Winter 1997 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • $3.95

# Goldenseal

## West Virginia Greeks

# From The Editor: Holiday Greetings

Happy holidays from the GOLDENSEAL staff! Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, or the arrival of Old Man Winter, we wish you peace, happiness, and all the joys of the season. And we certainly hope you enjoy this latest issue of GOLDENSEAL.

I am struck by the diversity of our state, as reflected in the following pages. Ethnic communities from the Northern Panhandle to the Southern Coalfields continue to thrive, and, as usual, GOLDENSEAL explores these topics with a personal touch and a strong eye toward family history.

Our industrial heritage continues to play a big role in the magazine with strong articles on mining and lumbering. Our diversity of religious practice comes to light in stories about black gospel singer Ethel Caffie-Austin and the Greek Orthodox community in Weirton.

A lumber mill Christmas in the 1950's at Werth. Photographer unknown. See our story on page 10.

This issue also contains the annual GOLDENSEAL index, which will help you to remember the many great and varied stories GOLDENSEAL has brought you during 1997.

Which brings me to 1998. We have big plans for the new year. We continue to receive fascinating stories and story ideas from writers and readers across the state, and we look forward to bringing them to you in future issues. You may notice a few subtle design changes over the next several issues, and you will also be hearing details of our plans to celebrate GOLDENSEAL's 25th anniversary in 1999.

In addition to these plans, we are preparing a third reprint of the successful *GOLDENSEAL Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars*, due out this spring. See page 8 in this issue for information on our new homepage on the World Wide Web.

Thanks to those of you who have recently renewed your subscriptions. We appreciate your support. We also appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Here are some highlights and excerpts from our subscription renewal mailbag:

Charleston, WV
Thank you for your magazine. Both my husband and I always find something in it of unique interest - especially old-time musician stories!

Corpus Christi, TX
I really enjoyed this issue of GOLDENSEAL. My father played music with Clark Kessinger. ...It was a special treat to read about all of his life.

Clarksburg, WV
Last few issues have been taken over by fiddle, guitar, and banjos. ... Please, enough of the fiddles. Thank you.

Keyser, WV
How about more on the Eastern Panhandle?

Sterling, VA
I'd like to have more train stories, please.

Middlebourne, WV
Can't believe anyone would expect this nice magazine for free!

Quinter, KS
I look forward with great anticipation to my GOLDENSEAL, and read virtually every word.

Clendenin, WV
I wouldn't want to be without GOLDENSEAL. I admire your magazine for many things and am glad we don't need advertisements. Keep up the good work. You have my support.

Huntington Beach, CA
GOLDENSEAL is a great publication. I doubt that any other state has anything to compare with it.

Narvon, PA
Still a great magazine but I very much dislike the new lighter weight paper. It is not as durable or classy as the other.

Moundsville, WV
My wife and I sure do like this magazine. We are older people.

Thank you for your thoughts. I read every word of every letter that comes into our office, and I learn a little more every day. Mostly, I'm learning how lucky I am to have this job. And how lucky we all are to live in a state that has what it takes to publish a magazine like GOLDENSEAL.

John Lilly

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Cecil H. Underwood
Governor

Division of Culture and History
Renay Conlin
Commissioner

**John Lilly**
Editor

**Debby Sonis Jackson**
Assistant Editor

**Cornelia Crews Alexander**
Editorial Assistant

**Anne H. Crozier**
Graphic Design

GOLDENSEAL (ISSN 0099-0159, USPS 013336) is published four times a year, in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. The magazine is distributed for $16 yearly. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome; return postage should accompany manuscripts and photographs. All correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Phone (304)558-0220. Periodical postage paid at Charleston, West Virginia.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Articles appearing in GOLDENSEAL are abstracted and indexed in *Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life.* The Division of Culture and History is an Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer.



# Goldenseal

Volume 23, Number 4 Winter 1997

COVER: The Koukoulis family of Weirton, 1927. Charles and Panagiota with children Angelo (seated) and Helen. Background from Sabraton *National Herald* newspaper, March 10, 1923. Photo restoration and cover concept by Greg Clark.



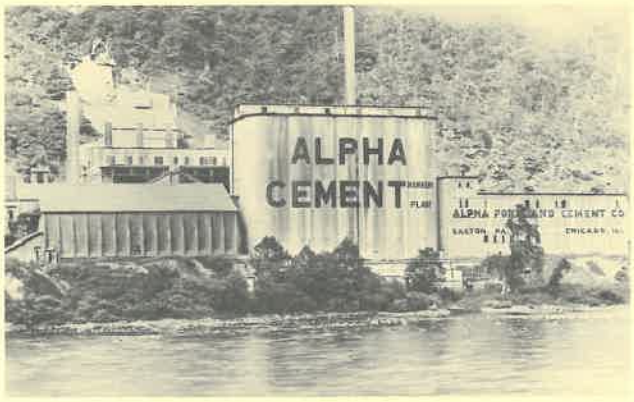
PHOTOS: Greg Clark, John Cooper, Mike Furbee, Michael Keller, Charles Koukoulis, Johnny Krause, Ron Rittenhouse, L. Wayne Sheets

# 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.*

**Manheim**

October 21, 1997
Charles Town, West Virginia
Editor:
We never heard of GOLDENSEAL until last week. A dear friend of




ours (formerly of Manheim) gave us the Fall 1997 issue and we're thrilled. We were born and raised in Manheim and my husband worked at Alpha Cement from 1942 until 1959 when he was transferred to the Lime Kiln plant. I shouldn't have said I was born there — I was transplanted there in 1946 when I married a Manheim native, Kraymer Witt, who is in the basketball picture in the article. He lived right above Witt Park where the large group of men were pictured. Joycelyn (McVicker) Ayersman is his cousin and Bunny Brutto was his foreman at Lime Kiln, Maryland. Bunny's wife, Naomi, taught our daughter in first and second grades.

Will you please send me four copies of the Fall 1997 issue so I can give one to each of our children? Anxiously awaiting our order, we want to say thanks for the wonderful article about our beloved settlement along the Cheat River.
Truly yours,
Gloria P. Witt

September 24, 1997
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Editor:
Congratulations on a great fall issue. The mix of nostalgia and information is as intoxicating as ever.

I particularly enjoyed the Peggy Ross "Manheim — Faded Glory" article. For several years in the Foreign Service I lived near the namesake town Mannheim in southwest Germany. A major industrial city and riverport at the confluence of the Rhine and Neckar rivers (and a major target of our Air Corps in World War II), it is, with a population nearly triple that of Charleston and Huntington combined, far from being "a small village." I can only speculate, but maybe our Manheim was actually named after the borough of Manheim in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,

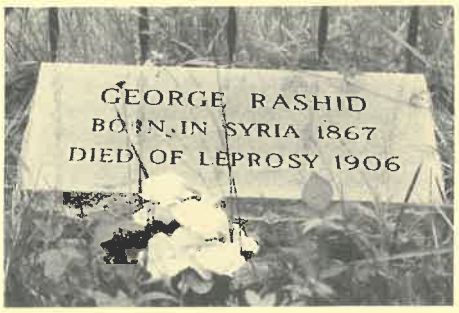
*For several years in the Foreign Service I lived near the namesake town Mannheim in southwest Germany.*

which likely took its name from the German city.

I am a transplant to this beautiful state from old Virginia and must frequently remind people that about half of Virginia is the same "ridge and valley" country that characterizes so much of West Virginia's topography. Both are precious — let's hear it for the Virginias!
Your avid reader,
Dabney Chapman

**The Pickens Leper**

October 15, 1997
New Haven, West Virginia
Editor:
L. Wayne Sheets' article on George Rashid ("The Pickens Leper," Fall 1997) and accompanying articles on Hansen's disease were most enlightening. Yet I'm troubled to learn that Mr. Rashid is remembered on a headstone as a victim of leprosy and with a possible future roadside marker as the Pickens Leper. He suffered from a most unfortunate disease. Added to this was the ostracizing and the ignorance of the time. I feel he should be




L. WAYNE SHEETS

George Rashid's headstone.

remembered for his fortitude in facing not only his physical troubles but those that were imposed on him from his community. When I pass away I should hope to be remembered for my endeavors and accomplishments during my lifetime and not have

placed on my grave "Died from cancer," or "Died from an automobile accident."

I have visited the Pickens area many times. I have enjoyed the Maple Syrup Festival, the flora, the fauna, the mountains, and the many fine people of the area. Promote those and let Mr. Rashid rest in peace, something he didn't have the last few years of his life.
Sincerely,
Steven D. Mace

October 3, 1997
Huntington, West Virginia
Editor:
I have just finished reading the fall issue of GOLDENSEAL. I found the story on "The Pickens Leper" to be most interesting. I grew up hearing about the leper and his plight from my mother. My grandfather, my mother's father, was Artinis W. Zinn, the undertaker from Huttonsville who buried Mr. Rashid.
Sincerely,
Charles L. Harrison

September 29, 1997
Rainelle, West Virginia
Editor:
The article concerning the leper was interesting. My father, W.T.W. Morgan — not Morton — was the undertaker. I was five years old at the time they buried the leper. They wore coveralls and buried them later. When Dad arrived home he took a good bath and rubbed with a lotion of some kind. Zinn was hired by Morgan and later took over the business there when my dad moved to Rainelle.

Winters were severe at that time. Dad had five places where he stored caskets. They were transported on a sled. In time he bought an ambulance and all wanted to see in it.

With two sons, one would think they would inherit the business but when my brother Dan helped

# Triplets

June 16, 1997
Beckley, West Virginia
Editor:
I got acquainted with your magazine a few weeks ago. I thought you might be interested in publishing something about my dad and his wife having triplets in Sophia in 1929. This was 67 years ago and two of them are still living.

They were born on December 3, 1929, at Sophia, and it was ten below zero. Present in the home were my dad, his wife, a neighbor Mrs. Lucas, Grandma Elizabeth Ward, and Dr. Moore. First Ruby was born and she weighed four pounds. Then Ruth was born and she weighed five pounds, then Ralph H. was born and he weighed six pounds.

After the triplets were born, my dad had to go to a store and buy white outing material so neighbors could get busy making clothing for the babies. They only had three outfits, because they thought only one baby was coming.

Ruby died 20 days later and was buried December 24, 1929. Ralph H. Ward [has] lived all his life in Sophia and Glen White areas. He worked as a coal miner and served in the army during the Korean conflict. He is the father of four sons.

Ruth Ward [has] lived most of her life in Raleigh County. She is a housewife and the mother of five sons.

The house the triplets were born in still stands across from United National Bank on the four-lane at Sophia. Ruby and her mother Alice are buried to the left of the house upon a mountain. It is called Jessup Cemetery.

My dad, Frank Ward, was born October 23, 1902, and died May 5, 1981, at the age of 79. He was a West Virginia coal miner. His first wife was Alice Bridgeman — the mother of the triplets. They had a total of five children. Dad was a widower for four years before he married Edna Gray Ward.

Although she was expecting only one baby, Alice Bridgeman Ward gave birth to triplets on December 3, 1929, in Sophia. Photo courtesy of Carol Horton.

Edna Gray Ward was married to Jesse Ward, a brother to Frank, at the time the triplets were born. She had two children by Jesse Ward. Edna was the one who named the triplets when they were born.

When the triplets were 12 years old, their mother Alice died of cancer. Jesse Ward had died in a mining accident. Edna was a widow for ten years before she married Frank. When Frank and Edna married, Edna became the triplets' stepmother. I was born to Frank and Edna Ward in 1948. Mom is 91 years old now and still lives on the old home place. She has been a resident of Raleigh County for 87 years.
Yours truly,
Carol Horton

with the embalming he got sick. James drove the ambulance but wasn't interested in embalming. Dad had the first funeral home in Rainelle, now we have two others.

All the stories are interesting in GOLDENSEAL. I look forward to the magazine.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Edith Quick

**Agnes Runner Nestor**

September 12, 1997
Greenville, West Virginia
Editor:
I was much interested in the article about Agnes Runner Nestor which was in the last issue of GOLDENSEAL.

I am almost her age. I was born January 31, 1899, and am the mother of ten living children; five boys and five girls. They are all married and living with the same spouses that they started out with, except my youngest daughter. She lost her first husband, and is married again.

*I am almost her age. I was born January 31, 1899, and am the mother of ten living children.*

I live alone in an apartment under the same roof with a son and his wife. This farm was settled here in 1798 by the Larew family. It joins the farm on which I was born. I voted in 1920 — the first year that women had the right to vote.

As we had no high school class, I had to go away to get that schooling. I had one year of college. I have never worked away from home. We raised chickens and turkeys and had a good garden. Also raised some cattle. Like Mrs. Nestor said, "You name it and I done it."

All my children were born at home in a cottage that we had built on a part of this farm. I was married September 10, 1919. As I do not know how to address Mrs. Nestor, will you pass this on to her?
Sincerely,
Mrs. Robert (Gladys B.) Larew

P.S. I still raise a garden. I had a good one this season. I do have to use a cane when I walk on the ground — use the hoe in the garden.

**Clark Kessinger**

October 14, 1997
St. Clairsville, Ohio
Editor:
When I was a little girl, my father played fiddle with Clark Kessinger and I danced my feet off. When we knew that Clark was coming it was like the "Second Coming." Mother cooked. Daddy got on the phone and rang up everyone who could play an instrument. Sometimes Clark's nephew Luke was also there. My father was Sidney Fadely and we lived at Racine, Ohio, and Mason, West Virginia. Sid was a fiddle maker and once he made a fiddle for Clark.

The article was very exciting for me particularly since I have met and have become a "groupie" for Robin and Dan. Nothing makes me happier than a Kessinger tape. I was a tiny girl when Clark Kessinger came to play and I could not keep my feet still. I can still hear my mother saying, "Don't give that child any more cider."
Virginia (Ginny) Helms

Clark Kessinger and Gene Meade in 1966.

**Pilot Rose Cousins**

June 21, 1997
Broadview Heights, Ohio
Editor:
This is about the article, "I Was Never Afraid of Anything" in your Summer 1997 issue.

Although Rose Rolls Cousins and I are about the same age, and we both lived in Fairmont in the '30's, I never heard of her until I read your article.

Her reference to Fairmont Theater manager Fuzzy Knight (bottom of page 37) rang a bell. He was born John Forrest Knight on May 9, 1901, in Fairmont, and died February 23, 1976. He is probably Fairmont's most famous movie actor "son," appearing in dozens of Hollywood westerns between 1932 and 1967, usually as the cowboy star's sidekick or a hanger-on. His speech was a bit choppy and hesitant, not quite a stutter, and may have been contrived for effect. He was also a vaudeville actor, composer, and musical revue performer.

MIKE FURBEE

Rose Cousins near Fairmont today.

The Fairmont was the best of the city's three theaters. The Nelson was where kids like me went on Saturday

mornings for a nickel to find out that the stagecoach didn't really go over the cliff, as the ending of the previous week's serial part one suggested. The Virginia was the "in-between" theater, both literally and figuratively, on Adams Street (often called Main Street because that's where all three theaters and other "main" attractions and business places were).

Thanks for giving us Mary Rodd Furbee's story.
Sincerely,
Shel Harper

**News from Trace Creek**

October 1, 1997
Hamlin, West Virginia
Editor:
Just a bit of news from the valley of Trace Creek, West Virginia.

I have lived on this farm all my life. We had gas to burn for heat free from a well on the farm. This past summer the company capped the well and I must pay for gas for use now.

The well was making enough for our use and more. But the company said it wasn't making enough for them to leave. I tried to buy the well for home use but they wouldn't let me have it.

They said they were capping all of the old wells. Some they can't find. But they knowed where my well was. That's how poor folks at the bottom of the pile get treated.

Thanks for listening to my troubles.
Mary E. Lucas

**Traveling Poet**

August 27, 1997
Cortland, Ohio
Editor:
I have a book of poems, written by O. O. Eckels from Parkersburg and Weston. This book came to my parents, Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Lazier, shortly after the Depression days of the '30's.

We lived along Route 50 east of Bridgeport during that time and many people stopped at our place for a handout. One day a man by the name of O. O. Eckels stopped and my mother made breakfast for him.

He told her he was compiling a book of poems, and if he could get it published he would mail her one.

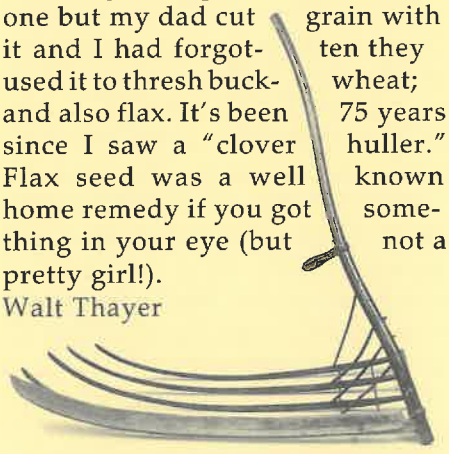
I was a young boy at that time. I am 78 now and I have that book.

O. O. Eckels was born in Wood County. I would like to hear from any of his people. The title of the book was *Sentimental, Humorous, and Miscellaneous Poems* by O. O. Eckels.
G. C. Lazier

*Our staff discovered that Mr. Eckels' book can be found in a number of West Virginia libraries including Marshall University, WVU Wise Library, and the WVU West Virginia Collection. Please let us know if you learn any more about this interesting individual — there could be a story here! — ed.*

**Harvesting the Grain**

October 20, 1997
East Wenatchee, Washington
Editor:
The photo of the grain cradle on the cover of GOLDENSEAL reminded me of the one we had over 75 years ago. I never used one but my dad cut grain with it and I had forgotten they used it to thresh buckwheat; and also flax. It's been 75 years since I saw a "clover huller." Flax seed was a well known home remedy if you got something in your eye (but not a pretty girl!).
Walt Thayer



Grain cradle courtesy State Museum.
Photo by Michael Keller.

# Happy Holidays!

Make the holidays happier with the gift of GOLDENSEAL. If you're enjoying the magazine you have in your hands, why not make it a gift to someone you care about?

It's the time of year we all scramble to find special holiday gift ideas for friends and family.

Simplify your shopping by giving the gift of GOLDENSEAL.

Sixteen dollars buys a year's worth of good reading. GOLDENSEAL brings out the best of the Mountain State, stories direct from the recollections of living West Virginians, beautifully illustrated by the finest old and new photography. After more than two decades of publication, the stories just keep getting better. Stories that are just right for GOLDENSEAL, for you, and for those on your holiday gift list.

Share the gift of GOLDENSEAL! We'll send the gift card. All you need to do is to place the order. **Look for a coupon on the other side of this page.**

**Happy holidays!**

## Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

Please add the following name(s) to the GOLDENSEAL mailing list. I enclose $16 for each subscription.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

[ ] I'm adding $4 extra per subscription (total $20). Please send the current issue along with the gift card!

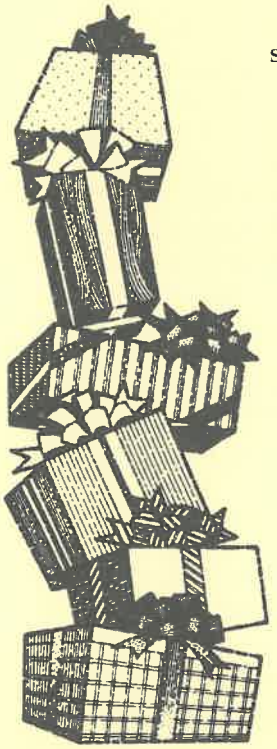
Gift Giver's Name

_____

Address _____

_____

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



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

# 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.*

### See the Trees

The West Virginia State Museum at the Capitol Complex is hosting the Cultural Center's annual Christmas tree exhibition this season. The Kanawha Garden Council of West Virginia Garden Clubs developed and decorated a number of thematic Christmas trees to tie in with exhibits in the State Museum.

Holiday trees return to the Cultural Center this month. Photo by Michael Keller.

The Settler's Cabin displays a "Tree of Toys," representative of pioneer children's playthings, with Germanic and Pennsylvania Dutch heritage trees in the yard of the cabin. At the train station, visitors will find trees from Holland, Poland, and Russia. An 1870's tree overlooks the "curiosities" exhibit, and a Lithuanian tree is incorporated into the museum's flatboat. A pioneer tree accompanies the Conestoga wagon exhibit, and a sparkling glass tree complements the museum's West Virginia glassmaking exhibit.

As usual the Great Hall of the Cultural Center will display an impressive traditional tree. The balcony exhibit area is dedicated to a special holiday china exhibition featuring elegant china from West Virginia.

The holiday trees will remain up through the end of December. For more information contact the State Museum, Division of Culture and History, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305;(304)558-0220.

### Holiday Light Shows

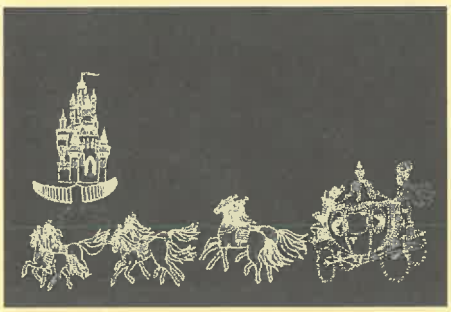
Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights, "America's largest light show," attracts nearly a million visitors each year with a six-mile driving tour featuring more than a million colorful lights displayed on 300 acres.

Several new displays planned for this year include a paddle wheel boat, prayer angels, downhill skiers, and "Flight of the Butterflies." A one-time donation of $5 per vehicle enables visitors to view the show as often as they wish for the entire season.

The Festival of Lights opened November 1 and continues through the first week of January. For more information contact Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights at 1-800-624-6988.

In southern West Virginia, Chief Logan State Park in Logan County offers a special holiday tradition of its own. Its Christmas In the Park light show is put together by the community. All labor is provided by volunteers and funding comes from businesses, civic groups, churches, and individuals.

The park requests voluntary donations from visitors. Attendance has risen from 200,000 in 1994 to 500,000 in 1996. Five new displays have been added for 1997. Christmas In the Park is



Cinderella at Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights.

held annually from Thanksgiving Day through January 1. For more information contact Chief Logan State Park, Logan, WV 25601; (304)792-7125.

In Webster County, a free holiday light show is offered during the month of December through New Year's Day. Knights Christmas Fantasy is designed and created by W. Sampson and Wynonia J. Knight of Webster Springs. The light show is located in Bolair, on Route 20 between Webster Springs and Cowen. For information, call (304)847-2065.

**Food For The Hungry**

Five years ago, the state Division of Natural Resources began its "Hunters Helping the Hungry" program. Two-pound packages of ground venison are distributed through the Mountaineer Food Bank to help the hungry and the homeless. So far 82,562 pounds of venison have been distributed through the food bank.

The program operates during the first week of bow season, and for the entire 12-day buck, 6-day antlerless, and 6-day muzzleloader seasons. Any hunter who wants to donate meat may take his or her deer to the nearest participating meat processor. In all, 36 businesses participate in Hunters Helping the Hungry in counties from Berkeley to Wayne and Logan to Brooke.

Brochures listing names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the meat processors are available at all game checking stations or through the Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Section, Building 3, Room 821, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-2771.

The Mountaineer Food Bank in Braxton County helps West Virginians in need. Since 1981, the organization has donated food and other products to soup kitchens, day care centers, food pantries, shelters, and churches throughout the Mountain State. Farmers, hunters, retailers, distributors, local food drives, and individuals all donate to the program.

This holiday season, the anti-hunger group is asking for additional support in the form of donations. A Mountaineer Food Bank membership card is sent to all donors. There are four card categories from "caring donor" which begins at $5 to "gold" for donations of $1,000 or more.

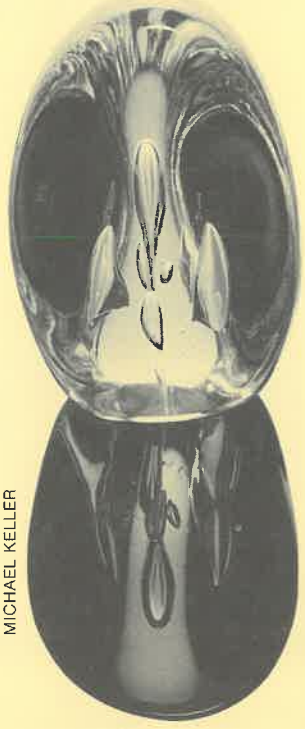
To send your donation to the Mountaineer Food Bank contact director Carla Nardella, Mountaineer Food Bank, 416 River Street, Gassaway, WV 26624; (304)364-5518.

**West Virginia Glass**

West Virginia has a rich heritage in glassmaking. Attracted by natural resources and a willing work force, more than 500 glass factories have operated in the Mountain State over the years. A comprehensive brochure about West Virginia glassmaking is now available through the state tourism office.

The attractive, four-color brochure features well-known companies such as Viking, Fenton, Blenko, Homer Laughlin, and Pilgrim as well as individual glass artists. The brochure includes color photography, a brief history of glassmaking in West Virginia, product descriptions, information on glassblowing demonstrations, and directions to nearly 20 locations.

For a free copy call 1-800-CALL-WVA or contact the Division of Tourism, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305.



MICHAEL KELLER

Paperweight by Cubert Smith.

Glassmaking in West Virginia is also the subject of an exhibit at the State Museum in Charleston. "Of Fire and Sand: West Virginia Glassmaking" offers a thorough look at the state's glass heritage. The show runs through September 1998 and includes West Virginia glass products manufactured from 1842 through 1995. The show was put together from glass housed in the West Virginia State Museum's permanent collection. The exhibit also features photography, video, and an historical map of West Virginia glass factories.

For more information contact the Division of Culture and History, 1900 Kanawha Blvd East, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-0220.

**Annual Journal Published**

*West Virginia History*, the annual history journal of the State Archives, was recently published and is available by mail order. Volume 56 is centered around "the challenges which arise from

changing historical interpretation" according to a promotional flyer for the book.

A prime example deals with the 1774 Battle of Point Pleasant which is often referred to as the first battle of the American Revolution. The 1997 *West Virginia History* publishes for the first time a draft of a 1909 speech written by Virgil Lewis refuting the oft-made claim to Revolutionary status for this battle. Lewis

The Battle of Point Pleasant, from *West Virginia History*.

was the first state historian and archivist.

The cover story addresses the Heyward Shepherd Memorial in Harpers Ferry. Heyward Shepherd was the first person killed in John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal armory. In 1931, the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans dedicated the memorial. The cover story article by Mary Johnson explains why it has been a source of controversy.

*West Virginia History* is fully indexed and illustrated with historic photographs. The 222-page softbound book is sold by subscription for $12 per copy. Send mail orders to the Archives and History Section, Division of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305. Make your check or money order payable to *West Virginia History*.

**More High Tech History**

The second in a series of CD-ROMs of West Virginia history is now available. This CD, titled *Explorer: The West Virginia History Database, Jefferson County Module*, was completed last December. It is the work of Jefferson County historian Bill Theriault and features maps, photos, historic landmarks, land grants, and abstracts of newspaper articles and census records of Jefferson County. It also has the full text of a number of articles, books, and other literature, by writer Julia Davis and others.

To operate the *Explorer* CD for Jefferson County, you will need a well-equipped IBM-compatible computer (486 or better) with Windows software, CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers, and related gear. Contact the State Archives if you have questions regarding equipment specs.

To order the new CD, send a check or money order for $25 (payable to *Explorer Timeline*) to Archives and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305.

**Encyclopedia Seeks Writers**

The West Virginia Humanities Council is seeking freelance writers for its proposed one-volume *West Virginia Encyclopedia*. The new encyclopedia, expected to be about 1,000 pages long, is scheduled for publication in the year 2000.

The encyclopedia will be a comprehensive West Virginia reference, according to Ken Sullivan, former editor of GOLDENSEAL and now director of the Humanities Council. "The big book will run from A to Z," Sullivan says, "including hundreds of authoritative short essays on many aspects of West Virginia history, biography, flora and fauna, geology and geography, and other subjects. We expect to produce a landmark book, and will need the help of a lot of good writers."

Work on the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* is already underway and interested writers are urged to get in touch. Writers should send samples of their previous work, and indicate their areas of expertise. Contact the West Virginia Humanities Council, 723 Kanawha Blvd. East, Suite 800, Charleston, WV 25301; (304)346-8500, fax (304)346-8504.

**GOLDENSEAL Online**

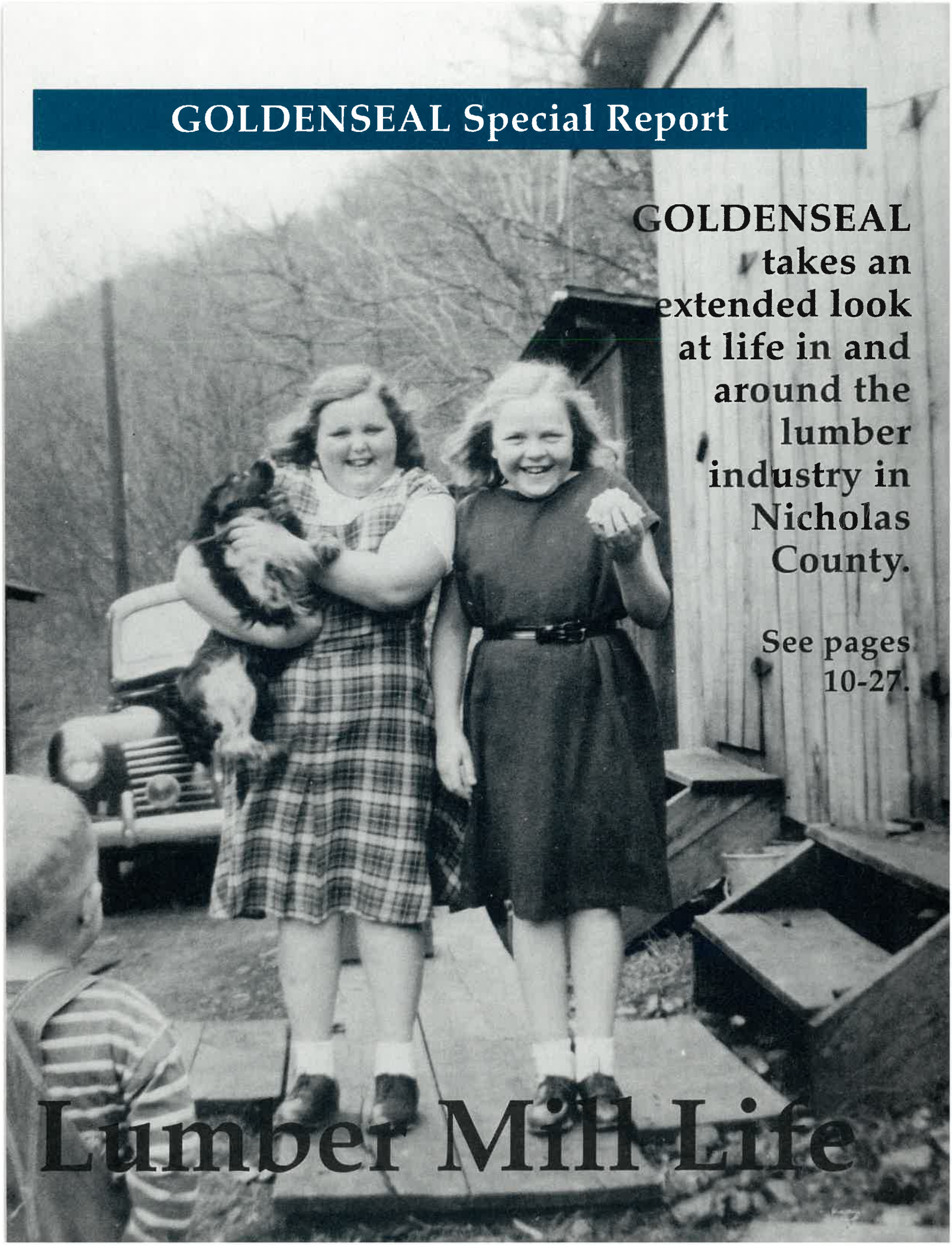
Internet users may want to check out GOLDENSEAL on the World Wide Web. Thanks to the efforts of Mike Keller at the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, GOLDENSEAL now has its own web site.

The magazine can be found at www.wvlc.wvnet.edu/culture/goldensl.html. The West Virginia Library Commission hosts our site on their server, which accounts for our lengthy address. But as Mike says, "Fortunately, you only have to type the address once, bookmark it, and we're only a double-click away." Those browsing GOLDENSEAL's site will find front covers and tables of contents from recent issues as well as subscription information and short feature articles by GOLDENSEAL staff.

Since the State Archives first posted to the Web in 1995, Keller has been working to post information about all sections at the Division of Culture and History. The site is continually being expanded and updated. It includes schedules for events and exhibits at the Cultural Center, Camp Washington-Carver and West Virginia Independence Hall, grants news and deadlines, and e-mail addresses.

To e-mail GOLDENSEAL, send your messages to jacksond@wvlc.wvnet.edu.

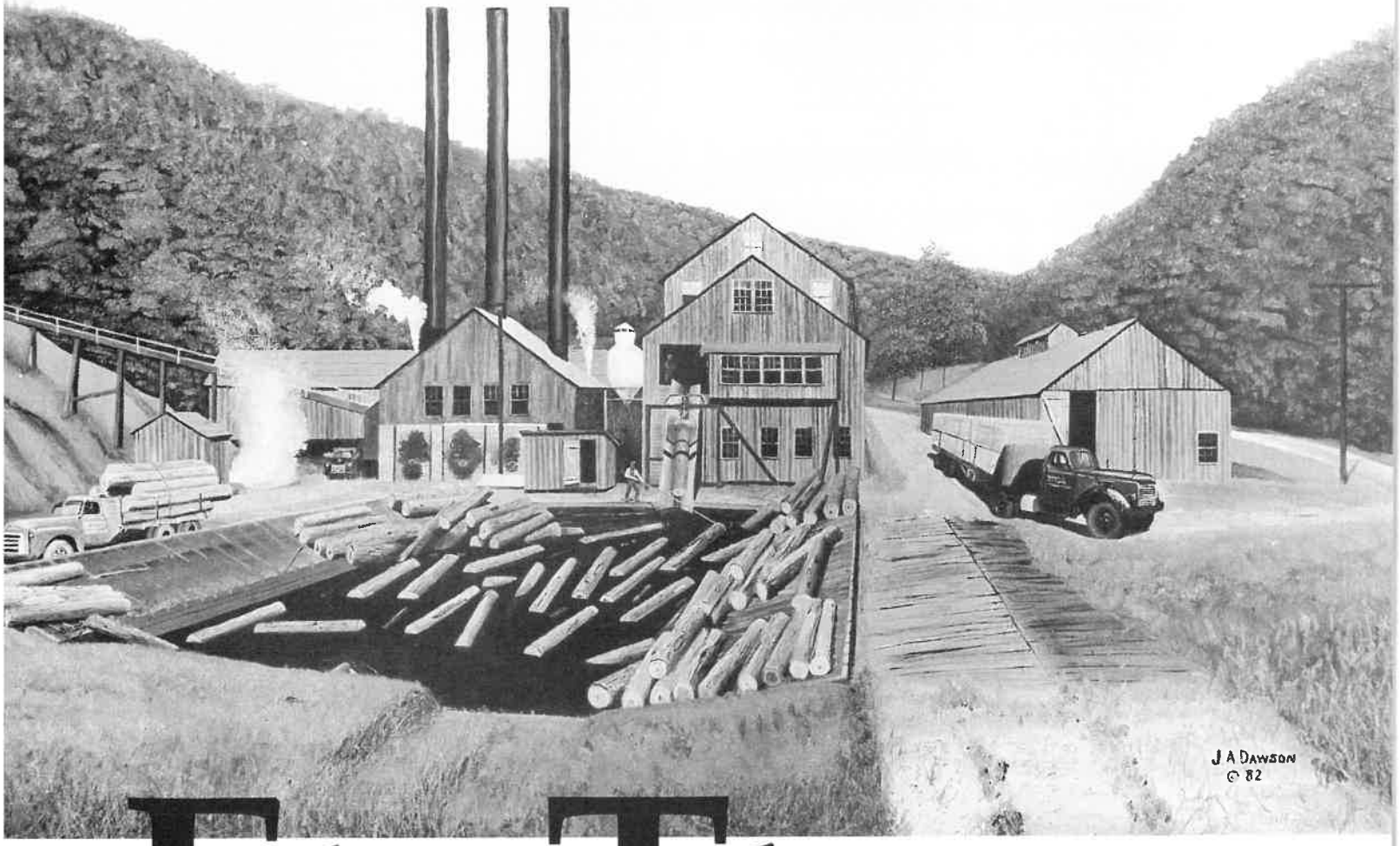
GOLDENSEAL Special Report



GOLDENSEAL takes an extended look at life in and around the lumber industry in Nicholas County.

See pages 10-27.

# Lumber Mill Life




# Ely-Thomas Lumber Company

By Patricia Samples Workman

The Ely-Thomas Lumber Company was a major employer in Nicholas County through the 1930's, '40's, and '50's. The mill was located in the small community of Werth, north of Summersville. The name of the community was an ingenious combination of the mill owners' initials — Ralph Hills Ely and Wellington "Bull" Thomas.

Bull Thomas would feed his lunch to the horses out in the woods. It was his opinion that they needed the food more than he did, as the horses were the ones doing all the hard work. Mr. Thomas was from a little town called Newelton, up around the Upshur-Randolph County line and the West Fork of the Buckhannon River. He ran a sawmill there.

Wellington "Bull" Thomas, shown at right with daughter and grandchildren, founded the Ely-Thomas mill with partner Ralph Hills Ely in 1931. This photo was taken in 1937 at Werth.

*The name of the community was an ingenious combination of the mill owners' initials — Ralph Hills Ely and Wellington "Bull" Thomas.*

Mr. Ely already owned a band mill at Arlington, in Upshur County, but the supply of timber in that vicinity ran out. Mr. Ely scouted around and decided on a new location in Nicholas County, and bought the land from a Mr. Bobbitt, who lived in Cowen. Ralph Ely and Bull Thomas formed a partnership and the new company was called Ely-Thomas Lumber Company. The new company began operation in November 1931.

Ralph Ely ran a successful lumber operation in Upshur County before opening the mill at Werth. These workers display company horses in front of portable lumber shacks at "Camp 28" in Upshur County. Photographer and date unknown.

Lumber was brought from Arlington, commonly known as Gougertown or Stringtown, in Upshur County to construct the three-story wooden mill building at Werth. The

On Page 9: Happy kids at the Ely-Thomas Lumber Company boardinghouse in the 1950's. At left with dog is Shirley Sue Mearns; at right is Della Fox. Young Alan McKisic looks on.

"Ely's Mill." This 1982 lithograph (opposite page) by John Alan (J.A.) Dawson depicts the Ely-Thomas lumber mill at Werth during its heyday.


Panoramic view of the mill at Werth, probably taken from Ralph Ely's home overlooking the operation. The offices and company store are at far left, narrow gauge railroad and lumber pond are at center, sawmill is at right, and lumber stacks are at far right. Photographer and date unknown.

mill building was designed to house the band mill and other equipment. All the equipment at the Arlington mill was dismantled and moved to the new location at Werth. This included the log train engines, log loaders, trucks, and other machinery and equipment. Once the band mill was moved to Nicholas County, the Ely-Thomas Lumber Company began operation at its new site.

A pond was constructed out in front of the sawmill, so the logs could be washed of dirt and rocks before cutting them into lumber. This process was necessary because the grit and debris on the logs dulled the band saw. The saw required several hours of filing to be sharp enough to cut the logs and to give a good square cut. The company had a saw filer, R. E. Wilson, who lived up around Henderson in Upshur County, who was quite talented and was with the company for many years. He stayed at the boardinghouse and only traveled home a few times a year due to the distance, the difficulty of travel in those days, and the importance of his job.

Another important job at the sawmill was to work the pond. The trucks, an old International and a Chevrolet, would bring in the logs. Then the logs would be dumped into the pond to wash off all the debris.

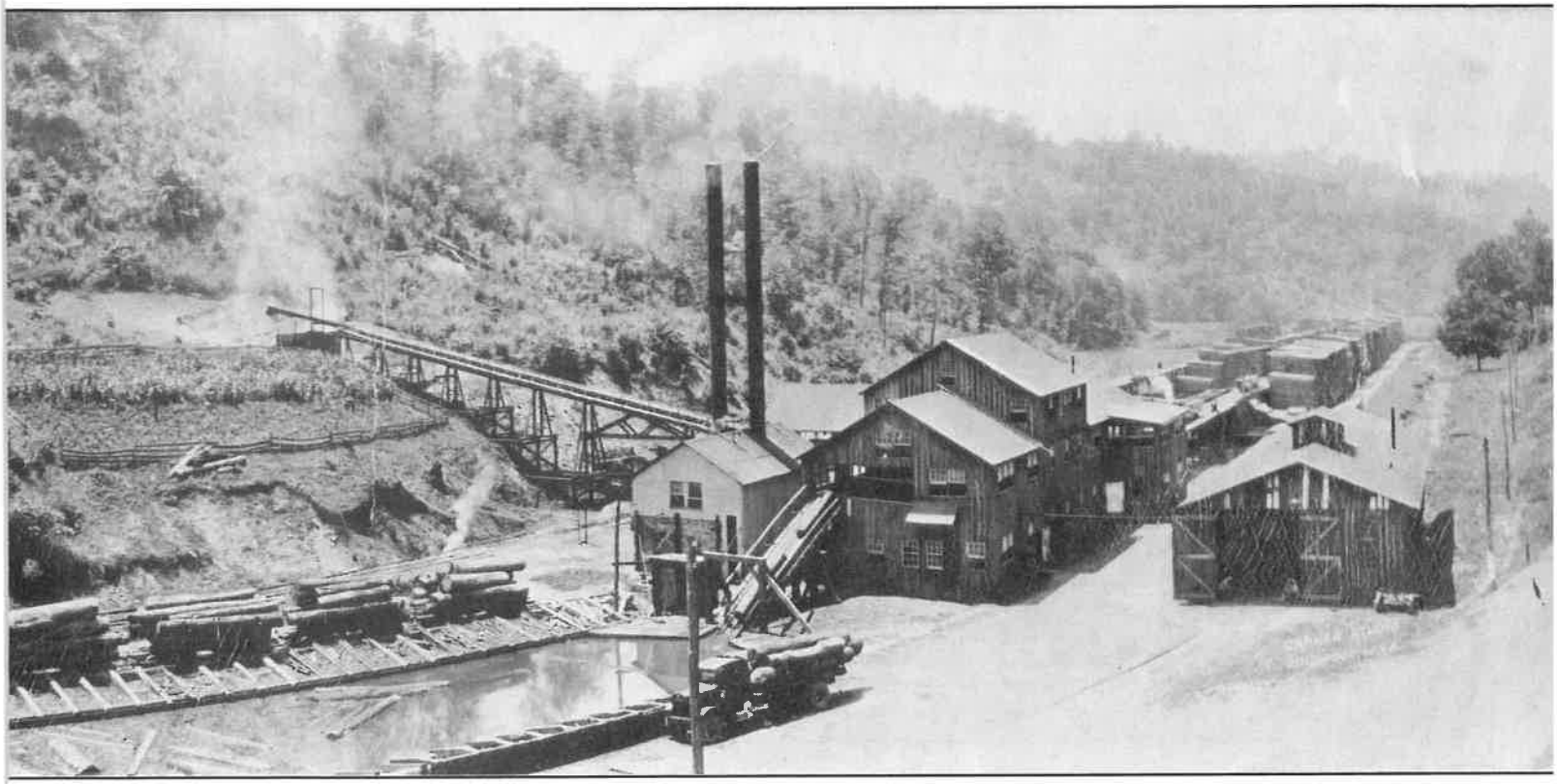
The men would grab hold of the individual logs with a cant hook and position them on the loading ramp, or "slip-jack." The logs would then be brought up the ramp into the mill for processing. Working the pond was a difficult job that required a strong man.

On one occasion, a new man was hired to work the log pond. On his first day of work this poor man was unlucky enough to fall in the log pond three times. The men all got a good laugh out of the new fellow's misfortune.

Another time, while the men were working with a load of logs to be dumped from one of the trucks, a poisonous snake was discovered. Apparently the snake had been coiled up in a large hole in one of the logs and had remained undetected until the men at the mill began to unload the logs into the pond. There was quite a bit of excitement for a few minutes in the general vicinity of the pond until one of the men killed the snake.

*There was quite a bit of excitement for a few minutes in the general vicinity of the pond until one of the men killed the snake.*

As the process of production continued, the log would start up the slip-jack, which was operated by a



chain. The log was then positioned in the movable carriage.

Once the men on the carriage had the log in position, they set the "dogs" on top of the log to hold it in place. The sawyer would then assess what he wanted to do with the log, then start the saw. A first slab would be cut, then an adjustment was made. The log was moved by the carriage an inch or two at a time, the sawyer grabbed the lever, and another cut was made.

On a large log, about five boards would be cut off each side, then there would be a big piece in the center, the heart of the log. The sawyer would then assess what work would be done from that point on. Bill Simms was the head sawyer at the mill for several years. He died of a heart attack while busy at work one day.

The company had wood camps that employed several men. Ely-Thomas ran several wood camps during the early years, then began contracting the camps out to individuals. When the camps first started, Belgian horses were used to pull the logs in from the woods to be loaded on trucks, which then took them to the sawmill. In later years, tractors were used to pull the logs into the loading areas, where they were loaded onto the trucks and hauled to the mill.

There were experts in every aspect of cutting, notching, and felling the trees. If the timber split when it was felled, the split could shoot up the trunk and ruin the log. A skillful logger could throw, or fell, each log in a precise position pointed in the direction they were to be hauled, particularly if horses were used to haul out the logs.

The men in the camps would work all day, just taking time enough to come in and eat. They would get up and eat breakfast, then harness up the horses and head out to work in the woods. The men would come back into the camp for the noon day meal, eat, then head back out to the woods. In late evening, the men would come back to the camp, ready for supper.

The camps consisted of long wooden bunkhouses usually constructed in rows. Inside the bunkhouses there was usually just enough room for a row or two of beds. The largest building housed the kitchen and dining hall. If the log camp was a small operation, the man in charge of the camp, along with his wife and family, lived in a couple of rooms in this house or building. A smaller camp worked ten or 15 men and the foreman's wife did the cooking for the men. Most men thought it was a man's job to cook in the wood camps, but many felt if a woman wanted to do it, she was usually the cleanest cook.

The cook would have to get up before dawn in order to prepare breakfast for the crew of men. A routine breakfast for a small camp would always include six to eight large pans of biscuits, then sometimes oatmeal, grits, gravy, eggs, jellies, jams, and plenty of butter. Two or three pots of coffee were usually made during breakfast, as well.

The cooking was done on woodstoves and there was no refrigeration. Usually a small creek or branch close to the kitchen was utilized to keep things like butter and milk cool.

The boardinghouse from the front. The dining room was on the first floor with 14 rooms above, 1950's photo.

# Boardinghouse Life

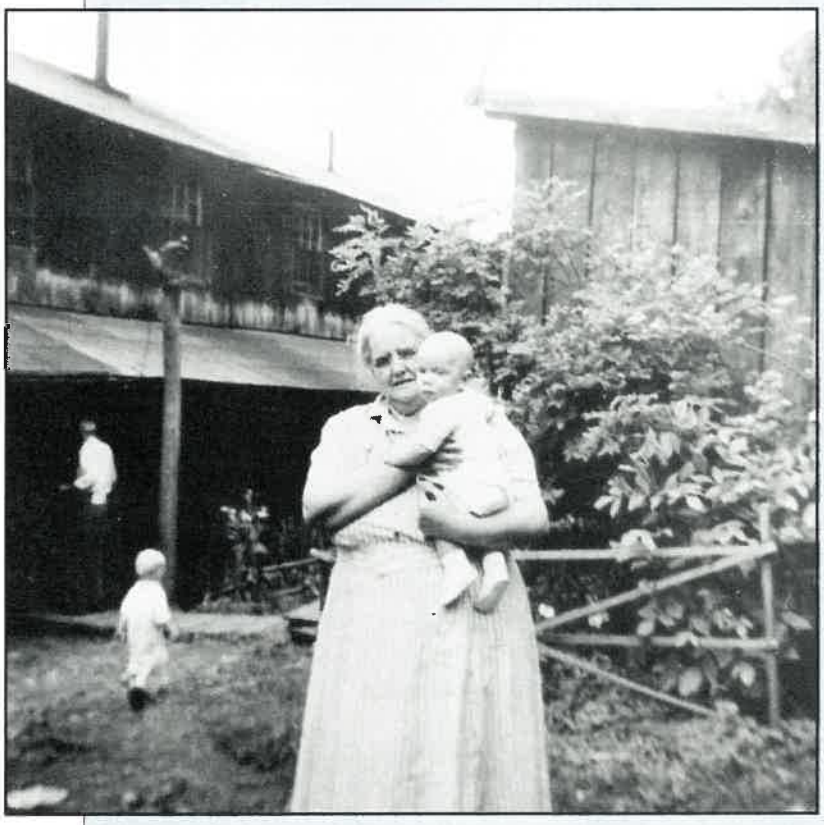
The Ely-Thomas boardinghouse and adjacent company houses were the center of family life and social activity at Werth. The boardinghouse was run for many years by Alph and Addie McKisic, who had run several camps for "Bull" Thomas in the years before the opening of the new mill at Werth.

Always busy and always crowded, the boardinghouse was a home away from home for scores of lonesome, hungry lumberjacks. Mrs. McKisic was known for her excellent cooking skills, and visiting auditors and other officials were happy to share the table alongside mill workers at mealtime for a generous helping of boardinghouse fare.

Mrs. Marguerite Halstead, a daughter of the McKisics who grew up in the Werth boardinghouse, recalls scores of chores including laundry, ironing, scrubbing, dusting, cleaning, and, of course, cooking. Food was kept cool using big blocks of ice. The women would use ice picks to break the blocks up into tiny pieces for use in drinking glasses and water pitchers.

She recalls that most of the men were very courteous, and that several of the regular boarders were quite helpful with some of the routine chores such as carrying in buckets of coal and shoveling snow.

After the Werth mill burned in 1959, the boardinghouse was sold to John and Nancy Dawson. They renovated the structure, removed the second floor, and adapted the old boardinghouse into a comfortable family home. They still live there today, the walls decorated with pictures and paintings of life at the old Ely-Thomas lumber mill.

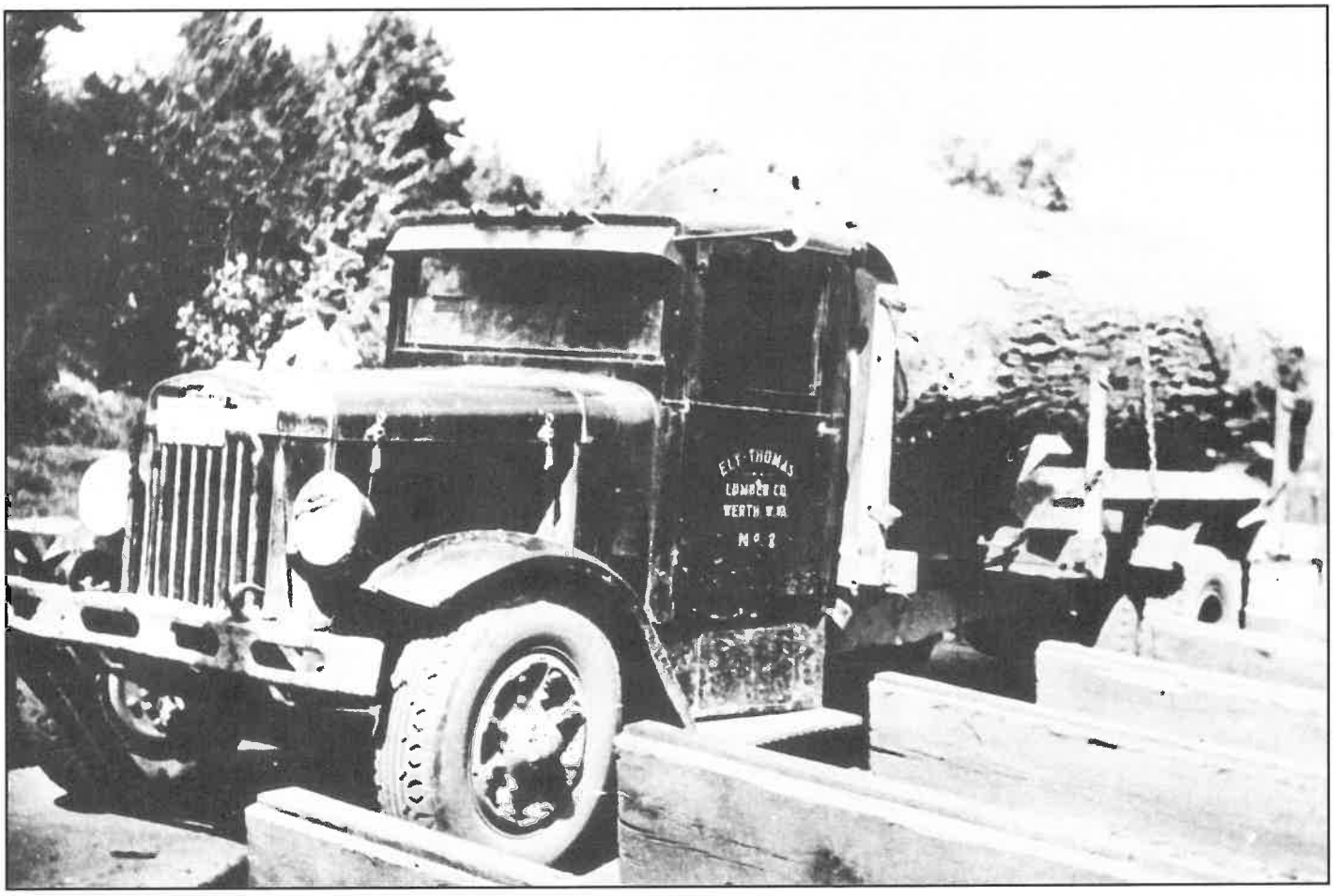


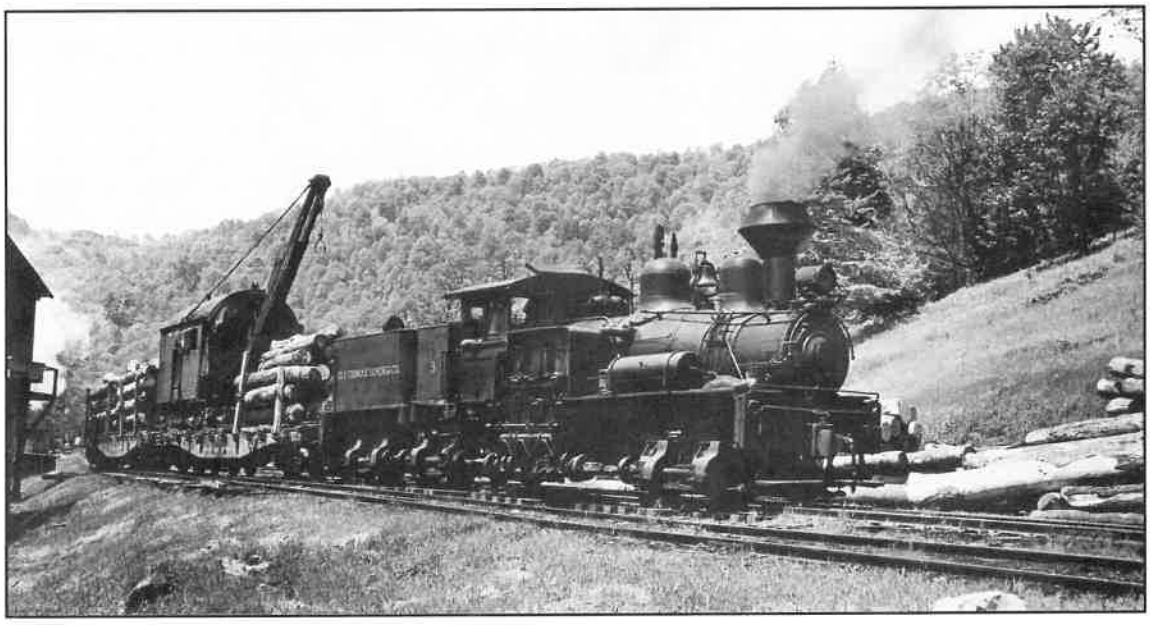
Behind the boardinghouse, 1950's, Ely housekeeper Esta Lewis holds young Alan McKisic. The dinner bell is visible at left atop a tall pole.

Addie McKisic in the 1950's, with a full house in Werth. At left, young grandson Ronnie McKisic inspects a model gun with son-in-law Clinton Halstead (daughter Marguerite's husband). At center, Addie carries a bird cage and a pot, while helper June Hamrick, right, looks on.

Addie McKisic
with draft horses at a lumber camp in
Upshur County, where she worked for Bull Thomas
before coming to Werth. Photographer unknown, 1916.

The boardinghouse today at far left, converted into a one-story family home by John and Nancy Dawson. Photo by Michael Keller.



Trucks and trains hauled cut timber to the mill. This early model truck (above) carries one impressive log into the yard. The train, a coal burning Shay No. 3 with a log loader and two loaded flatcars, was photographed at the Ely-Thomas mill in Fenwick in 1960. Train photo by Johnny Krause, courtesy Dr. Roy B. Clarkson.

Supper would consist of a big platter of meat and gravy, fried or mashed potatoes, green beans, and fried onions. Blackberry cobbler or pie was always a favorite. The men would come from the woods and be almost starved to death and eat tremendous amounts of food.

Supplies for the camp were brought in regularly about once a week. Everything had to be bought in quantity because there were so many people to feed in the camps. Buckets of lard, large bags of flour, and big slabs of fatback for seasoning were usually purchased at the company store.

Not all the wood camps were small; many were large operations that worked 100 to 200 men. The large camps were staffed by old loggers called "swampers." They kept the camps as clean as a pin.

Several piles of well-stacked lumber in the yard at Werth.

The men didn't have to make their beds; the staff kept clean sheets on the beds.

The camps had good food. This was a particular point of pride. Long years back, it was hard to get good loggers; they were scarce. The companies would entice the men with good food and a clean-run camp. The superintendent of the camp was always proud of how his camp was run. The loggers were proud of their camps, too. The camps had to be good because they were a main attraction for hiring a good labor force. The men worked hard, under hard bosses, six days a week.

One common practice at the log camps and boardinghouses was that when the men sat down to eat at those long wooden tables — sometimes more than 200 men — not a word would be spoken. The only conversation would be someone asking another person to pass them an item on the table. There was never any gossip or talk about the day's events. The dining table was just a place for the men to eat and it was sort of an unspoken rule.

*The men worked hard, under hard bosses, six days a week.*

After the meal was over in the evenings, the men would retire to the porch or lawn and the cool evening shade. This was where they would talk and smoke. They would rest and relax after a hard day's work and a hearty meal.

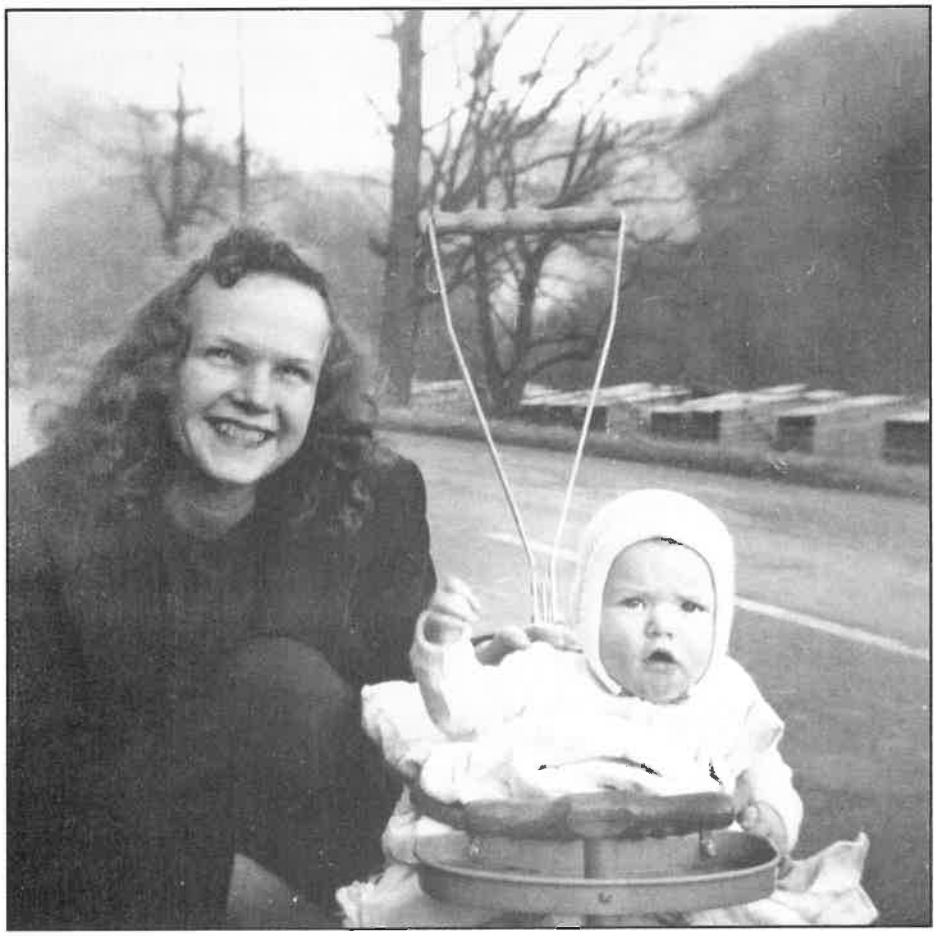
One of the favorite pastimes shared by almost all the men was playing cards. Everyone's favorite card game was Setback. There was usually a running game of Setback going on at any given time.

Periodically, wood camps could be loaded up and moved as the supply of timber was cut. An entire camp including bunkhouses, tools, equipment, and everything needed to run the camp could be moved within a few hours.

As the Ely-Thomas Lumber Company became established, a permanent two-story boardinghouse was built in Werth. Many of the men from the Upshur County site came to work in the new mill. These men were already trained and needed the work after the Arlington mill closed.

Early rates for the boardinghouse were about 60 cents a day. The men that boarded were generally very courteous and helpful. A few of the men lived quite a distance from the mill, some up around the Elkins

Lumber stacker Hance Grose (left) with wife Bertha and son Paul in 1962. Daughter Margaret (not pictured) authored "Memories of Ely-Thomas Through the Eyes of a Child" in this issue. See page 20.



Nancy Dawson and son John Alan during the 1950's at Werth, with lumber stacks behind. As an adult, John (J.A.) created a series of lithographs based on lumbering activities in Werth, including the one which appears on page 10.

vicinity. Therefore, they did not get to visit home often, due to the distance and bad weather.

Another two-story building was constructed nearby, to house the office and company store with additional sleeping quarters made available on the second floor for workers.

*The lumber yard at Ely-Thomas was unique in the way they stacked the lumber in their yard.*

The company store issued its own scrip. Scrip was a form of money issued by a particular company and could be used only at the company store. This practice was made common by the various coal companies throughout the region. Almost anything could be purchased or ordered through the company store. Items such as food, dry goods, clothing, and furniture were stocked by the store clerks. Many workers spent the majority of their wages at the company store.

Later, when the mill was running and more timberland was acquired, Mr. Ely had a beautiful rustic home constructed for his family above the mill in the woods at Werth. He then moved his family from Buckhannon to the newly constructed home. The family consisted of Ralph Ely's wife, Amy Clark Ely; and his two sons, Ralph H. Ely, Jr., and David Clark Ely. They also had a full-time housekeeper, Esta Lewis, who had worked with the family for several years.

There was no post office in the community of Werth. Since all the lumber produced at the mill had to be hauled by truck to the nearest railhead at Allingdale, it was decided to have the address of the company listed as Camden-on-Gauley, which was a short distance from the Allingdale shipping point. This system would allow for the mail to be picked up daily by the trucks, when they delivered the lumber for shipping. The mail was delivered once a day at the post office at Camden-on-Gauley, after the train came in. The daily mail would then be brought back to the mill by the truck drivers.

After all the timber had been cut and made into lumber from the area surrounding the mill, a narrow gauge railroad was constructed to bring the logs to the mill during the 1940's and 1950's. It ran down McMillion's Creek on down the Muddlety Valley to Phillips Run. After this area was all timbered, the logs were hauled by truck from other outlying areas, either by company trucks or by individual contractors. Some logs were hauled to the mill from as far away as Charleston.

A lumber yard was constructed below the mill. The lumber was always beautifully stacked. The company won competitions over the years for the quality of their lumber and the precision and neatness in the way the lumber was stacked by the men.

The lumber yard at Ely-Thomas was unique in the way they stacked the lumber in their yard. All the ends of the lumber were evenly cut. The spacer boards between each layer of lumber were always the same size and precisely positioned throughout the stack. Top boards protected the lumber from the elements and the boards had a slight pitch so that water would naturally drain off the lumber. Each kind, size, and grade of lumber was stacked together in piles to air dry and kept in the stacks until it was time to be shipped. Great pride in workmanship and the satisfaction of a job well done were the motivation to all the men that worked at

the mill. Hance Grose was one of the best lumber stackers employed by the company.

All different types and sizes of wood and trees were cut into lumber. The timber consisted mainly of hardwoods, including soft and hard maple, red and white oak, bass-

*Some logs were hauled to the mill from as far away as Charleston.*

wood, poplar, gum, cherry, and ash. The logs were cut into 4x4, 4x5, 4x6, 4x8, 4x10, and 4x12 boards; hemlock was cut into 2x4's.

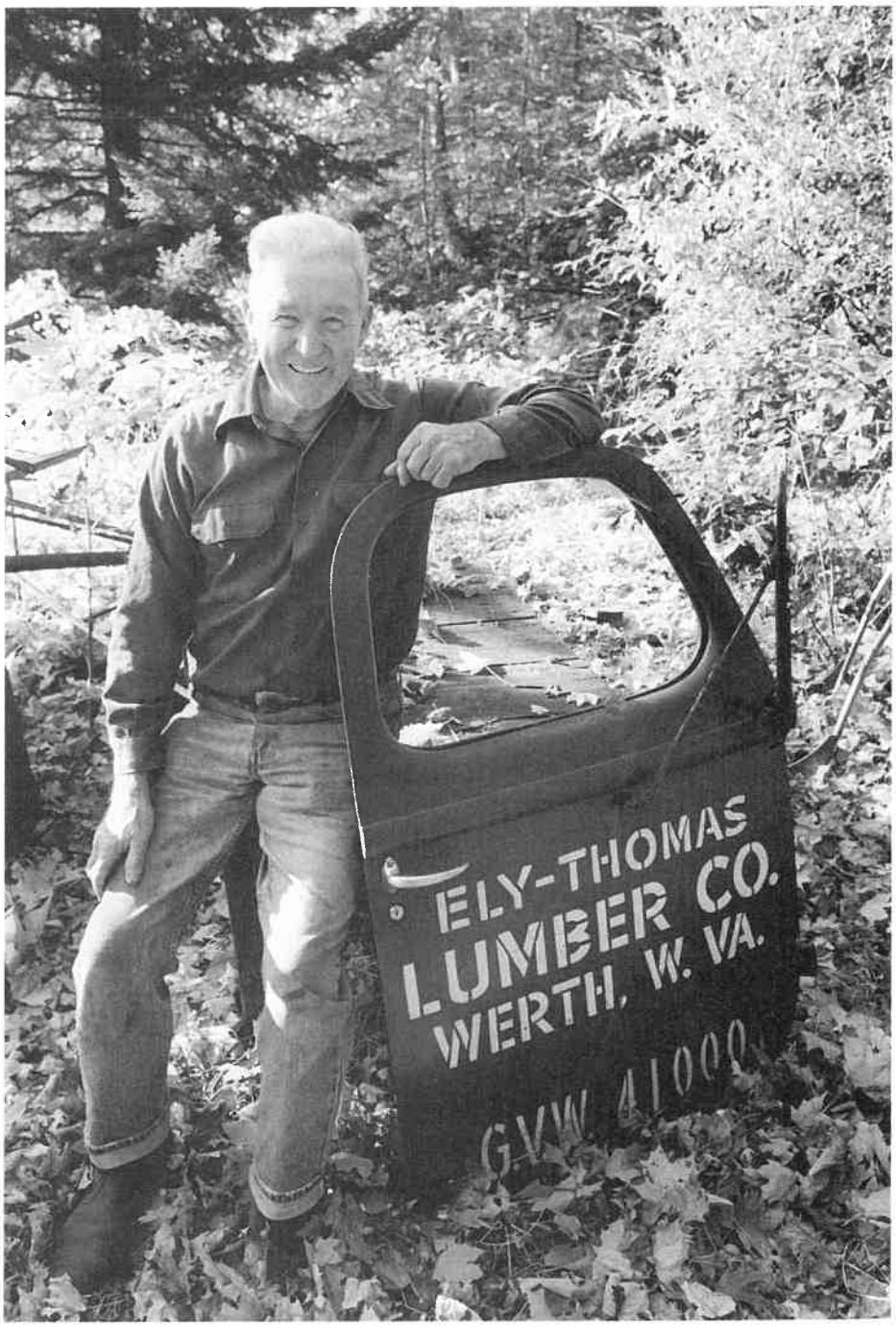
As the logs were sawed into lumber and the lumber into boards, there would always be some waste including bark, slabs, shavings, and sawdust. The mill was powered by steam generated by the burning of these waste products. The wood ashes were later sold by a man who had a contract with the company to remove them. He also delivered firewood to the local residents gathered from "odds and ends" at the mill. Other larger pieces of wood were made into mine wedges and sold to coal mines throughout the area.

The mill opened during the early days of the Depression and money was a scarce commodity. The men's average wages were about 16 cents an hour. The men worked ten hours a day, six days a week. Overtime was an unknown concept in those days.

At one time the mill employed 130 men. The mill also had a whistle that blew four times every day. Everyone in the community could hear it.

During World War II, Ely-Thomas Lumber Company manufactured special lumber for the U.S. government in the sizes 4x10 and 4x12 — clear oak, with no defects, which was shipped to Norfolk, Virginia, where it was made into landing barges for the navy.

The day the war ended, everyone




John Dawson drove a lumber truck for Ely-Thomas for many years. He poses here with a passenger door, behind the converted boardinghouse where he and wife Nancy still live. Photo by Michael Keller.

was celebrating at the boardinghouse. The dinner bell was on a tall pole, located behind the boardinghouse. The men continually rang the dinner bell all day and up into the night.

At 1:20 a.m. on October 21, 1959, residents and workers were awakened by a sound of a very different nature. A fire alarm cried out, calling the Summersville volunteer fire company to the Ely-Thomas mill. The sky was lit up for miles around as puzzled and frightened residents tried to understand the commotion. Some feared that there had been some sort of invasion, others imagined that there had been a major explosion. In fact, the Ely-Thomas

*(continued on page 22)*

# Memories of Ely-Thomas Through the Eyes of a Child

**By Margaret Grose Winebrenner**

I was born at Saxman, West Virginia, October 23, 1925. Saxman is just a few miles from Richwood, a little place up a hollow near Fenwick. We moved to Persinger, three miles from Werth, when I was five years old.

My dad, Hance Grose, worked as a lumber piler for Ely-Thomas Lumber Company for many, many years. He was one of the best lumber pilers the company ever had, made the company proud of how good the lumber looked. I had five brothers who also worked for Ely-Thomas: Harley P., Joe A., and Burlin Grose, then later on Paul Grose got a job, and then maybe Bob Grose worked there for a while. I am not sure about Bob.

Anyway, I always loved to hear that old mill whistle blow, especially at quitting time, because Dad and my brothers would soon be home for supper and I remember their clothes in the summer would be wet with sweat and their hats were always covered with sawdust.

The mill whistle always blew at 5:00 a.m., as well as 7:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, and again at 5:00 p.m., if I'm right on this. I really miss hearing that old mill whistle. I still remember how it sounded.

We got our kindling from the mill. I learned to split those soft yellow poplar blocks with an ax as well as a man could and I enjoyed doing it.

Times were hard, but children never worry about where money comes from, they just play and, like all children, never think or realize how hard the work is that got them those big flat Side-A-Meat candy bars. You never hear of Side-A-Meat candy bars anymore. They were about four inches square, white creamy vanilla inside and thick chocolate coating on the outside.

I remember when Paul and I were in grade school, sometimes Mom would let us walk to the company store. Paul and I were allowed to get a candy bar on the rare visits to the store. Paul always got a wee little one called Cream Puff. I never for the life of me could see why he chose such a little bar, when you could get a big fat Milky Way or Baby Ruth for the same money. He explained to me why — because he liked the smaller Cream Puff better. I never did go for that. I guess I was looking for size, not quality.

Speaking of size and quality, I had to have a pair of shoes and Dad brought home the cutest pair for me to try on. They were what any

Margaret and Bob Grose during the late 1930's.

The Ely-Thomas company store as it appeared in 1965.

little girl in those days would dream of, but no, they simply would not fit. Too small, even if I tried two or three times, still too small. So Dad took them back and got a bigger pair. No dainty flat heels, the pair he had to get was what we called "Grandma" shoes. Black sharp toes, big thick heels, and lace-ups. I was just sick, but that's all they had at the Ely Company Store. It was either wear them or go barefoot in winter. Any shoe is better than no shoes at all. The little boy who laughed at my pink anklets and said they (the anklets) looked like panties didn't make it any better. Can you imagine panty-looking pink anklets with Grandma shoes?

On the 4th of July, my brother Joe and Dad got us a whole gallon of vanilla ice cream, packed in a big carton of dry ice. We didn't have a refrigerator or electric light way back then, but as long as it lasted that ice cream was delicious to the last bite. Smoke came off that dry ice and we were told not to put it about our mouth. We usually had new potatoes and fried chicken by the 4th back then.

The men got much fun in teasing. One of the men was talking about how good possum was when it was cooked just right. Dad told him he would never eat possum. So one day the man asked Dad if he wanted a piece of rabbit. Dad ate it and the man asked him if he liked it. Dad said, "No, it was too rabbity tasting." The man laughed and told Dad it was possum. Dad wasn't a bit happy about that.

Dad worked hard for us kids and nearly everything, including clothes, came from the company store. They called it scrip for money. Dad had his payday used up in scrip and one day he came home with a check. They always worked until noon on Saturday and it was payday. Dad had received a check for $2 and some few cents. You'd have thought he was really in the money. He was a wonderful, kind man. He earned his bread and ours by the sweat of his labor. I've seen his blue chambray shirts dry-caked white with salt.

We washed clothes by scrubbing them on an old brass washboard and boiling them in lye water. You'd never catch my mom hanging dingy white clothes on the clothesline to dry. All pillowcases had to be turned wrong side out to be washed. Once she sent me to hang out some sheets. I couldn't hold them good enough to pin the corners together so I undertook to hang them middle way's across the line and my mom threw a fit and let me know anything worth doing was worth doing right. I never forgot that.

My husband worked at Ely's mill after we got married. I still have our store bills for the first two or three weeks of September and October 1943. Coffee was 15 cents a pound and there was a brand of bread, good bread, which was two loaves for 15 cents. Salt was a nickel a box.

While we were still courting, we both found a 50-cent piece at the same time. When he went to work at Ely's, the first day he paid for his lunch at the boardinghouse with our 50-cent piece. He was kind of bashful and his butter slid off his knife onto the table. He couldn't get it back on the knife and he said (to the butter), "If I had you at home, I'd get you, so I'll just get you anyway," and he got his butter back to his bread with his fingers. They laughed about that for a long time. It's been 53 years and I can still remember Dad talking about that.

We may have been what most folks would call poor but we really were rich because we learned through tough times and we had love. All my family are gone now but Bob, my sister Martha, and me. I pray God has a place in heaven just like West Virginia, or else I may get homesick.

Margaret Grose Winebrenner today.
Photo by Michael Keller.

*(continued from page 19)*

Lumber Mill was going up in flames.

At Werth, every available person came out to help fight the fire. Several fire companies were called in from surrounding communities and neighboring counties. This was a fire of major proportions and fire fighters battled it for several hours.

The mill was a total loss. Although some of the timber and lumber was salvageable, the Ely-Thomas mill at Werth never reopened, dealing a tremendous blow to the entire community.

Ralph Ely owned another mill at the time located in nearby Fenwick, and a number of workers were transferred there. The salvaged lumber was sold off, as were the boardinghouse, horses, and company houses.

Mrs. Nancy Dawson, a local school worker, and her husband John still live in the converted boardinghouse along state highway 55, north of Summersville. Nancy's father Dee Roby was a supervisor at the mill, and John drove an Ely-Thomas lumber truck for many years. Nancy grew up at Werth and today collects memorabilia, photographs, and artifacts from the mill. Her son, John Alan Dawson, created a commemorative lithograph depicting the Ely-Thomas mill in its prime.

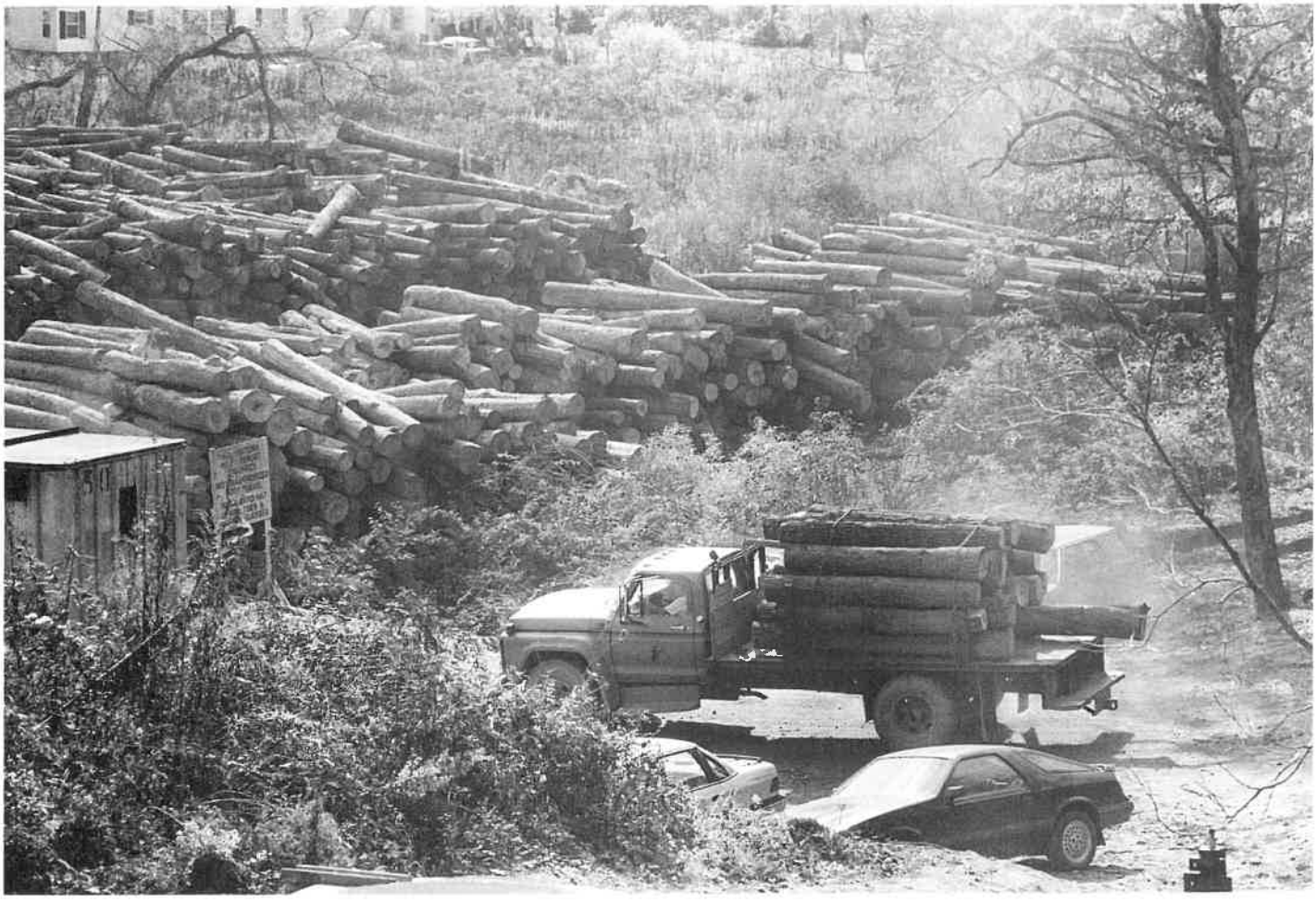
*A new lumber mill now operates on part of the property which once was the site of the old Ely-Thomas lumber yard.*

A new lumber mill now operates on part of the property which once was the site of the old Ely-Thomas lumber yard. The smell of freshly cut wood and the rumble of trucks and machinery again fill the air in Werth.

Above the site of the old mill, Ralph Ely's rustic log home is barely visible behind a dense stand of cedars. Several pickup trucks and a satellite dish fill the yard.

A few hundred feet away, the converted boardinghouse and some company houses still survive, but Werth today is home to very few.

Those who were children in the old mill town are now adults, most of them living far from here. In their memories the history of the Ely-Thomas Lumber Company lives on.

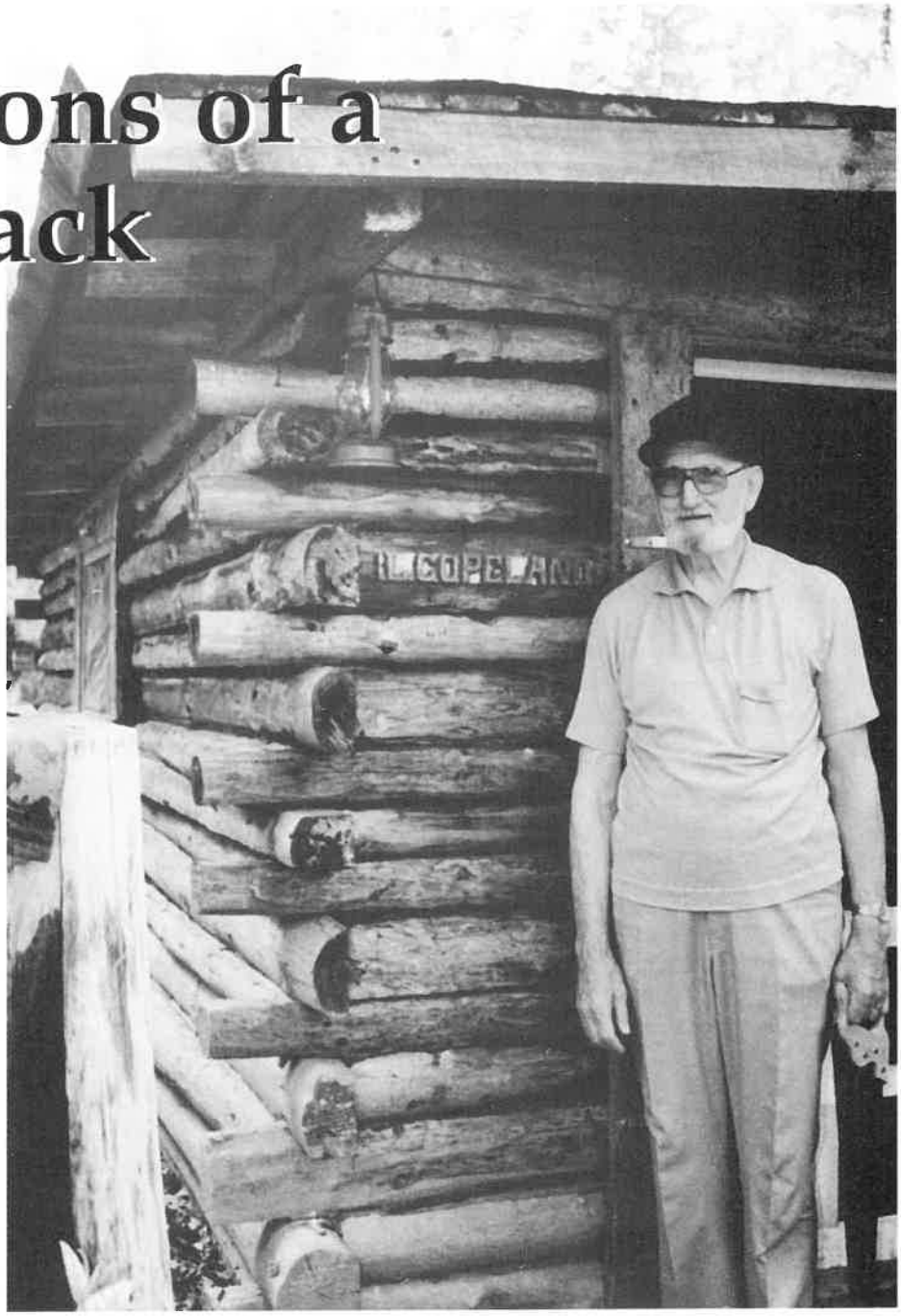


The rumble of lumbering once again fills the air at Werth. The Valley Lumber and Fence Company mill now operates at the far end of the old Ely-Thomas yard. Photo by Michael Keller.

# Confessions of a Lumberjack

**By E. Luther Copeland**

*Author E. Luther Copeland was born in 1916 in Drennen, Nicholas County. His branch of the Copeland family figures prominently in the history of the Nicholas County timber industry, and has shown up in the pages of GOLDENSEAL on a number of occasions. See "From Morocco to Swiss: Family Life Around the Mines and Mills" by Vernice Trimble, Spring 1993; and "Logging at Swiss in Nicholas County Around 1909" by Alicia Tyler, July-September 1976. Vernice Trimble is Luther's sister, and Alicia Tyler is his cousin. Other relatives including his father, brothers, and uncles are profiled in these earlier stories about logging in Nicholas County. With these reminiscences, Luther adds his perspective.*



Luther Copeland, Jr., retired from lumbering in 1940. He is shown here, saw in hand, in front of a cabin he built recently near Mountain City, Tennessee. Photographer unknown.

When I finished high school in 1933, at the age of 17, my first employment was as a member of a crew of men building railroad for the Birch Valley Lumber Company in the general vicinity of my Muddlety home in Nicholas County. At the time, I was approaching my adult height of six feet and three inches, had no body fat, and weighed about 175 pounds. Already I was beginning to pride myself on my physical strength.

However, the effects of the Great Depression were weighing heavily upon us and when, with unwise timing, the crew organized a union and called a strike, the Birch Valley Lumber Company simply shut down for the duration of the Depression, leaving all of the crew unemployed. I failed to get a job at other places including Ely-Thomas Lumber Company which was paying one dollar a day. So I spent my summers digging ginseng and other roots and picking berries, and my winters hunting and trapping.

Meantime, the economic situation started to ease a bit, and my father and my brother, Lowell, who was two years older than me, began to do some logging on their own. At the age of 19 or so I joined them, and we formed a small logging contract firm, L. L. Copeland and Sons. Lowell was a big fellow, slightly inclined toward obesity, six feet four in height and weighing about 220 pounds, with lots of muscle and not very much fat. Even after I attained my full growth I was not quite that big. Our dad was relatively small, an inch or two short of six feet and weighing about 150 or so, but extremely powerful for his size and quite agile.

Our equipment eventually included a team of horses, two log

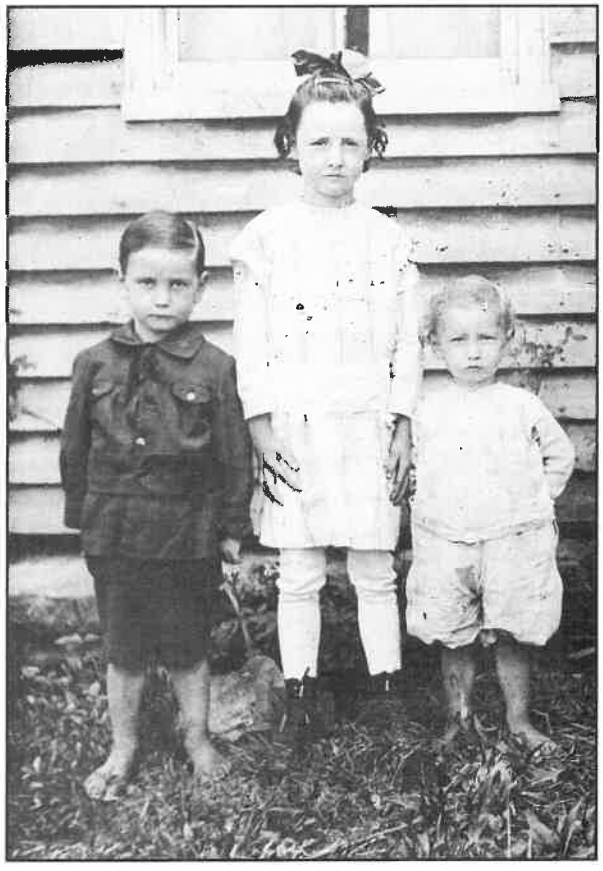
trucks, and a small tractor, for which we contracted huge debts. We usually employed at least one team of timber cutters, a tractor operator, a teamster, another man to "jim" behind the tractor or horses, that is, drive grabs and such, and sometimes one or two road builders — though most of us often helped build the roads. Lowell and I drove the trucks, usually two- to three-ton Internationals, which, against our dad's judgment, we often overloaded.

The Copeland family of Nicholas County. This 1913 photo, taken in Swiss three years before our author was born, shows an extended family, deeply involved in lumbering. The author's parents, Nannie and Luther Copeland, are shown on the left with daughters Vernice (left), Faye (on his lap), and Daisy. At the center is the author's grandfather, Winfield Copeland. Photographer unknown.

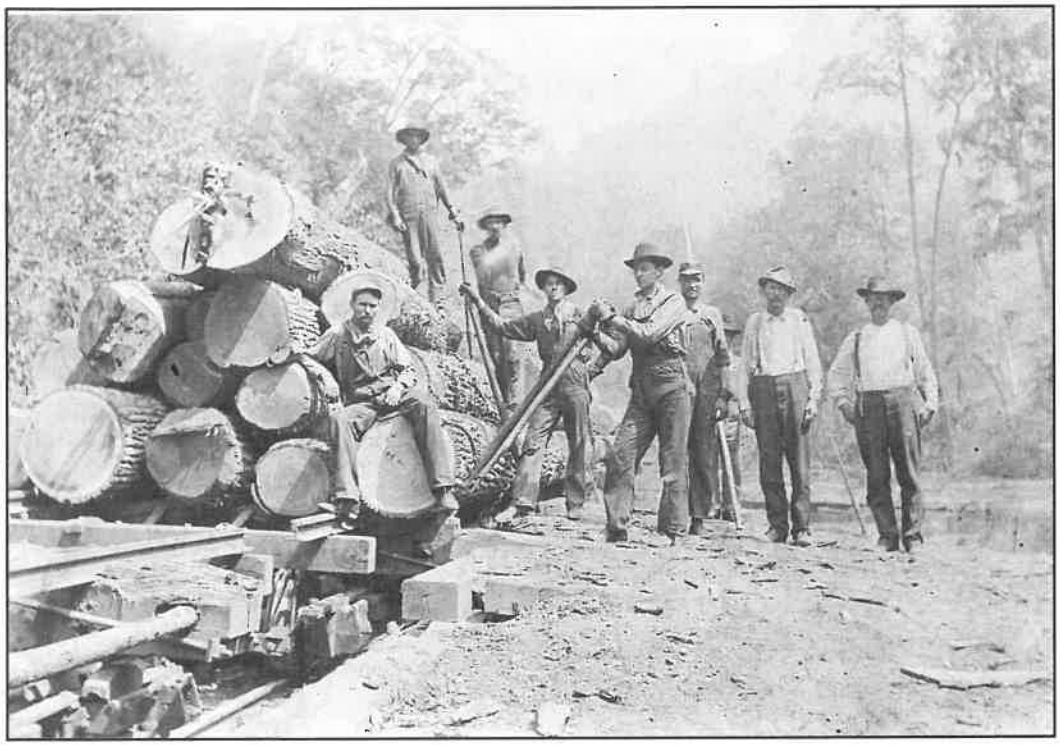
We constructed "skidways" from which to load the logs onto the trucks. A skidway was a pier-like contraption made of logs approximating the level of the truck bed, with two straight, long, and strong timbers upon which the logs would be rolled after they were pulled into position behind or above the skidway. When we had loaded the first tier of logs on the truck, we would use two spiked skids, one placed on each of the skidway timbers to load the second and succeeding tiers. A spiked skid was a sturdy timber, usually made of oak, and with sharp metal spikes protruding upward to keep the logs from spinning or sliding as they were rolled up the skids. Other metal spikes facing downward on plates on the ends of the skid kept the skid anchored in place.

All lumberjacks had to be proficient in the use of a peavey, but this was especially true of those loading logs on trucks. The peavey was an instrument designed for rolling logs. It was about four feet in length and consisted of a round wooden handle, usually hickory, sloping upward to smaller size for easy gripping. On the bottom of the handle a metal sleeve was attached with a movable hook on it. The end of this metal hook had to be sloped just right and filed to acute sharpness so that it would eat into the log to be rolled. A metal spike at the end of the peavey was inserted into the wooden handle and the sleeve. This spike was very useful in sticking into the skidway, or the ground, and cutting the rolling log to regulate its direction. The spike distinguished the peavey from the much less useful cant hook, which was similar to a peavey but without a spike.

It was remarkable what skill a good peavey man could develop, in rolling, cutting, or stopping logs. Or what strength he could manifest rolling a



Author E. Luther Copeland (right) with brother Lowell, and sister Faye about 1918. Photographer unknown.



Winfield Copeland (far right) posed for this photo with a logging crew around 1909. The long-handled tool held by some of the men is a peavey. Photographer unknown.

Luther Copeland, Sr., (right with pipe), raised his sons around lumber. Lowell is at the wheel and young Warren and Luther, Jr. (right) are in the truck in this photo from the late 1920's, taken near Muddlety. Photographer unknown.

log, lifting it with the peavey in his hands, and then hoisting the log on his shoulder. My brother and I often boasted about how big a log we could roll working together, since either of us could hold as much of a load as both of us together could lift. At one time or another I did most of the tasks of the timber woods at least briefly, but I never developed much facility in the use of an axe or saw. I prided myself, however, both in my skill at using a peavey and in my considerable physical strength. I could break most any peavey handle and sometimes did, including a favorite of

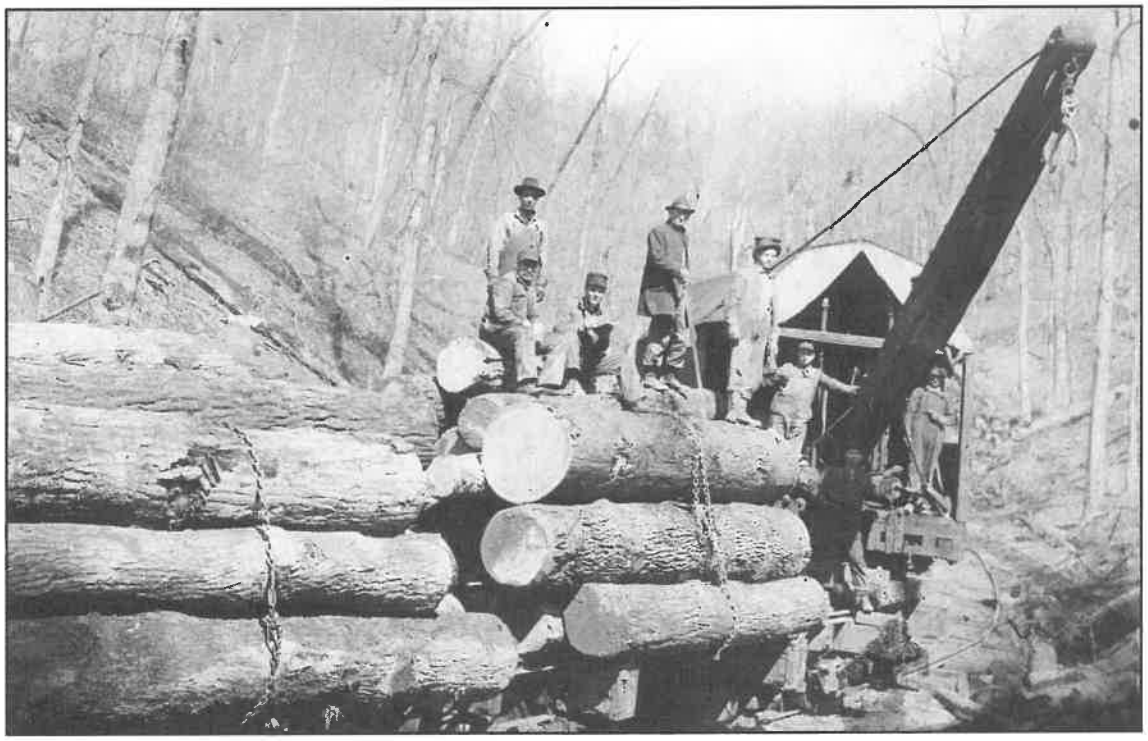
*All lumberjacks had to be proficient in the use of a peavey.*

Lowell's, for pure macho enjoyment — and to Lowell's utter disgust.

On at least one occasion, however, I dismally failed, and the mishap which I caused is graphically etched on my memory. Lowell and I were behind a log, easing it down the slightly inclined skidway, preparatory to rolling it up the skids and onto the first or second tier of logs already on the truck. It was a fairly large oak log and traveling moderately fast, but not too large or too fast for both of us to stop it if we threw our peaveys into it backwards simultaneously. Lowell yelled "Catch!" which was the signal for me to catch the log with him. However, for some reason which to this day I do not understand, I did not even try to catch the log. Unfortunately, Lowell did, and the log threw him over it and through the air. His hand came down on one of the skids and a steel spike grated upon the bone of his palm as it tore it open. I can still hear the sickening sound of that spike ripping into his hand and feel the hot shame for my inexplicable failure.

Often, in reflecting upon our logging days, I have experienced considerable remorse for my part in our arrogance and recklessness. Sometimes, in passing friendly country people we would lift a hand in what appeared to be a wave but then midway turn our hand to scratch our head. By that time the person we had accosted was returning our wave, only to find, to his or her embarrassment, that the wave was not really a wave.

On one occasion when we logged above a certain little town, we would let our loaded log trucks, a 1936 and a 1937 model, roll rather rapidly down a mountain toward the town on an unpaved road. Sometimes when we would meet a car, the driver in terror would steer his auto into the bank in order to give us plenty of room, much to our amusement, especially Lowell's.



Luther Copeland, Sr., worked as a log scaler for Flynn Lumber Company when this photo was taken about 1913. He stands fourth from left with his scaling rod. Photographer unknown.

I think we were incredibly lucky. Earlier, when I was driving an older truck, I was passing a one-room country school at recess time. Although the truck was empty and I was not driving fast, a first-grade boy suddenly darted toward the dirt road in front of the school. Before I could stop, and while the front disc wheel on his side was still skidding, he hit the wheel and knocked himself out. I quickly got out of my truck and helped the teacher revive him. When he came to, he cried, the most welcome crying I have ever heard. We took him to his nearby home for recovery, and, fortunately, he was relatively unhurt.

On another occasion, I was hauling a 50-gallon drum full of gasoline on an empty truck. The truck had only a skeleton bed for hauling logs, with a short space floored between two of the heavy cross timbers on the ends and between the channel irons of the chassis on the sides for hauling our tools and log chains. It was in this floored space that I had placed the gasoline drum. I had not bothered to fasten it with a chain and boom because it fit rather snugly. Since an empty log truck with a low center of gravity is almost impossible to turn over, Lowell and I characteristically went around curves — of which there were many on West Virginia roads — at high speed. In this case, I negotiated a right-hand curve at such a velocity that the gasoline drum parted company with the truck, crossed the other lane of the paved road, rolled over an embankment and settled several yards distant in the woods below. I have often thought, with a sobering sense of shame and relief, what if another vehicle had been in that other lane when the gasoline barrel rolled off?

On still another job, Lowell and I were moving our crawl tractor on an unpaved road to a new job where we needed it. We had placed a flat bed on one of our log trucks and had loaded the tractor onto it. To unload the tractor, we had to choose a place where we could back the truck up to a bank of the road about the height of the truck bed. The only suitable place we could find was on the mountain road and sloping somewhat sharply to one side. Since it was winter time and there was some snow and ice on the truck, it was hazardous to back the tractor off.

Lowell and I both examined the situation and decided that the tractor could be unloaded, especially if the motor was gunned so it would back off rapidly. Lowell, of course, was the one to operate the tractor. He started the motor, warmed it up, put the tractor in reverse, and then started to back it off with the motor fully revved. Contrary to our hopes, the tractor began to slide off the truck immediately and rapidly. In an amazing feat of agility for a big man, Lowell put his hands on

either side of the seat, threw his legs up and jumped, landed on his feet and outran the tractor as it turned completely over onto its tracks and backed up against the bank of the road where it killed its idling motor. Our tractor was now safely unloaded with practically no damage, but I still get goose bumps when I remember my brother's close call.

Nor did I merely cooperate in getting Lowell into trouble. Once in a while I helped get him out of it. For instance, in the vicinity of a camp which we had set up because the logging job was quite a distance from home, was a mountain school, and we learned that on a certain night there was to be a pie social there. Now pie socials were big back in those days, with pies made by pretty girls auctioned off to the highest bidder, who then would have the privilege of eating a pie with an attractive girl. There were also cake walks in which couples walked in a circle, the couple reaching a mark when time was called by an official winning the cake. Sometimes, in addition, there were ugly man contests and other such activities, all for the benefit of the school.

Most of the small crew boarding in our log camp decided that we would attend the social. This decision was made in spite of the fact that we knew that the three single Copeland boys, Lowell and I, and our cousin Donald who worked for us a while, were not particularly welcome. There was fear that these outsiders would steal the affections of the young ladies in the community. It turned out that I was a candidate for ugly man, along with a local young fellow, who, some time after this event, proved that he was a rather mean hombre by killing a man. He sent word to me that, "If Copeland wins, he'll have to eat my fist." Not knowing his true nature, I interpreted his remark as an attempt at humor. Also, I figured that he wasn't too dangerous if he sent his threats by someone else. So I responded, "Tell him that I'd eat all of him if he wasn't so dirty." I don't remember who won the contest, though I thought I was pretty well qualified.

*I still get goose bumps when I remember my brother's close call.*

While I was still in the schoolhouse, I learned that some of the locals were threatening Lowell and Donald outside. I made my way out, along with our tractor operator who was a tiny man but also very tough. All four of us were able to get our backs against the building, and evidently the community guys were not up to challenging these ostensibly dangerous lumberjacks under the disadvantage of having to launch a frontal attack. The peril soon passed and we returned safely to our camp.

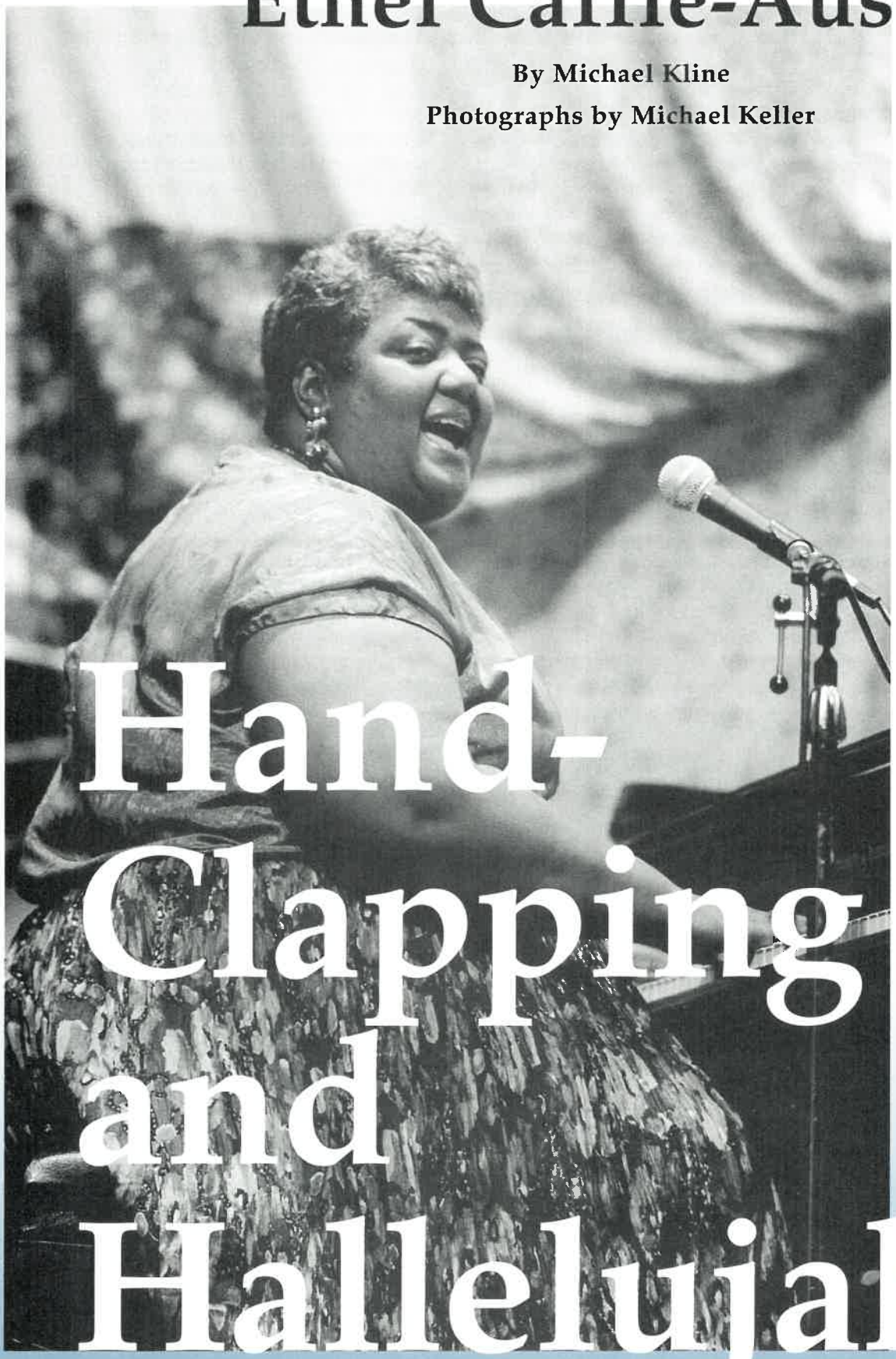
When you are old, it is pleasant, if sometimes poignant, to reminisce about an era and a way of life that are gone. Such is the logging world of my youth. In the fall of 1940, at the age of 24, I left the timber industry to enter college and study for the Christian ministry. I never returned.

*Lowell now lives in Abingdon, Virginia, and is retired. After logging, he worked in mining in Virginia and West Virginia. Luther, also retired, lives in North Carolina. After his logging days, he worked in Japan as an educational missionary and taught at several theological seminaries. — ed.*

Full-grown and serious, Lowell Copeland drove lumber in this 1937 International truck. Photographer and date unknown.

# A Visit with Ethel Caffie-Austin

By Michael Kline
Photographs by Michael Keller



# Hand-Clapping and Hallelujahs

From a humble storefront church in East Charleston to the grand concert halls of Europe, Ethel Caffie-Austin is stirring souls. She is known as West Virginia's First Lady of Gospel Music. As a singer, pianist, choir leader, teacher, and ambassador, Ethel represents a rich cultural heritage of African American song and worship. Believers and non-believers alike are inspired by her undeniable talent and universal message. Author Michael Kline has known and admired Ethel for more than 20 years. He visited with her last August in Elkins.

**Ethel Caffie-Austin.** I am the product of a preacher named Reverend Dave (or "D.C.") Caffie. My mother's name was Lucy Caffie. My father was a coal miner-slash-preacher. He worked in a number of the coal mines in West Virginia for over 35 years. He belonged to the United Mine Workers Union. He was a union man from Alabama. He migrated to Pennsylvania, and later to West Virginia. He worked in Boomer in the Montgomery area as a coal miner. They were also over in what they used to call "The W" which was a coal camp over near Gary.

By the time I was born they lived in Mt. Hope. They had lived in the coal camps, but I lived in what was considered "the city" of Mt. Hope, a typical little town with families all around. Up until the time I was about 11 or 12, we lived at the bottom of a hill on Lincoln Street.

If you walked to the top of the hill there was an elementary school. You could actually see the school from our house. I can recall that it was an all white school. And when it was time for me to go to school, my first year I went to a black school, which was in what they called "The Holler," probably a mile away from our home. Most of the blacks lived back up in what they called Kessler Holler, which was still part of Mt. Hope. And the school was DuBois Elementary School. I attended that school one year.

After that, integration in our area became an issue and my parents enrolled me in the white school that was just up the hill. I entered second grade, and from grades two through six, I was the only black child in my class. In the seventh grade, when I went to junior high, I had two or three friends who joined me. They had attended the black school and by the time we got to seventh grade some of those kids ended up in the same track.

The community was very open to integration. At the movies we always sat in the balcony, which I think was the best place to sit anyway. When civil rights laws became effective, they just opened it up and we could sit anywhere we wanted. So there was no problem, not in Mt. Hope.

*Ethel was raised with a sense that color didn't matter and that she could circulate freely in Mt. Hope — as long as her parents were in attendance, of course. Her father had proven himself in pulpits and coal pits of the region and was widely respected.—Michael Kline*

**ECA.** My dad said he got salvation in Pennsylvania. He would tell me stories about how he went to Pennsylvania and he was a gambler. See, he always played blues guitar. He wouldn't say it was blues guitar, but now I know what it was. He said God talked to him and said it was time for him to get saved, so he went to this little church where they were having noonday prayer and he

Ethel (opposite page) at the 1993 Vandalia Gathering.

Ethel's father, Reverend Dave "D.C." Caffie (right), pictured during the 1960's in Beckley with parishioner Brother Johnson. (Below) Ethel's mother, Lucy Caffie, at home in Mt. Hope, 1966. Photographers unknown.


Deacon Herbert Smith still lives next door to the Word of Truth church, established by Reverend D. C. Caffie in the early 1960's in Beckley. One of the first parishioners, Deacon Smith has been active in this congregation for more than 35 years. He played guitar alongside Ethel's father, with young Ethel on the piano. Deacon Smith continues to attend this church, maintains the building, and plays guitar at Sunday services.

went in and got saved.

And then he was called to preach and he didn't want to preach, so he ran for many years. Finally one day he says, "OK, God, if you really want me to be a preacher, when I wake up you let the grass be dry and not have any dew on it." It was similar to the story in the Bible, I think it was Gideon, who had put a fleece before God. And my dad says, "I woke up and the land was *bone* dry! That had to be God." And that's when he started preaching. And he established a church in Pennsylvania before coming to West Virginia.

He had a little church when I was a kid in Turkey Knob, another little holler right past Mt. Hope High School. The church was by a creek, maybe a mile or so back up in the little holler. And a number of people used to live up in that area. And then you had two black Baptist churches in town for those who were educated. Those individuals would never be found in a little Holiness church because they were teachers and doctors and, at that time, were considered to be the high class of black people. And those who were in the Holiness church were not of the same standing.

Mama would make little comments about the educated, we called them "educated fools" because they'd got so much education they didn't really have any common sense. I don't think my mother got past the ninth or tenth grade and my daddy didn't get past maybe the sixth or seventh grade. But their major drive was that I would never have to do what they had to do. My Mom always said, "I don't want you on your knees scrubbing anybody's kitchen floor. You *will* go to school." So when I graduated from high school, she snatched the diploma out of my hand and she said, "This is mine!"

And then of course I had no choice. I *would* go to college. I selected a black college in Lexington, Mississippi. But they had bitter remembrances of the South. It was 1967, and it was like, "No, you're not going to go down there, they'll lynch you, or something. You can't go south." Then I said, "West Virginia Tech." Well, they had friends in Montgomery. They figured they could still keep a thumb on me, because they really didn't want to let go yet. So they let me go to Montgomery and I was riding Greyhound home every weekend.

By this time my dad had a church in Beckley in an area called Red Brush which at that time did not

## Black Sacred Music Festival

On February 12 through 15, West Virginia State College will host the Black Sacred Music Festival in Institute. Ethel Caffie-Austin is the music festival's founder and director. For four days participants learn new skills, songs, music, and techniques.

The Black Sacred Music Festival is designed to preserve the history and style of Black Sacred Music. Classes are offered daily along with mass choir rehearsals. A mass choir performance will be held on Saturday evening at 8:00 p.m. On Sunday, a special youth mass choir concert begins at 4:00 p.m.

West Virginia State College faculty, staff, and students are admitted free with valid identification. Other college students with current college identification are required to pay $20. Registration fees for adults are $30, $20 for adults over 62, and $10 for youth ages 7 to 18.

For further information contact Ethel Caffie-Austin at (304)766-1013. For lodging information contact Hilda Armstrong at (304)343-1763.

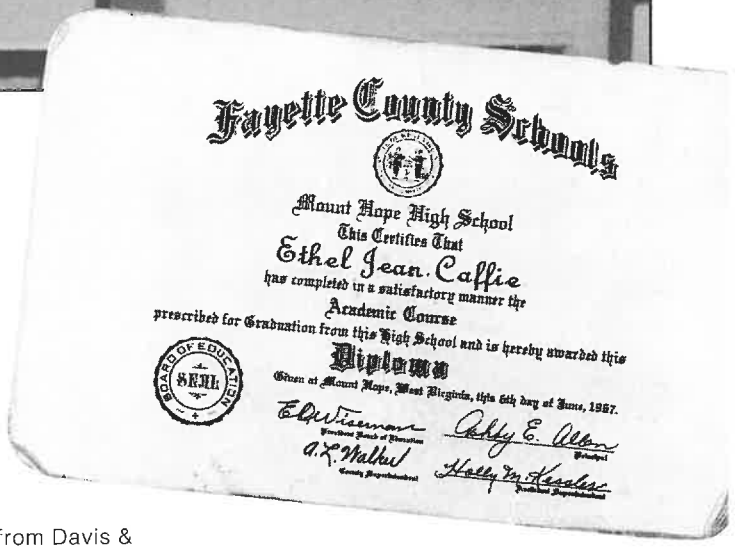
have paved streets. It was a black community in East Beckley over near Piney Oaks Elementary School. The church was originally a house. My father went over and invited the man next door to church. And Deacon Smith is still there. They're still in the same plain structure that I grew up in and they still have the same piano that I played.

**MK.** Tell me about your own development as a young piano player. Who did you listen to? Were there older church women you heard?

**ECA.** To be real truthful they didn't have any other musicians than my father and Deacon Smith. He would play rhythm and Daddy would play lead. But there was a traveling evangelist named Bessie Carter. In the summertime she would preach in the white and black churches in all the little coal camps. And that little old woman could bang a piano, so she was a real inspiration. And when she'd be preaching she'd get excited. In all those churches they'd get real jubilant, real excited. She'd always carry these big handkerchiefs, and as she was preaching she might throw it at somebody, and somebody'd pick it up and take it back to her.

I started playing the piano at six, started playing in church at nine. And then my dad needed a choir, so probably by about 11 or 12, I was working with young people and developing choirs. I was doing that when I was a kid.

I took music from six years old up until I was 17. When I went to college my parents didn't want me to major in music. Daddy wanted me to play well, but he didn't want me to be able to get out and earn a living with music. He was afraid that if I learned too much, my life would have a turn and that I would probably go secular. He said I couldn't make a living in music. I either had to be a teacher, or I had to be a nurse. Don't even think about going into music.


Fayette County Schools

Mount Hope High School
This Certifies That
Ethel Jean Caffie
has completed in a satisfactory manner the
Academic Course
prescribed for Graduation from this High School and is hereby awarded this
Diploma
Given at Mount Hope, West Virginia, this 6th day of June, 1967.

In 1967, Ethel was a senior at Mt. Hope High School, and a member of the Future Homemakers of America. This yearbook photo shows Ethel and classmates preparing for a hot dog sale.

Ethel's parents placed a high premium on education and were very proud when their only child received her high school diploma in 1967. Ethel later earned a bachelor's degree from West Virginia Tech in Montgomery and, in 1997, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from Davis & Elkins College.

My parents had convinced me that I needed to stay in English. So I was an English teacher for 20 years.

**MK.** So how did you keep your music alive through all of that?

**ECA.** Well, I remained in the college choir and then I made some decisions on my own because the director was brutal, a tyrant. And at this point he had aspirations of taking me to New York and auditioning for Broadway or Carnegie Hall.

But I was becoming more in touch with my beliefs. And in Tech Singers we were beginning to get into some things that I was feeling convicted about, based on my faith. I could do a good "Basin Street Blues" and when you sing a song like that you've really got to play the part, sexy and sultry, wearing these real short outfits up above my knees. You know, mini-skirts were in, and here I was looking almost like a flapper. I felt like a hypocrite.

So I made an appointment with the choir director and told him that I just couldn't do it any longer and that I was going to drop out. Oh, he

## Safeguarding My Virtue

*Even after he moved his church to an East Beckley community and his family into a middle-class, all white neighborhood, Rev. Caffie's style remained unchanged. He continued to play his electric guitar with Deacon Smith in a musical setting of tambourines and jubilant congregational singing. His musical dependence on his only child, Ethel Jean, also persisted. He wanted her in church with him when he held forth each Sunday morning.—MK*

**ECA.** Oh, yeah, it was foot-stamping and hallelujahs! He was more into his preaching than he was his singing, but he knew he needed music. So that's where I came in. And when I stopped coming home from college to play at church, I was "on my way to hell."

That was a real, real traumatic experience, cutting the cord. And he didn't go down without a fight. I was still in college and for at least two years I had been going home *every* weekend that God made. And I said, "This has got to stop." So I made up my mind and told my friends, "I'm not going home this weekend. I'm staying here."

And on the phone I told Dad, I said, "I am not coming home, I've got finals to study for and I'm staying on campus." And he wasn't happy. "You can come home and study." I said, "Nope, I'm staying here." Well, I had never, *ever* gone against my father in such a defiant way, to not be physically where he told me to be at a particular time. I never had done anything like that.

So I thought I had gotten away with it. Then I looked up on the Sunday afternoon and here came a caravan of cars headed by my father down to the college campus, members intact, to see what I was doing. They had my mom in that car. Another car was with them. They had the church clerk and Brother Smith — a *bunch* of them, they just came down. And brought me a box of food: fried chicken and homemade bread and brownies and all of this. And brought me money, wanted to make certain I was OK. So since I didn't come to church, they came to see me.

There was a sister church in Kimberly, about five-ten minutes away. So my daddy had talked to the pastor of that church, and said to keep an eye on me to make certain I was staying out of

Ethel in 1967 shortly before leaving home for college.

trouble. They had made certain someone came down to check me earlier that day. Little did I know that my father was on his way down there after church. You can see that I didn't really get much freedom. I wasn't a mischievous person, a carouser or anything like that. I don't know what my dad thought I would get into, but it wasn't even in my makeup. So he didn't have anything to worry about, but I guess he wanted to be certain that I kept my virtue.

had a cow! I think he leaned on some people in the English Department to try to pressure me into the Music Department, even after I told him I was going to quit singing.

So I started a gospel college choir on campus, about 1969 or '70. We called it The Collegiate Gospel Choir of West Virginia Tech. Well, you know the Music Department had a cow and three chickens! The music majors had to sneak to choir rehearsals and sneak to engagements for a while, because the choir director put out a proclamation that anyone in his music department found singing with me could be thrown out of the department. It was war for a while. We had up to about 40 students singing "underground gospel."

A lot of the schools, black and white, during the 60's were not supportive of gospel music. The idea of having drums, guitars, basses, pianos, and tambourines, that was unheard of. They favored the Anglo-Saxon way of quieter singing. Hand-clapping and swinging were out of the question. In the '60's the young people were saying, "Why can't we? It's our heritage. We grew up with it, why can't we sing it?"

Well, by the time I was in college in the 60's, you were getting a choir sound with a little flavor to it that had not been heard in the churches. So it was like an explosion and a revolution along with the Civil Rights Movement. Aretha Franklin was singing with her daddy, Reverend C. L. Franklin. One of the very first songs she ever recorded was a gospel song called "Precious Lord." Later she came back to his church and did another gospel album with James Cleveland called "Amazing Grace." And she had the choir back her up. That was awesome. That was in the 60's, and it's still popular. I grew up with that album.

In 1971 I had an opportunity to take the college choir up to Alderson to the Federal Women's Prison and the warden there just

nonchalantly said, "Would you like to work as an intern at the prison?" I said, "Sure!" So I taught a gospel choir and then I had a secular group. We were working on "West Side Story." They had enough trust in me that they would allow me to take trustees out of the prison and take them on gospel trips. That's what I did, and I loved it.

Later in 1976 I went in with Multi-CAP, an agency that served rural communities. I worked in Charleston with people in the government housing projects and started teaching piano to students who would not normally have an opportunity to learn. And that's how I started another choir! It was a community choir. It started out with kids from age 12, up. It grew to 70 or 80 in that choir. I used to have to drive the van, pick up the kids, direct the choir, drive them home, and then go park the van. After a while we had four vans going all over the Charleston area. We would pack them with kids and adults. And it ended up being a family situation, where a mother, daughter, granddaughter would be involved, or fathers and sons took advantage of it.

Ethel led the Charleston Area Community Choir during a West Virginia Day performance on the steps of the State Capitol. The large vocal ensemble, accompanied by horns, drums, bass, and piano, created a moving sound and represented a new direction in gospel music. Photographer and date unknown.

In 1979 we got a grant for choir robes and took two busloads of project kids to Washington, D. C., to sing at the James Cleveland Workshop of America for a week. We sang at Constitution Hall, got standing ovations, and had a ball. They had never had a delegation from West Virginia before. We sang gospel music in Constitution Hall, the place where Marian Anderson was not allowed to set foot. And that was historical in itself. Groups came from all over the world, several thousand young singers came to participate in this James Cleveland Workshop of America.

There are people today who started out in that little choir or in the vocal class or in the piano class who now have their own choirs.

**MK.** Tell us a little bit about your husband, James, how you met, and what characterized your marriage

## Recordings by Ethel Caffie-Austin

West Virginia's "First Lady of Gospel Music" recently produced an instructional videotape titled *Learn to Play Gospel Piano*. The two-tape set presents Ms. Caffie-Austin in an entertaining and inspirational program with powerful arrangements of well-known hymns and spirituals.

The videos include sheet music to accompany the instruction. For example, on tape two, Ethel Caffie-Austin starts off with a basic hymnal version of "Amazing Grace" and works her way into a full-blown gospel arrangement of the hymn. Likewise, the sheet music builds from a hymn book version to easy gospel, more "gospelly," and finally "with swing to it."

The videos are available as a set or individually. The cost for two tapes is $49.95; one tape is $29.95. Shipping is $5.95. To order contact Homespun Video, Box 325, Woodstock, NY 12498; 1-800-33-TAPES.

Ethel Caffie-Austin also does what she loves, and what gospel


music fans love to hear, on two cassette recordings — "Gospel Music...Generation to Generation" and "Christ Is Coming Back." The tapes are available from Delnora Roberts, 38 Caraway Road, Reisterstown, MD 21136. Call (410)833-5623 for information.

The "Generation to Generation" cassettes may also be ordered for $10 each, plus $2 shipping from the Cultural Center Shop, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-0690.

Ethel married James Austin in 1982.

with him.

**ECA.** We met in a church where I had brought my community choir to do a play, and he introduced himself afterwards. He and his brother and sisters used to attend my father's church in Turkey Knob years and years ago, when I was a kid. His grandmother was a member of my father's church. And we went out to dinner a couple of times. I tried to shunt him over to somebody else; I was not interested. I had my music. Nobody would take him. They kept pushing him back to me.

So it ended up that one day he proclaimed his love for me. And I'm going, "Oh, *God* what have I gotten myself into?" Then he asked me to marry him. I prayed about it and got an OK, so I married him. His background was one I had no problem with. My parents and others had real problems because he was a former inmate and had been in the penitentiary at Huttonsville and Moundsville and the last time he went to prison he was not supposed to get out for 40 years. But he had some life changes and experience with God, and because God touched the lives of the parole officers, he was released after almost eight years of being in prison. He had been what they called a "habitual" criminal and they really did not have hope for him. But he had changed. Of course people don't go with change. They believe whatever your reputation is, you must be that forever.

But he proved that to be incorrect, was a wonderful husband, very loving, did all he could to show that he loved and respected me. People were saying, "He's going to beat you, and abuse you." That man never lifted his hand to me, not once. And I gave him reason a couple of times to be very angry, but he never showed any type of violence to me. Never. So that just proves what God can do, and how God can change a person's life. It was a short, but a very intense and beautiful marriage. He had an enlargement of the heart and gradually his heart deteriorated. We were on the list for a heart transplant. Before a heart came up, I found him dead one morning.

**MK.** It sounds like he made the most of every minute after he met you.

**ECA.** He did and we did. He taught me about street people and street language. I taught him about church people and about loving and being gentle to people. It was a growing process for both of us.

In 1986, Ethel's performing group, the Christ Inspiration Delegation, included (left to right) Jeanetta Hobbs, Rosa Brown, Ethel, Beverly Robinson, and Malva Carey.

*Since James Austin's death in 1989, Ethel's career has mushroomed. 1996 found her in her second appearance at the Port Townsend Folk Festival near Seattle, where she was approached by a representative of the New Orleans Jazz Festival. He invited her on a series of European tours co-sponsored by Swiss Credit Bank and Blues House, a Zurich recording company. The response to her "Gospel for Everyone" presentations has been overwhelming.—MK*

**ECA.** The three ladies who have been traveling with me are Quandora Hornbuckle, Jeanetta Hobbs, and Delnora Roberts, who is my business manager here in America. "Christ Inspiration Delegation" is the name of our group.

## Hearing is Believing

If you would like to hear and see Ethel Caffie-Austin perform, or participate in a workshop, there are several opportunities to do so over the next year. After the first of the year, Ms. Caffie-Austin will teach weekly gospel piano classes at Christ Church United Methodist at 1221 Quarrier Street in Charleston. To register contact Malinda Crothers at the church at (304)342-0192.

Vandalia Gathering, the annual folklife event held on the Capitol grounds each Memorial Day weekend, is home to Ms. Caffie-Austin's gospel workshop. The gospel workshop is held on Saturday; on Sunday, workshop participants perform at the finale concert in the Cultural Center Theater.

Ethel's gospel workshop at the 1994 Vandalia Gathering. Photo by Michael Keller.

Ethel also teaches at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop in Elkins each summer. She teaches gospel piano and solo black gospel singing during July and August. For information contact The Augusta Heritage Center at 100 Campus Drive, Elkins, WV 26241: (304)637-1209.

Additionally, Ethel Caffie-Austin says that services at her church are open to the public. "People are welcome to come to services anytime," she adds. The church, Rimson Memorial Church of God in Christ, is located at 1441 Third Avenue in Charleston. Services are held Sundays at 11:15 a.m. and Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m.

Our third trip, June 23-July 8, 1997, we were in Basel, Geneva, Zurich, and Ascona, a resort area on the border of Switzerland and Italy.

We had an opportunity to go into one of the little villages, Ascona, and we conducted church services in a Catholic church on a Sunday morning after Mass, and it was packed. People were standing three and four deep outside in the rain with umbrellas and they would not leave. We read our scripture and we prayed and had praise and worship time and then we'd sing. There were a lot of older people there, but the young people thronged to our concert and loved the music, *loved* it. One of their favorite songs was "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jerico." The people wanted to know why we sing those words, and the story behind the songs. I ended up being a historian as well as a singer. And afterwards there were people walking up trying to kiss our hands and one lady kept saying, "You're just like a priest, you're a priest!"

And I'm going, "No ma'am, no ma'am, I'm not a priest, no, no, ..." and trying to get them to realize that what we were doing was something we do all the time. She kept saying, "But, it seems like God is in you!" And I said, "Well, He's in you, too! You can do the same thing." I had to really put my feet on the ground and say OK, I am a person, I am not a star, and, you know, just try to keep things in perspective.

At home I'm common. They know I have talent, but they're so used to it, it's just common to them. It's good to have that balance, where you come back and you're just a regular person and people are not impressed by what you do, so that you can keep your feet on the ground and walk right.

Hand-clapping and hallelujahs filled Ethel's home church, the Rimson Memorial Church of God in Christ, on a recent Sunday morning in Charleston. Photo by Michael Keller.

Panagiota Diamantidas (left) and Evstratios Koukoulis met in Asia Minor. They were married in West Virginia in 1916. This photo was taken soon after their marriage and was sent to her family to announce that they were expecting a child in a new land.

# A Bundle of Greeks in West Virginia

**By Pamela Makricosta**

Panagiota Diamantidis Koukoulis, my *yiayia* (grandmother) was born in the ancient coastal city of Palea [old] Phocaea, Asia Minor, in 1889. Across the Aegean Sea from the Greek mainland, this area is located in the western part of present-day Turkey. It has a rich Greek heritage dating back thousands of years.

One of six children born to Evangelos and Arhontia Diamantidis, my grandmother came to America on Christmas Day, 1915. She and her husband soon became part of a growing Greek community in northern West Virginia. Several decades later, this stronghold of Greek culture remains intact and thriving, thanks in many ways to the efforts of these early emigrants to create a special "bridge" to future generations.

For me, that bridge is comprised of yiayia's heirlooms: a journal, her poetry, her handiwork, and other items bound together in her bundle of "treasures" which she carried with her as she narrowly escaped the warfare and destruction of her homeland.

Every family has its stories of the "good old days," but when our family speaks of those days, they mean a period of time that began nearly 3,000 years ago. Grandmother would discuss how Palea Phocaea was an Ionian city which served as

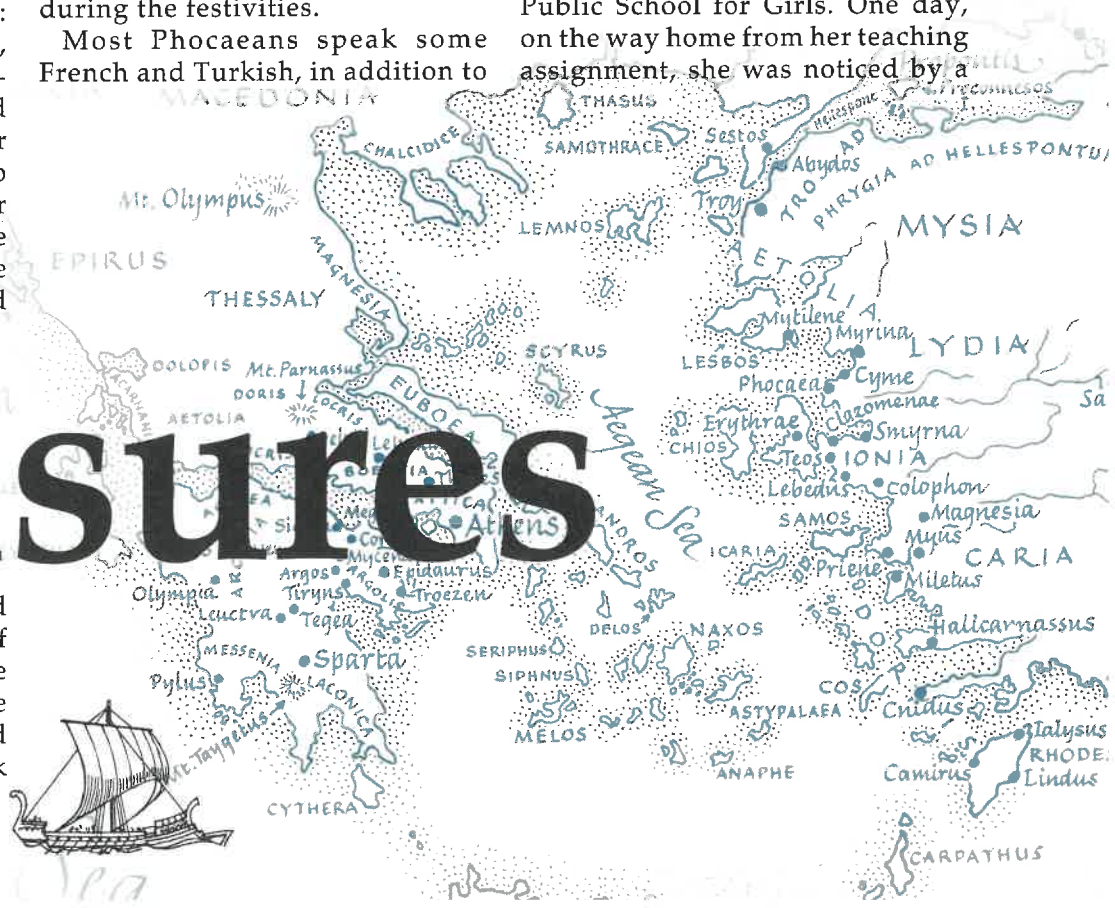

The beautiful Greek island of Mytilene was a haven for Christian refugees during the Turkish massacre of 1914. Panagiota and her family landed here, along with other displaced Greeks.

# Treasures

a center of commerce and culture. Mariners from that busy port city founded 20 colonies throughout the world — more overseas colonies than any other Greek city. The most important of these colonies were: Massalia (Marseilles) in France, Emperion (Ampuras) in Spain, Alalia in Corsica, and Ela (Velia) and Lucania in Italy. Grandmother Panagiota would tell anyone who would listen about the great harbor of Marseilles and the bronze plaque stating that its founders were Greeks from Phocaea who had settled there about 600 B.C.

The cultural, commercial, and spiritual ties between the city of Marseilles and Palea Phocaea are strong ones. For many years the government of Marseilles would send a ship to Phocaea to bring back the oldest man and woman to be honored at their centennial celebrations. These representatives of the "founding mothers and fathers" of the city were treated as royal guests during the festivities.

Most Phocaeans speak some French and Turkish, in addition to their native Greek. My grandmother showed a proficiency in French from an early age, and was chosen by the administrator of the local school to teach French at the Public School for Girls. One day, on the way home from her teaching assignment, she was noticed by a

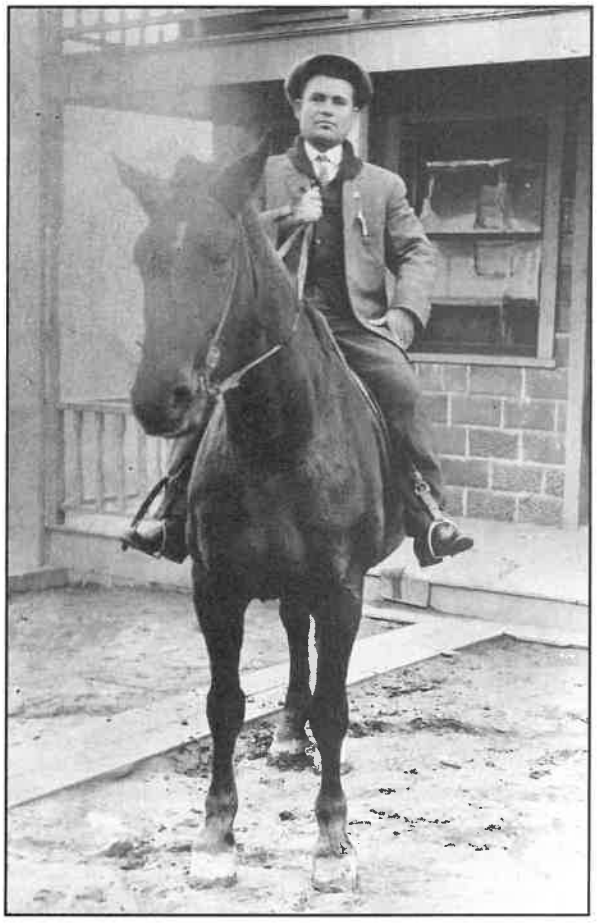


young man.

That young man was Evstratios (Charles) Koukoulis. Wanting to see where that lovely young teacher lived, he climbed the belfry of the local Greek Orthodox Church. Once he saw which home she entered, he put his "master plan" into action.

The following Friday he went to the Diamantidis home and introduced himself to the head of the house. "Hello, Mr. Diamantidis. I am Evstratios Koukoulis, a famous photographer in the area. Would you be interested in having a portrait taken of your lovely family?" My great-grandfather was puzzled and amused at this "famous" photographer. He had heard of the Koukoulis family, but not this son. There was something about this young man that endeared him from the start, however, and he did have four single daughters!

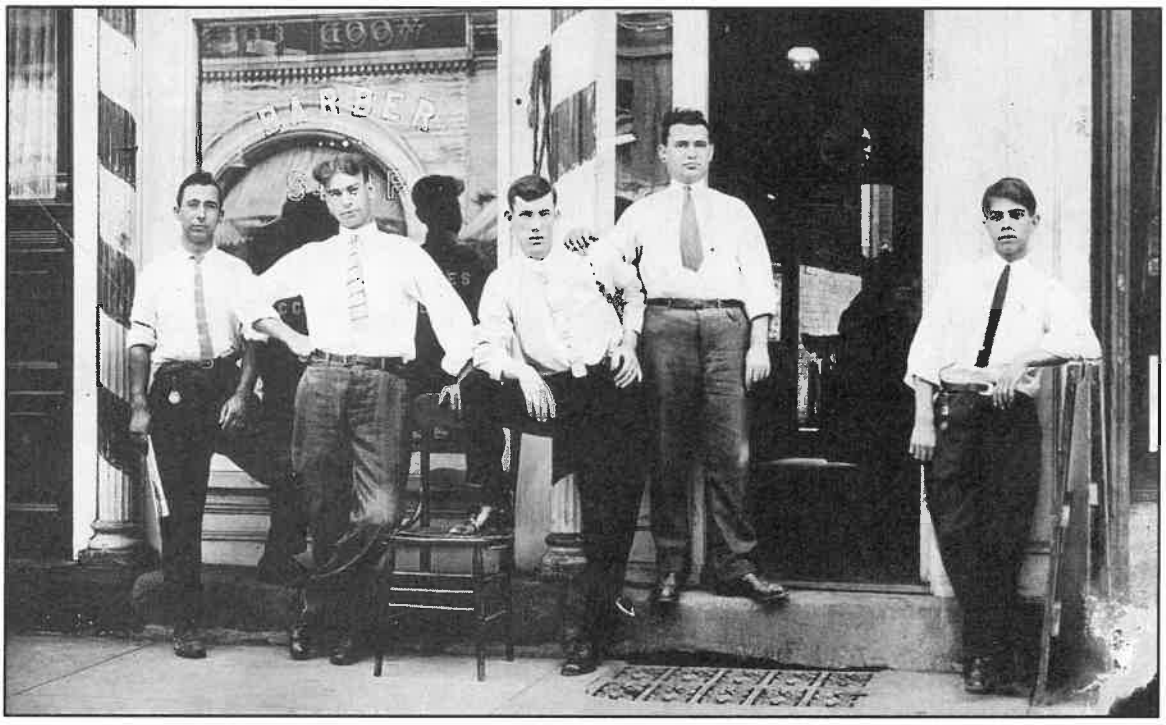
Evstratios was invited to attend the Divine Liturgy the following Sunday and to join the Diamantidis family for lunch following the church service. After a lavish luncheon, the family was posed for the formal family portrait. During coffee it was decided that the famous photographer should bring the finished pictures with him when they were ready, and join the family again for lunch. Unfortunately, the pictures were ruined in the developing, and Evstratios had to set up another appointment. More pictures were taken, but once again they were ruined. Mr. Diamantidis became quite suspicious of this and asked, "Mr. Koukoulis, is there really something wrong with your equipment or the film, or is there another reason why these photographs aren't available?"



Evstratios, known in America as Charles, looked like an American cowboy in this photo, which Panagiota received while living in Mytilene as a refugee.

Well, Grandfather had to confess that he was interested in seeing one of the Diamantidis girls. "My son, you are interested in my oldest daughter, Anastasia, right?" Much to his surprise, my great-grandfather learned that it was his younger daughter Panagiota who had caught the photographer's eye. This presented a problem since Panagiota had two older unmarried sisters. After many hours of serious discussions, Evstratios received permission to court Panagiota, and on January 29, 1911, they were engaged.

During this time, political and economic troubles in the region grew quite serious. The situation was especially tense for ethnic Greeks who had been targeted by the Turks. In the face of this danger and uncertainty, Evstratios decided to go to America. He planned to join his



As with many immigrant groups, Greek men were the first to arrive in America. Charles Koukoulis is shown here (fourth from left) with other *patriotes*.

Wedding photo of Charles and Panagiota Koukoulis, February 6, 1916, at St. John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church in Wheeling.

friends who had already become established in a beautiful area called Sabraton in the mountains of West Virginia.

Many of his friends had found work as laborers in the mines and mills around Sabraton and Morgantown. Some of them had saved enough money to open their own small restaurants, flower shops, confectioneries, and butcher shops. By the fall of 1911, Panagiota's youngest brother, Nicholas Diamantidis, escaped being drafted into the Turkish army and joined his friend C. P. Guidas in Morgantown. He sent Evstratios a letter detailing the journey from New York to Morgantown.

Evstratios soon sailed across the sea to America himself. He joined the hordes of immigrants at Ellis Island, then set out from New York to West Virginia using Nicholas' letter to guide him. Unfortunately, Evstratios did not know the English language and was surprised to find himself in Willmar, Minnesota, instead.

"It was absolutely terrible. By accident Dad ended up in Minnesota," recalls Angelo Koukoulis of Bridgeport. "The winter was too severe there, and my father nearly starved to death. The people in that area were very prejudiced against foreigners, and he feared for his life. Well, it didn't take him too long to contact his future brother-in-law and to find his way back east to West Virginia."

*They carefully set aside a portion of their wages in hopes of bringing the rest of the family to live safely with them in America.*

As with many of the early emigrants to America, it was the men who first left their homelands in search of a better life for themselves and their families. While some didn't plan to stay, Evstratios and Nicholas intended to make America their permanent home. They worked many long hard hours and carefully set aside a portion of their wages in hopes of bringing the rest of the family to live safely with them in America.

Their only recreation was occasional visits with their *patriotes* (other men from their homeland) who had formed a fraternal and philanthropic society in Sabraton. The name of this society was "*Ee Elpis*" (The Hope) because of the Phocaeans' hope that their lives in America would be blessed by God. Nicholas and Evstratios treasured "the little touch of home" they experienced at the society's picnics and cultural festivities.

By 1913, there were many changes in the lives of my grandparents both in America and in Palea Phocaea. My grandfather and his future brother-in-law moved to Weirton to join other *patriotes* in the northern panhandle of West Virginia.

Nicholas went to work as a laborer in the steel mill which E. T. Weir had begun in 1910, and Evstratios opened up a barbershop and a small confectionery where he made a variety of Greek and Middle Eastern delicacies.

Within a few months, my grandfather sent an urgent plea to Asia Minor for his brother, Panagiotis Koukoulis, to join him in America. Panagiotis was an accomplished carpenter, and Evstratios needed his expertise in the construction of a large building to house his family, plus a bigger barbershop and confectionery. By the time Panagiotis arrived at the train station in Hollidays Cove, my grandfather had also decided to build extra boarding rooms to accommodate the many bachelor *patriotes* who had also moved to Weirton.

At this same time, Grandmother Panagiota saw many changes in Palea Phocaea as well. Three archaeologists from France had moved into a huge home in the center of the city. Messieurs Dandria, Sartiaux, and Carlier had met the Koukoulis and Diamantidis families during previous visits. They were searching for physical evidence of the connection between ancient Phocaea and its colony — the grand city of Marseilles. There was great excitement in the air once the excavations began.

Panagiota's father, Evangelos, passed away in late 1912. Early the next year Panagiota received a letter from her fiancé, with a picture of him on a horse. She wrote back to her "American cowboy" in West Virginia, and told of her father's death and of the worsening political and economic situation in Asia Minor.

According to Grandmother's journal, the first deportation of Christians from Asia Minor began on May 29, 1914. The visiting French archaeologists had overheard that Turkish soldiers were planning to forcefully expel the Greeks from their ancestral home and. Fearful of an impending massacre, the Frenchmen set out to save as many people as possible. Since the French were recognized by the Turkish authorities as being neutral in matters of politics at that time, the Frenchmen felt safe moving through the city unarmed. As quickly as possible, they began identifying key people in each of the neighborhoods.

Panagiota peers from the second floor balcony of this boarding-house in Weirton. Charles' barber shop and confectionery are on the ground floor.

Then they each went to a different part of the city, entered the largest home in that area, and flew French flags in the front and in the back of these homes. Since Grandmother spoke French, one of the Frenchmen contacted her. "You don't have much time. It will be very bad. The Turks are nearer than I thought. In an hour you must all be ready to leave. You can each take one bundle of things — nothing more. There isn't much time. Remember, tell as many people as you can to come to the French homes. They are 'safe houses.' I fear that you'll never be able to return to your homes. Hurry. God be with you all."

Grandmother and most of her family and neighbors escaped with their lives and their small bundles thanks to the courage and assistance of the Frenchmen. Escorted by armed men whom the Frenchmen had paid to protect them, they made their way to the waiting ships. On their way, the survivors witnessed countless murders, the looting and burning of all they held dear, and the total destruction in a matter of hours of what had taken thousands of years to build.

The ships took the survivors of the Palea Phocaea massacre to many of the neighboring Greek islands and also to the mainland. Grandmother Panagiota and her family and friends were among the fortunate refugees who were taken to the island of Mytilene.

Sending a letter to "Charlie in America" was difficult, but

Panagiota managed, and wrote to Evstratios about all that had happened. Finally, his reply reached her. She left for Athens to prepare for her journey to America.

It was decided that the rest of the family would wait for a time in Mytilene. Panagiota received a note with her mother's blessing a few days before she sailed for America aboard the *Patris*, November 26, 1915.

She landed in America on Christmas Day, December 25, 1915. After being processed at Ellis Island, she headed to West Virginia by train. To avoid the mistake that landed Grandfather in Minnesota, Grandmother wore a baggage tag: "Panagiota Diamanditis — To: Charles Koukoulis, Hollidays Cove, West Virginia — From: New York." After a seemingly endless train ride, Panagiota reached the station. She was reunited with her fiancé and her brother Nicholas.

*After being processed at Ellis Island, she headed to West Virginia by train.*

The future Mrs. Koukoulis had to be ready within a few days to entertain all the *patriotes* who had been anxiously awaiting her arrival and news from their families and friends. One can only imagine the joy that the men experienced when they learned that their loved ones had survived, or the sorrow they felt when they learned that they had either not survived or were still missing. That first open house at her home on 4th Street continued the ancient tradition of hospitality which has been carried on by her children and grandchildren to this day.

One of those guests at the open house was C. P. Guidas whom Nicholas had chosen to help in the planning of the upcoming wedding. In addition to being the official "bridal consultant," Mr. Guidas was asked to become the *koumbaro* (best man). Since the closest Greek Orthodox Church was in Wheeling, plans were made for the ceremony to be held there. Before leaving Weirton, Mr. Guidas purchased the wedding dress and accessories for the bride-to-be. The entire ensemble cost $23.84.

So, on February 6, 1916, a train headed north from Morgantown and a train headed south from Hollidays Cove carrying the members of the bridal party. The two trains met in Wheeling. The happy couple was escorted to St. John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church by a festive group comprised of mostly men, one woman, and two children — all from the city of Palea Phocaea, Asia Minor.

The Greek immigrant population in the upper Ohio Valley continued to grow, and soon an Orthodox church in Weirton was needed. People from the Greek mainland, the islands, and Asia Minor worked together with the leadership of the steel mill to create All Saints Greek Orthodox Church. In the spring of 1916, the original cornerstone was laid on Avenue A in the northern part of Weirton. Once the church was established, the men sent for their wives, sisters, fiancées, and other family members.

The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in this new church on March 25, 1918, in honor of the great religious and historic double holiday celebrating the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Greek Independence Day. The headquarters of the Phocaean Society had been moved to Weirton from Sabraton in 1914, so its members were among the first parishioners of the All Saints church.

On November 3, 1918, Charles (as he was known in America) and Panagiota were blessed with a daughter. They named her Eleni (Helen) giving her the name of

First generation Greek Americans, the author's mother Eleni is on the right and uncle Angelo is on the tricycle. They pose with neighborhood friends in front of the Koukoulis home on 4th Street in Weirton. Photo by Charles Koukoulis, about 1924.

Charles' mother. For the first time, Panagiota was able to use some of the baby items she had made in Phocaea and had carried with her to freedom. Eleni wore the nightdress and she slept on the sheet and pillowcase that my grandmother had embroidered with one of the few English words that she knew — "Baby." After Panagiota's mother died in Mytilene on September 11, 1922, Charles brought his sister-in-law, Katina, to Weirton to help with little Eleni, my mother, the first American in the family!

Little Eleni and her younger brother Evangelos (Angelo), grew up in a rich and culturally diverse environment at the north end of Weirton. Grandfather's barbershop and the confectionery stayed busy. In fact, the Koukoulis house on 4th Street had two signs painted on the first floor windows: *Koureion* (barbershop) and *Kafeneion* (coffee house).

*Charles brought his sister-in-law, Katina, to Weirton to help with little Eleni, my mother, the first American in the family!*

"My earliest memory," my uncle Angelo Koukoulis states, "was being given a little hammer to crack almonds and walnuts. I was about four years old, and my job was to get the nuts ready for the filling that Dad would use for the baklava and other pastries. I also remember Dad always telling me, 'Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are.' That was good advice."

As my uncle got older, he was given the job of helping to stretch out the phyllo dough until it was paper-thin. "I would stretch out the dough on a *tallaro* (frame) and then place the dough on special sheets that were made from the sugar and flour sacks. Between each layer of dough, I'd place a sheet. When I had stacks of 20 or 25, I would go back and cut them into strips."

Anyone who loved such delicacies as baklava, *amegthalota* (almond cookies), *pastelli* (honey-sesame candy), or *soumatha* (the traditional almond drink served at weddings or engagements), could call Charles Koukoulis' Weirton Candy Shop and place their order. The most tedious confection that Grandfather would make was the famous *loukoumi*. It was made in huge copper kettles. Uncle Angelo remembers that, "when the molten sugar and glucose reached the right consistency, it looked like lava boiling and popping."

By 1932 Grandmother Panagiota and a group of ladies from Palea Phocaea decided to establish the ladies' society, *Ee Eepsosis Tou Teemeeou Stavrou*

Eleni (or Helen) Koukoulis was the author's mother and the first of her family to be born in America. She married Nicholas Makricosta on July 29, 1951.

Angelo Koukoulis still lives in Clarksburg, and was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story in the Fall 1982 issue (Volume 8, number 3) entitled "All Greek, and All Hard Workers." Photo by Ron Rittenhouse.

(The Elevation of the Holy Cross). They chose that name because they wanted to follow the examples of the early Christians who "raised the cross of Christ" in foreign lands. She became the society's first president and she wrote a poem about their beautiful homeland. This society continues its cultural and philanthropic activities to this day. (Currently, I serve as the society's president.)

In an effort to preserve the past and to share their Christian and ethnic legacy with their children, these "founding mothers and fathers" from Phocaea also created an organization especially for their children. The name chosen for this organization was *Ee Enosis* (The Union), since the children represented a union between the old world and the new one, between the past and the future, between memories and dreams.

The '40's were busy, exciting, and turbulent years not only for the Weirton community, but for the whole world. In a letter preserved in my grandmother's journal, she wrote from Hollidays Cove to her sister Anastacia in Greece:

*Dear sister,*

*Today my daughter Eleni and her friends are standing at the entrances of the theatres in town selling potted plants to passersby. They are doing this to raise money for the war effort and the Red Cross.*

On June 21, 1943, my Uncle Angelo began serving his country in the armed forces. Grandmother's journal records a poem, "To My Soldier Son, Angelo, on His Birthday," on February 26, 1945.

April 11, 1945, was a "red letter day" in Grandmother Panagiota's life. That was the day that she became a citizen of the United States of America. She was naturalized at the Circuit Court in New Cumberland. Shortly after this, she registered to vote and voted for the first time in 1946.

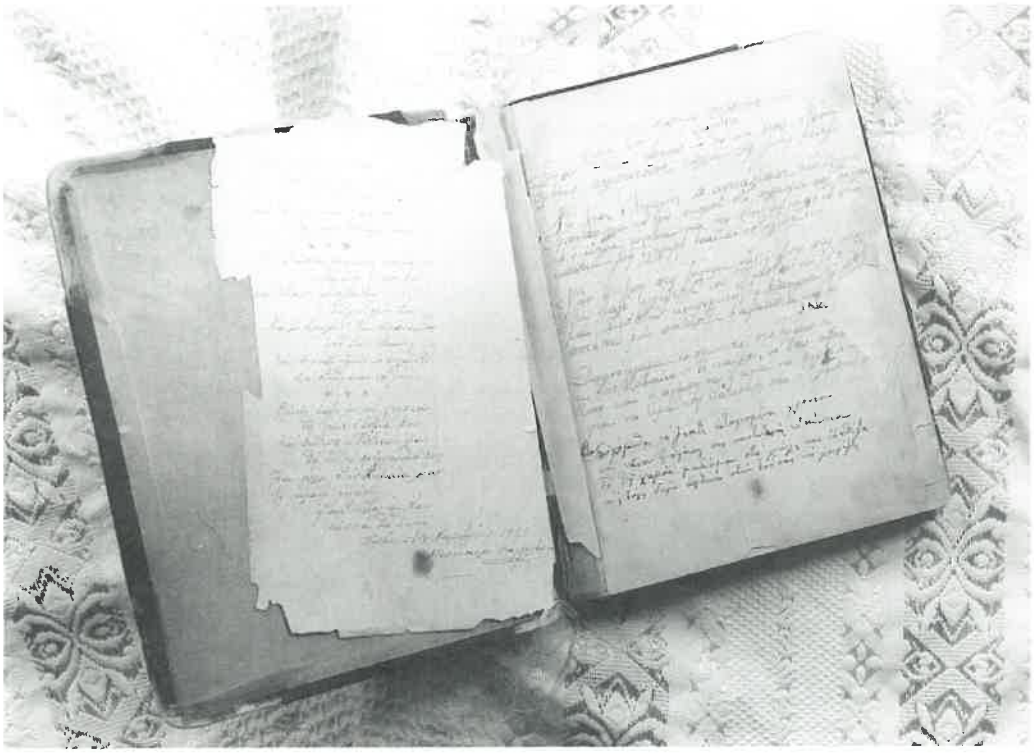
Uncle Angelo returned home from the service on September 3, 1945. He and the others who had served their country during the war were glad to be back home, and set about the business of building up their communities. The original building which housed All Saints parish on Avenue A had become too small for its membership. So, property was purchased on West Street in downtown Weirton. Archbishop Athenagoras of North and South America, who later became the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, blessed the cornerstone of the new All Saints church on May 24, 1947. The Byzantine-style church was dedicated on June 3, 1950. Much of the actual work on the new church was done by the parishioners themselves.

Many of the original icons from the old church, painted by the parish's first priest, Father Iosafeos, were included in the beautiful new structure. The ornate carvings and jewel-colored windows depicting the lives of the saints are awe-inspiring to many visitors. All Saints is proud of the distinction that it is the only church in the country that has two stainless steel bell towers and a stainless steel dome.

This church serves as a center for the religious and cultural life of Weirton's Greek Orthodox community. It stands as a proud monument to the immigrants and pioneers who made their home in this far-off land.

*GOLDENSEAL thanks author Pam Makricosta for loaning family photographs, her grandmother's journal, and family heirlooms to tell the story of her ancestors' arrival in West Virginia. — ed.*

All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Weirton. Note the stainless steel bell towers and dome. Photos by Michael Keller.



Panagiota's journal.

# Yiayia's Bundle

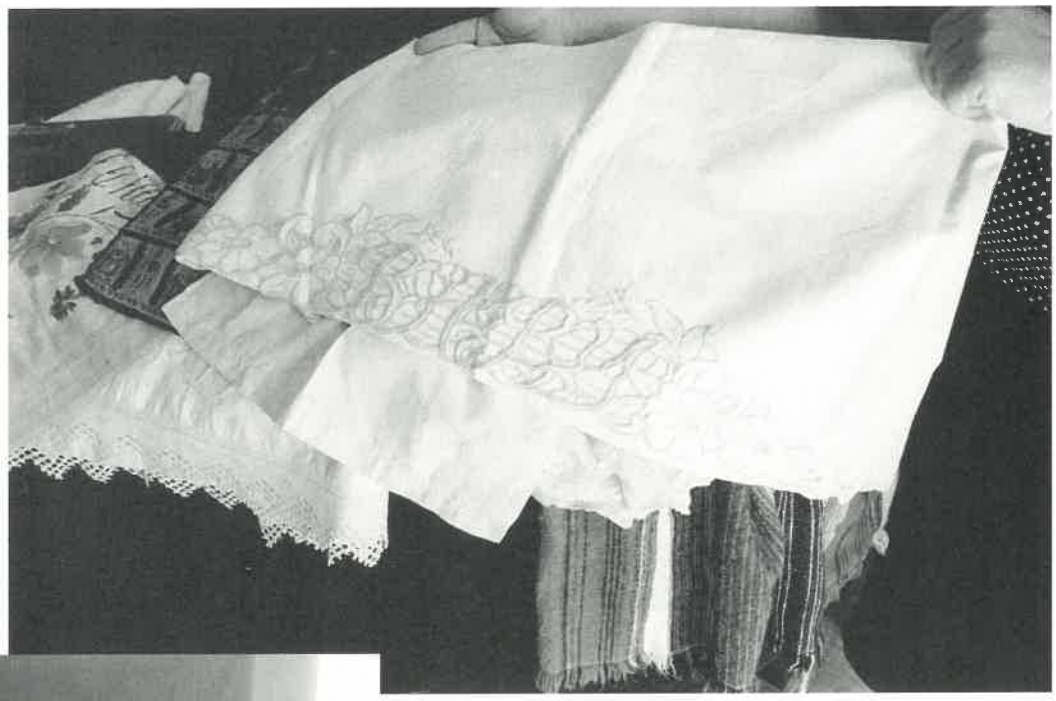
Grandmother Panagiota, my *yiayia*, died on July 9, 1950, and Grandfather Charles died February 19, 1951. My mother, Eleni (Helen), was the first of their children to be married, and that was on July 29, 1951. Neither I nor any of Yiayia's other three grandchildren had the opportunity to meet our grandparents.

Even so, I feel that we are able to "touch and know" Yiayia's spirit through the family stories and, especially, through her journal and other treasures that she carried with her in her bundle. These items are evidence that she was a talented, religious, and family-oriented lady. She was strongly motivated to not only succeed in America, but to also retain her pride in the ancient Greek past of her homeland in Asia Minor. Grandmother Panagiota's life left a significant imprint on the lives of her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all those who knew her. The priceless items in Yiayia's bundle will continue to serve as a bridge between our generation and the next.

These were among the items which Grandmother Panagiota brought with her in her bundle: her dowry sheets and pillowcase bordered with handmade lace and embroidered with her initials; slippers that she made for her bridegroom and herself (she embroidered these slippers with silk thread on black velvet); an icon of St. Nicholas — the patron saint of the family; a church book of prayers and scriptures; pic-

The author displays a tapestry from her yiayia's bundle. The tapestry, dated 1912, depicts the victorious entry of the Greek king and army into Thessaloniki at the end of the Balkan War. Journal photo by Greg Clark; all other photos by Michael Keller.

tures of the family and Palea Phocaea; a baby nightshirt; a set of baby sheets and pillowcase on which she had embroidered one of the few words she knew in English — "Baby"; and a tapestry from Greece dated October 28, 1912, commemorating the "Liberation of Thessaloniki." It depicts the victorious entry of the Greek king and army at the conclusion of the Balkan War. The bundle also contained a red velvet vest which her mother, Arhontia, made for her to wear when she participated in patriotic programs as a child; a *tagari* (shoulder bag) carried by a woman of Souli during the Greek War of Independence (1820's); a slip made of cotton and handmade lace; some of the oil on silk paintings that she had made; and, of course, her journal.



Handmade lace pillowcase embroidered with word "Baby."

Pam Makricosta is a second generation Greek American who shares her family's heritage by bringing her yiayia's bundle into area schools.

I have been performing my yiayia's story in communities throughout the tri-state area of West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania for at least ten years. I especially enjoy sharing my grandmother's story with the school children. Usually, I start my talk by asking them, "If you were told that you had to leave your home in an hour and that you were never going to be able to come back, what would you do? What would you take with you if you could only take a bundle of things with you?"

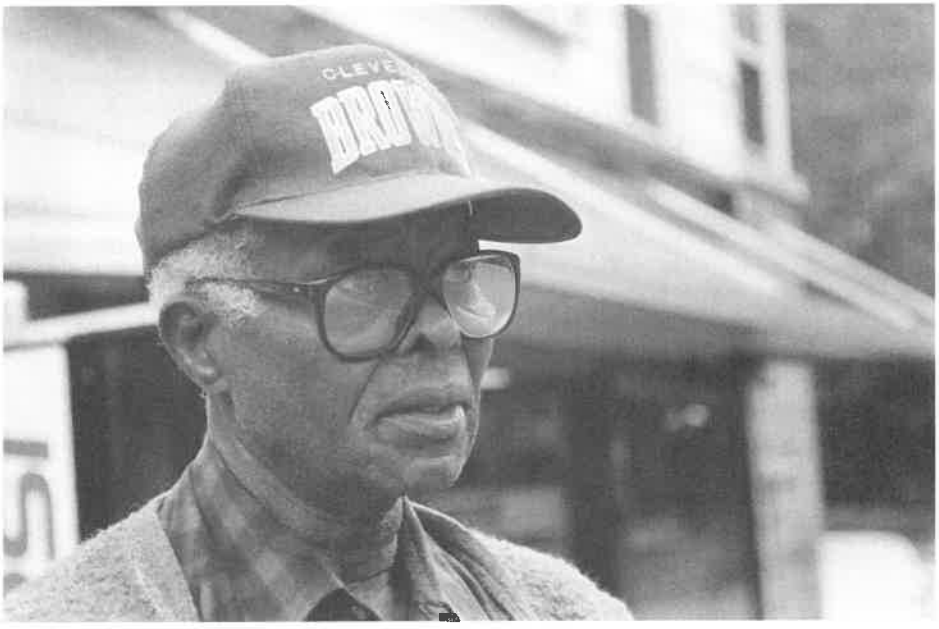
It is so interesting to hear what is important to them. Many of the items that the children mention are similar to the ones my grandmother took with her — pictures, some money, food, and small mementos of family and friends.

— Pamela Makricosta

# Mining in the Melting Pot

## The African American Influx into the McDowell County Mines

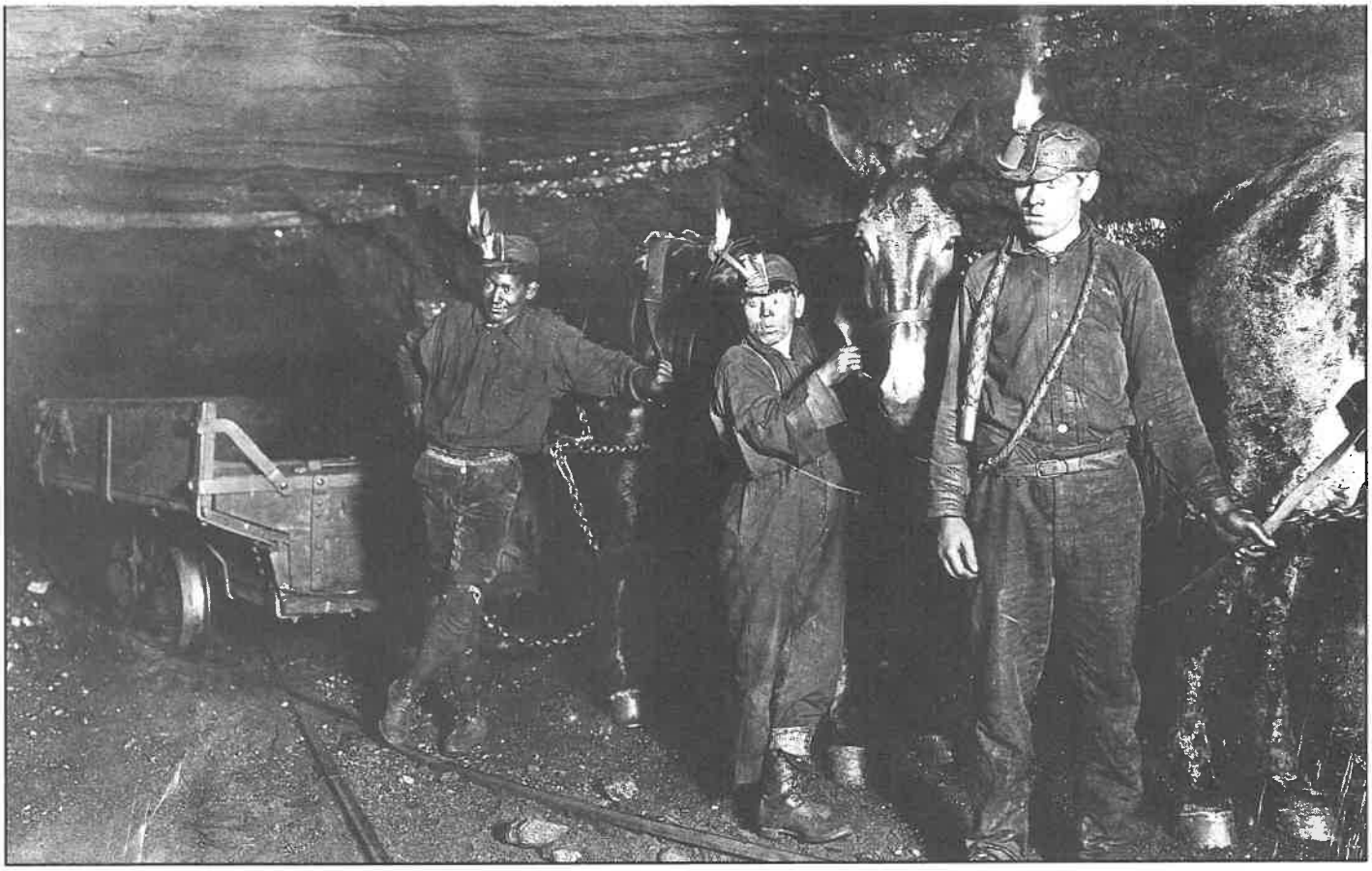
**By Jean Battlo**



Young Alex Amerson first came to McDowell County from Alabama in 1938. He arrived ready to work. He left for a while, but returned in 1942 to spend the rest of his life in "the nation's coal bin," as a local radio station refers to this southern county.

Mr. Amerson, who recently turned 79, lives in Kimball where many know him as "Lightning." He is one of those miners who, against the contemporary grain, still looks back on his work in the mines as "the good old days." When asked

Retired coal miner Alex "Lightning" Amerson has fond memories of his hard working, hand-loading days in the McDowell County mines. Photo by Michael Keller.



McDowell County coal mines attracted thousands of blacks and other workers between 1890 and 1940. These young miners were photographed with mules in a Gary mine. Photo 1908, courtesy Library of Congress.

how he felt about those hard working, hand-loading days, Lightning's eyes light up and he flashes out his answer, "Loved it. I just loved it."

Mr. Amerson goes on to say that the society of that era was also one he admired. "The men were easy to get along with. All the people were, and there were lots of people here. People were like brothers and sisters in those days. It sure was a lot better for everyone without all these drugs and nonsense that goes on now."

Alex was living in Livingston, Alabama, driving a tractor trailer when the "call of the pits" reached him through a brother who was already working in McDowell County. "I had had several jobs there but there was no security nor benefits in the work I was getting." So, like so many others before him, he came to McDowell County and went right into the mines.

When Alex Amerson arrived nearly 60 years ago, he followed in the footsteps of earlier African Americans who began the trek into the region decades before.

The first African American settlers came to McDowell County to work in the mines during the 1800's. Like the European immigrant miners, they were recruited or, in some cases, lured into the southern coalfields, and their numbers increased in proportion to the opening of new coal mines. Prior to the beginning of the mining era, the African American population in this region was all but nonexistent. Of the 8,000 blacks in West Virginia in 1870, most lived in the more prosperous farm counties or in regions such as the Kanawha Valley where there were more job opportunities.

In 1880, there was not a single black miner in the state of West Virginia, according to author David Alan Corbin in his book *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*. Following the opening of the Pocahontas coal seam in the late 19th century, populations in the southern coal counties grew steadily. From 1890 to 1900, the number of African Americans in McDowell County quadrupled from approximately 1,500 to nearly 6,000. It tripled again to more than 18,000 by 1920. In 1930, there were 114,000 blacks in West Virginia, most of them in the southern coal counties and railroad centers.

Another author who has devoted extensive research to this subject is former Eckman resident, Dr. Howard P. Wade. The son of black migrants, Dr. Wade received his early education in McDowell County and has himself been a coal miner, U.S. Marine, gas utility technician, teacher, and college administrator. His definitive work, *Black Gold and Black Folk: A Case Study of McDowell County, West Virginia's Black Migrants, 1890-1940*, was published in 1990. It was submitted as his doctoral thesis for his degree at the University of Miami, Florida.

According to Dr. Wade, the predominant hometowns of newcomers to McDowell County had been Martinsburg, West Virginia; Danville, Boxwell, Pulaski, Tazewell, Ridgeway, Rocky Mount, Farmville, Burnt Chimney, Wytheville, Stuart, and Salem, Virginia; and Spray, Blue Creek, Draper, Reidsville, Leaksville, Winston-Salem, and Rocky Mount in North Carolina. Lesser numbers

arrived from Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Then as now, getting to McDowell County at all was no easy matter. Though the average African American would no more have owned a car or had money for train fare than his Caucasian counterpart, Dr. Wade disputes claims that many "walked over into McDowell." He cites the fact that there were areas of the county where it was very dangerous for an African American to even pass through.

Nonetheless, many pioneering black miners, including relatives of Dr. Wade, did walk from Boxwood, Virginia. Such a trip on foot involved a two-week odyssey traveling from Martinsburg, around the Blue Ridge; through Hillsville, Wytheville, and Fort Chiswell; over East River Mountain, and finally to Bluefield. As Dr. Wade notes, "Once in Mercer County, their journey to the coalfields was all downhill, making their descent from the 3,480-foot elevation at Bluefield to the 1,600-foot elevation at Eckman." From Eckman, the African American miners moved chiefly to Lick Branch, Elkhorn, Powhatan, Kyle, Northfork, and Keystone.

As black miners arrived by rail, on horseback, and on foot, life changed in McDowell County. Due to the conditions in the mines and life in the coal camps, early race relations there were unique.

Before the mining industry arrived, there had been no foundations for race relations; the census record for 1880 lists only one "Black" living in the entire county. Newly arriving blacks were joined by large numbers of Europeans from Italy, Hungary, Poland, and other lands. The coals of the mines provided some of the first, best fires for the American melting pot.

With this considerable immigrant influx into the region, those prejudices which did develop were chiefly a by-product of unfamiliarity, fundamentally different from prejudices based on centuries of slave/master dynamics. The typical African American immigrants to the county were adults whose parents had been slaves and who had personally suffered the injustices, mistreatments, and discriminations of Reconstruction. They did not find similar conditions in the newly developing coal towns of McDowell County, however. As a result, this large undeveloped region of southern West Virginia was able to start with a clean race slate. "Fortunately, for the natives and black arrivals, McDowell County did not suffer through the confrontational aspects of Reconstruction," writes Dr. Wade.

Another important factor in creating this unprecedented relationship was the comradery and solidarity of working in the mines. That brotherhood apparently created a union before the Union and it has a deep and long tradition in McDowell County. Black and white miners were linked together in the "code of the pits." They shared common economic needs, a respect for the hard work each was doing, a sense of integrity, and, like fellow soldiers, the men were bonded by the constant danger they faced each day in the mine.

Lightning Amerson went from hand-loading to working timbers, a job which involved setting up timbers for the coal loaders. Lightning's first job was at Carswell. "I was actually working at the 44 Pillar where the miners had been killed years before," he recalls. "Danger? Well, oh, for sure there was always danger in the mines. But the key to that was you had to be careful." He remained with Eastern Gas Company at Carswell for eight years before moving on to Lake Superior.

Black migrants arrived in McDowell County on foot, by rail, and on horseback. A lucky few traveled by automobile, including this family pictured in the early 1920's. Photo courtesy State Archives.


Throughout West Virginia, the mines brought together a rich mix of races, cultures, and languages. This sign, from a 1939 mine in Kempton, Preston County, was posted in English, German, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Czech, and Polish. Photo courtesy Library of Congress.

It would be idealistic to suggest there were no racial or ethnic divisions. In fact, the new coal camp towns of Roderfield, Hemphill, Vivian Bottom, and Carswell Hollow all had their racial ghettos, with derogatory nicknames. Such separation, however, did not extend to the men working in the mines. Views of race relations during this era range from one woman's claim that "there never was any prejudice in the town of Kimball," to another old-timer's view that "we just had to get used to one another."

An example of "getting used to one another" is found in the journal of John Williams, a Welshman who came to work in the Algoma mines.

"Before I came here," he wrote, "I was told [blacks] were the most treacherous and devilish lot of people to deal with, and the only way to manage them was to knock them down with anything at hand, at any sign of offense on their part. This was told to me by several people in Pennsylvania who had a great deal of experience with them; so when I came there I expected to have a jabbering semi-wild lot of people to deal with."

After working with African Americans for some time, Williams concluded:

"I came in contact with several of them, and found them all extremely well behaved and enlightened people. I am extremely fond of them and have not had the slightest trouble with them since I have been here. I would rather manage 500 of them [African Americans] than half a dozen of the white people in this country."

The probable reason for Williams' assessment was the African American ambition and desire to work, and their desire to make money. Dr. Wade notes a miner, Homer Marcus, stating that "I heard they was raking up money in cars in the coal mines of West Virginia."

According to Lightning Amerson, "They were real nice to a man at the Lake Superior mines. They would pay a man $5 on the first day before you even worked a lick. That was a nice thing and good money then, but of course there were some fellows who'd take advantage of that. They'd go get their $5 and then not go to work. That's not right."

But Dr. Wade contends that it was the freedom of choice as much as the lure of money that brought the African American miner to the coalfields of McDowell County. A miner was, in many ways, his own boss; he could do his work, or not, as he chose.

If they did their work, black or white, and if they did it well, black or white, they could be promoted to motor men, brakemen, tipple workers, track workers, etc. Relatively few occupations in America during these decades allowed such upward mobility to an African American worker.

This independence created a new African American image: a sense of integrity combined with a progressive work ethic that was fostered and supported by new national groups such as the NAACP. In *The Plight of the Bituminous Coal Miner*, Homer L. Morris writes, "Because of past discrimination in the Deep South, McDowell County seemed like a haven to most black migrants. The opportunity to be their own boss appealed to many blacks. They thought that a colored man had a better chance in mining than in anything else."

When asked if he thought the miner was handled fairly in his day, Lightning answers like lightning. "Had to be. The Union was strong by my time so things were taken

Lightning Amerson recalls the dangers of life in the mines. Photo by Michael Keller.

# Beyond the Mines . . .

Robert Patterson and family at home on Kimball Hill.

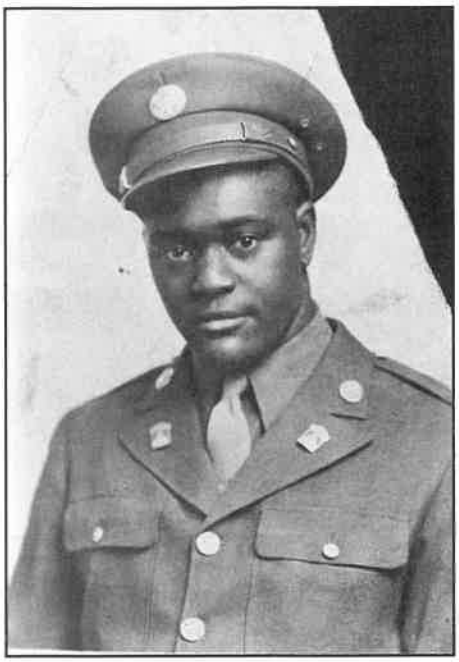
Wiley Patterson and family on porch.

The Patterson family, pictured here, typified the experience of many African Americans in early McDowell County. With roots in mining, they were also involved in other aspects of community life.

All photos courtesy State Archives.

John and Hattie Patterson.

Lizzie Patterson with Bible.



The African American community in McDowell County eventually grew to include a broad range of occupations and professions from lawyers and teachers to nurses and soldiers. These nurses, the daughters of professional miners, graduated nursing school in Welch, class of '35. The enlisted man is Harry Crider. Photos courtesy State Archives.

care of. You got good money for your work. And if you were having some trouble and needed money before payday you could go up to Kopper's Store and have them cut you $5 or $10 scrip. Course that was taken out of your pay later, but it was still good when a man could count on the money when he had the need."

Along with their white counterparts and other ethnic immigrants, early black settlers in McDowell County were the unsung heroes, mining coal, building the bridges and roads, bricking the buildings, and forging a new society. As the years became decades, many of those who had come intending to return to their previous homes or to go north, remained and made a home in the "free and independent state of McDowell County."

Alex Amerson stayed in the mines until January 1980, working "34 years, four months, and four days." He earned his nickname for the rapidity with which he used a #4 shovel while hand-loading. He takes great pride in the fact that he did a solid day's work every day, raised his family, and sent his daughter Gwendolyn through Bluefield State College.

During these years, he was an old-fashioned citizen in Kimball, greeting his neighbors and helping out in any way he could. He would bag groceries for Battlo's Supermarket, without pay, a personal tradition which he maintained in the town for decades. Those who were children in the '50's and '60's, black and white, have equal memories of "Mr. Lightning," who gave nickels, quarters, and dimes to many.

He is still a fixture in Kimball, where he sits almost every day in his car across the street from this author's home, watching what's left of his town go by. He still spends part of his day in the local grocery store, now called Gianato's, or Jeanette's, helping out where he can.

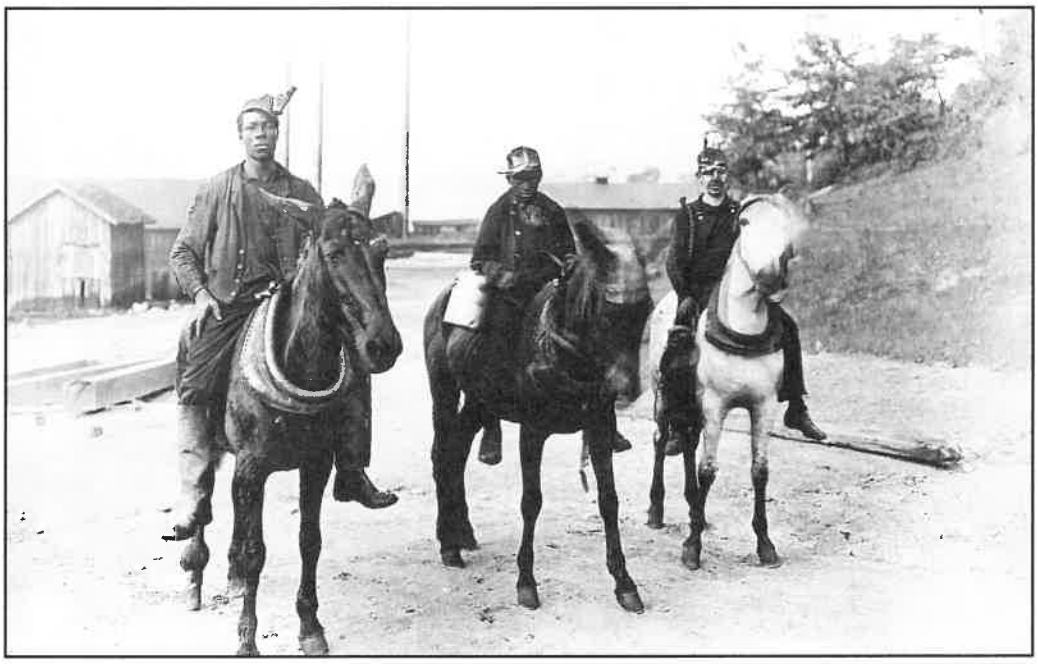
He is proud of his life in the McDowell County mines. His intellect, industry, and integrity exemplify the hard working coal miner at his best.

Alex Amerson is still a fixture in Kimball. He can usually be found helping out at Gianato's grocery store, or visiting with passersby along the street. Photo by Michael Keller.

# Black Migration to Southern West Virginia, 1870-1930

*In GOLDENSEAL's October-December 1979 issue (Volume 5, Number 4), the arrival of African Americans in the southern coal mining counties was the subject of this brief, but informative sidebar. Editor Ken Sullivan and author Randy Lawrence wrote this account, based on Randy's doctoral thesis,* Appalachian Metamorphosis: Industrializing Society on the Central Appalachian Plateau, 1860-1913, *which is available through the State Archives at the Cultural Center in Charleston. — ed.*

At the close of the Civil War, few blacks lived in southern West Virginia. There were small black communities along the Kanawha River and in the valley farming districts of Monroe and Greenbrier Counties, but most of the new state's rugged terrain had not been suited to the plantation-style agriculture which produced large enslaved populations farther south. After emancipation, 20 percent of southern West Virginia's black residents moved out of state, further reducing their already small numbers. Scattered black families continued to live in most areas, but the 1870 Census reported only 5,540 blacks in the state's southern counties. Kanawha, Greenbrier, and Monroe Counties together claimed 78 percent of these people, with McDowell and Lincoln reporting none at all. Great changes were afoot in the southern counties, however, and by 1900 McDowell County would boast the largest and most progressive black community in the state.

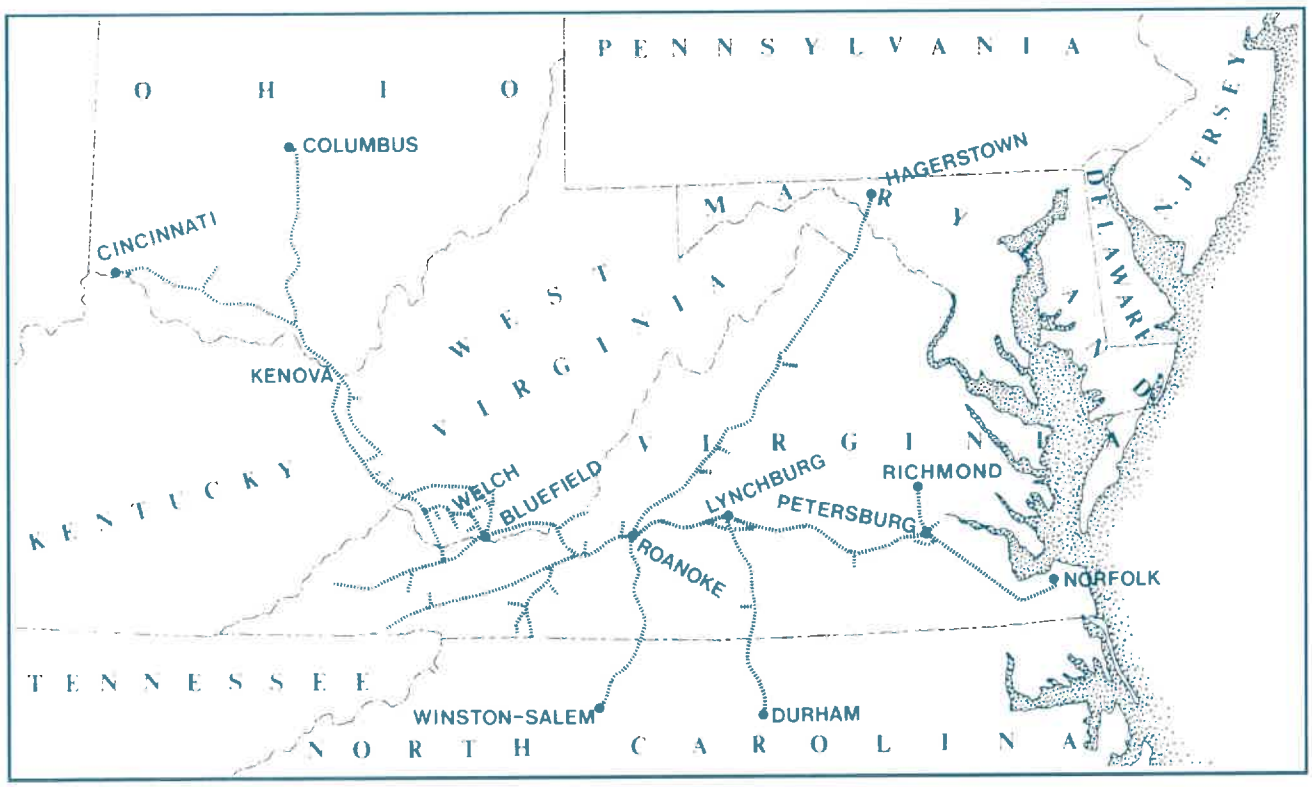


Miners on mules. Photo 1908, courtesy Library of Congress.

The black community in southern West Virginia expanded with the coming of industrialization. In the 1870's and 1880's two major railroads pushed across the state's southern counties. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad entered Greenbrier County and extended westward to Hinton and down the New and Kanawha Rivers to Charleston and beyond. The Norfolk & Western Railroad entered Mercer County and followed the Tug Fork and Twelvepole Creek watersheds through McDowell, Mingo, and Wayne Counties.

Jobs on railroad construction crews attracted black laborers from sharecropping districts in Virginia, the Carolinas, and the Deep South. These jobs provided opportunities for direct wages, as opposed to the cropsharing system under which most blacks in the South worked. Jobs on the railroad were not burdened by the economic and social constraints imposed by the sharecropping system. "Working on the railroad" was not a ticket to freedom and prosperity; but for most black laborers railroad jobs provided some opportunity for social mobility.

While many blacks came to southern West Virginia to work on the railroad, the larger migration followed the completion of the rail lines. The opening of hundreds of coal mines on the new rail lines created thousands of new jobs in the sparsely populated mountains. Blacks traveled to southern West Virginia after hearing from friends




The N&W served as an agent in the hiring of blacks for railroad and mining jobs and as the means of transporting them to those new jobs. Black families in Virginia and North Carolina often boarded N&W trains in Norfolk, Durham, and Lynchburg for the journey to Bluefield, Keystone, and Welch.

or relatives of job opportunities. Mining companies hired recruiters to work in southern cities. Recruiters organized whole trainloads of black families, departing from cities like Durham, North Carolina, for points in southern West Virginia.

Consequently, the black population increased dramatically throughout southern West Virginia: 1870 — 5,540; 1890 — 18,866; 1910 — 46,731; and 1930 — 88,214.

Blacks became an integral part of the labor force and the larger community through hard work and participation in community affairs. In the 1890's an epidemic of lynchings in the Pocahontas coalfields erupted; 700 blacks met in Elkhorn and appointed a committee to demand action by county officials. Blacks were eager to organize schools and political groups. Black miners strengthened their positions in the mine and the community through participation in the Knights of Labor and in later UMWA organizing.

The history of southern West Virginia's black community is something of an anomaly in the Appalachian experience. Southern historians have usually characterized Appalachia as overwhelmingly white and racially repressive. Yet by 1930 almost 90,000 blacks lived in southern West Virginia in one of the South's most progressive black communities. Small towns — Keystone, in McDowell County, for example — boasted thriving black professional communities. Black lawyers, doctors, and educators won the respect of the entire community. Keystone even supported a black newspaper. Black colleges in Bluefield and Institute educated graduates from the area's segregated secondary schools.

The Great Depression, mine mechanization, and the decline of the coal industry in the 1950's and the early 1960's combined to change the history of the black community. Black and white West Virginians fled the depressed state to seek better opportunities in northern cities. This outflow has reversed itself in the last decade, as thousands have returned home to West Virginia.

It appears, however, that blacks, with roots only a few generations deep in the region, have been under-represented in the reverse migration. Since blacks — generally "last hired and first fired" in the coal industry as elsewhere — were over-represented in the original out-migration, the combined result has been a waning black population in the southern counties. Today, black strongholds exist only in McDowell County and a few other places, and the trend is not likely to change itself soon.

# Anna Lee Terry and Her Mountain Cookbook

By Mary Rodd Furbee
Photographs by Mike Furbee

# Making Jam From Sour Grapes

Anna Lee Terry is known for miles around for her old-time herbal remedies, craft skills, nature lore, and country cooking. She lives in a cozy home which once was the milkshed on her family farm, in a remote corner of Marion County.

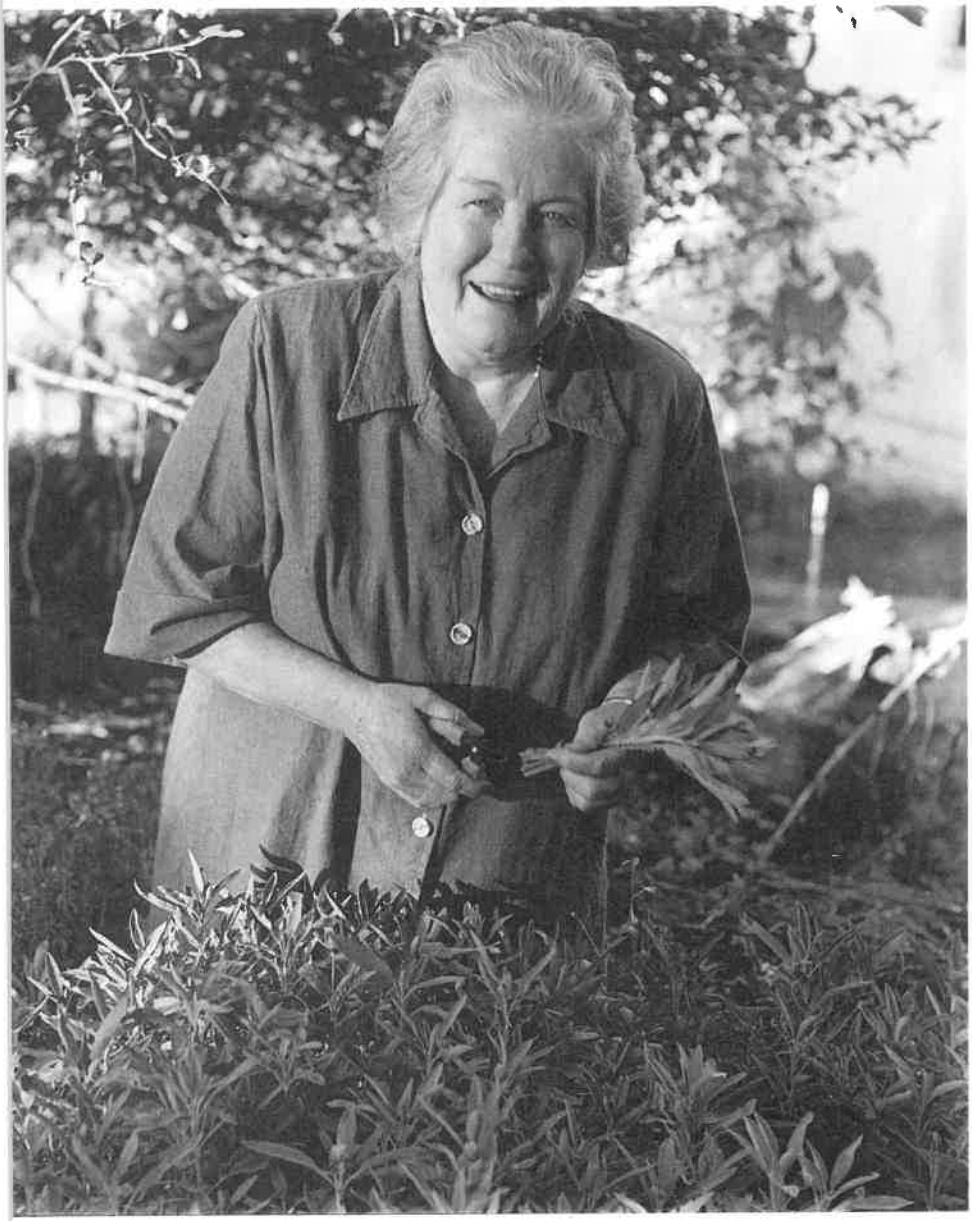
Gardeners call for advice on growing the multi-colored yarrow that lines her stone walkway leading to her back door. Crafts workers want to know how she made the bright puff quilt draped over her oak porch swing. Fellow bird lovers call to discuss the latest sighting of scarlet tanagers or phoebes at their backyard feeders.

Mostly, however, it's the meals and snacks and desserts made from the wild plants and game, expertly prepared and warmly offered, which draw streams of extended family and friends to Anna Lee's back door.

It isn't always easy for Anna Lee to meet the demands of hospitality — to greet visitors with a laugh and smile, to offer up a pan of her famous biscuits (baked in an iron skillet), or a dish of sweet, wild peaches. But Anna Lee's tenacious and generous spirit, tempered by hard times and hard grief, simply won't let her quit.

"I'm just plain stubborn, I guess," Anna Lee says with a laugh. "And I hate to let people down."

When she was a single mother in her mid-40's, she developed a chronic and disabling back condition. Unable to continue working as a nurse at the old Fairmont Emergency Hospital, and without an income to pay her bills, public assis-



Anna Lee Terry is happy working with wild things. Here she harvests sage from her garden.

tance was an option. But Anna Lee's "stubborn streak" wouldn't let her go down that road.

"If the world gives you sour grapes," Anna Lee is fond of saying in her matter-of-fact manner, "you make jam."

*Cooking with wild plants and game became Anna Lee's passion.*

And making jam is, literally, what Anna Lee did.

Anna Lee sold her home on Bunner Ridge above White Day Creek in Marion County. She sold her car and most personal possessions, and packed up some clothes and dishes. She left for a cramped, old milkhouse on the family homeplace where she grew up at the mouth of White Day Creek where Taylor, Monongalia, and Marion Counties meet.

Once there, with the help of the large extended family who surround her still, Anna Lee set about turning the milkhouse into a home. As she remodeled and settled in, Anna Lee discovered something to help her cope with poverty and chronic pain. Living in the shed where she had made cream, butter, and cottage cheese as a young girl rekindled Anna Lee's memories of her farm childhood. Especially memories of her great-grandmother Elvira Phillips Jones. Especially Grandma Jones' old-time cooking.

As Anna Lee took the daily walks her doctor ordered, she recalled Grandma cutting poke greens, gathering tiny ugly wild peaches for making peach butter, and picking violet leaves for pot herbs. Grandma, Anna Lee remembered, peeled every last one of those bruised little peaches.

Anna Lee found great comfort in these memories, which led her on a journey from which she's not yet come back. The journey led her from thickets and meadows to botanical books, herb magazines, and old cookbooks. Then, armed with a deepening curiosity, Anna Lee headed for the old woodstove in the small milkhouse kitchen. Soon, Anna Lee was toting back plants that she identified from books, flowers and herbs she hung from the rafters to dry, and greens that she threw into pots brimming with her latest concoction. Cooking with wild plants and game became Anna Lee's passion.

Anna Lee's son Douglas — the enthusiastic beneficiary of her developing culinary expertise — encouraged her to write down her growing store of knowledge before it was lost forever. But Anna Lee was too busy gathering and cooking to get around to writing. "I never really felt it was that important," Anna Lee says. It wasn't until later — after she'd faced her greatest trial — that Anna Lee began scribbling her much-tested recipes in three-ring notebooks set up on the kitchen counter.

Now, years later, those recipes are included in the forthcoming book, *Bootstraps and Biscuits*. But Anna Lee's book is more than just a simple cookbook. It's a testimony to the bounty of nature and a story of a rapidly disappearing way of life. It's a gift to a beloved grandmother, and a memorial to a missing son.

Born in 1932, Anna Lee Robe was the eldest of five children. A strong girl with broad shoulders and thick auburn hair, Anna Lee often stayed in the house to be with her great-grandma, Elvira Phillips Jones; Anna Lee called her "Grandma." Once a much sought-after midwife, Grandma was nearly blind by the time Anna Lee was five years old.

"I was too little to do anything but get in the way in the fields. I needed looking after, and Grandma needed someone to be with her, too — someone to help around the house."

Sitting by the old woodstove with little Anna Lee by her side, Grandma Jones would intersperse stories of the births she'd attended with instructions on what Anna Lee needed to cut, measure, mix, boil, or stir. The end result — always good and tasty — was dished up each day for their hard working family's midday meal.

Anna Lee in 1933 at age one.

Anna Lee's family on both sides — including the Robe, Phillips, Shuttleworth, Summers, and Jones families — were among the many Scotch-Irish and English immigrants who settled the remote White Day Creek area of then-rural Monongalia County. The immigrants came by the hundreds in the mid-1800's. Most area families farmed. In Anna Lee's family, many of the men did blacksmithing on the side. Through the 1950's, Anna Lee recalls her father making horseshoes for area folks in his smithy shop. And Anna Lee's Great-Grandpa Jones bartered cantaloupes and apples for supplies at nearby Smith's Store and Mill. "The store sold coffins for a dollar and a half," Anna Lee says.

Anna Lee was born into this big, extended family between the two great wars. Her parents, Emory Theodore Robe and Edna Shuttleworth Robe, had five children in all: four girls and one boy. On the farm, everyone worked hard including Anna Lee. "We had hogs, chickens, sheep, and dairy cows," Anna Lee continues. "We grew corn, oats, buckwheat, and made sauerkraut, apple butter — butchered our own hogs."

Anna Lee, like her siblings, "got up at 5:00 a.m., milked the cows, separated the cream, fed the live-

Emory and Elvira Phillips Jones were Anna Lee's great-grandparents. "Grandma Jones" gave Anna Lee her love of wild food and game. Photographer and date unknown.

**Mountain State Foods**

Two recent publications by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture highlight homegrown food and handmade goods by West Virginia vendors. *A Taste of West Virginia* profiles 36 agricultural businesses and the people who operate them. The catalog includes photographs of business owners and their products along with prices and ordering information.

All of the items carry the "West Virginia Grown" endorsement guaranteeing that the products are from West Virginia and that they meet high standards. Products vary from apples, candies, honey, and herbs to meats, jams, trout, and cheeses. Specialty items include toffee, shiitake mushrooms, hams, candles, and Italian-style peppers and sauces.

The Department of Agriculture makes the transition from catalog to cookbook with the publication of *A Taste of West Virginia: Recipes from the Mountain State*. West Virginia chefs, asked to share their ideas on how best to use West Virginia products, contributed nearly 100 recipes to the book. The catalog and cookbook are free to the public. For more information about either publication contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-2210.

stock, went inside to eat buckwheat cakes, washed, and went to the one-room school down the road." Then each evening at 4:00 p.m., she came home and started all over again. To earn pocket money, Anna Lee was permitted to sell one quart a week of the cottage cheese her mother made. "One quart a week gave me allowance, ten cents. I thought I was rich; but then, a Coke was only five cents," she says, shaking her head with disbelief at the memory of those low prices.

*Anna Lee helped her blind great-grandmother navigate the house — especially the kitchen.*

During her childhood, Anna Lee's contact with her great-grandmother gave her a unique experience for which she's forever thankful. While the others worked long hours in the fields, Anna Lee helped her blind great-grandmother navigate the house — especially the kitchen. Because they were responsible for keeping the fire going and feeding a hungry, multi-generational brood, Anna Lee and Grandma spent much of their time bustling about the wood cookstove in the kitchen.

"My Grandma influenced me more than anyone else," Anna Lee says. "She'd peel potatoes, and I'd cut off the skins she missed. It took me years to learn to make pickled green tomatoes like she did. She put those in five gallon crocks. They were washed, sliced, and salt fer-

Anna Lee as a teenager at the family farm on White Day Creek in Marion County.

Anna Lee and son Douglas; Christmas, 1958.

Quinton Terry was a U.S. Air Force gunner during World War II. He and Anna Lee married in 1952.

mented. In the winter, you'd have to break thin ice off the top to get them, but you never tasted anything so good in your whole life. They're lots better than pickled green walnuts. ...I wish I could remember one sixteenth of what that woman told me."

Anna Lee's Grandma wasn't just a special person because of her culinary skills, however. It was her way of loving that meant so much to Anna Lee. "I was the oldest, you see. With Mom and Dad and the others, it was always do this, go watch that. If something broke or someone fell out of a tree it was my responsibility, but Grandma was not like that. She wasn't pretty or rich or well educated in books, but she was smart in her own way. Everybody else was always working or in bed. But Grandma was always there."

World War II changed a lot of things in Anna Lee's world along White Day Creek. Anna Lee's Grandma died and her father got a job at the Fairmont ALCAN plant, which produced aluminum airplane parts used in the defense industry. "Aluminum was in such demand during the war that Daddy had us go out in the garbage dumps and find old pans that could be melted down and used at the factories. We collected zinc lids, too," Anna Lee recalls.

"During the war years, it was mostly the women at home," Anna Lee says. "It was hard to get to school. I almost froze to death in two different blizzards." For the first two years of high school, Anna Lee walked two miles to the blacktop road to catch the bus to East Fairmont High School. But it was hard to work the farm and get to school. So, after two years at East Fairmont, Anna Lee got a late-shift job waitressing at Swisher's Barbecue in Rivesville and took a correspondence course to finish her degree. After graduating, she went to Ohio hoping to attend Ohio State University. Instead, she ended up briefly enrolled in secretarial school before working in a restaurant and getting married.

In 1952, Anna Lee married Pitts-

"Cornfed" was Anna Lee's nickname at Fairmont Emergency Hospital, where she worked as a nurse for nearly 10 years. Here she takes a break. Photographer and date unknown.

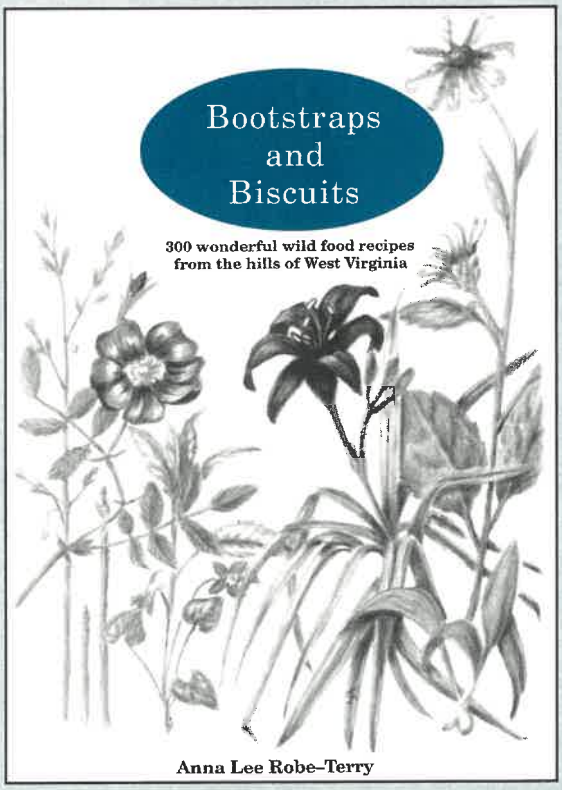
# Bootstraps and Biscuits

*Bootstraps and Biscuits* is a unique mountain cookbook by Anna Lee Terry, laced with homespun wisdom, fine illustrations of wild plants, detailed instructions, and hundreds of recipes — both common and offbeat. Readers learn that violets are "chocked full of nice vitamins." Day lily shoots, Anna Lee writes, are cooked like asparagus and the young buds taste like tender green beans. Coffee-like brews can be made from dandelion root, acorns, nut grass, goose grass, yellow goat's beard, and common sunflowers. Milkweed makes a delicious summer soup. Rose petals make great vinegar and rose water for the complexion. Wild persimmons — ripe when wrinkled, brownish, and gooey — are perfect for chiffon pies and steamed puddings, drop cookies, and ice cream. White sweet clover can substitute for vanilla; field pennycress can substitute for pepper; spicewood tastes like allspice.

Yet wild fruits, greens, and herbs aren't all Anna Lee shares. She also gives detailed directions on butchering, smoking, brining, baking, barbecuing, pickling, and fixing wild game — bear, deer, rabbit, squirrel, turkey, woodchuck, possum, beaver, turtle, frog, fish, and more. Along with instructions on making jerky, sausage, scrapple, hot dog sauce, and real mincemeat, the book advises cooks that deer "chased by dogs or shot to pieces, hauled around or left till later to dress, will not taste like one done properly."

To preserve ramps ("the little bulb that looks like a lily and is loved by many and hated by some"), Anna Lee suggests cleaning, blanching, and draining them. Then place a few in a plastic sandwich bag, wrap that in freezer paper, and place it in a wide-mouth glass jar with the lid tightly screwed down. Only the glass prevents the odor from penetrating the other foods in the freezer, she warns. To dispel the strong odor that can linger on "your body and breath," Anna Lee advises "eating parsley raw and brushing your teeth with baking soda."

Anna Lee also writes about sunlit days picking wild berries (grapes, raspberries, blackberries, huckleberries, wild strawberries, elderberries) as a family — then making cakes, dumplings, frostings, rolls, fillings, syrups, vinegars, jams, shortcakes, and more — recipes and directions included. "Many cold winter suppers [were] simply a jar of canned blackberries poured over crumbled homemade bread with lots of good milk. It doesn't sound like much of a supper in today's world, but we all grew up rather healthy."




To harvest sassafras for tea that tastes like root beer, jelly, or hard-tack candy, Anna Lee tells you to dig the root of a large tree after the ground has frozen and before the spring thaw. "The sap is full of all the goodness in the root bark," she explains. "You'll also learn that the best bark grows on uncrowded specimens in good soil; and the older the tree, the richer the flavor, and taking a good hunk of root won't damage the tree."

After the harvesting, Anna Lee instructs readers to scrub the root with a stiff brush and scrape off the outer layer. The thick juicy layer is next, and you peel this off and put it on a screen to dry the same day. Then when the bark is dry, you store it in a sealed jar in a dark place. It will last several years, and it's very potent. "A bark piece the size of your thumb makes several cups of tea," she writes.

And as for next year, well, Anna Lee advises moving on to another tree. "You can take of any plant what you need," she says, "but never destroy and always leave some for others."

—Mary Rodd Furbee

Bootstraps and Biscuits *is available from McClain Printing Company, P.O. Box 403, Parsons, WV 26287; 1-800-654-7179. The mountain cookbook sells for $17.98 per copy, plus $3 shipping and handling. West Virginia residents must add 6% sales tax.*

A jar of herbs, elderberries, pickled black walnuts, and pickled green tomatoes are a sampling of Anna Lee Terry's mountain fare.

burgh native Quinn Terry, an Air Force veteran who ran a driving school and worked for the post office; he later took up photography. The couple moved to Florida for a couple of years in the early '50's, and there Anna Lee went to school to become a licensed practical nurse. "I was so homesick, I cried like a baby," Anna Lee says. "Then my father died and my mother was ill. So we came home."

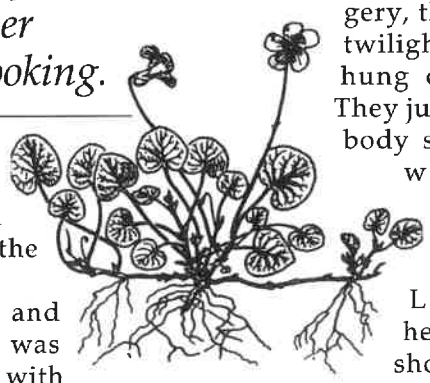
Anna Lee and Quinn had a home on Bunner Ridge. Quinn worked as a freelance newspaper writer and television photographer. His television stories about West Virginia ran on WTAE, Pittsburgh; WTRF, Wheeling; and WSAZ, Charleston-Huntington. That's how Anna Lee got started with her writing.

"To help Quinn, I researched and wrote features, which is how I got started with all this," she says gesturing to her cookbook manuscript. Quinn, she says, shot the pictures with old black-and-white still and movie cameras. Then she helped write and edit the stories. They would run fast-breaking television stories to the bus depot in town and put them on the buses to the stations.

*Anna Lee grieved hard, but eventually found comfort in her collecting and cooking.*

In 1956, Anna Lee and Quinn's son, Douglas, was born. She stayed home with him until he went to school. Then she started working at Fairmont Emergency, the old miners' hospital on Fairmont's east side. "It held state patients from the mental institutions, prisons, orphanages, and the local poor. Upstairs, there were private patients. They tore it down in the last ten or 15 years," Anna Lee says.

For nine and a half years, Anna Lee worked at the hospital. Her coworkers called her "Cornfed" because she could lift heavy patients and was good at settling down agitated mental patients. "We also had all these orphans from the Elkins orphanage, mentally retarded from St. Marys — and the young boys from Pruntytown," Anna Lee adds. "They had nobody to visit or care about them; and when they had surgery, they were in that twilight zone and just hung onto your arm. They just needed somebody so much. I'll always remember that."



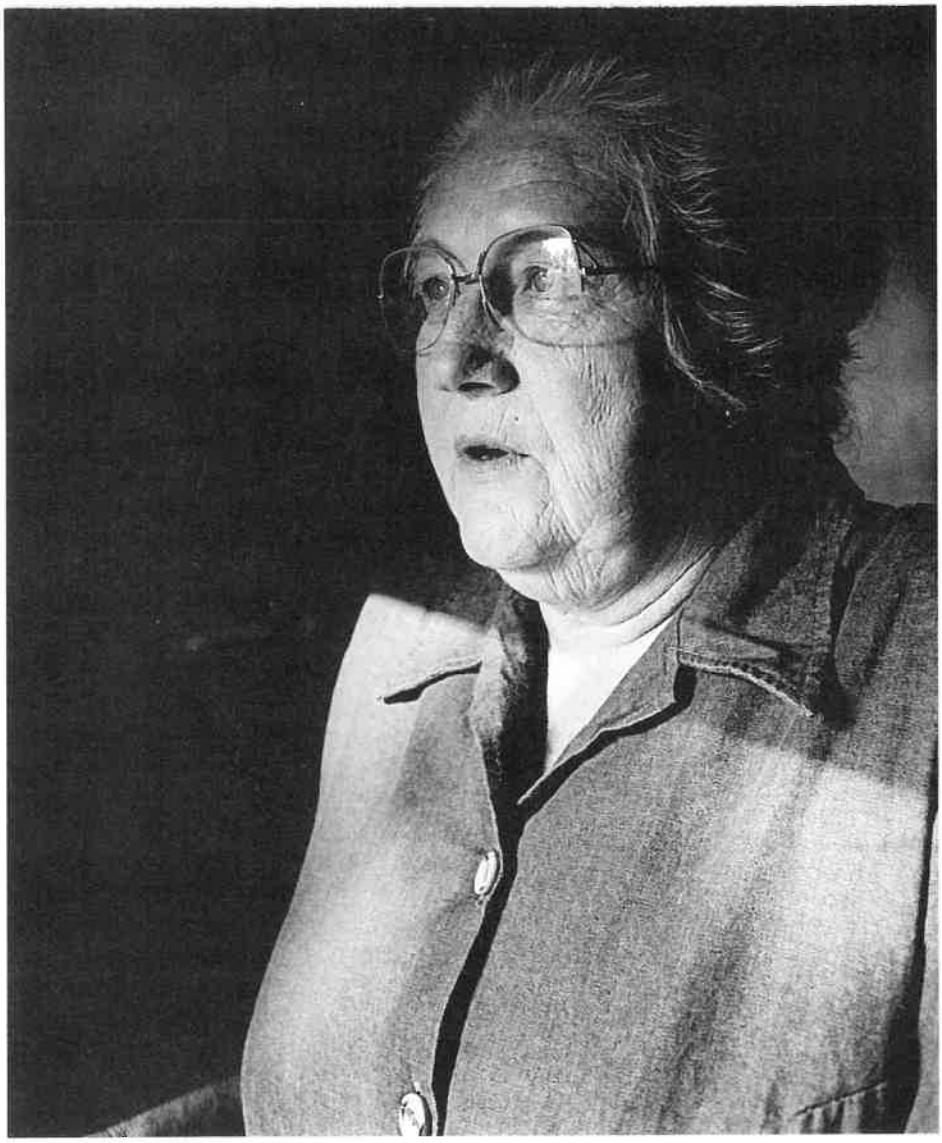
Unfortunately, Anna Lee's career in health care was cut short when she began to experience severe pain in her lower back. Her symptoms began in 1975. "I left the hospital to have tests done, and I never could go back," she says.

In 1976 she was diagnosed with a condition called spondylolisthesis, the forward displacement of one vertebra over another. "My back wants to come out my belly button. I can hardly ride in a car; the vibration runs all through me, even my hair."

This painful back problem prevented her from performing the strenuous lifting and other work she had done at the hospital. Her doctor advised her to sign up for Social Security. "It was a cruel blow," Anna Lee remembers.

As Anna lost her physical strength, her emotional strength was also sorely tried during the following years. Quinn Terry had war-related disabilities which

Herbs have a variety of uses. This decorative wreath, made by Anna Lee, is just one.



After suffering from severe physical pain and emotional loss, Anna Lee found strength in the gathering and preparation of wild foods, and in the writing of her mountain cookbook.

worsened. He passed away in the early 1970's.

Faced with severe back pain and coping with the death of her husband, Anna Lee decided that her only option was to liquidate and simplify. She moved back to the old family homeplace in 1979. "I paid off what bills I had and had $200 a month to live on. My son helped me raise what I ate and we hunted. I decided I'd never owe anyone anything again — and up till now I haven't," she says firmly.

For years, Anna Lee lived simply in her new home. The dusty old milkhouse became a cozy cottage with painted walls, shiny barn-red door frames, and windows which tie up inside with strings. Dried flowers hang from hooks around the doors. Shelves lined with red coffee cans hold fragrant herbs and teas. The big kitchen window above the sink looks out over a vibrant herb garden filled with mugwort, comfrey, and multi-colored yarrow. Yarrow, Anna Lee explains, was used by the pioneers and during the Civil War to stop soldiers' wounds from bleeding. Mugwort, she adds, is good for female complaints, and comfrey is an overall "tonic" used for whatever ails you.

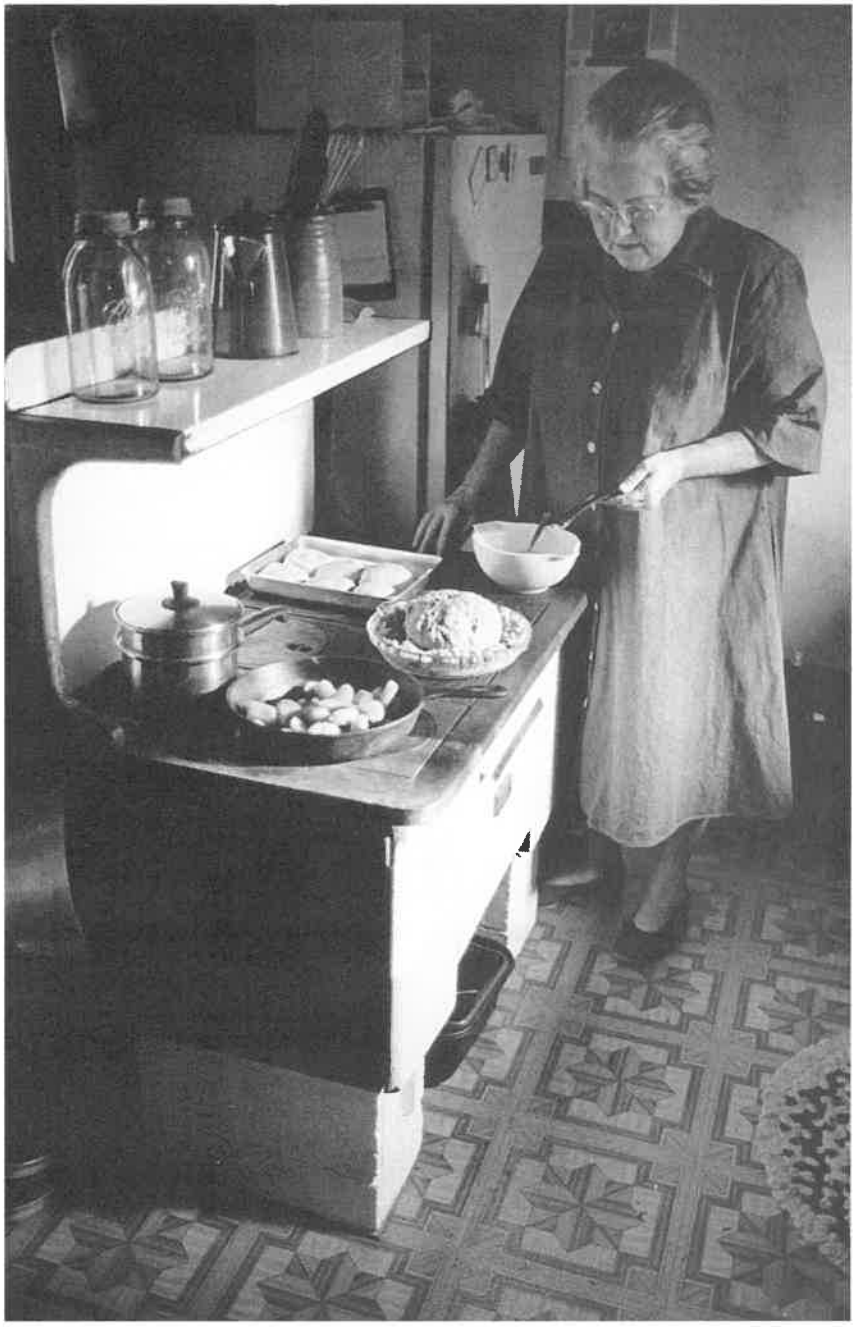
In their milkhouse home, Anna Lee and Douglas lived happily for several years until tragedy struck again. While attending Fairmont State College, Douglas, a promising art student, died suddenly in 1989. Anna Lee grieved hard, but eventually found comfort once again in her collecting and cooking. Now she had a reason to take pen in hand, as her son had wanted.

"He and his friends were always tasting and asking questions about all these wild foods," Anna Lee says. "He wanted to do a video, or me to write it all down, but I never got around to it. Then when he died it became very important to me to get this down on paper. I guess you could say the book was a result of that trauma. The hurdle's been getting it published," Anna Lee says. The book is being self-published with the help of friends.

Last year, Anna Lee's long-time friend and neighbor, Linda Cooper, began helping her jump this seemingly endless array of pre-publication hurdles. The two women first met in the early 1990's, when Linda ran a small tour company called Backroads Adventures. Through Backroads Adventures, Linda arranged for families and small groups to visit the homes of craftspeople, cooks, farmers, musicians, and others, including Anna Lee, who were keeping mountain culture alive. "Anna Lee," Linda explains, "already cooked her specialties for any friends and friends-of-friends who stopped by. For her, it was just an extension of what she already did, only visitors came from further afield."

For years, Linda watched Anna Lee struggle with getting the book typed, deciding on artwork, finding the right publisher or the funds to self-publish. Then in February of 1997, Linda and other members of the Morgantown-based Appalachian Folklife Foundation decided to help. A nonprofit outgrowth of Backroads Adventures, the foundation takes on small projects which explore and preserve traditional mountain life and culture. While the Foundation didn't have the funds to actually publish the book, they were able to offer plenty of expertise and energy.

With Linda and Anna Lee coordinating, various professionals have volunteered their services in exchange for a promised jar of venison mincemeat or pickled black walnuts. A botanist checked botanical names of plants, experienced



Anna Lee prepares traditional foods on an old-fashioned woodstove. Here she puts the finishing touches on a favorite winter meal.

wordsmiths helped with proofreading, self-publishers provided logistical advice, and an artist sketched the cover.

"Everyone who has read or even looked over the book, has gotten excited about it and wanted to help," Linda explains. "They saw what a wonderful book it is and that it deserves to be out there."

Anna Lee has also kept busy over the years by making and selling herbal wreaths and dried applehead dolls. Until a few years ago, when the cookbook began consuming all her energy, she sold the wreaths and dolls at crafts fairs in West Virginia, Penn Alps in Maryland, and at other outlets. When her health permits, she is also actively involved with the Pricketts Fort Foundation, Heritage Days on Bunner Ridge, and the White Day Creek History Association. The publications *Countryside, Potpourri From Herbal Acres*, and *Grit* also have published her how-to articles on wild foods and crafts.

But in recent years, those projects have taken a back seat to the cookbook. "Sometimes I thought I'd bitten off more than I could chew; I've had to push myself to finish. I've been up, and I'd fall back down thinking the thing would never get done," Anna Lee says of the project. Nevertheless, she believes that writing *Bootstraps and Biscuits* was healing.

"I think it helped slow down the progress of this crippling disease for awhile, anyway," she says. "It hasn't been easy, but I've had to learn to accept what I can't change. I am out here and I do what I do. When I have to hunt instead of sitting on my couch or on the swing, it helps me. I live just about like my grandparents did. I grow what I eat and I eat good, wild food."

Of course, there are some things that Anna Lee hopes she can change, including the way so many people prepare food and share meals today. As a girl, Anna Lee helped her family butcher their own hogs, make sausage, cook buckwheat cakes for winter breakfasts, and preserve the array of jams and relishes and chutneys which covered the table at mealtime. Now, she shakes her head at how many people wolf down processed cereal, slather store-bought jelly on factory-baked bread, or grab a banana on the run.

Anna Lee thinks that's a shame, and hopes her book will help rekindle interest in delicious traditional recipes made from wild plants and game, on well-set tables filled with bountiful fare, and in gathering together to break bread and share a few yarns.

"I pulled myself up by my bootstraps and learned it over again. This will all be worth it if I can teach others something."

Anna Lee believes in a "well-set table." Here a mincemeat venison pie (far right), two chutneys (front left), and an iron skillet of sweet potatoes complement Anna Lee's turkey roll and wheat buns.

# Churning Butter

An unidentified girl makes butter with a wooden churn in Monroe County. Photo courtesy of State Archives. Photographer and date unknown.

**By John Cooper**

Thinking about butter churning causes me to think back to the early days of my life. I was born in 1919, on a farm in Gilmer County, where we raised cattle, sheep, hogs, and chickens. Horses were used for all the power for machine work. Our farm was nearly self-sustaining because we mostly raised our food, then canned or dried much of it for the winter. We butchered hogs for our meat supply. Cattle and sheep were sold for the money. As I remember, the only food items we bought were sugar, salt, cooking cereals, and sometimes flour — if we didn't have it ground at the mill. There was always a grain mill nearby. We lived near Coxs Mill. We milked one or two cows and had our own milk, butter, and cottage cheese.

Butter making was a special project. That was long before we had heard of homogenized milk. Milk was usually kept in a one-gallon earthen crock, glazed, and brown colored. After a few hours, the cream would come to the top — making a layer one-eighth to one-quarter inch thick. The cream was skimmed off with a spoon. The remaining milk, which we called "skimmed milk," was put in another container for drinking, cooking, or was fed to the hogs. Skim milk in stores today is fat-free. Our "skimmed milk" was not.

Author John Cooper (left) feeding milk to a young calf in 1928. His mother, Lollie Cooper, looks on with a concerned neighbor child, while brother Newton steadies the dish. Photographer unknown.

Before it was used to make butter, the cream was allowed to become sour. Butter can be made from "sweet," or fresh, cream but we always let it become sour. Souring usually did not take long because our only refrigeration was in a dug well that stayed around 58 degrees in the summer. I can remember sometimes when morning milk would go sour before evening. It was then said to be "blinky."

Now all was ready for the making of butter. We had an earthenware churn that held five gallons. Oldtimers, (I'm one of them), called them "stone churns." It was 18 to 20 inches tall and

gray in color. The top had a raised rim that held a wooden top with a hole in the middle. The purpose of the lid was to keep the cream from splashing out as it was being churned. A plunger stick about the size of a broomstick held a piece of wood on the bottom. It was shaped like an X with a hole in each point of the X, or else each end was sloped. This combination was called a "dasher." The purpose of the dasher was to churn the sour cream. This was done by raising and lowering the dasher with some force. It was necessary to raise the dasher above the liquid each time. This agitated the fluid more and helped with the butter "gathering" process.

Cooper family farmstead on Stone Lick Creek near Coxs Mill, Gilmer County. Photo by John Cooper, 1971.

I remember when I was six to 12 years old, it was my job to do much of the churning. My small arms and back were usually aching by the time the churning was complete. This usually took 30 to 45 minutes.

One could tell when the butter gathered because it was lighter than the buttermilk and came to the top of the liquid, leaving buttermilk below. My mother always took over at this point. She would take butter off with a large flat wooden spoon and put it on a board or in a flat pan. She worked the butter by pressing it with the flat spoon against the pan to work the water out of it. Cold water was poured on the butter towards the end of this just to wash the rest of the milk out and make it firmer.

*One had to be careful not to turn cows on pasture early in the spring where there were any wild onions because butter and milk would reflect the taste of onions.*

After this was done, she would form the butter in about one-pound patties shaped like a small loaf of bread. Some people had butter molds in which to form butter into one-pound or one-half pound size.

Before molding the butter, my mother would add some salt and stir it in so as to give it a better flavor. Our butter would last a week or so before it became rancid. Of course, this depended on the weather. In the winter or with proper refrigeration it would last quite some time. As I remember, one gallon of sour cream would produce about one pound of butter. We churned once a week or whenever enough cream was collected to fill the churn about half full.

One of the rewards of churning was that we always had some delicious buttermilk. One extra attraction to the buttermilk was that my mother could not get all of the butter removed and little flecks of butter were left floating. This seemed to add to the taste of the buttermilk.

Butter made in the spring soon after cows were turned out on grass was yellower than butter made when cows were on dry feed. It seemed to have a fresher taste too. One had to be careful not to turn cows on pasture early in the spring where there were any wild onions because butter and milk would reflect the taste of onions.

Country butter keeps well frozen. In later years it was common to freeze extra butter so as to have it on hand when the cow was "dry," six weeks or so prior to calving.

Toward the end of my butter churning experiences a new invention came along. It was called a "daisy churn." Some were made of wood, while some were made of glass. We had a daisy churn about one gallon in size and the churning was done with a crank attached to rotary paddles inside. Ours was made of glass and it was easy to see when the butter was gathering. Following that, a centrifuge called a "cream separator" came along to separate butterfat from skim milk and electric churns replaced the older type churns. The early earthenware churns, along with daisy churns, butter molds, and butter dishes, are antiques today. Occasionally, I see them in antique stores or in homes where antiques are cherished.

Twenty or 30 years ago, I remember regularly buying country butter from farm women who made it. Butter is still made on some West Virginia farms. Country butter is delicious.

# A Pretty Little Box for Christmas

**By Edelene Wood**

**Photographs by Michael Keller**

Cecile Morgan of Mineral Wells turned 98 this November. Her collection of decorative boxes, such as this snuff box from the early 1920's, tells the story of her life.

Christmas gift giving has changed dramatically in the 98 years Cecile Vandal Morgan has seen. She was born November 11, 1899, one of a set of twins born to the Leander Vandals of rural Wirt County.

Cecile, (whose name is pronounced "Cecil") lived comfortably with her three sisters, father, and mother, surrounded by many acres of valuable farmland. Cecile's grandfather was the country doctor in the area, and her father always saw that the family was well provided for.

Nevertheless, Christmas presents were modest in the days when Cecile and her twin Celia were young, especially in comparison to the opulence of today's holiday gift giving. "We were tickled to just get a pretty little box for Christmas," Cecile remembers. "And, it didn't have to have anything in it. We

Handkerchief box with hanky, a men's commemorative hat box, pencil box, and cigarette box.

were tickled with just a pretty little paper box."

In many ways, Cecile's life and times can be told by pretty little boxes. "My sisters and I learned to read with some spelling blocks in a box," she remembers.

Pencil boxes, writing boxes, and lunch boxes (pails in her day) were a big part of going to the one-room school she attended. Cecile still has a wooden pencil box with a sliding lid as a reminder of her days as a school teacher in country schools.

Early on, she was given a sewing box and was taught to sew by her mother, an excellent seamstress. Cecile made all of her own dresses throughout her life, the latest two years ago from beautiful rose-peach silk given to her as a birthday gift by a neighbor from India.

There were little music boxes as gifts. These were very appropriate since her parents encouraged the Vandal girls to learn to play the piano. Cecile quickly found that she could play the piano by ear and has continued to play all of her life, many of those years as the pianist at the Big Tygart Methodist Church.

She has a Bible box where she keeps the Bible that belonged to the family of her husband, Walker Morgan. She lost her husband in an accident 20 years ago. To recover from her loss, she traveled to many places, and holds especially fond memories of her two trips to the Holy Land. There, she found beautiful carved boxes, but she treasures shells from the Sea of Galilee most.

Walker Morgan in uniform; France, 1918. Cecile and Walker were married on Christmas Day 1921. Photographer unknown.

Cecile (left) and twin sister Celia in 1916. Celia died in the flu epidemic of 1918. As children and as young women, the two sisters were very close, and today Cecile cherishes the memories she has of her twin. Photographer unknown.

Cecile Morgan has always loved jewelry. She has several jewelry boxes containing pins, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, ear-bobs, and rings. The lavaliere was fashionable when she and her sister were girls. "My husband-to-be was in the Army overseas in World War I and had a beautiful lavaliere sent to me from Sears & Roebuck. It had a green stone set in gold on a thin gold chain.

"That same Christmas my twin sister and I chose cufflinks, a stick pin, and tie clasp to send to our boyfriends in the Army. What a foolish gift, we didn't know any better. They sent them back, but both wore them when they came home."

One piece of jewelry that she can't forget was the tramp art-type ring made for her by a school teacher who pounded it out of a piece of stainless steel. "My husband-to-be borrowed it for size when he went to buy my engagement ring, then came home and lost it while baling oats on

his farm."

Cecile and Walker Morgan were married on Christmas Day 1921. Gifts of cut glass crystal were uncommon in rural West Virginia, but they got some. "I loved the glass boxes we got, but we laughed the most about an empty wooden silverware box they wanted me to open. It was a wedding gift from my husband but friends had removed the silverware from the box as a prank."

A box that holds one of the most precious items from her past is the one containing the long, reddish-brown hair she had "bobbed" in the days of the "Roaring 20's."

The Victorian look, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco came and went while Cecile and her husband "made do" on their farm. None of these fashions influenced their way of life. They treasured little things like paper printed cigar boxes, cigarette boxes, snuff boxes, and boxes of Prince Albert that contained the makings of home-rolled cigarettes. "We never used tobacco, but my husband's mother and aunt kept their little snuff boxes in their apron pockets, ready for a pinch."

When the Morgans were married, there was no Bride's Box, the customary gift among their German neighbors. There was no Band Box for her things or Hat Boxes for their wedding hats, although Cecile and Walker did acquire these in later years. "In my bedroom, I had a celluloid powder box, real silk hosiery box, and a beautiful glove box containing the elbow-length, white kid gloves my sister and I had been given as gifts."

*I had a celluloid powder box, real silk hosiery box, and a beautiful glove box containing the elbow-length, white kid gloves my sister and I had been given as gifts.*

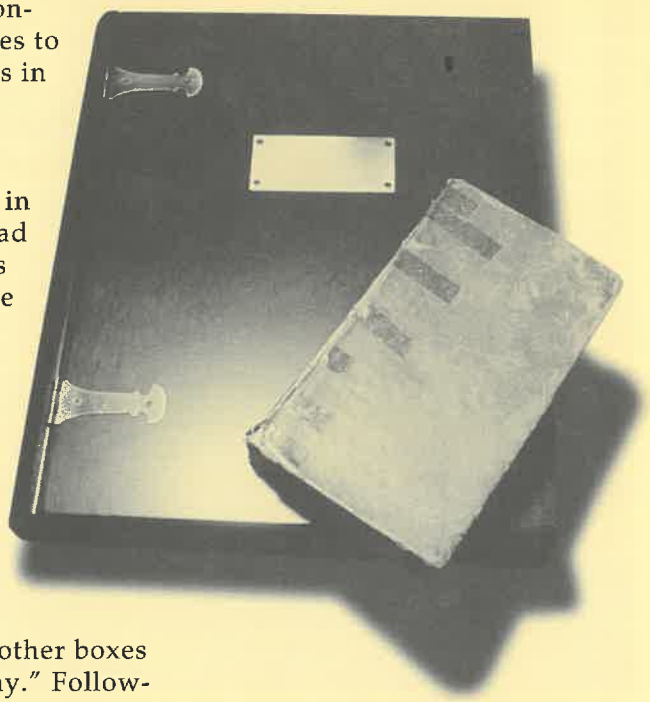
In the years of World War II, she had a letter box containing the forms which she needed to write to her nephews serving in the South Pacific.

On her little coffee table were the colorful ceramic cigarette boxes and attractive boxes containing coasters, the fashionable things for hostesses to have for visiting guests in those years.

At the end of World War II, nylon hose replaced the lisle hose in her hosiery box. She had sold real-silk stockings door-to-door before the war and walked many miles along the rural roads around her home at Mineral Wells to make sales.

Colorful Japanese pot-metal cigarette boxes, some "Made in Occupied Japan," began to appear in her home, and there were other boxes marked "West Germany." Following the war in Vietnam, fancy black lacquered boxes marked

A variety of cookie and snack tins with a brownie on top.



Bible box and Bible.

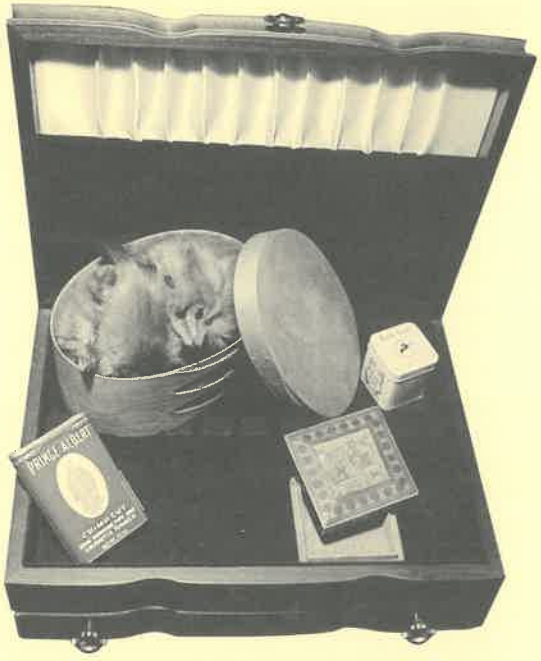
"Made in Taiwan" told the passing of history. In the 1970's, boxes of Lucite, some tinted gold, recorded the activity of the DuPont Chemical Company in her county. Boxes of carved black walnut recorded a nearby county's promotion of one of West Virginia's most valuable trees. The list of interesting boxes goes on and on.

*The pretty little boxes treasured most by Cecile Morgan today are the tin boxes which friends and neighbors bring containing her favorite food — cookies.*

Today, however, the pretty little boxes treasured most by Cecile Morgan are the tin boxes which friends and neighbors bring containing her favorite food — cookies.

Among her favorites are those brought on special occasions by the 100-plus members of the nearby Saulsbury 4-H Club who have called her their "honorary grandmother" for many years. Each tin box is kept as a memento when the cookies are gone.

"Pretty little boxes" continue to tell the 98-year story of Cecile Vandal Morgan, just as they did when she and her twin sister were tickled to get such a box for Christmas.




Cecile's silverware box holds a Prince Albert tin, a shaker box with fox fur, a Kentucky Club tin by Mail Pouch, and a papier-mâché box.

Several small boxes and other memorabilia are displayed on the piano and elsewhere throughout Cecile's home.

# Goldenseal Index

## Volume 23, 1997

Articles which appeared in Volume 23 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



# PHOTOGRAPHER

## 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 1, 1997, 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, John Lilly, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; managing editor, John Lilly, 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.

Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: NONE.

Publication Name: Goldenseal: West Virginia Traditional Life
Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Fall 1997

The average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months are:
A) Total no. of copies printed:
Net press run: 32,625
B) Paid and/or requested circulation:
1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales (Not Mailed) 1,119
2) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Include Advertisers' Proof Copies/Exchange Copies) 26,787
C) Total paid and/or requested circulation: 27,986
D) Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means (Samples, complimentary and other free copies) 3,538
E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means) -0-
F) Total Free Distribution 3,538
G) Total Distribution 31,524
H) Copies Not Distributed
1) Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled 599
2) Return from News Agents 502
I) Total 32,625

Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 88%

The actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date are:
A) Total no. of copies printed:
Net press run: 32,000
B) Paid and/or requested circulation:
1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales (Not mailed) 1,201
2) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Include Advertisers' Proof Copies/Exchange Copies) 27,065
C) Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation 28,266
D) Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free) 2,249
E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means) -0-
F) Total Free Distribution 2,249
G) Total Distribution 30,515
H) Copies Not Distributed
1) Office Use, Leftover, Spoiled 1,485
2) Return from News Agents -0-
I) Total 32,000
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 92%
I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

John Lilly, Editor

## New To GOLDENSEAL?

We're glad to make your acquaintance and hope you want to see more of us. You may do so by returning this coupon with your subscription payment for $16.

Thanks—and welcome to the GOLDENSEAL family!

Your Name _____

Address _____

_____

Please make your check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL. Send to:

GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

**ADDRESS CHANGE?**

Please enter old and new addresses below and return to us.

**OLD**

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____

**NEW**

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____

# State Seal and Soil

The State of West Virginia celebrates its heritage through a variety of symbols. Among the symbols on the front of the "Great Seal of West Virginia" are a rock covered with ivy which symbolizes stability and continuance. In 1863, a farmer pictured with an axe and a plow illustrated the fact that West Virginia was partly cultivated, but still in the process of being cleared of the original forest.

Perhaps the most telling illustration from the time is the Phrygian cap or "cap of liberty" which is placed atop two hunters' rifles representing West Virginia's freedom and liberty which "were won and will be maintained by the force of arms."

The Great Seal of West Virginia. Courtesy Division of Tourism.

GOLDENSEAL readers may recall a rare appearance of the state seal's reverse side in our Fall 1997 issue (page 30). Among other symbols, it depicts the B&O Railroad viaduct above Manheim in Preston County, as a symbol of engineering triumph.

Over the years, other state symbols have been adopted — a state flower (rhododendron) in 1903, state bird (cardinal) in 1949, state animal (black bear) in 1973, state tree (sugar maple) in 1949, state fruit (apple) in 1972, state fish (brook trout) in 1973, and a state butterfly (monarch) in 1995.

Recently, the State of West Virginia named a state soil. In April 1997 the West Virginia Legislature named Monongahela silt loam as the official state soil. In doing so, the Mountain State joined 14 other states in designating a soil symbol. Monongahela silt loam beat out Pineville and Guyandotte soils after a study was conducted by the West Virginia Association of Professional Soil Scientists (WVAPSS). Monongahela silt loam covers over 100,000 acres in 42 West Virginia counties and is used extensively for crops.

In November, Secretary of State Ken Hechler dedicated an official state soil emblem. Posters, t-shirts, and sweatshirts were distributed to state soil conservation districts. For more information on West Virginia's state soil contact Rob Pate, WVAPSS, State Soil Committee Chair, 483 Ragland Road, Beckley, WV 25801; (304)255-9225.

## Goldenseal

### Coming Next Issue...

- Ohio River Voices
- Tales from the Irish Tract
- Lynn Davis & Molly O'Day
- Liars!

# Our Writers and Photographers

**JEAN BATTLO** was born in Kimball and still makes her home in the McDowell County community. She is a teacher, poet, and playwright, and has had numerous works produced by professional and community theater companies. She recently completed the book *McDowell County in West Virginia and American History*. Jean's last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Spring 1997.

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

**JOHN COOPER** was born in Gilmer County in 1919. After earning his degree in agriculture from WVU, he worked for the Farmers Home Administration and the Soil Conservation Service. Now retired, John Cooper owns and operates Santa's Forest, a Christmas tree farm in Mason County featured in the Winter 1992 GOLDENSEAL. This is his first contribution to the magazine.

**E. LUTHER COPELAND**, a native of Nicholas County, grew up in the logging industry. After an extensive education, he worked as a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan. Since his retirement, he has taught at four Southern Baptist seminaries and at Baylor University in Texas where he was a Distinguished Professor of Religion. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

**MIKE FURBEE**, a native of Philippi, is research coordinator for the Center for Rural Emergency Medicine at WVU. He is also a photographer and a fine traditional musician. His photography has been published in newspapers and magazines, and exhibited at the West Virginia Juried Exhibition in Charleston, the Forest Festival in Elkins, and at the Stonewall Jackson Heritage Jubilee at Jackson's Mill. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1997.

**MARY RODD FURBEE**, a native of Pittsburgh, came to West Virginia 21 years ago. A freelance writer and part-time journalism instructor, her work has been published by *The Charleston Gazette*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Gannett News Service and *The Progressive* magazine. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Summer 1997.

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

**MICHAEL KLINE** spent childhood summers in Hampshire County. After graduating from George Washington University in 1964, he worked in various social programs in Kentucky and West Virginia. He was assistant editor for GOLDENSEAL in 1978, and went on to work for the Mountain Heritage Center in North Carolina and the Pioneer Valley Folklore Society in Massachusetts. He and wife Carrie Nobel Kline now operate Talking Across the Lines: Worldwide Conversations, which produces books and radio programs devoted to oral histories. His last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Winter 1994.

**PAMELA MAKRICOSTA**, a native of Weirton, is the literacy coordinator for the Mary H. Weir Public Library. She regularly shares the immigrant experiences of her family with live audiences, and hosts the "Athenian Radio Greek Language Program" on WEIR-AM radio in Weirton. Pam is working on a book of survivor stories from what she calls the "Christian Holocaust in Asia Minor" from 1914 to 1922. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

**EDELENE WOOD** of Parkersburg is retired from Monongahela Power Company. From 1950 through 1970, she published a series of manufacturers directories covering nine counties of the Little Kanawha region. Edelene Wood is the author of *A Taste of the Wild* and *Favorite Wild Foods of the Fifty States*. She says her story on Cecile Morgan's Christmas boxes brought to mind her own "box of wild friendship" in which she sends wild West Virginia foods to friends in faraway places. Her last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1992.

**PATRICIA SAMPLES WORKMAN** has worked for the State Department of Human Services for 16 years. Though she was born in California, Patricia says her ancestors on both sides are fifth- and sixth-generation West Virginians. Her husband, Clennie, worked the log pond at Ely-Thomas Lumber Company and was featured in the Spring 1996 issue. Patricia's last contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1996.

## Pete Humphreys Remembered

Kanawha County banjoist Earl M. "Pete" Humphreys died on October 18 at home. He is remembered by many for his performances at West Virginia folklife events, especially as a regular performer at the Division of Culture and History's Vandalia Gathering. "He was here for every Vandalia," says Bobby Taylor, Vandalia music contest coordinator.

Pete Humphreys competed in both bluegrass and senior old-time banjo contests, winning the latter competition several times. "He was a perfect gentleman and a role model for other competitors," Taylor recalls. "He was never upset when he didn't place."

Mr. Humphreys was named a banjo master by the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College, and was a teaching member of the Tennessee Banjo Institute. He played with his brother Mike, a renowned fiddler, on the album "The Music Never Dies: A Vandalia Sampler, 1977-1987."

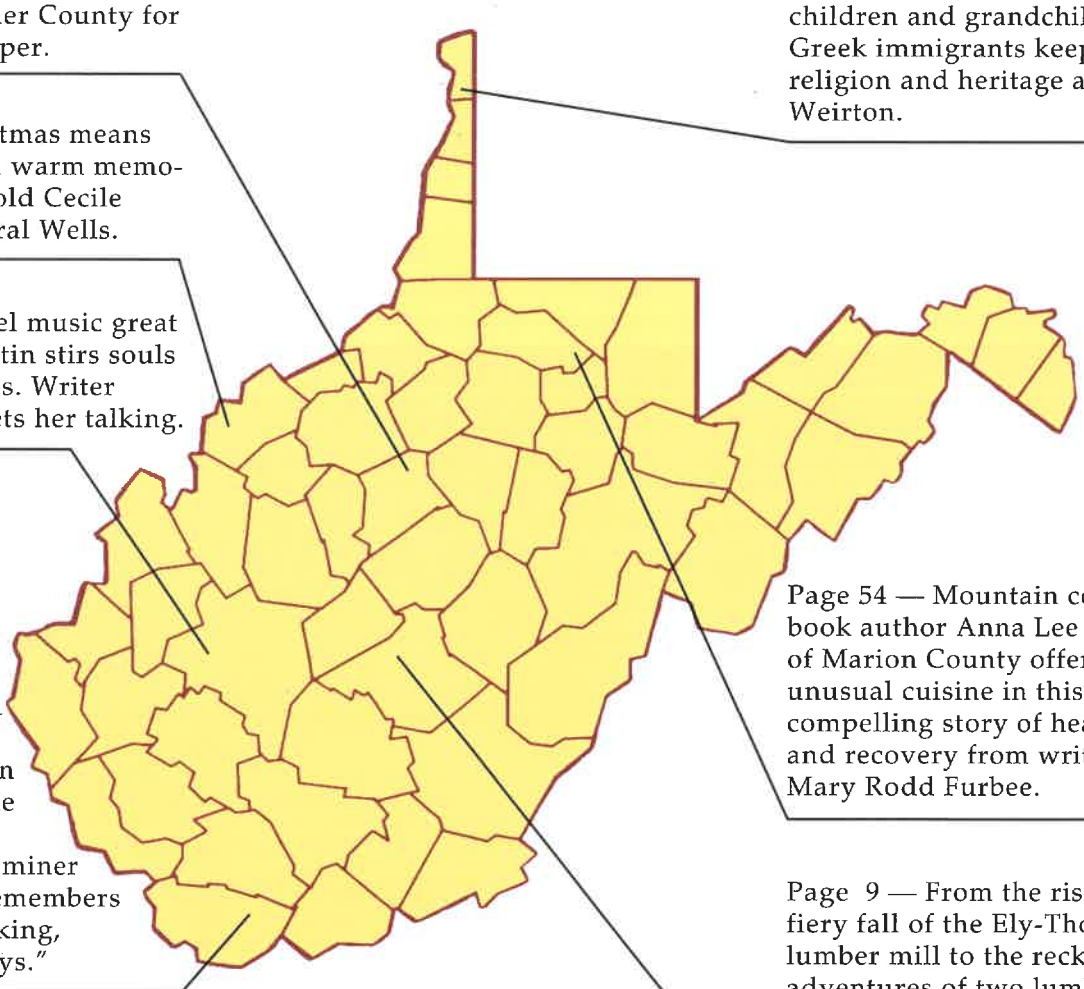
Banjo picker Earl Humphreys at Vandalia 1992. Photo by Michael Keller.

Pete Humphreys was remembered in a more personal way by Vandalia staffer Cathy Miller as a man who held his back straight and walked tall. His presence will be missed for many years to come.

GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0300

# Inside Goldenseal





74
0 94295 76645 1