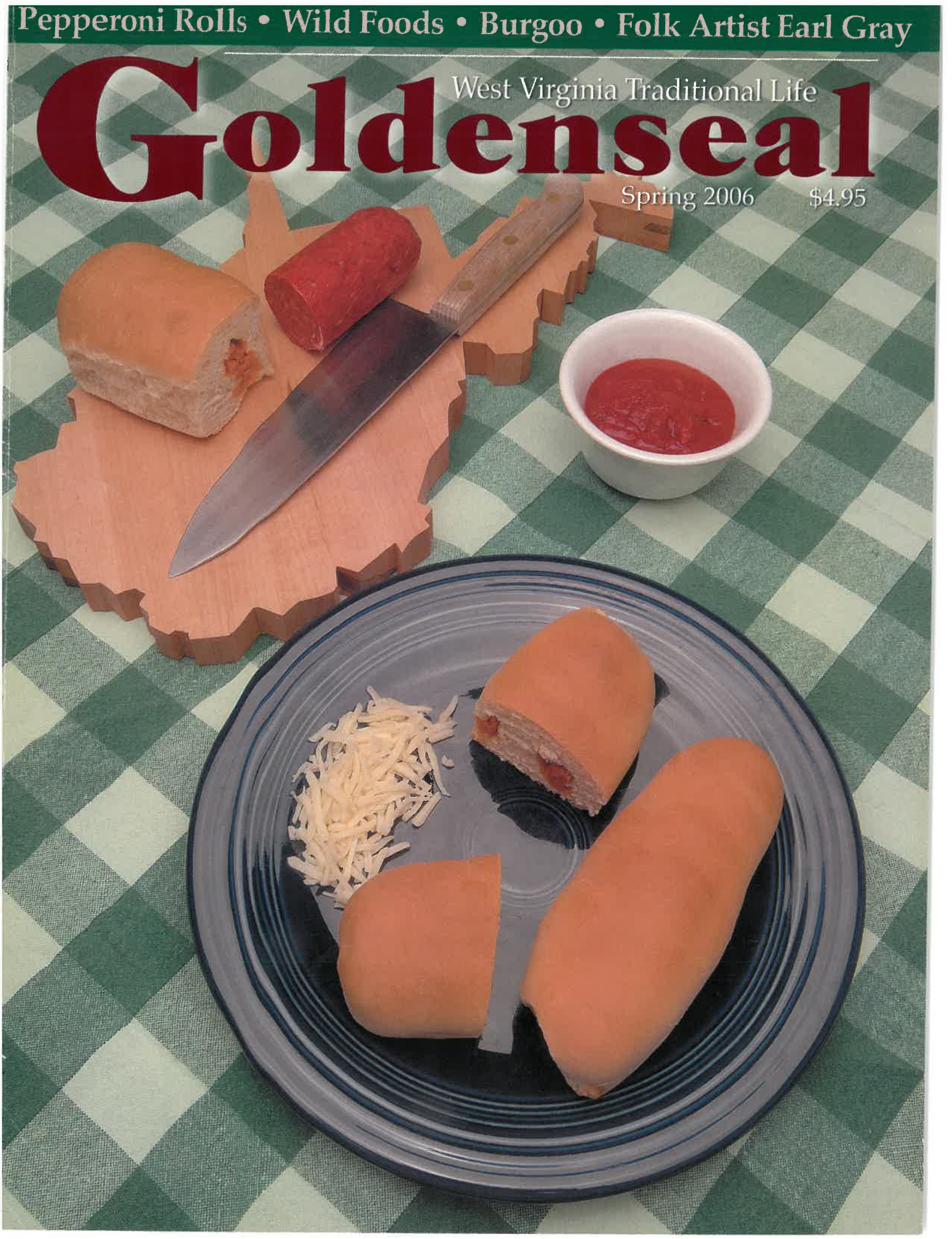
Pepperoni Rolls • Wild Foods • Burgoo • Folk Artist Earl Gray

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Spring 2006 $4.95



Folklife*Fairs*Festivals 2006

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 16-20 Irish Spring Festival
Ireland (452-8962)

March 17-19 George Washington's Bathtub Celebration
Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)

March 17-19 Upper Potomac Spring Dulcimer Festival
Shepherdstown (263-2531)

March 18-19 W.Va. Maple Syrup Festival
Pickens (924-6288)

April 7-9 Cast Iron Cook-Off
Stonewall Resort (1-888-278-8150)

April 21-23 Springfest
Oglebay Resort/Wheeling (1-800-624-6888)

April 22 Feast of the Ramson
Richwood (846-6790)

April 28-30 Dogwood Arts & Crafts Festival
Huntington (696-5990)

April 28-30 Spring Mountain Festival
Petersburg (257-2722)

April 29 International Ramp Cook-Off & Festival
Elkins (636-2780)

May 1-7 New River Birding & Nature Festival
Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)

May 3-6 Rendezvous on the River
Blennerhassett Island/Parkersburg (420-4800)

May 4-7 Mullens Dogwood Festival
Mullens (732-8000)

May 5-7 Pendleton County Spring Fest
Franklin (358-3884)

May 5-7 Scottish Heritage Festival & Celtic Gathering
Bridgeport (842-3457)

May 6 Cheat River Festival
Albright (329-3621)

May 6 W.Va. Marble Festival
Cairo (628-3321)

May 6-7 Frontier Gathering
Kanawha State Forest/Charleston (755-2990)

May 6-7 Steam & Gas Engine Show
Point Pleasant (675-5737)

May 11-14 Wildflower Pilgrimage
Blackwater Falls/Davis (259-5216)

May 13 General Adam Stephen Day
Martinsburg (267-4434)

May 13-14 Buffalo Heritage Days
Buffalo (937-2755)

May 13-14 Mother's Day Founder's Festival
Webster (265-5549)

May 14 Observance of Mother's Day
Grafton (265-1589)

May 16-20 Bend Area Gospel Jubilee
Cottageville (882-2049)

May 17-21 W.Va. Strawberry Festival
Buckhannon (472-9036)

May 19-21 Elkhorn Railfan Weekend
Eckman (862-2031)

May 20-21 Appalachian American Indians of W.Va. Pow Wow
Fairlea (536-3188)

May 20-21 Elizabethtown Festival
Moundsville (843-1170)

May 21 Eat'n, Sing'n & History Festival
Horner (269-5555)

May 23-29 Bluefield Mountain Festival
Bluefield (327-7184)

May 26-28 30th Vandalia Gathering
State Capitol Complex/Charleston (558-0162)

May 26-28 Upper West Fork Bluegrass Festival
Chloe (354-6958)

May 27-28 Head-of-the-Mon-River Horseshoe Tournament
Fairmont (366-3819)

May 27-28 Webster County Woodchopping Festival
Webster Springs (226-3888)

June 1-3 Calhoun County Wood Festival
Grantsville (354-9204)

June 1-4 Blue & Gray Reunion
Philippi (457-4265)

June 2-3 Greek Food Festival
Clarksburg (624-5331)

June 3-4 Mineral County Strawberry Festival
Keyser (788-2513)

June 9-11 Hatfield & McCoy Reunion Festival
Matewan (426-4239)

June 9-11 Ronceverte River Festival
Ronceverte (647-3825)

June 9-11 Spring Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Harpers Ferry (1-800-624-0577)

June 10 PattyFest 2006
Morgantown (864-0105)

June 15-17 Pennsboro Country Roads Festival
Pennsboro (859-2116)

June 15-18 W.Va. State Folk Festival
Glenville (462-5000)

June 16-17 Hancock County Quilt Show
New Cumberland (564-3401)

June 16-18 Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival
Parkersburg (424-3457)

June 16-19 Old Central City Days Festival
West Huntington (781-2036)

June 17-18 Heimatabig Summer Homecoming Music Festival
Helvetia (924-5503)

June 17-18 W.Va. Spring Wine Festival
Crab Orchard (252-9750)

June 20-24 W.Va. Coal Festival
Madison (369-9118)

June 22-25 Music in the Mountains Bluegrass Festival
Summersville (872-3145)

June 23-25 Pearl S. Buck Birthday Celebration
Hillsboro (1-800-336-7009)

June 24-25 Living History Days
Point Pleasant (675-5737)

July 1-4 Mountain State Art & Craft Fair
Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-3247)

July 1-4 New River Gorge Heritage Festival
Fayetteville (574-1500)

July 5-8 Pioneer Days
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)

July 6-8 Benedum Festival
Bridgeport (1-800-368-4324)

July 7-9 John Henry Days
Talcott (466-1729)

July 8 Belgian Heritage Day
South Charleston (744-9711)

July 8-9 New Deal Festival
Arthurdale (864-3959)

July 11-15 Battelle District Fair
Wadestown (662-6265)

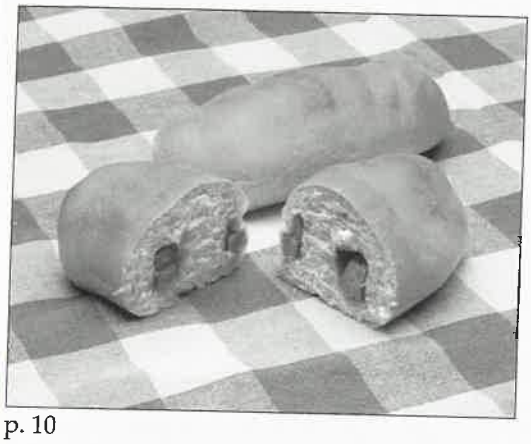
July 21-23 Ohio Valley Italian Festival
Wheeling (233-1090)

July 23-30 Cowen Historical Railroad Festival
Cowen (226-5902)

July 25-29 Paw Paw District Fair
Rivesville (278-7042)

July 31-August 5 Magnolia Fair
Matewan (426-6621)

Volume 32, Number 1 **Goldenseal** Spring 2006



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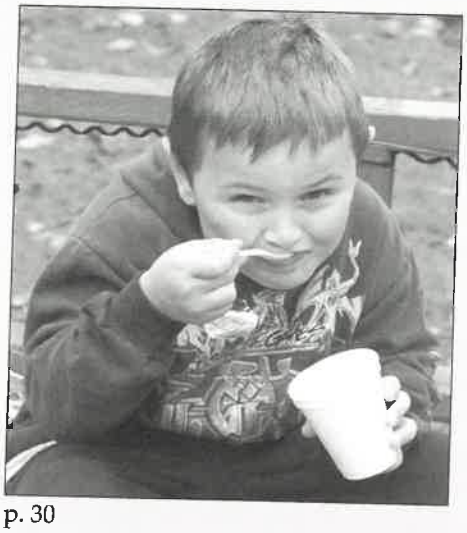

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On the cover: Pepperoni rolls are the unofficial state food of West Virginia. Our stories begin on page 10. Photograph by Michael Keller.

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John Lilly
Editor

Gordon Simmons
Editorial Assistant

Cornelia Crews Alexander
Circulation Manager

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Correspondence to:
The Editor
GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Phone (304)558-0220
e-mail goldenseal@wvculture.org
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From the Editor

You are what you eat, they say. If that's true, many people today are walking combinations of Italian pizza, Texas barbeque, Chinese carry-out, Mexican burritos, and French fries. As the globe has grown smaller, it seems, our menus have grown wider.

Perhaps the time has come for the world to take notice of Appalachian cuisine. Somehow, those two words don't seem to fit comfortably together, but maybe they should. There is a new nonprofit organization, called the Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia, designed to develop and promote just such a thing. They are the folks behind the Cast Iron Cook-Off at Stonewall Jackson Resort on April 7-9 [see the notice on page 8].

I applaud this effort, at least from what little I know of it. After all, New England has its chowder, Louisiana has its gumbo, Wisconsin has its cheese, and Cincinnati has its chili (try it — it's good!). Heck. San Francisco even has its Rice-a-Roni, or so the TV used to sing. It seems only fitting that West Virginia should claim its own state food.

So, we are nominating the pepperoni roll. Tasty, affordable, popular, and open to almost unending variation. Actually, the pepperoni roll was first declared the state food of West Virginia by author Jeanne Mozier in her quirky 1999 travel book, *Way Out in West Virginia*. Nobody has objected or come up with a better idea, as far as we know, so we are picking up the banner and running with it in this issue.

On page 10, you'll find Colleen Anderson's account of the origins of the pepperoni roll, the Argiro family that started it, and the Fairmont bakery that still makes their rolls the old-time way. Next, Jeanne Mozier takes us on a whirlwind trip down the Pepperoni Highway where we get a sampling of various styles of the roll and a grasp of how far the roll has evolved and how deeply ingrained it is in the culture in certain parts of the state. Finally, we meet a sweet lady from St. Albans named Tressie Dale Smith, who makes some of the finest pepperoni rolls on earth, which she sells to raise money for her local church.

Our food theme continues with articles about the wild foods movement, a hearty hunters' stew called burgoo, and raising cattle in Monroe County, which, if you think about it, comes back to the dinner table, as well.

It's all mixed up and ready to serve in this issue of GOLDENSEAL. Come and get it!

John Lilly

electrodes. I've heard these stories all my life. GOLDENSEAL has given Bob Harness an opportunity to share his memories and educate us at the same time.

Thanks, GOLDENSEAL!

Sincerely,
Ruth Rine Jackson

According to Paul Kirby, as many as 10,000 visitors tour the prison each year. Tours are offered Tuesday through Sunday, from April through November. The cost is $8 for adults, $7 for seniors, $5 for children under 12, free for those under five. For more information, call (304)845-6200 or visit www.wvpentours.com. —ed.

Restored Boxcar

January 1, 2006
Romney, West Virginia
Editor:
Enjoyed your article on the old 40/8 boxcar. [See "The Box It Came In: Saving the French Gratitude Train," by Richard Hartman; Fall 2005.]

Indirectly, we donated to the restoration through our local voiture. I have five oak trees from Point Pleasant through S.R. Burge of Welch. They are about 20-feet high.

Sincerely,
Blair M. Haines, Jr.

Restored French Gratitude Train boxcar on display in Welch. Photograph by Richard Hartman.

Renewal Mailbag

January 6, 2006
Midlothian, Virginia
Editor:
I would subscribe to more than one year, but I'm 94! I am a long-time West Virginian and subscriber — a terrific magazine and state.
Mary L. Brand

January 6, 2006
Raleigh, North Carolina
Editor:
Our thoughts and prayers are with the miners of the Sago mine and their families. As a former resident of Fairmont, this brings back memories of other cave-ins of long ago.
Elizabeth D. McMillan

January 2, 2006
Grafton, West Virginia
Editor:
I would like to thank you all for a great magazine. I'm 70 years old. I can relate to a lot of the stories of the past therein. I'm a bluegrass buff — a lot of the older fiddlers and the like. I have met a lot of them in person. I cannot play music myself, but enjoy good bluegrass.
Hayward W. Cooper

December 22, 2005
Nutter Fort, West Virginia
Editor:
I did receive the September letter and had decided not to renew. Would really miss it, so I'm renewing. Thank you for sending the winter issue. I have often wondered about the bus abode in the middle of the Kanawha River at Gauley Bridge.
Wanda I. Mapes

Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

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Muntzing Arch

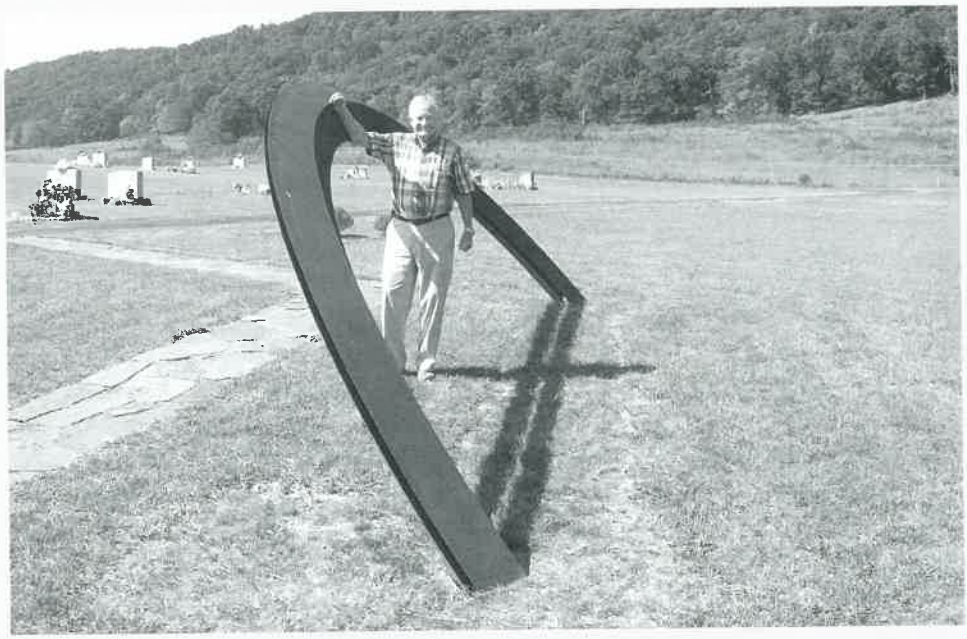
A unique steel-arch memorial has been erected in a remote cemetery in Grant County, dedicated to members of the Muntzing family. The Muntzing Equinox Arch measures 22-feet wide at the base, is approximately six-feet high at the apex, and weights 8,750 pounds. Designed to act as a sundial, it marks the seasons as the sun moves across the sky. The arch is set at a precise angle so that twice a year — on the Vernal (spring) and Autumnal (fall) equinoxes — the sun shines directly through a narrow opening in the arch, drawing a thin line of sunlight across the length of the arch's shadow on the ground throughout the day.

Workmen prepare to place the Muntzing Equinox Arch into the ground at the Maysville Cemetery in Maysville, Grant County, on May 15, 2005.

The unusual sculpture is the brainchild of brothers William and Manning Muntzing, both originally from Moorefield. The brothers worked with California sculptor Roger Berry to design and create the one-of-a-kind memorial, located in the Maysville Cemetery near Maysville, where many of the Muntzing ancestors are buried.

As adults, the Muntzing brothers began researching their family history and published a genealogy in 1991. The first Muntzing settlers, they discovered, came to the area from southern Germany in 1839. One of these, Ernest Muntzing, became the first clerk of Grant County when it was originally formed from Hardy County in 1866. As the brothers continued their research, they began to think of ways to build a lasting monument to the Muntzing ancestors and their pioneering spirit. The result is this remarkable arch.

The arch is constructed of Corten steel, with a stainless steel base, and was fabricated in Roger Berry's studio in Clarksburg, California, taking 35 days to complete. It was then transported by truck across country to Maysville — a seven-day journey. It was installed last May and dedicated on Memorial Day. This past September 20 — the fall equinox — the Muntzing family had the pleasure of witnessing the sunlight shine brightly through the opening in the arch, just as they had hoped.



Bill Muntzing stands inside the Muntzing Arch last September 20 — the Autumnal Equinox. On this day, and on the Vernal Equinox, the sun shines directly through the opening in the arch, as shown here.

According to a plaque placed near the base of the monument, the arch "symbolizes the connection between Heaven and Earth." It adds, "The arch provides hope for those who see it and a memory for those who rest here."

The Maysville Cemetery is located about two miles south of Maysville on State Route 42. The next Vernal Equinox will take place on Monday, March 20.

GOLDENSEAL *wishes to thank Lisa Amoroso and William Muntzing for sharing this item and these photographs with our readers. —ed.*

Current Programs • Events • Publications

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

On-Line Store

Internet shoppers can now subscribe to GOLDENSEAL on-line, as well as buy gift subscriptions for friends and relatives, purchase available back issues of the magazine, and order copies of our books, *The* GOLDENSEAL *Book of West Virginia Mine Wars* and *Mountains of Music*, from the comfort of their home computers.

The new on-line shop is a service of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Other items from the agency, including music CD's, videos, publications, and photographs from the collections of the State Archives are also now available electronically.

To browse the selection, or to shop securely on-line, go to http://shop.wvculture.org/goldenseals.aspx.

Feast of the Ramson

Richwood's Feast of the Ramson, now in its 68th year, is West Virginia's oldest and best-known ramp feed. This year's dinner will be held April 22, beginning at 11 a.m. and running until 4 p.m. The event, sponsored by the National Ramp Association, will feature a menu that includes ramps, ham, bacon, brown beans and cornbread, and desserts. Dinner is served at Richwood High School; tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children 12 and under. [See "Ramps," by Yvonne Snyder Farley; July-September 1980 and Winter 1994.]

There will also be an art and craft show on the same date at the Richwood Junior High School gymnasium from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information about either activity, phone (304)846-6790.

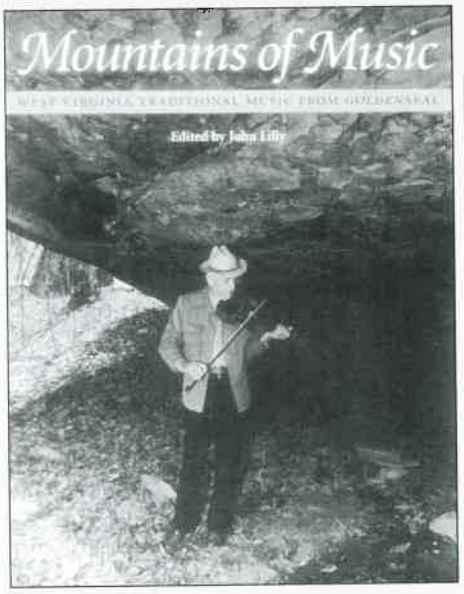
Willie and Tony Wise with ramps in Richwood, 1980. Photograph by James Samsell.

More Ramps

More than two dozen ramp festivals, dinners, and related events take place throughout West Virginia every spring.

Among the most popular of these is the Annual Ramp Cook-Off and Festival, now in its 16th year, scheduled April 29 in Elkins at Elkins City Park. Highlights include a ramp cooking contest with a $1,000 first prize, a public taste testing, entertainment, craft and ramp food vendors, and a ramp dinner. For additional information about the event, including contest rules and entry forms, phone 1-800-422-3304.

The Upper West Fork Community Park near Chloe, Calhoun County, is the venue on April 9 for an annual ramp dinner, now in its 34th year. The dinner features all you can eat of fresh ramps and home-cooked dishes. Adult tickets are $8, $3.50 for ages 6-12, and children under 6 eat free. The



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 $23.95, plus $2 shipping per book; West Virginia residents please add 6% sales tax (total $27.39 per book including tax and shipping).

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

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park is located 10 miles north on Route 16, off the Big Otter I-79 exit. The event is a fund-raiser for the park and for the local volunteer fire department. For more information, call Michele Sears at (304)655-8172, or e-mail imlmsears@yahoo.com.

Other ramp dinners will be served at Helvetia, Lansing, Hacker Valley, Glenville, Nitro, Springfield, and elsewhere. For additional listings, visit www.kingofstink.com/WV.html.

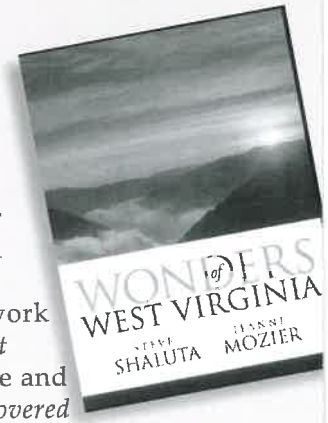
Cast Iron Cook-Off

On April 7-9, Stonewall Resort near Roanoke, Lewis County, will host the first annual Cast Iron Cook-Off. Featured on Friday evening will be a West Virginia foods reception. An invitational New Appalachian Cuisine contest will be held on Saturday, in which six teams of chefs will showcase their skills in using West Virginia ingredients, preparing at least one of three dishes using cast-iron implements. Saturday evening, there will be a dine-around dinner, sampling cuisine from restaurants from around the state. Sunday morning will close the event with a traditional cast-iron cookware breakfast.

The weekend package costs $174 per person, including two nights lodging and five meals. It is an initiative of the Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia, a nonprofit organization designed to develop and promote Appalachian cuisine. For information, or to make reservations, phone 1-888-278-8150 or visit www.stonewallresort.com.

Scenic Photography

The scenic beauty of West Virginia is the subject of a new book of color photography by Steve Shaluta, titled ***Wonders of West Virginia***. The 128-page over-sized hardback includes 161 images, with descriptions written by noted travel author Jeanne Mozier.



Shaluta is well known as staff photographer for the West Virginia Division of Tourism and for his work in *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine and books, such as *Covered Bridges in West Virginia* and *The State Parks of West Virginia*. Jeanne Mozier is author of the popular state travel guide titled *Way Out in West Virginia: A Must-Have Guide to the Oddities and Wonders of the Mountain State*. Her work also appears in this issue of GOLDENSEAL [see "Postcards from the Pepperoni Highway"; page 15].

Wonders of West Virginia is published by Quarrier Press and sells for $29.95, plus $3.50 for shipping. Copies can be ordered from the West Virginia Book Company, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302, by calling 1-888-982-7472, or on the Internet at www.wvbookco.com.

Herbs and Traditional Healing

Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachia, by Anthony Cavendar, explores the history and folklore of health practices in the region, from the 19th century to the present. Included are a catalog of ailments and their treatments, along with details about medicinal plants and patent medicines.

The book also documents examples of present-day practitioners of these traditional skills, provides a survey of archival sources and contemporary research, and offers a glossary of regional medical terms.

Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachia is a 266-page paperback and sells for $19.95 from the University of North Carolina Press, on the

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Carl Rutherford in 1994.
Photograph by Michael Keller.

Carl Rutherford, celebrated McDowell County singer, guitarist, songwriter, and community activist, passed away January 28. He was 76. Originally from the town of Warriormine, Carl began his working career by mining coal. After witnessing a tragic mine accident, however, Carl chose to make his living elsewhere. In 1950, he relocated to California, where he worked in the timber industry and played music at night in the local honky-tonks. Carl returned to West Virginia in 1975 and became a regular participant at the Vandalia Gathering and at other traditional music events across the state. He was the recipient of the Vandalia Award in 2004 and was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story in our Fall 1994 issue, titled "Carl Rutherford: Music from the Coalfields," by Jim McGee, also included in the book *Mountains of Music* [see page 8].

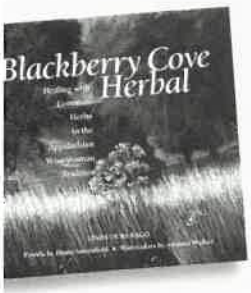
Bob Spence, a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor, passed away in Weston on December 1, at age 55. Originally from Logan, Bob traced his family roots back to the 1790's and some of the earliest settlers of Logan County. Bob came from a newspaper family and was an accomplished author and researcher, having published numerous stories in GOLDENSEAL and elsewhere, particularly about southern West Virginia. His 1976 book, titled *The Land of the Guyandotte*, is a comprehensive history of Logan County. In 2003, Bob co-authored *The Tale of the Devil: The Biography of Devil Anse Hatfield*, with Hatfield descendant Coleman C. Hatfield. Bob's most recent contributions to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 2002 issue. He will be missed.

Edna Reeves in 1999.
Photograph by Michael Keller.

Edna Carpenter Reeves of Harrisville passed away on January 6. Born at King Knob, Ritchie County, in 1914, Edna moved to Harrisville's famed Whitehall Hotel in 1934. Two years later, following the death of the wife of one of the hotel owners, Edna began caring for the Reeves children, eventually marrying Tom Reeves. Along with Stella and Horace Britton, the couple owned and ran the Whitehall until 1964. Living and working at the hotel, Edna found herself at the center of activity, helping run the busy hotel, raising her stepchildren, and looking after a stream of other youngsters who came under her care. Edna Reeves and Stella Britton, and their colorful recollections of life at the Whitehall, were the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story in our Winter 1999 issue, titled "'A Home Away From Home': Harrisville's Whitehall Hotel," by Mary Lucille DeBerry. Edna Reeves was 91.

Internet at www.uncpress.unc.edu; phone 1-800-848-6224.

Blackberry Cove Herbal, by Linda Ours Rago, of Harpers Ferry, is a seasonal tour through the folklore of Appalachian herbal healing. The book includes recipes and directions for the use of common herbs in teas, tinctures, oils, salves, and ointments.



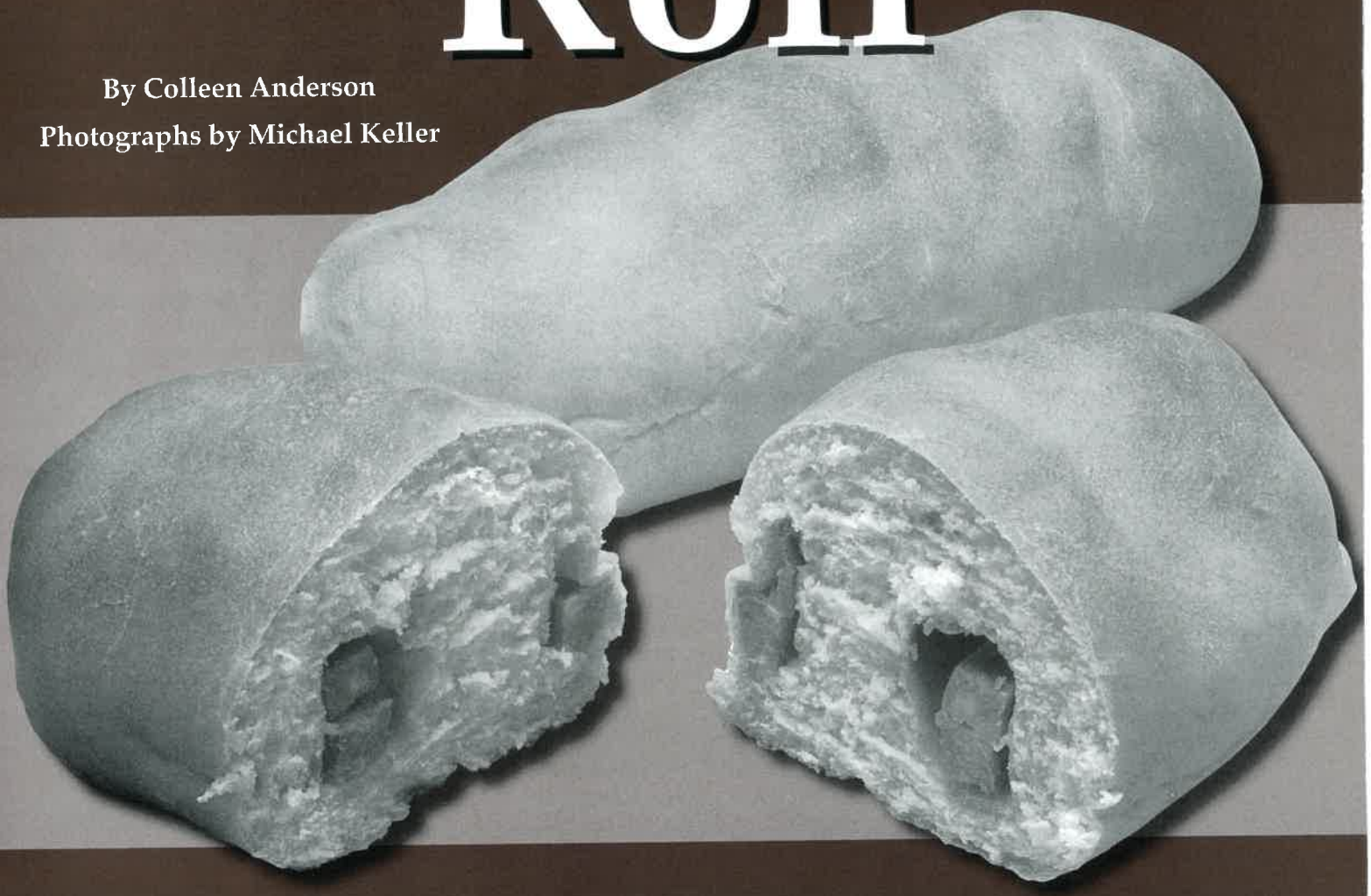
Colorfully illustrated with pastels and watercolors by Diana Suttenfield and Antonia Walker, the 166-page hardcover book includes an index. *Blackberry Cove Herbal* sells for $18.95 and is available from Capital Books, 22841 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166; phone (703)661-1571.

There is more than medicine in the new edition of ***The Many Lives of Doctor Dan***, by Thelma and Kent Kessler, based on the career of Webster County physician Dan Kessler. This biography, originally published in 1975, recalls the life of a turn-of-the-century country doctor, who traveled mountain roads to reach patients as a general practitioner.

In telling about the life of Dr. Dan, a good bit of the history of rural central West Virginia is also told. The 170-page paperback sells for $20, plus $2 shipping and handling, from Images by Romano, P.O. Box 455, Summersville, WV 26651, or on the Internet at www.imagesbyromano.com.

The Pepperoni Roll

By Colleen Anderson
Photographs by Michael Keller



State Food of West Virginia

West Virginians enjoy and celebrate some native foods that many Americans don't even know exist, much less eat — pawpaws and ramps come to mind. But the Mountain State is the bona fide birthplace of one beloved food item that has become much more familiar, in and out of the state, than these other homegrown delicacies — the pepperoni roll.

The concept is culinary simplicity — bread dough wrapped around pepperoni. And no one seems to dispute that its inventor was Giuseppe (Joseph) Argiro [pronounced AR-juh-row], who came from Calabria, Italy, in 1920 to work in the Clarksburg-area coal mines.

When he first traveled to America, Guiseppe Argiro left his pregnant wife, Teresa, behind. Within a few years, he had earned enough money to return to Italy and bring his wife and young son back with him to Clarksburg. Guiseppe soon left the mines and moved his growing family to Fairmont, where he started a soda pop bottling business. Then, in 1927, he opened People's Bakery. The bakery was located on Robinson Street, and the family lived in the building behind it.

The inventive Argiro got the idea for the pepperoni roll directly from his experiences in the mines. A common lunch for immigrant miners, according to Giuseppe's younger son, Frank Argiro, consisted of "a slab of bread, a chunk of pepperoni, and a bucket of water." At some point between 1927 and 1938 — nobody seems to know exactly when — Giuseppe began placing the spicy pepperoni within the bread, and the pepperoni roll was born.

Left: Pepperoni rolls from Country Club Bakery in Fairmont.

Combining the bread and pepperoni had a practical aspect: It turned a two-fisted eating experience into a convenient, one-handed operation. Evidently, Giuseppe Argiro knew he had devised a winner; he spent a good deal of time experimenting with the concept, changing bread dough recipes, pepperoni, and proportions until he was satisfied. He test-marketed the buns in beer halls where miners went to relax after their shifts.

Label from a bag of pepperoni rolls from Country Club Bakery in Fairmont. The ingredients listed on the package are for bread and pepperoni, and nothing else.

At first, Giuseppe sold his pepperoni rolls for 45 cents a dozen to the owners of the beer halls and to local grocers, who in turn sold them for five cents apiece. They were immediately popular, and their popularity has never lagged. With Teresa and the couple's three children — two sons and a daughter — helping out, the bakery prospered, becoming a Fairmont institution. In the late 1980's, when she was nearly 90 years old, Teresa Argiro still worked at the bakery and could assemble a pepperoni roll faster than anyone else there.

Giuseppe Argiro is thought to have originated the pepperoni roll at his Fairmont bakery between 1927 and 1938. He is shown here removing a loaf of bread from the oven during the late 1950's. Photograph by Larry Argiro.

Frank "Cheech" Argiro, at right, worked at the bakery throughout his adult life, taking over the business in 1963 following his father's death. He is shown here assembling pepperoni rolls with a crew of young workers in the late 1990's. Photographer unknown.

In 1947, the Argiros moved their bakery to Country Club Road and changed its name to Country Club Bakery. Giuseppe's son Frank, who had continued to work in the bakery, took over the business after his father's death in 1963. Frank Argiro operated the bakery until his own retirement a few years ago, when it was sold to the Pallotta family. Frank Argiro died in 2002. "He worked all his adult life for the bakery," says his wife, Pauline "Polly" Argiro. "It was a good life. We were together, everywhere."

The couple had grown up on the same street in Fairmont, in the same Italian neighborhood where the original Argiro bakery was located. Polly remembers it well: "My mother used to send me to the bakery to get Vienna bread. It was three loaves for 25 cents. A lot of women in the neighborhood would buy their yeast at the bakery."

She started working at the bakery when her husband took over in 1965. "I loved working the counter," she says. "I got to know so many people. I think when you go into a place and the people call you by name, it makes the food taste better."

She wasn't the only one who enjoyed the atmosphere. "Retirees would come in during the early morning," she remembers. "The bakers started at 3:00 a.m., and some people would come almost that early. If the workers knew the visitor, they would let them in."

Some of their best employees were retired people. "We had a fellow who came in from four to six in the afternoon, Tate Taylor, who passed away just last week [October 2005]," Polly says. "He knew all the children who came in. Some weren't tall enough to see over the counter. He always gave them a free cookie."

Polly Argiro at home in Fairmont, with a picture of her late husband, Cheech, on the wall.

Almost everyone knew Frank Argiro as "Cheech," but Polly tends to call her late husband "Mr. Argiro" when she talks about their working life. "I was an employee at the bakery," she says. "There, I was not his wife. I rang the time clock. But he was easy to get along with. He was a good boss. Once you worked for Cheech Argiro, it was hard to work for anybody else."

Misty Whiteman first came to work at the bakery 24 years ago and today runs the ovens. She agrees with Polly's assessment. "Cheech, he was my buddy," she says as she checks on a rack of pepperoni rolls rising in the proofing oven — not really an oven, but a warm room where the yeast does its work before the rolls go into the baking oven. "He showed me everything I know here. If you didn't do your job right, you'd hear about it. But he was a real nice guy. I miss him."

Whiteman's day starts early. She wakes up at 2:30 a.m. and is at the bakery by 3:30 a.m. "There's no air conditioning," she explains, "so it's good to start early, especially in the summer, so you're done by the heat of the day." She points to a thermometer on the wall, which indicates that the temperature in the room is about 80 degrees. In summertime, she says, the temperature often reaches well over 100 degrees.

Misty leads the way around the bakery, walking me through the sequence that begins when big bags of flour are dumped into an electric mixer, along with yeast, salt, and water. The bread recipe, which has not changed since Giuseppe Argiro perfected it 70-some years ago, includes no eggs or milk.

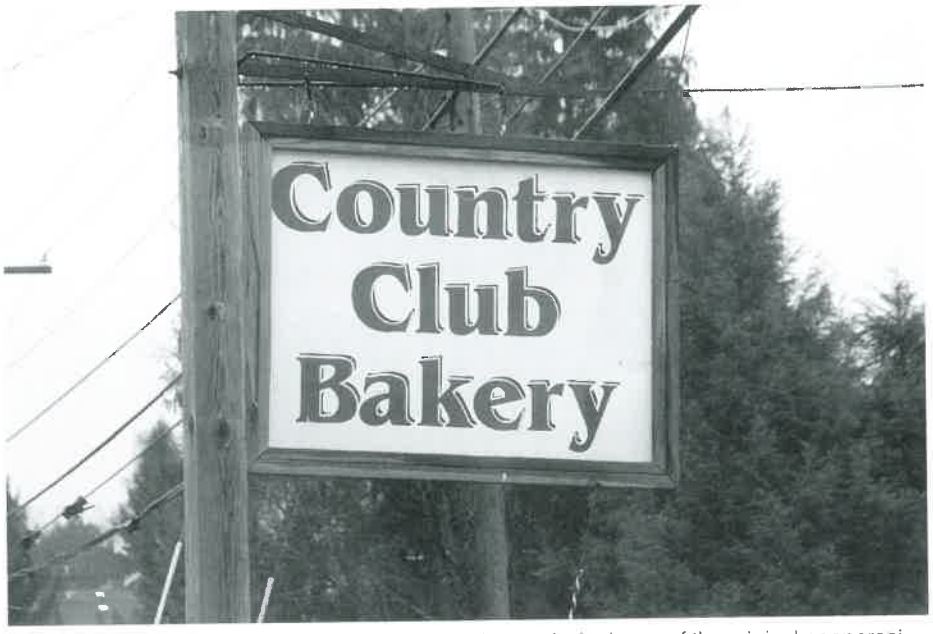
Misty Whiteman began working at Country Club Bakery 24 years ago. Today, she runs the ovens. Misty is shown here with a tray of pepperoni rolls, hot from the oven.

The dough rests in a huge, covered wooden trough until it is ready to be fed into the divider — a machine that extrudes measured lengths, each of which will be wrapped around pepperoni.

The pepperoni, which comes to the bakery in large rolls, is sliced into pieces about the diameter and length of a pencil. A few of these are rolled inside each piece of the yeasty dough. The assembled rolls rise once more before they are baked.

As she explains the process, Misty checks on the baking rolls frequently. When one batch reaches the perfect shade of brown, she lifts the pans out — the large oven holds 20 pans, and each of them accommodates 27 pepperoni rolls — stacks them on a metal cooling rack, and refills the oven. She tells me that it usually takes about 12 minutes to bake the rolls, but adds, "There isn't a time schedule. It depends on the weather, the humidity, and who else in the neighborhood is using gas."

The rolls are about six inches long. The one I ate, right then and there, was probably as good as a pepperoni roll gets — the soft, light bread a perfect complement to several lengths of rich, spicy sausage.



Country Club Bakery, on Country Club Road in Fairmont, is the home of the original pepperoni roll, still made today according to the old Argiro family recipe.

On an average day, Country Club Bakery produces more than 2,700 pepperoni rolls. On football weekends, demand skyrockets. Most are delivered by truck to area grocery stores, but a few of the fresh-from-the-oven rolls go into a bakery case in the front of the shop. It's a small, unpretentious place — no glitz, but you can't beat the aroma. The walls are decorated with Cheech Argiro's collection of souvenir plates, which stayed behind when he retired. "Customers brought them to him from all over," Misty explains. Chris Pallotta, who now operates the bakery, seems inclined to leave the bakery's decor, as well as the Argiro family recipe, unchanged.

A good idea spawns imitators, of course, and there are many other makers of pepperoni rolls on both sides of the 55-mile stretch of Interstate 79 between Morgantown and Weston — sometimes known as the "Pepperoni Highway" because the spicy rolls can be found in any convenience store at any highway exit. The variations are nearly endless, according to writer Jeanne Mozier, who lays claim to "extensive tasting sprees" in her book, *Way Out in West Virginia*. [See "Postcards from the Pepperoni Highway," by Jeanne Mozier; page 15.]

Some cooks use chunked or sliced pepperoni instead of sticks. Some add cheese, tomato sauce, and even roasted peppers. Over the years and in all its permutations, the pepperoni roll has become a ubiquitous part of the Mountain State menu. It is common fare for school lunches, is sold by the bagful by grocers and bulk food wholesalers, and is baked in the home with care and pride by countless cooks across West Virginia.

Like everything else, though, the price of a pepperoni roll has gone up. At the Country Club Bakery, the cost is now 75 cents, plus tax — still a bargain for a tasty, portable lunch.

COLLEEN ANDERSON designed the very first issue of GOLDENSEAL in 1975 and has been a frequent contributor since that time. She is the owner of MotherWit, a design and writing business in Charleston. Colleen's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2001 issue.

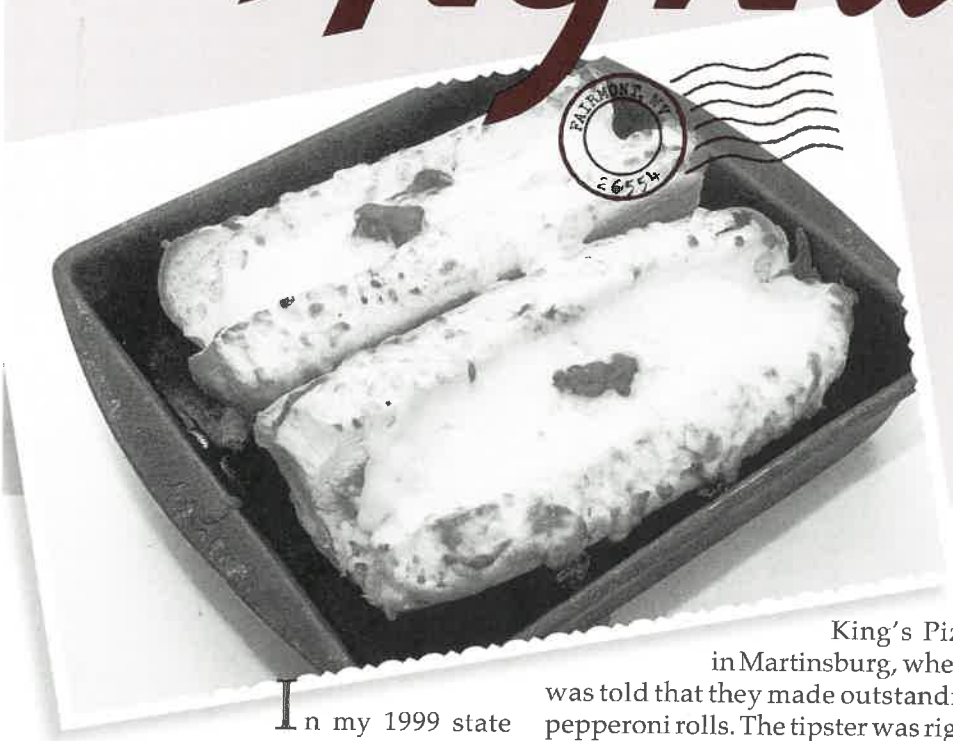
MICHAEL KELLER is director of photographic services for the Division of Culture and History.

Chris Pallotta, the current owner, with a fresh dozen pepperoni rolls from Country Club Bakery. The bakery produces more than 2,700 rolls each day.

Postcards from the Pepperoni Highway

By Jeanne Mozier

Photographs by Michael Keller



Pepperoni rolls are found across northern West Virginia, and no two rolls are quite the same. These large beauties from Colasessano's in Fairmont have been split and toasted, with cheese added.

In my 1999 state travel book, *Way Out in West Virginia*, I publicly announced the pepperoni roll as the state food. Little did I guess at the time that I was opening myself up to countless conversations with strangers and friends about various aspects of the spicy treat.

The most recent of these sent me to King's Pizza in Martinsburg, where I was told that they made outstanding pepperoni rolls. The tipster was right, on the universal level. King's Pizza pepperoni rolls are delicious. They are not, however, the West Virginia version. They are a New York City version. There is a difference.

New York-style pepperoni rolls have similar ingredients to their in-state cousins. The pepperoni is spicy, sliced, and abundant. Mozzarella cheese provides a soft inside layer, not unlike some West Virginia varieties. The New York-style "bread," however, is actually pizza dough, folded over like a diaper, allowing the pepperoni to decoratively peek out. Plus, the pepperoni rolls are automatically served with tiny containers of marinara sauce for dipping.

The West Virginia pepperoni roll was created as a handy and cheap workingman's lunch—essentially a closed bun with meat, which could be eaten with one hand so the work

Small rolls such as these, called "pepperoni fingers," are served with soup, as a snack, or for breakfast. These dozen pepperoni fingers are fresh out of the oven at Colasessano's in Fairmont.

would not have to stop. It continues in this form today and remains inexpensive enough that college students can live on pepperoni rolls and save their food money for beer. The New York-style pepperoni roll I enjoyed was too fragile to be eaten one-handed, and its $3.50 price made it unsuitable as subsistence cuisine. Most West Virginia pepperoni rolls can be bought for little more than a dollar — sometimes less. [See "The Pepperoni Roll: State Food of West Virginia," by Colleen Anderson; page 10.]

I was introduced to pepperoni rolls years before I contemplated writing about them. My introduction came by way of Martha Offutt of Fairmont, the mother of my friend Suzanne Offutt. Since Suzanne is an avowed vegetarian, her mother was thrilled to have me there to enjoy her distinctly non-vegetarian baking. I was happy to oblige, and I am forced to admit that few commercial versions of the pepperoni roll have ever measured up to that home-baked first experience.

Some two decades later, Cecelia Mason, noted Eastern Panhandle voice of West Virginia Public Radio, was the first to enlighten me about the importance of the pepperoni roll in state culture. "It's a valued commodity in my world," she assured me. "I trade it regularly for housing."

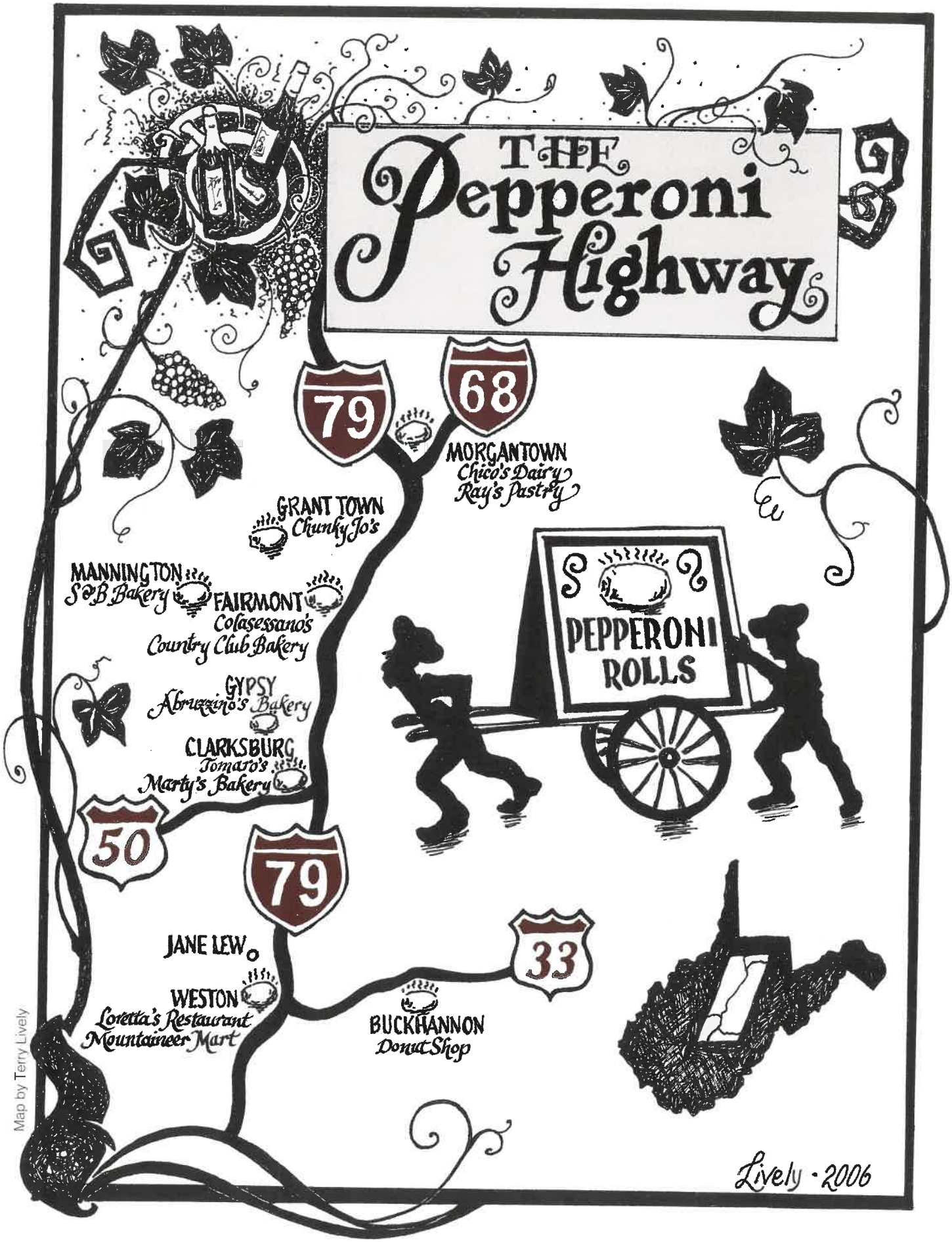
As I interviewed people all over the state, it became clear that pepperoni rolls were the food that Mountaineers have shipped around the globe, that brings them back again and again no matter where they roam. No one disagreed when I postulated it as the state food of West Virginia. No one was surprised when I announced it the only food worthy of a quest.

From its birthplace in Fairmont, pepperoni rolls have spread to dominate a quadrant of the state from Morgantown to Weston. I soon discovered that they could be found literally everywhere in this region.

From its birthplace in Fairmont, pepperoni rolls have spread to dominate a quadrant of the state from Morgantown to Weston. I soon discovered that they could be found literally everywhere in this region. "Everywhere" means obvious places like bakeries and lunch counters, as well as convenience stores and supermarkets, where there are choices among a variety of brands.

The concentrated geography makes a quest for the perfect pepperoni roll possible. The abundance of choices, however, makes identifying a single culinary champ impossible, except as a matter of personal taste. I cannot select a winner. I can only share my observations and encourage readers to plan their own sampling and rating excursions.

The traditional pepperoni roll is the six-inch torpedo still made by Country Club Bakery in Fairmont, where it originated. It is cholesterol-free plain yeast dough rolled around two thick sticks of spicy pepperoni. The bread bakes into twin tunnels around the pepperoni sticks, which, in turn, soak the fluffy white bread with their oil, making the inner core the ultimate taste sensation. A packaged dozen



Map by Terry Lively

pepperoni rolls bought on site at the bakery is only a couple dollars more than the single, diaper-folded New York-style version.

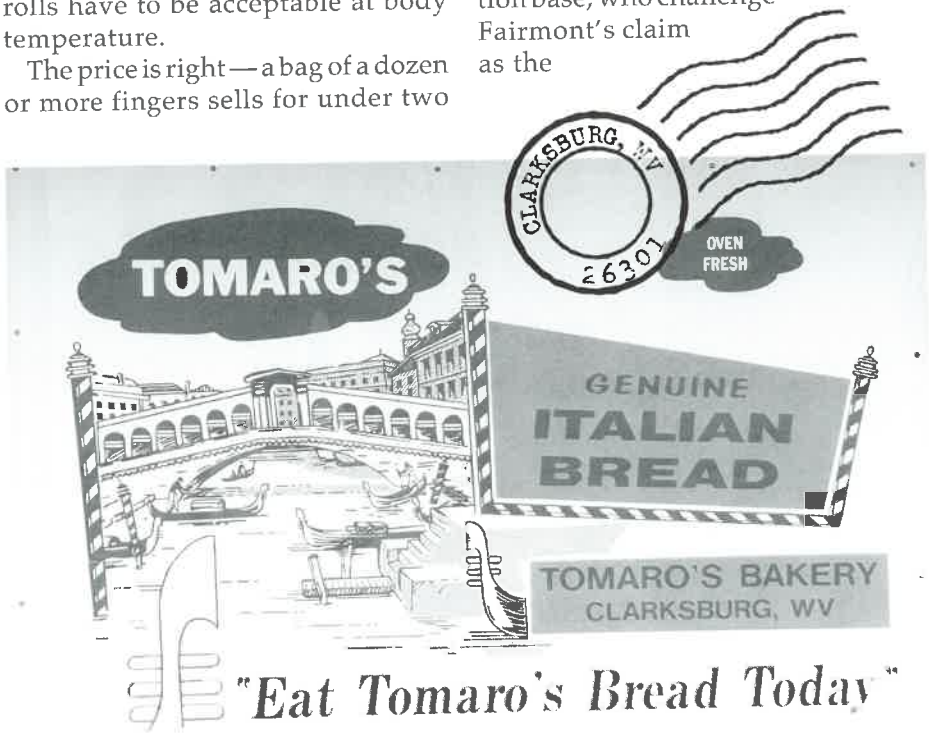
Most supermarkets in the pepperoni district make their own rolls, as well as stocking one or two boutique brands, like Mama Leona's of Dailey. Several convenience store clerks assured me that people do have their favorites. Supermarket and convenience store knock-offs generally use sliced pepperoni — a step down in taste intensity, unless it is thickly layered, like the King's Pizza variation. No matter how abundant, however, sliced pepperoni lacks the bite quality a stick provides. (Martha Offutt's tiny pepperoni roll tidbits used chunks, not slices.) Cheese can often be found as a component of the core. Not always a tasty addition, however, the cheese can be a problem when eating the pepperoni roll cold. Some makers avoid using cheese, because good cheese melts out.

The bread is generally improved with heating, although I've found that using a microwave oven degrades the pepperoni sticks. To serve as quality road or trail food, pepperoni rolls have to be acceptable at body temperature.

The price is right — a bag of a dozen or more fingers sells for under two dollars; individual big ones are less than $1.50. All the bread is basic white and usually undistinguished. Exceptions include the originals from Country Club and the braided-dough modification occasionally made by Tari's Cafe in Berkeley Springs.

Rolls from the Donut Shop in Buckhannon feature ground pepperoni.

My favorite pepperoni-roll breakfast — a bag of three-inch-long fingers with stick pepperoni—came from Tomaro's, a family bakery in Clarksburg. It's important to note that there are those in this northern-tier city, with a strong Italian population base, who challenge Fairmont's claim as the pepperoni roll homeplace.



Tomaro's family bakery in Clarksburg.

I had the ultimate pepperoni-roll experience with a modified version that would disqualify it from consideration by purists. I turned off U.S. Route 33 onto State Route 20, heading into Buckhannon. On the left, a sign caught my eye. "DONUTS" read the top line; "Pepperoni Rolls" read the next. Obviously, this was not a chain. I ordered a 99-cent pepperoni roll, not quite certain what I was getting. I jumped in the car and drove off, taking a bite, then another. Incredible! Ground pepperoni, sauteed and put in a large square white bun and layered with spicy cheese. "It's not a pepperoni roll unless the meat is baked in the bread," said Cecelia Mason with disdain when I later described this find to her.

Whatever it was, I turned the car around and went back for a second one. Later, a certified insider nodded his agreement. "That's the Donut Shop, where everyone goes for breakfast," he said about my Buckhannon find. Over the years, I

With years of experience as a school cook, Tressie knows her way around a kitchen. Here, she prepares a batch of her famous pepperoni rolls.

men would ask Tressie when another batch was going to be available.

Encouraged by the men's appreciation, she decided to start selling the popular rolls. Tressie was not trying to run a business or make any profits from the rolls — she discovered a better use for the money. Because the rummage sales, dinners, and bake sales at church had made her pepperoni rolls so popular in the first place, she thought it would be better if the entire proceeds from her sales were given back to the church.

In an average week, Tressie bakes three- to five-dozen pepperoni rolls. There's no telling how many people will call her for a treat, she says, so she must be prepared. For a person who could take all the money she earned and spend it on herself, I think it's astonishing that she gives it all away.

In addition to baking those delicious pepperoni rolls for church benefits, Tressie volunteers for many activities throughout the community. She has helped campaign for local political causes and has volunteered at the polls during elections. She feels that if a person has the right to vote, they should get out and vote, because there are many people in the world who are unable to do so. "It is our right as American citizens to vote, and every vote counts," she says.

Another thing Tressie feels is very important is our country's symbol — the American flag. After a flag at the corner of MacCorkle Avenue and Parkway Terrace was destroyed in 2001, Tressie contacted Orville Browning of the St. Albans Street Department. Mr. Browning supplied the new flag, and the St. Albans Fire Department graciously installed it.

According to the December 2001 issue of the *St. Albans Monthly*, "As a result of her concern and respect for the flag, the residents of Parkway Terrace can now be proud that Tressie took the time to correct the situation." Tressie showed unusual courage and concern for something she believed in. That's what makes her such a special person.

For some, birthdays can be a gloomy, predictable part of our social existence. Tressie Smith sees them as just another day in paradise. I've had the privilege to attend four out of the last five birthday gatherings held for her. Her 84th birthday was the most memorable, for me. As the night progressed, I figured it was only proper that I toast the birthday girl. My toast, which was only expected to last five minutes, extended for over an hour. The toast's focus was on Tressie's generosity and many accomplishments during her life. As the toast came to a close, I looked to a room filled with tears of joy and happiness. In my book, you can't get much better than that!

JERRY CARPENTER grew up in St. Albans and works as an administrative assistant. He is currently a student in elementary education and history at West Virginia State University. This article was written as a class assignment at WVSU and is Jerry's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Tressie Dale Smith and author Jerry Carpenter

Flummery and Purslane

Food and the Great Depression

By Maureen Crockett

The Wood family of Parkersburg was prosperous when this picture was made on October 19, 1929. From the left, they are Hazel, Edelene, and Ira. The family's way of life changed dramatically after this day.

In 1929, when they were in their early 20's, Ira and Hazel Wood of Parkersburg were prosperous. A photo taken October 19 — the day the stock market crashed — shows Hazel in a fur-trimmed coat, a flower-bedecked cloche on her head, wearing high heels. Ira stands confidently, sporting a suit, tie, and fedora. Between them is young daughter Edelene, dressed as fashionably as her mother.

Ira had taken a college course in electronics and had found work with a Parkersburg company as a union electrician. This comfortable position allowed him to give Hazel the latest in electrical appliances, including a washing machine, radio, curling iron, and an extravagant cigarette lighter. They bought their food from grocery stores and gave it little thought. By sundown, however, their happy, affluent lifestyle was doomed. Electricity soon became an impossible luxury. The family lost everything in the wake of the Great Depression: job, home, and the city life they loved.

In spite of his youth, Ira suffered from dangerously high blood pressure. Back then, there were no medications for hypertension. While healthy young men could work for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Ira's health caused the federal work program to reject him. So for the next seven years, the Wood family found itself on a farm, living five miles outside Liverpool, Jackson County, in a house on the county's highest hill. They struggled hard to exist, remembers Edelene, today a retired secretary living in Parkersburg. She says that although Ira and Hazel came from large families, their people were able to offer little more than love to help the young family through the growing hard times.

The farm rent was eight dollars a year, which merely paid the taxes. As months passed, Ira couldn't even pay that. With his severe hypertension, Ira found he could not do any hard physical labor. Soon, their son, Woody, was born, making one more mouth to feed.

The Woods were city people, not farmers. Now they had no running water. No electricity. No toilet that flushed. There was a well in the yard, but years of drought rendered it dry. Hazel would take the baby, some tubs, and her family's clothes down the hill to a creek on wash day, then spread the clothes over bushes to dry.

Hazel learned to "make do," which became her middle name, remembers Edelene. "'Making do' included cooking on a wood stove with a broken oven," she recalls. "[Hazel] possessed two iron skillets, so most meals our family ate came from those skillets."

One-dish meals, many based on biscuits, became the norm for the family. Egg gravy, corn cakes, and creamed tomatoes were common one-dish meals, eaten anytime of day. Looking back on those hard years, Edelene remembers, "Our family associated life with food." Together, they learned to farm, gather, trap, cook, and can as a means of survival.

Fortunately, Hazel's grandfather Marcellus "Doc" Williams, an herb doctor who lived in neighboring Wirt County, had passed along his knowledge of herbal medicines to Hazel's mother, Alma Williams Watkins. When illness struck the Wood

children, Alma knew which plants to gather to relieve their symptoms. A tea made from chestnut leaves was used for whooping cough. Boils were treated with slippery elm poultices and tea.

Hens on the Wood farm lived uncharacteristically long lives, Edelene says. Chickens became meals only on special occasions, being more important as egg layers. Wild meat was around, but it seldom appeared on their table. Ira did own a broken German Luger handgun, a relic from World War I, but there was no money for bullets. Moreover, he had worked as a veterinary aide and couldn't bring himself to shoot animals.

Ira had made a long bow and arrows, but he seldom shot anything that way, either. Instead, Edelene says, "he brought wild meat home by dead fall. He would prop a rock up with a wooden contraption, then bait it with an apple — a system which provided the family with plenty of groundhogs, which our mother boiled."

Ira made snares to catch rabbits, using a loop tied to young saplings. Sometimes he even found a squirrel in the snare. Hazel would fry them, nothing fancy, remembers Edelene.

The family ate anything they could find, Edelene says. A widow lady who lived at the base of their hill in a log cabin with a dirt floor taught Hazel what she knew about wild food preparation. Hazel used elderberries and hickory nuts. They made tea from sassafras. They gigged for frogs. In later years, Hazel told Edelene, "We used to eat wild grape tendrils and the flowers of red clover."

When blackberries were abundant, Hazel made flummery — a delicious mixture of cooked berries, flour, and cornstarch — which became a popular dish in their home, served over biscuits. Edelene and Woody still love flummery.

"We never grew tired of it," Edelene says, "which was fortunate, because lots of times that's all she had to offer."

The family knew little about edible wild greens, though Ira was interested in plants. "He knew a few, like ginseng and yellow root, but you can't eat them," Edelene says. [See "In Search of the Wild Goldenseal," by Marion Harless; Fall 1999.]

A working knowledge of nature lore is necessary for anyone collecting food from meadows and forests, Edelene points out, because some plants are healthful — like the dandelion, whose leaves are full of vitamins — while others can kill — like the beautiful but deadly amanita mushroom.

A working knowledge of nature lore is necessary for anyone collecting food from meadows and forests.

One day, when Ira was hoeing weeds in the garden, he found a $10 gold piece. Looking back, Edelene comments, "The purslane he was weeding out would have been far more valuable to the family than that money."

Purslane, which Ira was tossing away as weeds, had been a valuable food in colonial times. Commonly called pigweed, this hearty green would often be thrown to the pigs as fodder in summertime, when it ran rampant. Early settlers could also turn it into pickles, dill crock purslane, pancakes, and casseroles. The Wood family could have used it on their table, as well, had they recognized its value at the time.

While the effects of the Great Depression were widespread, individual families and communities dealt with the hardships in different ways. A few miles away in Pennsboro, Ritchie County, John and Bessie Barnard rode out the Depression years far more easily than did the Wood family. The Barnards had good farmland and knew how to use it. Their son, Dr. Richard Barnard, a retired manager of an industrial plant now living in Parkersburg, remembers his mother augmenting her garden produce with gathered spring greens, huckleberries, blueberries, walnuts, hickory nuts, butternuts, and hazelnuts. His father went squirrel hunting. "We had meat three times a day and dessert with every meal," Richard says. "The first time I didn't was when I went [away] to WVU."

Over in Webster County, however, Lela and Virgil Miller had it tough,

Five generations posed for this photograph in the late 1920's. Young Edelene Wood is at the right. From the left are Edelene's great-great-grandmother Sally Dobson Williams, great-grandfather Marcellus "Doc" Williams, grandmother Alma Williams Watkins, and mother Hazel Watkins Wood.

Edelene, holding an armful of unidentified plants, sits on the lap of her great-great-grandmother, Sally Dobson Williams, in the late 1920's.

says daughter Stella Miller Riffle, a retired teacher now living along the Gauley River, eight miles upstream from Bolair. "Jobs were scarce, and food was limited," she says. What they ate "was often what could be raised in the garden or killed in the woodland."

According to Stella, "Dad and Grandad hunted, and often brought a raccoon, opossum, or groundhog for meat for the family." They prepared groundhog by parboiling it two times, rolling it in flour with salt and pepper, and then frying or baking it.

"Dad would go out early mornings, kill six squirrels, and bring them in," Stella says. "Mom then skinned them, put them in salt water, cut up, rolled in flour with seasoning, and browned them in a pan. She often made squirrel gravy to put over biscuits or mashed potatoes. Gravy was often eaten for breakfast.

"Deer were scarce. They raised chickens for meat and eggs, or sometimes Dad traded for a pig, and raised it to butcher in the fall. Hams were often salt cured, smoked, and put in paper bags and hung in the smokehouse. They ground meat for sausage in the food chopper, then fried it and put it in stone jars with grease over it, then covered with a bag, tied, and let cool in the cellar. If glass jars and lids were available, they processed it in a tub over a fire outside.

"Chestnuts grew plentifully at that time. They fell to the ground, burst open, and were picked up during excursions on Sunday afternoons. Granddad would roast them in the oven of the old woodstove. Grandmother preferred boiled chestnuts.

"Sometimes, trees grew where long ago someone had thrown apple cores, so apples were prized. They were put in root cellars or dried by hanging in the attic on strings. Some people sulphured the apples and put them in a barrel to eat later. Of course, applesauce, apple pies, and jelly enhanced the dinner table.

"Poke greens, parboiled at least two times, put in a skillet with bacon drippings, and served with vinegar and eaten with cornbread" were common fare at the Miller home. Some folks even ate poke stalks. They would wash the stalks, then cut them in four-inch lengths. They were rolled in a mixture of flour, salt, and pepper, then fried in bacon drippings. "They tasted like fish," Stella says.

"Hickory nuts were gathered to bake with cookies or cakes, or to crack and eat by the handful." Blackberries, huckleberries, raspberries, and dewberries became jam, jelly, juice, pie,

The Miller family of Webster County in 1935. Mother Lola Miller holds baby Jesse at left. Son Charles stands at center, father Virgil Miller is seated at right, and three-year-old Stella stands at far right.

Participants sample the offerings at a wild foods gathering at North Bend State Park in 1989. Photograph by Chuck Mapes.

or were canned. "Dumplings made in berry juice were a delicacy," she recalls.

"Sometimes, Grandmother put blackberries, wild grapes, or strawberries in a stone jar with molasses and covered the jar with cloth tied around with string, to be eaten during the winter. Grape butter and apple butter were also made, put in stone jars, and covered with a paste made of flour and water — layers and layers — to seal it. Peaches were sliced, hung on a string, and hung up to dry for snacks or pies. Food in the stone jars were preserved with molasses or pickled with salt. Strange, but foods kept well, and no worms were in the nuts they gathered," Stella says.

In Marion County, Italian immigrants brought their mushroom-hunting skills from the old country. Whole families would hunt edible wild mushrooms from surrounding forests and meadows — sometimes even in their front yards. However, this popular pastime can be troublesome and sometimes deadly.

Dr. R. Scott Pore, a microbiologist at WVU's medical school, works with state physicians whose patients become ill with mushroom poisoning. "Several common poisonous mushrooms found in West Virginia resemble favorite edible mushrooms in Italy," Dr. Pore says. "We had an elderly Fairmont gentleman of Italian heritage who picked several large, white-capped mushrooms in his yard and fried and ate them. After a two-week hospitalization at Ruby Hospital, he recovered enough to recount that they tasted delicious."

"Believe me, it wouldn't be so funny if you had to eat that stuff like we did during the Depression."

When World War II began and the Depression came to an end, the Wood family moved back to the city. Through all the lean years, they had yearned for their Parkersburg life. Edelene wanted running water and a toilet that flushed. Hazel wanted relief from long days of boredom and a return to a better life. Ira wanted a good job. They were pleased when Ira's union recalled him and they could leave the farm behind. Ira eventually owned an electric company, and their prosperous life resumed, until his untimely death. "He died at 45, and our mother ran the company for the next 20 years," Edelene recalls.

Years later, Edelene learned much more about wild food and became the president of the National Wild Food Association. She grieves to this day over her inability to help the family when she was a child. "In Parkersburg, the city they had to leave to survive, I have, as an adult, catalogued more than 100 wild foods that we could have gathered within city limits. To this day, I find the best persimmons, acorns, and wild grapes within walking distance of where we lived

near the Parkersburg City Park," she says.

Each September, Edelene runs a wild foods gathering at North Bend State Park, in Ritchie County, which draws people from all over the United States. [See "Wild Foods at North Bend: Some Were Eaten and Some Escaped," by Maureen Crockett; Winter 1989.] Participants at the wild foods weekend learn to recognize and prepare delicious wild fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, desserts, wines, and many varieties of ice cream. Guides take guests into North Bend State Park's fields and forests to collect nature's harvest, with special park permission. Late in the afternoon, they dine like royalty.

At the wild foods party in 1987, Edelene made a dip with purslane, which many enjoyed, though she did not. When people are hungry or starving, they will eat whatever is edible, she says. When prosperity returns, they eat what is palatable. Edelene suggests that people check old recipes, make some culinary trials, and see what suits.

Edelene Wood, founder and president of the National Wild Foods Association, with a pair of black walnuts in 1989. Photograph by Chuck Mapes.

During another wild foods party, Edelene learned how Hazel Wood could "make do" with frog legs. "She and the late Osbra Eye of Kanawha State Forest were helping me feed wild food to a surprising 60 people at a nature gathering there," Edelene recalls. "I had only expected a few people and brought the 10 frogs I had gigged that season. When we ate, everyone seemed to have a frog leg to taste. I asked her how they fed the multitude, and she said, 'Well, you had 10 frogs. Each frog had two legs, and each leg had three parts. So we had 60 pieces.'"

In later years, Edelene's older relatives were mortified by talk of eating food from the wild. "They hated to admit they ever had to exist on wild food from the land," Edelene remembers. In her early days of teaching about wild food, Edelene was firmly told by her aunt Lillian Wood Chenoweth, "I've been reading stories about your wild food programs. Believe me, it wouldn't be so funny if you had to eat that stuff like we did during the Depression."

"I knew she was right," adds Edelene. It hadn't been funny, and Edelene had been there. Slowly, however, as Edelene continued to teach classes in wild food gathering around West Virginia, other older people began to show up. Sometimes, they would admit what their families did during the hard years. "They knew all kinds of things not mentioned in books," Edelene says.

The shame of "making do" is long gone now. Today, gathering food from the wild has become a hobby with a certain cachet that gives many people a sense of accomplishment. In the grinding years of the Great Depression, however, many West Virginians did it to survive.

MAUREEN CROCKETT is a freelance writer, photographer, and illustrator who lives in St. Albans. She is the author of *Jewels in Our Crown: The State Parks of West Virginia*, as well as numerous newspaper and magazine articles. Maureen's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2005 issue.

Burgoo,

By Allen D. Arnold

Participants arrive by the wagonload for the 10th annual Burgoo International Cook-Off in Webster Springs, October 8, 2005.

the Stew

Photographs by Randy Timm

Last October, Webster Springs' Burgoo International Cook-Off celebrated its 10th anniversary. Throughout the day, an estimated 500 people gathered here to sample and celebrate this hearty hunters' stew, which has been made and enjoyed in this region for ages, and for which a local town and creek are named. [See "Bergoo, the Town," by Mark Romano; page 34.]

When this event was founded in 1995, Merle Moore was the director of Webster Springs Main Street. She introduced the idea of establishing a community-sponsored annual festival that would be tied to, and would celebrate, the area's rich cultural roots. "As we began searching for the specific theme for this festival, one topic that came up again and again was the mountaineer hunting tradition of Webster County," Merle recalls.

"And then," she says, "I remembered W.E.R. Byrne's account in *Tale of the Elk* of hunters who camped beside the creek at the head of the Elk. They had the idea of naming the creek, where they camped and enjoyed the hearty one-pot meal made from their day's hunting, Bergoo [spelled with an "e"], in commemoration of the stew. I made the connection, and that really is how the idea for the Burgoo Cook-Off was spawned."

Not everyone was familiar with burgoo, and Merle had to explain to a number of people what it was. "I drew on my library background in finding the information, but with all my research and digging, I couldn't find any clear way to trace the lineage of burgoo," Merle says. "I knew that they make a lot of burgoo in Kentucky — especially at Derby time — and they even claim to have originated the concept.

"What I did find in my research is that this stew is real Appalachia. It actually predates the Revolutionary War, and it is often described as Appalachia's adaptation of East Coast Brunswick stew." Merle explains that burgoo is a thick, hearty, highly spiced stew, usually prepared in large quantities, that includes a variety of game. It is slow-cooked, often over an open fire, for a long period of time until the meat falls off the bone. Vegetables are then added, and it is simmered until it thickens.

Merle brought to the burgoo planning discussions significant previous experience with this type of community festival effort. At an earlier time in her career, Merle had been director of the library in Clarksburg. She made a similar suggestion for an annual community festival there, pointing out that the event could be tied to the rich Italian culture flourishing there. People responded very positively to the idea. In fact, the first year, the festival was actually run out of the library that Merle directed. Since then, the Italian Heritage Festival in Clarksburg has prospered for more than 25 years. In 2003, in appreciation for her visionary concept and leadership, Merle was named an honorary Italian by festival organizers.

When she accepted a position in Weston as director of the Chamber of Commerce in 1990, Merle saw

Merle Moore proposed and founded the Burgoo International Cook-Off in 1995 to promote and celebrate Webster County's cultural heritage, especially its rich hunting tradition.

Mary Legg, a Webster Springs Main Street Association volunteer, shows a batch of burgoo made by a local restaurant. Cups of this stew were offered for sale, with proceeds going to benefit the community.

still another opportunity to establish a local festival as a means of celebrating the area's cultural roots. She realized that there used to be three major glass factories in the area — and two still existed — and a large number of French, Belgian, and German glass workers and their descendants. Her brainchild this time was Weston's OktoberFest.

Merle brought all of this experience with her to Webster Springs. "I had been to a number of chili cook-offs," she says, "so I had some sense of how this type of competition should be organized." Now, every year on the Saturday of the Columbus Day weekend, dozens of contestants and hundreds of people flock to Bakers Island to be a part of this event steeped in Appalachian culture.

"In pioneer times, when both burgoo and Brunswick stew were originated," Merle suggests, "the ingredients quite simply included everything that was on hand, which was then thrown into the pot. There is only one ingredient considered essential to make them both authentic — squirrel. That tradition remains, and about a third of all of the entries in our International Burgoo Cook-Off include squirrel, but many include much more exotic ingredients."

In the first year of the cook-off, the blue ribbon was awarded to Karen Vandevender, whose burgoo interpretation called for rattlesnake. The first line of her recipe, published in a cookbook from the event, reads, "Catch a live rattlesnake." This is certainly not food for the faint of heart.

Nor is it for culinary lightweights. One recipe for burgoo from a 1939 cookbook demonstrates just how large the quantities frequently are. This one makes 1,200 gallons and is slow-cooked over an open fire for 20 to 30 hours. It calls for:

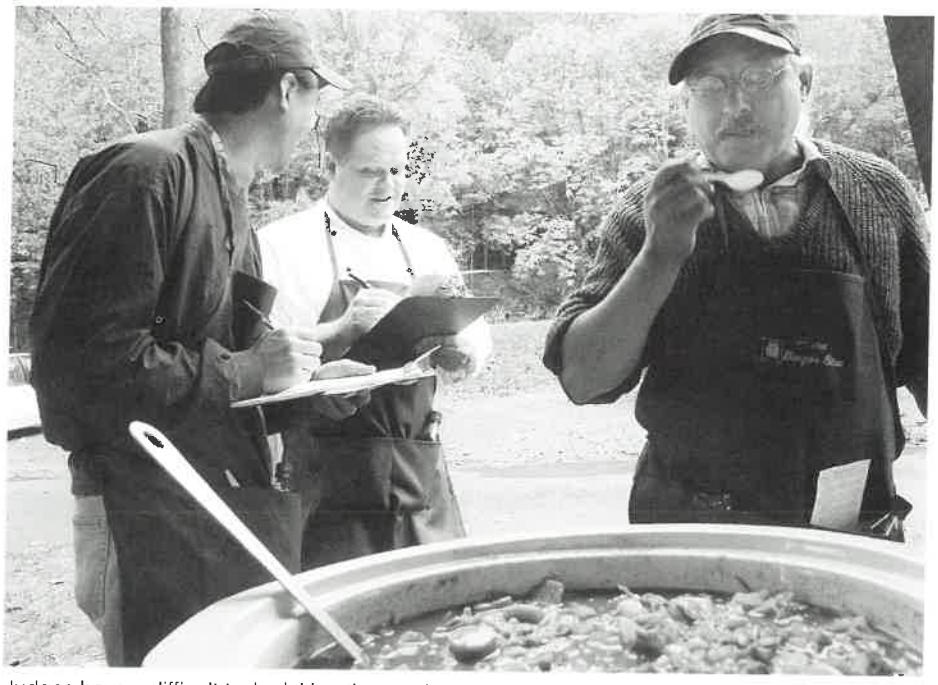
600 lbs. lean game on the bone
200 lbs. fat hens, plucked
2,000 lbs. potatoes, peeled and diced
200 lbs. onion, peeled and diced
5 bushels cabbage, chopped
60 lbs. tomatoes, pureed
24 lbs. corn cut from cob
Salt and pepper to taste, and Worcestershire by the pint

The cook-off continues the local emphasis on hunting and wild game that have been evidenced throughout the event's history. In 2005, there were 23 entries. The first-place recipe, by Mary Alice Hall, included elk, venison, and wild boar.

Contestants prepare one gallon of their creation at home and bring it to the event in a crock pot, or similar cookware. Despite the rustic nature of the recipes, the festival is able to attract judges from some of West Virginia's finest restaurants and resorts. This year's judges included executive chefs Robert Wong of the Bridge Road Bistro in Charleston, Dale Hawkins of Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, and Tim Urbanic of Café Cimino in Sutton.

Like so many efforts, this festival's success is due to its being a team effort. Building on Merle Moore's original concept, Sue Talbott assumed a major leadership role for the cook-off when Merle left Webster Springs Main Street in 1996. Sue increased the festival's financial stability by successfully applying for state funding. Equally important, she was able to convince her son-in-law Robert Wong — a West Virginia culinary celebrity — to be a judge. And he has continued to play that role rather consistently throughout the festival's history, attracting other high-profile chefs.

First, second, and third prizes are $500, $200, and $100, respectively. There is also a $50 People's Choice Award. As Sue Talbott describes it: "Some of the folks who come to the festival have their own opinion of which is the best entry and don't always agree with our distinguished judges. And so, for a small donation, they get a ballot to vote for the People's Choice. It helps us raise some additional funds for the festival, and also provides an opportunity for everyone who is interested to be a part of the judging process."



Judges have a difficult task picking the top three contestants at the cook-off. From the left, they are Robert Wong, Dale Hawkins, and Tim Urbanic.

The cook-off has attracted some notable out-of-state attention, as well. Recently, Fodor's *Road Guide*, a highly respected international travel publication, recommended the cook-off as an "event worth attending." Two years ago, folklorists from the University of South Carolina, who were creating a documentary on southern stews, selected the International Burgoo Cook-Off as one of a handful of events to be featured in their video, which was aired nationally on public television.

The 2006 Burgoo International Cook-Off will take place on October 7 in Webster Springs. The event is free to the public, though there is a $10 entry fee for cook-off contestants. For more information, call (304)847-7291.

As Sue points out, "This is a real day of festivities, and not everyone comes to eat game. There is wonderful bluegrass music all day. This year we had the Black Cat Mountain Boys from Clay County and the Family Heritage group from Greenbrier County."

There are other events during the day, as well, like the old-time cake walk. This takes place while the judges do their tasting and make their deliberations on the burgoo entries. For the cake walk, people bake cakes to be used as prizes, and contestants pay one dollar each to be a part of a procession moving along until the music stops. At that point, someone with his or her back to the group drops a broom. Whomever it lands in front of is the winner for that round and "takes the cake" for their prize. Then the process repeats until all the cakes are gone.

"The cook-off planning committee intends for this festival to outlast the current generation," Sue explains. "In order to groom future cook-off contestants, there is a children's burgoo pot. Festival workers start this stew pot early in the day over an open fire, although they actually add beef rather than game. They also add, in keeping with the children's story about the migrant peddler who tells villagers he can make soup from stones, one stone." Children then add vegetables they have brought from home. After the ingredients have cooked and steeped for some time, they have the opportunity to sample a burgoo version of their own design and execution.

ALLEN D. ARNOLD was born in Pennsylvania and now lives in Charleston. His work has been published in *West Virginia Executive*, where he is a staff writer. This is Allen's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

RANDY TIMM is originally from Illinois and has lived in Webster Springs since 2001. He works at the Webster-Addison Public Library and pursues photography as a hobby. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

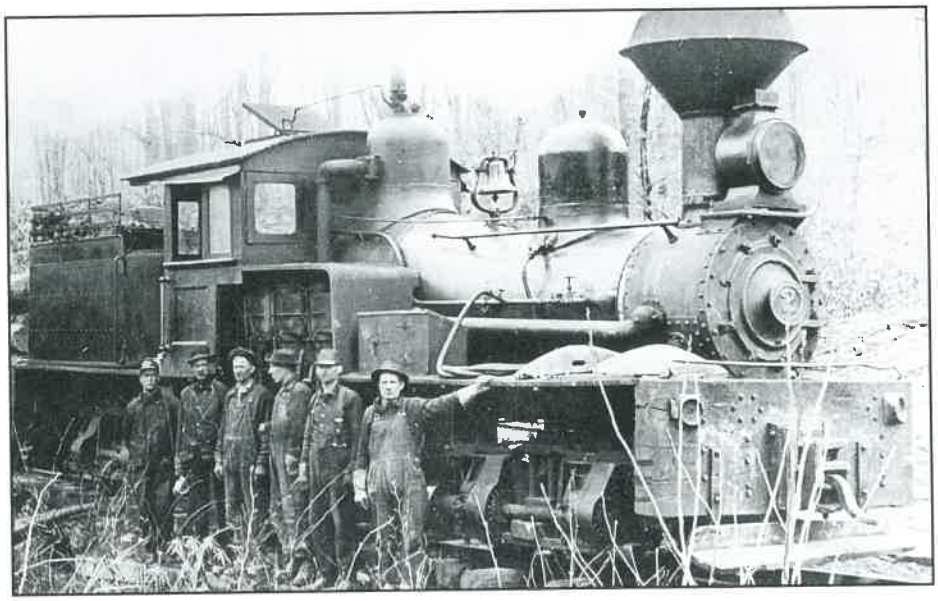
Young Gavin Surbaugh of Webster Springs knows good burgoo when he tastes it.

Bergoo,

By Mark Romano

Eight miles up the Elk River from Webster Springs lies what is possibly the only town in West Virginia named after food — Bergoo. To be more precise, Bergoo (spelled with an "e") was named after Bergoo Creek, which takes its name from the hearty hunters' stew known as burgoo (usually spelled with a "u"). Once a remote wilderness outpost, Bergoo became a bustling timber and coal center in the early 20th century, only to return to the peace and serenity of a nearly abandoned hamlet during recent years.

According to a history book published by the Webster County Historical Society, Bergoo Creek got its name during Revolutionary War times and is identified by that name on several land documents from the time period. Various legends circulate about how the creek came by its name, but one of the most colorful accounts is found in W.E.R. Byrne's book, *Tale of the Elk*. According to Byrne, a group of hunters pitched camp where the creek empties into the Elk River, while they hunted the surrounding woods for several weeks. They brought their game back to camp each night, where the men took turns preparing it.



Pardee & Curtin's Shay engine No. 2, used to haul timber.

During its heyday, Bergoo was a busy timber, coal, and railroad center. Here, the narrow-gauge Pardee & Curtin rails, at left, meet the standard-gauge tracks of the Western Maryland Railroad in the center of town. Historical photographs courtesy of Leroy Crislip, photographers and dates unknown.

After hearing complaints about the meals from some of the other hunters, one particularly inventive cook decided that he would put all the various ingredients into a large pot and cook it together in a stew. According to Byrne: "He proceeded to chop up goodly portions of bear meat,

the Town

venison, turkey, pheasant, squirrels, fish, etc., for his stew, and by way of adding zest and flavor to the mess, adding, as it simmered in the pot, occasional dashes of applejack."

The hunters thought it was the best meal of the trip, and they decided to name the place Camp Bergoo in its honor. The camp disbanded, but the name lives on via the small stream flowing nearby. [See "Burgoo, the Stew," by Allen D. Arnold; page 30.]

The first permanent settlement in the vicinity was established in 1830, about a mile downstream from Bergoo Creek, at the mouth of Leatherwood Creek, by members of the Gregory, Hamrick, and Dodrill families. Though the town took the name Bergoo, it was also known locally as Leatherwood for many years. In fact, the first post office, established there in 1876, was called Leatherwood until 1881. The post office has been known officially as Bergoo since 1882, though occasional use of the name

This Pardee & Curtin double-band sawmill was in full operation by late 1927. Here, workers pose on the elevated tracks behind the mill.

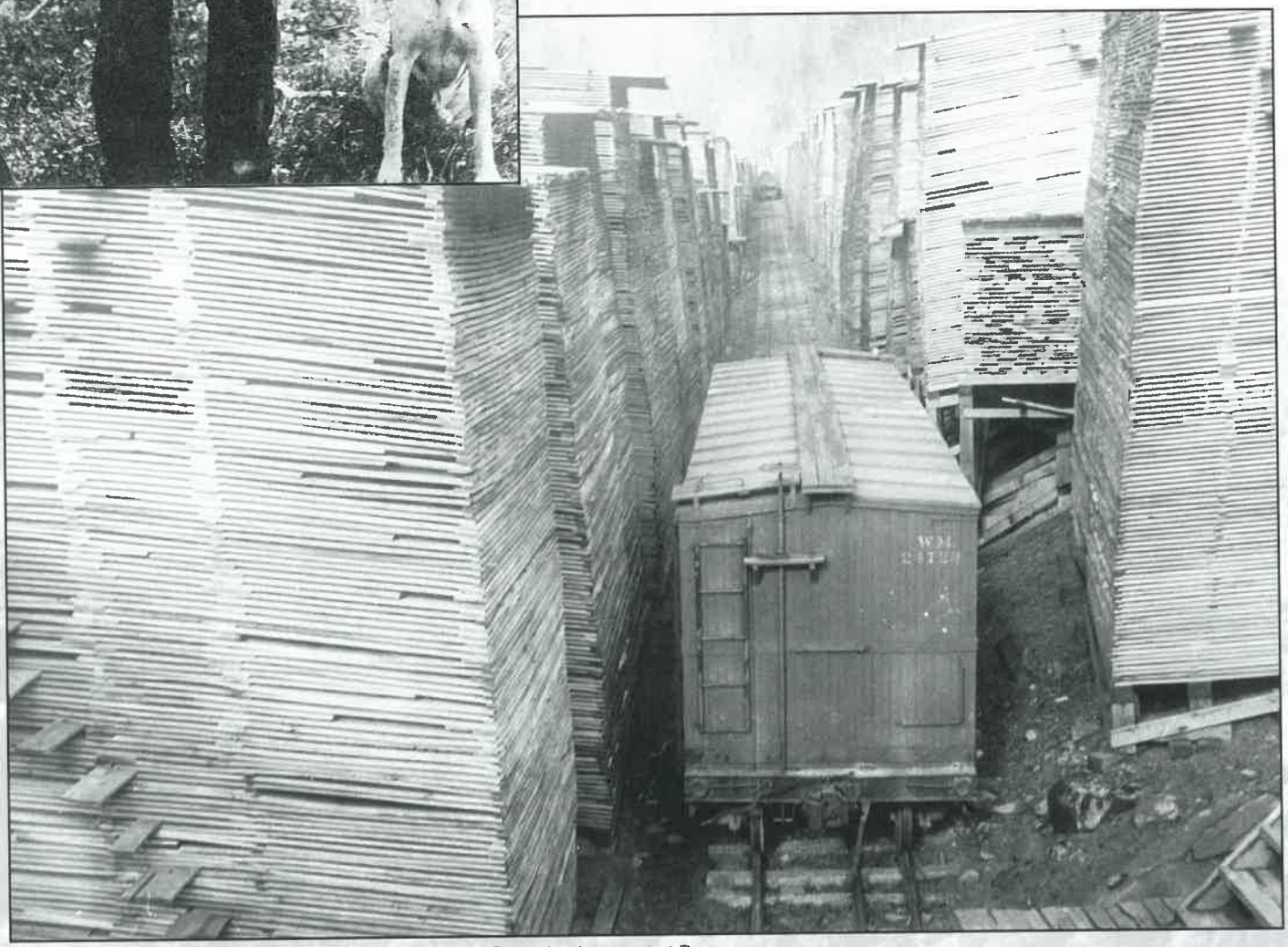
Sheriff Rimfire Hamrick with his gun and dog.

Leatherwood persisted until at least the late 1920's.

In 1917, industry came to the area when the Pardee & Curtin Lumber Company purchased a large parcel of land and began setting up a massive lumber operation. They started out with 72 houses, a hotel, and boarding house. A railroad extension from Webster Springs to Bergoo was completed in 1925 or early 1926. Initially a narrow gauge railroad, it was later converted to a dual gauge with the coming of the Western Maryland Railroad. Later in 1926, the Curtin mill began shipping construction timbers and stacking strips to Bergoo via the B&O and West Virginia Midland Railway, expanding the operation there.

The company mill, shop, and all rolling stock were moved to Bergoo by late 1926. By December of that year, construction was underway on the mill yard, including the laying of tracks, construction of the loading docks, and so forth. Bergoo was only half-finished at the time, but the shop was already in limited operation. By late 1927, the Bergoo mill — a steam-powered, double-band type — was completed and in full operation.

Bergoo was already becoming a booming town with the logging industry in 1929, when P&C got into the coal mining industry, opening mines throughout Webster County. Mining operations continued there until 1959, producing more than 23



Huge stacks of lumber dwarf a boxcar in the Pardee & Curtin lumber yard at Bergoo.

Author Beryle Hess McDougal was quite a gal. Her full name was Nina Beryle Hess Bowman Forquer McDougal — she had two first names and married three times. At the time of this writing, however, she was a 79-year-old newlywed, having wed her childhood sweetheart after her second husband passed away. Hence, McDougal.

Beryle Hess was born in 1900 in Bingamon, near Wyatt, in southern Marion County. The second daughter of William Ellis and Edna Daniels Hess, Beryl came from a long line of Palatine Germans, and lived most of her life within a short distance of the farm where she was born.

Her father was a successful farmer, a wheeler-dealer. In addition to tending crops and raising dairy cattle, he worked the oil fields, planted fruit trees, raised chickens, and engaged in a variety of other ventures. He and Beryle were quite close. Since she had no older brothers, and her sister Hazel preferred the indoors, Beryle helped her dad with the farm work. She grew to love it. According to her daughter Dorothy Harris Stalnaker of Shinnston, Beryle would rather be outside shoveling manure than in the house making up beds.

Beryle's father died unexpectedly in 1910, when she was 9 years old, so Beryle and her mother took over the responsibilities of running the farm and raising the younger children. Though she eventually received a ninth-grade education at the local one-room school, Beryle learned much about life from the realities of running a farm and helping to manage a growing family.

She married Frank Bowman in 1919 and had two children by 1923. Frank reportedly abandoned the family in about 1928, leaving Beryle to once again manage a household and raise kids on her own, this time during the height of the Great Depression. It was hard times, to be sure, but Beryle "made do" for the next 11 years, until marrying John Forquer in 1939. She and John lived happily for the next 26 years, raising three of his children. He passed away in 1965. An unexpected letter in 1978 from an old sweetheart, George Earl McDougal, himself a widower, led to Beryle's third marriage.

Through all of this time, Beryle remained mentally and physically active. She was keenly interested in politics and current events, voted regularly, and freely spoke her mind on a range of topics. As she approached her later years, she decided to commit to writing some of her experiences as a West Virginia country girl, and some of the things she observed and learned throughout her long life, primarily for the benefit of her citified great-grandchildren. She began writing in 1972, and continued until her death in 1989.

Recently, Dorothy Stalnaker graciously shared her mother's writings with us. We hope you enjoy this portion as much as we did. —ed.

This morning I had a hamburger with onion on it for breakfast. Weird, yes. But when you live alone, you get that way. You just look in the refrigerator and take out what's there. It doesn't matter or make much difference.

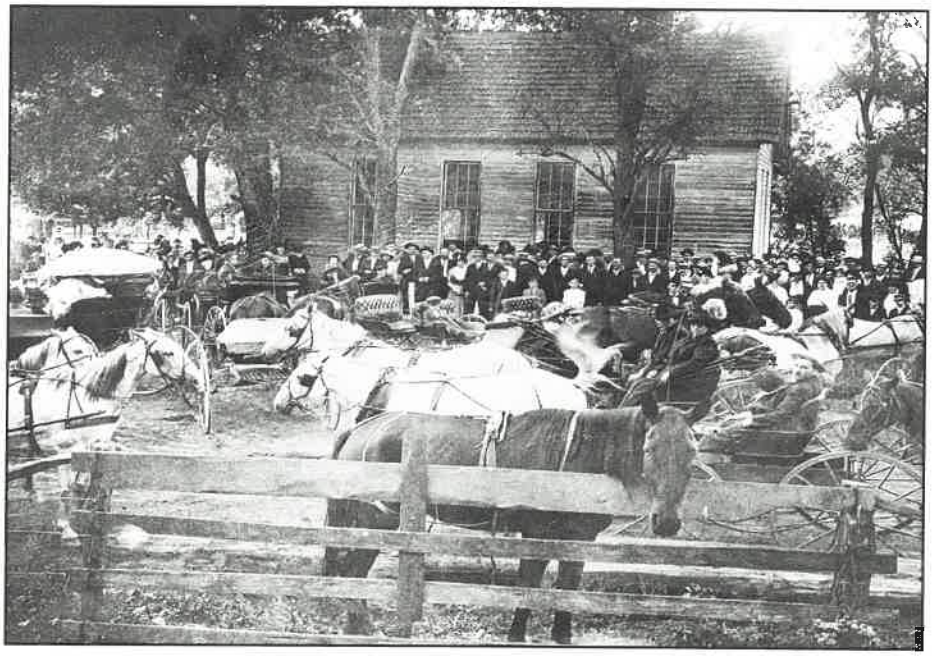
While eating, I thought, what would my mother say, in the years gone by, to see me sitting in front of the fire, coffee cup on the stove, and a hamburger and onion for breakfast? Then I began to think of all the things onions were used for in my young days.

They were on every table twice a day. They were our salad then. Some were just quartered, and they would be eaten with salt with the meal. There were little salt plates at every plate for your onion. They were the size of a child's small play dish. I haven't seen one in years.

Others would cut onions and put homemade vinegar, salt, pepper, and sugar on them. If it was cucumber time, cucumbers would be sliced and mixed with the onion and dressing mixture. Sometimes tomatoes were sliced with them — big vegetable dishes so everyone could have plenty. It didn't matter in those days where you were going after eating all those onions, because everybody smelled the same.

Young onion gravy was a spring dish. They would fry cut young onion in fresh cow's butter, thicken it, and serve over biscuits. To cream onions, the onion would be cut in chunks, parboiled, and then cooked in salt and a tiny bit of sugar. Then it was creamed with flour, milk, and butter.

"Loosin' a Stump" was the name of a homemade cough remedy made from — you guessed it — onions! The onion would be chopped fine and pressed with a fork to get the



The Bingamon Homecoming, seen here in 1914, brought people together from across southern Marion County every September, until the 1960's.

Beryle as a teenager, sporting a wool coat and a fashionable plumed hat.

juice started, then a little sugar was mixed in (brown was best). The mixture would stand until it was mostly juice. After taking a few spoonfuls of this mixture, it wouldn't be but a few minutes until your passages were open.

Then there were onion poultices. Ugh! I can smell them yet, but they really worked. The onions would be fried in lard and then the mixture would be tied in a bag. It would then be placed on the chest. In severe cases, one would also be placed on the back. In later years, they were made of raw chopped onion and salt, placed in a bag, and pounded to get the juice.

Onions were raised by the bushels, the same as potatoes, in five or six beds across a big garden. When the meal was almost ready, the children were sent to the garden to get the onions. They cut the tips of green ones about halfway up and left the rest on the onion. Onions were our main medical aid, and would still be just as good today if people would use them.

Wild greens came first in the spring and then the young onions. We were so starved for something fresh and green that anything tasted good. I remember going to the woods and fields as soon as the wild greens got through the ground. The first was butter weed, then dandelion. They would be bitter if you did not get them very early. But parboiled and cooked with salt pork, they tasted like nothing does today. Later, all kinds of wild plants were picked, cooked, and eaten.

The first green beans were out of this world. I was a young woman before people knew that you could can beans and corn, so we did not have them all winter, like you do now.

Everybody had a drying rack that fastened to the ceiling by wire from all four corners. Some just had cloth, and some had screen on a frame. It hung over the cook stove, which was either wood or coal. Beans, corn, apples, peaches, and pears were placed on it and dried for the winter. Drying and salt brine were the only ways to keep things then.

Everybody had what they called a "cave." It was dug to the size desired and walled up with field stone. Some, like ours, had inside walls and ceiling boards. A roof was fashioned in a way whereby the rainwater would drain off. Then, the cave would be covered with dirt. Sled loads of dirt were hauled and put over it until it looked like a big mound of dirt. Big bins of potatoes and fruit were put in there.

Everybody had their own orchards of every fruit, from cherries to apples. I can smell those orchards yet. Apples were available from early spring to frost. The winter apples were picked so they wouldn't bruise. The spring and summer apples were dried for pies in the winter, apple butter, and jelly.

When the wild berries began to ripen, all of us, from oldest to smallest, went to the fields to pick buckets and buckets of them. We picked gallons of wild strawberries for jam. It took hours to pick and hours to take the

stems off, but everyone did it, and didn't know it was hard work. Then came the raspberries and blackberries, which we picked for canning and jelly. All this was done on a wood or coal stove. Water had to be carried from a spring by buckets full. The children carried the water and kept fuel for the fire and helped with all the work. I wonder how people would handle all that work today.

While the women and children were doing all this picking, canning, and drying, all other work had to go on. This included, of course, the big garden of all kinds of vegetables to tend, and sewing for the whole family, including school clothes. There were always at least two meals a day to be cooked for hired hands or neighbors helping with the farm work. There were cows to be milked twice a day, milk to care for, churning to make butter and cheese, chickens to be raised, eggs to be gathered, always a pen of pigs to be fed out for the year's meat. The men were busy cutting hay, raising corn, oats, wheat, and millet to feed the horses and other animals through the winter. Anything animals or people could eat was saved.

While all this work was going on, a new baby would usually arrive about every two years in most families. The babies were born at home and were just absorbed into the family.

There were two kinds of wheat raised: winter wheat and spring wheat. The winter wheat was for pies and biscuits, and the spring wheat was for light bread. If someone ran out of one kind before threshing time, they traded a sack of what they had to someone who had what they wanted. To buy a sack of flour was never heard of when I grew up.

The wheat was cut by men with hand cradles. One would start a swath around the field and another behind him, and so on, until every man had his swath going around the field. Neighbors would help each other and go from farm to farm. When all was in shocks, someone would come with a threshing machine, and for weeks that was all that was done. The farmers came with their teams and wagons, and the women brought food. Wherever the threshers were, that is where meals were. Then everyone would move on to the next farm.

As the wheat was threshed, it was loaded on wagons. After the threshers quit in the evening, the wagons went to a flour mill four miles away. The wheat was left there to be ground into flour. Sometimes they made a second trip before going home to sleep until 4:00 a.m., and then get up for another day.

The grain that wasn't needed for flour was put in bins to feed the animals through the winter. Oat and straw were saved for rough feed and bedding. Sometimes, straw was

Family — and extended family — formed the cornerstone of daily life for Beryle. She is standing third from the left in the back row of this undated family portrait. Grandparents James and Catherine Hess are seated at left in the second row from the top.



Beryle married three times. She is pictured at left with first husband, Frank Bowman, in 1919. At center, with second husband, John Forquer, in 1960. At right, she is with George Earl McDougal, an old childhood sweetheart whom she wed in 1979. Beryle passed away in 1989.

stacked in what was called a "rick" in the fields. My dad had a big rick in the field back on the farm. Once, a neighbor with a wild imagination came bursting into our kitchen and breathlessly panted, "Don't you go on down where that straw rick is! I just came through there, and the devil run ahead of me. And when he got to the rick, he jumped clear over it (a distance of about 12-feet high), and as he went over, he waved his tail at me!" Nobody else ever saw the devil there.

The big cornfields were a delight to me. Beans were planted in some of the fields to run up on the corn. When the beans would be hanging off the corn from top to bottom, we picked them by the sackful. Pumpkins and squash were planted in the cornfields after the corn was cut and put in shocks. Soon, the fields would be lying full of all kinds and colors of squash. The squash went into the cave, along with the apples and potatoes.

When the corn was dry, husking came, and the golden piles of big ears of corn were beautiful. So much of the best was put aside to be taken to the mill and ground into cornmeal. It was real coarse and had to be sifted, as some hulls were left in, but what wonderful flavor every bite had! Added to the cornmeal were flour, soda, baking powder, buttermilk, sugar, and cracklins to make cornbread. The cornbread we have today is not the kind we had then, and not half as good.

The other corn was sorted and put into cribs. The big ears were put in one section, not so big in another, then what was called short cobs was fed to the hogs and the beef we were raising to be butchered for our meat. The animals would eat that, cob and all, as the ears were softer and hadn't matured into big strong ears.

After butchering time came the long winter. But why worry? All the animals and people had their food stored. Fuel was no problem. Coal was dug from someone's farm if you didn't have it on your own. Wood was all around you, and every home had a big fireplace in their rooms and a coal or wood stove to cook on.

Going to town was never thought of, unless you lived close to town. Everything was bought ahead for the winter. A small barrel of salt fish, sugar, salt, and medicine were always purchased in the fall. However, most people made their own medicine from herbs in the field. Whiskey was a must in every household for medicinal purposes.

The men did all the repair work to farm machinery during the winter months. They split rails to build fences the next spring, cut posts if needed, and repaired harnesses or anything else that would take time away from summer work.

The women sewed all the clothes for the family. Most women made two trips to town: one in the spring and one in the fall. Everything was saved. Every button was saved from a worn-out garment. If a garment had one good piece in it, it was cut out and saved for a patch or quilts. This is where the term "patchwork quilts" came from. Old coats and dresses made of heavy material were especially good to make comforters.

If someone made or had a new dress or garment of any kind, everyone was as happy as if it was theirs, and all looked it over and then tried to copy it. If someone thought up something new (there were no patterns), you just cut until you got a pattern to fit out of paper. If it wasn't perfect, nobody cared. If thread could be pulled in any length, it was wound on an empty spool for use again. A piece of string was wound into a ball, and every piece after that was short-tied to the end of the last piece.

I often think that if everyone would save now like they did then, there would be no high prices. We throw away more now than they saw in a lifetime.

What the Old Folks Say

By Beryle Hess McDougal

These are some customs and expressions I learned in the country when I was young.

Sliced raw onion and salt placed on a copperhead snakebite will draw poison out. Plenty of onions are necessary, as the onion will turn green and rot as soon as it hits the bite.

Raw chicken was also used for snakebites. If there were not enough onions, they would run to the chicken house and kill a chicken. The chicken would be cut in two pieces and placed over the bite, entrails and all. The chicken will also rot immediately, but when the rotting stops, the poison is out. Nobody ever called a doctor for snakebites in those days.

If you see gnats in a bunch, dancing and flying around in the evening air, the next day will be nice.

If it is raining and the chickens fly up and begin pecking and fluffing their feathers, the rain will soon be over. If it will rain all day, the chickens will wade around in it. But if it will rain only a few hours, they stay in the dry. No matter how hot and pretty, if the guineas begin to fly, circle, and screech, the next day will be rainy.

When the mourning dove coos of a morning, it is said it will rain sure as if drops are falling. It is not a dove as we know, but a small bird that sits in the brush and only coos if it is going to rain. Also, if the leaves on the ground plants are standing up, it will rain. Otherwise, they lie flat.

If a spider is coming down a web, it will rain; if the spider is going up, it will be nice. If the ground is covered with webs in the morning, it will be a hot clear day. The more webs there are, the hotter.

If horses or colts start running and playing like children, there will for sure be a storm.

In winter, if animals come to low land, it will be snow and very cold. When they start to go to high ground, it will get warmer. If the animals have slept high up, it will stay warm. If they have slept down low, it will be cold.

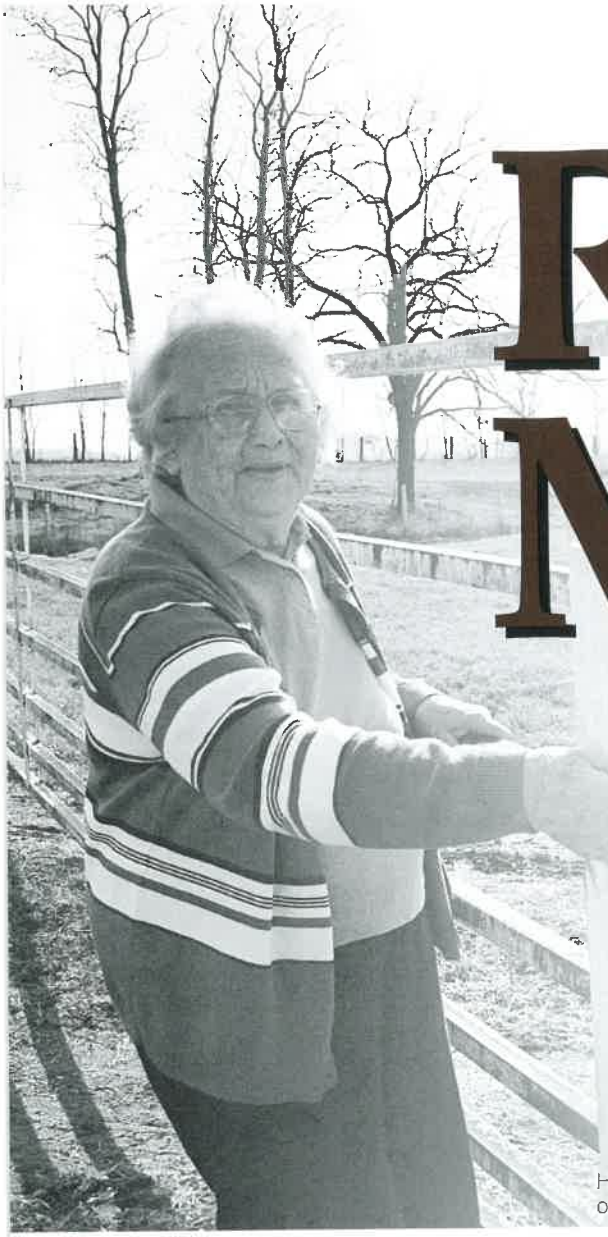
If a dog sits and howls close to the house, you will get bad news, just as sure as that dog howls. It is a different sound from a dog normally howling at the moon or another dog. It raises the hair on your head, if you know the meaning of it.

When the wind whistles — and I mean whistles — around the corner of the house, there is bad weather and cold coming.

Using "horse sense" came from people "letting the horse have the reins," as we used to say, when people used horses quite frequently. If you were lost or were out on a dark night, let the horse take over, and it would take you home.

Catherine and James Hess, Beryle's grandparents, at their home in Marion County. Photographer and date unknown.

Families are like a business. If you do not invest and put into it all you have to give, the business never prospers. Children are a family's investment, and most parents give all they can. That is what makes fine boys and girls that keep the world going. Did you ever stop to wonder why nearly all of our great men have come from very poor families? They were taught by a father and mother that the gift of work is the greatest gift God ever gave to man. Children back then had so little, they used their brains to work out inventions of their own if they wanted something. The father set the example before his son, and the mother before the daughter. It is just as true today.



Raising Monroe

By Mike Walker

Hazel Shrader of Pickaway, Monroe County. For many years, Hazel raised cattle by herself on an old family farm, which she inherited from her mother. Photograph by Ken Sherman.

Hazel Shrader, a sturdy, sensible lady with a kindly face, rose well before sunrise each morning, especially in the coldest months of winter. Following a slippery path to her pond, Hazel would break the ice so that her 15 cows, their calves, and a solitary Hereford bull could drink. Afterwards, she would ensure that these animals had enough hay to last through the day and check on any newborn or especially fragile calves. Then she would leave.

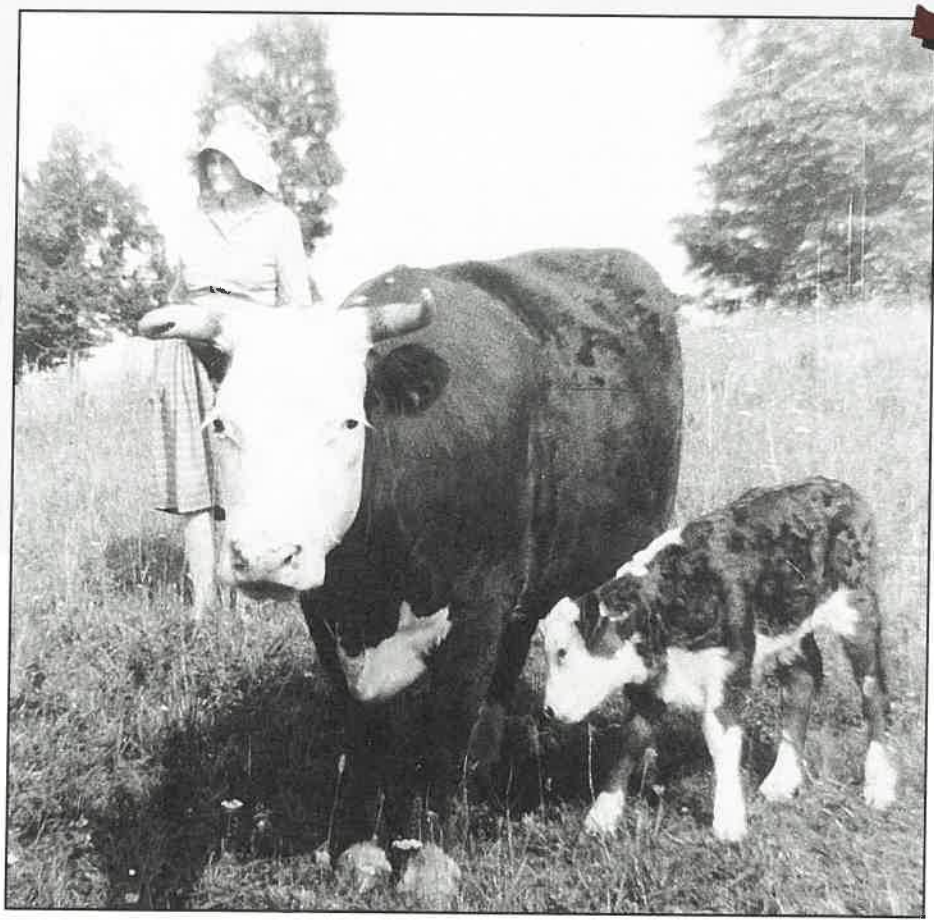
Hazel worked as a school teacher as well as a farmer, and she would not have the opportunity to see about her livestock again until after school was out in the afternoon. Never married, Hazel had helped her widowed mother, Minnie Shrader, tend this farm on U.S. 219 near Pickaway in Monroe County for many years. When her mother passed away in 1972, Hazel inherited the small farm, including the 15 cows.

"By maintaining heifers," Hazel tells me, "I never had to buy any calves. They were born, and if I lost one, it wasn't any loss of money [for the calf]." Hazel kept cattle through most of the 1980's, up until she retired from teaching school in 1987. Despite these two demanding vocations, Hazel never missed a single day of school, except for the four days she took off when her mother passed away. From her farm chores, she did not even have a reprieve at that time.

Hazel Shrader's situation was certainly not unique, as many people in Monroe County keep a small beef or dairy herd, or both, for profit and personal milk production. Both my maternal and paternal grandparents owned farms in Monroe County, as did many other family members. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a person on either side of the family who has not, in some way, been engaged in farming at some point in their lives.

The entire county is primarily agrarian and has depended on livestock production and subsistence farming since the arrival of early settlers in the 18th century. It is often calves — if beef cattle — that will fetch a handsome profit and might make the greatest economic impact in a family's year. If dairy calves, they are depended upon for the continuation of the herd, as well as profit in sales.

Calves in County



Minnie Shrader, Hazel's mother, with a Hereford cow and newborn calf on her Monroe County farm. Photographer and date unknown.

Hazel Shrader is a cousin of mine, who is now 82 years of age. I interviewed her recently, along with my maternal grandmother, to discover how calves were raised when they were young women.

Mayo Martin Lemons — my maternal grandmother, now 83 — recalls how, as a child, she helped with the care of young calves. Her father, mother, and three siblings lived on a large tenant farm near Monitor, now New Lebanon, in north-central Monroe County. Her father worked the farm, and the Martin children were involved in the care of their own livestock, as well as those of the Moore family, who owned this farm. When Mayo Martin married Shelby Lemons in 1943, she married a man and a family engaged in dairy farming.

Today, Mayo lives in a small ranch house, overlooking the same farm, now managed by her son Gary Lemons, who took it over after Shelby's death in 1979. Situated only a few steps from the dairy barn she and her husband built, Mayo is still surrounded by cattle and the business of raising them, as she has been for her entire life. With more than eight decades of the hard work, triumphs, and tribulations of earning a living through cattle, Mayo has a lot of history to share.

Neatly dressed in light green slacks and a white top, Mayo leans back in her chair. "Cattle, you had to always watch them," she explains. "Things would not go wrong very often, but something always could. We had bulls get over on someone else's land. Often they had cattle, too — sometimes their own bulls — so you had to get them back right fast. Now, that's not changed since the old days. That's still the case today. Cattle need some land, and the more cattle you have, the more land you need. It wasn't always possible to see them from the house, so you had to go and see about the cattle a lot. The woods up above [Gary's house], Shelby had to go up and check about the cows and calves. A calf could get hurt back in there, and you'd not

even know it."

Like any business, economic factors play into calf-raising at every level. If things went right, "you could make something off of beef calves," Mayo tells me. Calves are born in the winter or spring and sold in the fall, so they do not require an intensive effort in harvesting and storing hay or silage to feed them through the entire winter. Cows, of course, have to be provided for in this way. Calves were therefore the most economically rewarding livestock option.

Ideally, calves would be born during the warmer spring months, but in reality, Mayo says, they often appeared on freezing February nights. Careful observation of a cow going into labor would lead most farmers to confine the expectant cow to a stall, or at least to the inside of a barn, to offer warmth and safety for the delivery. It was also common for cows to give birth in secret seclusion, however, and for no one to realize the fact until a couple days later, when the cow and calf emerged together from some wooded corner of the pasture, Mayo says. When possible, though, births were attended to by the farmer. Even in the early 20th century, a veterinarian was called when difficulties arose. Birth itself was usually the most dangerous time for a young calf.

Young Mayo Martin with her first calf, in about 1935. Photographer unknown.

"Dad would always try to be there when a cow was in labor and they knew it," Mayo recollects. "He would send for the vet if she really had trouble, and that did happen. I can remember the vet coming out on several occasions. Once, the vet came out to the Moore place. The calf he came about seemed okay, but another one had just been born, and it was struggling, so it was a good thing we'd called him out."

Mayo notes that feeding the newborn calf was the first priority for the farmer, once the calf's immediate health was assured. There were different mechanisms of feeding, but for the first few days, the calf had to receive colostrum from its mother to build up its immune system.

"Sometimes we left [the calf] on the cow, and sometimes we tried to get him to drink from a bucket of milk," Mayo explains. "I learned to milk when I was five years old. You'd milk right into the bucket and then take it to the calf warm and stick his head down there and let him suck on your finger so he'd taste the milk. Sometimes, they'd learn to drink from the bucket that way.

Mayo Lemons has lived on cattle farms in Monroe County her entire life. She is shown here on the deck of her home near Pickaway, with a herd of cattle in the distance. Photograph by Ken Sherman.

Sometimes, we'd use a pop bottle and rubber nipple and fill that with milk, either real milk or substitute. The calves grew better, it seemed, on the real milk, but we needed some cows for milk [production], and some would orphan the calf or not let it nurse. So we used the substitute, too. What they have [as substitutes] now is better than what they had then, I imagine."

Mayo reports that calves often spilled their buckets of milk, and great care had to be taken to ensure that they obtained enough milk in their first month of life. Milk and the commercial milk substitute were precious commodities, so waste was kept to a minimum. As young teenagers, Mayo and her brother and sisters would spend hours with the calves, mostly to make certain they were well-fed and that as little milk as possible was lost.

"Once my brother, Bill, took a bucket of milk in to the calf. We had an orphaned calf, and it wouldn't drink. So he set the bucket by the side of the stall and left it there, tied to the stall so the calf wouldn't knock it over. There was another little calf in the next stall, and he came along and just tried and tried to get to that bucket of milk. But the one it was intended for didn't want it at all," Mayo says.

Disease was another serious concern and, aside from stillbirths and losses immediately after birth, was the main cause of death in young calves. The most prevalent disease seemed to be the "common scours," Mayo says. This infection often weakened young calves and made them susceptible to other diseases, especially those caused by bacteria. As it is primarily a digestive ailment, the scours traditionally has been treated through a reduction of feed intake and isolation of the affected calf. Due to the swift progress of the disease and its ability to quickly infect an entire herd of young calves, isolation was important for the sake of the healthy calves, Mayo tells me.

"They would get the scours," Mayo recalls. "Dad would try to separate the calves with it from the others, but it set in fast. We would thin their milk with water to make it easier for them to swallow, I guess, but also to make it go further. We would give them a little castor oil sometimes, too. But you'd lose some to it. Even when we called the vet in, there wasn't much he could do."

Hazel Shrader agrees. "If you had a sick calf, you needed to get him out of the pasture where the rest of them were. I only had one barn to put them in. So if I had several sick, they all had to go in there. Not many took sick, really, but sometimes five at a time were ill. You couldn't predict how they would do. My father raised turkeys and sheep more than cattle — we were turkey people, and my college was paid for by the turkeys. But with all those animals, you had to take the sick out and hope the others hadn't got it already. Cattle were hardier than sheep, though," Hazel recollects.

Hazel Shrader describes the difficulties of a single person tending to young calves. As a teacher, she was away from her home during the day and could not look after her stock as farmers traditionally would have done. Today, more and more people involved in cattle-raising in West Virginia are in Hazel's situation, working other jobs alongside farming. Hazel notes how neighbors, almost all of whom had their own livestock, depended heavily upon each other.

"People knew I would be gone [during the day] and would look

"The more cattle you have, the more land you need," Mayo points out. This herd of cattle belongs to her son, Gary, who manages approximately 130 acres. Photograph by Mike Walker.

Hazel Shrader taught school during the days, and neighbors helped look after her cattle while she was gone. "They knew when I had calves," she says. "People were really good to look out for each other." Photograph by Ken Sherman.

over and see if my cows were okay, if any got out or any looked sick," Hazel says. "They knew when I had calves. People were really good to look out for each other, and, oh, if a neighbor lost a cow, now that was a disaster. Most people had — even in the 1980's — small herds. Earlier, you had a few cows for milk and maybe sold the calves. So if you lost a cow, that was the difference sometimes between a family making it that year or not. People knew they didn't have much money; kids didn't ask for new things because they knew their parents could not afford [anything]. You paid your taxes, and if you had any left over, maybe bought something new. But we grew up in the Depression and knew not having much — that's all we knew."

Mayo Lemons remembers how the beef market could greatly dictate how many head of cattle the farmers in the area carried each year. Unlike the large ranches of the West, farms in Monroe County were small operations in terms of geographic size, but some did carry 300 to 500 head of cattle, or greater, and raised the crops to tide these animals over through the winter. Other farms were much smaller. Some were a simple matter of someone having 10 to 20 acres and finding it to be profitable to raise cattle now and then.

"People who didn't have cows [sometimes] would go and buy baby calves and raise them, if the market was good [for beef]," Mayo says. "People might not hardly have any land [to graze them on]. They'd have yearling calves out there and not hardly a blade of grass left when they sold them in the fall. They would hope, since [these calves] were old enough to be healthy, they wouldn't lose any and they'd bring high enough to make a profit off of them. But if you bought them and lost a couple somehow, you might lose some money, too. I know of a man — I won't say who, because it would sound hateful — but someone around here who always had more calves than he could take care of, really. He didn't keep his fences up, and they'd get over on other people awfully bad. There just wasn't enough grass for them. But I guess that's all he could do, and he probably did make a little off them."

Most farmers kept the majority of calves inside their barns during their first weeks in harsh weather, she points out.

"The winters seemed worse, colder, back then," Mayo says. "I think they were worse than now. Dad would keep the newborn calves in a shed together in the winter, and when [they were] older, they were put out. Dad would build a pen out of wire for them in the spring."

Mayo recalls that bad weather affected the calves in other ways, as well. "There was a veterinarian down at Hollywood, and the Moore women had a phone — one of those old wall-mounted wooden phones — in the house. But if you called the vet, he wouldn't always come in bad weather. So Dad would go get him. If you went in person to get him, he couldn't say no. But if you called, he might come or might not. If it was important, you went for him.

"One of Gary's cows had her calf on a really bad, really

Newborn calves, such as these, face their most challenging times at, and immediately following, birth. Photograph by Mike Walker.

Much of Monroe County lies over rich limestone deposits, making for fertile soil and forming numerous sinkholes, such as this one. Occasionally, these holes pose a hazard for grazing cattle. Photograph by Mike Walker.

cold night in February, and she had him way out in the field. Gary knew she was about to go into labor, but he didn't get there until later than he planned because he had other stock to tend to — there's a lot for a man to do on a farm. When he found the cow and calf, it was in the middle of the night and way below freezing, probably below zero, too. The calf's ears, tail, and feet had frozen. Gary got him into the barn and called the vet, but she couldn't do much for him. He lost his tail, part of each ear, and was crippled. He got along okay though, never grew as large as he would have otherwise. What saved him was getting him warm. That's what we'd have done 70 years ago, too. I don't imagine the vet now could do anything the vet then couldn't [do] for him. She might have put him on antibiotics, but it was more about getting him out of the cold. You can expect to lose several calves every year, maybe a couple cows, too. I'm glad that one wasn't lost, too."

In the story above, the calf was crippled, but not orphaned, as many calves are in similar situations. Calves were lost to injuries, cold weather, and to disease. On some farms in Monroe County, some were also lost falling into sinkholes and caves. While this didn't happen on the Lemons or Shrader farms, it did happen on Dewey Walker's Twin Springs Farm, where my father grew up. On at least one occasion, a steer fell into an open crevice leading about 12-feet down to a cave in the limestone karst. The animal had to be rescued, but others have not been so lucky. Some farmers have heard what seemed to be animals bellowing from underground, and perhaps, indeed, that was the case.

Overall, raising calves in Monroe County was hard work but less labor-intensive and more predictable than field crops and other options for farmers, Mayo and Hazel tell me. Small family farms in remote areas, such as Monroe County, often retained traditional approaches to farming out of necessity, if not out of desire. As advances in knowledge about animal diseases and better methods of husbandry were developed, some practices slowly changed here. Many methods, however, were time-tested, and there was no need to replace them with new concepts. The raising of calves is such an area — a type of agriculture well-suited to the small farm that could involve the entire family and relies on a dedication to the care of individual animals instead of complex profit projections or crop forecasts.

At the end of the day, what mattered was that the calves were healthy and would hopefully turn a decent profit. As Hazel Shrader notes, "I wasn't always glad to see those calves in the morning, but I was always real glad to see that they were healthy and doing well."

MIKE WALKER is a freelance writer, originally from Monroe County. He is currently a student in architectural history at Savannah College of Art and Design and makes his home in Gainesville, Florida. His writing has been published in *BrightLights Quarterly*, *EcoFlorida*, *Lunar Magazine*, and other periodicals. This is Mike's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Farming is a family business in Monroe County. Here, Mayo Lemons stands with her son Gary on the cattle farm he now manages. Photograph by Ken Sherman.

Grandma and the Gentleman

By Gene Bailey

The man coming up the lane was struggling to hold the rope as the cow jerked her head back and forth and his teenage son followed behind with a limber switch cut from an apple tree. Each time the man gave the cow a little slack in the rope, she kicked her hind quarters into the air in an attempt to get free. And when the man pulled on the rope, she dug in her feet and refused to move until the teenager swatted her rump with the switch. But the man continued pulling the rope, and the boy switched the cow as necessary, until the trio arrived at the front gate of our farm house.

My brother and I lived along Pisgah Road, about two-and-a-half miles northeast of Princeton, in Mercer County, on a mountain farm with Mother, Daddy, Grandma, and Granddaddy. The men were often working a distance from the house and couldn't see or hear when someone came calling with a cow. The moment when a neighbor arrived at our front gate with a cow was a dreaded time for Grandma and Mother, because one of them had to go out and greet him and explain that the men folk were gone. But the real terror came when it was time to explain how they could take care of the business for which they had dragged the cow to our farm.

It was the 1930's and early '40's, and times were hard. Money for buying anything was scarce. We produced most of the food we needed, and the men traded for many other essential items. But money was necessary for some things. Granddaddy and Daddy thought of many ways to make money.

Stella Shumate Bailey, our author's grandmother, in the early 1940's.

They had a mill to grind feed for the neighbors' livestock, some of whom paid in cash. But they were more likely to pay a portion, or toll, of the grain that they brought in for grinding. Then Granddaddy would sell the toll to farmers who ran out of feed. They had a machine to clean and grade grain. The better grain was sold, at a premium price, for seed. In the spring, they grew and sold vegetable plants, which were produced in a horse-manure hotbed. They sold wool from the sheep that they sheared just after the "sheep rains" in May. And they sold registered Hereford calves for breeding purposes.

But perhaps their most embarrassing money-making project, at least for Grandma and Mother, was keeping a bull for breeding the neighbors' cows. To keep them milking, every cow, about once a year, had to be bred and have a calf, or "come fresh," as it was called. This kept the cow giving milk. Many of our neighbors had a milk cow or two, but couldn't afford to keep a bull for so few cows. For these neighbors, Granddaddy and Daddy kept a bull to accommodate their cows. And they charged a fee for the service. The fee brought in enough money to pay the expenses for keeping the bull and provided a little additional cash.

Cows only have a short period of time when they can be bred, and owners soon learned to recognize the signs when their cows were "in heat." Because this time was brief, neighbors would bring their cows to our farm at anytime of day or early evening to make their annual visit. Often, if it was during the day, Granddaddy and Daddy would be away working. When the men were gone, either Grandma or Mother had to greet the neighbors who were dragging and switching the cow up the lane to our front gate. This was always an embarrassing time for the women, especially Grandma, because southern mountain women in those days did not discuss sex, or the results thereof, with men or in the presence of children.

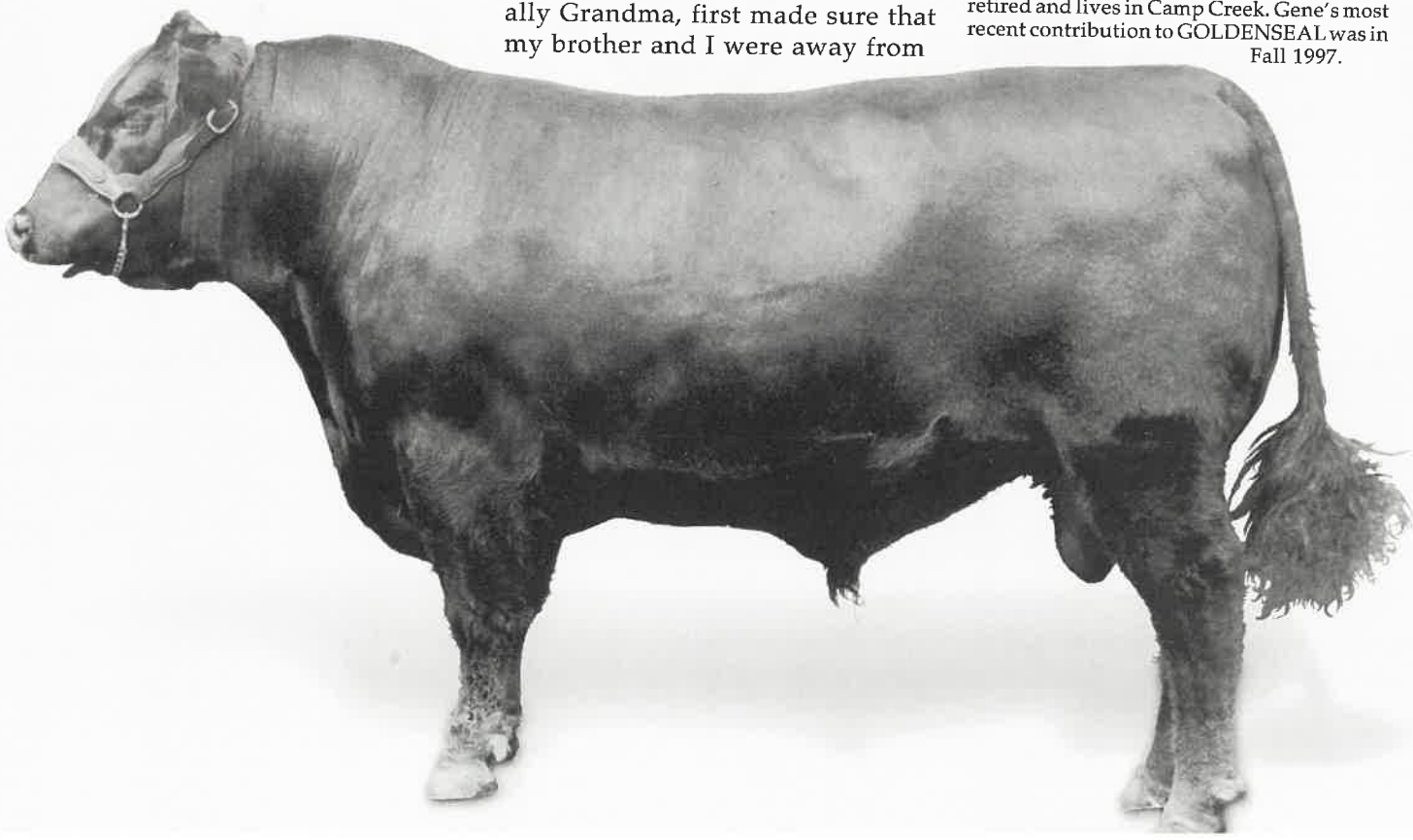
It made no difference that we children, by the time we were six years old, had seen dozens of animals being bred. We knew where babies — at least animal babies — came from. And we had a pretty fair idea of how they got there. Nevertheless, sex and pregnancy were never discussed in our presence.

So, when the neighbor and his son finally wrestled the cow to our front gate, one of the women, usually Grandma, first made sure that my brother and I were away from the front of the house and out of earshot — or so she thought. (We often went upstairs where we could hear perfectly well and had a clear view.) Then she would step out on the porch and greet the neighbor.

After Grandma exchanged brief greetings with the neighbor, asking about his wife or other family members, she would give instructions, but she would never use the term "bull" or acknowledge what was to be done. Many times, I heard her tell a neighbor with a cow, "The 'gentleman' [bull] is over in that field. Take your cow on out to see him, and if he does her any good, stop back by and pay me two dollars."

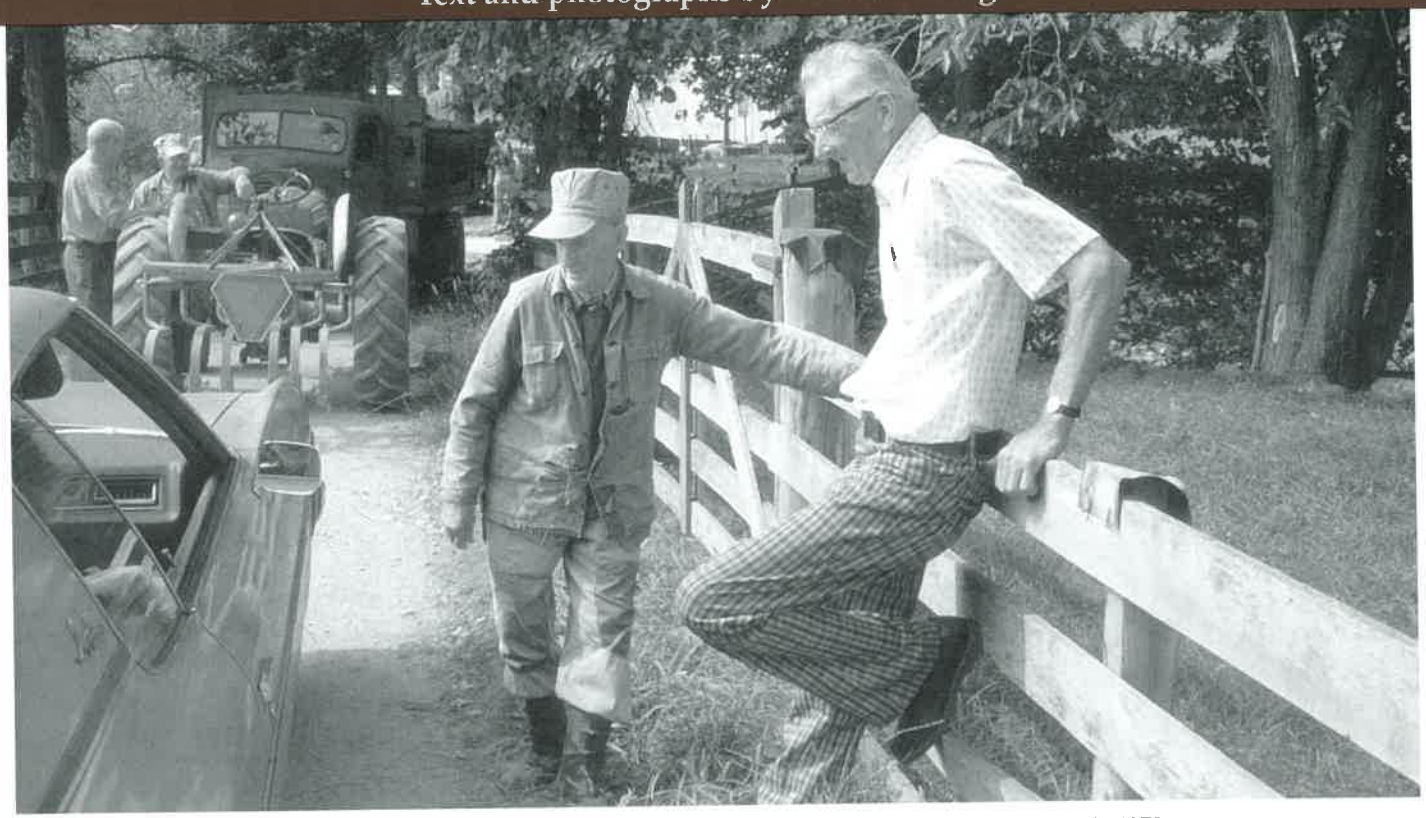
And she would add, "If it don't take, bring her back next month and there won't be anymore charge." Then she would come back into the house and close the door, making sure that my brother and I were nowhere near the windows, which provided a view of the bull lot. She didn't realize that we were often upstairs, where we had an even better view of the unspeakable event.

GENE BAILEY grew up on a mountain farm near Princeton. He served as a four-term member of the West Virginia Legislature and taught social studies at Oakvale Junior High School from 1969 to 1989. He is now retired and lives in Camp Creek. Gene's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL was in Fall 1997.



Slim Bosely and His Outhouse

Text and photographs by Warren Poling

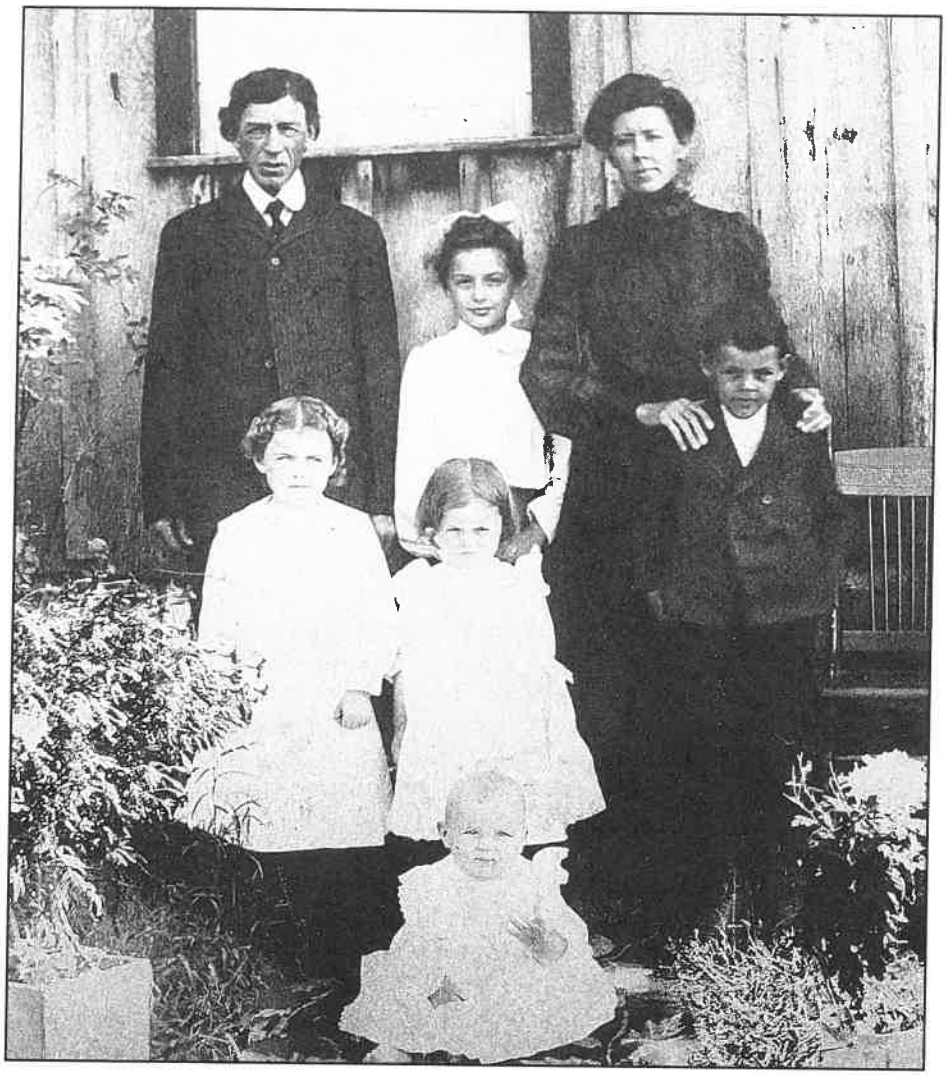


Long and lanky as a fence rail, Floyd "Slim" Bosely, at right, visits with friend Oliver Liller on a farm near Romney in 1978.

Of my four uncles — one Poling and three Bosely — it was my uncle Floyd Bosely whom I knew best and admired most. Due to his towering height of six feet and seven inches, those who knew him called him "Slim" throughout his adult life.

He was born in 1905 on a farm in eastern West Virginia near Keyser, the fifth child of William Warner and Delilah Bell (Bean) Bosely. Slim was 10 years younger than my mother, Ora Mae Bosely, who was born in 1895.

In 1908, Grandfather Bosely, for reasons unknown, gathered up his wife and flock of six children and moved them into an old, partially log house on a poor, hilly farm in Barbour County near Belington. There they settled in, to scratch out a living raising cattle and farming the arable part of the property, which was only a few acres. Slim was three at the time of the move. He had two older and one younger sister and an



The Bosely family at Keyser in about 1905. Parents are William and Delilah Bell Bosely. Mae Bosely, our author's mother, stands between her parents. Sisters Beryl and Cora, and brother Ralph, stand in front. Baby Floyd Bosely is seated. As an adult, Floyd was known as "Slim"; he lived most of his life in Barbour County. Photographer unknown.

older and a younger brother.

Slim and his brothers and sisters grew up on the farm, herding and milking the cattle, tilling the fields, and raising crops of berries, cherries, garden produce, and walnuts — anything to sell for a few dollars or trade at the store. Beginning when I was about five, in the mid-'20's, I usually spent summers with them, tagging along in the fields, helping to hoe corn and pick berries, sleeping with them on straw ticks in the attic, and riding with Granddad Bosely when he hitched a horse to his buckboard wagon to take produce to the store in Belington to trade for essentials, such as flour, sugar and salt, and yeast for the home-baked bread.

Essentially everything served on the table was raised on the farm. Root vegetables, such as rutabagas, beets, parsnips, and potatoes, as well as apples, were buried in straw in a pit in the nearby garden and dug out a few at a time to eat during the winters. Hogs and maybe a calf or sheep were butchered in the fall to provide meat for the table. I now know that they were dirt poor, but it wasn't realized at the time — so was everybody else.

Slim and his younger brother Arthur grew up working on the farm, plowing, seeding, and cultivating crops, such as corn, wheat, and buckwheat. While Slim and Arthur worked the fields together, I noticed a strange thing — they never talked directly to each other, in the fields or in the house. If one wanted a response from the other, he would ask me to ask the other person for him. I assume that this was just a personality trait, and do not know to what age it persisted, but in later life they did communicate directly. In fact, both became avid storytellers and loved to tell tales of the people and times they had known.

To my knowledge, Slim never had much of a social life or dated girls. Lack of both car and money probably inhibited such activities, but he did attend church, which was the center of social life back then. Sometime in the mid-'20's he met a young woman named Alma Holbert, who played the organ in church. They decided to get married in 1929. Lacking any means of transportation, they asked my dad, Opha Poling, to drive them to Oakland, Maryland, a town about 60 miles away and just across the state border. Many young couples eloped or went to Oakland to marry because they could buy a license and get married immediately on the same day, which wasn't possible in West Virginia.

I believe that Dad's car was a Ford Model T. It wasn't much good on the steep, winding mountain road to Oakland, and Dad wasn't a very good driver, but they made it there and arrived back that evening, a married couple. They had no car, and a honeymoon was out of the question, so they spent the night at our house.

Our sleeping arrangements in the old farmhouse consisted of two small bedrooms up a narrow steep stairway, one of which Mom and Dad slept in, and the four Poling kids, plus Grandma Poling, slept in the other. I can remember three or four to a bed. There was a bigger bedroom with a fireplace downstairs off the parlor, but for some reason Mom wouldn't let us use it. So Slim and his new bride got to sleep in the guest bedroom. Next morning they left, for where I do not know. Maybe they moved in with Alma's parents, which wouldn't have been uncommon in those days.

Slim at work in his garden in 1978. By this time, Slim was retired from the State Road Commission and devoted most of his time to farming.

The years passed, and eventually the couple bought a big old farmhouse about two miles up the road from our store (Poling's Store, later known as Poor Ralph's, and still operating). There they lived for many years while they raised three girls: Norma Jean, Alberta, and Nancy. Slim worked many of those years for the State Road Commission, driving truck and bossing the road maintenance and repair crews. In the winters, a big part of his responsibility was plowing the ice and snow off the Barbour County roads to keep them passable. On nights when the snow was blowing and piled high, the snowplows and cinder trucks could be heard grinding by, and you knew that out there was Slim Bosely doing his job.

In the fall of 1950 when our children, Judy and Gary, were little, we left them with their grandparents in Philippi while we drove to Washington, D.C., where I interviewed for a job. Heading back from Washington westward toward West Virginia on Route 50, we hit an ice storm, and the trees and road quickly accumulated a coat of ice. We knew we were in for trouble, and, sure enough, as we climbed up Allegheny Front Mountain, the drifts started piling in the road. We stopped at a restaurant on the top of the mountain near Mount Storm, where I put on tire chains. From there on westward, I followed snowplows and graders, managing to get around stalled vehicles, including a jack-knifed semi-trailer in a particularly vicious hairpin turn at what was known as the "Big A" on Cheat Mountain. Our heater quit working, and we could reach out either side and touch a snow wall. Late that night, we got into Clarksburg. From there, I tried to get out on the road to Philippi, but the road soon disappeared in the whiteness, and I was forced to turn back. We ended up spending two nights in the Waldo Hotel at Clarksburg, worrying about the kids getting their milk, because we heard on the radio that Philippi was isolated. [See "More Bad Weather: The Big Snow of 1950," by Joy Gilchrist; Spring 1997.]

On the second morning, the storm had cleared. We started out on Route 20 for Philippi, not knowing if we could get through. We made it over the Harrison County roads up to the Barbour County line, where Route 57 to Philippi begins, fearing the worst about the roads ahead. There sat a State Road Commission snowplow, and in it was Uncle Slim Bosely. He had gotten little sleep for three days, but he said, "Come on, I'll get you there." And he did. Slim was always identified with the State Road Commission until he retired to work on his beloved farm.

Slim and Alma are at left in this 1978 photograph, with Slim's sister Mae Poling (our author's mother) and Betty Poling (our author's wife).

The years went by, and Slim and Alma lived out their lives and raised their girls, who grew up and left home — probably happily, because their parents battled constantly. Alma gave piano lessons, played the organ in church, baked wonderful cookies, and took in sewing to make a little money, which they desperately needed. Slim's job with the road commission was seasonal — when the annual budget ran out, he was unemployed, unless it snowed. Alma was noted to be a nag, and Slim a miser. Being tight with his money, Slim never saw fit to install running water in the house — thus no indoor bathroom or hot water. Instead, they all used the outdoor privy.

Their 50th anniversary came around in 1979, and their children planned a big party to celebrate. By this time, they had good income from a gas well drilled on their property, and Slim got Alma a new kitchen range, which operated on gas, as well as some gas heaters, replacing their old coal stoves and fireplace. Alma was tremendously proud of her new kitchen range. We went in to see it, and she proudly pointed it out, patted it, and said, "There she is. Ain't she a beauty?" She had baked thousands of cakes in the old coal-fired one.

But still no indoor bathroom facilities. I guess Slim did realize that the old outhouse had outlived its useful life, though. For their anniversary, he had a new outhouse built, equipped with store-bought rolls of toilet paper to replace the Sears catalogs.

Alma lived into the early 1980's. A few years before she died, Slim finally had indoor plumbing and a bathroom installed. Sadly, Alma only got to enjoy it for a short time before her death.

Slim died at 87 in 1992, having survived Alma by about 10 years. Being alone now after her death — although I don't think they were much company to each other, anyhow — he started driving about five miles to Belington for morning coffee and attending church on Sunday. He met, or perhaps previously knew, an elderly nice-looking widow, and they started going out together. The story is that he was quite attentive to her, necking in public and holding the car door for her. He also bought her gifts and jewelry, things that he never did for Alma, and his girls were outraged and disliked her because of it.

Slim Bosely's original outhouse, as it appeared in 1979. He had a new one built for Alma for their 50th wedding anniversary.

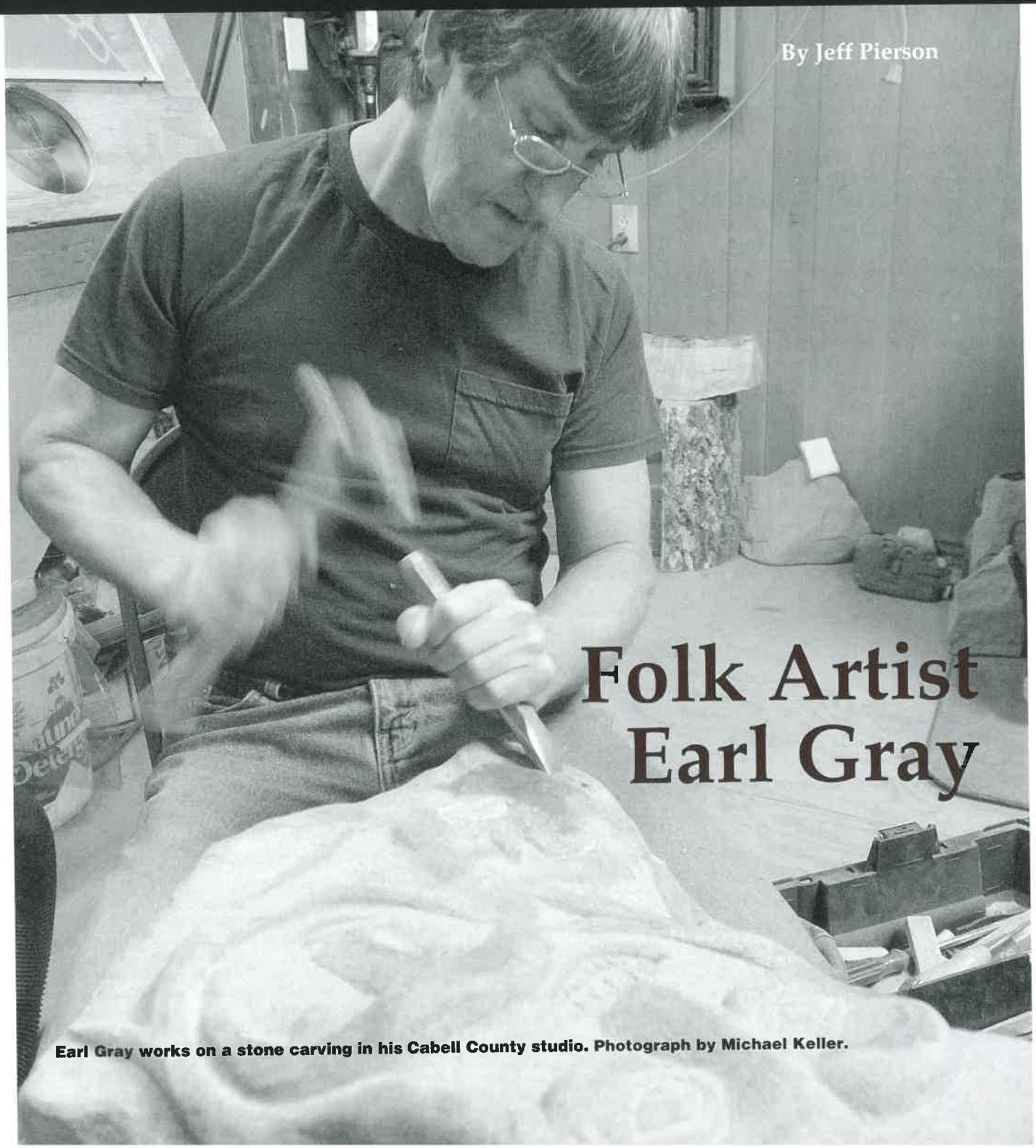
In early 1999, my sister Juanita died and was buried in the Corley cemetery on Route 250, where Alma and Slim, as well as my mom and dad, are buried. As we walked back to the car from Juanita's grave, we passed Slim and Alma's fairly big and ornate grave monument with their names and dates of birth and death inscribed. It happened that two of their daughters, Norma Jean and Alberta, were close ahead of us. I commented as we walked, "There lies my Uncle Slim and his wife, Alma. I remember when Dad took them to Oakland to be married in 1929, and they spent the night at our house." Alberta spoke up and said, "Yes, and Mama told me that she sat in a chair and crocheted the entire night."

WARREN POLING was born in Barbour County on a farm between Philippi and Belington. He graduated from WVU in 1943 with a degree in mechanical engineering. Warren is retired from the Tennessee Valley Authority and lives in Chattanooga. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

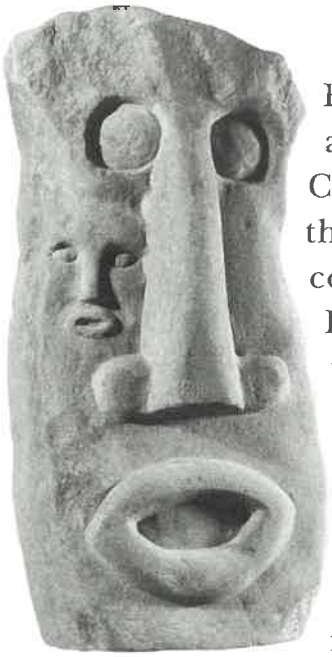
"Finding a Face in the Stone"

Folk Artist Earl Gray

By Jeff Pierson



Earl Gray works on a stone carving in his Cabell County studio. Photograph by Michael Keller.



Earl Gray has his home and art studio in northern Cabell County, just across the line from the Mason county town of Glenwood. He is a self-taught artist who carves unusual faces and figures in wood and stone. Reminiscent at times of the sculptures found on Easter Island, those of Aztec gods found in Mexico and Central America, or ancient Celtic carvings, Earl's art is primitive and timeless. He manipulates various surfaces to create metamorphic faces and designs, some of which become quite intricate as they develop. Earl does not sketch ideas on paper before executing the final work, but rather develops them on the spot, inspired by the moment and by the materials that he finds in the woods behind his home. "I would look at the grain of the wood and find faces," Earl explains. "Once I had found the face, I would carve it out of the wood."

Earl was born in Sistersville on May 14, 1955. Sistersville, a small river town located about 40 miles up the Ohio River from Parkersburg, was quite isolated at the time. Earl's parents were Clarence Frederick "Catfish" Gray and Mary Francis Gray. Catfish, originally from Jackson County, was well-known as an herbal doctor, carrying on a tradition that went back several generations in his family. He was given the name "Catfish" while working at the DuPont chemical plant in Williamstown during the early 1950's, where he would set up outside the gate and sell fresh catfish to co-workers.

In 1953, Catfish experienced a setback when he was injured on the job. He soon moved his family to Cabell County and began selling flowers in Huntington. He would set up at a local market and sell wildflowers to people passing by. Through conversations with other vendors, it soon became obvious that Catfish knew a tremendous amount concerning herbal medicine and natural remedies. Before long, people came from all over to get his advice and to buy certain plants. He was dubbed "Catfish — Man of the Woods" by the local media, was interviewed many times, appeared on television, and was the subject of a 1974 documentary film, as well as a 1977 GOLDENSEAL story. [See "Catfish: Portrait of an Herb Doctor," by Ted Green and Allen Bennett; July-September 1977.]

The Gray family worked a farm on Spurlock Creek in northern Cabell County. There were 10 children in the family: four boys and six girls. Earl, one of the middle children, spent most of his days helping out around the farm. Earl lived what he considered to be a rather normal childhood. He attended school in the area and graduated from Fairfield High in 1975.

As a young man, Earl discovered that he had talents in carpentry, house painting, farming, and woodworking. "I did what I could do to get by," he recalls. "I made money by working odd jobs and working with my brothers." In the early 1980's, Earl went to work with his brothers at a local tobacco farm.

At the tobacco farm, Earl spent most of his time waiting on his brothers while they made delivery runs. Earl

Above: This 12-inch-tall untitled sandstone sculpture by Earl Gray has two faces. Photograph by Jeff Pierson.

Young Earl Gray at the family farm near Bens Run, Pleasants County, in about 1958. Photographer unknown.

Earl carved this untitled 21-inch-square face in 1995, his first stone carving. Today, it stands outside of his studio. Photograph by Barbara Gray.

recalls, "One particular day, about 20 years ago now, I was sitting waiting for my brothers Jon and Dorman, and I started looking at the stick I had picked up. As I carried the stick around, I began to see a face. So, I pulled out my pocket knife and started carving the stick until I had a face looking right back at me. Up until that point in my life, I had never thought about making art. I had no interest in art at all."

The Grays had no exposure to art in their home, Earl says. Being isolated and living out in the country, Earl made art merely for his own amusement. This was something to pass the time, he says. "It was entertaining to me."

Earl continued taking odd jobs to make money and to help support the family. In his spare time, he carved faces on the ends of sticks, which he had found in the woods. "I would just whittle away," he says. "Whenever I had the face I was looking for, I would stop."

In early 1983, Earl married. His wife, Barbara, is also a folk artist, who paints landscapes and other natural subject matter. The couple bought a farm house near where Earl grew up. There, Earl built a studio for his and Barbara's art. All the while, he continued to take odd jobs.

In 1990, Earl took a house-painting job for a lady named Kate McComas. Earl worked eight-hour shifts and did not take breaks, seldom even stopping for lunch. On a rare lunch break one day, Earl carved a back scratcher for Kate. This carving became the turning point in his life as an artist.

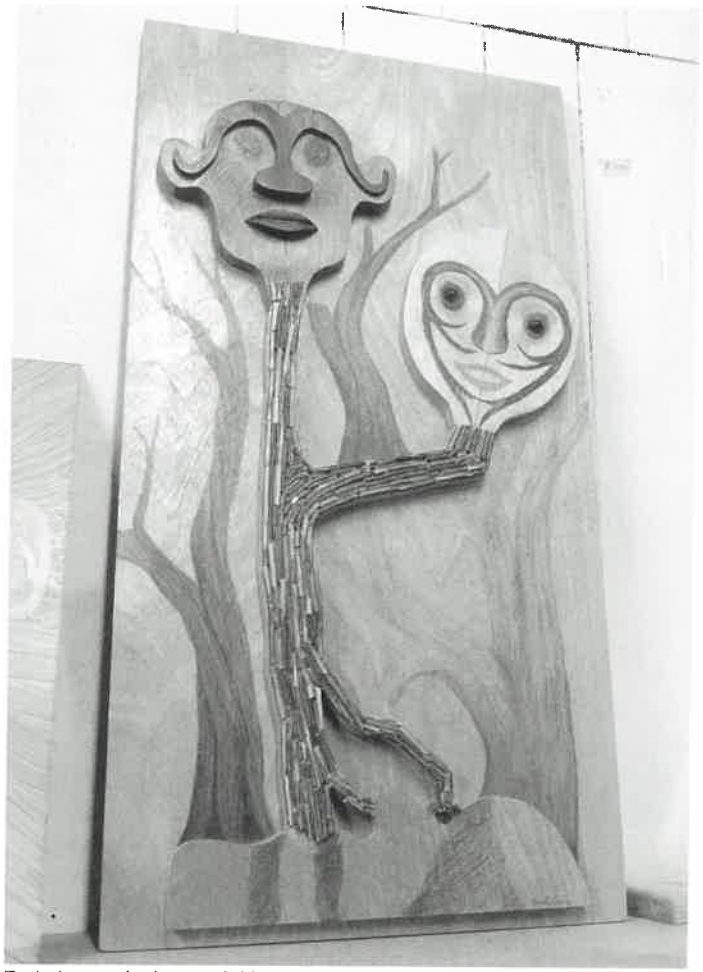
Kate happened to be a docent at the Huntington Museum of Art. She was impressed with this carving and immediately wanted to see more. Earl took her some additional carvings in a small shoe box. Kate bought a few of the carvings and eventually showed them to Eason Eige, the museum's chief curator. A meeting with the Gray and Eige was soon arranged.

"I liked Earl," Eason says. "He and Barbara were great friends early on. He came over to Kate's with six bags of carvings. It was obvious he had been making these carvings for a while. His work is very personal. He is a genuine person, and it comes out in the work. ... The isolation, I think, fueled his creativity. ... The work was coming [from] within. There was no evidence of any outside influence."

Eason bought several pieces for himself and began helping to promote Earl's work. At the time, Huntington Museum of Art's Collection Committee did not purchase folk art, but Eason promoted Earl's work elsewhere. The first museum to express an interest in Earl's art was the American Visionary Museum, located in Baltimore's inner harbor, which included Earl's art in its inaugural exhibition in 1995. His work was well received, and, as a result, Earl's carvings started to get noticed on a wider scale.

Eventually, Eason decided to have

Earl shows the profile emerging from an unfinished work, carved in alabaster. Photograph by Michael Keller.



Earl also works in wood. Here, he has attached raised pieces onto a 30" x 16" illustrated board in this untitled piece. Photograph by Michael Keller.

a folk art exhibition at the Huntington museum, titled "By the People: Two Hundred Years of Folk Art," featuring artists from around the country. He, of course, called on his new friend to be a part of this exhibition. This gave Earl the local spotlight. "I would not be known at all if it were not for Eason," Earl comments.

Earl spent hours in the woods near his studio looking for just the right wood. "I really like the smell of cedar," he says. "It made for good carving wood." Like most artists, Earl eventually found that he wanted to take his work to the next level. About 1995, Earl came across a new medium while on a walk in the woods.

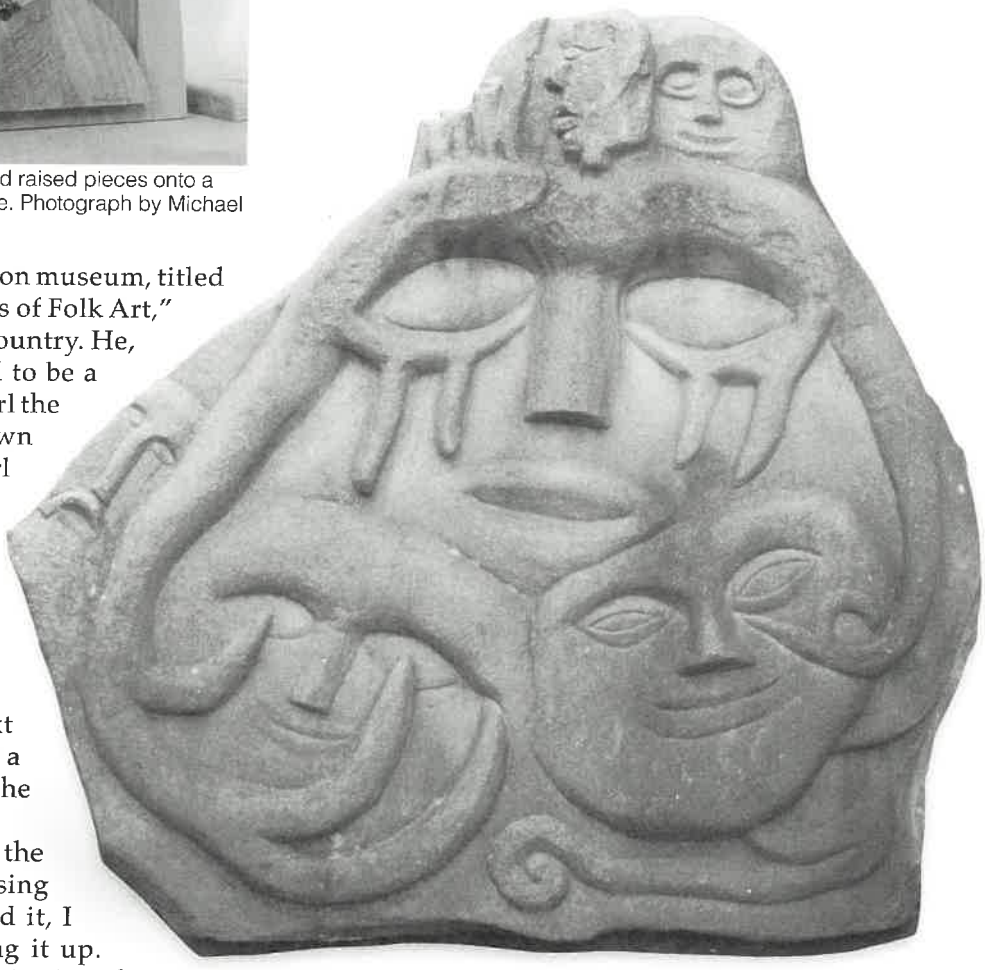
"I was looking for firewood up on the hillside," he recalls, "and I keep passing this same stone. Each time I passed it, I became that much closer to picking it up. After gathering all the wood, I went back with my tractor to get the stone down to my studio. It was a very large stone — about 20 inches by 25 inches — must have weighed about 130 pounds. I found a chisel and a hammer in my shop and started carving, finding a face in the stone."

That first carved stone sits outside of Earl's studio to this day. As with every aspect of his artwork, Earl has been forced to develop his own style and methods for stone carving through trial and error. He initially used whatever tools he could find in the shop, leftover from his brothers or his dad. He soon learned how to select the best tools and choose the best rocks for his new carvings.

"I do not take rocks from the waterbed," he says. "I take them from the woods. I like them sun baked. The sun-baked rock makes carving easier, because they are harder and do not crumble. River rocks seem to want to fall apart as I carve them. They are not as solid."

The faces that come from these rocks are entrancing. They are simple in form, but they have a quality of personal emotion that viewers feel when they look at them. In Earl's hands, the stones seem to have life within them.

With Eason's help, Earl's work has found its way into many local galleries, museums, and retail outlets,



Earl carved multiple faces in this 28" x 26" sandstone rock, untitled. Photograph by Jeff Pierson.

Earl and Barbara Gray surrounded by original artwork in their Cabell County home studio. Photograph by Michael Keller.

including Tamarack in Beckley, Taylor Books Annex Gallery in Charleston, MountainMade in Thomas, and Penn Alps in Baltimore. His work has been on exhibit at Museum in the Community in Hurricane, Marshall University, Parkersburg Art Center, and Huntington Museum of Art, among others.

Earl enjoyed carving faces out of stone and wood, and many folks were beginning to notice his work. In early 1996, however, Earl began to experience extreme back pain. He found that he had a herniated disc in his lower back, which landed him in the hospital. There, he'd lie in bed with little to do. One day, his wife, Barbara, brought him a piece of flat wood and a pencil, opening yet another new avenue of art for Earl.

"I just started drawing on the wood, finding the same kind of faces that I would find in my other carvings," he says. "The difference is that now I am adding, and not subtracting, to the surface."

Not unlike his father's experience, Earl made adjustments to his routine in response to injury, which changed his vision.

Earl describes those first few drawings: "I really liked the texture that the pencil had on the wood. It was just a regular No. 2 pencil, but it really made for really nice drawings." Not unlike his father's experience, Earl made adjustments to his routine in response to injury, which changed his vision.

Eventually, Earl made it back home, where he continued to draw on flat pieces of wood. His neighbor brought him a white pencil one day when he was visiting. Earl explains the change that happened: "I started filling in the eyes with white. I knew then that I needed color." Barbara bought some colored pencils, and Earl continued making these drawings. They started selling, as well.

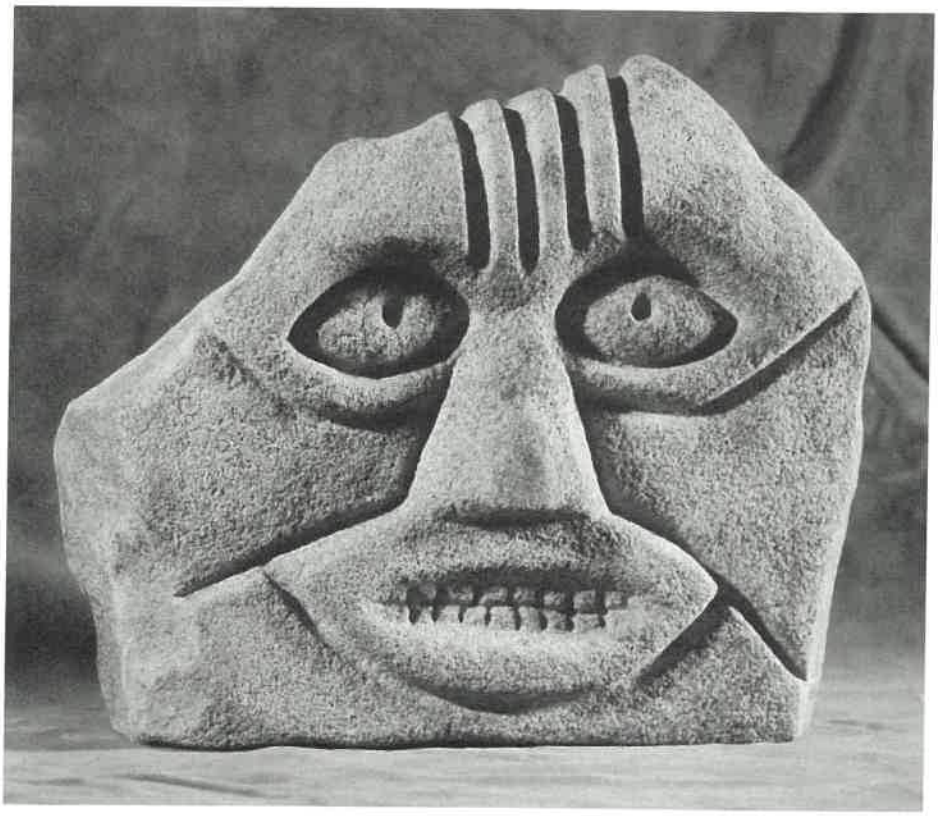
One of the most significant of these drawings is a piece he did for the Marshall University Graduate College. It is an untitled pencil drawing on wood, measuring 88 inches by 14 inches. It is his largest drawing to date. According to Eason Eige, "It is the unfolding of images in a totem composition that I enjoy. This piece is very much a metamorphosis."

After some time, Earl's back started to heal. He began walking with a walker, then a cane. Before long, he was feeling like himself again. Today, Earl continues to work with wood, but he carves sandstone more than anything. Most of these stones weigh about 30 pounds and are about 15

inches in diameter.

In 2003, the Huntington Museum of Art asked him to take on his biggest carving project to date. They commissioned him to make a series of stone carvings along the nature trail located behind their campus. The rocks were not brought in. Rather, Earl found the rocks along the path. There are about 20, in total, that he will be carving. He has carved seven so far. They range from a small, one-foot sandstone to a large sandstone that is about three feet in diameter. The trail is being renovated with work from several area artists and is intended to be an experience of natural art for visitors to the wooded area behind the museum.

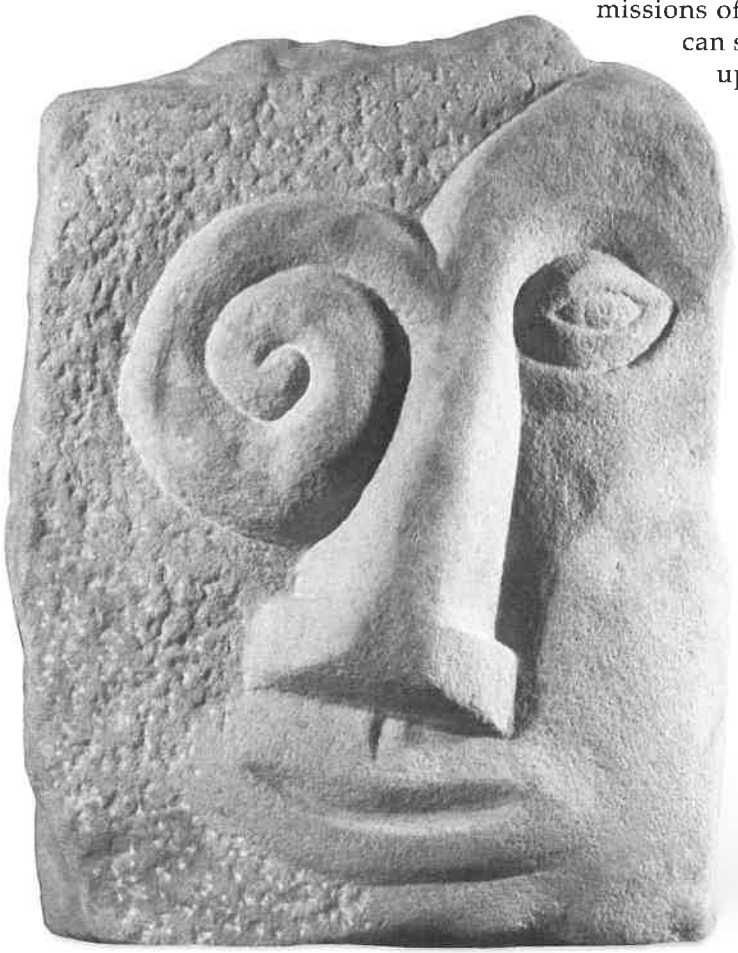
"This has been a great project for me," Earl explains. "This is where I started my career in art." The museum felt that having Earl Gray carve artwork into the native stone on the trails would be an effective way to integrate both the art and nature missions of the museum. "I walk the trails regularly myself, and I can say that it is always a pleasure to come so unexpectedly upon one of his unique carvings," says Margaret Mary Lane, executive director of the Huntington Museum of Art. "I think it expands the trail experience so that the museum has something to offer to nature lovers that is not available on other trails in the region."



A 9" x 8" sandstone rock face by Earl Gray, untitled. Photograph by Jeff Pierson.

Earl is an outsider artist who has been successful, both regionally and nationally. The Celtic look to his work has a direct correlation to the heritage of many people who live in West Virginia and throughout Appalachia. However, there is also an underlying universality to his work that has a personal impact upon those who see his art, separate from any specific ethnic heritage.

Earl and Barbara spend most of their time together in their studio. When Earl is not making art, he enjoys walking in the woods and hunting. Earl does not talk very much at all. He is quiet, especially, when it comes to talking about himself. Earl does not feel that his story is an important topic of conversation. On the contrary, the story of Earl Gray is one of inspiration and passion for art.



A 9" x 7" sandstone rock face carved by Earl Gray, untitled. Photograph by Jeff Pierson.

JEFF PIERSON grew up in Charleston and graduated from the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. He is individual artist coordinator for the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, as well as a freelance illustrator. His work has previously been published in *Artworks*. This is Jeff's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

West Virginia Back Roads

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Grant Kimble's Store
A "Scherr" Thing in Grant County

I went into Grant Kimble's general store at Scherr looking for directions to Greenland Gap, but I got lost in the past.

Grant's store stands at a lonely fork in the road just east of the intersection of routes 42 and 93 at Scherr. An old, weathered church and the general store define this remote Grant County crossroads. A few hundred yards east of the intersection, Greenland Road splits in two directions without benefit of a sign, so Grant gets his share of lost tourists stopping for a clarification.

"You want to go to the left," says the soft-spoken, middle-aged man. "The sign got tore down not long ago. Somebody run over it."

Continuing his directions to Greenland Gap, Grant tells me to take a right a couple of miles down the road. By that point, however, my attention had been seriously distracted by my surroundings. My eyes adjusted to the dark interior and were busily taking inventory of the room. With the exception of the new front door, the linoleum on the floor, and modern grocery stock, the store looks very much like it would have 70 years ago. Goods are stocked on shelves made of wormy chestnut lumber. The ceiling is made of narrow wormy chestnut strips. Grant tells me the entire structure is probably built of this beautiful wood.

A circa-1960's post office decal is visible on the front window, whose age is revealed by the wavy distortions it gives to the crossroads view outside. Original oak-and-glass cases are used to store and display merchandise. A Sof-Spun bread rack serves as the counter. Behind it is a metal sales-bill register that holds the credit accounts — a fixture in the store since Sly Kimble started it in the 1930's. Attached to the top rail of one section of shelves are tickets that state "Our ceiling price," artifacts from Depression-era price controls. Even the sign on the roof of the building — "Evans Store" — is outdated.

Grant is a reticent, stern-looking, balding man in his middle 50's. He tells me he's been working in this store ever since he was 11, when its owner, Jessie Evans, and her daughter, Jean, hired him to cut the grass and help maintain the building. Grant got the job because his grandmother and Jessie were sisters.

After Jessie died, Jean ran the store, with Grant's assistance. "She worked her whole life here," Grant says of Jean, who died in 2001 at the age of 72. Jean willed the store to Grant.

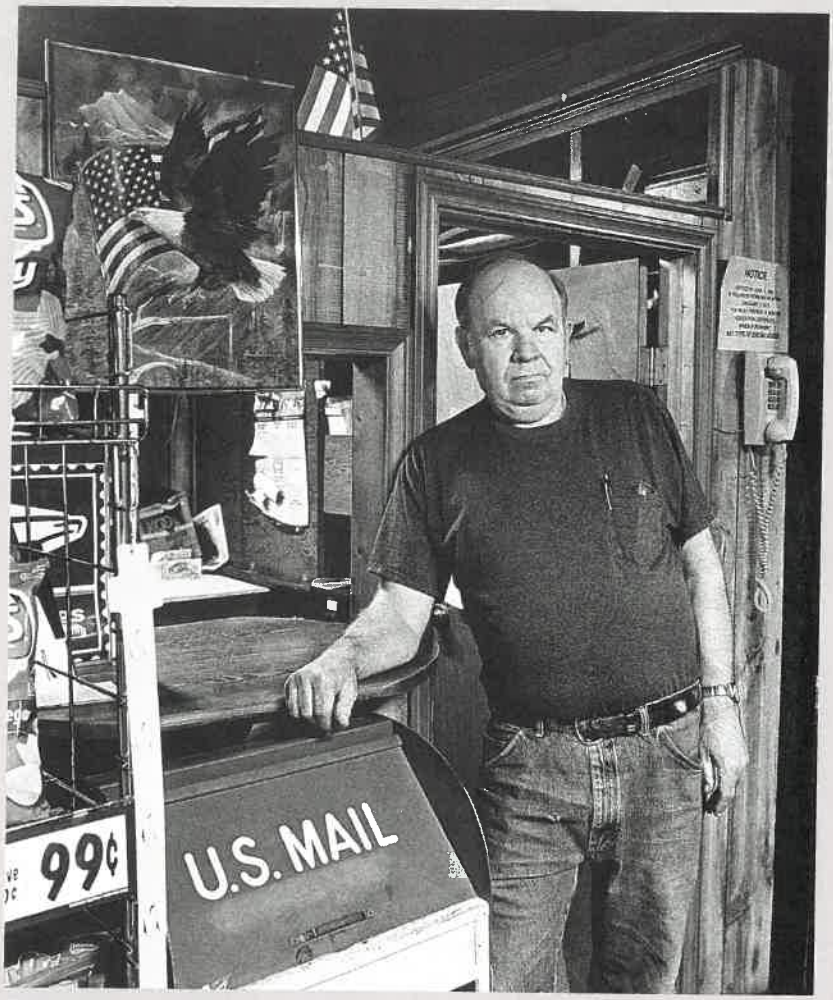
The Evans Store in Scherr, now owned and operated by Grant Kimble, first opened at this Grant County location in the 1930's. It has changed little since that time.

"She told me to do what I saw fit with it," Grant says. Grant worked in the woods and farmed while helping the Evans family. He prefers outdoor work, but age and years of hard, physical labor were catching up with him, and he decided shop-keeping would be a more passive way to earn a living. He works from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day, except Sundays.

"If I had it to do over again, I may not have done it," he says. One of the issues for Grant is the pressure of competition from the Wal-Mart in nearby Keyser. Grant has found the best way to compete is by keeping the status quo, treating people fairly, and providing services germane to the needs of rural residents.

That includes extending credit to established customers. Grant has about 30 such accounts, which range from a few dollars to more than $200 in charges for food, boots, gasoline, and anything else the store sells. He expects his customers to settle their accounts monthly.

"It's operated just like it's been done here all the years," he says. "If you don't do credit business here in the country, you're not going to be here very long, because you're too close to Wal-Mart."



Grant Kimble handles the mail at Scherr and runs a small post office in his general store. "Everything a regular post office can do, I can do here," he says. The post office helps bring business into the store, he adds.

Grant also secures and retains customers by providing exceptional service. If they want, he'll even pump their gas for them. His are the only pumps in the community, but Grant says gasoline sales aren't very profitable these days because of the high taxes levied on the underground storage tanks.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the store is the post office station based there. Grant has a contract with the U.S. Postal Service to be a rural station of the Keyser post office. Once a common, coveted, almost-essential arrangement for rural shopkeepers, having the post office gives Grant's store an edge over his high-volume competitors.

Mail arrives from the Keyser post office around 2 p.m. each day. Grant says having the post office in his store ensures that, on most days, a couple dozen people will stop in — and perhaps purchase something.

"Everything a regular post office can do, I can do here," he says. The postal section is delineated from the retail area by a paneled enclosure with a door and clerk's window. Inside the enclosure, Grant sorts the mail into cubicles for the 30, or so, box patrons who pick up their mail at the store and the nearly 100 rural-delivery customers serviced by a mail carrier. Every piece of outgoing mail gets postmarked "SCHERR, WV 26726."

The only things missing from this slice of Americana are a checkerboard and two old-timers dressed in red flannel shirts and overalls, hunched over their game. Today's customer is more likely to be a young mother driving an SUV, or a tourist looking for directions and a bottle of soda.

"Most of the old people that did that kind of stuff have passed away," Grant says, "and the younger generation has other things to do."

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 the owner of Feather Multimedia, a freelance photography and writing business. He has been lifestyles editor at the Ashtabula Star-Beacon since 1991. Carl is a regular contributor to GOLDENSEAL.

2005 LIARS CONTEST

Here are the first- and second-place winning stories from last year's State Liars Contest, held at the 29th annual Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Congratulations to the winners!

Justin Wood Charleston
First Place

"Joe and the Pirates"

I wasn't actually planning on telling a lie this year. But then my friend Joe called me. He said, "You want to go on a trip?"

I said, "Sure."

What followed was the greatest adventure of my life. Now, you might have read part of it in the paper — about Governor Manchin taking a state plane down to Alabama to get his yacht and bring it up. Now, that's true, but that's not the real story.

You see, Joe calls me up and calls up a couple of his friends and says, "I got a yacht. I got to go get it."

So we all hop on the plane. We all go down to Alabama. Alabama's a nice place to visit, being from West Virginia. When your state ranks 49th continually, it's nice to see who you beat out.

We get on the yacht — beautiful yacht. This thing is decked out. It has a kitchen, two bedrooms, full bath, jacuzzi, shower, ballroom, orchestra, kitchen staff. This thing is, to the "t," the perfect yacht.

So we get on, and we start sailing up, coming back to West Virginia. Do a little fishing, have a little fun. No big deal. Three days pass, and we're almost back in Charleston. We get on the Kanawha, and Joe says, "I want to fish."

I look up to the sky, and I say, "Joe, I think those clouds want to grow up to be thunderstorms, and I think they're growing up quick. I don't think we should fish. And it's the Kanawha — what are you going to catch in the Kanawha?"

He says, "No, we're going to fish."

And I say, "We're going to be cold, and we're not going to catch anything."

2005 first-place winner, Justin Wood, hoists his coveted Golden Shovel prize. Photograph by Michael Keller.

And he says, "Justin, fishing's a lot like women. Sometimes it's great, and it's more than you can handle. And sometimes it's cold and angry that you didn't fix the faucet."

Now, Joe didn't make any sense. But if what he said was true, that fish are really like women, I was starting to reel in the Jennifer Garner of fish. Just as I start to feel the tug, the storm starts. We could hear it coming from the side. Big splashes in the water. Hail, rain, piercing thunder. It keeps on coming closer and closer.

I'm trying to reel in this fish before the storm gets there. Joe looks at me, and he says, "Don't give up, Justin. If that rain storm hits us, you just keep on going. 'Cause if I've learned one thing in running for governor, it's never good to give up — and to put your name on everything — but especially never to give up."

That hail, that rain starts coming. Big, monstrous waves are crashing in from either side. I'm scared, I'm worried. But I'm not going to let that fish get away from me. I dig in. The rain's piercing. People start crying out. It was tremendous and traumatic. I was so focused on saving the fish, and they were so focused on saving their lives, that no one noticed the barge coming towards us.

The rain started to let up. The hail left us. Lightning stopped. Thunder stopped. I started to pull that fish in, and I see it to my side — it is none other than Captain Cletus Clearwater's pirate barge. Before I can scream out, the pirates have already come on deck. They're fighting the kitchen staff and the orchestra, who are no match for those hillbilly pirates.

With my last ounce of strength, I pull that fish up, and I start wielding it around like some medieval ball-and-chain. I'm hitting pirates left, right, knocking them out, knocking the two teeth they have out, taking them out.

And then I see him — fear struck my heart. I drop my weapon, fish and all. It was the captain himself. He stood towering before me. His bare feet and overalls, a mining pick in one hand and a hook in the other. His teeth made out of coal. A patch over one eye. And a blood-red cardinal sitting on his shoulder.

Very calmly, he grabbed me and the rest of the crew. He tied us up and put them on the barge. We didn't know what was going to happen to us.

That night, he called Joe and I into his chambers, and he told us the story of his twisted, twisted life. See, Captain Cletus is the product of an unholy matrimony between a West Virginia University Mountaineer and a Marshall student. At the time, such a marriage was looked at as immoral and ungodly — looked down upon by most states, but for some reason, West Virginia allowed it.

The mother of the Mountaineer was so disgusted by it that she put a curse on the first-born child's head. He would sail the West Virginia rivers forever, cold and alone, never finding peace until the day Marshall beat WVU in football.

So, Joe, being smart and intelligent, well, being a talker, starts coming up with a plan.

He says, "Well, I can't promise you a win, but I can promise you some games."

So, with that they negotiate for awhile, and, actually, a pirate and a politician negotiating is amazingly cooperative. But they work it out that Joe will set up the games in exchange for our lives and the beautiful yacht.

So, we come back to Charleston, and here I am today, and we have games set up for Marshall and WVU to play. It's not a happy ending, though. I might be safe and so is our governor, but poor Cletus. He's just a twisted, twisted soul, searching for peace. But we all know it'll be a cold day in hell before the Creator above, who made the sky blue and the sun gold, allows His heavenly and beloved Mountaineers to be beat by the Thundering Herd.

Contest founder and master of ceremonies, former GOLDENSEAL editor Ken Sullivan, prepares to call another contestant to the stage. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Adam Booth Huntington
Second Place

"The Gospel According to West Virginia"

Well, seeing that you have gathered today as a congregation, and today being Sunday, the Sabbath, I reckon we ought to have us a little Sunday school. So, today's Sunday school lesson shall be called "The Gospel According to West Virginia."

Now, it was in the days — the great glory days — of the coal mining industry. And a woman named Mother Jones had just walked into the land known as West Virginia. She was tired from walking and sat down on the banks of the Kanawha River to take

a rest. And she heard a sound, a sound like the bleating of a lamb. And she looked over, and, lo, there was a small child there. And it was hurt and sick.

So she saw someone walking by on the road, and she said, "Come here — help. This child needs help."

This gentleman comes down. He was a coal miner, and they sat there and prayed right there that the child would be healed.

Now, at the same time, in a town known as Keyser, which was about a two-week's walk away, there lived three scientists who every night would come out and study the stars.

On this night, the first scientist took out his telescope and said, "Brethren, look! I see a great light coming from the west, and it beckons us to go to Charleston."

And the second scientist said, "Oh, don't be a fool. That great light's nothing but the gold dome on top of the State Capitol."

And the first one said, "Be that as it may, it beckons us to go. And it beckons us to take gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh."

And the second scientist said, "Oh, don't be a fool. You know we don't got none of them."

And the third scientist said, "We don't even know what those are."

But they went anyway, these three scientists — you could say, these three wise men — from the East-ern Panhandle.

They went to the Capitol and they took with them, not gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, but they took with them gifts of coal and rhododendron and preserves. Blackberry preserves. And they were all gifts that would warm and feed and comfort the child in the good West Virginia tradition. Can I get an "Amen?"

And the scientists made it, and the child lived. Hallelujah!

Now, Mother Jones and the coal miner decided to take the child as their own. They took him down into the coalfields, and he grew up with the coal miners. It was soon discovered that the problem with him was that he had a bad lung, and because of that, he could not go down into the mines.

Karl Smakula, a young contestant from Elkins, learns why honesty is always the best policy, even at a liars contest! Photograph and digital enhancement by Michael Keller.

Instead, he grew up learning the ways of the coal miners, and he went from town to town teaching the ways of the coal miners. And he was a great teacher. People would come from miles around to hear him teach the ways of the coal miners.

In those days, a great evil came into the land, and a great war sprung up between those that worked in the mines and those that owned the mines. There was shooting and fighting and weeping and bloodshed and gnashing of teeth. And when the great teacher heard about what was going on, he went down there to the coalfields, to the battlefields. And he said, "Stop the fighting. It is not smart to kill those that can work. I cannot go into the mines, but I have lived a good life teaching the ways of the miners. If you want to take someone, shoot me as a sacrifice."

And he stood there, and those that owned the mines took their guns and shot him. He was hit and fell to the ground. All the miners rushed around him and dragged him down to Cabin Creek to wash and dress his wounds. He was out for three whole days.

And on the third day, he began to stir and his eyes opened. When the miners saw him stirring, they rushed around him.

He said, "Brethren, come closer. I can see white mountains and blue skies, and I can hear raging waters. And music of beautiful instruments. I can see all the wildlife and animals and plants of creation. Tell me, brothers, have I died and gone to heaven?"

And one of the miners leaned in close and said ever so softly, "Almost heaven."

And knowing that his purpose had been served, and that the war had been ended, he closed his eyes and died right there.

But the lesson we should learn from this story is that, even though not all of us are miners today, we don't have to be, as long as we remember the law of the miners: to be good people, keep good families, do hard work, and live good, clean lives. We don't have to be miners because of the sacrifice that was made for us by the great teacher. And that while on this earth, our gift is almost heaven, West Virginia.

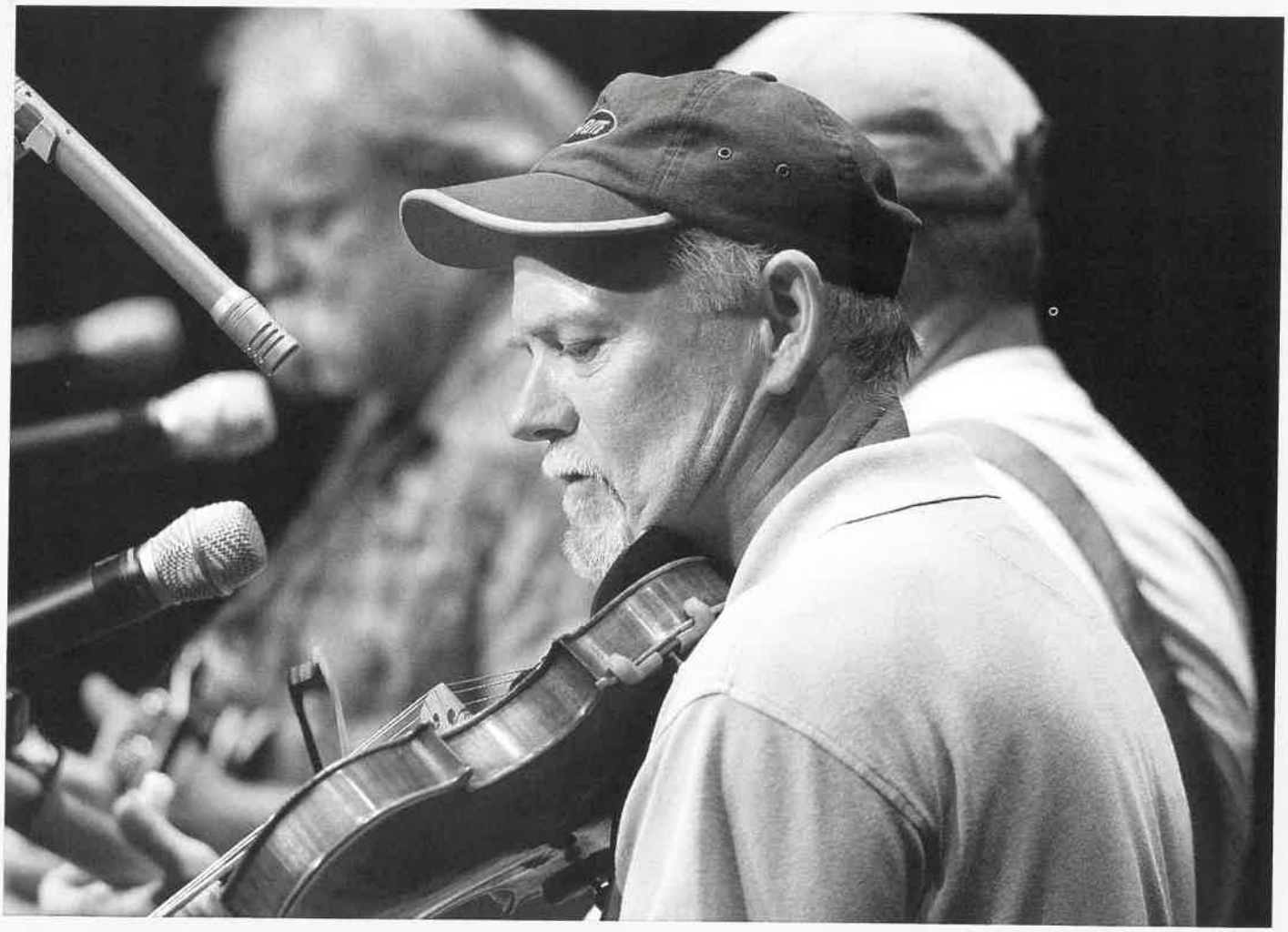
Sunday school is dismissed.

Vandalia Time!

Photoessay by Michael Keller

Enjoy the sights, sounds, tastes, and rhythms of the Vandalia Gathering, each Memorial Day weekend at the West Virginia State Capitol Complex in Charleston. This free annual event celebrates the Mountain State's finest traditions, and you're invited.

Culture and History photographer Michael Keller shares these images from the 2005 Vandalia Gathering.



2005 Vandalia Winners

Vandalia Heritage Award —
Lester McCumbers, Calhoun County

Fiddle (age 60 and over)
1 - Donald Jones, Scott Depot
2 - Elmer Rich, Morgantown
3 - Lester McCumbers, Nicut
4 - Jerry Lewis, Nettie
5 - Junior Spencer, Frankford

Fiddle (under age 60)
1 - Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
2 - Jarred Nutter, Meadow Bridge
3 - Jenny Allinder, St. Albans
4 - Adam Hurt, Charleston
5 - Meredith Pheasant, Fairmont

Old-Time Banjo (age 60 and over)
1 - Ben Carr, Wilsie
2 - Mack Samples, Duck
3 - Bernard Cyrus, Fort Gay
4 - Charlie Loudermilk, Frankford
5 - Eugene Parsons, Orma

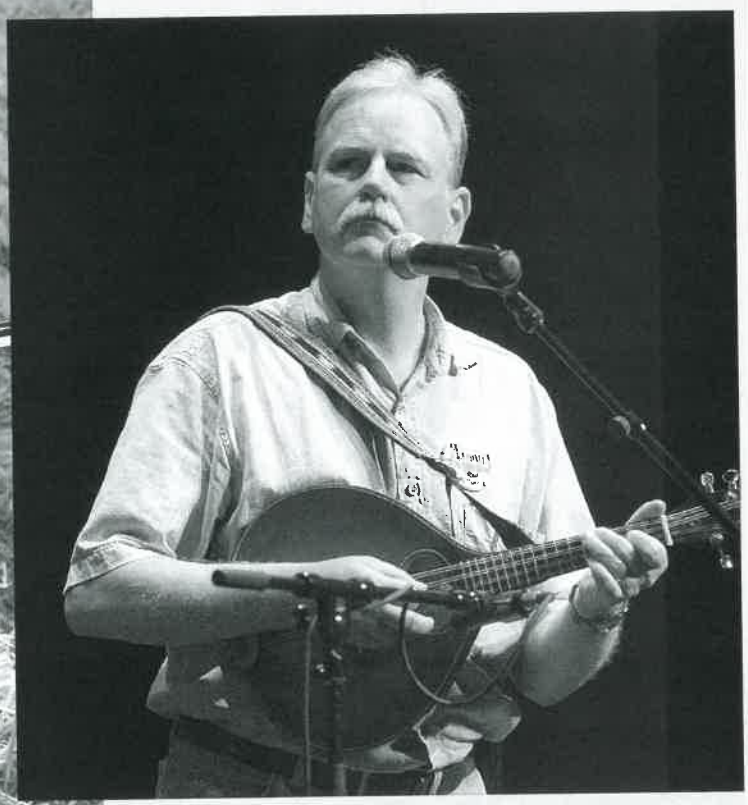
Old-Time Banjo (under 60)
1 - Tim Bing, Huntington
2 - Adam Hurt, Charleston
3 - David O'Dell, West Logan
4 - Bob Shank, Morgantown
5 - Pete Kosky, Charleston

Mandolin
1 - Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
2 - Rachel Singleton, Summersville
3 - Fred Honaker, Oak Hill
4 - Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
5 - John Putnam, Looneyville

Bluegrass Banjo
1 - Butch Osbourne, Parkersburg
2 - Tommy Drake, Chapmanville
3 - Zach Life, Murraysville
4 - Ben Harrington, Clear Fork
5 - Bruce Jones, Gladesville

Lap Dulcimer
1 - Alan Freeman, Renick
2 - Dave Haas, Cross Lanes
3 - David O'Dell, West Logan
4 - Katie Stricker, Charleston
5 - Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville

Flatpick Guitar
1 - Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
2 - Rich Adkins, Cross Lanes
3 - Rick Falls, Arnoldsburg
4 - Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
5 - Adam Hager, Kenna



30th Annual Vandalia Gathering

May 26-28, 2006

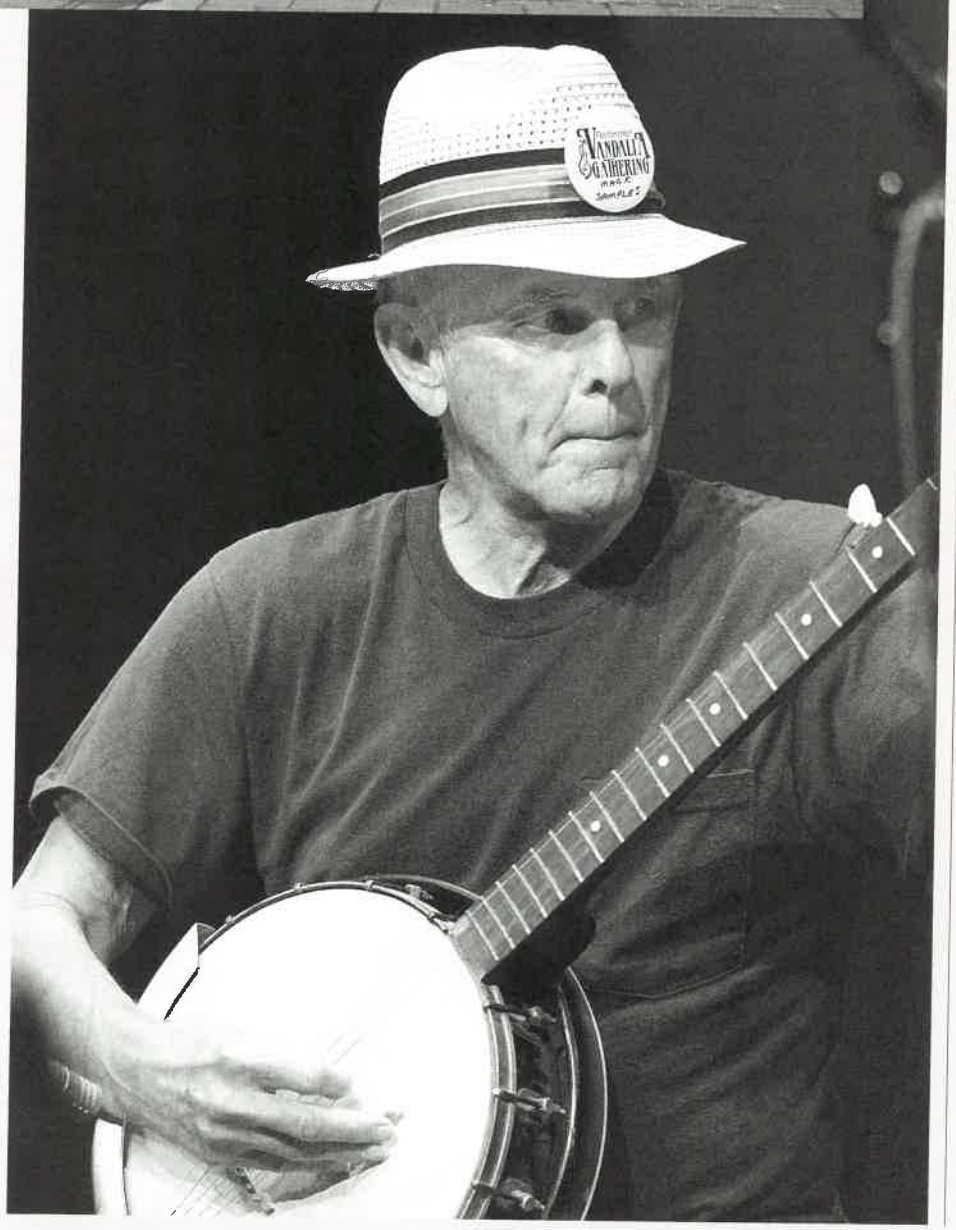
State Capitol Complex — Charleston, West Virginia

Friday, May 26
7:00 p.m. Concert

Saturday, May 27
11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Appalachian Heritage Dancing, Jam Tent, Kids' Activities
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Performances, Contests (Fiddle, Bluegrass Banjo, Mandolin)
12:00 noon- 5:00 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing, Flatfooting
6:30 p.m. Awards Ceremony and Concert

Sunday, May 28
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Appalachian Heritage Dancing, Jam Tent, Kids' Activities
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Performances, Contests (Old-Time Banjo, Lap Dulcimer, Flatpick Guitar)
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m. Old-Time Square Dancing, Flatfooting
12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m. Storytelling
1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Liars Contest
6:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony and Finale Concert

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



Back Issues Available

- ___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
- ___Summer 2004/1939 World's Fair
- ___Fall 2004/Grafton Trains
- ___Winter 2004/Toymaker Dick Schnacke
- ___Spring 2005/Newell Basketball
- ___Summer 2005/Tygart Valley Homestead
- ___Fall 2005/Coke Ovens
- ___Winter 2005/State Archives Centennial

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

Better yet, take advantage of our Deluxe Gift Package: receive all 15 back issues listed above, plus a copy of the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from* GOLDENSEAL, a copy of *The* GOLDENSEAL *Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars*, and a full-color reprint booklet featuring our 1985 Homer Laughlin China article, all for only $50 plus $4 shipping. That's a savings of more than $30 off the regular price!

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Panoramic Photograph Book

West Virginia Coalfield Photography, 1900-2005, is the largest collection of historical coalfield photographs ever to be published in a single volume. Most of the 500 images found in the book, 400 of which are panoramic, are either the work of Rufus "Red" Ribble [see "Red Ribble: Coalfield Photographer," by Mark Crabtree; January-March 1981] or Glen Jean studio photographer W.O. Trevey. The last chapter features recent color panoramic shots by publisher George Bragg and his son, Morgan Bragg. The book's descriptive text is written by George's wife, historian and author Melody Bragg [see "The Reliable Bill Trevey: Glen Jean's Photographer," by Melody Bragg; Winter 1988].

The book visually documents dozens of coal towns, mines and work crews, company stores, and various facets of life in the coal country, spanning much of the 20th century across southern West Virginia.

There are chapters for the counties of Boone, Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, and Wyoming, including alphabetical listings for towns in each county.

The 188-page book is published in a 11 x 17-inch paperback format, in order to better reproduce the panoramic format of most of the original photographs.

West Virginia Coalfield Photography, 1900-2005, sells for $49.95, plus $4 shipping and handling, and may be ordered from GEM Publications, 269 Maplewood Lane, Beaver, WV 25813; phone (304)256-8400, or e-mail gemphoto@charter.net.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Black Lung Movement
- Bill Blizzard, Jr.
- Singer Elaine Purkey
- The *Real* Crum

August 2-6 Appalachian String Band Music Festival
Camp Washington Carver / Clifftop (558-0162)
August 3-5 W.Va. Blackberry Festival
Nutter Fort (623-2381)
August 5 Swiss National Holiday
Helvetia (877-794-7768)
August 5-6 W.Va. Square & Round Dance & Clogging Convention
Buckhannon (452-8656)
August 6-13 Cherry River Festival
Richwood (846-6790)
August 9-12 Big Coal River Festival
Whitesville (854-1224)
August 10-12 Firemen's Bluegrass Festival
Chloe (286-3783)
August 11-13 Augusta Festival
Elkins (637-1209)
August 11-13 Jefferson County African American Heritage Festival
Charles Town (725-9610)
August 11-13 Logan County Arts, Crafts & Antiques Fair
Logan (752-1324)
August 11-20 State Fair of West Virginia
Fairlea (645-1090)
August 13 Mahrajan Lebanese Festival
Wheeling (233-1688)
August 18 W.Va. Celtic Games and Festival
Beckley (252-2244)
August 18-20 Homecoming Festival
Parkersburg (422-9970)
August 24-27 Appalachian Festival
Beckley (1-877-987-3847)
August 26-27 W.Va. Honey Festival
Parkersburg (428-5835)
September 1-3 Festival of the Rivers
Hinton (466-1241)
September 1-3 Fireman's Arts & Craft Festival
Jane Lew (457-3097)
September 1-3 W.Va. Italian Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (622-7314)
September 1-4 Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee
Weston (1-800-296-1863)
September 2-3 Apple Butter Weekend
Blennerhassett Island / Parkersburg (420-4800)
September 2-3 Oak Leaf Festival
Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)
September 2-4 Hick Festival
Parsons (478-3747)
September 4 Miners' Labor Day Celebration
Racine (346-0341)
September 8-9 Country Music Assn. Fall Festival
Fairmont (292-5854)
September 8-9 North Preston Farmers' Club Fall Festival
Bruceton Mills (379-7500)
September 8-9 W.Va. Black Heritage Festival
Clarksburg (623-2335)
September 9-10 Helvetia Fair
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 10 W.Va. Monarch Butterfly Festival
Wellsburg (737-2316)
September 14-17 Clay County Golden Delicious Festival
Clay (587-4455)
September 14-17 Treasure Mountain Festival
Franklin (567-5100)
September 14-17 W.Va. Oil & Gas Festival
Sistersville (652-2939)
September 15-16 Mothman Festival
Point Pleasant (675-9726)
September 16-17 Country Roads Festival
Ansted (658-5212)
September 16-17 Grape Stomping Wine Festival
Summersville (872-7332)
September 22-24 Fall Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival
Harpers Ferry (1-800-624-0577)
September 22-24 St. George Greek Festival
Huntington (522-0773)
September 23-24 Annual Leaf Peepers Festival
Davis (1-800-782-2775)
September 23-24 Mary Ingles on the Virginia Frontier
Winfield (562-0518)
September 28-30 Molasses Festival
Arnoldsburg (655-8379)
September 28-October 1 Preston County Buckwheat Festival
Kingwood (329-0021)
September 29-October 1 Oktoberfest
Helvetia (924-6435)
September 30 Roadkill Cook-Off
Marlinton (1-800-336-7009)
September 30-October 1 Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival
Burlington (788-1953)
September 30-October 8 Mountain State Forest Festival
Elkins (636-1824)
October 1-7 Mountain Color Festival
Richwood (846-6790)
October 5-6 Apple Butter Fair
Salem (782-3585)
October 6-7 Appalachian Heritage Festival
Shepherdstown (876-5113)
October 6-7 Pine Bluff Fall Festival
Pine Bluff (592-1189)
October 6-7 Southern West Virginia Italian Festival
Bluefield (589-3317)
October 6-8 Oglebayfest
Wheeling (1-800-624-6888)
October 7 Burgoo International Cook-Off
Webster Springs (847-7291)
October 7 Country Roads Folk Festival
Kearneysville (267-7963)
October 7 October Sky Fall Festival
Coalwood (297-2999)
October 7 Traditions Day
Huntersville (1-800-336-7009)
October 7 Wirt County Pioneer Day
Elizabeth (275-3569)
October 7-8 Applefest
Wellsburg (479-2115)
October 7-8 33rd Annual Apple Butter Festival
Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)
October 8 Blennerhassett's Birthday Celebration
Blennerhassett Island / Parkersburg (420-4800)
October 12-15 W.Va. Black Walnut Festival
Spencer (927-5616)
October 13-15 Lumberjack Bluegrass Jamboree
Mullens (294-4000)
October 13-15 26th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair
Fairlea (645-1321)
October 19-22 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival
Martinsburg (263-2500)
October 20-22 Upper Potomac Celtic Weekend
Shepherdstown (263-2531)
October 20-22 W.Va. Turkey Festival
Mathias (897-5532)
October 21 Bridge Day
New River Gorge / Fayetteville (465-6517)
October 27-29 Fiddlers Reunion
D&E College / Elkins (637-1209)
October 27-29 Potomac Arts Festival
Shepherdstown (876-7276)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 2007 "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, if available. We must have this information by January 15, 2007, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are no longer included in the listing.

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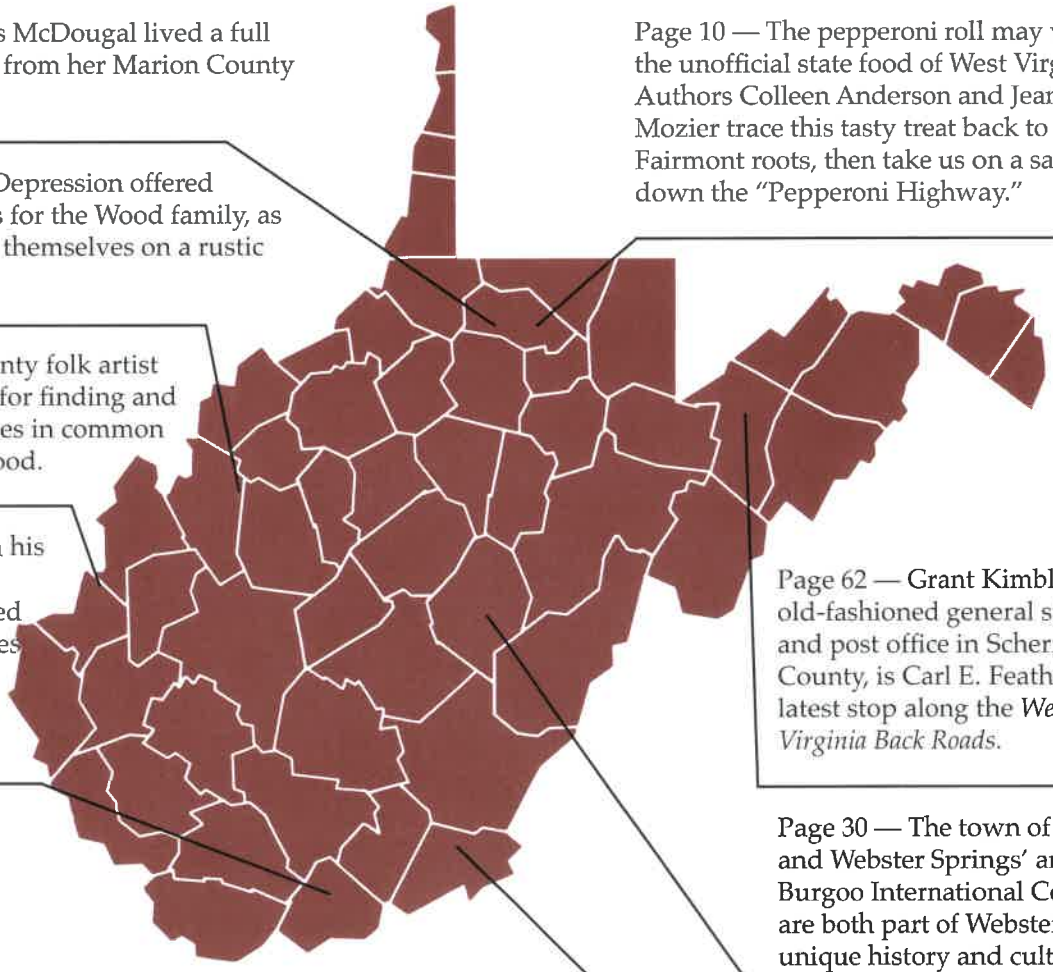

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