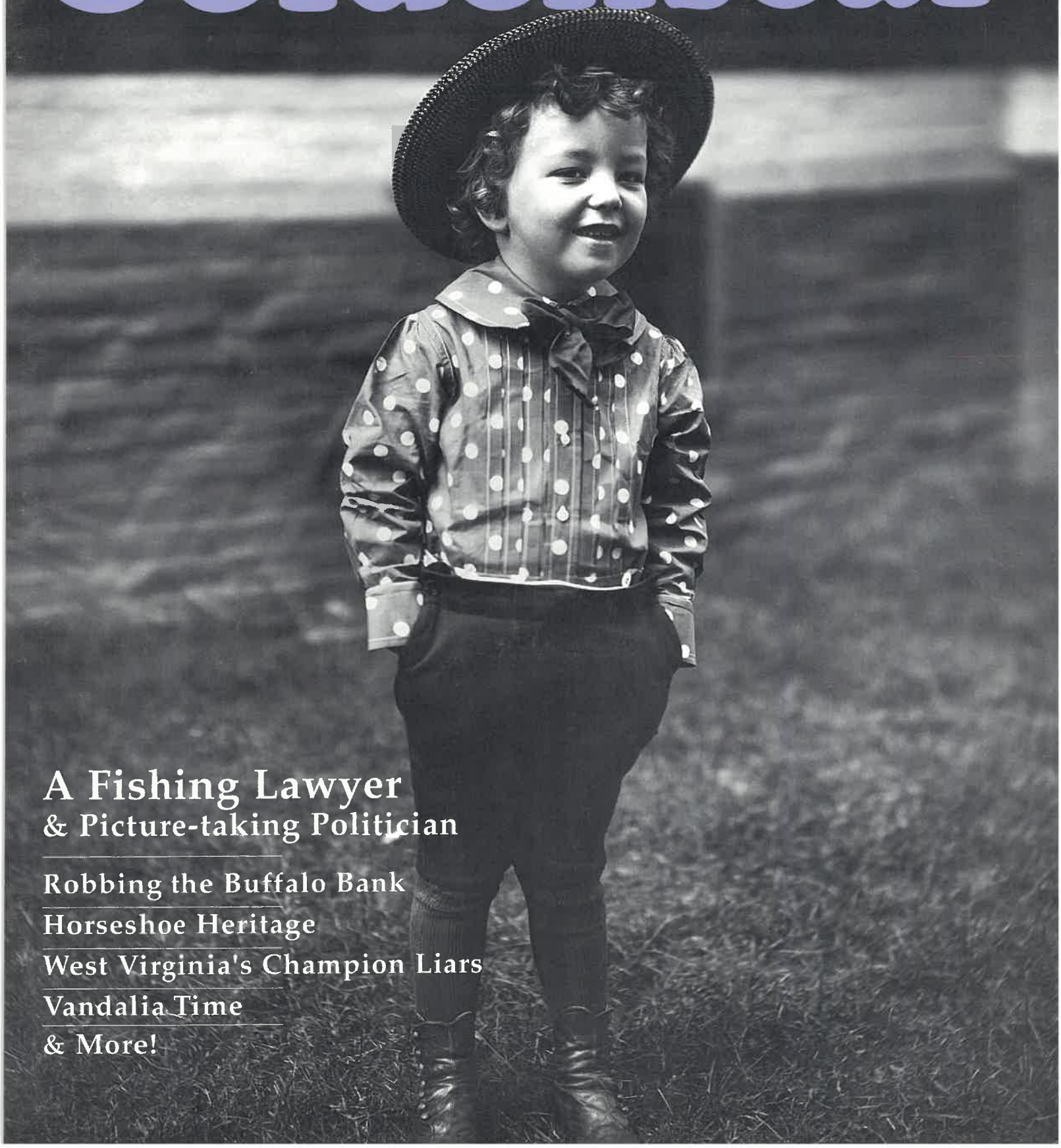
Vol. 22, No. 1 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • Spring 1996 • $3.95

Goldenseal



A Fishing Lawyer
& Picture-taking Politician

Robbing the Buffalo Bank

Horseshoe Heritage

West Virginia's Champion Liars

Vandalia Time

& More!

Folklife * Fairs * Festivals

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

April 16-17 Braxton County Arts & Crafts Show
Gassaway (364-2340)
April 20 Melvin Wine Birthday Concert
Landmark Studio/Sutton (765-7566)
April 20 Feast of the Ramson
Richwood (846-6790)
April 21-26 Augusta Spring Dulcimer Week
Elkins (637-1209)
April 26-28 Dogwood Festival
Huntington (696-5990)
April 26-28 Spring Mountain Festival
Petersburg (257-2722)
April 27-28 Spring Celebration
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)
April 28 24th Clay County Ramp Dinner
Clay (587-4226)
May 3-5 Dogwood Festival
Mullens (732-8000)
May 4 Historic Bramwell Spring Tour of Homes
Bramwell (248-7252)
May 4 Cheat River Festival
Albright (472-0025)
May 8-11 Rendezvous on the Island
Blennerhassett/Parkersburg (428-3000)
May 9-12 35th Wildflower Pilgrimage
Blackwater Falls/Davis (558-3370)
May 12 Mother's Day Celebration
Grafton (265-1589)
May 18 Allegheny Mountain Wool Fair
Mingo (335-4880)
May 19 Battle of Matewan 76th Anniversary
Matewan (426-4239)
May 19-26 Webster County Woodchopping Festival
Webster Springs (847-7666)
May 22-26 West Virginia Strawberry Festival
Buckhannon (472-9036)
May 24-26 20th Vandalia Gathering
Charleston (558-0220)
May 24-26 Dandelion Festival
White Sulphur Springs (1-800-284-9440)
May 24-27 Mountain Festival
Bluefield (327-7184)
May 24-27 Spring Folk Dance Camp
Oglebay Park/Wheeling (242-7700)
May 25-27 Head-of-the-Mon Horseshoe Tournament
Fairmont (366-3819)
May 30-June 2 Blue & Gray Reunion
Philippi (457-3700)
June 1 10th General Adam Stephen Day
Martinsburg (267-4434)
June 2 Rhododendron Outdoor Art & Craft Festival
South Charleston (744-4323)
June 6-9 West Virginia Bass Festival
St. Marys (684-2848)
June 7-8 Confederate Memorial Ceremony
Capon Chapel/Capon Bridge (822-4326)
June 7-9 Ronceverte River Festival
Ronceverte (645-7911)
June 7-9 Mountaineer Country Glass Festival
Morgantown (599-3407)
June 8-9 Hammer-In-Weekend
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)
June 14-15 Hancock County Quilt Show
New Cumberland (564-5385)
June 14-16 Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Charles Town (725-2055)
June 14-16 River Heritage Festival
New Martinsville (455-4215)
June 20 West Virginia Day
Independence Hall/Wheeling (238-1300)
June 20-22 West Virginia State Folk Festival
Glenville (462-8427)
June 20-22 West Virginia Coal Festival
Madison (369-7377)
June 27-30 Bluegrass-Country Music Festival
Summersville (872-3145)
June 28-30 5th Wheeling African-American Jubilee
Wheeling (1-800-828-3097)
June 29 Pearl S. Buck Birthday Celebration
Hillsboro (799-4048)
June 29-30 Mid-Summer Music Festival
Tomlinson Run/New Manchester (564-3651)
July 3-7 Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-7860)
July 11-13 Pioneer Days In Pocahontas County
Marlinton (799-4315)
July 13-14 Mountain Music Festival
Caretta (875-3418)
July 13-14 Pioneer Days & Wheat Harvest
Farm Museum/Point Pleasant (675-5737)
July 15-21 West Virginia Interstate Fair
Mineral Wells (489-1301)
July 17-20 Durbin Days
Durbin (456-4955)
July 21-28 Cowen Historical Railroad Festival
Cowen (847-5106)
July 22-27 West Virginia Poultry Convention
Moorefield (538-2725)
July 26-28 Upper Ohio Valley Italian Festival
Wheeling (1-800-828-3097)
July 26-28 46th State Gospel Sing
Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
July 29-August 3 Marshall County Fair
Moundsville (845-3980)
July 30-August 4 State Water Festival
Hinton (466-5400)
August 1-3 Bluestone Valley Fair
Spanishburg (425-1429)
August 1-4 Appalachian String Band Festival
Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (438-3005)
August 1-4 Boone County Fair
Danville (369-3925)
August 2-5 Wayne County Fair
Wayne (523-1728)
August 3-4 West Virginia Glass & Craft Festival
Oglebay Park/Wheeling (1-800-624-6988)
August 4-10 Cherry River Festival
Richwood (846-6790)
August 5-9 Magnolia Fair
Matewan (426-4239)
August 5-10 Tyler County Fair
Middlebourne (758-2494)
August 5-10 Mannington District Fair
Mannington (980-1911)
August 6-11 Tri-County Cooperative Fair
Petersburg (538-2278)
August 7-10 Wirt County Fair
Elizabeth (275-4517)
August 9-11 Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair
Logan (752-1324)
August 9-11 Augusta Festival
Elkins (637-1209)
August 9-11 Dulcimer Weekend
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)

(continued on inside back cover)

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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Goldenseal

Volume 22, Number 1 Spring 1996

COVER: Arthur Kenna, photographed in his Charleston yard in the 1880's, looks like Mr. Springtime to us. Father John E. Kenna, the picture-taking politician profiled on page 14, made the photo.

PHOTOS: Central Studios, Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Craig Cunningham, DeLuxe Studio, H. P. Fischer, John E. Kenna, Michael Keller, Harry Lynch, Gerald S. Ratliff, Doris Ulmann

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.

Losing the Chestnuts

December 27, 1995
Dover, Delaware
Editor:
The chestnuts died on our farm south of Hurricane, Putnam County, in 1927, '28, '29 and '30. I was three, four, five and six years old. Our largest tree was 25 feet around at the ground. Since many wondered how thick it was, my mother, a teacher, applied math [and calculated that] 25 feet around equaled 7.96 feet thick.

As per GOLDENSEAL ["Battling the Blight," Winter 1995] one could not climb a chestnut tree. The limbs were as thick as other trees. I judge the trees were 130 feet to 140 feet high.

All of our disasters including earthquakes, volcanoes, etc., are minimal compared to the death of the American chestnut. According to the Associated Press it numbered one out of five trees east of the Mississippi.
Sincerely,
C. T. Tincher, Jr.

Strike Trouble

October 18, 1995
Sevierville, Tennessee
Editor:
The Sand Fork railroad bridge was completely blown out of the water [during the Widen strike — GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1995]. Some of it landed on the hillside several hundred feet from where it once stood. The Sand Fork bridge was the largest on the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad, about six miles from the mouth of the creek at Dundon.

I remember well the night they blew up the bridge. A small bridge about a mile above Swandale was blown up first, and this I reckon was a signal for the men to blow the Sand Fork bridge. The first blast was just before dark. It was not too loud. Then came a loud blast that

Repairing track at Widen.

shook the old house, and rattled the dishes in Mom's cabinet.

They fixed the little bridge in just a few days. A train would come from Widen to Swandale, and my dad would take the company truck through the woods to Sand Fork, where a train from Dundon would unload supplies onto the truck. Then Dad would take the supplies to the waiting train at Swandale — thus the people of Widen had plenty to eat. I also saw cases of new 30-30 Winchesters come in that way.

I can remember the convoys of cars and trucks that would go through Swandale at night on their way to Widen. They would have their lights off, but I could see the men holding their guns inside the cars. I don't know if they were company or union. But as a small lad, I knew they meant business.
Sincerely,
Cody Burdette

Our thanks to GOLDENSEAL freelancer Cody Burdette for this extra information on the Widen strike. Cody's railroading father [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1988], worked for Widen's owner, J. G. Bradley, and Cody supplied the lead photo for our Winter 1995 story on the Clay County strike. — ed.

December 20, 1995
Durham, North Carolina
Editor:
I just finished reading C. C. Stewart's article, "Strike Duty," in the Winter 1995 GOLDENSEAL. I enjoyed it very much, coming from a family of coal miners.

My grandfather Thomas Frederick Chapman was a coal miner who came from England to West Virginia about 1910. Below is a story that was told to my brother Tom by my Aunt Lilli in July 1993.

Granddad was superintendent of mines in West Virginia. The family lived in several towns — Sun, Illini, Wet Branch and Swiss. The family always had one of the nicer homes in the town because of his position. While in Wet Branch, there was a strike, about 1923. Threats had been made against Granddad so he was guarded by state police at his house at night. Lilli (his daughter) would fix dinner for them.

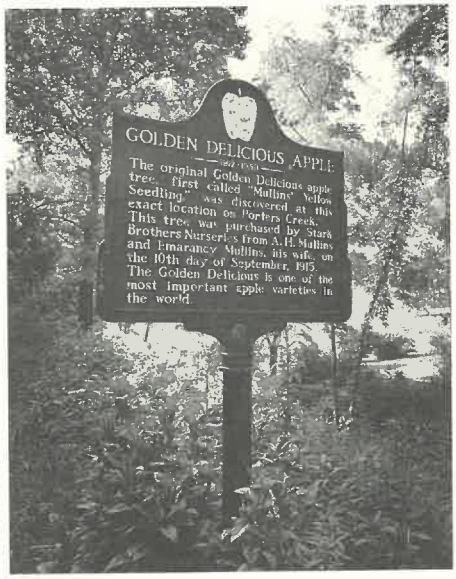
Once a man known only as "Skinny," a short, ugly man with red hair, a union member and a trouble maker, followed Granddad into a mine intending to kill him. The state police followed him in and arrested him. He was carrying a gun. After Skinny was arrested, three masked men came to Granddad's house when only Lilli and her brother Clarence were home and asked if there were any guns in the house. Lilli said no. The men said they knew better, and started to go in. Clarence hit one in the face, but the others got in and stole Granddad's rifles.

Later, Granddad called for a special train to take Skinny to Charleston. Four state troopers walked Skinny to the train. As they neared the train, someone yelled and Skinny fell to the ground. People on the hill opened fire and killed three policemen. One was named White, one was named Black. Lilli knew them because she [had] fixed dinner for them all the time. More police were called and all were arrested. The men were using Granddad's guns.
Sincerely,
Chuck Davidson

Delicious in any Shape

December 16, 1995
Rustburg, Virginia
Editor:
I enjoyed your recent article on the Golden Delicious apple so much my wife and I drove over to Clay County to visit the actual site where it was found. My wife even made my picture standing by the sign.

When the picture came back, I noticed something strange: That is not a Golden Delicious apple shown on the sign! I'll bet my last bushel of Golden Delicious that a Red Delicious apple is shown on the sign. A Red is more long and



MICHAEL KELLER

tapered as shown [on the sign], while a Golden is much more rounded on the bottom.

Please talk to someone you know that is familiar with both apples and ask his opinion.
Sincerely,
Tom Lusk

You are probably right about the roadside marker, our experts conclude, and we wonder if anyone else has ever been sharp-eyed enough to notice!

John Marra, the author of our Golden Delicious story and himself a county extension agent, agrees that the Red Delicious is more elongated than the Golden. He notes, however, that the Washington State Golden Delicious is longer than the eastern type grown in West Virginia.

We also contacted C. Marshall Ritter of Morgan Orchard in Monroe County. "I agree that the shape of the stylized apple on the historic marker does resemble Red Delicious rather than Golden Delicious," he writes. But Mr. Ritter wisely adds, "As apple growers, we are not so much concerned that a particular shape of apple may be designated as we are pleased that the shape of an *apple is designated."*

Thus speaks a practical man, and we agree. — ed.

The Dulcimer Lady

January 8, 1996
Arbovale, West Virginia
Editor:
It was with great pleasure that I read the article by Danny Williams in the Winter 1995 issue entitled "Carrying on the Music: Dulcimer Player Patty Looman."

I had the honor in 1994 of being the first hammered dulcimer apprentice to Patty, through the West Virginia Folk Art Apprenticeship Program administered by the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins.

As the master teacher, Patty taught me a great deal about the hammered dulcimer, as well as many old-time songs, including several of Russell Fluharty's and Worley Gardner's tunes, during the year she worked with me.

Patty not only is an *excellent* dulcimer teacher but one of the finest persons I've ever known. I'm sure all of her past and present students would agree with me. She certainly has enriched my life, more than she'll ever know, with the knowledge, music, and kindness she has shared with me.
Sincerely,
Alesia Wayne

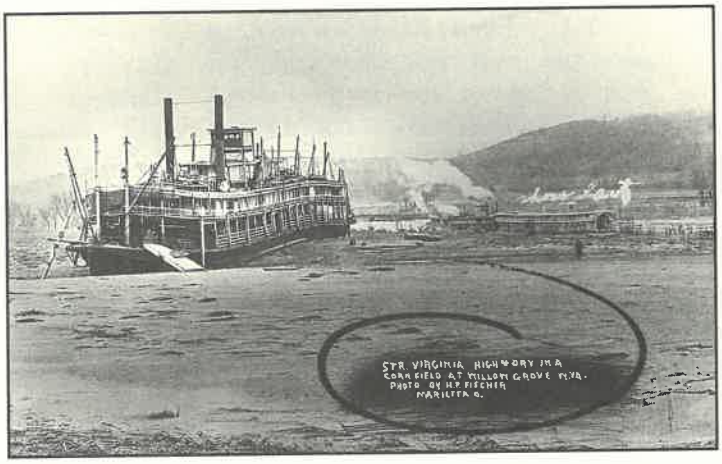
January 29, 1996
Edmond, Oklahoma
Editor:
I have been receiving GOLDENSEAL for many years, and enjoy it very much.

I was raised in West Virginia and get back to visit every chance I get. I really enjoy the music. I have been able to attend the Vandalia Gathering a couple of times.

I was very much interested in the story on Patty Looman. I hope Patty continues to play and teach after recovering from her fall.
Thanks so much.
Bruce A. Hanlin

Steamboat in a Cornfield

January 10, 1996
Devola, Ohio
Editor:
While perusing Bob Withers' fine story of the sternwheeler *Virginia* in a cornfield, Volume 21, No. 4, pp 18-19, I noticed that you state "photographer unknown" — while the photo is clearly marked by Marietta's outstanding photo-graphic artist and postcard maker for over 50 years, Harry Philip Fischer. We here think the photo should be credited to H. P. Fischer. His 10,000-plus negatives, including 800-plus steamboats, are in the archives of Marietta College.
Respectfully,
J. Devol



H.P. FISCHER

Oops — you're right, and we apologize to the fans of Mr. Fischer and to his memory. We have a saying on this side of the river about overlooking something as plain as the nose on your face, and it looks like we did just that. — ed.

December 27, 1995
Steubenville, Ohio
Editor:
I enjoyed the photos and story on

the *Virginia* in the cornfield. I am the Ohio River's historian for the tri-state area, having lived and worked on the Ohio River boats, and my father was a steamboat man. In 1986 my good friend John Hartford, who wrote the song "Gentle On My Mind," published a book entitled *Steamboat in a Cornfield*. It had wonderful photos of the *Virginia* and the cornfield in it.

I lived in West Virginia when I worked on boats towing sand and gravel. Gerry Sutphin and Captain Charley Stone are very good friends of mine. I have quite a large collection of Ohio River photos and history.

Happy Holidays,
William (Slim) Brandt

Any friend of Gerry Sutphin and Captain Charles Henry Stone [GOLDENSEAL Summer 1985] is a friend of ours, and we are pleased to hear from you. We knew of John Hartford's book when we published our story and wish we had gotten that great title before he did. We didn't mention Steamboat in a Cornfield *because the book is out of print and off the market.*

Incidentally, we understand that Hartford is now at work on a book about fiddler Ed Haley, a Logan native, and would appreciate any information our readers may have. — ed.

The Hatfields are Heard From...

October 15, 1995
Warrensburg, Missouri
Editor:

I am grateful to you for sending me a copy of the Fall 1995 issue of GOLDENSEAL. While I was especially interested in "Hatfield History," I enjoyed the other articles, as well. The impact of the G.I. Bill on West Virginia University was fascinating. In the broader sense, the G.I. Bill transformed American campuses and produced the "golden era" of higher education.

I have three children and want to provide them with their own individual copies [of the Fall issue]. It will serve to enrich their knowledge of their ancestry, while also reminding them of their proud West Virginia heritage.

Sincerely,
J. Tennis Hatfield

January 16, 1996
Logan, West Virginia
Editor:

In reading the letter in the winter '95 issue from James R. Kidd, my first thought was that his mother must have been a beautiful young

GERALD S. RATLIFF

Willis Hatfield.

woman. (A prerequisite of all Hatfield women.) Had she dated Willis he would have found out if she was a good cook. (The other prerequisite of all Hatfield women.) Had she met the second test, Mr. Kidd and I would probably have been cousins. The moving finger writes...

Sincerely,
Coleman Hatfield

...and a Rexrode

December 30, 1995
Sugar Grove, West Virginia
Editor:

I really enjoyed the Winter 1995 issue of the GOLDENSEAL magazine. The cover features a painting by my late father, James Tyree Rexrode. Also, the article [featured a] picture of my friend Robert Simmons.

Sincerely,
Everette L. Rexrode

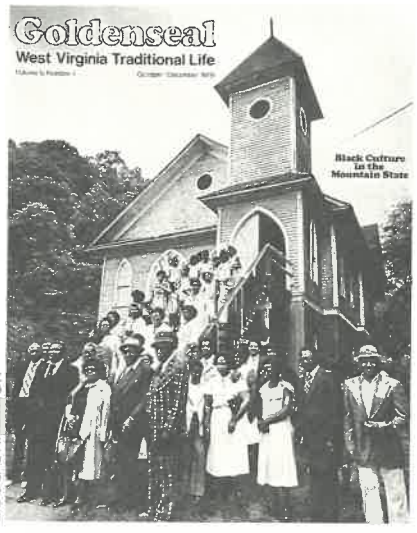
We depend on the cooperation of West Virginia families and were proud to have both Hatfields and Rexrodes represented in recent issues of GOLDENSEAL. The earlier letter which Coleman Hatfield refers to expressed the reluctance of Mr. Kidd's mother, as a young woman, to date Coleman's uncle Willis Hatfield. — ed.

Goldenseal's Golden Oldies

Bookseller Donnell B. Portzline of Mountain Memories knows GOLDENSEAL is worth something. He has assembled complete sets of the magazines from Volume 1 through Volume 20 and is offering them for sale at a whopping $600.

Separate volume sets, each covering one year, are also available for $30 each. The available sets include all years from 1981 to 1993, except 1986. Portzline encourages interested buyers to contact him by phone to avoid ordering sets and volumes that may have sold out. Mountain Memories may be reached at P.O. Box 63, Fayetteville, West Virginia 25840; (304)574-0365.

GOLDENSEAL reader Jim Anderson of Huntington also is offering a complete set of back issues for sale at an unspecified price. He says he discovered GOLDENSEAL late in life and enjoyed it so much he set out to purchase and read all the back issues. "Luck was with me, and I managed to find all the back issues starting with Volume 1, Number 1 in mint condition," he wrote. Now Mr. Anderson wants to sell them to someone else to enjoy. Contact him at 784 Eastwood Drive, Huntington, WV 25705; (304)522-4495.



DOUG CHADWICK

A 1979 Goldenseal.

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.

New from Pictorial Histories

Bullets & Steel: The Fight for the Kanawha Valley, 1861-1865 is a new publication from Pictorial Histories. The 190-page softcover deals with the Civil War period in the Kanawha Valley, from Gauley Bridge to Point Pleasant. The book is the work of three well-known local authors: Richard Andre, Stan Cohen and Bill Wintz.

Their intent is not to give a blow-by-blow of every major event leading up to, during and after the war, but to "give an overview of actions." They used as many first-person accounts as possible and researched every reference they could find concerning the war years in the Kanawha Valley.

The book also draws on the work of fellow researchers Terry Lowry, Tim McKinney, Dave Phillips, and Paul Marshall, as well as earlier historians Roy Bird Cook and Boyd

High Tech History

MICHAEL KELLER

The State Archives has produced the first CD-ROM of West Virginia history. *The Explorer Timeline*, developed by Bill Theriault of Jefferson County and Stan Bumgardner of Charleston, is a 12,000-event history of the state, cross-referenced by topics, names, dates and locations.

A CD-ROM is the same in appearance as a regular compact disk, but carries computer data rather than recorded music. *The Explorer Timeline* includes textual information, as well as images and some sound. The CD draws from a variety of sources, including state and county histories, biographies, acts of the Virginia General Assembly and West Virginia Legislature, and articles of incorporation.

The Explorer Timeline is for computers running Windows 3.1 or higher. For optimum performance, the computer should have a 486 DX or Pentium processor that is 66 megahertz or faster, eight megabytes of RAM, an SVGA color monitor, and a mouse. At least three megabytes of hard disk space should be available. The CD-ROM may be purchased for $15 from Explorer Timeline, Archives and History Section, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

The timeline is one component of the new West Virginia History Database, which is available on the World Wide Web. The database features the West Virginia State Archives home page, guides to state historical societies and repositories, a portion of the timeline, and various articles and issues of *West Virginia History*, the state's scholarly history journal. You may visit the database home page at http://www.wvlc.wvnet.edu/history/historyw.

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.

I enclose $_____ for _____ copies of *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars.*

Name_____

Address_____

_____

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL. Send to:
GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

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Hundreds of our readers like GOLDENSEAL well enough to send gift subscriptions to their friends and relatives, and we'd be glad to take care of your gift list as well!

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[ ] Add my name too! I enclose $16 for my own subscription.

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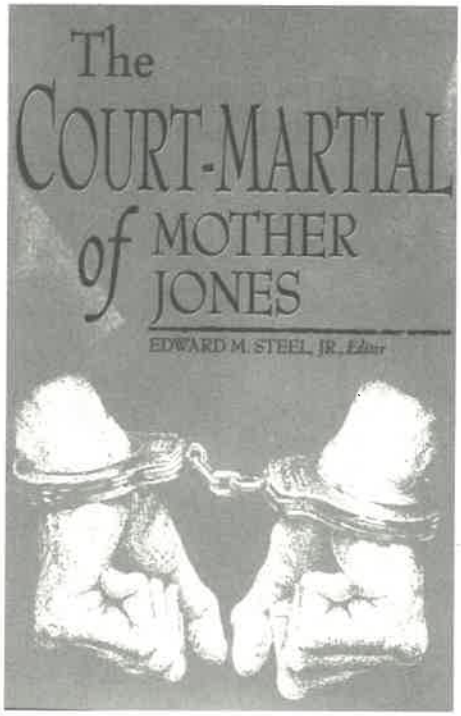
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Stutler. *Bullets & Steel* is illustrated with more than 120 photos, drawings and maps. Author Richard Andre points out a reproduction of the oldest known map of Malden, a previously unpublished photo of General John McCausland, an 1873 view of Charleston believed to be the oldest scenic photograph of the city, and the only known photo of Charleston's 1870 capitol building.

Bullets & Steel is in bookstores around the state. It sells for $14.95. Mail orders may be sent to Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 4103 Virginia Avenue S.E., Charleston, WV 25304; (304)925-7611. Add $4 for postage and handling. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

The Military & Mother Jones

One of the most dramatic episodes in the long life of Mary Harris "Mother" Jones came in the spring of 1913 when she was court-martialed for her part in the West Virginia Mine Wars. A new book edited by WVU historian Edward M. Steel, Jr., documents the trial and related events. *The Court-Martial of Mother Jones* was published late last year by the University Press of Kentucky.



Mother Jones was arrested in Charleston while leading a delegation of striking coal miners to see Governor Glasscock, then tried under military law and jailed for two months at a boardinghouse in Pratt. The wily octogenarian reaped a wealth of publicity from the episode, using her trial and imprisonment to speak to an audience well beyond the courtroom. "I have no defense to make," she declared at the outset. "Whatever I have done in West Virginia, I have done it all over the United States, and when I get out, I will do it again."

Dozens of other civilians were tried as well, and many of them also incarcerated for lengthy periods. The general outline of these events is well known, and described in detail in Jones's autobiography and other books on the period. The new book makes the court-martial trial transcript readily available for the first time. Steel includes more than 200 pages of verbatim transcript, preceded by a long introduction to put the legal matters into context.

The Court-Martial of Mother Jones is a 319-page book, with extensive notes, index and illustrations. It sells for $49.95 in hardback and $18.95 in paperback at bookstores. Mail orders, including $3 postage and handling, may be sent to the University Press of Kentucky, 663 South Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40508.

Architecture Acquisition

The Eastern Regional Coal Archives in Bluefield recently acquired the papers and photographs of prominent Bluefield architect Alex Mahood (1888-1970). His son, Alex Mahood, Jr., who was also an architect, recently died and left the records of his father's work to the archives.

Mahood's work was featured in the summer 1993 GOLDENSEAL in the article "Bluefield's Biggest: The Grand West Virginian Hotel" by historian Stuart McGehee. McGehee teaches at West Virginia State College and is archivist at the Eastern Regional Coal Archives.

Alex Mahood first came to Bluefield in 1912 and over the next half-century he designed buildings in Bluefield and many other places. In addition to the West Virginian

UNDERWOOD & UNDERWOOD/EASTERN REGIONAL COAL ARCHIVES

The West Virginian Hotel.

Hotel, Mahood, Sr., built numerous churches, schools, stores, residences and public buildings. He also built the Creative Arts Center and Twin Towers at WVU as well as buildings at Bluefield College.

McGehee says the collection now housed at the Eastern Regional Coal Archives includes literally thousands of items — photographs, plans, documents, diagrams, and drawings. He cited Mahood's work on CCC and WPA buildings in particular, and the Itmann Company Store in Wyoming County. The archives' collection is open to the public. For more information contact Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Craft Memorial Library, 600 Commerce Street, Bluefield, WV 24701; (304)325-3943.

Looking Back

Debbie Schwarz Simpson of White Sulphur Springs recently published a new book in her *Backward Glance* series. In *Backward Glance: The World War II Years* Simpson drew on her own experiences growing up in White Sulphur Springs. Much of the book talks about The Greenbrier resort during World War II when it was operated by the military as Ashford General Hospital. Simpson also pays tribute to veterans of the war and White Sulphur Springs residents who "made a major contribution to the cause."

Her new book uses plenty of historic photographs, extensively identified. There are pictures of victory gardens, postcards, and people, as well as other illustrations concerning the war and the homefront.

Simpson also recently reprinted *Backward Glance: White Sulphur and Its People*, a pictorial history of her hometown presented through photographs from the late 1800's to the mid-1900's. Simpson authored *Backward Glance: State Fair of West Virginia* a few years ago, a collection of photographs from West Virginia's big summer event.

The *Backward Glance* books are small format, softcover publications. The State Fair pictorial is available from the State Fair of West Virginia, P.O. Drawer 986, Lewisburg WV 24901. The cost is $10, plus $1 postage and handling. The two other *Backward Glance* books may be ordered from Debbie Schwarz Simpson, HC 69, Box 985, White Sulphur Springs, WV 24986. The cost is $8 each, plus $2 shipping and handling.

Mountain Portraits at Huntington Museum

The Huntington Museum of Art is exhibiting the work of photographer Doris Ulmann from this month through June 9. Widely respected for her work with Appalachian photo subjects, Ulmann traveled the southern mountains photographing faces in the 1920's and 1930's.

"She concluded that there would always be someone handy with a snapshot camera to photograph the pretty girls with frilly dresses and curled hair, with made-up eyes and lips. She was not concerned with these people, but rather with those who were downright, genuine individuals," folklorist John Jacob Niles wrote in his introduction to the book, *The Appalachian Photographs of Doris Ulmann*.

Niles accompanied Ulmann during many of her travels, himself studying the ballads of the mountain people she photographed. His other purpose was hauling equipment for the diminutive photographer. With glass plates for the cameras slung over each shoulder he helped Ulmann as she posed her subjects with great care.

DORIS ULMANN/COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Doris Ulmann did what she did before better-known Farm Security Administration photographers like Walker Evans traveled through Appalachia. Though they shared some of the same subjects, Ulmann's photographs are more straight-forward portraiture. Huntington Museum of Art describes her work as characterized by soft focus, abstract backgrounds, and carefully rendered texture with a sensual quality.

Ulmann was born in New York City, educated there, and died there on August 28, 1934. She was 50 years old. She spent the last day of her working life with John Jacob Niles in western North Carolina on top of Turkey Mountain.

For more information about the Doris Ulmann exhibit contact the Huntington Museum of Art, 2033 McCoy Road, Huntington, WV 25701; (304)529-2701. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Grandma Bessie

Into her late 50's, people would comment that Grandma was a good-looking woman. Height runs in our family, and Bessie was about five-eight, sweet and with a tender heart. Her salt-and-pepper hair was twisted neatly, encircling the base of her head.

She had very few wrinkles, but she wore glasses and comfortable "old woman" shoes. Sometimes holes were cut in select places, because her feet were full of corns, bunions and calluses. Long sleeves covered arms that I had never seen, and her thick stockings sometimes lay in wrinkles around her legs. When I'd hug her, her breath smelled of coffee.

Grandma Bessie was Bessie Welker Sovine, my mother's mother. She lived out her life on Coon Creek in Putnam County. Every day she wore a different apron that she had made herself. Having grown up in a poor family, she was unable to throw anything away. Once I found a handkerchief she had painstakingly patched.

Grandma's father was blind, and she told of her love of reading to him. Unfortunately, her own eyesight was poor and many hours spent on books caused her eyes to weaken from the strain. Later in life, glasses enabled her again to enjoy the pleasure of reading. Romance novels were her favorite. That amazed me, considering her straitlaced thinking.

A scar stretched downward on her earlobe. She explained that at one time her ears were pierced, and an earring had been torn through her lobe. I could understand why she never wanted me to have mine pierced. She told me that we were part American Indian, explaining her high cheek bones and a slight hump in her nose.

In good weather, Grandma was always outside. Her yard showed the love and hard work that she put into it. There were flowers of every variety. Sweet Williams of white, red, and bright pink held their heads high, standing proudly in a line under the windows on the side of the house where the bedroom was located. Huge pink roses climbed the end of the house, peeking in the window. There were snow balls, irises, grape hyacinths, roses of sharon and more. You could find her any day in her bonnet, apron and dress, working until every thread was wet with perspiration.

When forced to stay inside during the winter months, she loved to sew. Many of the feedsack dresses I wore were made by Grandma, not to mention almost every apron owned by anyone in the hollow. Comforts and quilts were pieced from discarded clothing, recycled with lots of pricked fingers and patience into beautiful patterns of color to warm those she loved.

The days that Grandma Bessie kept us, while Mother worked outside the home, were precious. We'd pack a picnic and a tablecloth, and head for the hollow. We'd spend time somewhere under a tree, talking about how good God is.

In 1951, when I was just seven years old, Bethel Baptist Church held a revival. Grandma and Reverend Joseph asked me if I wanted to be saved. Of course I did. My daddy was not a Christian at the time, but before the week was over he, too, accepted Christ into his life. We were baptized together in Hurricane Creek about a mile below the church on a cold snowy day in November.

Grandma's people had apparently always been Baptists, but strict Church of God discipline would have better described the way they believed. Grandma said I shouldn't wear shorts, although my mother insisted that I could. The entire body should be modestly covered, Grandma said, and absolutely no makeup. I remember later, when I was in my 20's, the H-back blouse was the fad. They were cut high in the bodice, and opened down the back. I never thought they were daring. I made myself one and went to visit Grandma Bessie. She was appalled that her Bonnie would wear something like that, so I never did again, around her.

Being allowed to go along, anywhere, was quite a treat, and I guess that's the reason I attended so many wakes with Grandma. In the late '40's and '50's, most corpses were kept at home until the funeral. Friends and family gathered to offer condolences. Food was abundant and everyone stayed late into the night to be with the family. People gathered in who had not been together in a long while and these occasions were as much reunions as funerals.

But nothing was more special to me than staying all night at Grandma Bessie's. She let me sleep in the same bed with her, and we would talk and talk. She never told me to be quiet and go to sleep.

The night sounds in Grandma's house were wonderful. After we quit talking, I would lie quietly and listen to the alarm clock tick. I could imagine the clock running around in a circle, and as I listened I could actually hear it coming closer and going by me, on around, then returning again. On wet nights, the rain played music on the roof. If you haven't slept under a tin roof on a rainy night, you haven't lived.

When Grandma got a chance she'd tell me things about herself. She was born in 1889 and married after the turn of the century. Grandpa Cade had been traveling up the path of Coon Creek when he looked down in the field and saw the most beautiful girl he had ever seen in his life. Eventually they reared four children. Grandpa's only income was from the farm, so life was not easy. In 1945, Walter Cade Sovine passed away. My mother said she believed he had been sick for a long time.

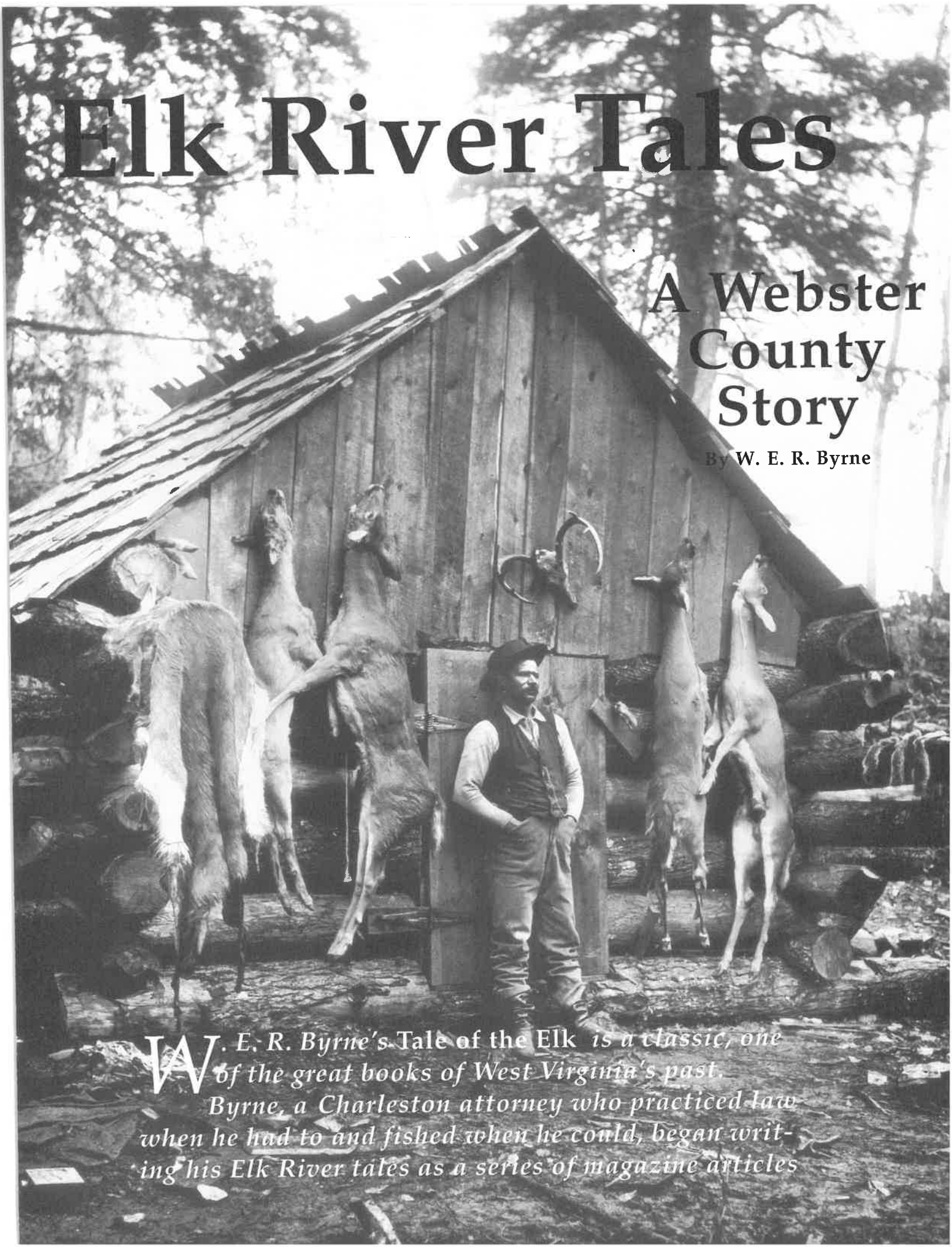
Now I'm a grandmother myself, and Grandma Bessie has been gone for a long time. But as I picnicked with my daughter and two grandsons one afternoon this summer I could almost see her with us under the sycamore tree, sitting there on the checked cloth and patting her brow with a lacy, patched handkerchief.

— Bonnie Lewis

Elk River Tales

A Webster County Story

By W. E. R. Byrne



W. E. R. Byrne's Tale of the Elk *is a classic, one of the great books of West Virginia's past. Byrne, a Charleston attorney who practiced law when he had to and fished when he could, began writing his Elk River tales as a series of magazine articles*

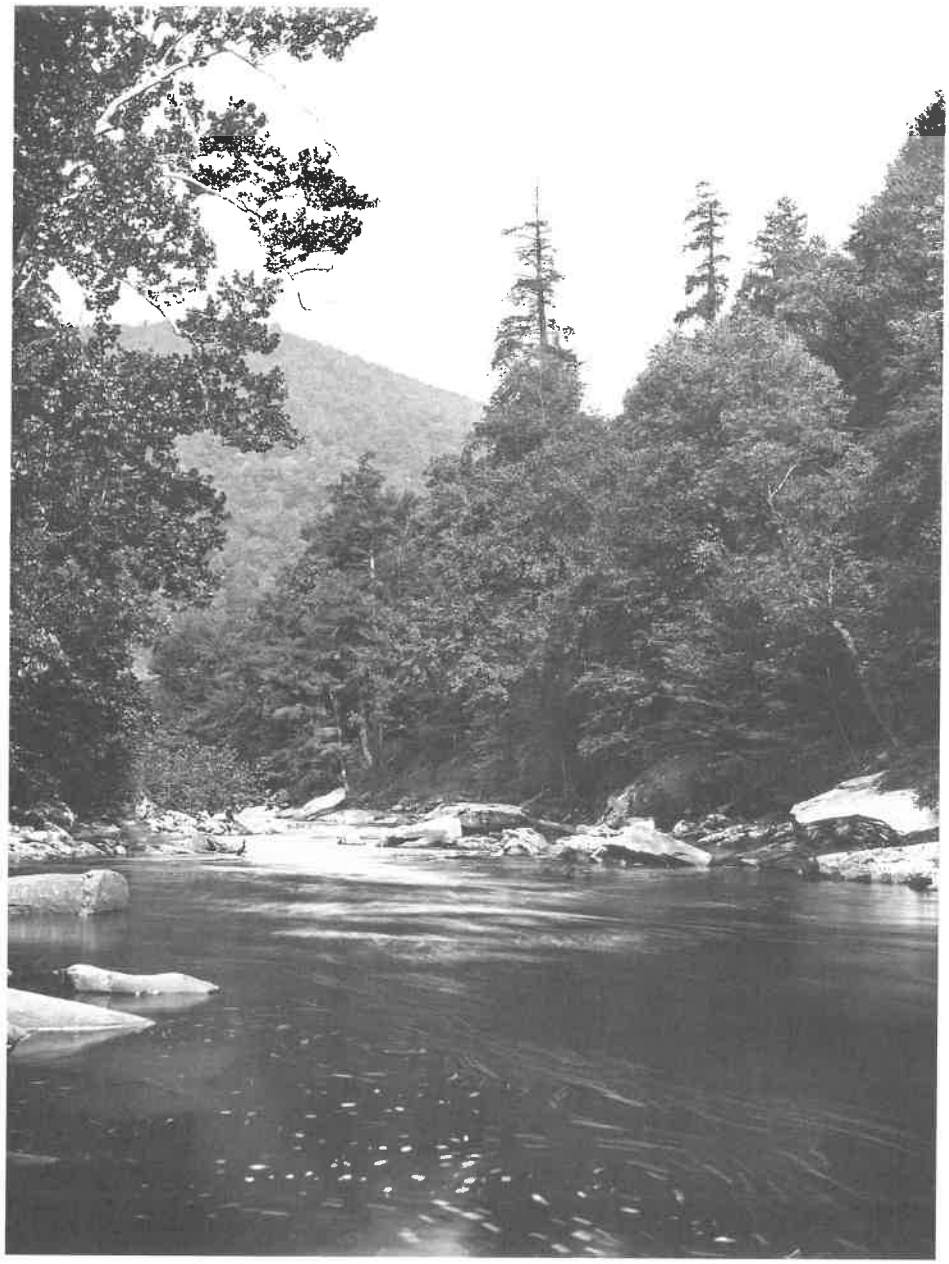
in the 1920's. The pieces were brought together in book form in 1940, and Tale of the Elk *has been republished from time to time since then.*

We are glad to see the book back in print again in a nice new paperback edition from Quarrier Press. To commemorate its reappearance we offer the following excerpt from Chapter 8, dealing with Byrne's buddy, the photographer and politician John E. Kenna, and with a memorable trial in Webster Springs. The old resort town was a favorite place with Byrne — "whenever I land at Webster Springs I've had to tear myself away," he wrote — and Chapter 8 is one of several devoted to that area.

The only wagonload of venison I ever saw, was at Webster Springs in the month of November, 1885. I was there attending my second term of court and Senator John E. Kenna and Dick Delaney, from Charleston, accompanied by Fleet Porterfield, their true, tried and trusty cook and teamster, drove in via Summersville in a road wagon for their annual hunt. They proceeded on up the river to Whittaker Falls and pitched their camp somewhere in that neighborhood. My recollection is that about ten days later they returned, Kenna and Delaney afoot and Fleet driving — the wagon loaded to the guards with unskinned deer carcasses. There must have been ten or a dozen. I do remember that Mr. Kenna gave a deer to each hotel and boarding house in town, and had five or six left, which they took to Charleston.

"If those who lived there when I first knew the place had stayed at home and behaved themselves, Webster would by this time be by far the most populous county in West Virginia."

In August, 1886 or 1887, Senator Kenna built — and I don't mean had built — a fine johnboat, at Webster Springs, and he and Fleet Porterfield undertook to fish from that point to Charleston. I accompanied them for two or three miles on the trip. I do not mean to say that I rode in the boat with them; for that is not the way that trip is made. If the water is at fishing stage, the shoals and swifts, of which there are many, are so shallow that one man usually wades and guides the boat over the roughs, while the others walk or wade along and do the fishing; and if flush, the current is so swift and the channel so rough and rocky that it would be a perilous undertaking to travel in any sort of craft for the first twenty-odd miles from Webster Springs down to the mouth of Laurel Creek, now the town of Centralia. My recollection is that Senator Kenna came to grief on this very trip down at



Above: A mountain stream, photographed by Senator Kenna. Byrne says that Kenna fished the Elk from its upper reaches to Charleston. Date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

Previous Page: Fleet Porterfield, Senator John E. Kenna's cook and traveling companion. Bill Byrne says that Porterfield drove the only wagonload of venison he ever saw, and he has a good start on another load here. Photo by John E. Kenna, date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

W.E.R. Byrne: A Fishing Lawyer

William Eston Randolph Byrne was a respected public servant in his time, and a man who knew how to get away from the rigors of public life. A lawyer who served his clients and West Virginia's Democratic Party for more than 50 years, Byrne had a special love affair with the Elk River which he fished, hunted and camped on whenever he could.

W.E.R. Byrne was born at Fort Defiance, Virginia, in 1862. His father was a member of the convention voting Virginia out of the Union and later a Confederate officer, but his mother was from Braxton County and the family moved to West Virginia at the end of the Civil War. They lived at Weston, Parkersburg, Clay, Charleston and Wheeling.

After attending schools in Wheeling and Charleston, young William worked as a civil engineer and studied law in his spare time. In 1884 he went to Greenbrier County to read law with his uncle, Supreme Court Justice Homer A. Holt (grandfather of the governor of the same name), and after 10 months he was admitted to the state bar. He practiced law in Braxton and surrounding counties and was elected prosecuting attorney for Braxton County in 1893.

Byrne later moved to Charleston where he served as clerk of the State Senate, clerk of the House of Delegates, and speaker of the house. In 1936 when he was 74 years old, Byrne was appointed clerk of the State Supreme Court after his term as chairman of the Workmen's Compensation Appeal Board expired.

Law was Byrne's chosen vocation, and fishing his avocation. He spent every moment he could along the banks of his beloved Elk River. Byrne enjoyed fishing immensely, but he also spent a lifetime studying the river and its geography. He knew every inch of the Elk.

To those who lived along the river, Byrne was a welcome fishing companion. It was said of him that he delighted in gathering his friends around the campfire at night to tell favorite stories. Eventually he began to commit his tales to paper.

He best expresses his love for the Elk River in the pages of *Tale of the Elk*, a compilation of magazine columns written for his friend Gus Bolden, editor of *West Virginia Wild Life Magazine*. The last chapter of Byrne's book, "The Camp at the End of the World," is written in verse. It is dedicated "'to him who in love of nature holds communion with her visible forms,' and can both speak and interpret her language."

W.E.R. Byrne spoke it well. The lawyer-outdoorsman died at home of pneumonia on December 11, 1937, after he was stricken at his Elk River camp. The following words closed Byrne's *Tale of the Elk*:

W.E.R. Byrne. Photographer and date unknown.

When the order shall come to
give over the fight, and the
flag of life's battle is furled,
Let me sleep — let me dream —
by the murmuring stream,
In my Camp at The End of
The World.

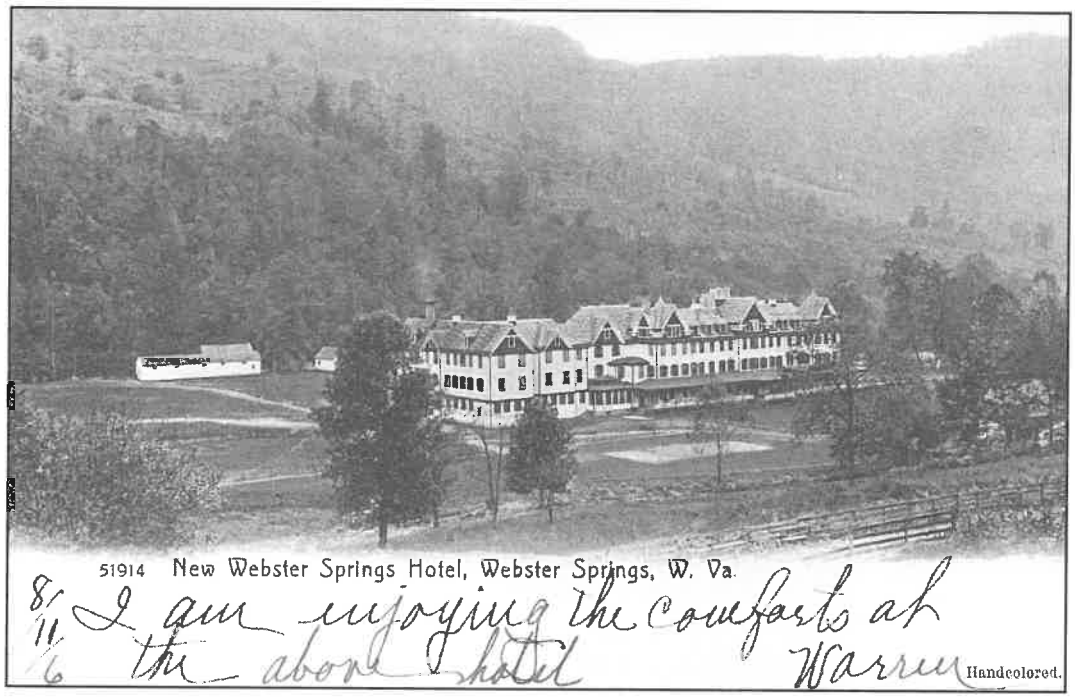
Union Mills, a short distance below Centralia, where his boat was wrecked by coming in contact with a rock, and that he had to call on old "Squirley" Carpenter who then lived thereabout, to convey him to Charleston in a canoe. Afterward, however, Mr. Kenna built another boat in which he made the continuous trip from Webster Springs to Charleston. So far as I know he is the only man who ever did so.

Mr. Kenna was a great lover of the outdoors, and an all-round "Wild Lifer." While hunting big game, such as deer and bear, was his long suit, he was very fond of fishing for trout and bass. The only time I ever fished in Sugar Creek of Back Fork, Mr. Kenna and I rode up from Webster Springs, making an early start and a late return, and put in a full day in Sugar Creek and at the island near its mouth, in the Back Fork. This was four or five years before his death, which occurred in 1893.

John E. Kenna held a strong hand with the people of Webster County. It was in the old Third Congressional District, which he represented for two or three terms before he was elected to the United States Senate in 1883. He hunted and fished with them during his campaigns and as well in the off year; went to their logrollings and house-raisings, and called them by their first names, and every man, woman and child called him John. The story is told that in his last race for the House of Representatives

Kenna received every vote cast in Webster County, except one, and that was cast by a fellow who had borrowed $10,000 from him and failed to return it.

Webster County is one of the most sparsely settled, and, from the standpoint of population, smallest counties in the State, but if those who lived there forty years ago, when I first knew the place, and all who have been born there since, had stayed at home and behaved themselves, instead of moving out and spreading themselves all over creation, Webster would by this time be by far the most populous county in West Virginia. In those days the average of children per family was from twelve to sixteen, and a fellow with only eight or nine children was looked down on by his neighbors. Currence Gregory's family consisted of himself and his wife, and, if I am not mistaken, sixteen children — all girls but fifteen; and one of his neighbors by the name of Hamrick, had almost exactly the same number, with but one boy in the lot. I wish I could get hold of the photograph of Currence Gregory's family which John Alderson once showed me. It would fit in here just fine.



Webster Springs, and particularly its big resort hotel shown on the postcard (above), attracted prosperous visitors from Charleston and other cities. The West Virginia Medical Association (below) met there in 1906. Photographers unknown, courtesy State Archives.

If anybody should check up on me and challenge the accuracy of these family figures, I hope they will take into consideration the fact that I am speaking merely from memory, and the further fact that it is not out of the way in matters of this kind to add a few, to cover future contingencies.

Once I asked one of the numerous Hamricks — I don't now remember which one — how many children he had, and he replied that he had thirteen, all living. I said, "Thirteen! Don't you know that thirteen is an awfully unlucky number?"

"Is that so?" said he.

"That is so," said I.

I saw him about a year later and he said, "Well, Bill, you needn't worry any more about my bad luck. Fourteen."

John Vickers has fished the roughs of Elk from Webster Springs to Union Mills several times, and has quite a

The village of Webster Springs, as it appeared in John Kenna's day. The Webster County Courthouse, built soon after Bill Byrne's whiskey trial, stands center right, with the arched doorway. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

number of very interesting fish yarns to relate. But the trouble about John is — and sad to relate, almost everybody else, excepting the present writer — you cannot depend upon the absolute accuracy of his statements of, concerning or pertaining to, the fish he caught or didn't catch.

The old stock of Webster County have always been pre-eminently a quiet, peaceable, law-abiding people, and in the olden days and as well the present, when a crime of any great magnitude was committed — and many have been committed — it was safe to say that in nineteen out of every twenty cases, the culprit was a "furriner" and not one of the "natiffs," as Tom Daly called them. Because of its remoteness from the outer world and its boundless mountain fastnesses, desperadoes and fugitives from justice from border states, especially Kentucky and southwestern Virginia, were wont to seek refuge and isolation in its friendly seclusion. The most hospitable people in the world, no wayfarer, however humble or forbidding his appearance, ever left the door of one of the old Webster stock, with his wants unprovided for. And many was the time that weeks or months after the event, the news would percolate through to the host, that he had entertained, not an angel unawares, but an imp of darkness who was eluding the gallows or penitentiary for some crime committed scores or hundreds of miles away.

"I asked how many children he had, and he replied 13. I said, 'Don't you know that 13 is an unlucky number?' I saw him about a year later and he said, 'Well, Bill, you needn't worry any more about my bad luck.'"

The first case of any magnitude, with the trial of which I was concerned in Webster County, was the State versus Williams, alias Mennifee, upon an indictment for burglary. This was probably at the April term, 1886. It seems that Uncle Johnny Baughman, who operated a country store back on the mountains, had sustained one of his peri-

odical robberies, and a day or two thereafter a suspicious looking character by the name of Williams or Mennifee was found in the neighborhood, and being a total stranger and wholly unable to properly account for his antecedents, he was promptly pounced upon by the minions of the law, charged with the robbery and confined in the Webster jail to await the action of the next grand jury. This jail was a one-story stone structure, consisting of two cells, with a hallway between, surmounted by a one-story frame structure, which served as the jailer's residence, and from which descended a stairway to the hall below.

"The trouble about John is you cannot depend upon the absolute accuracy of his statements of, concerning or pertaining to, the fish he caught or didn't catch."

A year or so before the incarceration of Williams, one Jacob A. Hosey, a citizen of the lower section of Webster County, had ordered from a Cincinnati liquor house by the name of Sandheger about $1,000 worth of whiskey, wine, porter, ale and drinks of like nature, which was promptly shipped to the nearest railroad station and there taken over by Hosey and hauled to his home. Some question arose soon about payment for the goods and Sandheger brought a suit in the circuit court of Webster County, and sued out an attachment which was placed in the hands of Sheriff Sam Given, who promptly took possession of the stock of liquors, and conveyed the same to Fork Lick, where it was deposited for safe keeping in one of the two cells of the jail, in the original containers, barrels and kegs. Williams was put in jail about December, 1885, and remained there all that winter. Whether someone told him, or whether he sensed it from the frequent trips made down the stairway and into the neighboring cell, which he could observe through the bars of his cell door, in some way Williams found out that there was something of more than usual interest in the cell across the hall, and being an ingenious devil he proceeded to whittle out a wooden key to the padlock of his door and another key for the other cell, and to make quiet investigation of the mystery. Among the numerous barrels and kegs, he found one of the latter over in a dark corner where it was not likely to be missed, full of liquid of some kind. This he quietly removed to his own cell and found it to contain brandy. Williams' dining table consisted of an inverted empty flour barrel, and this he placed over the brandy keg, thus concealing it. Swiping one of the pint tin cups brought to his cell with his meals, he bent the rim spout shape, hung the cup on the nail in the wall provided for his hat, which, of course, concealed it, when the hat was in its accustomed place. He was now ready for business, and, his cell being on the ground floor and no fence or other obstruction to intercourse with the outside world, except the stone walls and barred windows, he communicated the fact to some one who became his confederate, and soon empty bottles coming in and full bottles going out through the bars was a continuous performance during the hours of darkness.

When the brandy keg was empty, Williams carried it across the hall and into the other cell, and by means of a small rubber hose siphoned the liquor from one of the barrels into the keg which he again conveyed to his own cell. This he kept going for two or three months. At first he was careful to tap the barrels most remote from the cell door, in order that the emptiness thereof might not be discovered; but alas, business so increased in volume that he threw discretion to the winds and encroached too far on the front line of containers, and on one sad day the sheriff and jailer, on a tour of inspection, discovered one particular barrel, which they supposed to still contain quite an amount of exceptionally fine "drinking liquor," to be empty as a

W.E.R. Byrne describes his friend, U.S. Senator John E. Kenna, as a public figure and "a great lover of the outdoors." In the excerpt published here from *Tale of the Elk*, Byrne says that Kenna hunted and fished with his constituents whether it was an election year or not. That helped to give him a "strong hand" with voters in Webster County and elsewhere, according to Byrne.

Kenna photographed much outdoor life — fishing and hunting expeditions and camp life in general — in the wilds of West Virginia. His surviving photographs also depict a comfortable home life with portraits of Kenna's family at their house in Charleston. One of Kenna's fishing photographs was used as the frontispiece for the current reprint of *Tale of the Elk*, and this issue of GOLDENSEAL includes

This photo is one of several showing cook Fleet Porterfield at an unidentified camp. Courtesy State Archives.

The Picture-taking Politician: John E. Kenna

several Kenna photos as well.

John E. Kenna took pains to produce quality photographs. In his day even amateur photography required cumbersome equipment, fragile glass photographic plates, and a good knowledge of chemistry. "When I started in the amateur photograph line I had not contemplated all the difficulties which sometimes beset the adventurer of the camera," Kenna once remarked.

He came to appreciate the outdoors at an early age. Kenna was born in what was then Kanawha County, Virginia, in 1848, and his father died when he was only eight years old. His mother then moved the family to Missouri where her brother lived, and young John Kenna worked with oxen and a prairie plow to open new farmland. He loved hunting, and could be found in the field with his dog and gun when he wasn't working.

Kenna joined the Confederate Army at a young age and at the end of the Civil War returned to West Virginia. After that, things happened quickly. Kenna worked as a salt-maker, attended St. Vincent's academy at Wheeling, and studied law in Charleston. He was admitted to the bar on June 20, 1870.

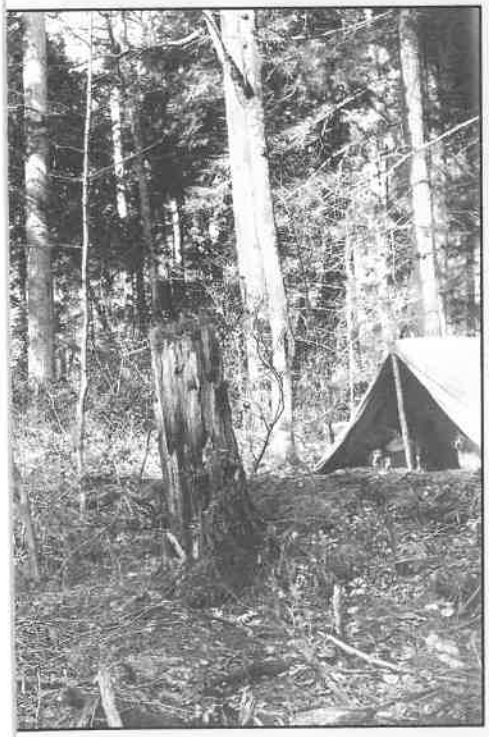
John E. Kenna crammed a full life into 45 years, including service in the U.S. Congress and Senate. In between he trained himself as a photographer, his work including this self portrait. Courtesy State Archives.

His career in law brought him into politics. In 1876, John E. Kenna became the youngest member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He was re-elected in 1878, 1880 and 1882. Just before his last term, he was chosen to succeed Henry Gassaway Davis in the U.S. Senate, once again the youngest member of the institution. He was re-elected in 1889. During his years in Washington, Kenna was known as a man who never spoke except when he had something to say.

Unfortunately the young senator's life was cut short. Kenna died in Washington in 1893. He was just 45 years old and had spent nearly half his life in public service.

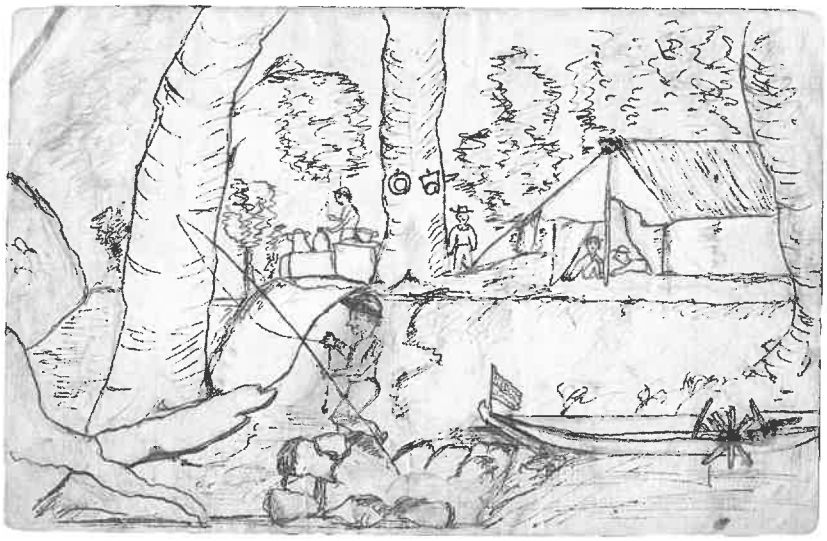
The West Virginia statesman was laid to rest in a Catholic cemetery above the Elk and Kanawha rivers. He is one of two West Virginians to be honored with a statue in Memorial Hall at the Capitol in Washington.

Hundreds of Kenna's photographs have been preserved at the West Virginia State Archives, the glass negatives fragile reminders of life in the late 19th century. Many of the images have yet to be positively identified, and those published here are ones we believe or know to be of West Virginia subjects.



This picture, (right), showing May Tarr on the steps of the Kenna home in Charleston, is typical of Kenna's domestic photography. Courtesy State Archives.

Fishing Elk River, 1888. Edgar Albert Andre made this sketch of a fishing camp he and others established on Elk River in 1888. The drawing shows a detailed view of camp life of the era, including fishing and cooking as well as the tent and boat. Professor Andre, a music teacher who once occupied the same Charleston boardinghouse as John E. Kenna, is believed to be the man seated at center front in the photograph (below). Fleet Porterfield sits at lower left, with Kenna at center rear. Photo by John E. Kenna, courtesy State Archives; sketch courtesy Richard A. Andre.



missionary box. Their official suspicion being thus aroused, they at once proceeded to investigate, and to their amazement and horror discovered that ninety per cent of the liquor was gone. Why they should have suspected my future client, Williams, alias Mennifee, I cannot imagine, but suspect they did, and promptly entering his cell they ruthlessly yanked the empty flour barrel from the floor and so exposed in all its guilty nakedness the brandy keg, which they found to be then half full of their favorite brand of Kentucky Rye. The hat was summarily yanked off the nail and there grinned the battered pint cup and wiggled the rubber hose. Williams was doomed. Not that he was guilty of the Baughman robbery wherewith he was put in jail, because ere the convening of the April grand jury the perpetrator of that crime was discovered and confessed, and Williams was completely exonerated. But at the said April term Williams was indicted for feloniously breaking and entering the jail of the county of Webster and stealing, taking and carrying away divers goods, wares and merchandise, to-wit, whiskey, brandy, wine and other liquors, of great value, etc., the property of Jacob A. Hosey.

When Williams was arraigned for trial Judge Brannon asked him if he had counsel. He said he had not, and in answer to the question as to whether he had means to employ counsel, he stated, notwithstanding the winter's business conducted by him, without the payment of any license or rent, that he was utterly destitute of funds. Whereupon Judge Brannon appointed George Revercomb and me to defend him.

John Alderson, who was prosecuting attorney at that time, prosecuted the case with his usual ability and vigor, while Revercomb and I defended with great vigor. Alderson had no trouble in proving by the sheriff and the jailer not only the *corpus delecti*, but all the other *delecti* essential to stick Williams, so far as the facts were concerned; but we, his counsel, raised the "high pint" that as Williams was already in jail he could not under the law be guilty of breaking into jail, and further suggested that so preposterous was the thought that any sane man would voluntarily break into jail, that neither the common law nor the statutes made any provision whatever applicable to such an anomaly. We also raised the question as to the ownership of the liquor as laid in the indictment — as it was questionable under the evidence as to whether it belonged to Hosey, Sandheger, Sam Given or Tom Daly. Judge Brannon knocked us out on our "high pint," and because of some remark made by me in the argument concerning ownership, in which I said the jailer seemed to exercise a peculiar proprietorship over the liquor, Tom Daly threatened to lick me.

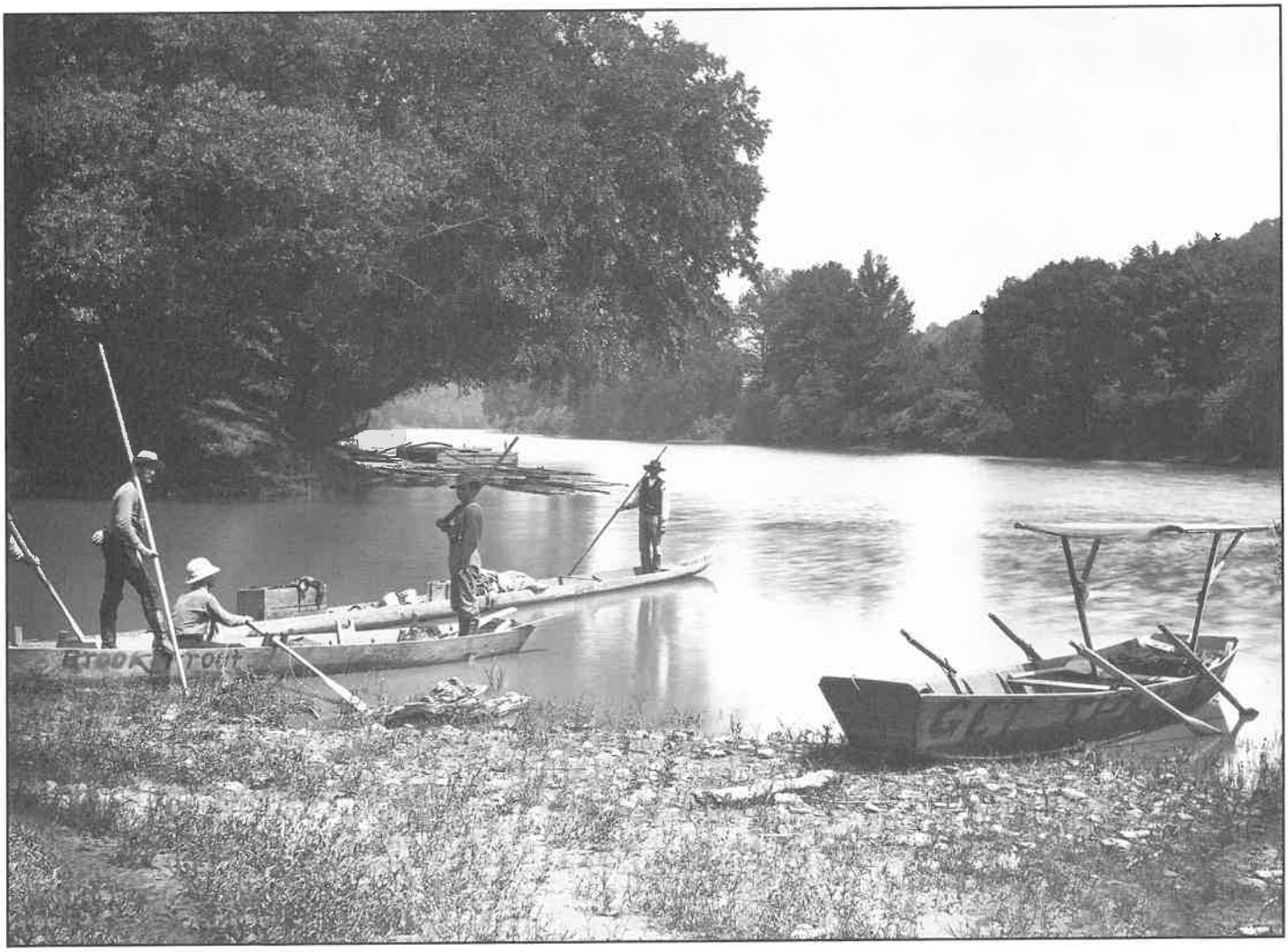
"One sad day the sheriff and jailer discovered one particular barrel, which they supposed to still contain quite an amount of fine drinking liquor, to be empty as a missionary box."

Williams was sent to the penitentiary for five years; the Supreme Court of Appeals quashed the attachment under which the liquor was put in jail, Hosey was execution proof; and the liquor was gone. Now, under all the circumstances, I want to propound this question: Who was it that lost the liquor?

Byrne's Book

Tale of the Elk is available in a paperback edition for the first time. The reprint, a publication of Quarrier Press, sells for $14.95 in bookstores around the state. Mail orders may be sent to Quarrier Press, 1416 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25301; (304) 342-1848. Shipping is $3.50 and West Virginians must add 6% sales tax. Credit cards are accepted.

A John Kenna river view. The "Brook Trout" boat occurs in many of his photos, but this stream has not yet been identified. Date unknown, courtesy State Archives.

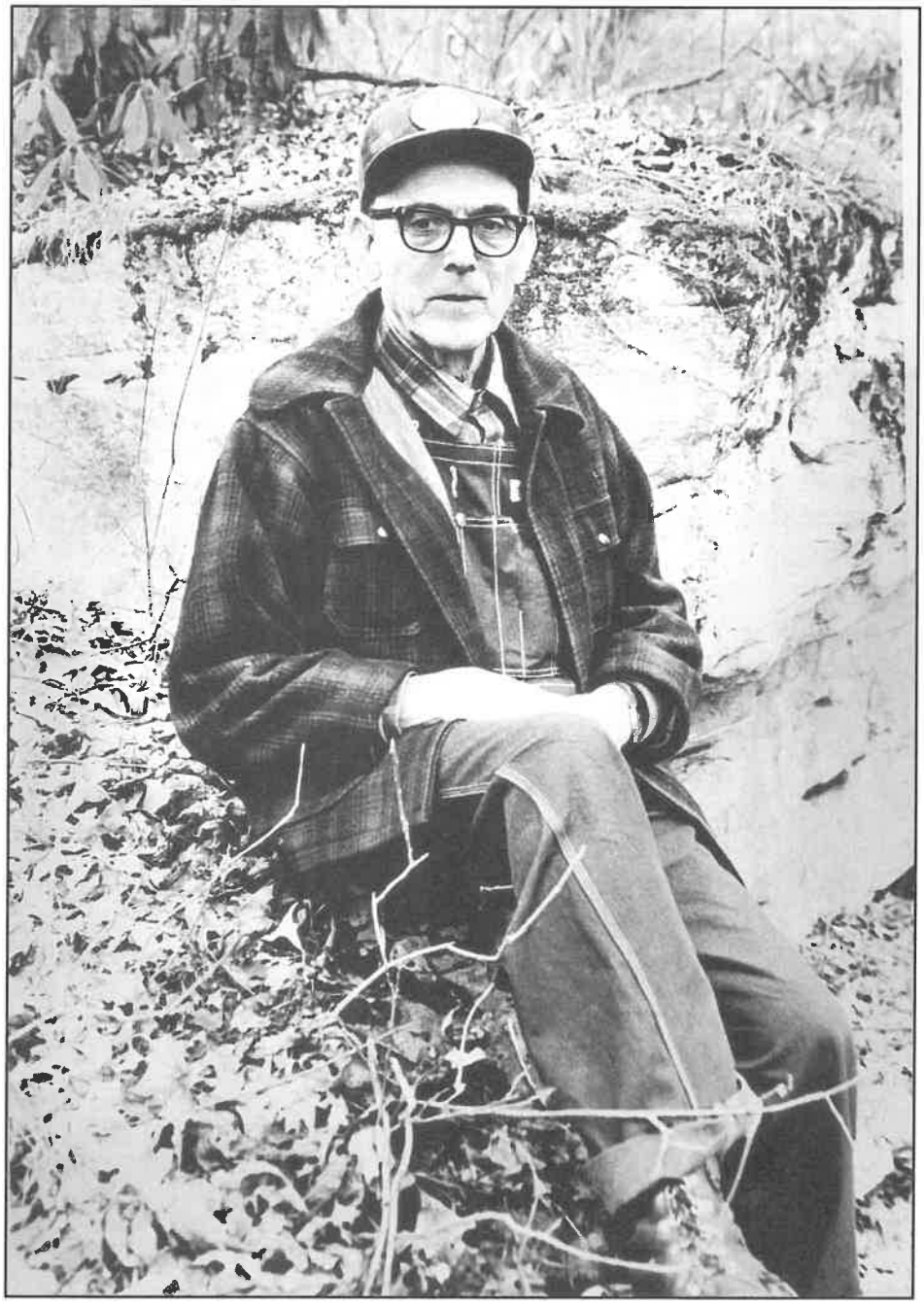


Recollections of Robinson Fork

Nicholas County Rural Life

By
Patricia Samples Workman

Times were hard on Robinson Fork in the early 1900's, and survival depended on following the old mountain ways. Clennie Workman's family ran their hogs in the woods, hunted and gathered what they couldn't raise on the farm, and looked after themselves. Uncle Barry Deal could stop bleeding with a Bible charm.



Clennie Workman was the kind of man who was comfortable in overalls. This photograph shows him in later years. Photo by Harry Lynch, mid 1980's.

My husband Clennie Workman was born April 11, 1914, the second of 13 children. He was raised in a remote section called Robinson Fork, in Nicholas County. It is located in the central part of the state, several miles from the town of Summersville, which is also the county seat. The Clay County line is just a few miles away.

Robinson Fork is a creek that rises in the eastern edge of Grant District, near the abandoned Lone Star School. It flows westward and empties into Twenty Mile Creek. Robinson Fork is about three and a half miles long.

During the early 1900's the largest city in this region of the state was Charleston, and it still is. Visiting the city required two or three days travel, round-trip.

The primary method of transportation during this era was horses. The well-to-do traveled by horse and buggy, while some people were desperately poor and had to walk wherever they needed to go. Common folk rode horses, and used wagons to haul heavy loads. Sleds were also used by most families, even on the bare ground of summertime. The sleds reflected the woodworking talents of their makers, some of them displaying fine craftsmanship and even beautiful and ornate carvings.

Such woodworking was one of the few avenues of artistic expression available to the average person during this period. Quilting was another necessary handicraft whose products could be quite expressive and occasionally stunningly beautiful.

When Clennie Workman was about seven or eight years old, his family owned a dog named Ring. Old Ring had been bitten so many times by copperheads and rattlesnakes that he had grown immune to their venom. The dog was black with a white ring around his neck. He was loved by everyone in the family.

The Workmans also had several wild animals as pets over the years, such as raccoons, groundhogs, squirrels, foxes and crows.

The family raised hogs, allowing them to run loose in the surrounding woods. The forest furnished better food than they could have provided if the animals had been kept in pens. The hogs fed on the "mast" which the forest produced each autumn — chestnuts, acorns and beechnuts, among other things. But even with the large number of hogs running in the woods, meat was a rarity on the family table.

Different families used the same woods to run their hogs, and ownership was determined by the markings cut into each hog's ears. Clennie's family used a slope on the right ear, a crop on the left and two underbits.

Whenever the older boys came upon a new litter of pigs in the woods, they caught and marked the piglets' ears with their family's mark if the sow was theirs. The marks served the same purpose for local people as did cattle branding in the West. In the area where Clennie lived, three different families used the same woods to run their hogs, and ownership was always determined by the markings cut into each hog's ears. The mark that Clennie's family used was a slope on the right ear, a crop on the left and two underbits.

Sometimes someone might accidentally kill a hog that did not have the appropriate markings. The person either confessed, or cut off the ears and buried them to hide the incriminating evidence. There were a few people in the area who deliberately stole hogs. They would intentionally butcher animals that belonged to other families. Local people usually knew the perpetrator's identity, but it was always difficult to catch a rustler red-handed.

Sheep were marked in the same manner as the hogs. The Workmans maintained a small flock of sheep which they would shear once or twice a year. The wool was their only regular source of money.

Less steady income came from hunting and trapping and selling animal pelts. Clennie learned hunting and trapping as he learned about farming, while still quite young. He was particularly fond of hunting raccoons and squirrel-hunting with his father.

Occasionally farming was as adventurous as hunting, and sometimes it was hard to tell the two apart. Clennie recalls one day when he and his dad were out in the woods with the dogs, hunting for a very large boar which needed to be castrated. This particular hog was quite mean and in no mood for the work at hand.

The dogs had bayed the big boar under a rock cliff at the top of a hill. Hogs liked to go into shallow caves or spaces under rock cliffs for their dens, and now the boar was cornered there.

Young Clennie scrambled to the top of an old tree stump to watch the proceedings, and also to stay out of danger. He held the dogs' lead straps tightly in his hands.

His dad headed up toward the rock cliff just about the time the boar chose to make a run for it. As the angry boar charged out of its den, it ran straight at Mr. Workman, who was quick enough to jump behind a nearby tree. The enraged animal then spotted Clennie, who was about nine or ten years old at the time. The boar darted toward the stump, striking it soundly. A large chunk of wood

Old Apples

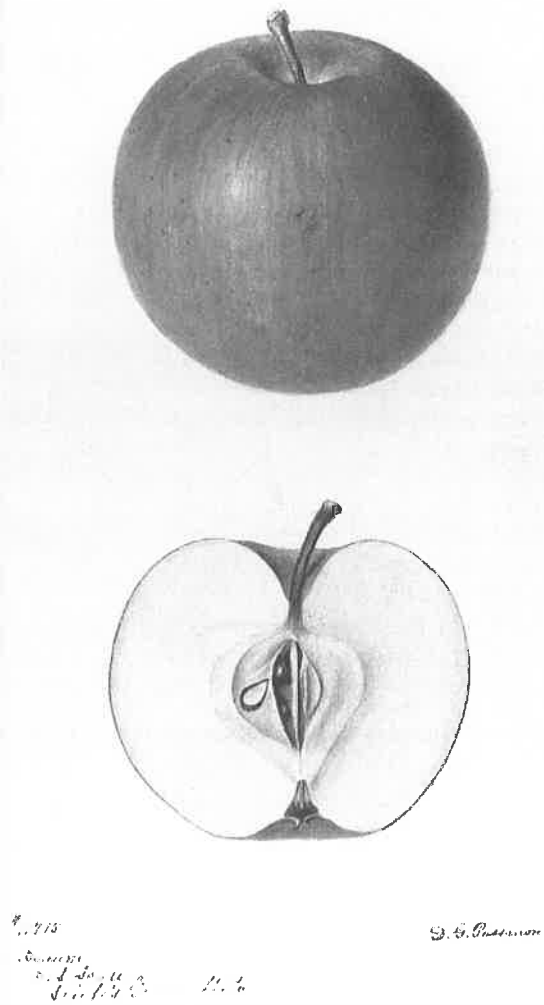
In 1774, when George Washington leased some land in Berkeley County, he required his tenant to plant 200 apple and peach trees and to fence livestock out of the orchard. The founding father knew the value of fruit to improving his property.

This anecdote is from the opening chapter of *Old Southern Apples*, by Creighton Lee Calhoun, Jr. The new book was recently published by the McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company.

Berkeley County went on to become a commercially important apple growing area, but the same is not true of most other parts of the South. The bulk of the region lies in USDA plant hardiness zones 7 and 8, below the major orchard districts. With the nurseries catering to the commercial growers, Southerners were left to develop their own apple varieties, and they did so in a big way.

Old Southern Apples concerns the literally hundreds of types of apples, once grown in the South, many of them always obscure and some of them now altogether lost. The book describes each variety, separating the extinct apples from those which are still available. While our state lies just outside the book's major area of interest, some West Virginia varieties are discussed and many of those developed elsewhere were grown here as well. A full index allows easy cross reference, making this an excellent handbook.

Beautiful watercolor paintings of apple varieties, prepared by USDA staff artists generations ago, illustrate *Old Southern Apples*. They help to make the oversized paperback a truly handsome book, which will interest anyone curious about our rural past. You may order the 326-page book for $49.95 plus $4 postage and handling from McDonald & Woodward, 6414 Riverland Drive, Fort Pierce FL 34982. Write to author Calhoun at 295 Blacktwig Road, Pittsboro NC 27312, if you can contribute information to the ongoing search for old apple types.



The Magnum Bonum apple, from Monroe County. Watercolor by Deborah G. Passmore, from the book.

was dislodged, and Clennie lost his balance and toppled into the bushes.

Somehow he managed to let the dogs loose, but they promptly jumped a rabbit. In all the excitement, the big hog escaped momentarily, but by the time Clennie and his dad made it to the bottom of the hill the dogs had bayed him again. This time the dogs had him by the ears. Each of the dogs was firmly attached to one of the hog's ears, and they were lying right up next to his neck on each side. Thus assisted, Clennie and his dad quickly completed the job of castrating the boar.

These two dogs were Old Ring and a collie whose name is forgotten. Clennie also recalls that the Workmans once owned a dog that would not run a female hog's track, but only a boar's. According to Clennie, when the dog caught up with the hog, "Look out, the fight was on."

Nothing went to waste when a hog was butchered. Clennie says that among his favorite parts were the feet, while his mother preferred a particular part of the nose which she referred to as the "rooter." Sometimes Mrs. Workman would split a hog kidney in half and lay it on top of the hot stove caps to roast. According to Clennie, this was a treat the children greatly enjoyed. Hog testicles were considered by some people to be quite a delicacy, commonly called mountain oysters. Clennie had one aunt who was particularly fond of them.

Frugality was the key. If they did not grow it or catch it in the woods, the family went hungry, Clennie remembers. In winter cold and hunger were frequent companions. The items that were purchased on the rare trips to the general store were salt, coffee, sugar, and occasionally a sack of flour. But the store was quite a distance from the hollow where the family lived, and money was scarce. Many nights there was not enough food to go around.

Clennie and his older brother were responsible for most of the chores on the farm, especially the outside tasks. During the wintertime their mother sometimes had to wrap their feet with rags and feed sacks because they didn't have decent shoes or boots to wear. If they were lucky, the children would receive one pair of shoes each year. Most of the time, they did not have shoes at all.

Although they did their best to grow crops and hunt their hogs and the wild game, it was a constant battle to keep food on the table for the large family.

Gathering was also vital to their survival. The Workmans harvested the various wild fruits, berries and nuts that are native to our region. This included blackberries, blueberries, mulberries, raspberries, gooseberries, cherries, pawpaws, strawberries, walnuts, hickory nuts, and beech nuts. Clennie recalls that once they gathered a 100-pound feed sack of chestnuts for winter storage.

Green beans and apple slices were strung with a needle and a loop of thread two or three feet long, then hung in the sun on the porch to dry. Later, during the autumn and winter months, their mother would cook the beans with water and a piece of fat pork for several hours. The dried green beans, now brown and chewy, were called leather britches. The apples were cooked with water and a little sugar or honey. Occasionally Mrs. Workman would make delicious dried apple pies as well.

Cornmeal was used for cornbread, corn pones or cooked "mursh." The children like their cornbread crumbled in milk, although milk was often a scarce commodity. Sometimes grated corn was used instead of cornmeal. The children would scrape ears of corn on an old piece of tin with nail holes punched in it, using field corn just before it started to harden. Their mother called it gritting corn.

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Apples, sweet potatoes, turnips, cabbage and potatoes were buried in a pit for the winter, lined with straw. They were usually dug up around Christmas.

Different varieties of apples were used to make apple butter. This task was accomplished by building a wood fire outside and cooking the apples and sugar in a large copper kettle, stirring all day long to keep the mixture from sticking. The apples would cook down and gradually thicken into apple butter. Making apple butter was quite a chore. Clennie remembers that all the children would help to peel and slice the apples. They would also gather firewood and help with the stirring.

The women of the family made homemade soap. The ingredients included lard and lye, made from wood ashes. This smelly mixture had to be boiled in a metal pot over an open fire for several hours. It was hot and difficult work, but a necessary task which had to be attended to on a regular basis. Their mother washed the family's clothes

Clennie (right) and a cousin occupy the sturdy fenders of a Model A Ford. Photographer and date unknown.

A masterful sled from the folklife files. The mention in the adjoining article of the importance of homemade sleds to rugged mountain farms, and the beauty of some of the sleds, reminded us of this handsome creation by Jenes Cottrell. The late craftsman made this sled for use on his Clay County farm, where Mike Keller photographed it several years ago. The sled, made of wood with metal hardware, was crafted by hand tools in Cottrell's non-electric workshop.

in the nearby creek with the lye soap and a worn-out washboard.

Pork was the meat that was usually eaten, along with any wild game that could be killed, such as groundhogs, raccoons, squirrels, turkeys, rabbits, possums and grouse. Salt was the major preservative. They would salt down large portions of pork to store in the cellar house for the coming winter months. Mrs. Workman would make sauerkraut, cucumber pickles, pickled corn on the cob and pickled green beans in big wooden barrels.

Cows were kept mainly for their milk, not for the beef. The milk was used to make cream, butter, buttermilk and cheese. The Workmans used whole, unpasteurized milk, straight from the pail.

As Clennie got older, the family would occasionally visit the town of Summersville. The children sold ginseng and blackberries to purchase small luxuries like hard candy, a loaf of white bread, or a sack of flour to take back home. Their mother could then make biscuits, a treat to the cornbread-eating family.

Clennie has been rubbing snuff since he was about six years old. His favorite brand for the past several decades has been Honest Snuff. At one time he used Square Snuff, but changed brands because he disliked the cardboard boxes the company started using. Clennie's former wife, Fanny, always used Navy Snuff. It was once common for women to dip snuff because smoking was not socially acceptable.

When someone sustained an injury or became ill, mountain people dealt with the situation as best they could. There were very few doctors and no clinics or emergency rooms. A wound was bandaged and maybe herbs applied, in the hope the body would heal itself. If a limb was broken, a rough splint or sling was improvised. Sometimes the bones would not grow back in the proper fashion, due to the severity of the injury or to being improperly set.

Clennie himself suffered from poor medical attention. He recalls the time when he and some of his siblings were out playing in the creek one hot summer day and he slipped and fell. He cut his hand on a broken canning jar that had been thrown in the creek. The wound was deep, the jagged glass severing one of the tendons in his left hand. The wound left his index finger stiff and smaller than normal. Today such an injury could probably be repaired by a surgeon with no permanent disability.

People gathered the herbs of the forest and fields for medicinal purposes. Some of the plants used by the Workmans and their neighbors were ginseng, yellow root or goldenseal, comfrey, mullein, camomile, willow and slippery elm. These plants were the key ingredients in teas, infusions and poultices. Some people would render the fat from a groundhog or a skunk to make a poultice for chest and respiratory ailments.

According to Clennie, skin boils were a common problem. Pine resin from the different pine trees native to the region were used for a variety of ailments, including the boils. One type of pine resin was sweet, and the children chewed it like gum. The tasty leaves and berries of the teaberry plant were also a favorite treat.

When Clennie was about 14 or 15

Old Ring was long gone by the time this photo was taken at mid-century. Clennie poses here with Buster and Benny. Photographer and date unknown.

years old, he accidentally cut his foot while alone in the woods preparing to cut a bee tree. The honey bees had begun to sting, so he decided to build a fire for a smoke screen. He was hacking firewood from a nearby pine log when the axe glanced off and struck the top of his foot.

He attempted to walk for a short distance, but was bleeding profusely. He lost so much blood that his pant leg was drenched to the knee.

Uncle Barry Deal and some of his sons happened to be nearby in the woods, and Clennie hollered for them to come help him. One of the boys got a horse to carry Clennie home. According to Clennie, Uncle Barry could "charm" or stop bleeding. This ability is supposed to come from a certain scripture in the Bible. Clennie recalls that his Uncle Barry got the blood stopped.

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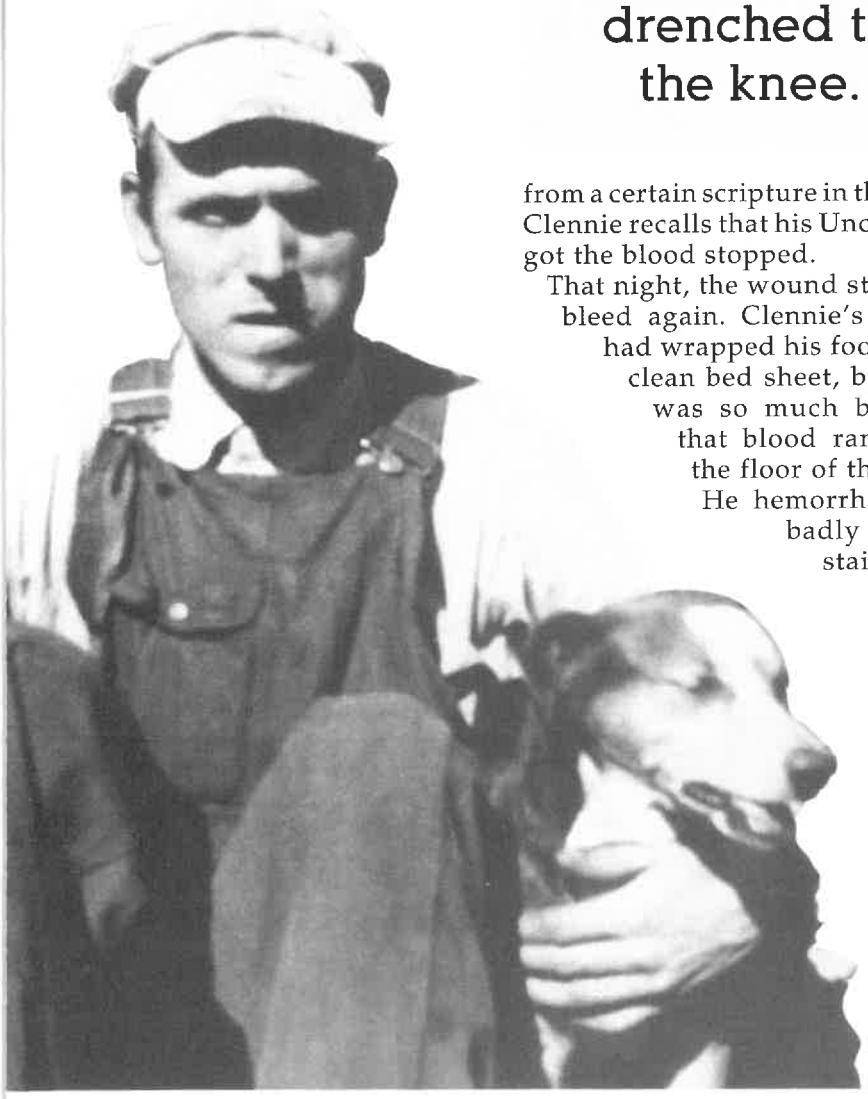


That night, the wound started to bleed again. Clennie's mother had wrapped his foot with a clean bed sheet, but there was so much bleeding that blood ran across the floor of the room. He hemorrhaged so badly that the stain on the white cotton sheet was pinkish rather than red. Uncle Barry was again called to stop the bleeding. Luckily his patient was young and strong, and he recovered.

And what story would be complete without a scary tale or two? Clennie recalls a time when he was 12 or 13, about old enough to like girls, and walking home late one evening. It was probably about twilight.

In the fading light, he suddenly saw a headless man walking across the creek on a fallen pole. Clennie was up in the road, close by the creek bank, about ten or 15 feet from the apparition. He truly believes he saw a headless man that evening. The incident scared him so badly that he ran the rest of the way home.

Clennie remembers that his mother used to tell the children a story about a little girl who had come under the spell of a snake. The little girl was five or six years old. She loved to go off into the woods alone to play. Her favorite spot was around an old chimney and hearth out in the forest.

As the story goes, the child's behavior grew so bizarre that her father began following her when she left the house to play. Before long he made a chilling discovery. The old chimney site was also home to a huge rattlesnake. It was obvious to her father that the snake had charmed the little girl. He waited until she had left for home, then he eliminated the dreadful creature.

According to the story the little girl almost immediately fell ill and soon died. Clennie recollects this as a true story, but no doubt it has been embellished over time and in the numerous retellings.

Clennie Workman is old now and in a nursing home. These recollections are among the things he told me over the course of 25 years of marriage. He has always been fond of recounting the stories of his childhood. There are probably a few inaccuracies due to the passage of time, but nonetheless they make a good tribute to a kind, decent and loving person who survived hard times and is proud of it.

Church time was taken seriously on Lick Creek. This is the church our author recalls from childhood. Photographer and date unknown.

Life on Lick Creek

Recalling a Boone County Community

By Edward H. Thomas

The road was dirt, the work hard, and the plumbing strictly outdoors. But community life was sound and strong, reinforced by the bonds of school, church and kin.
This was Lick Creek, Boone County, in the 1930's, and it sounds like a lot of other West Virginia places to us.

Lick Creek is two miles long and empties into the Little Coal River less than a mile from Danville. Since there aren't many signs, it's easiest to tell a stranger to find the Boone County fairground and keep going. That puts Lick Creek in the western end of the county, and nowadays just off a modern expressway, but it was more remote in times past.

Frederick and Elizabeth Chambers settled there about 1852. The post office at the time was Ballardsville, at present-day Low Gap. By 1865, Frederick and his stepson, Sylvester, had each acquired 900 acres of land, all lying on the "waters of Lick Creek" in the legal terminology. My mother was a member of this Chambers family, and I was born in her father's home on Lick Creek.

To give a historical perspective, the buying of property and settling of the area began when Abe Lincoln was still an unknown lawyer from Illinois and continued through his presidency and assassination, and the Civil War and Reconstruction. West Virginia had become a state; the original Boone County courthouse had been burned by Union troops and a new one built; and the population of the county had increased from 3,200 to about 4,200. Things were changing all over, as well as on Lick Creek.

The original land has passed through many sets of heirs by now. My great-granddaughter became the ninth generation of the Chambers family to live on the creek.

Early family members are buried in the family cemetery, located on a point above the Carl Chambers home and directly across the creek from the old Jacob Chambers home. This is the site of the original Frederick and Elizabeth Chambers homeplace.

Ed Thomas as a boy, standing in front of his mother and grandmother Chambers (with little brother Jerry). His grandfather and father (right) stand at rear. Photographer and date unknown.

The settling of Lick Creek was not easy. Decent farmable land was scarce, and these hardy souls had before them a task that called for plenty of resourcefulness and a lot of hard work. They were isolated by today's standards, and they had to rely on themselves. If a house needed to be built, they were carpenters; if shoes needed mending, they were cobblers, and they were farmers and blacksmiths as well. The women knew how to preserve food for winter and prepare meals for large and hungry families. "If you don't raise it and put it up, you eat snowballs for winter," Grandmother often said.

"If you don't raise it and put it up, you eat snowballs for winter," Grandmother often said.

Shifting for themselves made this early family independent and even eccentric. Traditions were important. They represented the known ways of surviving, and there wasn't much variation from these tried and true ways. New ideas were dangerous, not having been tested and proven successful. On a mountain farm, the difference between success and failure could be fatal.

They were careful people. Early houses were built with detached kitchens to reduce the danger of the whole house being destroyed, since most fires began in the kitchen. The houses were made either of logs or of board-and-batten construction, using rough-sawed lumber from trees felled on the property. A chimney with double fireplace would heat the living room and bedroom. As new generations came along or prosperity blessed the family, additions were made to the original structure and the kitchen joined the rest of the house.

Houses were lit by coal oil and then kerosene, the lamps giving a soft yellow light. The later "Aladdin Lamp," which used an asbestos mantle and gave a much brighter, white light, was a welcome addition if you could afford it. One could tell what kind of lamp a family had by the color of light shining through

the windows at night. It wasn't until after World War II that Lick Creek homes had electricity or telephones.

There were no indoor toilets. Outhouses were universal, and like death a great equalizer. The only difference was whether it was a one-holer or two-holer. The location of the outhouse was a compromise — somewhere between being far enough away and still near enough for those times when nature gave an urgent call. Sears and Roebuck supplied the toilet paper.

The Lick Creek road was unpaved and full of ruts and mudholes. Maintenance was rare, but you could always count on the road being scraped just before an election. In the summer the road got so dry that even walkers would kick up some dust, and the occasional car raised a cloud that continued long after it had passed. I remember as a barefoot child the delicious feeling of this talc-like dust squishing up between my toes as I walked. Various and interesting birds, animals and insects left their trails on the dusty road. It was a child's intrigue to guess what had passed and where the passer was now. Snakes were frequent crossers as they came from woods and fields to the creek for water.

Winter turned the dust to mud and the ruts to mudholes. For a child, it gave a wealth of puddles to wade or stomp.

Lick Creek was tranquil most of the time. During the driest part of the summer it would dwindle to a trickle or dry up except for a few small holes of water. But during the spring rains it could become a terror. The hillsides on each side of the creek were not high, but they were very steep. Runoff from these steep banks quickly found the creek.

Heavy rains brought sudden floods. In 1916, Lick Creek leapt out of its banks and flooded many homes. My grandfather's house was inundated, and the family barely escaped by wading through waist-deep water to safety. When they returned to their home, they found a large log stuck through the living room window. This episode left such an impression on my mother, who was only six at the time, that for the rest of her life she could not sleep at night if it was raining.

The home, church and school were the main social institutions in the community. Parents and children gave proper attendance and due respect to all of these.

The church was a one-room building with hand-made benches. Both Sunday school and worship services were conducted in this one room. Sunday school was regular, every Sunday, but church services depended on the schedule of a minister who had four other churches in his circuit. The denomination of our church was Methodist, but in actual practice there was little difference between Methodists and Baptists at that time and place. Both preferred baptism by total immersion, shunning the official Methodist practice of sprinkling as unscriptural. A stranger sitting in the congregation of either church could scarcely have told the difference.

I attended both church and Sunday school regularly for at least 16 years and cannot remember ever hearing either the teacher or the preacher recount the history and beliefs of the Methodist Church. That also would have been categorized as un-scriptural.

We preferred a solid, gut-level religion. Preachers were quick to consign to hell's fire any who differed from what they considered to be the norm. Sermons may have had more judgmental condemnation than redeeming love. Sinners were called to the mourners bench at the front of the church to repent and escape eternal damnation. Those who considered themselves Christians would join the sinner, all praying loudly and at the same time. This would continue until the sinner had "prayed through," and was convinced of his salvation.

When the preacher could not be present, the congregation would have testimonial meetings, with singing, individual testifying and the group praying.

Revival meetings were annual events in our church. They were called protracted meetings, lasting at least two weeks or as long as there were sinners being saved. Revivals were welcomed by the young people, not because they were especially religious but because there were so few other social events. It gave an opportunity to do a little bit of sparking, or courting. If there were blossoming romances, it was rumored that some of the young people would bribe others to go forward and be "saved" so the meetings — and the romance — would continue.

The Lick Creek road was full of ruts and mudholes. But you could always count on the road being scraped just before an election.

The school of my mother's youth was a one-room building at the mouth of the creek, which was later abandoned as a school and converted to a family dwelling. The elementary school I attended was also a one-room building, located about a mile up the creek from the original school and about 200 yards down the creek from the church.

In my day, there were about 40 students of various ages in one room with one teacher. That might sound disastrous, but it was the best school I ever attended. There were at least two reasons: Our parents participated in the life of the school and actively insisted on proper behavior, and we had a remarkable teacher. Mr. Richard Echols was my teacher for four years and left an indelible impression on my life.

He was a strict disciplinarian, as you would have to be with such a

Church and school were the main institutions, our author says, and both were thoroughly integrated into family and community life. Ed is the young fellow with his head turned aside in the second row, third from right in the Sunday School photo (above). Brother Jerry is the shortest student in the back row in the picture of Lick Creek students (right) with teacher Vela Thompson.

teaching challenge. Misbehaving students were sent to stand in a corner with their back to the classroom or made to stand on tip-toe with their nose in a chalk ring on the blackboard. If the ring was rubbed out, you started over. Eventually, you got the message. The paddle was always handy, but seldom used.

On the playground we played "base" during recess, a tag game where everyone tried to reach the base, which was guarded by whoever happened to be "it." At noon we played softball.

Mr. Echols played ball with us and would seldom break up a close game to call us back into the classroom. We had an outstanding softball team that occasionally challenged other schools. Since ours was such a small school, our opposition was always much larger schools. Our record for 1935 to 1937 was four wins, one loss and one tie. That single one-run loss was from a ten-room school avenging an earlier four-run loss to us. Mr. Echols would take us to games in his old Ford pickup truck and bring us home afterwards.

Family units were comfortably strong in our Boone County community. It was not unusual to have four generations living under the same roof. Everyone had chores and also worked without question at

Uncle Jake and Juniper

Jacob Chambers was the grandson of Frederick Chambers, the original settler. He was known as "Uncle Jake." He was a store owner as well as a farmer, and a highly respected member of the community. He raised corn and cattle, like many others, and he was the only farmer on Lick Creek to raise and thresh his own wheat. He also collected maple syrup for sugar and had his own coal mine for fuel.

The Boone County court appointed him Overseer of the Poor. As the title implies, it was Uncle Jake's duty to see to the well-being of the indigent residents of the county. He traveled throughout the county to deliver sustenance to his charges. His account books gave minute details, showing deliveries of flour, bacon and beans. In another notebook he kept formulas for home remedies and noted that he also imparted these remedies to his paupers.

Uncle Jake loved fast horses and a good buggy. His grandson, Elmer, lived with him in his latter years and drove for him. Uncle Jake urged him to make the horses go faster, "Dad bobbit, faster, Elmer! Faster, I say!"

He collected all sorts of gadgets. He was afflicted with "rhumatize," probably arthritis, and had a machine that would give the person holding onto two prongs a shock when someone turned the handle. He kept bees and would occasionally stir them up so they would sting him as a remedy.

As a businessman Uncle Jake was known to be tight with the dollar. He was, however, generous with his hospitality. Friends and total strangers riding by his house were greeted by his booming, "Light and look at your saddle." His dining room table was left with food on it throughout the day. It was covered with a cloth, and anytime someone was hungry they helped themselves. Uncle Jake built a room on his front porch for the exclusive use of the circuit-riding Methodist preacher, giving him a place to stay when coming through the area.

A Chambers family trait was big ears and bad hearing. The whole family was deaf to some degree, and some were said to have "faucet hearing" — just hearing what they wanted to hear.

Jacob "Uncle Jake" Chambers (1853-1934) was Lick Creek's leading citizen.

One story often repeated was that Uncle Jake was once approached by an acquaintance who wanted to borrow money. The man said, "Uncle Jake, I want to borrow five dollars." Uncle Jake cupped his hand to his ear, "Eh, what did you say?"

Since he had not yet been rejected, the man increased the amount. "I said I wanted to borrow ten dollars."

To which Uncle Jake replied, "I heard you the first time."

His home had originally been a small, single-story log house, made of square-cut chestnut oak, at the mouth of Sugar Camp hollow on Lick Creek. As his fortunes improved and the family increased, additions were made until it became a comfortably large, two-story house.

As his great-grandson, I faintly remember Jake Chambers as a tall, thin man with a flowing moustache. He wore boots and suspenders and had a gold watch and chain.

I often went to his house, a few hundred yards from where I lived with my grandparents. I usually found him sunning himself in a rocker on the front porch. He called me "Juniper," the nickname he also gave his grandson, my Uncle Clifford. He would hail me with "Hello, Juniper," pat me on the head and reach in his pocket for a treat, usually a few raisins, a prune or a small piece of hoarhound candy with the brown paper wrapper stuck to it. Whatever the treat, it would taste of tobacco, since he kept his loose pipe tobacco in the same pocket.

I would go through the house, visit with the others, play a while, then go around and back up the front walk for another pat on the head and a new treat. He had forgotten my earlier appearance — or if he hadn't, he never let on.

In April of 1934, word spread that Uncle Jake was dying and a large crowd assembled. It was the custom to gather at the home of a person who was dying to witness the passing and offer support to the family. The greater the esteem of the person dying, the larger the crowd. Obviously, Uncle Jake was held in high esteem.

Barely six years old, I was entertaining those on the front porch and in the yard by doing childish stunts. I relished the attention I was getting. Then someone came to the front door and announced to the crowd that Uncle Jake was dead. I couldn't understand why those who had been laughing at my antics now were weeping. It was my first encounter with death.

— Edward H. Thomas

whatever other tasks were assigned. Hard work was the norm, growing up on Lick Creek during the Depression. It took everyone working together to survive.

Meals included the whole family and there was plenty of conversation. In those days when there was no television and we didn't have radio, we actually talked to each other. If you wanted to go somewhere in the evening, the two questions were, "Have you done your chores?" and "Have you done your books?" Only if you answered "yes" to both would any consideration be given to your request.

The extended family of my youth was the whole community. Every child was welcome at every house for meals, play or overnight, and was expected to behave as if it were his own home. You could be as quickly disciplined where you were visiting as at home. "Uncle" and "Aunt" were terms of respect you gave those considered to be your elders, regardless of kinship. To call an older person by the first name without such a title was a punishable sin in our household.

Playgrounds were all around us, natural playgrounds, the best kind. We used our curiosity and imagination. There were the mysteries of woodland and creek to be explored. Mothers had a lot of work to do. They didn't need kids underfoot, so after their own chores the children were told to go out and play. Most every boy had a dog as his companion in those adventures. When the exploration of nature did not appeal, the forks of an old sycamore tree formed an ideal place for reading a good book.

There were no extra chores on Sunday, and after Sunday school and dinner Lick Creek boys would gather to play. If someone had a softball or football, we played those games. There were always corncobs, so corncob battles were among our favorites. Dry corncobs would sting but not hurt too much, but all too often someone would get angry and start throwing corncobs marinated in barnyard manure, or rotten eggs found in forgotten nests. Then there was trouble, with the corncob battle degenerating into a fist fight.

Every child was welcome at every house and expected to behave as if it was his own home. "Uncle" and "Aunt" were terms of respect, regardless of kinship.

Changing times and modern ways came to Lick Creek during Ed Thomas's generation. He poses here, at left, with his family. Photographer and date unknown.

Lick Creek had not changed much in the four generations before my birth in the late 1920's. Life was a bit easier and there were a few more opportunities for young people, but day-by-day living was much the same as it had been for 75 years.

It was my generation and World War II which brought the dramatic changes. For the first time, most of the young people went elsewhere to live, and strangers moved into our community. Transportation and communication improved, but seemed to do little to bring people closer together.

Nowadays, everything is different on Lick Creek. Many of the landmarks of my youth are gone. The four lanes of U.S. 119 pass nearby, putting my old neighborhood less than an hour's drive from the state capitol in Charleston. But despite the ease of going home I don't get back so much anymore, and it is mostly in memory that I travel the dusty roads of Lick Creek.

A. O. Barnette's

Changing Times in Kanawha City

By Jeffrey A. Green

The big Libbey-Owens-Ford glass plant put bread on the table in Kanawha City. Local people worked at the plant, and raised their families within the shadow of its 12 tall stacks.

Our author grew up there. He remembers those days, and says that times have changed in the old neighborhood.

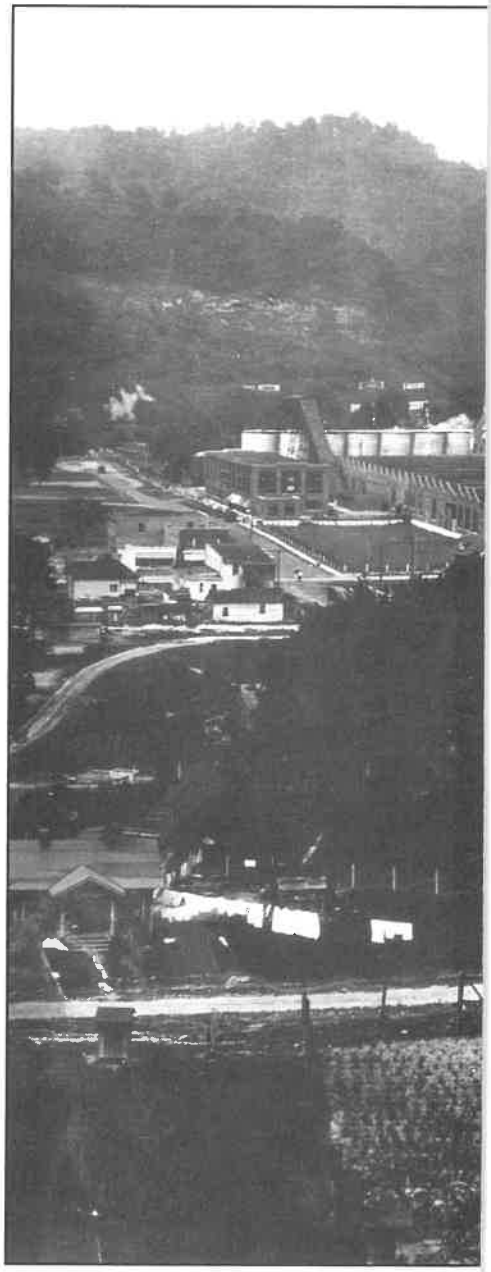
It doesn't seem so long ago that we used to play our football games and hold our baseball marathons at the old Libbey-Owens-Ford fields in Charleston's Kanawha City neighborhood.

Kanawha City is Charleston's easternmost section, across the Kanawha River and upstream from the State Capitol, and the Libbey-Owens-Ford glass making complex was on the east end of Kanawha City. The fields covered an area nearly four blocks square. One of them ran from 55th Street and MacCorkle Avenue back to Washington Avenue, and extended to 56th Street. The other one covered from 56th Street and Washington to 56th and Lancaster, and then worked its way east to 57th Street. MacCorkle, also known as State Route 61, is the main thoroughfare on that side of the river, with nearly everything else intersecting it or running parallel to it.

There were at least six different locations within the boundaries of the fields to play baseball, that I know of, and I remember four areas designated for football. During the winter, a small hill at the corner of 55th Street and MacCorkle served as our sleigh-riding course, and in the warmer months it was not unusual to see a golfer or two out practicing their swing somewhere on one of the two playgrounds.

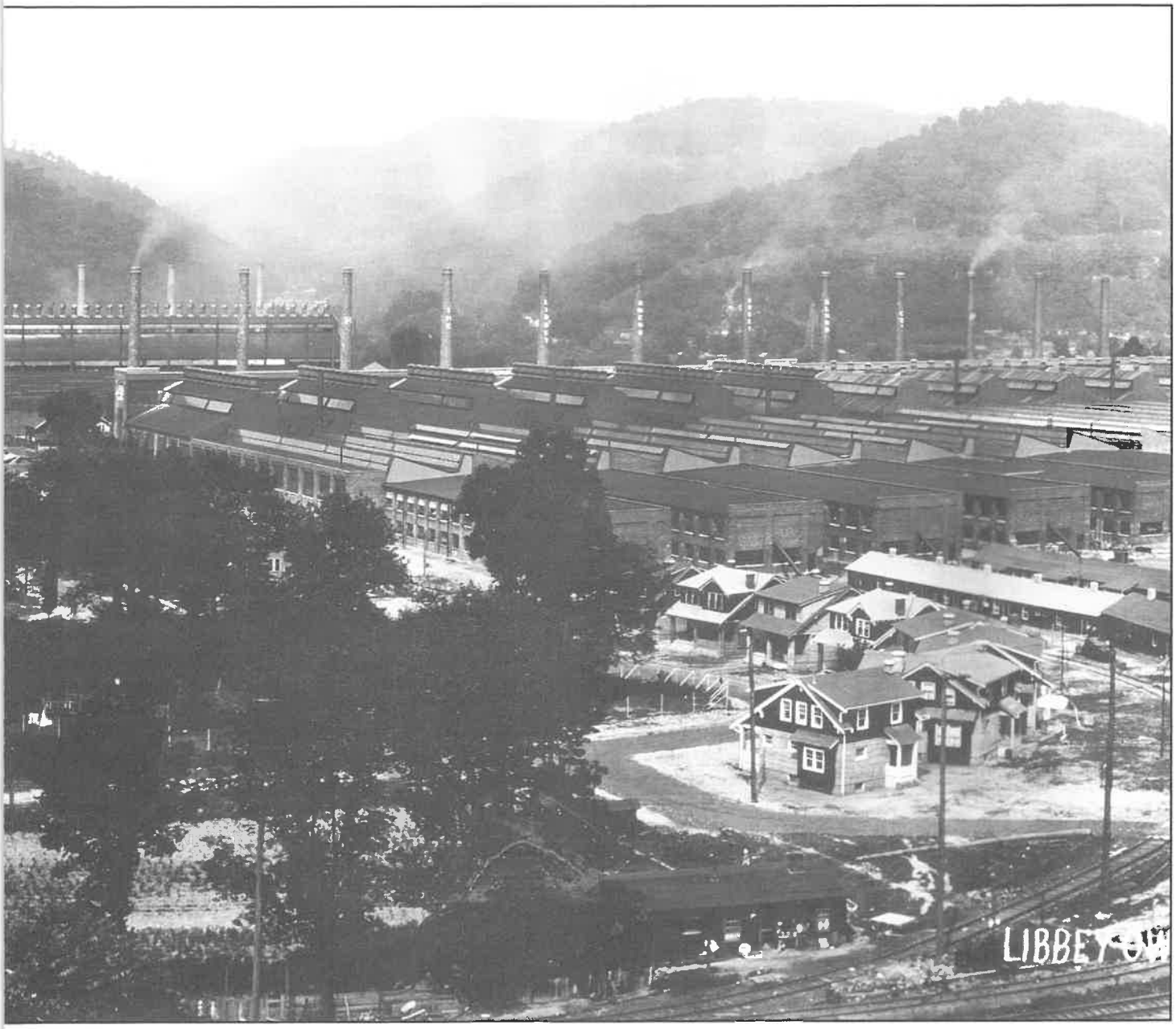
An Esso service station, at the corner of 56th Street and MacCorkle Avenue, served as our pit-stop for water breaks, and for those with a pocket full of change Sneed's Drug Store was just across the street and up at the corner of 57th and MacCorkle. There were a number of other businesses in the area — Risk's Key Market, Gay's Hardware, Joe Butta's Gulf Station, a Diamond Reo truck service garage, and Cassem's Pool Hall, to name a few.

But looming much larger than anything for miles around was the Libbey-Owens-Ford glass plant. With its 12 gigantic smokestacks lining the MacCorkle Avenue side of the factory, the massive structure could be seen from several blocks away. During its heyday the plant was the biggest producer of flat glass in the world, and it symbolized a way of life for hundreds of Kanawha City families. Most of the homes lining the streets and avenues around there were occupied by the workers who spent their lives laboring in the extremely hot, sometimes dangerous confines of Libbey-Owens-Ford.



Kanawha City was a different neighborhood back when A. O. Barnette made his living there. Kanawha Mall now occupies most of the industrial site shown here. Photographer unknown, 1921; courtesy Kanawha County Public Library.

Neighborhood



One of those workers was my grandfather, Aubrey Otto Barnette, best known by the initials "A. O." Although I lived with my family at 53rd and Venable for most of the first five years of my life, I spent a great deal of time at the home of my grandmother and grandfather at the nearby corner of 56th Street and Lancaster.

I have fond memories of that house, especially ones that center around being with my grandmother, Julia. Listening to her sing, and lying sleepily in her lap while she read to me are among the very best memories I have. On occasion, I helped deliver my grandfather's lunch to the front entrance of Libbey-Owens-Ford. I was never actually allowed to go into the plant, so everything I knew about what went on inside those walls I overheard from conversations in the home of my grandparents.

Many years have passed since those days. Many of my Kanawha City landmarks have disappeared, although the Risk family still have their store at the corner of 53rd and MacCorkle. The place where Sneed's Drug Store was located is now a self-serve Exxon station. The

Like other young families in the area, the Barnettes depended on the glass plant for their livelihood. Julia and A. O. Barnette pose with baby Norma Jean, about 1924. Photographer unknown.

Esso station and our sleigh-riding spot were eventually replaced by Chi Chi's Mexican restaurant, and now there is a Hooters next to that.

But saddest of all to me, the Libbey-Owens-Ford glass plant and one of the big fields have been replaced by the Kanawha Mall. This is not to say that the shopping center is a bad thing, but I can't help but think that the demise of all those earlier businesses, and in particular the Libbey-Owens-Ford plant, signaled the end of a happier, more safe and secure time.

Recently, I had the opportunity to revisit those days through a collection of pictures and other memorabilia that my mother, Kathryn, had stored away in her closet. She was A. O. and Julia's third daughter. It was after looking at pictures for a while that the conversation led into my grandfather's life and his work. I began to take notes on what she was telling me, and soon I was sitting with a lapful of documents, letters, and personal writings that detailed a life that was remarkably eventful.

He was born February 11, 1901, in Cressmont, Clay County, and at a very young age moved to Widen with his parents, Simon Peter Barnette and Lucy Alice Hamrick. His dad worked in the mines in and around Widen, and worked hard, but the Barnettes were poor and often lived hand-to-mouth. Most of what they bought was purchased with company scrip from the company store. New clothes were hard to come by, and young Aubrey received one pair of shoes and one pair of overalls each year. According to my mother, his family never had a Christmas tree.

Aubrey only went to school through the fourth grade, but he was an avid reader who studied on his own. He became an expert in math, and his handwriting was beautiful. Many of the books that my mother kept from my grandfather's childhood are educational texts. *Essentials of Geography*, the Jones readers, the Appelton arithmetics, and *Practical Lessons in the Use of English for Primary and Grammar Schools* were just a few of the worn out books that he had used to educate himself.

His father, Pete — the fine biblical name was inevitably shortened to a single syllable — used to boat down the Elk River from Clay County to Charleston and eventually moved the family to the capital city. The Barnettes first lived in a house at 49th Street in what was then called Libow, West Virginia, which was later changed to Owens. This is all Kanawha City now, the area where Libbey-Owens Sheet Glass Company had just opened its massive operations. The company changed its name to Libbey-Owens-Ford after a 1930 merger.

It was at Owens Bottling that he met Julia. Within a matter of months they were married in the Clay County Courthouse.

Pete Barnette went to work for the glass plant, and by this time A. O. himself was a young man looking for work. His first job in the local area was with Owens Bottling, an affiliated operation located across MacCorkle Avenue from Libbey-Owens itself. We think it was at Owens Bottling that he met Julia Hilton. Soon after meeting her, A. O. got a job across the street at Libbey-Owens. Within a matter of a few months he and Julia were married in the Clay County Courthouse.

Their home together was in one of the company houses that was located on Railroad Avenue, later renamed Lancaster Avenue. The frame houses were built on posts with hardly any foundation, and were wide open underneath. Theirs had four rooms, and it was so close to the railroad tracks that it nearly shook off of its support each time one of the big steam locomotives rumbled past.

It was in this house that their three daughters were born, and the little place knew tragedy as well as joy: Phyllis Kathleen, who died of whooping cough at the age of 13 months, was buried the same day Norma Jean was born, on July 9, 1923. My mother was born there on January 18, 1925, and she still has the bed they all were born in. The old bed and matching bedroom furniture are still in use today, as

A Practical Man's View of Glass Making:
"You Can't Put It Entirely in Books"

Excerpted from the Notes of A. O. Barnette

Making glass isn't something that can be put down exactly in a textbook and executed right off according to the rules, by any bright young guy who can read the figures and work a slide rule.

The late A. O. Barnette, from about the time our author remembers him. Photographer unknown, 1960's.

You can know everything about what goes into the batch and what should go into it, you can know about temperatures, about gas currents and the effect of ventilation in the top of the furnace house, but when that bright pond under the cap of the furnace begins to buck and stew, the sitution seems to call for some veteran midwife of glass.

The books are all right, but they just don't seem to be quite enough. It takes feeling for glass, when some things go wrong. Maybe the glass just wants to be rocked and have its hand held. Anyhow, it is clear to me that what it wants is very tricky and uncertain and something it may never have wanted before.

The shenanigans of glass remind me a little of a putt-putt motor boat I had when I was a kid. It was the Robert Fulton of the modern motor boat. It was afraid of storms and never ran more than ten miles at a time.

I was having a lot of trouble with it and had applied all the knowledge from the book of instructions when an old fisherman said, "Boy, you ain't using the right language on that critter, and besides you're treating it too reasonable. You want to do something queer to it — maybe just wrap a life preserver around the cylinder. Try that, try anything."

It would be stretching it to say that the rule with glass is to "try anything" but you get my point.

Apparently you can't put the business entirely in books. You can't exactly put it into formula. Whatever you do is subject to some variations. Materials and human effort applied to glass never came out twice in exactly the same way.

Yet the science and the book-work has to be there to a high degree of accuracy. The tricky variations which develop on top of a sound basis of science are troublesome enough. They would be terrible if the foundation were not laid in the best and most exact knowledge that the engineers and the mechanical precisionist have developed down through the years.

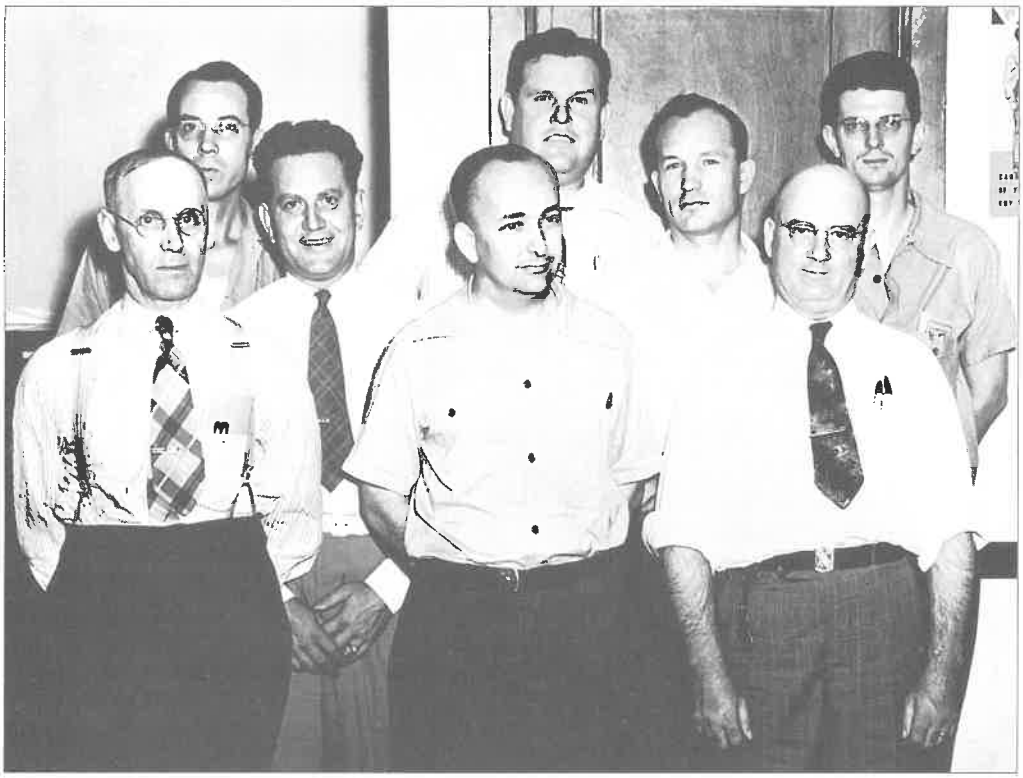
At Charleston there are furnaces with the vertical lifting of glass out of the pots onto the rolls. It caught my attention when I first saw it. That molten glass could be drawn up out of the pot by its own consistency seemed to me, and still seems, a bit of a miracle.

When the skein breaks or when the flow is stopped, they have to go down into the pot and hook up another thread of glass and draw it over the roll until the two-foot lift is again working smoothly. That, too, seems a miracle.

Another sample of that is the way they put new floaters in the red-hot furnaces without stopping or slowing up the process. Maneuvering those floaters around until they lock together in the right way and at the right angle, all in the very midst of glass at a temperature up about 2,500 degrees, is an exercise that ought to be attractive to everybody who hasn't lived very well and has need to get hardened up for hot work in the hereafter.

A lot of human temperament goes into the temper of glass.

A.O. Barnette left numerous mementoes, including his own writings as well as union documents. Photo by Michael Keller.



Mr. Barnette rose with his union. He is shown at left rear in the above photo of glass workers' union officers, in 1940. He hunkers at right in the 1942 portrait (below) of the West Virginia delegation to the CIO convention in Boston. Photographer unknown for the 1940 photo, other photo by Central Studios.

sturdy as they were 70 years ago.

During this period Mr. Hilton, who was Julia's father, and Pete Barnette lost their jobs at Libbey-Owens because of age. At nearly the same time, A. O. was let go at the plant because of his involvement in trying to unionize the workers. After walking the streets for several months, unable to find other work, he decided to return to the glass plant to ask for his old job. He was taken back, but only after being cautioned not to try to unionize the plant again.

The bosses might as well have saved their breath. As Professor Fred Barkey notes in the adjoining article the Libbey-Owens-Ford labor policies were self-contradictory, discriminating against the industrial work force which the plant's new technology created. What followed was several years of continuous struggle, the result of which was a climactic strike at the Kanawha City plant.

This strike lasted for several months, but ultimately the workers won and the place was unionized. A. O. Barnette was very involved in this winning effort. I'm not sure of all that took place during the period when the workers were organizing, and I don't think my mother knows either, but what we are sure of is that it was the persistence of my grandfather and people like him that led to

the unionization of the Libbey-Owens glass plant. The union contract helped to bring security to the Kanawha City I recall.

A. O. became an early member of the new Federation of Flat Glass Workers, and he rose with the organization. Receipts found among the paperwork saved by my mother indicate that extensive travel was part of his activities. Guest tickets from a number of hotels chart the path traveled by my grandfather as he moved from one city to another on union business. His travels took him to the McLure Hotel in Wheeling, the Fairmont Hotel in Fairmont, the Chancellor Hotel in Parkersburg, and to many out-of-state stops at such hotels as the Planters in Owensboro, Kentucky, the New Seneca Hotel and the Hotel Virginia in Columbus, Ohio, and the Ritz and Commodore hotels in Washington, D.C.

Ultimately, A. O. Barnette would go on to become the president of Flat Glass Workers District No. 2, which was headquartered in Clarksburg. He served as district president from 1935 to 1943, and also held a position on the International Executive Board of the Federation of Flat Glass Workers of America.

My grandfather was a union man through and through, but his papers show that he took a wide interest in the glass business, much broader than just labor affairs and union politics. Among the many letters and documents that were saved by my mother, I found handwritten pieces penned by my grandfather that detailed everything from the history of glass making to the history of the Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Company. Even a step-by-step description of how glass was made during this period is folded within the faded and tattered pages of his notes.

I know it is only a small part of American history, but I have found a big piece of my own personal history in all this. It makes me proud to think that my own grandfather had a part in events that forevermore changed the face of his industry, and helped to shape the neighborhood which I remember as a boy.

Mike Owens's Glass Company

By Fred Barkey

An early prototype of Mike Owens's bottle-making machine. The machine was trundled up to the pot of molten glass, some of which was vacuumed up into the outreaching arm. Courtesy Libbey-Owens-Ford.

October 17, 1917, was a beautiful Indian summer day in Kanawha City, but the men inside the new Libbey-Owens window glass factory scarcely noticed. Their attention was riveted on an iron bar, with flexible metal strips attached, which was being lowered by machine into white-hot, molten glass.

On signal the machine moved forward, pulling the bar with a sheet of fiery red glass behind it. The "bait," as the iron bar was called, pulled its six-foot-wide sheet of glass over a bending roll and across a flattening table. The glass, which was now brilliantly transparent, passed through a 200-foot annealing oven to the table where it was cut to size. The process seemed so smooth and quietly efficient, but the glass workers who watched knew of the heartbreak and sacrifice required to produce this wondrous new technology.

The automated window glass machine replaced a laborious and highly skilled hand process which craftsmen had practiced virtually unchanged for generations. It was the brain child of Irving Wightman Colburn, a native of Massachusetts. Born unto a long line of Yankee inventors and tinkerers, Colburn had become interested in applying technology to the production of glass in the 1890's.

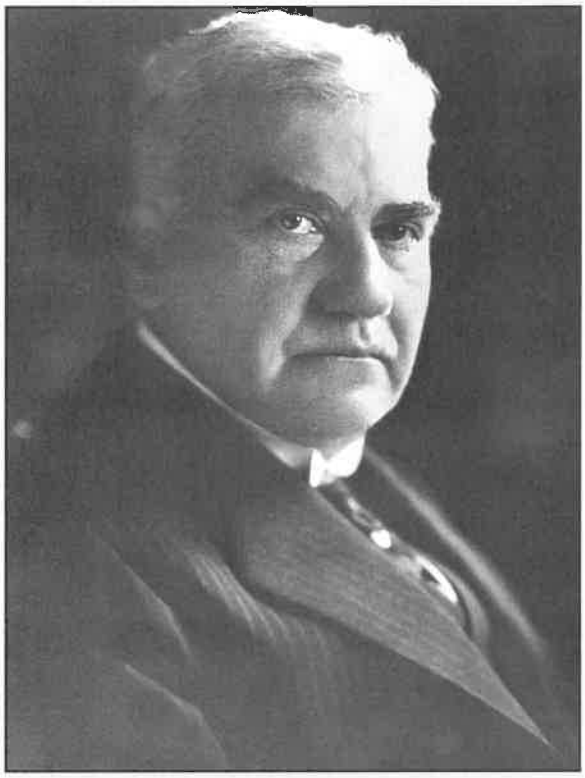
High hopes and deep frustration followed. Colburn lost his own fortune and vast sums put up by his backers. But by 1911 his luck changed when West Virginian Michael J. Owens, the foremost pioneer in glass technology, convinced Edward D. Libbey and other members of the board of the Toledo Glass Company to underwrite his efforts. Four years later, Colburn's machine was producing marketable glass and Toledo Glass sent a representative to Charleston to buy a suitable factory site.

On May 18, 1916, the Libbey-Owens Sheet Glass Company was incorporated and construction started on a factory on a $35\frac{1}{2}$ acre tract between the Kanawha River and the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. Tragically, William Colburn would not live to see the realization of his dream. His health had begun to fail, and he died in September of 1917. Because of Colburn's illness, the entire responsibility for setting up the automatic window glass machine in Charleston had fallen to Mike Owens.

It was a homecoming for Owens, as he had been born in Mason County in 1859. He was the son of poor immigrants who were driven

from County Wexford in Ireland by the great potato famine. Necessity required that Owens go to work in a Mason County coal mine with his father before he was ten years of age. When young Mike was injured in a mine slate fall, the family moved to Wheeling where the lad went to work tending a furnace at the Hobbes-Brockunier glass works.

His rise in the glass industry was dramatic. At the age of 15 Owens was a skilled journeyman glass blower, working beside tradesmen two or three times his age. He was an outstanding member of a debating society of working boys organized by his parish priest, and soon he became an officer in his union. His reputation grew to the point that it attracted the attention of Edward D. Libbey, who hired Mike to turn his ailing glass factory around.



Michael J. Owens, born in Mason County in 1859, became one of America's leading industrialists. Photographer unknown, courtesy State Archives.

Libbey got much more than he bargained for when he recruited Mike Owens. First of all, Owens's managerial skills placed the Toledo Glass Company on solid financial footing. Second, and more importantly, his technological innovations moved the company into the forefront of the mass production of glass products.

His inventions came one after the other, and by 1895 Owens had patented machines for producing light bulbs, tumblers and lamp chimneys. Then, over the next four years Owens developed his masterpiece, the first automatic bottle machine. By 1909, Owens and Libbey had become partners and built a factory near Fairmont to house Owens's latest machine, capable of producing 600,000 bottles a year.

Two years after the Kanawha City window glass operation had been launched, Owens drew away from the day-to-day supervision of the plant in order to head the search for a safer window glass for the growing automobile industry. He plunged into the project with characteristic zeal, but years of unrelenting labor had apparently taken their toll. He died suddenly in December of 1923. However, the legacy of this glass worker turned inventor was reflected in the continued growth of the Kanawha City operation which became the largest producer of window glass in the world after it expanded its capacity in 1920.

The establishment of technologically advanced plants like Libbey-Owens meant a dramatic change in the work force in the window glass industry. In the days of hand production, skilled tradesmen had controlled the process, but now all that remained of that system were the cutters, whose services were still needed because glass cutting machines had not been invented yet. The rest of the work force, which had grown to 1,000 by early 1927, consisted of machine operators, helpers and those performing general labor of one variety or another.

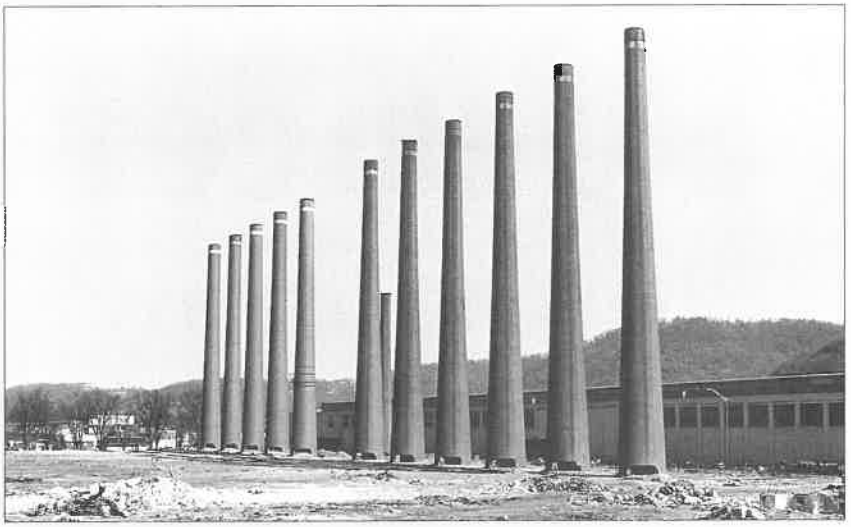
In dealing with the new work force, management at Libbey-Owens followed a double standard. Since the work of the glass cutters was absolutely critical to the production and profitability of the firm, Libbey-Owens negotiated with these craftsmen through their union, the Glass Cutters League of North America. In addition the company allowed the cutters a number of special privileges such as being able to finish their meals in the cafeteria before any other workers were allowed to enter. By contrast, the company dealt rather heavy handedly with the rest of the work force and did everything possible to keep them from belonging to a union.

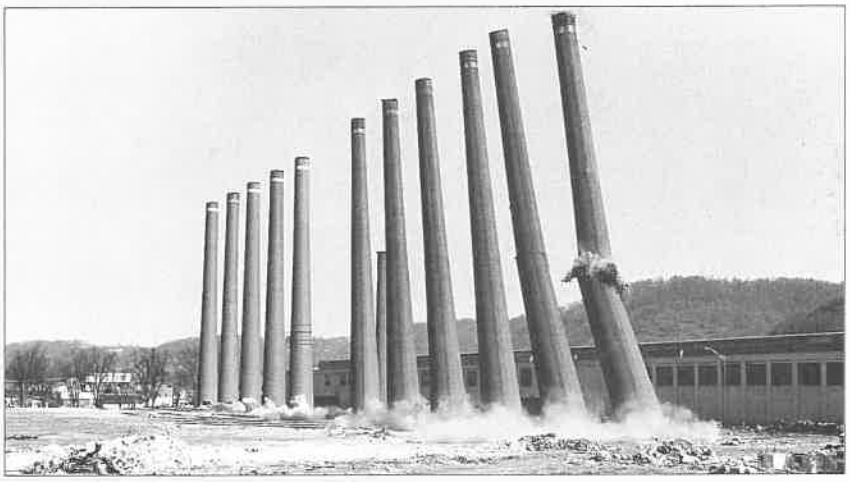
This was the situation confronting A. O. Barnette when he first began work at the plant. His Clay County country boy origins were typical of the workers being hired. Company foremen were apparently encouraged to hire employees with a hard-working rural background and little firsthand knowledge of trade unions. Once hired, workers were usually required to sign a "yellow dog" contract pledging they would have nothing to do with a union. Close supervision was the order of the day and when some employees tried to form a union in 1922, the company crushed the effort by summarily discharging anyone suspected of participating. Apparently, Barnette was among the group, although he was re-hired.

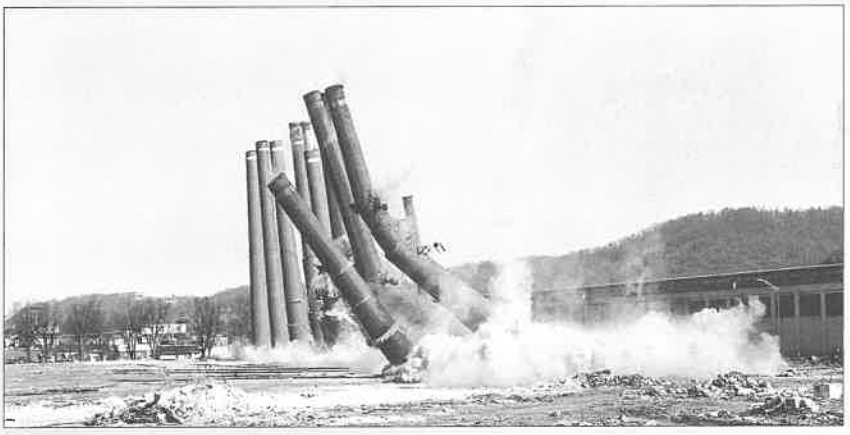
The Great Depression tore away the economic underpinnings which held the Libbey-Owens industrial relations system together. There was little employment for anyone at the plant by the early 1930's. Skilled and unskilled workers alike came day after day to get what few hours they could. It came as a real blow in 1932 when the base rate of pay was cut 10 percent. Shop foremen were told to work only the most efficient men and to push them as hard as possible.

The lack of work, wage cuts and arbitrary treatment made the machine operators and unskilled workers at Libbey-Owens ripe for a unionization drive, which was stimulated by President Roosevelt's labor legislation. The Glass Cutters League responded quickly. Their president was Glenn McCabe of Charleston.

The horizon changed forever when the Libbey-Owens-Ford smokestacks fell to the earth. Eleven of the 12 stacks stood 207 feet tall, with the shorter one 150 feet tall. The time of the demolition was an open secret and hundreds of Charlestonians and hordes of photographers gathered to witness the loss of a landmark. Controlled Blasting Services brought the glass plant stacks down early Sunday morning, April 18, 1982, to make room for the Kanawha Mall. Photos by Craig Cunningham.







He mobilized the cutters in June of 1933 to organize the machine workers at Libbey-Owens. The result was the establishment of Local No. 1 of what became the Federation of Flat Glass Workers of America.

In 1934, McCabe resigned his office in the Cutter's League to become the president of the Flat Glass Federation, which by then represented 10,000 industrial workers across the country. The fighting spirit of the new organization was reflected in the fact that it affiliated itself with unions from the AF of L which eventually became the rival and more radical Congress of Industrial Organizations, or CIO. For that action, the Flat Glass Federation was suspended in 1936 by the American Federation of Labor and changed its name to the United Glass and Ceramic Workers of America. This new industrial union was immediately tested with the necessity of conducting a 93-day strike to secure its first labor agreement contract with Libbey-Owens-Ford in Kanawha City. This is the big strike which A. O. Barnette helped to lead.

From 1937 until roughly 1960, the glass cutters and the unionized machine workers labored side by side at the plant in Kanawha City. However, beginning around 1955, the automatic cutting machine began to enter this country's window glass factories.

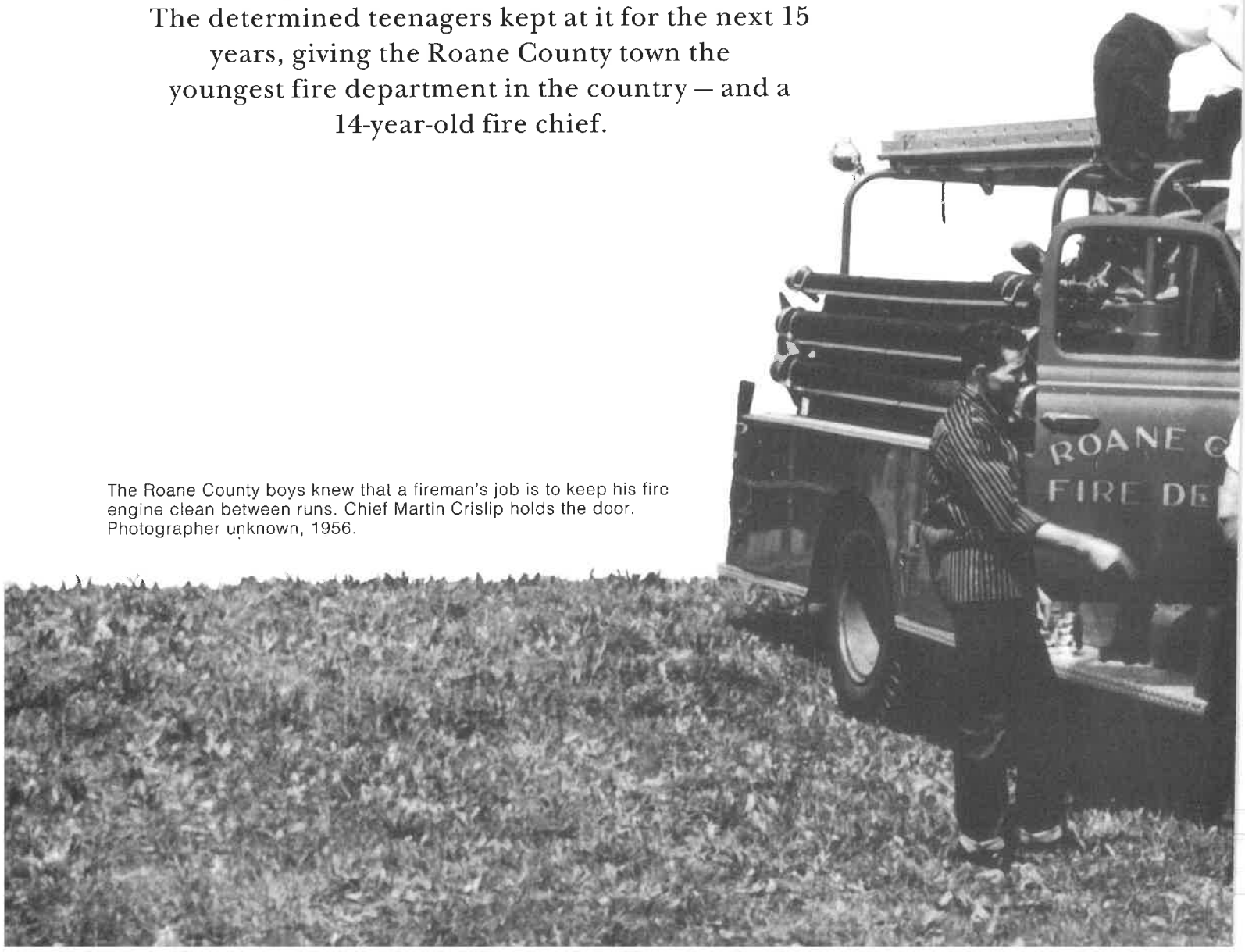
Now the cutters faced the same plight as the earlier crafts within their industry. They tried in vain to hold on to their privileged position. But the best they could do was to obtain an agreement that reserved to them half of the machine-operating jobs, as their industry continued to cope with the technological changes set in motion by former craftsman Michael J. Owens.

Spencer VFD

Roane County's Teenage Smoke Eaters

By Joetta Smith Woods

When the adults quit fighting fires in Spencer in 1942, high school boys took over the job. The determined teenagers kept at it for the next 15 years, giving the Roane County town the youngest fire department in the country – and a 14-year-old fire chief.



The Roane County boys knew that a fireman's job is to keep his fire engine clean between runs. Chief Martin Crislip holds the door. Photographer unknown, 1956.

Spencer is a medium-sized town, the county seat of Roane County, a medium-sized county. It is a great place to live, but keeping up the services citizens expect is sometimes more of a challenge than in larger cities. Prior to 1942, Spencer had an adult volunteer fire department, which was loosely organized and largely untrained. A fire that year destroyed several houses in Alvord, now part of Spencer but at one time a separate town. The fire department did its best but failed to control the damage. That was the last run of the old fire group.

Later in 1942, a student at Spencer High organized a group of high school boys to get together to look after the meager fire fighting equipment the city owned, to keep it in working condition for an emergency. They also cleared the fire department of trash, and removed confiscated items stored there by city police.

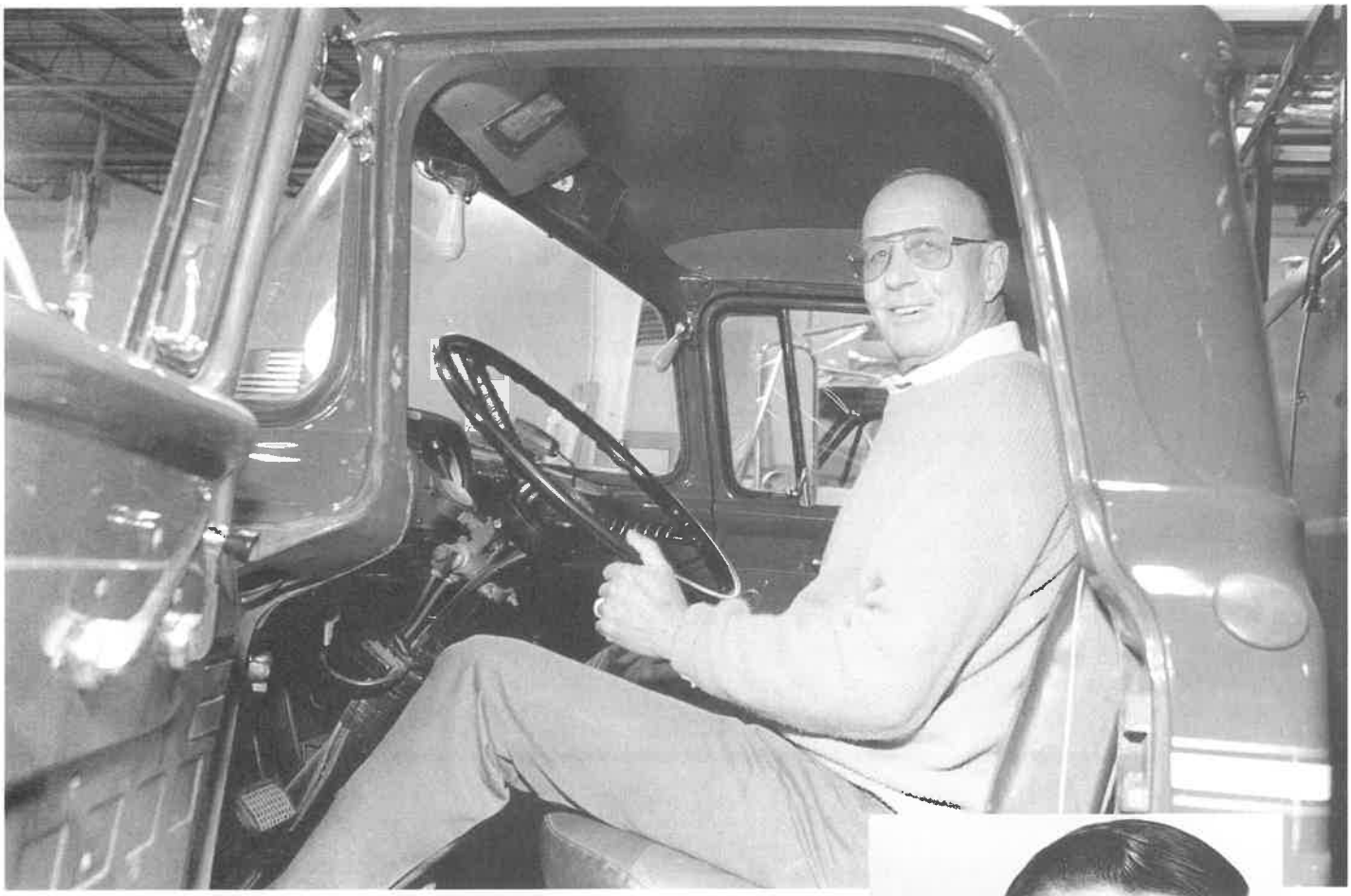
This was the beginning of Spencer's teenage fire fighters, and for the next 15 years local fire protection was in their hands. By 1957, when the department was forced to reorganize using mostly adults due to concerns having to do with funding, insurance, and classification ratings, the young firemen had received publicity in every major West Virginia newspaper and in national magazines. They were credited with having saved Roane County over a million dollars in property loss.

It was in early 1943 when this group from the high school officially became the new Spencer Fire Department, consisting entirely of teenage boys. Melvin Crislip withdrew as fire chief, and turned the post over to Dick Parrish. As original members dropped out for various reasons mostly having to do with growing up — high school graduation, jobs, military service, and so forth — the loss was offset by bringing in younger boys, a system that continued down through the years.

The new department first distinguished itself during a fire that destroyed Simmons Auto Company and heavily damaged adjacent property. The Charleston Fire Department sent help, but they could not hook up to the Spencer hydrants due to a difference in coupling threads. Young Chief Parrish amazed the Charleston firemen by running his hydrant take-off hose into the visiting truck's booster tanks, keeping the tanks topped up and allowing the visitors to pump from their trucks.

Differences of opinion soon developed among the youngsters, and they decided an adult was needed to serve as counsel and advisor. They elected French Jones, a Latin teacher at Spencer High School. Mr. Jones soon organized and taught an extension course in fire fighting which was provided by the School of Mines of West Virginia University. He also arranged to send some members of the group to the University fire school each year.

As World War II progressed more members of the fire department were drawn away and the average age became even younger. Lakin Crislip was chief in 1945, and when he was inducted into the armed services it appeared that no member was old enough to assume the responsibility. The boys elected Mr.



Joe Smith feels at home in this vintage 1958 pumper. He joined the force at 11. The inset photo is a high school portrait, made during his teenage fire chief years. Recent photo by Michael Keller.

Jones as chief but he declined, thinking it best to leave the members in charge. He appointed a youth named Joseph Smith to the post, with Mr. Jones to work in close contact with him. Joe Smith was the youngest fire chief anybody had ever heard of, only 14 years old.

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How Smith became chief at such a young age is a story within a story. Early in the days of the teen fire department, Dick Parrish had noticed a small boy hanging around the station and fooling with the equipment. Someone suggested Parrish ask him to leave because he might hurt himself and the department be held responsible.

Parrish started to send the kid away but realized that he was genuinely interested in the fire engines. So Parrish instead just told him he could not hang around the firehouse without a slip from his parents granting him permission to join the fire department. The boy left, but returned a few days later. He had the paper in his hand, signed by his grandmother, who was his guardian. It had taken a couple of days to talk her into it.

So in spite of his age, 11 at the time, Joe Smith signed on as an apprentice member of the Spencer Fire Department. They made him clean-up boy, in charge of loading and cleaning hoses. He was not allowed to fight fires at first, but there was plenty of time for that later. For Joe Smith stuck with it, becoming the fire chief in three years and eventually serving for 25.

The teenage fire department was called upon in many emergencies. One such incident occurred in the fall of 1947 when an Alvord propane explosion fired several homes. The department controlled this fire with a minimum loss and without a scratch to a fireman. This fire and

the part played by the young firemen were the subject of national news articles.

Recognizing the service being provided, civic clubs and local businessmen began a program of assistance and cooperation that resulted in more and better equipment for the teenage firemen. Another truck was bought, a new 1954 Dodge Power Wagon to supplement the 1940 Ford Fire Wagon in use since 1942. Additional hoses and auxiliary pumps were obtained. A 1955 International fire truck was purchased in 1955, with the main contribution being made by the county government. This made it possible to answer calls outside the Spencer city limits. Two trucks were dispatched when the alarm was out of the city, with one truck always left at the department for any local emergency.

The fire fighters enjoyed a wide variety of support. Roane County allocated funds for maintaining the trucks, while the city of Spencer provided operating funds. The department itself raised a great part of its funds by selling magazines, pumping out cisterns and ponds, washing streets, and providing other services.

From the various revenues received the department sent members to fire school, purchased accessories and equipment, and paid the bills. Jackets were bought for the members as they graduated from high school.

In 1951 Joe Smith entered the United States Air Force, and Martin Crislip took over as fire chief. Martin held this position until 1957, when the teen fire fighters disbanded and were replaced by young adults.

Joe Smith served in the military through 1955, mostly following his favorite occupation — fire fighting — as a member of crash crews at various Air Force bases. His posts of duty took him to Texas and as far away as Greenland. He was discharged with the rank of staff sergeant.

In 1956, after moving back to Spencer, Joe took a job with Parrish Motors as a mechanic. He also was named by the County Commission to replace his old mentor, French

Women Fire Fighters

While the town of Spencer once laid claim to the state's only teenage volunteer fire department, the federal prison for women at Alderson is the home of West Virginia's only all-female fire fighting force.

Tough training is required for inmates who sign on as fire fighters, but competition for the privilege is fierce. The fire-fighting women live in a cottage set aside for them. There is a fire truck on the grounds and an inmate trained to drive it. The Alderson fire fighters assist primary response teams in Alderson and Lewisburg. Whenever the women go out into the nearby communities they are accompanied by a staff member from the prison.

Delores Stephens, executive assistant at the prison, says the number of inmate fire fighters varies. Recently there was a total of 15. They also assist in emergency situations other than fires, according to the prison official.

Stephens says the fire fighters also take part in community service projects, beautification for one. Through the summer the women are busy mowing, raking and landscaping. They have helped people in Greenbrier County, and in parts of Monroe and Summers counties as well. All in all, the women cover about a 25-mile radius around the prison.

With fire-fighting emergencies somewhat rare these days, the inmates concentrate on their other projects, according to Stephens. "They've shown over time a willingness to be of service to the community. They are never hesitant and they really enjoy helping," she says of the women.

The desire of some inmates to be of service was dramatized in January when about 200 women from the prison helped Alderson residents clean up after severe flooding. One prisoner put it in perspective. "We have it hard in there, but it's worse out here. At least we have clothes and some place to sleep and people who are paid to take care of us," Dawn White told the *Charleston Gazette*. "It just makes you feel good to be able to help."

The all-woman fire force in 1988. The squad answers calls in Alderson and surrounding communities. Courtesy Charleston Newspapers.

The teenage fire fighters often practiced. They learned not to open their hoses on smoke, how to handle high-pressure nozzles, and general teamwork, among other fundamentals. Photographer and date unknown.

Keith Price and Ronnie Wissuchek man the bumper-mounted pump while three other boys demonstrate the high-pressure hose. Photographer unknown, 1956.

Jones, as adult supervisor of the teen fire fighters.

The last major fire the teens fought occurred that year, 1956. Led by Smith, the boys battled a fire that wiped out half a city block, destroying the O. J. Morrison Department Store, DeGruyter's Jewelry, and Phillips Drug Store. They were able to restrict the fire from the other half-block, saving the Coney Island, a local tavern and eatery, as well as the Spencer Department Store and G. C. Murphy's.

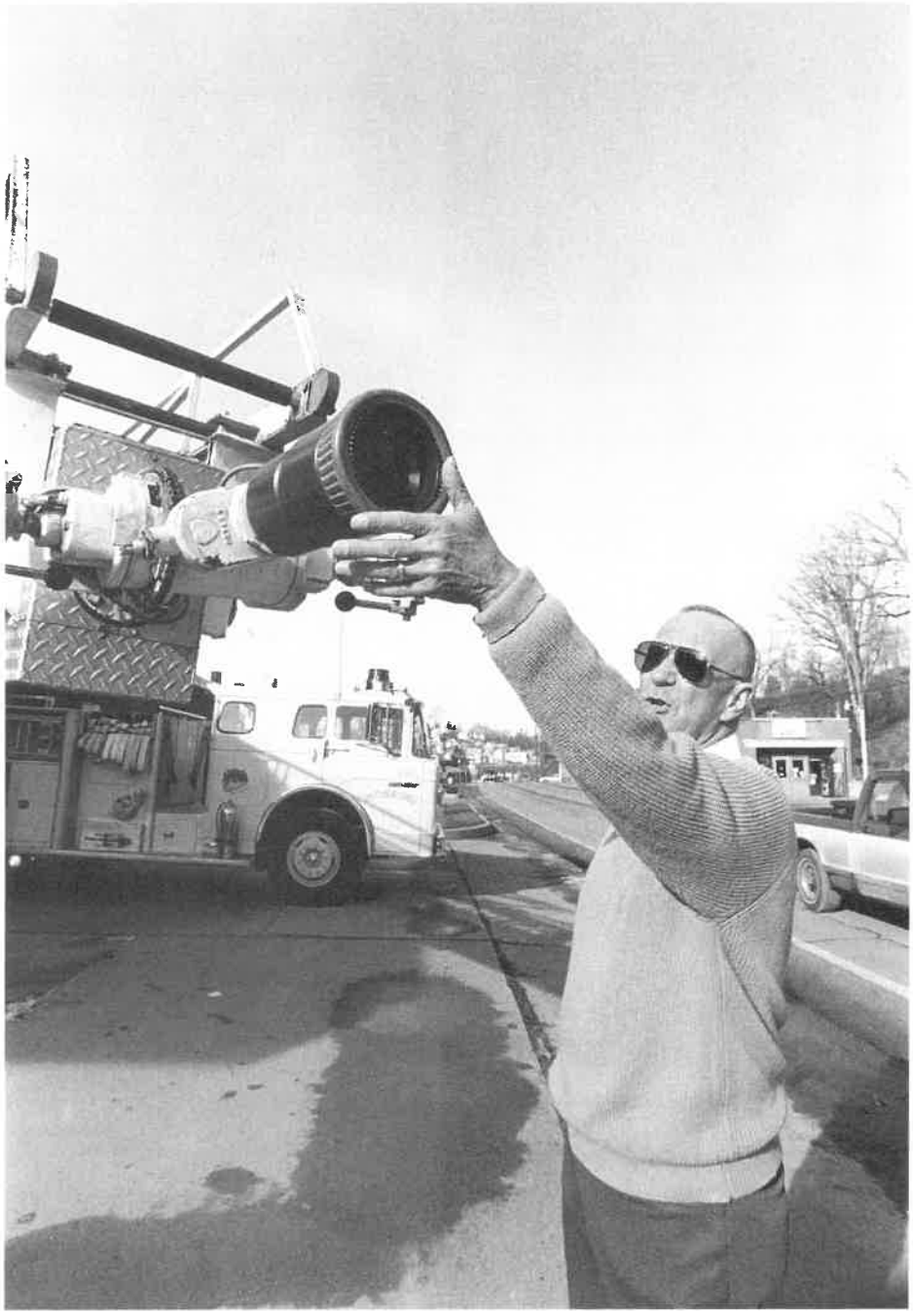
It wasn't smoke and fire that finally did the teenage fire fighters in, but changing times. In 1957 it was determined by Smith and the County Commission that several thousand dollars a year could be saved by Spencer residents in taxes and fire insurance if the West Virginia Inspection Bureau raised the

Spencer Fire Department's ratings from class VIII to class VII. This required the upgrading of trucks and services and meant that young fire fighters (though still acceptable) had to meet stringent new requirements.

The new rules required the teenage firemen to attain a scholastic average equal to the standard required for members of athletic teams at the high school, and written recommendations had to be submitted from the Spencer High School principal and three instructors. After meeting those requirements, the applicant could formally apply for membership, seeking approval from a special screening board, then undergo a month's waiting period. After all this, he had to be voted in by two-thirds of the department.

The upshot of the new requirements was to dramatically raise the average age of Spencer firemen. Early in 1957, the County Commission appointed Joe Smith fire chief again, and soon he had a squad of 30 men in their 20's and early 30's. After the new requirements were announced, no teen fire fighters applied. Perhaps teens still interested just chose to wait until they could join the squad as adults. In any case, the 15-year history of Spencer's teenage fire fighters was effectively over.

It wasn't smoke and fire that finally did the teenage fire fighters in, but changing times. After the new requirements were announced, no teenagers applied.



Spencer has an up-to-date fire department today, including a fleet of modern equipment. Joe Smith shows off the nozzle on a ladder truck here. Photo by Michael Keller.

Late in 1957, the squad moved its headquarters from underneath the mayor's office on Main Street to an empty garage just behind Spencer High School. This new firehouse enabled Spencer's fire rating to reach the desired class VII, although the department was reminded of the need to upgrade equipment and services.

In 1959, the Spencer Fire Department purchased a new 1958 Ford F-750 pumper, superior to anything they had used in the past. A 1952 Ford panel truck was converted in 1960 for use as an ambulance emergency vehicle for fire victims. This same year a used bread truck was converted to carry rescue equipment.

Arriving in 1963 was a new 1962 Chevrolet "American Pumper," a large fire truck with special capability in fighting chemical, gas, oil, or automotive fires. This was particularly important to Roane County because of the local oil and gas industry. Shortly thereafter, the squad purchased a Ford F-800 tank truck, replacing the army tanker they had used since the late 1960's. Also, in 1965, they purchased another F-750 pumper.

All this new equipment forced the fire department to move once again, this time to the Daniels Building, located adjacent to the Big Star gro-

cery store. Still the space was barely adequate, and once again the topic came up that a new fire station needed to be built.

In 1971, the squad began a county-wide fundraising drive to raise $225,000, to build a modern station. The firemen used door-to-door solicitations, bake sales, car washes, and other activities. It took about a year to raise the money.

They negotiated to purhcase a sizeable parcel of state land next to the National Guard Armory for the grand sum of $1. In the summer of 1971 the "Hardly Able Construction Company" — really just a group of firemen — began filling dirt on the land they soon were to own.

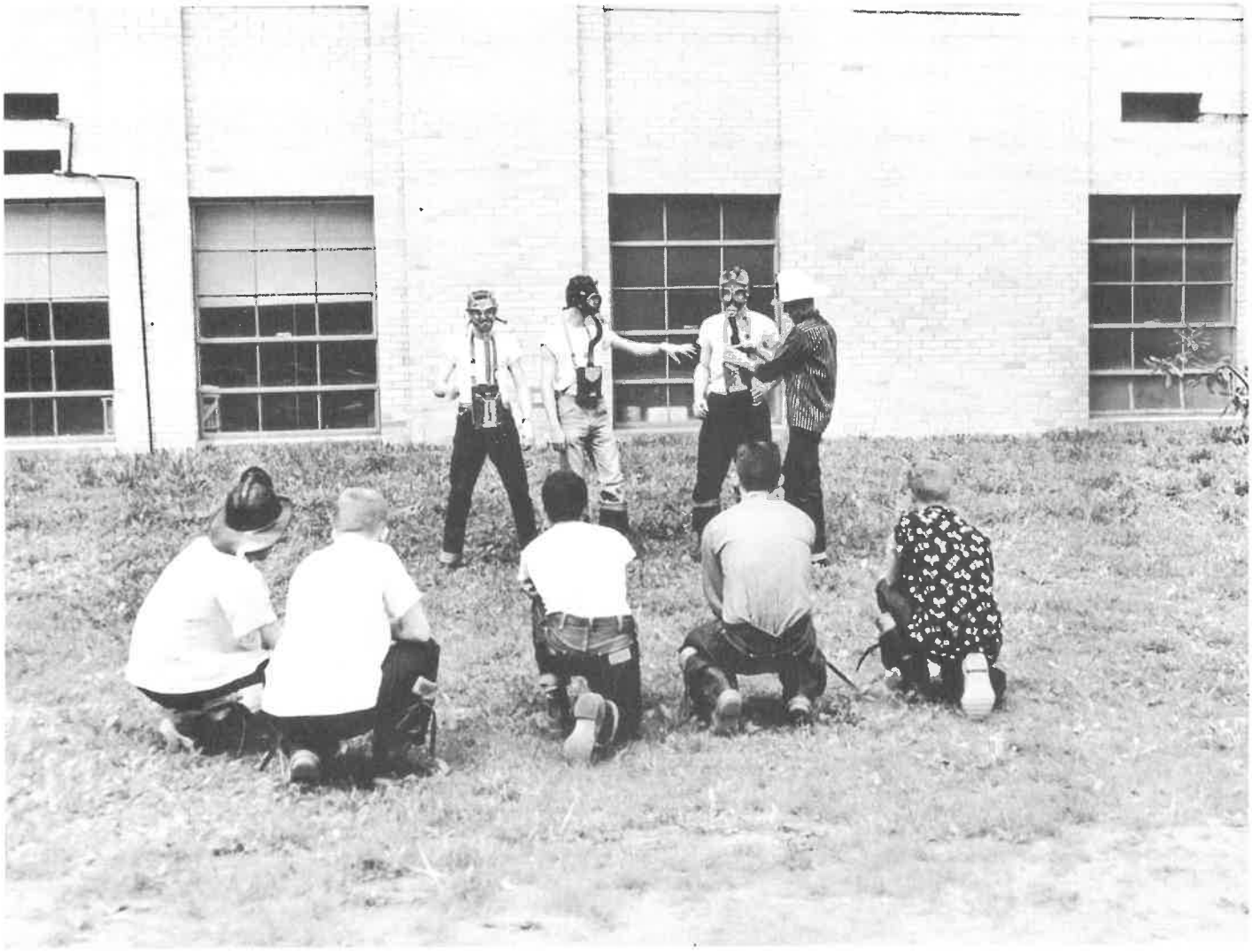
Among the workers was Bruce Parrish and Jack Wine. Both were from the original teenager fire squad, boys who had grown to men with the department. The legend and spirit of the teen fire fighters had never been forgotten. The TV game show *What's My Line* even sent Joe Smith a telegram in later years, inviting him to be a guest on the show, thinking he was still the country's youngest fire chief. He had to decline, informing them he was way beyond 14 years old by then.

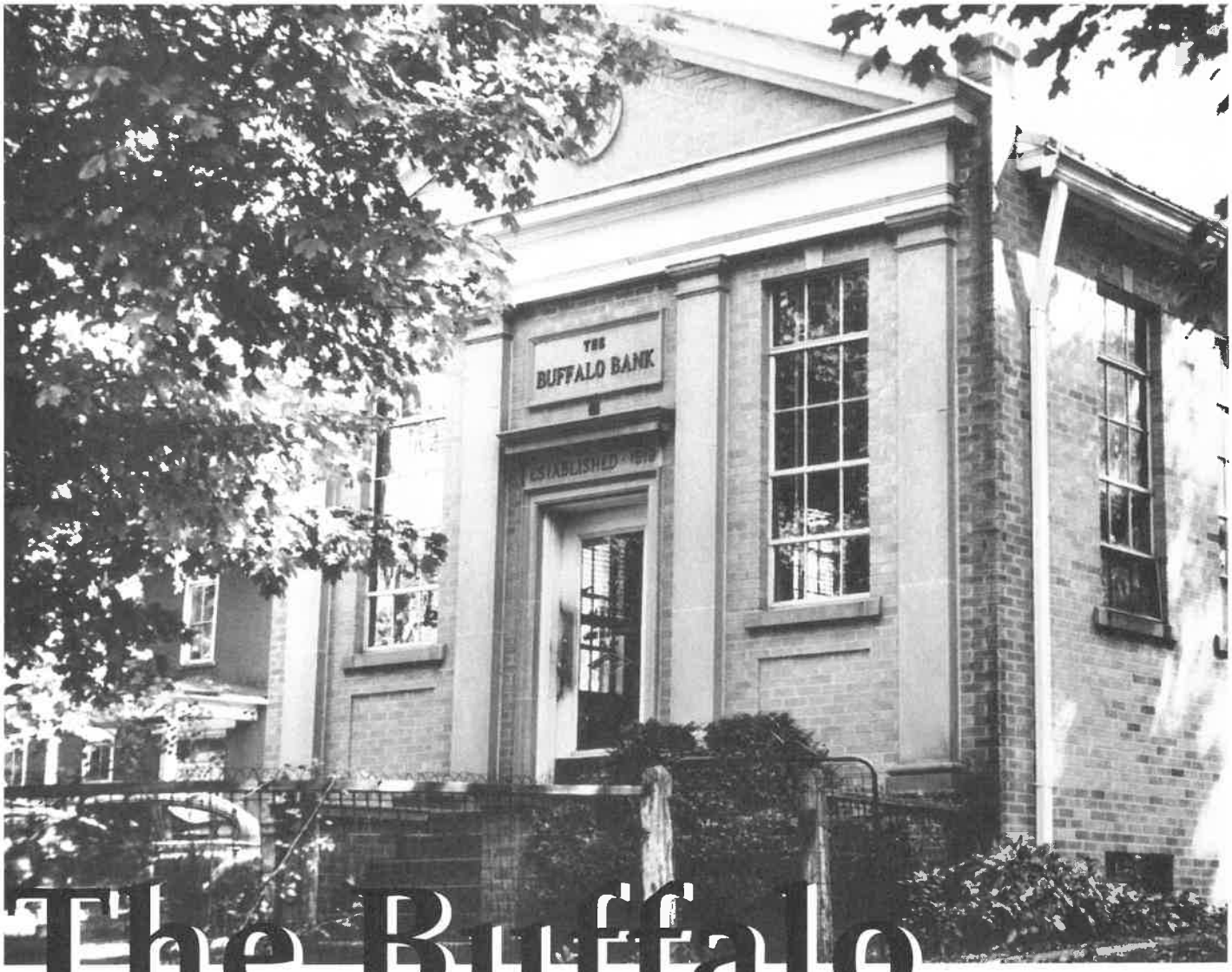
The new fire station opened in 1971. Joe Smith, no longer a boy, prepared to leave as he saw his dream fulfilled.

The new fire station was opened in 1971. Joe Smith, who had become a fireman even before he became a teenager, was no longer a boy. He prepared to leave as he saw his dream fulfilled, retiring as Spencer fire chief in late 1972. He had been working shift work at Kaiser Aluminum in Ravenswood since 1968, and could no longer be on call on a regular basis. But his position at Kaiser was on their self-contained fire department, so he was still doing the job he loved.

He left the town in good shape. Spencer has a first-rate fire department today with Granville Lance, a retired dentist, now serving as fire chief. Lance has 45 years of volunteer service in the department and is himself one of Spencer's original teenage firemen.

It looks like more fun than we had in high school: The boys try out protective breathing apparatus in this 1956 photo. Photographer unknown.





The Buffalo Bank Robbery

Further Adventures in the West Virginia State Police

By C. C. Stewart

Above: The Buffalo Bank was normally a peaceful place in a quiet town. Photographer unknown, 1953; old photos courtesy Anna Murphy.

Last winter we published retired State Policeman C. C. Stewart's outspoken account of his service during the mine strikes at Widen.

It turns out there are more tales where that one came from. This one starts on a quiet morning a generation ago, when three tellers, two schoolgirls, and a pair of inept gunmen converged at the Buffalo Bank.

My State Police career took me back to the Kanawha Valley in the early 1950's. Soon after I completed strike duty at Widen and returned to Chelyan, I was transferred to Nitro, west of Charleston. I worked there with Lawrence Craft.

Police work has a way of going from very routine to very exciting. On October 1, 1953, while Lawrence and I were giving drivers license examinations, the telephone rang, and we were advised that the Buffalo Bank had been robbed. I told Craft to call Company B and ask for a couple of troopers to help us, and to tell them we were on our way to the bank.

Buffalo is on the other end of Putnam County from Nitro, maybe 20 miles down the Kanawha River. We arrived at about 10:15 a.m. While Craft worked outside, I interviewed the staff inside the bank.

The three employees who had been held up were Cora Edith Cain, Maxine Mitchell and Ann Rose Haer, all of Buffalo. They reported that they had come to work that morning at 8:00 a.m. as usual. At about ten o'clock two men came in. The older one, who looked to be about 50, showed the women a revolver, told them to turn around and face the wall, and to "be good." The ladies didn't argue.

Police work has a way of going from very routine to very exciting. We were giving drivers license exams, the telephone rang, and we were advised that the bank had been robbed.

About that time Susie Hill and Mildred Young also came into the bank. They were school girls, sent there on an errand by their teacher. The man with the revolver ordered them also to stand still, and the frightened young girls obeyed.

One of the men had a paper sack, and he took the money from the

Tellers Ann Rose Haer, Maxine Mitchell and Cora Edith Cain (above) show off the empty cash drawers. Major Taylor and Sergeant Newman (below) checked their workplace for evidence after the mid-morning robbery. Photographer unknown, 1953.

teller's counter and drawers. The two robbers then left the bank, stating as they departed, "You have been good kids."

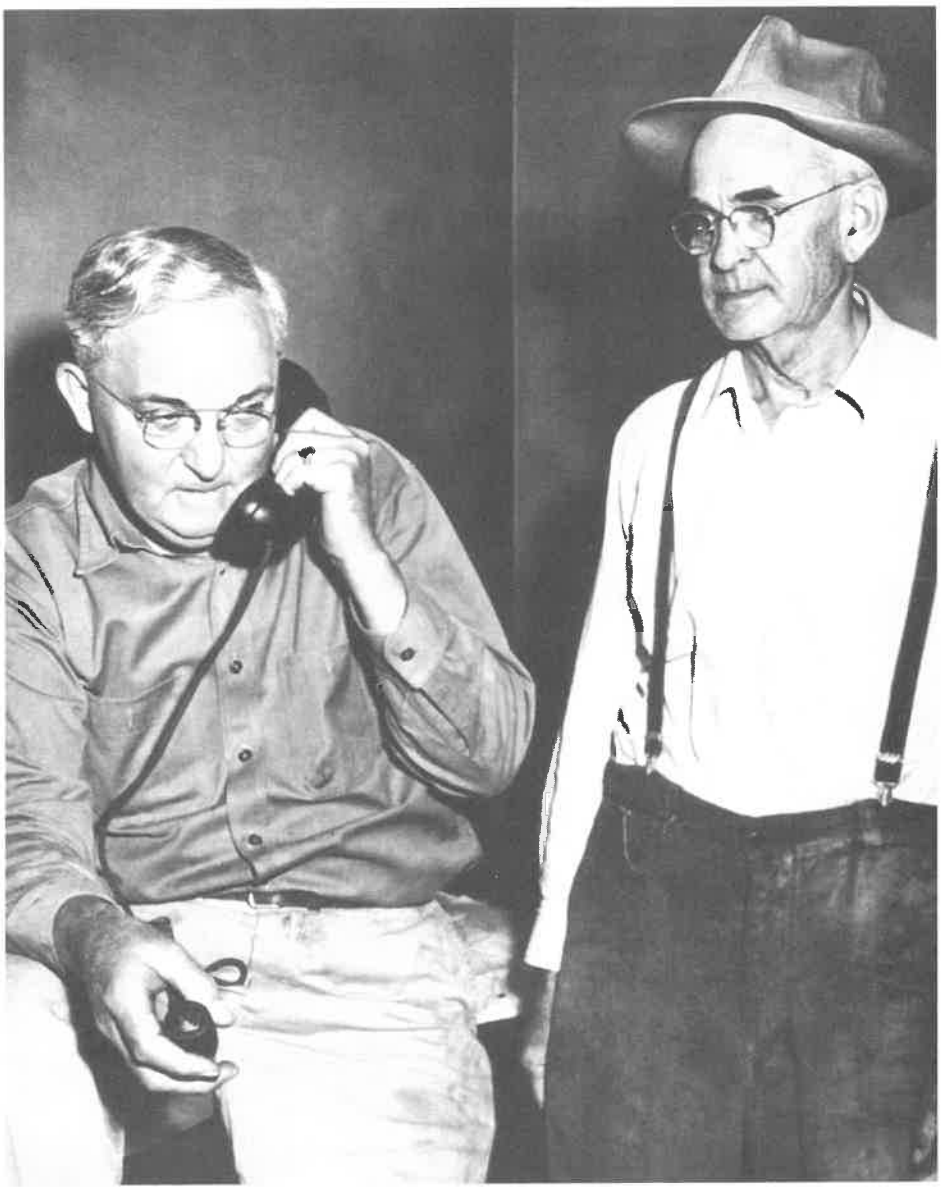
Those inside the Buffalo Bank came to life as the holdup men left. Miss Haer looked out the window and saw the robbers get into a blue Hudson sedan. Another man was waiting in the car, and drove them away. The Hudson did not appear to have a license plate.

Maxine Mitchell also looked out the bank window. She confirmed that the blue car had no license plate, and said it headed toward Point Pleasant. Maxine stated that it was the younger man, who appeared to be about 35, who had gathered up the money. She told me that neither of the bank robbers wore a mask.

Someone outside the bank told Trooper Craft that three men in a blue car had been seen turning up the 18-Mile Creek road, just beyond Buffalo. We relayed the information we had to Company B by telephone. Major C. P. Taylor and Trooper R. L. Bonar arrived on the scene about 10:30.

With no bridges crossing the Kanawha between Winfield and Point Pleasant, we concentrated our search on the north side of the river. All roads leading away from Buffalo were checked. Troopers Craft and Bonar were sent to the intersection of old U.S. 21 and Martin's Branch. U.S. 35 near Point Pleasant and State Route 17 were already being patrolled. Troopers were also at the intersection of U.S. 21 and State Route 34 at Kenna. U.S. 21 between Ripley and Kenna was being patrolled, as was the road between Elkview and Cotton. Troopers were sent to patrol Frog Creek and Derricks Creek, as well as Allens Fork.

Check the map for that area and imagine I-77 is not there for a good idea of the roads and intersections critical to our 1953 manhunt. We worked those points intensively and counted on the cooperation of outlying police agencies for the fringe areas. Policemen from the city of Charleston checked traffic at the intersections of routes 25 and 35, and at 40th Street and Route 35. The Ohio Highway Patrol checked traffic at the Ravenswood Ferry and established a roadblock at the bridge between Point Pleasant and the Buckeye State.



Bank officers had an anxious time until the money was recovered. Here Director K. C. Atkeson takes a call while cashier W. L. Smith stands by. Photographer unknown, 1953.

We got an early break while routinely checking area businesses. Sergeant Carson and I went to Liberty and interviewed Lester Bumgardner, the operator of the general store there. He told us of a party of three that had been in his store, Clair Starcher and two other men, and said that they had gone across the street to Otis Bumgardner's filling station to have a tire fixed.

We then questioned Otis Bumgardner at the filling station. He told us that Starcher was an ex-convict, and said that he and the two men with him were traveling in a blue Hudson sedan. Our investigation was looking more promising.

Sergeant Carson and I gave this information to the State Police radio operator at South Charleston. At 12:00 noon Trooper Mike Murphy and Trooper Macejcyk apprehended the three suspects in the car at the head of Derricks Creek. The men turned out to be Starcher, Robert Combs, and Harold Paige. Trooper Neely was nearby. He went to the scene and took pictures of the three men and the blue car.

Recalling the Robbery: "We Were Scared"

Susie Hill Tucker and Mildred Young Stover were ten years old when they met the men who robbed the Buffalo Bank. Mrs. Tucker remembers that their fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Emma Cain, had sent the girls to the bank and the post office that day. The school's students often took turns doing errands for their teacher. Mrs. Stover says they usually split up, one to the bank and one to the post office, but that day the two girls stayed together.

On their way back, they ran into the principal who scolded them for taking so long. The girls tried to explain that the bank had been robbed.

Their first stop was the bank, and Susie knew something wasn't right as soon as they walked in. "We knew all the tellers," she recalled in a recent interview. "Mrs. Haer called to us when we came in and told us to do what the men said." Susie went on to explain that a man with a gun was standing in the lobby. He told the girls to put up their hands and be quiet and that everything would be alright. "That's exactly what we did," she said.

Mildred knew something was amiss because the blind was pulled down over the bank window. She also remembers the man pointing the gun at her and her friend and telling them to be quiet. The other man was in the back with the tellers helping himself to the bank's money. It didn't take long.

Mildred Young Stover and Susie Hill Tucker recently returned to the scene of the crime. Photo by Michael Keller.

Susie was upset because her friend Mildred was crying. "I was too scared to cry," she said. Mildred remembers that the girls knew the men were gone when one of the tellers got up and looked out the window. Then they headed back to school. On their way, they ran into the school principal who scolded them for taking so long. "Get back to school!" he ordered. The girls tried to explain that the bank had been robbed, but they knew he didn't believe them.

When they got back to school, both girls were taken to the cafeteria and questioned by the police. Susie Hill Tucker says her mother came to get her. Mildred rode the bus home as usual, with her schoolmates questioning her the whole way. "Were you really there?" they wanted to know.

Mrs. Tucker says that after the bank robbers "were caught on a country road" things settled down a bit. Mildred Stover says their teacher didn't send them on errands again. Both girls were scared for a long time, and worried that the men would get out of jail and come after them.

The Buffalo Bank building still stands, though it is no longer a bank. Susie Hill Tucker and Mildred Young Stover still live in Buffalo. Mrs. Tucker went on to work for the Buffalo Bank branch in Winfield for five years, and then for City National when it converted over. Both women agree their brush with the bank robbers was quite an experience and both are quick to say, "We were scared."

—Debby Sonis Jackson

Roadblocks were used throughout the region. This trooper checks drivers near the intersection of Routes 25 and 35. Photographer unknown, 1953.

Sergeant Carson and I told the troopers to bring the arrested men to Liberty. One of the troopers brought the blue car in while the three suspects were taken by way of the Buffalo Bank, where they were identified as the ones who had held up the place that morning. In the meantime, Sergeant Newman had been taking pictures inside the bank, dusting for fingerprints, and so forth. He took pictures of the suspects when they were brought in.

We took the money from the three men and counted it. The loot was returned safely to the bank by mid-afternoon, with only $7 missing.

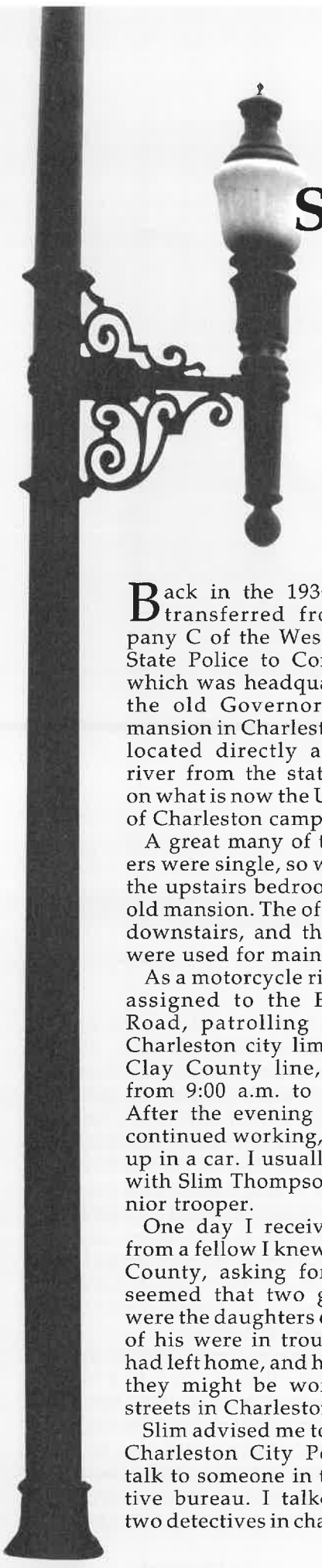
We then took our suspects to a justice of the peace at Bancroft for arraignment. The J.P. ordered the three held without bond, to await the action of the Putnam County grand jury in November.

We then took them back to State Police headquarters in South Charleston. After taking statements from each suspect, we delivered them to the Kanawha County jail to be interrogated by the city police. They were then returned to the Putnam County jail.

Within a few days we had three more suspects, charged as accessories before the fact. Sergeant Bias of the Charleston Detective Bureau had informed Trooper Craft and me that while he was questioning James Shreves about other crimes, Shreves implicated Ezekial Myers and John Berry in the Buffalo Bank robbery.

When he was interviewed, Myers stated that he, Shreves, Paige and Combs had spent the day drinking together on Saturday the 26th, the previous weekend. Then they held up Van's "Never Closes" Market. He also told us that John Berry had visited the Buffalo Bank the week before to look it over. So Shreves, Berry, and Myers had helped plan the bank robbery but did not actually participate. In fact, Berry and Shreves could not take part because they had already been arrested and incarcerated by the Charleston city police on other charges.

Harold Paige went under the street name "Poor John," and his luck was getting poorer all the time. He and Combs admitted to having robbed Van's Market and also to a breaking and entering at Woodrow Wilson High School. Myers admitted his part in planning the bank



"How the System Worked"
Street Life in the Capital City

Back in the 1930's I was transferred from Company C of the West Virginia State Police to Company B, which was headquartered in the old Governor Dawson mansion in Charleston. It was located directly across the river from the state capitol, on what is now the University of Charleston campus.

A great many of the troopers were single, so we slept in the upstairs bedrooms of the old mansion. The offices were downstairs, and the garages were used for maintenance.

As a motorcycle rider, I was assigned to the Elk River Road, patrolling from the Charleston city limits to the Clay County line, working from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After the evening meal, we continued working, doubling up in a car. I usually worked with Slim Thompson, our senior trooper.

One day I received a call from a fellow I knew in Roane County, asking for help. It seemed that two girls who were the daughters of a friend of his were in trouble. They had left home, and he thought they might be working the streets in Charleston.

Slim advised me to go to the Charleston City Police and talk to someone in the detective bureau. I talked to the two detectives in charge of the prostitution section, and I really got an education!

When a girl came to Charleston and started hustling, they told me, the city detectives heard about her in a day or two. They picked her up and brought her to the police station. Then they contacted a madam who came in and told the newcomer how the system worked.

Rule one, she had to work for a madam — that is, the owner of a house of prostitution. The madam would give her a commission, furnish her a room, and put her to work.

If the girl went out on the street on her own again, a detective would bust her and call her madam. The madam would pay her bail and take her back to the house. She would have her punished, which helped to keep the rest of the girls in line.

Occasionally a madam brought her girls in, and they were all booked for soliciting. She paid their fines and they were then released into her custody.

Parkersburg and Huntington had red light districts similar to the one in Charleston, and they all operated on similar rules. Once a girl became involved in the network, she usually stayed with it. Her fingerprint records followed her from one city to another.

The prostitutes were expected to cooperate in the system. When one saw that a client had a firearm, for example, she told the madam. The madam called the detective bureau. They came immediately, and if necessary pulled the man straight out of bed. Many a difficult case was solved in this way.

Slim told me that when the State Police were looking for someone, they left his file with the city detectives who worked on prostitution. If the suspect showed up, he was nabbed in a hurry.

While I was stationed at Chelyan, I had the chance to see this work. A Dr. McClung of Montgomery was murdered. He operated a drug store and had gone to the bank to cash checks. He failed to return, and one of our troopers finally discovered his body in a trash pile on Hughes Creek.

I immediately contacted the detective bureau in Charleston. They soon called me back to say a man had been at one of the houses in the red light district, flashing a big roll of money. The detective told me that the man had just left the house a few minutes before, traveling by taxicab.

We put out the word. One of our troopers spotted the cab on Route 60, heading east. We contacted the dispatcher at the cab company, who managed to alert the cabbie. A short time later the cab was surrounded and the suspect taken into custody. Upon questioning, he confessed to the murder. He told us he had been with a woman in the red light district and had hidden the rest of the money behind the wallpaper. Other than a couple hundred dollars which the man had already gone through, we recovered all of it.

Most of Charleston's prostitution took place on Frye's Alley in what was known as the Triangle — about where the Interstate highway now crosses Elk River. I was reminded of the Coconut Grove area of Balboa on the Pacific end of the Panama Canal, reputed to be the largest red light district in the world. I saw that while in the Navy. The shore patrol made sure you got a VD shot when you left, even if you had only gone through to sight-see.

But getting back to my story, the Charleston detectives located the two girls from Roane County and told me where to find them. Their father came to Charleston and took them back to the country. I don't know if they stayed home or not, as I heard nothing more about them. But I imagine their experience on the streets of Charleston was enough to make Roane County look like a good place to live.

— C. C. Stewart

Our author on another case, at about the time of the robbery. Photographer unknown, early 1950's; courtesy C. C. Stewart.

robbery, and his participation at Van's and Woodrow Wilson.

As our case came together, Lawrence Craft and I later went to the Putnam County Courthouse at Winfield to talk to Velmer Knapp, the prosecutor, about the bank robbery. Judge Hereford of Huntington was conducting a hearing involving the prosecutor, so we waited.

While we were there the county sheriff went up and talked to the judge. The judge immediately called Craft and me to the bench and told us the sheriff was having difficulty with some of his county jail inmates. He asked me if we could help by quieting down the inmates.

I told the judge we would do the best we could, and sent Craft to get the keys for the jail. Craft returned with the keys and said, "Would you mind telling me what you are going to do?"

I said, "I am going into that cell block and quiet those guys down just as the judge told us to do." Craft wanted to know what about the sheriff. I said, "He had better go back to his office and tend to business." So Craft told the sheriff to do just that.

The jail was in a separate building away from the courthouse, and Craft and I went there. We headed upstairs to the cell block where the problem was. John Berry was in the middle of the floor, daring the sheriff or anyone from his office to come in.

I gave my revolver to Craft and told him to hold the door. I went inside and as I walked toward Berry, he lunged at me. "Here is the SOB I have been waiting for," he yelled, only he didn't abbreviate it.

As he started to swing, I knocked him down. He began begging me not to bust him up. I ordered him to strip naked and told the regular trusty to put him in a one-man cell, and be sure it was securely locked.

The trusty did so, and asked me how long Berry was to be kept there. I advised him to keep the prisoner there until someone with authority released him.

The remaining inmates had clustered in one end of the cell block while all this was taking place. I told them to return to their regular pursuits. Trooper Craft and I then left. After Craft returned the keys, we went back to the courthouse and told Judge Hereford that our mission was completed and the jail was quiet. He congratulated us on a job quickly done.

Craft and I sat back down to wait for the prosecutor to finish with the hearing. As soon as he was through, he joined us. About that time the sheriff marched up to Judge Hereford and told him Craft and I had abused his inmates and had even stripped one of them and put him in solitary.

When I walked into the witness room, a startled Poor John looked up and said, "I thought you were dead." I assured him I was very much alive.

Judge Hereford told the sheriff he believed the inmates would now be quiet and dismissed any further discussion of the matter.

All of the accused robbers were finally tried in Putnam County for the Buffalo Bank robbery and convicted. They were also tried in Kanawha County and convicted of other charges. All were sentenced to the West Virginia Penitentiary at Moundsville, and soon they were out of my mind.

But that wasn't quite the end of the story. In 1955 I retired from the West Virginia State Police, and ended up with the Broward County

Sheriff's Department in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where I attained the rank of Captain-Inspector.

While O.C. Boles was the warden of the Moundsville penitentiary — I don't remember the exact year, but I believe it was in the late 1960's — I received a call from an assistant attorney general in West Virginia. He asked me if I remembered one Harold Paige. Since I could not recall immediately, I asked if the man had a street name.

He replied, "Poor John."

That reminded me at once of the Buffalo Bank robbery, and I told him I had caused the man to be sent to the penitentiary in Moundsville in 1953.

The assistant attorney general asked me if I had been present in the intermediate court in Kanawha County when Paige had been sentenced to life imprisonment by Judge Littlepage. When I told him I had been there, he asked me if Paige had been represented by an attorney at the hearing. I told him that he had.

The state's lawyer then advised me that Paige had now filed a motion in federal court stating he had been sentenced without due process, because the public defender representing him was inept and not familiar with the law. He asked me if I could come to Moundsville on Paige's trial date. I agreed to do so, and soon received a summons and a plane ticket from Fort Lauderdale to Pittsburgh.

A driver with a West Virginia state car met me in Pittsburgh and drove me to Moundsville. I let the assistant attorney general know I had arrived. Paige's case came up the next morning in federal court. When I walked into the witness room, a very startled Poor John looked up and said, "I thought you were dead." I assured him that I was still very much alive.

Shortly thereafter, the assistant attorney general came to me and told me that Paige had withdrawn his motion and I was free to head back south. I was ready. It was cold in Moundsville. I was very happy to return to the warmth of Florida and get away from the ice and snow.

Within hours, troopers Mike Murphy (left) and John Macejcyk had three suspects and hats full of money. The captives are Robert Combs, Clair Starcher and Harold Paige. Photographer unknown, 1953.

Brooks Smith

The Making of a Banjo Player

Interview By Andrew Dunlap

It takes one to know one, they say, so it seems natural to publish Andrew Dunlap's interview with Brooks Smith. Andrew is an accomplished young banjo player in the old-time style, and Brooks is the old master who taught him his music. They came together at the Vandalia Gathering a few years ago, as it turns out, and began playing together after that. In time Andrew got around to asking how his teacher himself had learned, and about the bygone musicians whose echoes he was hearing in Brooks Smith's banjo.

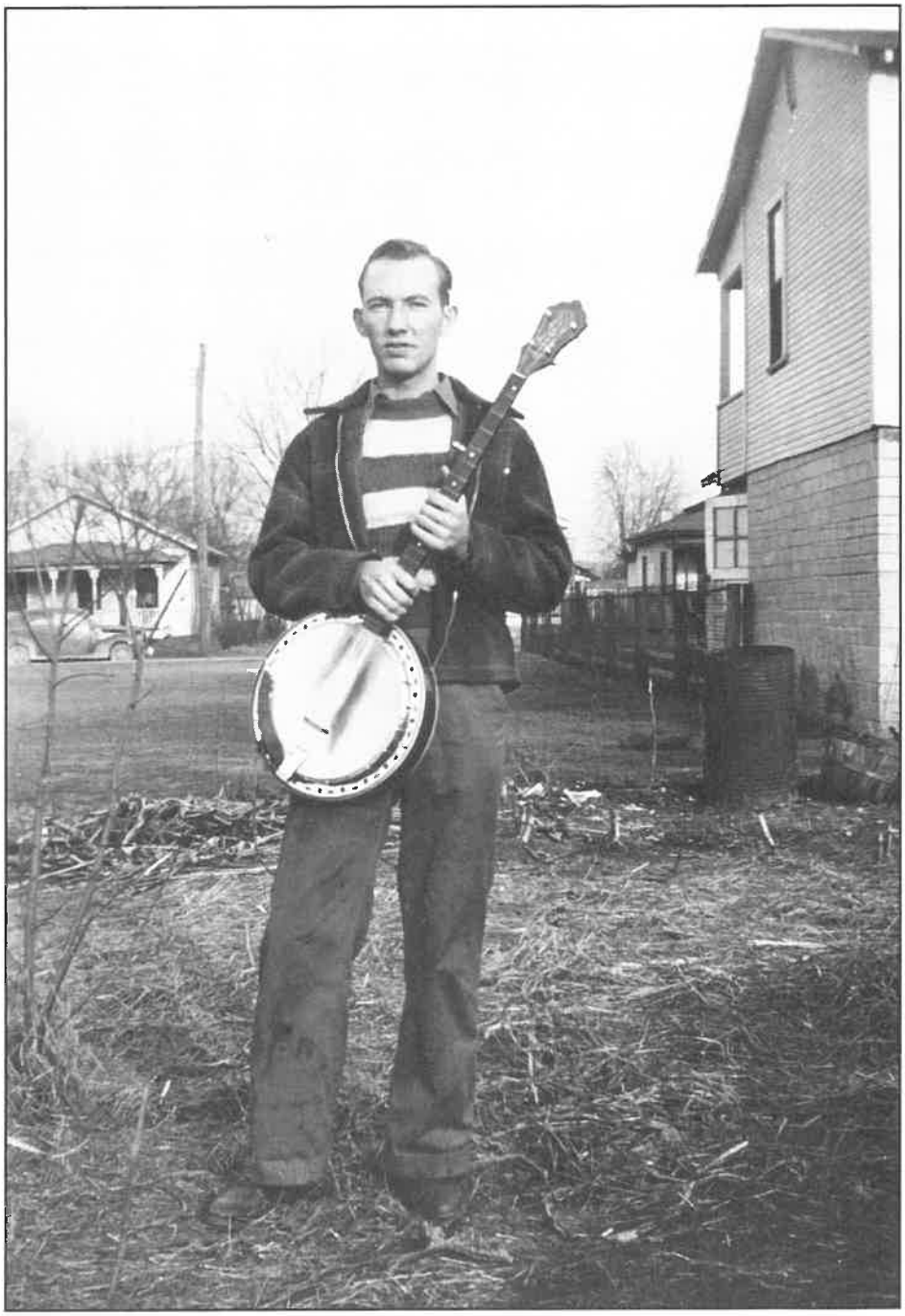
Andrew Dunlap. Tell me a little about yourself, where you grew up, where you were born and raised.

Brooks Smith. I grew up on the west side of Charleston, and I was born in Jackson County. About '33 we moved to the farm over at Goff Mountain between Cross Lanes and Institute. And there, one of the ladies, a distant relative I guess, had a four-string banjo she played like a five-string banjo.

I got excited about that. I never did really bug my parents, but I got to beating on my chest like that [plays "air banjo" on his chest]. My mother said, "If you'll quit doing that I'll get you a banjo." So that was how I got my first banjo! An open back. Got it from Uncle Jake's Loan on Summers Street, back of the old post office. I don't know what it cost, but it was good for the purpose.

AD. How old were you then?

BS. I was probably 12, I would imagine. About '36 or '37 I started taking lessons from a fellow in West Charleston. On Saturday morning [my parents] would take me to town and they would get the groceries for the farm, you know. In the wintertime we walked over the hill,



Brooks Smith was still playing the banjo his mother bought him when this photograph was made at Dunbar in 1942. Photographer unknown.

over Goff Mountain which was about a mile, mile and a half, up one side and down the other.

AD. Did you have a case for the banjo?

BS. No, I just carried it under my arm. I would take the bridge out because I was afraid I was going to burst the calf-skin head. So, I would go in town about half an hour to take a lesson.

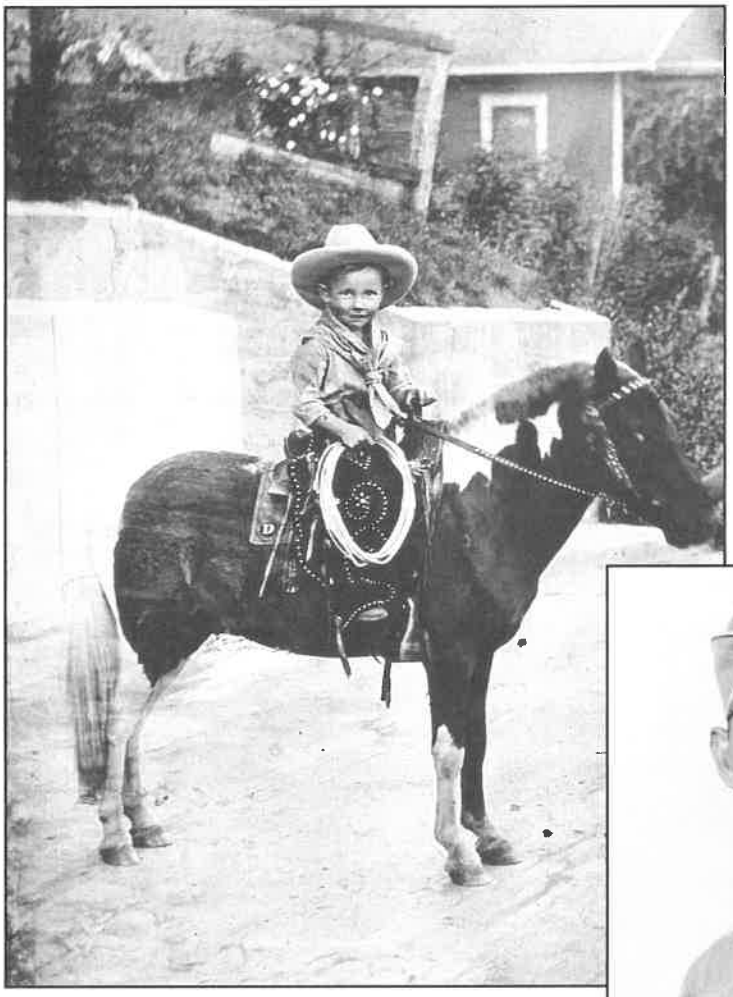
AD. How did those lessons work?

BS. He'd just show you where the chords were. Then after I got into notes he started putting notes down, but most of the time he had sheet music. That was back when sheet music was very popular. You'd get the country tunes and you'd get the popular tunes and you played like that. And I advanced to 7th-chords and minors and then got into augmented and diminished chords. That's when you got into the sheet music and playing, strumming. I took lessons, I don't know, maybe three years or something like that.

In high school in Dunbar, they would have something once a year they called Stunt Night. I was on that one time, and that was a highlight of high school.

AD. Of your career?

BS. Yeah! After I quit taking lessons I started playing with Dick Midkiff's son, Richie Midkiff. There was three of us, and sometimes we got a bass fiddle player, Jack Maddox, the brother-in-law of Richie Midkiff. Bill Bergdahl was the guitar player and singer, and he was the MC. We played the Owens-I Club [at] the glass plant in Kanawha City. Upstairs they had a recreation room with a pool table, and a ping-pong table, and a big floor — they'd run six [square dance] sets most of the time.



Brooks was born in Jackson County and later lived in Charleston and neighboring communities until his service during the war. The horseback — ah, ponyback — photo was made on Collis Street in Charleston, about 1926. He was photographed in uniform at Camp McCain, Mississippi, in 1943. Photographers unknown.

AD. So it was a social club?

BS. Yeah, it was for the people that worked there. They had one microphone, that's all they had. Back then you didn't think of everybody having a microphone. You just get up close and play as loud as you can. The fiddle player was the key, and he was right in front of that microphone.

We got to playing for different functions. Playing for the Grandparents' Club, at the Daniel Boone [Hotel]. They had A. W. Cox, O. J. Morrison, Okie Patteson, the governor. He had one leg, had an artificial leg. They were prominent people in Charleston, called it the Grandparents' Club. They would have a dinner and we would play during the dinner, play the old tunes. They didn't like anything too fast, but they liked the waltzes, and, you know, the popular music.

"I never did really bug my parents, but I got to playing air banjo on my chest. My mother said, 'If you'll quit doing that I'll get you a banjo.'"

The Ruffner Hotel on the Boulevard, it's not there any more, we played there several times. And we played a few nights a year at a club over on Virginia Street and Summers Street.

AD. How did you get these jobs?

BS. Richie was known and people would get in touch with him and say, "Hey, we need somebody." They were good, I wasn't. I was just rhythm, no lead parts, just a rhythm banjo. The banjo has beautiful chords on rhythm like that.

I went in the service in '43 and came back in '48 and picked it up again. But I lost all my notes. I had been picking out the popular tunes,

the old tunes, reading music, and I had forgotten all that. You don't need it for old-time music, but it would make it so much easier.

Before I went in the service, I played with Walter Melton for square dances. He was the old left-handed fiddler from Poca River.

AD. How did you meet up with him?

BS. Well, he lived in the neighborhood when we moved to Dunbar [and] we got together. He was retired at that time or out of work or whatever. He would come and say, "Let's go down and play with Old Man So-and-So," and we would go down and play maybe for two or three hours.

We played in a lot of homes [on] Poca River. People would have people they knew come in, and relatives would come, and they'd clear the furniture out of the room. The largest room, the living room or the dining room, whatever you want, and you would stand in the corner or the doorway and play. They would have one set [of dancers]. You could hardly keep time because people would stomp as loud as they could. This was quite an experience.

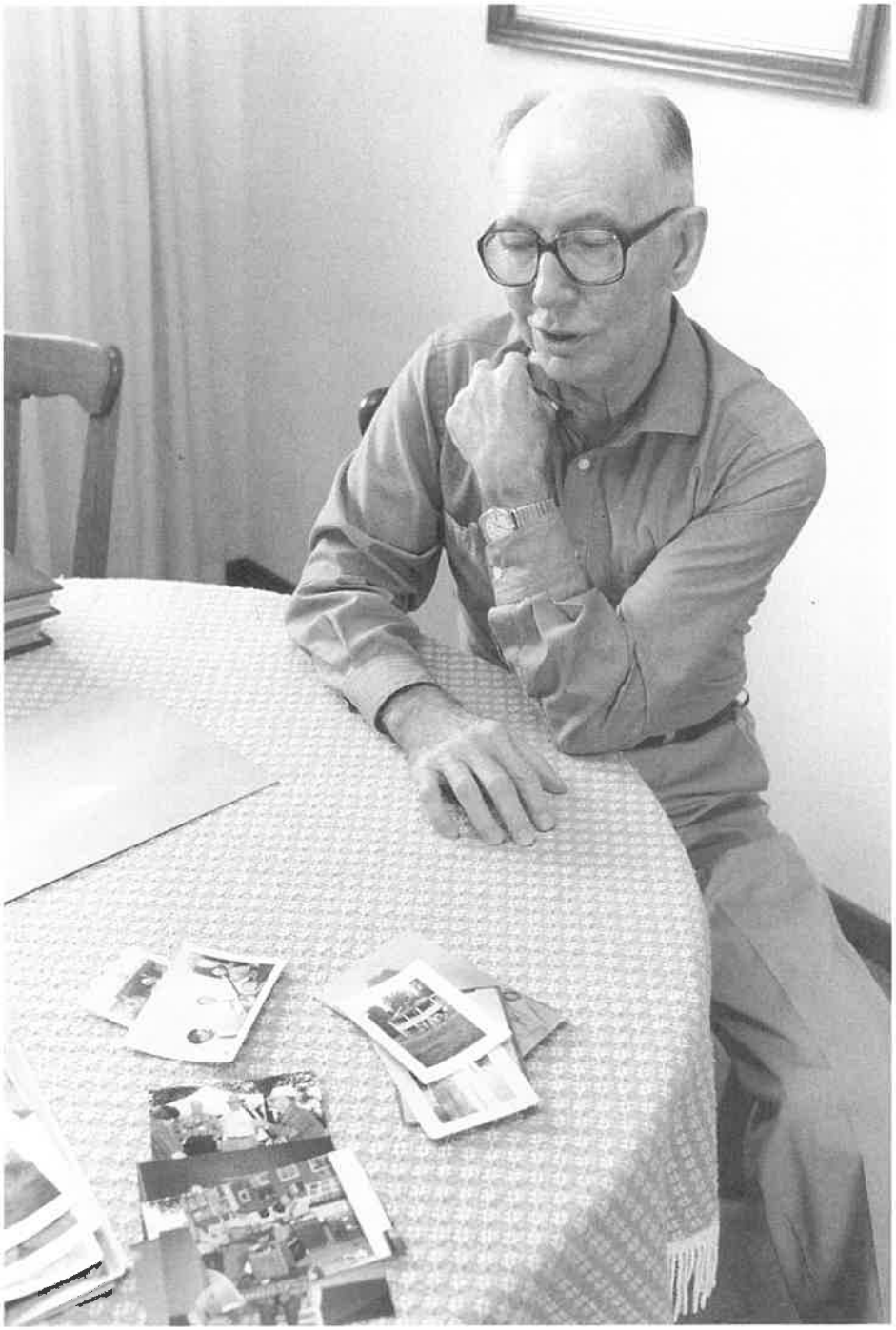
I always thought of a square dance as a real challenge, Andrew. Some of them, they had five and six sets of squares. You played till they got through dancing, you didn't stop until they left the floor. It was an enjoyable thing, because you saw people having fun. But like I say, it was a real challenge. I was the youngest one of the group, so I felt like I should hold in there as long as they did.

But we had trouble a lot with guitar players, usually guitar players were drunks.

AD. Rather than the banjo players!

BS. Well, not all of them. The one that played with Walter Melton was a nice guy. Everybody I played with was nice people — except once in a while you get a guitar player that would drink too much.

Then I played with Bill Roberts. He was a local boy here in Dunbar. He took lessons on the guitar from Mr. Midkiff. Once I came back from the service, he and I and George Phillips played, George played the guitar.



Mementoes of a musical lifetime cover the dining table at Brooks Smith's Dunbar home. Photo by Michael Keller.

I used to play with Earl Gibbs down in Point Pleasant. He owned a liquor store there, right beside the bridge that fell, the Silver Bridge. We played at the inn right at Institute there, where you go over Goff Mountain, White Inn. They had a square dance every Saturday night and Earl Gibbs got to playing there and they needed a banjo player. Never had any problem, but they sold beer there. We were too young, you know, to get out and drink beer like that, but we drank beer at home. We had it in the house, no problem. I didn't go wild when I went out, but it was an experience.

Earl was a different type of player. Every time you get with a different fiddle player you sort of adjust to their timing and notes. Then we

Brooks began playing over WKNA with the Happy Valley Ramblers after returning from the service. Brooks stands at right in this 1948 publicity photo. Photographer unknown.

went uptown one day at noon and played for Slim Clere's program on the radio.

AD. What station was that? WCHS out of Charleston?

BS. Yes. That was the first time I was on the radio. Slim Clere is around now [GOLDENSEAL, Spring 1982], he's still a good fiddle player. He had his own program at noon and he played a lot of good music.

And then I guess I got into playing on WKNA radio, with the Happy Valley Ramblers. On Saturday afternoon, we played on the stage at Dunbar, at City Hall. That was a hard place to play because the acoustics were terrible. We were just glad to get out of there. We played there, then we went up to the Lyric Theater on Virginia Street. They had a Jamboree there and we would go in there and sometimes it would be 12:00 when we'd get done.

AD. Was that broadcast?

BS. Yeah, it was broadcast over the air.

"We played music in a lot of homes on Poca River. They'd clear the furniture out of the room and you would stand in the corner or the doorway and play."

AD. Did you all ever have to do commercials?

BS. No. The master of ceremonies, he would do all of that. He would announce who was playing. Just had one microphone was all on the radio. When you took your break you just got up real close and held your banjo straight up, and when the fiddle player pulled out on the left side you got in on the right just as quick as you could without knocking the microphone over! That was an experience. Now everybody has their own microphone.

AD. You are all spread out.

BS. Yeah, might be three or four feet apart.

AD. It seems like it might have been better then, when you could hear what you were doing. Sometimes when you try to listen to a monitor it doesn't work too well.

BS. If you got good monitors you're great. Up at Glenville in the new auditorium it would be just like you're sitting in a room right

there beside me. That's nice to play in a place like that, where you can hear.

Then we got into playing with George Phillips, he started playing the fiddle. I moved to Dunbar from Goff Mountain. He was a guitar player and he started playing the fiddle like old Walter Melton, the old-time square dancing style. And we got to playing with Bill Miller, guitar player. We played for several dances. The American Legion in St. Albans, the American Legion in Charleston, and several festivities. Sometimes just go to somebody's house, just for enjoyment. That's when you really enjoy playing, I guess.

And then I got into playing with you. We started, what, one night a week, was it?

AD. Yeah, I think we started playing Thursday nights, or Tuesdays.

BS. What year was that?

AD. Three years ago, I think.

BS. That sounds about right.

AD. I met you up at Vandalia. Pete Kosky introduced us.

BS. Yeah. Were you at Joe Dobbs's Fret & Fiddle before that? I remember seeing you [at that store], but I didn't know you.

AD. Yeah, Dad and I went down there. We were just looking. I think we were going to get a book or a record. It was a Thursday, and they happened to have that Appalachian Fiddlers' meeting. They said we might as well stay around and hear some music. They have it after they close. So we ended up staying and we told them that I was looking for someone to help me out and get me started. I think it was Joe's son who said, "You ought to talk to Brooks Smith." He said, "He's helped several people out."

BS. Well, that's great. It's great to be referred. Well I've enjoyed it, Andrew.

AD. What were some of the first songs that you played?

BS. I guess, well, the first one I ever learned was picking with two fingers, "Old Man, Old Man, Can I Have Your Daughter?" It's so easy, there's not much to it. We did some of the old slow tunes first, and then we got into the drop thumb. The old left-handed fiddler Walter Melton, we would be playing for square dances and he would say, "Come over there!" And I didn't know what he was talking about. He wanted me to bring my thumb over!

AD. Well, what kinds of songs did you play at square dances? Did Walter Melton change songs in the middle without stopping, just to keep it interesting?

BS. No, he would usually go the same tune. "Poca River Blues" was one of his favorites, "Mississippi Sawyer." "Walking in Your Sleep" was another good one. "Dance All Night With A Bottle In Your Hand," maybe that was his favorite. Sometimes he would just stop playing completely and sing a verse and then pick it back up, and that's when he was going really good.

You know, my dad's family, they all sang. They sang as a quartet or whatever they could get when we came out there to his farm in Roane County. They had an old organ and they could play that by ear, and he played a harmonica.

Like our other traditions, mountain music is handed down from the older generations to the younger. Our author was taught by Brooks and plays with him here at a recent festival.

Old-Time on the Air

There's a group working out of Elkins to put more old-time music on the radio. Old-Time Music On The Radio (OTR) is a project of the Old-Time Music Group, Inc., a nonprofit organization. The group publishes a newsletter full of information on its work with radio stations — everything from surveys and public funding to music conferences and new releases.

A recent newsletter announces the second OTR conference, planned for June 4-6 in Mt. Airy, North Carolina. Radio programmers, musicians, record company representatives, folklorists, members of arts organizations, and listeners from across the U.S. and Canada gather for three days to participate in panel discussions, town hall meetings and technical workshops.

For 1996, the keynote speaker is Alan Jabbour, the director of the American Folklike Center at the Library of Congress. Jabbour is a noted folklorist and researcher, and an old-time fiddler himself. The conference also features music performances and a record- release party in honor of *Old-Time Music on The Air; Volume 2*, a compilation of traditional music from Rounder Records.

Registration for the June conference is $90 for the full event including meals Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. A special one-day registration is available for Thursday only for $50 and it includes a technical workshop. For more information contact OTR, P.O. Box 3014, Elkins, WV 26241.

Yes, Brooks is a picky player, and it shows in the ribbons on his wall. They are from Vandalia and other contests. Photo by Michael Keller.

I guess back in the *Grand Ole Opry*, that's back when he was there. We lived on the farm on Goff Mountain. We didn't have electric, and my dad got a battery-powered radio. Saturday night my mother and dad would have it on. They would go to bed and listen to that and I'd lie in my bedroom. I remember Lulubelle and Scotty. He played a banjo that was a different style from anybody and they sang. They played slow tunes, and he was just fantastic.

At the Middleburg Auditorium they used to have a fiddle contest, out where the post office is now, some place there on that block. And I went up there and watched Clark Kessinger, and Natchee the Indian. They had a good banjo player there.

AD. What year was this?

BS. It was probably '37 or '38.

And then Grandpa Jones came along, and he was one of my favorites also. But no one in the family or around where I lived, I didn't know anybody like that. It was unfortunate, it would have been nice if we would have had somebody to play the guitar. At school one of my friends played the harmonica and he would come home with me, we would play the banjo and the harmonica. And of course I played with my dad on the harmonica sometimes. Another friend I had played the guitar and he would come home with me and stay all night, we would play. He would bring his guitar. That was an experience. But I never could sing, unfortunately.

AD. How did you happen to start playing the festivals and contests?

BS. George was the first one to go to [the West Virginia State Folk Festival at] Glenville from around here

AD. What are some of your other early recollections?

BS. When we lived on the west side of Charleston, I might have been eight or nine, I don't know, these two young boys came to our house, younger than my older brother but older than I was, and they played "Arkansas Traveler" on mandolin and guitar. I can remember that just like it was yesterday. They would stop and one would say, "Hey, old man, how did your potatoes turn out?" And the other one would say, "Didn't turn out, had to dig 'em!" And then they would play another whole chorus or verse.

AD. Yeah, do that whole routine, "Where does this road go?" "It's never gone anywhere."

BS. That was really good.

AD. Who else did you hear growing up? Did anybody influence you? Did you just want to sound like somebody, or certain songs?

BS. We heard Uncle Dave Macon.

Do You Remember Louis Chappell?

In the 1930's and 40's folklorist Louis W. Chappell did extensive field recordings with West Virginia musicians. The Chappell Archive is now part of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at WVU. It includes some 2000 selections from nearly 90 performers.

The Augusta Heritage Center and WVU are working together to release some of Chappell's recordings on cassette. They are interested in hearing from anyone who remembers Chappell and his work.

Anyone able to help should contact Dave Shombert, 26 Pineview Drive, Elkins, WV 26241; (304) 636-8083.

that I know of. He came back and said, "If you had been there you would have won the contest!" Well, I didn't believe that.

That's when I got the Stellings banjo, '79. It was a fine banjo, a bluegrass banjo. I went to Glenville the next year, with George Phillips and John Preston. Got in the contest. Scared to death. I was the first one to play, and after it was over with, they said, "We want to hear [the first player], we haven't heard him." The judges were not in the audience the first time! So I got to play again.

AD. What did you play, do you remember what songs?

BS. "Soldier's Joy" was one, I think, "Ragtime Annie" was the other. The second time [announcer] Mack Samples said, "Now don't be nervous." He saw I was a little bit nervous. Of course that helped a little. So I got up and played. Maybe being the last one playing they had me in their memory, I don't know, but I won that one. And I won first place maybe six times up there, maybe five or six. Sometimes third place or second. I only missed placing last year, since '79, I guess.

Brooks Smith on his picking bench on the porch of his home. Photo by Michael Keller.

Then in the meantime Vandalia came along and I thought I might as well get into that. I played for several years and didn't place, this was [when they had just] one category for seniors and young people.

AD. All together?

BS. Yeah, and the young players are really hard to compete with. Then they changed to the senior's category, and the first year I won that. I think I won that three years, maybe, and I've placed every year. And then the year before last at [the Appalachian String Band Festival at] Clifftop, I got first place. I didn't place last year. But I [played] first last year, and they had about 150 after me. I didn't play good, or the judges weren't any good probably! Maybe they forgot about me. But you don't win them all.

"I always thought of a square dance as a real challenge. You played till they got through dancing, you didn't stop until they left the floor."

AD. Did you ever go out of the local area to any of those festivals?

BS. I went to Elkins once, that was really the only one out of the area. Stay in your own backyard, I guess.

AD. Yeah, I think one of the best things about Vandalia, is that you've got to be a resident of West Virginia to play in the contests. It keeps it kind of confined to the region.

BS. Well, yeah, that's good I think. You know, back in the '80's Glenville was flooded with people who were the hippie style. It changed things quite a bit. Of course, you learn from them too.

AD. There's a lot of variety.

BS. You know, Andrew, you can learn from anybody. I watch you and I do things differently because you do things different. You'll play different than I do. You don't play everything like I do, and that's good.

No Strangers to Trouble

The 1995 Vandalia Liars Contest Winners

Photographs by Michael Keller

The old champ was back at the 1995 Liars Contest, and back in fine fettle and with his little brother with him. Paul and Bil (that's right, one "l") Lepp swept the first and second place awards, as they did in 1991. Both boys had fishing on their minds, and — well, we'll let you have it in their own words. No way we could top either of them.

David Proudfoot of Fairmont took third prize, with some new ideas on chicken farming. We will invite him and the Lepps back to defend themselves this spring, and GOLDENSEAL readers are invited to come take a whack at them. The 1996 Liars Contest takes place at two o'clock on Vandalia Sunday, May 26, at the Cultural Center in Charleston. Contact Editor Ken Sullivan at (304)558-0220 to pre-register.

Paul Lepp. You might not know it to look at me, but I am no stranger to trouble.

My momma always said that trouble was like a box of chocolates with me — she never did know when I was going to get into it. It seems like every time I turn around, trouble is a-sneaking up behind me and biting me right square on the buttocks. It's worser than a treble hook on a toilet seat in a one-hole outhouse.

Take two weeks ago Tuesday, for example. I was at work, and my musical pal David Morris stopped by. He was booking his next world tour. It's got a Disney theme, I guess, 'cause it's a small, small world tour.

Well, Dave said he had to take a fox up to a man in Weirton. I asked him why he had to take a fox to a man in Weirton. And Dave said he didn't rightly know, only that the man up there needed some information about the tour. He had asked Dave to send him a fox.

Now see, actually, he wanted Dave to send it through a "fox machine." But Dave said he didn't have no fox machine and, even if he did, he didn't reckon he could get that fox to go into it. It was a pretty suspicious-type of fox.

"I had been needing to get up to Weirton for some time, to stop in at Weirton Steel where they custom-cast the 20-pound stainless-steel, slip-sliding sinkers I use on my nine-foot surfcasting rod."

I had been needing to get up to Weirton for some time, to stop in at Weirton Steel, where they custom-cast the 20-pound stainless-steel, slip-sliding sinkers I use on the monster stick. That's my nine-foot surfcasting rod. It's got a reel full of six miles of brand new 50-pound Stren carp cord. It's the castingest outfit I own, and a couple of split shots from K-Mart just won't do the trick.

I asked Dave if I could go along, and he said, "Sure." So I climbed into his big purple musician-type custom touring van and off we went.

It started out pretty good. I scored the sinkers and Dave — well, he gave the man so much information that we got to keep the fox after all. It was long after dark when we headed back, darker than the inside of a cow. We were southbound on I-79. There at Morgantown, where I-68 comes in from Maryland, we got behind this big truck. And that's when the fox started acting funny.

First he started sniffing the air and whimpering a little bit. The next thing you knew, he starts to yipping and barking and hopping around. We were about half afraid he had hydrophobia and that's why the man had given him back to us.

And then he done the strangest thing I've ever seen a fox do: All of a sudden, he went on point. Pointing right straight at that truck in front of us. I took a closer look and I noticed a sign that I hadn't seen before. A sign on the back of the truck that said, "Caution: Live Catfish."

Well! There wasn't a man or beast in that van that didn't have a hankering for some fresh catfish. Now, I will say in Dave's defense that he did allow as to how he didn't think it was a very good idea, as I unlocked the back door and climbed

the little ladder on the back of his van and strode on top with the monster stick in hand. But after I started plucking out four-foot catfish from that truck with all the regularity of a bran muffin with a prune juice chaser, and a-shoving them in the driver's window to him, well, Dave hushed up.

I think everything would have gone just fine if I had just cleaned out that first tank and left it go at that, but I decided I needed to take one cast into the second tank. And laying in that second tank, unbeknownst to me, in solitary confinement, sulking, was the biggest, baddest, meanest, one-eyed, tattoed, goateed, most unrehabitatible catfish in the whole catfish farm system.

That fish had nothing to lose and he didn't care who he took out with him.

No sooner did he hit my hook than I knew what the bard, Bill Shakespeare from Stratford over on Avon Creek, meant when he said that "Something in Denmark smells like a rub of Copenhaven." That fish started his run just as the truck topped a mountain there at Flatwoods and off we all went like legislators to a free lunch.

There was that truck a-flowing out big clouds of diesel smoke, splashing catfish water all over the interstate. And there I was perched atop the van with my feet stuck underneath the luggage rack, a-fighting that fish with one hand, wiping splattered bugs off my glasses with the other. Dave was in the van with both hands on the wheel, dodging deer and trying to keep at least one tire on the pavement while that fox pounced around on those other catfish like a chicken in a cricket barrel.

We was doing 170 miles an hour and figured we'd make Charleston in about 15 minutes. That fish was getting tired, from all that uphill swimming he was doing. And things was looking pretty good until we rounded the curve coming down off the mountain into Mink Shoals.

The truck was in the right-hand lane, and me and Dave were in the left. Up ahead of us was that long, straight stretch of empty highway — empty except for about half way down the road where, straddling the center line, going three miles an hour, being operated by two little old blue-haired people that could have been Methuselah's grandparents, was a motor home the size of Cleveland. And bearing a Buckeye license plate.

And just like Cleveland, it was sprawling, rusty, hard to go around and very dangerous to try and go through. So the truck veered right and me and Dave veered left, and six miles of brand-new 50-pound Stren carp cord caught the back of that motorhome and slingshoted it nonstop to Tallahassee.

Well, Dave, he done donuts down the median strip until he got us stopped. The truck careened on down the shoulder on the other side until he hit another truck that was parked down there. That caused him to spill the last of the 2,000 pounds of catfish right onto the interstate and shut it down for three hours. You might have seen that in the newspapers.

I believe it is fair to say that everybody involved with that whole mess was kind of upset. To start out with, that truck driver, once he found out what had happened, was just about as mad as any man that has just been slapped in the back of the head with about 400 wet catfish could be.

The state trooper and the DNR officer that arrived on the scene, they got into a fight over the jurisdiction. And the blue-haired people were mad because they had planned on driving the whole way to Florida at three miles a hour, and they didn't have no hotel reservations till October.

Well, Dave, now Dave was mad because they give him a ticket for DWI. That stands for "Driving With an Idiot." I thought that was pretty funny, too, until they handed me my very own citation. You see, I wasn't driving, so they just slapped me with a "BI." That stands for "Being an Idiot."

Personally, I don't think that part's funny at all. I'm going to take them to court and I plan on

Paul Lepp, West Virginia's most decorated liar, wore his smiley face badge, Arch Moore campaign button, plenty of badges from past Vandalias, and a rubber frog on his hat.

fighting them. That is, just as soon as I can find me a law firm that don't hang up the phone every time I call and ask to speak to their best idiot lawyer. Thank you.

Bil Lepp. I went to church and went to Sunday school as I was growing up and I got to where I knew the Bible pretty good. I knew all about how Noah led the Egyptians out of Israel, and how Moses built that big boat and got all those animals and a bunch of two-by-fours on it and went wherever he went.

I was getting to where I felt pretty good about the Bible, so I thought I'd go to divinity school. I've been down there in North Carolina since January at divinity school. And I tell you right now, them big-shot professors of religion, they're teaching me some pretty queer things.

For example, I always thought "BC" just meant "Before Caperton." And I thought "AD" meant "After Dinner," 'cause the preacher man's always talking about that last supper business.

One of the strangest things I found out was that King James didn't write the Bible, apparently. And it wasn't even originally written in English, it was written in some language called Hebrew. Now just between you and me, the first time I heard about Hebrew, I thought they were talking about some kind of real man's beer. You know, like "He Brew," for the beer-drinking he-man in your life.

But anyway, this here's a story about a fellow named Jonah. You-all have probably heard about Jonah. Actually, his real name is Joseph Nah, and over the years, people said it so fast, it got cut down to Jo-Nah. And the only reason that I even bring that up is 'cause this county and that river out front were named for Jonah's great-great-grandpappy, Ken-Nah.

This is a story about a man, a fish and a giant CS&X monster coal train, laded down with 168 cars of coal. It comes straight out of the Bible, honest.

You see, it was just about last April and Jonah was way up Nah Holler, sitting on his front porch. He was sitting in his wicker rocker. He had his icebox on one side and his wash machine on the other there.

Coincidentally enough, he was sipping on a He Brew. And with his other hand, he was patting his ever-so-gentile hound dog. He had the window open and he was listening to the sweet, melodious sounds of the *Andy Griffith Show* drifting through the screen.

He was looking over his property. He smiled at the rusted-out bed of a pickup truck that he had turned into a trailer. He had the words "Farm Use" painted on it in big letters. His heart was warmed at the sight of the pile of tires he had collected on the other side of the driveway, and his eyes glittered as they wandered over the wall of his barn. He had one hubcap from every GM car ever made nailed to that barn.

Jonah was sitting there. He was sitting there thinking to himself, "Almost Heaven, West Virginia," when suddenly, the word of the Lord came to Jonah.

And the Lord said, "Get up, boy. Get yourself on over to that great city of Big Otter, 'cause a great wickedness is come up there and them folks need some good old revivaling."

Bil Lepp had trains on his mind again this time, and more than a few other things. He played second fiddle to brother Paul.

Now Jonah had done some preaching in the past, but he had been doing some backsliding lately, if you know what I mean — and I imagine some of you folks know what I mean. So he didn't really want to go over to Big Otter. He pulled on his boots and he shot out towards Cowen. Now, you-all know that Big Otter and Cowen are in different directions. And what Jonah figured he'd do is go to Cowen and then get a coal train up to Grafton.

He crawled down and he waited in the weeds there for a train to come by. Of course, it's illegal to jump coal trains. So Jonah looked over one shoulder and then he looked over the other as a CS&X monster train started heading out. Nobody was looking, so he ran up, grabbed the ladder and pulled himself on that train.

He sat back and was getting ready to enjoy the ride on Weirton's world-famous steel fashioned into CS&X's railroad tracks running clear from Cowen to Grafton, via Burnsville, Buckhannon, Carrollton and Philippi.

Jonah was tired from running from the Lord, 'cause it's the sort of thing that will tire a man out, and pretty soon he fell asleep. But before that train got far, a great storm arose. The heavens just opened up. Rain was coming down in sheets and torrents. Mud was coming off

the hills, thunder was booming, lightning was flashing, trees were bursting into flames, and the waters of the rivers started rising up. The railroad track there runs right alongside the river and as the water started to rise, pretty soon, it was licking up over the railroad tracks. And after just a couple of minutes, the water of the Buckhannon River was two or three feet above the tracks and that train was plowing through.

Now the captain of that train, he'd been driving trains for about 20 years. But he and the brakeman and the crew were pretty scared, 'cause they knew that train wasn't about to float. So they got down on their knees and started praying to their various gods. But alas, Richard Petty and Charlie Daniels don't have much to do with the weather.

The engineer climbed out of the window and started walking back along the coal cars. And before too long he found Jonah, nestled up, sound asleep, like a pocket of methane in the coal.

He reached down and he picked Jonah up and shook him awake and he said, "Boy, first of all, you're trespassing. And second of all, we're in a terrible fix here. This train's going to be sinking before long and I'm worried sick. Is there anything that you can do about it?"

And Jonah said, "Well, Mr. Engineer, I've got some good news and I've got some bad news. The bad news is that this whole mess is my fault, see, 'cause the Lord told me to go to Big Otter, but I decided I wanted to go to Grafton instead. But the good news is, all you got to do to stop this storm is let me off this train."

Now when Jonah said that, the emotion caught up to him and he just broke out in tears, and fell down on his knees and starting weeping. The engineer of that train, he was a warm, kindhearted man. You know, it's the '90's, after all, and men are much more in touch with their sensitive side, they say. The engineer reached down and he picked Jonah up and he held him in his arms — and promptly threw him off the very next bridge they came to.

Sure enough, the storm stopped and the water started going down. But Jonah plopped down into the waters of the Buckhannon River, and you-all know about the Buckhannon River. Below the spillway, the Buckhannon River, well, it's a shallow, nasty, murky, littered sewage-fed river. But above the spillway, it's a *deep*, nasty, murky, littered sewage-fed river. Full of some of the ugliest wildlife you ever saw in your life.

It was into these waters that Jonah splashed. And quicker than you can say, "Live Bait To Go," he was swallowed up. Jonah was swallowed up by the biggest, ugliest, meanest, litter-eating, sewage-drinking river carp you ever wanted to see.

"Jonah had done some preaching in the past, but he had been backslidng lately, if you know what I mean — and I imagine some of you folks know what I mean."

And there was Jonah in the belly of a river carp.

Now, folks, I imagine being in the belly of a river carp is something like being locked in the bathroom of a cross-country Greyhound bus. Locked in the bathroom of a cross-country Greyhound bus, with two drunk-sick pigs — two drunk-sick pigs and Ted Kennedy.

And Jonah was in the belly of that fish for three days before he started praying. Folks, I've been on dates for three or four minutes and I started praying, but it was after three days that he finally got around to praying. He said, "Lord, I admit it, I ain't too smart. I ain't the brightest guy you ever put on the earth. I admit I thought "Hooked on Phonics" was a fishing lure."

He said, "Blame me Lord, I voted for Clinton."

"But," he said, "I realize that you're mad at me, and I get the point with the storm and all, and being swallowed up by the fish. I can guarantee you right now, Lord, that if you get me out of the belly of this fish, anything you say, I'll do. I swear."

Well the Lord, he heard Jonah's prayer and he spoke to the fish. That fish swam up close to the shore and spit Jonah out like so much chewed-up Beechnut. Jonah hit the shore kind of hard and he rolled, but more than anything his pride was hurt. He knew what he had to do, though. He knew he had to get up and head out to Big Otter. He headed straight there and he stopped only long enough to shower, play the lottery — and try and satiate his strange but undeniable craving for sushi. Thank you.

David Proudfoot. I moved here to West Virginia from some state up north that will remain nameless. I decided to move back to the country, build myself a home, eat a lot of peaches — you know. I moved here with my wife, Bonnie, and my daughter, Destiny, and searched around the countryside until we finally found a "head of the hollow" farm up in Wetzel County. A beautiful place, you had to drive through a creek and up a hill until

Our Judges. Judging a liars contest may be a questionable honor, but we have always found good people to do it. Tom Drummond of Huntington (below), himself the champion liar in 1985, joined Bonnie Collins of Doddridge County and Marc Harshman of Moundsville as the 1995 judges.

you got up to the ridge tops. We had to drive through somebody's yard, by the way, named Bartsel Bowyard, a real nice farm boy.

We came in, and I introduced myself, said I was a teacher. He said, "Well, you ain't going to teach me nothing." I'm afraid I probably didn't. And I think he probably didn't want us to move back into his private hunting preserve, because the first thing he told Destiny and Bonnie was that it was full of snakes up there — and to be especially aware of the hoop snake.

Now you may not have heard of the hoop snake. I don't think they're in West Virginia any more. It looks like a black snake. It's black on the top, has a white belly, and it has this funny trait and that's where its got its name from. It grabs its tail in its mouth and it rolls down the hill. Now, on the end of its tail is a poisonous stinger, and it's a very poisonous snake.

So he told us about this, but we moved up. We took our pickup truck, drove it up the hill, and started unloading it. We had camping gear, hoes, shovels, saws and all manner of things, and of course, our beautiful little dollhouse that I had made for my daughter.

This is a baby blue, Victorian mansion dollhouse, with furniture and all kinds of things. And that's the first thing she started crying about, "I've got to have my dollhouse." So I unpacked the whole truck and I pulled out the dollhouse and started carrying it up to where we were going to set up our tent.

As we were walking up the hill, I hear this swishing sound. That's the sound that you hear from a hoop snake, swishing in the grass. I looked up ahead and here's this big black snake rolling down the hill towards us. Faster than a teenager on roller blades, coming down the hill, it cuts near us and it whips out its stinger and poisons that dollhouse.

I set the dollhouse down and run back down to my wife and tell her, "Oh, he's right, there are hoop snakes up here. You've got to watch out." And we grab up our sleeping bags and our tent and we start walking on up the hill. When we get up there we see this dollhouse is starting to swell from that poison. It's getting bigger and bigger until it's a huge Victorian mansion on the hill.

David Proudfoot of Fairmont was a winner for the first time last year. His chicken-and-snake story took third place.

We said, "Oh, let's move in!" So we did.

Well, ah, you should have seen Bartsel Bowyard's eyes when he came up and visited us. He said, "How'd you do that?" I said, "I don't know if I can teach you that." He looked around and he said, "Well, you've got a nice place here," and went away.

We had to start our farming business and I decided on chickens. I thought they were just beautiful, the most beautiful animal. And you know, they go around the yard, pecking and a-clucking.

But they didn't tell me about a few things when I got started, like those green do-do's on your front porch steps. And there is something even worse that I don't like about chickens. When we started raising chickens, they were all nice cute yellow things but they got bigger and bigger and redder and redder and louder and louder, and being from the city, I wasn't used to getting up at the crack of dawn.

This one red rooster, he was pretty brainless. I called him "A. J. Manchin" because he was always crowing about something. He got so loud and boisterous in the morning, I just hated him. I wanted to get rid of him.

So one day I said to my wife, "We ought to just cut off his head and have him for Sunday dinner." I went out and caught him and put him under my arm, and carried him out to the backyard. We had this ditch running down through the backyard with a two-by-four laying across. I walked across that and put the chicken down and lopped off his head.

I let go of him. He jumps up, and starts running around the yard. And he runs across that two-by-four, turns around, runs back across that two-by-four. I realized this chicken didn't *need* a head. So we started feeding him with a funnel, we'd take some corn and pour a little bit of corn down the funnel, a little bit of grit. I didn't have to wake up so early in the morning, but I still had all these hens running around the yard, cackling, making all kinds of noise.

I said, "What the heck, let's just lop all their heads off." So I did.

And that farm, it had kind of a whistling sound, but mostly it was a pretty quiet place. I could sleep till nine, which was exactly the way I liked it. But sleeping till nine doesn't make a successful farmer. And one morning a thunderstorm came rolling in and the rain came pouring down and drowned all my chickens.

I decided that I had to get out of the farming business, and I invited Bartsel up and sold him the place. He took the whole place, lock, stock and chicken coop. I've never been back, because right after he bought the place, I hear he painted the house red and the turpentine in it drawed the poison right out of that house.

Now he has the prettiest little farm in Wetzel County.

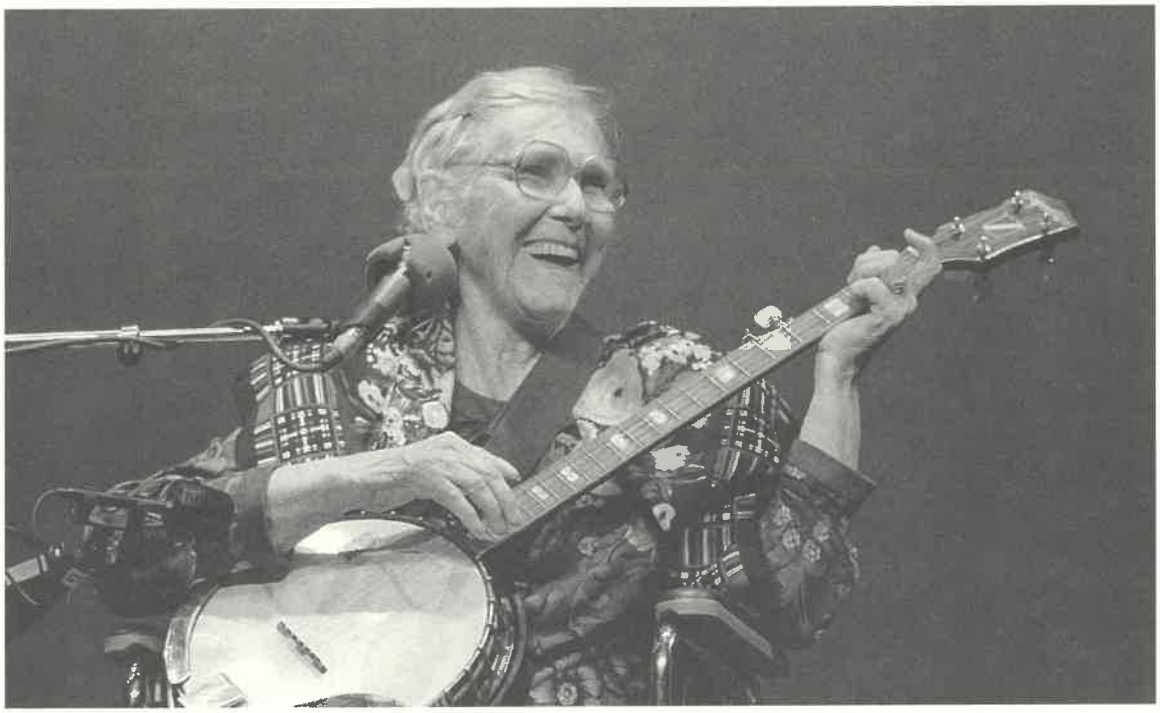
Vandalia 1996 — the 20th Year!

Vandalia Gathering rolls around every spring, but the big 20th anniversary festival will come only once. Plan to be there. It happens Memorial Day Weekend, May 24-26, at the Capitol Complex in Charleston, with a busy schedule running from Friday evening through late Sunday afternoon.

The Vandalia Gathering began in 1977, one of the first major events at West Virginia's grand new Cultural Center. The festival has continued every year since then, sprawling over the adjacent grounds until it now occupies much of the Capitol Complex. The idea — to celebrate the best of West Virginia's rich traditional heritage of music, crafts, food, folklore and dance — has remained unchanged through the years.

The 20th Vandalia will bring back many of the performers who have appeared in the past and add new events to celebrate the festival's growing legacy. Among the special plans is a two-year video project, initially resulting in a video portrait of the 20th Anniversary Vandalia followed by a retrospective of the festival's entire 20 years. The second tape is expected to be ready for sale in 1997. The classic *Music Never Dies* double record album, featuring performances from Vandalia's first decade, will be reissued as a compact disk.

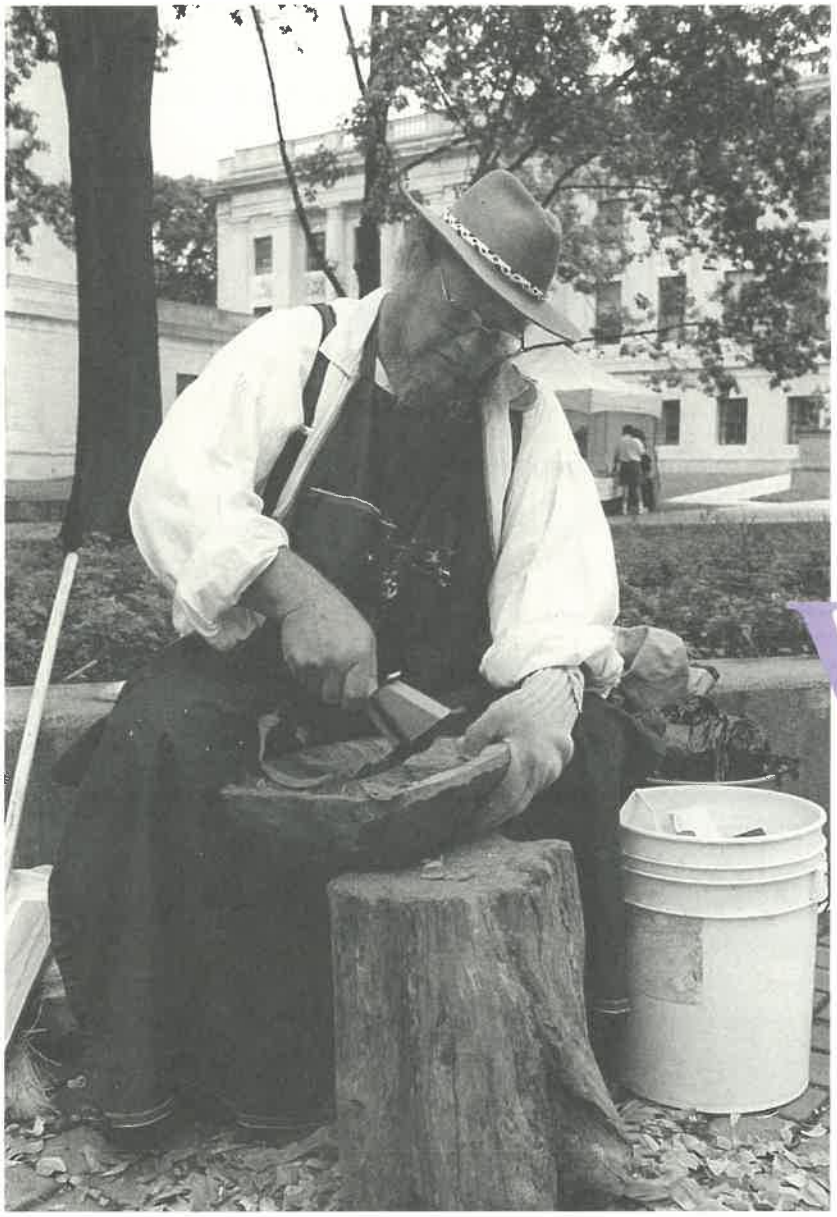
As always, Vandalia 20 will kick off with a big Friday evening concert, this year emphasizing Vandalia heritage. Events get under way again Saturday, with the popular fiddle contest, concerts and storytelling, a dulcimer contest, heritage dance, open-stage clogging, and other events. Saturday winds down with the usual evening concert and — new for 1996 — a big square dance under the stars.



Phoebe Parsons of Calhoun County is always a star at Vandalia. These days the old-time banjo player goes onstage in a wheelchair, but often leaves dancing. Photo by Michael Keller.

Events resume at midday Sunday, with the banjo contest, more music and dance, and the West Virginia State Liars Contest at 2:00 in the Cultural Center theater. Ethnic and regional foods will be offered for sale both days, as will crafts and West Virginia publications. Vandalia 20 closes down with the big awards concert in the late afternoon and early evening.

Drop by the GOLDENSEAL booth Saturday and Sunday, to meet the folks who make your magazine. Vandalia is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. *The pictures which follow, from Vandalia 1995, are by photographer Michael Keller.*



Vandalia

Above: Phil Payne of Barns Run Wildwood scoops out a wooden bowl.

Top Right: Randolph County fiddler Woody Simmons visits with a young admirer.

Center: Guitarist Nat Reese of Princeton took the coveted Vandalia Award in 1995. Culture and History Commissioner Bill Drennen congratulates him here.

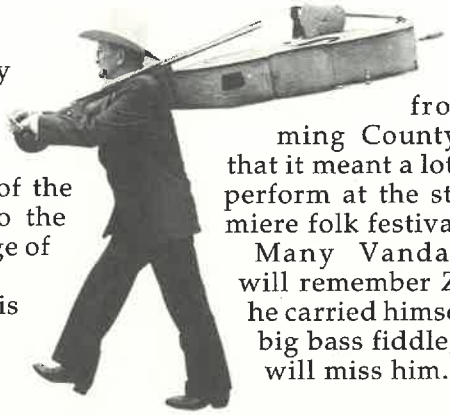
Far Right: Beth Molaro, Greenbrier Valley dance caller, takes to the floor outside the capitol.

Right: And finally there's the food. Colleen Seager of Charleston chows down.

Remembering Zeke

The image of Zeke Brumfield, captured by photographer Mike Keller striding through the capitol complex in 1992, is one of our favorite pictures from Vandalia Gathering. It says a lot about the spirit of the event, the way West Virginians come to the capitol grounds once a year and take charge of the place for their own enjoyment.

Zeke Brumfield died last year, and his daughter Tishie wrote to the Cultural Center to tell us about her father. "He loved people and people loved him," she wrote from Wyoming County, adding that it meant a lot to him to perform at the state's premiere folk festival.



Many Vandalia-goers will remember Zeke, how he carried himself and his big bass fiddle, and they will miss him.

Vandalia at 20: What's in the Name?

Vandalia visitors often ask about the name. Answering the question requires a trip back to the earliest roots of West Virginia — to the time of British King George and his German queen; Ben Franklin and his compatriots; of land deals and western settlement; and of the awakening desire for a free government in the mountains.

Vandalia was a proposed British-American colony west of the Eastern Seaboard, one of several land settlement projects from the late Colonial period. These schemes arose out of the general ferment of the years between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, as settlers moved beyond easy reach of eastern governments. The dream of separate western governments was realized in different form after the Revolution, with the creation of the states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. What is now West Virginia, through its long history of dissatisfaction with the government in Richmond, can trace its origins back to these pre-Revolutionary desires for western independence.

The Vandalia Colony originated in the land speculation of influential Englishmen and prominent Colonial Americans, some of whom became America's Founding Fathers. In 1768 Benjamin Franklin was one of the organizers of the Great Ohio Company, which sought to acquire Ohio Valley lands for settlement. Franklin's group proposed the creation of Vandalia as a 14th colony, with its capital at Point Pleasant. The new colony would have included almost all of present West Virginia, except for the Eastern Panhandle, and much of Kentucky. In 1773 George Washington cited the possible establishment of Vandalia in advertising his Kanawha River lands for sale.

The proposed Vandalia colony was named as a political gesture to Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, who claimed descent from the Vandal Tribe through her birth to German nobility. The Vandalia backers brought their plans almost to success in the early 1770's, when deterioration of the American political situation made the British government back off. When *those* problems were resolved by the Revolutionary War, King George was in no position to authorize governments of any sort in the American West.

Thus the word Vandalia is rich in West Virginia heritage. It occurs as a place name in several parts of our state, and it makes a fitting name for the statewide folk festival dedicated to keeping the old ways alive.

— Ken Sullivan

Knights and Ladies of the Golden Horseshoe, 1949. Author David Halsey (at right in the enlargement) and buddy Bill Sizemore (left) traveled from Wyoming County to the State Capitol for the event. Photo by DeLuxe Studio.

Knighted A Long Time Ago

Memories of the Golden Horseshoe

By David H. Halsey

The announcement in the Fall 1995 issue of GOLDENSEAL of the upcoming Golden Horseshoe reunion triggered a memory of a time long ago, when I made the trip to Charleston for my own Golden Horseshoe ceremony. For me it was an incredible journey, although lasting only a day. As a soon-to-be graduate of Maben Grade School, I was already excited with the anticipation of high school in the fall. But these feelings were mild compared to what I was to experience traveling to Charleston that day in 1949.

The Golden Horseshoe program, still participated in by hundreds of West Virginia students each year, was already a venerable tradition in my time. The printed brochure for last year's ceremony says that the idea goes back as far as 1929, originating with Phil Conley, editor of the old *West Virginia Review*. Conley promoted "West Virginia Clubs" through his magazine and proposed that the State Department of Education begin competitive testing of eighth grade students

as a way to stimulate interest in learning about West Virginia. The superintendent of schools agreed, and the clubwork and statewide testing soon began.

In my day the West Virginia Clubs, covering four years beginning with the fifth grade, required students to study the history, geography, and economic development of the state. Eighth graders were tested on this knowledge, as they still are, and the four winners from each county, two boys and two girls, were rewarded with a trip to the state capital to be dubbed Knights and Ladies of the Golden Horseshoe. The ceremony was usually attended by the governor and other high state officials.

The name of the award goes far back in our history, to 1716 when Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood led an expedition from Williamsburg, then the capital, to the top of the mountains separating Virginia from what is now West Virginia. There the governor gave each member of his party a tiny golden horseshoe in commemoration of the adventurous journey.

Lunch was unforgettable since it was my first time eating spaghetti and the very first time that I had ever sat at the same table with a black person.

My own Golden Horseshoe adventure began very early on a Saturday morning in May when my father drove Bill Sizemore, a neighbor, pal and classmate, and me from Pierpoint across the five miles of narrow, curvy, mountainous State Route 16 to Mullens High School. There we waited for Mrs. Mae Belcher, the assistant superintendent of schools for Wyoming County, to take us to Charleston. Not only was Mrs. Belcher a VIP in my life of barely 14 years, but she lived in a "prefab" house in Saulsville that had been delivered in sections via railroad from some distant place, an unimaginable event to reckon with at that stage of my life.

I remember, while we were waiting on Moran Avenue in front of the high school, a paperboy ambled by and stopped to chat for awhile. He wondered why we were about so early in the morning, especially since he had never seen us before. Frank Penn, the paperboy, turned out to be a pleasant and personable guy, and our short visit left a favorable impression on me. Frank and I soon became classmates in Mullens and remained friends throughout high school.

What happened during our three-hour drive to Charleston left no lasting memories, and my next recollection is of arriving at the capitol building and joining a huge crowd of people. The students from all the counties, plus their chaperons and others, made a big group, all of them probably as excited as I.

Lunch was served at Charleston's Fruth School, as I recall. I remember seeing that name etched in an ornamental concrete block located above the door that we entered. The meal was an unforgettable experience, since it was my first time eating spaghetti and the very first time that I had ever sat at the same table with a black person. I don't recall his name, but he sat directly across from me at the lunch table. I remember him being from Cass, Pocahontas County. I knew that Cass was a few miles from Denmar, on the Greenbrier River, where my Uncle Dewey Cook had just moved to a small farm. My family would soon visit there for the first time.

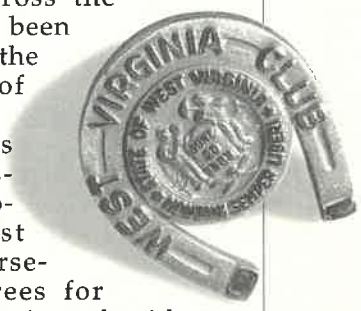
You must realize that at this point in my life my world consisted of about 120 people from a small town, very patriotic people who had recently sent 34 of their boys off to World War II but also very homogeneous. Which is to say that all of us were pretty much alike. The townspeople were all white, and most thought that FDR sat at the right hand of God and John L. Lewis was at the left hand. Up until that time I had had little experience with Republicans, and people of the Jewish and Catholic faiths, or blacks. My trip to Charleston came right at the time when my world was beginning to expand.

Sometime during the day the Golden Horseshoe group was bussed to Kanawha Airport as part of a capital city tour. I vividly remember three P-51's flying in a tier formation, circling the airport, an awesome sight to a country boy who had never before seen those magnificent machines cutting through the air with such grace. After that I knew deep down that someday I would fly an airplane, and so I did in the early 1960's as a young lieutenant. I flew with Major Bortel in the West Virginia National Guard, in fact, and he told me that he had flown in one of those P-51's on the day of my Charleston visit, himself a lieutenant at the time.

All of this was preliminary to the big day's main event, and finally that came, too. It was time for us to meet the state superintendent of schools for the knighting ceremony. The culmination of an adventure which for me had started almost 12

Golden Horseshoe Reunion Update

Though the Golden Horseshoe Award ceremony is a one-day experience, it's something one never forgets. Work continues on a 1996 reunion of past winners, dating back to 1931. The Golden Horseshoe Reunion is planned in conjunction with West Virginia Day, according to organizers for the event. More than 2,000 people from all across the country had been in touch by the beginning of this year.



Last year's winners assisted in locating past Golden Horseshoe honorees for the reunion. Armed with lists by county, the students went back to their homes, placed notices in newspapers, and talked to teachers and other community members to help get the word out.

For an invitation to the reunion, past winners should contact West Virginia Homecoming at 1-800-CALL WVA. Invitations for the June event will be mailed in March.

hours earlier began as someone read the names of the four winners from Barbour, the first county in alphabetical order. The students walked to the front of the auditorium and knelt with bowed head. This individual ceremony was repeated for each of the 55 counties.

Think where Wyoming falls alphabetically, and you will know that my wait was agonizingly long. At last, the 55th county was called. After our names were read, Bill and I, with another winner whose name I don't recall, moved to the front of the auditorium and knelt before W. W. Trent, the state superintendent of schools. He placed the sword upon our right shoulders and across our backs and spoke the words, "I knight you in the Order of the Golden Horseshoe." We were told to rise and the bright little horseshoes were pinned to our shirts.

Governor Spotswood's original horseshoes carried a Latin motto translating as "Thus he swears to cross the mountains." The Golden Horseshoe competition instilled some of that mountain-climbing, venturesome mood in the winners of my day, and I imagine it still does. My world had already grown since the time four years before when we, as fifth graders, had received the small green West Virginia Club books, and it was soon to expand much further. In the ensuing decades my life's adventure has carried me beyond the hills of home and outside the boundaries of our state. But I have kept my horseshoe through it all as well as the knowledge of our proud West Virginia heritage.

Test Yourself

The annual Golden Horseshoe test consists of more than 100 questions. The actual test is kept confidential, but the West Virginia Department of Education provided us the following sample questions. These questions are typical of recent tests, if you care to match wits with West Virginia's smartest eighth graders.

You will find the answers at the bottom of the page.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Governor Spotwood's expedition was mainly concerned with which of the following?

A. Establishing settlements in western Virginia.
B. Making war against the French.
C. Locating a route for a canal through the mountains.
D. Exploring the western part of Virginia for the English.
E. None of the above.

2. What was the historical significance of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry?

A. His raid freed all the slaves in western Virginia.
B. His raid caused Congress to pass civil rights laws to protect the slaves.
C. His act was one of the major events which led to the Civil War.
D. The act revealed the widespread support which John Brown and his followers had.
E. The act caused wealthy people to contribute great sums of money to the slaves.

3. West Virginia's economy is undergoing rapid changes. If you were to look for a job today in West Virginia, you would find the most employment in:

A. Coal.
B. Lumber.
C. Steel.
D. Oil and gas.
E. Services.

4. Pearl S. Buck is known worldwide for her contribution:

A. To the study of religion and Asian cultures.
B. To the study of peace and poverty.
C. To the field of acting and filmmaking.
D. To literature.
E. To the study of population control and its effect on the environment.

5. Which combination of activities is depicted on the West Virginia State Seal?

A. Fishing, farming and trading.
B. Farming, mining and hunting.
C. Mining, trading and trapping.
D. Farming, mining and trapping.
E. Mining, lumbering and fishing.

6. What are the results when the voters of a county approve a bond issue?

A. They authorize the county court or the board of education to borrow money for some public improvements.
B. They require county funds to be deposited in local hands.
C. They require each county office holder who handles county funds to be bonded by a bonding company.
D. They obligate the sheriff to purchase U.S. Government Bonds with county funds.
E. They require all county employees to receive raises.

7. Which of the following determines the constitutionality of West Virginia laws?

A. The West Virginia Legislature.
B. The State Supreme Court.
C. The Attorney General.
D. The voters.
E. The U.S. Congress.

8. What is the method of choosing county school board members in West Virginia?

A. They are appointed by the county superintendent of schools.
B. They are appointed by the State Board of Education.
C. They are selected by the previous school board.
D. They are elected by the people of the county.
E. None of these.

9. During the Civil War, the United States Congress authorized the formation of land grant colleges and universities within the boundaries of the State. Which of the following colleges and universities is a land grant college for West Virginia?

A. Bethany College.
B. Marshall University.
C. West Virginia Wesleyan College.
D. West Virginia University.
E. West Virginia Institute of Technology.

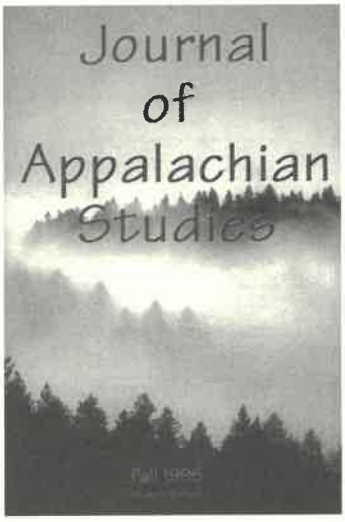
Essay Question:

10. Pretend you have just been elected governor of West Virginia. As you prepare for your administration, what would you see as the major challenges facing our state in the next four years and what would be your best ideas in addressing these challenges?

Answers: 1—D, 2—C, 3—E, 4—D, 5—B, 6—A, 7—B, 8—D, 9—D. As for No. 10, you are on your own. We hope at least one West Virginian can figure this out every four years!

New Regional Journal

The first issue of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* was published in November. The new journal, published in Morgantown, is edited by West Virginia University historian Ronald L. Lewis.



The *Journal of Appalachian Studies* is the official publication of the Appalachian Studies Association, whose membership includes hundreds of scholars, writers and activists from throughout the mountain region. The first issue features articles from several Appalachian states, including one by GOLDENSEAL freelancer Ted Olson. GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan is on the new publication's Board of Editors, a 15-member group which helps to select material for the journal.

The first issue of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* is a 136-page paperback in the unillustrated format common to scholarly journals. The association plans to publish two issues of the journal a year in the beginning, and hopes to add more issues in the future. You may subscribe by sending $30 to *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, P.O. Box 6825, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506. The fee includes a one-year membership in the Appalachian Studies Association.

Goodbye, Mr. Shaw

Just before 1995 came to a close, West Virginia lost one of its most memorable figures. Sam Shaw, third-generation editor and publisher of the *Moundsville Daily Echo*, died on December 23. He was 82 years old.

MICHAEL KELLER

Shaw was an athletic man and a competitive long-distance runner until well into his old age. He is remembered in Moundsville for collecting the day's news by bicycle, something he did up until 1993 when a broken hip took him off his wheels. He worked as a journalist for 68 years, and took over the family newspaper in 1951. His grandfather founded the *Moundsville Daily Echo* in 1891. Shaw's sister, Alexandra, worked side-by-side with him as assistant publisher, writer and photographer in past years. She died in 1991.

Sam Shaw was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story in Winter 1988. At that time he expressed the pride and satisfaction he felt because the *Daily Echo* had remained an independent operation at a time when newspaper chains were taking over small papers as well as big ones. This he said he managed "just by staying alive."

Shaw's spirit and dedication will be missed by his colleagues, his hometown, his family and his faithful readers. Charlie and Marian Walton, Sam Shaw's longtime associates, said the *Daily Echo* will continue publishing.

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.)

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_____Winter 1984/Webster County's Mollohan Mill
_____Fall 1985/Dulcimer Maker Ray Epler
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_____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!
_____Summer 1993/Fairmont Romance
_____Fall 1993/Bower Homestead, Twin Falls
_____Winter 1993/Monongah Mine Disaster
_____Spring 1994/Sculptor Connard Wolfe
_____Fall 1994/Boone County Coal Camp
_____Winter 1994/20th Anniversary
_____Spring 1995/Vandalia Time!

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Our Writers and Photographers

FRED BARKEY, professor of labor relations and the humanities at West Virginia Graduate College, is a native of Pittsburgh with a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. He has written for numerous periodicals, journals, and scholarly publications. West Virginia labor history is his field and social democracy for workers his specialty. Fred contributed to GOLDENSEAL during its first year of publication with an article on glass makers.

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

ANDREW DUNLAP grew up in St. Albans and started playing old-time banjo while still in high school. He met Brooks Smith at Vandalia Gathering and eventually decided that he had to get his story "down on paper." Now a senior studying criminal justice at WVU, Andrew plays at festivals throughout West Virginia and plans to keep up his music. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

JEFFREY A. GREEN is a native of Charleston. Married for 18 years and the father of two, Jeff is working on an elementary education degree at West Virginia State College. He is a vocalist and keyboard man in his spare time, and has performed locally for the past 25 years. Like his grandfather, Jeff is a union man and an officer in Musicians Local 136. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DAVID H. HALSEY, born in Wyoming County, earned an engineering degree from Marshall University. A retired colonel from the Army Corps of Engineers, Halsey was officially commended for his work as operations officer during the Buffalo Creek dam disaster in 1972. Colonel Halsey has published numerous articles in technical journals. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1992.

MICHAEL KELLER is chief of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

BONNIE LEWIS was born on Coon Creek in Putnam County. She recently completed a collection of memories of the last 50 years of her family's history. Her "Grandma Bessie" essay is excerpted from that. Bonnie is now a grandmother herself and writes with her grandchildren in mind. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

C. C. STEWART lives at Mt. Nebo in Nicholas County. He served as a West Virginia state policeman from 1935 until his retirement in 1955, and later also retired from the Broward County, Florida, Sheriff's Department. Mr. Stewart served four years in the Navy during World War II. Recently he has been at work compiling the stories from his years as a state policeman. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1995.

EDWARD H. THOMAS was born and raised in Boone County. He worked as an apprentice glass cutter when he was just 16 at the Libbey-Owens-Ford plant in Charleston. He joined the Army Specialized Training Reserve Program in World War II and later served in the Air Force. Ed Thomas worked as a Methodist minister in West Virginia for about 12 years, and is now retired in California. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1994.

JOETTA SMITH WOODS, who says school and family have consumed her life for the past three years, will graduate later this spring from West Virginia State College. Joetta's father was in the Air Force when she was born in Las Vegas, but the family moved to Spencer when she was just four months old. The town's fire fighters were a big part of her growing up, she says. This is Joetta's first published piece.

PATRICIA SAMPLES WORKMAN, who is pursuing a degree in social work and psychology at Glenville State College, has worked for the State Department of Human Services for nearly 15 years. Though she was born in California, Patricia says all her ancestors on both sides are fifth- and sixth-generation West Virginians. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Feud Show Scheduled. The Hatfield-McCoy Feud will be featured next month on the Arts & Entertainment Network program, "Biography."

GOLDENSEAL's Fall 1995 cover story presented the Hatfield view of the famous 19th-century feud. The word in southern West Virginia is that the A&E show tilts the other way, with the production crew spending most of its time on the Kentucky side of the Tug Fork. Devil Anse Hatfield is portrayed by a Pikeville lawyer, which is pretty sure to set up a subterranean rumbling in a certain Logan County graveyard we know of.

The program is scheduled to air on Monday, April 15. Check local listings for the time.

(continued from inside front cover)

August 9-17 State Fair of West Virginia
Lewisburg (645-1090)
August 11 58th Job's Temple Homecoming
Glenville (428-5421)
August 12-18 Town & Country Days
Martinsville (455-2418)
August 16-18 Lilly Family Reunion
Flat Top (253-7883)
August 17 Old-Time Day
Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (438-3005)
August 17 Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion
Camp Woodbine/Richwood (846-9490)
August 20-24 Doddridge County Fair
West Union (1-800-296-2574)
August 22-25 32nd Appalachian Arts & Crafts Festival
Beckley (252-7328)
August 23-24 Dunkard Valley Frontier Festival
Core (879-5500)
August 23-25 Mason-Dixon Festival
Morgantown (599-1104)
August 23-25 Cairo Days
Cairo (628-3705)
August 23-September 2 Charleston Sternwheel Regatta
Charleston (348-6419)
August 24 Foundation Day
Tomlinson Run/New Manchester (564-3651)
August 24 Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion
Little Beaver State Park/Daniels (252-3161)
August 25-27 American Indian Heritage Weekend
Blennerhassett/Parkersburg (428-3000)
August 26-31 Barbour County Fair
Philippi (457-3254)
August 30-September 1 12th Firemen's Arts & Crafts Festival
Jane Lew (842-4095)
August 30-September 1 Labor Day Gospel Sing
Mt. Nebo (472-3466)
August 30-September 1 West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (622-7314)
August 30-September 2 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Jubilee
Weston (1-800-296-1863)
August 30-September 2 9th Annual Weirton Greek Bazaar
Weirton (797-9884)
August 31-September 1 Oglebay Woodcarvers Show and Sale
Wheeling (242-7700)
August 31-September 2 Hick Festival
Parsons (636-6324)
September 1 Roane County Homecoming
Gandeeville (343-8378)
September 6-8 Hilltop Festival
Huntington Museum of Art/Huntington (529-2701)
September 6-8 Erbacon Days
Erbacon (226-5104)
September 7-8 Hampshire Heritage Days
Romney (822-5013)
September 7-8 Putnam County Homecoming
Winfield (755-8421)
September 7-8 Brickyard Bend Festival
New Cumberland (564-3694)
September 8 Mule and Donkey Show
Sutton (744-8372)
September 12-15 28th West Virginia Oil & Gas Festival
Sistersville (652-2939)
September 13-14 Sagebrush Roundup Fall Festival
Fairmont (363-6366)
September 14 Country Showdown
Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (438-3005)
September 14-15 Helvetia Community Fair
Helvetia (924-5018)
September 14-15 West Virginia Honey Festival
Parkersburg (1-800-752-4982)
September 14-21 King Coal Festival
Williamson (235-5560)
September 19-22 Treasure Mountain Festival
Franklin (249-5422)
September 20-22 Nature Wonder & Wild Foods Weekend
North Bend/Cairo (558-3370)
September 20-22 Volcano Days Festival
Waverly (679-3611)
September 21 Country Fall Festival
Lost Creek (745-3466)
September 21-22 Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (623-2335)
September 25-27 29th West Virginia Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
September 26-29 55th Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Kingwood (329-0021)
September 27-28 FOOTMAD Fall Festival
Camp Sheppard/Gandeeville (768-9249)
September 27-29 Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Charles Town (725-2055)
September 27-29 Hardy County Heritage Weekend
Moorefield (538-6560)
September 28 Roadkill Cookoff
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
September 28-29 National Hunting & Fishing Days
French Creek (924-6211)
September 28-29 Autumn Harvest Festival
Union (772-5475)
September 28-October 6 Mountain State Forest Festival
Elkins (636-1824)
October 3-6 Golden Delicious Festival
Clay (587-4900)
October 4-6 Wellsburg Apple Fest
Wellsburg (737-0801)
October 4-6 Middle Island Harvest Festival
Middlebourne (758-2494)
October 4-6 West Virginia Pumpkin Festival
Milton (743-9222)
October 5-6 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
Burlington (289-3511)
October 5-6 Fall Country Festival
Farm Museum/Point Pleasant (675-5737)
October 6 Heritage Craft Festival
Graham House/Lowell (466-3321)
October 10-13 West Virginia Black Walnut Festival
Spencer (927-1780)
October 11-12 Lumberjackin'-Bluegrassin' Jamboree
Twin Falls/Mullens (294-4000)
October 11-13 Battle of Point Pleasant Commemoration
Point Pleasant (675-3844)
October 12 Taste of Our Towns
Lewisburg (645-7917)
October 12 Big Run Apple Festival
Cameron (686-3732)
October 12-13 23rd Apple Butter Festival
Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
October 12-13 Aunt Jenny Wilson Old-Time Festival
Logan (752-0253)
October 12-13 & 19-20 Railroad Days
Hinton (466-5420)
October 17-20 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
Martinsburg (263-2500)
October 19 Bridge Day
Fayetteville (1-800-927-0263)
October 20-27 Old-Time Week & Fiddlers Reunion
D&E College/Elkins (637-1209)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 1997 "Folklife Fairs Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number, if possible. We must have this information in by January 15, 1997, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

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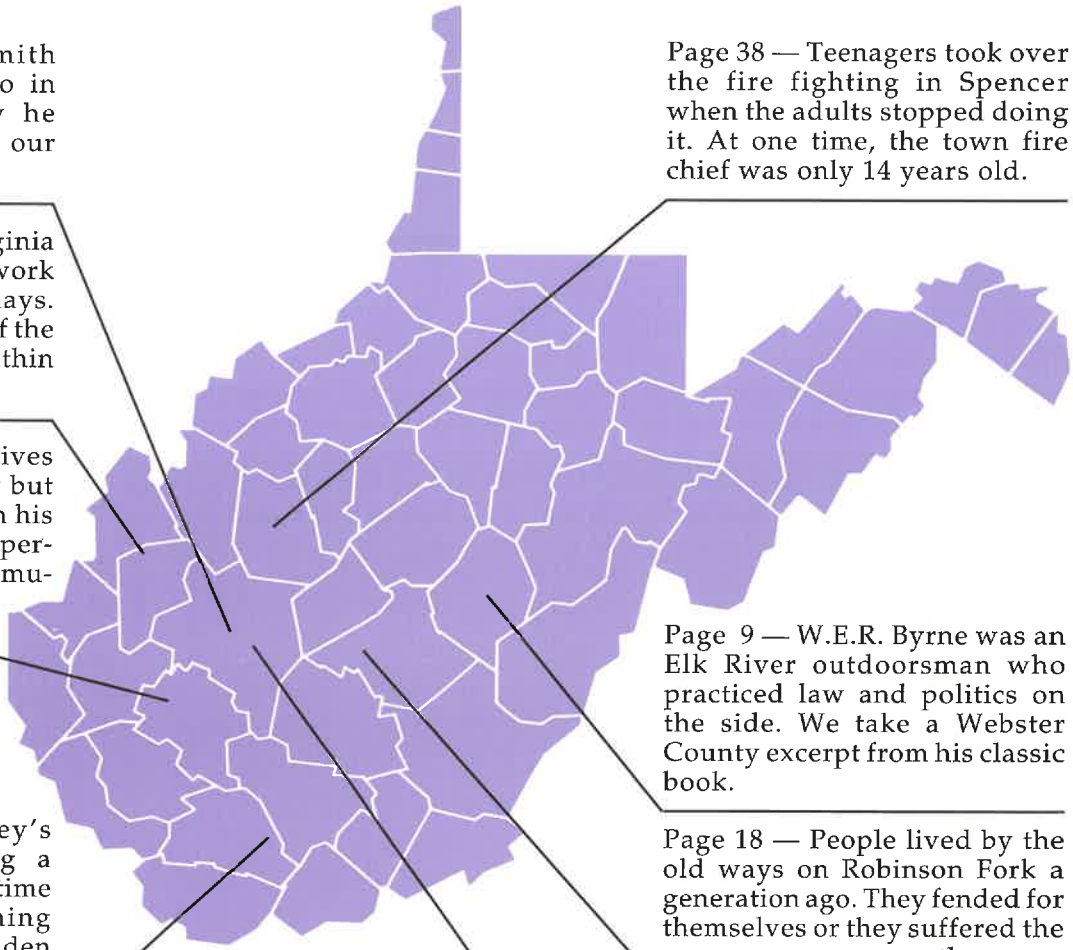
Inside Goldenseal



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