

Goldenseal



West Virginia Traditional Life

Spring 2005

\$4.95

Newell Basketball
Paint Creek Flood
Myers Remedies

Folklife*Fairs*Festivals 2005

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

March 17-20	Irish Spring Festival	June 2-4	Calhoun County Wood Festival
Ireland (452-8962)		Grantsville (354-9204)	
March 18-20	Appalachian Heritage Weekend	June 2-5	Blue & Gray Reunion
Pipestem (466-1800)		Philippi (457-4265)	
March 18-20	George Washington's Bathtub Celebration	June 4-5	Mineral County Strawberry Festival
Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)		Keyser (788-2513)	
March 18-20	Upper Potomac Spring Dulcimer Festival	June 9-12	Hatfield & McCoy Reunion Festival
Shepherdstown (263-2531)		Matewan (426-4239)	
March 19-20	W.Va. Maple Syrup Festival	June 10-11	Hancock County Quilt Show
Pickens (924-6288)		New Cumberland (564-5385)	
April 16	Feast of the Ramson	June 10-12	Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Richwood (846-6790)		Harpers Ferry (1-800-624-0577)	
April 22-24	Spring Mountain Festival	June 10-12	Weston Carp Festival
Petersburg (257-2722)		Weston (269-2210)	
April 22-24	Springfest	June 11	PattyFest 2005
Oglebay Resort/Wheeling (1-800-624-6888)		Morgantown (864-0105)	
April 23	International Ramp Cook-Off & Festival	June 11-12	Ronceverte River Festival
Elkins (636-2717)		Ronceverte (647-3825)	
April 23-24	Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival	June 14-18	W.Va. Coal Festival
Huntington (696-5990)		Madison (369-9118)	
May 1	W.Va. Marble Festival	June 16-18	Pennsboro Country Roads Festival
Cairo (628-3321)		Pennsboro (859-2116)	
May 2-7	New River Birding & Nature Festival	June 16-19	W.Va. State Folk Festival
Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)		Glenville (462-8427)	
May 4-7	Rendezvous on the River	June 17-18	Country Music Assn. Spring Festival
Blennerhassett Island/Parkersburg (420-4800)		Fairmont (292-5854)	
May 5-7	Mullens Dogwood Festival	June 17-19	Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival
Mullens (732-8000)		Parkersburg (424-3457)	
May 5-8	Wildflower Pilgrimage	June 17-19	Old Central City Days Festival
Blackwater Falls/Davis (259-5216)		West Huntington (781-2036)	
May 6-7	Frontier Gathering	June 18	Coalton Days
Kanawha State Forest/Charleston (755-2990)		Coalton (636-5658)	
May 6-8	Scottish Heritage Festival & Celtic Gathering	June 18-19	W.Va. Spring Wine Festival
Bridgeport (842-3457)		Crab Orchard (252-9750)	
May 7	General Adam Stephen Day	June 23-26	Music in the Mountains Bluegrass Festival
Martinsburg (267-4434)		Summersville (872-3145)	
May 7	Mother's Day Founder's Festival	June 24-26	Cass Homecoming
Webster (265-5549)		Cass (1-800-336-7009)	
May 7-8	Steam & Gas Engine Show	June 25	Pearl S. Buck Birthday Celebration
Point Pleasant (675-5737)		Hillsboro (1-800-336-7009)	
May 8	Observance of Mother's Day	July 1-4	Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
Grafton (265-1589)		Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-3247)	
May 10-15	Bend Area Gospel Jubilee	July 2-3	Pioneer Days
Cottageville (882-2049)		Point Pleasant (675-5737)	
May 18-22	W.Va. Strawberry Festival	July 7-9	Pioneer Days
Buckhannon (472-9036)		Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)	
May 19-21	Elkhorn Railfan Weekend	July 7-10	Benedum Festival
Eckman (862-2031)		Bridgeport (1-800-368-4324)	
May 21	Spring Festival	July 8-10	John Henry Days
Romney (492-5891)		Talcott (466-2449)	
May 21-22	Appalachian American Indians of W.Va. Pow Wow	July 9-10	New Deal Festival
Fairlea (536-3188)		Arthurdale (864-3959)	
May 21-22	Elizabethtown Festival	July 20-23	Durbin Days
Moundsville (843-1170)		Durbin (1-800-336-7009)	
May 24-30	Greater Bluefield Mountain Festival	July 22-24	Ohio Valley Italian Festival
Bluefield (327-7184)		Wheeling (233-1090)	
May 26-28	Upper West Fork Bluegrass Festival	July 24-August 1	Cowen Historical Railroad Festival
Chloe (655-8172)		Cowen (226-5902)	
May 27-29	29 th Vandalia Gathering	July 26-30	Battelle District Fair
State Capitol Complex/Charleston (558-0162)		Wadestown (662-6265)	
May 28-29	Webster County Woodchopping Festival	July 30	Celtic Festival
Webster Springs (226-3888)		Canaan Valley (1-800-622-4121)	
May 28-30	24 th Head-of-the-Mon-River Horseshoe Tournament		
Fairmont (366-3819)			

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On the cover: The Newell Big Green meet the Gassaway Elks for the 1952 Class B state basketball title. *Dominion-News* photograph. Our story begins on page 10.

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From the Editor

Congratulations to the winners of our 30th anniversary gift subscription contest!

Throughout 2004, we encouraged readers to help us grow GOLDENSEAL by giving gift subscriptions and offered a contest for those who gave the most gifts. First prize was a complete collection of GOLDENSEAL magazines in hardbound editions, an estimated

\$1,000 value. Second place was a free Deluxe Gift Package, including select back issues and GOLDENSEAL books and reprints — a \$50 value. Third place was a complimentary three-year subscription — a \$45 value.

We were pleased to present the complete bound set to Deanna Combs of Elkview, who gave a grand total of 25 gift subscriptions. Originally from Mineral Wells, Dee has been a subscriber since 1998. She is a natural gas engineer who first encountered GOLDENSEAL when a friend gave a copy to her father. Dee has been reading — and collecting — GOLDENSEAL ever since.

There was a tie for second place, so we gave prizes to two generous individuals, each of whom gave 13 gifts. These winners were Richard Yost of Glen Burnie, Maryland, and Julius Stern of Parkersburg.

Our third-prize winner was Constance Stanley of Barboursville, who gave nine gifts. We were glad to extend her subscription by three years.



Contest winner Dee Combs of Elkview receives her complete bound set of GOLDENSEAL magazines from editor John Lilly. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Thanks to everyone who gave the gift of GOLDENSEAL. We appreciate your generosity and your continued support. And congratulations once again to our winners!

For more information about giving GOLDENSEAL gift subscriptions, see page 6.

John Lilly

Letters from Readers

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



Dick and Jeanne Schnacke. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Toymaker Dick Schnacke

January 3, 2005
Denver, Colorado

Editor:

When I first met toymaker Dick Schnacke, he was big man on campus at Iowa State University because of his track and field record. [See "Whimydiddles and FlipperDingers: A Visit with Toymaker Dick Schnacke," by Catherine Moore; Winter 2004.] Jeanne, his wife, was my freshman roommate. Little did I know at the time that I would play the role of matchmaker, because it was in our sophomore year I introduced Jeanne to Dick.

Over the years, we kept in touch through drop-in visits. Until reading about it in the article, I had forgotten our visit in the house that later slid down the hill in the landslide. Not forgotten was my visit in their home next to the Mountain Craft Shop. On each floor was evidence of Dick's ingenuity. Who could forget the swing hanging from the ceiling on the upper floor, where Jeanne could sit and swing as she looked out the window at the natural beauty surrounding

her mountain-ridge home?

Some of the toys from the craft shop made their way back home for my children and grandchildren to enjoy. Because of our home in the west, where even today buffalo roam, the Bull-Roader was one our favorites.

Friendship is precious, but it

becomes even more precious when one can know the contribution a friend has made in the lives of others. From our own experience, we knew what fun Dick's toys could bring. But until the article, I did not know about the contribution he had made to West Virginia's economy through his cottage industry.

Thanks to your article, the link binding us in friendship became even stronger.

Sincerely,
Aleon DeVore

McDowell County Postcards

December 16, 2004

Vermilion, Ohio

Via e-mail

Editor:

Your Winter 2004 issue with the article about McDowell County postcards just arrived yesterday, and I was thrilled to read about my home. [See "'I Am

Downtown scene
Keystone, McDowell
County, about 1904.

in a Swell Place Now': Early McDowell County Postcards," by Jean Battlo.] I was born and raised in Coalwood, McDowell County, and was delighted to see pictures of yesterday. Memories are wonderful. I love reading your magazine, as it takes me back with those memories.

My daddy was a state legislator back in the 1960's, so McDowell County was, and is still, very important to me. Even though I do not live there anymore, it is still home.

Really enjoy the magazine. Keep up the good and interesting articles.

Judy (Wooten) Broeckel

Little John Graham

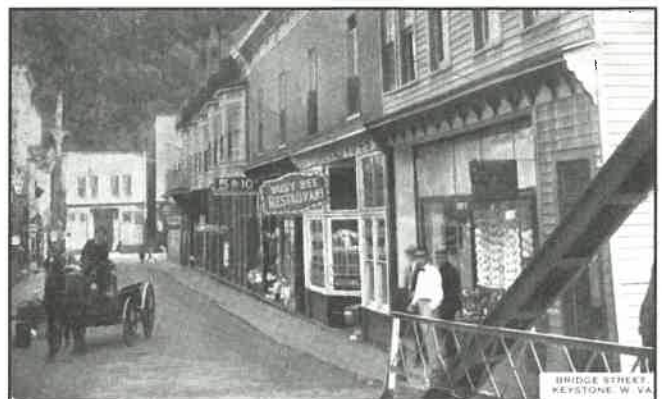
January 5, 2005

Freeport, Ohio

Editor:

I have been a subscriber for several years. I especially enjoy reading about the old times in country music, and liked your last article on Little John and Cherokee Sue. [See "Little John Graham and Cherokee Sue: A Radio Love Story," by Carl E. Feather; Winter 2004.] My dad took me to the coliseum in Parkersburg to see them.

I wrote earlier asking you if



Lulu Bell & Scotty were from West Virginia. I heard they were from Spencer. Could you please verify this for me?

Jean Ater

Thanks for your note. According to Ivan Tribe's book, Mountaineer Jamboree, Lulu Belle (Myrtle Cooper) and Scotty Wiseman were from North Carolina. Scotty was a student at Fairmont State College, however, from 1929-33, and performed regularly over WMMN radio as Skyland Scotty during that time. He was program director for the station for a year before moving to WLS radio in Chicago in 1933.

There, he met and married Lulu Belle; they were wed in 1934. By the mid-1930's, Lulu Belle and Scotty were the most popular husband/wife duet on radio. In the late 1950's, they retired from show business and returned to their North Carolina home. —ed.

Cellar Houses

December 16, 2004
Hurricane, West Virginia
Via e-mail

Editor:
The article in GOLDENSEAL about West Virginia cellar houses has piqued my interest in the subject. [See "Ritchie County Cellar Houses," by Katherine

Roberts; Fall 2004.] While researching my roots for a book of family history, I discovered my great-great-grandparents' cellar house, built in about 1793. It is still in reasonably good condition and located near the kitchen of the Abner Stout home on Brushy Fork of Elk Creek, near Quiet Dell, Harrison County, on State Route 42.

This cellar house was built by, or for, Josiah and Martha (Stout) Davisson. It is the oldest cellar house in central West Virginia. Perhaps a search might reveal older ones located in the Eastern Panhandle area, which was settled earlier. Josiah Davisson received a 400-acre land grant in 1781, for his Tomahawk Right of 1773, on the West Fork River, opposite Brown's Creek. Later, he acquired a large farm on Brushy Fork, where he and Martha built a large home and the still-existing cellar house.

Regards,
Russell Lee Davisson

Laban Richmond

November 29, 2004
Mason, West Virginia
Editor:

I received the issues of GOLDENSEAL. I'm very pleased with them. I'm so glad that I now have a good photo of my grandfather Laban Richmond. [See "Echoes of a Mountain Preacher: Recalling Laban Richmond of Summers County," by John Eric West; Fall 2004.] How I wish that we hadn't moved from that area when I was only 12 years old! I missed out on so much family history.

The article was very good, but failed to tell the whole story. My



Laban Richmond of Summers County.
Date unknown.

father John Francis Richmond (son of Laban and Martha), along with his brothers Estil and Carl and maybe my Uncle Lon, were very talented singers. They had a quartet and sang at family reunions and conventions.

Dad worked on the WPA after the mines closed as the Great Depression started. He had worked on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad as a fireman 'til he was smothered in the Big Bend Tunnel, along with the engineer and a couple of others. The C&O sent Dad and the engineer to Arizona to a hospital for recovery. Uncle Estil was in the Army, Uncle Carl was a minister and section foreman, and Aunt Beulah had a nursing home at Oak Hill.

The families have drifted apart since Dad and his siblings died. It's very sad. A lot of the family is buried at the O'Brien cemetery near the Bowles homestead on Bench Road. Thank you again.
Barbara Altheide

Mailbag

January 7, 2005
Morgantown, West Virginia
Editor:

I love GOLDENSEAL magazine. Since I will be 90 years old in



Cellar house belonging to Josiah Davisson, built about 1793 in Harrison County. Photograph by Russell Lee Davisson, courtesy of West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries.

Photo Curiosity

December 21, 2004

Lubbock, Texas

Editor:

I didn't have to read the article surrounding the Photo Curiosity in the Winter 2004 edition of your magazine to recognize Mr. Leland Feamster's creative piece. When I moved to Summers County and started teaching a class of seventh and eighth graders at Forest Hill Elementary School in 1984, I decided to take the students on a couple of field trips to familiarize them with various places in Summers and surrounding counties.

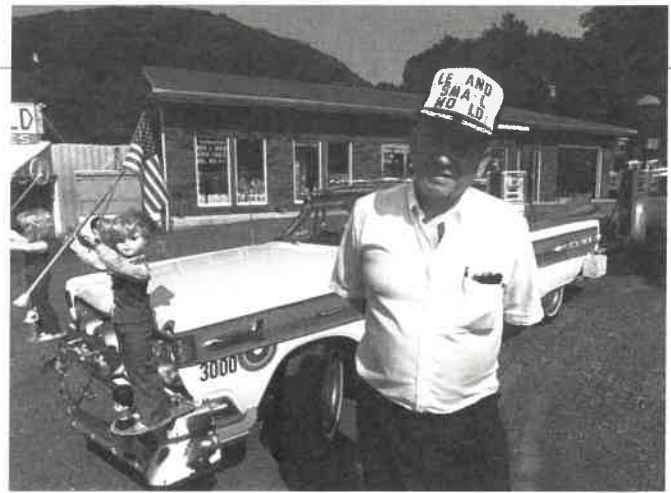
One of the parent chaperons suggested that we stop at "The Small World of Leland Feamster," since it was on our route. As a new teacher in the area, I was not familiar with the museum. But as soon as I stepped inside the door, I was totally fascinated by the dozens of mechanical gizmos that filled the entire room.

Needless to say, it was one of the highlights of our trip, competing against battlefields, caverns, Pearl Buck's home, and the Cass Scenic Railroad. During the next few years, I revisited "The Small World of Leland Feamster" many times while taking visiting friends or relatives on a tour of the surrounding area. It was always a real treat.

I moved away from the area in 1995 and don't know what happened to Mr. Feamster or the display. I certainly hope it is being preserved somewhere. Good luck in tracking it down.
Catherine K. Mack

Thanks, Catherine, for that wonderful recollection. A number of other readers also recalled Leland Feamster, and thanks to them, we were able to get in touch with Leland's son Steve.

Speaking on the phone from his business in Alderson, Steve tells us that Leland passed away in



The late Leland Feamster, above, and his "Space Car" in 1985. Photograph by Andy Yale. Below, mechanical creation by Leland Feamster. Photograph by Elaine Eff, 1978.

March 1993 at the age of 65. Steve inherited his father's auto parts business, as well as his entire collection of mechanical creations. Steve estimates that there are at least 120 pieces still at the old "Small World" location. He keeps them in working condition for his own enjoyment and to preserve the memory of his father, adding that he does not plan to sell, move, or display any of the items.



Steve does not know where the photograph that appeared in our Winter 2004 issue was taken. He notes that Leland did not own that auto dealership, but that he did occasionally set up his displays at businesses and other locations around the state.

Thanks to everyone who responded to this Photo Curiosity. —ed.

May, I'll go for one year at a time.

Marion Biser

January 3, 2005

Kingsville, Ohio

Editor:

This is a wonderful magazine. We enjoy all of Carl Feather's articles.

Thank you,

Carl & Cossette Feather

November 2, 2004

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Editor:

I ordered the Deluxe Gift Package earlier and have enjoyed every issue. Now I am ready for a subscription.

I was turned on to GOLDENSEAL by my parents M.J. and Rosemary Bragg during a visit with them last year at their home in Clarksburg.

I loved the week's visit to my home state, but found to my dismay that apparently spending the last 40 years in Oklahoma has turned me into — gasp! — a flatlander.

So you can see that I need my GOLDENSEAL to get me back on track!

Keep up the great job.

Yours,

Nancy L. Bragg

Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

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

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

[] I'm adding \$5 extra per subscription (total \$22). Please send the current issue along with the gift card!

Gift Giver's Name _____

Address _____

Name(s) to be signed on gift card:

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Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL.

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1900 Kanawha
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Charleston, WV
25305-0300



Current Programs • Events • Publications

GOLDENSEAL announcements are published as a service, as space permits. They are not paid advertisements, and items are screened according to the likely interests of our readers. We welcome event announcements and review copies of books and recordings, but cannot guarantee publication.

National Road Mile Markers

The distinctive mile markers found along the National Road between Wheeling Hill and the Pennsylvania state line are the focus for a historic restoration project by West Virginia University. The markers, 4-foot-tall iron obelisks painted to resemble stone, are being refurbished by WVU's Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology.



National Road mile marker. Photograph by Dan Bonenberger.

The 15 markers on the West Virginia portion of the National Road date from the 1830's, and are being restored to their original condition and appearance using a combination of new and traditional technology. The restorations began in 2002,

and are expected to be completed by May.

For more information about the National Road marker project and the Institute, call Dan Bonenberger at (304)293-3589.

West Virginia History Day

On Thursday, March 17, the ninth annual West Virginia History Day will be observed at the State Capitol Complex. Historical and genealogical associations from throughout the state will provide displays and exhibits in the Capitol Rotunda, featuring historical photographs, documents, publications, and artifacts. Other attractions will include impersonations of historical figures, and musical and storytelling performances.

At 10 a.m., State Archives officials will present the annual History Hero awards in the Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater. Nominations are made each year by preservation, genealogical, and historical societies. The awards honor those individuals making important contributions to local and regional history.

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call the West Virginia State Archives at (304)558-0220 ext. 168, or visit the Web site at www.wvculture.org/agency/press/historyday05.html

Bil Lepp Book

Storyteller Bil Lepp, five-time winner of the State Liars Contest



Bil Lepp and Buck-dog. Photograph by Michael Keller.

at the annual Vandalia Gathering, has published his third collection of stories. *Armadillo Recon Unit and Other Tall Tales* includes 22 stories, two of which were written by Bil's late brother, Paul. The two Lepp brothers were the subject of the cover story in our Spring 1998 issue, titled "The Lying Lepp Brothers," by Bil Lepp.

In addition to being a Mountain State favorite, Bil Lepp has been a featured storyteller at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesborough, Tennessee, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C.

The new paperback book is available for \$9.95, plus tax, from Quarrier Press, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302, or at the Web site, www.wvbookco.com.

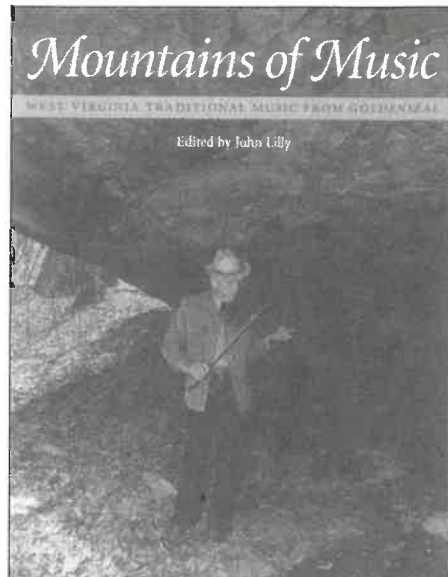
Storytelling at the Theater

Storytellers and poets headline a free monthly performance series at the Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater, presented by the Division of Culture and History.

On Friday, March 18, storyteller Bil Lepp of South Charleston will be featured. Friday, April 15, will feature Huntington poet Ron Houchin. Karen Vuranch of Fayetteville, known for her "History Alive!" portrayal of Mother Jones, will be the featured storyteller on Friday, May 13.

Open mike sessions, where members of the public are invited to share poems and stories of their own, will follow the featured performer each evening. All programs will run from 6 to 8 p.m.

For more information, call Pat Cowdery at the West Virginia Division of Culture and History at (304)558-0220 ext. 130, or check the Web site, www.wvculture.org/agency/press/poetry1.html.



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

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

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

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

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

Announcements Welcome

Planning a public event or heritage activity? Don't forget to send press materials to GOLDENSEAL so we can let our readers know. Please keep in mind that our deadlines are three to five months in advance of the date of the event.

Event date	Deadline
June-August	April 15
September-November	July 15
December-February	October 15
March-May	January 15

Send press releases to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305.

The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



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

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

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Virginia Mine Wars.*

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Charleston, WV 25305-0300
(304)558-0220

State Theater Renamed

The State Theater of West Virginia, located in the Cultural Center at the State Capitol Complex, has been renamed the Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater in honor of Dr. Norman L. Fagan of Redhouse. The announcement was made by Secretary of Education and the Arts Kay Goodwin in December 2004.

Dr. Fagan served as the first commissioner of Culture and History. He founded the Vandalia Gathering in 1977 and was instrumental in the building of the Cultural Center. Prior to his 15 years at the helm of the Cultural Center, Fagan served as director of education for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., and became director of performing arts for the National Endowment for the Arts in 1972. Dr. Fagan was the recipient of the 2001 Vandalia Award.

Last Forest CD's

In 1940, Pocahontas County author G.D. McNeill published his highly acclaimed book, *The Last Forest: Tales of the Allegheny Woods*, in which he recounts his years of hunting, fishing, and hiking in the massive old-growth forests that once covered most of rural West Virginia. Five of McNeill's stories are now available in audio form, offered as a three-CD set from Pocahontas Communications Cooperative.

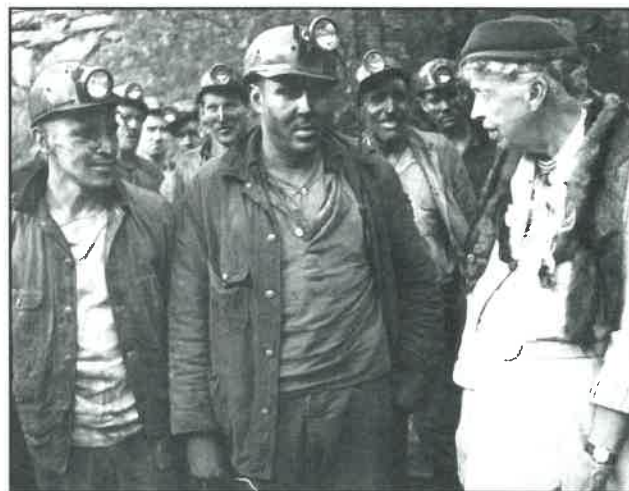
Originally produced for radio in 2004, these stories are read by Bill Kimmons, Julian Martin, Jim Costa, Frank Taylor, and Michael Frasher, with additional voices added for featured characters in

the stories. Music is provided by Dwight Diller, Edden Hammons, Woody Simmons, and the band Gandydancer, who provide the theme music.

Produced and directed by "Mountain Stage" host Larry Groce, *The Last Forest* audio set costs \$20, plus \$2 shipping, and is available from Pocahontas Communications Cooperative, Dunmore, WV 24934; phone 1-800-297-2346.

Historical Photos

Reproductions of 22 historical photographs from the archives of *The Charleston Gazette* are now available for sale to the public, with plans to add more selections over time.



Eleanor Roosevelt with miners in Raleigh County, 1956.
Photograph courtesy of *The Charleston Gazette*.

Images include important events and places in West Virginia, such as the 1907 Monongah mine disaster, the 1921 destruction by fire of the State Capitol, and the Silver Bridge collapse of 1967. Prominent visiting political figures such as John F. Kennedy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman are among the available choices. The most popular request so far, according to *Gazette* staffers, is a 1975 performance photo of Elvis Presley on stage in Charleston.

Reproductions may be pur-

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

John "J.J." Young, renowned railroad photographer, passed away on November 27 at his home in Charleston. Originally from Wheeling, John was bitten by the railroad bug at an early age. He hung around the rail yards, befriended railroad personnel, and frequently hitched rides in the cabs of steam engines, much to his family's dismay. As a young man, John became a self-taught photographer.

Training his camera on his favorite subjects, he eventually amassed thousands of stunning photographs of B&O steam operations in and around Wheeling. He spent most of his working life in Binghamton, New York, where he taught photography at a community college. After retiring, John moved to Charleston in 1995. He was the subject of the cover story in our Summer 2001 issue, titled, "Capturing Steam: Railroad Photographer J.J. Young," by Bob Withers. Mr. Young was 75.



John "J.J." Young. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Bob Kessinger of Gandeeville, Roane County, prize-winning mandolinist and recipient of the 2002 Vandalia Award, passed away November 16 at the age of 78. A minister and evangelist, Bob worked for more than 50 years in various churches, preaching throughout West Virginia, as well as in Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Michigan. Best known to GOLDENSEAL readers through his music, Bob was the nephew of champion fiddler Clark Kessinger and Bob's clear and lively mandolin playing echoed Clark's fiddling. Bob was active on Charleston radio during the early 1950's. Though he later put his music aside when he took up the ministry, Bob eventually returned to informal playing, passing along this family tradition to talented sons Robin and Dan Kessinger. Bob and his family were the subjects of a GOLDENSEAL story, titled, "The Kessinger Family," by Paul Gartner; Fall 1997.



Bob Kessinger. Photograph by Michael Keller.

chased in a variety of sizes and prices from Gazette Photographs, *The Charleston Gazette*, 1001 Virginia Street East, Charleston, WV 25301, or on-line at <http://photos.wvgazette.com>.

West Virginia Literary Map

The state's first literary map, printed as a full-color, wall-sized poster, is now available. Titled "From a Place Called Solid," taken from a passage by late poet laureate Louise McNeill, one side of the map features original art by Noel Tenney, highlighting locations associated with 35 prominent West Virginia authors.

The reverse side lists resources and groups related to West Virginia literature, as well as 138



Louise McNeill, photographer and date unknown.

entries of additional writers from the Mountain State. Literary historian Phyllis Moore of Clarksburg and Dr. Judy Byers of Fairmont State University's Folklife Center collaborated in the map's creation. The project was sponsored by the West Virginia Library Commission and is designed to provide a reference tool for educators as well as for the general public. Detailed information about the Literary Map of West Virginia is available at the Web site, www.fscwv.edu/wvfolklife/literary_map.

The map costs \$6, plus \$4 shipping and handling, and is available from the West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State, 1201 Locust Avenue, Fairmont, WV 26554; phone (304)367-4403.

**MARCH 6
1952**

**MARCH 8
1952**



Class B -- Region 1

BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

WILLIAMSTOWN MEMORIAL GYM

WILLIAMSTOWN, W. VA.

When the “Big Green” Rolled

By Bob Barnett

Newell’s Championship Season

When I was in junior high school, my mom called Newell a “one-horse town.” I was really offended. I admitted that Newell was small, with a population of about 2,000 in 1950. It was unincorporated, had large potholes in the streets, and had mostly dirt sidewalks. I admitted that Newell was a town with only one red light, which operated only when the pottery and the racetrack let out at the same time. It blinked on caution the other 22 hours of the day.

But to balance those disadvantages, Newell was the home of the Homer Laughlin China Company, the largest pottery in the world under one roof, and had a great pottery dump. [See “Wall of China: Recalling the Greatest Dump in the World,” by Bob Barnett; Spring 1992.] Newell is the most northern city in West Virginia and was the closest town to Waterford Park racetrack, now known as Moun-

taineer Resort and Gaming Center. (Chester, our bitter rival to the east, was given credit for both because they were incorporated and Newell was not.) There was one thing, I argued, that did set Newell apart from the hundreds of other small towns in West Virginia in the 1950’s: We were the home of the 1951-52 West Virginia State High School Basketball Champions. For one glorious season, we were — and will forever be — Number One.

My family had moved from Follansbee to Newell when I was in second grade. We lived in the “lower end” of town, a block from the high school, and right next to the lower end playground that had

one of Newell’s three dirt basketball courts. In the evenings after high school baseball practice and on weekends, the court was mobbed with high school and junior high kids and even some old married men, trying to momentarily recapture a sliver of their youth.

Wells High School, the formal name of Newell’s high school, had opened in the 1927-28 school year and was named for W.E. Wells, one of the owners of the Homer Laughlin China Company, who donated the building site and the surrounding land. [See “The Homer Laughlin China Company,” by Jack Welch; Spring 1985.] The school

*We were the home of the 1951-52 West Virginia State High School Basketball Champions. For one glorious season, we were — and will forever be —
Number One.*



Aerial view of Newell during the 1950's. Newell is West Virginia's northernmost town, separated from East Liverpool, Ohio, by the Ohio River, seen here. Wells High School is located in the upper left-hand corner of this photograph. Photographer unknown.

was called Wells High School until the late 1940's, when Newell High School became the more common name, although some old-timers continued to use the original name.

Occasionally, a small high school will have an exceptional group of athletes come together at the same time. With an enrollment of about 120 students, Newell easily qualified as a small high school. And the players who made up that 1951-52 Newell team were indeed exceptional athletes. "We had some good athletes and shooters," says former player John Laneve. "Actually, we were seven or eight deep with good athletes. And our only recreation then was playing basketball and baseball."

Ron LaNeve, a 6'1" shooting forward, was clearly the team's best player. He was the second leading scorer in the state in West Virginia Class B that season, averaging 25 points per game. Norm Six, a 6'3", 215-pound center, was big, strong, and agile. Norm and guard Frank Mangano (6'1", 195 pounds) were outstanding football players who used their strength and size to clear out under the basket. The two juniors on the team were Ron's cousin, forward John Laneve (5'11"), an

excellent defender who could shoot; and Jim McDevitt (5'9"), a quick point guard. The previous year, the team had advanced all the way to the Class B Northern Area finals, only to be beaten by Fairview High School, one game short of the state finals. Newell retained all but two players from that group, and everyone hoped that this year's "Big Green" would be a special team. They weren't disappointed.

The coach was John Robison, who knew what to do with a group of talented basketball players. "Robbie," as Coach Robison was affectionately known to adults, was a unique man. At about 6'6" tall, he was easily the tallest man in town and taller by far than any of his players. He told us that he had not been a very good basketball player in high school because he played in the late 1930's when coaches

did not know how to use big men effectively. But we suspected that he was also slow and not well coordinated.

His height made him stand out in any crowd. It was also difficult for him to buy suits. I remember once he had just purchased a stunning new gabardine plaid suit, which he wore for the first time to a game. When he emerged from the locker room and walked across the floor, the crowd rose to its feet and gave him a standing ovation. That is the only time I had ever seen a suit get a "standing O." Coach Robison ignored

the cheers, as coaches always did then.

Coach Robison, who had a math degree from Fairmont State College and a master's degree from Columbia University, was a very bright man with a keen analytical mind. I don't know what possessed



Embroidered patch commemorating Newell's 1952 championship season. Photograph by Michael Keller.



Cheerleaders Joby Young, left, and Pat Gilmore smile for the camera while the boys practice their hoops on a dirt lot in Newell during the early 1950's.

him to settle in Newell as a high school math teacher and coach, except that he loved kids and basketball. He understood basketball on many levels and could see perfect games played out in his head. No doubt the championship team was the height of his career, when those perfect games were also played out on the floor.

As expected, Newell won the first two games of the 1951-52 season beating Salineville (Ohio) 66-46 and Irondale (Ohio) 77-39. But they were upset by hated rivals, the Chester High School Panthers, in the third game of the season. "Frank (Mangano) was in the hospital with appendicitis," recalls Norm Six. "I don't know if that's why we lost, or if they just ran us. After that game, Robbie started running us hard in practice. The next time we played Chester, we had them down 25 points by the end of the third quarter and beat them easily."

The strongest team that Newell played that year was Wellsville (Ohio), led by 6'9" sharp-shooting Clarence "Bevo" Francis. Bevo was an instant legend because it was

rare for a big man to be able to both run and shoot. He was exceptionally tall in an era when most high school centers were between 6'1" and 6'3". Many people considered Bevo to be a freak, but he could

play basketball. The next two seasons, he attended tiny Rio Grande College in Ohio, where he scored more than 100 points in a couple of games and led the Rio Grande Redmen to a national ranking.

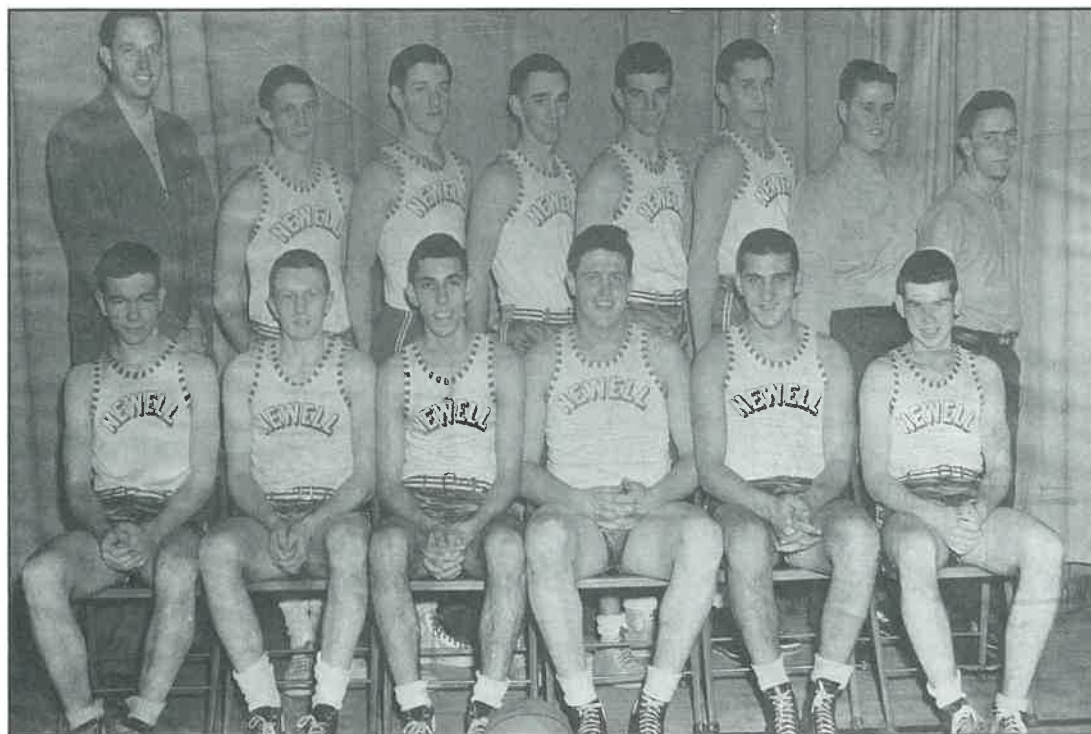
Newell played against Bevo at Wellsville in the eighth game of the season. Norm Six recalls Newell's strategy for that game: "I did not play against many players taller than me," Norm says. "But Bevo was taller, and he could shoot. The best strategy was to keep him from getting the ball. In the first game against Wellsville, we tried to slow the game down and play a 1-3-1 zone defense. I played behind Bevo. The halftime score was Wellsville [leading by] 11-9. That forced us to play catch-up in the second half, and we lost by 16 points (17-33)."

The second game against Wellsville, later that season, would be different.

I went to every home game during the championship season because I lived so close to the high school. My game-night routine was always the same: Eat dinner. Leave the house by 6:15. Run all the way to the high school to be first in line



Wells High School, named for pottery owner W.E. Wells, is located across the road from the world-famous Homer Laughlin China Company. The high school was consolidated in 1963, then was used as a middle school until the 1990's. Today, the building is owned by the Newell Fire Department and is used as a community center. Photograph by Michael Keller.



The championship team of 1951-52. Seated, from the left, are Wayne Swift, John Laneve, Ron LaNeve, Norm Six, Frank Mangano, and Jim McDevitt. Standing are coach John Robison, Bob Thorne, Orwin Britton, Donald McGown, David White, Ray Godwin, manager Virgil Grimm, and manager Dick Harrison. Photographer unknown.

when the doors opened at 6:30. I raced from the door for the front-row middle seat — the same seat that I occupied for every game but one. Admission was 35¢, and I always took an extra 20¢ for popcorn and a coke.

Everyone in the area wanted to see Bevo play that season. I anticipated a large crowd, so I left home 20 minutes before my usual time. But to my surprise, there were already 20 people in line in front of me. When I raced to my usual seat, I found rows of folding chairs set up in the band pit, and the band balcony behind the main seating area was open to accommodate the overflow crowd. The best that I could do was to get a front-row folding chair. It was at the foul line — not my usual center-court seat. That was a bad omen.

Newell abandoned the slow-down strategy that did not work in the first meeting. "We ran with them and were ahead at the end of the third quarter," recalls Norm Six. "But they hit 10 of 11 shots in the fourth quarter and won the game."

That was the last game Newell would lose that season.

The highpoint of the regular season came late in the year during the same week as the Sweetheart Prom. Newell was scheduled to play Class A powers Weirton, Moundsville, and Salineville. The team needed to win all three of the games to have momentum going into the tournament, but the players also wanted to go to the dance.

"We had a 10 p.m. curfew every night, all season," says Norm. "The week of the Sweetheart Prom was the biggest week of the season. Robbie wasn't going to let us go to the dance because it would keep us out too late. But Frank Mangano talked to him and made a deal that,

Norm Six today. Norm still lives in the Newell area and plays in a senior basketball league. Photograph by Michael Keller.

if we won all three games, we could go to the dance. We won them all and went. But when Robbie found out that we stayed out until after midnight, he wasn't going to let us play the next week. But Frank talked him out of that, too. Frank was a real salesman," Norm says.

Newell easily beat Weirton 72-53, Moundsville 59-47, and Salineville 88-51. The victories over the big schools were important. "Beating Weirton and Moundsville really gave us confidence because we beat the big boys — Class A schools," John Laneve

says. "After the game, the Weirton coach came to our dressing room and said, 'Congratulations. You have a great team, but we're never



going to play you again. You are so small that we don't have anything to win."

Newell ended the regular season with an outstanding 16-3 record. They began tournament play led by John Laneve's 28 points to crush New Cumberland by the score of 89-27. The trip to the state tournament was a triumphant march south, but when you are the most northern high school in the state, what other direction can you go? Each weekend of winning games took the Newell Big Green further from home, but the Newell fans loyally followed their team. A caravan of cars went to every game, and the fans who had to stay at home listened eagerly on the radio. At Grace's Place, a snack bar and confectionary on Washington Street, owner Grace McCall kept a quarter-by-quarter running score of each game in big numbers on the front window of the store.

The Big Green rolled. We easily beat Pennsboro (63-50) and Sistersville (73-60) in the Regional Tournament at Williamstown. The next week, John Laneve and Joby Young began a classic basketball player/cheerleader romance. "John and I started dating two weeks before the championship game," Joby recalls. "He always bet milkshakes on the games, and I had to buy him one at Carnahan's Drug Store. After the milkshake, he headed down the alley towards home, but Ron (LaNeve), who was with us, said that someone had to walk me home. John did, and we have been together for 52 years since then."

The Northern Area Tournament in Clarksburg was more of a challenge for the team. In 1951-52, only the winners of the Northern Area and Southern Area tournaments went to the state finals. Newell beat Moorefield in a 67-51 romp, but had a more difficult time defeating Tygarts Valley, 58-51, to win the Northern Area championship and secure a state championship berth.

The state championship game

against the Gassaway Elks was set for Friday, March 21, 1952, at the West Virginia University Field House in Morgantown. I begged my father to take me, but he could not get off work to go. I was ecstatic on Tuesday of championship week, though, when he told me that he had found a ride for me to go to Morgantown. Carnahan's Drug Store had made a list of everyone who needed a ride to the game. My dad put my name on the list, and Keith Wheatley, a man who worked

filled with 5,000 fans. The playing floor was an impossible jumble of lines because it was also used for crosscourt basketball, volleyball, badminton, and who knew what else. I did not know how the players could sort out the basketball boundaries from all the other marks, but they did just fine. The crowd seemed huge to me, but it did not seem to affect the Newell players.

"The crowd was big, but we had played before big crowds before during the season," recalls John



The Newell Big Green took on the Gassaway Elks for the state Class B title on March 21, 1952. Here, Gassaway's Gary Mullins launches a shot while Newell's Norm Six goes up to block it. Frank Mangano is at left and Ron LaNeve is at right. *Dominion-News* photograph.

with my dad, saw my name and agreed to take me with his family.

Along with 800 other excited Newell fans, we left early that Friday morning to make it to Morgantown for the 3:30 p.m. game. I do not remember much about the trip, except that I used some of the dollar that my dad had given me to buy lunch in a Morgantown restaurant.

The West Virginia University Field House seemed massive with bleachers all around the court,

Laneve. "Once we got out on the floor, we were oblivious and did what we had to do."

Gassaway was an equally small school, located in Braxton County. Nobody from Newell knew anything about Gassaway or even where it was located. "Down state" was all that anybody from Newell could say about Gassaway. We considered anything past Moundsville to be the Deep South, and it was just a blur on the map to us.

The *Wheeling Intelligencer* picked

Newell Captures Class B Title

L'NEVE BOYS SPARK TEAM TO EASY WIN

Gassaway Five Loses By 56-39 Score In Big Game

Newell High School's sharp-shooting Big Green trimmed the Elks of Gassaway, 56-39, yesterday afternoon at the Field House to capture the State Class B basketball championship.

A crowd of some 5,000 fans saw the northern quint grab command about midway in the first quarter and ramble onward toward its first title in the school's history.

The charges of Coach John Robison had too much class and balance for the southern forces of Coach A. C. Smyth.

Gassaway, whose record now is 22-3, got the jump on Newell as Gene Gay slipped in a one-handed layup after a miscue of a pass.



The Morgantown Dominion-News, March 22, 1952.

the game as a toss-up. Gassaway had a 22-2 record and was led by 6'4" center Gary Mullins, who averaged 25 points a game. Mullins was a one-man team. He had scored 46 of his team's 53 points in the area semi-final game and scored 30 points to beat Glen Rogers in the Southern Area Tournament final. "One of the things that Coach Robison said was that we had to keep Gary Mullins' scoring total down," remembers Ron LaNeve. "Norm Six had that job."

Gassaway's Gene Gay opened the scoring, but Jim McDevitt tied the game for Newell with a set shot from the top of the key. After an exchange of baskets, Gay put Gassaway ahead 5-4. But two goals by John Laneve and a goal by Ron LaNeve gave Newell a 10-5 lead. By the end of the first quarter, Newell was leading by 16-11. Mullins valiantly tried to keep Gassaway in the game during the second quarter by scoring 11 points when Six had to sit on the bench with three fouls. But Ron LaNeve's shooting and a balanced attack took Newell to a 36-25 half-time lead.

Newell was able to penetrate Gassaway's zone for easy inside shots and was content to let the

Elks play as slowly as they wanted in the second half. The Big Green maintained a 44-33 lead at the end of the third quarter. After a couple of quick baskets by Newell in the fourth quarter, Coach Robison began to clear the bench. As Wayne Swift, Orwin Britton, David White, Don McGown, and Ray Godwin entered the game, the Newell fans stood and began to chant, "We're running away with Gassaway. We're running away with Gassaway." The student section began singing our fight song, "It's Newell High School," sung to the tune of the WVU fight song. The song was repeated three times, and everyone was on their feet chanting, singing, and throwing confetti as the game ended in a 56-39 romp for Newell.

Ron LaNeve led the Big Green scoring with 21 points. John Laneve had 12 points, and Jim McDevitt had 10 points in one of his best games of the season. Mullins led Gassaway with 21 points, but Norm Six had kept him in check and controlled the boards, pulling down 15 rebounds.

"I was surprised how easy the championship game was," says Jim McDevitt in a recent interview. "It was the second easiest game we played in the tournaments."

During the awards ceremony after the game, Ron LaNeve and

Frank Mangano were named to the All-Tournament team. Coach Robison was given the huge Class B championship trophy, and the players for both teams were given small trophies and a pint bottle of chocolate milk. I think that I slept for most of the ride back home, because I was one tired third grader.

The celebration of the championship reflected the simplicity of the town. "When we got home," Ron LaNeve says, "they had a big truck up near the Newell Bridge for a parade. We got out of our cars and the team and cheerleaders got on that truck for a parade through town. We did not expect that, but it was really nice." On Monday, the high school had an assembly to honor the team and coaches. At the end of the assembly, the whole student body snake-danced from the high school down the length of Washington Street. Mrs. Haynes, my third-grade teacher, let my class go to our classroom windows to watch.

"After we won the championship, the players were given the choice of having a team meal at the restaurant of our choice," recalls Jim McDevitt. "We voted to eat at Frank Mangano's house because his mother made great spaghetti. She cooked for three days, and we had a great meal."

The town gave Coach Robison \$200, and the players were given



Newell players, coaches, and cheerleaders pose for a picture with their well-earned trophies from the 1951-52 championship season. In the front row, from the left, are Shirley Simian, Joyce Parsons, Pat Gilmore, Martha Brooks, Joby Young, and Ruth Ann Stephens. Seated in the second row are assistant coach Pete Horoszko, John Laneve, Ron LaNeve, Norm Six, Frank Mangano, Jim McDevitt, and head coach John Robison. Standing are manager Dick Harrison, Paul LaNeve, Orwin Britton, Raymond Godwin, Joe Mikeals, David White, Wayne Swift, Donald McGown, and manager Virgil Grimm. Photographer unknown.

commemorative plates, which were also sold to the public. Remember, we were a pottery town, so there were at least three different types of plates. The one that I treasure and proudly display in my kitchen has the names of the coaches, players, and managers superimposed over the picture of a basketball. Another plate had a picture of the team, while a third type had the scores of all the games.

That championship was huge for the people of Newell. "Newell was just a small factory town, and we were always treated as also-rans, not only by the state, but by the communities around us," says Orwin Britton, a substitute player on the team, quoted in an article published in *Mountain State Hoops* magazine. "We were the only rallying point that I can remember for the town."

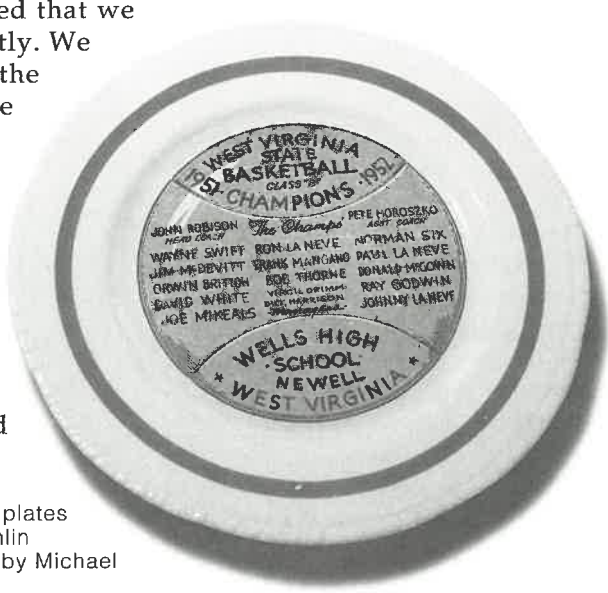
"The people of the town were really proud," says Ron LaNeve.

"They never treated us any differently, but we could tell that they really appreciated how we represented the town."

After a month, baseball season started and things seemed to get back to normal. But not really. Everyone in Newell realized that we now did things differently. We were special. We were the state champions. We were inspired to believe that championships, athletic scholarships, and college degrees were all within the realm of possibility. The champs inspired us to believe that people from Newell could go out into the world and compete and win. 🍁

One of three commemorative plates made at nearby Homer Laughlin China Company. Photograph by Michael Keller.

BOB BARNETT teaches sports history at Marshall University. He has written for *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Washington Post*, *Sports Heritage*, and the *Journal of Sports History*, and is sports and recreation editor for the upcoming *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. His most recent GOLDENSEAL article appeared in our Spring 1992 issue.



"Fleetie Belle"

By Tom Felton

Adventures of a Tucker County Milk Truck

A college degree has always been a valuable commodity. However, in the 1940's and '50's, it was rare for a young man or woman in rural West Virginia to have the resources to pursue this dream. In Tucker County, several ambitious youths were able to complete their education thanks to a daily ride to the nearest college in the back of a milk truck provided by John Harold "Johnnie" Felton, the owner of a local dairy farm, and my grandfather. The truck was affectionately known as "Fleetie Belle," and this is the story of how these young scholars rode her to success.

The Holly Meadows Dairy was established in the early 1920's in the community of Holly Meadows, approximately two miles north of Parsons in Tucker County. The dairy originally milked 12 cows. This number eventually increased to 20 or more when a new barn was built in 1946. The milking was done by hand until a milking machine was purchased around 1949. The dairy was a family business owned by my grandfather and operated by him and his sons Robert (my father), Kenneth, and Fred. My grandmother Atha, my youngest uncle Jack, and my aunt Joanna washed bottles. Jack recalls a time when he was 10 years old and milked nine cows by hand because an impending storm had the older brothers



Dairy owner John Harold "Johnnie" Felton. Photographer and date unknown.

putting up hay until dark.

For years, the dairy produced raw milk and delivered it by automobile to households in Tucker County. Eventually, the cars were replaced with Fleetie Belle — a 1936 Plymouth panel truck my granddad purchased from a local grocer. About 1946, the sale of raw milk ceased. Now the milk had to be transported daily to Elkins, more than 20 miles away in neighboring Randolph County, for processing. There the raw milk was pasteurized and bottled by the Elkins Dairy Plant, then returned to Parsons.

One of the drivers of Fleetie Belle was Glenn Shoemaker, today a resident of Alexandria, Virginia. Glenn would keep the milk truck overnight at his home in Parsons and pick the raw milk up at the farm at

would volunteer the use of the milk truck. All of the empty milk bottles would have to be unloaded in order to make room for the musicians and their instruments. Upon their return, the milk bottles would have to be placed back into the truck.

One of the regular riders on Fleetie Belle, John Mauzy of Parsons, recounts his experiences with nostalgic pleasure. Like Glenn and Carl, John remembers my grandfather allowing the young men to use the truck for extracurricular activities when it was not being utilized for milk deliveries. John recalls several of them going to a tournament in Buckhannon, in which the D&E basketball team was competing.

On one occasion, John and Carl had the milk truck full of soda pop to sell at a baseball game at Parsons. Baseball was a very popular sport during this period, and tournaments would draw many teams and a large number of spectators. Being the enterprising young man he was, Carl set up a soda stand at the Parsons High School athletic field. As he was navigating Fleetie Belle down Walnut Street through downtown Parsons, he and John heard a loud clank underneath the vehicle. When they got out to investigate, they discovered the gasoline tank had fallen off. Greenlief Funeral Home was situated directly beside them, and the proprietor Harry Greenlief was seated and observing the activity. John recalls the businessman was laughing so hard he "almost fell off his chair."

John, who spent five semesters at D&E studying forestry and physical education, had a varied career afterwards. He worked three years for the Department of Highways, seven years as a salesman for the American Snuff Company, operated a meat shop with his brother for several years, and worked on community action programs. He is certain that his five semesters at D&E were very beneficial towards preparing him for his various careers.

The time spent on the drive over



Glenn Shoemaker, shown here during his Navy days, drove Fleetie Belle while taking classes at Davis & Elkins College. Photograph circa 1945, photographer unknown.



Carl Schoonover, still a resident of Parsons, had several memorable adventures while driving Fleetie Belle, including thwarting a daring robbery attempt. Photograph 1948, photographer unknown.

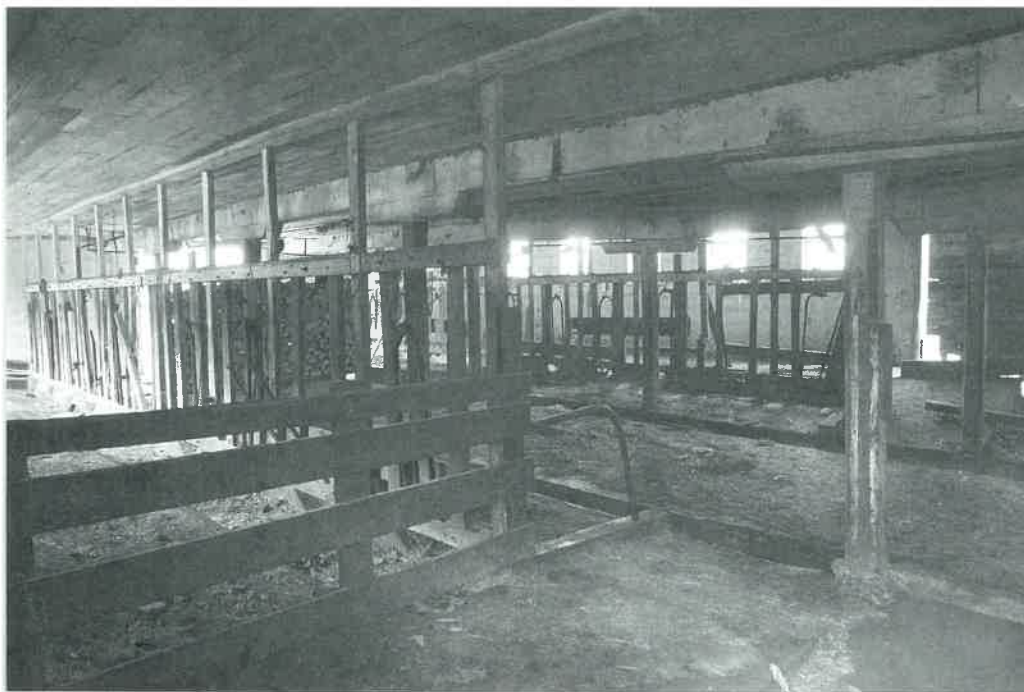
to Elkins was occasionally utilized for studying. John relates that one semester, Carl was taking a French language class. John would take Carl's textbook and quiz his buddy by giving him the English word

and asking for the French equivalent. According to John, this was how Carl learned his French. My uncle Bob Kalar worked at Hinebaugh's Restaurant, a regular delivery site. Bob had served in France during World War II. He knew Carl was taking a French course and would refuse to pay him for the milk delivery until Carl told him the amount owed in that language.

Bill Jones began driving Fleetie Belle upon transferring to D&E from Potomac State in 1950. He now lives in Phoenix, Arizona, where he retired as superintendent of two of the biggest school systems in the state. "Johnnie Felton provided more scholarships for students from Tucker County than anyone I am aware of," he says. "That scholarship was that milk truck — the amount they paid us weekly and the transportation to and from school. It was a godsend to me and my brother. Otherwise, we would have had to find another source of transportation and income, which would have been difficult in those days. We would probably not have graduated from Davis & Elkins if we would not have had that opportunity."

One of the establishments in Tucker County where milk was delivered daily was Husky Phillips' store. Husky had a large cooler in the store, and Bill remembers that any leftover milk from his deliveries would be left there and picked up and distributed the next day.

Oftentimes, when Bill delivered the milk to the store, Husky would ask him to look after the establishment for a few minutes while he ran an errand. One day while he was doing so, a lady came in and told him she wanted a large chicken for a gathering she was hosting that evening. There was only one chicken in the meat case, and Bill retrieved it for her. She looked it over and informed him it was not big enough and asked him to get her a larger one. He looked for a larger fowl in the cooler, but none



This recent photograph shows the interior of the Felton dairy barn, no longer used for milking cows. Photograph by Michael Keller.

was available. Away from the vision of the customer, he took the small bird and "fluffed it up" in order to make it appear larger. He took it back to the lady and said, "This one should do nicely." The woman examined the bird for a moment and exclaimed, "No, this one is not large enough either. Just give me both of them!" Being in a fix, Bill thought for a second and decided to wrap up some pork chops and give them to the woman. He accomplished this in no time, marked "chicken" on the package, and gave them to the lady. She paid for the purchase and departed none the wiser. From then on, every time the woman's husband would encounter Bill in town, he would call him "Pork Chop."

Another funny occurrence happened one day when Bill was returning from Elkins with an extra-heavy load of milk. A rear tire on the truck blew out, and Bill stopped to put on the spare. As he was beginning this task, a prominent minister stopped to assist him. As they jacked up the truck on the side where the flat tire was located, the heavy load of milk shifted to the other side. This caused the rear tire on that side of the truck to explode with a sound Bill equated to a detonation of dynamite. The preacher

jumped straight into the air and exclaimed, "Holy Hell! What was that?"

Bill states that he would occasionally use the vehicle for taking his future wife, Josephine Hehle, on dates. The smell of sour milk and the pillows on milk crates that were used for seating, seldom washed, were "somewhat of a distraction," he recalls, but they learned to put up with it.

A recurring theme when interviewing former drivers and riders

of the Felton milk truck was the generosity of the owner, Johnnie Felton. Bill Jones states, "Johnnie Felton saw the milk business as so much more than just taking milk to Elkins for processing. He was a wonderful man and saw it as an opportunity to provide an education for young people. He was a very generous man!"

Replacing Bill Jones as the driver of the milk truck was his brother Jim, who echoes his sibling's praise of the opportunities made available to the young people of Tucker County by Mr. Felton and Fleetie Belle. Jim feels it is quite likely he would not have been able to obtain his college degree if not for the transportation provided by the dairy. His education allowed him to pursue a career with the West Virginia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, where he retired as deputy director with direct authority over more than 600 employees.

Jim nostalgically recalls his job as driver, which only paid \$14 dollars a week, as the "good old days." There was a rider named Frank Baker, Jim says, who always rode in the rear of the truck near the back door. During the winter months, the windows of the truck



John Mauzy was a regular rider of the dairy truck back in his college days. He is shown here at his home in Parsons. Photograph by Michael Keller.

on our Stone Lick Farm

By John Cooper



The Cooper family farm on Stone Lick Creek, near Cocks Mills, Gilmer County, as it appeared in 1971. The "new" barn was built in 1921.

weighted to make raising or lowering it easier. The sides of the granary were slatted at a 45-degree angle. The slats were perhaps one inch apart so that air could enter and dry ear corn. There were also bins for wheat. The granary was built around 1900. Dad's brother, my uncle Homer E. Cooper, is credited with being the innovator and architect.

These were the days when neighbors helped neighbors. If someone had fruit, everybody had fruit. My father, Worthy West, John Hall, and

Blaine Nutter helped one another in the hay harvest or other farm work that required more than one man or one team of horses. Blaine Nutter had some wonderful cherry trees, both sweet cherries and sour cherries. He always had enough to share with us. A tornado — called a cyclone, in those days — destroyed our 200-tree orchard when I was one-and-a-half years old. The tornado came across the hill from John Hall's farm, but luckily did not damage anything on his farm. After the storm, he still had plenty

of apples to share with us.

The Wests had many sugar maple trees, which they tapped each February. The trees were two feet or more in diameter and were tapped using four to five spiles and No. 2 or No. 3 washtubs to catch the water, filling many times in one day. One year during sap-flow season, the Wests got sick with the flu and they asked us to collect all the sugar water. That was the first time I remember being tired. Their farm was a short half-mile from ours, and I helped carry the water in buckets



This innovative granary was built in 1900. It is raised on six-foot posts lined with tin to discourage climbing rodents. The sheltered area beneath the granary was used to store farm equipment, while the granary itself had chambers to store corn and wheat. Photographer and date unknown.

to our farm, where we boiled it to make maple syrup and sugar. I was perhaps six years old.

In the 1920's, nut-bearing trees were very important: walnut, shell bark hickory, and the native American chestnut. An oriental blight came through our area in the late '20's and killed them. [See "Battling the Blight: A Second Chance for the American Chestnut," by Lucille Griffin; Winter 1995.] Not only was the chestnut prized for its nuts, it was perhaps our most valuable timber tree, at the time. It was good for furniture, all rough-lumber uses, fence posts, and fence rails. Most farm fences were made of chestnut split into rails.

The log-home birthplace of our author's father, Eric J. Cooper, located on the family farm. Photograph by Sidney Cooper, 1915.



On the hill behind our house were two large walnut trees, one large chestnut tree, and an excellent hickory tree. The hickory tree produced several bushels of nuts every year. The shells were thin, and when held correctly, one whack with a hammer would crack the nut, and two halves, unbroken, were removed. My mother once cracked a heaped-up gallon crock of these nuts. We took them to Auburn, and she wanted to sell them to Mr. Rymer, who had a store. He said he had no demand for nuts, but he would give her \$1 for them. Sold! My Christmas present one year was a lightweight ball-peen hammer for cracking nuts.

Since we had only one nut-bearing chestnut, we often picked up nuts across the hill at the John Hall farm. They had two trees near the house. His wife Peachie and my mother, along with Peachie's son William, my brothers, and I, would have a big chestnut-picking day. Chestnuts matured in October, and we usually went barefooted until nearly Thanksgiving. We picked up chestnuts barefooted, dodging the spined burrs.

After gathering the chestnuts, we put them in an open-front gas heating stove to roast them. Chestnuts are delicious roasted. The way we would roast them was to cut a little hole in all but one. Then we put them on top of the heating stove near the front. When the uncut one exploded, they were done. How warm and delicious they were!

There were no paved roads then. Each farmer took care of the road along his farm. When a car went by, which was only in summer, everyone went out to the porch to see it out of sight. Model T Fords were notable arm breakers. They had to be hand-cranked to



The Cooper family dressed in their Sunday best for this portrait taken in July 1919 at the Cooper home. From the left are our author's grandmother Clemmie Newton, mother Lillie Cooper, father Eric J. Cooper, and grandfather Charles Cooper. Standing in front are brother Newton, sister Edith, and brother Frank. The photograph was taken by grandfather F.M. Newton. Author John Cooper was born in this house three months later.

start. The motor often kicked, frequently breaking an arm. There were a few trucks that were used to haul drilling supplies. Their tires were made of solid rubber — flat, and six to eight inches wide. When one of them went by our farm, we watched it, secretly hoping that it would get stuck in a steep bank in the road. None ever did.

It was during the late teens and '20's that much of the drilling for oil and gas took place in the Coxs Mills area. My father did a lot of teaming to supplement our farm income. His teaming was done with a road wagon and our work horses. Some of the current names of local places date back to teaming episodes. Bloody Run Hill got that name because the hill, especially the side toward Troy, was very steep. It was said that some ruthless teamsters would whip their horses until they bled, trying to get them to pull a load up the hill. I remember Dad telling about double teaming, or even triple teaming, to get a heavy load up that hill.

Another interesting name was Hog Run, the mouth being at the upper end of Coxs Mills. It got that name because a local landowner

charged oil drillers for drinking water while at the same time becoming quite wealthy from oil and gas royalties. Since my time in that area, someone decided the creek should be called by a more respectable name: Coxs Camp Fork.

There were no supermarkets. We raised almost all our food. We buried potatoes, apples, and cabbage and had a "dry house" where we dried apples, peaches, corn, and beans. Mom didn't think we should start into the winter unless she had 100 quarts of beans, along with other vegetables and fruits. She usually had nearly 1,000 quarts canned.

In winter, our screened-in back porch served the purpose of refrigeration. In the summer, our dug well had to do the best it could, being around 60 degrees down near the water level.



Eric J. Cooper farmed, drove horse teams and trucks, and performed various other jobs to support his family. He drove this dump truck for the WPA during the 1930's. Photographer unknown.



Milking cows and churning butter were among the farm chores shared by the Cooper children. Here, author John Cooper, at left, feeds a young calf, brother Newton steadies the dish, and mother Lillie Cooper places a neighbor child on the back of the animal. Photograph taken in 1928, photographer unknown.

Dad milked every morning and evening. I remember many times when the morning milk would sour before evening. We had country butter — buttermilk with a little butter in it — and cottage cheese. We had a five-gallon upright churn, and inside was a dasher. The dasher was a round stick with a wooden splasher on the bottom. The splasher had four or five holes in it. The churn had a wooden top with a hole in it, through which the round stick protruded. Churning was done by raising and lowering the dasher vigorously inside the churn, which was partially full of soured milk. One of my jobs was to churn. How my arms would ache! [See “Churning Butter,” by John Cooper; Winter 1997.]

My father, Worth West, Blaine Nutter, and John Hall were members of the Knights of Pythias lodge at Auburn. They attended regular meetings on Saturday nights — I don’t remember how many times a month. While the lodge was a men’s organization, once in a while there would be a family night with lots of food and fellowship. I remember at one of the family get-

togethers that I gorged myself on delicious food. Following that, I gorged myself on delicious homemade ice cream. Imagine, getting sick on ice cream! I did.

Auburn was considered “town” even more so than Coxs Mills, although they were an equal distance from our farm. Auburn had two stores, two churches, a bank, a confectionery “drug store,” and a photography studio. The photographer had a bear skin with the head attached, which was always included in portraits. It was in the photography studio at Auburn that I heard a radio for the first time — perhaps 1924 or 1925. It was a large piece of equipment with a round speaking horn on the top. A voice came from the horn. In my youthful mind, I thought that surely there must be someone behind the contraption doing the talking.

I never heard the word “bathroom” when I was young. Baths were taken in the kitchen using a No. 3 washtub. Bathing was a Saturday ritual so that we would be all shined up for going to church the next day. An urn, called a slop jar, was located in each room for emergency use, because indoor commodes were non-existent. The toilet was located in an outbuilding. There were two holes cut, with the waste dropping into a small intermittent creek, called a run. No wonder typhoid fever was common in those days! The famous Franklin Roosevelt outdoor privies finally came along about 10 years later. [See “The Roosevelt Outhouse,” by Norman Julian; Winter 1998.]

Going to school and getting an education was somewhat of a problem. I was the youngest child in our family, and my mother taught me at home very intently for one or two years. In the fall of 1927, when I was eight, I began attending regular school. Mom convinced the teacher that I was ready for third grade. My teacher was Alice Fair, whom I loved very dearly.

I remember at one of the family get-togethers that I gorged myself on delicious food. Following that, I gorged myself on delicious homemade ice cream. Imagine, getting sick on ice cream! I did.

Coxs Mills had a two-room school. Miss Fair taught the lower grades, and I think Willie DeBarr taught the upper grades.

At the end of the eight-month rural school term, I



The Cooper children astride Skeet, the family's riding horse, in 1932. From the left are Frank, Newton, Edith, and John.

was promoted to the fourth grade. At this time, around April of 1928, we moved from our Stone Lick farm to Glenville. Town schools had a nine-month term. Mom took me directly to fourth-grade teacher Drusella Kidd. I was in Miss Kidd's fourth grade for one month to finish the year, and then she promoted me to the fifth grade for the next year.

My brothers Frank and Newton attended Coxs Mills School, too. My brothers and I all rode Skeet, our riding mare, to school. She had a long back and long legs — named Skeet because Dad said long legs and back are characteristics of mosquitos. Frank rode in the saddle and held the reins. Newton and I rode behind the saddle with a saddle blanket to sit on. Brison Bowyer had a store right behind the school at Coxs Mills and a barn behind the store. Skeet stayed in the barn until the trip back home. The old mare was affectionate and was apparently smart, also. If she didn't have three boys on her back, she was reluctant to go.

My parents were very devout, as were most in those days. We had a surrey — a four-wheeled, two-seated horse-drawn carriage with a covered top. Every Sunday morning, we went to the Methodist church in Auburn, two-and-a-half miles, and many Sunday nights attended church in Coxs Mills — two-and-a-half miles in the other direction. I remember riding back home on Sunday night, a tired and sleepy boy. We had

two work horses that pulled the surrey and farm machinery. Their names were Frank and Nell. Frank was a huge gelding, while Nell was a mare. Dad trained them well, so they always knew what to do.

One Sunday, we went to an all-day "doin's and dinner on the ground" at Trinity Church located on the Blaine Nutter farm between Stone Lick and Horn Creek. It was as described — lots of food, preaching, singing, and fellowship. About half of those attending came on horseback or in horse-drawn vehicles. The other half came in cars, mostly Model T Fords. One person who attended, I think his name was Argule Emerson, had achieved success in urban life. He had a shiny car and clothes, which were envied by everyone.

The Nutter Cemetery is still located nearby. Some of my relatives are buried there. I visited the area in 1983, and I found a couple of foundation stones and trees 10 to 15 inches in diameter where the church once stood. The Walton one-room school once stood across

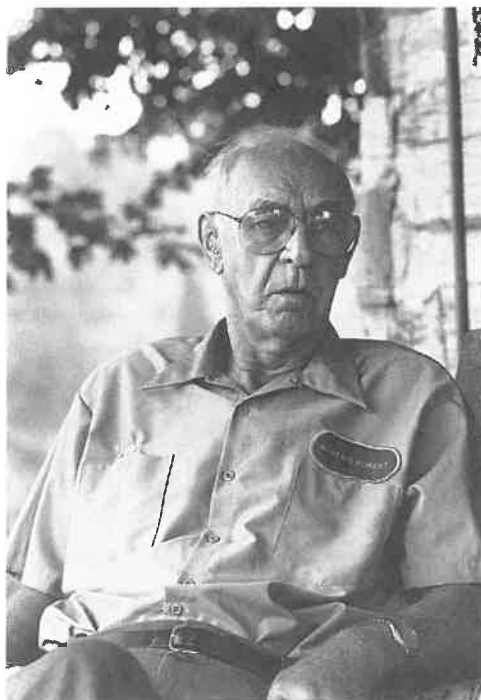
the road. It, too, is gone.

I don't think of myself as being particularly old, although 85 years and physical impairments force me to accept the fact. Living through the Great Depression in the 1930's, surviving nine major sea battles aboard the battleship *New Jersey*, and then watching the rapid changes in the world since WWII have all left lasting impressions.

Sometimes I throw my mind out of gear and realize that the first settlement in this country was in 1607 —

less than 400 years ago.

My age causes me to accept the fact that I have lived through more than one fifth of that time. In less than 400 years, the United States has come from a wilderness to the leading — and the most envied — country in the world. I have watched much of it happen. 🍁



JOHN COOPER was born in Gilmer County in 1919. He earned a degree in agriculture from WVU. After retiring from the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, he began operation of Santa's Forest, a Christmas tree farm in Mason County, featured in our Winter 1992 issue. John's story about churning butter appeared in our Winter 1997 issue.

Author John Cooper in 1992. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Harmony Church

Witness and Worship in Mason County

By Irene B. Brand

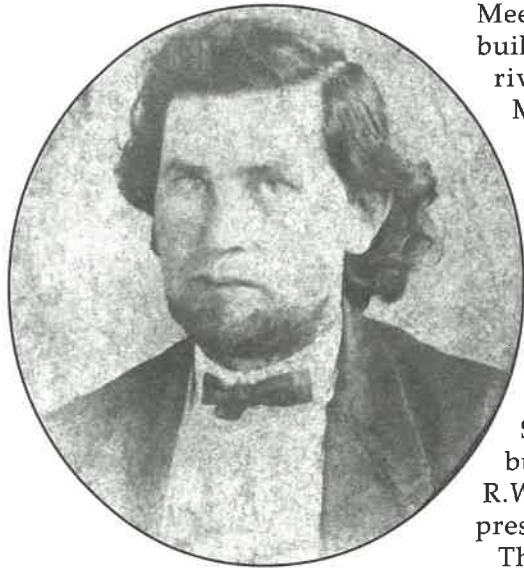
Forty members of my church family ringed the creek bank and sang “Shall We Gather at the River” on July 28, 1940, when Reverend H.A. Jackson immersed me in the waters of Little Sixteen Creek, in rural Mason County. The following Sunday morning, I was accepted into the membership of the Harmony Baptist Church. From that day to the present, dedication to our church and its witness has been high on my priority list.

One of the oldest continuing congregations west of the Allegheny Mountains, Harmony Church was organized in 1812. Meetings were conducted in a log building located near the mouth of Little Sixteen Creek until March 1838, when another meeting house was built on the northeast side of the Kanawha River. It stood on land donated by William and Eliza Sullivan and became

Harmony Baptist Church in Southside, Mason County, as it appeared in 1945. Photographers unknown unless otherwise noted.



known as the Sullivan Meeting House. The exact site of this building is unknown, but it is thought to have been located a short distance



The Reverend R.W. Davis, pastor of Harmony Church from 1860-93. He was pastor when the current church building was constructed in 1860.

south of the present town of Leon.

Since the congregation included members from both sides of the Kanawha River, Sunday services alternated between the Sullivan Meeting House to the north and a building on the south side of the river, known as the Harmony Meeting House. Members traveled by boat from their respective homes to the different buildings.

The present church structure, located on the south side of the river along Route 35 at the present town of Southside, was built during 1860 on land donated by the Long family.

Services started in the new building in 1861. The Reverend R.W. Davis was pastor when the present building was constructed.

The first vacation Bible school at Harmony was conducted by Pastor R.W. Davis in May 1872. Summer Bible schools were held sporadically until the late 1930's, but from that time, Bible schools have been a consistent part of the church's outreach. Evelyn Wallace, a Baptist missionary, directed the first vacation Bible school I attended when I was 10 years old.

When I first remember seeing Harmony, the exterior of the building had changed little since its construction in 1860. It was a one-room structure, situated on ground-level foundation sandstones. We had three or four classes when I first started to Sunday School. Curtains separated the sanctuary into rooms. In the early days, men and women were taught in separate groups, and two classes of adults occupied the major part of the building. Classes for children and youth were held on the pulpit platform. We children were often reprimanded for peering around the curtain to see what the other classes were doing, but it was difficult to keep our minds focused when the voices of four teachers vied for our attention.

Our church has had less strife than many congregations. How-

ever, at one time, strict discipline was employed to keep members in line. As a child, I often heard my parents discuss people who'd been "churched." Because of some alleged sin, membership was withdrawn and the names of the individuals removed from the church roll. Members were excluded from the fellowship for drunkenness, swearing, fighting, gambling, immorality, and for absenting themselves from church services. Any member who didn't attend meetings for three months was automatically dismissed. Business meetings were held each quarter on Saturday afternoons, and for several years during the early 1900's, church discipline was the main focus of those meetings.

While researching the history of the church, I was startled to learn that my own maternal great-grandparents had been excluded from the church fellowship. My great-grandfather had been found guilty of drunkenness, while my great-grandmother had been heard to call her children little devils.

Women were liberated early at Harmony. Kate Crouch became a member of the board of trustees in 1907, and five years later my aunt Eva B. Hannis was elected as the church clerk. Only women have held the position of clerk since then. My mother Maggie Beard served as treasurer of the church from 1945-75.

During the Great Depression, financial hardships prevented the membership from spending money on the church building, and it fell into disrepair. The windows were easily opened from the outside. Late one night in 1945, the pastor and his wife drove by the church and discovered some undesirable visitors. One young man on horseback had leaned inside an open window and was talking to a group of his friends who were playing poker inside the church by lantern light. They scattered in all directions when the pastor opened the door and turned on the electric





Bible school at Harmony Church in 1945. Author Irene Brand is in the second row, second from the left, wearing a white dress.

lights. This wasn't the first time the culprits had played poker in the church, but it was the last time.

A swarm of honeybees were also unwelcome visitors to the church and were much more difficult to evict than the poker players. In the mid-1940's, the bees took up residence behind the weatherboarding of the building. Local residents knew to avoid that corner of the churchyard, but one traveling family decided the church lawn would be a good place for a picnic. They spread blankets and laid out their food close to the beehive. The bees invited themselves to lunch, and a few of the travelers suffered painful stings. Some members thought the church might be liable for a lawsuit, but after all, the travelers were trespassing. The bees had been there first!

The honeybees remained residents until 1980, when the structure was completely renovated and vinyl siding was put on the exterior of the church. The contractors refused to work on that section of the church until the bees were evicted. One ingenious member put insecticide on a board at the entrance to the hive and thus elimi-

nated the bee threat.

Through several restorations and additions over the years, the church has changed from one room to a formidable church complex.

The appearance of the church changed dramatically in 1960 when a vestibule and a belfry were added. This addition fulfilled a longtime goal of the congregation. A belfry had been considered as early as 1892, and lumber was bought for the construction. But two years later, the lumber was sold. Again in 1915, a committee was appointed to build a belfry and buy a bell at a cost of \$300. Two other attempts were made to build a vestibule and belfry before the dream became a reality in 1960. The church bell was purchased from the Wood County Board of Education. It had once hung in a school in downtown Parkersburg. The church paid \$100 for the bell, and it is rung faithfully, 15 minutes before every service.

Music has always been an integral part of our worship. The congregation sang without musical accompaniment during the early years. A choir was organized in 1869, but the first record of the

church owning a musical instrument came when an organ was purchased in 1882.

In 1921, the church granted permission to a quartette of ladies to hold a concert in the building. Proceeds from this concert netted \$1. In that same year, the Ladies Aid bought an upright piano, which was used until a studio piano was purchased in the early '60's. The church purchased a Hammond spinet organ in 1969 with money given in memory of J. Hanly Morgan of Huntington, who owned a farm in the community. Since then, we've had both organ and piano accompaniment for congregational singing. The first organist was Ed Whitehead. I started playing the piano for worship services when I was a teenager and have served as either pianist or organist since that time.

Our congregation likes to sing the old songs, but we are always ready to move forward with new types of worship. Although musical accompaniment for congregational singing has always been a piano, organ, or both, we have had many guitar players through the years who've provided music for

themselves or others for small group singing. Musicians have used a variety of other instruments, as well, including banjos, upright bass, mandolins, and fiddles. A chorus of young men was organized in 2000 and called themselves the Harmony Grass, as their speciality was bluegrass gospel songs.

Although the first choir was organized in 1869, the choir ministry was intermittent until 1951, when a permanent choir was organized with 24 members. For the first time, choir robes were bought. Since then, the choir's ministry has been continuous, with two of those original members still singing with the group; I've been actively involved in this ministry since its beginning.

In 1991, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the choir's organization with a special Sunday afternoon service. We also prepared a float for the Mason County Fair



In 1960, a new vestibule and belfry were added, fulfilling a longtime goal of the congregation. Photograph 1962 by Rod Brand.



Though music had long been an integral part of worship at the church, Harmony didn't establish a permanent choir until 1951. The choir is shown here at the dedication of robes. Standing in the front row, from the left, are Juanita Hudson, Mary Rawson, Geraldine Bowles, Dorothy Sebrell, Stella Birchfield, Bessie Lyons, Jewell Denney, Reba McCallister, Maxine Vansickle, Nina Hudson, Vea Peptons, and Rose Sebrell. Standing behind are Clyde Dowell, Joe Fisher, Jimmie Walker, Robert Ray Hudson, Edward Jeffers, Bob Jeffers, Charles Sommer, Jabez Beard, Joann Vansickle, Deloris Vansickle, Cleo Hudson, Loretta McComb, and the Reverend M.M. Malcolm. Photograph by Charles E. Butler.



Ladies Aid meeting on June 8, 1938.

parade in Point Pleasant, with choir members riding on the float and singing their favorite songs. The effect wasn't as impressive as we'd hoped, however, because our place in the parade was directly behind a fire truck that kept its siren blowing during our progress down Main Street.

The first Women's Mission Society was organized in 1898, but when I first remember, the women's group was called the Ladies Aid. Meetings were held in members' homes. When I was a child, it was always exciting when the ladies came to our house. Each woman seemed to have a speciality dessert she served when she was the hostess. My mother usually made pies for the ladies. Children attended with their mothers, so the meetings gave me an opportunity to see my friends.

The ladies supported their work with monthly dues of five cents in the '30's, but in the next decade, they started paying 50 cents per month. However, the majority of their income came from fund-raising projects, used for most of the improvements at the church in the 1930's. They prepared embroidered linens and rugs for sale, but the

most popular projects were the ice-cream socials held each summer. Attending ice-cream socials is one of my earliest church-related memories. A glass of lemonade, dipped from a large stone jar and kept cold by a block of ice, was a tasty treat for a kid who seldom had iced drinks. The hand-cranked

Although one purpose of the church is to help the needy, we don't believe the Lord expects us to be gullible.

ice cream was a rare delicacy. And a leg of fried chicken always tasted better when I sat on the ground eating with my friends. During the 1930's, these socials were the highlights of my childhood.

In 2003, a freestanding portable baptistry of molded fiberglass was obtained. Using 100 gallons of water, it requires no plumbing, because it is filled and emptied through a water hose. The baptism of Jessica Taylor in that unit on July 20, 2003, was the first time in the church's history that a baptism

occurred on-site. Prior to the purchase of this baptistry, pastors had immersed prospective members in the local creeks like I was, in the Kanawha or Ohio rivers, or in farm ponds. After our sister church, Concord, installed a baptistry, they allowed our congregation to use their facility for baptismal services for several years.

Harmony Church has long been recognized for its generosity. However, the generosity of our church has been abused at times. Because of its location along a major highway, the congregation is often an easy

mark. When some unscrupulous people seek help from the church, they usually want money, not goods, expecting to prey on the sympathies of the congregation by receiving a cash offering on the spot. That's not the case at Harmony. We provide for everyone, but we don't hand out cash. Although one purpose of the church is to help the needy, we don't believe the Lord expects us to be gullible.

One Sunday morning during worship, a child came down the aisle and handed a note to the pastor. He left the pulpit and went into the vestibule with the girl, while the rest of us continued the regular order of service. The note said that the family was without food. They particularly needed milk for the children. The grandmother of the child was in the vestibule, and the pastor explained that he would take their problem up with the deacons after the morning worship. He invited them to worship with us, though they declined and waited in the vestibule.

Afterward, the pastor accompanied the family to a restaurant, bought their lunches, groceries, and gas. He also took the husband aside

and counseled him about his responsibility to provide for his family.

Later in the day, we learned that while the grandmother and child were at our church, the husband, wife, and other children had paid a visit to the nearby Methodist church. That congregation was so moved by the plight of the family that they took up a cash offering. Some members went home and brought boxes of food items for them.

A few weeks later, our pastor attended a ministers' meeting in another county. He mentioned the episode, giving the name of the family. One of the other ministers said, "Oh, everyone in this county knows them. They prey on different churches each week, choosing to live that way rather than to work."

One activity I enjoy as part of my church commitment is visiting our elderly members and shut-ins. Since I've been the treasurer for several years, our members tend to associate me with church finances.



The baptism of Jessica Taylor on July 20, 2003, the first on-site baptism in the history of Harmony Baptist Church. Photograph by Rod Brand.

Many of them reach for their billfolds or purses when they see me coming. Because they can't attend worship services regularly, they wait for my visit to give their offerings. One old gentleman always said, "I want to pay my dues." One woman, who probably had Alzheimer's Disease, once mailed a hundred dollars to me, in cash, stuffed into an envelope. I've had

people hand money to me in grocery stores, funeral homes, and other public places.

In addition to money, I've received various other items in the offering plate — buttons, safety pins, hair pins, and fake coins. At one time, the young men enjoyed folding dollar bills into tiny triangle "footballs" and dropping them in the plate.

In 1987, we celebrated the 175th anniversary of the founding of the church. I suggested that since our church was one of the oldest congregations in our part of the state, we should apply for a West Virginia Historical Highway Marker to commemorate

our anniversary year. The congregation authorized me to take the necessary steps to obtain the marker, and I made application to the Division of Culture and History, sending excerpts from our church records to prove that the church was organized in 1812. The sign was approved and was subsequently installed by the West Virginia Department of Highways. The following inscription on the sign recognized the church's place in West Virginia history:

"The Reverend William George and sixteen charter members organized the Harmony Baptist Church in 1812. Congregation, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, met in the Sullivan Meeting House from 1838-1860. After 1842, meetings alternated with Harmony Meeting House. Present sanctuary was the original church built and dedicated in 1860." 🍁

IRENE B. BRAND, a lifelong resident of Mason County, earned her master's degree from Marshall University. She has written 35 books, mostly fiction. In 1989, she retired from teaching at Point Pleasant Junior High School after 23 years. Irene's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 1993 issue.



The Harmony Baptist Church complex today.

"Are You

By Barbara Smith

Dr. J.W. Myers and his Remedy Company



Early in the 20th century, Dr. J.W. Myers set a high standard for medical practice in Barbour County and throughout the region. Because of a shortage of health care, Dr. Myers established the first local telephone system in the Philippi area, followed by a successful medical remedy company, eventually serving more than a million people in at least 13 states. The world-renowned Myers Clinic, also founded by Dr. Myers and his sons, stands as a living monument to this dedicated physician and his remarkable family.

Jehu Winfred "J.W." Myers was born in Tucker County in 1872. After a childhood on the family farm, he "read medicine" for three years with a local physician. Overcoming his father's resistance, he then went to Physio-Medical College of Indiana. Immediately after graduation in 1895, Dr. Myers began

At one time, there were several thousand of these Myers Remedy Company medicine cabinets in small towns throughout 13 states, serving millions of customers. All of the Myers medicines were prepared and packaged in Philippi.

Sick?"

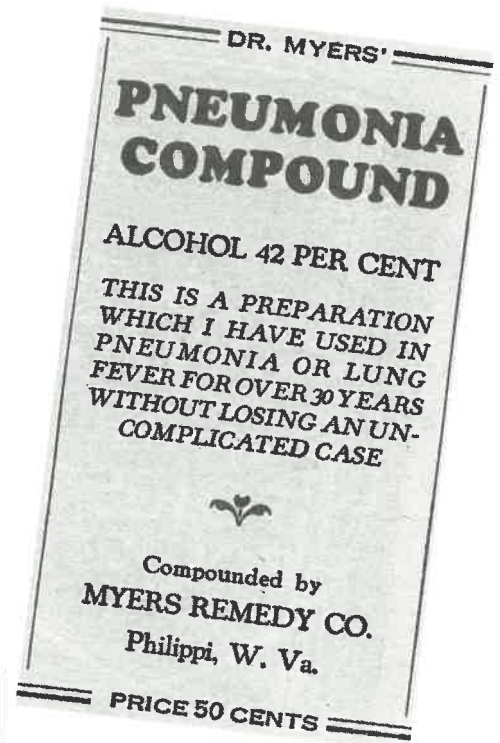
practicing medicine in Nestorville, Barbour County. He found himself traveling day and night to visit patients. He would ride until the horse wore out, then come home, switch his saddle and medicine cases to a fresh mount, and start out again. Eventually, he bought a sulky, not only to relieve himself of

having to ride horseback, but also to give himself time to read medical journals while he traveled.

His practice continued to grow, as did the realization that he could not meet the needs of the region without adequate communication. So he ran a telephone line from his house to those of his father and



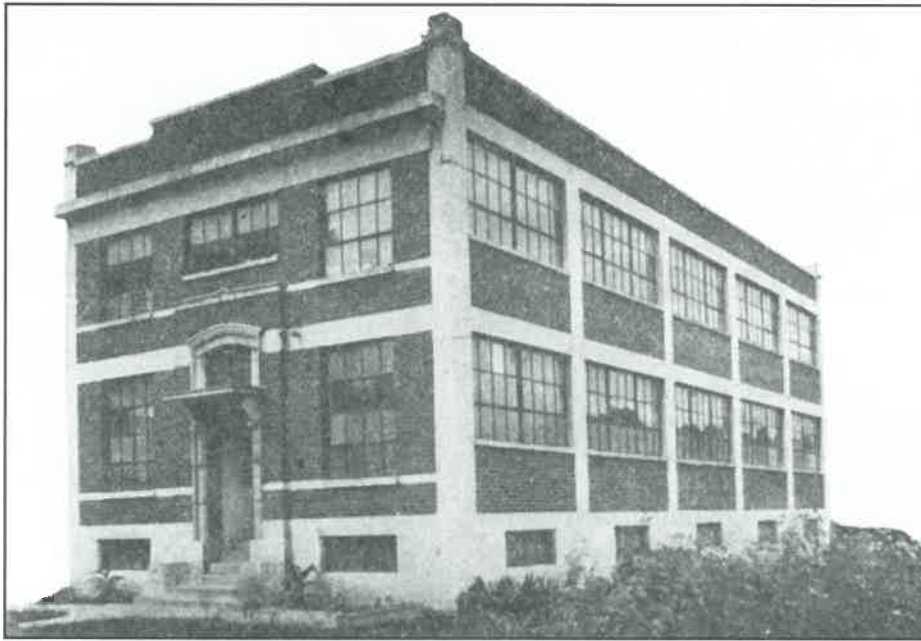
Dr. J.W. Myers in 1895, at his graduation from medical school. He went on to practice medicine in Barbour County for 40 years, established the Myers Remedy Company, and founded the Myers Clinic. Photographers unknown unless otherwise noted.



brother-in-law. This service grew into the Citizens United Telephone Company, serving 1,700 customers in five counties. Dr. Myers built the first switchboard in Nestorville himself, later building three more switchboards to accommodate more than 1,000 miles of wire. His wife, Mrs. Lennie Crim Johnson Myers, was the first switchboard operator.

This communication system was not enough, however. Dr. Myers decided that ill people in those rural areas needed direct help until a physician could reach them. From his own office supplies, he prepared a quantity of simple drugs such as antiseptics and laxatives. To begin with, he sent these remedies directly to people needing them. He then began placing small supplies at various convenient locations in the area of his practice. When a telephone call came, Dr. Myers asked questions, made a preliminary diagnosis, and told the patient what drugs to obtain. As soon as possible, Dr. Myers followed up with a visit.

The cabinets of basic medicines were often the only help available to hundreds of people who were far from doctors' offices or drug-stores. These specific, scientifically



The Myers Remedy Company factory in Philippi in the 1920's.

prepared drugs were a welcome alternative to the alcohol-based drugs or "cure-alls" popular at the time. Eight drug depositories were established in 1907. By 1927, 67 were listed in Barbour County alone. Up until the late 1950's, there were several thousand such locations serving more than a million people in isolated communities in 13 states. [See "Growing Up in a Family Store," by Newton L. Poling; Spring 2002.]

At first, Dr. J.W. and Lennie Myers mixed the medications themselves in a log cabin. Their first two products were Pneumonia Compound and Camfo-Phenol, but the list of Myers products grew rapidly. Dr. Myers moved his practice and business to Philippi in 1910. The remedy company was incorporated in 1915, and land was purchased in 1922. In 1924, a factory was constructed, with administrative offices on the first floor, and a pharmacy and packaging area on the second. A printing press for the production of labels, brochures, and pamphlets occupied the basement. Two more buildings were soon added.

Richard Crawford, a retired medical photographer in Philippi, remembers that as a boy in Lewis County, he saw Myers Remedy Company medicine cabinets and medications in many country stores. "It was a large and very active factory," Crawford says. "There was a railroad siding to bring in the reagents and chemicals, and there was a trolley to carry supplies from the trains to the factory."

Josephine Simpson, a lifelong resident of Philippi, worked in the office for almost eight years. "Mrs. Myers was there all the time," she says. "She was the first business manager. Then they hired Mr. Hubert Ward, and there were four others of us in the office, plus a pharmacist, Mr. Lacy Ford, and two helpers and

two people in the packing room.

"Six of the medicines were sent out on consignment, and the rest had to be bought outright by the retailers," Mrs. Simpson continues. "Distribution depended heavily on our seven full-time salesmen, who lived in the areas to which they were assigned and who delivered shipments to whoever ordered them. The Camfo-Phenol and the Pneumonia Compound — all of them, in fact — were really great medicine. They saved many, many lives."

The order form used by the retailers in those early years offered a list of the products along with their prices, almost all 25 cents or less per unit. Dr. J.W. authorized all transactions, as well as the formulating and preparation of all Myers products, but Mrs. Myers

was his official superintendent. In 1918, the board of directors appointed her general manager and, in 1927, assistant secretary and treasurer. Josephine Simpson



J.W. Myers wed Lennie Crim Johnson in 1898, as shown in this beautiful wedding portrait. The pair raised five children and were partners in business. Among her other responsibilities, Mrs. Myers was general manager at the remedy company.

reports that the young Myers children often sat on their mother's lap while she worked on accounts in the office.

Dr. Evangeline Myers Poling of Philippi, granddaughter of Dr. J.W. and Lennie, has in her possession Mrs. Myers' account book. The entries are dated from 1908 and give a glimpse into the finances and inner workings of the company.

One distributor's page contains the note, "Amt. Owed .04," and another page says, "Amt. Owed .12." Still another notes, "Overpaid Commission 70c." The J.T. Berry & Son company in Lorentz, Upshur County, sent a message dated February 12, 1915, which reported that four bottles of Stimulating Liniment had evaporated during shipment. Another message reads, "There was 25 bottles of Liver Tablets. You have it 24 ... and one bottle of Blood Builder was broke and contents gone."

Other products available at various times included Castor Oil, Olive Oil, Spirits of Turpentine, Spirits of Camphor, Glycerine, Extract of Lemon, Extract of Vanilla, and Vanilla Compound. Some customers paid in other than cash. J.L. Johnson's records run 14 pages, several of his 1914 records suggesting that payment was made "by check and sugar" or "by sugar, etc." or "by goods, etc."

Although the remedy company had an excellent reputation for honesty and fairness, a few customers expressed dissatisfaction. In a letter dated September 12, 1913, J.L. Sanders, who owned a company offering "Dry Goods, General Merchandise, Clothing, Boots, and Shoes," wrote, "I am

MONTHLY SALES REPORT TO MYERS REMEDY CO., PHILIPPI, W. VA.

Med. on hand

	Amount on hand	Amount sold this month	Price.
Cough Compound,	8	3	5-
Blood Builder,	4	1	3
Dyspepsia and Stomach Cure,	5-	3	2 - 2
Blood Purifier,	4	1	3
Diphtheria and Sore Throat Powder,	5-		5-
Worm Syrup,	5-	3	2 - 2
Rheumatic and Kidney Compound, .	4	3	1 - .
Diarrhea Remedy,	3		3
Stimulating Liniment,	7		7
Liver Tablets,	16	8	8 - 1
Campho-Phenol,	5-		5-
Eczema and Skin Ointment,	4	1	3 - 1
Headache, Pain and Fever Powder, .	9	7	2 - 2
Pneumonia Compound,	5-	5-	0
Composition Powder,	4		4
Baby Cordial,	6	4	2 - 1
Cascara Sagrada,	7	1	6
Dusting Powder,	5-		5-
Eye Medicine,	2	1	1
Belladonna and Capsicum Plaster, .	7	2	5-
Pile Ointment,	4		4
Uterine Wafers,	3	1	2

Med. sold at Horvath's since last report 7/24/15

till Name 9/1/15-

Date

Post Office

Express Office

Total

1/4/ 3.25

191 82

2.43

174.84

shipping today your medicine case also medicine packed in a box. Now I have done all I could to advertise your medicine, but when it comes to paying twice for what I sell, I won't do that." This misunderstanding apparently ended a three-year relationship with Sanders.

A booklet titled *Dr. Myers' Medical Adviser* was also a very successful undertaking. Evangeline Myers Poling reports that copies of the very first edition are no longer available. This edition was printed four pages at a time on a hand-operated printing press that Dr. Myers had purchased — used — in Nestorville. Mrs. Myers typed the copy, helped with the printing, then

hand-sewed the pages together.

A number of the 1908 editions of the *Adviser* are still in circulation. Copyrights for subsequent editions were registered in 1916, 1917, 1920, 1922, 1925, and 1926. The price listed on all seven editions was one dollar. Distributors ordered as many as 50 copies at a time, and by 1927, total sales had reached 250,000 copies.

Topics covered in the *Adviser* include "Health and Disease Defined," "Classifications of Disease," "Prevention of Disease," "Diseases of the Eye, Ear, and Throat," and many others. The section describing antidotes for poison lists 32 types of poison. The remedy sug-

gested is amusing, as well as undoubtedly effective: "To produce vomiting get a long feather, strip off all the down except about an inch at the end, tickle the throat with this until a free emetic effect is produced. Repeat this process until you are sure the stomach is thoroughly empty. Or a mixture of one tablespoon of mustard and salt given in warm water will produce emesis very quickly."

There is also a long explanation concerning cancer. Dr. Myers notes, "As there are 12 kinds of tissue in the body, we may and do have that many kinds of cancer, named according to the tissue which it stimulates." This is followed by a list



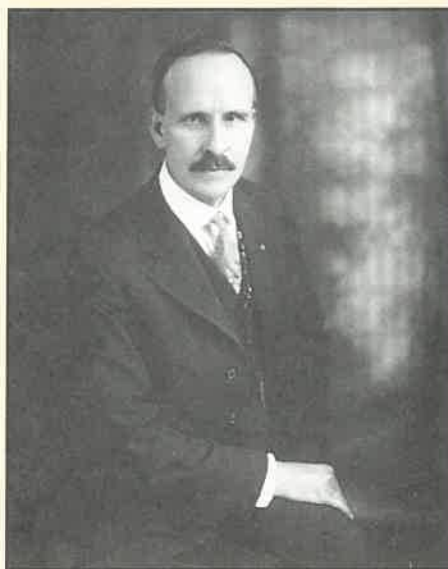
The staff of the Myers Remedy Company in 1925. Dr. J.W. Myers is standing third from the right; Mrs. Lennie Myers is fifth from the right. The boy is their son Junior Myers.

The Doctor Says...

Perhaps one of the most interesting and moving statements made by Dr. J.W. Myers, printed in a number of places, is this:

"How much better it is to prevent disease than to cure it. Oh! That physicians would spend more time in educating mankind to a bigger plane; a higher life; a life nearer that which Christ set for us; a pure, temperate, moral life. Often we are pained to see them leading lives the opposite of this ideal. But we are glad to see that so many of the physicians of today do lead noble, upright lives: lives which tend to uplift humanity.

A yet smaller number we see who are giving their lives, as it were, for the benefit of their fellow men. They are leading the



J.W. Myers M.D.

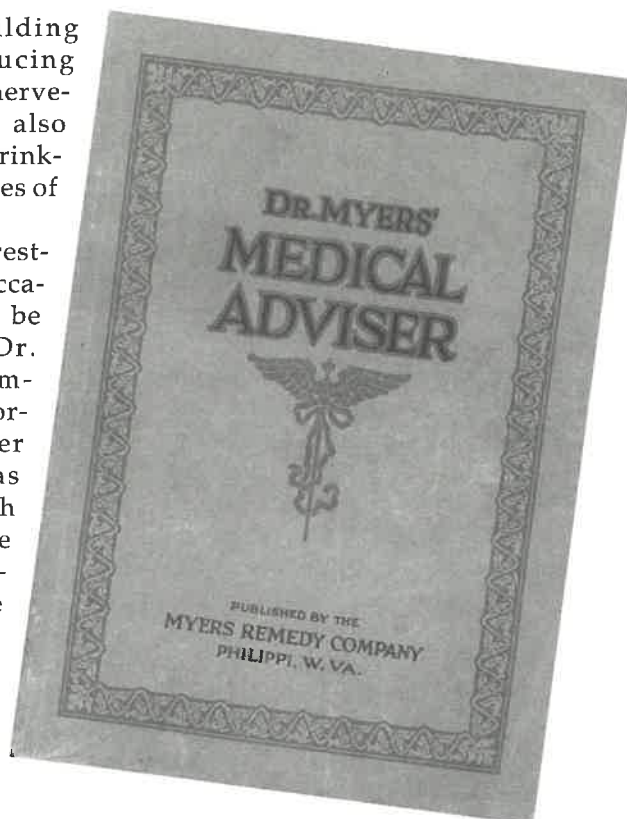
ideal life; imparting their knowledge, sacrificing their time, talents and energies that suffering may be lessened; that life may be lengthened; and that mankind may become happier, purer, and stronger, both physically and mentally. These are the noble, giant-minded men of the medical profession; men who are safe guides, and an honor to any community, and whose examples would be followed by all who love right rather than wrong, and who hope for that day of perfection when sin, sorrow and suffering shall end and all humanity shall reach that state of perfection in which it is commanded, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'"

that includes carcinoma, myoma, lymphangioma, osteoma, and others. He offers recipes for "caustic creams" to be used to treat skin cancer, and then says, "We will send a cancer paste, which is almost painless, to any address on receipt of \$25, and guarantee it to cure or refund your money. No deep-seated cancer such as a woman's breast or other deep tissues should ever be treated with salves or pastes; but it should be removed with a knife, and the treatment followed with the x-ray which prevents the return of the tumor. We are fully prepared to give this treatment and are willing to guarantee a cure."

These and other prescriptions now seem primitive and naive, but there are sections of the *Adviser* that sound modern. In "Care of Health," Dr. Myers suggests exercise "both physical and mental, in order to maintain a normal balance in the circulation, and the secretions and excretions of the body up to the proper standard." He describes the proper kinds of food,

including muscle-building foods and fat-producing foods, plus "bone and nerve-producing foods." He also recommends the daily drinking of at least eight glasses of "pure" water.

Other amusing but arresting suggestions occur occasionally: "Nothing will be found better than Dr. Myers' Diarrhea Compound. It contains no morphine, opium, or other harmful ingredients as does [sic] most other such remedies found on the market." Another popular product was Pile Ointment. The directions read, "Apply in the usual way once or twice daily; or a better way is to tie two small pieces of cotton together about one inch apart with a small thread, rub this ointment into the cotton freely, and insert



Several editions of *Dr. Myers' Medical Adviser* were published between 1908 and 1926. It has recently been reprinted and is available through Mountain Treasures, One North Main Street, Philippi, WV 26416; phone (304)457-2030.



Following the death of Dr. J.W. Myers in 1934, the name of the company was changed to Modern Drugs, Inc. The business was sold in 1958. These samples and bottles remain on display at the Barbour County Historical Museum in Philippi. Photograph by Michael Keller.

one end, letting the other remain on the outside."

For constipation he offers the following advice: "Eat less meat and starchy foods, more fruits and leafy vegetables. Bran or yeast may in certain cases add desirable bulk. Drink at least eight glasses of water or other fluid each day. Exercise the abdominal muscles by manual labor or by setting-up exercises. ... Have a regular time of day for going to stool."

Throughout the publication, Dr. Myers recommends the use of common herbs to counteract and prevent various problems. He offers recipes for hair tonic, mouthwash, and various everyday necessities.

In 1934, soon after the death of J.W. Myers, the name of the company was changed to Modern Drugs, Inc. Two of the sons of Dr. J.W. were practicing with him by that time. Because the brothers appeared to be involved with the Myers Remedy Company, and therefore patent medicine, the local medical society would not grant them membership. The change of name solved that problem.

In 1935, the company added another publication, a First-Aid manual. Much of the writing was done by Dr. J.W.'s eldest son, Dr.

Karl Myers. Again, common sense and modern techniques are evident. He writes, "Think before you act. Better not to do anything than do the wrong thing." Three conditions are listed as demanding immediate attention: serious bleeding, stopped breathing, and poisoning. The reader is told to keep the patient warm and to provide three pieces of information when an ambulance or a physician is called: "1) Where the Injured Person is, 2) What has Happened, 3) What is Being Done." Other topics include how to treat shock victims, gun wounds, and animal bites. One specific instruction reads, "If the dog must be shot, do not shoot him through the head, but save the head so that the physician can have it examined for evidence of rabies."

No one knows how many "Business Bulletins" were published by the Myers Remedy Company, but Dr. Evangeline Myers Poling owns one that contains an interesting statement: "From time to time as new discoveries are made in medical science, Dr. Myers has added to the medicines in the cabinet new

products, thus keeping abreast of the times and enabling more than a million users of Dr. Myers' medicines to obtain the newest as well as the best medicines known to the medical world. Among some of the new items added to the cabinet within the last two years are the Dental Cream, Antacid Tablets, Astringent Mouth Wash and Gargle, and the New Camfo Ointment, which takes the place of the Pile Ointment." Dr. Poling indicates that because of their high iodine content, salted peanuts were also available, as was a tooth-whitening compound.

At least one other publication was produced. A pamphlet titled "Dr. Myers' Health Hints" is labeled "Vol. 1, No. 11" and dates from the late 1920's. On the cover is a photo of two of the Myers' grandchildren — Karl, Jr., and Evangeline. Below



"Healthy Children Are Happy!" This 1929 brochure shows Evangeline and Karl Myers, Jr., two of Dr. J.W. Myers' grandchildren.



The Myers family sat for this portrait in about 1920. In the front row, from the left, are Edna, Lennie, J.W., and Junior. In the back are Karl, Elmer, and Hu Myers. All of the Myers children became doctors.

to stand all food and drug acts and tests. No cure-alls to be found in this case. Each remedy herein is designed to meet special diseased conditions and are [sic] compounded after formulas which have been thoroughly tested by leading physicians.

"Are you sick? This case contains a remedy adapted to your special diseased condition and will give you relief or accomplish a cure in the shortest possible time. Manufactured by the Myers Remedy Company, Philippi, W.Va. Ask for a copy of *Dr. Myers' Medical Adviser* — a \$1.00 book given away free."

There is no doubt that the Myers Remedy Company provided an extremely important service at a time when a shortage of physicians was acute and when the population of north-central West Virginia was scattered. Tributes to Dr. J.W. Myers have been without number. His legacy has been made evident in the excellence of practice and the altruism of his descendants. 🍁

BARBARA SMITH of Philippi has written poems, short stories, and novels, the most recent of which is *The Circumstance of Death*. She is professor emerita from Alderson-Broaddus College, where she chaired the Division of Humanities. Barbara's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL was in our Spring 2003 issue.

the picture is the caption, "Healthy Children are Happy!" The pamphlet warns against flies carrying infantile paralysis, and it recommends vigilant tooth care as a preventative for rheumatism. Other comments relate to the need for typhoid fever vaccinations and how to prevent and treat indigestion and infections.

The demise of the Myers Remedy Company — Modern Drugs, Inc. — is dated January 21, 1958, and the price paid was \$10,500 cash.

"Mrs. Myers," reports Richard Crawford, "offered to sell the company to me and to many others, but a man from Philadelphia smooth-talked her. He promised to protect the stockholders if she would turn the management over to him. She gave him all of her stock, and he proceeded to run the company right into the ground.

"Later, he tried to manufacture personal helicopters, sort of like our ultra-light planes. But it didn't work, and he disappeared, taking the Myers Remedy Company with him."

When the business closed, 24 of the medicine cabinets were given to Crim Memorial Methodist Church. Several of them were passed on to members of the Myers family. Several others are still in the church, some having been painted, now serving as worship

centers or bookcases. Local legend has it that hundreds of the medicine bottles were carried out of the factory in buckets and discarded, but during a flood — probably that of 1985 — remaining bottles and other supplies stored in the basement floated away down the Tygart Valley River.

One of the original cabinets holds a place of honor in the living room of Dr. Evangeline Myers Poling. A sign on the front of the case reads:

"This case contains 24 different kinds of medicine, all guaranteed



Dr. Evangeline Myers Poling today, beside one of her grandfather's popular medicine cabinets. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The Myers Clinic

A Family Legacy in Barbour County

By Barbara Smith

Perhaps the most visible and lasting memorials to Dr. J.W. Myers and his family are the Myers Clinic and Broaddus Hospital near Philippi. These modern, high-tech facilities trace their roots to the innovative country medicine practiced by Dr. Myers in Barbour County some 75 years ago.

In 1927, Dr. J.W. Myers decided that Barbour County and the surrounding region needed a clinic where a team of physicians with various specialties could meet local health needs at one location. On land that already held the Myers home and outbuildings, a one-story office building was constructed, with a second floor added two years later. By the time the clinic opened in 1933, J.W.'s eldest sons had begun practicing with him, while his other three children were in medical school.

The five offspring specialized in different areas: Karl in radiology,

Hu in surgery, Elmer in medical technology, Edna in obstetrics and gynecology, and Junior in ophthalmology. Lennie Crim Johnson Myers, J.W.'s wife, had also "read medicine" and served as the first business manager of the clinic.

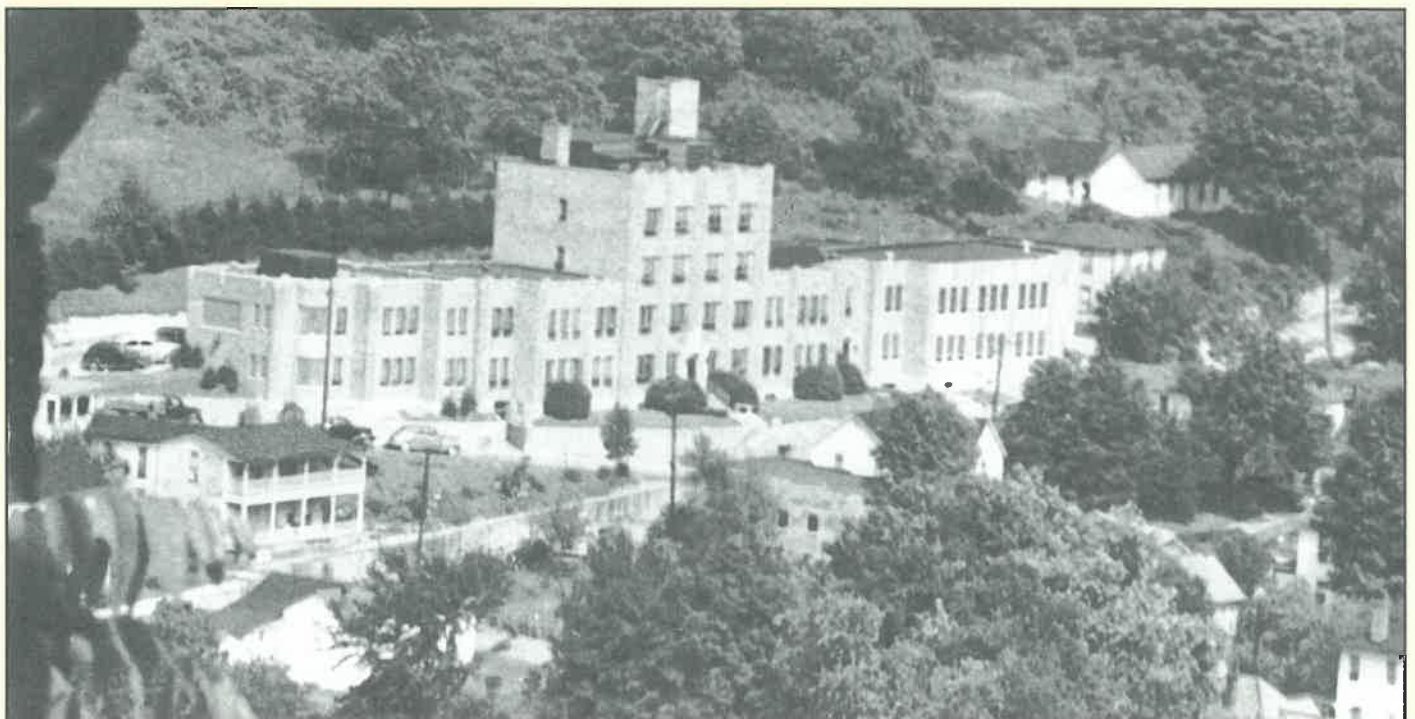
Eventually, Edna and Junior left to establish independent practices, but the other three children remained in Philippi. Most of the doctors who worked at the Myers Clinic also taught at Alderson-Broaddus College in programs initiated and directed by Hu, Karl, and Elmer Myers. These programs included nursing, medical technology, radiologic technology, and physician assistant. Also, a large number of surgical residencies were served under the guidance of the Myers doctors and their colleagues. Many of these surgeons stayed to practice in the region.

After World War II, two wings

were added to the original clinic building to house a laboratory, a library, conference rooms, x-ray facilities, and operating rooms. When the Myers Clinic could no longer meet regional needs for hospitalization and medical education, the clinic staff helped to establish Broaddus Hospital, which opened in 1954 and is still the only hospital in Barbour County. Originally located on the Alderson-Broaddus campus, it now occupies new facilities just south of Philippi on Route 119.

Throughout the years, the Myers Clinic and Broaddus Hospital have been pioneer institutions. Richard Crawford, recently retired as clinic and hospital medical photographer, reports, "The Myers Clinic-Hospital had a tremendous drawing power. We had the very first cobalt machine east of the Mississippi — even before Cleveland

The Myers Clinic in Philippi opened in 1933. This photograph was taken in the late 1940's. Photographer unknown.





The Myers Clinic medical staff in 1963. From the left are Drs. A.K. Bush, Glenn Poling, Scion Soleymon, E.G. Guy, Hartle, R.W. Cronlund, Guterriz, Thompson, Harman, J.L. Rittmeyer, Cora Lenox, Karl Myers, John Len, Hu Myers.

Clinic and Sloane-Kettering. So patients came long distances, and many of them returned to see other doctors to get other kinds of treatment. It was a real team effort. Inpatient services were handled at the hospital, and the clinic building was dedicated to physicians' offices and treatment rooms. All of the doctors and technologists worked both places, usually the hospital in the morning and the clinic in the afternoon.

"In addition to teaching materials used throughout the region," Richard continues, "any number of innovations came out of the clinic. Dr. Hu invented or developed several surgical instruments still used widely. Dr. Elmer developed a distilled water machine. Fame wasn't what the Myers doctors were interested in, though. They developed new instruments or treatments and simply shared their knowledge.


Doctors came from all over the region to consult them or to sit in on Grand Rounds."

Jean Propst, who worked at the clinic as a medical assistant from 1962 to 2004, recalls that the partners were never paid until the support staff and the bills were taken care of. "The clinic was more than a job for me — and for almost all the staff. The clinic was our home."

She continues, "We saw patients from West Virginia, of course, but also from Pennsylvania and Maryland and Ohio and Virginia — from all over. They liked the team approach to medicine, and they liked the family atmosphere. And they could always get their lab reports on the very same day that the tests were done. Whatever went on at the clinic, it was always patients first."

As needs and conditions changed, a new Myers Clinic building was constructed adjacent to Broadus

Hospital. Dr. Kreider, the only early partner still with the clinic, says, "Here in our new building we can provide out-patient services and, when necessary, we send them over to the hospital for lab tests and x-rays. Or, if they need to be admitted, the hospital is right next door. If we have patients in long-term care, we can just walk across the parking lot to see them."

The Myers Clinic stands as a tribute to its founding father — Dr. Jehu Winfred Myers. His obituary included this statement: "It was the deep interest he held in the welfare and happiness of his countrymen, coupled with the great success he enjoyed, that prompted him, during the last year of his life, to plan and build the Myers Clinic-Hospital, which he determined from the start should be outstanding among institutions of its kind." It has been and still is. 

Three Important Things

By Lud Gutmann



Keith Wolfe of Walton, Roane County, on his Ambler Ridge farm in 2003

Recalling
Keith Wolfe of Walton



Walton's Main Street in about 1917, the year Keith Wolfe was born. Photographers unknown unless otherwise noted.

Keith Wolfe always knew what was important. If you had asked him, he'd probably have told you, first, that he was born in 1917 in Walton, out on the Poca River Road, in Roane County. The period around 1917 was the heyday of the oil boom in Roane County, and Keith's father Clarence worked in the Rock Creek oil field.

The Walton of Keith's boyhood was a busy town. "The first oil well was drilled in 1904," Keith told me recently, "and that was the beginning of the boom that lasted into the [Great] Depression. I remember the town had at least two hotels in those days, and Main Street was just dirt."

Keith went to grade school at the Mount Lebanon School on Ambler Ridge. It was a two-room schoolhouse with no running water — "we had to bring our own," Keith said — and no inside toilets. Later, he went to the old Walton High School and graduated from there in 1935. It burned down in 1940.

A popular figure around Walton and nearby Ambler Ridge, Keith lived most all of his life in Roane County. He farmed, worked at a chemical plant 35 miles away in South Charleston, raised a family,

and became an expert on local history. He was mostly known, though, for his good humor, generosity, and boundless energy.

Second most important in Keith's life were the three notable years of service to his country he spent during World War II. Stationed in Newbury, England, he worked as an air traffic controller — "a tower man," he said — and met Betty, his wife-to-be, an English girl. When the war ended and Keith came home, he lived in Charleston and went to Morris Harvey College part-time for two years on the GI Bill while he worked at FMC Cor-

West Virginia — first in Charleston and then, three years later, in Walton. One of Keith's coworkers at FMC told him that his good friend L.Y. Ashworth was an ordained minister and would be pleased to marry Keith and Betty. So, they were married in 1947 in the Elk Funeral Home in Charleston, Ashworth's place of business.

Betty was a city girl. She was appalled by her first impressions of Charleston a half century ago. As she recalled the scene in a recent article about war brides in the *Spencer Times Record Reporter*, "It was nothing like London. I kept asking,

Keith farmed, worked at a chemical plant 35 miles away in South Charleston, raised a family, and became an expert on local history.

poration in South Charleston, a large chemical plant.

Meeting Betty in England was a milestone and the third most important event for Keith — third in time sequence, but perhaps most important to his happiness. He and Betty were very much in love from the time they met. In 1947, after writing back and forth, she came over to marry him and to live in

"Where are the underground stations?" I couldn't understand how people got around. If I could have gotten on the boat right then, I'd have went home." But moving to the farm in Walton changed everything for Betty. Five decades later, she said emphatically, "My roots are here in America."

The Walton of today is a small town on U.S. Route 119, 10 miles



The Wolfe family in 1929 with the family car. From the left are father Clarence; Keith; sisters Densie, (unidentified), and Justine; and mother Etna.

from I-79 on the Pocatolico River, 35 miles northeast of Charleston. It is said that Walton was named after Atlanta Walton, the mother of Samuel A. Miller. Miller owned large tracts of land in the area and was instrumental in the establishment of the post office there. The first settler, Charles Droddy, wanted the post office put at the mouth of McKown Creek and the community named Droddyville, but the name Walton won out. The town was laid out in 1856.

I recently asked Debbie Greathouse, the Walton public librarian, for the population of the town. She said she wasn't sure, but she remembered that there are 140 water meters in town and 221 outside of town, this according to her husband Bill, who reads the meters and should know. Keith Wolfe's house doesn't have a water meter. The same well that has been running for more than 95 years still serves. It was drilled in 1907. The house was built before the Civil War.

Another important event in Keith's life occurred in 1950, when he bought his 157 $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre farm (according to his property deed) located three miles out of town on

Ambler Ridge. Keith and Betty lived there for 52 years and brought up their two children: a girl, Evelyn; and a boy, Keith, Jr.; now 63 and 58 years old respectively. Keith also raised purebred Herefords — as many as 64 head at one time — for 40 years, and grew all his own fodder for them while still working at FMC Corporation. As late as the fall of 2003, Keith still had three

cows, three dogs, and assorted chickens. He rented out his pasture to another farmer and got an unlimited supply of free natural gas because of the 13 wells — four of them still working — that dot his farm.

You might ask how Keith managed to work at FMC full time in South Charleston and run his farm in Walton, and why he did both. "Well, it wasn't easy," he told me. "I mainly had cattle plus a few hogs and a milk

cow. I had to leave for work at six in the morning and haul a bunch of riders with me. In the summer, I'd come home from work and cut hay 'til 10 o'clock at night, if the moon was shining bright. But I never could have done it without Betty. She was number one. She took care of the kids and the farm by herself when I wasn't there. In the winter, I'd load up the two hay chutes in



Walton High School, built in 1914 and destroyed by fire in 1940. Keith Wolfe graduated from here in 1935. Photograph date unknown.



Keith Wolfe's home on Ambler Ridge. He bought this place and 157 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres in 1950. This photograph was taken in 2003.

the barn on the weekends, and Betty'd go out every day to spread out the hay in the mangers for the cattle. She did the milking, too.

"Now, why did I do both — work in Charleston and run the farm? Tell you what, Doc. I was really ambitious. I wanted to outrun and outstrip all my relations — bootleggers, teachers, all of them."

I knew Keith as only his doctor could know him. Over years of visits and conversations, we became friends. We first met in the summer of 1996, when he came up from the farm to see me at West Virginia University's Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center in Morgantown. Keith was having problems with muscle weakness.

The first thing I saw in him was his sense of humor. He was holding his jaw up with his thumb as I walked into the examination room, and he said immediately, "I know this looks crazy to you, Doc, but I can't keep my mouth shut." He smirked at me and let his jaw drop to show me, while his wife smiled politely. Then he added, "It's been coming and going for two years. The first time I got it, I was driving me and the wife home from my daughter's, and I had to hold up my jaw for 20 miles."

It turned out that he also had weakness of his tongue and facial muscles that interfered with his speech and worsened as the day progressed. His arms and legs were not affected. "Yesterday, I pitched 30 bales of hay on my farm. Not bad for a 79-year-old fellow," he told me, grinning with pride.

I saw him as a healthy man with nothing else wrong with him, except for his weakness. His face was tanned brown and wrinkled with deep creases from years of working in the sun. His arms and legs were muscular, and he didn't have an ounce of fat on him. He was full of energy and good spirits, but both eyelids drooped, and his right eyelid almost completely covered his

eye. As I listened to Keith's story and studied his features, I saw a textbook illustration of a rare muscle disease called myasthenia gravis, and I told him so.

"Well, that's just great," he said. "Now tell me what



Keith enjoys a walk through one of his farm fields in 2003.



Betty and Keith met while he was stationed in England during the war. She later came to West Virginia, and the pair married in 1947 at a funeral home in Charleston. They are pictured here in England in 1943.

married 54 years. She was a good woman."

"It's hard to lose someone you really love," I said. "I remember how close you two were."

He perked up at that, smiled and fished in his pocket. "Doc, let me show you a picture of the tombstone I designed for us." He held up a drawing of it, looking proud. On the left side of the stone was inscribed, "Keith — 8th and 9th Air Force — WWII." On the right, it read, "Betty — English War Bride — WWII."

"You see, this stone gives our life story," he told me. "Two hundred years from now, people won't have any trouble figuring out what was important."

Betty was buried on a sunny knoll in a private cemetery on their farm. A few other family members are buried there, but mostly Keith opened it to neighbors who were too poor to be laid to rest anywhere else. "I got 13 people buried up there — a 16-year-old boy who rode his motorcycle into the side of a house, his dad who died of a heart

we're gonna do about it." After I got to know him better, I realized this was a typical Keith response. He always had confidence that something good could be done in any situation and saw every challenge as winnable. Keith's optimism was well placed. With medicines commonly used to treat myasthenia gravis, all his muscle weakness gradually disappeared over the following eight months.

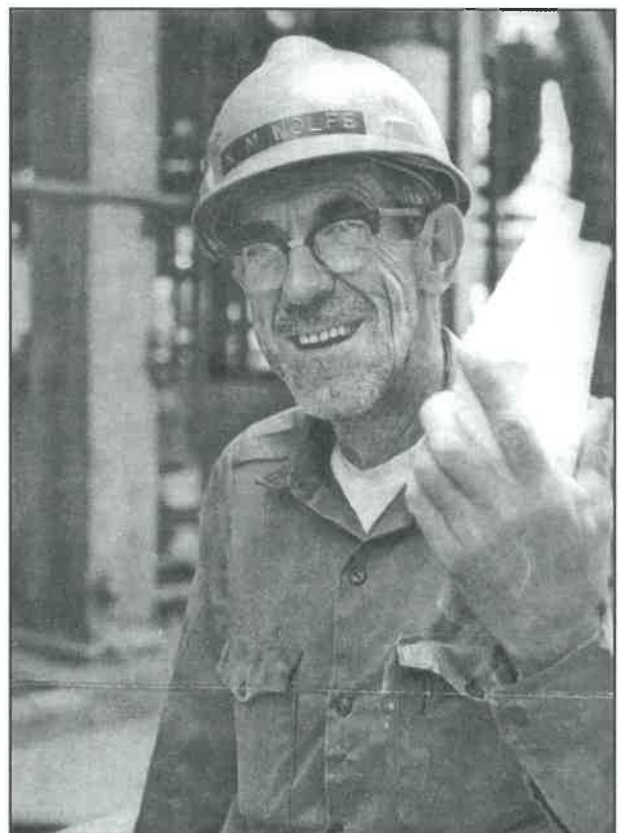
For the next six years, Keith came to see me every few months for check-ups. He always came with his daughter or his wife. He may have looked old, but he never seemed old. His enthusiasm for life seemed to infect everyone, especially me. I looked forward to his visits. He liked talking about his family, and every visit brought a new memory or story. One time, he told me about his mother, who was a Hawkins and was from Harmony, eight miles west of Walton. "All her original family is buried up there on the F.B.I. property, just off Jerry Dove Drive," he said. "The

America from debtors' prison in England."

In 2001, Keith's wife Betty stopped coming with him because she was battling cancer. After that, his daughter came with him instead. But one day, he was alone. He looked fine, except his smile was somewhat faded. "How's your wife?" I asked.

"Oh, Doc," he answered. "I've had an awful time the last three weeks. She just died of her cancer. I miss her terrible. I thought I'd handle it better, but we were

While Keith maintained a farm and raised cattle in Roane County, he also worked for many years at the FMC chemical plant in South Charleston. He is pictured here on the job in 1977.



attack, a young pretty woman who choked in an asthma attack. I even have two babies buried up there. One was murdered by her mother. They were all broke, all dole jobs."

I asked Keith what was so special about Walton. "I've always loved this part of the county," he told me. "I know everybody, and everybody knows me. I may be the best-known man in Walton. And I gotta tell you, most of the old people are dead now, but they were some of the finest people you'd ever want to meet."

Recently, I talked with Ben Robertson, Keith's longtime friend and CEO of the Poca Valley Bank. Ben has lived in Walton for 25 years and taught at Walton High School before he started working for the bank. "Keith knows more about the history of Walton than anybody else," Ben tells me. "He's our local historian. And everybody likes him

and respects him. He's a kind and generous man who'd always do you a favor.

"I'll tell you a story that typifies the man," Ben continues. "Some

"Two hundred years from now, people won't have any trouble figuring out what was important."

years ago, after he'd retired from FMC, he told me, 'By God, I was up to my elbows in asbestos, but the company did everything they promised they would — gave me a gold watch and a good retirement package. I got no complaints. I think it's awful the way people are trying to sue them now.'"

When I visited Keith recently, his neighbor Randy Burgess said, "Everybody likes Keith. He's friends

with everybody." Randy and his wife had come over to check on Keith. Keith didn't seem to need any checking on, but he sure enjoyed the company. When I called later, I was glad when his grandson told me that Keith couldn't come to the phone. He was out on his four-wheeler, working on his farm.

Keith always knew what was important. He did, all of his life. Keith Wolfe died on November 13, 2003, at his home. He was 87 years old and active on his farm until shortly before his death. He was laid to rest, as he had wished, next to his wife Betty, in his private cemetery on the farm. 🍁

LUD GUTMANN is a professor of neurology at the Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center of WVU. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, he attended Princeton University and received his medical degree from Columbia University. In addition to teaching, Lud has written 160 scientific articles. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Keith Wolfe remained active throughout his 87 years. He is shown here on his four-wheeler in 2003, with one of his three dogs. Keith passed away the following November 13.

Do You Know
The first three years to
its plans are presented
and after blind.

Established 1887.

18 Die In Paint

Special "Relief" Session Of Legislature Will Open. At Noon Today In Capitol

Special Session Leaders

Outcome of Meeting in
Doubt as Member-
Voice Opposition
To Increase

Governor Will Deliver
His Message in Person

Democrats to Wait for
Conley Before Out-
lining Program

Re Clyde H. East
ALL MANY REMAINS AND COLO-
RED BLOOD LINES. MY
BLOOD IN LIVES TO BE AT
A STATE OF THE WORLD BE
REMENT SING. AND THE
STANDARD. AND THE
THE EXTRA REMAINS REMAIN
AND REMAINS AT THE
IN THE MAIN PART OF THE



Special Session Leaders

... Parsons

Syrian Slays Sister-in-Law, Wounds Wife

Crazed by Jealousy, Joe
Corey Empties Guns
Into Two Women
On West Side

One of Victims In
Critical Condition

**"I Am Now Happy," Killer
Says After Arrest
By Police**

Crowded with jealousy and bitter
tensions over domestic difficulties,
Joe Corey, 38, of Washington
street last night pumped ten bul-
lets into his wife, Mrs. Harvey
Corey, of Huntington and her da-
ughter, Katherine Glitz of Logan, in-
stantly killing the latter and
probably fatally wounding the
wife. All are Syrian.

[illegible]

**Word Sent to Gazette—
In First Message Out**

In First News

The first communication established between Mahan on Paint Creek and the outside world was a letter delivered in 1913, K. H. Hannon at Pratt from the Rev. J. H. Morton.

The letter was written to assure his wife that he was "all right" and to call The Gazette to inform the newspaper of the great damage done up the creek.

An excerpt from the letter follows:

Tell me wife Tell her I'm all right
Tell me do not know when I can
Tell her Tell her

"Tell my wife to tell Anna when I can get out of Mahan. Tell her the flood did a great deal of damage but no one was injured. Susan ask her to call Mrs. Hore and Hogan and tell them Mrs. Hore and daughter are all right. Call G. H. Steerman and tell him his family are all right. As one was injured in Mahan but get out before we can get out. Tell my wife to call The Gazette and tell them great damage has been done to the camp. Mahan is completely marooned."

Libby Holman Sticks to Her Suicide Story

**Neither She Nor Friend
Of Husband Are Shaken
From Version of To-
bacco Heir's Death**

**Coroner's Jury Will
Give Verdict Later**

Wife of Wealthy Youth
Sobs Out Tale of
Tragedy Night

WINSTON SALEM, N. C. July 11.—
[CP]—A coroner's jury tonight de-
clared that Z. Keith Reynolds came to
his death at the hands of a person or
persons unknown.

Neither lobby
famous stars and many of
and had left to the Reynolds school
millionaire Mrs. Albert B. AB. Walker
both of whom had been heard as in-
terviewed in the room were present when the
verdict was read.
Assistant Solicitor J. Eric McMichael
read the verdict and then said that
"under the verdict Mrs. Reynolds and
Albert Walker are free right now."
"I hope no lady would make before to
be heard," he added.

Albert was no idea of the
"I have" he added.
"I will follow" he said.
"No decision will be made before the
microphone as to the future course of the
The Council has the effect of taking
the case out of the corner of the
and putting it in those of the officers
of the City Council. The Council is
the vehicle to seek an answer to the
the Council is the only one that can

...nord the
and with ...
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Five Cents.

ny Missing

Hundreds of Families Forced From Homes As Waters Devastate Area

... Suffer Most; Woman C...

Burnwell and Gallagher Sailer Against
Two as She is Dashed Against Bridge; Can
Are Torn From Parents' Arms by Torrent; N
Hundred Houses Washed From Foundations
Refugees Huddle About Fires in Mine
On Mountain Sides; Relief Organization
Aid to Sufferers

By Frank Lewis

By Frank Lewis
Eighteen are known dead, many are missing and homeless as the result of floods which devastated Fairview and the surrounding country. The bodies of five persons have been recovered from the flood plain. The bodies of five persons have been recovered from the flood plain. The bodies of five persons have been recovered from the flood plain.

The bodies of five persons who were missing could be obtained last night. Approximately 300 families on Paint creek in Kanawha county abandoned their homes early yesterday morning and rapidly filled the streams.

At least four railroad bridges were washed out and so damaged as to have been condemned. Railroad tracks and county roads washed out along the two creeks kept in many places. Telephone and electric power

**List of Known
Dead in Flood**

... 78, of Norchelle, body
... 1944.

Jack Elmer, 78, of Neshville, born
married at Crown Hill.
Marion Ronald and three kin-
and children of Glen Moody
Joseph Power, 23, of Pickett-
Lester Perry and grandmother
of Neshville
Nash

**List of Known
Dead in Flood**

Dead in a...
Jack (Hue), 70, of Natchez, body
recovered at Green Hill.
Marion Kinard and three Kin-
ard children of Glen Mosey.
Joseph Penner, 23, of Fayette.
Lawrence Perry and grandmother
of E. N. Adams.

100-443887-100

Congress Will **Mrs. Parsons**
Pass New Bill **Found Guilty**

The Charleston Gazette, July 12, 1932.



"Water from Hill to Hill" Paint Creek Flood of 1932

By Matthew Mitchell

Paint Creek is a long, winding tributary of the Kanawha River. Starting in Raleigh County, the clayish-colored waters for which many believe the creek is named flow nearly 100 miles, passing through Fayette County, running south through Kanawha County, until finally joining the Kanawha River at the small town of Pratt.

Though many coal companies mined the mountainsides and large coal communities lined its banks, the people living along Paint Creek were experiencing hard times in 1932. Roland "Joe" Savilla was 16 years old and a resident of Livingston, a town four miles from Pratt. A resident of St. Albans in 2002, Joe recalled that Paint Creek was "beginning to feel the full impact of the Depression," at that time. The coal community of Livingston was losing more and more miners. Their houses were barren, waiting for better times, he said.

James "Jeep" Hall of Gallagher was 10 years old and was a friend of Joe Savilla's brother Sammy. As Jeep remembers, "Times was hard. If we had a couple ole biscuits with potted meat or something on 'em to take to school, that was something. [Sammy] used to bring me a peanut butter and banana sandwich all the time."

Paint Creek had already experienced its share of tough times. In 1912, it was the site of a pivotal chapter in the infamous West Virginia Mine Wars. [See "Three Sides to the Story: Governor Hatfield and the Mine Wars," by Joseph Platania; Summer 1985.] According to historical accounts, coal operators, refusing to recognize the union, hired armed guards to evict protesting miners from company homes. Joe Savilla's mother witnessed firsthand the cruelty of these guards. "Mother was seven months pregnant back in the strike of 1912," he said. "One of the guards came to our house and asked Mother where my father was. She said he had gone to Ohio to look for work there in the coal mines of Ohio. Well, they didn't like that answer, and one of the guards clenched his fist and hit her in the stomach. She had to go to the hospital prematurely to give stillbirth to a boy."

Twenty years later, men and women at Paint Creek still carried the unpleasant memories of a labor war, which, according to accounts, left 13 miners and mine guards dead.

But on July 11, 1932, more hard times were in store. That day, a cloudburst poured vehemently from the sky, and the townspeople were forced to take shelter.

Far left: A devastating flash flood along Paint Creek in southern Kanawha County on July 11, 1932, caused widespread damage and at least 18 deaths. Here, cars are forced off the road at the Paint Creek Coal company store in Standard, the day after the disaster. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.



Young Joe Savilla a few years before the disaster. He and his family lived in Livingston at the time.

Joe Savilla recalled, "It was towards evening, and the sky really had what we call a threatening look. It was dark, [there was] some wind and thunder. It really had the atmosphere of [impending] danger. It really did."

Ann Adkins, now of Gallagher, was six years old and living in Livingston. As she remembers, "That night it just rained, rained, rained. It was just a cloudburst, is what it was, I guess, at the head of the holler. I remember all of us kids laying across the bed — we lay crossways in the bed, five kids and Mom. We watched the lightning, and it kept the sky just bright. Oh, it was just lightning awful."

In Burnwell, Jeep Hall stood outside watching. "It was some night," he says. "It thundered and lightning, and it kept the sky lit up. We just stood out on the railroad track in the rain. We didn't have umbrellas. Then them slides started

coming in. You could hear 'em start back on top of the mountain, and that's when we got scared."

The cloudburst saturated the ground, and the brownish-tinted creek rapidly rose to dangerous levels. Ann Adkins says, "It was like a gullywasher coming down that creek, and the creek was raising. And directly the men came down the road hollering, 'Get out of the house! Get out of the house!' They's hollering at everybody as they went. So Mom just grabbed all of us, and we took up the hill. Our neighbor — we went to their house first, which was on the other side of the road. It was next to the hill, and then we saw

Gazette

Press
1932.

Five Cents.



Another Body Is Found As Relief Workers Begin To Succor Stricken Area

Senate Passes Relief Measure

Bill Which Is Believed
President Will Accept
Is Approved

WASHINGTON, July 12.—A new unemployment relief bill, which administration leaders on Capitol Hill believed President Hoover would accept, was swept through the senate tonight by an irresistible bi-partisan coalition.

There was hardly a murmur of opposition as the gigantic \$2,100,000,000 measure, modified to meet some of the president's objections, passed the senate without a second vote after less than 1 1/2 hours of debate.

It now goes to the house, where it is expected to be adopted without amendment to a bill which already has passed that body and can be adopted there without further ado.

There, however, that house leaders would insist upon considerable amendments, which the senate committee approved earlier today.

The house bill was more acceptable to the administration, and reputation leaders were expected to seek its adoption, rather than acceptance of the senate measure.

This would require that the bill go through the senate again, with the house by accepting the senate version could send it immediately to the White House.

The senate leaders for through the bill.

Flood Victim's Body Found at Huntington

HUNTINGTON, July 12.—The body of a two-year-old Negro boy was found floating in the Ohio river here today. The body floated beside a section of hardwood flooring in debris washed into the Ohio from floods in Paint and Armstrong counties in Kanawha county. Formerly, F. N. Schuler expressed the opinion that the child, recently clad, had been swept downstream from the flood area.

Flood-Swept Threatened With Disease and Famine

Official Death Toll
Is Still Unavailable

Workers to Continue
Search for Dead
This Morning

By Frank Lowe

Bringing the official death toll to 15 in Monday's flood disaster in the Paint and Armstrong areas, the body of a young man was removed from his mud-buried automobile at Milburn, on Paint creek, yesterday afternoon.

Seven bodies, including the one of the young man—Floyd Glick, 26, of Kingston—had been recovered last night. Eight more were known to be dead, but their bodies had not been recovered.

Although the above figures were supplied by state police, Red Cross officials placed the number of dead at 18 officially and 21 unofficially.

Many more were missing, but officials of the number could not

Cooper Tells Of Devastation

Troopers Being Back
Story of Misery
From Section

Captain Harry A. Cooper of state police, who led a detachment of troopers through a 24-hour trek to the head of Paint creek and back early Monday, furnished many interesting sidelights on the flooded area.

He was accompanied by Sergeant C. Myers, Sergeant George H. Skern, supply officer, and Trooper William E. Wright of the Parkersburg detachment.

Strenuously, the troopers



Joe Savilla at his home in St. Albans. Joe passed away February 7, 2005. Photograph by Michael Keller.



Jeep Hall of Gallagher was 10 years old at the time of the flood. Jeep and his cousin found a dead body near this location. Photograph by Michael Keller.

it was going to get inside their house, too."

Men, women, and children scrambled for higher ground and took shelter in neighbors' houses, school buildings, boardinghouses, and powder houses. Clarence "Whitey" Adkins of Gallagher, Ann Adkins' brother-in-law, was six years old and living in Burnwell. He recalls, "Dad was drunk. He took us up the road there, and there was water coming down the road, you know. [We were] going up the schoolhouse." Whitey's wife Jenny was only four years old, but she remembers the muddy waters racing by as her mom took her to a boardinghouse on higher ground.

The conditions became increasingly dangerous. The water surged over the soggy banks and ripped through houses, barns, churches, and anything else obstructing its destructive flow.

From the side of a hill,

Countless roads and houses were ruined by the fast-moving water. Nearly 100 houses, such as these, were washed from their foundations.

Joe Savilla witnessed the devastation. "I would hear cows that were mooing, because they were being flooded," he recalled. "But the thing that really made an eerie impression was the fact we could hear a church bell ringing as an entire church was going down the creek."

Ann Adkins remembers, "That night we could just see across the water. Just water from hill to hill. You couldn't see nothing else, it was so dark."

The next day, headlines in *The*

Charleston Gazette described the tragedy:

- "18 Die in Paint Creek Flood, Many Missing"
- "Hundreds of Families Forced from Homes as Waters Devastate Area"
- "Burnwell and Gallagher Suffer Most"
- "Woman Cut in Two as She Is Dashed Against Bridge"
- "Children Torn from Parents' Arms by Torrents"
- "Nearly Hundred Houses Washed from Foundation"

• "Refugees Huddle about Fires or in Mine Shacks on Mountain Sides"

• "Relief Organizations Rush Aid to Sufferers"

The newspaper ran a list of the known dead: "Jack Cline, 70, of Nuckolls, body recovered at Crown Hill. Harrison Kincaid and three Kincaid children of Glenn Huddy. Joseph Posewieb, 35, of Powellton. Lawrence Perry and grandmother of Collinsdale. Mrs. Starr of



Millbourne, body recovered at Burnwell. Three Durham children of Morton. Anne Lindsey, Negro, of Whitaker. An unidentified Negro woman drowned at Collinsdale. Mrs. Violet Mitchell, Negro, and her three children, drowned at Gallagher."

Two of the Kincaid children may actually have been survivors Robert and Robena Kincaid. In the book, *The Flood and the Blood*, by Dennis Deitz, Lillian Breeden Martin reports seeing the two Kincaid children floating down the Kanawha River. "They had ridden from Glenn Huddy on Paint Creek, then down the Kanawha River, a total of 12 to 14 miles," Lillian says. "As I remember, Robena told me that one of them had held onto a door or door frame, and the other one, a barrel. She also said that she had held onto a younger brother, who was immediately knocked out of her arms. She also told that the flood waters of Paint Creek rushed

Take or Send Your Spare
CLOTHING
and
FOOD
To The
RED CROSS

Library Building
For the Relief of the Paint and Armstrong Creek

FLOOD SUFFERERS

Send Cash Contributions to P. A. Hirscher,
Treasurer, Kanawha Banking & Trust Co.

The Charleston Gazette, July 13, 1932.

across the Kanawha River so hard that they hit the bank on the opposite side. But [they] had been able to get off to safety."

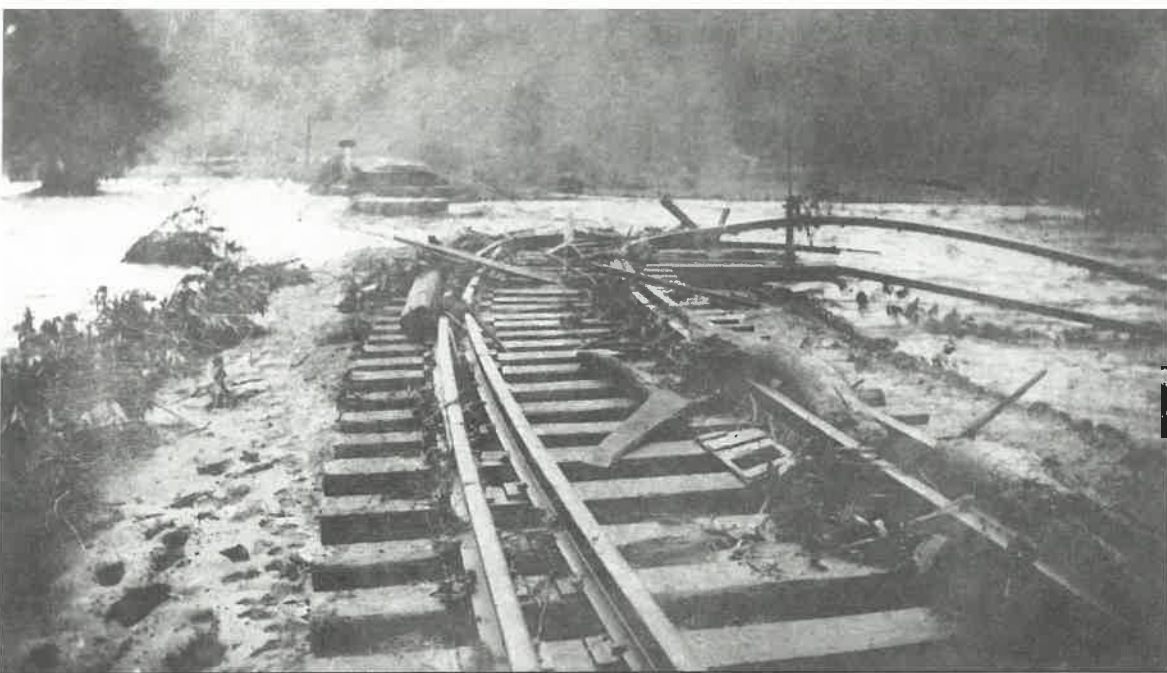
Robert and Robena were able to escape, but some weren't so lucky.

Jeep Hall relates, "The next morning, when me and my cousin left ole' hunky boardinghouse, we come down to the main creek and the railroad bridge below Burnwell. There was a Baptist church used to sit there where it's at. [The flood] didn't wash [the railroad bridge] out, but it washed out around the end of it and left the tracks hanging in midair, but the ties was still on. So me and him come down there, and the water'd done went way back down. We walked across there on them ties, and we found a dead woman. She was all tangled up in some fence wire."

The aftermath was truly devastating. Many families were without shelter and food, so they stayed wherever they could and ate whatever they could scrape up. As Ann Adkins remembers, "The water went down the next day, but that track that was up in there behind Ray Kee's house [in Livingston], they had boxcars



The Bailey family was left homeless following the disaster, as were many families in the Paint Creek area.



Steel rails were ripped from their ties by the surging current. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

parked up there. So the railroad company just opened up the boxcars and let people live in those boxcars. The water was, oh, I don't know how high it was, maybe three or four feet up in the houses.

"Mom canned blackberries. She canned all kinds of stuff that summer, and the berries she had canned were just floating around in the water. So we just took 'em to the pump and washed 'em off and ate 'em. We didn't have nothing else to eat. I guess we stayed maybe a week, something like that, in the boxcars. And we lived there at night, because our mattresses [were] all soaked where you sleep."

The Red Cross came to the aid of many Paint Creek flood victims. Jeep Hall recalls, "The Red Cross come, but Standard Bridge is as far as they could get. We had to walk from [Burnwell] just to get [there]. Well, the Red Cross, I think they had beans and rice, bacon in big slabs, flour meal.

"And then one time, the Red Cross went to Cabin Creek to the mouth of Lamont Holler. We walked from Burnwell across the mountain. And Burnwell had a bunch of ponies that worked in the mines. We took some ponies across there and got commodities and came back across the mountain on ponies."

The Charleston Gazette ran adver-

tisements for cash donations for a Paint Creek relief fund. The names of the donors were listed in the paper along with the amount they gave.

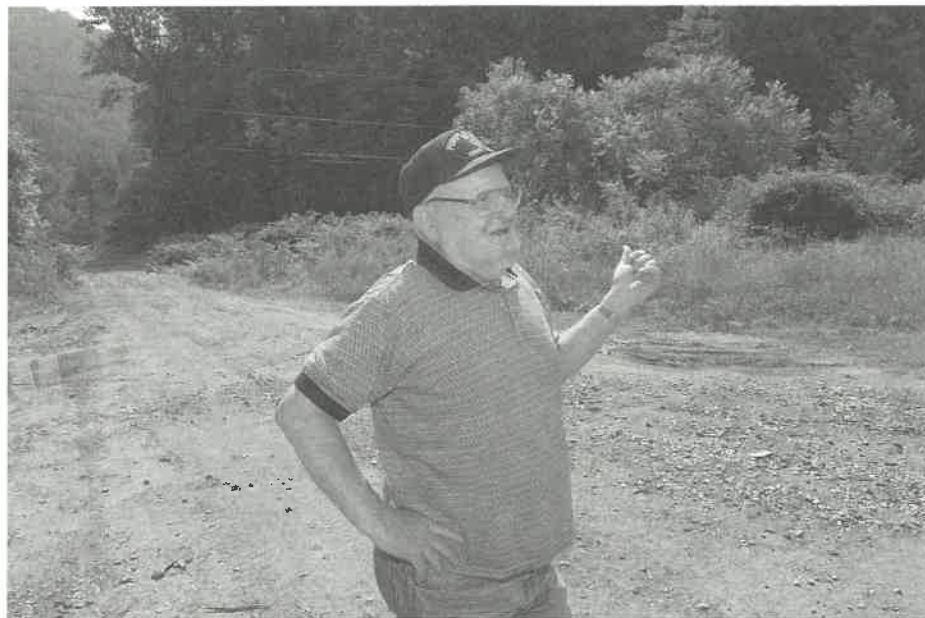
But in many ways, the Paint Creek community was left picking up the pieces. Jeep Hall's outhouse, washroom, and back porch were totally destroyed. Ann Adkins' house was full of mud. She helped her family wipe the furniture off and put it out to dry. Whitey and Jenny Adkins had debris and mud caked

within their homes. Whitey's dad Denver worked feverishly to save his buried home brew. Joe Savilla's favorite swimming hole had disappeared. This was the worst natural disaster ever to hit the Paint Creek region. It took more lives than the mine wars and left the region even more crippled.

The Paint Creek community worked together to rebuild. They had no other choice. As Ann Adkins reminisced, "Well, everybody was

just in the same boat. You just helped each other get their houses cleaned out. You just swept and shoveled the mud out and everything, until you could [get] back in. [You] just put up with what you had." 🍁

MATTHEW MITCHELL lived on Paint Creek at Gallagher for 13 years. A graduate of East Bank High School and West Virginia State University, he is currently pursuing a master's degree in Kansas City, Missouri. This story was written as a WV SU class assignment and is Matthew's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Jeep Hall stands where the company store and post office once stood. Like many in the Paint Creek area, Jeep still has haunting memories of the 1932 flood. Photograph by Michael Keller.

West Virginia Back Roads



Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

Dave Cross III

The Coalwood Greeter

In his memoir, *Rocket Boys*, author Homer Hickam, Jr., describes mine shift changes in his native Coalwood as “daily major events,” involving a parade of miners. Although their volume has been

greatly reduced from Hickam’s day nearly 50 years ago, miners still pass through the intersection of Route 16 and Coalwood’s Main Street Row, not on foot, but in SUV’s, pickups, and beater cars. Amid this motorized traffic, a retired member of their fraternity keeps a pedestrian’s vigil at this historic McDowell County intersection.

Dave Cross III is Coalwood’s one-man welcoming committee. When weather permits, Dave parks his highly polished black SUV next to the famous sign that reads, “Welcome to Coalwood, WV: Home of the Rocket Boys.” He gets out, leans against the hood, waves, and enjoys the simple pleasure of being a retired member of this storied mining community. Mornings and in bad weather he can be found inside Country Corner, a combination gas station and convenience store located across the street from the white, two-story frame house where Homer “Sonny” Hickam, Jr., grew up. [See “Coalwood Today,” by Mark Crabtree; Summer 2001.]

Dave III is so numbered because “my daddy was Dave, and my granddaddy was Dave,” he says.

“He’s the doorman,” says Lyndora Hamilton, Country Corner owner. Country Corner sells gasoline, beverages, groceries, Rocket Boys souvenirs, and hot sandwiches — to go, or eat-in at a lunch table flanked by two benches. Dave’s preferred seating is at the end closest to the door so he can smile

Dave Cross III greets passing motorists in Coalwood beginning at 6 a.m., seven days a week. A retired miner, Dave is determined to make every person who comes into town feel welcome.





When he's not on the street, Dave can usually be found at the nearby Country Corner convenience store. Here, Dave visits with miner Danny Walker, who is on his way home from working the midnight shift at a local mine.

and greet every customer. He starts his day with a cup of coffee, bottle of Coca-Cola, and a lot of smiles.

"Seven days a week, I'm right here," says Dave, who usually arrives at the store by 6:10 a.m. He stays until the mailman makes his stop at the store, usually around 10 a.m. Dave picks up his mail from the mailman's car then heads home to Six Hollow, where he lives with his mother Catherine O'Neal. After lunch, Dave returns to the store or his post across the street, where he stays until 5 p.m.

"This is my fun," he says. "This is my hobby." Dave's only breaks from this hobby are when he goes out of state to visit his family in North Carolina or Connecticut. Country Corner customers immediately sense his absence.

"The place wouldn't be the same without Dave," says Danny Walker, a coal miner in his early 50's. Danny works third shift — 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. — at XMV32, a mine about six miles from Coalwood. "I look forward to seeing Dave here every morning," he says. "If he's not here, I ask about him. Dave's a good guy, I think the world of him."

Dave relates well to Danny and the many other miners who stop at Country Corner on their way to or from work, for he, too, was once a McDowell County miner.

"There was a time they had so many mines around here you could walk out of one mine and get a job in another one," Dave says. "Every one of

them was union. You could leave one job and get another. It all started breaking down in 1983."

After Dave lost his mining job, he found work in a North Carolina turkey processing plant for several years. He came back to Coalwood in 1990 to care for his mother and ended up retiring here.

"It's cheaper to live here," he says. "I ain't paying no \$1,800 or \$1,900 a month rent." Dave has emphysema and has undergone three lung operations. He says his mother, who is in her late 80's, is probably in better health than he is.

Despite Coalwood's fame as the Rocket Boys' hometown, conversation at the Country Corner is

often focused on more immediate issues, such as the flash flood of May 2, 2002. The residents still talk about the damage, the miraculous sparing of life, and the way the community pulled together to help each other get through the disaster.

The other common topic is coal mining, or the lack of it. Danny, like many of the miners in this region, worked for U.S. Steel's mines until they closed in the mid-1980's. He vowed he'd never work a non-union mine, but after a year of unemployment, his perspective changed.

"When you get down and out and have to provide for your family, you do things you don't want to do," he says. With only 13 years in the UMWA, Danny doubts if he'll ever be able to retire like Dave and sit out his days sipping coffee and greeting locals at the corner store.

"I'm looking at working until my toes point up, until I die," he says.

Dave is just grateful he can share in the simple joys of daily life with his Coalwood neighbors and visitors.

"Life don't get boring to me no more," Dave says. "It's so joyous now. I thank the good Lord I'm living every day." 🍁

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

2004 Liars Contest

Here are the winning lies from last year's State Liars Contest, held at the 28th annual Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Congratulations to the winners !

Adam Booth Huntington First Place

"Moses of the Mountains"

I've been in the news quite a bit recently. I'm sure everyone was laughing 'cause you recognized me as Moses of the Mountains. I figured I'd get a lot of applause. I guess most of you don't take the news, so let me tell you why I'm known as Moses of the Mountains.

It was earlier this spring and some of my college buddies and I decided to take a spring trip. We wanted to drive across and see the Rocky Mountains. So we were out in Colorado, driving up the mountains pretty high. Before I knew it, my car had a flat. So I pulled over, I got out, and I went to get the jack. I'm looking through my trunk, and behind me I hear this booming voice say, "Hey, son. You'd be wiser to keep on moving."

Well, my buddies heard that and took off running. I dropped the jack, and I turned around,

and behind me was the biggest, burliest mountain man I'd ever seen. And on both sides of him were equally burly mountain people. And I took a step back, and they took a step toward me, and I took another step back, and I hit the trunk of my car, and I fell on the ground.

The voice came out again and said, "Son, does that license plate say West Virginia?"

And I said, "Yes, sir."

And he said, "West-by-God Virginia?"

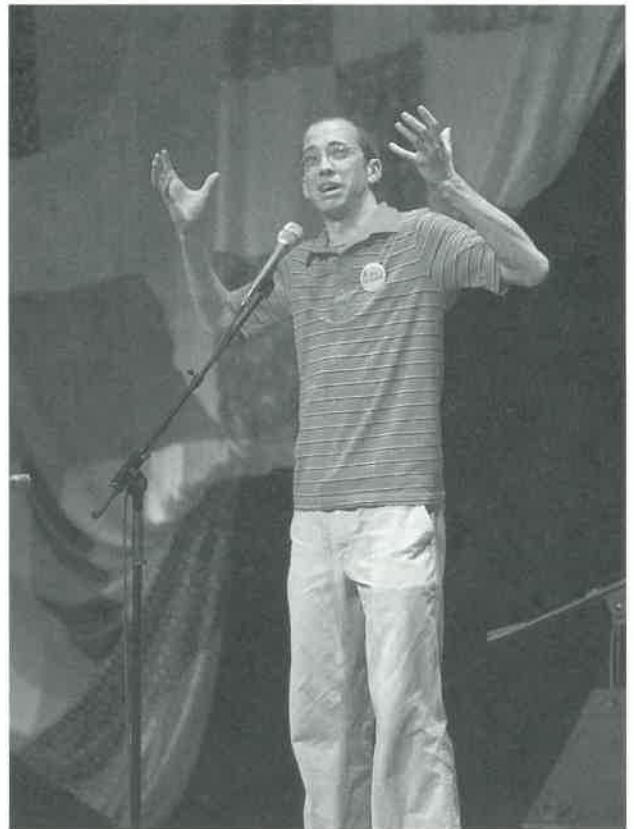
I said, "That's the one."

And he said, "Well, why didn't you say so? Say, everybody, this guy's kin."

I said, "You know West Virginia?"

And they said, "Know West Virginia? We *are* West Virginia. You are looking at the 12 lost tribes of West Virginia."

I couldn't believe it. He said, "Here on my right I've got six tribes. Tribes known as Cabell,



Adam Booth, winner of the coveted Golden Shovel award for 2004. Photographs by Michael Keller.

Putnam, Kanawha, Wood, Monongalia, and Berkeley. They're known as the industrialite tribes. On my left I've got six tribes. The tribes of Wayne, Mingo, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, and Wyoming. They're known as the bituminite tribes."

He said, "Back in the days of our great-great-grandparents, it came income tax time, and they were going to the capital to pay their taxes. But back in those days, no one was quite sure where the capital was. It all depended on which town had the biggest fire and which other town had the most gumption. So they set off to pay their taxes, not quite sure where they were going, and they ended up here in the mountains. We been here lost ever since. Will you lead us back to West Virginia?"

And I said, "Well, we can't drive, 'cause there's too many of you for my car, but we can walk."

And they said, "Okay."

So we set to walking. Well, after about two weeks, we ran short on food. We were in Kansas, and we came upon a really nice farmer name of John Farrell. And Farmer Farrell agreed to let us work all day in his farm, and he would pay us in food every night. So we worked hard, but I tell you what, after about five days, we hadn't received anything for our hard work. And we were tired. We'd worked hard. So the next morning, I decided to do something about it.

Now, my back had hurt from working in the field all day long, so I grabbed the biggest walking stick I could, and I walked up to the front of his field. I grabbed my stick, and I thrust it to the ground, and I said, "Farrell! Farrell! Let my people go!"

He looked me square in the eye and said, "Get back to work, hillbilly."

If there's one thing I hate, it's being called a hillbilly. So I went

back to the 12 tribes and said, "Gather 'round. Listen, you all been keeping up with the ways of West Virginia since you been lost?"

And they said, "Sure."

And I said, "You got you some ramps?"

They said, "Yeah."

I said, "Quick, eat as many of them as you can, right now."

So they started to eating them, and before you knew it, a giant cloud of stench rose up from their bodies. It went out across Farrell's land, and it killed the first-grown crop of his land. And it killed the first-born animals of all of his livestock.

I turned around, and behind me was the biggest, burliest mountain man I'd ever seen. And on both sides of him were equally burly mountain people.

When Farrell saw what had happened, he turned to me and said, "You get all your people out of my land. You take whatever you want and leave."

I said, "Okay."

So we took us enough food to make it the rest of the way. Things were pretty good after that, until we got to the Mississippi River. I guess Farrell had called the police on us, 'cause there was some cops after us. They were hot on our tail. The river was in our way, and we weren't anywhere near a bridge across the river. I said, "Quick, everyone, form squares."

So they got in squares, and I said, "Bow to your partner, swing around, do-si-do, don't slow down, and faster." And they started square dancing faster and faster. Up from the middle of their squares came giant, giant twister clouds, 'cause they were square dancing so fast. And the clouds went over to the Mississippi River and parted it right in half.

And I said, "Now's our chance.

Go!" We ran across the parted Mississippi and got just to the other side where the police couldn't catch us. The Mississippi closed back, and they were left on the other side. We kept on running, running as fast as we could. Before we knew it, we were in West Virginia.

I guess people had heard of our travels, because when we got there, there were police waiting for us. They said, "Who's leading you all?"

And I said, "I am."

And they said, "What's your story?"

And I told them about how I'd found the 12 lost tribes of West

Virginia in the Rocky Mountains, and how I led them across, and how we were captives of Farrell, and how we made it out of Farrell's land, how we parted the Mississippi, and we're back in West Virginia.

And he said, "That's true, is it?"

And I said, "Sure thing."

And he said, "I bet there'd be a great group of people who'd like to hear this true story. Why don't you just go up to the State Capitol on the Memorial Day weekend?"

I said, "Well, sure."

He said, "I'm sure they would gladly applaud your heroic deeds."

I said, "Okay."

And that's why when I came up at the beginning of this, I figured that you all would recognize me and give me better applause. So I'll try this beginning again, and maybe you'll applaud me better for my heroic deeds.

I have been in the news a lot recently. I'm sure everyone here recognizes me as Moses of the Mountains.

Mark Howes Helvetia Second Place

"The Pond Mower"

I think you all are familiar with me and my cast-iron, hot-air, 500-pound, propane air balloon. Well, it seems that its been so wet that nobody in our area's got much to do. So these boys over in Selbyville — it's just across the mountain — they've taken all the mower blades off their mowers up there and have lawn mower races all the time.

Being wet and all, no income, I'm thinking me and Froggy Wilson — the fellow helped me invent it — me and Froggy should get together. We got all these lawn mower blades and decks, and we hooked them up to our hot-air balloon, and we make this big windmill. We hook it on the back. Now, we's spinning these blades. We decided we's going to start mowing ponds, you know, lily ponds. I know it's hard for anyone here to imagine, but we was charging \$6 a pond. Just an average pond to mow, cattails, what have you. And \$12 if it's a pretty good-sized pond.

So we wasn't doing too bad, until we met the lady that's in charge of the pistol at the lawn mower races, Bucktooth Bessie. Froggy's looking at Bucktooth. Froggy's in love. I can see it happening already, because she's



Mark Howes took second place.

give him a Troy-Bilt mower. I can't see a bit of difference in a mower Troy built and my old Stratton up there, but he fell in love with it.

So there they go off and get married. And he's my right-hand man. And where's he take her on a honeymoon? Of all places, Beckley, to the Exhibition Coal Mine. And I'm thinking to myself, not bad, Froggy. 'Cause you ain't wanting nobody to see Bucktooth anyway. Take her in the dark.

In the meantime, I'm trying to think of what could be done to generate some more income. I'd been mowing at Stonewall Jackson Lake. Well, it just happens to be that's the Army Corps of Engineers. The next thing I know

is that the Secretary of Defense is wanting me to do a presentation of my machine. Now, if he thinks I'm going to give him a presentation, he can forget it. He ain't getting my machine.

So I headed down here. Well, my brother calls me. He says, "Do you know who the Secretary of Defense is?"

I said, "Yeah, me and Dad talked about it last night. He's one of them there guys out in Washington, D.C., that's in charge of those great big farms and stuff that's up there in Texas where they got all them fences and stuff. One man can't take care of all them fences."

He says, "You realize now that he works for the man, the President."

And I said, "Yeah."

He said, "You forget that they hung Chad down in Florida. Nobody knows why, but he got hung. Well," he says, "Mr. President-man is going to get your machine."

"Uhn-uhh, not my machine."

I went all the way back to Helvetia this morning, disassembled my machine, and I have hid it. I'm just hoping and praying that there's none of you government officials in here today, 'cause I'll tell you right now. I do not have a pond mower. You can check my buildings. Don't have no pond mower nowhere.

Rich Knoblich Wheeling

Third Place

"Cooking the Bookie"

My friends call me the Bookie. They call me the

Bookie because I read a lot of those self-help books "for dummies." Yeah, this dummy needs all the self-help he can get. Well, recently I got an invitation addressed to the Bookie. It seems

they wanted me to host one of those comedic roasts, down at a nutrition conference at a Caribbean resort. Well, the first thing I did was I took out that one-way plane ticket they had enclosed, and I cashed it in, and I pocketed the money. Now for air transportation, I took an old inner tube, and I nailed it between a couple of trees. Then I sashayed my way

back into it, and I managed to slingshot myself all the way to that conference.

Now, it was at the registration table that I found out that the nutrition conference was being hosted by cannibals. And it wasn't those amiable South Pacific variety. It was a lot worse than that. It was New York Wall Street financial cannibals. Specifically, the sub-sub-live-under-the-rocks species, *lackus ethicus*. Well, milling about that conference center I saw fat-cat predators just waiting to pounce on their next pigeon. I saw accountants feasting on prime-rate rib, then kicking back and sipping coffee while counting their kickbacks.

The very first workshop detailed ways to burn investors. It was titled "How to Fricassee a Derriere: It's All It's Cracked Up to Be."

Well, right about this time, my host escorted me on down to the jacuzzi hot tub, which was this huge, black iron kettle. Underneath, I could see a fire blazing away being fueled by shredded Enron documents. Standing off to one side, stirring that boiling water with a giant wooden paddle, I could see the queen of

the cannibal cooks, Martha Stewart.

She had a big ol' stack of books beside her. She'd pick one up. The title would read *How the Wealthy Avoid Paying Taxes*, by Leona Helmsley, and she'd chuck it on in. She'd pick up another

It was at the registration table that I found out that the nutrition conference was being hosted by cannibals. And it wasn't those amiable South Pacific variety. It was a lot worse than that.

one, *Proper Etiquette at a Country Club Prison*, and she'd chuck it in. To add a little spice to her gumbo, she'd throw in a trashy romance novel. She eyes me up and down real quick, gets that big Chessie-cat grin on her face, and says, "Hop in. It's a good thing."

Right about that time, I started getting real suspicious. I pulled out my invitation, and I read it a little bit more carefully. It seems they didn't want me to host a comedic roast, they wanted to roast a comedic host. I suddenly understood why it was a one-way plane ticket they had enclosed.

Well, I tell you, I started getting real nervous. Those financial cannibals, they were crowding in closer. You could see them salivating at the thought of trying to cash in on my life insurance policy. Friends, I needn't tell you that without my slingshot inner tube,

well, you might say my rear was in a sling.

I needed some way to get out of there. I needed a diversion. So I reached into my pocket, and I pulled out my cash and flung it into the air, and I ignited a feeding frenzy. While those turkeys were gobbling up my lettuce, this free-range chicken flew the coop. I ran so hard and so fast that when I hit the surf, I hydroplaned all the way back to the mainland.

And the last words they heard as I ran out of sight were, "Missy Martha, you and your cronies may be able to cook the books, but you can't cook the Bookie."

Join the Fun!

Would you like to try your luck at the next State Liars Contest? It's fun, easy, and free. It takes place as part of the annual Vandalia Gathering, held each Memorial Day weekend at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston. The Liars Contest is held in the Norman L. Fagan West Virginia State Theater on Sunday afternoon from 1 until 3 p.m., with contestant sign-up beginning at noon.

The contest is open to all state residents. Each story is told in front of a live audience and should be three to five minutes

in length, maximum. Stories can be humorous, dramatic, or supernatural; they can be traditional, original, or some combination of the two — as long as they aren't true!

A panel of three experienced judges keeps score, rating each story on technique (delivery, confidence, general stagecraft), story development, originality (new material or fresh handling of a familiar yarn), and effectiveness (in the judges' opinion, taking audience response into consideration). The judges then tally their scores and pick three winners. On occasion, the judges

have also given a special youth award to a talented up-and-coming liar.

The awards are presented in the theater on Sunday evening, where the first-place winner retells his or her story.

Over the years, the State Liars Contest has become a popular and beloved part of the Vandalia Gathering, and all state residents are invited to join in. And that's the truth!

For a printed a copy of the contest rules, call Anna Kozak at (304)558-0220 ext. 129 or Pat Cowdery at ext. 130.

Vandalia Time!

Photoessay by
Michael Keller

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

Each year on Memorial Day weekend, the West Virginia Division of Culture and History celebrates our finest traditions with the gala Vandalia Gathering. Come to the State Capitol Complex and dance, eat, sing, play, lie, laugh, listen, and learn!

Culture and History photographer Michael Keller captured these wonderful images at the 2004 event.





29th Annual Vandalia Gathering

May 27-29, 2005
State Capitol Complex Charleston, West Virginia

Friday, May 27

7:00 p.m. Concert

Saturday, May 28

11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Heritage and
Native American Dancing, Kids' Activities

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Contests, Performances
(Fiddle, Bluegrass Banjo, Mandolin)

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Flatfooting

1:15 - 3:30 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing

1:30 - 4:00 p.m. Singing and Storytelling

6:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

7:00 p.m. Concert

Sunday, May 29

12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. Storytelling

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Heritage and
Native American Dancing, Kids' Activities

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Contests, Performances
(Old-Time Banjo, Lap Dulcimer,
Flatpick Guitar)

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Flatfooting

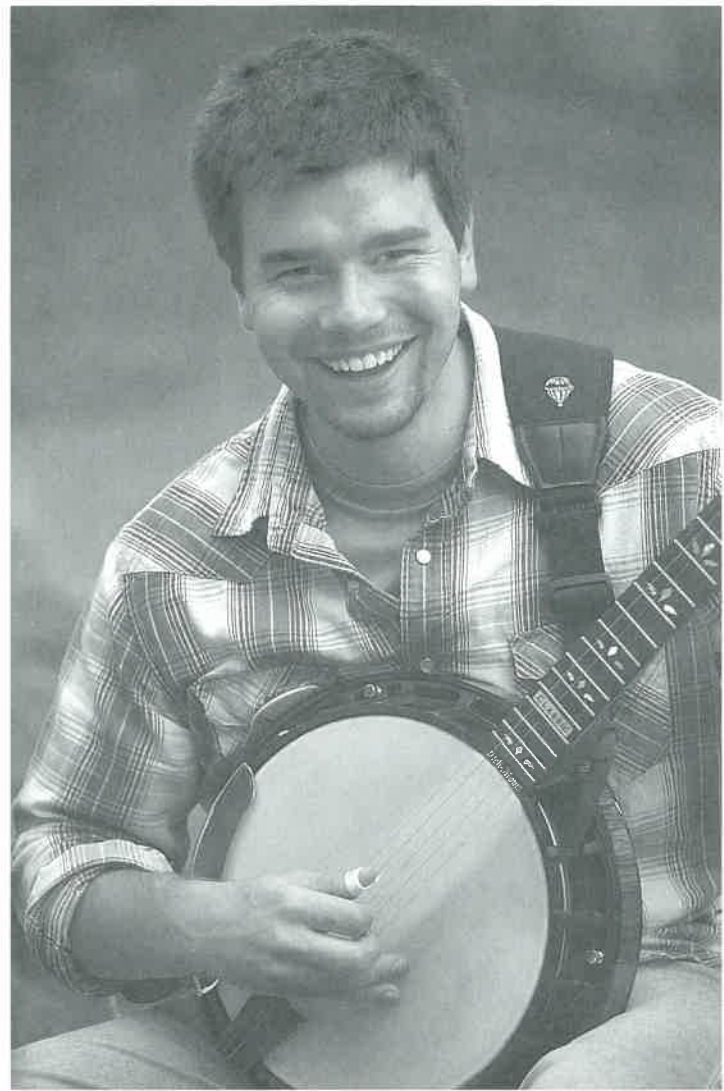
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Liars Contest

1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing

5:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

6:00 p.m. Finale Concert

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





2004 Vandalia Winners

Vandalia Heritage Award —
Carl Rutherford, McDowell County

Fiddle (age 60 and over)

- 1 — Harold Burns, Yawkey
- 2 — Elmer Rich, Westover
- 3 — Lester McCumbers, Nicut
- 4 — Terry Vaughan, Cross Lanes
- 5 — Junior Spencer, Frankford

Fiddle (under age 60)

- 1 — Jarred Nutter, Meadow Bridge
- 2 — Meredith Pheasant, Fairmont
- 3 — Jake Krack, Orma
- 4 — David O'Dell, West Logan
- 5 — Jenny Allinder, St. Albans

Old-Time Banjo (age 60 and over)

- 1 — Bernard Cyrus, Fort Gay
- 2 — Ben Carr, Wilsie
- 3 — Jerry Lewis, Nettie
- 4 — Eugene Parsons, Orma
- 5 — Charlie Loudermilk, Frankford

Old-Time Banjo (under age 60)

- 1 — Andrew Dunlap, St. Albans
- 2 — Tim Bing, Huntington
- 3 — David O'Dell, West Logan
- 4 — Adam Hurt, Princeton
- 5 — Jim Mullins, Charleston

Mandolin

- 1 — Mike Melton, Ripley
- 2 — Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
- 3 — John Putnam, Looneyville
- 4 — Steven Acord, Fairdale
- 5 — Dan Kessinger, St. Marys

Bluegrass Banjo

- 1 — Brandon Green, Beckley
- 2 — Ben Harrington, Fairdale
- 3 — Ron Seebaugh, Parkersburg
- 4 — Bruce Jones, Kingwood
- 5 — Dave Douglas, Ivydale

Lap Dulcimer

- 1 — Alan Freeman, Renick
- 2 — David O'Dell, West Logan
- 3 — Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville
- 4 — Dave Haas, Cross Lanes
- 5 — Bernard Cyrus, Fort Gay

Flatpick Guitar

- 1 — Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
- 2 — Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
- 3 — Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville
- 4 — Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
- 5 — Matt Poff, Dunbar

Films and Videos on West Virginia and Appalachia

By Steve Fesenmaier

-30- — Cal Price and *The Pocahontas Times*

100 mins. 2004 Patchwork Films
Pocahontas County filmmaker and musician Bobbie Jo Sharp Gudmundsson spent years making this portrait of Cal Price, the longtime editor of *The Pocahontas Times*, thought to be the last handset newspaper in America. Cal Price was pictured on the cover of our Summer 1990 issue. [See "The Pocahontas Times," by Gibbs Kinderman; Summer 1990.] With support from the Pocahontas County Free Libraries and the Pocahontas Historical Society, Gudmundsson uses the tale of this family-run newspaper to tell the history of Marlinton and Pocahontas County. Price's environmentalism is highlighted, as Gifford Pinchot biographer Char Miller tells the history of the conservation movement, which was interwoven with the political landscape of that time. Family members and others who knew the "Sage of Pocahontas," such as *National Geographic* photographer Volkmar Wentzel, provide insight into the man himself. The film also chronicles how family members and employees sustained the newspaper following Price's death in 1957, surviving floods, skeptics, and rapid changes in the publishing industry. Music is provided by John Lilly, Dwight Diller, and Oscar Brand.

VHS copies of the film are available for \$24.95, DVD for \$29.95, from Patchwork Films at (304)645-4998 or on-line at www.Patchworkfilms.com.



Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia

20 mins. 2003

Augusta Heritage Center

In 1943 and 1944, more than 50,000 U.S. soldiers came to Seneca Rocks to train for mountain fighting in Italy, Europe, and the Pacific. Elkins historian Rob Whetsell and filmmaker Gerald Milnes mark the 60th anniversary of the event with a detailed documentary about these unusual military maneuvers. With support from the West Virginia Humanities Council, the Randolph County Historical Society, the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College, and the U.S. Forest Service, the film includes rare historical

photographs, film footage, letters, and first-person accounts from participants. Together, they tell how one of West Virginia's most rugged and scenic recreation areas was used to turn raw recruits into hardened, combat-ready soldiers.

VHS copies sell for \$26.15, including tax and shipping, and are available from Rob Whetsell, 202 15th Street, Elkins, WV 26241; on-line at www.augustaheritage.com.

Mine Wars

55 mins. 2004

Bill Richardson Productions

Mingo County filmmaker Bill Richardson continues his investigation of local and regional history with this look at the age of mine wars in southern West Virginia and their influence on American life. Using rare historical footage and letters written by participants, Richardson shows a positive view of the labor struggle that took place here during the early 20th century, explaining what happened at the Matewan Massacre, the Battle of Blair Mountain, and elsewhere. Richardson interviews author Lon Savage, Dr. Fred Barkey, Dr. Ken Bailey, and labor historian Dr. Ken Fones-Wolf, who describe these well-known events and put them together to form a much larger picture.

The DVD is available for \$18, including tax and shipping, by writing to Bill Richardson, 29 Skyview Drive, Apt. #1, Belfry, KY 41514; e-mail brichard@wvu.edu.



The Fifth String

81 mins.

2003

Front Porch Entertainment

Traditional mountain music is used as a metaphor for a wide range of personal and cultural issues in this ambitious and highly entertaining movie. Pocahontas County musician Dwight Diller and Clay County musician John Morris play two brothers who love old time music but have a strained relationship with each other. Diller, who plays the older brother, is a professor of music and folklore who returns to Appalachia for the funeral of the uncle who raised him. When he becomes trapped in the mountains, he embarks on a confrontation with a past he has tried to forget. The movie was filmed largely on location in Clay and Pocahontas counties and addresses issues of identity and cultural preservation in a changing world. Diller and Morris turn in convincing acting performances, and their strong musical skills make this an enjoyable and thought-provoking film.

The DVD sells for \$14.95 and is available on-line from amazon.com or by calling Front Porch Entertainment at (401)751-0014.

The True Meaning of Pictures — Shelby Lee Adams' Appalachia

75 mins.

2002 Mercury Films

Photographer Shelby Lee Adams was born in eastern Kentucky. He devoted 30 years of his life to visiting and making portraits of families living in Appalachia, primarily those who are often misrepresented in the media, derogatorily referred to as "hillbillies." This film, directed by Canadian documentary filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal, delves into the controversy that surrounds Adams' work, including hot debate among critics and revealing commentary from his friends and photo subjects. "The True Meaning of Pictures" makes us question the meaning of art itself. Along the way, we get to know both Adams and the extraordinary people who stand in front of his camera.

The DVD is widely available. It sells for \$22.46 on-line at Amazon.com.

Mucked — Manmade Disasters: Flash Floods in the Coalfields

52 mins.

2003

Omni Productions

Robert Gates has been making films about the effects of strip mining since 1977 with his first film, "In Memory of the Land and People." This new film shows the relationship between mountaintop removal coal mining, steep-slope timbering, and the wave of major regional flash floods that began on July 8, 2001, in several southern West Virginia counties. According to the film, more than 380,000 acres of land have been mined by this practice; valley fills have filled in 1,200 miles of streams; and six major regional flash floods — and the Lyburn Disaster — have resulted, with major impact on 47 communities, 12,000 homes and businesses, an estimated \$1 billion in damages, and a number of fatalities.

To obtain a VHS copy for

personal use, cost \$45, write to Omni Productions, P.O. Box 5130, Charleston, WV 25361; phone (304)342-2624 or e-mail omni@ntelos.net.

The Biography of Gwen Clingman

45 mins.

2003

Red Oak Productions

In 1945, Gwen Clingman and her husband Garland opened a small kitchen and began serving lunches in downtown Lewisburg. Gwen's Kitchen became a local institution, as did its spunky proprietor. The film tells the passionate story of this remarkable woman, whose philosophy was, "Everyone should be able to afford at least one decent meal a day." Gwen was the focus of a GOLDENSEAL story in our Spring 1999 issue, titled "Clingman's Market," by Belinda



Anderson. Gwen Clingman passed away in 2003, just after filming for this project was completed.

The VHS tape sells for \$19.99 and is available from Red Oak Productions, 316 Seneca Trail, Ronceverte, WV 24970; phone (304)645-2415.

**A. James Manchin —
The Final Accounting**
28 mins. 1991

WV Public Broadcasting

Former Secretary of State A. James Manchin was forced to resign as West Virginia State Treasurer in 1998 after his office reportedly lost hundreds of millions of dollars. Manchin recently passed away, and the public response to the loss of this controversial and charismatic public figure was overwhelming.

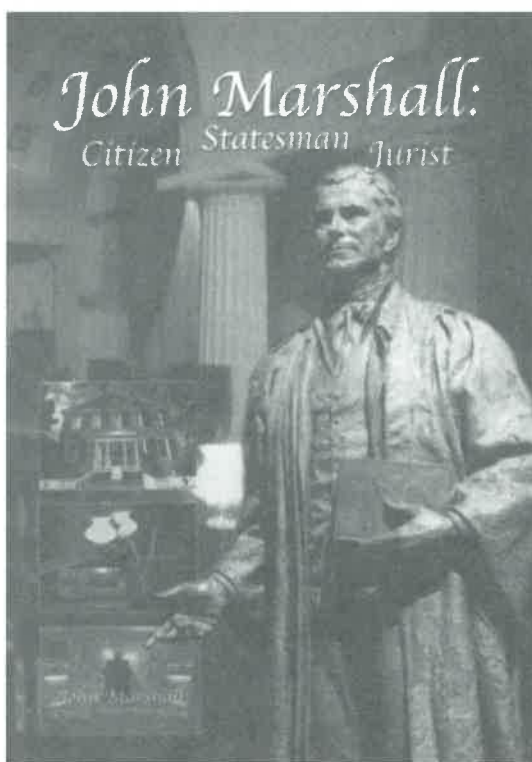
Manchin was famous for fighting outsider stereotypes of his beloved West Virginia, even traveling to New York City to protest. This is filmmaker John Nakashima's second portrait of one of our state's most colorful and debated politicians. His earlier film, made in 1988, was titled "A. James Manchin — Your Public Servant."

Copies are available at West Virginia libraries through interlibrary loan from the West Virginia Library Commission.

John Marshall — Citizen, Statesman, Jurist
57 mins. 2004

John Deaver Drinko Academy

Marshall University and the West Virginia Humanities Council produced this film about the life of one of America's greatest chief Supreme Court justices and the namesake of Marshall University. The film presents Marshall's life



from his early days on the Virginia frontier to his death in Philadelphia in 1835 when the Liberty Bell cracked, ringing for the last time.

Historians and descendants discuss the importance of Marshall's life work as the nation's longest-serving chief justice, emphasizing that it was he who made the court the equal to the other two branches of the federal government.

DVD copies can be checked out through most West Virginia public and school libraries. For additional information, call (304)969-6397.

Whispers from Space
105 mins. 1996
Facets Multimedia

This documentary looks at UFO lore and self-styled "ufologist" Gray Barker from Clarksburg. [See "Gray Barker: West Virginia Ufologist," by Matthew Mullins; Fall 2002.] Barker was an active writer, publisher, and researcher, who reportedly not only didn't believe in Unidentified Flying Objects, but may have perpetrated a UFO-related hoax or two himself. Photo stills, home movies, location shooting, and interviewees — ranging from Parker's surviving relatives to business associates, amateur sleuths, and a local folklorist — offer insight into the man from rural West Virginia who

specialized in the flying saucer trade. Ralph Coon, a director of music videos from Los Angeles, came to West Virginia to make this documentary.

The VHS tape sells for \$19.99 and is available on-line at www.facets.org.

The Captives
58 mins. 2004

Jude's True Blue Productions

Roane County teacher Judy Miller tells the famous story of pioneer settler Mary Draper Ingles, who is captured, survives, and finally escapes her Indian captors and travels on foot through the

GOLDENSEAL TV

Select stories from GOLDENSEAL will take on a new dimension, thanks to a recent partnership between the magazine and West Virginia Public Broadcasting. Fifteen-minute television segments based on stories from GOLDENSEAL will be produced and broadcast as part of WVPB's popular televi-

sion program, *Outlook*. The show can be seen statewide on Thursdays at 9 p.m. and is rebroadcast on Sundays at noon.

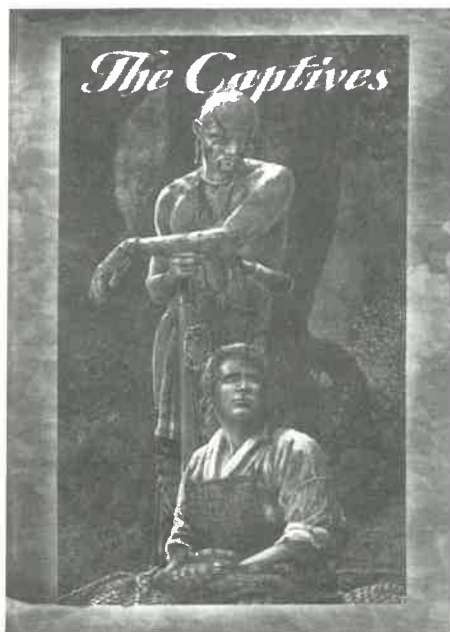
The first installment, which aired in early February, featured Marie Robinette, 94-year-old Mingo County resident thought to be the last surviving witness to the infamous 1920 Matewan

Massacre. [See "Eyewitness: Marie Robinette of Matewan," by Dallas H. Jude; Winter 2004.]

Other stories will follow, with organizers expecting to produce one new GOLDENSEAL television story per issue. For more information, visit www.wvpubcast.org/tv/outlook.

wilderness back to her home in eastern Virginia. Miller wrote, produced and co-directed the film, which had its world premiere at the Robey Theater in Spencer, the oldest continuous movie theater in the country.

DVD (\$24.95) and VHS (\$19.95) copies are available through Jude's True Blue Productions, 527 Church Street, Spencer, WV 25276; phone (304)927-4793.



The Righteous Remnant: Jewish Survival in Appalachia

50 mins. 1997 WNPB-TV
Marianne Reed, who grew up in Beckley, directed this award-winning film about growing up Jewish in a small Appalachian town. This film examines the history and present-day concerns of the small Jewish community in Beckley. When the West Virginia coal industry was booming, Jewish people came to the area and established businesses that supported the coal-based economy. When the coal industry suffered decline in the late 1950's and '60's, many Jewish families, along with their Gentile neighbors, left the state for economic opportunities in other parts of the country. Typically, young adult Jews did not return, in part for economic reasons, but also be-

cause of the cultural challenges they encountered as a matter of course in the mountains. As a result, Jewish populations in the southern and eastern counties declined dramatically after 1960.

VHS copies are available at libraries through interlibrary loan. For more information, go to <http://are.as.wvu.edu/reed.htm>.

Leo Herron — Augusta Master Series

60 min. 2005 Augusta Heritage Center
Barbour County musician "Fiddlin' Leo" Herron made his mark in West Virginia's early country music radio days during the 1930's and '40's, playing fiddle and guitar in various bands over WMMN radio in Fairmont. [See "'Seventh Heaven': Saturday Night at the Sagebrush Round-up," by Carl E. Feather; Winter 2004.] In the 1990's, Leo re-emerged at the Augusta Heritage Center's annual Fiddlers Reunion at Davis & Elkins College, delighting participants and impressing other musicians with his considerable talent. Augusta filmmaker Gerald Milnes recorded a performance by Leo in 1997, which stands as the only known visual documentation of Herron's music. That performance is now available on this new DVD, along with rare audio recordings, historical photographs, biographical information, and three of Herron's tunes played by apprentice fiddler Chris Haddox.

The DVD is available for \$15, plus shipping, from www.augustaheritage.com; phone (304)637-1209.

Many of these films and videos are available at local libraries or through the West Virginia Library Commission; phone (304)558-3978. A complete list is posted on-line at www.ferrum.edu/applit/bibs/WVFilmIndex.htm.

Back Issues Available



- ___ Fall 2000/Elifritz Rock Museum
- ___ Winter 2000/Coondogs
- ___ Winter 2001/Veterans Memorial
- ___ Summer 2002/*Princess Margy* Sternwheeler
- ___ Fall 2002/Flatwoods Monster
- ___ Winter 2002/Berlin, Lewis County
- ___ Spring 2003/Stained Glass Dome
- ___ Summer 2003/General Charles R. Fox
- ___ Fall 2003/Artist Boyd Boggs
- ___ Winter 2003/Weaver Dorothy Thompson
- ___ Spring 2004/Mack Samples
- ___ Summer 2004/1939 World's Fair
- ___ Fall 2004/Grafton Trains
- ___ Winter 2004/Toymaker Dick Schnacke

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PHOTO CURIOSITY



Rally 'round the bunny! These well-dressed military men appear to be escorting a very large rabbit through a crowd of parade-watchers in McDowell County, possibly sometime in the 1950's. This intriguing photograph, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, comes to us with little additional information. We can assume that it was taken during cool weather, most likely at a train station. Whomever this long-eared fellow is, he certainly draws a nice crowd and commands some impressive security.

If you can shed any light on this big bunny or his entourage, let us know at the GOLDENSEAL office.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Tygart Valley Homestead
- Hardy County Sawmill
- Jones Mansion
- Porch Swings



(continued from inside front cover)

August 1-6 Magnolia Fair
Matewan (426-6621)
August 3-7 Appalachian String Band Music Festival
Camp Washington Carver/Climftop (558-0162)
August 5-6 W.Va. Blackberry Festival
Nutter Fort (623-2381)
August 5-7 W.Va. Square & Round Dance & Clogging Convention
Buckhannon (452-8656)
August 7-13 Cherry River Festival
Richwood (846-6790)
August 12-13 Ritchie County Fair
Pennsboro (349-2957)
August 12-14 Augusta Festival
Elkins (637-1209)
August 12-14 Logan County Arts, Crafts & Antiques Fair
Logan (752-1324)
August 12-21 State Fair of West Virginia
Fairlea (645-1090)
August 14 Mahrajan Lebanese Festival
Wheeling (233-1688)
August 19-21 Homecoming Festival
Parkersburg (422-9970)
August 25-28 Appalachian Festival
Beckley (1-877-987-3847)
September 2-4 Fireman's Arts & Craft Festival
Jane Lew (457-3097)
September 2-4 Gospel Jamboree in the Hills
Mineral Wells (489-1063)
September 2-4 Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)
September 2-4 W.Va. Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (622-7314)
September 2-5 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee
Weston (1-800-296-1863)
September 3-4 Apple Butter Weekend
Blennerhassett Island/Parkersburg (420-4800)
September 3-5 Hick Festival
Parsons (478-3747)
September 5 Kanawha Central Council Labor Day
South Charleston (345-7570)
September 5 Miners' Labor Day Celebration
Racine (346-0341)
September 9-10 Country Music Assn. Fall Festival
Fairmont (292-5854)
September 10-11 Civil War Weekend
Carnifex Ferry (872-0825)
September 10-11 Helvetia Fair
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 10-11 Mule & Donkey Show
Sutton (364-8364)
September 10-11 North Preston Farmers' Club Fall Festival
Bruceton Mills (379-7500)
September 10-11 Riverfront Festival
Moundsville (845-2773)
September 10-11 W.Va. Honey Festival
Parkersburg (428-5835)
September 15-18 Clay County Golden Delicious Festival
Clay (587-4455)
September 15-18 W.Va. Oil & Gas Festival
Sistersville (652-2939)
September 16-17 Grape Stomping Wine Festival
Summersville (872-7332)
September 17-18 Country Roads Festival
Ansted (658-5212)
September 17-18 W.Va. Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (623-2335)

September 21-25 Mary Ingles on the Virginia Frontier
Winfield (562-0518)
September 22-24 Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg (655-8379)
September 23-25 Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Harpers Ferry (1-800-624-0577)
September 23-25 Oktoberfest
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 24 Roadkill Cook-Off
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
September 24-25 Annual Leaf Peepers Festival
Davis (1-800-782-2775)
September 24-25 St. George Greek Festival
Huntington (522-0773)
September 24-26 FOOTMAD Fall Festival
Fayetteville (415-3668)
September 29-October 2 Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Kingwood (329-0021)
September 30-October 1 Americana Music Festival
Jackson's Mill/Weston (1-800-287-8206)
September 30-October 1 Appalachian Heritage Festival
Shepherdstown (876-5113)
October 1 October Sky Fall Festival
Coalwood (297-2999)
October 1 Traditions Day
Huntersville (1-800-336-7009)
October 1-2 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
Burlington (788-1953)
October 1-2 Pine Bluff Fall Festival
Pine Bluff (592-1189)
October 1-9 Mountain State Forest Festival
Elkins (636-1824)
October 2 Blennerhassett's Birthday Celebration
Blennerhassett Island/Parkersburg (420-4800)
October 2-8 Mountain Color Festival
Richwood (846-6790)
October 7-8 Pine Bluff Fall Festival
Pine Bluff (592-1189)
October 7-8 Southern West Virginia Italian Festival
Bluefield (589-3317)
October 7-9 Applefest
Wellsburg (737-2787)
October 7-9 Lumberjack Bluegrass Jamboree
Mullens (294-4000)
October 7-9 Oglebayfest
Wheeling (243-4000)
October 7-9 25th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair
Fairlea (645-1321)
October 8 Burgoo International Cook-Off
Webster Springs (847-7291)
October 8 Wirt County Pioneer Day
Elizabeth (275-3569)
October 8-9 32nd Annual Apple Butter Festival
Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)
October 13-16 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
Martinsburg (263-2500)
October 13-16 W.Va. Black Walnut Festival
Spencer (927-5616)
October 15 Bridge Day
New River Gorge/Fayetteville (465-6517)
October 21-23 Upper Potomac Celtic Weekend
Shepherdstown (263-2531)
October 28-30 Fiddlers Reunion
D&E College/Elkins (637-1209)
October 28-30 Potomac Arts Festival
Shepherdstown (876-7220)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 2006 "Folklife*Fairs*Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address, phone number, and Web site. We must have this information by January 15, 2006, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in this listing.

Inside Goldenseal

Page 10 — Newell's high school basketball team rolled to the state championship in 1952, making its hometown proud.

Page 30 — Harmony Baptist Church has been a center for witness and worship in Mason County since 1812.

Page 46 — Keith Wolfe of Walton, Roane County, knew what was important in life, according to his doctor, author Lud Gutmann.

Page 18 — Holly Meadows Dairy in Tucker County played an important, if unlikely, role in the educational lives of local youngsters during the 1940's and '50's, thanks to its generous owner and an intrepid milk truck named "Fleetie Belle."

Page 36 — Are you sick? The Myers Remedy Company of Philippi offered relief for millions of rural customers during the early 1900's, while the Myers Clinic became a local medical institution.

Page 24 — Life on a Gilmer County farm brings back cherished memories for author John Cooper.

Page 58 — Welcome to Coalwood! Retired miner Dave Cross III is the famous town's unofficial greeter.

Page 52 — Paint Creek in southern Kanawha County flooded suddenly on July 11, 1932, leaving devastation in its wake.

