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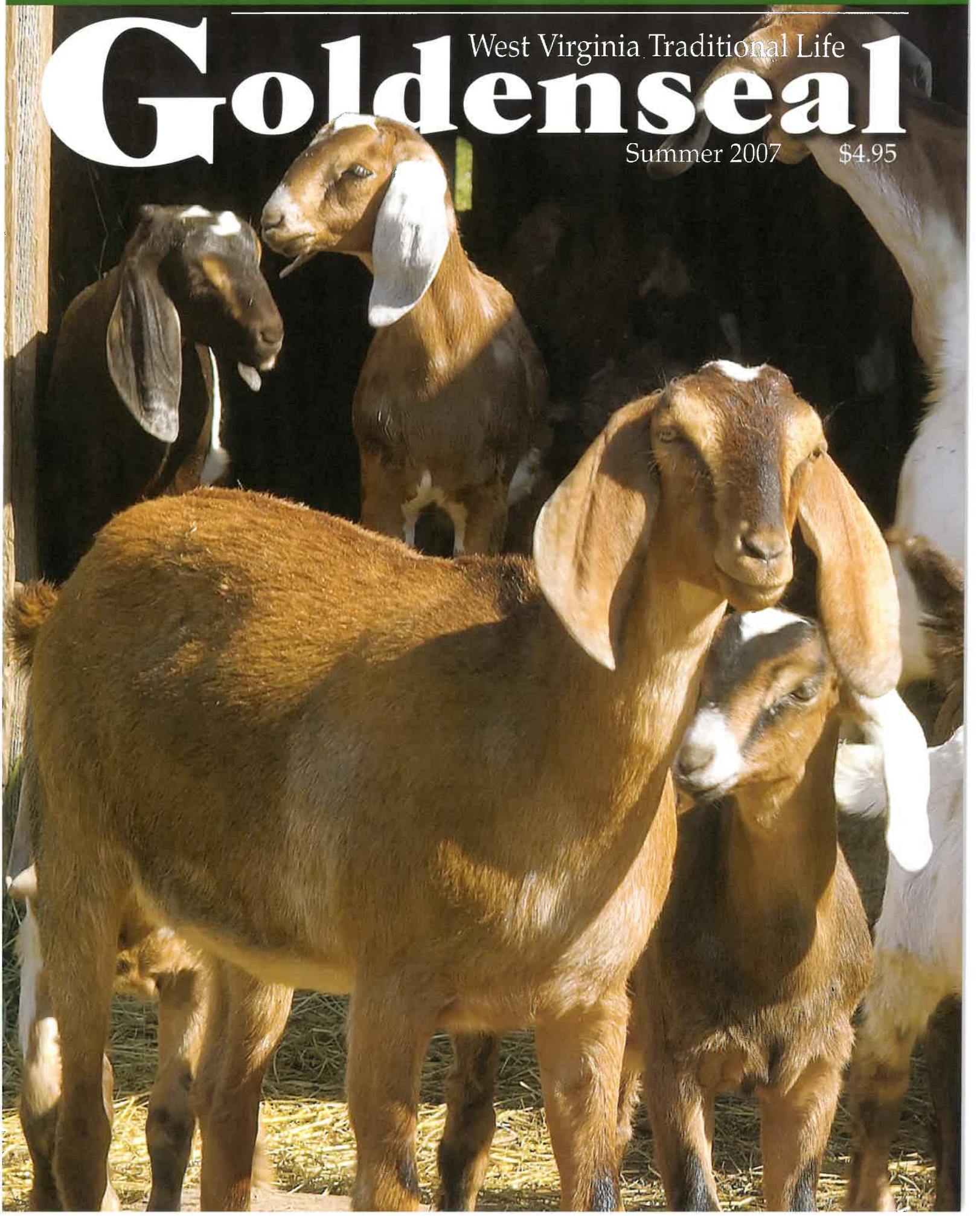
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Summer 2007 $4.95



From the Editor - Future History Heroes

I have seen the future of the past, and it looks pretty good. Last week, I was invited to serve as a judge at the State Social Studies Fair, held at the Civic Center here in Charleston. The competition apparently takes place every year, but this was my first experience with it, and I must tell you I was impressed.

There were a good many judges — 200 or more of us — from all over the state. The students were from fourth grade through high school. They also came from across West Virginia, but the rules prohibited them from identifying their home school or county, lest regional favoritism rear its ugly head during the competition. Each of the entries at this state contest arrived here through an arduous system of elimination at the classroom, school, and county levels. This, therefore, was the cream.

All areas of social studies were represented. I saw awesome displays on Greek history, mummification (several), the life of Chester A. Arthur, the history of the mandolin, Irish folk dance, how money is made, and a critical analysis of the life and social impact of fashion maven Coco Chanel (of Chanel No. 5 fame). There was a very useful explanation of why Mexicans celebrate Cinco de Mayo (May 5) and a scathing assessment of the professional career of Saddam Hussein.

I was (mercifully) assigned to help judge some of the West Virginia history projects. As an inexperienced judge, I was grateful to my partner, a pleasant middle school teacher from McDowell County, who was an old hand at this. We had a few minutes to score the table-top displays before the students came in to give their five-minute oral presentations.

As impressive as I found the displays, they did little to prepare me for the intensity, dedication, and preparation evident once we met the students themselves. Each student pair delivered their rehearsed speeches, followed by a short question-and-answer period. Though a few of them were admittedly a bit nervous to start out, they all did just fine. We saw two presentations on the Sago Mine disaster, histories of Ice Mountain and Seneca Rocks, very dramatic presentations on the Marshall plane crash and the Battle of Rich Mountain, and a charming talk on the famous Braxton County Monster.

I suppose this judging stuff is easier at the lower levels, but by the time these students have reached the state competition, it's difficult to find fault in their work. But judging must take place, so we nitpicked and analyzed until our scorecards showed a bit of a point spread. We reconvened with our fellow judges and discovered that we had a three-way tie for third place! (Marshall and Braxton tied with the Mine Wars.) So we called the students back and asked them to give encore performances for the other judges.

The prizes from our corner were finally decided and submitted, and the judges bid cordial farewells. I took the occasion to wander, drop-jawed, through the vast exhibit hall. Granted, most of these projects bear the fingerprints of various levels of parental involvement. And, I suppose, many of these students will forget all about these projects as soon as they dispose of the display materials. But a certain number will not. A few of these kids have already begun a journey into history, which they will pursue for the rest of their lives.

These are the future of our past. The teachers, librarians, archivists, historians, writers, and — hopefully — editors. They've got the fire in their belly and the taste on their tongue. And they have a teacher to thank.

I was gratified to see evidence of GOLDENSEAL in many of these projects. Several students cited stories from our magazine as research sources, and a few even had magazines on display. There were others who could have and should have used GOLDENSEAL. Next issue, we will have some exciting news to share on recent efforts to help put GOLDENSEAL in the hands of these students and their teachers.

In the meantime, see page 7 for information on a few of our most recent History Heroes, as recognized by the State Archives and History section. If what I saw at the State Social Studies Fair is any indication, there is a new generation of History Heroes coming right behind them.

John Lilly

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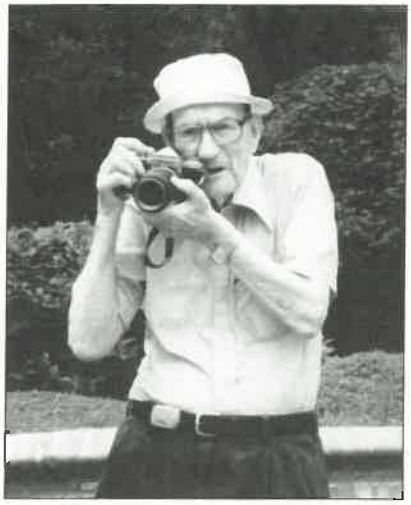

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On the cover: Dairy goats belonging to Mitzie Rival of Jackson County. Photograph by Michael Keller. Our story begins on page 32.

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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.

Lost Creek Church

March 20, 2007
Scott Depot, West Virginia
Editor:
I read with great interest the article on the old brick church at Lost Creek in the Spring 2007 issue. [See "The Old Brick Church at Lost Creek," by S. Thomas Bond.]

It reminded me that I have a faded newspaper clipping from the front page of a Clarksburg newspaper dated 1917. The article is about the celebration at Lost Creek of the 100th birthday of deacon Levi Bond. Among other interesting details of his life, it is recalled that he had been a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church at Lost Creek for 85 years and a deacon there for about 60 years.

The reason this clipping has been in my family all these years is that deacon Levi Bond's daughter, Elizabeth (Betty), was married to my great-grandfather, Dr. Peter Musser, who was a "country doctor" in Lewis and southern Harrison County until his death in 1906. Thus, this gentleman who was a deacon in the Seventh Day Baptist "Old Brick" Church for 60 years was my great-great-grandfather.
Cordially,
Dwight Musser

April 16, 2007
Via e-mail
Lexington Park, Maryland
Editor:
Fascinating article on the old brick church in Lost Creek, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The Bonds involved in the slave controversy were my ancestors, too, and various members of my family (Bond

Seventh Day Baptist Church in Lost Creek, Harrison County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Carmichael's store in Smithfield, Wetzel County, about 1913.

and Curry) have been members of that church for several generations.

I imagine several readers will want to make the correction on page 36 to the names attached to the pastors' photos. The Reverend Rex Zwiebel is the one in the center, not the right. Also, on page 38, it says the wrought-iron fence was "moved out to a few feet from the road, where it is today." In fact, the fence was removed entirely and has not been there for many years.
Bill Rymer

Carmichael Store

March 19, 2007
Cedarville, West Virginia
Editor:
How I enjoy the GOLDENSEAL and look forward to its arrival at my address each issue! The article in Spring 2007 about Carmichael's store really excited me to the point that I must write to see if there is anyone who might have more pictures of early days in Smithfield, Wetzel County. [See "Letters from Readers: Carmichael's Store," by Borgon Tanner.]

Baby Bernice Mae Childers on a porch in Smithfield, Wetzel County, in about 1930. The others are, from the left, Helen Rose, Helen Powell, and Helen Fisher.

I was born in Smithfield on November 11, 1930. My parents lived in a little house across the tracks from the "Big Carlon House." I was named Idris Lavonne Childers, after a teenager named Idris Boord, who lived in the community.

Idris Boord Adams is now in Wishing Well Manor in Fairmont. Thanks to help from a newfound friend, Bonnie Collins (who has also lived in Smithfield and has been the subject of some of your past articles), I visited Idris Boord Adams, and we were both unbelievably happy.

Special thanks to Borgon Tanner.
Sincerely,
Lavonne Childers Minigh

GOLDENSEAL on Tape

January 24, 2007
Mullens, West Virginia
Editor:
I was not acquainted with your magazine until I started getting tapes from the West Virginia Library Commission, Services for the Blind, due to my increasing macular degeneration.

I have appreciated hearing the many tales of unique and historical happenings in other parts of the state. Much of this was new to me. I would like to make a small donation to your magazine and its fine work.
Sincerely,
Virginia W. Cook

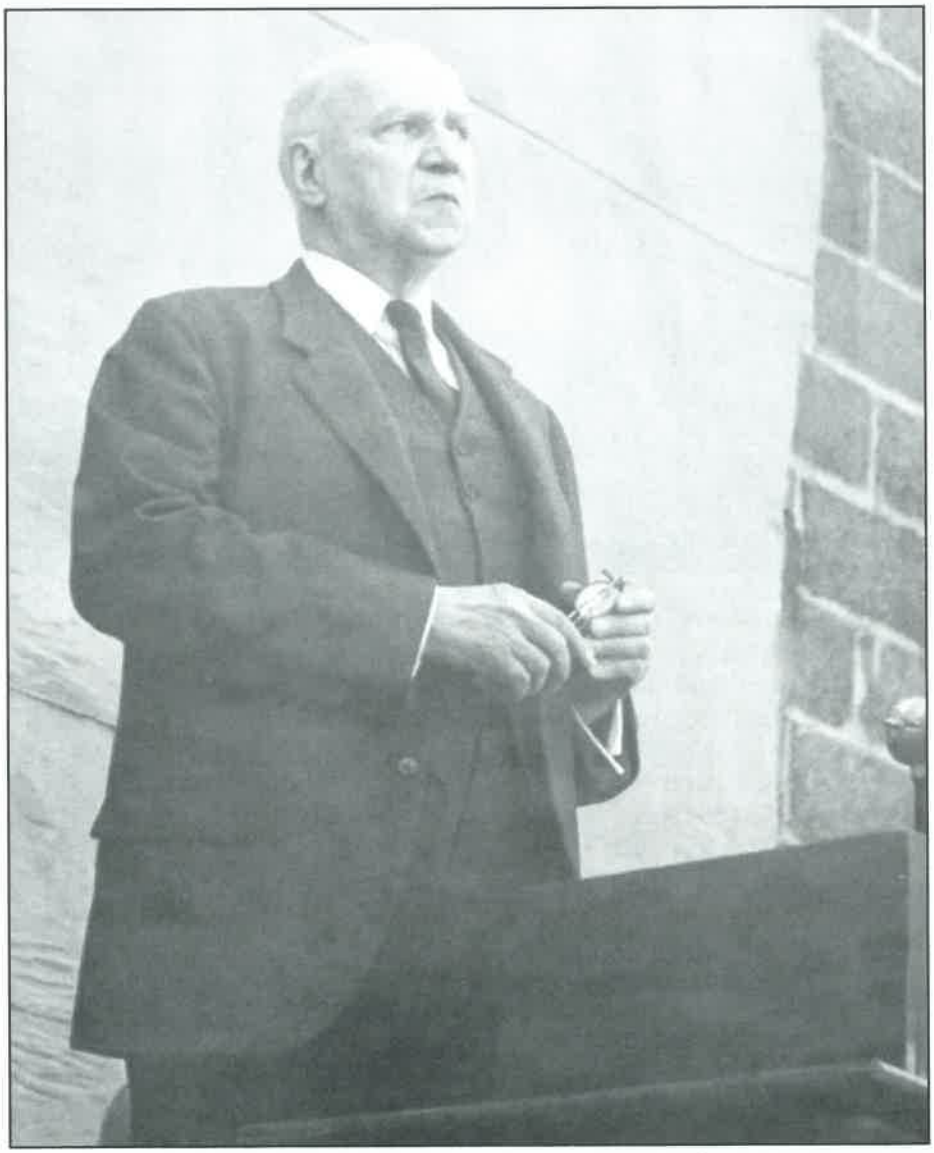
Thank you, Virginia, for those kind words and for your contribution to the cause. Both are appreciated and much needed. For more information about receiving GOLDENSEAL on audio cassette tape, call the Library Commission at (304)558-4061 or 1-800-642-8674. —ed.

J.G. Bradley and Widen

March 22, 2007
Charleston, West Virginia
Editor:
This is to inform you of some wrong information in your article on Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad on page 17 of your Winter 2006 issue.

[You state that "When the (1952) strike ended,... Elk River had finally been organized by the United Mine Workers."] This is incorrect. There were only two strikes against Elk River Coal & Lumber Company. One was in the 1940's by union miners from other mines. The strike in 1952 was by Widen miners, and this was the only time the Widen miners struck. Neither strike was successful. Mr. J.G. Bradley retained complete control over his Clay County empire until he sold out to Pittston Coal Company in 1958. Pittston asked the Widen miners to vote the UMW in, and they did.

My dad, Onas Bailes, worked in the Widen mines from 1939 until it closed in 1963. I myself worked for the company from 1950 until June 1952, and from June until October 1956. When I returned to work in Widen in June 1956, I was registered as a member of the Widen League of Miners, an organization of management and labor, but certainly not a union.
Thanks,
Albert D. Bailes



J.G. Bradley. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Thank you for writing. We heard from a number of readers about this question and apologize for any confusion. In one important detail, you are, in fact, correct. The UMW did not gain a contract with Elk River until after the sale of the company to Pittston. Nevertheless, according to historian Michael K. Smith, the employee association created by Bradley in 1934 was in essence a company union, created for the purpose of keeping a legitimate union out. Wilson documents several attempts by the UMW to break Bradley's hold on his commercial empire, with work stoppages in 1935, 1941, 1944, and 1946, in addition to the strike of 1952-3.

Legal scholar James Gray Pope points out that, in the wake of a western Pennsylvania wildcat strike of 1933, Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act was interpreted by the courts to allow workers "to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing," but also to prohibit the use of company unions by employers in obstructing that right.

An old-style coal baron in a new social and industrial age, Bradley held out longer than most in complying with this new legal arrangement. The 1952-53 strike clearly weakened his resolve in resisting the inevitable. His sale to Pittston and subsequent move to Boston in the wake of that bitter, hard-fought strike signaled the end of an era in work relations.

Thanks again for writing. We enjoyed hearing from you.
—Gordon Simmons, editorial assistant

West Virginia Girl

By Janet E. Haines

I was going through some of my grandmother's old pictures when I stumbled upon this gem. It is a picture of my grandmother, Marjorie Hennen Cooke, born January 1909 in a small house in Monongalia County. "Babies were never born in hospitals. Hospitals are for the sick," she would say.

I can remember my grandmother telling me that her family was so poor that they really couldn't afford to buy something as extravagant as pictures. One summer day back in 1910, a man came to their door offering to take a picture of their daughter. The family couldn't resist buying just one. This was the only picture they bought that day. My great-grandmother put her daughter in the outfit the child wore to church every Sunday. This outfit had been handed down many times before my grandmother ever got a chance to wear it. It would be handed down a few more times before being tossed into the rag box. Her little black patent-leather shoes made the outfit complete.

The photographer picked just the right spot on their porch to take this single precious picture. She was posed several times before the photographer was happy. My grandmother told me her mother took money that was set aside for household expenses to pay the photographer. They "went without" many times during my grandmother's young life, and they "went without" for this little luxury.

As the years went by and my grandmother grew up, she went to work for Clay-Battelle High School in Blacksville. She worked as a cook for several years. The students used to call her "Cookie" because she baked cookies for them daily, and on occasion she would give the students extra snacks. They especially loved her peanut butter cookies and homemade chocolate fudge.

In 1955, my grandmother moved away from the state she loved in order to be with her daughter, son-in-law, and their new baby girl in New Jersey. She never returned to West Virginia to live. Every year, she would come back for a visit with her two sisters and one brother. Her address changed, but she never did. Till the day she passed away, she made homemade bread, fudge, sticky buns, freshly churned ice cream, chicken and dumplings, homemade chicken noodles, and, of course, cookies. She quilted, crocheted, and did needlepoint.

Marjorie Hennen (Cooke) of Monongalia County in 1910.

My grandmother was a true, old-fashioned West Virginia girl. She didn't like all those new-fangled things. She used to say she would never be caught riding on one of those airplanes, and the only way we would ever get her on one was to fly her home after she died. On July 25, 1992, my grandmother passed away. She was placed on an airplane and returned home to West Virginia.

The love she had for this state and its traditions was passed down from her to me. I left New Jersey and its fast-track life and settled in Ritchie County. I wanted to enjoy not only the beauty and peace and quiet of the state, but to live the old-time traditions and to belong to a group of people who believe in helping their neighbors. Yes, my grandmother left West Virginia in 1955 to be with me, and due to all her beliefs and the traditions that she passed down to me, I moved to West Virginia to make it my home.

JANET E. HAINES has a master's degree in criminal law and works at the West Virginia Industrial Home for Youth. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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.

Summer Fun

The 5th Annual Lavender Fair will be held June 30 at Alum Bridge, Lewis County, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The fair features gourmet food, crafts, workshops, and presentations on the use of herbs for medicinal and culinary purposes. This year's event will also include demonstrations on wild edible plants, cooking with lavender, and lavender oil distillation. There will be an edible mushroom walk, a wine tasting, a workshop on herbal aphrodisiacs, and a lavender cookie contest with a cash prize. In addition, the fair boasts two dozen exhibitors.

The rural location of the Lavender Fair is La Paix Herb Farm on the May-Kraus homestead, recently designated a National Historic Landmark. More information, including a workshop and event schedule, is available from La Paix Herbal Farm, 3052 Crooked Run Road, Alum Bridge, WV 26321; phone (304)269-7681 or on the Web at www.lapaixherbfarmproducts.com/lavender_fair_2007.htm.

The John Henry Days Festival will be held July 13-15 at the entrance of the Great Bend Tunnel in Talcott, Summers County. The festival celebrates the legendary African American railroad worker reputed to have won a race with a steam drill. In addition to gospel and other musical performances, the commemoration features a grand parade and a rubber duck race on the Greenbrier River. For more information, contact John Henry Days Festival, P.O. Box 353, Talcott, WV 24981-0353; phone (304)466-2449 or 466-3640.

The Festival of the Rivers will be held September 1-2 at Hinton, Summers County. Two days of music ranges from bluegrass, folk, and gospel to rock and R&B. The festival also features homemade musical instruments, such as cigar-box guitars, and local art and crafts. For more information, phone Catherine True at (304)466-0748; on the Web at www.hintonwva.com/festrivers.html.

Summer Workshops

MountainMade Studios of Thomas will host craft workshops throughout the summer. In June, there will be weekend workshops on block printing, papermaking, stained-glass lamp shades, moccasins, bead making, painted baskets, and fused jewelry. July will feature fiber arts and felting; August will feature fiber arts, bead making, stained glass, and traditional hickory-bark seat weaving.

Class size and fees vary. For more information, or to register, call MountainMade at 1-877-686-6233; on the Web at http://stores.homestead.com/MMade/StoreFront.bok.

Allegheny Echoes will offer its 11th annual summer workshops in music and writing June 24-30 in Marlinton. Dedicated to preserving and passing on state and local traditions, Allegheny Echoes offers classes in fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, bass, vocal, dulcimer, and creative writing. All ages and skill levels are welcome, and there are opportunities for private instruction.

For information, including workshop descriptions, or to make reservations, write to Allegheny Echoes, RR 2 Box 128M, Marlinton, WV 24954; phone (304)799-7121, on the Web at www.alleghenyechoes.com.

Augusta Heritage Center in Elkins offers a variety of one-week summer workshops beginning the week of July 8-13 and ending the week of August 5-12. Numerous folk arts, such as Celtic design and lettering, blacksmithing, weaving,

Flower applique by Judy Lilly, courtesy of Cedar Lakes Craft Center.

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Lew Burdette. Photograph by Jim McLean.

Lew Burdette, Nitro native and famous Major League baseball pitcher, passed away February 6 at his home in Florida. He was 80. Lew got his start in baseball in 1944 when he took a job at the American Viscose Rayon plant in Nitro and pitched for their team in the Industrial League. Following a stint in the military, Lew played college ball in Virginia for the University of Richmond, which quickly led to a minor league contract in the New York Yankees farm system. He made his big league debut in 1950 with the Yankees. Ironically, it was Lew's pitching success against the Yankees that catapulted him to national fame. In 1957, Lew was the hero of the World Series as he led the underdog Milwaukee Braves to victory over the dreaded Yankees, pitching three complete-game victories against one of the most potent line-ups in baseball history. Lew was the feature of a GOLDENSEAL story in our Fall 1998 issue, titled "The Pride of Nitro: Baseball Star Lew Burdette," by David Driver.

Ted Burdette. Photograph by Tracy Jackson.

Theodore Allen "Ted" Burdette, originally from Clay County, passed away at his home in Sevierville, Tennessee, on February 20. As a boy, Ted worked around the farm and took odd jobs, including carrying the mail via horseback, mule, or wagon throughout northern Clay and southern Roane counties from 1929 until 1932. He eventually became a steam locomotive engineer, running log trains for the Elk River Coal & Lumber Company and for the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad. After the BC&G shut down in the mid-1960's, Ted relocated to east Tennessee, where he continued to run a steam locomotive for the tourists at Dollywood theme park. He was featured in GOLDENSEAL numerous times, including the Spring 1992 issue, in which he graced our cover, cleaning his beloved locomotive. Most recently, Ted was featured in our Winter 2006 issue in an article written by his son, Cody A. Burdette, titled "'Out On the Trail': Tales of a Mail Rider." Ted Burdette was 93.

in McDowell County. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 1907 structure was originally a warehouse for Ashland Coal, becoming the company store in 1943. The restored facility features numerous crafts by West Virginia artisans, as well as the Coal Camp Café. The refurbished store is a project of the nonprofit Travel Beautiful Appalachia, Inc.

Hours of operations are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. The Ashland Company Store is on the Northfork-Ashland Road in northeast McDowell County. For more information, write Ashland Company Store, HC 76 Box 701, Ashland, WV 24868; phone (304)862-4800.

Capon Springs

Capon Springs and Farms marks its 75th season with special programs in addition to regularly scheduled events throughout the summer at their historic rural Hampshire County location.

A program on the history of the resort, featuring a walking tour, slide show, and descriptions of the resort's origins in the 1850's and its revival in the 1930's, is scheduled for June 4-6, and again on September 3-5.

Workshops on watercolor painting are scheduled at Capon Springs on June 11-13 and September 17-19. The class will be for all levels, with emphasis on the natural landscape of the surrounding area. [See "A King-Sized Reunion: Capon Springs Resort," by Stephanie Earls; Spring 1997.]

For more information, write to Capon Springs and Farms, P.O. Box O, Capon Springs, WV 26823; phone (304)874-3695, on the Web at www.26823.com.

Country

By Skip Johnson
Photographs by Ferrell Friend

Photographer Ferrell Friend

70 Years Behind the Camera

Tucked away in the hills of Calhoun and Clay counties are the tiny communities of Chloe and Floe. In the vernacular of country folk giving directions, "You can't get there from here." But Ferrell Friend has always managed. In a career that has spanned 70 years behind the camera, it seems like he has forever and a day been photographing West Virginia places like Chloe and Floe.

He has also photographed or written about split rail fences, old chimneys, country stores, one-room schools, the "nutting" season for black walnut trees, people digging ramps, raising parsnips, plowing with horses, making molasses, playing old-time fiddle tunes, and — almost for diversion, it sometimes seemed — five presidents of the United States.

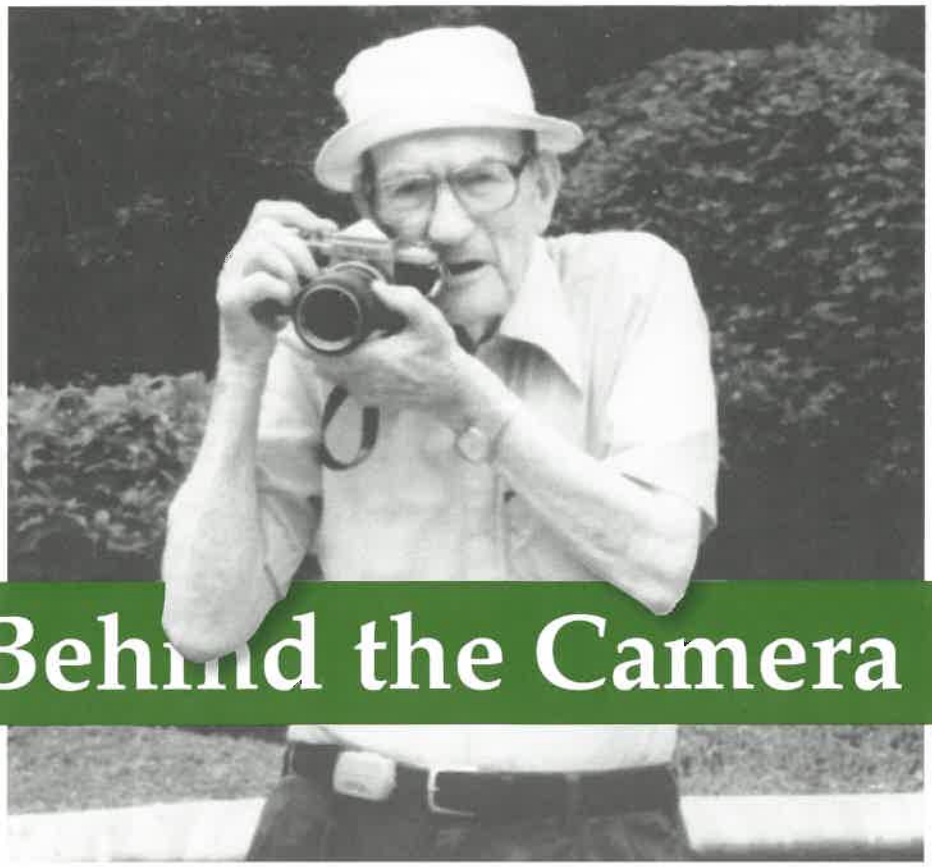
Left: A crowd gathers as Bert Vaughan delivers the mail on horseback between Chloe, Calhoun County, and Floe, Clay County. Ferrell Friend captured this iconic image in 1954.

Ferrell retired from *The Charleston Gazette* in 1975 after 22 years with the newspaper, but he forgot to tell his camera. It is still clicking away. Now 94 years of age and living in his native Ivydale, Clay County, Ferrell came to the Charleston Civic Center in March 2006 to photograph, for the *Clay County Free Press*, the Clay County High School girls basketball team playing in the state tournament. It was a major milestone for him. He had covered his first game at the Civic Center almost a half-century earlier, in 1958-59, when the original arena opened. True to form, he aimed his camera more often at the fans than the players. "One good action shot of a game is enough," he maintains. "The people make the games. I'd rather photograph a five-year-old kid than the president of the United States," he says.

But he has done that, too. Among his prize "catches" on film were Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Gerald Ford.

The only "celebrity" picture that hangs on the wall at Ferrell's home — and almost the only picture of any kind — is of President John F. Ken-

Ferrell Friend and his trusty camera in 2001. Photographer unknown.



nedy speaking on a rainy June 20, 1963, at the West Virginia centennial celebration at the State Capitol. "I don't have much space for pictures," Ferrell explains, "but perhaps more than that, I don't want other pictures to distract from my memories of JFK and the moment."

That damp, bittersweet day was the occasion when Kennedy said famously, "The sun always shines on West Virginia." Ferrell photographed him from a short distance away — something news photographers covering a president would not be permitted to do now. "I was within perhaps five or six feet of him," Ferrell recalls. "His speech was brief, and when he finished, he walked off the podium and disappeared into a sea of umbrellas. I doubt that the Secret Service was happy about that."

Another of Ferrell's memorable pictures, taken from a West Virginia Air National Guard helicopter, showed the devastation on Buffalo Creek in Logan County in a flood following the 1972 collapse of a coal refuse impoundment in which 125 people were killed. The picture appeared the next morning on the front page of *The New York Times*.

Ferrell managed to accomplish the near-impossible at a Richwood Ramp Festival dinner, with the cooperation of West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph, an eminently likeable and courtly man who was a photographer's delight. Ferrell introduced himself to Senator Randolph, they shook hands, and almost immediately Randolph hoisted a large forkful of ramps. Few people photograph with dignity when they're preparing to eat ramps, the stringy, odoriferous wild leek of the West Virginia mountains, but Randolph did.

Fewer still have Randolph's natural affinity for the camera, and they need guidance. Enter Ferrell Friend. "One thing I prided myself in," he says, "is that once I moved onto the scene [of a photograph waiting to be made], I took over the situation for the time it took to get the picture I wanted. I would say, move here and move there."

One time, Ferrell requested that Senator Jay Rockefeller (then governor) wade out into a river and stand on a certain rock for a picture. The occasion was the dedication of a water intake structure that had been built by the state Division of Natural Resources on the Shavers Fork

Left: Baptism in Scary Creek, Putnam County.

Below: President John F. Kennedy speaks during the West Virginia Centennial celebration at the State Capitol in Charleston on June 20, 1963.

Right: Aerial view of wreckage following the 1972 Buffalo Creek disaster in Logan County. This photograph by Ferrell Friend appeared on the front page of *The New York Times*.

River at the Bowden Fish Hatchery. Rockefeller readily complied, but may or may not have gotten his feet wet. Tall and lanky, he was more or less able to step from rock to rock, Ferrell recalls.

Ferrell photographed both Rockefeller and Senator Robert C. Byrd many times. At a Putnam County homecoming at Winfield, Ferrell took possibly the first published picture of Byrd playing the fiddle — at least the first such picture published in the *Gazette*. L.T. Anderson, city editor at the time, kept the picture under the glass on his desk top for a long time.

Ferrell was having lunch a few years later at a Charleston restaurant when his photographer's eye noticed a stream of people stopping at a nearby booth. The attractions were Senator Byrd and his wife, Erma. As the Byrds were leaving, Ferrell spoke to them and mentioned the fiddle picture. The senator, a man who is serious about his fiddle playing, nodded and grinned. He may or may not have actually remembered the moment, but odds are that he did.

Two pictures define Ferrell's career as "the country photographer." One was of a horseback mail carrier between Chloe and Floe, taken in 1954. The other, of the tiny Floe post office, was taken in 1987. The mail carrier assignment was made by Frank Knight, then managing editor of the *Gazette* and a man who had a keen eye for a good story or picture. Usually Ferrell came up with such assignments on his own initiative. At the newspaper office, he would scan the photo assignment book, and if "FF" wasn't written in for an early picture, he would drive around looking for one.

"He liked to talk to people," remembers Frank Wilkin, one of Ferrell's colleagues on the *Gazette* photo staff who lives in retirement in South Charleston. "He liked to photograph and write about what people did — their status in life, that kind of thing. He was familiar with the country, and many of his stories and pictures reflect that."

True, but, in my experience, his conversations with people could be brief, punctuated by comments and body language that, although civil enough, clearly indicated when he was ready to move on. I once wrote that he had "the attention span of a hummingbird." One day, I asked him if that was an accurate assessment. "Let's say my attention span is moderate to short," he replied. He admitted to rarely hearing what a photo subject was saying. "I'm too busy getting the picture," he explained. He frequently described his approach to taking a picture for the newspaper and getting it into the editor's hands

as "the quicker the sooner." I used that phrase for the title of a book I wrote in 1990 about Ferrell and his career.

Terry Marchal, the late humor columnist for the *Gazette* and a city boy, would frequently accompany Ferrell on trips to rural areas. He wrote that "traveling with Ferrell Friend, newspaperman and country philosopher, was not always exciting, but it was always a pleasure."

Terry claimed that Ferrell called everybody "lad," regardless of their age. He said Ferrell told him it was easier than remembering names. Ferrell denies saying that. He says the only person he called lad with any degree of regularity was Terry, because Terry always looked at least 20 years younger than his actual age, which was true.

Most newspaper photographers are called upon to cover sporting events, and most of them go willingly, because they know their pictures will be widely viewed. The old adage that "sports sells newspapers" has more than a little truth to it. Ferrell was not a sports fan in an obsessive way, but he enjoyed the games and took good sports pictures. One of his most innovative, taken around 1974, showed a row of muddy feet and legs of football players seated on the bench during a West Virginia conference game. He doesn't remember where the game was played or by whom, but the picture won a state Associated Press award. Ned Chilton, late publisher of the *Gazette*, gave Ferrell a $100 bonus in recognition of the picture and the award.

Chilton, who had trouble remembering names, called Ferrell "Fred Friendly" after the early CBS television executive. Chilton would step from his office into the newsroom and yell loudly, "Where's Fred Friendly?" Not long after Ferrell came to the *Gazette*, he took a picture of the liftoff of the first jet to fly out of Charleston on regular commercial service. Among the passengers on the Atlanta-bound plane were Ned and his wife, Betty, who is now the *Gazette* publisher.

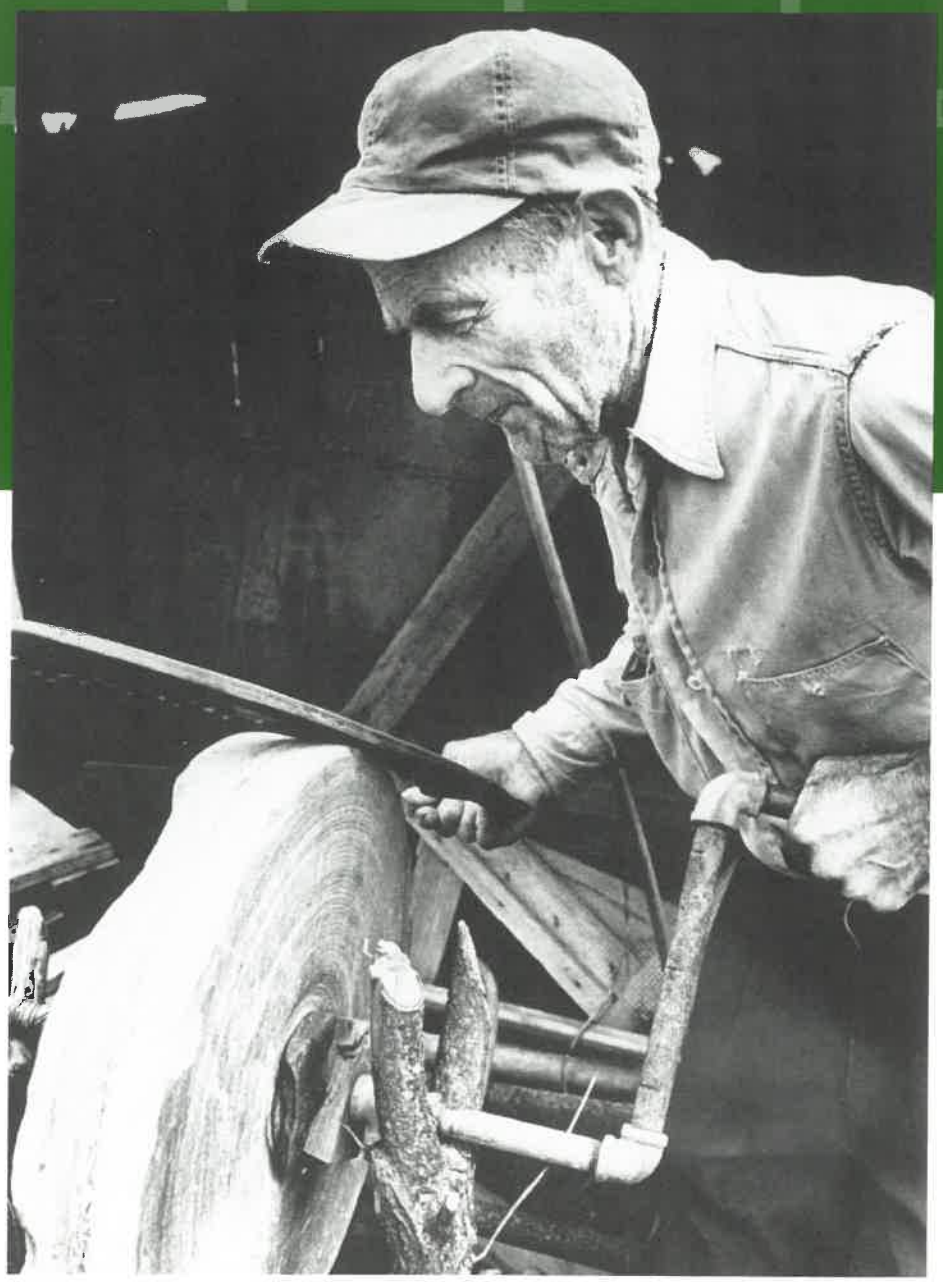
The Quicker the Sooner: The Story of Photographer Ferrell Friend, by journalist Skip Johnson, is a book-length homage to the author's longtime associate and co-worker in the West Virginia newspaper trade. The book includes an extensive biographical sketch of Ferrell, along with a collection of more than 100 of his photographs and several of his most memorable newspaper articles. The book features a brief preface by U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller and an epilogue by the late photographer, publisher, and editor Arnout Hyde, Jr.

This volume also offers anecdotes about the photographer's 22-year career at *The Charleston Gazette* — including his warm relationship with legendary publisher Ned Chilton — and Ferrell's lifelong attachment to his Clay County home in Ivydale. Photographs of celebrities, political figures, and ordinary West Virginians illustrate the book throughout.

The Quicker the Sooner, a 222-page paperback published in 1990, is now out of print but is available at libraries in West Virginia through interlibrary loan. Used copies are offered for sale at www.abebooks.com.

Left: The postmistress at Wildcat, Lewis County, prepares to display the colors.

Right: Andy Johnson of Belington sharpens a scythe using a hand-powered grindstone.



Ferrell loves to fly. He is not a pilot, but he was an aerial photographer in the Navy in World War II and flew on several different types of military aircraft. He also flew twice in a Ford Trimotor, a pioneer aircraft in commercial passenger service. He and a boyhood friend, Lewis Ross, once took a ride at Morgantown in a World War I-era Jenny.

Ferrell has been photographed many times himself. One such picture shows him wearing a surgical gown and mask at a Charleston hospital when he was there to photograph the first baby of the New Year. In another, he is bundled up like an Eskimo to cover the inauguration of Arch Moore to his second term as governor on a 38-degree day in January 1973. His expressive face seems frozen in time as he peers out from the hood of the padded coat that he is wearing against the cold. There have been many others.

Ferrell's interest in photography began at an early age, sharpened by the presence in Ivydale of Thompson Davis, one of the first news photographers in West Virginia. One of Davis' pictures that fascinated Ferrell was of the wreck of a Baltimore & Ohio passenger train called the *Midnight Flyer*, which was traveling toward Charleston in early morning and went off the track just north of Ivydale at Waters Defeat, a tributary of Elk River. There were no fatalities, although one of the Pullman cars came to rest near the river.

Ferrell bought his first camera, a Speed Graphic from Sears Roebuck, when he was working at the Clay County courthouse from 1936 to 1942 as deputy county clerk. It cost $125 — exactly his salary for a month — and was an excellent camera for its time. Its popping flashbulb was familiar to movie-goers of the day in scenes involving news photographers.

Ferrell's father, Ellis Friend, a storekeeper at Ivydale for 40 years, was shocked at the price that his son paid for the Speed Graphic. Ellis always preached the virtue of frugality to his children. But when Ferrell had trouble meeting the payments on the first car he bought with his own money — a 1929 Ford Roadster — his father lent him the money. "That car was the pride of Ivydale," Ferrell recalls. "There was nothing else around like it."

Shortly after enlisting in the military in 1942, Ferrell attended the Navy School of Photography at Pensacola, Florida, in what would be his only formal training in his craft. He must have been, as he once described one of his colleagues at the *Gazette*, "a promising young prospect." His duty stations included Guam and Pearl Harbor, where he arrived in autumn 1944. His brothers — Virgil, Dallas,

and Darris — also served in WWII, and all survived.

The Rolleiflex, an excellent German camera, eventually replaced the Speed Graphic of Ferrell's early days. Its top unfolded and the photographer peered through the opening to "frame" his subject. It was with a Rolleiflex that Ferrell made his picture of Kennedy speaking in the rain at the West Virginia centennial celebration.

Then came the 35mm Nikon, a Japanese camera that Ferrell was using when he retired, and is still using. The current technological rage is the digital camera, which photographers at Charleston Newspapers have been using exclusively since January 2000. Ferrell has resisted digital technology with a passion, just as he resists pumping his own gas at a service station.

With self-service gasoline stations sprouting up everywhere, his obstinacy could be a problem, except that he buys his gas exclusively at Bruce Cunningham Motors near his home in Ivydale, where they pump it for him. He never drives farther than a full tank of gas from Bruce Cunningham's will take him and bring him back home, unless somebody else is with him to do the pumping.

"I can't recall ever pumping my own gas," he says. "One time, my tank was on empty, and I stopped at a Go-Mart in Gassaway. It was raining. A pleasant young lady who worked there saw that I was having a problem, and she came out holding an umbrella and volunteered to pump the gas for me. That was the only time I've ever even tried."

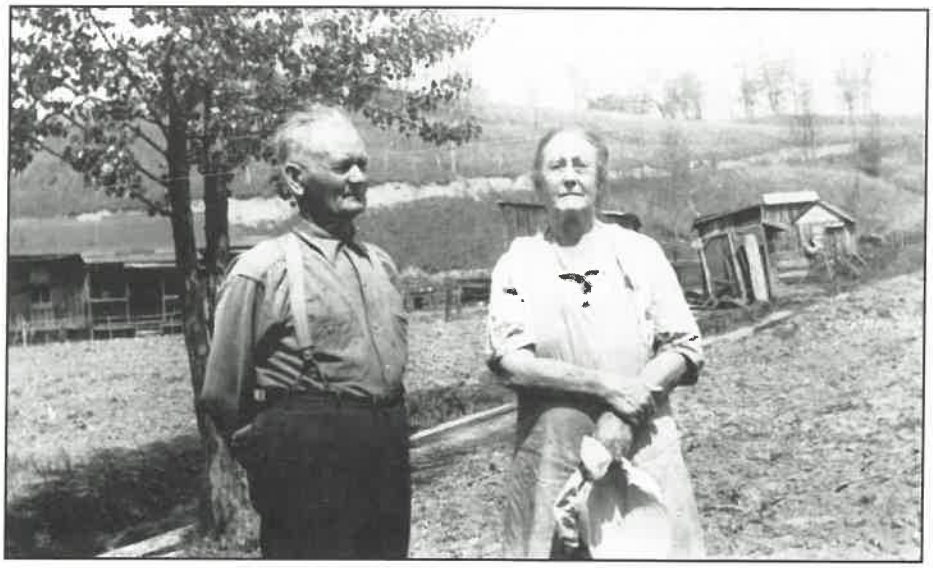
Bruce Cunningham is a retired teacher at Clay County High School, where he taught social studies for over three decades. He considers Ferrell a Clay County treasure, not only because of his photography but because he still gets excited when he sees a picture possibility. "He came to the station one day this past winter," says Bruce, "and saw our packaged-ice container covered with snow. Immediately he became enthused and took a picture, which appeared in the *Clay [County] Free Press*."

Ferrell and the *Free Press* go back more than 60 years, beginning during the time he was employed at the Clay County courthouse. He had a few pictures published in the hometown paper, including the January 13, 1941, inauguration of Matthew M. Neely as West Virginia's 21st governor.

Ferrell eventually bought an interest in the *Free Press*, and ran it jointly for a time with Dove Johnson, who had inherited her late husband's share in the paper. Ferrell sold his interest when he went to work for the *Gazette*, but his association with Dove continued. They began dating when their paths crossed again at a political meeting in Charleston, and they were married in 1961 at a little

you could ever ask for to sleep on. She made it herself from feathers and goose down that she saved. It also had a certain smell that I'll never forget."

Alyce's father started out trying to farm but found the ground too poor and rocky to raise enough food to sustain a growing family. However, he was a man of many talents: today a stonemason, tomorrow a union pipe fitter, and the day after a bible preaching minister. These were a few of the positions he held that enabled him to raise a family of seven children through hard times. Living off the land involved other important skills, as well.



Grandparents Andrew Jackson and Ellen O'Dell at their Clay County homestead. Photographer and date unknown.

"Living in the country, and knowing which things are edible and which ones aren't, put many a meal on our table back then," Alyce recalls. "The boys — Larry, Ronnie, and Mark — were excellent hunters. Mother knew a dozen ways to fix groundhog, and they were all good.

"The girls — Mary Ellen, Jeannie, Susie, and I — were avid mushroom hunters. There wasn't a thing growing that we didn't have a name for and knew how to use. All of the mushroom knowledge was passed down through our ancestral heritage, but we've done our share of experimenting along the way, too. I still love to hunt mushrooms to this very day. Sometimes our salads come from right out of the front yard — but it's been a while.

Alyce and her husband, Criss, built this home 16 years ago on the spot where her grandparents' house once stood.

"My mother was really the brains of the family," Alyce continues. "When I looked her square in the eyes, I could almost see the wheels turning. She had a plan for living that she made us kids stick to. Mom taught us girls how to cook and clean and keep house, while Daddy taught all the boys how to hunt and farm. They both drilled it into us kids about always being honest and truthful in everything. Mom and Daddy's love for God and church saw us through some pretty awful times."

Living with a preacher for a father, Alyce's Christian life developed early. Her biblical schooling helped develop the values that she holds dearly today. Going to church on Sunday is a practice that she and her husband, Criss, try to stick to as closely as possible.

"God was surely watching out for me the day Criss came into my life," she recalls. "I was 19 years old when we met at a church-sponsored weenie roast at Hansford Fork. He kept picking me as his partner in the ring games we were playing. Four in the Boat, Miss Molly Brown, Old Dusty Miller — not many people remember those games today, but they were

loads of fun if you could get enough kids together. I went to the party with another boy, but after I met Criss, I don't remember what happened to him. I was completely thrilled with Criss. I didn't find out about it until later, but he went home that night and told his mother that he had met the girl he was going to marry. We met in early August and were married on December 24, 1954.

"After we were married, we went to Ohio and lived with Criss' brother for a short while because [Criss] could get work there. But we both got so homesick we couldn't stand it. It seemed the longer we stayed, the louder we could hear these hills calling us back home. We were both just young and scared mostly. But once we moved back home, it didn't take us long to put down some permanent roots.

"Criss was a heavy-equipment operator for years and worked as a union pipe fitter for Carbide for 10 years. His last job was working as a foreman for West Virginia Paving, until he had a heart attack in 1997 that forced him to take early retirement. He's truly a jack-of-all-trades, having learned so much from the things we've done during our lifetime. He still stays as active as possible around here, helping the boys and the neighbors from time to time. I keep waiting for him to slow down so I can catch up, but that doesn't seem likely to happen anytime soon."

Things haven't always gone quite so smoothly for Alyce during her active life. In 1987, she was hospitalized and lost a kneecap after tripping over an unburied gas line and falling over a short embankment to a cement sidewalk below. She had been feeding her son's pet rabbit in the dark when the accident occurred.

"The doctor said it looked like a smashed cookie, and, oh, did it hurt! I lost the whole kneecap," Alyce says. "It doesn't hurt much today, but I can really tell it when I go to pick beans or hunker down to do something low on the ground."

In December 2004, she was knocked down from behind by the family dog, a playful border collie, breaking her ankle in two places.

In 1991, the same year she started writing her column for *The Charleston Gazette*, Alyce suffered a broken back while riding an ATV with her 13-year-old grandson. She had ridden with her husband many times before, but she found that chasing across the rugged hills with a youngster at the wheel was a completely different story.

"He wouldn't slow down for love nor money — the faster the better," Alyce recalls. "We finally went across one hump of dirt so fast that it made me lose my grip and threw me up into the air. I landed so hard on the seat that my back received two compression fractures. That one put me in the hospital for a while, and I had to wear a brace for the longest time. It still bothers me when the rains come and my rheumatism starts sending out weather signals.

"I was always a tomboy at heart. When I had the ATV accident, I was afraid I would lose my grandmother image with my reading fans. But it didn't make any difference in the least. Most folks realize that 'Granny' likes to have fun, too."

That accident happened during a time when she was working as a lab technician in the family asphalt business in Nicholas County. It was her job to make sure the asphalt quality met state standards. Alyce and Criss were staying in Nicholas County through the week and coming home to Ovapa for the weekends.

When it came time to harvest their garden, a lot of the produce went back to Nicholas County on the return trip, where Alyce would preserve the corn and beans in between running samples on the asphalt.

"We were busier than a blacksnake's tail back then," she recalls. "I don't know how we got it all done. Criss was working his butt off running the plant and keeping up with the orders, and I did all the process sampling along with canning everything I could get my hands on. We were up to our ears in work back then.

"By then, all six kids were raised and had lives of their own, so it was back

Alyce and her siblings in about 1947. They are, clockwise from the left, Jeannie, Larry, Mark, Alyce, Ronnie, Mary Ellen, and baby Susie. Photographer unknown.

Alyce works at her computer in a well-lit corner of her home. This is where she does most of her writing.

to just Criss and me. But you know, old habits are always the hardest to die out. We couldn't raise a garden and then just stand back and watch it all go to ruin. So we'd take it with us to the plant and bring it all back again in jars on the weekends."

The six kids — Michael, Patricia, Kevin, Andy, Matthew, and Crystal — are the proud parents of Alyce's 22 grandchildren: 11 boys and 11 girls. They, in turn, are the parents of her 13 great-grandchildren. All her children have made their homes in close proximity except Crystal, who married and moved to North Carolina.

"Almost everyone in this holler refers to me as 'Mommaw,'" Alyce says. "My kids live behind me, across the road from me, and just down the holler from me. And Criss and I have adopted everyone else, so what more could a mother ask? Even now, since Criss has retired, we still spend most of our time helping our kids. A lot of mornings, the 'breakfast bunch' will come to our house to have my biscuits, gravy, and fried apples to

Alyce Faye and Criss Bragg at the wedding of their daughter, Patty, in 2006. Alyce and Criss were married in 1954. Photographer unknown.

get the day started right. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't get to see some of them almost every day. If you ask me, this is the way God intended for a family to be."

In many of Alyce's columns she mentions a place called Pilot Knob. It's recognized as one of Clay County's tallest peaks, and it can be seen by looking straight up the hollow behind Alyce's home. In winter, snow hangs on at the top of the mountain well after it has melted in the lower elevations below. It's the first place that catches the sun in the morning, and the last to turn it loose in the evenings.

"It sits there like it's framed in a picture in my back yard," she says. "It's really beautiful to see when the first snows come in the early winter. It looks like a big ice-cream cone when it's covered in white. My daddy used to predict the weather by watching the clouds over Pilot Knob. When we were all kids, we would sometimes climb to the top of the mountain to see the view from there and look for arrowheads. You can see for miles in every direction from the top. There isn't much that grows up there except for a few small scrub bushes right on the very top."

Alyce Faye, as most people call her, is the author of two published books — *This Holler Is My Home* and *Homesick For the Hills* — and is currently working on a third book. She continues to write weekly columns, and her popularity is still increasing. Alyce is still bombarded with e-mails and phone calls from her devoted fans and spends many hours every week trying to provide answers to the countless questions posed by her readers.

"If I had my way, everyone out there would be calling me their Mommaw, and I would love them back just as much," Alyce says.

"You wouldn't think that much ever happens in a little holler like the one where we live. But I've been writing my column now for 25 years, and I've yet to run out of new material to write about," she says. "Life is so beautiful if you stay as close to nature as possible. I thank God for the way He has let me live my life, and I thank Him for giving me the talent to reach out and touch other people the way I have through writing. I've made so many friends through people who have identified with my column, and I've enjoyed it so much that I'm going to pursue it as long as possible. If I had my way, everyone out there would be calling me their Mommaw, and I would love them back just as much."


Criss Bragg, leaning against a truck, and Alyce's brother Larry, at left, operate a small sawmill, just to keep busy.

GEORGE DAVID BEGLER, a resident of Roane County, was born and raised in Clendenin. He retired from Appalachian Power in 2003. George has published articles in *Mountainechoes* and the *Spencer Times Record* and is at work on his second novel. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

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

MY HOME

By Alyce Faye Bragg

The old Jenny Lind house where I grew up was like many of the country houses of my generation. It never saw a lick of paint, and the weather-beaten boards had turned a silvered gray. It boasted two porches. On the front porch hung a handmade swing and a couple of split-bottom chairs. Woodbine grew thickly up the porch posts and shaded those who came in to "sit for a spell."

Daddy loved the old-fashioned pink-and-white rambler roses, and he grew masses of them beside the house. They climbed up the bedroom wall in front of the house and draped over the trellis in front. In summer, we girls decorated our mud cakes with the small roses.

The back porch contained a gasoline-powered Maytag washing machine and banisters to hold sundry items, such as the zinc washpan. There was a handy towel on a nail right above it.

The ceilings were high in the "front" room, and the walls were covered with heavy Wallrite paper — always in shades of dull gray or blue. The floor was narrow matched floorboards with a hump in the middle of the room where the rock foundation had sunk into swampy ground. It made a perfect place for little boys to run their toy cars downhill.

The house was heated with open gas stoves, giving off a faint odor of unburned gas. We never had electricity in the house until I was 10 years old. Gas mantles lit our rooms at night. We proudly owned a gas Servel refrigerator, which served us faithfully. I remember the crocks of milk and real country butter that were kept cold there.

We had a big homemade table and a bench behind it that overflowed with tow-haired children at mealtime. The table was covered with cheerful red-and-white checkered oilcloth, and 11 of us (including Grandpa) gathered around it.

Of course there was no indoor plumbing, and we carried water from the pitcher pump that was installed in the nearby Virginian Gas & Oil Company office yard. It was my brothers' chore to carry the water to the house in zinc water buckets, but sometimes we girls would be pressed into duty. I can remember slopping water down the side of my leg on a winter day — unforgettable!

Then there was the old country staple called the outdoor toilet. We called it the "Johnny house," and Grandpa called it the "backhouse." Whatever it was called, it was a necessary part of our country life. There have been songs, poems, and rhapsodies written about this humble building. We needed it.

This might seem like a hard and cheerless way of life, but this was not so. In this simple house there were love, happiness, contentment, and security. There were babies, laughter, abundant food, and faith that God was taking care of us.

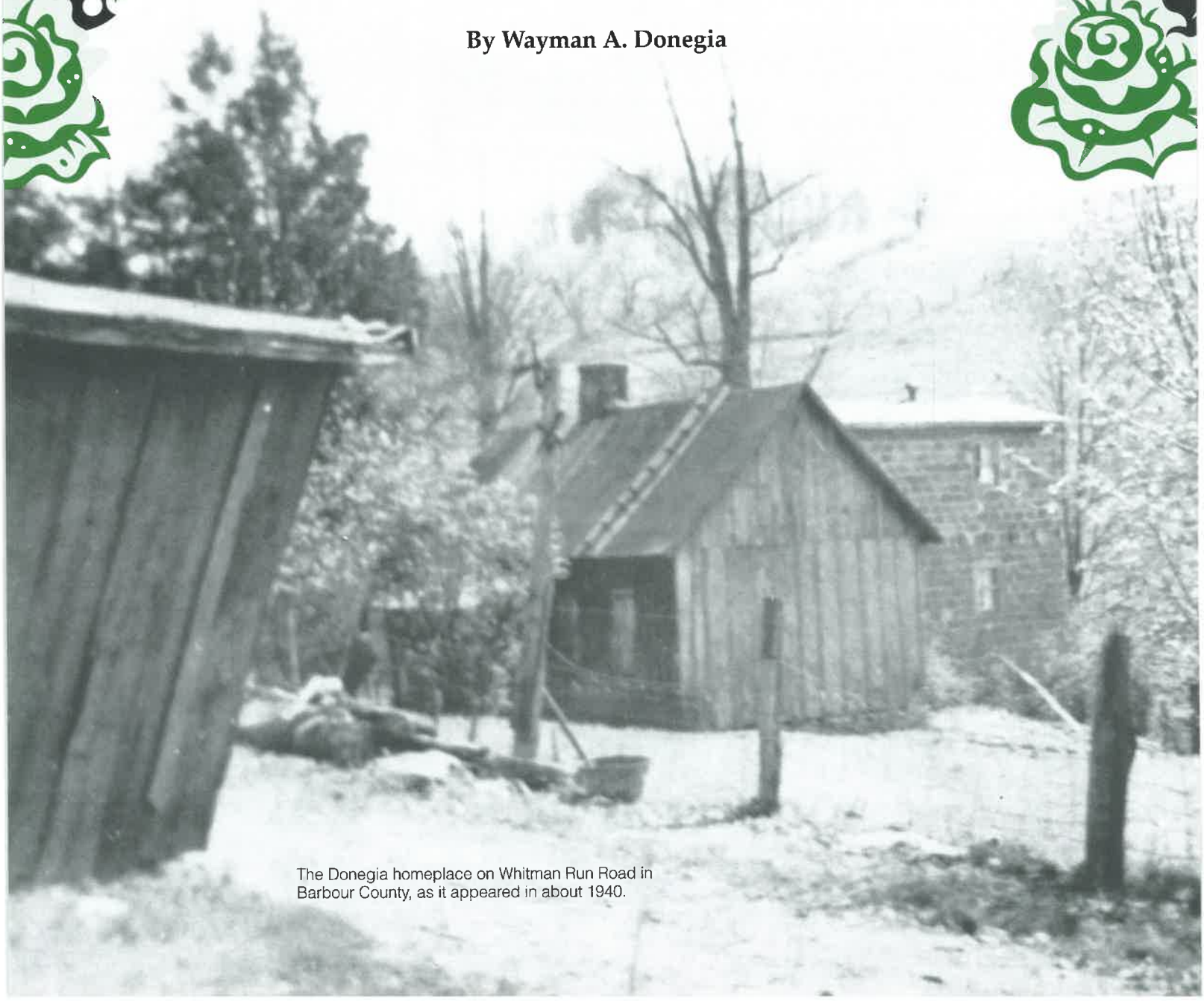
These are the memories that time cannot erase.

We are grateful to Alyce Faye Bragg for sharing this previously unpublished sample column, written in April 2007. —ed.

Alyce Faye Bragg at her writing station. Undaunted by technology, Alyce uses this modern equipment to write her popular columns and books about country living. Photograph by Michael Keller.

How We Fed Ourselves Back Then

By Wayman A. Donegia



The Donegia homeplace on Whitman Run Road in Barbour County, as it appeared in about 1940.

Eating Well in Barbour County

When the Great Depression brought the country almost to a standstill, many found themselves living with very little. When my dad lost his job in the shops for the Western Maryland Railroad, we moved to a rental farm in Barbour County. I was born there in 1928. Soon afterwards, Dad got a bonus from the government for being in World War I. With this money, he bought about 40 acres of land from my grandpa on Whitman Run Road. This land had a three-room box house — what some called a planked-up-and-down house — a granary, and a chicken house. We soon found that if you had a few acres of land and you worked from daylight until dark, you could live.

When I was very young, Dad, with the help of neighbors, built a two-story log barn. Selected oak trees were cut and hauled to the barn site. They were then sorted according to size. Notches were cut in the logs to make the corners fit, and a foot adz was used to make them even on the top and bottom. As the log barn grew in size, heavy poles were laid from the ground to the top of the last log, and men would roll the new log in place.

When we got to the top of the barn loft, a short wall was built on the high side and a rough lumber roof was added and covered with v-crimp metal roofing. Later, sheds were built onto the sides of this structure to house more animals. Cows and horses were kept in the bottom of this barn, and hay was stored in the loft.

Besides cows and horses, we always had hogs we raised for pork and lard. These were fed grass and food scraps in the summer, also a lot of garden weeds they liked. In the fall, scrap apples and corn were fed to them to make them fat for butchering, about Thanksgiving time.

When the hogs were butchered, the ham shoulders and bacon were treated with Morton salt and laid aside to cure. Pork loin was cut up and canned. A lot of the lean meat scraps were used to make sausage. It was ground on a hand sausage grinder. After the sausage patties were fried, they were put in half-gallon jars and canned. Other parts of this lean meat were cooked and shredded up. With raisins, apples, spices, and sugar, they were made into mincemeat and canned. This always made one of my favorite pies.

The fat from butchering was put into a large iron kettle with a little fire underneath. After the lard was melted, the really nice white lard on top was dipped off and put in stone containers to be used for frying and shortening for pastry, biscuits, bread, pies, and cakes. Pork rinds were rendered, the lard was saved, and the pork rinds made a nice snack.

We were lucky to have what was left of an old orchard. With careful trimming of the trees, we were able to get many, many bushels of apples every fall.

Dad built a dry house, which was a building about eight feet square. It had a small door in one corner, and in the middle was a small wood-burn-

Author Wayman Donegia, Jr., at right, with brother Sherwood, late 1940's.

ing stove. All around the sides were shelves about eight inches wide and about a foot apart. These shelves were covered with paper, and small slices of apple were spread out on the paper. A small fire was kept in the stove, and in two or three days the apples were dry. This process was started over, and a new batch of apple slices were put on the shelves to dry.

One year, we dried 40 gallons of apples. They were stored in a 50-gallon wooden barrel. These made great pies, or sometimes they were cooked in water with sugar added for a fruit at mealtime. A bag of dried apples made a great trail mix to carry with you when you were out in the field.

We also made a lot of apple butter. This was made in a large brass or copper kettle outside, over an open fire. Apples to be dried or to be used for apple butter were both processed about the same way: A sledload of apples would be brought to the house. After they were sorted, the smoothest apples would be peeled with an old-fashioned apple peeler. Then everyone who was big enough to handle a knife safely finished peeling the apples, cut them in quarters, cut out the core, and cut them up into the size needed to either dry or be used for apple butter.

Apples for apple butter were put in a large kettle with just a little water. A small fire was placed under the kettle. These apples had to be stirred constantly with an special paddle. Sugar was added later. These were cooked until they were the right thickness. We made many gallons of this every year, usually stored in stone jars.

We stored other apples for fresh apples. These were put in an enclosure we called the apple cave. This was a trench dug in the ground about two feet deep, four feet wide, and six feet long. This dugout had wooden sides and a steep roof made of wood. Dirt was piled on top of this for insulation and to keep the apples dry. It had an opening in the front with a heavy insulated door. A lot of wheat straw was put on the bottom of this cave. Then, many bushels of blemish-free apples were placed on the straw. More straw was placed on top before the door was closed.

Almost all of the cave apples were of a variety called Waldour. They were really good keepers, and we usually had fresh apples until Yellow Transparents were big enough to pick in early summer. We sometimes had a few winter apples, also called Blacktwig and Northern Spy.

Another method of winter storage was to dig holes maybe a foot deep and four feet wide in a circle. These were dug in a well-drained location. Some holes were used to store potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, rutabagas, and carrots. Wheat straw was put in the bottoms of the holes, then the vegetables piled on top. Then more straw, finally covered by dirt in a cone-shaped mound. On warm days in the winter, a hole would be dug in the side of the dirt mound and a few weeks supply of the contents removed. Straw and dirt

would be replaced to once again prevent freezing.

Chickens and turkeys were a supply of meat and eggs. In the spring, Mom ordered about 200 day-old chicks. She kept a little heat in the building she kept the chicks in, because it was early spring and always cool at night. She slept on a cot in this building to keep an eye on the chicks and on the heat. She said her clue when to leave the chicks on their own was when they were old enough to fly up on the cot she slept on.

Young roosters were dressed and sold to customers in town when they were about two pounds. These were always called fryers. The older hens were sold in the fall. We always had eggs for sale, more in the warmer months than in the winter.

We raised about 50 head of turkey each year. Eggs were collected from the turkey nests in the spring and put under chicken hens that were beginning to brood chicken eggs. We removed the chicken eggs and put as many turkey eggs under each hen, whatever they could cover. When turkeys hatched, they were put in a pen with a wire bottom to keep them clean. They were kept there until they feathered out, then they were left to free range on the farm.

It was a sight to see 40 or 50 turkeys fly off a hill when it was feeding time in the evening. Most of these turkeys were sold to customers in town at Thanksgiving. We had only a couple of days to get these turkeys dressed and delivered. Sometimes it was almost an all-night job. We always kept three or four hens and a tom, to start over the next spring.

A patch of sorghum cane was planted every year. In the fall, the blades, or leaves, were stripped from the cane stalks. It was then cut, the seed heads removed, and the stalks placed on a sled and hauled to the cane mill site. The mill had three steel rollers driven by gears, powered by a long beam pulled by a horse. This made the horse walk in a circle. The operator sat inside this circle and fed the cane stalks into the rollers. Buckets caught the juice as it was squeezed out. When a bucket was full, it was carried to the evaporator pan, and an empty bucket was set back in its place.

The pan we boiled the molasses in was about six feet long, three feet wide, and about a foot deep. This sat over a trench about two feet wide. When the pan was full of juice, a small fire was built under the pan. As it began a slow boil, foam raised to the top of the pan. This foam had to be skimmed off. The juice continued to boil until the liquid was thick enough to be called molasses. The fire was let to go out and the molasses dipped out and put in containers for storage. The blades from the cane were used to feed cattle, and the seed heads made great chicken feed.

In the winter or real early spring, we tapped sugar maple trees to make maple syrup. We had about a dozen large trees. We drilled holes in the trees and drove a spile (spout) in the hole, then placed a bucket under this to catch the maple sap. Some of the spiles were store-bought metal, and others were made from wood from a sumac. These were fashioned to the appropriate size. They had a large pith in the center, which was punched out with a piece of heavy wire. This made a passage for the sap to flow through. When the buckets were full, they were carried to a central location and put in a large kettle. With a little fire underneath, this was boiled until the syrup became thick enough to use. Sometimes syrup would be boiled down until all you had left was maple sugar, almost like fudge.

We had a few hives of bees. This made us some honey for extra sweets. In the late summer, we would watch for signs of wild swarms that had made a hive in a hollow tree. If we were lucky enough to find one of these, we would cut the tree in the fall at night and remove all the honey. We always got a few stings doing this.

One way we located bee trees was to find a source of water with a little mud or sand at its

Wayman Donegia, Sr., wearing a dark sweater, was a veteran of World War I who used his military service bonus to purchase 40 acres in Barbour County during the late 1920's. He is shown here in the mid-1940's with three of his sons. They are, from the left, Sherwood, Junior, and Charles.

Students at the local one-room normal school in 1941. Our author, Wayman Donegia, Jr., is in the middle, wearing a tie and suspenders (see arrow).

edge. If we found where bees were getting water, they usually flew in a straight line to their hive. This took a lot of patience and quick eyesight, but it always helped.

Blueberries and huckleberries were picked by the gallon. On the brow of the hill east of our house was about a half acre with many berries. They grew in bunches from 10 to 20 feet across. Many of these branches had a little different shade of blue — some shiny, some dusty-looking, and one small bunch almost white with a pink side. We canned gallons of these berries. Every year, we sold a few gallons to someone we called the ice-cream man. He drove the ice-cream delivery truck out of Elkins. I don't know what he did with the berries, but we sold him some every year for several years.

Many gallons of blackberries were picked and canned every year. These, like the blueberries and huckleberries, came in various shapes and flavors — some large and almost round, some long and slim and very sweet — but they all tasted like blackberries, which has always been one of my favorite fruits. We also had a patch of raspberries. We picked and canned these and made a lot of raspberry jam. This was great on a hot biscuit.

A little patch of corn was raised for meal corn. I think the name of this corn was hickory cane. After the ears were allowed to dry, we shelled about a bushel at a time and put it in a meal bag. Many times I have taken this to the mill on horseback. The miller took one gallon of corn from each bushel. This was his toll for grinding the corn into cornmeal.

In the fall, I can remember us getting wheat from Grandpa and taking it in a buggy to Fisher's mill, where it was ground into flour. This flour was not real white, more like whole wheat flour, because this mill could not remove all the hearts from the wheat.

We also raised a patch of buckwheat. The buckwheat blooms in the fall furnished our honey bees with a lot of food for the winter. After the buckwheat was ripe, it was cut with a grain cradle and stacked in shocks. We then had it threshed. Later, the grain would be took to the mill to make buckwheat flour. This made great buckwheat cakes for breakfast.

We always raised a big garden. Gallons and gallons were canned in quart and half-gallon jars — tomatoes, beans, corn, peas, and peppers. A lot of beans were let dry on the vine, then they were shelled and stored for winter. Dill pickles were made from cucumbers. Mom always made sweet pickles from small cucumbers called sweet jerkins [or gherkins]. She made a lot of these, and I thought they were almost as good as candy.

After onions were dug in the fall, the tops were tied in bundles and hung over a wire like a clothesline. They dried out and were preserved for a long time. These, of course, had to

Three of the Donegia boys during their teen years, in the early 1950's. From the left, they are Sherwood, Charles, and Wayman, Jr.

Author Wayman Donegia, Jr., posed for this recent photograph with an old grain cradle. He recalls using this tool when he was 13 years old and has since donated it to the Adaland Museum in Philippi.

be kept inside to prevent freezing.

We raised a lot of cabbage. We made cole slaw and fried cabbage in the summer. In the fall, several select heads of cabbage were used to make sauerkraut. The big heads of cabbage would be quartered and cut on a kraut cutter, which cut the cabbage into small shreds. This shredded cabbage was put into a 20-gallon jar — a layer of cabbage, a lot of salt, another layer of cabbage, and more salt — until the jar was almost full. Then a white cloth was placed on top of the cabbage, then a round, flat stone we had saved for many years was put on top for a weight. The kraut, when used in winter, had to be rinsed in water a few times to get rid of the salty taste. I always liked sauerkraut with a lot of things, but it was really good with spare ribs, potatoes, and cornbread.

Two snack foods we raised were peanuts and popcorn. We usually planted about 100 hills of peanuts in a couple of rows in the garden. In the fall, before the frost, the vines would be pulled up and laid to dry. After the vines dried, we would pull off the peanuts and store them in a place until the hulls dried. Then we could hull them out and roast them, or they could be roasted in the shell.

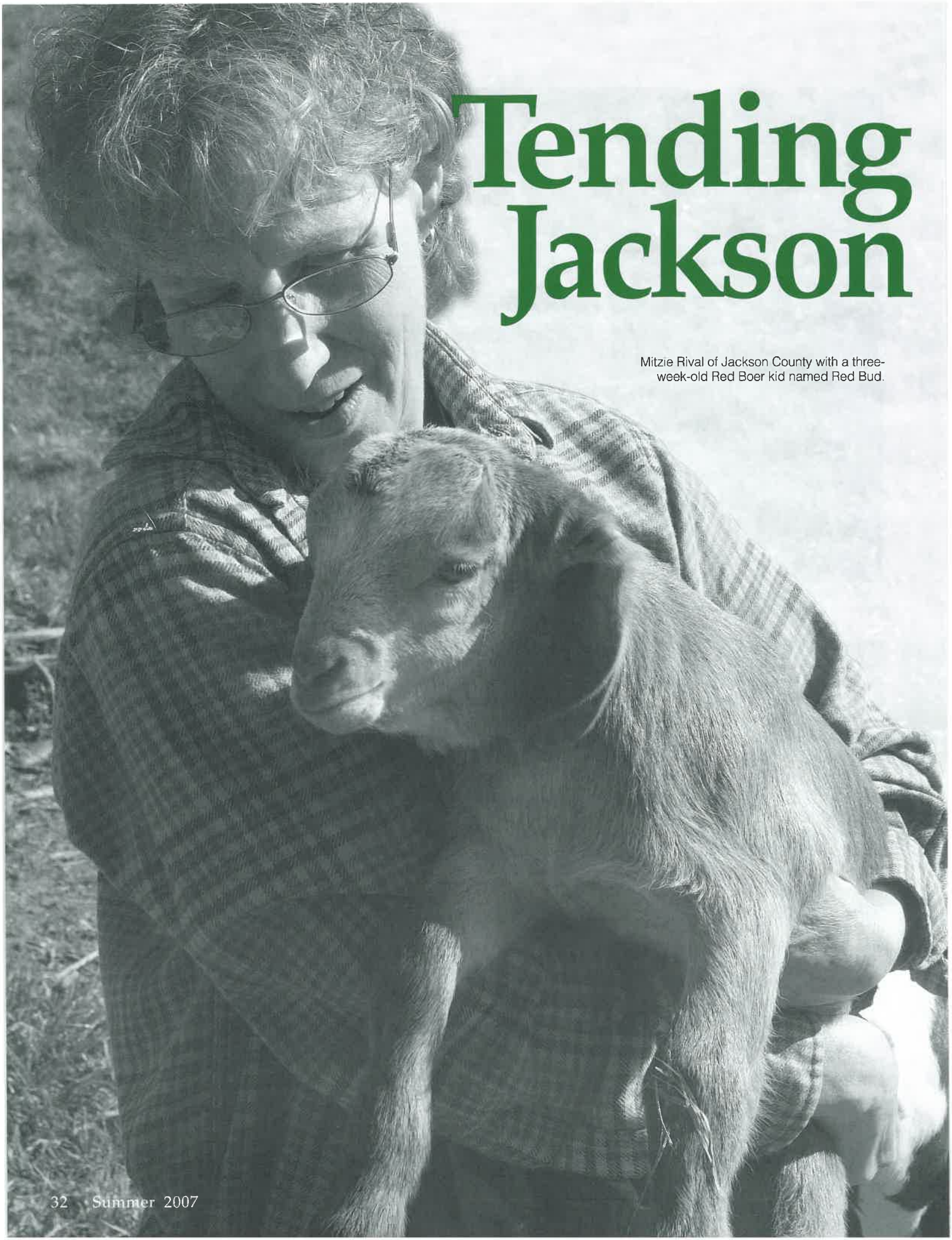
We always planted popcorn away from sweet corn or field corn. Dad always said it might cross-pollinate and not make good popcorn. We usually planted a few rows on the edge of the potato patch. We shucked this popcorn on the stalk when it was dry and stored it in a secure place away from mice and bugs. When it was dried out good, we would shell a few ears and pop it in an old popcorn popper. This was a pan about 12 inches long, by eight inches wide, and about three inches deep. It had a metal sliding lid with air holes in it and a twisted-wire handle about 30 inches long with a wooden grip on the end.

A good fire would be going in the old wood cookstove, and, with some shelled popcorn in the popcorn popper, it would be slid back and forth on the top of the stove until the corn was popped. Add a little butter and salt to this, and you had a nice popcorn snack. Sometimes Mom would make up a mixture with molasses and put it over the popcorn to make a sweet snack. This was real good, but it got your fingers sticky.

Looking back as to how much work it was to raise, prepare, and preserve food on the farm, we did well to feed a family year-round without much being bought from grocery stores. We did not do this all by ourselves. The Good Lord helped with the earth, rain, and sunshine. It would be a lot of work to try and do this again, but the food tasted great and I really miss the homegrown meals.

WAYMAN A. DONEGIA was born and raised in Barbour County and graduated from Philippi High School. He has worked on farms, cutting timber, as a beekeeper, running a tugboat, driving a truck, and in a paper mill. Wayman retired after 25 years as an electrician for General Motors in Dayton, Ohio. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Tending Jackson



Mitzie Rival of Jackson County with a three-week-old Red Boer kid named Red Bud.

the Herd in County

By Carolyn Harmon
Photographs by Michael Keller

Down to the edge of the world, where winding roads disappear into cavernous cliffs and shady Jackson County hillsides, at the bottom of Fisher's Ridge, near Kenna, lives Mitzie Rival — and her goats.

Mitzie raises a whole herd, but some of them are missing. They went wandering along the ridge earlier, led by their fearless leader, Ollie, a 150-pound Great Pyrenees livestock guardian dog. This, I learn, is a daily occurrence. But as the evening progresses, worry sets in.

"Right now I've been selling them because I can't keep up with them," Mitzie says. "Currently I have six that are barely one month, 10 babes that were born in January, and 12 adults counting the yearlings — I still have too many.

"I have one buck, a Boer, which is a meat goat that turned one in March. I use him for my Nubians, which are floppy long-eared milk goats. I borrowed him from a neighbor."

Mitzie started crossing the Nubians with the Boers to sell to make money for hay. She budgets $80 per month for grain and $375 for hay per year.

"My first generation is all Nubians," she says. "I bred all the Nubians to a purebred Boer buck. I then bred them all back to a purebred Boer. So the babies this year are 75 percent Boer. I keep the nannies to breed back to purebred Boer."

Mitzie says the Nubian buck who fathered her first generation was given to her by a friend in Doddridge County who had too many bucks. The buck's house is separate. They come into season for a long time and will breed right up to summer.

Mitzie's love for goats was obvious as we hiked up the hill toward the barn to feed them.

Ollie, a four-year-old, 150-pound Great Pyrenees livestock guardian dog, lives with the goats and goes where they go. Here, goats and dog greet the day.

Mitzie Rival and her Goats

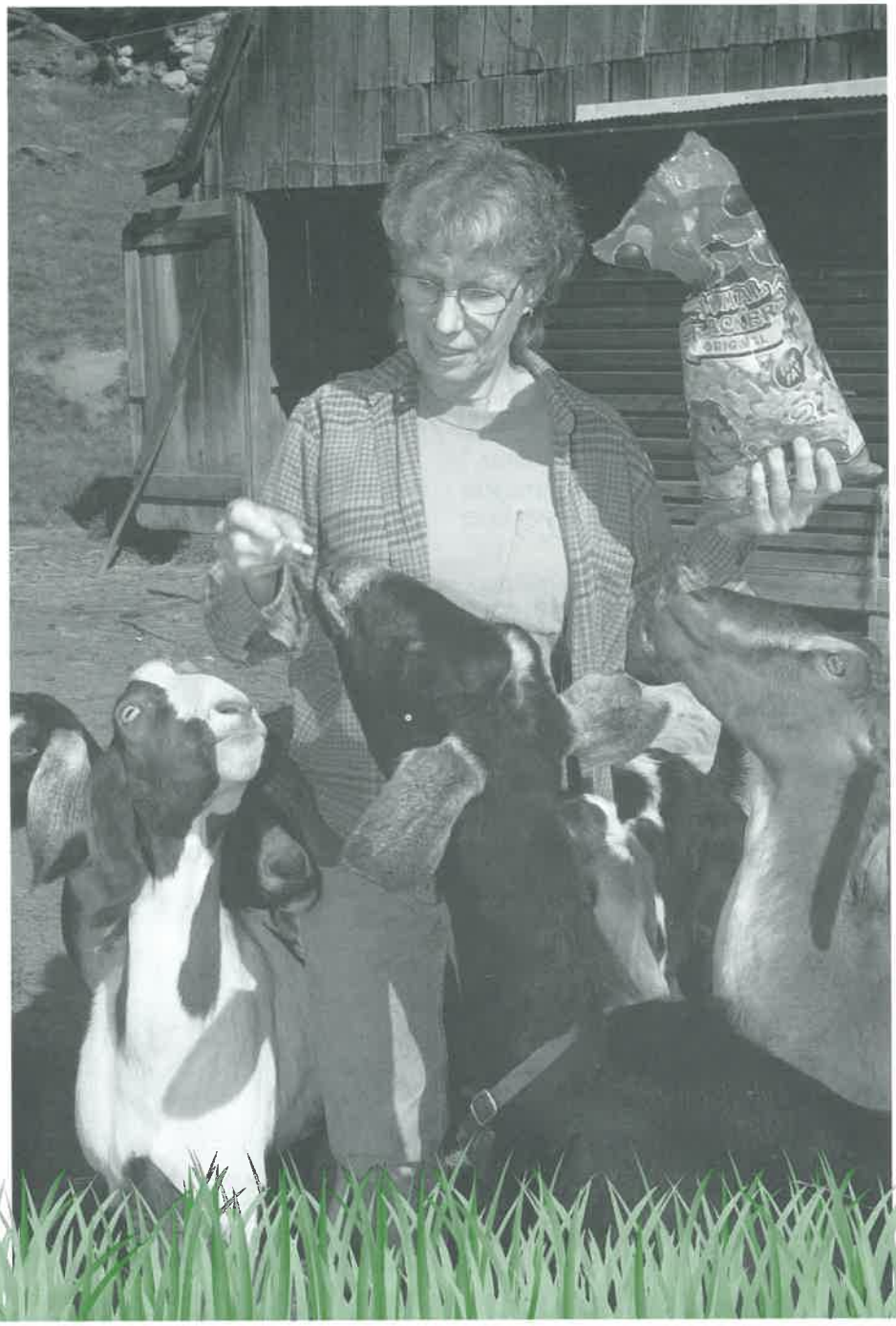
"I know, you poor little things are starving — your momma went off and left you, didn't she? Well, there's nothin' I can do about it — I'm a-comin'," Mitzie replies to the babes crying in the barn.

Mitzie feeds them buckeye goat food — a blend of corn, alfalfa, molasses, and wheat. To those that are still milking she gives a higher-quality horse feed.

"The goats need minerals, too, or they get foot rot," she says. "They have a mineral house which contains calcium, zinc, selenium, and iodine."

Mitzie moved to the farm with her parents and siblings in 1951. She remembers the first two goats that came to them.

Snack time makes Mitzie very popular, as she gives her herd a treat of animal crackers. The large black goat at center, a nine-year-old Nubian doe named Moses, was the first goat in Mitzie's herd. She was raised as a 4-H project by Mitzie's daughter Mindi.



"My daddy, [James Ray], gave me the buck. I named him Billy. And my brother got the nanny," says Mitzie. "My father brought them in the early part of spring, and the nanny's ears were frozen. All the other goats sucked on her ears. It was so cold that they just froze off.

"We only had one buck, and he was mean. Daddy had to board up the chicken farm door to keep the cats from getting in, and I was bendin' over that board one day. Old Buck, he bucked me over that board. I'll never forget it. I would stay away from the goats because of him. We had them for years, until one day Dad sold off his herd.

"We probably had 20 goats. Daddy would buy them — they would have babies, and then he would sell them. Mommy milked the goats, and the kids drank the milk."

Mitzie's mother, Edna Ray, was raised on the farm, and she helped her uncle build the existing house. Edna laid the foundation, Mitzie says. Mitzie's grandmother was raised in Middle Fork, about two miles down the holler, and her father was born somewhere close by.

"Mom worked very hard. We worked in the hayfield and the garden, raising our own food. It used to have corn, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, radishes, onions, green beans, and lettuce. She'd carry corn to the mill. She's still raisin' some of her own food," says Mitzie.

"I love this holler. I love the privacy — there's a freedom to it. I know layin' my head down, I never have to lock the doors."

Mitzie moved away from the farm for a while with different jobs and college. She earned an associate's degree in general technology at York Technical College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, with a major in heating and air-conditioning. She and her two girls would come back and visit

Short Branch, Jackson County, where Mitzie was raised and where she lives today. Her parents still live in the old family home, visible at left. Mitzie lives in the double-wide at center. The barn at right – home to the goat herd – was built in about 1940.

the farm during the summers.

"I've always loved animals, and for some reason goats have been the one thing I always go back to," Mitzie says. "They've always been here for me. People ask, 'Why in the world do you do that?' It's just an enjoyment. I thank God for it and my family and the land and the freedom I have to do it."

Mitzie's youngest daughter, Mindi, named all of the goats. She took the dairy goat project in 4-H. She chose this project because at the time she wasn't eating meat, and the dairy goat project was the only one where the animals were not sold. Some of the goats' names are Ada, Zeta, Moses, Obadiah, Gracie, Katrina, Susie Q, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, and one of Mitzie's favorites, Wobbly Hope.

"Wobbly Hope was born three years ago, when it was 16 degrees on top of the knob. I knew her mother was due. One evening, me and Ollie went looking, and Ollie led me to her mother. She had triplets. Wobbly Hope was the only one alive. The other two had frozen to death. When Mindi came home, I said, 'Keep her warm.' She still was so cold. [Mindi] laid her in the sun on the floor inside under glass, and by that evening Mindi had her up on her feet. She would walk so wobbly.

Tammy, a Boer doe, feeds her two young kids.

Mitzie's goat herd gathers around her weathered barn. At latest count, the herd numbered 20, including three sequestered bucks.

I normally don't name them, because I don't keep them," says Mitzie.

Mitzie's children are grown now. Misti, 24, lives in Morgantown where she is an apprentice chef. Mindi, 22, is a lance corporal at Fort Meade, Maryland. Neither one has plans of moving back to the farm.

But Mitzie is not without family. Her parents live on the farm with her, in a separate home. Mitzie's

Bubba, a stately, year-old purebred Boer buck and the father of Red Bud. To his right is Buster Brown, a Nubian buck. Mitzie's three bucks are kept in a pen, separate from the kids and females.

brother lives a couple of miles down the road. Her sister lives with her husband and two children up the ridge on their grandparents' dairy farm.

"They'll be the next 4-H generation," says Mitzie.

Mitzie currently works for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, paying providers. Between her job with the state and her job at home, she has no time for anything else. She has no plans to leave again and dreams of enclosing the front of her home in glass, so that the exquisite beauty that surrounds her is always in plain view.

"I don't know, it's just home," says Mitzie. "It's peaceful. When we were little, we roamed these hills like little banshees."

And so the goats have followed suit.

CAROLYN HARMON, a writer living in Charleston, was born in Heath, Ohio. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in journalism. Carolyn has published articles in *Graffiti*, the *State Journal*, and the *Lincoln Standard*. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Appalachian Goat Association

Goats have roamed the hills of West Virginia since the time of the earliest settlers and often are included in the stereotypical image of rural mountain life — unkempt, tin-can-eating critters with little practical value. In reality, goats are highly prized livestock and play an increasingly important role in West Virginia's agricultural landscape. It is estimated that there are some 1,400 goat farmers in West Virginia, raising more than 21,000 goats.

Dairy goats are historically the most common variety. Milk from these female goats — called does or nannies — is used for drinking, as well as for making soap, lotions, and a wide range of other valuable milk by-products. Other goats are kept for their meat and form the fastest-growing segment of the market. Goats can also serve as pack animals or can be raised for their fiber. Adult males, called bucks, are generally used for breeding. Young goats are called kids.

In 1992, the Appalachian Goat Association was formed to further the interests of goat farmers across West Virginia and neighboring states. The Association strives to improve the image of goats, educate people about the proper care and raising of goats, and develop an improved marketplace for goats and goat products. According to treasurer Teresa Freeman, there are currently 30 members of the Association, including Mitzie Rival, who serves as assistant secretary/treasurer.

Membership is open to anyone over the age of 18, and dues are $6 a year for individuals, $10 per couple. The group meets in Spencer the first Sunday of each month, beginning at 1:30 p.m. in the basement of the Spencer Presbyterian Church. For more information, visit http://members.aol.com/agagoat/club.html or phone (304)494-1255.

Mitzie Rival stands behind her parents, James and Edna Ray. James and Edna are quite involved in their daughter's goat operation, Mitzie tells us.

"Worth Weight in

Family Picnic and Safety Day in Red Jacket, Mingo County, was held from 1950 until 1955. All photographs courtesy of the author, photographers unknown.

Their Gold"

In 1946, my father, Joseph J. Plasky, was hired as Safety and Training Director for the Red Jacket Coal Company in Red Jacket, Mingo County. My family lived there for the next 10 years, and Red Jacket was the site of many memorable experiences for me as a child. Among the most enjoyable of these were the annual Family Picnic and Safety Day gatherings held in our coal camp each summer.

Recalling Red Jacket Safety Day

By Joe Plasky

The Red Jacket Coal Company was a subsidiary of the W.M. Ritter Lumber Company, which had mines in several places throughout southern West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. The Ritter Lumber Company had its main offices in Columbus, Ohio, where the founder, W.M. Ritter, made his home. Mr. Ritter was very involved in the day-to-day operations of the mines and was deeply concerned about treating each employee fairly and about creating a "family" atmosphere within his company.

Following World War II, many changes took place in the mining industry in our area. Local coal mines faced new challenges from abundant and cheap oil and gas, as well as the prospect of low-cost nuclear energy. Mines were still mostly of the manual method of production, which resulted in low productivity. The United Mine Workers of America had recently made major gains, and the union

The winning mine rescue team at Red Jacket in 1951 and 1952 was from Junior Mine. From the left, the team members are Lewis Simpkins (captain), Ed Simpkins, Nakomis Sloan, George Williamson, Jr., John Hailey, and Benny Chafin.

was growing in momentum. John L. Lewis and President Harry S. Truman were in constant battles, with neither side giving much quarter.

When my father was hired, it was hoped that he would improve safety for the miners at a lower cost to the company. His other duties included improving labor relations and training the miners in mechanization. The objectives of fostering a "family" organization and the encouragement and recognition of an improved mine safety program came together in the creation of the Red Jacket Coal Company Family Picnic and Safety Day. This idea was largely my father's, and he was the driving force behind its implementation.

The objectives of fostering a "family" organization and the encouragement and recognition of an improved mine safety program came together in the creation of the Red Jacket Coal Company Family Picnic and Safety Day.

Planning for the event was thorough and involved many committees. There was a general committee, plus committees in charge of games, parking, registration, entertainment, grounds, and prizes. The committee members included management, employees, and union representatives. There was a lot of coordination necessary as the mines were in different locations.

The place selected for Safety Day was the Red Jacket ballpark. This was not a full-sized ballpark as it was bordered by the railroad on the third-base side and a very steep hill for right field. The community building, grade school, and junior high buildings were also utilized.

At the time, I was in my teens and needed what spending money I could earn. So I asked to do the weed cutting to prepare the grounds. In those days, we did not have powered weed-cutting equipment, so this was my introduction to the use of a hand scythe. The scythe was just about as big as I was and required a lot of sweat and muscle to operate. It took me the better part of three days to clear the area. I was paid about $20, and I was proud to have mastered the operation of the scythe.

Red Jacket Vice President and General Manager W.M. Ritter addresses the crowd at Safety Day in 1951.

Other preparations were underway by the grounds committee to erect the speakers' and drink stands. These were constructed by the company's carpenters.

Perhaps one of the most important preparation items was to devise the mine rescue and first-aid problems for the teams to work during the contests. These had to be realistic problems that could be solved in the time allotted. State and federal mine inspectors developed these problems and, of course, kept them secret.

The door prizes to be given away were selected and donated by a joint committee of the union and the company. This cooperation was an indication of the "family spirit"

A mine rescue team brings an "injured" man out of the "mine," while the crowd and judges look on during Safety Day on August 4, 1951.

that was one of the purposes of the event.

The first Safety Day was held on August 5, 1950. Since Red Jacket did not have rail passenger service, the families from the other coal camps drove in. Parking was arranged on a slate pile beside the grade school building. The parking committee was hard-pressed to park all the incoming cars in this small area, but it was done.

The first featured event of the day was the mine rescue contest. This contest was one of my father's favorites, as he believed that every mine should have its own mine rescue team — he was close to achieving this goal within Red Jacket Coal. This contest was the showcase for the men who had spent their time in rescue training, which was extensive and strenuous.

The contest required the teams to wear full clothing and SCBA's (self-contained breathing apparatus). This attire was very hot to wear in the middle of summer as the contest was conducted above ground. Concern for the heat was the reason for the early morning start.

Author Joe Plasky on his sister's bicycle, enroute to another victory in the slow bicycle race in 1951. Joe dominated this event, he telis us.

It was a very exciting and serious event, with the teams always well-trained and very competitive. A replicated mine was identified on the ballfield by using ropes and lines to simulate rooms and entries. A fictitious accident or disaster prepared by the contest committee was given to each team captain. The captain and the team would determine a rescue or recovery plan that met the given situation, and then they would go about executing the plan.

The first part was the inspection of the equipment and preparation of their SCBA's and gear. The team would then enter the "mine" and

The competition was heated and hectic during this wheelbarrow race in 1950.

simulate their safety checks for gas and roof conditions as they proceeded to the affected area. I remember the use of a trailing rope to find their way out, should it become necessary.

A real hush fell over the entire crowd in awe and respect for the work these men were capable of doing.

Once they arrived at the area of the problem, the team would make an assessment and begin their work. They might be confronted with a roof fall, results of an explosion, or other disaster that required their expertise. While the teams were working on the problem, a group of judges from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and West Virginia Department of Mines would evaluate every move of each team member. By staying just outside the marked-off area, the judges could follow the teams as they entered the mine and moved in for the rescue. This added a level of excitement to see the teams in operation and their performances being evaluated by the experts.

The mine problems were announced to the crowd so they could better understand the work going on. When the teams were performing, a real hush fell over the entire crowd in awe and respect for the work these men were capable of doing. Timers clocked the teams during the simulation. While this contest was not a race, a part of each team's score was the time it required to perform the rescue. Here were a coal company, union miners, and government all working together to ensure Red Jacket had a highly qualified mine rescue team at each mine. Remember, this was the early 1950's, and this level of cooperation did not exist everywhere.

After the mine rescue contest, Safety Day was officially opened with prayer and welcoming remarks. The next events were the fun contests for the boys, girls, men, and women. A committee was in charge of the games, but the one person I remember best was Dick Grist. Dick was the company forester and a fine person who was also the Scoutmaster in Red Jacket. He always assumed the lead in the games, and his leadership assured a lot of participation.

The boys and girls' game I remember best of all was the slow bicycle race, as that was one I won most every year. The race course was a distance of about 100 feet over the ballpark infield, so it was on dirt. The object of the race was to take the longest time to go from start to finish. If your feet touched the ground, you were disqualified. My sister had a Schwinn bicycle with a spring on the front wheel. This allowed the bike to be moved up and down, making the bike move very slowly without using the pedals. But the best part of the bike was the tires, which had a 1½-inch-wide flat tread surface. This was really great for balancing. I have not seen one of those bikes since the '50's. I also have not heard of a slow bicycle race anywhere else.

The other events I remember for the boys were the 100-yard dash, three-legged race, wheelbarrow, and sack race. Contests for the girls were the 100-yard dash, sack race, and baseball throws. The bubble-gum blowing contest was mixed for the boys and girls.

The men had two contests: hog calling and horseshoe pitching. You had to live in the hollows to appreciate the seriousness of these events. Hog calling was an art form for all those who participated, but one man stood out each year. This man was Mr. Elias Sipple, and he had some voice. Some said he could be heard in Matewan, 15 miles away. He had suffered war injuries but not to his voice. Mr. Sipple relied mostly on volume, while other contestants used more words, with a singsong approach. This was a very difficult contest to judge.

Horseshoe pitching was as serious as hog calling. The coal camps were in very narrow hollows, so there was little land for ballfields and the like. Horseshoes did not require much flat land, thus people could enjoy this activity in their yards. There were many enthusiasts and very good pitchers. I remember the horseshoe pit we built along the edge of Mate Creek. We looked very hard to find just the right "blue clay" for the box. This clay allowed the horseshoes to slide properly to the peg. As a result,

1952 bubble-gum blowing champ Kenneth Dunton, from Keen Mountain.

Concentration was evident among the contestants at the women's nail-driving contest in 1951.

we had one of the better horseshoe pits in the area. On Safety Day, horseshoe pitching was a crowd favorite and had a lot of spectators, along with teams from each coal camp.

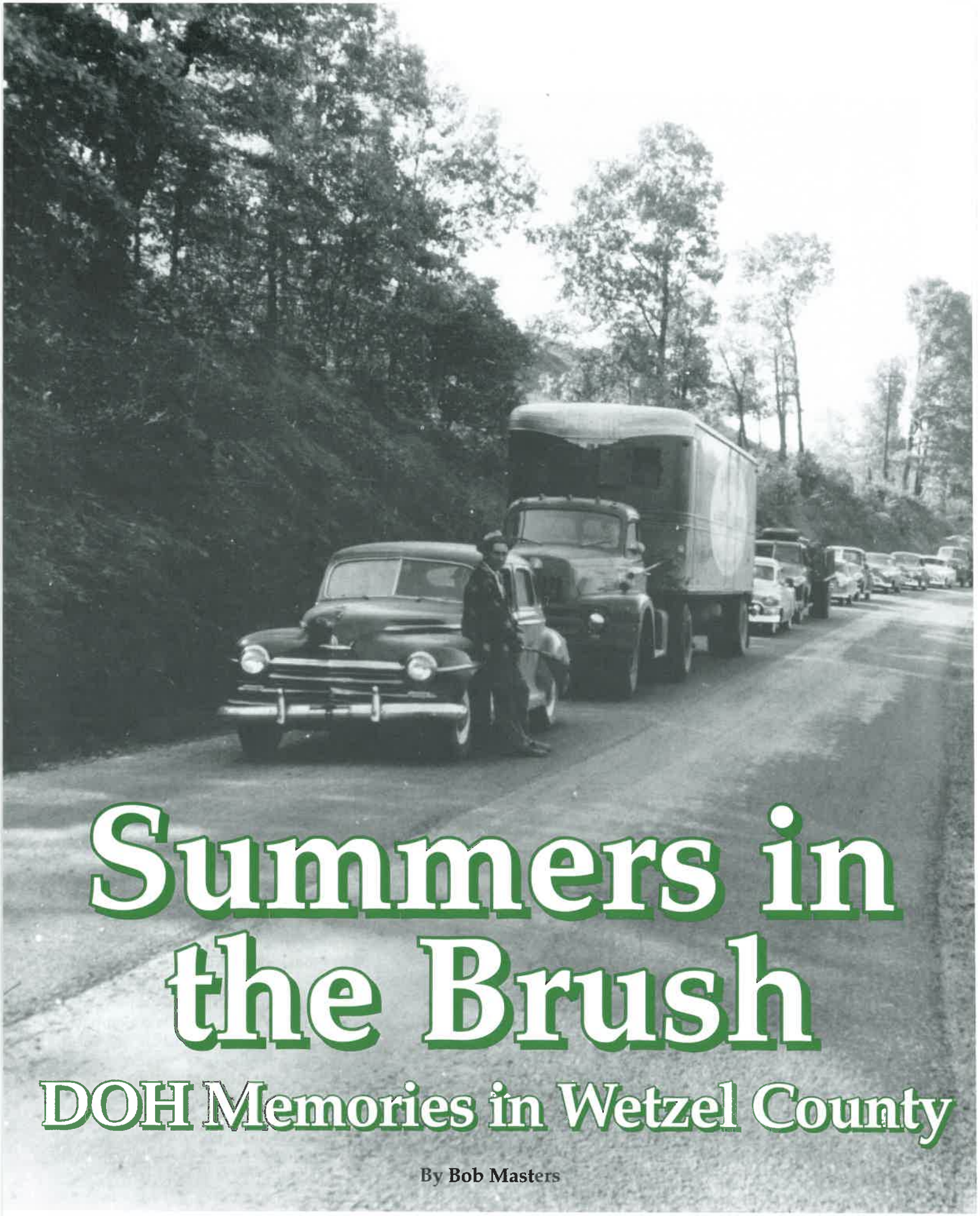
One of the most-watched games was the women's nail driving contest. In the coal camps, the women had to be pretty self-sufficient, and some of them could really drive a nail. In this contest, each lady was given a nail, hammer, and a board. The object was to drive the nail all the way through the board in the shortest time.

The other women's contest was husband calling. This was a real fun event as the women would get creative about the calls. While volume was important, the words used to call the husbands were also entertaining.

The games stopped for lunch. Most of the miners and their families ate picnic lunches they had brought. Since there were no picnic tables, the lunches were enjoyed on blankets and tablecloths spread on the ground. In the shade on the hillside overlooking the field, which I had mowed previously, was a great place to spread a blanket for the picnic. There was a drink stand nearby, which sold ice-cold drinks.

During lunch, the music contest was held, providing entertainment for the picnickers. The crowd always danced to the music right on the ballfield as an expression of having a good time.

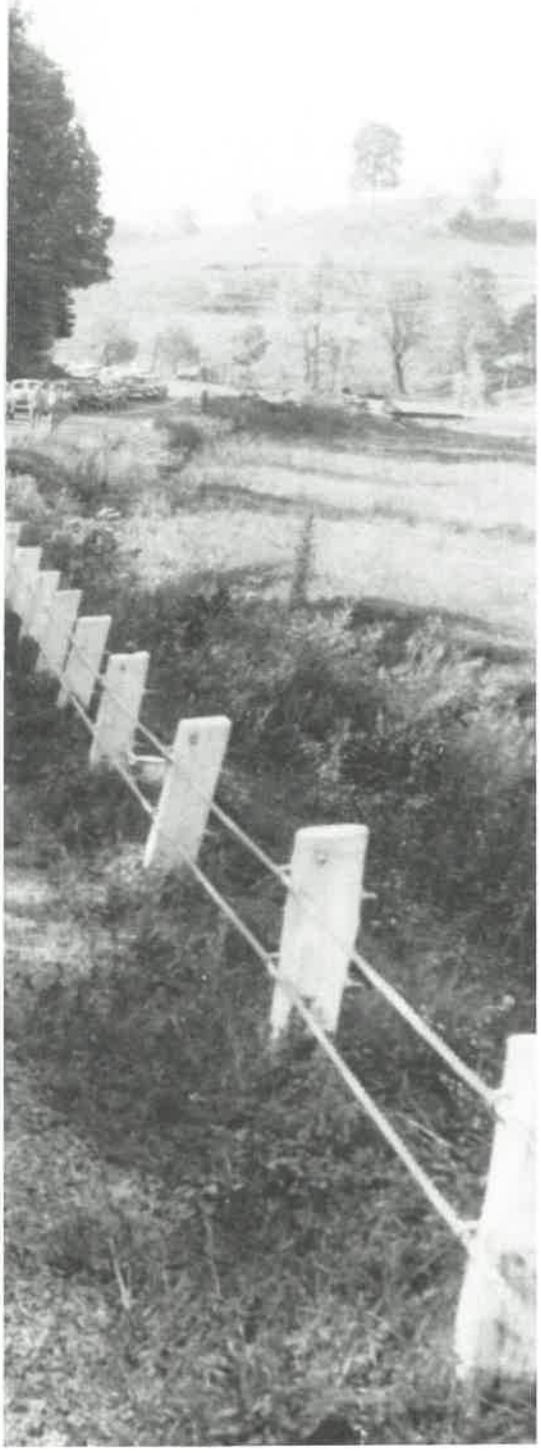
The management group ate at the general manager's house, about a half-mile from the field. But there is no question in my mind that those who ate the best were the federal and state mine inspectors. My dad was a friend with these men and was close to some of them as he had worked as a federal mine inspector prior to the Red Jacket employment. My mother was an outstanding cook and used this occasion to show off her cooking ability. She would start several days early, cooking pies and cakes. Then, the day prior to the event, the large beef roasts and hams would be prepared. On the morning of the event, Mom would make her yeast dinner rolls. A buffet would be set up with all the fixings in our dining room. We had a large living room and porch that were used for seating as everybody ate and visited. Mom



Summers in the Brush

DOH Memories in Wetzel County

By Bob Masters



Jackson County roadside in 1953. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia Division of Highways.

It was one of those days that sometimes occurs in late August in Wetzel County when high pressure brings cool, dry Canadian air southward and creates autumn-like weather. The sky was cloudless and fall-blue, yet the green leaves on the trees bespoke summertime rather than autumn. The Division of Highways summer brush-cutting crew, composed mostly of a few of us college boys, was about to finish the day's work.

It was almost 3:30 p.m. — about time to leave for DOH headquarters in order to be there by the 4 p.m. quitting time. I was leaning on my brush scythe and looking out from the hilltop, where we had been clearing brush from the roadsides. I was trying to absorb the view to the extent that I would always be able to recall it and to see it in my mind's eye. I said to myself, "I will always remember this time and place."

At 3:45, our straw boss, Dewey Taylor, said, "Okay, boys, it's time to go in." We piled our brush hooks, axes, and scythes into the back of Dewey's old truck then climbed in ourselves. Some of the fellows sat along the side rails with their legs stretched out into the bed of the truck. Others sat on the open tailgate and let their legs hang over the edge. Glen Hunt and I stood up in the bed of the truck with our arms extended over the roof and looked at the road ahead of us.

For three summers from 1956 to 1958, several boys from Church and Clay districts of Wetzel County and I worked for the West Virginia Division of Highways, primarily cutting weeds and brush from along the back roads and highways of Northern Wetzel County. During the course of those three summers, we worked along practically every roadway — dirt, gravel, or paved — throughout our end of the county. Weather permitting, after reporting to the State Road building between Burton and Hundred on U.S. Route 250, the mowing crew was dispatched to various locations.

Our foreman was the late Dewey Taylor, a man of infinite patience and enduring goodwill. Dewey, a confirmed bachelor, worked at a number of occupations and jobs during his lifetime. He and his father once owned a timber operation and sawmill somewhere in the vicinity of Coburn, about 10 miles south of Hundred. During the week, they lived and "bached" in a rough-lumber shack near the sawmill. Dewey also worked for many years as a foreman for crews hired to clear right-of-ways for the construction of pipelines. Throughout his life, Dewey had bought, sold, and traded livestock. He dealt in everything from pigs and goats to Thoroughbred horses.

Dewey was an effective boss who was able to get a good day's work out of his crew, even if that crew was a group of feckless college boys. He required us to cut the weeds and brush close to the ground so as to leave no unsightly stubble. For this reason, Dewey insisted that we keep our tools razor sharp. He would often say to us, "Boys, there's no time lost in whettin'." We all liked the man and affectionately referred to him as "Doodad."

I remember one very hot and humid day in July when we were cutting weeds and brush along Route 250, just above the town of Littleton. At

Author Bob Masters around the time of his summer employment with the DOH in Wetzel County.

the bottom of a long hill there was an establishment called the Mooette Tavern. I told Dewey that if he were any kind of a boss he would buy everyone a beer when we reached the tavern. We were all at least 18, which was the legal drinking age at that time. Dewey's response was that he would get into trouble buying beer for us during working hours. However, when the crew got to the tavern, he took us all inside and bought each of us a cold drink.

Dewey was a tolerant man and put up with a considerable amount of foolishness from us boys. Although he never married, Dewey had a number of different lady friends over the years. During the period that we worked under his supervision, Dewey's main girlfriend was Sadie Barnhart, a formidably tall redhead. One evening when several of us fellows were lounging around on the steps of the Bank of Hundred, Sadie came strolling up the sidewalk, looking for Dewey's truck. Scoundrels that we were, we directed Sadie to some stranger's truck. Later, a man and his wife came along and found this woman, whom they did not know, making herself at home in their vehicle. Nonplussed, Sadie got out of the truck and came back down the sidewalk towards us. Without saying a word, she winked, smiled, and continued on her way, looking for Dewey's truck.

Brush crew foreman Dewey Taylor. A confirmed bachelor with a colorful background, he is fondly remembered by his workers as a fair and effective boss.

DOH supervisor Bert Lough with a shovel on a Wetzel County roadside in 1952.

Working on the brush crew was not without its hazards. Poison ivy, yellow jackets, and snakes existed along the roadsides throughout our section of the county. Everyone was stung from time to time, and we all suffered from almost daily contact with poison ivy. Dewey, being a veteran right-of-way mower, insisted that we pile and burn the brush and weeds that we cut from the roadsides. For that purpose, he carried a supply of old tires and a container of kerosene in his truck.

Chauncey Simms was the member of our crew who was charged with the responsibility of starting and maintaining the fires. Sometimes, Chauncey would have two or as many as three fires going at the same time, while the rest of us cut and dragged vegetation to the fires. None of us realized at the time that when poison ivy plants burned, the smoke from the fire transported a poisonous substance into the surrounding air. Some of us got so badly affected that we required medical attention. I remember that Chauncey got poison ivy in his eyes and even inside his mouth.

I recall one time on a back road over near Wileyville, we were joking with Dewey about how snaky a place below the road looked and how we were all afraid to go down there to cut the brush. Finally, Glen Hunt grinned and hopped down over the road bank with his brush hook. He then gave out a blood-curdling yell and came scrambling back up the bank with his ears laid back. We naturally thought that Glen was horsing around with Dewey. Actually, he had just encountered two of the largest copperheads that any of us had ever seen. What's more, upon cautious investigation, we discovered that he had miraculously killed both snakes with a single blow of his brush hook.

During the three summers I worked for the DOH, Bert Lough, the local supervisor, often assigned regular, fulltime employees to work on the brush crew with us for a few days. These men were, without doubt, some of the most colorful people that I have ever met.

Perry Haines was a DOH employee for most of his life, but his primary

interest was horse trading. Perry's father, known as Old Perry among local residents, had also been a horse trader of some repute. Perry Haines literally knew every horse in the surrounding countryside. No matter what animal one could mention, he had some remarks to make about it. One day, John LeMasters, a heavy-equipment operator for the DOH, told us to mention any horse owned by someone living in our area and then to observe Perry's behavior as he warmed up to comment on that particular animal. John predicted that Perry would stop whatever he was doing and begin to flick his tongue in and out like some old snake prior to delivering his assessment of the horse. Later the same day, one of us mentioned a horse that belonged to an area resident. Sure enough, Perry stopped swinging his scythe and started flicking his tongue in and out. He pronounced that the animal in question, although not blind, was a "dummy horse" and would run into objects if ridden too closely to them.

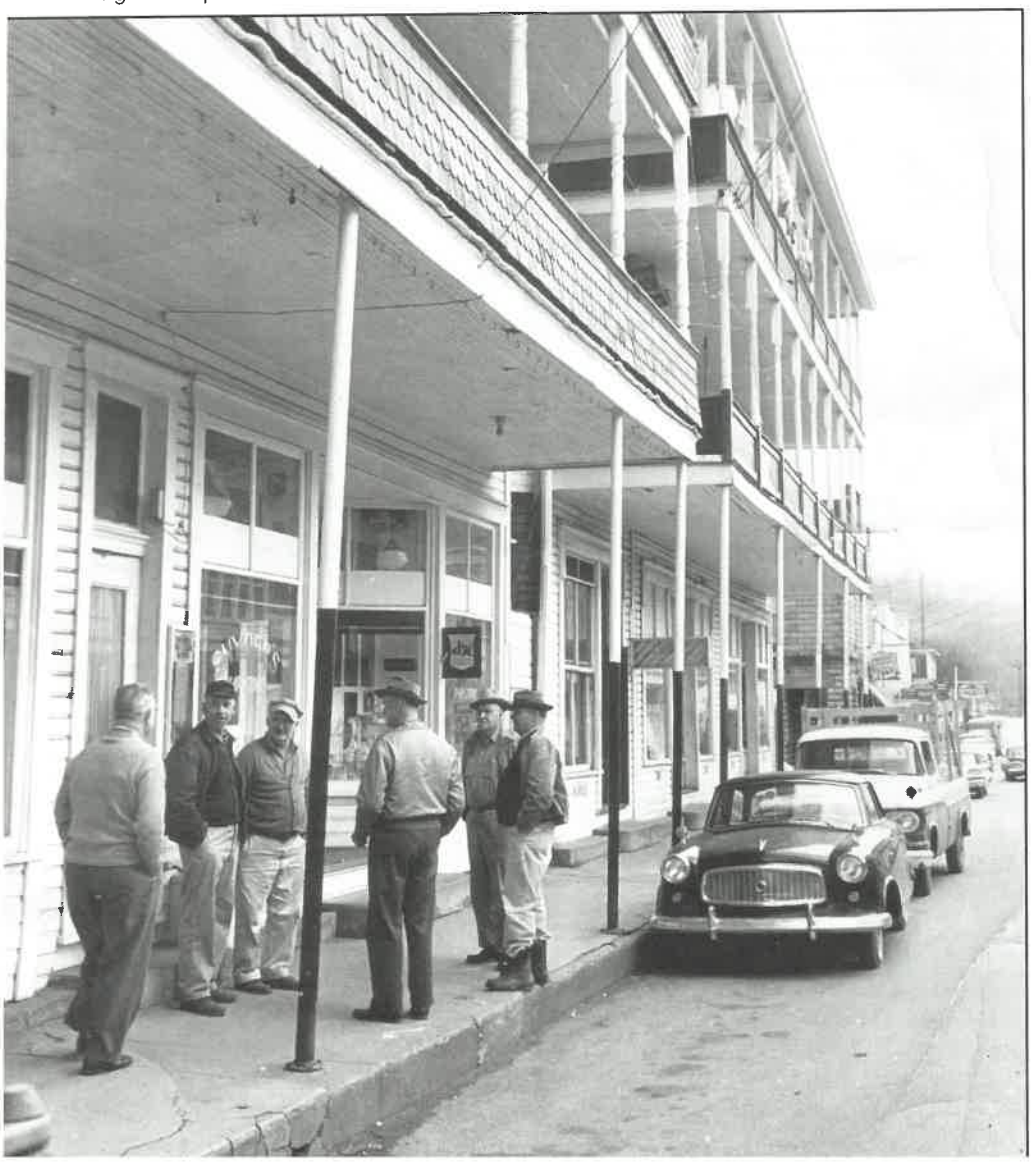
Another interesting fellow who sometimes worked with us boys was Lindsay Allenbee. Lindsay was quite a storyteller, and his specialty was tales of crime and murder. His favorite story was about a resident of the Littleton area, who in 1878, had brutally murdered his sister-in-law, her infant daughter, and 14-year-old cousin. This fellow had supposedly slain all three victims with a blacksmith's hammer. He was subsequently lynched by a group of local vigilantes known as the Redmen. Lindsay was very good at describing all of the gory details related to the murders and the lynching. He was convinced that the Arm & Hammer Baking Soda emblem was in some way connected to the murders.

Probably the most entertaining of the regular DOH employees was Step-and-a-Half Francis. I have no idea what the man's actual name was. He walked with a slight limp and, of course, "Step-and-a-Half" was by no means a politically correct nickname. However, this is what his wife and friends called him, and, moreover, this is how the man referred to himself. Step-and-a-Half was sort of an outhouse poet. If someone got on the wrong side of him, Step-and-a-Half would compose a satirically humorous poem about the person and recite it the next day at lunch or during a water break. The verse was pure doggerel, but the barbs were clever, lighthearted, and extremely funny. Step-and-a-Half was frequently asked to compose and to recite poetry for political rallies throughout Wetzel County.

The summers that the other boys and I spent working for the West Virginia Division of Highways helped all of us to continue our educations. I am sure that each one of us was grateful to the DOH for giving us the opportunity to earn some money for school.

From time to time, I have thought about that late summer afternoon when I leaned on my scythe and gazed at the surrounding countryside. I have tried to recall what was so special about the view from the ridge where our crew was working that day. I have often tried to recapture in my mind the look and feel of that particular time and place. But to tell the truth, I have never been very successful. I think that it was all about being young and seeing the world through youthful eyes. However, I can say this without any hesitation: Those days working for the West Virginia DOH were days well spent and among the happiest days of my life.

This gathering of men in downtown Hundred during the 1950's included two memorable DOH workers, according to author Bob Masters. Third from the left is Perry Haines; second from the right is Step-and-a-Half Francis.



BOB MASTERS grew up in Hundred, Wetzel County. A graduate of West Virginia University and George Peabody College, he was director of library science at Fairmont State University for 18 years, where he retired in 1999. Bob's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2005 issue.

Soap Box Derby 1937

By Houghton Robson

I was rummaging through the attic the other day and found my old Soap Box Derby helmet. It was the one I had worn in the 1937 race down the Patrick Street Bridge. This was the first Soap Box Derby in Charleston and was sponsored by *The Charleston Gazette* and McMillen Motors, a Chevrolet dealer. I was 11 years old, and this is my story.

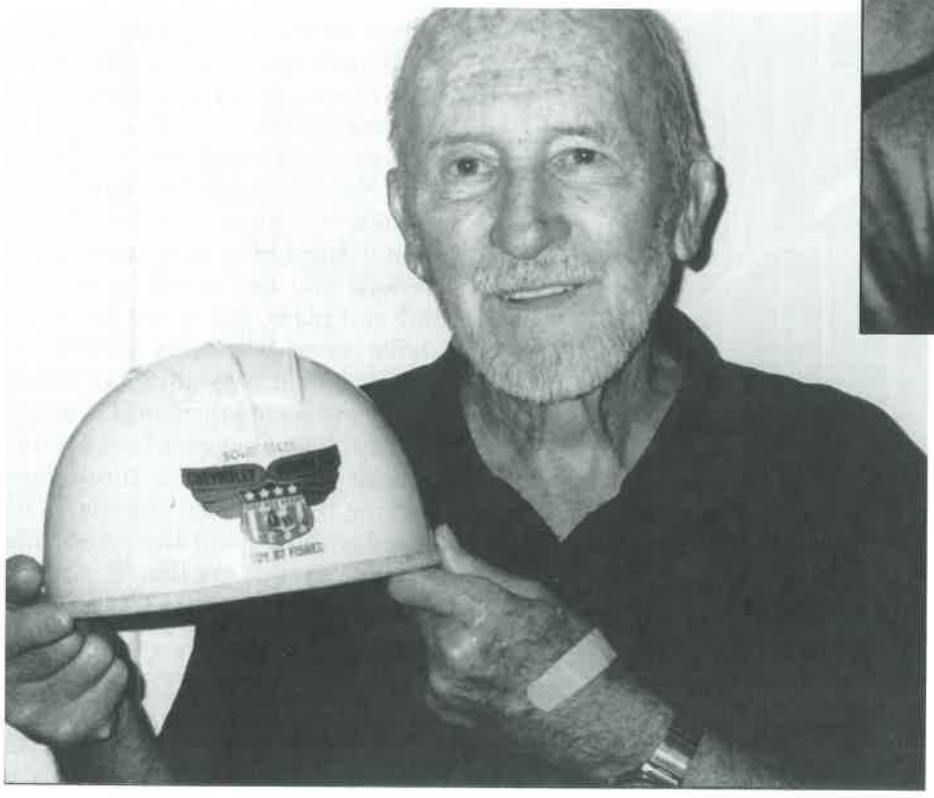
One day in the summer of that year, a pal of mine named David Rollyson came to our home with two entry forms to enter the Soap Box Derby. He explained that each of us could build a racer to enter. My mother, a widow with four children, emphatically said "No!" She envisioned dozens of racers speeding down the Patrick Street Bridge, injuring or maiming the young drivers and even killing some. She wasn't about to risk her only son in such foolishness. After days of my begging and cajoling, she relented, but wondered how in the world we could build two racers without money, tools, or materials.

David's dad was a carpenter by trade, and he allowed us to use his tools and any scrap lumber we could find. My family's toolbox consisted of an old claw hammer with a broken claw and an old flathead screwdriver.

The rules, as interpreted by David's dad, were that we would have to design and build the racers with his advice only. No help, at least no physical help. As it turned out, we worked alone.

The specifications for a soap box racer were given to us when we entered. We took them home to study and found that racing wheels were one of the secrets to winning. But we had no racing wheels and no money to buy any. I believe they cost five dollars, and in 1937, five dollars would buy more groceries than a grown man could carry. So, we did the next best thing. We took the wheels off our wagons. These wheels were of a small diameter and had roller bearings — no match for the official wheels with ball bearings and a greater diameter. But, heck, we'd just put more grease on ours.

Below: Author Houghton Robson with his 1937 Soap Box Derby helmet.
Right: Houghton Robson in Charleston, 1939.



The length of the wagon axles was another problem. Our axles were too short. To solve this problem, we dismantled two more wagons to get four more axles. We nailed the axles to a pair of 2x4's — two axles on the front 2x4 and two axles on the rear 2x4 of each car. We now had four-wheel suspension, though the alignment was questionable. We labored on.

We planned to make the bodies out of scrap lumber, but we didn't have enough. So we covered the framing

on the Hill,' and the name stuck."

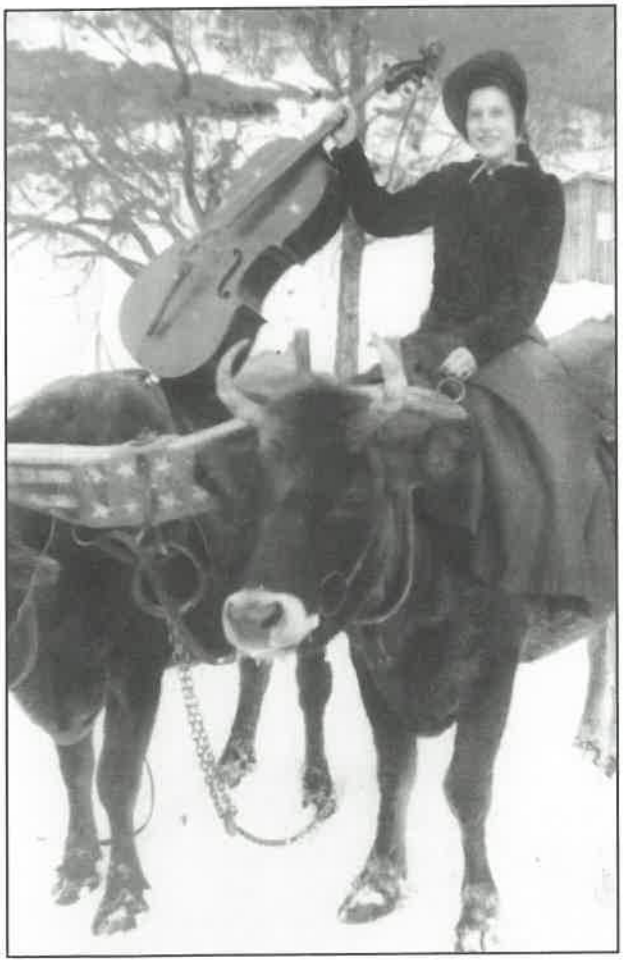
Jiggs invited me to join them the next time. "You'll meet some more of the family," he said.

I baked an apple cake for the potluck, and on the third Saturday of the month headed for the Calcutta Community center, not knowing exactly what to expect. The evening was magical. The people there love music, they love each other, and they are the salt of the earth. They welcomed me with open arms. I even won the cakewalk. I really think the man dropped the broom handle in front of me on purpose! I took home a beautiful Halloween pumpkin cake.

Jiggs introduced me to his younger sister, Emma [Emmy] Fox. "Emmy's the one who had the idea to hang instruments on the graves," he explained. She invited me to come for a visit.

Sisters Grace (Cronin) Cunningham, at left, and Emma (Cronin) Fox at the Calcutta Community Building.

I met Emmy at her home on Turkey Creek a week later. Emmy, 77, and her husband, Dane, live in a home that once belonged to her great-grandfather, Andrew Warren Cronin.



Farm life and music went hand-in-hand for the Cronin family. Here, Grace hoists a cello while seated on a yoke of oxen. Photographer and date unknown.

"I thought of the idea to put guitars on the graves about a year-and-a-half ago," Emmy said. "My daughter, Dorothy [Dottie] Davis, and her husband, Jim, made the guitars. My sister, Grace, had a flyswatter that looked like a guitar. It was just the size we wanted. Jim took a scroll saw and traced it and cut it out. Dottie and I used pieces of wood we had around here. Dottie stained it with polyurethane to protect it. Dottie put little screw hooks on the guitars. For string, we used fine fishing line. We bought some shepherd's hooks at the Dollar Store. We put in time and effort, but not much money. Later we added fiddles and mandolins."

The instruments remind Emmy of her childhood. "We worked hard, but we had a lot of fun," she said. "We laughed a lot. We lived on a 110-acre farm, and we put up hay and raised corn. In the evening after the work was done, Dad got out the songbooks and we practiced. There wasn't anything else to do in the evenings back then."

Emmy took me to meet her older sister, Grace Cronin Cunningham, at her Belmont home. At age 85, Grace still plays the 12-string guitar and the harmonica. "Dad taught me to play the banjo, and then I learned to play the bass fiddle. My bass fiddle was bigger than I was," she said with a laugh. "I remember Sunday afternoons at home. After church, we would all gather around and play and sing. In the summertime, we'd play out in the yard, and lots of people would stop by.

"Dad took us around to play at churches and on other occasions, like pie socials," she recalled. "A pie social is when the women and girls baked pies and took them to the social. Someone would auction the pies off, and the tradition was that the person that baked the pie had to eat with the person that bought the pie. I didn't always want to eat with the person, but I had to," Grace said.

Grace also enjoyed what she calls serenades. "When someone got married, the whole neighborhood would go to the newly married couple's house after they had gone to bed and make lots of noise and drag them out on

Keith (left) and Tom Cronin, members of the extended Cronin family, help carry on the family's musical heritage.

the porch. The men would ride the groom around on a log and carry the wife in a washtub. I remember one serenade when the new husband came out and shot his gun in the air to get rid of the crowd. The shot caught an oil well up on the hill on fire, and that ended the party. The men had to go up and put out the fire!"

Grace's favorite childhood activities were dances called play parties. "They were sort of like a square dance," Grace explained. "We had play parties once a week in the summertime. Everyone would get in a circle — boy, girl, boy, girl — and hold hands. We'd sing songs and then follow the instructions in the song, like 'turn left,' 'turn right,' and 'swing your partner.' We sang all kinds of songs — 'Old Dan Tucker,' 'Little Red Wagon Painted Blue,' and 'Strip the Willow.' 'Shoot the Buffalo' was my favorite. We didn't use instruments for the play parties, just singing." [See "The Appalachian Play-party," by Michael E. Bush; July-September 1975.]

Before I left, Grace played her guitar, and she and Emmy sang an old Jim Reeves song called "He'll Have to Go." It was wonderful to hear two sisters singing together as they had since childhood. As I took Emmy home, I wondered whether this music would continue. Jiggs, Grace, and Emmy are all that remain of Michael K. Cronin's children. Would family and friends still meet at Nashville on the Hill, 20 years from now? Would the Cronin family still gather at yearly reunions and play and sing? For the answer, I turned to Tom Cronin, Michael K. Cronin's grandson and Jiggs, Grace, and Emmy's nephew.

"Some of the young cousins are learning to play instruments and sing. At the annual family reunion, the kids join in."

"I've thought about that, too," Tom said. Tom and his family had moved to the Weirton area in the 1950's when Tom's father, Blaine, took a job at Weirton Steel. When Blaine passed away several years ago, Tom came down for services and spent time with his Pleasants County relatives. "Uncle Jiggs invited me to come to Nashville on the Hill," Tom recalled. "I worked with him to learn a few of the songs. After that evening, I decided that I would work to preserve the Cronin musical tradition. I think my experience shows that we Cronins eventually come back to our music," Tom said. "I drifted away from music, and now I am back.

"My dad played the guitar and the mandolin," Tom said. "He told me that when I learned to play a song, he would let me take music lessons. I did. When I was six or seven, I started taking lessons in Weirton. This went on for several years with different teachers. I learned how to read music.

"In 4-H, I joined a choral group sponsored by West Virginia University professor Dr. Patrick Gainer," Tom said. "Dr. Gainer specialized in West Virginia traditions and folklore,

and we were part of his presentations. We sang old Scottish, Irish, and English songs. We sang some contemporary songs, too — songs by John Denver and Peter, Paul & Mary. We performed at Cedar Lakes, the Buckwheat Festival, at Christmas programs, and even in Washington, D.C. It was non-profit, but we took up a donation to help pay for our public address system, microphones, and gasoline." [See "Dr. Gainer: Folk Festival Founder," by Paul Gartner; Summer 2000.]

After graduation, Tom joined the Navy. "Music was on-and-off then," he said. "In Guam, we put a group together and did shows playing rock and roll, but people were transferred and the group broke up. When I was stationed in Maine, we had a group that stayed together for a couple of years, but there were years when my guitar would sit in the closet and get dirty."

His guitar doesn't get dirty now. "I play at Nashville on the Hill every month," said Tom, who has recently moved back to Pleasants County. He believes the tradition will continue. "Things go in cycles," he said. "Some of the young cousins are learning to play instruments and sing. At the annual family reunion, the kids join in. You get to a certain point in life where you are away from the family, and then as you get older you want to come back. It will take a while, but the younger ones will get together and play and sing."

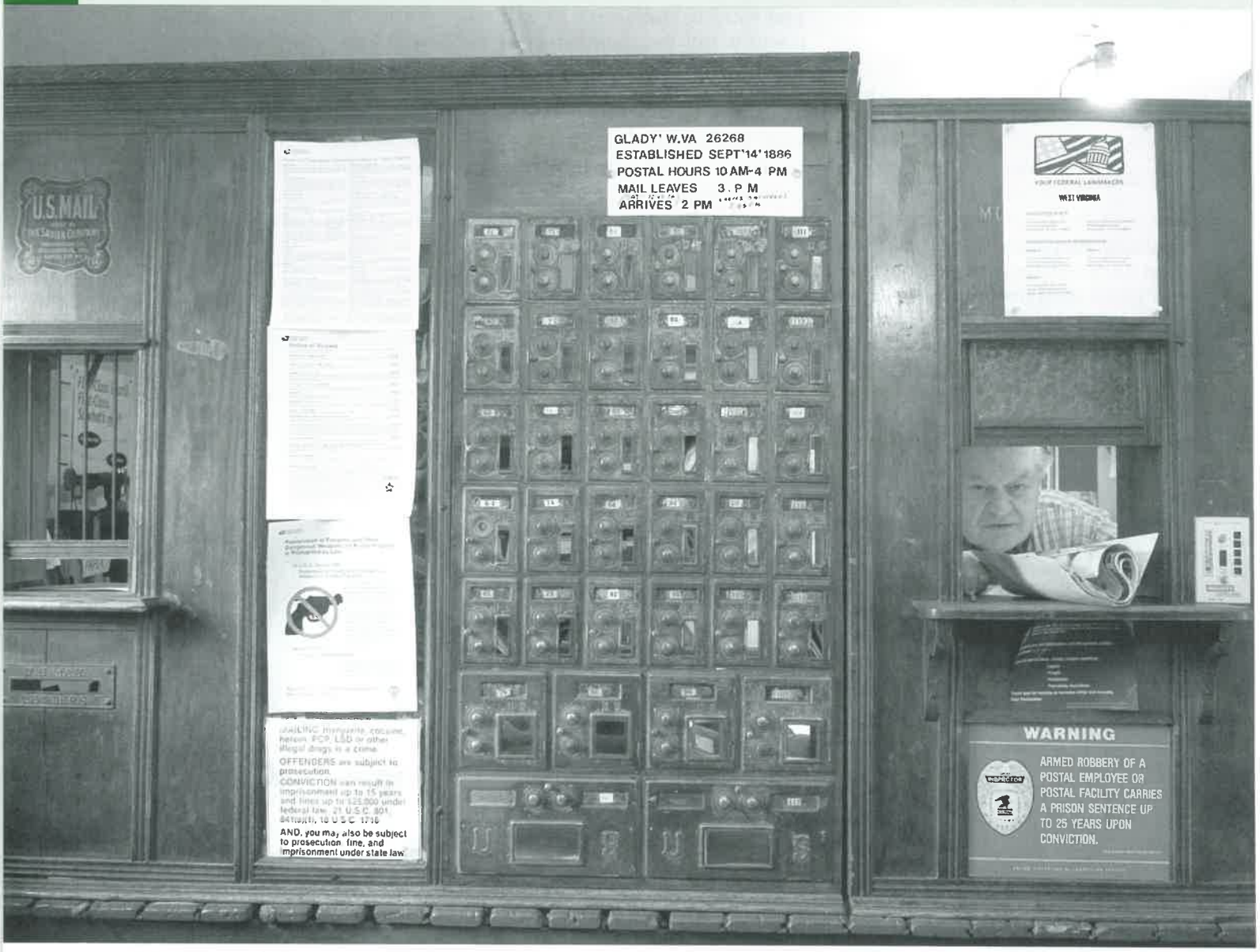
Now Millie and I are regulars at Nashville on the Hill. On our last visit, Keith dedicated "I'm the Boss" to all the women who think they are boss. We laughed at the lines "Don't tell me how the dishes should be done" and "I'll hold the baby's diapers anyway I please." In his song "When I Get Rich," Jiggs sang about putting a swimming pool in his yard and building a mansion big and tall. Emmy sang about her relatives in "I'm My Own Grandpa," and she and Grace teamed up for "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder" during the cakewalk. Everyone joined in singing "Old Country Church," "Old-Time Religion," "Tennessee Waltz," "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," and other songs. Tom ended the evening with John Denver's "Back Home Again."

Millie eventually learned that her great-great-great-grandmother is buried at the Harmony Grove Cemetery. A few days later, on the way there, we stopped by the Cronin family cemetery. It means more to us now. The handcrafted guitars, fiddles, and mandolins bring back memories of Nashville on the Hill and the Cronins, who through many generations have shared a love for family and music and West Virginia.

BETTY LEAVENGOOD is a Parkersburg native and a graduate of Parkersburg High School. She received a degree in history and secondary education from Marshall University and a graduate degree in history from Ohio University. An avid hiker and bicyclist, she wrote *Tucson Hiking Guide* and *Grand Canyon Women* while living in Arizona. Relocating to the Parkersburg area in 2000, she wrote a pictorial history of Wood County. Her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL was in our Winter 2002 issue.

Musical decor at the Cronin family cemetery in Pleasants County.

Mail Time



Calvin Shifflett hands mail through one of two windows at the post office in Glady, Randolph County. Calvin has been assistant postmaster here since 1976.

The highlight of the day for most Glady residents occurs around 2 p.m. on weekdays, 90 minutes earlier on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays. That's when Calvin Shifflett hollers "Mail's up!" from behind the wall of brass-and-wood mailboxes that have served the people of Glady since September 14, 1886, when this Randolph County hamlet first got a post office.

Calvin is assistant postmaster of Glady. His wife, Frances, is postmistress. But it is generally Calvin whom the postal patrons of ZIP code 26268 see and deal with when they stop at the post office/general store, a few hundred yards south of the crossroads of Bemis and

in Glady

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Calvin Shifflett and his Post Office

Glady roads, about 10 miles south of U.S. Route 33.

Serving as assistant postmaster is just one of Calvin's interests. He's also a musician, tavern owner, landlord, and proprietor of the general store; Calvin and Frances also run a little store in nearby Bemis that mirrors the Glady store's product line, except the Bemis store also sells beer.

"I can't sell beer here in the post office," Calvin says. "I get people who ask for it, and I got a ready answer: 'Did you ever see any post office that sold beer?'"

Calvin's not opposed to the sale and consumption of beer. Far from it. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, he works as bartender at his own 50-seat tavern, known to patrons as "Calvin's." As if all that's not enough to keep him busy, Calvin picks up a guitar on Saturday nights and entertains the Bemis bar crowd. "I'm on the job seven days a week," says Calvin, age 74. "I don't have no days off."

Once a booming lumber town that boasted three sawmills, Glady today is a tiny crossroads village whose residents include a mix of elderly lifelong residents, younger people who drive to Elkins to work, and seasonal visitors who maintain camps and general-delivery post office boxes. A Columbia Gas compressor station is a short distance from the hamlet and provides a steady stream of workers, vehicular traffic, and customers for Calvin's store. Further, Glady is a crossroads of hiking trails, and Calvin is more than happy to give hikers directions and sell them a bag of chips, candy bar, and soft drink in the process.

Until 2003, Calvin also sold gasoline, but mandated upgrades to his pumps would have cost him $7,000, and Calvin decided it was more profitable not to sell gas than to upgrade.

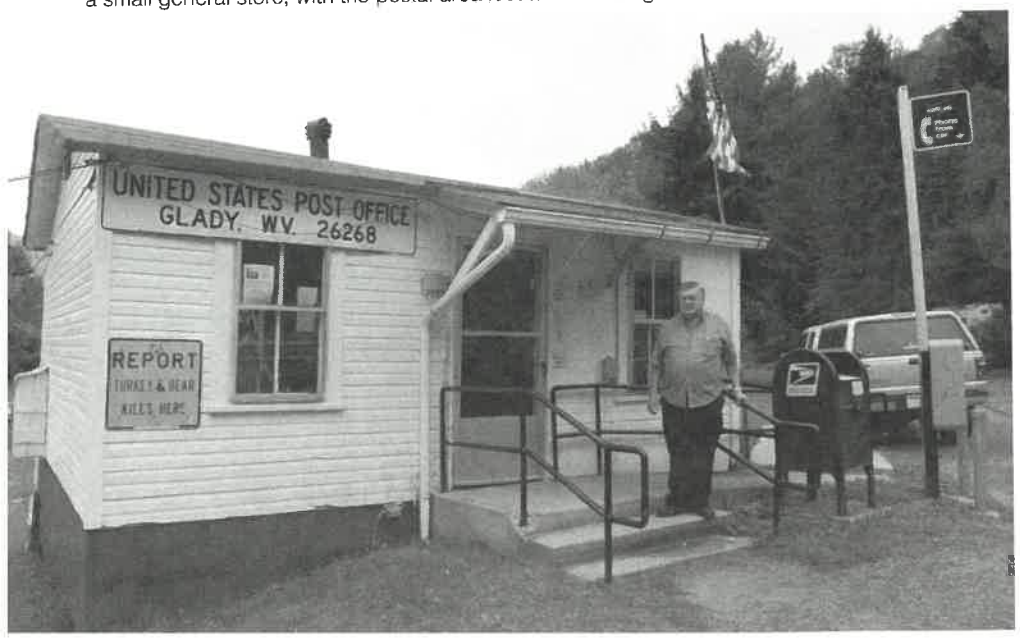
The Glady store and post office maintain the same hours as one another: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday, closed on Sunday. Six hours is sufficient to handle the volume of business in Glady, Calvin says.

The Glady post office and Calvin's store are housed in a frame building that measures about 18 by 18 feet. The division of function is well defined: as one enters the front and only door, Calvin's store is to the left — a small freezer for ice, beverage cooler, a candy case topped by a sales counter, and a wall covered with shelves for canned goods, convenience foods, medicinal needs, and canning supplies. (Home gardening and canning are major pastimes in Glady.)

Postal business is conducted on the right-hand side of the building. The post office consists of a long counter whereupon rests a fax machine, computer, and the row of dual-combination postal boxes with two tiny clerk windows, one of them with bars. The one-piece unit still has the original cursive "Sadler Company" logo painted on the hardwood face with gold letters.

Against the back wall is a brown kerosene stove flanked by wooden chairs. The oak one on the right came out of the Bemis schoolhouse and is plunked next to a stack of newspapers, including ones from Harrisonburg, Virginia; and Elkins. There is enough space between the chair and back wall for Calvin to slightly tip a chair on its rear legs as he reads. Across from this chair is a brown recliner,

Calvin owns this building, which he leases to the U.S. Postal Service. The left half of the place is a small general store, with the postal area located on the right. Calvin runs them both.



Tom Crosston, a Columbia Gas employee, purchases some snacks from Calvin as he passes through Glady on his way to the compressor station. Snacks and soft drinks make up the majority of Calvin's sales.

which at one time was Calvin's seat of choice, but a bad hip and arthritis make it difficult for him to get out of the thing. He abdicates sitting rights to patrons who want to wait for their mail or shoot the breeze in upholstered comfort.

The dichotomy of this building, which Calvin leases to the U.S. Postal Service, is something postal inspectors frown upon, as are the chairs, which encourage loitering. But Calvin says loitering in the post office is a long-standing tradition in Glady.

"Yeah, they don't like it too well," he says. "When we took over here, the guy called me over and told me, 'You shouldn't allow them to sit around here.' So I got my sign up."

Posted on the front of the building, along with a Pepsi thermometer and "Check Deer and Bear Kills Here" sign, is Calvin's hand-lettered "No Loitering" sign, largely ignored by patrons. Loitering isn't the only issue Calvin has to deal with when it comes to the U.S. Postal Service.

"They complained on a couple of visits about having a store in here," he says. "They let me know one time that they weren't happy about it. And I said, 'I'll just lease half of [the building] to you,' and they said, 'No, you won't!'"

Thus, while Calvin leases the whole building to the Postal Service, he borrows half of the space for his general store. Likewise, the telephone inside the Glady operation is intended for postal use, however Calvin gets all manner of calls on it: people checking to see if their mail is up, if it's raining at Glady, or how the deer hunt is going.

A telephone and Internet connection — Glady went online in 2004 — are essential to running a modern post office, no matter how small, because of the many reports that must be generated and filed every day. Information about scanned items, such as certified letters and mail sent with

Glady was once a booming lumber town with three sawmills and a bustling downtown area. This 1906 photograph shows the train station and depot, with the Hotel Glady visible at the far left. Photograph courtesy of Steve Bodkins, photographer unknown.

delivery confirmation, must also be transmitted electronically.

"I do every report that Elkins does," says Calvin. "You would think that they would have different rules for us small offices, but they don't."

Calvin says the post office has the capacity for 30 box patrons, but only 22 boxes are rented. There are several general-delivery accounts and 23 Bemis postal patrons who get their mail through Glady. And a contract mail carrier delivers mail three times a week on a two-mile run out of Glady that serves about 10 patrons, two of which are commercial accounts. Calvin feels it's the commercial accounts that justify the route, which is driven by Gene Cave.

"The route used to go 15 miles to the Sinks of Gandy," Calvin says. "That's the way it was 100 years ago when they delivered it by mule. Old man Andrew Tingler carried mail on a mule and horseback."

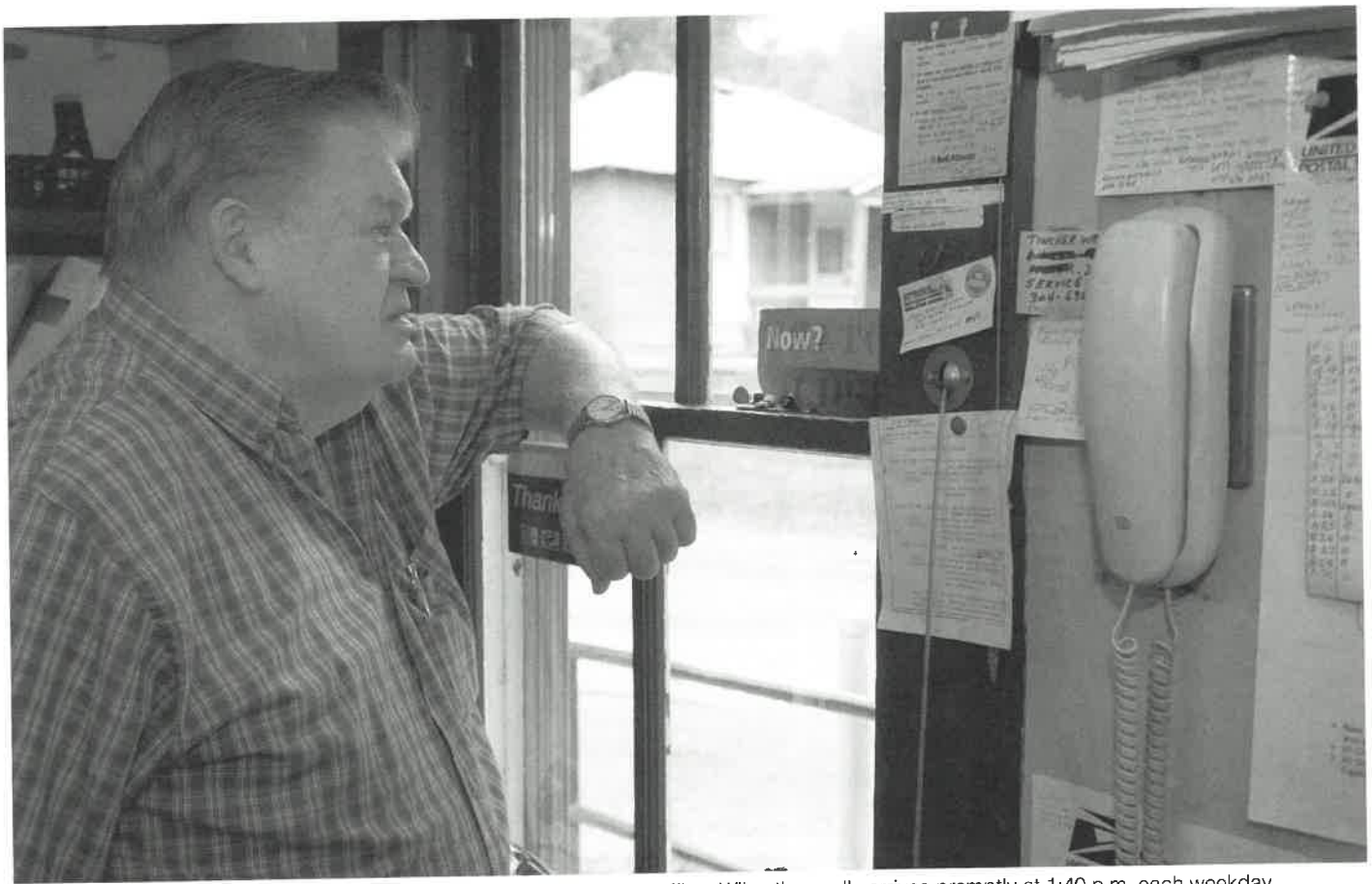
Calvin became a landlord to the Postal Service in 1961. His mother-in-law, Susie Hedrick, was postmistress at Bemis when that post office merged with Glady. She had the opportunity to go to Glady, but a new building was needed.

"She had a whole basement full of used lumber, so this was built with used lumber," Calvin says. "A fellow up the road, Delber Strawder, built it for them. He was a retired railroader." The structure is simple, without indoor plumbing. (Calvin owns the house next door, and it has a bathroom, although visitors who ask to use a restroom are directed to an outhouse behind that house.) The floor is made of rough, unfinished boards preserved by years of dirt ground into their fiber.

When Susie Hedrick died in 1976, Frances and Calvin decided to take on the postal duties, for fear the Postal Service would pull the plug on the operation if they had to go to the trouble of finding someone unfamiliar with the area or the work. The job isn't particularly strenuous, the hours are decent, and there's seldom any stress – except in hunting season, when there can be three or four customers waiting to be served on the store side while postal patrons wait for their mail to be put up. Calvin says most of the mail that comes through Glady is the prosaic stuff that we all get. But occasionally something addressed to Israel will come into Glady, because the post office's ZIP code is nearly identical to the zone code for the Middle Eastern nation. Calvin recalls one package in particular.

"The carrier brought it in, and she was complaining how bad it smelled," he says. Calvin says it was a shipment of very ripe fish. "I took it out and put it in an outbuilding until the next morning, then I sent it back with a big mark around [the code.] That fish took the long route. It should have gone to Israel, and it went to Glady."

The Glady post office delivers at least 100 pieces of mail on an average



Calvin waits for Wilmoth Lambert to deliver the mail to the Glady post office. Wilmoth usually arrives promptly at 1:40 p.m. each weekday.

New History of Bemis and Glady

Bemis and Glady, West Virginia: A History of Two Mountain Towns, by Steve Bodkins, is a newly published, comprehensive historical account of these remote Randolph County communities.

This surprisingly extensive narrative begins with records of the earliest pioneer settlers in the period after American independence, while frontier wars were still being waged against Native Americans. More serious development and expansion of the area, however, began in the early 20th century. It was at this time that the Coal & Iron Railroad of Henry Gassaway Davis and Stephen B. Elkins opened this rugged part of Randolph County, later to be followed by the Western Maryland Railroad. Timber and coal were the catalysts for the flourishing of Bemis and Glady, as well as the towns of Flint, Montes, Woodrow, and Morribell. As a result, Bemis and Glady experienced the boom-or-bust fortunes typical of other West Virginia timber-and-coal communities. Both towns have been in a period of decline for the past few decades, according to the author.

In addition to the historical narrative, this book contains cemetery, marriage, and census records from 1865 to the present, plus 40 pages of biographies for genealogical reference. More than 300 vintage and recent photographs visually document the communities, industrial and commercial history, people, and local schools. A separate chapter explores hunting and fishing lore — favorite activities of the author's childhood spent in the area.

Thoroughly researched, with endnotes, bibliography, and index, this 608-page hardcover sells for $45, plus $6 shipping and handling, from McClain Printing, 212 Main Street, Parsons, WV 26287; phone 1-800-654-7179 or on the Web at www.mcclainprinting.com.

day, but there's usually only a dozen or so pieces of outgoing mail. The mail here comes out of Clarksburg by way of Bowden. Wilmoth Lambert, a contract carrier, generally brings the mail to Glady. Calvin says you can pretty much set your watch by Wilmoth, whose white vehicle generally crests the hill into Glady around 1:40 p.m. every weekday.

About 10 minutes before the big event, Roy Rhodes parks across the street from the post office and waits for Wilmoth's arrival. Roy follows Wilmoth into the post office, then Roy takes up his position against the general store counter while Wilmoth and Calvin sort the mail. Earl Bonnell, another postal patron, takes a seat next to the brown kerosene stove and beneath the back window. Gene Cave is next to arrive. The men chat about the weather, happenings around the area, and the status of their gardens while they wait for Calvin to announce "Mail's up!"

Earl makes a beeline for P.O. Box 112, Roy for P.O. Box 83. Gene heads out the door with the mail he'll deliver on his route. Earl and Roy flip through their stacks of mail, bid farewell to Calvin, and head home.

Throughout the afternoon, another eight to 10 patrons straggle in to get their mail and perhaps drop off a letter or package. Calvin closes the post office at 4 p.m. and heads to his home across the mountain in Bemis, about two miles away.

It was while growing up in Bemis that Calvin got his first sense of just how significant the arrival of mail is to an individual – the daily dose of anticipation that his ship has finally come in with the arrival of that mythical check that's been in the mail for years or, at the very least, a government entitlement payment. Or perhaps it's a letter from a grandchild who's off to college or a better life in the city. Whatever he delivers, the mailman is the common man's daily ray of hope.

"That's the only excitement there is here, mail time," Calvin says. "That's the way it was when I was a kid. The train would come into Bemis at 12:15 [p.m.] There would be 30 to 40 people down there waiting for the train to come in."

He says boys would gather at the station to lug the mail sacks over to the post office — some of the sacks, especially those stuffed with the Sears Roebuck catalogs, were quite heavy. Calvin always opted for carrying the lighter bags of letters.

Calvin's memory of the Western Maryland train's arrival at Bemis is one of wartime, when 50 of the community's young men were away serving their country. Calvin says it seemed as if the train almost always

In nearby Bemis, Calvin owns and operates another small grocery store and bar, identified by this wooden sign.

Thousands of dollar bills paper the walls and ceiling of Calvin's bar, all of them defaced. Calvin estimates that 3,500 bills have been placed there by customers since the practice began in 1975.

was either taking a young man away to war or bringing back the injured body or remains of a local soldier.

Calvin's family came here from Virginia in 1925. "My dad came over in 1916 and worked for the Western Maryland Railroad. All his brothers were section foremen on the railroad," says Calvin. His father went back to Virginia in 1918 but returned to West Virginia with his family in 1925, this time for good. By then, Joseph and Rosa Shifflett had three boys — Medford, Ronald, and Maynard. Three more — Orville, Clarence, and Calvin — were born in West Virginia. If there was a common thread among the family, it was an ability to play just about any kind of stringed instrument.

"All of us played except my one brother," Calvin says. "My father played, my uncle played the banjo, fiddle, and guitar. It just came natural to us."

Calvin says growing up in Bemis was an isolated existence. The school, which offered grades one through 10, was the center of recreation and social life. His mother, who had only an eighth-grade education, taught him his ABC's and how to read by the time he was five. She convinced the Bemis school principal that Calvin was sufficiently prepared to enter school a year early. By the time he was 14, Calvin was in high school, but not for long.

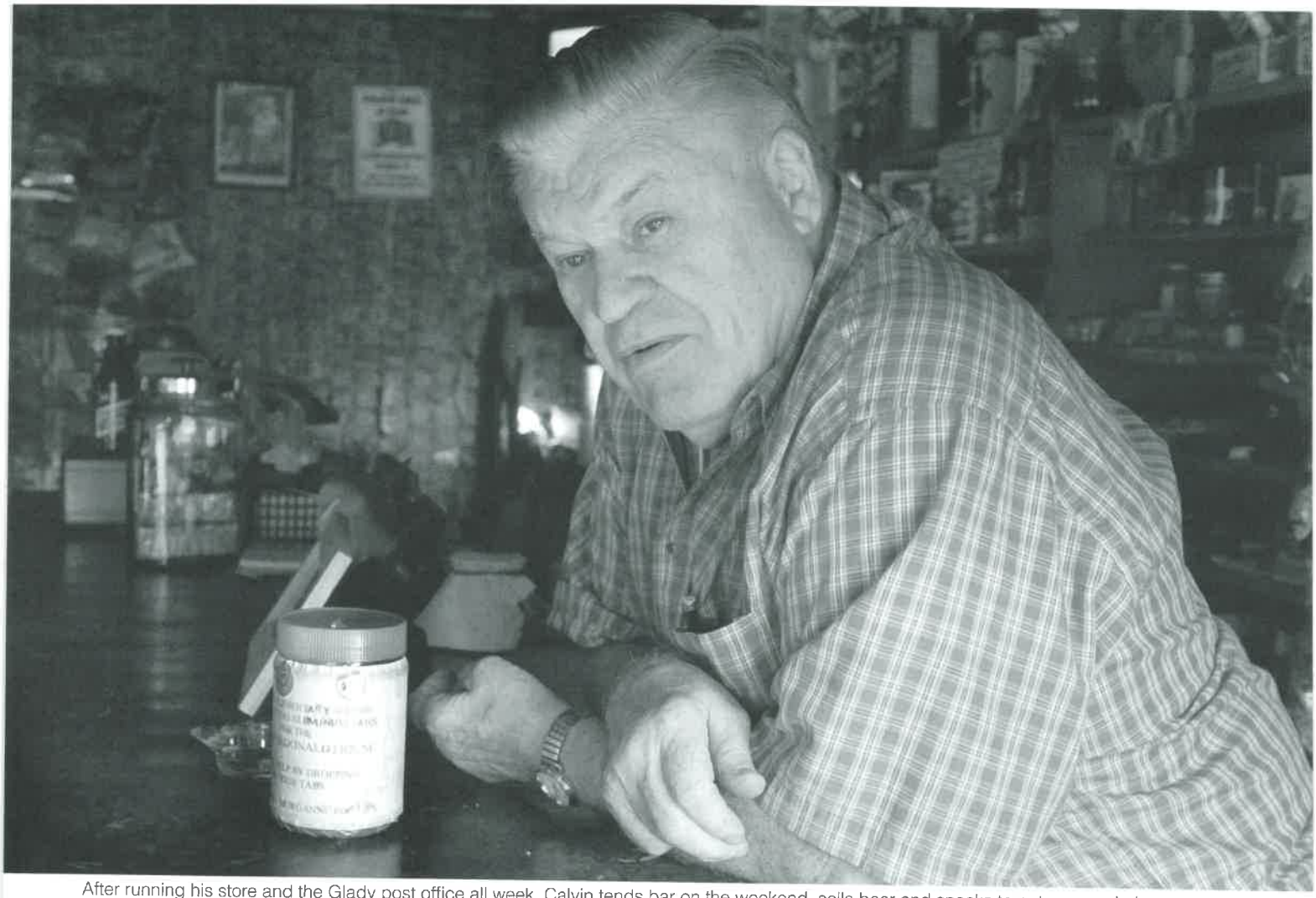
"My dad had an accident and broke his leg," Calvin says. "Things were pretty tough when I was going to high school." Hungry and inspired by his older brothers who had served in the Navy during World War II, Calvin conspired to enter the Army at the age of 15. All he needed was a birth certificate that showed he had been born in 1930, instead of 1933.

"I doctored up my birth certificate," he says. "I took bleach and took the '3' out. A railroad agent at Bemis showed me how to do it. He lined up the certificate in the old typewriter and showed me how to make that a '0.'"

Calvin then made a photocopy of the doctored birth certificate, which the Army accepted without question. Assigned to the infantry, Calvin spent three years in the Army and completed his high school education during that time.

He came back to Randolph County after the service and, in 1953, married Frances Hedrick, with whom he'd grown up in Bemis. They eventually had seven children. Calvin got a job at Metal Lab in Beverly, where he advanced to finishing supervisor. But the work took him all over the country, and he got tired of the travel.

In 1961, he decided to build a little tavern in Bemis to supplement his factory income. The community had all but died in the early 1950's, when the last of the mines closed. Property was selling at bargain prices, and Calvin purchased one of the row



After running his store and the Glady post office all week, Calvin tends bar on the weekend, sells beer and snacks to patrons, and plays country music on Saturday night. "I'm on the job seven days a week," he says. "I don't have no days off."

houses as well as the school. Many of the old buildings were being torn down, and there was a large supply of used lumber.

It was from this lumber that Calvin built the first room of his tavern. "I had the lot and a basement full of used lumber," he says. "I traded a heifer calf to a guy for a load of half-inch sheathing. The sides and roof of my first building, that's what I sheathed it with."

Calvin originally planned to build a venue for playing live country music. But people started bringing in beer, and Calvin realized he'd soon encounter serious trouble with the law if he didn't get a license. He was licensed in 1962 and to this day sells only beer in his bar, because a liquor license would require food service. Business boomed, and he has put on two additions to serve the dozens of people who crowd into the bar on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings.

Calvin's Place serves a clientele that is largely seasonal. But he also gets a crowd that drives across Cheat Mountain from Beverly on a narrow gravel road to congregate in what is one of the region's most unusual bars. The bar is heated with a wood/coal-burning stove, to which every patron contributes by carrying in a log or two as needed. Bar patrons can also do their grocery shopping from the wall of goods behind the bar counter. But the most unusual and striking feature of this establishment are the 3,500 or so dollar bills taped to the ceiling and walls of the bar.

Each bill is autographed by the person or party that contributed to the tradition, which began back in 1975 when a couple of men from Charleston placed their bills on the ceiling. Since then, hundreds of patrons have expressed their sentiments on a dollar bill stapled or taped to the ceiling or walls.

The donations include a bill signed by Alan and Barbara Mollohan on June 26, 1987. "[Congressman] Mollohan used to stop here quite a bit when he went bear hunting in these parts," Calvin says.

The collection includes currency from several foreign countries and some bills larger than a greenback. "I had a $100 bill," he says. "This guy wanted to beat his brother, so he put a $100 up. It took about two weeks before somebody stole it."

They replaced it with a 50. Calvin says he doesn't worry about patrons stealing the money or fire claiming it.

"It ain't cost me nothing," he says.

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.

Peter Shaver's Grave

Text and photograph by Carl E. Feather

In addition to his duties as shopkeeper, bar owner, and assistant postmaster of Glady, Calvin Shifflett also looks after pioneer Peter Shaver's burial site. Located in a meadow off Randolph County Road 27 between Glady and Alpena, the grave is marked by an American flag, a large flat stone, and a modern stainless steel marker.

The inscription on the plate reads: "Here lies Peter Shaver killed by Indians 1781. This mountain and Shavers Fork River are named in his honor."

Calvin says he first erected a sign at the site about 30 to 35 years ago. He passed the site every day on his way to work and noticed that the small sign the Randolph County Historical Society erected there was missing. He made a new sign at work, but it, too, was soon stolen.

"I made up signs, and the hoodlums kept stealing them," he says. "I guess people would take them and put them in their den. It was a conversation piece to brag about, to say they had taken Peter Shaver's grave marker."

The stainless steel marker is the work of Jeff Darnell, who rents a cabin from Calvin. Jeff welded the marker to a six-foot steel barbed pole. He and Joe Horty drove the thing into the ground with sledgehammers. "No one has attempted to pull that one out," says Calvin. "They'd have to have a bulldozer to get it out."

Calvin's son-in-law, Terry Site of Belington, keeps the little plot mowed in the summer. "Someone puts a flag up there, but I don't know who does that," Calvin says. "There's always a good-looking flag up there."

Calvin says it is important to honor the pioneer because of his contributions to settling the area. However, he says the site is more ceremonial than historical: No one knows for certain if Shaver is buried there. The meadow is believed to have been the site of his cabin; a limestone spring near the gravesite supports that placement. However, Homer Floyd Fansler's 1962 *History of Tucker County*, suggests the site was that of a ranger hut. Gary Pase writes that the cabin Shaver kept at Collette Gap was only an outpost for hunting and a refuge from the Shawnees. His base was elsewhere in the Tygart Valley, but Gary recognizes Collette Gap as Shaver's burial site.

Fansler writes that Shaver was an Indian ranger and soldier of the Revolutionary War. Shaver and his wife, Sarah, their three sons, and Shaver's sickly brother, Paul, lived on what is now Shavers Mountain in 1772.

Indians scalped Peter Shaver and deposited his body across a path. Sarah and Paul discovered the bloody remains as they rode home from visiting other settlers. Horrified by the gruesome sight, Sarah, who was pregnant, is said to have put her hand to her face to hide it from her eyes.

"Her brother-in-law, Paul, tried to quiet her by saying it was a log across the trail, but it was apparent that he had been killed and scalped only a few minutes before," writes Fansler.

The Shaver family fled the area. Several months later, Sarah gave birth to a son, Francis, whose face bore a large red birthmark in the shape of a human hand. The mark was attributed to his mother having placed her hand across her face at the sight of her husband's mutilated body, according to Fansler's account.

"Here lies Peter Shaver killed by Indians 1781. This mountain and Shavers Fork River are named in his honor," reads the stainless steel marker, placed here 30 years ago by Calvin Shifflett.

West Virginia Back Roads

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Being Different in Hepzibah

I was drawn to George Harvey's house by the red airplane twirling atop a nine-foot pole in his front yard, where also are displayed a locomotive, star-shaped Ferris wheel, partially buried rocket, stagecoach, life-size wooden cow, and concrete deer statues.

I had a hunch that the person who lives in this house must be retired and takes a lot of pride in his property. I was right on the money: George, 71, spent 20 years in the coal mines, retired when he was 59, and devotes his time to caring for his yard, its ornaments, and a special hobby revealed when he opened his garage door.

George and his wife Ruth live in Hepzibah (pronounced HEP-zee-ball), more accurately, Hepzibah Heights, a community of about 15 houses and mobile homes, located north of Clarksburg in central Harrison County. The Harveys' neat, white house is two doors down from the Hepzibah Baptist Church, where the town's name reportedly originated.

"This guy he come through here and was preaching over to the church, and it didn't have no name," George tells me as we sit in his living room. "So he said we'll call it 'Hepzibah.' He took the name out of the Bible."

The reference, incidentally, is to Hephzi-bah, the mother of Manasseh, a wicked king of Judah (II Kings 21:1).

Most of the decorations in George's yard are the work of his neighbor, J.E. Smith, an octogenarian who can build and motorize just about any contraption. J.E. is the one who built the red, single-prop biplane that caught my attention as a motorist on U.S. Route 19. Built of galvanized sheet metal on a frame of aluminum tubing, the plane has a wingspan of 10 feet and is a little over eight feet long. It weighs more than 100 pounds.

The airplane reminded J.E. of the Snoopy/Red Baron saga from the Peanuts comic strip, and he painted a figure of the famous beagle on the aircraft. They motorized the airplane with a five-horsepower lawnmower engine and entered it in several parades before officially retiring it to George's yard on July 4, 1988.

Because the pole is perched on a steep rise above the highway, it gives the illusion of the airplane being much higher than it really is. George says he puts a Christmas tree in the back of the plane during the holiday, and he once had an electrical generator hooked to the propeller, which turns freely in the wind. The power thus generated was fed to a string of bulbs that decorated the plane.

"The lights came on, but I didn't have any way of regulating it, so when the wind blew too fast, the bulbs would burn out," he says.

George says the strong winds that blow through his holler play havoc with the plane. "The bolts come loose on the frame because there is so much wind up here, it vibrates them loose," he says. "I use a bucket on a

George Harvey of Hepzibah, Harrison County, admires his landmark Snoopy airplane, fixed on a pole in his front yard. The plane was built by neighbor J.E. Smith and was placed on the pole in 1988.

George examines a reel of 35mm motion picture film in the projection booth of his home theater — a garage converted into a movie theater.

front-end loader so I can get up there to maintain it."

Farther up his front yard is a row of mechanized decorations, also the works of J.E. Smith. There's a Ferris wheel-like structure decorated with Christmas lights and propelled by the wind; a five-foot-long, three-foot-wide locomotive built of metal; and a six-foot-long stagecoach pulled by four plastic hobby horses. The stagecoach and locomotive were once mechanized and powered by the same five-horse-power engine that ran the airplane, and like the plane, were retired to George's yard.

"They were his ideas, and I went along with him," George says of the decorations. He displays them because, like the name of the town in which he lives, George likes being a little different.

"I wanted something different," he says. "Before the airplane was down here, I had a building in front of it, and there was a Volkswagen on top of it."

The clincher, however, is what George had inside that building.

"I used it as a projection building," he says, explaining it housed two 35mm motion picture projectors aimed at a screen on the side of another building in his front yard. Speaker horns on the building completed the drive-in theater experience for his friends and neighbors.

"A couple of times they called the law on me and told me I was too loud," he says.

Running an outdoor motion picture show was his hobby. Some guys like to hunt and fish; George likes to show movies. And he would have continued to run the outdoor shows if the roof on his projection building had not collapsed. So what became of the projectors and his film collection?

He opened the side door of his garage and we stepped inside the Harvey Theater. At one end is an elevated projection room with two 35mm projectors, weighing a total of one ton, and a 16mm projector modified to an arc lamp source — the work of J.E. Smith, who obtained the projectors and much of George's film collection from an old theater. At the other end is a curved screen, 16 feet long and eight feet tall.

Several huge speakers hang from the ceiling and provide a genuine movie-going experience, complete with an electronic keyboard wired into the sound system. George runs old westerns and *Dead End Kids* features, ancient previews of coming attractions, and just about any other kind of film he can lay his hands on. Usually, it's for an audience of one. But George Harvey takes pride in being the operator/audience of the last moving picture show in Hepzibah — and the joy of being himself.

"I like to be different," he says. "I am different."

New Books Available

By Gordon Simmons

Elk River Travelogue

Skip Johnson's ***Upper River: Elk's Origins and Beyond*** traces the geography and history along the Elk River from its headwaters at Slatyfork, Pocahontas County, to its confluence with the Kanawha River at Charleston. Along the way, the Elk passes through Pocahontas, Randolph, Webster, Braxton, Clay, and Kanawha counties, dropping more than 4,000 feet in elevation and flowing 171 miles. The author introduces the reader to the people, history, legends, and fishing of the longest river located entirely within the boundaries of West Virginia.

The book has a chapter devoted to W.E.R. Byrne, author of *Tale of the Elk*, and one about the fishing creeks of Bergoo and Leatherwood. [See "Bergoo, the Town," by Mark Romano; Spring 2006.] Historical and contemporary photographs illustrate this informal and engaging narrative.

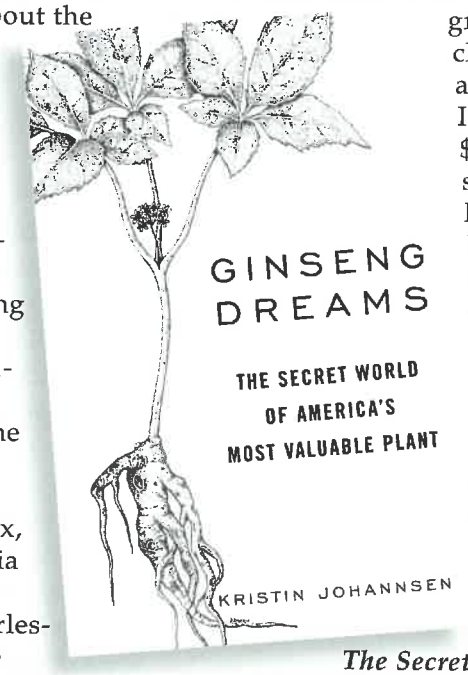
Upper River is a 301-page hardback and includes an index. The book sells for $27.50, plus $5 shipping and $1.65 in-state sales tax, from the West Virginia Book Company, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston WV 25302; phone 1-888-982-7472 or on the Web at www.wvbookco.com.

Books on Nature

Growing and Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal and Other Woodland Medicinals is an informative and practical guide to cultivating plants native to the Appalachian region. This new book is written by veteran ginseng grower Dr. W. Scott Persons and expert horticulturist Dr. Jeanine M. Davis.

Along with ginseng and goldenseal, the authors detail methods of growing such botanicals as ramps, black cohosh, bethroot, bloodroot, blue cohosh, false unicorn, galax, mayapple, pinkroot, spikenard, wild ginger, and wild indigo. In addition to extensive practical advice regarding plant cultivation, they also discuss current market conditions, list references and resources, and provide a disease list.

The 466-page paperback book contains more than 200 photographs and charts, as well as an index. It sells for $25, plus $5 shipping and handling, from Bright Mountain Books, 206 Riva Ridge Drive, Fairview, NC 28730; phone 1-800-437-3959.



Kristin Johannsen's ***Ginseng Dreams: The Secret World of America's Most Valuable Plant*** examines the history and future prospects of ginseng through the accounts of seven people engaged in activities ranging from growing the plant to researching its medicinal applications.

Readers learn, for example, from an interview with WVU conservation biologist Jim McGraw, that there are an estimated 87 million ginseng plants in West Virginia, with as much as five percent harvested yearly. In addition, the author discusses in detail the recurring possibility of extinction of wild ginseng.

A 215-page hardcover edition, *Ginseng Dreams* includes bibliographical notes and an index, and sells for $24.95. The book is available in bookstores or from the publisher, the University Press of Kentucky, 663 South Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40508; on the Web at www.kentuckypress.com.

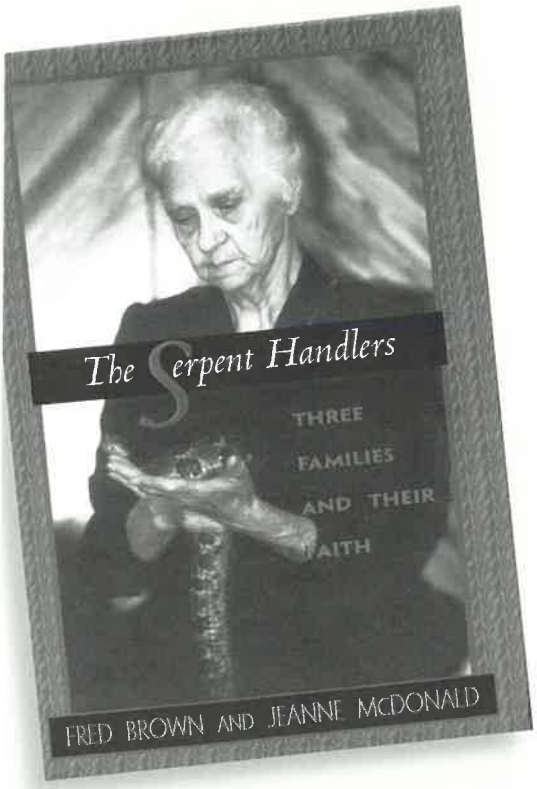
Common Myths About Appalachian Forests is a publication of the West Virginia Forestry Association, a timber industry organization, seeking, in the words of its executive director, "to correct the folklore" with the latest scientific findings. As one would expect from a special-interest group, many of the claims debunked as myths in this pamphlet have to do with alleged environmental harm attributed to practices of the forest industry, such as the wholesale deforestation of the Appalachian region at the beginning of the 20th century.

The 33-page pamphlet sells for $1.50 from the West Virginia Forestry Association, P.O. Box 718, Ripley, WV 25271; phone (304)372-1955.

West Virginia Birds: An Introduction to Familiar Species is

published as part of the Pocket Naturalist Guides from Waterford Press. Conveniently designed to slip into a shirt pocket, the laminated booklet unfolds to reveal 10 pages of color illustrations of birds common to West Virginia, featuring 140 species in all. Pictures are accompanied by information to aid in identifying the bird depicted, such as size or description of call. A map on the back of the booklet locates bird sanctuaries around the state.

Also available is an ***Appalachian Trail Wildlife*** guide in the same series. The guides sell for $5.95 each from Waterford Press, 428 N. 24th Street, Phoenix, AZ 58008; phone 1-800-434-2555 or on the Web at www.waterfordpress.com.



Religion in Appalachia

The Serpent Handlers: Three Families and Their Faith, by Fred Brown and Jeanne McDonald, is an account of Signs Following families in Jolo, McDowell County, as well as rural Tennessee and Kentucky. The authors allow serpent handlers to speak for themselves, without the sensationalist commentary sometimes found in journalistic accounts of the faith. Several members of each family are interviewed, all of them willing to testify as to the sincerity of their beliefs.

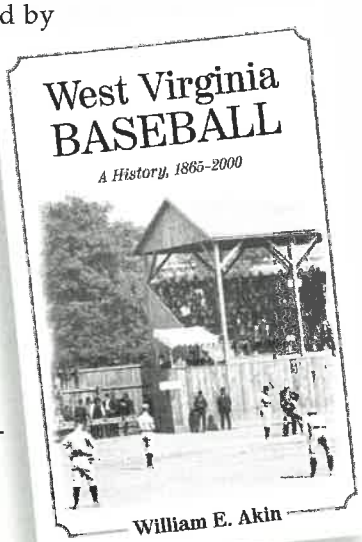
The book is a 352-page hardback and includes 54 black-and-white photographs. It sells for $19.95 from publisher John F. Blair, 1406 Plaza Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27103; phone 1-800-222-9796.

The Galax Gatherers: The Gospel Among the Highlanders, by Edward O. Guerrant, is a reprint of a now-classic study of Appalachian religious practices, first published in 1910. Long out of print, this books exemplifies the missionary efforts and attitudes that prevailed toward rural Appalachians beginning in the late 19th century. Guerrant traveled the region preaching and setting up churches and organizing congregations during a period in which inhabitants of the southern mountains came to be regarded as backwards and in need of religious missionaries, as well as the blessings of modern urban society.

The Galax Gatherers opens a window into the paternalistic mindset that still lingers in the attitudes and prejudices of some outside the region. The 264-page paperback sells for $19.95 and contains a critical introduction by Mark Huddle, assessing the significance of the publication and its author. The book is published in the University of Tennessee Press' Appalachian Echoes series, available from the publisher; phone 1-800-624-2736, on the Web at www.utpress.org.

West Virginia Baseball

West Virginia Baseball: A History, 1865-2000, by historian William E. Akin, begins with the observation that the invention of baseball and West Virginia's statehood closely coincide. This book not only chronicles the history of the popular sport in the Mountain State but also situates each period of baseball's development in the social and political context of the time.



Readers learn of the first match game played by the Hunkidori Base Ball Club in Wheeling in 1866. From this beginning, Akin traces the professional, minor, and independent leagues in the state, leading up to the revival of professional baseball here after 1985. Chapters include its origin as a social game (1865-73), the emergence of professional teams (1874-95), an era of Martinsburg's prominence in the game (1914-34), and the importance of baseball in coal mining communities (1920-41). [See "Coal Town Baseball," by Paul Nyden; October-December 1980.]

Thoroughly researched and highly detailed, *West Virginia Baseball* includes interesting photographs — a young Henry Louis Gates, for example, poses in his role as scorekeeper with the 1962 Little League team from Piedmont, Mineral County — as well as reference notes, bibliography, and index. The 239-page paperback sells for $29.95, available from McFarland & Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; phone 1-800-253-2187 or on the Web at www.mcfarlandpub.com.

Covered Bridges

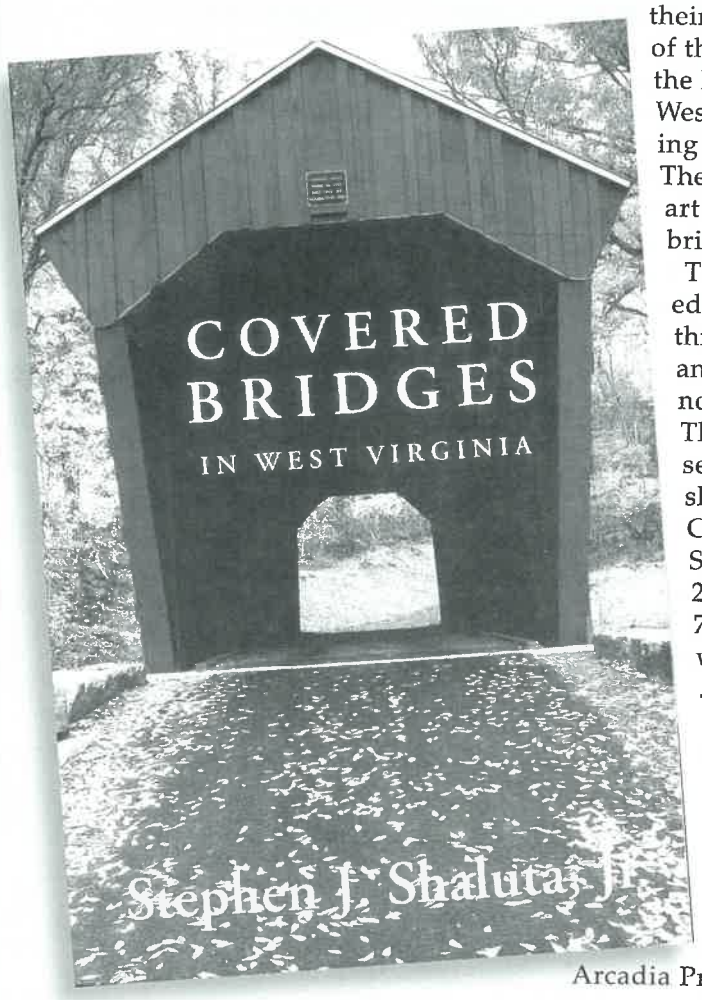
A new book titled ***Covered Bridges in West Virginia***, by author and photographer Stephen J. Shaluta, highlights all 17 remaining struc-

tures in the state, showing them off to full advantage in rich color.

The 64-page paperback serves primarily as a pictorial guide to the bridges, offering between two and four views of each in a variety of seasonal settings, along with a handy locator map. Shaluta's dedication to this topic is evident, as he has obviously visited and photographed each bridge on numerous occasions; he provides the reader with a short history and concise driving instructions for each one.

GOLDENSEAL readers will be familiar with a number of these bridges, including the one in Barrackville [see "Saved — Again!: Restoring the Barrackville Covered Bridge," by Mark Kemp-Rye; Fall 1999], as well as the work of Stephen Shaluta [see "A Spruce Knob Miracle," by Bill Garnette; Fall 2000]. Shaluta is a staff photographer for the West Virginia Department of Commerce, a freelance photographer, and a regular contributor to *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine.

Covered Bridges in West Virginia is published by Quarrier Press and sells for $8.95. It is available from the West Virginia Book Company, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston, WV 25302; phone 1-888-982-0594 or on the Web at www.wvbookco.com.

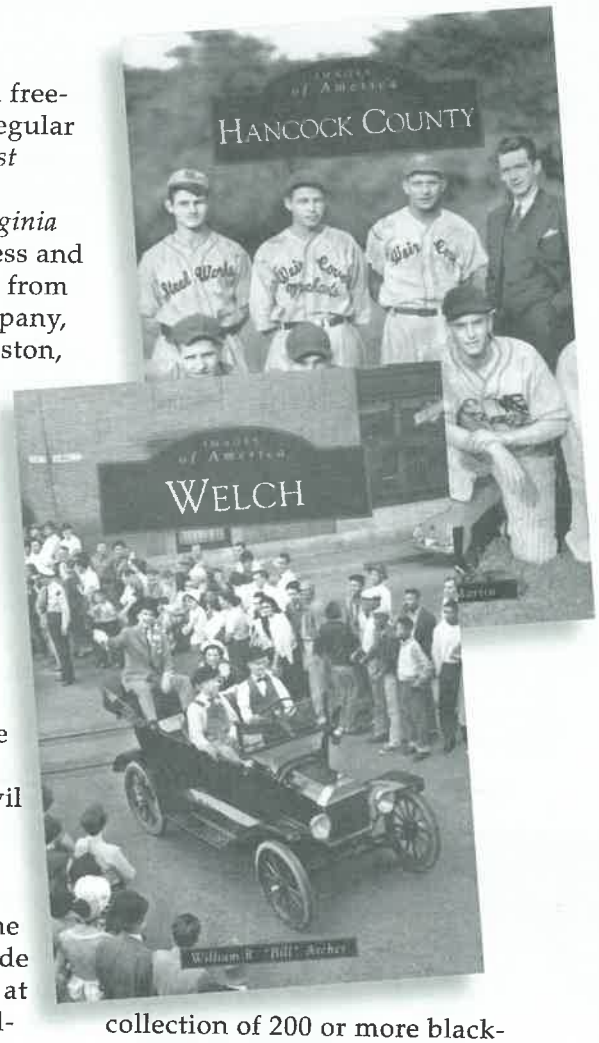


The most historically important builder of West Virginia's covered bridges is the subject of ***Lemuel Chenoweth, 1811-1887: Bridging the Gaps***, by Randy Allan. From the beginning of Chenoweth's career as a turnpike superintendent during the Civil War, this pioneering civil engineer designed and built nearly two dozen structures, renowned for the quality of their construction. Some of their locations include the Middle Fork River at Weston, Philippi, Leading Creek, and Barrackville. The author also details the art and science of covered bridge building.

The book is illustrated with photographs throughout and includes an index and the Chenoweth family genealogy. The 166-page paperback sells for $21, plus $5 shipping, from McClain Printing, 212 Main Street, Parsons, WV 26287; phone 1-800-654-7179 or on the Web at www.mcclainprinting.com.

Images of West Virginia

Several new volumes have been published in the popular Images of America series by Arcadia Press. Each book is a collection of 200 or more black-and-white photographs, often consisting of vintage, early 20th century images, including an introduction, as well as descriptive captions throughout.



Central City, by Lola Roush Miller, traces the booming industrial center that was absorbed into Huntington in 1909 and was recently revived as a mecca for antique collectors. [See "Central City Bung Company," by Jean McClelland; Winter 2003.] In addition to historical chapters on the city's founding, industry, businesses, transportation, schools, churches, and recreation, there is a chapter on the recent revival and redevelopment of this historic neighborhood.

Hancock County, by George B. Hines III and Lou Martin, offers images from the history of this northernmost Northern Panhandle county, with chapters on communities such as New Cumberland, Chester, Newell, and Weirton.

Photographs of such enterprises as Homer Laughlin China, Weirton Steel, and, more recently, Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort attest to their prominence in local history up to the present day.

Brent Carney's ***Oglebay Park*** is a pictorial history of the famous resort and cultural center in Wheeling. The 1,650-acre park appears in a range of images, historical and recent, including those depicting such traditions as the Mahrajan Lebanese Festival, first held in 1933, and the nationally famous Winter Festival of Lights.

Historian and journalist Bill Archer has two new entries in the Images series. ***Princeton*** surveys the history of the Mercer County rail-and-coal town that became a major junction for the Virginian Railroad in the first decade of the 20th century. ***Welch*** is a pictorial treatment of the seat of McDowell County, similarly associated with the early 20th century coal boom in southern West Virginia.

The Postcard History Series, also published by Arcadia, has a new entry, ***Harpers Ferry***, by James A. Beckman. Hundreds of vintage postcards are reproduced to illustrate the town's dramatic history, with chapters devoted to John Brown, the Civil War, early street scenes, Storer College, and the National Historical Park. For yet another take on this historic town, ***Harpers Ferry***, by Dolly Nasby, is a new volume in Arcadia's Then and Now series, which compares scenes from historical photographs with contemporary depictions, allowing the viewer to see things as they were, what has remained relatively unchanged, and what has gone forever.

Each volume is a 128-page paperback and sells for $19.99. They are available at local bookstores or from Arcadia Publishing; 1-888-313-2665 or on the Web at www.arcadiapublishing.com.

Hot Dog Gourmet

Hot Dogs from Almost Heaven, by Harry Lynch, is a cookbook dedicated to a versatile favorite food usually considered too humble to rate such a treatment. The author has compiled more than 80 recipes, including sauces and side dishes, testimony to the enduring popularity of the hot dog, both in West Virginia — chili, onions, and slaw as preferred toppings — and elsewhere.

Hot Dogs from Almost Heaven is a 104-page paperback and sells for $6.95, published by Quarrier Press. It is available from the West Virginia Book Company, 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston WV 25302; phone 1-888-982-7472 or on the Web at www.wvbookco.com.

GORDON SIMMONS is editorial assistant for GOLDENSEAL magazine.

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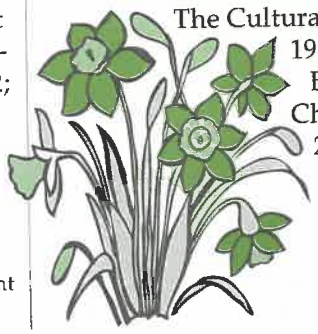

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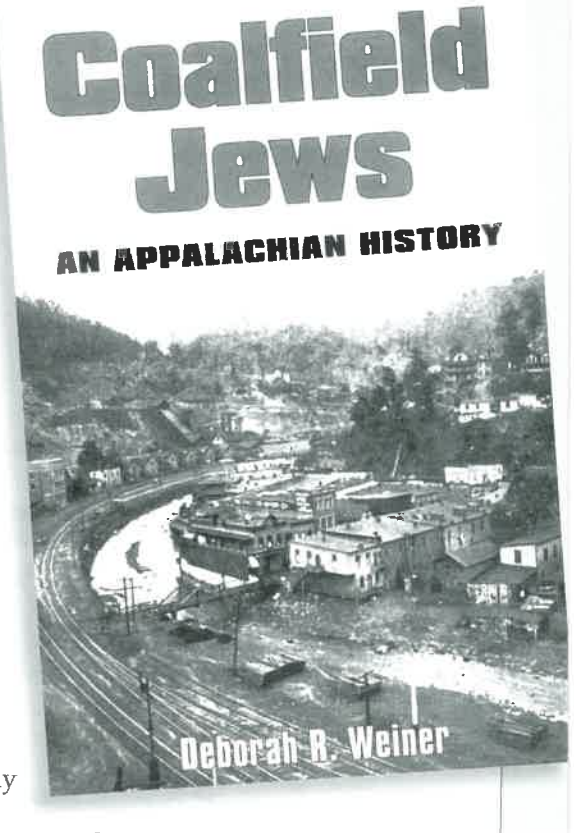
Coalfield Jews



Coalfield Jews: An Appalachian History, by Deborah R. Weiner, examines Jewish immigration to the coal towns of central Appalachia in the early 20th century, including Fayette, Logan, Mingo, Raleigh, Wyoming, McDowell, and Mercer counties.

Often serving as local merchants, Jews from Eastern Europe arrived with other immigrants in large numbers during the coal boom, playing key roles in many communities and becoming a significant presence during this pivotal period of Appalachian history. Jews moving to many small mountain towns found obstacles to maintaining religious observance. As merchants, many had to navigate around competition from company stores, commonplace throughout the coalfields. These immigrants were, nevertheless, often able to persevere and prosper, establishing an enduring place for themselves and their descendants in a region transformed by modern industry.

Personal interviews and research of original source materials allow the author to discover much that has been little-known, such as the fact that Jews made up at one time 10 percent of the population of Keystone, McDowell County. The result is a new and more nuanced appreciation of Jewish contributions to the region's history and development. [See "Faith, Knowledge and Practice: The Jews of Southern West Virginia," by Michael Meador; Summer 1985.]

Coalfield Jews is a 264-page paperback, with photographs, endnotes, bibliography, and index. The book sells for $25 and is available from the University of Illinois Press, Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 South Langley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628; phone 1-800-621-2736 or online at www.press.uillinois.edu.

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Coming Next Issue...

- Seneca Rocks Climbing School
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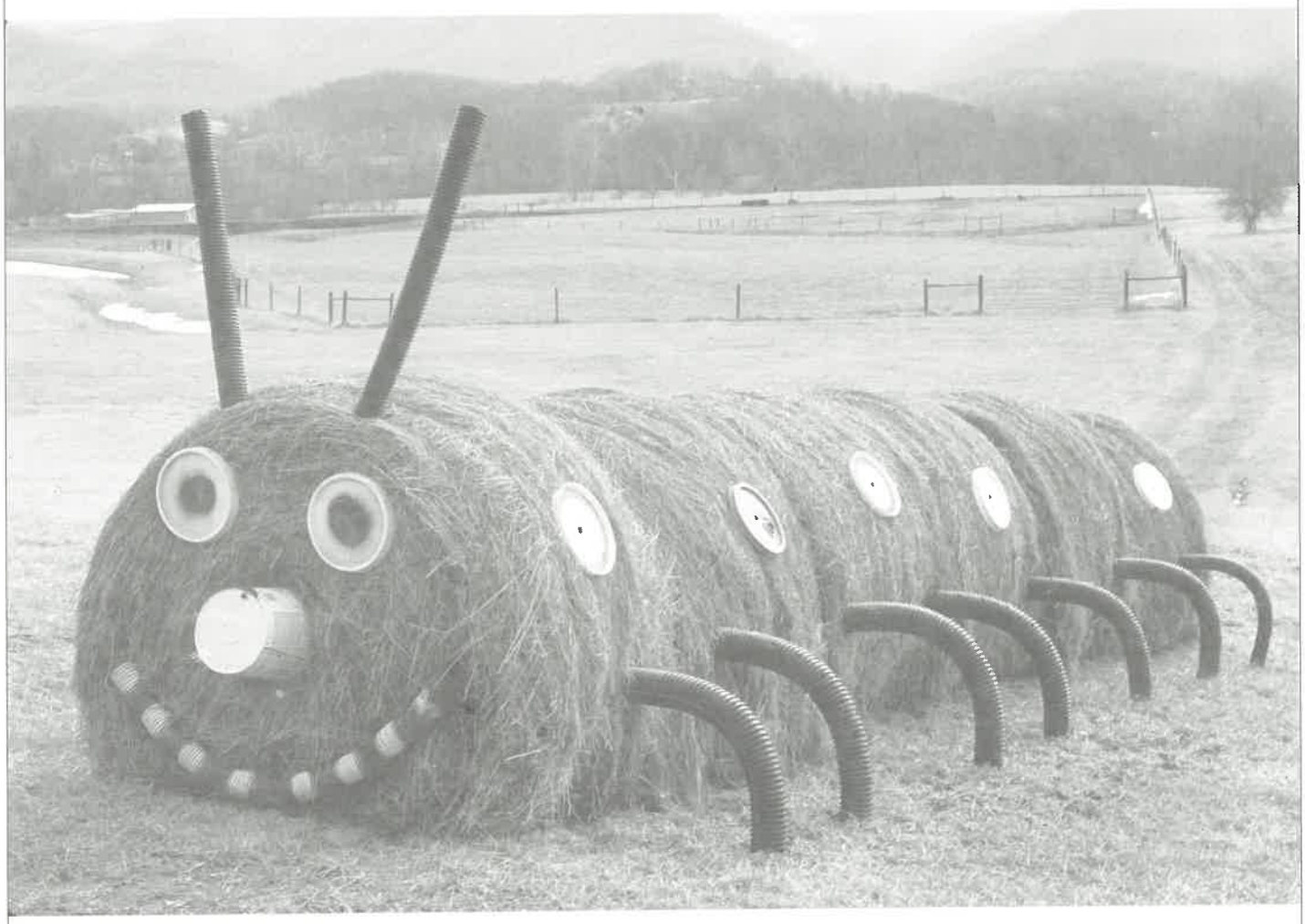
- Pennsboro Speedway

Photo Curiosity



Is it just me, or are the caterpillars a little large this year? This monstrous creation turned heads and frightened small dogs along U.S. Route 219/250 near Valley Bend a couple of years ago, where Gerald Milnes managed to coax a smile for this photograph. Made entirely of straw and plastic by an unknown farmer, this is West Virginia agricultural folk art at its finest.

If you have any information about this clever critter or its maker, or have photographs of similar beasts or contraptions, please drop us a line at the GOLDENSEAL office.

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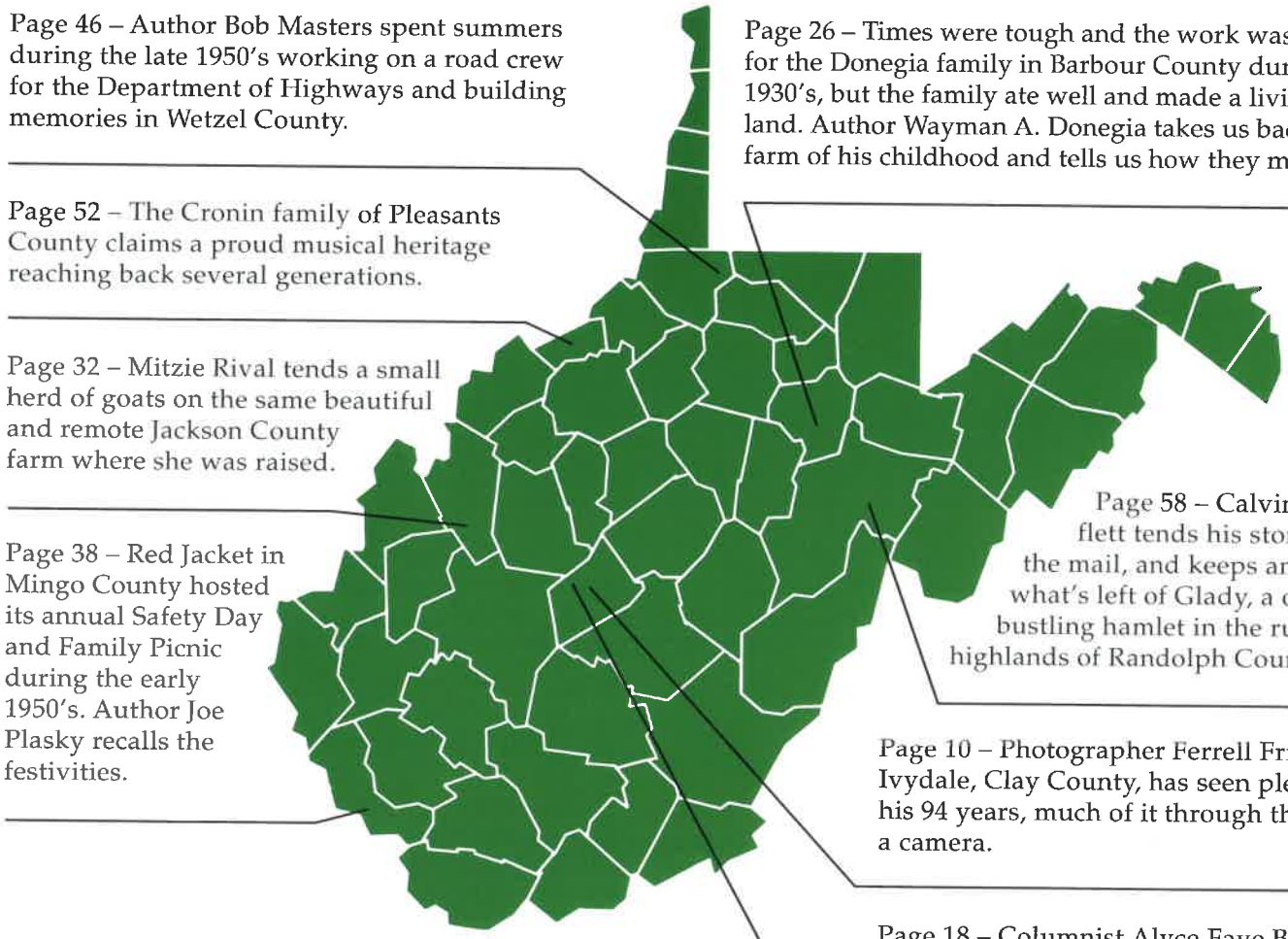

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