Pumpkin House • Midland Trail • Mountaineer • Bagpipes

West Virginia Traditional Life

Goldenseal

Fall 2006 $4.95

From the Editor - Carve Your Niche

Somewhere, somehow, we all need to feel like we belong. This issue of GOLDENSEAL highlights several unique individuals, past and present, who carved their niche in the Mountain State and enriched all of our lives as a result.

No one does more carving than Ric Griffith of Kenova. Ric owns a beautiful home on Beech Street in the state's westernmost city, where he runs the local pharmacy. Every autumn, Ric dedicates his home, finances, creativity, and energy to providing his community with a spectacular display of carved jack-o-lanterns. More than 3,000 of them, at last count. He doesn't charge admission, apply for grants, sell advertising, or even accept donations. It's just something he and his family, and a host of enthusiastic volunteers, feel called to do. It's impressive, to say the least. Read their story beginning on page 10, and see the pumpkins for yourself on or around Halloween.

Photographer Homer L. Wells found his niche taking pictures along the Midland Trail during the 1920's, '30's, and '40's. Traveling up and down U.S. Route 60, Homer climbed rocks, forded streams, and scaled hillsides to capture some of the most picturesque views ever taken along this pioneering trail. A smattering of old postcards was all that he left behind, which intrigued author Bob Moore. Bob's story begins on page 18.

Barber Earl Townsend came to Summersville 75 years ago, looking for a place to cut hair. Four generations later, Townsend's Barbershop is still rolling along at a good "clip." Read about it beginning on page 26.

Author Dan B. Fleming, Jr., undoubtedly felt a tremendous sense of belonging during the early 1950's, when he served as West Virginia University's Mountaineer mascot — a school institution since 1927. Dan's story about his time as the Mountaineer and the history of this venerable symbol begins on page 30.

Cabwaylingo State Forest in Wayne County, one of West Virginia's most remote and rustic parks, is home to Bonnie Watts, a trusted employee here for 30 years. After briefly testing the waters in the big city, Bonnie came home in 1976 and dug in for the long haul. She loves both her job and Cabwaylingo; you can read about her and the forest beginning on page 56.

Whether or not you live in West Virginia, we hope that you feel a sense of belonging as you read these pages. We are proud of the many fine letters and e-mails we receive from readers, adding comments, making suggestions, and requesting information. Many of you write to make story proposals or to submit manuscripts. We welcome this. For more information, see our contributor guidelines on our Web site at www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/contrib/html or write or call our office for a free printed copy of the guidelines.

While these expressions of support and encouragement are important, we would not be here at all without your financial support in the form of subscriptions, renewals, and gift subscriptions. It saddens me that our circulation numbers continue to drift gradually downward, and we are considering a variety of marketing approaches to help find new readers.

If you feel that you belong with us here at GOLDENSEAL — as I hope you do — please consider the different ways you can get more involved. We are counting on you to renew your own subscription when the time comes — fall is the season when the greatest number of subscribers come due. We also need your help spreading the word about GOLDENSEAL among your friends, family, and associates. Put copies in waiting rooms and reading areas where people can see them. Please, please, give at least one gift subscription this holiday season. You have many loved ones on your shopping list — a gift subscription to GOLDENSEAL will be cherished throughout the year and for many years to come. There is a gift coupon on page 4 and a mail-in card located inside the back cover.

After more than 32 years of publication, there is no doubt that GOLDENSEAL has found its niche. I invite you to find your place, as well, here with us.

John Lilly

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On the cover: Kenova pharmacist Ric Griffith designs and displays more than 3,000 carved jack-o-lanterns, such as this one, each Halloween. Our story begins on page 10. Photograph by Michael Keller.

p. 18

p. 30

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Letters from Readers

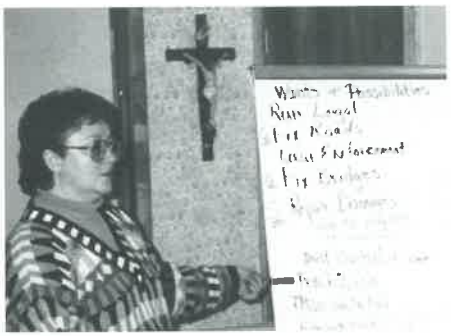
GOLDENSEAL welcomes letters of general interest from readers. Our address is The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Published letters may be edited for brevity or clarity.

Elaine Purkey

June 6, 2006
Cresaptown, Maryland
Editor:
Thank you for the Summer 2006 GOLDENSEAL, which, as always, I have greatly enjoyed.

The piece on Elaine Purkey was very interesting and inspiring. [See "'One Day More': Activist Songwriter Elaine Purkey," by Paul Gartner.] Once I saw the big crucifix [on page 15], I jumped to the conclusion that Elaine is a Catholic. However, I read later that she was raised in the Church of Christ, so I assume the Boone County meeting must have been held in the local Catholic parish hall.

One hopes your summer is a pleasant one, marked by not-too-humid days and cool nights. We've mostly escaped all the torrential rain, and it is quite pleasingly green here.
Thanks again,
Wayland Brown



Elaine Purkey in 1999.

Crum

June 24, 2006
Cochiti Lake, New Mexico
Via e-mail
Editor:
At the risk of spoiling what I've been told is my bad-boy image (actually, I'm grateful to be called "boy" in any context), my compliments on the pieces in GOLDENSEAL about Crum, the town, and Crum, the novel. [See "Redeeming the *Real* Crum," by Carl E. Feather and "*Crum: The Novel*: Why the Fuss?"; Summer 2006.]

Nice work, professionally done, in a fine voice. In all honesty, I thought maybe the Crum issue was dead. But then, there have been times when I thought I was dead.

Both thoughts, it seems, are premature.
Lee Maynard
Author of *Crum: The Novel*

Blackberries

June 10, 2006
Nelsonville, Ohio
Editor:
I congratulate first-time author Nicole Rose for a story well told. [See "Blackberry Tales," by Nicole Rose; Summer 2006.] Most everyone that has picked blackberries in the mountains of Pocahontas County is familiar with the large, curved claws on those vines. We called them "catclaws."

Few people know that a thornless variety of blackberry was discovered in the late 1950's in the mountains of neighboring Webster County. Plant nurseries have been working with it for years and now have blackberries that produce crops early, middle, and late season, and one ever-bearing variety. The one thing they have failed to do is develop a sweet variety, like the wild "sugar tit," so you need a large, well-filled sugar bowl when you make a cobbler with them.
Sincerely yours,
Dempsey T. Sharp

Boy Scout bugler Bill Wyatt in 1935.

Boy Scouts and Baseball

July 6, 2006
Morgantown, West Virginia
Editor:
Two of your articles in the Summer 2006 issue evoked strong memories for me of growing up in the 1950's and '60's.

Joe Wyatt's article on scouting reminded me of many remarkable outdoor activities as a camper, especially my experience with the Order of the Arrow. In fact, it was raining during most of my three-day "ordeal," making the required silence and starting a fire all the more challenging. Mr. Wyatt and I earned our Eagle Scout awards during the same month of December 1963. [See "When We Were Boy Scouts," by W. Joseph Wyatt; Summer 2006.]

The following piece by Karl Priest about baseball reminded me of the many pickup and sandlot games I experienced as a young teenager. [See "Over the Hill Is Out: Baseball in the Projects," by Karl Priest; Summer 2006.] While I didn't live in the projects, the fervor for the game was just as strong — for both the talented and less-talented, as I was. We all pretended to be Yogi, Mickey, Willie, or whoever our local hero was.

Thanks to both authors for bringing back a little bit of my childhood.
What a blast!
Jim Helmkamp

Pepperoni Rolls

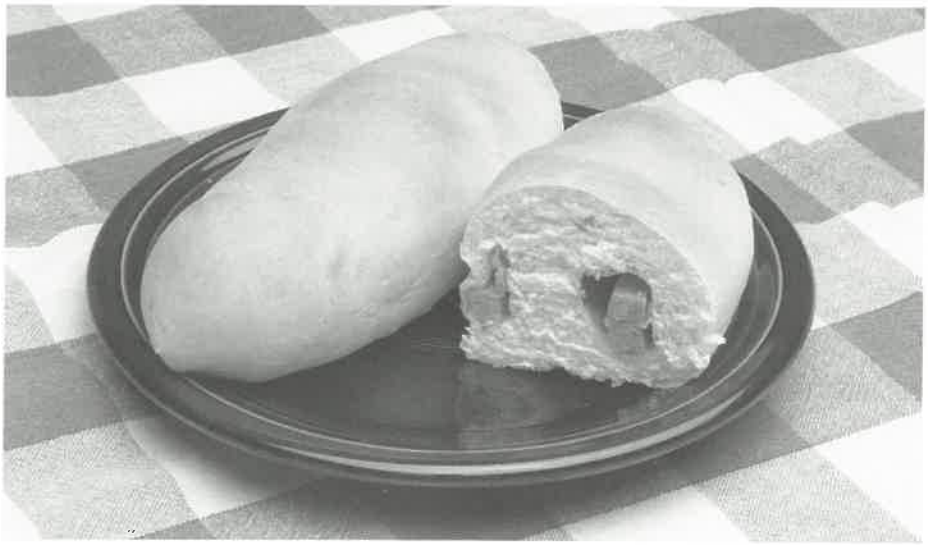
May 31, 2006
Mobile, Alabama
Editor:
The pepperoni roll article in the Spring 2006 issue was a great piece. [See "The Pepperoni Roll: State Food of West Virginia," by Colleen Anderson; Spring 2006.] In the late summer and fall of 1949, I worked construction on a railroad bridge in Grant Town, Marion County. At the end of the workday, as we headed for our rooming house in nearby Rivesville, we would stop in at a small café near Grant Town. A beer and a couple of rolls were always a great treat at the end of a hard day.

In later years, I could never find the right words to describe to others this culinary delight. Thanks to Colleen Anderson for bringing to us this wonderful memory.
Respectfully,
Sam Jordan

May 25, 2006
Arlington, Texas
Via e-mail
Editor:
Our family always lived in the Edgemont Addition of Fairmont, only two blocks away from the Country Club Bakery. Occasionally, our mother would be at the bakery at 6:30 a.m. to pick up a freshly baked batch of pepperoni rolls or loaf of bread from Mr. Argiro.

When I was young, a stroll to the bakery to pick up an order for my mother was an exciting event. Approaching the bakery, one would get a whiff of the delightful aroma of freshly baked Italian bread and rolls. The aroma from the bakery extended, at times, as far as the old streetcar track. The most interesting aspect of the errand, after going inside to make a purchase, was watching the insertion of prepared dough into the oven and the removal of the finished baked goods.

Eventually, I grew up and moved on to various locations. A visit back to the family home on Fleming Avenue was not complete without having purchased a few pepperoni rolls to snack on.



MICHAEL KELLER

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A permanent relocation to Texas never prevented pepperoni rolls from reaching our house. On every visit to our home in Arlington, my mother would bring a dozen of them with her on the airplane. As soon as we'd meet her at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport, she would always say, "I brought you some fresh pepperoni rolls!"
Dave Rogers

June 21, 2006
Knoxville, Tennessee
Via e-mail
Editor:
My dad is Clarksburg-born and bred. While he enjoyed the pepperoni roll article, he was deeply offended that Tomaro's in Clarksburg did not take front and center. However, he wasn't too offended since he requested extra copies.

While I, too, was born in Clarksburg, I wasn't lucky enough to grow up there. But I do remember on visits waiting eagerly outside of Tomaro's for the pepperoni rolls to come out of the oven. For Father's Day this year, I made my dad a batch of pepperoni rolls. He told me they were very, very good — almost good enough to rival Tomaro's! It was your article that inspired me to make them.

Good article, excellent magazine!
Thank you,
Beth E. Sanderbeck

Slim Bosely

July 13, 2006
Dayton, Ohio
Editor:
Slim Bosely was a neighbor. [See "Slim Bosely and His Outhouse," by Warren Poling; Spring 2006.] I always remember him as being the tallest man in the county and driving a State Road truck. I worked for the State Road some, the summer when I was 15 years old. Everyone was in the service or gone to work in defense plants. Sometimes, I rode to the State Road garage in the back of Slim's dump truck.


Slim Bosely, at right, in 1978.

I remember the world's tallest man, Robert Wadlow, coming to our town. He was eight feet nine inches tall. They put a silver dollar on his head, and anyone that could reach it got to keep the silver dollar. Slim Bosely tried, and everyone said if Wadlow had not tipped his head sideways Slim would have gotten the dollar.
W. A. Donegia

Bill Garnette

July 5, 2006
Portsmouth, Virginia
Editor:
My name is Helen Franklyn (Garnette) Campbell, the sister of the gentleman with his story of his plane crash on Spruce Knob. [See "A Spruce Knob Miracle," by Bill Garnette; Fall 2000 and "GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes"; page 9.]

I was only six years old then, but I remember our father telling me about what happened and taking a train from Montgomery to Norfolk to see Bill and hearing some of his stories.

Thanks for being so nice to Bill and his wife, Penelope.

Thanks for letting me share.
Helen F. Campbell

Mine Rescue Curiosity Response

We received numerous responses concerning our Summer 2006 Photo Curiosity, showing two men aboard an experimental mine rescue device. One reader identified the upper passenger as H.L. Maulk. Another reminded us that a similar rescue capsule was used to transport stranded miners during the 2002 Quecreek mine incident in Pennsylvania.

The following letter is from an intrepid female miner, who has personally ridden in one of these tubular contraptions.

June 13, 2006
Morgantown, West Virginia
Editor:

I worked underground at Consolidation Coal's Arkwright Mine No. 1, just west of Morgantown, from September 1978 to October 1995, when the mine closed permanently.

Most of the intake air shafts at Consol's huge mines had escape buckets similar to the one shown on the inside back cover of the Summer 2006 issue. The one at Arkwright was only one-story tall, but could hold two miners tightly, face-to-face.

On one quiet summer Sunday afternoon, the management retrained the pre-shift fire bosses, which included me, on the operation of the escape capsule. The cage was connected to the surface structure by a long cable that had to be let out slowly, so that the basket wouldn't rotate round and round, making the current resident ill. A diesel engine provided power to the wench and to the cage, in case the electricity to the portal [or main mine entrance] failed.

After management left for the day, three of us thought it might be an adventure to cage down to the mine in the capsule. I volunteered to go first. My heart skipped a beat as the hoist operator positioned me over the 630-foot-deep hole. I was fascinated — I could see the layers of concrete and rock as I descended. When I looked up, I could still see the bright sky. Suddenly, I was rising in the shaft, much faster than when I was going down. The capsule started to rotate slowly. My operator had chickened out and was bringing me back up. However, I was having the time of my life.

Since no one else would lower me in the capsule, we went to work the usual way. None of us ever discussed the incident for fear of reprimand. However, I continued to ask around for someone that would lower me to the depths and bring me up again in that small capsule. I figured the scenery would be great.

Sincerely,
Nancy L. Dorset

We also received a gracious e-mail from author Homer Hickam, Jr., whose father is pictured in the lower chamber of this photograph. The following is from Homer's Web site www.homerhickam.com/coalwood:

Experimental mine emergency escapeway at Coalwood in 1951. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

"The rescue cage and system used to bring up the nine trapped miners at the Quecreek mine in Pennsylvania was designed and tested by Homer Hickam, Sr., way back in 1951. The design was a two-man tube that used pre-drilled ventilation holes in the mine as escape ways in case of an accident. When Homer Sr. tested his rescue cage, he was lowered down a 700-foot hole. (The Quecreek rescue was 240-feet deep.) At about 350 feet down, the tube got stuck. Water was dumped into the hole to lubricate it so that it could be raised back up. Rather than quit, Homer Sr. got in it again and successfully went down, got out, and then came back up. No one else wanted to try it!"

Homer Jr. recounts this story in his book We Are Not Afraid. *Thanks to everyone who responded. —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.

2006 Vandalia Award recipient Ethel Caffie-Austin. Photograph by Michael Keller.

2006 Vandalia Award

Ethel Caffie-Austin of Dunbar, Kanawha County — renowned gospel music singer, pianist, choir director, and teacher — received the 2006 Vandalia Award on May 28, as part of the 30th annual Vandalia Gathering, held at the Capitol Complex in Charleston. The Vandalia Award is the state's most distinguished folklife honor and is presented in recognition of a lifetime contribution to West Virginia folk culture.

A native of Mount Hope, Fayette County, Ethel began learning piano at age six, played for church services at nine, and led her first choir at age 11. Grounded in the tradition of African American gospel music, she has since performed and taught throughout the United States and in Europe.

She is founder of the Black Sacred Music Festival at West Virginia State University and frequently conducts gospel music workshops for the Vandalia Gathering and elsewhere. A graduate of West Virginia Technical College in Montgomery, Ethel taught school for 20 years and received an honorary doctorate from Davis & Elkins College in 1997.

Considered West Virginia's "First Lady of Gospel Music," Ethel Caffie-Austin was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL interview in our Winter 1997 issue, titled "Hand-Clapping and Hallelujahs: A Visit with Ethel Caffie-Austin," by Michael Kline. Congratulations, Ethel!

Pumpkin Festival

The West Virginia Pumpkin Festival will be held in Milton, Cabell County, October 5-8. The popular event draws an estimated 45,000 visitors annually. Attractions include pumpkin sales, food concessions, arts and crafts exhibitors, a daily schedule of music and other entertainment, and a beauty pageant. The Great Pumpkin Contest, held Friday, awards the largest pumpkin with a prize of one dollar per pound. A recent winner weighed in at 589 pounds. The festival features a pumpkin bake-off; categories include bread, rolls, cookies, and cakes. There is also a pumpkin pie contest. Both competitions are held on Saturday.

For more information, call (304)755-4223 or write to West Virginia Pumpkin Festival, West Virginia Pumpkin Park, P.O. Box 358, Milton, WV 25541.

Fiddlers Reunion

The 17th annual Old-Time Fiddlers Reunion will be presented by the Augusta Heritage Center on October 27-29, at the Hermanson Campus Center at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins. The reunion begins at 8 p.m. Friday evening with a Halloween-themed costume square dance. On Saturday, there will be performances featuring many older traditional fiddlers from around the state from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fiddle music and jam sessions continue throughout the evening. Saturday will also feature exhibits by musical instrument vendors. The weekend concludes with a gospel sing and breakfast at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Fiddler Ralph Roberts. Photograph by Gerald Milnes.

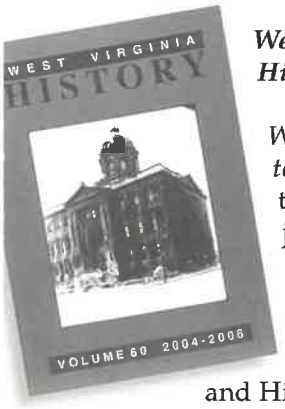
For more information, visit www.augustaheritage.com/reunion.html or phone (304)637-1209.

Mural depicting the city seal of Buckhannon.

New Buckhannon Mural

A new mural on the side of a building on Buckhannon's busy Main Street features a 30-foot-high version of the city's new seal. The seal was designed in 1998 by local artist Ross Straight. Richwood artist deborah dorland painted the colorful 1,200-square-foot mural, with the assistance of local volunteers. The mural was dedicated on July 7.

Buckhannon's city seal, viewed by some historians as controversial, depicts a meeting between Delaware Indian Chief Buckongahelas and Samuel Pringle, an early settler to the area. Further information, as well as a photographic record of the mural's progress, can be viewed on-line at www.rossstraight.com.



West Virginia History

West Virginia History (2004-2006), the state's official journal of history and genealogy, is now available. Published by the State Archives and History section, this edition includes articles on pro-labor politician T.C. Townsend, the New Deal-era Federal Music Project in Huntington, a centennial history of the West Virginia State Archives, and selections of Civil War correspondence found in the adjutant generals' papers. There is also a tribute to the state's first historian laureate, the late Otis K. Rice.

Volume 60 of *West Virginia History* sells for $15 from Archives and History, Division of Culture and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, WV 25305; phone (304)558-0230, or on-line at http://shop.wvculture.org.

Historic Organizations Directory

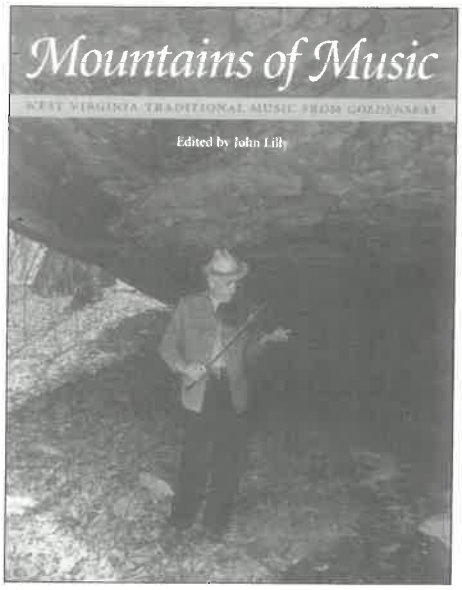
A Directory of Historic Organizations, covering 79 groups in Kanawha and Putnam counties, has been published by the Council of Historic Organizations. Alphabetical listings include a description of each organization along with their areas of interest, purpose, activities, and contact information. There is a subject index, indicating the range of activities represented, such as archives and libraries, genealogy groups, historic preservation, museums, and reunions.

The 85-page, paperbound booklet was funded by the Sustainable Kanawha Valley Initiative in cooperation with the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. It is available free of charge from the Midland Trail Scenic Highway Association, phone (304)343-6001, or from the Kanawha Valley Historical and Preservation Society, phone (304)342-7676.

New Political Books

Three new books concerning West Virginia's political history offer election-season reading.

The memoirs of the late Thomas F. Stafford, longtime statehouse



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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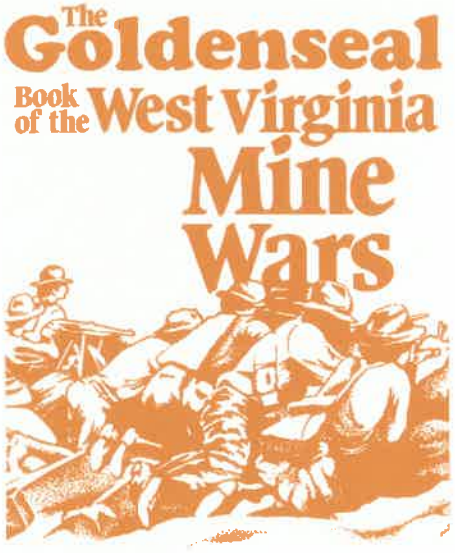

The West Virginia Mine Wars were a formative experience in our state's history and a landmark event in the history of American labor. GOLDENSEAL has published some of the best articles ever written on this subject. In 1991, former editor Ken Sullivan worked with Pictorial Histories Publishing Company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

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

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reporter for *The Charleston Gazette*, have been published by West Virginia University Press. *Afflicting the Comfortable: Journalism and Politics in West Virginia* covers the 30-year period of Stafford's newspaper career, from 1936 to 1966, including the details of his exposé of the Invest Right scandal in the 1960's, during Governor Wally Barron's administration.

Afflicting the Comfortable is a 331-page hardcover, including an index and photographs. It sells for $30 and is available from the publisher, phone (304)293-8400; on-line at www.wvupress.com.

Dr. Allen H. Loughry's new book, *Don't Buy Another Vote, I Won't Pay For a Landslide: The Sordid and Continuing History of Political Corruption in West Virginia*, puts the Barron scandal in the context of a history of vote buying, bribery, kickbacks, and election fraud. Beginning with the period of the state's founding, the author presents a detailed chronicle of West Virginia's political history, warts and all. Loughry goes beyond the catalog of scandal and corruption to propose a series of legal and ethical reforms.

The 623-page hardcover book includes forewords by senators Robert C. Byrd and John McCain, photographs, and an index. It sells for $34.99 and is available from bookstores or from the publisher, McClain Printing Company, Parsons, WV 26287; on-line at www.reformwv.com.

In *Arch: The Life of Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr.*, attorney Brad Crouser offers a largely admiring biography of a longtime West Virginia politician who pleaded guilty in 1990 to several federal criminal charges.

Arch is a 671-page hardcover with photographs. It sells for $34.95 from West Virginia Book Company, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302; phone 1-888-982-7472 or on-line at www.wvbookco.com.

Charleston Postcards

Charleston, by Stan Bumgardner, featuring more than 200 postcard images from the capitol city's past, is a new book in the Postcard History Series from Arcadia Publishing. Postcard photographs of downtown and nearby Charleston scenes, drawn from the earliest years of the 20th century through the 1970's, show businesses, churches, schools, and other landmarks — some of which remain and others of which are gone forever.

The 127-page paperback, arranged chronologically, includes an index as well as chapter introductions summarizing the historical periods illustrated. The book sells for $19.99 and is available from local bookstores or from Arcadia Publishing, phone 1-888-313-2665; on-line at www.arcadia-publishing.com.

Oral Histories Collected

Survivors of the 1944 Shinnston Tornado held a reunion on June 23 to commemorate the opening of the Bice-Ferguson Memorial Museum in Shinnston. Their recollections and stories were tape recorded and will be transcribed for posterity. [See "The Shinnston Tornado," by Martha A. Lowther; Summer 1998].

The Bice-Ferguson Memorial Museum, located on the corner of Bridge and Pike Street, is administered by the city of Shinnston. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Bill Garnette. Photograph by Steve Shaluta.

Bill Garnette, a former Navy fighter pilot who survived a harrowing 1946 plane crash atop Spruce Knob, passed away in Florida on May 4. Born in Charleston and raised in Huntington, Bill joined the Navy shortly after high school and received his wings in 1944. He flew numerous combat missions over the Pacific, before being stationed at Norfolk in 1946. There, on March 14, 1946, Bill and pilot Reginald Parsons, also from Huntington, boarded a Navy aircraft bound for Pittsburgh. Their plane crashed 100 feet from the crest of Spruce Knob, West Virginia's highest point. Parsons died in the crash. Bill Garnette survived, thanks to a miraculous chain of events. Bill told his chilling tale in a GOLDENSEAL story, titled "A Spruce Knob Miracle," in our Fall 2000 issue. Bill later worked as a journalist and enjoyed a long career with the U.S. Civil Service Commission. He was 83.

Duane Lockard. Photograph by Neal Menschel.

Duane Lockard, author and retired university professor, passed away June 19 in Massachusetts at the age of 84. Duane was the son of coal miner Clyde Lockard. Though Duane was born at Owings, Harrison County, the Lockards had family roots in Braxton County and visited there frequently throughout Duane's early years. He wrote about this in an article, titled "Bulltown of My Youth," in our Summer 2003 issue. Duane attended Fairmont State College and West Virginia University before joining the Army Air Force and flying transport planes over Europe during World War II. After the war, he received a Ph.D. in political science from Yale University, taught political science at Princeton University for 23 years, and authored several books. Through it all, Duane remained true to his West Virginia roots and his own family background. Duane's article about his father, titled "A Miner's Life: Clyde Lockard's Diary," appeared in our Summer 2005 issue.

Aftermath of 1944 Shinnston Tornado. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. For more information, call Maxine Weiser at (304)592-1942.

Oral histories documenting life along the Ohio River have been gathered as part of the Lifeboat Project of the Carnegie Mellon College of Fine Arts in Pittsburgh. An ecologically friendly pontoon boat, built of found and discarded materials, was designed for the 982-mile journey, with stops at 60 towns and cities along the river, including Wheeling, Vienna Island, and Huntington.

The crew set sail on June 18, gathering documentation of folklore, personal and community history, and discussions of life and work on the Ohio for use in an upcoming audio documentary, under the direction of Studio for Creative Inquiry fellow Carolyn Lambert. More information about the Lifeboat Project, its boat, crew, and history can be found on-line at www.ohioriverlifeboatproject.org or by calling Eric Sloss of the College of Fine Arts at (412)268-5465.

Blair Mountain Endangered

Blair Mountain has been placed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation on its 2006 list of most endangered historic sites. Despite the significance of the 1921 Battle of Blair Mountain, the preservation group has determined that Blair Mountain is threatened with obliteration through strip mining; this designation is expected to draw national attention to the importance of the events associated with the Logan County site. [See "Blair Mountain: A Brief Overview," by Gordon Simmons; Summer 2006.]

For more information, or for a list of other endangered historic places throughout the nation, contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036; on-line at www.nationaltrust.org.

3,000 Points of Light

Kenova's Pumpkin House

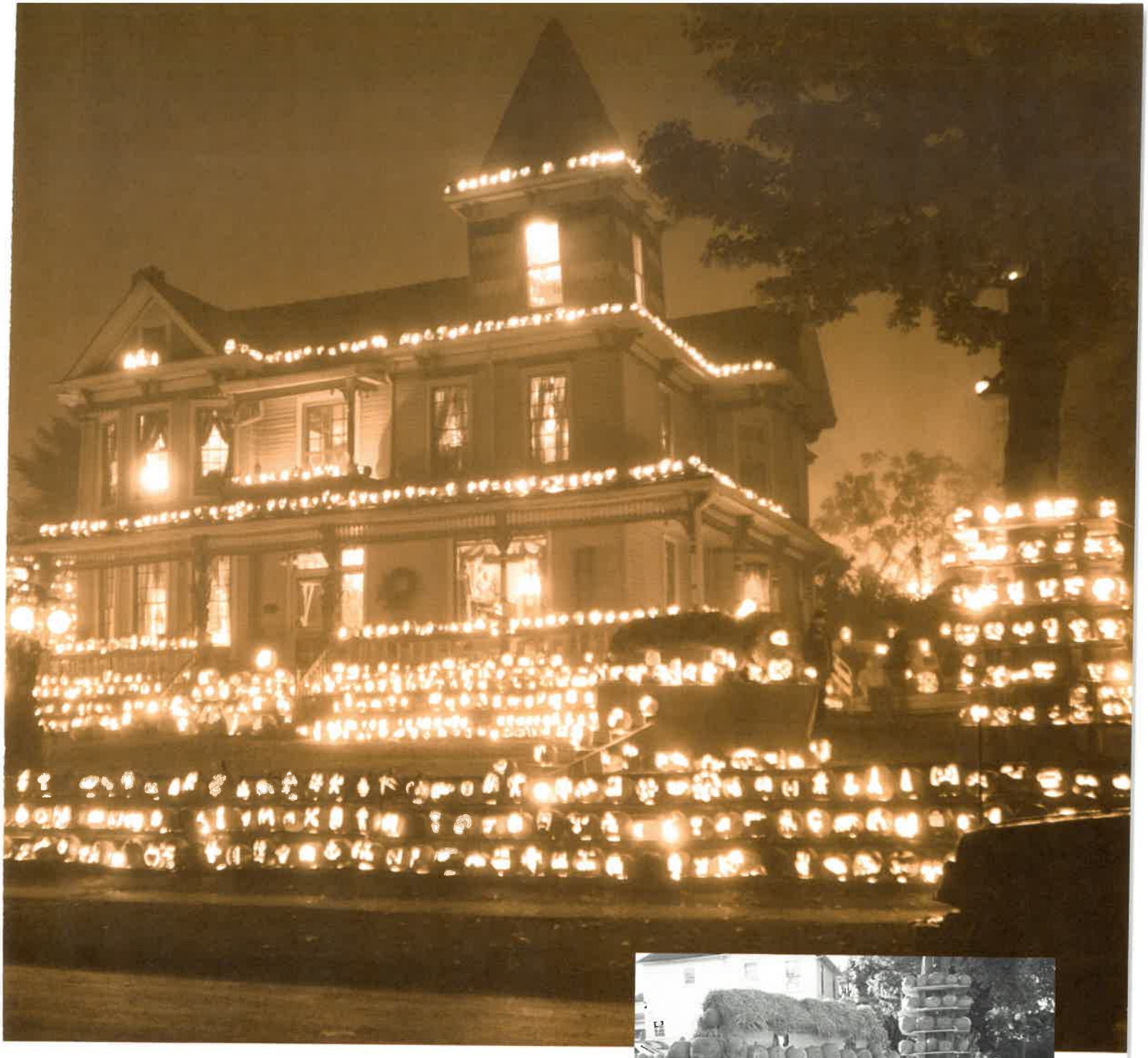
By John Lilly

Kenova's Pumpkin House, located at 748 Beech Street, displayed approximately 3,040 carved pumpkins in 2005. Owner Ric Griffith has been displaying pumpkins at this location each Halloween since 1992. At night, the lights can be seen from across the river in Ohio. Photograph by Ric Griffith.

A concerned woman from Ohio came to Ric Griffith's house in Kenova a few years ago, looking for the owner. She seemed worried. From her home on the north side of the Ohio River, she could see a strange orange glow lighting up the sky around Halloween. She thought maybe something was burning, but there was nothing in the papers about a huge fire in West Virginia, and the light, whatever it was, never seemed to burn out.

Ric smiled and explained that it was nothing to be alarmed about—it was only the massive collection of jack-o-lanterns he carves each year and displays at his house. Last year, there were more than 3,000 of them. Pumpkins line the porch, cover the eaves and much of the roof, and extend precariously to the cornice and tower atop this 115-year-old Victorian structure. They also line the front sidewalk three high, fill a large pyramid display in the yard, and occupy scaffolding and wooden shelves along the perimeter of this property and along three sides of the house. Oh, yes. There's also Noah's Ark, filled with a menagerie carved into jack-o-lanterns. And each one is lit up, 24 hours a day.

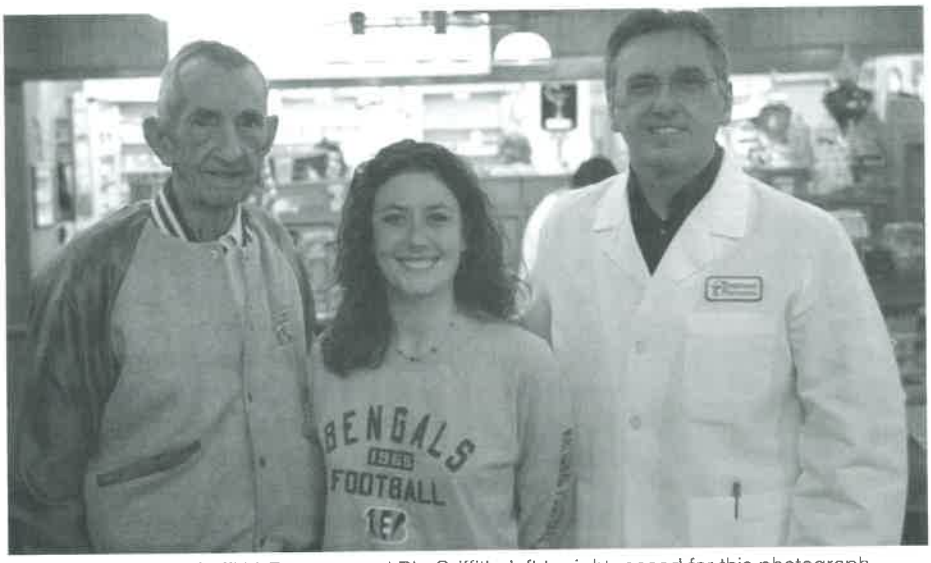
This is Kenova's Pumpkin House, and it's been Ric Griffith's creation — obsession, perhaps — for most of the past 20 years. "My wife says I have an obsessive/compulsive disorder," Ric says, only half joking. His wife,



Noah's Ark, one of many themed displays at the Pumpkin House, features a menagerie carved into jack-o-lanterns. Photograph by Heidi Romero.

Sandy, is a local psychologist, who probably doesn't joke about such things. Together, Ric, Sandy, and their family have invested untold hours and dollars, along with considerable creative energy, to bring Kenova a unique and beautiful celebration of the season. And each year, approximately 200 volunteers show up to help them and as many as 10,000 visitors flock to see the free displays.

Ric is the local pharmacist and owner of Griffith & Feil Pharmacy on Chestnut Street in downtown Kenova. His family has been involved with the pharmacy for 85 years, and Ric is the third Griffith to work there. The pharmacy opened in 1892 at a nearby location, where it was founded by R Ney Williams. "He came here from Blacksburg, Virginia, when the railroad laid out the town of Kenova," Ric says. Kenova is the westernmost point in West Virginia and takes its name from the three states that meet



Dick Griffith, Heidi (Griffith) Romero, and Ric Griffith, left to right, posed for this photograph recently at Griffith & Feil Pharmacy in Kenova, where members of the family have worked since 1921. Ric is the current owner. His father, Dick, is a retired pharmacist. Daughter Heidi is in pharmacy school at the University of Kentucky and works at the pharmacy when she is in town.

near there. In the 1890's, the Norfolk & Western Railroad sold lots in the area, and Kenova vied with Huntington for early prominence in the region, owing to its flat terrain and desirable location at the confluence of the Ohio and Big Sandy rivers. Though Collis P. Huntington chose to invest his fortunes a few miles to the east — largely due to flooding concerns at Kenova — Kenova became an active railroad center and remains so today.

"My family became involved in the pharmacy when my uncle started work here, out of high school, in 1921," Ric explains. Simpson Griffith, or "Uncle Simp," was the older brother to Ric's father and assumed adult responsibilities when their father passed away at an early age.

"Uncle Simp stayed with the business and eventually became a primary stockholder of it," Ric says. Willard S. "Dick" Griffith, Ric's dad, went to pharmacy school and soon joined his brother. "When Mr. Williams died in 1943," Ric says, "my family bought the business, along with Mr. Glen Feil. They changed the name to Griffith & Feil ten years later."

Ric was born in Kenova in 1949. "I was sitting on the couch after graduating from high school," he recalls. "I was watching cartoons. Dad told me to come to work down here, and I've been here ever since. He told me I was too old to be watching cartoons." Dick Griffith is currently 92 years old, is an avid tennis player, and still holds his pharmacy license, though he no longer practices.

After graduating from pharmacy school in Toledo in 1976, Ric returned to Kenova and began work as a registered pharmacist in the family business. He soon married and had three daughters: Heidi, Jenny, and Y Alexis. "When they were little," Ric recalls, "I carved us each a pumpkin. We had four pumpkins. We lived down here on Chestnut Street. And the next year, I did the four pumpkins and started filling in some space on the rail. Then it began to fill up the porch rail and the steps. Then we went up to the porch roof, and then to the upper roof."

Following a divorce, remarriage, and a move to the Victorian house at 748 Beech Street, Ric's pumpkin fascination turned serious by around 1992. "We began to rapidly expand how many pumpkins we were doing," he points out, modestly. What began as a few jack-o-lanterns on the porch grew to dozens, then hundreds, then thousands.

"The people in the town, they know when they deliver them," he says. "They see the trailers coming in. We set up almost like a fire-brigade line in the backyard and toss them and line them up. That's usually the first week in October."

But the pumpkin process begins much earlier. Actually, pumpkins are never far from Ric's mind, and he keeps notebooks full of design ideas throughout the year. Anywhere he looks, anything he sees or hears might spark an idea for a fresh design. Daughter Heidi Romero helps with the design process, as well.

A pharmacy student at the Uni-

A few of the unique designs found at the Pumpkin House last year. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The pumpkins arrive. Photograph by Ric Griffith.

versity of Kentucky, Heidi comes back regularly to help out during pumpkin season. Though she willingly pitches in wherever she is needed, Heidi says that she especially enjoys drawing the designs. "It gets to the point where you start seeing pumpkin designs everywhere you go," she says. "Before one of my exams last year, I was looking down at the carpet and saw a design [in the pattern] and sketched it out real quick."

The design on each pumpkin is unique, as incredible as that seems, considering there are 3,000 of them. They range from the traditional, such as jack-o-lantern faces — scary, funny, goofy, cute, or otherwise — to the unexpected, such as a robin with a worm, a mailbox, the number four, a coyote, an outhouse, a porpoise, a fork, the list goes on and on and on. One wall is what Ric calls the "cat choir," featuring dozens of howling felines, accompanied by a tape recording of cats "singing" the "Hallelujah Chorus." The pyramid display features hieroglyphics, mummies, and other Egyptian images. One display honors dozens of regional schools and universities, while another includes a variety of religious symbols. Hundreds of design ideas churn around in Ric's and Heidi's heads for months before pumpkin season begins.

The practical side of the project gets underway in mid-September with a planning meeting, followed by the setting up of boards and tables and the layout of the wiring. Ric is grateful for the help of his daughters, their husbands, fiancés, and friends, along with the generous support of the community, throughout the following six weeks of work.

Heidi and her sisters were raised with this pumpkin obsession and have become increasingly involved as they have grown up. When she lived in Charlotte, Heidi even enticed a few of her college friends to make the journey to help at pumpkin time. "If I couldn't be here one October, it would really make me sad," Heidi says. "It's just really become a part of my life, and I really enjoy it." Her husband, Jorge, is involved, as

Ric Griffith helps unload some of the more than 3,000 pumpkins that have just been delivered to his house. George Robinson is pushing the wagon while others look on. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Hundreds of board feet of shelving support displays throughout the property. Strings of Christmas tree lights are used for illumination. The bottoms are cut out of the pumpkins, and the pumpkins are set atop the bulbs, as shown here. Photograph by Michael Keller.

well, which is handy since he is an electrician, Ric says.

Electricity replaced candles several years ago, when the pumpkin count grew to above 500. Now, the bottoms are cut out of the pumpkins and light bulbs are placed inside them. "We use the C-7 Christmas tree light bulbs — the larger Christmas tree lights," Ric says. "Although the candles will produce a neater effect because they flicker — they're more animated — we had to go to electric lights. It was just too overwhelming."

It took some trial and error during the transition, however. When hundreds of lights were strung together, they continued to blow fuses while the Griffiths ran more and more extension cords out of every window of their house. They eventually had the house rewired, then rewired again, then again, this time with trenches dug throughout the yard to bury wires and to position circuit boards around the property.

While the wooden boards, tables, and wires are put in place, Ric takes a permanent black marking pen and begins drawing designs on the pumpkins. "We line them up in rows of two," he says. He then goes down the rows, rolls the pumpkins over, quickly draws the designs, and rolls the pumpkins back. "We try to minimize the number of times you have to lift it," he says. Heidi and Jorge help with this part when they are available, but Ric draws the vast number of designs himself, sometimes spending 16 or 18 hours a day at the task.

Though he has no formal art training, Ric has a keen eye for what it takes to make a successful design on a carved pumpkin. He knows that he needs to consider the most effective use of

The Griffith sisters have been involved with the Pumpkin House since childhood. Here, Heidi uses a marking pen to draw a design on a pumpkin. Photograph by Jorge Romero.

Though he has no formal art training, Ric Griffith has a keen sense of design when it comes to jack-o-lanterns. It takes him approximately three weeks to draw on about 3,000 pumpkins. Photograph by Michael Keller.

"negative space" — where the light will show through the cut-out area — as well as the overall integrity of the design as the pumpkin begins to decay. He explains a simple "system of three," in which every cut-out element of a design must be supported by three solid sections in order to give the design sufficient strength over time. Ric also realizes that in the heat of the carving process, there is no telling who will be executing a particular design, so he must keep them as simple as possible.

"The word I hate most during this process is 'Oops!'" Ric says. "That means that someone's ruined one. The phrase I hate most is 'Anyone got a toothpick?' That means they're trying to put it back together."

Ric writes his name on the pumpkins that bear the most intricate designs, indicating that he will carve those pumpkins personally or will relegate them to the more experienced volunteers.

The drawing process takes between 21 and 22 days. Approximately one week before Halloween, the carving begins. "We have about 72 linear feet of tables, about waist high," Ric says.

Canopies are erected, electric cords are strung, and bungee cords are hung to help keep the other cords out of harm's way. This next step involves power tools, and lots of them.

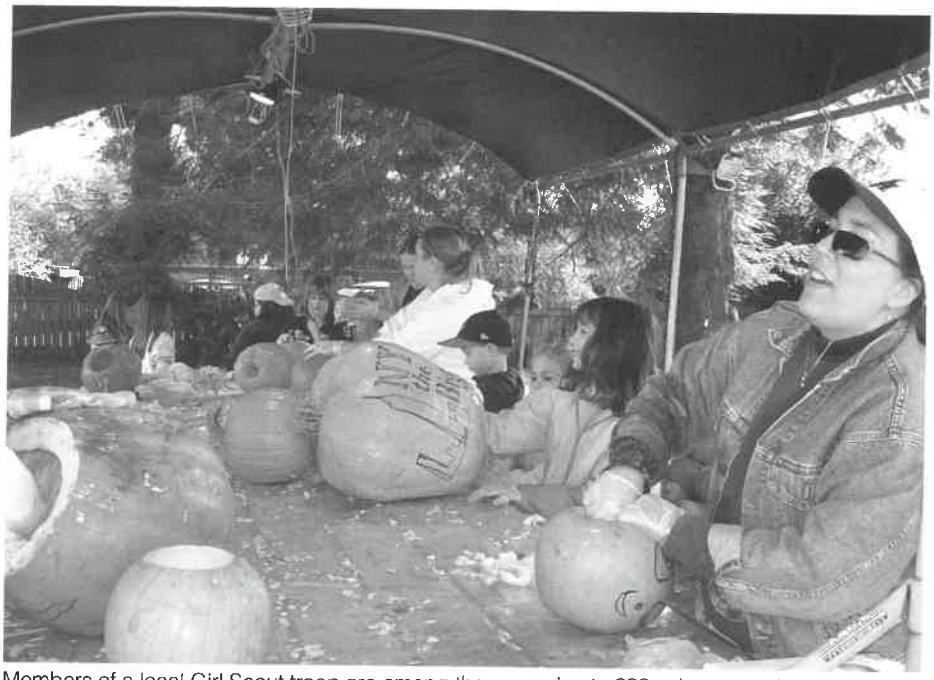
First, the bottoms are cut out of each pumpkin, using a four-inch drill attachment or hole saw. Then, volunteers scoop the seeds and scrape the sides.

"We've got cheap metal spoons," Ric says. "We bend the handle over, so it's shorter and you can scrape the side more efficiently. People come, and many of them will take the seeds." Last year, Hospice baked some of the seeds and used some of the cut-out bottoms to make pumpkin pies. Other seeds and scrapings are used for mulch, and some end up as bird feed. Some seeds take root in the Griffith's yard the following year.

After the pumpkins are scraped, they are carved. "I draw them all so that they can be done with a jigsaw," Ric says. "A jigsaw cuts cleanly, cuts quickly."

Among the many volunteers who come to help carve the pumpkins are some older gentlemen, who favor more traditional methods of carving. "They want to get out their little drywall saws and their knives," Ric says. "I tell them, 'Guys, we got 3,000 pumpkins here. You can take an hour on that pumpkin, if you want, but that's 3,000 hours it's going to take us to do this thing.' I'll stand next to them with a jigsaw, and while they're cutting out one eye, I'll go 'vrooom vrooom' — I'll do a whole pumpkin. That's the game."

As they are carved, each pumpkin is dipped in a bleach-and-water mixture — "a mild anti-mold, anti-bacterial solution," Ric says, sounding again like a pharmacist. After the pumpkins have been dipped and



Members of a local Girl Scout troop are among the approximate 200 volunteers who help with the pumpkin project each year. Here, Girl Scouts and their leaders are up to their elbows in scooping. Photograph by Heidi Romero.

cleaned, they are set on the ground to drain. This is an important step and is necessary to avoid shocks as the pumpkins come in contact with the strings of electric lights.

The mind-numbing challenge of organizing so many carved pumpkins is the next step. "We code them," Ric says. "I'll put stakes all around the yard. Like, Section 22 — the Ark. Just to save time, instead of writing 'Ark,' I'll just write '22' on the top of the pumpkin." These numbers help keep the jack-o-lanterns in order, but it still falls to Ric and his family and core of volunteers to make sure that each pumpkin ends up where it belongs in the displays.

"Each year, we always do the 'hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil' — the three-monkey thing," Ric says. "Every year, it's a mad search to get the three of them together."

The carving takes about five days, about 18 to 20 hours a day, with a core of about a dozen carvers. "When someone shows up and they want to help, they all want to carve," Ric says. "They really want to say, 'I did that one.' It's like they get credit for it." Ric acknowledges the dangers inherent in this process of using power tools to carve thousands of wet, slippery pumpkins. He discourages children from getting involved at this stage and stresses safety among all his volunteers. There have been a few shocks, Ric says, but nothing major.

Despite the risks, the long hours, and the sometimes-grueling work, hundreds of people come to Ric's door, looking to lend a hand. Some come back nearly every day, and some can only stay for part of their lunch hour. All of them get caught up in the allure of this gargantuan task. "During the last week, it's almost like this work effort becomes an organism," Ric says. "It all falls into place."

Although a certain amount of direction is provided, the workers seem to develop a natural sense of what needs to be done and where they can be most helpful. "It's like it takes on a life of its own," Ric says of the work effort, pointing out that each year, with one exception, all of the pumpkins have been carved and in place in time for the crowds to arrive on Halloween.

Volunteer Joe Smith uses an electric jigsaw to carve a pumpkin. Photograph by Michael Keller.

And the crowds do come. The city of Kenova changes Beech Street to one-way to accommodate the flow. They begin showing up before sunrise and continue well past midnight, some staying for a few minutes, some spending hours. Many are local residents, while others come from as far away as Japan or Seattle. Over the years, the local media have taken notice of the Pumpkin House, and news cameras, reporters, and photographers are a frequent sight.

Children especially enjoy the displays. They are fascinated by the pumpkins themselves, the designs, and the sheer scale of the thing. Many squeal with delight as they recognize images carved in the pumpkins and run back and forth between the displays, trying to see them all, show their parents, or pick a favorite.

The glimmering array of glowing pumpkins strikes a deep chord within people of all ages, however.

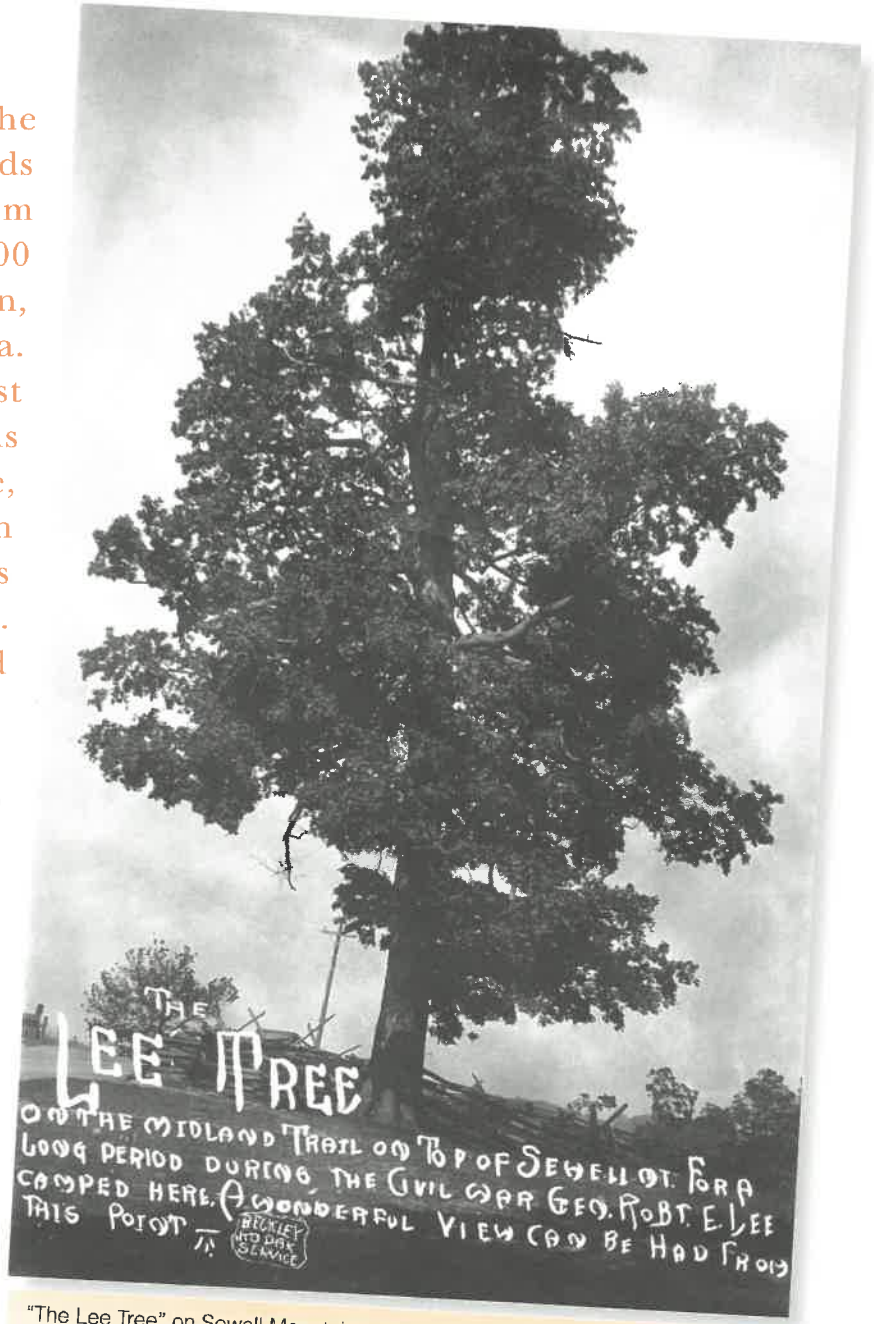
Children are especially enthralled by the massive show of carved pumpkins. These youngsters seem to have found one with a burnt-out lightbulb. Photograph by Michael Keller.

L. Wells Photographer

By Bob Moore
Photographs by Homer L. Wells

The Midland Trail was one of the first coast-to-coast automobile roads created in the early 20th century. From the California coast, it stretches 3,300 miles across America to Washington, D.C., and Newport News, Virginia. The 189-mile section through West Virginia is much older than that. As the James River & Kanawha Turnpike, it was among the earliest migration and trade routes used to settle lands west of the Alleghenies. Today, it's U.S. Route 60, also known as the Midland Trail Scenic Highway.

There's a lot of history on this road, and a few mysteries, as well. With more than 50 years of personal memories scattered along this highway, my research into the history of the Midland Trail in West Virginia still reveals some amazing discoveries. This is one of them.



"The Lee Tree" on Sewell Mountain — the postcard that started it all. "For a long period during the Civil War, Gen. Robt. E. Lee camped here. A wonderful view can be had from this point," the postcard says. A State Historical Highway Marker is located on Route 60 near here today.

Left: "On the Midland Trail near Ansted, W.Va." Homer Wells parked his car and climbed the bank to take this photograph. It's 1924. Although spring or early summer, the road must have been muddy, as close examination suggests chains on the rear tires. The guardrail is steel cable strung to a series of wooden posts. Today, the road is much wider and bordered by thick foliage. All postcards from the author's collection, except where noted.

I've been collecting West Virginia picture postcards for years. Some of them date to the 1890's — mostly photographs featuring carefully hand-colored images, often touched-up to enhance local scenery. Details were often retouched or enhanced by artists who had never been there!

Occasionally, I'd find a black-and-white photo on a postcard. Many were produced by local photographers and were offered for sale to the tourist trade. While anyone with a Kodak box camera could take photographs and have them turned into postcards, there were some images that clearly stood out. That's how I discovered Homer Wells. His talent was not just in depth, composition, and print quality. He had an eye for position — knowing where to find the right place to take a photograph and knowing how to get there. The reward is the real picture — straight-up and honest.

The first Wells postcard to grab my attention was a tattered old view of Lee's Tree on Sewell Mountain. Located just off the Midland Trail, "The Tree" was all that remained of the campsite used by General Robert E. Lee's Confederate troops in the autumn of 1861. In the 1930's, as people were encouraged to rediscover American history, this living Civil War monument was a favorite subject of color postcards promoting the scenic and historic sites along the highway.

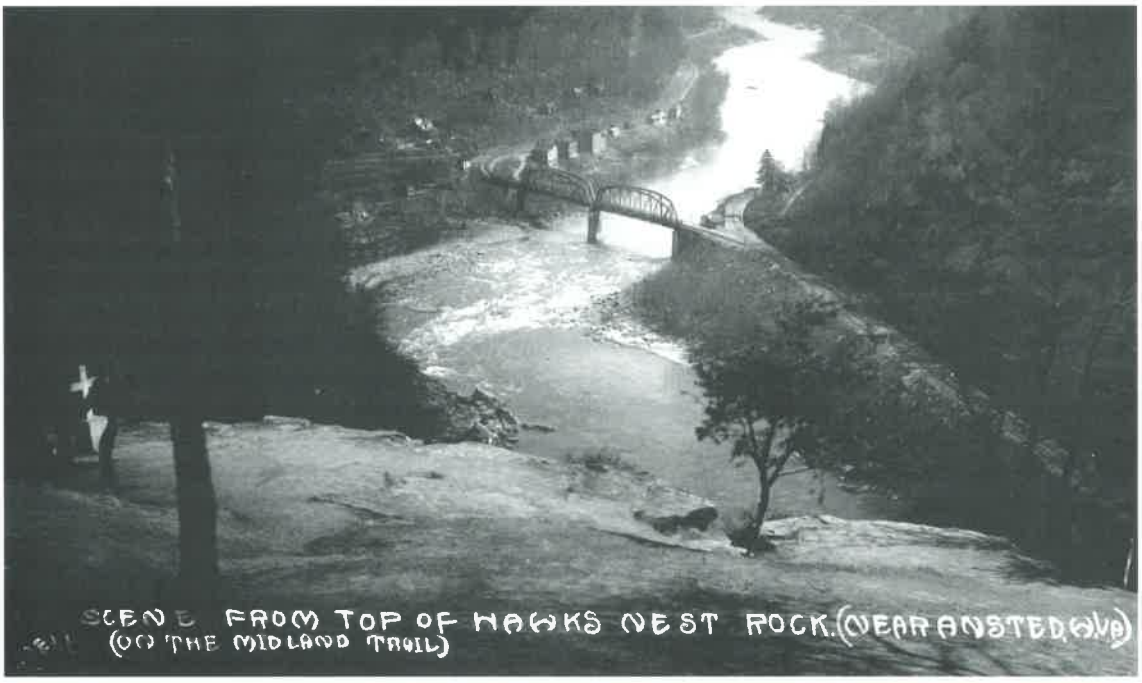
Although I could see their eyes filling in the colors on those old black-and-white photos, few could tell me anything about the photographer.

This card was different, though. The stark black-and-white photo of the famous tree, which succumbed to old age in 1937, had a carefully hand-lettered description. It was the genuine article, and the man who captured the image knew his subject. It also contained a clue: an upside-down "W" logo with the inscription "Beckley Kodak Service."

The mystery deepened as I found more of his postcards. Most, linked by a consistent lettering style, mentioned "Midland Trail" or "Route 60." The photo credits varied: "Beckley Kodak Service," "Premier Photo," and "Wells Photo." The credit "Homer L. Wells Photo" opened the door.

His photographs each tell their own story. As famous photographers like Ansel Adams preserved the beauty of our western wilderness, this man, whoever he was, toiled almost in anonymity as he drove his car along West Virginia's Midland Trail with cameras and tripods. He hiked steep banks, climbed rocks, and stood on cliff tops, railroad tracks, and even in the middle of the road. Whatever it took, he got his picture! He wanted others to see what he experienced through his viewfinder. Homer Wells did for West Virginia what others did for the American West, only few people knew it. Until now.

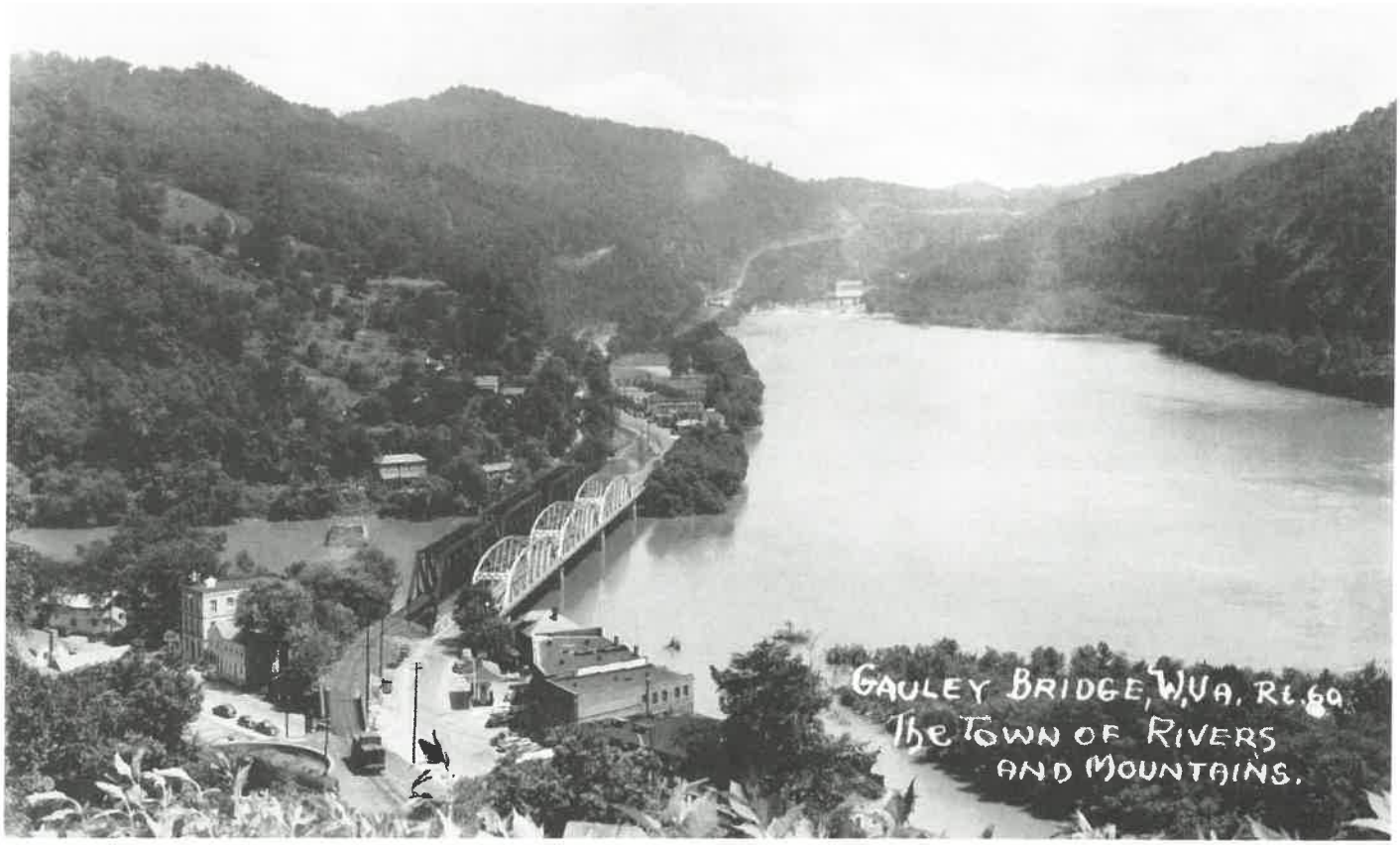
Who was he?



"Scene from top of Hawks Nest Rock (Near Ansted, W.Va.) (On the Midland Trail)" With no fences at the overlook, folks ventured out onto Hawks Nest Rock at their own risk. After a young New River State College student fell to his death in 1925, a memorial was erected, visible at left. In this perfect moment, the glow of the afternoon sun illuminates the memorial cross. On the river far below, life goes on in the busy little town of Hawks Nest — all framed by the age-old splendor of the New River Canyon. Today, the town is history, but freight trains still rumble across the bridge, where they can be viewed behind the safety of a stone wall.

Homer Leroy Wells was born February 1, 1889, in Curwensville, Pennsylvania. After a three-year hitch in the cavalry from 1909 to 1912, he married Nola May Monk in Johnson County, Kentucky, in 1914. His occupation: "Photographer." Soon after, Homer and May Wells became West Virginians, by choice.

In World War I, Homer enlisted in the Army at Mullens, on November 9, 1917. Within a year, Private Wells was a combat veteran of battles for Amiens and survived a poison gas



"Gauley Bridge, W.Va. Rt. 60. The town of rivers and mountains." If a picture is worth a thousand words, this one says plenty. Looking east from Chimney Rock above town are three rivers: the Gauley on the left, the New and the Kanawha on the right. Barely visible in the lower left corner, a New York Central Railroad locomotive rests on the turntable, preparing to pick up a caboose spotted on the track leading to the railroad bridge over the Gauley River. The three-story building at left with the stars on the roof is the Bank of Gauley. Behind it, to the left of the railroad bridge, are the piers of the bridge burned in 1862 by retreating Confederates. The three-span highway bridge, bearing the Midland Trail, is to the right. In the distance, the highway winds its way up Gauley Mountain. Barely visible in the center is the power house for the Hawks Nest Dam. This photograph was taken in the late 1930's.

attack during the Argonne offensive. In 1919, he came home to West Virginia.

The 1930 Fayette County census lists his residence as Ansted. Today, few folks in Ansted remember him. Looking through my small collection of his photos at the town's homecoming not long ago, many there were taken back to a time when the world was much younger, to the memories of old friends, hard times, and good times. Although I could see their eyes filling in the colors on those old black-and-white photos, few could tell me anything about the photographer.

Robert Dever, Ansted High School class of '35, remembers Homer Wells. "He was a tall, friendly, outgoing man of medium build," Robert recalls. After more than 60 years, Mr. Dever's salient recollection of Wells was of a man who always wore a white dress shirt, "what you might expect of a salesman," he says.

Homer Wells was a salesman, not just because roadside merchants and tourist attractions sold his postcards and folios. It's in his work — photographs that reflect the labor of love of a one-man booster for the Midland Trail in West Virginia.

At his home in Ansted, 90-year-old Bill Skaggs remembers him, as well. "He smoked a crooked-neck pipe and wore a fedora," says Mr. Skaggs, relaxing in his easy chair and looking through the photographs. Bill worked for Wells one summer day in 1930, helping to set up his roadside display of photographs on Gauley Mountain.

Mr. Skaggs' memories are still clear after 75 years. "I remember there wasn't much traffic that day," Bill recalls. "He told me, 'I guess we aren't doing much good here,' so we packed it all up. He paid me a dollar — pretty good money in those days." Mr. Skaggs was especially impressed by Homer Wells' attitude. Although he was "all business," as Bill Skaggs puts it, Wells was polite to his teenage employee and treated him well.

Each additional Wells photo I found opened another window into a time when cameras were barely as common as automobiles. Wells' subjects ranged from Lexington, Kentucky, to Natural Bridge, Virginia, but most of his work was in West Virginia along the Midland Trail and the New River Gorge. Each view is a small sample of the scenery found only here.

The Midland Trail was a narrow dirt road until it was paved in 1924, and several of Wells' cards show the

road during this early era. Later cards reference "Route 60" — the federal highway designation given the road in 1927.

Each additional Wells photo I found opened another window into a time when cameras were barely as common as automobiles.

Between 1930 and 1936, Wells owned land across the highway from where Hawks Nest Lodge is located today. He built Lovers Leap Tourist Camp, a cozy complex of cabins with a small washhouse for guests. Their modest frame home served as office and studio. A number of cards depict this camp, as well.

Longtime Ansted businessman Bob Wells, a 1953 graduate of Ansted High School and no relation to Homer, is a researcher for the Ansted Museum. Bob grew up in the town, serving an apprenticeship under his father, Lacy Wells, at the family automobile dealership. Bob remembers that Homer built a small roadside shelter, with a free water fountain for passing motorists.

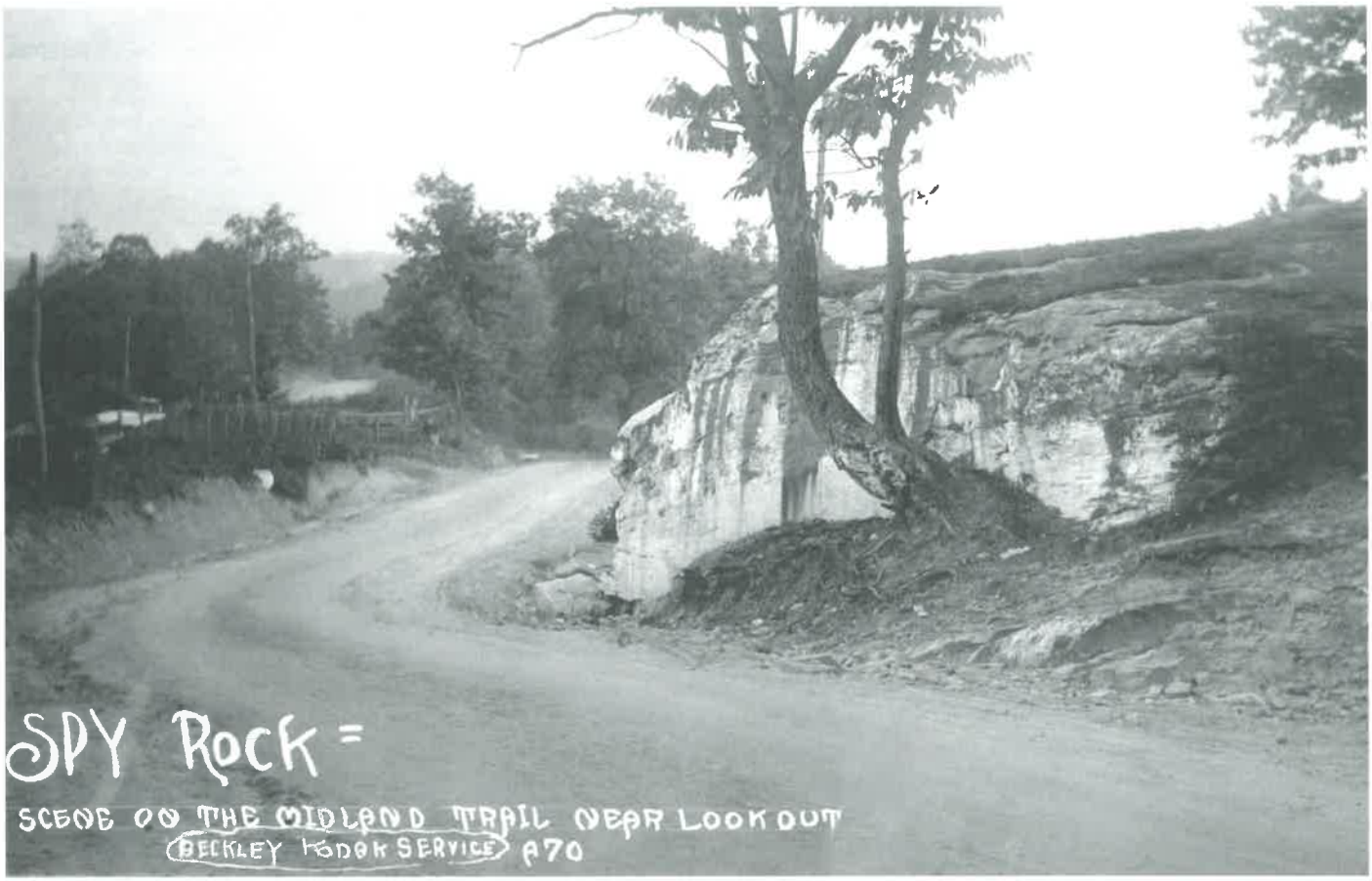
Wells produced at least two black-and-white postcard folios: souvenirs of nearby Hawks Nest Resort and Wells' own Lovers Leap Tourist Camp. Among Wells' last photographs of the period is one that shows members of the Ansted Volunteer Fire Department posing with their new 1937 Chevrolet pumper truck in front of the Lovers Leap Tourist Camp. In August 1938, Wells sold the property to Webb Brown.

"I don't know," admits Robert Dever. "He was here for a while, and then we just didn't see him anymore."

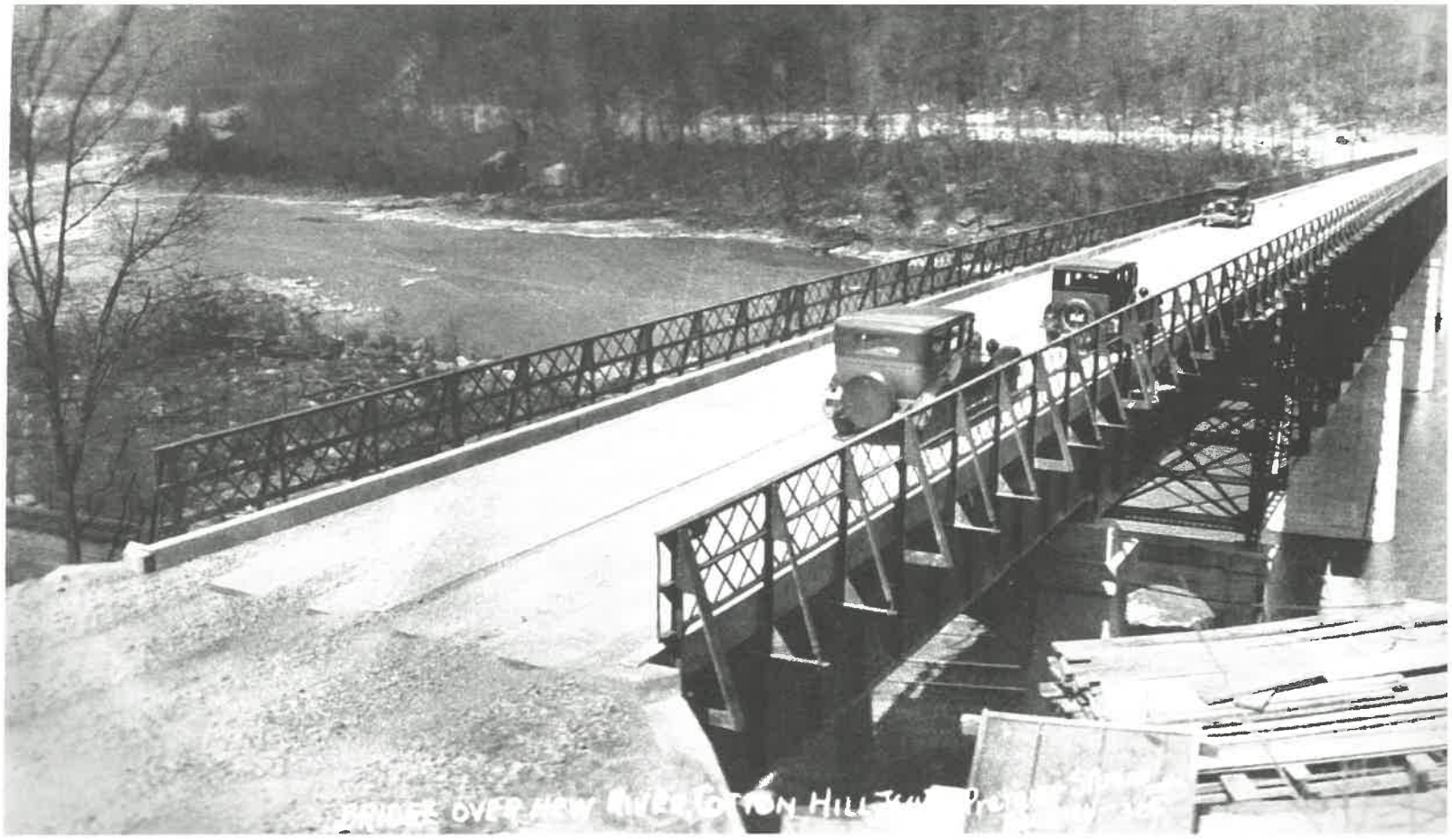
Wells purchased three-and-a-half acres of the Tompkins farm on Gauley Mountain in 1942. Canyon View Tourist Camp and Wells' small photo studio were located across Route 60 from the upper side of Hawks Nest Country Club.

Within a few years, Homer and May sold the property and moved to Beckley, where Wells Photo Shop met the public on Neville Street. The couple settled in nearby Mabscott.

The Wellses lived across the street when neighbors Bud and Sue Sisk moved to Mabscott in 1948. They became close friends. Their daughter, Kay Sisk Walker, who now lives in Colorado, recalls Homer as a "genuine person. He had a gray beard and loved children," she recalls. "He was like a grandfather to us kids. Since



"Spy Rock — Scene on the Midland Trail near Lookout." Located about a half-mile west of Lookout, Spy Rock was named for its unobstructed view of Sewell Mountain. This vantage point was used by Indians, later by frontiersmen. In 1861, the Union Army guarding the James River & Kanawha Turnpike used the rock to observe Confederate troop positions on Sewell. The Midland Trail was a narrow gravel road when this picture was taken in the early 1920's.



"Bridge over New River at Cotton Hill, W.Va." When this picture was taken, the bridge was so new that we can still see leftover construction materials piled up on the right. The Cotton Hill Cut-Off was a gravel road built in 1924 to connect Fayetteville with the Midland Trail at Chimney Corner. That's where those two cars are going. In 1926, this became U.S. Route 21. This old bridge was replaced a few years ago by a much wider concrete span.

they had no children of their own, they sort of adopted all the kids in the neighborhood." Kay says she was always welcome in their home.

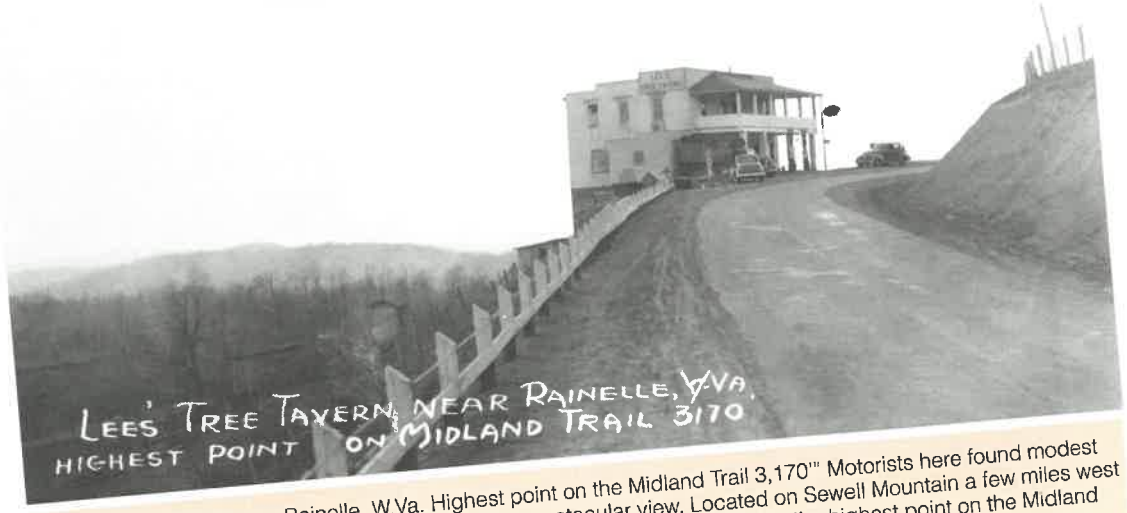
"Every year, they would take their Airstream trailer on a long vacation that usually included a fishing trip to Canada," Kay continues. "When they came back, he would show us all these great photographs [he had taken]. He always used black-and-white film, because he believed that color film loses depth and quality."

She remembers that Homer had a small darkroom in the basement, where he used to develop photographs. May didn't like the smell of the chemicals and fretted about Homer blowing up the place.

But, what about those hand-colored photographs?

Kay Walker believes May did that. "Homer didn't like to fuss with details," Kay says. "He liked to take pictures. He would tell us, 'I do the easy work, and she does the hard work.'"

Closing the shop in 1957, they sold the house and moved to Florida. Their 59-year marriage ended when May passed away



"Lee's Tree Tavern near Rainelle, W.Va. Highest point on the Midland Trail 3,170'" Motorists here found modest accommodations, restaurant, gas station, and a spectacular view. Located on Sewell Mountain a few miles west of Rainelle, the inn closed in the 1970's and was torn down. The 3,170 feet is the highest point on the Midland Trail east of the Mississippi River.

It's business as usual at Townsend's Barbershop in Summersville. Tending to customers, from the left, are barbers Bradley Hughart, Brad Hughart, and

Townsend's

Shave and a Haircut in

Bob Townsend.

Barbershop

Summersville

By Bill Lynch

Photographs by Michael Keller

Looking out the window of Townsend's Barbershop in Summersville on a Friday afternoon, the pace is easy and casual. A few people in work clothes walk along the sidewalk and nod to each other as they pass on their way down the street toward the bank, to the courthouse, or maybe down to the Caledonia Cafe for a cup of coffee. Cars creep along Main Street. It's best to take it slow and steady behind the wheel in Summersville. The speed limit signs here aren't suggestions.

This is about as busy as it gets, except maybe during the tourist season, when Summersville Lake is full and the license plates come from as far away as Alaska.

On the inside of the plate glass, however, Townsend's Barbershop never seems to slow down. Men in coats shuffle in through the front door. Barber Bob Townsend, scarcely taking an eye off whomever is in the chair, waves at the newcomers with scissors in his hand. Most of the time, he greets them by name as they grab a seat in the row of white chairs lined up against the wall. Sometimes there is a wait, even with three barbers working in front of the great mirror. Of course, not all of the seats are occupied all of the time, but on a good day, none of them have the chance to grow cold either.

There's the hum of clippers, the snap-snip of scissors, and the easy, friendly noise of jokes and unrepentantly idle chatter.

"I heard that WVU's coach makes more than the president," an old farmer says, thumbing patiently through the sports pages and waiting his turn.

"That's fine with me," another replies. "I think Rodriguez is worth the money. I can't say if I think that about the other guy."

A warm chuckle spreads up the length of the line.

"I think they both make too much money," somebody else says.

"Must be a Marshall fan," the farmer quips and settles back into his newspaper. A few people smile and shake their heads before the room's attention drifts back to a television, mumbling basketball scores.

Townsend's Barbershop is the kind of place where everybody knows everybody and everybody is welcome, though this *is* a barbershop. And barbershops cater to men. Townsend's is a place for the men of the town to meet and pass the time, swapping stories about their kids and wives, talking college football and local politics, telling old jokes and maybe even the occasional tall tale.

"It's amazing how big the deer get around here during hunting season," barber Brad Hughart says.

It's a comfortable little place where men can just be men, where they can legally waste an hour waiting to get their haircut. There are fewer places in the world like this today than there used to be.

"We get some people who drive in from outside the county to come here," Bob says.

For Bob Townsend, today is just an average day of cutting hair, one of thousands that stretch back to 1958, when he first started working as a barber. Looking out into the street, Bob says that he's seen a lot in his time. He's watched Summersville grow and change from the little community where his father opened up shop during

Owner Bob Townsend takes a little more off the side of customer Ronney O'Dell. Bob has worked here for 48 years.

the Great Depression to the thriving lake town that it's become.

"It used to be a lot different," Bob says. "It used to be on a Saturday night, there'd be people sitting on that old wall from one end to the other. You wouldn't be able to get much in between 'em."

The wall across the street is empty now and mostly stays that way, he says.

"People came in and did their shopping on Saturday," he explains. "They'd go to the movie or just sit on that wall and socialize." He grins. "I used to make pretty good money shining shoes."

Townsend's Barbershop began in 1931 with Bob's father, Earl. Earl Townsend started out as a barber in Webster County. He was modestly successful there but suddenly found himself out of a job.

"Well, the road was coming through," Bob explains. "It went where his shop was. The road came in, and they took his store. He used to say they'd run him out of Webster County."

Looking around to see where he might best start over, Bob's father saw a little storefront by Ward's Theater in Summersville. Earl liked what he saw and thought the town had great potential. He made up his mind to buy it, if he could get it.

"Louis Groves owned that place," Bob says. "Dad went up to him and asked him if it was for sale."

Both men saw an opportunity.

"'Mister,' he told my dad, 'everything I got is for sale!'"

The entire room roars at Bob's story.

Townsend's Barbershop stayed there for five years before it was moved down the street to the Dixon building, across from the St. Nicholas Hotel. Twenty-six years later, it was moved again, this time to its current place on Main Street, across from the courthouse. For 75 years, through economic upturns and downturns, the shop has managed not only to survive, but to thrive.

"A barbershop is supposed to get by on repeat business," Brad Hughart says, "but we've got people from Michigan who come see us every summer and other people who see us whenever they come to town to see family."

Though it has become a local institution, it wasn't always that way. Today's stream of paying customers coming through the door started off as a trickle.

"Sure, the Depression wasn't as bad here as it was in a lot of places," Bob admits, "but getting started wasn't easy."

For one thing, Townsend's wasn't the only barbershop in town.

"When Dad got started in town, a haircut cost 35 cents," Bob says. "There was a guy up the street. He cut the price to 25 cents, said he was going to 'run that foreigner outta town.' That's what he called him. Called him a 'foreigner.'"

To keep his struggling business afloat, Earl had to cut his prices, too.

"Dad said it was tough but that he was going to hang in there," Bob recalls.

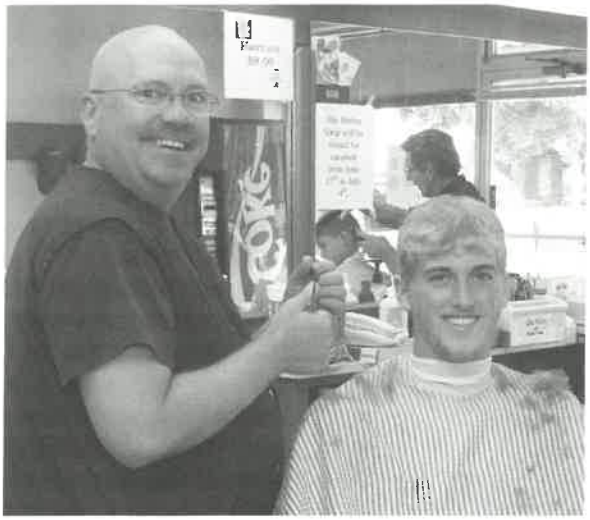
He did better than that. He started a dynasty. In 1958, after studying at Huntington Barber College, Bob joined his father at cutting and clipping hair in downtown Summersville.

Bob Townsend remembers his father as a hardworking man, devoted to his family and to his business. He was a man who always came to work dressed smartly in a shirt and tie. Earl Townsend worked long hours and didn't put much stock in vacations. He was dedicated to his profession and to the important role he played in the community.

"It used to be more important to people how they looked when they went to church," Bob says. "Older fellows might have a harder time shaving. Their hands weren't so steady or maybe their eyes weren't so good. They relied on him."

Earl was more than a shopkeeper to these men. He was a friend. Over the years, Townsend's Barbershop

Earl Townsend, shown here with a young customer in about 1934, began barbering in Webster County in 1931. He soon moved his business to Summersville, where Townsend's Barbershop has operated for the past 75 years. Photographer unknown.



Brad Hughart got into barbering in the late 1970's as an unexpected result of dating Bob Townsend's daughter. Brad is shown here with customer Chase Smith.

became a fixture in Summersville, a way to instantly connect to the roots of the community.

"There was an old guy named Bill Dawson," Brad Hughart explains. "He was the caretaker for the Nazarene camp up the road. He used to come here for years. Anyway, after he retired, he left a note for the new man who replaced him. It had a long list of what he was supposed to do. The last thing on that list was 'Get your haircut at Townsend's.'"

And he's been coming in ever since.

Bob looks back fondly on the 20 years he spent working with his father.

"I learned more than I can ever really say," he says. "He knew a lot about this business, about how to live, too."

In 1978, Brad Hughart began seeing Bob Townsend's daughter Marsha. Dating blossomed into a romance and ideas of marriage, but Brad didn't have a job or much of an idea what he wanted to do with his life.

"So, I got my BS [Barber Science] degree at Charleston Barber College," he says, with a laugh. He stepped in to take the elder Townsend's place — Brad's first day on the job was Earl's last.

"He did three haircuts that day, then retired," Brad says. "He was 79 years old."

Although retired and no longer cutting hair, he kept watch over the shop he had started. Earl Townsend had a tried-and-true method of doing things.

"First year I was on the job, I took a day during the week and went hunting," Brad recalls. "That was something the old man would never do. He just didn't believe in it. So the next day I come in, and he picks up a brush."

Earl began dusting him off.

"He told me he was brushing the deer hair off of me," Brad says, with a laugh, "and that I could be replaced. Going deer hunting when I was supposed to be at work, he didn't think much of it."

Bob shrugs and nods in agreement.

"Bob's dad never took a vacation," Brad says. "Bob didn't take one until after he'd been working for 20 years."

"He was a tough guy," Bob says. "He had to be."

Since then, they've amended that one particular policy. The three barbers now take a week off together, usually during the last week of June.

Earl Townsend passed away in 1985, but his methods have been kept over the years. The barbers still cut hair much the same way they always have, with clippers, scissors, and a straight razor to shave.

"I did talk Bob into wearing a smock," Brad adds.

Progress.

Brad agrees that things have changed in his time, too.

"Well, when I started," Brad says, "the hair was long, then it went short. Now it's kind of long again. It just sort of comes and goes, I guess."

It's not only hair styles that change. Where people go has changed, as well.

"Well, downtown here is struggling," Brad says, shaking his head. "A lot of business went outside of town, out to where all the shopping centers are, where Wal-Mart is. It's hard for some people to make it work here."

"We're staying," Bob adds. "I'm not worried about Wal-Mart."

Brad's son Bradley joined the barbershop almost four years ago. He'd always just assumed that he'd be part of the business one of these days. Quiet compared to his father and grandfather, Bradley Hughart seems to mostly just soak in the elder two barbers' endless stories.

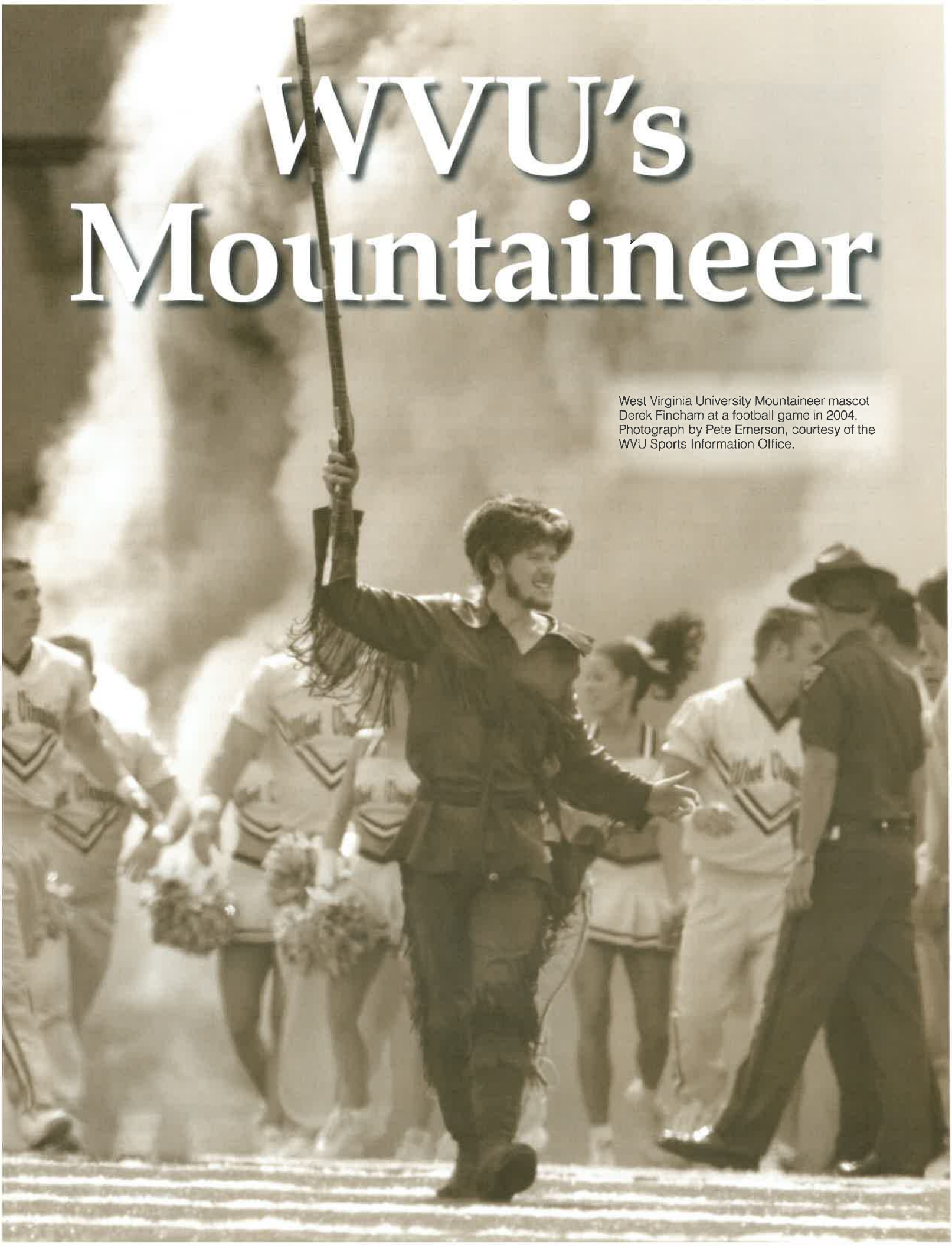
Bob Townsend doesn't mention whether he'll ever retire. Moving sprightly from customer to customer, with hands as steady as a surgeon, his mind full of jokes and tales, he's as good at his trade as he's ever been.

"You know, if Bob ever does get out," Brad says gingerly, "Bradley and I have kind of talked about it. I think we'll just keep it all the same. Same name, you know? That just seems like the right thing to do."

BILL LYNCH is a freelance writer based in Charleston. His work has appeared in *The Charleston Gazette*, *West Virginia South*, and *Graffiti*. This is Bill's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Bradley Hughart, Brad's son, came by barbering naturally and has been at the shop for about four years. Here, Bradley works on customer Gary Hamrick of Sutton.

WVU's Mountaineer



West Virginia University Mountaineer mascot Derek Fincham at a football game in 2004. Photograph by Pete Emerson, courtesy of the WVU Sports Information Office.

Mascot with a Mission

By Dan B. Fleming, Jr.

What do oranges, buckeyes, beavers, tigers, spiders, and turkeys all have in common? They are mascots for college athletic teams. Mascots can represent ethnic groups or nationalities, such as the "Ragin' Cajuns" or the "Fighting Irish," while others relate to occupations, such as cowboys or boilermakers. Some, like "Hoyas," "Hokies," or "Hoosiers," well, nobody seems to know what they are. Only a few serve as the symbol for their school and state, and none does it better than West Virginia University's Mountaineer.

I served as the Mountaineer mascot from 1952-53, while a student at WVU. Nothing has been more exhilarating to me than leading a crowd of exuberant freshman, wearing their blue and gold beanies, onto the field before a football game, or heading a homecoming parade down High Street in Morgantown. At basketball games, I had a grand time carrying out pranks, such as tugging the unhappy wolf mascot of North Carolina State around by his tail or running into the stands to exhort the crowd to greater fervor. Equally satisfying was talking one-on-one with children, who looked up to the Mountaineer as a hero.

When I became Mountaineer in 1952, I was issued a new uniform made of deerskin by a New York firm. My outfit differed from the older version in that fringes were added across the back of the jacket and down the sides of the pants. The jacket was also different in that it had a collar and two front pockets. I provided my own musket, had no financial support, and paid my own travel costs to most away games.

As the new mascot, I had very little briefing as to what I could do and could not do, and I rarely heard from university officials except when I did something wrong. Once, I was chewed out for firing my musket in the field house during a basketball game. The day after the game, I was called into the office of athletic director "Legs" Hawley, who read me the riot act. Apparently, a member of the university's Board of Governors, who attended the game, suffered from shell shock from his wartime experiences. Needless to say, I never fired my gun at a basketball game again.

While browsing through an old college scrapbook, I came across a forgotten sliver of wood from a University of Pittsburgh goalpost, garnered at the Pitt-WVU game held on October 25, 1952. I was fortunate to be Mountaineer that day, when a group of young and inexperienced players produced one of the greatest victories in WVU football history, over a strong Pitt team, beginning a 30-game Southern Conference winning streak over the next six years.

WVU was a huge underdog when we took on an outstanding Pitt team on its home turf, led by star running back Bill Reynolds, from St. Marys — a former classmate of mine. Adding to the WVU woes, several of our key players were out with injuries. Much to the great surprise of everyone, WVU won the game handily, 16-0.

During the game, I fired my musket behind an official. It really scared him as he leaped away from the loud explosion. The official made it very clear that I was not do this again. After the game, hundreds of celebrating WVU fans poured onto the field. I led them on a charge to take down the goalposts, where I was greeted by two very large policemen, who lifted me off my feet and hauled me aside. In the process, my musket was lost on the ground. The fans swarmed over the police, however, and the goalposts were rapidly demolished. Much to my relief, a couple of friends rescued my musket and returned it to me undamaged.

Author Dan Fleming in his Mountaineer costume in 1952. Being the Mountaineer was an exciting time for Dan and led to many memorable experiences, he says.

"grabbed the Panther's tail and gave it a mighty heave. It ripped out the whole back end of his Panther suit, but the son-of-a-gun had it tied around his waist. The Pitt cheerleaders chased me away without my prize." Near the end of the game, Pitt fans jumped out of the stands, knocked Pattison down, and tried to take his gun away. He hung on, but they got his coonskin hat.

Pattison also recalled that while under orders not to fire his gun in any enclosed place, he led the basketball team on the floor at Madison Square Garden. He couldn't resist the opportunity to fire. "It sounded like the end of the world. The FBI came and took away my powder and percussion caps — but it was worth it," he said.

The late Ed Pritchard, from Sistersville, was Mountaineer in 1964-66. He ran into trouble at Pitt before the game when "a crew of well-oiled fraternity members" surrounded him, "in a nasty mood for souvenir hunting," he recalled. Fortunately, he was rescued by members of the WVU band.

Dr. Jerome Scherer, a physician now living in a Pittsburgh suburb, was Mountaineer in 1976-77. He remembers the Pitt rivalry well. "A week before the game, I got word that a cash bounty had been placed on my coonskin hat in the Pitt school newspaper," he recalls. "Anticipating troubles, I didn't wear my hat at the game, but was still caught off guard when several Pitt fraternity members ran on the field, held me, grabbed my gun away, and triumphantly carried it into the stands. The Pitt police were standing nearby and did nothing, assuming it was a staged stunt. Coming to my rescue, several WVU male cheerleaders went up in the stands and persuaded those taking it to return it. Unfortunately, in the process, the gun was broken in half." Scherer says, "I loved every minute of being the Mountaineer. My son is attending WVU this fall and eventually plans to try out to be the Mountaineer."

When a fan shouted at her, "We want a man," she replied, "So do I!"

Mark Boggs, Mountaineer in 1984-85, resides in Frederick, Maryland, where he has his own environmental consulting firm. He recalls his Pitt experience: "Near the end of the game, I was standing on the back line of the end zone. Some 200 people had gathered behind me while being restrained by local and state police. When the game ended, I ran on the field. Suddenly, there was a bull rush through the police line of what I thought were WVU fans. Much to my surprise, they turned out to be Pitt students on a mission to take my musket and the school flag I was holding. We had a real tug-of-war, and I managed to roll up and hang on for dear life to the flag and gun. Fortunately, a rescue mission by WVU supporters arrived on the scene and quickly won the day, dispersing the badly outnumbered Pitt attackers."

John Stemple, now an engineer working for Proctor & Gamble in Brockville, Ontario, remembers when WVU played the Miami Hurricanes in Morgantown in 1994. In the center of the field was an outline of the state, and the Miami mascot, Ibis the bird, began dramatically tramping on the state outline. Stemple says, "I decided to put a halt to this. As I walked toward him, the crowd began cheering me on. As I got closer and closer, the cheers grew louder and louder. I tackled Ibis, throwing him to the ground, put my foot on his chest, and triumphantly fired my musket. The crowd went wild, but Ibis was a very unhappy bird."

Natalie Tennant, now Natalie Tennant Wells, was the first, and to-date only, female Mountaineer. She served as mascot during the 1990-91 season, amid a good deal of controversy. Natalie "would not hesitate to do it all over again," she says. Photograph courtesy of the WVU Sports Information Office.

From 1934 to 1937, Louie Dawson, a young Calhoun County woman, found out how much she loved teaching in the one-room school on Three Mile Run. This is how she remembers those days.

—Joe Snider

The older Dawson children in about 1924. Seated is baby Launa. Standing, from the left, are Leota, Loui (before the "e" was added), and James Lewis.

I loved school. Not everyone growing up on Calhoun County farms between the world wars could say that, but I did. As a student, I thrived on the routine in my one-room school. I walked down over the hill from my house, through the woods, and across Three Mile Run to school. Three Mile School sat in the mouth of Schoolhouse Hollow and had been there more than a century when I did my primary grade studies. I had no idea then what Three Mile School would mean to me as I became a young adult.

I was the oldest of five daughters and one son born to Jack and Georgia Dawson. In 1929, I was old enough to enter high school, but there was no practical way for me to get to Grantsville, where a beautiful, new stone high school had opened two years before. Our farm straddled the road, about halfway between Brohard and Freed, near the Calhoun and Wirt county line. The road became impassable during the worst parts of winter and spring. Since my paternal grandparents lived in Parkersburg, Mom and Dad decided to let me live with them and enroll at Parkersburg High School. My tuition ran $10 a month—a healthy sum in those days. I could have kept mum about being from out of town and pretended to live on 23rd Street. Other students beat the system, but Jack Dawson believed in scrupulous honesty.

Then, in the fall of 1931, I transferred to Calhoun County High School in Grantsville. I boarded with a well-to-do family in exchange for light housework. Being a high school student away from home came as naturally to me as sitting in the one-room school just down the hill from my house. The highlight of those two years at Grantsville was going to Charleston to receive a golden horseshoe pin as a top West Virginia history student. Seventy-three years later, I still take it out and look at it as one of my most prized possessions.

In the spring of 1933, my principal, Mr. Glenn Callaghan, approached me and some other seniors about taking the teacher proficiency exam. Most of us did, and I found myself at age 18 with a high school diploma and a teacher certificate. Mr. Callaghan left Grantsville that summer for Charleston to work at the state office of the National Youth Administration (NYA), a New Deal youth program. If Mr. Callaghan had not been in Grantsville my senior year, the next chapter of my life might have turned out quite differently.

I hadn't planned to teach. Looking back, I think that was my dad's dream for me. I think Dad looked at teaching as my ticket to college. He'd even taken me to Glenville to visit the State Teachers College. But we didn't have any money, so I didn't think much about it. I didn't expect to pass the teacher proficiency test either, but I did.

In the summer of 1933, another man took interest in my future as a teacher. Mr. Bernard McDonald, the Calhoun County Superintendent of Schools, contacted me about an opportunity he thought was just right for a young teacher. John Yoak taught about 50 students at the Spruce Hollow School on Yellow Creek. Mr. McDonald had access to federal Civil Works Administration (CWA) money to hire an assistant for Spruce Hollow.

Mr. Yoak strung a curtain down the middle of the Spruce Hollow School.

The 1934-35 student body of Three Mile School in northern Calhoun County. This was the last group to attend classes in the old school building, before it was remodeled.

He assigned me to teach grades one through three, while he handled the older boys and girls on the other side of the curtain.

The Spruce Hollow School was a little less than five miles from my home. I boarded with a family on Yellow Creek during the school week and walked home on Friday evenings. On Monday mornings, I reversed the trek, walking the road along Leading Creek through Freed to the Bell School. There I crossed the creek, climbed the hill, and ran the ridge to where I went down onto Yellow Creek and went directly to school. I did a lot of walking in the dark and the cold as fall turned into winter.

CWA funding for the Spruce Hollow experiment didn't last the whole school year. By the spring of 1934, I was substitute teaching at schools around the area, such as Annamoriah and Big Bend. My real teaching, however, began that fall at my beloved Three Mile School — an easy walk from home.

Without a doubt, Mr. Al McCray was the most distinguished man in our rural community. He wore a suit and carried himself with dignity. He operated a general store up Three Mile Run from the school, and he was a school board member. Mr. McCray had a daughter, Gwendolyn, who would start first grade in 1935. His older children were pretty-well grown, and the baby was special to him. For whatever reason, Al McCray decided he wanted me teaching at Three Mile School when Gwen reached school age.

The school board offered me Three Mile School and a challenge. State law required an average daily attendance of 12 first- through eighth-grade students to maintain a school. Once upon a time, Three Mile School had been as large as the Spruce Hollow School, but attendance had dwindled to about 20. That fall, a "school bus" was going to start taking a dozen high school age young people to Grantsville. That is to say, Tony Snider had fitted benches into the back of his truck and stretched a tarp across the top to keep out the weather.

There wouldn't be enough students to keep the school open unless local parents and I could come up with some "creative" enrollments. By opening day, we had eight returning students and four new ones. The regulars were Willard McCray; Bob, Luella, and Gene Snider; my sister Launa "Ed" Dawson; Virginia and Marjorie Snider; and Pauline Elliott. The four new students were another sister Betty Ruth "Dub" Dawson, Arlie Paul "Skip" Kelly, Margie Robinson, and Naomi Cooper. Betty Ruth was only four years old, but she bumped our enrollment to 12. We had a young first grade that year.

Day after day, all 12 students showed up, and it looked like we could stay close to perfect attendance and keep the school open all year. Then the whooping cough hit, and we had to close the school until the disease ran its course through the community. In the long run, my students did better than I did. My sister and brother brought home mumps and both kinds of measles. Through that school year, I caught all three from them. Nelle Snider, a retired teacher, had to sub for me.

My 12 scholars and I limped through that 1934-35 school year, and we all hoped for better things in the next term. Bob Cooper, Emma Jean Kelley, Junior Snider, Gwendolyn McCray, Eva Jean and Lillian Frederick, and Amelia "Tootie" Freed all would start first grade. Jimmy Duncan and J.P. Morrison had moved into the area

The refurbished Three Mile School was open for classes by the fall of 1935, when this photograph was taken.

Mischief personified. Jimmy Duncan, left, and Arlie Paul "Skip" Kelley, in about 1935.

and would join our student body at other grade levels. On top of that, we were getting a remodeled school.

The old Three Mile School building had been intended to accommodate all the area children. With the high school drawing away the older ones, it would never be full again. The ceiling was high. The windows along the sides of the classroom reached nearly from floor to ceiling to catch the sunlight. Gaslights provided artificial light for evening community social events. A large gas space heater did its best to ward off the winter chill. The old desks were big enough for two or three students. They varied in size for younger and older boys and girls. They also varied in style, because they had been gathered from hither and yon through the years. A blackboard ran across the front of the classroom.

I hoped my new school could be streamlined to suit the numbers who would study there, be modernized to stay warmer, and be filled with light. Of course, we would keep the 48-star American flag that hung on the wall and the brass handbell I rang to call students at the start of the day or the end of recess.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers from Camp Crawford, near Elizabeth in Wirt County, worked through the summer of 1935, turning the old Three Mile School building into a "modern" school. They moved the school back from the road and turned it 90 degrees. They took the roof off the school and lowered it. The remodeled school had smaller windows along the long north wall opposite the new entry, and in the short back wall toward the road. Educational theory of the day said light should come over the left shoulder and from the rear.

I had good students, and I think it's fair to say I loved them.

Builders repositioned the door so local scholars entered the south side of the school, near the front of the classroom, rather than from the back as before. The men mixed and poured concrete for a wide covered porch for the entryway. They built a partition across the front of the schoolroom and mounted the chalkboard on that wall.

Behind that partition was an ordinary cloakroom and the extraordinary treasure of Three Mile School — a library room! Books for the lower grades stood invitingly on the bottom shelves. The school board purchased new single-student desks of varying sizes for the refurbished school.

Sanitary conditions improved, too. Previously, to get a drink of water, students had to lower the bucket into the well, draw it out, and ladle a dipper of water from the bucket into their cups. Now we had a "water cooler." Kids put their cups under the spigot and filled them without effort. I, on the other hand, had to fill the "water cooler" with the bucket from the well. We were modern, but just barely. The school also boasted two brand new "Roosevelts" — two of the two million "sanitary privies" the New Deal built throughout rural America during the Depression. [See "The Roosevelt Outhouse," by Norman Julian; Winter 1998.] When Three Mile School opened in September 1935, I thought it was a thing of beauty.

My students and I weren't the only ones who admired the drastically remodeled Three Mile School. Everyone for miles around talked about it and came to see it, because school buildings functioned as community centers in those days. School programs were important events. Cake walks and pie socials brought people together for social interaction. They also raised money to buy books for that new school library.

The 1935-36 and 1936-37 school years at Three Mile School rushed by in a flurry of events that melt together into a collage of happy memories. I had good students, and I think it's fair to say I loved them. They were my first students, and they're the ones I still remember best. Some of my favorite recollections feature Skip Kelly and Jimmy Duncan — two little rascals bent on having fun in the classroom and on the playground.

My worst teaching experience occurred one summer when school was out. I had to go to court at Grantsville

My whole world changed abruptly and unexpectedly in the spring of 1940.

in a case involving corruption on the school board. A board member had been accused of selling jobs. Allegedly, to get a teaching job, you had to buy an Electrolux refrigerator at this man's Grantsville store or pay money for a job.

Jimmy Duncan's father confronted me on the street one day during the trial and demanded to know if I had paid for my job. "I told them you didn't," he said. Then he added. "You didn't, did you?" Of course I hadn't, but those were hard rumors to live with. Rumor also had it that the other school officials had turned a blind eye to this abuse of office. Some board members lost their jobs as a result of this scandal. But much to my relief, I just sat in the courtroom in Grantsville and was never called to testify.

I taught at Three Mile School for most of two school years as Miss Dawson. But on April 11, 1936, I married Bernard Snider, whose family lived in Freed. I was 21 years old, and he was 25. I finished my second year and taught my third at Three Mile School as Mrs. Snider. My husband worked in his uncle's store at Freed, and we lived at Freed in my mother-in-law's house.

All through this time, I took summer education classes at Glenville State Teachers College. During the school years, I took extension classes when I could at Grantsville or Smithville.

In 1939, I received my formal teacher's certificate from Glenville. I regret that my dad didn't get to see me earn it. That was his dream before it became mine. I don't know how many times he had driven me to Glenville for classes and tests, but he passed away on December 7, 1937.

One-room school teachers didn't get to stay at one school very long in those days. The idea was that students should be exposed to different teachers during their primary grades so they could benefit from the strengths of each one. I count myself blessed to have had three years at Three Mile School. In the fall of 1937, I was assigned the Prosperity School, which was a little more than three miles east of Freed on Leading Creek. There weren't many students there, and I only had that school one year. The next two years I taught at the Bell School, just east of Freed. The Bell School was close to home, and I enjoyed my students.

My whole world changed abruptly and unexpectedly in the spring of 1940, my last year at Bell School. The Calhoun County Republican Party had elected Lena Snider, my mother-in-law, as voting district chairman for Freed. She asked my husband, Bernard, to do the work for her. Bernard was glad to do it. His father had filled that role for years before he died, so it seemed a natural thing to do. However, this time some interesting backwoods politicking kicked in. The county trustees, most of whom were Democrats, informed Bernard that if he didn't certify the candidates they wanted in the coming election, I wouldn't get a school in the fall.

Bernard wouldn't play ball with the trustees, and, sure enough, I didn't get a third year at Bell School. I didn't get any school. What we ended up doing was joining the exodus of unemployed and underemployed West Virginians heading north to the Akron area in Ohio. I had hopes of teaching again, but I wasn't qualified for Ohio schools.

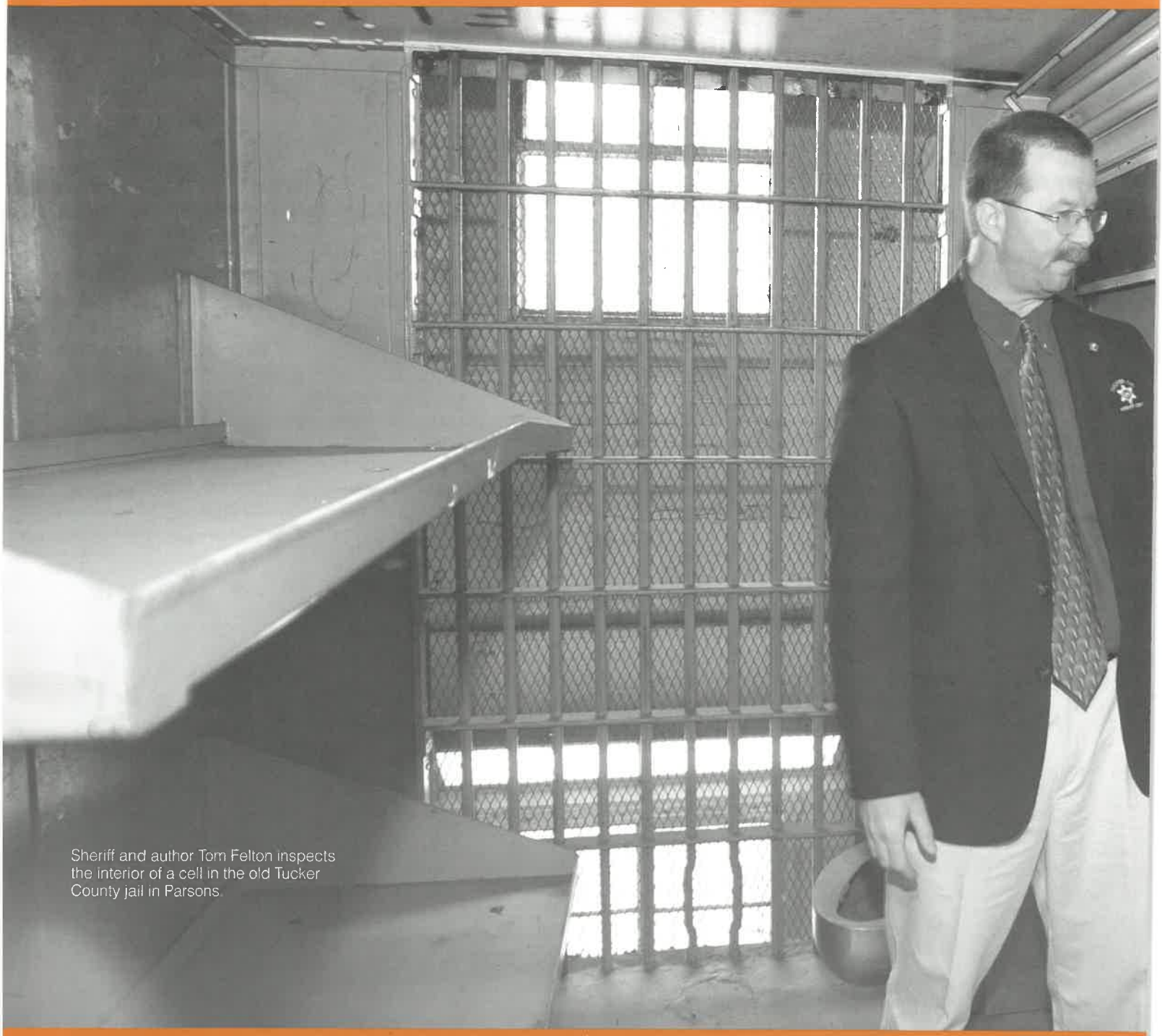
The war came. Children came — four of them — and years flew by. When my oldest, Mary Ann, started to Akron University in 1960 to study education, I got the itch to go back to school. In 1962-63, I completed enough course work at Akron University to get teacher certification, but I never went back to the classroom. When the last of our children went off to college, Bernard and I cared for foster children for several years.

I guess we retired in earnest in 1978 when we moved to Brownsville in Monroe County, Ohio, where we currently reside. I still have the school bell I used to summon boys and girls to class at Three Mile School. I have several fading snapshots and lots of indelible memories of three priceless years in the school on the banks of Three Mile Run.

Author Louie Dawson Snider wears her 1933 golden horseshoe pin with pride in this recent photograph. It is one of her most prized possessions, she says.

LOUIE DAWSON SNIDER, born and raised in Calhoun County, now lives five miles from the West Virginia state line in Brownsville, Ohio, with Bernard, her husband of 70 years. She spends time gardening and visiting with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

TALES FROM THE



Sheriff and author Tom Felton inspects the interior of a cell in the old Tucker County jail in Parsons.

RECALLING THE TUCKER

What's with These Dawson Names??

Everybody wonders about the names in my family. How many women named Louie do you know? How many women named Louie have sisters named Leota and Launa? My parents, Jack and Georgia Dawson, had normal names. What were they thinking?

Supposedly, Mom found the name Loui in a story. She liked it and gave it to me, her first daughter. As I got older, I thought my name seemed a little masculine, so I tried to feminize it by adding an "e." Ah, the wisdom of youth.

Mom got on a roll with that "L" theme. She named her next daughter Leota. That wasn't a common name, but it wasn't unheard of. Then came her only son, James Lewis, who was called Lewis. Daughter three was christened Launa (pronounced Lay-OO-nah). That one came out of a book, too.

As a high school student in Grantsville, Lewis liked to introduce me by saying, "Hi. My name's Lewis, and this is my sister Louie."

The "L" names finally petered out. Dear little Mary Belle died before her first birthday. Then Betty Ruth and Glenna rounded out our Dawson clan.

But that's not half the story. Hill people like nicknames, and Jack Dawson hung some doozies on us girls. He referred to me as "Koot." In a single brainstorm, Leota and Launa became "Felix" and "Ed." Since Leota was getting old enough to catch the eye of local swains, Dad relented, dropped Felix, and shortened her middle name — Josephine — to "Jo." Launa received no mercy and has endured all sorts of variations of Ed, Edward, and Eddie through the years.

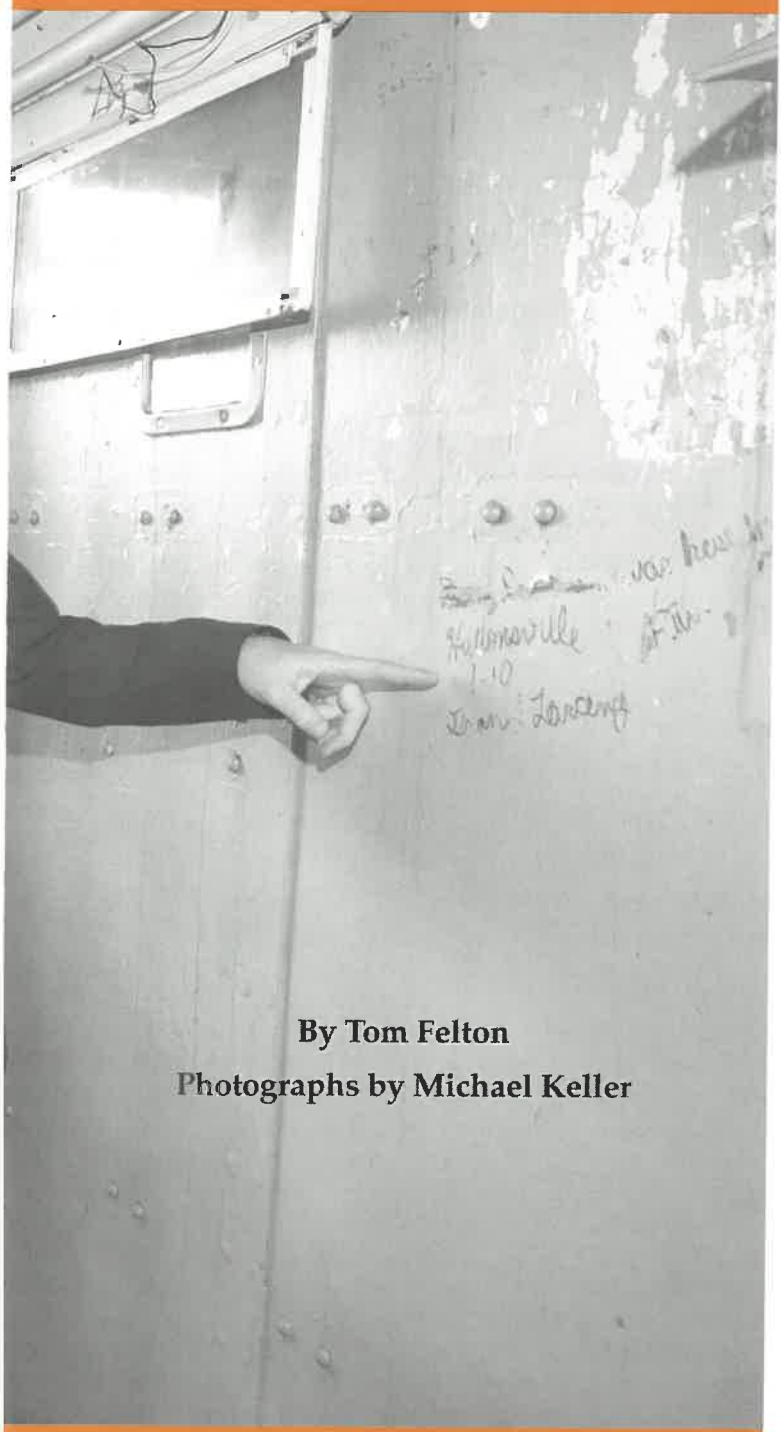
Betty Ruth's favorite nursery rhyme started "Rub-a-dub-dub; Three men in a tub." What could she be called but "Dub?" Glenna didn't wait for lightning to strike. She named herself "Kid," or sometimes "The Kid." (As a young adult, Glenna sometimes called Mom "George.") With imagination exhausted on the girls, Jack called his only son — what else — "Son." The rest of us girls displayed our father's humor and called our brother Son. We called him Son all his life. Eventually, his nieces and nephews called him Uncle Son.

It should be noted that I, Louie "Koot" Dawson, married Bernard "Bunk" Snider. At family gatherings, poor confused children had to cope not only with Uncle Son, but also with Aunt Koot and Uncle Bunk.

—Louie Dawson Snider

The Dawson clan posed for this snapshot in 1985. Seated are Leota "Jo" Hall (left) and mother Georgia "Georgie" Dawson. Standing, from the left, are Glenna "Kid" Wilson, Launa "Ed" Law, author Louie "Koot" Snider, James Lewis "Son" Dawson, and Betty Ruth "Dub" Nelson. Photographer unknown.

CELLS



COUNTY JAIL

By Tom Felton

Photographs by Michael Keller

As the current Sheriff of Tucker County and a former employee of the West Virginia Department of Corrections, I have a certain fascination with crime and punishment. I've visited the former Federal Penitentiary at Alcatraz, the old Montana State Prison at Deer Lodge, the old Idaho Penitentiary at Boise, and the former West Virginia State Penitentiary at Moundsville. While the now-closed Tucker County jail pales in comparison with those places in some ways, it has its own rich and interesting history.

Construction of the Tucker County jail in Parsons began on May 8, 1895, and the building was ready for occupancy in August 1896. The red brick building with a cut stone foundation stands adjacent to the courthouse on First Street, looking much the same today as it did during its 90 years of service. Through the years, many sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and their families have lived in the residence attached to the jail. Several of these people shared with me colorful memories of their time there.

Although she is now in her 90's, Virginia (Cooper) Parsons has vivid memories of living in the jailhouse, beginning when her father, Fred Cooper, became sheriff in 1929. She resided there two years, until she married Cecil Parsons and moved to Canaan Valley, leaving her mother, Ida, and her younger brother, Joe, with her father at the jail.

Virginia's family brought two cows with them from their farm in Canaan Valley when they came to Parsons, keeping the animals on a property close to the jail. She recalls that her mother would milk the cows twice a day to provide milk as part of the prisoners' diets. Virginia also remembers peeling many potatoes — a task she did not relish. There was a "pass through" window from the kitchen back to the jail, but her father would not allow Virginia to serve the meals through the window, as he wanted to prevent the prisoners from making lewd or suggestive remarks to her.

When she was 15 years old, Virginia's father began teaching her to drive the family car. He drew an "H" to show her where the four gears and neutral were located. He told her, "I'm not going to show you that again, so you had better remember it!"

One day, she was sitting in the car, which was parked on the street in front of the jail, practicing shifting gears. Suddenly, the local state policeman,

Virginia (Cooper) Parsons lived in the sheriff's residence for two years as a teenager, beginning in 1929 when her father, Fred Cooper, was elected sheriff.

H.D. Ancel, appeared at the window of the vehicle and ordered her to follow a car that had just passed them.

"I can't," Virginia stated. "I don't have a driver's license, and I've only driven this car once!"

"I said, follow that car!" the lawman retorted.

The young girl grudgingly complied and started after the car, with her accomplice standing on the running board, occasionally yelling at her, "Go a little faster!" They apprehended the fleeing criminal a mile or two out of town. Later that day, the policeman went into the sheriff's office and told him, "Order Virginia's driver's license. She drives well enough to have it."

One of the youngest sheriffs in the history of West Virginia was Albert S. "Jack" Hockman, who was 23 when he was elected in 1956. His wife, Linda, was a mere 18 when her husband became sheriff, and they and their son, Jack, moved into the residence attached to the jail. Their daughters Julie, Sandy, and Dana were born during the young sheriff's only term.

As unbelievable as it sounds today, the Hockmans remember allowing some of the prisoners with whom they were more familiar to come into the residence and babysit the children while Jack worked and Linda would need to run a brief errand.

Jack recalls one incident when a "mental case" was placed into the jail. The man caused such a commotion by tearing pipes off the wall and other disruptions that Jack called the state and city police. They came and helped Jack place the man in a straitjacket in order to prevent him from injuring himself or others. It took several officers about an hour to place the man in the restraint. Early the next morning, the sheriff went to check on the welfare of the prisoner only to discover he had removed the device and was using it for a pillow!

Linda helped prevent a mass escape one day when Jack was out of town. He had not locked the prisoners in the bullpen before he left, an omission he later regretted. Early that morning, Linda heard a commotion and yelled through the feeding window, "What's going on in there?" She could see through the window and observed some prisoners running up the stairs.

"We're getting out of here!" one hollered.

Linda loudly replied, "You get back down these steps, and get in that bullpen!" The inmates complied, and the young sheriff's wife entered the jail and locked the men in the bullpen. Three others had already escaped through a small hole they chiseled in the bricks with a spoon handle and were apprehended by the state police a short time later.

James D. "Jim" Phillips was elected Sheriff of Tucker County in 1960 and took office in 1961. He served only one term because, at that time, sheriffs in West Virginia could not succeed themselves. Jim and his family did not stay in the living quarters provided by the county.

In 1956, Jack Hockman became one of the youngest sheriffs in West Virginia when he was elected to the post in Tucker County at age 23. He is shown at left in his office in the courthouse in 1957 (photographer unknown), and, at right, at the jailhouse today.

Corporal Marshall M. Davisson (who later became sheriff) were booking 19-year-old Fred Hamilton and two juveniles into the jail. As the handcuffs were removed from Hamilton, he unexpectedly grabbed the .357 revolver from Davisson's holster and began shooting. According to Pine, the corporal was struck in the belt buckle, knocking him to the floor. Hamilton then shot Trooper Brown in the chest. Subsequently, Pine shot Hamilton in the leg, immobilizing him until he could be restrained.

Pine recalls Brown bleeding profusely and being unable to talk. Pine's wife, Katherine, held the young trooper until the ambulance arrived. Brown died at the hospital later that evening. He was survived by his wife, Susanne, and young daughters, Christina Marie and Angela Susanne.

Hamilton spent a few days in the hospital and was returned to the Tucker County Jail. During his stay, he befriended a young prisoner named David Mills. Mills was later released from the jail. Apparently at the urging of Hamilton, Mills kidnapped and murdered Ida Mae Cooper, the wife of Davis mayor "Red" Cooper, in an apparent attempt to win the release of Hamilton. According to the *Parsons Advocate*, at Mills' trial, Mills testified he was "mesmerized" by Hamilton. Hamilton had written out detailed instructions for Mills on how to perform the kidnapping, including instructions to call the *Elkins Inter-Mountain* newspaper with ransom demands that included a vehicle, $750,000 cash, and Hamilton's release. Mills was captured the same day as the crimes. He later told Sheriff Pine that Hamilton had told him to "leave no witnesses."

Pine remembers being contacted by the state police and advised to carry a weapon while the convicted killer was loose.

Both Hamilton and Mills were eventually convicted of various crimes and sentenced to the state penitentiary at Moundsville. Mills was stabbed to death by another inmate in 1986. Hamilton and two other convicted murderers escaped in 1992 by tunneling out of the prison. As I recall, Hamilton was captured in Oklahoma after having been featured on the *America's Most Wanted* television show. Reportedly, he said he was on his way to the famed Pebble Beach golf course in California to play a round of golf. Hamilton was originally from Ohio and was on a golf scholarship at a nearby college just prior to committing his crimes.

Former sheriff Pine, who was working at the West Virginia Children's Home in Elkins at the time of Hamilton's escape, remembers being contacted by the state police and advised to carry a weapon while the convicted killer was loose. Pine recalls that Hamilton had made threatening statements against both him and Marshall Davisson. Pine says he did not personally feel afraid, but followed the advice anyway. Hamilton was returned to Moundsville upon his apprehension and is currently an inmate at the Mount Olive Correctional Center in Fayette County.

Gary L. Lipscomb was sheriff when the Tucker County jail ceased operations following the great flood in 1985. [See "Night of the Raging Waters: Parsons and the 1985 Flood," by Jerry DiBacco; Fall 2005.] For several years after that, various county and regional jails were utilized. Since July of 2005, prisoners from Tucker County have been housed at the Tygart Valley Regional Jail, located near Norton, Randolph County. The old jail in Parsons is used for storage of county records, and the sheriff's residence serves as offices and meeting room for the county commission.

Even though the jail is no longer used, I sometimes walk through it to imagine how things used to be there. It's almost as if I can hear the "tales from the cells" emanating from the cold, steel walls.

Built in 1896, the Tucker County jail and sheriff's residence remains a well-preserved example of public residential architecture. It is visible at left in this 2006 photograph, adjacent to the Tucker County courthouse. Both structures were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

TOM FELTON is sheriff of Tucker County and a lifelong resident of Parsons. He is the author of two books of local tales and history. Tom is a 1974 graduate of Parsons High School, where he served as senior class president. He received degrees in sociology and law enforcement from Fairmont State University. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 2005 issue.

The Ricottilli family of Barbour County gathers to make apple butter at a reunion in 2002. Here, Adeline, the supervisor, dips the apple butter from a copper kettle and pours it into jars. Photographer unknown.

The Ricottillis of Barbour County

An Italian Family Carries On

By Lori Marie DiBacco ~ Photographs by Gerald Milnes

As the morning fog rolled out of the valley, the scent of wood smoke began to fill the air. Two copper kettles stood over open fires in the morning light, and the slow process of making apple butter began. The Ricottilli family had gathered again for a reunion at its homeplace in the Talbott community of Barbour County, to carry on traditions that are a mix of West Virginia farm life and old-world Italy. For the Ricottillis, this combination of cultures has been a fact of life for more than 80 years.

The family members worked together to accomplish the task at hand, much as they have for several generations. Good-natured teasing flowed easily between those stirring the kettles and those temporarily on the sidelines. As one person tired, another stepped in to take over. What was once a matter of necessity has become a time of fellowship and a chance to pass along traditions to a younger generation.

To gain a clearer picture of this family and its history, I visited the homeplace one evening with three

Mother Giovanna Ricottilli making apple butter in 1953. Photographer unknown.

of the siblings. Patsy (short for Pasquale) Ricottilli, age 75, lives on the property with his wife, Sally, 58, in a new home they built in 1985. Two of Patsy's sisters, Amelia Derico and Lucy Palmisano, were visiting there, as well. Lucy, age 83, came over from her home in Elkins. She walked around the property with us but left early in the evening. Amelia, age 81, visited from the farm she shares with her husband, Guy, in the Mt. Nebo community of Upshur County.

As we walked down the hill from Patsy and Sally's house to see the rest of the property, stories of growing up there began to flow. Laughter erupted as Patsy, Amelia, and Lucy shared their experiences with me. They occasionally interrupted one another to give "their side of the story" or fill in details that the other had forgotten.

In 1921, parents Panfilo and Giovanna Ricottilli purchased this land and moved to Barbour County. They were both originally from a region in east-central Italy and were married there shortly before emigrating to the United States in about 1914. They lived in Coketon, Tucker County, and Struthers, Ohio, before coming to Barbour County. Panfilo learned about the farm from his friend and soon-to-be neighbor, Ralph Quattro. "We still have the deed from where he bought it," Patsy says. "He paid $600 down and then so much a month for a year."

Panfilo and Giovanna had 14 children. Because of the span in ages, some of the eldest siblings had moved out before the youngest were born. Despite this, Patsy claims, "I think we were always very close."

When asked to name all of the siblings, Patsy, Amelia, and Lucy work together: "There's Laboria, Fiorina, Albert, Armand, Lucy, Amelia, Adeline, Joe, Patsy, Fiori and Dominick (the twins), Virginia, Tony, and Carlo."

In 1933, when the twins were only a few months old, the family drove to New York to visit two uncles. Because they could not keep milk cool in the car, Panfilo would stop and ask farmers along the way for cow's milk. Patsy laughs when he remembers the farmers looking out and seeing a 1927 Chevy with nine people in it. "They saw that bunch and didn't charge us for the milk!" he says.

There are sad memories, as well. Fiorina, the eldest sister, died in 1932 at the age of 16. Patsy explains that the cause of death was infection that resulted from a ruptured appendix, initially misdiagnosed as typhoid fever. Patsy says, "I think they tried to operate on her, but they didn't save her." Laboria, Armand, and Albert made her grave marker by building a form, cutting out the letters, and pouring the concrete at the cemetery. The marker would have been too heavy to carry if it had been poured elsewhere. "It's still standing, and the letters are still showing good," Patsy says with pride.

The Ricottilli family carries on traditions that are a mix of West Virginia farm life and old-world Italy.

Food preparation and mealtime were quite a production for this large family. Amelia says that when their mother made bread, "She used 25 pounds of flour. She used a washtub. All our baking was done in a regular oven. You just kept doing it."

Patsy adds that Giovanna baked that much bread two or three times a week, because "25 pounds wouldn't last us that long." Additionally, Giovanna would can and preserve food from the garden and orchard for use during the winter months. For several years, she did this without the benefit of electricity or running water.

Amelia recalls that the family always ate together. "We had a certain time to eat, and we were all there," she says. "You didn't just 'grab something.' You sat with the family and ate." Patsy mentions this closeness, as opposed to "the way people live today," several times throughout the evening.

All of the Ricottilli children attended the Water Camp School, a one-room school about a mile away from the homeplace. Patsy remembers that each of the eight grades would take turns going to the front of the room for direct instruction. Each class had a chance to hear what the others were learning, something he thinks added to their education. The schoolhouse, built in 1868, still stands.

For several years, the family only went to church in the summer, because that was the only time a priest could make it to the church in Kingsville, Randolph County. Eventually, a priest was assigned to the parish, but the family still only went when the weather would allow the ride in a carriage or buggy. "Father Davern was the priest when I went to the church," Amelia says. "[He] didn't take much collection. He said that if you had a chicken and gave

him a chicken, he was satisfied. We sometimes took produce from the garden," she adds.

Patsy, Amelia, and Lucy recall the work involved in growing up on a farm. In addition to being their home, the farm provided the family's income from the produce, meat, and cheese produced there. Patsy describes the preparations: "They'd gather the produce or whatever we had — apples and stuff out of the garden." This included potatoes, beans, and fruit grown on the trees in the orchard. Amelia pipes up, "Sometimes they even killed a calf. They sold meat, cheese, and bacon."

Patsy (short for Pasquale) and Sally Ricottilli live at the old family homeplace in the Talbott community of Barbour County.

Patsy continues: "[Panfilo] had a horse buggy. The back part was like a little wagon where he would put his produce. He would leave before daylight and go into Coalton and Norton. He said he didn't need to go from house to house and sell it. People would come to him and buy it right off the buggy. It would usually take all day by the time he got down there, sold all his produce, and got back home."

Patsy and Amelia both remember their mother waiting on the porch, listening for the wagon, which usually arrived home after dark. They admit their father had many friends and liked to talk, which probably delayed his return some evenings. Eventually, Panfilo bought a truck, which made the trips quicker and easier.

Another major source of family income was the cheese that Giovanna made. "Mom shipped most of her

The Ricottilli family posed for this studio portrait in 1935. Twins Dominick and Fiori are at front left; Patsy is standing in front of his father, Panfilo. Joe is standing behind the twins. The taller boys standing in the rear, from the left, are Armand, Albert, and Laboria. Baby Virginia sits on the knee of mother Giovanna. The other girls, from the left, are Amelia, Lucy, and Adeline. Tony was yet to be born. Photographer unknown.

Amelia (Ricottilli) Derico, now living in Mt. Nebo, Upshur County, strolls through the grape arbor at the old family homeplace.

cheese to New York," Amelia says. "Pop took some of it down to Coalton." Patsy adds, "They'd usually make about three cakes in the morning — they were four-pound cakes — and then another three cakes in the evening." This process was repeated every day.

Patsy says that the family kept about 30 cows — "mostly Herefords." They used about half the milk for making cheese and drinking, and the calves would take the other half. The cows were let out in nearby pastures, and the children took turns "bringing them in."

Patsy showed us the family's grist mill, which still stands in one of the outbuildings on the property. "We ground cracked corn for the animals and cornmeal for the family," he explains. "We also ground wheat into flour."

The family also engaged in beekeeping. "We had about 15 beehives," Patsy says. "[My father] put me in front of the beehives with a stick to kill the male bees as they come out. They don't do any work. They just eat the honey. I was nervous sitting there with all them bees going in and out. Father told me if I just sat still I'd be okay. I never did get stung.

"We had a special bee bell," he adds. "If you'd get a bee swarm out there and they decided to leave, well, you're supposed to run after them with that bee bell and ring it. Everytime I took after them, they flew that much faster! I never did get them settled down." The family members did not sell the honey they gathered. They used it as a sweetener for food in place of sugar.

Taking care of crops at harvest time was a community effort. Patsy explains that a threshing machine would travel from farm to farm to thresh grain, and neighbors would gather at each location.

"They got along real well," he says. "Maybe one farmer would have three days threshing. Well, maybe one of those other farmers would only have a half-day threshing. There were no arguments. They called it even, even if it did take one person longer. If they came over here to thresh, our family would feed the whole crew. Whenever we'd thresh at their place, they'd have a meal for whoever helped them. Now days, if they help you a half-hour longer than you help them, they want paid for it."

Discussion of the crops brought back memories of their mother's technique for carrying baskets of food. Patsy recalls, "Mother was a strong lady. She learned to carry things on her head. She would take a cloth, wrap it, and make a circle and put it over her head. Then she'd balance something on her head. I've seen her carry a whole bushel of cherries on her head and a bucket in each hand and come to the house with them. That makes a big load." Patsy thinks that she learned that "in her early years."

"They did that a lot in Italy," he says. The technique was not limited to produce. Patsy describes a time his mother took "the waste from the cheese, put a bucket on her head and a bucket in each hand, and carried that to the pigs. She could even step over the fence. If that was me, I'd have it all over me."

The family also made its own brooms. Patsy describes the process of placing the broom corn around the handle and wrapping it with wire to hold it in place. It was then clamped and stitched. He still makes brooms

Food preparation was a big production every day for this large family. Here, Giovanna serves lunch in the field to sons Armand, Tony, Fiori, and Patsy, seated left to right. Photograph circa 1940, photographer unknown.

Lucy (Ricottilli) Palmisano of Elkins during a recent visit to the family homeplace in Barbour County. "We worked hard on the farm," she says. "We all went into the workplace and did well."

in this traditional manner.

Lucy explains that she values the lessons that came from all of this work. "I know we worked hard on the farm," she says. "We all went into the workplace and did well."

Life on the farm was not all work and no play. Social life for the Ricottillis primarily involved getting together with neighboring families, especially members of the Ralph Quattro family and the Dominick Centofanti family. "They used to come over here and play music and dance," Patsy says. "About all the Quattros played music."

Amelia adds, "The Quattros played about everything: the banjo, the mandolin, and the guitar. Ralph played the accordion, too."

"They played by ear," Patsy explains, "not by notes. They would square dance and polka sometimes, maybe a waltz. Father played the accordion and maybe the bagpipe. Maybe the next weekend we'd go to their place. I think we really got together more back then than people do today."

Patsy explains that the family made the windbag part of the bagpipes from the skin of a sheep. Care had to be taken in preparing the hide that it was not split and remained all in one piece. [See "Bagpipes in West Virginia," by Gerald Milnes; page 54.]

Dances were held in the family/dining room. Amelia remembers, "We'd take our dinner table outside and use the room for square dancing. We'd enjoy it in the summer. In the winter, there wouldn't be room with the heating stove in there."

We arrived at one of the most distinctive features of the Ricottilli farm — the stone house that the family built, literally from the ground up. Patsy narrates what happened: "Father decided to build a stone house like they did out in Italy. Most of the stone [for the house] came from a large stone about four-feet thick and maybe ten- to 12-feet wide."

The stone was split by hand, using chisels, iron wedges, and water to make the stone crack. "It was a slow process," Patsy says. After receiving some initial instruction from a stonemason, Laboria and Armand split the stone for the upper part of the house. The basement was laid with stones gathered from the fields.

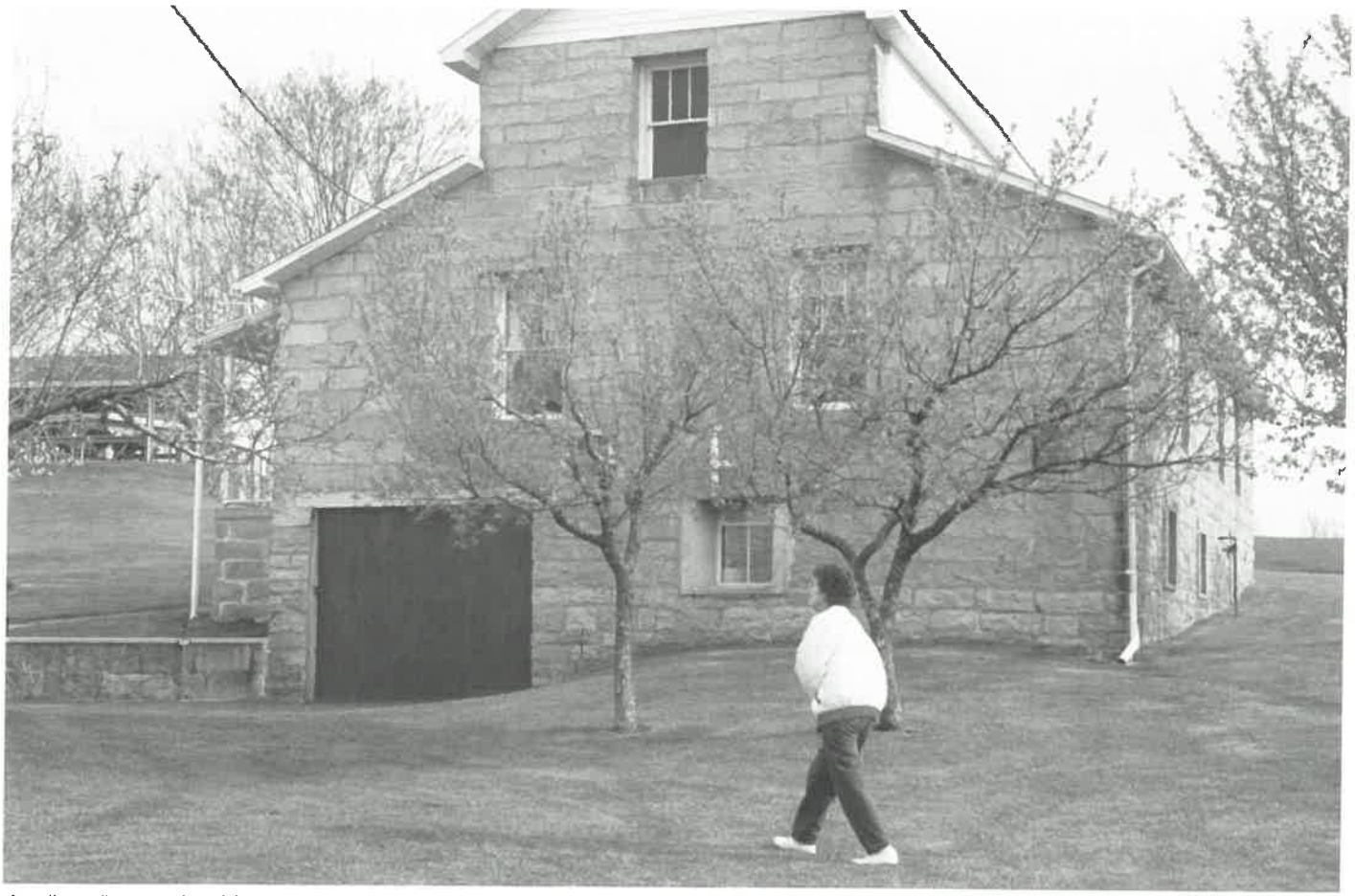
World War II put a temporary stop to the construction, as some brothers found jobs and others joined the service. Building materials were hard to come by during the war. After the war, the house was completed by family members working together.

"Whenever we needed gravel to mix with the cement to pour between the stone wall and the tile wall inside the house," Patsy says, "we had to break the stones with a hammer to make the gravel. It was boring sitting there with that hammer."

Patsy explains the dimensions of the house: "The house is about 50-feet long and about 30-feet wide. He was planning on going up two full stories. Back in Italy, whenever the children got married, they would stay [as couples] with their parents. He thought it would be the same way here." Some of the older brothers proved Panfilo wrong, so he made the upper floor about half the size of the lower floor.

The house has several special features, including a hinge located on the

Music and dancing were popular pastimes for the Ricottillis and their Italian neighbors. Here, three family members display instruments commonly used at these gatherings. Armand is on guitar, Amelia on accordion, and Adeline on bagpipes. The women claimed not to have played these instruments but were just holding them for the picture. Photographer and date unknown.



Amelia walks past the old stone house, built by family members during the 1940's, employing traditional Italian construction methods. The house, now used mostly for storage, contains many distinctive features, including beehives built into the north wall.

west side of the house that allowed the family to hang a bucket of milk from a hook near one of the windows and keep it cool for the day.

In addition to the beehives the family kept for honey, there were beehives built into the north wall of the house. Patsy says, "Whenever we built the stone house, Father had us leave cavities in the walls for honeybees, like they did in Italy. One swarm of bees came in on their own and were there about 20 years before the mites killed them out. [Panfilo] left a loose tile on the inside of the house, where you could take out the tile and get the honey. We never did rob those bees. In later years, I fixed a door with glass, so that you could look in and watch them work."

During my first visit to the Ricottillis, there were no bees present. However, during later visits, the family was excited to take me out to the stone house and show me where the bees had returned. The bees were hard at work, and the honeycomb grew considerably between two visits.

"Father never had a chance to live in the stone house," Patsy says. Toward the end of the construction of the house, Panfilo stepped on a rusty nail in a board, which led to an infection and, eventually, a fatal case of tetanus. "Whenever he left to go to the hospital that night," Patsy says, "he knew he wasn't coming back and told me to take care of the farm."

Today, the stone house is used primarily for storage, though family members do occasionally use it as a hunting lodge or a getaway. Times have changed. The family no longer relies on farming as a means of making a living. Several of the brothers went into the post-and-rail fence business, and Ricottilli rail mills still exist in several locations around the state.

The Ricottillis are making an effort to ensure that family traditions are passed along and maintained. This is done in part through regular family reunions and through other projects, such as a published family history and a cookbook.

"We have the reunion every July," Patsy says. The reunion has been held for about 28 years. Patsy says the largest crowd they ever had for the reunion was somewhere between 225 and 250 people. The average is now closer to 150 or 175.

It's clear in talking to the Ricottillis that growing up on the farm was not an easy life for them. It also becomes clear that it was basically a happy life and one that they want to pass along to future generations.

LORI MARIE DIBACCO lives in Elkins, where she was born and raised. She has degrees from Wheeling Jesuit University and West Virginia University, and works as a speech pathologist for Randolph County schools. This is Lori's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

GERALD MILNES is the Folk Arts Coordinator for the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College in Elkins. He is a frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor whose most recent work appeared in our Winter 2005 issue.

Bagpipes in West Virginia

By Gerald Milnes

The earliest references to bagpipes in world literature occur among the ancient Greeks, about 400 B.C. Over the centuries, all European regions have held a bagpipe tradition of some sort, with examples known as far east as Turkey, as far north as Sweden, as far south as Spain, and as far west as Ireland. While immigrants carried many of their cultural traditions with them to the New World, bagpipes have rarely been documented in Appalachia.

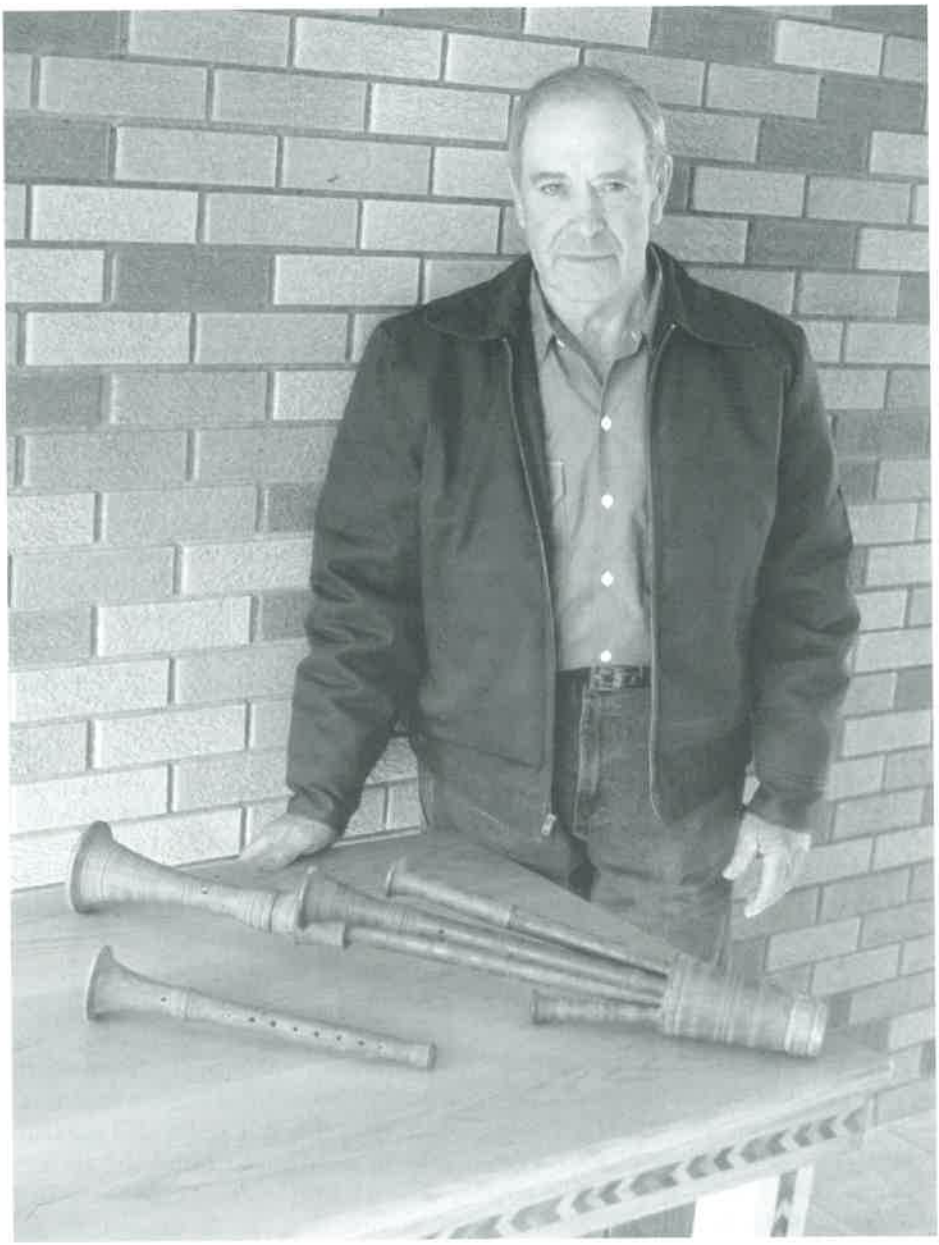
Today, when most people think of bagpipes, they are usually thinking about the Great Highland Bagpipes, or "war pipes" of Scottish tradition. Indeed, these are the most commonly found bagpipes in North America. Scottish pipe and drum bands became popular in the 20th century as people sought to rekindle their ethnic identity. These groups currently include the West Virginia Highlanders of Davis & Elkins College in Elkins and the Kanawha Valley Pipe & Drums in Scott Depot. When these groups perform, the pipers' startling sound reminds us how enemies were struck with fear by this sound on the historic battlefields of Scotland.

Scottish bagpipes do not have a long history in West Virginia, however. Practically all of the Scottish ancestry here came by a circuitous route that first landed immigrants in Northern Ireland in the 17th century. Many sailed to the New World throughout the 18th century, generally coming to Pennsylvania before settling in the Allegheny Mountains of West Virginia and elsewhere. These Scots-Irish, as they are referred to today, came originally from the Scottish lowlands and the border country with England, where the war pipes were not strong in tradition.

The *uilleann* pipes (Gaelic for "elbow" pipes, because the bag is pumped with the elbow) are traditional to Ireland and have seen a resurgence of interest on both sides of the ocean in recent years, as interest in Irish and related musical styles has grown.

Other European piping traditions include the Northumbrian small pipes from northern England, the German *sackpfeife*, the Greek *gaida*, Spanish *gaita*, Italian *zampogna*, and others. There are no known instances of any kind of bagpipes being played among West Virginia's many Scots-Irish or German immigrants during the pioneer era.

My interest in bagpipes was awakened when a friend



Patsy Ricottilli with portions of an old set of Italian bagpipes, called a *zampogna*, that has been in his family for generations. Photograph by Gerald Milnes.

mentioned to me that an old, established Italian family in southern Barbour County had an unusual musical instrument at their homeplace, and that it is treasured as a family heirloom. He was unsure exactly what the instrument was. I had a hunch, given the description, and soon I was headed to the family homestead of the Ricottillis, near the Randolph and Upshur county lines. There, kept in a dresser drawer in the family's old stone house, Patsy Ricottilli showed me the first set of bagpipes I'd ever seen in a traditional context in West Virginia. These pipes today are missing the goatskin or sheepskin bag that gives the instrument half of its name and are literally just that — pipes. At one time, however, when the instrument was in service, these skins were replaced often, usually at butchering time.

Uncle Carmine Ricottilli holds the same set of bagpipes in this 1938 photograph taken at the family farm in Barbour County. Panfilo holds the accordion, and Giovanna stands at right. Also pictured, from the left, are Uncle Tony and Aunt Lucy Ricottilli, Aunt Vincenza, and baby Mary. Photographer unknown.

It is likely that a piping tradition went back within this family for hundreds of years.

Patsy's description of how the hide of a sheep was used for the bag reminded me that I once had seen and heard traditional Greek bagpipes played. Needless to say, I was quite taken by the set of pipes I was holding and also by the very existence of a set of old Italian pipes in Barbour County. It is likely that a piping tradition went back within this family for hundreds of years.

Various types of bagpipes are traditional to Italy. A distinctive feature of these instruments is the circular wooden stock into which the pipes are anchored. All types of bagpipes share the common use of a flexible chamber, or bag, which is filled with air. With Italian pipes, as with the familiar Scottish pipes, the air is blown into the bag through a mouthpiece, and the musician's arm forces the air through the pipes, including the chanters — this type has two chanters. By fingering holes in these chanters, different musical tones are played. The other pipes are not controlled at all but are left to drone on their own, producing the distinctive steady-pitched "skirl" recognizable with all bagpipes.

The Ricottillis are from the Abruzzo region, L'Aquila province, in the east-central part of Italy, an area with a strong piping tradition. The Ricottilli bagpipes, or *zampogna*, are of a sub-type identified with the Molise region of Italy. Author Lori DiBacco helped to solve a small mystery there, as she found the Molise region was originally part of Abruzzo, only coming into its own as a designated region in 1963. So this type of bagpipe is, in fact, native to the Abruzzo region from which the Ricottillis emigrated. [See "The Ricottillis of Barbour County: An Italian Family Carries On," by Lori Marie DiBacco; page 48.]

The Ricottillis have pictures of family members playing these pipes at family gatherings in the old days. Apparently, some Italian neighbors also played the accordion at these gatherings, where traditional old-world Italian music was the music of choice. Just as Italian food specialties were once the favored dinner fare for Italian immigrants, Italian music helped to assuage a longing for their homeland. Nostalgia is a powerful force that drives folk traditions among all people. It shows up with regularity within various expressions of values and identity that are inherent in folk music and folk practices of all kinds.

The rural West Virginia countryside is full of surprising traditions, especially when the folkways of various ethnic people are encountered. The Ricottillis have rejuvenated many old family traditions at their reunions. Given this family's love of tradition, it is possible that younger family members will again rekindle interest in the old pipes, perhaps filling the air of Barbour County with traditional Italian bagpipe music once again.

Cabwaylingo State Forest

"Is Cabwaylingo an Indian name?" This is the most common question posed by visitors to Bonnie Watts, secretary at this remote state forest for the past 30 years. No, she politely tells them.

"Can you tell me where the stripper lives?" is often the next question. Fannie Belle Fleming, a.k.a. Blaze Starr — the exotic dancer whose story was the basis of the 1989 motion picture *Blaze* — grew up in Wilsondale, located at the southern end of the forest. Starr evidently left quite an impression upon the men who saw her perform in burlesque shows around the Baltimore area during the 1950's, '60's, and '70's.

"I have older men come in here and say, 'When I was in the service, there was a lady who performed in a strip club, and she talked about being raised on Turkey Creek,'" says Bonnie, who grew up near Blaze Starr's childhood home.

As for the most common question, Bonnie says that while Cabwaylingo sounds Native American, the name of the forest is derived from those of the four counties that meet near its borders: CABell, WAYne, LINcoln and MinGO. Its entire 8,123 acres are in Wayne County, however. The forest was established during the 1930's and remains a popular destination for hikers, campers, and nature lovers.

The park superintendent's house at Cabwaylingo State Forest. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, date and photographer unknown.

Bonnie was born within the boundaries of this forest on November 9, 1948. Her parents, Hubert and Ozalene Crum, still live on the property where she was born. Bonnie was hired by the state under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) on June 21, 1976, and has worked for the forest longer than any other employee in its 70-year history. Bonnie's ubiquitous presence has given voice and personality to Cabwaylingo. She sets the tone here.

"Bonnie is Cabwaylingo State Forest," says Clisby Jennelle, IV, park superintendent. "There are a lot of people who will call in, and if Bonnie doesn't answer the phone and I happen to pick it up, will say 'That's all right, we'd rather talk to Bonnie. We'll call back.'"

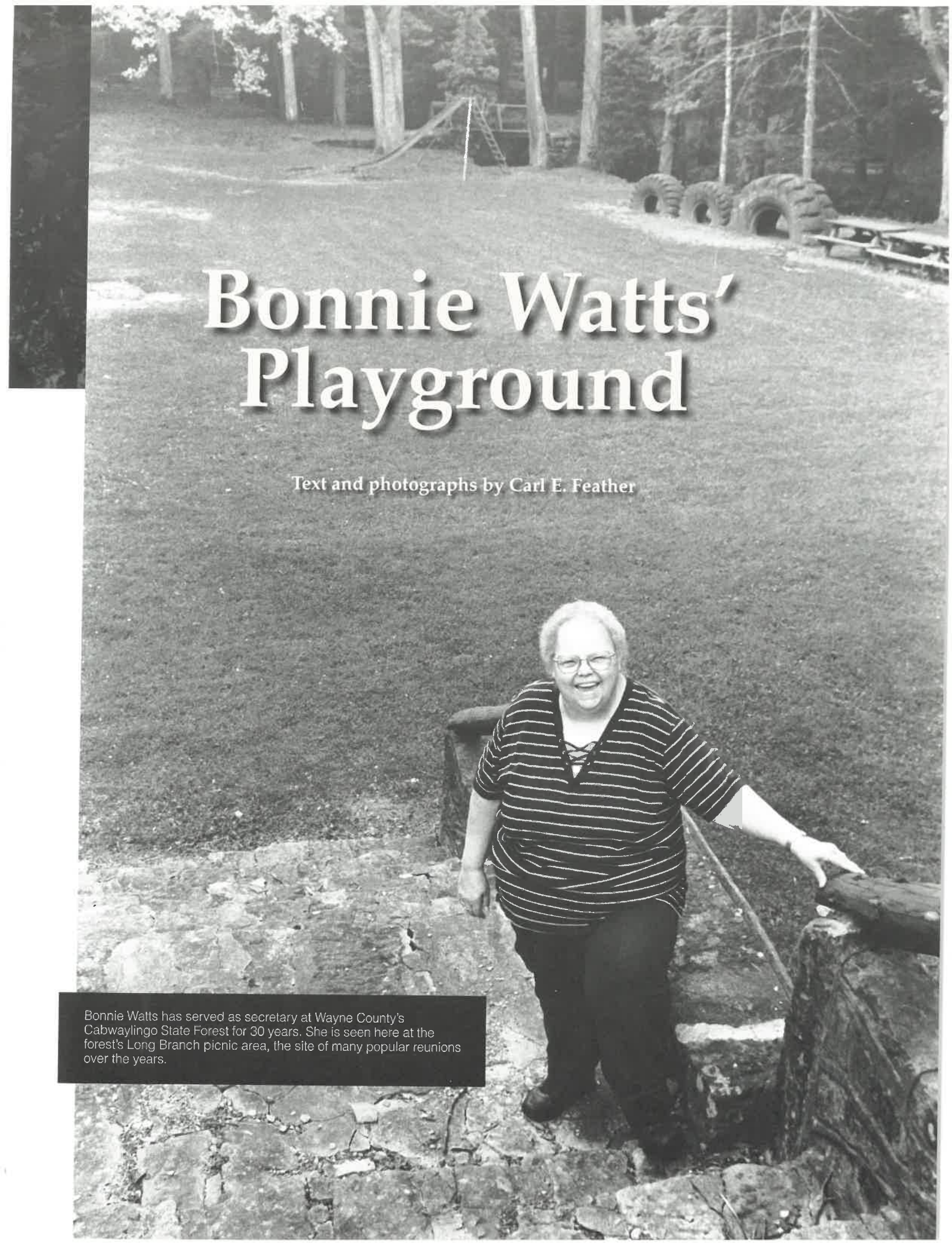
By Bonnie's accounting, Clisby is the 11th superintendent she has worked under since starting her job at the forest. She's also worked under at least nine other state supervisory personnel who pulled interim duty at Cabwaylingo.

"Most of the superintendents who have been here have gone up the ladder to larger parks — Pipestem, Babcock, Holly River, Cass Scenic Railroad," Bonnie says. "This kind of gets their feet wet, to see how parks and forests are run — to learn the rules and regulations."

"She has probably trained half of the superintendents in the system

Bonnie Watts' Playground

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather



Bonnie Watts has served as secretary at Wayne County's Cabwaylingo State Forest for 30 years. She is seen here at the forest's Long Branch picnic area, the site of many popular reunions over the years.

This stone pump house and cabin were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) at Cabwaylingo between 1935 and 1939. The cabins are still in use and are rented to forest visitors.

now," Clisby says. "She's a valuable member of the park system. I wish we had more like her."

Bonnie loves Cabwaylingo and promotes it every opportunity she gets. She especially enjoys telling visitors about its Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) roots and directing them to the massive stone-and-log structures these young men created in the park between 1935 and 1939. A reunion of men who worked on the camp is held at Cabwaylingo every summer. A monument honoring their efforts was erected in the group camp area, formerly the site of the CCC barracks, in the fall of 2005.

Bonnie had the good fortune of growing up with this forest as her playground. Even the first several months of her elementary education, in the fall and early winter of 1954, were spent in Cabwaylingo.

"It was only a one-room [school], with grades one through eight," recalls Bonnie. "All students attended classes at the same time. Each class had its own designated area within the one room, and there was one teacher for the students. Her name was Anna Kirk."

When the new elementary school opened at Dunlow, Bonnie and the other students were bused out of the forest and their little schoolhouse was torn down. But the forest remained a standard destination for school outings.

"We were allowed one day per year for field day," she says. "We'd have it at the Long Branch picnic area. We would play horseshoes, ball; have a cookout. We always had it in the spring, right before school ended."

Her parents were very committed to family time, and a portion of every Sunday was usually spent in the forest picnicking, playing a ball game with neighbor kids, or just enjoying the natural beauty of the woods and streams.

Of all her childhood memories of the forest, none looms larger for Bonnie than that of the family reunions held there the second Sunday in September. It was called the Perry-Maynard Reunion, though people from all over the area turned out for the event, which continues to this day on a much smaller scale as the Maynard Reunion. But in Bonnie's childhood years, the reunion drew between 2,000 and 2,500 persons. Bonnie says vehicles would be parked on both sides of the road for several miles, as folks converged on the forest. Held in the Long Branch picnic pavilion, the reunion sprawled over the grounds and onto the surrounding hillsides.

"The tables would be lined with home-cooked picnic dishes by the women," recalls Bonnie. "There were games, singing, contests, speeches, and a wonderful time had by all. This was the largest one-day gathering in the forest."

The magnitude of this event can be gauged by the caliber of the entertainment and speakers. Bonnie recalls hearing Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs at the forest, as well as Minnie Pearl and Stringbean (David Akeman). She says the performers arrived in big buses that parked in

The old CCC barracks and dining hall at Cabwaylingo serve today as the McClintic Group Camp, used largely by church groups. This photograph from the 1930's comes courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, photographer unknown.

Bonnie doing what she does best — welcoming visitors with a smile and a brochure about Cabwaylingo. She also manages souvenir sales, cabin reservations, and myriad other responsibilities.

the picnic area next to the stage.

"A few years, Governor Arch Moore flew in on his helicopter to attend," she says. "They landed it across the road from the Long Branch picnic area."

Despite these pleasant childhood experiences, Bonnie set her sights on the big city when she graduated from Crum High School in 1966.

"Growing up, it never once ran through my mind that I would ever work at Cabwaylingo," she says. "As a country child growing up, my dream was to get out of the country and get into the big city."

For Bonnie, that big city was Huntington, 45 miles to the north. Bonnie attended Huntington Business College, where she majored in accounting. Within two years of graduating from the college, Bonnie married Ronnie Watts, a fellow Wayne County native.

Bonnie worked for five years in Huntington as a seamstress at the Sunset Furniture Company. Her husband also worked there, as an upholsterer. But after their child, Ronnie II, was born in 1973, their attitude toward living in the city changed. Bonnie says they wanted to raise their son in the same kind of rural atmosphere they'd known as children. They moved back to Wayne County and purchased a mobile home. Ronnie started working with Bonnie's father, who was in the construction business.

"The guy I worked for at Sunset made a trip all the way out here and begged me to come back to work for him," says Bonnie, who continues to do upholstery work for her father's and uncle's antique cars. [See "Crum Brothers: Witnesses to the Change," by Carl E. Feather; page 62.]

She learned about the job at Cabwaylingo from Wilma Jarrell, the wife of Lacy Jarrell, park superintendent for 23 years. Bonnie applied for the job, sent her paperwork to Charleston, and was hired under CETA.

"It was a challenging job, but I was excited," Bonnie says, recalling her first weeks at her new position. She was the secretary's assistant, responsible for answering the phone, making cabin reservations, and handling other office duties. Bonnie worked under the CETA program for three years before she became a state employee and was given the title of secretary.

Bonnie had the good fortune of growing up with this forest as her playground.

One thing that stands out in Bonnie's mind about those early years was the incidence of forest fires.

"We've had some major fires in here. This was really a hot area," she says. "When I first came to work here, there would be as high as 10 men sacked out in my backroom. They'd stay all night and stay two or three nights, if we were having a bad fire season."

The Tick Ridge fire tower, built in 1935, was still in use at that time. It remains standing today, but is closed. Fires were fought with crews consisting of both paid fire wardens and local men wielding nothing more than hand tools.

"They had to stay in the forest many nights to help save the timber and its natural resources," says Bonnie.

Bonnie recalls how the forest suf-

fered from another manifestation of nature's fury in 1977 and 1978. Extensive flooding along the Tug Fork and its tributaries forced many residents out of their homes and into the forest for shelter.

"Almost every person in the Dunlow and surrounding areas was affected," recalls Bonnie. "Many lost everything they owned and had to start all over." The state forest became a temporary home to many of the flood victims, who were housed in cabins until services were restored.

"We had community residents sleeping in the forest headquarters/office building until they could be relocated," Bonnie recalls. The C&P Telephone Company set up shop in the park's group camp facility, and workers were housed there until service was restored to the Dunlow, Moses Fork, and Crum areas — about three months.

Bonnie's job duties have matured and expanded with the forest's multiple roles. They include answering the phone; preparing reports; supervising the cabin cleaning crews; making shelter, cabin, and campground reservations; checking in guests and resolving issues; ordering supplies; processing payroll; selling souvenirs and hunting and fishing licenses; and providing information about the forest and region.

Her office also serves as the first-aid station. Over the years, she's patched up her share of scratches, scrapes, and burns. Amazingly, she's never had to treat a snakebite — Bonnie says Cabwaylingo has a reputation for its copperhead population, although encounters have decreased from when she first started there.

A stuffed baby rattler, a gift from a local resident, is on display in Bonnie's office. While it might be the only venomous snake visitors are likely to see at Cabwaylingo, it is certainly a conversation starter.

"When they were building the Tick Ridge campground, it wasn't unusual for the men to come in at the end of the day and report killing 25 to 30 copperheads," she says.

Battling forest fires has been a continuing concern at Cabwaylingo, especially during the forest's early years. This group of fire fighters gathered at the forest's Tick Ridge Forest Fire Tower in 1963 while attending fire school. Photograph by Bentley Humphrey, courtesy of the West Virginia Division of Forestry.

Most guests at Cabwaylingo encounter only one poisonous snake their entire visit — in Bonnie's office. Coiled up under glass on the counter is a very dead baby rattlesnake, a gift from a local resident. The other place visitors occasionally encounter a snake, usually a nonpoisonous blacksnake, is in their cabin. As temperatures drop in the fall, the reptiles sometimes seek the warmth of these structures.

"City people, it would frighten them to death. They'd be really, really scared," Bonnie says of guests who dash down to the office (there are no phones in the cabins) after discovering the intruder.

Bonnie acknowledges that for some "city people," Cabwaylingo is just too remote and rustic. When a first-time visitor calls to make a reservation, Bonnie always tries to alert them to the rustic realities of the forest.

"I'll ask them what type of activities they are looking for, and if they say they want horseback riding, golf, and things like that, then I will recommend one of the other parks," she says.

Bonnie also tells first-time guests to carry in their supplies. It's an hour's drive to any major shopping center, and there are no convenience stores or restaurants located within the forest itself.

Cabwaylingo, says Bonnie, is best suited for the family that enjoys the simple things in life. Opportunities here include hunting on the state forestland during respective hunting seasons and fishing in Twelvepole Creek, which is stocked with trout in early spring. There are 25 miles of nature trails and two waterfalls, one of which rivals Blackwater Falls in height, says Clisby Jennell. Overhanging rock cliffs are found along several of the trails, as well.

While there is no lodge, the 14 log cabins are furnished and have electricity and running water. There's no cable or satellite dish television, but visitors can watch flames dance from hardwood logs in their cabin's stone fireplace and hear birds singing in branches just beyond their windows. Cabins are furnished with bed linens and towels, have a complete kitchen for preparing meals, and most have front porches surrounded by the forest and solitude. One of the cabins is handicapped accessible.

Manmade amenities include a swimming area with a pool, bathhouse, and wading pool. The pool area, which is protected by lifeguards, is open to guests and local residents from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. A basketball court is located near the swimming pool.

Adjacent to the swimming area is the McClintic Group Camp, which can accommodate 100 persons in two bunk buildings — the former CCC barracks. A dining hall with a fully furnished kitchen is included in the group rental. Bonnie says the group camp is particularly popular with church organizations, which use it for retreats.

This area of the park is of special significance to Bonnie, for it's the location of the Bonnie Watts Picnic Pavilion, a structure named in her honor to commemorate her first 25 years of service.

"It's an honor, that's for sure," Bonnie says.

Bonnie's personal favorite activity at Cabwaylingo is spending time with her family on picnics. "Sometimes, we just sit in a picnic area and just enjoy the nature part of it," she says. "I enjoy just getting out and listening to the birds and watching the butterflies. It is gorgeous, gorgeous in the fall. The tree color is spectacular."

Most nature lovers, city people and locals alike, disappear from the park around the end of November, when the campground closes for the season — cabins close a month earlier. But Bonnie says the work goes on. Indeed, winter is a very busy time for her and the staff.

"You got to cut wood, paint the cabins, keep up with the inventory, reorder, repair, and get ready for the next year. It doesn't get boring. January goes by real quick. It pretty much keeps you busy year around," Bonnie says.

With Bonnie's lifelong connections to the forest and long tenure on the job, she would seem a natural choice for the superintendent's position. But seeing the stress that superintendents are under has convinced her that it's a job she wouldn't want.

Bonnie acknowledges that for some "city people," Cabwaylingo is just too remote and rustic.

"I've had a few of the other superintendents talk to me about it," she says. "But I don't want to put anything in front of my family. With this superintendent position, you have to forsake a lot of your family activities to do your job duty.

"I'm satisfied being the secretary," she adds.

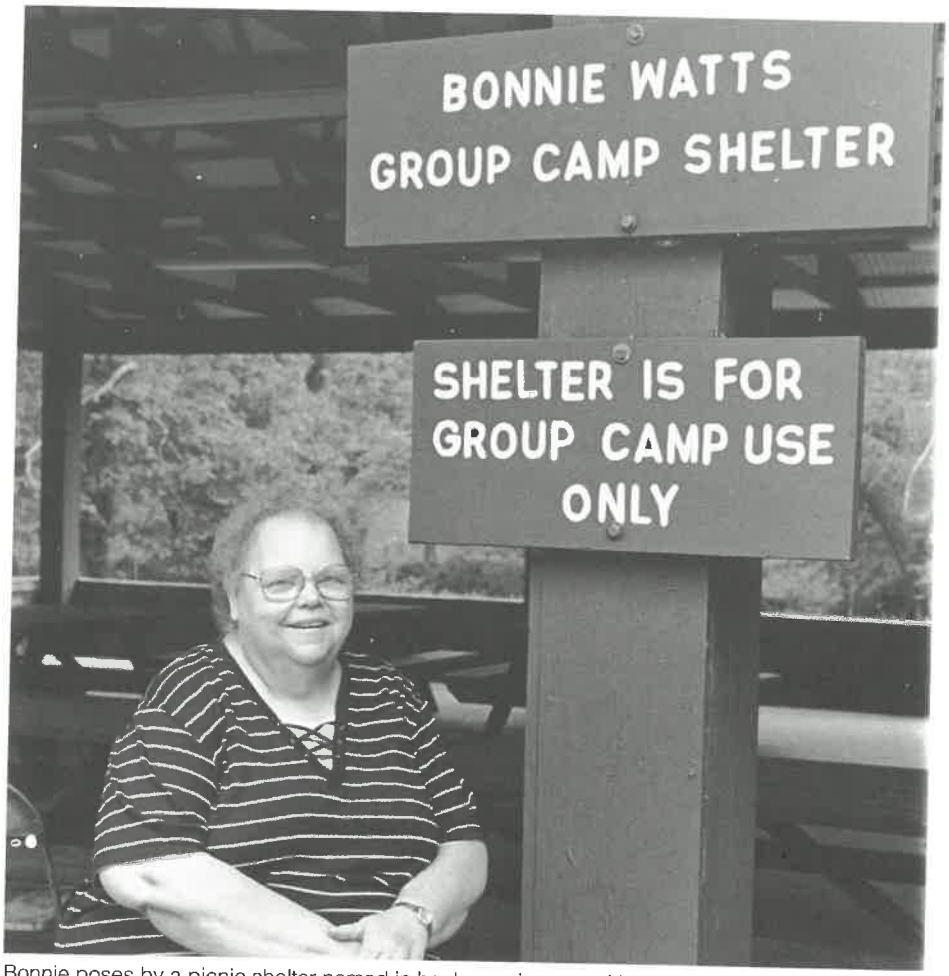
Bonnie says the thing she dislikes most about her job is when someone leaves Cabwaylingo State Forest a disappointed or unhappy camper.

"A lot of people come here looking for an elaborate 'Holiday Inn' type of thing," she says. "They end up not liking it because it is so far out in the country and they don't like the rustic feel of it. It's very remote and mountainous here."

Bonnie does everything possible to make sure the visitor feels right at home. She greets every visitor with a smile and brochure about the park. She encourages them to explore the park's fascinating CCC structures and take lots of pictures of the natural and manmade beauty. And she's always ready to answer questions and give directions, even if it's to a retired stripper's hometown.

"I've always enjoyed my work," she says. "Every day it's different people."

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.



Bonnie poses by a picnic shelter named in her honor, in recognition of her many years of devotion to Cabwaylingo State Forest. "I've always enjoyed my work," she says.

Crum Brothers

Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

Twins Hobert (left) and Hubert Crum, age 83, on the porch of Hobert's home in Cabwaylingo State Forest, Wayne County.

Witnesses to the Change

The transformation of 8,100 acres of farmland and wilderness into Cabwaylingo State Forest provided more than employment for hundreds of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers in the late 1930's. It also brought civility and progress to a formerly remote, depressed, and sometimes lawless region.

Twin brothers Hobert and Hubert Crum of Missouri Branch, Wayne County, grew up at the northern end of what would become the state forest. Their family's 40-acre farm along the Norfolk & Western Railway line provided an excellent vantage point to witness the changes

Hubert (left) and Hobert work together in a garden they share. They were raised on a 40-acre farm near here and are no strangers to farm work. The men spent their careers, however, in home and commercial construction. They give away most of the food they raise in this garden.

this development would bring to the hollow.

The boys were born May 29, 1923, to Flem and Evaline Johnson Crum. Flem Crum was a farmer and an excellent timberman, who earned the $1,200 needed to purchase his farm by grading and selling timber. He moved his family from their native Crum community in 1919.

Hobert says there were very few farms along the rail line in the 1920's. The coal mining boom that brought prosperity to McDowell and Mingo counties had not reached Wayne County, although coal deposits existed there. While the family's farmland was cleared, it was surrounded by virgin forest made up largely of large yellow poplar, which had little value in that economy.

Most families lived along the ridges and eked out their livings farming, timbering, and making moonshine — the region's most reliable cash crop. "You'd see smoke arisin' in every holler around here," Hobert says. These stills, along with arson and careless picnickers, were responsible for starting many of the devastating forest fires that occurred in Cabwaylingo in its early years.

Hobert's brother-in-law was a moonshiner. Hobert says his brother-in-law went down to the train station one day to make a delivery, but found the sheriff waiting for him.

"The train come by, stopped, and he got on it and sold the whiskey to the engineer and conductor," Hobert says. The train continued up the line about a half-a-mile then stopped so the moonshiner could get off, his business successfully conducted.

The N&W line was the family's main source of contact with the outside world. Travel to nearby settlements like Dunlow and Crum was by foot or horseback. Hubert says that when their baby brother died at the age of nine months, their uncle carried the corpse on his lap while riding horseback to Crum, where the baby was buried in the family cemetery.

There was a dirt road that ran along the hill above their farm, but it was nothing more than a wagon path. Hobert says it was a common occurrence for his father to be called upon to hitch up his team of oxen and extract a vehicle that had become mired in the mud and deep ruts of the very crude highway. Wagons, sleds, and teams of horses were the common mode of transportation on this road.

"Back then, there were just maybe one or two [motorized] vehicles in this part of the country," Hubert says. "There was just one filling station around here, in Dunlow, and gas was 12 cents a gallon."

Day and night, coal trains labored up the slight grade of the line, which connected the vast coal resources of the Tug Fork River Valley to the outside world. Hobert says hobos frequently rode the coal trains in those days, and for some of the black and foreign-

Most families eked out their livings farming, timbering, and making moonshine.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 3540 at Camp Twelvepole (Camp Aracoma) in neighboring Mingo County, one of the CCC groups that helped

born hobos, their trip through Wayne County was their last. Hubert says lawless members of the community who took their prejudices to the extreme shot the hobos as if they were sport shooting. "They were mean, they were uncivilized people back then," Hubert says.

Trackmen who came upon a body thus killed usually simply buried it there without pursuing further investigation, say the twins. Hobert says that his father, who was justice of the peace for that district, was powerless in preventing or prosecuting these murders.

"Back in our days, you could kill somebody and skip over to Kentucky at Ten Mile and get away with it," Hobert says.

"They never knew what law was up here," Hubert adds. "I never knew anybody to get took up for killing someone."

Even the Civil War continued to be fought in their settlement. John Lowe, who had served in the Confederate army, lived on the property that is now Hobert's land. Two other Civil War veterans, "Uncle" Joe and Isaac Marcum, also lived in the community. Joe had been a Rebel, while Isaac was a Union soldier. Quarrels between the two old soldiers were ongoing, and they would occasionally erupt into threats of harm, although the men were too aged to make good on their threats.

It was against this backdrop of violence, isolation, and ignorance that the announcement of a new state forest project rippled through the community. A catalyst for this development was the decision to convert the former N&W rail bed to a highway around 1935. The entire route was replaced by the 59-mile-long Big Sandy Extension through Wayne and Mingo counties. Trackage from Dingess to Dunlow was removed and was converted to the "3/5 Road" — the county designation for Twelvepole Road.

The twins recall area men working on the huge project, which came under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Men from the area who previously spent their days making moonshine, fussing, and feuding were put to work earning cash on this project, which involved building a rock road bed, 12 inches thick.

Hobert says the Bill Floyd Land Company purchased as many acres in the area as possible to create a single tract of forest. Most of the purchases were small farms, like that of the Crum family. While many of their neighbors sold out, Flem Crum refused to part with his farm. To this day, there are numerous private tracts within the state forest, Flem Crum's included.

Once the land company had acquired 6,196 acres, it sold the total tract to the state for $2 an acre. Over the years, additional purchases have increased the holding to 8,123 acres.

CCC Company 3532 moved into Camp Anthony Wayne in what is now Cabwaylingo State Forest on July 4, 1935, and remained there through October 1938. Company 1558V, made up of World War I vet-

CCC workers built this log cabin at Cabwaylingo. Note the date "1936" imbedded in the stone work at right. The coming of the CCC and the state forest brought employment and many positive changes to their community, the Crum brothers say.

to develop Cabwaylingo State Forest. Late 1930's photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, photographer unknown.

erans, followed them, staying until April 1939. The CCC barracks for Camp Anthony Wayne are now the forest's McClintoc Group Camp.

Another camp opened just across the Wayne County line in Mingo County at the mouth of Poor Branch of Twelvepole Creek. Known as Camp Twelvepole (also called Camp Aracoma), it was established July 13, 1935, and closed April 5, 1937. Camp Twelvepole's workers were assigned to fire control, forest stand improvement, recreation development, wildlife feeding, surveys, and stream improvement.

Camp Anthony Wayne's workers built the massive stone-and-timber cabins, shelters, steps, and other amenities visible today in the forest. Both camps brought employment and hope to the region.

"It was exciting to us," Hobert says. "There was nothing like that around here until they came in."

The twins were too young to work in the CCC projects, but they remember the positive impact the camps and outside investment had upon the area. They say the CCC workers interacted with residents, and a number of the young men ended up marrying girls they met while working at the camps. Further, the presence of outsiders brought a previously unknown level of oversight to the region and forced the lawless element to curtail or cease their activities, the men say.

Hobert and Hubert made their livings building houses and commercial buildings in the tri-state region. The Crum twins earned a reputation for being able to build virtually anything and doing any trade in the construction business, from carpentry and masonry to electrical and plumbing work.

Now retired, the men collect and restore Ford Model A cars and plant huge gardens on the land across the highway from their family's homestead. They give away most of the food they grow there.

Hobert and his wife Mary Ann have two children; Hubert and his wife Ozalene have five, including daughter Bonnie Crum Watts, who has worked for the state forest since 1976. [See "Cabwaylingo State Forest: Bonnie Watts' Playground," by Carl E. Feather; page 56.]

Both Hubert and Hobert are active in the Cabwaylingo State Forest Foundation, a volunteer organization that provides labor and fund-raising for forest projects. Hobert spearheaded the fund-raising and labor for a picnic shelter in the forest more than a decade ago. In honor of the work he and Ernie Morgan did on that project, the structure was named the Crum-Morgan Picnic Shelter.

"I think it's a great thing for our community," Hubert says, summing up the park's impact. "I'm proud of it. We wouldn't have nothing here if they hadn't decided to have that in this part of the country."

Hubert (left) and Hobert collect and restore Ford Model A cars. Each brother owns one of these classic vehicles.

West Virginia Back Roads

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

A Texas Tradition In Preston County

Head west off State Route 24 across from the Horse Shoe Run post office in Preston County, go a mile or so to the top of the next hill, and you'll end up in Texas. Texas Settlement, that is.

Not to be confused with Texas Mountain, which is over in Tucker County and another story in itself, Texas Settlement doesn't appear on the map. Nevertheless, residents of this agricultural community will verify you are in Texas, as will the bronze plaque on the iron fence surrounding Texas Cemetery.

A driveway veers off to the left just above the cemetery, passes a grove of hickory, maple, and oak trees, and intersects with the narrow, dead-end road that cuts in front of the Bethel United Methodist Church. The church, grove, cemetery, pastures, and a smattering of farmhouses define Texas.

David Teets, who owns one of those farms, says he really doesn't know where Texas ends and begins. But he knows his farm is part of it, because the deed to his property places it in "Texas Settlement."

According to local legend, the settlement got its name from two brothers by the last name of Evans. The men decided to set out from Moorefield for Texas, the state, and made their ambitious intentions known to family and friends. For whatever reason, they ended up traveling no farther west than Preston County. Not wanting to embarrass themselves as having failed in their plans, they named their new claim "Texas," so the folks back home could honestly say the boys "went to Texas."

"It's supposed to be a true story," says David, an amateur historian and retired dairy farmer/Preston County school bus driver who's well acquainted with the residents of these hollows and hills. [See "The Milk Had to Get Through: Home Delivery in Tucker County," by Carl E. Feather; Spring 1999.]

David is tied to Texas Settlement through marriage, as well. His wife's grandfather, John Henline, purchased the family's farmland from Abraham Wotring, an early settler to this area who donated the land for Texas Cemetery. David says Abe stipulated that burial plots would be free in the cemetery, a tradition that continues to this day.

Opening and closing a grave was another matter. David and his father-in-law, Lawrence Henline, worked as gravediggers, together earning $12 for their services. David says it was usually an all-day job, because the soil on this ridge is a stubborn mix of clay, stones, and layers of shale.

David remains caretaker of the cemetery, which includes a venerated sugar maple tree at the far southeast corner of the lot. The tree measures 16 feet in circumference at four-to-five feet above the soil. It's probably the oldest living thing in Texas.

About the time this maple's dark green leaves start to turn scarlet — the fourth Sunday of September, to be exact — folks from as far away as Terra Alta and Oakland, Maryland, gather at the church for a tradition started back in 1923 — the Texas Sing. Grace Wolfe Bachtel, a retired teacher and Horse Shoe Run resident, says her father, George Wolfe, was the first chair-

A small sign in southeastern Preston County identifies this as the Texas Cemetery. According to local legend, the West Virginia settlement of Texas was named by two brothers who set out for the Lone Star State from Moorefield, but only got as far as Preston County.

The annual Texas Sing has been a local tradition for more than 80 years. George Wolfe organized the first sing in 1923. Today, daughter Grace Bachtel, pictured here, continues her father's work.

man of the sing. After he died in 1963, Grace took over the job and has been chairwoman ever since.

After more than 80 years, the sing is still the biggest event held at the church or in Texas all year. Grace says it is but a shadow of the gatherings that were held there in the 1940's, '50's, and '60's. Terra Alta resident Mary Ruth Helmick Ball, who grew up in Horse Shoe Run and went to the sings as a child, says the all-day event once spilled out of the church and into the grove, where long tables constructed from sawhorses and sheets of plywood were spread with home-cooked, country dinner favorites.

"Families came from all over," Mary Ruth says. "They'd have like a family reunion here. When they say we had 'dinner on the ground,' we had dinner on the ground!"

Mary Ruth says Obe Evans, who had moved away to Michigan, faithfully came back to the sing until his death about 15 years ago. "He always wanted 'The West Virginia Hills' sung," she says. "And he usually got it."

David's wife, Wilma Mae Henline Teets, remembers going to the sing as a child and having to stay in the church until the home choir, of which she was a member, had sung. After that, the children were free to go outside and play on the grounds.

Back in those days, the singing started right after Sunday school and supplanted the morning worship service. It was a congregational sing, particularly for those fortunate enough to get a seat inside the sanctuary. A loudspeaker was placed outside the church so people sitting in the grove — and, if the weather was cool, in their cars — could hear the singing.

In addition to the smaller crowds at the contemporary sings, the congregation does a lot less singing today than their ancestors did 50 years ago. Church choirs, families, duets, and soloists do most of the singing, except when Grace invites the congregation to stretch their legs and exercise their lungs on old-time hymns, like "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "The Old Rugged Cross."

Members of the church hold a dinner on the grounds before the sing, which gets under way at 1 p.m. and ends when the last person — usually Grace — leaves the church, at 4 p.m. or later.

Grace has no idea why the sing has survived for more than 80 years, but, like the settlement in which it's held, the sing is just too rich a tradition to let it die or be absorbed by the less-important details of life.

"It's one of those things that has continued on," she says.

This year's Texas Sing will take place on Sunday, September 24, at Bethel Church in southeastern Preston County, beginning around noon. Visitors are invited, especially those who wish to sing. For more information, call Grace Bachtel at (304)735-5288. —ed.

Films, Videos, and DVD's on West Virginia and Appalachia

By Steve Fesenmaier

Veterans Memorial Bridge at Weirton, from *Crossings: Bridge Building in West Virginia.*

Crossings: Bridge Building in West Virginia

56 mins. *2006*

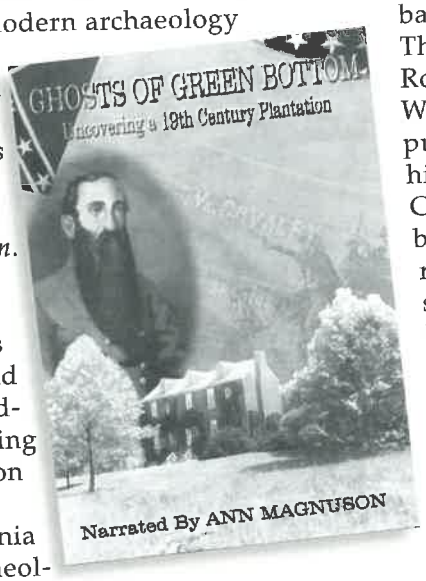
WV Dept. of Transportation

West Virginia, the most mountainous state east of the Mississippi, is a land of bridges. Some are famous — like the New River Bridge — others are infamous — like the Silver Bridge. Terry Lively, Creative Services Manager for WVDOT and freelance cartographer [see "Postcards from the Pepperoni Highway," by Jeanne Mozier; Spring 2006], produced and co-directed this look at 38 different highway bridges across the state. Digital Vision Works of Dunbar shot and directed the film. Bridges shown include all 17 covered bridges in West Virginia, the Wheeling Suspension Bridge, New River's Fayette Station Bridge, East Huntington Bridge, Star City Bridge, and many others. The film highlights these impressive structures while honoring the engineers and workers who designed and built them. Copies of this film will be distributed to every public school and library in West Virginia. For more information, go to www.wvdot.com/crossings/CROSSINGS_index.html.

Ghosts of Green Bottom

28 mins. *2004 Daniel Boyd*

In 1825, William Jenkins did the unthinkable. He crossed the rugged Appalachians to establish a Southern-style plantation on the wilderness fringe of Western Virginia, in present-day Cabell County. At its peak in the mid-1800's, the sprawling estate employed around 80 slaves, working 1,700 acres of rich Ohio River bottomland. Being loyal Virginians, the family cast their lot with the Confederacy during the Civil War, triggering a series of fateful events that ended their plantation lifestyle and nearly destroyed their once-proud legacy. Today, the house and property are operated as a historic site by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, known as Jenkins Plantation. In this film, director Daniel Boyd and executive producer Robert Maslowski use traditional research and modern archaeology to reveal the *Ghosts of Green Bottom.* This is the pair's second award-winning film on West Virginia archaeology. DVD copies are available for $10 each, plus $2.59 shipping, from www.danielboyd.com/big.htm.

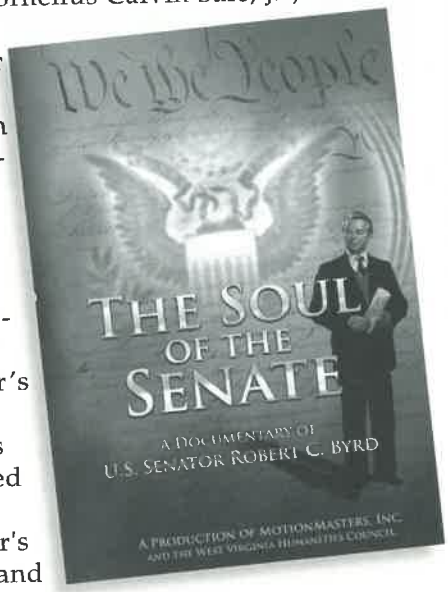


The Soul of the Senate: Robert C. Byrd

56 mins. *2005*

MotionMasters and the West Virginia Humanities Council

U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd was born Cornelius Calvin Sale, Jr., on November 20, 1917, in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. Following his mother's death, he was adopted by his mother's sister and her husband, Vlurma and Titus Byrd. They changed the boy's name to Robert Carlyle Byrd and moved to West Virginia in 1920. The future public figure graduated from high school in Stotesbury, Raleigh County, where he met his wife-to-be, Erma. Byrd soon began a storied political career that would span more than 60 years and see him become the longest-serving U.S. Senator in the nation's history. Every public library and school in WV has a copy of this film. It is available in VHS and DVD formats, plus an enhanced DVD with bonus footage. For purchase information, write to MotionMasters, One Creative Place, Charleston, WV 25311 or phone (304)345-8800.



The Last Campaign
107 mins. *2005*
Wayne Ewing Productions
West Virginia Supreme Court Justice Warren McGraw's hotly contested — and ultimately unsuccessful — 2004 campaign for reelection is the subject of this unusual political documentary. Marked by scandals, outrageous allegations, and outside financial influence, this election was considered one of the nastiest and most expensive in U.S. history. Interspersing excerpts from his 1972 documentary on McGraw — titled *If Elected* — filmmaker Wayne Ewing creates a unique cinema verite portrait of American politics over a 32-year span. DVD copies are available for $29.95, plus shipping, from www.thelastcampaign.com.

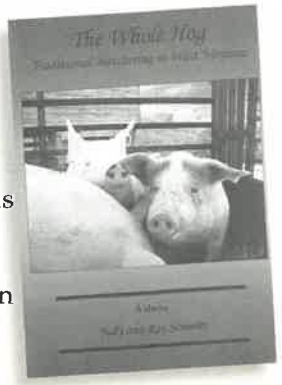
The Kingmaker: Don Blankenship
30 mins. *2005*
West Virginia Public Broadcasting
Reporter Anna Sale of West Virginia Public Broadcasting produced and narrates this look at Don Blankenship, controversial president of Massey Energy, one of the state's largest and most powerful coal companies. Archival footage documents his early life and career. Supporters and detractors are interviewed, offering contrasting perspectives on this prominent and politically active coal executive. Supporters present positive opinions about his management style and his contributions to southern West Virginia communities, while detractors point to the damage he has allegedly done to the environment and to workers' health. Blankenship told the Charleston press that he considers the report to be balanced. Copies are available for $29.95 from West Virginia Public Broadcasting; phone (304)556-4900.


Don Blankenship, courtesy of Massey Energy.

Black Diamonds
90 mins. *2006*
Catherine and Ann Pancake
"Black Diamonds" charts the escalating drama over the increase in mountaintop mining in Appalachia and the controversy surrounding its use. Filmmakers Catherine and Ann Pancake were born and raised in West Virginia — Catherine an award-winning filmmaker and Ann an award-winning author. They worked for more than four years on this project, traveling throughout Appalachia, studying this mining method, and documenting its impact. Citizen testimony and visual documentation are interwoven with commentary from government officials, activists, and scientists to create a riveting portrait of an American region caught between the grinding wheels of the national appetite for "cheap" energy and an enduring sense of Appalachian culture, pride, and natural beauty. For more information, go to www.blackdiamondsmovie.com/index.html or www.bullrogfilms.com.

King of Stink: Appalachian Ramp Festivals
55 mins. *2004 Golden Lion Media*
The arrival of this wild leek is celebrated each spring with festivals and community ramp suppers in the high mountain regions of North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia. This film offers a tour of a dozen of these festivals. Through expert commentary and oral accounts from local participants, a full appreciation of this centuries-old tradition of gathering, preparing, and feasting emerges. The story is told with humor and affection, accompanied by traditional and bluegrass music. West Virginia festivals include Helvetia, Richwood, Chloe, and Elkins. DVD or VHS copies are available for $20 each, plus $5 shipping, from Golden Lion Media, P.O. Box 149, Stuarts Draft, VA 24477; phone (540)337-1095 or on-line at www.goldenlionmedia.com.

The Whole Hog: Traditional Butchering in West Virginia
24 mins. *2005 Real Earth Productions*
Since frontier times, rural families have butchered their own hogs for food. This practice is still found today in the Lost River Valley area of Hardy County. Late each fall, families and friends get together for this all-day event, which culminates in a delicious country dinner. Filmmakers Judy and Ray Schmitt celebrate this tradition and the people who practice it through an interesting and informative look at rural foodways. Due to the nature of this subject, some of the images might not be suitable for young children. DVD or VHS copies are available for $24.95, plus $3 shipping, from Real Earth Productions, 2701 Crab Run Road, Mathias, WV 26812; phone (304)897-6961 or on-line at www.realearthproductions.com.



UFOs in Hardy County
28 mins. *2005 Real Earth Productions*
Following the 2002 release of his sci-fi feature, "The Lights," filmmaker Ray Schmitt began interviewing neighbors and others in the Lost River Valley area of Hardy County, concerning UFO's and strange phenomena they had seen in the sky. Filmed on location, these stories are intriguing and otherworldly, and beg for a scientific explanation. DVD or VHS copies are available for $24.95, plus $3 shipping, from Real Earth Productions, 2701 Crab Run Road, Mathias, WV 26812; phone (304)897-6961 or on-line at www.realearthproductions.com.

GardenStory: The Garden as Environmental Stewartship
30 mins. 2005 Rubicon Productions
Former Charleston resident Rebecca Frischkorn hosts this ambitious four-part series on gardening, exploring some of the social, environmental, and philosophical implications of large public gardens. The segment on environmental stewartship was filmed in the Upper Shavers Fork Nature Conservancy Preserve in Randolph County in the summer of 2005. It is about volunteers and non-profit organizations working to sustain the preserve, which includes rare and endangered plant and animal species, in an effort called "restoration gardening." The DVD containing all four GardenStory episodes is available for $12.99, plus shipping, from www.gardenstory.org/default.asp.

Standing on Holy Ground
62 mins. 2005 PatchWork Films
Part of the "Modern Marvels of Inspiration" series, B.J. Gudmundsson and Joan C. Browning co-produced this film about Methodist minister the Reverend Dr. Patricia A. Jarvis and her husband, Julian George Sulgit, Jr. It follows the pair as they engage in ministry in West Africa, Charleston, Glenville, Bluefield, and Lewisburg. The film is a portrait of a family living a life of faith and a couple with a strong commitment to social justice. VHS copies are available for $20, DVD's for $25, plus shipping, from PatchWork Films, 106 Lamplighter Drive, Lewisburg, WV 24901; phone (304)645-4998 or on-line at www.patchworkfilms.com.

He Went About Doing Good
47 mins. 2005 PatchWork Films
The inspiring life of retired Methodist minister Carl W. Renick, Sr., of Lewisburg is the subject of this recent release, directed and co-produced by West Virginia's 2005 Filmmaker of the Year, B.J. Gudmundsson. The Reverend Renick was born in Lewisburg in 1913 and was among the first graduating

A growing number of films are now available that are either produced by youth or are intended for young audiences:

Bringing Down the Mountains
14 mins. 2006 Mountain Sustainability Project
Pennsylvania high school students Kaitlyn Walton, Jill Sompel, and Stephanie Loughner produced this powerful 14-minute documentary to describe what life is like around mountaintop removal mining sites in southern West Virginia. Limited copies are available for outreach and educational use via e-mail through bringingdownthemountains@yahoo.com.

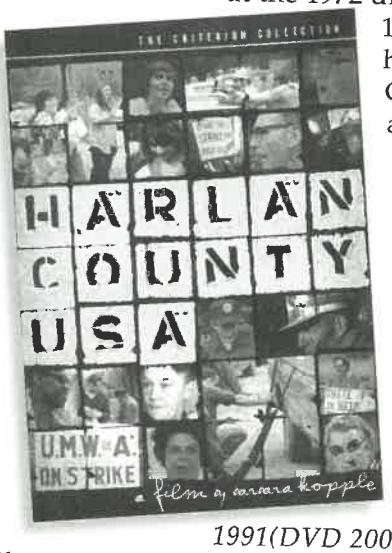
On the River's Edge
85 mins. 2005 self-released
Francesca Karle, a 17-year-old Chesapeake, Ohio, high school student, chose to do her Girl Scout Gold Award project on the homeless. She began filming during September 2004 using a JVC camcorder, following the chronically homeless in the region — people who would rather live on the streets or river's edge than stay in shelters. DVD copies are available for $25 via e-mail from bigfoot1@netacs.net.

Labor in the Mountains
55 mins. 2005 Labor in the Mountains Foundation
In what might be the first labor history for children ever put on film, a grandfather tells his granddaughter about the history of the labor struggles in West Virginia. The film is available in VHS or DVD formats for $5 from Labor in the Mountains Foundation, ILSR/WVU, 719 Knapp Hall, Morgantown WV 26506.

class at Greenbrier County's first black high school. Working summers at The Greenbrier, he saved money to go to college, graduating from Negro North Carolina A&T in 1942. In 1950, he and his wife, Edna, returned to Lewisburg, where Carl worked at The Greenbrier and made the decision to enter the ministry. He was ordained in 1960 and spent the next 21 years pastoring at Methodist churches in West Virginia and Virginia. Rev. Renick is now pastor emeritus at the church of his youth, John Wesley United Methodist Church, in Lewisburg. Part of the "Modern Marvels of Inspiration" series, VHS copies are available for $15, DVD's for $18, plus shipping, from PatchWork Films, 106 Lamplighter Drive, Lewisburg, WV 24901; phone (304)645-4998 or online at www.patchworkfilms.com.

Several classic regional releases are now available in DVD format:

Harlan County, USA
103 mins.
1976(2006 DVD)
Criterion
Barbara Kopple's Oscar-winning documentary about mining in southern Appalachia, labor strife, and the pivotal role played by women in the struggle. Dave Morris, Hazel Dickens, and other Appalachian musicians provide the music for the film. The new DVD includes out-takes and bonus features and is available from Amazon.com and other sources. The soundtrack CD is also available.



Buffalo Creek — An Act of Man
40 mins.
1975(DVD 2006) Appalshop
Buffalo Creek Revisited
31 mins.
1984(DVD 2006) Appalshop
Appalshop's unflinching look at the 1972 disaster that left 125 dead and 4,000 homeless in Logan County, along with a follow-up report, ten years after. Both films are now available on a single DVD for $30, plus shipping, from www.buffalocreek-flood.org/main.htm.

Dancing Outlaw
60 mins.
1991(DVD 2005)
Jacob Young
Dancing Outlaw II: Jesco Goes to Hollywood
30 mins.
1994(DVD 2005) Jacob Young
Jesco White, Boone County's most famous dancer and Elvis impersonator, is the subject of these controversial documentaries, profiling a talented and troubled artist. The single DVD release includes both the original film and the 1994 follow-up, plus unseen footage. It sells for $29.95, plus shipping, and is available at www.dancingoutlaw.com.

STEVE FESENMAIER is the research librarian and film advisor for the West Virginia Library Commission in Charleston. He is also the co-founder of the West Virginia International Film Festival and the Sutton West Virginia Filmmakers Festival. Steve is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor.

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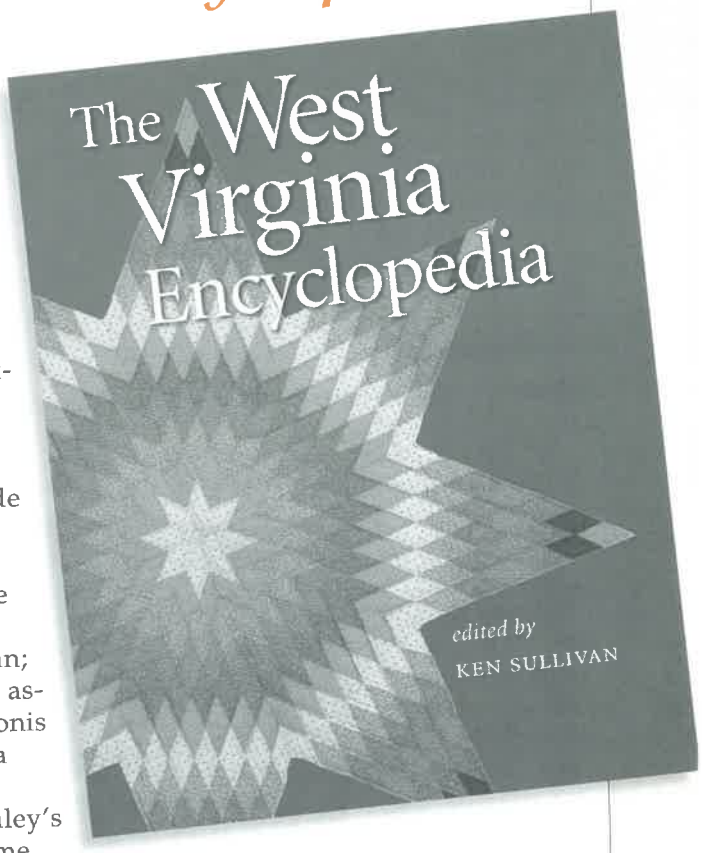


The long-awaited *West Virginia Encyclopedia* is now available from the West Virginia Humanities Council. This impressive one-volume reference book, billed as "all there is to know about West Virginia," contains approximately 2,200 entries by an estimated 600 contributors and is the result of nearly a decade of research and preparation. The big book was edited by longtime GOLDENSEAL magazine editor Ken Sullivan; former GOLDENSEAL assistant editor Debby Sonis served as encyclopedia managing editor.

Inspired by Phil Conley's 1929 volume of the same title, the new state encyclopedia includes biographies, history, agriculture, labor and industry, architecture, music and the arts, geology, nature and wildlife, law and politics, literature, folklore and folklife, religion, sports, and geography. Illustrated with more than 350 photographs, drawings, and maps, the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* includes a separate listing of common and scientific names of indigenous plants and animals, 40 pages of bibliography and citations, and an index.

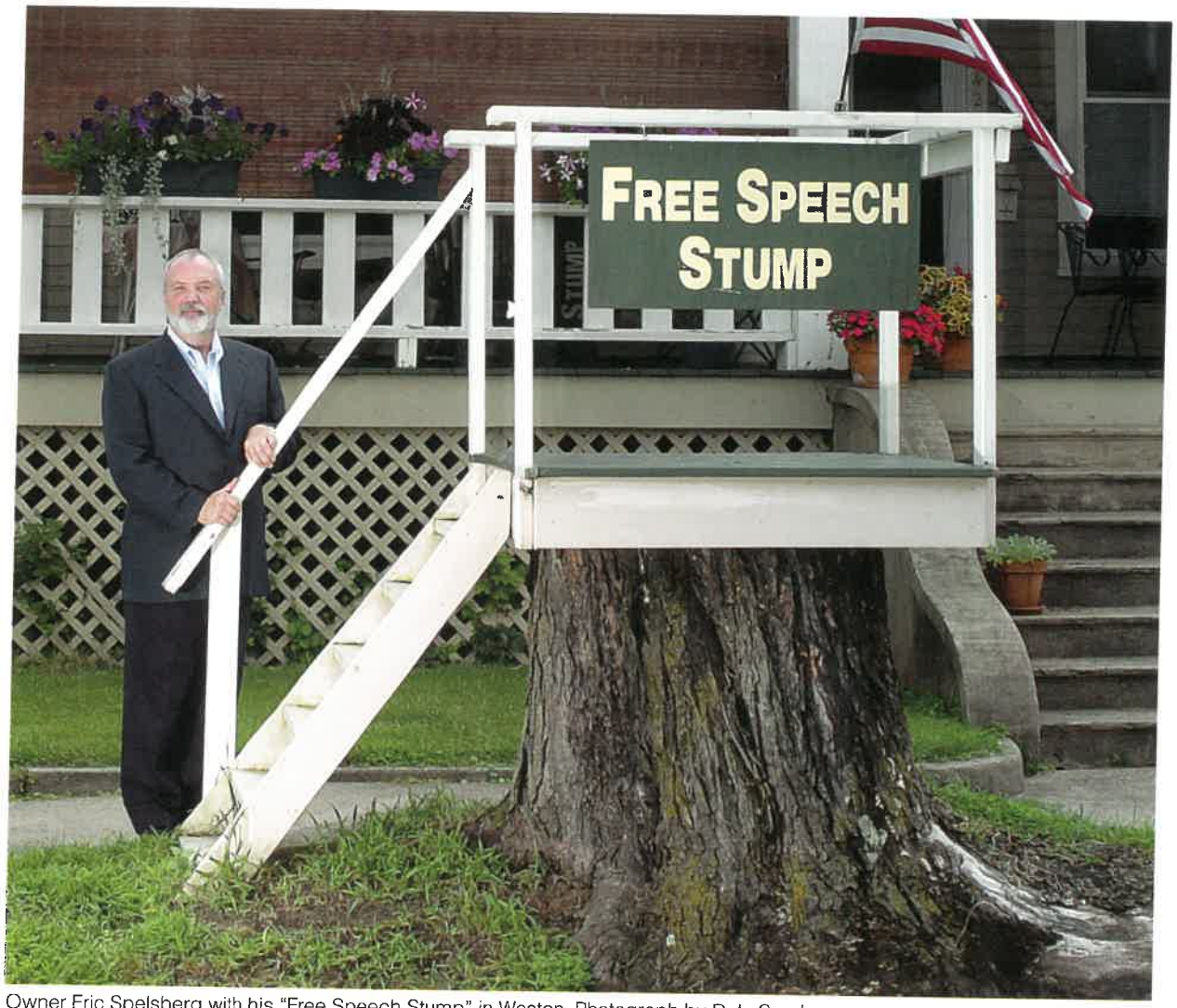
The 927-page, large-format hardcover book sells for $44.95 and can purchased at bookstores throughout the state or ordered from the West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, WV 25301; phone (304)346-5800 or on-line at www.wvhumanities.org.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Steel Drums in Morgantown
- Boone County's Tool Carver
- Plaugher Hollow
- Groundhog Lore

Photo Curiosity



Owner Eric Spelsberg with his "Free Speech Stump" in Weston. Photograph by Dale Sparks.

Got something to say? This tree stump in Weston might be just the ticket. Dubbed the "Free Speech Stump" by owners Eric and Julia Spelsberg, this rustic podium was once a large silver maple tree, until a storm took it out in 2000. Eric had heard the term "stump speech," and it gave him the idea to convert his damaged property into a community asset. He added a set of steps and a small platform. When 90-year-old incumbent Ken Hechler wanted to debate challenger Betty Ireland here during the 2000 race for Secretary of State, Eric decided it was time to install a handrail.

Since then, numerous speeches have been delivered from the distinctive stump at 426 Center Avenue. It has also served as a venue for local drunks and at least one marriage proposal. Eric expects the stump to see plenty of action as the 2006 election season nears, and he welcomes it.

"I'm an advocate of free speech," Eric says. He can be reached at 1-800-209-6423.

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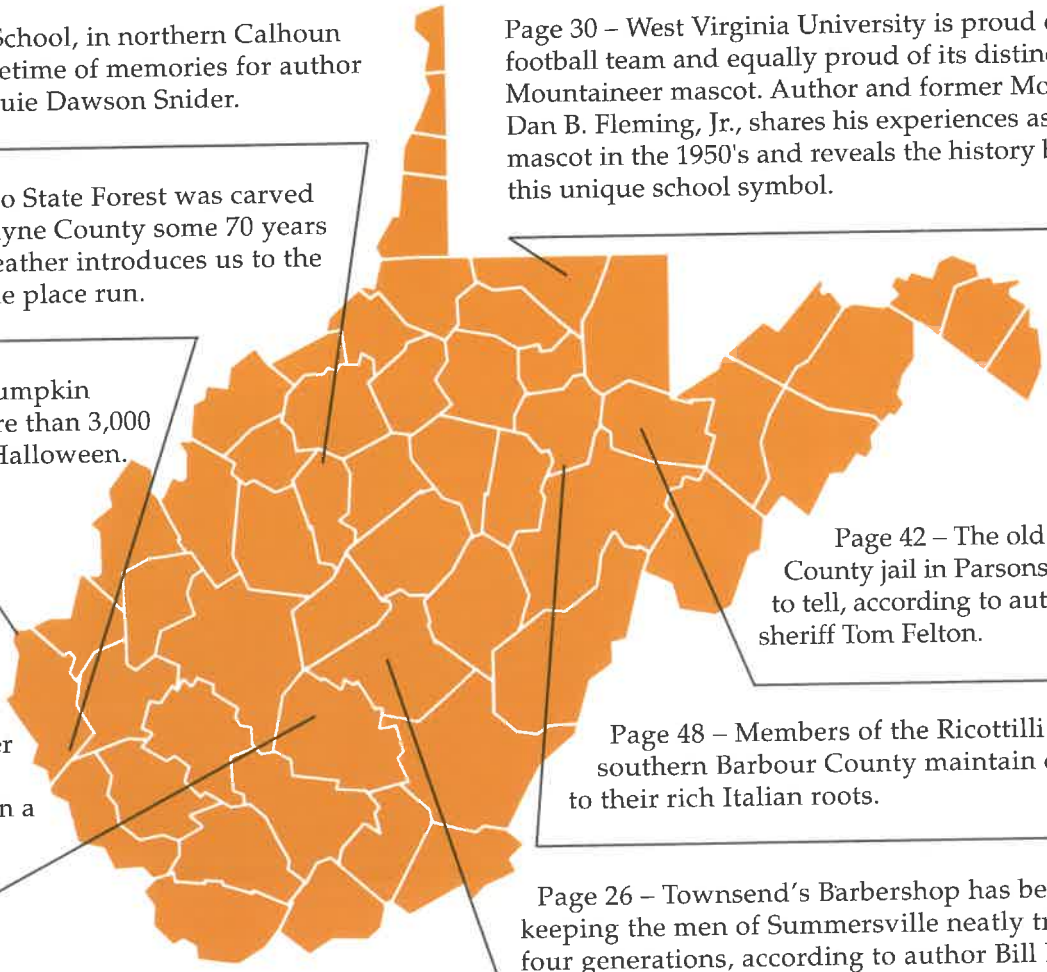

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