmond, the Glen Jean Bank, Hinton, and Grandview. Mail orders, including a $1.05 handling charge and 6% sales tax for West Virginians, may be sent to Eastern National, P.O. Box 117, East Lansing, WV 25862; (304)574-0305.

Town founder William Dabney Thurmond, from the book.

with every morning will live in my mind forever.

Nearly all eight people who come to the post office daily have their appointed arrival time. Every morning, much farther after eight o'clock than it should be, I either wind my way by foot down 300 feet of briars, weeds and half-grown oaks to the tin-plated post office building or my friend Lisa drops me off in her car. When on foot, I usually slip and fall. Rocks and boulders make up most of the path. Fog blankets the town at night and makes the rocks slippery in the mornings. Briars pull me off balance as they tear into my shirt or sweater.

However I arrive, once I get there, I rush inside, crumble up paper for the stove if the weather is cold, start the coffee, throw on some kindling, cut on the flickering fluorescent lights which seem as old as the 1920's building, light the fire and run back out to raise the flag. When I remember, I also check the mailbox outside the building before heading back in.

Mayor Dorothy Wells and the two Dremas (Drema Ashley and Drema Young) are usually right behind me, walking in around 8:20, ten minutes before the place is officially open. They berate me for not having the coffee fixed, and in the winter, for not having a hot enough fire. I heat the place with a Warm Morning coal stove using wood and feel pleased with myself even to have the thing going at all.

Most mornings, Ralph, the mail delivery man, arrives anywhere from 8:30 to 9:15. He barges into the post office, cradling the mail on top of his belly, hands it off to me and rushes to the back room for a cup of coffee. He returns, complaining about the strength of the coffee.

It was a boom town, with boom town stories to match, stories of murderers, sheriffs and lovers.

After I sort the mail, the four of us hang around the wood stove. They continue to tell how strong my coffee is and how weak my fire: every day, no matter how few grinds I put in or how much wood I throw into the stove. Little Drema tells me I have the flue open too wide and Big Drema simply laughs at me, calling me a flatland tourist. Every once in a while, I glance up at the pressed-tin ceiling and wonder out loud how many coats of paint have been slapped up there (or any such thing to change the subject).

Meanwhile, Mayor Wells frets about how we're going to keep the town water going. "What are we going to do when another family moves out?" she asks. She seems both worried and pleased to have something to worry about at the same time, and maybe that's the key to civic leadership even in places bigger than ours.

"I'm not going to stay here another winter," she declares. "That's all there is to it." According to more than one source, she's been saying that for three years now.

The talk eventually moves to who might be selling out to the government next. Whoever that person is gets abused. It's not that we don't understand our neighbors selling, it's just that it makes us feel good to knock them for doing so.

A slow, lumbering figure appears at the door.

"Uh-oh," Mrs. Wells says, and in comes Billy McGuffin.

"Good morning ladies, Hodding," he says, his gray toboggan perched over his brow. He then walks by the fire, not bothering to stop because he knows it's not hot enough to warm his hands, and sits in his chair. No one else really has a place in the post office, except Billy. If a visitor is sitting in his chair, Mrs. Wells will scoot the person out as she announces his arrival.

She and Billy drive each other crazy. They are the oldest residents of Thurmond. She gives me a certain nod to her head when he's talking, and Billy winks when it's her turn. Each complains to me about the other, and then they spend up to two hours a day talking to each other on the phone.

One day Billy rails about the Republicans, and then on another day he lights into any Democrat he can think of. All that seems to matter to Billy is that he has somebody to go up against. "A working man's got it tough. They know all about you," he says. "Once they got you on a salary — they own you."

He's probably the most loquacious man I've ever met. He tells

stories of peeping on prostitutes in the old hotels, hoboing onto trains headed for Cincinnati and the glories of mine work.

After I put up the mail, which takes me much longer than it should, the two Dremas leave. Ralph then heads up the gorge with the town of Thayer's mail. Thayer lies about eight miles east by gravel road and has a larger population than Thurmond. He'll return in about an hour to collect our outgoing mail.

Sandra Akins might call me about then. She works at J. C. Penneys a half-hour away and her husband Charlie guides rafting trips on the river. "Could you tell me what's in my box, please?" she asks. "I couldn't get the van started so I'm out of time." I run over and report there's only junk.

Mrs. Wells usually leaves about now because she's tired of hearing Billy talk. "I can't stand to hear about mines," she confides in me. "I hate mines. Really." She has, of course, been living with them all her life.

Jon Dragan comes in sometime around this time. Usually it's just Billy and I who are there to talk with him, except on the days Billy can't make it down. Then Mrs. Wells might have stayed. Anyway, Jon comes in and tells us to watch out for the National Park Service. "God bless America," he'll say, smiling in a way so that you know he means it and doesn't mean it — all at the same time. There is no doubt that he's unhappy about the Park Service boarding up buildings in town.

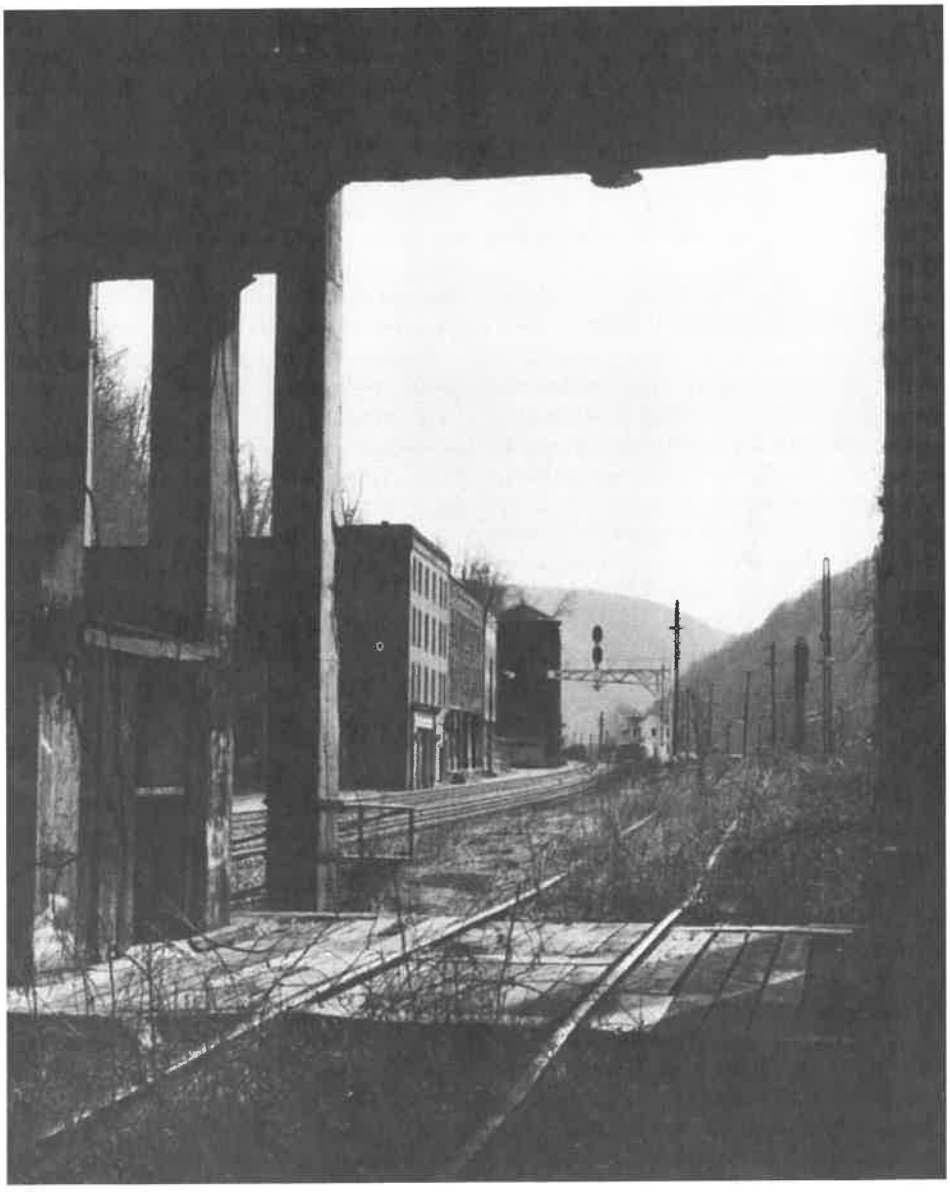
Jon moved here in the '60's to raft the New River and started the first whitewater rafting company. If there's been any economic boom in this area this half of the century it's been whitewater rafting. When the Park started buying property in the '80's, Jon had a lot of land they wanted. People say he became a millionaire, but maybe he regrets selling some of it now.

Joe Freeman and Katy Miller come in around ten o'clock, half an hour before closing time. They are the closest to my age in town and we usually have dinner together once a week. Katy works part-time for the Park Service and Joe guides rafting trips. Pretty soon, they're going to start running a general store and bike rental out of the post office building.

The last to show up is always J. D. Sears. He drives down from his home, says "Howdy," takes his mail from me and leaves. He's a man of few words down at the post office, but when I walk by his house on a warm day, he's usually sitting on his lawn and will talk for half an hour. The post office seems to be a place for business to him, not the dozy hangout that most of us find it to be.

Ralph returns. We trade insults while I do the unnecessary paper work, which usually amounts to writing "No Report" on a special slip of paper, signing my initials, stamping it with the day's date, and sealing it in a delivery pouch. Ralph takes the flag down for me because he knows I'll forget otherwise and have to come down later. Sometimes he cuts off the coffee maker, as well, worrying about a fire.

I pull the heavy wooden door shut and clamp down the padlock. It's 10:30 a.m. and the Thurmond post office is closed for the day.



Thurmond from the west end, as viewed from underneath the coaling tower for steam locomotives. The town had no main street, its stores fronting directly onto the busy C&O main line.

Scissors, Paper and Glue

The Art of Mary Olive Eddy Jones

By Cheryl Ryan Harshman

Photographs by Michael Keller

Snip, snap, snip.
I will tell you a tale.
Made of paper.
Held together with the glue
of memory.
Snip, snap, snip.

Mary Olive Eddy Jones has been snipping stories and making memories for over 50 years. It started in kindergarten. She was the teacher.

Which child it was doesn't matter, and when it was doesn't matter either. But Mary says that one day when a child turned and reached down, maybe for a paper or a crayon that slid off the desk, in that instant, she saw the child's profile so sharply that she drew it on a sheet of black paper from her desk. Then she cut the child's silhouette.

"They never knew when I did it," she smiles, remembering. "I gave the silhouettes to their mothers for Christmas." And so for 30 years, 70 children each year, Mrs. Jones cut silhouettes. As it turned out, it was a long, wonderful apprenticeship.

The first formal art training that Mary Jones had was mandatory. "I was up at Broaddus College and I had to take it. I never had any other art training at all before that," she says, referring to her childhood and school days.

But because she was in teacher training at what is now Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi, she took the required art class. After that, "I just couldn't stop. I went to Maine to an art colony for several summers. Oh, it was wonderful!"

The creative spirit that had been held inside for years was set free. And since that time Mary has used this gift in hundreds of ways — decorating her classroom countless times for Halloween and Christmas, orchestrating yearly pageants, illustrating birds and flowers of the Bible for church.

Betsy Ross created a five-point star for the first American flag with one snip of her scissors.

At the age of 84 this artistic spirit still sings to visitors who climb the 17 steps over a Fairmont florist shop to her apartment — a bedroom full of violets, shelves crowded with cans of brushes and pens, walls covered with her paintings and antique fans. Color, design, and line are strong here. She pulls a cardboard portfolio from under her bed and begins to bring out story after story.

The stories Mary tells so eloquently these days are cut from big sheets of black paper, 18 by 24 inches, with tiny fingernail scissors. She cuts trees and birds and hearts, practicing the traditional art of *scherenschnitte*. The word is German, meaning to cut. Although it can be traced back to the beginnings of paper in China 2,000 years ago, scherenschnitte came to America from Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries.

"It has trickled down all over us," Mary says. "I'm so glad it trickled my way." She knows her paper cutting history and has shared it with numerous workshops. "I love public speaking. Just put me in front of a group and say, 'Talk!'"

Historians suggest that this craft was originally practiced by men, using small sharp-bladed knives. (On the other hand, Polish craftsmen today still use large, cumbersome sheep shears.) But women quickly adopted this decorative form as well, using their sharp embroidery scissors to cut out the major design areas and sewing needles to prick in delicate details.

We have to remember that paper, like cloth, was a luxury to early

Americans. Like the scraps in a quilter's box, pieces of paper were saved to use again and again. Aside from oiled paper, which was a substitute for window glass, early settlers cherished writing paper for correspondence. This writing paper was rag paper, thick and very durable. And unlike today's paper, mostly made from rolled pine pulp, it yellowed very little, nor did it dry out and crumble. For these reasons early manuscripts and examples of intricate paper craft work like scherenschnitte have survived intact to the present day.

holding hands! This is the last vestige of the fine art of paper cutting for most of us.

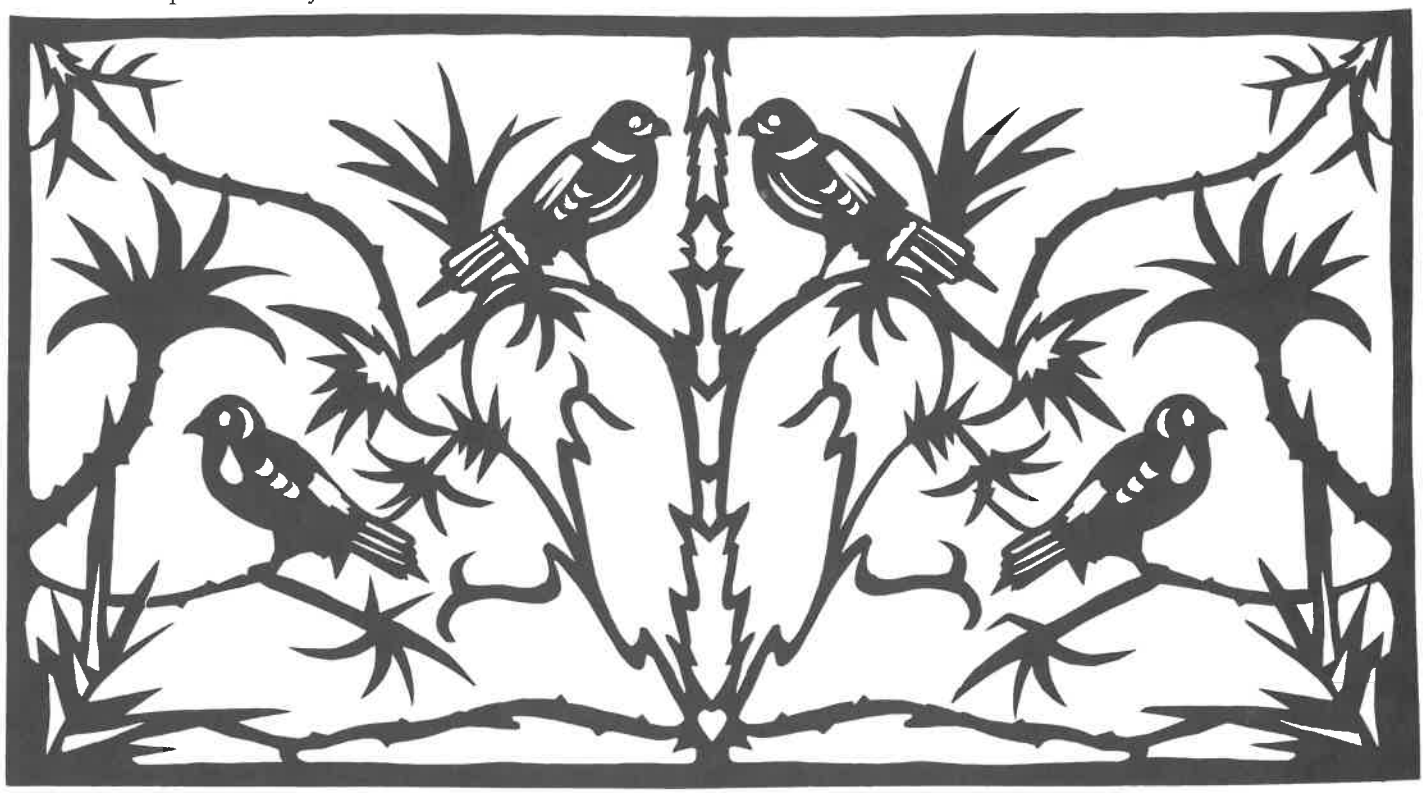
It is easy to see how paper cutting and decoration lent itself to the delicate patterns of a needleworker. Patterns and folk motifs could easily be copied and cut out. Young ladies often went even further by making paper lace doilies and by embroidering on perforated paper.

While scherenschnitte was popular in Europe, a forerunner of photography called the shadow graph was brand new in 18th century America. In France these same

salesman came to show this new line, and I was so disappointed. It was all patterns! I never do anything with patterns.

"But I started, and you know, when you start, there's no place to stop. I don't want to stop. It's the simplest thing in the world. It's so easy I can't believe people think they are difficult to do. When I did classes for people, they all wanted patterns. But that's not how I work."

Although Mary does draw some of her own designs on paper before beginning to cut, it is done to lay



"Birds" is among the simpler examples of Mary Olive Jones's scherenschnitte artwork. The piece measures 22 x 30 inches.

At the time of the American Revolution, the ability to cut ornamental patterns from stiff paper was considered a useful accomplishment for young ladies. Finishing schools offered various courses just in paper craft.

Do you remember Betsy Ross? She created a five-point star for the first American flag with one snip of her scissors. She had been trained in the art of paper cutting as well as needleworking. And can you still make a long row of paper dolls? Fold a strip of paper many times, accordion style, and cut out half of the shape of a figure and unfold. Like magic — a whole row of dolls

shadow outline portraits were called silhouettes. Before long people on both sides of the Atlantic were cutting profiles and decorations from black paper and pasting it on white. After 30 years of cutting children's silhouettes, Mary Jones turned her scissors to scherenschnitte. It seems only fitting looking back now that she should have done so.

"My friends at the craft store called me," she says. "They wanted a new craft demonstrated at a trade show they were having. I told them I had never done scherenschnitte, but they said to come anyway. And so I started demonstrating cold. A

out major elements of design. Then she goes back and cuts most of the details freehand. "I use a pen when I draw — pencil rubs off. And I fold the page in half and cut. You only have a half page to tell the story. When it's opened up, it's entirely different."

After 50 years, her tools are still the same found in any kindergarten classroom: scissors, glue, and paper. She buys fingernail scissors six or seven at a time. "There's no way of sharpening them and cutting paper dulls the scissors." Their sharp tiny blades make her lacy patterns.

Her glue is simply Elmer's white

Mary Olive Jones charmed our photographer, and we bet the charm worked on generations of kindergarteners as well. Here she breaks down into a girlish giggle.

school glue, applied painstakingly with toothpicks. "I wish I had bought stock in the Borden's factory! I don't know how many quarts of glue I have used. Gluing is what really takes the time! That and laying them out flat. The only thing hard about a great, great big one is to get it unfolded and flattened out after it is cut. It's wild! It can really be a mess! I have to be so careful and not rip the paper."

The black paper is ordered from New York. "I don't do much with color papers. I have done some other colors for people who ordered a specific one to go with their rooms. But I like the dramatic black on white. Oh, I just love that contrast! I don't do white on black because if you cut the white thin enough, the glue shows through.

"When I started, everything was ducks," Mary says, referring to the first scherenschnitte she began cutting. Looking through her portfolios, one sees lots of small silhouette-like pictures — small children standing under trees, ducks and geese in hearts, or traditional designs. "I have a whole album of cuttings I made no bigger than my thumbnail. But I'll not make any more of those!" It was all good practice — the narrative figures, the tiny snips, and the many years of children's profiles.

Although she may not have known it, Mary's paper cutting was evolving into something larger and more beautiful than these smaller, early elements. Now she routinely incorporates many symbols and picture representations in her large pieces, using small components to tell a big story. The one titled "The Morgan Family" is a good example.

"Mother was a descendent of Morgan Morgan and a direct descendent of David Morgan, one of the first settlers in West Virginia," Mary explains. "Mother's father was John Randolph Morgan. Well, as I grew up, I heard so many stories that were passed along, just handed down, nothing ever written, just told like storytelling used to be.

"One of the family's favorite was about David Morgan's wife. She was a horse person. She loved horses, and she had a colt that she especially loved and it loved her.

"In this one particular legend that they liked to tell, she was in a little outbuilding away from the house stirring apple butter. She was sitting with her back toward the horse, not paying much attention to anything but what she was doing. So she didn't see that there was a copperhead coming towards her very quickly. But the horse saw it and killed it. And that is in the cutting." Mary points to the specific parts of the cutting as she narrates the tale.

"David Morgan had the first church in West Virginia and this is supposed to be it. Here he is in his preacher's hat and this is his wife. I included the Morgan Fort. Here are his two children and the log cabin."

As Mary says, this story goes back to our very early history. David was the son of Morgan Morgan, who

"Life of Christ," one of Mary's biggest pieces at 33 by 34 inches, is full of religious symbolism.

is supposed to be West Virginia's first white settler, and the father of Zack Morgan, for whom Morgantown is named. Mary mentions the story of David Morgan's famous fight to recapture his children from the Indians, though the Indian family shown in her depiction are at peace. "I thought I needed to put something of the Indians in there," she says.

"I had to have square dancing," she adds, "a little fun to go along with it. They lived on deer meat and rabbits, and I thought that should be included in it. And then of course, the covered wagon that they came in. I drew most of this before I cut, because I wanted to space it. I wanted to be sure to get everything in it."

Mary's religion and church life are extremely important to her. She has found many opportunities for combining her art and her religion, for example, by painting and drawing the birds and flowers of the Bible.

Naturally, the stories of the Bible lend themselves to scherenschnitte. Religious symbolism is easily cut, and there is plenty of it in her "Life of Christ." Look closely and you will find the wheat and grapes representing the bread and wine of the communion; Bethlehem and the manger; the boat where Jesus walked on the water; the Roman soldier and Gethsemene; the cock that heralded Peter's betrayal; three crosses and the crown of thorns; the alpha and the omega; the peace dove and the head of the Creator. There are even more symbols imbedded in this picture.

Besides this large piece, Mary has done other stories from the Bible, including the dramatic Book of Exodus with scenes of the parting of the Red Sea, the burning bush, Moses leading the children, and the ten commandments. She has done Noah's Ark with all the animals as well.

Other subjects show Mary's sense of humor and heart. "You know, I have one piece that has 100 cats. It's not that I'm that interested in cats, it's just that they are so easy to do!" She obviously loved the puzzle

Telling Stories in Pictures

Mary Olive Jones's best cutwork pieces have a story to tell, including the "Life of Christ" which she explains in the photo at left.

Our favorite is the elaborate cutting called "The Morgan Line." This highlights familiar episodes from the history and folklore of the Morgan clan, West Virginia's oldest white family and Mary's ancestors on the maternal side.

"As I grew up, I heard so many stories that were passed along, just handed down," she reports. Many of these family tales were incorporated into the big artwork, which measures 22 1/2 by 30 inches. Like most of her cuttings "The Morgan Line" was cut folded, making the finished piece perfectly symmetrical. We show only half of the piece on page 25, with all of it reproduced in smaller scale below.

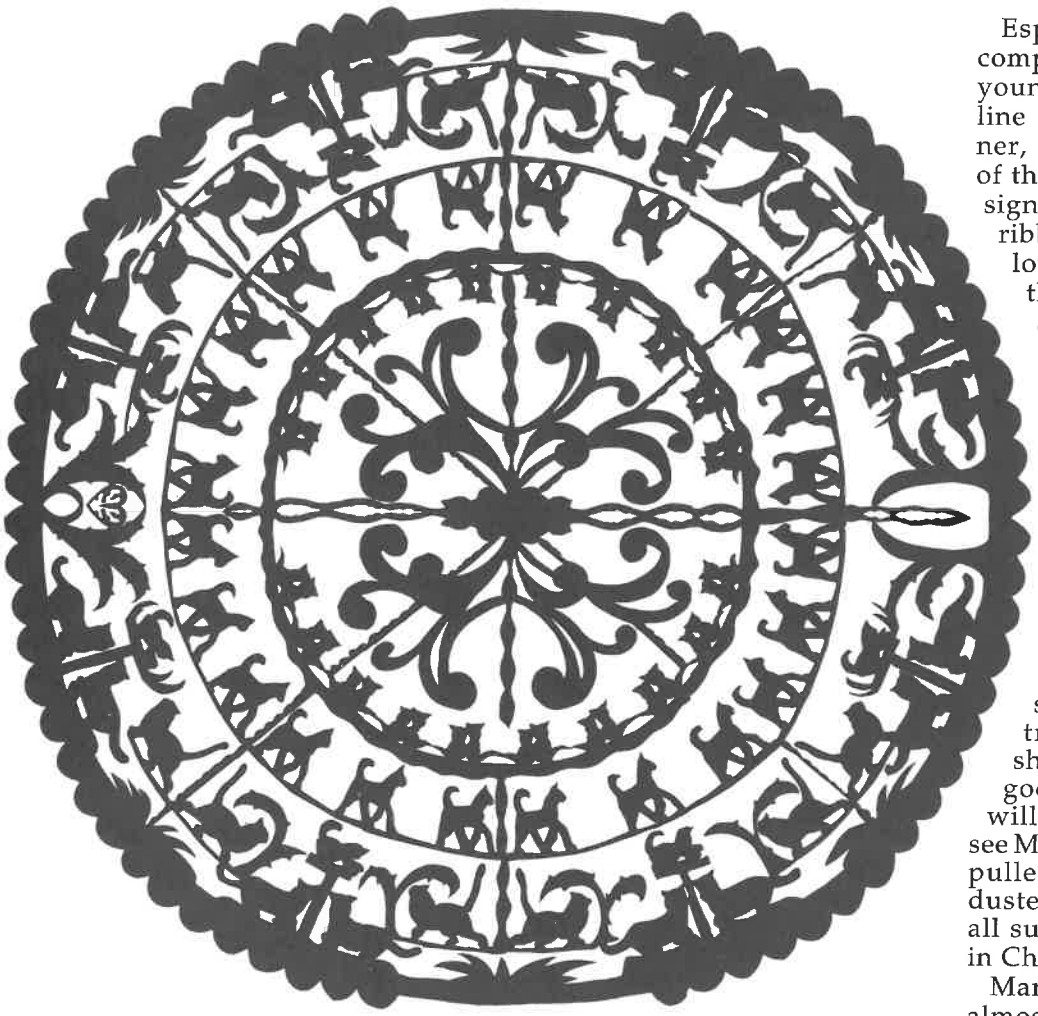
A key episode in the Morgan family saga is the kidnapping of pioneer David Morgan's children, and the subsequent rescue and slaughter of the Indians involved. This event is represented in the central image of the united Morgan family standing between their home and a palisaded fort.

Another image shows an Indian family by their tepee home, the children perhaps symbolizing the Morgan children while in Indian hands.

Another and more personal story is that of David Morgan's wife, her horse and the treacherous copperhead. The watchful horse stamped the life out of the poisonous snake as it crept toward Mrs. Morgan, herself unaware of approaching danger. The cutwork scene shows the horse killing the snake, while the woman works calmly at her apple-butter making in a shed nearby.

Other images are less complex, symbolizing simple facts of early family history. The church represents the fact that David Morgan was a frontier minister, shown approaching the church in what Mary calls his "preacher's hat." And there is no mystery about the couple dancing under the quarter moon, who are just exactly what they seem.

"I had to have square dancing," Mary says, "a little fun to go along with it."



This one is called "Cats (100)," although we haven't counted. "It's not that I'm that interested in cats," Mary says, "It's just that they are easy to do!"

of how to fit all those cats in concentric circles.

And then there is "the love of my life, Kokopelli, the Hopi flute player," a religious figure drawn from Southwestern myth. She has several pictures based on Native American symbols and stories using the turtle, the maize, and the flute player.

Personal symbols also appear in her cuttings. "I have always loved birds and after I had Budgie, even more so." Doves, roosters, song birds, phoenixes, and more are tucked away in her pieces. And often a heart. "The heart is my signature," she confesses. "Almost everything I have done has a heart in it to say I've done it."

Especially dear are the pieces composed of children's toys and young lovers. In these her use of line is very different, much thinner, and little details tell so much of the story, soft little droopy legs signifying a rag doll or the flowing ribbons and outstretched arms of lovers singing to each other in the moonlight. Such whimsy and tenderness in a few snips of black paper are what indicate the strength and beauty of Mary's work. "It just kills me when someone says, 'What's that supposed to be?' Oh, that is just about the one thing that takes my life! That's true with [my] painting, too, not just [my] cutting."

After all those years of seeing children's profiles so sharply, Mary's artistic eye is trained to see outlines and shapes clearly. It is the great good fortune of all of us that we will now have an opportunity to see Mary's cuttings. They have been pulled out from under the bed, dusted off, and will be on display all summer at the Cultural Center in Charleston.

Mary notes that her show opened almost exactly 65 years after she was crowned May Queen at Broaddus College. "I have wonderful memories," Mary smiles and the warm afternoon sun comes through the window over her shoulder. She shows her photographs.

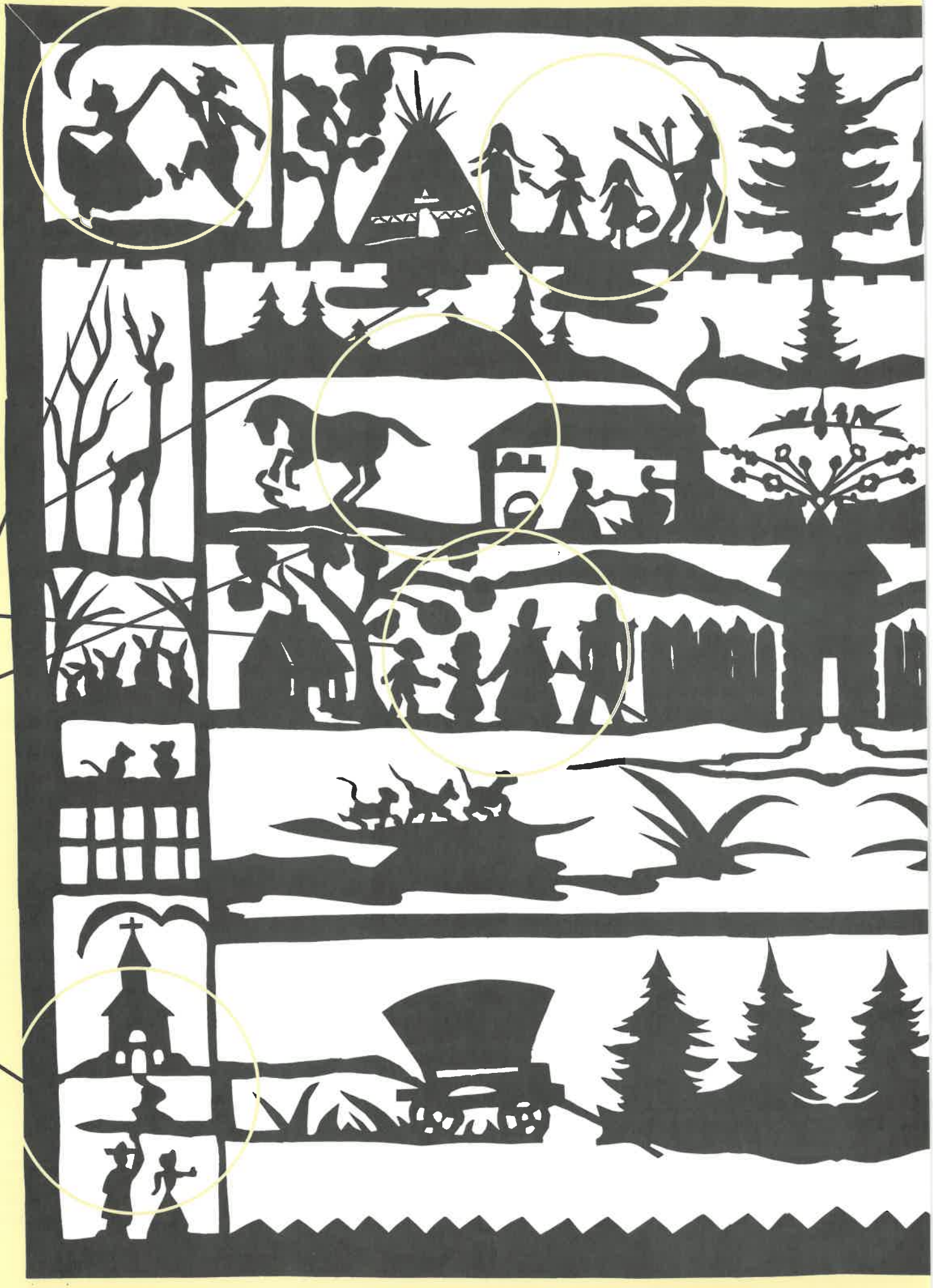
"I wish I had bought stock in the Borden's factory! I don't know how many quarts of glue I have used."

"These were my parents. My father was a dentist until he lost his sight and then he worked in the coal business. My mother was a teacher before I was born. Once her little school caught on fire. She hurried to get the children out of the building and a nearby farmer saw the smoke and came with a horse and hay wagon to collect the children. But after that her hands al-

Mary Jones Art on Display

The work of Mary Olive Eddy Jones is now on display through September 10th at the Cultural Center in Charleston. More than a dozen examples of her work in varying sizes, some of it almost three feet square, are fixed to the walls and protected by plexiglass.

"What's interesting about her work is the fact that it's all original drawings, no patterns are used. The work is allegorical and narrative and includes true West Virginia themes," Mark Moore, director of exhibits at the Cultural Center, said in discussing the show. "Her folk art is so good, it's fine art," he added.



It's not all scissors and paste at Mary Olive Jones's place. Art is a major part of her life.

ways shook. I can remember her steadying her hands for a few moments before she signed her name. She had a kind of nervous breakdown, I suppose.

"I was the youngest of three children — Ralph, Martha Jane, and me. Jane was always my mother's favorite. She had long, shoulder-length curls. Mother didn't know what to do with me — straight black hair (it was always cut short) and big, owl eyes.

"I was married for 44 years to Mr. Jones. He was very interested in my kindergarten and used to come to visit and give me a kiss. Well, one day a kindergarten mother called me and said, 'I thought I should tell you what my child said today. I asked him, "What did you do in school?" "Nothing." "Well, didn't you do anything special? Any visitors?" "No, just Darling. He came in and kissed Mrs. Jones."'

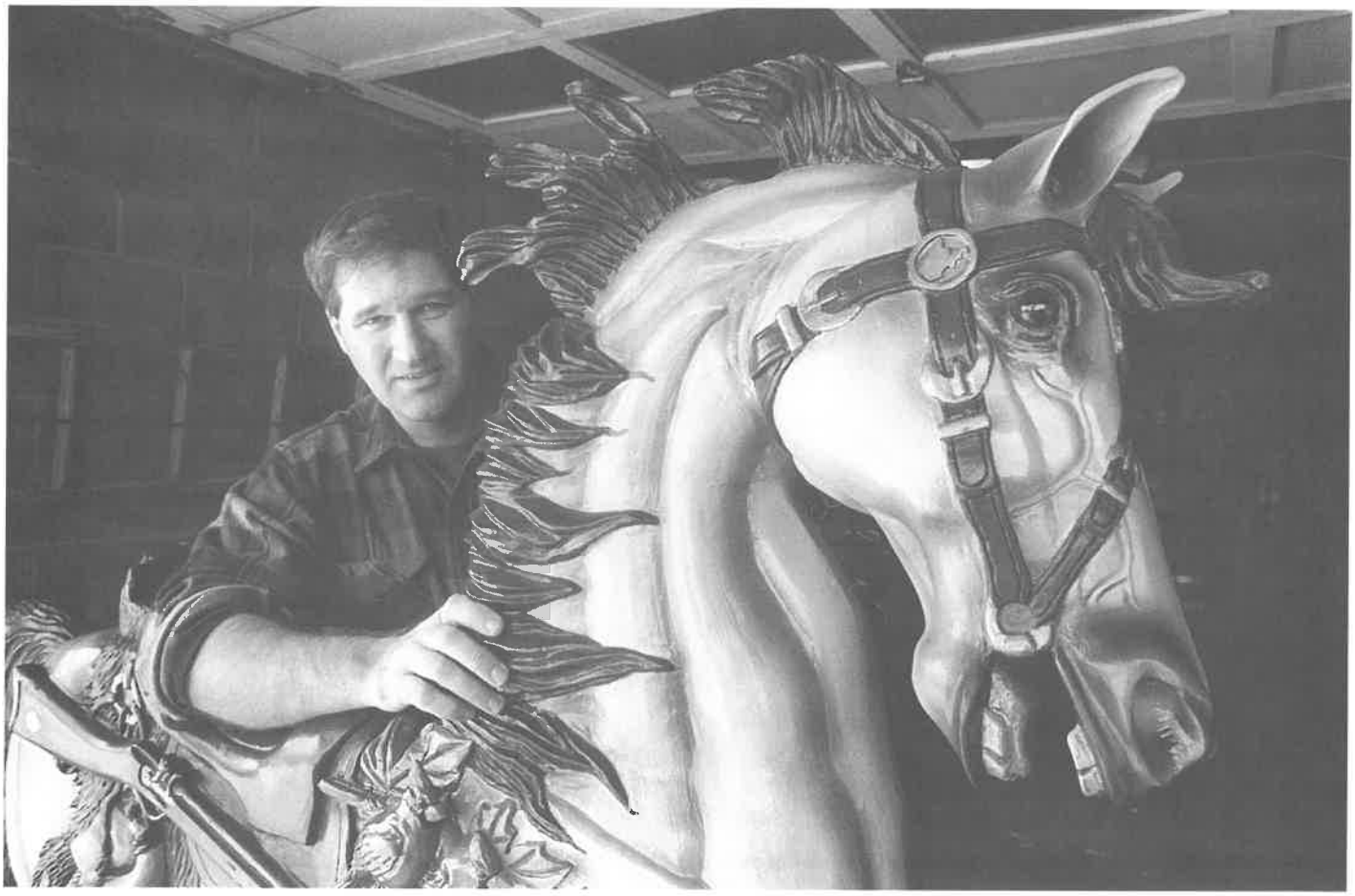
"So of course I called him Mr. Jones whenever he came into my classroom again. And it stuck. I still call him Mr. Jones. But I miss him so, even now. In the night I reach out to touch his hand, and he's not there. Then I can't get back to sleep, so I get up and do the cuttings.

"I never gave birth to a child. That has always been a great sadness to me. But I adopted my brother Ralph's son, Buck. And what a wonderful man he is. He teaches in the physical education department at the university at Knoxville. No one there calls him Ralph or Dr. Jones, they all call him Dr. Buck. I'm so proud of him.

"I had a wonderful, wonderful experience with kindergarten. Oh, I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I can't go out or to the store or the bank without seeing some of my children. But now when things are kind of tough and I'm housebound quite a lot, I have those wonderful memories to live with. They can't take that away from me. I'm comfortable here. This is where I belong. I'm here."

And Mary Olive Eddy Jones is *here*, in these joyous works of traditional scherenschnitte, for all of us to know and enjoy her.

Snip, snap, snout
This tale's told out.



When John Garton makes a horse, he makes a horse, some of them close to life-size. This is "Mountain State Pride," his special West Virginia-theme horse.

Carving Memories

Making Chips Fly in the Northern Panhandle

By Amy Williams-Allred

Photographs by Michael Keller

My first memory of riding on a carousel horse was at the county fair almost 30 years ago. I remember the bright lights and loud music. My horse was red and blue, and I didn't want to get off when the music stopped.

It's this kind of memory that has evoked a special feeling among many people for the art of John Garton. Garton carves carousel horses out of West Virginia basswood at his Wellsburg home.

That's John Garton, DVM. Though he no longer practices veterinary medicine, one can see that Dr. Garton's training as a large-animal vet has enhanced his art. The veins stand out on a wooden horse's neck. A tail or mane stands still as if blowing in the wind. The ripples can be

seen in the roof of a horse's mouth. These intricacies bring Garton's horses to life.

And it's just as obvious that this trained medical man has plenty of natural artistic talent. Garton recognizes what he calls his "God-given talent," but he's quick to add, "I've wasted a lot of wood over the years that ended up in our fireplace!" He says patience is a must for any artist. "You can't turn out a piece of art in a few days, but you just keep working."

The carver says it takes three to four weeks to make a small horse and up to eight weeks for a large horse. He spends about 70 percent of his time carving and 30 percent painting. Speaking of his early experience, Garton says, "When I made one of the big horses I thought 'I'll never finish this.'"

He retired early from veterinary medicine and now enjoys creating his horses and having time for family. For Dr. Garton the wood carver is a bit of a house husband, too. He fits his carving in with caring for his sons, Handley, six, and Neil, five. He credits much of his success to the emotional and financial support of his wife, Martha, a Brooke County 4-H agent.

Garton earned his veterinary degree from Ohio State after attending West Virginia University. He worked with a Lewisburg practice before moving to Wellsburg with his wife 10 years ago.

At that time Garton had carved only totem poles. In fact, his very first wood carving was a totem pole he made after graduating from high school in the early 1970's. His parents had a fire pit at their Lewis County home, and the young Garton thought a totem pole would add a nice effect. The pole has since retired from public service and now stands watch in a corner of the artist's Northern Panhandle woodworking shop.

Dr. Michael Endrizzi, a WVU and Ohio State classmate, says that in veterinary school other students recognized Garton's talent. "John has always been artistically talented," Endrizzi says. "A lot of us thought he was wasting his time in vet school." The fellow veterinarian says Garton's talent came out in the classroom, where he doodled during lectures, and also in more unusual ways. "After one snowfall, we piled some snow in a barn," Endrizzi recalls. "Within 20 minutes John had carved a full-size cow out of the snow with his gloved hands."

When Garton and his wife bought their Wellsburg home, the previous owners left an old band saw in the basement and a can of hand chisels. Garton says he had no inkling at the time that carving would become his business. "I descended into my basement in 1987 to build a hobby horse for my son and ended up making six horse heads." His family used the full-size heads to make a ring around their Christmas tree. In the spring of 1988, he carved bodies for the heads.

Garton recognizes his "God-given talent," but he's quick to add, "A lot of wood over the years has ended up in our fireplace."

There had been a 14-year lull from his totem pole to his first horse, but John Garton had found his niche. On a trip to Washington, he visited the carousel exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Armed with that knowledge and some books, he came back to West Virginia and went to work.

As he continued carving, Garton would call Mike Endrizzi with anatomy questions. When Garton finished the first horse, Endrizzi drove up from Morgantown to have a look at it. "I knew he was going to become popular," Endrizzi says, "so I bought the first horse before the prices went too high." Today, Endrizzi's collection also includes a totem pole, a chicken looking through its legs at an egg, and a 12-inch rocking horse.

By 1989, Garton had carved 12 full-size horses. That year, Martha asked her boss, Beth Drake, the Extension Service's area director, to come by their home and see her husband's work. At the time, Drake was president of the board of directors of the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Ripley. After seeing his hand-carved horses, she told Garton, "You *will* be at the fair!"

That summer the artist sold two horses, and by the spring of 1990 he had built a workshop and was going full steam. Today he makes four series of horses, from the large, full-scale carousel horse to a smaller child-size version.

Garton's first two horses were completely hand-carved, using only chisels for the cutting. It was a time of learning, he recalls. Of his early horses, Garton says, "If anything could go wrong, it did."

His first horse took longer to finish than he had hoped. And it quickly became apparent that an old shoulder problem would force him to find a better way to carve than pounding away with chisel and mallet. Nowadays, he carves the horses by hand, but with some help from power tools. Although some would say it isn't "traditional," Garton contends that 1920's pictures show carousel horse carvers were using some power tools even then. "Their philosophy was to use whatever took the wood away," he says.

He uses wood from the basswood tree, also call linn or linden, because it is the softest hardwood available. Linn blossoms are loved by honeybees, and Garton says the trees swarm with bee activity in the summer. An average horse takes 100 board feet of basswood. The wood comes from Wetzel County or from forests elsewhere in West Virginia. Its short grain doesn't splinter, which makes carving easier. Garton draws his own patterns for the horse bodies. Each horse has numerous different patterns — one for each side and section of the animal.

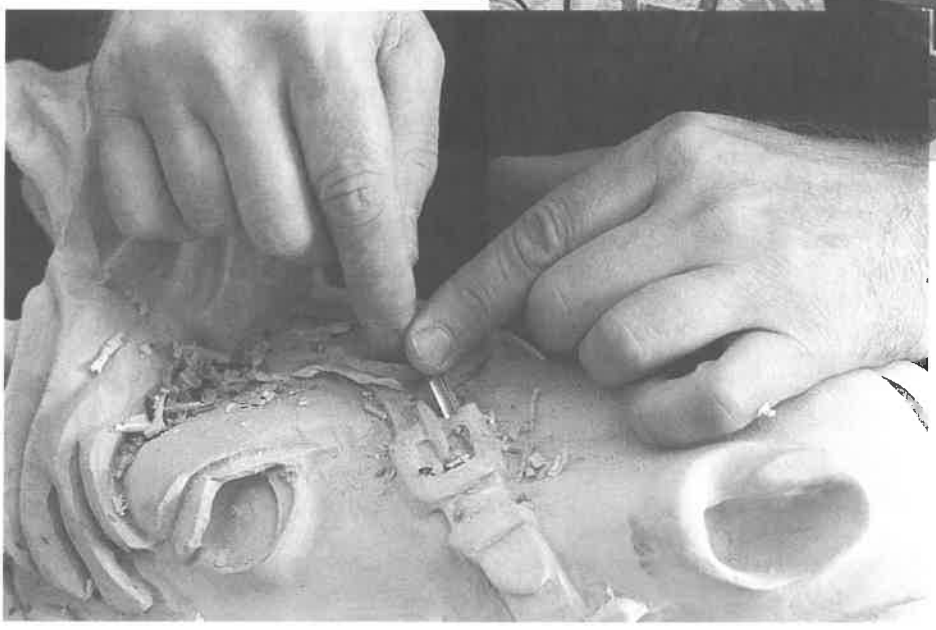
The horse's body is made from multiple pieces of wood glued together with yellow carpenter's glue. Each horse has about 120 glue joints in its body. The main body section is formed much like a sealed wooden box, with a hollow interior. Garton has put time capsules or other special items inside his horses' bodies.

The head, legs, and tail are carved separately and then fastened to the body, using dowel rods in the joints. Then Garton begins the detail carving. In keeping with the style of old carousel horses, Garton carves his most intricate patterns on the right side of the horse. Since the horses travel in a counterclockwise direction, this is the more visible or "out" side, also known as the romantic side in carousel jargon. The left side of the horse on the inside of the circle and less visible to the public, is carved more simply. Garton draws the flowers, bridle, and other features onto the wood in freehand style before he begins carving.

After the horse is carved and sanded, Garton paints it with up to three coats of primer. Then he airbrushes on an acrylic decorative paint finish. He uses acrylic because it is odorless, quick drying, and has some give, unlike oil paints. He applies a polyurethane sealer when he's done.

Garton hired someone to paint the first horse, but he has painted every one since. His painting is good — so good, actually, that it once was a detriment to his business. That startling fact came to his attention at a 1990 Washington art fair, where he had a booth to sell his horses. People came and went. They were interested, but not buying.

The carousel horses are made in sections, later joined together into complete bodies. The horse heads take the most intricate carving.



Finally, an older man at another booth called him aside.

"Son," Garton recalls him saying, "I know you're new at this, but I'm gonna tell you that you've got a problem. People think your horses are fiberglass." The paint job was so glossy and professional, people didn't believe Garton's horses were hand-carved wood. Based on that advice, the artist now includes part of an unpainted horse, or pictures of the carving process, at his shows.

At arts and crafts fairs, Garton's booth is usually surrounded by

Though detail carving is all done by hand, Garton uses power tools for rough shaping. Early carousel horse carvers used "whatever took the wood away," he says.

people who are fascinated by his work and how well he does it. There aren't many casual buyers at the prices he has to charge. Fortunately, he has developed such a following that he doesn't need to hustle sales. His horses sell almost as soon as they're made. White horses with pink and blue roses are the most popular, but Garton has made and sold everything from unicorns to Robert E. Lee's war horse Traveler and Stonewall Jackson's Little Sorrel. Some years he sells two or three horses, and other years he has sold nine or ten.

"I descended into my basement in 1987 to build a hobby horse for my son and ended up making six horse heads."

He is working in a very old tradition. Carousels, or merry-go-rounds as they are commonly called, have been around for centuries. They were very popular in England and France in the 1700's and 1800's. Carousels first came to the United States around 1860. They increased in popularity as trolley car companies built parks with carousels at the end of their railroad lines, in order to attract riders on Sundays and holidays.

Originally real horses or mules, laboring in pits below the carousels, turned the carved animals above. But by the 1890's carousels were powered by steam engines and became an even bigger entertainment attraction.

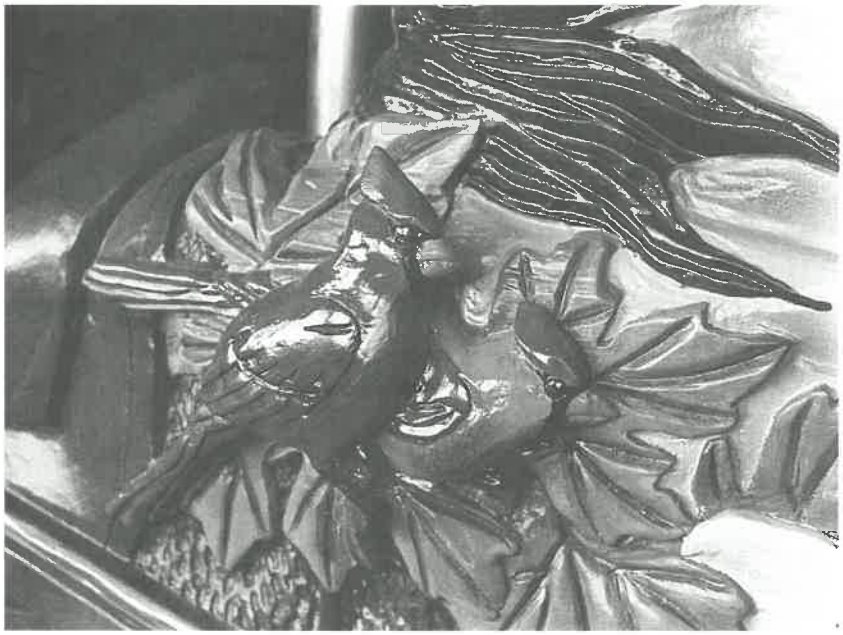
In America, carousels reached their height of popularity in the first two decades of this century, with over 2,000 operating across the country. European immigrant furniture carvers found work at carousel carving shops, and Garton says carousels subsequently reached their artistic zenith in this century. By 1913 a mechanism was developed to allow the merry-go-round horses to move up and down as they traveled round and round. This just increased their popularity.

But hard times were coming. The carousel industry crashed with the Great Depression and didn't revive until after World War II. By then most of the old carvers had retired or passed away. Broken or damaged horses were replaced with aluminum castings made to look like the wooden originals. In the 1960's fiberglass horses were being made.

Since the late 1970's and early 1980's, collectors have been grabbing up the remaining wooden horses. Consequently, surviving carousels across the country have been taken apart. Since one antique horse can bring $35,000 to $150,000 (depending on its age, condition, paint quality and size), fiberglass horses have quickly replaced wooden ones on working carousels. Garton estimates there are fewer than 200 real wooden-horse carousels left today.

While buyers of antique horses tend to be wealthy art collectors, Garton's buyers often act for sentimental reasons. Many are older, well-to-do people who have fond memories of carousel horses and money to spend. They buy the ornate carvings to put in their homes or to give to their grandchildren.

Garton's horses are less expensive than antique originals, but pricey enough. The starting price for the small horses is $1,900 and the larger and more intricately carved horses sell for up to $12,000. In addition to individual buyers,



Garton carves detail, sometimes to an astonishing degree. These close-ups show some of the ornamentation of "Mountain State Pride," a Garton masterwork.

Garton's horses have been purchased by The Greenbrier resort and a private shop in Atlantic City's Trump Castle Casino. Most of his sales are made to individuals through the big Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Show in Jefferson County. [GOLDENSEAL, Fall 1993]. Garton's horses have yet to be used in a carousel.

Over the years, Garton has broadened his artistic work to include other projects. His hand-carved Victorian Santas sell out a year in advance. He also makes pig and sheep cedar chests and carvings of other farm animals. But regardless of what else he carves, he plans to keep making carousel horses.

Since he started, Dr. John Garton has accomplished many goals. He finished that first carousel hobby horse for his children, and it now stands well-used and proud in the family living room. And he's created 65 other horses over the past several years.

But he still has a few more dreams to fulfill. Although he doesn't care for riding himself, this horse carver hopes someday to have a family farm with a real horse for his boys. He would also like to see his special West Virginia carousel horse, "Mountain State Pride," either in the Governor's Mansion in Charleston or at the new Tamarack Arts Center on the West Virginia Turnpike.

But his greatest ambition is to carve a full set of carousel horses for a complete West Virginia carousel. The state's last wooden-horse carousel was in Huntington's Camden Park, and those horses have since given way to fiberglass replacements [GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1987]. Now John Garton would like to create another. If he does so he will not only fulfill a personal dream but also carve new memories of the old-fashioned sort for West Virginians both young and young-at-heart.

Getting Yours

If you would like to order a West Virginia-made carousel horse there are a few things to consider, time and price in particular.

First, get your request in early. John Garton tells us that orders sometimes take from six months to as much as a year to complete, depending on the amount of work he has on hand.

After the hundreds of hours spent carving and putting a horse together, the artist's paintbrush brings the animal to life. Garton spends up to 40 hours at this final stage, bestowing the detail and colors to give each horse a distinctive personality.

The hours and artistry are reflected in the price of the horses, none of which is cheap. The cost of your made-to-order carousel horse may vary anywhere from $1,900 all the way up to $12,000 or more. For more information contact John Garton, 1040 Washington Pike, Wellsburg, WV 26070.

Button, Button

St. Marys Had the Button Factory

By Jennifer L. Efaw

Photographs by Michael Keller

St. Marys, the county seat of Pleasants County, is situated on the banks of the Ohio River, in a broad valley with the hills behind and the river in front. This combination has led to a variety of occupations for residents, with timber, manufacturing, farming, river transport, and the oil and gas industry all having enjoyed their periods of boom and bust.

Surely one of the more unusual local pursuits was the manufacture of pearl buttons from the shells of river mussels. These mussels, a type of freshwater mollusk, were once eaten by the Indians much as we eat clams today. Sometimes prehistoric encampments have been found by the large amount of mussel shells discarded nearby.

The shells of river mussels are lined with mother-of-pearl, an iridescent substance prized for its beauty and durability in making beads, buttons, and other decorative items.

Such shells are used today in the making of cultured pearls. A tiny piece of shell is slipped inside the oyster, where it acts as an irritant. The oyster is then returned to the sea in a wire cage, which protects it and makes retrieval easier. The nacre, a lustrous substance produced within the oyster, builds up layer by layer on the piece of shell until, in some oysters, a pearl is formed.

By 1909, according to George E. Riggs, a local historian, gathering mussel shells along the riverbank was a popular occupation of St. Marys townsfolk during times of low water. Occasionally, some rather fine pearls were found, some valued at $100 to $150, more than enough to ensure that collecting river mussels remained a popular hobby. But mostly the mussels were gathered for their shells, which were sold to pearl button factories elsewhere in the Ohio Valley.

Some of the workers were itinerant, highly skilled floaters who traveled up and down the rivers from the Mississippi eastward, going where the work took them.

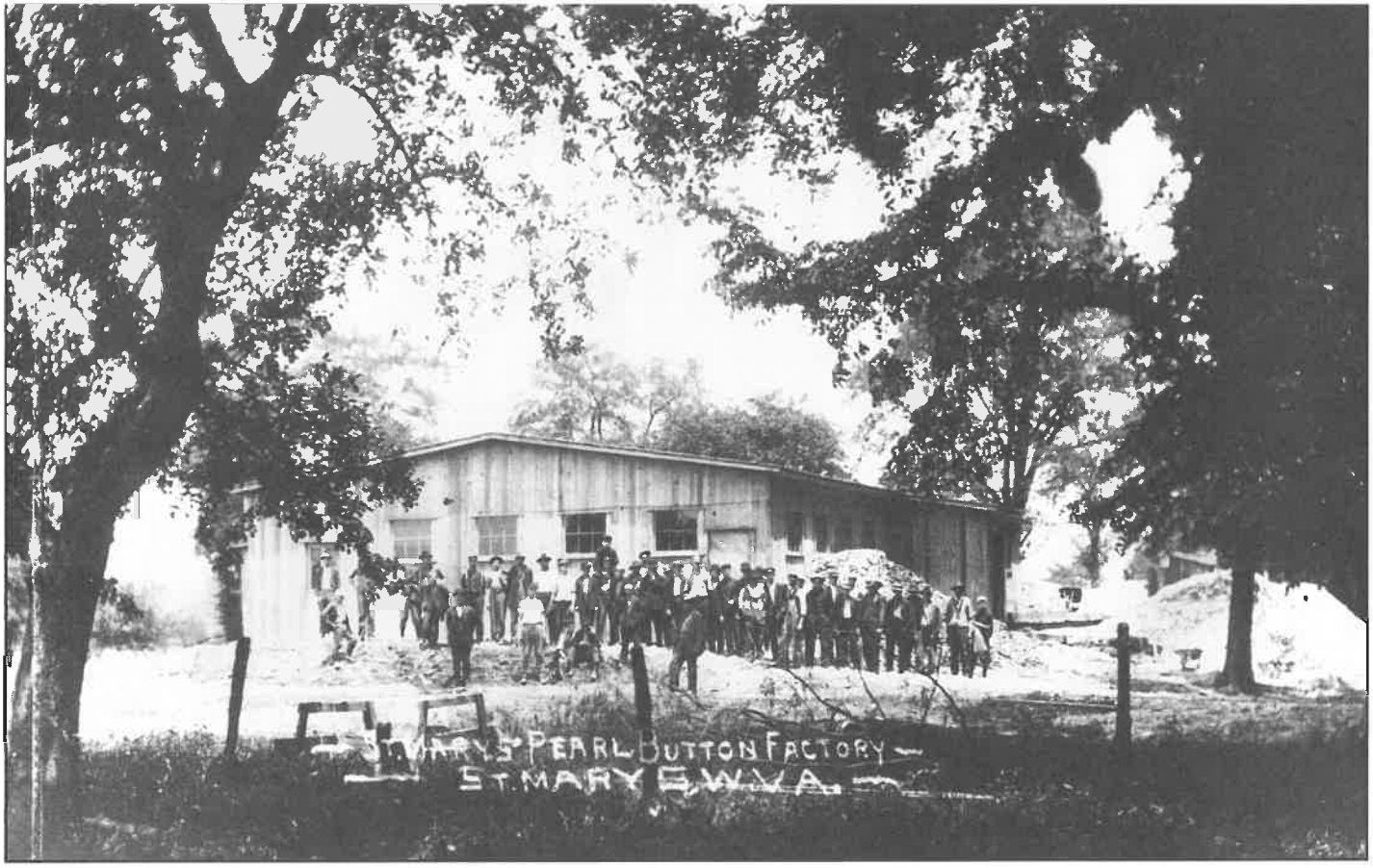
It was soon felt by the local Board of Trade that St. Marys could support its own factory, and a correspondence was begun between the city fathers and Harvey Chalmers and Sons of Amsterdam, New York, who operated a number of factories in the region.

Button blanks from the St. Marys Pearl Button Factory, along with river mussel shells from which blanks have been cut.

An agreement was reached. If the board could find and purchase suitable land, the company would locate a pearl button factory in St. Marys. A sum of $4,000 was donated by local citizens to purchase land and erect buildings. A parcel of land was selected which was known in the county records as "the swamp lot." Presumably this was because the lot was located in the flood plain, and was often wet and muddy as the river level rose and fell.

Whatever its disadvantages, the swamp lot was situated conveniently for the factory. It was actually on Middle Island Creek, just north of the center of the city. The site was close to the point where the creek joined the river, and near as well to the main road and the railroad tracks.

The land was purchased by the Board of Trade from R. Alexander Gallaher and others and deeded over to Harvey Chalmers, his son Arthur, and their wives. A build-



The button factory was a modest affair, as this photograph of the building and its workforce shows. Photographer unknown, about 1920; courtesy Pleasants County Historical Society.

ing was quickly erected, and in 1910 the button factory opened. At times, it employed 65 to 100 skilled men and laborers, and apparently work was surprisingly steady throughout the year.

The saws which were used to cut the button blanks, or slugs, were powered by a gasoline engine, and a constant stream of water had to be directed onto the little saws to cool them. Mr. Riggs recalls that the factory had a gas-powered generator to supply water pressure to the hoses, the city of St. Marys not yet having electricity in all areas. Water was pumped from Middle Island Creek.

By 1914, the factory was successful enough that it was incorporated in Montgomery County, New York, Harvey Chalmers's home county. The deed holder was changed in the Pleasants County records to "The St. Marys Pearl Button Company of Amsterdam, New York."

Mr. Riggs remembers when he was a paperboy of ten or 12, delivering newspapers to the button factory. Each cutter controlled the flow of water to his saw with a rubber diaphragm, operated by a foot pedal.

The factory men weren't above a little mischief, Mr. Riggs says. "The first cutter in line would hit me in the face with a stream of cold river water as soon as I came in the door, and each man would hit me in turn until I made it out the back door," he recalls.

One new cutter spent his week visiting the men working on other machines rather than working himself. At the end of the week, his paycheck was for 16 cents.

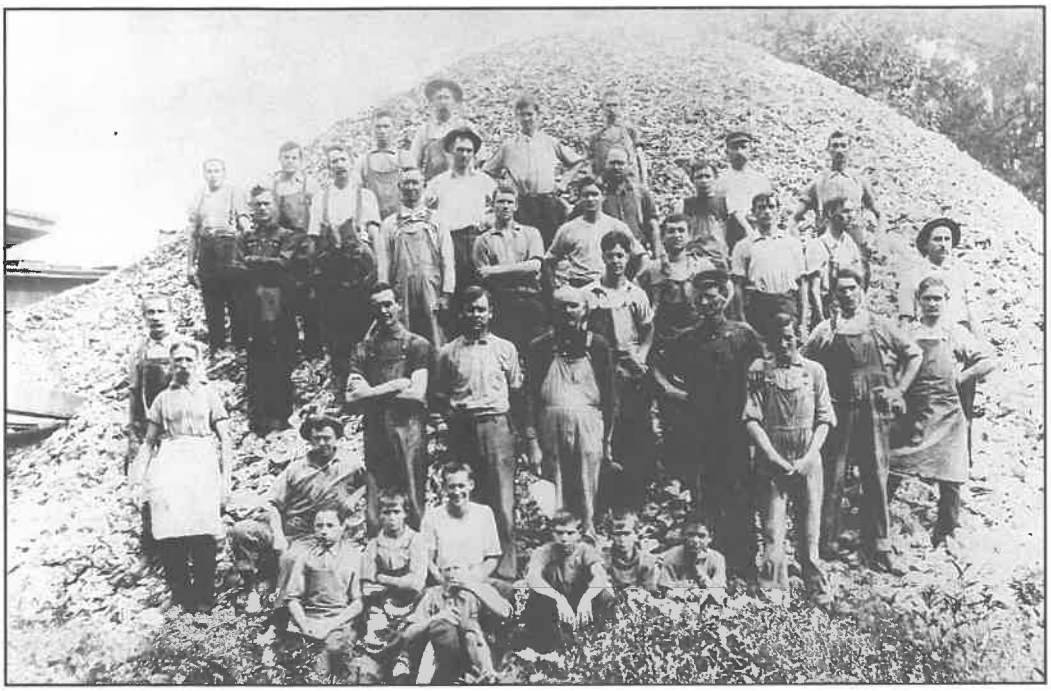
Their fun was not limited to visiting paperboys. Mr. Riggs remembers that the cutters sprayed each other freely when the foreman chanced to turn his back, and even dared to wet the boss occasionally.

Along the humid river bottom, before the days of air-conditioning, spraying each other down may have been the only way to avoid heat stroke. Working in rubber aprons around hot machinery wouldn't have helped matters.

In spite of the working conditions, button cutting was considered a good job, paying better than many in the area. My grandfather, Ben Winland, along with many other St. Marys men made a decent living working at the factory. I can remember playing as a child with what I took to be strange-looking seashells my grandmother had kept for many years. They looked like a cross between a clam shell and Swiss cheese, full of perfectly round holes about an inch in diameter.

I never met my grandfather, since he died before my birth, but I remember wishing I could ask him about those curious shells. I later found out that these shells were common keepsakes in the county, along with saws and other tools of the button trade.

Dessie Stewart of St. Marys is from another local family which sent workers to the factory. "My father and three of my brothers worked at the button factory," she recalls. "I still have one of their saws and some of the shells that they cut blanks out of."



Button cutters posed by the shell pile for this undated photograph. The factory consumed mountains of Ohio River mussels during its 18-year history. Photographer unknown, courtesy Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

Other workers were itinerant, highly skilled floaters who traveled up and down the rivers from the Mississippi eastward, going where the work took them. According to Mr. Riggs, "They stayed in one place six or eight weeks to three months, then moved on. They would announce on Friday, their payday, 'Well, I'm going to drag up.' That's what they called it when they moved on, 'dragging up.' Some families whose fathers and grandfathers came here as floaters decided to stay on in St. Marys, and the families still live here today."

The mussel shells that provided the factory with its raw material were harvested in several ways.

Gathering shells by hand remained common. It was possible to wade along the shore, leading a horse-drawn wagon, and easily collect a wagon load of shells to sell to the factory. According to a 1975 article in the *Parkersburg News*, even small children once earned spending money by gathering mussel shells.

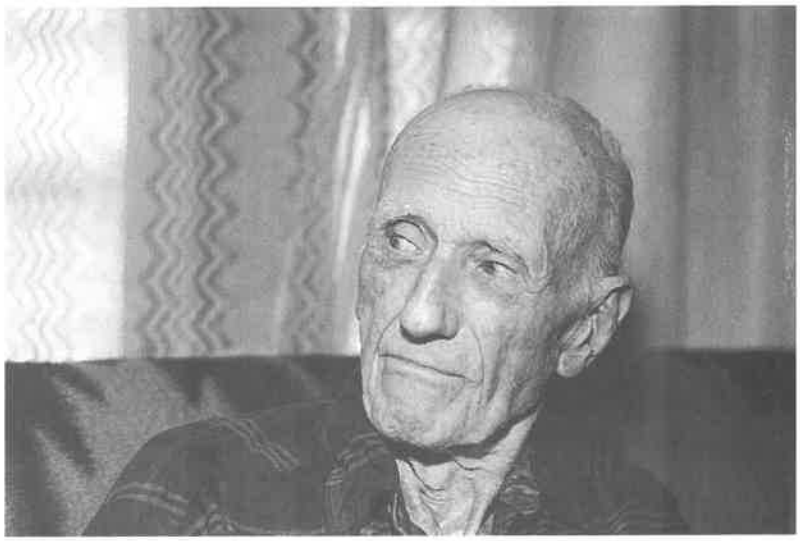
The Ohio River was so shallow and the water so clear in those days that anyone with a boat or barge could use a clam hook and simply reach down and pluck mussels off the river bottom. Wide, flat-bottomed boats were often used for mussel collecting. They could be loaded down with people and mussels with little danger of tipping.

The most ingenious method of gathering mussels employed a contraption called a "brail," a long metal rod or pipe fitted at intervals with long cords. On the cords were large, blunt hooks. The brail was dragged crosswise along the river bottom from a flat-bottomed boat. The mussels, which ordinarily rested on the bottom with their shells open, would feel the hooks catch against their shells. Sensing danger, a mussel's instinctive response was to close its shell, clamping down on the hook.

When all the cords were covered with mussels, the rod and cords, with mussels still tightly attached, was pulled back up onto the boat and relieved of their load. This operation was repeated until the boat was full.

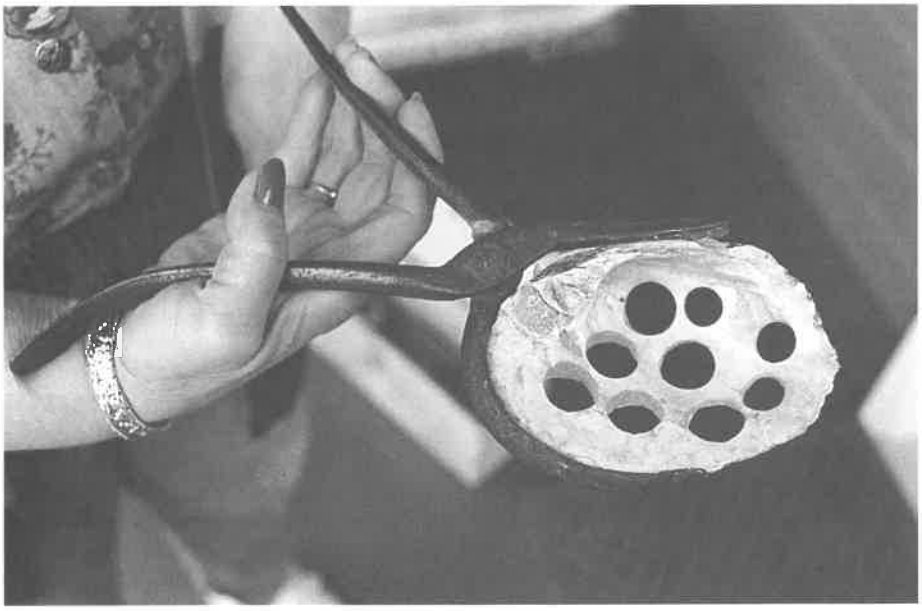
George Riggs, like many other children of the time, remembers swimming with friends over to nearby Middle Island. One of the larger Ohio River islands, Middle Island lies at the point where Middle Island Creek spills into the river. Close to the factory, yet removed from town, it was a good place for mussel camps. In the summer, the camps would set up under large canvas tents. Boatloads of mussels were brought to the island by the mussel fishermen, where they were cooked, split, searched for pearls, and roughly cleaned.

Cleaning the shells was a messy, smelly business, often performed by women and children. The mussels were first cooked in large iron pots over open fires. After the mussels were cooked, they were pried open and the meat picked out by hand — an unenviable task. Though the meat was quite edible, most was either fed to dogs or thrown out to spoil. *Parkersburg News* correspondent Dot Griffin, in an interview with Harry "Hank" Dotson, now deceased, said the mussel camps were "probably the city's first introduction to pollution."



George Riggs remembers delivering newspapers to the button factory workers as a young boy. They were a feisty bunch, he recalls.

Taken by barge to a landing point on the mainland, the shells were loaded into flatbed wagons with side rails and delivered to the button factory, where they were sold



Cutting buttons required specialized tools, including tongs to grasp the shell firmly by the rim. The shell was pressed against the spinning blade of a stationary saw, the idea being to get as many good blanks as possible from each shell. The tubular saw blades, such as the one shown below, were similar to modern hole saws.

to the manager by weight. Then the mussel shells were steamed in large vats near the factory for four or five days to soften them for cutting.

Mrs. Griffin also notes in her article that local sources of supply were not the only ones used by the St. Mary's factory. Some mussel shells were brought in by train from Wabash, Indiana, and by boat from the Muskingum River in Ohio. She states that "literally hundreds of tons of mussels were processed here."

The next step was sorting the shells. All species of mussel in all sizes were used for buttons, but some types were better suited than others as far as quality and kind of button.

Mr. Riggs remembers the sorter as a big, burly man wielding a large pair of tongs. He sorted shells by size and quality, determining which shells would be best for which type of button blank.

Each man specialized in cutting a different size, depending on his tools and his skill in using them. It took a lot of coordination to do the job right. Each cutter bought and maintained his own hand tools. The saws had to be filed carefully, and kept sharp.

The shell was held in one hand with a clamp-like pair of tongs, and the button saw was operated by the other hand. The tubular saw blade spun on a horizontal shaft, looking like a lathe but working something like a home handyman's hole saw to core out the button blanks. The flow of water and the speed of the saw were controlled by a foot pedal.

When cut, the round blank fell down a tube into a galvanized bucket under the workbench. The bucket had sawdust in it, to dry the blanks.

The large blanks were easiest to cut and paid the cutter the least, as so few could be cut from each shell. These would most likely have been used to make the larger buttons, such as for coats.

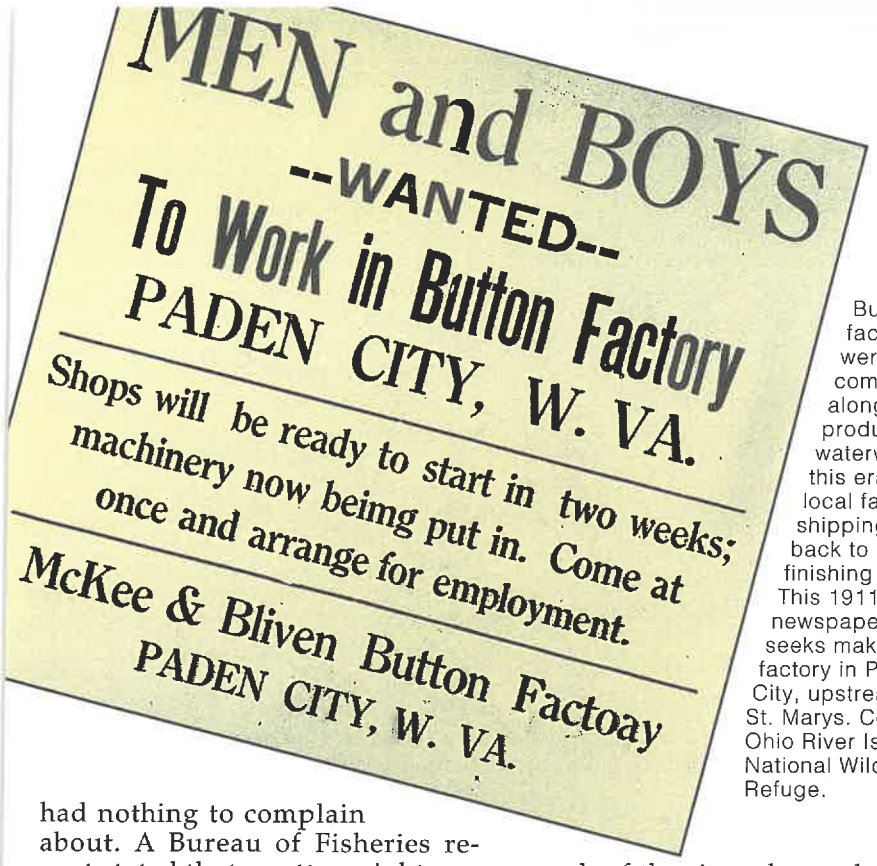
The "tips," the smallest blanks, took the most skill and paid the most money. These could have been used for smaller, more delicate buttons, perhaps for baby clothes and ladies' finery.

Every part of the shell was used. Smaller blanks were cut from the rims of the shells, and whatever remained was ground up and added to chicken feed.

Each Friday, the cutters took their buckets of blanks to be weighed, and were paid according to their production. Checks were drawn up by the bookkeeper, the only woman working at the factory. Dent Rockwell, now living in Belmont, said in his interview with Dot Griffin, "We were paid by piece work and the company counted a gross at 168 instead of 144. This was to allow for faulty slugs."

Mr. Riggs tells the story of one new cutter who spent his week visiting the men working on other machines rather than working himself. At the end of the week, his paycheck was for 16 cents. He announced that he was going to go home and frame his check "to show people what a darned fool I was to think that I could make a living working at a button factory."

Of course, as Mr. Riggs points out, if the man had done more working and less visiting, he would have



Button factories were common along mussel producing waterways in this era, small local factories shipping blanks back to large finishing plants. This 1911 newspaper ad seeks makers for a factory in Paden City, upstream from St. Marys. Courtesy Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

had nothing to complain about. A Bureau of Fisheries report stated that a cutter might earn as much as $35 a week in 1919.

After cutting, the blanks were shipped to New York State for finishing. There the Harvey Chalmers and Sons factory, billed locally as the "largest in the world," finished the buttons, drilling holes, grinding them down to size, and polishing them.

A history of Montgomery County, New York, states that the buttons were used in the flourishing garment industry. The Chalmers family had started the Hampshire Pearl Button Company in an abandoned textile mill in Amsterdam in 1898. A second factory was erected nearby in 1903. The two connected factories, one on either side of a stream, were soon "producing daily more than 25,000 gross in [a] wide variety of buttons." That comes out to millions of buttons a day.

The Montgomery County history further states that, "Employment at peak output was about 1,000, including Amsterdam housewives who added to family income by sewing buttons on cards at home. The buttons originally were cut from river clam shells found in the Mississippi region."

Whatever their other sources of supply, the St. Marys Pearl Button Company had to have been in its heyday a significant contributor to Mr. Chalmers's endeavor. A photograph of the time shows the workers along one side of the exterior of the factory, standing in front of a veritable mountain of mussel shells.

The installation of locks and dams on the Ohio River, a system under construction for decades and completed in the 1920's, spelled the beginning of the end for the St. Marys button business. The rise in the level of the river made dredging difficult and mussels scarce. One theory of the demise of the river mussel is that the deeper water made it impossible for the mussels' eggs to hatch, since sunlight couldn't penetrate deep enough to warm the eggs.

Pollution played its part in making mussels less abundant. Acid runoff from coal mines, and the waste products of mills, and oil wells upriver, interfered with the reproductive cycle of the mussel, and made the shells soft and unusable. Dredging for river gravel further altered the ecosystem. Mussels need a surface of sand and gravel, and cannot tolerate great amounts of silt.

There were indirect effects, as well. According to Walter Carpenter, president of the local historical society and retired science teacher at St. Marys High School, certain fish play an important intermediary role in the development of the river mussel. At one point of their

Ohio Riverboating

Huntington journalist James E. Casto has written *Towboat on the Ohio*, a new book on the commercial navigation of the Ohio River. The book was published by the University Press of Kentucky in May.

Towboat on the Ohio treats the history and lore of the Ohio Valley boat and barge industry, relying on the author's observations and firsthand reporting. The story is woven around a running account of an upriver trip aboard the Ashland Oil towboat *Paul G. Blazer*, a portion of which was published in GOLDENSEAL in 1993.

Casto made the trip and clearly enjoyed it. He describes the details of modern towboating as he encountered them along the way, introducing his readers to crew members from the captain to the cook. It's not entirely clear just whom he considers the more important of the two, since he concludes that a towboat, like Napoleon's army, travels on its stomach.

Among the revered predecessors to the *Blazer's* crew was the late Frederick Way, Jr., who has his own new book out. Captain Way, the most legendary of Ohio River boatmen, became a pilot and captain in the 1920's and later was known as a river historian and publisher. The revised edition of *Way's Packet Directory, 1848-1994* was published by Ohio University Press earlier this year. The massive paperback lists hundreds of passenger boats which worked the Ohio and other rivers of the Mississippi watershed.

Towboat on the Ohio, a 184-page hardback, sells for $22.95 in bookstores or from the University Press of Kentucky, 663 South Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40508. *Way's Packet Directory*, a large-format, 625-page paperback, sells for $34.95.

development, mussels are a parasite in the gills of some fish. The acidic water killed many of the fish, contributing eventually to the near disappearance of mussels in the river.

Janet Butler, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee with the new Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge, adds that the button factory did its part in the demise of river mussels. The harvesting of the shells was an unregulated industry, and many mussel beds must have been wiped out.

Ms. Butler further states that when the locks and dams were installed on the river, it changed the Ohio from a free-flowing river into what is essentially a series of lakes. This limited the migration of fish. She explained that mussels are very species-specific as to what kind of fish a particular species of mussel will parasitize. With the loss of those fish came the loss of the mussels.

And that meant the loss of the St. Marys button factory. An attempt was made to ship mussels from other, less troubled streams, but this proved to be too costly. In 1928, the factory closed its doors for good. Some workers moved on to other button factories, but many seem to have stayed in the area and found other work.

The vast amount of shells left when the factory closed were crushed and used by the City of St. Marys to pave the remaining dirt streets and driveways. Mr. Carpenter recalls that the shell fragments, when mixed with cinders from the local Quaker State oil refinery, made a durable and attractive paving medium. After a hard rain, he recalls, the streets glistened with mother-of-pearl.

Raymond "Buck" Dotson, whose father Hank worked at the factory, agrees. But, he adds, "Those sharp-edged shells sure were hard on tires. They could cut a tire to ribbons."

Shells were crushed and used by the city of St. Marys to pave streets and driveways. After a hard rain, the streets glistened with mother-of-pearl.

The river mussel is now a protected species in West Virginia. Harvesting them is illegal. Thanks to this, and the federal Clean Water Act in the 1970's, the river mussel is making something of a comeback.

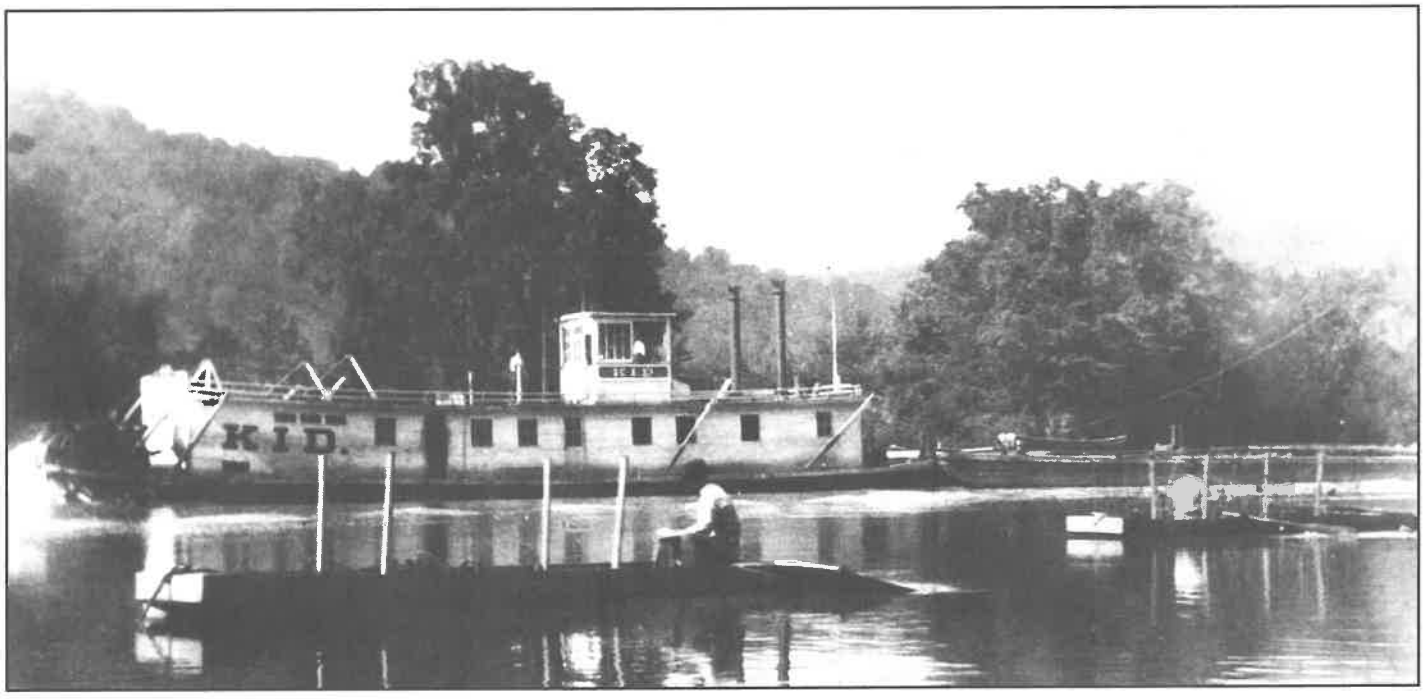
But poaching is a serious problem. In spite of the possibility of heavy fines and even imprisonment, endangered mussels are being harvested illegally and sold, primarily to the Japanese, for use in making cultured pearls. But Janet Butler remains hopeful. "The Ohio River, unlike a lot of the world today, 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," she recently told a Kentucky newspaper.

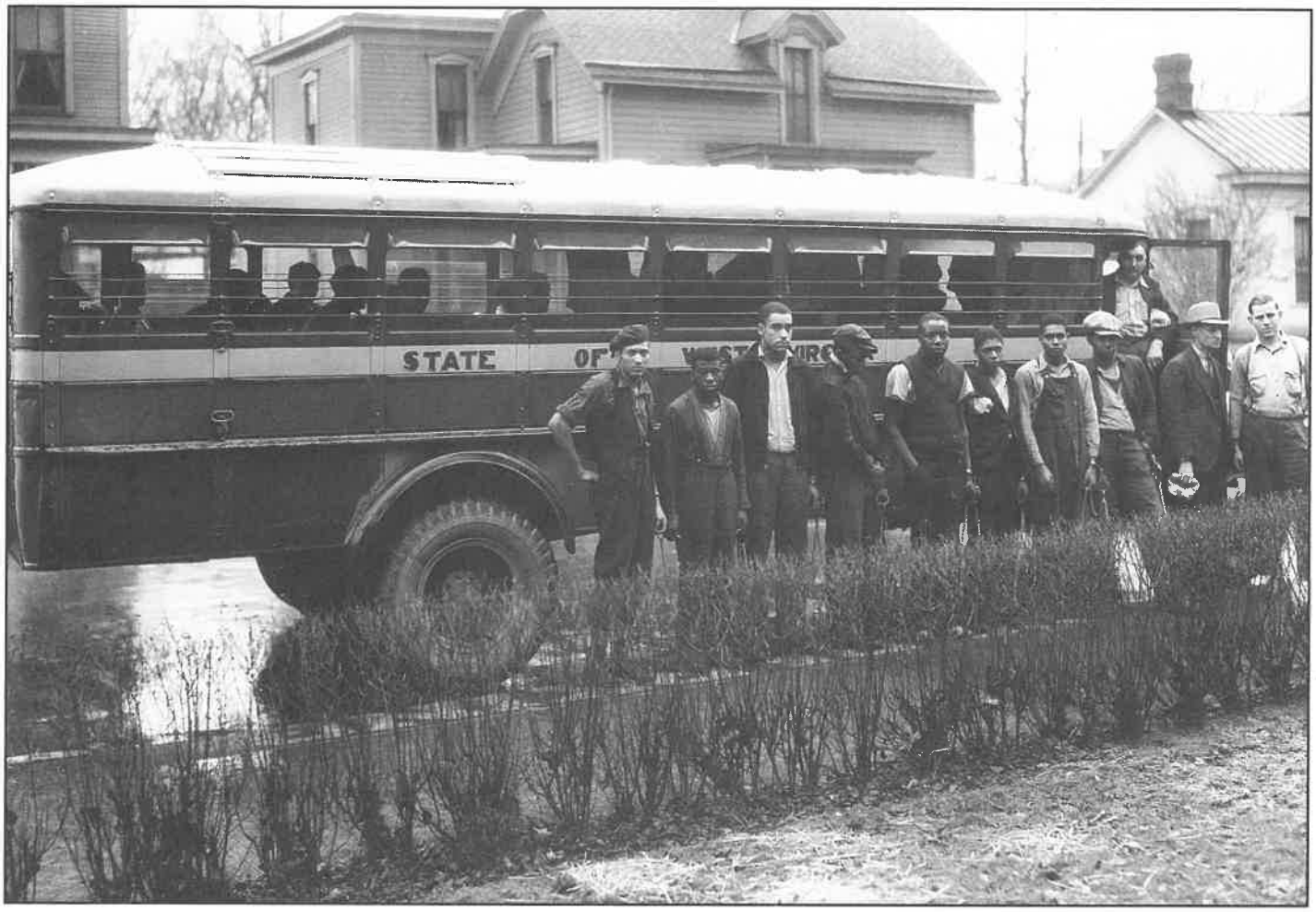
Another threat to the mussel is the accidental introduction of a non-native species, the zebra mussel. It is thought to have come from Europe in the ballast water of ships which made their way into the Great Lakes system. It seems to be taking over the habitat of native mussels, pushing some endangered species closer to the brink of extinction.

Even should the mussel recover to its former numbers, the advent of plastics makes the future manufacturing of pearl buttons unlikely. Buttons can now be made more cheaply and easily from other materials. The only people who appreciate the old pearl buttons are collectors and those who are interested in them for historical reasons.

All that remains of the St. Mary's factory now is the concrete foundation and the thousands of shell fragments still scattered over the area. Those and a lot of memories, of a time and an industry, and a way of life long past.

The fishermen in the foreground are gathering mussels using the brail method, according to Janet Butler of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Ohio River Islands National Wildlife Refuge.





A 1937 report from Warden C.M. Stone to Governor Holt identifies this photograph as a "chain of prisoners on arrival." Hard service awaited them. Photographer unknown.

"A Tough Joint"

The West Virginia Penitentiary at Moundsville

By Joseph Platania

The old West Virginia State Penitentiary at Moundsville never claimed much glory in its 129 years. And what's more, the prison — built in 1866 to house the state's most dangerous felons — was a dangerous place. Murders, rapes and riots were common within its 24-foot walls. Although the frequency of violence subsided somewhat in recent years, its intensity could be appalling. During a riot on New Year's Day 1986, 200 inmates took 16 hostages and controlled much of the prison for two days, killing three of their fellow convicts.

The gray stone fortress was built by convict labor, on what was then the edge of town. Now it is surrounded by Moundsville, a Marshall County community of nearly 11,000 people, 12 miles south of Wheeling in the Northern Panhandle. The prison's Gothic architecture and austere appearance stand in sharp contrast to the lawns

This photograph of the main entrance to the State Penitentiary was made by Wheeling photographer George James Kossuth. Date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

and greenery of nearby homes.

This past spring the doors at the time-worn penitentiary creaked closed for the last time as more than 400 inmates were moved in closely guarded convoys to a modern new prison at Mt. Olive, across the state in Fayette County. There are hopes of turning the Moundsville complex into an outlet mall, or maybe a museum, but it will never be the state pen again.

Many in Marshall County regard the transition with mixed emotions or outright regret. A new regional jail has absorbed some of the prisoners and taken up some of the slack in the economy, but still Moundsville will suffer lost business and lost taxes.

The Ohio River town will also suffer from the loss of the old lockup's $6 million annual payroll. John Massie has been a records clerk at the prison for 26 years. "A lot of these local grocery stores and gas stations and everything are going to be devastated," he figures.

And despite the upheavals, riots, and escapes, most Moundsville residents have considered the institution a good neighbor. "When you've lived around it all your life, you don't think about it," Moundsville native Nan Collins says. "It doesn't even dawn on you that this is a maximum security prison.

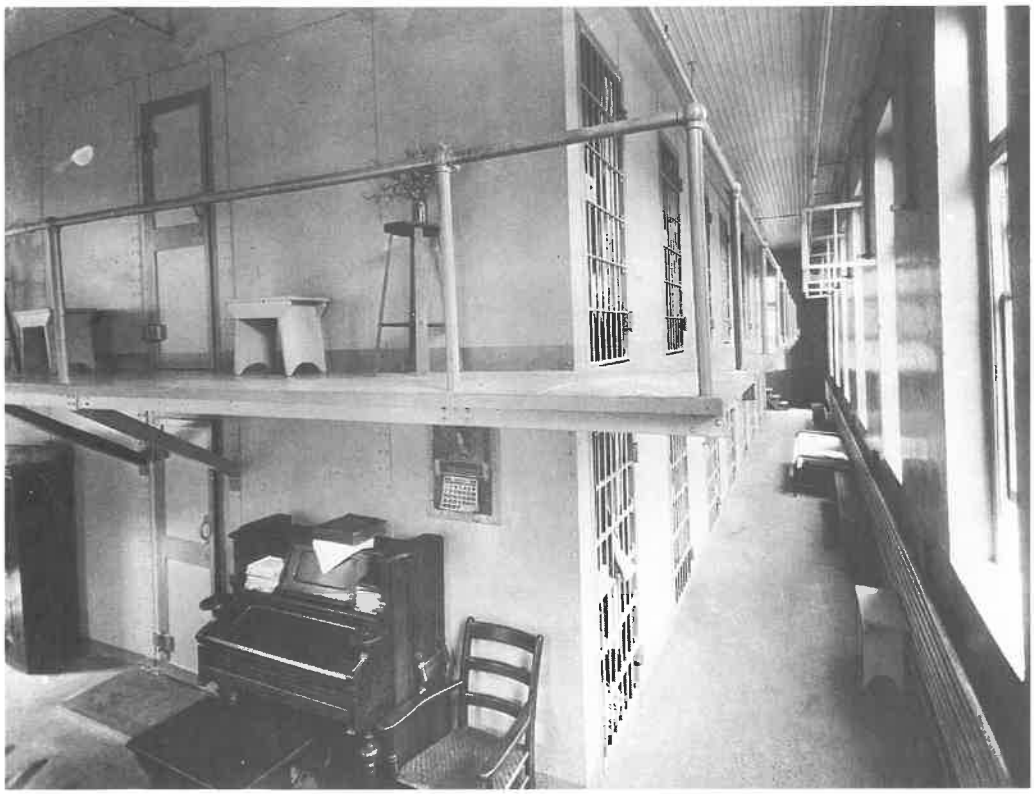
By 1874, the daily cost per prisoner had been reduced to less than 16 cents.

"There's nothing wrong with our town," Mrs. Collins adds. "Moundsville is a better town than most."

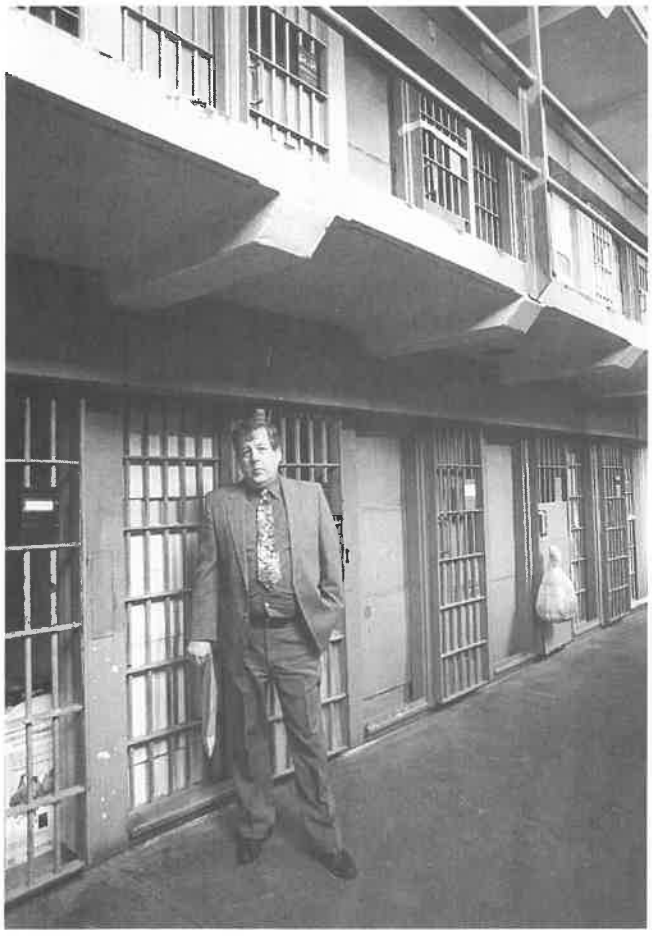
Townspeople pass the prison almost every day. Some can see its grim, gray walls from their living room windows. But living in the prison's shadow seldom interfered with their lifestyles. Whether working at a factory or in the coal mines, or bowling at Riley's, taking in a movie, or reading the *Moundsville Daily Echo*, the local newspaper, residents always went about their normal activities.

Doris Arn, who lives a block away from the pen, says that she's never been afraid to share her town with the state prison. "If I saw them coming over the wall, it would bother me," Mrs. Arn said before the prison closed. "But I figure that if they got out of there the last thing they would want to do is stay around here."

During the January 1986 riot, townsfolk opened their homes



A piano and other homey touches did little to soften harsh prison cell blocks. The calendar page says August 1927, photographer unknown.



John Massie, a prison records clerk for 26 years, is a source of historical information about the old lock-up. Mr. Massie now works at the Northern Regional Jail. Photo by Michael Keller.

to reporters who wanted to use their telephones or just come in out of the cold and rain. One journalist noted that "most residents had lived in the same houses all their lives."

Josephine Musilli remembered picnicking in the same farm field where inmates worked when she was a girl. "Folks weren't afraid of the prisoners the way they are now," she told a reporter. "There was never any trouble then with them. Even if someone escaped, you weren't afraid, because you knew they'd head for the river or the hills."

Even at that troubled time, most residents said they wouldn't think of moving from the town in which many of them had lived most of their lives. "You get used to it," is the way one resident described her feelings about living one block from the prison.

In fact, the penitentiary had woven itself into the fabric of the community. Townspeople went there to see boxing matches and football and baseball games between inmate athletes and visiting teams. In the 1940's, retired Pittsburgh Pirates Hall of Famer Honus Wagner brought a traveling team that he coached to the prison for a game, according to an Associated Press story. The article adds, "Townspeople at times also were invited to hangings."

Moundsville's history can be traced back to the pre-Revolutionary War era. Around 1771, three brothers, Joseph, Samuel and James Tomlinson, arrived at the Flats of Grave Creek. They built a cabin about 300 yards north of the mound and spent the summer on the Ohio River.

In 1799, Elizabethtown, named in honor of Joseph Tomlinson's wife Elizabeth, was established and laid out. By 1830, Elizabethtown had a population of 300. Moundsville was the second town laid out on the Flats of Grave Creek. On January 28, 1832, Moundsville was established as a town by the Virginia General Assembly.

Moundsville remained very small until February 23, 1866, when Elizabethtown was consolidated into Moundsville by an act of the West Virginia Legislature. Four days earlier, on February 19, 1866, the State Board of Public Works, by an act of the legislature, had been directed to select a site for a penitentiary "in or near Moundsville, Marshall County." The story goes that when the city fathers were asked whether they wanted the state penitentiary or the state university, they chose the prison because it was expected to provide more jobs. The legislature appropriated $50,000 to begin construction.

The prison was built of hand-cut gray sandstone that was quarried at Grafton and Wheeling, and

Convicts were employed at a wide variety of work places within the prison walls, including the tailor shop shown above. The inmate below appears to be admiring doll clothes he has made. Photographers and dates unknown.

Steubenville, Ohio. The construction began in July 1866. The penitentiary was the second new public building in the young state. The first was Weston State Hospital, which opened in 1864.

The prison was an imposing structure. At the front was a central administrative unit, 70 feet by 70 feet and four stories high. Attached to this were two wings, or cell buildings, 180 feet by 150 feet each. They were called North Hall and South Hall.

Ten acres of ground belonged to the prison, and five acres were initially enclosed by a stone wall four feet thick at the base and tapering to two feet at the top. On each of the four corners of the wall is a tower, or turret, where guards were stationed. A walkway 42 inches wide goes along the top of the wall.

Over the years, nearby farmland was purchased until the state owned nearly 250 acres. Convicts worked for their keep. In the decades after the Civil War, the penitentiary reflected the state's predominantly rural, agrarian way of life. The penal institution guaranteed inmates a life of hard physical labor for the duration of their sentences.

A report from that era notes that in September 1874 the state penitentiary had its own "blacksmith

and wagon shops, carpenter shop, brickyard, stoneyard, paint shop, shoe shop, and tailor shop." Prisoners also worked in the kitchen, stables and wash house.

The prison's population was listed as 99 that year. Crimes against property accounted for 72 of the inmates, the other 27 having committed "crimes against persons." By 1874, the daily cost per prisoner had been reduced to less than 16 cents.

During this early period, surplus convict labor was sold to private businesses in the vicinity of the prison. "Labor contracts yielded an income of $23,493 for the State ending September 30, 1890," records for that year indicate, for example. This controversial practice continued into the next century.

By 1890 there were 296 convicts confined to 279 cells at the prison. The salary of the chief administrative officer, then called the superintendent, was $1,500 a year.

In 1909, the land on which the prehistoric Grave Creek Mound stands was purchased by the State of West Virginia. The penitentiary is located near the mound, and the warden had an ample supply of labor with which to maintain the property at no cost to the state. Since that year, the mound has been maintained by inmates who work outside the prison walls.

Records show that from 1911 to the time of World War I, prison population hovered around 1,000. The convicts were not a burden on the taxpayers. In the 1916 *West Virginia Legislative Handbook*, Warden M. Z. White states that "for a number of years no appropriations have been needed, as the proceeds of prison labor have been more than sufficient to meet all expenses at the institution."

Joseph W. McCoy, commissioner of the West Virginia Department of Corrections from 1977 to 1986 and now a professor at Marshall University in Huntington, confirms that the prison was largely self-supporting in its early years. Prison industries, the farm, and later even a coal mine, all contributed. Consequently, the legislature appropriated only a nominal amount to run the institution, said McCoy.

In the 1917 *Legislative Handbook*, Warden White described how a new prisoner was processed at the penitentiary and, after six months of good behavior, received his prison uniform of "cadet gray." An inmate was then assigned to one of the prison factories and "was required to work nine hours every day, except Saturday afternoon, Sunday and holidays," states White.

At that time, 700 inmates out of a total of 942 worked in the prison factories. The warden explained that a prisoner earned money for the state and for himself.

White wrote that when a prisoner was released, he was given a new outfit of civilian clothes and, if it

MICHAEL KELLER

The new State Penitentiary at Mt. Olive, Fayette County.

Moving Out

The State Penitentiary at Moundsville closed its doors for good this spring, and the State of West Virginia was faced with moving hundreds of men to a replacement facility. One hundred and ninety inmates had already moved during July and August 1994 to the newly built Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility in Moundsville, and in late March the last of the prison's remaining inmates boarded a one-way bus to their new home at Mt. Olive.

The new $60 million Mt. Olive Correctional Complex is located on 120 acres seven miles up Cannelton Hollow from the Kanawha River on a Fayette County hilltop. The 800-bed facility has a 100-foot observation tower which provides guards with a bird's-eye view of the grounds. Armed guards patrol the perimeter of the new prison, and they are "riding the fence 24 hours a day," according to Deputy Warden Howard Painter. He goes on to explain that inside the facility the officers are not armed, but there are plenty of firearms on site should the need arise.

Inmates were moved in small groups and because of security the travel route wasn't announced. In all, the inmates had to ride more than 200 miles on buses. The bus doors were locked, and prisoners wore orange jumpsuits, handcuffs, and leg shackles.

After the inmates left, there was still plenty to do at Moundsville. "There's a lot more to it than just locking doors and turning out the lights, " said Col. Dennis Eisenhauer, director of operations. Property must be moved or stored, the electricity shut off, and water and sewer pipes drained. Although the State Supreme Court found the conditions there to be "unconstitutionally antiquated" in 1986, the Moundsville prison is still an impressive structure. Many West Virginians who have come to know it from the outside hope that the old penitentiary can be renovated and put to some good use again.

— Debby Sonis Jackson

This ballpark had a good fence. This early 1940's photo shows Warden M.E. Ketchum (right) with the prison's Red Sox baseball team. Photographer unknown.

was winter, an overcoat. Transportation was paid back to the county from which he was sent, and a cash advance of three dollars was provided. He also received the money that he had saved from working in the prison factories.

The prison had a large chapel; "attendance was compulsory," wrote Warden White. There also was a night school and a library with 7,000 volumes as well as a large number of magazines. White states that some 2,000 newspapers were delivered to the inmates monthly.

The warden explained that the state owned in connection with the prison a 212-acre farm with both pastureland for grazing cattle and bottomland for crops and gardening. The prison factories manufactured "whips, brooms, shirts and pants," states White. The prison had its own cold storage and ice plant, bakery, storeroom, laundry, power plant, incinerating plant, print shop, carpentry and blacksmith shop, greenhouse, and a tailoring shop where all of the inmates' clothing was made.

During the last annual reporting period the prison had turned over a profit of $100,000 to the state treasury, according to White's 1917 report. But by the following year, the prison was no longer self-supporting and required a $5,000 appropriation to meet expenses. In 1920, a coal mine, located on the nearby farm, began production and furnished all of the coal required for the institution. The mine continued in operation as late as the mid-1960's.

"I figure that if they got out of there the last thing they would want to do is stay around here."

Former corrections commissioner McCoy figures that in addition to convicts, the prison mine probably had professional miners working there. "The state couldn't just turn loose a bunch of untrained inmates to dig coal," McCoy commented. He added that the mine was in operation before the existence of strict federal mine safety regulations.

Moundsville convicts have also done a little unofficial tunneling, McCoy acknowledges. He explains that down through the years there have been several escapes and attempted escapes under the prison's walls. As recently as 1991, inmates dug a 180-foot tunnel under the wall before they were spotted by a perimeter guard as they emerged from their hole, said McCoy.

In the early 1920's, prison population almost doubled from 800 to more than 1,500. According to the annual *West Virginia Blue Book*, by the late 1930's there were more than 2,700 inmates at the prison, including 75 to 80 women.

In 1939, in order to relieve overcrowding at Moundsville, a medium security prison was established at Huttonsville, south of Elkins in Randolph County. A farm of more than 3,000 acres was established in connection with the Huttonsville prison.

The prison coal mine and tipple, with adjoining engine house. This complex was located on the prison farm. Photographer and date unknown.

In 1941, M. E. Ketchum, a career law enforcement officer from Wayne County, was appointed warden at Moundsville. Ketchum was well liked and respected among the inmates. In interviews for a 1989 GOLDENSEAL article, Ketchum's sons Chad and Dorsey recalled that their father walked freely and unarmed among the convicts in the prison yard and would sit down and eat with them.

Joseph McCoy, now a Marshall University professor, is a former Commissioner of Corrections. He says criminals knew the old penitentiary as "a tough joint." Photo by Michael Keller.

During the Ketchum years, the penitentiary was enlarged, with a new cell wing added. A new infirmary and sports field were completed. Ketchum improved working conditions at the mine and the farm. Proper diet and better food were instituted. A women's prison was established at Pence Springs, Summers County, in 1947, Ketchum's last year as warden, and about 70 female inmates were transferred there [GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1990]. Ketchum was the last warden to live in the apartment at the front of the prison, said daughter Harriet.

In the late 1940's, a significant change in the administration of the death penalty took place under Ketchum's successor, Warden O. J. Skeen. According to an historical marker posted along Jefferson Avenue in front of the penitentiary, inmates

Touring the Penitentiary

During June people are invited to tour the West Virginia State Penitentiary at Moundsville. The West Virginia Chapter of the Southern States Correctional Association is sponsoring bus tours to the former prison in Marshall County. The round-trip includes lunch, an afternoon tour and dinner, for $40 per person. At the prison visitors may see sites of famous escapes, weapon displays, inmate art and the North Hall where incorrigible inmates were held.

Buses are departing from various locations in West Virginia and tours will run on a limited number of days through June 30. For exact dates and departure times call the Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility at (304)843-4067 in Moundsville or the Division of Corrections at (304)558-2036 in Charleston.

The north wagon gate was one of the oldest parts of the historic penitentiary. It appears to be undergoing repairs in this undated photograph from prison files. Photographer unknown.

"We've lived here all our lives and never been scared," said Veronica Pollock, shown here with her husband Charles on their front steps in Moundsville. Photo by Michael Keller.

who had been convicted of capital crimes had been hanged there from 1889 to 1950.

Larry L. Skeen, Warden Skeen's son and now a Jackson County lawyer, recently wrote to me concerning capital punishment at Moundsville: "My father was in fact the last warden who supervised an execution by hanging and was also the moving force in obtaining an electric chair for the prison for use in lieu of hanging, which my father found to be quite inhumane. As I recall, not having any money available to the prison to afford an electric chair, my father took a prisoner to the Ohio State Prison at Columbus to look at their electric chair, and the prisoner then constructed a home-made electric chair for use at the Moundsville prison. Needless to say, he was not very popular after that construction project."

Over the years, there have been stories that lights in Moundsville or at the prison "flickered and dimmed" during an electrocution. Dorothy Klonsick grew up near the prison and lived in her grandmother's boardinghouse across from the prison entrance. "I can still remember how the light would flicker and go dim whenever they had an execution," Mrs. Klonsick said in a 1978 Huntington *Advertiser* story.

She recalled women crying on the street in front of the boardinghouse. "'They were the mothers and wives of the men who were being executed,' she said. 'They would sit on our front porch and watch the lights go dim,'" according to the newspaper story.

But Larry Skeen, who with his brother had lived in Moundsville when their father was warden, states that the prison "operated its own generator powered by coal mined by the prisoners at the state mine outside Moundsville." Neither he nor his brother recall the lights flickering during an electrocution.

A review of annual *Blue Books* finds that in the 1950's, prison population was in the 1,200 to 1,600 range. During those years, a new wing was built to add 640 cells and relieve some of the overcrowding.

The *Blue Books* also report that during the '50's and '60's, prison industries produced such commodities as denim and khaki work clothes, soap, detergents, mattresses, pillows, "chewing and smoking tobacco individually packaged," paint, and signs of all types as well. A printing shop made business cards, forms, letterhead stationery, and of course license plates. These products were never sold out

Those making a run for the hills found company waiting outside the gate. Photographer and date unknown.

of state or on the open market but were available to state agencies and to West Virginia city and county governments.

In 1965, the State Legislature abolished the death penalty, thereby making relics of the penitentiary's gallows and electric chair.

By the 1970's prison population had declined from more than 1,600 in the early 1960's to the 600 to 700 range. These figures included inmate trusties who lived and worked at the prison farm.

In 1979, there was an escape of 14 prisoners who broke out through the front gate. Later, one escapee shot and killed an off-duty state trooper. Following an escape in 1985 and a riot in January 1986, the population of the aging institution was capped at 575 inmates in July 1986.

Joe McCoy, who ran the institution on several occasions during some of its most turbulent times, states that no prison is escape proof but that the old state pen had a formidable reputation. He says that among the criminal classes, both inside and outside, the West Virginia Penitentiary was known as a "tough joint." And McCoy has nothing but praise for the people of Moundsville. "They have been very supportive, concerned and patient," he says.

Charles and Veronica Pollock would fall into that category. They live across the street from the prison. In a June 1994 interview, Mrs. Pollock said, "I hate to see them close it down, but you know, we always had the black name of being called 'the prison town.'"

Over the years, there have been stories that lights in Moundsville or at the prison flickered and dimmed during an electrocution.

The Pollocks witnessed the 1979 escape in which 14 inmates broke through the front gate and the 1986 riot that left three inmates dead. "We've sat on the porch and watched them come down off the wall with bedsheets tied together," Mrs. Pollock recalled.

"We've lived here all our lives and have never been scared. We were never worried one bit," she said. "When they get out of there, brother, they go for the hills. They don't stay around here."

The Pollocks said that inmates kept up with residents around the prison. "They knew when I got up, they knew when I went to work, when I came home," said Mr. Pollock, a former electrician at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. "They knew everything."

"They knew about every family on this street," Mrs. Pollock added. "If you went out, they would call you by name and call your children by name.

"It didn't bother me. I knew they were in there. There was no way they were going to do any harm to us," she said. "In fact, we talked a lot. We'd ask them how they were. Didn't ask what they did. It was just one human being to another. You can always say a kind word."

When Hollywood Came to Moundsville

Filming Davis Grubb's *Fools' Parade*

By Camilla Bunting
Photographs by Michael Keller

"I've called Moundsville by several names: Adena, Elizabethtown, and Glory," said writer Davis Grubb in an interview nearly 20 years ago. "I've called it several names because it is several places to me. Moundsville is every city I've ever known, in a way."

Grubb, author of ten novels and more than 50 short stories, grew up there. Though he later lived in Clarksburg, Philadelphia and New York, he made Moundsville the setting for many of his stories. Twenty-five years ago this year his novel, *Fools' Parade*, was made into a movie, and the filming took place in Moundsville. Hollywood came to Moundsville, and this time Moundsville was called Glory.

Grubb's earlier novel, the best-selling *The Night of the Hunter*, was also made into a movie, a 1955 black-and-white thriller starring Robert Mitchum. It, too, was filmed in Moundsville, and in nearby Cresap, although a 1991 made-for-TV version was not. "I just can't think of taking off on any book without a West Virginia base because I can't quite visualize things happening in the world without their happening here," Grubb said.

Andrew McLaglen directs the ***Fools' Parade*** stars on a Moundsville street. They are Strother Martin, Jimmy Stewart, Kurt Russell and George Kennedy. Courtesy Columbia Pictures, ©1971

Though Davis Grubb died in 1980 at the age of 61, he made audio and video recordings in which he talked about his writing and his feelings toward West Virginia. The quotations in this article are taken from a series of 1978 interviews videotaped by the West Virginia Library Commission.

Davis Grubb's family history is rich in West Virginia tradition. His mother's family had owned land on the Ohio River, at Cresap's

This building at 7th and Court, now a law office, became the Merchants Bank of Glory in the movie. Its interior (above) has been left as it was. The ***Fools' Parade*** plot turned around the fine print on a Merchants Bank check, shown here at the teller's window.

Grove, for 200 years. Her father, William Davis Alexander, was a riverboat captain and one of the founders of Moundsville's Mercantile Bank. Grubb's father, Louis, was an architect from a prominent Wheeling family.

Grubb's youth supplied the colorful threads that he would later use to spin his tales. Since Louis Grubb himself had aspired to be a writer, he made certain that sons Davis and Louis had access to good books. "I was exposed to books like I was exposed to good food," said Davis Grubb. His mother took him on a trip from Wheeling to Cincinnati on the steamboat *Queen*

Davis Grubb, shown here in later years, was delighted to come home for the filming. He said it was like a big party. Photo by Alternative Advertising, Clarksburg; courtesy Louis Grubb.

City, an experience he would never forget.

The family visited Lake Chautauqua in New York where Grubb remembered meeting Thomas Edison and John D. Rockefeller I on the same day in August 1927. He found Rockefeller a man of such great dignity that he was "impressed, but terrified." When Mr. Rockefeller handed him a dime, young Grubb was so overwhelmed that he went off into a nearby field and buried it.

After the death of his father, Grubb moved with his mother to Clarksburg. There he saw another side of life, accompanying his mother while she worked as a child-welfare worker during the Depression. Eventually, New York City became his home and writing his career. His short stories appeared in magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers* and *Science Fiction*. His story, "You Never Believe Me," was dramatized on the Alfred Hitchcock show. He moved back home to West Virginia late in life and was working on his 11th novel at the time of his death.

"I write my stories first and foremost for West Virginians," Grubb said in the 1978 interview. "I write about the splendors, horrors, and great humors of our state." Mostly he wrote of the Northern Panhandle, celebrating the area he knew best. In *Fools' Parade*, he says that the Ohio River "lay blazing like a ditch of diamonds beyond the old stooped willows of its shore." He tells how "the violet, orchard-fringed ridges rose humpbacked and shimmering to the east."

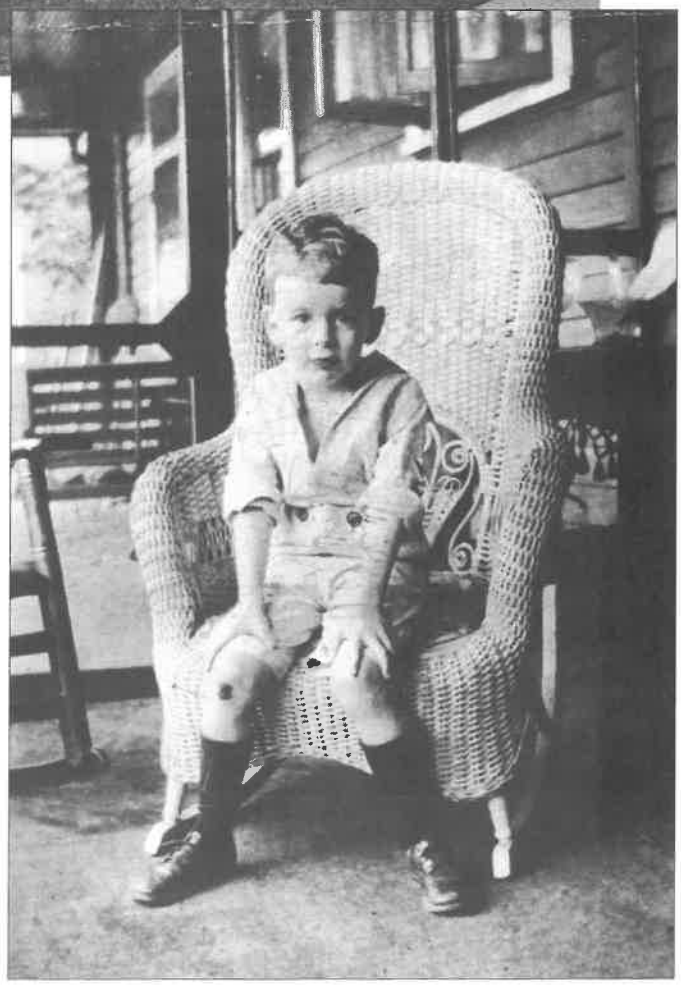
Yet there is also a darker side to Grubb's writing. *The Night of the Hunter* and *Fools' Parade* are novels of suspense. Both begin in the West Virginia State Penitentiary. Grubb's style is powerful, haunting and mystical, even macabre. His characters are complex, few being entirely good or evil. Often the truly good-hearted and insightful are men and women of low repute: those accused and convicted of heinous crimes, those of simple minds or queer habits. Just as often the most despicable characters are found among society's most respected: bankers, doctors, clergymen.

"I never made fun of West Virginia," Grubb said. "I've written about funny people and I've written about dreadful things that happen, but it was always West Virginians doing things to other West Virginians, which distresses me like a fight in my neighborhood block in Moundsville."

And fights were something Davis Grubb understood maybe too well. Delvis Miller, his principal at Central School, once remarked, "I never knew anybody to come in with as many bloody noses as Davis Grubb."

Grubb recalled, "I was a kind of a funny, lonely kid, and never fitted in with the general, you know, the ball-playing thing. I made horrible grades in school, to the disappointment of my father and mother. I came home with my report card just bristling with F's and D's. It looked like a comb sometimes, there were so many F's on it. I was sort of a sore thumb on the hand of the whole town."

Yet, Grubb said these "pluses and minuses" are what helped him be-



Davis Grubb as a youngster (right) and his Moundsville childhood home as it appears today. The skinned knee supports local memories of an active, mischievous boyhood. Most of his fiction was about his hometown in one way or another, Grubb said. Early photographer unknown, courtesy Louis Grubb.

come a writer. "I wouldn't trade my West Virginia childhood for the childhood of a king in some opulent land — because in a way I had that, too. I was the king of a foreign land in my backyard. I was anything I wanted to be — Lon Chaney, Tom Mix, any of the movie stars." In 1970, Davis Grubb returned to his backyard and brought a few movie stars home with him.

Fools' Parade tells the story of three convicts who have just been released from "Glory Prison," loyal friends ready to make a new start. They share a dream — to find a home and run a general store. This dream seems just within reach since the oldest of the three, Mattie Appleyard, while serving 47 years for murder, has saved all of his meager wages in the Prisoners' Work-and-Hope Savings Plan. He now holds the sum total of his savings, a check for $25,452.36, this in the leanest years of the Great Depression.

All Mattie has to do is cash that check. But there's a catch. The small print reads that only the Bank of Glory can cash the check — and the bank has no intention of doing so. Nor can it, since banker Homer Grindstaff has been skimming money from the prisoners' fund for years. So *Fools' Parade* is the story of men fighting for their freedom and their future. It is a story of greed and lust, and unexpected bravery, and of finding love in unlikely places.

The Columbia Pictures film was directed

by Andrew McLaglen. The starring roles were played by Jimmy Stewart, Strother Martin and a young Kurt Russell, portraying the ex-cons Mattie Appleyard, Lee Cottrill and Johnny Jesus, respectively. George Kennedy played the sinister captain of the prison guards, Uncle Doc Council. Also appearing in the film were Anne Baxter, William Windom and Wheeling native Morgan Paull. Movie stars, producers and directors, crew members, stunt men, old steam locomotives — all in Moundsville for four whole weeks. "It was all like a big, wonderful party," remembered Grubb.

I spoke with some residents who remember the filming. Was it exciting, like a party, as Mr. Grubb said?

"Oh yes," says Kate McNinch, who signed on to be an extra in the movie. "People were there all the time; we would go down and watch them shoot scenes." Mrs. Julia Hummel, manager of the concession stand at the drive-in theater at the time, says she didn't go around much at first, but soon became curious as "everyone kept talking about the movie, the movie."

"People could sign up for a part," says Hugh Buzzard, "They were thrilled."

Miss Mary Hubbs, now 85 years old, was a teacher at Central School which lies across the street from the Marshall County Courthouse, where much of the filming took place. "I remember one day my little third graders were out on the playground and Jimmy Stewart and the others came over and shook hands with them. They were just so excited."

Did Miss Hubbs watch the filming? "My land, yes," she laughed. "Town had never had anything like that happen before."

So just what happens when Hollywood comes to town? On September 1, the *Moundsville Daily Echo* announced that there were 1,000 applications for parts to be filled locally. A Moundsville resident, the late W. D. "Pete" Morris, was the agent in charge of coordinating local talent. "I didn't know Moundsville had so many actors," someone said, as hundreds of residents came to apply.

The *Wheeling News-Register* cov-

"Westbound to Parkersburg"

The Opening Scene from *Fools' Parade*

By Davis Grubb

At the opening of Fools' Parade, *prison guard Uncle Doc Council has just delivered three newly released prisoners to the Glory, West Virginia, train station. "The westbound to Parkersburg is due in thirty-nine minutes," he tells them. "When it leaves you will be on it."*

The following excerpt reproduces the first few pages of the novel, and closely parallels the corresponding scene in the movie. George Kennedy played Council in the film version, and Jimmy Stewart was Mattie Appleyard.

It was a late afternoon of savage bottomlands heat in the April of 1935. Johnny Jesus stood between his two companions, leaning back against a high baggage wagon on the warped bricks of the depot landing and facing the big, moon-faced gunman.

The sun stood halfway down the west sky above the Ohio River which lay blazing like a ditch of diamonds beyond the old stooped willows of its shore. To the east stood the town of Glory, West Virginia, and beyond it the violet, orchard-fringed ridges rose humpbacked and shimmering. No wind stirred. Yet, from time to time — like the hide of a field horse beneath a cloud of stinging flies — the Appalachian light seemed to twitch.

Five eyes watched* Uncle Doc Council's fat forefinger dig a ninety-eight cent watch out of his stomach and hold it up on a braided leather thong to check its time against the scrolled hands above the stationmaster's quartered window. Uncle Doc's amiable round face turned to look at the three of them again and the light on the lenses of his spectacles flashed like army heliographs. When he spoke his words were distinct but the voice was soft as the sound of mud daubers up amongst the jigsaw shadows of the lichen-stained depot walls. Like an animal trainer, Uncle Doc had cultivated that voice through his years as captain of guards at the state prison.

"Now then, each one of you has got him a brand-new state-free suit and a state-free hat and a state-free pair of shoes. I mean those are gratis gifts from the State of West Virginia —."

Uncle Doc was one of those humped, huge men who, beneath a cloak of paunch, are cat-swift as dainty dancers and hard as sacked salt. He wore his loose, poky suit of slate-gray alpaca with the sleeves rolled halfway up the freckled beef of his hairless forearms — arms which seemed not to have wrists at all and his hands were the kind which still seem like fists even when the fingers are opened.

"—Reach in the right-hand coat pocket and you'll find a brand-new five dollar bill. Reach in the left and find seven cents carfare. Besides them gratis gifts from the state, each man of you has got a state-free B&O coach ticket in his hip pocket— ."

He had the flat, benign countenance of a Sunday School teacher which,

*Only five eyes watch Uncle Doc because Mattie lost one of his in a long-ago mining accident. The homemade replacement, a wooden eye with a name and personality of its own, is popped out from time to time in a fortune-telling ritual. — ed.

in fact, he was: on his right lapel shone the bright brass button of Christian Endeavor.

"—Your prison release papers is in your coat pockets. They're in order—."

Beneath the pink roll of his third chin a bone stud shone at the gathering of his dingy, collarless shirt. Perched high on his pale bald head he wore a broken brimmed Panama straw hat while on his tiny feet shone the startling white canvas of his ball-brand tennis shoes. Uncle Doc's feet commonly hurt him. He used up six or eight pair of Keds every summer because he never kept them after they got grass-stained or dirty.

"—The westbound to Parkersburg is due in thirty-nine minutes. It'll pull out of this depot in forty-two minutes. When it leaves you will be on it."

He stopped short, shifting the chew to his tight right cheek while the lenses slowly ranged the three of them, settling at last on the old man. Mattie Appleyard: once miner, once murderer in a time beyond recall of any save himself and state archive: one-eyed mountainman from Hampshire County; craggy-browed, towering and white-haired beneath the hand-me-down child's-sized hat — a tall man toppled in somehow upon his very height yet holding, erect and proud-mouthed. He smiled faintly, thoughtful, staring at his new paper shoes.

Fools' Parade opens with three ex-cons, just released from the West Virginia State Penitentiary, waiting for their train. Uncle Doc Council (George Kennedy) stands by with his shotgun. Courtesy Columbia Pictures, ©1971.

"Mattie, they tell me up at the prison you got a certified check in your coat pocket. They say it's for better than twenty-five thousand dollars."

Uncle Doc did not smile.

"That's a good deal of money," he said.

And still did not smile, though some movement that might have been a chuckle stirred deep beneath his buckled paunch.

"What's a man have to do in Glory Prison to get a lot of money like that, Mattie?"

"Forty-seven years, Captain."

ered the sign-ups, which took place on the courthouse lawn. The chosen actors and actresses were instructed not to wear sideburns or fancy hair-do's. Later that week Mr. Morris asked for more men to apply, but said there were already "enough women for several movies."

By September 21, filming had begun. "Jimmy Stewart Arrested Here," headlined the *Echo*, also showing a picture from that day's shooting at the train depot. The cast and crew stayed in Wheeling and drove down to Moundsville during the day. Lunches were served on the courthouse lawn. The local Welcome Wagon hostess presented Stewart with the customary gifts for newcomers.

There were more parts to fill. The late Kitty Doepken, then columnist for the *News-Register*, was asked to fill the need for a "large middle-aged female" to appear in crowd scenes. She wrote in her column that she was "Dee-lighted." Director McLaglen called her "the Auntie Mame of the Mountains."

Pete Morris asked Julia Hummel if she'd like the part of a jail matron. "I thought he was kidding at first," she says. She was told to get a black skirt and black shoes, and that she would be provided with a grey blouse and badge. "Funny thing, the night before I had gotten rid of some old clothes. I had to go and dig that skirt out of the trash." Kate McNinch remembers being taken to one of two big trailers to receive her 1930's-style costumes. "You walked in and there were just all kinds of clothes," she recalls. For their work, local actors were paid $16 a day, $12.65 after taxes.

Taking 1970 Moundsville back to the 1930's was relatively easy. Hugh Buzzard told me, "One reason they did the filming here was because so little had changed in appearance." The penitentiary had been around since before Davis Grubb was born, and the same courthouse stood in the center of town. The train station remained unchanged. The fact that it badly needed a coat of paint only made it more believable. For the filming, Andrew McLaglen needed a small, old town in a hilly terrain, a winding river, and railroad tracks. Davis Grubb told him

Getting Some Grubb

Davis Grubb's *Fools' Parade* is one of GOLDENSEAL's favorite West Virginia stories.

The novel, published in 1969 by The New American Library, is out of print but widely available in public libraries across the state. Also check out Grubb's masterpiece, the 1953 suspense novel *The Night of the Hunter*, while there.

The movie version of *Fools' Parade* was released by Columbia Pictures in 1971. Though it is no longer in distribution, the West Virginia Library Commission has a copy available through public libraries statewide. The videotape includes a short documentary, *On Location With Fools' Parade*, about the making of the movie in Moundsville.

In his lifetime Davis Grubb published better than a dozen novels and books of short stories, most now out of print. Look at the library for *A Dream of Kings*, *The Golden Sickle*, *A Tree Full of Stars*, *The Voices of Glory*, *The Watchman*, and *You Never Believe Me and Other Stories*, a collection of short stories. Books still in print and available in bookstores include *The Night of the Hunter*, *Twelve Tales of Suspense and the Supernatural*, *Ancient Lights*, *Barefoot Man*, *Shadow of My Brother*, and *The Siege of 318*.

Davis Grubb, courtesy West Virginia Library Commission.

Most of Grubb's novels and stories are set in thinly fictionalized West Virginia locations, particularly his Northern Panhandle home country.

he could find all of these together in one place — Moundsville, West Virginia.

But just as the actors were costumed to suit the period, so Moundsville was altered here and there. Trains now stopped at "Glory" station. Set designers went to work inside the vacant Marshall County Bank building, and soon it was taken back to 1935. Its new name — "The Merchants Bank of Glory."

An auto parts store became the "Brakeman's Bide-A-While," advertising Iron City Beer. Filmmakers paid local antique car owners for the use of their cars; one soon bore the seal of "Glory Penitentiary." A houseboat was constructed on the riverbank. "Iron Horse Heard Again," the *Echo* boasted on Setpember 24, as a retired steam locomotive rolled into town for filming. Lightning flashed, thunder roared, and rain poured, all on a clear night, thanks to weather-making simulators, delighting a crowd of spectators.

Movie stars hardly go unnoticed in a small town like Moundsville. There was lots of picture taking and autograph signing. Everyone I spoke with, who had some involvement in the filming, had met James Stewart personally and spoke of him fondly. On the other hand, all freely added that Anne Baxter never came out of her trailer except to work. "Not even when Neubauer's Florist sent flowers," recalls Kate McNinch.

Harriet Rittenhouse liked to go and watch the filming. She remembers that, "Jimmy Stewart and George Kennedy could walk right down the street and not get mobbed. People just kind of took it in stride." To Bill McNinch, former owner of McNinch Hardware, it meant a little extra business. "We had a cold snap come through, and one day they came down and bought every space heater I had, I think about 15 in all."

On October 20, Davis Grubb arrived. He stayed with Hugh and Frederica Buzzard in their home on Fifth Street. Those who awaited the return of a man remembered for his peculiar ways were not disappointed. No one claims to understand Grubb, and no one speaks of him without it bringing a smile to their face, or some hearty laughter.

"Have you heard that he brought his dog here in a taxi all the way from New York City?" chuckles Bill McNinch. "Everyone was talking about that."

I had heard. On video Davis Grubb recalled, "I came down and created something of a legend, a joke anyway — I didn't mean to — by bringing my small dog, Rowdy Charlie, with me in a taxi cab." Grubb explained that he wanted to give his dog the chance to "sniff around" the place he recalled from childhood. "It cost me $700 to get him down here in a cab and back."

Brother Louis Grubb recently shed some light on the costly cab ride, explaining that the airline had refused to sell an extra seat for Charlie and that Davis was unwilling to put his dog in the cargo hold.

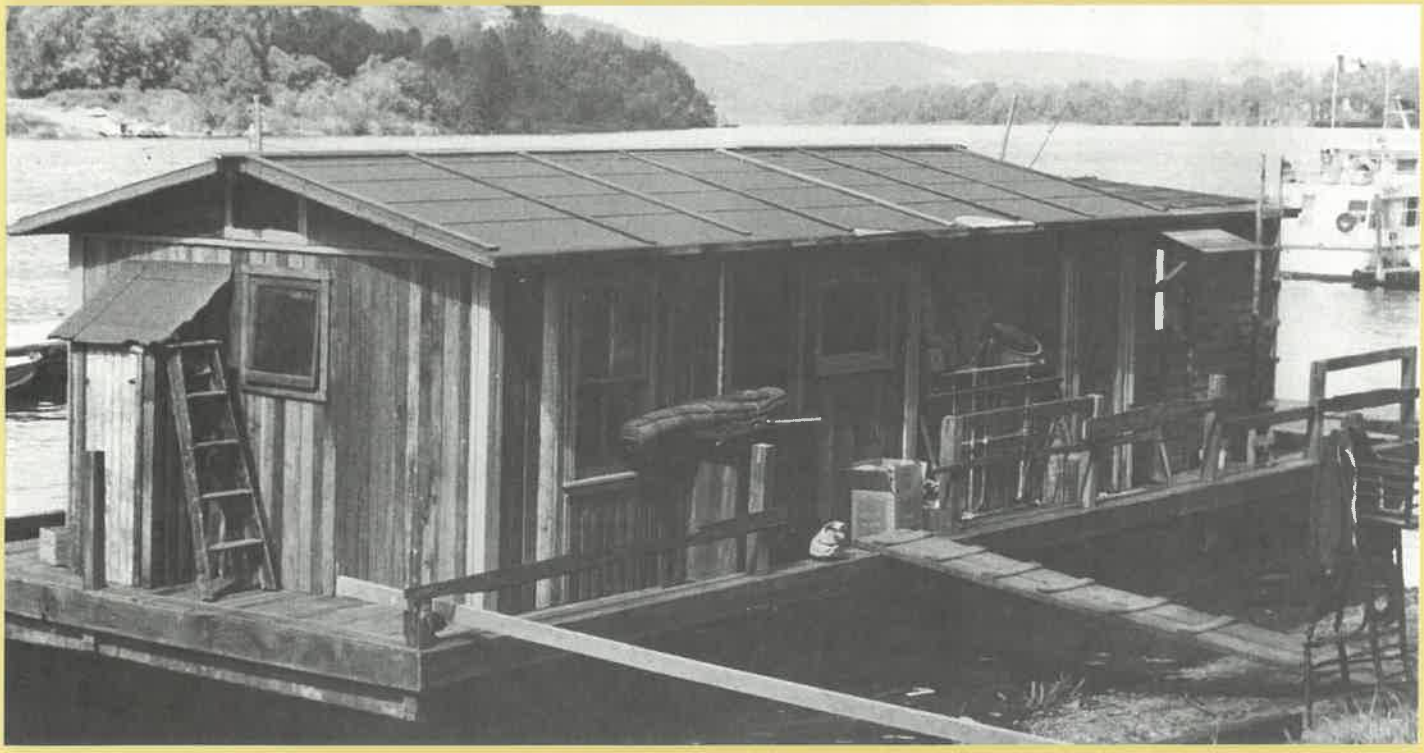
Davis Grubb kept Hugh and Freddie Buzzard busy during his week with them, staying up late at night, drinking Pepsis all morning. "He did a lot of reminiscing. He was eccentric, you might say, set in his ways, sort of like a fussy old maid. But he was also very considerate. One afternoon I watched him stand for a long time and sign autographs until he had signed for everyone that wanted one," Hugh Buzzard recalls.

Whatever the people of Moundsville think of Davis Grubb's antics, they do read his books. The Marshall County Library copies are well-worn, with the names of local sites underlined or circled.

"Yes, I've read his books," says Mary Hubbs. "Some of them I like, and some I don't. I don't like the gruesome ones. My favorite is the one about the Christmas tree." Bill and Kate McNinch say that they

GLORY

Moundsville was transformed in details big and small, from repainting the depot sign (top) to transforming a local business into a fictitious beer joint. The houseboat was built for the movie then blown to pieces. Bide-A-While and boat photos by Charlie Walton.



own all Grubb's books.

Mrs. McNinch adds, "He used a lot of local names. We can pick out the people, like in *Voices of Glory*, we know who they were copied and modeled after." Mary Hubbs agrees. "There was one woman here who was a health nurse. She was a spitfire, she could just tell them all off. I recognized her in the books."

By October 21, filming was coming to a close. The "rushes," the early, unedited segments of the movie, were flown back to Hollywood. "Indeed not!" replied Pete Morris when the faraway previewers asked if the Ohio River had been died blue, or the leaves on the trees painted in order to enhance scenic shots. The last day of filming was by far the most dramatic. Onlookers gathered as the houseboat, constructed just a few weeks earlier, was destroyed in a giant explosion.

Governor Arch Moore attended the farewell dinner, held at the National Guard Armory. "Glory Days Dinner" consisted of a solid country meal of beans, cornbread, and apples, topped off with various presentations and one last chance to get autographs. Jimmy Stewart said he'd never forget the warmth and friendliness he had experienced in Moundsville. George Kennedy added, "Anyone would be happy to have a home among people who have been so friendly and courteous as you have been to us." In June of 1971, *Fools' Parade* opened with a gala premiere at the Court Theater in nearby Wheeling.

Today few public remnants of the filming remain. The iron-barred teller's windows, built for the "Merchants Bank of Glory" create an unusual decor in what is now a private office building. Framed movie bills are displayed in the West Virginia room of the library, and the depot signs for "Glory" and "Hannibal Junction" now hang outside the Alpine Tavern. Owner John Young says the signs were there when he bought the building, and he's left them there for conversation's sake. "People notice them and remember the film," he says. But there's no "Davis Grubb Avenue," no "Glory Cafe."

Have there been any lasting effects on Moundsville?

"Well, the movie is shown on the late show now and then, and people talk about it before and after," comments Hugh Buzzard. Otherwise all agreed that life in Moundsville soon went back to normal. Many here never saw Davis Grubb again. "They pretty much up and left, and that was that," says Kate McNinch.

Hollywood came, and Moundsville became Glory. Everyone had a good time. An old friend came home to visit. Then Hollywood left, and Glory became Moundsville once again.

Movie Reunion Planned

Moundsville plans to mark the 25th anniversary of the filming of *Fools' Parade* with a reunion of some of the film's principal players and local people who worked on the movie. The *Fools' Parade* reunion is set for October 12th - 14th. Director Andrew McLaglen has been contacted as well as Kurt Russell, William Windom, and George Kennedy. "We are trying to get as many people back as possible," reunion committee member Bruce Mosa says.

Reunion activities include a parade, an antique car show, and a showing of the movie *Fools' Parade* at the Strand Theater on 5th and Jefferson Streets. For more information contact Sue Daugherty at (304)845-5722.

Jimmy Stewart dressed up when he came back to town to cash his check. With a dynamite corset and a Marsh Wheeling stogie, he was not a man to be messed with. Courtesy Columbia Pictures, © 1971.

A vanload of patrons rolls into the Grafton Drive-In on a humid night last August. Photos © Carl E. Feather 1994.

A Passion for the Drive-In

1950's Institution Alive and Well at Grafton

Text and Photographs by Carl E. Feather

Jim Henderson toggled between the football game and the Weather Channel while he finished dressing for work on a humid Saturday afternoon last August. Gathered around the television set was the entire Henderson family — Jim, wife Mary Ruth, son Jeff and daughter-in-law Christy — to monitor the movement of a thunderstorm across the Mountain State. At 4:00 p.m., the storm was pelting Parkersburg with heavy rain. Would it bypass Clarksburg — and their community, Grafton?

"This is crunch time," Jim said, lacing up his shoes. "The next couple of hours will determine if we do a $5,000 night or nothing."

Jim and Mary Ruth are drive-in theater owners, a dwindling breed in West Virginia and across the nation. Their livelihood depends upon beating the odds that weather, Hollywood, and an ever-changing public stack against them.

Many other operators closed their

Once inside, tailgates open and lawn chairs and blankets appear. The screen brightens as daylight dims.

theaters in the 1970's and 1980's. In 1954 there were 76 drive-in theaters in West Virginia. Today, there are only a dozen or so active outdoor screens — and their numbers continue to fall. Through a combination of devotion, hard work, perseverance and a little luck, Jim and Mary Ruth are succeeding.

The Hendersons have owned and operated the Grafton Drive-In on U.S. Route 119 since 1983. Located a couple miles north of the Route 50 intersection, the drive-in's fluorescent sign, 1950's-style ticket booth, and 30-by-72-foot screen catch the unsuspecting motorist by surprise. Travel the road at night, and the sight of Eddie Murphy or Fred Flintstone cavorting along the side of a hill is startling.

One reason for the Hendersons' success is that their home and business are the same. They live in a house that overlooks the manicured field where gray speaker boxes bloom on metal stalks. Mary Ruth can look out her kitchen window and watch the movie while she's doing dishes.

Not that there's much time for that. Usually Mary Ruth watches the movies from the concession stand counter where she, Christy, Jeff, Donna Myers and Amy Snyder serve up mountains of popcorn and rivers of soft drinks.

Travel the road at night, and the sight of Eddie Murphy or Fred Flintstone cavorting along the side of a hill is startling.

Jim spends his summer nights at the family's *other* drive-in, the Sunset Theater, which he and Mary DeAngelis of Morgantown lease from Anthony Ellis. Located on Route 19 between Shinnston and Clarksburg, The Sunset is a 45-minute drive from The Grafton. The two operations complement each other and provide area residents with a nostalgic entertainment option which most of us have lost.

The two drive-ins are all that remain of a once healthy crop of outdoor movie theaters that grew in this part of the state. "At one time, within a 20-mile radius, there were 25 theaters," said Junior Armstrong, Mary Ruth's brother and the projectionist for The Grafton. "Now there's only two. They've all went by the wayside."

The Grafton and The Sunset might have fallen by the wayside as well if it were not for the simple fact they make money. "I like it, but if it wasn't making money, believe you me, it would be a flea market or something else," Jim said. "It would be just like all the others."

The Hendersons' tenacity in the drive-in theater business has been aided by their other ventures — the Capri Pizza Parlor, in downtown Grafton; the Manos, an indoor movie theater next to the Capri; and Giovanni's, a Morgantown pizza shop they co-own with Mary DeAngelis.

The businesses support each other. The Capri supplies pizzas for drive-in patrons and pays the bills when the movie is rained out. The Manos opens when The Grafton closes. In April, the "closed" sign goes up at the Manos and moviegoers know to head north to The Grafton.

Jim bought The Grafton at a time when drive-ins were already being razed in favor of parking lots, office buildings and auto auctions. But he saw advantages in owning the only two motion picture theaters in Taylor County. Drive-ins are hurt by competition from indoor theaters in the same market area, often having to wait for a first-run film to finish playing in the indoor houses before it can run outdoors. But in Taylor County, Jim Henderson himself is his only competition.

Jim's lifelong association with the theater and its prior owners, John and Mary DeAngelis, sealed his future in the business long before he wrote the check to pur-

It's a different field in the light of day. These are the follks in charge: Jim and Mary Ruth Henderson, with son Jeff and his wife, Christy.

chase The Grafton. Jim said the Summers family, who were associated with the Compton Coal Company of Clarksburg, had the theater built in 1949 on farmland. Virgis Summers operated the theater for several years, lost interest in it and put it up for sale in 1953.

Jim has but one memory of The Grafton's early days. "I just remember that the people who had it had three beautiful girls," he said. "They always laid on top of the projection booth and got a suntan."

John and Mary DeAngelis were visiting relatives in Grafton when they noticed the local drive-in was for sale. They bought it and moved down from the Northern Panhandle town of Follansbee.

The DeAngelises were already experienced drive-in theater operators. In 1949, they had built The Blue Moon in Wellsburg. They sold out to their partner a couple years later and built a second theater, The Ohio Valley, in nearby Follansbee. Neither drive-in remains today.

"I loved the theater business, so I got my husband interested in it," Mary recently said. "I had just always loved that since I was a kid. I used to walk by the ticket booth of the theater and say to myself, 'I am going to own a theater someday.'"

John and Mary had just sold The Ohio Valley when they came across the Grafton Drive-In. They fell in love with it and made it their home and livelihood for the next three decades. It was a good husband-and-wife operation. "My husband and I worked together all those years," said Mary. "He always took care of the maintenance and I took care of the snack bar, booking the films and advertising."

Mary said she can't remember a bad year in the business. "To me, it never was work," she said.

John and Mary added more parking spots and doubled the size of the screen soon after they purchased The Grafton. "At that time, Cinemascope had just come out," she said. "The big pictures were in Cinemascope, so you had to do what you had to do to get the big movies."

The theater could hold between 250 and 260 cars. Mary said there were many nights in the 1950's that patrons had to be turned away because there was no more room. This was in spite of a seven-day-a-week schedule that ran from early spring to Thanksgiving.

To encourage attendance during the week, drive-ins used a number of promotions, from bingo games to giveaways for the first 100 patrons. On weekends, there was no need to entice patrons with games or gifts. The low admission, 50 cents a person, and lack of competition from television made the drive-in attractive. "That was cheap entertainment," Mary said. "And there was nothing else to do."

It was cheap for the operator as well, in those days. Mary recalls paying only $12.50 to rent a feature film for the weekend. A cartoon added $5 to the bill.

Mary DeAngelis and her husband previously owned The Grafton, and they gave Jim Henderson his first job in the business. Our photographer caught Mary in Giovanni's in Morgantown, a joint venture with the Hendersons.

Going to the Drive-In

Photoessay by Michael Keller

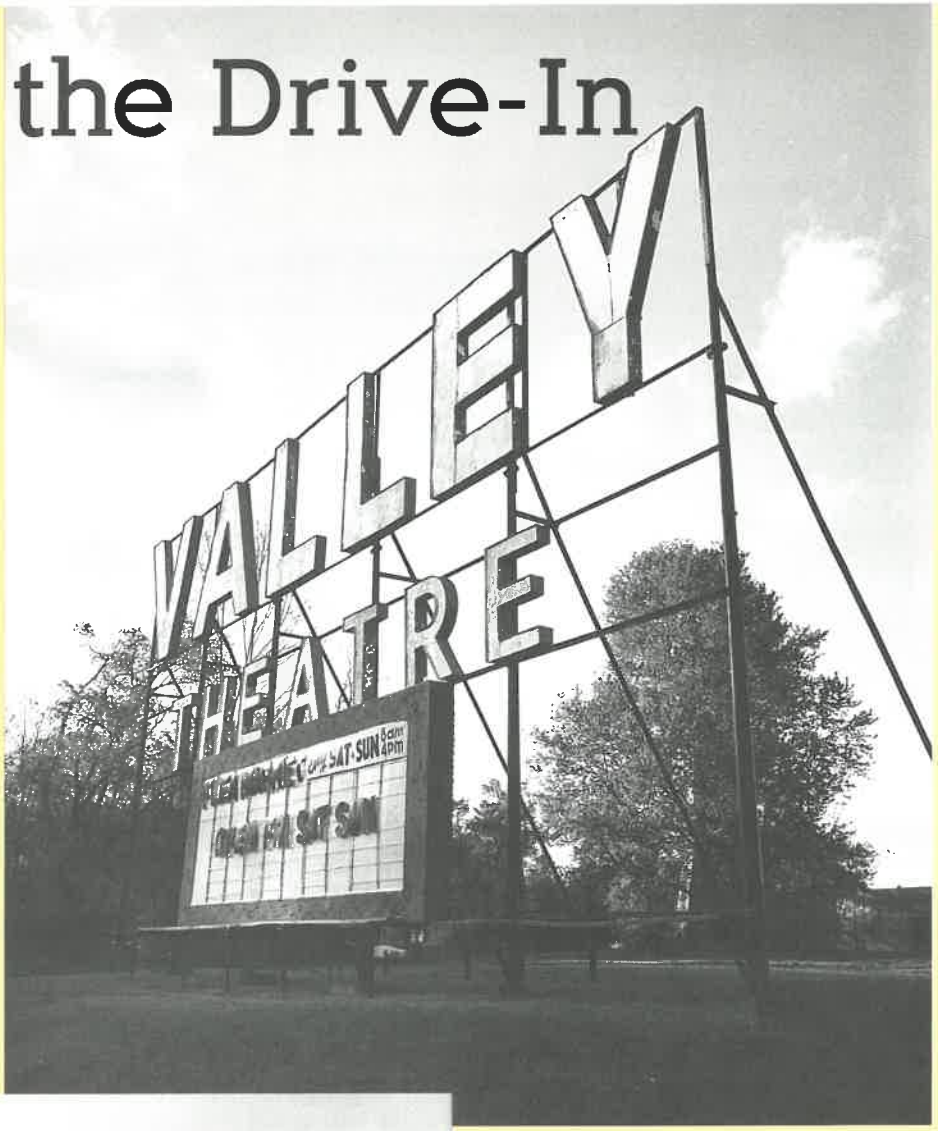
A generation ago, summer was the season for West Virginians to pack up the car, gather friends and family, and head out for a long evening at the drive-in.

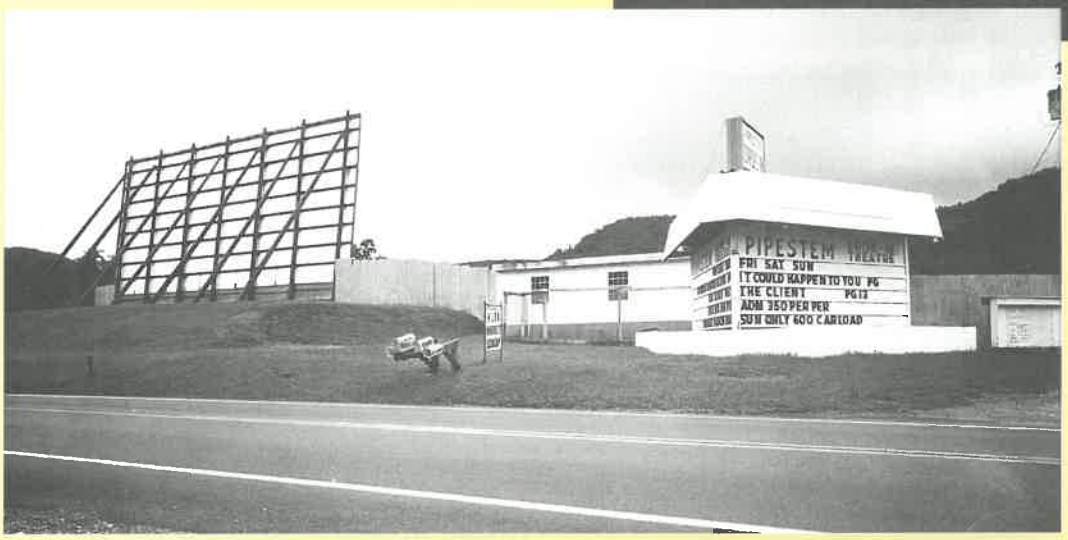
Names like Starlight, Twilight, Skyline and Park beckoned outdoor moviegoers for decades. Now most of the Mountain State's drive-in theaters are gone, but Donald Moore of Charleston knows of several that survive.

Mr. Moore, who sells, services and installs theater equipment, says that besides The Sunset and The Grafton featured in the adjoining story, moviegoers can go to the Meadow Bridge Drive-In in Fayette County, Newell's Hilltop in Hancock County, the Pineville Drive-In in Wyoming County, Beckley's Moonlight, the Pipestem in Summers County, The Jungle at Parkersburg and the Valley at St. Albans. Moorefield's drive-in closed just last year.

Photographer Michael Keller has been to several of those places and some others as well, in his travels around the state for GOLDENSEAL. He began photographing drive-ins a while back, and we've reproduced some of those pictures here.

The Valley Theatre (top left) is the drive-in most familiar to Mike and other residents of the Charleston area. The St. Albans theater is located near the busy intersection of U.S. 60 and U.S. 35, the letters of its name outlined against the sky. The smaller sign advertises a flea market which shares the grounds.

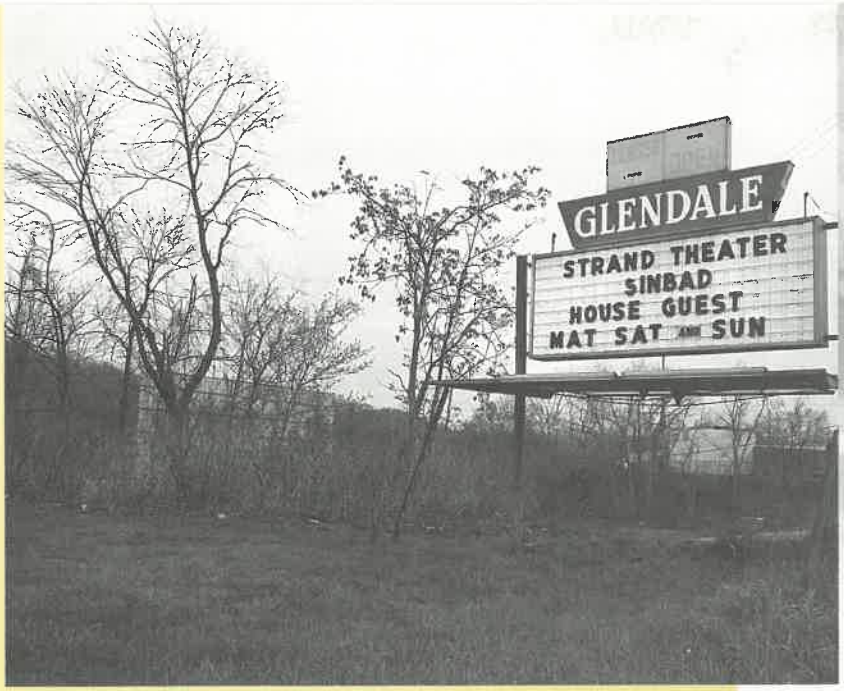




The Pipestem Drive-In Theatre (left) also advertises a weekend flea market to supplement its movie income. The Pipestem sits by West Virginia Route 20, near the state park of the same name.

Like other drive-ins, Marshall County's Glendale (above center) is closed during the cold-weather months. Late last winter its sign advertised the current movies at The Strand, an indoor movie house in nearby Moundsville.

Work's Drive-In (above right) in New Martinsville, unfortunately now out of business, was an impressive facility. The big screen



houses work space and living space in its rear, with a canopied double ticket booth to the side.

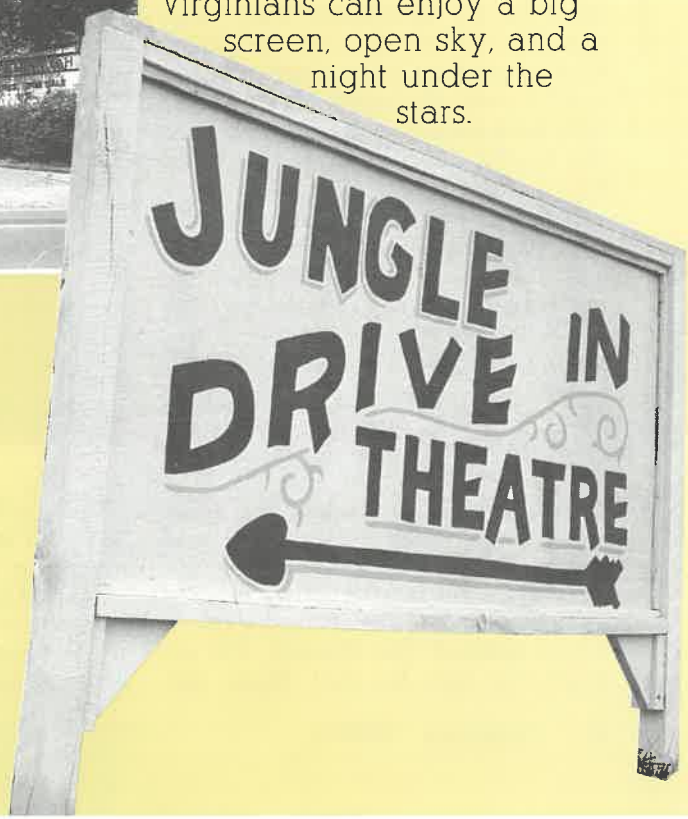
McDowell County's Starland Theatre (below) was another big one, its size reflecting the prosperity of the Billion Dollar Coalfield which it served. The arched entry had ticket booths

on the left and right, with a winding paved road behind to lead patrons up the mountain to the screen and concessions complex. The drive-in, on U.S. Route 52 just outside Welch, is now closed.

The Jungle Drive-In's sign is a familiar landmark to travelers of the mid-Ohio Valley. The drive-in is located on State Route 2, north of Parkersburg.

Dark screens like those at Welch and New Martinsville are the rule nowadays, unfortunately. But Donald Moore and others

say that the business has picked up in the last five years. That means it's likely that drive-in movies will be around for awhile so future generations of West Virginians can enjoy a big screen, open sky, and a night under the stars.



Mary said some of The Grafton's best-grossing films were those in the "Ma and Pa Kettle" series and flicks by Gene Autry and Elvis Presley. But the film they really had to turn people away from came in the 1980's, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, with Dolly Parton and Burt Reynolds. Clint Eastwood's *Every Which Way But Loose* and Lucille Ball's *Long, Long Trailer* also drew overflow crowds.

John DeAngelis pastured black Angus cattle on the verdant hills surrounding the theater. The red barn he built for his livestock still stands to the north of the drive-in. The cattle frolicked and occasionally fought on the hill above the screen, providing added entertainment for city folks who drove down from Morgantown.

When the DeAngelises first purchased the theater, the concession stand was located in the basement of what became their home. They later built a separate stand, from which Mary served hot dogs, chili, popcorn and all the other drive-in goodies. Mary used to cook the chili herself. People came for the food and atmosphere as well as the movie.

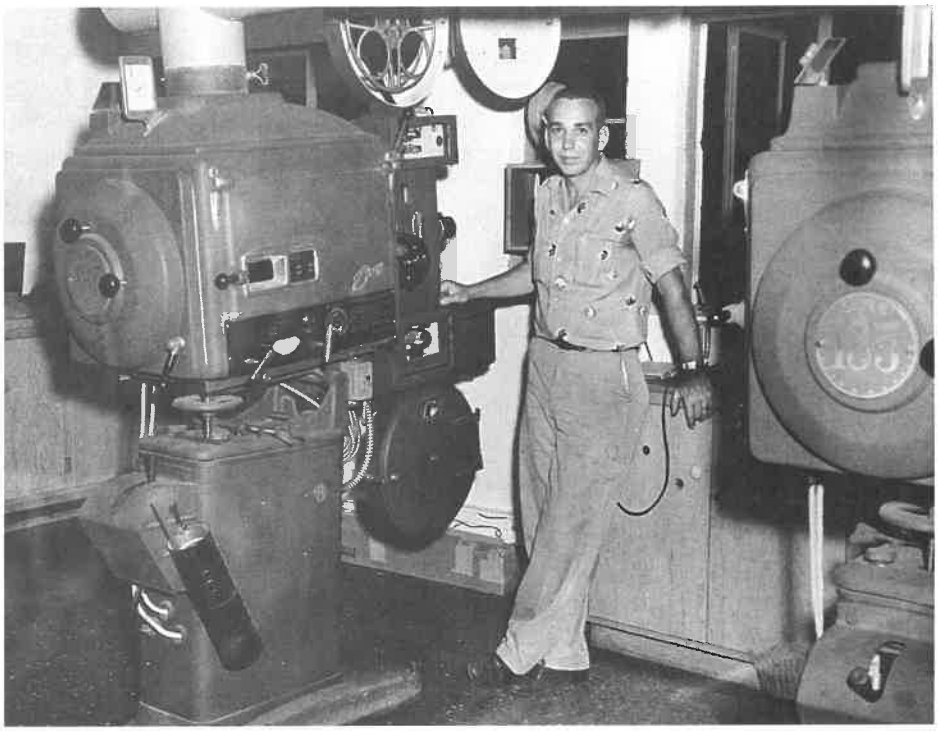
"I had people come in before the show and sit out under the trees just to eat a hot dog before the movie," Mary said.

Those days are gone. Patrons today are more likely to arrive late than early, although they still spread their blankets on the grass. And where moviegoers once pulled head-on into the parking spots, they now back their vans and trucks onto the knolls for a view uninhibited by a windshield.

There have been changes to the ticket booth, as well. At one time, it was located in the middle of the road leading to the drive-in. The arrangement caused traffic problems, so John DeAngelis built a new booth further away from the marquee. It's still standing, with the original, squiggly neon lights and "ENTRANCE" across the top.

"Jim keeps the theater the same way it was when we had it," said Mary.

Perhaps Jim's attention to detail is rooted in his childhood experiences around the theater. He recalls the day he met Mary DeAngelis.



Projection technology hasn't changed much in West Virginia drive-ins. Here projectionist Junior Armstrong (above) shows off one of The Grafton's Super Simplexes, essentially similar to the Super 135's shown in the 1950's picture of the Sunset Drive-In's projection booth. The Sunset projectors are still in daily use.

"I went to work there when I was 11," Jim said. "I was riding my bicycle out the road and the people who had just took the drive-in over asked me if I'd want to work picking up papers. I said, 'I don't care.' They always thought that was kind of funny, because I said I didn't care."

Jim's future in-laws, the Armstrongs, also lived down the same road near the theater. Mary Ruth was 13 when she went to work at The Grafton. She was following in an older brother's footsteps when she

took the job at the snack counter.

"My oldest brother worked here when the original owner had it," Mary Ruth said. "They were so busy back then they had to have the boys direct the cars in and help park them. They would take these flashlights out and direct the cars."

Junior Armstrong, another brother of Mary Ruth's, also grew up working at the drive-in. He went to work making popcorn at The Grafton when he was 12 or 13. "We worked in the snack bar as soon as we were old enough to see over the bar," Junior said.

Junior first found himself working the projection booth in the mid-1950's. He learned simply by being there all the time, watching the projectionist and doing odd jobs.

He has worked for the Hendersons for 11 years, running and maintaining the projection equipment at both the drive-in and the Manos Theater. When he's not in the projection booth, Junior helps in the pizza shop. "My father was what they called a jack of all trades and master of none," he said. "It rubbed off on me. I kind of pick things up easily."

That's a good quality for a projectionist to have, particularly when dealing with equipment that is over 35 years old. Junior is a one-man show when it comes to the projection booth. The theater's projectors are Super Simplex units with a 2,000-foot reel capacity each. Junior changes and threads reels every 20 minutes. Once a show starts, he is pretty much confined to the booth for the evening.

"I used to walk by the ticket booth and say to myself, 'I am going to own a theater someday.'"

Most modern theaters are equipped with projectors which have xenon bulbs that can last for 1,000 hours or more. The old Simplex projectors work like electric welders, producing light by an arc of electrical energy. Their carbon rods burn down and have to be replaced every hour or so. If the gap between the rods becomes too large, the light will go out. Atmospheric conditions can also affect how the rods burn, requiring the operator to keep a sharp eye on them throughout the night.

Friday nights are the most challenging for Junior. That's when the new films get their first run. Sometimes the reels are marked incorrectly and get out of order during projection. He's even had reels come through with bubble gum substituted for splicing tape. Junior, and the audience, discover the problem when it gets caught in the projector's aperture.

Quick decision making and ingenuity are requirements for the job. If it's a problem he can fix in a few moments, Junior hops to it and lets the screen go blank. Most patrons don't mind and leave their car horns alone. If the show will be interrupted for a longer period, Junior explains the problem through the theater's sound system.

Such was the case when the electrical system burned up on one of the machines at the beginning of a show last summer. Junior knew he would be unable to repair it that night, so he made an announcement that there would be a brief pause during each reel change since he would be using only one machine.

"We never had a single horn blow and not one person complained," he said.

And even if horns do blow, Junior's not likely to hear them with all the noise in the projection booth. But he does hear the ominous knocks at his door, of patrons who run to the source when they have a gripe.

He recalls a particularly dark print of "The Crow" which played poorly on the screen despite cranking up the projectors' light output. "One guy came down here and wanted to take me on," he said. Junior made an announcement on the speaker system about the fault being with the film itself. They left him alone the rest of the night.

"It seems like once you explain things to the people, they don't get as irate," he said.

Junior has also been accused of "cutting the reel down" to shorten the movie. "This one guy dozed off and missed part of the movie," he recalled. "He came down here complaining because he thought we'd messed it up. I said, 'You got to watch it, you can't go to sleep.'"

But going to sleep is a common problem, especially during the second feature.

"You'd be surprised how many people go to sleep and we have to go around and wake them up," Junior said. He and security guard John Shingleton walk the grounds after the show is over, knocking on windows and informing lingering patrons that it's time to go home.

"Last week I had one who was sleeping up a storm," Shingleton said. "I thought I'd have to break the glass to get him to wake up."

Shingleton stays alert to patrons' attempts to sneak in without paying. If a car pulls over to the dark side of the drive-in and the driver pops open the trunk, there's a good possibility he's unloading more than a cooler. Patrons who try to sneak in by driving up the exit drive face a $50 fine if caught.

Shingleton said very few patrons give him trouble. "It's a pretty good bunch of people," he said.

Indeed, a drive-in theater owner's biggest worry is not a couple of teens sneaking past the gate or a local hopping the fence after dark, but the weather. And in the mountains, weather can destroy a show or even a lifetime of work in a few seconds.

"We had a storm, tornado, come through here in April 1991 and demolish the right side of the screen," Mary Ruth recalled. "We had planned on opening up that weekend and had to postpone it until we could rebuild the screen. I know of at least two other times it has been blown down."

"Wind storms have blown it down a good many times," Junior agreed. "This valley brings the wind right up through it."

Fog is another headache in the valley, sometimes closing down the show. Fog passes are issued if the blanket rolls in during the first film. "We are at the mercy of the elements," Junior observed.

The outdoor setting brings other challenges as well. "We've had deer

run right across the screen," Junior said. "We've counted as many as 20 to 30 deer up behind the screen. We have birds fly through the beam, especially in the early evening when they are going after the bugs."

But when the weather, old projectors and wildlife cooperate, an evening at the Grafton Drive-In can be a journey to the past for the pre-Woodstock crowd and an exciting new experience for the video generation.

"I look at the drive-in as something like an amusement park, because you got all that grass," said Jeff Henderson, who was raised at The Grafton. He said many people attribute the renewed interest in outdoor theaters to nostalgia, but he feels the theaters have their own merits for a new generation of moviegoers. "I think it's a great thing," he said. "If you don't go to a drive-in, you're missing something."

Jim Henderson said 1994 was a good year for both The Grafton and The Sunset. Both were packed for several films. Over the Fourth of July weekend, the movie and a fireworks display not only filled The Sunset, it created a two-mile-long line of cars that had to be turned away from the gate.

"Business is better than ever. This is the best I've ever seen it," Jim said.

"Drive-ins are coming back full force," said Mary DeAngelis, who still dabbles in the business by working the concession stand at The Sunset. "The thing is, it used to be that picture companies wouldn't sell the newer products to the drive-ins. But Grafton can play the new products with the other theaters."

And the operators say that Hollywood has provided them with some fine product in the past couple years. Films like *The Flintstones* and *Jurassic Park* are naturals for the outdoor theater. Jim said the theater does its best business on the family-oriented, "PG" films, and he tries to maintain a family atmosphere by booking only that kind of movies.

The Grafton advertises in five newspapers, and draws a good crowd from not only Taylor County but also from Morgantown, Philippi, Fairmont and Preston County. Mary Ruth tells of one patron who drives from Cumberland, Maryland, about 90 miles away. Tourists passing through or staying at the nearby state parks also find the drive-in to be a pleasant addition to their trip.

Early evening brings showtime to The Grafton's field of illusions. The sun slips below the hills. The neon lights of the ticket booth flicker, then glow steadily in the humid air. The smell of popcorn hangs about the concession stand.

"This one guy dozed off. He came down here complaining. I said, 'You got to watch it, you can't go to sleep.'"

Junior Armstrong, wearing a plaid shirt and blue jeans held up by suspenders, threads up reel one of the first feature, *Beverly Hills Cop III*. Cars begin to line up at the ticket booth, and Jeff collects $3.50 for every person over 12 in each vehicle.

Blankets and lawn chairs pop up on the grassy field, speakers are plucked from their stems and eyes turn toward the green hillside and white screen. Junior checks the light outside the tiny windows of the projection booth and shortly after 9:00 p.m. throws the switch. The carbon arc sizzles and its searing light seeks a vent through the aperture gate of the whirling old Simplex. Needles on the sound equipment jump as the film rushes across the sound head. The hills come alive with the sight and sounds of Hollywood.

Jim Henderson cannot predict how many summers these events will be repeated in this Taylor County hollow. Perhaps the next strong wind that blows through the valley will completely fold the screen — and the business. Perhaps he will get a better offer for his 13 acres of level land. Perhaps both old projectors will refuse to jump at Junior's command and shut down the show for good.

Or maybe something worse: Perhaps we'll become so accustomed to seeing movies on a 20-inch screen that we will forget the magic of places like The Grafton, The Sunset or The Blue Horizon.

You won't get *this* comfortable at the mall mulitplex theater! These young drive-in fans are (left to right) Nicole Tingler, Kali Jones, Jeremy Tingler and Bryce Jones, all of Grafton.

A Harrison County Drive-In:
Sunset Memories

The Sunset Theater, located on U.S. Route 19 between Shinnston and Clarksburg, is probably the oldest West Virginia drive-in still in operation.

Owner Anthony Ellis said his father, the late John Ellis, purchased the drive-in in 1955 from Alex Silay and Steve Medve. John Ellis was no stranger to the business. He and his brother, Louie, had built The Ellis at Bridgeport in 1950. Louie, who lives in Clarksburg, started in outdoor movies by showing 16mm films in his backyard. The films attracted a regular audience, so the men figured they couldn't go wrong with a drive-in.

Anthony Ellis is an old hand in the drive-in business. He owns The Sunset and leases it to Jim Henderson and Mary DeAngelis.

But when it came time to purchase a second theater, John Ellis was on his own. "Dad wanted the brothers to expand with him," Anthony said. "He told my uncles, 'You ought to buy The Sunset.' But they didn't want to take the chance, so he bought it himself."

The Sunset had been in operation for eight years when John Ellis paid $85,000 for it in 1955. Anthony said the drive-in was built by Lawrence Barmahejo and his business partner Charley Perez. The theater was built on vacant farmland using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows.

Business was extremely good in the early years. The drive-in had 600 parking spots and they were usually filled. The overflow was a knoll behind the main parking area.

"They said that in those days they didn't have time from Friday to Monday to count the money," Anthony said. "They were getting 50 cents a head. It was the only theater around and a real novelty back then, so you can understand why they were so busy."

Lawrence Barmahejo brought an unusual innovation to the business. Wanting to make sure bad weather didn't stop people from coming to his movies, he experimented with small carports that sheltered windshields from the rain and snow. Anthony said Barmahejo obtained a patent on the devices, two dozen of which still stand at The Sunset.

Promoted as "Rain Visors," each metal carport can shield two cars. They also help protect the speakers from the elements. Anthony said they were introduced at The Sunset a year or two after it was built. The Ellis Drive-In also installed Rain Visors in the late 1960's. Otherwise, Anthony said, he has never seen the Rain Visors used elsewhere. Anthony plans to install at The Sunset the carports he salvaged from The Ellis when it was torn down several years ago. He said flea market vendors, who set up in the Sunset Theater on weekends, appreciate the shade.

The early drive-in operators also provided heat. Electric heaters that plugged into the speaker posts and operated on 220 volts were passed out to patrons as they entered the drive-in. Anthony said the units were in use until the early 1970's.

While drive-ins today close by late September, it was not unusual for a 1950's outdoor theater to remain open until a blizzard made projection impossible. "We were running back then until we got so much snow we had to close down, usually about January," said Anthony. "We'd open back up in February. The heaters did a fair job of keeping the people warm."

Gallons of coffee and hot chocolate served up from the concession stand also helped keep patrons warm and the operators in business. Anthony said the first concession stand was an old streetcar that the original owners purchased when the car line was eliminated in 1947. There have been two other concession stands since then. The current one is located in the back of the Ellis Restaurant, the business Anthony's father built in front of the drive-in.

The original cement block screen is still used, but it has been expanded from the early 1940's when two large speaker horns were attached to the screen. Individual speakers were not provided for the cars in the theater's early days.

The builders cleverly designed the back of the screen as living quarters. The four-story building features a kitchen on the ground level, a bedroom on the second floor and

two storage rooms above that. Simon and Helen Perez, who worked for the original owners and later for John Ellis, lived in the screen before the Ellis family bought the place.

"Father put on seven rooms in the front so he and mother would have room for them, me and my brother," Anthony said. He recalls the boys' bedroom, the second floor of the screen, as quite roomy, despite a triangular shape. "There were two closets on each side, two twin beds, a couple chests of drawers and we still had plenty of room," he said.

Anthony graduated from high school in 1955, worked summers at the drive-in and graduated from college. He taught high school biology from 1962 to 1967, but left teaching to operate the family restaurant and the drive-in on Saturdays and Sundays. The Sunset has operated continuously except one year, 1974, when a lack of good movies and competition from television put the crunch on drive-ins everywhere.

"In those days, you couldn't get the product until the indoor theaters had finished with them," he said. "A drive-in was lucky if it could get a movie six months after it came out."

Anthony had to be content with showing "mostly scary movies, thrillers, action, mystery films." But he never resorted to booking X-rated films, a last-ditch approach taken by many drive-ins in the 1980's.

Like many small business owners, Anthony depended on help from his family. He, his wife Sue, and daughters Melissa and Antoinette have put in long hours at the restaurant, flea market and drive-in. Sue's parents, Jim and Peg Hardesty, have also been very helpful in keeping the business alive, Anthony said.

"I just worked at it and kept my overhead down," he said. "I ran a family operation and kept it going." Other Harrison County drive-ins have not fared as well. Originally there were five, and only The Sunset remains.

Grafton Drive-In owner James Henderson and Morgantown businesswoman Mary DeAngelis have leased The Sunset for the past two decades. Anthony runs a flea market on the theater grounds during the day and operates his adjoining restaurant year-around.

The Sunset will be open for the 1995 season. If 1994 was any indication, it should be a very good year. It seems that a whole new generation is discovering the magic of watching a movie in a setting as big as all outdoors.

"People are getting tired of watching videos in their living rooms," Anthony Ellis said. "They want to get out and bring the lawn chair and spread the blanket."

— Carl E. Feather

The Sunset concession booth was busy in this mid-50's photo. Owners Jean and John Ellis work behind the counter, with Jean Spino. Photographer unknown.

Appalshop Anniversary

Last year Appalshop celebrated its 25th anniversary. The grassroots film making outfit says its work is all about "standing up for what you believe in and creating change." Appalshop Films and Videos produces award-winning movies that explore the cultural legacy and social concerns of Appalachia. Other Appalshop programs include the Roadside Theater, June Appal Recordings, *Headwaters* Television, and WMMT-FM radio which reaches audiences in parts of five states in central Appalachia.

Two recent Appalshop productions are *Beyond Measure: Appalachian Culture and Economy* by filmmaker Herb E. Smith and *Ready for Harvest: Clearcutting in the Southern Appalachians*. The first is the story of a West Virginia community that organized a citizens action group to rebuild the town's failing water system and open a community center in an abandoned school building. *Beyond Measure* will be available at West Virginia libraries at a later date. The second video, *Ready for Harvest*, is the story of the Western North Carolina Alliance, an environmental group. It is available at state libraries.

To learn more about Appalshop and its programs contact Appalshop at 306 Madison Street, Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108.

Mountain Music Roundup

By Danny Williams

To fans of mountain music, twin fiddling is a rare and special treat.

We don't mean simply two fiddlers playing the same tune. "Twin" fiddlers listen to each other and adjust their own playing to blend with their partner's. In accommodating each other they each play something a little different from their usual arrangement, and together they create a new and exciting version of a tune.

It's a rare sound because it's a lot of work. You will hear some of our better musicians enjoying the challenge in festival jam sessions, and sometimes a band will work up a twin-fiddle arrangement or two for a recording.

Joe Dobbs and **Buddy Griffin** are the first West Virginians we know of to record a whole tape of nothing but twin-fiddle pieces, *Friends, Fiddles, and Favorites*.

Those of us who go to music events around the state know Joe's and Buddy's music, and this tape sounds just like them. They both play on the smoother side of fiddling, with long bow strokes, clear tones, and nary a squawk or squeak. They like waltzes and slow tunes, and they enjoy surprising listeners with material from outside the old mountain repertoire.

Even on the slow pieces, Joe and Buddy play with rhythm and drive. Many recent recordings of "Ashokan Farewell" seem to be entries in some slowest-fiddling contest. Joe and Buddy bring it back up to a danceable waltz speed, and make it sound fresh again. On "Westphalia Waltz" their sharp harmonies and aggressive bowing make the two fiddles sound like a small orchestra.

Joe and Buddy work the traditional end of the spectrum with "Soldier's Joy" and "Turkey in the Straw," both played at a fine hoedown tempo, and "Clarinet Polka." "The Water is Wide" and "Sweet Bunch of Daisies" are old standards, and "Lorena" is a newer one. The Beatles' "Yesterday" is the most often-recorded pop tune ever, but it's something of a surprise on a tape of West Virginia fiddle music. Joe and Buddy make it work.

Other instruments fill in the background on *Friends, Fiddles, and Favorites* — that's Joe and Buddy playing them, too — but the two fiddles carry all the tunes. On practically every note, the fiddles are combining in some careful way to create a particular sound. The result is true twin fiddling, and it's like nothing else.

Friends, Fiddles, and Favorites *is produced by Braxton Recordings. You may order this tape from Joe Dobb's "Fret 'n' Fiddle" shop in St. Albans for $10. Send orders to 809 Pennsylvania Avenue, St. Albans, WV 25177; (304)722-5212.*

* * *

Frank George is the most influential mountain fiddler to come out of West Virginia, and only partly because of his musical ability.

Frank's light touch and impeccable timing would place him at the top of any group of musicians, but his real distinction is his connection to the roots of our West Virginia music and culture. As a young man Frank sought out the legendary old masters, and now he carries more of their music than anyone else alive. Frank has made transmitting that music his life's work.

But there's more. Frank's interest in music comes from his fascination with people. Frank remembers the old-timers as more than musicians. He remembers their family histories, their personal habits, their dogs; he knows who they played music with in their early days, and where they got their strings and instruments and whiskey; he repeats the stories they told, and the stories told about them. No one but Franklin George plays our music from such an understanding of the people who created it. When Frank fiddles, ghosts dance.

On his latest recording, *Reflections of the Past*, Frank returns to his original fiddling tradition, that of Mercer County and the neighboring area of Southwest Virginia.

Three of the tunes come from Frank's fiddling grandfather, William Washington George. These are some of the more common tunes, "Sugar in the Gourd," "Sugar Hill," and "Liza Poor Girl." In the days before radio, when Appalachian music was still separated into dozens of local traditions, these versions were peculiar to the Mercer-Mingo-Logan area. Frank knows more about these tiny regional variations than anyone.

Frank remembers the old-timers, their personal habits, their dogs; he knows who they played music with in their early days, and where they got their strings and instruments and whiskey.

Frank plays two tunes from his teacher, Jim Farthing, including the rare "Train on the Island." Henry Reed, one Mercer County legend who fortunately survived into the age of recording, is the source for Frank's versions of the well-known "Over the Waterfall" and the seldom-heard "Folding Down the Sheets."

Frank plays fiddle on all these tunes, accompanied on banjo by his prize student, **David O'Dell**. David, many times the state banjo champion, also recorded and produced *Reflections of the Past*. This is David's second major field-recording project (after Glen Smith's *Four Miles to Cumberland*, reviewed in the Fall 1993 "Mountain Music Roundup"), and he has plans for

several more recordings.

Together, Frank and David have a sound which comes only from years of partnership, and from a mutual feeling for the roots of our West Virginia musical traditions.

If Reflections of the Past *is not available at your local record store, ask the manager why not. It may be ordered from Roane Records, Route 3, Box 293, Spencer, WV 25276. The cost is $15 for CD or $10 for cassette, postpaid.*

* * *

In their second recording, called *Country Life,* **Curmudgeon** gives another demonstration of why good musicians love to play and sing together.

All five members of the Morgantown band are master singers and instrumentalists, and if they had come together only to record this tape the results would have been superb. But this is a group which has been together for many years, carefully crafting their sound so it fits together just right. Listening to this recording, there's no mistaking the hard work behind Curmudgeon's sound. These guys are together.

All five members play very strong leads, harmonies, and rhythms on a variety of instruments — **Larry Spisak** and **Mike Furbee** on fiddles

Songs of the Civil War

Somebody said that the Civil War was more important to West Virginia than West Virginia was to the Civil War. Our state was born of the great national struggle, but was spared the worst of the fighting and denied any large role in shaping the events of the war. The strategic battles and pivotal political decisions took place in neighboring states. What West Virginia did experience was pain, fear, pride, loss, hardship, rumor, lawlessness, and heroism on a more local, personal level.

These are the experiences which affect common people deeply, so they are the breeding ground of folk songs and stories. A new audio recording, *Folk Music and Lore of the Civil War,* comes as close as we can get today to a first-hand audio account of the war's impact on the lives of West Virginians, and it is powerful stuff.

The tunes, songs, and stories on this tape are performed or told by West Virginians who learned these things within their families and communities. The recordings were made in the field, usually in the homes of the performers, by Gerry Milnes of the Augusta Heritage Center. The material is varied, presenting almost every attitude toward the war. The one consistent thread is the personal impact of the war; when these performers transmit their songs or stories, they do so with an attitude passed down from the people who lived the life.

Currence Hammons tells the family story of his grandfather, a Williams River farmer whose sympathies were Southern, engaging in a respectful exchange with a Union captain. More often, though, the war here away from the battlefront was ugly. Grace Nicholas tells her family's story of neighbors "bushwhacking" her grandparents, using the war as an excuse for general lawlessness.

The other 16 selections on this recording contain music, but many of the performers tell how their songs or tunes relate to their family's war experience. Homer Sampson's "Battle of Mill Springs" is a standard, popular-style ballad, but this performance is made special by the fact that Sampson's grandfather died in the battle. Before singing his fragment of "Zolly's Retreat," Clyde Davenport recounts the list of his ancestors killed, wounded, or unhurt in the war.

Even the instrumental selections on *Folk Music and Lore of the Civil War* are performed in the context of feelings generated by the war. Wilson Douglas plays "Camp Chase," which he learned from the legendary fiddling Carpenter family; the Carpenters believe their ancestor won release from a Union prison by playing this tune in a contest. Arthur D. Johnson says his banjo piece, "Three Forks of Hell," was composed to commemorate a battle on Cheat Mountain near his home. Mose Coffman's fiddle tune, "Who's Been Here Since I've Been Gone," is supposed to have been composed by a fiddling soldier who returned from the war to discover an over-young baby in the house.

Whether literally true or not, stories like these demonstrate the Civil War's impact on the lives of West Virginia families. In the folk process, people make songs and stories about what's important to them. The songs and stories on *Folk Music and Lore of the Civil War* create a unique and powerful testimony.

— Danny Williams

Folk Music and Lore of the Civil War *is produced by The Augusta Heritage Center, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241. Tapes sell for $10. Shipping and handling charges are $2 for 1 to 2 cassettes and $4 for 3 to 5 cassettes. West Virginians must add 6% sales tax.*

and mandolins, **Bob Shank** on hammered dulcimer and clawhammer banjo, **Jack Barker** on mandolin, bouzouki, and tenor banjo, and **Monica Andis** on guitar. On the instrumentals — all Irish in origin or spirit — the group's years of practice give them a rare versatility; these are highly wrought arrangements, with instruments smoothly weaving their way between the background and the highlights, creating a richness and variety few bands can rival.

On the slow, dramatic "Craiggy Dhu," the bouzouki plays its own harmony line just behind the two fiddles. The hammered dulcimer plays very near the fiddle melody on tunes like "Locked Inside" (one of three Irish-inspired tunes on this tape composed by Furbee) and "Loch Laven Castle," and sometimes breaks out to contend for the spotlight. Clawhammer banjo carries the instrumental section of "Two Sisters" before giving way to the vocals. All the instruments are doing something and heading someplace all the time. Even Monica's guitar, usually busy with the task of holding all this melody together, occasionally comes into the lead.

And that's just the instrumentals. All five players are also strong vocalists, and the different qualities of their voices provide Curmudgeon the same sort of vocal versatility they have with their instruments. On the rousing title tune, Larry's quiet voice on the verse contrasts with the roar of five-part harmony on the chorus. Jack's and Monica's fine voices combine in a surprising but just-right *a capella* harmony in "What Will We Do?" Mike sings lead on "Bedlam Boys," and shares a duet with Monica on "The Waters of Tyne." Bob sings "Two Sisters," and everybody's voice comes in here and there all over the tape.

Listen, and see what five fine musicians with a few years of spare time on their hands can accomplish.

Country Life *is available from Curmudgeon for $10, plus $1 shipping and handling, at 1 Bryson Street, Morgantown, WV 26505.*

* * *

Jim Martin of jMp Records has probably produced more recordings of real West Virginia music over the past several years than anyone. Now Jim has released *Roots and Branches*, an anthology of highlights from his impressive recording catalog.

Jim selected 18 of the finest tunes from eight different jMp recordings for *Roots and Branches*, including performances by Tom King, The Bing Brothers, Robin Kessinger, Jenny Allinder, Alan Freeman, Mike Morningstar, and The Kessingers. Jim has packaged all this with informative notes on the tunes and photos of the performers.

MICHAEL KELLER

Jenny Allinder and Alan Freeman.

Most of these recordings have been reviewed previously in "Mountain Music Roundup," so we won't go into detail here. The folks at jMp probably figure that after people hear this sampler, they'll go out and buy some of the individual recordings represented. With the quality and variety of music on *Roots and Branches*, we believe that's some pretty smart thinking.

Order Roots and Branches *from jMp Records, P. O. Box 152, St. Albans, WV 25177 for $12, plus $1.50 shipping and 6% sales tax for West Virginians. Be sure to ask for information on their other recordings, and get on their mailing list. All tapes in this column are also available at the Cultural Center Shop.*

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. 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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_____Summer 1986/The Draft Horse Revival
_____Fall 1986/West Virginia Chairmaking
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_____Summer 1987/Camden Park History
_____Summer 1988/Hugh McPherson
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_____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!
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Films on West Virginia and Appalachia

Steve Fesenmaier, director of the West Virginia Library Commission's Film Services unit, provided GOLDENSEAL with the following list of recently acquired films and videos about West Virginia and the Appalachian region. Film Services has the largest collection of mountain movies and tapes anywhere in the country. They may be borrowed at public libraries throughout the state.

Always Free
52 min. (VHS) 1993 WCHS-TV
A history of West Virginia during the Civil War. A well-written narrative and hundreds of historical photographs tell the story of the Mountain State's participation in America's greatest conflict.

American Genius: James Rumsey
27 min. (VHS) 1995 Surkamp Prod.
Eastern Panhandle folks will tell you that James Rumsey of Shepherdstown was the real inventor of the steamboat. Thomas Jefferson called him "the most brilliant mechanical genius I have ever met."

Angel City
96 min. (VHS) 1980 Xenon
Paul Winfield (*Sounder, The Terminator*) stars as Cy, a toughened citizen of Angel City who befriends an unsuspecting migrant family venturing into a living hell. Ralph Waite (*Roots, The Waltons*) co-stars as the head of the West Virginia family that journeys to south Florida only to find themselves trapped in a squalid labor camp. This stirring saga stars Jennifer Jason Leigh, Jennifer Warren and Mitchell Ryan.

Bluegrass, Blackmarket
25 min. (VHS) 1994 Appalshop
The residents of mountainous Owsley County, Kentucky, have been growing marijuana for years. Recently even the police have taken part in this illegal business, which has replaced tobacco as the most valuable crop in Kentucky.

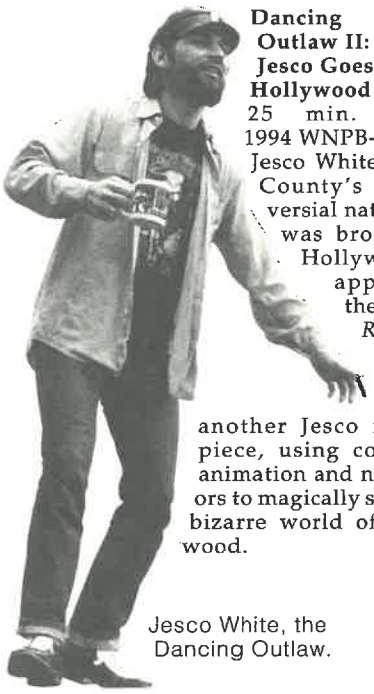
Borderlines
48 min. (VHS) 1993 Cinema Guild
Set against a background of farming, sawmilling and moonshining in rural Kentucky during the Depression, this short film dramatizes the use of violence as a socially accepted form of "folk justice." An idealistic young school teacher becomes embroiled in a local dispute and is forced either to accept, reject, or attempt to change deeply embedded forms of behavior.

Breaking Silence: Sisters at DeSales
60 min. (VHS) 1993 Tommie Dell Smith
A look at a 130-year-old cloistered convent in Parkersburg and the surviving Sisters of the Visitation in their final year before the convent closes for good. It follows the sisters as they struggle with grief, fear, and the uncertainty of their future as the walls of tradition come down around them. A rare, intimate and emotionally powerful insight into a way of life that may soon be gone. GOLDENSEAL's story on the sisters of DeSales Heights appeared in Winter 1990.

Christmas in Appalachia
29 min. (VHS) 1964 Carousel
Charles Kuralt came to the hollows of eastern Kentucky in 1964 to show the living conditions there. He focuses on Christmas and the fact that some did not even celebrate the holiday season. A Poverty War classic, carrying a message from another political era.

Creative Strip Quilting
60 min. (VHS) 1985 Cambridge
Nancy Zieman, home economist, author, national sewing authority, and hostess of television's *Sewing With Nancy*, offers a three-part series on strip quilting. The first segment details a "speedy" log cabin technique, and the second presents Seminole quilting and how to apply it to a garment.

Dancing Outlaw II: Jesco Goes to Hollywood
25 min. (VHS) 1994 WNPB-TV
Jesco White, Boone County's controversial native son, was brought to Hollywood to appear on the sitcom, *Roseanne*. Jacob Young directs another Jesco masterpiece, using computer animation and neon colors to magically show the bizarre world of Hollywood.



Jesco White, the Dancing Outlaw.

A Date With West Virginia 1947
30 min. (VHS) Courtesy Exxon Corp.
From the collection of the West Virginia State Archives. This film highlights scenes from across West Virginia: farming, cattle, and harvesting of hay, wheat, apples; Cacapon, Babcock, Lost River, Hawks Nest and Blackwater Falls state parks; coal mining towns, mining scenes and safety; road building, railroads, and rivers; marbles, gas

and chemical industries; as well as Charleston, Huntington and Wheeling.

A Date With West Virginia 1956
30 min. (VHS) Courtesy Exxon Corp.
From the collection of the West Virginia State Archives. Footage of the West Virginia Turnpike, Kanawha (now Yeager) Airport, West Virginia University, diesel locomotives on railroads, and new mining technology.

Even the Gypsies Had Cars!
27 min. (VHS) 1992 Surkamp Prod.
This 1921 Shepherdstown film shows small town life with its silent films, nickel vanilla soda, cornsilk cigarettes, and the newfangled automobile.

Amazing Delores and Michael Lipton
15 min. (VHS) 1994 WVLC
Steve Fesenmaier interviews Delores Boyd, the colorful singer and performer from Kanawha County. Delores talks of the release of her first CD. Michael Lipton, editor of the Charleston tabloid, *Graffiti*, plays the guitar.

Ken Hechler and Chuck Anselovich
30 min. (VHS) 1994 WVLC
Steve Fesenmaier interviews Secretary of State Ken Hechler concerning the new documentary of the Clinton presidential campaign, *The War Room*. Hechler talks about two presidential campaigns he worked on and the general state of American politics. In the second interview, Fesenmaier talks with Chuck Anselovich concerning the state AIDS Awareness program.

From Every Mountainside 1942
20 min. (VHS) State Road Commission
From the collection of the West Virginia State Archives. This film shows West Virginia's contribution to the World War II war effort. Contains rare footage of the South Charleston Ordnance Plant, Morgantown Ordnance Works, Marietta Manufacturing Company and Interwoven Mills. Shows the State Road Commission's effort to build national defense roads in the face of wartime shortages.

High Lonesome
95 min. (VHS) 1993 Tara Releasing
An engaging chronicle of the development of bluegrass, told through the performances and recollections of the legendary pioneers of this truly American music. Featured musicians include Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Mac Wiseman and Jimmy Martin.

Homer Laughlin China Company
25 min. (VHS) 1991 WSWP-TV
Stretching for more than a mile along the Ohio River at Newell is the Homer Laughlin China Company, the world's largest manufacturer of dinnerware. Many West Virginians have never heard of the Northern Panhandle company, although they surely have eaten off its dishes. Laughlin claims to have manufactured about one-third of all dinnerware sold in the United States, including famous Fiestaware.

In the Company's Hands
25 min. (VHS) 1987 WSWP-TV
This documentary about the rise and fall of the company town in the Mountain State takes a comprehensive look at the long and violent history of our southern coalfields. Historic photographs and reenactments by Michael Martin are coupled with oral histories drawn from miners, coal operators, camp residents, railroaders and others. Produced by Jack Kelly.

Filmmaking in West Virginia
25 min. (VHS) 1994 WVLC
Public Affairs reporter Beth Voorhees interviews Steve Fesenmaier, filmmaker Danny Boyd, and Mark McNabb of the West Virginia Film Office about movies made in West Virginia.

Jack and the Dentist's Daughter
40 min. (16mm & VHS) 1984 Davenport
For ages eight to adult. Black actors in period costumes and vintage cars reenact a variant of the Grimms' comic story, "The Master Thief," in a small 1930's American town. Jack, a poor laborer's son, wants to marry the dentist's daughter, but the dentist puts him through a series of premarital hurdles. A fine example of an American Jack Tale, closely related to traditional trickster tales found worldwide.

Lullaby for Ben
78 min. (VHS) 1993 PalmaFilms
A new resident is born in Shepherdstown. This tiny new life can't imagine how much joy he has brought into the world or how many problems. The life of a small town unfolds as the lullaby for newborn Ben becomes a lullaby for Shepherdstown. Many songs and lullabies were especially written for the work.

Moonshine Mountain
75 min. (VHS) 1964 Weird Video
A "good ole boy" epic with a liberal dose of sex and gore set to a country music score. Doug Martin is a successful country singer who returns to his roots to recharge his creativity. He meets two families who — along with the local sheriff — own the world's largest still, where the sheriff has been dumping the bodies of federal agents.

New River Gorge
30 min. (VHS) 1994 Panorama
The New River Gorge cradles one of the oldest rivers in North America, its waters cutting through layers of rock more than 300 million years old. This documentary explores the natural wonders found there. Early settlement is also explored, telling the stories of those who came to work in lumbering, coal, and railroading. GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan is among the commentators.

Portrait of a Coal Miner
15 min. (VHS) 1980 National Geographic
Follow Tom Marcum, a West Virginia coal miner, as he descends to his daily workplace. Later you get to know the Marcum family, and see the steep hillsides and narrow valleys that characterize the world outside the coal mine. From the Community Life in America series.

A Scar Remains
30 min. (VHS) 1992 WCHS
Twenty-five years after the Silver Bridge disaster, this 1992 documentary retells the December 15, 1967, collapse of the bridge at Point Pleasant.

See Yourself in the Movies
60 min. (VHS) 1991 Surkamp Prod.
This 1941 Charles Town documentary shows people leaving church, their factory jobs, at the school playground, and in other scenes. Restored by the Jefferson County Oral and Visual History Association with support of the West Virginia Humanities Foundation.

Teacher of the Year 1993
30 min. (VHS) 1993 WSWP-TV
Debbie Seldomridge, a dynamic teacher of geometry and pre-calculus at Keyser High School has been widely recognized for her excellence in mathematics education. West Virginia's 1993 Teacher of the Year, she was a 1989 recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching and a 1991 recipient of the Tandy Technology Scholar Award. This program follows her hectic schedule of professional and personal commitments.

Horse Racing in Jefferson County
21 min. (VHS) 1988 Surkamp Prod.
This film captures the infectious spirit of the horse culture from the days when George Washington's brothers raced horses in this Eastern Panhandle county. Traces the establishment of Charles Town's racetrack by A. J. Boyle at the bottom of the Depression in the 1930's, and follows its fortunes up to 1980.

West Virginians at War
90 min. (VHS) 1994 WPBY-TV
Jon McBride hosts this history of 250 years of West Virginians at war. Interviews and historic footage make this one of the best programs ever produced by West Virginia Public Television.

West Virginia, the State Beautiful
70 min. (VHS) 1929 Rev. Ottis Snodgrass
This early film follows Route 60 from Kentucky to the Virginia border. Shows everyday life of the time including salt works, chemical plants, tourist camps, and colleges. Transportation of the day is featured, from automobiles, passenger and logging trains to a ferry and a steamboat.

Wild, Wonderful West Virginia
25 min. (16mm & VHS) Dept. of Commerce
This 1970 official travelogue confirms that West Virginia offers fine educational institutions, natural scenic beauty, diverse natural resources, public recreation areas and a sound social and economic climate.

The Wonders of the Appalachians
60 min. (VHS) 1994 Panorama
This video production exalts the wonders of the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Shenandoah, and the Great Smokies, the major national parks of the southern mountains.

GOLDENSEAL ROAD TRIP II

2 days * October 19 - 20, 1995 * 8 Counties * Fall Foliage * History, People & Places

Goldenseal hits the road again this fall with a bigger and better bus trip. We invite you to tour the Eastern Panhandle with us, visiting the sites of some of GOLDENSEAL's best stories:

BOB WROBLESKI

Senator Davis's mansion at Elkins.

*Millionaires' mansions at Davis & Elkins College
*Revolutionary-era McCoy's Mill in Pendleton County
*The *Moorefield Examiner*, a 3rd-generation family newspaper in Hardy County
*Bunker Hill Gristmill, near the site of West Virginia's earliest settlement
*Historic Berkeley Springs, with lunch at the Country Inn
*Hampshire Club on the South Branch Potomac
*And more, including a stopover at Seneca Rocks and plenty of the best scenery in the eastern USA

Our trip departs from Clarksburg on Thursday morning, October 19, heading out for the Potomac Highlands, Eastern Panhandle and adjoining areas. We will spend the night at turn-of-the-century Capon Springs & Farms resort, with a robust outdoor banquet and evening entertainment.

The idea is to bring your favorite magazine alive, and you will visit with GOLDENSEAL story subjects and freelancers all along the way.

Your cost includes all tours, meals and gratuities, entertainment, overnight parking in Clarksburg and a keepsake book of article reprints for the story sites we visit.

Cost per person for double occupancy $155
Cost per person for single occupancy $165

GEORGE JAMES KOSSUTH

Reservation Coupon/Clarksburg to Panhandle & Return

(Name) _____

(Address) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

Telephone (home) _____ (work) _____

Number of people you are registering for _____ Double Occupancy Suite _____ Single Occupancy _____

Signature _____

Return this Registration Form with deposit of $50 or full payment to: Goldenseal, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305 *Make check payable to Mountain Arts Foundation.*

Full Payment Must Be Received By August 15, 1995.

REFUNDS/CANCELLATIONS MUST BE MADE 45 DAYS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

The fine print: GOLDENSEAL assumes no responsibility for damage, injury, loss, accident, delay or inconvenience from whatever cause during this trip. We reserve the right to change the tour itinerary if necessary, or to cancel the trip due to conditions beyond our control (including insufficient participation), with full refund in the case of cancellation.

Our Writers and Photographers

CAMILLA BUNTING, who grew up in Akron, has roots in West Virginia through her parents' ties to Wetzel and Pleasants counties. Camilla graduated from West Liberty State College and lives in Moundsville. She is a volunteer with Historic Landmark Commissions in Wheeling and Moundsville, and has written for *Christianity* magazine. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

BRUCE BURGIN, born in North Carolina, moved to West Virginia as an infant. He works as a draftsman for an engineering firm in Beckley and does freelance commercial, industrial and aerial photography. After joining the Navy in 1968, he spent three years on the carrier *USS America*, went around the world twice and to Vietnam twice. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

W. HODDING CARTER, a native of Greenville, Mississippi, says his family was in Charles Town before West Virginia was a state. Hodding worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya and has written for *Esquire*, *Newsweek*, and other publications. He is the author of the book, *Westward Whoa*, a humorous recounting of a trip he and a friend made on the trail of Lewis and Clark. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GREG CLARK is photo preservation archivist for the Division of Culture and History.

JENNIFER L. EFAW makes her home in St. Marys, where her family has lived for generations. She is a health service worker at the Colin Anderson Center there. She became interested in the St. Marys button factory since her grandfather had worked there and her grandmother kept mussel shells as souvenirs. This is her first published work.

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 has worked as a freelance photographer for more than 20 years and a freelance writer for ten. He is now lifestyles editor at the *Ashtabula Star-Beacon*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Spring 1995.

CHERYL RYAN HARSHMAN lives in Moundsville. She and her husband, Marc, are both accomplished storytellers and regular participants in the Vandalia Gathering. Cheryl is an outreach librarian at the Public Library in Moundsville. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1990.

FRANK P. HERRERA, a native of Beckley, now divides his time between Martinsburg and metropolitan Washington. He earned degrees from WVU and the University of Maryland, and was head of photography at Shepherd College from 1981 to 1985. His photographs are widely published and exhibited. He works for the National Park Service at Glen Echo Park, Maryland. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Spring 1989.

LOUIS E. KEEFER is a native of Wheeling. He was educated at Morris Harvey College, WVU and Yale University. A retired planning consultant, he has written for magazines and professional journals. He recently completed his third book, *Shangri-La For Wounded Soldiers: The Greenbrier As A World War II Army Hospital*. Louis is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER is chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

JOSEPH PLATANIA, a Huntington native, earned his B.A. and M.A. at Marshall University. He has worked for the West Virginia Department of Welfare and the U.S. Veterans Administration, and is now a freelance writer whose work is published in *Huntington Quarterly* and other publications. He has contributed to GOLDENSEAL for many years, most recently in Fall 1993.

DANNY WILLIAMS, a native of Wayne County now living in Boone, is a former folk arts specialist for the Division of Culture and History. He holds an M.A. in English from WVU where he has taught English and worked as an archivist for the West Virginia and Regional History Collection. He teaches part-time for Southern West Virginia Community College and Marshall, and teaches music privately. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

AMY WILLIAMS-ALLRED is a native of Indiana, where she attended Purdue University. She moved to West Virginia a year ago and now works as a garden columnist for the *Charleston Daily Mail*. She has written for *Parenting*, *American Baby*, and *Wonderful West Virginia* magazines. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Remembering Mrs. Hanna

Lucille M. Hanna of Pratt was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story by Mary Cobb in Winter 1993. Mrs. Hanna died January 5, at age 97. She was born in Pratt and lived there until she got married at 19. Her husband's work took her to mining towns on Paint Creek, Campbells Creek and Coal River.

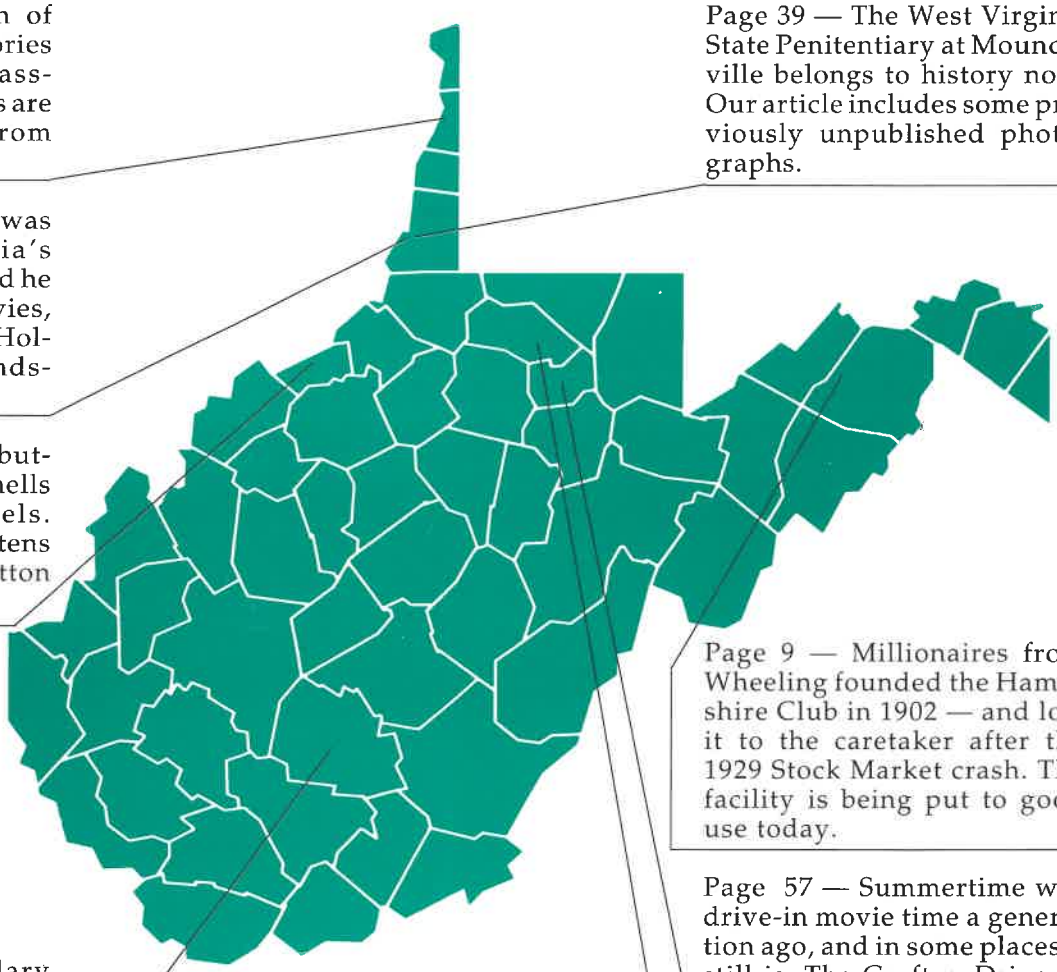
Mrs. Hanna returned to Pratt in 1959 after her husband's death and lived there ever since. She kept her own house, attended church, and occasionally visited her sister who lived out of state. Mrs. Hanna had many fine memories of Pratt and the people she met in West Virginia's coal towns. "There was good people in those towns," she remarked, and we're certain Lucille Hanna was one of them.

Lucille Hanna, 1897-1995.

Mountain Arts Foundation
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0300

Address Correction Requested

Inside Goldenseal



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