Summer 1998 • WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE • $3.95

Goldenseal

South Branch Cruise

Lost Village of Lilly

Old-Time Music at Ivydale

Mountain Cattle Drives

Miss West Virginia 1923

From the Editor

George P. Lilly owned a farm in northern Illinois at the turn of the century. On October 7, 1909, he stepped into the St. Vincent DePaul orphanage in Chicago. When he left, he took with him a young boy named Jeremiah Razebak who had lived with the nuns at the orphanage for several years. Three and a half years later, with adoption proceedings complete, George Lilly gave that boy his name. This younger George Lilly grew to become my grandfather. My father, also named George Lilly, still lives in the Chicago area; he named his oldest son George Lilly. Today, I am the very proud father of a lively one-year-old son named George Lilly: the fifth generation of George Lillys on my branch of the family tree.

I mention this family tale because I am frequently asked whether I am related to the great Lilly family of West Virginia, featured prominently in this issue of GOLDENSEAL. Unfortunately, I don't know the answer to that question although it appears that my family's claim to the Lilly name begins with an Illinois adoption finalized in 1913.

Mason Lilly, son of GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly, enjoys a pony ride at the 1997 Lilly Reunion. Photo by Catherine Lilly.

That doesn't stop me from feeling some distant pride each time I hear a recording of the legendary Lilly Brothers, or see a sign for Lilly Jewelers at the mall, or cross the Lilly Bridge near Hinton. It also didn't stop the West Virginia Lillys from inviting me to appear as a guest speaker at the 1997 Lilly Reunion at Flat Top and showing me and my family — sons George and Mason, and wife Cathy — a wonderful time. Our story about the lost village of Lilly begins on page 42.

In the summer of 1976, 60-some years after my family became adopted Lillys, I strapped a backpack to my boney frame and hitchhiked from central Illinois, where I attended college, to Pocahontas County. I was among the many young musicians flocking to West Virginia in those days to learn more about real old-time music. My destination was a scrubby field near Marlinton and a music gathering known casually as the Hammons Family festival. I found everything I was looking for and much more. I spent the rest of that summer in and around West Virginia attending music festivals, visiting fiddlers, and becoming smitten by the mountains and the people.

Twenty-two years later, I am still smitten, though I look a little more presentable, seldom hitchhike, and can't recall what became of that backpack. The music festivals of the 1960's and '70's served to introduce thousands of young people — both from within and outside the state — to West Virginia's folk heritage. Our story about the Morris Family Old-Time Music Festivals begins on page 56.

Cattle drives, canoe trips, beauty pageants, photography, trains, and tornadoes also come alive in this issue of GOLDENSEAL. Like me, I hope you find a little of yourself, your family, and your own heritage within these pages.

John Lilly

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Goldenseal

Volume 24, Number 2 Summer 1998

COVER: Neva "Toby" Jackson was the first Miss West Virginia. She is shown here in a parade along the Atlantic City Boardwalk in 1923. Photo courtesy of Margaret Niland Malone. The story begins on page 20.

PHOTOS: Leo Chabot, Greg Clark, Zebedee John Crouse, Harold Field, Carl Fleischhauer, Ferrell Friend, Thom Hodges, Michael Keller, Mike Meador, Gerald Milnes, Ernie Sampson, Robert Whitcomb, J.J. Young, Jr.

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.

Ely-Thomas Lumber

February 16, 1998
Summersville, West Virginia
Editor:
Since the Ely-Thomas mill at Werth has been so much a part of my life, I enjoyed the article about the mill in your winter issue ["Ely-Thomas Lumber Company," by Patricia Samples Workman; Winter 1997]. I especially enjoyed seeing the panoramic view of the store, mill, and lumberyard. I asked around for a similar picture when my son was planning to paint a view of the mill and produce limited edition prints (copies are still available). I could only find a few pictures of the updated mill.

Nancy Dawson and son John at Werth in the 1950's.

The look of the mill and its surrounding structures underwent a number of changes over the years. In the 1940's, the boiler room was redone for repairs and to add more power. At that time, a third smokestack and a breather were added to the mill. Another addition was an apartment over the office for Guy Ross who ran the office and was a shareholder in the company.

Around 1938, my family moved into the apartment above the garage where they worked on the vehicles (mostly log trucks) for the company. Dad was a mechanic at that time. The train ran behind our apartment and blew fine ash on the front and back porch. It was my job to sweep after every trip the train made.

In the early days, the store, repair shop, truck garage, our apartment, and some of the houses had DC current from the mill with which to operate electric lights. The lights were turned off at 10:00 p.m. so that the generator could be oiled and any needed repairs could be made. The lights were turned on again at 6:00 a.m. when the mill whistle blew for the men to get up. Most people went to bed by 10:00 p.m. but, if not, you had to get out your oil lamp.

The mill whistle controlled our lives. The day began with the 6:00 a.m. wake-up whistle, soon followed by the 7:00 whistle that signaled it was time to go to work. There was a noon whistle for lunch, the 1:00 back to work whistle, and finally the long-awaited 5:00 whistle for "quittin' time." We were not the only ones who experienced the regimentation caused by the mill whistle. It was so *loud* that our chihuahua ran howling to his box, and neighbors five and six miles away responded to its call to eat or go to work.

My dad, Dee Roby, became the woods supervisor in the '40's. His job consisted of selecting and overseeing the cutting and transporting of the timber to the mill pond, as well as supervising the truck maintenance garage.

I went with Dad to visit one of the woods camps when I was 11, and we ate dinner there. On the way home, I remarked that I hadn't seen him pay for my meal. He said that he didn't have to pay for my meal since they would just put me down as a "tramp hand." I was highly insulted and never went to a woods camp to eat again.

Your article was a nice stroll down memory lane. It made me think of many things that happened in those days in our community, some that could be printed and some that could not.
Sincerely,
Nancy Dawson

Pickens Leper

February 20, 1998
Massillon, Ohio
Editor:
This letter is long overdue. I've been going to write ever since the Fall '97 issue came out. This is in reference to the article on "The Pickens Leper," by Wayne Sheets.

I am the twelfth child of Mary Thomas Warner, who helped her father, James Thomas, care for the leper George Rashid. She prepared

Charles Warner's mother, Mary Thomas Warner.

meals for her father to take to George.

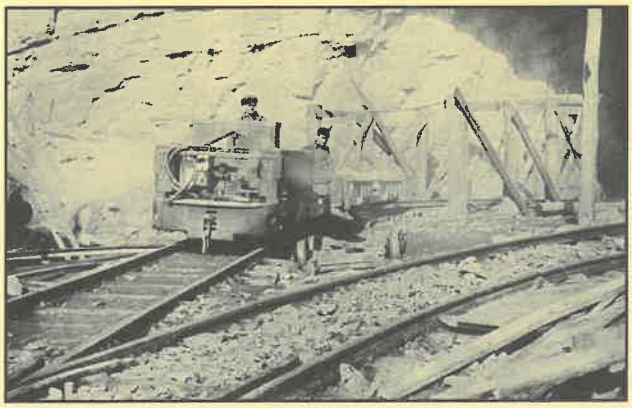
I was born in 1914, so I only know what I remember my mother and older sisters telling. I did not remember that she was paid, so that was interesting to me.

I go to Pickens two or three times a year. The leper's grave is very close to what was our family's land.

I met Wayne Sheets at Pickens where he first interviewed me. My wife and I have become very good friends with him and his wife, Sue. We hope the friendship will last for many years. We have complimented Wayne on his fine story. And we compliment you on a fine, interesting magazine.
Charles Warner

Manheim Memories

November 1, 1997
Tyrone, Pennsylvania
Editor:
How I enjoyed the fall GOLDENSEAL. Our family was raised in Manheim and all 16 of us have purchased a magazine. My father, Raphael Pyles, and his eight brothers worked at the cement plant, also my mother's father. ["Manheim: Faded Glory in a Quarry Town," by Peggy Ross; Fall 1997]



Manheim quarry workers. Photographer and date unknown.

I have a picture (the long type like the one in the story) of the town of Manheim: all homes, store, train station, and plant. My mother has been in a nursing home here in our town in Pennylvania for the past nine years and can still tell me all the names of the families in the picture. One of my uncles was in the crusher and lost his life and his brother had to remove him.

There are so many sad times, good happy times, and lots of stories from Manheim. I worked four years for the high school where we all graduated, and eight years for the Manheim School before moving to Maryland for 34 years. I'm now retired in Pennsylvania for 17 years. So you can see I have lots of memories of Manheim. Naomi Brutto taught me and my two brothers in school.

If you ever do an update on our little town, I would be happy to give you anything I could to help all of us to "remember when."

Thanks again for giving all 14 nieces and nephews, and two uncles, great reading in your magazine.

Best of luck on all your great stories in GOLDENSEAL.
Ann Clark

Barns

March 20, 1998
Richardson, Texas
Editor:
Now I know how to keep shingles on a barn without nails! ["The Barns of Pendleton County," by Gerald Milnes; Spring 1998]
John Latimer

More Mountain Tea

March 16, 1998
Cortland, Ohio
Editor:
In the Spring 1998 GOLDENSEAL, a Joyce Gill of Warren, Ohio, asked about mountain tea for her father ["Letters From Readers," Spring 1998; page 5].

I am one of the old medical diggers, and I know what she is looking for — I know where it grows near her home in Trumbull County. My name is in the phone book if she is further interested.
Respectfully yours,
G. C. Lazier

April 14, 1998
Elkins, West Virginia
Editor:
In regards to "Mountain Tea" for Daymon C. Taylor of Warren, Ohio, my grandparents were always eager for their spring tonic or mountain tea. It was made from boiling a root of a sassafras shrub.

I was raised on a West Virginia farm, am now 88 years of age. A few years ago, my sister bought a bottle of the juice to have whenever she wanted it, and my daughter said she had seen the roots in a store.

I'd hate to pick the teaberry for a glass of tea.
Sincerely,
Hallie C. Kyle

There appears to be more than one way to find — and brew — mountain tea. Although Ms. Kyle seems not to prefer it, a number of other readers have contacted us to sing the praises of the spicy teaberry. —ed.

"On the Right Track"

January 24, 1998
Richmond, Virginia
Editor:
Thank you for the winter issue of GOLDENSEAL. I was amazed, as a longtime subscriber. The articles were absorbing — a good variety and spotlighting various sections of the state. I had been discouraged about the magazine for some time.

Thank you, I hope it's on the right track.
Sincerely,
Mary L. Brand

Honey Bees

September 29, 1997
Fenwick, West Virginia
Editor:
I just returned from a Navy reunion in Hartford, Connecticut, and this friend of mine told me he had an article of me in the GOLDENSEAL magazine that his brother from Pennsylvania had sent him. He gave it to me ["Bee Tree: On the Trail of Wild Honey," by Skip Johnson; Fall 1994].

So I had to give a little talk on bees and all about honey and the mites. I am proud that my bees made some awfully good honey this year. I gave three new swarms away to my friends to get

FERRELL FRIEND

Vaden Young (left) and Jack Chambers in 1994 with honeycombs.

them back in the bee business. GOLDENSEAL is my number one magazine.
Vaden Young

1913 Flood Recalled

April 6, 1998
Minden, West Virginia
Editor:
I am writing to see if you can get some information about the 1913 flood, as it was awful. I tell people about it and they say they never heard of it.

Huntington's commercial district during the 1913 flood. Photographer unknown.

I was eight years old, my father and mother lived at Kenova. It was flooded and Ceredo was flooded so bad that some of the houses were covered with just the chimney sticking out. It got up under our house and my father took us up to Happy Hollow to my mother's brother. It was so bad it washed away houses — I have seen them like boats. They said they caught a house and a baby was in a baby bed in it. They took them out of apartment houses in Huntington. I had a cousin and his wife that lived in an apartment in Huntington close to the Owens and Illinois glass factory. She worked, he drove a taxi. They took them out the upstairs in boats. It would take an old-timer like me to remember — I will be 92 years old in June.
Sincerely,
Mrs. Sarah Burwick

Thank you for writing, Mrs. Burwick. The 1913 flood is remembered as one of the most devastating in state history, and has come up in GOLDENSEAL on a number of occasions. The most extensive account is contained in "High Water and Growing Pains: A Huntingtonian Looks Back on 1913," by William B. Newcomb; Winter 1985. The flood also affected other towns along the Ohio River including Point Pleasant ["The Worst Since Noah: Point Pleasant Floods," by Irene B. Brand; Winter 1991] and Wheeling ["'Give Us the Old Mud-caked Oh-ho-ho': Flooding on Wheeling Island," by Marie Tyler-McGraw; October-December 1978]. —ed.

Ties to Nova Scotia

January 30, 1998
Stellarton, Nova Scotia, Canada
Editor:
I have recently returned to Nova Scotia, Canada. I must tell you that I miss the mountains and the spirit of the Appalachian people. The similarity between "you all" and the people of Nova Scotia is uncanny — Irish coal miners and a strong sense of self-sufficiency.

I look forward to sharing GOLDENSEAL with my friends. Thanking you in advance.
Brian Ives

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.

Belles of the State Folk Festival

Each year at the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville, a special group of women is honored. Known as the "Belles," the women have been a part of the festival since 1957, when director Fern Rollyson started the tradition of honoring women over 70 years of age who represented the true pioneer spirit. That first year there were ten Belles. Now more than 30 women are honored each year.

The Belles are nominated by community groups, Chambers of Commerce, and WVU Extension Homemakers organizations. The nominations are based on service to community and traditional domestic skills such as quilting. For many years, only members of Extension Homemakers clubs were nominated, but in recent years the field of nominees has grown to include women from other service groups who have made lifelong contributions to their communities.

The "Belles" of the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville. Photographer unknown, late 1950's.

The Belles take part in many activities during the State Folk Festival, but they are especially honored during the Saturday afternoon Lions Club parade. All the Belles participate wearing handmade traditional dresses. "The women come out in all their finery," former festival organizer Mack Samples remembers. On Sunday morning, the Belles join festival-goers for the special Sunday morning worship service at Job's Temple.

The West Virginia State Folk Festival, considered one of the Mountain State's most authentic folk festivals, celebrates its 49th year in 1998. The dates are June 18 through 21. Founded by West Virginia folklorist Dr. Patrick Gainer, the folk festival is a four-day celebration of traditional music, crafts, and community spirit. The activities include dancing, storytelling, a Sunday morning worship service, and concerts at Glenville State College Fine Arts Center. Some of the best music tends to happen after the sun goes down and temperatures cool a little, festival organizers say.

For more information about the West Virginia State Folk Festival or local accommodations call 1-800-480-8098 or (304)462-8427.

Panoramic Pictures Sought

The West Virginia Historical Society and the West Virginia State Archives are sponsoring a "Panoramic Picture Preservation Project" in order to collect these unique West Virginia historic images in a central location.

Panoramic pictures were common in the early 1900's in West Virginia. Today they provide documentation of the state's physical features and social development. The images were made with a "cirkut" camera which rotated on a tripod to produce pictures several feet long. Most of these surviving photographs are in private collections.

The panoramic picture project serves to preserve images for future generations of West Virginians. According to project guidelines, each panoramic will be copied by a professional photographer in Charleston and the photographic negative will be put on file in the West Virginia State Archives. After the negative is made, the original panoramic will be returned to the owner. Participants are invited to either mail or bring their images to the West Virginia State Archives. Special arrangements can also be made.

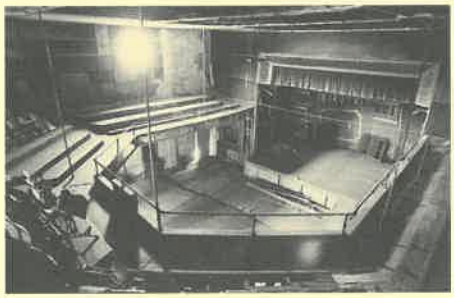
The West Virginia Historical Society is asking for help from county and regional historical societies in locating panoramic pictures for each county or region of the state. West Virginia cities, landscapes, industrial settings, and historic groups are of primary interest.

For more information contact

Fred Armstrong, Director, West Virginia State Archives, Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-0220.

Cottrill Opera House Restoration

Alpine Heritage Preservation, Inc. was formed in 1979 in Tucker County to save the building that once housed the Cottrill Opera House in Thomas. The historic property, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was



The Cottrill Opera House in Thomas is undergoing big changes.

built in 1902 by Hiram Cottrill. [GOLDENSEAL, October-December 1980, "Thomas and Its Opera House" by Ruth Belanger]. It was an "opera house" that never saw an opera, built for the vaudeville acts that were popular at the time. Six hundred people could be seated in the three-level auditorium.

The glory days of the Cottrill Opera House are being rekindled through the efforts of the Alpine Heritage Preservation group. Its goal is to restore the historic building and convert it into a multipurpose visual and performing arts center. Renovation of the first and second story balconies, orchestra pit, and stage is planned. Velvet drapes and ornate fixtures in the style of the opera house's original era will be added as well.

It's a big undertaking and Alpine Heritage has some big fund-raising plans in mind. The public is invited to enter a raffle in which a Canaan Valley vacation home is the grand prize. A maximum of 4,500 chances will be sold at $100 each. The grand prize giveaway will take place on September 26 during the 1998 Leaf Peepers Weekend event in Thomas. "We feel that this is a unique way to raise funds and to bring attention to our efforts to restore the Opera House," says Walt Ranalli, president of the group.

For more information write to Alpine Heritage Preservation, Cottrill's Opera House, P.O. Box 33, Thomas, WV 26292 or contact George Mikedes at (304)866-3848.

Mule and Donkey Show

This fall, the Central West Virginia Riding Club hosts its sixth annual Mule and Donkey Show on Sunday, September 13. The event returns to Holly Gray Park near Sutton. A special trail ride, beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 12, precedes the main event. Supper and an evening program are planned for the Saturday trail riders.

The Mule and Donkey Show begins at 10 a.m. on Sunday and runs until all of the expected 35 classes are shown. They include contest, pleasure, log skidding, coon jumping, costume class, driving class, and open trail class over obstacles. The mules and donkeys come in all sizes and colors — from miniature to draft and solids to spots.

During the 1997 show, partici-

1997 Liars Contest Correction: In the Spring 1998 issue of GOLDENSEAL, 1997 State Liars Contest winners Kip Lee and Bee Murphy were credited improperly. Kip Lee won second prize in the State Liars Contest with a story about trying to become a sweepstakes grand prize winner. Bee Murphy's story about his favorite television program, "Murder She Wrote," won third place at the 1997 Liars Contest. Our Spring 1998 issue reported these awards in the incorrect order. We apologize for the error.

Bee Murphy is nearly 90 years old. A native of South Charleston, he is a long-time participant at the State Liars Contest and a past winner. Kip Lee credits his participation in the State Liars Contest to his friend the late Paul Lepp, and to Bee Murphy, who happens to be his great uncle.

Bee Murphy (above) and Kip Lee at the 1997 State Liars Contest. Photos by Michael Keller.

4th Annual Mule and Donkey Show, Bruceton Mills, 1996.

pants from across the country attended. Entry fees are charged for contestants in each of the classes. Some classes are for mules only and others are for both mules and donkeys. Contestants are allowed helpers for the competitions.

It's an event for all ages. Organizers stress that "everyone and anyone can participate — from 2 years old to 80 years old."

There's also plenty of tale telling at hand. "The show grounds are filled with stories of what my 'Bess,' my 'Tom,' or my 'Nettie' could do back when I was a young lad," says Karen Carr of the Central West Virginia Riding Club.

For more information contact Ms. Carr at 8 Rush Run, Gassaway, WV 26624; (304)364-8364.

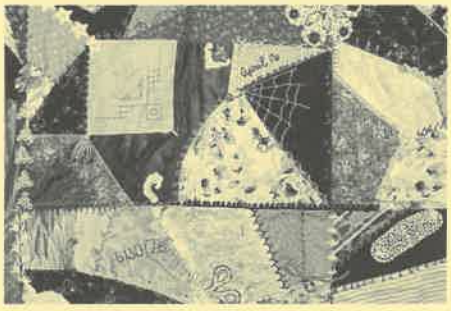
Quilt Shows

Two West Virginia sites are planning big quilt shows this summer and fall. "West Virginia's Best Quilt Show and Sale" will be held during the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes near Ripley from July 1 through 5. Cash awards and ribbons will be presented to West Virginia quiltmakers as part of the show. Quilt entries will be accepted through June 25.

Five categories of quilts will be judged: pieced, applique, combined techniques, co-op (made by more than one person), and "A Work of Heart" in which quiltmakers are invited to create a wall hanging, or a hand- or machine-made quilt of their own design. For further information on the Cedar Lakes quilt show, contact Sara Burlingame at (304)372-2034 or Sally Summers at (304)586-0217.

The Division of Culture and History presents "Quilts '98" in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center in Charleston through October 18. The annual exhibition, held in conjunction with Vandalia Gathering, features 29 quilts — all handmade by West Virginians.

First, second, and third place awards are given to winners in the categories of "pieced" and "applique." In addition, the Friends of West Virginia Culture and History funded the purchase of a special "Purchase Award"



Detail from "Victorian Crazy Patch" by Barbara Wheeler of Parkersburg, in "Quilts '98" Exhibition. Photo by Michael Keller.

quilt which will be placed in the West Virginia State Museum's permanent collection. The juried quilt show was judged by Lovell Symons of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. She said the quilts are "a spectacular color treat and a sure crowd pleaser."

String Band Music

The Appalachian String Band Music Festival is in its ninth year. The popular event returns to Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County from July 29 through August 2. The festival, known as "Clifftop" to many, is a five-day mountaintop gathering featuring concerts, contests, crafts, dancing, and workshops. It is a program of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History,

It is also a family event with storytelling, youth contest categories, and workshops for children; but the majority of the activities are designed for serious string band musicians. The schedule includes fiddle, banjo, traditional band, and non-traditional band contest categories. Nightly old-time square dances are held and there's a big flatfoot dance contest.

Appalachian Masters Workshops are a Clifftop tradition. The Appalachian Masters for 1998 are West Virginians Dave Bing, Joe Dobbs, and Wilson Douglas along with Kentucky's Art Stamper.

Appalachian crafters and instrument vendors also exhibit at the festival. This year there is a special effort to include new craftspeople. For an application contact Pat Cowdery at the Division of Culture and History, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305; (304)558-0220.

Daily admission to the Appalachian String Band Music Festival is $5 for adults and $3 for children ages three to 15. Children under three are admitted free. Rough camping is available at Camp Washington-Carver during the event for $25 per person or $60 per family. The one-time fee includes admission. Camp sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Concessions include vegetarian meals and a variety of snacks, along with the traditional fare of good home-cooked meals served in the Great Chestnut Lodge. For more information contact Camp Washington-Carver, HC 35, Box 5, Clifftop, WV 25831; (304)438-3005.

GOLDENSEAL Index Online

As announced in the Winter 1997 issue, GOLDENSEAL is on the World Wide Web. Now, GOLDENSEAL's index is online and includes stories from 1975 through 1997 listed by subject and author.

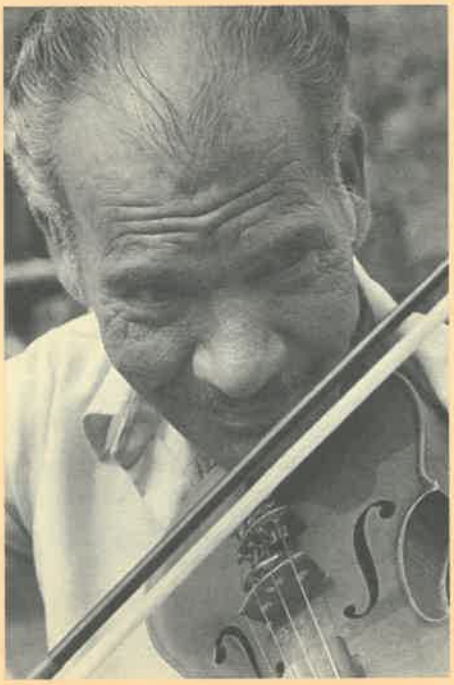
Thanks to the efforts of Stan Bumgardner, former state historian and manager of the West Virginia History Database at the Cultural Center, this electronic index includes hundreds of entries ranging from "Accidents and Industrial Disasters" to "Winemaking" all from the pages of GOLDENSEAL. The index also includes a link to a listing of available back issues of the magazine; those stories which are not available in back issues can be photocopied for a nominal fee from the GOLDENSEAL office.

In addition to the newly-added index, the web site includes recent GOLDENSEAL covers, tables of contents, story excerpts, and subscription information. The address is www.wvlc.wvnet.edu/culture/goldensl.html.

Glen Smith Receives Vandalia Award

Wirt County fiddler Glen Smith was presented with the 1998 Vandalia Award last month at the annual Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Glen was born in 1923 and has been a fiddler for nearly all his life. Originally from Woodlawn, Virginia, Glen came to West Virginia more than 30 years ago to work in the timber industry around Elizabeth.

His early band, the Mountain State Pickers, included his son Delano on guitar along with mandolinist Hal Cotrell and banjo player Mike Wade. On one occasion, the band played with the WVU marching band at a homecoming football game in 1974. During the middle 1970's, Glen hosted a series of traditional music gatherings near his hometown of Elizabeth. These local festivals are fondly remembered by musicians from across the state.



CARL FLEISCHHAUER

Glen Smith, the 1998 Vandalia Award winner, at Ivydale in 1971. Our Ivydale story begins on page 56.

Glen has been a fixture at West Virginia traditional music events for more than a generation, having performed regularly at the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville, the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair at Ripley, and at fiddlers conventions and contests throughout the region. He has participated in the Vandalia Gathering every year since 1980.

Glen was featured in the Summer 1990 issue of GOLDENSEAL in an article entitled "'I've Always Loved Music': Champion Fiddler Glen Smith" by Jacqueline G. Goodwin.

Wife Helen Smith and Glen have been married for 54 years, and still live in the Elizabeth area.

The Vandalia Award is presented each year as a highlight of the Division of Culture and History's Vandalia Gathering festival. Glen Smith's award was presented by Commissioner Renay Conlin.

Paul Lepp, Pete Humphreys Honored

The Fred James Posthumous Vandalia Award has been presented to champion liar Paul Lepp and to banjo player Pete Humphreys. Commissioner Renay Conlin presented the awards to family members at this year's Vandalia Gathering.

Pete Humphreys was an accomplished bluegrass and old-time banjo player, who won the senior old-time banjo competition at Vandalia several times. He passed away in October 1997.

Paul Lepp was widely recognized as West Virginia's preeminent liar, having won first prize in the state Liars Contest at Vandalia five times. Paul and his talented brother Bil were featured in the Spring 1998 issue of GOLDENSEAL ("The Lying Lepp Brothers" by Bil Lepp), Paul passed away in January 1998.

Paul Lepp's and Pete Humphreys' names have been added to a plaque mounted in the Heritage Courtyard area at the south end of the Cultural Center in Charleston.

Our Cruise on the South Branch

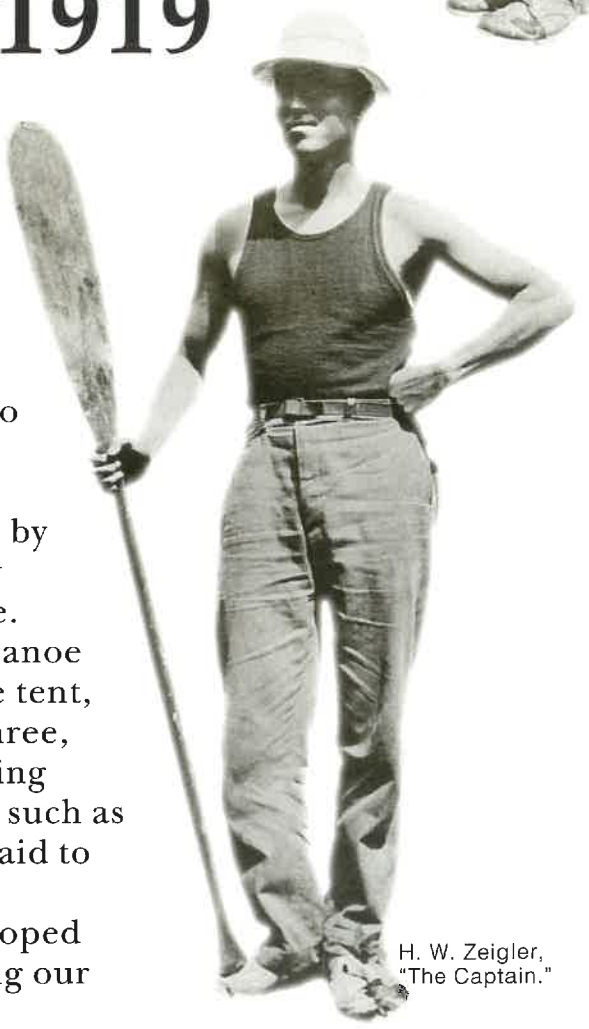
The Log Book

July 13-27, 1919

Text and Photographs by Harold Field

Harold Field, "The Mate."

Clifford Repass, "The Midshipman."



H. W. Zeigler, "The Captain."

Sunday, July 13th – The "Party" left Charleston at 7 P.M. on C&O train #2, bound for Petersburg, W.Va., via Washington and other points in the East, this being the shortest and most convenient way to get to our starting point.

The camp duffle and canoe had been shipped several days previous by express and we carried with us only personal articles of a sundry nature. Included in the shipment was our canoe (an 18' Mullins model), 7'x9' wedge tent, three bed sacks with blankets for three, cooking kit, box of provisions, fishing tackle, and minor camp necessities such as axes, lights, baskets, cordage, first aid to ourselves and to the canoe, straps, ponchos, etc. This we prayerfully hoped would be at our destination awaiting our appearance on the scene.

Monday, July 14th — Weather, fair. We awoke somewhere in Virginia and soon ascertained that the train was on time and making good headway. The captain (H.W. Zeigler) was out first and after gaining the main deck and finishing dressing, awoke the mate (H.W. Field) and midshipman (Clifford Repass). The latter's foot slipped as he swung down from his hammock and fouled the occupant of the lower berth, whose feminine outcry caused the midshipman to stage a quick getaway in the direction of the wash room. No harm done, however.

Breakfast was in order as we neared Washington. The train was on time and this allowed sufficient time for a quick trip up-town, where some needed repairs to the captain's watch were secured.

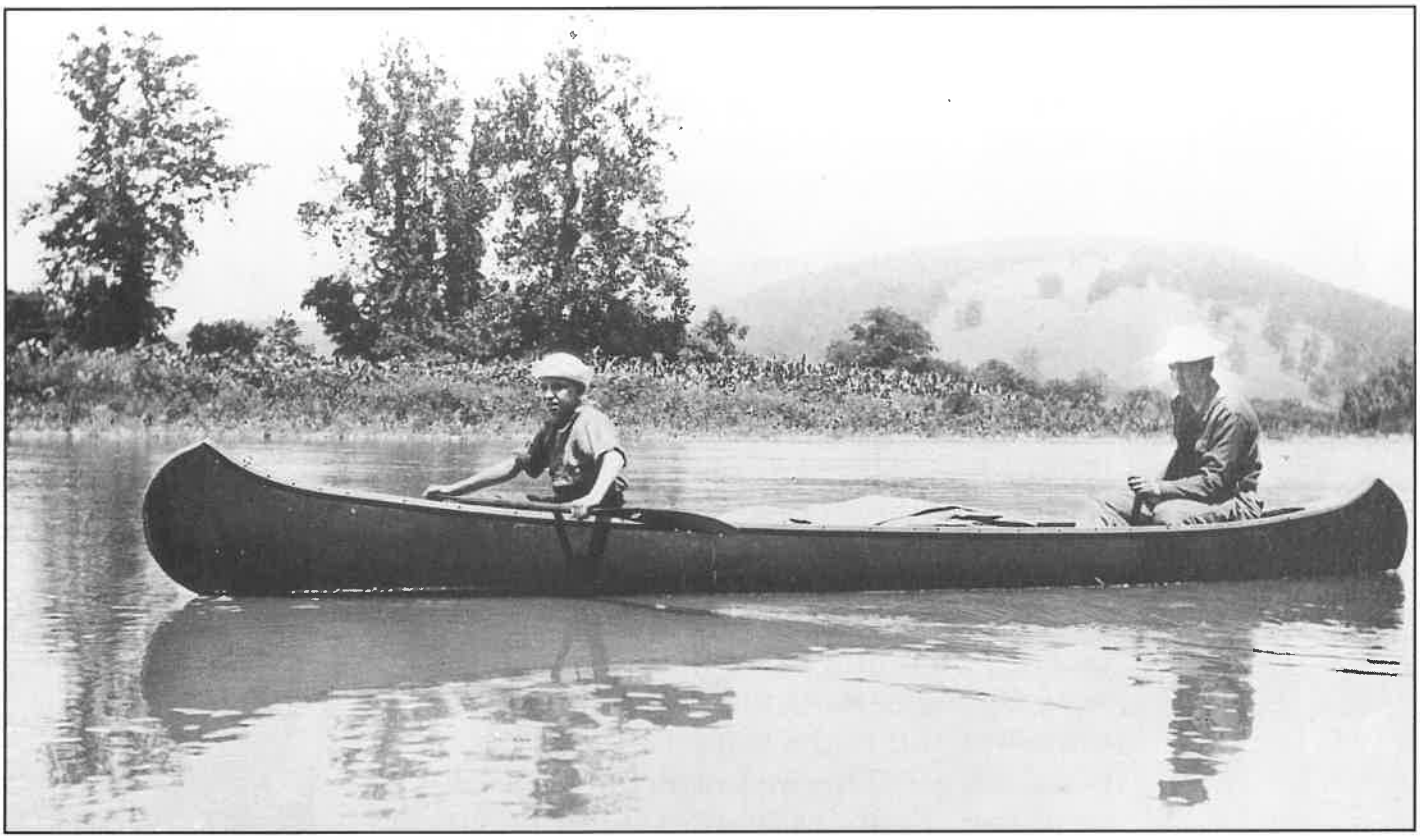
Back to the station and, after an interview with the ticket agent, we purchased tickets to Petersburg. Had dinner on the train and changed to the mixed train which was to carry us up the branch line which follows the South Branch river to Petersburg.

This branch railroad is about 55 miles in length and was formerly the Hampshire Southern R.R. It was a typical mountain enterprise and some of the original rolling stock appeared to be still in use on it, although it is now a part of the big B&O system. Our engineer was an artist at coaxing speed out of the old scrap heap masquerading as an engine up at the front of the train of stock cars and passenger coaches, but the best he could do was five hours for the trip and it was nearly 6 o'clock when we rolled into the terminus at Petersburg. One grade, in particular, nearly proved to be a Waterloo for the ancient locomotive, and several attempts were necessary before the outfit was finally dragged over the top.

At Petersburg we found the canoe and the tent already on hand. Pessimism had an inning when a quick search of the warehouse failed to reveal the other two packages, but joy again reigned supreme after we located them in the express car of the train which had brought us up the valley. A local teamster then took charge of the entire outfit and hauled it across the flat to the river, about a quarter of a mile distant.

The crew quickly retired to the seclusion of a neighboring thicket where a change into sea-going clothes was soon accomplished. The canoe was next unpacked and placed in the water, after which the captain began the work of loading it while the mate and midshipman returned to the village to mail the suitcases ahead. By the time they returned the canoe was ready to sail and, with all hands aboard, no time was lost in getting away, as it was now almost sundown.

A short half hour's paddling brought us past the town and, having located a likely looking grove of trees on the right-hand bank, a landing was soon effected and camp pitched. The heavy work of camp-making being disposed of, all hands indulged in a refreshing bath and swim and then hit the back trail for the town.



The Good Ship "CH_2" an 18-foot Mullins canoe.

Great excitement prevailed in the town and everybody seemed to be turning out, the activity, we discovered a moment later, to be the result of an old time carnival operating with the throttle wide open in the very center of the community. After refreshing ourselves at a soda fountain and watching the country people at the show, we retraced our steps to camp, which we had a little trouble in locating due to getting our landmarks confused in the darkness. Tired with the long railroad journey all hands turned in early.

Tuesday, July 15th — The noise of rain on the tent was the first thing we heard this morning. An easy going, fitful rain, but still — rain. We managed to produce a very satisfactory breakfast, however, after which the camp turned out for a search for various kinds of bait. The river was just beginning to clear up nicely and we anticipated good sport in a day or two.

By noon the rain was over and our outfit had dried out enough to permit moving, so we packed the canoe and pushed off. For a while the stream was whipped with artificial lures of several kinds but all efforts in this respect drew blank so we gave it up and devoted our whole attention to cruising. A large patch of blackberries on our left bank promised surer returns and we stopped long enough to fill ourselves and a two-quart pail. ...

The view from a railroad bridge.

The sun shone brightly most of the afternoon and our bare shoulders began to turn a light pink from the effects of the bright rays, but just about the time we began to think seriously of donning shirts for protection heavy black clouds appeared in the west and the growling of thunder warned us that it would soon be time to dig in.

As we had already come a considerable distance we at once began to look for a camping place for the night, but the storm broke before we found anything like a decent location and we were forced to land and put up the tent temporarily to keep dry. The rain did not last long and we improved the time by eating a lunch consisting mostly, however, of blackberries and cream, which did duty partly for supper.

After the rain was over we resumed our hunt for a camp site and after half an hour located a very good place in a clump of trees on the left bank about two miles above Moorefield and about a mile above the road bridge leading to town. All hands went to work and soon camp was ready and a light supper in order, by which time the twilight had deepened into darkness, so we turned in. Our map showed that we had paddled nearly 15 miles during the afternoon.

Wednesday, July 16th — Rain. Raindrops on the canvas above was again the first sound we heard on awaking and this time the noise had a decidedly business-like sound. Breakfast was a problem and we finally compromised on a large pot of hot oatmeal which was cooked with some difficulty in the rain.

An inspection of the river showed that the rain of the afternoon before had evidently been heavy up above and the water was of a distinctly yellow color and rising. Our hopes of bass fishing went glimmering when we saw this, as a week at least would be needed for it to clear properly.

Shortly after lunch the clouds broke away once more and we packed the canoe and started out. Just above the Moorefield bridge we had great sport shooting the first real rapid we had encountered so far but got through safely. Most of the rapids on this river are caused by gravel bars and while the water is swift and the waves sometimes high, the bottom is fairly uniform and there is little danger in shooting them. There are rocky rapids, however, in sufficient numbers to make the trip interesting, and getting through some of them with the canoe unscathed is a job for the skilled canoeist only.

In negotiating a long rapid just opposite Moorefield we ran afoul of some unusually high waves and shipped water in bucketfuls, making a landing just

below to dump the canoe. A large herd of cattle watched operations closely and several times had to be driven back to keep them from treading on the duffle.

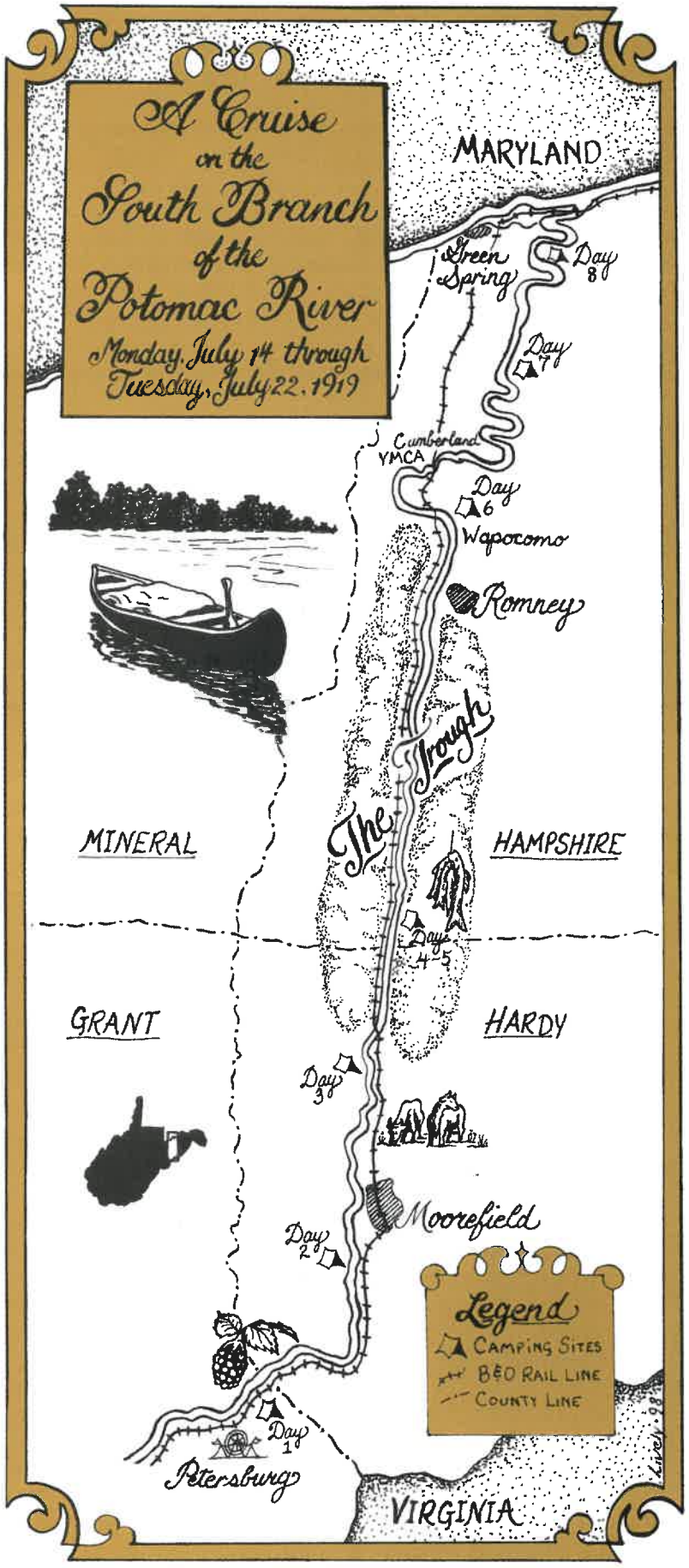
On board again we pushed on downstream and at our next landing for observation discovered to our chagrin that we had passed the town at least a mile. The same thing had happened to the captain on two previous cruises and he had firmly resolved not to be caught napping again, but there is absolutely nothing along here to indicate the presence of the town and one has to be intimate with the river to know where to stop to the best advantage.

We flushed a rattlesnake on the hike back to town but by the time the party, organized to kill, had located the source of the rattling the snake had made good a victorious retreat.

Moorefield is the county seat of Hardy County and is a town of about 1,000, beautifully situated in the very center of the river valley which at this point widens out into a sort of plain at least four or five miles across and very fertile. As in the case of Petersburg, there is a large tannery located here and the town has several hotels and a picture show, but the chief business is farming and farm supply.

All hands visited the local soda fountain and post office, where mail was dispatched, supplies were purchased, and the return hike back to the canoe begun without delay as the afternoon was beginning to slip away and we were anxious to locate a good camp site early and take advantage of the good weather to make things extra snug for the night.

About two miles below Moorefield we discovered an ideal spot on the left-hand bank and upon landing found that it embraced everything to be desired in the way of a camping place. A high hill with the river cutting into its base tapered down into a kind of plateau about 30 feet above the water surmounting an abrupt cliff and covered with a dense pine woods. At the lower end of the woods a break in the cliff gave passage to a little brook and on its delta we landed in regulation canoe style. Hoisting the camp duffle to the plateau required the expenditure of some little energy but we were more than repaid by the fine and comfortable camp we soon had ready for use. A real supper of hot cakes and maple syrup, bacon, eggs, fried potatoes, and cocoa, the first really good camp meal we had been able to prepare on account



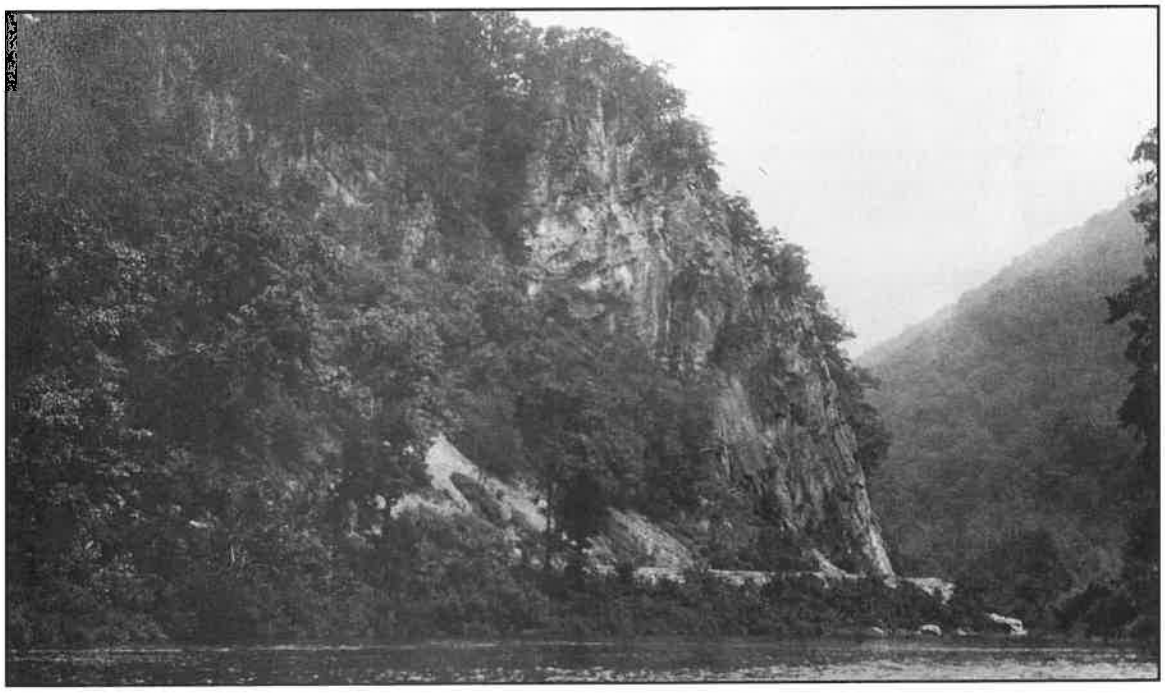
MAP BY TERRY LIVELY, 1998

of the damp weather, soon became a memory and after gossiping awhile with two of the natives who happened along about that time, we got our fishing tackle together and went out to try for eels and sunfish. No luck, however, so we returned to camp early and retired.

The late start and visit to town cut into our cruising progress and a little over four miles was the best we could claim for this day's journey.

Thursday, July 17th — Fair. The camp awoke about 7 and we at once turned out and finished breakfast. Last night proved to have been a trifle cool and all our firm resolutions to take a bath this morning were forgotten when we felt the chill touch of the frosty morning air. The river was muddy as a clay bank but had gone down somewhat during the night so we felt encouraged.

Breakfast over, we spread the entire camp outfit out to dry on nearby stumps and fences and then started on a hike from here and we lingered until the sun was sufficiently bright to enable us to get several pictures of the river winding through the valley. Then back to camp and everyone indulged in the luxury of a good soap bath and swim.



In the "Trough."

By this time our inner selves indicated lunch time so we acted accordingly and after sampling the baskets, struck camp, loaded the canoe, and shoved off about 1 o'clock. ...

After half an hour's delightful cruising we came to a bridge and at the left end of it noticed some houses, so we landed to investigate the possibilities of digging some bait in their vicinity. Worms were there in plenty and we soon had a canful. We were now in sight of the "Trough" a peculiar mountain formation through which the river flows, and stopped to take a distant picture of it.

This Trough is quite famous throughout this section. For nearly ten miles the river flows in a narrow gorge between two towering mountains, their sides meeting in the river at an almost perfect angle of 45 degrees, and, with the exception of a short crooked part in the very middle, the whole formation is straight as an arrow. ...

An hour's cruising brought us to the head of the Trough and we shot safely through the series of rough rocky rapids which seem to act as a kind of portal for it, landing just below the railroad bridge which carries the railroad over to the left-hand bank at this point. About 50 yards below the bridge on the right bank is a fine spring and we stopped to quench our thirst and fill the water bucket. We also took several pictures of the rapids and the Trough.

About three miles down the Trough on the right-hand side is a flat ledge jutting out from the hill and well above the water level and here we made camp. Two hundred yards farther down is a fine spring, so, all in all, the location is fine for a small camp and we made the most of it. After supper we went fishing but luck was poor, the midshipman catching one good-sized sunfish. Frog hunting likewise proved a failure, the high water having caused most of the frogs to dig in. We soon gave up and returned to camp and the more important business of attending to a number of jigger bites we had picked up in the blackberry patch and to some poison ivy which the midshipman was developing. After the session with the iodine and other first aids to the stung, we were ready to retire.

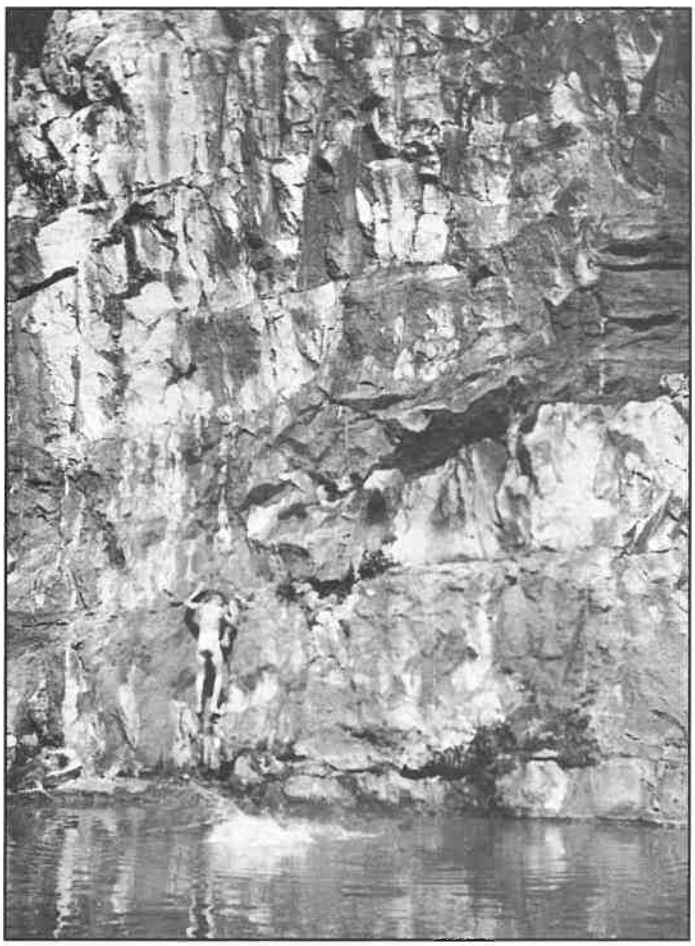
Checking up with the map showed that we had paddled about 14 or 15 miles during the afternoon.

Friday, July 18th — For the third time since starting, the rattle of rain on the canvas was the first sound we heard in the morning so we took our time about turn-

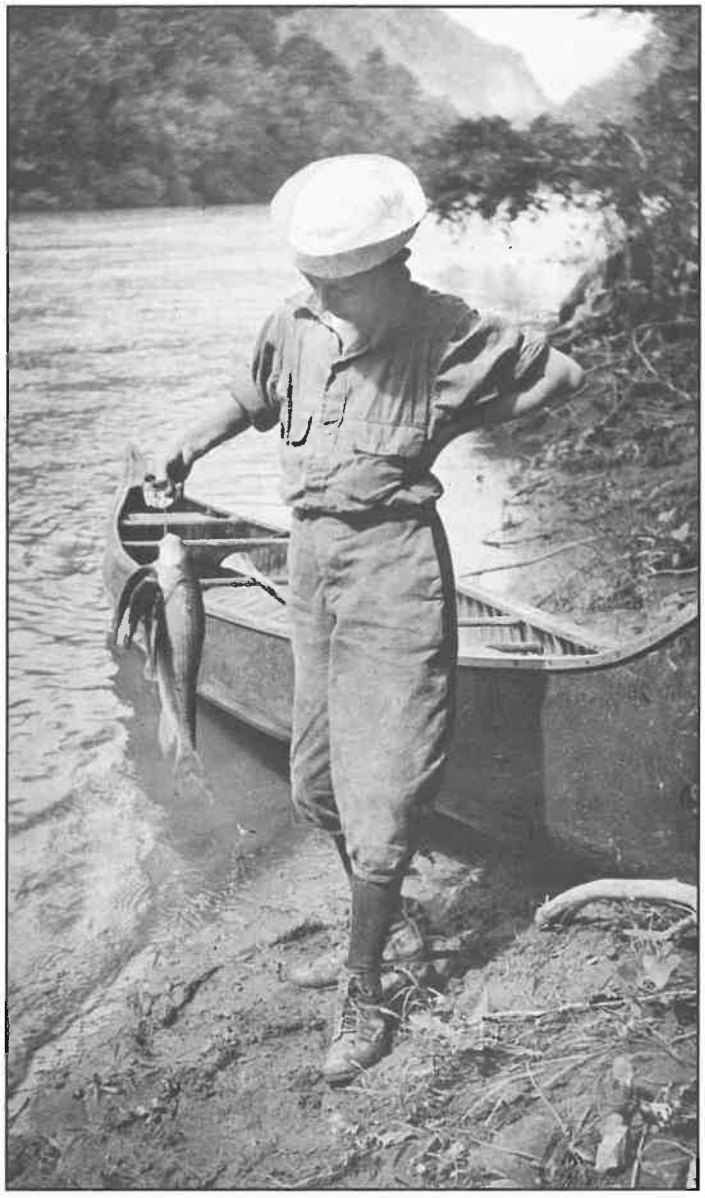
ing out. All hands served a breakfast of iodine to the jiggers boarding on their several persons, and then, the rain having temporarily ceased, set about preparing their own. For the first time on the cruise the nerve of the party was equal to a morning dip and this proved so refreshing and invigorating that more resolutions to be faithful were freely made.

The river had fallen about six inches during the night and seemed clearer, so after tidying up around camp we went fishing. Luck was with us this time and when we were finally forced ashore by a shower early in the afternoon we had five good-sized sunfish and a two-pound sucker in the bag. The midshipman caught the sucker, pulling him out from under a large boulder on which he was sitting at the time, as much surprised as the fish probably was.

Several more showers fell during the afternoon and just after supper we were treated to another heavy thunderstorm, enough rain falling to make still more gloomy our prospects for clear water. However, after the rain ceased we cast awhile with artificial bait, more to keep in practice than anything else, as the water is still much too cloudy for this kind of fishing. Just as we retired the rain again began to fall and by the sound of it will probably keep it up all night.



A quiet swim.



A two-pound sucker and several sunfish from the Trough.

Saturday, July 19th — Rain was not actually falling when we turned out for our dip this morning but the sky was a mass of lowering clouds filling the entire upper half of the Trough. Breakfast was scarcely out of the way before it began to rain once more but we held a council of war and decided that if we were to keep up with our schedule considerable distance would have to be covered today, so we loaded the canoe and about 10 o'clock set sail.

We had not been afloat 15 minutes before the rain increased in quantity and we were forced to get our ponchos out of the packs and put them on. Paddling with a large rubber poncho draped about the shoulders is something of a nuisance and hindered the movements of the arms considerably, but with plenty of water under the canoe we still made pretty good time.

Soon after leaving camp we passed the "Trough Club" and shortly thereafter the "Hampshire Club," both fishing organizations with commodious club houses, that of the former being especially well-located and attractive. Another hour and we were at the end of the Trough proper, the mountain on our right receding and several foothills taking its place. The mountain on the left still loomed high above the river as majestic as ever, but the river, as if glad for its freedom from restraint, took advantage of the opportunity to meander in wide sweeping curves away from it, returning several times every mile or so, however, to nestle at the foot. ...

About noon the rain became intermittent and we stopped half an hour under an overhanging cliff to eat lunch. Soon after this, the rain practically ceased and we were able to dispense with the poncho handicap, a move which made paddling much more enjoyable and efficient.

We reached Romney about 3:30 and tied up the canoe under the railroad bridge just opposite town. Romney, like Moorefield and Petersburg, is not close to the river but about half a mile distant and instead of occupying the river plain as in the case of the towns up river, lies on a plateau about 200 feet above the valley level. It is beautifully situated but we had a wet and muddy hike as our reward for reaching it. The population is about 2,000 and at present it enjoys the distinction of being the home of Governor Cornwell of West Virginia.

The Sunday camp.

After our usual visitation program of eating ice cream, attending to the mail, and purchasing papers and supplies, we hit the back trail to the canoe and resumed the cruise about 4:45. It was now getting late, and with the weather none too promising, we began to keep a lookout for a place to camp over the night but it was 6:30 and we had come five or six miles before we found a likely-looking location in a grove of trees on the right bank just below Wapocomo station. ...

Considering the late start that morning, the difficulty of paddling with the ponchos, and the numerous delays to dump the canoe or bale, we had covered 21 miles and were content to rest our laurels on this record.

Sunday, July 20th — The sun was shining brightly when the camp awoke about 7 o'clock this morning — a bad sign — but nevertheless optimism reigned supreme and all hands hit the water for the morning dip cheerfully. By the time breakfast was over, however, clouds again covered the sky and rain seemed imminent, but we packed the canoe as usual and at 9:15 pushed off.

Two miles below our camp we stopped a few minutes to visit at the Cumberland Y.M.C.A. boys' camp and found them idling about the tents waiting for the 11 o'clock Sunday morning devotions. The camp occupies a beautiful location near the village of Springfield and is just below the suspension bridge at this point. Between the camp and bridge was a high arching cliff of rock strata very similar to the "hanging rock" at Wapocomo and we stopped also to get a picture of this. Our picture taking was interrupted by a light shower of rain, making the eighth consecutive day that showers of some kind have fallen.

The 60 boys in camp were in the charge of two brothers by the name of Lewis and seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely. The Lewises were very genial and accommodating young fellows and took great pleasure in showing us about camp, talking freely of their plans for the future of the camp. The camp, however, already possessed most of the

desirable features usually associated with such an outing — fine deep swimming hole with plenty of equipment, good fishing, hill and mountain climbing, baseball and athletic field, and, above all, a very efficient-looking cook and a pantry full of provisions.

By the time we had taken leave of the campers, the sun had again gained the ascendency over the clouds and the appearance of the sky raised our hopes greatly, every indication pointing to a fine clear afternoon and the end of the wet spell. We had a fine cruise, the river winding in and out in large curves through the hills in real backwoods country. Even the railroad which had stuck close to either one side or other of the river most of the way down, deserted us just above Springfield and took advantage of a valley to the westward to make a short out to the main line at Green Spring. ...

Sunset on the South Branch.

The weather continuing fair and warm we decided to cut the day's journey short and make camp early so as to give our outfit a good chance to dry out thoroughly and also do some needed laundry work. We found an ideal spot in an angle where the river swung in close to the mountainside and we lost no time in getting our plunder ashore and camp in order. This location is on the right-hand bank just above a road bridge which carries the valley road across the river, the bridge being about a quarter of a mile below camp and hidden from sight. A fine cold spring, plenty of open forest, and a fine level plateau made this place almost the equal of our pine grove camp just below Moorefield, and we regretted that we could not spend at least another day there.

Dinner over, we spread our duffle out to dry and then went fishing. Luck was good and we soon had quite a string of chubs, sunfish, and a large sucker: plenty for supper and breakfast, so we pulled up our lines and returned to camp.

Having had a late dinner, we did not finish supper until nearly dark after which the campfire was in order, there being plenty of wood available for this so we made it a big one. Just before turning in we went for another bath and swim and noticed that the river had risen six inches or more and was as muddy as ever.

The day's cruise only totalled 12 miles but we were in no hurry as our schedule gave until tomorrow night to reach the mouth of the river and this we knew was only about 15 miles farther on, a distance we could cover at our present rate of travel in three or four hours.

Monday, July 21st — The sky was in its usual overcast condition when we rolled out this morning and while we indulged in the morning dip a slight shower of rain fell, making the ninth consecutive day we have had attention from old Jupe Pluvius. It soon passed over, however, and the sun came out bright and warm and after a fine breakfast we broke camp in ideal weather. ...

We passed several camps and cottages and shortly after 12 o'clock found ourselves nearing the mouth of the river. A landing was made on the right bank on a shelf at the base of the cliff and camp soon established. Our grub stake being low we decided to hike to Green Spring and lunch there, so we paddled the canoe downstream nearly a mile, landing on the opposite side from camp, where we hid the canoe and paddles in the bushes and took to the road. It proved a good three miles over to the village and we were fortunate in getting a lift by one of the campers from upstream, who happened along in a flivver about that time, also bent on going to town for mail and supplies.

The return trip was made by way of the railroad, and while possibly half a mile shorter, was plenty hot enough to more than make up the difference. The canoe was easily located and after a strenuous half hour's paddling against a stiff current we reached camp about 4 o'clock and all splashed in for a well-earned and much-needed swim.

After supper we fished a short time but did not catch anything. This locality is excellent for bass fishing when the water is in favorable condition but there are few holes or eddies to provide feeding places for other varieties and to this we attributed our unsuccess. As a camping place it is in a higher class, provided the camper is not unduly subject to ivy poisoning, there being liberal quantities of this delightful vine draped over the trees and bushes. Drinking water is found just across the river.

Tuesday, July 22nd — Camp awoke early today and with fair weather at last we took our morning dip, breakfasted, and loaded the canoe in record time, getting away about 8:45.

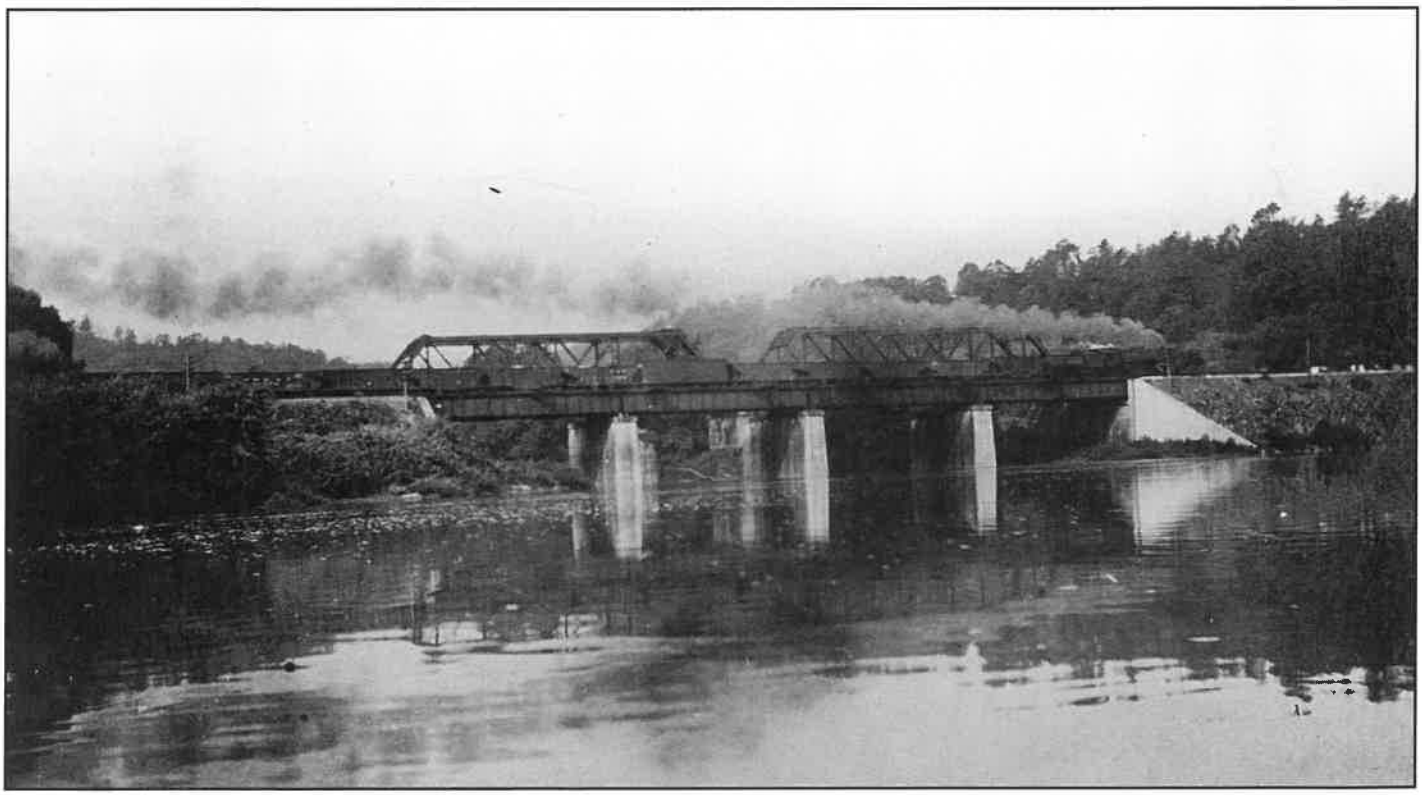
A mile below we passed under the main line railroad bridge and found ourselves on the Potomac River proper, the North and South branches of the stream uniting here and forming what is now "The Potomac." Several pictures were made of the bridge and some trains which happened along about this time and then we turned for a long trip downstream, for cruising was now our only object and we were anxious to test our speed. ...

For six more days — and 4,000 more words — the intrepid travelers continued their canoe-going adventure. The Potomac River was broader and busier than the South Branch. With West Virginia on their starboard and Maryland on their port side, they braved drenching rain storms, battled giant snapping turtles, endured less-than-ideal fishing conditions, and generally had a wonderful time.

Harold, the "mate," left the excursion on Sunday, July 27, in Harper's Ferry where he caught a train back to Charleston. His companions, H.W. Zeigler and Clifford Repass, the "captain" and "midshipman," continued for another two days, finally paddling 14 miles up the Monocacy River in Maryland. There the canoe was sold and the travelers traded in their sea legs for a much-deserved pair of train tickets.

They had canoed nearly 250 miles in a little over two weeks. It was a grand adventure, and they immediately began making plans for their next voyage.

(Other related GOLDENSEAL *stories include "Traveling the Trough: Camping and Fishing the South Branch," by Vernon O. Griffin; Summer 1987 and "The Hampshire Club: Where Millionaires Relaxed on the South Branch," by Louis E. Keefer; Summer 1995.) —ed.*



The formation of the Potomac River near Green Spring, where the North Branch joins the South Branch.

Remembering

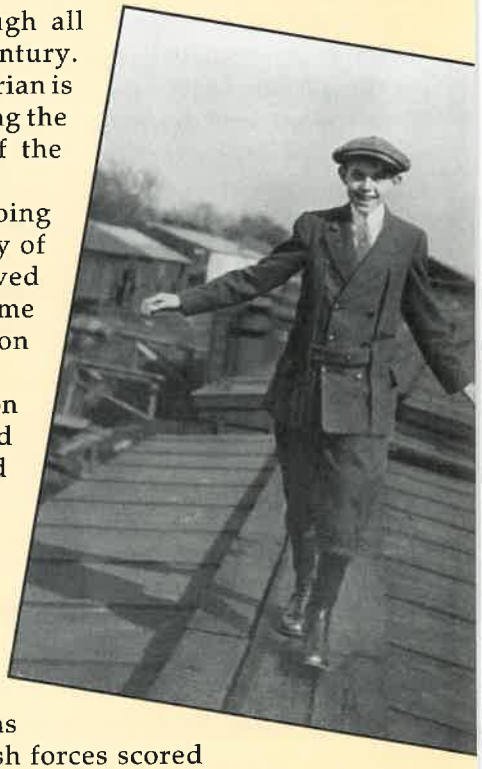
Harold Field (above) in his mid-60's. Photo by Deluxe Studio, Charleston. At right, Harold as a mischievous teenager, about 1915 in Charleston. Below, Harold with an engineering crew in the 1930's. Facing page, Harold at home in Charleston with daughter Frances. Photograph by Tess Field, 1936.

Harold Watson Field lived through all but four years of the 20th century. One of the pleasures of being a historian is the interesting people you meet along the way and Harold Field was one of the most memorable.

In the summer of 1987 I was doing research for my book on the history of Charleston High School and I received a tip that Harold Field might have some photos from his years at Charleston High before World War I.

A call produced a warm invitation and recollections of my dad who had been a long-time friend of Mr. Field from their American Legion days.

As I sat across the dining room table, this 87-year-old man, who was nearly blind, began to recite memories that spanned the American experience from the Wright Brothers to the moon landing.



Both of his parents were born in England and one of his scrapbooks was full of yellowed clippings of the early days of World War II when British forces scored precarious victories.

Another album highlighted his unexcelled career as a civil engineer and top-notch land surveyor. In his later years he served as a consultant for Union Carbide on several important projects. And at this writing his company, Field Engineering, still continues on with considerable prestige.

Then there were articles and memorabilia of his love for stamp collecting and his proud 71-year membership in the Masons. An avid traveler, he had been all over the world trying to satisfy an innate curosity.

Finally we came to the last album — dusty and tattered — full of fading photographs showing three fellows in a canoe.

As I described the scenes that he could no longer see, the years rolled away and the grey haired octogenarian before me smiled and became a mischievous teenager again.

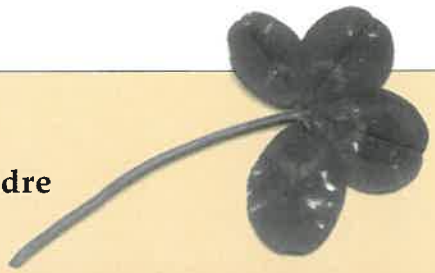
Harold Field loved to take photos and he recorded their Potomac adventure as if somehow he knew that a lifetime later the story would interest everyone who thrills at the sound of rushing waters and scenic grandeur.

"The Log Book" waited 79 years to be told. The boy who wrote it went to meet his maker in 1996 after a long and eventful life.

RICHARD ANDRE is a native of Charleston. He has co-authored five books of local history and written numerous magazine and newspaper articles. His latest contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1995.

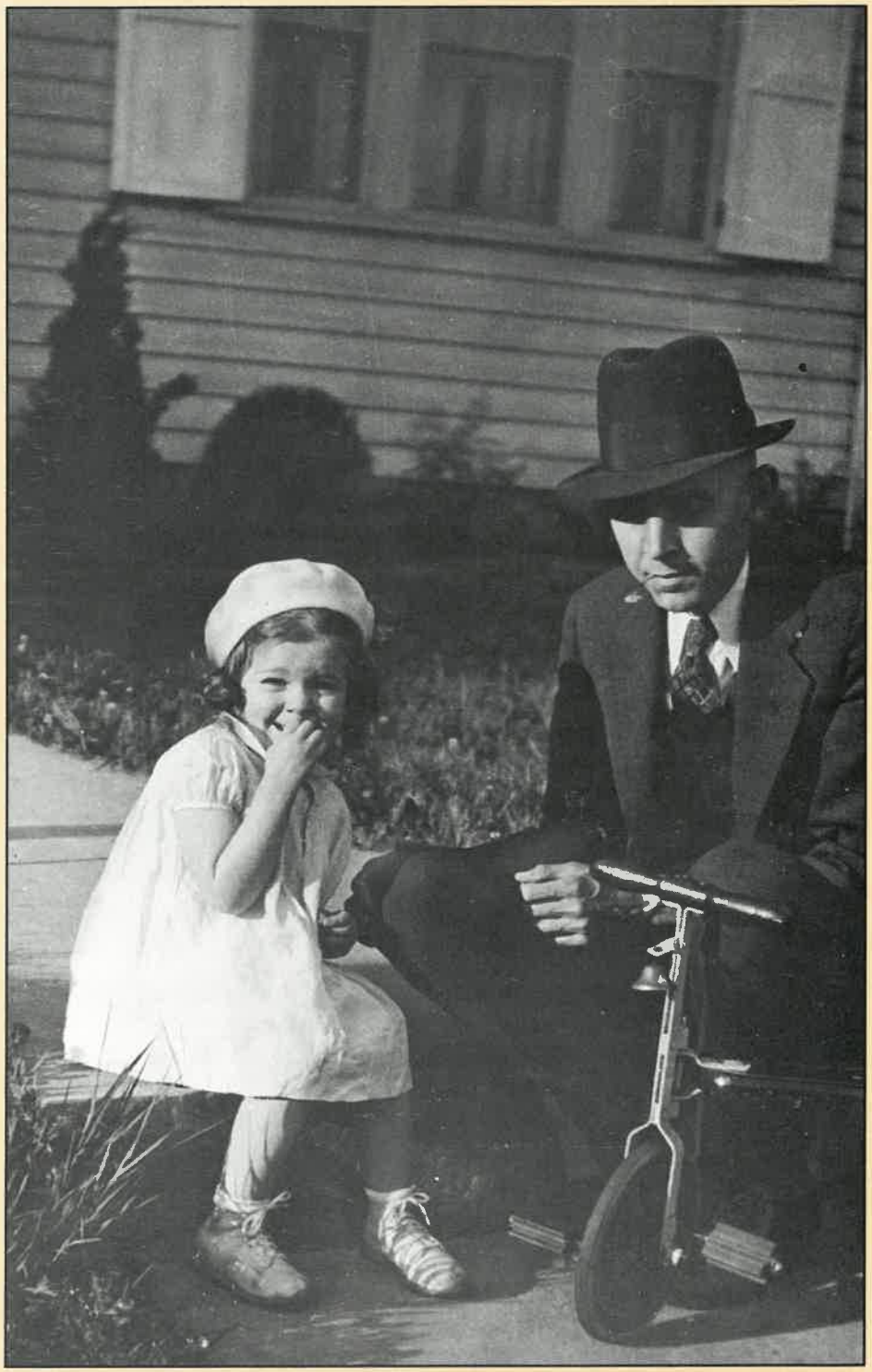
Harold Field

By Richard Andre



During work on this story, editor John Lilly met with Harold Field's daughter, Frances Fuller. She graciously offered memories of her father and help in identifying some of the photographs presented here. We couldn't resist asking about her father's fascination with four-leaf clovers, something John observed in reviewing the many scrapbooks Mr. Field assembled. The scrapbooks included correspondence with others about the possibility of cultivating these unusual backyard finds.

In this photograph (right), a four-leaf clover appears to be firmly clamped between Harold Field's teeth. Frances, shown here in Charleston in 1936, recalls big patches of clover in the family's yard. "After dinner we would go out in the evenings, sit down in the grass with a magnifying glass my father used for his stamp collecting, and hunt four-leaf clovers," she says. Father and daughter would then take the clovers and press them in books — mostly the family Bible, but also in books on the Civil War. "He would stick them in at random," she recalls. Frances also remembers accompanying her father on engineering jobs where they looked for four-leaf clovers.



"His reason to find them was for good luck," she says. Frances adds that her father had many interests. "That's what kept him going for so long," she observes.

The First Miss West Virginia

Neva "Toby" Jackson, Miss West Virginia 1923. Official portrait by Shea; Gravely-Moore, Charleston.

By Jane Mattaliano

There was an air of excitement in the little town of Philippi on that sultry August morning in 1923. As throngs of townspeople hurried toward the train depot adjacent to the covered bridge, they passed storefronts draped with colorful bunting and plastered with welcome signs. Some paused at midpoint along Main Street to view the window display of photos and gifts at the W. O. Davis Drug Store, while across the brick street, girls and women admired a special exhibit of gowns, slippers, and jewelry in the Crim Company's windows. At nearby Crim Hall, workers positioned tables, chairs, and floral arrangements for that evening's reception. As the train pulled into the station, citizens strained for a glimpse of the beautiful young passenger stepping to the platform amid cheers and applause. Miss West Virginia of 1923, Miss Neva "Toby" Jackson, had returned to her hometown.

The popular eighteen-year-old beauty had just completed three

exciting days at the State Beauty Pageant in Fairmont, during which she won the honor of representing West Virginia at the National Beauty Tournament at Atlantic City, New Jersey, on September 5, 6, and 7.

Initially reluctant to enter the contest, the striking brunette, a college student and employee of the *Philippi Republican* newspaper, was urged by her friends and coworkers to represent Philippi in the state competition. Her main concern was that, in order to enter, she would miss the county institute sessions necessary to fulfill a teaching contract she had signed for the coming school term. Now she returned triumphant from the state beauty tournament, and would soon compete for the coveted title of "Miss America."

West Virginia had not had a beauty competition previously. Although the first national contest to select a Miss America was held in 1921 in an effort to keep tourists in Atlantic City after Labor Day, participation in the early pageants was sparse, with only eight entrants the first year. But by 1923, the *Fairmont West Virginian* decided to sponsor a state competition to coincide with the annual meeting of the State Bankers Association.

The contest, which took place at the new Fairmont Theater on Tuesday, August 21, 1923, attracted the largest crowd the theater had seen since its opening the previous spring. More than 1,700 tickets were sold, including several hundred for standing room. Many were turned away. Elaborate preparations for the event were handled by theater manager H.C. Gordon.

Ten contestants participated, and five prominent bankers attending the 30th annual convention of the West Virginia State Bankers Association served as judges.

Staged during a spectacular revue of 11 New York vaudeville acts brought in especially for the convention, the pageant received much advance publicity from the sponsoring newspaper. The contest followed a dinner for the contestants, judges, and the *West Virginian* newspaper at the Fairmont Country Club.

For their first appraisal by judges and audience, the ten young contestants "all gowned exquisitely and in accordance with their respective types," passed slowly in review before a special palace setting. Judges used scorecards to rate each young lady on general appearance, complexion, hair, facial beauty, and stage manner. The participants then returned for an ensemble review, with all ten beauties together on the platform to provide the five judges a second opportunity to select the winner.

Advertisement from the Fairmont *West Virginian*, August 1923. For her upcoming appearance in Atlantic City, Miss Jackson selected an evening gown from Osgood's, "The Best Place to Shop, After All."

"Miss West Virginia's" Evening Gown

No bathing suit or talent competitions were held. "In appraising the maidens who pass before them," the *West Virginian* noted, "the judges will place much stress upon stately carriage and general contour."

At the conclusion of the vaudeville performance, Oscar C. Wilt introduced the three finalists: Miss Grafton, (Margaret Niland); Miss Fairmont, (Marion Stephenson); and Miss Philippi, (Neva Jackson). The emcee then presented Miss West Virginia 1923, Neva Jackson, to the enthusiastic audience. Described by a Fairmont *West Virginian* correspondent as medium-sized with dark, bobbed hair, fair skin, and gray eyes, Miss Jackson wore an old-gold lace gown loaned by Jones Dress Shop, gold brocade slippers, and long jade earrings.

The runner-up, Margaret Niland, competed in a black gown embellished with blue sequins, with a Spanish comb in her brown hair. Today, Margaret Niland Malone, now 95, still has her "Miss Grafton" banner, and has often recounted the excitement of the long-ago pageant and the thrill of being introduced as a finalist, along with Neva, and the third-place winner, Marion Stephenson. "She was a lovely girl," recalls Margaret, who has kept a photograph of Miss West Virginia for 75 years.

While in Fairmont, the ten carefully-chaperoned beauties were entertained at several social events, including a luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel and a dinner at the country club, both given by the sponsoring newspaper.

The day following her victory, the new Miss West Virginia posed for her official photographs by Shea Studio of Charleston, enjoyed a shopping tour, and was the honor guest at the luncheon meeting of the Fairmont Kiwanis Club. That evening, Miss Jackson made two appearances between acts at the Fairmont Theater to display some of the fashionable wardrobe donated by local firms.

To ensure that Miss West Virginia would be properly attired for any occasion while in Atlantic City, Hartley's Department Store provided an afternoon dress, and the E. C. Jones Store donated lingerie, with the Hat Box furnishing milli-

Runner-up Margaret Niland, Miss Grafton. Soon after the 1923 pageant, she married and became Margaret Malone; she is shown here in her wedding picture. Today, Mrs. Malone is 95 years old and still lives in Grafton.

nery, and Fanus & Company supplying jewelry for the various costumes. The Holt-Rowe Novelty Company provided the special-order Jantzen swimming suit required for the national pageant, and Millard's Dress Shop of Atlantic City donated a supply of hosiery. Many items from this exquisite wardrobe were displayed in Philippi prior to Miss Jackson's departure for Atlantic City.

Miss West Virginia's hometown offered its victorious native daughter a spectacular public celebration, beginning with the welcome at the Philippi railroad station by a cheering crowd of one thousand townspeople. Friends, neighbors, members of the various civic organizations, and representatives from nearly every local business greeted Miss Jackson as she arrived on August 23 at 9:45 a.m. A parade of automobiles through the streets provided residents a closer glimpse of the beauty queen.

That evening, A. S. Poling, editor of the *Barbour Democrat,* presided at a reception for Miss Jackson at Crim Hall. Several friends stood with Miss West Virginia in the receiving line as she received congratulations from local residents and out-of-town friends. The program included music by Red's Pep Orchestra, led by Adrian F. Davis, and several speeches.The following week Miss Jackson resumed her duties at the *Philippi Republican,* juggling her work with numerous public appearances.

In addition to being the first Miss West Virginia, Neva Jackson also had the distinction of being a third cousin of General Stonewall Jackson. Her grandfather, Samuel Dexter Jackson of Upshur County, was first cousin to the famous Civil War general. Born on February 21, 1904, Toby was the oldest of three children of Granville D. and Ana Rogers Jackson. No one recalls how she acquired her nickname, but Neva was "Toby" to both family and friends from an early age. The family resided in Volga during the early years. Her mother died in 1911. When Neva's father remarried in 1915, he moved the family to Philippi where he was employed in the post office, and served as superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School. Neva received most of her schooling in Philippi, and is fondly remembered by her former classmates.

Neva Jackson with brothers Roger and Reed, about 1915.

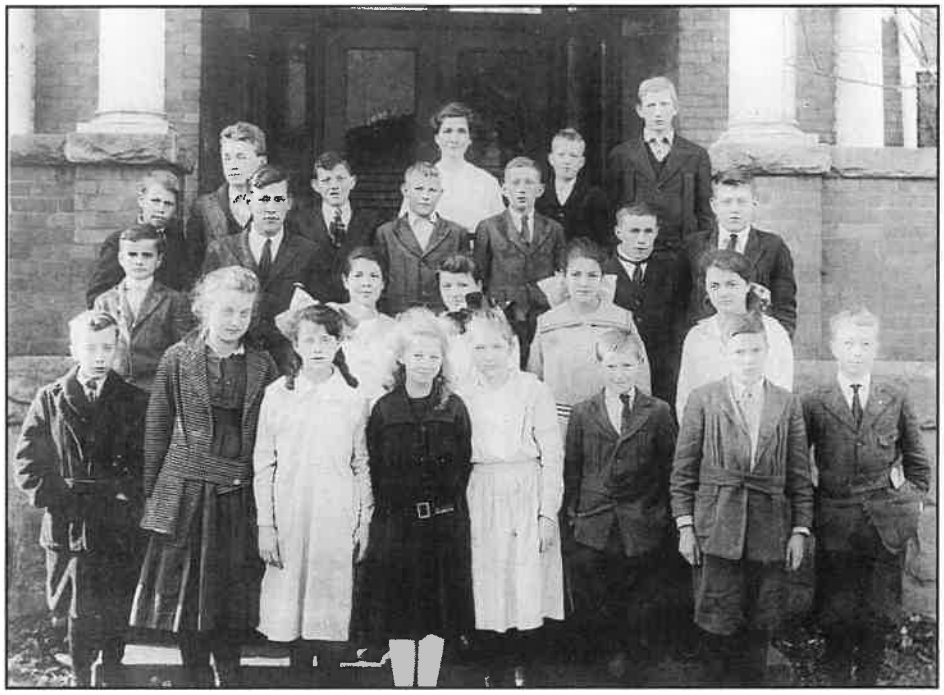
Pauline Watson "Curly" Fife describes Neva as a bright, striking brunette whose big, dark eyes were her best feature. Mrs. Fife has vivid memories of double dates with Toby, when the girls and their dates, Hu Myers and Paul Ware, met at each other's homes to dance to tunes like "Whispering" and "My Buddy," cranked out on the Victrola. Mrs. Fife also remembers that Toby was among the first to drive a car, often giving rides to her friends "all the way out to the W. D. Zinn farm." Mrs. Fife is now 94 and lives in Hinton.

Another friend and schoolmate, Pauline "Bud" Weekley Waddell of Buckhannon, remembered Toby as friendly, but somewhat quiet and reserved, with expressive eyes. Mrs. Waddell chuckled as she described staying all night at Toby's home in the Georgetown area, where the trio of pals — Curly, Bud, and Toby — slept three in a bed, talking and giggling most of the night. On many Sunday afternoons, according to Mrs. Waddell, a crowd of young people met at Toby's and walked several miles up the unpaved road to the Mt. Vernon Cemetery. Mrs. Waddell passed away in 1997.

The three close friends were members of the 1922 graduating class, the first class to graduate from the new Philippi High School, which opened the previous year. After graduation, the friends separated to attend college, with Neva study-

ing for one year at Broaddus College in Philippi, where she was a cheerleader. During the summer of 1923, she completed a short course at Fairmont Normal School, practicing her swimming on weekends at Camp Toraizel on Poplar Island.

At the time of the state beauty contest in August, Neva had signed a contract to teach first grade at the little mining town of Century in Barbour County. However, according to relatives, she never taught at Century, perhaps because she missed the required pre-school meetings held during the week of the state pageant.



Neva Jackson poses for a class picture during the 1916-17 school year. Neva is second from the right in the second row, with a large bow. In the front row are friends Pauline "Bud" Weekley (second from the left), and Pauline "Curly" Watson (fourth from the right).

On Sunday afternoon, September 2, amid the cheers and farewells of 500 citizens, Miss Jackson boarded the train that took her to Fairmont, the first stop on her journey to Atlantic City. The following afternoon, she and her chaperone, Mrs. A. I. Garrett, boarded the overnight train and began an exciting and exhausting week.

Atlantic City spared no expense to welcome the quarter of a million visitors who thronged to the "World's Greatest Playground" for the three-day event. The famed boardwalk, lined with colorful streamers and banners, made a spectacular setting for the outdoor appearances of the "dazzling gathering of feminine pulchritude."

Most contestants entered as "inter-city beauties," such as Miss Dayton, Miss Brooklyn, etc. In a group photograph of the contestants, Miss West Virginia, positioned directly behind Miss America, was one of the few entrants wearing a state banner, rather than that of a designated city.

"I am thrilled to the ears! I am just too excited to even talk, but I am certainly glad to be here. It has been one round of excitement after another, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world." With these words Neva Jackson described the thrill of appearing on the stage of the Garden Pier Theater and being introduced to King Neptune and the public on Wednesday evening. In the audience were several people from Fairmont and Philippi, including her parents, Mr. and Mrs. G. D. Jackson.

A board of five judges, headed by artist Norman Rockwell, began the arduous task of selecting the finalists from the 74 contestants from 36 states. Miss West Virginia remained a contender after winning third place in the southern division of the rolling chair parade on Thursday. Fifteen girls were selected in this first elimination, based on the beauty of the entrants and the decorations of the wicker chairs in which

Pauline Watson Fife is still known to her friends as "Curly." She is 94 years old and lives in Hinton. Photo by Michael Keller.

they rode along the boardwalk. According to an account in the *Philippi Republican*, Miss West Virginia's chair was decorated with "mountain rhododendron gathered from the Barbour County forests of her native state" and sent from the Kiwanis Club of Philippi. Trophies for these winners were awarded during the evening gown competition later that evening.

Audiences for the various events were large and vocal. The judges were challenged to choose between two distinct types: the petite and shapely "flapper," versus the "demure old-fashioned miss with well-turned ankles and long tresses." The judges faced a tedious process of elimination, during which spectators repeatedly voiced their preferences. The rigorous selection process, using a point system, included the bathers' revue, the only time contestants appeared in swimwear, and the evening gown competition. No talent contest was held. Judges based their selections on physical qualifications and personality as they searched for the ideal American girl.

The final event of the 1923 National Pageant on Friday evening, was a four-hour program "before a vociferous throng that taxed the capacity of the Million Dollar Pier Ballroom." Despite the popularity of Miss Philadelphia and Miss St. Louis, both strong favorites of the crowd, the announcement of the selection of the winner, Miss Mary Katherine Campbell of Columbus, Ohio, was met with cheers and thunderous applause. In an unusual twist, the 1923 Miss America was also the reigning Miss America, having been selected the previous year as well. Indeed, the Golden Mermaid, the solid gold trophy awarded to the winner, became the permanent property of any girl who won it three times! As she knelt on a velvet cushion, Miss America received her crown and scepter from King Neptune.

Miss West Virginia expressed no disappointment over the decision. "I could not believe that my chances were very great among so many beautiful girls," she commented in a post-pageant interview. "I am entirely satisfied with the results of the pageant and have had the most wonderful time of my life. I am very grateful to the people of my home city for the opportunity they have given me, and tell them I did my best to justify the confidence they placed in me. The week's activities have been great, and I am tired, but very happy, and shall always remember with pleasure my participation in the pageant of 1923."

Following a dinner dance at the Chelsea Yacht Club the following evening, Miss Jackson and her entourage returned home, stopping in Pittsburgh en route to visit relatives. Her trophy was displayed both in Fairmont and Philippi.

After the excitement of the national pageant, Neva Jackson completed her education at West Virginia University and began her intended teaching career. Following her father's death in 1924, she took her two young brothers to Clay County. She taught in the high school there, and later taught at Leewood Junior High. On January 1, 1929, Neva Jackson married Carroll B. Bolton in the First Presbyterian Church in Morgantown, and moved to the Morgantown area. For several years she was an English teacher at Morgantown High School. Her younger half-sister, Ruth, who lived with the Boltons while attending West Virginia University, recalls that Neva's grandmother, Mrs. John Rogers, also resided with them for a while.

1923 Inter-City Beauties competed for the title of Miss America in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Miss West Virginia is tenth from the left, second row.

Miss West Virginia Today

The 1998 Miss West Virginia pageant will be held in Clarksburg at Robert C. Byrd High School on June 25 through 27. Miss West Virginia competes with other young women for the Miss America title in Atlantic City each fall, but nowadays the emphasis is on community service and higher education. Awards come in the form of scholarships.

Miss West Virginia, named by the State Legislature in 1972 as the official state hostess, makes appearances throughout the year as a speaker, performer, emcee, and hostess. Miss West Virginia 1997 is Eisa Megan Krushansky of Morgantown. In addition to the state crown, Eisa won special recognition for her work with Alzheimer's disease.

Twila Gump of Shinnston is executive director of the Miss West Virginia Scholarship Organization, as it is now known. "We exist to help young women fund their educations, prepare for success in their careers, showcase their talents, and serve their communities," she says. The organization is staffed entirely by volunteers.

For more information contact the Miss West Virginia Scholarship Organization, P.O. Box 4146, Clarksburg, WV 26302; or call Twila Gump at (304)592-0096.

A respected educator and well-known resident, Neva Jackson Bolton was a member of the Morgantown Service League, the Delta Gamma sorority, the Amusu Club, and the Wesley Methodist Church. In the early '40's, ill health forced her to discontinue her teaching, and despite consultations with specialists in Pittsburgh, she died at the Heiskell Memorial Hospital in Morgantown on December 1, 1945. She was 41 years old. In addition to her husband and stepmother, she was survived by an adopted son, David Lyle Bolton; two brothers, Roger and Reed Jackson; a half-sister, Ruth Jackson Propst; and her grandmother, Mrs. John Rogers.

During her short life, Neva Toby Jackson left her mark. The impact of her achievement is evident, even today, as local residents reminisce about the celebrated citizen. The beautiful, vibrant Miss West Virginia made a lasting impression on several young school girls of the 1920's. Josephine Zinn, Lucille Malone, Sue Tenney, and Sylvia Reed are all in their late 80's or early 90's, and still living in the Philippi area. Sue Tenney still recalls the beautiful red dress Miss Jackson wore when visiting the Peel Tree School, where she dazzled the students and teacher Jesse Lang. Sylvia Reed, who recently celebrated her 90th birthday, remembers seeing Miss West Virginia riding the merry-go-round during the county street fair.

Although Neva Jackson did not capture the title of Miss America, to the proud residents of her hometown, she was a winner, fondly remembered as the first Miss West Virginia.

JANE MATTALIANO, a native of Wood County, came to Philippi as a college student and stayed to raise a family and pursue her career as an educator. She worked for the Barbour County Board of Education for 24 years and was assistant professor of education at Alderson-Broaddus College. Jane is the author of *Milestones: A Pictorial History of Philippi, West Virginia*, two cookbooks, and numerous articles. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Zebedee John Crouse Mountain Photo

By Myrtle R. Reul

Photographs by Zebedee John Crouse

My father was born September 17, 1871, near Webster in Taylor County. The baby who came into the world that September morning was destined to have the physical build of his father — wide shoulders, long slender fingers, long legs, and a mature height of "six foot in his stocking feet." His thick black hair would tend toward waviness and, as he approached his 70th year, it would whiten with a silver cast that fell in deep waves, the envy of many women at a time when "finger waves" were popular. His eyes were brown, not dark brown like his mother's, but medium in color flecked with highlights of amber and a hint of blue inherited from his father. In his late 20's, Zebedee is said to have worn a full beard for about a year but, after that, he was always clean-shaven except for a mustache.

From an early age, Zebedee John Crouse was aware of the importance of photographs, especially to mothers. He saw his mother exhibit his own baby picture, a tintype. As a young child and later as a teenager, he talked about becoming a photographer and taking pictures not only of babies, but of landscapes

Zebedee John Crouse. Photo by Foreman Studio, Grafton, 1899.

grapher

and of people at work or doing everyday tasks. He felt life was changing in West Virginia and that it should be recorded.

My paternal grandfather, Anthony Hamilton Crouse, was a farmer and veteran of the Civil War. He felt the only two occupations a man should follow were those of farmer or soldier. He was disappointed and even angered that his young son, instead of eagerly planting corn, preferred to sit on a hilltop watching the effects of sunlight, fog, or shadows on the view of a distant valley and imagining what it would look like in a photograph. This father transmitted to his son his love of travel, the tug of faraway places, and his sense of humor. In turn, Zebedee John inherited from his mother, Rebecca, a loyalty to family and a concern for the well-being of others; in his adult years, this was expressed in his concern for West Virginia coal miners working under unsafe conditions, for exploited Native Americans on western reservations, and for the widespread destruction of natural resources. He was determined to make pictures that would show life in his time period but, wherever possible, would also show the need for social change.

To make his dream come true, Zebedee read everything he could find on the new art of photography which had started in Europe in 1839. After an 1889 visit to the Foreman Studio in Grafton, he had a pretty good idea of what sort of camera and supplies he would need, and approximately how much everything would cost. He was now more than ever determined to be a photographer, so he set out to earn the money.

At 18, he became a brakeman on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's run from Cumberland, Maryland, to Parkersburg, with a stopover in Grafton. His job paid $2.54 for a ten-hour day. After five years he had saved enough money to buy cameras and an enlarger; to rent a studio in the little community of Cecil, Taylor County; to stock his dark room; and to buy a horse, saddle, and a buggy with a storage compartment. Earlier he had started photographing part-time, riding horseback into the mountains of Pendleton County and southward with his camera strapped behind his saddle. He followed narrow dirt trails, dropped down into valleys he never knew existed, and brought a camera into parts of West Virginia where people had never seen a camera. As they had little money, he often traded pictures for eggs or vegetables.

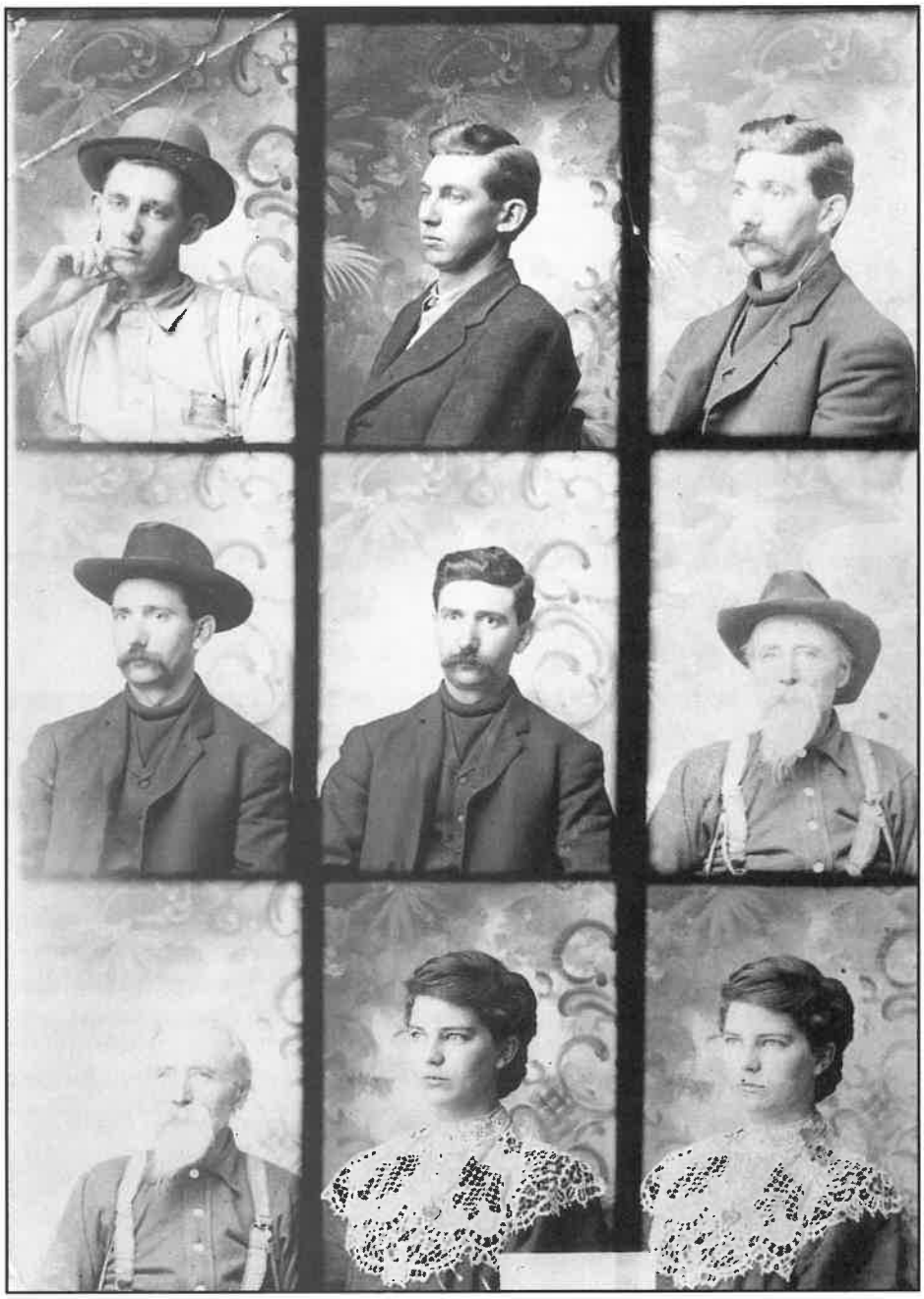
This was the time of glass negatives and time exposures, when subjects, whether babies, children, adults, or animals, had to hold perfectly still anywhere from 30 seconds to two or even three minutes, depending upon lighting. There was no wide lens. In

Tintype of Zebedee as a baby, 1872. Photographer unknown.

Zebedee worked five years as a brakeman on the B&O to save money for photography equipment. This railroad portrait was made in Ritchie County, in 1895, shortly after he began working as a full-time photographer.

order to take panoramic views, it was necessary to set up the tripod, take a picture, and, without moving the tripod, swivel the camera slightly to take a second picture; when developed, those pictures were joined together, carefully matching trees, rocks or buildings. Flash powder, made from a mixture of picric acid, chlorate of potash, and powdered magnesium, had to be used for indoor pictures and, in addition, if the room was large (like a church), kerosene lamps had to be lighted.

In the beginning Zebedee experimented with various backgrounds, using a "crazy quilt," a blanket, wallpaper, a goatskin, natural foliage, a hillside, or even a large rock. In his studio he used photographic backgrounds painted on muslin, and when he traveled he rolled one up and carried it with him. As the glass negatives which he treated with emulsion were heavy and fragile to transport, he learned how to make multiple exposures on one piece of glass.



Glass plate negatives were used in the early days of photography. Here, Zebedee exposed nine images on one negative. Taylor County, 1899.

Starting in 1894, photography was my father's full-time occupation. He maintained his studio in Cecil on a schedule which allowed him to continue to make field trips into other areas of the state. On one such trip into the western part of Barbour County where he did a good deal of work in the little community of Burnersville (now called Volga), he met Victoria Robinson whom he had known when they were young children attending a one-room rural school at Pleasant Creek in Taylor County. She was a dressmaker who had her own millinery shop, designed ladies' hats, and had recently completed a correspondence course through the University of Chicago in the art of retouching glass negatives and tinting pictures. Zebedee John, who wanted the services of a retoucher, made an arrangement with her to do the retouching of his negatives and to tint his enlargements. On Sundays he would drive from Cecil, bringing the glass negatives he wanted retouched along with trial prints, on the back of which he wrote instructions such as, "take out shadows on the left," or "see what you can do about the heavy wrinkles around the eyes."

During the years, as they worked together producing beautiful pictures for satisfied customers, their professional respect for each other developed into love. Zebedee John Crouse and Victoria Robinson were married in the home of the bride at Burnersville on August 15, 1901, a marriage which lasted for more than 58 years. For their first home, they bought an old house in Quiet Dell, Harrison County, where my father converted part of a stone springhouse into a small darkroom so he could do some of his processing there and would not need to spend as much time at his studio in

Cecil. He still continued to do fieldwork, traveling by buggy to photograph construction sites, farm sales, or individuals in their own homes.

While he never specialized in one area of photography, father received a great deal of acclaim for his skill in photographing young children, and his ability to ensure they would remain perfectly still long enough for a time exposure.

Some of Zebedee's most perceptive pictures of what life was like at the turn of the century came from photographing community events, or from making pictures of people in various occupations showing the equipment they used or the products they produced. He did a series on construction, and another series on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

During the years, their professional respect for each other developed into love.

With businessmen and county officials, my father developed a reputation for being able to take pictures of buildings where the location created focusing problems. The best example of this was the Doddridge County Courthouse which he photographed in November of 1902. The new courthouse was to be dedicated in early 1903 and other photographers had tried to photograph it, but its location on a high hill surrounded by older buildings resulted in pictures where the courthouse seemed to lean, or where the clock tower was cropped off. Evaluating the situation, Zebedee decided the only way the courthouse could be photographed was from the roof of a building at the foot of the hill. When he showed his results to the commissioners, they were ecstatic with praise, asking how he did it. "Professional secret," was his reply.

One part of his work which became very lucrative was making pictures into postcards. The "postcard craze" was at its peak around the turn of the century. The most popular cards were photographs of individuals, babies, children, and pets; the next most popular were

This unidentified girl refused to smile for the camera until Zebedee brought her dog into the picture. Taylor County, 1905.

An Upshur County sawmill operation in 1900.

scenic views and the West Virginia countryside was a photographic paradise. New buildings, like the Doddridge County Courthouse, were also high on the demand list.

In the years Zebedee had been a full-time photographer, his father had never commented about his work. Grandfather had seen some of his son's pictures and while he never criticized, neither had he expressed approval. As my father told me the story years later, it was on a spring morning in 1902 that he was getting a large order ready for delivery. He said his father, who was visiting, watched him for a long time in silence and then suddenly asked, "How much are they paying you for all that?"

"If you can make that kind of money with a camera, I was wrong and I'll never criticize you again for as long as I live."

Father said he answered, "I get $17 a dozen for this size here, and $15 for these, but when people take a dozen of each, like this order, I give them a special price of $30. There are also two black-and-white enlargements with this order, so I'll collect $42."

"How long did it take you to do all this?" Anthony continued.

"One evening and a long day. Mounting each picture takes quite awhile as..."

His father interrupted. "You mean, you can make $42 in one day?" Anthony was incredulous. Grandfather's shocked reaction is understandable when that $42 is compared with the wage of a 1902 farm worker. According to Paul H. Douglas in *Real Wages in the United States, 1890-1926*, the monthly wage for a farm employee in 1902 working a six-day week from "dawn to can't see," was $19.85.

After hearing the amount of money his son would collect, grandfather was silent several minutes and then he continued. "If you can make that kind of money with a camera, I was wrong and I'll never criticize you again for as long as I live."

Doddridge County Courthouse, West Union, November 1902.

From that point on, my grandfather made glowing comments about his son and his work until he passed away in October 1902.

The following years were busy and successful for my father and his photography business. Things were also busy at home as my mother bore a daughter in 1902, a son in 1904, and another son in 1906. Father was often away for days at a time tending to his photography, and my mother, left alone to care for three young children, began to wish for a change.

In 1906, that change occurred. During a relatively slow period for Zebedee John's photography business, Mother convinced him to take a job in one of the local coal mines. This was an eye-opening experience. During his brief tenure as a

Photographs of Zebedee Crouse

Photographer of the Hills and Prairielands is Dr. Myrtle Reul's tribute to her father's work as a photographer. The 274-page hardbound book is an impressive compilation of photographs from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, most of which were made in Barbour, Taylor, and Harrison Counties.

Most of the 254 published images were taken, developed, and printed by Crouse. However, the work of his wife, Victoria Robinson Crouse, is also included in the book. She made her own pictures (mostly of Zebedee), retouched glass negatives, and tinted the photographs her husband made.

Though more than 2,000 glass negatives were lost or destroyed over time, enough of Crouse's work was preserved by family members to publish *Photographer of the Hills and Prairielands*. "His pictures are a portrayal of styles, customs, babies, children, families, homes, newlyweds, occupations, recreational activities, transportation, and adverse weather," his daughter says.

Dr. Reul's book is more than a pictorial history. She learned much about the art and science of photography from her parents, and explains it very clearly. The large format book includes a glossary of photographic terms, appendices about the history of photography, a bibliography, and index.

Photographer of the Hills and Prairielands is available in West Virginia at Tamarack in Beckley and at Prickett's Fort State Park in Fairmont. Mail orders may be sent to The Athens Printing Company, 1135 Cedar Shoals Drive, Athens, GA 30605. The cost is $55, including shipping and handling.

miner, my father became acutely aware of the dangerous working conditions in the mines during those early years. His attempts to rally coworkers into organizing were unsuccessful.

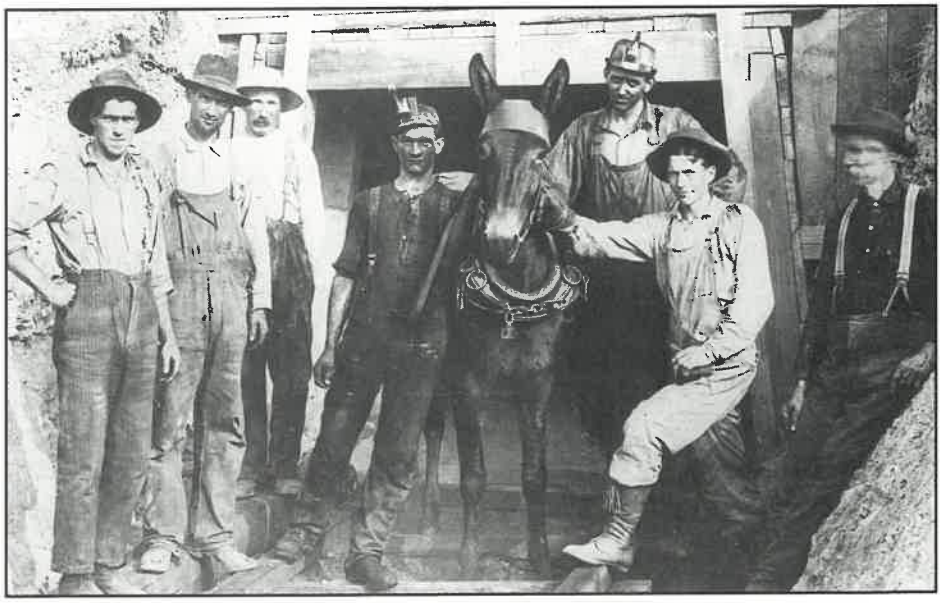
After being involved in a near fatal cave-in, my father decided to take his camera into the mine. He hoped that his documentation of the hazardous conditions would help to alert state officials to the miners' desperate situation. Instead, mining officials destroyed his glass plates, threatened to destroy his camera, and "blackballed" him from every mine in that part of the state.

Although he returned to his full-time photography business, Zebedee John remained frustrated and disappointed at the miners' hesitation to organize, and was haunted by the conditions he had seen and experienced. Compounded with the struggles to balance his demanding photography business with family life, my father made an adventurous decision.

In March of 1910, Zebedee John traveled with a friend to the prairie lands of Sheridan County, Montana, and filed two homestead claims: one for himself, the other for his widowed mother. My mother, three older siblings, and my grandmother joined him that summer, embarking on an entirely new way of life for our family.

On a prairie homestead, concern for the first five years was divided between building some sort of living shelter, usually a small tarpaper-covered shack or a "sod shanty," and getting the land into production. The various homestead laws required that the land be lived on, and that by the second year, one-eighth be under cultivation. In five years, all tillable areas of a homestead had to be producing. This meant clearing the land of stone, breaking up the virgin soil, plowing, discing, and planting some form of grain like wheat, oats, barley, or flax.

I was born in Montana in 1918. Our neighbors were immigrant farmers who joined us in the never-ending struggle to wrench a living from the dry, rocky plain. None of



Miners and their mule were pictured coming off their shift at the Tyrconnel Mine in Rosemont, Taylor County, 1904.

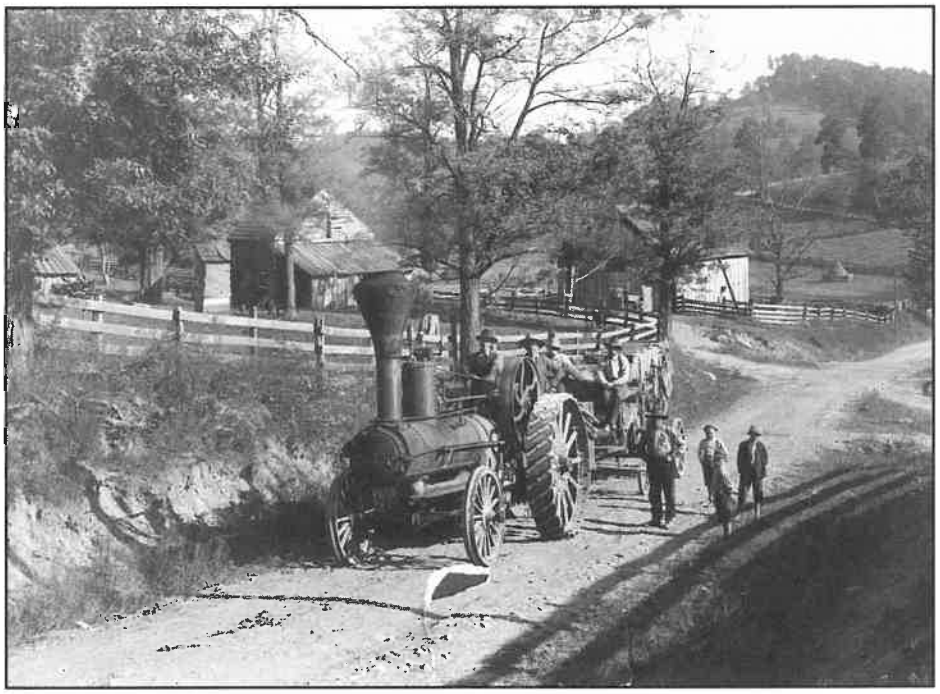
these families had ever seen — or anticipated — such harsh conditions when they took on the challenge of homesteading. These were very lean years.

During this determined attempt to survive in Montana, my parents sorely missed the green, rolling hills of West Virginia. In my preschool days and when the heavy snows of winter limited our travel, they used the West Virginia photographs to teach me about hills, wide rivers, tall trees, and styles of housing very different from the sod shanties and tiny two-or three-room houses which dotted the Montana countryside.

The local hard-scrabble farmers and ranchers laughed at the suggestion that my father was a talented photographer. In the prairie lands of Montana, there was little interest in photography. Photographic paper and chemical supplies were not available in those early days of homesteading in that section of the West, and the financial and physical hardship of prairie living did not lend itself to ordering photographs.

While my father was no longer very active as a photographer, his love of photography was always with him. As we rode in a buggy or one-horse sleigh throughout Sheridan County, my father taught me to see a picture in every view, like the ripple of wind through a wheat field, the scurry of prairie dogs, or the layered drifts of snow that covered fence posts.

Most important were his teachings about the use of shadows and sunlight. There were times he got out his camera and had me duck under the focusing cloth with him so he could show me how a view appeared upside down on the ground glass screen and how the various sizes of the aperture controlled the opening to the lens. But mostly he talked about how to view nature as if from the lens of a camera. He liked to quote the author Henry David Thoreau as saying, "The question is not what you look at, but what you see."



This steam engine was used to power a threshing machine in Barbour County, 1900.

In 1927, my mother and I boarded a train and traveled home to West Virginia after my maternal grandmother suffered a stroke. I never returned to Montana to live. We heard about the availability of small farms with fruit trees in Michigan, and my parents and I moved there later that year. The rest of the family stayed in Montana.

In Michigan, I got my first camera in the midst of the Depression as a bonus prize from the Ferry Seed Company for selling seeds. From the first click of the shutter, I became hopelessly hooked on photography. Father contrasted my small camera with the type of equipment he had used 38 years before. Getting out the tripod, he set up his

A polite lady always rode sidesaddle, especially when she expected to have her picture made. Harrison County, 1901.

one remaining camera so the two of us could examine it to see similarities and how my camera differed.

His enthusiasm was contagious as he explained how he cut and prepared his glass negatives, sensitized them with the emulsion, exposed them in the camera, and went through the developing and fixing processes. As he described the various formulas he made, I began at the age of 14 to write them down so I could ask him to explain the difference between a gram, a grain, or a dram, and how he used his apothecary scales.

The secret in photography, he told me, was not only envisioning the picture and using the camera to capture it; the real test came in the darkroom during the development process when the image was brought out and fixed permanently.

From the first click of the shutter, I became hopelessly hooked on photography.

The secret for permanent preservation of photographs, he explained, was in the washing and re-washing of prints to remove processing chemicals. Knowing it was virtually impossible to get all the residue of silver nitrate off a print, he used gold toning. This process meant the silver grains on the image were coated with gold which protected them from atmospheric exposure, so his pictures would retain their clear image much longer. "The process used in developing can make or break a picture," was one of his favorite sayings.

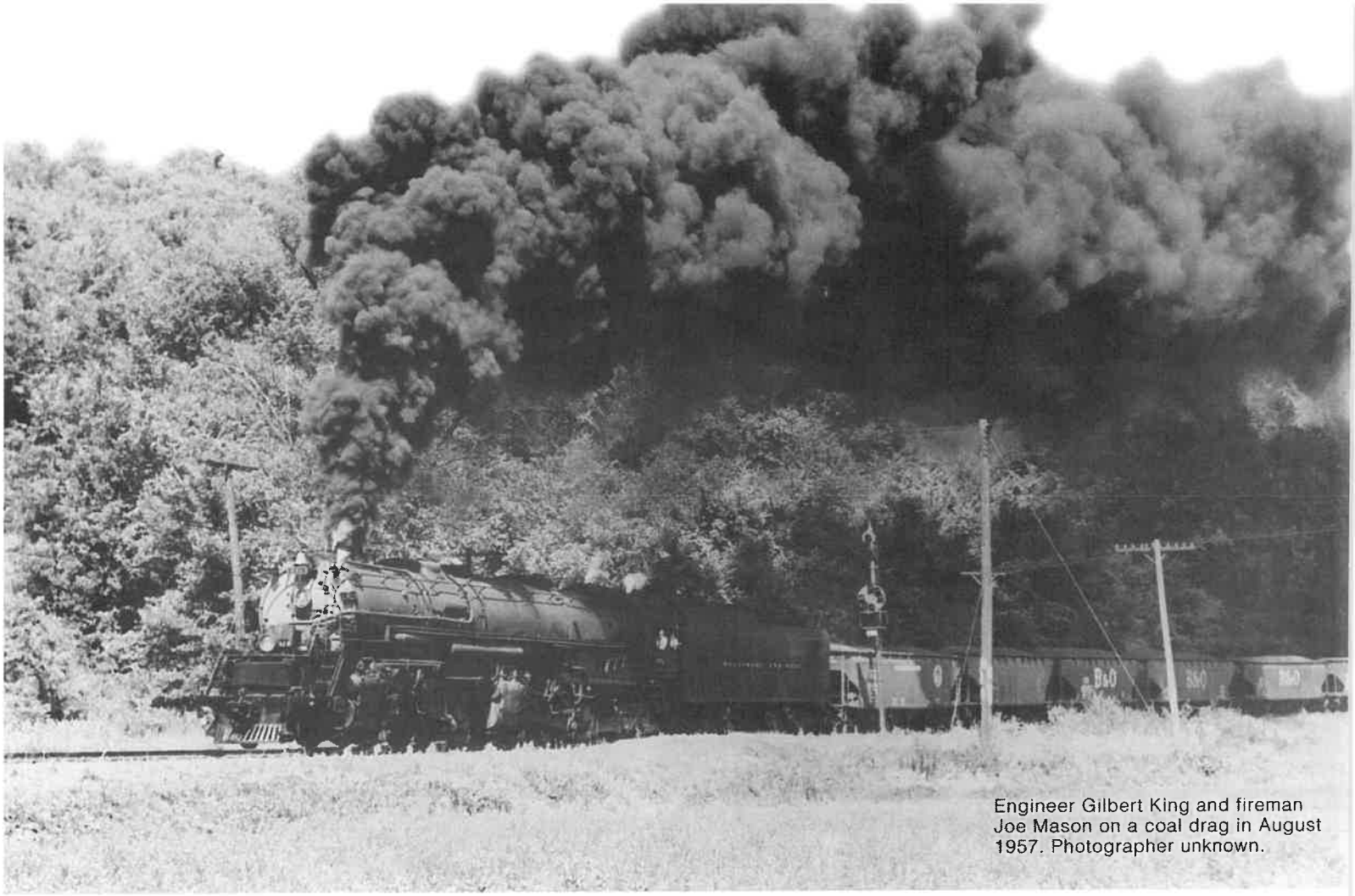
My parents lived the rest of their lives in Michigan. My father gardened, sold various products, worked in leather, and invented a formula for soap. My mother continued to sew, design hats, and weave rugs, for which she had quite a market. I received an education, and took pictures "like a drunken sailor." We visited West Virginia as often as possible — at least once a year. My mother passed away in 1959; Zebedee John died in 1960.

Father left me not only with a deep love for photography, but also with over 300 of his old photographs and glass negatives. Some years ago, while in the process of making copy prints for some relatives, some co-workers at the University of Georgia urged me to compile my father's pictures into a book.

I agreed with them that my father had produced a treasury of beautiful old photographs. I also felt that, in writing and compiling a book, I might be able to give him some of the recognition he did not often get during his lifetime. The result was a book, *Photographer of the Hills and Prairielands.* It was a lot of work over a four-year period, but I had a strong feeling that somehow or another, his story should be told.

MYRTLE R. REUL, Professor Emerita of Social Work, University of Georgia, has worked as an educator, social worker, university administrator, author, lecturer, researcher, and amateur photographer. Though she was born in Montana, Dr. Reul considers herself a seventh generation West Virginian and returns frequently to the Mountain State. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Author Myrtle Reul shot this portrait of her parents on a visit to Taylor County in 1951, on the occasion of Zebedee and Victoria's 50th wedding anniversary. On the right is Victoria's brother Arthur Robinson and his dog.



Engineer Gilbert King and fireman Joe Mason on a coal drag in August 1957. Photographer unknown.

Locomotive Engineer Gilbert King

"I Like Railroading"

By Gordon Lloyd Swartz III

Gilbert King recalls four decades of railroading at his home on Fork Ridge in Marshall County. Photo by Michael Keller.

"My name is Gilbert King, Sr., and I was born and raised on a truck farm down between Marietta and Belpre, Ohio, right along the Ohio River."

The retired locomotive engineer appeared uneasy as we began the interview, conducted on October 30, 1995, at his home on Fork Ridge in Marshall County. I conducted the interview as part of my job as an intern with the Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation under the direction of Mr. Charles Flynn, and "The Spoken History Project," headed by Michael and Carrie Nobel Kline.

Mr. King was recommended to me by his good friend, Orville Rogerson, a conductor on many of the trains Gilbert had engineered. I wished to learn more about locomotive engineering on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and, within minutes, I realized that I was speaking to the right man.

His reticence soon vanished and it became clear that he was speaking about a subject which he knew well. Before we concluded over two hours later, Gilbert had recounted over 40 years of railroad life, recited railroad poetry, and played railroad songs on his harmonica and guitar including a rousing rendition of the "Orange Blossom Special."

His knowledge of the history of the B&O is impressive, but Gilbert's tales of the actual day-to-day work of a locomotive engineer make it obvious that his life's work was a labor of love.

— G. L. Swartz III

Mr. King's father, Robert "Bob" King, was with the B&O for 44 years. When 18-year-old Gilbert applied for a job on the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1942, his father was unhappy with that decision.

Gilbert King. He said, "My, my! You don't want no job with the Pennsylvania Railroad." He said, "They kill them up there like flies. They have a head-on collision up there every week on the Pennsylvania Railroad. ...If you want a job on the railroad, they're just now starting to hire men right out of Parkersburg here for the B&O. They haven't hired anybody since 1930, but I can get you a job on the railroad right here."

And he did.

GK. I had to make five student trips. My first pay trip I made December 1, 1942, firing a shovel engine from Parkersburg to Kenova, 132 miles. Well, after I made that trip, I kind of wished I'd never thought of the railroad because, I'll tell you, them was mankilling jobs. Of course, I was born and raised on a farm, and I was pretty tough for a young fellow. I had to be. ...You shoveled 15 ton of coal one way.

Gilbert in 1957. Photographer unknown.

Gilbert demonstrates the proper way to fire a coal burning engine. Photo by Michael Keller.

That was all with a shovel, and buddy, when you got to Kenova, you know you done a day's work. ...(The fireman) had to coal the engine, sand the engine, put water in the tank, and put sand in the sandbox. ...I didn't make a trip that I didn't threaten to quit. ...It's unreal the work you had to do, I'll tell you. And my dad and a few other fellows in his class, they fired those engines for 20 years. I don't know how they ever stood it.

Mr. King served in World War II, with the 91st Infantry Division in Italy. As a result of an injury received during his military service, he transferred to the Wheeling area following the war.

GK. Now when I come out of the service, all those engines at Parkersburg were shovel engines. The reason that was, the Point Pleasant bridge wouldn't hold a heavy engine. ...

Well, I hurt my hand when I was in the service. I got it burnt real bad with white phosphorous. When I come out of the service, why I come up here (Wheeling area) and worked, because the biggest part of the engines up here were stoker engines. But they had a few shovel engines stuck here and there — every once in a while you'd get a shovel engine. I come to Wheeling for the simple reason I hurt this hand.

I lived up in McMechen, and I worked out of Benwood. ...One day they called me to go to Holloway on a coal drag. ...I went out, and here they had a shovel engine, 5100 even, and, boy, she was a coal burner! She was a hard one to keep hot. She was a beaut! Well, I knew I was in trouble then, but I didn't say anything. ...Well, I shoveled all that coal in that old engine for 16 hours and, of course, that hand was all busted open again. It just looked like a big piece of beef. ...So, I went

Wheeling Heritage Trails

The legacy of the steam locomotive can be retraced today on two converted rail-trails in the Wheeling area. The Wheeling Heritage Trails follow the old B&O rail line, covering nearly 12 miles of level asphalt. About 90% of the converted hiking and biking trails follow the original rail bed.

The Ohio River Trail runs north to south, starting in South Wheeling and ending at Pike Island Dam. It is approximately 8.5 miles long and takes travelers right through downtown Wheeling about one block from the waterfront. The East-West Trail begins at 17th Street, ends on Mt. DeChantal Road, picks up again at Washington Avenue, and extends to Lava Avenue in Elm Grove. The urban trail, passing through picturesque Wheeling neighborhoods, is about two miles long.

The Wheeling Heritage Trails are open dawn to dusk. For a complete set of rules, safety tips, and more information contact Tom Murphy at the City of Wheeling's Economic and Community Development Department, 1500 Chapline Street, Room 305, Wheeling, WV 26003; (304)234-3701.

In the last decade, more than 400 miles of rail lines have been developed into rail-trails throughout the Mountain State by the West Virginia Rails-To-Trails Council. Some of the more popular trails include the 81-mile Greenbrier River Trail (formerly the Durbin Line of the old C&O Railway), the Tri-Rivers Trail, the Cheat Junction-Bergoo Trail (122 miles and still being developed), the Paint Creek Trail, and the 16-mile rail-trail at Snowshoe. For more information on West Virginia's rail-trails and the Statewide Trail Plan contact Keith Norman at the West Virginia Trails Coalition, P.O. Box 487, Nitro, WV 25143; (304)755-4878.

down to young Doctor Ashworth, and I told him what took place, and I said, "I don't want to say anything to the railroad company. I'm afraid they'll take me out of service." I like railroading. I'd have hated to lose my job. He gave me this salve, and said, "If you keep that gauze on there and keep gloves on all the time, that'll get better. But," he said, "you've got to baby it." I babied it as much as I could, and I dressed it. And it finally started healing. ...So I just stayed up here.

Gordon Swartz. You were a fireman, and then you worked your way up to be an engineer?

GK. Yeah, and you had to do all that on your own. All this stuff here you had to know. It was about valves, gears, stoker. You had to know a steam engine from the ground to the top, from one end to the other. And then you had the book of rules to learn.

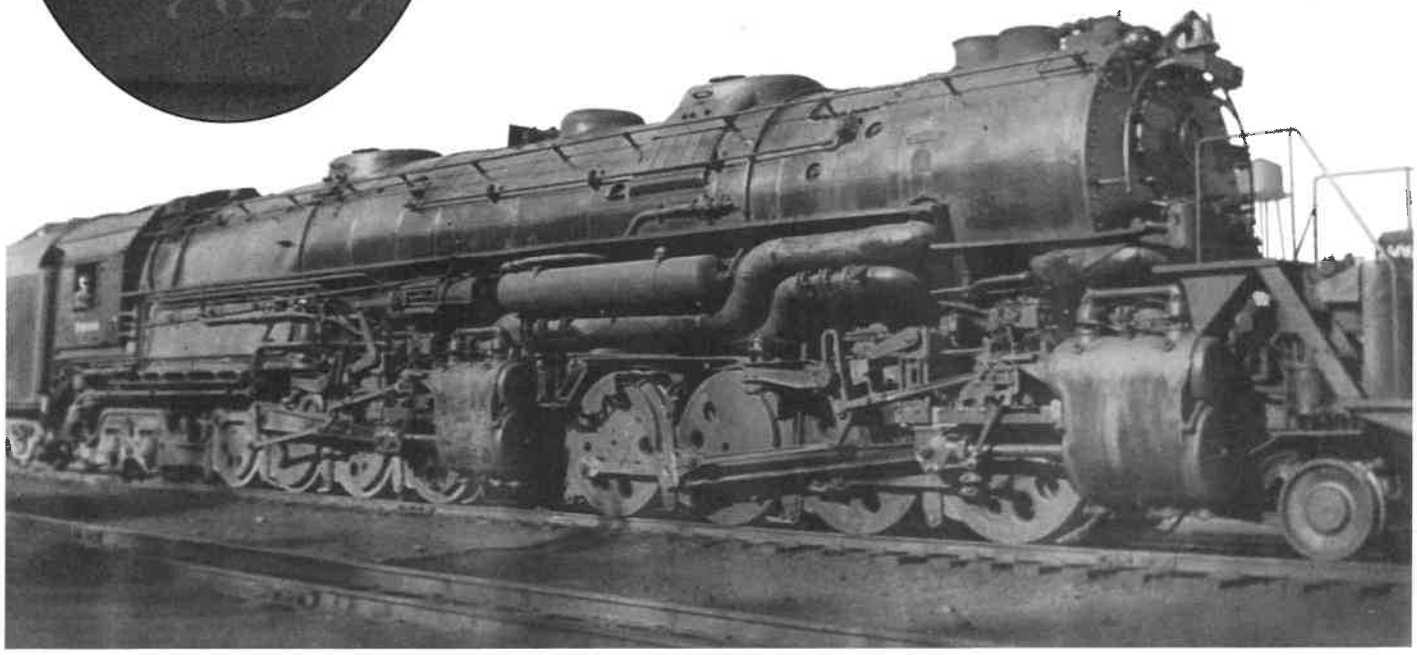
Timetables, air books, running orders, and a volume of other technical material accompanied Gilbert on every run. Photo by Michael Keller.

GS. Did you take tests?

GK. I took tests. It was equivalent to a college education. ...Nobody pressed you. You was on your own. If you couldn't pass these examinations, you didn't have a job. ...When I went to running engine, I was 24 years old, and this trainmaster, he really put it to me, because he knew that I was a young fellow, and that it was a big responsibility to run one of these engines under train orders. ...And, boy, he put me through the mill, but I passed it. I passed it.

You carried your timetables, and your machinery book, and your air

After several hard years as a fireman, Gilbert worked his way up to be an engineer (left). Below, he pulls an EM-1 engine into the shop at Benwood. Photographers unknown.



Train Talk

By J.J. Young, Jr.

The colorful language of railroading fills Gilbert King's speech. Railroad historian J.J. Young, Jr. is kind enough to explain some of these terms. —ed.

Air Book — An operating manual for the air brake system.

Brakeman/Trainman — Person assigned as a subordinate to the conductor to assist in the safe and efficient operation of a train. Duties consisted of coupling or uncoupling train and engine, throwing switches, and other needs as requested by conductor.

Coal Drag — A solid train of coal loads, usually being of the maximum tonnage that the assigned locomotive(s) could "drag" across a given division on the railroad.

Conductor — The person responsible for the overall operation of a train and for the performance of other crew members while on the road. The conductor is the train "boss."

Engineer — The person responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the locomotive assigned to a given train, and the control of the train that the locomotive is assigned to pull.

Fireman — The person assigned to an engine crew who is responsible for maintaining sufficient steam pressure on the locomotive.

Sand/Sandbox — Clean, dry sand is used — even today — to provide better traction between the locomotive's drivers and the rail during adverse weather conditions or when starting a train. On a steam engine, the sand was contained in a "sandbox" or "sand dome", located atop the engine's boiler.

Short Line — An abbreviation for West Virginia Short Line of the B&O which ran between Fairmont and Brooklyn Junction. There are numerous "short line" railroads, so called because of their limited mileage, which is much less than their larger, "class one" counterparts.

Shovel Engine — An engine which was fuelled manually with coal via a shovel, usually using what is known as a number 5 scoop, which indicated the shovel's capacity.

Stoker Engine — A steam locomotive equipped with a mechanical means of firing or stoking as opposed to a manual "shovel engine." (A "stoker engine" was also the small steam-powered device located under the cab on the left side of an engine and operated by the fireman, which powered the whole stoker assembly.)

Duplex Stoker/Standard Stoker — The commercial names of two stoker manufacturers. They varied only in their means of coal delivery to the firing plates.

Tonnage Train — Because of the diverse topography of various parts of a railroad, called "divisions," tonnage ratings or limits are assigned, even today, for the various classes of locomotives which can be expected to operate across a specific division. A "tonnage train" is one whose gross weight comes up to that tonnage limit or maybe even exceeds it, and will be of concern to both the engineer and the conductor.

J.J. YOUNG, JR., a native of Wheeling, worked for 36 years with the New York State Department of Education before he retired and moved back to West Virginia. "I've been a train nut all my life," he says. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Coal train out of Benwood Junction. Photo by J. J. Young, Jr.

"It took a good woman to stay with a railroader," brags Gilbert about his wife Margaret. She is shown here in 1946 with son Gilbert, Jr., ("Butch") and daughter Sharon. Photographer unknown.

book, and your book of rules. ...Whenever you had any time, like when you pulled in a passing siding, you had to get that out and start studying, because you never had time at home, because they kept you on the railroad the biggest part of the time. Then, when you was home, why, of course, you got a little bite to eat, and you went to bed to get your rest, and it was like that seven days a week, year after year.

It took a good woman to stay with a railroader, I'll tell you. When my two older children were growing up, there'd be days and days that I scarcely seen them. I might see them when they was in bed, but it was just in and out, 16 hours a day, seven days a week. They couldn't keep railroad men on that account. They would hire men continuously. And, of course, there's other reasons, too, they couldn't keep them. Laying away from home in these old beaneries was one reason. Another reason was the tunnels. These tunnels, these tunnels was awful. ...

One of the worst experiences I ever had was in the Hartzell Tunnel. ...Orville (Rogerson) was the conductor. I'll never forget the engine. I had the 7128. The majority of those engines had a Duplex stoker on them, but this engine here had a Standard stoker. It was a rigged-up job they come up with in shop, and this engine was hard to fire for an experienced fireman, but I had a brand new fireman, and I had a brand new brakeman. Neither one of them had ever been over the Short Line before. But they'd heard a lot of stories about these tunnels, you know, how hot they were, and, to top things off, when I got up to the Hartzell Tunnel, I had to take siding. When you got to the other end of the siding, why, right there's the tunnel, but your whole train was on a hillside. ...

You carried a gas mask that you put down over your head, each one of you, and you had air that blew through them masks to keep from breathing that smoke, see. Well, when we stopped up at the other end (of the siding), I opened up the lid of the seat box and I reached down and got my gas mask out, and I went to hook it up, and this brakeman said, "Why, I don't have no mask." That's something I always check real careful before I left, before I'll ever leave the terminal, but I'd overlooked it this trip. Here I only had two masks, so I gave him mine. The fireman and brakeman

Train emerging from the Hartzell Tunnel. Photographer unknown, 1956.

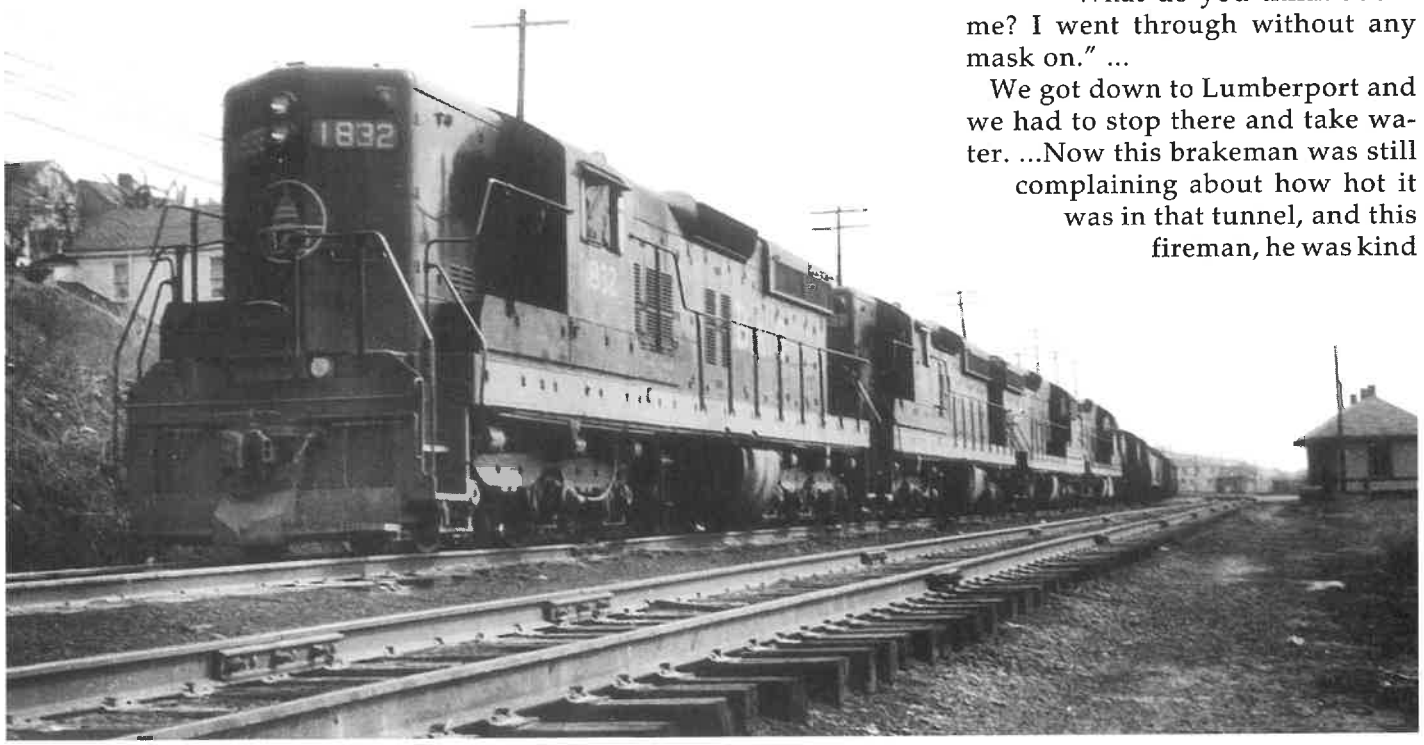
both had a mask.

Now I almost didn't make it this trip. I got me a great big piece of waste cloth, about big as a bushel basket, and I took a water jug and poured water all through it. I'd hold it up against my nose, face, going through there. Well, I instructed this fireman how to fire that engine through there. You had to fire that thing through there lightly to keep the steam above 150 pound. If your steam fell below 150 pound, why your air compressor would stop, and that would apply your brakes on your train and hang you up in there, see. Well, we hadn't any more than got in there till he turned the steam on to his stoker, and I heard that stoker engine running, clackety-clack, clackety-clack, and I knew it was running too fast. So I got up and went over there and got ahold of his hand and shut it off. Well, I went back over and sat down, and I hadn't any more than sat down, he done the same thing again. So I went over that time, and I shoved his hand. I hit his hand, and I told him to leave it alone. He couldn't say anything. He couldn't see nothing. And about that time that smoke started to come in the cab, and in a little bit here come that sulphur through that waste, and in a little bit I couldn't breathe. Well, I could feel myself passing out. ...I was just ready to fall off my seat, and I throwed the window open, and just as I throwed the window open, we come out of the tunnel. That's all that saved me. ...

Gilbert still owns his old railroad gas mask, essential equipment when passing through tunnels in a steam locomotive. Photo by Michael Keller.

The brakeman, his name was Hill. That's the first time I ever seen the guy. ...He kept saying, "My God, that was awful in there!" I says, "Awful? What do you think about me? I went through without any mask on." ...

We got down to Lumberport and we had to stop there and take water. ...Now this brakeman was still complaining about how hot it was in that tunnel, and this fireman, he was kind



"The King Special." This four-unit diesel train hauled coal for several years with Gilbert as engineer, his brother Norman as conductor, and son Butch as the fireman. Photographer unknown.

of a comical sort of fellow. His name was Shepherd. He was the son of a B&O policeman. "Why," he said, "no wonder you got hot in there. You know what? I hooked your gas mask up, and I forgot to turn your air on your mask." There he set with that mask over his head, and there was no air going through it. All that smoke was going right underneath his mask, and he was setting there breathing it.

GS. What is the longest that a train would be when you were an engineer?

GK. Well, I had a test train one time. I was working between here and Clarksburg. I had diesels then. ...When we got the train all together we had, I think there was 223 cars, but I had five units (engines). I had five General Motor diesels, 1500 horsepower apiece, and I didn't know really what was going on, but I surmised what it was. It was a test run, and that was one of the biggest trains that ever come over the Short Line. They had radios on them engines, and I'll never forget, I had a meet order with an engine with a train at Hartzell. He was in a siding, and this engineer's name was J. R. Montgomery. He and I was about the same age. ...Well, I never said anything about what kind of train we had, you know, but I was listening on the radio. I knew he was going to say something. We got way down on Smithfield Hill, and finally he got on the radio, and them cars was still coming back there where he was. He said, "How many — cars you got?" We had 223 cars, and we had about 16 cars on the head end, and we had to set off at Alan Passing siding for damage. Well, I'll tell you, handling that many cars is just like handling a basket of eggs, because you could tear one of them in two awful easy if you didn't know your railroad real good.

Well, I came down to Alan Passing siding and set these 16 cars off, and my supervisor was standing there. He said, "Boy, if you get this train to New Martinsville without tearing it in two, there's going to be a lot of people lose a lot of money over this train. They've got bets all over the railroad that you'll never get this train to New Martinsville."

Well, I did, and they had that (record) hanging up on the wall for years. But there was a guy come along a few years later and broke my record, and he was my son.

GS. So your son is on the railroad, too?

GK. Yeah, he's an engineer, too. He works out of New Martinsville.

GS. Still is working?

GK. Oh, yeah, 27 years. *(Gilbert King, Jr., "Butch," has now been with the railroad for 31 years. —ed.)* I never wanted him to come on the railroad because the railroad was a hard life for me. But he wanted a job on the railroad, and he just insisted on it. Well, I said, "Okay. I can get you a job on the railroad," and, of course, I did. But railroading is nothing like it was back then. Today you've got good engines and you've got good equipment, heavy. ...They don't know what a tonnage train is nowadays. Back when I worked, every trip was a tonnage train, or usually more than tonnage. And it was a battle to get them things over the railroad, I'll tell you, especially if you got one failing for steam, or get an old diesel that wasn't working right, or get one on a bad rail in the rain and snow, and you had to conserve on sand. It was a struggle. You had to really be on the ball to get one over the railroad.

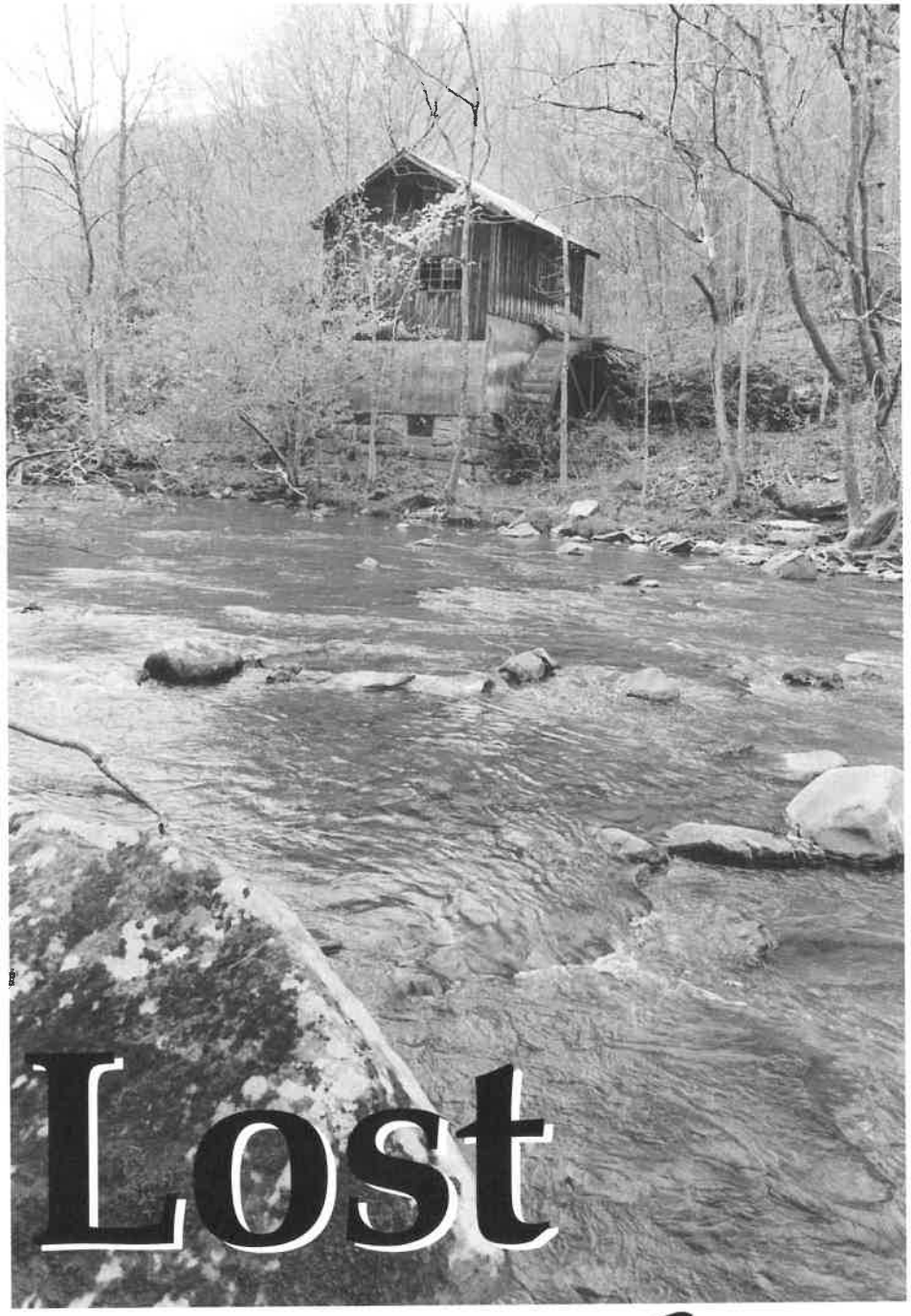
GORDON LLOYD SWARTZ III, a native West Virginian, graduated from WVU with a degree in agriculture. More recently he earned a Master's Degree in Recreation and Park Management from WVU. Gordon works as a coal miner at Consolidation Coal's Shoemaker Mine in Marshall County. His latest contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1992.

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

MICHAEL KELLER

Gordon L. Swartz,III

This family portrait was taken when Gilbert retired in 1983 at Benwood. Pictured, left to right, are son Butch, Gilbert, brother Norman, and father Bob. Photographer unknown.



The old Tom Cooper mill at Lilly as it appears today, along the Little Bluestone River. Photo by Michael Keller.

The West Virginia Lillys, one of the largest and most prominent families in the state, trace their proud family tree to a lush and secluded dale in Summers County. Here, along the Bluestone River, its branches spread out from the original homeplace of the first Lilly settlers. For over 150 years, the family – and their close relatives the Meadows, Coopers, Bashams, and others – came together at the village of Lilly.

The Lost Village of Lilly

By Jack Lilly

As a young boy, I remember my father, Fred Lilly, and uncles, Arthur and Paul Lilly, talking about the Big and Little Bluestone Rivers and the village of Lilly in Summers County. The village of Lilly existed from the late 1700's until 1946, when it was dismantled due to the construction of the Bluestone Dam.

I remember family names such as Bartley

Fred Lilly (left) at age 19, with cousin Blake Lilly. Photo 1917.

Lilly, John A. Lilly, John H. Lilly, Luther Lilly, and many others. Many Lillys were given nicknames which related to their hobby or occupation: Miller Bob, (owned a mill); Jerusalem Jim, (a Primitive Baptist minister); Shooting Bob, (deputy marshal); Ground Hog Bill, (killed groundhogs); Buckwheat Jim, (a farmer); Devil Sam, (practical joker); and many others.

At that time, those names or places didn't seem important. We were living on a farm at Shady Spring in Raleigh County. I remember in the early 40's, my brothers and I would catch fish bait on Saturdays which consisted of worms, minnows, lizards, and hellgrammites. At daylight on Sunday we would sit along Route 21 with a homemade sign and sell our fish bait for ten cents a dozen. Our buyers were people from the Beckley area going to the New, Greenbrier, or Bluestone Rivers to fish. These three rivers all come together above Hinton, near the Lilly Bridge.

As I grew older my uncle Arthur Lilly, an avid fisherman, would take me fishing with him to the New River and Bluestone area. I remember the dirt road along the New River to the Bluestone and Lilly.

Lilly was located about 11 miles south of Hinton, near the confluence of the Little and Big Bluestone Rivers. This was one of the first settlements in Summers County which, in early times, was a part of Virginia.

The first to settle the Bluestone River valley was the Robert and Fanny Moody Lilly family. This was during the middle and late 1700's. At about the same time came the Josiah Meador family. Josiah, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, married Judy Lilly, daughter of Robert and Fanny Lilly.

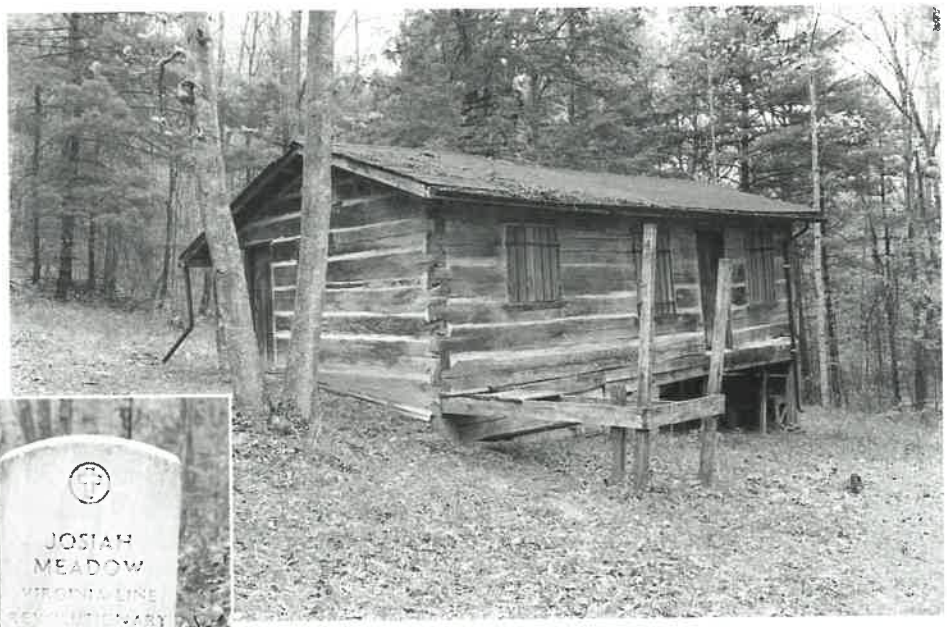
Josiah Meador's home was a double log cabin with a dirt floor. When the village was dismantled during the 1940's some logs of Josiah's home were preserved and a reconstructed cabin was built near the site of Lilly. This cabin is presently in great condition.

The early Lilly settlers were of French Anglo-Saxon background. This branch of the Lilly family was

Adridge Lilly, daughter of "Devil Sam" Lilly. Photo by Lee R. Clough & Company, Hinton, 1899.

James Washington "Jerusalem Jim" Lilly. Photo about 1900.

Twin brothers Hiram and John Lilly, sons of "Ground Hog Bill" Lilly. Photo by The Hinton Photo Company, about 1900.



Timbers from the original Josiah Meador cabin are used in this reconstruction. Photo by Michael Keller.

mostly Protestant and was associated with the Baptist faith. These early settlers had no easy task before them. Land had to be cleared, logs cut to build their homes, and seed planted for their food supply. The summers were spent farming the fertile river bottoms and the winter months spent cutting timber.

The post office at Lilly was founded in 1898 by John H. Lilly and two of his sons, Alva and Erastus. They formed a company named the E. M. Lilly Company and built a general store that housed the post office. This building was located above the mouth of the Little Bluestone River where it flows into the Big Bluestone River.

Caesar Lilly had a stave mill on the south side of Little Bluestone. The barrel staves were cut and hauled to True at the mouth of the Big Bluestone on New River and taken to Hinton. Caesar Lilly usually had 15 to 20 men in his timber crew and had a sawmill on Bluestone River. He cut railroad ties for the C&O Railroad Company. After they were cut they were put together in lots of 50 by nailing boards around them to hold them together. They attached a makeshift rudder to guide them down the river, then placed them in the river by sliding them on skids when the water was high. Caesar Lilly's son, Boone, at the age of 11 rode them down Bluestone to New River where there was a man by the name of Meadley who took several of the lots of 50 ties by attaching them together and riding them down New River to the old Hinton Builders and Supply Company. At this point the railroad picked up these ties to use them on the railroad wherever they were needed.

About the year 1915, my father Fred Lilly and Albert Meadows rafted railroad ties to Hinton and sold them. In the spring when the water was high, they rafted 100 ties to True on New River. From True to Hinton they fastened two rafts together, making a total of 200 ties. At Hinton they sold them to the T. H. Lilly Lumber Company for 50 cents apiece.

The village itself consisted of a post office, general store, school, and a Baptist Church. At its peak, the Lilly community was home to about 65 families, the majority of whom were either named Lilly or had close family ties to the original Lilly settlers. Most of these families lived on farms in the surrounding area and supported themselves by farming.

The main industry around Lilly was timber. The James Lumber

Lilly Family Books

If you want to read more about the West Virginia Lillys and their family history, two books are available on the subject. Jack Lilly recently published *Lilly Family History: 1566-1997*. The 376-page large format, hardbound book is extensively illustrated with family photographs and drawings. The text is mostly genealogical in content, with some short family histories and longer feature articles.

For the book, Mr. Lilly gathered marriage, census, death, and cemetery records. The author says his book is meant to be a guide and not a complete history. It is devoted to "the southern branch of Lillys, namely the Robert Lilly lineage," he writes. There are also sections on the early history of Ellision Ridge, the Lilly Reunion, and Lilly veterans from the War of 1812.

To order the book, contact Jack Lilly at 4048 Fohl S.W., Canton, OH 44706; (330)484-3544. The cost is $35, plus $5 shipping and handling.

William Sanders' book, *Lilly on the Bluestone*, is now in its third printing. It tells the story of the village of Lilly and the settlement of what is now known as Pipestem State Park. The new expanded edition is 140 pages and includes a name index, photos, and illustrations. The standard-size paperback sells for $15, plus $1.50 shipping and is available from William Sanders, 320 Courthouse Road, Princeton, WV 24740; (304)425-8125. West Virginians must add 6% sales tax.

Company and the Kirby Lumber Company employed scores of Lillys over the years.

Junior Lilly, who grew up in the village of Lilly, recalls Kirby Lumber. "For about eight years," he says, "they were the only business up in there." Junior's father, Luther Jennings Lilly, however, did not work in the lumber industry. He mined at Lillybrook Coal Company, and returned to farming during the 1920's.

Junior was born in Lillybrook in 1922, and moved to the farm at Lilly in 1924. His father and mother, Lillie Mae Lilly, had four children in addition to Junior: sisters Ethel and Sophia, and brothers Archie and Arnold. Junior lived in Lilly until the town was abandoned in 1946. He has clear memories of those early years.

"Around 1925, the post office at Lilly was located on our farm, which bordered Little Bluestone River and Big Bluestone River. Soon after this date, the post office was moved to the Jack Cooper farm where it remained until 1936. The post office was then located up Little Bluestone River to the Willis Lilly residence where it remained until the government bought all the surrounding property that the Bluestone Dam water would cover.

"The Lilly church was located about 30 feet from our farm boundary line and very near the Lilly school which was also on our farm. The Reverend Richard Lilly was pastor most of the years while I was growing up. He lived at Sand Knob which was about three miles from the church on top of the mountain near Jumping Branch. He would walk to and from church, even at night, carrying a lantern, rain or shine. Reverend Lilly would not disappoint the congregation and was a wonderful pastor, serving many times for just two to five dollars a week. He was a dedicated minister caring for the people of his community. Reverend Lilly died in 1954.

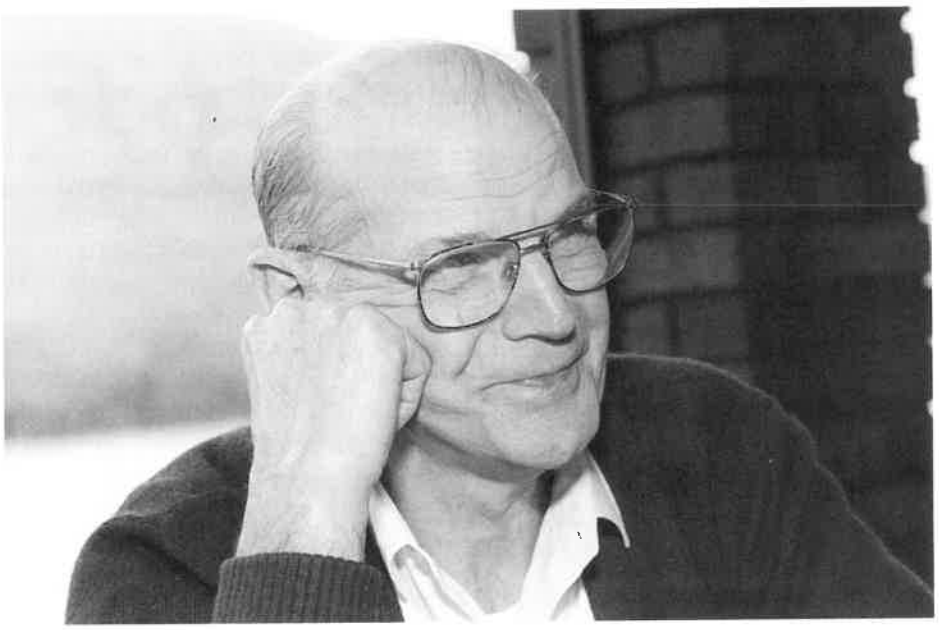
John H. Lilly, the author's great-grandfather in 1863 at age 16.

"Our school teacher for many years was Luther Lilly from Fall Rock located on Little Bluestone River about three miles from Lilly," Junior recalls. "He walked to and from school each day. We will always remember Mr. Lilly for his kindness and ability to teach so many different classes in a one-room building so effectively. Following Luther Lilly was Icie Lilly Farley (living at the present time at True near the Lilly settlement), who taught us for two years. She was strict but a lovely and wonderful teacher and friend to us all. Icie walked about three miles to and from school each day, up and down a very steep mountain at Lerona. Our next teacher was Grover Harper. Mr. Harper was a well-known educator in Summers County.

"I was lucky enough to be employed by the board of education each year to do the janitor's work. We had pine floors that had to be oiled once each week and cleaned every day. I had to build fires using my own kindling wood. Other duties included cleaning windows, chalkboards and erasers, and bringing coal in for the fire. Each day I raised and lowered the flag. My salary was $3.60 per month."

High school students needed to travel into Hinton to attend classes. As Junior recalls, "My father Jennings Lilly was hired as a bus driver for the high school students in and around the Lilly area, providing he would furnish his own vehicle. He bought a used eight-passenger Buick limousine to transport the students to Hinton High

Caesar Lilly wood crew. Photographer and date unknown.



Junior Lilly today. Photo by Michael Keller.

School. The Buick had mechanical brakes and the brake shoes would freeze on cold nights. In the winter, Dad would arise at 5:00 a.m. and heat water on a wood stove to thaw the brakes."

Social life in Lilly centered mainly around church and school activities. Dances, socials, revivals, and prayer meetings brought the Lillys and their neighbors together. For anything on a larger scale like concerts or ball games, they traveled 11 miles down the Bluestone Turnpike to Hinton.

Junior remembers those times. "There was no electricity at Lilly. We were one of the first to have a radio. It was a cabinet-style Philco and was battery operated. On Saturday nights, neighbors would come to our house and listen to the Grand Ole Opry from Nashville, Tennessee which began broadcasting in 1925 and is still heard each Saturday night."

The Bluestone Dam, begun in 1942, is one of the largest flood control projects in the state. It employed hundreds of people, created the Bluestone Lake, and forever changed the lives of those both above and below the dam. Photographer and date unknown.

After severe flooding along the Bluestone in 1936, plans were developed to construct a mammoth dam just below the Lilly community to control flooding and, they had anticipated, to produce hydroelectric power. At that time, according to Junior, there were around 40 families in the area. Some of these residents welcomed the dam and the resettlement opportunity that came with it. Others opposed the project. Nevertheless, in January 1942, work began on the dam, spearheaded by the Army Corps of Engineers. The dam was one of the first and most extensive flood control projects in West Virginia, employing over 600 people, costing over $30 million, and forever changing the lives and the landscape in the Bluestone valley.

Junior joined the service during World War II. When he returned from the war, his family had already been relocated to Wyoming County. Junior found work with the Cabot Gas Corporation, and retired from that company in 1985. He still lives in Wyoming County, but has fond memories of his years growing up in Lilly.

"We look back on those days that we thought were so bad and realize how fortunate we were and how God blessed us while we were growing up at Lilly, West Virginia."

In May of 1997, my brother, John E. Lilly, and I, along with Junior, Archie, Sophia, Arnold, and Ethel Lilly visited the area where the village of Lilly once stood. The Corps of Engineers have built a footbridge across the Little Bluestone River. Two or three oak trees set by John H. Lilly in about 1885 are still standing in the school yard. These trees are now about four feet in diam-

Lilly Reunion 1998

The first Lilly Reunion was held at Flat Top in 1930 on August 16 and 17. It continued at that location until it was interrupted by World War II. The reunions resumed following the war, but when reunion president Abe Lilly became ill after the 1949 gathering, the Lilly Reunions were discontinued for most of the next three decades.

In 1975, the Lilly Reunion was revived and held at various locations in Summers and Raleigh Counties. By 1981, the Lilly Reunion Association had purchased 36 acres of land at Flat Top and established Lilly Reunion Memorial Park, giving the big event a permanent home.

This year, the 69th anniversary of the Lilly Reunion takes place on the traditional third weekend in August. The 1998 dates are August 14 through 16. The Lilly Reunion is known as the "World's Largest Family Reunion." At one time as many as 75,000 people attended the event.

Last year GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly was a guest speaker joining entertainers, politicians, and other Lillys for the reunion program, including Grand Ole Opry star Connie Smith, a Lilly relative herself.

One special Lilly will not be there for the 1998 reunion. On April 9, Sylvia Lilly passed away. She served as secretary/treasurer of the Lilly Reunion Association for 23 years. Sylvia Lilly was born in 1905 at Flat Top, the daughter of the late attorney W. Londa Lilly and Anna Shanks Lilly. Her father was a great promoter of past reunions, according to Jack Lilly, and Sylvia's work and dedication will be sorely missed.

The Lilly Reunion is a celebration of family. Whether a Lilly or not, everyone is welcome to attend. For more information about this year's event contact Jack Lilly at (330)484-3544.

eter. Some of the old foundation rocks are still in place. There was an iris flower in bloom. An old well was still visible covered by a rusty wheelbarrow bed.

Ethel Lilly Lusk showed us where she had been baptized, the calm water where many people in bygone days were baptized. In the quietness, although imaginary, you could almost hear the church choir singing "Amazing Grace" or Luther Lilly ringing the school bell.

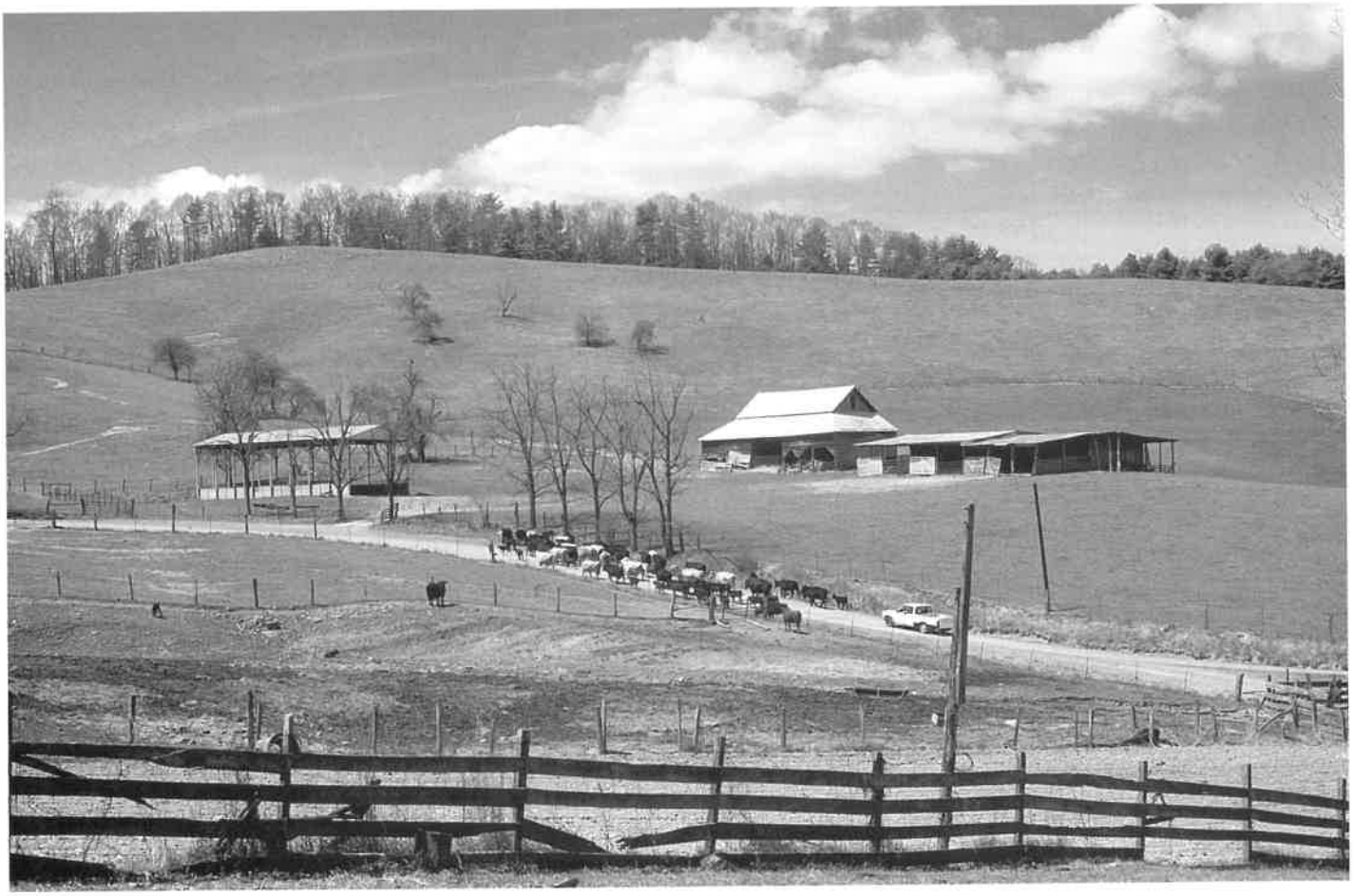
It was a quiet time of reflection. The sounds were beautiful, the rippling flow of the Bluestone River, a fish now and then jumping in the water, a squirrel barking in the distance, and the many birds chirping. As we left that warm day in May, we saw seven deer lying quietly in the field.

The village of Lilly will forever remain quiet, but the history and memories will last forever.

A few large oak trees, some foundation stones, and an old well are about all that remain of the village of Lilly. Junior and his wife Naomi enjoy their occasional visits there. Photo by Michael Keller.

Author Jack Lilly.

JACK LILLY was born in Summers County and moved to Raleigh County at a very young age. In 1960, he moved to Ohio where he retired from the retail meat industry in 1994. Jack has served as president of the Lilly Reunion for 23 years. He has written two books and four manuscripts about his famous family. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



A recent cattle drive in Pendleton County. Photo by Gerald Milnes.

Mountain Cattle Drives

By Robert and Judith Whitcomb

Each summer, residents of Randolph County gather along the streets of Beverly to witness the annual firemen's parade. Forty to 50 years ago, onlookers witnessed a far different parade, as local farmers drove cattle through the town on their way to or from summer pasture. The cattle drives of the 1940's and '50's are remembered by many old-timers; today, as the highway system of Randolph County is gradually being transformed into a modern infrastructure, the drives assume historic significance.

Cattle farmers need access to large open areas which serve as grazing land for their livestock: five to ten acres per head on the average. During the winter months, most cattlemen keep their herds on their farms. Here they can supply them with hay and other feed, and keep a close eye on them during harsh weather.

Come summer, however, cattle are turned out to pasture. While some farmers have access to large tracts of lush bottomland, other West Virginia cattlemen must move their herds up the mountains to suitable grazing land. Today, modern cattle trucks speed along paved roads transporting herds from farm to farm, and from pasture to pasture.

Not too long ago, however, cattle drives were needed to move herds from the low, sheltered valleys to spectacular mountaintop pastures in Randolph and Pendleton counties.

Worth Armentrout has spent his entire life in one aspect or another of the cattle business. Born in 1938, Worth helped drive his family's cattle from the Sinks of Gandy Creek to Beverly during the 1950's.

"I was only about 12 when the drives began, but I remember a fair amount about the drives. The Beverly farm was the best for wintering cattle, and the Sinks made the best summer pasture, so we drove the cattle back and forth between winter and summer pasture. We used two routes. Some years we drove the cattle through Elkins and sometimes down the back roads. There was anywhere from 150 to 250 head, depending on the number of calves. You can only drive cattle 10-15 miles a day without pushing them too hard, so the drive from the Sinks to Beverly, or back, always took two days."

Worth recalls that his mother's first husband, C. Edward Lukens, drove anywhere from 1,200 to 1,500 head of cattle along similar routes during the 1930's. Earlier, during the 1920's, Lukens drove large herds of cattle from as far away as Harrisonburg, Virginia, a distance of over 100 miles.

Worth Armentrout at age 12. Photographer unknown.

Though he no longer drives cattle, Worth has vivid memories of the experiences he had driving herds in the remote highlands during the 1950's.

"In those days Route 219 was a cement road — I call roads like that *ca-dunkin* roads; you'd drive down it *ca-dunk, ca-dunk, ca-dunk*. Later in the '50's it was blacktopped, and today that road down to Beverly is five-lane at 60 miles per hour. Just imagine!

"It took four men and a couple boys to do the drives. There was one man on a horse leading the cattle and another on horseback riding along, and two walking. There was a truck following along behind, too; that was important, because that had the sandwiches — homemade bread and ham — and baked beans. We boys were called the 'go-get-me' boys. When a cow would wander off into the woods we'd chase after it; otherwise you'd lose some. We'd let the cattle wander off and graze or drink a little when they wanted. I remember one fellow in a brick house saw a cow

or two come up in his yard. He asked me, 'Whose cattle are those? 'Cause I'd sue 'em if I knew whose they were!' I said I didn't know, that I was just helping out, but of course I knew good and well they were my mother's! By the time we got to Beverly, we always had them together — they'd make a string maybe a half mile long sometimes. But the folks there just watched. I think they were pretty much tickled to see them come through."

Worth has seen big changes in the cattle business, and an amazing transformation of the highway system and traffic patterns in the past five decades. While it is no longer possible to parade cattle through the streets of Beverly, Worth continues to live close to the land on his old family farm.

Worth has seen big changes in the cattle business. Photo by Robert Whitcomb.

"We still have our home farm at Whitmer, and lots of land, but we don't have near as many cattle as we used to. Mostly now we lease it out for grazing or make hay. It's easier to make hay now than it used to be — we got the first tractor just about the time of the drives — before that, we were pitchforking and shocking. But wintering cattle is still hard, between freezing and snow and sickness and all. The country around Job and Whitmer is hard in the winter — it's one big snowmaking machine. But I wouldn't live anywhere else. The house on the home farm is 110 years old, and across the road the old log house is going on 200 years old. It was built by my granddaddy's uncle back in the early 1800's. I don't own the land it sits on, but a few years back I put a new tin roof on it anyway. Part of me is in that house, and another big part on the home farm here."

ROBERT AND JUDITH WHITCOMB recently retired from government careers as research scientist and editor, respectively. Though they now reside in Arizona, they return annually to their summer home on Shaver's Fork near Elkins. There they "roam country roads, study birds and flora, and attend old-time music concerts wherever they can find them." Robert contributed to the Spring 1998 GOLDENSEAL. This is Judith's first contribution to the magazine.

GERALD MILNES is the Folk Arts Coordinator for the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. He is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL, an accomplished old-time musician, and author of the children's book *Granny Will Your Dog Bite and Other Mountain Rhymes.*

This log house was built by Worth's grandfather's uncle in the early 1800's. Worth's home farm is at the right in the distance. Photo by Gerald Milnes.

"We Drove Cattle from Beverly to Osceola"

By Eck Howell

Photographs by Gerald Milnes

Born near Elkins in January 1918, Estill B. "Eck" Howell grew up on a farm near Beverly, Randolph County, with six brothers and a sister. His father, Worthy Wilmoth "W. W." Howell, worked a variety of jobs around the Elkins area. During the Depression, however, farming became his major occupation.

Like many farm families, the Howells raised enough crops to feed themselves, but relied on the sale of livestock to earn cash money. Here, he describes the fascinating process of driving cattle from their lowland farm along the Tygart Valley River to grazing pastures in some of the highest, most remote, and most beautiful parts of the state.

According to Eck, many of the cattle on these drives were "short two-year-old" steers — those steers which were just shy of being two years old. These steers spent the summer in high pasture. Then they were sold and transported by truck directly from the grazing land, producing a payday for the Howell family, and continuing a one-way trip for the young steers. Any remaining cattle were driven back home the way they came.

In 1943, after the drives described here, Eck entered the armed services. Because he had experience driving heavy equipment, he was assigned to a training center in southern California, where he ran a road grader and trained soldiers for combat duty.

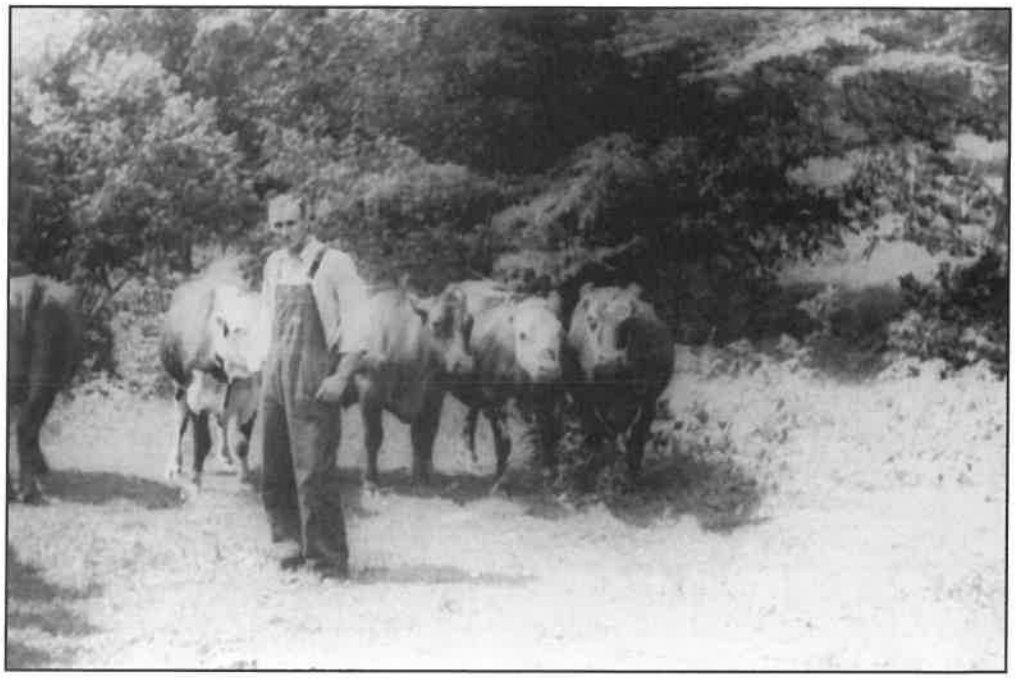
After the war, Eck chose to continue his work with heavy equipment. He drove bulldozers, shovels, and a drag-line for construction firms. He also operated equipment for coal companies. On one job he loaded about 16 cars a day, five days a week, for 12 years; that is a lot of coal. "I'd like to see it all in one pile!" he told us.

Eck's equipment driving days are not over. He still occasionally works for his son, Howard, who owns a construction company. "Ten-hour days, not eight!" he told us. He also does an occasional brush hog job. When he is not driving, he spends his time in his shop, where he welds custom iron hand rails, frying pans, and andirons.

— Robert and Judith Whitcomb

In the days of the drives, cattle farming was a year-round occupation. During the winter, the cattle were fed hay stored in the barns on our farm on Georgetown Road, two and one half miles west of Beverly. My Dad aways tried to keep them from losing weight in the winter so they'd be ready for the drives. We fed them twice a day. In early April, they were vaccinated against black leg, and later they were treated for foot evil, a fungus that could infect their hooves. About April 20-25, we would take them to pasture, where we checked their horns, to be sure none were deformed.

The drives usually began about May 1. Summer pasture was made available to us



Eck Howell drove these Herefords 26 miles to high pasture during the early 1940's. Photographer unknown.

when Charley Lantz of Glady had some financial difficulties. One of the ways he repaid his debts was to give us access to pastureland he owned at Osceola, a tiny community in the "Sink" country of Gandy Creek across three main ridges of the Alleghenies.

Although this pasture was a long ways away — especially for a drive — we were in no position to turn it down. The Depression had been hard on everyone during the '30's.

Those were hard years, so when we had the opportunity to have summer pasture, no matter how far away, we took it.

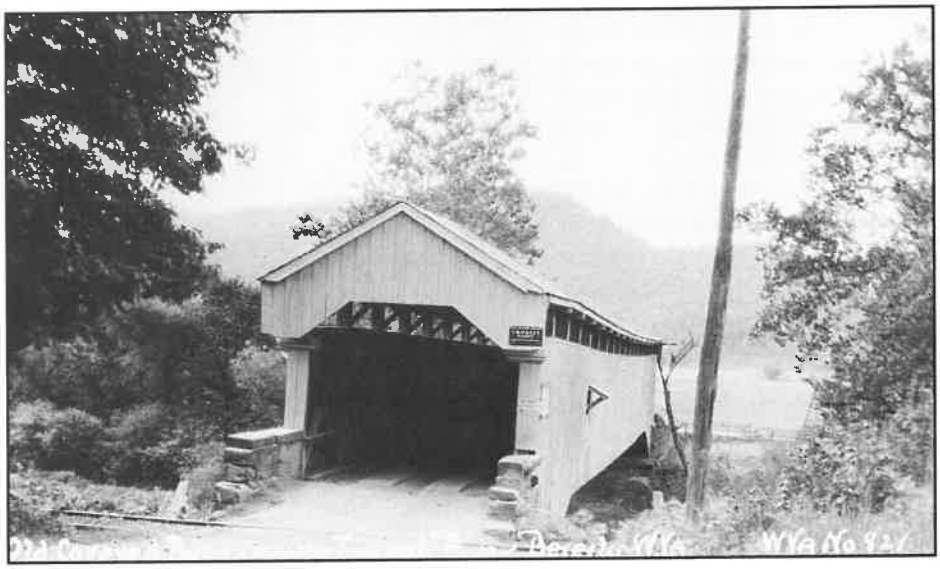
It was hardest on the town folk, who had no farm to raise food. People would walk five miles to our farm, work all day for a bushel of corn or potatoes, then carry the food by foot back into town.

Although we had enough to eat in those days, we didn't have any money. We had a Model T Ford but couldn't afford to license it, so we just drove it on the farm. We used horses for most of the farm work. When we finally did get a steel-wheeled farm tractor, we had to spend our gas money on it.

Those years in the '30's — before the war — were hard years, so when we had the opportunity to have summer pasture, no matter how far away, we took it. We had only 85 acres of permanent pasture there on the home farm; having summer pasture gave us a chance to raise more cattle.

The drives were pretty much alike — I don't remember anything unusual happening on any of them. Dad would carry a backpack we called a salt poke — a canvas bag that the cattle knew had salt in it. About 6:00 a.m. we would set out from the farm along Georgetown Road. A helper, Pat Thompson, and

Downtown Beverly hasn't changed much in the past 50 years. Eck drove his cattle past this bank on his way to Osceola.



The old covered bridge at Beverly. Photo courtesy State Archives.

The Cattle Trail

Eck Howell recently retraced his steps and drove a herd of imaginary cattle for GOLDENSEAL. 1939 map courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; Monongahela National Forest.

I would follow along behind; my brother Lloyd came along some years. We also had a black collie that my Dad had ordered specially for working with cattle. That dog was worth a couple of men; we had him on all our drives. In the early drives, Georgetown Road was just dirt, but by the last drives, the CCC had paved the road all the way from Beverly to Elkins with river rock. After an hour or so, we would go through the old covered bridge across the Tygart's Valley River, just west of Beverly. Now, there's no way you can drive just a few cattle across a bridge, so all 60 head would go across at once. That old bridge was really bouncin'!

When we got into Beverly, we turned the cattle there by Chenoweth's house — the fellow that built the bridge — then turned them up Files Creek Road. That road went right across Route 219 through the heart of town. It looked a lot then like it does now, although some things are gone — there was a blacksmith shop along the road then. We drove the cattle right through town and on up to what we call Mt. Vernon Road today. Now the creek comes real close to the road there, and the cattle would get a good drink before they headed up the mountain. The road past the creek went up past small farms to the foot of Cheat Mountain. By this time we had driven the cattle about six miles, and it was still pretty early in the morning.

Now it just happens that on Files Creek Road, we went right past the house where Helen Pritt lived; a couple of times she saw us go by, and I think she may have noticed me driving the cattle. Anyway, after the drives, but before I went away to the war, I was driving a lumber truck up that road and gave Helen a ride to her home. I asked her out that night, and we saw quite a bit of each other before I went into the Army. When I was stationed at San Bernardino, she came out to California, and we got married. That was the best thing to come of the drives, as far as I am concerned.

Helen Pritt noticed Eck Howell as he drove cattle past her home on Files Creek Road. They were married in 1944 in California while Eck was in the service. "That was the best thing to come of the drives," says Eck. Photographer unknown.

Anyway, we didn't drive up Cheat Mountain as fast as we had across the bottoms. With all the grades and switchbacks, it must have taken us a couple of hours to get to the top, and then we just had to go back down again on the other side. At the bottom, we crossed the railroad tracks there, past the red brick general store at the tracks. In Bemis, we watered the cattle on Fishing Hawk Creek. They hadn't been watered all across the mountain and by that time they were really thirsty. There's a bridge across that creek today, but then there was just a ford. At Bemis, we had to go across the Shaver's Fork bridge and then up over Shaver's Mountain. That bridge wasn't a covered bridge like the one over at Beverly; it was just steel. I'm told it's been there since early in the century — even survived the '85 flood. The mountain there isn't as high as it is some places, so we got over it in a couple of hours. Some people call that mountain Bemis Hill.

When we came down into Glady, that was the end of the first day. We had come about 16 miles by then, and the cattle were ready to be watered and fed. We held them in a feed lot owned by Charley Lantz, where we fed them hay. That night we slept over in a boarding house

Eck and Helen today at their home in Dailey.

owned by Mr. Lantz. Now in those days, and especially in earlier days, Glady had a rough reputation. I remember being told we should keep our billfolds under our pillows, which we did. Nothing ever happened, though.

The next morning we got up and set out for Osceola. This wasn't quite the walk the first day was. We headed up Middle Mountain. Of course, any grade with switchbacks goes slow, and the top of the ridge is about four miles from Glady. Then we took them down the other side to Laurel Fork. There we went through the old CCC camp. By that time the camp was shut down, but there was a fellow, a game manager by the name of "Dusty" Rhodes, who always met us as we passed through.

Then we took the cattle on for the trip up to Osceola. Two or three miles from Laurel Fork, the forest opens up into open grazing land. That land is a little bit of thousands of acres of grazing land in Randolph and Pendleton Counties; I have been told, although I don't know anybody that's done it, that you could walk from Osceola to Franklin in grass country without ever going through forest.

So up the last hill — Osceola was up on a big hill — and then into the pasture on the south side of the road. It was a big allotment — a couple hundred acres — just west of what they call "The Sinks," where Gandy Creek runs right through the mountain. Now at that time Osceola was a little community, with a few houses and a little post office and store. The mail was brought over there every day by Harry Tingler, who would come riding by us on horseback. It was pretty primitive back there — no electric or anything like that.

When we had the cattle safe in the meadow, we were met by a brother in our Model T — we had it licensed by then — who drove us home. By the time of the last drive, we had replaced the old Model T with a Model A. One year my brother was late in coming, so we just headed off walking. We were passed by a salesman who had been trying to sell Home Comfort stoves in Osceola. He offered us a ride, but my Dad asked "Will ya haul my dog?" He said no, so my Dad said "Well, just drive on then."

After we got the cattle in pasture we had to drive over there every week to check on them — get a count, look at their health and things like that. We got some help from a fellow named Charlie Vandevender — I'll never forget him — a big fellow who was always riding around with a gun strapped to him. There wasn't much trouble with rustling in those days, and I think we lost only one animal in all those years; we found it butchered there on the hills. One thing that helped was that we marked our cattle by punching a diamond-shaped hole in their ears. We had been told that some farmers had been known to trade cattle — poor ones for good ones — and we didn't want to take any chances.

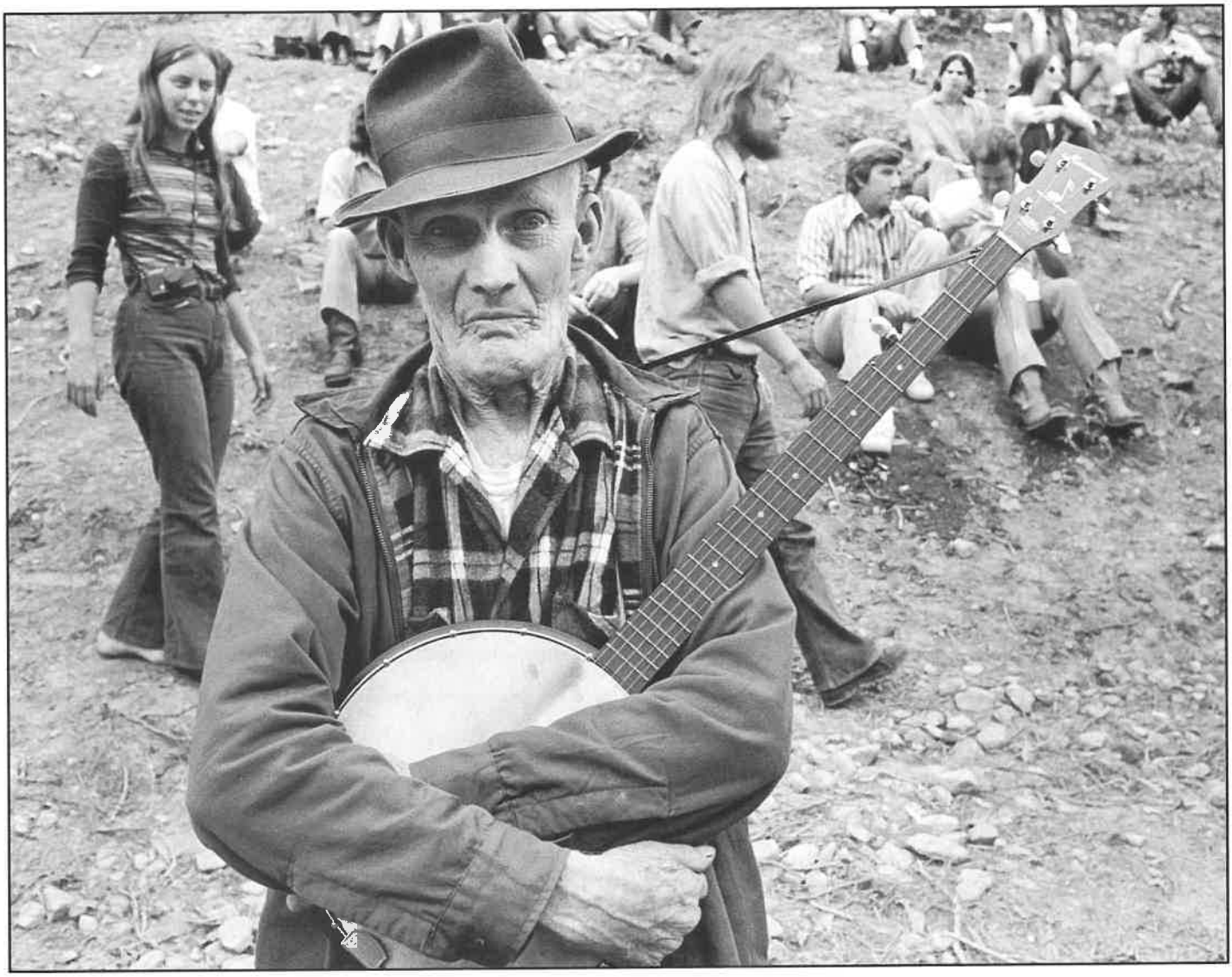
We had come about 16 miles by then, and the cattle were ready to be watered and fed.

In the fall, we would sell off what steers we were going to sell — usually trucked them off but we always drove the cows for calving back across the same 26-mile drive they'd come on.

Now some people ask me whether we had any trouble crossing the paved road at Route 219 in Beverly and the answer is no. As a matter of fact, there were times when we helped Mr. Maxwell, a nearby farmer, herd cattle all the way from Mingo to Beverly. Now that was *on* Route 219. You see, there weren't many cars in those days. You wouldn't see more than about 20 in a day. When a car came up to the herd — which had as many as 300 head, and maybe 10 horses or so in with them, and made a line maybe 500 or 600 yards long — it just worked its way through and then went ahead wherever it was going.

I think back to those drives and the Depression years of the '30's often. It was a hard life in some ways, but when other people couldn't get enough to eat — maybe a slice of cornbread or a potato for a meal — we had plenty. It was a different world, but it was a good life. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Young steers in pasture at Osceola. Photo by Robert Whitcomb.



The "back-to-the-landers" met the salt of the earth at the Morris Family Old-Time Music Festivals near Ivydale during the late 1960's and early '70's. Lee Hammons is pictured here at the 1971 event. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

Nearly 25 years after the fact, memories remain of my first exposure to real West Virginia traditional music. On July 19, 1973, five of us left Wheeling late on a Friday night and headed south. Our destination was Ivydale in Clay County — the site of the Morris Family Old-Time Music Festival.

I had no idea as we drove the van through the night and wound our way on narrow, crooked roads deeper into West Virginia's central mountains that the weekend I was about to experience would make such a lasting impression on me.

The decision to go to the festival was a rather casual one. I graduated from high school the month before and was working as a camp counselor for the summer. The director of the camping program knew banjo player Dwight Diller from when she and Dwight were students at West Virginia University. She mentioned that she was going to a festival and asked if I wanted to go along.

It was the first time that I felt the spirit of a music and a people that inhabits the central and southern mountains of my native state.

I had been playing the guitar for a while and was interested in music in general, so I said yes. Oddly enough, I didn't take an instrument. I can't remember why now, but I think it might have been for lack of room in the van. In retrospect, I think we should have left something at home and made room.

Fortunately, I did take a small Wollensack cassette recorder. I still have the tapes that I made that weekend, and I've made several copies of the original tapes just in case they finally self-destruct.

What was so special about Ivydale? It's hard to know where to

Ivydale

The Morris Family Old-Time Music Festivals

By Bob Heyer

Ira Mullins (left) and Lee Triplett peek out from behind the stage at Ivydale. Dave Morris looks on. Photo by Leo Chabot, date unknown.

start. For me, it was hearing the music, meeting the people, being in the mountains, sloshing through the mud — the whole shooting match. Something got a hold of me that weekend that's still got a grip on me.

It was the first time that I heard many of the fiddle tunes that now are so familiar to me. It was the first time that I met Lee Triplett and heard Ira Mullins' distinctive cackle while telling a tale about his days at the sawmill. It was the first time that I saw Phoeba Parsons beat out a tune on the fiddlesticks.

It was the first time that I felt the spirit of a music and a people that inhabits the central and southern mountains of my native state. This spirit has a quiet dignity to it. It embodies strength, but it is gentle; it has fire in its belly and is rough around the edges; it possesses a shared wisdom and grace. This spirit was alive in the elder musicians at Ivydale that weekend.

Before we left on Sunday afternoon to drive back home I was making plans for future trips. Twenty-five years later I'm still seeking out the music and the people associated with it. Over the years there have been many memorable gatherings: the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville, Don West's festivals at the Appalachian South Folklife Center near Pipestem, Glen Smith's festivals at Elizabeth, to

Osie Adams Morris. Photographer and date unknown.

Grandmother Lula Hill with John (center) and David Morris at Ivydale, 1950.

John, Dallis, and David Morris (left to right), 1968.

name a few. I have fond memories of them all. But, for me, none has matched my baptism into West Virginia old-time music at Ivydale.

The Morris family came to Clay County in the winter of 1917. Amos Morris was born in 1888 in Stinson, Calhoun County. He purchased a tract of land near Ivydale and moved his family there. Four-year-old Dallis Morris, Amos's son, sat in a wooden box in the back of the buggy that carried them on the 14-mile journey from Stinson to their new farm. They crossed a rain-swollen creek, and the water got up in the buggy. The box carrying Dallis started to float out of the buggy. His mother, Osie Adams Morris, grabbed the box and held it to keep him from floating away. This wasn't the last time that Big Otter Creek presented a challenge for the Morris family.

"She would tell us stories about the family, about her life growing up in the mountains."

John and David Morris grew up on the farm next to the original property that Amos Morris purchased in 1917. They lived with their parents, Dallis Morris and Anna Merrill Hill Morris, and their maternal grandmother, Lula Jane Woods Hill. John was born in 1946, David in 1944. Much of their early exposure to music and singing came from their family.

"Daddy played the guitar and would sing to us in the evenings after work. Mama was always singing around the house. You always could find her because she'd be singing as she worked in the garden or in the kitchen. Grandma Hill sang gospel songs and ballads. She was born in 1892 on Wilson's Ridge near Strange Creek in Braxton County. She would tell us stories about the family, about her life growing up in the mountains, and

Fiddler John and guitarist David Morris at the West Virginia State Folk Festival, Glenville, 1974. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

just about things that had happened around the area. Both Grandma and Grandpa Morris were clawhammer banjo players, so you see, there were a lot of influences there," says David.

In addition to their immediate family, John and David learned from their neighbors. At that time, Clay County was well-known for its concentration of fine old-time singers and musicians.

David elaborates. "French Carpenter used to come stay at the house. I think that he was John's first fiddle teacher. Dad would play with Wilson Douglas and his father, Shirley, who was a banjo player. There was Gruder Morris, Dad's second cousin, who played the guitar and banjo and Gruder's wife, Jenny, who sang and danced. I learned songs from Laurie White Boggs Drake and John learned tunes from her brother, J. F. 'Doc' White. We knew Jenes Cottrell and his sister, Sylvia O'Brien. There were other fiddlers in the community — Lee Triplett and Ira Mullins. We also learned from Aunt Minnie Moss and Phoeba Parsons."

A makeshift stage and brick-and-board benches were part of the festival in early years. Later, a more permanent stage was constructed using boards taken from the house of fiddler French Carpenter. Photo by Carl Fleischhauer.

Music became an important part of the Morris brothers' lives. John sang and played the banjo, guitar, fiddle, lap dulcimer, and mandolin. David sang, played the guitar, and autoharp, and danced. As they grew older they became increasingly interested in preserving the tunes and songs of their family and neighbors, and in promoting the traditional music of West Virginia.

This desire to keep the old music alive, along with a local tradition of live music at social events, laid the foundation for what later became the Ivydale festival. The direct evolution of the festival, however, was a result of two important events — one to say "Goodbye and good luck," and one to say "Welcome home."

David Morris explains. "When I left for Vietnam in 1967 and then when I came home in 1968, we had get-togethers at the house. All of our friends and neighbors came, and we played music and enjoyed each other's company. We had such a good time that we decided to keep it going."

The first Morris Family Old-Time Music Festival was held the last weekend of September in 1969 at the homeplace of John and David's parents. The once-private gathering made a subtle transformation into a public event. The festival literally took place in the yard and driveway next to the house;

Gerry Milnes (left) and Melvin Wine in 1993. Photo courtesy Augusta Heritage Center.

restroom facilities were limited to the one inside of the Morris family home. What the festival lacked in terms of amenities was more than made up for with its charm.

"Aunt Jenny Wilson sat in our living room in the morning for several hours and played the banjo while folks were standing and waiting in line to use the restroom," recalls David.

It rained a little bit that year but not enough to really matter. The first year of the festival included strong participation from local musicians and singers, many of whom had been inspirational to the Morris brothers. These local musicians joined with people from surrounding counties, and with those who had come from much farther away, to make music.

Banjo player Harry Pitzer (with glasses) and fiddler Harry Dixon (at microphone) are at the center of an enthusiastic group of musicians during one of the later Ivydale festivals. Photo by Tom Screven, date unknown.

In 1970, the site of the festival was changed in anticipation of larger crowds. John Morris was living in a house adjacent to his parents' home. A stage, without a permanent back or a roof, was constructed in the garden between the creek bank and the house.

Once again it rained for part of the weekend, but the enthusiasm of those attending the festival was undiminished. Although advertising for the event was minimal, the word spread about the Ivydale festival. The older local musicians were once again joined by musicians from bordering counties and surrounding states, invited by the Morris family. The 1970 festival was a testament to the number of young people who were actively seeking out traditional music and musicians. People came from all over the country; Dallis Morris counted license plates from 36 states.

The appeal of the Ivydale festivals owed much to the fact that they provided an opportunity for younger musicians with an interest in the old music to get acquainted

The experience for some was incredibly deep.

and interact with those who would become their mentors.

John Blisard, multi-talented musician from Kanawha County, remembers that Ivydale was the place where he got to know Franklin George. "I had seen Frank prior to this at the West Virginia State Folk Festival, but I never had a chance to play music with him until Ivydale."

Another significant relationship that began at Ivydale and lasts to this day is between Gerry Milnes and Melvin Wine. "I was introduced to Melvin there," recalls Gerry, "as well as a number of other great musicians: Glen Smith, Frank George, Wilson Douglas, Lee Triplett, Ira Mullins, Harry Dixon, Herb Pitzer, Uncle John Hilt, and Sherman Hammons."

The experience for some was in-

Ivydale on Film and Tape

In 1972, filmmaker Bob Gates captured the Ivydale Festival on 16mm film. "It's something I felt had to be done. I went and charged more film than I could pay for at the time just so I could do it," Bob says. More than 20 years later, the film is available on videocassette. *The Morris Family Old-Time Music Festival*, a 30-minute black & white video production, sells for $19.95 from Omni Productions, 1117 Virginia Street East, Charleston, WV 25301; (304)342-2624. A special collector's edition in a gold-embossed "bookcase box" sells for $24.99. Include $2 for shipping and handling charges. A copy print of the 16mm film may also be ordered. For more information contact Bob Gates at Omni Productions.

The 1972 Ivydale film may also be checked out through the West Virginia Library Commission's film services unit in its original 16mm format or on videotape. West Virginia readers can check with their local libraries for information on reserving the movie.

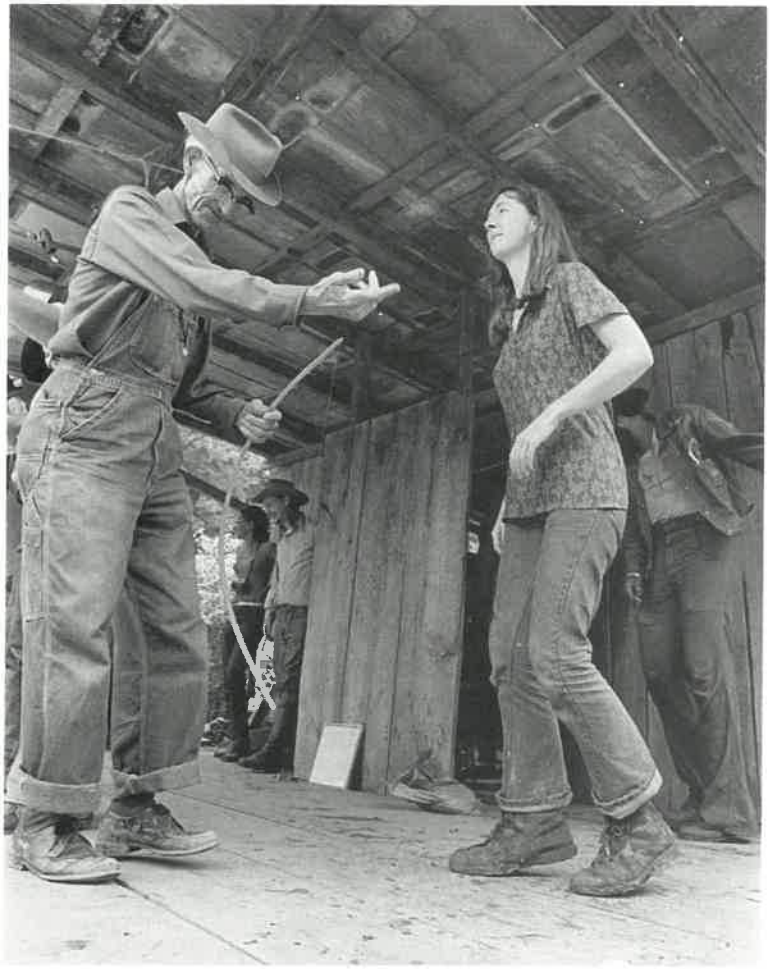
In addition, the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College in Elkins has much of the music from the Ivydale festivals in its Augusta Archive of Folk Culture. Original tapes from the festival were recently transferred to digital recordings. Gerry Milnes, Folk Arts Coordinator at Augusta, says the collection is a great representation of the music played at Ivydale by young and old musicians alike. The materials are available to the general public by appointment. For more information contact Augusta at (304)637-1209.

Filmmaker Bob Gates at Ivydale, 1972. Photo by Judy Galloway.

credibly deep. John Morris reflects on the intensity of these relationships with the older musicians. "It's not easy to describe it, but it needs to be said. These people shared so much of themselves with us — freely and graciously — they literally shared their souls with us."

Fiddler Glen Smith *(see photo, page 8)* recalls how the strength of the music itself drew the younger generation to those who played it. "One thing that I remember is that you could go up there to the Morris boys' festival and all the kids would follow you around just like puppies. You were doing something that they enjoyed and they wanted to pick up this old-time music."

In addition to providing a place for the young to learn the old music from their elders, the festivals made it possible for many of the younger people to connect with one another.



Dancers Morris Norton (left) and Trina Milefsky on stage during the 1972 festival. Photo by Mike Meador.

"I think one of the most important things that the festivals did was to provide a place to get together," says John Blisard. "They helped to turn a lot of people on who are now players."

John Morris remembers one person in particular who got "turned on" to old-time music at the festival. "Tom King was a 17-year-old rock and roll guitar player. After coming to Ivydale he traded in his electric guitar and never looked back. He became the finest old-time backup guitar player that ever walked." *(Tom King passed away in 1993. —ed.)*

JOHN HILT/STEPHEN TUTTLE

SYLVIA O'BRIEN AND GRUDER MORRIS/JACK KERN

EARL GILMORE/THOM HODGES

LEE TRIPLETT/CARL FLEISCHHAUER

Gerry Milnes recalls, "Some of the first people that I met at Ivydale or saw and listened to were some people from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. It was Bill Hicks, Tommy Thompson and his wife Bobbie, Eric Olson, Malcom Owen, Blanton Owen, and Vicky Owen. At the time they were kind of in the forefront of a mini-revival in old-time music, and they showed up at Ivydale playing just great tunes that they learned in West Virginia from people like Frank George, Oscar Wright, and Burl Hammons. It was a real revelation to me that there was starting to be an interest not only in real folk music but by people of my age group. That was kind of an exciting thing to realize that there were other people besides myself who were interested in old-time music."

Pocahontas County musician Dwight Diller came to the Ivydale festival for the first time in 1970. "I went to my first old-time music festivals in the summer of 1970. I went to Hillsville, Independence, and Galax, Virginia; and Ivydale. I'd been hanging around with the Hammonses up to that time. Suddenly I discovered these festivals. I didn't know that anything like that existed. I met a lot of people at Ivydale that year: Wilson Douglas, Gerry Milnes, Odell McGuire, Lee Triplett, and lots of others. I knew John and Dave from seeing them once in Morgantown and once when they came to Pocahontas County the previous year. But I guess you would say that we started to know one another better from that point on."

By 1971 the festival had become a tradition of its own. The festival site was moved once more to accommodate the people who would descend on the community during the last weekend of September. The decision was made to use a field located next to Big Otter Creek on the original property that Amos Morris purchased in 1917. This site served as the home of the festival through its final year in September 1973.

A permanent stage was constructed as well as outhouses and a concession stand. Appropriately, the boards used to build the stage were taken from the house of fiddler French Carpenter.

David Morris explains, "The interstate was coming through and John, John Martin, and myself were hired by a company that was clearing right of way. We found out that French's house was going to be taken out by the road so we went after work one day and got what we could to use for the stage."

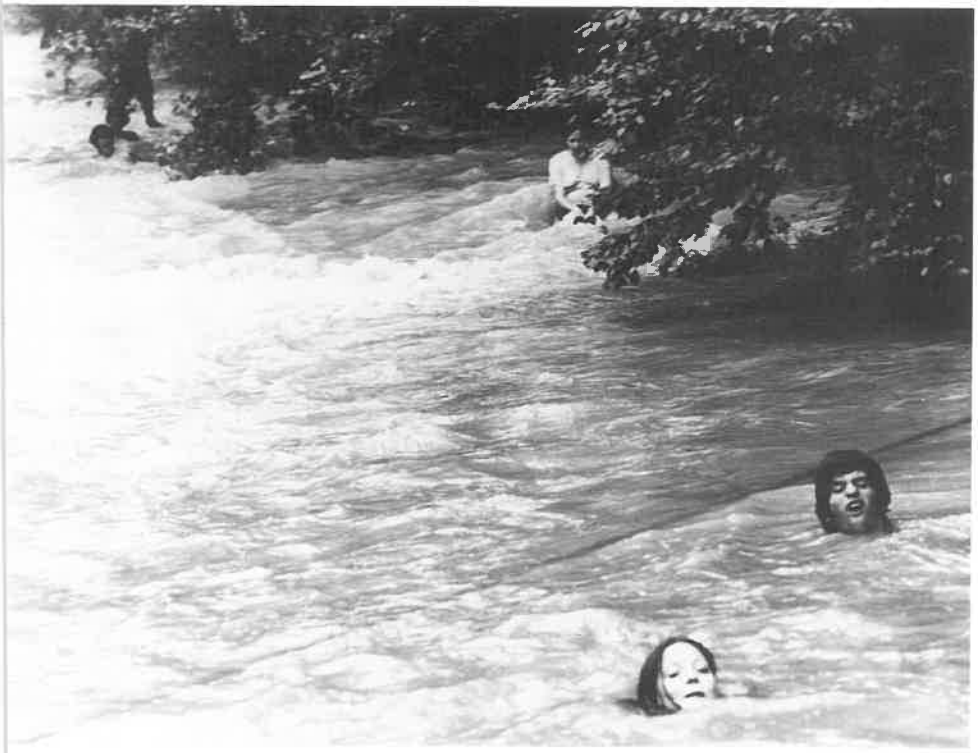
"That was an exciting thing to realize that there were other people besides myself who were interested in old-time music."

The new site helped to provide more room, but heavy rains made access difficult. The waters of Big Otter Creek swelled over the bridge and another somewhat unwelcome tradition was established at the Ivydale festivals.

The festivals in 1972 and 1973 were plagued with flooding rains. Even the attempt to have an additional festival in July of 1973 failed to bring dry conditions. During these years the words "Ivydale" and "mud" became synonymous.

Fiddler Woody Simmons describes one weekend. "One year I went down there, and it started raining on Friday. It rained all day Friday, all night Friday night, and all day Saturday. Sunday morning it was kind of cold and awful muddy. That was when I met Tom King. He had the legs of his britches rolled up above his knees and he was barefooted. I had four-buckle arctics on."

Bob Gates, a Charleston filmmaker, captured many of the sights and sounds of the 1972 festival in-



Though no one drowned, it was dangerous to cross the flooded Big Otter Creek during the 1972 festival. Photographer unknown.

cluding the inhospitable weather conditions. Bob was working on a project documenting the effects of strip mining in the state when he heard about the festival and decided to film it. The resulting 30-minute black and white film, entitled *The Morris Family Old-Time Music Festival*, is a stunning reminder of the people, the place, the time, and the potential ferocity of Big Otter Creek. The creek that nearly claimed Dallis Morris in 1917 got a crack at a bunch of folks in 1972 and 1973.

In spite of the many weather-related hardships endured by those who attended the festivals, most people remember the good things that happened at Ivydale.

Glen Smith recalls one such incident. "I remember one time we got shut off by the water. I was on the wrong side of the creek, and I hadn't had no dinner, no supper, no nothing. This old man, he was a preacher, but he played the washtub bass. Sloan Staggs was his name. He was one of the nicest old men I ever met. I was about to starve to death. He said, 'Come to my camper.' He fixed me three or four sandwiches and I stayed with him. During the night the water went down, and we got out the next morning. It's little things like that that I remember about the Morris boys' festivals."

In spite of the increasing crowds and other changes, the festivals maintained much of the original spirit of the initial gatherings of friends.

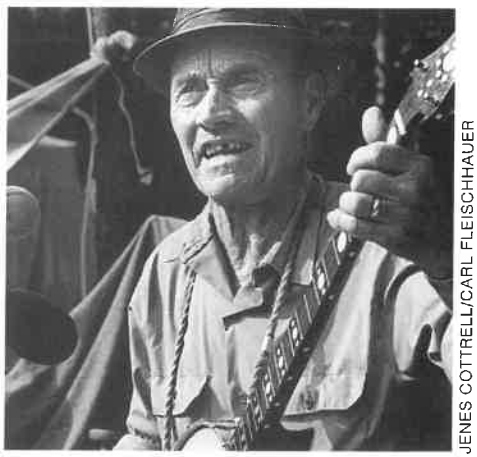
Gerry Milnes comments, "The festivals were informal events where people weren't presented on a pedestal. The music was everywhere, and the music was very accessible. At Ivydale the music wasn't presented by any academics. It wasn't presented by folklorists. It was presented in a way that seemed in context. You know, it was just down in the back field on this farm on a little homemade stage. It wasn't the kind of deal that there was a show going on, and the performers were separated from the audience. The performers were the audience, and the audience were the performers."

The overall impact that this series of festivals has had on preserv-

LAURIE WHITE BOGGS DRAKE/THOM HODGES

IRA MULLINS/CARL FLEISCHHAUER

FRANKLIN GEORGE/CARL FLEISCHHAUER



JENES COTTRELL/CARL FLEISCHHAUER

ing the traditional music of central West Virginia is difficult to measure; the festivals were part of a larger ongoing process that was occurring during this period of time and continues to this day. Even so, it is possible to identify several contributions that the Morris Family festivals made toward keeping the traditional music of our state alive.

"The old people were looked up to, and they were honored for what they knew and what they did."

One of these contributions is the fact that the festivals made it possible for traditional music to be heard by a whole new generation who, in turn, were able to claim it for their own. This could not have happened if the older musicians had not been given the opportunity to share their talents with others.

For David Morris, this is the aspect of the festivals that made him the most proud. "Through this series of festivals we were able to call to the attention of a huge number of people — the old people. They were looked up to, and they were honored for what they knew and what they did."

Some of the people about whom David speaks are no longer with us. It is now up to the Morris brothers and others to carry on this legacy. John and David still have a commitment to the music. You will find them each year at official gatherings such as the Vandalia Gathering, the West Virginia State Folk Festival, and the Stonewall Jackson Jubilee, in addition to other festivals, dances, and get-togethers across the region.

There's even some talk about another Ivydale festival. Pray for sunshine, but bring your rain gear. I'll see you there.

BOB HEYER, a graduate of West Liberty State College and West Virginia University, lives in Wheeling where he works as a teacher for Ohio County schools and as a musician. He and his wife, Barb, operate the Mountain Moon Coffeehouse in Oglebay Park which features monthly performances of live West Virginia traditional music.

I would like to thank everyone who assisted me in the completion of this article. I also encourage others who were there to contact me to share their experiences. I view this as an ongoing project and will continue to collect people's recollections of the festival.

—Bob Heyer
501 National Road
Wheeling, WV 26003

Author Bob Heyer today. Photo by Michael Keller.

A wet but happy David Morris at Ivydale, 1972. Photo by Mike Meador.

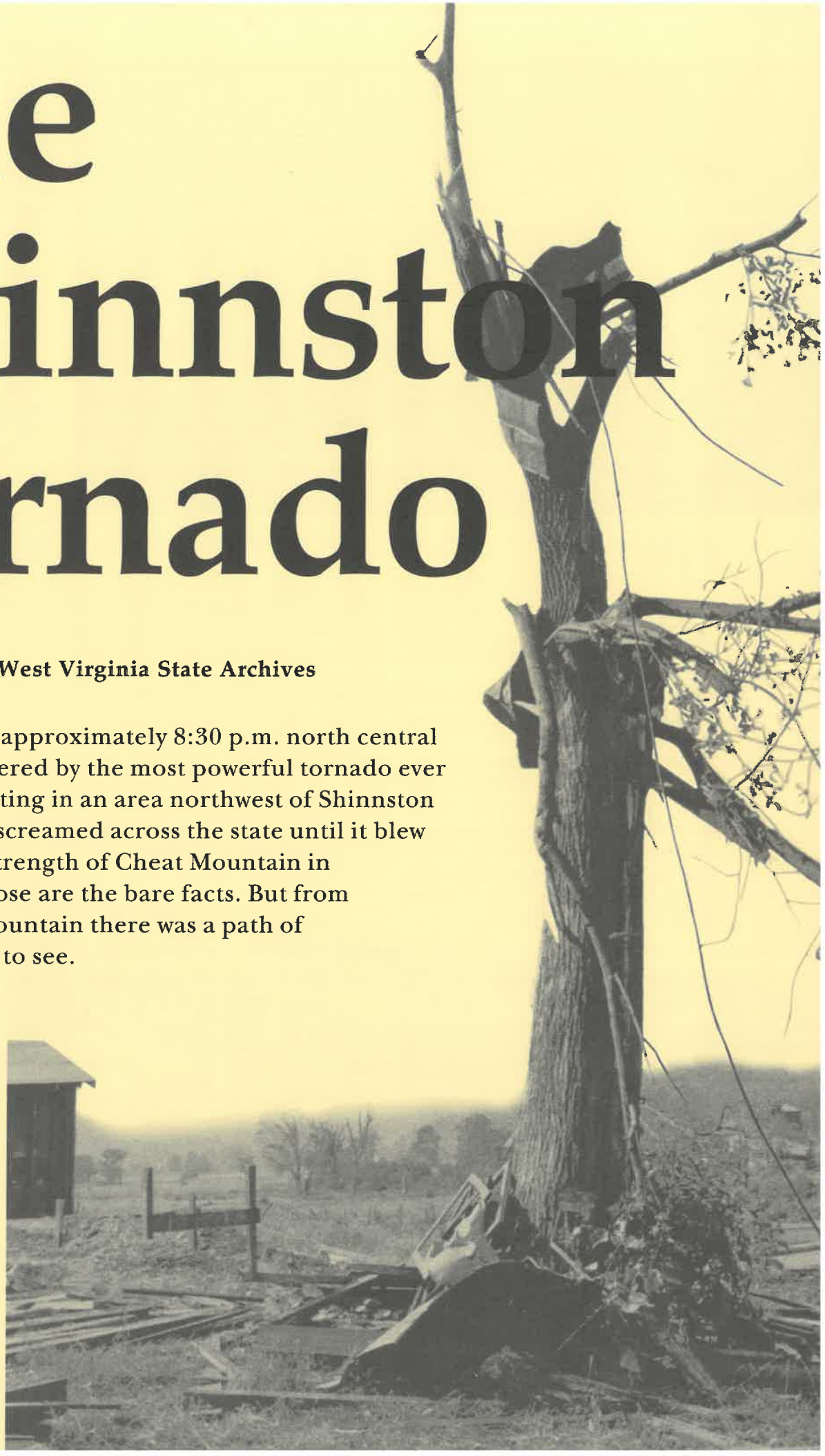
The Shinnston Tornado

By Martha A. Lowther

Photographs Courtesy West Virginia State Archives

On June 23, 1944, at approximately 8:30 p.m. north central West Virginia was battered by the most powerful tornado ever to enter the state. Starting in an area northwest of Shinnston in Harrison County it screamed across the state until it blew itself out against the strength of Cheat Mountain in Randolph County. Those are the bare facts. But from Shinnston to Cheat Mountain there was a path of destruction left for all to see.

Final count from the tornado was 103 killed and 430 seriously injured. Within those miles of destruction and casualties lie stories of bravery, self-sacrifice, heroism, and the grace of God. Some people would call it fate.



Residents view destruction in the wake of the tornado. This photo was taken in Montrose.

Headlines in the *Clarksburg Telegram* read, "95 Lose Lives," "Looks As If Giant Scythe Hit Section."

Looking back from 54 years later, it is hard to imagine the terror of that evening.

Aside from the unimaginable impact of high wind and flying debris, the most difficult part of that dark night was the loss of electricity. Monongahela Power had a modern system of lines coming into Clarksburg but the storm made child's play out of them, leaving them lying twisted and broken on the ground. Starting at Lucas Mills, the storm leveled poles and two spans of 22,000 volt transmission lines which feed into Clarksburg. At Saltwell it twisted a large steel tower that supported a 132,000 volt transmission line. Then over in the territory between Flemington and Simpson the storm took out a 66,000 volt transmission line coming into Clarksburg.

Still going in its southeasterly direction, it entered Barbour County where it blew away 26 poles and spans of conductors which put the 22,000 volt line serving Philippi, Elkins, and points east, out of commission. Even with this massive power outage, service was restored to most of the area by noon the next day.

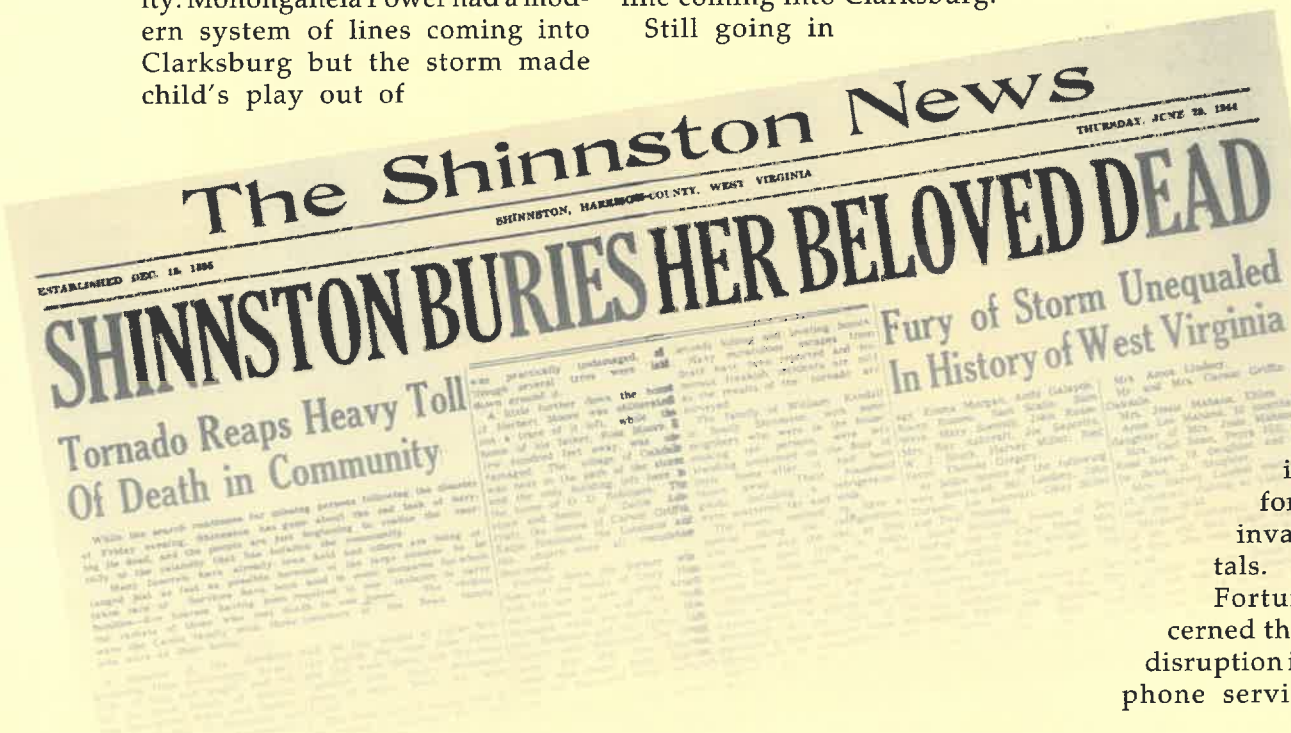
But for that night, in the aftermath of the storm, hospitals were desperately in need of electricity. Both Saint Marys and Union Protestant Hospitals in Clarksburg were quickly filling up with the dead and injured.

Volunteers quickly assembled at both hospitals and local clinics bringing candles, flashlights, or lamps. They lined the hallways and operating areas giving light wherever they could so the doctors and nurses could see well enough to go about their grisly tasks.

The J. C. Weer Railroad Show was performing at the Nixon Plaza that night. There were 2,000 people on the fairgrounds when the electricity went off. The management quickly set up portable generators and were able to get the people off the grounds but since there were no streetcars running many of them were stranded.

Hearing that the hospitals were operating without electricity, Mr. Weer donated the use of the show's generators. He personally saw to the loading of the generators, many of which were small personal generators used to supply power to the living trailers of the performers. They proved invaluable to the hospitals.

Fortunately for all concerned there was only a small disruption in the Shinnston telephone service. Because it was


The Shinnston News

ESTABLISHED DEC. 18, 1886 — SHINNSTON, HARRISON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA — THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1944

SHINNSTON BURIES HER BELOVED DEAD

Tornado Reaps Heavy Toll Of Death in Community

Fury of Storm Unequaled In History of West Virginia

wartime, the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company had prepared back-up generators to be used in case of an emergency. And this was definitely an emergency. Shinnston C & P manager Rufus Taylor and his staff of operators worked with skill and efficiency to meet the needs of the night. There was no electricity for an hour or so but the girls took turns filling the positions at the switchboard while others held candles or flashlights.

There was great relief when the lights came back on, which also allowed them to use their portable fans, for it was a very hot night.

Clarksburg was not as lucky as Shinnston in this regard. According to a local newspaper, "R. J. Eisenhauser, manager of the local C & P Telephone Company said three of the telephone operators, Mrs. Evelyn McCoy, Mrs. Jean Thacker Bennett, and Mrs. Tacy Auvil, who operated the local switchboard during the time the electricity was off for a period of about 12 hours, were forced to use a hand crank to do all the ringing, and the handle of the crank broke almost as soon as they started to use it. They then used a screwdriver as a handle, and their fingers became raw and sore from using this improvised device."

The service of those gallant operators was invaluable that night in saving lives, contacting doctors and nurses, and alerting the different hospitals to the needs of the community.

Help came from many unexpected sources. The state road workers who were called out to help ended up doing many different chores in addition to clearing the roads. According to District Superintendent Harold F. Kramer, the workers pitched in and helped transport volunteer workers and rescue parties; they loaned Saint Mary's hospital a portable generator, and a state road panel truck was used to carry the injured to hospitals. After clearing roads, the crews stayed on helping to bury pets and helping victims relocate to other shelter.

One of the unexpected areas of help came from the prison department labor camp at Gypsy. These men were said to have done splendid work in digging graves for the tornado victims, assisting the State Road Commission in clean-up work, and doing whatever they could.

There are many individuals who stand out in newspaper accounts. Civil Air Patrol Wing Commander Colonel Hubert Start flew doctors, nurses, and much-needed plasma from Charleston into Benedum Airport at Bridgeport. Colonel Tom

Thomas was devastated by a separate twister, two hours later than the lethal storm that ripped through Shinnston and other communities.

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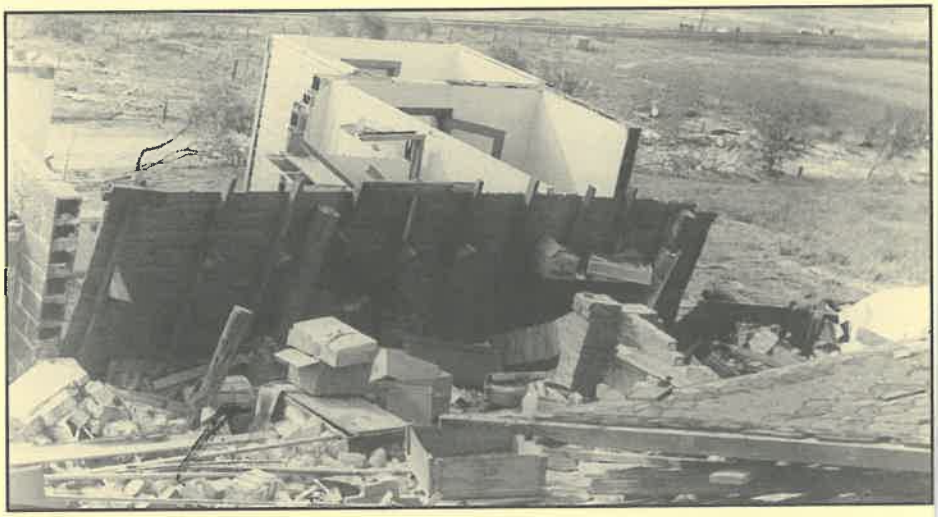
The U. S. Army, the Civil Air Patrol, the West Virginia State Guard, and countless others helped with relief efforts in the aftermath of the storm. These servicemen are shown in Montrose.

Leland of the West Virginia State Guard and his men helped direct traffic to make sure ambulances and emergency vehicles could get through. State Police superintendent Clare H. Hess had his men out patrolling and searching for bodies.

Major Albert V. Walker of the Salvation Army distributed a truckload of clothing; since many people lost everything in the storm, clothes were of the utmost necessity. United States Representative E. G. Rohrbough cancelled his trip to the Republican Convention in Chicago and hurried home to provide whatever help he could offer. Shinnston Fire Chief Harry C. Carder worked tirelessly to do whatever needed to be done.

Doddridge County sent road crews to help clear roads and culverts. The fire department of West Union collected $199.82 from the citizens of the town and presented it to the town of Shinnston: a princely sum in those days.

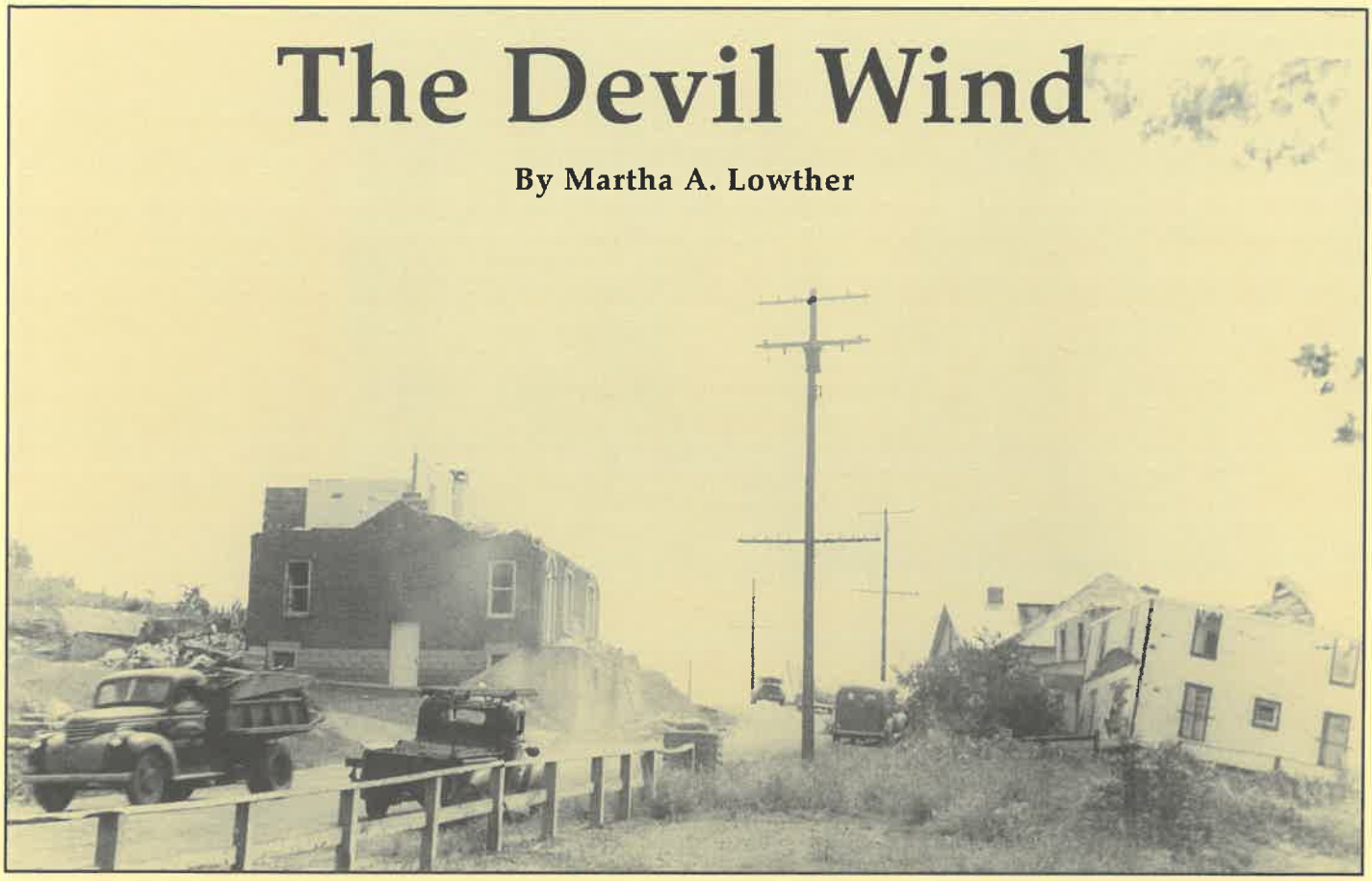
The United States Army encampment at Elkins was of great assistance, offering the use not only of men and equipment but also their 125-bed hospital. Not only was Shinnston affected, the storm killed people in Meadowville in Barbour County, and Montrose in Randolph County. All in all, five counties were involved. Starting in Marion County, through Harrison, Taylor, Barbour, and ending in Randolph: a storm of epic proportions that is remembered even to this day.



Thomas, June 23, 1944.

The Devil Wind

By Martha A. Lowther



Shinnston after the tornado. Photo by Ernie Sampson.

There are in each of us, hidden in our most secret places, fears that dominate our lives. For me it is the fear of gathering storm clouds and a high wind. It may be a lovely spring day, but if the sky starts to lose its bright blue coloring and the trees start to turn up their leaves, my first impulse is to clear a path to the basement step.

The beginning of my fear started the night of June 23, 1944. It was hot and humid, the heat hovering close even though the sun had already set.The West Virginia of that long-ago night was much different than the world we know today. For the first time during the war things were beginning to look hopeful for the Allied Forces in Europe. Headlines screamed of the imminent invasion of Cherborg, France.

Neighbor still visited neighbor and houses stood open to the evening air, not shut up in air-conditioned solitude. Sitting on the front porch and quick chats over the backyard fence were common everyday occurrences. People were quick to lend a hand to those in need.

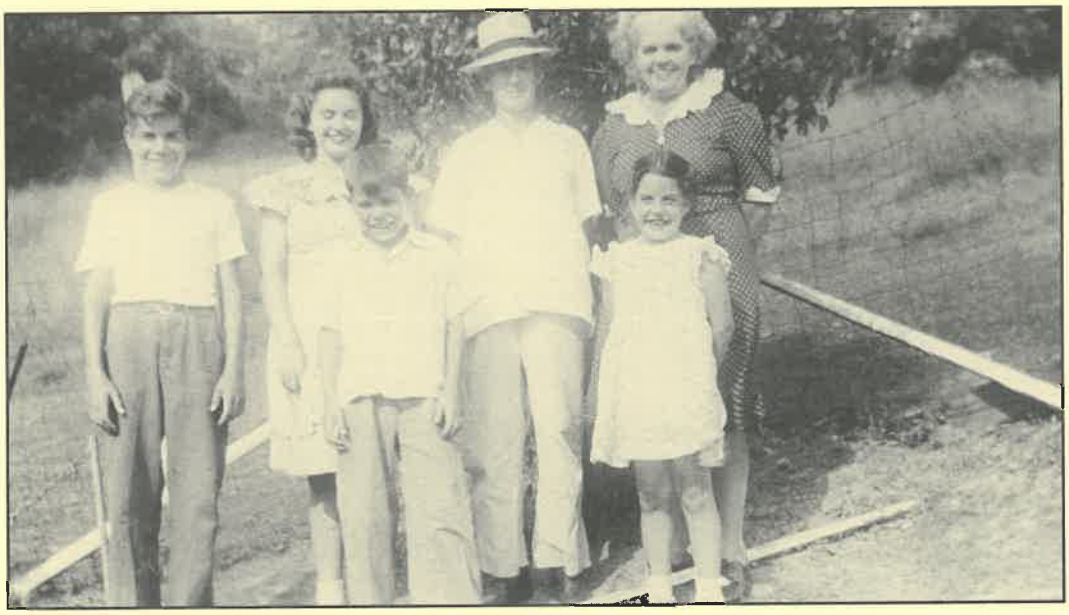
In my home, the Smith home, things were much as usual. My dad, Ralph, was working the three-to-11 shift at the Wendell Coal mine and my mother, Irene, was finishing up a week of household chores. I was playing nearby, my sister Maxine was reading, and my brothers Jim and "Whozie" (Harold) were playing on the hillside above the house.

At Mom's frantic calls, we all came running. By this time the sky was turning black.

As Mom came outside to check on us, she noticed that the sky had taken on a funny greenish look. Even as she frantically called us into the house she saw the sky turn a brassy color.

Being children, we were reluctant to give up the remains of the day but at Mom's frantic calls, we all came running. By this time the sky was turning black. My brother Whozie later said that as he turned to look back over his shoulder, he could not see beyond the end of the porch.

Coming into the house we all gathered in the back room away



The Smith family survived the tornado. Left to right: Jim, Maxine, Harold ("Whozie"), father Ralph, mother Irene, and author Martha. Photo taken about 1945 on a family trip to Tyler County.

from the storm where Mom and the rest tried to hold the doors shut against the devil wind. Looking out the window I could see trees whipping to the right, then the left, touching the ground first on one side and then on the other. Some survived, others didn't. Poor Mom, she didn't know what was going on. It was the commonly-held opinion that tornadoes would never cross the mountains, that somehow our beautiful hills would protect us. How tragically wrong was that line of thinking.

We all knew by the destruction left that the storm had come near our dwelling, but I never realized until my brother Whozie shared his memories with me years later that it had come to the very edge of our home.

Large walnut trees standing 40 yards in front of the house were twisted around, and left broken on the ground.

The tornado started northwest of Shinnston in Harrison County, and traveled through Joetown, Oakdale, Wyatt, Peroa, Prospect Valley, Bingamon's Run, Pleasant Hill, into Shinnston itself. It went through Boothsville where it left the Hope Natural Gas Compressor station a mass of twisted metal, across Route 50 where it destroyed the Corder mansion, crossed over our hill, roared past our home, sailed over top of the D. L. Cather home, (thankfully staying in the air for this section of space), then ripped across the southern slope leaving bare ground in its wake.

The Smith home also survived, with only an upstairs window blown out. A lamp in the window signalled that everyone was OK. Photographer and date unknown.

Dad didn't know if his family was dead or alive, so he battled on until he had to finally leave the car and continue on foot.

As it left us, it headed for Simpson where it cut a wicked path across Gabe's Fork. There it took the lives of Lawrence Scolish, his wife Rose, and their children Daisy, Norma, and Sammy. In the same area the storm took the life of Lawrence's mother, Mrs. Sammy Scolish, and Josephine Kittle Moyer, a young pregnant woman whose husband was overseas in the service. Also her little sister Charlotte Kittle. All

three houses stood, one right above the other. A daughter, Rosemarie Scolish, a teenager, was spared because as the other children hurried home to avoid the storm, she stayed in Simpson at her grandfather's. She didn't want to be caught in the storm. Or so the story was told.

Ironically, only six weeks before, my parents had moved from the Gabe's Fork area to Berry Run at Flemington so the loss of these families was very personal to us.

All summer long we found storm salvage in the meadows surrounding our home. One Sunday afternoon remains in my mind. Mom and I had taken a walk out around the hill when she grabbed my hand and hurried me back to the house. Calling for my dad she made him go retrieve an object she had seen lying in the grass. It turned out to be a little girl's sundress, probably size eight, maybe ten, trimmed in red rickrack and red and white peppermint stripe. Mom kept the dress for years as a reminder, I suppose, of those less fortunate.

The storm passed us by, leaving only a blown-out windowpane from an upstairs window. Dad claimed this is what saved the house. Mom had other ideas. I heard her tell someone later that summer, "I guess the Lord wasn't ready for us yet."

Mom found a coal oil lamp, lit it, and stood it on a table in front of the living room window after the storm had passed. All of the doors were shut tight and locked even though it was suffocatingly hot. She had no idea what to expect next for we had never encountered such a storm.

At the coal mine the huge electric fans used to pull air into the mines stopped working so the shift ended. As Dad came out of the mine he heard there had been a tornado on Berry Run. He ran to his car and started home. It was still daylight when he started but long after dark before he made it home, a trip that normally took ten minutes.

He had to stop and clear the road and drive around fallen limbs and brush. Dad didn't know if his family was dead or alive, so he battled on until he had to finally leave the car and continue on foot. We lived on top of a high hill and as Dad started up the hill in the total blackness of the night, he saw the small flickering flame of the coal oil light. I heard him tell someone later, "That was the prettiest sight I believe I ever saw." Being a child I wondered at the tears in his voice.

And so the Smith family survived, to fight again, to love again, to bear our children, and to tell once more the tale of the killer wind.

The ground was ripped bare in many areas around Shinnston. Photo by Ernie Sampson.

MARTHA A. LOWTHER was born in Taylor County. Martha has written for the *Ravenswood News* as a contributing columnist and now works as a librarian at the Rockport Full Gospel Worship Center where her husband is second associate pastor. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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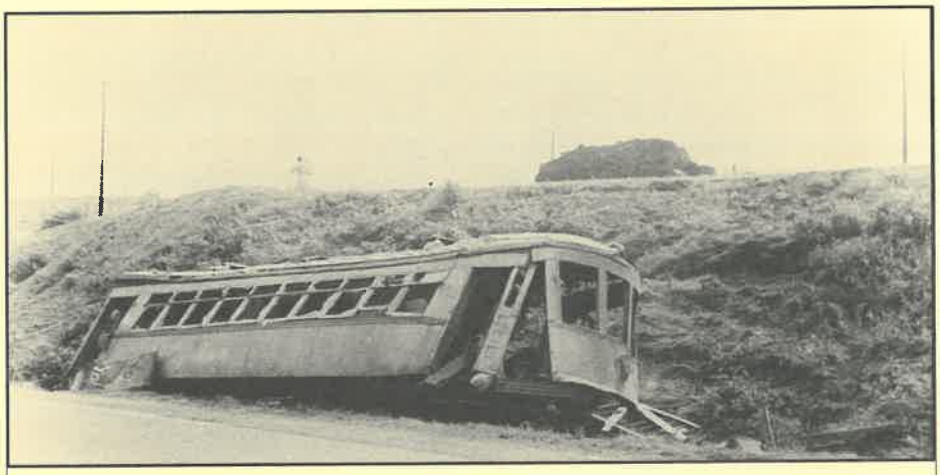

According to John L. Finlayson, this was the streetcar home of Henry Heldreth on Pleasant Hill, destroyed by the cyclone. Photo by Ernie Sampson.

Reading More About It

Shinnston Tornado by John L. Finlayson was published in 1946 by The Hobson Book Press of New York. The 200-page book about the deadly tornado contains eyewitness accounts, strange phenomena associated with the storm, and detailed descriptions of disaster relief efforts.

Finlayson includes numerous photographs of the tornado's enormous destruction, a list of those who died in Harrison County, and official weather bureau accounts. He tracks the path of the tornado and describes the lives, buildings, and property affected along the way. There is an account of a letter carried 100 miles to Grantsville, Maryland, where it was mailed to the original addressee. "It was stated that the envelope was somewhat muddy and the postage stamp loose," Finlayson writes.

John Finlayson wrote *Shinnston Tornado* to remind West Virginians of the need to be prepared to meet disaster. He warns that even though many West Virginians believe that their hills and valleys are immune from tornadoefcgas, "It can happen here."

Shinnston Tornado is available at more than a dozen West Virginia libraries, or through interlibrary loan.

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Coming Next Issue...

- **Mountain Politics — Special Report**
- **Post Office Art**
- **Hatfield Family Photos**
- **Pitcher Lew Burdette**

PHOTO CURIOSITY

Historian Bill Wintz of St. Albans took this picture of a girl diving from a ledge behind Blackwater Falls in August of 1939 in Tucker County. Recently, he contacted GOLDENSEAL searching for her identity.

"She dove three times while I was there and each time she screamed like a WVU cheerleader when she came bursting through the cascading falls. She then skipped down the crest of the falling water and hit the center of a churning pool about ten feet in diameter. When she reappeared she slid up on a large flat rock, got up and started all over again," Mr. Wintz writes.

Just climbing back up the face of the rock behind the falls was a feat in itself. "About three-fourths of the way up the side of the falls she picked her way onto a narrow ledge that ran back under the falling water. Then she felt her way along the rocky shelf until she reached the underneath side of the center of the falls," he remembers.

Bill Wintz wants to know: "Is there a 75-year-old lady still out there somewhere who used to dive off Blackwater Falls?"

If you know the identity of the diving girl, please contact GOLDENSEAL.

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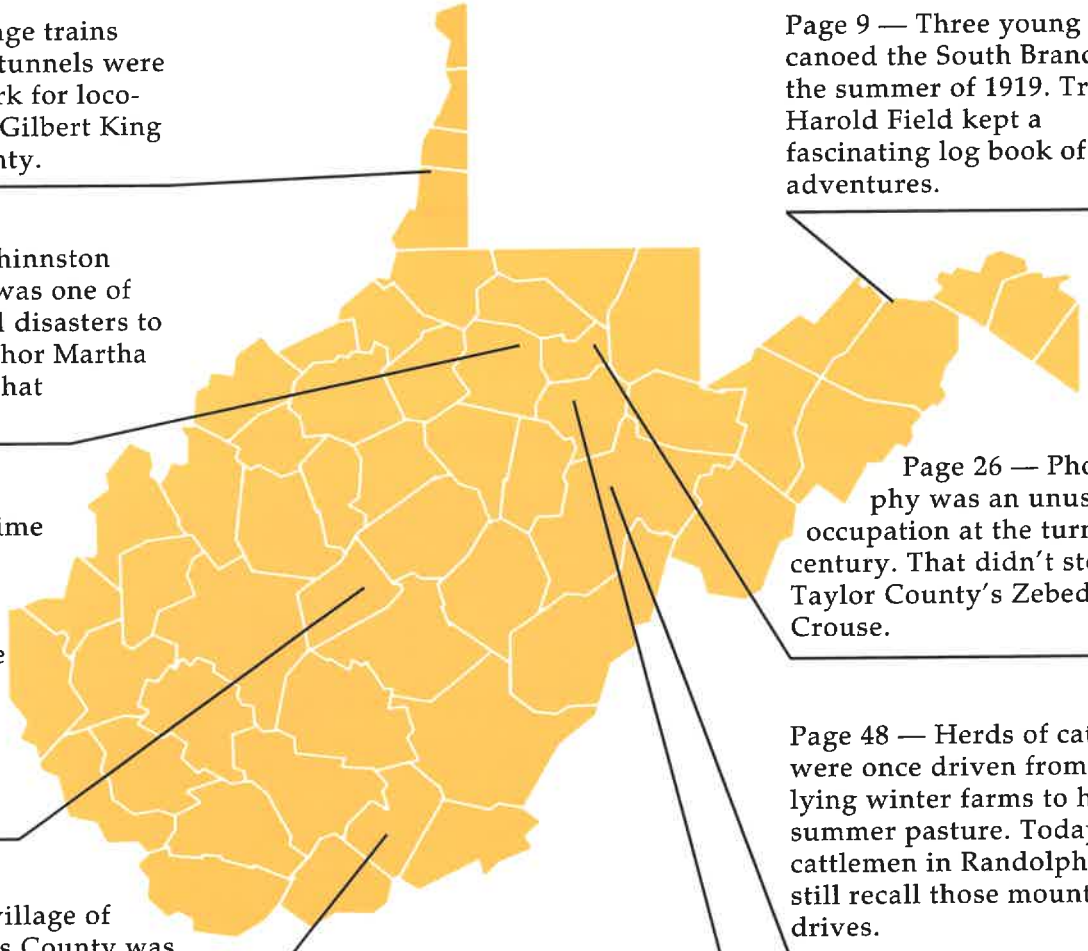

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