Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Spring 2002 $4.95

Coal Heritage

Filming *Stage Struck*

Joltin' Jim McCoy

Poling Store

Folklife*Fairs*Festivals

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

March 14-20 Irish Spring Festival
Ireland (452-8962)
March 15-17 George Washington's Bathtub Celebration
Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)
March 16-17 Maple Fest
New Creek (788-5482)
March 16-17 W.Va. Maple Syrup Festival
Pickens (924-5096)
March 22-24 Appalachian Heritage Weekend
Pipestem (466-1800)
March 22-24 Upper Potomac Spring Dulcimer Festival
Shepherdstown (263-2531)
April 13 The Birthday Concert
Landmark Studio/Sutton (637-1334)
April 20 Antique Plowing Contest
Lost Pavement (863-6342)
April 20 Feast of the Ramson
Richwood (846-6790)
April 20 Annual Mason-Dixon Ramp Feast
Morgantown (879-5500)
April 20 Spring Fling
Mount Clare (622-3304)
April 26-28 FlowerCraft Festival
Wheeling (1-800-624-6988)
April 26-28 Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival
Huntington (696-5990)
April 26-28 Spring Mountain Festival
Petersburg (257-2722)
April 27 Ramp Cook-Off & Festival
Elkins (636-2717)
May 4 Cheat River Festival
Albright (329-3621)
May 4 W.Va. Marble Festival
Cairo (628-3321)
May 4-5 Steam & Gas Engine Show
Point Pleasant (675-5737)
May 10-11 40th Wildflower Pilgrimage
Blackwater Falls/Davis (558-3370)
May 11 Mother's Day Founder Festival
Webster (265-5549)
May 12 Observance of Mother's Day
Grafton (265-1589)
May 15-19 W.Va. Strawberry Festival
Buckhannon (472-9036)
May 16-19 Three Rivers Festival
Fairmont (363-2625)
May 16-19 Annual Bend Area Gospel Jubilee
Point Pleasant (675-5737)
May 18-19 Moundsville's 4th Annual Elizabethtown Festival
Moundsville (845-6200)
May 18-19 Heritage Days & Civil War Weekend
Buffalo (937-2755)
May 24-26 Woodchopping Festival
Webster Springs (847-7666)
May 24-26 26th Vandalia Gathering
State Capitol Complex/Charleston (558-0162)
May 25-27 21st Head-of-the-Mon-River Horseshoe Tournament
Fairmont (366-3819)
May 31-June 1 Heritage Festival
Middlebourne (758-4266)
June 1 Herb & Arts Festival
Romney (496-8002)
June 1-2 Shinnston Rails to Trails Days
Shinnston (592-0177)
June 5-9 Hobby & Crafts Festival
Buckhannon (472-1722)
June 6-9 3rd Annual Hatfield/McCoy Reunion
Matewan/Williamson/Delbarton (235-5240)
June 7-8 Hancock County Quilt Show
New Cumberland (564-5385)
June 7-9 River Heritage Days
New Martinsville (455-1406)
June 14-16 Ronceverte River Festival
Ronceverte (647-3825)
June 14-16 Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival
Parkersburg (428-4405)
June 14-16 West Augusta Historical Society Quilt Show
Mannington (986-1089)
June 15 Basket Festival
Cairo (628-3321)
June 15 Juneteenth Celebration
Huntington (522-3180)
June 18-22 W.Va. Coal Festival
Madison (369-9118)
June 20-23 W.Va. State Folk Festival
Glenville (462-8427)
June 21-23 Old Central City Days Festival
W. Huntington (525-1500)
June 22 Wood County Flywheel Festival
Mountwood Park/Parkersburg (489-1596)
June 27-30 Bluegrass Festival
Summersville (872-3145)
June 28-30 Little Levels Heritage Fair
Hillsboro (1-800-336-7009)
July 3-6 Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-8159)
July 6-7 Pioneer Days
Point Pleasant (675-5737)
July 11-13 Ellenboro Glass Festival
Ellenboro (869-3780)
July 11-14 Benedum Festival
Bridgeport (842-8240)
July 11-14 Pioneer Days
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
July 12-14 John Henry Days
Talcott (466-1729)
July 13-14 New Deal Festival
Arthurdale (864-3959)
July 17-20 Durbin Days
Durbin (1-800-336-7009)
July 19 Pricketts Fort Polka Festival
Fairmont (363-3030)
July 27-28 Cowen Historic Railroad Festival
Cowen (226-3366)
July 27-28 Arts & River Festival
Morgantown (291-6720)
July 31-August 4 Appalachian String Band Music Festival
Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (438-3005)
August 1-3 W.Va. Blackberry Festival
Nutter Fort (623-2381)
August 1-3 Mercer County Bluestone Valley Fair
Spanishburg (425-1429)
August 2-4 W.Va. Square, Round Dance & Clogging Convention
Buckhannon (473-8104)
August 3-4 Living History Days
New Creek (788-5129)
August 3-4 Meadow Bridge Homecoming Festival
Meadow Bridge (484-7250)
August 5-10 Mannington District Fair
Mannington (986-1911)

(continued on inside back cover)

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On the cover: Wallace Williamson Farley at the Coal House in Williamson — the only structure of its kind in the world, and a fitting monument to southern West Virginia's coal heritage. Our coal stories begin on page 10. Photograph by Michael Keller.

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p. 54

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From the Editor

Know more coal! No pun intended — the coal industry remains a powerful force in our state, and it is still the dominant cultural and economic influence in the southern counties. With that in mind, it's fair to say that the more we know about coal — its history, its future, its triumphs, and failures — the more we understand about West Virginia.

In this issue, we take you on a "road trip" along U.S. Route 52 from Bluefield to Williamson. This 95-mile stretch of highway cuts through the heart of southern West Virginia's coal country, and to the careful observer (and the ardent reader), it reveals volumes about the land, the industry, and the people of this historic mining area [see story beginning on page 10].

Along the way, we meet some fascinating people, including 99-year-old Melvin Leon Harris [see page 30], family historian Coleman C. Hatfield [see page 27], and Wallace Williamson Farley, who was named for the founder of his industrial, coal-centered hometown [see page 20]. A highlight of our trip to coal country is a look at the world's first and only building constructed entirely of coal — the famous Coal House in Williamson [see photograph on front cover, and story on page 24].

Elsewhere in this issue, we explore West Virginia's film history as we learn about the making of *Stage Struck* in New Martinsville in 1925 — the first major motion picture filmed in the state [see page 36]. Film researcher Steve Fesenmaier provides an overview of other early West Virginia cinematic milestones [see page 40], and then takes a look at more than a dozen recent films and videos about our state and the Appalachian region [see page 68].

On page 44, we begin a series of articles about small, family-run stores in the state. In these days of urban sprawl, strip malls, and monstrous mega-marts, it's refreshing to realize that independent grocery, hardware, dry goods, and "sanitary" stores have been serving West Virginia communities for generations. Newton Poling's account of growing up in his family's store in Philippi gets the ball rolling — you can expect to see related stories in the next several issues of GOLDENSEAL.

There are a number of other interesting articles in this issue, as well, along with our popular coverage of the State Liars Contest, a Vandalia preview, and our annual "Folklife*Fairs*Festivals" calendar. It looks like another fine issue of GOLDENSEAL to me! I hope that 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.

Pearl Harbor Day

December 10, 2001
Burlington, West Virginia
Via e-mail
Editor:
I enjoyed the article "Two Days That Changed Our Lives," by Borgon Tanner; Winter 2001, about going from New Martinsville to Mannington to Christmas shop on the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. The author is an old friend of nearly 50 years. Although I didn't meet him until about 12 years after this time, I feel as though I traveled with him on that day, as I remember December 7, 1941, well.
Sincerely,
Ed Weaver

December 21, 2001
Apple Creek, Ohio
Editor:
Just finished the article, "Two Days That Changed Our Lives," in the Winter 2001 issue. I grew up in Mannington and knew Charles and Eleanor Martin all my growing-up years. As a matter of fact, they were customers of mine as the paperboy who delivered their *Fairmont Times* in the morning, as well as their *West Virginian* in the evening to their home at the corner of Clarksburg and Howard streets.

I was pleased to see an article on Mannington, and I do recall hearing of Pearl Harbor that Sunday afternoon on my way home from the local movie house, which was located three doors from Martin's Bon-Ton Department Store. By the way, both the buildings that housed the Bon-Ton and the local movie house still stand today.

We look forward to the GOLDENSEAL each quarter; keep up the great stories.
Joe Boughner

USS *West Virginia*

December 10, 2001
Santee, South Carolina
Editor:
The article in the Winter 2001 issue of GOLDENSEAL lists two servicemen from West Virginia who were killed in the Pearl Harbor attack on the USS *West Virginia* [see "USS *West Virginia*: A Tale of Three Ships"].

The battleship USS *West Virginia*, photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, USS *West Virginia* Collection.

Of the four men killed at Okinawa by the suicide plane, at least one was a West Virginian. My cousin Noel Fields, a Marine aboard the USS *West Virginia*, was in the gun turret that was hit. Noel was buried at sea. He was born and raised in Harper District of Roane County. At the time of his death, I believe his wife was living at Clendenin. He left a wife and a five-year-old daughter. This daughter, Carolyn Sue, at last account, was living at Gandeeville in Roane County.
Bill Fields

January 18, 2002
Frankford, West Virginia
Editor:
I really enjoy the GOLDENSEAL magazine — you do very nice work.

On page 20 of the Winter 2001 edition, you have a picture of the signing of the Japanese surrender [at the close of World War II]. My dad Everette Woodrow Crews was in the background of the picture, but you can't see him. He was a private. He still has an original picture of the Japanese man doing the signing of the surrender papers. He said they had a hard time finding a table that was big enough to hold all the papers.

My dad joined [the Army] in January 1945. Dad had four daughters, and my mother was expecting a baby in June. The doctor and my mom didn't want Dad to go, but that didn't stop my dad. He wanted to help make our country free again.

My baby sister was born on June 29, 1945. The Red Cross sent Dad a letter, but he didn't get it for a long time. He only had a

letter from Mom saying that "Jimmy" was born — that was the nickname we gave our little sister, as her name was Ada Virginia. For quite a while, Dad thought he had a son.

My Dad will be 83 on April 4, 2002. I think my dad is a real hero.
Shirley Ann (Crews) Green

Black CCC History

December 14, 2001
Bridgeport, West Virginia
Editor:
I just finished reading your Winter 2001 issue and was most interested in the excellent, well-documented articles about the black CCC enrollees [see "Camp War: Remember CCC Company 3538-C," by Ancella Bickley and "'Nothing But Just Fighting': The 1936 CCC Race Riot," interview by Susan Leffler]. I am glad you included the older, dark-side piece about the brutal treatment of black enrollees. So far as I can tell, none of those outrageous camp fights ever made it to the press room. In my upcoming book *Written on the Land*, a pictorial history of the CCC and camp life in West Virginia, I have some pictures of black enrollees; one of the scenes shows blacks having lunch in the field with whites in a racially-mixed work crew of one camp.

GOLDENSEAL is tops. We've been getting it for many years, and every issue is highly cherished in our household.
Sincerely,
Robert E. Anderson,
professor emeritus
West Virginia University

December 10, 2001
Ronceverte, West Virginia
Editor:
As a longtime subscriber, I patiently wait with enthusiasm and pride for the GOLDENSEAL, all because of the diversity of the articles. It always seems to complement and support the very reasons that West Virginia originally became a state of the Union. GOLDENSEAL seems to be the only publication within the state that satisfies its diversity.

Your articles on black CCC camps in the Winter 2001 issue were most timely, since I always read about CCC reunions. I was not sure about the black camps, but I recall the white guys coming to town every Saturday night. Compliments are extended to Mrs. Bickley [for her articles], and to Ms. Leffler, whose interview you held onto.

I am now 70 years old. I was too young for CCC camp then, but I vividly recall. I grew up as a neighbor to Mr. James Cashwell and his dad on the Tannery Row in Marlinton. Have not seen him in years.

The interviewee, Mr. Bill Dougherty, I believe to be Mr. William "Bill" Daugherty from up home. He was born in Cloverlick. I knew some of his siblings. He died in 1987. His grandfather Isaac Daugherty, Sr., first appeared in the 1870 federal census of Pocahontas County. Keep up the wonderful work.
Bill Lindsay

Racially integrated CCC band at Camp Cranberry, Richwood, in1935. Photograph by Lewis Chaff.

WSAZ Radio

January 15, 2002
West Melbourne, Florida
Via e-mail
Editor:
Always a pure joy to read your magazine — even more so the Winter 2001 issue. On page 43, the picture of Colonel Long throwing the switch for WSAZ radio was a thrill to see [see "WSAZ Radio: 'The Worst Station from A to Z,'" by Corley F. Dennison]. My father Paul O. Fiedler is the unidentified man on the end. He was mayor of Huntington at the time. This past summer, I gave several articles about that occasion to the Museum of Radio & Technology.

My husband was also pleased to read about the USS *West Virginia* at Pearl Harbor. His cousin Ensign Harvey Smith was

WSAZ radio, Huntington, on June 15, 1943. Huntington Mayor Paul O. Fiedler, at right, watches while Colonel J.H. Long throws a switch, signaling the station's affiliation with the ABC radio network. Photograph courtesy of Mike Kirtner.

stationed aboard her during the attack.

Keep up the good work. We share your magazine with our sons in Florida and neighbors from West Virginia.
Sincerely,
Elizabeth Estler

Thanks for writing and for identifying your father in the photograph. We appreciate the information. We also appreciate your sharing your GOLDENSEAL with your sons and neighbors. Perhaps they would enjoy receiving their own subscriptions; a convenient gift card is included inside the back cover of this issue. Thanks again for your letter and for your support. —ed.

Yellow Spring

December 17, 2001
Charleston, West Virginia
Via e-mail
Editor:
I was fascinated to learn in the Winter 2001 issue that reed organs were made in West Virginia in Yellow Spring [see "'Old-Fashioned Things': Yellow Spring Memories," by Cecelia Mason; Winter 2001]. Perhaps I could explore that, since I am really into those old instruments. The Reed Organ Society has a half dozen West Virginia members. Most of us are nuts. Certainly these old instruments were part of our culture. The state museum has two Cornish reed organs, identical to the one I own. Alas, they were made in Washington, New Jersey!
Lawton Posey

January 21, 2002
Romney, West Virginia
Via e-mail
Editor:
I recently came across this ad for Tilbury Orndorff's bourbon whiskey in the August 2, 1899, issue of the *Hampshire Review*. I thought it might be of interest to your readers.

A 1957 newspaper article about the history of Yellow Spring mentions that Tilbury's distilling talents were known well outside of the community. According to the article, Colonel Cooper, who ran a grocery store in Capon Bridge, was told of people parching rye for a coffee substitute. Cooper stated that if he had to drink rye coffee, he wanted Tilbury Orndorff to boil it.

Asa Cline, also mentioned in the article, always said that the soft, sweet water from the mountain springs came from an underground lake. He said that a second spring flowed out of the mountain above the main water source.
Sincerely,
Kathleen S. Rogers, editor
Hampshire History


Absolutely Pure,

OUR RYE AND BOURBON WHISKEYS

Are guaranteed so.

No adulteration, whatever. They are manufactured by

TILBURY ORNDORFF,

of Yellow Spring,

and are used far and wide for medicinal purposes.

The prices are $2, $2.25, $2.50, $2.75, $3.00 and $3.25, according to age.

If you want a GUARNTEED ARTICLE call on us.

J. F. SCHAFFENAKER,

Yellow Spring, Hampshire Co., West Virginia.

5-31-99-3.m.

Advertisement from the *Hampshire Review*, August 2, 1899.

Burlington Break-In

There is sad news to report from Mineral County. Ed Weaver's Service Station Museum, featured in a Fall 1993 article written by Bill Moulden titled "'Not a Going Business': Ed Weaver's Service Station Museum," has been closed following a break-in last November. According to Ed, several historic items were stolen, including a 1897 Western Electric wall telephone, a 1906 Zeno chewing gum machine, and a 33-inch-tall Michelin Man.

The loss was quite disheartening to Ed, who had already been considering closing the unique roadside attraction, located 10 miles west of Romney. He feels that the robbery was a professional heist, and that the stolen items were intended for resale over the Internet or elsewhere.

Ed is uncertain about the future of his vast collection and would appreciate any information about his missing items. He can be reached at (304)289-3800.

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.

Irish Festivities

St. Patrick's Day events are scheduled this spring at Ireland, Huntington, and Pence Springs in honor of West Virginia's Irish heritage.

Dr. John Lozier and fellow harpists on parade at the Irish Spring Festival in Ireland, Lewis County.

The Irish Spring Festival at Ireland, Lewis County, will be held March 14 through 20 [see "Dancing at Ireland," by Mack Samples; Spring 1997]. This year's theme is daffodils. Some of the scheduled activities include dancing, a parade, and displays of collections including historical photographs, antique dolls, and other items. The event is sponsored and organized by the Shamrock Educational Outreach Service Club. Ireland is located on old U.S. Route 19, just off I-79 between the Flatwoods and Roanoke exits. For more information, call Sandy King at (304)452-8962.

Huntington's annual St. Patrick's Day celebration will be held March 16. It will include Irish games, food, and live entertainment. The celebration begins at 3 p.m. at Third Avenue and 11th Street, and culminates at 6 p.m. with the start of the annual St. Patrick's Day parade. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Greater Huntington Parks and Recreation office at (304)696-5954.

Pence Springs will celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 16 with two special events. A traditional Irish dinner will be served at the Pence Springs Hotel [see "Pence Springs Resort Lives Again," by Maureen Crockett; Summer 1990]. Reservations are recommended. For dinner reservations or more information, call the Pence Springs Hotel at (304)445-2606 or 1-800-826-1829.

An evening of Irish music, also at the Pence Springs Hotel on March 16, will feature the O'Daugherty Family Singers from Elkview, beginning at 8:00 p.m. Tickets for the musical performance are $5; senior and student tickets are $4. For ticket reservations or more information, call Joe Hurley at (304)466-1496.

Anna Jarvis Statue

Mother's Day founder Anna Jarvis [see "'But After All Was She Not a Masterpiece as a Mother and a Gentlewoman': Mother's Day Revisted," by Marie Tyler-McGraw; Spring 1999] has been honored with a statue in the lower rotunda of the West Virginia State Capitol. The bronze bust of the Taylor County native

Anna Jarvis bust in State Capitol rotunda. Photograph by Michael Keller.

was dedicated on November 9, 2001. Anna was a keynote speaker at the 1932 dedication of the capitol building and is the first woman to have a statue in her honor placed in the state capitol. The bust of Jarvis was rendered by Grafton sculptor Lorna Vincent-Venter and was commissioned by Thunder on the Tygart, Inc., of Grafton.

Heritage Presenters Sought

A roster of regional heritage presenters is being developed in northern West Virginia. A survey is being conducted by the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia to identify individuals and groups who are available to present heritage programs in Preston, Monongalia, Marion, Harrison, and Lewis counties. They are looking for musicians, teachers, craftspeople, historians, collectors, genealogists, and artists, as well as people who can recount oral histories or have old-time skills and knowledge. Presenters may live within or outside of the five-

county area, and may be experienced presenters, novices, professionals, or hobbyists.

The survey will provide directors and programmers at historic sites and organizers of heritage events in the five-county region with a list of available presenters. Danny Williams, a GOLDENSEAL contributor, is directing the project. To obtain a survey form or to request information about the project, write to Danny Williams, 364 Patteson Drive #265, Morgantown, WV 26505, or e-mail him at WV5county@aol.com.

Gilmer County History

The Holt House in Glenville will soon become the Holt History Center for Gilmer County, thanks in part to a $208,000 endowment from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Under the leadership of the Gilmer County Historical Society, the 1903 house will be renovated to serve as a regional museum, a historical and genealogical research facility, and as a center for educational outreach throughout the county.

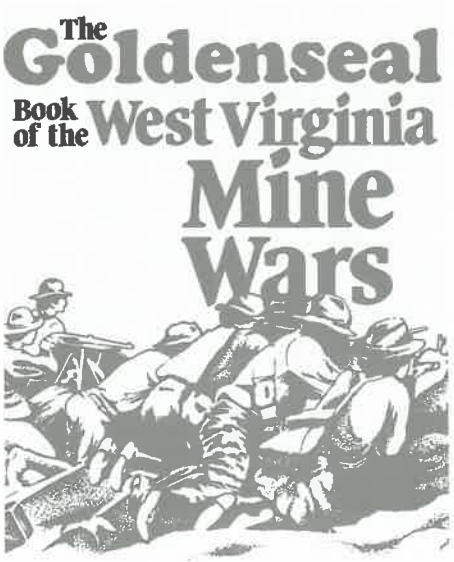
The Gilmer County Historical Society, whose offices are currently in the Holt House annex, is seeking donations of family documents, photographs, household items, and oral histories that relate to the history of Gilmer County. Members of the Gilmer Senior Citizens Center are assisting the historical society with an oral histories project by recalling and telling stories about early children's games. Volunteers may contact the Gilmer County Historical Society, P.O. Box 235, Glenville, WV 26351; telephone (304)462-4295.

Italian Needlework

The needlework of the late Anna Guarascio Peluso of Fairmont [see "Anna Guarascio Peluso: Preserving an Italian Art in West Virginia," by Joan Savereno; Winter 1981] will be highlighted at the conference "Biancheria: Critical and Creative Perspectives on Italian American Women's Domestic Needlework," on March 16, in New York. Biancheria is the traditional embroidery technique of drawing and cutting threads to create the intricate patterns seen on Italian bed coverings, tablecloths, towels, doilies, and intimate apparel.

The one-day conference, presented by the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College in New York, will be held on Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall, at the Graduate Center on Fifth Avenue in New York City. It includes both scholarly and artistic presentations addressing the themes of needlework and textiles in the lives of Italian American women. Author Joan Savereno will be among the presenters, and a photograph of Anna Peluso from GOLDENSEAL is featured on a poster for the conference. The admission for the conference is $10. For information, call (212)642-2042.

Anna Guarascio Peluso in Fairmont, 1981. Photograph by Rick Lee.



The West Virginia Mine Wars were a formative experience in our state's history and a landmark event in the history of American labor. GOLDENSEAL has published some of the best articles ever written on this subject. In 1991, former editor Ken Sullivan worked with Pictorial Histories Publishing Company to produce this compilation of 17 articles, including dozens of historic photos.

Now in its fourth printing, the book is revised and features new updated information. The large-format, 109-page paper bound book sells for $10.95 plus $2 per copy postage and handling. West Virgina residents please add 6% state tax (total $13.61 per book including tax and shipping).

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

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GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Sylvia O'Brien, one of the grand ladies of West Virginia traditional music, passed away on December 26, 2001, at the age of 93. She seldom traveled far from her cabin home on Dead Fall Mountain in Clay County, but made countless friends through her appearances at folk festivals around the state, where she was known for her old-time banjo playing, gentle wisdom, and irresistible smile. She was presented with the Vandalia Award in 1989, and was featured in the pages of GOLDENSEAL [see "'We Lived Good Back Then': Vandalia Award Winner Sylvia O'Brien," interview by Ken Sullivan; Fall 1989] and in the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music From* GOLDENSEAL [see page 7].

Sylvia O'Brien with young Hilary Keller at the Vandalia Gathering in 1993. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Oby Edgar "Buddy" Starcher, influential country music entertainer, passed away on November 2, 2001, after a musical career that spanned nearly six decades. He was born in 1906 in Craigsville, Nicholas County. His father was an old-time fiddler, and Buddy first learned to play music on the banjo. As a guitarist and singer, he soon began broadcasting over a series of radio stations including WCHS, Charleston; WMMN, Fairmont; and others. His popular recording "History Repeats Itself," a recitation which explores the similarities between the lives of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy, won a Grammy Award in 1967. Buddy Starcher and his Mountaineers were pictured on the cover of the July-August 1977 issue of GOLDENSEAL. Buddy was living in Harrisonburg, Virginia, at the time of his death. He was 95.

Buddy Starcher, seated at right, and his Mountaineers, in Charleston, 1938. This photograph appeared on the cover of our July-August 1977 issue.

Reed Dunn, pioneering country music artist and early member of WWVA's "Wheeling Jamboree," passed away in Wheeling on January 7, 2002, at the age of 85. He was known as the "Singing Mountaineer" and was the first musician to have a star installed in his honor on the sidewalk of the Capitol Music Hall in Wheeling. Reed was pictured in a 1946 "WWVA Jamboree" cast photograph in our July-August 1977 issue [see "West Virginia Country Music During the Golden Age of Radio: An Introduction," by Ivan Tribe].

Route 52

The Old Coal Road

By Su Clauson-Wicker

Many who live in southern West Virginia's coalfields grow poetic complaining about the tortuous curves and steep inclines of U.S. Route 52. But talk of flattening her out to bed proposed I-73 brings mixed emotions. Route 52, the old coal road, can be rough and sooty, but she reminds us that this was the country's richest coalfield, providing the low-smoke coal that helped to fuel America's industrial revolution.

Dr. Stuart McGehee, archivist for the Eastern Regional Coal Archives and a frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor, is more emphatic. "We have a storehouse of coalfield history along Route 52 — coke ovens, tipple shafts, a gold-domed Russian Orthodox church, Victorian company stores. To destroy these gorgeous artifacts would be a tragedy."

Anyone with an interest in coal history should follow the sinuous route along what was the nation's most productive piece of railway from the late 1890's until the 1920's. At one time, 220 mines operated along the Norfolk & Western Railroad in the heart of the rich bituminous, "smokeless" coal country, spanning 95 miles between Bluefield and Williamson. The mines were mostly run by independent coal operators who leased the land from the railroad. Their Italian-crafted coke ovens, mansard-roofed company stores, triple-tiered coal superintendents' homes, and the ubiquitous rows of company houses still stand as reminders of the era when the demand for high-grade coal from this region, known as the Pocahontas coalfield, put mines elsewhere out of business.

Postcard view of downtown Bluefield, date unknown. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives (WVSA hereafter).

Bluefield, positioned at the gateway to coal country, is deceptive. A city of tall buildings and marble-facade storefronts, it seems at loose ends these days serving a population of barely 12,000. Once a thriving city boasting the nation's highest per capita ownership of automobiles, Bluefield now counts tire recapping and shoe repair prominent among its downtown businesses. Edifices of the gilded era, however, remain: the old Elks Lodge with its opera house, the Law and Commerce Building which once housed a full bowling alley for lunching railroad men, and the Ramsey School, which is listed in *Ripley's Believe-It-or-Not* for its seven entrances on seven levels.

In 1883, when the N&W began transporting coal out of Pocahontas, the town consisted of two large farms. Six years later, the population was 1,775, and the citizenry doubled every 10 years for its first three decades.

At 2,612 feet above sea level, Bluefield is the highest city east of Denver and is known as "Nature's Air-Conditioned City." In 1939, the Chamber of Commerce decided to serve free lemonade whenever temperatures reached 90 degrees. Servers had to wait two years to offer their first glass and hit another dry spell between 1960 and 1982. In 1988, however, servers passed out

Pinnacle Rock is a striking geologic formation north of Bluefield. It was established in 1938 as a state park, which today includes 364 acres. This undated early photograph by Underwood & Underwood is courtesy of Eastern Regional Coal Archives (ERCA hereafter).

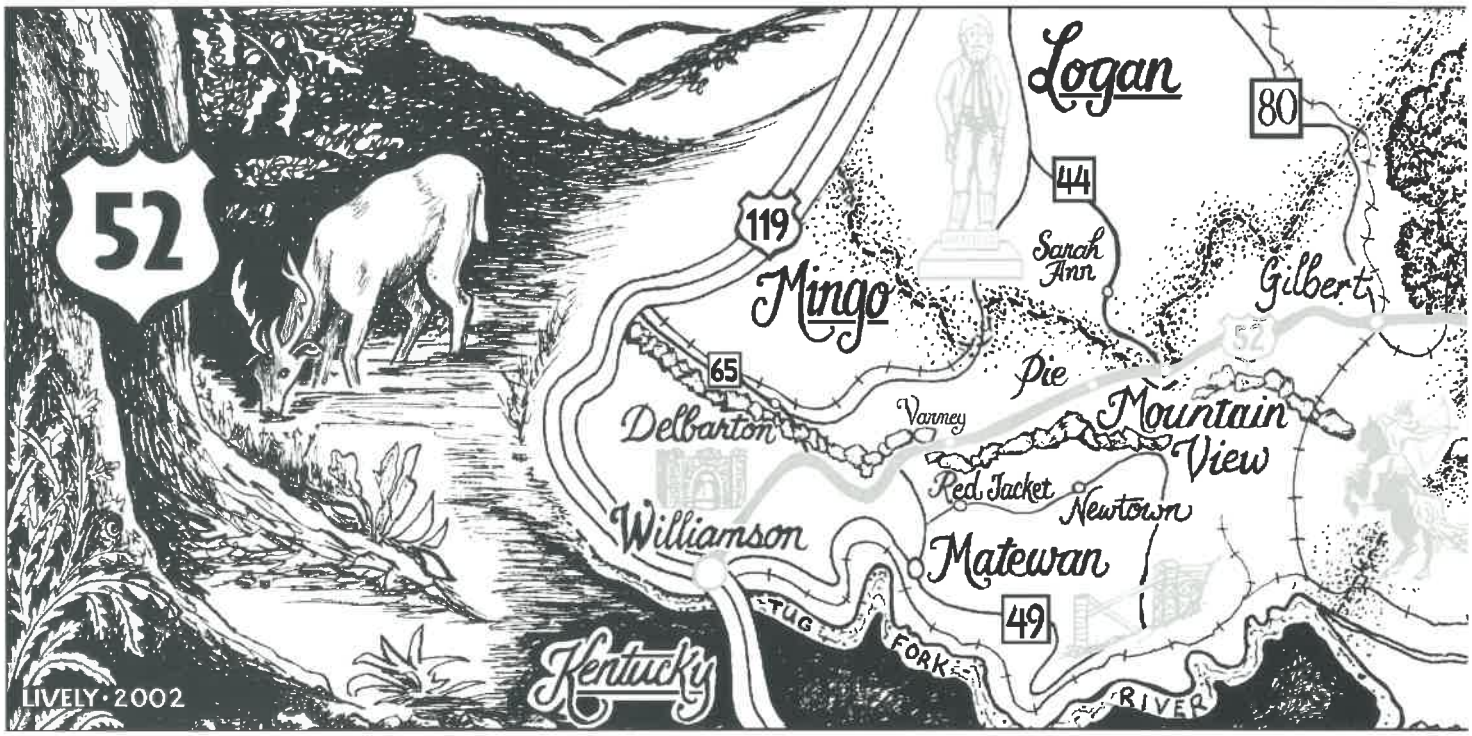
lemonade 17 days. [See "Free Drinks in Nature's Air-Conditioned City: Bluefield's Lemonade Escapade," by Stuart McGehee; Summer 1997.]

Going west through the rolling, limestone valleys of Bluewell and beyond, Route 52 rises to Pinnacle Rock, a half-mile-long roostercomb peak marking the divide between limestone country and coal-bearing shale geology. The surrounding 364-acre park offers picnicking and a panoramic view of Lick Branch Valley. A two-mile hiking trail extends to Jimmy Lewis Lake with connecting footpaths to Bramwell.

Down the road, clusters of houses keep the coal camps of Simmons and Freeman alive in name, if not in activity. Englishmen John Freeman and Jenkin Jones opened Simmons Creek Mine with only one mule, one mine car, a few shovels, and their bare hands. In 1889, the pair formed Caswell Creek Coal & Coke Company and subsequently made a vast fortune.

Their story was not unusual in the southern West Virginia coalfields at the turn of the last century when mines could be opened with relatively little money. All that was required were houses for miners, a company store to supply them, and a tipple to dump coal into the railroad cars. Miners furnished their own tools — picks, shovels, breast augers, tamping bars, needles, and axes. Because of the low start-up cost, many small companies were formed throughout the Pocahontas coalfield.

Confederate flags wave from several roadside shops along the eastern stretches of Route 52. West Virginia was a Union state after it



seceded from Virginia in 1863, but when the Civil War began two years earlier, Mercer County sent 10 full companies to the field to serve under the Confederate flag — the highest proportional recruitment of any Virginia county. Southern sympathies here still run deep.

Adjacent to Freeman is Bramwell, the home of millionaires — as many as 14 lived here in its heyday at the turn of the last century. A quarter-mile off Route 52 is the historic district on a flat curve of the Bluestone River. Wealthy coal officials' Tudor and Victorian mansions housed indoor swimming pools, ballrooms, the region's first intercom system, and as many as 10 bathrooms per home. [See "Millionaire's Town: The Houses and People of Bramwell," by Beth A. Hager; Winter 1982.] Today, visitors can vicariously slip back into the gilded era by spending a night in one of Bramwell's two historic bed-and-breakfast inns, or going shopping at any of several up-scale stores and antique emporiums in the small, renovated downtown.

Route 52, however, mostly traverses the land where the hard, dirty task of mining coal was accomplished. A half-mile north of the Bramwell turn-off, 21 beehive coke ovens, overgrown with weeds and brush, line the left side of the highway, reminders of the days when coal companies leased the land with the obligation to build one coke oven for each 10 acres of lease. This was a way to dispose of the slack coal in the form of coke. The burning ovens produced a beautiful spectacle at night, but the volatile gasses escaping were worth more than the coke, so coke manufacturing was eventually switched to special processing plants.

A Confederate flag, Hank Williams, Jr., and a load of coal appear along Route 52 in Mercer County. Photograph by Su Clauson-Wicker.

In Maybeury, just over the McDowell County line, company houses radiate up narrow hollows into the hills. The town is the site of the worst railway disaster in the history of the Pocahontas coalfields. [See "The Great Maybeury Railroad Disaster," by Stuart McGehee; Spring 1991.] On

MAP BY TERRY LIVELY

The genteel lives of the millionaire coal operators and their families in Bramwell stood in sharp contrast to life in the surrounding industrial communities during the 1920's. This well-dressed party in Bramwell includes W.E.E. Kepler, secretary of the Pocahontas Operators Association, at left. Others are unidentified. Photograph courtesy of ERCA, date unknown.

the evening of June 30, 1937, westbound Norfolk & Western freight No. 85 plunged off the east end of the Maybeury trestle, killing three crewmen and a pedestrian, and creating an inferno that tied up rail and road traffic for weeks. Fifty-eight boxcars spilled liquor, canned pineapple, and Vicks VapoRub over the site, and the explosions shattered windows a quarter-mile away. Today, the foundations of the old bridge are visible on the left side of the Maybeury curve.

Disaster seemed to lurk around these turns. A mile north at Switchback, a deadly combination of coal dust and methane ignited at the Lick Branch Mine, killing 50 miners on December 29, 1908. Less than two weeks later, 67 miners died in another explosion, likely caused when an inexperienced miner overcharged his shot.

In two more miles, Route 52 passes the little town of Elkhorn, deep in a valley on the right. It was one of the first and definitely the prettiest of the coal camps established in McDowell County. ("We call them coal *communities*," historian McGehee says. "*Camps* sounds pejorative.") Towns of three-room Jenny Lind houses were thrown up almost overnight after 1887 when the N&W opened a tunnel through the mountains into McDowell County. For years, the railroad was the only reliable source of transportation in or out of southern West Virginia. The unpaved roads were impassable in winter, and wagons mired in muddy slush would stay that way until spring.

John J. Lincoln, a Quaker coal operator whose attractive green-and-white home still sits below the right bank of Route 52, is remembered by Elkhorn residents for his support of schools and cultural activities, such as the Elkhorn Orchestra. His own children, however, attended the smallest school in West Virginia — a green-and-

Below: Coke ovens at night in Elkhorn, courtesy of ERCA, date unknown.

Inset: The remains of several beehive coke ovens are still visible along Route 52, north of Bramwell. Photograph by Su Clauson-Wicker.

white cottage on their lawn. [See "A Busy Time in McDowell History: Looking Back With John J. Lincoln," compiled by Stuart McGehee; Fall 1989.]

Gold-domed Saint Mary Russian Orthodox Church, built in 1890 and rebuilt in 1910 after a fire, still presides over the town and remained in active use until 2000, when the congregation built a new place of worship in Bluefield. For many years, even though most parishioners lived elsewhere, they returned each Sunday to their childhood church. A coal train rattled by six or seven times a sermon, requiring the priest to don a wireless microphone. Until the 1980's, most of the service was conducted in the Slavic language of the church's primary congregation — descendants of Belorussians from the Carpathian Mountains in eastern Europe. The church was so popular among those who wanted to hear their own language spoken that people often had to stand outside the windows. Walking through the mines from the opposite side of the mountain was often the quickest route to church.

The 1937 train wreck in Maybeury killed at least four people and destroyed 58 railroad cars. Photograph by Bernard Wills, courtesy of ERCA.

Elkhorn's narrow streets are lined with still-used coal bins. The old mule sheds, though, now contain small cars or motorcycles. Coal towns like this border Route 52 throughout the coalfields — 132 separate communities once. The architecture varies with the distance from Bluefield; the older villages, built first in the railway's westward expansion, have a Victorian look. The blue-gray company store at Maybeury sports a mansard roof and gables, but Keystone and Kimball, for example, are composed of decidedly industrial red brick row houses.

Some towns, hit by the double blow of repeated flooding and mine mechanization, are straggling arrays of vacant hotels, storefront

More Coal Heritage

West Virginia's rich and diverse coal heritage has become a subject of increased study during recent years. In 1999, the National Park Service and the state of West Virginia began a partnership to develop an 11-county National Coal Heritage Area, one of only 23 such National Heritage Areas in the nation. The area encompasses the entire West Virginia portion of U.S. Route 52, its host counties, and neighboring counties. It seeks to preserve, protect, and interpret the culture, properties, and historic structures associated with coal mining in those areas.

Through the program, funding and other assistance will be made available to help support a range of historical projects. Currently, a grant program is being developed, environmental impact statements are being prepared, and other plans are taking shape. For a brochure about the National Coal Heritage Area or for further information, call Jeff Harpold at (304)558-0220 ext. 148, write to National Coal Heritage Area, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305, or visit the Web site www.coalheritage.org.

U.S. Route 52 between Bluefield and Welch is also part of the Coal Heritage Trail, designated as a National Scenic Byway. At Welch, the trail heads north along State Route 16 to Beckley, with a spur extending through sections of Fayette County. The Coal Heritage Trail Association, which administrates and coordinates trail activities, is a non-profit organization made up of mayors, civic leaders, and others from the communities along the trail route. Their goals include economic and tourism development in the trail area, preservation, interpretation, and outreach.

The recently renovated Bramwell Depot in Bramwell is scheduled to be the new offices of the Coal Heritage Trail Association. It will also house an interpretive center and will provide travel information for the region. For more about the Coal Heritage Trail, check the Web site www.coalheritagetrail.org, or write to Coal Heritage Trail Association, City Hall, Bramwell, WV 24715.

Southern West Virginia was home to a diverse mix of European and other ethnic groups as coal companies recruited immigrants and blacks to work in the mines during the early 20th century. St. Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Elkhorn stands as a reminder of one immigrant community. This photograph of the church and its congregation was taken in 1995 by Melvin Grubb, courtesy of ERCA.

churches, and storage buildings. Unemployment in the area is officially listed at 10-12%, but some say that it's much higher. The first U.S. food stamps were issued in McDowell County. Poverty, McGehee says, may be worse here than in Harlem, yet there is surprisingly little crime.

"This was a multicultural area, not the Scots-Irish breed we identify as Appalachian stock," McGehee says. "There simply weren't enough people in this sparsely populated farm area to serve the mining needs, so immigrants and blacks from the deep South were imported. And though they may have lived apart, they mixed in the mines where your face is always black. It wasn't unusual to meet Southern blacks who spoke enough Polish to get by, or see mules who understood only Italian orders." [See "Mining in the Melting Pot: The African American Influx Into the McDowell County Mines," by Jean Battlo; Winter 1997.]

Farther west is Northfork, then Keystone, formerly notorious across the East for its flourishing brothels in the Cinder Bottom section. [See "Cinder Bottom: A Coalfields Red-Light District," by Jean Battlo; Summer 1994.] More than 20 bawdy houses once operated in a two-block red-light district between Coal and Cinder streets. Lawlessness seemed to abound here, where the famed outlaw John Hardy killed his man in an 1893 crap game, and rumor says that bodies showed up in the cut south of town each weekend in the early 1900's. At the same time, this cosmopolitan community founded the area's first Jewish synagogue in 1903 and sold its first real estate to African Americans in 1892.

Route 52 follows the railroad tracks past the quiet remnants of Landgraff and Kimball, where the stately Patterson War Memorial — the first black American Legion building in the U.S. and the only existing monument to African American participation in the first World War — is slated for renovation. A thick, rich coal seam is exposed and visible on the right-hand side of the road in Kimball. Evidence of the historic coal industry, old tipples, and abandoned mine shafts dominate the view in central McDowell County, while much of the present-day mining activity takes place discreetly beyond the view of casual travelers.

The county seat at Welch, once so congested it was called "Little New York" by the *New York Times*, now seems over-built for its dwindling population. [See "On the Road, 1940: Job Hunting on Route 52," by Mel Fiske; Spring 1994.] When the N&W railroad reached Welch in 1891, the surrounding coal seams were opened up, and a town sprang up within two years. Railroads were

119, before modern Corridor G was built several miles to the west of here. Route 44 winds its way north to the county seat of Logan, passing through several small, interesting communities, including Sarah Ann, the burial place of Devil Anse Hatfield. [See "The Devil Turned to Stone," by Robert Spence; page 27.]

Re-entering Mingo County just past Mountain View, Route 52 descends the mountain through a succession of small villages along the banks of Pigeon Creek — Pie, Musick, Varney, Taylorville, and Delbarton, where restaurants serve up country food cooked over coal-burning stoves.

Cinderella, three miles out of Williamson, is named for the trademark coal produced in Sycamore Coal mines. Not far from these mines, dozens of striking miners and their families were fired upon and thrown in jail by coal interests and a Williamson citizens' militia in June 1920. By the time the UMWA strike was called off in October 1922, it had bankrupted the district union and led to more than 20 deaths. It was not until the Roosevelt administration 10 years later that the mines of southern West Virginia were unionized.

Williamson, at the foot of the mountain, is the seat of Mingo County, resting on the north bank of the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy River. It was established in 1892 when the N&W railroad came in to haul off coal from some 100 mines in the lucrative Williamson coalfields.

Williamson's Chamber of Commerce stands cheek-by-jowl with the towering Mountaineer Hotel. Called the Coal House, the small black building is constructed entirely of coal, with walls two-feet thick. It is a fitting tribute to the rock that gave character, sustenance, and notoriety to this rugged region. [See "Williamson's Coal House"; page 24.]

At Williamson, Route 52 intersects U.S. Route 119, which crosses the river into Kentucky. Meanwhile, Route 52 hugs the West Virginia shore on its way north to Kenova, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis before it quietly merges with U.S. Route 41 in a northern Indiana cornfield. Nowhere along its course, however, does Route 52 have the unique character it displays along its slow, demanding, and historic stretch through the southern West Virginia coal country.

SU CLAUSON-WICKER from Blacksburg, Virginia, is the author of the *Inn to Inn Walking Guide for Virginia and West Virginia*, winner of the 2001 Best Book award from the West Virginia Division of Tourism. Formerly the editor of *Virginia Tech Magazine* and a reporter for the *Roanoke Times*, she now works as a freelance writer and photographer. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

The coal classification yard in Williamson can handle as many as 5,400 loaded coal cars at one time. Photograph courtesy of ERCA, date unknown.

"I Never Wanted to Live Anywhere Else"

Wallace W. Farley of Williamson

By Robert Spence

Wallace Williamson Farley can look over the Tug Valley from his home at the top of cemetery hill in West Williamson, just across from "the heart of the billion-dollar coalfield." He seems to have known all the founders of the city of Williamson and is himself one of its most characteristic citizens, having watched its development throughout his own 82 years of a productive, interesting, and gentlemanly life.

Wallace is a namesake of Williamson's founder Wallace J. Williamson and knows the city from the inside. There are few better ways of learning about this city than to spend a morning talking with Wallace and listening to his tales of growing up here and of what Williamson has meant to Mingo County, the region of Tug Fork, and southern West Virginia.

Wallace Farley was born on July 28, 1919. By that time, the city and the county were already well-established as part of the booming railroad and mining economy in southern West Virginia. According to Wallace, "Williamson seemed to have everything that people needed to live well and be content." The city's major avenues were lined with an array of shops and other concerns. "You could find almost anything you wanted," Wallace says. There were clothing and appliance stores, boardinghouses and hotels, places to eat, and a variety of entertainments including three theaters. At one time, there were three newspapers, as well: the *Williamson Daily News*, the *Mingo Republican*, and the *Mingo Democrat*. To a young man growing up, it all seemed picturesque and endlessly active. "Back when I was a youngster," Wallace says, "you had to elbow your way around people because they were shoulder-to-shoulder in town on Saturday afternoons."

Wallace was born in downtown

Building Grade School, a structure which stood on Sixth Avenue near Harvey and Wallace streets. "My favorite subjects were history, geography, and math," he remembers. "But school was something I tolerated rather than enjoyed. I always looked forward to being out and about."

Like most youngsters of the time, Wallace played baseball and marbles with other boys. He especially enjoyed Saturdays in Williamson. "I did odd jobs around," he says. "There wasn't much money around, but you didn't need a lot. You could go to the movies for a dime, and a cone of ice cream cost a nickel. So, if you made a quarter, you could have fun all day with it."

Wallace remembers with special pleasure the times during the summer when a circus would come to town. The circus train would arrive and unload performers and strange-looking beasts at the end of town.

It was an exciting place for a young man. "Williamson was a real busy place because it was the trading hub of the whole region," he says. There were 15 passenger trains every day because it was on the N&W railroad's main line. Some were just local trains, but others were through trains, and Wallace saw people of every description passing through on business.

"I've always thought that one of Williamson's real assets was that the people were so friendly. Many, many people have told me the same thing. I guess that is true, in part, because we had so many types of people coming through on business. That helped make the town popular and active," he says.

With his friendly disposition, Wallace soon became acquainted with many of the movers and shakers in the city and the county. "One of the jobs I had as a boy for a while was selling the *Williamson Daily News*," he recalls. "A good customer

"Williamson seemed to have everything that people needed to live well and be content," says Wallace Farley. Photograph by Michael Keller.

was Wells Goodykoontz who was the representative in the U.S. Congress from here for some time. I remember him well. He was tall and stately, and he always bought the paper from me."

Wallace also was acquainted with the family of Newton J. Keadle, Mingo County's first sheriff. "I knew his sons and daughters, all of them," he says. "Their father was one of the city's most well-known public figures, though I did not know them as well as I did some of the Hatfields."

He recalled Greenway Hatfield for a special reason. "Greenway was elected sheriff three times, and one of his grandsons, Wayne Hatfield, Jr., was a special friend of mine. There was one election where the Hatfields were elected sheriff in three counties: Logan, Mingo, and McDowell. In one election, Greenway was chosen sheriff here and named his son Wayne Hatfield,

The old Mingo County Courthouse in Williamson, photographer and date unknown.

Sr., as jailor."

When Wallace was young, Mingo County's jailor lived behind the old courthouse. The lot beside the courthouse became vacant. O.W. Evans, then the manager of the Norfolk & Western's fuel department and president of the Chamber of Commerce, suggested constructing a building made from coal to symbolize the valley's main concern. An architect named H.T. Hicks from Welch designed the structure. The famous Coal House was built from 65 tons of coal donated by the Leckie Collieries Company, Crystal Block Coal Company, and the Winifrede Block Coal Company. It was completed in 1933.

"Young Wayne Hatfield and I were the best of friends the year the Coal House was built," Wallace recalls. "So every day, nearly, we'd go out there and watch the men working on that building. There were about six or eight men working all the time, and it took about a year to finish the building. But that construction held the

Williamson's Coal House

There is no more enduring symbol of southern West Virginia's coal heritage than the Coal House in Williamson. Black, shiny, and proud, it stands at the intersection of Second Avenue and Court Street on the northwest corner of the Mingo County Courthouse property.

The Coal House is thought to be the only structure in the world built entirely of coal — 65 tons of it, high-grade, low-sulphur, smokeless, bituminous, and two-feet-thick. Graceful arches frame all of the windows and doors, and a colossal entrance portal is flanked by two corner buttresses. Built of randomly shaped blocks of coal, the building rests on masonry blocks set on concrete footing. It was completed in 1933. [A ranch-style residence and gift shop were later built in Greenbrier County, using coal facades over conventional wooden frame structures. See "The Other Coal House," by Belinda Anderson; page 60.]

The Williamson Coal House was the brainchild of O.W. Evans, whose dual role as fuel manager for the N&W railroad and as president of the local Chamber of Commerce led to a project which successfully combined area economic interests and civic pride. From the outset, the project was heartily embraced by the entire community. Coal companies donated

The world-famous Coal House in Williamson. Photographs by Michael Keller.

coal, business leaders chipped in money and materials, and local workers — many idled by the Great Depression — donated the necessary labor.

The designers and building supervisors were Welch architect H.T. Hicks and Williamson merchant D.M. Goode. Two community leaders who were instrumental in lining up support for the unusual project were attorney and politician Wells Goodykoontz and M.Z. White, a local banker and prominent political figure. Upon its completion, a large bronze plaque was installed on the Coal House listing not only the architects and major sponsors, but every local company, businessman, mason, carpenter, and laborer who worked on the building.

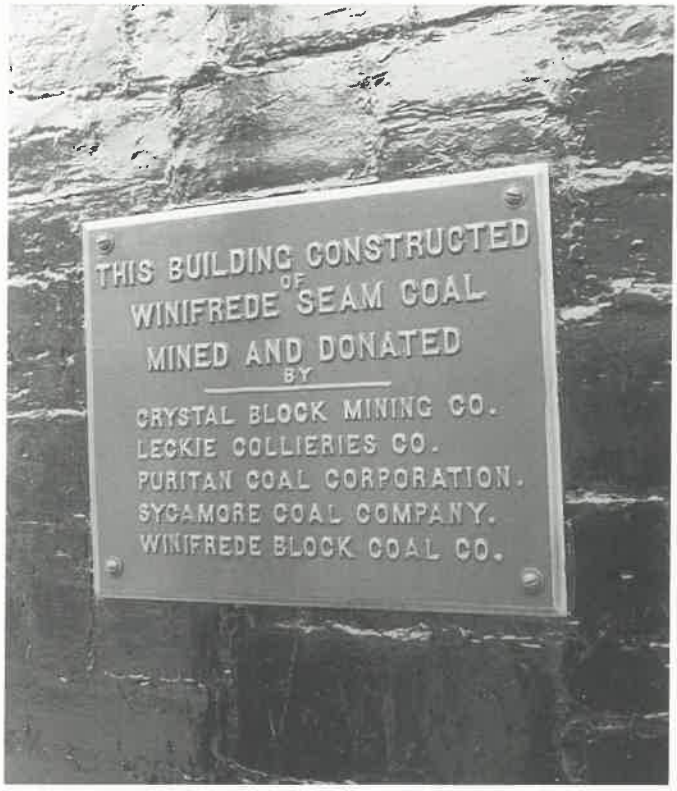
It was built to house the Tug Valley Chamber of Commerce, as it does to this day. According to Cecil Hatfield, director of the chamber for the past 13 years, the building started out as a one-room chamber office and also functioned as a visitors' center for Williamson, Mingo County, and the southern coalfields region. It still serves those purposes, he is proud to point out, but the interior has been renovated and modernized several times since 1933. It is now divided into three separate office suites and hosts the local United Way and Marshall

public's attention all the time, and it is still something that Williamson people are very proud to have done."

Soon after the Coal House was finished, Wallace attended Williamson High School, where he graduated with the class of 1937 at age 18. "I went to work right away," he says. "That was true of most of the young people I knew then. I took a job with the Williamson Supply Company and worked for them until the United States got into the second World War."

Williamson Supply Company was one of the major industrial outfitters in the area. The company sold mining supplies along with a wide range of other items needed by local businesses, including heating and plumbing supplies and lesser hardware items, as well. Wallace says that it remained a large business during World War II, a very active time for this coal-producing region.

"I decided to go into the U.S. Navy when we got in the war," he recalls. "That seemed like the best



The Coal House was built during the height of the Great Depression with materials and labor donated by coal companies and individuals from Williamson and neighboring communities. The building, the first of its kind in the world, was completed in 1933.

Postcards, coal memorabilia, and local information are available inside the Coal House, which houses the Tug Valley Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, and an office of Marshall University.

University Southern Mountain Center in addition to the chamber and welcome center. The offices are brightly lit and comfortable, sporting walnut paneling, wall-to-wall carpeting, air-conditioning, and all the modern conveniences. In fact, none of the building's 65 tons of coal is visible on the interior of the structure.

Outside, however, the Coal House shows its true colors. Every two years, the lustrous black coal is coated with a weatherproof varnish to protect it from the elements. In spite of the highly volatile qualities of processed coal, the heavy blocks used to build the Coal House are not considered to be a fire hazard, and the building is insured without question by a nationally known insurance company.

In 1980, the Coal House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a testament to its significance as a structure and as a source of overwhelming community pride. Special thanks to the West Virginia Historic Preservation Office for providing much of the above information. The Coal House welcomes visitors. For information, call the Tug Valley Chamber of Commerce at (304)235-5240.

thing to do. I was in the Navy between December 18, 1941, and October 25, 1945. I served aboard the USS *Biscayne* and the USS *Corvis*, where I was the storekeeper. I was involved in five invasions: northern Africa, Sicily, Sardenia, Anzio, and Okinawa." When his honorable service in the war ended, Wallace returned home to Williamson to resume his peaceful life with Williamson Supply, where he worked for 22 years.

Wallace married Viola Vass on July 12, 1948. The couple had two sons: Wallace, Jr., and Frederick. "I might tell you this story while we're talking about marriages," he adds with a big grin. "We used to keep the Indian that you see at the Coal House down at the courthouse. There was a big fountain around the Indian. When a young fellow got married, it was fun when the boys would take him down and throw him in that fountain." Asked if that had happened to him, Wallace laughs again and says that the prank had gone out of style by the time he was married. Wallace and Viola were together for 39 years, until her death in 1987.

"I think too much has been made of that time and the mine war that began in Matewan in 1920. I think it might be for the best if we thought some about the good things that happened here, or the positive achievements."

Like many others from the region, Wallace is aware that Williamson and Mingo County have suffered through some dark times. "Everyone knows about the Hatfield and McCoy feud," he says. "But I think too much has been made of that time and the mine war that began in Matewan in 1920. I think it might be for the best if we thought some about the good things that happened here, or the positive achievements."

Wallace Farley is proud to call Williamson home. Photograph by Michael Keller.

A likable man, Wallace has been called upon by his neighbors to help his hometown in various ways. His geniality came into play once when the citizens needed the services of one of its most well-known public officials. Wallace was part of a delegation that went to see former U.S. Senator Henry D. Hatfield to ask his support for one of Williamson's public projects. "I was very impressed by Senator Hatfield," Wallace says. "He was a big man with much dignity, and he helped us very much. I remember after we explained the matter to him that he picked up a telephone and called whoever was in charge and talked to them like he had just seen them on the street. He was one of the best leaders we ever had and did many great things for Mingo County." [See "The Devil Turned To Stone," by Robert Spence; page 27.]

After working for Williamson Supply for more than two decades, Wallace was asked to take over the supply operations of the Mingo County Board of Education. "So I took that job and worked at that until I retired for keeps in 1981," he recalls.

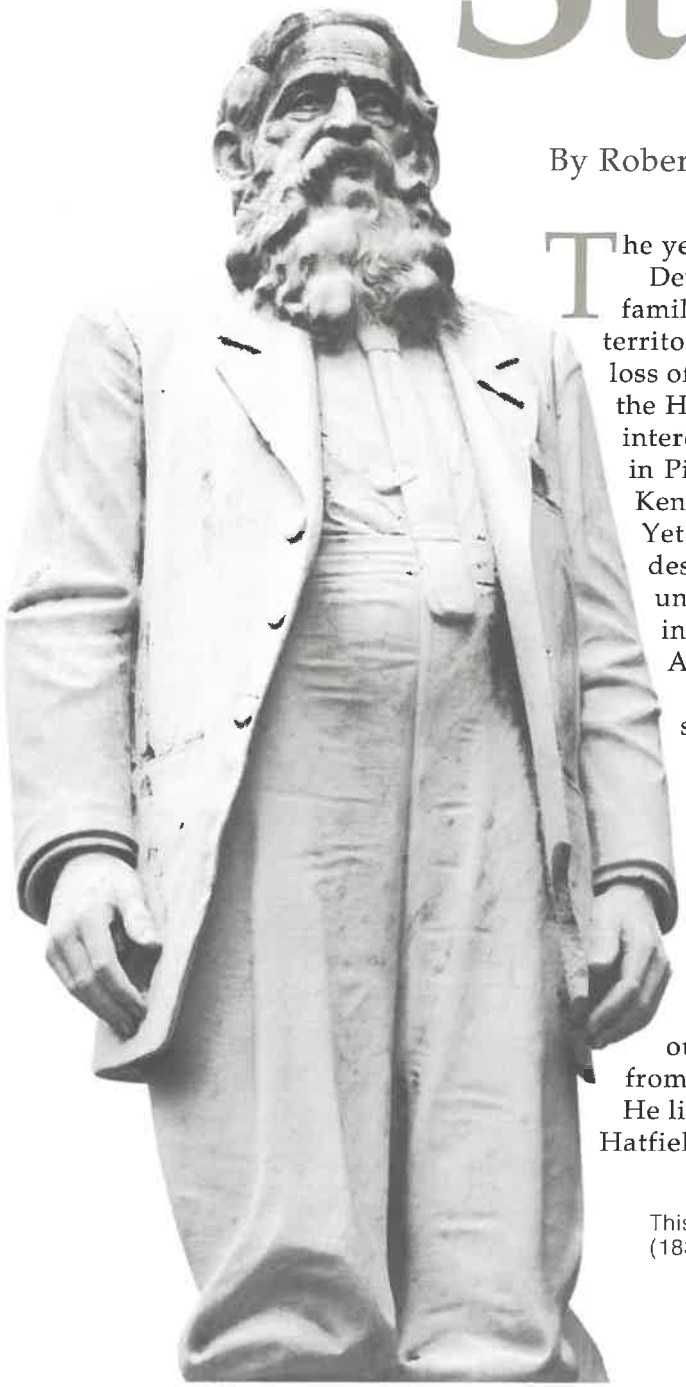
Through the years, Wallace's love of his family, his work, and his side interests have all been centered on his community. "We have had problems, like all places," he says. "The flood of 1977 destroyed a lot. When they built the new flood wall, it took away everything on First Avenue. We have had several bad fires. But through it all, this has been a good place to live. It grew continually until recent years, and I have been happy to be part of it all."

Communities like Williamson are well-served by the people like Wallace who call them home. "I never wanted to live anywhere else," Wallace says. "I think the people here are the best, and I am glad to have so many friends in one place."

ROBERT SPENCE was born and raised in Logan where his relatives have lived since 1790. A graduate of Marshall University with a bachelor's degree in journalism, he worked for the *Logan News* for 11 years and now works as a freelance writer. He is a frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor whose most recent article appeared in our Spring 2001 issue.

The Devil Turned to Stone

By Robert Spence



The year was 1900, and the feud was over.

Devil Anse Hatfield had taken the cautious step of moving his family to the head of Main Island Creek, away from the feud territory along Tug Fork. Randal McCoy seemed shattered by the loss of two children and the merciless beating of his wife Sarah by the Hatfields the night of January 1, 1888, and no longer seemed interested in revenge. Cottontop Ellison Mounts had been hanged in Pikeville. Wall Hatfield, Anse's older brother, had died in a Kentucky prison after being sentenced for feud-related crimes. Yet the younger Hatfields needed to come to terms with their destinies as individual men and women. The way this happened underscored the end of the feud and moved the Hatfield family into another era. [See "After the Feud: Livicey Hatfield's Photo Album," by Robert Spence; Fall 1998.]

At first glance, Henry Drury Hatfield and William Anderson "Cap" Hatfield seem remarkably different. Henry, born in 1875, before the feud began, appears at first to be the more sober, responsible, and cultivated man. He became a physician, worked as a "company doctor" in McDowell County, and created hospitals in Welch, Logan, and Huntington. He enjoyed a successful political career, first as a local politician, then as a West Virginia State Senator, Governor of West Virginia, and United States Senator.

Cap Hatfield, on the other hand, suffered in the wake of the feud. A marked man often considered the most dangerous individual in southern West Virginia, he was forced to flee from the region.

He lived for a time in Oklahoma and Colorado. A son, Shepherd Hatfield, died of malnutrition while Cap was absent — as much a

This statue marks the resting place of Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield (1839-1921) in Sarah Ann, Logan County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

William Anderson "Cap" Hatfield, date unknown.

casualty of the feud as anyone who was shot dead. Cap later believed that he himself had been misused by Devil Anse, and the resentments lingered until Cap's death in 1930. Yet in time, Cap "read the law" and was admitted to the West Virginia Bar Association, making a living for many years as a peace officer.

"It took time, the growth of the religious spirit, and education before the passions of the feud years faded," Cap's son Coleman A. Hatfield later wrote in his unpublished manuscript, *Tales of the Feuding Hatfields*.

Despite the apparent contrast of fortunes between Cap and Henry Hatfield, there were deeper similarities. The two men were double first cousins — sons of two brothers who married two sisters — a relationship similar, genetically speaking, to that of whole brothers. And the two Hatfields shared the same time, reacting to the new era in much the same way.

The year 1900 is a dividing line in the history of West Virginia in more ways than one. South of the Kanawha River, the coalfield counties exploded as a new society was created. The snake-like lines of the Norfolk & Western, Chesapeake & Ohio, and Virginian railroads twisted their ways into places as centrally located as downtown Logan and Welch, and as remote as Matewan.

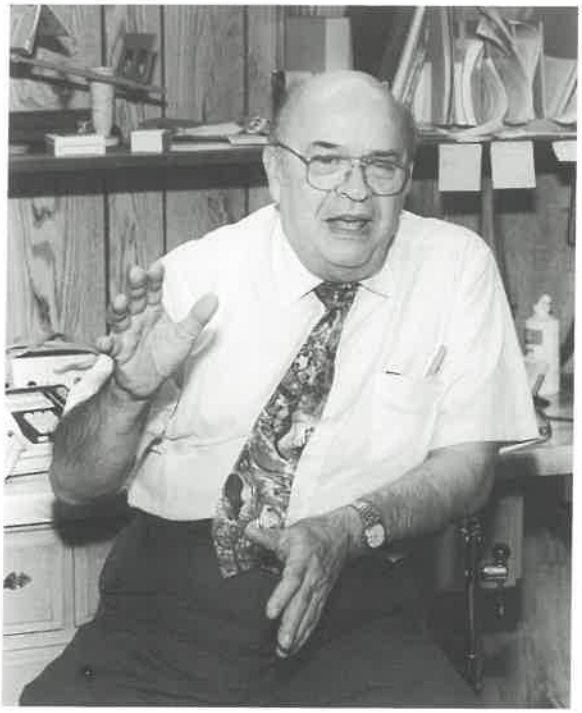
As this network of coal mines and railroad lines took shape, many local residents sold their isolated farms and moved closer to one another. The older lifestyle of farming in the summer and timbering in the winter changed into a relatively more sophisticated economy and forced the mountaineers to become more dependent on each other and upon the rush of newcomers from distant lands.

Cap and Henry Hatfield had to adapt to this changing condition, just as all their neighbors had to adjust to their new lives. Yet each sought to maintain some influence in the new society instead of watching their influence wane. Henry was more reflective and thoughtful. Cap was more active and dynamic. But both men sought to insure that they and their children would direct their own lives rather than be dominated by the sudden wealth that was circulating in the Tug and Guyandotte watersheds.

Among Cap's proudest achievements was his son Coleman A. Hatfield, whose tireless efforts to document the events of the feud years were the focus of a 1995 GOLDENSEAL story. [See "The Scholar and the Legend: The Research of Coleman A. Hatfield," by Robert Spence; Fall 1995.] Coleman attended Concord College where he earned his undergraduate degree, and went to work as manager of housing for a coal company in his home area of Main Island Creek. After a few years at that job, he wanted a better life and attended the law school at West Virginia University. Coleman married Mossie Caldwell, and the young couple had four children of their own. The eldest, Aileen Hatfield, was one of the first women to graduate from WVU's law school. The youngest child, Coleman C. Hatfield, became an optometrist and today continues his family's ongoing research into feud lore.

As Cap's offspring sought to change their society for the better through the practice of law and medicine, Henry Hatfield enjoyed his blazing success. When he be-

Governor Henry D. Hatfield. Date unknown, courtesy of WVSA.



Dr. Coleman C. Hatfield, grandson of Cap Hatfield, is an optometrist in Logan and an expert on Hatfield family history. Photograph by Michael Keller.

came West Virginia's governor after the election of 1912, there was no workman's compensation law in the United States. Henry's proudest professional achievement was getting such a law enacted by the legislature. That law was widely admired and became a model for the entire nation.

The tale of Henry's actions during the bitter mine strike on Paint and Cabin creeks in 1912 and 1913 is an often-told story. He acted decisively to end the strike, but he also sought to bring better conditions to that section and the entire coalfield after the violence ended. Best described as a progressive Republican, Henry wanted his state to improve gradually rather than force sudden changes. [See "Three Sides to the Story: Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars," by Joseph Platania; Summer 1985.]

In this and other ways, the multiplying Hatfield family was striving for a better West Virginia. Devil Anse's mother Nancy Vance Hatfield had served her neighbors as a midwife. Seven of her grandsons followed suit by becoming doctors. One, Daniel S. Hatfield, died heroically trying to find a cure for "parrot fever." Other family members joined their society in a variety of capacities — doctors, lawyers, mining officials, workers, lawmen, teachers, preachers, and businessmen.

The changing times had a profound effect on the feud leaders. In 1889, the year the worst consequences of the feud fell on his head, Devil Anse Hatfield became 50 years old — a significant milestone in many lives. Anse realized that the troubles would go on and on if he remained on the Tug, placing his younger children in greater danger and further darkening the Hatfield reputation. These concerns underlie his relocation to the head of Main Island Creek.

As Anse aged, he became a more familiar figure around Logan. Many tales are told of his usefulness in various court trials. Many have recalled fondly the increasingly relaxed way he lived in his final years. The story of his baptism by Uncle Dyke Garrett is the stuff of legend, though perhaps it is an exaggerated symbol of the pragmatic way Anse approached his end.

When the end came in January 1921, a score of years had passed since Anse had been in danger. A little more than a year later, Anse's son Tennis Hatfield was active in Logan County politics and bought the famous statue that stands today at the feudist's gravesite in Sarah Ann. Photographs taken at that time reflect the obvious pride the surviving Hatfields felt about their various achievements.

By 1988, a century after the feud reached its violent peak, historians, authors, and family members finally began to view the feud dispassionately, recognizing that it was one unique chain of events in the history of Appalachia, not something characteristic of the people as a whole.

Today, one can stand at the grave and statue of Devil Anse, regretting the violence of the feud but understanding its causes. In that mood, it is possible to think of the phrase, "The devil turned to stone."

The Hatfield family at the grave of patriarch Devil Anse Hatfield, 1922. Photograph courtesy of WVSA.

Doing Fine

A Visit With Melvin Harris

By Ross Ballard II

The first thing I noticed about Melvin Harris was his handshake. At 99 years old, I was expecting him to be wheeled into the interview, giving me a small wave. To my surprise, he strutted in very much under his own power and gave me a firm grip and a big smile. "Hello, sir. My name is Melvin Leon Harris." I had been told that he was a master storyteller, so I made the trek to the McDowell County Continuous Care Center in Gary to see if I could persuade him to tell me about his days as a miner and schoolteacher.

After a friendly exchange, we settled in for my history lesson. Melvin's posture was straight, with his hands folded atop his hickory cane. He looked very much like the wise man whom I would come to know through several visits over the next few months. I ask him to tell me about his life.

"I was born in North Carolina on December 6, 1902, and was there until I was two," he begins. "My

Melvin Leon Harris, age 99, at home in McDowell County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

at 99

"The older miners, they watched out for the younger ones. I think that nearly all older men feel that way. Watching out for others makes us feel useful and respected. Young men need guidance when life gets dangerous."

father was from Holland and my mother from North Carolina. I don't know what that made me. My mother was very young, black, and unmarried. When it was time for me to leave, I came to the little town of Tidewater [McDowell County]. It was named for the coal company there. Later, when it got a little bigger, they changed the name to Kimball.

"I came to live with my mother's sister Haddie Harris. Aunt Haddie ran a boardinghouse for the miners who were filling the small town. She looked after me and didn't put up with any foolishness. If you said something she didn't like or took the Lord's name in vain, well, it could get pretty cold sleeping on the porch.

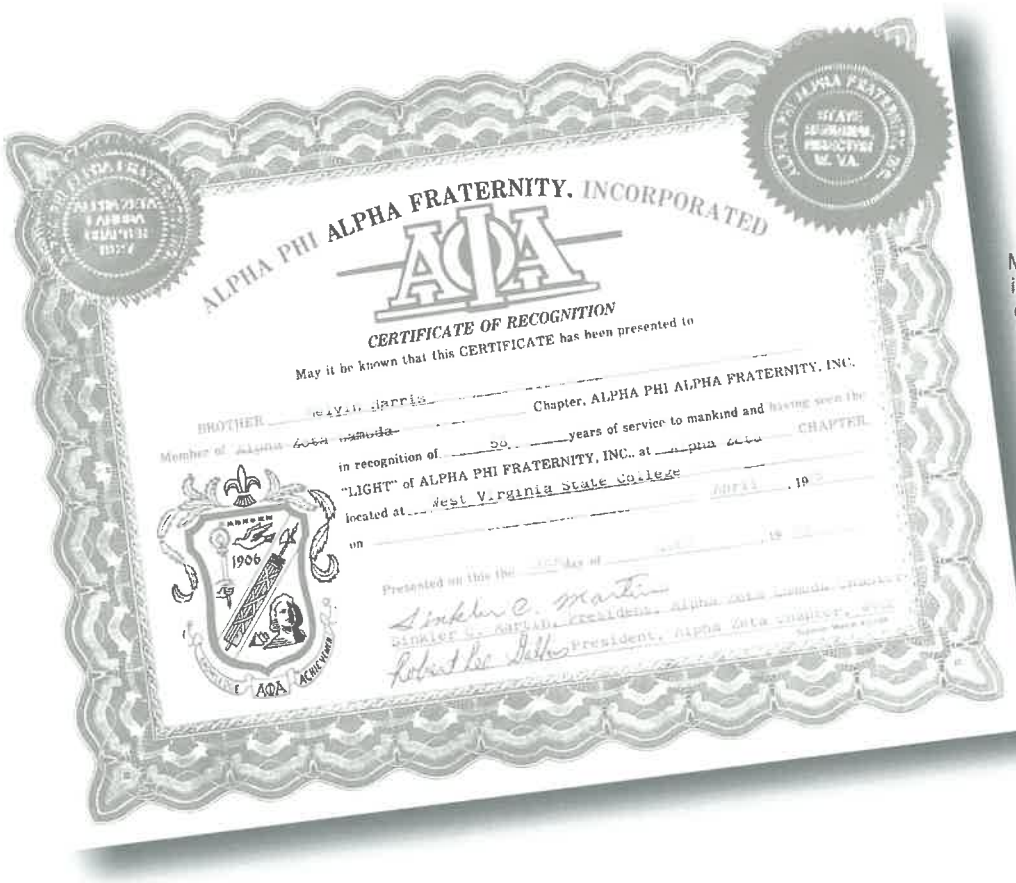
"It was she who named me Melvin Harris. Now, most names in our time had three parts. I don't know what they have now, but we had three. She didn't know how to get that middle one. She said she thought and wondered about it until it came to her. Above us, a man had a very beautiful shepherd d o g . Everybody liked the dog. It had once been a lost puppy but now had a good home. The dog's name was Leon. She said she knew now and called me Melvin Leon Harris! Later when I found out, I asked, 'Momma [as Melvin called his aunt], why did you name me after a dog?' She told me it was because the dog was so beautiful. I think she was just sweet-talkin' me. I loved Momma so much."

Melvin was an industrious young man and found work in the mines during the time of the first World War.

"Well, I was 14," he continues, "but I told the man I was 15 so I could go underground. He gave me a job trappin'. You know, trappin' was opening doors for the miners and their mules. Trappin' was usually a boy's first job in the mines back then. After I had been opening doors a while, I got to where I would lean back on a big board and sleep until the first miners came wanting me to be ready. Sometimes it'd be a while before they came. I remember once, I heard one coming, but I just couldn't wake up. All of a sudden, I felt hot breath on me like the devil. I woke up, and a big mule was looking me right in the face! The old miner laughed and told me I'd learned that lesson the easy way. Scared me so much I never fell asleep at my job again. The older miners, they watched out for the younger ones. I think that nearly all older men feel that way. Watching out for others makes us feel useful and respected. Young men need guidance when life gets dangerous.

"I was working in the mines and going to school. One day after class, the teacher said, 'Melvin, they need a teacher down in Murrytown. You should try teaching.' A lawyer had been teaching there. He hadn't gotten too many cases and had been substituting at the little school. His name was Bassett Carter. He wasn't much of a lawyer, but he was a fine man who loved the children. One day, I was talking with Mr. Carter about being a teacher, when a little boy asked him, 'Mr. Carter, what makes it thunder?' He bent down and said, 'I'm going to tell you now, and don't you forget it. When I kiss a pretty girl/It puts me on a wonder!/I jump so high, I bump the sky./And that's what makes it thunder.'"

As a young boy, Melvin came to live with his mother's sister Haddie Harris in Tidewater, McDowell County. He went to work in the local coal mines at age 14. Melvin is shown here in Tidewater, date unknown.


ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INCORPORATED

ΑΦΑ

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

May it be known that this CERTIFICATE has been presented to

BROTHER Melvin Harris

Chapter, ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INC.

in recognition of 50 years of service to mankind and

"LIGHT" of ALPHA PHI FRATERNITY, INC., at

located at West Virginia State College

on

1906

ΑΦΑ

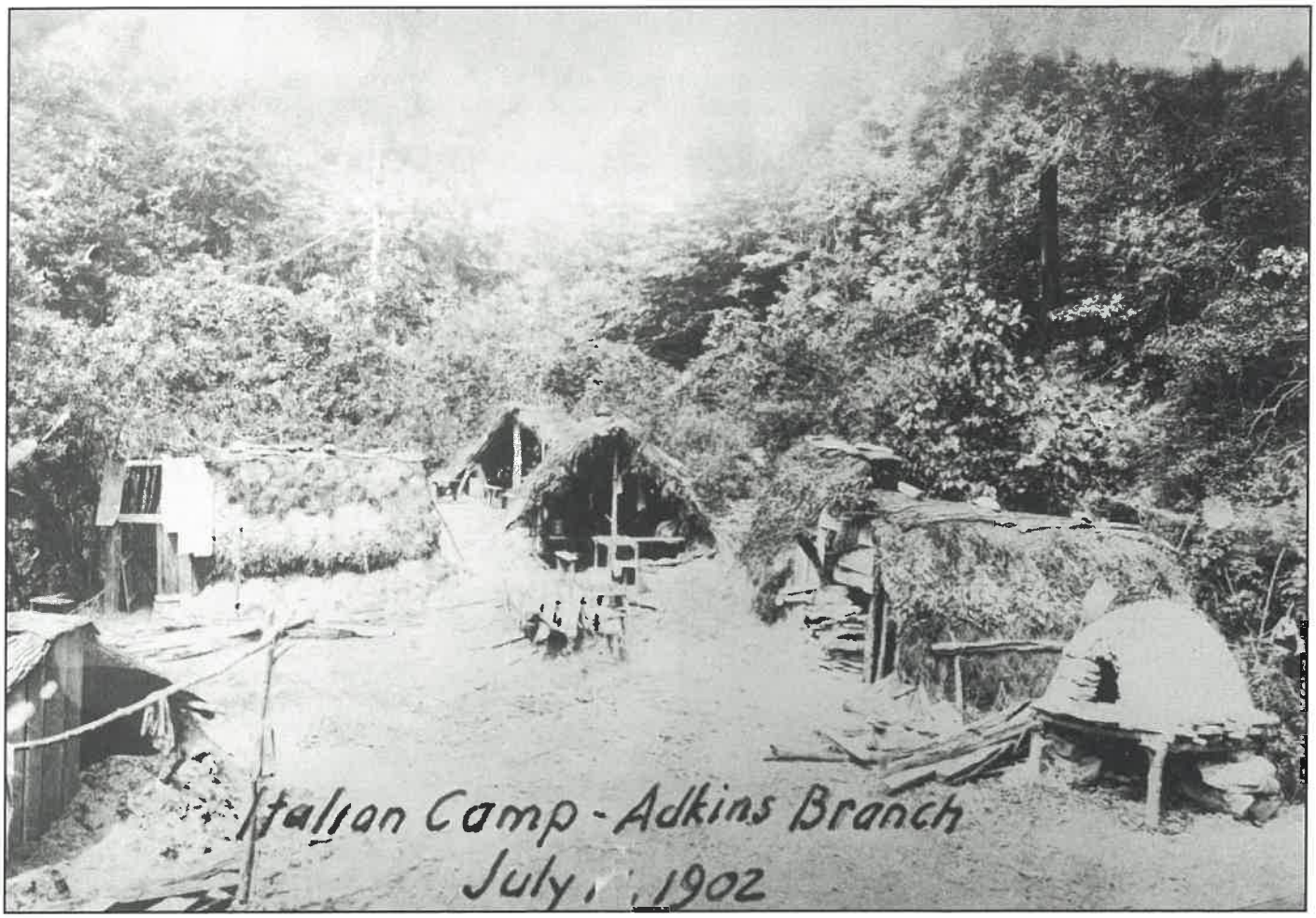
Melvin realized the importance of a good education. He entered West Virginia State College in 1923, and received his bachelor of science degree in business administration in 1927. He returned to the school in 1944 and took classes in mining education. In 1983, he received this certificate of recognition from Alpha Phi Alpha, the nation's oldest black Greek fraternity.

Melvin knew that in order for him to better himself, he would need to get a solid education. In McDowell County during the 1920's, few young men moved beyond grade school. For minorities, the chances of getting into college and affording a decent education were odds to beat all odds. In August 1923, Melvin Harris was given the chance of a lifetime.

"I went to school at West Virginia State College at Institute," he says. "'We rooty-toot for Institute!' We were there when it was a young place. It was back during the making of the school. I have to say it was the making of me, too. Not that I learned so much in my head, but I saw things, things that taught me to be a man. Self-respect and hard work go a long way making young men.

"You know, people were kind way back then. I remember one important man asked me, 'Do you want to go to school?' I said yes. He said, 'If you want to go to school, then I'll help you. I ain't got much, but I'll help you.' And he did. He even had folks come to the station sometimes to meet me when I was going back to Institute. Everyone helped. Somebody might say, 'What's he doing now?' And someone would tell them, 'Did you know he's going to school? We should help him.' When it came time to go, the men would come ask me, did I need anything? They'd yell, 'Hey, Coot!' They called me Coot. 'Hey, Coot. Do ya need anything?' One, he'd give a dollar, and another might give you two dollars. Before long, you might have $20 that night. If they loved you, and you acted like you had any sense, folks would help. Our little part of the community needed a teacher, and they wanted me to do well."

Melvin began his teaching career immediately after graduating college and taught school in southern West Virginia for 41 years. He is shown here during his teaching days, photographer and date unknown.



Primitive conditions existed in this Italian mining camp at Adkins Branch, McDowell County, in 1902. Note the oven, visible at right. Melvin Harris recalls eating Italian bread baked in similar ovens, and socializing with local Italian miners when he was a young man. Photograph courtesy of WVSA.

Knowing that Bluefield State College was located much closer to Gary than West Virginia State, I asked Melvin why he chose to go all the way to Institute for his college education.

"Well, [State College] President Davis came and spoke in Kimball. And, man oh man, it was something. He was there to see if any of us wanted to go to his school. We didn't have what others had, but he told us if we really wanted to go to school, we could. He said, 'Stick with the state. Stick with West Virginia.' Then he said, 'It's a young school, and we [are] going to make it old.' He was a great speaker. He told us to challenge ourselves. That's why I went there."

Melvin graduated from West Virginia State College in 1927, and immediately began his teaching career.

"My first teaching job was way past Davy, in Murrytown, about 30 miles from Tidewater," Melvin says. "I started in a two-room schoolhouse with a big coal stove in the corner. The boys always kept the fire going, and the union made sure we had coal to burn. It gets pretty cold here in the winter. I had an old car that got me there somehow, up and over the mountains. It was a hard drive, and that old car didn't have a heater.

"If they loved you, and you acted like you had any sense, folks would help. Our little part of the community needed a teacher, and they wanted me to do well."

"People would ask me how I was getting along now that I was teaching. I'd say, 'Oh, I'm doing pretty good now, but I sure don't like that drive.' They knew teachers weren't getting any fortune. We made about $100 a month cash money. Everybody would help out when you needed something, if they loved you. Later I taught in Kimball, closer to home. Everyone was saying, 'Ole Coot's a-teachin' now. Ole Coot's a-teachin'!' It wasn't very glamorous, but I was proud to be a teacher.

"If a fellow would come along with nothing or he had very little training, nobody would talk to him.

They'd tell him, 'Go talk to Coot.' I'd talk to him. I'd tell him straight up. Then I'd help him maybe with his letters or numbers. A man needs a skill. He has to learn. Some did learn, and some didn't. But I'm always glad to help.

"I was a teacher 41 years. Yessir, 41 years. I could have taught longer. They asked me to do a special project. I thought about it and said, 'No.' I would have to drive too much, and I had gotten old. I decided to help out in other ways.

"I'm a lucky man. I had a lot of friends, but I guess I had some enemies, too. One man who came to live in the bottom down from me decided to let me know he didn't like my kind much. He came out into his yard one evening with a shotgun. He looked at me and then shot it up in the air, you know, to let me know he had it. I went inside and got my gun. I had a rifle. One of the boys who came over said, 'Hey mister, there goes a bird!' I threw my gun up quick and brought that bird down. He looked at me, then turned away and never brought the gun out again.

"Some people must have heard about what had happened, because a few days later, he came and apologized to me for trying to scare me. He said, 'Mr. Harris, I'm sorry for gettin' out there and showin' myself like that. You hadn't done a thing in the world to me.' He kind of lowered his head a bit and said, 'I just wanted you to know... I hated you.' I asked him why. I said, 'You don't even know me. In two months, you haven't said much to me.' He said, 'Yeah, but you're different, and that's the way I was taught. I'm sorry.' It seems some folks had told him not to bother the teacher. I suppose he figured that if he wanted to make it in Tidewater, he'd need to show better judgment. Another coal miner they could get. Teachers were harder to find."

Melvin married Leona Howard of Elbert in 1931. They were together for 70 years until Leona's death last year. Melvin and Leona are shown here in 1997, photographer unknown.

Whatever racial tension might have existed, coalfield communities were made whole again by their collective tribulation and determined self-reliance [see "Mining in the Melting Pot: The African American Influx Into the McDowell County Mines," by Jean Battlo; Winter 1997]. I asked Melvin if there had been racial tension in the town.

"Oh no. Not like some people think," he says. "Everyone was so poor, nobody noticed. We pretty much got along because it was a small coal community, and most had to work together in the mines.

He may not have gotten rich in the mines or become wealthy teaching school, but in the fabric of his coalfield community, Melvin Harris became one colorful thread.

The Negroes lived near the bottom of the hill, the Italians up top. Sometimes it was hard for us to understand each other, but we got introduced and got to know each others' names. They would get out on Sunday and play a game with a ball and pins like bowling. They put money on top of the pins and sure would make the coins scatter with that ball. We watched and sometimes played. The Italians used to make a funny kind of bread that was very good. They all had those ovens they made. We loved to eat the bread. You know, we're all the same people down deep. If you take 10 different people underground and blow out that old dangerous lamp so nothing explodes, it's the hand-holding that brings them out of the dark."

Growing up in a small community myself, I was curious about what life in the coalfields was like back then. I asked Melvin about the good times.

"You wouldn't believe what beautiful flowers and gardens everyone had," he recalls. "We had all kinds of fruit trees. There were apples, peaches, chestnuts, and pears. Everyone would can something for the winter. Then you could trade with each other. Some of us fellows, we'd make a malt home brew, you know. We didn't make a lot, just enough to have some fun.

Hollywood Comes to New Martinsville

By Susan M. Doll

Residents of New Martinsville still talk about the time, more than 75 years ago, when Hollywood came to town. This group gathered at Quinet's Court Restaurant recently to share memories of their town's brush with stardom. They are, from the left, Bryan Wilson, Joel Potts, Jim Fitzsimmons, Betty Corliss, Herb Rothlisberger, Eloise Hayes, Wells Eakin, Carl Palmer, Dr. L. Coffield, Wayne McCaskey, and Carol Hawkins. Photograph by Michael Keller.

recently gathered to talk about their town's brush with stardom. Their genuine openness and friendly manner reveal the secret of New Martinsville's appeal, both then and now.

As the special train pulled through the railroad yard that morning in 1925, the engine tooted a welcome while factory whistles joined in the noisy salute. The New Martinsville Band struck up a hearty musical greeting while the townspeople eagerly watched "Gorgeous Gloria," as she was dubbed by the *Wetzel Democrat*, step out onto the newly painted platform. Some onlookers may have been surprised at her tiny frame, which barely reached five-feet tall, but her commanding personality and her exotic entourage signaled that a big star had indeed arrived. Swanson was accompanied by her husband Henri, a French nobleman sporting the title *Marquis de la Falaise*, and Monsieur Rene Hubert, her personal dresser who doubled as the costume designer for her films. Director Allan Dwan followed Swanson onto the platform, where they were soon joined by co-stars Lawrence Gray, Gertrude Astor, and Ford Sterling.

Also onboard were Arthur Cozine, a location and financial manager for Paramount Pictures, and Van Nest Polglase, an art director. Cozine and Polglase had discovered New Martinsville while scouting locations for this high-profile motion picture. The two had

traveled from Pittsburgh to Ravenswood, looking for the perfect setting for a silent movie about a small-town waitress who works hard to win the heart of the man she loves. A river-town atmosphere was crucial to *Stage Struck* because much of the action would take place on and around a showboat. New Martinsville fit their needs perfectly, according to Cozine, who gushed to the *Wheeling Register* that the town "is the only city along the river we found entirely suitable from a standpoint of beauty and hospitality. Some were too small, some too big, but here we found just the right conditions and assurances of cooperation, which I am glad to say have been more than fulfilled. I would call this city the Parlor City of the Ohio Valley."

The group of more than 100 visitors were formally welcomed by Mayor Frank Clark, Kiwanis President Dr. W.C. Adams, and Women's Club President Mildred McCaskey. Mildred, a first cousin to Court Restaurant regular Wayne McCaskey, presented Swanson with a basket of cut flowers. The visiting group parted the crowd and started toward a row of shiny new automobiles waiting in front of the station. A few days earlier, an official call had gone out to residents with "impressive-looking" automobiles to volunteer to provide transportation, and now a motorcade of freshly washed cars lined up for duty.

Banners and signs hailing "Welcome Gloria" hung from every available source.

Betty Corliss vividly recalls that day. "Harris Hawkins, who lived across the street from me, had a nice Studebaker," she says, "and he was selected to chauffeur her." Swanson and the Marquis sat in the backseat as Hawkins drove them to their lodgings. Along the way, banners and signs hailing "Welcome Gloria" hung from every available source. Eventually, the couple were deposited at the residence of J.O. Noll, who had offered his large brick home to the star and her entourage for the duration of their stay. The colorful businessman liked to be called Cap Noll or Captain Noll, though no one from the Court Restaurant gang could recall him ever being a riverboat pilot or the captain of a ship. Noll owned interests in several commercial and freight boats, however, including the *Water Queen*, the old showboat that was to be used in *Stage Struck*. The 800-seat *Water Queen* was not in operation at the time, but it was quickly redecorated and wired for electric by Paramount technicians.

While staying at Cap Noll's, Swanson enjoyed the luxuries be-

This huge crowd greeted Gloria Swanson and a group of more than 100 visiting actors and film crew when they arrived in New Martinsville on August 17, 1925.

staged at Emch Park, located about a mile below the town. The park was transformed for the scenes by the addition of tables, benches, refreshment booths, a bandstand, and a dancing stage. The scenes took all day to shoot, but the hundreds of extras did not seem to mind. Many photos were taken that day showing a smiling Gloria posing with Dwan and her co-stars or mingling with the residents. Many of these photos still line the walls of the Court Restaurant today. Local churches manned the booths built at the park, selling popcorn, ice cream, lemonade, and photos of Swanson, with the real-life proceeds going to charities.

As young boys, Joel Potts and Wayne McCaskey felt fortunate to serve as extras for the performance sequence shot on the *Water Queen* in which chorus girls (described by Wayne as "flappers") danced on the showboat stage. They were among several hundred extras who made up the audience, and their job was to act enthusiastic in several reaction shots. McCaskey was part of a specific shot in which several dozen spectators were directed to show excitement by pounding on the person in front of them, which added a bit of physical humor to the scene. Some of the extras — who were amateurs, after all — did not realize that they could fake the act of pounding, and that it would look authentic enough on the screen. The person behind McCaskey really walloped him on the head repeatedly, leaving the young lad with a mighty sore head.

A local band, the Magnolia Serenaders, played on the lawn of the house most evenings to the delight of Swanson and other guests.

Among those who chipped in to help in other ways was Jennie Winer Hoffner, mother of Carole Hoffner Hawkins. The Winer family owned a clothing store in New Martinsville for more than 60 years. When the costumers working on *Stage Struck* needed a pair of old-fashioned cotton bloomers for Gloria's character to wear in a couple of key scenes, they called on Winer's Department Store, which donated the big white bloomers to the film. Jennie hand-delivered them to the costumers.

As odd as it might seem, the bloomers were an essential part of Gloria's costume, adding a homespun, or old-fashioned connotation to her sweet-natured, small-town character, who stands in contrast to the gussied-up showboat performer who tries to steal her beau. They were also part of the comedy in a key scene in which Gloria, despondent over her wayward boyfriend, jumps off the deck of the *Water Queen*. The next shot finds her dangling in midair by the elastic in her bloomers, caught by a hook or rod extending from the side of the boat.

Wayne McCaskey witnessed the

Sid" Hatfield. The film was made in 1920, and legend has it that the only copy of it was stolen from the National Archives.

Various national groups came to the state to document WPA activities. One such film, which has been converted to video, is called *Recreational Resources — State Parks in West Virginia*. It shows various state parks, the Greenbrier Resort, the Capitol, and other so-called "recreational resources." The WPA also produced the first sound film in the state — *A Better West Virginia* (1937) which lasts eight minutes and 25 seconds. Another film was made by the Pocahontas Fuel Company in 1926, showing miners working in their "Pocahontas Field."

In 1932, a documentary was made in Charleston called *Charleston, Beautiful on the Kanawha*. Hometown son Blundon Wills directed the portrait of the city. There were documentaries made in the 1930's about other towns in the state, as well, including a film made in Jefferson County called *See Ourselves in the Movies* (1941) and a film made in Elkins — *See Yourself in the Movies* (1937), which was sponsored by the local American Legion and photographed by Amateur Services Productions of Akron, Ohio.

Two other interesting early films that were made in West Virginia by state natives include *West Virginia, the State Beautiful* filmed in 1929 by the Reverend Otis Rymer Snodgrass. This was a film tour of the West Virginia portion of U.S. Route 60 from Kentucky to the Virginia border. Also worthy of mention is the short film *One-Room Schoolhouses* which was photographed in Barbour County in about 1935 by the Myers brothers, who were noted local physicians and amateur filmmakers. Excerpts from *West Virginia, the State Beautiful* and *One-Room Schoolhouses* were included in *Treasures of American Film Archives* — a DVD set of rare films assembled by the National Film Preservation Foundation in 2000.

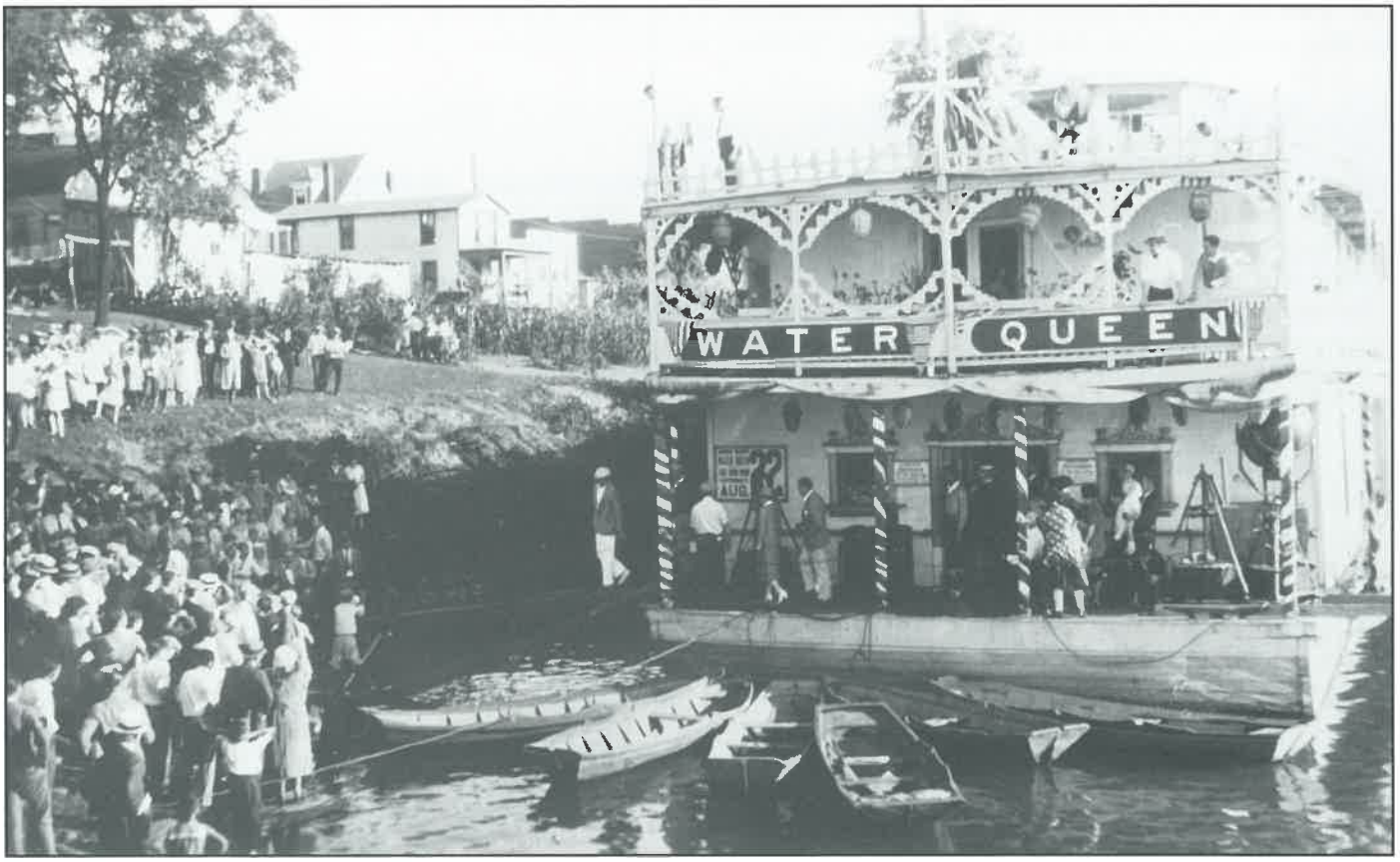
To see a complete list of films and videos that have been made about the state and region, available from the West Virginia Library Commission through any local public library, check out www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/wvvideobib.htm.

STEVE FESENMAIER is the research librarian and film advisor for the West Virginia Library Commission in Charleston and is the co-founder of the West Virginia International Film Festival and the Sutton West Virginia Filmmakers Festival.

Filmmakers were impressed with the talent of local residents who served as extras in the movie. Here, locals react enthusiastically in a crowd scene from *Stage Struck*.

making of this scene, which exposed the "magic" of the movies to the impressionable 10-year-old boy. McCaskey describes, in a somewhat disappointed tone, how he watched Swanson jump off the *Water Queen*, but instead of landing on a hook, she jumped onto another boat. The boat took her to a position just below the hook on the side of the *Water Queen* where crew members held her up and attached her to the hook by her bloomers, specially rigged by the costumers to hold her weight. Then the cameras started rolling again, as Swanson kicked her legs and flailed her arms for comic effect.

After the movie wrapped, Swanson personally kept the unusual undergarment. Years later, Louis Winer — one of the owners of the store — wrote to Swanson and asked if she would be kind enough to return the bloomers as a keepsake for the family, which she did. He proudly displayed them in the store as a reminder of his store's part in the production of *Stage Struck*. Jennie's daughter Carole now owns the bloomers, which she lends out for town celebrations and keeps as a family heirloom.



The *Water Queen*, a real-life sternwheeler owned by J.O. "Captain" Noll of New Martinsville, was the location for many scenes in *Stage Struck*. Electrical wires, camera tripods, and floodlights are visible in this picture of the boat.

I grew up in a family store. A.W. Poling & Son Sanitary Store opened up for business on South Main Street in Philippi in mid-summer 1920, and closed its doors around April 1, 1933. I was a part of it for those nearly 13 years, as well as the previous six years at the store's original Chestnut Street location. Now, 69 years later, I want to tell about my experiences, both for those who grew up in similar circumstances and also for those who didn't and can't imagine what it was like.

Our first store opened in 1914, the year I was born. It was located on Chestnut Street in an area known as Grab-a-Nickel. It gave my grandfather an indoor job after many years of hard work as a stonemason, and it taught both him and my father — a schoolteacher — how to run a business of general merchandising.

This little store was good preparation for the larger store which we later opened on South Main Street.

My grandfather and father carefully planned for the new store building. It had to be larger than the first one, and it had to be convenient for all of us — grandparents, parents, and children. We all lived together as one family. The house was connected to the store with only a door between, and I spent time on both sides of the door. To say that I grew up in our home is the same as saying that I grew up in the store.

In the summer of 1920, there were seven of us who moved to the new location on South Main Street: grandfather Albert W. Poling, 66; grandmother Catherine Moore Poling, 69; father Columbus H. Poling, 44, a full-time school principal; mother Willye Idleman Poling, 45, a full-time homemaker; brother Wendell, 11, student; sister Mary Alice, 9, student; and myself, 6, preschooler. It was soon apparent that all of us would be involved in the family business. School attendance and homework had priority in our home, but the children were drawn into the work of the store. It was easy for the grown-ups to summon us when we were outside playing — they just had to walk a few steps to the rear of the store, open the door, and whistle. We quickly learned that we should come running when we were called.

Life settled down in our home and store for a few months, but then serious trouble appeared in the form of illness. A typhoid epidemic raged in our town and struck Grandmother Poling and Wendell. They became very ill. Later, my sister took the disease, also, but she recovered, having had time to get an inoculation.

Grandmother Poling died in February 1921, a few days before the age of 70. A few months later, in May, my brother Wendell died at

Left: Albert Wilson Poling, shown here in an undated photograph, began the family store, along with his son Columbus Poling, after having worked many years as a stonemason.

Above: Catherine Moore Poling, our author's grandmother, died during a typhoid epidemic in 1921. The epidemic also claimed Newton Poling's older brother. Photographer and date unknown.

Right: Columbus and Willye Poling, our author's parents, at the back door of the Poling store in 1928.

The Poling store moved to this location on South Main Street in Philippi in 1920, and did a good business until 1933. Visible here in front of the store are, from the left, Willye, A.W., and Columbus Poling, and author Newton Poling on his bicycle. This photograph was taken in 1927.

age 12. We buried them both in the family plot in the Quaker cemetery, Mount Olive, near Mansfield. A stillborn baby was already there. Our customers and friends showed their concern for our family. We felt that the store was located among people who were sympathetic and helpful.

A store in a small town is a place where people go for many reasons. Usually a customer would come to the store for a few items — bread, groceries, lamp oil, thread, candy, fruit, or what-have-you — and leave immediately. Every week or two, regular customers would come for several days' supply and go away with about all that they could carry, or maybe they would have it delivered to their home. Some of our customers were little children who came for a bag of candy, and in the early 1920's, a nickel or a dime could buy a bagful.

Some of our customers were traders. They would bring produce from their home or farm, often carrying it a mile or two — two or three dozen eggs, four or five pounds of butter, and sometimes a hen or two. The clerk would credit them with the worth of their items at wholesale price and then sell them the items they needed.

I learned a lot by listening to our customers tell about their daily activities and problems.

Our customers represented a cross-section of our town and the surrounding countryside. Besides the traders who were what we would now call subsistence farmers, we had several substantial farmers as customers. We had coal miners and mine operators. We had several lawyers, the county prosecutor, and the county clerk. There were physicians, schoolteachers, secretaries, and clerks. There were stonemasons, carpenters, plumbers, haulers, salespersons, seamstresses, homemakers, students, day laborers, widows, and retirees. Even after all these years, I can cite examples of persons in each category. Such a large list speaks well for our business, and come to think about it, it was good for me.

I learned to know them, and they knew me.

The store was a fascinating place for me, and I spent a lot of time in it. I belonged to a little gang of boys and enjoyed many, many hours playing with them, but I had something they did not have — I had work to do, and I had a place to meet a variety of people. I learned a lot by listening to our customers tell about their daily activities and problems. On long winter evenings, some of them would sit around the pot-bellied stove and spin their yarns, or tell of their scary experiences on dark moonless nights, on lonely country roads, and in cemeteries. It was enough to make a little boy's hair stand on end.

We sold for cash, for trade, and for credit. The small merchant in those days found it necessary to "put it on the books." Even some of our best customers expected it. This required a good bookkeeping system and a good collection plan, but also a close scrutiny of the applicants for credit. My father and grandfather tried to keep up-to-date on how much each customer owed us. Even then, someone would get over his head into debt before we knew it and would have to be cut off until he settled up. Or a customer would run up a big bill and suddenly stop dealing with us. Or a customer would just plain beat us out of money. Whatever way it happened, we always regretted it because we could not afford to lose the money, and we didn't want to lose a friend.

Traveling salesmen were necessary for our business. Practically every bit of stock on our shelves came from orders we gave to traveling salesmen. Several of them came weekly, some came monthly, and a few came three or four times a year. They became our friends, and we could depend on pleasant visits with them. They would look out for our interests and would be sure to mention special deals that would give us a price break. In our first years on South Main Street, they came by train, utilizing the excellent passenger service which the B&O railroad maintained up and down our Tygart River Valley.

Specialty salesmen, however, were sometimes a nuisance. They came to introduce or emphasize one product and to sell a large order. Not having to visit the same merchants week after week, they did not mind applying pressure in order to make the sale. We got so that we hated to see them come and were glad to see them go. One of them went faster than he planned to. He was too persistent and had to be thrown out. That was pretty heavy stuff for a small boy to see.

There was one type of product we bought locally. It was called Myers Remedies. J.W. Myers, a country physician who moved to town, mixed his medicines and made them available to his patients and to anyone who wanted them. We sold his medicines in our store and displayed them in a little cabinet which he provided.

Every family has its ups and downs. Ours was on an upswing for several years following the deaths in 1921 of my grandmother and my brother. Grief gradually lifted, the store business increased, my sister and I were growing and getting along well in our schoolwork, and Father was having a good career as school principal. Then trouble visited us again.

In the summer of 1925, Father lost his position in the school because the new school board belonged to a different political party. With this turn of events, he decided to devote his full time to the grocery business. Grandfather, now 71, needed to be relieved because his health was deteriorating. Also, Mary Alice was fighting a losing battle with diabetes, and it was good for Grandfather to be near for her sake. Grandfather lived for seven more years, but Mary died in February 1926. She was 16.

Mary's death was a shock to the

The summer of 1925 was a difficult time for the Poling family. Father Columbus Poling lost his job as a school principal, grandfather A.W. Poling was forced to retire due to declining health, and sister Mary Poling was fighting a losing battle against diabetes. She died the following February at age 16. This 1925 photograph was taken at the Idleman family farm in Grant County and shows Mary at left, Newton, and Willye Poling.

family and to the community. I well remember the sense of loss we all felt with Mary's passing. Father and Mother were devastated and only gradually could they accept her death. Our customers and friends rose up in sympathy with us and affirmed their closeness with the grocer's family.

I never resented the attention given to Mary for I was always included in my parents' concern. I suffered along with them. Soon, I began to realize how things had changed in our home. When we had moved to South Main Street in 1920, there were seven of us. Now there were just four, and I was the only child. I knew that I would now have to do a larger share of the work, and that I must take more responsibility for the future. At 12, I sensed that all the hopes and dreams of my family were focused on me. These were humbling thoughts.

Author Newton Poling with his father in 1932, the year before the store closed.

My mother worked hard caring for our busy family and helping out in the store as needed. She liked to go to her family's home in Grant County for a week each summer. I was glad for this, for she took me with her, and I learned to love the farm. A special visit came in 1925 when our Idleman grandparents, their children, and grandchildren gathered for a reunion. Everyone attended except my father. There were 25 of us.

Father hardly ever got away from home. On Sunday, we usually went to Sunday school and church in the morning. In the afternoon, we took a walk in the hills or along the river, weather permitting. Frequently, we visited the cemetery.

Politics was always a lively topic of conversation in the Poling store. My interest in politics was aroused partly because the store was designated as a voting place. (The Poling place was a polling place, we would say.) One side of the store was used for voting, and the upstairs hall of our residence was used for counting votes. On Election Day, I enjoyed seeing what was going on. Because I was small, I had no trouble slipping in and out of both places.

Our business seemed to be good in the last years of the 1920's. The stock market crash in 1929 did not immediately have much effect on us, and I cannot remember exactly when our business started going downhill. When a downward trend became apparent to me early in the '30's, other things were happening at the time to get my attention. At the beginning of my college education in September 1931 — I went to Broaddus College, our local Baptist institution — I was very busy. My father, now fully in charge of the store, did not burden me with his worries about the business.

By 1932, everyone knew that we were headed for some kind of a business slump. The ranks of the unemployed were growing, and businessmen were complaining of declining profits. On June 22, Grandfather Poling died. He was almost 78. The funeral service was held in our home, and once again the procession of cars wound its way downtown, across the covered bridge, and over the hills to Mount Olive Cemetery. Grandfather was laid to rest in the family plot where four members of the family lay, and where he so frequently had visited.

Returning home, we realized that we were at the end of an era. Albert W. Poling was a strong personality, and he left his mark on us and on everything he did. We grieved not only for the loss of a loved one, but for ourselves. There were only three of us left, and we were lonely. We knew, however, that we must work through our grief and move on.

The summer of 1932 featured the presidential campaign, now famous, which pitted President Herbert Hoover against New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt. We followed the campaign with great interest because we knew that the winner would have to do something about the worsening economic condition of the nation. We hoped that he could

help us in our situation.

We sat around our radio on Inauguration Day, March 4, 1933, and heard Roosevelt's famous speech ("The only thing we have to fear is fear itself"), and we heard the announcement of the bank holiday. We did not realize the meaning of it all, but we knew something had happened when our local banks closed and the amount of our weekly store sales — already small — was cut in half. Father told us that we could not hold out long, and then the ax fell! The bank's receiver now demanded full payment of the note we owed. My father could not pay off the note, and he decided to go into bankruptcy. He employed J. Blackburn Ware to steer him through this process, which only a few years back would have been unthinkable.

As a family, we went through those terrible March days when the store was closed, and we got ready to vacate the premises. I was nearing the end of my second year at college, and my friends could see that I was depressed and preoccupied. The family had the sympathy and support of our customers and neighbors, but this could not save the business and the home.

"If you do not have the money, I can advance it for you. You have trusted me and waited for my payment many times in the past. I can trust you this time."

My father made arrangements for me to stay at the college till the end of the school year. He and Mother moved in with two of her sisters on the Idleman family farm in Grant County, 85 miles away. Under the law, my father could keep his possessions up to a certain value. Since values were down, he was able to keep our household goods, the old car, and a small amount of cash. It was a time of deep gloom for all of us, but especially for Father who felt defeated and who did not want to move away from his native Barbour County.

Newton Poling at the family plot in Mount Olive Cemetery, 1983.

The farm was probably a good place to heal a wounded spirit. After a while, Father seemed to be enjoying farm life, and he and Mother became very close to one another. I joined them on the farm that summer and returned to college in the fall. In the spring of 1934, Father developed pleurisy, and we took him back to the Myers Hospital in Philippi. His condition was relieved, but he died suddenly of heart failure an hour before he was to be discharged. It was June 12, 1934. He was 58. We buried him at Mount Olive Cemetery with those who had preceded him in death.

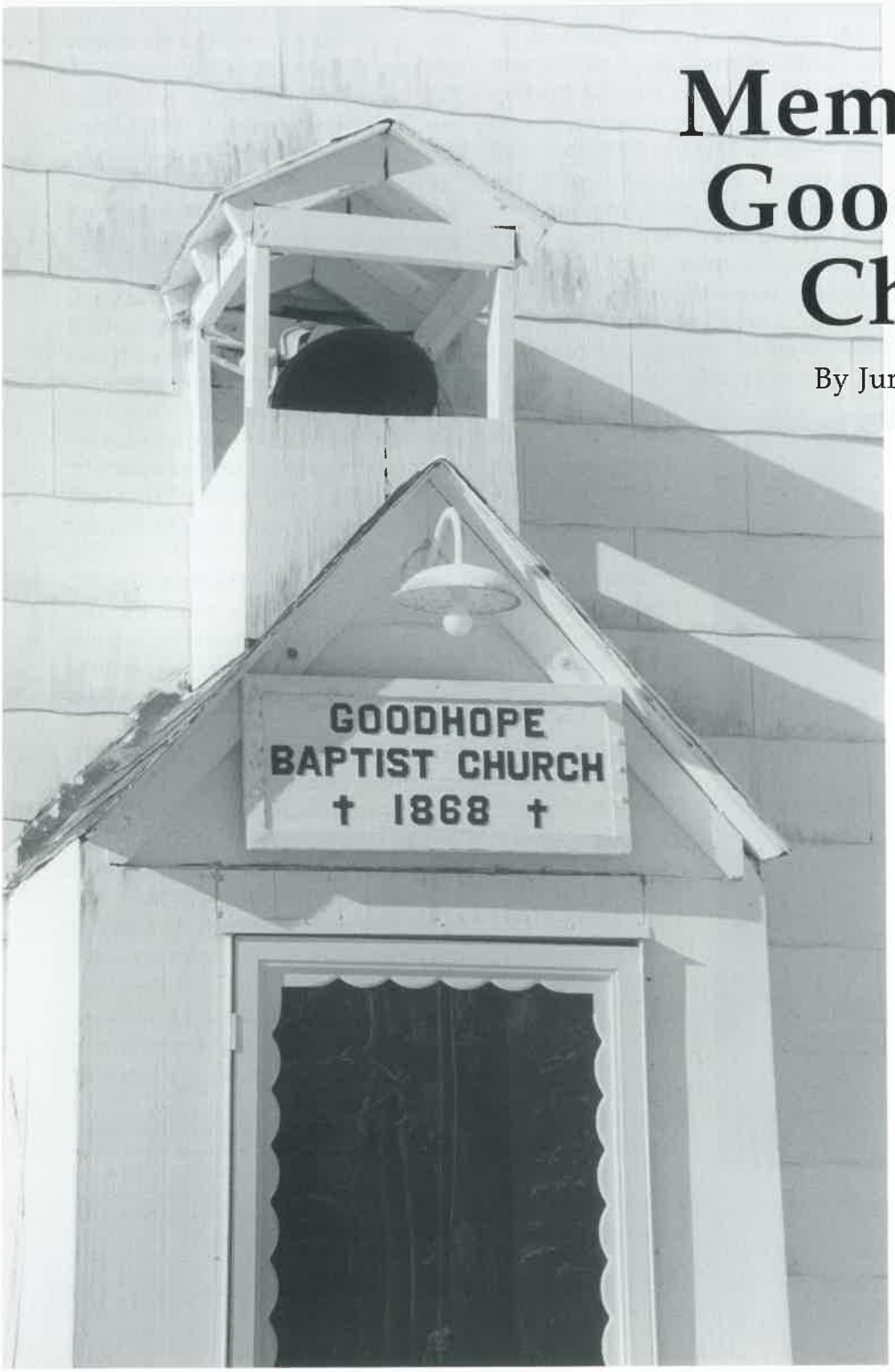
Recently, I was looking over some family memoirs, and I came across a letter addressed to Columbus H. Poling in May 1934. It was from our attorney-friend J. Blackburn Ware. He wrote briefly to Father, "It is now time to file the final papers for your bankruptcy so that you can be free of claims against you. It will cost $15. If you do not have the money, I can advance it for you. You have trusted me and waited for my payment many times in the past. I can trust you this time." I do not know if Father ever saw Mr. Ware after that, but somehow I feel that this kindness of Mr. Ware was a token of the trust and confidence the community felt for its storekeeper.

A final tribute to the firm of A.W. Poling & Son was paid by the Herbert Wilson family which opened up its home for the funeral of my father, and by the neighbors and friends who came to pay their respects and to show sympathy to the bereaved survivors. It was a great comfort to my mother and me, who alone were left.

We were glad to have been a part of a significant enterprise on South Main Street in Philippi. It had not only supplied bread to its customers, but it had encouraged the sharing of the milk of human kindness. I know now that I was fortunate to have grown up in a family store.

NEWTON L. POLING was a retired minister and freelance writer who made his home in Washington County, Maryland. This was his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL. Sadly, Mr. Poling passed away as this issue was going to press. He was 87.

"To Seek and Save"



Memories of Good Hope Church

By June Cowles Jones

Oblivious to the thousands of cars and trucks passing continuously within a stone's throw, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church at Graydon, Fayette County, has stood much unchanged since 1868. There is something very restful and uplifting about a small rural church in such a serene setting. When the trees are barren, it can be seen from U.S. Route 19 between Hico and Beckley — a white, well-kept church with a silver roof peeping above the bushes and trees.

Once, a thriving community surrounded it. Services were held often, and a large congregation attended. It had an adjoining cemetery — we called it the graveyard — which was always well-kept. Many of its founding fathers and other church members lie sleeping there.

Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church at Graydon, Fayette County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Jacob Thomas "Jake" Kious was a dapper gentleman and one of the more memorable members at Good Hope Church for author June Cowles Jones. Date unknown.

neglected home, gather vegetables, clean, and cook the evening meal for a big family.

I remember well some of the people who attended church there. I recall one old gentleman who always rode a huge white horse to church. He wore a big black hat and was always "dressed to the nines." He had silvery hair, a neatly trimmed white moustache, beautiful white teeth, and he was always so gracious to everyone. He cut quite a figure. His name was Jake Kious.

My father used to tell us about the time he was coming home from his parents' house. It was dark, and he was taking a shortcut. Back then, you either traveled by flashlight, carbide light, or moonlight. Daddy was carrying a carbide light. Just as he was passing Good Hope, he took a quick glance up toward the cemetery. To his amazement, he beheld a large white casket setting atop the ground. Had that been me, I would still be running! Not so for Daddy. He went to investigate. Just as he reached the gate, the "casket" stood up. It was a white cow who had managed to mash the fence down enough to get in, but could not get back out. Too bad. Another West Virginia ghost tale squelched before it got told!

The church still stands and provides a house of worship for a dwindling congregation. The men and women's doors have been replaced by a single door cut in the center. Everyone enters together now. Also, a steeple and bell have been added. But sad to say, the old wooden pews are gone, replaced by more modern seating. No one seems to know where the pews went. The piano was greatly needed, I am sure — the mice had taken their toll on the organ.

After being away for a long time, I attended a homecoming at Good Hope about 20 years ago. Among a few of the other changes, I noticed that a new barbeque had recently been built on the grounds. I was both pleased and saddened to learn that the huge, beautiful cut stones that were used to build the barbeque came from the foundation of my great-grandfather's old homeplace. My great-grandparents had been members here, and their home was located less than a mile from the church.

Time moves on, and change is inevitable. To my children and grandchildren, this story might have little meaning. But to many older readers, it might strike a forgotten chord. This grand old church deserves a place on center stage one more time because it is rich in history. I am proud to say that my early Christian education began on this hallowed spot. Good Hope will always have a special place in my heart.

JUNE COWLES JONES is a native of Fayette County, now living in Charleston. She recently retired after 41 years as a certified registered nurse anesthetist in Charleston-area hospitals. Her writing has appeared in the *Fayette Tribune* and in various hospital and religious publications. This is June's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

A barbeque, picnic shelter, handrail, and air conditioner are a few of the visible improvements to Good Hope Church apparent in this recent photograph by Michael Keller.

Singer, songwriter, song publisher, record producer, disc jockey, music store proprietor, club owner — Jim McCoy has done about all there is to do in the country music field.

Joltin' Jim McCoy

While he never had a chart-topping song, Jim has managed to make a life-long career in the hard-tumble music business. He performed all over the country, recorded for a major Nashville label, helped introduce Patsy Cline to the airways, and ran his own record company featuring regional acts from West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Now 72, Jim and his wife Bertha own the Troubadour, a nightclub and restaurant on Highland Ridge in the Morgan County countryside near Berkeley Springs. Named in honor of Ernest Tubb, the "Texas Troubadour," the club is decorated with photos and memorabilia from Jim's long career. A barbeque fashioned in the shape of a giant six-shooter is located out back along with a spacious patio, a sloping lawn, and an outdoor stage for live music. The McCoy family lives in a complex of mobile homes nearby.

Just a few hundred feet away, James Wesley McCoy was born on April 11, 1929, to Peter Wesley and Carrie Virginia Henry McCoy.

After a musical career that took him to more than a dozen states, Jim finally moved back to the old homeplace in the mid-1980's. On summer days, Jim can be found tending his garden of tomatoes and onions, some of which are used in the restaurant and some of which he simply gives away to friends. He's been gardening since he was a kid and claims, "The tomatoes

Jim McCoy of Morgan County has enjoyed a long career in country music. This promotional photograph dates from the 1960's.

Morgan County's Country Music Troubadour

By John Douglas

coming off these hills are the best anywhere." When he was growing up, Morgan County was renowned for tomatoes and had an active tomato canning industry — an industry that died out because of a tomato blight in the 1940's.

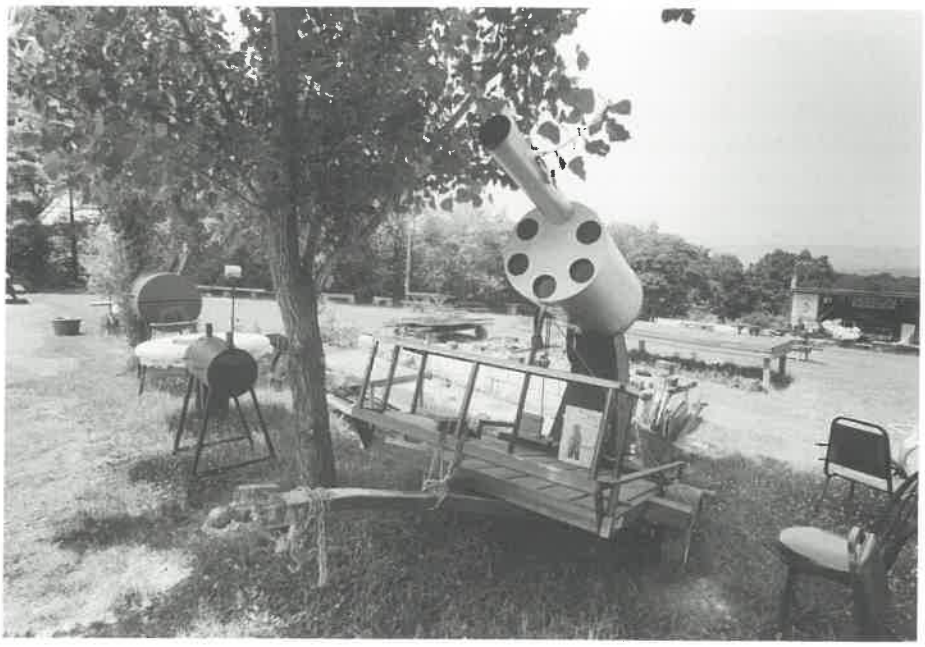
The McCoy family earned much of its cash in those days by cutting timber. One day, young Jim decided, "There has to be a better way to make a living than holding this old crosscut saw." That better way — a career in music — was still some years off, but it seems to have been part of Jim's thinking from an early age.

When he was 13, Jim learned to play guitar from Pete Kelly, one of his neighbors on Highland Ridge. "He played the prettiest guitar I ever heard," Jim says. "I told my dad I want to play the guitar, but I couldn't even tune it. Pete would come over once a week and tune the guitar and teach me chords." Two of the songs he recalls learning from Kelly were "Wildwood Flower" and "You Are My Sunshine." Their music was the contemporary "hillbilly" music of the 1930's and '40's, which they mostly learned from records and radio.

Peter McCoy encouraged his son's musical inclinations. He bought him a guitar from a Montgomery Wards catalog and recordings by country singer Ernest Tubb. The teenager listened for hours to Tubb and to Bob Wills on the family's windup Victrola, and the Texas Troubadour became Jim's personal idol. At age 14, Jim walked and hitchhiked 40 miles to see Ernest Tubb perform at Conococheague Park near Hagerstown, Maryland. Jim got to meet his hero that night, and after-

Above: Jim and his wife Bertha now own and manage the Troubadour nightclub near Berkeley Springs. The walls are filled with photographs and memorabilia from Jim's musical career.

Below: Outside, the Troubadour features a barbeque in the shape of a six-shooter, an outdoor stage, and a spectacular view of the Morgan County countryside. Photographs by Michael Keller.



wards, they exchanged letters. Three years later, Tubb stopped and phoned young Jim while driving through Berkeley Springs. "Boy, I thought that was something," Jim says. Even today, he says of Tubb, "I just loved the guy so much."

Inspired by Tubb's deep voice and by the modern, amplified country sound emerging in the 1940's, Jim began singing and playing with his pal Ken Hoffman at Jack Waugh's tavern in southern Morgan County. Before long, Jim branched out to perform with Slim Belford. Slim later became the fiddler with bluegrass greats Bennie and Vallie Cain who also got their start in Berkeley Springs. In addition, Jim performed with regional favorite Sammy Moss and fiddler Sonny McCumbee, a member of a well-known Berkeley Springs musical family.

Jim and these other musicians played live gigs and radio shows all over an area where an hour's drive can take you from southern Pennsylvania, through western Maryland and West Virginia, and into Virginia. The teenaged McCoy's first time "on the air" was on WJEJ in Hagerstown in about 1945. He recalls his father hauling him to the radio station in the family's 1934 Studebaker in the wee hours for the 6 a.m. broadcast so that Jim could perform two songs with Bud Messner and his Saddle Pals, a popular band from nearby Pennsylvania.

While Peter McCoy never said much about his son's budding musical career, he was always supportive. Sometimes they would even string up lights near their farmhouse on Highland Ridge, and Jim would perform for neighbors from a wagon bed, perhaps foreshadowing the outdoor stage Jim later built behind the Troubadour.

Jim McCoy, at left, with his hero Ernest Tubb in the early 1960's. Disc jockey Keith Lupton is at right.

Jim soon had an itch for his own radio program. "I wanted to play so bad that I got a 30-minute show on WINC in Winchester, Virginia," he says. "I didn't even have a car to get there. I bummed a ride any way I could." He talked Rumsey Unger, who ran a general store south of Berkeley Springs near the Virginia line, into paying five dollars to sponsor his half hour.

"That was fun days," McCoy says, "but it really wasn't very good radio."

WINC was one of the few stations that was heard far and wide in those days, covering a good bit of the northern Shenandoah Valley and nearly all of West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. The station's Saturday morning lineup consisted of a string of 30-minute country music programs. Others on the air at that time included Sammy Moss who had a popular honky-tonk style reminiscent of Hank Williams, and Alan Greenfield, a Gene Autry-influenced singer from Martinsburg.

"That was fun days," McCoy says, but then he smiles and concedes, "but it really wasn't very good radio."

For a time in the 1940's, Jim moved to Baltimore where he worked in the nail mill at Bethlehem Steel, but a strike and a layoff later, he took a job with Montgomery Wards as a salesman. When Wards offered him a transfer to the Winchester store, Jim jumped at it and resumed his musical career.

It was during this period that he earned his long-standing nickname, Joltin' Jim McCoy. He was so busy doing radio shows and what he terms "schoolhouse" jobs, not to mention working full time at Montgomery Wards to pay the bills, that someone remarked that he was always "joltin' around." The name stuck.

Jim's band was called the Melody Playboys, a name inspired by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys whose brand of Texas Swing music was much admired by Jim McCoy and many of the other Eastern Panhandle musicians of the era.

There were memorable moments at WINC, even if it wasn't "very good radio" on a bigtime scale, and even if the "pay" was simply free advertisement for the weekend's live appearances. Nothing, however, quite stood out like the morning in 1946 when a 14-year-old girl named Virginia Hensley walked in and asked to sing with the band.

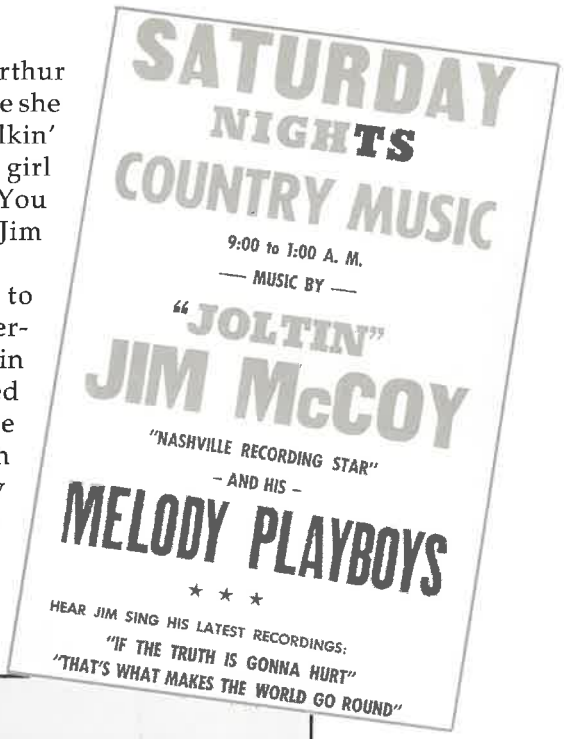
"I talked to the boys and they said, 'Yes, let's give her a chance,'" says Jim. He was just 17 himself, but he already had a reputation for sharing his stage and mike with other performers.

The girl — who in the 1950's would be better known as Patsy Cline — bowled everyone over. "Boy, we knew right off that this girl was something else," Jim says. For the next month, she joined Joltin' Jim and the Melody Playboys on Saturday mornings.

"She was the only person I ever met in the music business who could say to the band, 'We're going to do this in [the key of] C,' and she would start out singing, and it would really be in C," Jim recalls.

Patsy Cline went on to sing with one local outfit after another, including groups led by Sammy Moss, Bill Peer, and Don Owens before finding her way onto Jimmy Dean's *Town and Country Time* TV show, which was beamed to Virginia and West Virginia from Washington, D.C. In 1957, she reached a national TV audience with Arthur Godfrey's *Talent Scouts*, where she sang her first big hit, "Walkin' After Midnight." "I knew this girl was going to move forward. You could tell it at an early age," Jim says.

Jim always stayed close to Patsy and they sometimes performed together, particularly in the late 1950's before she moved to Nashville. Occasionally, the two would sing duets, with Patsy's forthright, bluesy voice entwining with McCoy's deep country sound. Unfortunately, no recordings of these performances are known to have survived, though Jim says he has searched for them. After Patsy died in a plane crash on March 5, 1963, Jim McCoy and Sammy Moss were two of her pallbearers. A year later, Jim did the first of many radio shows remembering Patsy, a tradition he continues with a special tribute at the Troubadour in early March each year.



Window card advertising a performance by Joltin' Jim McCoy and his Melody Playboys, from about 1962.

Jim McCoy and band members John Anderson with guitar and George Dover at the drums, in the 1960's.

As Cline's career took off in the late 1950's, Jim stayed around Winchester and kept his day job at Montgomery Wards. Finally, he had to make a choice when he was asked to become the morning disc jockey at WHPL, a new station that debuted in Winchester in December 1960. "I wasn't really sure I wanted to do that because I had a pretty good job there at Wards, making $40 a week," he says. But he decided to make the leap into a full-time radio and musical career. Things moved fast for the next few years for Joltin' Jim.

In 1961, Jim's first record was released on Nashville Records, a sub-

sidiary of Starday-King, a major country label. The record, called "That's What Makes The World Go Round," was produced by Tommy Hill, a country music pro who had written several hits. It made a small splash.

During his trips to Nashville, Jim visited Patsy Cline and her husband Charlie Dick, and he became closer to Ernest Tubb. He was invited to Tubb's home and hung out with him and some of the other Music City personalities of the time, including Ray Price, Willie Nelson, and songwriter Harlan Howard.

A couple of years later, Jim looked like he was about to break into the top ranks himself. His new one, "Which A Way, What A Way, Any Way," was a pick hit by *Billboard*, *Record World*, and *Cash Box*, which predicted, "A catchy new song, watch it go." The record, a humorous Larry Kingston-penned song about a missing wife, sounds fresh even today. "But it didn't go," Jim says sadly. "You know the business. It's very rough to make it."

About the same time, the master tapes for his first LP were lost when the record-pressing company went bankrupt. Jim is not one to dwell on his disappointments, however, saying only, "There's been heartaches from this business."

Wisely, McCoy kept joltin' around and didn't put all of his eggs in the Nashville basket. He continued to perform locally and made frequent appearances across the Eastern Panhandle. Some of these performances included Jack Waugh's place in Berkeley Springs; the Old Orchard Inn (now Rainbow Road) in Rippon; Moose, Eagles, and VFW halls in Martinsburg; and even the famous Berkeley Castle in Berkeley Springs. Meanwhile, he stayed on the air at WHPL and promoted concerts featuring some of the newer country music acts. He also started a music publishing firm, publishing his own songs and tunes by other writers.

About this time, he teamed up with Jean Alford, a Virginia singer-songwriter, and launched Alear Records. The third Alear release, "It's a Big Old Heartache" by Teenie Chenault of Richmond, looked like it would be the big payoff for their efforts. As the song gathered airplay, record distributors began calling, and they rushed to ship out more copies. Unfortunately, they were never paid for most of those records, Jim says.

In spite of several promising record releases, national success eluded Jim McCoy. He is shown here, seemingly in a reflective mood, in 1961.

Just as Jim McCoy gave young Patsy Cline a chance on his radio show in 1946, he's still sympathetic to young talent.

By the late 1960's, the McCoy-Alford partnership became strained, and Jim started his own Winchester Records, complete with a label picturing a big apple to symbolize the Virginia city. A string of regional performers trooped through his studio at 314 Lanny Drive.

Aside from recordings by Jim McCoy and Jean Alford themselves, the Alear and Winchester catalogues included material by country singers Mel McQuain and Frank Darlington, both of Martinsburg; gospel music performer Kenny Johnson of Hedgesville; and the fairly well-known Carroll County Ramblers from nearby Maryland. The majority of the singers they recorded were country artists, but there were also releases by The Lone Star — a folk-rock singer from Romney whose real name was John Mark Hott — and by The Smacks — a Winchester rock group. Most of the records were 45 rpm, but there were also a few album releases. The records were often well-received and won attention in their home areas.

McCoy generally produced and engineered the recordings himself,

and even when a singer was less than inspiring, the sound quality of Winchester's output was surprisingly good. He mixed the sound while listening to small speakers, rather than big studio ones, so that he could hear what people would hear at home. Jim always sought what he calls a "bitey sound" for the guitar, a lively sound that could be heard on his own records. Jim says that he tried to keep a copy of everything he released, but just couldn't seem to hold on to them. Sometimes, a group would even walk out the door with the master recording.

For a time, Jim ran another label, as well — Master Records, which specialized in gospel music, some of it from black groups associated with Virginia churches. "I loved the black gospel," Jim says. "I'll tell you what, if you didn't have a little feeling when they got through, there was something wrong with you."

In fact, Jim's lengthening radio career eventually included a stint with WEFG, a Winchester gospel station that he managed for a while. He took a Bible course, did a late-night talk show called *Heavenly Hot Line*, and put together his own gospel group, The Golden Strings. "After I left WEFG, I went back into country music," he says. "What do you call that? Backsliding?"

Jim continued on the air as a DJ and ran his recording company into the 1980's. With the help of his wife and daughters, he also operated several family businesses through the years, including a record store, a music shop, and an early convenience store.

In the mid-1980's, he and Bertha returned to the McCoy homeplace on Highland Ridge and built the Troubadour. While he intended to semi-retire, Jim still finds himself working around the business daily. In addition to the club's country music decor and special events, there are regular Friday night steak feeds, and live bands on Saturday nights. Just as Jim McCoy gave young Patsy Cline a chance on his radio show in 1946, he's still sympathetic to young talent.

Not long after the Troubadour opened, singer Justin Tubb showed up on Father's Day 1985 to see the place that was named for his dad, and he took the stage for a few songs. "That was the greatest thing that has happened here," Jim says.

Jim continues to be good buddies with Charlie Dick, Patsy Cline's husband. Each September, Charlie returns to Winchester and drives up to the Troubadour to attend the Labor Day celebration that Jim puts on in memory of Patsy Cline, Ernest Tubb, and Johnny Triplett who played steel guitar in the Melody Playboys for many years. As part of the event, Jim introduces new members to his West Virginia Country Music Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame, begun by Jim in 1992, is located in one room of the Troubadour. It consists mainly of attractive plaques mounted on the walls to honor the inductees along with a few photos and memorabilia. So far, the Hall of Fame includes Patsy Cline, U.S. Senator Robert Byrd, Little Jimmie Dickens, Penny DeHaven (another Berkeley Springs native), Bluefield singer Mel Street, and Larry Murphy — a local country and rockabilly artist who died about 20 years ago. Jim plans to expand the Hall of Fame and hopes someday to build a museum dedicated to West Virginia country music artists, if he can find the funding.

Jim still listens to country music, but comments, "Today, there are no unique voices. They all sound the same. There's no Roy Acuff, no Johnny Cash, no Hank Williams, no Merle Haggard."

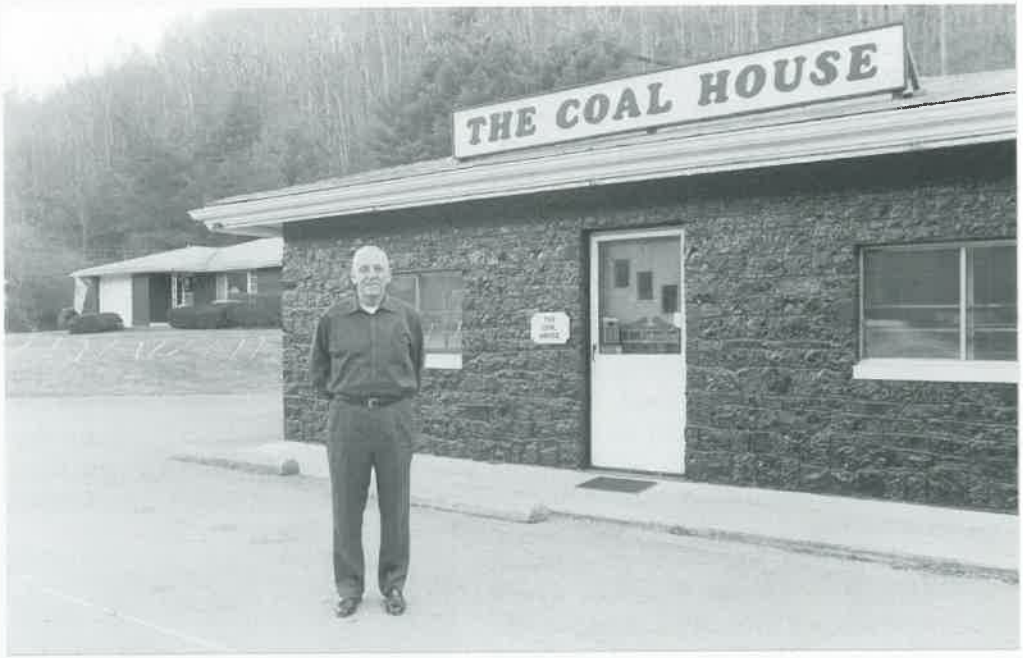
Jim keeps busy sorting through his memorabilia and trying to organize the master tapes of the music he has produced in his life. He talks of putting together a CD of some of the best cuts from Winchester Records and of finishing an Ernest Tubb tribute album that he started some years ago. "I'm still joltin'," Jim says. And you can bet he is.

Jim and Bertha McCoy at the Troubadour today. "I'm still joltin'," Jim says. Photograph by Michael Keller.

JOHN DOUGLAS from Berkeley Springs is a music journalist, author, and mystery writer. He has been editor of the *Morgan Messenger* newspaper for 26 years. John has served as a reviewer and columnist for *Blues Access* magazine and has contributed articles to *Down Beat* magazine and the *Washington Post*. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 1993 issue.

The Other Coal House

By Belinda Anderson



David T. Myles, Jr., stands in front of the Coal House souvenir store, built by his father "Tip" Myles in 1959, located east of White Sulphur Springs on U.S. Route 60. The family's one-of-a-kind coal-built home is visible in the background. Photograph by Belinda Anderson.

With its shiny black exterior and a big sign promising a free lump of coal, the Coal House gift shop along U.S. Route 60 in White Sulphur Springs sold novelties and enticed tourists for four decades. But the real novelty is the residence next door, where the Myles family has lived since 1961. This ranch with its midnight-hued bricks is thought to be the only home in the world built from coal.

The idea for these two unusual structures came from the entrepreneurial mind of the late David Turpin "Tip" Myles. "He was always sort of adventuresome," says David T. Myles, Jr., speaking of his father's varied and colorful career. "He had several different kinds of jobs. When he was a young man, he was in the lumber business. He was Justice of the Peace in Quinwood. I think he helped run a restaurant. He was in the Army back during the second World War. He worked for the Veterans Administration helping disabled veterans find jobs. He was in the insurance business for awhile. He liked to do unusual things, and he was usually pretty successful."

The notion for the Coal House derived from yet another of Tip's occupations. "My dad had a coal operation in Winona," David recalls. "He might be at the tipple weighing coal or supervising what was going on at the auger, and he would pick up coal and start whittling shapes. He got the idea of making jewelry."

Soon came the decision to locate a gift shop one mile east of White Sulphur Springs. A good tourism trade flourished along U.S. Route 60 in the days before Interstate 64, and the Coal House did well. The gift shop featured coal jewelry made by Tip Myles, figurines, moccasins, souvenirs, a variety of mountain handcrafts, and of course, postcards of the Coal House.

The next step was even more ambitious. "Who would have ever thought to build a house of coal? The reason he did it was to attract attention to the gift shop," David says.

It took 30 tons of Clay County cannel coal, one of the hardest and most malleable varieties of bituminous, to build the gift shop, which opened July 4, 1959. The house was built two years later. Reports vary, but David says that it took as much as 100 tons of coal to complete the house. "They got big dump-truck loads of coal brought in here, and they had men hewing it with hatchets, by hand."

That's probably why there aren't any other coal houses, David says. "It costs too much to hand-hew all those stones."

In contrast to the original Coal House in Mingo County [see story on page 24], which was built in 1933 entirely of huge coal blocks, the Myles' home is actually a conventional frame structure. "It's just a stone veneer house," David points out. "It's just like you build a brick house. You put up the wood frame, you cover it with tar paper, and then you put the bricks on the side." The eight-inch-thick coal bricks make excellent insulators, David says. Maintenance is a black sealant applied about as often as a wood house requires painting.

David never lived in the coal home. He graduated in

1959 with an electrical engineering degree from Virginia Tech and had already gone to work for NASA in Virginia. He and his wife Theresa and their family now live in the Houston area. He shared his memories of his father and the Coal House during a recent visit to see his mother Quindora. Recalling those early years, David says, "I came up here and helped my dad put the tile floor in the shop, and I helped build the drain field for the septic tank. It was the hardest digging. It must have been an old creek bed. Every time you'd go to dig, you'd hit a rock and jar your teeth. And it was hot, so hot in July."

Customers examine the wares inside the Coal House gift shop in the early 1960's. Behind the counter are son John A. "Andy" Myles, Tip, and Quindora Myles. Photographer unknown.

David's younger brother John Andrew "Andy," who died in 2001, eventually took over operation of the gift shop from their father. The gift shop is closed now, and the house and store are both for sale.

Quindora Myles, 89 and retired from White Sulphur Springs Elementary School, still lives in the coal home. "I didn't want an old, dusty, black coal house," she once told a *Charleston Gazette* reporter. But she said that she later changed her mind. "I love it. It's cozy and easy to take care of," she said.

Newspapers around the country have profiled the coal home. "This has been featured on Paul Harvey's news and *Ripley's Believe-It-or-Not*," David says. He has a favorite story about the media attention. "One reporter was asking Mother about the coal house, thinking it would burn easily. 'What would you do if it caught on fire?' She said, 'I guess I'd call the fire department.'"

BELINDA ANDERSON is a freelance writer and writing instructor now living in Greenbrier County. She is a frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor whose most recent article appeared in our Fall 2001 issue.

The Coal House souvenir shop is now closed. The house and store are both up for sale. For information, call (304)645-2255. Photograph by Michael Keller.

2001 Liars Contest

Here are the winning lies from last year's State Liars Contest, held at the 25th annual Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Congratulations to the winners !

Mike Lantz (First Place)

Preston County

My true story begins on one of those hot, sticky summer afternoons in West-By-God-Smile-When-You-Say-It-Virginia. Me and my ole buddy Cletus Ray Arbagast, we had us a hankering for some panfish. You may know the ones I'm talking about — them roll-em-in-flour, fry-em-in-butter bluegills. Yum, yum.

We decided to fetch us some mealworms from Ma's cornmeal and head on down to Hauser's Pond to see if we couldn't latch onto some of those tasty little critters. The fish were biting better that evening than the bedbugs in Granny's ole straw mattress. I'm here to tell you that we had an exciting time. In fact, we didn't even need the mealworms. We was catching 'em on a bare hook, and that's no lie.

I told ole Cletus, "Why don't you just stand there behind me, and I'll flip them back over my shoulder. You can take the fish off, and I'll just cast it back out in forward motion." It was just like fly-fishing. We had it down to a science where we was landing a fish every five seconds. Big ones, too. Most of 'em we had to throw back in because they was too big for the fryin' pan. Then is when the fun really started kicking in. We could see the fish lined up under the water, clear across the length of the pond, just waiting their turn.

First-place winner Mike Lantz with the coveted Golden Shovel award. Photographs by Michael Keller.

You see, we can do that where I come from. The water's that clear. Ain't like the water I seen down here. My wife and I took a little walk down here to the Kanawha River a little bit ago. My fifth-grade science teacher must have lied to me because he told me water was odorless, colorless, and tasteless. And what is that stuff floating around in there? Does anybody really know for sure?

In any event, Cletus and I was havin' us a good time, and we was having too much fun. It was at that point things took a strange

and dramatic turn for the worst. I smelled something so bad, so foul, so rank, so disgusting, I thought I was in Charleston when the legislature was in session. I turned around to see what was the matter, and there stood a 400-pound, West-By-God-Smile-When-You-Say-It-Virginia black bear, staring me right in the eye.

That, however, wasn't the problem. Heck, that bear never scared me none. I've mud wrestled with Mean Martha at the county fair. Now *that* was scary. The problem was that that there bear had just ate the bluegills that I'd planned to eat for supper. And not only that, he'd swallowed my No. 10 hook that was attached to my No. 2 pound test line, that was attached to my brand-new, magnesium, aluminum, fiberglass, heavy-duty, medium-weight, ultralight spinning rod.

Now, we got us a problem. In fact, we got us a problem so serious, I don't think a crooked Republican could figure his way out of this one. Well, I was just going to have to call the new governor, that's all there was to it. Just then, that there bear decided to take off down over yonder hill. Well, I'm here to tell you, there's no way I'm going to let that bear get away with my supper. So I tightened up the drag on my brand-new, magnesium, aluminum, fiberglass, heavy-duty, medium-weight, ultralight spinning rod, and I held on tighter than Al Gore in a Florida recount.

Over the hills and through the woods we went, banging, crashing, and thumping on every stump and rock in the forest. And I'm here to tell you that sometimes drastic situations call for drastic measures in life, and now was one of those times. Just as I noticed that I was beginning to wear that bear down, I loosened up some drag on my new spinning reel, I whipped out about 10 or 12 feet of No. 2 pound test line, and I proceeded to tie me a lasso on the end of my fishing pole. Just when that bear stopped for a breather, I lassoed him around the neck, gave a big ole jerk, and brought that 400-pound bruiser down on the ground begging for mercy. While his head was still spinning around and around, I got up, I pulled his paws behind his back, I tied him up with my No. 2 pound test line, and I hollered up the hill for Cletus, "Cletus, Cletus, come a-runnin'. And bring the Epsom salts and castor oil."

"Epsom salts and castor oil?" Cletus exclaimed. "What the heck fer?"

I said, "Because I'm goin' to give this bear what he deserves, and that's a good physic. I'm goin' to get my bluegills back, one way or the other."

Dorsey Johnson (Second Place)

Putnam County

I'm from Hurricane. Many of you probably don't know where Hurricane is at. It's about 11 miles northwest of Tornado, and it's about seven miles south of Winfield. And, if you don't like that, it's about 10 miles west of Nitro. We got a lot of powerful places down there where I'm from.

Somebody asked me one time how the town of Hurricane got its name. I've heard lots of different stories, but there's one story this fella told me. He said a big storm came through here. Tremendous winds, just tore up jack. So I asked him, "Well, how fast were those winds? How many mile per hour?"

He said, "Well, I don't know that they ever really calculated that. But," he said, "I tell you this. A personal witness told me he saw this one ole hen lay the same egg three times."

I want to tell you a little bit about my childhood. When I was a real young boy, I had a terribly bad habit of stretching the truth. I would go to school, and I would tell the teacher a taller tale every day. After awhile, the teacher, she got a real burden for me, and she thought, "Well, I've just got to turn this young man's life around."

So, she laid awake at night, and she come up with a plan. She thought,

Dorsey Johnson won second place.

"I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to try some reverse psychology on this young man. The next time he comes to school and lies to me like that, I'm going to lie right back to him bigger than he lied to me. Maybe he'll see how obnoxious that sounds, and he'll refrain from doing that."

So, about the next day, I came to school. I said, "Boy, teacher, me and my brothers went fishing yesterday evening. We fished for two hours. We caught 20 fish, every one of 'em weighed 18 pound or better."

And she said, "Dorsey, that ain't nothing. I went home yesterday evening, there was a big ole black bear in my backyard. Didn't know what in the world I was going to do, like to scared me to death." She said, "About that time, this little ole black-and-white dog come out there and run around the corner of the house. There he stood, about 10 or 12 inches tall. He went out and run around that big ole black bear about half-a-dozen times and sort of got him dizzy. Directly, that ole bear had enough of that, and he bent over and gave a big swat at him, like that. About the time he done that, that little ole dog jumped up there and grabbed a-hold of them jugular veins, and just held right on until he killed that big black bear."

She said, "Now what do you think about that?" I guess she thought she'd let me meditate about how it sounded.

And I said, "Well, teacher, that really doesn't surprise me a bit. That was my dog, and that's the second time this week that's happened."

Mark Howes (Third Place)
Randolph County

I'm from Helvetia, a little ole farm up there, and every winter seems like times gets harder. Everything on the farm is getting old. The chickens in the chicken house are just laying there. You know, sort of like them boneless chickens you see in the store. Well, during the winter, we thought to ourselves, what could we do to make our chickens be more like the chickens on the farms down the road where they walk around, run around, just don't lay around? We discovered that if you crocheted boots — if you could keep their feet warm — that these chickens would actually lay eggs all year round, even during the wintertime. Now, the eggs are kind of hard-boiled, but they're still eggs.

So my mother, she really got into this. She started crocheting boots for the chickens. She got into ear muffs, the whole works. I mean, little capes for the chickens. Good lookin' chicken farm.

All this worked out just fine until the space station — the Mir — a piece of it broke off and hit in a hole of water out front of the farm. That morning when we got up, my brother said, "There's a Mir in the hole of water out front."

I said, "That's just your reflection in the water."

He said, "No, I mean, the Mir."

So, I thought, well, I'll check that out. Go out there and, sure enough, there sets a water dog on the bank, looking at his reflection in the water. If anybody's ever seen a water dog, they're sorry looking things. They have no hair, absolutely none at all. This water dog went up, started eating from our dog's food.

Believe it or not, first thing them water dogs do — it's instinct — is start chasing chickens. I thought to myself, "This is bad, this is bad. I mean, a water dog chasing a chicken. I never seen nothing like this in my whole life." We penned all the chickens up, got them away from the water dog, and this water dog headed back for the creek.

Well, we got to noticing everything in the creek was changing. I mean, the crawcrabs had growed another pincher. And the fish, they had extra fins. And, of course, the catfish were being run out of the water by the water dog. The water dog looked so sad that I thought, well, maybe we ought to do something for him. He keeps going back to the dog food. Let's try putting a little Rogaine in the dog food to see if we can't grow some hair on that water dog.

Believe it or not, we had hair growing on that water dog. He was a slick-lookin' water dog. I mean, he was good lookin'. He wasn't too smart. I mean, he had bumps all over his head from chasing the car that was parked in the driveway. But other than that, that water dog was smart. He was so smart that he would actually hold catfish, bass, you-name-it, trout, he would hold 'em under a rock and bay 'em till we got there. He was a good water dog.

Well, this was during the dry time of the season, and there hadn't been much rain. Once the rains came, everything got back to where it was. Pouring down like it usually does in our area, it flushed the stream very well with a spring flood. But, sadly to say, everything in that whole water is back to normal. The water dog, he's back under his rock. The fish are back to where they have normal fins. And the crawcrab only has two pinchers.

Vandalia Time!

The 26th annual Vandalia Gathering will take place this Memorial Day weekend at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston. The Division of Culture and History throws this party each year to celebrate our state's traditional culture. Photographer Michael Keller captured these images of Vandalia activities and participants at last year's event. We'll see you at Vandalia!

Fiddler Woody Simmons with Dan Kessinger on guitar.

Above: Little pickers at the kids' tent.

Above right: Sylvia O'Brien.

Right: Potter Gary Shaffer at the craft circle.

26th Annual Vandalia Gathering

May 24-26, 2002

State Capitol Complex Charleston, West Virginia

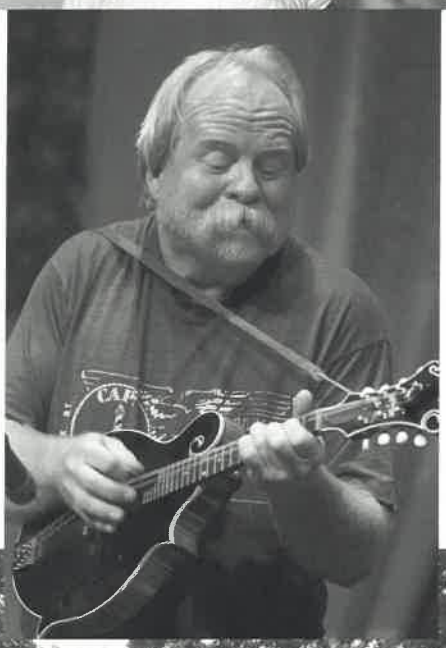
Friday, May 24
7:00 p.m. Concert

Saturday, May 25
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Heritage and Native American Dancing
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Contests, Performances (Fiddle, Bluegrass Banjo, Mandolin)
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Flatfooting
1:15 - 3:30 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing
6:30 p.m. Awards Ceremony
7:30 p.m. Concert

Sunday, May 26
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Heritage and Native American Dancing
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Contests, Performances (Old-Time Banjo, Lap Dulcimer, Flatpick Guitar)
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Flatfooting
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Liars Contest
1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing
3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Gospel Workshop
5:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony
6:00 p.m. Gospel Concert

All events free and open to the public. For further information, call (304)558-0220, 558-0162, or visit www.wvculture.org/vandalia.

Photoessay by Michael Keller.



Above: A competitor in the fiddle contest.

Right: Mike Bing plays mandolin on stage.

Below: Old-time square dancing.

2001 Vandalia Winners

Vandalia Heritage Award — Norman Fagan, Red House

Fiddle (age 60 & over)
1 — Elmer Rich, Westover
2 — Harold Burns, Yawkey
3 — Lefty Shafer, Charleston
4 — Jim Nichols, Pickaway
5 — Jerry Lewis, Nettie

Fiddle (under age 60)
1 — Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
2 — Jake Krack, Orma
3 — Darrell Murray, Charleston
4 — David Bing, Harmony
5 — Zack Fanok, Morgantown

Old-Time Banjo (age 60 & over)
1 — Woody Simmons, Mill Creek
2 — Eugene Parsons, Orma
3 — Ben Carr, Wilsie
4 — Brooks Smith, Dunbar
5 — Charlie Loudermilk, Frankford

Old-Time Banjo (under age 60)
1 — David O'Dell, West Logan
2 — Tim Bing, Spencer
3 — Andrew Dunlap, Morgantown
4 — Doug Van Gundy, Marlinton
5 — Paul Gartner, Sod

Mandolin
1 — Mike Melton, Charleston
2 — Robert Shafer, Elkview
3 — Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
4 — Dorse Sears, Orma
5 — Matthew Hiser, Layland

Bluegrass Banjo
1 — Butch Osborne, Parkersburg
2 — Ben Harrington, Fairdale
3 — Rad Lewis, Winfield
4 — Bobby Maynard, Huntington
5 — Virgil Osborne, Lorado

Lap Dulcimer
1 — Alan Freeman, Renick
2 — David O'Dell, West Logan
3 — Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville
4 — Peter Snyder, Pigeon
5 — David Gladkosky, South Charleston

Flat-Pick Guitar
1 — Robert Shafer, Elkview
2 — Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
3 — Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
4 — Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
5 — Jamie Rhodes, Green Bank

New Films and Videos on West Virginia and Appalachia

2001 was one of the best film years ever for new films about West Virginia and Appalachia. The great success of the feature film *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* and its multi-platinum-selling soundtrack recording led to a renewed national interest in traditional mountain music and spawned the follow-up *Down from the Mountain*. Appalshop films of Whitesburg, Kentucky, released biographies of two of the greatest mountain singers — Ralph Stanley and Hazel Dickens — along with a riveting documentary on domestic violence.

There is clearly a renewed interest in our region among filmmakers and film audiences, and several promising new projects are currently in production. Last October, a new film festival was launched in Sutton devoted to the work of our state's filmmakers. The next West Virginia Filmmakers Festival is scheduled October 4-13, 2002, at the Landmark Studio for the Arts in Sutton. For information, call (304)345-5850 or e-mail mystery12@newwave.net.

A number of locally produced films on West Virginia history have recently come out on topics ranging from Jefferson County in the east to Blenko Glass and Marshall University football in the west. Of special interest to GOLDENSEAL readers will be the lumber history from Pocahontas County, *Out of the Storm*. Featuring vivid oral recollections and generous historical photography, watching this video is almost like seeing a GOLDENSEAL article come to life.

It is also encouraging to see the recent restoration of a number of historic film titles including *Night of the Hunter* and *Tol'able David*, in addition to the four-disc DVD collection of rare restored "orphan" films, *Treasures from American Film Archives*, which includes segments from two historic West Virginia-made films.

The McClintic Library in Marlinton has created a large collection of videos on West Virginia and Appalachia. Many of the titles listed below can be found there, and West Virginia local libraries can obtain them through inter-library loan. For information, call (304)799-6000. To purchase the videos listed here, contact any national video distributor, or check the Web addresses given.

—Steve Fesenmaier

Hazel Dickens — It's Hard to Tell the Singer from the Song
55 min. *2001 Appalshop*

From the coalfields of Mercer County to the factories of Baltimore, Hazel Dickens has lived the songs she writes and sings. A pioneering woman in bluegrass and country music, Hazel has influenced generations of songwriters and musicians. Her songs of hard work, hard times, and hardy souls have bolstered working people at picketlines and union rallies throughout the land. Her powerful, piercing vocals are featured in the soundtracks for the films *Harlan County, USA* and *Matewan*. She is a 2001 recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. In this intimate portrait, interviews with Hazel and fellow musicians are interwoven with archival footage, recent performances, and 16 powerful songs. It is available from the Appalshop Web site at http://ns.appalshop.org/film/hazel.htm.

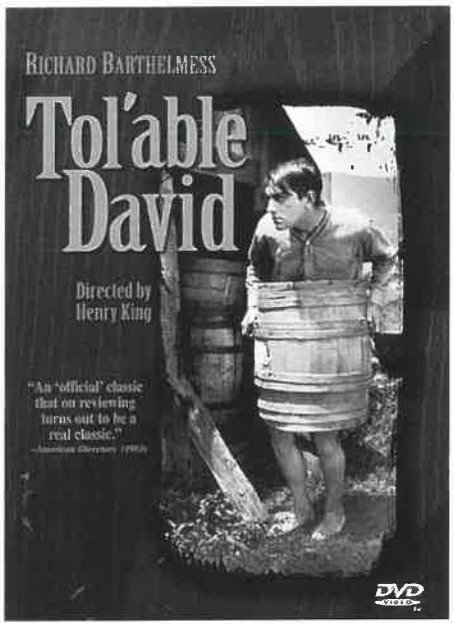
The Ralph Stanley Story
82 min. *2000 Appalshop*

The "Stanley sound" is true old-time, mountain-style bluegrass music, popularized by recording artists Carter and Ralph Stanley from Clinch Mountain, Virginia. This film tells Ralph Stanley's story through interviews with him, fellow musicians, and those who know him best. It is a revealing look at the homeplace, family, and strong belief system that underlie Ralph's intense singing and banjo playing. "Rank Stranger," "White Dove," "Pretty Polly," "Man of Constant

made-for-TV film version was created based on the book in which a woman leaves her wealthy husband in order to teach the deaf. Montague was an award-winning author and is thought to be West Virginia's most filmed novelist. Originally called *Amy On the Lips*, this film has recently been re-released on home video.

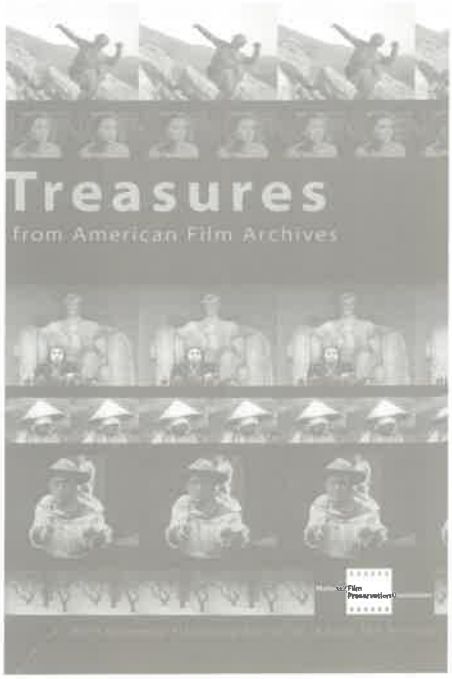
Tol'able David
110 min. *1921/1997 Kino International*

David Shepherd, America's leading film preservationist, has restored this landmark film by director Henry King, set in rural Appalachia. Combining the Biblical tale of David and Goliath with a mountain feud, this film was one of the early sources for the negative stereotype of the Mountaineer. [See "Early West Virginia Cinema (1919-1941)," by Steve Fesenmaier; page 40.]



Night of the Hunter
99 min. *1955/2000 MGM Home Entertainment*

Robert Mitchum and Shelly Winters star in this 1955 classic thriller, which has been called "one of the most frightening movies ever made." Based on a best-selling novel by West Virginia native Davis Grubb, portions of the film were shot on the Ohio River, near Moundsville. The newly restored version was shown in local theaters late last year and will soon be available on home video and DVD.



Treasures from American Film Archives
640 min. *2000 Image Entertainment*

"Orphan" films are those which, for one reason or another, have never been seen by the general public. Over the years, countless of these orphan films have piled up in archives across the country. Recently, 50 of these rare treasures, gathered from 18 individual archives, have been restored by the non-profit National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF) and issued in an impressive four-disc DVD set. The films, made from 1893 to 1985, range from early feature films to cartoons, avant garde fiction, and documentaries. Segments of two West Virginia-made films are included: *West Virginia, the State Beautiful* (1929) and *One-Room Schoolhouses* (c. 1935). For more information, check the NFPF Web site at www.filmpreservation.org/dvd_treasures.html.

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GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300
(304)558-0220

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

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Address

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Still Dancing at 100

Henry Neylon recently turned 100 years young, and is still kicking up his heels. The spry flatfoot dancer was featured on the cover of our Summer 1992 issue, and we were impressed at the time that he was dancing so well at 90 years of age. Ten years later, Henry is still going strong. He lives in the Charleston area, and dresses up every day and takes the bus to the downtown mall where he hobnobs with customers, merchants, and other mall regulars. He still dances each year at the Vandalia Gathering and is easy to spot with his black felt hat, sport coat, and tap shoes.

Henry Neylon, dancing at the Cultural Center in 1992. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Henry grew up in Shrewsbury, Kanawha County, and worked for 52 years in the local oil and coal industries, retiring in 1970. When asked the secret to his longevity, Henry recently confided to *The Charleston Gazette*, "I've always did a lot of walking, and I try to keep worry off my mind." Well said, Henry. Congratulations!

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Fidler's Mill
- Kane & Keyser Hardware
- Cassity
- Hollidays Cove Mystery

(continued from inside front cover)

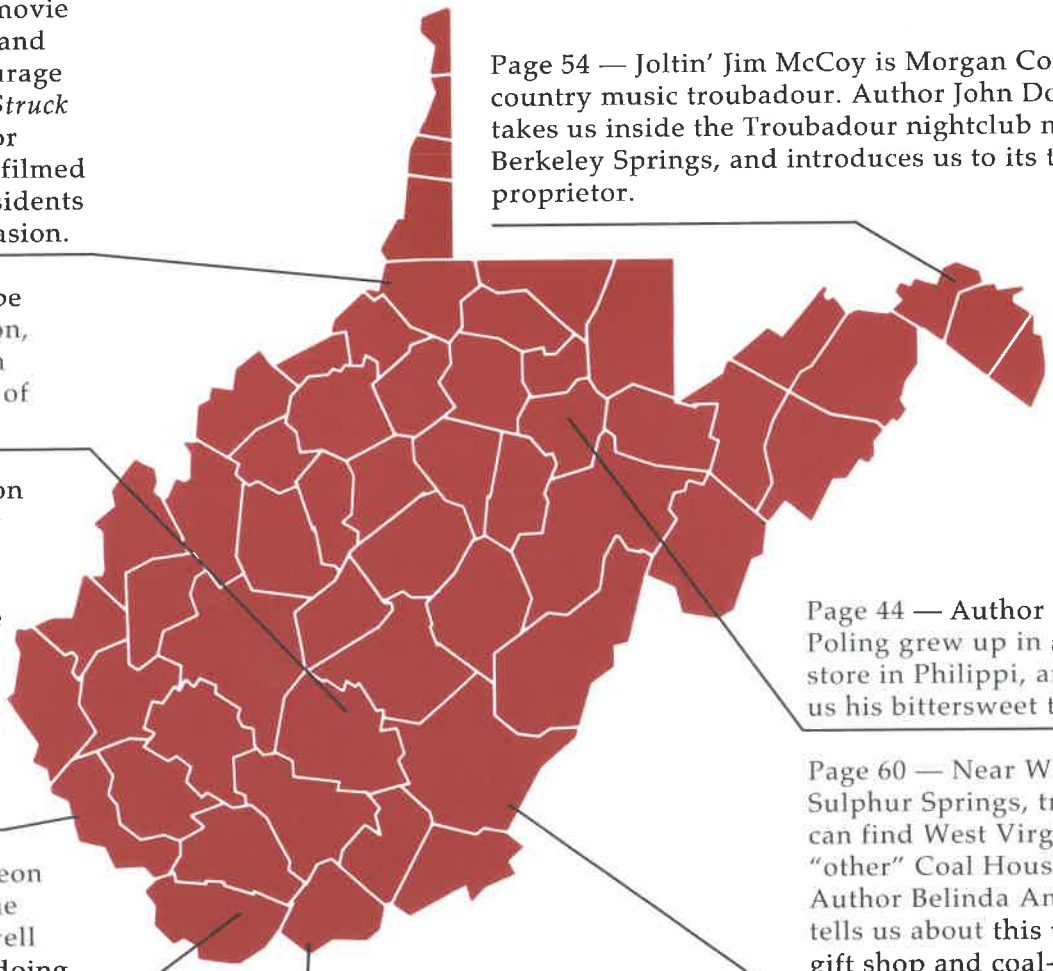
August 9-11 101st Pinch Reunion
Pinch (965-3084)
August 9-11 Augusta Festival
Elkins (637-1209)
August 9-11 30th Annual Logan County Arts & Crafts Fair
Logan (752-1324)
August 9-17 State Fair of West Virginia
Fairlea (645-1090)
August 10-11 Dulcimer Weekend
Fort New Salem/Salem (782-5245)
August 11 Lebanese Heritage Festival
Wheeling (277-3230)
August 16-18 W.Va. Highland Games & Celtic Festival
Beckley (727-0068)
August 16-18 African American Festival
Charles Town (263-1917)
August 22-25 Appalachian Festival
Beckley (252-7328)
August 24-25 Mason-Dixon Frontier Festival
Mason-Dixon Park/Core (879-5500)
August 29-September 1 Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)
August 30-September 1 W.Va. Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (622-7314)
August 30-September 2 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts Jubilee
Weston (1-800-296-1863)
August 31 Mountain Heritage Day
Fort Gay (648-5954)
August 31-September 2 Holly River Festival
Holly River State Park (493-6532)
August 31-September 2 Hick Festival
Parsons (478-3747)
August 31-September 2 65th Annual W.Va Horseshoe Pitchers
Worthington (622-8024) State Tournament
September 7-8 Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (623-2335)
September 7-8 23rd Annual Hampshire Heritage Days
Romney (822-7221)
September 7-8 Riverfront Festival
Moundsville (845-2773)
September 7-8 10th Annual Mule & Donkey Show
Sutton (364-8364)
September 8 James C. McGrew Birthday Celebration
Kingwood (379-7621)
September 12-15 W.Va. Oil & Gas Festival
Sistersville (652-2939)
September 13-14 Country Music Assn. of W.Va. Fall Festival
Fairmont (675-5737)
September 14 Mound Festival Arts & Crafts Show
South Charleston (744-7564)
September 14-15 W.Va. Honey Festival
Parkersburg (1-800-752-4982)
September 14-15 Helvetia Community Fair
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 14-15 Mt. Grove VFD Potato Festival
Horseshoe Run (735-5035)
September 14-22 14th Annual Leaf Peepers Festival
Davis (259-5315)
September 19-22 King Coal Festival
Williamson (235-5560)
September 19-22 Treasure Mountain Festival
Franklin (249-5025)
September 19-22 Clay County Golden Delicious Festival
Clay (587-4455)
September 20-22 Florence Merow Mason-Dixon Festival
Morgantown (599-1309)
September 20-22 FOOTMAD Fall Festival
Fayetteville (415-3668)
September 21-22 Country Roads Festival
Ansted (658-5212)
September 26-28 W.Va. Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg (655-8374)
September 26-29 Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Kingwood (329-0021)
September 27-29 Volcano Days Antique Steam & Gas Engine Show
Walker (679-3611) and Festival
September 27-29 Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Harpers Ferry (1-800-624-0577)
September 27-29 Hardy County Heritage Weekend
Moorefield (538-8080)
September 27-29 St. George Greek Festival
Huntington (525-5634)
September 27-October 6 Mountain State Forest Festival
Elkins (636-1824)
September 28 Poca Heritage Day
Poca (755-4677)
September 28 Roadkill Cook-Off
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
September 28 W.Va. Autumn Festival
Burnsville (853-2422)
October 3-6 W.Va. Pumpkin Festival
Milton (743-9222)
October 4-5 Southern W.Va. Italian Fest
Bluefield (589-3317)
October 4-5 Appalachian Heritage Festival
Shepherdstown (876-5113)
October 5 October Sky Festival
Coalwood (297-5102)
October 5-6 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
Burlington (788-2342, ext 235)
October 5-6 Country Fall Festival
Point Pleasant (675-5737)
October 5-6 Native American Powwow
Mason-Dixon Park/Core (879-5500)
October 5-6 Bunner Ridge Heritage Days
Fairmont (363-3631)
October 10-12 W.Va. Storytelling Festival
Jackson's Mill/Weston (599-2219)
October 10-13 W.Va. Black Walnut Festival
Spencer (927-1780)
October 11-13 22nd Annual Arts & Crafts Fair
Fairlea (645-6652)
October 11-13 Old Central City Harvest Festival
W. Huntington (525-1500)
October 12 Reckart's Mill Days
Cranesville (789-2225)
October 12 Burgoo International Cook-Off
Webster Springs (847-7291)
October 12-13 Wayne Fall Festival
Wayne (272-3221)
October 12-13 29th Annual Apple Butter Festival
Berkeley Springs (258-3738)
October 12-13 20th Lumberjackin' Bluegrassin' Jamboree
Mullens (294-4000)
October 17-20 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
Berkeley County (263-2500)
October 19 New River Gorge Bridge Day
Fayetteville (1-800-927-0263)
October 20 Elmer Bird Music Festival
Hurricane (562-5896)
October 25-27 Fiddlers' Reunion
D&E College/Elkins (637-1209)
November 2 Something Old/Something New Craft Show
Glenville (462-8291)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 2003 "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, 2003, 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.

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

PERIODICALS

Inside Goldenseal



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