

# Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Fall 2003  
\$4.95

Artist Boyd Boggs

Sportsman's Club

Odd Fellows Home

Ikie's Tomb



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# From the Editor: You've Been Deputized!

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**B**efore the modern world encroached on every hill and holler, communities and families occasionally had to round up a "few brave souls" when there was a big job to do. This might take the form of a barn raising, sheep shearing, or hog butchering in a farming area. Or maybe a quilting bee for the ladies. Sometimes, a group of men and their dogs might beat the bushes for a missing outlaw. We've read about similar activities many times in these pages, and it's inspiring to see how people can pull together when the need arises.

Well, the need has arisen, and I must ask your help. As I indicated in my editorial in the Spring 2003 issue, GOLDENSEAL is in urgent need of new subscribers.

We greatly appreciate the thousands of faithful readers who regularly renew their subscriptions each year — you have been our lifeblood. It is essential, however, that we bring new readers into the fold. And I'm not just talking about one or two. We will need to attract approximately 1,000 new subscribers for each of the next five years. That is our goal.

GOLDENSEAL experiences about an 80% renewal rate — a remarkable figure considering that the industry average hovers between 40-50%. There is a certain amount of natural attrition in this business, and the magazine industry as a whole has seen that trend accelerate in recent years as a result of a sagging economy and competition from new media sources.

We know from experience that there is a strong audience for GOLDENSEAL. The challenge for us has always been to get the magazine in front of enough potential new readers. It never ceases to amaze me when I meet native West Virginians — many with a longstanding interest in local history and culture — who react with surprise when I tell them about GOLDENSEAL. The magazine is about to enter its fourth decade of publication, and it's high time every person in the state became aware of it. Don't you agree?

Starting now, I officially deputize every GOLDENSEAL subscriber as an honorary sales representative for the magazine. Talk about it.

Put it out on your coffee table. Lend your back issues to a friend and encourage them to subscribe.

As I mentioned in the spring, it is critical that we figure out a way to make the magazine visible and available in public places as much as possible. I'm talking about waiting rooms, senior centers, libraries, barber shops and beauty parlors, doctors' offices, etc. It is in these situations that many of our current, faithful subscribers first became exposed to GOLDENSEAL, and in my opinion, this is the key to our future success.

To put my money where my mouth is, I offer the following incentive: **For every new public or institutional gift subscription we receive, we will add one free issue to the subscription account of the giver.** In other words, if you give a new gift subscription to your local tire repair shop for display in their waiting room, we will tack one free issue onto the end of your own subscription as a way to say thank you.

I can't stress enough how critical it is that we reverse the current trend of slowly decreasing readership. My esteemed predecessor, Dr. Ken Sullivan, deftly used his magazine editorials to repeatedly remind readers how important it is that you feel a sense of ownership in the magazine and that you take a share of the responsibility for its security and well-being. I have intentionally been rather "soft-sell" in my editorials up to this point, but have lately come to realize the wisdom — and necessity — of Ken's thinking and his insistence. You can expect more of that from me in the future.

With this Fall 2003 issue as evidence, I hope you will agree that the magazine is as good as ever, with an attractive cover, interesting and varied stories, compelling photographs, and useful current information. The authors, photographers, designer, editor, printer, proofreaders, and office staff see to that. Now we need your help. You've been deputized, and I have every confidence that you will do your part to help us meet our goals. Thanks, in advance!



*"I hope my story motivates the young people to do their best in the tasks they are given, and to keep on serving others with what God has given them, in spite of the disappointments and unavoidable events of life's experience."*

*General Charles R. Fox*

Virginia, Okey Patteson, was coming to our camp and would like to meet some West Virginia soldiers for a day. We dressed up in our dress uniforms and were taken by a military vehicle to the base airport, where we spent the day with Governor Patteson and General Fox. Here's a picture of that special occasion more than 50 years ago. General Fox is standing at the far left. I am the third soldier from the left. Next to me is Governor Patteson. I don't recall the other soldiers' names.

After basic training, I was sent to Germany with the occupation forces and lost contact with my five other friends, but I occasionally read about General Fox and his military career.

Jack M. Campbell

*Thank you, Mr. Campbell, for this photograph and for your interesting comments. If any of these soldiers wishes to contact Jack Campbell, you may write to him in care of GOLDENSEAL. —ed.*

June 4, 2003

Charleston, West Virginia

Via e-mail

Editor:

Great issue of the magazine. The story of General Fox was particularly fine. My wife enjoyed seeing the picture of the general with her mom's neighbor John Mitchell, whom I believe is ill at present.

As to the Norwalk photograph on page 30 [see "The Norwalk: Martinsburg's Motor Car," by Daniel J. Friend; Summer 2003], I

have serious doubts that this car was fresh from the factory. Consider the signs of wear on the old-style rims. Actually, it makes no difference to the story, but I will bet that car had been around the block quite a few times.

Regarding your "Photo Curiosity," my search found no image of a similar Hudson Special, but the emblem might be that of a Hudson. Hudson used a triangle emblem, possibly inverted. The later cars had a fancier thing, still with the triangle motif. I believe the sportster had a triangle emblem. So, it might be a Hudson.

Lawton Posey

*Thank you, Mr. Posey, for those comments. Though we never established anything definitive about the sporty car in our most recent "Photo Curiosity," we did learn a great deal about the driver. Please see page 6 for more information about I.H. "Skinny" Moore. Thanks again for getting in touch. —ed.*

#### **Rhododendron Girls' State**

July 19, 2003

Grafton, West Virginia

Editor:

It was with particular interest that I picked up the Summer 2003 issue of GOLDENSEAL magazine, looking forward to perusing the article related to Rhododendron Girls' State. [See "Win With Katie McGee," The First Governor of Girls' State Looks Back," by Sharon Wilmoth Harsh.] As a law student at West Virginia University, I credit the lovely and



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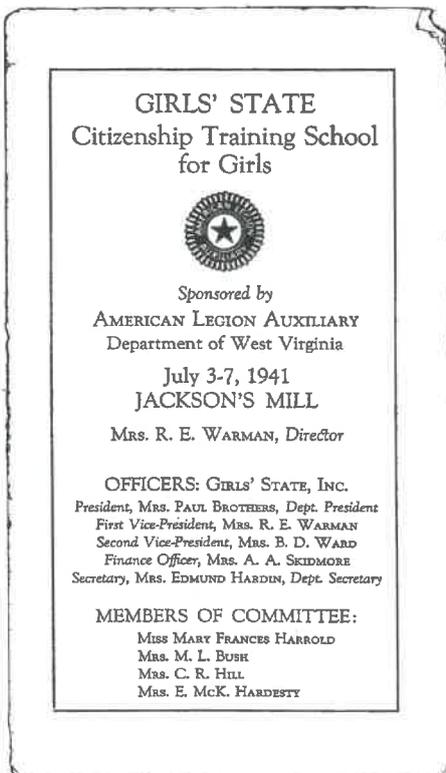
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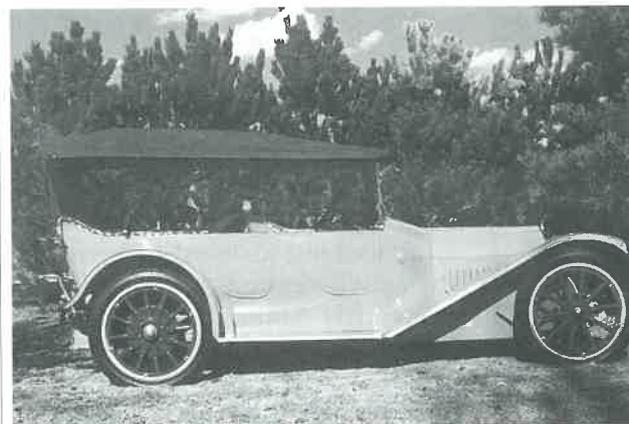
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dedicated women who presided over Girls' State for my knowledge of all things government related. I truly enjoyed the familiar description of Mrs. White's 1941 bid for governor.

I must, however, make a correction. In the accompanying sidebar on page 21, titled "Rhododendron Girls' State Today," it states that Girls' State has been held at Wheeling Jesuit since 1996. This is incorrect. I was one of Taylor County's two delegates in the



1914 Norwalk Underslung, belonging to Shirley Hoffman of Longmont, Colorado.

summer of 1996, and we were firmly ensconced at Jackson's Mill, more particularly in Randolph cabin. As I know your fine publication prides itself on accuracy, I felt compelled to make this correction.

As an aside, it was issues of your magazine that ultimately helped me prevail on my Golden Horseshoe exam. Thank you for your time and a wonderful article.

Sincerely,  
Allison B. Clark

*Thank you, Ms. Clark, for those kind words and for the additional information. Far be it from us to argue with a law student — our office collected the information about current Girls' State activities, and we apologize for any confusion in our report.*

*Thanks again for getting in touch. —ed.*

## Norwalk Automobile

July 25, 2003

Martinsburg, West Virginia  
Editor:

My husband Bob and I were planning a trip to Longmont, Colorado, to see the 1914 Norwalk car, when we heard about your article in GOLDENSEAL. I enjoyed the story very much. On July 1, 2003, we visited the owner Shirley Hoffman, who was extremely

gracious to us by allowing me to take many pictures and even sit in the car.

Shirley Hoffman's car is the only remaining Norwalk known to exist. The emblem on the radiator confirms that it was built in Martinsburg. It is in excellent condition, with bright yellow paint and burgundy interior and top.

We delivered a hat and t-shirt from our Norwalk Antique Car Club, along with a copy of the GOLDENSEAL to Ms. Hoffman from Bob and me. She thanked us for our visit to see her car and mentioned that she would like for it to be seen by others, as well. What an asset it would be to have it back in a museum in Martinsburg.  
Sincerely,  
Bea Aikens

### Natchee the Indian

June 4, 2003  
Spencer, West Virginia  
Editor:

The article of "Natchee the Indian" in the Summer 2003 issue caught my interest [see "Letters from Readers"; page 5]. His name has intrigued me for years. Now, I can put a face on it and know his history.

He is featured on one of the old posters that I have found in my theater. My theater was featured in GOLDENSEAL [see "The Robey Theater of Spencer: A Roane County Tradition," by Jim Mylott; Winter 1981].  
Thank you,  
Mike Burch  
Robey Theater



Show posters at the Robey Theater in Spencer.



Grant County comedienne Elsie Whitmer. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.

### Elsie Whitmer

July 26, 2003  
Sistersville, West Virginia  
Editor:

Red Skelton had movies, radio, and TV to announce his talent; likewise Bob Hope, Jack Benny, George Gobel, Lucille Ball, Carol Burnette, and Tim Conway. Elsie Whitmer has Carl E. Feather and GOLDENSEAL. Nice going Carl! Nice going GOLDENSEAL! [See "So Proud To Be Here": A Visit with Comedienne Elsie Whitmer," by Carl E. Feather; Summer 2003.]

We all need laughter. The Bible, in the book of Proverbs, says that laughter is good medicine. Elsie continues to give out a good dose every week there in Grant County. Every community needs an Elsie Whitmer. Author Carl E. Feather does a great job in telling about Elsie's 91 years of life. Even though she had such rough times as a child and on into her adult life, she has not harbored bitterness. She just keeps working hard and being cheerful. As she says, "There's too much sadness in the world. I want people to laugh."

That picture of Elsie on her front porch swing is a classic. I have never met her, but I can tell that she is someone I would love to chat with. That smile and

jovial conversation would cheer any person up on their saddest day.

You have a good magazine. Thank you.  
Sincerely,  
Dr. Kelvin W. Feather

### Hajash Brothers

May 17, 2003  
Beckley, West Virginia  
Editor:

I have received so much response to the Hajash family story that I feel very proud and also very humble. [See "Coming Home: The George Hajash Story" and "The Fighting Hajash Brothers," by Belinda Anderson; Spring 2003.] I am especially proud of the letter that I received from the former pastor of St. Francis DeSales Catholic Church in Beckley. I will always treasure this letter, as Father John McGinnity is a special friend, at present, and in the days gone by. I hope you enjoy the letter as much as I did.  
George Hajash

Shrine of The Sacred Heart  
Hot Springs, Virginia  
Dear George:

A friend sent me a copy of the most wonderful and entertaining article on you and your family in GOLDENSEAL. I enjoyed it so much. I read it several times. I always knew that the Hajash family was a truly great family, but I had no idea *how great*. Congratulations on keeping written and photographic memories of your family. It is wonderful to keep all this history on record for future generations.

What made the article so special to me was that it reminded me of my childhood. My parents had nine children. They were great parents, just like yours, who

## Moore Information

Readers enjoyed our "Photo Curiosity" from the Summer 2003 issue, showing race car driver I.H. "Skinny" Moore seated in a car at Northfork, McDowell County. We were pleased when reader Hazel Beckett of Princeton informed us that she was not only familiar with this driver, but she was able to put us in touch with his son — her brother-in-law.

I.H. Moore, Jr., who like his father is known as "Skinny," lives in Gardnerville, Nevada, where he is retired from the aerospace industry. Skinny, Jr., tells us that his father was born in Floyd County, Virginia, in 1901, and enjoyed racing cars when he was a young man. According to his son, the elder Moore did not personally own any race cars, but he drove them for other owners. The picture we ran in the magazine was familiar to the younger Moore, who recognized it from a collection of family photographs. He felt sure that the picture was taken in 1923 — the same year he was born.

Skinny Moore, Jr., tells us that while he does not race cars like his father once did, he enjoys flying gliders above the open desert and mountain country where he lives.

Then, just as this issue was going to press, we were thrilled to receive the following letter from another member of the Moore family. —ed.

July 24, 2003  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
Editor:

What a special "gift" to find my father's picture in his race car on the inside back cover of my summer edition of GOLDENSEAL!

This car raced at Indianapolis and was purchased there by "Buck" Clayton of Bluefield. He had it boxed and shipped back to Bluefield. My daddy was his mechanic and driver for races at the Bluefield Fairgrounds. I do not know when the car came into my father's possession. My two older brothers say the last they saw the car, it was in the basement of the Moore family home in Christiansburg, Virginia. The home has been sold.

Ivren "Skinny" Moore grew up in the Christiansburg/Cambria area. His father was the contractor for the Montgomery County Courthouse in Christiansburg. My dad and his brothers were always around trucks, cars, and construction equipment. By the time they were teenagers, they could tear down these vehicles and engines and put them back together in

working order.

Skinny came to Northfork, McDowell County, at the age of 20 or 21. He married Hazel Goode of Maybeury in January 1923, and they settled in the town of Clark, later part of Northfork. Dad established a garage beside city hall. It was so small that when it rained, he could only pull in a portion of the vehicle he was working on to keep dry.

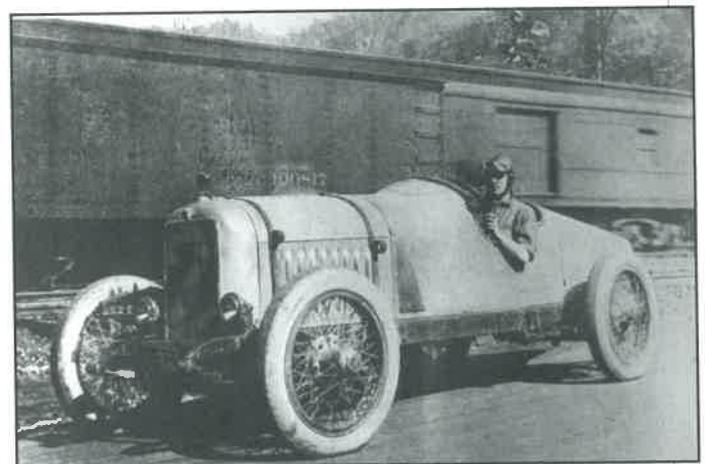
Later, he formed a partnership with a mechanic friend named Clyde Martin, and they moved into a building vacated by the discontinued Black Diamond Bus Lines, located at the forks of the road to Northfork Hollow. This picture of Dad was made at these train tracks at the forks of the road.

My dad was noted as the best automobile mechanic in the tri-state. He died in 1961 in the Welch Emergency (Old Miners) Hospital, just three months shy of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. My mother was living in the West Virginia Manor

(formerly The West Virginian Hotel) in Bluefield at the time of her death in 1990.

I was reared in Northfork along with my three brothers: Ivren Jr., Thomas, and Robert. I lived in Welch for two years after marrying Clyde Madeira, also of Northfork. I then lived in the same house in Keystone until I was 73, when we moved to Williamsburg to be near our son and his family. I retired in 1999 as executive secretary to the superintendent of McDowell County Public Schools, with 31 years of service.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Moore Madeira



Ivren H. "Skinny" Moore at Northfork, in a race car reportedly owned by "Buck" Clayton of Bluefield. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives.



The Hajash brothers in Beckley, 1945. Standing, left to right, are John, Steve, Andy, and Joachim; in the front are George, Martin, and Nick.

worked hard and struggled to keep food on the table, but they succeeded in doing so.

We also had the one bicycle for all the children, but we never had the brains to substitute a hose for a tire. Instead, we had a hidden corner, which passers-by could not see. It was full of bicycle spare parts. From these spare parts, other bicycles were born, but they did not live very long.

Like you, we moved several

*"It is amazing how all those European big families were so happy together, and how they were so pleased with the simple things of life."*

Father John McGinnity

times, but we eventually returned to the "home place," where my father and grandfather were born. Our biggest thrill was when we had enough money to buy a donkey and cart, which eventually improved to a pony and riding trap. When my father was

about 60, we bought the Ford car. The bicycle spare-parts corner gradually became the corner for spare parts for cars, and my younger brothers became self-taught auto mechanics.

Your article brought back many memories. It is amazing how all those European big families were so happy together, and how they were so pleased with the simple things of life. Life might have improved in some ways, but your family and mine and others like us enjoyed a support, happiness, and love which is hard to find today.

Congratulations to you and all your brothers on your military service. There was a movie that was famous many years ago called "The Sullivans," about the four Sullivan brothers going to World War II. The story of the [seven] Hajash brothers is actually far more interesting.

George, I always regarded you as a most wonderful person. I knew how interested you were in photography, and I enjoyed the many wonderful historical photos [you took] of St. Francis School and parish events. But this article really let me see what a blessing

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Edited by John Lilly



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you are to so many people, especially your family. I hope all your nieces, nephews, and future generations will cherish the memories you have given them in writing and photos.

God bless you and all your family always. Thanks for giving me many happy memories and several chuckles while reading this article.

With great respect, gratitude, and prayers,  
Father John McGinnity

## West Virginia Coon Hunters

May 29, 2003  
Rocky Gap, Virginia  
Via e-mail

Editor:

I was at the clinic today and ran across a copy of the Spring 2003 issue. Was I surprised to see my grandfather's picture in it! [See "The West Virginia Coon Hunters: On the Trail of a Lost String Band," by John Lilly.] I'm the granddaughter of fiddler Wesley "Bane" (not Bone) Boyles. My mother Lena Mae Bowling of Princeton is his eldest child. She played guitar in honky-tonks and barn dances with him as a young woman.

Bane Boyles was born August 5,

1905, in a house on the north side of Walker's Mountain in Bland County, Virginia. He came from a musical family and learned to play the fiddle at a very early age. By the time he was a teenager, he could play all the old mountain reels and call a square dance. In the 1920's, the family moved to Bluefield, West Virginia, where Bane worked odd jobs and continued to play for barn dances.

In 1927, he was playing with the West Virginia Coon Hunters string band. That August, on Bane's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, they recorded two songs for Ralph Peer at the famous Bristol Sessions in Bristol, Tennessee. Unfortunately, about a year later, my granddaddy was arrested for transporting illegal alcohol and was forced to serve three years in a federal prison in Georgia. This ruined any chance he might have had to make another record or to "hit the big time" with his music.

When he got out of prison, he came back home and married my grandmother Hazel Burress, whom he had left unmarried and pregnant when he was sentenced. My mother was born in 1929, while Granddad was serving his



Fiddler Wesley Bane Boyles with three of his six children in Bluefield during the late 1940's. From the left are Lena, Jimmy, Bane, and Bill Boyles.

## GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

**Stella Hedge Britton** of Harrisville, Ritchie County, lived an eventful life. Many of her experiences have been chronicled in these pages, from the decades when her family co-owned and operated the Whitehall Hotel [see "A Home Away From Home": Harrisville's Whitehall Hotel," by Mary Lucille DeBerry; Winter 1999] to the sometimes turbulent years she spent as the wife of a Ritchie County sheriff [see "Mayberry

in Harrisville: Keeping the Peace in Ritchie County," by Larry Bartlett; Spring 1995]. Stella passed away on April 8, 2003. She was 96.



Gwen Clingman. Photograph by Michael Keller.

**Gwen Clingman**, popular owner and proprietor of Clingman's Market in downtown Lewisburg for 57 years, passed away on May 12, 2003, at age 90.

Gwen and her late husband Garland began the business in 1945, when they purchased it for \$1,500 from Garland's former employer. Initially a retail meat market, the store eventually became a busy spot for hungry workers, students, and visitors looking for a hot, hearty lunch. Lewisburg declared April 23, 1995, "Gwen Clingman Day." Gwen was the subject of a story in our Spring 1999 issue called "Clingman's Market," by Belinda Anderson.



Stella Hedge Britton. Photograph by Michael Keller.

time. After my grandparents married in 1931, they tried their best to settle down in the Bluefield area, where they raised six kids. Bane worked several jobs, including as a mechanic and a barber. But he just couldn't give up the music, which caused a lot of friction in their marriage. The couple split up in the 1960's, but they never divorced.

Granddaddy Bane played with everyone, but never recorded again. He would go to the "Old Dominion Barn Dance" in Richmond in the early 1950's, and they would have him join in, but not as a particular guest. He would also play with various people over WHIS radio in Bluefield. He played with Bill

Monroe at a fiddlers convention in 1946 or '47 at Doran, Virginia.

When I was five years old, Granddaddy was living at Ada, Mercer County, and my parents took me for a visit. I could see my granddaddy through the screen door in a white shirt, dress pants, and shiny shoes, standing there playing the fiddle. My parents joined him, and I fell asleep on a pile of coats listening to that mountain music as a lullaby.

He continued to play music until his dying day. I remember in his later years, relatives took turns driving him to fiddlers conventions. They would just drop him off. He'd tell them not to worry, that he'd find someone to give him a ride home. He

always did. He died in 1975 while fishing on a creek bank in Bland County.

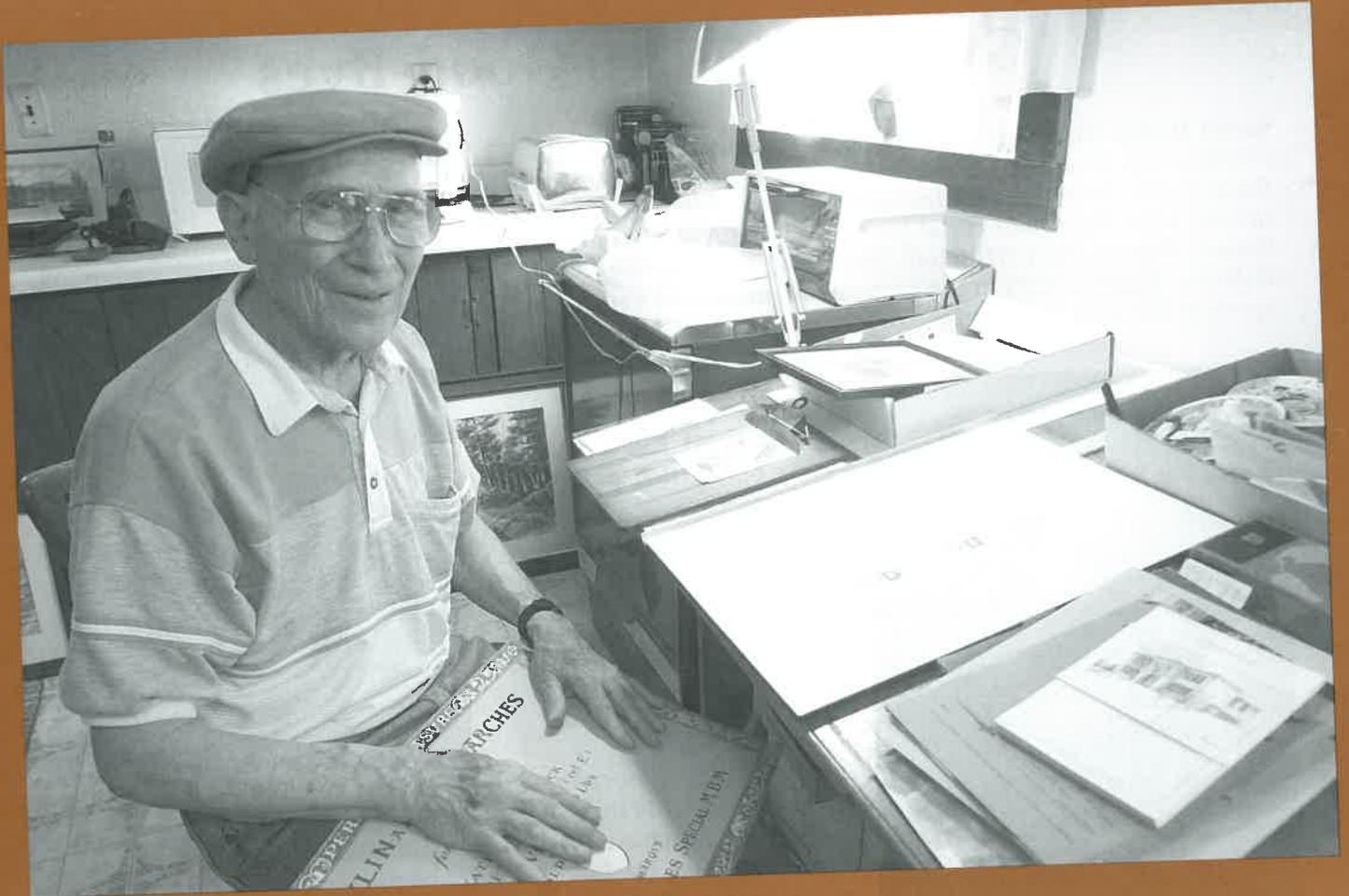
I just want Granddad to be understood and credited for his main passion — his music. Thank you for helping me give Granddad the credit he's due.

Sincerely,  
Denise Smith

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See page 72.



Boyd Boggs seated at his art table in the kitchen of his home on the outskirts of Glenville.

# "I Never Gave Up the Art"

Interview by Ginny Hawker  
Photographs by Michael Keller

artwork while I was in the service for the outfit, and so on. After the war was over, I came back to this country, and I decided to go to commercial art school.

*Boyd married the former Wanda Greenlief of Glenville in 1942. Ronald, their only son, was born in 1944. Boyd, Wanda, and Ronald lived in Washington, D.C., for a short while following Boyd's return from military service.*

**GH.** That was a little bit unusual, wasn't it, for a married man with a child? How did your wife feel about that?

**BB.** Well, we worked it out. She worked some, and also I [worked]. I got a night job earlier in the evening up until midnight, then I went to art school during the day. Of course, that didn't last too long. That was pretty hard to do. I decided we'd better move out to a better location somewhere.

So we came back [to West Virginia]. There was employment here in Gilmer County [at a] glass decorating shop, for Ludwig Glass.

**GH.** Ludwig? That was the glass factory here in Glenville. About what year was it that you came back here?

**BB.** About 1945. We did flower designs, ceramics on crystal glass. It did pretty well for a while. My older brother and I worked together on some things — one doing leaf work on a flower, the other one doing the blossom. Piece work, you know. How fast you could do it, the better. We made out good. The only trouble was the imported glass soon took over, so they had to close down.

We had an old Czechoslovakian that was a professional glass decorator. Rudy Sidlak was his name. I couldn't spell it. He was probably 60 or 70 years old.

**GH.** What kind of a teacher was he?

**BB.** The best in the world. He could do anything.

**GH.** He was a nice person?

**BB.** Oh, yeah, he was great.

**GH.** Did he come with his family?

**BB.** The man that was heading this decorating shop in the glass factory, his name was Kenneth Michaels, from Beaver, Pennsylvania. He knew the old Sidlak and sent for him. It worked out.

**GH.** So, now, Mr. Sidlak, how did he do here living in Glenville?

**BB.** He was doing fine, he had a lot of friends. And he liked to drink beer. You'd find him down at the beer parlor. But he was a real artist, he was.

**GH.** He didn't have any family with him?



Boyd, Wanda, and Ronald Boggs in Ohio, about 1960. Photographer unknown.



Water jug and tumbler from the Ludwig Glass Company of Glenville, hand-painted by Boyd Boggs in the late 1940's.



After returning to Gilmer County from Ohio, Boyd became well-known as a sign painter. Many of his finely lettered, hand-painted signs are still visible around Glenville, including this one for a church parking lot.

**BB.** Not with him. His wife was living in Indiana. I guess [she was] elderly, and they didn't travel much, you know. He was kind of a loner in that way. Odd fellow, but he was really nice, nice person.

**GH.** You feel like you learned a lot from him?

**BB.** Oh, yes, I did.

**GH.** Did he teach you much about drawing technique, or was that something you had already learned?

**BB.** Pretty much drawing. But these patterns that were used, [they] were already established before. All what we did, you take the brush, and you just start on the plain glassware. That takes time to learn. These special soft sable brushes, too. You've got to know how to handle the brush and the ceramic paint, or you will make a smudge instead of a stroke. You mix the ceramic paint on a glass plate. You dip a little in, maybe, turpentine or oil and get it just the right consistency to work well on the glass, which is a very slick surface, you know. It takes a little

practice, that's about all.

*After the Ludwig glass plant closed in the early 1950's, Boyd and his family moved to northeast Ohio, where Boyd worked briefly for General Motors as a sign painter. Then, for about a year,*

*Boyd moved his family back to West Virginia to Cameron, Marshall County, where Boyd and his older brother operated a glass decorating shop for the Cameron Glass and Manufacturing Company. That shop soon closed due to labor difficulties.*

*Returning to the Akron, Ohio, area, Boyd worked for Goodyear Aerospace as a sign painter for about five years, going to art school at night. He then worked a short while as an artist for an advertising agency, but it didn't suit him. So, he took a job with the Summit County auditor's office as a real estate appraiser, where he stayed for the next 16 years. Boyd and Wanda returned to West Virginia after Boyd's retirement in 1974.*

**GH.** So, all this time, it seems like you were trying to find a way to make a living, support your family, and do your art.

**BB.** Right. Eventually, most of the things I did, or worked at, was part of an art job. Something to do with art.

I retired after these 16 years and



Beginning in the late 1990's, Boyd created a series of pen-and-ink drawings, documenting historic buildings and historical landmarks in Gilmer County. A complete set of these postcards, note cards, and prints suitable for framing are available from the Gilmer County Historical Society, P.O. Box 235, Glenville, WV 26351; phone (304)462-4295.

come back here. We had a little shop here in town, you know. Had craft supplies. I had an old easel there, and I did watercolors, anything that people wanted.

**GH.** Was that the Glenville Variety, right there at the intersection of Route 5 and Route 33?

**BB.** Right. After about five years, Wanda was beginning to get this breathing problem — emphysema. It was so dusty around there that we finally just sold or traded for this [place] out here, to get her out of the dust. From here, I did truck lettering and commercial signs for I.L. Morris.

I did a lot of lettering and sign work for other oil and gas companies here in the Gilmer County area, too. In fact, [I] got so much of it, at one time, that finally I.L. Morris got stick-on things for his trucks. I couldn't keep up with it.

**GH.** I know that your lettering work was very popular.

**BB.** I finally gave up all the bigger signs. I have done smaller signs that I could do here. But even that, the odor from the paint would bother Wanda's breathing. In nicer weather, I could take it out on the porch or the garage area to work. But I got it back down to something I could [do] in here.

This co-op down on Main Street here in Glenville, I've belonged to it for nine years. Shortly after it got there, I lettered the signs. The lettering in the windows is still there.



Watercolor of Cathedral Falls, Fayette County, painted by Boyd Boggs in the 1970's.

They found I could do pen and ink pretty well. I did the pen-and-ink drawings [of] Main Street there once, some of the buildings they was tearing down. And they got the idea [for me to] do some of these historical things. Why, I liked that.

**GH.** You've done drawings of the different schools around here that are now closed.

**BB.** That's part of it. But all the old, historic buildings and river boats.

**GH.** That's right. The river boats were very important as the Little Kanawha comes through Glenville.

[See "It was Crowded Up There": Paddlewheelers on the Little Kanawha," by Joy Gregoire Gilchrist; Summer 1994.]

**BB.** Right. There's a history in those things. On most of the sketches I did, I put some information on there in small lettering.

**GH.** I see some of your watercolors around your home here. They're beautiful.

**BB.** The wife won't let me get rid of those.

**GH.** Do people still come to you and want to buy some of your watercolors?

**BB.** Oh, yeah. Well, they want something painted of an old homestead, or something. They've got photos, and then I'll go see what's in real life now at the places.

**GH.** Do these people want you to draw or paint from a photograph of what their homeplace

used to be? Or do they want it [to look] like it looks now?

**BB.** Well, sometimes the building may be gone, and they'd like to have it [painted] from photos.

I kind of like the landscaping and the outdoor. Sometimes, I get waterfalls like the Blackwater Falls and things that have water in it. I just want to make it look realistic. I was in this real estate thing in Akron there for a while, quite a while. We'd have to draw buildings in scale drawings. That kept me interested, because I did real nice drawings for these buildings that we appraised.



At 81 years of age, Boyd is still an active and prolific artist. These paintings show various scenes from Gilmer County. The watercolor at left, titled "Stewart's Creek," is the view from Boyd's front porch.

Below: Boyd Boggs at the Glenville Banking & Trust Company, with a drawing he made of the same structure. Boyd also painted the lettering visible in the bank window.

**GH.** Having worked in real estate myself, I can say that was probably a real help to the real estate business.

**BB.** Oh yeah, it helped our department. But all the time I was in there doing the real estate, I was doing freelance work at home with art. I never gave up the art. I had it somewhere.

**GH.** I get really interested in your feelings about your art work.

**BB.** I think about it all the time.

**GH.** Do you?

**BB.** Something about a tree. That tree has some character to it, you know. Or an old barn with part of the siding missing, or the roof in bad shape. That makes an interesting subject for me.

**GH.** So it doesn't have to be perfect and pretty?

**BB.** Oh, no. It's alright, if that's the way the customer wants it. But I'm looking for something that's

got more character to it.

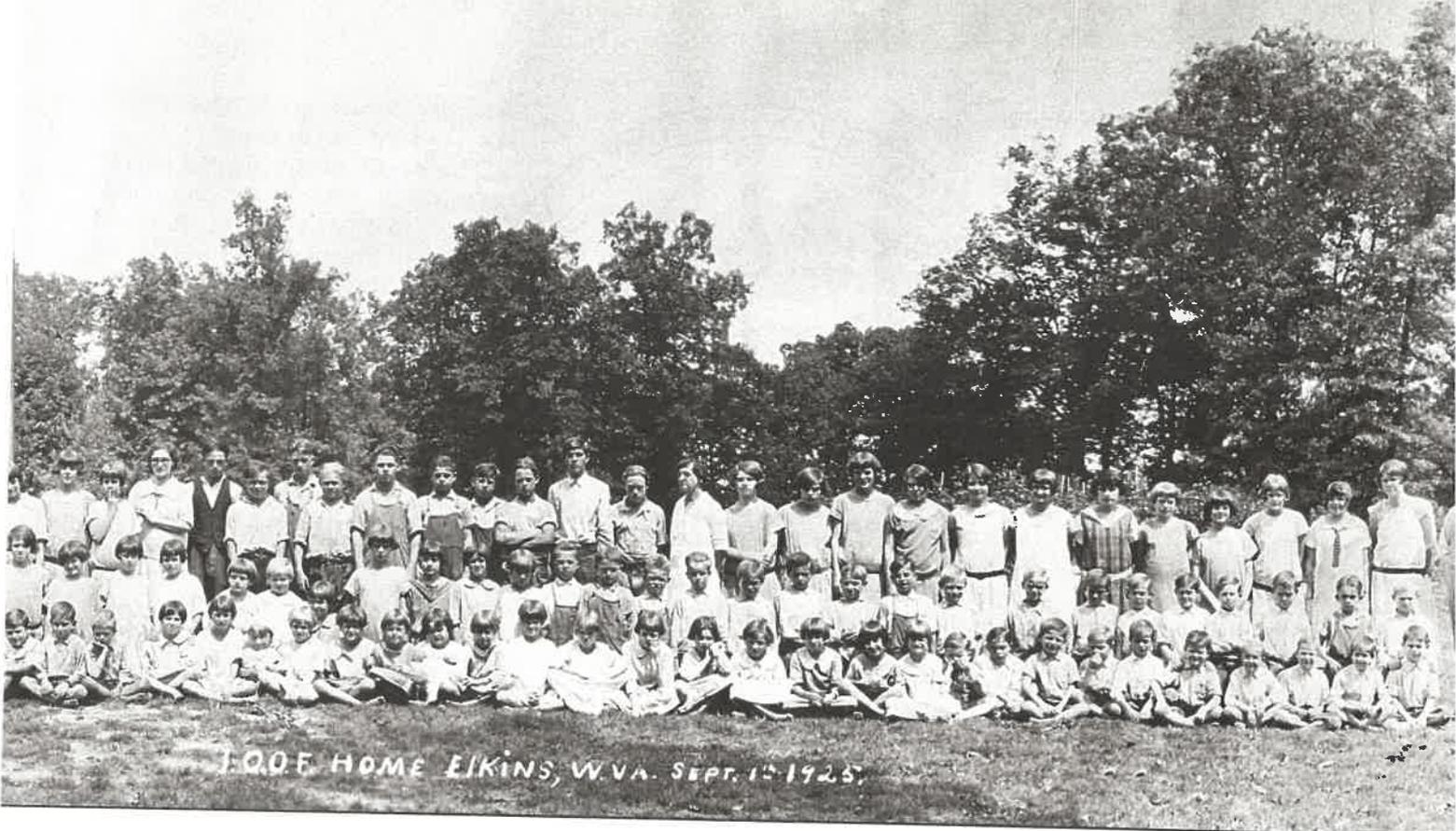
**GH.** I agree with you there. Sometimes, the imperfect things or older things do have more soul, don't they?

**BB.** Yes, right. 🍂

**GINNY HAWKER**, born in rural Virginia, has been a resident of Tanner, Gilmer County, for 27 years. She received a degree in elementary education from Glenville State College in 1991 and has worked as a teacher, real estate agent, and traditional singer. Ginny has been president of the West Virginia State Folk Festival since 1995. Her writing has appeared in the *Glenville Democrat* newspaper. This is her first contribution to **GOLDENSEAL**.

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





The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Home in Elkins with residents and staff in September 1925.

ately call "Momma," was born in rural Kanawha County on October 15, 1914. She was one of six children, and she spent much of her childhood at the spacious Odd Fellows Home in Elkins.

Momma married young. She was lucky — she married a wonderful man, my great-grandfather Homer Porter. Together, they raised eight children and one granddaughter — my mother. For more than 60 years, Bonnie and Homer enjoyed life together in West Hamlin, Lincoln County.

Now, my great-grandfather is gone, and Momma suffers the effects of a stroke and Alzheimer's. She no longer recognizes family members and doesn't function well in day-to-day activities. But somehow, through her cloudy memories, she clearly recalls her happiest childhood moments. It might seem surprising to those who think of orphanages or children's homes as sad and lonely places, but some of Momma's happiest times are related to the years she spent at the

**Odd Fellows Home.**

Life was hard when Momma was a very young girl. It got even harder after the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-19. That particular virus infected a fifth of the world's population, claiming more than 20 million people throughout the world in only one year. More than 600,000 of those deaths occurred in this country. One of those who perished was my great-great-grandfather Samuel Withrow.

After her husband died, Momma's mother

Bonnie Withrow Porter and husband Homer Porter at their Jackson County home in the early 1940's. Born in 1914, Bonnie lived at the Odd Fellows Home in Elkins from 1919 until 1927. According to Bonnie, these were some of the happiest years of her life.



Oma Blizzard Withrow was unable to cope with the daily struggle of raising a family alone. Unable to provide the care she felt they needed, she took her two oldest children Roy and Gladys to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Home in Elkins on May 14, 1919. Three weeks later, on June 5, 1919, Momma and her twin sisters Merle and Myrtle were also accepted into the Home. Momma was four years old at that time.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is an enduring fraternal organization, whose actual origin has been the subject of various discussions. Some feel that the IOOF can be traced back to Roman times, while others claim the first "Odd Fellows" meetings were held in England in the mid-1700's. It is generally agreed that the first American lodge began in Baltimore in 1819, when Thomas Wildey and four members from England instituted Washington Lodge No. 1.



They organized the lodge for the purposes of giving to those in need, and of pursuing benevolent projects for the benefit of all mankind. Adopting the Rebekah Degree in 1851, the IOOF became the first national fraternity to include both men and women. The Odd Fellows and Rebekahs were also the first fraternal organizations to

establish homes for its senior citizens and for its children.

The IOOF motto, displayed on their seal, reads, "We command you to Visit the Sick, Relieve the Distressed, Bury the Dead, and Educate the Orphan." In a 1907 article for the *Souvenir Odd Fellows Directory*, Mrs. Louise B. Hall wrote, "The care of the widow and orphan is a subject which we contemplate with pride, to be the instrument of so God-like a duty and so charitable a mission." At that time, there were 75 Rebekah Lodges and approximately 300 Odd Fellows Lodges in West Virginia, holding regularly scheduled meetings. Membership numbered in the thousands.

In 1889, in keeping with their beliefs, West Virginia's IOOF members began discussions regarding the possibility of building a home to care for its members and their families, and a building fund was started. The West Virginia IOOF Home was soon built in Elkins



The Odd Fellows Home today. The spectacular structure sits on a hilltop just south of Elkins. It was built in 1908, through the influence and endowment of Elkins industrialist Henry Gassaway Davis, on 200 acres donated by the Elkins Board of Trade. Between 1911 and 1954, this was home to more than 700 children. Photograph by Michael Keller.

# Inside the Odd Fellows Home



The beautiful and palatial Odd Fellows Home, located just south of Elkins on Georgetown Road, is an impressive structure by any standard. Its exterior bears a resemblance to two other Elkins landmarks: Graceland and Halliehurst mansions on the campus of Davis & Elkins College. All three buildings were built by Henry Gassaway Davis around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent years, both Graceland and Halliehurst have been completely renovated and are in current use at the college.

The Odd Fellows Home, however, never fell into disuse or disrepair. Though home to only a few residents these days, it is still carefully maintained and is largely in its original condition. We were pleased to be invited there last July to visit and to sample their hospitality. We found it to be clean, homey, and thoroughly enjoyable. While we were there, photographer Michael Keller captured these images of the interior of the Odd Fellows Home.



Sunday in a very muddy dress. She feels that the Christian values she was taught during her childhood gave her a solid foundation of faith, which has sustained her throughout her life.

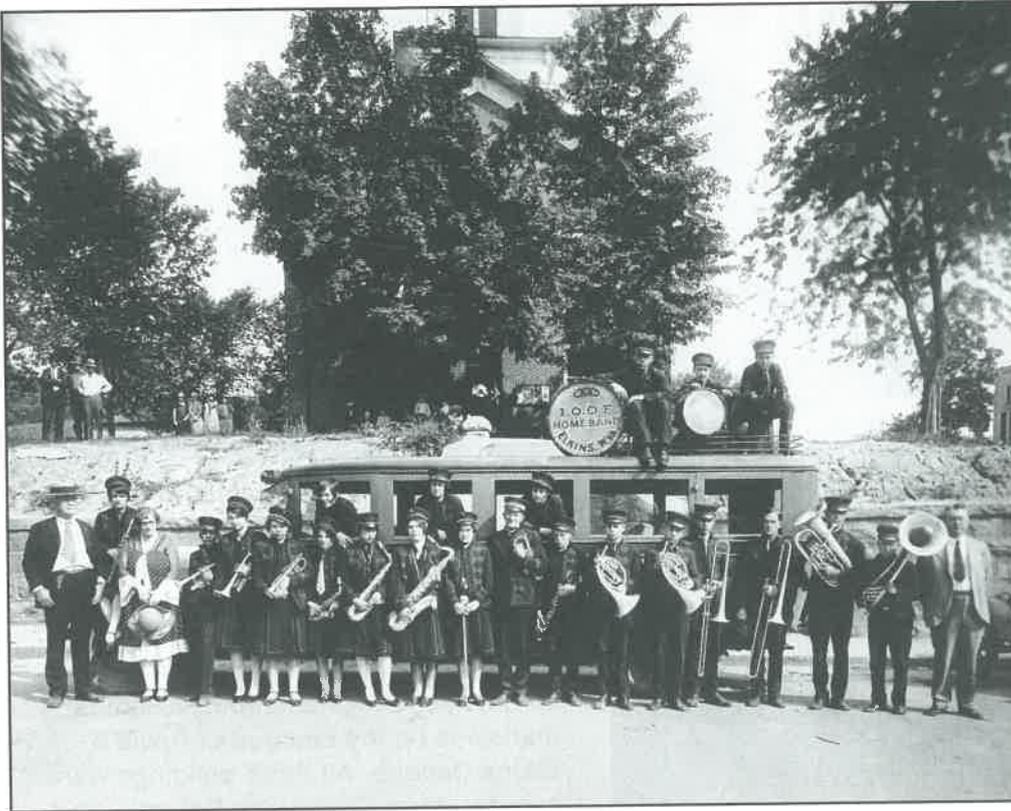
The IOOF and Rebekahs ensured that the residents enjoyed the holidays, too. A traditional Thanksgiving dinner was prepared annually. At Christmas, in addition to the

often, especially her best friend Elzora Prater, who lived at the Home from November 1915 to February 21, 1925. Elzora had taken Momma under her wing, so to speak, and Momma missed her desperately after Elzora left the Home. Momma never forgot her, and later named one of her daughters after her as a living legacy of their childhood friendship.

came the guardians of the residents, providing for them in sickness and in health. Seniors were lovingly cared for at the Home throughout the remainder of their lives, whenever possible. If a resident's health became poor enough to require admission to a nursing home, the IOOF arranged for that placement and paid any necessary expenses. The Home took care of

all the needs of their children: medical, food and shelter, education, religious guidance, and love. They enabled many of their children to attend college and proudly claim doctors, school teachers, naval officers, lawyers, and many other professionals among their alumni.

Although the IOOF Home always housed a few seniors, it operated primarily as a children's home until 1954. After that, it remained open as an adult resident home. From 1911-80, the IOOF provided housing for 336 seniors, and continues to provide such services today. As a way of staying in touch with former residents, the IOOF board and staff host annual homecomings for former residents, inviting them to return for a weekend of fellowship around Labor Day each year.



The Odd Fellows Home Band took to the road in this undated photograph, taken in Grantsville, Calhoun County; courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

holiday meal, each resident received candy and oranges provided by lodge members throughout the state. A huge, live Christmas tree was decorated each year, and music was provided by the Home's own band.

These happy times of Momma's life were abruptly ended on July 8, 1927, when her mother returned for her and her sisters. Momma was almost 13 years old, and at that age, was considered a manual-labor asset to her mother's household. Momma soon lost touch with her friends, but thought of them

The IOOF Home was open to indigent adults who were members of good moral standing in the IOOF or Rebekahs at the time of their admission, and to the spouses, widows, or widowers of members. Adult applicants needed to be able to walk themselves into the Home and be able to take care of their personal needs at the time of their admission. Orphaned children of IOOF or Rebekah members were eligible for admission, as well as children of members who could no longer provide the needed care.

After admission, the IOOF be-

In 1976, my mother Bonnie Greenleaf had the pleasure of escorting Momma to her first homecoming. In Momma's mind, Elkins was far, far away — a lifetime away in her memories. She was astounded to discover that it was only about a three-hour drive to Elkins from her home in Lincoln County.

When they arrived, Momma was welcomed as a very honored guest. She and my mother were invited to spend the night and enjoyed a traditional ox roast celebration the next day. Mrs. Lake, the matron of

the Home, gave them a personal tour of the facilities. Although my mother was slightly intimidated by the large building and its many rooms, Momma had no trouble navigating the halls of her childhood home. She remembered every nook and cranny. Momma said the girls lived mainly on the third floor of the back wing, while the boys lived in the south wing.

She gently ran her hands along the smooth banisters as she headed straight to her former room.

As Momma later walked through the dining hall, she remembered the many meals she enjoyed there. She beamed with joy as she recognized the large black oven that was used to bake so many loaves of bread over the years. She cried as she remembered a fire in the laundry area that resulted in the death of one of her young friends.

Momma later enjoyed a long, happy marriage and was a pillar of

*Although only a few seniors reside there currently, they receive the same loving and complete care that was provided for my Momma.*

strength and inspiration to her family, friends, and church. Not even the devastation of Alzheimer's can erase the joyful memories she has of her childhood.

The IOOF Home still stands proudly in Elkins, where the staff



Current residents Delphia Forbes, Nora Lee Hughes, and Mildred Clingerman (left to right) relax on the spacious porch of the Odd Fellows Home. Photograph by Michael Keller.

takes meticulous care of the building and the surrounding 200 acres. Although only a few seniors reside there currently, they receive the same loving and complete care that was provided for my Momma. The IOOF staff welcomes former residents and their guests at any time. They still host the traditional homecoming celebrations each fall, although the ox roast has been replaced with a wonderful indoor meal.

Elevators have been installed, wiring has been updated, the roof was recently replaced, and the Home is currently undergoing modernization that will make it completely handicapped accessible. They no longer maintain their own dairy or grow all of their own produce. But I'm happy to know that the brick oven Momma remembered with such love remains unchanged, as does the ongoing commitment of the International Order of Odd Fellows to continue their tradition of lifelong service to residents at their beautiful and historic Home. 🍁



Bonnie Withrow Porter in 1988. Photographer unknown.

KAREN STALNAKER is originally from Charleston's west side. She wrote this article about her great-grandmother while a student at West Virginia State College in Institute, as a class assignment for a course in West Virginia history. Karen graduated from WVSC in 2002 with a degree in business administration. This is her first published article.

# Laying Track in Nicholas County

Text and photographs by  
Sam Jordan

In 1948 and '49, the New York Central and the Chesapeake & Ohio railroads jointly constructed a railroad in Nicholas County to haul coal from a new mine that was under development. This story is about the track-laying phase of that project. It tells about the men, their work, their methods, trials, and accomplishments. It is also about the passing of an era.

Within a decade of this project's completion, manufacturers and railroads began developing an array of sophisticated equipment, using the latest technology in hydraulics, controls, and guidance systems. Operated by a few men, these modern machines did away with many of the operations we performed on this job. What we did in Nicholas County was soon a thing of the past and will never be repeated.

Field engineer Sam Jordan, our author





Track crew in Nicholas County in the late 1940's, constructing a railroad to haul coal from a new mine. Here, workers adjust the track, at right, while general foreman Buck Lancaster, at center with hat, inspects their work.

The new rail line ran from an initial turnout on the existing C&O line near the confluence of Gauley River and New River. It extended northeasterly about 15 miles toward Summersville. At the upper end, where the coal mine was being developed, there would be two miles of yard track. There were numerous bridges and culverts along the line as it snaked in and out of hollows, running along certain ridges and cutting across others. Access to the work sites was by various dirt roads and trails leading away from the villages of Swiss, Drennan, Lockwood, Zela, and Gilboa — all

located along State Highway 39.

The track work was contracted to Royce Kershaw Company of Montgomery, Alabama. They established a field office in Belva near the C&O team tracks. Kershaw's general superintendent was C.W. Springfield, with Buck Lancaster as general foreman. I was the field engineer. One company foreman and several locally hired foremen were the other supervisors. The main work force of about 40 laborers, 15 teamsters, and operators were transferred in from other projects. Kershaw's work force, built up over time, was racially mixed and integrated the skills,

talents, and abilities of men from different backgrounds and lifestyles. There were no social issues. There were a few disagreements between the men, mostly personal in nature. The men worked well together, and things ran smoothly on the job, as I recall.

The exceptionally rugged terrain near the beginning of the project dictated the sequence in track construction. Usually, construction would begin at the initial turnout and progress up the line to the end, using standard gauge locomotives, as well as material, tool, personnel, and camp cars. In this case, the decision was made for construc-



The Royce Kershaw Company field office was established at the town of Belva. The Belva post office is barely visible at the far left. A café and tavern are at the center, and the Kershaw company office is in the foreground.

tion to begin near the middle of the line, while grading and bridgework was ongoing in the rugged terrain below.

The work began in the summer of 1948. The railroads delivered the materials to a team track near Belva, where they were off-loaded onto trucks to be hauled on Highway 39 to a midpoint near Drennen, then distributed along the roadbed. The trucking of materials on winding dirt roads was troublesome, but transporting the 39-foot rails presented the most problems. The track ballast — crushed stone — was stockpiled near Drennen. Initially, some of this material was hauled and distributed by trucks until a train could be brought in.

Once the roadbed was prepared, the next phase of operations was labor intensive. The cross ties were picked up by men using tongs and evenly placed according to the centerline stakes, followed by the placement of tie plates. A small crane assisted in the placement of the rails onto the ties. Motor cars pulling material and tool cars followed, with men placing joint bars

and adding more spikes. As soon as the track was in place from the midpoint back to the initial turnout, a standard gauge locomotive and cars slowly proceeded up to the ballast stockpile, where a crane loaded the hopper cars. The train then moved back down the track, dumping and spreading the stone,

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*There were numerous bridges and culverts along the line as it snaked in and out of hollows, running along certain ridges and cutting across others.*

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with crews jacking and lining. Final spiking and tightening of bolts followed. Two or three lifts would be needed before final line and grade was accomplished.

Jacking and lining, all done by hand labor, required the skill of an experienced foreman. Survey stakes determined the final grade,

the alignment, and the smooth curvature of the track. The foreman, with a hand level and level boards, was able to read the stakes and bring the rails to the proper elevation on the curves and final line and grade. In these operations, the jacking of the track and the tamping of the ballast was one thing, but the real art was in the final lining — “throwing the track.”

A lining crew consisted of about 20 men. Each had a heavy steel bar — 1-1½ inches in diameter. When first laid, the track had many ups and downs, and a large number of kinks. The objective was to bring the rails to an even, smooth grade and true straight lines in accordance with the survey stakes. With all joint bars in place and all the plates and spikes tight, the track now became one long structure.

The ties were now partially buried in stone. To move the track laterally, only a fraction of an inch at a time over a short distance, took a great deal of force. Eight to 10 men were placed on each rail. Two men were adjacent to each tie, facing away from the direction of the

"throw." The task was to slightly lift the track and slide it sideways. The men had to act in unison, each pulling at the exact time.

The key to this success was something taken from olden times, when workmen would often sing. With this specialty work, one man was hired to just sing. He set the rhythm and the beat. And he had to be acceptable to the crew. They wanted someone they knew and one who knew them. He had to know old folk songs, gospels, little jingles; he had to be creative and make up little tunes about the men themselves or someone they knew. He had to be knowledgeable about contemporary subjects, and be able to add some humor. These chants, songs, and rhythms, and the art of expressing them, go back centuries in time, yet are a forerunner to contemporary music.

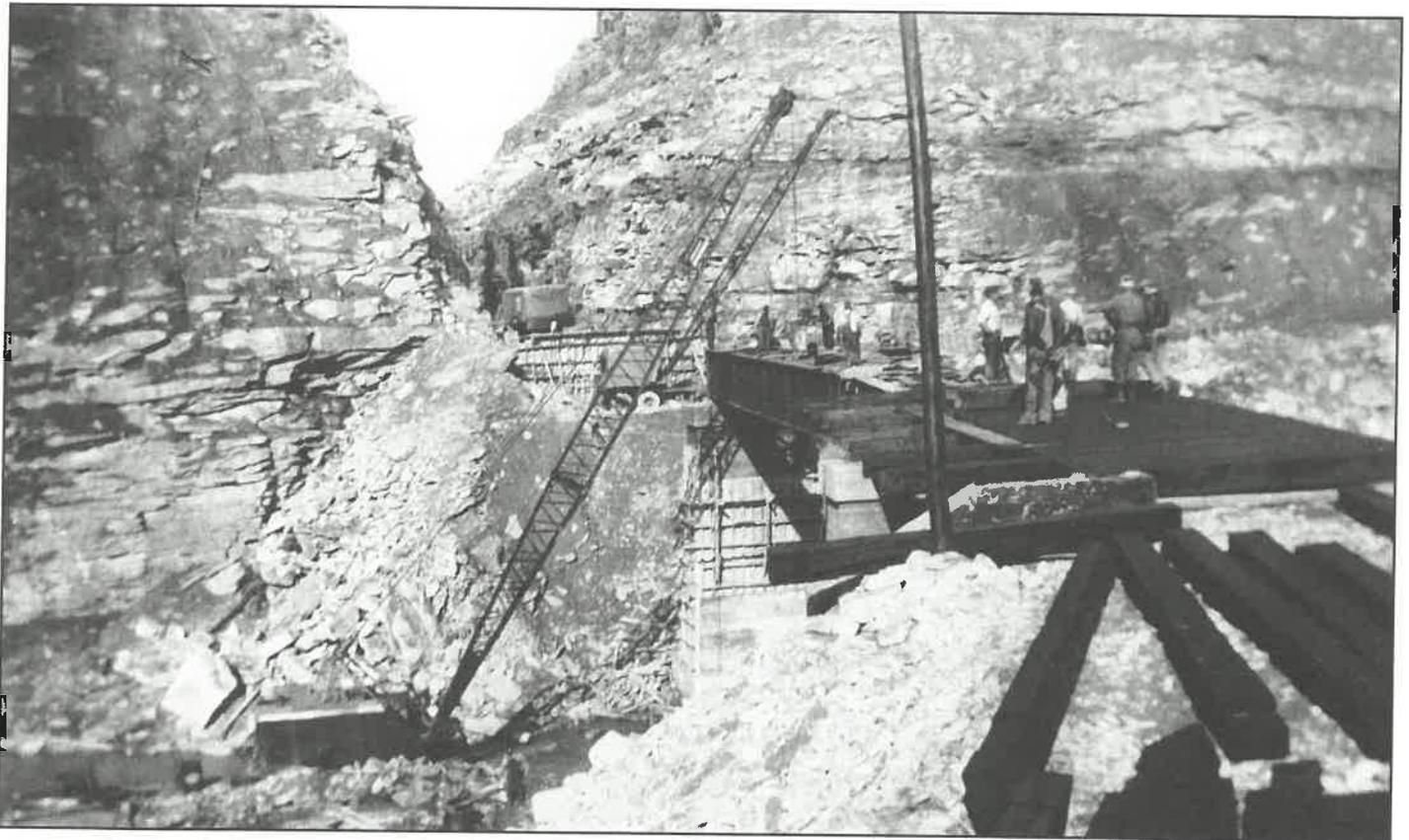
The singer had a long stick like a broom handle, and positioned himself some 20 to 30 feet from the crew. He would start a tune, pick-

ing up the beat by tapping his stick on the rail. The men, with their lining bars against the rail, would quickly pick up the rhythm by tapping their bars on the rail. Each tune or song had a place to grunt, moan, or express a sound like an "oomph." The men would be in unison with their tapping, and when the special sound came from the singer, they would sound along and all heave at the same time. Acting as one, they were able to move the track. The foreman moved the crew back and forth, positioning them in each place where the track needed to be shifted until it was in perfect alignment.

Our track-laying project had to be completed by the summer of 1949. To meet this schedule, work continued through the winter. This was particularly difficult for work on the lining, because often the ballast would freeze, making it impossible to move the track. There is an old expression that "necessity is the mother of invention," and here

it proved to be very true. A couple of men told the boss that if he could find a plow, they would plow the ballast. A large farmer's turning plow was located, borrowed, and put to work. A motor car was loaded with kegs of spikes for extra weight, the plow was "hitched" up and was manned with two of the strongest men. Down the track they went, with the plow held firmly against the end of the ties. It began breaking up and turning the frozen stone aside. It worked, and the engineers from the New York Central Railroad learned a new trick.

Some days, the snow and the bitter cold kept the men in camp. When out on the line, open fires along the way helped the men keep warm. A hot lunch provided relief, but only for a moment. Yet there always seemed to be a happy, free spirit among the men. Many of them knew each other from other jobs, or they were from the same neighborhoods. Often, this generated



The rugged terrain along the lower Gauley River required some deep excavation and the building of numerous bridges, as seen here. The large crane at left is setting a bridge girder into place.



Placing cross ties by hand on the finished road bed is especially hard work.



After the cross ties are laid down, this small crane is used to place the rails.



The initial spiking crew setting a few plates before the ballast is spread. These men are engaged in a contest called "hammering the hammer."

some talk as to who was the strongest, who could throw a lining bar the farthest, or who could drive a spike the fastest. The spike-driving competition seemed special. In a contest, two men would face each other, standing over a tie plate with four spikes set in place. With heavy manual hammers, each man took a stroke on a spike. The other man followed. The test was to see which man could swing the fastest, delivering his blow before the other man could draw back. The loser was the slow man getting his hammer "hammered."

Kershaw set up a camp to house and feed the imported laborers, foremen, and others in need of housing. Some of the equipment operators and truck drivers brought their families with them and found other housing. A couple of other single men and I lived in the camp until rooms became available in Summersville late in the fall of the year.

The workers' camp was made up of railroad cars leased from the general contractor. They were from another era when gandy dancers were used to construct many of the railroads throughout the Midwest. The camp consisted of a kitchen car with a dining car on each end — one for the operators and supervisors and the other for the laborers — and two bunk cars on each end of a dining car. The cars were set on a C&O siding along the bank of the river, not far from the village of Swiss. Access to the camp from Highway 39 was via a narrow dirt road.

Heat for all the cars was provided by individual coal burning stoves. Up until



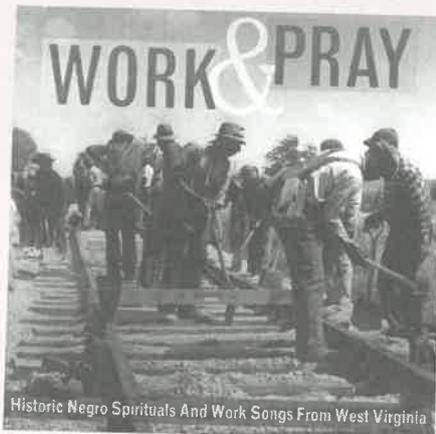
The final lining of the track is accomplished by a highly orchestrated group effort, co-ordinated by a leader who develops a song or chant. His rhythm keeps the men pulling together. The man seen on the left is the singer.

## Sounds of Labor and Praise

At the same time author Sam Jordan was working with experienced and skilled railroad laborers in Nicholas County, Bluefield music professor Cortez D. Reece was traveling throughout southern West Virginia capturing the sounds and songs of railroad workers in rural Mercer and neighboring counties. A new CD of these field recordings is now available, called "Work & Pray: Historic Negro Spirituals and Work Songs from Southern West Virginia."

The songs and chants used to line track in Nicholas County, so colorfully described by Sam Jor-

dan in the accompanying article, were no doubt quite similar to those found here, recorded in West Virginia between 1949 and 1953. Reece



made these recordings as part of his doctoral dissertation in musicology, and they are commercially available here for the first time.

In addition to railroad work songs, the CD also contains religious songs and African American folk songs, most of them sung in a powerful, unaccompanied style.

"Work & Pray" was released in June 2003 by the West Virginia University Press. It sells for \$16. For more information, call (304)293-8400 or visit [www.wvpress.com](http://www.wvpress.com).



Spreading ballast. Note cross ties being pushed along the track to distribute material.

fall, when cold weather set in, a spray bar near the well served as a shower. When the weather became too cold for taking an outside bath, water was heated on the stoves for washing in miners' tubs. All of the cars had wash basins, pails, and tubs.

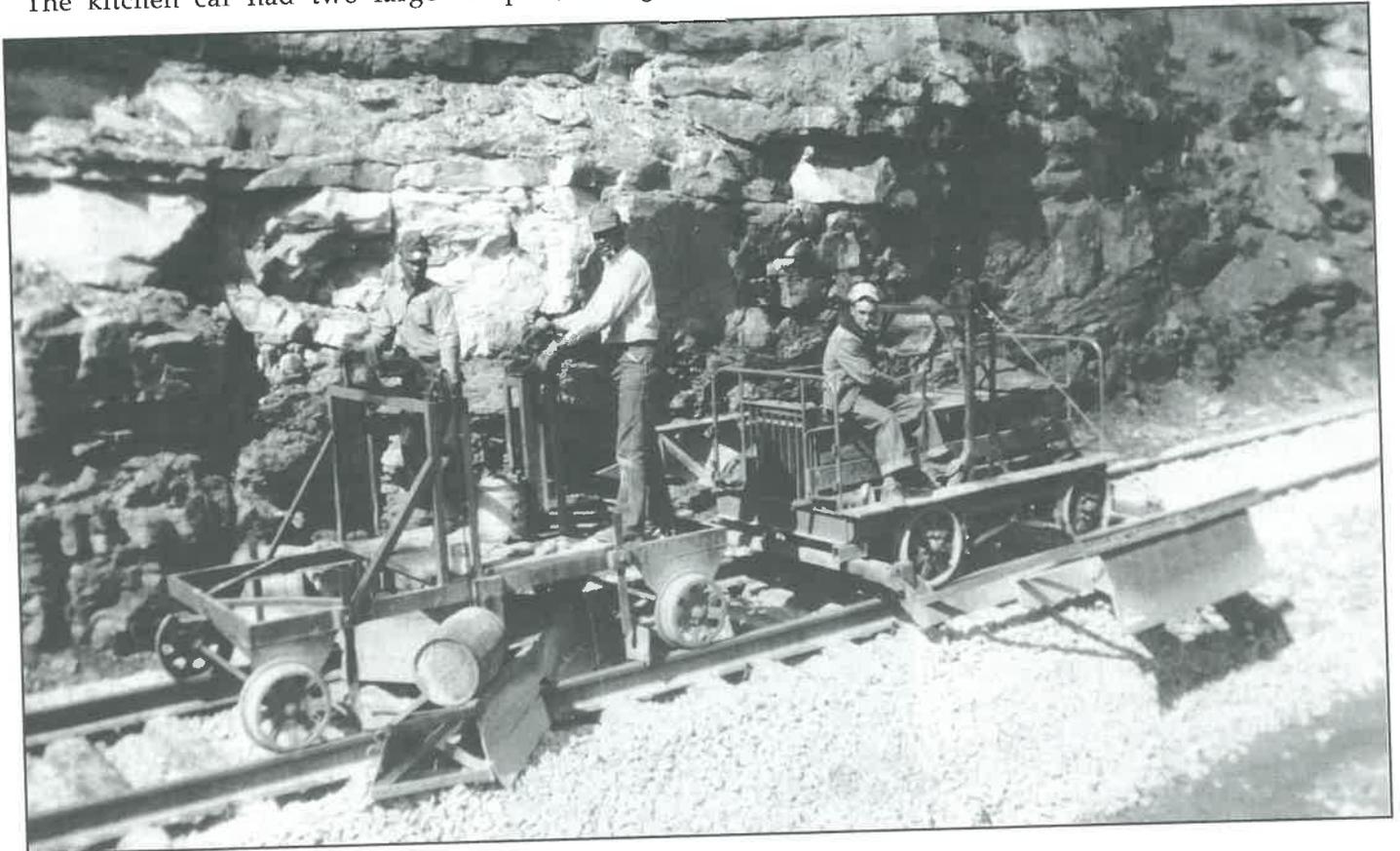
The kitchen car had two large

stoves, a large cooler similar to a refrigerator, a couple of large coffee urns, bins, shelves, tables, and a large wash basin. There were racks for pots, pans, and dishes. The cook and helpers prepared three meals a day, seven days a week. Food was simple, basic staples, though menus did vary

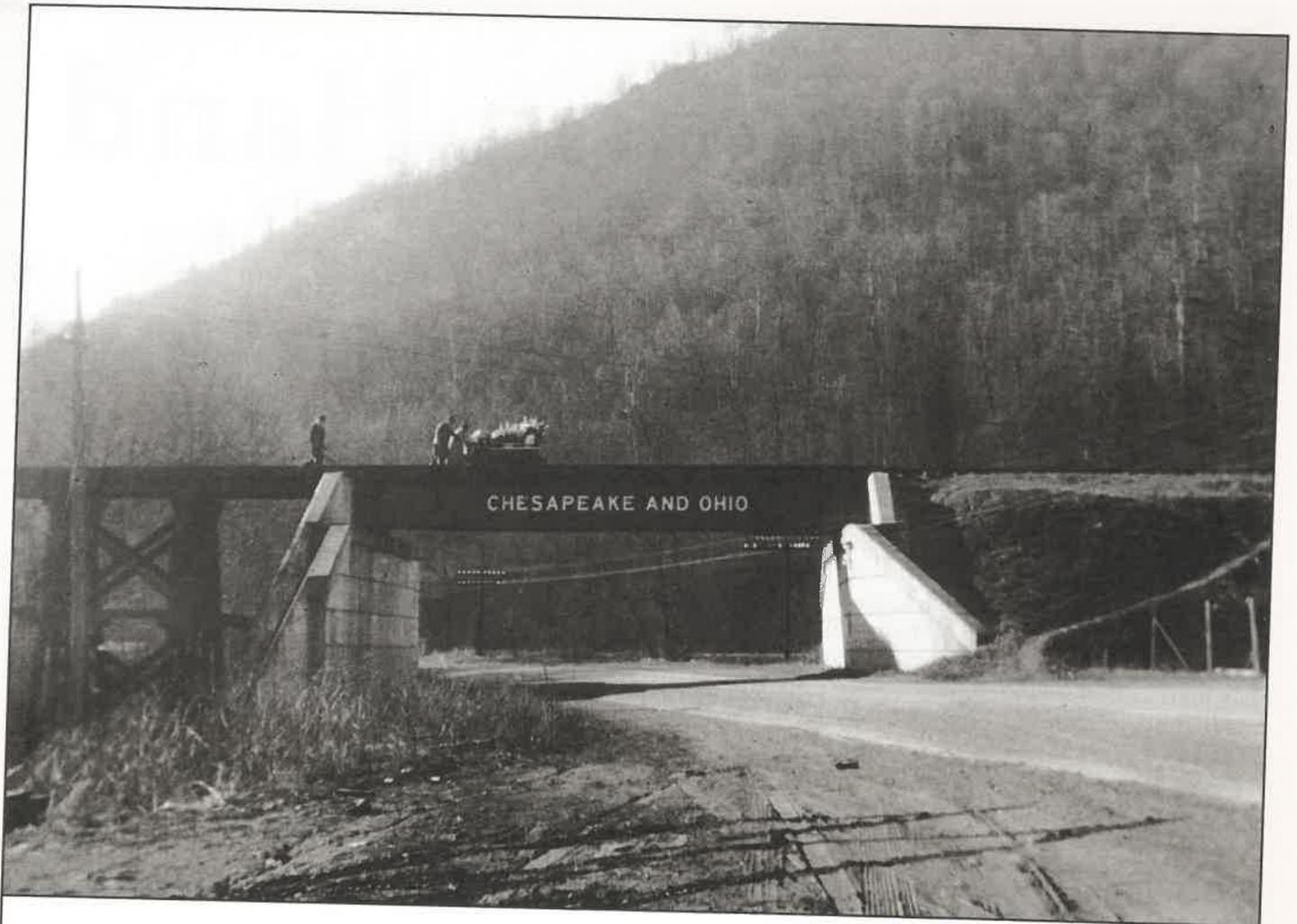
some. Breakfast was ham and eggs, salt pork, grits, sometimes potatoes, cornbread or white sandwich loaf bread, and coffee. There was always plenty of cane syrup. Dinner at night consisted of one or two kinds of meat, potatoes, dried peas or beans, root vegetables, cabbages and other greens when available, cornbread, and coffee.

The noon meal was stew or hash, fried chicken on some days, and beans or peas and potatoes, and cornbread or white loaf bread. This food was delivered in large insulated containers to the work sites and was served off the tailgate of a truck. One of my duties as field engineer was to stop by the camp about 11:00 a.m., load up the containers and the dishes, and deliver them to the crews who were at two or three different locations. The men would have about 20 to 30 minutes to eat, then I packed the dishes and was off to the next crew.

The men were transported to and from the work sites in flatbed trucks with stake bodies and tarp covers.



Plowing the ballast.



## A Poor Man's Funeral

While I was working in Nicholas County in 1948-49, there was one experience, not job related, that was unforgettable to me. It occurred during that winter on a cold, dreary day. It was a funeral procession along the railroad tracks.

The C&O tracks ran along the Gauley River, crossing over Highway 39 near Belva, then on toward the village of Dixie. Between Gauley Bridge and Belva there was a small settlement, just a few houses and shacks. There were no churches or cemeteries near the settlement, I was told. So, when someone there died, the family had to make arrangements for the body to be buried elsewhere. There were few choices.

Through the years, the people of the settlement used a cemetery that was located between Belva and Dixie. A longstanding agreement with the C&O allowed a family to use its tracks to transport the body to the cemetery for burial. I had never seen anything similar to this. I do not know to what extent religious services were provided for the deceased, or where these services were held. However, I assumed that services were probably held at the house of the deceased, with a local preacher saying a few words and maybe someone singing a hymn.

The railroad provided a push car, and the casket was taken slowly down the tracks, along the river, and across the highway to the cemetery. The car was pushed by two men. Following behind was the preacher, and trailing on foot were some six or eight family members or friends.

I captured that scene on film as it passed over Highway 39. There was something about the quality of the occasion and the character of the people that was very touching to me. I've always remembered it.

—Sam Jordan

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# The Section Hand

By Cody A. Burdette

**M**y story starts in 1944, when I was a young boy growing up in Montgomery, Fayette County. The C&O railway ran right by our door, and I loved to watch the many trains that ran each day. You could still see a hobo every now and then. I can remember when they would knock on our door, and Mother would always fix these lonely, wandering men a sandwich.

Into my life one day came this old black man — a section hand on the C&O. Back then, everything on the railroad was still done by hand. Nowadays, they are called “maintenance of way” workers, but then they were called section hands. There were five or six men in a section crew, and they took care of about six or seven miles of track. The C&O built one-room houses along the track for these men to live in. One of these houses was just a few hundred feet from my home, and here is where my friend lived.

These houses were simple, but efficient. When you came through the front door, which always faced the railroad track, on your right were rows of double bunk beds, to the left were the sink, toilet, and icebox. Straight ahead and against the back wall was the big coal-burning cookstove. This stove was also used to heat the shanty in the winter. There were no electric lights, only oil lamps. I will never forget the homey smell of these shanties. The men kept them spotless, the beds were always made, and the dishes, pots, and pans were clean and in the right places. The smells of coal and lamp oil mixed with creosote and filled the air. I loved these smells, for they were the smells of the railroad.

My old friend’s name was Ben. He had worked many, many years for the C&O. His hands were scarred and crooked from gripping a spiking hammer for years. His frame was bent from lifting too many heavy cross ties. His hair was snow white, and his eyes were dim from time, but his spirit was light and gay. He always had a smile for me and was always interested in what I did each day.

In the summertime, I would spend endless hours sitting in the door of the shanty talking with him at night. As we sat there in the dim light of the oil lamps watching trains go by our door, he would tell me about the days, the work he did, and what it was like



Cody Burdette at nine years of age in Montgomery, Fayette County.

being a section hand.

He said, “You know, it never rains on the railroad.” What he meant was that the lowly section hand worked in all kinds of weather. In summer, the hot creosote splashing off the ties would get in their eyes. They would mow the right-of-way through snake dens and yellow-jacket nests. Then in winter when snow and ice piled up and clogged the switches, who was out in the ice-cold wind? Why, the section hand! Without these men, the mighty freight trains or the luxury passenger trains would have come to a halt. Ben said, “I love the railroad, and it has been good to me. I have

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*My old friend's name was Ben.  
His hands were scarred and  
crooked from gripping a spiking  
hammer for years.*

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put in a lot of hours just sitting in a motor car, doing nothing, waiting for a late train to go by. Then we would follow it home."

Old Ben went to work many a frosty morning, but he would not retire. He became weaker with each day. He stayed more and more at the shanty, and was sick a lot now. Ben had only one living member left of his family. His sister lived in an old folks home in Clifton Forge, Virginia. Though he was unable to work for the C&O any longer, the other men agreed to let Ben stay on at the shanty.

Now I got to see my friend anytime I wanted to. I would help him sweep out the shanty and wash the dishes. He, in turn, taught me how to cook on a coal-burning cookstove. I remember the day I went to see him and found him sick in bed. He wanted me to fry him some pork chops, which I did and brought them to him in bed. I then cleaned up the kitchen before I went home, and forgot about what I had done for him. But he didn't forget. A few days later when he was able to get around, he went to the store to pay his store account. It was the custom when you paid your store account, the owner of the store would give you a bag of candy. When Ben returned to the shanty, he called me over to the doorway and gave me the bag of candy. He said, "Here, have some candy on me and the C&O."

I went to Sunday school each Sunday. On my way, I had to pass by the shanty. I didn't know old Ben was watching me go to Sunday school, but he was. On my way back home, he would stop me, and we would talk about church. I told Ben he should go to church on Sunday, and he agreed. He said he would, just as soon as he felt well enough to walk over to the Negro church, which was about a half mile away.

Ben was a tough old man, and he soon was back on his feet. He started going to church, like he promised he would. At this time, all the other men would go home on weekends, and old Ben would be at the shanty by himself. I remember when President Harry Truman came to Montgomery and gave a speech at the depot from the back of his train. Mother and I went to hear him. At the end of his speech, the president asked all of us to vote for him, because he didn't want to go house hunting! The next day, old Ben wanted to know word-for-word what the president had said. Ben was proud that a president had come right by the shanty on his beloved C&O railway.

Now more than 45 years have slipped by. Old Ben is gone, but his memory lives on. To me, he was greater than Harry S. Truman, for he was a simple man who owned nothing but the clothes on his back. But he was happy, and he knew what friendship was all about.



Our author is shown here at his home in Tennessee with a working steam engine and cars he built from scratch. The engine runs on coal, he tells us, and will haul up to 15 children.

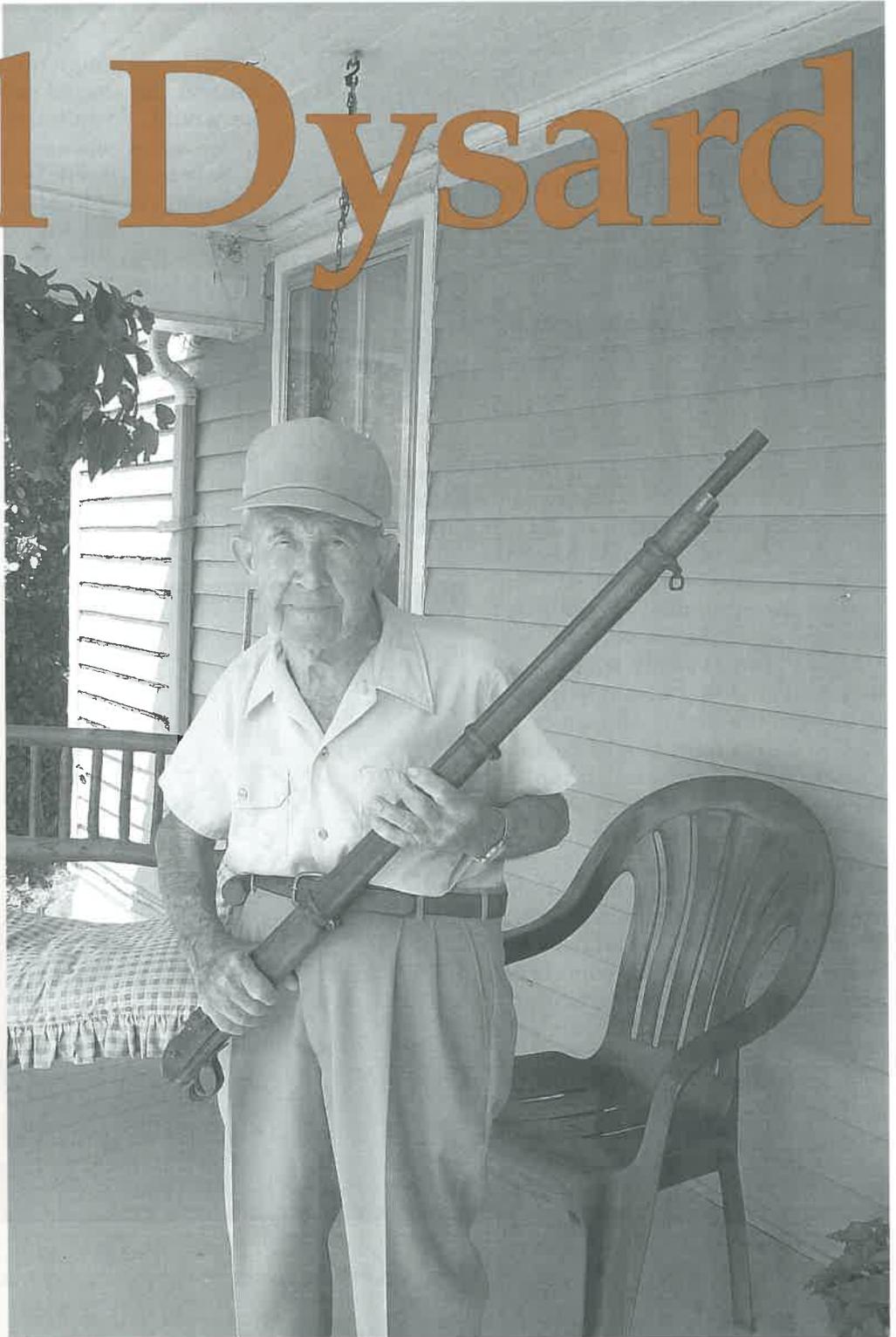
He had a way about him that told you he was a hard-working, honest man, who would lay down his life, if necessary, for a friend.🍁

CODY A. BURDETTE grew up in Montgomery, Fayette County. He worked for the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company during the 1950's, and later worked as an automobile mechanic. He is now retired and lives in Sevierville, Tennessee. Cody's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 1993 issue.

# Bill Dysard

## A "Real Son" of the South

By  
Belinda Anderson



William Asbury Dysard of Lewisburg holding a rifle owned by his father, a Confederate Civil War veteran. Photograph by Michael Keller.

# of Lewisburg

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*Perhaps A.K. Dysard also was mindful of his parole agreement, in which he promised to “do nothing to the detriment of, or in opposition to, the U.S. government.”*

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1908 and settled on her farm near Lewisburg. A newspaper account of the wedding described the couple in glowing terms: “Mrs. Hunter is well-known in this community, where she has lived for some years, as a lady of superior qualities of mind and heart and of an attractive personality. He is an elder in the Presbyterian church and a man of high character and standing.” Bill Dysard was born the next year, when his father was 65 years old. Bill’s sister Helen was born three years later.

Bill grew up on a 100-acre farm on Stonehouse Road, on land that now lies near the golf course in Lewisburg. His earliest memories are of helping his father with the horses, greasing the harnesses, and painting the buggy. Sometimes, Bill would go into town with his father. “I’d sit in the buggy and hold the horse while he went into a store or bank. We didn’t have any two-hour parking limit,” he says, laughing.

Though he was retired as an educator by that time, A.K. Dysard was a schoolmaster even on the farm, curtailing little Bill’s preference for recreation over scholarship. “I liked to get out and coast on the snow and skate,” Bill says, “and he’d get out and holler for me to come back in. He taught me arithmetic and spelling before I went to school. I guess he was alright, but he was stern.” Thanks to his father’s strict tutelage, Bill completed both first and second grades in one year.

A.K. Dysard had served as a Confederate soldier, but he talked little of the Civil War, other than to say that he had joined up at age 18. Bill doesn’t even know whether his father was drafted or if he enlisted. He does know that A.K. served from 1862-65 in the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Virginia Infantry. He was inducted as a corporal and discharged as a sergeant. Perhaps the Confederate veteran chose not to talk about the war because the father of his stepchildren had been a Union soldier, Bill speculates. Perhaps A.K. also was mindful of his parole agreement, in which he promised to “do nothing to the detriment of, or in opposition to, the U.S. government.”

Though he was not prone to discuss the war at home, A.K. Dysard was apparently proud to have been a Southern soldier and attended reunions on a number of occasions. Bill still has a collection of medals his father received from his trips to Confederate veterans reunions. Bill is proud of his heritage, as well, and has a certificate proclaiming him a “Real

Son,” framed and on display in the foyer of his house.

During Bill’s childhood years, the gaggle of step-brothers and stepsisters got along pretty well, as he recalls. “They didn’t care too much for taking orders from my father,” he says. “There might have been some friction there, but we got along alright. I don’t recall any fussing, or anything like that. On the farm, there was so much work to do. I can remember coming home from school and putting bedding down for the cows. And going around the hill and getting the old cows.” The family sold the cream from the milk to the creamery, located where a popular hardware store now stands in downtown Lewisburg.

Still, Bill always found time to sneak down to the pond to hunt frogs. “I’d hit ‘em with a pole, cut their legs off,” he says. “I’d take them in to Mother, and she’d soak them in salt water and fry them the next morning for me, just like sausage.”

A.K. Dysard died when Bill was 14 years old. In his father’s absence, Bill became a lackluster student. “I went to high school, and I wasn’t doing very good. I wasn’t making very good grades. I didn’t have my mind on that,” he recalls. “I asked my mother if I



Bill and sister Helen Dysard, in about 1914.



At age 16, Bill went to work for the West Virginia Department of Highways and stayed with them for the next 49 years. This picture was taken on Droop Mountain, Pocahontas County, in 1929. Bill is standing between the truck and the steam shovel.

couldn't quit and go to work. She let me get by with things my dad wouldn't let me get by with. So, I went to work when I was 16 years old."

His first job with the department of highways became a lifelong career. "I started off in the ditch," Bill says, "just as low as you could get, with a pick and a shovel." Eventually, Bill rose to the position of foreman, then assistant supervisor. "I never called on a man to do a job that I wouldn't do, or that I hadn't already done," he states.

Bill's 49-year career with the state highway department was, in some ways, almost as improbable as his being the son of a Civil War veteran. State employees were not always protected by law as civil servants, Bill says. "If a [new] governor went in, somebody was going to take your job. A lot of good men were laid off because they were on the wrong side of the ticket. Democrat governor go in, he'd get rid of most of the Republicans. Republican governor would go in, he'd get rid of most of the Democrats. I stayed out of politics."

At about the same time that he took his first job with the highway department, Bill met Eula Catherine May. "I went up to my half-sister's farm, which adjoined [Eula's] family farm, to help my brother-in-law in hay, and I met her," Bill says. "She was 16, I was 16. She went away to college, and I went away to work. After we got back together, I went up one Sunday to visit my half-sister, and [Eula and I] went to church. I don't think either one of us knew what the preacher was talking about," Bill says with a sly smile. Bill began driving his new Model A to Pocahontas County every weekend to see Eula. "And from that time on, I dated her every Sunday for 52 Sundays, and then we

got married." The wedding took place on July 2, 1932.

The couple lived with Bill's mother at her home in Ronceverte for a few months, then began renting a portion of a house at the edge of Lewisburg. Bettie Echard Jackson Hunter Dysard eventually married for a fourth time, this time to Indiana resident John Keller. When he died, Bettie inherited enough money to open a camp with tourist cabins in Warm Springs, Georgia.

One might imagine that this many-married woman would have possessed a forceful, flamboyant personality, but when asked for a description, family members say simply, "Quiet."

When Bill and Eula Dysard first



Bill married Eula Catherine May in 1932. Their marriage lasted 65 years, until her death in 1997. They are seen here with daughter Barbara and son William, Jr., in the mid-1940's.

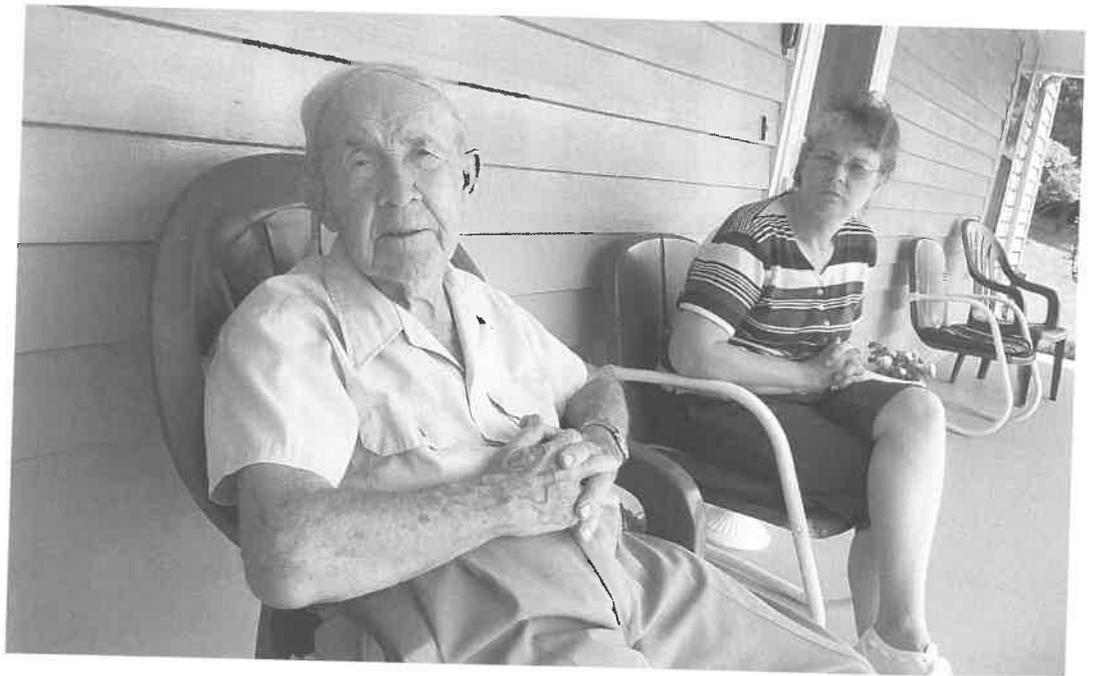
moved to Lewisburg, he was earning only \$3 for a 10-hour day. Eventually, though, the couple became the owners of the house where Bill still lives. Today, neighbor and friend Juanita Powell helps Bill look after the house. Juanita helped to care for Eula following Eula's heart surgery in 1996 and has been close to the family ever since.

Bill Dysard considers himself a blessed man. His marriage to Eula endured 65 years, until her death six years ago. Eula's collection of dozens of miniature glass slippers still decorates their home. Their marriage produced two children and four grandchildren. Daughter Barbara and her husband David have two children and live nearby in Virginia. Son William, Jr., attended Harvard University on a scholarship and became a minister. He is married and has two children, and lives in New Jersey.

Pointing to a tan, upholstered chair in the corner of the living room, Bill says, "I don't know how long I'll be here. But the last day I'm here, I wouldn't mind to be sitting over there in that chair, sleeping, and pass on."

He's not ready for that final rest just yet. As a matter of fact, he still drives a car. If he needs groceries, he drives his Buick to a store just a few miles away. "He's always well-dressed, and he always has a hat," says store manager Truman Shrewsbury. "He'll mosey around in there and find what he wants, usually one bagful."

Truman met Bill a few years ago when Bill and Juanita were shopping at the store. "She introduced me to him, and he got to talking to me about how old he was and how his dad was a Confederate soldier. And, of course, that just shocked



Today, Bill remains proud and active. He lives alone in the house he shared with his wife and children, thanks in part to the help of friends and neighbors such as Juanita Powell, seen here with Bill on his front porch. Photograph by Michael Keller.

me," he says. "I was just in awe of him. He was so active, and his mind was just so bright and alert." Truman describes Bill as a humble man. "You just know he's as honest and reliable and dependable as he can be," he says.

Brought up as a farm boy and having worked outdoors most of his life, Bill still does a good deal of his own yard work. He has become more mindful of his nine decades recently, though. "I hurt my back here a few years ago. I did a foolish thing," Bill says. "I picked up a five-gallon bucket of roofing paint and carried it about 25 feet, and I fractured my back. I thought I was 21, but I found out I wasn't," he says, offering another of his ready laughs. 🍁



MICHAEL KELLER

BELINDA ANDERSON is a native of Monroe County now living in Greenbrier County. She is a freelance writer and also teaches writing workshops. A former newspaper reporter, Belinda has written for publications including *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine and has authored a book of short stories titled *The Well Ain't Dry Yet*. Belinda is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor whose most recent article appeared in our Spring 2003 issue.

# Bridging

By Marielle Gallagher

“My mother Ida Iona Mosser and my father John George Yaus lived with dad’s parents, and it was in that house on Wheeling Island that I was born,” Dorothy told me. “Dr. Statts delivered me at 3:00 a.m. on the stormy morning of August 31, 1919.”

Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo was born on Wheeling Island in 1919. Now 84 years old, she recently shared childhood memories with her 18-year-old granddaughter, who was kind enough to share them with us. The photo at left shows Dorothy during a recent West Virginia visit, photograph by Marilyn Cuonzo. She is seen at right, in McMechen, Marshall County, in about 1929, photographer unknown.

old,” she tells me. “Dad was offered a job at the B&O railroad in McMechen, which is only about eight miles from Wheeling. Before his job at the railroad, he worked odd jobs, one of which was working in Moundsville at the glass blowing factory.”

The Yaus family moved to a home located at 1316 Caldwell Street in McMechen in 1920.

“Dad bought a two-story house on the same hill as some of our other relatives, just up above the river,” Dorothy says. “Dad always went fishing. He went to the river every day — I don’t care what kind of weather. To get to the Ohio River, he had to cross the railroad tracks.

“These campers, they hopped those freight trains,” she recalls, noting that the trains traveled quite slowly through that area. “I imagine that’s why they congregated there. It was a good place to build a fire, or do whatever they needed to do to heat their coffee.

“Evidently this one guy, one morning, Dad happened to be talking to him about fishing, and things



**W**hat started out as a high school history assignment — to interview somebody who lived during the Great Depression — had been transformed into a chance for me to learn about the early life of my grandma Dorothy Leona Yaus Cuonzo. She and I sat together at her kitchen table during a recent Christmastime visit at her home in Illinois, and her memories came to life. I watched her face light up with nostalgia as her mind took her back to her childhood, growing up in McMechen, Marshall County.

“We lived with dad’s parents until I was nine months

# the Years

## A Visit With Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo



like that. [Dad] said, 'Come on. I'll take you home and give you breakfast.' So, he did. He brought him home and told him to sit down there in the kitchen. I was getting ready for school when they arrived. It was in the late fall, November. It was chilly outside, but not real cold."

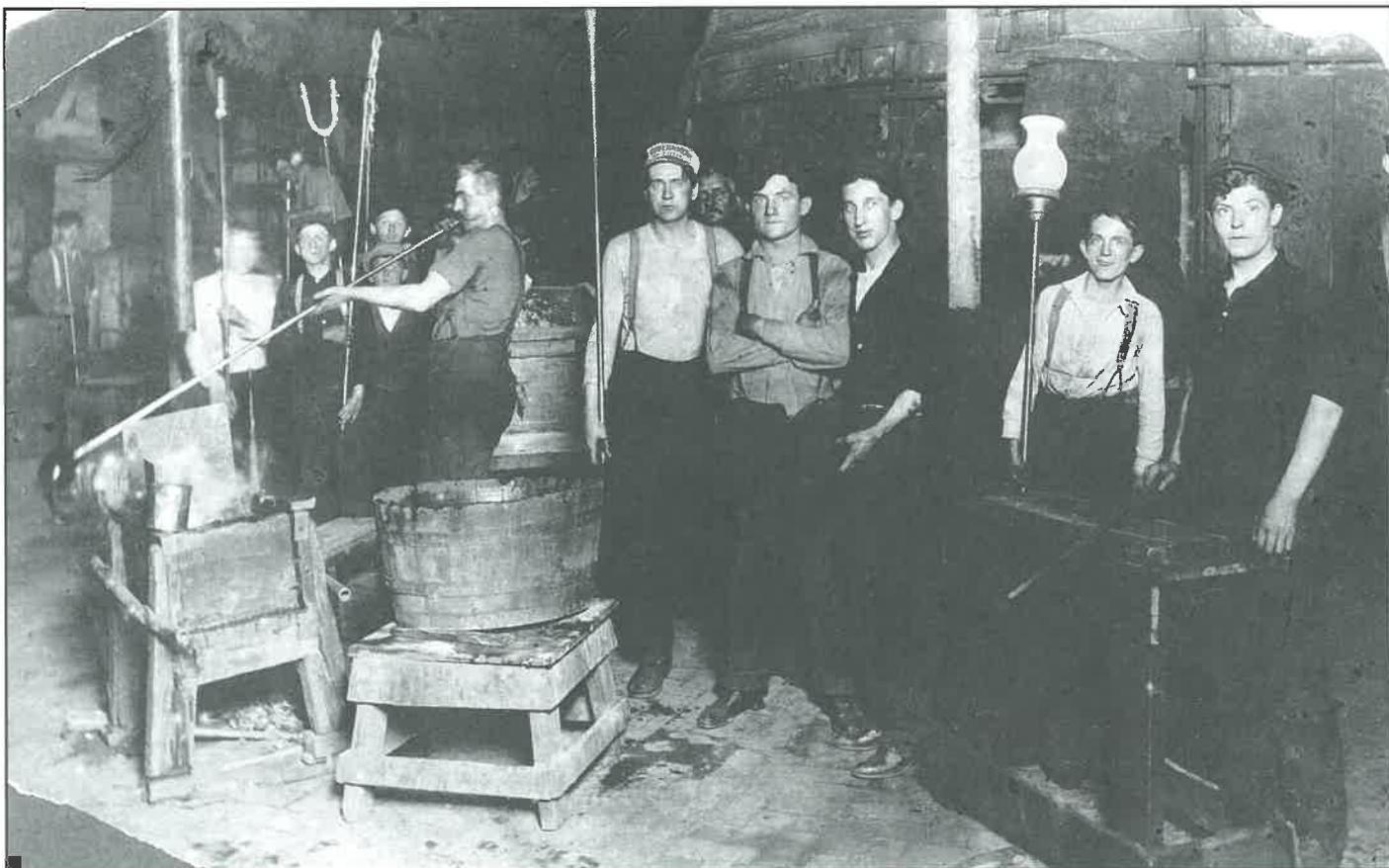
I asked Dorothy what it was like for her and her mother to meet this type of person in their home. Her eyes opened wide. She looked at me with an expression of disbelief, then, with a chuckle, she answered.

"Inviting a person like that into our home was a big deal, and my mother and I were not allowed around him. Before the man was even invited inside, my father took us both in the other room and told us, 'Just stay in here till I fix him some breakfast and send him on his way.' Especially with women back in those days, they always kind of put them in the back room, anyhow. He proceeded to fix him his breakfast of eggs, toast, bacon, and coffee, and then sent him on his way with a quarter to buy his lunch. And that was the end of that.

"But from then on," she recalls, "there was always somebody coming and knocking at the door. The first man had put some kind of sign on the house, signaling that our family gave a hot meal to those who were in need. Dad said if somebody came, and he wasn't there, to not answer the door. We could see who was

at the door from our dining room window. My dad worked from three till 11 at the B&O railroad roundhouse, and these guys always came in the morning. So, he was generally there.

"These were very hard-up times, and these men were not bums, really. They were men that were looking for work. That's why they would hop a track and ride the rails, as they called it. Some of the cars would be open, and they just hopped in to ride to a bigger city where they might find work. And then if they couldn't, why then they got back on and kept going until they did."



George Yaus, Dorothy's father, worked in a glass blowing factory in Moundville when this photograph was made in the early 1900's. He is seen here standing at the far right. George later had a long career with the B&O railroad as a roundhouse supervisor.



George Yaus with a big catfish in 1941.

Pausing, Dorothy takes a deep breath. She is 84 years old, and it takes some work for her to remember her life as a fifth grader in 1929. I asked her to tell me about her home.

"It was a bungalow-style house covered in clapboard siding," she says. "Our porch there on the side of the house was always a good place to sit and swing when I was a kid. Dad always had a garden in the back, right there beside the house. Way up in the back of the yard next to the woods sat our outhouse. I remember the day Dad put indoor plumbing downstairs. It was like heaven. I was just a little girl, and I hated going outside in the winter.

"Then, shortly afterward, we had another big modification," Dorothy tells me. "One afternoon, there was a knock at the door. It was the electric company. They had come to offer my dad free installation in the downstairs of our house. They walked up and down Caldwell Street trying to get everybody signed up, because most people were scared to have electricity in their home. I made sure that my dad accepted that offer.

"Upstairs there were just two bedrooms: I had my bedroom, and my parents had theirs. I could look out my bedroom window and see the Ohio River. The boats would be going up and down the river. Way over there was the train track. Between the whistle of the train and the whistle of the tugboats, I could tell what was going on over there. When the boats got about a mile away from the dam, they sounded their

whistle so they'd start to fill up the lock."

Out her window to the right, Dorothy could see the rail yard where her father worked as shop foreman at the B&O roundhouse. "He kept track of all the parts that were being ordered, and delivered them when they arrived," she recalls. "He had to know when it was time to order more oil, or when an engine needed some new parts, like brakes, or something. There were only about three men working in the roundhouse at a time, therefore my dad was lucky when the Depression hit, because he wasn't laid off. There were quite a few men that actually worked on the railroad, though. They laid off a lot of those men."

Dorothy was an only child. I asked her to tell me about her mother. "My mother Ida was basically a housewife after she and my father were married and moved to McMechen," she says. "But before that, when she lived on Wheeling Island, she worked at the Northwood glass factory. Her job was to hand paint the small drinking glasses. She decorated them with small flowers, mostly. After she quit the job, she had so many glasses that she decided to sell them. She ended up selling them for two or three dollars. Today, they would be worth around \$60."

Since Dorothy grew up in a small town, just as I did, I was curious to know the differences between living in a small West Virginia town in 1930 and 2003.

"McMechen was like most little towns," she tells me. "It didn't have much for children to do. There was a playground down by the river, but my mother wouldn't let me go down there by myself. From my house, it was just a brisk walk to get downtown, but to the river was a long walk. We had a movie house, where I went with my friends sometimes to catch a black-and-white flick on Saturday nights. A movie was 10 cents, and if you wanted any refreshments, you bought them at the adjoining confectionary store and took them in with you.

"Our Methodist church was right there downtown, too. Sometimes after Sunday school, Mom would have me run over to the butcher

Ida, George, and young Dorothy Yaus in about 1932. The family was living in McMechen at the time, and Dorothy and her mother would take memorable shopping trips to Wheeling aboard the streetcar.



Though they lived in town, the Yaus family raised much of their own food. Here, a very young Dorothy feeds chickens in the yard of their Caldwell Street home.



The Yaus family traces its roots to Wheeling Island, where Dorothy's father was born and lived until he was 35 years old. This photograph was taken during one of the many floods on the island, and shows the Yaus family home on the left. George Yaus' mother is standing in the first-floor window. Date unknown.

shop and pick up 35 cents worth of roast beef. It had sawdust floors, and the butcher would go in the back where there was a walk-in freezer to get the meat.

"There's a straight road through McMechen that the streetcar ran down, and everything just branched off. When I rode the streetcar, all I had to do was pull a chain to let the driver know when I needed to get off. A ride was 10 cents for anywhere around town, and to go to Wheeling or Moundsville it was 15 cents. You could actually go all the way to Pittsburgh, if you wanted to. Of course, you had to get off and change to another streetcar. It was when I left to go to nursing school that they converted the streetcar to a bus system. I regretted that. I liked the old streetcar. You didn't

have that stinky bus smell. The streetcars ran on electricity, so they were nice and clean. In the winter, it was nice and warm inside the car. And in the summer, you put the windows down and enjoyed the nice, fresh air.

"Summertime was the best season in McMechen," Dorothy tells me. "My grandmother Mosser

*"My father and his four brothers lived [on Wheeling Island] around 35 years."*

owned the whole hillside behind our house. We always called it the 'big hill,' but anybody who wasn't from around there referred to it as a mountain. The first thing we did

when spring came was to head up into the hill to pick wildflowers.

"My relatives all liked to organize Sunday picnics on the hill. It was because of these picnics that I learned how to cook. My Aunt Bessie would show me one time how to make fried chicken. Then we'd go on a picnic, and she'd say, 'Okay, now you can make the fried chicken.' Then another time, she would teach me how to make potato salad, and then she'd say, 'Okay, now you can make the potato salad.' The most cooking I ever did was with her at her house. When I'd try to help my mother, she would say, 'No, go on outside and play. I want to get done.' About the only thing she would let me help with was the crab apple jelly. When my dad's crab apple trees behind our house ripened, there

## Bridge Reading

Like many who were born or grew up on Wheeling Island, Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo has memories of the grand bridges that connect the island in the Ohio River with mainland Wheeling to the east and Bridgeport, Ohio, to the west. In the accompanying interview, Dorothy relates how her uncle Clarence Yaus worked on the Bridgeport Suspension Bridge and met his end in a tragic fall from that structure.

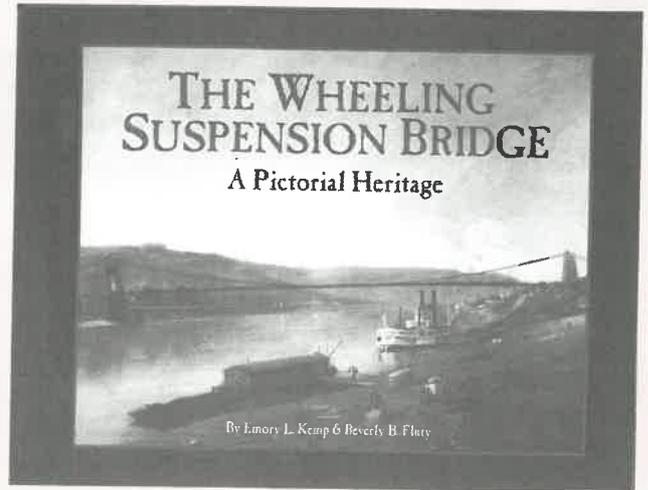
On the opposite side of the island lies one of West Virginia's proudest feats of antebellum engineering — the 154-year-old Wheeling Suspension Bridge. It was designed by legendary engineer Charles Ellet, Jr., and was completed in 1849. At 1,010 feet in length, it was the world's longest clear-span bridge — a distinction it held until the Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883.

The story of this bridge and its history is well-told in a recent book titled *The Wheeling Suspen-*

*sion Bridge: A Pictorial Heritage*, by Emory L. Kemp and Beverly B. Fluty, published in 1999 by Pictorial Histories Publishing. As the name suggests, the 82-page, paper-bound book includes ample illustrations, showing numerous views of the bridge through the years, as well as depicting several similar or related structures and engineering details.

The book was intended to document the history of the bridge on the occasion of the 150-year anniversary of its construction. Accomplishing that goal, the book also sheds ample light on the passage of time in Wheeling, Wheeling Island, and Bridgeport, Ohio, as the need for the bridge, its

eventual construction, and subsequent repairs and renovations, all reflect the social and economic climate in the region over time.



Copies of *The Wheeling Suspension Bridge* are available for \$12.95, plus shipping, from Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1416 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 25301; phone 1-888-982-7472.

was a lot of work to be done all at once, and she accepted the help.

"We had peach trees back there, too. And a cherry tree on the side where the swing was. Dad would have to fight the robins. He'd be up there picking cherries, and robins would be coming down and pecking at him. They wanted those cherries as bad as he did."

As Dorothy talked of the fruit trees, her father's garden, and the chicken coop, I asked her if all of their food came from the backyard.

"Well, actually most of it did," she recalls. "But every so often, my mother and I would take the streetcar up to Wheeling. There was a big market there that was a whole block long. We'd walk through together. As my mother shopped, I looked around in awe of all that was happening. The smells were

intense. I distinctly remember the scent of dill and also the fresh fruits and cheese. My mother got her eggs from the farmers that brought them fresh from their farms that day. There were all kinds of people that brought their specialties to the market, looking for a chance to sell. German people had German foods and German cheeses; Italians brought homemade noodles and breads.

"Also on our trips to Wheeling, my mother took me to a big department store for some clothes shopping. In the basement, there was a restaurant that I liked to eat in. I always ordered a ham sandwich and a chocolate soda. They cut those sandwiches a fancy way, and when they put it down in front of me, I thought, 'Man, this is great! A ham sandwich and a chocolate soda

just for me.' My mother couldn't get me to do anything until we went down there. That's where we headed first."

During these mother-daughter trips to Wheeling, Ida Yaus shared with young Dorothy the details of their family history, including her own birth on Wheeling Island. "Before I was born," Dorothy tells me, "my father and his four brothers lived there around 35 years. My dad moved when he was 35, because he married my mother. He was the oldest of the four. As a young man, he was on the recreational football team, which was basically just a mob of friends. They played around in the alley for fun, sporting their homemade jerseys with the initials BAC for Bridgeport Athletic Club." Bridgeport, Ohio, is located on the Ohio side of



The Bridgeport Athletic Club played football on Wheeling Island, and George Yaus was a member for many years. He is seen here crouching at the far left, in the second row. [See "Photo Curiosity"; inside back cover.]

the river, directly across from Wheeling Island. It was common at that time, as it is today, for residents of the river island to move back and forth across the state line on a regular basis for work and recreation.

"Around 1915," Dorothy says, "one of my father's brothers, Clarence, took a job as a construction worker on the new Bridgeport Suspension Bridge going up between Bridgeport and Wheeling Island. When he was working the job, he fell from the top of the scaffolding and was killed. It was a terrible tragedy at the time for our family, especially because he was engaged. Then his other brother Harry went off to World War I. That was yet another tragedy, because he was exposed to mustard gas near the end of the war. By the time he got home, he was very sick. It didn't take long before he died, as well. He was so young, probably in his late 20's. As a little girl lis-

tening to these stories, it was hard for me to imagine what it must have been like for my dad," Dorothy says.

"My mother told me one story each time we went to Wheeling, as I ate my ham sandwich. Then, after

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*Nobody wants to be forgotten. Through the sharing of her memories, I have learned a story that I will always carry with me.*

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some shopping, we rode the streetcar back to McMechen," she recalls.

When my grandmother mentions the word "war," I have little to relate with her experiences. But considering the troubled times that our nation is going through now, I asked her what it was like being a young kid in a small, West Virginia

town, knowing that all of this economic strife was going on around her. She was lucky, she says, as her family experienced little difficulty during those years. The discussions in church among the congregation, however, the routine bake sales to raise money for the poor, and the frequent visitors at their door for breakfast were all signs to Dorothy that times were hard. After two years of the Great Depression, people were ready for a savior. Their wish came true in 1932.

"One of the farthest places that I went as a young girl," Dorothy says, "was to Washington, D.C., to watch the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. I was 12. I remember leaving the house late at night to hop on the streetcar that took us down to the train station. Our passes were free, because my father worked for the railroad. We boarded at around 10 p.m.

"Onboard the train, everybody was singing and whooping it up



Dorothy Yaus graduated from high school in 1937 and moved to Charleston to become a nurse. It was there that she met her future husband, Dr. Richard Cuonzo. Dorothy is seen here in her nurse's uniform in 1939.

came so sporadic that I only saw them every two or three months," Dorothy recalls. "And then, the last one came. My parents were both impressed by Roosevelt and had great faith that he could get our country moving again, like he promised in his speeches."

The sign of hospitality on the Yaus home, which had once been a beacon amidst dark times for hungry traveling men, wasn't needed any longer. As George set off to work every day, so did thousands of other men.

After Dorothy graduated from high school in 1937, she went to Charleston to become a nurse. There, she met Dr. Richard Cuonzo, whom she later married. The couple had three daughters; the middle child, Marilyn, is my mother.

My visit with Dorothy came to an end. I prepared to head back to West Virginia and hugged my grandma good-bye. As I looked into her eyes, there was a new dimension. Now, whenever I talk to her on the phone, I have a deeper understanding of who she is. Nobody wants to be forgotten. Through the sharing of her memories, I have learned a story that I will always carry with me. 🌿

MARIELLE GALLAGHER is a 2003 graduate of Elkins High School. She began this story as part of a history class assignment during her junior year, and later expanded it for GOLDENSEAL. She will attend Wells College in Aurora, New York, this fall, where she plans to study writing. This is her first published article.

and going through the cars. The train rode through the night, and the people never stopped to sleep. I was so tired the next day. My mom made me lay down on the train seat a couple of times. But there was so much noise, I couldn't get to sleep.

"When we got there, we had to walk over to where the ceremony was. We walked as close as we could get to the swearing in of Roosevelt. I was so short that I couldn't see anything. So, my dad said, 'I'll put you up in this tree.' He pushed me up in the tree, and I could see everything then. President Roosevelt was standing up on a stage that they had built so everyone could see. He gave a short speech about how happy he was to be president and that he hoped to get us out of the Depression. Afterwards, he shook lots of people's hands. That was the highlight.

"After that, the bands started playing, and people were talking loud and laughing. After the ceremony, we walked back to the train. It was just an excursion train, which meant it was just a short trip. We didn't stay the night, or anything."

Following the inauguration, the family returned to McMechen with a new sense of hope. George Yaus still went fishing everyday. But as he crossed the train platform to get to the river, the number of men spending idle time there became fewer. Workers were soon hired back to the railroad yard.

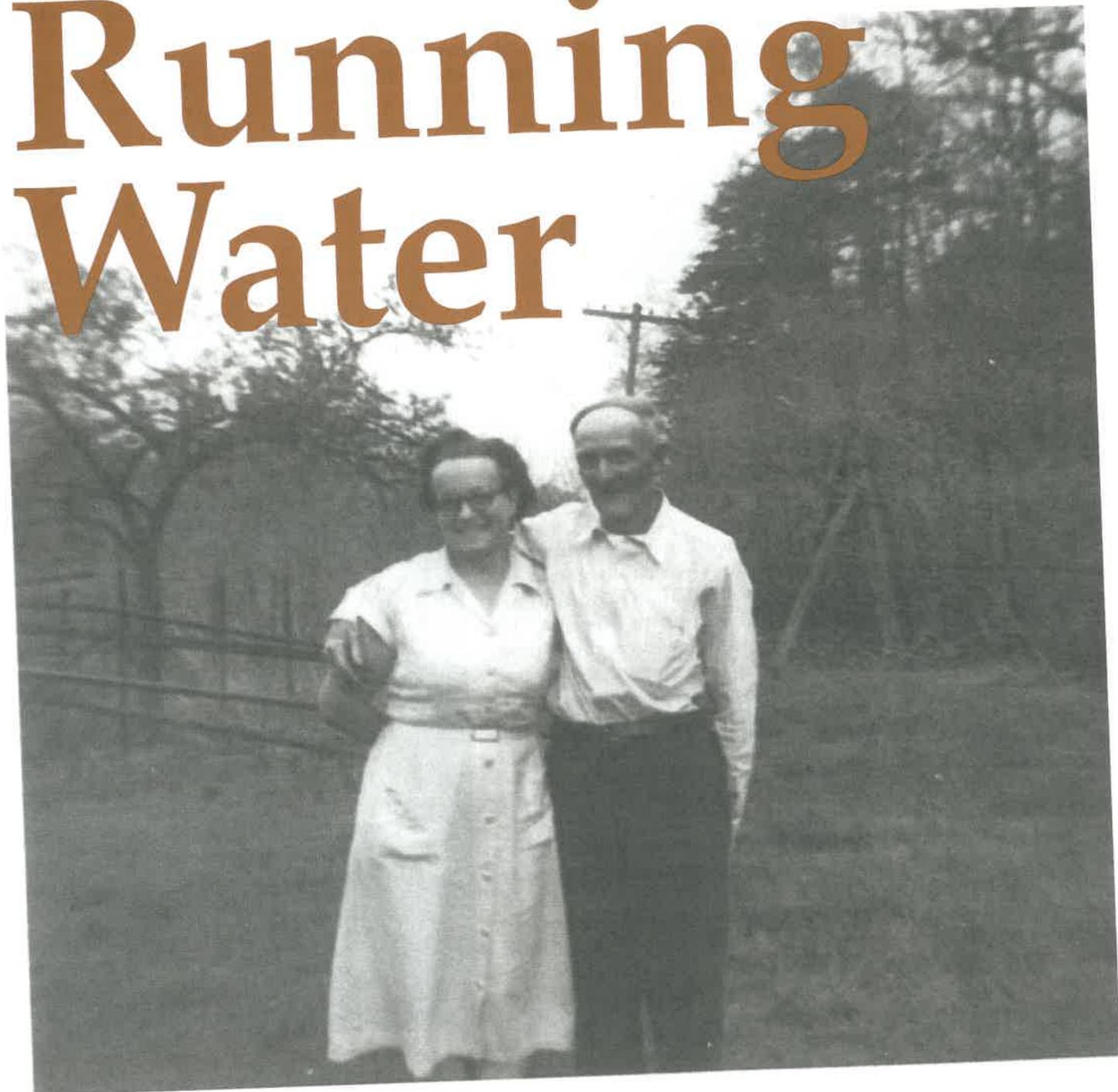
"The unemployed men that had once needed breakfast be-



Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo and our author, Mariella Gallagher. Photograph by Marilyn Cuonzo.

# Burning Coal and Running Water

By Robert Hammon



# Recalling Life "Up Quick"

**T**he smell. I'll always remember the smell of coal smoke, rising from the fires used to heat the homes and lingering around the smoldering slag heaps. The slag fumes hung in the air day and night. The smoke would no longer be acceptable today, but I remember it well. Once you have that smell in your nostrils, you never forget.

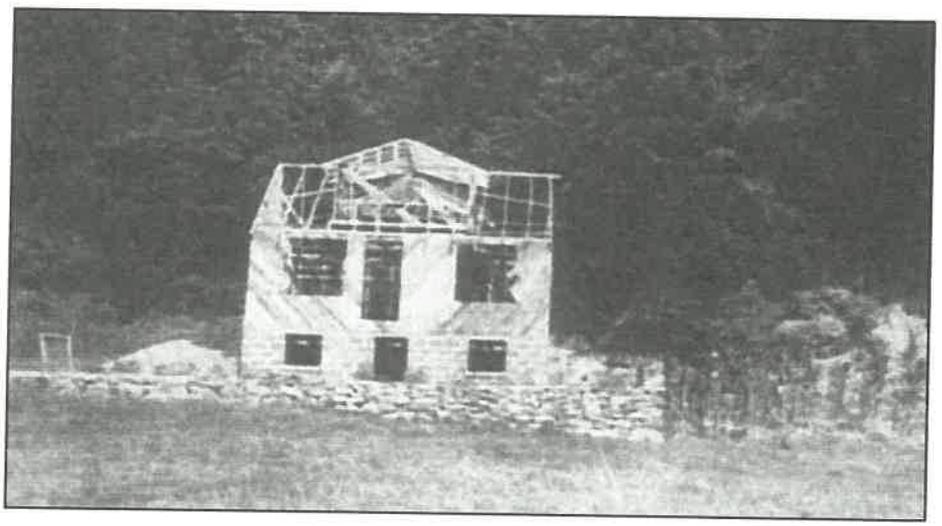
For more than 40 years, my grandfather Robert Brewer dug the coal, mostly at the Shamblin mine near Quick, Kanawha County. Although a meager one, it provided him with a living and the ability to raise five children. Among those children was my mother, nicknamed "Rain," which is short for Lorraine. Papaw, as we knew him, was born in 1890. He was, by most standards, a physically small man — about 5'6", pencil thin, and forever slightly slumped, perhaps as a result of stooping in the mines. He came to West Virginia by way of New York after serving as a nurse in the first World War. I remember him as a very intense man, quiet to a fault, and almost standoffish. Leave no doubt, he was a tough man. As my dad used to say, he was "tougher than a pine knot."

He was also endlessly resourceful. Papaw would forage whatever he could find from scraps of mate-

Left: Robert and Lydia Mae Brewer at their home near Quick, Kanawha County. This photograph was taken in about 1954.



Blue Creek provided a range of diversions for youngsters when author Robert Hammon was a boy, visiting his grandparents during the early 1950's. Not much has changed in the last 50 years, as this recent photograph indicates. Here, local children enjoy a dip in a swimming hole near an old B&O railroad trestle on Blue Creek, located about two miles below Quick. Photograph by Bev Seale.



A house within a house. After building his first home out of discarded mining supplies, Robert Brewer built a second, larger home around the original structure, as seen here. Photograph taken in the early 1950's.

rial at work and carry them home each day under his arm. In his other hand, he carried his miner's bucket. I don't ever recall him driving or owning a car. He would walk the dirt road next to Blue Creek from the house to the mouth of the hollow and back — four miles, every working day. The road was lined with mountain laurel or rhododendron, spectacular blues and yellows as bright as the noonday sun, during their season.

The creek, at its widest, ran about 50 feet across in its shallow flow to meet the Elk River at the town of

Blue Creek, located several miles downstream. Knee-deep in the summer, its bed consisted of flat stones covered with algae, making wading through the shallows precarious. Up the creek a ways, the B&O railroad had dredged out the creek for a bridge trestle, and there was a pool deep enough for swimming and skinny-dipping. Most of the creek had excellent "crawdaddin'" as a result of rippling water and a multitude of flat, time- and water-worn rocks lining the bottom. The current ran steady and fast enough to take a refresh-



The Brewer home near Quick, with a pile of coal. Photographer and date unknown.

ing “sit down” in the water facing downstream, letting the coolness flow over you on a hot, muggy summer day.

I remember Papaw in the late afternoon coming up the tree-lined lane from the dirt road that paralleled Blue Creek. His face and clothing covered in coal dust, his miner’s hat slightly tilted on his head, the carbide lamp still attached over the bill.

He taught me how to light that lamp. Open the reservoir. A half-pint copper cup was screwed onto

the bottom of the lamp. Drop in a small handful of carbide chips and spit into the cup. The moisture would start a chemical reaction, which would produce the gas that fueled the lamp. A thumbscrew operated the valve, and with a self-striking match, you would light the escaping gas. This would burn for hours with a bright blue flame that would light the immediate area in front of your face.

As conventional as Papaw was in many ways, he was also a unique individual. I learned a great deal

from him just by watching him work and live. For example, I learned from him to “think beyond the end of my nose” and to “measure twice and cut once” — a carpentry phrase that warns against the wasting of time and materials. I observed Papaw over many summers, staying with him and Mamaw — my grandmother Lydia Mae Brewer. I lived with them for almost a year while my own parents were experiencing some hard times during the early 1950’s.

Papaw built a house up a hollow at Quick on a hill overlooking Blue Creek. That is not really a magnificent feat, until you think about how he did it. For years, he brought home discarded lumber, considered scraps to the mine carpenters, along with large wooden pallets and boxes that were used to ship the new automated mine machinery. With all of the discards, Papaw constructed a complete house, including a cellar in which Mamaw could store all of her canning to get the family through the hard winters.

I most remember the paneling in the master bedroom, before it was covered with drywall in later years. It was paneled from wooden dynamite boxes that Papaw separated into flat pieces and carried home from the mine. In places, he also recycled *The Charleston Gazette* into wallpaper and insulation.

The house was pretty impressive to me, but Papaw wasn’t quite satisfied with it. So, he decided to reconstruct the house more to his liking. But there was a problem. He and Mamaw needed a place to live during the reconstruction. Instead of finding another flat spot of ground on his 36 acres of hillside property, or moving in with his wife’s father — Papaw did not want to be beholden to anyone — he chose to stay in the original house

Author Robert Hammon inspects the coal mine dug by his grandfather into the cliff behind his house. The opening at the left was the main entrance to the mine. Photograph by Michael Keller.



while he built the new structure around it.

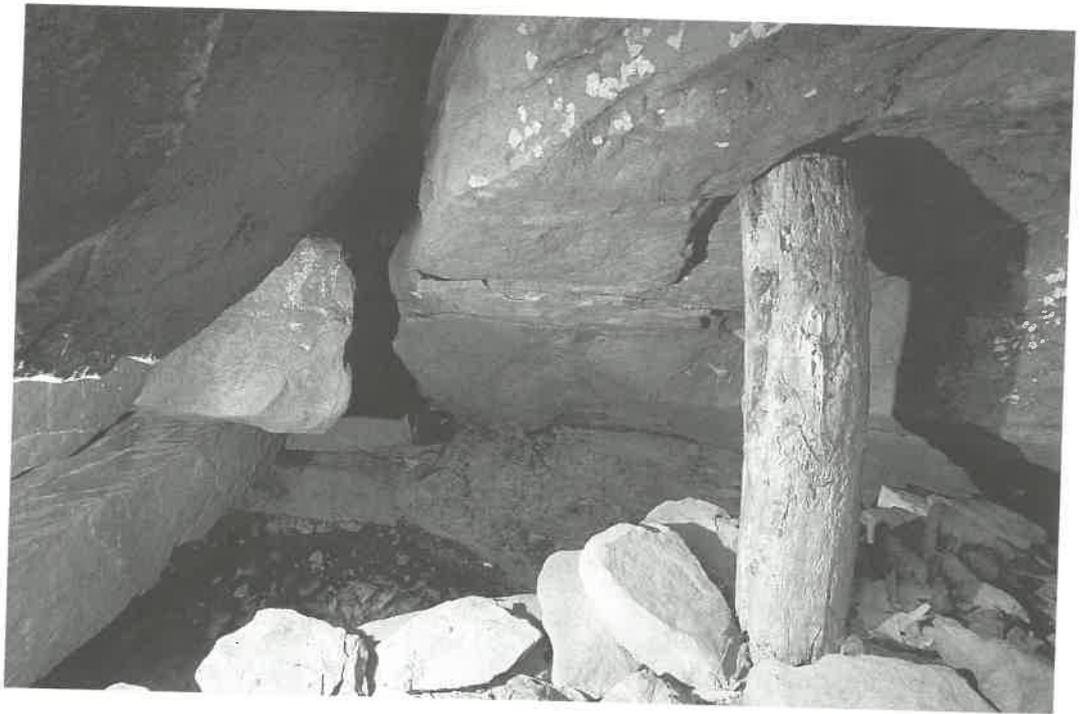
I recall on one occasion looking up from the first floor of the original house and seeing Papaw perched on the rafters of the new roof. There was a giant hole to the sky. He had opened the original roof, which was below the new one, and was stripping material from the original rafters to use on the new one. He constructed the outer shell of the new house by re-using materials from the old house. Once he had completed the shell, he proceeded to tear down the older inner portion piece by piece, constructing the new rooms inside as he progressed.

It was tedious, to say the least, but he did it. The result was a remarkable house still visible on the hill today, more than 50 years later. The house now belongs to a woman from Texas.

During Papaw's time, the house was heated with a potbellied cast iron stove. Two tons of anthracite, or hard coal, was delivered each fall to last the winter. Anthracite was not as common as the softer bituminous coal, but it gave off a maximum of heat with small flames and less smoke.

I don't ever remember sleeping in a bed, "out Quick." My brother Butch and I always slept on the floor as close to the stove as possible, without getting close enough to ignite. We were usually lying on, and wrapped in, one or two of Mamaw's handmade quilts. In the winter when the temperatures hov-

Inside Robert Brewer's coal mine. Remnants of the coal seam are visible at the center. Note the stone wall at right, pipe, cinder blocks, and pool of water. These are what remains of Papaw Brewer's ingenious reservoir and fresh water supply system. The reservoir filled with seepage and run-off, and the pipe carried the water down the hill to the house. Photograph by Michael Keller



Using methods learned in the Shamblin mines at Quick, Robert Brewer shored up the roof of his private coal mine using stout timbers cut from trees on his land. This roof support is still in place, 50 years later. Photograph by Michael Keller.

ered in the single digits, the stove would get so hot that it would glow red and yellow. This was especially interesting during the moonless winter nights, with the amber glow dancing on the ceiling and the walls of the darkened house. It was a little eerie, but the flickering lights lulled us to sleep in a matter of moments.

One year when the store-bought coal ran out mid-winter, Papaw got creative again. With characteristic

ingenuity, he not only developed a long-term supply of free heating fuel for their home, but supplied Mamaw with running water, as well.

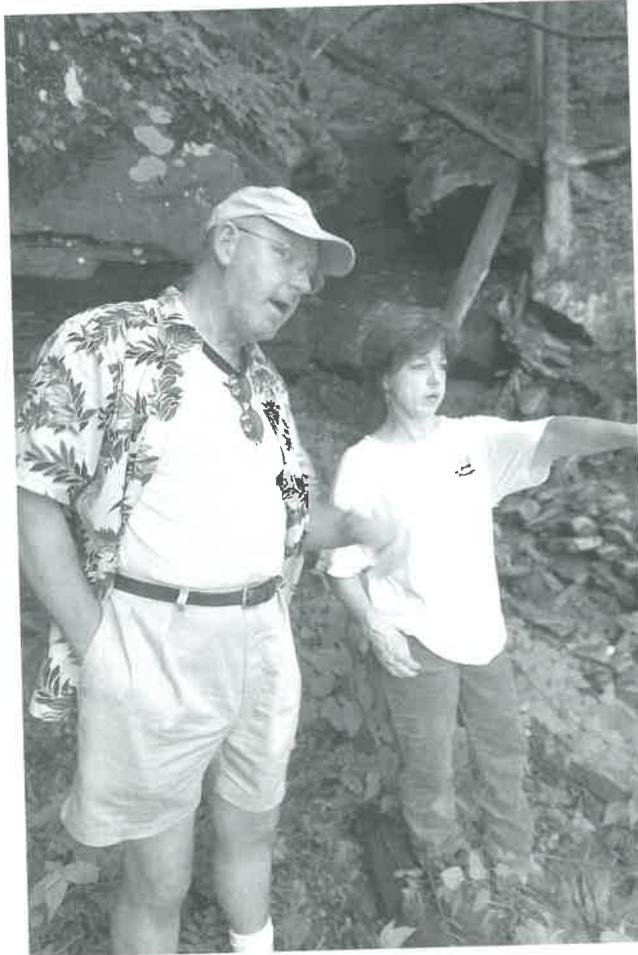
About 75 yards up the hill was a waterfall created by a towering rock cliff. It was a thing of beauty. The water would plunge down the stones when it rained and trickle when there was just enough water to keep it running. The stones there were covered with reddish-orange



moss, which maintained its deep, lush color most of the time. Giant oak, hickory, maple, and sycamore trees on the top of the cliff shaded the rock, the falls, and the stream. Just to the left of the waterfall, level with the sloping of the earth away from bottom of the rock cliff, was a seam of coal. The seam was visible only about 18 inches from the ground, extending up the face of the cliff. It was shiny and as black as the absence of all light, contrasting against the solid quartzite, slate, and sandstone layers above it.

The Shamblin mine shut down for a time at Quick, so Papaw was out of work. He was also out of scrip and money. It was common in those days to be paid mostly in scrip and only partially in cash. Sometimes, the miners were paid only in scrip. What little cash the miners did receive was paid in \$2 bills. The miners considered the bills bad luck. Based on a forgotten superstition, they would tear off one of the "2's" from the corner of the bill. The four "2's" on the corners added up to eight, and that was an unlucky number.

Papaw was stubborn and refused to get any more indebted to the company store than he already was. He and Mamaw could get through the winter with the canned goods she had put up the previous summer, and he figured he could get enough fuel if he dug out the coal seam at the bottom of the cliff. It would not take more than a few minutes a day to gather enough fuel to make it through the winter, he reasoned, so he started chipping away at the seam. After using up the face of the seam, he found that it went further into the cliff. As he dug deeper, the seam widened to about four-feet thick — 18 inches above the ground with the remainder below the surface. Papaw would tote the fuel down the hill in two "coal scuttles" — a three-gallon heavy tin bucket, fluted at the top, with one side of the lip shaped to form a pouring spout. He would travel by foot down a



Author Robert Hammon and current owner Bev Seale discuss changes at the old Brewer home place. Photograph by Michael Keller.

small path worn into the rocky soil, across a small footbridge located over the stream adjacent to the house, and deposit each load onto the growing coal pile. His "few minutes a day" turned into sometimes hours.

the slack and to create pillars. He knew the necessity of roof timbers after experiencing rock falls in the mines that had resulted in the loss of life and limb of some of his fellow miners.

After he ran the seam out of coal,

tion on his knees, resulted in the creation of a room beneath the gigantic cliff. When Papaw finally ran out of coal in the seam, the cavern was almost 20-foot wide at the face, four-feet high, and tapered out some distance back into the mountain. The stone above Papaw's dig weighed thousands of tons, so he used his experience in the mines to shore up the roof of the room.

He had "borrowed" a manually operated roof jack from work to help protect him while he dug. Then, he used eight- to 10-inch-diameter oak and hickory timbers cut from the hill above as permanent roof supports. He drove flat rocks beneath and above the timbers to take out

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*Both Papaw and Mamaw lived in the house in Quick for the rest of their lives. The spring worked magnificently for many years after Papaw created it.*

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Papaw's "obsession" had begun with the simple goal of covering the cost of coal for the remainder of the winter, then expanded into digging out enough for the next winter, and finally gave rise to a more ambitious idea.

A few months of digging the coal by hand, and mostly from a posi-

he left the roof timbers intact. Visible at the face of the seam, there was only about an 18-inch-wide smiling mouth for an entrance. He would enter the cave by lying on his stomach, sticking one leg through the 18-inch slit in the cliff, sliding in on his belly, and drawing his other leg in behind him.

in the estate settlement. Like his father, Stuart preferred the outdoors to the confines of a barroom. An avid sportsman, Stuart played football for Thomas High School and was on the track team. He attempted to play community baseball, but admits he wasn't very good at it.

He more than compensated for any lack of batting or pitching prowess with his shooting and fly-casting skills learned from his father. "Back in the late 1920's and early '30's, my dad took me fishing. He was a fly fisherman. I watched him closely, and that's how I learned to fly fish," Stuart says.

"I taught quite a few people to fly fish that way — taught over 500 people how to, and didn't charge a penny! I also tied my own flies and my own patterns, made up fly rods, and gave quite a few away. I made up five bamboo rods. Boy, what a big job!"

Stuart also inherited his father's passion for harvesting deer, grouse, groundhog, squirrels, and rabbits from the forest. The finest of these specimens went to the taxidermist, and from there to a display wall in Buck's Place. One of those specimens was a black bear that eventually fell apart from time and handling by bar patrons. Pheasants, groundhogs, deer heads, and other specimens also disintegrated. Their remains are hidden behind the paneling at the front of the barroom, says Linda Delaney. Rather than remove the shelf and its contents when the bar was remodeled, paneling was applied right over them.

Two of Buckshot Thayer's most unusual hunting accomplishments remain on display. The first is a 28-pound wildcat Buckshot and another hunter bagged at Maxwell Run in the Sugarlands. Stuart says his father and the other

hunter were coon hunting when they came upon the cat. Throughout the night, the two men and their dogs kept the heat on the animal, treeing it time and time again. But the cat managed to escape each time. Finally, the cornered animal made a run for it, and Stuart Thayer took his successful shot.

Another wildlife specimen is a timber rattler coiled around the base of a coat rack in a dark corner of the bar. Stuart's father almost stepped on the huge snake while fishing at the Falls of Seneca. After



This stuffed timber rattler guards the coal rack at the Sportsman's Club, much to the surprise of unsuspecting patrons.

Buckshot delivered a fatal blow to the snake's head with a large rock, he collected the carcass and took it to a taxidermist for preservation. Like the other specimens, the snake has suffered the ravages of time and patron abuse.

"It had ten rattlers on its tail, but someone cut them off," Stuart says. "They were still sticking up in the air, ten big ones."

The dark snake blends into its murky corner, and many patrons pull up a chair next to it, unaware of its sinister presence. Patrons are further enticed to sit near the snake by virtue of its proximity to the coal stove and the fact that they hang their coats and hats above its coils. After they sit there a few minutes and their eyes adjust to the darkness, many notice the creature and make a dash for the poolroom.

"He's one of our prize sportsmen," Stuart says with a mischievous grin.

Stuart changed the name of the bar from Buck's Place to the Sportsman's Club in 1967, when West Virginia's liquor laws were revised to permit the sale of hard liquor by private clubs. The first seven years he owned the bar, he operated it pretty much as his father did, except with longer hours — 1 p.m. to 1 a.m., seven days a week. The mainstay of his business remained satisfying the thirsts and social needs of coal miners.

"There were still quite a few men who worked in the mines here, and they had strip mines here," he says. "They were all local people. Everyone knew each other."

Many of them also shared a common interest in hunting, fishing, football, and other sports. Thus, when the opportunity to form a club and thereby expand his business presented itself with the law change, Stuart responded by

forming the Sportsman's Club.

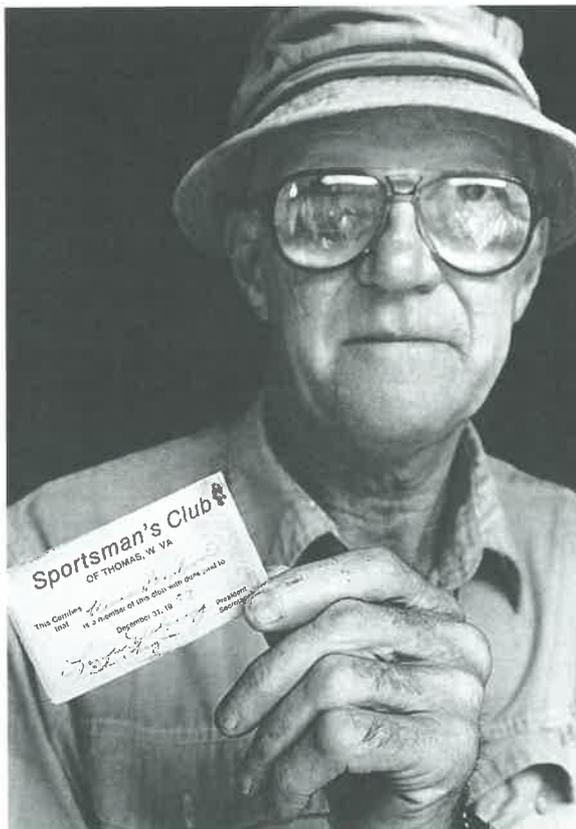
"We were interested in all the sports in Tucker County — golf, skiing, hunting and fishing — anything that pertains to sports. On the weekends, when all the people came in, that's about all they talked about," he adds. "It got pretty thick in here."

To form a club, the owner had to come up with a minimum number of qualified members. Stuart says a potential member had to be a U.S. citizen at least 21 years of age and be active in a sport of any kind. Members also had to agree to obey all the bylaws of the club and agree to participate in sports. Stuart says there wasn't an application. He simply asked the questions and wrote each new member's name in a book. The applicant paid a dollar initiation fee, and a dollar a year to stay a member. Club president Stuart, vice-president Linda Delaney, or secretary Eda Thayer issued a blue membership card.

"To start with, we had 150 members," Stuart says. "It grew each year to where we had about 300 members." Linda Delaney says guests could usually get one drink without a membership. But first, they had to get into the building. The front door was kept locked at all times. Members gained access by ringing the bell — a signal to the bartender to throw the electromagnetic switch on the lock.

In the mid-1990's, the state relaxed its liquor regulations and no longer required club membership to purchase hard liquor in a bar. Stuart says he still has former members who come in after being away from the state for several years and want to know if they can renew their membership.

Although any person with proper age identification can



Though he no longer needs it to enter the club, longtime customer Vince Ponikvar still proudly carries his membership card.



now be served legally, Stuart has chosen to keep the "Club" moniker. The "Sportsman's" aspect of the establishment has also remained intact. Hunting, fishing, car racing, football, or whatever sport is in season still accounts for most of the conversation that travels up and down the 11 bar stools and around the half-dozen tables.

Urban sports bar regulars would be disappointed at the bar's paltry 19-inch television on which national sporting events are watched. Stuart says his patrons don't seem to mind the lack of a big-screen television. "I don't have that kind of room in here," he says. "It would chase the patrons out." The little screen is one more contribution to the bar's homey atmosphere.

He says any change to the bar's appearance has to be cleared by his patrons first. He proposed getting rid of the old mechanical cash register that dates back to the time when his father owned the bar, but was outvoted. Another mainstay behind the bar is a vintage yellow-and-red Royal Crown Cola cooler that keeps the cans of beer ice cold.

A shelf that runs along the length of the bar's backboard displays beer cans and bottles from around the nation and world. Stuart says the artifacts are donations from his customers. The wall also serves as a snapshot gallery of customers and their sporting accomplishments.

For several years, the bar also was a place where a band of local poker players could get together in the room behind the bar and play without

Linda Delaney has kept customers happy at the Sportsman's Club since 1984. Here, she retrieves an order from the cooler, which appears to hold a good deal more Budweiser than Royal Crown.

intrusion from their wives or the law. "It was illegal, but we wanted something to do," Stuart admits. "We had a round pool table in there. I even played some. I enjoyed it." Stuart says that they never played for big stakes. It was just a friendly game between a group of regulars. "In five or six hours of play, the most anybody ever lost was \$30," he says.

The fun came to an end when one of the players rattled on the group. "We got raided," Stuart says. "Somebody turned us in. One guy got jealous, or something like that. All of us were fined."

After the raid, the game moved to a private home, then fizzled out. "It was a good pastime for some of the fellers," he says. "Most of them were miners."

The room where the poker games were played is now used to store coal. Stuart says it takes about 12 tons of coal a year to heat the building. Ironically, Stuart can't burn the coal mined around Thomas — it has too much rock in it. He has it hauled in from Philippi. Before closing the bar in the wee hours, the bartender banks the fire, which keeps the barroom warm until Stuart comes to clean up the next morning. He banks the fires again, which holds until the bartender arrives to open up. Linda Delaney says the chore of periodically feeding a bucket of coal to the behemoth is one of her least-favorite tasks. However, she also knows that Stuart is unlikely to replace the coal stove with a gas appliance, and patrons would be unhappy if he did.

"Everybody stands around it in the wintertime," she says. Linda also must deal with ghosts that rattle around on the floor above the barroom. The second-story

rooms have been vacant since 1960, but both Linda and Stuart say ghosts still live there. "Sometimes you smell bacon frying or coffee brewing," Linda says. Other times, it's footsteps, creaking boards and — most upsetting — the sound of pool balls rolling around. "There is no pool table or balls up there," Linda says.

The barroom itself seemed to have a ghost that was associated with an old beer cooler. Linda says that when she was there by herself, she would hear the sound of the cooler opening, someone taking a

tomato at the club, but he died in his bathroom and wasn't found for several days. Could he be roaming around upstairs, reminding his former drinking buddies of his lingering presence? Linda thinks otherwise.

"I figure the one upstairs is Buckshot," she says. No one will ever know for sure. When a business has been in the same location for more than 100 years, seen the likes of characters like Big Head, Buckshot, and the backroom pool players, it is impossible to ascribe a single identity to these friendly spirits.



Stuart Thayer points to a few of the many souvenirs, photographs, and mementos donated by customers over the years.

bottle out of it, and then prying off the cap. And she'd be sitting there watching the cooler all the while it was happening. The mysterious sounds stopped after the cooler was removed from the barroom.

Both Linda and Stuart have theories about the ghosts' identities. Stuart thinks the one upstairs is Charlie Coffman, a Thomas businessman who owned a chain of clothing stores throughout the state. Charlie was a regular cus-

"There's been a lot of people who used to come here and have passed away," Linda says as she pours another cold one for Bob Sagace. 🍁

CARL E. FEATHER lives in northeast Ohio, but has family roots in Preston and Tucker counties. His book *Mountain People in a Flat Land* is published by the Ohio University Press. Carl is the owner of Feather Multimedia, a freelance photography and writing business. He has been lifestyles editor at the *Ashtabula Star-Beacon* since 1991. Carl is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor whose work most recently appeared in our Summer 2003 issue.



Ikke's Tomb in rural Pleasants County has been the subject of eerie tales for most of a century. Author John Tice decided to explore the truth behind this legend and discovered a very real — if chilling — story.

# Searching for Ikke's Tomb

Text and photographs by John Tice

I was 14 years old when I first visited Ikke's Tomb. It was a cool fall evening. My father told my younger brother Jared and me that he had something special planned for us. We jumped into his old Ford and headed toward the family farm — more than 500 acres of Pleasants County hayfield and forest known as Sugar Creek, named after the small run that meanders through the valley.

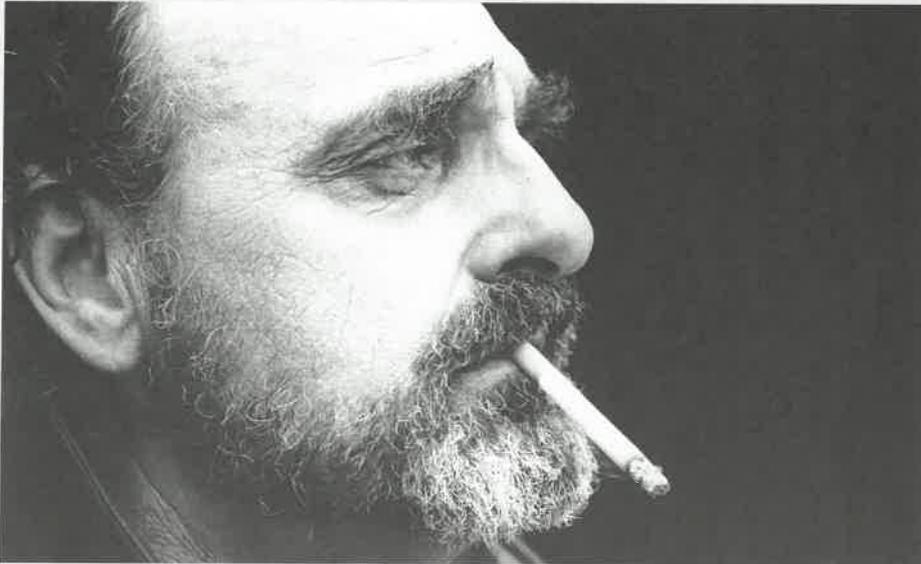
It was dusk by the time our truck tires hit the gravel road that winds along the side of Sugar Creek. As we neared the old farmhouse, I got a strange feeling — a mixture of comfort and awe brought about by the stories passed down to me over the years about this place. My great-great-great-grandfather Christopher Wagner settled this land in 1820. My Mamaw and Papaw had lived here for many years, and my father

played here as a child.

This time, however, Dad drove past it. A quarter-mile up the road stood the old Waldo Wagner place — a farm once owned by my great-uncle Waldo — now just a series of weathered barns and a decaying farmhouse. Beside it, Wolf Run flowed down from the hills and into Sugar Creek. We parked just off the road near the mouth of the run. Dad got out his flashlight, and we headed by foot up a small road that followed Wolf Run. I didn't like that road, especially at night. Mamaw always told me it was haunted, saying that when she walked the road alone as a young girl, she could hear footsteps behind her. When she would turn around to look, there was never anybody there.

My brother Jared hustled to keep up with us as the road slanted upward. My father didn't speak until we reached a small clearing at the top of the hill. We came to a stop, and Dad shined the flashlight across the small field, revealing a number of headstones, overgrown with brush and weathered by time.

"Boys," he said slowly, "this is Mount Welcome Cemetery." He led us closer to the graves and



John R. Tice, our author's father.

pointed out the foundation of a church building nearby. Only the four cornerstones and steps leading to nowhere remained. "This is where your grandma went to church. Everybody around here went to Mount Welcome Church back in the day." I asked Dad if this was the only reason we came all this way. "No," he replied. "You still have to see Ikie's Tomb."

Dad led us several hundred yards around the top of the hill and back into the woods. He stopped and shined the flashlight on what appeared to be a small concrete building. This was Ikie's Tomb. It

had been here for most of a century and is the source of countless legends and tales still circulated among the people of Pleasants County. Stories are often told about a young boy, his mysterious death, and his unusual burial here with his siblings, his toys, and other objects.

Dad walked up to the side of the ominous 10' x 10' structure. We had no choice but to follow — he had the only flashlight. There was a door that had been concreted shut and a small broken window on one side overlooking the hill. He shone the light through the window's narrow opening to reveal a small broken crypt inside the mausoleum, surrounded by dead leaves and large chunks of concrete. "The roof caved in years ago," Dad said. "They took Ikie's body out and buried him somewhere nearby — I don't know what became of all his toys. Some might still be in there." Jared and I were stiff with fear, but tried not to let Dad know it. As we walked away from Ikie's Tomb that night, I tried to shake the images going through my teenage head.

This past fall, my cousin Mark turned 40 years old. In celebration, he invited family and friends out to the farm for a pig roast, skeet shooting, and some moonshine sipping. As the day wore on, the empty shotgun shells and shattered clay pigeons began piling up, and the wide-mouthed Mason jars neared empty. When evening arrived, a large campfire was built, and the elder members of my family began to exchange tales.

I had heard most of these stories a thousand times before, but one stood out this night. Someone uttered the word "Ikie," and my cousin Steve perked up. "I'll tell you about Ikie's Tomb, if you want to hear it," he said. Everyone fell silent as he began to talk.

"In about 1905, or so," he began, "Ikie was seven years old.

He had two older teenage sisters and two young infant siblings. His father was a Mooring and his mother was a Gorrell. Their family owned a lot of land out here, back in those days. One day, the entire family went into town for some iced milk, which was a popular treat back then. The milk had spoiled, and all five children died within days of each other.

"The family was a bit strange and fairly well-to-do," Steve continued, "so they constructed this tomb up on Mount Welcome. They built a concrete basin inside to put Ikie and his two sisters in. They wrapped them up like mummies, with only their



This view of the interior of the tomb reveals the three burial basins where Ikie Mooring and his two sisters were reportedly interred. Visible at center are shattered pieces of stoneware. At right are broken pieces of concrete, presumably the remains of the once-solid concrete roof.

faces showing. They filled the basin with formaldehyde and floated the bodies inside. Ikie was in a small concrete coffin in the middle, and his sisters were on either side of him. They laid a concrete slab on top with a small window right over the top of Ikie's face. You could look in and see him floatin'. He had a pale complexion, freckles, tufts of red hair on his head. The two infants they put into two large stone crocks and filled them up with formaldehyde to preserve them. Those crocks had wooden lids with a layer of cotton inside — you could take off the lid, remove the cotton, and see the babies. The parents put all kinds of the kids' toys in there — an old-fashioned tricycle with the big front wheel, a wooden train, a wagon, books, all sorts of stuff."

Steve told us how the family moved away a few years later and how the mausoleum became abandoned. The formaldehyde evaporated, and the bodies deteriorated. During the 1960's and '70's, he said, the tomb became a popular spot with local teenagers. It wasn't long until the authorities came out, exhumed the bodies, and buried them properly.

While listening to my cousin, I realized that it had been 10 years since my last visit to see the tomb. I wanted to see it again, take photographs, explore, and learn if the story was true.

The following Monday was the first day of deer

season. So on Saturday, Dad, Jared, and I traveled to the farm for the annual sighting-in of our deer rifles. After that, we jumped on our four-wheelers and headed to Mount Welcome. My camera dangled at my side as we maneuvered through the trees with a brisk fall wind in our faces. The mausoleum was in sight as we reached the crest of the hill. It seemed smaller to me now, and not so intimidating in the daytime.

We inspected the tomb for nearly an hour. The door on the outside of the tomb was as I remembered it — solid concrete. From the difference in color and consistency, the sealing of the door had obviously taken place many years after the original construction. The date "1904" was engraved above the door and was barely legible. No glass was left in the narrow window by the door, and the roof had completely collapsed, giving us easy access to the interior. The floor of the mausoleum was covered in large hunks of concrete, but the crypt was clear of all other debris except dead leaves. The empty space for Ikie was only four-feet long. The two coffins on either side were a full six-feet long.

"John! Come look at this," my brother yelled from inside the tomb. It was a piece of brown stoneware. "There's lots of them here buried under the leaves," Jared said, stooping down to pick up another piece. Were these fragments of the stone crocks? My

cousin's story raced through my mind. All told, we found about 10 large pieces of old stoneware, and two four-inch-thick hunks of old pressed glass.

About 20 yards away, on the cemetery side of the tomb, I found a headstone, marked simply, "Ikie' Mooring, Dec. 19, 1896 — Mar. 3, 1904." The headstone didn't appear to be very old. There was also a small plastic gravemarker at the foot of the grave from Ruttencutter Funeral Home that referred to him as "Ikie' Gorrell." Two other Gorrell family headstones were found nearby.

As we left Mount Welcome that day, my mind was swirling with questions. The visit had proven useful, but it had only fueled my interest.

A search on the Internet led me to the Pleasants County marriage record of Kenneth Morring, age 30, and Emma J. Gorrell, age 21, married January 1, 1896 — almost one year before Ikie was born.

"Morrning" seemed to be a simple misspelling of the husband's last name, but the date of marriage didn't fit the timeline of the couple having had two teenage daughters. Searching deeper, I found another marriage record from Marion

County, stating that Kenneth Mooring had married a woman named Amanda Lawson on March 21, 1891, possibly accounting for Ikie's older siblings.

Ikie's mother Emma Jane Gorrell was born July 18, 1874. Her father Oliver Gorrell was an esteemed citizen of the county. He owned approximately 1,000 acres of land, was a school teacher, served as sheriff from 1877 to 1879, and served two terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates.

I then located a Pleasants County cemeteries Web site, which included a short testimonial about the tomb by Eva Wagner Brammer — a now-deceased relative of mine. Eva said that Ikie Mooring was the name of one of the children in the vault, as she called it. In her words, "Sometime later, two small children of the Moorings were put in there. Their bodies were put in stone jars, and a tricycle and

other toys were in there, and school books." Eva also remembered having heard that the mother of the children came and cleaned inside the vault, hanging the children's bodies on a tree while she did it. Older members of my family remember Eva as a very loving, honest, and humble lady, and say that her word was as good as gold.

Though I felt I had learned a great deal from the Internet, I decided that it was time to speak directly with some of the people in the community to see if I could find any further answers. My Dad accompanied me on many of these outings. After one particularly full day of searching, we pulled into the driveway of Hazel Dearth, a kindly 90-year-old woman and Waldo Wagner's only surviving daughter. Hazel was sitting on her porch swing as we

approached. Hazel remembered Dad almost immediately and laughed. She said the last time she had seen him, he was just a boy.

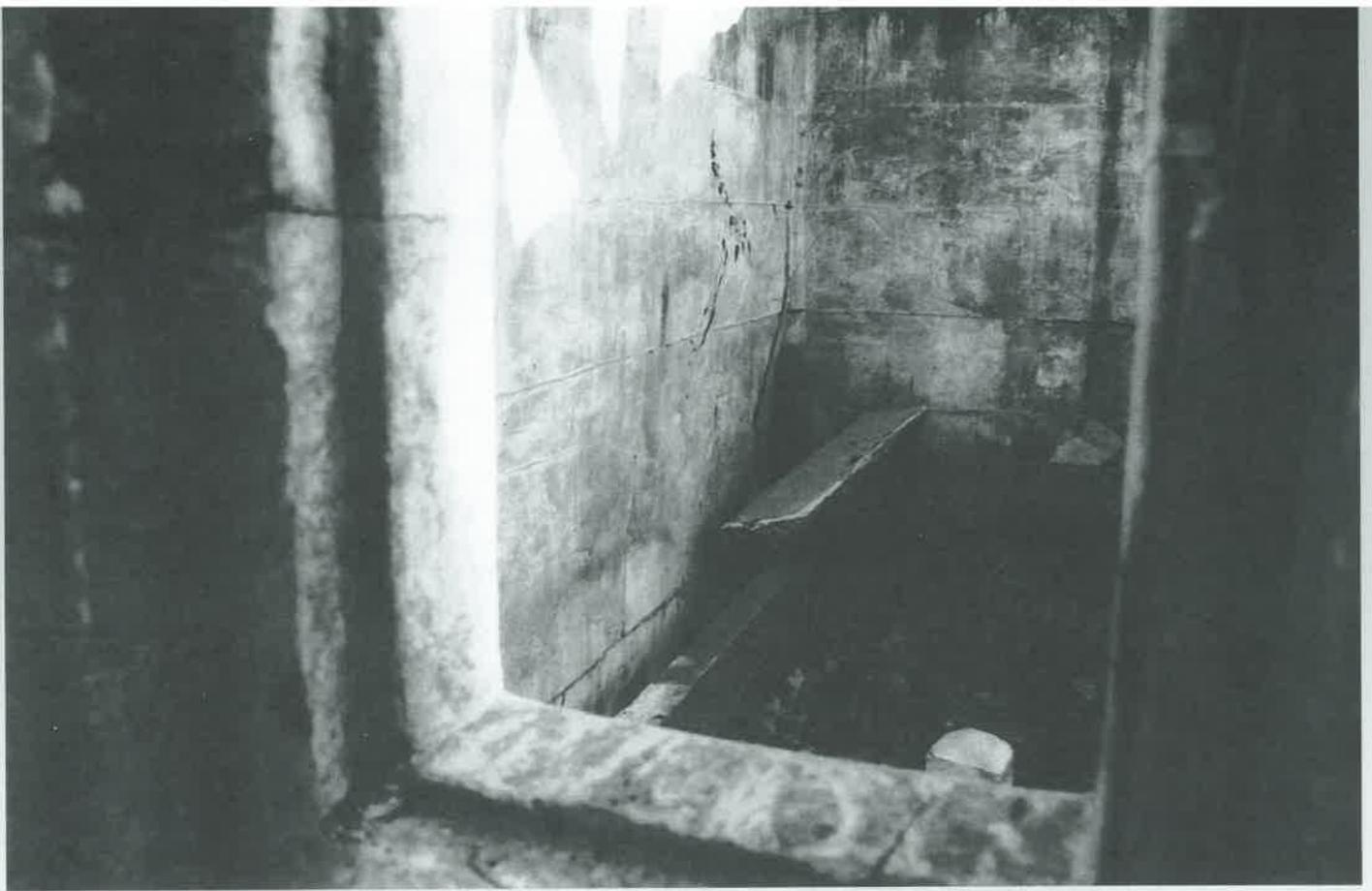
We asked her about the tomb. She said, "Oh, yes, I remember." According to Hazel, Ikie's father was a school teacher in Williamstown, and the family lived across Wolf Run

from the Waldo Wagner farm. She figured Ikie died from a fever, simply because "lots of kids died of that back then." Hazel recalled the two girls having died from colitis after the family moved to Williamstown around 1910 and were brought back and buried with Ikie. When asked what was in the tomb, Hazel replied, "Oh, they had all the kids' stuff — a tricycle, wagon, books. Everything they owned went with `em — like Indians."

Later that evening, Dad arose from his recliner and said, "We have to go do some more research." Dad's "research" landed us at the Eagles Nest, a local bar. As we pulled into the gravel parking lot, a large sign greeted us with the message, "Gun control! Steady Hand, Keen Eye." A large campfire was built outside, and deer and bear meat shish kebabs were on the grill. Robin Morgan, a friend



Ninety-year-old Hazel Dearth, one of many Pleasants County residents with stories to tell about Ikie's Tomb.



During the 1960's and '70's, local teenagers and vandals discovered the mausoleum. It became a popular destination for weekend revelers until the authorities intervened.

and owner of the bar, met us with a smile and a hug. "I haven't seen you guys for a while. What brings you around this evening?" she asked. "Ikie's Tomb," I replied.

Robin seized the opportunity to tell us about playing at the tomb as a child. "It was always a real spooky place," she said. "We kids used to go up there at night and scare the pants off of some city kids we'd bring along with us." Robin told us that Jim Groves, the constable of the Union District years ago, had helped get the bodies removed from the tomb.

The next day, we got started a bit slowly. By late afternoon, however, Dad and I finally pulled into Jim Groves' driveway. Jim greeted us from his porch. He confirmed that in 1979 he was constable of this district, a job he took very seriously. "I saw that teenagers had been trashing the area up around the mausoleum," he said. "I made several attempts to catch them in the act, but never did." Because the grave site was being desecrated, Jim filed a writ with the county to have the bodies exhumed and properly buried. According to Jim, the proprietor of Ruttencutter Funeral Home, Harvey Hatfield, came out and buried Ikie nearby.

Jim shared a story told to him by Grace Booher, a local woman who owned land adjacent to my family's property. Grace loved picking blackberries near the tomb when she was a little girl. One day,

she said, she looked into the tomb and saw Ikie's mother sitting in a rocking chair with Ikie's body cradled in her arms. Grace watched as Ikie's mother rocked him slowly and then gently placed his body back into the crypt. When Ikie's mother emerged from the tomb, her white apron was wet and stained blue from the dye of the little blue sailor suit Ikie was buried in.

While driving home, Dad told me what a wonderful lady Grace Booher was and how she had been like a second mother to him. "If Grace said it, then you can take those words to the bank," he said.

I spoke to Harvey Hatfield over the phone several days later. He provided me with some of the most substantial information I had collected, to date. Harvey ran Ruttencutter Funeral Home in 1979 and was the person responsible for removing Ikie's body. "Vandals had broken a small hole in the roof, and that's how me and Orville Hooper got in," Harvey said. "We found only the bones of a small boy inside and buried him nearby." Harvey mentioned that an old wooden rocking chair was in there at the time, possibly the same chair Emma Jane Mooring was said to have used to rock Ikie after he passed away.

Harvey described the roof of the mausoleum as being beautiful concrete work for the time period, but regrettably, he had to break the remainder of the roof in for liability purposes. As the past direc-



The final resting place of seven-year-old Ikie Mooring on Mount Welcome. His remains were exhumed from the nearby mausoleum and were reburied here in 1979.

tor of a funeral home, I asked Harvey about the peculiar burial method. "Oh, that was a highly advertised preservation method around the turn of the century," he told me. "They placed the bodies in solutions of alcohol." Harvey commented that the alcohol ultimately led to the deterioration of the crypt, saying it wore down the rubber seal around the small viewing window, allowing the alcohol to evaporate.

Speaking of Ikie's mother, Harvey said he heard that she became mentally unbalanced after Ikie's death and was remanded to the custody of a hospital in Huntington, where she died many years later.

A local man named Gerald Bills contacted me soon after that with two important discoveries. The first was a copy of a 1910 census report from Cabell County. It listed Kenneth Mooring as the head of household, age 47; occupation, oil well driller. Ikie's mother was listed as Emma Jane, age 36; wife, five children/one living.

The second discovery was a copy of Ikie's obituary from the *Pleasants County Leader*, dated March 18, 1904, and written by his grandfather Oliver Gorrell. It read: "Ikie' Mooring, the beautiful little boy and only child of Kenneth and Emma J. Mooring, died March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1904, aged seven years and two months.

"Ikie' is not dead, only a most beautiful, sweet flower that shed forth its sweet fragrance here for so short a time, has been plucked and transplanted in the fields of paradise, there to bloom forever. In his short life here, he touched and sweetened the lives of all who knew him, bound him-

self around the hearts of dear ones with cords of love that can never be severed.

"Now he stands on the other shore and holds in his angelic hands the Life Line, and beckons loved ones to come to him. He says to his dear Papa and Mama, 'I cannot come to you, but you can come to me; hold on to the Life Line, and we shall be housed together again in this beautiful land where there is no death, no sorrow, nor broken hearts, but one eternal life of joy, peace, and love."

A search of Cabell County led me to Barboursville Cemetery, where I discovered the final resting place of Kenneth and Emma Jane Mooring. What I found there was a simple grave under the shade of a large pine tree. Kenneth had joined Ikie in 1935; Emma came to her beloved son in 1950.

Sitting there for a moment in quiet reflection, I retraced my journey. Many questions still remain unanswered. Some are shrouded by contradictions and inconsistencies. I began this search trying to find the facts. By the end, however, I realize that the facts don't matter so much, after all.

In many ways, perhaps Oliver Gorrell was correct when he wrote that Ikie is not dead. Ikie can still be found at campfires and family dinners, in backwoods bars, and in the memories of the young and the old in Pleasants County. His story has become a local legend — another small and unique piece of Appalachian history that will continue to haunt and fascinate countless generations. 🌿

JOHN TICE was born in Pleasants County where his family has lived for six generations. He is a 2002 graduate of West Virginia University and holds a bachelor of fine arts' degree in graphic design. He currently lives in Charleston and works at the West Virginia Legislature's Office of Reference and Information. John also works as a freelance photographer. This is his first published article.



The Cabell County graves of Kenneth and Emma Mooring — Ikie's parents.

# 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.

## Filmmakers Festival

The art of filmmaking is alive and well in West Virginia, as evidenced by the steady flow of new films and videos announced in these pages. The West Virginia Filmmakers Film Festival, scheduled the first two weekends in October in Sutton, will showcase many of these recent and vintage films, and will provide a forum for discussion among their creators.

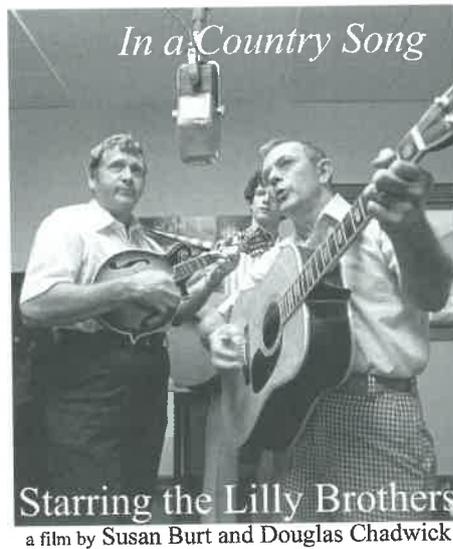
On the schedule are films produced by GOLDENSEAL contributors Gerald Milnes, Russ Barbour, Doug Chadwick, and Mary Lucille DeBerry, as well as many other filmmakers. Film topics will include West Virginia folklore and witchery, the Greenbrier River disaster of 1996, Jolo serpent handlers, *Pocahontas Times* editor Cal Price, the music of the Lilly Brothers, and other historical subjects, as well as fiction. A highlight of the festival will be selections from the West Virginia State Archives film collection presented by archivist Dick Fauss.

Screenings will take place at several venues in town including the Landmark Studio for the Arts, Café Cimino, the Hideaway Pub, and the Elk Theater. For a complete schedule, ticket prices, or other information, call Steve Fesenmaier at (304)345-5850 or visit [www.geocities.com/wvfilmmakersfilmfestival](http://www.geocities.com/wvfilmmakersfilmfestival).

## Literary West Virginia

The third annual West Virginia Book Festival will take place October 11-12 at the Charleston Civic Center. Sponsored by the

## True Facts...



Library Foundation of Kanawha County, the West Virginia Humanities Council, and Charleston Newspapers, the free festival is a chance for book-lovers to meet their favorite authors and participate in workshops and discussions. Attendees may also purchase new books directly from publishers and obtain used books at the popular Kanawha County Public Library annual sale.

Participating authors familiar to GOLDENSEAL readers include nature photographer and writer Jim Clark, author and activist Denise Giardina, and West Virginia poet laureate Irene Brand, along with magazine contributors Mary Rodd Furbee, Marc Harshman, Cheryl Ryan Harshman, and Dean Six. GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly will moderate a panel discussion titled "Haunted West Virginia," featuring authors Walt Gavenda and Mack Samples, plus folklorist Judy Byers. The discussion is

scheduled Saturday, October 11, at noon.

For more information about the book festival, call Cindy Miller at (304)343-4646, or visit [www.wvhumanities.org](http://www.wvhumanities.org).

Fourteen of West Virginia's finest writers have been featured in a highly acclaimed radio series from West Virginia Public Radio titled "In Their Own Country," produced and narrated by Kate Long of Charleston. Originally broadcast in 2002, the series will air again this fall. Programs will air each Monday evening at 8 p.m., beginning on September 15. For a complete broadcast schedule, visit [www.wvpubcast.org/writers](http://www.wvpubcast.org/writers) or call (304)558-3000.

The popular series is now also available on a 14-CD set from the West Virginia Library Commission, for a donation of \$70 to the West Virginia Writers Fund. For information about the fund, or to obtain copies of the CD set, call Mary Hogue at (304)558-2045.

## Storytelling Festival

For those who prefer their West Virginia stories told in a live



Storyteller Bill Hairston.

setting, the eighth annual West Virginia Storytelling Festival will take place at Jackson's Mill October 8-11. School programs, ghost tales, a "story swap," and live traditional music will be offered this year, along with evening performances by several top storytellers. Among them will be 2002 State Liars Contest winner Rich Knoblich, GOLDENSEAL contributor and radio host Kate Long, African American storytellers Ilene Evans and Bill Hairston, and others. A special feature this year will be a Saturday evening dinner theater program titled "Mystery at the Mill."

For tickets, lodging and food reservations, or other information, call Jackson's Mill at 1-800-287-8206.

### Herb Festival

The West Virginia Herb Association will sponsor a Celebration of Herbs festival at Jackson's Mill on Sunday, October 19. The festival comes at the conclusion of the 12<sup>th</sup> annual West Virginia Herb Conference. The conference is open to anyone with an interest in herbs or herb gardening, as well as to association members. The conference begins on October 17.

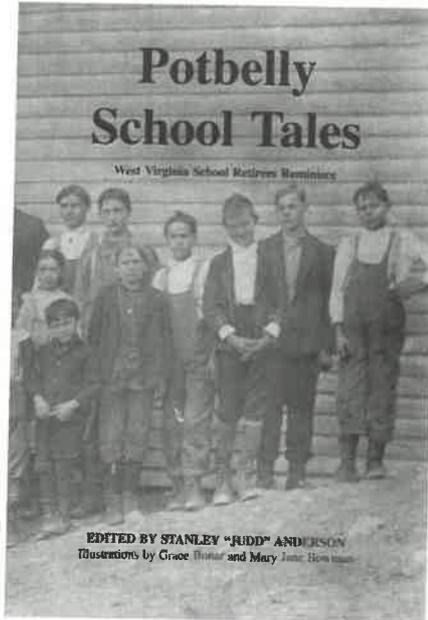
Sunday festival activities are aimed at a family audience and include topics such as "Woods Wisdom," "Herbal Pet Care," "Growing Ginseng," and "Local Medicinal Lore." A worship service, woods walks, live music, and raffle are also planned.

For ticket prices, a complete schedule, or to register for the entire conference, write to the



West Virginia Herb Association, 1289 Smoke Camp Road, Weston, WV 26452; phone (304)269-6416, or visit [www.wvherb.org](http://www.wvherb.org).

### New School Book



Students and teachers will say — and do — the darnedest things, as any retired school employee will readily tell you. Now, more than 200 tales of real-life school days, spanning much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have been gathered into an entertaining book titled *Potbelly School Tales*, published last year by the West Virginia Association of Retired School Employees.

Gathered from the recollections of more than 100 retired teachers and school service personnel, the 158-page paperback book recounts memories that are alternately amusing, touching, revealing, and sad. Together, they paint a valuable portrait of how West Virginia children were taught, and what teachers and staff went through in the process.

Copies of the book are available for \$12, including postage, from editor Stanley "Judd" Anderson at HC 32 Box 16, Cleveland, WV 26215.

### Back Issues Available



- \_\_\_ Summer 1990/Cal Price and *The Pocahontas Times*
- \_\_\_ Winter 1991/Meadow River Lumber Company
- \_\_\_ Fall 1993/Bower's Ridge
- \_\_\_ Spring 1996/Elk River Tales
- \_\_\_ Fall 1996/WVU Mountaineer
- \_\_\_ Spring 2000/West Virginia Women
- \_\_\_ Summer 2000/West Virginia Men
- \_\_\_ Fall 2000/Ellifritz Rock Museum
- \_\_\_ Winter 2000/Coondogs
- \_\_\_ Spring 2001/25<sup>th</sup> Vandalia
- \_\_\_ Summer 2001/Train Photography
- \_\_\_ Fall 2001/Apples, Apples, Apples
- \_\_\_ Winter 2001/Veterans Memorial
- \_\_\_ Spring 2002/Coal Heritage
- \_\_\_ Summer 2002/*Princess Margy Sternwheeler*
- \_\_\_ Fall 2002/Flatwoods Monster
- \_\_\_ Winter 2002/Berlin, Lewis County
- \_\_\_ Spring 2003/Stained Glass Dome
- \_\_\_ Summer 2003/General Charles R. Fox

Stock up on GOLDENSEAL back issues! Purchase any of the magazines listed above for just \$3.95 each, plus shipping, while supplies last. Pay just \$2.50 each, plus shipping, for orders of 10 or more.

Better yet, take advantage of our Deluxe Gift Package: receive all 19 back issues listed above, plus a copy of the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from GOLDENSEAL*, a copy of *The GOLDENSEAL Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars*, and a full-color reprint booklet featuring our 1985 Homer Laughlin China article, all for only \$50 plus \$4 shipping! That's a savings of nearly \$25 off the regular price.

Treat a friend or treat yourself to this memorable collection of GOLDENSEAL books and magazines. Take advantage of our new Deluxe Gift Package, and celebrate West Virginia traditional life!

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## New Hatfield Biography

Few characters in West Virginia history capture the public imagination more than patriarch Anderson "Devil Anse" Hatfield. Born in September 1839, his life spanned 81 years, during a time when West Virginia made its tumultuous transition from a sparsely populated agrarian society to a booming mining and industrial hub.

It was also a time that saw the Hatfield family emerge as one of the most prominent in the Tug River Valley, due in no small measure to Devil Anse's dominating leadership. He was one of the key personalities in the infamous conflict between the West Virginia Hatfields and the Kentucky McCoys during the late 1800's. His quieter later years, his baptism in the Tug Fork River, and his 1921 death and burial have been the subjects of numerous stories and articles over the years,

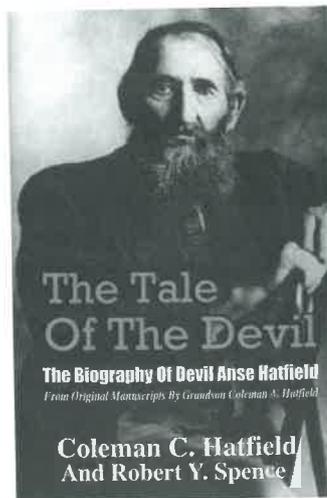
including several published here in the pages of GOLDENSEAL.

A new book about the life of Devil Anse Hatfield is now available from Woodland Press of Chapmanville. *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil*

*Anse Hatfield* is the work of Hatfield family historian Coleman C. Hatfield and freelance author Robert Spence, both from Logan. This 320-page hardbound volume chronicles Anse Hatfield's life, puts it in the context of his time and place in history, and introduces us to

many other intriguing members of this extended and influential family. Twenty-eight pages of photographs add a welcome visual element to the story.

*The Tale of the Devil* is available for \$29.95 plus \$7 shipping and handling from Woodland Press, 118 Woodland Drive, Chapmanville, WV 25508; or visit [www.woodlandpress.com](http://www.woodlandpress.com).



## Goldenseal

### Coming Next Issue...

- Fairmont Postcards
- Fountain Hobby Center
- Nurse Lafadie Whittico
- Central City Bung Company



## PHOTO CURIOSITY

What is that thing around his neck?

These two photographs of the Bridgeport Athletic Club aroused our curiosity. Taken in the early 1900's, they show young men from Wheeling Island and neighboring Bridgeport, Ohio, who played football together on a community team. George Yaus was born on Wheeling Island in 1883 and played on this team for many years. [See "Bridging the Years: A Visit With Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo," by Marielle Gallagher; page 44.]

In the photograph on the left, George is wearing an unidentified object around his neck. On the right, in a picture of the same team taken several years earlier, a teammate is wearing a similar object. We can't tell you what it is, or why they are wearing it. Is it a piece of athletic equipment? A whistle? A good luck charm?

George Yaus passed away in 1975, and we were unable to reach any other members of the team for their comments. Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo feels that the object is some type of nose protector. What do you think?

If you can identify this unusual piece of sporting paraphernalia, please let us know at the GOLDENSEAL office.



# Goldenseal

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1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
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PERIODICALS

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## Inside Goldenseal

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Page 44 — Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo grew up in McMechan. She shares her memories and “bridges the years” with granddaughter and author Marielle Gallagher.

Page 64 — The legend of Ikie’s Tomb has haunted rural Pleasants County for generations. Author John Tice explores this chilling tale.

Page 10 — Artist Boyd Boggs of Glenville is still painting and drawing after 81 years. He tells interviewer Ginny Hawker why he “never gave up the art.”

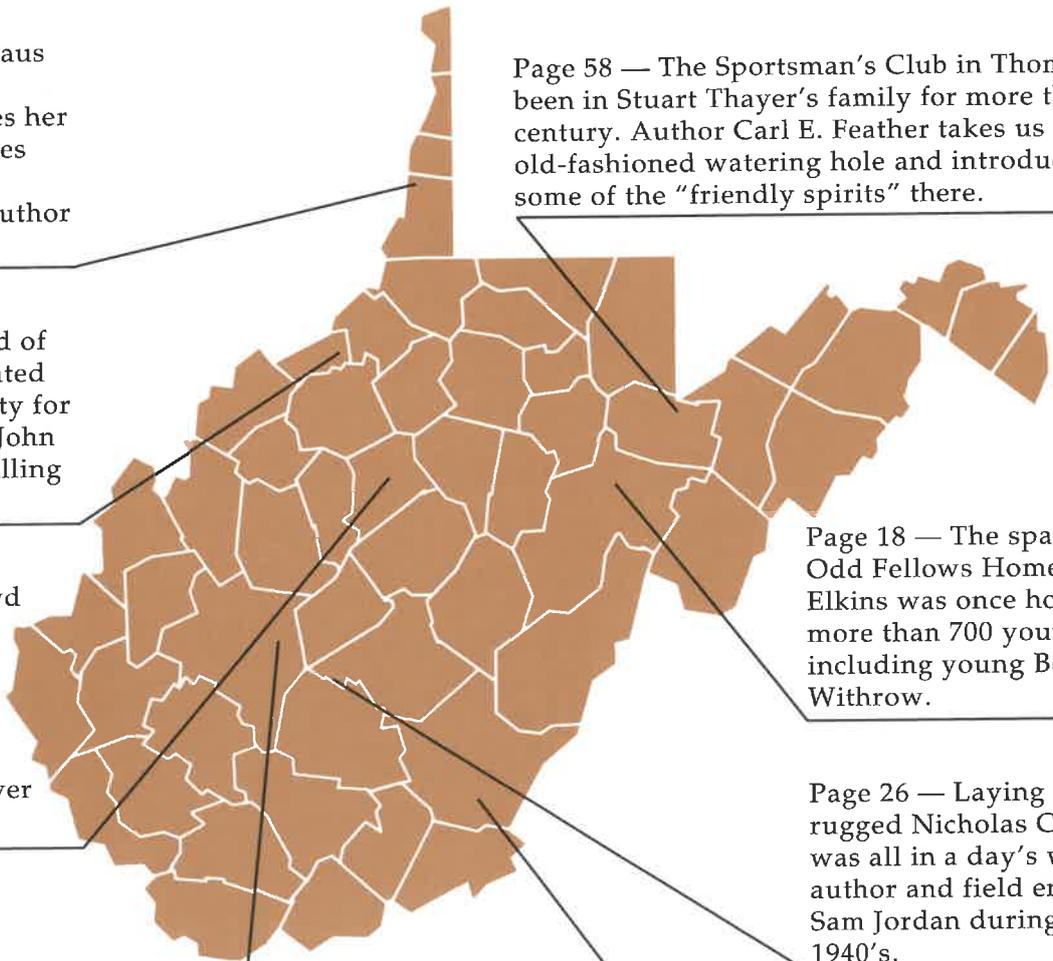
Page 58 — The Sportsman’s Club in Thomas has been in Stuart Thayer’s family for more than a century. Author Carl E. Feather takes us to this old-fashioned watering hole and introduces us to some of the “friendly spirits” there.

Page 18 — The spacious Odd Fellows Home in Elkins was once home to more than 700 youngsters, including young Bonnie Withrow.

Page 26 — Laying track in rugged Nicholas County was all in a day’s work for author and field engineer Sam Jordan during the late 1940’s.

Page 52 — Robert Brewer of Quick was a coal miner and a clever, hard-working fellow, according to grandson and author Robert Hammon.

Page 38 — Bill Dysard of Lewisburg is a “real son” of a Confederate veteran. He tells his unusual story to author Belinda Anderson.



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