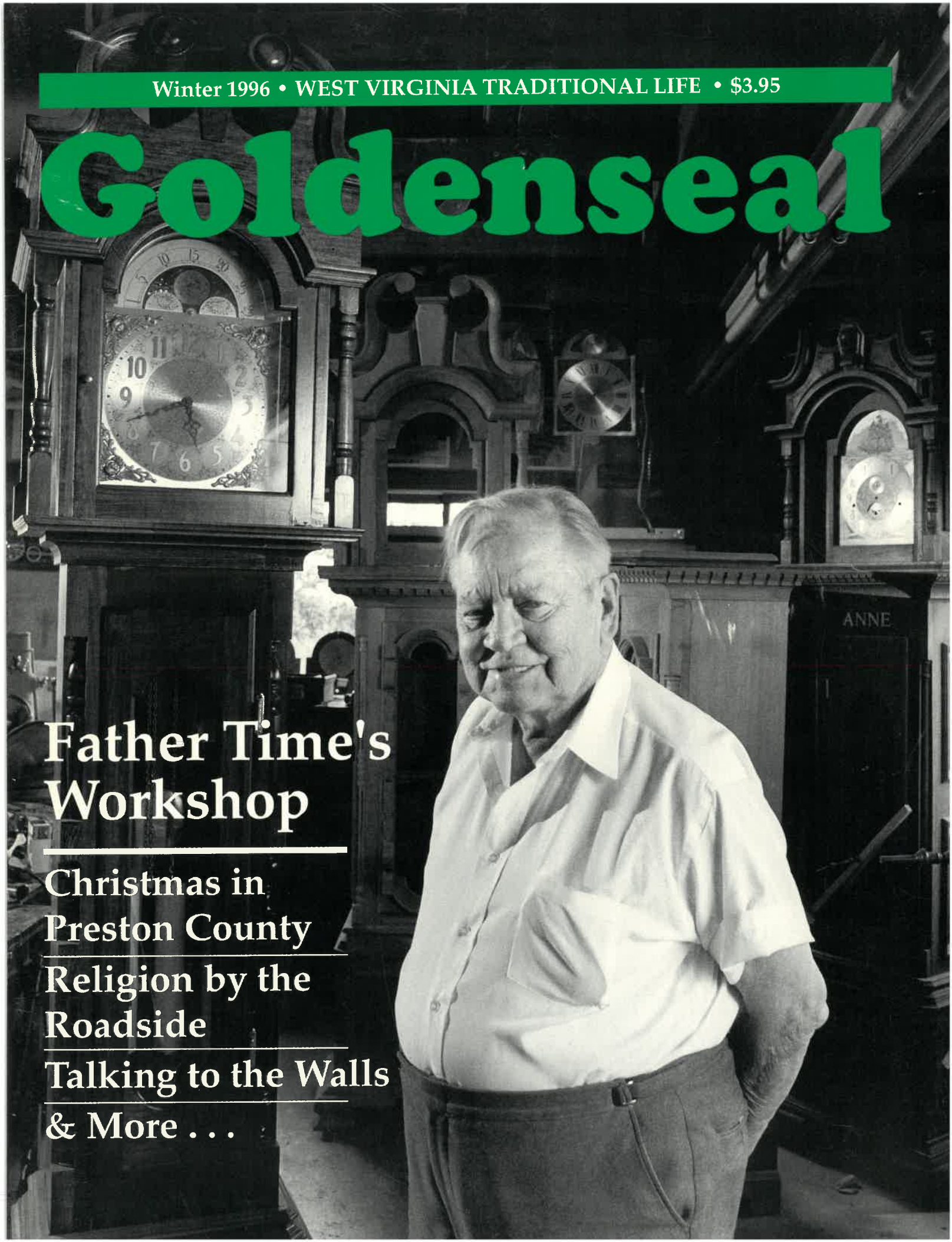
Winter 1996 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • $3.95

Goldenseal



Father Time's Workshop

Christmas in Preston County

Religion by the Roadside

Talking to the Walls

& More . . .

From The Editor: Happy Holidays

It's always busy here at GOLDENSEAL — but I don't think we have nearly as hectic a time as Old Saint Nick, to judge from the picture below.

The Jolly Old Elf, AKA Bryan Sheets, was photographed in 1914 by Perry Cox of Auburn. I figure the local kids roughed him up on his way to the studio, but who knows? Maybe Santa had been down half the chimneys in Ritchie County and neighboring Gilmer before Cox got to him.

You will find an article on Perry Cox's photography by Mary Lucille DeBerry on page 26. Mary Lucille is a Cox on her mother's side and Perry's grand-niece, so we have been after her to do this story for a long time.

Perry Cox (1871-1938) was among West Virginia's historic master photographers, ranking with George J. Kossuth of Wheeling, Red Ribble of Fayette County, and a handful of others whose old pictures make our job a lot easier. Cox's photos have appeared in GOLDENSEAL occasionally, including the 1977 cover reproduced on page 30. We considered using his raggedy Santa as a whimsical Christmas cover this time, but that would have meant displacing clockmaker Fred Reichenbach, which we weren't about to do. Mr. Reichenbach, who gives his clocks away because they are "too expensive to sell," represents the spirit of the season as far as we are concerned.

But I'm getting ahead of myself with all this Christmas talk. Actually, it is closer to Thanksgiving as I write this, and surely as West Virginians we have much to be thankful for.

We're thankful for the smell of wood smoke on crisp mornings, and the woodcutters among us are thankful for the way chunks of oak pop open when hit just right with the splitting maul. Henry David Thoreau said his firewood warmed him twice, and there is no disputing that — but there is a pleasure and a blessing in good, hard work, as Mr. Thoreau well knew.

We're thankful for the rich heritage that keeps West Virginians making music, dancing at unique shindigs like Lewis County's Deer Hunters Ball, and cooking up a storm over the holidays. These are the things which keep the pages of GOLDENSEAL full, issue after issue.

We're thankful that our state has the lowest crime rate in the country for 23 years in a row, according to a recent report. Thankful but not much surprised, for West Virginians are good at getting along together and looking after each other. "Neighboring," the country people used to call it, and I think they were wise to treat "neighbor" as an active verb as well a noun. It takes a little action, when you think about it.

And we're very thankful that the long, long election campaigns are over at last, aren't we?

At GOLDENSEAL we are grateful, in particular, for the continued support of our paying subscribers, and we appreciate the folks who made the big bus trip with us in October. We took lunch in Helvetia the first day and spent a sparkly, starry night in Cass, the first frost of the season for us lowlanders.

October was a great month for travel, as it turned out. I made trips on an Ohio River sternwheeler and a Norfolk Southern Railroad train within two weeks of the bus tour.

On the boat trip we "locked through" the Willow Island locks between Parkersburg and St. Marys, my first time through one of the big Ohio River locks. The train ride, sponsored by the Greater Bluefield Chamber of Commerce, was a real eye-opener, especially the mountians south of Iaeger. It took a near-miracle of railroad building — and plenty of trestles, tunnels and road cuts — to snake the long steel rails through to the Virginia line. We traveled via Canebrake but missed Cucumber, for those familiar with the wonderful place names down there.

With December upon us, I expect to travel less and spend more time indoors, winding up the business of the old year as we look forward to the new. I hope renewing your GOLDENSEAL subscription is on your year-end to-do list, if you haven't taken care of that by now.

We are headed into our third year working without a net, to borrow a line from an old Waylon Jennings song. Waylon was talking about something else, I'm pretty sure, but in our case no net means no tax subsidy to fall back on. We will be here just as long as paying subscribers keep us here, in other words. Do put your check in the mail, if you haven't already.

But that's enough grinching from me. It's holiday time, and all of us here wish you and yours the best of the season and all good things for 1997.

As for Santa, it's been a long time since the picture was made. I figure he's fully recovered by now and in great shape for this year's rounds.

Tell the kids GOLDENSEAL said so.

—Ken Sullivan

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

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Goldenseal

Volume 22, Number 4 Winter 1996

COVER: Fred Reichenbach of Triadelphia has time on his hands — and towering over his head, too. He gives his big grandfather clocks away since they are too expensive to sell. Cheryl Harshman's article begins on page 9; photo by Michael Keller.

PHOTOS: Doug Chadwick, Greg Clark, Perry Cox, Carl E. Feather, Mike Furbee, Cheryl Harshman, Frank P. Herrera, Michael Keller, John Sibold

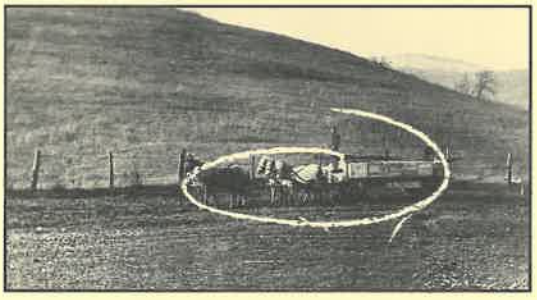
Letters from Readers

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.

Tragic Service Recalled

October 7, 1996
Fairmont, West Virginia
Editor:
A copy of your Winter 1993 GOLDENSEAL was given to me by a driver for our company. The article "No Christmas at Monongah" was a reminder that the worst mine disaster in the history of the United States occurred in a small town outside Fairmont and involved the families of many of our friends.

W. S. Thomas wagons at their grim work in December 1907.



A bright spot in the article was the photographs on pages 13 and 15 showing W. S. Thomas wagons. It is a good feeling to know my predecessors were able to give their assistance at this time of tragedy.

W. S. Thomas Transfer, Inc., was founded in 1899 by Walter Setton Thomas. Their first long-distance move was accomplished in April 1929 with a solid-tire padded van to the state of New York. The company was purchased by my grandfather, Harry D. Thompson, in 1949. We now operate 60 over-the-road trucks equipped with satellite communication devices. We certainly have come a long way. As W. S. Thomas will be celebrating our 100th year in 1999, Eugene Wolfe's article will become a part of our historical records.

We would like to request any readers who may have photographs with W. S. Thomas equipment in them to please contact me. They would be of great interest to my family and my co-workers.
Sincerely,
Mark Thompson, General Manager
W. S. Thomas Transfer, Inc.

Thanks for writing. We congratulate you on your company's upcoming centennial and will relay any information GOLDENSEAL readers may send.—ed.

Ammonia Cookies

September 20, 1996
Kearneysville, West Virginia
Editor:
I read with interest "Those Weren't Bad Days: Ritchie County Farm Life" in the Fall 1996 issue of GOLDENSEAL. The author spoke of ammonia cookies. Our mother, Lucy M. Hill of Belington, also baked those cookies. Her recipe called for five cents worth of ammonia, and 10 cents worth of oil of lemon, so you see it is very old.

I made the cookies several times and always used one ounce of ammonia, which nowadays costs $2.98, not five cents. The 10 cents worth of lemon oil would be about one ounce of lemon oil. Bakers ammonia can be purchased at Pattersons Drug Store, 134 S. Queen Street, Martinsburg, WV 25401, (304) 267-8903.

My mother's recipe seems to be about double the recipe you published. I remember one year, about 1985, my sister and I baked the cookies for the family reunion, always held close to July 4th (our mother's birthday). Mama had had a heart attack in early June and was unable to do the cookie baking that year. Sandra and I baked the full recipe and we had cookies cooling on every available table and countertop in our mother's big kitchen. Needless to say, everyone took cookies home from the reunion and ate cookies for many days after. Our mother passed away August 23, 1995.

"We baked the full recipe and had cookies cooling on every available table and countertop in our mother's big kitchen."

Mama's Ammonia Cookies
2 eggs
3 cups sugar
1 cup lard
1 pint sweet milk
flour as required
5 cents worth baking ammonia
10 cents worth lemon oil

Mash ammonia and put in ½-cup boiling water. Let set until cool. Use enough flour to make dough stiff enough for rolling. Roll thin, cut with cutters, and bake at 400° until light brown.

Thanks for a great magazine,
Mildred Everson

A Williamson street crew, July 1915.

August 27, 1996
Anaheim, California
Editor:

I was very much interested in your articles on John Henry and steel-driving which appeared in the summer issue.

My interest goes back a great many years. My first job out of high school was as a timekeeper on several street paving jobs that were being done in Charleston at the time. Very little power equipment was used on these projects as the intent was to provide employment to people who needed work during the Depression.

On several of the projects, it was necessary to blast out portions of rock to complete the grading of the road bed. Holes had to be drilled in the protruding rock so that dynamite could be placed for the necessary blasting to be performed. Holes were drilled by the striking of a drill bit by the steel-drivers who were using sledge hammers. The drill was rotated by the shaker who moved the drill bit after each blow was struck. As many as three drivers could be used with one shaker.

The steel-drivers were standing up and spaced far enough apart to give them enough room to swing the hammer and bring it down onto the bit. They were facing the shaker who sat on the rock and had the drill bit between his legs. He used his hands and arms to lift the bit after each blow and rotate it slightly so that the next blow struck would be against a new place in the rock at the bottom of the hole and dislodge fresh material.

In making a blow to the drill bit, the steel-driver would flex his knees slightly and lay the flat part of the hammer handle on his shoulder. He would then raise himself to full height and whip the hammer off his shoulder and would bring it down so that the hammer struck the top of the drill with tremendous speed and energy.

One of the crew chanted a slow, rhythmic refrain that indicated to the steel-drivers when the next blow was to be struck and also alerted the shaker to perform his function. Each driver struck a blow and then waited for each of the other drivers to strike a single blow before it was his turn again.

From time to time the drilling had to be halted to permit the shaker to remove the broken rock from the hole. The shaker swabbed out the heavy moist material with a rag attached to a long, heavy wire. The moist material was a mixture of the crushed rock and water which was poured into the hole before the drilling had begun.

I do recall that the chanter talked about John Henry, but it was not the fast pace of the John Henry ballad. The fast tempo goes along with the story which tells how John Henry beat the steam drill with a hammer in each hand. I believe that John Henry was drilling horizontal holes that went into the face of the rock in the tunnel, and the drilling that I saw was for vertical holes to prepare a road bed for a street.

I have noticed that most of the illustrations and pictures of statues in the article show John Henry with a hammer that has a straight, round handle. The steel-drivers that I observed in the past did not use a hammer of this type. As I remember, the hammer used had a round or oval handle for the third of its length that was grasped by the driver. The remaining two-thirds was flat and flexible, as is shown in the reproduction of the book cover on page 15 of the same GOLDENSEAL.

Your articles triggered my memory of those youthful days when things were much simpler. Holes were drilled into rock by good men who had the skills to perform this laborious and dangerous task and could sing as they did it.

Sincerely,
Charles Y. Lopinsky

Thanks for writing. In other steel-driving news, it has been announced that a John Henry Center will be established in the old Lincoln School building in Hinton. The John Henry Center will include a library, museum and art gallery, according to John Henry scholar Ed Cabbell.—ed.

September 18, 1996
St. Albans, West Virginia
Editor:
Thanks for publishing Claudette Hicks's recipe for ammonia cookies in your fall issue.

I have childhood memories of my maternal grandmother baking those cookies, and they were wonderful.

Your article noted the difficulty in locating baker's ammonia. It is available through the King Arthur Flour Company in Norwich, Vermont. They may be reached by calling their toll-free number 1(800) 827-6836, or writing them at P. O. Box 876, Norwich, VT 05055-0876.
Yours,
Ann McCormick

Thanks, ladies. It seems that more than a few readers remember old-fashioned ammonia cookies and know where to get the fixings. Jessie Sheets of Smithville brought the story home to Ritchie County by noting that bakers ammonia may be purchased at the Rite Aid Drugstore in Harrisville, the county seat.

And, hey — families were bigger in early times. If those old recipes produce too much, ship the excess here to the cookie testers at the GOLDENSEAL office.—ed.

Robbing Wadestown

July 31, 1996
Tallahassee, Florida
Editor:
I read with interest the summer issue of GOLDENSEAL and the letter from Eli Stark who mentioned the Wadestown Bank robbery [in reference to C. C. Stewart's Buffalo Bank robbery story.]

I'm originally from Wadestown and remember the excitement of the bank robbery which took place on December 4, 1935. Olen Henderson, the assistant cashier Eli mentioned, has since died but his oldest daughter lives in Florida.

The Bank of Wadestown has since moved to Fairview, where it is Bank of Wadestown, Fairview, West Virginia.

Wadestown also had a high school back then. My father, Donley Stiles, was one of the first graduates. In 1939 Wadestown consolidated with Blacksville to form Clay-Battelle High School. Daybrook consolidated the next year. Wadestown went from high school to junior high to elementary, to close in 1994.
Sincerely,
John D. Stiles

Another Greenbrier Camp

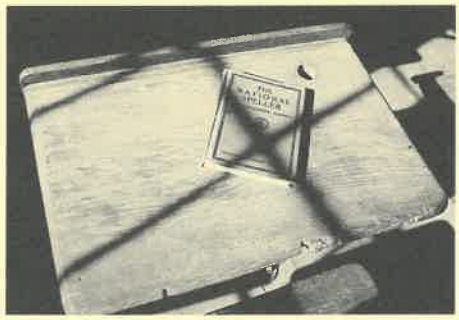
July 26, 1996
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania
Editor:
I enjoyed the article on Camp Shaw-Mi-Del-Eca in your summer issue, primarily because it brought to mind the happy summer days I spent at Camp Greenbrier.

Located alongside a beautiful stretch of the Greenbrier River a mile or so east of the outskirts of Alderson, Camp Greenbrier was organized at the close of World War I. I attended in the summer of 1919, one of a group of lads from the Huntington area. We had military drill one hour each day, five days a week, then off to whatever bit of recreation your heart desired — tennis, baseball, swimming, rifle range, canoeing, loafing. The highlight of the summer was shooting the Greenbrier rapids on an overnight canoe trip to Hinton.

Can't help but wonder if among your readers there may be another who slept in a tent at Camp Greenbrier.
Sincerely,
Odell Fletcher

One-Room Education

October 31, 1996
Cincinnati, Ohio
Editor:
Regarding the story about one-room schools [Fall 1996]: in the 1920's the teacher for our one-room school at Slatyfork was selected by three trustees in the community — *not* by a superintendent. My dad was one trustee. One teacher,


MICHAEL KELLER

Pauline Guyer, almost 100 now, came from, I believe, Kansas.

The teacher taught all classes, primary through eighth grade — reading, math, spelling, writing, penmanship, geography. She also taught games and songs, *disciplined*, graded papers at night, swept the floor, put on Thanksgiving and Christmas programs — all for perhaps $50 or less a month, from which she paid board and room at a local home. Compare that with today's workday!

Also in the Fall '96 GOLDENSEAL, Ira Alkire said, "there were no gray squirrels around until I killed over 100 red squirrels, then the grays started coming in."

I'm 80 years old and when I was a teenager I heard it said that red squirrels castrated gray squirrels to get rid of them. Any truth in that? Probably not.
Sincerely,
Dave Sharp

You're right — probably not, though the notion of red squirrels castrating the grays is a persistent part of our folklore. It surfaced here back in 1985, when we first published an article on red squirrels, also known as fairy diddles. But one outdoorsman told us it was the other way around, that the fairy diddles themselves were "steer squirrels," so figure it out for yourself.

As for the education workload — gee, the teachers I know still work pretty hard. Now ask me what my wife does for a living! —ed.

Mountain Music Roundup

By Danny Williams

The past few months have been a great time for friends of real West Virginia music, with more and more recordings bringing our favorite songs and tunes into our homes.

Isn't that what we said at the beginning of the last "Mountain Music Roundup?" Well, it's true again, and there's no sign of a letup.

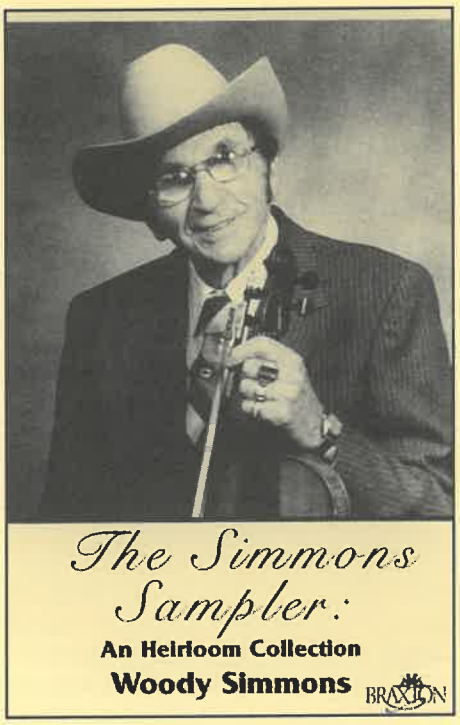
Among the best of the recent crop are a couple of important re-issues of older recordings, new releases by two prominent hammered dulcimer players, some great stuff from the Northern Panhandle, and a visit to one of the state's legendary jam sessions.

A CD re-issue of the classic *The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler 1977-1987* is the biggest news — literally. The two-disc set (formerly a double LP) features over 40 pieces by about 70 musicians, selected from stage performances at the annual Memorial Day showcase of West Virginia's finest.

Several of the musicians represented on *The Music Never Dies* continue to perform, but many others have passed away. Among the most rarely-recorded pioneers of our music appearing here are quirky fiddler **Ira Mullins**, lap dulcimer patriarch **Basil Blake**, fiddler **Delbert Hughes**, hammered dulcimer legend **Russell Fluharty**, and Clay County fiddle stylist **Lee Triplett**. No other recording even approaches *The Music Never Dies* for presenting the huge variety of West Virginia music, and we are fortunate that this treasure remains accessible.

We are also fortunate that the folks who cooked up this recording for the state's Division of Culture and History took the extra effort to provide valuable information about the music and musicians along with the CD. Most fans of this music care about the context and the tradition of the tunes, and we note with pleasure that the people who bring us such recordings are increasingly complementing the musical main course with a side dish of information.

Our second important musical



re-issue is the one and only recording by master fiddler **Bobby Taylor**. Taylor produced *Kanawha Tradition* in 1988, quickly sold out of tapes, and never ordered more. Taylor's explanation was that he "didn't want to be bothered with selling them."

GREG CLARK

Finally he has given in, and now a few more fortunate fans will be able to own this rich collection of hot fiddling. Most of the tunes are favorites of fiddlers and dancers, played with the inventive, energetic touch which has won top prizes for Taylor at many of the most prestigious music competitions. His mastery of the music stands on its own merit, and gains even more value from the countless hours Taylor spent learning directly from the best of the old West Virginia fiddlers. Buy this tape before he runs out again!

A fiddler who takes a little more care to make sure we get to hear his music is **Woody Simmons**. He has recorded his distinctive fiddling on several cassettes, and he's one of the old masters who can be counted

GOLDENSEAL Gift Ideas

Santa checks his twice, but once will be enough if you make your gift list from these last-minute ideas:

West Virginia: Mountain Majesty ($39.95), the fast-selling new coffee-table book written by GOLDENSEAL freelancer James Casto and edited by Ken Sullivan. Call the Cultural Center Shop, (304) 558-0690.

The GOLDENSEAL Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars ($9.95), which tears its pages straight from West Virginia's exciting labor history. Use the coupon on page 71.

The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler ($15 for the two-CD set), or any of the other recordings of real West Virginia music recommended by Danny Williams on pages 5-7. Check there for ordering information.

GOLDENSEAL back copies, either individually ($3.95) or the whole shebang ($50 for all available copies). Use the coupon on page 69.

A GOLDENSEAL gift subscription ($16), which keeps on giving through the new year. Use the coupon on page 72 or call us at (304)558-0220.

But remember — the best gift is the gift of yourself, and it costs nothing at all. Go home for the holidays!

on to show up at all the major festivals and contests. On his latest recording, *The Simmons Sampler*, he gives us another fascinating selection from his vast store of tunes. Simmons is especially noted for his handling of the waltz style, which many hoedown fiddlers find awkward and difficult. *The Simmons Sampler* contains four fine examples of how beautiful and inventive a waltz can be in the hands of someone who knows his stuff.

Patty Looman has finally sat down long enough to record some more music for us. As a self-appointed missionary for the hammered dulcimer, Looman is one of West Virginia's most active performers and teachers but had previously recorded only one cassette. On her new second recording, *Mountain Laurel Melodies*, Looman again delivers a thoughtful blend of old favorites like "Bully of the Town," "Under the Double Eagle" and "Sweet Sixteen," as well as little-known gems including "Prairie Flower," "Snow Deer," and an older version of the true West Virginia murder ballad, "John Hardy."

Looman's style is rooted in the past [GOLDENSEAL, Winter 1995]. She plays the melody simply and elegantly, with a little embellishment here and there and firm control of the rhythm. Typically, Looman promotes the work of lesser-known musicians, inviting several of her Morgantown-area neighbors to add some of their own favorites to this recording.

Like Patty Looman, **Bob Shank** lives in Monongalia County, plays the hammered dulcimer masterfully, and has recently released a recording of traditional tunes which real fans will want to own.

Beyond these similarities, there's no confusing the two musicians. Shank is one of the very few traditional West Virginia musicians who ever pursued his music professionally, spending years on the road hammering his dulcimer in folky touring bands. This eclectic education leads Shank to approach a tune with an inventiveness rarely heard on a traditional instrument.

Shank plays all these pieces without accompaniment on *Hammer Dulcimer Solo*, further highlighting his mastery of the instrument. The tune selection is ambitious, covering popular hymns like "In the Garden" and "Simple Gifts;" Appalachian dance tunes such as "Red Wing" and "Give the Fiddler a Dram;" and Celtic melodies including "The Road to Lisdoon Varna" and "Si Beag a`s Si Mhor."

Many of our accomplished performers say they were first attracted to this music by the open, friendly attitudes of the musicians. They saw the masters happily playing alongside the newcomers, heard musicians eagerly swapping tunes and ideas, and they decided that here they could find a home. This happy discovery has happened countless times over the years at the Tuesday night jam sessions at WVU's Percival Hall, where Morgantown friends of music gather to celebrate that spirit of fun and acceptance. Experienced musicians, rank beginners, and everyone in between sit as equals in this circle.

Some of that magic comes through on the cassette recording, *Percival Hall Pickers*, where a dozen or so of the Tuesday night regulars play about 20 of the group's favorites. Most of the selections are familiar ones, including "Over the Waterfall," "Ragtime Annie," "Petronella," "Midnight on the Water" and "Red-Haired Boy." The number and variety of instruments represented make for an ever-changing sound, and special recognition goes to recording engineer **Kim Monday** for sorting out all the voices of this unusually large group.

Meanwhile in the Northern Panhandle, **Bob Heyer** has been playing and singing both alone and with a group, and has been promoting the music through his Mountain Moon coffeehouse in Wheeling. Now Heyer has added two recordings to his list of accomplishments.

The first recording, *Root That Mountain Down*, features Heyer's solo work as a dulcimer player,

W.V. at the L.C. in D.C.

Fans of real mountain music will be pleased to know that the Library of Congress has an excellent West Virginia collection documenting our traditional music and associated folkways.

Recently, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress published a listing for the collection. The "Folk Archive Finding Aid" describes the West Virginia holdings found at the Folk Archive. Information on listening to or obtaining copies of the recordings is also available from the Folklife Center in the booklet, "A Guide to the Collections of Recorded Folk Music and Folklore in the Library of Congress."

The finding aid booklet lists many names familiar to GOLDENSEAL readers, including the Hammons family, Lee Triplett, Wilson Douglas, "Mose" Coffman, Andy Boarman, Woody Simmons and Russell Fluharty. The West Virginia collection includes holdings acquired through 1990. The Folklife Center enlisted the help of Pocahontas County musician Dwight Diller, Gerry Milnes of the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, and others in compiling the guide.

The 25-page finding aid lists sound recordings as well as information on manuscripts and microfilm. The publication is free, from the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540-4610;(202) 707-5510.

guitarist, and singer. Heyer demonstrates here that he loves the whole range of traditional music, and he handles it all with an impressive command of various styles and techniques. "Blind Fiddler" and the ancient "Wind and Rain" tell evocative stories; "Down in the Arkansas" and "I Got Mine" share some more lighthearted fun; and "Shady Grove" and "In the Pines" take the listener into the lonesome mountain sound which lies beneath so much of our music. Heyer shows a mastery of the familiar bass-and-chord guitar strumming, bluesy fingerpicking, and the old-time dulcimer sound, and his versatile baritone voice perfectly suits his material.

The one tradition necessarily missing from Heyer's solo album is the raucous string-band sound. Heyer and his friends **Scott Black, Matt Hines**, and **Richard Pollock** provide plenty of that as **The Cabin Fever String Band**. Their *Havin' a Fine Old Time* cassette presents square-dance favorites, novelty songs, instrumental pieces and more, performed in lively fashion with fiddles, banjo, guitar, bass, and vocals.

One final recording is not strictly West Virginia material, but it's an important piece of musical history which will interest many fans of traditional playing and singing. **Hazel Dickens** and **Alice Gerrard** recorded groundbreaking LP albums in 1965 and 1973. Now the Smithsonian Folkways label has re-issued both as a single compact disc entitled *Pioneering Women of Bluegrass*. Dickens spent her childhood in southern West Virginia before her family relocated to Baltimore, and her voice still echoes the haunting style of the mountains.

And while we're on the subject of re-issues which might interest fans of West Virginia music, we'll point out that Ivan Tribe's book, *Mountain Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia*, is now available in an updated edition. The original book traces the glory years of West Virginia radio broadcasting, when dozens of hillbilly performers played live music for audiences gathered around their living room radios. This new paperback version adds an afterword commenting on more recent developments. *Mountain Jamboree* has long been the primary sourcebook for information on West Virginia's early country performers, and fans of that end of our tradition will welcome this revision of the old standby.

Ordering these recordings:

Many of these recordings are available in The Shop at the Cultural Center in Charleston. Items mentioned in this column may also be purchased directly, as detailed below. Unless otherwise noted, the recordings are cassette tapes, and cost $11.50, including shipping charges.

The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler 1977-1987 *may be ordered from Elderberry Records, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. The cost of the two-CD set is $15, plus $2 shipping and handling (West Virginians must also add 6% sales tax).*

Kanawha Tradition *may be ordered from Bobby Taylor, 982 Elliot Street, St. Albans, WV 25177.*

The Simmons Sampler *cassette is from Woody Simmons, Box 152, Mill Creek, WV 26282.*

Mountain Laurel Melodies *may be ordered from Patty Looman, 1345 Bitonti Street, Star City, WV 26505.*

Hammer Dulcimer Solo *is from Otter Slide Productions, 1225 Corvet Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505. Prices, including shipping, are $16 for the CD, $11 for the cassette.*

Percival Hall Pickers *is from Phil Allender, 967 Chestnut Ridge Road, Morgantown, WV 26505.*

Root That Mountain Down *and* Havin' a Fine Old Time *are available from Bob Heyer, 501 National Road, Wheeling, WV 26003.*

Pioneering Women of Bluegrass *is a CD from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Phone 800-410-9815 to order.*

Mountain Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia *is a paperback book, and may be ordered from CUP Services, 750 Cassadilla Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. The cost is $17.95, plus $3.50 for shipping.*

For a free copy of High Notes, *a newsletter of West Virginia traditional music, write to High Notes, 456 Elysian Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505.*

Closing the Valley:
My Drive-In Days are Over

By Michael Keller

When I moved back to West Virginia as a high school senior, the Valley Drive-In in St. Albans was a major hangout for Kanawha Valley teenagers.

You could just as easily see a carload of guys or girls scoping out the opposite sex, as you could a couple enjoying the farthest corner of the parking lot. The fare was grade B, the price was cheap. For $5 I could get 75 cents in gas (this *was* 1971), two tickets to the show, one of those funky drive-in theater pizzas and a large cola to share with my date. And the summer I graduated I could count on an almost weekly $5 check from some relative to get me to the show.

Whether solo, a couple or a crowd, the routine was the same. We got to the drive-in early to grab a good spot. A big challenge was testing speakers until you found one that not only worked, but sounded decent. We made sure everyone got to enjoy our extensive collection of eight-track tapes while we proceeded to clean the windshield with Windex and paper towels.

For $5 I could get gas, two tickets to the show, one of those funky drive-in theater pizzas and a large cola to share with my date.

We were meticulous; the show might be bad, but we wanted to see it. Typical flicks included spaghetti westerns, science fiction, horror movies and teen love nonsense. We ate it up.

Fast-forward to the '90's: By then the Valley Drive-In is an anomaly, showing first-run films in direct competition with the big mall multiplexes that killed our downtown movie houses. And here I am, back at the Valley with my wife and two daughters, watching *The Lion King*.

MICHAEL KELLER

The place is overrun with minivans, and kids running back and forth from the playground to the cars to the snack bar. The old playground equipment is gone, but about 50 kids are divided into groups — a football game here, Frisbees there, tag over there. My daughters leap out of the car and run over to join, Lauren quickly organizing a game. Picnicking is the plan around many of the vehicles.

We quickly discover that modern cars are not made for the drive-in. The girls wind up in the front seats, Sandi and I in the back, craning our necks to see past the headrests. The Valley's speakers still work, but the best sound is from your car radio, the theater broadcasting the movie over a small transmitter.

The Valley closed for good in August of 1996, joining Welch's grand Starland, the East in Huntington and others — all victims of changing times and the high property value of flat land in West Virginia. It's sad; the Valley has always been a landmark. Even those who didn't go to the show knew where it was, and gave directions by it. "Oh, go down Route 60 to Route 35, there where the Valley is," they'd say.

Now it will be "where the Valley used to be."

Michael Keller photographed the Summer 1995 GOLDENSEAL feature about West Virginia's disappearing drive-in theaters. He hates to see another one go.

Father Time's Workshop

The Grandfather Clocks of Fred Reichenbach

By Cheryl Ryan Harshman
Photographs by Michael Keller

You may not know it, but Father Time keeps his workshop in the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia. Our writer and photographer went to see him there, and they report that time is in good hands, indeed.

Fred Reichenbach in his Ohio County shop, with examples of his work behind him.

U.S. Route 40 is the old National Road, built in the early 1800's, the first federal highway in the United States. If you have ever driven Route 40 through Wheeling, you know that nowadays it is a road of commerce — shops, service stations, eateries. As it snakes its way through the city and up and over the hills into the suburbs, a visitor must feel as though the old pike has lost its rough and rural historic past and now lives only in the fast lane.

But if you persevere through the traffic, the red

Works in progress crowd the floor. Fred has clocks in various stages of completion at any given time.

lights, and the left-turn-only lanes and make it out to Triadelphia, I can recommend a diversion. This is no short-cut, no quick way between two points. Rather, it is a jaunt to be studied and savored. If you leave Triadelphia and drive through a long tunnel of trees, up beyond the beyond, you just may find yourself at Father Time's own workshop.

Anyway, I did.

I knew as I drove up to the mailbox that this would be the place I was searching for. Here was the well-ordered homeplace that suited the kind of man who could create grandfather clocks. Frederick A. Reichenbach lives in rural Ohio County. Atop a quiet green hill, his home and workshop sit surrounded by an immaculate yard and garden. Attending to details is important to Father Time.

He was waiting for me that clear, crisp morning in his workshop. Classical music came through the open door where he stood. "Guten tag! Ich bin eine grossvather uhrmacher!" he greeted me in German. "Good morning! I am the grandfather clockmaker!"

I looked into his blue eyes, I listened to his voice, and for the next three hours I knew I was in the presence of someone special. Here was a man who held time in his hands.

"I never made two clocks the same. If I had to make two the same, it would become a job."

Fred Reichenbach has lived all of his 81 years in the Northern Panhandle. He is the son of Scotch and German parents, who says he takes after the German side. "They were artistic," he smiles. "My great, great-grandfather came to America from Hesse, Germany, in 1859." Fred was raised in Wheeling and attended the city's historic Ritchie School when it first opened.

But Fred doesn't live in his past. He will talk about his early days working on the river, about meeting FDR and Lowell Thomas, but only when pressed. This is a very contemporary man who surfs the internet on the computer in his dining room.

He obviously lives the present, in the moment of the many ticking clocks that surround him. And they are everywhere! Not just the clocks he has made, but the many others that have come his way.

In his workshop I am dwarfed by clocks eight feet and taller. Raw walnut boards have been cut and planed, sanded and joined together to make them. They are massive clocks, behemoths lined up together, commanding my attention. "I have set them up so you can see

what they look like," the clockmaker tells me. "I start by making the base, then I make the waist, and then the hood."

Fred is not as healthy as he once was. "My knees gave out when my kidneys did," he smiles as he picks up his cane. "If someone would have told me years ago that I'd have to be on dialysis, I'd have been destroyed. But now I have lived with dialysis for almost two years and it is not a terrible thing. It is something that is quite manageable. I think every day is a gift — that I can make clocks and take my dear wife Margie out to dinner.

"Of course, I don't make the clocks as fast as I did," he admits. "I go to Wheeling Park Hospital for dialysis three days a week and so those days are spent that way." I look around at the clocks, the bulk and weight of them, the skill and intricacy, and think again about this man and wonder that he is able to do any work at all.

My first lesson is that Fred Reichenbach is not a clockmaker. Although he knows the ins and outs of clocks, although he can take them apart and put them back together in running order, Fred is actually a cabinetmaker who specializes in grandfather clock cases.

His training began in his childhood. "As a child I built model ships. And I remember I used to take apart my grandmother's clocks. When I got them back together, I always had enough parts left over to make another clock.

"I always loved to draw," he adds. "I first began drawing to get attention from my mother. I felt she liked my sister better than me. But when I drew, she would notice. So did the relatives. 'How clever!' they'd say."

Fred's art training was not in a classroom or at a museum. Sometimes it was painting signs while a young man in the CCC. More often than not it was doodling, practicing over and over again. When he went to work for Wheeling Steel in Bencoal his drawing was so good he was offered an inside job in the drafting department. But Fred turned it down, even including the pay raise, because he preferred to be outside on the river, working as a crane operator. Outside he was able to breathe and wonder and think. It beat being stuck in a dark building all day.

It was still just a job, though, and Fred admits it.

"That was a boring job," he says. "All I did was think about how I could be building houses. But when you have a family, you can't worry about a boring job. If I hadn't had the responsibility of providing for them, I would have worked for a carpenter for free to learn how to do it."

So while he worked the crane on the river, Fred's imagination was at least free to roam in the open air. He observed the world around him, and read on every subject of interest to him. It shows in how he is able to talk knowingly on subjects from Jefferson's Monticello, to pilot Jimmy Doolittle, to architectural details. Fred Reichenbach's degree came from the School of Daily Learning.

"What you can do if you can think!" he tells me. "If you're interested in something, you can sit and figure it out."

He offers an example. "One day I was sitting in my car and across the street was an old building, over a hundred years old. And at the top, the crown piece was curved like that molding." Fred points to clocks

This craftsman talks with his hands and plans for the long term. "What's the sense of making something that will only fall apart?" Fred Reichenbach asks. "When I make a clock I build it so it will last 100 years."

in his shop to show me. "And I wondered 'How did they make that?' And I thought 'That would look nice on a clock.' So I sat and I thought and I figured it out."

What makes his clocks unique? "The moldings! You can look a long time and never find the molding as thick and heavy as they are on my clocks. That's my trademark.

"I've been so lucky to have the opportunity of time, time to make clocks," Fred tells me. He retired early from the mill, in 1957. "At first I started building bars for people in their homes. Then fancy Victorian mirrors with all the trim." Soon he got into clocks, and now doesn't know how many he has made. "I've kind of lost track after I got to 50," he says.

"There are so many talented people who work in wood and want to make clocks. But they don't have the time. I've been so lucky to have had the time.

"I love to come out here in the morning with a cup of coffee and listen to classical music on the radio. Out here I can sit and think out how something is made.

"I try something different with every clock. I never made two clocks the same. If I had to make two the same, it would become a job. It would lose the creativeness. Now I am trying some sculpture. That will set me apart from some of the others."

We look at a clock he is building from walnut, his favorite wood. It is for Anne, his youngest daughter, who just graduated from WVU last spring. "It could use some trim," he says. "I think a clock is all in the trim you put on. But some people don't like trim. They like the Shaker style."

We look at the head of Abraham Lincoln that he has placed above the clock face. It is an old piece of carving that he has had laying around for a long time. But he wanted to try something new, so this is the first sculptural carving he has put on a clock.

Fred buys his clock works and

The Grandfathers

Grandfather clocks have not always been called that. For the first 150 years or so, they were simply called tall case clocks. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the authority on how and where the words in our language originated, the term grandfather clock did not come into existence until 1876.

That was the year that Henry Clay Work published his famous song, "Grandfather's Clock":

"My grandfather's clock was too
large for the shelf,
So it stood ninety years on the
floor;
It was taller by half than the old
man himself,
Though it weighed not a
pennyweight more."

Like Stephen Foster, Henry Clay Work gave America many songs, but it was this one that placed Work in the chronicles of American music history. It became popular immediately, selling over 800,000 copies and earning its creator the hefty sum of $4,000, and it remains a favorite with old-time musicians today.

After visiting with Fred Reichenbach I wanted to see clocks old enough to have belonged to the songwriter's musical grandfather. So I went searching for clocks dating a century earlier than Work's song, say from 1740 to 1790. And what a treasure I found in my own backyard!

My search began at a museum near my Marshall County home, Oglebay Institute's Mansion Museum at Wheeling. I found seven beautiful, tall case clocks on display, all dating from 1780 to 1840, the heyday of these clocks. The Mansion Museum houses a wonderful collection of household artifacts which depict the history and decorative arts of the upper Ohio Valley from times past.

There was a marvelous old clock in the very first room I entered. What is so remarkable about this clock is that it is in perfect original condition.

Built between 1780 and 1790, this clock was made on the East Coast where clock building was a prosperous trade in Boston and Philadelphia. The clock was carried over the mountains to Wellsburg where it stayed until fairly recently, when it was donated to the museum. The case is in the federal style, that is, it is an example of furniture from the era of George Washington. The special features include wood inlay, carved urns at the top of the hood, and delicate feet at the base.

The second clock I saw is of special local interest. On the face of this clock is painted "Solomon King, Wheeling Virginia, 1822." And indeed Solomon King was a very reputable clockmaker in Wheeling at that time. At the top of the hood this clock has carved acorns in place of the urns seen in the first clock. Frequently, the ornaments at the top of the hoods are a sort of signature of the clockmaker.

The third tall case clock that I saw was made in Philadelphia in 1790 by John Millbank. This one has some mystery about it, according to Holly McCluskey, museum curator and also a bit of a historical sleuth. There is a date written inside which is about 30 years earlier than the manufacture of the clock. The inscription reads, "September 15, 1757, Ireland." What does that mean? Ms. McCluskey doesn't know, but she has some educated guesses. The Roney family, whose name also is in the clock, might have immigrated to America on that date.

It will take further digging to figure this one out, and such an old clock would have a lot of other stories to tell us, of the many families with whom it has lived. In its middle life this one reputably belonged to Lydia Shepherd and stood

# of Oglebay

in her home. Lydia was a prominent Wheelingite who helped to defend Fort Henry against the Indians in 1782 and later worked tirelessly to bring the National Road through Wheeling.

An interesting clock which is not a grandfather clock can be found in the museum's kitchen. It is a 'wag-on-the wall,' an old English wall clock with a wagging pendulum and no case. It is easy to see that it would take a very long and heavy case to cover this pendulum, with only a short step from that to a free-standing case clock.

Also included in the museum's collection are three other grandfather clocks, two of which belonged to Earl W. Oglebay, philanthropist and successful entrepreneur. One is from his home in Cleveland where the Oglebay Norton Company, an iron ore firm, is still in operation.

The other Oglebay family clock stood for many years on the stair landing at the Mansion where it had a commanding view of the comings and goings on two floors. Colonel Oglebay obviously had a fondness for these great clocks. The grandfather clock which the Oglebays kept in their West Virginia home was made in Liverpool, England, and dated 1806.

The Oglebay Institute's Mansion Museum itself is built in the neoclassical style. Originally built as an eight-room farmhouse in 1846, it was first owned by Wheeling's Dr. Hanson Chapline. Eight different families owned it until 1900 when Oglebay bought the Mansion and its grounds from his father-in-law's estate. He then had local architect E. B. Franzheim help create Waddington Farms, providing a palatial summer family home and one of the most progressive, scientific model farms of its day.

When Colonel Oglebay died in 1926, he bequeathed Waddington Farms to the city of Wheeling. That bequest lives today as both Oglebay Park and Oglebay Institute. The Mansion Museum is proud of the fact that it was the first museum in West Virginia to be accredited by the American Association of Museums, and it is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

— Cheryl Ryan Harshman

CHERYL RYAN HARSHMAN

Although any day is a good day to visit the Mansion Museum, early winter is an especially wonderful time. November through January, the Mansion Museum is dressed for the holidays and for the Winter Festival of Lights. It is open daily from nine to five, with expanded hours during the Festival of Lights.

For more information, call (304)242-7272 or write to Oglebay Institute's Mansion Museum, Oglebay, Wheeling, WV 26003.

faces and assembles them in the cases. He buys them from all sorts of places — catalogues where he might pick up handyman specials that need repair and restoration; flea markets and antique stores for old treasures; and of course companies that supply new works and faces as well. On occasion he has had a special face painted for one of his clocks. Next he wants to try his hand at painting clock faces.

What I learn from Fred Reichenbach is that after over 40 years of cabinetmaking, after making somewhere between 50 and 100 grandfather clocks, he is still excited by it all. And he still sees endless possibilities that he would like to try. A little carving here. A little painting there. He has a great reason for getting out of bed each morning. Fred always has something new to think about.

I ask if he remembers the first clock he ever built. He smiles that soft smile of his and those intense blue eyes flicker with the memory.

"A man came to me," he begins. "Oh, it must have been 1969 or 1970. His name was Paul Blizzard, had a summer home in Pocahontas County. He was the one that repaired the clock in Monticello, you know, Jefferson's home. It is the clock where the weights go along the wall and down into the basement. He came to me and said, 'I have a clock that needs a case. Would you be able to make one?'

"Well, I said that I never had, but that I would try. I made it out of particle board. That is what I had around, because I was doing a lot of formica work at the time. And it was heavy. Really heavy. But I made that clock case for him for his old Regulator clock. And after I made that first clock case, I got the bug! Just recently I made a replacement for that clock because the first was so heavy.

"Then another time Paul brought me a piece of molding from a clock he had. He wanted to restore the clock, but he didn't have enough molding, just this broken bit. Well,

if he had given me a piece that was 180 degrees, it would have been easy. You know, halfway around a circle, you can find a center, a radius, but all he brought me was a broken-off piece.

"Well, I thought about it for awhile. I laid in bed at night and I finally figured it out. I made myself a tool.

"Here, this is how it works," Fred explains. "If you put the piece of molding here and strike a line and strike another line here, where the lines intersect, that's the center of the circle, and that's where you draw your radius to make the arch for the molding. After the fact, I found there already was such a tool, but I didn't know that the tool existed."

"Lots of men play golf, they play ball, or go to bars. I like to spend my time building something."

Next Fred moves over to his work table. Here is a mantel clock that he is working on. And what a mantel one would have to have to hold this big piece! He is making it to take to a cousin in Michigan. There it will be placed in a church auction. The movement alone costs about $600. Every year he makes a clock for the auction.

It is noon, and I am treated to the clock's lovely chimes. On the sides and at the back Fred will put in glass inserts to see into the workings of the clock. He hopes that it will be placed on a mantel with a mirror behind the clock, making it possible to see inside.

"I do it because I love the wood," Fred acknowledges. He gives away all his clocks. He says no one could afford to pay him what the clocks are worth. They are "too expensive to do for the money," Fred says. "Lots of men play golf, they play ball or go to bars, but I like to spend my time building something that I can look at."

And it's not only clocks the he builds. "Once a friend had a beautiful antique cherry bed and dresser with all that fancy scroll work. Well, the trim from the dresser was broken and he said to me, 'I have a challenge for you.' He wanted me to try and match the scroll work on the headboard. 'That *is* a challenge!' I told him. But I did it! I was so proud! It looked just like the bed. That was one of my biggest achievements.

"What's the sense of making something that will only fall apart?" says Fred. "It is really rewarding to create something beautiful to look at. When I make a clock I make it so it will be around for a long time. I build it so it will last 100 years. Then recondition the clock and it will work for another 100 years!"

With a time scale like that, it is lucky that Fred has several apprentices who are learning to make clocks in the Reichenbach tradition. Douglas Hervey, a retired water department supervisor for the town of Wellsburg, is one of the newer trainees. Retirement set his creativity free, as well. And then he read an article in the Sunday *Wheeling News Register* in March 1995. It was about a clockmaker in Triadelphia who was celebrating his 80th birthday.

Doug called and was told, "Come on up and see me!"

So he went, and for the last year Doug has been going back. "He's been like a dad to me," he says of Fred. "He's never said, 'No. No, don't come back; we can't do that; no, you can't borrow that.' Anything I wanted to borrow, he'd loan to me. I've gotten 40 years of experience since last November."

Doug says that he helps take care of things around the shop, sweeps the floor, and is thrilled to work with this master craftsman. And what he learns is not only about wood.

"We glue something and then we sit down and talk," says Hervey. "All the designs are his own thinking. No one showed him. Fred thinks about a problem, maybe for months at a time. He thinks about it, and works it out."

By all accounts Fred Reichenbach is a good designer and he uses good materials. Usually he uses walnut for the clock cases, but he showed me a poplar base that he was beginning to build. He also uses maple. He bought 1,000 board feet from the Amish around Sugar Creek, Ohio. And when a cabinet shop in Wheeling went out of business, he bought their stock. "I have enough to last me the rest of my life," he figures.

A little Lincoln adorns a clock recently in the works at the Triadelphia shop. It is the first carved figure on a Reichenbach clock.

He walks me through the parts of a grandfather clock. First there is a base, the box on which the clock case rests. In old clocks like the one Fred's mother brought from her village in Scotland, dated 1770, the base is plain, no ornamentation or trim. The base may sit flat on the floor or stand up on legs.

The clock bases I saw in Fred's workshop were big, square, and massive. They had decorative panel

insets on three of their four sides. (The backs are always plain.) Some of the insets were rectangular and some had a curve on the top edge to match the curves around the faces of the clocks and the door panels.

"I don't use a router much anymore. I only use it to make templates," he says when I ask. "That's how anyone begins in this cabinet-making business, with a router. I'm beyond that," he says.

Then he talks to me about the joints in the clock base. "The joints are all splined instead of using dowels. That is, a piece of plywood goes down the grove of the joint, and is glued the whole length of the joint. With a dowel, there are only two points where there is any glue. This spline makes the joint very strong."

Next is the clock waist, or the middle section. Fred fastens the waist and the box together for a strong and stable clock case. Once though, he remembers, he kept the parts of a clock separate so that they would fit in the trunk of his car. He drove that clock cross-country to give to a friend.

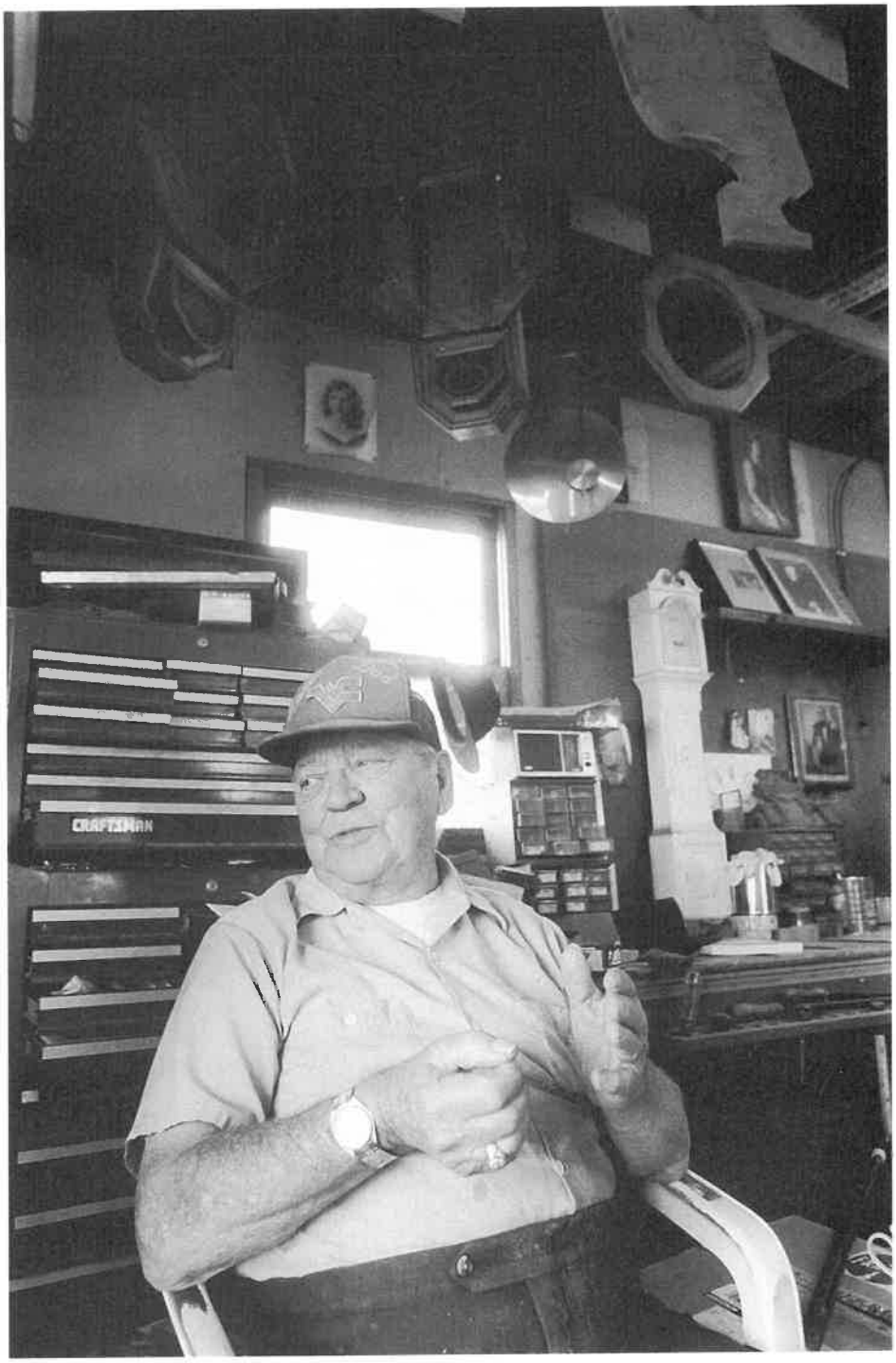
The waist houses the pendulum and the weights of the clock behind a door. The doors are as simple or as decorative as his mood dictates. One clock he showed me in his house has a daughter's name carved and gilded. Another has a glass panel with a small painted glass insert above it. Others are trimmed in his trademark heavy moldings. And one of the clocks-in-progress is waiting for beveled glass for the door.

"I make a template," he explains, "and I take it to a glass shop here in Wheeling. They send it away to be bevelled. And when it comes back, I put it right in the door."

For the backs of his clocks Fred uses $\frac{3}{8}$-inch veneered plywood. "Most use quarter-inch plywood, but it's not strong enough," he explains to me. And to increase the strength and sturdiness, the plywood is morticed in place.

At the top is the hood, which holds the face and is truly the crowning glory of the clock. Reichenbach's theory of clock building can be seen culminating here. The base, the waist, all the molding, the trim, the insets — everything! Every architectural feature on the clock must be in proportion to the face. It is the face that is the focal point. "After all, everyone looks up at the face," Fred reminds me.

You could say about the same for the clock man himself. Fred Reichenbach is someone to look up to, as an artist and as a person. "He never has anything bad to say about anyone," one of his apprentices says. "Fred is quite a fellow, very truthful. You'll never meet another one like him."



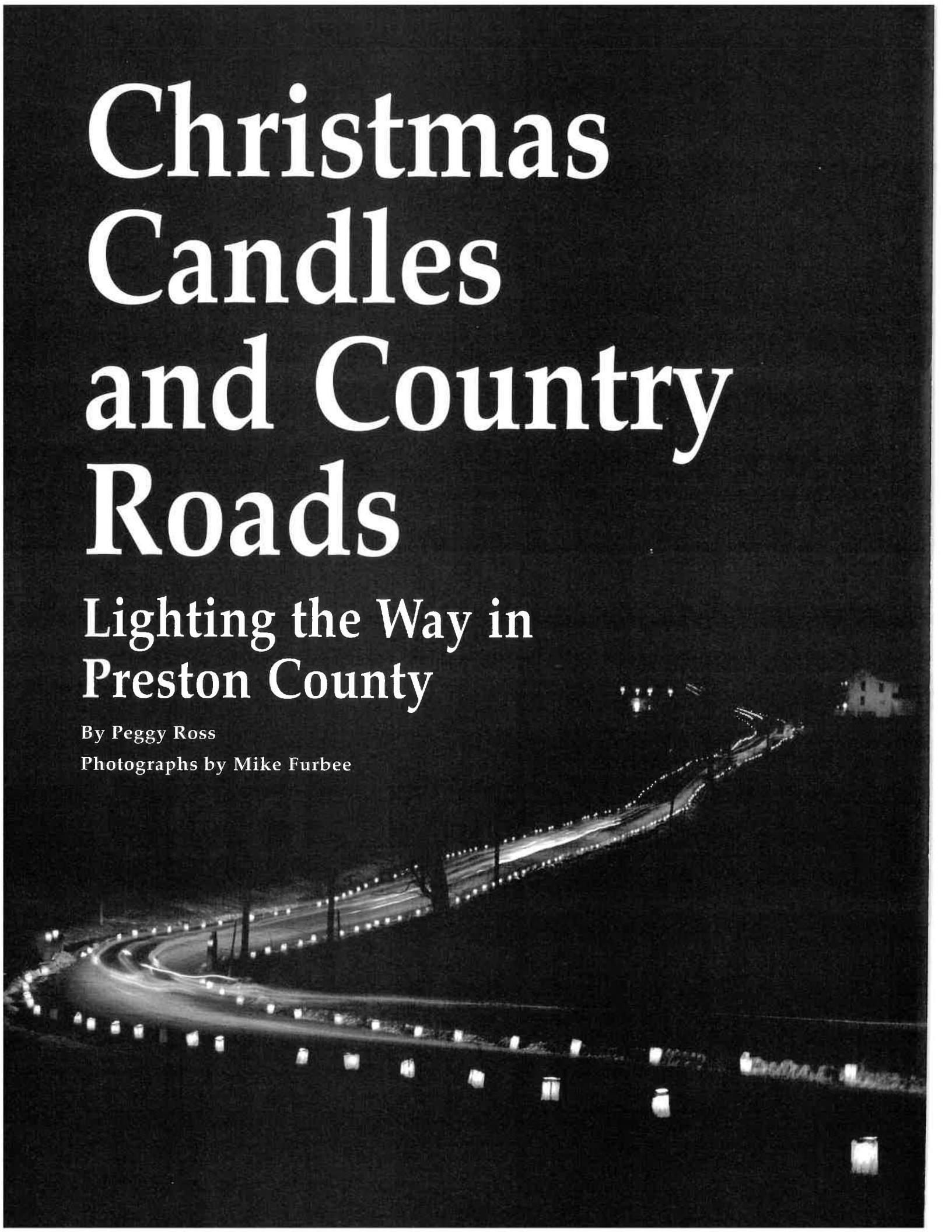
Sitting and thinking is the most important work done at the Reichenbach shop. "Fred thinks about a problem, maybe for months at a time," an apprentice says.

Christmas Candles and Country Roads

Lighting the Way in Preston County

By Peggy Ross

Photographs by Mike Furbee



Preston County is rugged, mountainous territory where the weather differs from one place to the next and snow is as much a part of everyday life as Grandma's buckwheat cakes in winter. Steep highway grades make coal truck brakes smoke and the drivers behind the trucks fume. Level spots are few and far between, and it's always a surprise to top a ridge overlooking easy, rolling countryside.

But Salem community occupies just such a place, its gentle topography tucked unexpectedly into the surrounding mountains. It's an out-of-the-way location. Situated off State Route 26, four and a half miles north of the Bruceton Mills I-68 overpass and 15 miles and one mountain away from the county seat of Kingwood, the turn-off to the Salem road may be passed without a moment's thought.

Except on Luminaria Sunday, that is. On that day, the last Sunday evening before Christmas each year, a couple of thousand candles twinkle enticingly to lure travelers onto the road to Salem.

Left: The road to Salem Church glows with Christmas lights on Luminaria Sunday. Photo by John Bright, courtesy Morgantown *Dominion Post*.

The warm glow of the luminaria, as the local folk quite properly call the glowing roadside lights, is the culmination of months of work. Settled snugly down in their bags of sand in the snow along the graveled road, the candles flicker softly for hours.

The farmers who built the first cabins here 200 years ago knew God's country when they spotted it, and they would have written off as a fool any man who told them God didn't personally guide them to it. Their church goes back a century and a half, to 1845. The original roster is filled with Thomases, Gibsons, Wolfes, Prinkeys, Seeses, Ridenours, Ringers and Glovers, and you will find many of those same names in the local phone book today. The church draws from nearby Pennsylvania, too. Longtime minister James Show (pronounced shall) lived in Marklesburg until his recent death.

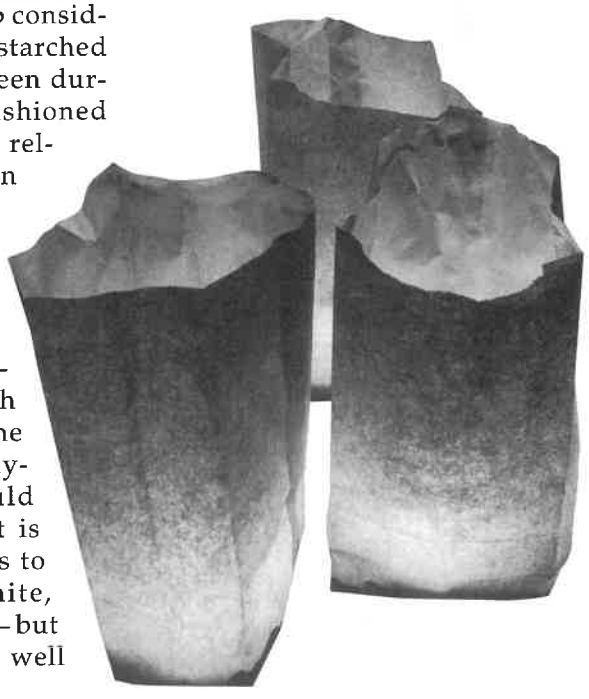
Earlier known as German Baptists — more commonly called Dunkards by others — today the congregation is affiliated with the United Brethren. Once so rigid in its beliefs that a man could be, and in fact in Salem was, censured for walking in his fields on Sunday, the church has loosened up considerably. Only an occasional starched white prayer cap can be seen during services now. Old-fashioned black bonnets have been relegated to the display case in the social hall as an interesting bit of church history, along with the footwashing tubs and photographs.

Yet, those rigid old standards probably did as much to form the character of the present community as anything else a person could point to with certainty. It is fashionable in some places to deride "WASPs" — White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants — but WASP ways remain alive, well and unapologized for here, where they continue to be admired as a positive influence. Salemites, and indeed most Prestonians, see nothing wrong with hard work, devotion to God, family, and community, and living well.

Beulah Grace Wilson Dobson, a great-granddaughter of Jacob Thomas, local settler and early minister, has the original, handwritten Church Book from 1876 to 1900. Some of the discussions were so sensitive that Brother J. A. Ridenour, who obviously was a board member but also was under investigation, scrawled this order across several pages: "Br. William Thomas, you will please take all this out as the church has ordered."

Brother Thomas did as he was told only to the letter of the word. The pages were indeed ripped out of the book, but kept inside the covers. So we know the nature of Brother Ridenour's shortcoming and that it had to do with the appearance of pride and that he denied it. We also know that the board decided to settle the matter by choosing half the committee to make a finding and allowing Ridenour to select the other half, which was democratic.

Witnesses were called but the testimony, laboriously recorded by



The church at the end of the road, as it appears today and in earlier times. The church, built in 1890, is shown surrounded by cleared fields in the September 1909 photograph.

hand, was as much gossip as truth about a subject that appears to the modern observer to be trifling at worst. A week later, the men (who opened their meetings with a prayer and closed them with a song) met again to sustain the charge against Brother Ridenour. "He promises to not advocate pride again," the secretary wrote. And that was the end of that.

It couldn't have been much fun to be called before the church board. Made up of one's neighbors, the panel had authority to oust members from the congregation forever and also wielded a heavy influence in the community. The summonses were not uncommon, either, and were handed out for a variety of sins.

Take the case of Brother Peter Boger, who appeared In January 1877 to defend himself against "keeping a disorderly house by allowing plays, etc.," or Brother Jas. Guthrie for "allowing parties." Some people were charged with "telling untruths," "using profane language and ill-treating...family and neighbors," "for getting drunk," or "dancing." Many of those charged were identified only by initials, so we don't know today which sisters were censured for wearing "fashionable hats instead of bonnets." But we do know that in Salem the straight and narrow was exactly that.

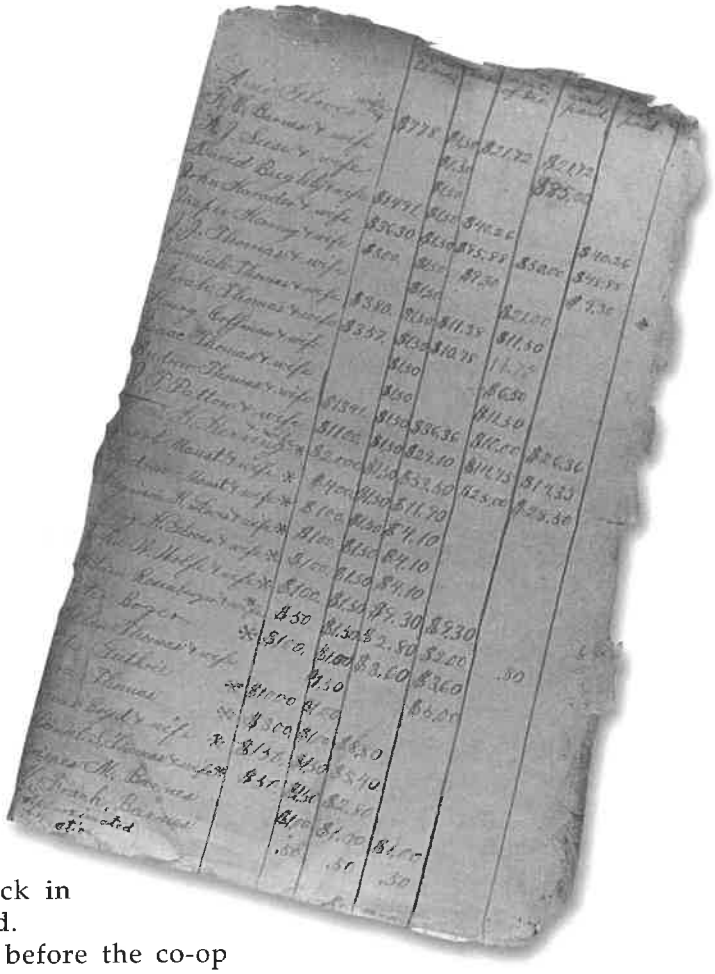
When Sister Ridenour was charged with swearing and abuse of a neighbor in July 1877 and the board "sustained the charges after examining her," she told them to strike her name from the church roll. After some consideration, however, she relented and asked to be restored to membership. After all, the church was the heart of community, not to mention the cradle of the soul.

Board members, themselves chided, charged and reprimanded by their peers from time to time, were not without heart. Even if the sinners pleaded guilty, all they had to do to remain in good standing was to promise to go and sin no more. Thus when Peter Boger was convicted of "sending for whiskey at his coal hauling," he acknowledged his fault and agreed to do better. All this is recorded in the ornate penmanship of the time.

Admonishments were a form of caring. Board members visited the homes of certain members in danger of moral slippage, charging them forthrightly and urging them to do better. An occasional family had to be told to take care of a relative, and if that was not possible or there were no relatives, the board appointed overseers. No person went uncared for or unloved. Money, taken from the church's taxation of members, was set aside for that purpose.

It's an interesting bit of fact that the German Baptists, like the Amish today, didn't hold with settling dis-

Beulah Grace Dobson is the great-granddaughter of one of the church founders. She has early church records in her possession, including the account of church tax collections at right.



putes in the courts. Wherever possible, they resolved matters among themselves, allowing the religious leaders in their midst to sit in judgment.

And tight-knit Salem shared many things besides its faith. Farmers all, they relied on one another almost as much as they did on themselves. They threshed, hayed and raised new houses and barns together; they even took to buying their fertilizer together once the trains began running within close enough distance to make such a thing feasible. They pooled their money, forming the North Preston Farmers' Club, a co-operative buying venture.

A few years ago Scott Prinkey recalled those days, "I was not much more than a tad when I took the wagon to the hard-surface road to meet the farmers coming back from the train that brought the bulk fertilizer to Summerfield, Pennsylvania. The group was in its earliest stages when my father joined back in the '20's," he said.

It wasn't long before the co-op evolved into a social club that sponsored annual picnics that came to include a carnival, and an annual oyster supper. In 1928, the year of the first oyster feed, the men went to Baltimore for the mollusks. Because there was little refrigeration, the dinner — then open to members only — had to be held in cool weather. The suppers took place in the church kitchen and then the schoolhouse, and as attendance grew, in Noah Thomas's big barn.

Farmers have prospered since they cleared enough trees to build their first cabins 200 years ago. They knew God's country when they spotted it.

Old Mister Thomas grew concerned over smoking in his barn and gave the club a 99-year-lease on a piece of his property, where the members built a clubhouse. The building, lovingly cared for and sparkling like just about everything else in Salem, stands surrounded by huge trees to this day.

"My father helped saw the lumber for the building," Mr. Prinkey said. "Chester Thomas and Noah, Joel Bigley, Charlie Thomas, Cal Younkin and others donated stuff and sawed wood for it. The community stepped in to help. Henry Glover was the head carpenter." Henry lived in Clifton Mills, just a few miles away on Big Sandy Creek.

The oyster supper is still around. At first, "the cost was one dollar

The historic North Preston Farmers' Club clubhouse is another center of the community.

per family," Mr. Prinkey recalled, adding that "some families had 10 or 12 kids." It must be noted, though, that oysters used to cost about $2 a gallon. "Now they're $44 to $46," Ida Faye Hileman, who drives to Morgantown to pick them up, said. Her son, Richard, has been president of the co-op for some time.

Over the years, word got around about the satisfying feasts and it wasn't long before folks other than members began to come. On the second Saturday in October, the women of Salem gather to cook what has grown to be about 350 meals. Sometimes signs advertise the event, so strangers turn out Salem Road to chow down elbow to elbow with the local people.

Of course, the price has gone up, except to members. They eat free on the basis of their dollar-a-year club membership, and with the additional consideration that they've contributed all the labor.

"It's a lot of work, but we enjoy it," Hileman said. "It's wonderful to have a bunch who work so well together. After dinner, all club members jump in and help wash the dishes, clean, take down and stack the tables, and sweep. You don't have to ask."

But even the oyster supper wasn't the first big event the community held. The gigantic annual picnics came first, more than likely an outgrowth of summer Sundays when even unexpected visitors were taken home from church and fed.

The late Alma Thomas Miller, author of *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, was born and raised in Salem. Out of the state and out of the country for much of her adult life, the things Alma missed the most were connected with the church and community doings of her youth.

"Going to the Big Picnic and becoming a teenager all in one day was almost too much!" she wrote in the 1978 fictionalized biography. As with every other event, a lot of the work fell to the women. "By 10:30, we had prepared six fried chickens, huge bowls of potato salad, gallons of baked beans, chicken dressing, six dozen deviled eggs, all kinds of fresh vegetables from the garden, sweet rolls hot from the oven, four butterscotch, three chocolate and two lemon pies, and four layer cakes."

Undoubtedly, other families did pretty much the same. "Bring your own lunch," the notice in the paper always said, but very few people outside the community did. The women always cooked accordingly,

Richard Hileman is president of the North Preston Farmers' Club, which puts on the annual oyster feed.

Alma wrote.

"Over 10,000 people came," Scott Prinkey added. "We had a stand, and they'd bring in soft drinks for two days, and they brought in ten-gallon containers of ice cream packed in ice inside big tubs."

Alma Miller also wrote about the church's Love Feast, an event of a strictly religious nature.

Anyone raised in a Christian church knows about communion, but the Love Feast is something else again. The Brethren observe both, and neither is taken lightly. Alma wrote that the Love Feast "required days of both physical and spiritual preparation." Foot washing is part of the ritual — the part that guarantees humility.

In Salem's early church records, expenditures for the Love Feasts are carefully noted. Back then, people from all over the district, at least four congregations, joined together for the occasion. The week before the feast, an elder visited each member's home to ask this question: "Does any member of this household hold any enmity against any person or harbor a grudge towards a neighbor?"

Hearts were to be searched. Each had to be free of such feelings and filled, instead, with the spirit of forgiveness, reverence and devotion before sitting at the Lord's table.

In 1878, the church board bought four sheep, 275 pounds of flour, three quarts of wine, six pounds of coffee, oats, seasoning and lamp oil for the feast. The tab was $47 and change. Church benches had been arranged so that every alternate one could be turned to face another, with a table in between.

"Almost everyone had a part in the preparations," Alma wrote. The deacons and their wives cooked the mutton and baked, cutting the unleavened bread into strips. Children were set to putting out the little wine glasses, helping prepare the fresh linens, and placing towels and songbooks on each bench. Other women made sure the dishes were clean, foot pans out of storage, and the homemade soap cut into little squares.

On Sunday morning, the service was one of self-examination during quiet meditation — each person determining for himself whether or not he was worthy of communing with his brother. That evening, by six Alma wrote, the church was filled — the women wearing the little white prayer caps that covered their long, piled-up hair. Even in hot weather the men wore heavy suits, for the service specifically called for a laying aside of coats in order to wash a brother's feet. The men washed men's feet; the women, sitting on the other side of the church, washed women's. When it was finished, the congregation sang, gave thanks, ate the Love Feast and then observed communion much as other churches do.

Things are done a little differently today — the feast is served in the hall and it's usually roast beef, not mutton. Footwashing is still part of the service.

There are generations of tradition inside the little white church, being passed on to a congregation full of children and young people. So, in

Folks from the church and club gather with lucky visitors each October for the annual oyster supper.

"An Act of Christian Love:"

The Footwashing

Writer Alma Thomas Miller grew up in the Salem Church and left the following account of footwashing at the Love Feast:

By six o'clock the church was filled, the women sitting on each side of the tables to the left of the aisle in their starched Sunday dresses, their long hair neatly arranged under little white net prayer coverings, for it was a sin for a woman to pray with her head uncovered. Mamma was very emphatic about the strict observance of this rule and draped the corner of the bed quilt over her head when she knelt to say her nightly prayers.

On the right the men looked uncomfortable in their good dark suits this hot, late August evening, but this was one of the few occasions when a coat was required for a man must lay off his garment when he washed his brother's feet, just as Jesus had done when he washed the feet of his disciples.

Tubs and towels come out twice a year for the footwashing at Salem Church.

Miriam sat with sister Jane, Lucy Wolfe, and three or four other good friends, while Mamma, Lucy's mother, and several of Mamma's friends sat at the same table to help the young ones with the rituals. As she looked out over the white-covered heads of the women above the white linen tablecloths spread both under and over the food and the sacraments she thought, "It looks pure as the driven snow." She had often wondered just what driven snow was, but the way she figured it according to the Bible if it was driven that apparently made it pure, and this was surely a pure occasion all etched in these little hills of white.

Papa, the Reverend Mr. Replogle and another visiting minister sat on the three high-backed chairs behind the pulpit. Since Papa was the presiding elder of the congregation it was his duty to begin the services. Miriam was proud of him as he introduced the first of the evening's sacraments and then read in his clear, expressive voice from the Book of John.

"He laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Dozens of tin oblong foot pans scraped along the wooden floor as they were dragged from under the tables. The women demurely removed their stockings while the men laid aside their coats. Almost in unison the persons at the ends of each table stood and tied the long towels that the ladies of the church had made from yards of white linen toweling around their waists, letting the long end hang to the floor. Miriam watched Mamma as she gently washed and dried first one foot and then the other of her good neighbor, Cora Wilson, who was sitting beside her. When she had finished Cora rose, the two women embraced and kissed, and Mamma took the towel from her waist and tied it around the waist of her friend who in turn humbly washed the feet of her neighbor.

Across the aisle no one thought it unusual for these brusque, strong farmers, who had been taught from childhood not to show emotion, to be embracing and kissing, for this was an act of Christian love.

Excerpted by permission from Enough Is as Good as a Feast *by Alma Thomas Miller, McClain Printing Company, 1978. You may order copies for $14.95, plus $3 shipping and handling, by writing to Linda Benson, 104 Brown Avenue, Kingwood, WV 26537.*

such a place as Salem — such a spectacular piece of God's good earth peopled by folks who know what they have — is it any surprise that along about late summer a group begins assembling the materials they will need to assure that the following Christmas will be as bright as the last?

It's a sizable job. Retired school teacher Jane Murphy, who sees that the church bulletin gets done, said that last year's luminaria required "two-and-a-half tons of sand, 2,000 six-inch candles, the same number of paper bags with the tops folded down, and lots of empty one-pound peanut cans.

"We budget $300 for it," Jane said, "but that's not been spent in all the years we've done it." People donate generously for the cause.

"This past year, I actually think we started in August or September," June recalled. Working in the picnic shelter and using the peanut cans, people make short work of bagging the sand. Then the bags are stacked and stored wherever there is a dry, roomy spot. Later, the candles are added. Finally, on the last Sunday before Christmas Eve, teams set the bags out at 10-foot intervals beginning at about 4:00 p.m. and the candles are lit. Only once has rained stopped them.

"It doesn't take long with so many people participating," said Genevieve Gibson, Beulah Grace's cousin and also a lifelong church member.

Luminaria Sunday is special all day, according to Mary Lebnick, who has decorated the church for years and who writes for the bulletin. She creates green wreaths for the doors, pine ropes for the railings and greens for the candelabra, as well as table arrangements. Christmas dinner is served after morning service that day.

"Snow makes it nice," for the luminaria, June said. "They'll burn seven to 12 hours."

She's absolutely right. The snow makes it beautiful, and you can just about count on snow this time of the year in Preston County, particularly in this highland part of the county. Imagine coming upon what appears to be a lonely little country road that doesn't seem to be going anywhere much. Imagine

Every year on the Sunday before Christmas, candles light the way to the little white church. Once a good thing is started in Salem, it rarely ever stops.

the dusky darkness being offset by the flickering lights of 2,000 candles. The road winds through the snowy countryside as you follow it, curiosity making you do so. At the end, in a tree-lined, sheltering cove you find the proverbial little church in the wildwood.

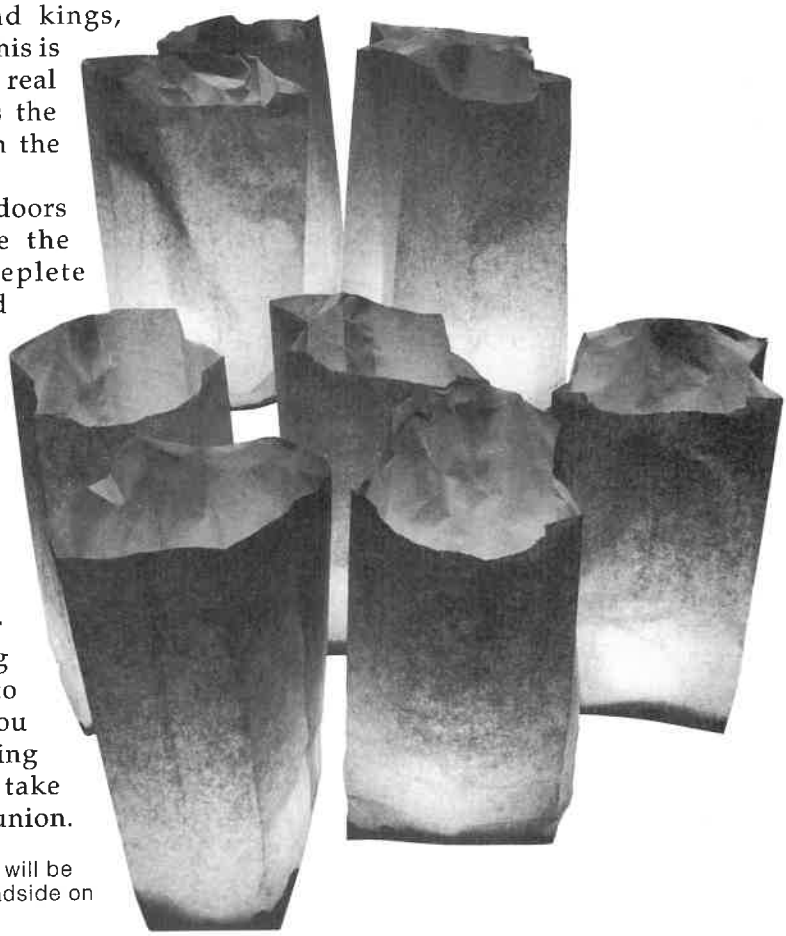
Children of all sizes are dressed like shepherds and kings, Mary and Joseph. This is farm country, and real live lambs bleat as the kids shiver a bit in the cold.

When the church doors open you glimpse the lovely interior, replete with a tree decorated with symbolic white ornaments up front. There is an overflow crowd. You must go inside. This is what your grandparents told you about but you never expected to see for yourself. You sing carols, you listen to the old message; you bow your head during prayer, you even take part in holy communion.

You are heartily made welcome and invited to stay after for cookies and coffee or punch in the hall, and you'll do that, too. While you're there, the folks will stop by to chat.

And you? Well, you get more than the feeling of welcome; you get the feeling of Christmas — that feeling of warmth, goodness, kindheartedness, and caring that didn't just happen overnight. You understand that you've just been part of something special, something deep and inherent in the hearts of the people. And not only that. You realize that all over West Virginia, and maybe all over our nation, there are little communities like Salem standing ready to welcome strangers and share their best.

Your heart lifts with hope, and you get back in your car humming a stanza of a long-forgotten carol, knowing you've already received the best present ever because you, like those three men of old, followed the sparkling light.



Thousands of luminaria will be displayed along the roadside on December 22.

Remembering a Mountain Neighbor:

The Man from River Ridge

By Richard L. Murchison

Little did I realize, as I wound my way practically straight up that mountain road in Summers County seven years ago, that at the top lived a most remarkable man.

My wife and I were ready to purchase a dream, our own mountain hideaway. I had just changed careers and was ready to explore another way of life. I did not know I was also going to explore a simpler time, before telephones, modern appliances, indoor plumbing and the automobile. But that was the world Carlean Keaton helped open up to me.

The first time I met Mr. Keaton was in 1989 when we were looking at a house for sale on River Ridge, near Pipestem. We were inspecting the property when a 1979 Chevette pulled up. Mr. Keaton, then 79 years old, walked over and said hello. We introduced ourselves and through a lengthy exchange of small talk, I got the feeling this man was very knowledgeable about local affairs. He had lived his entire life on River Ridge, and his home was only a half-mile from our prospective purchase.

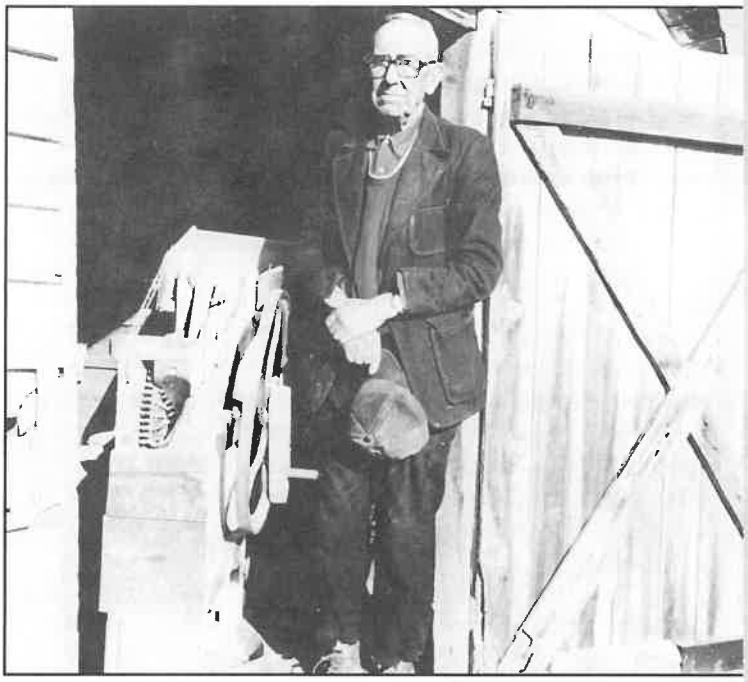
"The happiest day of my life was when my daddy sold the sawmill."

I asked if he knew anything about the house's well, as I was concerned about the availability of water on top of a mountain. He immediately answered that he had been present when the well was drilled in 1981.

"This well is 212 feet deep and pumps 600 gallons per hour," he answered me. He had watched the well test when the job was completed. His words provided assurance and we bought the house. I later learned that he was everywhere on the mountain when anything new was going on.

As we began to spend summers and other special occasions on River Ridge, we saw a lot of Mr. Keaton. We came to treasure and love him.

Mr. Keaton had always been a mountain man. He was born in an old two-story frame house that enlarged and enclosed an earlier log cabin. His father bought the house in 1900, and Mr. Keaton lived in it his entire life except for the years from 1934 to 1960, when he lived next door.



Carlean Keaton shows off a corn sheller at his River Ridge farmstead. Photo by Richard Murchison.

During those 26 years Carlean and his wife, Faye, and three sons lived in a house he built on land beside his parents' house. After his father's death, his mother pleaded with him to move back in with her, asking him 12 times. He and Faye and the three boys agreed. He later sold his own place to a man from Princeton, who built a new house there and gave the old one back to Mr. Keaton. He dismantled that house in 1965, saving every board and nail. "I straightened out the bent nails to reuse," he told me.

During his adult life, Mr. Keaton had logged, farmed, operated a sawmill, plowed and threshed wheat. His family had one of only two tractors in that area in the 1940's. Years earlier he also did a little moonshine making, he admitted.

It was a hard life. He recalled one time in the summer when he was hoeing a cornfield under a broiling sun, with no air circulating, that he got so hot the sweat soaked every inch of his clothing. "I tried to work even harder to see if I could get the sweat to run in a steady stream," he said.

He remembered how hard he worked as a boy. He worked for no pay at his father's sawmill — delivering barrel staves ten miles to Hinton by driving a wagon and team of horses by himself at age nine. He labored in the mill until he was 20. "The happiest day of my

life was when my daddy sold the sawmill," Mr. Keaton said.

In a logging accident in the '40's, Mr. Keaton lost the sight in his right eye, and he later developed a cataract on his left eye. But he was still the best rifle shot I'd ever seen. He had killed 47 deer over the years, seven with a .22 rifle, and even said he once killed a buck with a .22 at a distance of 225 yards. He practiced by shooting at one-inch ceramic tiles from a distance of 50 feet.

When I met him Mr. Keaton had been a widower for several years, living alone in that two-story house with 23 outbuildings and a barn. He had an outdoor toilet that the Federal government built for his father back in Roosevelt times. He heated his home with a woodburning stove, drew his drinking water from an outside well (one two-gallon bucket every two days), and used rainwater for his other needs.

He had an electric cookstove and a woodstove for a back-up, a 12-inch black-and-white TV, a radio and clock. He had no telephone. His electric bill averaged $4 to $6 a month, paid from the small Social Security check.

Mr. Keaton was the most financially conservative man I ever met, spending maybe $2,000 a year. Half of that was for medical insurance to supplement Medicare. Of the remaining $1,000, about $500 went for tobacco (he rolled his own) and for gasoline for his car, chain saw, and 1947 tractor.

He lived off his garden in the summer, growing his own potatoes, beans, corn, tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers. He froze and canned food for the winter. For meat, he killed whatever he needed — deer, turkey, squirrel, groundhog, rabbit and other game. He made the rounds of the many fruit trees on the mountain each summer, picking peaches, apples, damsons and cherries, and taking blackberries and raspberries from his berry bushes. His sons and neighbors made sure he got other food as well, but mostly he provided for himself.

Carlean Keaton's philosophy: "I don't buy anything I *want*, I don't buy anything I *need*, I only buy what I absolutely *have to have*." And he didn't throw much away. Rather than buy a new $6 tire pump, he made, and discarded, 25 gaskets before getting one that would fix his broken pump. Once he tied a kernel of corn to a mousetrap and caught 72 mice with the same kernel.

Mr. Keaton's directness and honesty of expression amazed and often startled me. Since I was a city fellow, he didn't know what to expect of my efforts to construct a raw lumber outbuilding on my property. He was in the hospital during construction and on my visits to see him I kept him informed of my progress.

When he was discharged he came straight to the house to see my work. I said, "What do you think?" He looked it over and said, "That's good, not what I was expecting!" I took it for a compliment.

Once, years ago, Mr. Keaton's mother had wanted to get shed of a rogue horse she owned. When the prospective buyer arrived, Mr. Keaton faced a dilemma — he didn't want the stranger hurt by the horse, but he did not want to kill the sale either. As the prospective buyer approached the horse, Mr. Keaton advised, "You want to be careful going around his right side."

The buyer, a former Western rancher and no doubt a horse expert, said, "You-all don't know anything about horses. I know all about them."

The man bought the horse, but it took him three separate trips before he was able to get the animal in the truck and keep it there to haul it away. Carlean later learned that the buyer drove straight to the railyards in nearby Glen Lyn, Virginia, and shipped the horse to a glue factory. So much for Western horse sense.

Mr. Keaton was a knife swapper as well as a horse trader. Several years ago, he told me, a door-to-door salesman had stopped by to sell him insurance. Mr. Keaton managed to withstand the sales pitch and even sold the salesman his pocket knife.

And he was quick, too, when he had to be. He once told me about the time he was making moonshine and he got word the law was coming to his still. I asked him if he got caught. "No sir. I was so far away it would take $1.50 for a postcard to reach me."

Several summers ago I invited him to accompany my wife and me to a lecture I was giving about the way of life on River Ridge. "I want to go but I don't want to get ready," he told me, implying that it would be a considerable chore for him to get spruced up in his cluttered house. "You couldn't find a milk cow in here," he said of his living quarters.

I learned to appreciate Mr. Keaton's ability to live a simple life, relying on his own initiative and practicality. He taught me a lot. Once I mentioned that I would love to own the entire mountain. "What would you do with it?" he asked, being a practical man. These days I find myself admiring his lifestyle and imitating parts of it. He was happy and content.

We could all learn from his example.

Carlean Keaton fell and broke his hip last year and he developed pneumonia and suffered a stroke. On October 24, 1995, he passed away. He was buried next to his wife, Faye, in the family cemetery on top of his beloved mountain.

Once I mentioned that I would love to own the entire mountain. "What would you do with it?" he asked, being a practical man.

Perry Cox

"A Good Photographer, Much in Demand"

By Mary Lucille DeBerry

Photographs by Perry Cox

Hans Peevey (seated left) and Ira D. Cox (in light suit) posed with Pennsylvania oil men in this 1919 portrait.

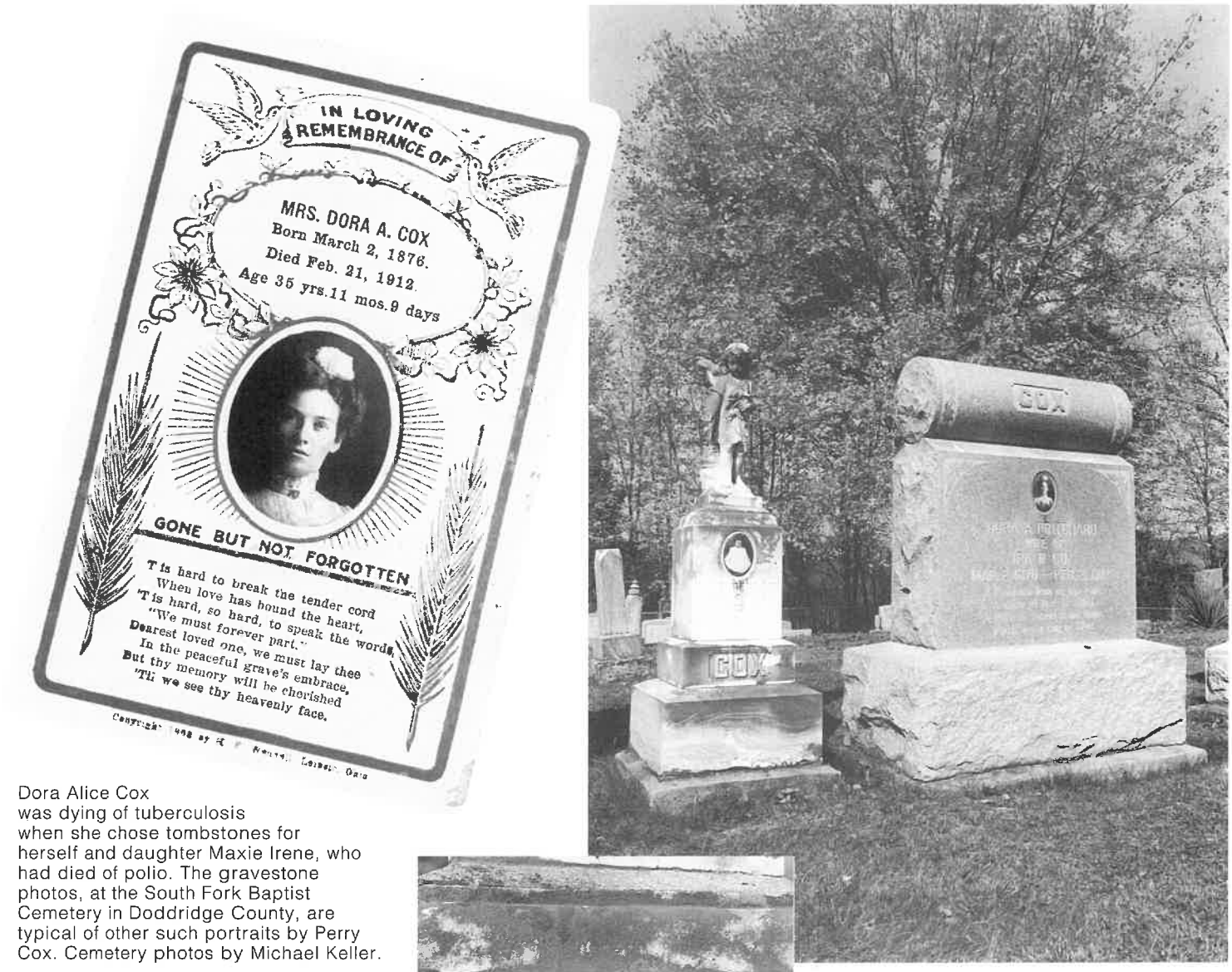
While others chased fortunes in oil and gas, Perry Cox chased pennies, making the photographs he loved. Now the derricks are gone and the oil fields quiet, but the priceless pictures remain.

Perry Cox and his wife, Rose Powell Cox, are buried in a hilltop cemetery in Auburn, the town where Perry kept a photographer's studio from the early part of the 20th century until his death in 1938.

For many years, the portraits Perry took of his parents, Oliver Perry and Sarah E. Kniseley Cox, were visible on their tombstones in the same cemetery. During the 1980's, however, vandals used the raised oval photographs for target practice and their bullets virtually destroyed the old pictures.

But not far away, in the South Fork Baptist Cemetery on the edge of Doddridge County, the portraits Perry made of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Ira Dale (Dora Alice Pritchard) Cox, and her young daughter, Maxie Irene, remain almost as vivid as when they were placed on those tombstones in the early part of the century. Perry also added his touch to many memorial cards, which at that time were given to family members and close friends much in the same way that leaflets are distributed at funeral homes today.

The Cox family portraits were familiar to anyone who visited the cemeteries. As a child, I saw them in my grandparents' big family album as well. Other pictures were printed up as postcards and stored in a shoebox. From a very early age



Dora Alice Cox was dying of tuberculosis when she chose tombstones for herself and daughter Maxie Irene, who had died of polio. The gravestone photos, at the South Fork Baptist Cemetery in Doddridge County, are typical of other such portraits by Perry Cox. Cemetery photos by Michael Keller.

I was interested in those pictures.

Perry Cox lived his entire life in that special corner of West Virginia where Gilmer, Ritchie and Doddridge counties come together. It is rolling farm country, a center of oil and gas drilling in Perry's lifetime and once heavily farmed. Perry grew up at Coxs Mills, where his father operated a grist mill, a sawmill and a general store. As an adult, Perry lived just a few miles over the hill at Auburn, where he took photographs for about four decades.

Perry's interest in photography apparently was inspired by another family member. According to the late Winnifred Brown Scott, who learned it from her neighbor, Mona Cox Reaser, Perry's older brother George had gone to Texas when he was young and became a photographer there.

When George came back to Gilmer County for a while, Perry worked with him and learned from him. George then decided to return to Texas and sold or gave his photography equipment to Perry. By that time, Perry was living in Auburn, so he began working in the little building next to his house. He took pictures, developed them in a way that has enabled them to retain their brightness, and he mounted many on durable grey mats.

My mother, Lucille Cox DeBerry, stayed, during the winter school terms from 1913 through 1917, in

Many of the Cox photos remain in Dora's elaborate family album (left), which has a little drawer in the bottom. One page in the album shows a self-portrait of Perry Cox beside a picture of his wife Rose. Family album photo by Michael Keller.

Auburn with her Uncle Perry and her Aunt Rose. Just a couple months prior to her death in March of 1991, she recorded information about the photographer and his wife.

"Uncle Perry thought of photography as something he loved to do," my mother recalled in the tape recording. "Aunt Rose made hats. She was rather an ambitious woman and she did not quite approve of all the time that Uncle Perry spent in the studio taking picture after picture.

"I remember people coming," Mother said of Perry's clients. "I remember kids screaming. I remember that he had a few toys in his studio. There were some wicker chairs and there were some backdrops. But it was dusty and I always sneezed. He didn't keep it very clean. And Aunt Rose never approved of my hanging around the studio too much, because I always sniffed and sneezed from the dust and she wasn't about to clean it. He could clean it himself.

"It seems to me, looking back, there were always people having their pictures taken. He used a camera with a black cloth over it that he hid behind and told you to smile. You didn't always smile. It might have been a little scary for a child. It was an old foldy-up accordion camera that stood on a tripod. When he got ready he put a glass plate in and stood behind the cloth and took the picture."

One of Perry's pictures shows my mother and a young playmate, none other than Winnifred herself. Mother recalled the occasion very well. "For that picture of Winnifred Brown Scott and me, he just plunked us down. We were playing in the studio with our dolls and he said, 'Sit down. Let me take your picture.' We did. That's the way we looked.

"Those stuffed animals that my father shot while big-game hunting in Idaho were taken to the studio," she added of the big-game trophies which are used as props in many of Perry's photos. "A lot of people had their pictures taken with

Lucille Cox (right), our author's mother, and playmate Winnifred Brown were captured by Perry's camera in 1917. Note the mountain lion rug from the oil men portrait.

those stuffed animals.

"Uncle Perry did his own developing, and his fingers rather bothered me," she continued. "They were always stained with the chemicals from developing. The ends of his fingers were always brown, just real brown. The studio had a little room that was the dark room. And when he was in the dark room, you left him alone; you didn't interrupt him in any way.

"Uncle Perry took an awful lot of group pictures. If people were having their reunion, the Odd Fellows meeting or whatever, and they wanted a picture, they came and got Uncle Perry to do it. And people would call him and he would go here and there."

Perry Cox documented the daily life of his community. "He took pictures of anyone and everyone or anything and everything that was around," Mother recalled. "He took pictures of this crowd that was out looking at my daddy's Model T Ford that didn't have any front doors. He saw this crowd up Main Street and he grabbed his camera and we went up and took a picture of it.

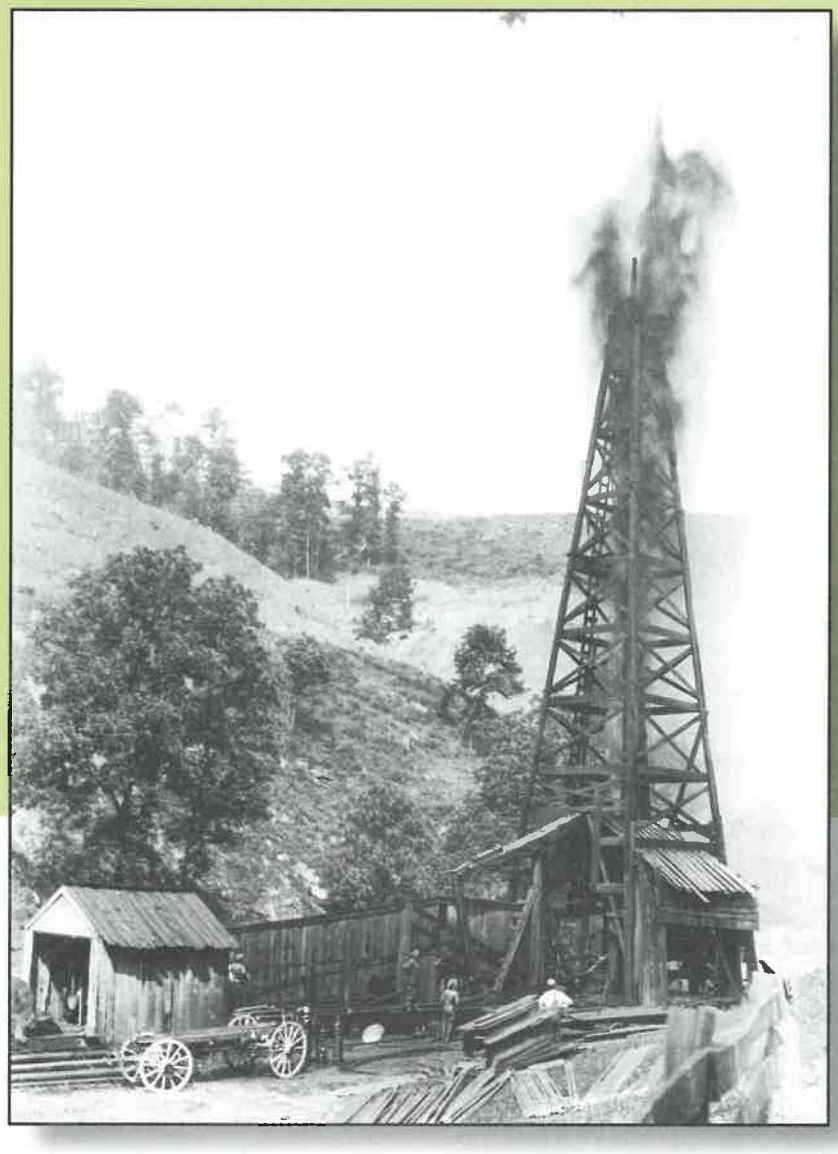
"He used a camera with a black cloth that he hid behind. You didn't always smile. It might have been a little scary for a child."

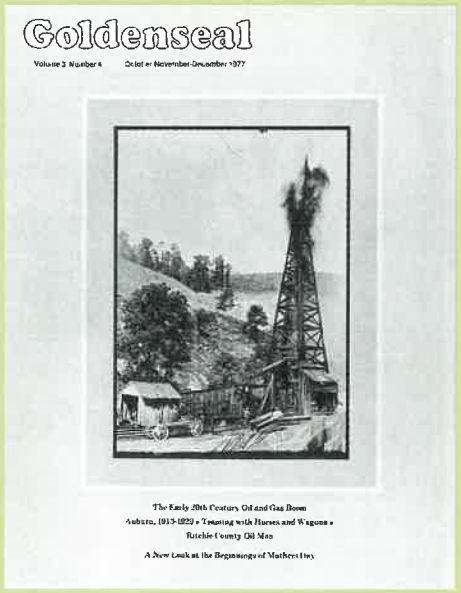
"He went to Coxs Mills to take pictures, and he probably got to Newberne," she estimated. "But I would say most of his work was done in a radius of within five to ten miles.

"The most famous picture, the one that has been seen all over West Virginia is the oil well gusher [photograph] made in 1918 that appeared nearly 60 years later in GOLDENSEAL. Ralph Eddy, who became a medical doctor in Ohio, drove him to the scene. Uncle Perry never had a car. He never drove a car. He never wanted to drive a car.

"That picture came about when my father, a wildcatter, drilled an oil well over at Coxs Mills, the first to be drilled there, and it came in spilling oil all over the bottom of Bowyer's land. Mrs. Bowyer was so excited, she ran out with her apron and said, 'Catch it boys! Catch it! Catch it!' She knew it was valuable stuff and it was going up in the air and going everywhere. And of course, she couldn't catch it. They got it shut in, and it had been such a wonderful exhibit of oil spraying out of the top that Uncle Perry wanted a picture of it."

So Perry wasn't there when the gusher first came in, and Mother reported that he needed a little help to get his dramatic photograph. She cited a letter to the editor following





The gusher, Perry Cox's best-known photograph, made a GOLDENSEAL cover back in 1977. Brother Ira D. Cox drilled the well in 1918, and according to family lore Perry had it uncapped for this formal portrait.

the initial publication of the picture as a 1977 GOLDENSEAL cover photo.

According to a letter from Ralph Eddy published in the January-March 1978 issue, Ralph drove his father Dr. N. E. Eddy and the photographer to the location, she recorded. "They unplugged the well to get that picture, and that was a very dangerous thing to do. It could have all blown and caught fire and ruined the well and even killed people. It was a very asinine thing to do, but he got the picture because either he or my father wanted the picture of the oil going out the top of the rig."

Rose Cox kept working on her husband to get into a more conventional line of work," Mother remembered. "With the insistence of Aunt Rose, he bought a furniture store and an undertaking business," she said.

"I very clearly remember he bought a black suit to do funerals. And his first funeral was a baby. He came back home and I can see him yet, taking off his stiff collar and his collar bones and saying, 'Now listen, Rose, I'm telling you one thing. This is the last funeral I'm ever gonna do. That baby looked just like a doll. I'm not having any more funerals or anything more to do with *dead* people. I'll keep the furniture store and I'll work in the furniture store but this undertaking business is out. No more.'"

Thereafter, Perry supplemented his income with other activities, more to his liking. "He had a theater in his upstairs part of the store. He showed movies, and he did this and he did that and the other thing.

"He had bees. But he didn't like chickens. Aunt Rose thought that they should have chickens and pigs for food, and he wasn't about to spend his time with chickens or pigs or any other animals. He didn't particularly like animals. And he wasn't a very good gardener either; he just never gardened much. He didn't grow very good vegetables and Aunt Rose wasn't very good at cooking or canning or pickling. Most of the people in Auburn were good at growing and using home-grown food.

"Aunt Rose made hats, in competition with Kate Ward who lived across the street and down the street," Mother recorded. "And they were good millinery women. They both made beautiful hats.

Robert Sommerville checks the door to the Cox studio, which stands empty today. The translucent panels let natural light into the studio in the days before electricity. Photo by Michael Keller.

"I loved it when Aunt Rose got her hat materials. I loved to watch her unpack them because there were feathers and flowers and vines, and they fascinated me. She made hats for me and for everybody. And she operated the telephone office. She was a pretty shrewd businesswoman.

"The only recreation that I ever remember Uncle Perry taking was camping and fishing. The Farnsworths across the street, Mark and Jewel Farnsworth; my Uncle Perry and Aunt Rose; and "Army" [Ormsby] and "Tude" [Susan] Hardman went to Leading Creek every summer. They had several pictures of fish they caught. The other families took their children along and they camped in tents.

"Uncle Perry loved to go fishing. Even though his family and friends hunted, he never hunted. I don't think he ever had a gun."

"A wildcatter drilled an oil well over at Coxs Mills. It came in spilling oil all over the bottom. Mrs. Bowyer ran out with her apron and said, 'Catch it boys! Catch it!'"

When Perry Cox died in 1938, the family sorted out his affairs. "My father had charge of settling the estate," Mother recalled. "My father felt a little bit like Aunt Rose did — that Uncle Perry spent too much time taking pictures and too much time in the studio developing them. Hours and hours and hours of time, and he didn't make much money. And my father was a pretty adventurous man and at that point he was mixed up in oil and gas. He was chasing big money while Uncle Perry was chasing pennies.

"In the rigmarole of settling the estate, the furniture store building was bought by my husband, Max DeBerry, and somebody else at public sale. They were going to tear it down and build a house. And they got a man over there to help, a good worker. They tore the furniture store down and stacked the lumber.

"Then one Sunday morning while we were eating breakfast, someone from Auburn called Max and said, 'We've got an awful flood over here and your lumber is causing a great problem. It's washing all over Auburn. Get over here and help us do something about it.' They never were able to salvage enough lumber to build a chicken coop.

"Bob and Myrtle Tingler Drane bought Uncle Perry's house. It's still in the Drane family. The studio may still be on their property," Mother

Plenty of people from north-central West Virginia treasure family photographs made by Perry Cox in the early years of the century, and some still recall the picture man himself.

Dean Joseph Gluck of West Virginia University remembers the Auburn photographer very well. Gluck is shown (above right) in a recent photo by Ron Rittenhouse and as a junior mule handler in Cox's studio in 1920.

Robert Sommerville, an Auburn native who now lives in retirement in Harrisville, was the subject of an endearing baby portrait (far right) made by Cox in the mid-1920's.

Robert is shown at right in a recent picture by Michael Keller.

Perry Cox, who made a living photographing other people at their leisure, took his own ease on the banks of Leading Creek. Here Rose and Perry (second and third from left) relax in the summer of 1911, with Mark Farnsworth (left), Jewel Farnsworth with son Lynn, and Tude and Army Hardman.

recalled, a fact later confirmed by Robert Sommerville.

"I never could find where the old black-and-white glass negatives went, except that they weren't sold to make greenhouse panes, something that was frequently done. The photographs, though, are owned by almost everybody who lived in Auburn during the time Uncle Perry was taking pictures."

In the course of remembering her Uncle Perry Cox, Lucille Cox DeBerry emphasized the importance of contacting some of the photographer's neighbors for further information. I later did this.

Linn Sheets, who still resides in the Auburn community, was born in 1910 and grew up on a farm located on the Toll Gate Road just outside Auburn. He remembers hearing a radio for the first time in Perry Cox's furniture store.

But, he says, "Mr. Cox was known for his photography more than for the furniture store. Everybody got a picture taken at the studio. He was always a very jovial person, friendly, and joked with children and adults as well. Everybody liked him very much. Any of the old homes around had several pictures taken by him in it." Linn and Oletha Sheets not only have Mr. Sheets's childhood photo taken by Perry Cox but also one the photographer took of their son James, who was born in 1933.

Robert Sommerville, who lived in Auburn from the time of his birth in 1923 until he moved to Harrisville in 1974, says that by the time he was growing up things were changing. The movie theater was on the other side of the street and was run by Hobart Hardman. He recalls that, by then, Rose Cox had ventured into yet another business and ran a restaurant in the upper side of the furniture store building.

"Now listen, Rose, I'm telling you one thing. This is the last funeral I'm ever gonna do. I'm not having anything more to do with dead *people."*

Robert's childhood portrait was made when he was only one or two. "I've been in there lots of times after that. We'd go in and talk to Perry. We boys liked to talk to him. All us kids. He liked to camp and fish and things like that," Robert recalled.

"He and Rose and that bunch went to Leading Creek, through

Perry Cox left a remarkable photographic record of daily life in an early 20th-century West Virginia community. Here Ira D. Cox drives Auburn's first Model T down the street in 1914.

Coxs Mills over toward Alice, on the road between Coxs Mills and Glenville. There used to be an old swimming hole and a big swing up in a tree. It was a real popular place to gather on Sunday. That's a thing they did quite often, they'd go fishing. That was all you had to do for recreation then. You couldn't take off and go miles away. Nobody had the money to, and it wasn't but seven or eight miles over to Leading Creek where they could go fish.

"I can remember one fish," Robert says. "It was three feet or more long. A catfish. There's a picture of that somewhere. Mr. Cox caught that fish. He was standing beside it.

"The main thing I remember about Perry, of course, was taking pictures. Everybody that had a reunion or church gathering, Perry was there with his tripod and his camera, taking pictures. He was the only one in the community to have professional equipment to do anything like that."

"He wasn't about to spend his time with chickens or pigs or any other animals. And he wasn't a very good gardener either."

Robert Sommerville emphasizes that the studio was next door but separate from the Cox home. "It stood alone and the Dranes moved it back behind the house, on the edge of the garden. On one side, it was some kind of white glass that provided light for his pictures. You see, they didn't have electric lights at that time, so he got his light for his pictures that way, from the sun. Those windows, if I'm not mistaken, are still in that building just like they were."

He points out that all the studio pictures were taken in front of the same backdrop with a distinctive trellis and house painted on it. He also remembers the darkroom as a little place sectioned off inside the building. "That's where he worked developing his pictures. You didn't bother anything in there.

"His pictures didn't turn yellow or fade like a lot of pictures did," Robert concludes. "Perry Cox was a good photographer and he was much in demand."

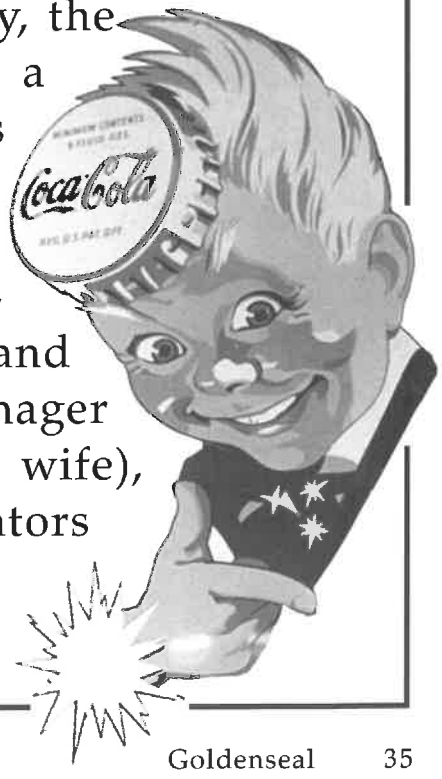
The Bottling Works

Keeping History on Ice in Romney

Text and Photographs by Carl E. Feather

It was a time when soda pop came in $6\frac{1}{2}$ ounce bottles, cost a nickel and was special enough to reserve for ball games, picnics and Saturday nights on the town.

The era was the 1940's to 1960's, the place Romney, where the Coca-Cola Bottling Works filled as many as 120,000 clanking soda bottles a week. In its heyday, the bottling plant served 1,200 accounts in a five-county region. Yellow delivery trucks left the plant every morning to deliver the refreshment to mom-and-pop grocery stores, hotels, restaurants, gas stations and red-and-white vending machines. Promotion and sales were everyone's tasks, from plant manager W. Roy Smith and his office manager (and wife), Reva S. "Effie" Smith, to the machine operators and route drivers.



Now those days are over. It's been

26 years since Coca-Cola has been bottled at Romney. America's insatiable thirst has made obsolete both the small bottles and the small town bottling plant. But at the Bottling Works museum, the memorabilia, slogans and machinery of the small-town bottling plant are preserved as if it were 1940, when the plant began bottling soft drinks.

"We say this was a Coca-Cola town — the plant, the employees, and those yellow trucks were just a real important part of the community," says Michael A. Smith, owner of the Bottling Works building. "It didn't matter what kind of activity was going on in the community, the truck was there."

Mike always tells visitors that he never planned to turn his fire equipment business into a Bottling Works museum. He was simply trying to save a building and find a home for South Branch Fire Equipment when he rented the landmark plant in 1990.

"I knew that I had to get in here and try to buy some time so I could arrange a purchase," he says. "I was really worried that someone would buy this place and tear it down."

Actually, Mike's interest in the building involves both family and community history. His grandfather, the late W. Roy Smith, Sr., came to Romney in 1934 from Front Royal, Virginia, to manage the first Coca-Cola bottling plant in Romney. The building Mike owns was built in 1939 and provided employment for his grandfather, his father, who was production manager, and others.

Mike Smith in his museum. The big sign is from a Hampshire County general store.

Mike practically grew up in the plant and knew every employee. A photo on display at the museum shows nine-month-old Michael Smith in front of the building with a bottle of Coca-Cola. "This place was like a family," he says. "Most of the employees were close and in turn, their children were close. Even now, if it were not for the support from family and my wife Linda, none of this would be possible."

"We bottled a high quality, fairly priced product. We knew our customers by their first names. That's the way things were done then."

Mike goes to a photo album and pulls out photographs taken in 1948. They are of the annual company Christmas party and show employees, spouses and their children waiting for Santa Claus to come down the "chimney." Actually, the elevator has been converted to a fireplace to facilitate his arrival. Santa is Edgar "Sheep" Pownall, who was the first employee of Coca-Cola in Romney. The late Pownall started there when he was 16 years old.

Another photo, from 1952, shows Pownall driving a company truck in the Romney Fire Company's Homecoming Parade. Reva, who volunteers as an exhibit guide, says Pownall is remembered as a champion product promoter.

"He'd go into a place where there were six or seven men and say, 'Come on guys, let's have a drink.'" Reva emphasizes that "drink" back

then meant "Coca-Cola." Pownall would split the cost of the drinks or pay the entire tab as a way of getting men to try the plant's products. "I don't know if it's true or not, but they say he drank a case of Coca-Cola a day," Reva adds.

The Bottling Works also used community events to promote the product. Reva said that such events were an important part of the marketing program. "This area was rural and nearly every fire company, church and organization had what we called festivals on Saturday nights," she recalls. "Our men would take a truck load of ice and leave the plant at four o'clock to work the festival."

Mike recalls working these events as a boy. "We'd set up a table and put the product in a tub with the chipped ice," he says. "We'd stay for the event and serve them, also. That was just part of what we did."

To recreate a bit of that nostalgia, Mike keeps a wooden tub full of bottled Coca-Cola on ice at the museum. "There's just nothing like an iced-down bottle of Coca-Cola," he says.

Soda pop was a treat, not a staple in those days, and the $6\frac{1}{2}$-ounce bottle was the standard measure of delivery. The 12-ounce bottles weren't introduced at the Romney works until the early '60's, Mike says.

The plant served a franchise territory that stretched in all four directions across the Eastern Panhandle. Four trucks left the plant every day to service accounts. "The farthest route went all the way to Sugar Grove, probably 70 miles," Mike says.

Drivers took care of their customers, even if it meant going an extra 17 miles to deliver 48 bottles. Mike said it was good marketing in the long run. "When that fellow's church had a social, they'd call us," he says. "We bottled a high quality, fairly priced product here. We knew all our customers by their first names. That's just the way things were done then."

Christmas party photos show glimpses of the interior of the plant, including some of the bottling apparatus. The object of the drinking game below was for one guy to hold the bottle and the other to drink, while not splashing the party clothes of either. Photographers unknown, late 1940's.

The Smiths would just as soon not mention Pepsi, but Reva admits that the main competitor was that "other cola," which was bottled in Petersburg. From working Saturday night festivals to stocking only Coca-Cola in their pantries, bottling plant employees were faithful to their own product. Reva and Mike remain so to this day. "I didn't drink anything else," Reva says. "I've had 'the other' once or twice at someone else's house. Rather than embarrass my hostess,

The Bottling Works truck was a big part of community events. Here employee Edgar Pownall drives a makeshift float in Romney's 1952 Homecoming Parade. Photographer unknown.

I didn't say anything. But I've never purchased one."

Although Coca-Cola was the plant's primary product and namesake, it was not the only soda produced there. Other flavors included ginger ale, grape, cream soda, strawberry, orange, root beer and lemon-lime. The crown on these beverages read "Crass," named after James E. Crass, the founder of the company that owned the Romney plant and its territory.

With the exception of Coca-Cola, the product was produced from scratch, using filtered water, sugar and flavorings. The Coca-Cola syrup, formulated at a factory in Baltimore, arrived in wooden kegs in the early years. Stainless steel drums eventually replaced the wooden barrels.

The second floor of the bottling works housed the sugar, syrup and filtration rooms. Water from the municipal supply went through a process to remove all taste, odor and color. It was chilled to 36 degrees, optimum temperature for accepting carbonation, then flowed downstairs to the bottling room. A "throw" of syrup followed by carbonated water went into each bottle as it passed through the line.

Edgar Pownall is remembered at the Bottling Works as a champion promoter. They say he drank a case of Coca-Cola a day.

For the flavored sodas, syrup was prepared from sugar, water and flavorings. "My dad can still remember sitting in that old syrup room at the first plant, stirring the orange to keep the pulp from clogging up the tube," Mike says.

Ginger ale was the most difficult flavor to bottle. "The little green bottles kept falling over," Mike says. "That little bottle was so much smaller than the others, they seemed to topple over easily. One would topple over and start a domino effect."

It took 12 people to run the Romney bottling works. Mike can still name off each position.

"We had four route drivers and one relief driver who worked in the plant," he says. "There were my grandfather, the manager; and my step-grandmother, the office manager. And there was one cooler service man." That employee, adds Mike, was responsible for maintaining the scores of vending machines in the field. The other four workers made the sodas, maintained the building and route trucks, and even built the wooden ice tubs. Everyone was involved in promoting and

selling the product.

Reva went to work there as a bookkeeper and secretary on November 15, 1940. She retired February 1, 1985, by which time the plant had become a distribution center only. "That was my life up there," she says. After his grandmother's death in 1948, a romance developed between Mike's grandfather and Reva. They were married in 1955. W. Roy Smith, Sr., died in 1979.

She recalls World War II as the most challenging years for the plant. Sugar was rationed, which halved the allocation of Coca-Cola syrup and sharply curtailed production of the Bottling Works own sodas. To compensate for the loss of sugar, they developed a corn-syrup based soda. "If the men saw five bottles of white syrup on a store shelf, they bought it and brought it in," Reva says.

Metal bottle caps — "crowns" to those in the business — also became scarce and had to be recycled. "It was rationing from the word go," she says. "The men would go around and empty every crown catcher and bring those into the plant. At night, the boys and the manager, we'd all sit there and take the cork out of the crowns and put the metal in a box. We'd send them back to Crown Cork and Seal to rework them. It was a terrible job, they smelled to high heaven."

Reva recalls those nights of sitting in the plant with a screwdriver in hand and an endless pile of crowns in front of her as part of the Romney civilian war effort. "It got kind of boring," she says. "But when you knew your job depended on it, you did it."

To perpetuate memories like these and educate a new generation about the Bottling Works' role in Romney history, Mike prepared an exhibit of memorabilia for the 1992 Hampshire Heritage Days. The exhibit opened on his 47th birthday, and for Mike it was like being reborn. More than 2,000 people visited the exhibit that weekend, convincing Mike that he needed to preserve more than just the building.

"People just loved it," he says. "We saw the opportunity to have a very nice attraction for the community and keep [the Bottling Works] alive somewhat as it was."

Mike hadn't been a collector of Coca-Cola or Bottling Works memorabilia. But Reva had. Stored in her closets and under her bed were decades of company promotions, advertising pieces and history. They, along with donations from Romney residents, former Bottling Works employees and visitors, provide us a hometown look at an international product.

Reva said many of the promotional items were given to her by the manager, who selected employee Christmas gifts from a Coca-Cola catalog. One of her favorite gifts was a set of Coke glasses with "Coca-Cola" in different languages. There's an aluminum, half-globe dish that has three Coke bottles for legs. It once held fruit at Reva's house.

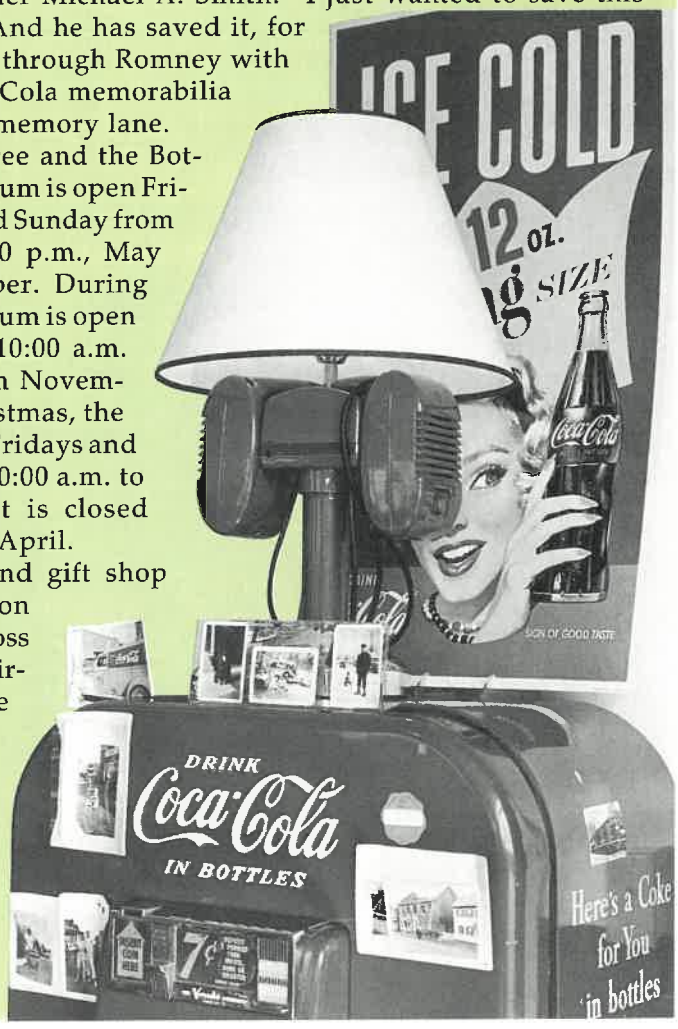
There are big items — like coolers, vending dispensers and the huge metal sign that a Bottling Works route driver installed on the side of a Purgitsville store in 1948 — and little treasures, such as radio station jingle tapes, toys, employee identification cards and bottle crowns. One corner of the museum is dedicated to a Coca-Cola Christmas, featuring commemorative ornaments, a scooter, serving

Visit the Bottling Works

The Bottling Works museum in Romney "happened unexpectedly," according to owner Michael A. Smith. "I just wanted to save this place," he says. And he has saved it, for anyone traveling through Romney with a thirst for Coca-Cola memorabilia and a trip down memory lane.

Admission is free and the Bottling Works museum is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., May through September. During October the museum is open every day from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. From November through Christmas, the museum is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and it is closed January through April.

The museum and gift shop are easily found on U.S. Route 50, across from the West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. For more information about the Bottling Works museum contact Michael Smith at (304) 822-4783.



trays, children's games and Santas.

Bernice Hamilton, who with her late husband Leonard owned and operated the bottling plant in Elkins, donated bottles, wooden cases and the first bottling machine to be used in the Elkins plant. Built by the Crown Cork and Seal Company, it dates from the late 1800's.

"If it weren't for Benice and Reva, a lot of things in here wouldn't be here," Mike Smith says.

Mike tries to keep the exhibit focused on items produced and used during the years the Romney Bottling Works was in business, the 1930's to 1980's. He said visitors who stop by and see the range of material in his exhibit often follow up with a donation from their personal collections. "People really are very generous as a rule," he says. "We have many, many things in here that belong to other people. They would rather, instead of having them in the basement or a closet, see them in here on display."

The exhibit now has so much memorabilia that it is getting crowded. But Mike says there are still two big items he needs to give visitors a complete picture of how America refreshed itself 50 years ago. The first is a soda fountain counter from a drug store, so 1990's youngsters can see how unbottled soft drinks were dispensed to their grandparents. The second is the bottling line equipment that once occupied much of the big room.

"I'd like to be able to show a bottling line and run it," he says. "We're not interested in actually bottling anything. We just want to feed bottles through the soakers, run them through the line and pick them off the accumulating table."

But the all-consuming goal for Mike right now is to keep the museum open with the dollar bills that trickle into the donation jar. There's no set admission fee for the Bottling Works exhibit, and the museum receives no outside funding. During 1995, approximately 9,000 people stopped by for a sweet sip of the past.

"What makes me feel good about doing this is there are a lot of people who bring their children in to show them what it was like when they were young," he says. "They come to remember and to teach their children how it was. That's why I simply have to put that bottling line in."

Mike said the museum has made a nice complement to the community's other major tourist attraction, the Potomac Eagle excursion train, which carries passengers along the South Branch in search of bald eagles. But one senses that Mike would be doing what he does even if there were not carloads of visitors pulling into the parking lot.

"This is a whole lot more than just showing things we've collected or saved," he says. "I think it was and still is a very important part of our community. I believe that this site had to be saved. Somebody had to do it. We just can't keep tearing down and replacing our past."

Mike Smith with Reva in 1946 (above) and enjoying a bottle of his favorite beverage today. Folks around Romney will tell you he hasn't changed a bit.

Getting Along Together

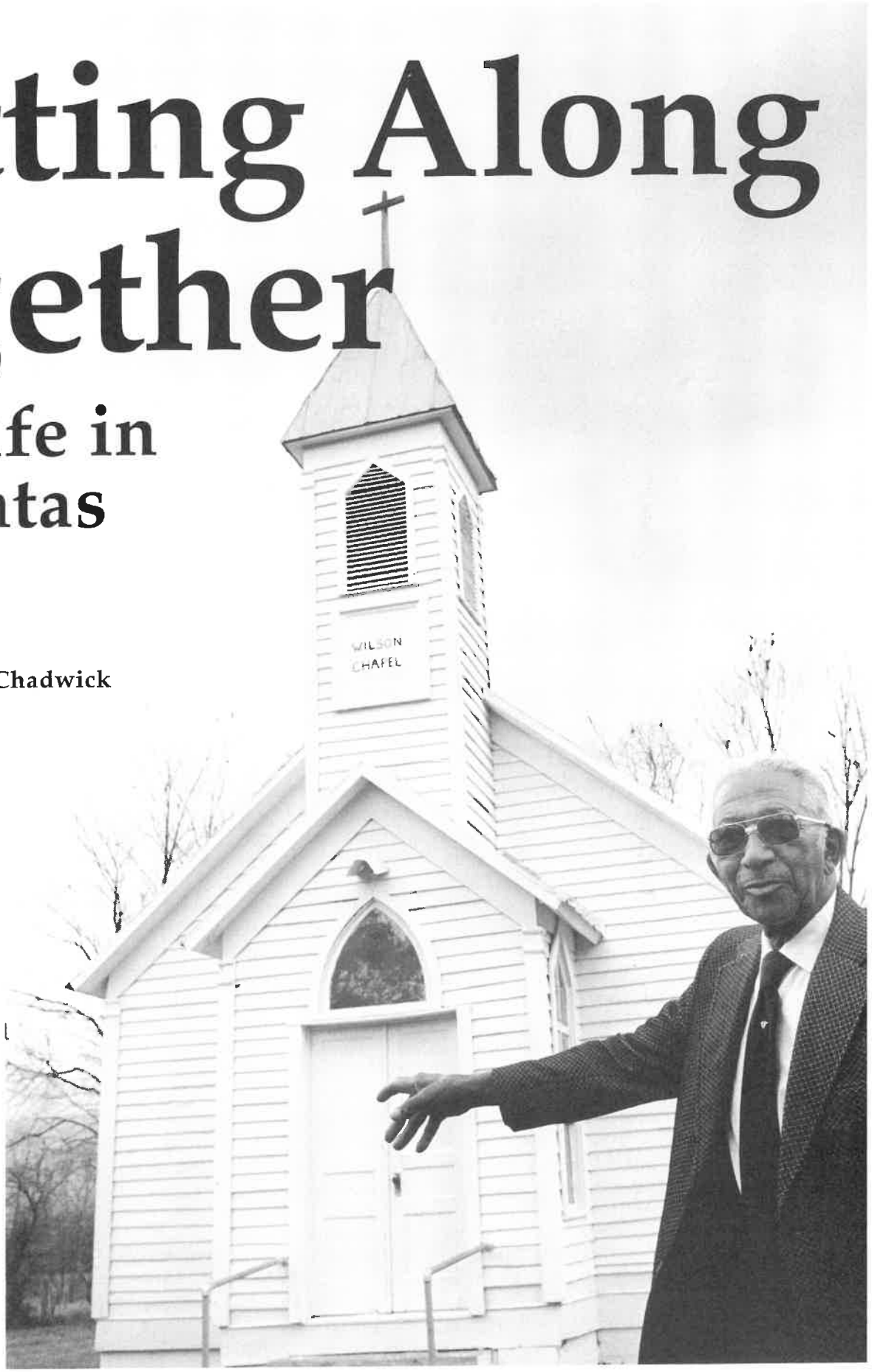
Black Life in Pocahontas County

By Maureen Crockett

Photographs by Doug Chadwick

There never were many black people in Pocahontas County, but those few made a difference. Their story goes back very early in local history.

On August 12, 1755, for example, a black man named Christopher died during an Indian raid. A few years later, a black called Nathan was at Fort Drinnon during an Indian attack. Indians laid siege to the fort, being careful to stay outside rifle range. After sundown, Nathan ran to take the news to the fort at Mill Point. He waded the Greenbrier River, climbed Marlin's Mountain, then



The Reverend Sanford Boggs points the way to the Lord's House. Wilson Chapel is one of several churches which once served Pocahontas County's black worshippers.

Like many West Virginians, Eleanor Stewart made her career out of state and has come home in retirement. She spends her summers at the family home near Marlinton.

re-crossed the river, his feat allowing soldiers to relieve the Drinnon settlers.

The next day, men took their families to the safety of Mill Point. Nathan and the Bridger boys scouted to prevent an ambush as the group moved along the trail. At the Notch near Buckeye, Indians silently crouched. Their two volleys killed John and James Bridger, but Nathan escaped; during the fusillade, he had bent down to tie his shoe.

Some of the stories are troubling. I had heard that records in the Marlinton courthouse tell of Peggy, a slave woman who may have murdered her newborn in 1825. Deputy Clerk Sandra Friel found the account for me. There were no marks of violence on the baby, but Peggy had vowed not to bear a child into slavery. The court found her not guilty, but it was divided in opinion. What happened then is lost in the mists of history.

After the Civil War, free black families drifted in and the migration increased with industrialization, helping to make West Virginia the only state south of the Mason-Dixon line to increase its black population between 1890 and 1910. Pocahontas County resident Houston Simmons said "blacks came to the county mainly to build railroads and to work at Denmar, the state hospital for black tuberculosis patients."

Something must have drawn them, for neighboring Webster County had no blacks in those post-Civil War years. Maybe Pocahontas was more hospitable to citizens of color. The late Andrew Price of *The Pocahontas Times*, wrote in 1929 that black people were a welcome addition, and that their presence increases the area's prosperity.

The community of Brownsburg had two schools for black children for a brief time before World War I. For a few years there were classes at Denmar. There were grade schools also at Cass, Greenbrier Hill, Seebert and Frank. One of the Greenbrier Hill teachers was Edna Knapper, for some years the only teacher in the county with a master's degree, said Jane Price Sharp, who is editor emeritus of the *Times*.

Tony Gum, who was a white student from Hillsboro, recalls those years of segregated schools and wonders about the lack of awareness. "We watched them walk in the rain past our school," he remembers. "The school bus didn't take them. We never thought it was wrong. It was just accepted. Our teachers didn't talk about it to us."

In Pocahontas County, after

eighth grade, black students had to go elsewhere for their education until 1955. Hillsboro High integrated that fall.

I was a white student there, a senior that year. We had no blacks in our class, but there was one in the junior class, Vernie Bolden. He not only survived, he prevailed and became a welcome presence on our football team, Remus Scott remembers. Vernie went on to college and into the ministry. Now a college professor in Virginia, Dr. Bolden has written five books, including two psychology texts.

One recent afternoon my friend Ancella Bickley and I were hunting for the site of Watoga, a black town along the Greenbrier River between Buckeye and Seebert. We made a lot of wrong turns on country roads. We followed complicated directions from clueless people.

Finally we found the flat meadow where the town had stood. The Watoga Land Association's plan was to build a black community on 10,000 acres. There had been a newspaper, *The Associated Voice*, even a school, but now there was just grass and wildflowers under a hot sun. Several decades after its beginnings all signs of the community have disappeared in the overgrown meadow.

There were several churches serving the county's black communities: Wilson Chapel Methodist and Macedonia Baptist in Brownsburg, also Pleasant Green Methodist on Seebert Lane, close to the grade school. The others were Stewart Chapel and Rising Mt. Zion Baptist in Marlinton, the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Frank, and the Cass Baptist Church.

My husband Bill and I visited the Pleasant Green Church one summer evening. The church has been closed for years, but is kept painted. The surrounding lawn is manicured. We peeked through the windows at wooden pews and a pulpit waiting for another gathering. A rope hangs from the bell tower, but the bell is missing.

The Broken Chain

Louise McNeill, the late poet laureate of West Virginia, was a daughter of southern Pocahontas County. McNeill was an accomplished historian as well as a poet, and her best work dealt with the history of West Virginia in verse form.

Among the poems she left was this one, dealing with the unseen nighttime passage of a runaway slave through the Greenbrier Valley during the Civil War.

Runaway

A stranger came to an inn one night,
While a rebel army swigged their rum,
Passed so softly on freezing feet
No one saw that a guest had come.

Shadows danced from the firelight, blended
Through pane and lattice and leafless bough,
The horses nickered, the barn door creaked,
A black man climbed in the fragrant mow.

At morning...only a man-shape pressed
In the golden straw where the guest had lain,
Footprints over the barn-lot frost,
And the crawling track of a broken chain.

From Gauley Mountain *by Louise McNeill, copyright 1939 by Harcourt, Brace & Company.*

Behind the church, we walked among evergreens and headstones to the Stewart and Bolden families' resting places. Down the grassy hillside are older markers, worn almost bare. The hand-chiseled stones lean over like old people.

The Reverend Carl Edward Boggs served Pleasant Green during the World War II years, then pastored the Macedonia Baptist Church, which his grandfather, Reverend William Madison Boggs, founded. Carl's brother, 88-year-old Reverend Sanford Boggs, served at Wilson Chapel in Brownsburg and at Pleasant Green. He lives alone outside Marlinton in a home surrounded by receding vistas of blue-gray Pocahontas mountains.

Answering my knock, he came to the front door with the help of his four-footed cane. Boggs's wife died seven years ago, so I wondered who took care of him. "I take care of myself," he asserted. "I make the bed as soon as I get out of it each morning. I putter around. I keep the house clean, mow my yard." He still drives his car.

Boggs was born in nearby Brownsburg on June 25, 1908. He started working at 14, laying steel for the Greenbrier, Cheat & Elk Railroad Company between Slatyfork and Webster Springs. The railroad was an adjunct of the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company logging operations at Cass. Three months into the school year, "the boss told me to go back to school, and come back when school was out." Boggs worked with the railroad 11 years and enjoyed that life, but had to leave when the Great Depression hit.

He also built sidewalks in Marlinton to replace the boardwalks near the First National Bank. That job was all right, but Boggs was homesick for the woods he had known in the railroad job.

He helped farm the family's 40 acres. "We never went on the

WPA," he notes with pride. "We survived. We had hogs, chickens, sheep and cows."

Until 1937, Sanford Boggs had never been out of state, but there were cousins and two aunts in Michigan, and the hope of work there.

"I went on a late Sunday afternoon," he told me. "I drove a '36 Dodge. First time in my life I got too much driving. I stopped where I knew people. I got to Michigan Wednesday morning." Three days after his arrival, he had a bellhop job in a Saint Joseph, Michigan, hotel, earning $12 a week and tips.

"I got homesick," he said, and after four months he developed gall bladder and appendicitis trouble. He decided to have the surgery back home. He took the bus, then saw Dr. Hanna, a physician working for the lumber company at Cass. This doctor, a friend of Boggs's father and knowing that the young man had no money, got him into the hospital by fixing papers so that the hospital thought Boggs was still working for the railroad.

Boggs recovered, then went into the mines beyond Slatyfork. He lived awhile in his grandfather's old homeplace, which had gone up

"Colored People Had a Hard Time": Miss Ruby Never Quit

I'm sitting on the front porch of a little white cottage. There are rings of red flowers in planters in front of the porch, on the green lawn that edges onto Seebert Lane just before you cross the Greenbrier River to Watoga State Park.

This is the home of Ruby Wheeler, who is 85 years old. She and a niece who lives nearby are the only two black citizens left in this tiny settlement, hardly big enough now to be called a village. It is astonishing to hear Miss Ruby describe what a bustling, thriving town Seebert once was, with a hotel, taxies, two passenger trains, four or five stores, and a busy post office. The railroad has been taken up and replaced with a hiking-biking trail, although truckloads of logs still rumble through the county.

Eleanor Stewart and Glenna Stewart Hayes are sitting there with me, sisters who grew up in Marlinton. We have been talking about old times.

When I asked what life was like in the early days, Miss Ruby's first response was simply that "colored people had a hard time here in Pocahontas County."

Ruby Wheeler on her porch. "Miss Ruby" is a vivacious octogenarian.

She speaks in a quiet, distinctive voice of times gone by. There was the endless work, with no such thing as a minimum wage. Public education for black students went only to the eighth grade. To go to high school meant leaving home, going to Elkins or Charleston, maybe staying in a private home and working for room and board. The county contributed $10 a month.

Ruby herself had to drop out of school in the seventh grade to go to work and help support her family. She and her mother lived in the home of Steptoe and Eddie Washington on Seebert Lane, next to the Pleasant Green Methodist Church.

Her memories linger there. Behind Pleasant Green lie the graves of so many of those from that once-vital black community who have now passed on. Some have been brought back, sometimes from far away, to rest in their home church graveyard. Ruby expects to be buried beside Richard, her son. Richard was the child of her youth, raised

for taxes. He bought the home, near the one he lives in now, getting it for just the back taxes.

His father's family had been living in a log house. On a hot August day while the family was out berry picking, they saw black smoke. Someone said it was just brush burning, but as they came in sight of the homeplace, they saw their house was gone.

In 1941, he went to Pennsylvania, where his sister lived. Boggs worked for Bethlehem Steel in Johnstown and boarded with his sister's family. He sent every cent he could spare back to his father so the family could have a home again. Boggs's father bought a six-room house on Deer Creek, near Cass.

Sanford Boggs was still single, but the relatives were working on that. His brother-in-law put it to him straight: "You want to get a girlfriend that a whole lot of men aren't running after? I know one."

That was Lutica, and both she and Boggs were 37 years old at the time. They married in 1945, and he brought her home to Deer Creek. "I bought a schoolhouse for $5 [which had been] built the same year I was born, by my father and grandfa-

by his father's mother. When he died in Cleveland in the fall of 1987, at the age of 60, Miss Ruby had his body brought home and laid to rest on a beautiful October day.

Steptoe Washington took care of the boardinghouse at Cass for the Mower Lumber Company. When Mr. Mower asked if he knew someone who could work at his home in Charleston, cooking, keeping house and helping with the Mower children, Steptoe recommended Ruby Wheeler. She had been caring for her mother. Now she left that to another member of the family and went to Charleston to work.

For about 15 years Miss Ruby worked for the Mowers. In the summer, the family would go to a camp they owned in Canada, with Ruby cooking, caring for the children, and looking after things — the opposite of a vacation for her.

I learned why Eleanor Stewart calls her "Mama Ruby." Glenna, Eleanor's older sister, had boarded with the state superintendent of Negro schools to go to Charleston's black Garnet High School. When Eleanor finished the seventh grade at Greenbrier Hill School in Marlinton, she too left for Charleston, staying with the superintendent's family, working for her room and board and going through Garnet High. As soon as Ruby was established with the Mower family, she took Eleanor under her wing.

She was glad to show Eleanor around the capital city, taking her to eat or to shop, or for entertainment. When contralto Marian Anderson gave a concert the Mowers got tickets for Ruby, who took Eleanor. It was an unforgettable experience for both of them.

Eventually Ruby came back home to Pocahontas County to look after the aging Janet Beard, who was retired and in frail health. She cared for Janet for 23 years, into her own '80's, until Janet's death in 1993. Ruby's service allowed Miss Janet to remain in her great old landmark home in Hillsboro to the end of her life, as she so wanted to do.

Now, for the first time in her life, Miss Ruby is able to live quietly in her own home, keeping any troubles in the past. As she told a neighbor, "That's over and done now." She has a marvelous sense of humor, which Glenna Hayes says is what has kept her going so well so long.

Eleanor spoke of Miss Ruby's love of poetry, and, indeed, there on her porch she recited Wordsworth and Kipling for us, then went and got a favorite book of poetry and asked Eleanor to read. She spoke of having always loved poetry, music and dancing.

As we sat there, a nice car came to a stop and a man came up to the porch. She recognized him as soon as he got out of the car and called his name, greeting him warmly. He was a member of the younger generation, back from a distant city to visit his father. He had grown up in Hillsboro, gone to the integrated school with no problems, and gone into the army at the end of the Vietnam War. His beautiful young daughter also came up on the porch to meet and greet.

Miss Ruby knew sad details from his early life. She respected him for persevering, and there was no doubt that he was there to pay his respects to her. She was heartened by that gift of appreciation and remembrance.

She ended our visit with fragments of a poem:

"Don't quit, when things go
wrong...as they sometimes will...
When the road you're trodding
seems all uphill...
When the debts are high and the
money low...
When you want to laugh but you
have to cry...or
When you want to cry, but you have
to laugh...
Don't quit..."

— Virginia Steele

ther," he remembered. "Lord, that was a gift. Dad said, 'You tear that down.' He helped me put it up here; it had two rooms."

Their daughter Inez was born in 1949. They also raised Boggs's wife's grandson, whom they got in 1957 when he was just nine months old. Boggs remembers bringing the baby back from Richmond through a terrible autumn storm. When the boy was four, they adopted him.

The years passed. Boggs found work with the State Department of Highways in 1957, which had been bad about hiring black people during segregation. By the '50's, integration had come, but Boggs says some things didn't have to change that much in Pocahontas County. "When segregation ended there wasn't much difference — white and colored always got along," he reports. "Whites visited colored in their homes, and colored visited whites."

One difference Boggs did note was that segregation meant that in public places "colored people could go in and sit down." Sometimes, they simply got better seats, Houston Simmons recalls. "The upstairs balcony at the Marlinton movie theater was for blacks," he says. Integration meant people could sit anywhere they pleased, though Houston remembers there were no restrooms for either color.

Boggs worked with oils and engines in the highways garage at the bottom of Airport Hill, putting in many long hours, until 1961 when he contracted a heart condition. "I cried when the doctor at Clifton Forge told me I had to go on disability," he recalls. He was only 53.

What should he do with the rest of his life? Fortunately he was already a lay preacher in the Methodist Church.

"They wanted me to go to preaching, so I studied at home and got graded by mail," he said. "I was licensed to preach at a Fairmont conference, to serve the Washington District of the Methodist Church. My grandfather had been a preacher. My brother Carl was the preacher at Denmar for 13 years when it was an old folks home. Our mother, Mabel, had a stroke and needed 24-hour care. She died at Denmar when she was 96." Soon Sanford Boggs served at Denmar as well, holding services midweek in the chapel.

The new preacher would serve mostly black worshippers, but the churches were not entirely segregated. Boggs remembered that white people joined his churches. "I had as many white funerals as I had black," he said. The largest funeral was that of an important businessman, the manager of a major store in the county.

"Charlie had 14 kids and a lot of close friends," Boggs said of that one.

Reverend Boggs is at home in the pulpits of Pocahontas County. Here he makes his way to the rostrum at Wilson Chapel.

"He got wicked, then took sick. I visited him, and Charlie accepted Christ, but he was worried about his years of backsliding. I tried to lead him into the light. I finally got him converted. Up at his house, Charlie said he wanted to accept Christ as his savior. Would he need baptism again? I said 'No.' He cried with joy. He said, 'If I die, don't worry, I'm saved, but I want Sanford to have my funeral.' Not everyone could fit into the Central Union Church for Charlie's service."

The Greenbrier River can be a fickle neighbor in flood time, but Eleanor treasures her riverside home. "We try to hold on to it," she says of the Stewart homeplace.

When he was pastoring at Wilson Chapel, a retired white nurse joined his church. "She said, 'As long as you are pastor, I will attend here.'" She came from the Marlinton Methodist Church. When the Reverend Boggs visited hospitals, he didn't just visit his own parishioners. He gave his time to other patients as well, and had prayer with them.

"I've been asked to preach in the biggest church in Pocahontas County, United Methodist in Marlinton," he said. "Our daughter Inez was the first black member there, and the first black in the choir. She was president of her senior class in Marlinton High School, too. She could make friends easily." Now Inez lives in Petersburg, Virginia, near Richmond. She and her daughter Tanya both work at a state hospital there.

For the next 22 years, Sanford Boggs pastored county churches and never missed a Methodist conference. Population declined in those years as young people moved away to find work and old ones died off. Churches closed, and Boggs completely retired at age 87.

Boggs's friend Eleanor Stewart lives on the other side of Marlinton from his hilltop home. Her family also has a fascinating history in Pocahontas County. Stewart, Dr. Vernie Bolden's cousin, lives in a comfortable home with wide lawns and ancient trees fronting the Greenbrier River.

"I was born in this house 70 years ago, and we try to hold on to it," she told me. "The flood of '85 was seven feet deep and once it was five feet. Both floods this year got in the house again."

We sat across from each other at a table on her back porch. As I looked at our arms resting on the table, I saw that her hands were lighter than mine. "There is white blood on both sides," Stewart said of her ancestry. A month later, I met her sister Glenna at the Snowshoe Symphony Festival, and I noticed Glenna's skin was even lighter than her sister's.

With her brothers and sisters, Stewart attended the two-room Greenbrier Hill school in Marlinton. The school was small, but offered quality education. Two Stewarts, Philip and Glenna, won Golden Horseshoes in the highly competitive statewide West Virginia studies contest.

Eleanor told how the family got their education. "W. W. Saunders was superintendent of the Negro schools. He and his wife took my sisters Glenna and Mattie and me to where they lived in Charleston, so we could go to Garnet High School. Pocahontas County provided $10 a month for room and board — not nearly enough. Our parents sent every penny they could spare for spending money, and white people would give us rides home on holidays."

The Stewarts continued to excel in the capital city. "Glenna was valedictorian in high school, and brother Phil was a class salutatorian," Eleanor proudly recalls.

"There were five kids, and we were poor, but our family wouldn't accept relief. Our father, George Stewart, Sr., worked at the tannery making shoe leather. When I was in junior high, I worked in Penny Richardson's hardware store, making $3 a week." Eleanor also picked berries, selling them for 75 cents a gallon.

"Glenna won a scholarship to a Georgia college, where she worked for the college president to pay

room and board," Eleanor says. "Then she went to nursing school in Canada, scholarships all the way. When she taught at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, she met a doctor. They married and moved to California."

Eleanor herself went to New York and did domestic work, which gave her free evenings so she could go to school in Manhattan for certification as an x-ray technician. "There was no protection from radiation in those days." Stewart got a job offer as assistant to the radiologist at Denmar State Hospital, but her father told her to say "No." The job was too dangerous. She stayed in New York, and went into banking, becoming the first black officer at the Queens Savings Bank. Eleanor Stewart worked most of her life in Elmhurst, New York, where she was named Woman of the Year.

"I always wanted to retire here to the homeplace," she said. Now she can watch the Greenbrier flow past her backyard on languid summer days. During the cold months she lives in her New York home.

"We are related to the Hillsboro McNeels through slavery," Eleanor told me, speaking of the prominent white family. "Some of our family are buried in their cemetery." Down through the years the families have remained friendly, and Lanty McNeel remembers growing up with the area's black citizens.

"George Bolden got me through trigonometry," Lanty said, reminding me that the Stewarts and the Boldens are cousins. When Lanty was nine, his dad sent him on horseback to give a message to Vernie Bolden, uncle to Dr. Vernie Bolden. "He lived in a rock house down in a hollow. He was baking bread in a rock oven, and it smelled great. He was a favorite of us kids, and we still have animal carvings he made us."

May Carter, another Marlinton resident, went to the Greenbrier Hill School, and started domestic work at 13, going straight to work after school each day. "I'd set my books on the step in the afternoon and keep on going." Later she worked at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia. At age 62, she came home to Marlinton, where she is known as Miss May. She has lived at the Old Clark Inn since the January '96 flood went through her home.

We visited in the inn's parlor. "When did you retire?" I asked her. She laughed. "I didn't." But two years ago, when her hip fractured, Miss May's life slowed. She had trained as a nurse's aide. "I'd do if I could. I go to senior citizens now. My days are pretty well spent; I've had a full life. I love people and people love me. I have a lot of true friends."

Pocahontas is a big county with few people and many fewer black people. Following a job may take them away, but mountains draw them homeward.

The doors have closed on most of Pocahontas County's African-American churches, but a rich history remains.

Denmar

By Ancella R. Bickley

"My grandfather died there," Bernard Hawkins said. "They brought his body home in a wagon. I was just a little boy, but I remember."

"There" was Denmar, which from 1919 to 1957 served as West Virginia's tuberculosis sanitarium for black people. Stemming from legislation passed in 1917, when TB was the highly contagious scourge of numerous communities, Denmar touched the lives of many people.

For the black medical staff, Denmar was a place where they could engage in the profession for which they had trained; for non-professionals, it was a place of steady employment; and for the local population, it was a place where they could find medical help in emergencies. For most of the sick and their families, it was a place of refuge and healing; and for an unfortunate segment of the ill, it was a place from which they never returned.

These still lie in unmarked graves on the Denmar grounds. In 1976, nearly 20 years after the hospital had shifted from the care of tuberculosis patients to the care of the chronically ill, the Denmar staff researched and posted the names, birth and death dates, and points of origin of the tuberculosis patients who were interred at the hospital site. One staff member took the old burial ground as his particular interest. Leveling the graves and planting grass, he turned the TB cemetery into a lovely meadow, a well-kept memorial to the patients whose lives were shortened by the dreaded disease.

Located five miles from Hillsboro on the banks of the Greenbrier River, the sanitarium opened in 1919 in buildings originally erected for a sawmill town. Dr. B. A. Crichlow was the first superintendent, and Dr. C. T. Hayden was one of his early assistants.

Denmar during its days as a TB sanitarium. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy West Virginia State Archives.

The main building, used as a hospital for the sickest patients, was later named for Dr. Crichlow. This building also housed the waiting room, laboratory, examination room, doctor's office, kitchen and dining room. Separate cottages for ambulatory men and women, created by joining some of the sawmill town structures, were named for Doctors R. C. Harrison and Samuel F. Clay. These men, along with Dr. Crichlow, were among the commission members appointed by Governor John J. Cornwell to select the sanitarium's site. As the patient load increased, additional buildings were used for cottages for boys and girls, and for a school and other facilities.

In 1938, in spite of some speculation about relocating the sanitarium because of the remote site, inconvenience of transportation, and distance from the centers of black population, a new hospital building replaced the old sawmill town structures at Denmar.

Employees at the sanitarium were sometimes drawn from among those who originally came as patients or who were relatives of patients or of other staff members. Such was the case of Mrs. Josephine Dillard Hill of Huntington who, along with her mother, Mrs. Ophelia Williams, and husband Clayborn Dillard, worked at the hospital.

"My mother was a cook up there," Mrs. Hill said. "She was sick when she went up there and when she got better, she stayed on to work.

"My husband was sick when he went up there, too," she added. "I went with him and then we both worked there. I started out clean-

ing, but Dr. Hayden, the doctor, said to me, 'Miss Jo, you doing so good you better look after these patients.' So [I] said, 'Well, I don't know, sir.' I couldn't lift them, you know. A lot of them were helpless; they were bad off, and I was afraid I was going to catch the TB, too.

But anyhow, he turned 'round and said, 'You just quit going around here washing bathrooms.' I was doing a little bit of everything. 'I'll tell you what you do, make your rounds of a morning and straighten up and empty up and help the nurses.' And that's what I did." Mrs. Hill's husband served as the hospital engineer for a time, and then the couple returned to Huntington where he worked with the C&O Railway.

Joining the Denmar staff in 1937, Dr. James Nelson, a Hinton native now deceased, was among the hospital professionals who is well remembered. Initially, he served as assistant to Dr. Bampfield, who had succeeded Dr. Crichlow. Later, Dr. Nelson became the superintendent, and his time there is still recalled by many of the local residents and by black families with connections to Denmar.

"He delivered me," the attendant at the Pearl Buck House in Hillsboro said, as she reminisced about Denmar and Dr. Nelson's obstetric care at the time of her birth. In fact, Dr. Nelson's daughter, Barbara Nelson Carroll, recalled that her father was frequently called upon for medical services by members of the local white community.

"He was probably the only doctor around," she said, "so when there was a medical need, they called him or came to our house. I remember one time that a family from across the river brought their son over. He had stuck a green bean in his ear and they brought the little boy to our house to get my father to take the bean out."

Edna Duckworth of Huntington traveled back and forth to Denmar when her husband was a patient there. "It was a very lonely spot," she says. Photo by Michael Keller.

"It was a wonderful place to grow up," Mrs. Carroll continued. "I wandered all around the hospital grounds. I would go down and watch them milk the cows, and they even let me milk sometimes. There really wasn't any black community nearby, but my parents had lots of friends in Covington and Lewisburg and we visited there. And we had family in Hinton. I played with the white children who lived around Denmar — some came from across the river."

Mrs. Carroll remembered participating in Christmas programs for the patients, especially reciting "The Night Before Christmas" at holiday time. The new hospital building opened shortly after her father began his employment at Denmar, and it had a chapel where church services were held and a recreation room where patients gathered to talk and play cards. "There wasn't much else to entertain them," she said. "Relatives came to visit, but usually they simply spent the day."

Those associated with the hospital remember young Barbara Nelson, as well. "Dr. Nelson's daughter was just a little tot running about the place when my husband was a patient at Denmar," Mrs. Edna Duckworth of Hunting-

Chain-link and razor wire now encircle the old hospital, which serves as a prison today. Photo by Doug Chadwick.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month in West Virginia and across the country. The man recognized nationally as the "Father of Black History" is Carter G. Woodson. Black History Month is an outgrowth of Negro History Week, organized by Woodson in 1926.

What many people don't know about Carter Woodson is the fact that Huntington was his hometown. He migrated there with his parents in 1893 from Buckingham County, Virginia, and graduated from Douglass High School in 1896.

His education, career and accomplishments took him away from West Virginia, but Woodson returned to Huntington from time to time to visit family members and eventually purchased a home there.

Last year, the River City honored its distinguished son with a bronze statue on Hal Greer Boulevard. While Dr. Woodson has been recognized with a commemorative U.S. postage stamp and a National Register of Historic Places listing for his Washington home and office, the Huntington statue is the only life-size monument dedicated to him.

Members of Marshall University's Alliance for the Collection, Preservation and Dissemination of West Virginia Black History led the campaign for the Woodson statue. The group works to preserve black history in West Virginia, collecting materials for use in schools, publishing a newsletter, and sponsoring an annual conference.

The Oral History of Appalachia Project at Marshall also worked with the Alliance to conduct interviews with Huntington's black citizens about their involvement in the civil rights movement.

For more information on the Alliance for the Collection, Preservation and Dissemination of West Virginia Black History, contact Dr. Carl P. Burrowes, c/o Marshall University's John Deaver Drinko Academy, 400 Hal Greer Blvd., Huntington, WV 25755; (304) 696-2473.

Huntington's statue of Carter G. Woodson. Photo by Steve Exum, courtesy *Huntington Herald Dispatch*.

ton chuckled.

"When my husband first got there they were still using the old buildings and they moved into the new one while he was still there," Mrs. Duckworth continued. "Dr. Bampfield was the superintendent then, and Jimmy Nelson was the assistant.

"It was a very lonely spot. I'd go up on the train with my children to visit my husband. Sometimes we would go on one train and come back on the next one, but we did stay about a week one Christmas. I didn't carry a Christmas tree, but I carried all of the trimmings."

When the Duckworths went to Denmar, they stayed with Curt and Amanda Davis, who worked there. "We called him 'Brother,'" she says of Curt. He did all kinds of things to keep the place going. They'd holler for him for everything. Electricity was a mess. When the lights went out or the elevator didn't work, they'd call for Brother. I remember standing at the window looking at the holes that his boots made in the snow when he went from his house to the hospital to fix things."

In addition to the paid employees at Denmar, some of the work was handled by prison trusties. Mrs. Carroll recalled that, for a time, managing the convicts was one of her father's tasks. The trusties moved freely about the sanitarium doing farm labor and other assigned work. "There was no fear of them," she said. "My father never wore a gun."

In the early days, people going to Denmar took the train, and later some came by bus from Marlinton or Lewisburg. Still others, as in the case of Mrs. Hill, had their own transportation. "We had an old 'struggle buggy,'" she recalled, "and we used it to get back and forth." The C&O Railroad's Greenbrier River extension came right up the valley by Denmar. "It was just down the hill from the hospital," Mrs. Carroll says of the rail line.

Denmar closed as a sanitarium for black tubercular patients in 1957, its ending occasioned by the reduction of incidences of the disease and by the integration of state facilities.

Since 1993, the building has served as a medium security prison, having been used as a long term health care facility in the interim period. Among the remnants of its place in the history of West Virginia's black community which were left behind when the sanitarium closed is the grave site of Dr. S. J. Bampfield. It is located on a knoll just at the bend in the road approaching the hospital site, mute guardian of the building whose construction and early use he oversaw.

Religion by the Roadside

The Halltown Memorial Chapel

By Georgia Caldwell

The Eastern Panhandle is full of historic architecture, fine old buildings great and small. A local favorite is the little stone church which sits by the side of the road in Jefferson County.

Halltown Memorial Chapel is a Jefferson County landmark. Photo by Frank P. Herrera.

The little church by the side of the road in Halltown attracts attention because of its simple, distinguished architecture and fine stone masonry. Now known as Halltown Memorial Chapel, its integrity of design and construction make it seem timeless. It is built of local limestone, a bane to farmers and a boon to builders since the first settlers came to what is now Jefferson County in the 1730's.

The sturdy structure looks as though it could have been built deep in the dales of England hundreds of years ago. In fact, the chapel has stood on the old Charles Town-Harpers Ferry pike only since 1901. That was when Daniel B. Lucas, a former West Virginia Supreme Court justice and a local poet, at the request of leaders in the Halltown African-American community, donated a small parcel of land from his "Rion Hall" estate to construct a Sunday school building. It was close to the old Colored Free School, which was on land donated by the black Braxton family.

The building that rose on the land became a small masterpiece, with pointed Gothic windows and small attached buttresses. Some have said that it must have been designed by a trained architect because of the simple elegance of its design. Actually, the designer is unknown. It is likely that the little chapel is what is known as vernacular architecture, designed by one of the artisans who built it.

African Americans in the Shenandoah Valley had long experience with limestone construction, build-

ing the extensive and enduring dry stone walls or "fences" which defined plantation boundaries in slave times and many manor and farm houses as well.

The volunteers who built Halltown Chapel drew on this tradition. "They worked in the evenings and on the weekends to build the little church, and provided materials out of their meager earnings," said George V. King, who marshalled the forces for the chapel's preservation many years later. The builders called their church the Halltown Union Colored Sunday School.

Small churches have been the center of black community life since soon after the Civil War. "The Negro church was the most influential institution in the black community," Latta Thomas wrote in her book *Biblical Faith and the Black Americans.* "The pulpit was the main source of news and inspiration; the church was the town hall." Certainly that was the case in Jefferson County.

Michael Pauley, in preparing the application form for the National Register of Historic Places, placed the chapel in this local context. "The building's greatest area of significance is...its unique relationship to the community of black Americans and the importance of the role it has played in the social and religious life of that community," the late historian wrote.

Most of the people who attended Halltown Union Colored Sunday School have died. Mr. Ernest Lewis of Bolivar, now 87 years old, attended church at the chapel in later years, when it was being used by the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church congregation. "Reverend Thomas Jackson of White Post, Virginia, came

"When I got off the train at Harpers Ferry and we drove to Halltown, I thought, 'My Lord, where have I come to?' It was so different from what I was used to."

to be our minister," Mr. Lewis remembers.

"It was pretty good then," he recalls of that period in the little chapel's history. "About 20 people were very active in the congregation. I had five children and we all attended Mt. Moriah, as it was called then."

Mr. Lewis's daughter, Mrs. Frances Watkins of Martinsburg, remembers attending the chapel when Reverend Jackson was the minister. "I was baptized there when I was 16, and Reverend Jackson baptized me," she recalled. "We had church every first and third

Sundays, at three in the afternoon. I remember learning to play the piano in that church, too, with a music teacher named Mr. Dennis."

Mrs. Watkins attended church at Mt. Moriah until she moved away from home in 1951. "I was a very small child when we started attending," she said. "It's sad, but most of the people I remember from that time are dead now." Mrs. Watkins first ten years of his life in New York City, and was sent to Jefferson County to live with his grandparents. That was quite a change, he remembers.

"I recall that when I got off the train at Harpers Ferry and we drove to Halltown, I thought, 'My Lord, where have I come to?'" Mr. Luckett said. "It was so different from what I was used to, so dark at night. I

Stephen "Lucky" Luckett moved to the community as a boy and grew up in the church. He poses here by his bait shop. Photo by Frank P. Herrera.

and Mr. Lewis said that when Thomas Jackson stopped being the minister of the church, he was replaced by the Reverend James Ernest Summers of Watson, Virginia, a small community not far from Leesburg in neighboring Loudoun County.

Mr. Stephen Luckett, known as "Lucky," is the only person still living in Halltown who attended the chapel. He is a Jefferson County sign maker who also operates a Halltown bait shop. He lived the had grown up with lights around all the time."

One thing that offered the small Lucky Luckett some stability and sense of community in his new home was religion. "I was baptized at St. Philip's Episcopal Church in Charles Town, but I went to Sunday school at least once a month at the chapel," he said. "I remember a lot of people, and joyful music and singing. After church was a time for family get-togethers, with picnics in the churchyard. They would put out big tables, put the food on ice in the back of the church, and just have a good time."

"But the whole community had a part in the chapel, not just the African Americans," said George V. King. "A white man contributed the land for it. People at the Halltown paper factory contributed to the construction fund, and so did the white community in Jefferson County. Although it was known as the Halltown Union Colored Sunday School, after it was built, some of the white children in Halltown attended. It was the center of black community life, but it was never exclusively a black institution."

But in 1980, the chapel stood vacant and in a poor state of repair, closed since 1967. It needed a new roof, the floor was rotting, the wainscoting had fallen off the interior walls, and the windows were broken and their woodwork damaged, King said. The original lime-and-clay tuckpointing was crumbling. Goats were pastured in the churchyard behind the graceful wrought iron fence, and all but one of the families who had supported and maintained the chapel and contributed to its vitality in the small factory community of Halltown had moved away.

Enter a man with a mission. George V. King, a local high school teacher, was known in Jefferson County for his commitment to his students and his love of history. Olive and Frances Braxton, the remaining members of one the families that had originally helped to build and maintain the little church, and parents of children who had been in Mr. King's history classes, enlisted his help to restore the chapel.

Mr. King took on the preservation project because the chapel was uniquely constructed and very beautiful, because it had been associated with a school, and because it had been such an important part of life in his adopted community.

The preservationists had found a solid man in Mr. King. The former

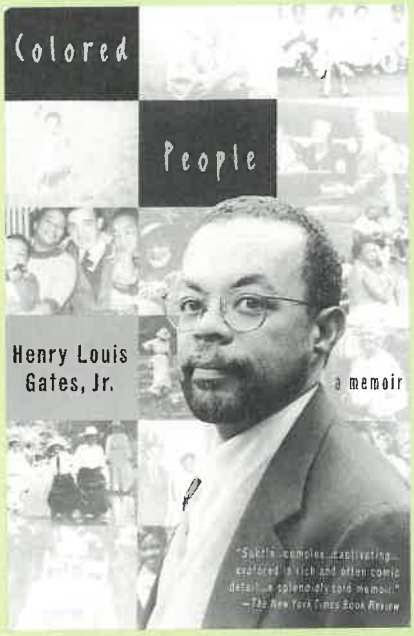
Growing up Black in Mineral County

The distinguished black intellectual Henry Louis Gates, Jr., chairman of the Afro-American Studies Department at Harvard University, recently published the best-selling autobiography, *Colored People.* Gates was born and raised in the Mineral County town of Piedmont, and his new book largely concerns those formative years.

Professor Gates — "Skip" to those who remember him in the Eastern Panhandle — grew up in the 1950's and 1960's. In *Colored People* he writes frankly and entertainingly of a small town black community on the eve of racial integration. Gates pulls no punches in writing of his many relatives, treating both sides of the family with humor and candid affection. In addition to family affairs, he writes of making a living (at the big Westvaco plant for most people he knew), the lively social scene and the sometimes stormy relations between the sexes, as well as race relations, school life, and getting religion.

One chapter is devoted to the Peterkin Center, the church retreat operated by the Episcopalians in Hampshire County (GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1995), which Gates credits with broadening his horizons at a critical time of his youth.

Colored People, offering a close look at the industrial valley of the North Branch Potomac, is a very readable book devoted almost entirely to West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle and neighboring areas of Maryland. The 216-page book sells for $25 hardback and $11 paperback in bookstores nationwide.



soldier had come to Jefferson County to complete his education at Storer College in Harpers Ferry in 1945, after serving during World War II in China, Burma and India.

WWII veteran George King came to Jefferson County to attend Storer College in 1945 and stayed on to become a leading citizen. He led the restoration of Halltown Chapel after retirement. Photographer and date unknown.

He graduated from Storer in 1947.

"I got my first job in Charles Town, and lived in Harpers Ferry. I rode the bus to school with the kids," Mr. King remembered of his early career.

"Of course, Jefferson County schools were segregated until 1966, so I taught for 16 years at the old Page-Jackson School before that. After desegregation, I taught at Harpers Ferry High School until it was consolidated with the other high schools into Jefferson County High School. Then, I continued to teach at what had become Harpers Ferry Junior High until my retirement in 1982."

Mr. King finds great joy and meaning in work. He was a ranger at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park for 15 years as well, and now he had found another way to teach history — by immersing himself in the preservation of this structure which was important to the history of Jefferson County. He joined forces with the chapel's remaining trustees — Mrs. Braxton, Ernest Lewis, and Reverend Walter Newman — to form the Halltown Chapel Preservation Association.

"We got to work," said Mr. King. "We put on a drive for restoration of the little building. We [applied for] grants — Dr. Ken Green over in Martinsburg was a great help with that. We got a West Virginia state historical preservation grant and the $5,000 was hand-delivered by Governor Jay Rockefeller himself.

"But the most amazing thing was what happened in the community here — community members, black and white, raised $12,000 to put into the restoration. There were lots of small fundraising projects — bake sales, that sort of thing."

The little chapel was gradually restored to its former dignity. The interior was repaired, the floor and roof replaced. A young volunteer, Eric Beauchesne, restored two of the stained glass windows, after seeing a news article about the project and becoming interested. William Blackford contributed for electrical wiring for the building. His son had been a student of Mr. King's.

Jesse Daly, a funeral director in Harpers Ferry, gave a new cornerstone. Mike Shepherd, a former student of Mr. King's from Harpers Ferry High School, voluntarily restored the wrought iron fence around the church. "Such craftsmanship!" Mr. King said. "It was painstaking, beautiful work."

"You see, the whole Jefferson County community was very liberal in its support. I want to emphasize that," said Mr. King. "You must remember that most of the black community had moved away, and we could not have done it without the help of almost everyone."

With a final grant from the State of West Virginia, the Halltown Chapel Preservation Association had the chapel masonry tuckpointed and the time-darkened surface cleaned by the Gruber Construction Company of Hagerstown,

"Those who gave will be forever memorialized in the simple beauty of a little country church by the side of the road."

revealing variegated silver-gray stone that reflects light beautifully.

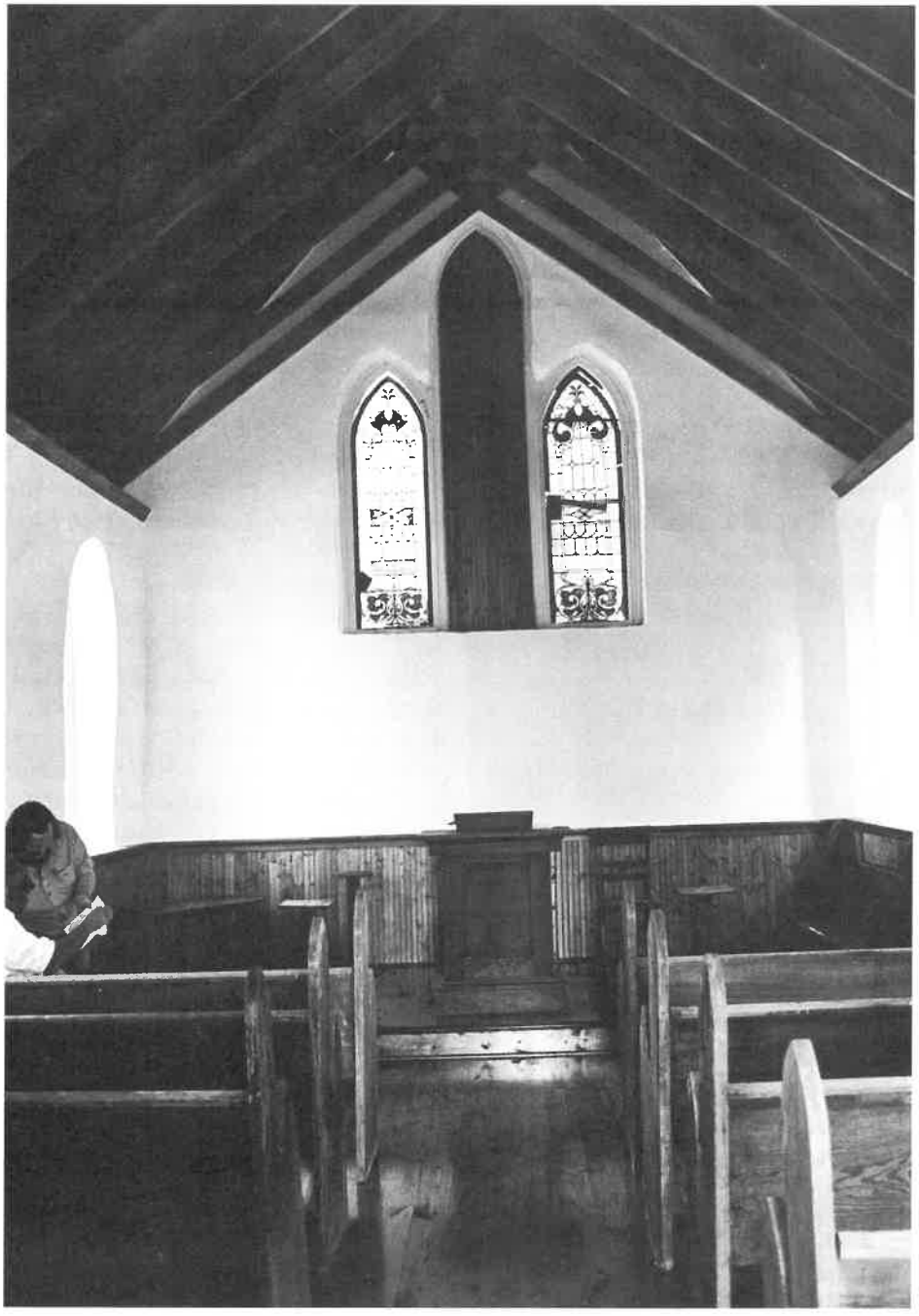
The preservation committee decided to rename the chapel. "Since its uses as a Sunday school and church are no longer practical, and regular services are out of the question, the new trustees decided to rename the church, more in keeping with its role after restoration," Mr. King wrote at the time.

"Halltown Memorial Chapel was the name chosen. Thus those who gave the land, love and industry will be forever memorialized in the simple beauty of a little country church by the side of the road."

On January 26, 1984, the preservationists received an important recognition of their work, a letter from the late Rodney S. Collins of the Historic Preservation Unit of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, indicating that the Halltown Memorial Chapel had been accepted by the National Register of Historic Places. Later in 1984, the jewel-like chapel was rededicated.

"The first formal use of the rededicated chapel was for the wedding of a young white couple," Mr. King said. "They had been my students in high school."

George King is completely retired now, and lives in the town of Bolivar. Harpers Ferry Junior High School is actually located in Bolivar, so he remains near where he worked for so many years. And maybe "completely" is too strong a word for this man's retirement, for despite ill health Mr. King is at work on his next project. Now he is seeking funds to restore the brick schoolhouse behind the church, the Halltown Colored Free School, which served as the first school for African Americans in the area.



Historic preservationist Michael Gioulis made this photo in 1983, as the chapel was being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The house in its last years, after the last children grew up and the old folks had moved to newer quarters nearby. Photographer and date unknown.

A House and a Home

Recalling a Wayne County Homeplace

By Connie Karickhoff

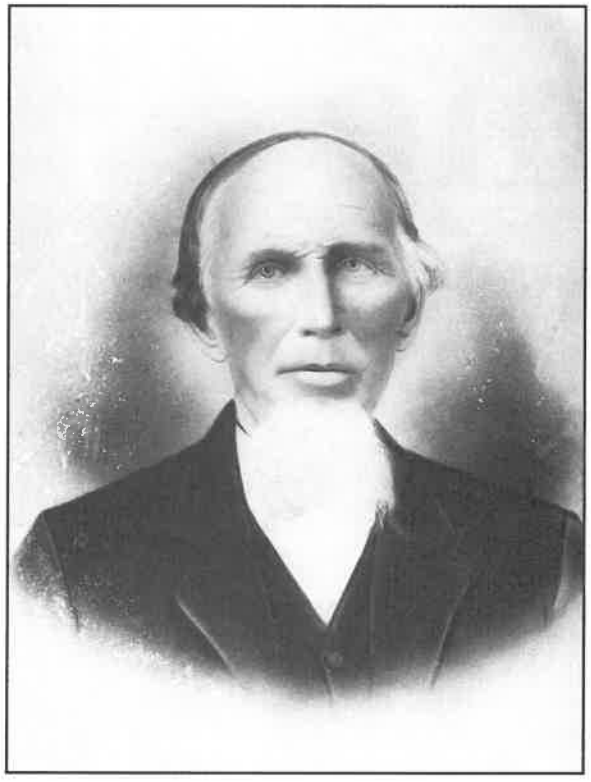
When I was a little girl, our family spent every Sunday at my grandparents' farm on Garrett Creek in Wayne County.

I loved those sunny afternoons. While our parents were inside talking over the week's news, my cousins and I would slip away to explore the strange, wonderful places around the farm. We played hide-and-go-seek in the barn, hiked back up on the hill to see the cattle, and caught crawdads in the creek. Our favorite spot was the one that frightened us the most, the

old house.

The old house was the original farmhouse on the property, set a few yards away from my grandparents' more modern home, and it was certainly the best place for exploring. The front door would creak open as we entered the dirty, musty rooms, now home to mud daubers, waspers, and a thousand other little creatures. The only light came from the windows and the strips of sunshine that came in through the gaps in the walls.

Jameson and Cynthia Garrett Booth were the founders of the Wayne County farm. They built the family home in the 1840's, on land given to them by Cynthia's father. Photographer and date unknown.



We sneaked in, trying not to disturb the hen nesting in the corner or the dogs dozing in the cool shade under the floorboards. Rusty farm equipment, broken furniture and bed springs were piled up in the middle of the front room, blocking the crumbling fireplace. An old rocking chair lay on its side by the front window and a desk whose drawers were filled with rubber stamps stood next to it, against the wall. We would search through everything, looking for some treasure from the past.

Upstairs the two bedrooms had been filled with hay up to our knees. Next to the dangerously leaning staircase, this was the scariest part, because we couldn't see the floor and never knew when we might fall through. Here we found old school books and papers from our parents, a Sears Roebuck catalog, and rags of cloth that we would take out to examine in the sunlight.

We could play in that ancient, run-down place for hours, completely taken over by curiosity. None of us realized that not long before the old house had been bursting with life.

Four generations of the Booth family had lived, laughed and loved in the old log house. It was built in the 1840's by Jameson and Cynthia Garrett Booth on land given to them by her father, Benjamin Garrett, who owned a large section of Wayne County at that time. Originally the house was made up of the main, two-story structure where the family lived, and a covered walkway that led off to the detached kitchen. Many houses were built this way, to keep a kitchen fire from destroying the whole house. Near the kitchen stood a well that provided the family with water, and around back was the privy.

For over 100 years this house and the surrounding farmland provided most of the needs of the people who lived there. It was a constant in a drastically changing world.

Four generations of the Booth family lived, laughed and loved in the old log house. It was built in the 1840's.

Jameson and Cynthia braved the Civil War, which brought hardship to many families in the area. They lost one of their sons, Alonzo, when he was shot on the old James River Turnpike in Wayne County. They lived in a part of Virginia that was soon to be a union state, and some of the family supported the South and some supported the North. It is said that Cynthia would hang different flags on the roof when Confederates or Yankees were visiting in her home, to keep conflicts down among family members.

The farm was passed to their seventh son, Jameson Wesley Booth, in 1891. He and his wife, Armilda Walker, raised their four children, Ercle, Olive, Fay, and Welcome Walker Booth (my grandfather), there. The family left Garrett Creek

in the early '20's and moved a few miles away to the town of Wayne so Olive and Fay could attend high school. They rented the farm out, locking their valuables in one of the rooms. They never returned until Walker brought his new bride, Ruby, and his widowed father back in the mid-1930's.

Walker and Ruby began their family during the worst of the Great Depression, working hard to keep the farm going. Walker had saved some money to study agriculture at West Virginia University when he graduated high school, but his dreams of a college degree never came true. Instead he settled down to take care of his father and the homeplace.

"Dad worked, sometimes for 50 cents a day, plowing or at whatever he could, until about 1944 when he began working at Owens Illinois glass factory in Huntington," daughter June recently wrote of Walker. He worked the swing shift at the plant to support his family, but the work on the farm was his true love. "Every inch of the 200-plus acres of the farm was precious to him," according to June. It's amazing to June and her older sister, Maudie, that their father ever got any sleep. Ruby and Walker's bed was in the main room where the fireplace was, and the children were always running in and out.

Jameson Wesley Booth, seventh son of Jameson and Cynthia, was the second generation to occupy the house. Photographer unknown, 1930's.

After his shift at the factory was done, Walker came home to work the land, planting and plowing the fields and the garden, and caring for the animals. Corn and hay were the biggest crops, providing feed for the cattle, horses, pigs and chickens.

They gardened by the signs, watching very carefully to plant when it was right for the best yield. St. Patrick's Day was usually the target for potatoes. After that came the lettuce bed, the peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, carrots, beans and other vegetables, which were all used to feed the family. Walker also enjoyed keeping bees. He had a special suit he would wear around the hives, and used a smoker to manage the bees when they swarmed.

Ruby did more than her share to keep home and family going. She rose each day at 4:00 a.m. to stoke the woodburning cookstove and fix Walker biscuits and gravy before his drive to work. Besides looking after the six children and her father-in-law, she made sure there was food on the table and enough put away for winter, kept the house up, made the clothing and quilts, did the laundry, and fed the cattle and chickens.

The garden and livestock provided most of the food for the family. Fruits and vegetables were bountiful in the summertime, and Ruby canned and preserved everything she could. Her pantry was always filled with tomatoes, corn, beans, kraut, peppers and pickles.

"She canned every kind of pickle you could think of. She had a recipe for a 14-day, a four-day, dill, sweet, salt brine, mustard, bread and butter pickles," June reports. One of June and Maudie's favorite memories of these years is when the whole family would go out to pick blackberries for pies, jams and jellies. There were once two orchards on the farm, as well, and sled loads of apples were brought down and covered with hay in the barn where they would stay fresh all winter long. Ruby needed meat on her table, and

Maudie and June remember the sturdy home of their childhood. They posed recently in Huntington for photographer Mike Keller.

this mostly came from the annual hog killing, one of the biggest events of the year. Neighbors from around Garrett Creek would come up to the farm before dawn to begin the day-long job of killing and butchering. The pork was laid out and salted, cured and sometimes smoked with hickory wood.

Almost every part of the animal was used. Ruby canned the backbones, ribs, and sausage, which she ground by hand at the kitchen table. She rendered the fat in a large kettle to make lard for cooking, cut up the head for souse or head cheese, and even mixed the brains in with scrambled eggs for breakfast.

A big mess of hog meat went to the neighbors who helped, and there was an understanding that Walker would help them when it was needed.

Because she couldn't drive, Ruby rarely went to the store. She would make a list and Walker would bring the necessities from Huntington after work. After all of her canning and preserving she needed only things like salt, sugar, flour, meal and spices. Walker also bought the shoes and coats for the family, and supplies for the house and farm. June remembers her mother once asking Walker to bring wallpaper and warning him not to get any "with lines." Ruby knew the pattern would show how crooked the old house was becoming.

The livestock feed that Walker brought home came in decorative cloth bags useful to make dresses, dishrags, and quilt pieces. Some of these feedsack prints were beautiful, but it was hard to find enough of one pattern for a garment. Ruby made most of the clothes for the children out of these and they were handed down from eldest to youngest over the years. The first dress Maudie, now a home economics professor, ever learned to make was from those Purina sacks. June recalls starting at Marshall in the late 1950's in a feedsack dress and bobby socks.

Wash day came every week, and with nine people in the house Ruby had her hands full. She made her own soap out of lye, wood ashes and lard. She heated the water from the well on the stove and put through three or four loads of clothes in one batch of water to save time and effort.

When the children came home from school they were expected to help with such things as milking the cows or chopping the firewood. "You got assigned the chore you were best at," says Maudie. "We had to help our parents get the work done. It helped us to learn responsibility."

After the sun had gone down and all the hard work was over, the old house came alive with laughter and music. Walker would sit around the fire and whittle new tool handles or repair a harness while Grandpa told stories to keep the children entertained. Sometimes Walker would get out his fiddle and play. They would pop corn in the fireplace, make fudge or have a taffy pull, and in the winter there was snow cream.

The first dress Maudie made was from Purina sacks. June recalls starting at Marshall in the late 1950's in a feedsack dress and bobby socks.

"We were not one of the first to get a TV, so we listened to the radio a lot," June recalls. "I can remember doing ironing in the summer and listening to *Pepper Young's Family*, and other soap operas." The family loved to gather around the radio and listen to shows like *The Guiding Light*, a soap opera which made the transition to television, *Arthur Godfrey*, *The Great Gildersleeve* and others. Walker listened to *The Grand Ole Opry* on Saturday nights, and once he called every-

one downstairs to hear a Little Jimmy Dickens song called "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bed Post Overnight?"

The Garrett Creek Community Church, which worshipped in the local one-room school, was a center for entertainment and social gatherings. There were picnics and other occasions when the community would come together to celebrate their many blessings.

Every year there was a box supper or pie social. All the young girls would fix a meal or a dessert in baskets that were auctioned off to the boys. Whoever won the basket got to eat with the cook. This was how many young people began courting. There were neighborhood parties such as bean stringings and apple peelings to help divide the workload while catching up on the news.

The photographer's backdrop failed to hide the hand-hewn timbers of the homeplace. Walker and Ruby were the last to raise a family in the Garrett Creek house. Photographer and date unknown.

The biggest social event for the women was a quilting bee. When a neighbor needed a new quilt for her family, she would "set it up" by piecing the top, putting on the muslin backing and the cotton batting in the middle, and basting the edges together. Then she let the other women know that they could come on a certain day for a quilting. She would cook for everyone or covered dishes were brought in, and the women would sit around the quilt and stitch all day long.

A big task became easier then, and fun for everyone. The ladies would visit, tell all the gossip they knew and finish the handmade quilt in a day. Walker's brother Ercle, the deacon of the Community Church, commented many times that a particular lady "was always too sick to come to church on Sunday, but if there was a quilting in the neighborhood she could walk a mile on Monday and quilt all day."

The most precious keepsakes of these gatherings were the friendship quilts they sometimes made for each other. Each woman pieced a block in the chosen pattern and stitched her name into it, then they put them all together into one quilt. Ruby had one of these. She passed it on to her daughters, and now almost all of the ladies whose names are on the quilt are dead.

These years of hard work, laughter and community animated the old house on Garrett Creek. This was the way life had been lived for generations, but it couldn't last. The children grew up and the world grew modern, and new inventions began edging in on old family traditions.

Electricity came around 1947. By then the old house was over 100 years old. When the men came to wire it, Ruby cleaned every nook and cranny as best she could. There were no closets, so things were stored anywhere and everywhere. The family's first refrigerator came in 1950. They were all hoeing corn in the lower field when the workmen brought it up the road. "We could hardly wait until it froze its first ice," June writes. An oil well was drilled on the farm in the 1950's, supplying natural gas as well. Ruby's wood cookstove was replaced with a gas range.

By 1960 the old house was in such bad repair that it was obviously time for change. That year Walker and Ruby built a new, modern home a few feet away, complete with plumbing, heat and television.

It was then that the old house was abandoned to the nesting hens, nursing puppies and curious grandchildren of the next generation. Many times the family discussed tearing it down, but Walker never had the heart to see it go. The main part of the house stayed intact for the next 35 years, a reminder to all those on Garrett Creek of the ways of the past.

We all know what it takes to make a house a home, and the old place had plenty of that. These children were the fourth generation of Booths to live there. Photographer unknown, about 1945.

After Walker's death in 1989 the house continued to crumble. Much of the old tin roof was blown away, the rotting boards on the back side caused the whole structure to lean, and the stone chimney separated from the house and was pushed over. The six children, Millie, Maudie, June, Wilma, Larry and Gary, decided it was time to look through the old log house one last time.

"I think we were each hoping to find a gold nugget, a valuable heirloom or something of monetary value," June says. Instead they found Grandpa's old rocking chair that Ruby had rebottomed with rubber strips from an inner tube, the remains of her old treadle sewing machine, old clothes, school books and term papers and such. Memories flooded over them as they searched through their childhood.

"We spent hours reading the old newspapers pasted under the wallpaper, some dating back to 1899," June says. "We took pictures and just had a fun day."

I believe the old house really died with Ruby in 1993, the last of the matrons of that place. The farm passed on to eldest son Larry, and it was finally decided to bring the rotting eyesore down. Michael Perry of Huntington, who is developing a museum to showcase area history, got wind of the family's plans and asked if he could take some of the old logs and stones from the house. He wanted to put these ancient logs together with others from similar homes to make historic display houses.

Finally, the old house was abandoned to the nesting hens, nursing puppies and curious grandchildren of the next generation.

Our family no longer gathers on Sunday afternoons. My cousins and I are in college or married with lives of our own, and somehow too busy these days for quiet visits to the farm. It's almost as if the house was what held us all together for so many years and so many generations, and now we have lost our center. The old place withstood years of turmoil and change, strong and alive with the hopes and dreams of a West Virginia family.

My own memories are among the last to be made there, and they are precious to me. I remember running joyfully from the old house up to the porch where my mother was sitting, to show her some treasure I'd just found. She would examine it carefully, nod and laugh to herself.

I never understood the expression on her face until now.

Another Family's Home:

Conversation with an Old House

By Hattie M. Crummitt

Golly, Old House, how I wish your walls could talk!

What wonderful tales you could tell. I have wondered many, many times what you could tell me of my dear mother. And what about all the others, before my mother's years with you?

You were built of logs, and of shingles handmade for your roof. Neighbors had to have helped, for your logs are at least two feet thick.

I like to think of those who came to help put you together, while Great-grandmother and the other women cooked pots of wild meat, potatoes, parsnips and beans, along with pans and pans of hot cornbread. I can almost smell the aroma, as the women hurry around making sure that there is enough food for all the hungry working men. They are dressed in long cotton dresses, aprons and bonnets.

How fast the men are working. You are really taking shape now, a beautiful sight to see, everyone so proud. You are a tall house — one and a half stories, with a ladder stair on the outside. You have a fireplace on the left end, with a chimney made of stone. This was the most comfortable part of the house. At first, food was cooked here over the open fire. Some logs burned all day.

Grandpa Jim Elder told me that in the very early years you didn't have glass in your windows, just shutters to close at night and to keep out the cold wind in winter. At first, you had only homemade candles for light.

I'm sure you remember the childbearing within your walls. First there was Great-grandmother Ruthie, trying to stand the pain all alone. Her muffled screams were followed by the beautiful sound of a baby's cry, then the laughter of proud parents as another new one came along every year or two.

You became such a happy place with all the children, and then all the other relatives coming to celebrate as the children themselves married off. Each wedding was a time of much food and gaiety.

But then came a sad time.

Your little boy Jim had grown tall and straight and become a man. He married Hattie Hodge. They had two children of their own, Gertie and Oscar. They had a few happy years, until Gertie was five and Oscar was three.

Jim and Hattie were my grandparents, since Gertie would grow up to be my mother. When Hattie became ill and knew she would soon be leaving her family, she wanted to take the children home to her parents. But her father, John A. Hodge, had never forgiven her for marrying and was too contrary to allow it. So she asked her in-laws, Sanford and Ruthie Elder, if they would take Gertie and Oscar.

Our author (left) says it's possible to talk to a house when the two of you share generations of family history. Her mother's people lived there.

You do remember, Old House, the sad day Hattie died and the children came to live inside your walls.

Gertie was so young and small, but bright and cheery, when she came to you. Her brother Oscar —

"Pete," as his grandfather called him — was a cute little boy, mischievous at times and never serious. Sometimes he cut your logs with his pocket knife, but Grandfather Sanford would never believe he could do anything wrong. Pete was his pride and joy.

It isn't hard to picture Uncle Oscar Elder as the rascal of the family.Photographer unknown, 1908.

Your roof sheltered these little ones who had lost their mother. And for awhile their widowed Pa Jim was here himself, happy to be back in his boyhood home in his time of trouble. You were a refuge and a haven to all of them. Did you hear Gertie crying at night in loneliness? When she knelt to say her prayers to God, were you listening too?

There are so many things I would like to know.

You stood there by yourself, no other house near. If it hadn't been for the children's noise and the voices of grownups talking of days gone by and planning the days ahead, you would have been lonely.

Grandfather Sanford's trade was coffin maker. Did it make you sad to hear him sawing, pounding nails and shaping boards? Perhaps not. That was his way to help people in time of sorrow. But maybe tears from heaven fell on your roof when Sanford's work was for a relative, dear friend or neighbor.

Uncle Kay and Aunt Mae raised their children here. Aunt Mae spent whatever leisure she had in her rocking chair. One day while she was gone, Oscar nailed her rockers to your floor. Remember that? Remember her yelling, wanting to know who would do such a thing? We already agreed Oscar was a rascal, didn't we?

Let me ask you another thing: Do you remember when Gertie was small and put a button up her nose? No one could get it out. While climbing up a sack of feed on your back porch, she fell onto your floor so hard the button popped out.

I remember my Grandma Lillie telling me of Gertie coming home to you after she was married to Newt Dodd and had children of her own, scrubbing your floors, making you spotlessly clean. You smiled with your shining surfaces.

Many years passed. You were getting old and your shingle roof had started leaking. The heirs decided to take your upper story down and put on a new-fangled tin roof. I know you didn't like this. But the old folks were gone and things were changing.

You know who I am, Old House, don't you? I am your great-granddaughter, named for that earlier Hattie who left her motherless children to you. I once hoped to own you myself, and bring my foster children to you in the summers and maybe sometimes in winter. You would have enjoyed children inside your walls again.

Unfortunately, it was not to be.

I heard you were going to be torn down and taken away. When my niece and I came to take pictures, you were a sad sight. Your chimney was gone, windows all broken, and parts of the floor which my mother had scrubbed were rotted away. The wallpaper was barely hanging in some spots. The small bedroom where my grandparents slept was all torn apart.

My heart ached, Old House. I touched your logs gently, and I whispered a little prayer that wherever you were going, you would be erected with love and pride.

On that last visit, I could almost hear my mother's voice and her footsteps. How many times you must have felt her touch on your window panes as she tiptoed to look out at the snow in winter, to watch spring flowers budding, and to listen to the birds singing as they built their nests and raised their families in summer?

I wonder how many times my mother came to the old dug well in your backyard to draw water and carry it to the house for cooking and for cleaning. I remember that well, with water so cool we didn't need ice.

But you had done your part, and none can blame you for getting old. Without proper care, you couldn't withstand the elements many more years. How many times have you stood against rain and snow and hot sun? You stood steady through all the emotional weather, too, our births, weddings and deaths.

As I walked out your door the last time, there was sadness in my very heart and soul.

I came back once again, but now you were gone. Your big logs had been sold and carried off. Only the stones of your foundation remained. You had been torn apart, taken away, but they can't have all of you.

Old House, you will always stand strong and precious in my memory.

Hattie Crummitt's old house was built near Pullman in the early 1800's, and moved to Ohio about a decade ago.

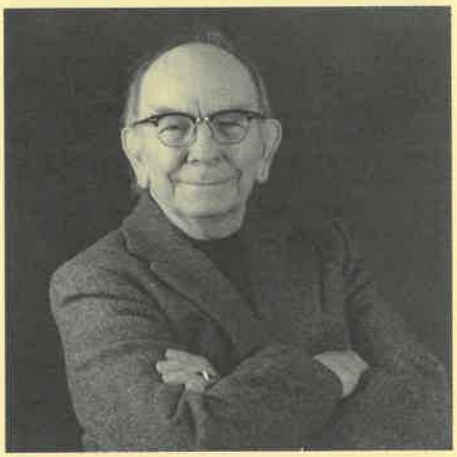
Current Programs • Events • Publications

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.

Uncle Abner Rides Again!

West Virginia mystery writer John F. Suter is the author of *Old Land, Dark Land, Strange Land*, published by the University of Charleston. Suter, who recently died, moved to Charleston in 1924 and worked as a research chemist at Union Carbide for 36 years.

His debut as a mystery writer came in 1953, with the short story



JOHN H. SIBOLD, COURTESY U. OF CHARLESTON

Mystery man John Suter.

"A Break in the Film." That tale won a Queen Special Award, and Suter's stories began to appear regularly in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and other publications.

Suter is best known among mystery buffs for reviving the "Uncle Abner" character, originally created by Melville Davisson Post of Clarksburg. Post, America's highest paid short story writer a century ago, is considered second only to Edgar Allan Poe as an inventor of the detective genre.

Uncle Abner is a righteous country squire of Harrison County or thereabouts who solves mysteries as often as not with the help of the Lord. John Suter's association with Uncle Abner dates back to the mid-1970's, when an agent for the Post estate sent him four short stories and an unfinished novel and asked him to complete them. Suter's new book also includes several contemporary stories, set in modern times.

Old Land, Dark Land, Strange Land is introduced by Sharyn McCrumb, one of today's hottest mystery writers. The 269-page hardback may be ordered for $21.95, plus $2.50 shipping and handling from the University of Charleston, 2300 MacCorkle Avenue, S.E., Charleston, WV 25304. West Virginia residents must add $1.32 sales tax. Suter's book is also available at The Cultural Center Shop and Taylor Books in Charleston, and other bookstores.

Mountain Heritage Books

Readers interested in West Virginia should know about Mountain Heritage Books and Research in St. Marys. The business offers new and used West Virginia books, West Virginia county histories and related books, West Virginia Blue Books dating back to 1935, and West Virginia vital records database searches.

The Mountain Heritage Books catalog briefly describes each book and its condition. Owner William D. White says many of his books are one-of-a-kind, but he also carries reprints and publications from West Virginia publishers such as Mountain State Press, Pictorial Histories, and McClain Printing. He bought some of his inventory from the late Jim Comstock's Richwood bookstore.

White constantly canvasses other bookstores and book sellers for out-of-print books, and he has his own collection of first editions. His dream is to open his own bookstore specializing in West Virginia books. For now Mountain Heritage books is set up for mail order business. Catalogs may be ordered for $2 from

First West Virginia History Day

This March West Virginia historical associations and societies will join with state agencies and interested individuals to celebrate the first West Virginia History Day at the Capitol Complex in Charleston.

The day-long event will feature historic exhibits, booths run by county historical societies and historic attractions, Civil War reenactments, living history characters, and past

From Hartley's *Life of Wetzel.*

Golden Horseshoe winners.

West Virginia History Day is set for March 5. For more information contact Dr. Stuart McGehee, West Virginia State College, Box 162, History Department, Institute, WV 25112; (304)766-3240.

William D. White, Mountain Heritage Books & Research, 319-A Washington Street, St. Marys, WV 26170.

McClain Printing Company in Parsons recently issued the latest edition of its catalog of West Virginia books as well. For more information call 1-800-654-7179 or write to McClain Printing Company, P.O. Box 403, Parsons, WV 26287.

Winter Waters Festival

Berkeley Springs knows what's in a name. This January the Eastern Panhandle town kicks off its seventh annual Winter Festival of the Waters. The festival celebrates the town's healing waters and begins with the Spa Feast weekend, January 24 through 26.

The festival continues with the popular Toast to the Tap in February. This event has attracted a lot of attention with competitors from across the country and around the world pitting their municipal tap water and bottled waters against one another. Sweet Springs Natural Mountain Water from Monroe County has been a big winner in past years.

The public is invited to taste the competing waters at Coolfont Resort. A professional seminar "Water, Water Everywhere, But Is It Fit To Drink?" will be held as part of the competition. The Toast to the Tap's 1997 dates are February 21 through 23. For more information contact Winter Festival of the Waters at 1-800-447-8797.

Berkeley Springs was established in 1776 under the name of Bath. Famous for its warm medicinal springs, the town and Berkeley Springs State Park still attract visitors in search of rest and relaxation. The old Roman bathhouse offers a half-hour Roman bath in a mini-sized swimming pool for $10. Mineral baths at the main bathhouse include a 15 minute soak, a 30 minute massage and a shower for $30.

The bathhouses at Berkeley Springs are open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. except for Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information contact 1-800-CALL-WVA.

Helping the Hungry

Gassaway is home to the Mountaineer Food Bank. The organization is called upon during disasters to feed those in need, and it also provides help to shelters, churches, soup kitchens, day care centers, and food pantries in 48 West Virginia counties.

The Mountaineer Food Bank was begun in 1981 by an anti-hunger coalition. Today the food bank receives food and other products from donors in West Virginia and elsewhere. Farmers, retailers, distributors, local food drives, individuals, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers all donate to the Mountaineer Food Bank. The donations are inventoried, stored and distributed to member agencies.

Earlier this year the food bank experienced a disaster of its own. An auxiliary warehouse being used to store food until a new warehouse and office were completed was damaged by floodwaters and $246,000 worth of food was lost. The Mountaineer Food Bank's distribution was greatly affected over the ensuing weeks, but the group continued to help needy West Virginians.

Anytime is a good time to help hungry people, but the holiday season is an especially meaningful time to give. The Mountaineer Food Bank invites West Virginians and others to invest in its efforts. The address is 416 River Street, Gassaway, WV 25524. Carla Nardella is the director of Mountaineer Food Bank. She may be reached at (304)364-5518.

Americanizing West Virginia

World War I and the years following were a time of political reaction in America, as the established powers came to terms with changes which alarmed them. Among the most disturbing threats were militant labor unions, massive immigration, and recent successes of radical political parties. These were taken to be un-American by some,

and widespread "Americanization" campaigns were begun.

West Virginia shared fully in this uneasy era, according to *The Americanization of West Virginia*, a new book by John C. Hennen. Professor Hennen, who teaches history at the University of Kentucky, has a Ph.D. from WVU and formerly worked for the West Virginia State Archives.

He begins his history in the late 'teens, with a look at wartime propaganda and the mobilization of public opinion in support of the military effort. Then he moves into the postwar period, which brought the Red Scare nationally and wide-

spread labor warfare in West Virginia.

These were the years of the "massacre" in Matewan; prolonged and bloody battles in the Tug Valley, on Blair Mountain, and in the Northern Panhandle; and the widely publicized assassination of Sid Hatfield. State and local authorities took measures ranging from armed suppression through the teaching of civics and the English language. Taken together, these actions were intended to reconcile West Virginians to the industrial order and make the state safe for economic exploitation, in Hennen's view.

The Americanization of West Virginia: Creating a Modern Industrial State, 1916-1925, winner of the prestigious Appalachian Studies Award from the Appalachian Studies Association, was published earlier this year by the University Press of Kentucky. The 217-page hardback sells for $32.95 in bookstores nationwide.

Greenbrier River Trail

The Greenbrier River Trail is a long piece of history running right through Pocahontas County. It was formerly the Durbin line of the old C&O Railway, built to haul lumber from boom towns in Greenbrier and Pocahontas counties early in this century. The rails were taken up in recent times, and the road bed was converted into the popular hiking-biking trail.

The Greenbrier River Trail is considered one of America's most beautiful rail-trails, according to the West Virginia Trails Coalition. The group was established to bring together the efforts of all trail-friendly organizations and individuals in West Virginia, and it is working to expand the Greenbrier River Trail.

Currently the trail stretches 80 miles from North Caldwell to Cass. The Trails Coalition wants to add the railroad bed from Cass to Durbin, and then continue along Monongahela National Forest's West Fork Trail to Glady Creek and Dry Fork (on what was primarily an old private railroad bed) to Canaan Valley.

The West Virginia Trails Coalition is looking for new members. For more information contact Lucian N. Schrader, P.O. Box 487, Nitro, WV 25143; (304)768-0528.

West Virginia Glass on Exhibit

Two museums recently opened major exhibitions to show off our Mountain State glass heritage.

The West Virginia State Museum at the Cultural Center in Charleston is exhibiting "Of Fire and Sand: West Virginia Glassmaking." The show, which will run through September 1998, includes products made in West Virginia from 1842 through 1995. Glass marbles have a place in the exhibit, with packages of marbles from such industry giants as Marble King, Vitro Agate, and Akro Agate.

All of the pieces in the show are from the State Museum's collection. One of the more unusual items is a cut-glass checkerboard made in 1940 by a worker at Charleston's Libbey-Owens-Ford. The exhibit also includes photographs, a glassmaking video by GOLDENSEAL photographer Michael Keller, and a map illustrating the location and operating years of West Virginia's glass factories.

The West Virginia State Museum is looking for several pieces for its collection — labeled glass from Bonita Glass Company in Huntington (1931-1953) and Colonial Glass Company in Weston (1945-1975), for example, as well as a mason jar from Nail City Lamp Company in Wheeling (1880's-1890's). To donate items or to find out more about the glass exhibit, contact curator Jim Mitchell, West Virginia State Museum, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305;(304)558-0220.

Meanwhile in Beckley, the Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia will exhibit "Splendor in the Glass" through the end of the year. The show was designed and built for the Youth Museum by glass collector Dean Six of Harrisville. Six is the founder and director of a group of glass enthusiasts who call themselves the West Virginia Museum of American Glass, Ltd. The group publishes a newsletter and holds an annual conference.

MICHAEL KELLER

Moon Over West Virginia by Pilgrim Glass, 1994.

"Splendor in the Glass," designed to educate young people about West Virginia's glass story, is an interactive show where kids can make music with glass, work a glass press, create colorful mosaics, and shoot marbles. The Youth Museum, located in New River Park adjacent to the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information call (304)252-3730.

For more information on the West Virginia Museum of American Glass, contact Dean Six at P.O. Box 574, Weston, WV 26452.

Goldenseal Index

Volume 22, 1996

Articles which appeared in Volume 22 are indexed below, under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

In the Subject category, articles are listed under their main topic, with many cross-referenced under alternate Subject headings. Each entry is followed by the seasonal designation of the issue, issue volume and number and page number. Short notices, such as appear in the regular column, "Current Programs, Events, Publications," are not included in the index.

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appeared in the April-September 1978 issue, and the index for Volumes 4 and 5 in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of the calendar year.

SUBJECT

AUTHOR

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LOCATION

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685 FOR GOLDENSEAL: WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE (U.S.P.S. No. 013336), Filing date October 2, 1996, published quarterly, at The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Number of issues published annually: 4. Annual subscription price: $16. The general business offices of the publisher are located at The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

The names and addresses of the publisher, editor and managing editor are: publisher, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; editor, Ken Sullivan, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; managing editor, Ken Sullivan, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

The owner is: West Virginia Division of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

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Publication Name: Goldenseal: West Virginia Traditional Life
Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Fall 1996

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2)Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Include Advertisers' Proof Copies/ Exchange Copies) 25,518
C) Total paid and/or requested circulation: 26,592
D) Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means (Samples, complimentary and other free copies) 5,193
E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means) -0-
F) Total Free Distribution 5,193
G) Total Distribution 31,785
H) Copies Not Distributed
1) Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled 808
2) Return from News Agents 338
I) Total 32,931

Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 84%

The actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date are:
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Net Press Run: 33,223
B) Paid and/or requested circulation:
1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales (Not mailed) 1,112
2) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Include Advertisers' Proof Copies/ Exchange Copies) 26,081
C) Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation 27,193
D) Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free) 4,673
E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means) -0-
F) Total Free Distribution 4,673
G) Total Distribution 31,866
H) Copies Not Distributed
1) Office Use, Leftover, Spoiled 1,357
2) Return from News Agents -0-
I) Total 33,223
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Ken Sullivan, Editor

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Our Writers and Photographers

ANCELLA R. BICKLEY, a native of Huntington, is a graduate of West Virginia State, Marshall, and WVU. She has worked as a teacher and college administrator. She is the author of *History of the West Virginia State Teachers' Association* and other publications. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GEORGIA CALDWELL writes about the lower Shenandoah Valley. She has published articles in *Wonderful West Virginia, Blue Ridge Country*, and *Potomac* magazines. A native of Illinois, Georgia has lived in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle for the past 20 years. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

DOUG CHADWICK of Pocahontas County was born in North Carolina, but has lived in West Virginia since 1970. He claims seniority over everyone else in the GOLDENSEAL family, his work having appeared here since our first year of publication. He now works primarily as a freelance panoramic photographer.

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

MAUREEN CROCKETT was born in New York State and attended City University of New York, WVU and other institutions. She lives in St. Albans and works as a freelance writer, photographer and illustrator. She contributes regularly to *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1991.

HATTIE M. CRUMMITT was born in Ritchie County in 1908 and attended country schools there and in Doddridge County. She now lives in Clarksburg where she is the oldest active member of East View United Methodist Church. The article in this issue is her first published piece.

MARY LUCILLE DeBERRY is a producer and director at WNPB-TV in Morgantown. She is the grand niece of photographer Perry Cox, and she draws on family history for her article about him. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1977.

CARL E. FEATHER lives in Ohio, but traces his family back to Preston and Tucker counties and visits West Virginia as often as he can. He has worked as a freelance photographer for more than 20 years and a freelance writer for more than ten. He is now lifestyles editor at the *Ashtabula Star-Beacon*. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1996.

MIKE FURBEE works for the WVU School of Medicine as a researcher, and is a photographer and fine traditional musician. He escorted Beulah Grace Dobson to the Salem church oyster supper to get photos for our story. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1996.

CHERYL RYAN HARSHMAN lives in Moundsville. She and her husband, Marc, are both accomplished storytellers and regular participants in the Vandalia Gathering. Cheryl is the author of the children's book, *Sally Arnold*, and an outreach librarian at the Public Library in Moundsville. Her work last appeared in GOLDENSEAL in Summer 1995.

FRANK P. HERRERA, a native of Beckley, now divides his time between Martinsburg and metropolitan Washington. He earned degrees from WVU and the University of Maryland, and was head of photography at Shepherd College from 1981 to 1985. His photographs are widely published and exhibited. He last contributed to GOLDENSEAL in Summer 1995.

CONNIE KARICKHOFF, a Huntington native, is a student at West Virginia University where she was named the English Department's Outstanding Senior of the Year. She wrote about her mother's Wayne County homeplace because of its "many precious memories." This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

RICHARD L. MURCHISON is a native Delawarian but a West Virginian at heart. He has visited state parks here since he was six years old, and lives part-time in Summers County. He has worked as a college professor and is now vice-president of marketing at Dover Downs. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

PEGGY ROSS was born in Ohio where she worked as a journalist and in public relations. She is the mother of four children, and a grandmother. Peggy moved to Preston County in 1988 to restore her husband's 200-year-old homeplace. She gardens, works as a freelance writer, quilts and sews in her spare time. She is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

DANNY WILLIAMS, a native of Wayne County, lives in Morgantown. He is the former folks arts specialist for the Division of Culture and History and a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

Making Life Interesting:

Groundhog for State Animal?

Jim Comstock is gone but not forgotten — and in fact still making waves, according to news from Concord College.

As the college prepares to host its 20th annual Groundhog Day breakfast this February, news surfaced of unfinished business from last time. It seems that Mr. Comstock presented the 1996 breakfast gathering with a letter suggesting that those present launch a campaign to make the groundhog West Virginia's official state animal.

That means replacing the faithful black bear, and fur is likely to fly in a battle like that. But Comstock, allegedly quoting a groundhog in the "cabbage and turnip observation business," argued that groundhogs are "more numerous and much cuter" than bears. A motion was duly entered and an endorsement passed unanimously by those at the 1996 breakfast to submit the idea to the State Legislature for approval.

Comstock, former editor of *The West Virginia Hillbilly*, has died since last February, but his cause lives on. "It falls upon us to advance this petition," said college president Dr. Jerry Beasley, "that the groundhog be designated as the West Virginia state animal."

Concord College has its own resident groundhog, Concord Charlie, who predicts when spring will arrive. Charlie and French Creek Freddie, his Upshur County colleague, are top-notch prognosticators, according to those in the know, far superior to Pennsylvania's media-hungry Punxsutawney Phil.

Each Groundhog Day the president of the college gives Charlie's weather report over breakfast. President Beasley shares the responsibility and the head table with Concord's "Grand Groundhog Watchers," including GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan, Secretary of State Ken Hechler, and novelist Denise Giardina. They and others were honored over the last two decades for "making life in West Virginia more interesting."

The public is welcome at the Groundhog Day breakfast, held on campus in the ballroom of the College Center building at 8:00 a.m. on February 2. The cost ranges from $4 to $5 for a robust country breakfast, and reservations are recommended for the popular event. Contact Joe Manzo at (304) 384-5208 for more information.

Groundhog Day is based on a custom brought to America from Germany and Great Britain. Legend has it that the groundhog awakens from its long winter sleep on February 2. It comes out of its home in the ground to look around. If the sun is shining and the groundhog sees its shadow, it is frightened back into the ground. This means six more weeks of winter weather. But, if the day is cloudy and the groundhog doesn't see a shadow, it stays out of its hole and spring is on the way.

The groundhog, more primly known as the woodchuck (scientific name *Marmota monax*), measures about two feet long, including the bushy tail. The mammal, which occurs throughout West Virginia, the eastern United States and much of Canada, hibernates until late winter.

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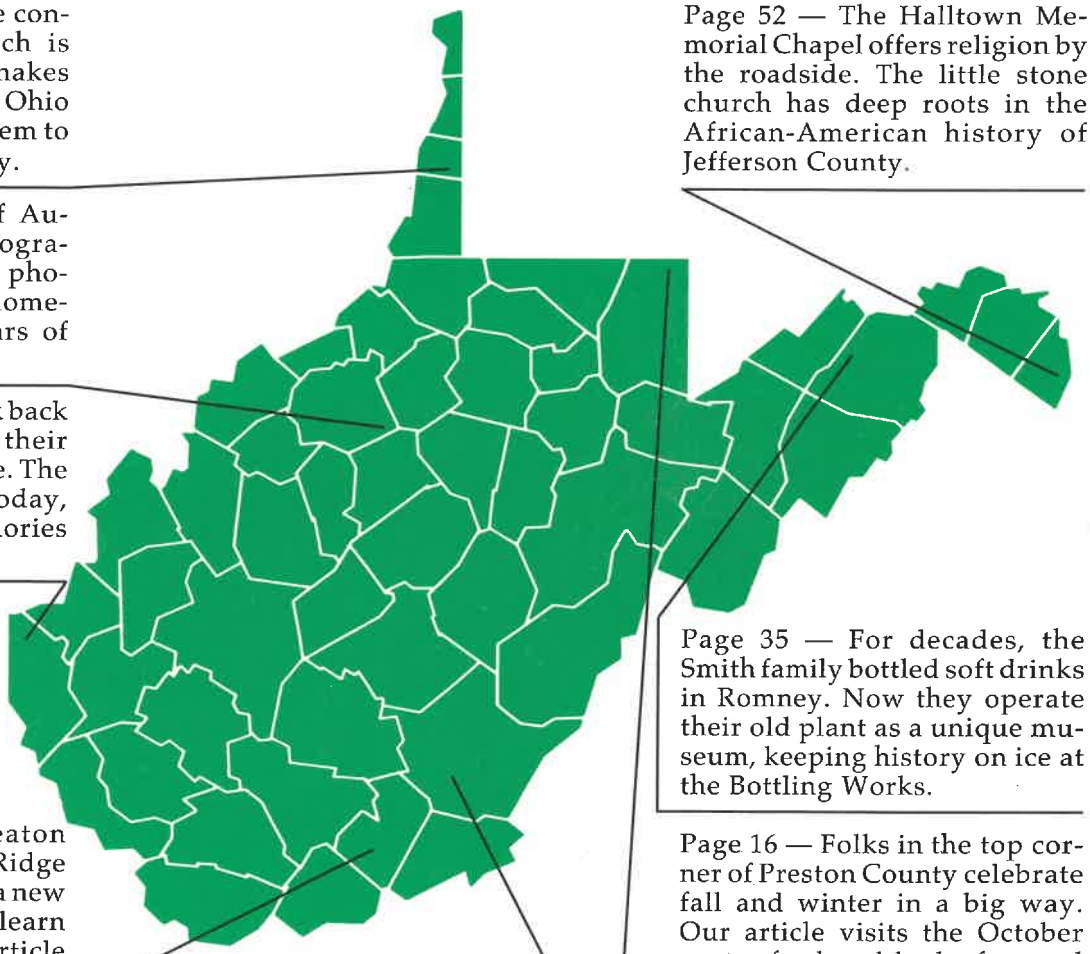

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