

Goldenseal

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April-June 1977



Interview with 'Dr. Maggie,' 1900-1976 •
Preston County Educator and Penman • Italian
Winemaking • McDowell County Song
Writer and Musician

Goldenseal

**A Quarterly Forum for Documenting
West Virginia's Traditional Life**

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COVER: Dr. Margaret B. Ballard (ca. 1974) at McClung's Mill in Zenith (Monroe Co.). An interview with "Dr. Maggie" begins on page 5. Photograph by Ray Ellis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

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Current: PROGRAMS • FESTIVALS • PUBLICATIONS

Pricketts Fort's Summer Plans

Pricketts Fort State Park near Fairmont begins its second season this month. The park, fort, and living history trade demonstrations open April 16 on a weekend-only basis, and a week-long operation begins on May 1.

A series of special events sponsored by the Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation begins April 16-17 with a tribute to spring—a Wildflower-Wildfoods Weekend. This is a hiking tour in search of area vegetation headed by guest lecturers and tour guides. Lunches and rainwear are advised. Reservations, by phone or in writing, are required. Other events scheduled for May and June include:

MAY 14-15.

Spinning Workshop. Instruction in the processing of raw wool (carding, picking, and spinning) headed by the fort's resident weaver. Reservations required. Fee.

MAY 21-22.

Invitational Revolutionary War Unit Encampment. Brigade of the American Revolution encampment. Muzzle loading demonstrations, military drills, and 18th century color and music.

MAY 29-30.

Spring Invitational Flintlock Rifle Shoot. Muzzle loading competition for flintlock and percussion buffs (rifles, muskets, pistols). Targets supplied. Entry fee. Competitor reservations advised.

JUNE 11-12.

Indian Artifacts Weekend. Invitational exhibition of regional Indian artifacts.

JULY 2-4.

Frontier Fourth Celebration. A salute to independence 18th century style. Interpretation of the role of the Virginia frontier in the fight for independence.

Pricketts Fort State Park is located five miles north of Fairmont, off I-79 at Exit 139. The reconstructed Revolutionary War fort houses artisans—a spinner and weaver, blacksmith, gunsmith, and harness maker—who ply their trades within the fort's 18th century living history environment. Dressed in period attire, they produce items ranging from muskets and pistols to wooden churns, buckets, woven material, and leather goods.

Situated on 188 acres of West Virginia field and forest, the fort overlooks the juncture of Pricketts Creek



Pricketts Fort. Photograph courtesy of Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation.

and the Monongahela River. Fishing and boating are permitted. Limited picnic facilities are also available.

Admission to the fort is by donation—adults - \$1.50; children - \$.75; under six free. Memberships entitling the bearer to free admission to the fort and all special events are available from the foundation.

For more information on the fort, memberships, or special events contact Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 8, Fairmont, WV 26554.

Traditional Music Festival at Culture Center on Memorial Day Weekend

An important four-day celebration called Vandalia Gathering: A Festival of West Virginia Traditional Music is being planned for Memorial Day weekend in Charleston. Sponsored by the Science and Culture Center, the festival will take place in and around the Center from May 27 through 30. Over 60 musicians, mainly older ones whose music has passed down to them through family tradition, have been invited to perform at Vandalia Gathering, called "a major effort of the Culture Center" by Director, Norman L. Fagan.

A special exhibit of old West Virginia quilts and musical instruments will be mounted in the Center to accompany the festival. Also, there will be demonstrations by quilt makers and

other craftspeople. Fiddle, banjo, and dulcimer players and ballad singers, or West Virginia's distinctive old-time musicians, will be most evident at Vandalia Gathering, yet a special search is underway to locate and invite ethnic musicians. Black blues and gospel musicians as well as those still performing music brought here by immigrants from central and southern Europe will be prominently featured on the indoor and outdoor programs.

A number of informal workshops are scheduled for the festival. Small groups of musicians who share similar styles, interests, or home places will play and talk about their music. Outdoor concerts are planned for Saturday and Sunday afternoons, May 28 and 29. Every part of Vandalia Gathering is free to the public, and no tickets will be required for any event.

Name Change and Festival Dates From National Council for the Traditional Arts

In December the board of directors of the National Folk Festival Association, Inc. voted to change the name of that organization to the National Council for the Traditional Arts, Inc. The council still sponsors the National Folk Festival held at Wolf Trap Farm for the Performing Arts near Washington, D. C., at Vienna, Virginia. This year's festival, the 39th, will be held July 29 through 31. *Tradition* is the name of the lively and increasingly informative quarterly publication of the organization, and it is sent to members of the council. The address of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, Inc. is Suite 1118, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

John Henry Folk Festival Dates

The John Henry Folk Festival will take place August 26-28 at Camp Virgil Tate near Charleston, according to Ed Cabell, director of the John Henry Memorial Foundation, Inc. The festival, an annual event featuring authentic blues and gospel music, is sponsored by the foundation. The affair will follow roughly the format of last year's offerings of arts and crafts, films, children's programs, various workshops, and evening concerts. For further information write the John Henry Memorial Foundation, P. O. Box 1357, Princeton, WV 24740, or phone 304/487-1148.



Oral "Nick" Nicholson weaves white oak and stories for visiting students in 1976.

Salem Fort's Events

Fort New Salem, the Salem College heritage arts center, is a cultural image of the past. The fort is an educational adaptation of a 19th-century Appalachian settlement, consisting of a collection of log houses representing the settlement of New Salem, Virginia, circa 1790-1830. Each log structure is a classroom or display area in which lifestyles and vocations of that settlement period are carried out in the same fashion.

In addition Salem College offers a degree program in heritage arts on its campus near the fort. The program is a specialization within the art department consisting of a major or minor in heritage arts toward a Bachelor of Arts degree, an Associate of Arts degree in heritage arts, and an apprenticeship program for degree candidates (or for non-candidates by special arrangement).

Fort New Salem is open to the public from April 22 through December 18, 1977, each Wednesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Special weekends and some evenings have altered schedules and extended hours. Monthly schedules will be furnished upon request by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Fort New Salem, Salem, W. Va. 26326. Phone (304) 782-5245. Write to the same address for the Heritage Arts Degree Program information. Fort New Salem is located off Route 50 west of Clarksburg, Salem College-Route 23 exit.

Admission to the fort is by donations of \$1.00 for adults and 25¢ for children. Group tours and special facilities may be available.

Fort New Salem Calendar of Events

APRIL 22, 23, 24

Salem College Heritage Arts Festival. An arts and crafts festival with heritage activities and special musical concerts. This extended weekend annually opens the fort's public season.

MAY

The fort is open with displays and activities centered around the daily life of a frontier settlement.

MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 28-30

The arts and crafts of settlement life are featured.

THROUGH JUNE

Seasonal activities of a rural frontier settlement.

INDEPENDENCE DAY, JULY 2-4

Celebration in Fort New Salem's own special way.

New Book Due on Preston County's 'Snow Capitol'

In Terra Alta, where 103 inches of snow set an all-time state record in January and where a winter total of 214 inches already had been recorded by late February, a new documentary book *Did It Snow in 77?* is being produced. The Pioneer Press of West Virginia, located in the State's historic snow capitol, will publish the book full of photographs and text revealing that Preston County is accustomed to big snows. It will be about the winter of 1977 all over Preston County and will include dozens of photos by *Preston County News* photographers, articles from local media plus stories and photos of snowstorms in the past, interviews with people involved in rescue efforts and those who manned the coal company highlifts during the

height of the storm, and comprehensive records of snowfall and temperature.

Jerry Ash, who co-authored last year's popular book, *West Virginia USA*, and wrote an article for this issue of *GOLDENSEAL*, will be one of the major writers of *Did It Snow?* He and his partner Rich Hopkins own the Pioneer Press as well as the *Preston County News*.

Expected to be a limited edition collector's item, the book is scheduled for distribution in July of this year. A pre-publication price of \$9.00 per copy will include tax and mailing costs anywhere in the U.S. After publication the book is expected to cost \$11.05. It can be ordered from the Pioneer Press of W. Va., Inc., 226 Washington Ave., Terra Alta, WV 26764.

Book on Playing Banjo

Traditional banjo playing is the subject of a several month-old privately published booklet. A *Clawhammer Banjo Book* is written by John R. Blisard, a West Virginia-born musician. The book teaches the clawhammer or drop thumb technique of banjo playing, and the author claims one does not have to read music to learn. He uses a variety of tablature notation to illustrate how to play the songs.

In the manual the author expresses his thanks to William O. Iman, Charleston's retired old-time fiddler and banjoist, for valuable assistance. The booklet has 21 pages and includes 20 songs—among them "Cripple Creek," "Old Joe Clark," and "June Apple"—and explains how to incorporate slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs, and double-thumbing into the clawhammer playing style. You can order it by sending \$3.00 to John Blisard, P.O. Box 192, Pliny, WV 25158.

Buffalo Town History

A bicentennial edition history of Buffalo (Putnam County) is available to the public at a nominal cost, according to John C. Davis, Jr., a member of the Putnam County Historical Society. The 20-page booklet is a historical outline of the Kanawha River town from early Indian settlements to modern-day Buffalo. Titled *The History of Buffalo, Putnam County, West Virginia*, it is the work of the Putnam County Historical Society. Funds for the project were provided by the West Virginia American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. Included are 17 photographs and a map of the town as it was in 1888. To order a copy send \$1.50 to John C. Davis, Jr., Box 177, Buffalo, WV 25033.

Fifth Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop

By Beulah Gilbreath

Nearing its fifth year, the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop will be held again in July and August in Elkins, a town of 8,500 surrounded by the mountains of Monongahela National Forest. Held on the campus of Davis and Elkins College, the Augusta Workshop has sought "to preserve and promote the precious heritage crafts of the Appalachian region" through a varied program of folk arts and music, along with folklore and history, taught by Appalachian craftspeople, artisans, and cultural historians.

Besides a wide range of one-to-five-week courses, students have the opportunity to experience the richness of Appalachia through a lively program of regional music concerts, nature trips, story telling, folk dancing, and singing. Among the featured guest artists for 1977 are the Red Clay Ramblers, one of the country's most popular traditional string bands, and Trapezoid, a string band and hammered dulcimer quartet that has won widespread acclaim. In addition to these groups, master Appalachian musicians, Nimrod Workman and J. P. Fraley, will be in residence during part of the workshop.

Begun in July of 1973, the month-long Augusta Workshop was the work of many planners. Most people involved credit two Elkins women, Miss Sadavioe Goddin and Mrs. Dorothy Cromwell, with seeding the idea of a workshop after they had attended a meeting of arts and crafts enthusiasts at the Hermitage Motor Inn's craft shop in Petersburg, in March of 1971. At that meeting the two women learned of possible funding from state and federal agencies for beginning a crafts program in the local area.

In August of 1972 the idea was introduced at a meeting of the Arts Division of Davis and Elkins College, which at that time was headed by Dr. Margaret Goddin. Mainly through her efforts, surveys were conducted in all Randolph County schools to determine the amount of interest in such a project and what courses would draw participants. In March Dr. Goddin presented a well-researched plan for Augusta to the Randolph Creative Arts Council, and a decision was reached



Above: Basket making at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop.



Left: Student making hammered dulcimer in the musical instrument construction class at the workshop.

by that organization to support the program. Augusta, the name George Washington first gave to the geographical area that later became West Virginia, seemed to the two original coordinators a likely designation for the workshop.

Sponsored jointly in 1973 by Davis and Elkins College and the Randolph County Creative Arts Council, Augusta received its initial funding from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council and the Benedum Foundation. From that first year, with a budget of \$22,000, the operation has grown to a \$56,000 undertaking. Again this year, Augusta is made possible through financial assistance from the State Arts and Humanities Council.

Dr. Goddin, now vice-president and Dean of Faculty at Davis and Elkins College, and Dale Wilson, manager of a local radio station, were coordinators the first year. "As coordinators that first year, Dale and I both worked until midnight many nights without pay," commented Dr. Goddin, "just because we wanted to see the workshop get started. But it was a fun time. Four years later I still hear from many of those first-year students, and they have indicated how valuable the skills they learned here have been to them. Those students have taught many other students the mountain crafts they learned."

Offering intensive and quite varied training, Augusta Workshop is not only designed for the potential master craftsman but also for people who simply want to try a craft or develop a hobby. Among the 90 students that first year, Bob Mays learned pottery making at the workshop. He came back the second year as an assistant instructor in the pottery class and now is a respected potter who earns his livelihood at studio production and teaching others his skills.

Kay Gillispie, who has been involved in making the workshop a success since its conception, enjoys relating a story to illustrate how Augusta has brought about the preservation of a craft tradition. She tells of how this year's instructor in beginner's basketry and natural materials basketry, Dorothy Thompson of Canaan Valley, apprenticed under the late Mrs. William A. (Catherine Candace) Laird from Beverly at Augusta in 1973. Although Mrs. Laird's death in 1975 was a loss to the community, her craft has been preserved by the people she taught and is still being shared and passed on to students.

From the eight classes offered



Student weaving at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop.

that first year, Augusta will offer 18 classes this year. Among the new courses to be offered is one providing students with instruction in glass blowing under John Nickerson, a former designer for Blenko Glass Company in Milton. He is presently artist-in-residence in Charleston under a State Arts and Humanities Council grant. Nickerson has lectured in the United States and Canada on pottery and glass making techniques and had taught at Colorado State University and at Georgian College of Applied Art and Technology, Barrie, Ontario. His award-winning work is represented in various permanent collections, including the Delaware Art Museum, his alma mater Alfred University in New York State, and the Georgian College in Ontario.

Two well-known West Virginia potters, Bob Anderson and Richard Miecznikowski, will offer a course specifically for advanced potters, which concentrates on experimental learning to increase understanding of pottery design, form, and function as well as wheel technique. It will cover basic glaze materials research, study of basic glaze calculation, kiln firing, and kiln material information. Refractories and burners will also be covered. Specializing in ceramic design, Anderson is a professional potter and professor of art at West Virginia University. He taught glaze calculation at Alfred University and general ceramics

at Buffalo State University and at the Society of the Arts and Crafts School in Detroit. Miecznikowski teaches ceramics at Fairmont State College and also has his own pottery studio. He has exhibited his work at the Three Rivers Arts Festival, Super Mud Invitational Show, Penn State University, and the National Council on Education in Ceramic Arts Conference Invitational at Philadelphia.

A course in off-loom weaving is new in this year's curriculum. It will cover off-loom techniques, such as twining, crochet, wrapping, shaped weaving, coiling, and netting. The instructor will be Rowen Schussheim, who teaches at the Open University of Washington, Smithsonian Institution, Glen Echo Park, and other schools and colleges in Washington.

West Virginia's teacher of the year for 1977, Judy P. Byers, of Fairmont will explore with students in a folklore class the beliefs and superstitions of Appalachia—remedies, magic, proverbs, and riddles. The course will include Appalachian folklore as found in ballads, songs, myths, legends, and folktales.

Again this year Augusta will offer its popular four-week Appalachian music course, taught by John McCutcheon, a highly considered old-style musician. Clusters of students playing traditional music on old-time instruments such as the fiddle, banjo, hammered dulcimer, autoharp, and mountain dulcimer are likely to be found under the trees. At night the musicians practice their tunes while others learn clogging, circle dancing, squares, reels, and play parties from students in the folk dance class.

The longest course, lasting for five weeks, allows students to build their own hammered dulcimer and their choice of a five-string banjo or a mountain dulcimer. This course, taught again by the expert instrument maker Paul Reisler of Montrose, has been one of the most popular in Augusta's history.

Other classes, each with the intent of preserving an endangered craft, strive to transmit the traditional attitudes and expertise that have long been the proud heritage of the mountain region. Some of those courses are spinning, quilting, stained glass, weaving, woodcarving, Appalachian cultural history, general crafts, and natural dyeing. For information concerning registration, course dates, housing and tuition, write to Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop, Kay Gillispie, Coordinator, 135 Buffalo St., Elkins, WV 26241 for a brochure. ❀

Interview with the Revered Monroe Countian

Dr. Margaret Byrnside Ballard: 1900-1976

By George Parkinson

DR MARGARET BYRNSIDE Ballard referred to herself as a "simple country woman." It was charming the way she said it, with that melodious accent which marks the speech of West Virginians who hail from the Greenbrier Valley region. She wanted to be thought of as just an ordinary person and not as an accomplished doctor of medicine or historian of Monroe County. Her neighbors in Union, as well as her many friends across the State, granted her request by calling her "Dr. Maggie," and strangers called her the same. On her last visit to West Virginia University she wore a patchwork dress, a knitted shawl, and her hair

was drawn up in a bun at the back of her head. I took her on board the futuristic Personal Rapid Transit system for a demonstration ride. In a matter of minutes she was talking with the students who shared our car and they, charmed by her grandmotherly manner, were calling her "Dr. Maggie." There was no thought given as to what the "Dr." was for. The students accepted her on her own terms, as she appeared, a sweet elderly lady visiting her alma mater.

As she and I became better acquainted, I found nothing "simple" about her, unless "simple" means old-fashioned beliefs firmly asserted. In any case the

Dr. Margaret Byrnside Ballard or "Dr. Maggie" in her library a few years before her death. Photographer unknown.



Dr. Ballard's paternal grandparents Leah Mann and Baldwin Ballard. Photographer unknown.



reader will be able to form his own opinion from the following transcript of a conversation I had with her on July 18, 1974. The original magnetic tape recording is part of the Sound Archives of the West Virginia Collection, West Virginia University Library. The conversation took place in the living room of Dr. Maggie's home, "Old Hundred," in Union, and the discussion has been edited for publication.

George Parkinson. I like that tape recorder, because it's less offensive than a big thing.

Dr. Maggie. Oh.

GP People tend to forget about it.

Dr. M Yeah, I see. Lot of people not used to — Personally, I'd rather go over TV than any other place. It's a lot more fun.

GP Yeah. You get to see yourself when it's all done, right?

Dr. M Well, when it's going on, they usually have a, you know, a screen and people can watch it . . .

GP You were talking about your grandfather?

Dr. M Is this on now?

GP Yeah, it sure is on.

Dr. M Is this recording?

GP Yeah.

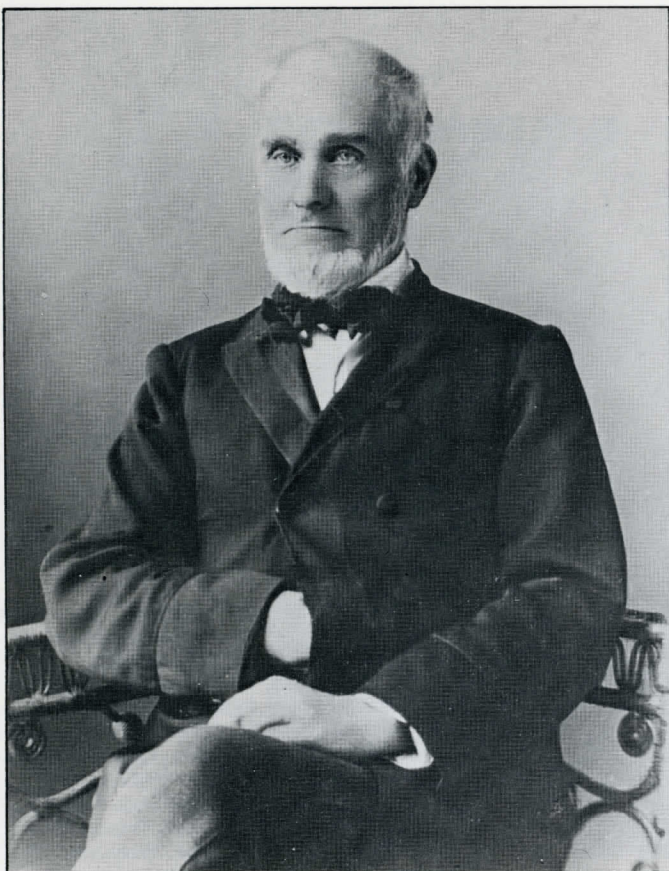
Civil War Stories

Dr. M I was talking about my grandfather, Baldwin Ballard, who lived near Greenville (Monroe County) during the Civil War. He was one of three voters in our district that voted against secession. And in the early part of the war, the Confederates moved into the area. And he went over to Springfield to see about his cattle. And there were some

Confederate soldiers there and he watched them. They watched him very carefully, but he went on up the hill to see about his cattle. And he said he stooped over like he was trying to tie his shoe and looked between his legs to see if they were following him. Well, they weren't; so he checked on the cattle and then went down and got on his horse to go home. And his horse, by the way, was a Tennessee walking horse, which is unusual. He didn't know it then, but we know that's what it was now.

So he started home, which was about two and a half miles away, and these same soldiers shot at him as he was riding along. They hit the horse, and he rolled off in the gutter, and they thought they'd hit him, but they hadn't. The horse had a flesh wound, and then they went on; they thought they had toppled him. Well, he got home, got his horse home, and that night they came out to his house to arrest him, and I know the name of one of the private soldiers. His name was St. Clair [she spelled it out], and he was a Negro. And that didn't bother grandfather, except he told them if they wanted to arrest him they ought to send a white man to arrest him.

But they did, they arrested him and took him into Greenville to see Colonel [A. R.] Barbee, and they asked him if he was a spy — he'd been talking about it. And he said, no, he wasn't a spy, but he would like to go — he didn't want to stay as a prisoner. So he asked if he could go home and fix the fences to keep the cattle in. And Colonel Barbee said to go on home, but to come back the next morning and stand trial, which he did; he came back the next morning. By the time he got there, Colonel Barbee says, "What do you want?" He said, "Well, you



wanted me." And two of his Confederate neighbors came up to him and said, "They're getting ready to hang you. They have a rope out on a tree," and he says, "they're going to hang you as a spy." And grandfather said his answer to 'em was, "Well, hang and be damned." But these two men, John McNeer and John Maddy, told the Confederates that they were Confederate sympathizers, and [that] grandfather was a Union sympathizer, but he was not a spy.

So they told him to go on home and quit talking so much. Well, that didn't do one bit of good 'cause grandfather wasn't the kind to quit talking . . .

The trial was held in the Logan Shanklin Hotel in Greenville. And of course he stayed a Union sympathizer all his life. We fought for this country from the very beginning, from the French and Indian Wars right straight down through—the whole family.

DP But he did have to face trial?

Dr. M Well, that's all the trial there was.

GP I see.

Dr. M. He was dismissed then, after the Confederates said he wasn't a spy. They were looking for spies because . . . the Confederates . . . were being pushed back all the time, and they figured that he must have some inside information.

GP I see.

Dr. M But he didn't, so then he got off. He was not in the army because he was a cripple. He'd had osteomyelitis as a child, and he walked just on his toe of one foot, so he never was in the army.

GP Is your grandfather the one who was shoved off a bridge?

Dr. M No.

GP Who was that?

Dr. M That was a cousin . . . who was a Union sympathizer, and he was captured by the Confederates. And while they were marching him—I don't know where, to camp or someplace—they were crossing a bridge, and they pushed him off and shot him in the water. See, he was trying to escape. And his daughter lived right near Union here, 'til she was 102 and five months. I saw her just a month before she died. Perfectly clear mentally. She couldn't see, but she was fine. Had a big celebration in Monroe County on her hundredth birthday; it was just wonderful.

GP My gosh, but it was she and the rest of her siblings—

Dr. M —of her family, brothers, sisters, everybody. When the man who shot her father went into the ministry—and I'm not sure what the denomination was, but I'm under the impression it was Methodist, but I never asked, and I don't know, nobody just ever bothered to tell me. But he was down at Rock Camp [Monroe County], and there was two Methodist churches down there, you know, a Northern church and Southern Methodist church. They're all one now. And, uh, when they found out who the minister was, the family just got up and walked out of the church very quietly; they didn't stay. I don't think you can blame them really.

GP No . . . he was lucky he got off that easy.

Dr. M Yeah. Now, grandfather's brother, Lewis [Ballard], we always called "Dock." Uncle Dock had a store at Lindsides [Monroe County], and grandfather [Baldwin Ballard] . . . kept dreaming that his brother's store was burned. He'd wake up and everything was on fire, he'd see in his dream. So grandfather then would go over to see him, of course, no phones or anything. So he would go over to see about Dock, and see if he was all right. And, finally, my grandmother's father—he [Baldwin] had to go right by their farm. And about the third trip, he stopped him, and he said, "Baldwin," he said, "you're riding by here every day. What's your business, what are you going over there for?" And he said, well, he told him that he kept dreaming that the Confederates had burnt out Dock and had done something to him, and he just went over to check on them to see if they were all right. And just a day or so later, they *did* burn the store and take Uncle Dock prisoner and took him to Salisbury, North Carolina. And they took Henry Hull at the same time from this same area . . . Daddy always said Uncle Dock and Henry weren't very well satisfied with the accommodations down there. And so they climbed out [of prison], and when they got outside over the wall they found the soldiers were playing mumblety-peg, and they slipped around, and they traveled by night and slept by day, about 400 miles, and they walked home. [Depending on the route taken, 150 to 200 miles is a more accurate estimate of the distance than the one made by Dr. Ballard.]



Left: Kate May Walkup and Isaac Newton Ballard, Dr. Ballard's parents. Photographer unknown.
Right: Dr. Maggie in 1974 at one of her favorite activities, demonstrating lye soap making at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair. Photograph by Ray Ellis, Brooklyn, N.Y.

GP That's quite a trek.

Dr. M Yes, it was a trek. And of course, Lewis' descendants are still, still here in the county.

GP I see.

Dr. M And still very prominent in the county. They are down around Lindside and Peterstown.

Early Monroe Life

GP Dr. Ballard, when, when were you born? Let's see, you said you're 75, right?

Dr. M I will be my next birthday. I was born in 1900. That's easy to remember.

GP That is, isn't it.

Dr. M Yeah, that's easy to remember. Born in 1900, uh, huh.

GP Right here in town, or the edge of town?

Dr. M No, I was born in Greenville, which is 13 miles from here. And I never lived here until—

Oh, I built the little house, the guest house, in 1954, and then I built this house I am living in now in '65. And this is a replica of the house I lived in in Baltimore for over 30 years. I built the house down there, and I liked it. So I just brought the plans down here and had another one built. Used the same furniture, same rugs, same draperies, and everything. Very simple.

GP It looks like a good plan.

Dr. M It is a good plan. It has a few drawbacks, but as long as you haven't figured them out, I'm not going to tell you what they are.

GP OK. I gather your family were farmers primarily and some businessmen, too.

Dr. M Uh, well, everybody of course was primarily farmers, uh, and business people. My

grandfather had a general store in Greenville. My father [Isaac Newton Ballard] had a general store, you know, where you took your butter and eggs and got credit and bought your sugar and coffee and so forth. Sold everything. And, uh, he was postmaster. And I, I am very proud of my father. He was a very civic-minded person. For instance, he was instrumental in getting a town water supply to Greenville in 1904, and it was the smallest town in the United States with a public water supply. We had less than 100 people in the town. Everybody chipped in but Daddy engineered it.

And then, you see, we didn't have banks. They had a bank here in Union, and they had one in Alderson. And you had to ride horseback to go to the bank; it took all day. And so he was instrumental in getting what is now the Bank of Greenville started in 1902. And he had a terrible time getting enough people to subscribe to [the] stock—25,000 dollars [worth]—but they finally got it all sold. And that's an interesting story too, because—of course he got the family roped in. Everybody helped a little bit, but nobody bought very much, about five shares; that's about all they would invest in. The bank has grown until it's almost a two million-dollar bank now. They reported one-and-a-half millions a number of month ago, and it's growing rapidly. And they've paid eight percent dividend on the investment for I don't know how many years, which is—

GP On the stock?

Dr. M —a good return on the stock. None of us had very much. I wouldn't sell mine even if it didn't pay a nickel, because I want to keep it. But you



can't buy stock in it unless somebody dies and the stock comes up for sale. And then it has to be offered to the stockholders first.

GP I see.

Dr. M So rarely it gets out of the country. And when they got ready to open the bank—

Now, that's interesting. That brings grandfather in too, because they had money up here in the Bank of Union, which is no longer in existence; and grandfather volunteered to come after the money that could be deposited, to open the bank in Greenville. And he rode horseback. Came to Union to get the money, the change and what they needed. And by the time he got home—he lived two and a half miles from Greenville—it was getting dark. So he just stopped home, ate his supper, and spent the night. And he had the money in his overcoat pocket. So he just took his overcoat off and hung it up behind the bed on a nail on the wall . . . [His] housekeeper is still living, his old housekeeper, and she said she was so afraid that somebody would come in and rob them that night. Said she didn't sleep any 'cause she figured people knew he had the money. She's past 90.

GP What's her name?

Dr. M Laura Reed. She's, she's real nice. You might go see her sometime. And, anyway, the next morning he got on his horse and—

He always got on off the ground; he wouldn't get up on a stile, although he was a cripple. He went to Greenville, gave the money to the bank. And he was the first depositor. He got his own personal account open, and that's the way they started. And the bank—

My father was president, and a friend of his, Bert Dunlap, whose son is now president of the bank, started out. And that tall desk in the back room here was their bank desk. They gave it to me, you know, when they got fancy and got a new one. And the split-bottom chairs, some of them back there, were the bank chairs, where the directors sat on. And also the doorknob on the door out there is one of the old bank doorknobs, a nice bronze knob that is worth its weight in gold. Of course, you know, you got to get modern; you get one of these things with a key in the center of the knob.

GP The story is one of grass roots capitalism? I mean, people in the area getting together, and they need a bank—

Dr. M Purely for the convenience of the community.

GP I see.

Dr. M And that's what it's always been. They don't do any great big things, and they are not big enough to do—you know, no trust department or anything like that, but it's a good bank and it's good solid. And about three years ago, they talked about having branch banking here—we have four banks in the county—and doing away with three of them and make one of them a branch bank of some big city bank. And after everything, the experts examined them all, they said, well, the Bank of Greenville would be the one to keep, because that was the most conservative and the most solid one. And we heard no more about branch banking. That disappeared. Just as long as—You don't mind if I ramble, do you?

GP No, no.

Dr. M The courthouse down here—

When I came back, they had the plans for a new courthouse. Some people had gone ahead and gotten plans drawn up, and they were gonna put it out on the edge of town someplace—parking easier and everything. And so I said, well, that was all right if that's what they wanted to do. But I said, "If you do, if you move the courthouse, then, I will start proceedings for my part of the property in Union, because James Alexander [1750-1814, Dr. Maggie's great-great-great-grandfather] gave it for public buildings, and as long as that's used for that, it's all right."

GP I see.

Dr. M But when building stops, it goes back into his estate. And I haven't heard any more about the courthouse being moved. You see, I am a little persistent and a little, I don't know, I try not to be too hard, try to be honest. But, well, anyway, I didn't want the courthouse moved; I wanted it left right there. They want to move the bank in Greenville, want to build it across the street. It doesn't belong across the street, it would look terrible, the lot isn't proper or anything, and we own the property, part of it. They're going to have to buy some from my nephew, and he doesn't want to sell.

And if he does sell, I have first option on it. And I'm not gonna sell to the bank, because I don't want them to move. They're on a nice lot and they have room to expand. And let 'em stay where they are.

GP What would you say about farm life when you were a girl? Now, was—was it beef or horses or—What was the cash crop?

Dr. M Well, the cash crop would be mostly beef cattle. But, now, that wasn't true of everybody—but a lot of beef and sheep—and dairy products. We'd ship butter and eggs and cheese, even homemade cheese, down into the coalfields and—

But all that belonged to the women. That didn't go into the husband's pocketbook. The women, the wife, had charge of the poultry and cows and the cream and everything, and whatever money she made that way, that was hers. That was true of almost every family.

GP I see, but your main market was over towards Beckley and—

Dr. M Down in the coalfield, coal area. Cabin Creek, Paint Creek, and all. [These streams join the Kanawha River in Kanawha County. Dr. Ballard's comment suggests that Monroe County's market for dairy products included the entire upper Kanawha River valley.]

GP Providing them with fresh food to eat?

Dr. M Well, yes, if you can call it fresh food, by the time you gathered it up and sent it once a week. Now, of course people down there had their gardens too, you see, and everybody here canned their food. The only thing you bought at the store would be sugar and coffee and tea and things like that. But you sold *everything* in a country store from eyeglasses right straight on through to kerosene oil. Everything. Beautiful kid gloves, linen, Irish linen by the yard, that you can't buy today in this part of



the country I still have some of the merchandise

My sister (Helen Ballard Chandler) and I planned to have a—We had really made big plans, and then she had a stroke and died. So I settled just for the museum in the back yard here.

GP What were your larger plans?

Dr. M Well, we were going to have a store, a country store, and put the old stuff in, sort of as a museum, and then have crafts for sale. She was an artist—We could, we could have done very—And we have a store building, you see. My nephew owns that. Nice store building, beautiful maple counters and shelves. We just have a marvelous place for a store.

GP My gosh.

Dr. M And we just use it for storage, that's all.

GP Now, this museum which you are building in back; you're reconstructing a log cabin?

Her Backyard Museum

Dr. M Well, the cabin has been torn down, each log marked, and it will be rebuilt back here on the back lawn. And it will be a museum. I haven't decided rules and regulations yet, you know, when it's going to be open, and how it's going to be open, whether it's going to be charge or free, or whatcha gonna do. I know it's not going to be open all the time, and I'm not going to run down there every whipstitch for somebody to see. It's going to be regular hours. I do know that.

GP Yes.

Dr. M Because you can wear yourself out, you know. But I think it ought to be open certain days, say, for certain—for schools, certain classes, and—but it will be furnished completely. There will be a living room on the first floor, and off to the west of the living room, there are two little rooms. The people that lived there used them for bedrooms, but I'm going to have the front one, the one that faces north, for a library, and the one that would be south for a dining room. And then we have the kitchen on that floor. Then, if you go out on the back porch, you can go upstairs and you have three rooms

Opposite: Maggie and her sister Helen as children.
Photographer unknown.

Below: Dr. Ballard in 1974 at the Mountain State Art and
Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes. Photograph by Ray Ellis,
Brooklyn, N. Y.



up there. And the little room at the head of the stairs can make a nice little upstairs sitting room, and then two bedrooms.

GP Exactly where did this cabin sit before you moved it?

Dr. M It sat on Indian Draft about a mile and a quarter below Greenville.

GP And when was it built, do you think?

Dr. M Well, I don't know. I've traced it back to 1835; it was there in 1835 When I get able I'm going to do a little more work on it at the courthouse Now, the springhouse comes from another property. The springhouse that we're going to move here is on the Dulaney-Sweeney place, which is on, near Rich Creek, near the Mercer Anglers Club. And Mr. Homer Long gave me the stone for the foundation of the chimney from the old Sweeney house. He wanted to get rid of it, and of course I'm glad to get it, 'cause they're *beautiful* rough-cut stones. And, uh, the springhouse is still intact, it's

still built beautifully, so we're gonna just dismantle it just like we did the logs and bring it over here and put it up. Now, the frame part—the roof has to be, will have to be new, but the stone will all be the original stone. And I haven't dated that house, but it is certainly—it's earlier. I'm pretty sure, than this house, than the logs from the house I'm building.

GP Who's doing this work?

Dr. M Mountain Heritage, Inc. That means Mr. Donald Page, Mary Page, his wife, and Jack Kilburn of the corporation. And they hire whoever else they need. But, now, that's—You probably don't know about Mountain Heritage, Inc. It's a right new corporation formed in Monroe County.

Religion

GP Going back to your girlhood, for lack of a better word, in Monroe County, what religion was your family?

Dr. M Well, my mother [Kate May Walkup

(1864-1944)] was a Presbyterian. She was brought up in the Episcopal Church as a child because her mother died, and Aunt Jane that raised her was Episcopalian. Then, when I was a child, Mother was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and my father was an old hard-shell Baptist . . . Mother's people objected to her marrying him. It was terrible. His father was a Union sympathizer, he was a Baptist—

GP Was a Baptist considered low-class?

Dr. M And he was a Republican, *and* he drove his horses through town at a tremendous rate of speed. No good could come of him. I'll put that in the Ballard history. I think that's *wonderful*. I don't think I'll put in about religion; I left that out.

GP Was to be a Baptist considered just low-class?

Dr. M No, but if you're Episcopalian or Presbyterian, you know, you're sorta up here. I don't think so, but a lot of people think, a lot of people think—They don't say the Baptists and Methodists and all are down here, they say the Episcopalians and Presbyterians are up here. It's a different way of expressing the same thing. I don't agree with them. 'Cause—no, I don't agree with them. It's whether you're a Christian or not, and, uh—But, anyway, I've been in the old primitive Baptist church, I love it sometimes.

GP There's a certain naturalness of feeling there which gets sort of squeezed out—

Dr. M Well, they shout a little bit, but we have some very active primitive Baptists in the area. But, now, in our Presbyterian Church at Greenville we have people who are members of the Baptist Church that attend regularly and work in the church just the same, because they only have service once a month in the Baptist Church, and we have it every Sunday, and they come . . .

The only people that are fighting down here are the people who are dyed-in-the-wool rebels from the Civil War, and there are few of those left. And we have the U.D.C—oh, glory hallelujah! They wouldn't even let me talk, make a talk before the U.D.C. [United Daughters of the Confederacy], because Baldwin Ballard was a Union sympathizer.

But my grandfather [Henry] Walkup was a Confederate, and he was taken prisoner by the Union people, and when the war was over he was in jail up in Pennsylvania and had to walk home. But, then, nobody will give me credit for that; I don't want credit. And he made—while he was up there he made Mother a little doll cradle and carried it home and I have it, it's upstairs, made out of lumber just from an old house or something. It was painted white, and he just sawed it out and just made a little cradle. I really have rambled haven't I? Well, now, you haven't asked a thing about education.

GP No, there are several things that—

Schooling

Dr. M Education—we got a Methodist minister, and the parsonage was across the street from our store.

And the Methodist minister went off and got married, brought the nicest little wife home.

And she'd been a teacher and she was lonesome . . . I've always been sick with something, and she asked Mother if she could—if I could come to her house and she could teach me a little bit each morning. And I did. So I was in second grade before I ever darkened the schoolhouse door. And then we went to the public school, you know, one-room school, had about 20 pupils in all classes . . .

And, then, we had no high school. I've never been to high school . . . And then we got a governess, and Daddy rented the little building and had a school and two or three—there must have been six or seven altogether—friends sent their children.

GP Yes.

Dr. M And I had a private tutor and managed to get along pretty well. And there was a private school in Alderson called Alleghany Collegiate Institute. Do you—have you got some data on that? I got a lot of stuff on Alleghany Collegiate Institute. So Mother sent us there for two years, because that was during the First World War, because she knew the principal. Well, that just faded, we finished that off in no time, went out of existence. And I did get a diploma from that. And then I went to West Virginia University two years and took pre-med, and then to the University of Maryland for four years and got my M.D. degree. So really the only thing I have is an M.D. degree. I have nothing else to show that I've ever been in school. You couldn't do that today.

GP No, you couldn't, I mean—

Dr. M Now, I'm eligible for a B.S. at both the University of Maryland and West Virginia, and I would say that if I went back a semester either place I could get a B.S. in maybe chemistry or something like that that I had a lot of hours in.

GP That's just what you need now, isn't it?

Dr. M That's all I need to do is go back to school . . .

GP Did you travel much when you were young, or when you went to Morgantown? Was that really a thrill to—

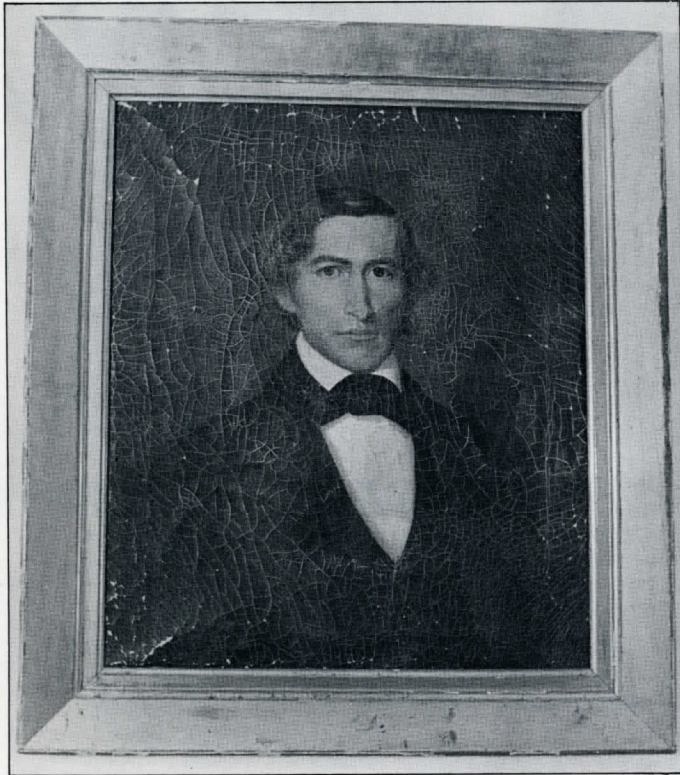
Dr. M You can't get to Morgantown from here.

GP But I mean when you went up to Morgantown . . . ?

Dr. M It was awful. You went up in the fall and you came home for Christmas and you went back and you came home in the spring. No, and you wrote letters in the meantime, no telephone. And you had an *awful* time getting there. I've gone by way of Athens, Ohio, train connection. I've gone up the Greenbrier Division to Durbin and transferred. I've gone—the year I went up there, I think we had to change trains three times.

GP I'll be.

Dr. M Oh, it was terrible, just a little ol', you know, I don't know, branch lines and things. But it's still difficult to get from here to Morgantown, by car, they tell me. I've never even tried. But we had an awful time. But the easiest trip I ever took—I



James Madison Byrnside, 1814-1873. Painting by Mrs. Joseph Cherard.

Elizabeth Peters Byrnside, 1816-1868. Painting by Mrs. Joseph Cherard.



went out into Ohio and then back across to Morgantown. I don't know what . . .

GP What was it like back then, I mean, being from Monroe County. Did you ever get over to Virginia often . . . ? Or when you went to Morgantown, was that the first time you took a long trip?

Dr. M Oh, no!

GP Then tell me about it. Where did you go?

Dr. M Well, we went to Canada one time. We went to California, the Grand Canyon in Colorado, we went down to New Orleans, took a boat and went down to Panama and through the Canal. But, now, this was *my* family; I was a *privileged* child. There was no question about that. Daddy took us out of school that time we went to Panama and, uh, came back the northern route by Chicago. And then we went . . . to Craig Healing Springs which is over in the mountains in Virginia . . .

[Craig Springs is near the north central boundary of Craig County, Virginia.]

GP I am looking at these two lovely portraits [hanging on her living room wall]. I wish—

Dr. M You want to know who they are?

GP Who they are, the one on the left and the one on the right—

Ancestor Portraits

Dr. M That's a man and woman, and my great-grandfather and -grandmother. And the man is James Madison Byrnside [1814-1873]. And he's a grandson of James Alexander [1750-1814] who settled Union and set aside the lots for the town of Union, and gave the land for the public buildings and the cemetery. And he named the cemetery Green Hill. And his wife [Elizabeth Peters Byrnside (1816-1868)] is the granddaughter of Christian Peters, who settled Peterstown, which is in the lower end of this county at the end of the Seneca Trail, U. S. 219. And when they married, that united two of the oldest families around. If I'm not related to somebody, I'll tell you. 'Cause chances are they're my cousins, so don't talk about 'em.

And . . . he [James M. Byrnside] had a store here in Union with Mr. Roberts, and it operated under the name of Roberts & Company; and that I find in some of the old record books and some of their things. And . . . after the Civil War he went to Peterstown and had a store there, was in the mercantile business. And during the Civil War—You want me to tell about the bond issue?

GP Yes, I think—

Dr. M Well, let's finish the portraits first. The portraits, as you see, are framed in wide gold frames, I mean they're beautiful oil portraits. And I did know the dimensions of 'em, but they're big—what, 18 x 20 inches, something like that. And the frames are the originals, and they're hung on the back with little brass rings . . . They've never been changed.

And they were painted by a Mrs. Joseph Cherard, and she lived in Peterstown. We think the

paintings were done before the Civil War because of the looks of 'em. They look like young people and not older people. And Mr. Cherard built mills and covered bridges; that was his business.

GP Uh, huh.

Dr. M Now, there are some Cherards up around Berkeley County and all. I've tried to trace 'em, but I can't get any connection. Some of the Cherards are buried at Peterstown in the cemetery. But they disappeared and we don't know where they are. The Smithsonian Institution's very much interested in 'em. They say it's really some of the finest paintings, and they're amazed to find portraits this good west of the mountains. They didn't think at that early period you had a resident portrait painter.

GP Tell us about the beautiful brown-haired lady on the right.

Dr. M Grandmother?

GP Yes. You described grandfather, but you didn't say too much about—

Dr. M Well, I said she was a granddaughter of Christian Peters, who settled Peterstown. And, uh, there really isn't too much to say about her except she must have been a wonderful woman. And she's dressed beautifully, as you can see, with a lace collar, very thin, embroidered, and a brooch, and her hair's parted in the middle and combed back very snugly.

She—her father was Captain John Peters [1788-1868] of—in the War of 1812, and he lived at Peterstown in the old Peters' house. And he kept an ordinary—now, you know an ordinary was a sort of a tavern, except that they were careful about the spiritous liquors.

And I tried my best to get the State of West Virginia to buy that house, that was built in 1812, and . . . get somebody to take a concession in there, and have, well, maybe some rooms, but certainly an eating place. And they could have paid for it many times over. Instead of that, one of my cousins inherited it and he tore it down. It's all gone. And it had original furniture in it of Captain John Peters. It's just a crime, but I couldn't get anybody interested at all, and I was in Baltimore working. So it's gone, and that takes care of that.

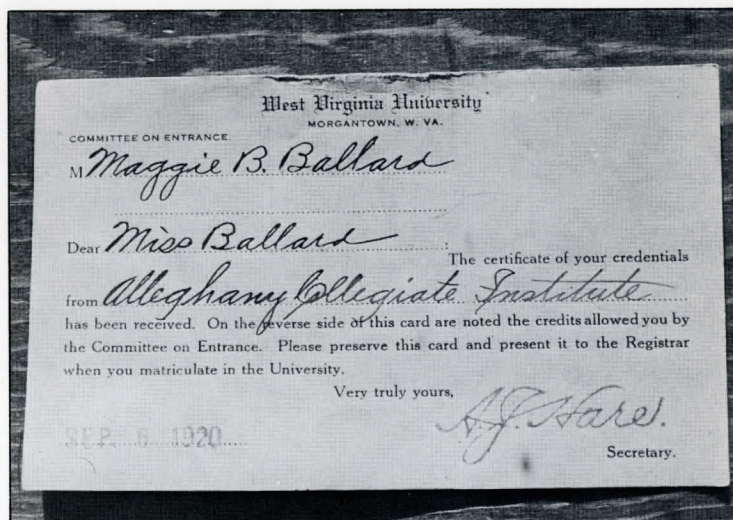
GP Well, how many children did she have, and when did she die?

Dr. M Uh, I'll have to look up the dates for that—

GP Just roughly, I mean—

Dr. M Well, he died in 1871 or '2, and [she] roughly around the same time. And they had a bunch of girls and one boy, and, brother, was he spoiled! Henry Clay Byrnside. And, uh, he rested himself a lot. He was a graduate of Washington & Lee. They—we've always believed in education. Wasn't any trouble about that.

And then he had my grandmother, who was Clara Catherine, and he had Cynthia, and he—I can't name 'em right off—Clara Catherine, Cynthia, there's another girl in there, married an Akers—Isn't that awful? Liza! Liza, sure! Okay, that's—I'm pretty sure that's right. [According to a manuscript



In 1920 Maggie B. Ballard received this certificate from West Virginia University when she transferred credits from Alleghany Collegiate Institute.

account of the Byrnside family prepared by Bertha W. Clark, James and Elizabeth had six children: Elizabeth Jane (1834-1890); Cynthia Ann (1836-1918); Clara Catherine (1838-?), who was Dr. Maggie's grandmother; Margaret Juliana (1841-1861); Henry Clay (1843-1923); and Josephine, who was born in 1862 and died in infancy. MS, Roy Bird Cook Collection, West Virginia Collection.]

And they had *nice* things in their family. Many of the things that I've inherited came from this family . . .

The silver—I have flat silver from them. I have drapery tiebacks in the other room, the sideboard in there was his, I have crystal, I have lamps, kerosene lamps. I had a lot of his clothes. I have his leather trunk that says Sweet Springs on the end of it. And, well, you name it, just worlds of things that belonged to grandfather.

GP What about the history of the portraits? You mentioned something about it this morning, that they were sitting out in the outbuilding—

Dr. M Well, they were discarded by— Well, let's say that one of the persons that married into the family didn't like 'em, and didn't appreciate 'em, and just took 'em down off the wall and put 'em in the storeroom. And I objected—I really created right much confusion over it, I'm afraid. But anyway they were not taken care of . . . and I'm taking care of 'em; and I know who will take care of 'em after I'm gone and that's where they will go. So, uh, they'll probably end up in some historical museum; I don't think there's any question about that. A lot of these old things will . . .

GP I'd like to go back quite a ways. We were talking about your education in Monroe County—

Dr. M I got it at home! (laughs)

GP You must remember World War I well . . .

Dr. M Oh, I remember World War I.

GP What was it like around here? I mean—

CREDITS ALLOWED AS FOLLOWS:			
Units	Units	Units	Units
English <u>4</u>	Algebra <u>1</u>	Geology	Dom. Sci.
Latin <u>3</u>	Plane Geom. <u>1</u>	Biology	Bible
Greek	Solid Geom. <u>1/2</u>	Ethics	Military
French	Plane Trig.	Psychology	Commerce
German	Drawing	Education	Woodworking
An. Hist.	Physics	Economics	Man. Train. <u>1/2</u>
Med. Hist.	Chemistry	Sociology	Elocution
Mod. Hist.	Botany	Com. Law	El. Sci.
Eng. Hist.	Zoology	Com. Geog.	Hygiene
Am. Hist.	Physiol.	Ind. Geog.	Spanish <u>2</u>
Hist. <u>3</u>	Agriculture <u>1</u>	Stenography	
Civics <u>1/2</u>	Phys. Geog.	Bookkeeping	<u>16 1/2</u>

The Young Woman Blooms

Dr. M Well, I was at Alderson, Alleghany Collegiate Institute, and we—everybody took military, even the girls, and we all wore uniforms. We didn't have much to eat, I guess we had more dry beans than anything else. Every time a group left by train from Alderson, we went down and shouted yells, and so forth and so on. But I can't remember being *deprived* of anything. I can remember people going. Now, my sister's second husband was one of the five [that] went from Monroe County—he and his brother were two of them out of the five. And I know that bothered us a great deal. They weren't married then, of course, but . . . people were upset, but we were not deprived of things. We still had plenty of food and plenty of clothes. The war was going on and we were upset because people were being killed. And it was bad that way, but that was the *only* way. I can't say that it disrupted the local way of living at all.

GP Everyone was behind Woodrow Wilson and the war to save democracy?

Dr. M Well, I didn't pay much attention to politics. Oh, we were out to win the war to end all wars. And Wilson had good ideas, you have to give him credit for that. I didn't pay too much attention to him, 'cause I wasn't, I just wasn't interested. I was far more interested in writing letters to the boys who were in the service, and helping with the Red Cross, and knitting sweaters, and doing everything we could. In other words we were interested in a humanitarian way, maybe, instead of a political way.

GP Were you still living in Monroe County at the time of the Great Depression?

Dr. M No, I was in Baltimore then.

GP But you probably returned to Monroe County in—

Dr. M See, I graduated in '26 and I never came back. I went to Baltimore in '22 and stayed 43 years. And, no, I was there during the Depression. That

was kind of rugged, but I didn't have sense enough to know it, you see. We were brought up that if we had enough to eat and clothes to wear, we weren't expected to have all these other things.

GP Uh, huh.

Dr. M I know we didn't have money. Banks closed. The poor little Bank of Greenville had to close; they made 'em. But they were in good financial shape; they opened up and everybody got their money out. And my mother was in Baltimore, came to Baltimore to see the doctor. And they closed the banks and we didn't have enough money to get her a ticket home on a train. She wanted to come home today. And of course I did obstetrics, and a patient came in and paid me \$50 on a delivery. We went down and bought Mother a railroad ticket with it. Sent her home . . .

GP Did you have any trouble getting accepted to medical school?

Dr. M No. They had to take me.

GP Why?

Dr. M Because there was a legal tie between West Virginia University School of Medicine and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. They agreed, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Baltimore agreed to take students that were in good standing and, you know, were acceptable academically, that had taken their two years in West Virginia, but they were West Virginia students. And of course I'd been there two years for my pre-med.

And in the meantime, the College of Physicians and Surgeons had merged with the University of Maryland School of Medicine. And there was a period of time in there when the . . . dean of the faculty of the medical school came up and inspected the medical school and all at West Virginia, and I have a copy of their report . . .

And they maybe could have created some confusion, since I was a woman, and since . . . I was working toward a B.S. at West Virginia instead of medical school. But there was no question, and they accepted all my grades from the governess and the private tutor, and the work at Alleghany Collegiate Institute that was out of existence. And I went right in, had no trouble at all.

And another girl and I were the first two women to ever go through the four years at the University of Maryland. We started something. They started six in the class, and she and I finished. We're the only two that finished. She was Phi Beta Kappa. Now, I, I passed my work; I wasn't Phi Beta Kappa. Well, I couldn't be without an A.B. And she led our class in medical school for four years and won the gold medal—almost killed the boys. She won *everything* that was offered, *every* prize that was offered.

GP I'll be.

Dr. M Her father was Phi Beta Kappa, she's a Phi Beta Kappa, her sister's a Phi Beta Kappa, her sister's husband's a Phi Beta Kappa, her sister's daughter's a Phi Beta Kappa. You name it.

GP Did you come across any professional—you must have. Were there professional barriers that you

remember? People listening to this tape, you know! Everybody's concerned with women's rights and things like that now, so I am asking those sort of questions.

Ideas and Strong Beliefs

Dr. M Oh, I'm so glad you asked that question! I think all this women's liberation and all this fightin' is so *ridiculous*!

GP Uh, huh—

Dr. M You have to make up your mind. Now, this is my philosophy and I *know* I'm right—You might find individual cases You have men that should be the head of the household; they should make the living, support their wife and children. Now, if there's some reason they can't, that's another story: But the woman should stay in the home, and *make* a home for her husband and children. Now, that doesn't mean she has to be tied down. She can have servants, but she should not go out and leave her children for just any Tom, Dick, and Harry to bring up. And that is what is wrong with the present young people. They have *no* security whatever.

And then somebody's gonna say, "Well, there you are, she's a doctor, she's an old maid, she never had that responsibility, and therefore we're not gonna pay any attention to *her*." Well, you make up your mind whether you're gonna have a profession, and go out, do your work, or whether you're gonna have a job, or whether you're gonna make a home. And you can't make a home and being out workin' some place. You can't do it! Now, I'm sayin' all this, and you're married, and I don't know whether you've got children, or your wife or what she does or anything. Sometimes the wife *has* to work in this day and age to feed the child. I know wives that are workin' to get their husbands through school. I know others that are tryin' to work at home. And there's *always* a way to manage it. But if you have children in the home, they *need* security and children today do not have *any* security.

Now, we've gone through it—I worked with Juvenile Court in Baltimore 14 years. And the children that came through there—'course they were mistreated—but, oh, they had no security at all. And we have it right here in Monroe County. The Mental Health Clinic'll tell you, the people that are workin' down there, of the little children that—they go home, they don't know—mother's—when she's comin' in from work, or when she's goin', or who's gonna be there; and you're depending on a—well, I'm not gonna call them second-rate, 'cause that isn't it, 'cause lots of times they're *better* than you are—but you're depending on a servant or a babysitter to bring up your child. And I don't want my child brought up by a babysitter. Now, I'm glad that's on tape, and I hope people—

GP I think it's worthwhile having; you expressed yourself clearly, and certainly your work in Baltimore—I mean your vocation—It's really a professional opinion, isn't it, as much as it is a

personal one?

Dr. M Well, it's both, it's both. But professionally, if you see a happy home, and you have people that are not complaining, and if they get sick they get taken care of, and you see children that are well adjusted, you can rest assured that they have a good mother in that home lookin' after 'em Oh, in Monroe County we have women workin', and a lot—they don't have to work! Don't you believe it! They don't *have* to have all these things. You don't *have* to have an automatic washer. You don't *have* to have a new car every year. You don't *have* to go to the beauty shop once a week, cost you ten or 15 dollars. You don't *have* to get the latest style shoes with heels way up or down or whatever they are this year. You just don't *have* to. You don't have to get all these doubleknit clothes. You don't *have* to have all those things.

And so they built the factory out here, Rubber Fabricators, now belongs to Goodrich, you know. And of course they're doin' a tremendous job. Most of the workers are women, and our divorce rate has gone up 50 percent in Monroe County since they built that factory. And we've checked, and it's the same thing other places But the women go out to work, and they get infatuated with somebody; the men go out to work—well, you know how it is, you've been to school. You do the same thing in professions; you don't have to be a factory worker.

Well, why should a man bother to go home if there's not going to be anybody there to get his supper? *I* wouldn't!

GP I think what many women say is that, uh, housework is not rewarding.

Dr. M It—why, it's the most rewarding thing in the world! To bring up a family.

GP Some people feel that is isn't.

Dr. M Well, I don't agree with it.

GP You know, they say that the *man* gets to go out, and his life in a sense grows, you know; I mean he grows professionally, he has new opportunities, he faces new problems. A woman stays at home, and washing one load of wash is like washing the next load, and you've done that year after year after year. And the only exciting thing that's very important is the children. But eventually the children leave, and you're left with a bunch of routine chores that are unrewarding.

Dr. M Yes, but the woman shouldn't let herself get *tied* like that, you see. Of course I'm an advocate of goin' out for dinner, really, dinner once a week anyway. And I think a man ought to take his wife out to dinner once in a while and somebody to stay with the children. And *she* ought to get interested in something, mentally. I don't care *what* she does. I have one friend, I think has the nicest children that ever was, and she never worked, but she always had a project. And one year she studied Marseilles bedspreads.

GP Uh, huh.

Dr. M And I didn't know that the name of the maker is woven into every spread that's made, the



Dr. Ballard working at a bicentennial project, making a replica of the flag first used on June 17, 1777, the Stars and Stripes. Photograph by Ray Ellis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

good ones. And every year she picks something important to occupy her mind. She gets books from the library—'course she's in Baltimore. And there're just so many, many things you can do at home. You can make crafts at home. You can sew, you can read, you can study. I have another friend who has her own little horticultural garden; she raises exotic plants in a greenhouse. But she does it at home and she's with the children. And of course the children get ready and leave you, that's part of life. They go away to school. But after all, they're not going to be *too* interested to come home for vacations if they don't have a happy memory of home

Oh, I'm rabid on the subject. You shouldn't have got me started; you asked the wrong thing that time, maybe. No, I'm glad to get it recorded, because that's the way I feel. And they should go—they should be taught religion. You could teach 'em something, that there is a Supreme Being that rules the Universe. And you can't prove there isn't. I can prove there is!

Because you cannot do what—you can't make a tree.

GP Uh, huh.

Dr. M So there has to be something underneath that. I once had a long discussion with a Moslem—guess he was, or a Hindu or something—he was from

India anyway. And he put up a big argument, and when he finally got back, he got to the end of his rope, he just didn't know who else to depend on. But there has to be a Supreme Being that rules the Universe. And call Him what you may. Of course, I believe in Christianity, but that's beside the point. And you have to accept—you only have two commandments to keep: thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and all thy strength; and the second commandment is like unto it, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. And that's all; you don't need any other law if you do those. You don't need a law, you don't need a Code of West Virginia. You don't need a [they both laugh] That's right! 'Cause you won't steal from him, you won't kill him—

GP I just had this incredible thought—

Dr. M —you will always be good.

GP —the Codes piling up, you know, as people break those two commandments. You know, attempt to use the statutory law to make up for them.

Dr. M I know, I have a Code back there, one of the early Codes of Virginia. And when we get that tape off, I'll show you another book that I inherited. People *give* me things. I've talked enough, haven't I? Unless you wanted something else.

GP No, I think—

Preston County Educator is Expert Penman

J. Roy Lipscomb
Professional Penman

By Gerald W. Ash

WHEN J. ROY Lipscomb was just a little tyke he got ants in his pants, and he hasn't been able to sit still since. "I heard my mother tell at different times about taking me out to the back fields when I was just a baby and putting me in a fence row while she hoed in the garden," he recalls of his Aurora (Preston County) childhood. "One day she heard me crying and came running and found several large ants biting me. They were biting where it really hurt."

If early "impressions" shape a man's life, the ant-biting episode sent that mountaintop farm boy on his way to a vigorous career that saw him rise from a naive country bumpkin with the scrawliest handwriting you ever saw to become educated, an educator, a professional penman, and more.

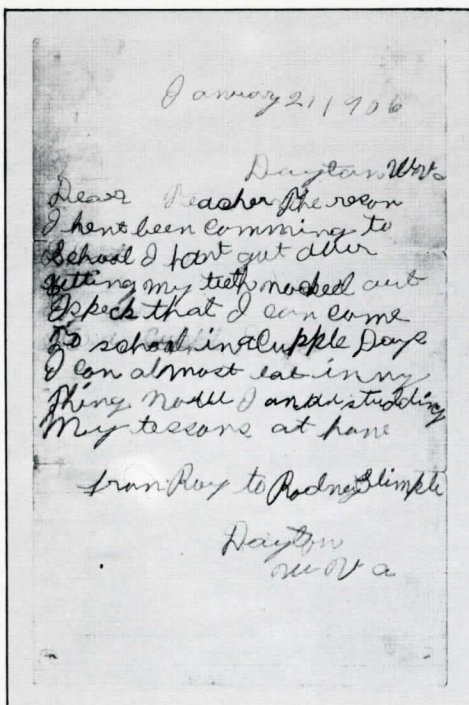
At the age of 80, J. Roy, as he warmly calls himself, has very little tolerance for idle hours, keeps ever busy at his pastimes and searches out new ones—as if those ants were still making him yearn for new territory. Although his interests range in all directions, his most intriguing title is professional penman, an art that grew up with this mountain boy.

J. Roy Lipscomb was born on a cold, snowy, winter day, December 14, 1896, in a small log cabin on his father's 50-acre farm, purchased a few years earlier from his grandfather. About four miles west of Aurora, it was "one-half mile from Little Wolfe Creek and one-half mile from the old Elias Bond Lipscomb homeplace . . ."

This youngest Lipscomb was of pioneer stock, a direct descendant of Ambrose Lipscomb, a Revolutionary War veteran who first settled near Stemple Ridge in 1808. Yet, with his illustrious heritage, there was little doubt that cold winter day, as his mother Etta Bolyard Lipscomb, his father Thomas A. Lipscomb, a neighbor, a hired girl, and the doctor looked on, that this new Lipscomb boy would have to make it the hard way.

These were mountain pioneers. And J. Roy's father was determined through the next few years to





Opposite Page: J. Roy Lipscomb.
Photographs by Gary Simmons.
Left: The note young J. Roy wrote in 1906 to his teacher explaining his absence.

feed the fancies of his young son's thirst for learning. At an early age J. Roy attended the one-room Mountain Top School. All eight grades were taught in that single room and this Lipscomb boy proved to be an attentive student.

"I happened to have a good memory and remembered a lot of the material covered by the grades above the grade I was in," Lipscomb now recalls. "Sometimes we couldn't get teachers in those small rural schools," he says, "and sometimes we only had three or four months of school in a year. The most was five months at any one time. And if the roads were bad we couldn't get to school." He is still quick to point out it wasn't ever his fault that "my attendance was very irregular . . . but it was good compared to other kids. Even in those young days I was very conscientious about getting an education. I wouldn't miss school unless I absolutely had to."

Yet he had to when another young lad ("He wasn't even in school.") knocked his front teeth out one day during recess. "We were playing out in the field across from the schoolhouse and a boy came out to play with us. I was catching balls on the bounce, you know, and he let the bat slip out of his hand and hit me in the mouth. Knocked all these teeth out above and one below. I was in a devil of a shape there for awhile."

J. Roy was less than ten years old at the time of that 1906 incident, but it sent him home for an extended period and caused the Mountain Top School's most conscientious student a great deal of concern about his schoolwork. He wrote his teacher a note to explain his absence. He addressed it to Rodney Stemple, and wrote in a childish scrawl:

Dear Teacher The reason I have been coming to School I have got over getting my teeth knocked out I speck that I can come To school in a couple Days I can almost eat in my Thing I am studying My lessons at home.

Then he signed it "From Roy to Rodney Slinple, Dayton, W. Va." That letter had been long forgotten when more than 40 years later Rodney Stemple died

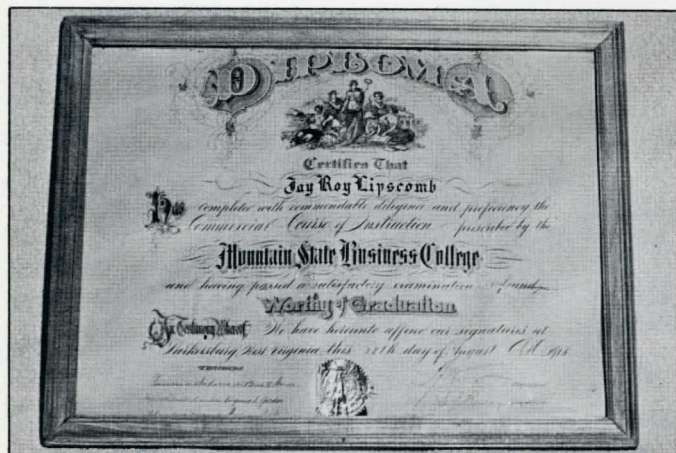
and the letter was found by his brother, Forest Stemple, while going through his effects. It was an unusual twist of fate that placed the imperfect letter in the hands of Forest Stemple, for it was Forest Stemple who had encouraged J. Roy to get his education, first high school, then college.

J. Roy completed the eighth grade in the spring of 1914, but he carried his diploma back into the Mountain Top classroom the following year. He couldn't go to high school without "leaving home and boarding away." So he took eighth grade over again, this time from a new teacher, "Mr. D. K. Mason, one of the best teachers and principals in Preston County at that time," Lipscomb proclaims.

"Mr. Mason was a very good penman. I admired his writing and wished that I could write as well. Mr. Mason encouraged several of us in the eighth grade to take the State (Uniform) Teachers Examination in April and then to attend his Eglon Normal School in the summer of 1915. "I remember Mr. Mason said, 'You can't put your feet under your dad's table all your life. You're going to have to make a living.' So I went home and told my dad, and dad said, 'Now, Roy, if you want to go to school, you go.' Well, I said, 'Just what am I going to use for money?' " J. Roy's father replied, "You remember several years ago we bought three sheep from one of the neighbors? And we gave you one?" J. Roy recalls, "We called mine Lisa because she'd go in the house and eat buckwheat cakes right off the table, you know."

His father gave him Lisa because "she always has two lambs every year." For several years J. Roy's father saved the money from the "withers and wool" he sold. That had amounted to \$52.00 and it would now be used to send young J. Roy off to normal school. He lived on it for nine weeks, paid his tuition, board and room. He earned his second grade teaching certificate that spring and during the summer term qualified for a first grade certificate.

The scrawly-handed youngster had become an



Left: The diploma Lipscomb received on his graduation from the Mountain State Business College in August 1918. Below: A certificate for the completion of a correspondence course in artistic writing from the Tamblin School of Penmanship dated March 1, 1927.



educator. He taught elementary school for the next three years. "One year I taught down in Limestone, 1915 and '16. They couldn't get a teacher down there. I didn't decide to teach until late that year, and schools were all taken up in Union District. So I went down there to teach. Seemed to me they were very anxious that I sign the contract and I soon found out why. Mrs. Saul Lipscomb (her husband was one of the trustees), she said, 'Roy, I hope the thing that happened to the last teacher doesn't happen to you.' 'Well, I said, 'What was that?' 'Well, she said, 'she died.' I said, 'What was the matter?' She said, 'The pupils were just so ornery they worried her to death!'"

By this time J. Roy was permanently hooked on the art of penmanship as he continued to recall with admiration the "hand" of D. K. Mason. It was not an uncommon admiration at a time when a man's ability to write handsomely was an outward measure of his talent and character. Penmanship was a matter of pride, "the mark of a man." Penmanship was a very important course for students in West Virginia's 23 business colleges in 1918, when J. Roy Lipscomb enrolled at Parkersburg with the intention of finishing the nine-month Mountain State Business College program as fast as he could.

"When I went down there they told me that it was \$25.00 a month tuition or \$225.00 for the whole course. Well, I looked the course over and decided it wasn't going to take me nine months to finish. Well, they said, 'No, Mr. Lipscomb, you'll never finish it in less than nine months.' Well, I said, 'I'm still going to pay by the month and I bet I save money doing it.'" He finished the course in four months and one week, and remained on the honor roll most of the time.

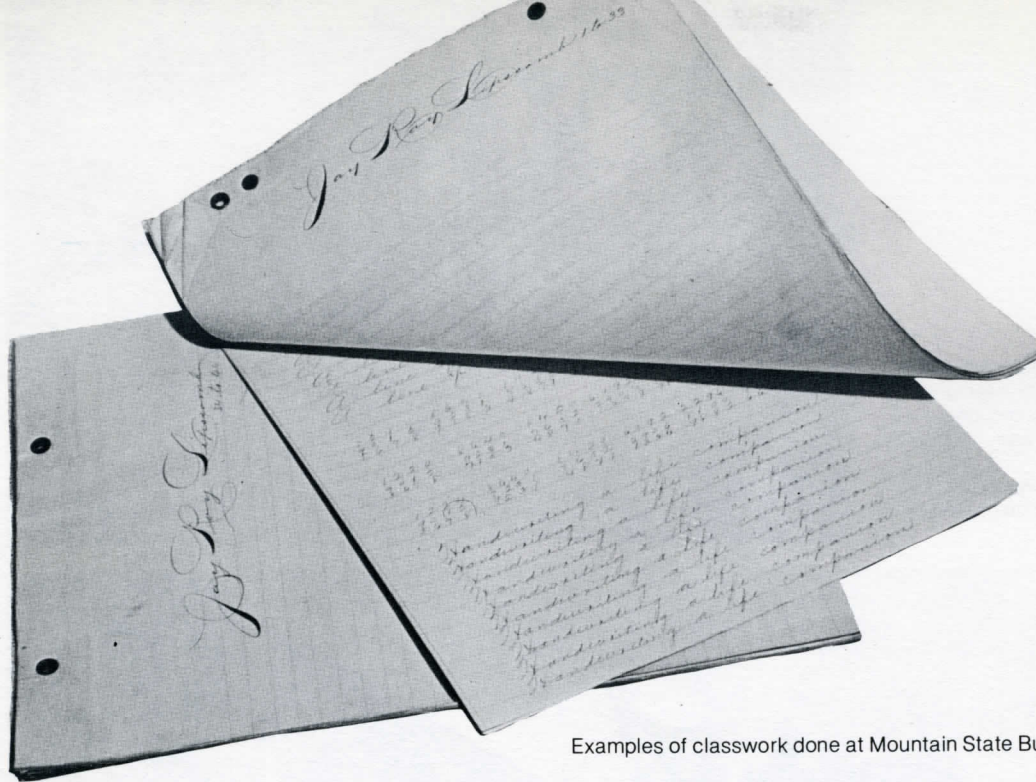
"At that time each business college in West Virginia had a professional penman to teach penmanship," Lipscomb says. "They all did ornamental writing, engrossing and such. I became very much interested in ornamental writing there, but I didn't have much time to practice it then."

J. Roy Lipscomb Recalls . . .

The boys and girls of today are much more advanced in their education than when I was a boy. This is due to better schools, television, radio, travel and many other factors. When my grandson, David, was four years old, President Eisenhower was President of the United States. I came in the room and said, "David, who is that?" He replied in a nice way, "Bobby, (my family call me Bobby) that is President Eisenhower. Don't you know that much?"

In *The West Virginia Hillbilly* issue of November 23, 1968, an article pertaining to my writing was published. The article was entitled "Calligraphy is What it is" and was written by T. Richard Penrod, a graduate student in journalism in the West Virginia University. This article was published in other papers and magazines.

A member of the International Association of Master Penmen, Engrossers, Teachers of Handwriting, after seeing the above article and seeing some of my writing, invited me to become a member of this association. I became a member and have attended several of their conventions. The only way one can belong to this association is to be invited to become a member by another member. The meeting last year was at Ottawa, Canada, and the 1976 meeting was at Atwood Lake at Dellroy, Ohio. Some of the best penmen in the world are members and attend this convention. Through the work and influence of this organization, I have been able to improve on my writing. All members are asked and urged to bring specimens of their work to the convention and all



Examples of classwork done at Mountain State Business College in 1918.

members are expected to demonstrate their writing ability before the group. This organization is in contact with all the state superintendents of schools and are urging them to put writing back in their courses of study. They are having some success with this. At the present time, Japan is leading all countries in the teaching of writing in their public schools.

Every day, newer, easier, and quicker ways are being found to do things. The teaching and learning to write has changed greatly since I was a boy. In those days, the ovals, push and pulls, the capitol A exercise and the capitol K exercise were the only drills used. Now we have exercises for practically all the upper case and the lower case letters.

Writing on the blackboard is one of the two most important means of communication between the teacher and the students. All teachers should be able to write well on the blackboard.

The average person using finger movement in writing writes an average of 12-14 words a minute, and only the small hand muscles are used and one's hand soon becomes tired. In muscular movement, the average person writes between 30-32 words a minute, and uses the large muscles in his arm. One can write all day and the arm never get tired. In the use of finger movement one's thinking is slowed down while in the use of muscular movement one's thinking is speeded up, and a continuity of thought is retained.

But practical penmanship was stressed in business colleges of 1918 along with endless drills in "rapid calculation" that would force students to use their heads, not their adding machines. There were typewriters and calculators in 1918, but students weren't allowed to use them until they could do it themselves first. "They wouldn't let you use an adding machine until you passed the test of adding 300 figures in three minutes or less without a mistake," Lipscomb recalls.

The business colleges stressed penmanship because handwritten work was often required in those days. "All letters of application in those days had to be in your own handwriting. You couldn't let someone else do your writing for you, because if you got the position it wouldn't take long for them to check your writing. They wanted people who could write a plain hand."

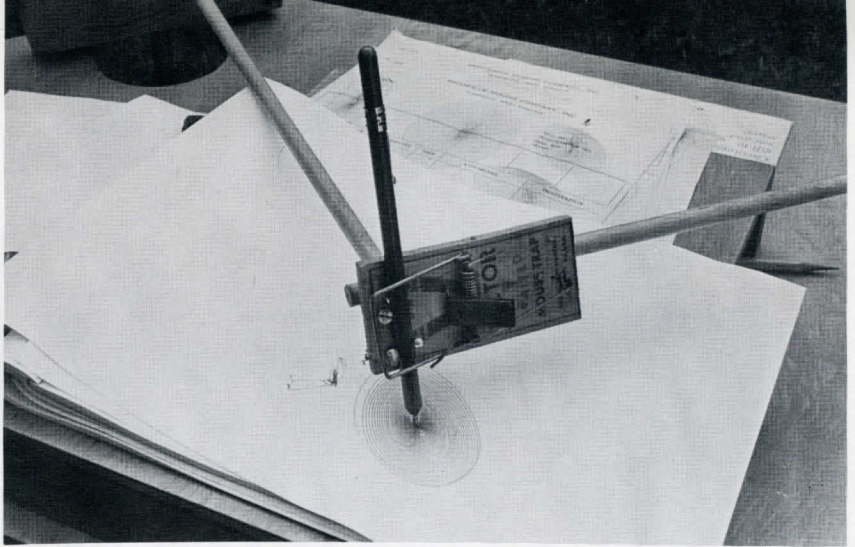
Lipscomb was a bookkeeper when he married Isabelle Davis in 1922. But his interest in education and penmanship continued. "We hired a carpenter by the name of Morris Stemple to make a solid quarter sawed oak table," he remembers, "and it turned out he was quite good at ornamental writing as a hobby. So during the time he was building that table in our home he gave me my first real lessons in ornamental writing."

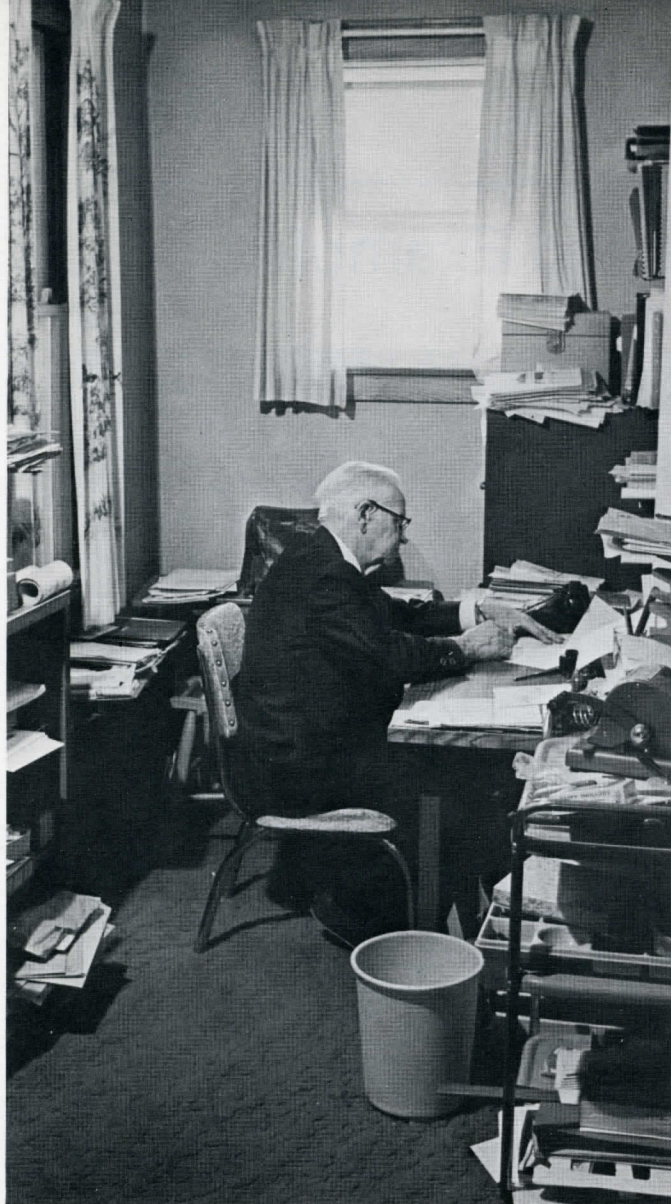
Soon Forest Stemple, then principal of the Aurora School, began to encourage him to continue his education. "He came to me and he said, 'Now, Roy, why don't you work your way through high school.' I said, 'Now, just how would I do that, working eight hours a day as a bookkeeper, you know?' He said, 'Well, your wife Isabelle (also a teacher) can help you.' He gave me credit for courses I had had at the business college, and I took some tests." Lipscomb got his diploma in less than three years.

In the meantime, Forest Stemple received a doctor's degree and became "dean of education" at the University at Morgantown. "He just kept after me to go on to college, so I enrolled at West Virginia Wes-

Below: Lipscomb built this machine which makes concentric circles after seeing a similar demonstrated at a handwriting convention about four years ago.

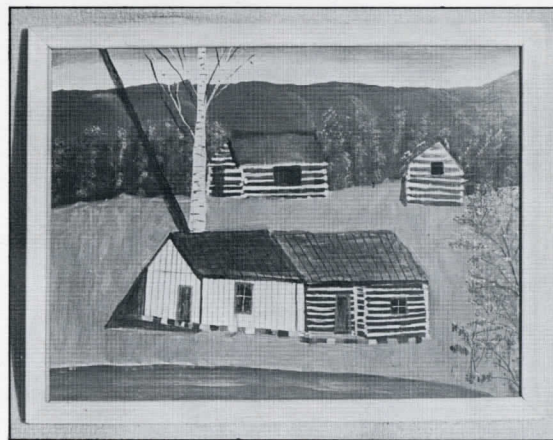
Right: His machine incorporates a mousetrap to hold the pen. Photographs by Gerald W. Ash.





Left: Lipscomb practices his handwriting skills in his office at home.

Below: In recent years Lipscomb has taken up painting. He painted this picture of his childhood home from memory.



"There just aren't any good penmen around anymore to teach the course."

Mr. Lipscomb thinks penmanship is still important for good readability as well as for identifying character. He likes to tell a story to explain why today's youth show little interest in good penmanship. "This instance happened in one of our West Virginia schools last year. An eighth grade boy handed in to his teacher a composition. The teacher wrote across the paper in red ink: 'Can't read, rewrite,' and handed it back to the boy. The boy studied the teacher's writing for a few minutes and then took the paper back to the teacher and said, 'Will you please tell me what you wrote here?' The boy couldn't read *her* writing. If all teachers would practice and insist on nice neat work in the elementary and high schools, and, yes, college too, one would see a lot of improvement in the writing of our high school and college graduates."

J. Roy Lipscomb does not live in the past, but now searches for new academic adventures. The physics teacher in him has him experimenting with a unique device constructed from mousetraps and oil cans and scrap wood that draws diminishing concentric circles in patterns that are as varied as the adjustments he makes. And the artist in him has him converting his sun porch at his Aurora home into a studio where he teaches himself to draw and paint. "I've already taken a few short courses in art from Mrs. Gardner over at Terra Alta, and a teacher is coming here soon from Fairmont to teach a course in oil painting. I'm going to take that course if I can get in," Jay Roy declares with a sort of youthful enthusiasm.

He makes his own natural finish wood frames for his own works that now include some of his favorite sayings inscribed by his fancy "good hand," paintings of religious and other subjects, and most recently paintings of historical landmarks in his beloved Preston County.

The ants are still biting J. Roy Lipscomb. ❖

leyan and got my B.S. degree up there at night school and summer school. And I got credit for 41 hours on work that I had at the business college."

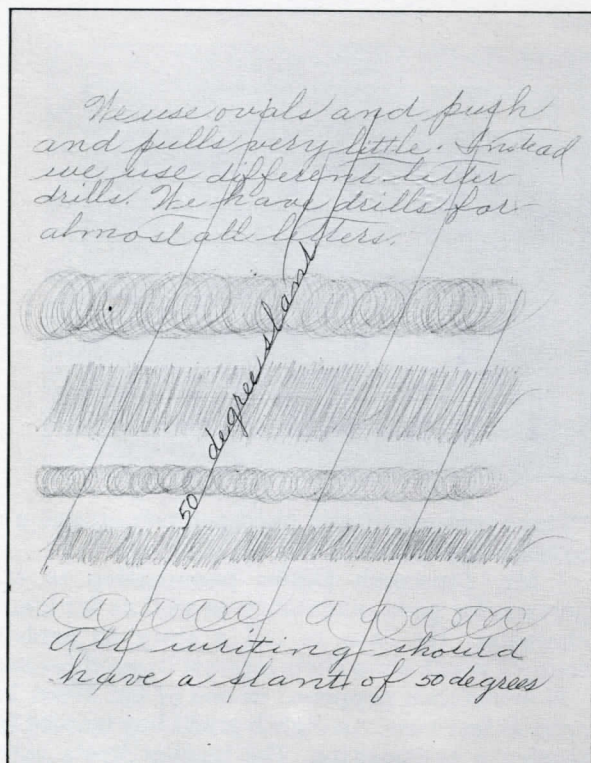
From 1925 to 1927 Lipscomb had taught in the commercial department of Tunnelton High School. Then he became head of the commercial department at Rowlesburg High School, teaching good business practices (including penmanship) until 1942, when he became principal at Rowlesburg.

"When I went over to Tunnelton in 1925, that's where I had my free time and took this correspondence course in penmanship and really learned how to write ornamental writing." Mr. Lipscomb enrolled in the F. W. Tamblyn School of Penmanship that year and learned the art of ornamental writing, card writing, lettering, and engrossing. By 1940 he had earned a masters degree from West Virginia University and continued as an educator until his retirement in 1963.

But the kid with ants in his pants wasn't finished yet. He became a teacher of penmanship at the Morgantown, Fairmont, and Clarksburg business colleges. With the exception of these later years when Lipscomb taught it, penmanship was no longer offered in the state's business colleges. "It's not because they're not interested in it," Lipscomb explains.

Handwriting Exercises and Examples

By J. Roy Lipscomb



Students practice these drills in class - if they are slow and they usually are, we make the letters in groups of five and count:

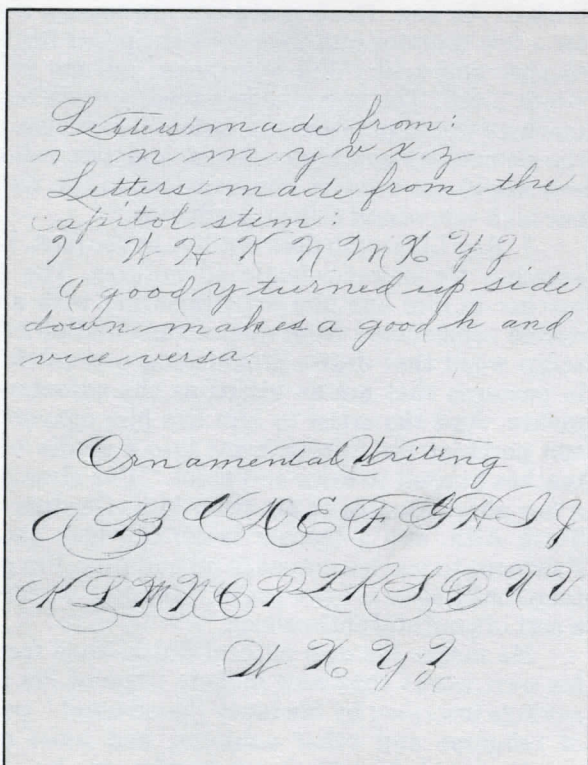
u u u u u t b b
O O C D Q

The one doing the counting determines the tempo.

All strokes we use in making the letters and numbers are found in this:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Notice letters made from:
i u w r s t
Letters made from: l h k b f



Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done whether you like it or not. Being forced to do your best will breed in you a hundred virtues which the idle never know.

Mack Jenks, Union Bard

1971 Interview with McDowell County Coal Miner and Musician

By J. Roderick Moore

ALTHOUGH I SPENT most of my life in Welch, West Virginia, it wasn't until 1971 that I was introduced to the music of West Virginia coal miners. Like many other residents of McDowell County, I was more familiar with the polkas, pop songs, and country sound that saturated the radio waves than I was with our traditional music. It was at the Middle Atlantic Conference on Folk Culture in Pittsburgh in 1971 when I first met Dr. Archie Green, author of the book, *Only a Miner*. When he learned I had spent some time working in the mines and had been a U.M.W.A. member, he automatically asked if I was familiar with Orville Jenks. I had to admit that while I had recorded some black music in West Virginia, I had done no work with mining songs.

Somewhat chagrined, I began making inquiries about the Jenks family and posted a notice in the Welch newspaper that I was looking for information about Orville Jenks. Almost immediately I heard from Orville's daughter Ruby and his brother Mack who invited us to come out and talk about Orville. In his book on mining music, *Minstrels of the Mine Patch*, George Korson had mentioned Orville but not his brother Mack. It was with some surprise that I learned that Mack was also a singer and songwriter. On December 30, 1971, in a two-hour interview, Mack reminisced freely about the early days of union organization in Twin Branch, Big Sandy, and the region I had known all my life.

While Mack has been unknown to folklorists, his brother Orville was a nationally recognized singer and writer of coal mining songs. These songs were a social history and commentary on unionization and the daily life of the coal miners. During the interview, Mack produced some new material—songs, stories, and observations—previously unrecorded, on the development of U.M.W.A. strength in McDowell County as seen through the eyes of a union organizer.

As I prepared this interview for publication, I did not know that Mack Jenks died late in December of 1974. His brother Orville, also known as Jake, had died in New Mexico in the early 1960s. As a fascinating part of the coal-mining history of West Virginia, these reminiscences are perfectly suited to GOLDENSEAL. Hopefully, in the future I will be able to assemble the material for an article on Orville Jenks, who wrote many songs, including "The John L. Lewis Blues."

J. Roderick Moore. I was talking to Orville's wife up in Welch.

Mack Jenks. That was his daughter, wasn't it?

RM I talked to his daughter, and his wife was down visiting.

MJ Is she over there now?

RM She's just going back to Ohio. She was leaving when we left. And they said you used to sing with Orville at the union meetings and things.

MJ Yeah. Yeah, we made up any number of

songs. Some of it we made together, and some of it he made a song and I make a song. And just like I tell you now, to write the song out, probably if you put music to it, it would change the tune to the song altogether. It'd change the tune of the song. And, now, I have about maybe eight or nine that, well, there was one or two now that he helped in and some he didn't. Now, he put on record or had someone to—I don't know whether he put it on himself or whether he had some recording artist to put it on, but he put on record the song about the little lump of coal.

RM Yes.

MJ And it's in Washington in the Library, at Washington, D. C., and it cost you \$4.75 to get a record of it. But, uh, his wife, she—I talked to her and she said, "I know that's your song and Jake didn't have nothing to do with it." See, it was my own composition. But he recorded it, or had it recorded, I don't know which, and had it put on record.

RM Well, when did you all start singing together?

Playing and Singing Together

MJ Oh, we—all our lives. You see, now, I couldn't understand where Scott got a-hold of him singin' in the choir at Big Sandy, because I never knowed of any singin' in the choir at Big Sandy. But me and him, we've sung together in churches, now. We'd sing together. He played the guitar, and—accompanied us with the guitar. When we was young, right up here at Big Sandy and right here in this camp, too, he used to operate the harps all the time. And, uh, the French harp, and I'd keep as many as four or five harps—different keys. And we would play for dances up here at Big Sandy. On Friday night they would let us have the theater after the show, and we'd just move the seats back and get all the room we wanted. And sometimes I've seen as many as 20 and 24 couples on the floor square dancing. And, me and him, and one of my brother-in-laws and a boy by the name of Frost, one of the Frost boys out of Henson Hollow, we played music all the time for 'em to square dance. We'd start square dancing right after the show and be right there when broad daylight come the next morning.

RM Where did you all learn to play your instruments? Did you learn through your father, or—

MJ Naw, just picked it up.

RM When did you all move down here in this area?

MJ Ah, we moved here in 1908.

RM How old were you, and how old was Orville?

MJ I was eight and Orville was about ten. He's about two years older than I was.

RM Were you all playing instruments, playing music, at that time?

MJ No, no.

RM Just started down here then?

MJ We mostly got together along in the '20s the early '20s. I just picked up the harp-playing, you know, by—I just picked it up, and he did the same way about playing the guitar.

Well, now, he married into a family where he and the boys all played some kind of a string instrument. So he picked up playing the guitar. And, uh, one of his wife's brothers, Jess, Jess Johnston, was—they called him "The Fiddlin' Fool." He was the best violin player in the State of West Virginia. And in fact he went, I don't know whether it was New York or not, but he got to playing in a big orchestra—and he playing second fiddle.

RM So he played violin music and not old-time fiddle music, right?

Mj Yeah. And so he didn't know one note. Well, I don't. I don't guess Orville did. But he could follow any man on the violin.

RM About what year did you and Orville start playing for dances and things around here?

MJ It was the early '20s.

RM Did you all play for right many dances before you started playing at union meetings?

Early Union Struggles

MJ Yeah, because the union didn't come into here 'til 1933, the summer of 1933. That's when the union come in. And in fact we helped organize a lot. I don't know of Orville a-being into it, but I know I was. Gary Hollow—after these other places already had the local set up—Gary Hollow, we didn't have it organized. We had a tough time in Gary Hollow. And then you might have heard tell of a place over here, in the northern part of the field here, by the name of Widen. We had trouble at Widen. At that time I was at Otsego in Wyoming County. That was in '40 and '41. I was president of the Otsego local.



Mack Jenks holding his grandson Charles Robert Stone about 1950. Photographer unknown.

We had trouble trying to get Widen organized and get a local union in there. And so we had it pretty tough here.

RM Well, before—now, when you all were playing for dances and things back in the '20s, were you all listening to many records and things or many other musicians?

MJ No, the only thing we heard then was these old-timey Victrolas.

RM Yeah, do you remember any of the people you used to listen to on the old Victrolas?

MJ Well, uh—

RM What about Gid Tanner? Charlie Poole?

MJ No, I don't remember none of them. But old Grandpappy Jones. We've listened to him, and, uh, because, you see, we just listened to the record. We never paid no attention to *who* put it out.

RM How did you all get to start singing at the union meetings?

MJ Well, just, you know, where they was trying to organize and have these meetings, we'd probably have a truck or something and we'd get in. And, now, right over here at Coney Island—you know where you come through Coney Island there. And used to be, there wasn't no businesses at all over there, and when this was organized in 1933,

there was any number of little tents made out of Brattach cloth. They was about eight by eight square. And the name of the coal company on top of it.

And, uh, we'd have these big meetings, you know, and you'd have to go in there and sign a check-off card and leave it there in order for the company—not the company, for the company was fighting us—in order for the members of that there local. Well, we didn't have no locals at that time, we was trying to get them. You see, but we signed these check-off cards, and the union—head officials of the union gets these check-off cards. Well, that's the way we had to do it in Gary. Now, the one up Gary Hollow there—old man Ciphers, lived out on a lease way up there in the head of No. 9 Gary, and we would slip around up there in Gary and get men to sign these check-off cards, but he was—would join the union and paid his dues, you see. And we'd get all that we could to sign these check-off cards. We'd have to go in the late hours of the night, because if these here what we called thugs, Baldwin-Felts men and state police, caught us up at Gary Hollow, ah, buddy, it was just too bad. You just paid off. And they'd kick you out of that hollow. And we'd slip up there in the late hours of the night and take these

check-off cards to him. And he kept a record, a record book, you see, and he'd put all these names and check-off cards.

And, uh, I was working for Ford up here at Twin Branch in '33, and a merchant there in Davy, Milt Burgess, he paid, he paid for our charter. It cost \$20 then to get a charter, you see, for a local union. And Milt Burgess, he paid the \$20 for our charter. So we didn't get to keep the charter very long because Ford at that time, he was paying far better money than the union was payin', and they wouldn't recognize the union.

And we had a grievance there which we shouldn't have had nothing to have done with at all. But, you know, there was always what we called rednecks, and someone stir up trouble all the time, keeps trouble stirred up. They called us the bunch of men up there that shut Ford down. And it was shut down on my birthday. I worked on the 16th day of January, of '34, and I come home that night, and I lived in an apartment right there on the main street in Davy. And we had a union hall. Mrs. Goodson—they still run the store there in Davy, Goodson's store. And they let us have one room upstairs for a union hall, you see, and we had our meetings in there. And on the 16th night we had a call meeting at the union hall over this grievance. It was over the powerhouse, now, it wasn't concerning the miners, it was over the powerhouse.

RM Was that up there at the dam?

MJ Yeah. So, uh, we shut Ford down, we didn't go out on the 17th. And I said to my wife on the 16th evening, "I've got to do something tomorrow I don't like to do." And she said, "What's that?" I said, "Work on my birthday." And she said, "Well, I wouldn't go out." Well, I said, "No, I have to go out." I said, "Now, when you're workin' for Ford," I said, "you do what *he* said do." Of course, now, he was paying far better, way better money than the union paid. So we shut him down and he never did work no more, Ford didn't.

RM He didn't open up Twin Branch again?

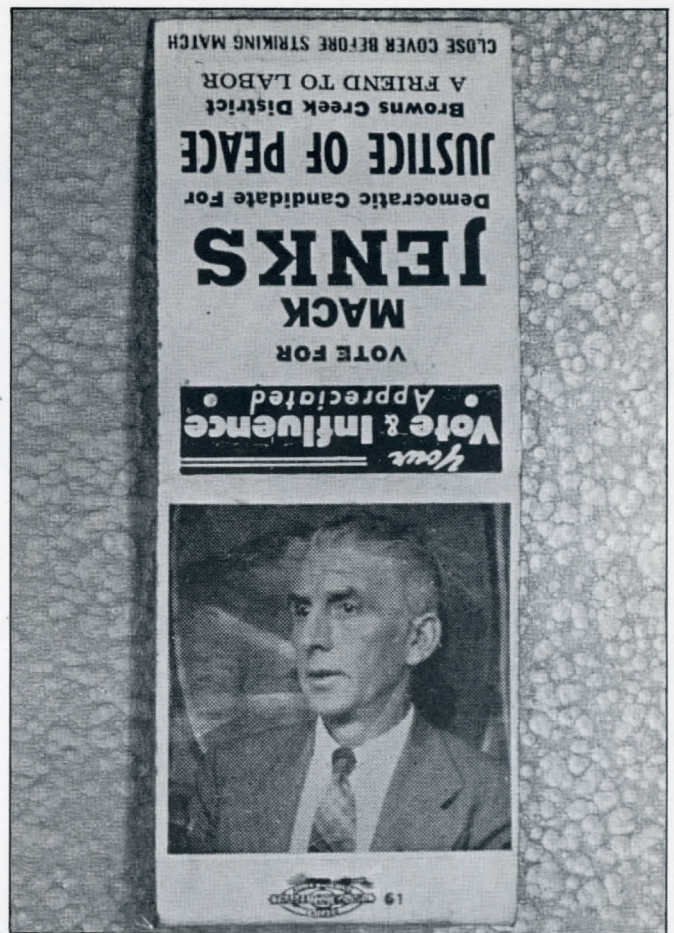
MJ No, well, he leased it out to other people, but he never did run no more at Twin.

RM Do you remember the first time that you and Orville sang at a union meeting?

MJ Well, I'll say it was in '33.

RM Do you remember where?

MJ Well, over here at Coney Island.

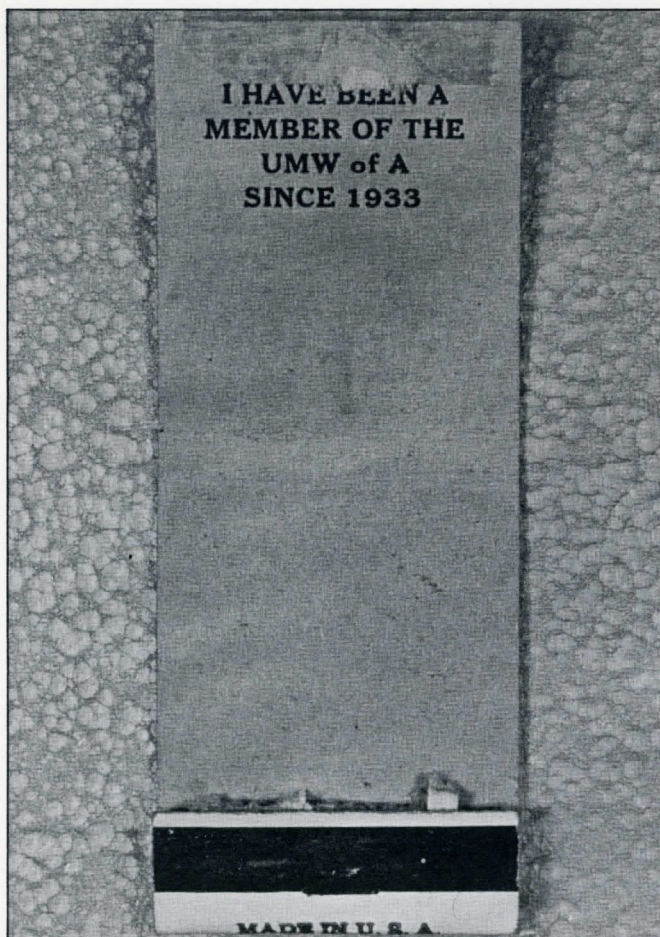


RM Coney Island. Would they advertise that you all were coming to sing at the meeting, or would you all just be there?

MJ No, no. We'd just get there. Now, then, I'll tell you what Orville did. In '35, that was the first convention of the United Mine Workers after we'd—this southern part of West Virginia was organized, they had the first convention in '35, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

I had a brother that worked down near Iaeger, just above Iaeger, back this side of Iaeger. He was a check layman for the United Mine Workers. And at this convention they'd send so many delegates from each local. Well, he was elected a delegate down there to represent that local in the convention. Well, there was—run a special train—don't know where it come from above here. It must have been probably above Bluefield. And they stopped every so often. They stopped at Welch, they stopped at Iaeger, and they'd pick all these here delegates up.

Now, Orville, he lived at Hemp Hill in a hollow we called Slick Rock. He lived up Slick Rock Hollow. And he went out to Sherman's Pawn Shop there in Welch and bought him his guitar, a Gibson Second. It was a good guitar, but yet it wasn't the best that they made. And he said he went out there and caught that train that night. It run about the time No. 3 run, about 11 o'clock in the night. He went out there and bought him a ticket to Cincinnati and got on that train with his guitar and that bunch of delegates. And my [other] brother, then, he got on down here at Iaeger.



Both sides of a matchbook advertising Jenks' unsuccessful candidacy in the 1952 primary election for justice of the peace.

RM You say you wrote right many of the songs also?

MJ Yeah, oh, yeah.

RM Who wrote "Dying Brakeman Blues?"

Writing and Singing Songs

MJ Oh, I don't know as either one of us wrote that song. But—you're talkin' about "The Motorman," "The Motorman Song."

RM Uh-huh, "The Motorman Song."

MJ Now, I'll tell you who—now, Orville might have done it. I wouldn't say he didn't. But that happened right around here, not two miles from here—in the mines. There was a song about the "Trembling Motorman" and, uh, the "Dying Brakeman." Now that happened right around here. I knowed the boy well. The boy's name was Hiram Hall, that got killed. And the man that was runnin' the motor that killed him was Charlie Lander. I broke for him a many day. And nipped for him a many day. As you know, a nipper takes care of the cable, you see—where the motor has to go where there ain't no trolley wire, he used a nip and a cable. There was a stirrup on the motor that the nipper— they called him a nipper. He has to stay in that stirrup and in case the cable hangs up he's got to get it loose, you see. And I've nipped for Charlie and then I broke for him. He was a good motorman. But this boy got killed braking for Charlie. And that's what the song was made up of, and I don't know whether Orville made the song up or not. I know I didn't have nothing to do with it.

RM If Orville didn't, is there anyone else around here that was making up songs at that time?

MJ Not as I know of.

RM Well, do you remember many of the songs that you all made up together and used to sing?

MJ Not too many that we made up together. But, uh, then I have my own, and then I have some that we made up together.

RM Do you have those written down?

MJ No.

RM Do you remember them?

MJ Yeah, they're back up there.

RM Can you still sing them?

MJ Oh, yeah.

RM Would it be possible to get you to sing them?

MJ Oh, yes. That's what I told ya, I'd be glad

Now, he went into Cincinnati with him and he said that all these meetings that they had at the convention, he was there. And any time there was a speaker come up, you know, to address the bunch of delegates, they'd always call him up to play for 'em. John L. Lewis was there. He had one song he called "The John L. Lewis Blues" and he said it just tickled old John L. to death to get him up there to singing that. And he stayed there, he said, 14 days he was in Cincinnati. And, uh, he said he attended every one of their meetings and all the big dinners they had, he was a guest at it. And he come back home and said when he went home that night he counted 270-some dollars that, you know, where he had played for them, and they'd take the hat around and they'd throw in and donate to it. And he said he made a lot more money on the trip. Said he slept in the very best bed, drink the very best liquor.

RM Did he ever stop working in the mines to play music?

MJ No.

RM How often did you all play? Now, you all played right often at the union meetings, didn't you?

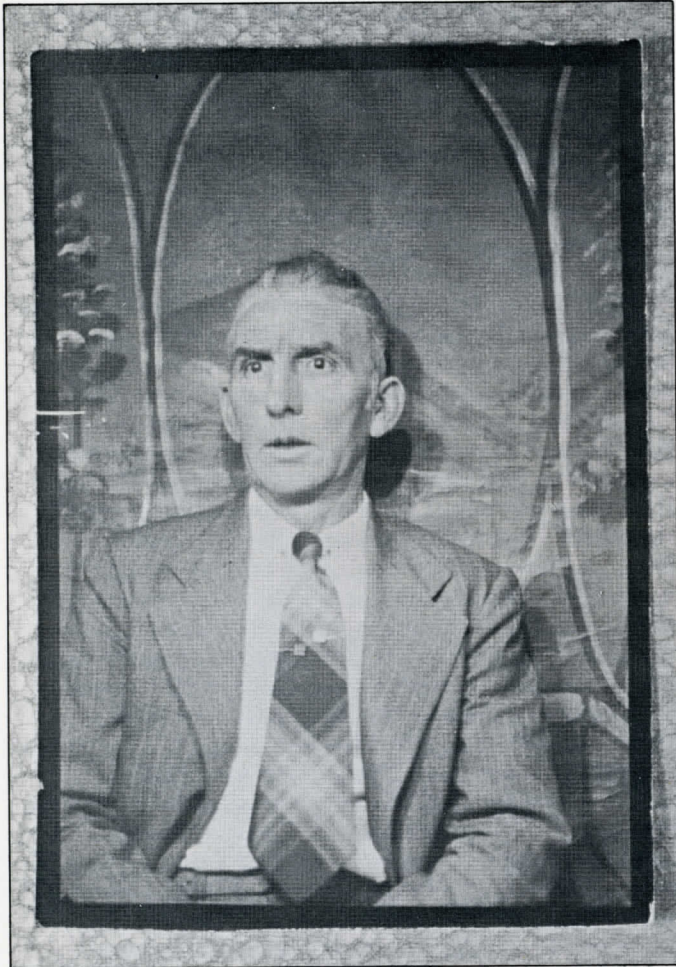
MJ Yeah.

RM Maybe once a week?

MJ No, maybe it'd be once a month or maybe it'd go for six months.

RM How many years did you play?

MJ Ah, me and him, we wasn't, you might say, had any set time to play, just whenever we got together. And, uh, whenever there'd be a dance, or anything like that, we'd play. That's all.



Mack Jenks. Photograph made about 1951. Photographer unknown.

to do it. Because you see, I'm old, I ain't got but—if the Lord just give me one more year, you know, or one more day, I'm satisfied. I've had a long life. You see I'll soon be, the 17th day of this next month, I'll be 72 year old. And so I'd be glad to give 'em to you, let you do whatever you want to with 'em. And if you can put 'em on record, that'd be perfectly all right.

I'd say, there is any number of songs that I've got that—they're my own, just my own compositions. Now, "The Little Lump of Coal," he never put a word in that song. But yet, I don't know, now I was told he put it on record. I don't know, I never heard it, you see. But that was my own composition.

RM One of his daughters said that he never wrote to music, he just wrote the words and used the music from other songs.

MJ Well, that's the way we did, you see. We just practiced up a tune and placed the words in it, such as "The Maple on the Hill." You know the song about "The Maple on the Hill"? Now, that is what "The Little Lump of Coal" was worded to, "The Maple on the Hill," you see.

RM Could you do the mining songs first?

MJ Oh, yeah. You want the mining songs?

RM Yeah, let's start with the mining songs if you could.

MJ (Sings "The Little Lump of Coal")

I am just a poor coal miner, boys, I labor for my bread.

This story in my memory I've heard told,
For the sake of wife and babies how a miner risks his life,

For the price of just one little lump of coal.

Don't forget me, little darling, when they lay me down to rest.

Tell my brothers all these loving words I say.

Let the flowers be forgotten, sprinkle coal dust on my grave

In remembrance of the UMWA.

I used to be a motor runner not so many years ago,
Used to work the starting box and fight the pole.

Me and my good loyal brakeman, we would scuffle all day long,

For the price of just one little lump of coal.

Mother Jones is not forgotten by the miners to this field,

She has gone to rest above, God bless her soul;
She tried to march the boys to victory but was
punished here in jail
For the price of just one little lump of coal.
Don't forget me, little darlin', when they lay me
down to rest.
Tell my brothers all these loving words I say.
Let the flowers be forgotten, sprinkle coal dust on
my grave
In remembrance of the UMWA.

RM That was great. That was good. And you wrote that?

MJ That's my own composition.

RM Do you remember what year you wrote it in?

MJ Well, I'd say it was in '34, about '34.

RM How did you come to write the song?

MJ I don't know. Just write 'em, they just come in my mind. I just sit down and write 'em out. And I know I wrote one sitting here one day babysitting for my wife's father.

RM Now, when you all would sing at a local meeting, would you sing at the beginning of the meeting or—?

MJ Oh, just anytime during the meeting. Maybe a speaker—or ahead of the speaker.

RM Were there many other people singing besides you and Orville that would perform at the meetings?

MJ No, not too many. And union songs—there wasn't too many a-singing.

RM Well, did anybody ever write down any union songs that you all wrote?

MJ No. Not as I know of.

RM You always played the harp behind him?

MJ I led with the harp. He followed me with the guitar.

RM Did you all ever make up any songs that were sort of good-time songs or happy songs or anything?

MJ Oh, yes. We had some funny songs.

RM Do you remember any of those?

MJ Oh, yes. Yes.

RM Well, could you sing one of those?

MJ Well, now—this is one I made up about men that didn't like to belong to a union, you know. And we called them "scabs," and we'd get rid of

them if we could. And one of the head men over here at the field office, his name was Jess Quinto. He was the head man. Then there was another field man by the name of a Johnny Griegle. He's still over there at the field office. Then we had another field man whose name was Matthew Daison. Well, I made up a song about—the title of the song is "The Union Blues." (singing)

There's a man name's Jess Quinto,
Says the scabs will have to go
And build their local in the devil's den.
Well, you get no easy chair, for the devil's boss down
there,
You'll get just what is coming to you then.

For the devil and his wife, they keep no dry packed ice
To put around your feet if they get hot.
Well, they're not the least bit slow, for they're always
on the go
And they sure do keep the snitchers on the trot.

For I cannot like a fellow, that seems the least bit
yellow,
And does not like to pay his union dues.
Well, we ought to cut some slab, right in on these here
scabs,
And whip 'em 'til they'll take the union blues.

For a man named Johnny Griegle,
He's not the least bit fickle
And would not laugh at any man's downfall,
But I'm sure that Matthew Daison
Would bust his sides a-laughin',
If we would take a stick and kill 'em all.

But I cannot like a fellow, that seems the least bit
yellow,
And does not like to pay his union dues.
Well, we ought to cut some slabs, right in on these
here scabs,
And whip 'em 'til they'll take the union blues.
I mean to tell you,
To whip 'em 'til they'll take the union blues.

RM When did you write that?

MJ (laughs) Back in '36 or '38, longer than that.

RM And you wrote that all yourself?

MJ Yeah, that's mine . . .

RM And what was the name of it?

MJ "The Union Blues."

RM "The Union Blues," and what was the tune behind it?

MJ I don't know. (laughs)

RM O. K.

MJ I just whipped up a tune. Put the words to it.

MJ Well, you see, he [Orville] had a number that I didn't know, you see, such as "John L. Lewis Blues." Now, I didn't know them, and he had different songs that I didn't know and maybe what we did know a song together, we sing together. Where if he knowed his song, he played and sang his song or he would accompany me on my song. And we just kicked it to that way, the way we got by.

RM Well, could you do the funeral song that the union asked you and your brother to write?

MJ Yeah, let's see.

RM What is the name of that? Is it called "Only A Miner"?

MJ Yeah, "Only A Miner" is the title of it. (singing)

Well, a miner has gone to make Heaven his home,
His wife and dear children he left here alone.
Let men of the union, from this rank and file
Put an arm of protection around his dear child.

He is only a miner, was killed underground.
He is only a miner, and one more is gone;
Why he was taken, nobody can tell.
His mining is over—poor miner, farewell.

He leaves his companion and little ones, too,
To earn their own living as miners all do,
Shut off from daylight and those that he loves.
The boulder that crushed him came down from above.

He is only a miner, was killed underground.
He is only a miner, and one more is gone.
Why he was taken, nobody can tell.
His mining is over—poor miner, farewell.
His mining is over—dear brother, farewell.

RM Did you all sing that very much?

MJ No, no. After we sung that at the local hall, and they said, "Buddy, we don't want no part of that." We just dismissed it. Of course, it's still stuck in my memory.

RM When did you stop working in the mines?

MJ I stopped working in there on April 2, 1959.

RM Where was the last mine that you worked in?

MJ Over here on the Coalwood Road. The mines went right in under the road.

RM Then you worked in the mines—I guess you started just the small punch mines, didn't you?

Coal Mining as a Boy

MJ No, I started in a large mine about two miles—no, it's not two miles up the road here. Hensley. I was a boy when I first started to work. Now, there was a large family of us—it's 12. And I started work when I was a boy 12 years old. I worked the summer that I was 12 years, and my name was put on the company payroll. I got seven and a half cents a hour, worked ten long hours a day for 75 cents.

RM What did you do?

MJ I knocked latches on a tippie, where they dropped the cars over the hill with a rope, and they would dump and you had to go knock a latch to let the door swing out for the coal to come down through the bottom. Then I went to school part of the winter that winter. And when a boy was 13 years old he would go and make a sworn affidavit before a notary public that they would not sue the workman's compensation in case you got killed. Then they'd let you work in the mines. Oh, when I was 13 years old, on the 17th day of January—and in March, the following March of that same year, I went inside the mines, when I was 13 years old. And I got a dollar and a quarter a day, 12 and a half cents a hour for labor inside. And I have been in the mines up until '59. I've been about 44 years inside of 'em. Some of 'em, coal was 28 inches high. You get down into such cold as that and you take coffee in your Thermos bottle but you couldn't—You'd a-had to hunt a place where the top had fell out before you could even turn up the cup to the Thermos bottle and get all the coffee out of it.

RM Well, I think they said he wrote a song called "White House Blues." Do you remember that?

MJ No, but I remember him *havin'* the "White House Blues," and then he had the "John L. Lewis Blues."



A 1955 snapshot of Mack Jenks, left, and Orville (Jake), right. Orville's wife Susan is between the brothers. Orville died in the early 1960s in New Mexico and his wife in the early 1970s.

Is it so that he is dyin'?
Lord, I tried to stop the motor
But I could not stop in time.

I saw the car wheels rolling o'er him,
Saw them bend his weary head.
I saw his sister stoop and kiss him,
Crying, brother, are you dead?
Yes, I'm dying, sister, dying,
Soon I'll reach that blissful shore
There to join with friend and loved ones
For my coupling days are o'er.

I saw his mother stand beside him,
Saw the tears stream down her face
As she prayed to God the Father—
Must he die here in this place?
As she prayed to God the Father,
She said, Father, you know best.
If my darling boy is dying,
Father, take him home to rest.
Yes, Father, take him home to rest.

RM What about—he did a song about a Model T?

MJ No . . . but he had one about the tobaccos, about all the different kind of tobaccos.

RM He did?

MJ Yeah.

RM Do you remember any of those?

MJ No, I don't remember; I couldn't begin to sing that. Now, did we get that motorman song on there for you?

RM No, do you know that?

MJ Yeah.

RM Would you sing that for us?

More Songs

MJ Yeah boy, sure would, but now it needs two to sing it. But I'll sing it one way and then if you want it put on like both of us would put it on, I'll put it on that way. Now that happened; that was a true happening. I knowed the boy that was braking—a boy by the name of Hiram Hall; and I knowed the motorman that he was braking after, Charlie Landrum was the man who was running the motor. (singing)

See that brave and trembling motorman
Who says his age is twenty-one.
See him stepping from his motor,
Crying, Lord, what have I done?
Have I killed my brave young coupler,

MJ Now that was the words of "The Dying Coupler," some call it, and some "The Motorman." But, now, that happened right around here, not two miles from here.

RM Well, you seem to think that Orville might not have written that?

MJ Well, I don't know, now. I'll just be honest with you, I couldn't say whether Orville wrote that song or not.

RM Were there other songs like that during that time?

MJ No. I never knowed none like that. Now, me and him would sing it together, you see. I believe it's much better where there's two a-singing it together, you see, because they can fill in with other words besides what just the lead man is giving out.

RM Well, do you think if you think about it, that you might remember some more songs about the mines that you wrote?

MJ Well, now, I had one about the Bartley explosion, but I've forgot some of it. It was sung to the tune of "One Step More." You've heard the old song "For it's only one step more"? Now it was sung to that. Now that happened in 1940, on the 10th day of January in 1940, when Bartley Mine blowed up over on Dry Fork and killed 91. I had a song on that but now I studied here for the last month trying to get that song back together because I knew you was

coming, and I tried to get that song back together and I never have been able to get it back together.

RM Do you have very much of it together?

MJ Well, uh, no, and it just about takes two to sing it.

RM Could you sing what you do have together?

MJ Yeah.

RM I'd like to, you know, have some record of it at least.

MJ Well, it was made up about the Bartley explosion. (singing.)

In the year of 1940, on the 10th day of the year,
There was a bunch of poor coal miners
Left their loved ones, sweet and dear.
Oh, a miner's life's not easy,
You can see what happened there.
They were entombed beneath the mountain
Without the slightest breath of air.
Oh, these men, these poor coal miners,
Oh, their work on earth is o'er.
They are now at rest with Jesus
Over on the other shore.

Oh, the Red Cross work, they are willing
With the UMWA

Now, that's as far as I can go but they was a lot more to the song, but I just deliberately forgot it, and I can't get it back together.

RM Let me ask you one more question, and I guess we're gonna have to go home. You all sang at the union meetings; was there ever any singing in the mines?

MJ In the mines? Yes, they's been a plenty singing in the mines. No quarters or nothing like that. But that brother, Orville, I broke for him months in and months out, and many times when we'd have to go a long trip with a motor and string of cars, I've sat on the bumper and him in the deck of the motor and we'd sing together. We'd sing different songs, most always religious songs. And he could put in a good alto and we'd sing together.

RM Were there many other men that sang in the mines also?

MJ No, no, most all of 'em, the only way you can prob'ly hear some fellow singing of his work and that's all.

RM But there was—you all did sing some in the mines?

MJ Yeah, we sung together a lot, but that would be the time we'd be a-traveling a right smart distance with a triple car, and I'd be setting on the bumper of the motor with him.

RM Well, did you both start singing in a church originally?

MJ Well, no, no. We never—we would go to—anywhere we was in church. Now, I been down in Ohio where he lived down there, and, uh, I'd go to church with him, and we'd most always sing a song or two there in church.

RM I just wondered when you were young, if

that's where you started singing together?

MJ No. We was up in our years, about—well, I say about—We didn't do too much singin' in the '20s, you see. We just played music and mostly for these square dances, but when we started singing together was in the '30s.

RM Well, did you all write very much music when you all were playing for the square dances?

MJ No.

RM You just played somebody else's music, then?

MJ Yeah. The old-timey songs.

RM And it wasn't until you started in the mines, then, to the union, that you all started making up songs?

MJ That's right. After the union come in, we started making up songs to sing at the local union and at these big gatherings that they have. You know they always have a John L. Lewis Day somewhere, and we'd usually be at them and sing.

RM Would you all try to write a new song for each big gathering or each new John L. Lewis Day?

MJ No. We just put on what we had, for them songs just comes to you now and then.

RM Well, they used to have a lot of entertainers come in for the John L. Lewis Days, didn't they?

MJ Oh, Law', yeah. That's a big day through this part of the country. 'Course, it's not now like it was ten or 15 years ago. It's just like everything else, you see, it just eventually wears away.

RM Well, I know that Orville's daughter, that's from Ohio, said that Orville used to take her and her twin sister to the meetings to dance.

MJ They did. He used to play for them. They had twins, and they was good dancers. They could dance good, and he'd play and sing, or just play, and they'd dance.

RM Did he take them to most of the meetings he went to, or—

MJ No. Just occasionally.

RM And there weren't any other people doing the same type of thing?

MJ No, no.

RM Well, I certainly do thank you for letting us spend some time with you . . . *

RELATED READING AND LISTENING

Books

Adams, James Taylor. *Death in the Dark: A Collection of Factual Ballads of American Mine Disasters*. Norwood Editions, Adams-Mullins Press, Big Laurel, Va., 1974.

Green, Archie. *Only a Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Mining Songs*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1972.

Korson, George. *Coal Dust on the Fiddle*. Folklore Associates, Hatboro, Pa., 1965.

Record

Folk Music of the United States: Songs and Ballads of the Bituminous Miners from the Archive of Folk Song. Recorded and edited by George Korson. Library of Congress, 1940. (Includes Orville Jenks' "The Dying Brakeman" and "Sprinkle Coal Dust on my Grave").

Home Winemaking:

An Italian Tradition in the Upper Kanawha Valley

By Alicia Tyler

Drawings by John Nickerson

JOHNNY M. SAYS that he didn't learn winemaking from his Italian father, who immigrated into the coalfields of West Virginia in 1913. Mr. M. *did* help his father make raisin wine—many Italian families in the Upper Kanawha Valley made such wine—but, being a child, he paid little attention to the process. It was just another chore, for there was always wine on an Italian family's table. Mr. M. also remembers walking under the grape arbor of another Italian family in their community, who made wine from their own dark blue grapes and made bread in an outdoor oven next to their grape arbor. But it wasn't until eight years ago, when he started making wine for himself, that Johnny M. actually learned the winemaking process.*

Why did he start making wine again? As he explains it, "My brother-in-law was coming up here [Smithers] and making wine with (an Italian friend). And being in the vicinity and watching 'em, I said, 'My gosh, I'd like to set some on, too, one year.' That's how I got started. Actually I was tickled to death to know it was so simple. Really it's making itself, and you're having to watch it."

Buying Grapes and Crushing Them

Johnny M. and his friends — for part of the pleasure in winemaking is getting together with your friends to pool your resources *and* have a good time—generously agreed to let me tape an interview on this ancient process for GOLDENSEAL. I was invited to the M. home one evening in early October to see the initial stage of the year's winemaking, crushing the grapes. Mr. M.'s basement was the scene of the evening's activities, and the heady odor of crushed grapes greeted me as soon as he opened the basement door. Downstairs his brother-in-law, nephew, and a couple of friends were relaxing around a coffee table, sampling last year's wine. Over to the side were four oak barrels lined up on a slightly raised platform; behind them were around two dozen cases of blue and green grapes.

One of the 50-gallon barrels was already filled with crushed grapes and covered with a muslin cloth. Upon my arrival, the men downed the last of their wine and started back to work. A wooden fruit crusher with metal rollers was hoisted up on top of the second barrel, and as two of the men began emptying a case of grapes into the crusher, another cranked the handle, crushing the grapes between the rollers. Behind them the other men were seated on upturned wooden crates, sorting through the next case of grapes and tossing aside any leaves or shriveled fruit that might spoil the taste of the wine.

Mr. M. insisted that I also sample some of last year's vintage, which he was very proud of (a blend of the dry and medium sweet wine was my favorite), and then, with the clamor of the fruit crusher and much joking and joshing in the background, he began talking.

Johnny M. First thing, really, in making wine is actually getting prepared a week ahead of time on these barrels. So remember, anybody that's going to make homemade wine definitely will take his barrels out and clean them and soak them for about a week. Your preparation's important. Then you wait for a decision on—actually, you will wait on the price of grapes, which is important to know how much you're going to make for the year. If the price is really high, you probably will cut down on the quantity you're going to make. And if it's reasonable, then you will go more.

Alicia Tyler. Oh, I see.

JM After the grapes get here—

AT Wait a minute. Let me back up a little bit. You mentioned earlier that most of the grapes in the East Coast come from, or are shipped from Pittsburgh.

JM Yeah, most of the grapes that are bought from this part of West Virginia. Somebody in this local area will take orders and actually go up with a truck and then bring them in from Pittsburgh, probably in an average of a dollar a case for expenses. Really he's just covering expenses for himself. Say this year, like they are, the price of

*Under federal law, the home winemaker is allowed to make up to 200 gallons of wine tax free each year.

European Immigrants in West Virginia

Italian immigrants, along with others from southern and eastern Europe, began pouring into West Virginia during the first part of the 20th century to help fill a demand for labor in the State's booming coal industry. This demand far exceeded the supply of native workers, so that companies scrambled to sign up prospective miners at the port of entry. Kenneth Bailey, in an article published in the quarterly, *West Virginia History*, points out that many Italian workers were recruited in New York, New York, or Ellis Island, by company agents who were often recent immigrants themselves. Lured by the promise of good wages and free transportation to the mines, which they believed were not far from New York City, unsuspecting immigrants signed contracts which bound them to mine coal until they had worked off their "free" transportation.¹

Bailey described several cases in which this "debt peonage" of Italian workers led to abuses. In 1894 the Vice Consul for Italy at Cincinnati requested that Governor William A. MacCorkle investigate the living conditions of 350 Italian laborers at Womelsdorf (Randolph County) who had been working for two months without pay.

A more flagrant example of abuse was recorded in 1906, when the Italian Ambassador to the United States complained to Secretary of State Elihu Root that his countrymen were being held captive in West Virginia. Specifically he cited the case of 15 Italian immigrants who had left New York purportedly to work on the railroads, only to find that they were expected to work in the mines:

When they protested and attempted to leave, they were stopped by armed men. The Italian foreman was manacled with handcuffs and the others were subjected to such 'brutal threats that three or four young and weak ones fainted.' The men were allowed to pool the resources and were able to collect \$164, with which they paid the company for the transportation costs of the weakest five or six men, who were sent back to New Jersey. The others were held by force and kept under surveillance. They were locked in a railroad car for six days and given nothing but bread and water.²

In spite of cases of obvious exploitation of Italian and other immigrants, the wave of immigration into the West Virginia coalfields continued. The foreign-born miners worked hard and lived frugally.³ One coal operator reported that many of them went into the mine an hour or two before starting time and loaded one or two cars before the other miners arrived. They did not, as a rule, draw scrip for credit at the company store; they spent very little of their wages on themselves and saved the rest to pay for the passage of their friends and families to their new homes in the Mountain State.⁴

By 1915 the number of immigrant miners in

the State had grown to more than 31,000, and of these more than one-third were Italian. But this trend toward an increasingly foreign-born labor force was soon reversed with the outbreak of war in Europe. Thousands of immigrant miners, including many Italians, were army reservists in their countries of origin and returned to Europe. Again, West Virginia faced a labor shortage, for the European war also cut off the flow of immigration. At this time the coal companies began to import large numbers of Negro laborers from the rural South.

Many of the foreign-born, on the other hand, did stay in West Virginia and raised their families here. In 1970 the Census Bureau estimated that there were almost 18,000 West Virginians who were either born in Italy or were the offspring of at least one Italian parent. Combined they constitute the State's largest ethnic group.

Relatively little has been written about the experiences of the foreign-born who immigrated into the coalfields of West Virginia. Perhaps this is because there was so much pressure for them to assimilate into a new way of life, a pressure which became focused in the Americanization movement that gripped the entire country during World War I. Often this assimilation was facilitated through the skills of their children who quickly learned English and served as translators for their parents, as they themselves learned the language. Surely these immigrants had mixed feelings about the ease with which their children adopted new ways and new values; nevertheless, the foreign-born displayed more than average interest in encouraging their children to continue their education.⁵

As the State's economy broadened, many of the immigrants found new jobs in other industries, and some even started their own businesses. Today their descendants are found in virtually every facet of the State's civic and economic life. In light of this obviously successful assimilation and considering the wartime pressure to Americanize, it would be interesting to learn how much of their native heritage has survived. One centuries-old tradition appears not only to have survived, but to be alive and flourishing in some areas—winemaking among descendants of Italian immigrants who toiled in the coalfields during the early part of this century.

¹"A Judicious Mixture: Negroes and Immigrants in West Virginia Mines, 1880-1917," January, 1973.

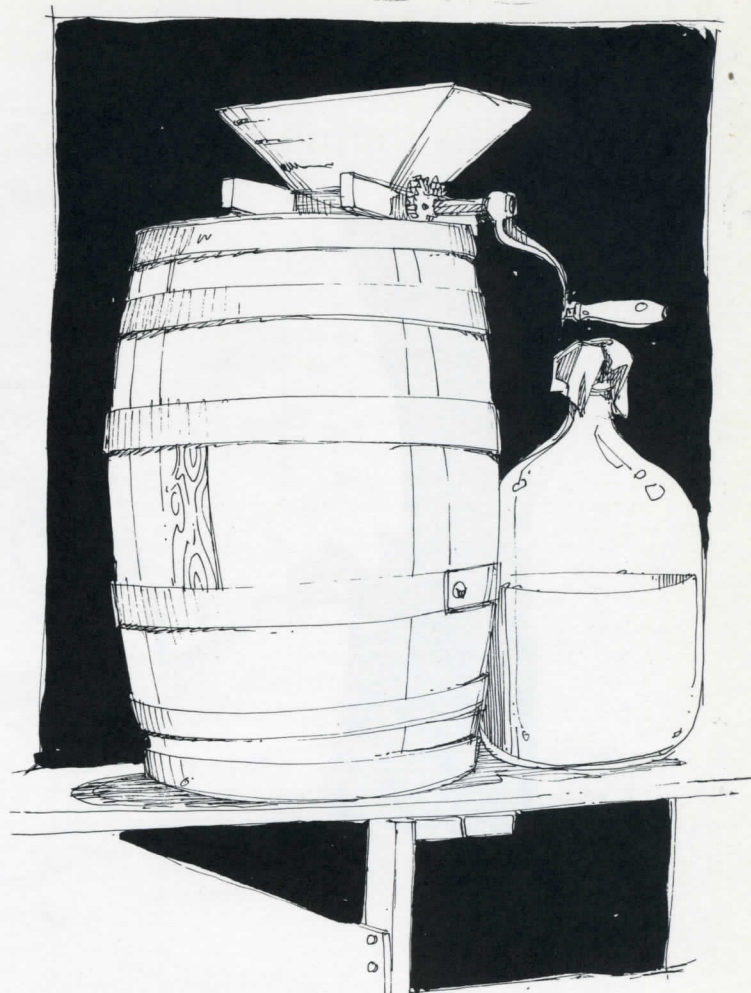
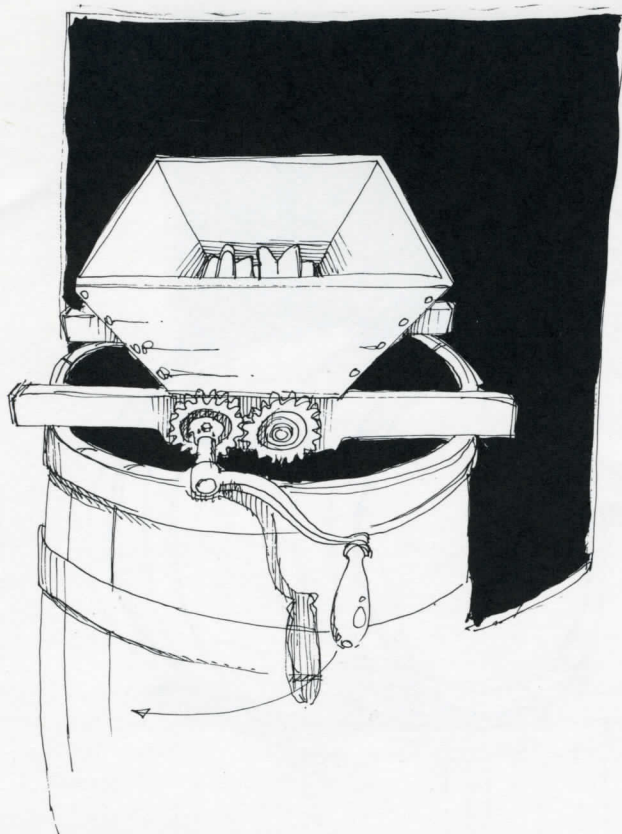
²Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 146, 147.

³W. P. Tams, Jr., *The Smokeless Coal Fields of West Virginia: A Brief History*, West Virginia University Library, Morgantown, 1963, pp. 35, 36.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 41, 52, 61; Walter Thurmond, *The Logan Coal Field of West Virginia*, p. 63.

⁵Thurmond, p. 63.

Top view of grape crusher.



Grape crusher crushes grapes to begin fermenting process.

grapes were \$10 a case. So he would probably told us that, at the most it's going to be, we're probably going to pay \$11. So, in other words, he can get 500 cases, 400 cases, whatever he could get in orders . . . and come pretty close to breaking even or halfway pay for his own.

This year (the grapes) were scarce because of the dry run in California. So that's really going to make your grape a little bit drier, but you still have the sugar, and the acid contents will be great and will probably make a beautiful wine, but not as much juice. So that way you won't complain as much. You have less wine, but probably a better taste.

AT Because of the dryness.

JM Because of the dryness, or because maybe it was a good year. You know, every year there's either a good year or a bad year for wine . . . which is not known to wine makers until after you've set it on. Then it's too late.

AT What are some of the factors that go into determining whether it's a good year or a bad year? Is it something to do with the climate?

JM Very much so, because a wet climate could hurt you on wine, too. See, a wet climate could give you a real large, beautiful grape and maybe you think it's a good tasting grape. Then it's too much water in the grape and not enough sugar and acid. Then it won't ferment as much. It may be a bad grape and it might not ferment enough to make wine. Then you lose the whole batch, which is easily

done too. You really take a chance when you make wine. You may lose the whole works. Oh, yeah . . . in the past eight years that I've been making it here, I've only lost one batch.

Primary Fermentation

JM Another thing you got to learn about making wine is any wine that you make like they're doing here now, that it may start working tomorrow, which is Sunday. Second day, it may work real good. Oh, boy, it's going to be beautiful! Then the third day it starts dropping on your working. In other words, it gets completely near a quit. Now, three days of working on wine, you might as well throw it away, because it didn't make enough alcohol to give you wine. In other words, you've lost it really.

AT Working. When you say working, you mean it's fermenting?

JM That means it's fermenting. Yeah.

AT Then how can you tell that by watching, that it's fermenting?

JM Well, actually it's boiling like water.

AT Really?

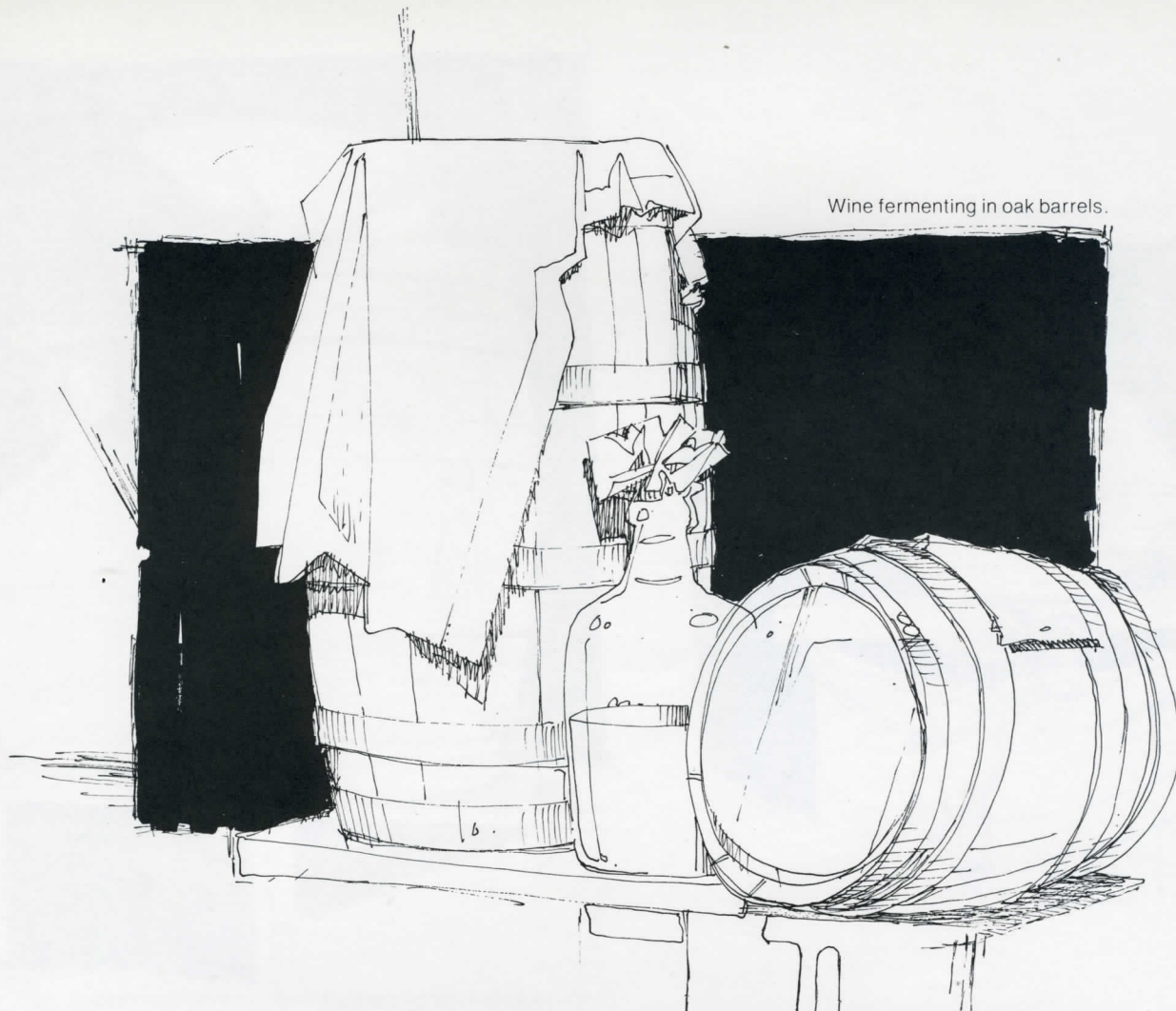
JM You can hear it. You can really—Well, you listen to it.

AT It fizzes or something?

JM Yeah, it fizzes. Fizzes like a Seven-Up or a gingerale.

AT And so it should—to make a good wine it should be fermenting for how long? Several days?

Wine fermenting in oak barrels.



JM You should go past three days. And, my gosh, if you hit the fourth day, you say, "Oh, beautiful, it's going to come out." Then the fifth day, well, you know it's going to be all right. Now, taste, it may vary. But then when you go six, it's great. But you really don't work it over seven days regardless if it's still working beautiful. Within seven days you take it off anyway. You take the juice away from the grape. Or you can burn it out. You get a burned taste or tart taste.

Now, you do stir it every 24 hours, and not longer than that, but less if you can. If you can go 12 hours, fine, you're doing good.

AT What do you use to stir it?

JM Oh, you stir it by hand. It doesn't hurt it. You wash your hand and you really reach down to your elbow and stir it. And what you're doing you're turning it over. If you leave it, it won't work. What it's doing, you're not working the top grape any more. You're only working what's on the bottom, which will burn up on you.

On the sixth day when you see it slowing down, I say, "Well, it's ready to come off. We'd better take it off tomorrow evening." And then you get your helper, you do it yourself, or whatever help you can get: "We've got to take it off tomorrow, so let's all get together." You do not stir it the last 24 hours. Because if you do, you'll just really have a muddy mess in there. What you're doing, you're letting all the grape work itself up to the top, leaving the

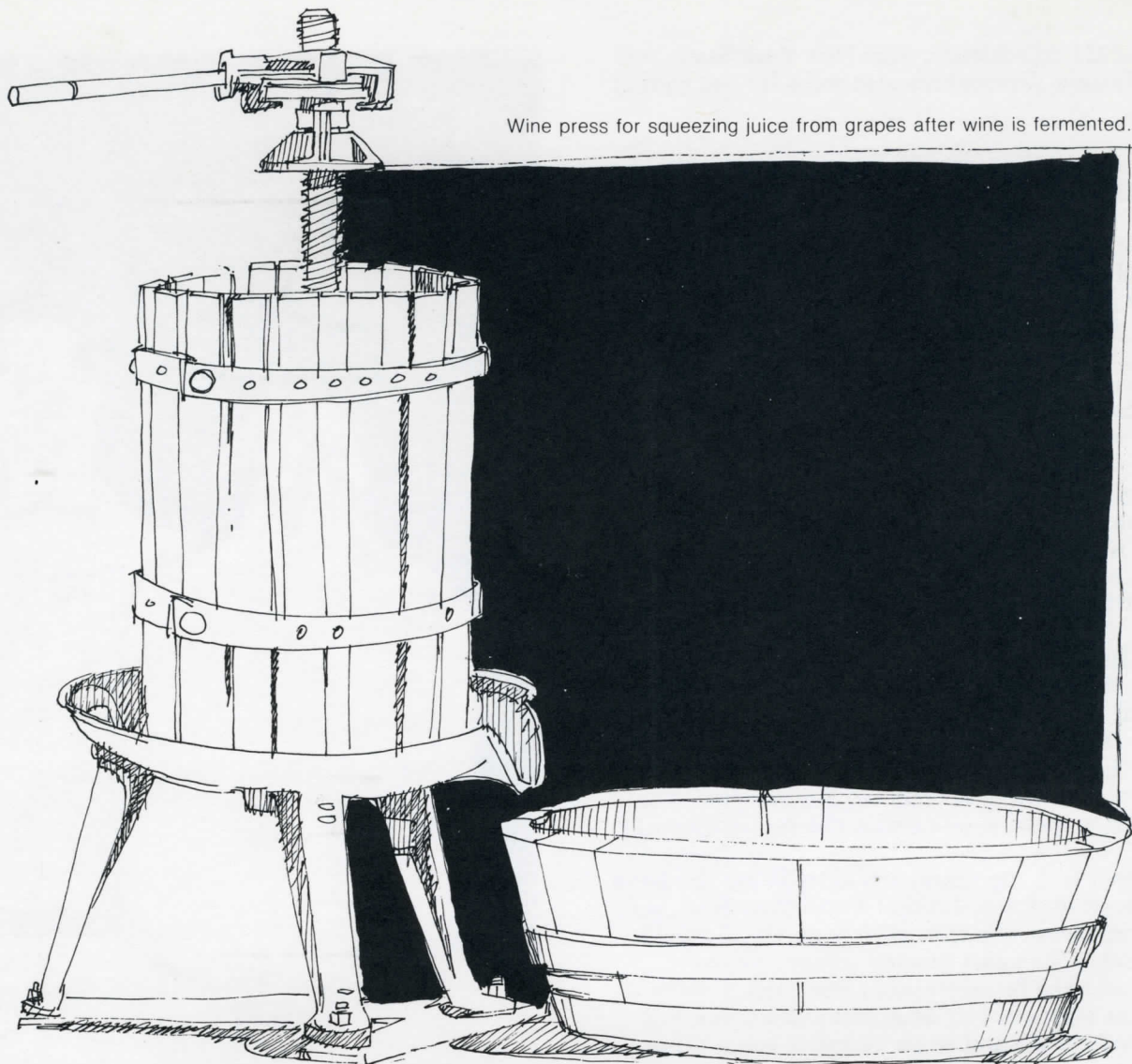
clearest part in the bottom. Then when you pull the plug out, you're getting most of your clear wine.

Secondary Fermentation

Two weeks later I returned to the M. home so that my husband could draw illustrations of the wine-making equipment, and also to see the next stage in the wine-making process, the secondary fermentation. Mr. M. was very happy and optimistic about this year's wine, because it had worked for six days. During the primary fermentation, he explained, the wine takes on its color, flavor, and body.

After it had worked for six days, Mr. M. had drained the new wine from the barrels and extracted the last drop of juice from the grape with a wine press; the leftover murk, seeds and skins, was given to a friend for compost. Then he strained the wine and funneled it into 25-gallon casks, placed on their sides, up to the top of a two-inch opening called the bunghole. Any wine left over, usually about eight gallons, was saved as "fill," to replace the liquid which evaporates from the casks. It is important, Mr. M. noted, to keep the wine up to the top of the bunghole, so that air cannot get inside the cask. During this stage, the secondary fermentation—when the new wine is taken away from the grapes and protected from over-contact with oxygen—the greater quantity of alcohol would be produced.

JM (adding fill to one of the casks) You're adding to it each day. And it works down each day.



Wine press for squeezing juice from grapes after wine is fermented.

Then you will notice as each day goes along, or each week goes along, it's not evaporating as fast. Maybe you'll add, oh, maybe a quart the first time you go in there, first day or two. Then you may add a little less than a quart. Then you get down to where you're just adding a pint to it. Then you're adding a half pint as each week goes on into October down through November and maybe on up to December sometimes. It is possible.

Now, I don't seal it when I put my last top [fill] on. I pour it in and I say, "Boy, that's it." I go in the next day and it hasn't worked down. I will not cap it that day. I will go another day or two, because sometimes a cool day will cause it to not evaporate or not work just a little bit. And then I'll come back two days later and say, "Uh oh, down again." It was a warmer day come up in October or November or December. Maybe we had a warm week. And you think maybe, "Well, it's working real good." And then you have a real cold spell, you think, "Well, that's it." So, that's the part of watching wine. You can get caught, see.

Settling and Bottling the Wine

JM Then when you notice that it's through working off completely, then you can seal it. You're sealing it in there to age. Only "aging" wine is really "settling" wine to me.

AT This would probably be about in December, right?

JM Well, that's when you're through capping it now. It's not settled. What you're doing, you're letting it sit through the whole winter into spring and mostly through April. Some people wait until they say, "Well, we're not going to take it off 'till the sap comes up." They go by the moon and sap. But I don't go with either one of them. I leave it in the barrels until I want to take it out.

During the first visit, Mr. M.'s brother-in-law told me that he went by the sign of the moon in April, the full moon coming up. One year he and his friend, W., had bottled wine in the wrong sign of the moon and later had to pour out all 175 gallons. Other local wine-makers, it was said, bottled when the sap comes up.

Another of Mr. M's friends, from New York State, said that in his area winemakers also went by the sign of the moon.

AT Okay, then by next spring, you're home free. Is that right?

JM Yeah. All that's left is bottling it and drinking it. You compare it with other people's. Some people will say, "Oh, no, I don't want it." Others say, "My gosh!"

AT Nothing can go wrong at that point?

JM If the barrels, which are new barrels . . . if the whisky in the Old Chartered Distilleries barrels doesn't change its flavoring at all, there shouldn't be anything wrong with it. (Laughter)

Now, a lot of people definitely go all the way on sterilizing, but I've watched my father and them make wine at home when they made it from raisins, and they just washed everything; they never sterilized anything. You do it the old way, I guess, except putting your feet in it. (Laughter)

Other Methods

AT You mentioned that in the early days the immigrant families made raisin wine.

JM Ed L. is making a case of raisin wine now, and he's the only one I know who can do it. But it will be a strong wine. It is an old Italian wine. The stronger they make it on raisins, the better they like it.

I talked to L. up there, and he tells me you have to add yeast, and, see, I didn't know that. Now, see, with a grape wine like this, there's no way I would touch yeast. [The yeast already present on the grapes starts the fermentation.] But there's some people that starts out as amateurs thinks that you have to have yeast and sugar to make you a grape wine.

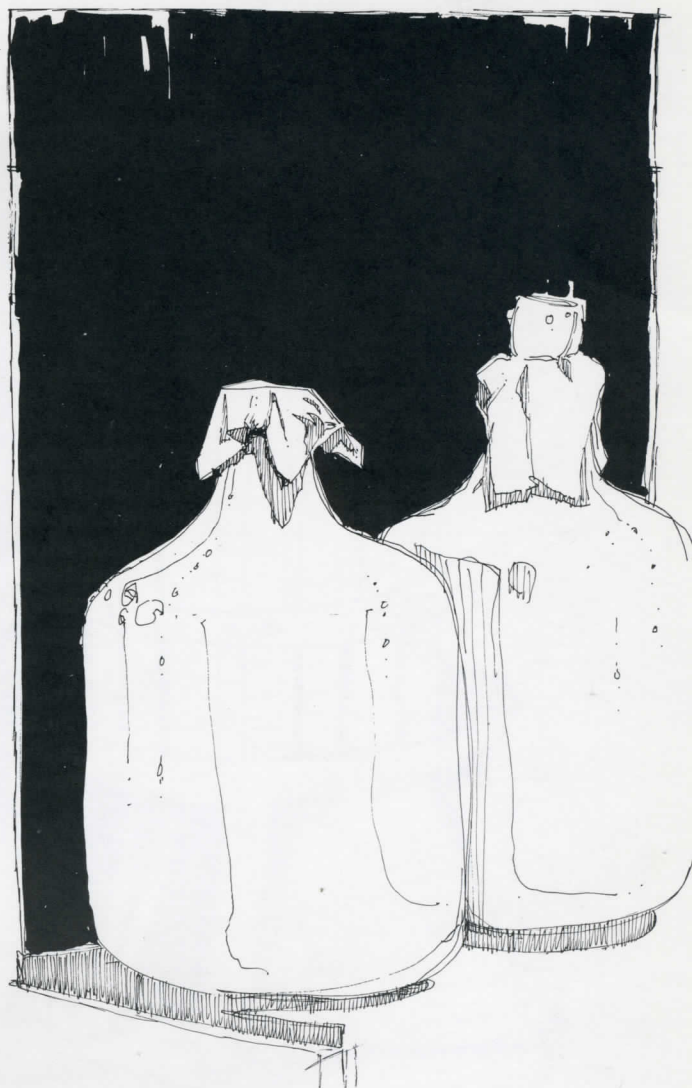
AT Let me ask you, your brother-in-law and his friend [W.] . . . did they learn from older people that had been making wine?

JM Yeah . . . now, W. is near 65 himself now. He really learned from his father, or maybe from his father-in-law. Now, his father-in-law makes wine different from the way we do. He make the old Italian way, and he would actually laugh at the people who were making it next door. But he come up with that real strong, dry wine.

AT What's the difference?

JM He took a barrel like this [cask] and he cut a hole in it and he kept this part [what he cut out]. Now, he crushed his grapes and he put 'em in there and he put that [lid] on top, and he left a little hole in it. But he never took the grape out of his wine; he left everything in there. And when it worked off, he capped it, waxed it, and next spring when he wanted wine he drew wine out the bottom. The grapes stayed on top.

You talk about a good, strong, beautiful wine. Now, maybe he made two barrels; he drank one and aged the other and he bottled it. When he died, which was just a few years back—he'd said when



Wine settling in glass bottles.

they buried him, go in his cellar and open up his oldest wine, and everybody, you know, drink it and be merry. Just go ahead, it suits him fine.

They did! They really did. They came back from the funeral—I went to the home there—and they pulled his best bottled wine. And you didn't get a glass of it, though, you only got a shot glass. There wasn't much of 20-year-old left, I guess six bottles at the most. After 20 years, it was beautiful! That one glass was like drinking a glass of bourbon, it was that smooth. So he knew what he was doing in his process.

AT That's really a nice custom.

JM Now . . . this last week, somebody said that over in Italy, after the wine was made in those big vats, there was a man come by with a horse and cart and took all the settlings out for himself. Whether he was using yeast or not, he would ferment the settlings. He was a poor man . . . and he was making a burgundy out of it. So there's really thousands of ways of making things that you want to make. ❖

Ethnic Music: A Neglected Part of Appalachian Culture

By Louis Horacek

A Washington, D.C., conference called "Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage," was sponsored by the American Folklife Center between January 24-26. The meeting was an effort by that agency to focus scholarly and political attention on the music of America's smaller ethnic groups, especially that of central, eastern, and southern European and Texas-Mexican enclaves. Although the nominal topic of the conference was the recorded music of these groups, it broadened to include all aspects of their music and, for that matter, of their culture.

Folklorists, librarians, businessmen, musicians, and collectors at the conference traced the importance of history and place on the music and records in ethnic communities. The yet unsolved problems in the study of ethnic music were discussed, along with the possibilities for help from the Folklife Center. At the Library of Congress, the Center was created early last year to preserve and disseminate America's folk culture.

Since the conference was the first national gathering of people interested in recordings and other aspects of ethnic music, there is not yet a country-wide effort for communicating information. However, there seem to be many things happening in the field; archives and individual collectors are beginning to develop good collections of recordings, and local festivals and educational projects are encouraging older carriers of the traditions to become active. These forums are giving new generations an opportunity to learn more of their heritage.

A remarkable thing about the United States has been its many ethnic cultures and communities, reflecting the wave after wave of immigration. Perhaps more notable has been the amount of effort expended in stamping out cultural diversity, ignoring it and covering it up with emphasis on national unity and Anglo-Saxon culture.

Through the 1960s an interest arose in what came to be called pluralism, beginning with the black cultural and

political movements, and gradually spreading through the other ethnic communities of the country.

As far as music is concerned, little attention has been paid to the smaller ethnic groups' output outside of local audiences. There has been plenty of activity at community levels, as anyone knows who has lived near a large Slavic or other ethnic group. Those local record stores are well stocked with ethnic records, and the airwaves, at least on the weekends, are full of the music. Ethnic bands play at weddings, in bars, and at fraternal halls.

Recordings of non-English-speaking groups' music in America have been made since the beginning of the recording industry in the 1890s. It was the first specialty market to be exploited by the industry, long before they realized the possibilities of the black and Southern white markets. This domestic recording activity received a great boost when imports from Europe were cut off in World War I and again when recording techniques were improved in the 1920s. In some years of the pre-Depression period, more titles were issued in the ethnic categories than in English-speaking ones.

These records are especially significant because in many cases they are the only recordings made anywhere of particular musical traditions. In Europe the music of rural people was not recorded, either through the prejudice of the record companies or due to the lack of a market. Often as not, our European ancestors were too poor to buy phonographs and records. Scholars eventually made field recordings in Europe, but frequently the traditions had faded or changed greatly by the time they got to it.

American record companies found that immigrants to this country were eager to hear their local musicians on records that brought them the sounds of the old country and commentaries on life in America. As it did in the Anglo-American and Afro-American traditions, World War II brought changes in the music, especially in the

Slavic communities where a uniquely American sound called polka music developed.

Folklorists have also been recording ethnic music through most of the century. However, except for the very significant recordings of American Indian music, it was not done on a large scale and has not been issued on records or received much publicity.

Today the problems are both those of preserving and spreading the music. Contemporary ethnic music, like polka music, has been effectively recorded and distributed by numerous small recording companies, at least within the communities. The older forms preserved on records and still practiced in the ethnic groups are fading rapidly. As noted, the field recordings have not been released, and there has been no widespread reissuing of old records as there has been with blues and country music. This reissuing is never likely to develop because the major companies that originally made the records are not interested, and a new copyright law will soon make it illegal for anyone else to do it.

West Virginia's numerous ethnic communities, Italian, German, Slovak, Polish, Yugoslav, etc., have been especially neglected. On one hand there is the great drive to conform—to melt or get off the pot. Additionally, there is currently the overwhelming political and anthropological interest in Appalachian culture. There is a nearly unstated though popular assumption that everyone who lives in the Mountains is part of the ancient Anglo-Celtic culture. So the others have not been encouraged and recognized in studies, records, or festivals.

We can be sure that there have been many fine musicians, as well as other folk artists, who have died unrecognized outside their immediate neighborhoods, and many more who are not active today for lack of encouragement. We know that young people are not having opportunities to become acquainted with their heritage, and everyone else is being denied a wealth of great music. ❀

Summer Craft and Music Events in West Virginia

Art and Craft Fairs

The following listing was furnished by the Arts and Crafts Division of the West Virginia Department of Commerce at the Science and Culture Center, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. For further information write the Division or phone 304/348-3736.

May 1-15	Greenbrier Valley Arts and Crafts Festival	Lewisburg
April 28-30	Parkersburg Community College Heritage Days	Parkersburg
May	Designers Craft Guild Exhibition and Sale	Morgantown
May 4-8	Huntington Dogwood Arts and Crafts Festival	Huntington
May 13-15	West Virginia Country Fling Quilt Show and Sale	Harpers Ferry
May 14-15	St. Albans High School Arts and Crafts Fair	St. Albans
May 26-30	Kanawha County Fair	Charleston (Camp Virgil Tate)
May 27-30	Vandalia Gathering: A Festival of West Virginia Traditional Music (Science and Culture Center)	Charleston (State Capitol)
May 28	Webster County Woodchopping Festival	Webster Springs
June 2-4	Calhoun County Wood Festival	Grantsville
June 2-5	West Virginia Strawberry Festival Arts and Crafts Show	Buckhannon
June 4-5	Arts and Crafts Festival (US Rt. 52, South)	Bluefield

June 5	Rhododendron Outdoor Art and Crafts Festival	Charleston
June 16-August 20	Greenbrier Valley Theater Summer Season	Lewisburg
June 10-12	Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival	Harpers Ferry
June 16-19	West Virginia State Folk Festival	Glenville
June 17-19	Monroe County Arts and Crafts Fair	Peterstown
June 23-25	Downtown Action Council Arts and Crafts Festival	Morgantown
June 25-26	Oglebay Institute Art and Craft Festival	Wheeling
June 30-July 4	Mountain State Art and Craft Fair	Ripley (Cedar Lakes)

Old-Time Bluegrass and Music Festivals

May 14-15	West Virginia Country Fling with old-time and bluegrass fiddle and banjo contests (Harpers Ferry Caverns)	Harpers Ferry
May 14-15	2nd Annual Bluegrass and Old-Time Music Festival (State Fairgrounds)	Lewisburg
May 20-22	Spring Bluegrass Festival (Potomac Highlands Park)	Moorefield
June 9-11	Skyline Bluegrass Festival (Blake's Farm)	Ronceverte
June 10-12	W. Va. Mountain State Gospel Sing (Off Rt. 19, South of Summersville)	Mt. Nebo
June 16-18	West Virginia State Folk Festival (College Auditorium)	Glenville
June 17-19	Butler Brothers Festival Cox's Field (East of Parkersburg on Rt. 47)	Walker
June 24-26	Mountain State Bluegrass Festival (18 miles East, State Rt. 15)	Webster Springs
June 25-26	CB Country Jam (Harpers Ferry Caverns Green)	Harpers Ferry
July 8-10	Goins Brothers Bluegrass Festival (Appalachian South Folklife Center)	Pipestem



This photograph appears here both to commemorate a remarkable event and to correct errors in the identification of these members of the Cabin Creek Quilt Cooperative in our last issue (Vol. 2, No. 4; pages 53-9). On December 15, 1976, the co-op members were at a ceremony at the Science and Culture Center to formally present their six specially made quilts to the State. Gov. Arch A. Moore, Jr. accepted the quilts and pinned a corsage on each of the quilt makers, (left to right) Dimple Brown, Indore; Eula Richmond, Clendenin; Gertrude Blume, Lookout; Nema Belcher, Elkview; Blanche Griffith, Sod; Alberta Johnson, East Bank; and Stella Monk, Ohley. The showing, called "Quilts: An Appalachian Tradition," was accompanied by photographs of each member in her home. Those photographs as well as this one were by Steve Payne of the West Virginia Department of Commerce.

Traditional Music Store Transplanted Enterprise in Berkeley Springs

By Nancy Wilkes

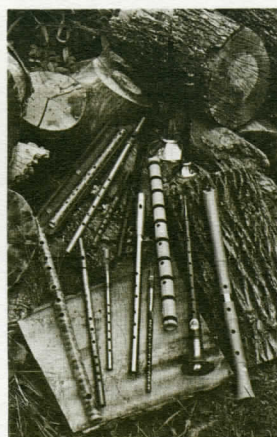
In September of 1975 the House of Musical Traditions opened for business in an old white frame house in Berkeley Springs. The opening was the end of a journey which began in New York, New York, in 1967, continued to Takoma Park, Maryland, and finally ended in the small Morgan County town whose mineral springs have attracted people for over two centuries. The distance travelled has been long and varied—in miles and also in the focus of the shop and in the life-styles of its managers.

As the store's name implies, traditional music is the order of business. Represented are a wide variety of instruments, books, and records from all over the world. The store's walls are lined with sitars and tabla from India, African talking drums, Irish bagpipes, and Japanese shakuhachi flutes, along with the more familiar American folk instruments, banjos, mandolins, Dobros, Appalachian lap dulcimers, jaw harps, and harmonicas.

The founder of the House of Traditions is David Eisner, a New York native whose interests lie in jazz and in ethnic instruments which many musicians in that field use. In 1970 he moved the shop from New York City to Takoma Park, Maryland, a Washington, D.C., suburb, to escape the big city problems inherent in New York. There he began a mail-order service for New York customers. Later, Spike Hopkins and I joined the venture.

Plans to move to the country became more feasible, since our mail-order business was growing, and our catalog had expanded and was in its third printing. We learned about Berkeley Springs and decided it would be a good place to relocate the business. No music store within a 35-mile radius served the area musicians. Too, Morgan County's rural beauty and its nearness to the Washington-Baltimore area added to its attractiveness.

We've added two more shops in the same building to complement the House of Musical Traditions. One is the Berkeley Crafts Shop, which sells traditional and contemporary crafts of local craftspeople. The other is Books' Records, a branch of our music store that stocks music books to match the variety of instruments we carry. Recently the books section was expanded to include non-music titles. The record



collection is far-reaching and includes many small label and ethnic recordings. In addition, a local musician Chris Anderson teaches guitar and mandolin there several days a week.

Still the bulk of the business is done through mail-order for which we have a 96-page catalog priced at \$1.00. Our address is House of Musical Traditions, 305 South Washington Street, Berkeley Springs, WV 25411. Store hours are noon until 7:00 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Top: House of Musical Traditions, Berkeley Springs. Photographs by Rebecca Stevens.

Above Left: Assorted flutes, Chinese musettes, and pennywhistles.

Above Center: Syrian dumbeks.

Above Right: left to right, Aeolian harp, Irish concertina, and lute.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Millstone, WV
March 15, 1977

Editor:

This letter is to commend the great work and collection of fine articles in your magazine. I found four issues in the Calhoun Co. Library and enjoyed them very much, especially about traditional folk ballads sung and played by the musicians you wrote about.

If possible could you write more about the Indians of West Virginia and the mounds that are not only numerous in Calhoun Co. but all over the State?

Your articles are of very great importance because we are losing too much of our past that is meaningful. In the name of progress we are leaving many things of value to life far behind. We are losing our perspective of harmony with nature, and your articles keep our interest alive in our link with the people and culture we came from.

Any copies you have *old* or *new* I would like to have or buy!

Thank you,
Judy Morris

Editor's note. Our supply of back issues is very, very low, and we are saving the few remaining ones for State libraries that need them to complete volumes for binding. Regretably, even money cannot buy them.

Richmond, Virginia
February 10, 1977

Editor:

My father Dr. L. A. Jarrett, graduated from Louisville Medical School in 1907. He worked for the Flynn Lumber Co. and was there at the time of GOLDENSEAL'S article "Logging at Swiss in Nicholas County around 1909." This was his first job. I was born at Swiss in 1910 and my sister Virginia (Mrs. L. F. Poffenbarger of Dunbar, W.Va.) was born there in 1911. The family moved to Charleston in 1912 or 1913.

Interest in "logging" came naturally for my Dad. His father John Thomas Jarrett had a logging operation in the late 1890's and early 1900's. Grandfather Jarrett's logging camp was up the Elk River at Jarrett's Ford, now known as Elkview. These were rugged and hardworking people. The trees were cut and trimmed by hand and the large logs were pulled down to the Elk River using oxen.

GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is Science and Culture Center, State Capitol, Charleston, W. Va. 25305.

They were worked in pairs—2-4 or 6 at a time. The logs were then tied together and floated down the river to the lumber mill at Charleston. One of my uncles told me the "loggers" were given a good place to sleep, all the food they could eat, and \$5.00 per week. My grandfather would frequently pay them with \$5.00 Gold Coins. On occasion many would go to Charleston on Saturday with their \$5.00 Gold Coins to have some fun. Some would have a hard time making it to work on Monday morning but they would always be there. The mode of "having fun" hasn't changed much over the years.

I enjoyed the article "Doing a Man's Work." Producing 30 Billion Board Feet of lumber during these years was surprising and very interesting. We all should be grateful for those proud and sturdy people. A little more of this kind of man and woman is needed today.

My father died in 1957 just before his 80th birthday. He lived and was part of a great change for the better in the field of Medicine and Surgery. In his late years he would talk about the tremendous improvement and advancement he witnessed in the practice of Medicine and Surgery and all the Sub-specialties. He saw the Influenza Epidemic of 1917 and went through a Typhoid Fever epidemic about 1919. He also saw better things such as development of the antibiotics, conquering most infectious diseases, better control of heart disease and cancer, advances in diagnostic techniques, the development of many sophisticated surgical operations, and many other improvements.

These were rugged medical times at Swiss around 1910. These were the days babies were delivered at home, illness and injuries were treated at home, and very few went to the hospital. House calls were made on foot or a railroad handcar. Medical equipment and supplies were limited. The following covers about all that was available to physicians to practice medicine at this time. Thermometer, stethoscope, blood pressure machine, microscope, medical bag, obstetrical kit, agents for urinalysis, materials to do blood counts, alcohol, iodine, novacaine, ether, chloroform, calomel, castor oil, aspirin, digitalis, quinine, vaseline, morphine, catgut suture material, skin clips, splints, plaster of paris,

bright colored placebo pills, and perhaps a few other medications. Frequently bright red or yellow pills would work better than blue or white pills. It took a lot of courage, blood, sweat, and tears to practice medicine in those days. Recreation was limited to hunting and fishing but this was great.

There was a very close and deep doctor-patient relationship at this time. I'm sure this love and respect for each other, and with the help of The Good Lord, the recovery rate from sickness and injury was excellent. Today the Science of Medicine is so superior and outstanding, but I sometimes think a little of The Art of Medicine as practiced in the old days would be helpful.

I hope some of these thoughts will be of interest to you.

Sincerely,
John T. Jarrett, M.D.

Atnens, WV
December 2, 1976

Editor:

Please do put my name of the free subscription list for your quarterly GOLDENSEAL.

Many of us here in southern West Virginia do not have opportunities to visit cultural centers and craft fairs, though we do have a few craft fairs. I would be sharing my GOLDENSEAL with family, friends, and Concord College students. Thank you, and all good luck in what seems a labor of love.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Karl D. Fezer

Bridgeport, WV
December 2, 1976

Editor:

I am writing in regards to your magazine GOLDENSEAL. I have been receiving the magazine since the very first volume . . . I think the magazines are great. I loaned mine to my Grandfather and he found some cousins that he hadn't seen for a long time in one of them. He said that he recognized the picture of the house and when he read the story he realized it was relatives he hadn't seen in over 50 years. He was really impressed by the magazine. He could sure give you some good stories. Thank you,
Marie Kelley

New GOLDENSEAL Staffmember

GARY SIMMONS, Assistant to the Editor, was born in Spencer, although he has lived in several different areas of West Virginia and out of State. He is a veteran of the U. S. Air Force having served a tour in England. He has attended Syracuse and West Virginia Universities. In May of 1975 Simmons started to work in cinematography at WWVU-TV, a public television affiliate in Morgantown. He has travelled throughout the State on film assignments. In January of this year he joined the staff of GOLDENSEAL.

In This Issue

GERALD W. ASH, a native of Bridgeport, is editor and co-publisher of the weekly newspaper in Terra Alta, *The Preston County News*. He holds two degrees from West Virginia University, where he later taught in the School of Journalism. After seven years at the University, Ash formed a partnership with Rich Hopkins and purchased the *News*. He is also vice-president of the Pioneer Press of West Virginia, Inc., a printing and publishing firm in Terra Alta. He was co-author of the 1976 book, *West Virginia U.S.A.*

LOUIS HORACEK, a native of Kansas, lived in Morgantown from 1960 to 1972 and in Fairmont from 1972 to 1975. He received his bachelor's degree in sociology from West Virginia University and in 1976 earned his M.S. degree in library science at the University of Illinois. Very interested in the history of commercial country music, he co-authored an article on the retired Mannington musician Ab Cole that appeared in the third issue of GOLDENSEAL in 1975.

J. RODERICK MOORE is a native of Fincastle, Va., and was raised in Welch, W. Va., where he was a student through high school. He received his B.A. degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and M.A. from New York State University in the American Folklife Program sponsored by the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown. He is now associate director of the Blue Ridge Institute at Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia. He has held offices in the Virginia Folklore Society and is on the board of directors of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, Inc. He has been a frequent consultant to public agencies and for writers in the field of folk art and crafts, and he has produced both folk music record albums and documentary films. As visiting curator, he has mounted several exhibitions of Southern folk art and crafts. Moore previously has co-authored two articles with Kip Lornell for GOLDENSEAL.

JOHN NICKERSON, former design director for Blenko Glass Co., Inc., in Milton, is resident artist in pottery at Washington Community Education Center in Kanawha County under a grant from the West Virginia Arts and Humanities Council. He has taught and lectured on pottery and glass-working techniques throughout the United States and Canada. He studied illustration as an undergraduate at Montana State University in Bozeman and received his M.F.A. in ceramic and glass design from Alfred University, Alfred, New York.

GEORGE PARKINSON was born in Columbus, Georgia, yet his family hails from Ohio. He is a graduate of Ohio State University and the University of Wisconsin where he received his Ph.D. in history. Curator of the West Virginia Collection at the West Virginia University Library, Parkinson oversees the largest archival collection in the State which includes sound recordings, books, documents, and manuscripts relating to West Virginia and Appalachia. He also teaches American history at the University.

ALICIA TYLER, a research writer, was born and raised in South Charleston. She attended West Virginia University and West Virginia State College, where she received her B.S. degree in psychology in 1968. During the past decade she has worked in several State agencies and is presently employed as research and planning coordinator for the State Commission on Aging. Her avocation is West Virginia folklore and history, and in 1974 she received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct an oral history project about the Hawks Nest tunnel-building project during the early 1930s.

A circular logo in a golden-brown color. It features a stylized sunburst or fan-like shape on the left, composed of several radiating lines. On the right, a violin is depicted, angled upwards. The sunburst and violin are intertwined within the circular frame. In the bottom right corner of the circle, the text "P. HANSEN 1992" is written in a small, stylized font.

A Festival of West Virginia Traditional Music
at the Center on

More than 60 musicians - workshops and afternoon concerts. Exhibit of old quilts and musical instruments. Demonstrations by craftspeople.

For information write Science and Culture Center,
State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305 or phone
304/348-3982