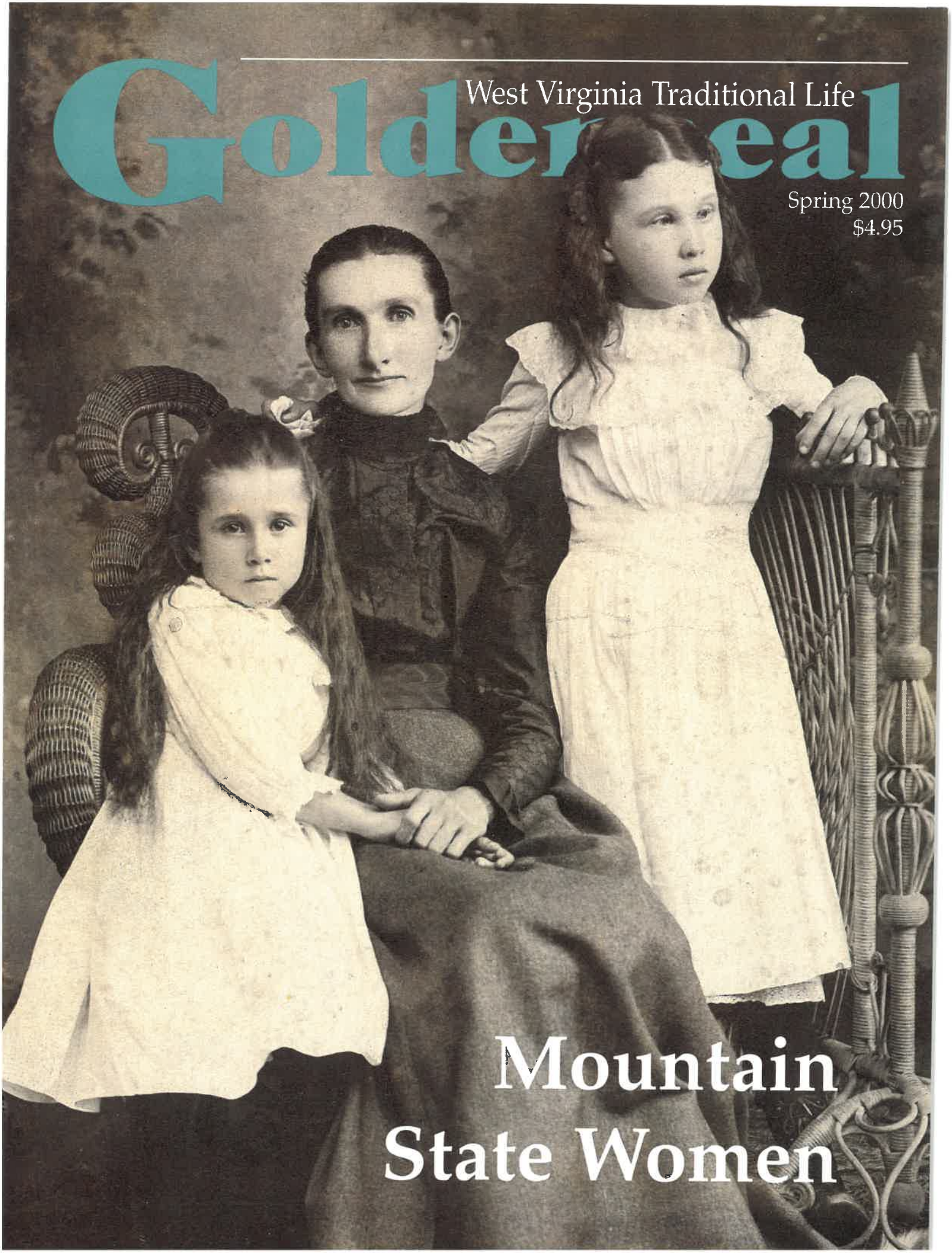
Golden Seal
West Virginia Traditional Life
Spring 2000
$4.95
Mountain State Women

Folklife*Fairs*Festivals

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

March 16-20 Irish Spring Festival
Walkersville (452-8962)
March 18-19 Maple Festival
New Creek (788-5482)
March 18-19 W.Va. Maple Syrup Festival
Pickens (924-5096)
April 15 Antique Plowing Contest
Lost Pavement (863-6342)
April 15 Feast of the Ramson
Richwood (846-6790)
April 15 Annual Mason-Dixon Ramp Feast
Morgantown (879-5500)
April 22 The Birthday Concert
Landmark Studio/Sutton (637-1334)
April 22-23 International Ramp Cook-Off & Festival
Elkins (636-2717)
April 28-30 30th Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival
Huntington (696-5990)
April 29 Spring Fling
Mount Clare (622-3304)
April 29-30 45th House & Garden Tour
Martinsburg/Charles Town/Harper's Ferry (263-5529)
April 29-30 Spring Mountain Festival
Petersburg (257-2722)
May 1 Cheat River Festival
Albright (329-3621)
May 6 W.Va. Marble Festival
Cairo (628-3321)
May 10-14 Rendezvous on the River
Blennerhassett Island/Parkersburg (420-4800)
May 11-14 38th Wildflower Pilgrimage
Blackwater Falls/Davis (259-5216)
May 12-14 Frontier Gathering
Kanawha State Forest (755-2990)
May 13 Bramwell Millionaire Garden Homes Tour
Bramwell (248-7252)
May 13-14 Mother's Day Founder Festival
Webster (265-5549)
May 14 92nd Observance of Mother's Day
Grafton (265-1589)
May 17-21 58th W.Va. Strawberry Festival
Buckhannon (472-9036)
May 20-21 Heritage Days & Civil War Weekend
Buffalo (937-2755)
May 25-28 W.Va. Dandelion Festival
White Sulphur Springs (536-2323)
May 26-28 24th Vandalia Gathering
State Capitol Complex/Charleston (558-0220)
May 27-29 Head-of-the-Mon-River Horseshoe Tournament
Fairmont (366-3819)
June 2-4 17th Annual Nongame Wildlife Weekend
Davis (637-0245)
June 3-4 Shinnston Rails to Trails Days
Shinnston (592-0177)
June 4 Rhododendron Outdoor Art & Craft Festival
State Capitol Complex/Charleston (776-1308)
June 4-11 Hatfield 2000 Reunion
Williamson (235-5240)
June 9-10 Hancock County Quilt Show
New Cumberland (564-5385)
June 9-11 Ronceverte River Festival
Ronceverte (647-3825)
June 10-11 Heritage Arts Weekend
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)
June 13-17 W.Va. Coal Festival
Madison (369-3391)
June 15-18 W.Va. State Folk Festiva
Glenville (462-8427)
June 16-18 Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festiva
Parkersburg (428-4405)
June 16-18 West Augusta Historical Society Quilt Show
Mannington (986-2636)
June 17 Juneteenth Celebration
Huntington (522-3180)
June 17-18 Spring Art in the Mountains Festiva
Tamarack/Beckley (256-6843)
June 20 West Virginia Day Celebration
Independence Hall/Wheeling (558-0220)
June 22-25 Bluegrass Festiva
Summersville (872-3145)
June 23-25 Eleanor's 65th Anniversary Celebration
Eleanor (586-2409)
June 28-July 2 Cass Homecoming
Cass (456-4056)
June 29-July 2 Mountain State Art & Craft Fai
Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-8159)
July 1 2nd Annual Summersville Jubil
Summersville (872-1588)
July 7-9 New Deal Festiva
Arthurdale (864-3959)
July 7-9 John Henry Day
Talcott (466-1729)
July 7-9 Crafts in the Mountain
Snowshoe (572-5477)
July 8-9 Pioneer Day
Point Pleasant (675-5737)
July 13-15 Benedum Festiva
Bridgeport (842-3638)
July 14-16 Horseshoe Pitchers Tournamen
Worthington (366-7986)
July 24-30 Cowen Historic Railroad Festiva
Cowen (226-3101)
July 24-29 W.Va. Poultry Convention
Moorefield (538-2725)
July 29-30 W.Va. Fireman's Festiva
Oak Hill (465-5617)
August 2-6 Appalachian String Band Music Festiva
Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (438-3005)
August 3-5 W.Va. Blackberry Festiva
Nutter Fort (623-2381)
August 3-5 Mercer County Bluestone Valley Fai
Spanishburg (425-1429)
August 4-5 Meadow Bridge Homecoming Festiva
Meadow Bridge (484-7250)
August 4-6 American Heritage Craft Festiva
Wheeling (243-4121)
August 4-6 W.Va. Square, Round Dance & Clogging Convention
Buckhannon (473-8104)
August 5-6 Living History Day
New Creek (788-5129)
August 7-12 Mannington District Fai
Mannington (986-1911)
August 11-13 99th Pinch Reunio
Pinch (965-3084)
August 11-13 Augusta Festiva
Elkins (637-1350)
August 11-19 State Fair of West Virgini
Fairlea (645-1090)
August 12-13 Dulcimer Weeken
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)

(continued on inside back cover

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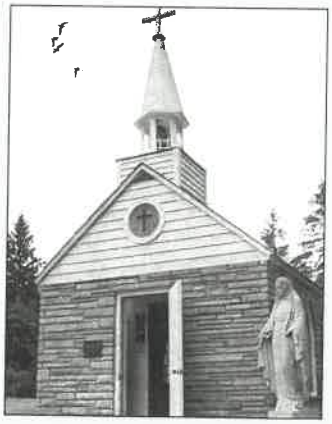

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On the cover: Viola Swearingen Springer and daughters Naomi (left) and Lula. Photograph by J.W. Arnett, circa 1900. Our story, part of this issue's special salute to West Virginia women, begins on page 12.

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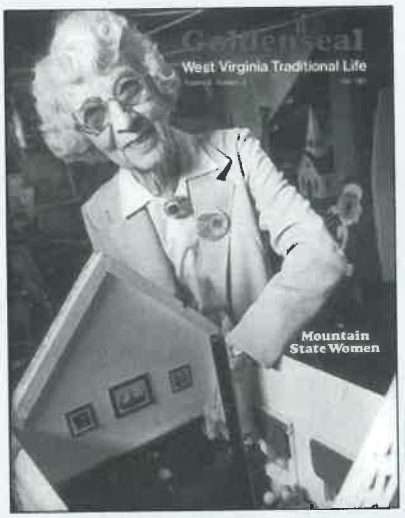
From the Editor

Strength, perseverance, ingenuity, and love. These four qualities come to mind as I prepare to send this issue of GOLDENSEAL on its merry way from the printer, to the post office, to you. Those words certainly describe the women who share the spotlight in this special edition of GOLDENSEAL.

During our 25th anniversary year in 1999, I spent a great deal of time reviewing past issues of the magazine — many readers enjoyed the reprinted articles which were published as a result. I was particularly taken by a special issue which editor Ken Sullivan assembled in Fall 1981, devoted to "Mountain State Women." It profiled a centenarian recalling early life in the mountains, a weaver, a woodworker, a nurse, an innkeeper, and an "old-fashioned down-home cook."



GOLDENSEAL Fall 1981

Well, 19 years have passed, and now that issue of GOLDENSEAL is, unfortunately, is out of print. The story of West Virginia women, however, has grown stronger, more interesting, and more important with time. I was pleased, therefore, to begin work on another special edition dedicated to stories about the women of our state. Stories of strength, perseverance, ingenuity, and love.

We'll meet a single mother from the turn of the century who raised her children, ran the family farm, and wrote 67 letters — one a week — to her son while he was away at school. We'll meet a spunky 91-year-old lady who shares her fondest memories of growing up in Logan. We'll meet a resourceful musician-turned-nurse-turned-musician whose journey to Chicago led her back home to Fayette County. We'll meet an impassioned philanthropist who used her wealth and social position to immortalize her war-hero son and enrich the lives of those in her community. We'll meet a sweet and stellar woman from Princeton who lifted herself up from the depths of the Great Depression to eventually own her own successful business. Finally, we'll meet a 93-year-old fiddler from Marion County who carries on a cherished family tradition, passing it along to her talented granddaughter and great-granddaughter.

Also in this issue, we'll visit a tiny house of worship in Preston County, explore an historic pottery program in Monongalia County, and meet an inspiring pair of folk dancers from Nicholas County.

As we do each spring, we'll review last year's Vandalia Gathering, bring you a sampling from the State Liars' Contest, and offer our annual Folklife*Fairs*Festivals list. I hope you enjoy it!

John Lilly

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.

Coal Mining

December 24, 1999
Winterville, North Carolina
Editor:
Buddy French's article about his first night at the #9 mine in Gary ["My First Night In the Mines," Winter 1999] brought back memories of my own first shift at #2 Gary just a few years later. Such a descriptive piece could only have been written by a real coal miner. My thanks and appreciation to Buddy French and GOLDENSEAL.
Happy Holidays,
Les Peters

Miner at Gary, McDowell County. Courtesy of Jim Boner.

January 6, 2000
Salisbury, North Carolina
Editor:
I really enjoyed the article by Buddy French about his first night in the mines. Reading his story sort of brought home close again.

I sure would like to see more articles by Buddy. He certainly does a good job. So many of us — many of whom are now scattered all over the country — can relate to his writing.

We always enjoy GOLDENSEAL. Keep up the good work.
Sincerely,
Don B. Swanson

Thanks for writing, Mr. Swanson. I'm with you — I'd like to see more articles by Buddy French, as well. Buddy's dramatic story in our winter issue was his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL. How about it, Buddy? —ed.

December 25, 1999
New York, New York
Editor:
It is always a pleasure to read articles about and view photographs of coal miners. Thank you for including such vital material in your GOLDENSEAL magazine.
With warm regards,
Builder Levy

January 3, 2000
Franklin, West Virginia
Editor:
You can put my name on a list of subscribers that enjoys and appreciates GOLDENSEAL. I can relate to so many of the stories. The current issue, Winter 1999, and the story of the Monongah mine explosion ["December 6, 1907: No Christmas in Monogah," by Eugene Wolfe], really interested me as I had a grandfather, Frank I. Shroyer, and two uncles, L.D. Layne and Adam Layne, killed in that disaster. My grandfather's body was never found.
Sincerely,
Jack Layne

November 17, 1999
Princeton, West Virginia
Editor:
It was a pleasure speaking to you on the telephone, and I want to restate how much I enjoy GOLDENSEAL. I think it is imperative that our heritage be kept alive during today's fast-paced world. GOLDENSEAL does an excellent job of this. I have especially enjoyed the stories related to mining in the earlier years.
Sincerely,
F.E. "Bud" Musick

Prodigal Returns

December 17, 1999
Vincent, Ohio
Editor:
You are correct! You did send a reminder in September. My fall issue I had lain aside, hoping for a better time to read, and never got around to it. I came across your reminder and thought I was running out of time for reading, and I cast it in the trash.

Then your winter issue arrived and I read it immediately, much like a drowning man gulping water, and rued the moment I had decided not to renew. I resolved to write and renew when, here in today's mail, there came another gentle reminder.

Thank you for welcoming your prodigal subscriber back into the fold! GOLDENSEAL is indeed unique and well worth the $16 and the reading time it requires. I was sorry to learn that Ruby Morris had died ["'Boy, That Was a Fine Bean!': A Harvesttime Interview With an Old-Fashioned Gardener," by Gerald Milnes; Fall 1999], and have resolved not to miss anymore of the "salt of the earth" souls that populate the

environs of your magazine.
Warmest regards,
Patty Johnson

We're glad to have you back, and especially appreciate such a warm and encouraging letter. You certainly make it all seem worthwhile! —ed.

More Salt Of the Earth

December 20, 1999
Orlando, West Virginia
Editor:
I hope the enclosed subscription will be satisfactory. I do not like to send money this way but I am 12 miles from Weston on a big farm. My nearest neighbors are a mile in three different directions, so I have to help myself and hope it does not inconvenience anyone else.

A neighbor of ours was attending his young wife's funeral on August 20, 1944, at the little country church below us. He stopped on his way back home, and brought his three little boys into our dining room and said, "Here, you can have these boys, I don't want them. You can have them."

I don't know who was the most startled — me or them. I was setting the table for guests who had come to attend the funeral, so it was the end of the day before we really could sit down with them and concentrate. That evening, we went to their house and got clothes, all their toys, and their dog named Silver.

The boys were only ages 8, 4, and 2, so we had a few up-and-down nights before they got adjusted. They had plenty of room in our 10-room house.

They turned out fine — we had them 17 years. We put them all through high school and they all joined the service when they graduated. But the oldest passed away this past year. He was assigned as a personal aide to President Kennedy. Carroll served in Germany, Vietnam, and Korea. Larry was military police here and in Germany. Their father, who was 38, married a 20-year-old a year and a half later and had six more children. You just never know.

That was good experience for all of us. You just never know what comes in the door.

Best wishes and Merry Christmas. I am 81 years old.
Hetty Finster

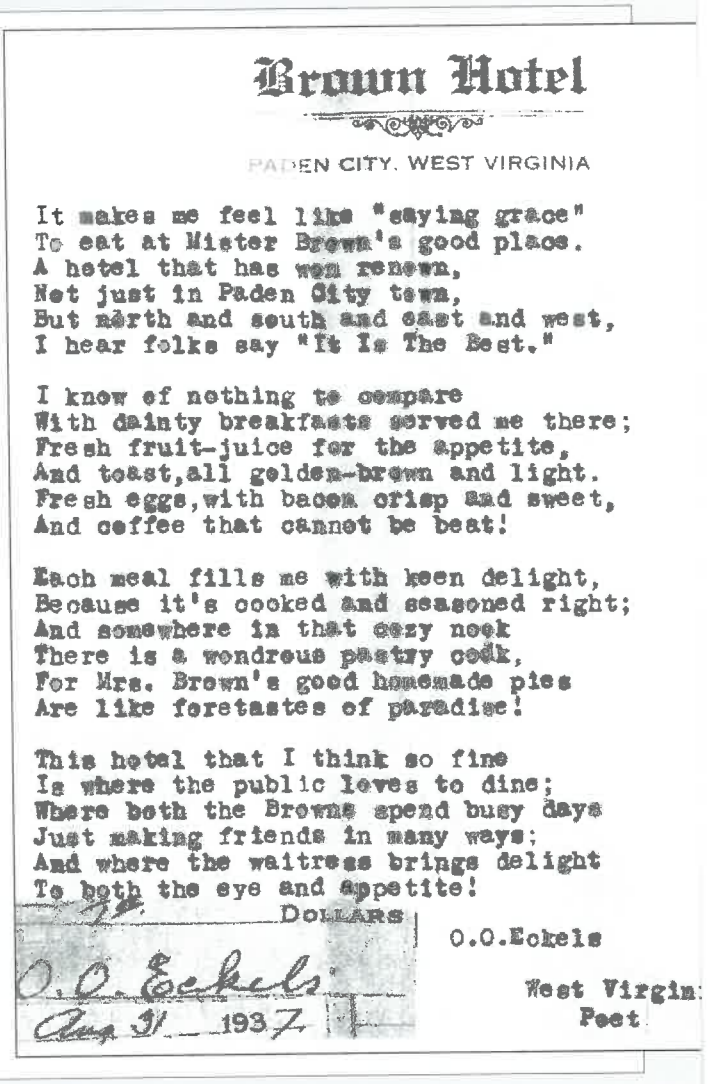
O.O. Eckels

Poet O.O. Eckels (1878-1949)

January 3, 2000
Paden City, West Virginia
Editor:
In 1937, O.O. Eckels came to my hotel here in Paden City [see "Poet O.O. Eckels," by Larry Bartlett; Winter 1999]. He was here for two or three days. The day he left, he asked me if I had a typewriter. I took him to it. He picked up a piece of my stationery, sat down and typed the enclosed poem. The signature "O.O. Eckles" is on a check he gave me for his stay. The check came back marked "INS."

I never tried to collect the money, as I considered the poem well worth the amount of the check. Just thought you would get a kick out of this.

Please excuse my writing as I am 94 years old and my eyes are not too good.
Sincerely,
O.O. Brown



Brown Hotel

PADEN CITY, WEST VIRGINIA

It makes me feel like "saying grace"
To eat at Mister Brown's good place.
A hotel that has won renown,
Not just in Paden City town,
But north and south and east and west,
I hear folks say "It Is The Best."

I know of nothing to compare
With dainty breakfasts served me there;
Fresh fruit-juice for the appetite,
And toast,all golden-brown and light.
Fresh eggs,with bacon crisp and sweet,
And coffee that cannot be beat!

Each meal fills me with keen delight,
Because it's cooked and seasoned right;
And somewhere in that cozy nook
There is a wondrous pastry cook,
For Mrs. Brown's good homemade pies
Are like foretastes of paradise!

This hotel that I think so fine
Is where the public loves to dine;
Where both the Browns spend busy days
Just making friends in many ways;
And where the waitress brings delight
To both the eye and appetite!

_____ DOLLARS

O. O. Eckels

Aug 31 1937

O.O.Eckels

West Virgin
Poet

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

We are saddened to learn of the recent deaths of four friends of the GOLDENSEAL community.

Chuck Heitzman and wife Esther open envelopes for GOLDENSEAL. 1995 photograph by Michael Keller.

Longtime West Virginia Division of Culture and History volunteer **Charles W. "Chuck" Heitzman** passed away December 10, 1999, at 79 years of age. A former mechanical foreman at DuPont, Chuck and his wife Esterina (better known as Esther) were known as the Division's volunteer "dynamic duo," giving their time and talent for more than 13 years to help ensure the success of myriad events, programs, and projects. "Chuck, along with Esther, was always a tremendous help to me over the years during our yearly subscription drives — opening, sorting, and stamping the thousands of checks we received," says Cornelia Alexander, GOLDENSEAL circulation manager. "I will miss him."

Howard University professor and poet **Dr. Sondra Y. Millner-Lindsay** passed away December 24, 1999, at age 46. A Princeton native, she served as a literature and creative writing instructor for the African American Heritage Arts Camp in Clifftop during the 1980's. She is pictured with other camp staff members in the GOLDENSEAL article "Camp Washington Carver: An African American Landmark in Fayette County," by Norman Jordan; Winter 1999, page 63.

Fiddler **Earl Franklin "Red" Henline** of Buckhannon passed away December 31, 1999, at 76 years of age. While teaching school was his life's work, Red was also an accomplished musician who "could play any instrument," according to his daughter, Charlotte Henline Reger. Red was principally a fiddler and won many awards for his fiddle playing both in West Virginia and other states. Red, who is also remembered for his keen sense of humor, will be featured in an upcoming issue of GOLDENSEAL.

One of West Virginia's most prolific finders of wild bee trees, **Roma E. Bailey** of Richwood, passed away September 25, 1999, at 80 years of age. A self-employed building contractor before his retirement, Roma professed to finding more than 400 bee trees in his lifetime, beginning in his boyhood days on Hinkle Mountain in Nicholas County. He and some of his fellow bee-tree hobbyists were featured in the GOLDENSEAL article, "Bee Tree: On the Trail of Wild Honey," by Skip Johnson; Fall 1994.

Roma Bailey, at center, with fellow bee hunters in 1994. Photograph by Ferrell Friend.

GIVING GOLDENSEAL

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

Simply enter the names and addresses below and return the coupon to us with your payment for $16 per subscription. *We'll send a card announcing your gift right away, and begin the subscription with the upcoming issue.*

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The Cultural Center
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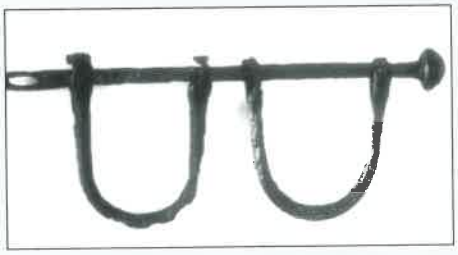
Current Programs • Events • Publications

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.

State Museum Hosts Slave Ship Exhibition

The 3,000-square-foot interactive exhibition "A Slave Ship Speaks: The Wreck of the *Henrietta Marie*" will be on display at the West Virginia State Museum in Charleston, March 25 through June 20. The landmark exhibition features artifacts and objects recovered from the *Henrietta Marie*, an English merchant slave ship which sank off the coast of Key West, Florida, in the summer of 1700.



Shackles from the *Henrietta Marie*.

The *Henrietta Marie* is the only merchant slave ship to have sunk in the course of trade in the New World, which has been identified and excavated. Artifacts were first discovered in 1972 by the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society in Key West. It wasn't until 1983, when divers unearthed a bell upon which the ship's name was inscribed, that its country of origin and grim purpose were discovered.

Museum visitors will explore the early history of the transatlantic slave trade and learn about the lives and cultures of the peoples of Europe, West Africa, and the New World. The exhibition allows visitors to examine artifacts for which human lives were traded such as brass and pewter wares, firearms, and iron currency bars. Visitors can also view replicas of a slave trader's office and a West African chieftain's home; enter a recreated hold like the one in which enslaved Africans were packed for the transoceanic voyage; and explore the ship's archeological recovery.

The 20-city tour of the *Henrietta Marie* is being organized by the Mel Fisher Society and funded by General Motors. A Charleston-based group, All-Aid International, Inc., raised funds to bring the exhibition to West Virginia. Many local and national companies, state and county agencies, and other organizations are also sponsoring the event.

Hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Group tours are welcome. Reservations are required for groups. Admission is free.

For more information, call the West Virginia Division of Culture and History at (304)558-0220, ext. 120. For group tour reservations, call (304)558-0220 ext. 171, or call toll free 1-800-CALL WVA.

Henry Reed Fund

Efforts are underway by the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress to establish a new endowment fund to support activities that benefit folk artists in any medium. The Henry Reed

Henry Reed, at right with banjo, and brother Josh. 1903 photograph courtesy of the Reed family.

Fund for Folk Artists, named for West Virginia fiddler Henry Reed, will support a number of activities such as grants to folk artists to explore the Folklife Center's collections, live performances and workshops, programs honoring distinguished folk artists, or other programs that directly benefit traditional folk artists.

Born in Peterstown in 1884, Henry Reed was a legendary fiddler whose repertory contributed to the old-time instrumental music revival in the later 20th century. Known as a fiddler, banjo picker, and harmonica player, his music ranged from Virginia dance tunes of frontier days to late 19th-century rags, waltzes, and popular songs, and 20th-century country music. Reed spent much of his adult life in Glen Lyn, Virginia, where he died in 1968.

While Reed never recorded commercially, he was recorded by former Folklife Center director Alan Jabbour from 1966-67 while Jabbour was a graduate student at Duke University. The new fund, named in honor of his friend and mentor, was initiated by Jabbour upon his retirement from the Folklife Center last year.

The Folklife Center is just a few thousand dollars shy of reaching the required $25,000 to establish the Henry Reed Fund. Persons or organizations wishing to support the creation of the fund may send contributions to the Library of Congress American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540-4610. Make checks payable to the American Folklife Center and write "Henry Reed Fund" on the comment line. For more information call (202)707-5510.

Pickens Maple Syrup Festival

Pancake feeds, craft exhibits, antique and quilt shows and sales, a square dance, and many other activities are on tap as the Randolph County town of Pickens hosts its annual Maple Syrup Festival March 18-19. The festival marks the rising of the sap in the maple sugar trees and sugaring time — long a tradition in the West Virginia mountains.

Other events include a muzzle-loading contest and exhibition, woodchopping exhibition, puppet show, basket weaving and other artist demonstrations, and a ham and bean buffet. Maple syrup items will be on sale at Dulaney's Store. The Roberts-Cunningham Museum will also be open for the festivities. All proceeds from the festival are used to support upkeep of historic buildings and community projects in the Pickens area.

Maple syrup from Pickens.

For more information call (304)924-5096 or visit the festival Web site at www.geocities.com/heartland/valley/3597/.

Paperweight Show and Sale

West Virginia glassmakers will exhibit and sell their work, and paperweight collectors will have the opportunity to showcase their collections at the state Paperweight Show and Sale, to be held Saturday, April 8, in the West Hall of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Weston. A project of the West Virginia Glass Museum, the show will be held from noon to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free.

Paperweights by Jennings Bonnell. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The show will be juried, and one paperweight will be selected and purchased for the museum. In addition, a new booklet entitled *West Virginia Paperweights*, which lists past and current state paperweight makers, will be available at the show.

GOLDENSEAL readers might recall the article, "Sharing the

Weight: A Visit With Glassmaker Jennings Bonnell," by James R. Mitchell, published in the Winter 1999 issue. The article highlights the work of Bonnell, a longtime glassmaker in Jane Lew and mentor to many of West Virginia's foremost glass artists. Color photographs of paperweights by Jennings and several of his former students are featured, as well.

For more information about the state Paperweight Show and Sale, call (304)628-3321.

Augusta Dulcimer Week

The Augusta Heritage Center's 10th annual Spring Dulcimer Week will be held April 9-15 at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins. The week of instruction, workshops, performances, concerts, and jam sessions is open to everyone from beginners to advanced learners. Students may choose to study either the hammered or mountain dulcimer.

In addition to intensive classes taught by professional musicians, students will explore additional dulcimer topics and themes such as Celtic, old-time, French, Latin, and blues music in afternoon workshops. New offerings this year include classes in the Autoharp taught by international Autoharp champion Linda Mueller, and creative writing classes by award-winning songwriter Kate Long.

Rounding out the week will be visits from guest artists, dances, student skits, and class performances. A public concert will be held on Thursday, April 13, in Harper-McNeely Auditorium on the Davis & Elkins College campus.

Tuition for the week is $325, with additional fees for food, lodging, and mini-classes. Loaner mountain dulcimers and Autoharps and rental hammered dulcimers are available, but must be reserved in advance.

For more information, call (304)637-1209 or, check the Augusta Heritage Center's Web site: www.augustaheritage.com.

Old-Time Wingding

A weekend of dancing, jam sessions, and family fun is in store at the second annual Old-Time Wingding, to be held May 12-14 at Camp Washington-Carver in Fayette County. Dance workshops, nightly square and contra dances, informal music jams, food, and family activities will be featured at the event.

The weekend begins with a square and contra dance on Friday evening. Workshops in flatfoot, waltz, contra, and swing dancing, as well as music jam sessions, are scheduled throughout the day on Saturday. Family activities include a jug band workshop and performance, and a "Please Touch the Instruments" area sponsored by Allegheny Echoes. The weekend wraps up with dances Saturday night and Sunday.

Daily admission is $5, with children under three admitted free. Rough camping facilities are available. Home-cooked meals, snacks, and vegetarian entrees will be sold throughout the weekend.

The Old-Time Wingding is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History in conjunction with Friends of Old-Time Music and Dance (FOOTMAD). For more information, call (304)558-0220 or visit the event Web site at http://spitfire.cwv.net/~llama/wingding.htm.

Fiddler at Kennedy Center

Calhoun County fiddler Jake Krack has been selected to represent West Virginia in a performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The 15-year-old musician was nominated by U.S. Representative Bob Wise to participate in the Center's Millennium Performance Stage series, highlighting artists from across the country. Jake's 45-minute presentation is scheduled at 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, March 29, and is free to the public. For directions or further information, call 1-800-444-1324.

Fiddler Jake Karck.

For anyone who is unable to make the trip to D.C., the show will be broadcast live over the Internet. Those interested in logging on and tuning in, should check the Kennedy Center's Web site at www.kennedy-center.org.

GOLDENSEAL Internet Update

GOLDENSEAL now has a new, shorter, and easier to remember Web site address and a new e-mail address. Our Web site, which can now be found at www.wvculture. org/goldenseal, includes excerpts from several recent issues, and a complete online index. It also features the special folklife report "An Introduction to West Virginia Ethnic Communities" and information about the new book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from* GOLDENSEAL. A list of West Virginia fairs and festi-

vals, contributor guidelines, a list of back issues, and subscription information are also available at the Web site.

In addition to our regular mailing address, letters to the editor and other correspondence can now be sent to us electronically at goldenseal@wvculture. org.

More W.Va. Internet

A Web site devoted to West Virginia authors is now available to readers, teachers, librarians, students, and anyone with an interest in our state's rich literary heritage. Sponsored by the Bridgeport Public Library, www.mountainlit.com features brief biographies and the career highlights of scores of West Virginia authors, from Pinckney Benedict to Pearl Buck; links to information about individual authors; information on state authors of children's literature and selected authors of books set in West Virginia; and lists of honors, awards, and achievements of West Virginia authors. A special section honors the achievements of selected African American authors.

Writer and literary historian Phyllis Wilson Moore serves as the Web site's consultant. Her article, "Yes, We Have Authors: Reclaiming Our Multicultural Literary History; a Brief Overview of Selected Genres and Authors," is available at the site.

In addition, a Web site for West Virginia family history researchers can now be accessed at www.usgennet.org/~alhnwvus/. New and still under development, the site is sponsored by the American Local History Network and includes a queries/discussion board and message index where researchers can seek information from other readers. It currently features information specific to Logan, McDowell, and Summers counties, and links to other state resources, including the West Virginia Archives and History Web site.

The Archives and History site includes State Archives resources including library information, accessions lists, and guides to collections; a West Virginia history center; an extensive genealogy section; notices of upcoming events and meetings; and more. The Archives and History Web site address is www.wvculture.org/history.

Grant Opportunity

The Mountain State Art & Craft Fair Scholarship and Grant Fund is taking applications for the upcoming year. Any West Virginia resident age 18 or over may apply for a scholarship to further their education or training in any field related to traditional or heritage music or dance, or the visual arts.

Last year, the fund awarded a total of six grants, averaging $1,000 each. Applications will be accepted through May 1; grants

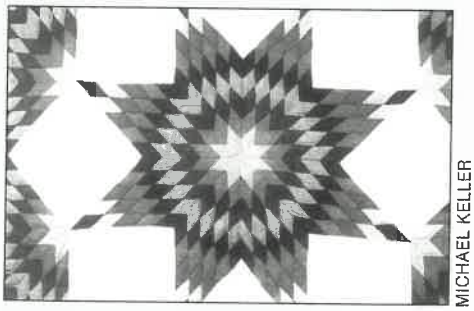
and scholarships will be awarded by June 1.

According to Fund President Bernie Hale, the scholarship program began 10 years ago as an outgrowth of the annual Mountain State Art & Craft Fair held at Cedar Lakes each July. Funds are generated at the event each year as craft items, donated voluntarily by craft fair participants, are auctioned off to attendees.

To receive an application, write to: Mountain State Art & Craft Fair, Scholarship & Grant Fund, Board of Trustees, P.O. Box 389, Ripley, WV 25271. For further information, call Bernie Hale at (304)256-6702, ext. 230.

Quilt Entries Sought

A call for quilts has been put forth by the Division of Culture and History in preparation for the upcoming "Quilts 2000" juried exhibition at the Cultural Center in Charleston. The winning quilts



MICHAEL KELLER

will be on display in the Great Hall from May 12 through September 4.

All handmade West Virginia quilts are eligible for consideration in the pieced, appliqued, or mixed/other categories. Previous winners are not eligible. All prizes and awards will be given on Saturday, May 27, as part of the annual Vandalia Gathering.

Quilt makers may submit only one quilt each, postmarked no later than March 31, or hand-delivered between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on March 30-31, at the Cultural Center. All entries must be accompanied by a non-refundable $20 entry fee.

A special quilt-making workshop will be offered by quilt artist and judge Jane Hall from Raleigh, North Carolina. The workshop is scheduled Friday, April 7, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., at the Cultural Center. There is a $35 workshop fee and reservations are required.

For further information about the quilt competition or the workshop, call Stephanie Lilly at (304)558-0220 ext. 128.

GOLDENSEAL Special Report

Celebrating West Virginia Women

See pages 12-43.

Since its inception, GOLDENSEAL has been proud to feature stories of West Virginia women — women of poverty and privilege, women with spheres of influence both large and small, women whose lives constitute some of the strongest and most colorful threads in the fabric of West Virginia life.

Other publications have also attempted to document the myriad roles and accomplishments of Mountain State women. In 1974, the book *West Virginia Women* by Jim Comstock was published as part of his *West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia* series. A "who's who" of notable women, Comstock wrote that the book was intended to address the "deplorable fact" that "...women have gotten very little attention by the historians and compilers of West Virginia reference books."

With the same intent, the West

Virginia Women's Commission published *Missing Chapters: West Virginia Women in History*, in 1983. A small state agency created in 1977 to advocate for and study the status of state women, the Women's Commission developed *Missing Chapters* in conjunction with the West Virginia Women's Foundation and the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia. The book chronicles the lives and contributions of nine women dating back to 1824, many of whom ventured beyond the barriers of social expectations for women of their time.

A follow-up volume, *Missing Chapters II*, published in 1986, includes the accomplishments of 15 more women. Women's Commission staff traveled the state conducting public presentations about the women featured in the two books. The volumes were sold in bookstores and sent to colleges and public libraries across the state.

In conjunction with the Women's Commission's ongoing efforts to highlight women in history, West Virginia Archives and History devoted its 1990 issue of the journal *West Virginia History* to women's roles in the state's development. The annual featured articles on topics such as midwifery in West Virginia, state women in the industrial workforce, and women's work in the southern West Virginia coal camps.

All of the above publications are available in West Virginia libraries or through interlibrary loan.

Today, the Women's Commission brings outstanding women to the public's attention through its annual Celebrate Women Awards program. Each year, the Commission selects 12 winners from nearly 100 women, nominated in various categories by friends, family members, and co-workers. The winners are honored at an awards dinner in Charleston.

In addition to recognizing outstanding women, the Women's Commission seeks to improve the lives of state women through research, education, and advocacy activities. The agency sponsors two major annual events — Women's Day at the Legislature and the Women's Town Meeting — to encourage women to learn about issues affecting them, and to help women build the skills necessary to influence public policy. The commission also offers two major publications: *Women and the Law: A Legal Rights Handbook*, which is available free to all state women, and *West Virginia Women: In Perspective 1980-1995*, a comprehensive data book which details the status of West Virginia women in areas such as health, income, occupation, education, marital status, economic status, and crime. Both books can be obtained from the Women's Commission office or at local libraries.

The commission also produces informational booklets and brochures on topics such as starting a business, running for office, women's health issues, prevention of eating disorders, girls in sports, and girls in school. These publications, as well as a summary of the data book, are free to state women and girls.

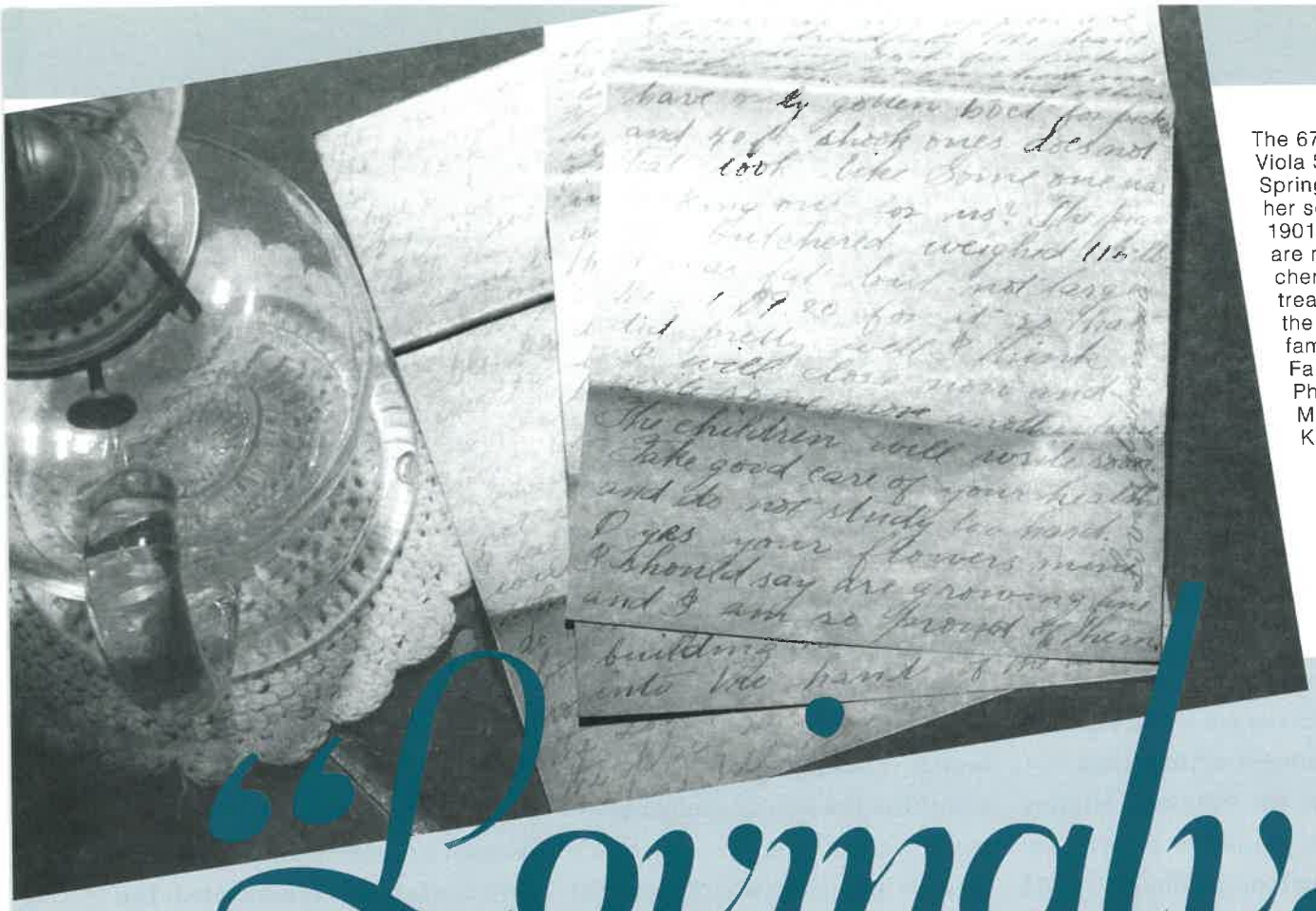
This year, the Celebrate Women Awards dinner will be held April 14 at the University of Charleston. To receive a nomination form for next year's awards, or to order books or brochures, call the Women's Commission at (304)558-0070. Collect calls are accepted. The Women's Commission may also be reached at 350 Capitol Street, Room 721, Charleston, WV 25301-3700, or by e-mail at joycestover@wvdhhr.org.

Women's lives constitute some of the strongest and most colorful threads in the fabric of West Virginia life.

Women's studies programs at West Virginia University and Marshall University also serve as valuable resources. For more information, call the WVU Center for Women's Studies at(304)293-2339 ext. 1155, or the MU Women's Studies Minor at (304)696-3643.

Join GOLDENSEAL as we, too, celebrate West Virginia women with this very special issue.

—Sheila McEntee



The 67 letters Viola Swearingen Springer wrote to her son between 1901 and 1903 are now cherished family treasures for the Springer family of Fairmont. Photograph by Michael Keller.

"Lovingly, Mama"

The Letters of Viola S. Springer

By Barbara Smith

Barbara Springer handles the packet of letters with great care. They are old — dated 1901, 1902, 1903 — and the handwritten words are on the inexpensive, lined 5" x 9" paper used back then by children in school and by householders for everyday tasks.

These letters were written by one of those householders to one of her children, a 16-year-old finishing his education about 15 miles away from home.

"It wasn't very far," Barbara explains, "but to Viola it must have seemed a world away. Carl had been the man of the family ever since his father was killed in a runaway horse accident when Carl was 8 and Viola was 31. The family farm was in Colfax, a suburb of Fairmont, and he was going to Broaddus Institute in Clarksburg. Viola wrote to him at least once a week, usually on Sundays, for all of the two years he was gone. She was a wonderful woman and a wonderful mother."

Carl was Viola Swearingen Springer's oldest child, but she had four others — Glenn, Elliot, Lula, and Naomi, the youngest born within weeks of her father's death. Viola's letters were found among Carl's possessions after his death in 1979. His grandchildren found them in an old trunk in the basement. The family then forwarded them to Barbara Springer, widow of one of Viola's grandsons.

"I have always felt close to Viola, although she died when I was very young," Barbara says, smiling. "For about two years after Dick and I were married, until he graduated from Fairmont State College, we lived in her chicken coop." Barbara is referring to a garage next to the Springer home, built to house farm equipment. Originally, the second floor of the building was used as a chicken coop, but it was later remodeled into an apartment which was occupied by various young couples over the years. The building still stands, still occupied, at the foot of Michael's Hill between Grafton and Colfax.

Viola Swearingen Springer (1863-1932).

But what of the letters?

The first one was dated September 8, 1901, only a few days after Carl left home, and it began, "This is Sunday afternoon. ...I know the time seems long as it does to me since you left home." It ended, "I pray every day that the Lord will bless my boy. Hoping to get a long letter soon I am with much love your Mama."

The final letter was dated May 19, 1903, and it ended, "We are all anxiously looking forward to your homecoming. Lovingly, Mama."

The other 65 letters carried the same themes — Viola's love for her absent son, her longing to be with him, and her dependence upon God. But the letters also told a great deal about life on the Springer farm and about the courage and determination of Viola, a single parent of five.

"It's hard to believe," Barbara Springer continues, "but Viola managed that farm and supported her family and sent Carl to Broaddus with no financial help that we know of. The other two boys, Glenn and Elliot, who were in their early teens, did much of the heavy farm work, and the girls helped with the housework. Viola herself worked in the fields and raised a huge garden. Her letters mention raising and selling apples and peaches and tomatoes and corn — well, everything she could think of to keep her family going."

Viola Springer was obviously an ambitious woman. In several letters she asked Carl's opinion about ventures she was considering or had accomplished, all the way from purchasing "a right good wagon for $12," to selling the farm and moving to town, or even renting out the farm and moving to Indiana. On May 5, 1902, she wrote, "Charlie Miller is very anxious to buy two acres off the orchard. Offers $50 an acre." Whether she sold the land is not mentioned.

She was also a deeply religious woman. On December 7, 1902, Viola wrote, "Some think they could not enjoy life so well if they tried to serve the Lord but that is because they have never known that Peace that 'Passeth understanding.' Some think they can not make as great a success of life if they follow the Lord Jesus. But the One that holds the Universe in His Hand says 'Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven and all these things will be added unto you.' It seems to me it will be a great thing in the great Day of Accounts to be able to say we have spent our *whole* lives in His service. ...Oh! Carl if you should hear the gentle Spirit knocking at *your* heart let It come in. Put yourself and all you ever hope to be in the Master's hands and you will wonder how you ever lived without Him." On the same date, she also wrote, "I am so glad you have an opportunity to hear so many good lectures and sermons. You ought to be a real good boy with so much to help you oughtn't you?" It was during that year that Carl was, indeed, baptized.

Viola also wrote of difficulties with the livestock. March 16, 1902: "I was feeling a little stupid today from being up a good many times last night with a baby pig so if this letter does not sound right or smells kind of piggy you will know the reason why. ...The young sow ...had seven pigs Wednesday one of which died two days later and yesterday

Carl Springer, in the foreground, with fellow students at Clarksburg's Broaddus Institute, approximately 1901. In his later years, Carl became a community and financial leader in Fairmont with extensive banking interests. He passed away in 1979.

the old sow had seventeen (17) but she has killed four." March 30, 1902: "We still have fifteen pigs and they are fine little fellows. They are all engaged, except the two I want to keep, at $3.00 per head. The other stock is still alive but Elliot's calf 'Sam' will have to be killed I expect as 'foot evil' has eaten a great piece around one foot just above the hoof so that the joint has come apart and I do not see how it can ever walk as the foot is nearly off." April 6, 1902: "We had to kill 'Sam' as both hind feet were coming off." April 20: "The pigs go away next week. They are right nice I think and so tame I think we will have no trouble to catch them. Could have sold twice as many as we have. I think the other stock will worry through although all are very poor and 'lousey.'"

In other passages Viola reported the deaths of other cattle, cholera contracted by the chickens, the death of a horse. And yet this woman never gave up. In January 1903, Viola wrote, "We have been taking up a good deal of time lately sending for and reading incubator catalogs and trying to decide whether we want hot water or hot air incubator and brooder. ...I feel quite hopeful about the chicken business and believe it will pay us to take a little of our capital to get started into it." A week later she reported, "We sent for our incubator and brooder yesterday and got two new roosters so we are embarked into the poultry business hit or miss. I drew $15.00 out of the bank to make the venture and feel very hopeful it will prove a success. I have been trying to get the children to hunt up a nice name for our poultry ranch and fruit farm but Glenn says I am getting the cart before the horse and had better wait until there is such a place."

Viola Swearingen Springer was a woman of strong opinion as well as strong will. In one letter she noted the assassination of President McKinley and blamed it on "the anarchists." On October 27, 1901, she applauded Carl for having joined the debate team, and she gave him fuel for his speeches concerning the legalization of drinking in the city of Clarksburg: "Speak of the city being made up of homes and how these homes are ruined by drink. Speak about the working man's money that should go towards building new homes is given into the hands of the rum-seller. Speak about the jails, penitentiarys, and poor houses and insane asylums that are kept full as the result of the saloon and ask if that makes a city better. Speak as you have never had the opportunity to speak before against this terrible crime. Forget all about your audience except that you have a message to give them that you want them to hear. Ask the Lord to help you as I

The Springer home and farm at Colfax, Marion County, date unknown. The Springer School on the left was used until the 1940's.

"Tacky Day" was not for the shy or the faint-hearted. Elizabeth, front row center, posed with friends Bertha Browning, Mabel Hinchman, and Catherine Fisher (back row, left to right); Kenneth Klinger, left, and Julius Vitez joined Elizabeth in the front row for this photograph, circa 1923.

of the books we received and to help with acquisitions. That entire summer I never had time to swim. Instead, I became Logan's first librarian.

Innis Davis' greatest love was the Baptist church. Someone once asked her what she'd do if she ever moved to a town where there wasn't a Baptist church. Her instant reply was, "I'd start one!" She later moved to Charleston with her husband Tom where she eventually was appointed head of the State Museum and Archives.

No one contributed more to cultural life in Logan than Jeannette C. Sayre. She came to Logan from her native Cincinnati after World War I and taught piano and was the organist and choir director at the Nighbert Memorial Methodist Church for more than 40 years. Every spring she presented all of her piano students at a formal evening recital conducted in the sanctuary. It began with the youngest and newest students and ended with the most advanced. For years, Sarah Land (Holland) was last on the program. She was not only the best of Miss Sayre's students, but also the prettiest. To the rest of us it seemed a very long evening, indeed!

Through her choirs, Miss Sayre introduced Logan to cantatas, oratorios, Christmas carols other than "Silent Night," and the best of classical and religious music. Although she never appeared anywhere as a soloist, she played the great music of Bach, Handel, Mozart, and all the masters at church services. She was truly a living symbol of music in Logan.

Another fine musician was Myrtle Stone, the movie pianist. On Saturday afternoons, all the kids went to the old Bennett Theatre to see silent picture shows starring William S. Hart in a Western or the latest installment of Billie Burke in "Gloria's Romance." Myrtle played the piano bringing forth wild sounds, eerie noises, or quiet gentle tones to punctuate the action on the screen. She was a one-woman orchestra. She made us shiver with fright during the "Perils of Pauline." She made us drown in romance with Mary Pickford. Her gift of improvisation was amazing. She never missed a beat as the action on the screen constantly changed. She never looked at her hands and she never so much as blinked an eye.

Two exciting annual events were on everyone's calendar: lyceum in winter and chautauqua in summer. Both played to packed audiences. The lyceum programs took place at the high school auditorium. There people listened spellbound to Russell H. Conwell deliver his famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds." Ida M. Tarbell, muckraker newswoman and friend of Georgia O'Keefe, gave an evening of fiery commentary on everything happening in the world. One vivid memory is of a sensational group of young African boys in their native beads and dress — or undress — singing and beating their strange-looking drums in a unique rhythm unlike anything ever before heard in Logan.

Chautauqua was more fun! It was conducted in a giant tent pitched in a vacant field near the home of Aunt Vicey Nighbert. Each afternoon and evening there was classy entertainment by musical groups, soloists, choral groups, and instrumentalists. Well-known actors appeared in traveling Broadway productions. All of this was more or less for the adults with performances in the afternoon and evening. Best of all were the morning sessions when "children's chautauqua" convened. Kids of all ages attended in droves. There were stories, games, reading contests, and the thrilling rehearsals for the children's production which took place on the final night. Heady stuff for kids living in Logan in the '20's.

You see, Logan wasn't just feudin' and fightin' and mine wars. It was paradise.

Elizabeth Witschey Today

By Sheila McEntee

Recounting tales of her girlhood in Logan, an engaging and articulate Elizabeth Thurmond Witschey gestures with animation. Her eyes sparkle and a ready smile lights her face. While she conveys some of her fondest personal memories, there is a broader message she does not want her listener to miss.

"Logan was a great place to grow up," Elizabeth says. "It wasn't all meanness and shooting. Nobody has ever tried to give it any good publicity. I finally decided I'd do it myself," she says, explaining how she came to write the preceding story.

The great-granddaughter of William Dabney Thurmond, founder of the town of Thurmond, and granddaughter of Joseph Samuel Thurmond, a former Speaker of the House of Delegates, Elizabeth Thurmond was born in 1908 at Skelton in Raleigh County. When she was five years old, her family moved to Logan where her father operated the Thurmond Coal Company for many years.

Upon graduation from Logan High School in 1925, Elizabeth went on to Ward Belmont College in Nashville, Tennessee, and later spent three years at The Juilliard School in New York where she studied piano.

While in New York, she took advantage of myriad cultural opportunities including concerts, Broadway shows, and other performances. "The teachers were always giving us tickets to something," she adds. "And if they didn't have tickets, it cost just $3.50 in those days to get into a show."

Upon completion of her studies, she returned to Logan where she gave private lessons and taught piano at Logan High School. During the Depression, her father lost his Logan mines and her parents moved to Parkersburg where her father had been appointed collector of Internal Revenue. It was on a visit to his office that Elizabeth met Robert E. Witschey, who was employed by her father. Elizabeth and Robert married in 1937.

The Witscheys settled in Charleston where Robert established a successful accounting firm and Elizabeth raised their son and daughter: Walter Witschey, now of Richmond, Virginia, and Sallie Hart of Charleston. Over the years, however, Elizabeth continued to pursue her music, giving many recitals and appearing as a soloist with the West Virginia Symphony and the Charleston Chamber Music Players. She also became an active community advocate for the arts and traveled extensively over the years in this country and abroad.

While Elizabeth, at 91 years of age, seldom returns to the place of her cherished girlhood memories, she still counts music, travel, and trains among her passions.

And there is one more, she says, calling attention to a recent photograph prominently displayed in the living room of her South Hills home in Charleston. It is a photo of her, smiling gleefully as she hugs her infant great-grandson.

"Do you know what his name is?" she asks with obvious delight. She does not wait for an answer. "It's Logan Cole."

This is Elizabeth Witschey's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Elizabeth Thurmond Witschey, at 91 years of age, still has a twinkle in her eyes and a warm spot in her heart for the years she spent growing up in Logan. Photograph by Michael Keller.

SHEILA MCENTEE of Charleston is a freelance writer and the owner of Words Worth, a home-based writing and editing business. Prior to opening her business, she was employed as communications manager for the West Virginia Women's Commission. She worked as production assistant on this issue of GOLDENSEAL.

A Country Girl Comes Home

A Visit With Olive Workman Persinger

By Donna McGuire Tanner

On May 3, 1921, the population of Brown's Mountain in Fayette County grew by one. With the assistance of Dr. Henley, Olive Daisy Workman was born to the Rev. James (J.I.) and Bertha Baxter Workman. Their new daughter joined siblings Leonard, Maggy, Nellie, Iva, Athaline, Philip, and Evelyn. Three years later, Olive's younger sister Rachel was born.

Olive's father J.I. Workman was born during the Civil War to a war-widowed mother: Louisa Jane Vanetter Workman, a

Olive Workman Persinger today. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Olive was the eighth of nine children in her family. She is shown her, at right, with older brother Philip and sister Atheline standing, and younger sister Rachel seated, holding a very young family visitor in this 1930's photograph. Olive's sister Rachel is author Donna Tanner's mother.

woman doctor everyone called "Lady." At the age of seven, J.I. began work in the coal mines, finally retiring at the age of 75. While his family lived on Brown's Mountain, J.I. worked in the mines at Nuttallburg [see "Brown's Mountain," by Donna McGuire Tanner; *Wonderful West Virginia*: September 1996]. He was active in bringing the union to men who worked in the mines along the New River.

Olive's father earned the title of Reverend by preaching in coal camps throughout the mountain areas. Shortly after the birth of their youngest child, J.I. and Bertha moved their family to the community of Kaymoor, where J.I. worked in the Kaymoor No.1 mine. He was appointed minister for the local Kaymoor Church of God, but also ministered to those in the surrounding communities whenever he was called.

"He was always kind to us," Olive says, recalling her father. "He never punished any of us — he left that to our mother."

Bertha Workman, Olive's mother, supplemented the family's income by selling eggs and milk, making quilts, and sewing dresses from the pretty fabric of feed or flour sacks. During the Depression, she rented out rooms in their large house. "We were lucky during those years," Olive says. "Because of Mama's and Papa's hard work, our family never went hungry like many did in those days. Mama always shared what we had with those in our community who had less."

Olive recalls, "At a very young age, I watched my mom can and cook and work in her garden. She would always tell me, 'Just watch and listen, you will learn more.' Mama tried to teach me to sew, but I didn't want to learn. I made one dress and one quilt in my life."

Perhaps Olive's appetite for mischief stood in the way of her sewing lessons. One day she decided to play hair stylist with her Mama's scissors, cutting off all the hair from their yellow tomcat — even his whiskers.

Another day, while Olive's mother was very busy working in the kitchen, Olive playfully knocked on the front door. The first time Olive's mother was called to answer the knock, she was barely annoyed. By the second and third time, however, she gave Olive a stern warning. Olive took the warning seriously and went off to find something else to do. Her mother was not convinced that the game was over, though, and she waited just inside the door for the next ill-fated knock. To everyone's surprise, the next knock on the door came from a neighbor man, who was quickly grabbed and jerked into the house with the warning, "Do that one more time, young lady... ." Olive is not sure that her mother ever recovered from the embarrassment, once she realized what had happened.

Pranks and mischief aside, Olive admired her mother. "Mama was always working and singing," Olive recalls. "She would go to church at night, and for her it was a perfect day."

Church and music soon became important parts of Olive's life, as well. At the age of 12, she learned to play the guitar, organ, and piano. She first sang in public at

Olive's mother, Bertha Baxter Workman. Photographer and date unknown.

Kaymoor Haulage

Miners prepare to ride the Kaymoor No.1 incline mantrip down the steep side of the 800-foot New River Gorge. The split-level town of Kaymoor – Kaymoor Top and Kaymoor Bottom – was connected primarily by this precarious haulage. In its many years of service, there was only one recorded mishap – a 1913 broken-cable accident in which two miners were killed. After that time, it provided reliable though breathtaking transportation for miners and their families, including young Olive Workman. Photograph courtesy of George Bragg, date unknown.

church, and later at PTA meetings. Her brother and mother joined her to form a trio. When her sister Rachel was old enough, she sang with her family, too.

Olive holds many dear memories of growing up in West Virginia with her family. "On May 1, we were allowed to go barefoot for the first time," she says, reflecting on the summers of her childhood. "On hot summer days, we would swim in Wolf Creek. I also attended Vacation Bible School at Altamont School in Kaymoor.

"When we were old enough, Rachel and I would ride the flatbed cars pulled by coal mining haulage wheels up and down the mountainside. To us it was fun, like an amusement park ride." The Kaymoor haulage was a special cable-driven rail car designed to transport miners, equipment, and other cargo up and down the steep New River Gorge. It featured a breathtaking view and a thrilling ride, especially as it began its downward descent, lurching over the 70-foot cliff at the top of the gorge.

As a child growing up in the 1920's, Olive experienced an era when the latest fad was riding on the running boards of a car, which she was forbidden to do because she was too young. It was a time of short dresses and white stockings for women. "I longed for a pair of black slippers with a strap across the foot," she remembers. She also recalls the smell of burning hair wafting through open windows as girls, using pokers heated in hot coals, styled their hair in the fashionable "short curly" look. She remembers singing the most popular song of the time — "My Blue Heaven" — over and over. "If I wasn't singing," she says," I would be practicing the Charleston and the two-step — which I still do!"

The Workman family moved to Fayetteville in the early '30's. In 1938, Olive went to a park in Summersville to hear some of her favorite radio music personalities. She, also, had a chance to sing and play her guitar. Afterward, she was approached by Lee Moore, one of the performers.

Olive recalls, "Lee asked me if I would be interested in auditioning at WCHS. I made the long trip to Charleston where I found the radio station on the corner of Dickinson and Lee streets. I was left alone in a room with a microphone. I was told to just start singing when I saw a red light come on. I sang right from my heart the song 'Rock Me to Sleep in My Rocky Mountain Home.' I was happy when they told me I was a new member of the WCHS "Old Farm Hour."

"It wasn't long before I became friends with a young girl from McVey, Kentucky. Her name was LaVerne Williamson. She went by other names — Mountain Fern, Yodeling Dixie — but is best remembered as Molly O'Day. I remember that she always wore the same green dress to do her performance." [See "'Living the Right Life Now': Lynn Davis & Molly O"Day," by Abby Gail Goodnight and Ivan M. Tribe; Spring 1998.]

"There were many other entertainers," Olive says, "such as Buddy Starcher. He later had a television program on WCHS-TV. There was also Cap, Andy, and Flip [see "Cap, Andy, and Flip: Mountain State Radio Trio," by Ivan M. Tribe; Winter 1989], Bailes Brothers, Frank Welling who played Uncle Si, Tex Tyler, Natchee the Indian, James Ledford, Lee Moore and his wife Juanita, Jack and Farley Holden, Fudge and Budge, brother and sister Honey and Sunny who later appeared on WOAY-TV in Oak Hill, and Arvy Hickman. Arvy used a skillet and spoons to play music, which sounded like a banjo."

Olive Workman — she never used

a stage name — played guitar and sang with a smooth and pleasant voice. Accompanied by the other musicians in the studio, she sang many of the songs that were popular on the air during those early years of country music. After a short stint at WCHS, teenaged Olive Workman went to Wheeling.

"I later decided to move on to WWVA radio station in Wheeling," she says. "That is where I have my most cherished memory of being a singing partner with Marjorie Weissert. We joined in performing with Curley Miller and the Plowboys." Olive and Marjorie, as they were known, sang duets in the Western style which was popular at the time. "We thought we were cowgirls!" Olive recalls with a chuckle.

"While I was with WWVA there was another young performer who used the gimmick of wearing a fake mustache. He played a guitar, but soon he started playing the banjo. His name was Marshall Jones. He is now better remembered as Grandpa Jones."

As much as Olive enjoyed her exciting life as a radio performer during the late 1930's, she also experienced the difficulties and hardships which came along with being an entertainer. With nowhere to live and only a sparse income to support her, Olive left WWVA after a year or so and made her way back to Fayette County.

In 1941, Olive married Melvin Myers, a local Fayetteville man who, among other things, shared her interest in music. Their daughter Linda was born four years later.

In 1936, at about the time this picture was made, Olive auditioned and earned a spot as a radio singer on the WCHS "Old Farm Hour" in Charleston. She later sang over WWVA in Wheeling before returning home to Fayette County.

By the early 1950's, Olive, Melvin, and their young daughter Linda were regular performers on the Oak Hill WOAY radio program the "Saturday Jamboree" with host Elmer Hickman. Olive remembers, "Linda always sang alone. And my brother Philip was often on the program, too. He played the guitar and his daughters Emily and Bertie sang."

Chicago was home to many displaced West Virginians during the late 1950's including Olive, standing second from the left, and future husband Bill Persinger, seated with the mandolin. All but two people in this snapshot, taken in 1957 at an apartment in Chicago, were originally from West Virginia.

It was in the mid-1950's that Olive decided to pursue a nursing career. She says, "I started my training to become an LPN in 1954 in Richwood at the Sacred Heart Hospital." Although she continued to entertain in the music field, more of her time was spent nursing. It offered more money.

Melvin and Olive decided to separate and later divorced. On December 1, 1957, Olive's nursing career took her to Chicago where she worked at the Edgewater Hospital for the next eight years. Even though she did not want to leave West Virginia, Edgewater Hospital offered the specialized medical training that she wanted, and the pay was better. She says, "Even though Linda and her father always remained in close contact, I was now a single parent raising my daughter alone in Chicago — a lost country girl in a big city."

Olive soon met new friends who

shared her passion for music. She says, "Some of my friends just happened to be from West Virginia. It seems just about anywhere you go in Chicago you will meet someone from West Virginia who knows someone from the area where you were raised." These friendships helped to stave off bouts of homesickness for the mountains, Olive recalls.

Before long, one of her new acquaintances introduced her to Bill Persinger, a machinist with the Bell & Howell company. Olive was delighted to learn that Bill's parents were Ivan and Goldie Persinger from Cunard, West Virginia — about three miles from Kaymoor!

Along with their West Virginia roots, Bill shared Olive's desire to be involved with music. In their spare time, the two of them, along with a group of other displaced West Virginia musicians, combined their talents to play music for their own pleasure and for friends.

Olive and Bill felt that they formed a natural partnership and, after a time, they married. Their union not only brought more music into the world, but soon their daughter Teresa was born. Not long after, Olive's first daughter Linda married and started a family of her own. Olive was now a young mother and grandmother at the same time.

When Teresa was six or seven years old, Olive decided to take a few years off from nursing. She explains, "I had been able to spend time with my first daughter Linda during her childhood years, and I felt it was the right time and I needed to be able to be with my youngest daughter for awhile. I could be there to walk her to and from school, or we could just do 'mother and daughter' things. I know from my own experiences with my own mother how important that is to a child."

Twenty years ago, Olive and Bill left Chicago and returned to his boyhood home in Cunard, where they now live. Olive worked as a private nurse until her recent retirement. Bill retired from the Mountain Transit Company on July 1, 1994.

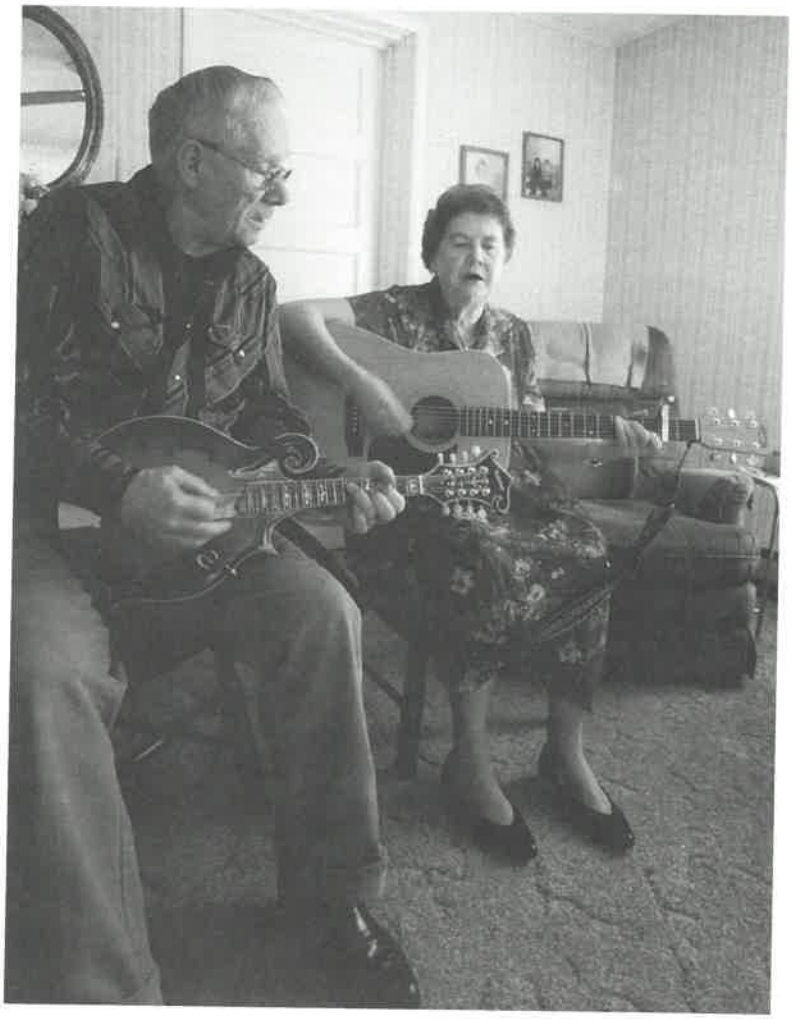
Olive and Bill are still active in music and perform together in a group called the Country Gospel Singers. Olive says, "We sing on WJLS radio in Beckley, but not as often as we used to. But we also perform often in hospitals, nursing homes, and churches." The Persingers are active members of the Cunard Baptist Church.

Every summer Olive grows a garden, and, as her mother taught her, she still cans the vegetables. In their spare time, she and Bill like to explore historical places and old homes in West Virginia. Olive also searches for and collects the old textbooks she once used in grade school: the *Elson-Gray Basic Readers*. With a wistful look in her bright eyes she says, "My reader collection would be complete if I could just find my primer book. Hopefully I will."

Olive's holidays are family affairs spent with her daughter Teresa and her husband Roger Barnes, and her daughter Linda and her husband Paul Browning. Six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren join in with the singing and celebrations.

Reflecting on anything that she would change in her life, Olive says, "I would change a lot of things. I would learn more music. I would never have left West Virginia."

Olive Daisy Workman Persinger has no doubts when asked about her favorite place. "It's Kaymoor, because that is my home."



Olive and Bill Persinger today at their home in Cunard, Fayette County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

DONNA MCGUIRE TANNER, a freelance writer living in Ocala, Florida, was raised in Fayette County. The niece of Olive Workman Persinger, she writes most of her stories and poems about West Virginia. She has been featured in *Wonderful West Virginia*, *Coal People Magazine*, and *Appalachian Log*, among many others. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL. The first one appeared in Spring 1999.

"Able

The Monumental Sallie Maxwell Bennett

By L. Wayne Sheets

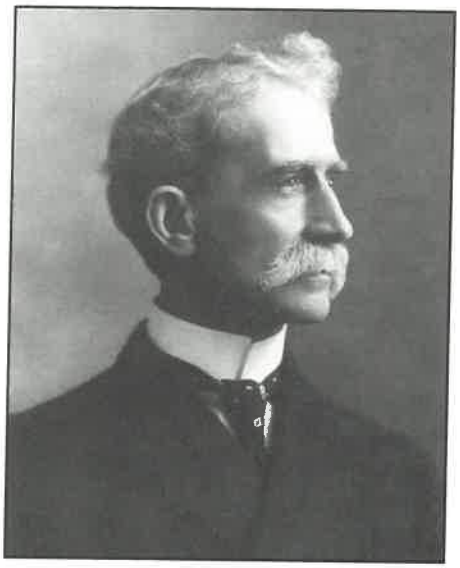
Sallie Maxwell Bennett (1857-1944) generously used her wealth and social position for a wide range of philanthropic efforts. Much of her life and work were devoted to memorializing her son, a fallen war hero. All photographs courtesy of West Virginia Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, unless otherwise noted.

On August 24, 1918, a World War I flying ace from West Virginia was gunned down over France. The death of this daring young pilot broke his mother's heart and set into motion a compelling chain of events, the results of which are visible today from Wheeling to Weston to Westminster Abbey. Together, they form a lasting monument to military bravery, and to a mother's love.

Born into wealth and opulence on June 2, 1857, Sallie Ann Maxwell was the daughter of James and Ruth Armstrong Ray Maxwell. Sallie's father was a successful mercantile entrepreneur in Wheeling who lived a life of great charity and social awareness. He was especially sensitive to the educational needs of the era.

Motivated by an impassioned desire to carry on her father's benevolence, Sallie spent many years — and untold amounts of money — striving to improve the lives of West Virginians, and to perpetuate

Courage"



Louis Bennett, Sr., in 1904. A noted attorney and state politician, Bennett ran for governor in 1909 when he was narrowly defeated by William E. Glasscock.

Agra Bennett, born in 1893, was named after the city of Agra, India, site of the Taj Mahal. She became a debutante and was, herself, a prominent Wheeling citizen.

Louis Bennett, Jr., was born in Weston in 1894. His brief career as a World War I flying ace ended in tragedy.

the memory of her heroic son.

Sallie married Louis Bennett in January 1889, at her home in Wheeling. Louis was the son of Jonathan Bennett, a wealthy landowner and attorney from Lewis County, and Margaret Elizabeth Jackson Bennett. The young couple made their home in Weston. Following in his father's footsteps, Louis Bennett soon became a very successful attorney and state politician. His eloquent speech and charisma endeared him both to his constituency and to fellow politicians, propelling him to Speaker of the House of Delegates during his first term in office — the first person in West Virginia politics to do so.

Members of her family believe that Sallie's passion for West Virginia developed in part through her support of her husband's political career. Not only was she married to a prominent and wealthy attorney, but she was ambitious and pragmatic herself. Through politics — especially her husband's 1909 gubernatorial race against William E. Glasscock which Bennett lost by only 12,000 votes — she established a network of influential acquaintances in West Virginia and throughout the East. Sallie and Louis also traveled extensively, establishing relationships with many influential friends and acquaintances around the globe.

Sallie's great-grandson, David McKinley of Wheeling, says, "She probably spread the name of West Virginia throughout the world during her lifetime more than did most state politicians."

A son, James Maxwell Bennett, was born in October 1891, but died of cholera the following July. The death of their first-born sent shock waves through their marriage. Louis and Sallie withdrew from politics and society and began an around-the-world trip in an effort to overcome their loss. While in the Orient in 1892, Sallie discovered that she was pregnant again.

Sallie and Louis immediately started their journey back to America. Their daughter Agra was born in Denver on April 3, 1893. Agra (pronounced "Au-gra") was named after Agra, India, site of the Taj Mahal and the most beautiful city Sallie felt she had ever visited.

On September 22, 1894, Louis Bennett, Jr., was born in Weston. He was their second son and their last child.

Doting parents and an opulent lifestyle afforded Agra and young Louis opportunities never dreamed of by most other West Virginia children. Agra attended the finest finishing schools in preparation for

high society. Louis attended the best preparatory schools before entering Yale in 1913. They were, according to a family member, being groomed to compete socially and professionally on a national level.

Young Louis was handsome, headstrong, extremely intelligent, and not a little unruly. At age 12, he built his own automobile out of spare parts and roared around Weston on the alternately muddy and dusty streets, aggravating more than a few citizens with the commotion of his machine. His adventuresome spirit and lack of concern for his personal safety led him to the romance and challenge of early aviation. He became fascinated with the new flying machines and soon earned his wings piloting locally manufactured wooden aircraft in the skies over West Virginia.

While at Yale, Louis conceived the idea of forming a West Virginia Flying Corps to aid in the fighting of World War I in Europe. Though he received the support of Governor Cornwell, the idea was rejected by Congress, much to his and his mother's disappointment.

Louis' impatience and his desire to get into the Great War tore him from college. On October 5, 1917, he left for Toronto, Canada, and four days later he entered Canadian flight school as cadet number 152374. One hundred four days later, he graduated. After a short visit home to Weston, he departed for London, England, arriving on February 25, 1918.

In July of that year, Louis Bennett, Sr., became unexpectedly ill. He died on August 2, 1918. Twenty-six days later, Sallie sat alone at her home in Weston, grieving her loss, when a knock came at the front door. She was irritated by the interruption, but nevertheless acknowledged the caller. It was a telegram. Another tragedy had struck.

The Western Union telegram from London, England, read:

> REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT LT BENNETT ROYAL AIR FORCE IS REPORTED MISSING AUGUST TWENTY-FOURTH LETTER FOLLOWS - SECRETARY [BRITISH] AIR MINISTRY 8:43 AM AUG 28 1918.

Just 26 days after losing her husband, Sallie faced the terrible possibility of having also lost her only son. With the bearer of the telegram, she sent a message to a friend of hers in London that read:

> LOUIS REPORTED MISSING TWENTY-FOURTH PLEASE ASK AIR MINISTRY TO OFFER REWARD FOR INFORMATION AND SPARE NO EXPENSE TO LOCATE BODY IF KILLED -BENNETT.

To the commander of the unit to which Louis was assigned as a fighter pilot she telegraphed:

> OFFER REWARD TO GERMANS TO LOCATE LT BENNETT REPORTED MISSING.

She waited anxiously for several months until, on October 31, the American Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland, sent a telegram confirming that her son had, in fact, been killed on August 24, 1918.

Sallie traveled to Europe and spent the next several months trying to locate her son's remains and the exact location where he had died. She discovered, sadly, that neither the British nor the American government had done anything to recognize her son's heroism. Sallie decided to right this wrong and spent much of the rest of her life ceaselessly seeking to honor and memorialize her son.

David McKinley says, "Certainly, a mother's love was more than enough justification for her to do everything she could to immortalize her son's memory. In addition to her devotion stood what she considered an ungrateful country's — in fact two countries' — failure to recognize his supreme sacrifice with memorial services or combat awards. Whatever her reasons, she succeeded in accomplishing her goals in the face of obstacles that most would have deemed impossible to surmount."

Before she was done, Sallie established a wide range of memorials to Louis which included, among others, a stained glass window at Westminster Abbey, a 17-room memorial library in Weston, a towering bronze statue overlooking the National Highway in Wheeling, and a church in France. In Weston, she also established the Louis Bennett, Jr., League, and had the

David Maxwell McKinley, Sallie's great-grandson, reminisces about his colorful forebears from his office at the Maxwell Building in Wheeling this past January. Photograph by Scott McCloskey.

Young Louis in England, preparing to fly in 1918.

airport renamed in his honor.

Louis had died in a German field hospital in the town of Wavrin, France, a community of 3,000 people, near where he had been shot down. When the Germans retreated in the face of the advancing and victorious Allied forces, they destroyed everything in their path including the chapel in Wavrin, of which the occupied French had been very proud. Sallie rebuilt the church and had it rededicated in memory of her son on August 24, 1919 — one year to the day after his death.

When Mrs. Bennett was in England in 1919, she attended a ceremony in Westminster Abbey at which U.S. General John J. Pershing placed the Congressional Medal of Honor on the tomb of Britain's Unknown Soldier. During the ceremony, she noticed harsh sunlight falling directly on the tomb through a plain window above the dean's pew. She immediately decided to place a stained glass window there in memory of Louis.

Sallie quickly saw to the details and soon had her window. On Friday, May 27, 1922, in the presence of an assemblage of distinguished British and American dignitaries, the window was dedicated to the memory of her son and to all those flyers who died in the quest for freedom.

The window graces the Abbey to this day. Known as the British Flying Corps window, it consists of three panels. The prophet Isaiah sits in the far corner of one panel and Ezekiel in the opposite corner, wafting a ribbon between them upon which is written their pronouncements on flying men. In the tracery is placed the Archangel Michael — the patron saint of airmen — watch-ing with approval. The inscription written on the glass at the base of the window reads: "To the Glory of God and in proud and thankful memory of those members of the British Flying Services who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918."

The handsome angel upon whom Michael is looking most favorably is West Virginia's own Louis Bennett, Jr. If one observes closely in the lower right-hand corner of the window, is the State Seal of West Virginia: the only state to be so represented at the Abbey.

Sallie soon became determined to erect a statue to the memory of her aviator son. She wanted it placed at a prominent location, "preferably," she said, "in his home state — West Virginia." She wanted the statue erected on the grounds of what was then Linsly Military Institute — the location of the first capitol of West Virginia. If Linsly officials refused, she wanted it on the grounds of the State Capitol in Charleston. If the capitol commission refused her offer, she would see that it was placed on the lawn of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. She "would not have it placed somewhere in a park!" If it were to be built, it would be in a place of prominence and political correctness. After some discussion, it was agreed that the monument would be erected on the grounds of the Linsly Institute at Theda Place in Wheeling, within sight of the National Highway.

On December 20, 1923, Sallie contracted with sculptor Augustus Lukeman of New York City to design and build the statue. At a cost of $10,000, the contract called for the statue to be seven-and-a-half feet tall, to be cast in standard bronze, and decorated with burnished gold. The base was to be cut from Greens-Landing granite from the state of Maine, and polished marble.

"The Aviator" was unveiled on Armistice Day, November 11, 1925. This spectacular work of art depicts Louis Bennett, Jr., in his aviator uniform atop a six-and-a-half foot pedestal. His belted flight coat is shown furling in the breeze while he looks boldly off to the horizon. He is fitted with enormous bird-like wings, one of which is held high, the other dipped — or broken — and touching the ground. On the reverse side of the pedestal is this inscription:

"The Aviator," by sculptor Augustus Lukeman, depicts fallen fighter pilot Louis Bennett, Jr. The bronze and gold statue, which is seven-and-a-half feet tall on a six-and-a-half foot granite and marble pedestal, stands at the Linsly School in Wheeling. Photograph by Scott McCloskey.

"Gift of Mrs. Louis Bennett whose only son Louis Bennett, Jr., 'Yale 1917' was Captain of the West Virginia Flying Corps which he organized at Wheeling, West Virginia. He was killed in action August 24, 1918, while serving as Lieutenant 40th Squadron Royal Air Force in France. His record August 15-24 being 3 enemy planes, 9 balloons destroyed (4 in one day). 'And thus this man died leaving his spirit as an example of able courage, not only unto young men but unto all the nation.'"

The sculpture and its dedication ceremony received widespread attention in 1925. "The Aviator" remained in place for the next 50 years until it was moved to the new Linsly School campus on Knox Lane and was rededicated on November 11, 1975, where it still stands.

Sallie Maxwell Bennett sent her Christmas greetings to the citizens of Weston in the form of a letter on December 9, 1921. In it, she offered to donate her 17-room mansion on Court Avenue to the city. In that letter, she talked about the many towns smaller than Weston in countries she had visited that had their own public library with a reading room and often a museum. In her letter she wrote, "Our streets are full of young people and children who after school is out have nowhere to go excepting the 'movies' where there is nothing to improve their minds and much beside the close atmosphere to ruin their health." She asked, "Have we not enough public-spirited citizens to support a public library and welfare center in Weston?"

As usual, there were the Sallie Bennett provisos. Basing her donation on Andrew Carnegie's theory that the people of the town to which he donated money to build a library must raise enough money to endow it, her house and its property would be given "on conditions that $50,000 to $100,000 be raised and placed on interest, such interest to be an annual income for salaries, books and papers, and upkeep. Any income not needed to be added to the principal or put on interest as a nest egg for future growth."

She went on to say, "My son Louis has boxes of books suitable for juveniles; our own library I would give as a nucleus, the books not to be taken away; you would raise a lending library." The building, its use, and services were to be strictly non-sectarian. Being the preservation visionary that she was, she also demanded that the high Victorian Italianate style of the home be kept intact.

One can almost hear the furor that her "Christmas greetings" caused in the little community astride the West Fork River. Fifty to $100,000 is a lot of money, even today. "How," the citizens must

have asked themselves and each other, many times over, "are we going to raise so much money?" The fact that the gift was conservatively estimated to be worth between $50,000 and $75,000 surely gave them encouragement and leverage for raising the money.

The people did not raise the money for an endowment, however, but found another way to receive their gift. The American Legion had been without an operating facility since its inception and saw an opportunity to provide a community service and a home for itself. The Legion circulated a petition among the citizens of Weston and Lewis County, asking the county court to take over the old home and fund its operation through the county commission. The petition succeeded.

Today, the Louis Bennett, Jr., Memorial Public Library in Weston is supported by the county commission and a fund-raising charity known as Friends of the Louis Bennett Public Library. The old home's parlor and billiard rooms are now stack space. Bestsellers, photocopying machines, and computer indexing systems sit in sharp contrast to the arched fireplaces, original plaster ceilings, and ornate molding in the rooms. The elder Bennett's roll-top desk and Sallie's oil paintings are still part of the décor. And the facade of the 1875 Italianate-style home with its heavily bracketed cornices, intricate wooden latticework, and elaborate roof tower are painstakingly maintained.

Not all of Sallie's efforts to immortalize her son took physical form. In an effort to keep Louis fresh in the minds of her family and friends she formed the Louis Bennett, Jr., League. Members met each year on the Sunday closest to August 24, the day on which he died. However far away Sallie may have been, she always returned to Weston to join the nearly score of friends and admirers and chair their annual meeting.

The meetings were nearly always of orthodox similarity. The group met at the Camden Hotel for a banquet with Mrs. Bennett. After the banquet they would adjourn to the old Bennett home where they would hold a short business meeting. There, the founder would update those in attendance on what she had done during the year to perpetuate her son's memory. Then they would retire to the cemetery to pay their respects to their fallen hero. Without Sallie's leadership and inspiration, however, the league slowly faded from existence after her death in 1944.

Sallie Ann Maxwell Bennett was a towering lady of societal and political prominence during her lifetime. Her correspondence with political and military leaders of Europe during her search for her son's remains document her ability to sway high-level authorities toward her agenda. In April and May of 1906, she visited with Mrs. Varina Howell Davis, widow of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, and later corresponded with her on subjects ranging in diversity from art to the education of the poor whites in the South. England's King George and Queen Mary received her daughter Agra as a debutante in 1911.

The monuments Sallie constructed of brick and mortar, stone, bronze, and glass still stand on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Through her efforts to immortalize her heroic son, she established a legacy for herself which is perhaps as great, if not greater, than that which she hoped to establish for Louis, Jr. As time marches on, her own strength and courage, as well as her benevolence toward her beloved state and the people of West Virginia, will stand as a beacon of amity and motherly love.

L. WAYNE SHEETS is a native of Pocahontas County. He is a graduate of Green Bank High School and Fairmont State College, with post-graduate work in historical research from West Virginia University. Wayne is a freelance writer and photographer whose work is published in the *Elkins Inter-Mountain*. He spent 15 years as a commercial pilot and recently retired from the position of air traffic control specialist. His latest contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in Fall 1997.

Sallie Bennett donated her 17-room mansion to the city of Weston in 1921, to be used as a public library in memory of her son. Today, the Louis Bennett, Jr., Memorial Public Library is still in use at 148 Court Avenue in Weston. 1977 photograph by Rodney Collins, courtesy of the West Virginia Historic Preservation Office.

Georgia Gordon Bryant in 1957, when she owned and operated the Thorn Street Diner in Princeton.

By Georgia Gordon Bryant

How I Came To the Thorn S

I was born on December 13, 1919, in a small town in McDowell County called Iaeger. My parents' names were Charles Leonard Easley Gordon and Fannie Hylton Gordon. There were 11 children born to them, five sons and six daughters. I was number eight.

My family moved from Iaeger to Princeton, in Mercer County, when I was around three years old. My dad did not have a regular job, and he thought he could find more work in Princeton. He did not do any better in Princeton, either. He would only get a day's work now and then. When he worked a day, he would barely make enough money to feed all of us.

I cannot recall how long it was before Hoover was elected president, but I knew we were a lot poorer than ever. Most of the time we did not have enough to eat. I can recall sitting on a wooden bench at a long table with six of my brothers and sisters, and all we had to eat was a bowl of white gravy and a plate of

Twin sons Dwight and Doug Bryant liked having a diner in the family. Here, one eats while his brother keeps the peace in 1957.

The Thorn Street Diner was a popular spot with Princeton young people who enjoyed the good food and wholesome atmosphere. Georgia's husband Maury is on the left along with sons Dwight, Buddy, and Doug, left to right. Joining them in this 1955 snapshot is Georgia's brother-in-law Clarence, at far right.

business was booming in Radford. A large powder plant was built not too far from the restaurant. We stayed open 24 hours a day and I soon found out why she was so desperate for me to come help her. I sometimes had to work the whole 24 hours before I got a break.

I worked there for about 18 months, then thought I would go back to my friend and her family. They welcomed me back with open arms. They gave me a waitress job in their hotel and restaurant. I got a room at the hotel and I ate for free at the restaurant. They paid me a fair wage, also.

My future husband Henry Maury Bryant made the mistake of eating there regularly and ended up with me. I didn't know then that Maury would turn out to be the best husband anyone could ever have.

I worked for several months after we were married but when we were expecting our first child, Maury wanted me to quit. We lived there at the hotel for about three years until we could afford to buy a lot and build a small house. By then, we also had twin sons. We were very happy to get the children in a house that had a yard for them to play in.

Our family soon outgrew the small house so we decided to build a larger house on an extra lot which we owned. We had been living there for three years and the children were all in school, so I had a lot of free time on my hands. Then I heard that there was a café for sale on Thorn Street.

When Maury came home from work, I told him about it and asked him if he would agree to us buying it if the price was right. We went to see about it that afternoon. The lady who owned it didn't like the restaurant very much and was glad to get rid of it. We told her we would be back the next day to close the deal.

We told the boys about what we were going to do. They were very happy. They liked the idea of free hot dogs, soda pop, a pinball ma-

Georgia and Maury Bryant today.

chine, and a jukebox. We needed to replace a lot of fixtures, but we could do that after we moved in. We laid new tile on the floor, and replaced the tables and chairs with booths.

We also changed the name to Thorn Street Diner. We learned that a café was a place where they sold beer and that wasn't what we would be selling. Buddy was 12, Dwight and Douglas were 10. They would be helping us in the diner. They went to school right across the street. There was no cafeteria at the school so a lot of the students ate at the diner. My sons suddenly made a lot of new friends. They knew they were welcome to hang out there. They played the pinball machine if they had money. If they didn't have any money, they could hang out there anyway as long as they behaved themselves. I never had any trouble out of any of the children. They appreciated the privilege to be with their friends. It was a good time for my sons, and I knew where they were about all the time.

There were a lot of girls who would hang out there, also. They would come in for a Coke and play the jukebox, probably to meet some boys, also. I know two of them married boys who they met there.

We moved into the apartment over the diner a few months after we bought it. With the boys sleeping upstairs, I could call them to come down to help me if I needed them in the morning before they went to school. I would go in the stock room and knock on the ceiling with a broom handle to get them to come down to help me.

All of the boys who hung around my diner turned out to be nice respectful men.

One morning, a caravan from the National Guard stopped in front of the restaurant. Before they got out of the vehicles, I hurried up and knocked on the ceiling for the boys to come down to help me. The sergeant came in and asked me if I could feed all of the men. He said not to bother with the menu, just fix them all the same. I fixed them all bacon and eggs. I had a large grill and could fry a lot of bacon at a time. The boys came down to help me serve. The sergeant and a couple of the guys helped carry out the plates and the drinks.

There were several college students who would stop in after class and play a game or two of checkers with me if I had the time. I had help in the afternoon and the evenings, so most of the time I could sit down and play with them. Most of the time I beat them. I played to win. If they won, they had to earn it.

We stayed there for seven good years. There was never a fight or a serious quarrel in my diner. I made it clear in the beginning I would not tolerate it. They were welcome as long as they behaved themselves. All of the boys who hung around my diner turned out to be nice respectful men. One of the men called me a while back and told me how much he appreciated me and he was afraid I would die before he got a chance to tell me. I almost cried.

One never knows how much influence one can have on someone's life. When I meet them, it makes me kind of sad that those days are gone. When they tell me those were the happiest days of their lives, I wish I could have done more for them and a lot of other children. I thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to do the things that were needed to help other young people while I was bringing up my own.

GEORGIA GORDON BRYANT closed the Thorn Street Diner when her sons grew up and began to leave home, and she and Maury moved back to their place on Foster Street in Princeton, where they still live. After working for a short time at K-Mart, she settled into a quieter life at home. She spent many hours crocheting afghans which she gave to neighbors, the preacher, her doctor, and many other friends. At one time, she counted over 100 bedspreads she had given away. Today, at 80 and 90 years old respectively, Georgia and Maury still enjoy each other's company immensely. Always one to stay busy, Georgia one day decided it was time to write about her life and the diner. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

The Fiddling Pheasants of Fairmont

By Torie Knight
Photographs by Steve Rotsch

Four generations of the Pheasant family join together in music. Rosa Bunner Pheasant is at left with son John Pheasant, granddaughter Cathy Pheasant Pearson, and great-granddaughter Meredith Pheasant.

Rosa, on the right in this 1948 photograph, says she learned all she knows of music from her father Selb Bunner. Selb is seen here with the fiddle Rosa called "the loud one." Rosa's sister Virginia is at left.

Rosa Bunner was only 10 years old, but she knew what she wanted. Her ears perked up every time her dad picked up that one fiddle — the one she called "the loud fiddle." The sound bellowing from the fiddle motivated the young girl. She had to have that fiddle.

The only problem was that this particular instrument was the one fiddle her father said she couldn't have. "Like kids are, they always want something they can't have," Rosa, now 93, recalls.

Her dad, Selb Bunner, challenged Rosa and one of her brothers, telling them that the first one to learn to play the fiddle well could have "the loud one."

"So I tried awfully hard to learn," Rosa Bunner Pheasant says from her home on Bunner Ridge in Marion County. She had no lessons, she simply sat and watched her father play. It was a difficult challenge at first, but her brother soon made the task much easier — he stopped playing. Eventually, Rosa was able to take hold of that fiddle and play it herself.

In the years since, Rosa has watched her son John Pheasant, her granddaughter Cathy Pheasant Pearson, and her great-granddaughter Meredith Pheasant, all pick up the fiddle and play. It gives her a feeling of satisfaction to know that a love for the instrument has been passed down in her family for five generations — from father Selb Bunner to young Meredith.

Selb and his brother Albert Bunner played several instruments. Rosa's uncle joined in on the fife and drums; the two brothers once had a drum band in which they combined the fiddle and the drums on tunes like "Marching Through Georgia" and "The Cuckoo's Nest."

Rosa has always lived in Marion County. She had four brothers and one sister. Her father was a carpenter by trade, ran a sawmill, and had a farm. Her mother, the former Phoebe Hayhurst, never played any instruments, but all the children did.

Rosa's sister Virginia Bunner Smith still plays the mandolin. Her brother John is very musically gifted. He plays the fiddle, guitar, mandolin, harmonica, and the drums.

Though she played some guitar when she was younger, Rosa concentrated mostly on the fiddle, learning all she knows of music from her father. She never has stopped playing, although there were some years during which she did not play as much.

As a child and teenager, Rosa attended square dances on Saturday nights, where there was always good fiddle music. She also spent some afternoons at the ball field watching baseball games. It was at

one of those events that Delbert Pheasant caught her eye.

She and Delbert wed in 1932. They were married for 44 years until his death in 1976. Their only child is John Pheasant. After John grew up, Rosa spent a few years working outside of the home as a school cook, but she soon returned to her home.

Her family and her music were her true loves. She never made any money playing the fiddle, nor was she ever on the radio. To her, those things weren't as important as passing on the love of music to her family.

John Pheasant doesn't claim to be especially skilled on any one instrument. He can play a few songs on each, but says he wouldn't ever test his musical skills in a competition. Still, John makes a significant contribution to the family's music.

Rosa carries a small black case with gold letters spelling out her name. Inside that case is a fiddle John made for her. John has built most of the family's instruments, along with almost everything else imaginable including his Fairmont area home. He is a professor at Fairmont State College and he has taught wood technology and building construction there for more than 30 years. He recently started a musical instrument-building class where students learn to make fiddles, mandolins, dulcimers, and other instruments.

"It's a challenge for any craftsperson," John says of making instruments. "There's something about an instrument that is kind of intriguing and very interesting." Many of his instruments, especially those made for musicians in the family, have decorative inlays fashioned in the shape of a pheasant.

As an instrument maker, John can describe the difference between the violin used in classical music and the fiddle used in bluegrass and country music. Although most believe that the difference lies in the way the instruments are played, John says that the violin bridge has more curve and is higher than that of the fiddle.

Rosa eventually did earn "the loud one," though she later passed it to her son John, after he made and gave to her the fiddle which she plays here.

Or, he jokes, you can tell by the way the instrument is carried. "You carry a fiddle in a poke, a violin in a case."

John loves the music despite the fact that he does not consider himself to be a virtuoso. "It's like everything else. When you are associated with something year round, you sometimes take it for granted," he says. "But I have a much deeper appreciation for people who play."

After having crafted many instruments, he also has a deep appreciation for the instruments themselves, especially the ones handed down to him from his grandfather Selb. John has two of his grandfather's fiddles, including "the loud one" that Rosa loved to play. "I have a good appreciation for it," John says. "It has sentimental value."

He also has fond memories of his daughter Cathy's early days of learning the fiddle. Cathy began playing the fiddle when she was seven years old.

John Pheasant is a prolific instrument builder. His work often includes a decorative "pheasant" inlay, such as the one seen on the headstock of this guitar.

Cathy Pheasant Pearson is a champion fiddler who has been winning competitions since she was in her teens. Cathy and husband Scott now live in Pennsylvania.

"Grandma got me started," Cathy recalls. She later took classical music lessons, though she wasn't always thrilled about all of the practicing that was required. "At first starting out, it wasn't much fun, but now it is," Cathy comments. "I'm glad Dad made me practice."

"She wasn't quite as interested in practicing as I thought she should be," John remembers. He recalls that he once took Cathy and one of his female college students out to help do a roofing job and worked them really hard. "I hoped to change their minds, to get them to practice harder," he says.

Despite his plan to discourage the two girls from manual labor, they were ready to help put up another roof. "I thought my plans had failed," he recalls. Eventually, though, Cathy learned that instruments are fascinating devices and that she needed to practice to make them sound appealing.

That love for music became more beneficial to Cathy than she ever imagined. A few years ago, West Virginia University professors Ray Hicks and Chris Mooney had a band called Friends and Neighbors. The professors asked Cathy to join the band. They also asked Pennsylvania musician Scott Pearson to join.

Cathy and Scott were married about two years ago and now live in Pennsylvania. Scott, a mechanical engineer, continues to play in a bluegrass group. Cathy couples her love for music with her love of people. She works as a nurse, and sometimes lifts the spirits of those she cares for with her fiddle playing.

Cathy was nine years old when she started competing. She remembers receiving a fourth-place award in a competition held at Meadowbrook Mall in Bridgeport. "I remember it well because I had to play with adults," she says.

In 1991 when she was just 15 years old, Cathy took top honors at the West Virginia State Fiddlers Championship at the Mountain State Forest Festival in Elkins. She then repeated the feat each year through 1996, except for '95 when she served as a contest judge. She participated in the Vandalia Gathering fiddle competition in Charleston each year from 1988 though 1997, placing in the top five several times until finally winning first place in 1997. She has also competed successfully at other contests across the country, winning countless prizes, ribbons, and honors.

Cathy is considered by many to be one of the finest fiddlers in West Virginia, even though she now lives "across the border" in Pennsylvania. Her sizable talent is often concealed by her soft-spoken nature and humble personality. At local events and festivals, Cathy is equally at home winning a first-place trophy with a spectacular fiddle showpiece, or quietly playing bass, mandolin, or guitar to

Seven-year-old Meredith Pheasant says she chose to learn the fiddle "because I want to be the same as Cathy." Here, Meredith and her Aunt Cathy pause between tunes during a recent family jam session.

back-up her 93-year-old grandmother or her 7-year-old niece. Oh, yes — Cathy is also learning to play the banjo.

Meredith Pheasant is a second-grade student at Fairmont's Pleasant Valley Elementary School. She has been playing the fiddle for about two years. Although the encouragement to play the fiddle comes from various branches of the family tree, the lessons are usually taught by certified instructors. Meredith currently has the same teacher who taught Cathy to play.

Why did Meredith decide to follow in the family tradition? "Because I wanted to be the same as Cathy," she answers. Cathy's brother Randy is Meredith's father. Randy is an instrument builder like his father and also leads the singing at local church services.

Meredith loves to play the fiddle with her great-grandmother and with her Aunt Cathy, although she was having some difficulty during the interview because she had recently sprained her wrist and was wearing a cast.

Often, when Cathy comes home from Pennsylvania to visit her parents and her grandmother, John and mom Audrey Louise invite many friends to come and play music in the large living room of their Bunner Ridge home, a home they have shared with Rosa for the past two years. Their living room contains many chairs, a bear rug, and a large bass fiddle which John made. The walls know a story of rich music and family togetherness that few walls ever hear. As Rosa, Cathy, and Meredith combine their efforts on the "Wabash Cannonball," smiles light their faces.

They often travel together to competitions. "I've been the chauffeur," John says. While he watches from the wings, Rosa competes in the senior contest, Cathy wows the crowd in the adult competition, and Meredith plays in the children's division. And it's not unusual for all three of the Pheasant girls to come home with trophies from the same competition.

John says that when Cathy first entered the competitions she told her dad that he could keep the money, she only wanted the trophies. "She later realized the benefits of money and didn't care so much about the trophies," John says.

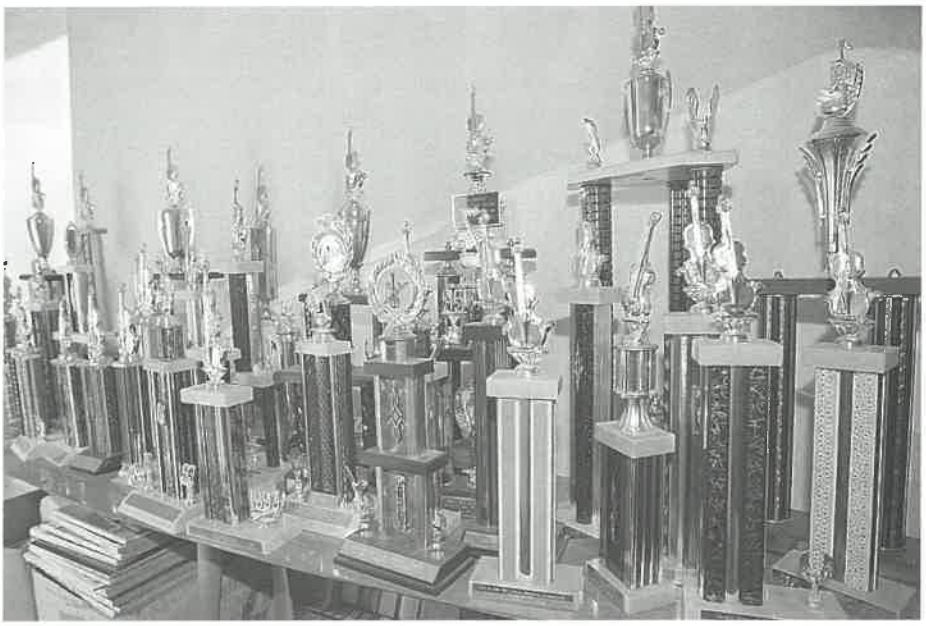
The walls know a story of rich music and family togetherness that few walls ever hear.

A wooden trophy case, made by John, is at the entrance of the living room where the family gathers to play. It is overflowing with music awards. Everyone in the family is proud of the trophy collection. It is admired by all four of John and Audrey Louise's children — John Randolph (Randy), Cathy, Michael, and Mary.

Mary says she is used to the family always playing, but she doesn't pick. She believes her family's love for music is "a good excuse for a party." It's also a good excuse for making lasting memories.

Mary and Cathy sit and laugh as they talk of the times their dad tried to learn to play a few tunes on the fiddle. "A little song frustrated him and he played it over and over and over," Mary says. The song was "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." She wouldn't even want to guess how many times she heard that song attempted. "He can play it. You can recognize it," she says. "That's a compliment."

The Pheasant family from Fairmont can't stop fiddling. They walk outside and this time Cathy works the strings of the fiddle diligently as she plays an upbeat song. Rosa watches approvingly as her feet start to dance to the music. She, too, used to play fast tunes at square dances in the area. And someday, the family expects that Meredith will do the same.



The Pheasant family trophy table appears to be about full, as is the nearby trophy case.

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STEVE ROTSCH was Governor Gaston Caperton's personal photographer from 1991-96. He also served seven years as a photographer for the Associated Press. He currently lives in Fairmont and is a photographer for *The Clarksburg Exponent-Telegram*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Blacksville Pottery

Local Hands and Native Clay

By John Lilly

Photographs by Mark Crabtree

Most people around Blacksville own a piece or two of beautiful handmade pottery. Some own quite a few. Many in this friendly town in far northern Monongalia County have fond personal memories of making this unique pottery, and of participating in this pioneering community arts and industrial education program.

Beginning in the mid-1930's, the Blacksville pottery program thrived for some 25 years, drawing on the creativity of hundreds of ordinary local people, and a nearby vein of high-quality native clay. Thousands of pottery pieces were made in Blacksville, attracting widespread attention ranging from the New York World's Fair to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Today, these pieces are considered to be collectors' items and are an indelible part of the local culture.

Bess Johnson Richardson, now 96 years of age, has lived in Blacksville all her life. Making the pottery not only provided her with a welcome artistic outlet, but it was part of her social life. "We had suppers," she says, recalling the monthly social gatherings held among the adult pottery students. "People'd bring their husbands or their wives, and everybody brought their favorite dish they liked. Some bring buns, some bring potato salad, some baked beans and bread. Anything! We just had a good time together. It was just like having a little party. We'd work a little while and then we'd decide it was time to eat. We'd spread things on the table and everybody's sit down and eat. Oh, it brings back memories, I'll tell you!"

The program also provided financial support for the Richardson family, since Bess' husband Ed Richardson was the pottery instructor at Blacksville for some 15 years.

The Blacksville pottery program was a pioneering arts and industrial education effort involving hundreds of local people from the mid-1930's through the early 1960's. Here, pottery student Marvin Phillips works at the wheel during class at Clay-Battelle High School in Blacksville. Late 1940's photograph courtesy of Mildred Gerling.

He taught pottery, welding, and shop classes at Blacksville's Clay-Battelle High School during the day, and taught adult pottery classes at the school in the evening. Two nights a week, he also held adult pottery classes in Morgantown. "He had a nice class and everybody liked him," Bess says, with obvious nostalgic pride. "We had a wonderful life. He was the nicest person. You ask any student what they thought of him, everyone said he was a wonderful person, and he was."

Their romance began with a car ride, she recalls with a chuckle. "He had bought a little car. A Ford. He come to borrow a flashlight from my brother. I told him, 'I hadn't seen much of you since you had a new car.' He said, 'Would you like to go for a ride?' I said, 'Well sure!' From then on, I had him hooked." They were married in 1923.

During the 1930's, Ed Richardson was among the first students in the early days of the Blacksville pottery program, before eventually assuming the role of teacher in the mid-1940's. Bess still remembers how her husband first learned to make pottery. "He had his leg broken," she recalls. "He was just sitting around and he wasn't being satisfied sitting still. So I'd fix his lunch, and he was on crutches. He went to school and learned to make pottery on crutches."

Ed's teacher was Bess' cousin Charles Tennant. It was Charles who accidentally discovered a valuable vein of native clay in about 1935. Charles Tennant was an industrial arts instructor at the local four-room high school. A small mudslide — or slip in the road — revealed a rich deposit of fine grey clay which Tennant found to be excellent for making pottery. This clay was so pure that it required very little preparation or handling

Bess Johnson Richardson, the widow of longtime pottery instructor Ed Richardson, has lived in Blacksville all her life. Now 96 years of age, Bess savors her memories of Ed, their years together, and the pottery. She is especially fond of this beautiful pitcher which Ed made and gave to her for her birthday in 1946.

before it could be formed into attractive and useful shapes by local hands.

According to Nick Fedorko of the West Virginia Geological Survey, vast deposits of native clay have been found across the state, some of it underlying coal beds and dating back more than 300 million years. The Blacksville clay, however, is of a relatively modern vintage in geological terms — dating back perhaps as recently as 20,000 years. At that time, glaciers blocked the flow of what we now call the Monongahela River and its tributaries, forming a massive body of water known to geologists as Lake Monongahela. Once the lake drained, sand, silt, and clay deposits were left behind.

One particular outcropping of this clay appeared on the banks above the Monogahela River in early Morgantown, giving rise in 1785 to Thompson pottery — a family business which thrived in Morgantown for more than a century. Evidence of other smaller-scale potteries in northern West Virginia suggest that families, settlers, and communities welcomed this natural resource, and found it to be useful in forging a life on the rugged frontier. Archeologists have found shards of Native American pottery in the region which they say date back more than 1,000 years.

What Charles Tennant discovered along the side of the road in the 1930's was a seemingly limitless supply of local clay, which he soon converted into a community resource for education, art, commerce, and culture. Not only was the quality of the clay unique, but the Blacksville pottery program became the only one of its kind in the country.

The program was originally established for local adults, with classes held two nights a week in a shop adjoining the old Blacksville High School. A 1937 newspaper article noted that there were 33 adults enrolled in pottery classes at Blacksville, with another 20 adults taking pottery classes from Charles Tennant in Arthurdale [see "Arthurdale: The New Deal Comes to Preston County," by Kathleen Cullinan and Beth Spence; and "Arthurdale Craftspeople, 1974," by Colleen Anderson; April-June 1981]. The classes operated on what was known as the Smith-Hughes Plan in which the county was reimbursed by the state and federal government for the instructor's salary.

Wilbur Morrison, Industrial Arts Director for the U.S. Board of Education, was quoted in a later news story as saying, "As far as we know, this is the first and only handcraft pottery class in the country which is partly sponsored by the federal

Ed Richardson demonstrates pottery making at an arts and crafts fair at the Fairmont Armory during the late 1940's. Photograph courtesy of Jack Richardson.

government." In addition to money, the government established certain standards, regulations, and procedures which local programs of this type were required to meet.

"In the pottery class," Mr. Morrison said, "the students are required to produce a series of articles as they would in a factory, just as if the products were for sale. In other words, the course is on a strictly practical basis. Finished products are taken home by the students and often land in the homes of family and friends."

Charles Tennant's students built their own potters' wheels using junk parts from washing machines and automobiles. Eventually, the program moved to the new consolidated Clay-Battelle High School in Blacksville, and became a regular part of the school curriculum under the guidance of Ed Richardson.

"Finished products are taken home by the students and often land in the homes of family and friends."

Bess Richardson recalls how the students themselves dug the clay as part of their class work. "He had the boys from the school start digging in that clay, Tennant did. Then Ed took over. It got to the place where it was so deep, they put a ladder down and the boys'd get down there. Ed sent the bucket down, they'd fill the bucket full of clay, and he'd pull it back up. That's the way they got their clay."

Once it was gathered from the field, the clay was brought back to school where the students prepared — or wedged — the clay. Bess explains. "You heard about wedging clay? It's just like you were mixing dough. You have a piece of wire and you cut the clay, and put it down. If there happened to be a little stone in there, you'd fire that and that would make a hole in it — wasn't pretty at all! You had to get all the impurities out of that clay — I mean little particles like sand and stuff like that. You cut a piece of clay, slap it together, cut it again, slap it together, till you got it real smooth. You just kept mixing it until he (Ed) thought it was right, and then you start using it. "

While a few students pieced their pottery together by hand, most preferred to use a wheel and the more challenging method called "turning" or "throwing." In this method, the potter starts with a single mound of clay at the center of the wheel and then carefully uses his or her hands to form the desired shape as the clay spins rapidly on the wheel.

One of the more talented students in the Blacksville program was Marvin Phillips. Marvin was in Ed Richardson's class from 1946-48

Students at work during pottery class at Clay-Battelle High School during the 1950's. Instructor Ed Richardson helps a student at left. Photograph courtesy of Mildred Gerling.

Charles R. Tennant, a Blacksville native and WVU graduate, founded the pottery program after he accidentally discovered a rich vein of native clay outside of town. He is shown here conducting a pottery demonstration in the lobby of The Greenbrier in 1940. Photograph by *The Charleston Gazette*.

and received the 1948 West Virginia Gold Key award in art for his pottery efforts. Marvin recalls Ed as a very good potter who encouraged creativity in his students. This approach to teaching fostered a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm among the pottery students, who looked forward to their time in class. According to Marvin, the pottery classes at Clay-Battelle High School met five days a week, three hours a day. Marvin points out that not every day was spent at the wheel giving rise to new pottery. About once a month, they would go out and dig clay. Other days were spent wedging the clay, while other days were devoted to mixing the glaze compounds or tending the kiln.

Marvin enjoyed all aspects of pottery, though he fell away from it after graduation. He and his wife, the former Peggy Yost — also a Clay-Battelle graduate and an accomplished Blacksville potter — moved to Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, in 1948 where Marvin enjoyed a long career as a millwright. They still live in Waynesburg, just north of Blacksville, and cherish their collection of pottery — souvenirs from their old high school days.

Jim Haught from Blacksville is another former student of Ed Richardson who carefully keeps a few examples of his high school pottery. Jim, a student at Clay-Battelle during the 1950's, also recalls Ed as being a fine potter who encouraged his students to be innovative. Getting out and digging the clay was a welcome change of routine, says Jim, who enjoyed climbing down into the hole and sending up buckets of fresh clay.

Jim's wife, the former Karen Lemley, is another Clay-Battelle alumna with ties to the Blacksville pottery. Though she chose not to take part in the pottery classes at school, the clay came from land belonging to her relatives. Today, she and Jim share a large home outside Blacksville which has been in the Lemley family for many years. In the fireplace are dozens of small clay balls taken from the same vein, placed in the hearth by Karen's grandmother more than 50

years ago. The balls serve to retain the heat of the fire, and provide another testimony to the versatility and strength of the native clay.

One event etched in local memory is the time First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt came to Blacksville to inspect the pottery operation. Mrs. Roosevelt had a deep and abiding interest in social programs which fostered self-sufficiency, and she had an obvious soft spot for West Virginia. It was in her honor that the Putnam County town of Eleanor was named in 1934 [see "Happy To Have a Chance: The Founding of Eleanor," by Rick Wilson, Spring 1988]. So it was not surprising that Mrs. Roosevelt was interested in the Blacksville pottery project and decided to pay a visit. Accompanied by young U.S. Representative Jennings Randolph, Roosevelt advisor Bernard Baruch, and an entourage of other dignitaries and officials, Mrs. Roosevelt's 1938 tour created quite a stir.

Bess Richardson recalls the day. "She came at the school to talk about the pottery. She had a meeting down at the old gym. Everybody around there went. I was so amused. She walked so fast! She had a couple of men from the Board of Education with her. They could hardly keep up with her walking from the schoolhouse down to the gym. She'd just fly!

"She watched Ed and Charles make pottery. Charles made the pottery — Ed helped him. They made a tea set for her — the pitcher, the little mugs. And they mixed up something for a blue and they called it 'Eleanor Blue.' So they sent it to her, 'cause she saw them making it. Of course, they had to fire it and all that. I had the clipping that she wrote back about the pottery — about how she liked it and she had it on her mantle in her living room up in Hyde Park."

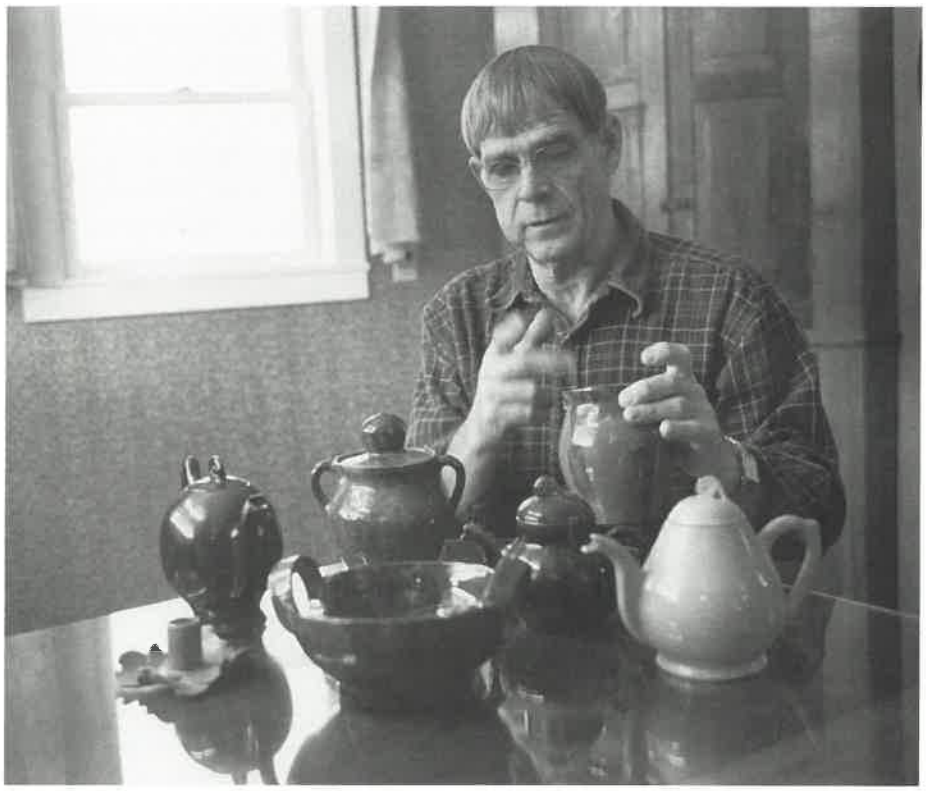
Even from a distance, Mrs. Roosevelt left a lasting impression on Bess. "She was pretty," Bess recalls, "because she gave out the personality of being a nice person. And that's the way you looked at her."

Eleanor Roosevelt was quoted in the local press as saying, "I think that it is a most interesting local project and should be fostered as such. I hope it will grow and be most successful."

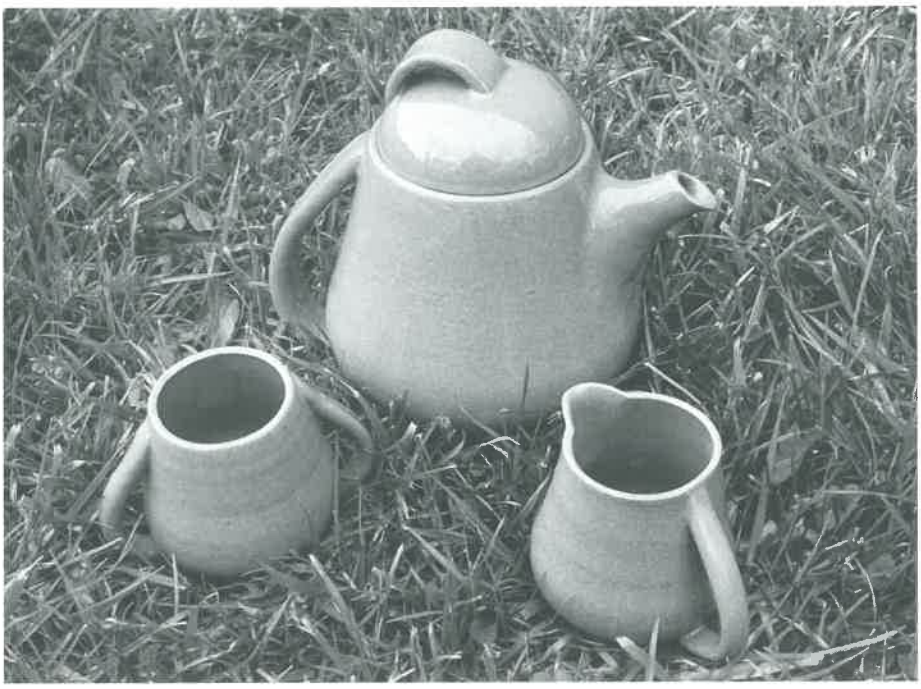
The program did achieve a measure of success over the years, including a highly-acclaimed display at the 1939-40 World's Fair in New York. It was also the subject of a short documentary film shot in 1937 for an industrial conference in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

Students wedging clay. Photograph courtesy of Mildred Gerling.

Although the Blacksville pottery program was not established as a commercial enterprise, steps were eventually taken to find a market for the excellent pottery which fairly streamed out of this small West Virginia town. Bess Richardson recalls that she and her



Jim Haught was a student in Ed Richardson's pottery class for three years. He still has a nice collection of work from his high school days, which he displays here at his home outside Blacksville.



This tea set, made by Ed Richardson, is a replica of the set presented to Eleanor Roosevelt after her visit in 1938. The set is glazed in soft "Eleanor Blue"; courtesy of Shelly Hinkens.

husband made several trips to the Smoky Mountains where the pottery was sold for a time. "We took it down to Gatlinburg, Tennessee," Bess says. "We'd take, oh, a hundred little pitchers like these," she says, pointing to a small, finely shaped pitcher her husband made for her. "They bought 'em, and then they sold 'em to different parks. We made two or three different trips down to Gatlinburg."

Bess also tells of an ambitious plan Ed had to establish a local pottery shop and outlet store in Blacksville. "We had a big barn right close to us," she says. "We were going to have a pottery shop, gift shop. We were going to call it 'The Hands.'"

Unfortunately, Ed's failing health stood in the way. Working with lead-based glaze compounds over an extended period can be dangerous, and Bess feels that this occupational hazard contributed to her husband's health problems. "I think that's partly what killed him," she says sadly, "breathing that white lead. All those recipes for the glazes had white lead in it. The doctors wouldn't believe that, of course. But I do."

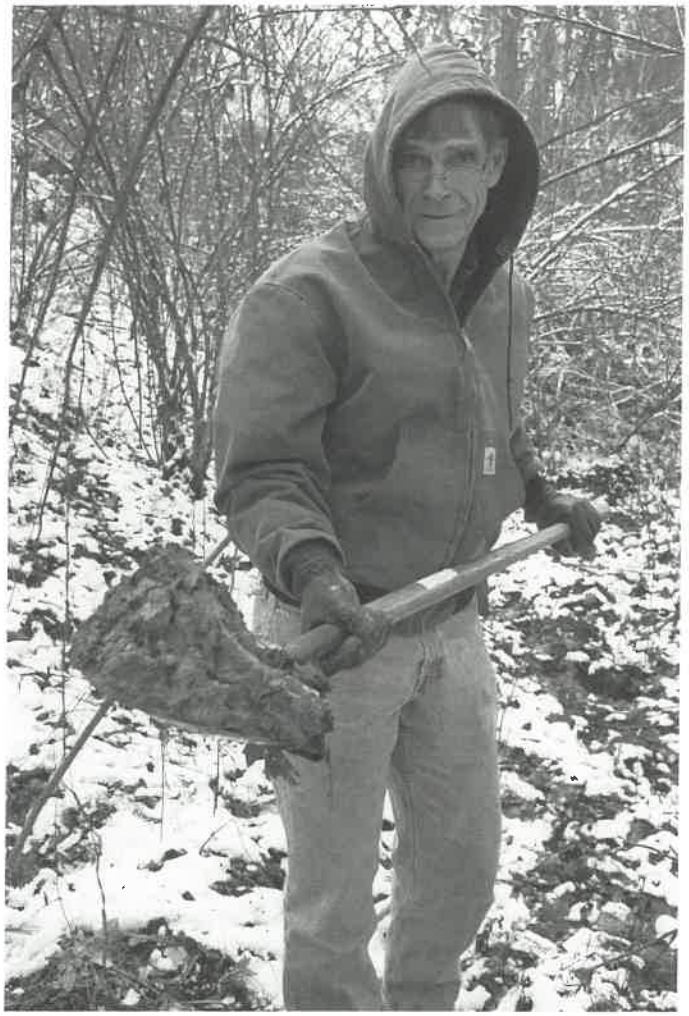
Vase and pitcher by Ed Richardson; courtesy of Shelly Hinkens.

Diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis — Lou Gehrig's disease — Ed found himself in a wheelchair, but he kept teaching and remained as active as possible. "He taught school the last year in a wheelchair," Bess says. "He was capable. Nothing wrong with his mind. He just had deterioration of the muscles and the nerves in his body."

After Ed Richardson's death in 1962, the pottery program at Blacksville was abandoned. The art created by the students and teachers during that time, however, has taken on a life of its own. Antique collector and dealer Mildred Gerling of New Martinsville discovered several pieces of Blacksville pottery around 1990 and has combed the countryside since then adding to her collection. She currently owns about 70 pieces. Mildred appreciates the fact that no two pieces of Blacksville pottery are alike, reflecting the creative approach taken by the teachers and students. She likes the glazes that were used and especially admires the look of the earlier pieces. Each item in her collection is identified with an inscription on the bottom including "Blacksville, W.Va.," and the maker's initials. Some of the earlier works also include the date.

The art created by the students and teachers of Blacksville has taken on a life of its own.

Mildred finds this pottery mostly in and around Blacksville at pri-



Above: Bess Richardson carefully holds a tiny pitcher made by her husband Ed.

Left: Although road and home construction around Blacksville have changed the lay of the land, Jim Haught had no problem locating a heaping shovelful of fresh native clay on a recent wintry afternoon.

vate sales or household auctions. Although she used to be able to obtain pieces for a dollar or two, they have become quite popular in the past few years and now command prices upwards of $20 each. She has seen larger pieces such as lamps go for as much as $60 or $70 each.

Her collection of Blacksville pottery is on display at Downtown Wheeling Antiques, 1120 Main Street in Wheeling.

Today, Clay-Battelle High School is still the center of learning in this part of Monongalia County. High School art teacher Wally Pierce came to Blacksville in 1971 from his home in Berkeley Springs and soon learned of the legendary Blacksville pottery program. He took steps to revive it, restoring a few old potters' wheels and procuring access to a kiln. Unfortunately, a fire in 1976 destroyed the kiln and set him back. A new addition was added to the school in 1978 and offered a new art room, which Wally used to begin a new pottery program. The current program is offered during the spring term of each school year. Most students use the simpler hand-built techniques, though the school does own two wheels which the students are free to use by appointment. Clay for the class is purchased from a commercial outlet. This spring, however, the class will not be held because the school was unable to obtain the necessary clay.

What of the local native clay? Actually, most of it is still in the ground where Ed Richardson and his students left it almost 40 years ago. Wally Pierce has been to see the clay deposit and dug a sample. He noted that its grey color turned to orange at a low fire and a rich brown under high heat. While he has no specific plans to use this clay in class, he acknowledges the possibility that students in Blacksville may again someday produce handmade pottery, in part, from this clay.

That is an appealing prospect when one considers the proud heritage associated with Blacksville pottery, and the unlimited potential for creativity represented by clay still hidden underground.

As Bess Richardson says, "It's amazing to think what you can make with just a simple little piece of clay!"

MARK CRABTREE was born in Brooke County and earned a B.S. in journalism from West Virginia University. A resident of Morgantown, he has worked extensively as a photographer, specializing in panoramic photography. He is a frequent contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

Our Lady of the Pines

The Small Church With a Big Heart

Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

Just south of Silver Lake Park in Preston County and a few hundred yards before U.S. Route 219 begins its arduous climb up Backbone Mountain, two small signs point to "The Smallest Church in 48 States": intriguing notices that tempt scores of visitors to leave the highway every day.

Christened Our Lady of the Pines, the sandstone church sits on a well-manicured blanket of grass in a cradle of mature pines, dogwood, laurel, azaleas, and rhododendron. True to the sign's claim, it is small — 24' x 12' on the outside with a 16' x 11' sanctuary illuminated by six stained-glass windows and a single ceiling fixture of incandescent lamps. There are six

Our Lady of the Pines in Preston County draws thousands of visitors each year with its claim as the "Smallest Church in 48 States."

pews, each capable of seating two worshipers. Standing room might expand the church's capacity to 24 souls.

Despite its dollhouse dimensions, the church was built for the serious business of caring for human souls and honoring the memory of departed loved ones, specifically the parents of its founders and builders, Peter and Elizabeth "Beanie" Milkint. There is no schedule of services or membership roll. However, Marie Teets, Peter Milkint's niece and the church's next-door neighbor, says one woman frequently drives 10 miles from Oakland, Maryland, to pray in the sanctuary. Others choose Our Lady of the Pines as a novel setting for christening a new life or blessing a new union.

As a tourist attraction, it doesn't offer much in the way of excitement or refreshment. The only restroom is an outdoor privy. It is a new one, a single-seater without running water. You have to cross the street to the Silver Lake Restaurant to wash up, buy a can of pop, or get something to eat. There's no tour guide. Souvenirs are limited to postcards. A standard-size card is a quarter; 40 cents gets you a jumbo card. For a dollar you can buy an 11" x 14" print of Blackwater Falls, suitable for framing. Regardless of your selection, the cards are sold on the honor system. Drop your change in the metal box next to the rack. Remember, you're in a church.

Visitors may wander down the path to the other attraction, the smallest mailing office in the United States. Marie calls it an "overgrown mailbox." It's slightly smaller than the church and serves the purpose of holding another rack of postcards, a metal collection box, a cluster of bronze mailboxes, and a slot for mailing those postcards. Visitors may write a line or two on the back of the card they just purchased and drop it in the slot along with the correct change for postage.

Later that day, Ellis Teets collects the mail and coins, affixes the necessary postage, and sends the cards on their way to the folks back home. If the mailing office volume has been heavy, Ellis drives the cards to the Eglon Post Office. If it has been a slow day at the Silver Lake mailing office — only a card or two — Ellis sticks them in his rural delivery box and saves the trip.

Should some extra change still jingle in a visitor's pockets after touring the church and mailing office, he or she may stop by the wishing well and drop some silver and copper in the shallow water.

The back of the wishing-well postcard states that money dropped in the well is donated to the orphans and poor. John Cook of Thomas, the Milkints' nephew, says two nonprofit corporations receive the income from postcard sales and donations made to the wishing well. Our Lady of the Pines, Inc., owns the buildings and grounds. A second corporation, Hope, Love and Charity, Inc., makes donations to the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, schools, libraries, a scholarship, and area emergency services. Both corporations were specified in the Milkants' wills and are funded from income earned by investments left to the corporations. A four-member board of trustees,

The sanctuary comfortably seats 12, with standing room for a dozen more. All fixtures are handmade including the crucifix, tabernacle, candle holders, and 14 tiny stations of the cross.

which includes Ellis Teets and John Cook, oversees the corporations.

Ellis is careful to remove donations from the wishing well and money boxes daily. He's not being paranoid about the possibility of theft from God's house, he's being realistic. Religious statues have been stolen from the church and money boxes pried open. "Several years ago, we had the boxes broken into three or four times in one year," Marie recalls. "We had a stained glass window broken out last year and had some flags stolen," Ellis adds. And one also suspects that postcards occasionally walk off without the echo of clinking coins hanging in the air.

The jumbo cards, which feature exterior and interior views of the church, include a personalized history of the building on the back of the card. "I was born of love, for it was because of their great love for their departed parents, and their wish to build a lasting memorial to honor and remember them, I was built in 1957-58." The parents honored by the cathedral are not named on the card nor on the church's dedication plaque. A statue a few feet from the church entrance pays homage to its builders.

Peter Milkint was born in Lithuania and immigrated to the United States with his parents. He worked hard and became a successful businessman in Tucker County. His

Smaller Than the Smallest

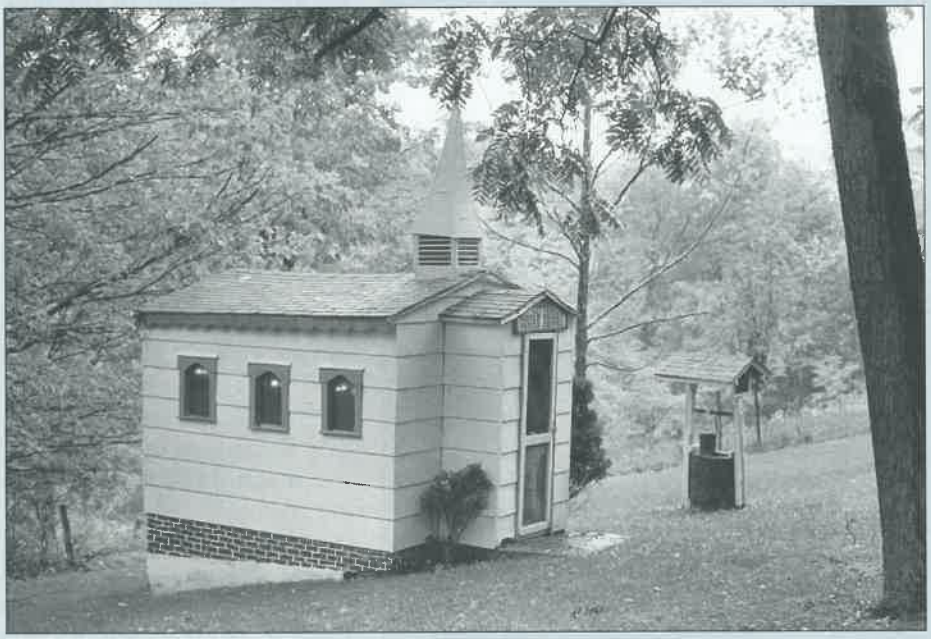
By Carl E. Feather

In 1975, Marshall B. Fleming of Antioch knocked Preston County's "Smallest Church in 48 States" off its pedestal with the completion of his Little Hidden Valley Prayer Chapel.

The chapel is a country church version of Silver Lake's Our Lady of the Pines. The frame-construction chapel has outside dimensions of roughly 8' x 9' with a 2' x 3' entryway, considerably smaller than its Preston County predecessor. If you are taller than 5' 8", you'll have to stoop to clear the ceiling.

Marshall Fleming, who passed away in August 1998, claimed his chapel could accommodate 13 persons — two per each of the six pews, plus one worship leader.

Few West Virginians and even fewer tourists know of the chapel, which is tucked away in the shadow of New Creek Mountain in Mineral County. Dedicated GOLDENSEAL readers are aware of it, however, because it was pictured in an article about Marshall Fleming that appeared in the Summer 1992 issue [see "Stories in Wood and Metal: Marshall Fleming's Little Hidden Valley," by Woodward S. Bousquet].



The Little Hidden Valley Prayer Chapel in Mineral County was built in 1975 by folk artist Marshall Fleming. Photograph by Carl Feather.

Although the magazine story was about Marshall Fleming's abilities as a woodcarver, the author devoted several paragraphs to the chapel. Fleming told Bousquet that friends, relatives, and community members donated materials to build and furnish the chapel, which he built in obedience to God.

"I'll defy any man to come in here by hisself and set down and just meditate a little bit," Fleming said. "Before you leave here, you feel like somebody's been with you. I never come in here by myself; it just seems like whatever watched me build it is still with me."

Marshall put the story of his chapel construction into the words of a poem, which is displayed on one wall of the chapel. It reads, in part:

"Oh God, I thank my wonderful friends
Who gave so many things to me.
They knew it was God's challenge to me,
To build the little chapel under the apple tree."

The apple tree mentioned in the

business interests ranged from a service station partnership with his brother Charles to real estate, banking, and a partnership in the Fairfax Sand & Crushed Stone Company. Elizabeth Cook worked at the Buxton & Landstreet Store in Coketon, was a post office clerk, and sold tickets at the Sutton Theater in Thomas. She and Peter married in their middle years and were childless. They traveled extensively and it is believed that they got their idea for the church while visiting Western states.

Nephew John Cook was 10 or 11 when the church was built on the 11 or so acres in the shadow of "Chocolate Drop," the name locals give to the knob that rises above the park. He recalls carrying water to the men who helped his uncle build the church out of sandstone blocks, most likely cut from sandstone deposits on Backbone Mountain.

Peter Milkint's plan was to have not only a cathedral and tourist attraction, but a nursery that would support the project through the sale of flowering plants. In the church's early years, the beautiful display of flowers and ornamental bushes attracted as many visitors as the church. Peter and Elizabeth did much of the gardening themselves. "Things are not like they used to be around there years and years ago," admits John. "But we do try to maintain what we can with what

poem is gone, says Janet Fleming, Marshall's widow. "When his mother was a-living, there was an apple tree down there," Janet says. "She said it would be a nice place for a building, so he built a church there. He just got it in his head to build it and he built it in memory of several people." Those persons are mentioned on a homemade plaque on the front of the chapel, which is partially hidden by a large shrub.

A walnut tree now stands watch over the chapel, which shares the front yard of Janet Fleming's green house with a woodcarving museum, Jacob's Well wishing well, and dioramas depicting railroad's golden age and Daniel in the lion's den. All of the attractions feature the woodcarvings and woodworking of Marshall Fleming.

Marshall built the chapel's furnishings including the miniature pulpit and six pews. Each one has two or more names written on it in black permanent marker: Barbara Sue, Billy, Tammy, Judy, Crystal, Debbie, Patty, Chad, Bruce Jr., Allen, Jerry, Michele, and Lucas. They are the Flemings' grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

The interior is painted a bright green with off-white paneling wainscot. Bible verses, a newspaper clipping, a hand-written prayer by Marshall, religious pictures, and a fly swatter decorate the walls. In the entry, Marshall put up an honor roll to recognize those who contributed to the project. Above that, inside a wooden display case, is the pocket New Testament that Marshall's mother gave him when he went off to fight in World War II.

A single incandescent bulb and six small plastic windows illuminate the chapel. Strings of Christmas tree lights glow in the windows. Janet controls electrical power to the chapel and museum from a switch on the porch of her home. She keeps the museum locked, but leaves the chapel open so people can come in and pray 24 hours a day.

In 1999, about nine different visits were logged in the guest book by individuals and families from Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland. Janet says others have stopped and didn't bother to sign the book including a female motorcyclist from Montana. She said there were years when more than 400 people visited the chapel.

The Little Hidden Valley Prayer Chapel is one of the Eastern Panhandle's best-kept folklore secrets, thanks to an absence of signs along the main highway. To reach the chapel, turn south on Grayson Gap Road, which is located off U.S. Route 50 about one mile east of New Creek. Travel about two miles to Penneroil Road on the right, take Penneroil about 1.5 miles to the chapel. The driveway to the chapel is marked by a small homemade sign hung low to the ground.

Stop by anytime. The door is open.

The late Marshall Fleming built his diminutive house of prayer out of obedience to God. Fleming and his creations were the focus of a GOLDENSEAL article, "Stories in Wood and Metal: Marshall Fleming's Little Hidden Valley," by Woodward S. Bousquet; Summer 1992. Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Souvenir postcards are sold on the honor system.

we have."

John can't date the contruction of the mailing office. He said it was a natural offshoot of the postcard business that his aunt established at the church. "At that time, the church was very popular and people would ask where they could mail the postcard," he says. Like the church, it has a sandstone exterior and pragmatic design.

Peter died in 1979; Elizabeth in 1993. Marie and Ellis Teets took care of Elizabeth in her final years, and the task of caring for the park and its buildings eventually passed to them. A neighbor boy mows the grass and Ellis and Marie open and close the church and mailing office every day. "Elizabeth always closed the church from November to March, but we keep it open all the time," Marie says. Only very deep snow closes the park. Ellis counts only a couple days in the winter of 1997-98 that the church was closed due to weather.

Keeping track of the number of visitors who stop at the church is difficult because not everyone signs the register book. A bus tour may stop and only one person from it register. For that reason, Marie believes it is safe to estimate the number of visitors at between 40,000 and 50,000 per year. She counted the names in the book for 1997 and came up with about 30,000. They came from every state and many foreign countries.

A glance at the registry for an October day last fall showed 13 different entries by mid-afternoon. They hailed from Montana, Georgia, Hawaii, Washington, D.C., Delaware, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the Mountain State.

Many visitors leave wondering why it's "The Smallest Church in 48 States" and not 50, or which two states have smaller churches. The postcards don't tell, and Ellis and Marie Teets say they've never heard why Peter and Elizabeth didn't include the entire Union. Was it a failure to update history or a deliberate hedge against being accused of deceptive advertising?

The most obvious explanation is that the church was built and named in 1958, when the "lower 48" constituted the Union. Alaska and Hawaii became states the following year. However, its claim to being the smallest in the lower 48 is tenuous. Visitors occasionally leave a note stating "I question this," or mentioning a smaller church. Marie said they've had postcards from Florida and a Western state challenging the church's claim. According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the honor goes to Christ Catholic Church of Highland, Missouri. Consecrated in July 1983, it measures 14' x 17' and seats 18.

Author Loren Eyrich believes the

Marie and Ellis Teets live next door and tend the church along with its companion attraction, the "Smallest Mailing Office," at Silver Lake. GOLDENSEAL readers might recall Ellis from Carl Feather's story about the Teets Brothers' Dairy in our Spring 1999 issue, "The Milk Had to Get Through: Home Delivery in Preston County."

At last year's Vandalia Gathering, Rush and Ruby Butcher were honored for their lifetime of commitment to West Virginia traditional arts with the 1999 Vandalia Award. The award proclamation noted their 50 years of dedication to learning, teaching, and demonstrating folk dance throughout the Mountain State. The proclamation didn't mention their engaging sense of humor, or their 180-acre Nicholas County farm where they raise hay and turnips and keep cattle, draft horses, goats, chickens, Shelty dogs, and two "long-legged" emus. GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly recently visited the Butchers at their place outside Summersville and learned a great deal from this unique and energetic couple.

Brookley Rush Butcher was born at Belfont, Braxton County, in 1923. He has devoted his life to farming and folk dance. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

John Lilly. So, you farmed all your life?

Rush Butcher. Yes.

Lilly. And your dad before you, was he a farmer all his life?

Rush. Yes. Yes. Years ago we learned our trade by apprenticeship. My father always said when I was growing up, "Now, I'll tell you. There is two or three things that you need to do. You need to know how to half slough a sled, you need to know how to plumb a haystack straight, and you need to know how to shoe horses if you're goin' to live on a farm." And my dad, until I moved away from the farm, he never had a tractor on his farm.

Lilly. All horse work?

Rush. Sometimes three teams a-goin' at one time. Had a fellow worked for us over there that lived down on Granny's Creek. He's in the neighborhood of 90 years old now. Mancil Rhea.

Lilly. I've heard of him.

Rush. Yes, he broke horses. We raised our own horses and broke the horses and had the teams. And we had people a-workin' 'em. I was there 22 years and I expect Mancil worked for my dad probably 20 years.

...We grew up in the area of West Virginia here where the close-knit family was very important. If we was caught up on our work fairly well, why Dad would just loan us out to one of the relatives. My dad sent me out to my uncle Cal Douglas. My mother's folks were Scotch Irish, and when Uncle Cal was 80 years old he could clog the old-time clogging. You know, where they keep their feet close to the floor. The house was pretty well dilapidated where he had lived in all his life. He would dance. The floor would just go up and down.

In my earlier days, dancing wasn't approved of.

Lilly. Tell me about that. How would you dance so that they wouldn't find out, or did you care if they found out?

Rush. Well, I didn't know. I didn't know I was in trouble until I was a *way* in trouble. I'd go to 4-H club and Jane Farwell would be there, and Harley Cutlip was director of Jackson's Mill and he would be there. He's a good Baptist and he danced. And we'd get together on a weekend up at Camp Holly Gray when they built a big lodge up there about 100-foot long and 50-foot wide, and upstairs just lots of room. When we would go to these camps, it wasn't long until I started to mimic the callers. By the time I was 12 or 13, I was calling square dances.

And so the minister there found out about it, and my older brother and next to my older brother Kermit found out about it. One day, Kermit

Neighbor and farmhand Mancil Rhea taught Rush to work horses. Here, Rush breaks a yearling Belgian colt at his Nicholas County farm during the 1960's.

Rush's father, George Washington Butcher, prepares to take a basket of eggs to the store in 1943.

got together with Johnny Lockard and Rev. Wade McQuade, Methodist minister. The minister come down and talked to my dad after we had moved from the farm over here. And Kermit said, "I want to talk to you about Rush." He said, "If you don't get him out of this 4-H club work and this dancing he's going straight to hell." I thought I was really in trouble.

Lilly. I'd say.

Rush. My dad, he was chopping wood and I was stacking it. Finally, he looked up at those men, and he said, "Well, the boy has never caused me any trouble yet. And if I need help I'll call you." And he just went on chopping wood.

Now 20-some years later, when I was a 4-H club agent in Boone County, I had dance teams down there. And I appeared on WSAZ-Channel 3 just about after they started. I was on Farmer Bill Click's farm program. And so my dad was in the hospital with a broken back where he had fell off the horse when he was 75, 78, something like that. And when he was in the hospital, he saw on television, he saw one of our programs from Farmer Bill Click's show.

Lilly. He saw you dancing on the television?

Rush. Yes. So, I went up to see him. My brother called and said, "You'd better come. He's serious. He has a broken back." So I just dropped what I was doing and I went on up to Sutton where he was in the hospital. I went in and he said, "What are you doing up here?" I said, "I come up to see about you, Dad." He said, "Well, I'll tell you the way it is. I've got things under control here, but I've got a lot of work to do out at the house." He said, "First thing, I want you to go out there and dig my sweet potatoes. Put 'em in the cellar. Then I want you to start shuckin' my corn, and don't you come back in here until you get my corn shucked."

That kind of disappointed me, but I done what my dad wanted me to do. I went out there, and I dug his sweet potatoes. But the word got around that I was down there shucking corn by myself. And here come the preacher Bob Robinson and he had about 10 or 12 people with him, and by 10 or 11:00 much of our corn — maybe had an acre of corn, two acres of corn — much of the corn had been shucked. So, I got his horse and a wagon and I started hauling the corn in. By 1:00, we had all his corn in his crib and all his fodder tied up in shocks there ready to use it.

And so, I went back in the hospital that afternoon, and he said, "Why are you back here so soon for?" I told him what happened and he said, "Well then, that's like my neighbors. That's the kind of community we live in up there." And he said, "I want to tell you something here." Said, "I saw a program from Huntington with Farmer Bill Click and you had a dance team down there." And he said, "I want to tell you, that's not much difference from what the preacher does."

And then he said, "When I started to work, I worked at the state hospital in Weston." He was raised in Jerry's Run in Webster County, but

Rush bought these 78 r.p.m. recordings on a vacation trip to New York while he was a student at Berea College in the 1940's. The international folk music and dances preserved on these records have had a profound impact on Rush over the years. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

he had found his way down to Weston and he worked for the state hospital. His requirement was that he dance — square dance — with the inmates up there three nights a week. When he told me that, why, I really got upset and I said, "Well, why didn't you tell Kermie this 25 or 30 years ago?" "Well," he said, "I didn't think it'd hurt you, and it wouldn't do me any good." (Laughter)

Lilly. So, he'd been dancing years before anyway?

Rush. And I kind of found out my mother had, too. She was raised in Lewis County and as a girl did square dances, and she would waltz.

Lilly. I'd like to know more about the dances you learned to call. You say when you were about 12 years old, you'd already learned to call some figures.

Rush. That was these basic square dances.

Lilly. What were some of them that you recall?

Rush. Oh, "Birdie in a Cage," uh, "Around That Couple and Take a Little Peep," "Up to the Center and Back," and then "Forward Up Six and Back." That is a dance that came from a singing game.

Rush continued his active involvement with 4-H throughout his youth, reenforcing a lifestyle built around agriculture and folk dance. He attended Sutton High School where he became a star football player in addition to keeping up his dancing and farm chores. In 1941, he was selected to attend the first conservation camp to be held at nearby Camp Caesar. There, he met representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and West Virginia University who encouraged him to consider the benefits of a college education. In 1944, Rush received a three-week scholarship to attend Opportunity School at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. He enjoyed the experience, but — as was the case with so many other young men of his time — Uncle Sam intervened.

A young Rush and an even younger Ruby, at about the time they met. Ruby is pictured in 1945 near her home in Kentucky; Rush is shown on the campus of Berea College on his and Ruby's wedding day — December 22, 1949.

Rush. I deferred from the draft to work on the farm because I was the last boy left to work with my dad. So, I just told my dad that they were talking about me being a draft dodger, these people in town, and they don't look at that very well. Well, I went in and told the draft board what I was going to do, that I was going to college. Well, they just canceled my deferment and six weeks later I was in the Army. I spent two years in the Army. I still thought that I was going to go to college when I come back, just because I'd entered Berea College in 1944. In 1946, I couldn't get in. I had to re-enroll all over again.

Lilly. So, at Berea College you have to work while you're there, don't you?

Rush. You have to have a job. Well, no one told me that you had to take what jobs were left when you went in in the midterm like this. So, my job was to wash pots and pans in the Fairchild Dining Hall. Well, I went over there and you had a lot of time for thinking and meditating. But I never advanced. I was still washing pots and pans when I got close to the end of the semester.

I went over to Minnie Maud McCauley who was director of the women's physical education program, and I said, "Are there jobs over here that I can get next semester?" And she said, "Well, what can you do?" And I said, "Well, what do you want done?" And she said, "I want someone to do folk dancing for girls' Phys Ed classes." And I said, "I'm your boy. I can do that." She told me when to start to work and that would be my job. That scared me because I really wasn't prepared, but when you are under pressure you learn faster.

I made arrangements to go with a boy from New York and this is just a coincidence. Foster Burgess lived in New York — and they have three weeks off at Berea for Christmas — and he said we'll talk to Michael and Mary Ann Herman, who are the foremost European folk dancers in America. So, I made a deal. I would go up and he was going to have a lot of dance schools around Christmas. I would go to the dances and he would teach me the dances, but I would have to buy the records.

Lilly. This was up in New York?

Rush. Yes. And so I thought that was a good deal. So, while I was up there I picked up about 50 or 75 records. The Ford records cost 60 cents a piece at that time and the RCA and Decca records that I used cost 79 cents. So, I picked up about 50 or 60 dollars worth of records and I got a metal case to put them in. We're still using some of those same dances.

Lilly. Ruby, could we hear a little bit about how the two of you met? You were at college together at Berea?

Ruby Butcher. Well, you aren't going to believe this — dancing. (Laughter) ...I went to dance and it went from there. (Laughter)

Lilly. So, you teamed up dancing and have been together since?

Ruby. Yes.

Lilly. Were you from the Berea area?

Ruby. No. I was from Fuget, Kentucky. It's about 10 or 12 miles out of Paintsville.

Ruby Jewell Salyer was born in Fuget, Kentucky, in 1928. She met Rush in folk dance classes while they were both students at Berea College more than 50 years ago. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

Lilly. Down in the coal country?

Ruby. It was farming there.

Rush. Tobacco country.

Ruby. I lived way out in the country so when I went to high school, most of the kids around there didn't go to high school. We walked over to the main highway, which was about four miles. Something like that. And my English teacher was Miss Howard and, from the very beginning when I had her in English, she started encouraging me to go to college. And then, you know, she told me about Berea and everything.

Rush. How much money did you have when you went to Berea?

Ruby. None. (Laughter) No, I had enough for the bus to go to Berea. Miss Howard made arrangements for me to catch the bus at Paintsville. The closer I got, the more worried I got. What in the world? I don't know anybody, and I have no money, and where am I going to stay? You know, the whole bit. I was a kid. The bus stopped and I got off, and this young lady walked up and she told me her name, and she said, "I'm your big sister." (Laughter) And that was it.

Rush. And then she worked as a half-a-day student and worked her way through college.

Lilly. What was your work?

Ruby. Boone Tavern.

Lilly. The Boone Tavern? Did you wait tables?

Ruby. I spent my four years there.

Rush. And at that time, she could tell you about every picture on the wall.

Ruby. Oh, yes. They trained us to know the pictures.

Rush. And don't talk unless you're spoken to, don't take any tips.

Ruby. You know, you speak and smile and all that, but don't make it a point unless they want to talk to you. And generally everybody did, because they knew we were students. And so they were interested in where we came from and, you know, the whole bit.

Lilly. What did you go there to study?

Ruby. Home economics. So, that's what I decided.

Lilly. Dance was just kind of a fun activity?

Ruby. Mmm-hmm. That was one of the activities we had in Berea for kids to do in the evenings and on weekends, and so on.

Lilly. So, what did you all think of your new teacher, when he came in?

Ruby. Well, he was doing dancing before.

Lilly. Rush was already there?

Ruby. Yeah. He was the one that was doing the dancing. One of my classmates said, "You need to go." We enjoyed the folk dancing.

Rush and Ruby soon became engaged and got married while they were juniors at Berea College. They returned to Rush's home in West Virginia after their graduation in 1951.

Rush. She was pregnant when we were seniors and Judy was born on the 25th of January. We started to work here in West Virginia shortly after the first of February and I went in training in Webster County over here.

Lilly. As an extension agent? Is that the work you did?

Rush. As an extension agent. And then I went to Boone County, and I was down there five years. There was no extension program in that end of the county then. We had 4-H clubs in Boone County, Logan County, and Mingo County. And then I had homemakers clubs in Boone County and I worked with all of the tobacco farmers. So, I was the extension service.

Lilly. Your family moved around to these different counties as your job changed, or did your family stay in one place?

Rush. We had an apartment in Madison.

Ruby. That's where we first lived. We came to Madison.

Rush. Then in 1955, we moved to Summersville. We lived out here in the country in a house and we about froze to death here. We moved into an apartment in Summersville for a year, then we bought this place in 1959. We built this house and moved out here. We bought a little piece of land here, and then we bought to it until we have 180 acres.

The Nicholas 4-H Dancers were formed by Rush and Ruby Butcher in 1963 and began traveling across the state teaching and demonstrating folk dance. In 1970, the group became the Nicholas Heritage Dancers. This 1973 photograph of the group includes son Keith at far left in the second row, and daughter Judy at far right in the first row, seated directly in front of her parents. Despite a strict "no fraternizing" policy in the group, both Keith and Judy eventually married fellow dancers from this team.

Since their marriage, Rush and Ruby have worked as a team in nearly all aspects of their lives. Here they are shown at a cultural heritage workshop dance display in Nicholas County, 1970. Ruby makes all their dance costumes including those shown here.

Lilly. So, you were the Nicholas County extension agent?

Rush. 4-H agent. And I was the first 4-H agent ever to be in this county here.

Ruby. And after we had the kids, I became a volunteer. I worked with 4-H some.

Rush. Really, we worked as a team.

Ruby. I became a volunteer.

Rush. We worked as a team with camps. She would take care of crafts and all of these things, and all of the dancing that we've done, it's all been together.

Following the birth of daughter Judy in 1951, Ruby gave birth to son Keith in 1952 while the family was living in Madison. By the early 1960's, Rush and Ruby Butcher had built a reputation for themselves as dancers, teachers, and organizers through their many 4-H programs in Nicholas County and across central West Virginia. With the help of some public funding, they soon expanded their efforts.

Rush. We started expanding our program here with cultural heritage-type programs in 1962 when Harley Cutlip got a grant through the cultural arts department — $50,000 — to teach folk dancing and to teach these things to low-income people. Well, we'd been doing it all the time. We didn't ask 'em how much money they had when we went to come out and dance. It didn't cost 'em anything. So, Harley asked me if we could develop a team that would travel over West Virginia in 1962. Well, in 1963 we started traveling. John Dooley was one of those who started traveling with us at that time.

Ruby. You have to laugh when you think of John.

Rush. Over at Hawk's Nest one time, when he was an awkward boy somewhere about 12 or 13 years old, and wore about a size 15 shoe, —

Ruby. Everybody loved that kid.

Rush. — he would get tangled up and he fell down. I guess at senior citizens camp over at Hawk's Nest, those women were watching him and they said, "Poor little thing — "

Ruby. "Poor little thing."

Rush. " — he's going to get hurt." But he got straightened out and he's one of the foremost dancers in the country. And more than that, he's the best money-raiser that Virginia's ever had, and I don't know why we ever let him get away from West Virginia.

...My intention is that I want to train a person to do a better job than what I can do. And you could find some of the kids that have gone through our program, they are some of the best recreation leaders in the country.

In addition to teaching and demonstrating local dances, the Butchers relied on their college experiences to share international folk dance with students and audiences.

Lilly. What were some of the international dances? Do you remember what countries they were from?

The Nicholas Heritage Dancers demonstrate a Romanian hora dance at the Bob Evans Farm Festival in Rio Grande, Ohio, 1977.

Rush. A lot of them from Germany.

Ruby. Norway and Sweden.

Rush. Norway, Sweden, Denmark. And I found out that all of our play-party games — the same games that we done here — I found out that they put them to music.

Lilly. So, you found the dances were similar? The play-parties?

Rush. Same dances. We just done different. Like in 1946 in the 4-H camping program where I was a counselor, I done a dance called "Put Your Little Foot." To me that was the dance, but later I found out that this is a Scandinavian dance called a *Barsavanne*. Over the generations, the Scandinavian and the Germanic dances kind of melted in together because over the period of years Germany owned and controlled different countries and the dances were similar. Like we do the *Weegis* , a Swiss dance but it's got a German name W-E-E-G-I-S, but it's a Swiss dance, but it's a German dance.

Lilly. Are these dances you found to be new to you, when you discovered the international dancing?

Rush. Well, we've been discovering international dancing from that day to this. Like, we go to Bob Evans (Farm Festival), or we go to Vandalia, or we go to Arts and Crafts Fair (at Ripley), we go to the Jackson Jubilee (at Jackson's Mill), we are a different nationality every day.

Like many of those involved with cultural heritage, the Butchers are able to see beyond their own particular art form and grasp the overall value of traditional culture. After more than 50 years, Rush and Ruby view folk dance in broad terms.

Rush. When we had dance teams, our putting on a show was not the primary important thing to us. We want to involve people. When you do dancing, there is a lot of qualities you get from that. They are talking today about how to involve young people and how to prevent

Ruby Butcher and son Keith, visible at the top of the circle, lead a large group of dancers "into the center and back" during the 1999 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Rush is calling the dance from the stage. Rush and Ruby were given the 1999 Vandalia Heritage Award. Photograph by Joseph G. Stanley.

all these things from happening that is happening today. Well, you don't have to do dancing. You can get them involved in the band, get them involved in sports, whatever turns them on. Well, in dancing you get them started for the fun of it. After they get to know it, first thing they know they are developing confidence, developing poise.

It was discouraging to me that we would train these young people, and I would be discouraged when they would leave us and say, "Well, we won't dance anymore because we're on the basketball team," or, "We're on the football team now." But looking back on it, it was a compliment to the training they had earlier. That they developed a skill to go on and succeed at something else. If you're going to dance, you are going to have to have a pattern to your life. Because this dance has got a pattern. And if you'll develop a pattern in one part of your life, you can develop a pattern in another part of your life.

JOHN LILLY is the editor of GOLDENSEAL, a position he has held since 1997. Previously, he served as publicist for the Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins, and worked as a tour guide at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville, Tennessee. John is an accomplished old-time musician and singer, and an avid traditional dancer, having performed and toured professionally with the Green Grass Cloggers dance team from 1984-88.

Accompanied by one of their many Shelty dogs, Rush and Ruby head back to the house, surrounded by 180 acres of spectacular farm and pasture land in the center of Nicholas County. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

1999 Liars Contest

Tall tales were once again the order of the day at the 1999 West Virginia State Liars Contest, held as part of the Vandalia Gathering last year. And once again, the winner of the contest was the inimitable **Bil Lepp**, recently of Charleston, who pleased the crowd and swayed the judges with another not-quite-believable tale about the adventures of his now-famous Buck-dog. Highlights from Bil's winning story are included here.

Other winners in 1999 were: second place, **Rich Knoblich** from Wheeling; and third place, **Mark Howes** from Helvetia. The youth award was given to **Eric Diehl** of Meadow Bridge.

This year's Liars Contest will be held Sunday, May 28, 2000, at 1:00 p.m., in the Cultural Center's State Theater in Charleston. For more information, call (304)558-0220.

Bil Lepp: ...You see, recently I've been reading a lot of Jack London and the idea of mushing a team of dogs across the frozen tundra certainly has its appeal. I was thinking about getting into that. The only problem is that, well, we don't have any frozen tundra here in West Virginia. But the more I thought about it, I mean, frozen tundra is nothing but a strip of land perpetually covered in snow, and snow is nothing more than frozen water. So, the way I figured it for those of us living in Fayette County seeking Londonesque adventure, we have a little bit of advantage on the rest of the people because we have the New River. And the New River, I logically deduced, is essentially nothing more than unfrozen tundra, because it's just a strip of land covered with unfrozen snow. Am I right or am I right?

So, I had my tundra, now all I needed was a dog sled and a dog team and really that was the easy part. I just simply substituted my wife's kayak for the dog sled and Buck-dog for my dog team. I harnessed Buck to the kayak and we headed down to the New River.

Now I figured anybody could dog-kayak down the New River, the trick would be to dog-kayak upstream. So, we went down to Charlton Heights, right there where the New becomes the Kanawha, and we mushed around in circles for a few minutes until Buck got his sea legs and I got a feel for the craft, and then we headed upstream. Well, Buck-dog made short work of the Kanawha Falls, slicing through the current as easily as the People's Republic of China cut through America's Department of Defense computer systems. We mushed up through Hawk's Nest, under the New River Gorge Bridge, past Prince, and up the Sandstone Falls. We were taking it easy as we rounded the bend there at Hinton, figuring to pull out at the Bluestone Dam.

Well, that's when the flock of ducks landed. They were heading north for the summer, and normally you wouldn't perceive a flock of ducks as a threat. You see, in Jack London's stories it's always a pack of wolves that threatens the lives of the crew and the team, and ducks are generally harmless. Unless, of course, you know Buck-dog well.

You see, Buck-dog is strong, and he's friendly, and he makes for good company, but he's also none too bright. Well, the fact of the matter is he's scared to death of all other living creatures. This is a little embarrassing to say, but this is a dog who was once treed by a squirrel. The first time Buck-dog saw a cow he just flat-out fainted. And ducks, now your average duck just alone in a pond minding his own business, that's not much of a danger. But you get a bunch of ducks together, they get that collective duck consciousness going, they can sense fear. Buck began to panic. They sensed that panic and they turned

Bil Lepp, 1999 State Liars Contest winner. Photograph by Michael Keller.

toward us like they were the International Olympic Committee and we were a rich city in Utah. I knew that I was going to have to work fast if I was going to save Buck and my dog-kayak. So, what I did is I pulled out one of the Styrofoam blocks that helps keep that kayak afloat, reached in my pocket, pulled out my stainless steel 74-function Swiss Army-type knife, and I quickly opened up the hot-glue gun and the duck-shaped cookie cutter.

Anyway, I cut a perfect duck-shaped figure out of that Styrofoam, coated it with hot glue, and since I was trying to emulate Jack London exactly, I was wearing a real nice down-filled parka. So, I just ripped it open, pulled out a handful of feathers, stuck 'em all over that duck, glued it to Buck's head, cut two more ducks, and glued one to his back and one to his tail. He was utterly hidden, totally covered. If he was a crime, Congress couldn't have covered him up better. He was, in short, the perfect Buck duck decoy ploy.

To the ducks, it must have appeared that Buck just disappeared, but they still had me in their sights. In fact, I was a sitting duck. I was out of ducks. I was a lame duck in the midst of a duck stampede, and I can tell you right now that the adrenaline was pumping out of my adrenal ducts faster than water off a duck's back.

Well, just about the time they were on me, Buck's panic overtook him in the worst way and he started barking just as hard as he could and, well, that startled the ducks and they flew away. Buck started to kind of regain his composure, and he looked around to see if I had noticed how scared he was. And that's the first time he noticed the duck glued to his back and the one glued to his tail. When he turned around to look at the other side, he caught a reflection of the mallard stuck to his head and he froze. Alarms started going off in his head. Near as I can figure, he thought he was surrounded, and he figured that if all the other ducks had flown away except these three, that these must be the three baddest ducks in all the world. So, ...he dove.

He dove under the surface of the New River and started heading upriver. He went up the spillway of the dam and right down the center drainage hole of that dam and that's where we got jammed up. You see, that kayak turned sideways. We stopped all the flow of water coming out of the dam. There was just a little air pocket, so we could breathe a little bit. The duck on Buck's head and the one on his back got washed off in the water, but my more immediate concern was for the entire state of West Virginia as well as parts of Virginia and North Carolina.

You see, we had blocked all the water flowing out of the Bluestone Lake and the Bluestone Lake was quickly going from the second largest body of the water in the state to the first largest body of water in the world. Water was backing up in the Greenbrier and the Bluestone rivers, and it was flooding in the New River all the way down to Blowing Rock, North Carolina.

...On the other side of the dam, the New River was drying up. No water was getting into it, so the entire tourist-based economy of southern West Virginia was disappearing as rapidly as the tops on our mountains. And if the New River dried up, well, then there'd be no more white-water rafting, no more scenic fishing, and the New River Gorge Bridge would be forever more known as the Old River Dried-Up-Ditch Bridge.

I didn't know what I was going to do, and that's when Buck-dog turned around and noticed the duck that was still glued to his tail, and in an act of sheer bravery, he lunged for it. Well, he missed the duck, but he hit the front of my kayak so hard that it knocked the vessel loose. We shot out of the dam on the wall of water that was surging out of the dam. Now, we were carried way down river.

I managed to hang a right at Lick Creek, but I had lost my paddle in all the turmoil so we were going to have to walk home. But, I figured after being jammed in the dam in the unfrozen tundra with Buck-dog, three Styrofoam ducks, and the entire economy of southern West Virginia hanging over my head, that being up Lick Creek without a paddle wasn't the worst way the day could have ended.

Lepp Book Available

The Lying Lepp Brothers have long been favorites of GOLDENSEAL readers, and have dominated the State Liars Contest for more than a decade. A new book published by August House Publishers has gathered the best of Paul and Bil Lepp into one volume called *The Monster Stick & Other Appalachian Tall Tales*. The 160-page paperbound book sells for $9.95 plus tax and shipping, and is available from Pictorial Histories Distribution, 1416 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25301; phone (888)982-7472, or e-mail wvbooks@ newwave.net.

Vandalia

Text and
photographs
by Michael Keller

Above: McDowell County guitarist Carl Rutherford.

Above Right: A youngster digs into a good-looking ear of corn.

Right: Jam session on the Capitol grounds.

For me, the annual Vandalia Gathering puts the "folk" in "folklife." As photographer for the Division of Culture and History, it's my job to photograph the event each year, and 1999 was no exception.

When I arrive at the Capitol Complex on Memorial Day weekend, the first thing I notice is the music. I hear it before seeing it, echoing around corners and down hallways, spreading across the lawn and under the shade trees between the Capitol building and the Cultural Center. Anywhere two musicians can get close together, you have a jam session, usually surrounded by a cluster of old-time or bluegrass music fans. The better the jam, the bigger the crowd, which for me usually means a bit of nudging, climbing, or crouching to be able to see and photograph the musicians.

Another thing you always know about the festival before you see it, is the food. During peak times, the smell of funnel cakes, barbecue, and roasted corn carries right along with the sound of the music. The food choices are as diverse as the population of West Virginia, with Greek gyros and German sausages alongside beans and cornbread. Finger licking is required Vandalia etiquette, which is a good thing

Faces

Above: Craft demonstration by a woodworker in the Craft Circle. Photograph by Joseph G. Stanley.

Left: Folk dancing in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center.

since I see so many kids — and grown-ups — wearing their food.

Folks with musical feet have plenty to do with continuous square dancing outside on the Capitol walkway, and ethnic European dancing in the Great Hall of the Cultural Center. I've seen the same people come back year after year, on both Saturday and Sunday, to form-up squares and dance right outside the governor's office. No matter what the weather, when the music's hot, so is the dancing.

In the Great Hall, a number of West Virginia dance groups demonstrate Scottish, Irish, Swiss, and other international styles of dance that have come to make their homes in this state. The costumes are as colorful as the quilts on the walls. This is an audience participation activity, however, so before the afternoon's over there will be sneakers and jean shorts mixed among the boots and kilts.

Around the fountain in the courtyard of the Capitol building, die-hard shoppers browse the Craft Circle, finding everything from West Virginia foods and books to stained glass art and Native American flutes. Faces light up while watching a potter

Above Left: A festival volunteer enjoys a wooden folk toy.

Above: Fiddling is a shared activity in the kids' area.

Left: The eyes have it during a raptor demonstration. Photograph by Joseph G. Stanley.

Right: Dunbar banjo player Brooks Smith.

will a lump of clay into a beautiful teapot.

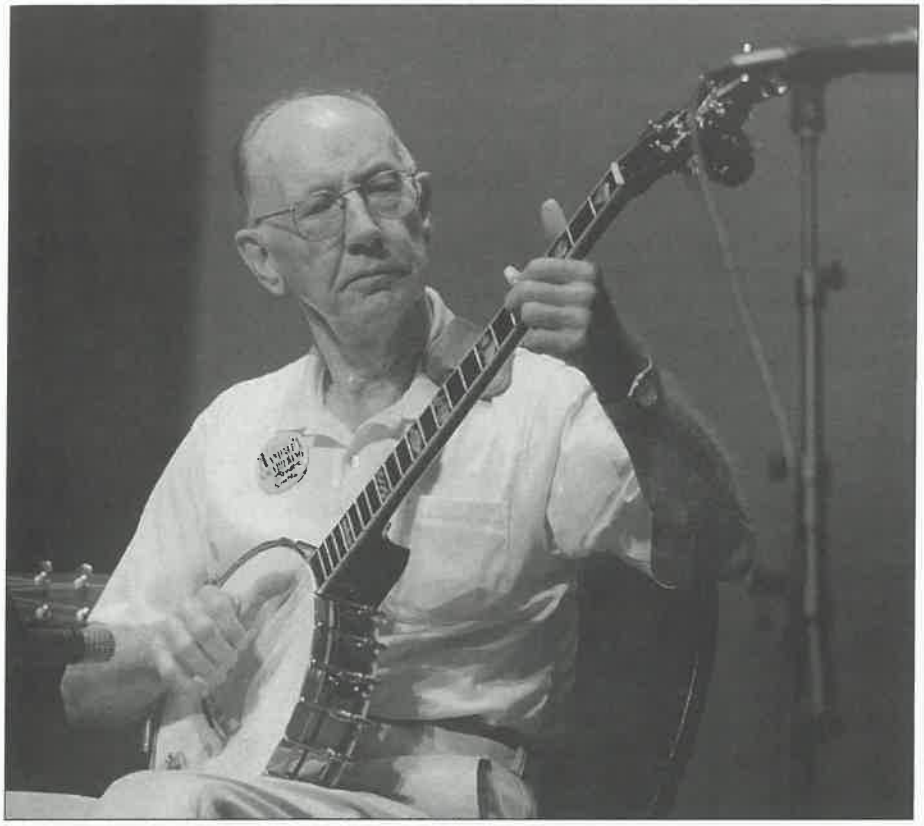
But for sheer pleasure, I walk over to the kids' area where children have the chance to participate in heritage activities like making candles or churning butter, making kaleidoscopes, or playing banjos and guitars that are often as big as they are. For a lot of kids, this is their first taste of old-time music, their first chance to actually handle a real instrument, and I doubt that their eyes could get much bigger.

Year 2000 will be the 20th year I've photographed at the Vandalia Gathering. I know I'll see a lot of people — both musicians and onlookers — back at the event once again. I might not know their names, but I'll know their faces and they'll know mine, and we'll smile at seeing each other again.

VANDALIA GATHERING

May 26-28, 2000

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



1999 Vandalia Winners

Vandalia Heritage Award — Rush & Ruby Butcher, Summersville

Fiddle (age 60 and over)
1 — Lefty Shafer, Charleston
2 — Jerry Lewis, Nettie
3 — Junior Spencer, Frankford
4 — Glen Smith, Elizabeth
5 — Virgil Ross, Clendenin

Fiddle (under age 60)
1 — David Bing, Harmony
2 — Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
3 — Gerry Milnes, Elkins
4 — Jenny Allinder, Charleston
5 — Terry Collins, Hurricane

Old-Time Banjo (age 60 and over)
1 — Woody Simmons, Mill Creek
2 — Charles Loudermilk, Frankford
3 — Brooks Smith, Dunbar
4 — Bob Ashley, Cowen
5 — Ira Southern, Princeton

Old-Time Banjo (under age 60)
1 — Tim Bing, Gandeeville
2 — Jim Mullins, Charleston
3 — Paul Gartner, Sod
4 — David O'Dell, Spencer
5 — Andrew Dunlap, St. Albans

Mandolin
1 — Johnny Staats, Sandyville
2 — Mike Melton, Charleston
3 — Matt Hiser, Layland
4 — Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
5 — Steve Acord, Fairdale

Bluegrass Banjo
1 — Butch Osborne, Parkersburg
2 — Virgil Osborne, Lorado
3 — Rad Lewis, Winfield
4 — Dave Douglas, Ivydale
5 — Calvin Leport, Henderson

Lap Dulcimer
1 — Alan Freeman, Charleston
2 — David O'Dell, Spencer
3 — Bob Webb, Charleston
4 — Martha Vickers, Ona
5 — Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville

Flat Pick Guitar
1 — Robert Shafer, Elkview
2 — Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
3 — Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
4 — Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
5 — Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville

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PHOTO CURIOSITY

Do you recognize this church? The mammoth house of worship visible in the background of this photograph has historians at the State Archives scratching their heads. While the photograph was originally thought to have been made in Charleston in the early 1900's, we have been unable to positively identify any of its features, including the church.

If you can solve this mystery, please write to us at GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25305 or e-mail goldenseal@wvculture.org.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- **West Virginia Men — GOLDENSEAL Special Report**
- **First Father's Day**
- **Old Sweet Springs**
- **State Folk Festival At 50**

(continued from inside front cover)

August 18-19 W.Va. Highland Games & Celtic Festival
South Charleston (746-5552)
August 19 Civilian Conservation Corps Reunion
Camp Woodbine/Richwood (422-1997)
August 24-27 Appalachian Festival
Beckley (252-7328)
August 26-27 Mason-Dixon Frontier Festival
Core (879-5500)
August 31-September 4 Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill (465-5617)
September 1-3 W.Va. Autumn Festival
Burnsville (853-2422)
September 1-3 W.Va. Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (622-7314)
September 1-4 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts Jubilee
Jackson's Mill/Weston (1-800-296-1863)
September 2 Mountain Heritage Day
Fort Gay (648-5954)
September 2-4 Hick Festival
Parsons (478-2660)
September 8-9 Country Music Assn. of W.Va. Fall Festival
Fairmont (457-2439)
September 9 James C. McGrew Birthday Celebration
Kingwood (379-7621)
September 9 Mound Festival Arts & Crafts Show
South Charleston (744-9085)
September 9-10 Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (623-2335)
September 9-10 Hampshire County Heritage Days
Romney (822-7221)
September 9-10 Pow Wow 2000 Festival
Moundsville (845-2773)
September 9-10 W.Va. Honey Festival
Parkersburg (428-1130)
September 9-10 Mt. Grove VFD Potato Festival
Horseshoe Run (735-5035)
September 9-10 Helvetia Community Fair
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 9-10 8th Annual Mule & Donkey Show
Sutton (364-8364)
September 9-16 King Coal Festival
Williamson (235-5560)
September 14-17 W.Va. Oil & Gas Festival
Sistersville (652-2939)
September 15-17 Mason-Dixon Festival
Morgantown (599-1104)
September 15-17 Bridge of Dreams Festival
Big Ugly Community Center/Harts (855-8557)
September 16-17 Country Roads Festival
Ansted (658-5574)
September 16-24 12th Annual Leaf Peepers Festival
Davis (259-5315)
September 21-24 Clay County Golden Delicious Festival
Clay (587-4455)
September 22-23 FOOTMAD Fall Festival
Fayette County Park/Fayetteville (768-9249)
September 22-24 Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Harper's Ferry (1-800-624-0577)
September 22-24 St. George Greek Festival
Huntington (525-5634)
September 23 Reckart's Mill Days
Cranesville (789-2225)
September 24 Poca Heritage Day
Poca (755-4677)
September 28-30 W.Va. Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
September 28-October 1 Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Kingwood (329-0021)
September 30-October 1 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
Burlington (289-6010 ext. 221)
September 30-October 1 Heritage Craft Festival
Lowell (466-3321)
September 30-October 8 Mountain State Forest Festival
Elkins (636-1824)
October 1 Cranberry Mountain Shindig
Cranberry Mountain Nature Center (846-2695)
October 3-4, 7-8 Bunner Ridge Heritage Days
Fairmont (363-3631)
October 5-8 W.Va. Pumpkin Festival
Milton (743-9222)
October 6-7 Burgoo Cook-Off
Webster Springs (847-7291)
October 7-8 Fayette County Pansy Festival
Fayetteville (574-2886)
October 7-8 Fall Art in the Mountains Festival
Tamarack/Beckley (256-6843)
October 7-8 27th Annual Apple Butter Festival
Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
October 7-8, 14-15 Harvest Festival
Salem (782-5245)
October 12-14 W.Va. Storytelling Festival
Jackson's Mill/Weston (599-2219)
October 12-15 W.Va. Black Walnut Festival
Spencer (927-1780)
October 13-14 Wayne Fall Festival
Wayne (522-2429)
October 13-15 20th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair
Fairlea (645-4310)
October 14 Taste of Our Town
Lewisburg (645-7917)
October 14-15, 21-22 Railroad Days Festival
Hinton (466-5420)
October 15 Elmer Bird Tribute
Hurricane (562-5896)
October 19-22 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
Martinsburg (263-2500)
October 21 Pleasant Valley Craft Fair
Fairmont (366-1694)
October 27-29 Fiddlers' Reunion
D&E College/Elkins (637-1209)
November 8 Something Old/Something New Craft Show
Glenville (462-8291)
November 11-12 Railfest 2000
Bluefield (431-2593)
November 11-12 Over the Mountain Studio Tour
Shepherdstown (725-2055)
December 1-3, 8-10 Christmas at Prickett's Fort
Fairmont (363-3030)
December 2 Christmas Greenery Bazaar
Mannington (986-2636)
December 2-3, 9-10 Spirit of Christmas at New Fort Salem
Salem (782-5245)
December 3 Souper Tastes of Christmas
McGrew House/Kingwood (379-7621)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing.If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 2001 "Folklife*Fairs*Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address and phone number. We must have this information by January 15, 2001, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

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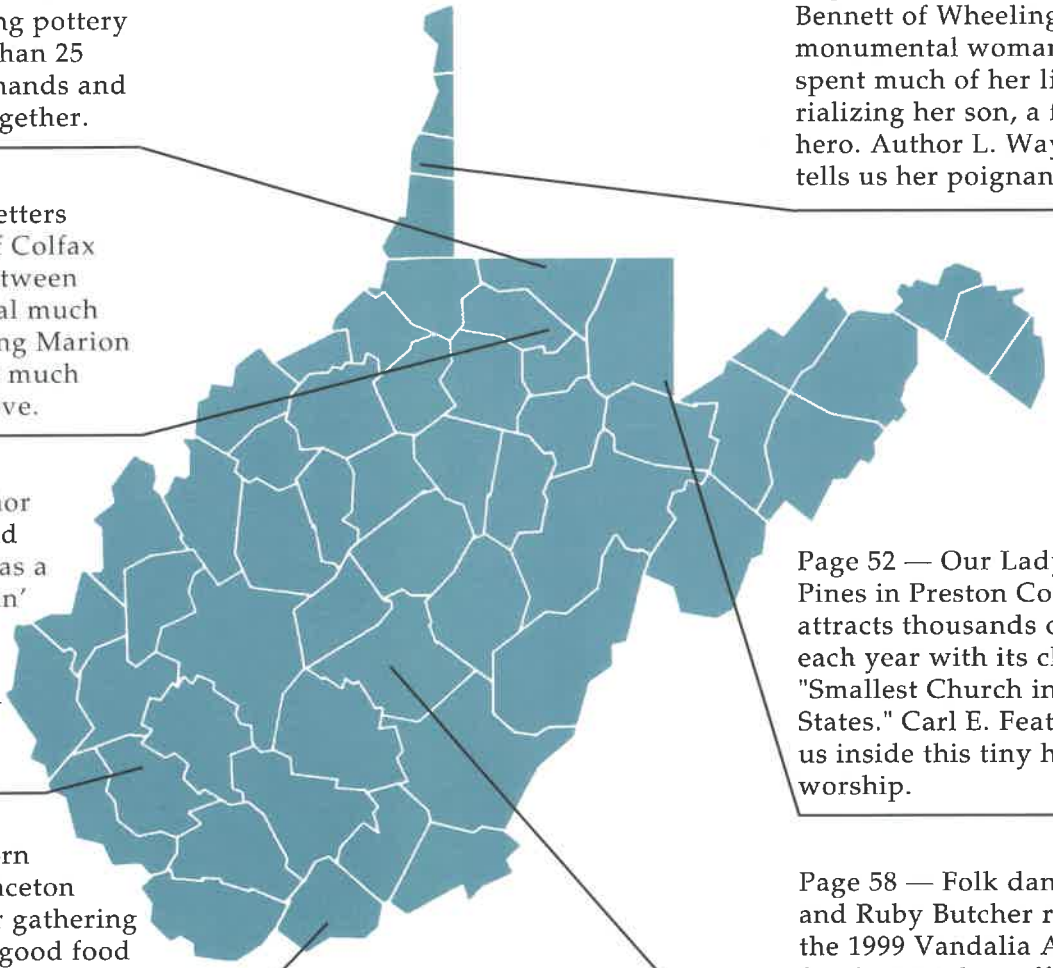

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