

Vol. 21, No. 3 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Fall 1995 • \$3.95

Goldenseal

Hatfield History

the family side of the
famous feud

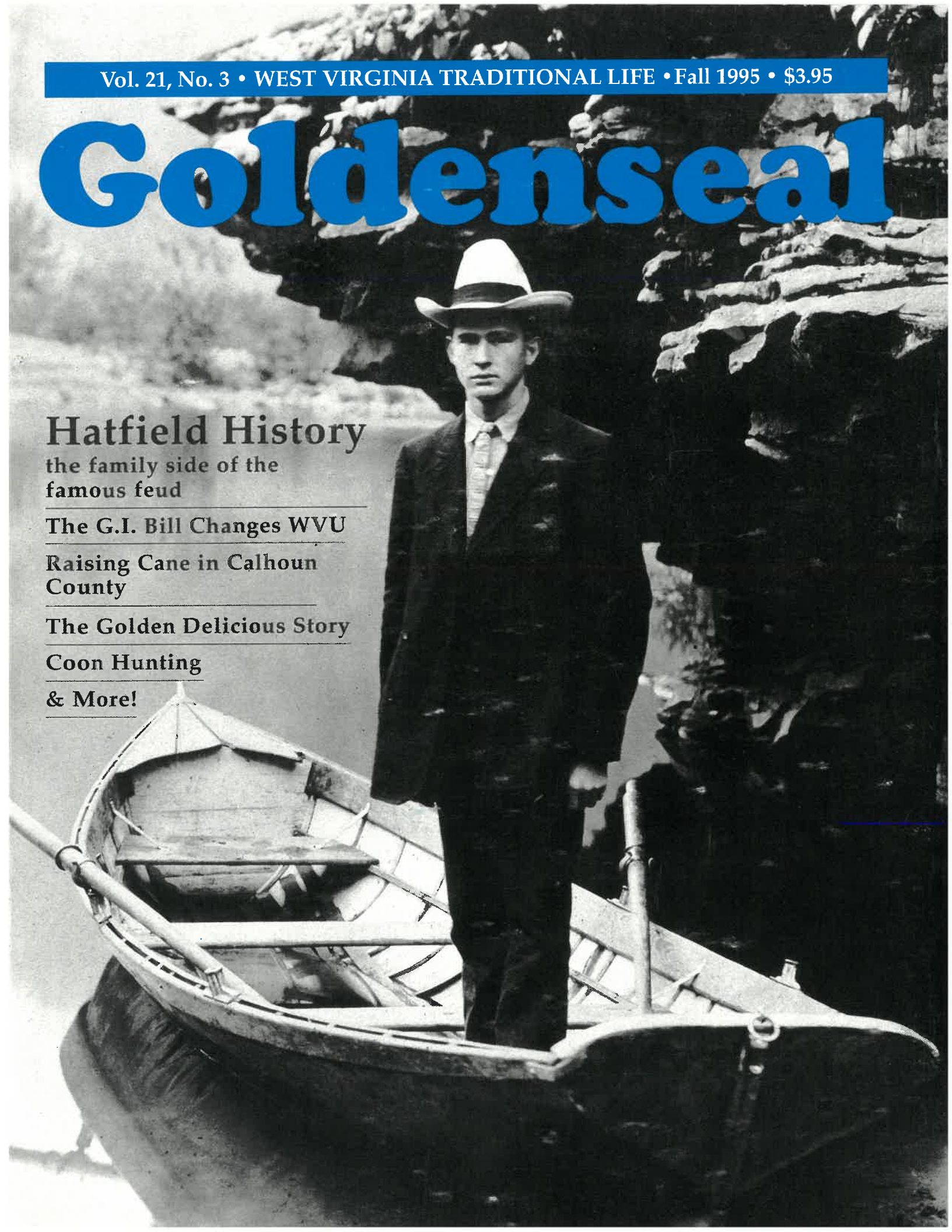
The G.I. Bill Changes WVU

Raising Cane in Calhoun
County

The Golden Delicious Story

Coon Hunting

& More!



Editorial: Covering Ourselves at Renewal Time

Considering the trouble we sometimes have to go to for a decent cover photograph, it is downright bewildering to end up with two great choices for a change. And that's just what happened this time.

We picked the right one, I'm sure. Our cover shows young Coleman A. Hatfield, grandson of feuding Devil Anse Hatfield, in a rowboat at a place he identifies as the "Roughs of Tug." That is near Wharncliffe, we understand, down in the rugged country where Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky come to a point. Coleman, who became a Logan lawyer and avid family historian, was the father of Coleman C. Hatfield, interviewed by Bob Spence in our cover story beginning on page 9.

The interview places the Hatfield-McCoy feud in the context of the Hatfield family's much broader, highly distinguished, and largely peaceable history. Considering that, a dapper younger Hatfield, not of the feud generation, seemed just right for our cover. The youthful face is pensive, even solemn, and the scene completely tranquil. The back of the original photo has a handwritten love note — in German and French — perhaps from Coleman to his sweetheart.

But there is more to it than that. For unlike most old photos we see, this one came with a close companion, apparently made just before or just afterwards. We have reproduced the other picture here for your comparison.

Coleman A. Hatfield no longer stands quietly by the still waters. He has rolled up his sleeves and assumed a warlike stance, with a belt of bullets strapped to his waist and a six-shooter in his outstretched fist.

The shooting photo would have made a strong cover, too, and might well have sold more copies on the newsstand. But the gun picture is a little sensational for my taste, especially since the Hatfield story has been sensationalized so many times before. That is just what Spence and Hatfield are trying to avoid in our article and in their upcoming book on the subject, in fact.

And we don't know exactly what the shooting pose signifies, in any case. Probably target practice, maybe a Sunday outing, entirely peaceful. Guessing Coleman to be in his early 20's, the pictures would have been made about 1910. The feud itself was long over, of course, decades in the past by then.

But these were even more violent times in southern West Virginia, as the social fabric strained and sometimes ripped during the abrupt industrialization of our coal and timber country. The mine wars were simmering, soon to explode, and there was much other strife in the meantime. Plenty of good people carried firearms in that time and place, for plenty of good reasons which we will never know.

But no matter the particulars: it all works to our advantage, selfishly speaking. Like young Hatfield,

we couldn't miss, not with a choice like this. Either photograph would have made a stunning cover.

That is important to us — and never more so than at this time of year. We're always especially anxious to have a great cover for the fall magazine, since this is our big fundraising season here at GOLDENSEAL. We raise two-thirds of our annual budget between Labor Day and Thanksgiving, so you can bet we want to make a good impression, from the front cover to the back.

We hope we have done so with this issue. But you are the judge of that, and now is the time to let us know. If you are like most GOLDENSEAL readers,

your subscription expires each fall. That means you will be hearing from me soon, with a letter urging you to renew just as soon as possible. I'll enclose a renewal coupon and a postpaid reply for your convenience, and hope to hear from you right away.

We have raised the subscription price, as announced last issue, but only by a dollar and for the first time in several years. I hope you agree that GOLDENSEAL is still a bargain at \$16 a year.

We'll try not to badger, and if you renew promptly you will hear no more from us. But we have to be dead serious on the subject of subscription renewal, since

survival itself depends on it — so maybe a gun-toting Hatfield is just the right note to strike, after all.

By the way, the photos come from son Coleman C. Hatfield, who makes his living as an optometrist. We thank Dr. Hatfield for the pictures, for his and Bob's kind hospitality in showing photographer Mike Keller and me around Logan County, and especially for the rack of honey he later sent from his backyard beehive. That and the molasses we wheedled in Calhoun County (see "Raising Cane," page 20), and the Flat Top Mountain blackberry jam my own good wife has been making, have meant a sweet summer, indeed.

I hope yours has been as good, and that you are looking forward to the crisper days of fall. Now is the time to get the wood in the shed, the antifreeze in the car, and the GOLDENSEAL check in the mail.

The GOLDENSEAL staff joins me in wishing you a great autumn, and the very best for the holidays that follow.

—Ken Sullivan



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Goldenseal

Volume 21, Number 3

Fall 1995

COVER: Coleman A. Hatfield, the son and grandson of prominent feudists, boating on the Tug Fork in Mingo County. Our interview with his son, Coleman C. Hatfield, begins on page 9. Photographer and date unknown; photo restored by Greg Clark.

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Letters from Readers

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

Mary Hartline

June 9, 1995
Morgantown, West Virginia
Editor:

The summer issue of GOLDENSEAL arrived today, and I am now sure of one very specific thing: Whoever writes your cutlines for photographs could NEVER have been a young girl in the early 1950's!

The doll being held by the Moundsville inmate in the picture on page 42 is instantly recognizable to those of us who were of that gender and that era — her name is Mary Hartline, and she was the heart's desire of many young ladies. The "real" Mary was a performer on the early television show, *Sealtest Super Circus*. Dressed in her majorette dress and boots and twirling her baton, she helped introduce the cartoons that made up the bulk of the show. She was so popular that the Ideal Toy Company of New York produced the line of dolls.



It turned out that the dress was red (how could we know — TV was only black and white) and, if you look closely at your photo, the name "Mary" can be read in the heart on the front of her dress. Her dress said "Mary Hartline" in script on the side and the [line of] music (also visible in your photo) circled the hem.

I received my own Mary Hartline for Christmas in, I believe, 1952. She has lost her boots, underwear and baton but I cherish her still.

Several years ago my daughter took her to a hobby show at our church with her doll collection, and the number of women whose faces lit up at the sight of dear Mary was very gratifying.

Given this background — and the photograph's background of other toys — I have to wonder if perhaps the Moundsville inmate was refurbishing Mary for something like a Christmas toy drive. I know when I received Mary Hartline — an expensive doll which I knew my parents could ill afford — it cemented my firm belief in the benevolence of Santa Claus. He hasn't let me down yet.

Very truly yours,
Polly Gray Plummer

You're right. Your faithful caption writer never was a '50's girl, but by golly we have now heard from several folks who were! And yes, they do remember Mary. We thank you for writing and apologize to Mary Hartline and her fans. — ed.

Naming Herself

June 7, 1995
Moundsville, West Virginia
Editor:

"Naming Baby" in your last two GOLDENSEAL's appeals to me in a special way. I was not named after my birth October 21, 1921, but given a nickname.

I had two older sisters and a brother, and two years later, another brother. They called me "Toots" or "Tootsie." Mom wanted to name me "Naomi," but Dad had some objection. She would tell Dad to name me and he would just say, "She can name herself."

We lived in Bristow, Oklahoma, or nearby. While on the farm, we girls would play games — one of them to name me. I tried different ones, but still everyone called me Toots. One day I suggested a name of a girl I liked in school, Mary Helen. My sister Beulah said I did

not want to use the same as hers — but how about Mary Ellen?

In 1929 we moved to Moundsville, having visited here after Beulah's death at age 17, and then moving here. We walked to Central School, Mom, Eloise and Quentin and I. I told Mom I was going to use "my" name [when I registered]; it was my eighth birthday. She did not answer me, but that was what I gave.

Mary Ellen Clark

Fools' Parade Video

June 17, 1995
Lawrence, Kansas
Editor:

I enjoyed reading about the making of the movie *Fools' Parade* in the summer GOLDENSEAL. I have a complete collection of author Davis Grubb's books, and a video of the 1955 *Night of the Hunter*. However, I have never been able to find a video of *Fools' Parade*. Perhaps the editors of this magazine could perform a cultural service by trying to get such a video made.

Adrian Melott

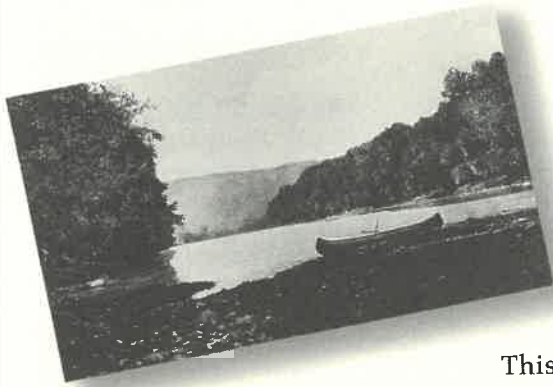
Columbia Pictures tells us that Fools' Parade is not available on home video. The West Virginia Library Commission copy circulates only within the state, so — unless you're willing to move to West Virginia — your best bet is probably to watch for it on TV. Sorry we can't help more. — ed.

Catching Up With Keefer

June 27, 1995
Charleston, West Virginia
Editor:

Being a native of Hampshire County, I found Louis Keefer's review of the old Hampshire Club to be most interesting for several reasons.

First, my father, William H. Ansel, Sr., had a "hand shake" arrangement — no written contract — with Bishop Strider to restore the old clubhouse. In the early '50's, I spent



Hampshire Club postcard.

some time in working on said project.

Secondly, Mr. Keefer invokes the early recollections of Manning Williams without mentioning his personal background. It so happens that Manning Williams's career could be subject matter for a featured story. A Romney native, Man-

ning had a fantastic career in world journalism ending up as an editor for the *New York Times*. Incidentally, his younger brother Charles, also recently retired, held a chair position at Harvard University's School of Business Administration.

This talented family also had a sister who was equally successful in a career which she pursued in South America. I have lost track of her.

Thirdly, had Mr. Keefer journeyed less than five miles further up the South Branch, he would have found another millionaires club of comparable fame. This one was built midway through the famous Trough and access was limited to the railroad or by traversing a hazardous

mountain trail. Named the Trough Club, this was a retreat for the turn-of-the-century coal barons, mainly from Fairmont and North-central West Virginia. Stories involving the Trough Club are legendary, and its popularity rivaled the downriver Hampshire Club.

Finally, the article reminds me of an interesting episode which occurred during one of my work days on the Hampshire Club clubhouse almost 50 years ago. It was a Monday morning and I was atop an extension ladder with paint brush in hand. Suddenly a shrill voice rang out, "Young man, can you tell me what time it is?" Looking down I observed a true, bearded mountaineer named Jimmy Polan clad in his

Closing the Mom 'n' Pop Jails: Opie Identified!

June 10, 1995
Elkins, West Virginia
Editor:

"Hey, Grandma! Look at this!" It was grandson Bret, a young doctor in Elkins, waving the spring issue of *GOLDENSEAL* at me.

It was the "Mayberry in Harrisville" article on Ritchie County law enforcement in the days of the Dotsons and the Brittons that had him excited. "Mayberry, huh? I guess you could call me Opie."

Right. In the early '70's we, too, lived in the century-old sheriff's residence with the jail on the rear. Bret and his little brother visited often from Pennsylvania.

Their grandfather, my husband John Carl Hinkle, a glassblower who wanted to be Ritchie County sheriff, lost two elections, then was appointed to serve out an unexpired term. After that, he was elected to his own four-year term.

So we spent six and one-half years in the big, comfortable brick house, built in 1869, which

attracted our kids and grandkids from three other states.

From the beginning, the kids have urged me to write down recipes, stories, whatever. There are plenty



The old Ritchie County jail and sheriff's residence at about the time the Hinkles lived there. Photo by Dan Deibler, courtesy State Historic Preservation Unit.

of stories, some sad, some funny. Never a dull moment.

A few samples: The time I spent 30 hours on the police radio and phone while all the guys were out on a search; the black poodle named Jailbird, AKA Birdie; the weekend we were bombarded by the courthouse clock just across the street, which struck 13 times at midnight Friday and continued, 13 booms on the hour, every hour, until help arrived on Monday morning; and how some mourned when the property

was razed in 1977 to make way for a modern jail.

But the story still told most often is that of my son-in-law, the Philadelphia lawyer, who called to check on his little boys, only to learn that Bret and Micah had jumped in the sheriff's jeep to go fishing down on the riverbank with a couple of the more trustworthy of the residents from inside the jail. It was okay — all four had permission.

During all this time I struggled to keep up my work with the *Parkersburg News*, write my *West Virginia Hillbilly* column and do publicity for the Ritchie County Speedway, Home of the Hillbilly Hundred. (That phone was in the kitchen!)

Later, Carl and I found ourselves living in another jail. He was named chief deputy in Pleasants County to serve when the sheriff and his wife were on vacation.

The mom 'n' pop jails are fast disappearing. But not the memories. And all the moms who served over the years deserve a special remembrance. Their husbands, too, of course.

Sincerely,
Idelene F. Hinkle

blue denim shirt and bib overalls. Mr. Polan, an elderly man who loved to play his fiddle, was the lone inhabitant of the deserted clubhouse. He lived there to protect the owners' insurable interest.

After glancing at my watch, I replied, "Mr. Polan, it is almost 11 o'clock."

With a stretch of his long arms, indicative of a sigh of relief, I heard him utter to himself, "Oh well, come day, go day, wash day tomorrow." Sincerely yours,
W. "Brud" Ansel

May 31, 1995
Boca Raton, Florida
Editor:

Louis Keefer's article on Wheeling Island was splendid. The Historical Society of Wheeling sent a copy to me recently at my request for information on the Island. Although I was born and raised there, (we had three houses on South York Street,) I really knew nothing of its history, and so it was a wonderful article to read. My family has passed away and we have no relatives there any longer, and I wanted my children who are now grown to know about the place where I grew up.

My maiden name was Nesbitt, my father and mother were Clyde and Lee, and my sisters were Nancy (Miss Wheeling 1946) and Marilyn. My father worked for the *Wheeling News Register* until his death. I represented the *Wheeling Intelligencer* at the North-South Football game in 1954 and was crowned Miss North. My grandparents, Clarence and Virg Sells Nesbitt, lived in Belle Isle on North York Street. My sisters and I all graduated from Madison School.

I have to say, it was a wonderful place to grow up.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Nesbitt Mischler

Who's Got the Buttons?

July 13, 1995
Romney, West Virginia
Editor:

I read with interest the piece entitled "Button, Button," having just recently studied with my students the history and endangered status of mussels in our state. As soon as

I read that they were used to make buttons, I could see and feel them in my mind in my mother's button box! I would love to have enough of these buttons to use on a dress I'm making from feedsack material, that will be part of a women's historical musical production I am working on. Could anybody out there tell me where I might find a dozen identical ones for a dress? Thanks!

Angela Kraus
P. O. Box 638
Romney, WV 26757

Mine Wars Memories

June 9, 1995
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania
Editor:

In reading the Spring 1995 edition of *GOLDENSEAL*, I was interested in the information regarding the Battle of Matewan. I remember that period so vividly.

First of all, I recall my father, who had stores both in Wilcoe and Welch, being deputized. I remember him walking out of the house with double-holster pistols and a rifle. My mother was crying.



Dave Scott, making his rounds in peacetime.

A group of men had been deputized because of a threatened march on the courthouse in Welch by the miners. While I recall the incident in Matewan, I recall even more vividly the shooting on the courthouse

steps. I was standing on the sidewalk opposite from the corner of the McDowell County National Bank. Why I was there, I have no recollection. I presume school was out and I was wandering about town. I heard the shots, but had no idea what they were. What I do recall was that my father appeared out of nowhere, gave me a good spanking on my backside and said, "Go home!" I was eight years old at the time.

I enjoy your publication very much as it brings back memories of a state that I feel so very much attached to. I [remember] my father's admonition to us as we were leaving: He said, "West Virginia owes you nothing, but you owe it a lot."

I knew then, and I recognize even more now, the truth in those words. Cordially,
Isadore M. Scott

Sid Hatfield, the miners' hero at the Battle of Matewan, was gunned down at the Welch courthouse on August 12, 1921, along with Ed Chambers. We appreciate this additional insight into the shooting from the daughter of Welch businessman, Dave Scott, featured in the Spring 1990 GOLDENSEAL. — ed.

Safe Stump Pulling

June 8, 1995
Winfield, West Virginia
Editor:

I have just received my summer issue of the best magazine printed, and congratulations are really in order for you and your staff.

In reading about the stump puller, there is no way I will question its use. But having worked in construction, and having experience using the comealong mentioned, I believe this stump puller would have to be anchored to the ground some way, or tied off very close to another tree or stump, otherwise I am afraid it would produce some of the same dangers the comealong produces. For example, if there was some distance between the two stumps, and this thing was, say, in the center as both the front and back cables become tight, this puller would want to come off the ground and spin like a top. It could injure or even kill a person if that occurs.

Comealongs were noted for this unless the operator could foul them somehow.
Faithful reader,
B. Y. Lett

Seeking Old Gold

July 19, 1995

Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Editor:

My wife and I recently attended a tour sponsored by the Ohio Canal Society that examined the slack water canal system of the Kanawha River. It was a tour that we thoroughly enjoyed. On the tour several copies of back issues of GOLDENSEAL were passed around. Before I knew what had happened I had read them all cover-to-cover. I found them to be the most informa-

tive, personal, and entertaining history publications I have read.

When we returned to Cleveland, Ohio, my wife subscribed to GOLDENSEAL. We just received our first issue and found it to be excellent. I noticed a letter offering a complete set of back issues for sale. Unfortunately, my call was too late to secure these issues for me. Would you please run a request for me as follows: Wanted — Complete set of GOLDENSEAL magazines from Volume 1, Number 1, through current issue. Call Frank Wrenick at (216)371-0226 or 371-5946.

Sincerely,

Frank E. Wrenick

Thanks for the enthusiasm, Mr. Wrenick. We can supply new copies of the back issues listed in the coupon on

page 71, if you can't locate a full set from someone. — ed.

Missing Mrs. Hanna

July 24, 1995

Bakerton, West Virginia

Editor:

I was saddened to read that Lucille Hanna of Pratt died earlier this year.

The tour she gave GOLDENSEAL readers in an earlier issue was filled with a twinkle, a vibrancy, and such enthusiasm that you wanted to put Pratt on your list of places to visit. And when you got there, you'd expect to have Lucille Hanna come out in person to welcome you.

May her memory inspire those who welcome visitors to our Mountain State.

Sincerely,

George B. Stebbins, Jr.

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.

Help for the Humanities

The West Virginia Humanities Council, a private nonprofit organization, provides a variety of educational programs for West Virginians. One of the best known is its chautauqua. These "living history" presentations have brought such historical figures as Mother Jones, Collis P. Huntington, and Carter G. Woodson to many West Virginia communities.

Over the years many GOLDENSEAL articles have grown from research initially supported by the council. The state humanities group also funds teacher training seminars, literacy programs, West Virginia writers, museum exhibits, and publication projects among its many endeavors. Now the council calls on its friends for help. Faced with proposed cutbacks in federal funding of its supporting agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the West Virginia Humanities Council must increase its fundraising among individuals, corporations, and foundations.

Pledges may be made at a "friend"

level of \$25 to \$99, a sponsor level of \$100 to \$499, or at higher patron and benefactor levels. Pledges may be sent to the West Virginia Humanities Council, The Union Building, Suite 800, 723 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25301. Call (304)346-8500 for more information about helping the humanities in West Virginia.

Mining Your History

The West Virginia State Archives and several state genealogical and historical societies are sponsoring the statewide conference, "Mining Your History: A West Virginia Homecoming," for the second year in a row. The 1995 conference dates are October 13 and 14, Friday and Saturday.

Friday's program begins at 9:30 a.m. with sessions on Mormon microfilming projects, the mystery of the Melungeons, census records, and research repositories in West Virginia among other topics. The first day will end with a banquet in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center, and an evening concert of tra-

ditional music in the State Theater. All activities during the two-day conference will take place in the Cultural Center at the Capitol Complex in Charleston.

Saturday sessions begin at 9:00



a.m. with presentations on West Virginia child care agencies and adoption records, Native Americans, Quaker history and records, country music heritage, and filmmaking and local history.

The conference costs \$60 for both days or \$40 for Friday or Saturday only for those registering by September 15. Late registrants pay more. The Friday night banquet is \$20 extra. Registration includes a box lunch on Friday, breakfast and a box lunch on Saturday, sessions, and entrance to all exhibits and vendors. For more information contact Mining Your History, West Vir-

ginia State Archives, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; (304)558-0230.

Black Heritage Museum

Right up Route 60 from Charleston is a museum devoted to the history of African-Americans in West Virginia. The African-American Heritage Family Tree Museum is housed in an original Gauley Mountain Coal Company house at Ansted dating back to 1900. The Mt. Chapel Baptist Church and Cemetery, which has served the African-American community there for 102 years, is adjacent to the museum property. The first African-Americans settled in Ansted in the 1890's, during the early coal mining era in Fayette County.

The museum tells its story through exhibits and collections. Historical items relating to the lives of Booker T. Washington, who at one time lived and taught school in Malden, and Carter G. Woodson, recognized as the "Father of Black History," are on display. Few people know that Woodson's hometown was Huntington. John Henry has an exhibit of his own, as well.

An exhibit of photographs from the first half of the 20th century is on permanent display at the museum. The William H. Jordan Collection includes more than 1,000 negatives and photographs, Mr. Jordan's personal diaries, his Kroma View studio camera and camera stand, his posing stool and various other artifacts. Jordan was born in Black Hawk Hollow in Kanawha County in 1886 and died in 1976.

The African-American Heritage Family Tree Museum's programs are supported in part by the West



Lucy Randall, photographed by William Harvey Jordan, 1933.

A Tape from the Tinker

West Virginia craftsman Dale the Tinker has produced an instructional video. The material in "Beginning Tinsmithing" was drawn from several years of teaching at Fort New Salem, a log house settlement emphasizing lifestyles and working skills of early rural communities, at Salem-Teikyo University.

The video is a condensed version of a three-day beginners' tinsmithing class. The two-hour tape comes with shop drawings of everything built during the video, and other supplementary materials.

Dale the Tinker was a familiar figure at West Virginia craft events for many years. He exhibited at the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair in Ripley for eight years. In recent years he has handled most of his work through catalog sales, but does some traveling out-of-state to the larger craft shows. At home he has been involved doing "small things for schools," he explains.

Dale the Tinker says he produced the video because he could reach more people through it than

in scheduling classes. He trained someone to take over for him at Fort New Salem, but still finds the time to teach occasionally.

The cost of the tinsmithing video is \$48, including postage and sales tax. Dale the Tinker's catalog sells for \$2.50 and features many of the popular items he fashions such as apple roast-



ers, sconces, tea kettles, a hot water bottle and bed warming pan, spice boxes, horns, lanterns and ink wells. Send orders to Dale the Tinker, P.O. Box 21, St. Albans, WV 25177.

Virginia Humanities Council. Most of its income is generated through memberships and donations. For more information about the museum or its newsletter, contact AAHFTM, HC 67, Box 58, Ansted, WV 25812; (304)658-5526. The museum is open regular hours during June to September, other months by appointment. Admission for adults is \$2 and children under 18 pay \$1.

Golden Horseshoe Reunion

A reunion of West Virginia's Golden Horseshoe winners is in the works for 1996. The governor's office and the West Virginia Department of Education are helping to plan the event. Golden Horseshoe ceremonies in West Virginia date back to 1931. Denny Avers, who represented Mineral County in 1956, contacted GOLDENSEAL seeking the magazine's help in locating past winners.

The Golden Horseshoe award takes its name from the golden horseshoe given by Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood to a party of about 50 adventurers who explored land west of the Allegheny Mountains. Today in West Virginia, the Golden Horseshoe is awarded to eighth-grade students for exceptional knowledge of the Mountain State. After several years of studying the state's history, geography, industry, geology, natural resources, flora and fauna, students take a comprehensive test prepared by the Department of Education. Those with the highest scores are selected for the coveted award, with winners chosen from each county.

If you are a winner of the Golden Horseshoe or know others who are, contact West Virginia Homecoming, the Governor's Office, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305 with the name, address, year of induction into Golden Horseshoe, the

county represented, and year of high school graduation. Past winners may also call 1-800-CALL WVA to be included in the 1996 Golden Horseshoe Reunion.

Greenbrier Genealogy

The Greenbrier Historical Society's spring newsletter lists a wealth of materials available for genealogists and historians.

As part of an ongoing effort to register all graves in the county, the group announced the need for more information on the Frankford District of Greenbrier County. A first volume of county cemeteries, covering the Williamsburg District, is now available for sale from the historical society.

Their newsletter, "Appalachian Springs," is published quarterly. It includes queries from family researchers, announcements of historical publications, county records listings, information on maps, charts and prints, and an order form.

A sampling of publications available through the society includes *The History of Greenbrier County* by Otis Rice, *Greenbrier Pioneers and Their Homes* by Ruth Woods Dayton, *Shangri-La for Wounded Soldiers: The Greenbrier As a World War II Army Hospital* by Louis E. Keefer, *The Handy Book for Genealogists*, and *Greenbrier County Bicentennial: 1778-1978*.

For membership information write to Julia Garnett, Greenbrier Historical Society, 301 West Washington Street, Lewisburg, WV 24901.

Jefferson County Crafts

This fall Eastern Panhandle craftspeople will open their studios again for an "Over the Mountain Studio Tour." The tour features art and crafts made in Jefferson County. Professional artisans will demonstrate and sell their work to the public.

The 1995 tour, to be held November 11 and 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., will take in the historic towns of Shepherdstown, Kearneysville, Leetown, and Middleway.

Organizer and potter Pam Parziale says the craft tour will include workshop visits to the creator of whimmydiddles and whirligigs,

pottery, basket makers, a quilter, a paper maker, joiners (cabinetmakers), a woodcarver, a metalworker and stained-glass workers.

The self-guided tour includes both contemporary and traditional styles of work. The Eastern Panhandle craftspeople decided to join together to give the public an unusual opportunity to visit their studios and see work in progress.

A map brochure is available by writing Over the Mountain Studio Tour, 38 Paynes Ford Road, Kearneysville, WV 25430; (304)725-4251. The event is open and free to the public.

Fiddler Hannah Ross

Hannah Ross of Harrison County recently released a new cassette re-

Hannah Ross



Lady's Mantle

MICHAEL KELLER

cording. It's getting quite a bit of attention, too, due in part to the youthfulness of the star player. Hannah was 16 when she made the tape, "Lady's Mantle." Another tape, produced a year ago with her family, the Ebenezer String Band, is titled "Where the Soul Never Dies." Two members of the family band accompany her on the new tape.

For "Lady's Mantle" Hannah elected to perform 16 instrumentals — from traditional tunes to waltzes, rags and reels — on which she proves herself to be a smooth, tasteful fiddler, and a rising per-

The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



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

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

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

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former of mountain music. "An incredible ear and a lot of talent," is the way one long-time fiddle champion describes her.

GOLDENSEAL's Spring 1995 cover girl, Hannah first appeared in the magazine in 1988. Her picture in that issue was taken the previous spring at Vandalia Gathering in Charleston around the time she began playing the fiddle by ear — at age seven.

"Lady's Mantle" may be ordered for \$10, plus \$1.50 shipping and handling for each tape, from Hannah Ross, Rt. 1, Box 379, Wallace, WV 26448.

Hard-Driving Music Research

GOLDENSEAL contributor Danny Williams is collecting information on a West Virginia oddity — Buick banjos, the creation of Clay County



These heavy metal banjos are made with Buick transmission parts. Jeness Cottrell banjos, photo by Pam Lohan.

musician Jeness Cottrell. Cottrell, who died in 1980, created the unusual instruments by incorporating the aluminum torque converter ring from 1956 Buick transmissions as the banjo tone ring. The tone ring is the flanged ring under the head of the banjo.

Williams is looking for present-day owners of Buick banjos. "No one knows how many Jeness made, or how many other people made at least one," he said. Williams plans to compile a list of instruments and

makers and to measure and photograph each banjo. He will restring and tune each Buick banjo he finds for free and give their owners information on maintaining and playing the instrument. Williams expects to build some Buick banjos of his own and is interested in hearing from anyone with parts to spare. Contact him at P.O. Box 35, Bloomingrose, WV 25024; (304)-837-3518.

Williams is also seeking information from Mountain State musicians in general. He is compiling a database of available West Virginia traditional music recordings. An instrument builder and traditional musician himself, Williams encourages performers, publishers, and music shop owners with recordings for sale to get in touch with him at the above address.

Mule and Donkey Show

For the third year the Central West Virginia Riding Club will sponsor an annual Mule and Donkey Show at Holly Gray Park at Flatwoods. The show gets underway at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 10. In past years the great long ears and their owners have come from states as far away as Delaware and Tennessee and from many parts of West Virginia to strut their stuff in Braxton County.

The Mule and Donkey Show runs until all of the 25-plus classes are shown. These include contest, driving, costume, halter, pleasure riding, a lead line, and a con jump. There is a \$3 entry fee with the exception of class 24, the wild mule race, which is \$10. Ribbons are presented to the first five places in each class. Some classes are for mules only and others for mules and donkeys both. The first few classes are for miniature and small standard jacks; large standard and mammoth jacks; and miniature, standard and mammoth jennets and geldings. Contestants in these classes are allowed to have a helper behind the animals. Jack handlers are required to be 18 or older.

Primitive camping and food are available on the grounds of Holly Gray Park. For more information about the Mule and Donkey Show contact Robert Smith, Route 7, Box 410B, South Charleston, WV 25309; (304)744-8372.

Anderson “Devil Anse” Hatfield was more of a bear hunter than a man hunter – fierce but fair-minded, committed to justice as he saw it, and indulgently affectionate of his family. When he took the law into his own hands, he did it deliberately and only in the absence of other law.

This is the Hatfield view of the feud, as it’s told in Logan County by the great-grandson of the devil himself.

Hatfield History Reconsidering the Famous Feud

Robert Spence Interviews Coleman C. Hatfield

Robert Spence. Coleman, the question that everyone wants answered is, “Why did the feud happen?”

Coleman C. Hatfield. The feud happened because of political and social pressures and because of the lack of proper government agencies to carry out law and order. As a result, people were left with the feeling that anything that approached law and order would have to result from their own actions. All this fell on the backdrop of the War Between the States, and when strife of various sorts happened through the normal course of events.

For instance, Asa Harmon McCoy was killed during the war. Asa Harmon McCoy [had sworn] that he would kill Anse Hatfield for revenge [for an earlier shooting]. Before he could act, Anse’s Uncle Jim Vance and Jim “Wheeler” Wilson

Devil Anse
Hatfield,
courtesy West
Virginia State
Archives.

Keeping Feud Facts Straight

The story of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud is a long and complicated one, which historians still debate vigorously.

In reading the adjoining interview, keep the following events in mind...

January 1865 - Randal McCoy's brother Asa Harmon McCoy killed by Hatfield partisans. This wartime slaying helps to lay a basis of ill will, later recalled during the feud.

June 1880 - Bill Staton killed by Sam and Paris McCoy. Like many others, Staton was related to both families but had sided against the McCoy's in the famous 1878 trial over the possession of a hog.

September 1880 - To the surprise of many, a Logan court acquits on grounds of self-defense in the Staton murder trial. The McCoy's go unpunished.

August 7, 1882 - Ellison Hatfield, Anse's brother and Staton's brother-in-law, is knifed in a drunken election-day brawl across the Tug Fork at Blackberry Creek, Kentucky. The Hatfields hold Ellison's assailants while he lingers near death.

August 9, 1882 - Ellison dies. The Hatfields carry brothers Tolbert, Pharmed and Randal McCoy, Jr., back across Tug Fork into Kentucky, tie them to pawpaw bushes and shoot them dead.

January 1, 1888 - Hatfield partisans raid Randal McCoy's Kentucky cabin under cover of darkness, set it afire and kill son Calvin and daughter Alafair as they flee.

...and remember the following cast of characters:

Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield - the Hatfield leader and Coleman C. Hatfield's great-grandfather.

Randal McCoy - the McCoy leader, whose name sometimes is given as Randolph, Randall or Ran'l.

Jim Vance - Anse Hatfield's uncle. Vance, leader of the New Year's raid and by some accounts the killer of Harmon McCoy, was perhaps the oldest — and fiercest — active feudist.

Ellison Hatfield - Anse's brother and Jim Vance's nephew. Ellison was fatally stabbed at the Blackberry Creek election.

Tolbert, Pharmed and Randal McCoy, Jr. - sons of Randal McCoy who were executed by the Hatfields for killing Ellison, above.

Elias Hatfield - Anse's brother, whose misgivings helped to provoke the New Year's raid.

William Anderson Hatfield, known as "Cap" - Anse's son and, apart from Jim Vance, the principal war leader of the Hatfields.

T. C. Crawford - *New York World* reporter whose 1889 book, *An American Vendetta*, helped to sensationalize the feud.

Coleman Alderson Hatfield - Cap's son and the father of our interviewee, is the offstage presence in our story. His manuscript account of the feud is mentioned several times, and it underlies the upcoming book by Coleman Caldwell Hatfield and Robert Spence.

There are many other characters and events pertaining to the feud, including 1889 trials in Pikeville, Kentucky, which resulted in the hanging of Hatfield kinsman Ellison Mounts for his role in the New Year's raid and the imprisonment of others. The items above are the ones most critical to following our conversation between Robert Spence and Coleman Hatfield.

We recommend Otis K. Rice's book, *The Hatfields and the McCoy's*, published in 1978 by the University Press of Kentucky, for further information.

tracked Harmon McCoy down and tied him with a rope. McCoy tried to escape and was shot dead. The shot was fired by Wilson. That became a cause for further revenge 25 years later during the worst part of the feud.

RS. In previous conversations we have talked that the true beginning of the feud was the killing of Ellison Hatfield at the Blackberry Creek election in 1882.

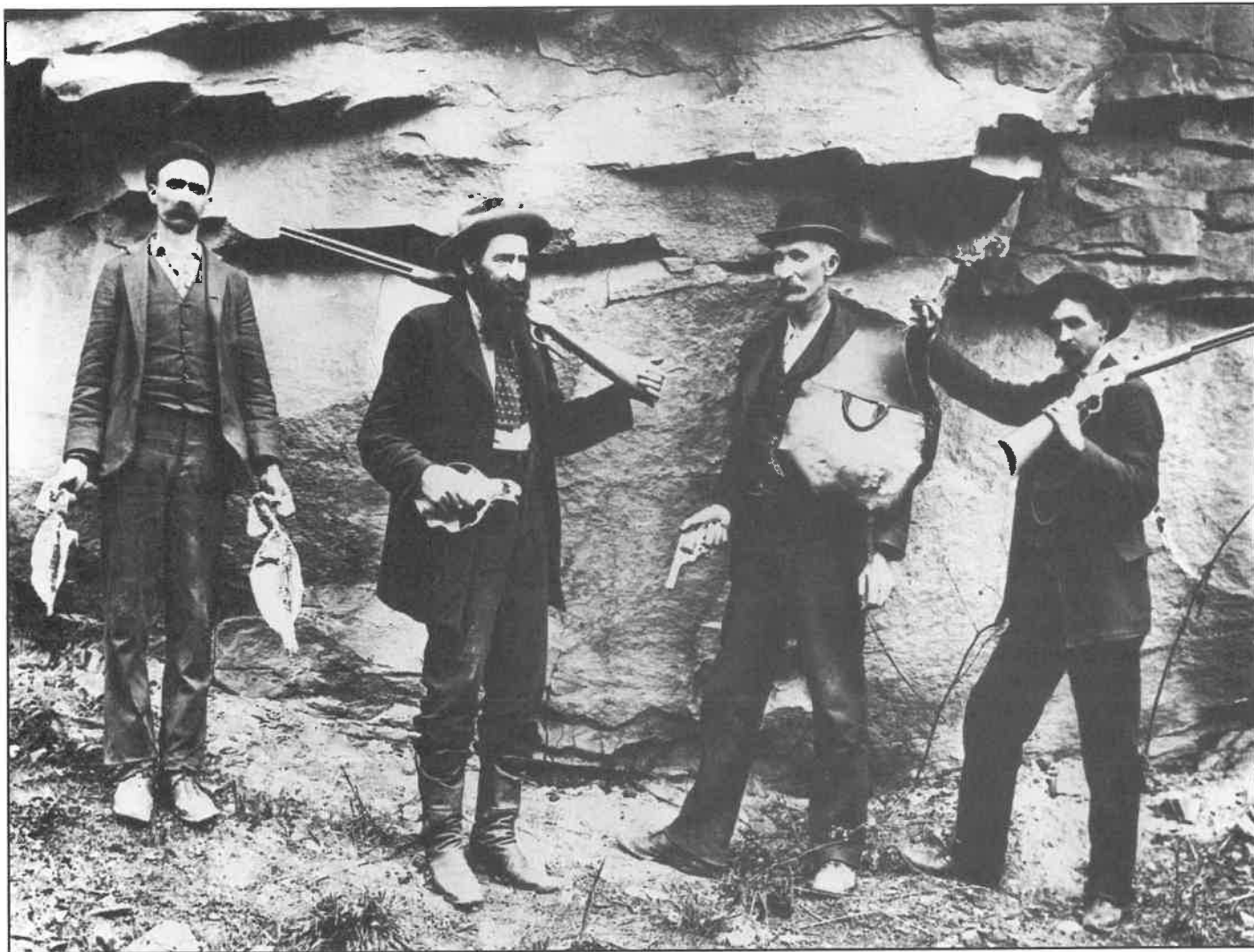
CCH. I am quite sure of that. If Ellison Hatfield had not been killed, nothing else would have happened. Any grudges or other unpleasant-ries were old and out of the way, like the killing of Harmon McCoy and some of the other events. Once the feud got underway, those events were old embers that were raked out and thrown into the fire. I do not feel they had any true role inciting the feud, but they probably kept the feud going longer and stronger.

RS. What is your opinion why the three McCoy brothers went after Ellison Hatfield that election day?

CCH. There had been a previous killing. Bill Staton was killed. I think Staton's mother was a McCoy, but his sister had married Ellison Hatfield. After Staton was killed, Ellison Hatfield was active in the prosecution of "Squirrel Hunting" Sam and Paris McCoy, [his killers]. There was animosity directed at Ellison Hatfield for getting involved in that case. That was probably enough to start a shouting match and name-calling. A good dose of alcohol was probably more important at the time. That's like starting a barbecue fire today. You might throw a match on the charcoal, but when you drench it with gasoline, that's when you get a fire.

RS. In one of your father's manuscripts, he made the point that it often is overlooked in feud lore that Ellison Hatfield was in the prime of life with five children and his wife Sarah pregnant with their sixth child.

CCH. That's correct. I know she was expecting, and Ellison's last child was born posthumously. Ellison was a Civil War veteran, and the war had been over almost 20 years by then. That put him in the forty-ish range of life, when



Devil Anse, second from left, with his uncle Jim Vance, second from right, apparently on a hunting or trapping excursion. Vance was killed by McCoy partisans in 1888. Photographer unknown, probably 1880's; courtesy West Virginia State Archives.

people are considered most active.

RS. So this was a devastating loss to the Hatfield family?

CCH. Well, it was not only a devastating loss but it was one that was unlikely to receive any justice. Like I said earlier, what caused the feud was the general lack of law and order and a total distrust of what little law that there was. There was a general feeling at the time that justice wasn't as blind and as fairly dispensed as we tend to say it is now.

RS. When Ellison died of his wounds, the Hatfields took Tolbert, Pharmeder, and Randal McCoy, Jr., across the Tug Fork to the Kentucky side, tied them to the paw-paw bushes and killed them on the night of August 9, 1882. Give me your understanding of the events.

CCH. First of all, [the Hatfields

seemed to think] that there would be no justice possible if a trial was held as the result of the killing of Ellison. Certainly the feelings and the emotions had worked up in the minds of the Hatfields. Ellison was slow dying. It took almost three days or something of that sort.

*Those who executed the
McCoy thought this was
appropriate, proper,
acceptable and justified.*

Then in addition, there was a local person of esteem or respect, or whatever those words, cautiously said, can mean, called Charlie Carpenter. He was the school teacher

of the community at that time. He was a stranger in the community as far as kinship is concerned. That is, he had no ties with anybody there. When they were all worked up about what to do, Carpenter drew up a set of vigilante or "regulator" rules. Being a man of education, Carpenter pointed out that when no other law officials were available, that was the way citizens acted to maintain the common law.

They accepted that. I think that was a large part of what might have been called justification in the minds of those who executed the McCoy. They thought this was appropriate, proper, acceptable, and justified.

RS. I have gotten the impression that in the aftermath of the killing of the three McCoy brothers that Anse Hatfield might have thought



Firsthand knowledge of Anse Hatfield's immediate family died out with his children. Willis, his last surviving son, was photographed in 1970 at age 82. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

it was a grievous mistake and wanted the feud to come to an end. Anse then tried various ways to settle the matter.

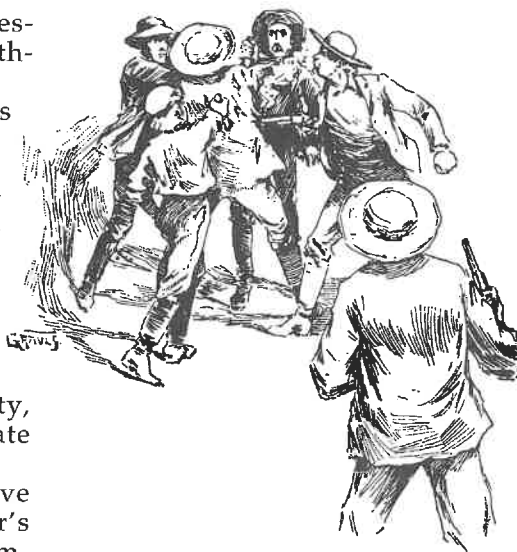
CCH. There were several occasions following when some moves were made by Anse to try to stop the feud in its progress. He saw oncoming threats. The biggest factor at the time was that rewards had been posted and there was a flood of "detectives" who came into the country, every one of them with a mail-order badge, as my father used to characterize them. They then became bounty hunters. Since there had been indictments brought out, if they could catch a Hatfield and drag him in they would get a reward. If they killed him in the

process, as long as they could present a body on Kentucky soil, nothing would be said about it.

RS. Your use of the words "bounty hunter" in that context interests me.

CCH. They were indeed bounty hunters, interested only in rewards. None of them carried any cloak or umbrella of constituted legal authority, other than the fact that they had copies of warrants for arrest of people who had been indicted in Pike County, Kentucky. They crossed the state line and invaded West Virginia.

RS. Another impression that I've gotten from reading your father's manuscripts is that after the summer of 1882, the Hatfields were



KILLING OF ELLISON HATFIELD.

The Scholar and the Legend

The Research of Coleman A. Hatfield

Folks still tell the tales of the feud between the Hatfields and the McCoy's along the border where Virginia is joined by West Virginia and Kentucky. Some speak of the men and women involved as though they were living flesh and blood, instead of characters in history. They tell about Devil Anse Hatfield and Randal McCoy, of Jim Vance and Cap Hatfield, of Johnse Hatfield and Roseanna McCoy as if they were modern-day acquaintances, even friends or enemies.

Yet for all this, the deeper meaning of the feud has been obscure, for good and sufficient reasons. The last active participants died in the 1960's, closing a chapter of history. Those left living in the ensuing 30 years have talked without first-hand knowledge. Though many books have been written about the feud, few of the authors had access to the hearts and minds of the people caught up in its drama.

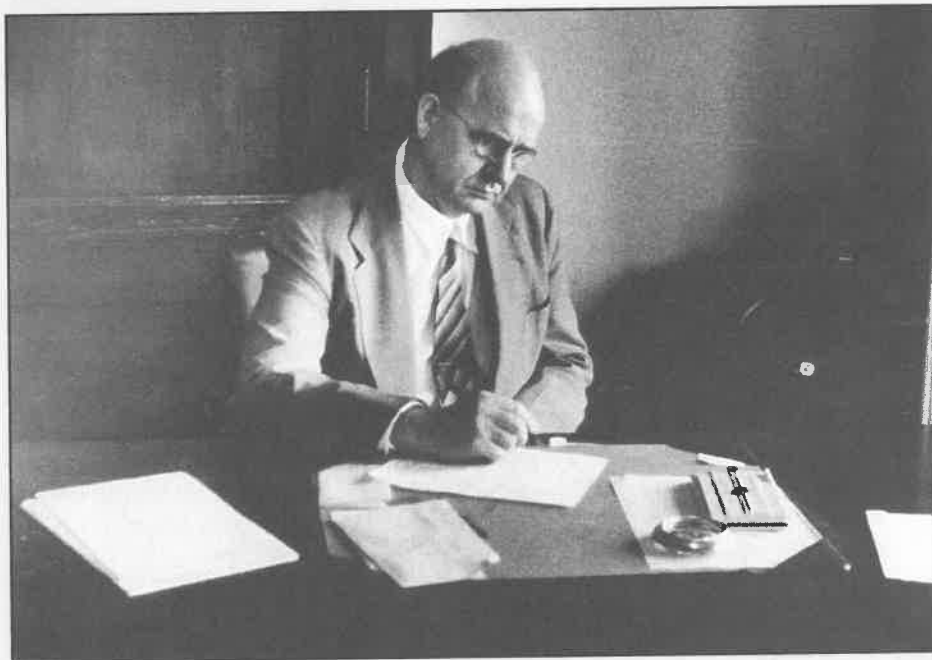
The Hatfield family produced its own feud scholar with the birth of Coleman Alderson Hatfield in 1889. He was the son of William Anderson (Cap) Hatfield and the eldest surviving grandson of the legendary Devil Anse Hatfield. He was a lawyer whose passion was for truth. His greatest attribute was a prodigious memory, of the type many refer to as a photographic memory. His great achievement in life was to record the recollections that were his cherished possessions, given to him by his father and his grandfather.

He began seriously researching the feud as early as 1909. Through the years, as the feudists passed away and as exaggerations sprouted like ramps in the mountains, Coleman A. Hatfield worked alone and later with the help of his children to preserve a painstakingly correct account. At times he hired professional genealogists to help him find traces of the earliest Hatfields in America. At other times he dictated letters to anyone

interested in writing about the feud. On one occasion he wrote an article to indicate to the general public the scope of the work that still needed to be accomplished before an accurate history of the feud could be written.

Just why Coleman A. Hatfield never published his book is a matter of some question. Certainly his

script published, with unhappy results. He then put the work aside, leaving it in the care of his children as a record for future generations. He supplemented his written account of the feud with tape-recorded memories that were done with the help of son Coleman C. Hatfield. After Coleman A. Hatfield passed away in 1970, his son kept



The late Coleman A. Hatfield at work. The Logan lawyer was an avid researcher of feud history. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Coleman C. Hatfield.

modesty played a role in that decision. So too did his concerns that his tale of the feud would be misunderstood in the glare of public opinion. A third reason was his reluctance to make a spectacle of the feud, which he believed was a tragic misfortune for both families.

He understood full well that he might be accused of presenting only the Hatfield side. Despite his admiration for Virgil Carrington Jones's classic work about the feud that was published in 1948, Hatfield believed that knowledge of the surface facts of the feud was an inadequate basis for interpreting the conflict.

Coleman A. Hatfield did try on at least one occasion to have his manu-

both collections safe.

The tale of the Hatfields is an American epic, endlessly fascinating, and the subject of much controversy and debate. Those who know the story, including members of the still-thriving Hatfield and McCoy families, will find points where they disagree with anything written about the events. Coleman A. Hatfield's work is nevertheless a valuable contribution to feud lore, as the conscientious research of a learned man. His material underlies the adjoining article and forms the basis for *The Tale of the Devil*, an upcoming book upon which I've collaborated with Coleman C. Hatfield.

— Robert Spence



With the passing of the feud generation, the Hatfield story passed into the hands of historians, some of them within the family. This is Coleman Hatfield, our interviewee, in his Logan medical office. Photo by Michael Keller.

more or less on the defensive.

CCH. The Hatfields basically were on the defensive through the whole feud. The one real occasion of the Hatfields being on the offensive after 1882 was the New Year's Day affair of 1888. That might be thought of as a preemptory countermeasure, because there had been so much movement around and so many threats passed back and forth. There was so much activity by detectives that the Hatfields thought the threat would become higher and higher unless there was something done to bring an end to those threats. That was what they intended to do, but they only fanned the fire.

RS. I was fascinated to learn that the Hatfields actually went out two nights to raid Randal McCoy's home and were thwarted the first night, which was December 31, 1887. I understand the planning was done on Christmas Day 1887. I think you told me once that Elias Hat-

field, Anse's brother, played a decisive role in that meeting.

CCH. Elias was Anse's brother as well as a brother to Ellison, who had been killed at the election. In fact, Elias was in the company of Ellison when he was mortally wounded there. Elias lived over on the Tug Fork. There had been a number of actions happening [before the New Year's raid]. Some shots were fired and some people seen. Elias was convinced that an effort was being made to either seize him or kill him. He was fearful for his life at the time.

The statements he made probably contributed strongly to the decision to make the New Year's raid. Elias was the first of the Hatfields to decide that the pressure from the McCoys was so great that it was best to

move away and just give up life on the Tug Fork and move over on the Guyandotte River watershed, as ultimately Anse and his family did.

RS. Did Elias tell Anse or Jim Vance or any of the others that gathered that Christmas Day that "Something will have to be did about it," meaning the McCoys' plan to ambush him?

CCH. I heard that tale retold by Dad many times. As you phrased it there, there was a little grammatical error.

Elias also excused himself from participating, wanting Anse's boys, whom he called "Anse's hellhounds," to take part. He said, "Your poor old uncle's health won't permit it." I think we have some exact wording there. The participants in the raid were fellows in their younger 20's and so forth, except for Jim Vance. He was the only one who was a Civil War veteran and was Anse's uncle by about 12 years. That would have made Jim

about 20 years older than Elias, who was Anse's junior by some years.

RS. I think Elias was actually nine years younger than Anse and was born in 1848, which was the same year U.S. Marshal Wyatt Earp was born.

CCH. Yes, well, that brings something else up that we've talked about. The "yellow press" of the day, which was the pioneer for the *National Enquirer* of today, made a great event of the feud and how wild and wooly it was in this section. At the same time, the same sort of events happened in the Far West, like the shootout at the OK Corral. Those events were painted up with a little bit of gilt and tinsel

A flood of "detectives" came in, every one with a mail-order badge. If they could catch a Hatfield and drag him in they would get a reward.

and all the participants made to look like heroes. I am not sure they were that heroic or the participants in the feud were that dastardly.

RS. As you know quite well, Anse Hatfield, in particular, has been damned black and blue as a heejus monster who was fomenting all types of ill-will against his fellow men. From reading your father's manuscripts, and from studying Anse's life in its entirety, that doesn't seem true to his character.

CCH. Let me alter what you said a little. Anse was, in truth and fact, a character. Violence was not his typical response or reaction and would not be predictive of him.

He had an extremely wide network of friends and acquaintances who would stand up for him under any circumstances. The reasons the detectives I referred to earlier did not carry him away instantly was that no stranger could come through the country without Anse knowing well in advance. There were people who were not necessarily kinfolk but who respected and liked him well enough to say,



The best-known family portrait was made at a logging camp in 1897, several years after the feud. Devil Anse and Levicy Hatfield sit second and third from left, with Cap Hatfield sitting at right, with rifle. Young Coleman A. Hatfield, Cap's son, stands by Cap, with pistol. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

"We need to tell Anse about this," when there was trouble.

I don't know that I'd say Anse was an extrovert, but that term wouldn't have been a total mistake in describing him. No one could have gathered as many friends as he did if he hadn't been a rather cheerful fellow.

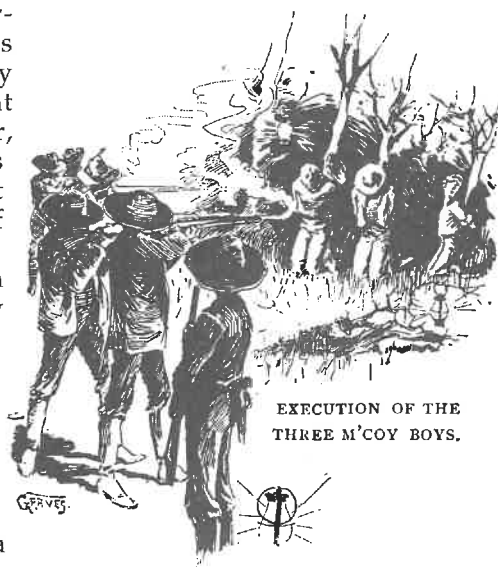
And you couldn't very well put him down. The replies he gave in a court case or two, when someone was trying to bad-mouth him a little, indicated that side of his personality. Once an attorney named John Marcum in such a case asked him if he was "Devil Anse" Hatfield. Anse had enough backtalk in him to say, "Do you see any horns on my head?"

RS. Yes, I remember that. He was

being cross-examined by Marcum, and Anse asked if Marcum was known as "Soda Head John Marcum." Another one of the points that fascinates me is what Anse may have been like as a young man. That time when he killed his first bear, he already thought of himself as "fit to face the devil." I thought that was the probable origin of Anse's nickname.

CCH. No one has nailed down the famous nickname with any truth or veracity. But as you sort out his character and look at his background, that seems, if not correct, closer than any other explanation of how he got that nickname.

RS. If you were given the task of describing Anse with maybe a



dozen key words, what would those words be?

CCH. A mighty bear hunter — that would be how he would think of himself, I believe. A man who was completely at home in a wilderness, which he was. It was a point of pride to him. On several occasions when he was offered protection, he only asked to be allowed loose in the wilderness.

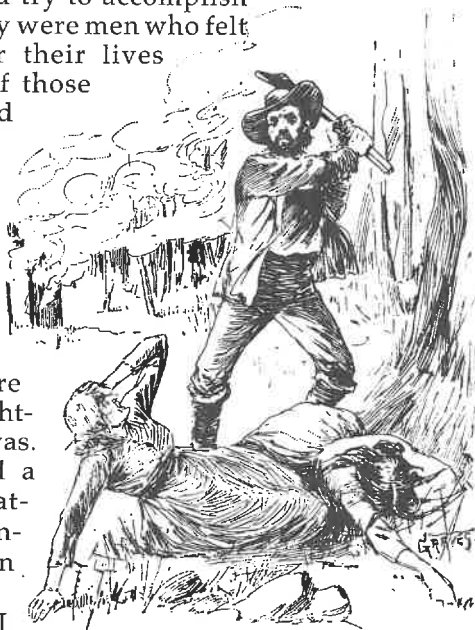
He was somebody who was strongly affectionate of his family. He felt a strong attachment to his personal family and to the more extended family that he had. In common with many of that time, he was well aware of who his people were. On top of that, he was a fairly canny, frugal businessman. He bought and sold timber and cut timber. A Carnegie or Rockefeller he wasn't, but in his own puddle he was a frog who knew how to jump.

RS. You are familiar, of course, with the famous photograph that gets reprinted everywhere of the Hatfield clan gathered at the Beech Creek logging site several years after the feud. You are the only man I know who has three generations in that photograph: your father, your Grandfather Cap, and your Great-grandfather Anse. With that in mind, I'd like for you to do a little comparing of the characters of those three men.

CCH. I think they were all men who were willing to work and get things done and try to accomplish something. They were men who felt responsible for their lives and the lives of those they affected and were responsible for.

Beyond that, Cap and Anse were opposite personalities. Cap was no introvert, but he was a little more pensive or thoughtful than Anse was. Cap maintained a more cautious attitude toward consequences than Anse.

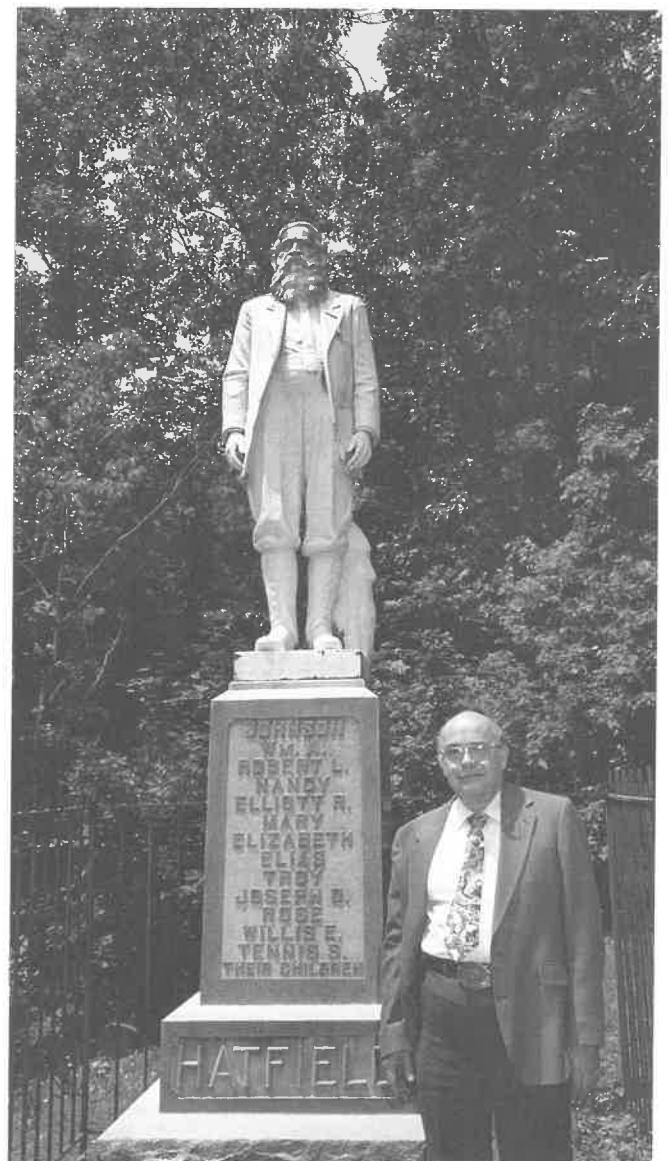
The last time I had a chance to talk



THE HOUSE-BURNING TRAGEDY.



The Hatfields oriented themselves around their famous patriarch, during his life and afterwards. Family members gathered (above) in 1922 to dedicate the impressive monument at Devil Anse's grave at Sarah Ann Coleman Hatfield (right) returned to the Logan County landmark in the summer of 1995. Early photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives; recent photo by Michael Keller.



Anse Hatfield's First Bear

One of many ironies in the life of Devil Anse Hatfield is that he wanted to be remembered as the greatest bear hunter West Virginia ever knew, instead of the fearsome feudist of legend. Anse was fond of telling tales of his bear-hunting exploits to his grandchildren. One of those young'uns, the late Coleman A. Hatfield, later recalled such tales in Anse's own picturesque language. Here is a favorite of his.

Yes, sir, I remember it like yesterday when I went huntin' that October day.

My dogs, Old Fife and Drum and Old Rounder and the rest of the pack got a big spike-horn buck lined out. I got a glimpse of him as he went over the top of the ridge. The last I heard of the hell-fired dogs, they were goin' out of hearin', barkin' skally-hoop! skally-hoop! Just a-singin' a tune after that deer.

I fired one shot as it topped the ridge, but it was too far away and I might have even creased it at that. But in runnin' after them dogs, I fell and upset my shot pouch and didn't notice 'till I was a mile on my way that I had lost my shot. There I was with my gun shot empty, bullets lost, and that spike buck a-leadin' every dog I had clean out of the country.

So I walked along the top of the ridge on Big Pigeon Mountain for maybe an hour or two and what did I see about 60 yards down under the top of the mountain but a big four-year-old bear asleep in a sinkhole full of leaves.

I stood for a minute so mad I could have chawed a hickory saplin' off at the roots. Just to think, the first chance I ever had by myself at a bear with a good gun and a horn full of powder and no bullets. The longer I stood, the madder I got.

I just set that old squirrel gun down beside of a black pine tree and I tore down that hill a-kickin' the stuffings out of that bear nearly before he got his eyes

open. I kicked his back end down that hill about 20 steps to a chestnut oak.

He was so flabbergasted that he took right up that big tree and he never stopped 'till he got up to the forks about 30 feet off the ground with me havin' nothin' to fight him with but my fists and a good pair of stompin' boots.

But that was the worst bluffed bear I ever saw as he sot down in the forks of that big tree lookin' back at me as if he was tryin' to figure out where I come from and what I had agin him by kickin' him up that tree. Well, sir, I just took off my huntin' shirt and I whipped the body of that tree and I hol-



Devil Anse Hatfield, as portrayed in 1889.

They asked me if I was hurt and I said, "The only one that got hurt here is a bear. I kicked his behind so hard that he took to a tree."

lered and hallooed at that bear to keep him up the tree.

In about two hours my dogs had given up the deer chase and had backtracked themselves and circled and found my sign where I had topped the ridge, and they come right to me and set in to barkin' at the bear and it just looked like it didn't have any mind to come down and face me and that gang of dogs.

I stayed there all day and all night and all the next day. I wasn't hungry, but I was just about starved to death for water.

Well, sir, it must have been after midnight. It was late in October and most of the leaves were down

and the moon had got high up when I looked out along the ridge on Pigeon Mountain and I saw a light.

I knowed it was a pine torch from the way they were carryin' it and I started hootin' like an owl and they answered me. They could hear my dogs barkin' then and they come right on out to me and it was Brother Wallie and Pete Brooks.

They asked me if I was hurt and I said, "Hurt? — the Devil! The only one that got hurt here is a four-year-old bear. I kicked his behind so hard with my boot that he took to a tree."

My poor little mother had sent me some grub — a big piece of venison — and I didn't eat it. I divided it among my dogs because I wanted to take care of them first. I was so tickled to tree my first bear that I could have done without grub for a week.

They wanted me to come home without the bear and I said, "I'm gonna stay here until I get that bear's hide." Wallie sent Pete back home to get some bullets and to give the word that me and my dogs were safe and sound.

Then here come Pap with a whole gang of neighbors and they give me a gourd full of water and I took the corncob stopper out of the neck and downed every drop of it.

When we come down the ridge we was a-totin' that old bear on a pole with four men at each end. To cap it all, they let me fire the shot that brought him out of the forks of that chestnut oak.

Pap said I was spoiled to bear huntin' now and Mother never anymore objected to lettin' me have all the bear meat I wanted 'cause she said, "Anybody that's been raised on bear meat will never give up to nothin' nor the trail they are followin' after."

— Coleman A. Hatfield

to Uncle Willis, he said, in a rather thoughtful, firm tone, "Coley, if it hadn't been for Cap, we'd all be dead." It wasn't that Anse didn't look out for the rest of them, but he was not as circumspect as Cap was. Cap was probably more willing than Anse to go the full route if he thought he was protecting his family.

RS. Cap was, I think, 18 years old when the feud started in 1882. Would you say that was a fearsome burden to be placed on a man that young?

CCH. Depends on how you look at it. In this day and time, that's exactly the time when you catch a young man and put him into a war-like situation. That's when he's big enough and tough enough to fight and hasn't had enough experience with the world to know if good judgment should put him there or not. Anse, in further contrast, always viewed himself as one who planned and arranged events. He was often referred to as a general or one who directed people to go do this or that.

RS. The feud has grown into an American legend. It struck me that the feud lasted eight years, tops, and there were only 13 deaths directly attributable to feud activities. Anse lived more than 81 years, and the feud lasted less than 10 percent of his lifespan. Why do you think the feud is so legendary? Why this feud, instead of some of the terrible feuds in Kentucky?

CCH. Well, to put it bluntly, the Hatfields are better, more important people. And so we should be recognized as such.

RS. Oh, come on!

CCH. This feud had several peculiarities we don't see with other feuds. First of all, this was an interstate feud. To my knowledge, there were no other feuds that were interstate, or if there were, they were not prominently so. Neither government had the authority to go in and grab both groups by the nape and bang their heads together and bring an end to the situation. When you get something that can go up to the United States Supreme Court and have two states duking it out

with each other, you've got something that can make news.

Up to about the time of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, there were no "newspapers." I'm using that expression in a weighted sense. The publication that Benjamin Franklin published wasn't a newspaper. Newspapers came into being with Hearst and Pulitzer and such folks as that. When newspapers came into being and we had media empires being built, the first impression of them was like the present *National Enquirer*. As a result, anything occurring at the time that fit that shoe was worn.

RS. It was common enough in the 1880's for reporters to have a fairly good idea what kind of story they wanted to write before they left

the family telling its story.

CCH. I agree with you. The only story that we have had told was a few newspaper interviews with Anse Hatfield. I don't know of anybody other than Anse on the Hatfield side making statements. That's possibly what helped him build a bigger image, because he was the chief and only spokesman for the family. Most of the other reports written up came out of the Louisville newspaper, and those were not stories planted by the Hatfields.

RS. Taking the nearly 400-year experience of the Hatfield family in America as a context, how do you see your family in history?

CCH. Mark Twain wrote of one period of time when his family had a great series of military people. He

Anse was, in truth and fact, a character. Violence was not his typical response. He had an extremely wide network of friends and acquaintances, people who respected and liked him.

their offices. I think that was true of T. C. Crawford's feud book, *An American Vendetta*. I would like to hear your comments.

CCH. My comment is that you are prejudiced. I never felt that reporters [have] changed any since then. I think the best stories are ones on preconceived ideas that are written as such.

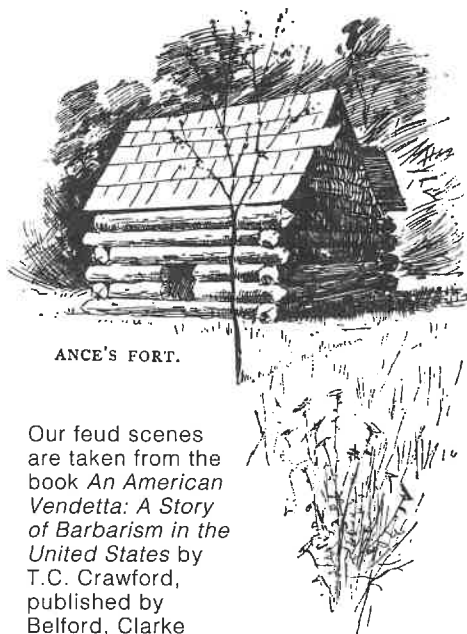
RS. I think that T. C. Crawford's work fixed in many minds, perhaps for the first time, the idea of the Appalachian as a "hillbilly." The illustrations for *An American Vendetta* may have done even more to fix that image.

CCH. I'm sure that is true. That was, if you will, our first advertising. T. C. Crawford and the *New York World* very carefully placed us in the category of the Third World, as we think of it today.

RS. Along that line, it seems that the first reports of feud events were taken to the newspapers by McCoy partisans. Your father's manuscript collection is the first time that I know of Cap Hatfield's branch of

said they went into battle a-singing and a-shouting right behind the army and came out a-whooping and a-running right ahead of the army.

Even though they were [among



Our feud scenes are taken from the book *An American Vendetta: A Story of Barbarism in the United States* by T.C. Crawford, published by Belford, Clarke and Company in 1889.

the] first families of Virginia from the standpoint of arrival and so forth, I don't see [the Hatfields] as being any of the gentry or landed people. They were never slave holders. They never became plantation people. I see them as being so independent and stiff-necked that they didn't like to live the demanding rules of the early colonies. They found it freer and easier to live a more casual life on the edge of the colonies, between them and the Indians.

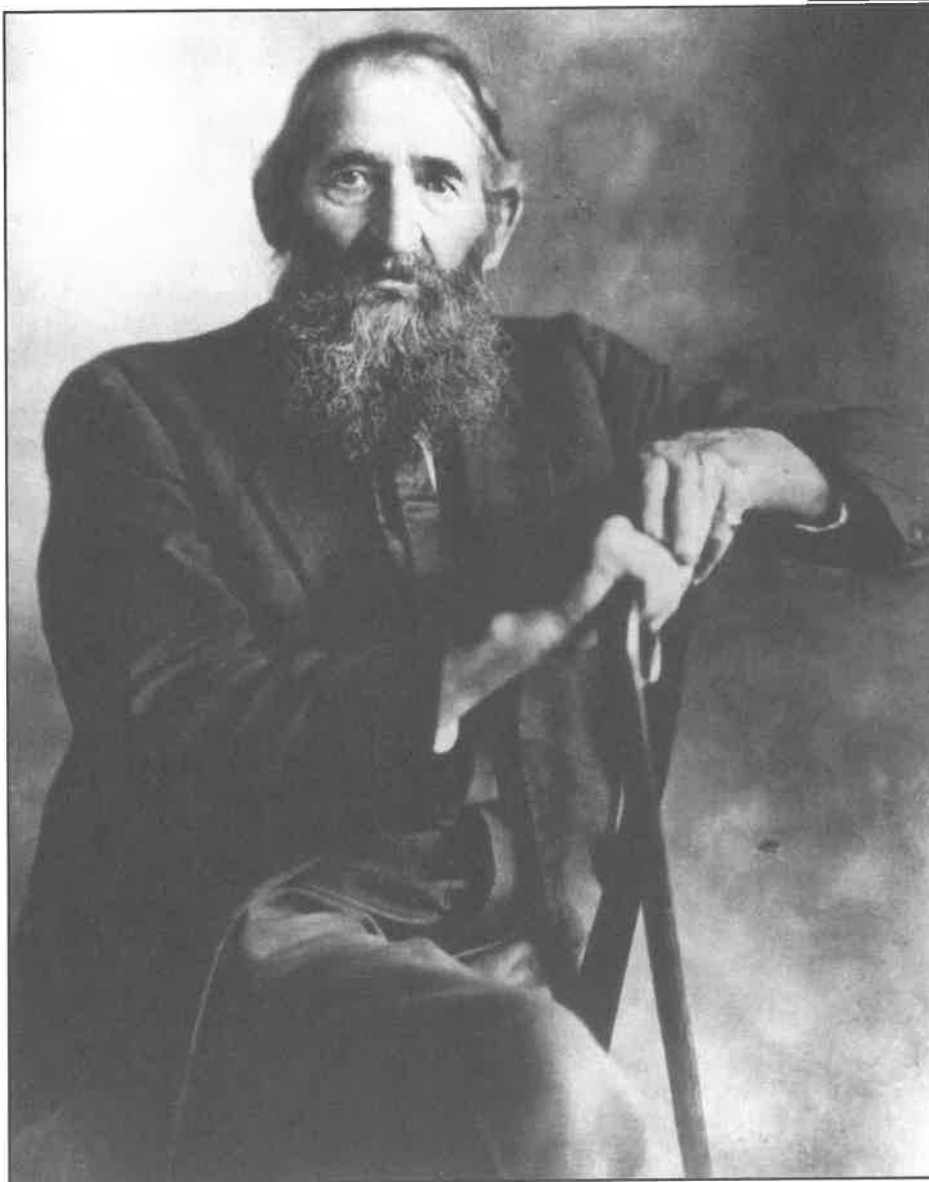
I see them as slowly moving across Virginia, just ahead of what passed for civilization and just behind the wild, barbaric practices of the Indians. They knew both and probably got no great advantage

from either.

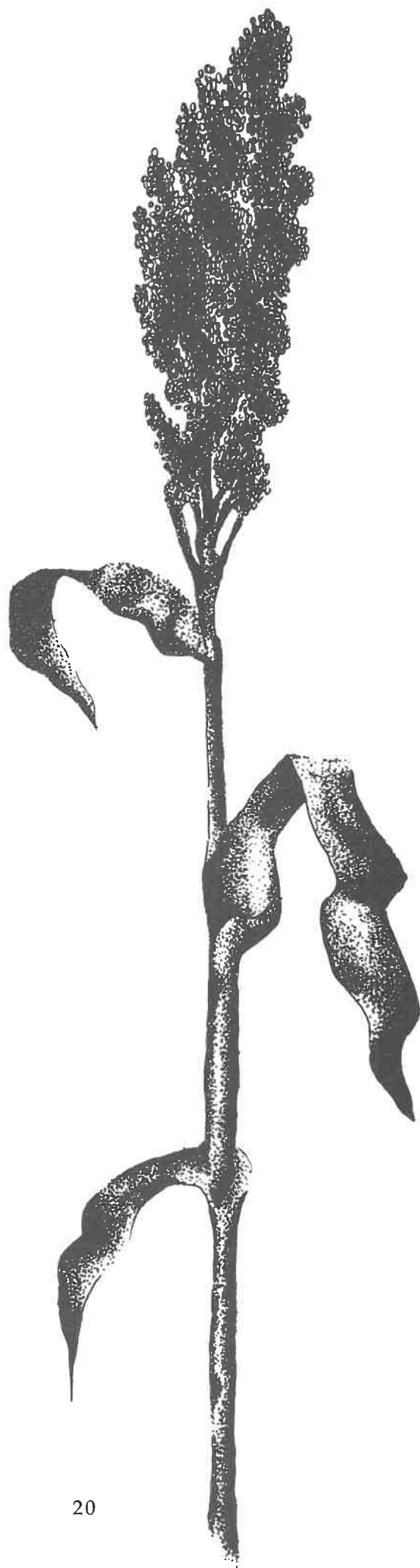
RS. I see the Hatfields as probably the most typical West Virginia family. In the pioneer period, you saw them coming into the Tug and Guyandotte region when it was still quite wild. I think the last man in Virginia captured by the Shawnees was taken on the Tug Fork. Then, as it became a more "settled rurality," to use historian Otis K. Rice's phrase, the Hatfields became a settled family. Then in the lifetime of Anse Hatfield, you saw them passing from being semi-frontier people to

being people affected by the first industries of the region. Then you became professional people as your father was a lawyer and you are a doctor.

I see that as a very American progression. 🍁



Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield was a favorite subject of photographers, due both to his notoriety and his striking features. The Gravely-Moore Studio portrait (left) has been widely published, while the less-known photograph (above) shows a more pensive old man, wearing what appears to be a dove-of-peace lapel pin. Both courtesy State Archives.



Raising Cane

A Sweet Story From Calhoun County

By Beth Bell

Sweet sorghum, the plant from which molasses is made, is important in plenty of places in the Mountain State, but nowhere more so than in Calhoun County. Here in our central hills the residents honor a very old tradition in the West Virginia Molasses Festival, held each fall when the sweet harvest comes to the mill, and many local people raise sorghum for their own consumption and enjoyment.

Technically the tall cane celebrated at Arnoldsburg each September is a grass, albeit a big one, of the genus *Sorghum* and family Graminae. It is one of the earliest known plants to have been cultivated, and was introduced into what is now the United States from South America about 300 years ago. Sweet sorghum is the biggest of all the sorghum grasses, having stems more than a half-inch thick and growing up to 15 feet tall. The lush green plant dwarfs its growers.

The entire process of making molasses, from planting the seeds to harvesting the cane and producing the dark, sweet syrup, takes several months. The planter must first decide on what variety of sweet sorghum to plant, from about 50 to choose from. In writing this article I spoke with two couples experienced in cane growing and molasses making, Jim and Juanita Bell and Deward and Byrnadeen Offutt,

all residents of Calhoun County. The Offutts plant only the Candy Cane variety, while the Bells prefer varieties such as Sugar Drip, Tracy and Orange Imbrazo.

Usually the seeds are saved every year to plant again. In fact, the Candy Cane variety has to be saved as it is no longer available to buy. The seeds must be kept dry and safe from mice and other varmints. They can be put in sacks and hung up, or, when thoroughly dry, placed in closed containers.

Sorghum needs as much hot weather as it can get, and it should be planted as early as possible. A good time in central West Virginia is May first. The weather must be warm and dry, so sometimes the planting season is extended until early June. The seeds should be planted one-half to two inches deep, usually in hills 20 to 24 inches apart. Different growers have their own preferences.

Deward Offutt makes a small hole in the ground and plants four to seven seeds in each hole, later thinning the plants down to no more than four. Jim Bell plants each seed separate from the rest, spreading the plants evenly along the row rather than grouping them into hills. When this method is used, about one seed every six inches works the best. Deward suggests soaking the seeds a day or two be-

fore planting, to get an early start on germination. He says not to leave too many plants in the hill, or none will grow to full size.

Sorghum seeds have traditionally been planted by hand, and Deward still does it that way. Recently though, other methods have come into use. One is to plant the seeds by machinery, such as a corn drill. This method is used by Jim Bell because it is accurate enough for his system of planting the seeds one at a time. About a quart of seeds will plant an acre, either way.

Sorghum patches commonly vary from a quarter-acre to two acres or more. "A half-acre site would most likely produce enough molasses to last the average size family for a

year," Juanita Bell estimates.

Sorghum wears out the soil, so planting sites have to be rotated every three or four years. "The best sites are located where the plants will receive morning light and full sunlight, if that is possible," suggests Deward, who put his own cane patch in a southerly location across the road from his house this year. But watch out for windy spots, old sorghum hands warn. "Wind can damage the crop considerably," says Jim Bell.

And there are many animals, plants and insects that can harm the crop, as well. Deer will run and lay in cane, and groundhogs like to eat the tops off the plants when they are still young and succulent.

Beavers and muskrats can be troublesome in bottomland sorghum patches. The Japanese beetle and the grasshopper enjoy eating the leaves. As for plant nuisances, nutgrass can smother the young cane and foxtail grass can gradually overrun a planting site, another good reason for rotating crops.

Besides strong winds that may blow the cane down, other weather conditions can affect sorghum in the field. In an extra wet growing season the cane will hold more water and require more boiling time in the fall. On the other hand, if the growing season is too dry the cane will not mature fast enough. Then the juice will boil down faster than it should, causing the molasses to be more sugary and crystallized than usual.

The best time of year to harvest sorghum is early fall, before the first frost, when the seed heads turn dark and the cane is tall and mature. Harvesting must be done early enough that the juice in the cane does not go back down the stalk into the roots, and from there back into the ground. First the leaves are stripped from the standing cane, a process called blading. Secondly, the seed heads are cut off, and finally the cane is cut down and taken to the mill.

The grinder or mill extracts the juice by crushing the cane stalks. Nowadays electric mills are often used. Before electricity there were gasoline-powered molasses mills, and horse power before that. Horse-powered mills are still sometimes seen in West Virginia, with a patient horse — or often a mule — plodding endless circles at the end of a beam which attaches to the mill in the center. The cane is hand fed into the steel rollers of the mill and the sweet, thin juice collected in a large container for transfer to the evaporator. The ground-up cane, called "pummies," is often discarded, although it makes a good coarse mulch.

A segmented evaporator pan seems to work best for boiling the fresh cane juice. A typical pan consists of six rectangular sections and



Deward Offutt in his Calhoun County sorghum patch last July. By harvest time the cane stalks will tower overhead. Photo by Michael Keller.

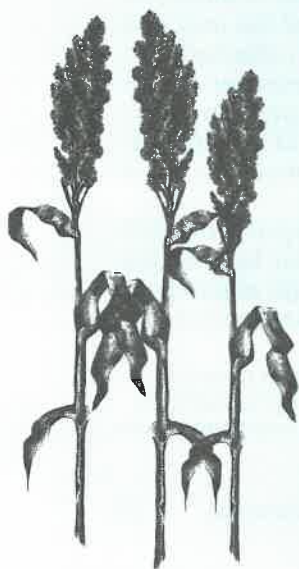
From the Folklife Files:

Molasses Making, 1970

A quarter-century ago Morgantown television station WWVU filmed a documentary on molasses making in central West Virginia. The legendary folklorist Patrick Gainer made the arrangements, wangling an invitation for the filmmakers to come to the farm of Johnny and Bernard Weaver in Gainer's native Gilmer County in September 1970.

Carl Fleischhauer, now at the Library of Congress, was in charge of the TV production, and we recently came across his unpublished 1974 account of the project in the GOLDENSEAL files. Naturally, with the adjoining sorghum story in the works, we got in touch. One thing led to another, with Carl eventually locating negatives for the photographs printed here, which are the work of photographer William Smock.

Smock's photographs follow the process closely, from the harvesting of the cane through the boiling of the sorghum sap into molasses. The first



picture shows the filmmakers and cane crew at work in the Weavers' sorghum patch, a bottom-land field tucked snugly into the mountains in typical Gilmer County fashion. Patrick Gainer converses with Wilbur Ferguson, in the photo on the opposite page, who is busy rolling a smoke.

Sorghum traditionally is "bladed," or stripped of its leaves, while still standing in the field, as an unidentified man does [below left]. Frugal hill farmers saved the cane blades for fodder and the seed heads for chicken feed. Next the cane stalks are cut by hand and taken from the field, as Johnny Weaver does in the small photo at the bottom.

The final destination for cut cane is the cane mill, powered in those days on the Weaver farm in the old way, by the single draft horse at right. The portable mill or cane crusher stands upright in the background, in the center of the circle which the horse travels around it. The crushed

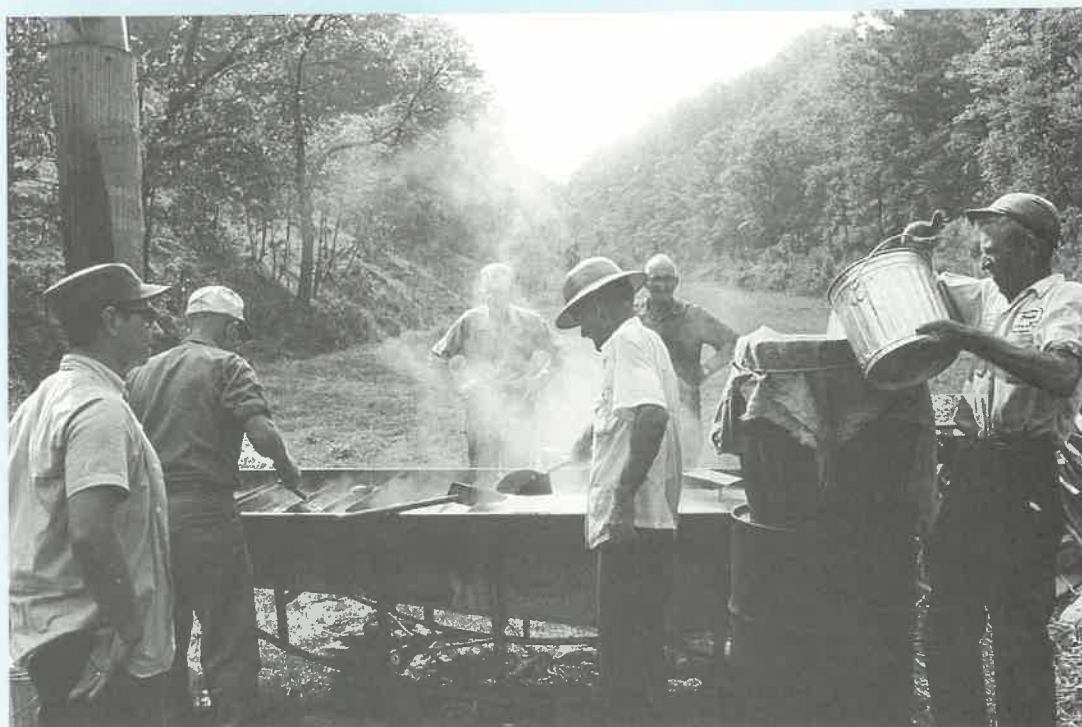


stalks are discarded and the sap taken to a nearby evaporator pan for boiling down.

The photograph at left shows Johnny leveling the long pan and fire box — or actually *unevening* it slightly, to allow the slow flow of sap from one end to the other as it boils and thickens. Note that the evaporator apparatus sits on a curved, rocker base to facilitate this important adjustment. The ends are blocked up once the pan is in position.

At last the men are ready for the actual making of molasses as shown below, and a long, hot job it is. But the crew can take turns at this, with time for swapping tales of past crops and the gossip of Gilmer County farm life.

Photoessay by William Smock



18 grooves. The juice cooks progressively as it snakes its way down the long shallow pan, which is slightly higher on one end. Each section is equipped with a trap door to allow the juice to flow through when ready for the next stage. The pan is usually four feet wide and nine feet long, with narrow ledges along each side to "catch the skimmin's." That's the floating waste matter produced during boiling.

The segmented pan allows uninterrupted production, with raw juice entering at one end and finished molasses leaving at the other. Jim Bell informed me that in earlier years, some people would boil the juice in individual batches in an iron kettle. When the molasses reached the right consistency, the boiling was stopped and the molasses finished. Others used an undivided pan which resembled a john boat, one end equipped with a plug. When the boiling was done, the plug was removed and the molasses flowed out into jars.

Molasses Festival

For the 28th year, folks will gather in Arnoldsburg to enjoy the Molasses Festival. The 1995 dates are September 28, 29 and 30, Thursday through Saturday. The popular event is sponsored by the West Fork Community Action group.



Set a bottle of West Fork molasses down by a big plate of pancakes and it's not hard to imagine what comes next. Our taste of the '94 molasses was superb. Photo by Michael Keller.

The main event is the making of molasses on community-

There are several ways to tell when the molasses is finished. It will begin to "thread" when pulled up out of the pan. The bubbles will stiffen as the boiling molasses thickens, and there is a whole art to judging bubbles. Some people watch for the bursting bubbles to begin to resemble chestnut burrs, while others say the bubbles should look like volcanoes, leaving momentary craters. Some judge when the molasses is at its best by the sound the bubbles make.

Molasses is known by several different names, such as sorghums and lassies, and some like it one way and some the other. Some prefer thick molasses, and some want thin. Thick molasses tends to be more sugary, while thin molasses will spoil and mold more quickly. It is the business of experienced molasses makers to make sure the product falls somewhere in between, to please the most people. Like vintage wine, molasses will vary from year to year.

owned equipment. "We try to keep it old-fashioned," says Deward Offutt, one of the organizers. Old-fashioned molasses making has resulted in lots of molasses over the years. Offutt tells of one year when the town's people worked up 700 gallons of molasses for the festival. It took five weeks. The last two or three years they've kept it to 125 gallons.

The three-day event features exhibits, a Country Store, molasses-making demonstrations, a pretty baby contest, hayrides, gospel music, and a Molasses Festival parade. There's also local entertainment, a talent show, a prize quilt drawing, a majorette competition, and a country belles program. Food events include a sausage and pancake supper on Friday and a chicken barbecue on Saturday, with food concessions on the fairgrounds as well.

The West Virginia Molasses Festival resulted from people in Arnoldsburg working to keep an important mountain tradition alive. They expect molasses making to continue in Calhoun County for as long as there's the sorghum to do it.

— Debby Sonis Jackson

Molasses making is pungent, sweaty, smoky, sweet-smelling work. The fire must be very hot to create a good boil. Hardwood is burned, along with softer sassafras and poplar. The best fuel is wood that is very dry and cut extra fine, almost like big kindling sticks. The thin pieces burn quickly, and a mountain of firewood is needed.

West Virginians once used molasses as a major sweetener. The product is as delicious as ever, but nowadays molasses making is more often done as a hobby, for personal consumption or for public demonstration. People used to purchase gallons and gallons of molasses per year. Today, the best-selling sizes are quarts, with half gallons and pints following that. The stuff is good for you as well as good, Calhoun Countians affirm. "Not only does molasses taste great, it is also an excellent source of iron," Deward says.

Considering that an acre produces as much as 100 gallons per year, collecting enough containers to hold the sticky harvest can be a problem. Glass jars are the best, but molasses may be kept in plastic containers, even frozen. In any case, even small growers will need a hundred or more containers of varying sizes per season. You don't have to tell them to recycle.

In earlier years molasses was sometimes made on a semi-commercial basis, with a mill owner traveling the countryside to do the grinding. The farmers would grow their own cane each season, cut it down at harvest time, then store it and wait for the equipment to arrive at their place. The traveling molasses man would stay until all the molasses was made.

Nowadays, refined sugar is readily available and inexpensive. The need to raise sorghum cane to supply the family table with sweetening no longer exists. But the sweet, natural taste of the cane product is still craved after by many, while others simply want to perpetuate a part of our rural heritage. They recognize that the growing of sweet sorghum and the making of molasses in central West Virginia is becoming a lost art that should be revived. 🌿

Life in College Park

The G.I. Bill Changes WVU

By Leona G. Brown

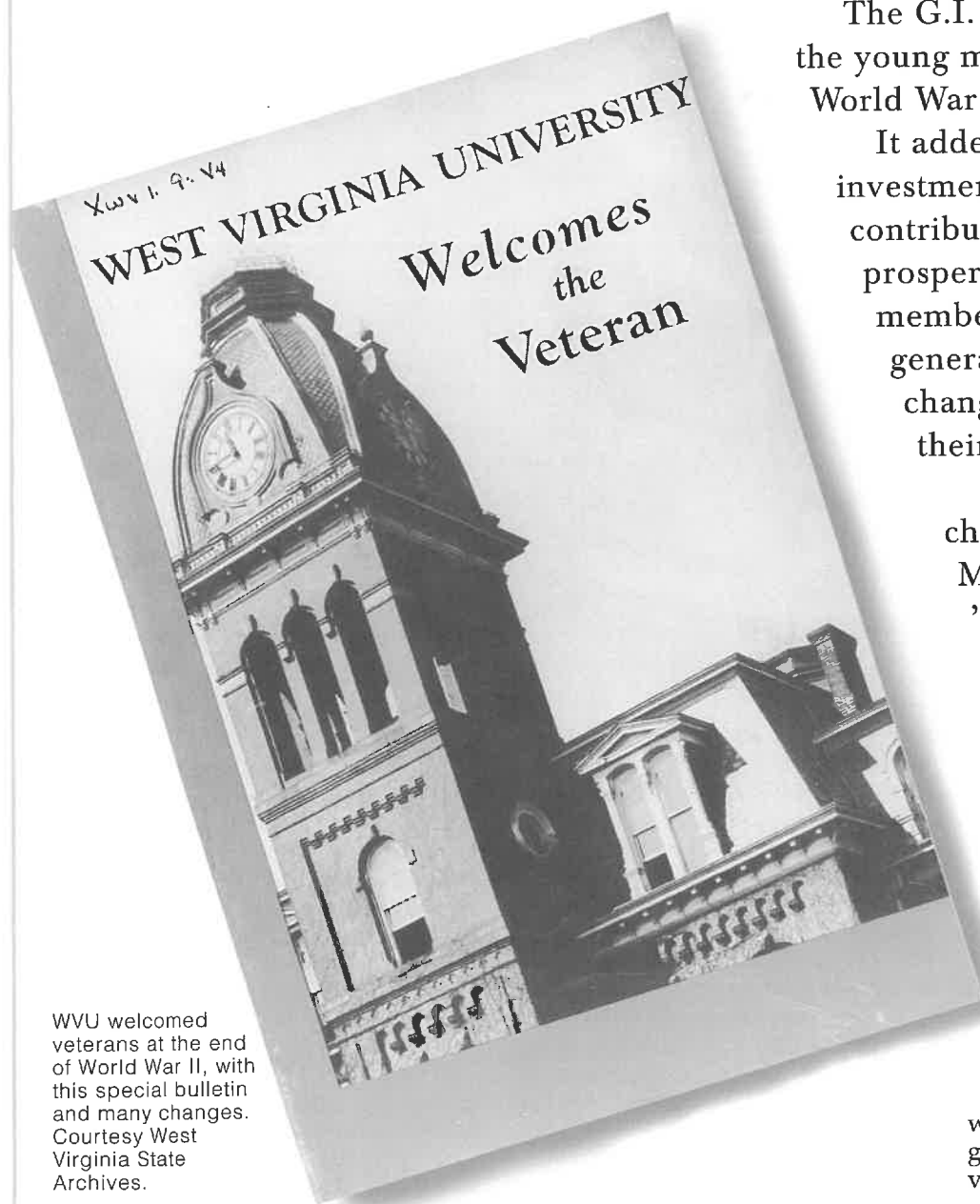
The G.I. Bill was America's gift to the young men and women who won World War II.

It added up to a massive public investment in higher education, contributing to the unprecedented prosperity later enjoyed by members of the wartime generation and profoundly changing campus life during their college years.

Here's what those changes meant to Morgantown in the fall of '46.

Once again, it was "hurry up and wait" as G.I.'s stood in long lines. But this time they were not waiting to be "processed," receive uniforms, or board a train or ship. The war was over. The men were in line to receive books at the West Virginia University Bookstore in Morgantown.

As reported in the *Morgantown Post* one day in late August, 1946, "...the G.I.'s, some still wearing parts of their uniforms, some walking with canes, took the delay good-naturedly. The few non-veterans...drew little attention from



WVU welcomed veterans at the end of World War II, with this special bulletin and many changes. Courtesy West Virginia State Archives.



Converted military barracks (above) made spartan apartments for students lucky enough to get into them. Those living in the trailers, such as the Johnstons (right), had even snugger quarters. First photo courtesy West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU; second photo courtesy Merlyn Ball.

the throng, but when a successful vet walked from the store in the basement of the Law Building he would raise his books over his head in a victory gesture and all would cheer."

The unusually large crowd of customers at the university bookstore was a result of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, familiarly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. The bill provided hospital care, educational expenses, loans, and employment benefits to veterans of World War II, and has since been amended to include veterans of other wars. Honorably discharged veterans were eligible for a period of training equal to time

served in the military plus one year. The government paid for books, tuition, and fees and provided a stipend for living expenses.

Record enrollments for the first summer term of 1946, a result of the G.I. Bill and the demobilization of thousands of potential students, were to bring great changes to WVU, causing administrative headaches for President Irvin Stewart. In previous years, enrollment at the university had totalled only about 3,500 students. By the beginning of the fall term of 1946, over 5,000 had enrolled. Between 60 and 70 percent of these students were veterans, many of them married. They

changed the tone of college life for the next several years.

An immediate and pressing problem for the university was a shortage of housing for the big influx of students. President Stewart made a public appeal to the Morgantown community for help. Ministers of local churches urged members of their congregations to consider opening their homes to students.

The university partially solved this problem by obtaining temporary housing through the Federal Housing Authority. By July, a trailer colony was under construction on a part of the campus known as Observatory Hill, near Univer-

sity High School. These trailers came from Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where they had served as housing for government workers during the war. Thirty-six couples had moved into trailers by mid-July of 1946. By the opening of the fall term, about 100 trailers were ready for occupancy.

In addition to the trailers, 18 barracks buildings were moved from

camping trailers and motor homes of today, about eight by 28 feet. Two people could barely pass each other in the center space. Two studio couches across the ends provided the only seating; folded down, they became beds at night.

Cookstoves in all the trailers were similar to Coleman camping stoves. They burned gasoline from a small tank that had to be pumped up be-

yards. Many planted flowers or small shrubs to give their places a more homelike appearance. Board walks connected the trailers to the bathhouses, laundry rooms, and water stations.

The barracks apartments were almost luxurious by comparison. Some had a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bath; others had a combination living room-bedroom, and kitchen and bath. Since they were located along College Avenue, they had Morgantown city water. Natural gas from city lines fueled heaters and cookstoves. The apartments were unfurnished. Families with children were given preference in renting the barracks apartments.

Doing laundry in College Park

"When a vet walked from the store he would raise his books over his head in a victory gesture and all would cheer."



Sleeping and living areas all came together inside the veterans' apartments. The apartments even had plumbing, unlike the trailers. Photographer unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.

Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky. These were placed on College Avenue on the hill above the trailer park. The interiors were converted into two- and three-bedroom apartments. James Reed was manager of the new colony of student veterans, by now called College Park.

The university offered some vocational courses designed to help veterans find jobs in the civilian world. One of these was a short course in radio electronics. My husband had taken a course in electronics while still in the Army. In September of 1946, he enrolled in the two-year course offered by the university. We moved into a trailer in College Park.

Life was far from cushy. Our trailer home was smaller than many

fore lighting the burners. Small wall furnaces operated on fuel oil from tanks that had to be carried outside the trailers for refilling. In retrospect, we marvel that there were no serious fires on the hill.

There was no plumbing. Each ten or so trailers shared a communal bathhouse, with sinks, showers, and toilet facilities. Long lines again became a part of life, especially early in the mornings when the men were getting ready for classes and many of the wives were preparing to go to work at various jobs in Morgantown. All water used in the trailer itself had to be carried from the bathhouse or one of the water stations scattered through the camp.

Some residents built fences around their trailers, forming little

was a shared experience, like using the bathhouse. The heavy-duty Bendix machines in the laundry stations had rotary drums and glass doors. There were no dryers, so many clotheslines decked the hill.

Rent was adjusted to income. A *Morgantown Post* story on a typical G.I. Bill couple reported that they paid \$20 per month rent from their \$90 stipend.

College Park soon became a real community. Some residents organized a co-op grocery store that operated from a Quonset hut erected on the hill. Representatives from congregations in town held Sunday school and worship services at University High School. Sometimes there were movies and slide shows. Friends formed social groups to play cards and other games. There was a ball diamond behind University High. All university activities were open to us, as students. We were also part of the Morgantown community, with its civic clubs and churches open to all.

Bill and Merlyn Johnston met

while Bill was hospitalized in Staunton, Virginia, after being wounded at Anzio in Italy. They were married on June 28, 1946, and a trailer in College Park became their first home. Merlyn reports that her mother helped make white ruffled curtains to replace the dark

blue government issue curtains. One couch was left folded down to form a bed in one end of the trailer. The other end served as living room and dining room. Merlyn soon mastered the pump-up cookstove, and even managed to bake with it.

Gilbert and Mary Ball became the

Johnstons' neighbors and close friends. Gilbert had served in the Army Air Corps as crew chief and flight engineer. Discharged from Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, in 1946, he enrolled for the fall term at WVU and moved with his wife to College Park.

Most veteran families had to struggle to live on the small stipend. The Johnstons, Merlyn told me, were determined to get by without asking their families for help.

"When we went to Morgantown," she said, "we had two silver dollars and our ration books for gasoline and sugar." Sometimes the veterans' checks were late, and usually money ran low at the end of the month. Merlyn remembers that the owner of a small Italian grocery store on Willey Street would lend them money, holding the two silver dollars as security. Almost 50 years later, she still has those two silver dollars, treasured souvenirs of the lean days.

Many of the wives worked to supplement the government income. Merlyn worked for the university in the Agricultural Extension department. Mary Ball worked for the credit bureau in Morgantown. Since finances precluded dining out, the two wives managed to turn Wednesday evenings into social occasions by having the couples dine together. Merlyn had Wednesday afternoons off, so she would prepare meat and salad. With the vegetables and dessert Mary had cooked the evening before, they served a special meal in one trailer or the other.

Gilbert Ball remembers that one evening he was walking home from class, up a steep street that led to University High School. Suddenly, he noticed a tin can rolling rapidly down the street from the top. He intercepted it, to find that it was a can of oysters, still partially frozen. Looking up the street, he saw no one, not a person or vehicle anywhere in sight. He had no idea where to return the runaway oysters. The communal feast that night was an oyster dinner.

Some of the men took part-time jobs. My husband Howard found work in the trailer park, filling the tanks with heating oil for the fur-



Student faces showed more age and experience during the vets' days on campus. The men (above) are journalism students, setting type for the student paper, the *Daily Athenaeum*. The others (below) appear to be doing business at the university student center. Photographers unknown, courtesy West Virginia Collection.



naces, repairing and maintaining cookstoves, and delivering cooking gas. I worked in a downtown clothing store for a while, then took a job as "mother's helper" for a Morgantown family with a small boy and newborn twins.

Howard also became a Fuller Brush man. His territory covered the area known as Scotts Run, northwest of Morgantown. Since he only had time to make deliveries on weekends, we often had one end of our trailer filled with mops, brooms, and other merchandise waiting to be delivered. Once, we returned from a winter weekend trip to find that a case of shampoo

guisher and ran to the source of the noise. He burst through the door, only to find himself an unwelcome guest at the scene of a domestic dispute.

The friendship these three families shared lasted long after their days at College Park. Oscar Hutchison's career took him to southern West Virginia. The Balls and the Johnstons seemed to follow each other around as they moved from job to job. Both families finally settled in Putnam County, where Bill Johnston was an extension agent and Gilbert Ball worked for the health department. In 1989, cancer took the life of Bill Johnston.

Each ten or so trailers shared a communal bathhouse, with sinks, showers, and toilet facilities. Long lines again became a part of life.

in glass bottles had frozen and burst. Shampoo covered the floor of our little home. After a sudsy cleanup, we probably had the cleanest floor in Morgantown.

This was at least a less odoriferous return than Gilbert and Mary Ball once had when they returned from a weekend trip. The "refrigerators" in our little trailers were merely ice boxes that held a 25-pound chunk of ice. When the ice was gone the cooler was out of commission. The Balls had left a package of fish when they went away, the ice had all melted, and the smell of rotten fish greeted them as they returned to their tiny home.

The Johnstons and the Balls became friends of another couple, Oscar Hutchison and his wife, Glenna. Like Gilbert Ball and Bill Johnston, Oscar majored in agriculture. After graduation he became an area manager for the Extension Service, and later helped establish the first Farmers' Market in Beckley.

Oscar Hutchison recently shared a humorous memory of the Park. The trailers sat close together on the hill, and the walls were thin. Sounds easily carried from one trailer to another. One night, sounds of shouting, crashing and banging came from a nearby trailer. Oscar, mindful of the ever-present danger of fire, grabbed a fire extin-

Mary Ball died soon after, in 1991. Merlyn Johnston and Gilbert Ball found themselves lonely, and the two close friends of many years married each other. They now live in Hurricane. Their friendship with Oscar Hutchison continues today.

Another veteran who arrived on the university campus that fall of 1946 was Joseph C. Gluck. He had served four years as a Navy chaplain in World War II. Gluck, now a legendary presence at WVU, retired as vice-president and dean of student affairs in 1980, but continues to work as special counselor for students.

In recent telephone conversations, Dean Gluck related his memories of arriving on campus that busy September. Discharged in California only a few days before, he had no civilian clothes that still fit. On the second day of his new job he was to address the ex-G.I.'s as part of their student orientation. When he rose to speak, still in his Army uniform, he was roundly booed by many who were heartily sick of any reminders of the military life. The next day, he reported, he went downtown and bought himself a brown suit.

Joe Gluck did not live in College Park, but as veteran's coordinator for three years he advised and found help for vets with problems

WVU's Old Trees



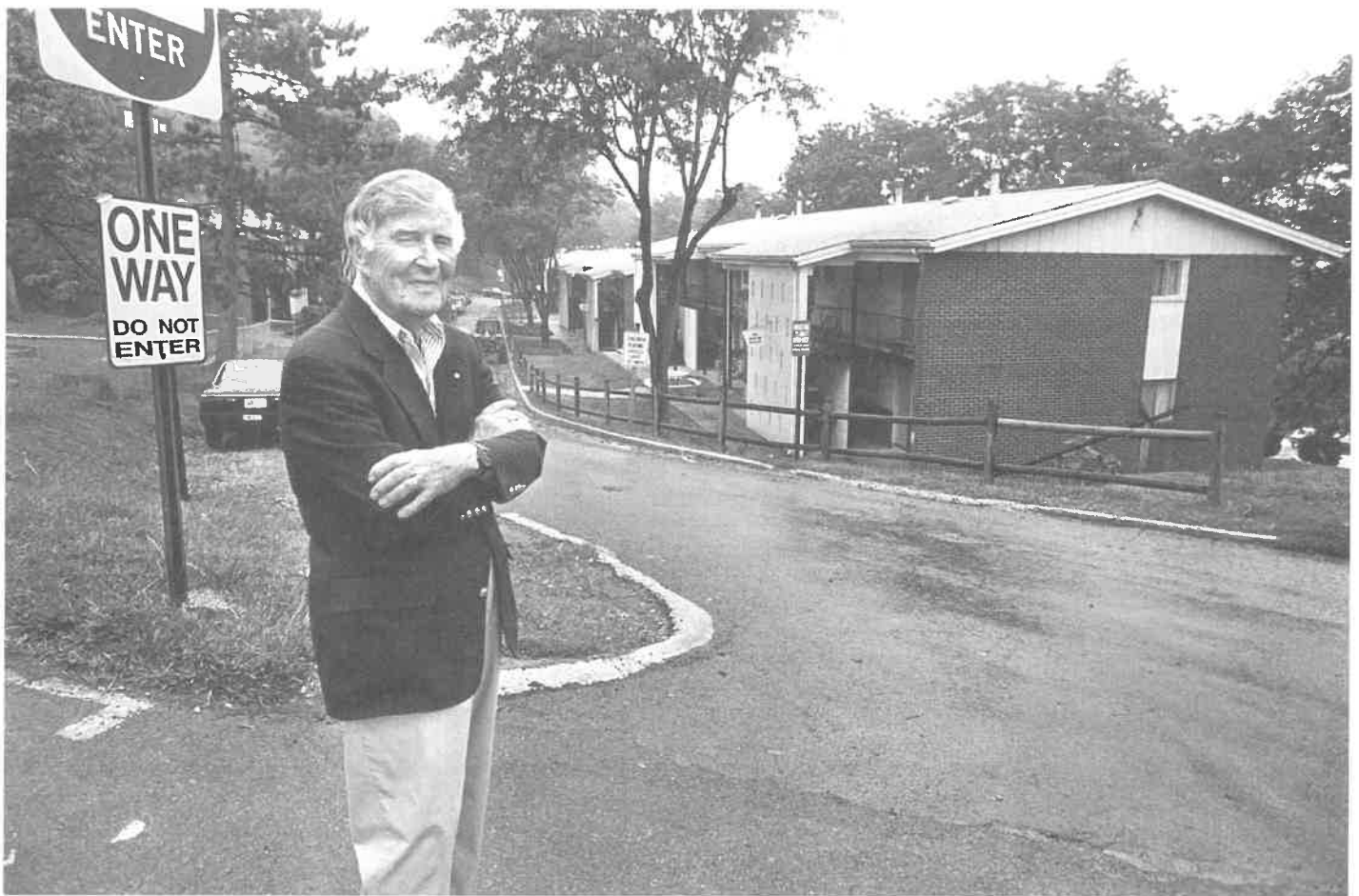
West Virginia University has several very old trees on campus, dating far back into the 19th century. Some have survived the Civil War, endured as many as 37 U.S. presidencies, weathered droughts and floods, and even a 1978 tornado.

Over the past ten years, WVU tree surgeon Dan Brown has cared for the old trees. He cherishes eight in particular. The white-barked American sycamore in front of E. Moore Hall is the "monarch of the campus," according to Brown.

Last December the tree surgeon began a special project to research and record the trees' lives. Brown believes the American sycamore to be the oldest, dating the 95-foot tree back to 1819. The second oldest tree, also an American white sycamore, was planted in 1852 near the present site of Martin Hall. A 120-year-old Northern red oak stands at the left of E. Moore Hall. A sugar maple adorns the walkway at Chitwood Hall, 115 years after it was planted. Stewart Hall's silver maple was planted in 1889.

In 1890, WVU botanist Charles Frederick Millsbaugh planted the American elm between Martin Hall and University Avenue in an attempt to build an arboretum on the downtown campus. He also planted a red maple next to Chitwood Hall in 1893, his last year at WVU. In 1895, another American sycamore was planted on the slope behind Martin and Woodburn Halls.

Dan Brown expects the old trees to be around for years to come, but has done his research just in case. "There will be many generations to come who will be able to enjoy the trees," he hopes, "but if for some reason they die, at least these historical records will keep their memories alive."



Joseph Gluck came to WVU as a veterans counselor and a veteran himself. Here Dean Gluck poses where the G.I. Bill barracks once stood, now the site for more modern student housing. Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

of many kinds, including those involving the late arrival of checks.

My husband and I lived in our trailer in College Park for two years. I must admit that at times it felt

seemed small in comparison.

And we were young, in love, and anxious to get on with our lives. College Park was not the end of our formal education nor of our training for life, but the experience gave

us a real appreciation for the good things that later came our way. It was a good readjustment to civilian life. For us, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act served its purpose well. 🍁

"When we went to Morgantown, we had two silver dollars and our ration books for gasoline and sugar."

good to visit friends or relatives who lived in larger houses, where we could take deep breaths and stretch our legs. But we really didn't mind our inconveniences. Howard had been in the service for three years, including the fighting through Europe after the Battle of the Bulge and then seven months in Japan in the Army of Occupation. Such things as lack of plumbing

Korean War Vets Reunion

Veterans of the war following World War II are planning a first-time event for this fall. The National Korean War Veterans Reunion is to be held October 19 through 21 in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Mountain State veterans plan to take part in the big reunion. Curtis Haley of Fairmont is West Virginia's northern state coordinator, and Floyd C. Cox of Pineville is serving as the southern state coordinator. Haley will also be "Uncle Sam" in the reunion parade where about 20 Korean War Congressional Medal of Honors winners will participate.

"This has never been done in the 42 years since the armistice that ended the fighting in Korea was signed on July 27, 1953," said national coordinator Dick Gallmeyer. Gallmeyer, a native of West Virginia now living in Virginia Beach, plans to reunite men and women Korean War Veterans from all the services. The Korean War lasted 37 months from 1950 to 1953. More than 54,000 U.S. military lives were lost.

Registration forms are available at American Legion, VFW's and DAV posts in West Virginia. Local Veterans Affairs offices also have additional information and registration forms.

"The Greatest Apple in the World": Striking Gold in the Clay County Hills

By John L. Marra

"Eureka! I found it!" Those were the words of Paul Stark of Stark Brothers Nursery when he bit into a new and exciting apple in 1914.

He found that special apple on a thousand-mile treasure hunt which started in the town of Louisiana, Missouri, the home of Stark Brothers, and ended on a hillside in Clay County, West Virginia. The apple, later to be called the Golden Delicious, has become our state's most famous contribution to horticulture.

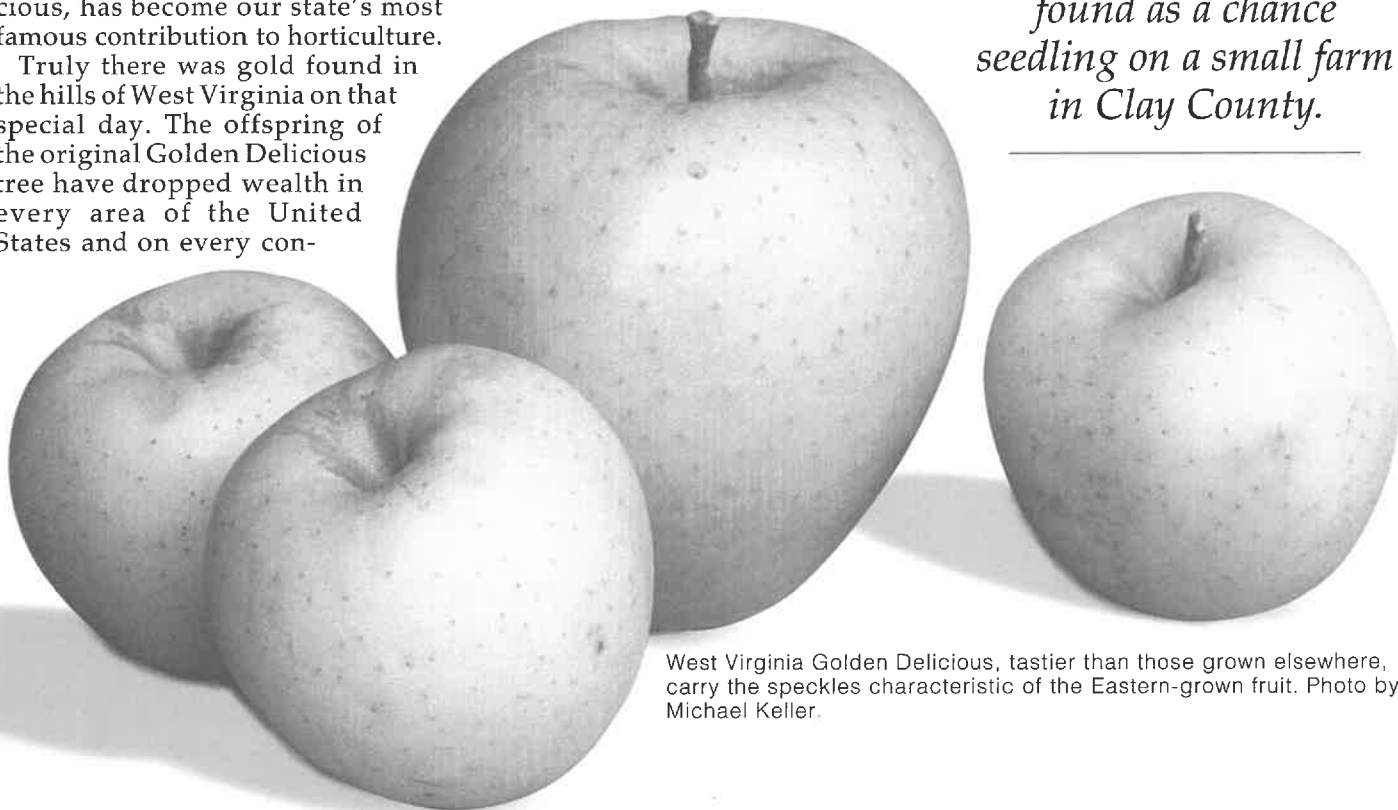
Truly there was gold found in the hills of West Virginia on that special day. The offspring of the original Golden Delicious tree have dropped wealth in every area of the United States and on every con-

tinent of the world. Over the years the Golden Delicious has become a standard in commercial and backyard orchards. There is a piece of West Virginia in all parts of the world, due to the popularity of this apple found as a chance seedling on a small farm in Clay County.

No one, at the time the Golden Delicious was discovered, had ever set eyes on such an apple. Red apples dominated at the turn of the

century. The new tree soon changed that. It bore huge yellow apples. And yes, they were delicious. "With one in your hand, you can't be sure

There is a piece of West Virginia in all parts of the world, due to the popularity of this apple found as a chance seedling on a small farm in Clay County.



West Virginia Golden Delicious, tastier than those grown elsewhere, carry the speckles characteristic of the Eastern-grown fruit. Photo by Michael Keller.

whether you're drinking champagne or eating an apple," Stark enthused.

Others were similarly impressed. Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, founder of the Kellogg's breakfast food company, wrote in a letter to Stark Nurseries, "I consider the Golden Delicious the finest apple I have ever tasted." Kellogg, an ardent health food proponent, was preparing to plant an orchard on his property.

Luther Burbank concurred. "After observing the Golden Delicious in my experiment grounds and giving it careful tests, I have no hesitancy in stating that it is the greatest apple in all the world," the legend-

ary plant breeder reported.

The Wilder Medal, the Nobel Prize of the apple world, was bestowed upon the Golden Delicious in 1919. It was the only yellow apple to receive this award, the highest tribute granted by the American Pomological Society.

Paul Stark set out to find the tree in the fall of 1914, the next bearing season after he first tasted a sample of the fruit. What he later called the "trail of the Golden Delicious Apple" ended at the small hamlet of Odessa, several miles south of the Elk River, near the Clay-Kanawha line.

Bewel Mullins had previously owned the Odessa farm, 36 acres located on a hill by Porter Creek. Mullins and his wife Nancy and three children lived there. "My father was a farmer and cattle driver in the area. He would herd cattle

to market and to other farms," remembered Roberta Mullins McQuain, Bewel's daughter who now lives in Charleston.

Bewel is the West Virginian who came to be most closely associated with the Golden Delicious tree, but he didn't occupy the farm at the time of the grand discovery.

"Dad wanted a bigger house," another family member later recalled. "We had three boys then so we traded his

36 acres for his uncle Anderson Mullins's 105-acre farm up Falling Rock Creek. Anderson was interested in our fruit trees, and Dad had the hillside full of them — pear, peach, apple and cherry, a regular orchard."

Roberta Mullins McQuain said that such extensive fruit growing was common in the area. "Most farms around our homestead back then had an orchard on the hills and a garden in the bottom," she recalled. Clay Countians still garden the bottomlands, but unfortunately the old orchards have mostly gone to ruin.

Anderson Mullins, the new tenant of the former Bewel Mullins farm, was a true apple lover. For several years Anderson had bought his apple stock from Stark Brothers Nursery. At that time, Stark was the major commercial mail-order company for fruit trees, known throughout the country by its advertising.

The Mullinses go way back in Clay County, according to family historian Henry Raymond Mullins. "My great-grandfather Joseph Mullins, married to Minerva, was a bond servant in Virginia in his early life,"

*Looming forth in the
midst of small, leafless,
barren trees was one tree
with rich green foliage as
if it had been
transplanted from the
Garden of Eden.*

Henry told me. "Because of his master's cruelty, Joseph ran away from him and came to the salt works on the Kanawha River at Malden and Charleston. Here he worked for some time and later married Minerva in 1829. He then moved to Porter Creek and acquired land near the Odessa post office."

Joseph was born in 1799 and Minerva in 1812. They were the parents of Anderson, and grandparents of Bewel.

These are a long-lived people. Anderson, whose father was born in the last year of the 18th century, was alive and active in the early years of the 20th. It was the fall of 1905 when he first noticed a bumper crop of yellow apples burdening a tree he knew hadn't been planted in the home orchard and which must have grown from seed. For the next nine years he marveled at the mysterious tree's ability to produce when other trees didn't. Also remarkable was the apple's ability to keep fresh and crisp in storage

*The following statement applies to all photo captions with an asterisk: Property of and provided courtesy of Stark Brothers Nurseries and Orchards Company, Louisiana, Missouri.



Today a roadside marker stands by the Clay County farm where the Golden Delicious apple was born. Photo by Michael Keller.



until late spring.

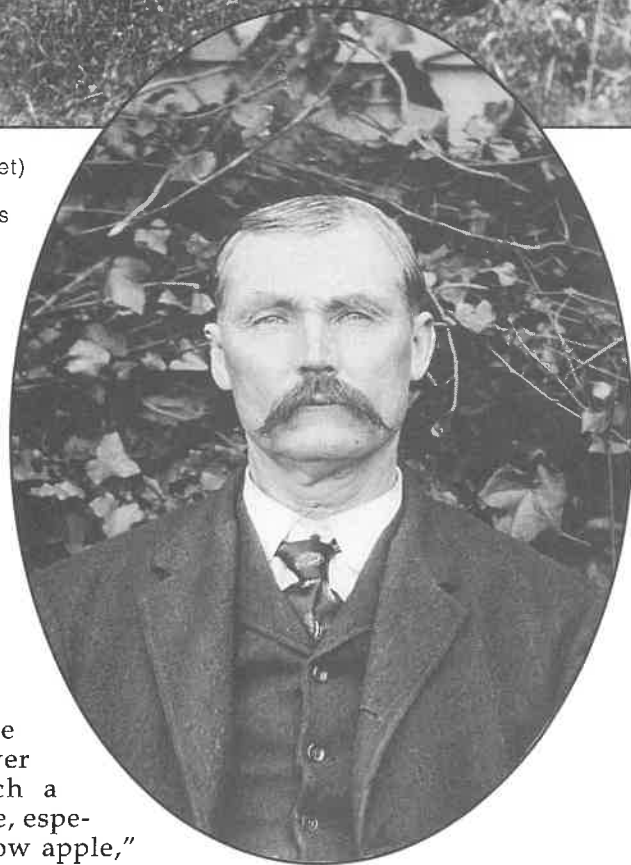
Mrs. McQuain remembers vividly what the apples of the original tree looked like. "During the early years of the tree, the apples were perfect — perfect, large, smooth, yellow apples," she explained. "Every time they were entered into the county fair they took first place."

Anderson Mullins knew he had something special. Figuring that his favorite nursery might be interested, he proceeded to send Stark Brothers samples of the fruit of his "Mullins Yellow Seedling." "Anderson sent us three apples and a modest letter explaining its characteristics," according to Paul Stark, Jr.

Because of the Starks' love of red apples and the fact that yellow apples had never been best sellers, Paul Stark, Sr., wasn't especially optimistic when the West Virginia

Anderson Mullins (inset) was the man who discovered the famous tree. Stark Brothers Nursery had the cage built to protect its substantial investment in the new apple. Photographers and dates unknown, courtesy Stark Brothers.*

fruit arrived in Missouri. But when the Clay County apples were sliced Paul and his brother Lloyd couldn't believe their taste buds. "We had never experienced such a spicy flavor before, especially from a yellow apple,"



Golden Delicious Festival

Each fall Clay County celebrates its famous apple with the annual Clay County Golden Delicious Festival. The first festival, in 1973, featured country-and-western star Tex Ritter as the grand marshal. That first year the "world's largest apple pie" was baked, measuring a whopping six feet across and filled with spicy, juicy Golden Delicious apples.

Those who recall the first festival say that West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglass planted the seeds in Clay County for an event to honor the big yellow apple and preserve its local history. The Clay Lions Club took on the festival idea and managed the event until 1975. Since that time the sponsorship of the festival has been with Clay's VFW Post 4419.

The dates for 1995's Golden Delicious Festival are October 5-8, Thursday through Sunday. All festival activities take place in and around Clay, the county seat of Clay County. To get there from most parts of West Virginia, take I-79 to Exit 34 and travel State Route 36 to Clay. For more information call (304)587-4900 in Clay.

Paul Stark afterwards reported.

Lloyd Stark, later to become governor of Missouri, declared the new apple superior to Grimes Golden. The Grimes, also discovered in West Virginia, was one of several yellow apples in production at the time.

So Anderson Mullins definitely got the attention of Stark Brothers Nursery with his three apples. In a 1964 article titled "The Golden Apple" Paul Stark, Jr., wrote of what happened next: "There was only one way to get from Louisiana, Missouri, to West Virginia and that was by railroad and horse and buggy. For a thousand miles, Paul Stark, Sr., traveled by rail. The final 25 miles was on horseback to a point

on Porter's Creek called Odessa.

"When he arrived at the Anderson Mullins farm, he knocked on the cabin door, but nobody answered. He then decided to look around, going up on the hill behind the cabin where a small orchard was planted."

Let's pick up the story now in the words of Paul, Sr., as quoted in a company catalog:

"There, looming forth in the midst of small leafless barren trees, was one tree with rich green foliage as if it had been transplanted from the Garden of Eden. That tree's boughs were bending to the ground beneath a tremendous crop of great, glorious, glowing golden apples.

"I started for it on the run, a fear bothered me. Suppose it's just a Grimes Golden after

all. I came closer and saw the apples were 50 percent larger than Grimes Golden. I picked one and bit into its crisp, tender, juice-laden flesh. Eureka! I had found it!"

A mountain farmer appeared just as the Missourian was enjoying his apple. Stark identified himself, saying, "That's some apple."

"Name's Mullins," the man said, "I sent you some."

The Clay County expedition was part of Paul Stark's lifelong search for new fruit. Often the new varieties came about accidentally, as the Golden Delicious had, the lucky products of natural pollination and literally the work of the birds and the bees. Stark called these happenstance occurrences a "break" or a "sport," meaning an unusual version of an existing type. He was ready to hop into his car, catch a plane or ride the railroad any time a customer or county agent reported that he had found a limb that was "acting up" — maybe ripening apples early in the season when other apples were still green.



Paul Stark, Sr., traveled a thousand miles to confirm the golden find. Photographer unknown, 1938, courtesy Stark Brothers.*

"That break could put 50 cents per bushel more in the grower's pocket," Stark figured, and he knew that it might mean a fortune to a nurseryman. "All you need is one little twig or a sapling that bears better fruit. You might find it in anybody's backyard."

This time he found it on a West Virginia hillside. After meeting in the orchard, Paul Stark and Anderson Mullins sat down to make their business arrangements. Taking no chances, Stark ordered the tree enclosed before he returned to Missouri.

"Several accounts exist as to what Anderson Mullins got for his special tree," retired Clay County Extension Agent Paul Allen recently told me. "The general consensus was that he was paid at least \$5,000." Some members of the Mullins family recall that the tree was actually rented for \$5,000 and then purchased for an additional \$5,000.

No matter which sale price was correct, there was no royalty agreement in the contract. "Such a finan-



cial arrangement would make the relatives of the Mullins family wealthy even today," Paul Allen commented.

Probably so, but Roberta Mullins McQuain doesn't worry about it. "That tree was nature's gift to the world," she said, adding that her people expected to work for what they got. "Honest people back then got paid for an honest day's work. You worked for it."

When Stark left the Mullins farm that historic day in 1914, he took with him a bundle of scion wood to graft to his apple trees back in Missouri. It was only two years after the grafts were complete and had produced a crop of yellow apples that he gave his new apple the name "Golden Delicious." No doubt he hoped to capitalize on the comparison to the popular Red Delicious, another Stark apple.

Stark Brothers advertising soon made the Golden Delicious one of the most important apples in the world. The photos show a 1922 Stark Brothers catalog cover (right), and a 1930 display at Penn Station in New York City. The company estimates hundreds of thousands of travelers saw the New York display. Photographer unknown, courtesy Stark Brothers.*

Stark Bro's Prize Fruits & Trees

Winner of Greatest Prize Ever
Awarded in North America
Received highest award at 1928 meeting of
American Pomological Society, the "Supreme
Court" of fruit of the Western Hemisphere.

"Most Delicious of all Yellow Apples"
Golden Delicious

The Photograph was taken at Louisiana, Mo., only
15 months after grafting began. A world's record for
size and beauty.

Introduced and Owned by
**Stark Bro's Nurseries
and Orchards Company**
Louisiana, Mo.

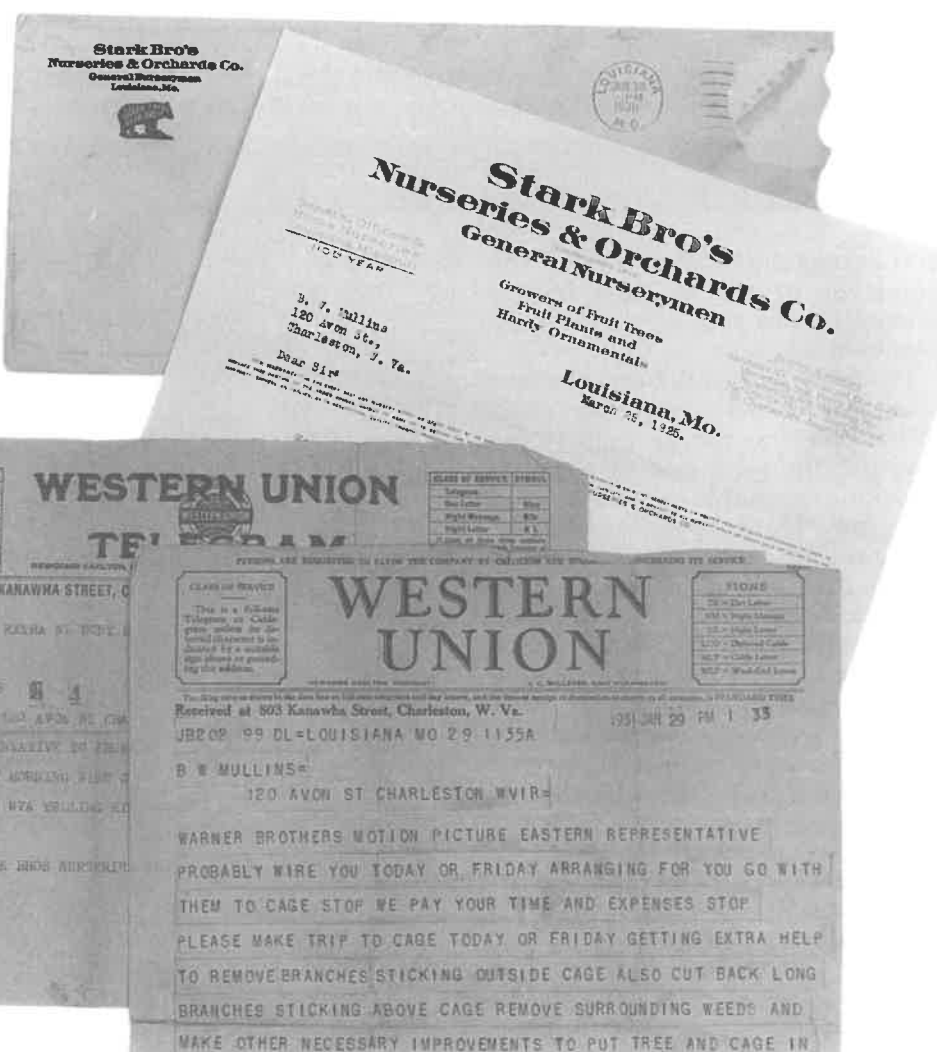


Bewel Mullins later looked after the tree his uncle had discovered. Here Bewel's wife, Nancy, shows a photo of him in the orchard. Photographer and date unknown.

Shortly after Anderson sold the rights to the Golden Delicious apple to Stark Brothers Nursery, Bewel and Anderson Mullins agreed to swap farms one more time. It was Bewel who was paid by Stark Brothers to maintain the original Golden Delicious for the next 30 years.

There is an extensive record of correspondence reflecting this long relationship. For example, on March 9, 1923, Paul Stark, Sr., wrote to Bewel Mullins: "I am enclosing check for \$55.00 — \$50 for the yearly payment and \$5.00 for the expenses on the spray material. If there is anything else that we owe you or anything else I promised in my letters, be sure to let us know, as I would appreciate your reminding us. Also would ap-

Decades of correspondence reflect the nursery company's long-term interest in the Clay County tree. These telegrams and letter date from the 1920's and '30's. Photo by Michael Keller.



Getting the Gold

We checked with the experts in researching the Golden Delicious. "Make no mistake about it, eastern grown Golden Delicious apples are far superior in taste to other Golden Delicious apples produced in the Pacific Northwest states," WVU Extension Specialist Henry Hogmire told us, and we're confident the best of them grow right here in the Mountain State.

Golden Delicious apples are grown commercially in several parts of West Virginia, including Monroe County and the Eastern Panhandle, and 1995 promises to be a good year for Mountaineer Gold.

"The trees are fabulous," Laura Sizemore of Clay County said when asked about this year's crop. She and her husband raise genuine Clay County Golden Delicious apples. Most people come to pick their own. To get to Sizemores cross the Dundon Bridge in Clay and go up the hill. The house is the first one on the left and their name is on the mailbox. Call (304)587-4670 or write the Sizemores at Route 2, Box 2, Clay, WV 25043, for more information. The apples are also sold at Clay's IGA store, and of course they will have plenty on hand at Clay County's Golden Delicious Festival, October 5 through 8.

At Morgan Orchard in Sinks Grove you can pick your own or buy them already picked. Gift packs are also available. A bushel can vary in price from \$8 to \$18 depending on size, "fanciness," and packing. The Monroe County orchard's apples go to farmers markets in Charleston and Weston, to Acme Markets which are found mostly in southern West Virginia, and to Kroger stores. There is also a large farm market at Morgan Orchard. We bought a bushel of Morgan Orchard Golden Delicious apples for last fall's GOLDENSEAL bus trip and can testify that they are superb. For more information contact Morgan Orchard, Sinks Grove, WV 24976; (304)772-3638.

Golden Delicious apples are usually ready by the end of September, and there are plenty at Malcolm's Orchard in Hampshire County too. Many of their apples go to Pittsburgh, but there are always apples at the orchard store and local fruit markets. Malcolm's also ships apples to schools in West Virginia where they are sold by Band Boosters and other groups. At Malcolm's, prices start at \$8 a bushel. For more information contact Malcolm's Orchard, HC Box 64, Levels, WV 25431; (304)492-5347.

Malcolm's told GOLDENSEAL about the West Virginia Apple Task Force, a committee of the West Vir-



The yellow gold hangs heavy each fall at Malcolm's Orchard. Photo by Michael Keller.

ginia State Horticultural Society. The group includes apple growers, processors, extension agents, and local business people who work in behalf of the agriculture and fruit industries of West Virginia. For more information write the group at P.O. Box 2232, Martinsburg, WV 25401. They publish a newsletter, and also have a market guide brochure listing the orchards mentioned here and several others operating in the Eastern Panhandle.

preciate it if you would let us know when any of this amount is due because we are so busy here I sometimes overlook matters of this kind."

The management arrangement called for fertilization, spraying three times a year, writing letters about the tree, taking photographs of it, and sending scions and buds to Stark Brothers Nursery. "That was a lot of work taking care of the tree, especially for what Starks paid Dad," explained his daughter. Probably the payment never exceeded \$100 a year.

Bewel Mullins moved to Charleston in 1920, but he still took responsibility in managing the Clay

County apple tree. "We would go back to the old homestead monthly, but Dad managed to travel back to Odessa about twice a week to check on the tree," Mrs. McQuain recalled.

"Dad was very interested in the tree, much more than Anderson was," she continued.

Bewel's interest and good management was reflected in an October 25, 1940, letter from Paul Stark, Sr. "Judging from these pictures it seems to have made good growth, with good foliage and a good crop," Mr. Stark wrote.

"We appreciate the personal attention you have been giving this tree and we want you to keep us advised if anything looks like it

seriously affects the living of the tree."

The letter also indicated Stark's concerns for the health of the aging tree. "The next time you are up there, could you take some little snapshots with this same camera to show the trunk of the tree from all sides so we can see if there is any indication of any weakness? We want to try to keep this tree in good healthy condition as long as possible," he wrote.

Stark signed himself Chairman of the Board, and added a handwritten postscript. "I suggest you put on a load of manure this winter to strengthen it for next year. If you can't do that, we will send fertilizer

Roberta Mullins McQuain, who grew up on the Golden Delicious farm, is a living connection to West Virginia's most important horticultural contribution. Photo by Michael Keller.

in the spring." He enclosed a check for Mullins.

For protection against thieves, Stark had had a 30-by-30-foot cage constructed out of wood and woven wire that completely engulfed the tree. "Dad had an electric alarm on the cage to detect intruders," Mrs. McQuain recalled. "The alarm wires stretched from the tree's cage behind the house to an alarm in the kitchen."

The 900-square-foot area was bought by Stark Brothers, and the deed still rests in the Clay County Courthouse. Paul Allen figures it was "the most valuable piece of real estate of its size in West Virginia."

Roberta Mullins McQuain has her doubts about the need to build a cage around the tree. "People back then were honest. No one would have bothered the tree," she explained. A neighbor's cow is the only intruder she can recall. But the cage was standard procedure in the competitive nursery business. Paul Stark had jailed fruit trees all over the country, including a blood-red apple in New Jersey and two more apples in Washington, and imprisoned a grapevine in the Arkansas Ozarks and a dogwood in Kentucky. He caged his speci-

mens on site because he was afraid to dig them up and have them transplanted.

The Golden Delicious tree represented valuable genetic raw mate-

rial to the Stark Nursery, and year after year the company sent Bewel his check. His orders were to maintain the famous tree in good health as long as possible. People aged along with the tree, and eventually Paul Stark, Jr., took over the correspondence from Paul, Sr. Bewel continued to cut off scion wood to be sent back to Missouri for grafting.

Thus coddled, the mother tree produced quality apples for nearly 50 years. The seedling had sprouted around the turn of the century, and apparently the old tree had borne its last apple and died by the late 1950's.

Paul Allen corroborates that approximate date. He remembers November 6, 1958, when he and WVU professors Joseph Barrat and David Quinn scaled the hillside behind the old Mullins home. They were in search of any remains of the famous Golden Delicious tree. "Hopefully we could find living shoots so that we could propagate directly from the original tree,"



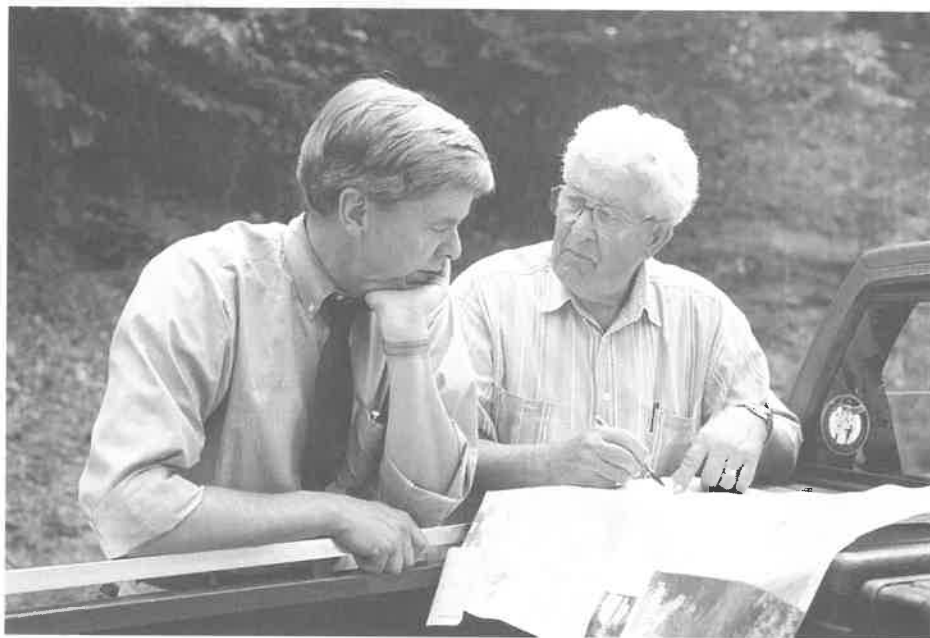
Roberta and her brother gather fruit from the original tree. Photographer and date unknown.



Paul recently recalled.

"We went through a dilapidated gate supporting a rusty fence. The original tree was there but it showed no signs of life," Paul continued. David Quinn took a few pictures of the dead tree and later sketched its final image in a pen-and-ink drawing.

Nowadays the only evidence that the tree of gold grew up the hill from Porter Creek is an historical marker located on Route 1 nearby. But the old tree did its job in bringing one of the great, good things into the world. And even though the original stands no more, one only has to visit the nearest supermarket to get a delicious reminder of the famous apple born in Clay County. 🍏



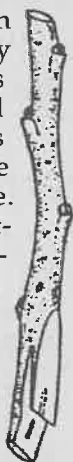
Retired Extension Agent Paul Allen (right) placed the highway marker and retains an interest in all aspects of Clay County heritage. Here he maps a location for editor Ken Sullivan. Photo by Michael Keller.

Grafting Apple Trees

Johnny Appleseed is given credit for planting many of the original apple trees across much of the United States, but if his nickname is accurate Johnny may have done a questionable service. The characteristics he wanted would not have materialized from apple trees planted from seed.

Apples have a long and complex genetic heritage, with the result that varieties do not come "true" from seed. If five Golden Delicious seeds are planted, each will produce a tree bearing fruit somewhat different from the others, and none may closely resemble Golden Delicious. For this reason it is necessary to propagate apples by vegetative means, rather than from seeds.

That means grafting. This involves bringing the cambium layer of a scion (the wood of the new variety) in contact with the cambium of the rootstock (the tree being grafted to) and attaching it firmly in place until the two grow together. The cambium is the living cells between the bark and the sapwood. This special layer is responsible for the uptake of water and nutrients.



apple rootstock that we have used for nearly 100 years," Patrick elaborated. "Basically it's the same crabapple tree that many homeowners use in their landscape."

Whip grafts are an easy propagation method but be sure to get the two shoots, the rootstock and the scion, of similar size. A special split is made on each, as shown in the illustration, and then they are joined like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The scion wood should be collected from the previous year's growth and possess two to six buds.

From "Grafting: An Introduction To The Art", West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Whip-grafting is the most common method in fruit tree propagation, and has been for a long time. When the first branches were taken from the original Clay County Golden Delicious tree in 1914, they were whip-grafted to Stark Brothers rootstock trees. "The whip grafting procedure today is the same as it was when Paul Stark carried the Golden Delicious scion wood back to Missouri," Bob Patrick recently assured me. Patrick is now the field supervisor for Stark Brothers Nursery.

"We use the same French Crab-

Bob Patrick, who has worked for Stark for 25 years, cautions backyard horticulturists on two aspects of grafting: "First, make sure the scion wood is alive and viable. You can do this by lightly scratching under the tree's bark to expose a live green cambium layer. Second, make sure the union is a match, that the cambium of the scion wood is in direct line with the cambium of the rootstock."

Complete information about grafting techniques and the management of fruit trees may be obtained by contacting the County Extension Agent in your county.

— John L. Marra

Something Abo

Curb Service in Huntington

By James E. Casto

Photographs by Michael Keller



John Mandt, Sr., has made a good business putting Huntington teenagers to work. So did his father and grandfather, and now his son.

Food service is a tough business to be in. Restaurants come and go, but precious few last as long as Huntington's oldest hot dog stand.

Stewart's Drive-In, now run by the third and fourth generations of the original family, is still in business at the same location after 63 years.

And it's still a doggone good place for lunch.

Most of us associate drive-in restaurants with the 1950's, with cars sporting huge tail fins, with Elvis, rock'n'roll, flattop haircuts, letter sweaters and poodle skirts.

But Stewart's Drive-In in Huntington had already been in business for nearly 20 years before the 1950's arrived. And today, Stewart's is still in business, still in the same location and still even in the same tiny building where it opened in 1932.

Frankly, the place doesn't look like much: A small frame building painted a bright orange, set down on a square of blacktop and

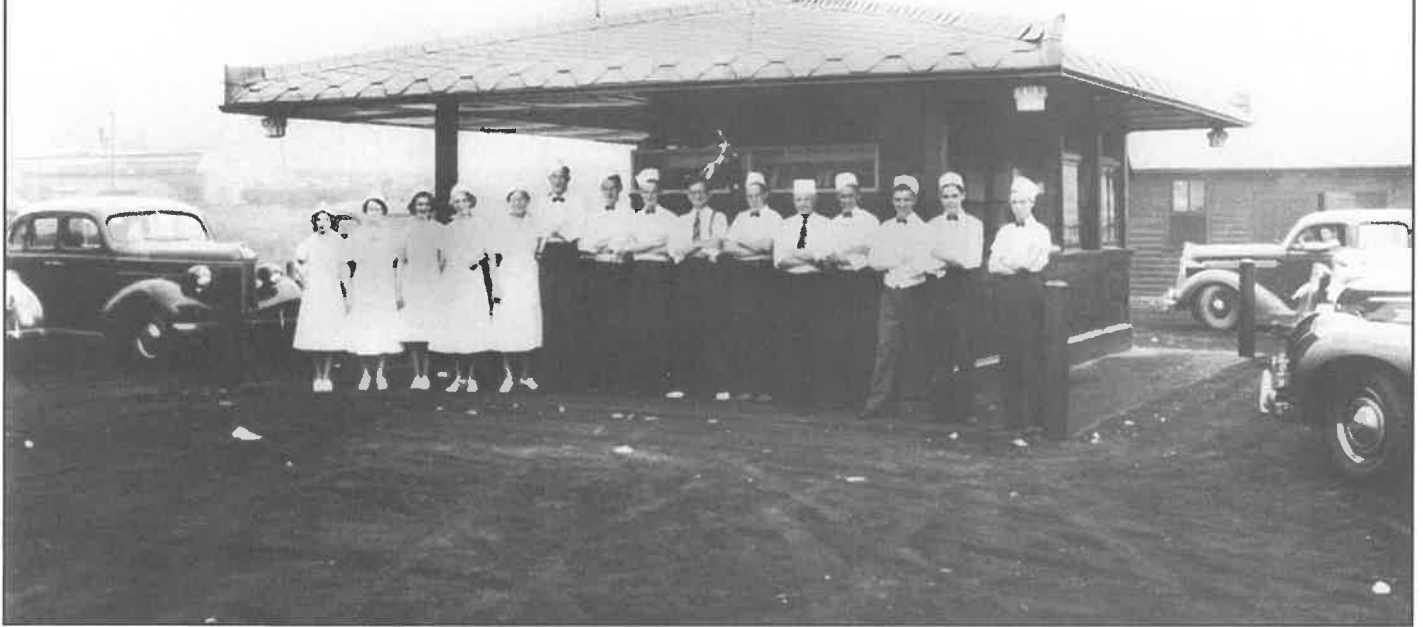
surrounded on three sides by a factory complex. But if you talk for very long with a transplanted Huntington resident, be it in Peoria or Paris, sooner or later he or she will ask: "Is Stewart's still there?"

Stewart's fans are a faithful flock. As the jingle in the drive-in's radio and TV ads puts it: "There's something about a Stewart's hot dog." And that something keeps them coming back.

In 1945, a G.I. sent a V-Mail message to "Mr. Stewart's Curb Service Restaurant." The postman had no trouble delivering it. Giving his address as simply "China," the hungry serviceman noted that he missed many things about America, "and one of them is Stewart's hot dogs and root beer. I wish you would reserve about 25 hot dogs and about 15 root beers. It's a little early to get them ready because I'll probably be here a year."

Dave Peyton, a reporter and columnist for the Huntington

ut Stewart's



The faces change but the idea — and the building — stay the same. The early photo shows founders Gertrude (fourth from left) and J.L. Mandt (striped tie, no hat), with cooks and curb boys, in 1938. The recent photo shows John Mandt, Sr., (dark pants) and John Jr., by his side, the third and fourth generations in the family business. Old photo courtesy John Mandt, Sr., recent photo courtesy Huntington *Herald Dispatch*.

Herald-Dispatch, recalls that when he saw his wife, Susie, after she had just given birth to their son, Davie, he asked her if there was anything he could get for her. "Yes," she said, "I want two Stewart's hot dogs." The hot dogs were fetched and the new mother pronounced them delicious.

Huntington's gift to the world of comedy, Soupy Sales, always makes a point of dropping in at Stewart's when he's back in town. "Stewart's has the best hot dogs in the whole world," Soupy says. "And believe me, I'm an authority on the subject. I've eaten hot dogs in 43 states and several countries."

Today, Stewart's is operated by a father and son team, John Mandt, Sr. and Jr., who are the drive-in restaurant's third and fourth generation of owners.



"This is a family business that was started by my grandfather, John Lewis Mandt, and my grandmother, Gertrude," explains John Mandt, Sr. "My grandparents were both born in Germany and came over to this country shortly before the turn of the century. My grandfather had been in the coal business in Germany, and so he did the same thing over here. But he didn't do

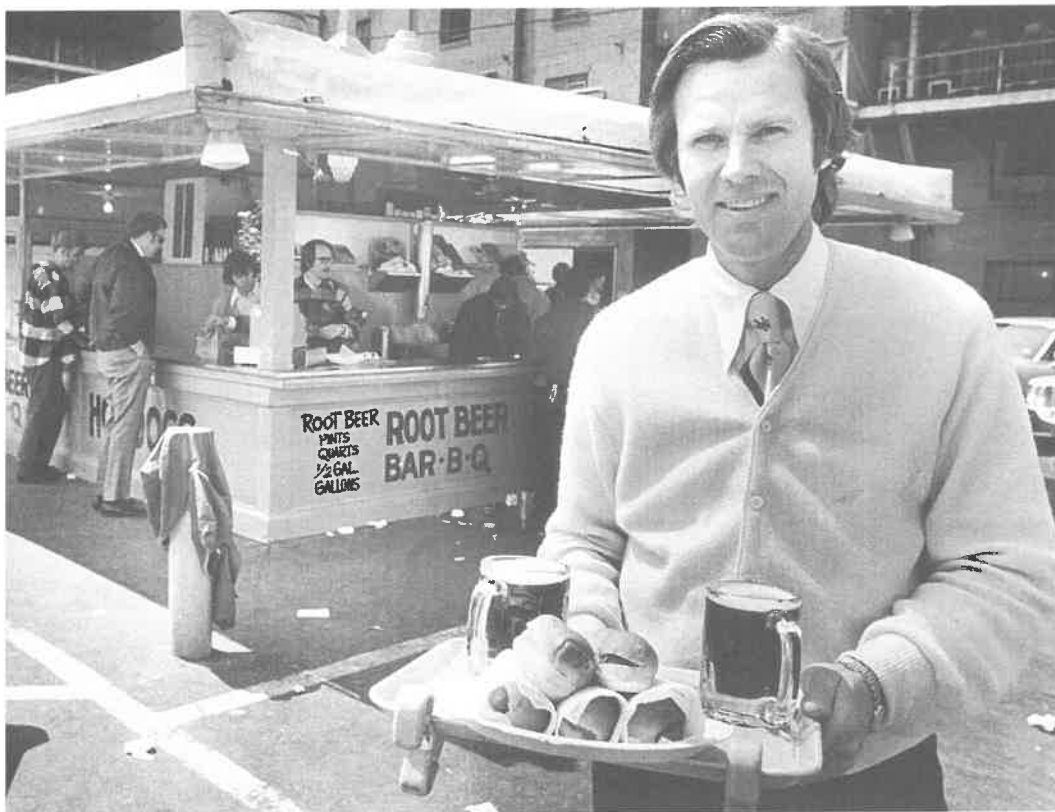
well and his business failed."

In 1931, the Mandts were operating a little gasoline station in northern Ohio, on U.S. Route 30, the old Lincoln Highway.

"My grandmother had a little restaurant hooked onto the gas station, so when you stopped to get gas you also could get a quick sandwich and then be on your way. Soon they found they were making more



The boss can still hustle the parking lot, as the above photo of John Mandt, Sr., shows. The photo below shows him delivering an order years ago. Courtesy *Herald Dispatch*, 1975.



money in the little restaurant than they were at the gas station."

It was at this point that John Mandt met Frank Stewart.

In 1955, Ray Kroc, a former milkshake-machine salesman, opened his first McDonald's restaurant. He went on to franchise thousands of others, not just in this country but around the world. But Kroc didn't invent food franchising. People have been doing it for years. And one of those people was Frank Stewart.

Where Kroc's claim to fame was hamburgers, Stewart's was root beer.

Beverages made from roots, barks and herbs have been produced for centuries by innkeepers and druggists. However, these early root-based beverages were mostly perceived to be medicinal in nature. It wasn't until 1876 that a root beer as we know it today was introduced at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. The original target market for this new root beverage was Pennsylvania's rugged coal miners.

Stewart's brand root beer was developed in draft form in 1924 by Stewart, an Ohio school teacher, who went on to franchise root beer stands throughout a five-state area. Among those buying franchises from Stewart were the Mandts, who decided to move to Huntington to launch their new venture.

Today, the Huntington location is one of only a handful of Stewart's stands still in operation. Nowadays Stewart's Root Beer is mostly sold in bottles, produced by Cable Car Beverage Corporation of Denver, Colorado.

John Mandt, Sr., explains his grandfather's decision to move from Ohio to Huntington. "His brothers already were in this area, so the move would put them all closer together," he says. "Besides, he had been to Huntington and liked what he saw here."

J. L. and Gertrude Mandt, along with their son, Harry, arrived in Huntington in early 1932. They bought a little piece of land on 5th Avenue and there built, at a cost of \$1,750, a tiny building. The closest neighbor to the west was the Standard Ultramarine and Color Com-

pany, then almost a block away at 24th Street. Looking to the east, there were no buildings in sight. When the circus came to town and pitched its big top at 29th Street, the tent could clearly be seen from the root beer stand.

In future years, Standard Ultramarine would expand and eventually all but encircle Stewart's. Relations between the big plant and the little restaurant weren't always good. One of the byproducts of the plant's dye-making process was a foul, sulfur-like smell which often hung in the air around the drive-in. The Mandts rejected repeated offers to sell out to the plant.

"Sometimes, it seemed that if they couldn't buy us out, they were determined to smell us out," says John Mandt, Sr. He hastens to add that today relations are fine between

When his wife had just given birth to their son, he asked if there was anything he could get her. "Yes," she said, "I want two Stewart's hot dogs."

Stewart's and the plant's current owner, BASF. And the smell is mostly history.

The first year it was open, the stand sold only root beer and popcorn. Total sales for the first day came to only 50 cents. "Looking back over the early records," says John Mandt, Sr., "you can see that in their first year my grandparents seldom did more than three or four dollars a day in business. If they had a \$14 day on a weekend, that was a big day. That wasn't profit, mind you. That was total sales. Of course, the root beer was a nickel and the popcorn was a nickel, so you had to sell a lot of both to add up to very much."

The Mandts decided they needed to add something more to the menu, and the choice they eventually made was what has made Stewart's a local legend — hot dogs.

At first, the stand served its hot dogs with mustard and onions. But then Gertrude came up with a spe-

cial sauce recipe. That secret sauce made all the difference in the world. The business began growing despite the Depression. And eventually it thrived beyond the Mandts' wildest dreams.

That first year, the stand employed one boy to take orders from motorists, then put the food on a tray and carry it to their car when it was ready. As business expanded, more employees were hired. In a 1938 photo of the stand, J. L. Mandt proudly posed with nine curb boys, each clad in white shirt and bow tie, and Gertrude joined four women who worked in the kitchen, all wearing white uniforms.

Most of the curb boys were high schoolers, with a smattering of college students thrown in. J. L. Mandt encouraged them to stay in school. On May 24, 1942, he had just typed a note to one, congratulating him on his graduation from high school, when he was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage. Two of the boys carried him out of the office, to the Mandt home, where he died shortly afterwards.

When J. L. died in 1942, son Harry and his wife, Isabelle, took over Stewart's Drive-In. Gertrude taught Isabelle the secret sauce recipe. Isabelle taught Harry. Harry taught John, Sr. And now John, Sr., has taught his son. John, Sr., emphasizes that he still uses the same ingredients that his grandmother used. He even uses the same measuring spoon. And the recipe remains a closely guarded family secret.

Like many businesses, Stewart's encountered tough going during the World War II years. The stand was



Kelly Broce was among the young people working at Stewart's in the summer of '95. Here she readies an order.

a seasonal business, closing each winter. But shortages prevented the Mandts from opening full-time during several summers. Sugar was in short supply, so was meat. Branching out, J. L. Mandt had opened a second stand on Piedmont Road in West Huntington. But his death, combined with the war-time shortages, forced the family to close that location and concentrate on their original 5th Avenue stand.

John Mandt, Sr., literally grew up at Stewart's. "When I was a little boy, I'd get a cigar box and put some candy bars in it and I'd go over to Standard Ultramarine and walk around the plant, selling the

candy to the guys who worked there. It was a pretty good deal, because I'd get the candy for free — and I'd always make sure I'd have some candy left that I could eat."

When he was 13, he started working a regular schedule at the stand. "Dad drew up my schedule and, as I look back on it, I realize it would have been easy for me to say I didn't want to work that day, I wanted to play instead. But Dad made me follow that schedule, and I appreciate that now. He made me work, made me realize what responsibility is."

Harry Mandt retired from the business in 1972 and died in 1991. Isabelle lives in Miami Shores, Florida, where she and her husband had wintered during the years they operated the business. Harry suffered from asthma and bronchitis and couldn't stand the winters in West Virginia.

Many people in Huntington thought the Mandts operated another hot dog stand in Florida during the winters. Not so, says son John. They simply rested from the grueling 16-hour days they spent each summer, peddling hot dogs and root beer in Huntington. In fact, Isabelle reports she has never made a batch of the famed hot dog sauce in Florida.

Like J. L. and Gertrude, Harry and Isabelle treated their young employees like family. Isabelle recalls that many of the youngsters would come to them with problems as if they were their parents. "We'd take them home from work," she says. "We'd sing and laugh and have a good time."

When Stewart's celebrated its 50th anniversary it invited many of its former curb boys back for the day, and the Mandts marked the stand's 60th anniversary in 1992 by selling their hot dogs at five cents — the same price as when the drive-in first started selling them. Over the course of the day, they sold 29,000 hot dogs at the original 5th Avenue stand and two other locations they've opened in recent years — on Adams Avenue at 1st Street and in Kenova at 1025 Oak Street.

Over the years, little has changed at Stewart's. And that's by design.

"We did add French fries a few years ago, and that was a tough decision," says John, Sr. Another tough decision was to add curb girls, a move that neither J. L. nor Harry might have approved of. "It's a different world today," explains John, Sr. "So we have both boys and girls waiting curb and both boys and girls working back in the kitchen."

Total sales for the first day came to 50 cents.

"Looking back over the early records," says John, "my grandparents seldom did more than three to four dollars a day."

Something John, Sr., takes special pride in is Stewart's long-time ties to two other veteran Huntington businesses — S. S. Logan Packing Company and Heiner's Bakery. Like Stewart's, both are family-owned businesses now in their fourth

generation.

"The firm we buy our wieners from, Logan's, they're four generations. The firm we buy our buns from, Heiner's, they're four generations. And in those three businesses, all four generations have done business with each of the other four generations. My grandfather did business with the original Mr. Logan, my dad did business with his son, I've done business with Buddy Logan and John, Jr., is now doing business with Skip Logan."

So how many hot dogs has Stewart's sold over the years?

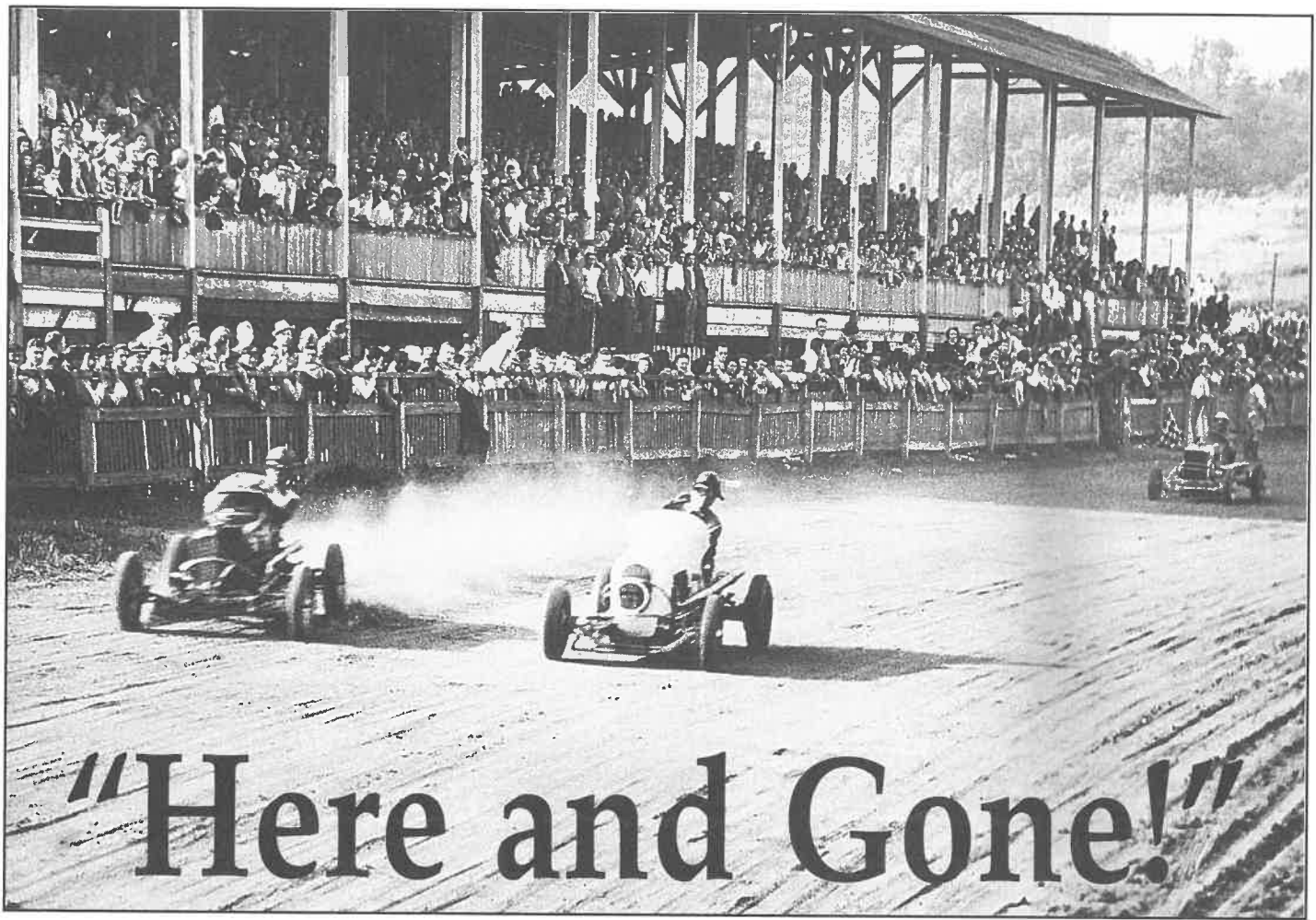
John, Sr., says he is frequently asked that question and must confess that, frankly, he has no idea.

"You know, we don't have a big sign we can point to that says we've sold so many million or billion or whatever," he says. "We've sold a lot, that's for sure. But, to me, the one that counts is the one you get. It had better be like the one you got last week or last month or last year. It had better be like the first one my granddad sold."

"If we can do that, we can continue to sell a lot of hot dogs." 🍌

There is plenty more where that came from, the folks at Stewart's will tell you.





Midget Car Racing in West Virginia

By Richard A. André

Baseball may be called the national sport, but it is still true that more people gather for an automobile race — the Indianapolis 500 — than any other single sporting event in America.

Unlike baseball, which at its simplest requires little real estate and minimal equipment, Indy-style racing is an expensive proposition. Too expensive to be more than a spectator sport for most of us, in fact, but in the earlier days of American automobile racing there were serious attempts to bring the sport within the reach of ordinary people. The result was "midget" cars, race cars scaled down in everything but excitement.

As with so many elements of

American life, midget auto racing began in California, in the 1930's. The midgets were relatively economical to build and race, giving virtually any red-blooded fellow a chance of winning. They offered unparalleled excitement on short tracks, usually a quarter-mile or less. The little cars fought it out wheel to wheel in the dust and smoke, and it was a rare evening that two or more didn't tangle and flip.

By 1946 midget auto racing had come to West Virginia. Veterans were coming back from World War II, not all of them ready to settle down completely. Returning servicemen had experienced the thrill of the diminutive cars in other

A standing-room crowd watches Charlie Stewart (left) roll to victory in the 1947 State Championship at the Dunbar fairgrounds. Photographer unknown, courtesy Daniel E. Davidson.

states, and it was only natural that the Mountain State developed its own daredevils of the speedway. Some men were eager to keep up mechanical skills they had learned in the service. After all, it is not so far from working on a P-51 fighter plane to working on a race car.

John Boone Harris of Charleston was one of those returning vets. "When I got home from the service in 1946, we didn't have all the means of entertainment we have today," Johnnie recalled in a recent interview which forms the basis of



Charleston's old Kearsce Theater exhibited Charlie Stewart's championship racer to promote *The Big Wheel*, starring Mickey Rooney. Joe McCall stands at right, with Stewart at the wheel and Speedy Estep holding the sign. Charleston policeman Smokey Stover, at left, was also a racer. Photographer unknown, courtesy Daniel E. Davidson.

this story. "There was no television, and midget auto racing offered the two things that most fellows loved — excitement and automobiles."

Of course, not all the racers were former soldiers. Many were simply men who loved fine machinery and wanted to go racing. They came from many walks of life. One of the best was a milkman. Sometimes the driver did not own his car, working instead with an owner who had no wish to drive.

In 1946, there were basically three popular classes of American race cars. The big Indianapolis designs were reserved for the major events. Next were the extremely fast and dangerous "sprint cars" that specialized in half-mile tracks. Sprint cars demanded considerable investment and rather elaborate racing facilities.

Last came the midgets, sized-down versions of their bigger broth-

ers. The midgets were restricted to no more than a 72-inch wheelbase and could be raced on relatively primitive short tracks.

The engines were held to about 140 cubic inches, and a wide variety was used, from the sturdy Ford tractor four-cylinder Ferguson to

"If you didn't help your buddies get their cars built you didn't have anybody to race with."

the Willys Jeep. One well-known midget used a Harley-Davidson motorcycle motor, and the small Ford V-8 "60" was very successful. Modifications were extensive, including multiple carburetors and high compression heads. Camshafts were created that transformed formerly docile engines from purring

pussy cats to fire-breathing tigers.

Usually weighing in at about 800 pounds, the little cars were easy to transport, but had a remarkable power-to-weight ratio that made them the undisputed champions of fairground dirt tracks.

The roll bars we take for granted today did not exist at the time. If the racers tangled and turned over it was not unusual to see injury and all too often death. The open cockpit was a part of the mystique of racing, and any man who dared fit a roll bar would have been ridiculed. The constant nearness of death provided much of the thrill, and the spectators knew that.

Today the little cars are collector's items and the drivers themselves are becoming scarce, as time has thinned the ranks of those who nearly half a century ago tempted fate and survived. That makes Johnnie Harris's racing story all the more precious.

I interviewed him at his home in Charleston. Johnnie shuffled through old photographs. The memories of a lifetime began to return as we talked.

"I was born in Pleasant Valley, Kentucky, not far from Olive Hill, in 1921," he told me. "I was raised in a foster home, and in 1929 we moved to Charleston, just at the beginning of the Great Depression. I went to old Union School down near Court and Lee streets, and I can still recall the sagging wooden floors."

Johnnie's neighborhood was bounded on the south by the Kanawha River, and he regularly found his way to the riverbank. "In the summer, we kids spent a lot of time in the river, and one sport was riding the steamboat paddlewheel waves," he recalled. "The Gordon C. Greene was one of the biggest boats, and one day I had a close call as her huge waves nearly took me under."

Neighborhood children made their own dry-land sports, too, most

of them safer than surfing steamboat wakes. "Money was hard to come by in the Depression, and my people were poor, so as a kid I had to do the best I could. I invented the game of bicycle polo, and we played down on the old carnival grounds next to the Elk River right where the Civic Center is now. The nice thing about this game was that the croquet mallets we used had a habit of knocking spokes out of line, and I was the only boy who knew how to true a wheel. I charged 15 cents."

On balance, those Depression years of having to make do were probably good for him, Johnnie figures. "I have always loved mechanical things," he says. "Looking back, maybe it was because if I wanted any toys I had to make them myself."

Johnnie says that he got into racing in small cars, although the first



The midget car races were advertised as family entertainment. This newspaper ad was for a 1946 race in Jackson County.

The racers were buddies, who worked together. Joe McCall stands at left here, with Chester Smith, Wallace Jones, and Johnnie Harris. Photographer unknown, about 1956.





Red Lanham, ready to roll, in Joe McCall's Zero Special. Old racers recall the little cars had two speeds, "here and gone."

one wasn't motorized. "In 1937, I competed in and won the West Virginia Soap Box Derby. I named my car 'Time Flies.' We coasted off the Patrick Street Bridge. Although my car was fast my brakes were not so good, and once I went all the way into the crowd out near the railroad tracks.

"You had to buy the official Soap Box Derby wheels which cost \$6.95, a king's ransom in 1937," he remembers. "I spent \$1.50 on the car itself. I did not win the national in Akron, Ohio, but the experience did whet my appetite for racing."

When his interest in cars came together with a fascination with planes, Johnnie Harris's mechanical future was set. "Airplanes have always competed with race cars for my interest," he told me. "I'll never forget taking the streetcar to Dunbar and walking the rest of the way to Wertz Field to see a flight of army pursuit ships.

"Wertz Field was where the rubber plant was later built, and where Rhone-Poulenc is now," he explains, referring to an area on the north side of the Kanawha River several miles downstream from Charleston. "Somehow I heard of the little fighters' arrival and hurried down to see them. They were

Boeing PT-26's painted in a beautiful, but gaudy, blue and yellow. I don't recall why they were here, promoting the Army Air Corps I guess, but to me they were the prettiest sight I had ever seen.

"Wertz Field is where I took my first airplane ride," he adds. "It was a Staggerwing Beech, I think. Anyway, it cost a dollar."

Maybe the Army's promotional

efforts worked, for Johnnie Harris soon found himself into airplanes in a professional way. "World War II was looming, and it wasn't long before I boarded a train at the old C&O depot headed west," he told me. "The Army decided I would make an aircraft mechanic, and they put me through extensive training where I came out third in a class of 126.

"The four-motor B-17 bomber was my specialty, and I was assigned duty in South Dakota, training other young men. Twice I requested transfer to the war zone in England, but I was turned down. Late in the war, I had just been assigned as a flight engineer on the new B-29, but they dropped the big one and it was all over."

Johnnie wasn't about to give up his mechanical interests when he came home after the war. Airplanes were a little out of his budget, and Indy racers, too, but small race cars were just right. He had seen midget cars before the war, but says no one was racing locally at that time. "There was no auto racing around Charleston in the 1930's, and I had to go to Lexington, Kentucky, to see my first midget auto race, about 1941," he recalls.

"I started building my car in 1946 and decided to apply some innovative design features. Most of the fellows just used a typical channel auto frame, but I found that the

Johnnie Harris recalls the post-war racing days very clearly. He poses here in his Charleston camera repair shop. Photo by Michael Keller.



My Turn at Racing

Writing the adjoining story came easy, because I was born with a racing heritage.

My father, B. E. Andre, was a champion motorcycle racer in the World War I era and Charleston's Indian Motorcycle dealer. I grew up with stories of his exploits [GOLDENSEAL, Volume 10, Summer 1984]. One of my earliest memories is of sitting on my dad's Indian racer, by then an antique, and dreaming of the thrills of the speedway.

I was raised in Charleston's East End, in an area which is now part of the state capitol complex. I attended old Kanawha Grade School and every day I walked down Elizabeth Street past the Eastern Garage, an auto repair shop that was so old it had once

*Maybe the older men
gave me a break because
they remembered they
were young once, too.*

been a stable.

One day my curiosity overcame me, and I entered the ancient building. I ended up in a back corner where I found a little race car that became to me the Holy Grail, everything a boy ever dreamed of. It connected perfectly with my racing fantasies, and I made a regular habit of visiting the garage after school. I soon knew all the mechanics by their first names — and, sad to say, most of their cuss words as well.

Joe McCall ran the garage. The midget racer I so admired was his, the Zero Special he called it. Joe and his wife had no children of their own, and somehow I believe Joe thought of me and the other neighborhood kids who visited the garage as his boys. Certainly he was like an uncle to me.

From grade school to high school graduation, I hoped some-

day to drive a race car myself. The Zero Special had its own regular driver, but in 1959 my opportunity came. My good friend John Bratt owned an older midget powered by a souped-up Jeep engine. I was able to convince John that if he would allow me to refurbish No. 4 and tune her up we might join with a few others who remained of the 1940's era and bring about a rebirth of midget auto racing in West Virginia. We painted the little car bright red, and though ten years behind the time it was to me beautiful beyond words.

Pete Miller was one of them, a little curly-haired dynamo who lived for racing. Pete worked at more mundane jobs through the week, but on Saturday night he was a race car driver and one of the best. That night Pete's car was disabled so he stood in the turn and waved me on, giving me the confidence I needed.

In one of the "heat" races there was a spin and crash in front of me, and I looked up to see a piece of two-by-six timber fly over. That big piece of the fence would have taken my head off if it had



Our author leads the pack at Princeton in 1959. Photographer unknown.

An 18-year-old knows only that he is bullet-proof and the world is his to conquer. So it was with me.

My first race, sometime in the summer of 1959, was at Torch Speedway between Marietta and Parkersburg, and later I raced at Princeton as well. As I ran my qualifying laps at Torch I was numb with excitement and oblivious to the danger. My lack of experience may have been offset by determination, and maybe the older men gave me a break because they remembered they were young once, too.

been inches lower. I put it out of my mind and went on to win the feature race — my only major racing win.

It is difficult to explain, now in my 54th year, that in that long ago when I was 18, all I cared to be, all I dreamed of was becoming a race car driver, but it is true. God was good to me, and let me get it out of my system without breaking my neck. I would not take a million dollars for my memories.

— Richard A. André



Planes and cars were big interests in Johnnie Harris's life. Here daughters Nancy Lou, Susan and Jenny show off the racer he built about 1950. Photographer unknown.

steel track for overhead garage doors had just the right profile and strength, so I built my frame out of that material.

"I used a Ford-Ferguson tractor motor, as did many of the other fellows. We called them 'Fergies,' and for the Class-B racing that we were engaged in they did a good

job. There was never any Class-A racing in our area since it required Offenhauser racing motors far beyond our reach. They ran those near the big cities where the crowds could support the cost of the racers."

Class-A cars were also midgets, but a more refined — and more expensive — line of vehicles.

Johnnie's experience in mating stock steel and salvaged parts into an economical racing machine was typical of the Class-B guys. A clever mechanic could combine ordinary automobile parts, cutting them down, modifying them so radically as to be unrecognizable in their original form. A Ford front axle was



Keith Birthisel was deaf.

Keith would place his fingertips on the car like a piano tuner and literally feel the condition of his engine.

preferred. Bodies were hand built, usually of aluminum, and the degree of craftsmanship was often astonishing.

"We were all really hobbyists who worked at regular jobs all week long, but spent long hours out back building our cars," Johnnie says of

Red Lanham and Johnnie Harris worked together away from the track as well. They stand here by a West Virginia Air National Guard C-47. Photographer unknown, mid-1950's.

the midget car enthusiasts. "We shared the love of racing and did our best to help each other. In a way it was a necessity, since if you didn't help your buddies get their cars built you didn't have anybody to race with.

"One of the best was Charlie Stewart, who owned Kanawha Machine Company. Charlie would give you the shirt off his back if he liked you. I can recall him letting me use his shop and telling me, 'When you're finished, clean up, turn out the lights and lock up. I'll see you later!'

"Charlie was one of the most successful local builder-drivers in his black Ford '60' V-8. He won the state championship in 1947 at the Dunbar track. Joe McCall had the 'Zero Special.' A unique name, but Joe was a unique guy — another

good friend like Charlie and all the others.

"We were a band of brothers as only men who shared danger can be," Johnnie reminisces. "Most of them are gone now, but I remember them well — 'Speedy' Estep, 'Doc' Folden, Howard Grissom, 'Smokey' Stover, O. B. Cottrell, 'Red' Lanham, Keith Birthisel, J. J. Coleman, Larry Bumpus and John Bratt.

"All the fellows had their own personalities, and a few of them were really remarkable. Keith Birthisel was deaf, but like Beethoven he didn't let his handicap stop him from doing what he loved. Keith built and drove his own car. When it was necessary to tune the motor, Keith would place his fingertips on the car like a piano tuner and literally feel the condition of his engine. It left those watching

with a sense of awe.

"We did most of our racing at the old 4-H fairgrounds in Dunbar. It was a one-fifth-mile clay oval that utilized the old half-mile grandstand straightaway," Johnnie remembers. Local people enjoyed the races, he says. "The public was hungry for amusement and the novelty and thrills of the midgets often attracted standing-room-only crowds.

"Most owners brought their cars to the track by trailer. Once unloaded, it was necessary to push-start them since the racers had no clutch or conventional transmission. When asked how many gears a midget had, the answer always came with a grin, 'Two — here and gone!'"

Johnnie recalls that local racers were lucky in never having a fatality among them, although death

"The Fun Comes in Winning":

Dirt Track Racing

Midget cars are a thing of the past, but dirt track racing is prospering in the Mountain State. Scores of racers flock to dirt tracks in West Virginia on most weekends from April through October.

Ivan Fox of Sissonville has been to all the tracks in his 20-plus years of racing — "too many," as he puts it. But plainly he enjoys the competition. "When you race a car, you work on it every night of the week just to race on the weekend," he says. "The fun comes in winning or when you do really good."

Cars race wheel to wheel and side to side against each other at dirt tracks in Elkins in the north and on down to Beckley in the south. Other dirt tracks are found in Pennsboro, Mineral Wells, Parkersburg, and Ripley. Shinnston is home to the Interstate 79 Speedway and Middlebourne has the Tyler County Speedway. Summit Point and Ona are West Virginia's paved tracks.

Dirt track racers mostly run three classes at the state's tracks — super late models, modified, and street stock cars. Other divisions are run as well, depending on the track. The super lates are the Cadillacs of the circuit, the most powerful and the fastest cars that run on dirt. The frames are built by commercial race car builders. Most racers buy the frame and then build the car from there. A super late can end up costing \$25,000 to \$30,000 or more by the time the car is built and the cost of the motor is factored in.

The competition is enhanced by the cash purses offered at the various dirt tracks. Drivers enter heat races to qualify for the "Main Event" where the top racer can win as much as \$1,000.

Pennsboro Speedway is a special events track. Every October the Dirt Track World Championship is held there and a \$50,000 prize is awarded. It is the last race held in West Virginia each year.

Like the race car drivers Johnnie Harris recalls from the 1940's, today's dirt track drivers are a close

knit bunch. Ivan Fox says 90 percent of them are good friends who don't hesitate to help each other out. They'll be helping each other out and nudging each other out at dirt tracks all around West



Stock car racers do it in the dirt every weekend. This 1970's scene is from the Beckley Motor Speedway. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Virginia this fall. And come next spring West Virginia's motor speedways will be filled with the noise and excitement of the popular sport once again.

— Debby Sonis Jackson

was common nationally. "The little cars offered little protection in a crash," he admits. "It seems amazing now that we didn't use roll bars, but midget racing was a macho sport. You needed plenty of nerve."

He believes there were several reasons for the decline of midget racing in West Virginia. "As the years went by the cars became more complicated and expensive. In its heyday midget racing was within the reach of the ordinary man, but the natural pressure of competition caused the cars to become very expensive. What had been a hobby became a profession."

Then the novelty wore off, and a new kind of racing came roaring up out of the South. Stock cars, they called them, and the public liked their rough-and-tumble style. Some of the midget car drivers switched and liked it, but there wasn't much left for those who didn't change over. After 1950 if you wanted to race midgets you had to drive hundreds of miles into

Ohio or Pennsylvania.

There were attempts to revive midget racing locally, but they failed. "There were just not enough cars and the fans were hooked on the stocks," Johnnie says.

Now he has his memories, and he treasures those. "If you were to ask me what was my most precious memory about midget racing, I

*When asked how many
gears a midget had,
the answer always came
with a grin, "Two — here
and gone!"*

would say it was my friends." He means it when he calls his racing buddies brothers. "I missed having a family since I was brought up in a foster home, but Charlie and Joe and the rest were like brothers to me. I found the family that I had never had."

Racing or not, Johnnie had no trouble keeping up his mechanical skills. In the 1950's he joined the West Virginia Air National Guard as an aviation mechanic and eventually logged over 5,000 hours of flight time.

Life changed dramatically in 1966. In October of that year, a lifetime of flirting with danger caught up with Johnnie when he stumbled over a cliff while hunting and broke his back. Paralyzed from the chest down, he has been confined to a wheelchair since.

Not one to tolerate idleness, he became a camera repair technician and still conducts a successful business in the home he shares with wife Helene. Local photographers respect him as the man local shops send their hard assignments to. Johnnie takes on the tough jobs, and maybe it's no challenge for the man who maintained flying equipment for the Guard, built race cars, and fixed the planes that won the war. 🍁

The midget cars were at home on West Virginia's fairground dirt tracks. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy Daniel E. Davidson.



Hobo's Coon

A Braxton County Hunting Tale

By G. Curtis Duffield

Raccoons can be mighty mean, especially when one has an old hound dog attached to her tail. But this coon was whipped, she just didn't know it yet. As soon as Hobo let go for a better grip Dad fired the 30-06 and the big coon was history.

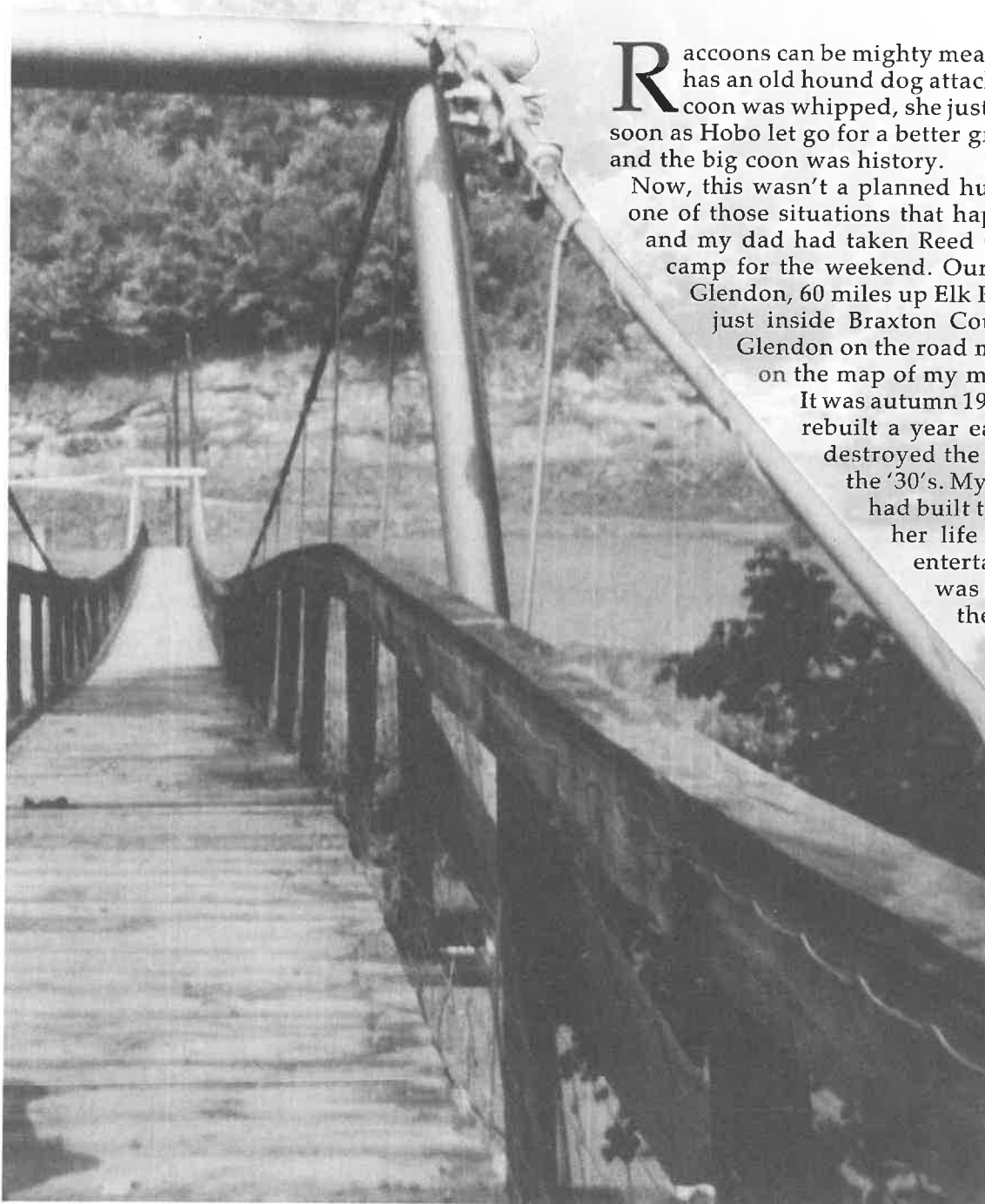
Now, this wasn't a planned hunting trip. It was just one of those situations that happen. It was early fall and my dad had taken Reed Carney and me to the camp for the weekend. Our camp was located at Glendon, 60 miles up Elk River from Charleston, just inside Braxton County. You won't find Glendon on the road map, but it's a big place on the map of my memory.

It was autumn 1968. The camp had been rebuilt a year earlier, after a fire had destroyed the original camp built in the '30's. My aunt, Bessie Burdette, had built the old camp and spent her life hunting, fishing and entertaining there. Our place was on the opposite side of the river from the road.

You had to cross a swinging foot-bridge and walk a quarter mile up the railroad tracks to reach it. The only thing near it was the farm of my cousin, Miss Rose Duffield.

Miss Rose was well into her 80's when we caught this particular coon. Since it was fall

The Glendon swinging bridge was the way to camp. Our photo looks across Elk River from the camp side. Photographer and date unknown.



and Miss Rose heated with wood, the main focus of her efforts was to have enough firewood to get through the winter. She always hired the Smith* boys who lived up on the mountain to cut firewood, and somehow Dad always managed to volunteer me to help.

The plan this year was pretty basic. Dad told me I ought to bring a guest up to the camp for the opening of squirrel season. I invited Reed to come, and after school on Friday we all left for the camp. Upon arriving we parked at the Corleys' house and crossed the river on the swinging bridge. At camp

him the Smiths would be cutting her wood the very next day. It didn't take Reed long to fall for this. He had never spent those great fall weekends with a chainsaw that only works part-time and a crosscut saw that blisters your hands.

It was decided that the next morning we would hunt the logging tram going up to the Nolan Hamrick farm, where the Smiths lived, and help with the wood cutting in the afternoon. I knew what we were in for. After Dad went to sleep I figured we ought to go outside and have a smoke and a couple of the warm beers I had smuggled in my

sides were covered with mature oak and hickory trees. The squirrels were always plentiful, and other animals too. If you went to the mouth of the hollow in the evening you could almost always see the deer coming right down the middle of the creek to the railroad tracks, where they would cross the tracks and swim Elk River. There was an island in the river that the deer usually slept on.

By ten o'clock we had all the squirrels we were going to kill that morning. Our program was fairly simple, one of us approaching the squirrel in one direction and the other going to the opposite side of the tree. Squirrels are predictable. When approached from one direction they run to the other side of the tree and flatten out on the trunk. This makes for an easy shot. It only gets really fun when they leap from one tree to another. Then you have something akin to wing-shooting.

As we walked down the railroad tracks to the camp we didn't see anyone at Miss Rose's cutting wood. I thought we might have gotten lucky. Maybe it was next weekend that the wood cutting would be done, and it seemed to me that I had a football game to go to next weekend. Anyway, we were hun-



Our author, with Hobo (left) and another dog at the family camp a couple years before the time of our story. Photographer unknown, 1966.

we had one of Dad's gourmet meals: steak, fried potatoes, fried apples and pork'n'beans, washed down by Early Times for him and milk for us.

After dinner we talked about hunting and fishing and such. As the evening drew on it got fairly damp, and we decided a fire was in order. This was only early October, but the dampness from the river made it seem colder than it was.

The wood fire was Dad's cue. As we enjoyed the crackling heat he mentioned as to how Miss Rose would be needing her firewood for the winter, and that it seemed to

pack. I told Reed he was going to be sorry he had volunteered to cut wood, so we might as well enjoy my bounty while we could.

The next morning we were up early while Dad slept. I fixed a breakfast of fried eggs, fried apples and grits. After a couple cups of coffee we got our shotguns and some shells and headed for the railroad tracks. We walked up the tracks past Miss Rose's house, to the place where the tram started up the mountain. The tram went up the left-hand side of the hollow to the Nolan Hamrick farm.

This hollow was my personal squirrel hunting preserve. It was filled with mountain laurel, and the

Hobo was owned by Dana Corley, but he belonged to me. We were pretty much inseparable on weekends at the camp until I went into the Marine Corps.

gry now and had squirrels to clean.

When we had finished cleaning squirrels and eaten a hunter's lunch, Spam and sardines, we were talking about getting the boat into the river for a little fall fishing. But Dad said he thought he had heard the sound of a saw up at Miss Rose's while he was down at the river. If you wanted to know if anything was going on around there you just went down to the river and listened. The river was equivalent to the in-

*This surname has been changed — ed.

formation highway in Braxton County, the hills cupping the sound down to the valley.

We loaded up the old jeep we had at the camp with the chainsaw and an ax. It was about this time that Hobo showed up. Hobo was owned by Dana Corley, but he belonged to me. The Corleys had had a dog named Jughead that came up missing one year after deer hunters had parked at their house to go hunting. Right after that Hobo showed up, just like he was the designated replacement. He was a half-grown puppy, part beagle and part coonhound. He had a broad chest and a square head and was afraid of nothing.

Shortly after Hobo showed up at the Corleys we happened to be at the camp and he and I made acquaintance. I don't know whether he adopted me or I adopted him, but we were pretty much inseparable on weekends at the camp until I went into the Marine Corps.

In the winter he would sleep on the wood box on the front of the camp until Dad would go to sleep, then I would let him in and he would sleep with me on a cot in front of the Franklin stove. This wasn't much to Dad's liking since Hobo wasn't accustomed to regular bathing. In fact the only baths he ever got were during the summer when we would be messing around in the river, or when he and I got skunked.

Hobo ran beside the jeep as we drove through the river bottom toward Miss Rose's place. As we ap-



Miss Rose Duffield kept the blackberry wine out of harm's way, on the top shelf. Photo by Adrian Gwin, 1960.

proached the creek just before the gate to her house there was an awful commotion beneath a nearby Winesap tree. Between the railroad

tracks and the river the creek got fairly broad. The big apple tree clung to one bank, and there was an abandoned groundhog hole be-

Hunting Dogs

In the adjoining story, Hobo hunted the raccoon by natural instinct, and he did a good job of it. Frank Jezioro of Fairmont has written a book about another kind of hunting dog — the highly trained bird dog. *Of Guns and Dogs and Men* is a 192-page hard-back book in which Jezioro shares his knowledge of bird hunting and bird dog training.

The author's hunting carries him across the country, but much of his book takes place in West Virginia.

In the first chapter he tells his childhood memories of "bouncing along in his uncle's old Scout," heading up the Blackwater near Davis. "Friends, if I tried to tell you of the numbers of grouse that country held back then you would brand me a liar and burn the book!" he writes.

Jezioro is a freelance writer who has been widely published. He has run bird dogs in major trials and judged major trials for hunting dogs as well. His chapters on developing the pointing dog will be of most interest to dog trainers and owners, while hunters will be interested

in his advice on guns. Altogether Jezioro shares 30 years worth of following bird dogs.

Of Guns and Dogs and Men sells for \$22.95, plus \$2 shipping and handling. The illustrated books are signed and numbered. Mail orders may be sent to Frank Jezioro, 1811 Ridgewood Drive, Fairmont, WV 26554.



neath it. It was abandoned because Hobo and I had killed the resident in the spring.

During the fall the creek was usually dry, except for a few potholes here and there. As we got closer we could see the Smiths, Homer, Jurden and Ford. Homer was the father and about 60 years old.

Jurden and Ford were about 35. They had their mule hitched to a sled for hauling wood, and all of them were standing in the creek bed with Miss Rose. Everyone was shouting and pointing to the groundhog hole.

As we got out of the jeep Homer asked Dad if he had a gun with

him. When we answered no, he asked if we would go get one. His prized coonhound that he had sent to Tennessee for was down the groundhog hole with a monster coon.

Reed and I obliged by driving the jeep back to the camp at breakneck speed to get the old World War I

The Remarkable Miss Rose

The remarkable Miss Rose Duffield was the leading citizen of Glendon, West Virginia, during the later years of her long lifetime. She was pushing 90 at the time of the adjoining article by Curtis Duffield, who recalls her as the whimsical older relative keeping up the homeplace, and several years before that she caught the eye of Charleston reporter Adrian Gwin.

Gwin, himself now retired, wrote the popular newspaper column, "Roving the Valley." Usually that meant the Kanawha Valley, but occasionally he ventured "up Elk" as well. In the summer of 1960 he came across Miss Rose, and obviously she made a big impression on him. We reproduce his vivid report, first published on August 12, 1960, by permission of the Charleston Daily Mail.

Miss Rose Duffield is a 105-pound power plant of endless energy.

She'll be 80 years old on November 7, and she works from dawn to dark and often long after, every day of the week.

She lives alone in a 10-room house with a quarter-acre lawn around it. She mows that lawn at least once a week.

She keeps a garden that would tax two hired men gardeners. She works the garden alone, and rarely does a weed or a blade of grass get more than an inch high. She plants the garden with sweet corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, green beans, onions, cabbage, watermelons and cantaloupes, beets, potatoes, and most anything else that will grow and is good to eat.

When the garden begins to yield, she eats from it all summer, gives truck away to every neighbor, and

cans literally hundreds of jars of every product for the winter.

She cans apples from her trees, and she picks gallons of blackberries, makes jelly and preserves and puts up pie berries, too.

She owns no transportation except her tireless legs — and a skinny old wheelbarrow. She pushes that wheelbarrow almost a country mile anytime she goes to the store.

She washes her clothes in the old-fashioned way, rubbing them

that brings the sweat popping out of strong men, working at the business of keeping a farmplace designed for a family of 10.

How does she do it? "The last time I was really sick I was sick for a week," she says, pausing to remember. "That was — let me see — about, well, about 1910."

Miss Duffield lives at a wide place in the road called Glendon, just north of the Clay-Braxton line and 14 or 15 miles south of Gassaway.

Miss Rose keeps chugging around all day, every day, at a pace that would bring the sweat popping out of strong men.

on a scrub-board for she owns no washing machine. Her water she draws from a well in the yard.

She thinks it absolutely normal to climb a ladder and paint her huge home outside and in, and she recently and most matter-of-factly slapped her ladder up against a neighbor's house, climbed up with her hammer and repair materials and fixed the leaky roof.

"I'm going to call you a tomboy!" I told her laughingly. Miss Rose's pale blue eyes twinkled. "When I was a bit younger girl than I am now I expect they all called me that! I climbed about any tree I ever saw when I was young!"

Miss Rose weaves beautiful hand-made rag rugs on a 100-year-old loom that her grandfather made for her grandmother. She sells those rugs as her only real money income.

And Miss Rose keeps chugging around all day, every day, at a pace

You stop just beyond the Glendon post office-store of Don and Irene Hamric, park your car in that wide place in the road, and start walking. You have to cross a big old swinging bridge over Elk River, then turn left along the railroad tracks that Miss Rose saw laid there when she was a young girl.

Half a mile up the tracks is the old Duffield homeplace, that Miss Rose has kept all by herself since her mother died 22 years ago. You never saw a neater home, outside and in.

Miss Rose sells eggs from her flock of chickens and pushes the eggs to the store in the wheelbarrow. "She left here yesterday with a 75-pound sack of chicken feed on the barrow, together with a lot of odds and ends for the house," Don Hamric said.

But Miss Rose isn't a backwoods "granny."

As a young woman, she attended

30-06 Springfield rifle. While we were doing this Hobo was frantically trying to get into the action. As we arrived the mail-order coonhound backed out of the groundhog hole with a 20-pound raccoon fastened to his muzzle. The dog was doing as close as I can describe to what a dog does when it screams.

The coon was definitely in charge. About that time Hobo put a vicious bite in the back of the coon. The coon let go of the coonhound and raced back to the groundhog hole. Hobo was right on his heels. Down they went. There was a lot of growling and hissing coming out. Every now and

then it was silent, like they were catching their breath, then the racket would begin again. After what seemed like a long time Hobo came out of the hole with the coon in his jaws. The coon was still very much alive but obviously hurt and not going far. As Hobo shook it with

business college in Clarksburg, and worked in the business world for some years. Among her other positions, she was housekeeper at the dormitories of West Liberty College on three different occasions.

When her father died 41 years ago, Miss Rose left the business world to return home, care for her mother, and look after "the place."

She's been housekeeper and cook, gardener, repairman, yard and lawn keeper, poultry farmer and general utility servant ever since, always at a pace that would kill a stevedore.

Miss Rose has electricity (since 1942) and uses her electric stove a lot. But she still likes to cook a meal on the old wood-burning range. She drags logs and splits and saws them, too, for the firewood.

And she has canned more than 50 quarts of greens beans so far, harvesting them, stringing and snapping them, all by herself. "I'm afraid of a pressure cooker," she admits, "so I just can them the old way. Cook 'em three hours, I do!" she says.

The house is heated in winter by the kitchen range and the coal-burning fireplace in each room which her father built long ago. "I used more than 100 bushels of coal last winter," she said. Fetches it all in the house herself, too.

This year she expects to dig about 15 to 20 bushels of Irish cobbles from the potato patch. Her stone cellar house is already beginning to fill with the products she is laying by for winter.

And in one corner, we spied several bottles of her blackberry wine. "Those are the last of a batch I made in 1942," Miss Rose said. "Would you like to try it?"

We couldn't come away without getting her recipe for the wild blackberry wine, taught to her by her mother and her grandmother. Here it is, in Miss Rose's own words:

"You use a wide-mouth, three-gallon jar (or crock) and put in two and a half gallons of ripe blackberries. Pour your fresh spring water in until you can just see the water in them.

"Then you take a potato masher and bruise it around in the berries, not to crush them all, but to just slush it around and bruise them to start the juice, so it can



Miss Rose used a hand mower to keep up the extensive grounds of her homestead. Photo by Adrian Gwin, 1960.

begin fermenting.

"Cover it with a clean cloth and set it in a cool place to ferment about a week. You'll know it is ready when it quits fermenting.

"Now you take it out of the jar and strain it up. Strain it through a fine cloth, cheesecloth won't do. You don't squeeze the cloth, that lets the pulp through, but you drain it.

"Let the juice you've strained off settle a while, so any pulpy matter will go to the bottom.

"And now you have to dip off the juice, not getting any of the pulp

from the bottom. Dip it back into the big jar. Then you add your sugar, eight pounds of it, and stir it to get it dissolved.

"Then you have to add some more water, up to about two inches of the top of the jar. And then let it work!

"Set it away in that cool place, covered lightly with the cloth, and every day you skim off the foam and skimmings, and after skimming it, stir it lightly to keep it mixed from the bottom, every day. It takes about another week.

"When it's ready it will stop working.

Oh, you might bottle it when it's still just a-nipping when you put your ear to the top of the jar, but don't bottle it too soon!

"When you put it in the jars, don't tighten the lids for two or three weeks! Let it stand until you're sure it isn't going to work a bit more, then tighten the lids.

"And don't touch it for two or three or four years!"

Why did Miss Rose Duffield never marry?

"Oh, I suppose nobody would have me," she says gaily. Then she turns to her work and her voice becomes matter-of-fact and brisk again.

"I was always too busy!"

And she still is too busy for foolishness like that.

— Adrian Gwin

Cooking Coon

"Some mothers fail to teach their young'uns the important things," as Bessie Gray of Pocahontas County says, so she was kind enough to donate her favorite raccoon recipe to radio station WVMR's Hunter's Cookbook. We haven't tried it in the GOLDENSEAL test kitchens but figure it's bound to make a better dinner than that produced by the Elk River coon hunters in the adjoining story:

Cut coon into small pieces and salt to taste. Cook in the inset pan of the pressure cooker for about an hour at 15 pounds pressure.

Cook longer if it is an old and tough coon. When coon is tender, arrange pieces in a baking dish and cover with dressing made as

follows:

Moisten 8 to 10 slices of dry bread with the juice cooked from the coon and add 2 eggs, 2 T sage, 1/2 t ground cloves, and 1 T salt. Bake in oven at 350 degrees until the dressing is browned. This assures a tender, tasty coon without being too fat and greasy. Also good for possum.

Reprinted from WVMR Hunter's Cookbook. This 170-page softcover book sells for \$8 postpaid, by writing to WVMR, Dunmore, WV 24934. West Virginia residents add 6% sales tax.



his powerful jaws, I shouted and he let go. That's when Dad shot the coon.

The scene was pretty much bedlam after that. The Smiths' mail-order coonhound had both ears ripped to shreds and his nose just barely hanging on. About all it could do was lay in the creek and whimper. Homer was beside himself. That dog had cost as much as a horse, and money didn't come easy up Elk River. Miss Rose was about as agitated as an 80-year-old woman can get. Her store-bought teeth were clicking 90 miles an hour. Ford and Jurden were pacing up and down. If that dog died they would have to cut a lot of firewood for Homer to get another one.

Hobo himself was rather proud. He kept nuzzling the coon just to make sure it was dead. He had a few cuts on his muzzle and ears, nothing serious.

The coon was an old female, and big. It was decided that we would take it back to the camp and cook it. One of the Smith boys would take the Tennessee dog home and doctor it while Homer and the other brother cut wood. Everyone was invited to the camp for dinner. Miss Rose declined. She said her teeth wouldn't work on any 20-pound she-coon.

Back at the camp it was determined that Dad didn't know how to cook a coon and the cookbook didn't have a

The mail-order coonhound backed out of the groundhog hole with a 20-pound raccoon fastened to his muzzle. The coon was definitely in charge.

recipe. Skinning the brute was my job. That coon had about three inches of fat on it. I've never seen so much fat on anything in my life. Hobo stood by to take care of whatever I deemed unfit for the pot. I had planned on stretching the skin but Hobo had other ideas as he disappeared with it. After the coon was cleaned we looked for a pot to put it in. The only thing large enough was a wash bucket.

Dad sent me to Miss Rose's to find out how to cook the coon. Between clicks of her store-bought teeth she said it probably wouldn't be any good since it was so old, but we could try to tenderize it with some wine. I thought she would offer some of her homemade blackberry wine, but either she didn't want to waste it on the coon or she didn't think I would take it straight back to camp. When I told Dad he said we didn't have any wine at the camp, but he

figured whiskey would do a better job of tenderizing anyway. About half a fifth of Early Times was added to the bucket and into the oven it went.

Reed and I went back to Miss Rose's to help with the firewood cutting while the cook took a nap. Along about evening we headed back to the camp, prepared to enjoy our first raccoon dinner. Dad was fixing huge bowls of french fries to go with the delicacy he was preparing. The coon didn't want to unroll after it came out of the bucket, so we just kind of placed it on a platter in a ball.

Since Reed was a guest we thought he should have the first taste. Dad cut him a slice and put it on his plate with some fries. Reed put the slice in his mouth and the next thing I knew he was out the door in the yard losing his first mouthful of Elk River raccoon.

About this time the Smiths arrived. Dad had left the bottle of whiskey on the table, and Homer spied it. He said that nothing went

with roast coon like a little bourbon. Dad handed each of them a 12-ounce paper cup and the bottle. Homer filled his to within a quarter of an inch of the top. The boys were more conservative, only filling theirs halfway. Dad offered some well water which the boys used to top their cups off. Ford told Homer, "Pa, I don't reckon that cup will hold much chaser." Homer agreed and turned it up and drank it all in one long draw.

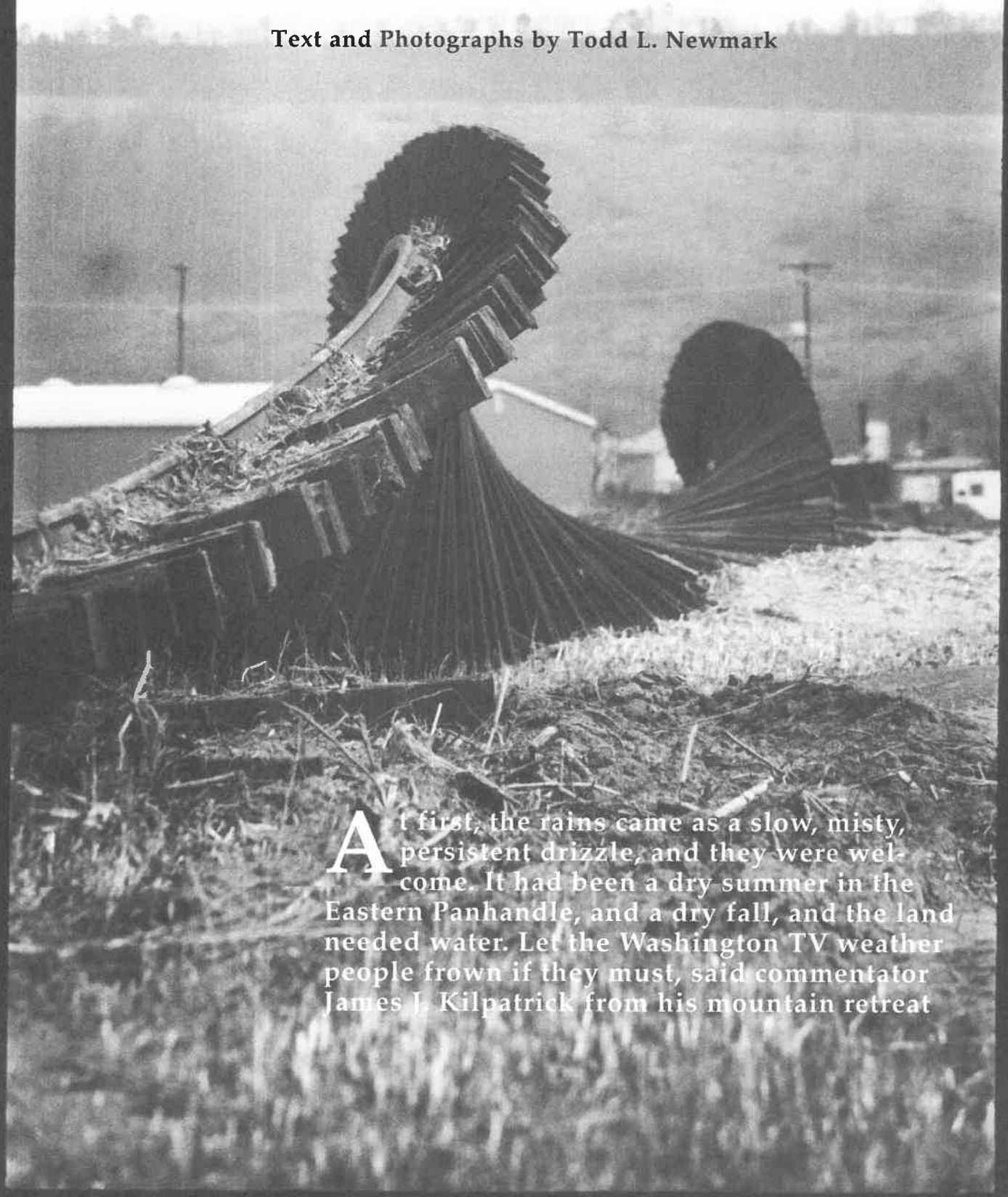
It turned out that Homer had the right idea, and he may have enjoyed that dinner more than the rest of us. For I learned two good lessons from this little adventure: The first is that mail-order coon dogs aren't near as good as an old vagabond hound dog.

And the other is that if you're going to eat an ancient coon you need to drink about 12 ounces of whiskey first to tenderize it. 🍷

Looking Back Ten Years Later:

The Flood of '85

Text and Photographs by Todd L. Newmark



At first, the rains came as a slow, misty, persistent drizzle, and they were welcome. It had been a dry summer in the Eastern Panhandle, and a dry fall, and the land needed water. Let the Washington TV weather people frown if they must, said commentator James J. Kilpatrick from his mountain retreat

in neighboring Virginia, but "we have been positively reveling in the all-day drizzle-drazzles."

It continued to drizzle-drazzle, and worse, but our reveling soon stopped.

It was November 1985. During much of October, a hurricane named Juan had been brewing in the Gulf. Juan was not thought of as menacing at first, even when, late in the month, it made landfall in Alabama and began to swing northeast. That sent it our way, toward the mountains of the Mid-Atlantic. There it collided with another stream of air, warm and moist, fresh up from the Bahamas, and conjured up a weird alchemy of violence.

That was our understanding at the time, although the National Weather Service later figured that it was a new storm, following in

Preceding page: The trains weren't running January 1986, when this photo was made near Petersburg.

Juan's wake, which brought the trouble. Whatever the cause, the results were the same.

As Kilpatrick said, it seemed good for the first three days, a steady, benevolent slaking of the thirsty soil. But instead of tapering off like better-behaved weather systems, this one got worse. On Monday,

*A deadly tropical storm
had burst, and the
Potomac Highlands of
West Virginia were
ground zero.*

November fourth, the volume of precipitation increased. It became a heavy rain, then a downpour suffusing the sod and the clay, which would no longer receive it. A deadly tropical storm had burst, and the Potomac Highlands of West Vir-

ginia were ground zero.

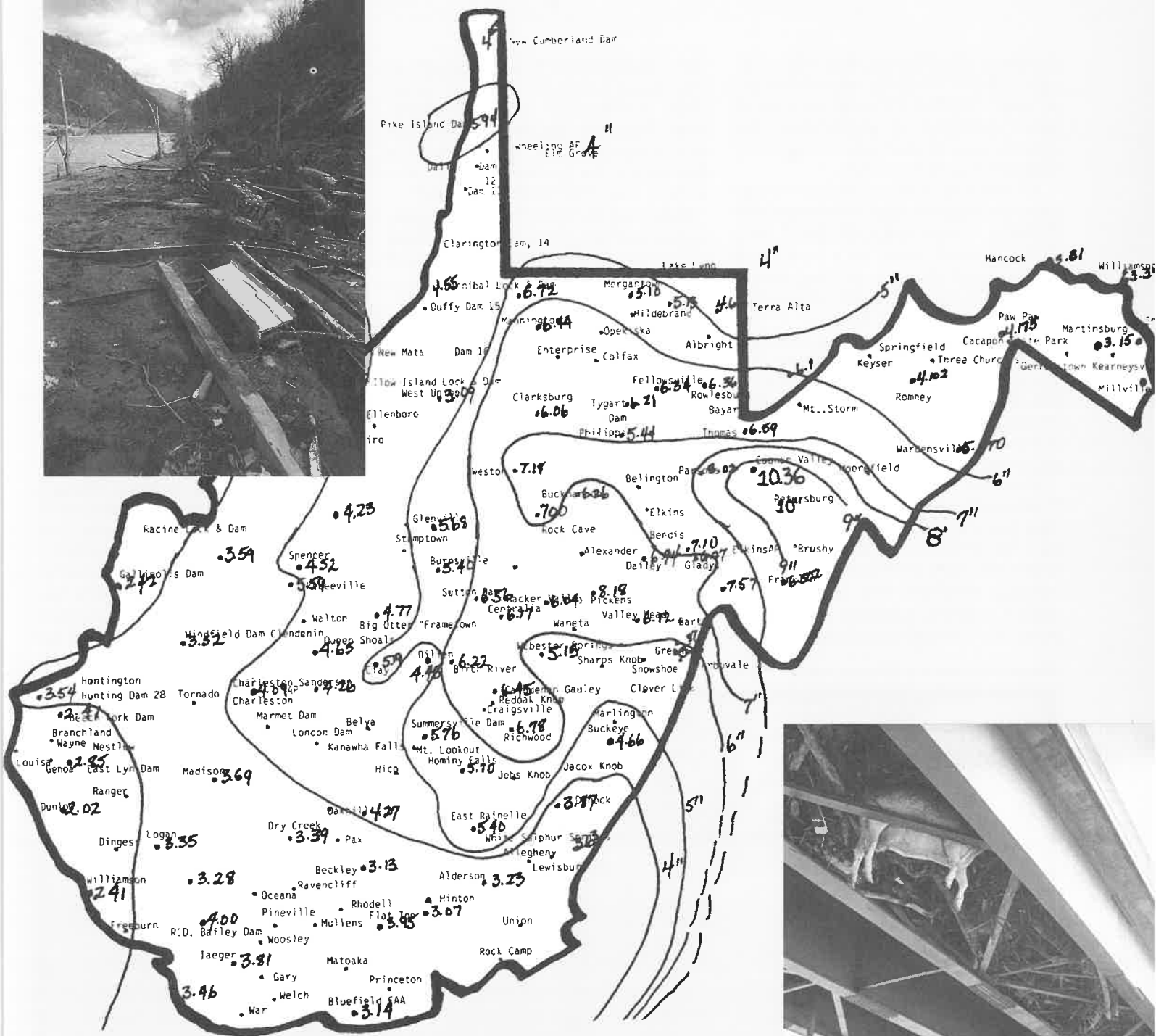
It was my good fortune to live in the ridges when the storm struck. Our house, near Keyser, sits on locust posts and brick in rolling terrain.

But after four days of non-stop mist, drizzle and rain, it appeared that even our place on high ground might be at risk. Monday evening I squished around our back yard, which slopes down to the house, to check things out. We were lucky, the runoff escaping fast enough around the ends of the house to preclude an inundation of our dining room. But the fact that my every footfall sank four to six inches into the lawn, and then seemed entrapped in a pudding of grass and mud, told me this was no ordinary storm.

The next day, reports of high water and flooding — throughout Mineral, Hampshire, Grant, Hardy and Pendleton counties — confirmed my sense that disaster had struck. These are all counties of the

Below: The face of the land changed overnight on November 4, 1985. These onlookers gathered the next day where the South Branch closed Route 220 north of Moorefield.





A Hard Rain and Its Consequences

The Weather Service precipitation map for the week of the flood looked like a paint-by-numbers picture going from bad to worse. The map shows the most rainfall, 10 inches and more, at Petersburg and nearby. Meteorologists tell us that anything over five inches is to be taken very seriously indeed. Map courtesy National Weather Service, Charleston.

The storm left an ugly mess in the Trough, between Romney and Moorefield, as shown in Michael Keller's photo above, and most every place else along the South Branch.

Photographer John Warner documented the disaster in the neighboring Cheat River watershed. Warner's grisly bridge photograph, right, became symbolic in the minds of many West Virginians with the awful carnage of November 1985. Copyright John Warner, 1985.

Potomac Highlands, but other areas of West Virginia were hard hit as well. Tucker County seemed to have suffered in particular, the county seat of Parsons ravaged by Cheat River tributaries.

At midday, I drove toward Romney, the county seat of Hampshire County. I was stopped dead, two miles west of town, by a backwash of the South Branch spilling across the highway. The pool of muddy water was two feet deep.

Abandoning the car, I scrambled over a woodsy embankment, bypassing the lagoon. I descended on the other side, where the road re-emerged to run its final brief lap toward the river and then disappear once more beneath the tide.

Usually, the South Branch of the Potomac is maybe 100 yards across and only a few feet deep at Romney. Now the river was a half-mile wide. An ugly, debris-filled torrent ripped through the iron bridge ahead, making passage utterly impossible. Though practically within

view, the town of Romney might as well have been on another continent, prompting me to consider how little we appreciate bridges until they are gone. What if my life depended on getting to Romney within, say, the next half hour?

Stopping at water's edge, I photographed the great, turbulent mass of the transformed and scary South

south toward Moorefield, some 18 miles upriver.

Moorefield, the seat of Hardy County, was no more reachable than Romney. Here, too, the usually placid South Branch had jumped its banks and run amok, overwhelming the rich bottomland and submerging all roads approaching town from the north.

Though practically within view Romney might as well have been on another continent, leaving me to consider how little we appreciate bridges until they are gone.

Branch. Houses which had sat at the edge were now in the river, their erstwhile occupants helpless spectators on the road, waiting for the muddy waters to recede.

I returned to my car, this time ferried over the lagoon by a canoe. I doubled back west, then turned

The Moorefield bridge, though pounded and jammed underneath by huge logs, uprooted trees, and hunks of lumber, was — strictly speaking — passable. Whatever good that might do. For once beyond, the pavement plunged down into the maelstrom and was lost for

The South Branch did its damage along Route 50 as well. This photo was made near Romney on November 5.



the remaining stretch into town. Cunningham Lane, an old country road jutting left at the far side of the bridge, was not to be found except by its telltale line of trees. Somehow, most of the trees were standing the current just fine.

I had seen enough and headed back to Mineral County, where the North Branch was behaving considerably better. It would be another five days before I ventured once again into the South Branch Valley. By then, Saturday the ninth, clean-up operations were in full swing, with the help of the National Guard, the Red Cross, state and local governments, private contractors, and hundreds of citizen volunteers. Sight-seeing was discouraged, but I thought a disaster of this magnitude demanded witnesses.

And a disaster it was. Houses, lifted neatly off their foundations, had drifted away during the dark, stormy night of the fourth. Mighty oaks and ash and sycamore trees had been torn from the soil and now strewn the land, looking like outsized bunches of broccoli stranded on the mud flats. Concrete roads had snapped into shards like peanut brittle, while asphalt tore like strips of fruit leather. Bridges, popped intact from their moorings, had rolled over and tumbled into river beds, where they lay like half-sunken hulks. Twisted, spiraled stretches of train track called to mind collapsed roller coasters. Mobile homes were tossed about, bashed and crumpled.

Here and there, precious top soil had been gouged and scoured off the valley floor, the earth stripped down to the stones and shale like fingernails torn to the quick, leaving arroyos where once had been fertile fields of corn and hay and alfalfa. Mud and all manner of flotsam invaded homes and basements and stores, and silted them up with smelly ooze.

But at least the weather was mild, and partly sunny, this Saturday when West Virginians were digging out. In all, some 33 West Virginia counties had been affected. Twenty-two of them were declared federal disaster areas, with an estimated one billion dollars damage done — so it was said, although the

Weather History

As the National Weather Service midnight-shift meteorologist, Ken Batty posted the Potomac Highlands flood watch for November 4, 1985, and went on to ride out the worst weather disaster in recent times.

Batty takes a professional interest in forecasting the future, but this weatherman looks the other direction as well. He collects unusual weather accounts, and over the years has begun keeping a record of significant weather events in West Virginia's history. Many reports have come from family diaries, the events that were written up often telling of tornadoes, floods, and extreme cold.

The Charleston weather watcher is still gathering material on West Virginia's meteorological history. If you have a written account or records of extreme weather events in the state's past, send a copy to Ken Batty, National Weather Service, 400 Parkway Road, Charleston, WV 25309. Batty is interested in accounts from both the 1800's and 1900's.



Point Pleasant, 1948.

figure seemed impossibly low at the time.

At least 38 lives were lost, statewide. And for many of the living life would never be the same. "The day of the flood is stamped forever on the consciousness of West Virginians as indelibly as the day John F. Kennedy was shot," wrote a local newspaper editor. One could tell which counties had been hardest hit by the number of dead: Grant and Pendleton, ten each; Hardy and Preston, four each; and Hampshire three.

If there was a silver lining behind the clouds of November 1985, it was the winter that followed, mild enough to allow recovery and reconstruction to go forward without

interruption. In January, I returned to the valley to check on progress. I was surprised to spot an old acquaintance, a recreational outfitter by profession, sitting placidly on what was left of his home, just the cinder block foundation. The rest of his family's commodious redwood modern had been swept off in November and was now God knows where — beached, or broken up and scattered across the county. For the moment, till things could get straightened out, John and family were living in a trailer.

Across the way a bulldozer grunted and droned, nudging around debris and burning brush, forming it into piles. John needed to talk to the man, he said. He

needed to talk with him about doing some work around his own place, just as soon as the dozer got done down there by the river.

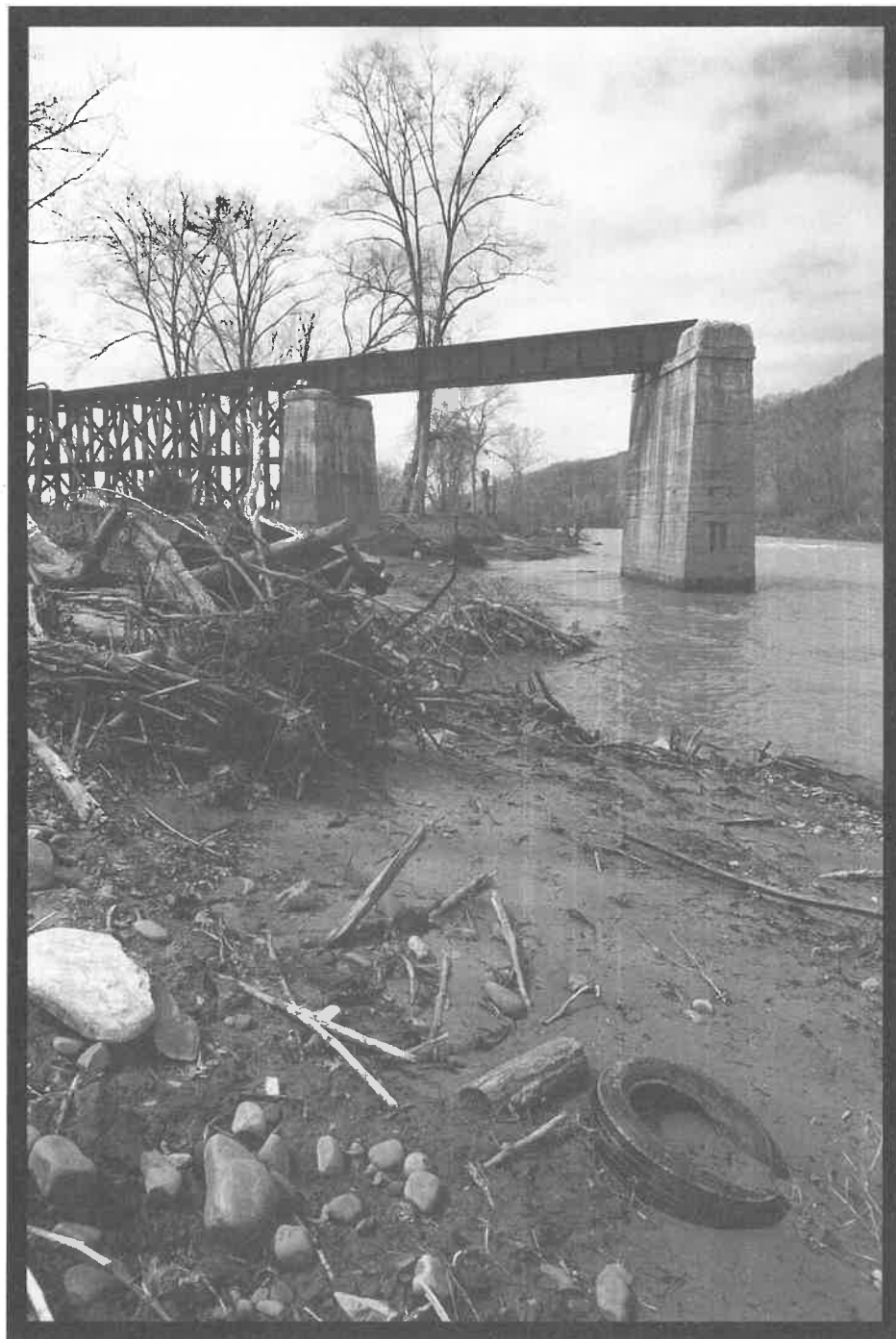
Spring was just around the corner, and people would soon be up from the city as if nothing had happened. They would be wanting to rent canoes, kayaks and rafts, and head for the rapids, wanting a guide to hike and camp the back trails,

needing this or that, and John wanted to be ready to take advantage of the business.

His neighbors had plans of their own, to restore farms, get businesses back in operation and lives back together. They would start over and rebuild, and these mountain people would persist and survive, come hell or high water!

I was sure of it, and I was right. 🍁

The river receded but it was a long while before things returned to normal. Michael Keller made this Hardy County photograph in April 1987, over a year after the big flood.



Tucker County Flood Monument

While Todd Newmark writes of the devastation along the headwaters of the Potomac, other areas of West Virginia were also hard hit in the flood of November 1985. The Cheat River and its tributaries ruined hundreds of homes and businesses in Tucker County, for example, and went on to wreak further havoc in Preston. Five people lost their lives in Tucker.

In Parsons, on November fourth, a monument will be dedicated to the Tucker County victims of the great flood of 1985. Mariwyn McClain Smith, editor of the *Parsons Advocate*, chaired the committee to build the monument. It will be 12 feet wide at the bottom, tapering up to six feet. It will be built entirely of river rock, "all that was left when the river left," Smith said.

The design model shows an ark mounted along the bottom of the flood monument. The doors and windows of the ark will be made of granite and engraved with the names of the five people who died, along with a poem written by Tucker County poet laureate Cleta Long.

The monument is the result of volunteer labor and contributions of material, money and land. Concrete blocks for the core of the monument as well as the time of the surveyor, mason and others were all donated. The former minister of St. John's United Methodist Church, Eldon Shingleton, will dedicate the monument in November.

Contributions for the Tucker County flood monument may be sent to Mountain Valley Bank, Parsons, WV 26287. Those wishing to donate time or labor to the project may contact Mariwyn Smith at the newspaper by calling (304) 478-3533.

November 14, 1970:

Remembering the Marshall Tragedy

By David E. Hoffman

On that cool, gray November Saturday morning, the Marshall University students who hadn't made the trip to Greenville, North Carolina, for the football game against East Carolina University gathered in their dorms, in their fraternity and sorority houses, or wherever there was a radio.

Gene Morehouse, the familiar "Voice of Thundering Herd Football," was broadcasting the game live from Greenville for the fans in Huntington. Morehouse had been a radio announcer in my hometown of Beckley for as long as I could

remember before he came to Marshall in the late 1960's as sports information director and announcer of all Thundering Herd games.

The football team was nearing the end of another losing season, 3-5 going into the ECU game, but there were hopes that Marshall was beginning to rebuild.

I joined friends at the fraternity house as we listened to the game and cheered on the Herd. Our cheers were futile, since ECU beat Marshall in a close 17-14 contest.

Two of the football players, Dennis Blevins and Mark Andrews were my fraternity brothers. Dennis,

from Bluefield, was one of the first blacks to join a white fraternity at Marshall.

Mark was from Cincinnati, and he was often seen riding around campus on his motorcycle. One afternoon that fall Mark had given me a ride, and we traveled down Interstate 64 at 70 miles per hour. Afterwards, I asked him, "Aren't you a little concerned about crashing at 70?"

He was uncharacteristically fatalistic. "On a motorcycle, it doesn't matter if you crash when you are going 55 or 70 or 80," Mark said. "The results are the same."

After the tragedy hearses lined Fifth Avenue outside the university fieldhouse. Photographer unknown, courtesy Marshall University.



That Saturday evening I had settled into my off-campus apartment. Some of my fraternity brothers were going to the movies at the Keith-Albee Theatre downtown, but I needed to study.

While sitting alone in my apartment, with a book in my lap and the television on, I thought about the day's game and the team's recent history. When I came to Marshall three and a half years before as a freshman, the football team hadn't won a game for two seasons. A homecoming loss that year against Bowling Green would have put Marshall into the record books — for the most consecutive games without a win. It was a record we didn't need, and fortunately the Herd won the homecoming game. The team was improving each year, but at the expense of finding itself in 1970 on NCAA probation for recruiting violations. It meant a suspension from the Mid-American Conference.

During my four years there, with 1970-71 being my senior year, the fans continued supporting the football team at old Fairfield Stadium, but Marshall was better known for its basketball teams. During the late '60's the basketball teams had been nationally ranked and gone to consecutive National Invitational Tournaments in New York City. For a university of just over 9,000 students, the basketball team had given us national recognition.

But things were also starting to look up for the football team. The coaching staff had recruited some young, strong players who were showing a great deal of promise, but those at the university had accepted the fact that it would take a few more years.

Tragically, we weren't to have those years, not with those players and that team.

I spent the evening reading and watching television on my 19-inch black-and-white Philco portable. At about 8:30 an announcement on television said that a plane had crashed at Huntington's Tri-State Airport, but no additional details were available. At 9:00 an announcer came on and reported that the plane was a Southern Airways twin-engine DC-9 and that it was

believed to have been the plane carrying the Marshall University football team.

It was not until some time between 9:30 and 10:00, in the middle of the "Mary Tyler Moore Show," that the announcer confirmed the bad news — 37 players, including Dennis and Mark, and 33 other passengers, including football coaches, announcer Gene Morehouse, and fans, plus five crew members, had all been killed in the 7:40 p.m. crash. The plane had come down about a mile and a half from the airport in light fog and rain.

The day after the crash, I worked the Sunday morning shift at WWHY radio, in the "penthouse of the beautiful Hotel Frederick in downtown Huntington," as we liked to say. We were a CBS-affiliate station, but we had no news team; our only news came from the wire service or from the morning and afternoon newspapers during the week and the morning paper during the weekend.

From the time my shift began at 6:00 a.m. until it ended at 1:00 that afternoon, the phone kept ringing. CBS stations from throughout the country wanted a "voice feed" from Huntington about the crash. I was the only one at the station, so I re-wrote the information in the morning newspaper and read it for radio stations all over the country.

The next few weeks, with Thanksgiving, final exams, and the Christmas holiday coming up, the gray sky settled in over Huntington as the university and all of West Virginia tried to understand this terrible tragedy. There were memorial services for those who had died in the crash. Bodies were identified and sent back to their hometowns. Hearses lined the street.

That winter seemed especially harsh, our pain felt by everyone at Marshall and in the Huntington community. When spring came again, a new coach had been hired and a new team recruited. The Thundering Herd came back, but for a while the wins and losses didn't seem to matter as much. On that cold November evening, we had shared a loss infinitely bigger than a Saturday afternoon football game, and we all had some rebuilding to do. ❁

Oral History at Marshall

The Marshall plane crash is the subject of several interviews, conducted as part of a series on Marshall's history, by the university's Oral History of Appalachia Program. The tapes are among many gathered under the research program which began at the school in the early 1970's.

Their work recording regional history is accomplished mostly through taped interviews. Transcripts, cassettes, and reel-to-reel tapes are kept by the program and deposited in special collections at the Marshall library.

Three interviews talk specifically about the crash. Dr. Robert Alexander, the former Business College dean, and Dr. Donald Dedmon, an interim president at Marshall, both discuss the tragedy. Dr. Alexander speaks of the crash at great length. The student union manager at the time was W. Don Morris. In his interview he explains circumstances that kept him from being on the plane that day in November 1970. The tapes are available to the public, as are all materials collected through the university's oral history program.

Recently, the Oral History of Appalachia Program added a major piece of work to its collection. The Owens Glass History Project documents the history of the enormous Owens-Brockway glass container plant in West Huntington. The plant closed in December 1993 after 80 years of operation. The Owens-Brockway documentation includes 45 in-depth interviews with former Owens employees.

A half-hour radio program based on the interviews was also produced. "Shattered Glass: The History of an American Factory" aired in Huntington last spring. Broadcast arrangements for other areas of the state may be made by calling (304)696-6799.

For information about the program, contact Gina Kates at the Oral History of Appalachia Program, 400 Hal Greer Boulevard, Huntington, WV 25755; or call the telephone number listed above.

Clay County Folklore and Folk Medicine: Empty Rockers & Sassafras Tea

By Lori Tanner

The West Virginia mountains are rich with folklore and superstitions from long ago. From the mountains also come many remedies for various illnesses and personal problems, or as the mountain people used to say, "fer what ails ye."

...my great-uncle Ray and his wife moved into the house and began hearing noises that sounded much like a rocking chair squeaking. They went into the attic...

The rugged hills of Clay County, where my family comes from, are definitely no exception. Recently I spoke with my mother, Margaret Rogers Tanner, about some of the stories and superstitions prevalent among people she knew. She related many fascinating tales and beliefs, some of which I had heard as a child growing up.

She told me, once again, of her great-aunt Adeline, affectionately known as Aunt (pronounced "aint") Ad, who was proficient in the ways of mountain life. She also mentioned several superstitions and remedies, many of which were practiced by our ancestors, including my grandparents.

Many of the superstitions common to our area were of the ominous variety. For instance, one should not sweep the floor after dark. If it had to be done, the dirt should never be swept through a doorway or bad luck would result.

My grandmother believed that. One night, during the birth of my cousin June, she decided to have the house clean and tidy for the new baby and began sweeping. She fretted about sweeping after dark, and took the precaution of gathering the dust from each room rather than sweeping from one to the next.

Another belief was that it was bad luck to rock an empty rocking chair — and heaven forbid the chair should rock itself!

This one reminded my mother of



a ghostly story she had heard from my grandmother. My grandfather and grandmother lived in a house with an attic, and in this attic was a rocking chair. After my grandparents moved, my great-uncle Ray and his wife moved into the house and began hearing noises that sounded much like a rocking chair squeaking. They went into the attic and found the chair there, rocking slightly. Uncle Ray's wife heard a woman singing, as if to a baby.

Others besides Uncle Ray and his wife said they had heard the chair also. No one could explain it, but a young woman once lived in the house and had rocked her baby in the rocking chair. Both she and the baby later died, and some believed

Dark clouds sweep across the landscape of Clay County, an area rich in West Virginia mountain heritage. Photo by Rick Osborn.

that this was the explanation for the rocking of the empty chair.

Of course, not all of the superstitions were so serious in nature, although they were as firmly believed. Many dealt with who was coming for company or which man a young woman would marry.

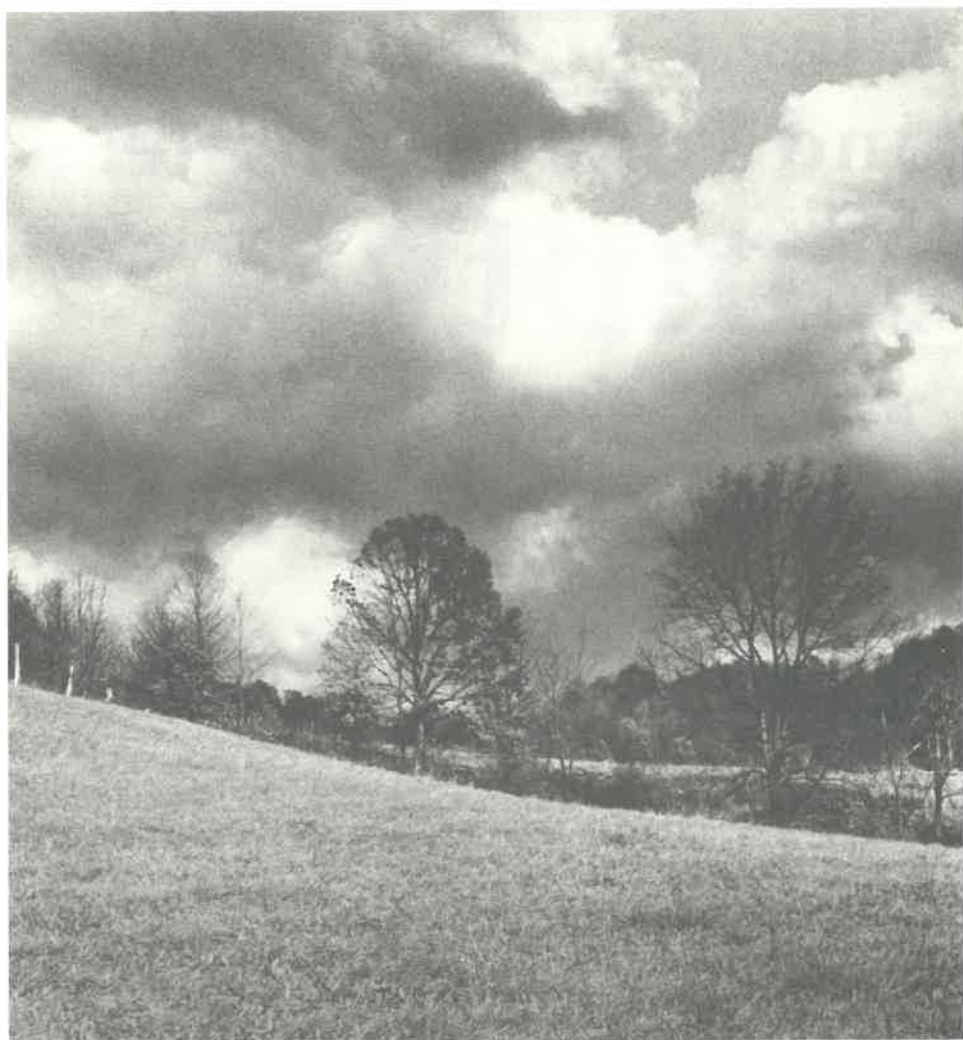
One common belief was that if a dish rag was dropped on the floor a person who was not particularly clean would visit. Or if a large spoon was dropped a woman would visit; a small spoon, a young girl. If a fork or a knife was dropped, a boy or man would visit, respectively.

If a young woman wished to know what the man she would marry would be like she ate a thimble full of salt and walked backwards to bed without speaking. That night she would dream of the man she was going to marry. A delightful superstition was that if a lady's dress hem was turned up, she should kiss the fold and make a wish and the wish would come true. Neither my mother nor I have any idea where these come from.

In addition to the outright superstitions there are many folk remedies, some of which combine the use of herbs and other natural ingredients with superstition. One very odd belief was that a man who had never seen his father could cure a baby of a condition known as the thrush, or sore mouth, by blowing into the baby's mouth.

Another common belief was that peach tree bark tea was good for an upset stomach, but only if the bark had been scraped in a downward motion from the tree trunk or limbs. The idea was that if the bark was scraped down, the vomiting would stop and the medicine would stay down. If the bark was scraped up the vomiting would continue, and the bark tea was useless.

Perhaps the most common remedy was the use of a poultice, with catnip being preferred for many ailments. Catnip poultices were made by combining catnip with a



batter-like mixture and bringing the concoction to a boil. This mixture was then placed on the problem area.

Catnip poultices were used especially for earaches and toothaches. My mother has experienced this remedy firsthand and believes that it did help dull the pain. It is true that many of these remedies were effective, with variants in some cases passing into modern medicine. For example, willow bark tea was used for headaches, and aspirin is made from a chemical found in its natural form in the willow tree. Some of these remedies were based on sound healing properties.

Many of the folkways I have spoken of were best embodied in Aunt Ad. She was the quintessential mountain woman.

Adeline Moore was born about 1872 and died in the early 1960's.

She lived in a small unpainted house with a tin roof and bare wooden floors. She burned coal or wood in the oil drum stove, whichever was available. My mother describes her house as intriguing, especially the spare room which contained large cans of various necessities such as lard, coffee, chicory and sugar. Aunt Ad grew the usual vegetables in her garden, as well as a lot of buckwheat.

She was about five foot-seven, of average build, and, although slightly bent in posture, she walked very briskly. She wore her gray hair short and straight and had a silver tooth. Her typical clothing consisted of a simple print dress over which she wore a heavy linen apron with a large pocket to carry her snuff.

Adeline was a self-sufficient woman. She raised most of her own food and, since she didn't like the taste of well water, drank water from



deer-lick springs. My mother remembers that Aunt Ad would make a spout from a hollowed-out limb about three inches in diameter and two or three feet long, insert it under rocks where water was coming from a spring in the side of a mountain, and collect her water from the spout.

She was very knowledgeable of herbs and folk remedies. Two of her standby teas were sassafras and bloodroot. Sassafras was popular with many people as a general tonic and beverage. My mother recalls Aunt Ad insisting she drink bloodroot tea because it was "good for the blood."

In addition to her knowledge of herbs, Aunt Ad was adept at fortune telling. She had told Mother's cousin Marie's fortune many times, and her sister Geraldine's. But she had never told my mother's until one night when my mother was 14,

at least not seriously. It is a favorite story of my mother's, and of mine.

The girls had come to visit that afternoon, bringing Ad a jug of my grandmother's homemade buttermilk, of which she was quite fond. The warm summer day progressed, and Ad fixed a supper of buckwheat cakes and homemade maple syrup. As they talked long into the evening, Ad noticed a neighbor's cow trampling through her buckwheat. After she and the girls ridged the field of the roaming cow, and received harsh words from the cow's owner, at about midnight Aunt Ad proceeded to tell the girls' fortunes as she had promised she would.

She told their fortunes by looking at cards, although she sometimes told fortunes by looking in the bottom of a coffee cup. She informed one of the girls that she would marry several times. Another would have a large family and marry a man who drank. It was while telling my mother's fortune that she became most serious, and my mother remembers this as unusual. She told her that she would marry a dark-haired, heavy-set man, live in a white house on top of a hill, and be financially secure.

Aunt Ad's predictions have, for the most part, come true. My father is dark-haired and was heavy-set when he and Mom were married. Our family also lived in a white farmhouse on a hill in Ohio for nearly ten years and moved to another white house here in Roane County. My mother, who is not a superstitious person, believes that perhaps Aunt Ad had a gift for seeing into the future.

In any case, there is a deeper truth involved. Although the superstitions and folk remedies may seem strange to outsiders, as they sometimes do to me, they should be respected as reflections of the people of the mountains. As Appalachians abandon the old customs and language of our ancestors, it becomes important for us to preserve the ways of the past and of people such as my great-great Aunt Ad. Rest her soul. 🌿

A Clay County Snake Story

By Todd Pettit

I have heard my share of snake stories. Tales of rattlesnakes as long as logs, lying coiled in the timber on Frame Knob and waiting for unwary ginsengs to stroll by, and of copperheads twisted in rope upon rope of thick yellow scales on berry vines, under houses, or lying patient in cellar tops between stone jars of jam. These are Clay County snakes I'm speaking of, big, healthy, hungry snakes.

There have been snakes around me ever since I was old enough to hear a wizened uncle sagely describing a gargantuan diamondback he'd spotted in the cemetery on the hill above my house. My grandmother said it had lain there in the sun, a heavy, glittering coil, for hours before someone thought to fetch a hoe or scythe from the coalhouse wall. She herself bore the ghost fang marks of a copperhead that had bitten her in the hand while she was out in the cellar, 30 years before I was even born. So you might even say I have snake in my blood.

"Of course, that was a long time ago," my grandmother said of the graveyard snake, her hands white with flour dough. "That snake is long gone now," she concluded. "But then again, who knows how long snakes live?"

"They'll stay in one place for years," the uncle added. "Do you remember that big copperhead they killed on Horse Ridge?"

They were off and running on another snake tale, another half-finished story.

"Biggest one I ever saw," my uncle would say. He had pinned the same adjective on the unkilld rattlesnake sunning itself on the hill, or the timber rattler that still lay writhing on the New River riverbanks, buttons rattling dangerously, or the copperhead, its head a square block of glistening gold, twisted and snarled and curled up in the weeds near the End of the World rocks on Elk River.

"Well, I'd like to see it," I said, referring to the viper still maybe lurking in the neighboring graveyard.

"That thing would eat you alive,"

marks scarring my grandmother's hand, so I grabbed up a hoe. Thus armed, I strolled up the rutted road to the cemetery, opened the gate, and stood there awaiting all snakes, big or little.

The cemetery was small but crowded; a cluster of tombstones to the left, the famous Maude Dean's frost worn monument rain-faded to scriptless gray slate. Her tombstone was nearly covered by goldenrod and other late blooming flowers. The grass was long and luxuriously thick, what my grandmother called fall grass. It hadn't rained for days, but the graveyard's

her wise voice, "That's just where I saw that big rattlesnake years ago. I told him not to come up here."

But, of course, those fears were unrealized. It was a lovely day — steeped in the almost cathedral silence only remote West Virginia hideaways can have — the rich scent of fall like a heady perfume. Leaves were starting to fall, crunching happily under every step.

I spent that fine afternoon walking around looking at dates and names, the ripe sunshine like butter across the tombstones, knowing all the snakes had crawled into their dens and caves and hollow logs awaiting the advent of spring. I was about to turn back home, not even vaguely disappointed, when something caught my eye.

Trapped in the briars around the gate was a shed piece of snakeskin, trapped in a gossamer string on the burdocks, trapped like a ghost snake on the thorns. It was thin as spider webbing but glittering, drooping with the wet. I gingerly unwound it, like unraveling a flag; it was longer than my leg, with thickness that was only hinted at.

I thought of my grandmother's stories of old-time mountain people who had to wear stove pipes on their legs while yellow root hunting because if they were bitten, or even struck, by the big snakes that lived in the higher elevations it could break a leg. I had scoffed then, just thinking about it, but now I scabbled up half wondering where I could find a stove pipe.

Now when the yarnning turns to snake stories, I always have something to add. And I have proof. It is a shred of snakeskin, caught by briars and dragged off the diamond back of a huge serpent, coiling away into the cemetery to start more stories and inspire fear in the hearts of non-believers.

That's enough for me. ♣

Old-time mountain people had to wear stove pipes on their legs because of the big snakes that lived in the higher elevations.

my grandmother snapped. "You just stay away from that cemetery.

"Did I ever tell you about the time that big den of snakes was found up there? An old sump well filled with snakes. You should have seen them. Squirring in knots. They filled it up with gasoline and lit it. You could see all those snakes down there in the wet, scuttling and twitching. Darndest thing.

"Besides," she said, kneading the dough on a cutting board. "I've seen snakes up there ever since I was a little girl. Why, when they buried Maude Dean, I seen a copperhead curled right up there on her grave..."

"No," said the uncle.

"I'd swear to it. Longest one I ever saw."

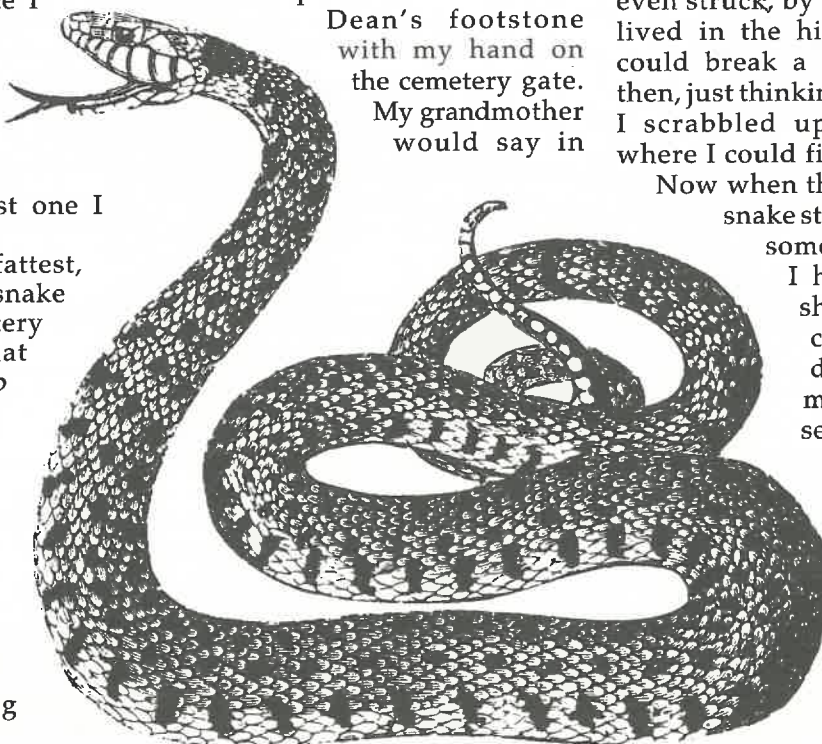
Always the longest, the fattest, the most buttons. The only snake I'd ever seen at the cemetery was a harmless racer that skidded off an old stump it'd been lying on and disappeared into the high grass like a smeared ink blot.

That had been the summer before, and since it was now October, I figured all snakes would be doing whatever snakes do during the fall. Still, I remembered the pale fang

grass was wet enough to soak the ankles of my jeans.

I walked almost tiptoe over the strange springy loam of all cemeteries, foolishly afraid of falling through one of the graves. Or maybe I feared stumbling across the huge rattlesnake curled in the grass like the patriarch of a very old and very poisonous snake mafia. No one would find me for days, and when they did I would be sprawled across Maude

Dean's footstone with my hand on the cemetery gate. My grandmother would say in



Talking Right

They say that John Kennedy practiced pronouncing the word "Kanawha" over and over on the airplane flying into Charleston, Kanawha County, for a campaign speech during the critical 1960 presidential primary race. No doubt the young senator got it as right as his Boston accent allowed him to get anything, which was mostly hit and miss as I recall. Lord knows how he managed when he got to Canaan Valley and Onego.



The new guide will help you keep the "VAP" out of "o VAY puh." Photo by Michael Keller.

Presidential candidates will have an easier time of it with a new pamphlet recently published by West Virginia University. *A Guide to Pronunciation of Place Names in West Virginia* was released by the university's Office of Publications last May. It gives Kanawha as "kun NAW uh," close enough, though maybe a little too much "n" on the first syllable for some of us who live in the county. Canaan is "kuh NANE," no matter what you learned in the Old Testament, and Onego is pronounced "WUN go." How else?

This is not a guide to unusual names, though West Virginia has lots of those, too. Paw Paw, Left Hand, Bergoo and Bim are plenty

exotic, and how about Horsepen, Wolf Pen, Blue Jay and Duck? Problem is, even New Jersians can pronounce any of them at first glance. Let's see how they handle Kumbrabow, which rhymes with how, or even Hugheston, which sounds just like a certain big city in Texas. Subtleties like these are where we Mountaineers can set ourselves apart, if the university scholars don't give all our secrets away.

The pronunciation guide, now in its fifth edition, was originally a project of the WVU Journalism School, presumably for the benefit of radio and television broadcasters. Those folks need to sound a little less down-home than the rest of us, perhaps explaining the guide's tendency toward more mainstream usages when there is a choice.

McDowell is given as "muck DOWL," for example, though I've heard McDowell Countians say "MACK dowl" more than a few times. Even the "Free State of MACK dowl" when they're feeling feisty, and I'm not about to argue. Maybe the same tendency toward correctness is why the guide's editors give Kanawha's first syllable as "kun" rather than the "kuh" which usually slips past my lips. And some of my fellow citizens drop Kanawha's last syllable altogether, sounds like. That's "kuh NAW," Morgantown, and proud of it.

But these are minor quibbles with what is a dandy little pamphlet. The pronunciation guide gets Ghent right, and most everyone out of hollering distance doesn't, and does a good job on most other places which I feel competent to check them on. Overall, *A Guide to Pronunciation of Place Names in West Virginia* is an excellent practical reference and a lot of fun to browse.

The best part is that it's free, at least in quantities of one, to anybody requesting a copy. You may do that by writing to Olive Shultz, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6690, Morgantown, WV 26506; or call (304) 293-6368, extension 413. Additional copies cost \$3 each.

--Ken Sullivan

Back Issues Available

If you want to complete your GOLDENSEAL collection or simply get acquainted with earlier issues, some back copies of the magazine are available. The cost is \$3.95 per copy, plus \$1 for postage and handling for each order. A list of available issues and their cover stories follows. To get your back copies, mark the issue(s) you want and return with a check (payable to GOLDENSEAL) for the right amount to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

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 bulk orders.)

- _____ Fall 1980/Recalling Mother Jones
- _____ Winter 1984/Webster County's Mollohan Mill
- _____ Fall 1985/Dulcimer Maker Ray Epler
- _____ Winter 1985/Huntington 1913
- _____ Spring 1986/Blacksmith Jeff Fetty
- _____ Summer 1986/The Draft Horse Revival
- _____ Fall 1986/West Virginia Chairmaking
- _____ Winter 1986/Educator Walden Roush
- _____ Summer 1987/Camden Park History
- _____ Summer 1988/Hugh McPherson
- _____ Fall 1988/Craftsman Wilbur Veith
- _____ Spring 1989/Printer Allen Byrne
- _____ Winter 1989/Smoot Reunion
- _____ Summer 1990/Cal Price and *The Pocahontas Times*
- _____ Winter 1990/Sisters of DeSales Heights
- _____ Summer 1991/Fiddler Melvin Wine
- _____ Winter 1991/Meadow River Lumber Company
- _____ Summer 1992/Dance, West Virginia, Dance!
- _____ Fall 1992/Bell Bottoms at Bethany
- _____ Summer 1993/Fairmont Romance
- _____ Fall 1993/Bower Homestead, Twin Falls
- _____ Winter 1993/Monongah Mine Disaster
- _____ Spring 1994/Sculptor Connard Wolfe
- _____ Summer 1994/Mortgage Lifter Tomatoes
- _____ Fall 1994/Boone County Coal Camp
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MICHAEL KELLER

Nat Wins the Big One

West Virginia bluesman Nat Reese became the 15th recipient of the Vandalia Award during ceremonies at the annual folklife festival in Charleston this past May. Reese, the subject of a 1987 GOLDENSEAL cover story, lives in Mercer County.

The Vandalia Award, the highest folklife honor awarded by the State of West Virginia, is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding contributions toward the continuation of the state's folk heritage. It is awarded for lifetime achievement in the performance, creation or perpetuation of West Virginia's traditional arts.

"Nat's story spans a period of great social and technological change, especially during the decades of the 1920's and '30's. This was the wide-open era of boom towns and labor camps, when Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith and many others toured through the coalfields 'meeting the paydays,'" our writer Michael Kline wrote in 1987 describing Reese's musical heritage.

Nat Reese was born in Salem, Virginia, in 1924. His father had migrated from the deep south seeking employment. After working several odd jobs in Virginia, he moved his family across the border to Itmann and then Princeton to work in the West Virginia coalfields. Though his father and mother were both musicians, Nat first started playing as a young man with Mitchell

Gordon, whom he calls "a born musician." They played a lot of music together, but Nat spent his time in the mines, too, and worked for the railroad. He calls Princeton the gateway to the coalfields. And it was this gateway that introduced Nat to many other black musicians.

"We had what they called a dance band, but we played jazz, and then we played polkas. We played blues. It wouldn't be the regular, what you call alley blues, or cotton field blues. It wasn't the regular Delta blues, see. There's a difference in Delta blues and, say, sentimental blues," Nat says. "They'd come in here and begin to kind of modernize it a little. They'd make it smoother. Make a lull, or put more feeling in it."

And it's that feeling that Nat has passed on so willingly. So on May 27, West Virginians and other visitors to Vandalia gathered in the Cultural Center's theater to honor Nat Reese. The proclamation read that evening commended him for mastering the coalfields blues and stamping "this rich musical legacy with his own personality, creating a jovial, joyful and uplifting sound all his own." Reese was also cited for his long association with the Vandalia Gathering, for serving as a model and a mentor for those who have sought him out, and for generously sharing his music and himself.

Our Writers and Photographers

RICHARD A. ANDRÉ is a native of Charleston. He has co-authored four books of local history and written numerous magazine and newspaper articles. "I'd like to have a chance to go around again," Richard said of his midget car story. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1984.

BETH BELL moved to Calhoun County from Ontario about seven years ago. She learned about sorghum molasses through helping her husband and father-in-law blade, cut and grind cane and make molasses. "The final product makes all the work worthwhile," she says. A member of the Calhoun-Gilmer Writer's Guild, this is Beth's first published piece.

LEONA G. BROWN was born in Fayette County and now lives in Raleigh. A member of the New River Gwinn family, she has written a book on her family's history and published numerous articles. She and her husband Howard will celebrate their 53rd wedding anniversary in 1996 — a long ways from their G.I. Bill days. Leona's last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1991.

JAMES E. CASTO, a native of Huntington, is associate editor of the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, a prolific freelance writer, and a commentator on West Virginia Public Radio. He is the author of *Huntington: An Illustrated History* and recently completed *Towboat on the Ohio*, a University Press of Kentucky publication. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1994.

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

G. CURTIS DUFFIELD says he was "born and raised in Charleston, but grew up at the camp" he writes about in this issue. He has since relocated to Florida where he is a partner in an electrical construction firm. He has written numerous technical articles, and last wrote for GOLDENSEAL in Fall 1994.

ADRIAN GWIN, a native of Alabama, came to West Virginia in 1942. He wrote for the *Charleston Daily Mail* for 39 years, and now contributes columns in his retirement. He recorded the "successes, failures, lives, and loves" of people in West Virginia through his popular newspaper columns, "Our Man Gwin," "Roving the Valley" and "Looking Back." This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DAVID E. HOFFMAN is a freelance writer and college professor at Averett College in Danville, Virginia. He earned his B.A. and M.A. at Marshall University, and a doctorate from the University of North Carolina. His writing has been published in various newspapers and periodicals. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER is chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

JOHN L. MARRA, born and raised in Morgantown, is the county extension agent for Cabell County. He is the garden columnist for the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch* and a television host for "Saturday Report" and "Home and Garden" on WSAZ-TV. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from WVU. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1994.

TODD L. NEWMARK, a freelance writer, lives in Mineral County where he writes "articles on subjects of local and rural interest." He wrote his retrospective of the great flood of 1985 and photographed the devastation along the Potomac tributaries in hopes of getting his material into the historical record. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

TODD PETTIT lives in Duck. He wrote his snake story as a tribute to his family, "all of whom have seen and killed their share of snakes." At 20 years old, Todd says he has "a deep love for where I live and how I grew up." This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

WILLIAM SMOCK worked for WWVU-TV in Morgantown in 1970 where he helped create a documentary on sorghum-making with Carl Fleischhauer. Today he lives in Berkeley, California, and is part of a media production company, Pictures and Words. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

ROBERT SPENCE was born and raised in Logan, and his people have lived there since 1790. A graduate of Marshall with a B.A. in journalism, he worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years and now works as a freelance writer. Bob, a descendant of patriarch Ephraim Hatfield, is working with Coleman Hatfield to finish the book, *The Tale of the Devil*, a definitive Hatfield family history. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1985.

LORI TANNER earned a B.A. in history at the University of Charleston, and is now a graduate student at West Virginia Graduate College. She has lived in Roane County the past ten years, and says she has "always been interested in tales and folklore of the mountains." This is her first published piece.

We thank Hatfield Historical Publications, Inc., for the use of material on pages 13 and 17, adapted from the forthcoming book, *The Tale of the Devil*, copyright 1995.

Remembering Sarah Singleton

Earlier this year Sarah Singleton died at her home in Braxton County. She was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story in the Summer 1992 issue. "Sarah Singleton: A Fiddler All Her Life," by Teresa Hamm, told of Sarah's early musical influences in a family where she was "the 13th child from the top and the fourth from the bottom."

The little girl who listened to the music her family made went on to learn the music herself. She began playing at 11 or 12 years of age, and was fiddling for square dances by the time she was 14. She kept it up her whole life.

Her music will haunt West Virginia dance halls for a long time.



MICHAEL KELLER

Inside Goldenseal

Page 20 — They will be making molasses in Calhoun County about the time this GOLDENSEAL lands in your mailbox. Always have — and always will, writer Beth Bell hopes.

Page 45 — Midget car racing was a big thing in the post-war years. Johnnie Harris of Charleston remembers the little cars and their big-hearted drivers.

Page 40 — Stewart's is Huntington's oldest drive-in and among the oldest restaurants of any kind in West Virginia. You go there for hot dogs.

Page 9 — The Tug Valley is Hatfield country, where this quintessential mountain family has birthed a governor and U.S. senator, many doctors and lawyers, and more than a few famous feudists.

Page 25 — Veterans from battlefields all over the world invaded Morgantown after WWII. The G.I. Bill students changed the campus in a big way says our author, who married one.

Page 59 — The hard rains of November 1985 devastated many areas of West Virginia. Todd Newmark remembers what it meant for his part of the Eastern Panhandle.

Page 53 — Curt Duffield calls his Elk River tale a coon hunting story, but actually it's about good dogs, bad dogs, chainsaws, and a wine-making octogenarian. Figure it out.

Page 67 — What is fall without folklore, ghostlore and a snake story or two? Some of the best come from Clay County.

Page 31 — And the best apple in the world comes from Clay County, too. The Golden Delicious was found there on a hillside farm in 1914.

