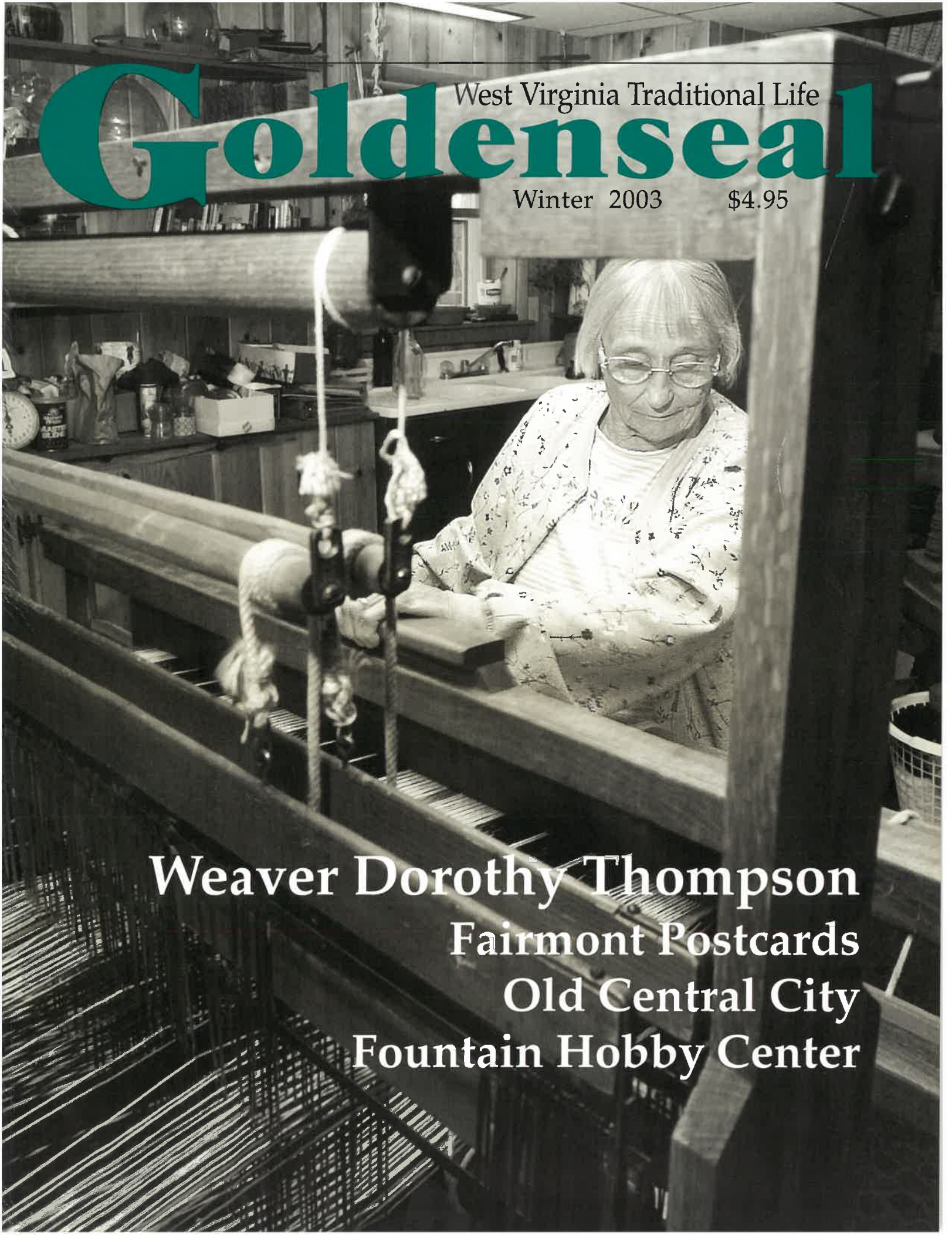


Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Winter 2003 $4.95

Weaver Dorothy Thompson

Fairmont Postcards

Old Central City

Fountain Hobby Center

From the Editor: Little Victories

Those us who have accumulated any level of maturity — that would include most readers of this magazine, I figure — can rest in the assurance that success is measured not in momentous triumphs, but in a series of little victories.

Most of the folks who appear in GOLDENSEAL, for example, are not widely known beyond their own communities. Yet, their lives stand as examples of how much can be quietly accomplished over the course of years, in a well-spent life.

Weaver Dorothy Thompson rose from the hardships of the Great Depression to become a skilled weaver, and later, a prolific teacher of weaving. Her studio — Ben's Old Loom Barn — is a center for education and weaving activity in Canaan Valley, something Dorothy accomplished one small step at a time. See page 10 for the full story.

Fountain Hobby Center is a Charleston landmark, owned and operated by members of the Morse family since the 1940's. What started out as a simple soda fountain, has changed — in small increments — into a bustling, complex toy and hobby center. Their story begins on page 26.

The revitalization of Old Central City in West Huntington is a crowning achievement in terms of little victories. From a deteriorating industrial neighborhood 15 years ago, community leaders turned the nearly forgotten "Bung Capital of the World" into today's "Antiques Capital of West Virginia." Our stories about the Central City Bung Company and the history of Central City begin on page 52.

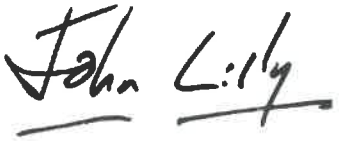
It probably comes as no surprise that all of this leads me to the subject of GOLDENSEAL gift subscriptions. As you might recall, this was the topic of my last editorial, and I promised to continue along these lines while we work together to reverse the trend of slowly declining readership. As my headline suggests, I have some good news to report.

Circulation manager Cornelia Alexander informs me that since my editorial appeared in the fall, we have received 137 new gift subscriptions and 289 gift renewals. Thank you! On page 5, in our "Letters from Readers" section, you will find an inspiring letter from a reader in Ohio who brought the magazine with him to work and generated eight new subscriptions! That's the sort of initiative and enthusiasm that gives us great hope.

In my fall editorial, I offered to extend the subscriptions of any readers who give gifts to doctors' offices, barber shops, senior centers, or other public places. We are happy to report that 10 readers took advantage of this offer. I firmly believe that placing copies of GOLDENSEAL in public places, such as these, is critical to our gaining new readers. My offer still stands — please consider it.

One interesting piece of information about GOLDENSEAL's circulation can be found on page 71 of this issue. We are required by the U.S. Postal Service to publish this information once a year, and we always include it in our winter edition. If you keep your back issues, you might find it useful to dig them out and compare some numbers. These figures show the gradual decline in readership that concerns me. This year, we are down 769 readers, on average, from last year. That is a mild improvement over the 1,066 and 1,158 readers we lost, on average, the two previous years. You can see my concern.

The good news is that, as of this writing (in early November), the current issue enjoys an increase of 21 readers over the fall magazine. This is the first time we have seen an increase since Spring 2002. Thanks to all of you who have recently renewed your subscriptions or given gifts. You've helped us to achieve this important little victory. Hopefully, there will be many more to come.



Volume 29, Number 4 **Goldenseal** Winter 2003

p. 10

p. 32

p. 18

p. 52

p. 40

On the cover: Weaver Dorothy Thompson works at an old loom in her Canaan Valley studio. Photograph by Michael Keller. Our story begins on page 10.

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Letters from Readers

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Published letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

The Odd Fellows Home in Elkins. Date unknown.

Odd Fellows Home

September 17, 2003
Milton, Florida
Editor:
The article on the I.O.O.F. home brings back memories [see "'So Charitable a Mission': The Odd Fellows Home in Elkins," by Karen Stalnaker; Fall 2003]. My two brothers and I went to the home in November 1928. My oldest brother stayed five years, the middle one stayed eight years, and I stayed 11 years.

Not many of the kids go to the homecoming anymore. My brother Earl is a member of the board of directors, and he and I haven't missed but a couple of times in the last 20 years. We always think of "the home" as our home.

I must say this — the city of Elkins is the best place to visit. I was born in Winona, [Fayette County], but I tell people that Elkins is my hometown.

I'm close to my 82nd birthday, and if I'm still going, I'll subscribe for another two years! Thanks for a wonderful magazine.
Dana Nelson

Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo

September 15, 2003
New Martinsville, West Virginia
Editor:
I've been receiving GOLDENSEAL for several years and thought about writing several times, but your story "Bridging the Years: A Visit With Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo," by Marielle Gallagher; Fall 2003, finally caused me to write. That story brought back a lot of memories for me.

When I was young, a visit to my uncle's in Benwood meant a ride on the streetcar, just like Dorothy described. What a treat for a rural Wetzel County girl! We lived along the Short Line railroad when I was growing up. When Mrs. Yaus was talking about feeding the hobos, it brought back memories. Many hobos came

Ruth Rine at age eight in Wetzel County.

to our home, as well. I remember my dad asking them to sit at a table on the porch and having my mom fix a meal for them. We were so poor ourselves, I wondered why we were giving our food away. Now I know he was teaching us a lesson in sharing. As Mrs. Yaus said, when you fed one, more would come.

Our home in Porters Falls was very close to the railroad tracks. We were about six miles from the Brooklyn Junction in New Martinsville, not far from a tunnel the trains came through. The trains moved pretty slowly by our house, and we kids became very friendly with the guys on the caboose. Knowing they were getting close to home, the men would throw out a huge block of ice for our ice box. Occasionally, they would throw us a club to play ball with. Our dad told us that they used the club to put hobos off the trains.

We saw many troop trains pass our house on the way to Fairmont, where the men were taken for examination for the service. World War II was going on, and there were many men called. I remember my mom crying as one train passed, because her brother was one of the men.

Dorothy's story was so good. What a wonderful surprise it was when I finished reading it, to see that it was her granddaughter who wrote the story! Thanks for the memories.
Sincerely,
Ruth Rine Jackson

Natchee the Indian

September 24, 2003
Salem, West Virginia
Editor:
I was so happy to see the article on [fiddler] Natchee the Indian in the Summer 2003 issue of GOLDENSEAL [see "Letters from Readers"; page 5]. I play the fiddle, too. As a youngster in the mid-1940's, I saw Natchee perform at Camden Park, close to Huntington, many times. His "Mockingbird" was outstanding, as was his unusual version of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," played by loosening the bow hairs and pulling the fiddle through the bow, allowing him to play on all four strings at once.

Fiddler Natchee the Indian with guitarist and singer Lloyd "Cowboy" Copas and promoter Larry Sunbrock in Huntington, 1934. Photograph courtesy of Phil Collins.

Happy Holidays!

Simplify your holiday shopping by giving the gift of GOLDENSEAL. Seventeen dollars buys a year's worth of good reading. GOLDENSEAL brings out the best of the Mountain State, stories direct from the recollections of living West Virginians, beautifully illustrated by the finest old and new photography. After more than two decades of publication, the stories just keep getting better. Stories that are just right for GOLDENSEAL and for you, not to mention those on your holiday gift list. Share the gift of GOLDENSEAL! We'll send the gift card. All you need to do is to place the order. Look for a coupon on the other side of this page. Happy holidays!

Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

Please add the following name(s) to the GOLDENSEAL mailing list. I enclose $17 for each subscription.

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Needless to say, I admired and respected his beautiful music and hung onto every note. I don't know anything about his personal life, but I hope that he was as happy as he made everyone with his beautiful music.

GOLDENSEAL is a most wonderful magazine. We West Virginians are so fortunate to have this great publication.
Sincerely,
Betty F. Perry

Photo Correction

September 4, 2003
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Editor:
Far be it from me to take issue with an individual who participated in an event. However, in the Fall 2003 issue, there is a photo that was contributed by Jack M. Campbell, showing a group of soldiers with General Fox at Camp Pickett, Virginia [see "Letters from Readers"; page 2]. The man in the center identified as West Virginia Governor Okey Patteson surely looks to me like Governor Bill Marland. Marland assumed the office in January 1953, succeeding Patteson.

Keep up the good work. There are many stories yet to be told.
Yours truly,
Alan Sturm

Right you are! We received quite a few calls and letters about this error, and we sincerely apologize for the mistake. We should have known better, since Governor Marland was the subject of a feature story in our Fall 1998 issue [see "The Hard Road Home: Governor William Casey Marland," by Rod Hoylman].

Thanks to you and to all of our knowledgeable readers who contacted us about this matter. We're glad to set the record straight. —ed.

Renewal Mailbag

September 12, 2003
Middlebourne, West Virginia
Editor:
Love your magazine and the article about Ikie's Tomb. [See "Searching for Ikie's Tomb," by John Tice; Fall 2003.] I have visited the site many times.
Gladys Gregg

West Virginia Governor William Casey Marland, at center with white shirt, visiting young state soldiers at Camp Pickett, Virginia, in 1953. General Charles R. Fox is at left.

The Independent Boys football team at Saint Marys in 1908. Note the nose and mouth protectors worn around the necks of two of the players in the back row and by one player in the front row. Photograph courtesy of Walter Carpenter, Pleasants County Historical Society.

Photo Curiosity

September 11, 2003
Jacksonville, North Carolina
Editor:
I just finished reading my Fall 2003 GOLDENSEAL. The Photo Curiosity page brought back old memories for me. [See "Photo Curiosity"; inside back cover. The pictures show two early 20th century football players on Wheeling Island with unidentified objects hanging on strings around their necks.]

I used a device that was almost identical to those pictured, during the time I played [football] for Washington Irving High School in Clarksburg, in the 1946-48 period. Dorothy Yaus Cuonzo is correct. The device is a nose and mouth protector. The one I used attached to my helmet, and a rubber projection on the back of it fit in my mouth. It was held in place by biting down on the rubber projection.

I hope this clears up the mystery.
Phil Mcintyre

Thanks, Phil. We received dozens of replies to this Photo Curiosity, identifying the object around the football players' necks as a nose and mouth protector. The photograph at left was sent to us courtesy of Walter Carpenter of Saint Marys. It shows a number of players with the device in 1908, as well as a couple of design variations.

According to Mr. Carpenter, these nose and mouth protectors were used in the years before the introduction of today's hard helmets with attached face guards. It was not unusual during those early rough-and-tumble games for a player with an injured or broken nose to be targeted by the opposing team, who would attempt to aggravate the injury. The nose and mouth protectors, therefore, were worn mainly by players with sore noses, which might explain why only a few members of each team are shown with them in these old photographs.

This is an interesting piece of sports history, and we appreciate your illuminating letter. Thanks to everyone who responded. —ed.

September 16, 2003
Romney, West Virginia
Editor:
Thank you for GOLDENSEAL. It's one of the few magazines I can proudly put on the coffee table for all to see — children and grandchildren!
Thank you,
Mary Alice Blizzard

October 3, 2003
Arnett, West Virginia
Editor:
Please don't raise [the price of] GOLDENSEAL anymore! My husband died in June, and I'm having a hard time paying my bills.

Also, if you know anybody who would like to buy my GOLDENSEAL collection, please call me.
Norma L. Farley

Thank you for your note and for your subscription renewal. We have no plans to raise the price of our magazine anytime soon, as long as we have plenty of faithful readers like you. Thank you again for your support!

If anyone is interested in contacting Mrs. Farley about her collection of back issues, please drop us a line at the GOLDENSEAL office. We will be happy to forward the information to her. —ed.

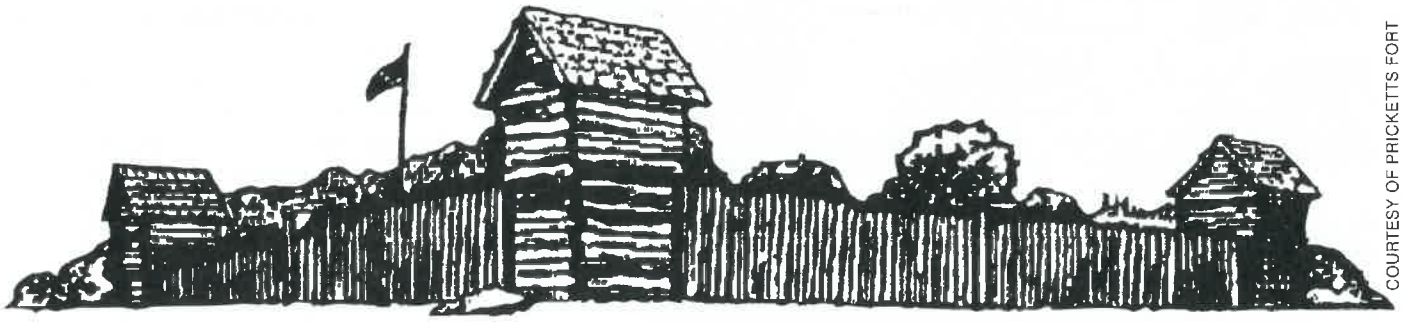
September 28, 2003
Navarre, Ohio
Editor:
After reading your request for new subscribers, I decided to help. [See "From the Editor: You've Been Deputized!"; Fall 2003.] So, I am sending eight new subscriptions that I got at my place of work.

I challenge every subscriber to do the same. The magazine will sell itself. Keep the good stories coming.
Del Childers

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you (eight times)! —ed.

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.



COURTESY OF PRICKETTS FORT

Holiday Celebration

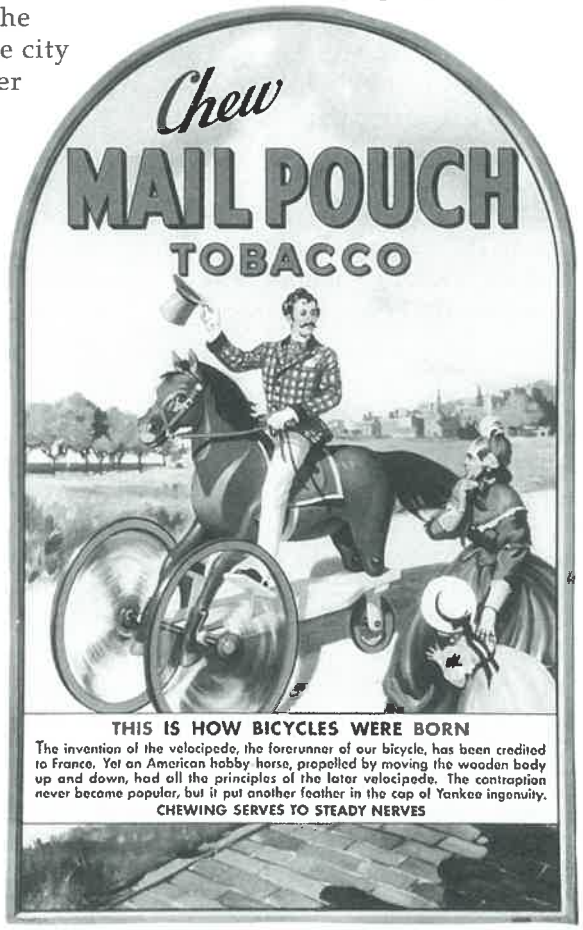
Christmas Market at Pricketts Fort, near Fairmont, will take place December 5-7. Old-fashioned holiday decorations will set the tone, and visitors are invited to enjoy a free weekend of traditional music and homemade refreshments while shopping for locally produced crafts and gift items. Dulcimer music will be highlighted throughout the weekend. Scheduled performers will include Worley Dervish, Central Methodist Dulcimers, and the Dulcimer Dames. Pottery, ornaments, baskets, folk toys and dolls, fiber arts, and other crafts will be offered for sale, as well as a variety of traditional items made by the Pricketts Fort craftspeople. Money raised at the Christmas Market will benefit the Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation and supports activities and programs at the fort year-round. For more information, call (304)363-3030 or visit www.prickettsfort.org.

Charleston Renaissance Art

Celebrating 20 years of urban revitalization, Charleston Renaissance Corporation (CRC) recently unveiled a commemorative drawing, illustrating the changes that have taken place in the capitol city over the past two decades. Charleston artist Doug Goebel was commissioned to produce two panoramic pen-and-ink drawings of the city, which were unveiled on September 4, 2003. The drawings show aerial views of Charleston's downtown area as seen from across the Kanawha River: one as the city appeared in 1983, the other showing how it looks today. Visible in the 2003 view are the new Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, the Capitol Market, Haddad Riverfront Park, and other recent downtown developments. The large-format original drawings will hang on permanent display at the Clay Center. Unframed, signed, and numbered prints, measuring 25½ inches tall by 29 inches wide, are available for sale from Charleston Renaissance Corporation. The cost is $100, and proceeds will benefit the work of CRC. For more information, phone (304)345-1738.

Tobacco Art

The Art & Advertising of Mail Pouch is a new book about Wheeling's most famous tobacco company and the ambitious, creative, and sometimes-humorous ways that it has been promoted over



the years. This 112-page spiral-bound volume is a collection of articles and photographs depicting the history of Bloch Brothers Tobacco company. The company was founded in 1879 in Wheeling, then the West Virginia state capitol. Bloch Brothers is best known for its Mail Pouch brand of chewing tobacco and its famous advertisements painted on the sides of more than 1,000 barns across the country, heralding in large letters, "Treat Yourself to the Best: Chew Mail Pouch." Included in the book is a reprint of an article from GOLDENSEAL titled "Interviewing the Best: The Mail Pouch Man," by Tom Screven; October-December 1976, in which our founding editor interviewed prolific barn-sign painter Harley Warrick.

The new book is published by Creative Impressions of Wheeling. It sells for $29.95 and can be ordered by calling 1-888-232-9623, or by writing to Creative Impressions, 114 - 14th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003.

Appalachian Art

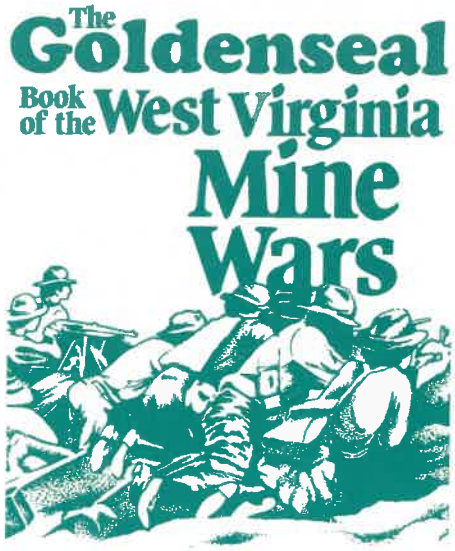
Scenes of rural life, traditional music events, and country people are subjects favored by Woodlawn, Virginia, pencil artist Willard Gayheart. His artwork is the subject of a new book titled *Willard Gayheart: Appalachian Artist*. Born near Hazard, Kentucky, in 1932, Willard moved to Mullens, Wyoming County, in the 1950's, where he met and married Mullens native Pat Dooley. The couple moved to Galax, Virginia, in 1961, where Willard worked in the retail business for the next 20 years. All the while, Willard enjoyed drawing finely detailed pictures of people and scenes typical of life in the southern mountain region. In the mid-1980's, Willard chose to pursue his artwork full-time. Since then, he has become one of the most prolific and recognizable artists

"A Lone Quilter," by Willard Gayheart, 1993.

in his genre. The new book, the first extensive published look at Willard's work, includes 78 pencil drawings, created between 1984 and 2002, depicting traditional musicians, storytellers, farmers, coal miners, children, baptisms, and other scenes common to the southern Appalachians. The 190-page, paperbound volume is co-authored by Doria S. Eley, and is available for $35 from McFarland & Company Publishers, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; phone 1-800-253-2187 or on-line at www.mcfarlandpub.com.

Coal Towns Book

The history of the southern coal fields, especially those towns and communities that flourished during the early-20th century in Raleigh, Fayette, and Wyoming counties, is told through pictures in a new book titled *Coal Towns of West Virginia: Volume 2*, by Mary Stevenson. The 265-page, large-format, paperbound book includes more than 350 images, taken from postcards, newspaper photographs, and snapshots, showing 79 towns from Affinity to Wingrove. Some communities will be familiar to



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

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

I enclose $___ for___copies of *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars.*

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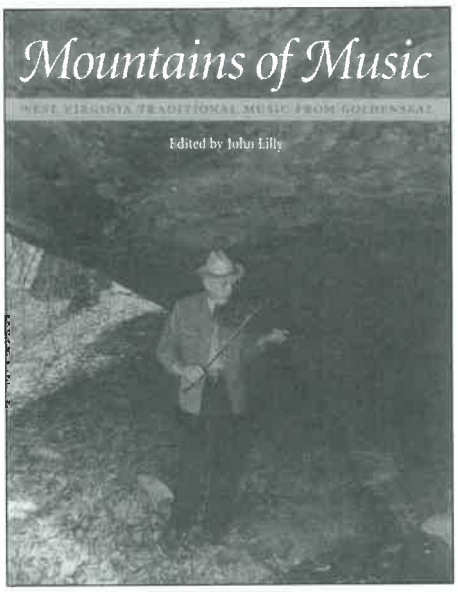

Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from GOLDENSEAL gathers 25 years of stories about our state's rich musical heritage into one impressive volume.

Mountains of Music is the definitive title concerning this rare and beautiful music — and the fine people and mountain culture from which it comes.

The book is available from the GOLDENSEAL office for $21.95, plus $2 shipping per book; West Virginia residents please add 6% sales tax (total $25.26 per book including tax and shipping).

Add *Mountains of Music* to your book collection today!

— — — — — — — — — — — — —

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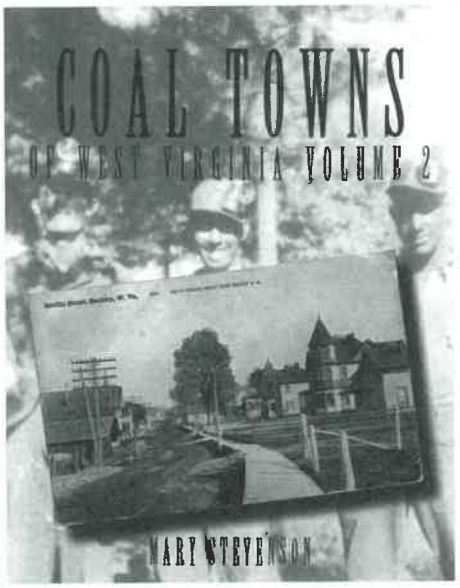


most readers, such as Beckley, Thurmond, and Mount Hope. Others, such as Bud, Blue Jay, Micajah, Skelton, or Sun, may be known only to those few who once lived, worked, or traveled in those areas. All are well-represented, though, in this new collection of rare old photographs. The book sells for $19.95 and is available from Pictorial Histories at 1416 Quarrier Street, Charleston, WV 24301; phone 1-888-982-7472.

New Glass Books

West Virginia glass is a subject of seemingly endless fascination for collectors and authors alike, and two new books add to the body of information currently available. *Viking Glass: 1944-1970*, published in 2003 by Schiffer Publishing, offers a colorful look at the elegant and artistic glassware produced by this New Martinsville company during its most successful and creative years. Written by West Virginia glass authority Dean Six [see "Stained Glass in West Virginia: A Brief History"; Spring 2003], the 160-page, large-format, paperbound volume shows hundreds of examples of Viking glassware — most pictured in lush color — with descriptions, comments, line or piece numbers, and current pricing information. A brief but helpful history of the company is also included.

More West Virginia glass history is available in the book *L.G. Wright Glass*, produced by the West Virginia Museum of American Glass in Weston and published in 2003 by Schiffer Publishing. The L.G. Wright Glass Company was located near New Martinsville and sold large quantities of decorative and ornate West Virginia glass items through their wholesale, retail, and catalog operations between the late-1930's and 1999. Glass sold by L.G. Wright was made by a long list of West Virginia companies, and that information, along with a short historical account of the Wright company, is included. The majority of the book is devoted to photographs, descriptions, and current pricing information for the thousands of unique, unusual, and novel West Virginia glass creations sold by Wright.

These two books sell for $29.95 each, and are available from Schiffer Publishing, 4880 Lower Valley Road, Altgen, PA 19310; phone (610)593-1777.

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Frances Upton Custer of Clarksburg, a former teacher, homemaker, and GOLDENSEAL author, passed away in Harrison County on September 12, 2003, at the age of 95. Frances grew up in rural Harrison County, one of five children. She was a graduate of Victory High School in Clarksburg and Fairmont State College, and later taught elementary school, retiring from Harrison County public schools after 10 years. Her article, "After the Fall of '29: A Clarksburger Recalls the Great Depression," appeared in our Fall 1988 issue.

Frances Upton Custer. Photograph by Greg Clark.

Mabel Moore of Nallen, who made and sold more than 100 quilts, passed away on September 24, 2003, at 97 years of age. Born in 1906 in Kentucky, Mabel came to Fayette County as a young girl, following the death of her mother and grandmother. Mabel met Clacy Moore, and the pair were married in 1924. As a young wife, Mabel was taught to quilt by a local woman who felt that every married woman should know how to make quilts. Mabel soon became an avid quiltmaker and teacher, quilting well into her 90's. She was the subject of a story in our Spring 2001 issue titled "'Quilt of Happy Memories': Mabel Moore of Nallen," by Fawn Valentine.

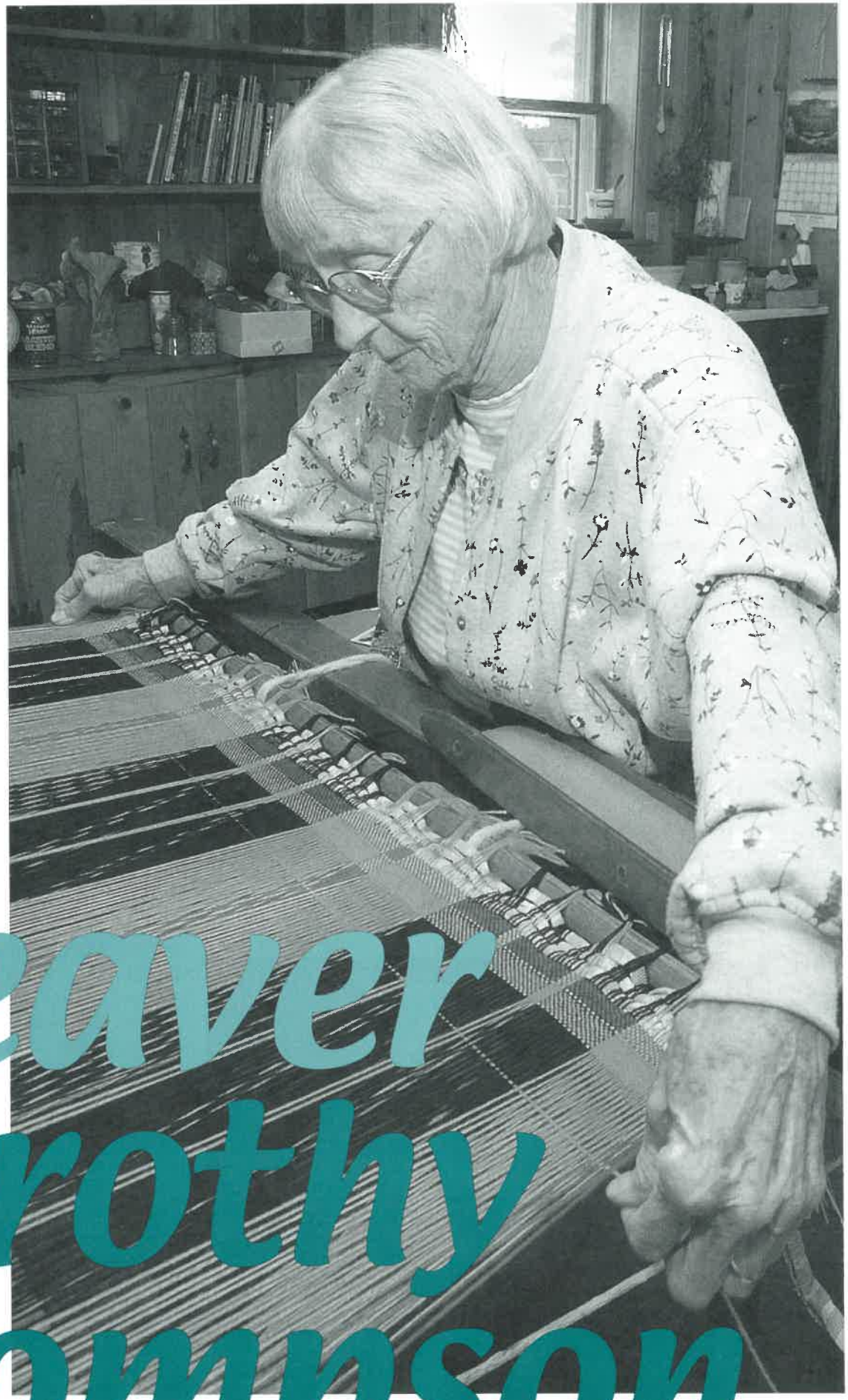
Mabel Moore. Photograph by Jurgen Lorenzen.

Jean Howdyshell, president of Marble King marble company in Paden City, passed away on August 20, 2003, in Sistersville. Jean assumed the helm at Marble King after her husband Roger Howdyshell passed away in 1991. Founded in 1949, Marble King has manufactured and sold millions of marbles worldwide and has been active in promoting the sport of competitive marble shooting. The company was highlighted in the article, "Champions With Dirty Knuckles: Marbles in the Mountain State," by Richard Ramella in our Summer 1993 issue. Jean Howdyshell was 75.

Jean Howdyshell. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Israel Welch, fiddler and last surviving member of the Welch Brothers band from Mineral County, passed away at age 90 on August 27, 2003. Born in Burlington in 1912, Israel farmed for most of his life. He was best known, however, for his fine fiddle playing and was a welcome sight at local square dances, festivals, and house parties for most of the last century. Israel and his brothers were featured in the article "'Always Come Home After the Dance': The Welch Brothers Band," by Bill Wellington, which appeared in our Summer 1984 issue and is also included in the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music* from GOLDENSEAL.

Israel Welch. Photograph by Michael Meador.



Weaver Dorothy Thompson of Canaan Valley, Tucker County, works on a loom made for her by her father in the 1940's. This is the first loom Dorothy owned. Photograph by Michael Keller.

By John Lilly

Weaver Dorothy Thompson

Dorothy Thompson of Canaan Valley, Tucker County, has been a weaver for most of her 83 years. She traces the roots of her own weaving to the traditions of her Czech and Slovak immigrant ancestors. Then, as a young woman in the 1940's, Dorothy married into a Tucker County family with generations of their own rich weaving history. This family coincidence doesn't strike her as unusual, however. "Most people did some sort of weaving back then," she says offhandedly.

What does strike her as surprising, it seems, is the persistent attention she has received in recent years for her own weaving expertise, her ability to teach others, and her tireless dedication to the art of traditional overshot weaving. In 2000, she received the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship in Washington, D.C., presented by the National Endowment for the Arts. This is the highest award given to folk and traditional artists in the nation, and recipients are carefully selected for their lifelong contributions to traditional culture. Dorothy is one of only four West Virginians ever to have received the award. Other Mountain State recipients are late Braxton County fiddler Melvin Wine (1991), Morgantown steel drum maker Elliott Manette (1999), and songwriter Hazel Dickens, originally from Mercer County (2001).

"It took me a little to decide to go along with it," Dorothy says cautiously, referring to the unexpected phone call she received from Washington, D.C., informing her of the award. "I don't care much for publicity." Likewise, when asked to submit to an interview about her life and her experiences as a weaver, Dorothy has mixed feelings. "I'd rather you write about this old way of weaving and the people who have taken up weaving since then," she says.

Dorothy Thompson is a link — a very important link — in a long chain of weavers that stretches back many years and includes Czech, Slovak, Swedish, New England, and Appalachian strains. The story of how Dorothy came into this time-honored art form, and how she has passed it along to others, says much about weavers and the nature of traditional weaving.

Dorothy and her family moved to Rivesville, Marion County, from southwest Pennsylvania in the mid-1920's. Dorothy is at left in this photograph, along with her sisters Julie (center) and Mary, heading off to school in 1926.

She was born in 1920 at Grays Landing, Pennsylvania, and was christened Barbra Dorthy Mayor. Dorothy has always been called by her middle name, however. "My brothers and sisters couldn't pronounce Barbra," she says with a smile and a twinkle in her deep brown eyes. A school teacher later added the second "o," changing Dorothy's name to its current spelling.

Dorothy's mother was the former Rosella (Rosie) Lucille Vance, the first American-born child of Czech immigrant parents. Dorothy's father, Alex Mayor, came from a Slovak family. Neither of her parents spoke much about their European backgrounds, though, Dorothy comments. Alex and Rosie married in 1915. They farmed a small plot of land in southwestern Pennsylvania and soon began their family.

During the coal boom years following World War I, Alex Mayor brought his family to Rivesville, Marion

Alex Mayor, Dorothy's father, on his wedding day in 1915.

County, where he took a job mining coal. Dorothy was three or four years old at the time. "I remember in 1926, we did live in West Virginia, because that's the year my brother was born," Dorothy recalls. "It was Christmas, the 26th of December. It was early in the morning, and we had our dolls in bed with us, us three girls. My father came in the bedroom, and he said, 'I got a baby, too.' He brought in our brother Charlie." Dorothy's father delivered all seven of the Mayor children himself at home, Dorothy says.

The mines soon closed in Rivesville, and the Mayor family moved to a succession of towns in nearby Monongalia County, including Fort Grand, Bertha Hill, and Granville. To make ends meet, Alex Mayor did whatever odd work was available. "These were Depression times," Dorothy explains. "There were various organizations that were trying to find work for the ex-coal miners. My father was digging ditches by hand with a pick and shovel, putting in a water line up Scotts Run. If there was any chance of getting work, he was applying everywhere." Applications were being taken at this time for homesteads at Arthurdale, an innovative New Deal settlement community in Preston County.

Along with Eleanor in Putnam County and the Tygart Valley Homestead at Dailey in Randolph County, Arthurdale was one of three planned communities established by the federal government in West Virginia during the early 1930's. [See "Arthurdale: The New Deal Comes To Preston County," by Kathleen Cullinan and Beth Spence; and "Arthurdale Craftspeople, 1974," by Colleen Anderson; April-June 1981.]

Alex Mayor applied for and was granted one of the Arthurdale homesteads and moved his family there in 1935. "Arthurdale was a wonderful place to live," Dorothy says. "We had a beautiful, brand-new, four-bedroom house with a bath, outdoor cellar, barn for the cow who came along, and chickens." Along with the home came three acres of land. The family grew corn and hay, in addition to participating in the other economic development activities at Arthurdale. Dorothy was 15 years old at the time and was just entering high school.

Education at Arthurdale was "progressive," as Dorothy recalls, with much of the schooling centered about developing marketable vocational skills. "The boys took woodworking and construction, and the girls got

Dorothy's mother Rosie Mayor works at a sewing machine in Osage, Monongalia County, in the early 1930's.

In 1935, Dorothy's family moved into this home in Arthurdale, Preston County. Their homestead included this house, a barn, a cow, and three acres of land. "Arthurdale was a wonderful place to live," Dorothy says.

weaving and garment making. That's where I got started weaving," Dorothy says. Along with the other girls in her class, Dorothy studied weaving every day. "Weaving and garment making class ran from nine to lunch — three hours every day," she says. "And that's where we learned garments making, decorative stitching, weaving, and dying." These classes were led by Ruth Hallen, a teacher from Sweden, Dorothy recalls.

While the Arthurdale classes constituted her first intensive instruction, Dorothy had already been exposed to weaving at home as a young girl. Dorothy's mother had learned weaving when she was a girl, and she taught Dorothy to weave rag rugs when Dorothy was about 10 years old. This weaving was done on a primitive loom called a rigid heddle loom, which was made by Dorothy's father. The loom consisted of a hand-held wooden frame, or heddle, surrounding a series of carefully spaced wooden slats, each with a hole in it and a slot between each of the slats. Typically, the warp for this loom was stretched between two trees, with the heddle used as the beater. "You threaded it up with a thread through the hole and a thread through the slot," Dorothy explains, sketching a picture of the loom on a scrap of paper. "Two people held it. You pushed it up [to form the shed], threw the shuttle through the shed, and beat with it, you see, [forming] the rug. You pulled down, and the threads that were threaded through the holes stayed stationary and formed the shed [again]." Reversing the process created the other half of the pattern. "We only made rugs on it, rag rugs," she says, adding that these rugs were not sold but were intended for everyday use around their home. "I just wove long enough to know how it was done, then I'd go play."

Another early experience for Dorothy had a more profound effect. "Traveling around [near] Morgantown, somebody did have a loom, and I watched them," she says. "I saw a loom weaving, and, ah! That was for me! I can remember that." Most impressive to Dorothy were the products that she saw coming off of the loom. "Producing cloth, producing these patterns on the loom. That's what's interesting about weaving — what you can do with it," she says.

At Arthurdale, Dorothy had the opportunity to work every day on

Dorothy, left, learned to weave on a rigid heddle loom, similar to this one owned by Frances Tekavec of Davis. Frances is standing at right. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Dorothy passes the shuttle through the shed — an opening formed between the long warp threads, which are strung lengthwise on this loom. The crosswise threads are called the weft. Photograph by Michael Keller.

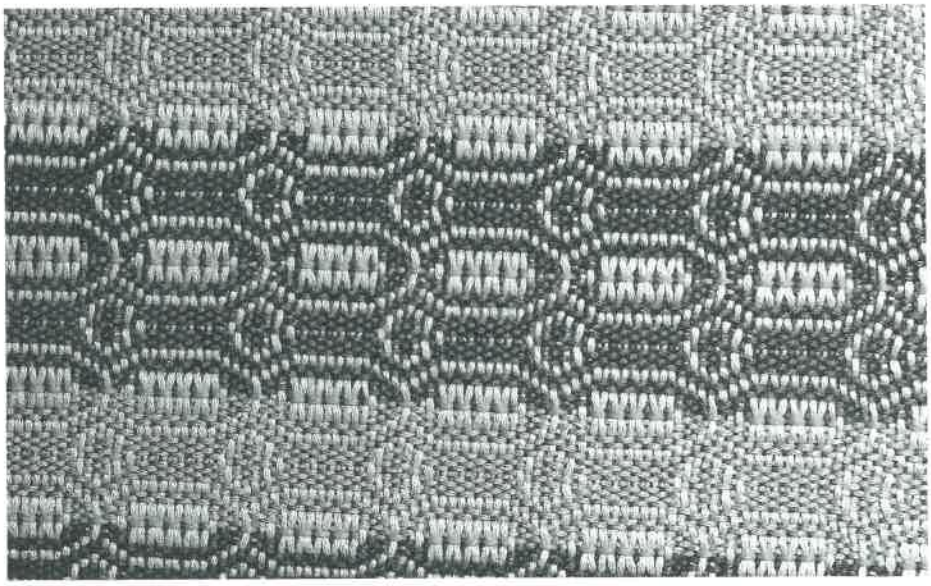
a loom, and she became increasingly involved and proficient with her weaving. The students there were taught basic weaving techniques and produced useful items such as rugs, towels, aprons, and woolen material. Dorothy even made her own graduation dress out of cotton and rayon fabric she wove herself. Many of the student-made items were sold to the public through a shop at Arthurdale.

In addition to student weaving classes, adults at Arthurdale also took instruction in various subjects. Dorothy says that her mother took weaving classes, and her father worked in the woodworking shop, producing furniture and other items. "Of the first 50 houses they built [at Arthurdale]," Dorothy points out, "they furnished those with furniture that was manufactured there at Arthurdale. Beds, chairs, tables, cupboards."

Dorothy graduated high school in Arthurdale in 1939 and was awarded a scholarship to study weaving in Louisville, Kentucky, with master weaver Lou Tate. Dorothy's work had caught the eye of Eleanor Roosevelt, whom Dorothy says was a frequent visitor at Arthurdale, and Mrs. Roosevelt paid for Dorothy's apprenticeship. During her year-and-a-half study with Lou Tate, Dorothy learned how to read patterns and was exposed to the fine points of overshot weaving.

Though they may appear complicated to those unfamiliar with them, most looms have several common elements. Among these are a solid wooden frame, four or more main beams, and a series of heddles held in rectangular harnesses. Lengthwise threads pass through the heddles and are called warp threads. By manipulating the harnesses using foot-operated treadles, an open space called a shed is created between the various warp threads. Through this shed is passed a shuttle containing the weft, or the crosswise thread. The warp threads are then rearranged using the treadle, creating another opening and allowing the shuttle to be thrown back through in the opposite direction. Two-harness looms are used for simple weaves, while additional harnesses offer increasingly complex design options. The use of multiple shuttles with different fibers or colors creates even more possibilities.

In overshot weaving, intricate patterns can be made by passing the shuttle over two or more warp threads at a time, causing the weft to appear to "float" over the underlying warp threads and creating a slightly raised pattern in the finished fabric. This is frequently referred to as colonial



This weave is a variation of a traditional overshot pattern called Quaker Ladies. Photograph by Michael Keller.

overshot weaving, Dorothy says.

In Louisville, Dorothy had the opportunity to immerse herself in weaving, spending all day, every day, in one-on-one study with her teacher Lou Tate. "All day, all the time, all the hours that I'd put in," she explains, adding that she lived in the home of her teacher and her family. Dorothy enjoyed this experience. The apprenticeship not only advanced her skills as a young weaver, but it also helped to prepare Dorothy for the role she would later play as a weaving instructor.

Returning to West Virginia with the onset of World War II, Dorothy rejoined her family. "War was coming on, times was tough, I wasn't making any money, and I got frightened," she says. "I came home." Back at Arthurdale, Dorothy soon met Ben Thompson, a young man from Tucker County who had come to Arthurdale to work as agriculture foreman with the National Youth Administration (NYA) program. Ben and Dorothy married in 1942.

The couple moved to Canaan Valley in Tucker County, where the Thompson family had settled in the late 1800's. Ben's family timbered and farmed in the area, and the couple originally moved into a house they shared with Ben's parents. The Thompsons had moved to West Virginia from New England, where a number of Ben's relatives had been involved with spinning and weaving. Dorothy soon began weaving in the parlor of the house on a loom made by her father. "He brought my loom up, tied on top of his Ford," she recalls.

Dorothy and Ben lived with the Thompsons for three years before refurbishing a second house on the farm, which became their home. Ben farmed, raised dairy cattle and chickens, and cut Christmas trees for a living. He was also a skilled woodworker and built many handmade items in his woodshop. In addition to raising their family, Dorothy continued with her weaving. "I was just always weaving something for somebody," she says. "I made some aprons and some rugs, and stuff. I must have sold some weaving, because if you don't sell something on weaving, you can't buy thread to do more weaving, you see." She also made bedspreads, coverlets, tote bags, and various other items.

Dorothy Thompson with samples of handwoven items in 1994. Photograph by Gerald Milnes.

At the time Dorothy arrived in Canaan Valley in the early 1940's, she found no other active weavers in the community. Over the next 20 years, however, she became well-known in the area for her skill and dedication as a weaver. When a new federal program was introduced in the 1960's during the Johnson administration, Dorothy was the natural choice to organize and lead a community education weaving workshop at a local two-room school. Dorothy was given $5,000 to obtain looms and begin a class to teach local people how to weave. The workshops were established at Cosner School, and Dorothy taught about 10 students each year. These workshops were quite successful, Dorothy says, and when the federal program ceased, she and her students began looking for another location to continue their classes.

After several moves, Dorothy's husband Ben determined that the best long-term solution was to build a barn on their property to house the looms and provide a permanent location for Dorothy's weaving classes. Selling a piece of

Ben Thompson, Dorothy's husband, was a farmer and a skilled woodworker. Among other things, he built the loom barn that Dorothy and her students now use. Ben is pictured here working at a lathe in his woodworking shop in the 1980's. Photographer unknown.

property to pay for it, Ben designed and built the barn. In the 1970's, the Thompsons established Ben's Old Loom Barn in Canaan Valley.

One of the first looms set up in the new building was a beautiful four-harness antique loom, handed down to Ben and Dorothy by Ben's great-grandmother in New England. The massive loom was made in the mid-1800's. It was brought to Canaan Valley in the 1960's by Dorothy and her daughter Sarah, who transported it from Lindonville, Vermont. It was kept in storage for several years, but Dorothy finally set it up and began weaving on it as soon as the new barn was erected. This old family loom is still in use.

Dorothy, at center, started a long career as a weaving instructor in the mid-1960's when she taught classes at Cosner School in Tucker County, shown here. Pictured from the left are students Beatrice Johnson, Dorothy's niece Barbara Mayor, Dorothy, and Lenore Hall, at right.

Soon, Ben's Old Loom Barn was filled with looms of various sizes and descriptions, which Dorothy had salvaged, bought, or borrowed from a number of sources. She was now able to devote herself to teaching the steady flow of students who sought her out, wishing to learn the art of weaving. In the early years, many of her students were local people — nearly all women — who were looking for a way to supplement their incomes. "Back then, they came because they needed work," Dorothy says. Students learned to make items that were easily sold, such as placemats and towels.

Over the years, times have changed, and Dorothy has noticed some differences in her students and their work. These days, she says, students are more apt to come to her in search of a new hobby or a recreational outlet. They are not as interested in production work, but prefer to learn what Dorothy describes as "very leisurely weaves." The majority of her current students are residents of Davis and surrounding areas, as well as a few seasonal residents or visitors. Dorothy still holds regular classes, offers individual instruction by appointment, and makes her loom barn available to students and other area weavers. She has been a frequent guest and instructor at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, and a master artist with the West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program [see "Passing It On: West Virginia Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program," by Gerald Milnes; Winter 2000].

Dorothy acknowledges that weaving is essentially an industrial process and that modern machines and technology have taken on the bulk of that production work. She

is impressed with the designs that are now possible through modern techniques and computerized design software. Still, she sees a strong interest in the old hand weaving, done manually on hand looms. According to Dorothy, hand weaving allows for a greater level of individuality. A skilled hand weaver can create unique items by customizing the materials and the weaving pattern. Dorothy also notes that a fair number of customers come to her looking for items specially made and designed to match dishes, color schemes, or decor in their homes. Dorothy and her students are happy to oblige. "We do things on looms that are not practical in factories," she says.

As a teacher, Dorothy is known as a patient but demanding instructor. According to Marion Harless of the Mountain Weavers Guild, "Her students love her, although she is an exceedingly tough taskmaster. In addition to being the owner of outstanding observational skills and memory that permit the almost instantaneous analysis of weaving structure and the rattling off of overshot pattern names and alternatives, Dorothy is still a great experimenter and learner."

The Thompson home in Canaan Valley. For information on Ben's Old Loom Barn, write to HC 70 Box 139, Davis, WV 26260. Photograph by Michael Keller.

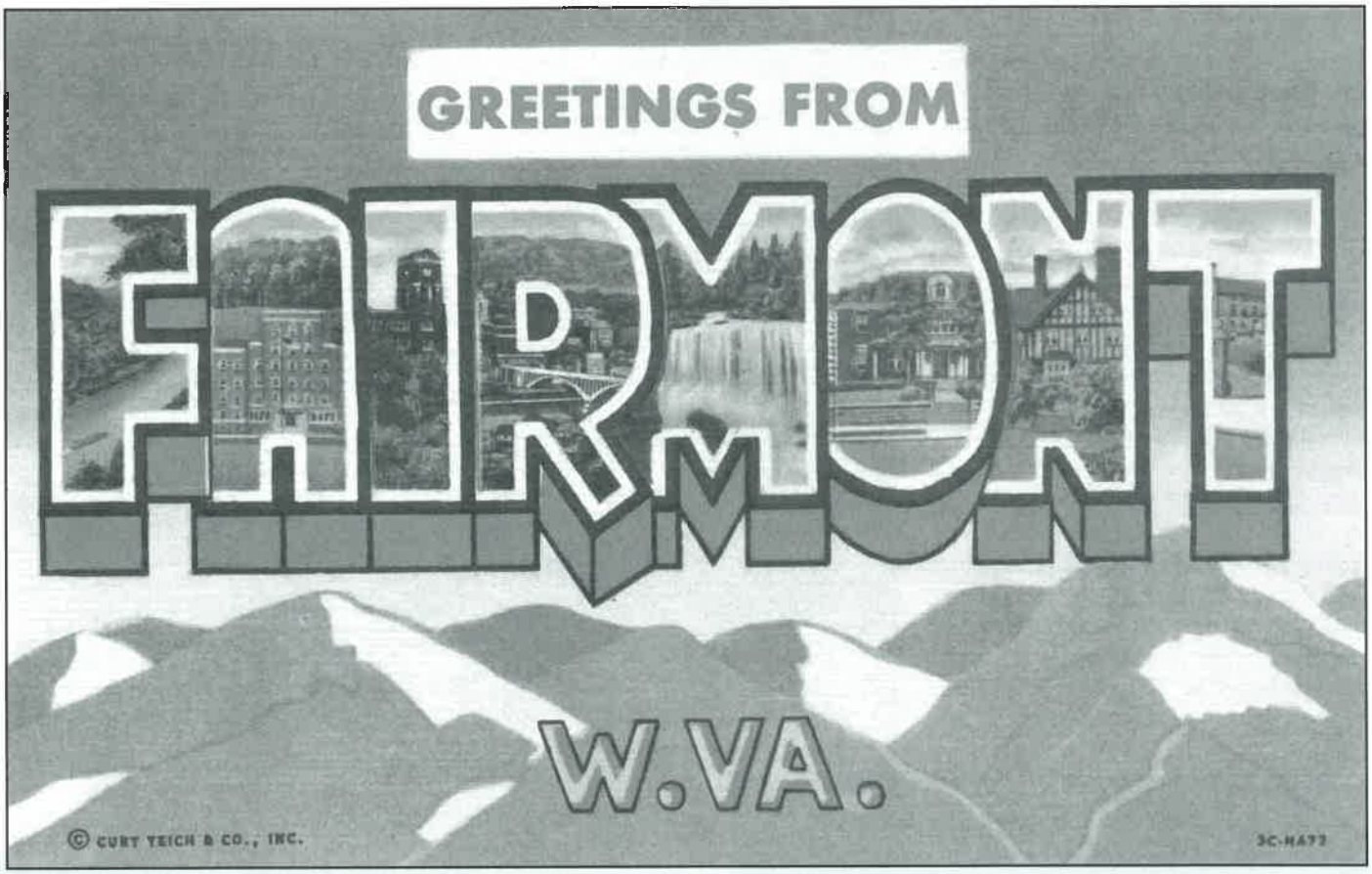
Surrounded by looms, handwoven fabrics, and works in progress, Dorothy flashes a satisfied smile. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The Thompson family weaving tradition continues. Today, Dorothy's daughter Sarah Maude Thompson Fletcher, granddaughter Jennifer Thompson Snyder, and sister-in-law Virginia Mayor are all active weavers. Virginia weaves on a loom made especially for her by her late husband, Dorothy's brother George Mayor. Daughter Sarah grew up around weaving, Dorothy says. She helped Dorothy at home with weaving projects until the time came for her to go off to nursing school. When she retired (temporarily) from nursing a few years ago, Sarah returned to Canaan Valley to help Dorothy at the loom barn.

In the late 1990's, Dorothy, along with Phyllis Helmick and Virginia Mayor, formed what Dorothy calls a "loose company" to run Ben's Old Loom Barn. The shop is open three days a week during the summer months; the weaving barn operates year-round. "Sarah is pretty much running the loom barn," Dorothy says. She weaves, takes orders, and teaches classes. As Dorothy puts it, "She's carrying on with keeping the loom barn open."

Dorothy seems pleased.

JOHN LILLY is the editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

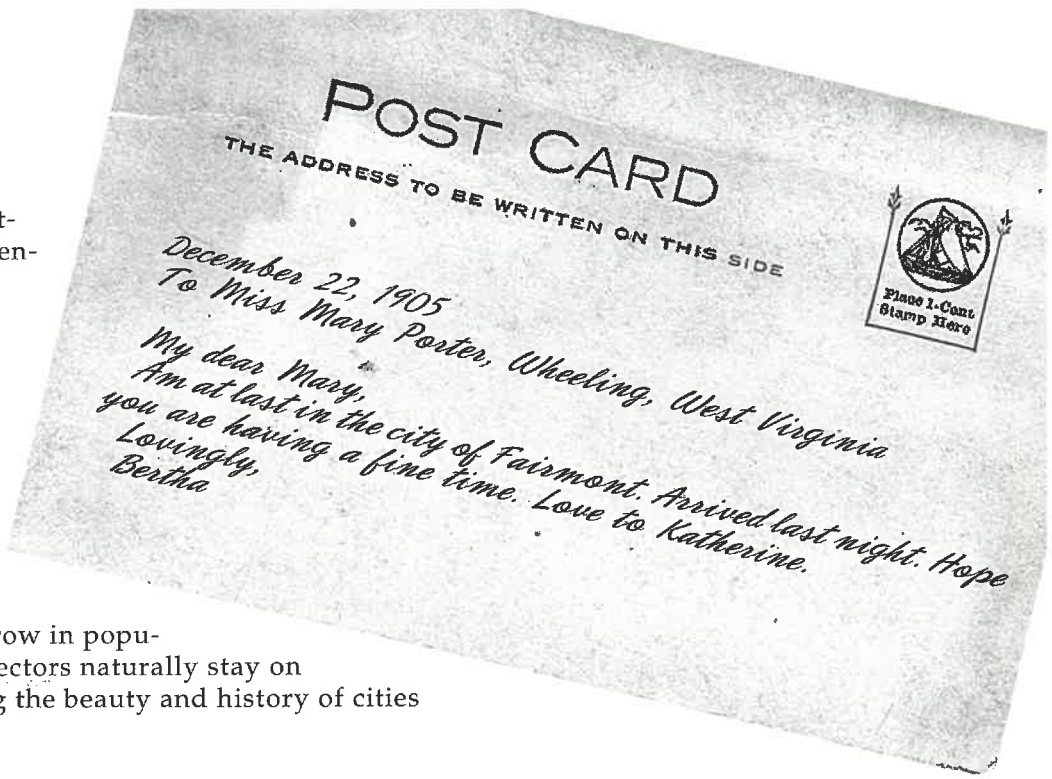


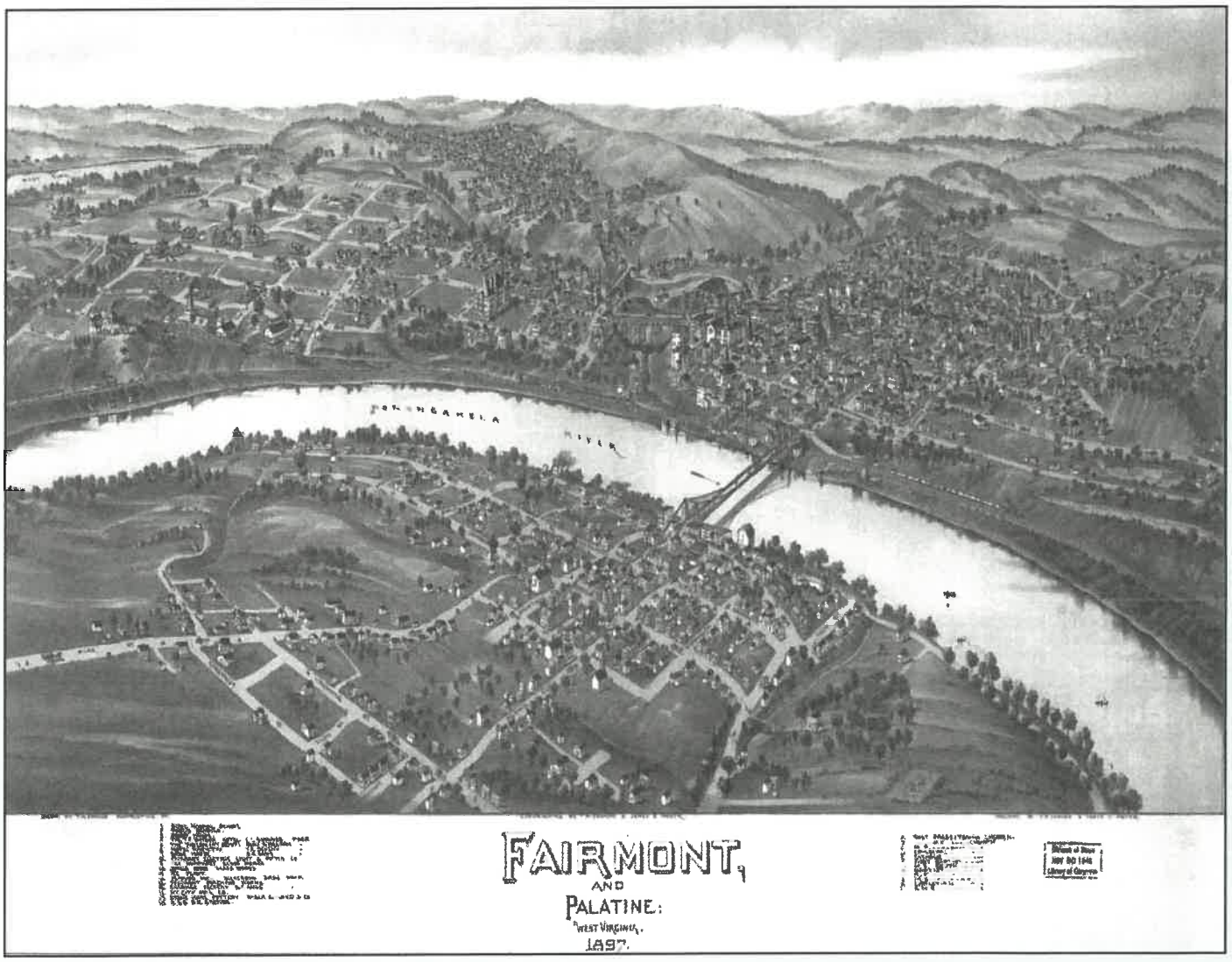
The View from Fairmont

A Century in Postcards

By Raymond Alvarez

For more than a century, postcards have offered an inexpensive way to send greetings, coupled with an interesting or picturesque image frozen in time. Deltiology is the formal name for postcard collecting, estimated to be the third most popular collectible hobby in the world, following coins and stamps. With a fairly inexpensive purchase price today — generally less than $7 for a postmarked card — this hobby continues to grow in popularity. Here in West Virginia, collectors naturally stay on the lookout for postcards showing the beauty and history of cities and towns in the Mountain State.





This 1897 map of Fairmont and Palatine appeared on a postcard mailed in 1910. The city of Palatine, on the near (eastern) side of the river, became Fairmont's First Ward when the two cities were combined in 1899.

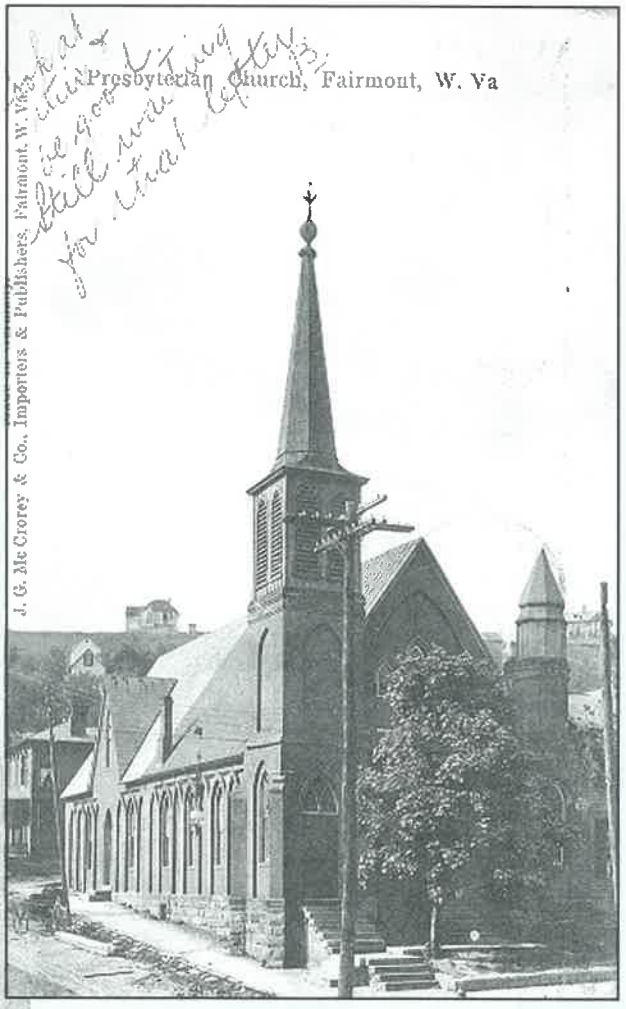
Postcards have a long and interesting history of their own, however. The first copyright for private, non-pictorial cards used for advertising purposes was obtained in 1861. In 1873, the U.S. government issued its first postal cards, but it was not until the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, when full-color postcards were sold as souvenirs, that the popularity of postcards began to grow.

Congress authorized private publishing in 1898, and postcards were soon mass-produced and mailed throughout the world. Writing was not permitted on the address side at the time, but enough of a blank area remained on the other side around the image for a sender's terse message. By 1907, postcards with a divided back were permitted. The address and message could now be written on the same side, allowing the image to take up the entire front of the card. The new Rural Free Delivery system helped make sending postcards practical and affordable, and they quickly became a way of life in the United States, including here in West Virginia.

Many early cards were imported from Germany, where the lithography process was advanced. When World War I cut off the supply of the German postcards, American printing technology and photography advancements fostered local production and a greater availability of local cards. Postcards were soon sold inexpensively in shops, hotels, and newsstands, as well as in post offices around the country.

Most early postcards featured sepia-toned or black-and-white photographic images. Hand-tinting these

Main Street, more commonly called Adams Street, is the primary road through Fairmont's downtown area. It is shown here in a postcard view from 1900.



First Presbyterian Church, located at 301 Jackson Street, is shown in this postcard view from 1906. Printed in Germany, only the address was allowed on the blank side of this card, leaving the sender to scrawl his or her message on the image side, as seen here.

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

Place 1-Cent Stamp Here

March 1, 1911
To Mrs. Frank Miller, Sistersville, West Virginia

Hello there! Maria and Grace arrived all right. We have a little niece at last. Bertha and baby are both getting along fine. Hope you are all well. Love to children and yourself.

Jessie

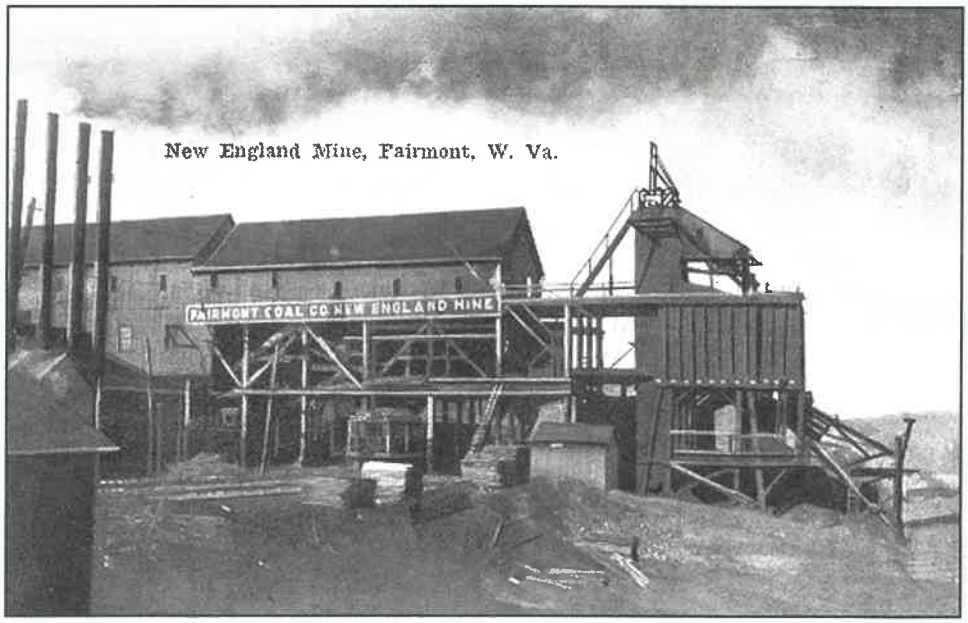
Fairmont's first public school, shown here in about 1906.

cards provided steady work for countless local artists, though the coloration process sometimes muted the sharpness or detail of the original photographs. From 1916 to 1930, postcards featured sharper colors and a distinctive white border. By 1930, the linen card became the standard, characterized by high rag content in the paper stock, which gave the surface a textured feel. Photochrome cards achieved popularity in the late 1940's, with clearer, glossy images printed on smooth paper.

The attraction of the postcard was often the photo subject itself. Leafy Main Street scenes, grand homes, local scenic spots, the highest peak, or other important locations were featured on cards from most any town in America during the early 20th century. It is nearly impossible to estimate the number of images that have appeared on postcards featuring West Virginia views. Scenes of Fairmont are no exception.

A few years ago, several Fairmont postcard collectors began sharing their collections with me. Soon, I was viewing more than 250 city postcards, dating from 1899 to 1968. Many of the early Fairmont images were printed from photographs taken by local photographers, such as A.G. Kinkead. These cards are clearly marked "Printed in Germany." Later cards have publication references to New York, Philadelphia, or New Jersey. Many indicate local distributors such as McCrorey's, Jones Department Store, or local newsstands.

This suspension bridge was built across the Monongahela River in 1852 and linked Palatine and Fairmont. It was later replaced by an iron bridge, known locally as the "Nickel Bridge," because of its five-cent toll. This postcard is from 1909.



Fairmont's New England coal mine in 1918.

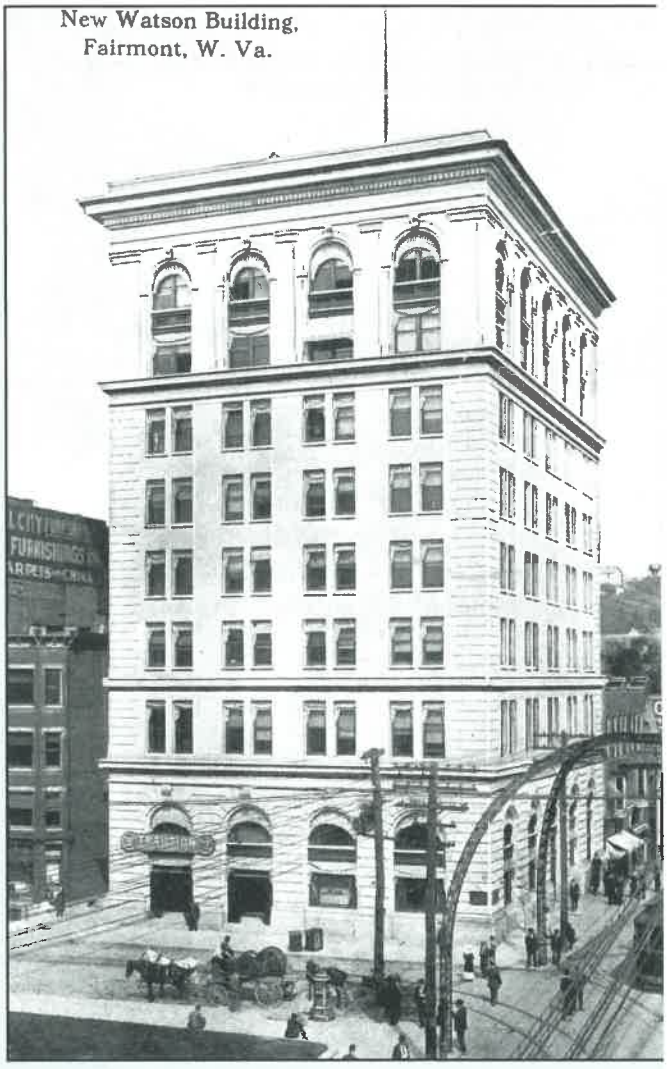
These opulent homes were the residences of George M. Jacobs and J.M. Jacobs. Date unknown.

Illustrating Fairmont's evolution from a rural community to an urban center, and documenting the manner of dress and mode of travel for local residents, a history lesson unfolded for me in these cards. Originally founded as Middletown, Virginia, in 1819 by farmer Boaz Fleming, the name of the town was changed to "Fairmont" when it became the county seat in 1843. After the arrival of the B&O railroad in 1852, the city prospered. While education existed in Marion County as early as 1779, it wasn't until 1867 that the West Virginia legislature funded local public education for grades one through 12, as well as a "normal," or two-year, teaching certificate beyond 12th grade. A building at the head of Adams Street served as the first school, and this building was a popular theme for early postcards.

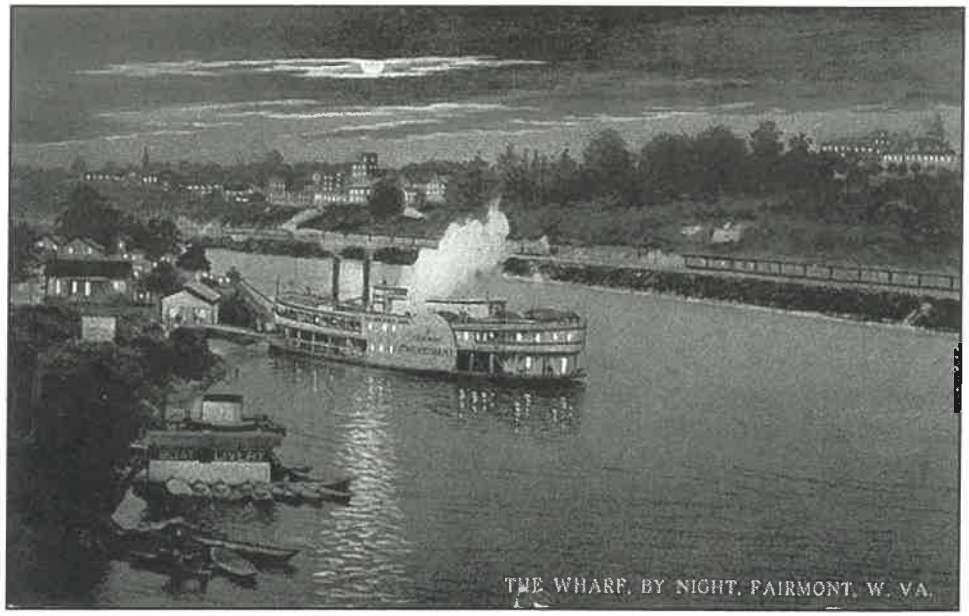
As the city limits expanded, the South Side Bridge, an ironwork bridge, opened in the late 1890's, and electric lights graced the main streets. The public school and normal school were separated, and the forerunner of Fairmont State College moved to its first distinct location in 1893.

Bridges to Palatine, a village on the east side of the Monongahela River, set the stage for an eventual merger of the two towns into one city in 1899. By the turn of the 20th century, Fairmont's population

Below: The "Watson Skyscraper," at eight stories, was easily the tallest building in Fairmont when it was completed in 1911. It is still in use, located in the 300 block of Adams Street. This postcard was made when the building was new.



Highgate was the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Edwin Watson, located on Fairmont Avenue, seen here in 1910. It was sold during the Great Depression to the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

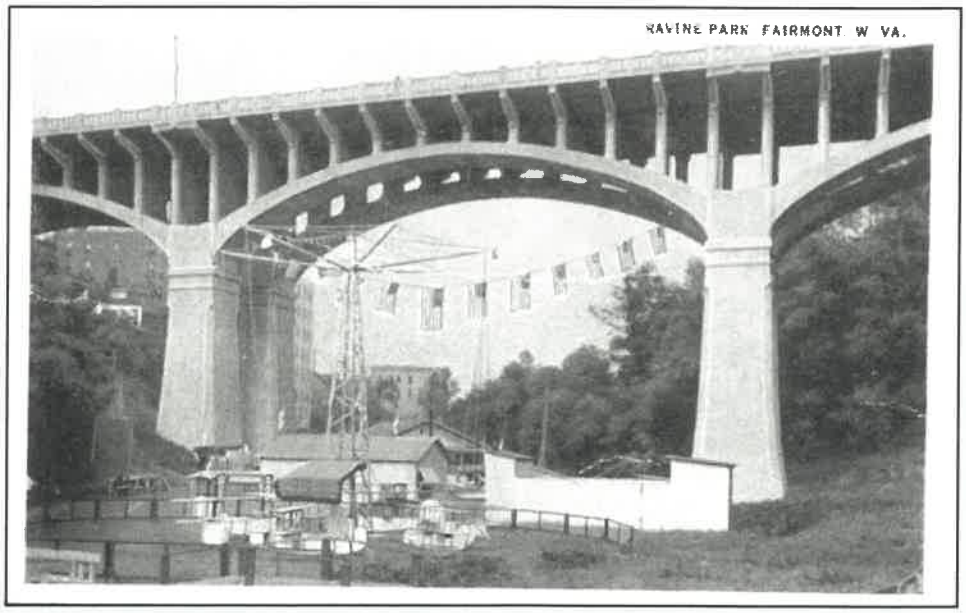


This nighttime postcard originally showed a day scene of Fairmont's wharf district, but an artist colored it to create this enchanting evening view. Date unknown.

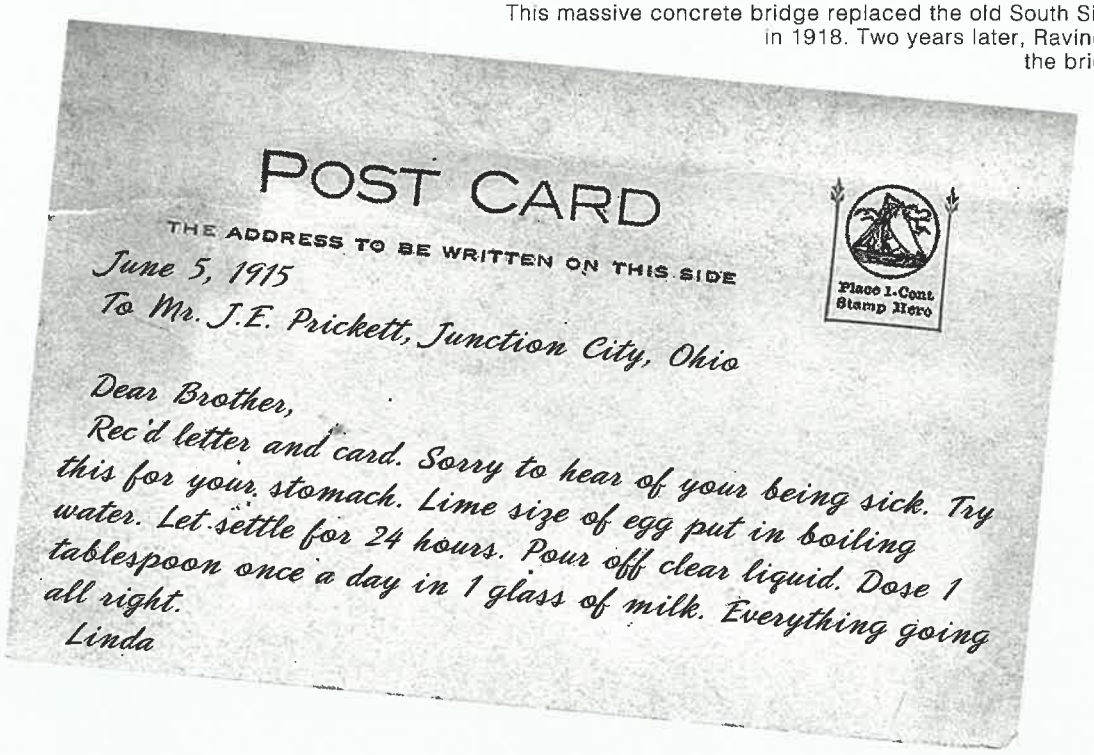
topped 1,000 residents. Coal mining now began to boom in earnest, and the owners of the mining operations built magnificent homes in and around the city. Fairmont also had three hospitals in operation. All of this was captured on postcards.

The skyline of Adams Street, the main thoroughfare, grew with the addition of new buildings, including a new courthouse in 1900 and a grand skyscraper built by J.E. Watson to house his coal interests and a traction company, complete with a trolley office. Since the Watson building was one of the tallest in the state, it was an extremely popular subject of postcards. In addition, many panoramic views of the town were taken from its rooftop.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1918, a modern concrete structure replaced the South Side Bridge. It spanned Coal Run Hollow, home to Ravine Park. During this same period, school construction flourished.



This massive concrete bridge replaced the old South Side Bridge across Coal Run in 1918. Two years later, Ravine Park was opened beneath the bridge, as shown here in this 1921 postcard. The free amusement park was a popular gathering spot for the next few years. Today, the space is used as a city parking lot.


POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

Place 1 Cent Stamp Here

June 5, 1915

To Mr. J.E. Prickett, Junction City, Ohio

Dear Brother,

Rec'd letter and card. Sorry to hear of your being sick. Try this for your stomach. Lime size of egg put in boiling water. Let settle for 24 hours. Pour off clear liquid. Dose 1 tablespoon once a day in 1 glass of milk. Everything going all right.

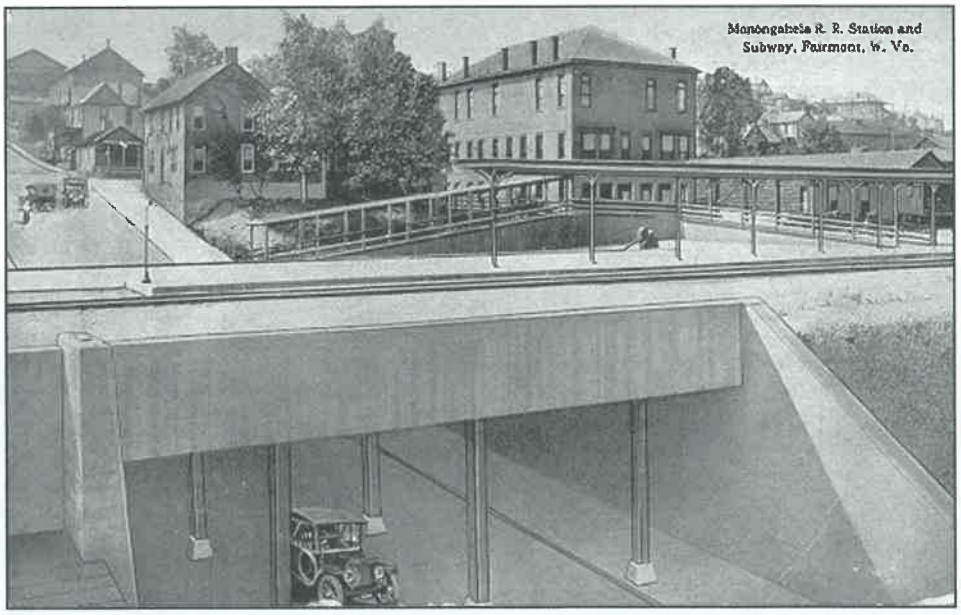
Linda

The Marion County courthouse, located in the 200 block of Adams Street, has been a center of activity since it was completed in 1900. This postcard view of the courthouse is from 1920.

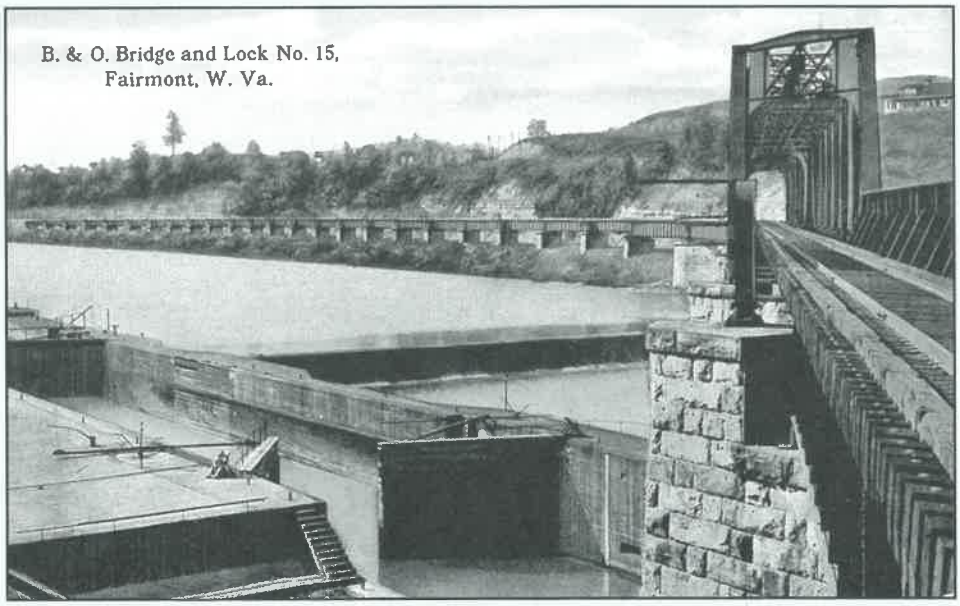
These schools often bore the names of prominent citizens. Built in 1905, Fifth Ward School was renamed for William Ryland White of Fairmont, who initiated the concept of state normal schools. Thomas C. Miller, the state superintendent of free schools from 1901-09, had a school named in his honor. By 1921, the town had two high schools, a high school for Negro children, and one parochial school, in addition to seven elementary schools.

By the 1930's, Fairmont had a population of 23,000 people. Postcard images from this period included factories, churches, theaters, and myriad views of all the bridges from various angles. For the next three decades, these and similar scenes appeared in photochrome, as well, giving an even more colorful and realistic representation of life in Fairmont. At a glance, the town's growth and progress is readily noted through these cards. There is also a degree of sadness, however, for many of the wonderful structures of the Victorian era have long been removed.

For me, looking at these postcards triggered a need to preserve the images in an educational format for members of the younger generations, who might not be familiar with such history. As a community-service learning project for a class I was taking called Leadership West Virginia, I obtained



This sophisticated urban scene shows the Monongahela railroad station in Fairmont and a highway underpass — referred to here as a "subway" — in 1918.



The B&O railroad bridge across the Monongahela River and Hoult Lock and Dam, shown in this 1930 postcard, illustrate Fairmont's role as an industrial transportation hub.

permission to copy the images into a CD ROM computer presentation that could be used by local schools, historical societies, and other interested organizations.

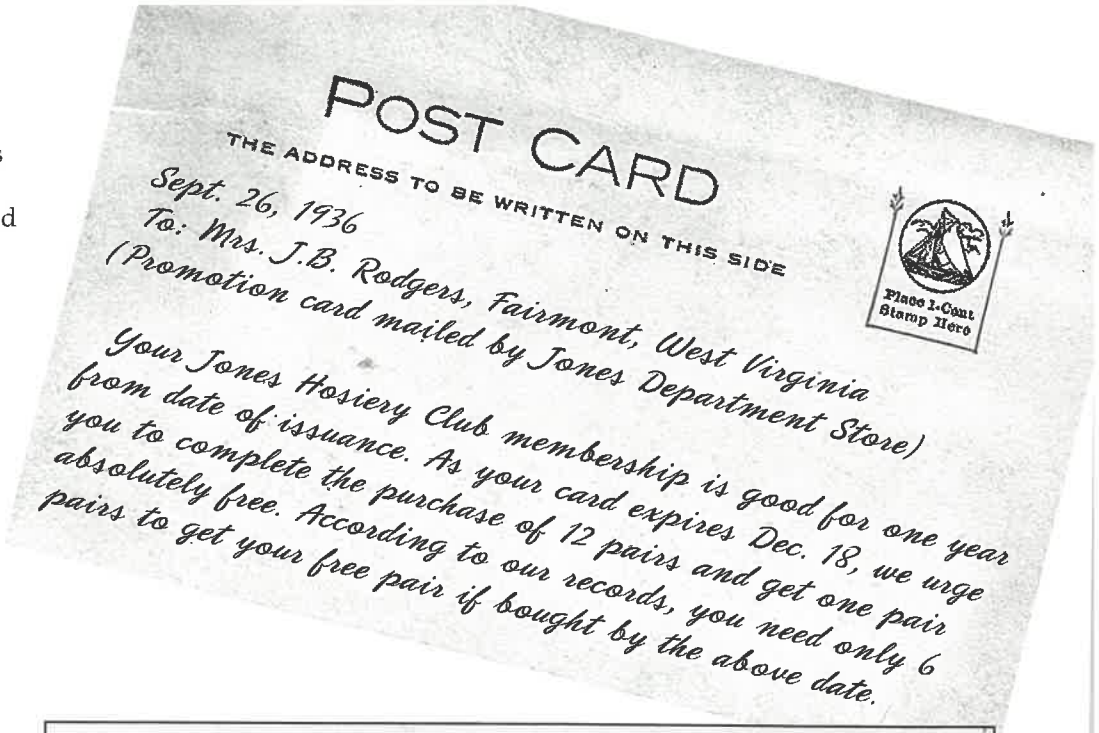
When the project was completed in 2002, the CD ROM contained 110 images with narration and music, along with a lesson plan for teachers and suggested classroom activities. Sixty copies were distributed to local schools, libraries, civic organizations, and local government offices. It received an enthusiastic response.

Michael Mills, director of historic preservation for the Vandalia Heritage Foundation in Fairmont, explained that these postcards provided him with a great resource in helping to develop a master plan for preserving and developing Fairmont's historical district.

For more information about the CD ROM, or to obtain a copy, contact the author at mralva51@juno.com or write to Raymond Alvarez at Rock Lake, Box 250C, Fairmont, WV 26554.

The author wishes to thank Ann Stout Newman, Dr. Thomas Miller, Ron Shackleford, and Dr. Lee Kraus for their help and encouragement with this project.

RAYMOND ALVAREZ is a native of Marion County and a graduate of West Virginia University. He is former vice-president of ancillary services at Fairmont General Hospital and has written several articles published in health journals. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 1994 issue.


POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

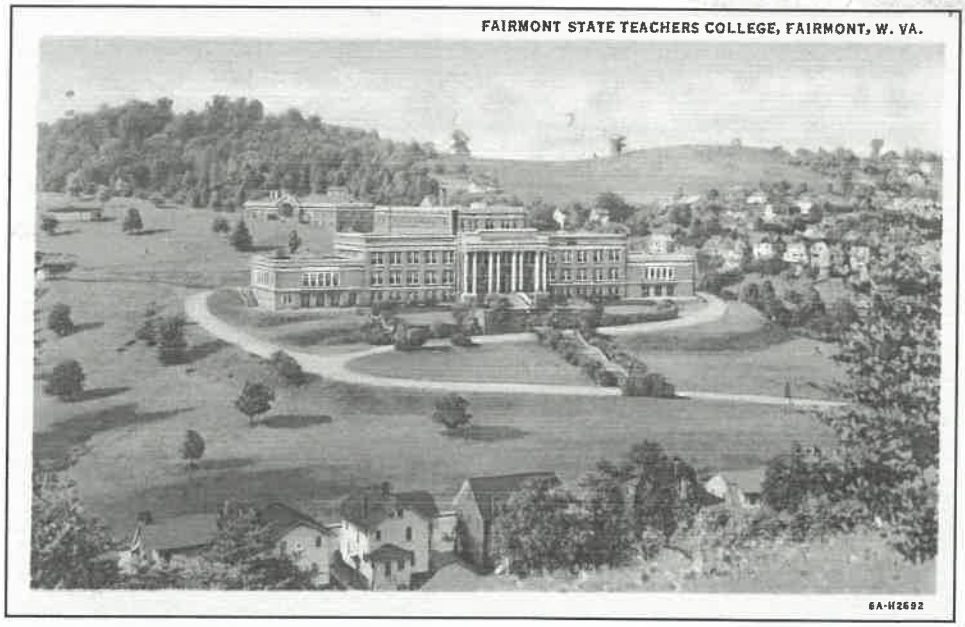
Place 1-Cent Stamp Here

Sept. 26, 1936

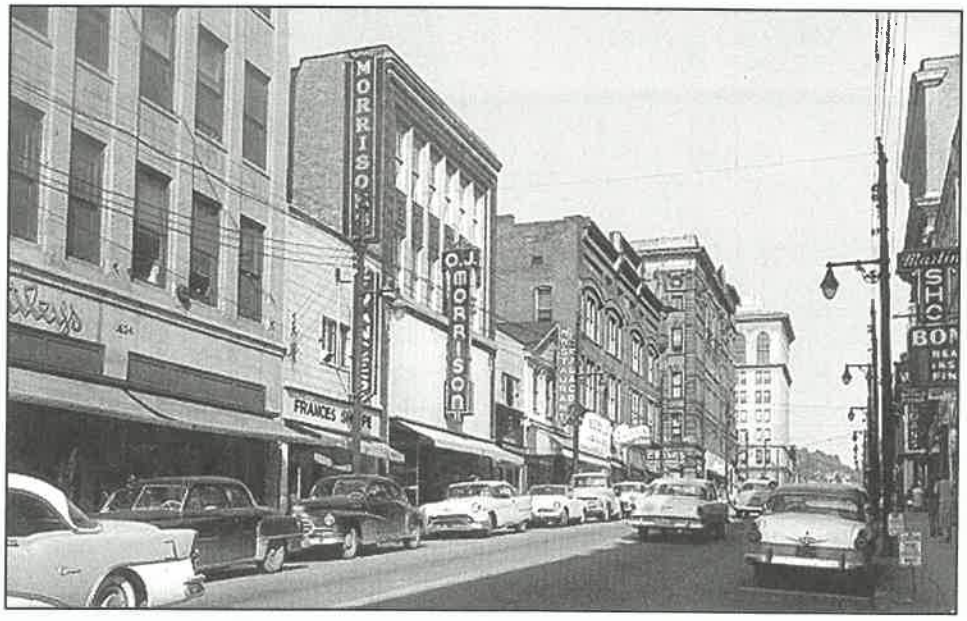
To: Mrs. J.B. Rodgers, Fairmont, West Virginia

(Promotion card mailed by Jones Department Store)

Your Jones Hosiery Club membership is good for one year from date of issuance. As your card expires Dec. 18, we urge you to complete the purchase of 12 pairs and get one pair absolutely free. According to our records, you need only 6 pairs to get your free pair if bought by the above date.



Above right: Fairmont State Teachers College, the forerunner of today's Fairmont State College. This postcard view of the campus is from the early 1930's, and is an example of a linen card.

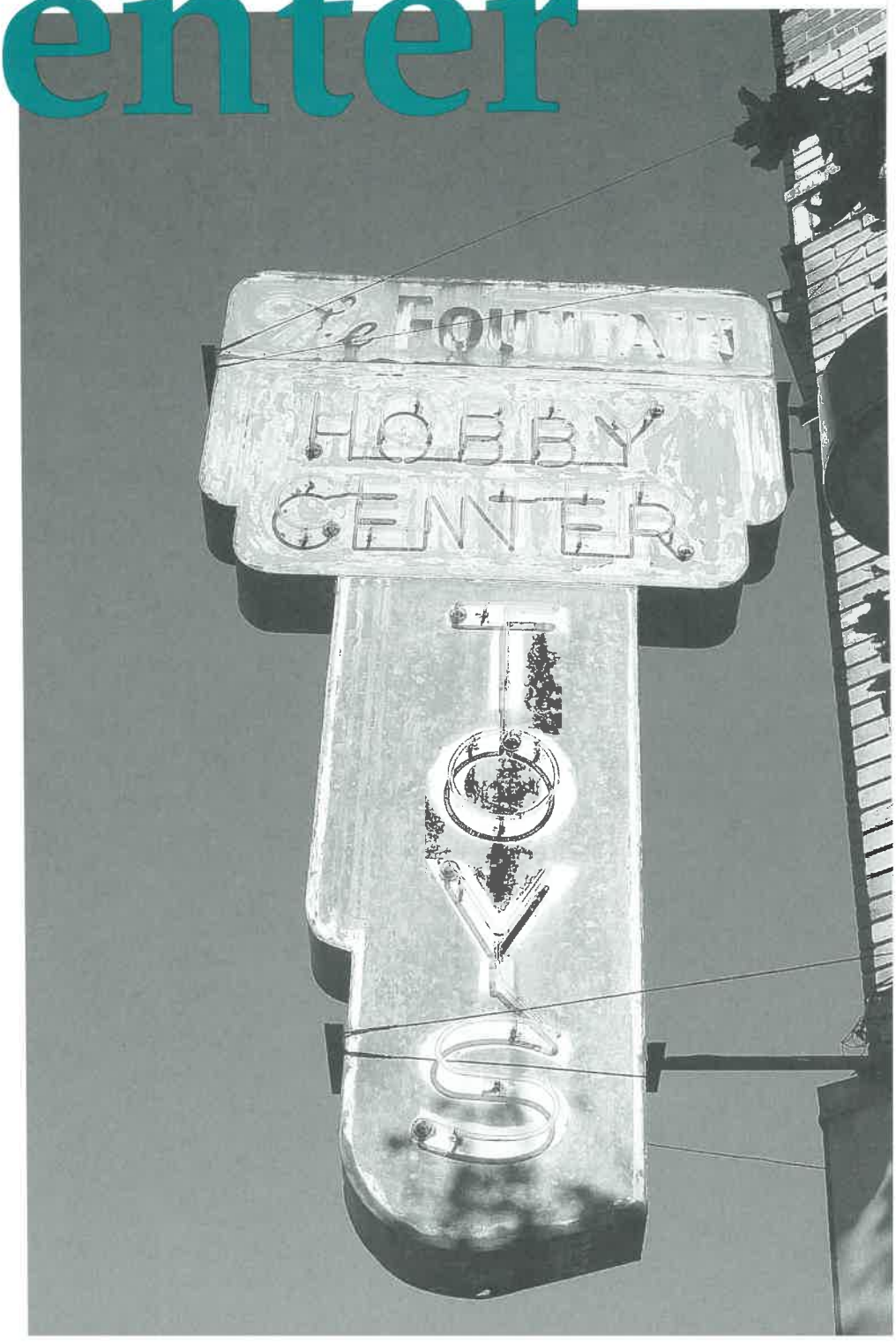


Right: This modern photochrome postcard shows Adams Street and downtown Fairmont as they appeared in 1958. The Watson Building is visible in the background.

Fountain Hobby Center

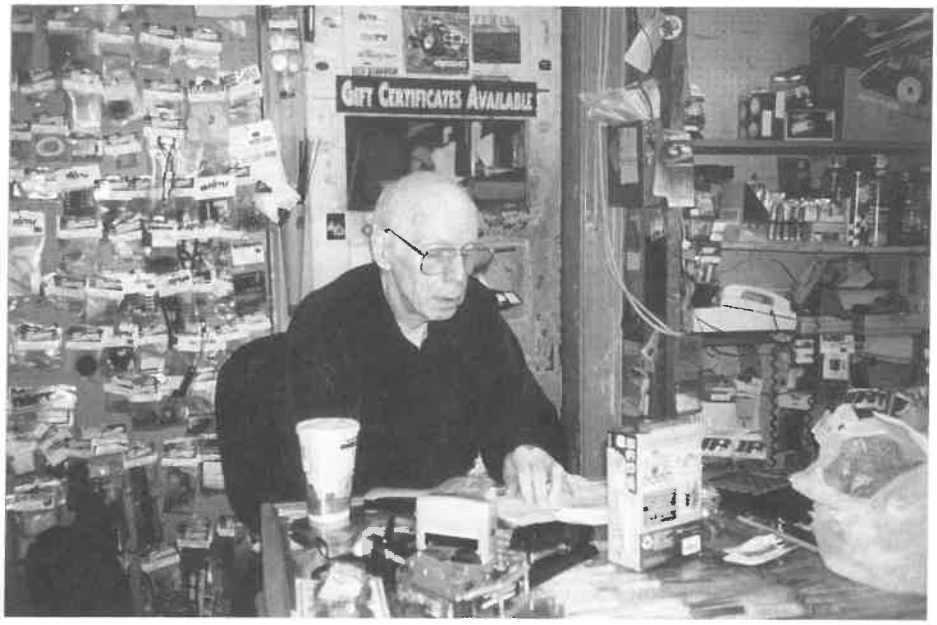
Passing the Test of Time

By
Melissa Smith
Photographs by
Michael Keller



A weathered sign mounted high on a storefront at the corner of Bigley and Washington streets on Charleston's West Side welcomes customers to Fountain Hobby Center. The old sign serves as an appropriate symbol for this time-tested family business that has managed to survive floods, fires, and the fierce onslaught of modern retail giants for more than 55 years.

Inside, Fountain Hobby Center is nothing like those trendy mall stores. You won't find bright lights, eye-catching displays, or the latest music pounding through your ears. In fact,



Chuck Morse first came to work with his parents in the 1940's, when they opened a soda fountain in North Charleston. Today, Chuck and his family operate a successful — if complex — toy and hobby shop on Charleston's West Side. Photograph by Melissa Smith.

there's not even a bar code in sight. What you will find, though, are two generations of the Morse family, offering their loyal customers old-fashioned service and a floor-to-ceiling array of hard-to-find items. These modest, proud, and hard-working individuals are holding onto a business and a way of life that are quickly becoming a thing of the past.

Locals insist that the interior of Fountain Hobby Center has not changed since the store moved to its present location 40 years ago. If you look closely, you can still see where the soda fountain stools from the old Valley Bell store have left their imprint every few feet on the store's original tile floor. The homey interior is overflowing with seasonal merchandise, games, toys, train tracks, beads, wooden items, puzzles, pipe cleaners, pom-poms, books on local history, and some items you would be hard-pressed to name, much less find anywhere else.

Shirley Morse started her career with Fountain Hobby when she took a job as a waitress at the Morse family's soda shop in 1955. She and Chuck were married about a year later. Here, Shirley takes a close look at an ailing mantel clock brought into the store by a customer. She is trying to figure out what new parts might be needed.

Fountain Hobby Center is well-known throughout the area for providing locals with a complete line of supplies for practically any imaginable hobby or craft. They stock everything from electric trains and remote-controlled cars and airplanes, to stamp and coin collecting materials, art supplies, costumes, and theatrical supplies.

Sitting down with owners Chuck and Shirley Morse to discuss how their family-run business evolved from a small soda fountain to a successful craft and hobby shop is no small task. The personal touch on which they pride themselves, and has helped to make their business so successful, really complicated matters when I tried to sit down with them to reminisce one rainy day last October.

The store constantly hums with activity and customers. Most are greeted personally by the Chuck or Shirley or by their daughters Cindy or Cathy, who also work in the store. As we tried to talk, the family members had to stop frequently to find a train part, answer incoming calls, greet friends, or chat with customers. This is the way of life at Fountain Hobby.

To get to the bottom of how they make a family-run business survive when so many others have failed, we had to finally hide in the back of the store where son-in-law Glen manages the adjoining photo shop. Glen Callihan joined the family firm in 1985, when he was laid off from his job as a coal truck driver. Chuck teases him and says he was given the executive director's job of taking out the garbage. "He's still trying to prove himself!" jokes Chuck.

The store's origins can be traced to Chuck's parents, Charles R. and

Daughter Cathy Morse Callihan. Cathy usually works with customers toward the busy front end of the store.

Kathleen P. Morse. The pair moved from the Huntington area to the Charleston area in the 1930's, when Chuck was just a boy. Charles was a newspaper reporter for the *Huntington Advertiser* and later for *The Charleston Gazette*.

In the late 1940's, Charles and Kathleen decided to strike out on their own and opened a soda fountain in North Charleston on 7th Avenue, across the road from where the Huskey's Dairy Bar is located today. They called it simply The Fountain.

Chuck clearly remembers their opening day on January 1, 1947. "All three of us were there. It was my first job," he says. The soda fountain featured "Brown Cow Shakes," Cherry Cokes, sundaes, and ice-cream cones. There were tables and booths where they served customers fresh hamburgers, hot dogs, chili, and other short-order items, all homemade on the premises. Later, they installed a custard machine — the first in the Kanawha Valley.

Back then, people didn't just visit a soda fountain for the purpose of enjoying a nice, cold drink or shake. Many of the fountain specialties were thought to serve medicinal purposes, as well. A Cherry Coke was thought to revive you if you were feeling a bit sluggish. You could order a "Bromo Seltzer" or buy Coke syrup for stomach troubles. If you had a case of the "vapors," an "Ammonia Coke" might cure your ills. As the soda fountain thrived, the family began offering other merchandise such as headache powders, gift items, and perfumes, and the business became known as Fountain Cut-Rate.

In 1955, the soda fountain waitresses were all outfitted in crisp, starched white uniforms with a hankie fanned out from the breast pocket. A pretty waitress by the name of Shirley Duff caught Chuck's eye, and they were married about a year later. For the next several years, Shirley stayed home to raise their two girls, Cathy and Cindy. Chuck continued to work in the family business during the day and at the county assessor's office in the courthouse at night. Shirley later took a job with the phone company.

The original soda fountain was located next to a field where men used to fly control-line airplanes, a forerunner of today's remote control variety. A salesman for the control-line planes happened to stop in the soda fountain one day and asked the Morse family to begin stocking parts for the planes. They did, and the hobby business grew from there. In 1958, the family decided to open a second business on the West Side of Charleston at 117 West Washington Street, across the street from their current location.

The new store was called Fountain Hobby Center, and it

Daughter Cindy Morse. Cindy and her father generally tend to the rear of the store, selling model trains, airplanes, and the countless small parts that accompany these hobbies.

featured a large selection of toys and hobby items. One of the specialty items they featured in their store windows were all kinds of huge stuffed animals. For a few years, they operated two locations, before closing the North Charleston store.

"This was way before there were these big fancy stores," daughter Cathy recalls. "Back then, it was really special for a child to walk in here and see this mountain of toys we had." Chuck agrees, noting that the old West Washington Street location was known mostly as a toy store. "Any girl that didn't get one of those big animals for Christmas from her boyfriend, why she just had to chalk him off!" he says with a laugh.

In 1962, a larger property across the street became available in the former Valley Bell building, and the family moved their store to its present location. "This was a neighborhood back then," explains Shirley. "There were lots of families here, which meant a lot of kids." Chuck recalls the days when city buses lined the sidewalks for a block along the side of his building. "At one time," he says, "this was the second busiest corner in Charleston."

When talk of the Interstate coming through Charleston began in the late 1960's, it caused the family concern. "We were scared that the Interstate would come, and people would use it to bypass the store," Cathy explains. "It ended up being a bonus, really. Our customers come from all over. You stand in here on any given day, and there's usually someone from Beckley, Bluefield, Parkersburg, Summersville, Oak Hill, Kentucky, or Ohio," she says. Many of their longtime customers make it a habit to stop in each time they are in town visiting.

Our discussion halts for a moment while we wait for the wailing sound of fire sirens outside to subside. Chuck cranes his neck to look and remarks, "Let's make sure they don't stop here." And with good reason! Over the years, Fountain Hobby Center has withstood two floods and two devastating fires. The first fire was in 1979. It started in the Rose City Cafeteria in the building next door. "Their building burned, but ours was saved," Chuck says. "They knocked out the fire so well that there was hardly any smoke damage. It was all water damage," he recalls. "Since it was all paper and party goods," Shirley adds, "we lost everything. But we called in our suppliers, and little by little, we built it back up."

The second fire, in 1988, had a more lasting effect on the business. It started in one of the apartments located upstairs, above the store. The flames shot as high as 60 feet in the air. "Both fires were spectacular," Chuck comments. He credits quick action from the fire department and his "good insurance people" for keeping the store from total devastation. The annex that contained a card and party shop was ruined and eventually had to be torn down. Today, a rectangle of green grass alongside the parking area of the store remains conspicuously empty.

"After the fire, when the city people came in to clean up, they hooked up some machine beside the building to tear the burned wall down," remembers Shirley. "They didn't research it and find [out] that it was a common wall. So, what they did was rig it up and lift up the wall. The whole front of our building came tumbling down, exposing the whole front room upstairs," she says.

Chuck's shoulders shake with laughter at the memory. They were returning from a weekend in Pittsburgh. "We came around the corner to the front of the building to

In 1962, Fountain Hobby moved from 117 West Washington across the street to its present location at 200 West Washington. This newspaper notice appeared in *The Charleston Gazette* and *Charleston Daily Mail*, informing customers of the move.

"Any girl that didn't get one of those big animals for Christmas from her boyfriend, why she just had to chalk him off!"

park. We saw a bunch of people out in front on the sidewalk, gawking up at our building. We got out and looked up, like the rest of them, and saw there was no wall upstairs on the front of our store!" says Chuck, shaking his head and smiling.

Seasonal items and books of local interest are among the thousands of items offered for sale at Fountain Hobby Center.

The family has demonstrated an uncanny ability to adapt to changes, like when the Charleston Town Center Mall opened up a few blocks away in the 1980's. The family adapted, Shirley explains, noting one of the reasons for their store's longevity. "Like everything else, your business will change a little bit," she says, "but eventually it will settle back into the way it was. That's what we have always done — roll with the punches. We change products, or we add new ones. We are very flexible. If somebody moves into our territory with something, we move into something else. We can always go to groceries!"

While each member of the family has a certain area of the store where they usually work, they all know the business well enough to sell anything on the floor. Shirley and Cathy can usually be found toward the front of the store tending to the hobby and costume section, while Cindy and her dad generally can be found in the back counter by the models and trains.

Both Cathy and Cindy remember the advantages of growing up in the family business. "Mom and Dad would go to toy shows in Pittsburgh and bring back things that other people didn't have yet," Cathy says. When the girls were little, their idea of fun was to come to the store and ride the dolly through the aisles. Cindy recalls that it wasn't unusual to find a plastic snake in the toilet at home or answer the door to find someone dressed in a gorilla costume on the other side. Ironically, the family members all get blank expressions on their faces when asked what hobbies they enjoy. The consensus is that everybody is so busy working that they don't have time for hobbies. Chuck says it best when he states succinctly, "Hobbies

Sisters Cindy, with phone, and Cathy hustle to help customers.

"We may not be rich, but we sure do make a lot of people happy."

are things you do in your spare time."

The family admits that there are days when working together can get too close for comfort. Cathy laughs and says, "There are some days when you come through the door that you'd better duck!" Cindy agrees and adds, "There are days you come through here and hear things you shouldn't hear. But one of us always knows when to let it go and moves on."

Knowing their customers and their products so well is probably the main secret to Fountain Hobby's longtime success. "We don't want kids to come in and buy a $400 airplane to start out," explains Cathy. "We like kids to start out with their building skills. To us, that's a longer-term customer." Cindy's experience selling remote control vehicles has taught her to take time explaining to customers before a purchase is made, making sure that the customer has the time to devote to the hobby and that it is appropriate for the child's age. "You may spend more time talking people out of an airplane than selling them one, because a child just wouldn't be able to handle it," she says.

A rite of passage for every West Virginia school child is the much anticipated — or dreaded — science fair project. Countless children have passed through Fountain Hobby's doors early on a Saturday morning, clutching their teacher's instructions in one hand and an anxious parent in the other. They are usually greeted at the door, and then the Morse family springs into action. Like a clothing store that orders certain clothing for different seasons, the Morse family knows which science and social studies projects are due each season, and from which schools. Planets, human cells, molecules, and Native American projects are the most popular, they say. "Science fair time can be a big secret, and you want to make sure that everybody doesn't end up with the same-looking project," says Cathy.

The Morse family views their role in the local hobby business as being one of problem solvers. The family goes out of their way to fill all kinds of requests, no matter how unusual. In one aisle, they could be helping a student gather materials to build a volcano. One day, they had men from a local chemical plant come in and buy plaster to make a mold of a piece of equipment, while they waited for a broken part to be shipped. Later, Cathy helped a man find a fake thumb to put over his missing digit to use for social occasions. "We fixed him up and sent him on his way," she says. "Sometimes, your head just aches at the end of the day from all the problem solving."

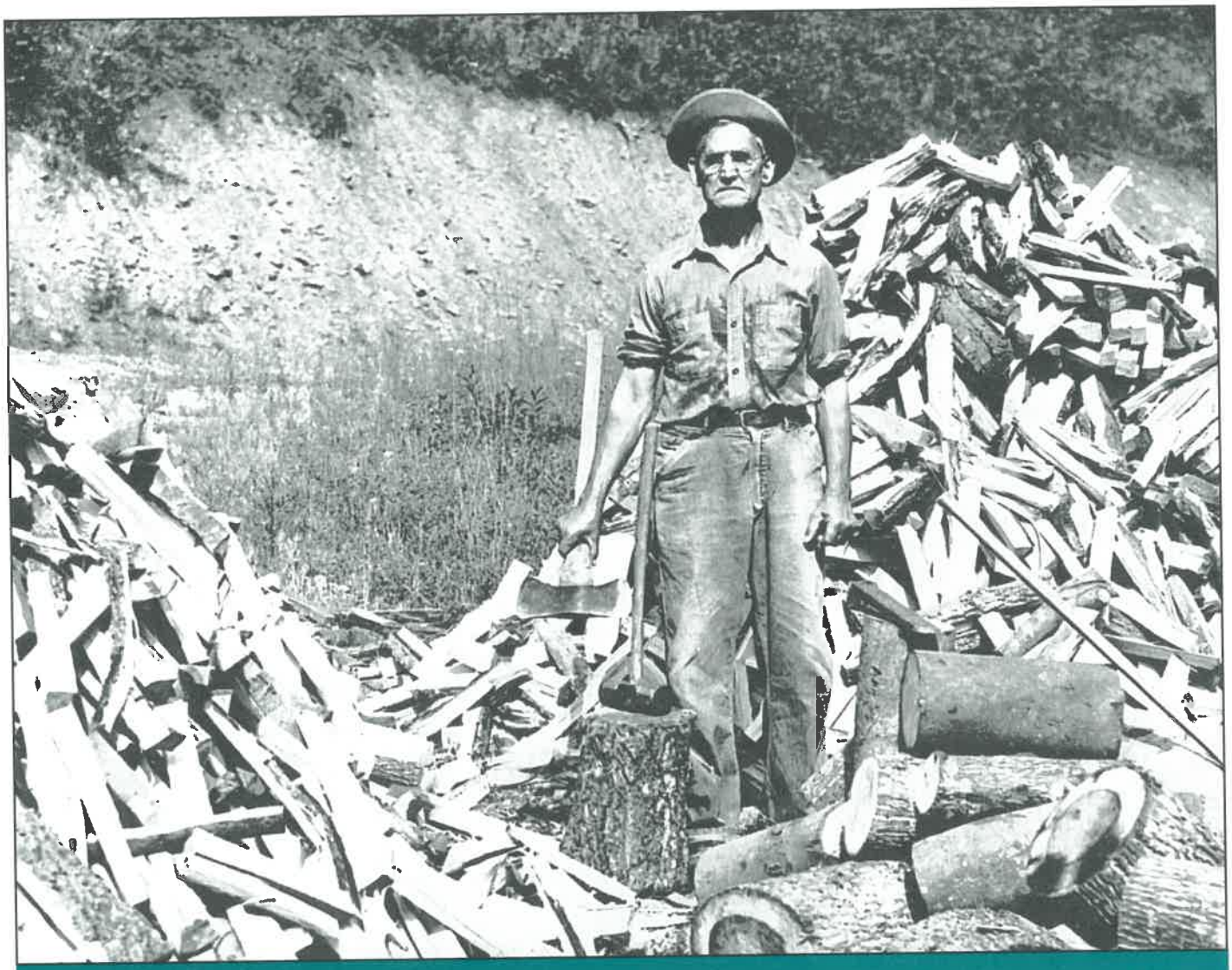
The time-worn sign out front of Fountain Hobby Center is a testimony to the many changes the Morse family and their business have encountered over the course of five-and-a-half decades. There is no longer a soda fountain, and they don't carry some of the toys that they once did, but they have managed to survive while so many around them have come and gone.

Their ability to withstand the changes exemplifies the very traits that make West Virginians unique. Their adaptability, resourcefulness, and determination to overcome adversity have enabled them to persevere through some very rough times. These are traits that have served this family well and will continue to do so for many years to come, they hope. Cathy sums it up best when she says, "We may not be rich, but we sure do make a lot of people happy."

Located at the corner of Bigley Avenue and Washington Street, Fountain Hobby Center has been a Charleston landmark for more than 50 years.

MELISSA SMITH is originally from Clinton, New York. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from James Madison University, then moved to Charleston and taught figure skating for 15 years. Returning to school, Melissa earned a degree in elementary education from West Virginia State College in 2003. She teaches sixth-grade science at Charleston's Stonewall Jackson Middle School. This story was written as a class assignment and is Melissa's first published article.

MICHAEL KELLER is director of photographic services for the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.



Ira Baker, our author's grandfather, was an expert woodsman and a hard-working fellow. He is shown here with a mountain of freshly split stove wood in the 1960's. Photograph by Brooks Ramsey, Jr.

Warm Mornings in Clay County

By Larry Campbell

Late fall and early winter can be a bittersweet time of year in central West Virginia. The autumn leaves that were such a wonder to behold in October are gone, and the bare tree branches can look stark against a plain gray sky. As the season progresses into winter, the shortening days can be cold and dreary. Because of the hilly terrain, the sun doesn't stay out for long, and it's sometimes hard to work up much of an appetite for sustained activity. Mixed in with these somber reflections of the season, however, lie some of the brightest memories of my childhood years.

My family lived in a small house on the Pack Fork of Little Sycamore Creek, about a mile-and-a-half up the hollow from Lizemores, Clay County. My parents Russell and Imogene Campbell moved there following their marriage in 1942, and that's where I was born in 1943. While this was my family's home, strong memories for me of life in the hollow center around the nearby house of my maternal grandparents. It sat — squatted is more like it — 100 yards, or so, up the road from my parents' house, between the road and the creek.

My grandfather Ira Theodore Baker was one of nine children of Lewis and Sophronia Baker. Ira was born on February 9, 1879, at the head of Twenty Mile Creek in Nicholas County. I am always amazed when I see that date. Even as a grown man, I find it hard to believe that I actually knew a flesh-and-blood man who was born fewer than 14 years after the end of the Civil War. It was the same year that Thomas Edison developed a workable lightbulb, although that fact did not matter much to the people who lived at the head of Twenty Mile Creek. It would be many years before they could even think of having things like electricity and indoor plumbing. My grandfather told stories of walking 10 or 12 miles in one day to see someone, then returning home in the night to the sound of a panther screaming in the dark. He was always known as Uncle Ira (pronounced "Are-ee") by everyone around, and they respected him as a man of strong back and stronger convictions.

Pack Fork of Little Sycamore, Clay County, as seen from the head of the hollow. Photograph by Larry Campbell, 1966.

My grandmother Mamie Frances Dawson was born on Little Sycamore Creek near what is now Glen, Clay County, on October 3, 1895. She and her twin sister Amy were the fourth and fifth children of Jefferson Davis Dawson and Virginia King, with four more children to follow. My grandmother told me many stories of life in their little clapboard house on Little Sycamore. She loved to tell of picking blackberries with her sisters and riding a horse to visit neighbors down the road.

My grandparents married, moved to Pack Fork, built a house, and had three girls. My mother Imogene Alice was their eldest, followed by Bonivere Carmen and Bina Rose. Their old homeplace wasn't much to look at. It had white asbestos shingles and a tin roof. A wood porch ran the entire length of the front of the house. The back porch was actually on the side of the house, just off the front porch and enclosed in screen. There were outbuildings: a chicken house, a wash house, a smoke house, a cellar dug into the side of the hill across the creek, and, of course, an outhouse — also across the creek.

Their place was perfect for a kid of eight or 10. On the coldest winter days, I could always count on a warm fire awaiting my frequent visits. I'm not sure that "visits" is the right word, for I probably spent as much time there as I did at my real home down the road.

In many parts of West Virginia, coal was, and still is, burned for warmth instead of wood. In the fall, each homeowner in our area would order and have delivered, usually by a neighbor with a truck, one or

Author Larry Campbell in 1946, at age three. He is shown here in the garden of his grandparents' home in Clay County.

two tons of bituminous coal, at $16 a ton. Our coal pile lay in a lean-to right next to the wash house. It would be hauled in a coal hod each day, or twice a day, into the house for use.

That is not to say, however, that wood was not burned. Wood was used primarily for heating the cook stove in the kitchen. Each morning, my grandfather would arise first and start a fire in the cook stove, using kindling he had split and stacked the evening before. When the fire was hot enough, my grandmother would get up and start breakfast, and the affairs of the day would commence.

My grandfather had cut timber for a living most of his life, and certainly knew his way around a double-bit axe and a cross-cut saw. He could, in a matter-of-fact way, name every tree in the woods, even in winter when there were no leaves to provide a clue. Through years in the woods, he could cite the most advantageous uses for hickory, oak, ash, basswood, poplar, hemlock, and all the others. He instinctively knew the ones that were most easily cut and split, as well as those that provided the hottest and longest-lasting fire.

The time in late summer and early fall when he felled, cut, and split the wood for the coming winter was one of the most memorable of my life. I accompanied him at every opportunity and never tired of this wonderful chore.

Our adventure would commence with a gathering of tools and a slow walk into the woods. My grandfather understood the need to conserve energy for when it was needed, and he had no desire to try to keep up with a 10-year-old who wanted to run ahead, investigating every trail and every sign of animal activity in every corner. When he found a suitable area, we would stop and survey the situation, determining how many trees were available of the right size, which direction they should be felled, and how they could most easily be skidded down the hill. When he selected a suitable tree, it would be felled with his axe using the least possible number of strokes. He was the best man with an axe I ever saw. Each swing would be carefully gauged, smoothly rendered, and would always remove the largest chips with the least effort. Even at that age, I marveled at the dexterity with which an accomplished workman employed his tools.

I also remember what a lethal weapon a double-bit axe appeared to be. It was razor sharp, and it seemed that to get too close would invite decapitation from one blade or the other. As a matter of fact, my grandfather, for all his accomplishments as a woodsman, had a particularly nasty run-in with an axe when he was younger and working full-time in the woods. As I understood the story from my grandmother, he was in the process of removing a large limb

This well-worn porch was a good place for visiting at the Baker home. Here, author Larry Campbell sits with his grandmother Mamie Baker on her porch in about 1960.

Following his grandfather around the farm and through the woods taught author Larry Campbell many valuable lessons. Here, Larry and grandfather Ira Baker return from the corn patch in 1967. Photograph by Elizabeth Campbell.

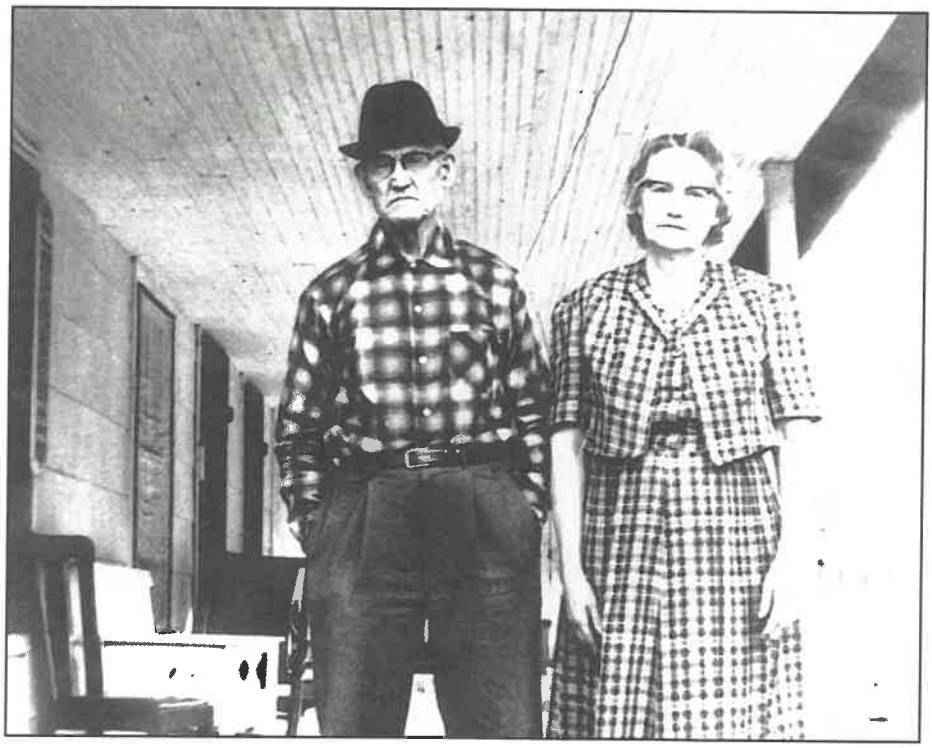
from a tree trunk when his axe slipped. It cut through his shoe and most of his foot — a debilitating injury. They got him out of the woods and to a doctor, who sewed him up. He was off his feet for a long time after that. Injury was a common occurrence in the woods in those days, as now, and my grandfather always taught me to have a healthy respect for dangerous tools.

After felling, the trees would be de-limbed. Then my grandfather would attach a log chain, throw the chain over his shoulder, and drag the logs one-by-one to the house. This effort seemed herculean to a kid of my age and, for a man of 75, or so, I now realize it was. I was sometimes allowed to assist, but my main job was to stay out of the way, lest a log get away on the downhill slide and do damage to life and limb.

Once all the logs had been gathered next to the smokehouse, they had to be cut to length. The correct length had been determined based on the length of the firebox in the cook stove, and my grandfather had a "story stick" at hand to measure the correct location of each cut. This is where I got to participate, many times more than I really wanted to. I was assigned to one end of the crosscut saw and spent hours helping to saw the logs into the correct length. Smaller parts of the log would be stacked and used whole. Larger sections would have to be split.

The splitting was done using a wedge, a sledge hammer, and an axe. I would sit for hours watching my grandfather expertly wield these tools to transform what was once a growing tree into firewood to cook our meals and keep us warm in the winter. He placed a section of the log on a large stump retained for that purpose, placed the wedge at the appropriate location, and struck it a mighty blow with the hammer. Wood like poplar and maple would split fairly easily. One blow would usually suffice to split the log. Oak and other dense woods required more effort. Normally, the wedge would get the split started, and the axe was used to finish it off and produce the right-sized stick of stove wood.

Then it had to be stacked in the smokehouse. That was primarily my job and my least favorite. It was the most boring part of the entire process. No great tools were employed. No trips into the woods. I just had to spend innumerable hours lifting, carrying, and stacking sticks of wood that looked all the same to me. But all things considered, I



Ira Theodore Baker and Mamie Frances Dawson Baker at their Clay County home. Date unknown.

treasure the experience.

The cook stove in the kitchen was a beautiful white whale of a stove with a black top that measured at least three-feet wide and five-feet long. It had a firebox at one end. In the middle was the oven. On the other end was a voluminous compartment for heating water, usually for baths. Many a sumptuous meal was prepared on this stove without, to my knowledge, a written recipe ever being followed. It should be a crime to bake biscuits in anything but a wood-burning cook stove. I watched my grandmother make biscuits every morning using one of the greatest of natural ingredients — lard. Standing at the large cupboard, she sifted and kneaded the ingredients without a wasted motion, cut the dough into circles using an old Carnation milk can, coated the tops with bacon drippings, and placed them in the oven. I once asked her to quote me the recipe, but she couldn't do it. Over the years, she had never given a thought to the measurements of the ingredients, adding a "pinch" of baking soda, a "little bit" of baking powder, and some buttermilk. But what emerged from the big oven was perfect every time, and they have not been duplicated to my satisfaction by anyone else since.

Heating the house was no simple task. My grandparents' home had a double fireplace at its center. There was a hearth and firebox in two adjoining rooms, both using a common flue and chimney. It was a well-thought-out architecture, but I don't recall it being used regularly for heating. We didn't spend much time in those front rooms. Most of our time was spent in the back bedroom where the Warm Morning sat. It wasn't a particularly elegant stove — made of cast iron, measuring about 18-inches square at its base, which sat on four legs. It was about four-feet high. The black stovepipe protruded out of the top and soared on up through the ceiling and out through the roof. Coal was added through a door in the upper part of the stove, and ashes were removed through a second door at the bottom.

Outbuildings and footlog on the Baker farm. Date unknown.

As a child, I didn't understand why the stove was in the bedroom rather than, say, in the livingroom. On reflection, I suppose it was placed in the back bedroom out of a desire to heat the smallest livable space and thus save on the cost of fuel. The room, being next to the kitchen, also benefitted from the heat coming from the cook stove. The stove was more efficient than the open fireplaces. The front rooms were more or less closed off in winter, and woe be unto you if you were assigned to the front bedroom to sleep. There were not enough quilts in the entire house to keep you warm. I often wondered what visitors thought when they were invited into the front bedroom when they came to the house. They never seemed to mind, however. It was just the normal way of doing things back then.

In the morning, after building a fire in the cook stove, my grandfather brought in a hod of coal and lit the Warm Morning. On the coldest mornings, I couldn't wait for a fire to be built. The fire would always go out during the night. Before bedtime, the fire would be banked with slack — the dust and small nuggets that were a part of every coal pile. This allowed the fire to smolder and provided some measure of heat for a time, but it would never last until sunrise. Everyone slept with a lot of covers, quilts so heavy that they made my toes hurt from being curled under the whole night.

After the stove had been going for awhile, warmth would creep into the room, and it was time to make a dash for the coming day. By the time I got up, got dressed, and made my way across the creek and back, things were going on in the kitchen.

After breakfast, there were chores to do outside. The chickens and hogs had to be fed. Wood and coal had to be hauled. And the various activities of a young boy had to be attended to. But I never passed up a chance to come inside and get

warm at the foot of the Warm Morning. The stove was placed a ways out into the room, about three or four feet from the two walls that formed one corner. This was probably done for safety, but the location provided a sizable place in behind the stove where a kid could do all kinds of stuff. I could sit back there and read books, do lessons, or play games. This was also my favorite place to sit and listen to the radio. I couldn't stay for long, however, because it got extremely hot there, and it was necessary to come out from time to time to cool off.

This corner was also a perfect place to dry ginseng, or "sang," and mayapple roots. In those days, an energetic person could make pocket change by harvesting, drying, and selling ginseng, and, to a lesser extent, mayapple and yellowroot — also known as goldenseal. [See "In Search of the Wild Goldenseal," by Marion Harless; Fall 1999.] The roots of the plants were dried and sold at the grocery store or to a peddler who made his way through the area occasionally. At times, sang could fetch as much as $10 to $12 a pound, while mayapple and yellowroot generally brought a lot less. It took a lot of dried roots to make a pound of either, and I can remember having roots laid out all around the stove. [See "'She Didn't Go Sangin' Alone,'" by Anna B. Shue Atkins; Fall 1999.]

In the evenings, after all outside affairs had been attended to, my grandparents occupied the two solid rocking chairs that had been arranged around the bed while I was in my usual spot behind the stove. On most nights, my grandfather could be found reading his Bible. He was very proud of the fact that he had read the Bible from beginning to end four times and the New Testament more than 20 times. He had only gone to the third grade in school and could barely write his name, but he knew the Bible inside and out and could argue its contents and meaning with any preacher that happened by.

My grandmother made beautiful quilts, sewed dresses from old feed sacks, and attended to other things that needed doing, such as mending socks or "long johns." As she worked, she told me stories of her childhood on Little Sycamore, how hard times were, and what they did to entertain themselves. At some point, early for modern people, my grandfather would get a bucket of slack to bank the fire for the night. That was the signal to head for the covers, and you had better not tarry, for the cold would begin to creep in shortly after the Warm Morning had been put to bed for the night.

It can be said, and often is, that the good old days were not so good. Our modern houses, with their efficient heating and cooling systems, have brought us great physical comfort. I suppose it all boils down to how you define comfort. Granted, having to cut wood and haul coal was backbreaking work, but many parts of it were fun. I wouldn't take anything for those hours in the woods, cutting and hauling logs to be sawed, split, and stacked against the coming storms.

It's all gone now. My grandfather passed away, at age 93, in 1972. My grandmother followed in 1975. The old house later burned down, a victim of a lighting strike. The property was sold to a neighbor. I don't know what happened to the stove. I hope it was saved and is still in use somewhere. There was a quiet comfort in gathering around that stove, alone with your thoughts or listening to stories of times gone by. They taught lessons and provided meaning to our existence that somehow I haven't been able to find today. Those days were warmer in many ways.

Three generations fit comfortably on this porch swing at the Baker home in 1967. Author Larry Campbell is at left. Grandmother Mamie Baker holds Larry's daughter Marilyn Suzanne Campbell; grandfather Ira Baker is at right. Photograph by Elizabeth Campbell.

LARRY CAMPBELL was born in Lizemores, Clay County, in 1943. He graduated from Ohio State University in 1969 and spent 24 years in the United States Air Force before retiring in 1987. He and his wife live in Hampton, Virginia. This is Larry's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Coal Fires and Memories

By Kathy Webb Brewster

I grew up on Buffalo Creek in the community of Crites, Logan County. Our family lived in a coal camp house, which Dad rented for about $27 a month. It had a big yard, two porches, and a great big apple tree in the backyard to play under. Inside the house, there was three bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom, and livingroom. We also had a big, long, walk-in closet, which we loved to play in on rainy days. Of course, we used coal heat. I can't remember ever being cold as a child. The coal fires were always burning.

The first thing I remember as a little girl of five years old was pretending I was painting the house we lived in. I was armed with a little fingernail-polish bottle full of water and a tiny brush, and with every stroke of that brush, the walls of the coal camp house would turn a darker color.

Author Kathy Webb Brewster as a young girl. She is shown here, at right, with her sister Linda, at the home of their grandparents. Date unknown.

My brother, sister, and I usually played with things that would probably seem strange to kids nowadays, like making mud pies in tin cans. We built sand castles, and marbles became people living in the castles. When my sister and I played with the little girls next door, small pieces of wood became houses for our miniature baby dolls. We decorated the "houses" with all the beautiful wild flowers we had picked earlier. Kids had good imaginations back then, in 1965.

Sometimes, Dad was asleep, and we knew not to wake him, because he was working the hoot-owl shift at the coal mines. Oh, how we hated being quiet as we played! It took the fun out of every-

Our author's parents Deloris and Wayne Webb, during the 1940's, prior to their marriage.

thing. Mom's little switch lay on the back porch to remind us to be quiet. I can't remember Mom ever using that little switch, though. It was only there to scare us into being good.

Dad worked hard, and we hardly seen him, but he always came in and kissed us goodnight or good morning, according to which shift he was on. Hard times had taught him to be careful with his money, but we always had plenty to eat and enough clothes to wear.

The contract strike was always a big fear at our house. There was always talk of saving for the contract strike. I always thought it came every Christmas when I was young, because it was such a topic of conversation among the coal miners and their wives at that time of year.

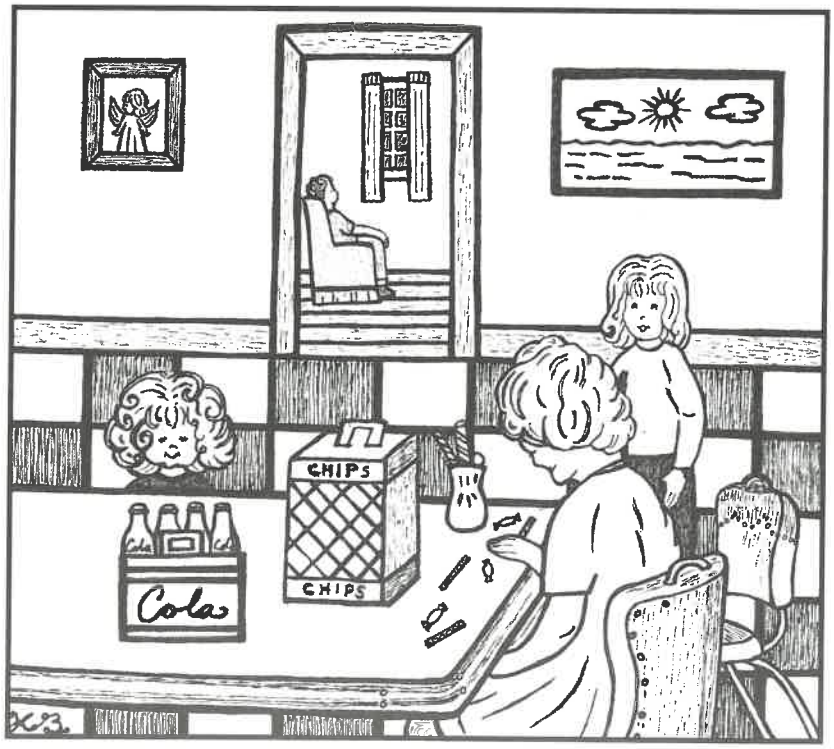
Mom was always doing something with her hands. She loved to make quilts and crochet, and she would be so proud when she made something pretty. Those handmade quilts always kept us warm and comfortable. Mom never learned to drive. She always got a neighbor to go to the store for her — about once every two weeks — to get us a box of potato chips, a carton of pop, and a bag of penny candy.

I remember sometimes going to the store with Daddy. I was so proud to be with my dad. It seemed like he was friends with everyone. I always thought of my dad as being an honorable man. He never liked owing anyone. If he owed a nickel, he'd be sure to pay. He was always so proud of being in the union. Even though he's been retired for years, I know he still drives for miles to pay his union dues.

I can't remember Dad ever complaining much. He always put off going to the doctor as long as he could. When he finally went, he would always end up having to stay for weeks or months in the hospital. Sometimes, we would have to stay with relatives, which we loved very much, but we still missed Mom and Dad like crazy. Then when Dad got better, back to work he'd go, just like nothing ever happened. He really believed in working and taking care of his family.

We've had our share of hard times. In February 1972, my father lost our home in the Buffalo Creek disaster. Even though we have had our ups and downs, I always knew that everything would be alright. Because no matter where we were, like the coal fires when we were young, the home fires would always burn in our hearts and memories.

KATHY WEBB BREWSTER grew up in the Buffalo Creek community of Crites, Logan County. The daughter of a union coal miner, Kathy currently lives in Oceana, Wyoming County, where her husband also works in the mines. Her poetry and artwork have been published in the United Mine Workers' journal. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Drawing of her childhood home in Logan County, by Kathy Webb Brewster.

Lafadie Belle Whittico

By Ancella R. Bickley

Black Medical Pioneer in Mingo County

A near legend in her home community of Williamson, Mingo County, 92-year-old Mrs. Lafadie Belle Dickerson Whittico has had long experience with the medical profession in southern West Virginia. A practicing nurse in her own right, she married a local physician in 1939. She then worked with him in his office and in the drugstore that he owned, served long and faithfully with the state's black medical association, and participated in numerous community activities. When she was in her 60's, she returned to work with a community action agency.

Looking back, Mrs. Whittico talks about her birth, her family's background, and her choice of professions. Born in 1911, she was one of three daughters in her family. "My father was a carpenter," she says. "He built houses and made coffins. I helped him by lining the coffins. I attended the Chilton County Training School in Clanton, Alabama, where we lived."

Mrs. Whittico's choice of a career was not influenced by seeing other black nurses. "I really didn't know any black nurses," she says. "There weren't any in Clanton. My cousin and I just decided that we wanted to be nurses. When I finished school in Clanton, I wanted to go to Meharry [black medical school in Nashville, Tennessee], but I was too young. I was only 16. So I went to Sandusky, Ohio, and stayed with my aunt and took some extra school work. I entered Meharry in 1930 and graduated in 1933.

Born in Alabama, Mrs. Whittico lived with an aunt in Ohio when she enrolled at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. She is shown here in her graduation portrait from Meharry taken in 1933. After graduation, she returned to Ohio before taking a job in West Virginia in 1935.

Lafadie Belle Dickerson Whittico at her home in Williamson, Mingo County. Photograph by John Tice.

"I came to West Virginia in 1935," Mrs. Whittico continues, smiling, eyes sparkling. "I had graduated from Meharry, and then I went back to Sandusky, Ohio. My girlfriend Lucille Anderson came over from Toledo, and we wrote about 25 letters applying for nursing jobs. Lucille had also graduated from Meharry. It was during the Depression, and jobs were hard to find. We sent one of our letters to Mercy Hospital in Williamson in response to an ad that we had seen. Dr. S.M.E. Simon, who owned the hospital, sent us a telegram hiring us, and we took the train and came to West Virginia. Dr. Simon was a Jewish

Dr. James Malachi Whittico. Dr Whittico earned his degree from Meharry Medical College in 1912 and established his practice in Mercer County that same year. In 1914, he moved his practice to Williamson and served patients there for the remainder of his career. He married Lafadie Belle Dickerson in 1939. Dr. Whittico is pictured here on his horse, named Dan, in 1945.

Mrs. Whittico, age 92, remains active and independent. She was the first black nurse in Mingo County in the 1930's, and has made a significant contribution to health care throughout southern West Virginia since that time. Photograph by John Tice.

doctor, and Mercy was a white hospital. It was a full-service hospital with surgery and everything. Lucille and I were the only two black nurses. We made $38 per month. Lucille went home after about two weeks, and I was there alone. Later, another black woman came, Mrs. Pritchard from Bluefield."

In addition to the groundbreaking use of black nurses in a white hospital, Dr. Simon also housed the nurses together in a racially integrated dormitory. Mrs. Whittico says, "My roommate in Williamson was a white girl, who was also from Alabama. Dr. Simon had converted some space in a house on Reservation Hill in Williamson into a dormitory. My roommate and I got along alright, but one night, I got up and found that she covered herself with a fur coat that my aunt had given me when I left home. I took my coat off of her bed and said, 'You can't use my coat like that.' We didn't have any trouble about it."

Mrs. Whittico remained at Mercy Hospital for a little more than a year before taking a job at a hospital at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia. "I got $50 a month at Hampton," she says. "That was $12 more than I was making at Mercy, and in those days, that meant a lot." Mrs. Whittico remained at Hampton until 1937, when she went home to Alabama to care for an ailing aunt.

Mercy Hospital and Williamson, however, had presented her with a benefit beyond Hampton's increased salary. It was while she was in Williamson that she met James Malachi Whittico, a divorced physician, whom she married in 1939. After her marriage, Mrs. Whittico returned to Williamson and has been there ever since.

"Dr. Whittico was one of 10 children," Mrs. Whittico explains. "Their [family] home was in a farming community called Ridgeway, near Martinsville, Virginia. At one time, they owned about 500 acres of farmland there. All but one of [the Whittico children] came to West Virginia to live. Some of Dr. Whittico's sisters were teachers in McDowell and Mercer counties. His brother John Valley Whittico pastored the first black Presbyterian church in McDowell County, and his brother Tom was the editor and publisher of the *McDowell Times*."

Like his wife, Dr. Whittico had attended Meharry Medi-

Dr. and Lafadie Whittico with their son Matthew Thomas in 1946. Dr. Whittico also had an older son, James M. Whittico, Jr., from a previous marriage. Both sons entered the medical profession.

doctors about new developments in the medical field. There would also be a banquet, and the ladies would have activities such as card parties."

One year, Dr. James M. Whittico, Jr., Dr. Whittico's son from his first marriage, was the guest clinician. A physician and surgeon in St. Louis, he served on a national level as president of the black medical association.

Dr. Whittico retired in 1972. Mrs. Whittico, while in her 60's, went back to work when the Southwestern Community Action Agency, headquartered in Huntington, recruited her to assist them with the development of a new home health care project. She worked in Crum, Wayne County, and in Harts, Lincoln County. "Sometimes, I was the only black person that some of my clients had ever seen," she says. "Once, I found a family that really needed help. I went to social services and told them that someone should go out to see about them. The house was a mess, and they needed food and other things. Some of my co-workers told me that the father wouldn't like that kind of interference in his family's business, and that he might hurt me if I went back to visit them. Well, I wanted to know if he got the help that they needed, so I went back to see them. Do you know that he thanked me for the help that he got?"

Mrs. Whittico reviews pictures in an old photo album at her home in Williamson. She typically spends the winters with her son in Michigan, but she looks forward to coming back to West Virginia each spring. Photograph by John Tice.

Mrs. Whittico remained with the Southwestern Community Action Agency for 16 years. During that time, she helped to develop a parent/child program, and the data collected through it provided the basis for two primary-care clinics, staffed with National Health Corps doctors. The clinic that grew out of the program in Lincoln County is still in operation as part of the Marshall University Center for Rural Health. After she left her position at the Southwestern Community Action Agency, Mrs. Whittico was called back to work with review teams. Two years later, she retired again, this time for good, in 1987. She was 78.

Two Whittico sons maintain the family's commitment to medical-related fields. James Malachi Whittico, Jr. — Dr. Whittico's son with his first wife, Nannie Cobbs Whittico — completed high school at all-black Liberty School in Williamson, took an undergraduate degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and earned his medical degree from Howard University. He currently practices in St. Louis. Matthew Thomas Whittico, the son of Dr. Whittico and Lafadie Belle Whittico, completed a doctorate in pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of California at San Francisco, and now teaches at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Whittico passed away in 1975. Mrs. Whittico continues to reside in their home on Harvey Street in Williamson and remains active in various organizations, particularly with her church. Her son has tried to convince her to move to Michigan. "He wants me to come and live with him," Mrs. Whittico says, "but I don't want to leave my home. I go to Michigan and spend the winters, but I come back to West Virginia in the spring."

ANCELLA R. BICKLEY holds a doctorate in education from West Virginia University, is a former professor at West Virginia University and West Virginia State College, and a former administrator at West Virginia State College. She has authored or coauthored several books and articles about West Virginia black history. Ancella is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor. Her most recent story appeared in our Fall 2002 issue.

The Magnolia Nurse

Patty Norton of Morgan County

By Helen Bradfield Shambaugh

Rural health care during the late 1940's and 1950's was much different than it is today. Sometimes, people lived a lifetime without ever seeing a doctor. As soon as certain immunizations became mandatory for children entering public schools, however, some help came in the form of the county health nurse, who would travel throughout a county for the purpose of immunizing children and teaching practical health care measures for the home.

Patty Norton of Morgan County was one such nurse. Now 90 years old, she has lived in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia for most of her life. Throughout her career, she devoted herself to the people of this region and their health care needs.

Morgan County health nurse Patty Norton at her office above the old Paw Paw fire hall in 1954.

Patricia "Patty" Jane Feeney Norton was born November 4, 1913, at the family homeplace in the Mapleside area of Cumberland, Maryland. She graduated from St. Mary's High School and entered the Allegheny Hospital School of Nursing at Cumberland, graduating from there in August 1934. She was awarded her R.N. degree in October 1935. Patty then worked on the maternity ward and was a private-duty nurse at Allegheny Hospital.

On June 22, 1936, Patty married James B. "Jim" Norton of Paw Paw, Morgan County. The newlyweds built a house on Jackson Street in Paw Paw, where they began raising a family that would eventually grow to include three sons. In 1947, the Nortons moved a few miles across the Hampshire County line to the small community of Pin Oak. My family lived at Pin Oak at the time, and this is how I first came to know Patty.

In January 1949, Patty was appointed Morgan County Health Nurse, serving Cacapon District and the Paw Paw area. In this role, she traveled from school to school and from community to community throughout all of Morgan County. It would take a book to tell all of Patty's experiences, but one unique phase of her work as county health nurse took place in the town of Magnolia during the 1950's.

Nestled deep in a valley between the mountains and the Potomac River, Magnolia is a small, isolated

railroading community. It was once a thriving town with doctors, dentists, a bakery, churches, and various stores after a section of the B&O railroad was built through there in 1914. Nearly wiped out by the 1936 flood, Magnolia never fully recovered.

My late husband Lindy M. Shambaugh was from Magnolia. He worked for the B&O there before serving in the military in World War II. Upon being discharged from the Army and getting his work rights restored, Lindy regained his position as trackman with the railroad and was stationed back at Magnolia. So, we went there to live in May 1948.

The only telephone in Magnolia at the time was the railroad phone in the home of a B&O track foreman. There was no electricity in any of the homes until 1956. There were still no private residential telephones when our family moved from there in 1960.

When Patty began her work at Magnolia, there was one county road — then unpaved — leading into the village. This road, with deep ravines off the sides, climbed and descended steep ridges, winding sinuously along Sideling Mountain for seven miles down into Magnolia. The road ended at a cemetery at the lower end of Magnolia, and the only way to leave was to turn and go back the way you came.

Around 30 or 40 families resided in Magnolia at that time. The two-room school was closed after the 1951 school term, and students were transported by bus to Paw Paw. There was one church served by a circuit preacher and one small grocery store owned and operated by G.I. Effland.

So, when Patty Norton needed a place at Magnolia from which to conduct her monthly well-child clinics, she asked if she might come to our home. We readily agreed. Once a month, Patty came from her office on the second floor of what was then the Paw Paw firehouse. Providing company on the trip and helping Patty with record keeping was Tiny Delawder. Sometimes, one or more of Patty or Tiny's children came along, as well.

Patty Norton sets up scales in preparation for her monthly well-child clinic in the village of Magnolia, Morgan County, in 1958.

"I remember when that was nothing but an old dirt road," says Tiny Delawder. "How we would lean for the sharp curves going around that mountain! Patty had an old bag of some sort that she carried her medical supplies in. We would load scales and other supplies in the back [of the car], along with whichever of our kids happened to be going with us."

When Patty arrived at our home, she would enlist help carrying equipment into the house. Scales for weighing infants were set up on my kitchen table, and adult scales were set on the kitchen floor.

Mothers of the Magnolia community, and sometimes from as far away as Great Cacapon, came with their children. Some of these people had been born and raised in Magnolia. Rather than going to the monthly clinics at Berkeley Springs, which would have been a much shorter drive for them, they came across Sideling Mountain to Magnolia. In addition to seeing Patty Norton, this was also a chance for them to visit with family and friends who still lived in the area.

Patty sometimes handed out free vitamins and any health care brochures she could bring. She gave instructions for using medications and remedies for everything from how to mix baby formulas to curing impetigo. She gave dietary advice, including handing out recipes and healthy menus to encourage better diets. Prenatal and postnatal care and information were given to expectant and new mothers. Advising a doctor's care when finding the need, she sometimes referred patients to the crippled children's clinic at Martinsburg. Patty checked blood pressures, tended minor injuries,

We recall how Patty sometimes had to help a parent pull a reluctant child from beneath the kitchen table to receive an immunization, or how she gently chided and gave rueful looks when her instructions for health care had not been obeyed.

and taught sanitation practices.

Explaining the dangers of communicable diseases such as whooping cough, diphtheria, smallpox, measles, and polio, as well as warning of the danger of tetanus, she administered immunizations. If a child howled while receiving a shot, Patty would smile ruefully and say, "Oh no! I'm sorry. Now you won't want to be Patty's friend. But I don't want you to be sick."

Children played together while they waited their turn to be examined. Mothers exchanged the latest family and community news. A life insurance agent from Paw Paw would try to make it to Magnolia on clinic day to collect monthly premium payments. Catching many of his clients at this one location saved him having to drive to their individual homes. Ladies brought their insurance premium books along, so that he could mark them paid.

With no phones and few cars in Magnolia, communication with our children's school in Paw Paw was rather poor, sometimes causing misunderstandings between teachers and parents. In her capacity as county health nurse, Patty also served as on-site school nurse at Paw Paw. When she came to conduct her clinics at Magnolia, Patty would bring us up to date on the latest school developments, sometimes acting as a tactful go-between for parents and teachers. She would advise us of any epidemics or other horrors, such as head lice or other communicable outbreaks, at the school and would teach us preventative measures and cures. Realizing that it could benefit everyone involved, Patty and Tiny used the school's mimeograph machine and printed a small monthly newsletter to send home with the children, giving well-child clinic dates, explaining new school policies, and telling of upcoming events at the school.

People trusted Patty. She always had a ready ear as a counselor and confidante and was sometimes told of personal situations. While professional in her work ethics and stern when administering crucial medical advice, she also laughed and cried with us. Patty never belittled a health care problem. Telling us that no question was too unimportant or ridiculous to ask, she would say, "Remember, I had to learn all of this, too."

Some people attending the clinic at Magnolia did not immediately leave when their health care needs had been met, but stayed until Patty had gone for the day. At summer's end, we had picnics on clinic days. We set out tables beneath the huge maples in our front yard. Mothers, as well as Patty and Tiny, brought favorite foods to share.

For several years, the clinic was conducted in our home. Later, Patty set up at other homes in the community, taking turns with other Magnolia families who attended the clinics. Today, whenever folks from those days in Magnolia meet for a reunion or other social event, someone will say, "Remember when Patty came to have the clinic?" Then we all laugh at memories of Patty, recalling how she sometimes had to help a parent pull a reluctant child from beneath the kitchen table to receive an immunization, or how she gently chided and gave rueful looks when her instructions for health care had not been obeyed.

Patty retired in 1975, but has remained active with many worthwhile volunteer projects over the years. Currently residing at a private care home in Slanesville, Hampshire County, Patty is an honor to her profession, her community, and her state.

At the end of the day, participants in Patty's Magnolia health clinics would sometimes enjoy a picnic together. The festive gathering in this picture took place in May 1958. Patty Norton is standing in the back row, second from the left. Tiny Delawder, Patty's assistant, is seated second from the left with author Helen Shambaugh's daughter Teresa on her lap.

HELEN BRADFIELD SHAMBAUGH lives in Slanesville, Hampshire County. She grew up in the community of Pin Oak, where she first met Patty Norton. The two met again during the 1950's while Helen, her husband, and children were living in Magnolia, Morgan County. Helen is now in her 70's and is enjoying her new career as a writer. This is her second contribution to GOLDENSEAL. Her first article appeared in our Fall 2001 issue.

Brooke County Trapping

By Barbara Copenhaver Bailey

Trapping was once a common part of the outdoorsman's life in many parts of West Virginia. My father Jack Copenhaver was a trapper in his teens and early 20's in the woods surrounding Collier, Brooke County. He learned to run a trap line from his uncle Harry Spicer. Great-uncle Harry was an expert trapper and taught Dad the skills of trapping. The two men spent long hours talking about trapping before Dad ever went into the woods. They would often be found sitting on the porch, talking about the local trapping area and going over the skills needed for successful trapping. Much of their time was spent discussing the most humane ways to trap.

Collier is a small community at the foot of Mechling Holler outside of Weirton. It is located on Harmon Creek, which flows into the Ohio River. Harmon Creek has a number of smaller tributaries feeding into it from several nearby hollers such as Klondike, Browns, Goat, and Scout Cabin. This is the area where my father trapped. In the late 1940's, there were no deer, turkey, or beaver to be found in Brooke County, so local trappers set their sights on the many muskrat to be found in the area, as well as mink and raccoon.

Dad started running a trap line as early as seventh or eighth grade. Since muskrat were plentiful, he set 10 to 15 muskrat traps during those first years, as he began to gain experience. As years went on, he set more and more traps until he had between 100 and 125 at a time during his high school years, and beyond.

In addition to spending many enjoyable hours in the woods, Dad soon learned that he could make extra money by selling pelts from the animals he would trap. He began to approach trapping as a business. A successful trapper would usually set as many traps as he could buy, so Dad put a lot of the money he made from selling pelts back into purchasing more traps

Jack Copenhaver, originally from Collier, Brooke County, has been an avid outdoorsman all of his life. He is shown here with a family pet during the early 1960's.

and other equipment and supplies for his trapping business.

Dad says that Great-uncle Harry once had a trap line that ran for 10 miles, from Collier to the Ohio River. A typical trap line, though, was two or three miles long. Trappers usually set their lines in a circle so as not to waste time backtracking when checking the line. Back then, there was no law as to how often a trapper had to check his line. However, Dad checked his muskrat line — a short, two-mile line that followed Harmon Creek — every evening between 7 and 9 p.m. He checked his mink and raccoon line every other day. This line was set in several of the hollers feeding into Collier, running up Mechling Hill to the Pennsylvania line, and back down Harmon Creek into Collier. Checking the entire line took him about three hours each time.

Jack's uncle Harry Spicer was an experienced trapper, and he taught Jack the skills necessary for trapping. Uncle Harry is shown here at left with young Jack Copenhaver in the 1940's.

Dad used two types of Victor steel traps — long-spring and jump traps. He purchased these from Sears & Roebuck or Taylor Brothers. He used blind sets for mink traps, which didn't require bait. He would occasionally trap a weasel, skunk, or opossum that got caught in the trap by accident.

Trapping season was from November to February. During this season, Dad had to pay special attention to the weather. If it rained too much, there was a chance that the creek would rise and flood all his traps. When it did rain a lot, Dad would go out and pull all his traps so that he wouldn't lose them. After the rain had stopped, he would have to go back out and set the line again.

When he was in high school, Dad would get up before school around 4:30 a.m. during trapping season and check his trap line. There was an elderly couple, Mr. and Mrs. G.A. Wright, who lived up the holler. Their house was the only one he saw along his trap line. Every morning while he was checking his trap line, he would stop at their place around 6:00 a.m. and bring in a couple of buckets of coal for the day. Mrs. Wright would always give him a nice cup of hot chocolate, and he would sit in the kitchen and visit with them for a while. Then, he would be on his way to finish checking his line. He still had another hour, or more, to go. Then he had to go home and get ready for school.

One morning, Dad ran into a skunk in the dark. It was a good thing he wears glasses, because he got sprayed straight in the face, and his glasses protected his eyes. He had to head home without finishing checking his line. His dad met him at the door and sent him straight to the garage, where he stripped off all his clothes and burned them. He had to get washed down in tomato juice, and that took care of the smell. Dad said it wasn't too bad, except the skunk got him so good the smell was almost enough to make him sick.

Grandpap helped Dad set up his work area in the garage. This is where he skinned all the animals. He had stretchers lined along all the rafters in the garage. It took about a month to cure a hide after it was stretched.

Jack Copenhaver was a freshman at Follansbee High School when this photograph was made in 1947. As a young man, Jack ran several miles of trap lines around Mechling Holler in Brooke County. During trapping season, he walked those lines most mornings before going to school.

During his best season in the early 1950's, Dad figures he sold about 250 muskrat pelts, eight to 10 mink, and 15 to 20 raccoon. He once trapped a large black mink that was 34 inches from tip to tip.

Grandpap put a natural gas heater in there so Dad could work in the cold winter. Pelts cannot be kept in the heat, so Dad would only use the heater when he was working.

Dad sold his mink, muskrat, and raccoon pelts to Sears & Roebuck or Taylor Brothers, depending on who had the best prices. He got price lists from them on a regular basis once he began doing business and purchasing traps from them. Some of the best prices ever were being paid for pelts at this time, because there was not yet very much importing going on. Prices varied depending on the size of the pelt, but typical prices were approximately $3 to $4.50 for muskrat, $8 to $15 for raccoon, and up to $35 for mink. During his best season in the early 1950's, Dad figures he sold about 250 muskrat pelts, eight to 10 mink, and 15 to 20 raccoon. He once trapped a large black mink that was 34 inches from tip to tip.

Dad didn't trap much after he came back from the Navy in 1957. He continued to squirrel and coon hunt, though, which he greatly enjoyed. He was a Boy Scout leader for many years and often took the boys hiking and camping for a couple of weeks at a time in the summer. He would also take them camping for two or three days over Christmas break, if any wanted to go.

In 1959, Dad married my mom, Marjorie Herceg. She had been born in a coal camp in Pennsylvania. After her father was killed in a coal mine collapse, her mother was left to take care of four children by herself. My mother's family depended on small crop farming, canning, picking berries, and other outdoor activities for much of their livelihood. Like my father, Mom developed a love of the outdoors. After Mom and Dad started their family, Dad didn't do much trapping or hunting, as family obligations took over. Also, he says, prices were declining for pelts, so trapping was no longer worth the time it took.

Dad never lost his love for the beauty and wonder of nature and animals, however, and most of our family vacations were spent traveling around West Virginia and visiting the state parks. While I was a child, we always had animals around us. We raised hogs and rabbits and always had different types of pets including cats, dogs, a crow, and a groundhog. Dad could always train a good dog. We had one dog that was a genuine part of our family for 16 years. My brother Doug now has two four-year-old beagles that he has been training as rabbit dogs. Today, Dad and Doug are often together hunting, fishing, and camping all over the state.

As a tribute to my father and mother and the love of nature that they shared, our family recently made a donation to North Bend State Park to establish the Copenhaver Flower and Bird Watching Garden. The area is currently under development and will be open for the public to enjoy by spring or summer 2004. For more information, call North Bend State Park at (304)643-2931 or 1-800-CALL-WVA.

Jack Copenhaver today, at right, with son Doug and Doug's beagles Jesse and Daisy. Photograph by Marjorie Copenhaver.

BARBARA COPENHAVER BAILEY is a native of Follansbee, Brooke County. She received a master's degree in agricultural education from West Virginia University, where she is currently pursuing her doctorate and is director of student support services. This is her first published article.

Central City Bung Company

By Jean McClelland

Central City Bung Company was located in present-day West Huntington between 14th and 15th streets West and between Monroe and Jackson avenues. It was once the world's largest producer of bungs. Because of it, Central City became known as the "Bung Capital of the World." Photograph courtesy of the West Huntington Public Library.

On the west end of modern-day Huntington are the reminders of a once-thriving industrial community called Central City. Among the many manufacturers and industries based there 100 years ago was the world's largest maker of bungs — carved wooden stoppers that were used in the barrel industry. The business was called Central City Bung Company, and in honor of its success, Central City was called the "Bung Capital of the World."

Originally located in Wirt County along the Little Kanawha River, the company suffered a devastating fire in the early 1890's. Chief stockholder John Hale was approached by some ambitious entrepreneurs from young Central City and was encouraged to move his business to the new town along the Ohio River. They offered to sell him a full city block for next to nothing in exchange for the move. The property they offered was located between 14th and 15th streets West, bordered by Monroe and Jackson avenues.

An attractive incentive for Hale was the ready market available for his product due to a number of locally owned breweries. There was also a keg manufacturer, a whiskey distillery, two railroads, and river transportation available nearby, not to mention the almost limitless flow of cut hardwood tim-

Left: The West Virginia Brewing Company was one of several local beverage concerns that relied on the Central City Bung Company for their bung needs. This 1912 photograph shows beer barrels being transported in a then-modern electric truck. In later years, the brewing company became known as the Fesenmeier Brewery. Photograph courtesy of the West Huntington Public Library.

A bung. This carved wooden stopper was used in the barrel industry. Shown here is one of the few remaining examples of a bung known to exist in Huntington today. It belongs to collector Earl Bush, who is shown here holding it in his hand. Photograph by Michael Keller.

ber — the raw material used to make bungs — constantly moving through the valley. It was a good deal for Hale. His renamed Central City Bung Company opened for business in 1894.

At its peak, the plant included a main woodworking building, three warehouses, a coopers' shed, and an engine room. To guard against fire, the company not only had one of the earliest sprinkler systems installed, but added its own water tower, just in case the city water failed to meet its needs.

Earl Bush, a Huntington resident and an avid collector of Central City memorabilia, still has in his possession a bung from the early years of the Central City Bung Company. It was carved on a machine used in the factory between 1894 and 1900. This machine rotated blocks of wood around a stationary knife in order to carve the bungs.

Earl's collection also includes a barrel stamped "West Virginia Brewing Company" in which he found the bung. Along with the bung and the barrel, Earl also has an original bung hammer. The hammer was specially made to set the bungs in the barrels, Earl says, pointing out that the slender handle was shaped to absorb the vibration of the pounding motion. This unique hammer was necessary so as not to do damage to the bung or the barrel.

In about 1900, a new process was invented for manufacturing bungs. It involved a machine that would compress the air out of the wood before carving. Once compressed, the block of wood could be forced against a cutting surface and formed into the precise shape to fit tightly into the barrel.

The invention was the property of the United States Bung Company of Cincinnati, which acquired the Central City Bung Company at about this time and took over its operation. The new owners continued to employ plant manager Alfred Hickman and retained the name Central City Bung Company, but there were many changes that took place at the Central City plant, some of them rather mysterious.

Alfred Hickman was plant manager at the bung factory from the time it opened in Central City in 1894 until it closed following his death in 1930. Photograph courtesy of Coleman Trainor, Jr., date unknown.

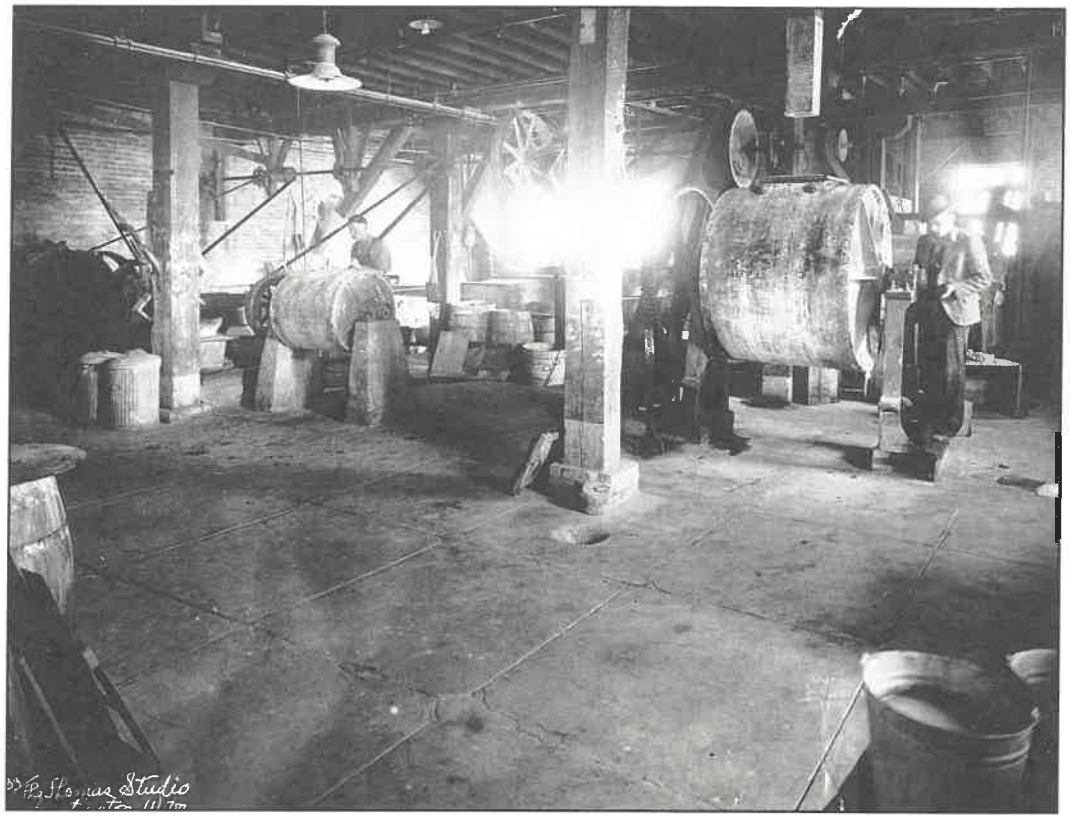
By guarding their production secret, the company eventually became the world's largest producer of bungs.

The Cincinnati company decided not to register a patent for their new invention, fearing that their competition would begin fabricating the machine once the patent expired. Determined to keep the new process a secret, they relied instead on their own strict security measures. The secrecy surrounding the plant intrigued local residents. The factory became a strange site with its barred windows and round-the-clock security guards. Visitors were limited, and anyone with mechanical or drafting skills was strictly forbidden from entering.

By guarding their production secret, however, the company eventually became the world's largest producer of bungs. Their monopoly lasted for many years, making Central City the "Bung Capital of the World." Much of the company's production was shipped overseas to Germany, Australia, Japan, and China. They also sold bungs to a number of local and regional breweries and other businesses.

According to Earl Bush, the bung company began to loose local business in 1914, when West Virginia prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages. When federal Prohibition became law in 1917, the United States Bung Company of Cincinnati saw the handwriting on the wall, and the Central City Bung Company was closed in 1918. The top-secret machinery from the Central City plant was shipped to the main plant in Cincinnati.

Curiously, the Central City plant, though idle and thought to be empty, maintained a full-time plant manager and security guard for 12 more years. During those years, young James Boone of Huntington worked for his uncle at the nearby Cavendish-Cyrus Hardware Store as a delivery boy. James remembers making deliveries to the former factory. He says that he was never allowed inside the buiilding.



The only known interior photograph showing the Central City Bung Company manufacturing plant. These large drums were filled with aggregates and were used to sand the bungs. Photograph courtesy of the West Huntington Public Library, date unknown.

He would knock on the door for a long time before anyone would answer. Usually, after an extended time, someone would open the door and take the delivery. Even though it had been years since the factory had closed, James remembers that the windows were sealed, and the doors were kept locked. He noted that there was no work force employed at the plant, but there still seemed to be a keeper there around the clock.

From the time the bung company came to Central City in 1894, Alfred W. Hickman was its manager. He remained with the company throughout its history, including the 12 years following the plant closure. Alfred's grandson Coleman Trainor, Jr., of Huntington recalls his grandfather going off to work at the bung factory each day. Even after the machinery was removed, Alfred stayed on to manage the property and to keep outsiders from examining the interior of the building, Coleman says. In 1930, Alfred Hickman died from a heart attack. The factory was then sold to local developers, who tore it down.

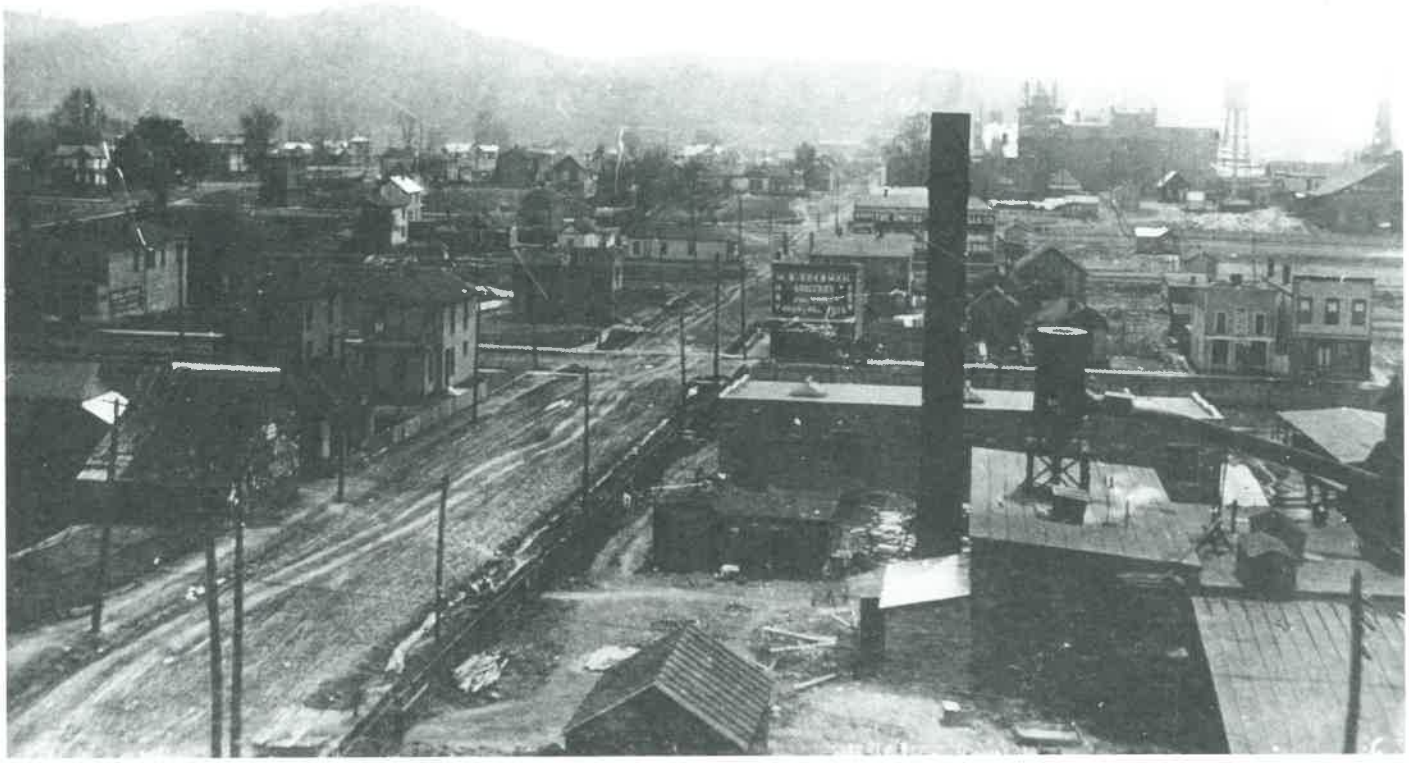
All that is left of the Central City Bung Company is a faint memory and a few newspaper articles. A grocery store and parking lot stand in its place today. Lola Miller, a librarian at the West Huntington Public Library, maintains a file on this elusive company. Now and then, a tidbit is added to her small pile of information, but the mystery that surrounds the factory continues. Some Huntington residents even speculate as to whether or not bungs were really the product being manufactured at the plant.

Perhaps we will never know the answer to that question. However, we do know that for a time, Central City was a bustling place and was proudly known as the "Bung Capital of the World."

JEAN McCLELLAND is a Charleston native who has lived in Huntington for the past 29 years. She has taught in Kanawha and Cabell county schools and is currently a technology resource teacher for the Independent Schools of Ashland, Kentucky. Her writing has appeared in the *Huntington Quarterly*, *Presbyterians Today*, and the *Herald-Dispatch*, where she writes a weekly column on antiques and collectibles. This is Jean's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Bung, barrel, and bung hammer from the collection of Earl Bush. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The City of Central City.



View of Central City, Cabell County, looking south along 14th Street West in about 1905. The Hartzell Handle Company is in the foreground, West Virginia Brewing Company and Huntington Tumbler Company are in the background. The Central City Bung Company is located behind the brewery in the distance on the right. All photographs courtesy of the West Huntington Public Library.

A Brief History

Unknown to many local residents, on a large portion of Huntington's westernmost reaches there once stood a freestanding, booming manufacturing hub known as Central City. Extending from Third Street West to 23rd Street West, and from the Ohio River to the foothills, Central City was home to more than 5,000 people and dozens of successful businesses between 1893 and 1909. A century later, the memory of Central City lives on, and local historians, librarians, businesses, and boosters are determined to make the most of it.

MAP OF

HUNTINGTON, CENTRAL CITY AND KELLOGG,

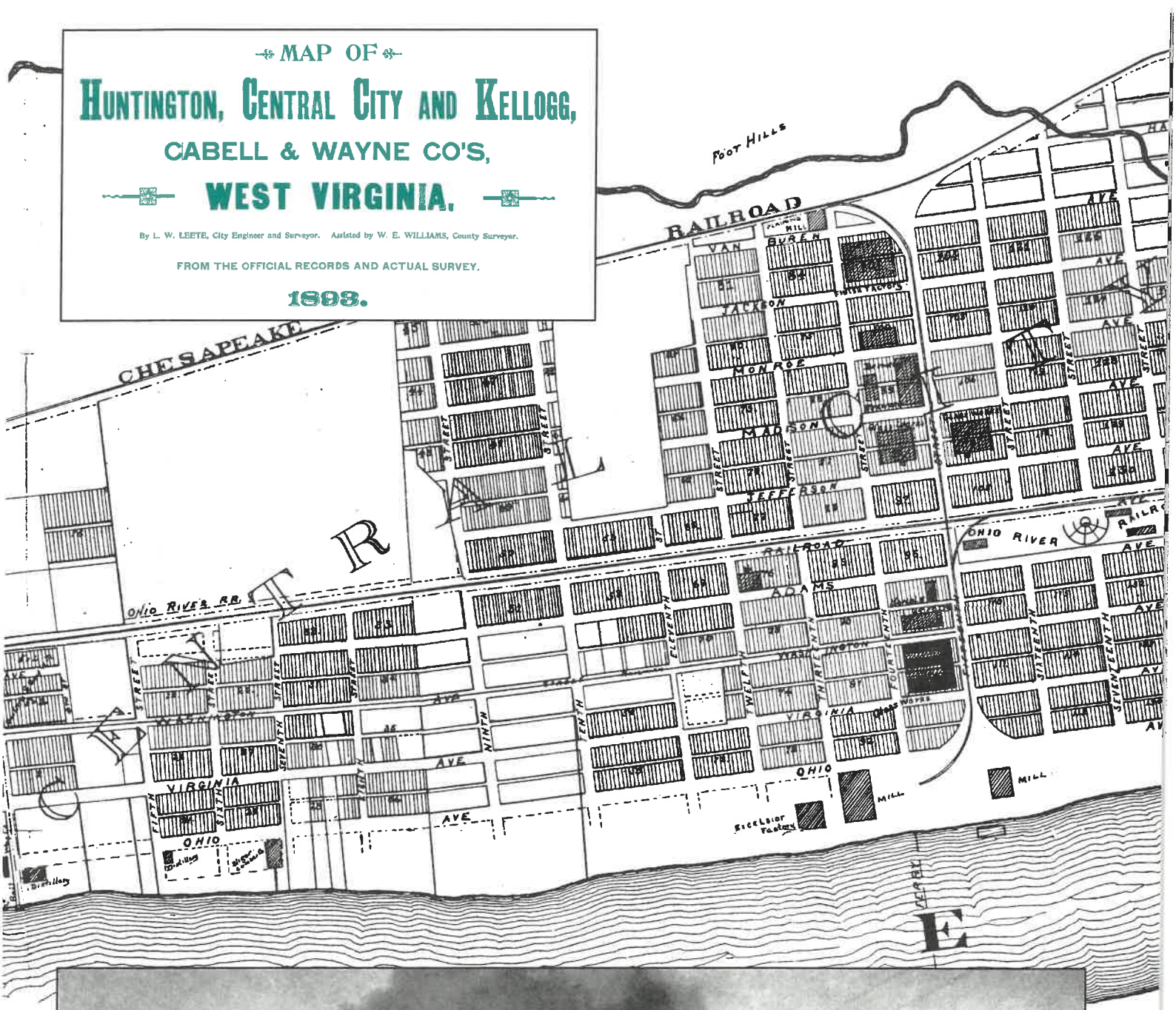
CABELL & WAYNE CO'S,

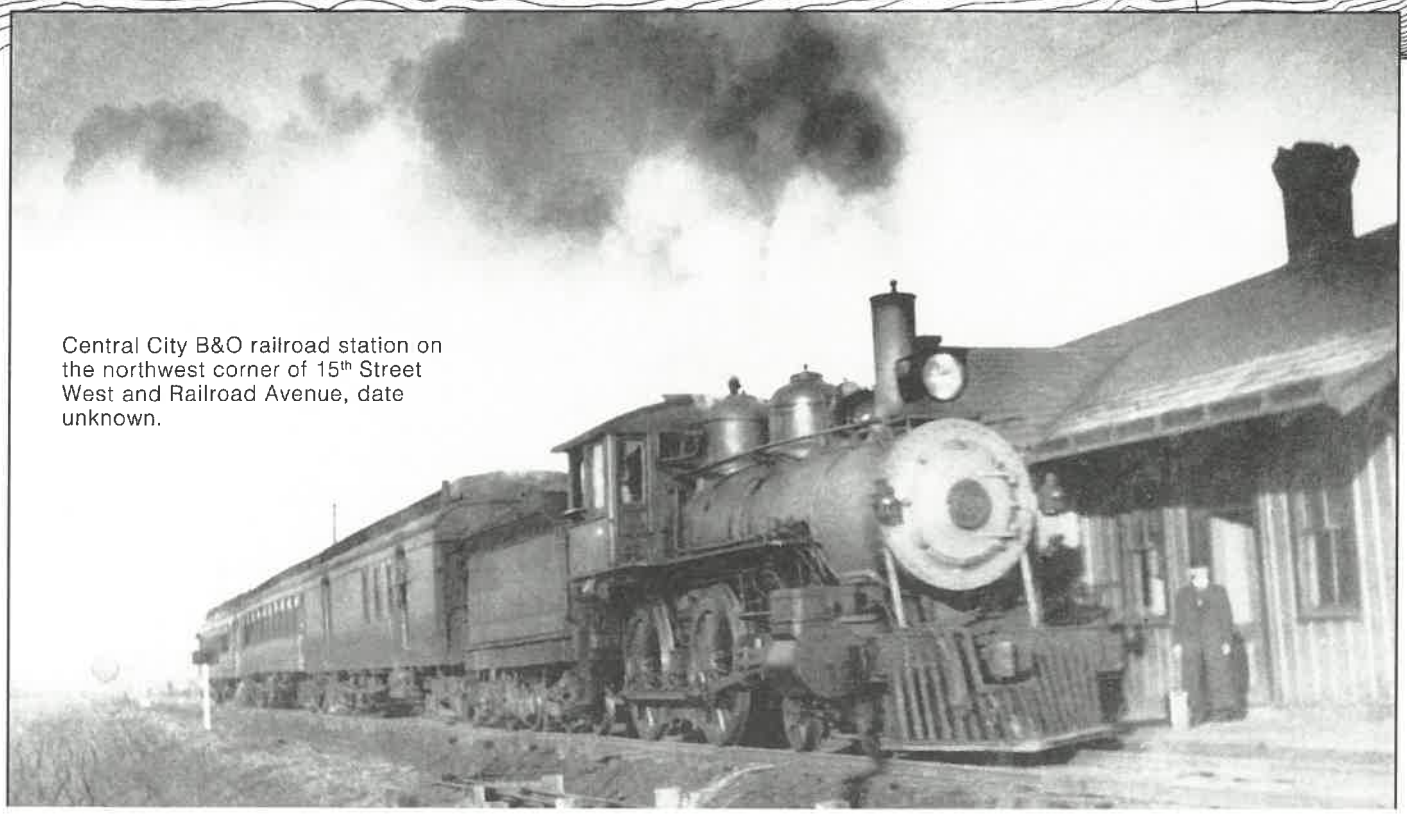
WEST VIRGINIA.

By L. W. LEETE, City Engineer and Surveyor. Assisted by W. E. WILLIAMS, County Surveyor.

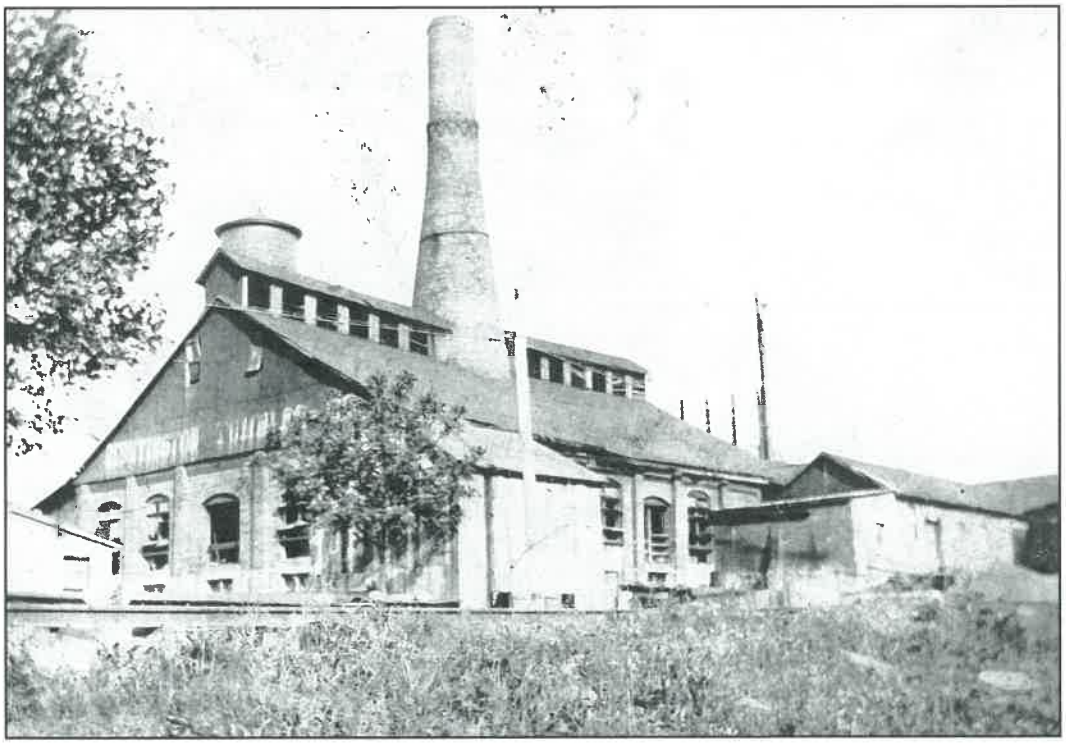
FROM THE OFFICIAL RECORDS AND ACTUAL SURVEY.

1893.

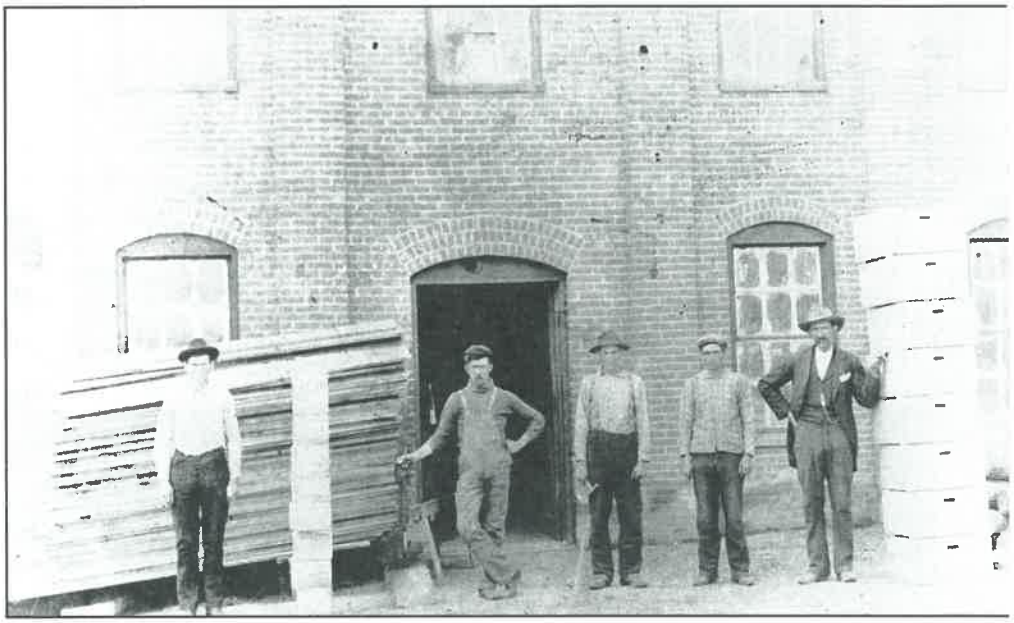




Central City B&O railroad station on the northwest corner of 15th Street West and Railroad Avenue, date unknown.



Huntington Tumbler glass company, located on 15th Street West, between Jefferson and Madison avenues, date unknown.



The Duncan Box and Lumber Company was still in business and owned by the Duncan family in 1999. From the left in this photograph are Mr. McClane, Hence Booth, Asher Stephenson, Rufus Clay, and M.L. Duncan, in about 1898.

Huntington was growing in the early 1890's, and the eyes of city planners began to look to the west. Foreseeing the expansion of the city into this flat, inviting valley, a group of investors formed the Huntington & Kenova Land Company in 1891 and aggressively sought businesses and manufacturers to locate there. The new development was called Central City. According to one source, that name was chosen because it lay halfway between Guyandotte and Catlettsburg, Kentucky. It was incorporated in 1893.

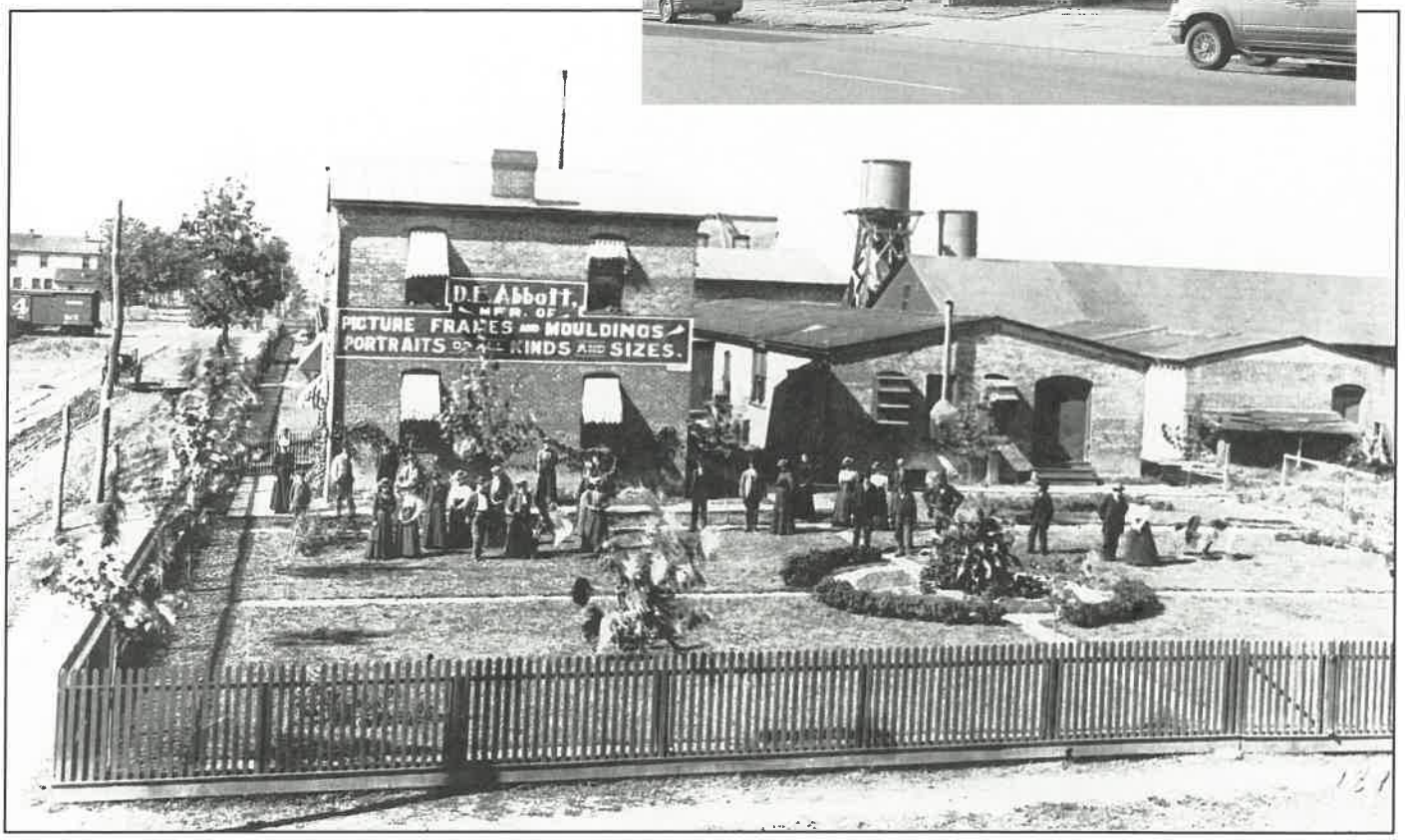
The area was served by both the C&O and the B&O railroads, providing almost unlimited access to hardwood timber and other raw materials and offering a ready method for shipping finished goods. At the heart of Central City was 14th Street West. Along this 12-block-long artery developed a lucrative array of factories, producing a wide variety of wooden products, glass goods, brewed and distilled beverages, bricks, ice, and a long list of other items.

Several glass plants operated in Central City, but the most successful of these was the Huntington Tumbler Company. It was formed in about 1900 and was run by members of the Zihlman family — Swiss immigrants, who sold tumblers, goblets, and high-quality lead-blown tableware around the world. They stayed in business until the Great Depression.

With the tremendous supply of available hardwood, several of Central City's most prominent businesses were wood-processing concerns. The most famous of these was the Central City Bung Company, which made carved wooden stoppers for the barrel industry, giving Central City its nickname as the "Bung Capital of the World" [see "The Central City Bung Company," by Jean McClelland; page 52]. At one time, the bung factory employed approximately 100 workers.

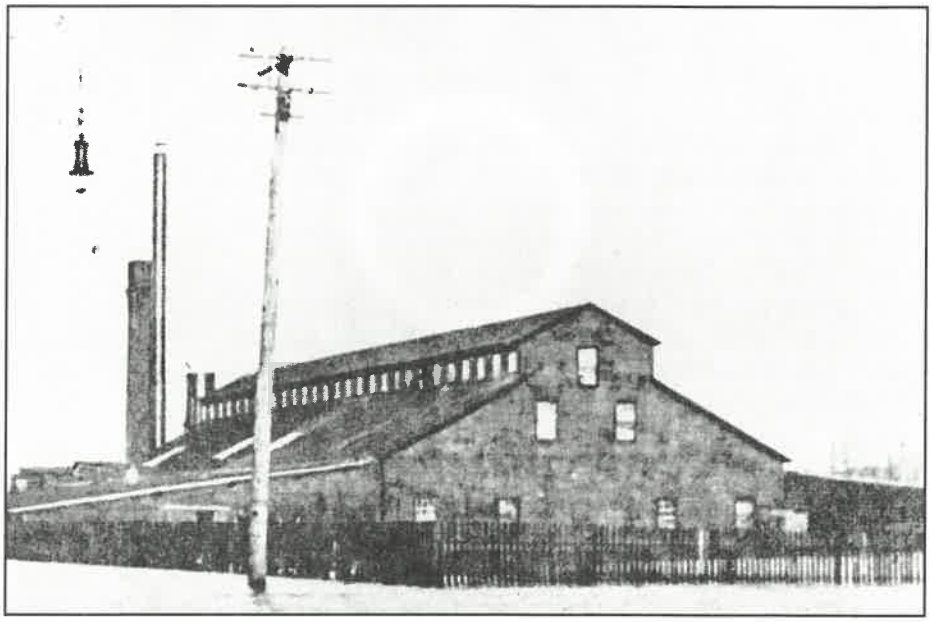
Nearly 300 people worked nearby at the D.E. Abbott Framing Com-

D.E. Abbott Framing Company, located at Washington Avenue and 14th Street West, shown below in 1899. The Abbott office building, at right, still stands today, largely unchanged. Recent photograph by Michael Keller.



pany. Formed by Canadian immigrant Darwin E. Abbott in about 1898, the company made picture frames and employed artists, who enlarged pictures and painted portraits. The Abbott office building still stands; a framing company operated out of there until 1993.

Two other important wood-processing operations were the Hartzell Handle Company and Beader Box, later known as the Duncan Box and Lumber Company. Hartzell made ax, shovel, and other tool handles out of hickory wood. Duncan Box made boxes and crates for the beer and soft-drink industries, as well as a good many military supply boxes. The company still operates and is run by family members.

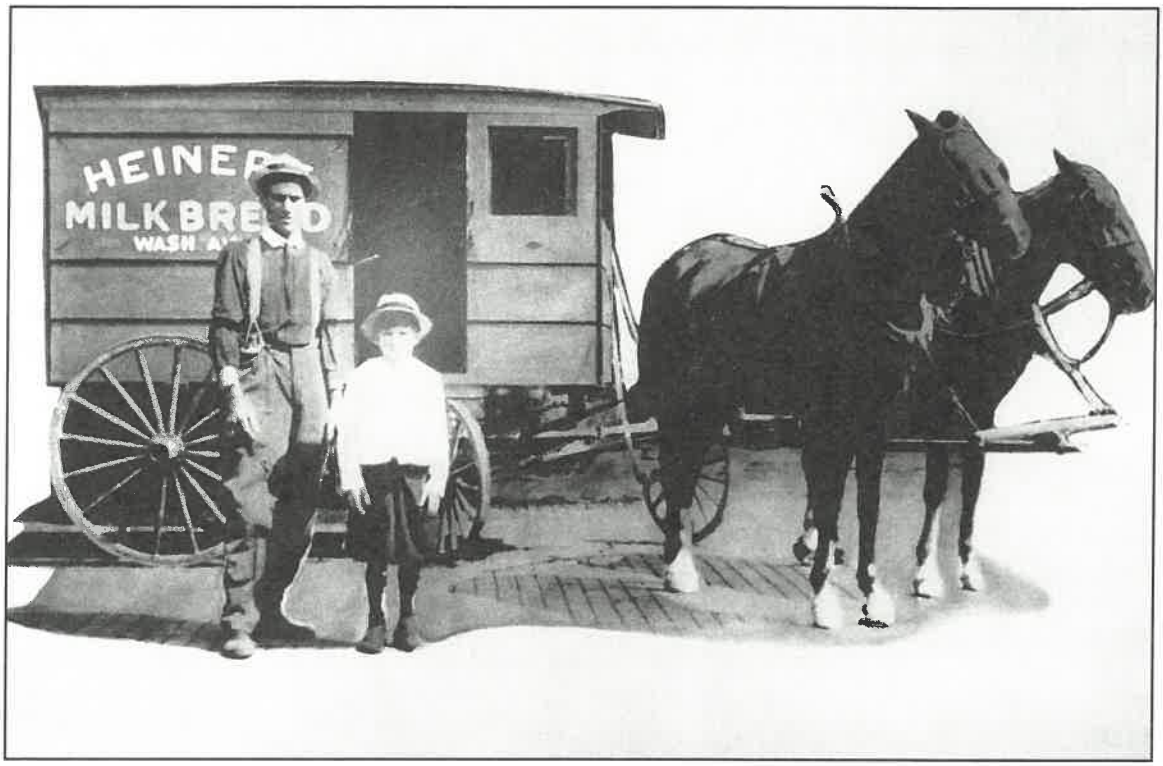


Hartzell Handle Company factory, date unknown.

West Virginia Brewing Company employees, 1896.

Businesses soon arose that catered to the thirsts of a growing population. These included the Blue Springs Distilling Company and the West Virginia Brewing Company. Little is known today about Blue Springs, but West Virginia Brewing Company, later called Fesenmeier Brewery, flourished until state prohibition was enacted in 1914. It later returned to brewing and operated until 1968. [See "'West Virginia: That'll Win Ya!': The Fesenmeier Brewery at Huntington," by Steve Fesenmaier; Winter 1981.]

Central City Keg Factory, located at 14th Street West and the C&O railroad tracks, shown here in about 1902.



Heiner's Bakery wagon in about 1910. Pictured here are founder Charles W. Heiner and son Earl W. Heiner. This was the company's first bread wagon. The bakery still operates at the northwest corner of 14th Street West and Adams Avenue.

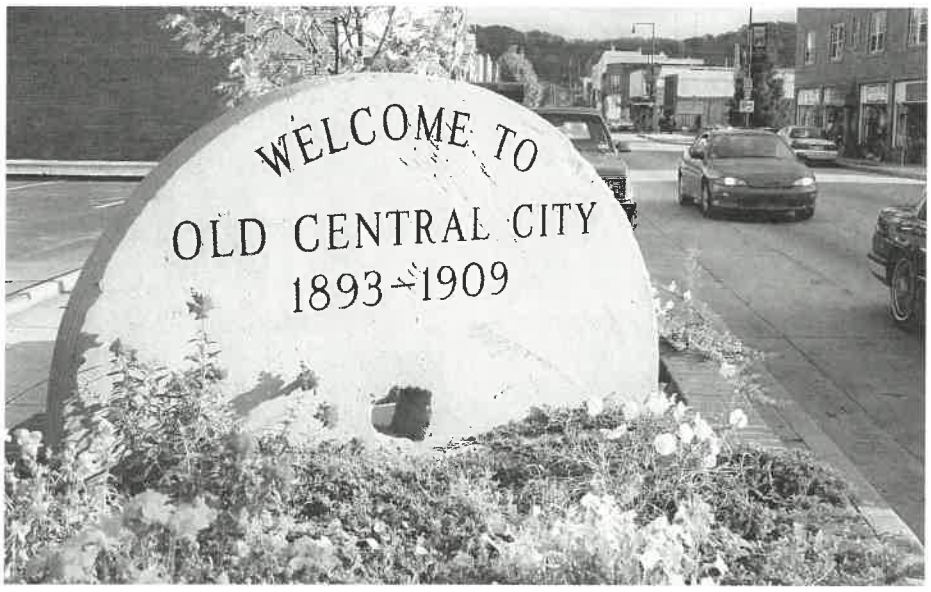
One Central City concern that has survived the years is Heiner's Bakery, begun in 1905 by Charles W. Heiner in one room of the Central Hotel. The Heiner family eventually grew their bakery into one of Central City's most successful and enduring businesses.

In 1908, the city of Huntington proposed the annexation of all of its suburbs and surrounding communities. Central City officially merged with Huntington on April 1, 1909.

In the mid-1980's, residents and community leaders in old Central City began an effort to revitalize their area, especially 14th Street West, and an organization called the Old Central City Association was formed. The West Huntington Library was built nearby in 1990, and librarian Lola Miller established a collection of materials related to the history of Central City. In 1993, Lola compiled much of this information into a booklet about the history of Central City. Copies of the booklet are available for check-out through the library; phone (304)528-5697.

Businesses along 14th Street West began sprucing up their store fronts. Soon, other businesses opened, including several dealers in antiques and collectibles. Today, there are approximately 19 antique and resale shops in the vicinity, and Old Central City calls itself the "Antiques Capital of West Virginia." Tourists, shoppers, local residents, and students of Huntington history can now visit this area and recall the days when Central City was an independent and thriving West Virginia city.

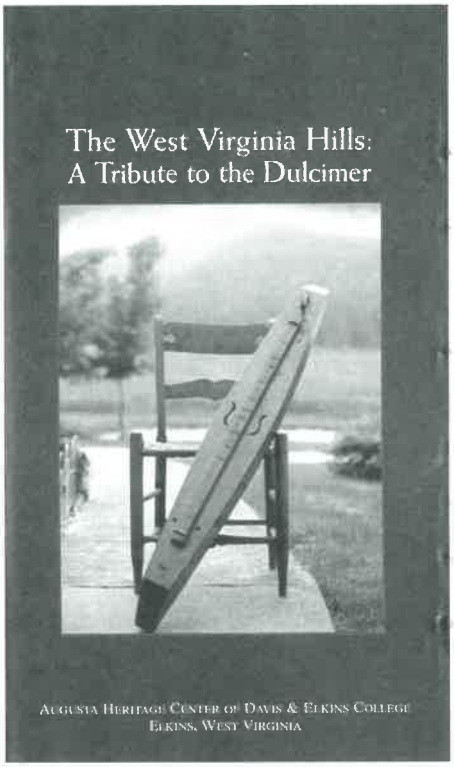
The editor wishes to thank Lola Miller, Jean McClelland, and Earl Bush for their assistance. For more information about Old Central City, write to Central City Market, P.O. Box 6666, Huntington, WV 25773; phone (304)525-1500.



Central City today is known as the "Antiques Capital of West Virginia." Photograph by Michael Keller.

Films and Videos on West Virginia and Appalachia

By Steve Fesenmaier



The West Virginia Hills: A Tribute to the Dulcimer
50 mins. *2003 Augusta Heritage Recordings*

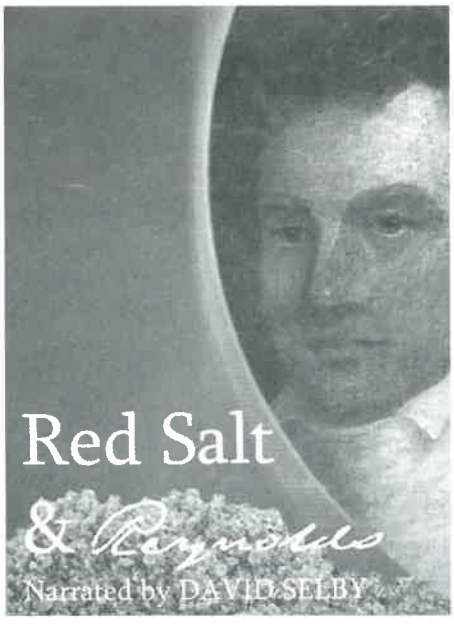
Folklorist and filmmaker Gerald Milnes of the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College has documented many older West Virginia dulcimer players and makers at their homes since the early 1990's. This new film introduces viewers to several of these players, while tracing the old-world German roots of the instrument, in part, through the collections of Patty Looman [see "Carrying On the Music: Dulcimer Player Patty Looman," by Danny Williams; Winter 1995] and Jim Costa [see "Jim Costa: West Virginia Renaissance Man," by Belinda Anderson; Fall 2001]. The film includes footage of traditional players, old dulcimers, and discussion about the origins of the instrument. It ends with cameo performances by some of the many talented dulcimer players who have graced the Augusta concert stage, including Margaret MacArthur, Lorraine Lee Hammond, and David Schnaufer. The VHS-format video is available for $25 from the Augusta Heritage Center; phone (304)637-1209 or on-line at www.augustaheritage.com.

Chase the Devil: Religious Music of the Appalachians
60 mins. *1990Koch Vision/ Shanachie Video*

This film focuses on the exuberant preaching, singing, and rituals of the Holiness Church, including footage of enraptured holiness members "speaking in tongues" and handling poisonous snakes as part of church services [see "Holiness People Revisited," by Yvonne Snyder Farley; Summer 1999]. The film also captures other aspects of Appalachian music and culture, such as the haunting and archaic religious balladry of unaccompanied singers Dee and Delta Hicks and Nimrod Workman, the old-time banjo playing of Virgil Anderson, the fiddle-band stylings of the Roan Mountain Hilltoppers, a traditional baptism in a river, and other scenes. This nationally-aired PBS documentary gives a street-level perspective of the religious music of the Appalachians and a behind-the-scenes tour of the region's traditional culture. It is available in either VHS or DVD format from www.amazon.com.

Red Salt & Reynolds
25 mins. *2003 Paradise Film Institute/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*

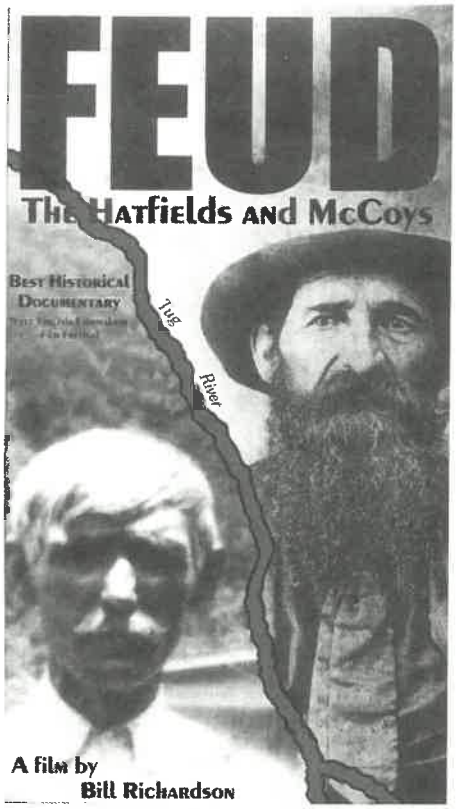
Exploration and settlement of the Kanawha Valley began in the late 1700's, fueled largely by the discovery of huge salt deposits and resulting in the development of the first large-scale extractive industry in the state. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has



spent years excavating a site at the Marmet Lock Replacement Project and have uncovered the remains there of four salt furnaces. They also have identified the mansion of early industrialist John Reynolds, the cabin occupied by his slaves, and the cemetery where he and several family members were buried. Using historic and industrial archeology, bio-anthropology, and historic documents, this new film details the rise and fall of the Reynolds family and traces the fortunes of the local saline industry, which was once the largest salt producer in America. The video is available in DVD or VHS format for $10, plus $3 shipping, from West Virginia Archeological Society, P.O. Box 300, Hurricane, WV 25526.

Feud: The Hatfields and McCoys
32 mins. *2002 Bill Richardson Productions*

Bill Richardson has created the most accurate and interesting film to-date about the legendary Hatfield-McCoy Feud [see "Hatfield History: Reconsidering the Famous Feud," by Robert Spence; Fall 1995]. In the film, Richardson lays out the history of the feud and shows what actually happened. He also carefully presents some of the many myths that persist about the feud, expertly showing how these common misconceptions simply could not be true. Richardson traces these famous families back to the Civil War, showing how both of the founding feudists fought on the Confederate side. He later explores the families' conflict over timber rights, thought by some to be at the root of the hostilities. There are many, many twists to the tale, and, as the narrator states at the end, the facts of the feud are even more interesting than the fiction. This is the first film about the feud made completely in the feud area and by local people. The narrator



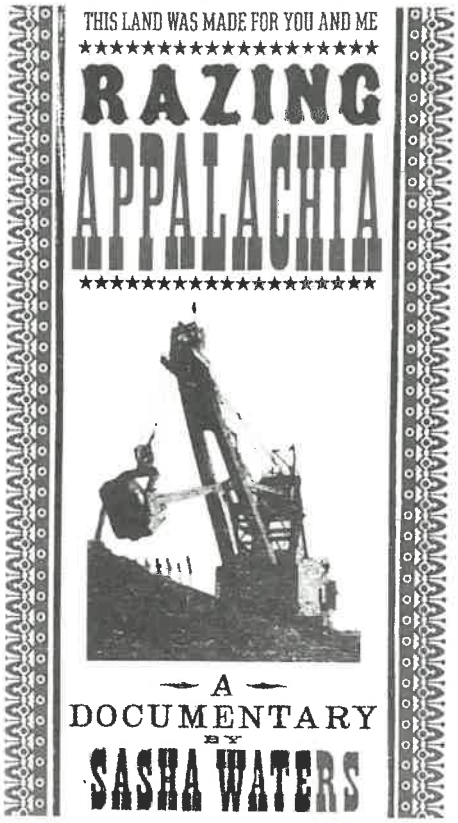
is from Matewan, and the majority of the music is from the feud period. The VHS-format video is available for $15, plus $3 shipping, from Bill Richardson, WVU Extension Office, Mingo County Courthouse, Room 3, Williamson, WV 25601; phone (304)235-0370 or e-mail brichard@wvu.edu.

The Pennsylvania Miners' Story
120 mins. *2003 Buena Vista Home Video*

One of the most dramatic stories of survival and rescue in recent years happened in a Pennsylvania coal mine in the summer of 2002. For 77 hours, nine miners were trapped in the Quecreek mine, and many feared that they would die. The world held its collective breath as rescue workers and volunteers dug down into the flooded mine shaft, using special equipment, only to come up empty in their first several tries to rescue the men. When they were finally saved with only a few hours of time remaining, an inspirational story of strength, cooperation, and faith was revealed. Much of this documentary/drama was shot in the actual locations in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, where the events occurred, including scenes at the real-life Quecreek mine, showing the life-threatening dangers and physical challenges the men faced during their ordeal. The film is available in VHS or DVD formats through www.amazon.com, or through other popular film or video outlets.

Razing Appalachia
54 mins. *2003 Room 135 Productions*

This new film explores the issue of mountaintop removal mining by examining grassroots efforts in one Logan County community to opppose the practice. In May 1998, Arch Coal, Inc., announced plans to expand its Dal-Tex surface mining operations above the town of Blair, and 40 families in nearby Pigeonroost Hollow were determined to stop them. In the ensuing fight, local activists



took on the country's second-largest coal company, powerful state political leaders, and 400 union miners whose jobs were at stake, in what became a dramatic and emotional struggle for survival. This VHS video is available from Bullfrog Films at www.bullfrogfilms.com; phone (610)779-8226.

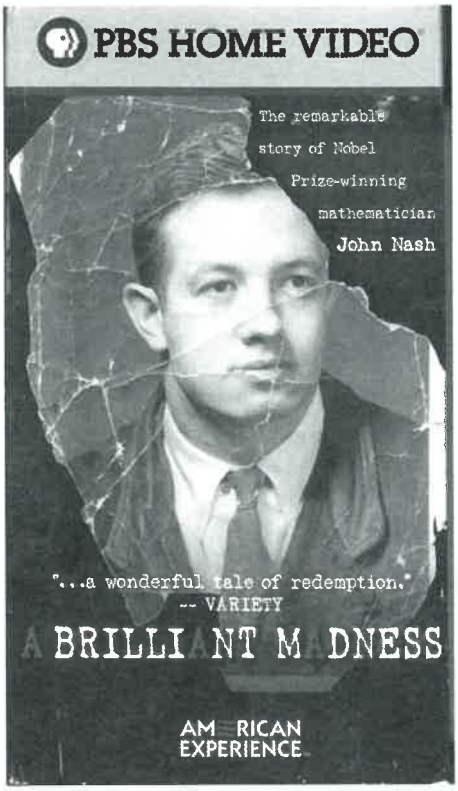
Coal Bucket Outlaw
27 mins. *2002 Appalshop Films*
The U.S. Department of Energy reports that coal produces more than half of our nation's electricity. As most people in this region are aware, the trucks used to haul that coal frequently operate well above their legal weight limit. Filmmaker Tom Hansell explores the world of overweight coal-hauling trucks in eastern Kentucky in this innovative new film, built around a day in the life of a Kentucky coal truck driver. This digital documentary offers a direct look at where our energy comes from and reveals the human and environmental price we pay for our national dependence on fossil fuels. Viewers

learn how the economics of the coal business demand that most drivers break the law every day. A veteran independent trucker plays a "cops and robbers" game with the weight crew from the Department of Transportation, a young driver debates whether to keep hauling coal or to move his family to the city, and a father describes a collision with a coal truck that killed his teenage son. The film is available in VHS format from www.appalshop.org/film; phone 1-800-545-7467.

Flood '96: The Greenbrier River Disaster of 1996
76 mins. 2000 Red Oak Productions
In 1996, for the second time in 10 years, the Greenbrier River poured more than six feet of torrential water and mud through homes in Pocahontas County, destroying virtually everything in its path. This compelling video captures the events as they happened, creating a chronicle of the awesome power of nature, the fragility of life, and the bravery and determination of those who were left to pick up the pieces. It is available in VHS format for $19.95, plus shipping, from Patchwork Films at www.patchworkfilms.com; phone (304)645-4998.

River on the Rocks: A Birch River Helicopter Journey
38 mins. *Wolf Pen Digital*
Viewing the scenic Birch River from the air, author/photographer Rob Johnson and filmmaker Neal Gentry offer a helicopter tour of the final 17 miles of the river and its valley. The aerial adventure begins at the Cora Brown Bridge in Nicholas County and ends at Glendon in Braxton County. Narrated by Clay County native and former NBC television newsman Neil Boggs, the film combines spectacular helicopter views with colorful still photography of the area. It sells for $15 and is available in VHS video format as well as CD-R computer disk from Scenic Birch River on-line at www.scenicbirchriver. com/store.htm.

A Brilliant Madness
60 mins. *2002 PBS*
Bluefield native John Nash was



an eccentric mathematical genius whose 30-year battle against schizophrenia ended in triumph, as he was awarded the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize in economics. His struggle with the disease was the subject of the acclaimed 2001 film, "A Beautiful Mind." Famed filmmaker Mark Samell — director of "West Virginia: A Film History" — returned to the Mountain State in 2002 to produce this film biography of Nash, including interviews with Nash, his sister, his wife Alicia, friends, and colleagues. The film was made as part of the popular "American Experience" series for PBS television. It is available in VHS and DVD formats from www.shop.pbs.org.

East Wind, West Wind: Pearl Buck
95 mins. *1993 Filmakers Library*
Best-selling author Pearl Buck was born in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, in 1892. She was the daughter of missionaries, and much of her youth was spent in China, where she developed a

deep respect for the Chinese people. As an adult, Pearl Buck became one of the most popular American writers of the 20th century and the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Her popular book *The Good Earth* is considered a classic.

Producer Donn Rogosin — former general manager of WSWP-TV, Beckley — and director Craig Davidson traveled the world to create the only feature film about this important West Virginia literary figure. The film interweaves early footage of both rural and urban China and interviews with Asian scholars and Buck's contemporaries. The film analyzes how Pearl Buck used her celebrity to draw attention to social issues of her time, such as women's rights, civil rights, the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, mixed-race adoption, and tolerance for the mentally retarded. For more information on this film, check on-line at www.filmakers.com/indivs/EastWind.htm.

The Pare Lorentz Collection
1928-32 International Documentary Association

Pare Lorentz of Clarksburg was selected as U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's filmmaker during the Great Depression. During those years, Lorentz made a series of documentary films that changed how the medium was used and how documentary films were created. Born and raised in Harrison County, Lorentz attended West Virginia University before moving to New York City to become a film critic. His work as a filmmaker is considered so extraordinary that the International Documentary Association has given the Pare Lorentz Award to the world's best social documentary films for the past six years. The International Documentary Association has also remastered four of Lorentz's films, making them available in high-quality video, along with a new study guide. The four films are "The Plow That Broke the Plains," "The River," "The Fight for Life," and "Nuremberg." They are available individually for $19.95 each, or as a set for $69.95, from the International Documentary Association; phone (213)534-3600.

Many of these videos and others can be purchased at Tamarack: The Best of West Virginia, located along the West Virginia Turnpike outside of Beckley. For information, visit them at Exit 45 or call 1-888-262-7225; on-line at www.tamarackwv.com. Many videos of regional interest are also offered for sale at Showcase West Virginia in Charleston's Town Center Mall; phone (304)342-8527. A greatly expanded list of other new films about West Virginia and Appalachia can be found on-line at www.ferrum.edu/AppLit/Bibs/2003WVFilm.htm. Additional lists can be found at www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/WVFilmIndex.htm.

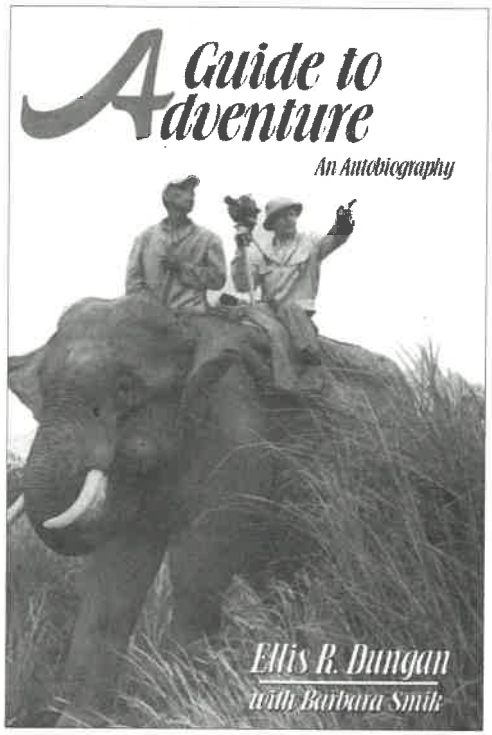
Ellis Dungan Book

Few people have lead a more colorful, varied, or productive life than Wheeling filmmaker Ellis Dungan. Born in 1909 in eastern Ohio and raised in Wheeling, he was educated in Southern California, traveled internationally after college, and finally landed in India, where he became a prominent maker of Indian movies.

After 15 years, Dungan returned to Hollywood, where he directed scores of jungle adventure movies and TV shows. Returning to Wheeling in the late 1950's, he began making historical, documentary, and commercial films, many of them concerning Wheeling and the upper Ohio River Valley.

Ellis Dungan was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL feature story in our Fall 1996 issue [see "'Ready, Wheeling and Able': Movie Maker Ellis Dungan," by Barbara Diane Smik]. Author Barbara Smik collaborated with Ellis Dungan in writing his recent autobiography, titled *A Guide to Adventure: An Autobiography*, published in 2002 by Dorrance Publishing.

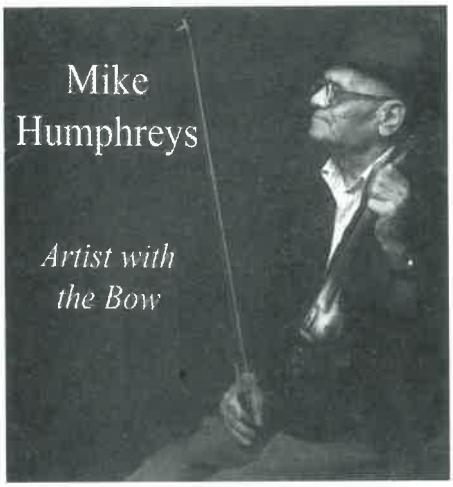
Included are numerous rare and unusual photographs, a useful filmography of Dungan's work, tips from Dungan on filming wildlife, and a forward by former GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan. This 261-page paperbound book sells for $22. To order, please call 1-800-788-7654.



Mountain Music Roundup

By John Lilly

Old meets new, young musicians sound ancient, and historic music is given a new lease on life through several new and recently released recordings. It's always pleasing to see our musical traditions evolve, and equally encouraging to know that classic performances by some of the all-time greats have been kept alive through the marvels of modern technology. Life is good!



Fiddler **Mike Humphreys** made big waves in Kanawha Valley fiddling circles beginning in the 1930's and lasting until his death in 1986 at age 67. Humphreys' smooth, powerful, and imaginative playing made him hard to beat at local contests, and made him a popular choice for area bands in search of a top-notch fiddler in country, bluegrass, or old-time styles. He performed widely over radio and television in the Charleston area and was a featured performer at many folk and traditional music festivals. In 1985, he received the prestigious Vandalia Award.

Surprisingly, Mike Humphreys never made a commercial recording during his lifetime. Thanks to West Virginia's Roane Records, however, we can once again enjoy this marvelous fiddler through a new CD recording called "Artist with the Bow." The generous 38 tracks on this recording give ample evidence of Humphreys' depth as a musician, and his clean, intricate versions of these traditional melodies give them new life. Obvious to fiddle fans are Humphreys' skill and confidence as he plays most of these tunes at a brisk-to-breakneck pace. Equally apparent is the debt Mike owed to Kanawha Valley fiddling legend Clark Kessinger. As a boy, Humphreys admired Kessinger's music, and he later readily admitted the influence Kessinger had on his playing. The two men eventually became friends, and Mike plays several tunes associated with Kessinger in this collection.

These recordings were gathered, restored, and mastered by David O'Dell at his studio in West Logan. They range from solo performances to duets with guitar accompaniment, to ensemble recordings with a full string band. The audio quality fluctuates, as the original recordings were culled from a wide range of sources. One minor shortcoming of this package is the lack of information provided about these source recordings. The only notation provided is that 16 of the tracks were recorded "by and with Emerson Summers in the late 1960's." We are left to guess about the other 22 tracks; some sound like they were taken from radio or television transcriptions, and others seem to be home recordings or jam sessions. All are good, however, and we're glad to have them.

Included with the CD package are numerous historical photographs and useful biographical notes and commentary from Robert Spence and Bobby Taylor, as well as a wonderful cover portrait of Mike Humphreys by Culture and History photographer Michael Keller. For information, write to Roane Records, P.O. Box 5294, West Logan, WV 25601 or visit www.fiddletunes.com.

World Champion Fiddler
Clark Kessinger

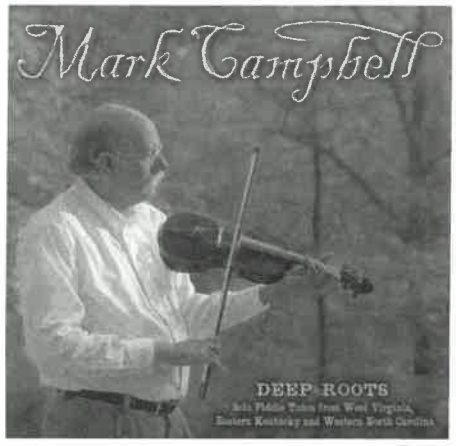
Recorded Live At
Union Grove, North Carolina

Speaking of **Clark Kessinger**, we are happy to report the recent CD reissue of Kessinger's influential live recording made in 1968 at Union Grove, North Carolina. Clark was the subject of an

extensive article in our Fall 1997 issue [see "Clark Kessinger: Pure Fiddling," by Charles Wolfe], and he is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest fiddlers ever to come from this region. This new release, called "Clark Kessinger: World Champion Fiddler," was originally issued on LP by Kanawha Records in 1968 then again in 1976 on the Folkways label; both LP's are long out of print. This new CD release documents Kessinger's music at the peak of his "second career," during the 1960's and 70's folk music revival. The original LP was recorded and produced by Ken Davidson, who also produced this reissue. It is available from Triagle Far Records, P.O. Box 1476, Dayton, OH 45401 or on-line at www.countysales.com.

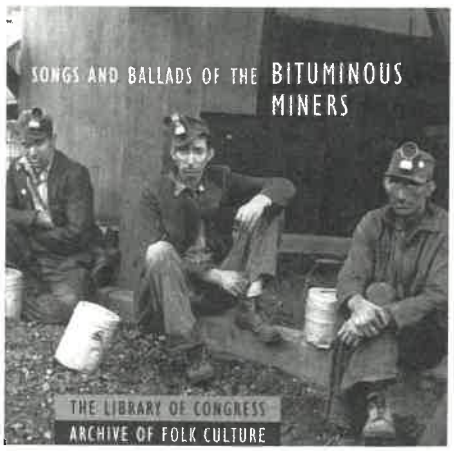
Heir-apparent to the Kessinger/Humphreys fiddling tradition is St. Albans musician **Bobby Taylor**. As a young man, Bobby studied under Clark Kessinger; he also played extensively with Mike Humphreys. Like Humphreys, however, Bobby Taylor has been conspicuously absent from the world of recordings. In 1988, Bobby released his one-and-only cassette tape called "Kanawha Tradition." This out-of-print recording has now been re-released by Roane Records on a new CD, also titled "Kanawha Tradition." In addition to the original 12 tracks, four new instrumentals have been added to the collection, with guitarist James Summers and banjo player David O'Dell — two talented young musicians who have often played with Bobby Taylor in recent years. For information, write to Roane Records, P.O. Box 5294, West Logan, WV 25601 or visit www.fiddletunes.com.

Preserving a more rustic, but equally compelling style of West Virginia and southern Appalachian fiddling is **Mark Campbell** of Richmond, Virginia. Mark is a dedicated and insightful musician who has devoted much of his life — and seemingly all of his available vacation time — to traveling the back roads of West Virginia, Kentucky, and western North Carolina in search of archaic fiddling. Not only has he found it, but he has made it his own. On his latest recording, "Deep Roots," Mark offers convincing solo renditions of 24 profoundly Appalachian melodies, many from West Virginia. Mark plays them all with feeling and authority. In the accompanying notes, he provides details about the history of each selection, the fiddle tunings used (they vary), and information about other recommended recorded versions of each tune. "Deep Roots" is appropriately dedicated to the memory of Braxton County fiddler Melvin Wine. For more information, write to Mark Campbell, 804 West 29th Street, Richmond, VA 23225.



Two young West Virginia banjo players have recently released CD's of their music. **David O'Dell** of West Logan, mentioned frequently in these pages as a record producer and accompanying musician, has issued a CD of his own called "Banjo for a Rainy Day." David is a consistent finalist in the Vandalia Gathering's "under 60" banjo contest, taking first-place honors in 2001 and second place the next two years. This new CD features David's prize-winning clawhammer banjo playing on 18 solo instrumental tracks. "Banjo for a Rainy Day" is available through Roane Records at P.O. Box 5294, West Logan, WV 25601 or on-line at www.fiddletunes.com.

Another young player with a deep well of talent is **John Blisard** from Elkview. GOLDENSEAL readers might recall John as the author of our Winter 2000 story about coon hounds [see "Coondog Heaven"]. John's greatest skill, however, lies in his music; he can play anything from a hard-driving banjo tune to a beautiful Celtic air on the harp or the bagpipes. His 1995 cassette recording "Protect the Innocent" has been reissued on CD. It includes 16 tracks and provides a vivid cross-section of John's versatility. On the recording, he plays banjo, harp, and bagpipes, as well as guitar, fiddle, cello, and bass, in various combinations. For more information, write to John Blisard at 800 Honeysuckle Road, Elkview, WV 25071; e-mail milo@ntlos.net.



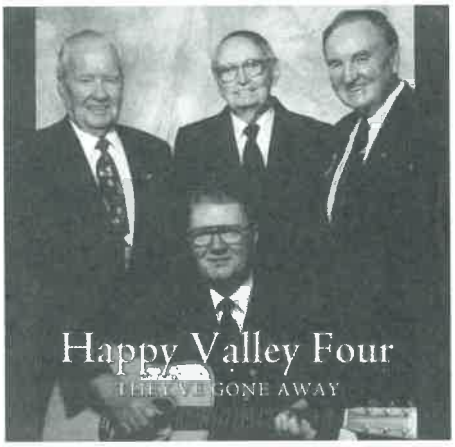
Songs of labor and struggle have played a crucial role, not only in our state's musical life, but in the raising of public awareness about mining issues and industrial causes. In 1940, folklorist George

Korson traveled the coalfields from Pennsylvania to Alabama, recording songs sung by working miners. The results were issued by the Library of Congress in 1948 and on LP by Rounder Records in 1965; they are now available on CD. **"Songs and Ballads of the Bituminous Miners"** is a startling collection of songs and unaccompanied ballads — plus one fiddle tune with a mining title — expressing the way of life and the working concerns of coal miners during the final years of the hand-loading era. Nine of these 18 songs were recorded in West Virginia. They document not only a time and place in history, they offer an often-surprising look at the musical talents of these working men. "Songs and Ballads of the Bituminous Miners" (Rounder 18964-1522-2) is available from Rounder Records, One Camp Street, Cambridge, MA 02140 or at www.rounder.com.

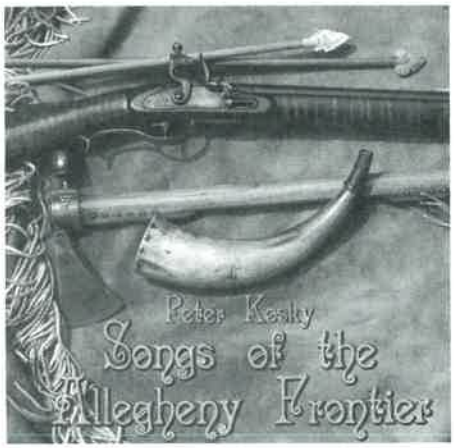
The **Lilly Brothers** of Raleigh County are living treasures of old- time country and early bluegrass music. Along with their neighbor, banjo player Don Stover, Everett and "B" Lilly introduced a wide audience — especially those in New England and Japan — to the music of our region. Some of the group's strongest recordings were made in 1956 and '57 in Maine for the obscure Event record label, which issued only a handful of them on

45-r.p.m. records. These four titles, along with seven remaining unissued takes, were later put out on a now-out-of-print LP from County Records. These rare and precious recordings are finally available on CD as "Lilly Brothers & Don Stover: Early Recordings" (Rebel CD-1688). These performances features pulse-quickening renditions of the group's best-loved numbers, highlighted by the brothers' soaring vocal harmonies and blistering banjo and mandolin playing. It is available on-line at www.countysales.com.

The Capitol Singing Doorkeepers are a Charleston-area gospel quartet, who were featured in our Fall 2000 issue [see "'Peace In the Valley': West Virginia's Singing Doorkeepers," by John Lilly].



Though these gentlemen no longer work on the floor of the West Virginia Legislature, they still travel the state singing their irresistible style of traditional gospel music at churches, tent meetings, and other gatherings. The group is once again using their old name — **Happy Valley Four** — and are sounding better than ever. Their latest recording is called "They've Gone Away," and it is available on both CD and cassette tape. It includes old-time favorites such as "Echoes From the Burning Bush" and "Down By the Riverside" along with 12 other fine gospel songs. For more information, write to Bill Pauley at 9004 Maryland Avenue, Marmet, WV 25315; phone (304)949-2670.



"Songs of the Allegheny Frontier" is an ambitious collection of original songs by Charleston-area musician and songwriter **Peter Kosky**. An accomplished banjo and guitar player, Peter often participates in traditional music events and has recorded with Dunbar banjo player and Vandalia Award recipient Brooks Smith. Peter is also a school-teacher, and this thematic project is based on the history of westward expansion into the Appalachian Mountains during the colonial period and tells many of the dramatic tales associated with the early exploration of the Allegheny Highlands. These 14 original compositions, and one traditional song, are presented with simple and tasteful guitar, banjo, and fiddle accompaniment, and Peter sings them in his clear and pleasant baritone voice. They present a colorful picture of hardship, determination, struggle, and triumph; they also show one musician's efforts to combine a knowledgeable and sincere appreciation of our region's folklife and history with a passion and talent for writing new songs. For more information, write to Tuscarawas Music, P.O. Box 8561, South Charleston, WV 25303; e-mail baldsongster@Yahoo.com.

Goldenseal Index

Volume 29, 2003

Articles that appeared in Volume 29 are listed in the index below under the categories of Subject, Author, Photographer, and Location.

In the Subject category, articles are listed under their main topic, with many cross-referenced under alternate Subject headings, as well. Each entry is followed by the seasonal designation, volume and issue number, and page number. Short notices, such as those that appear in the regular column "Current Programs, Events, Publications," sidebars, "GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes," etc., are not included in the index.

The index for the first three volumes of GOLDENSEAL appears in the April-September 1978 issue; the index for Volumes 4 and 5 is in the January-March 1980 magazine. The index for each successive volume appears in the final issue of each calendar year. The cumulative index is available on our Web site at www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/gsindex.html.

Subject

Author

Photographer

Location

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685 FOR GOLDENSEAL: WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE (U.S.P.S. No. 013336), Filing date October 1, 2003, published quarterly, at The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Number of issues published annually: 4. Annual subscription price: $17. The general business offices of the publisher are located at The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. John Lilly is the contact person at (304)558-0220.

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John Lilly, Editor

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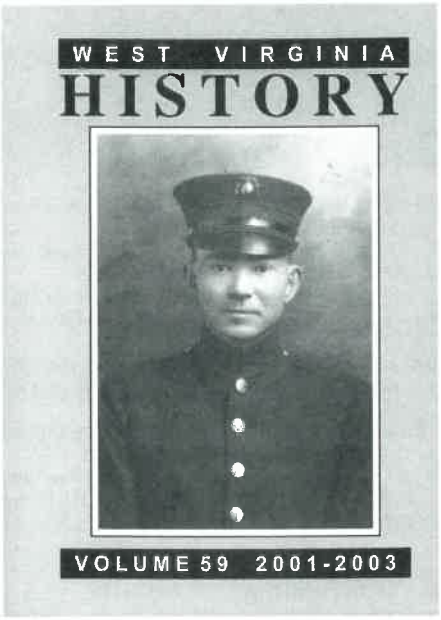
West Virginia History

West Virginia History, the state's official journal of genealogy and history, has released its latest edition. Current articles highlight military service and include stories on the December 1861 Civil War engagement at Allegheny Mountain in Pocahontas County, and the World War I letters of state resident Arthur Greenlee, who wrote to his family in Mason County from the trenches of France in 1918. There is also a 1916 report on the Meadow River Lumber Company.



The 2001-2003 issue of *West Virginia History*, Volume 59, was released in August 2003 by the State Archives and History section of the Division of Culture and History. GOLDENSEAL readers may be particularly interested in an extensive report on the Meadow River Lumber Company in Fayette County by Andrew Larson. The report, written by Larson in 1916 while a student at the New York State College of Forestry, includes specific financial and technical material on the company as well as background on lumbering in general. The Meadow River Lumber Company was the subject of our cover story in our Winter 1991 issue [see "Nothing but Hardwood: The Meadow River Lumber Company," by Ben Crookshanks].

The current edition of *West Virginia History* also includes information on efforts to make part of the Boyd B. Stutler Collection available online. The Stutler Collection was the world's largest private collection of John Brown materials when it was acquired by the State of West Virginia in 1977.

West Virginia History is available for sale from the State Archives office for $15.00. For more information, call Mary Johnson at (304)558-0230.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Musicians Lester & Linda McCumbers
- The *Wetzel Republican* Newspaper
- Preacher Homer Dale Hacker
- Winning Vandalia Liars

PHOTO CURIOSITY

Do you know these smiling people and their dogs? This wonderful holiday portrait comes to us courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Burnsville Public Library Collection. We aren't sure of the date, location, or identity of the subjects. It is plain, however, that this family loved their dogs, and that these boys are ready for some fun with their sleds. If you can identify these fine folks, or can offer any other information about this photograph, please contact us at the GOLDENSEAL office. Happy holidays!

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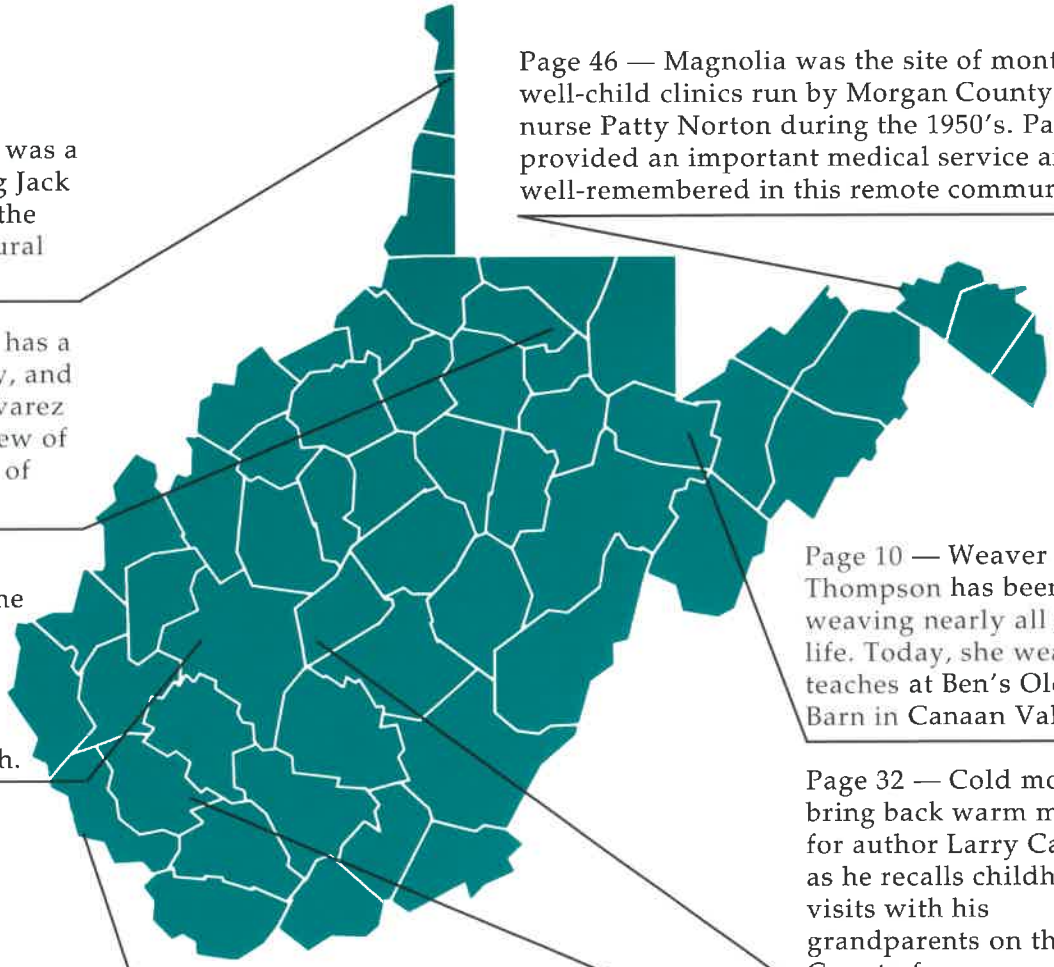
Inside Goldenseal



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