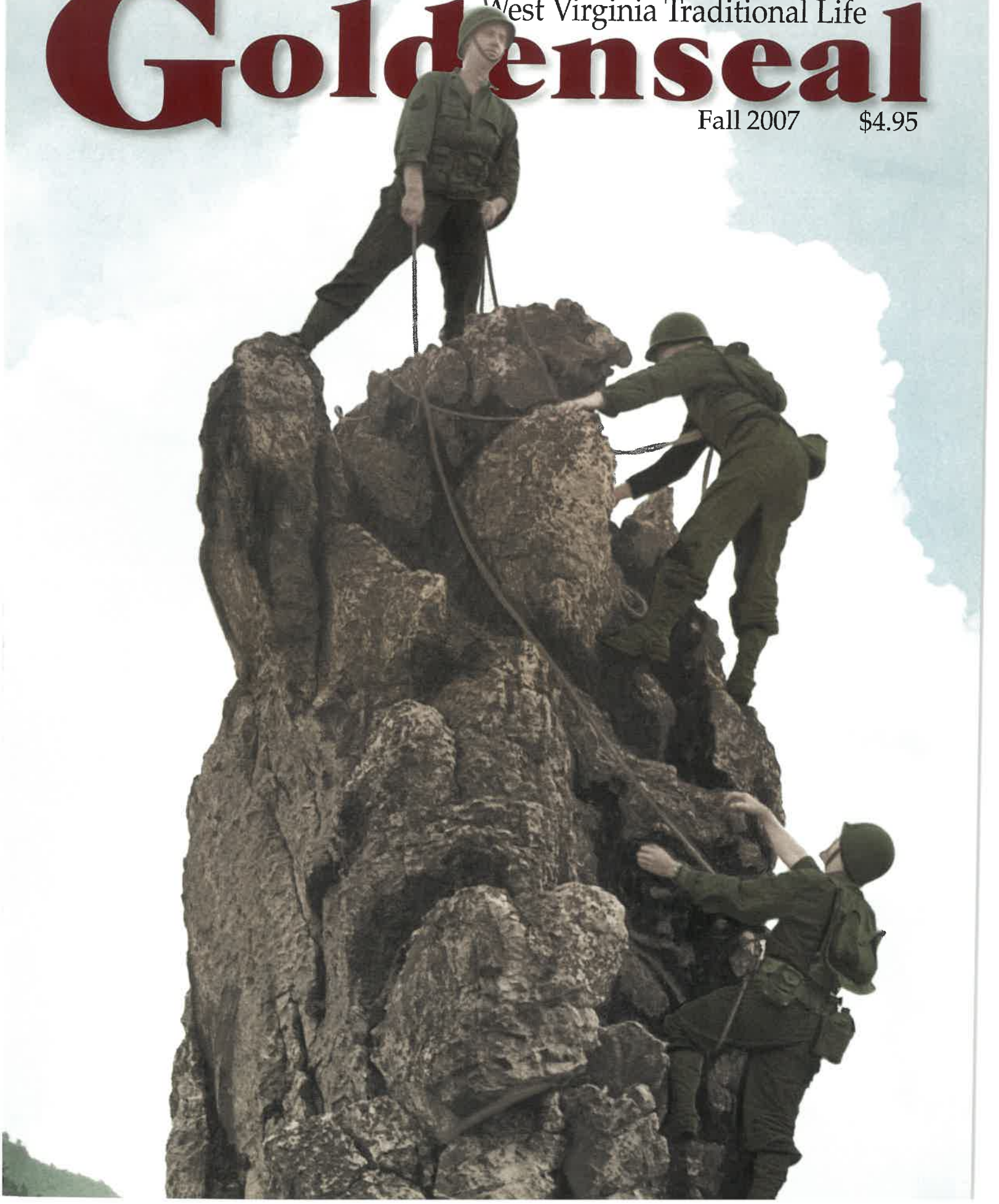
Seneca Rocks • Ken Hechler • Pennsboro Speedway • Quiet Dell Murders

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Fall 2007 $4.95



From the Editor - Good News!

Last spring, I was paid a surprise visit by Martha McKee, an energetic member of Secretary of Education and the Arts Kay Goodwin's staff. Martha is usually quite chipper and enthusiastic, and seemed especially so on this day. She informed me that Secretary Goodwin had read one of my recent editorials, decrying GOLDENSEAL's slow decline in readership and pressing our need to find new subscribers. The Secretary and Governor Joe Manchin wanted to help, and invited me to submit a proposal.

This was good news, indeed! For years, we have struggled to put GOLDENSEAL in the hands of teachers, students, and librarians. Many of these folks have a keen interest in West Virginia history and traditional life, and they love to read. Unfortunately, during austere times, fewer and fewer schools and libraries have budget enough to buy pencils, much less purchase even an affordable magazine like GOLDENSEAL.

This magazine has tremendous value for people who look for reliable sources of news and information related to local history and West Virginia folklife. There are great benefits to getting GOLDENSEAL into the hands of this audience. Not only would we expose thousands of potential new readers to the magazine, but we would begin the task of establishing a long and fruitful relationship with a new generation of West Virginians. That can't hurt!

A couple of years ago, we were encouraged when *Alabama Heritage* magazine, a beautiful publication from the University of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Archives and History, announced a partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield to place copies of their magazine in every school in Alabama. In spite of these high hopes and the sincere efforts by the West Virginia Commissioner of Culture and History, the support here in our state never materialized.

In earlier days, GOLDENSEAL was distributed for free. I know some of you recall those happy times, when the state could afford to publish a magazine like this at no cost to its readers. Not only was it free to individuals, but it was free to libraries, schools, and institutions. It's ironic that as the state realized it could no longer afford this expense, many libraries, schools, and institutions, feeling the same pinch in the pocketbook, found that they could no longer afford the new subscription price. Our mailing list, which had swelled to upwards of 30,000, was cut considerably. While we still think it is important — and fair — that we ask our readers to support the magazine financially, we have remained on the lookout for opportunities to provide the magazine to those for whom the modest subscription cost has proven prohibitive.

Well, upon hearing Martha's invitation, I immediately thought of our earlier efforts to place the magazine in schools and libraries. In addition, I wanted to include all state and federal prisons, along with all of the adult literacy programs in the state. We submitted a proposal to Secretary Goodwin and Governor Manchin to fund free two-year subscriptions to approximately 1,000 school libraries, public and private libraries, prisons, and adult literacy groups in West Virginia. We are pleased to announce that our proposal was accepted. So beginning with this issue and continuing until Summer 2009, GOLDENSEAL will be sent to all these locations, at no cost to them.

If you are reading GOLDENSEAL at one of these locations, please let the director or administrator know that you appreciate the magazine. In about two years, the program will be evaluated to determine its future. In the meantime, I hope you'll join me in extending our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Secretary and the Governor for their generous support, their vision, and their belief in GOLDENSEAL.

John Lilly

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On the cover: Soldiers scale Seneca Rocks during World War II assault training in Pendleton County. Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine, copyright Jennifer B. Bodine, all rights reserved; colorization by Karin Kercheval. Our story begins on page 8.

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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.

Ferrell Friend

June 11, 2007
Ivydale, West Virginia
Editor:
I was astounded when I received my copies of GOLDENSEAL and the terrific layout. [See "Country Photographer Ferrell Friend: 70 Years Behind the Camera," by Skip Johnson; Summer 2007.] Without question, it is the finest tribute I could ever possibly receive. I am grateful also for the coverage given *The Quicker the Sooner*, which was a pleasant bonus surprise.

You have encouraged me to look forward to and perhaps photograph a few more sunrises.
Sincerely,
Ferrell Friend

June 6, 2007
Sutton, West Virginia
Editor:
I am most appreciative of the fine treatment given to the story on Ferrell Friend. Simply put, I was quite proud of being associated with it.

I think Ferrell is unique because he has always preferred "country" pictures over the high and the mighty, although he has taken many of those, too. Then there are his eccentricities, such as a lifelong refusal to pump his own gas. I don't believe I mentioned this in the article, but in his prime he had a very nice tenor voice. He never sang [publicly], except I suppose occasionally in congregational singing or in the car with me, but he certainly could do justice to "Amazing Grace" and other hymns of his childhood.


Photographer Ferrell Friend in 2001.

In a way, this issue of GOLDENSEAL was a tribute to Clay Countians — Ferrell, Alyce Faye, Ted Burdette, and J.G. Bradley. The latter was not a native, but he is obviously most closely identified with Clay County.

Again, you have made not just my day, but my year, and I'm sure the same goes for Ferrell.
Best wishes,
Skip Johnson

June 14, 2007
Kansas City, Kansas
Editor:
In the 2007 summer issue of GOLDENSEAL, I read with interest the story of Ferrell Friend. On June 20, 1963, when President Kennedy spoke at the West Virginia Centennial in Charleston, to my recollection, what the president said was, "The sun doesn't always shine in West Virginia, but the people do!"

The statement as it appeared in GOLDENSEAL was that the president said, "The sun always shines on West Virginia." I believe that was an incorrect statement.

I always look forward to receiving my GOLDENSEAL. It always picks me up!
Regards,
Don Farley

According to John Woolley and Gerhard Peters of the University of California at Santa Barbara, President John F. Kennedy said, "The sun does not always shine in West Virginia, but the people always do. ...This state was born to turmoil. It has known sunshine and rain in a hundred years, but I know of no state...whose people feel more strongly, who have a greater sense of pride in themselves, in their state, and in their country than the people of West Virginia. And I am proud to be here today." —ed.

Alyce Faye Bragg. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Alyce Faye Bragg

June 19, 2007
Ovapa, West Virginia
Editor:
Thank you so much for sending the copies of GOLDENSEAL. I was proud of the article written by George David Begler. [See "Columnist Alyce Faye Bragg: Everybody's Grandmother"; Summer 2007.] It was laid out beautifully, and the pictures by Michael Keller were very good. We heard many compliments on the article and the magazine. Keep up the good work!

The only criticism I heard was the fact that folks found it difficult to find the GOLDENSEAL magazine in various stores. (Maybe a wider circulation?)
Sincerely,
Alyce Faye Bragg

Thanks, Alyce. It's a pleasure to hear from you. Circulation is, indeed, an ongoing challenge for us. We appreciate our readers' help in placing the magazine in appropriate stores and retail outlets. Please let us know if you have any recommendations. —ed.

Red Jacket

June 11, 2007
Via e-mail
Kinston, North Carolina
Editor:
I have received the issue, and I want to thank you for the work you did. [See "Worth Their Weight in Gold: Recalling Red Jacket Safety Day," by Joe Plasky; Summer 2007.] I am very proud of the article and the emphasis on my father. I know he would be proud to be recognized for his work and vision for safety in the mines.

Writing the article and going through the process with you and your staff has been a real highlight of my career. I really was able to feel inside the events and atmosphere of southern West Virginia in the 1940's and '50's. It was good to go back in time. I know your publication affects a wide audience, but I am more sure that it deeply affects the writers who lived the history.
Best regards,
Joe Plasky

Bob Masters in Hundred, Wetzel County, late 1950's.

DOH Memories

June 5, 2007
Via e-mail
Hundred, West Virginia
Editor:
I received my complimentary copies of GOLDENSEAL, for which I thank you. [See "Summers in the Brush: DOH Memories in Wetzel County," by Bob Masters; Summer 2007.]

You have misidentified the picture on page 47. That is not me, but Glen Hunt, one of the people mentioned in my story.
Bob Masters

Ooops! Our apologies to both you and Mr. Hunt. We are glad to set the record straight. Thanks for getting in touch and for another fine article. —ed.

Mary and Joseph J. Plasky at Red Jacket Safety Day, Mingo County, early 1950's.

Fiddler Warren Cronin

July 1, 2007
Via e-mail
Gibsons, British Columbia
Editor:
I always enjoy reading GOLDENSEAL but was especially glad to see the article about the Cronin family. [See "Music on the Hill: The Cronin Family of Pleasants County," by Betty Leavengood; Summer 2007.]

It was inspiring to read that music remains an important living tradition within the family today. I thought it worth mentioning that the music of the earliest recorded Cronin family member, Warren Cronin (1869-1943), is available in the Chappell Collection at the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at West Virginia University.

I first heard West Virginia fiddler and singer Warren Cronin on a field recording I discovered in the WVU archive while I was researching the interconnectedness of West Virginia fiddle and vocal traditions for my book, *Music in the Air Somewhere* (WVU Press 2006). This recording of Cronin was made in 1942 by folklore professor Louis Chappell, who collected 54 selections by Cronin. Thanks to Chappell's dedicated efforts, an important part of the Cronin family's musical legacy has been preserved.

Warren Cronin's fiddle and vocal style certainly reveal the family's Irish heritage. He played many Irish jigs, reels, and tunes in 3/4 time that sound more like set dances than waltzes, as well as old-time fiddle chestnuts, such as "Mississippi Sawyer" and "Soldiers Joy." Generally, Cronin's fiddle style is sparse, but when he plays an instrumental version of a ballad (song-airs), his fiddling becomes quite elaborate and ornate. A good example of this is his beautiful rendition of "The Blackbird" — also known as "Queen of the Earth, Child of the Skies" — which he plays on the fiddle and then stops to sing a couple of verses. When he sings the song, Cronin sounds like a traditional, Irish *sean nos* (old style) singer from way back.*
Sincerely,
Erynn Marshall

**This selection is included on a CD recording that accompanies Erynn Marshall's book. It is lovely, indeed. —ed.*

The headstone of Warren and Fannie Cronin in Pleasants County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Mrs. Virginia Cook

June 28, 2007
Via e-mail
Hopewell, Virginia
Editor:
My mother, Mary Gore Thomas, has been subscribing to GOLDENSEAL for quite some time. While reading her latest issue, I noticed a letter from Mrs. Virginia Cook of Mullens, who was thankful that issues of your magazine were available on audio tape for the seeing impaired. [See "Letters from Readers"; Summer 2007.] What a joy to see her name again! Mrs. Cook was my and my mother's home economics teacher at Mullens High School, and she changed my life by inspiring me to major in home economics at Concord College, now Concord University. Mrs. Cook and I left Mullens High School the same year — me to graduation and college and she to retirement. I have now recently retired from a very fulfilling career, teaching the next generation of students what she taught me.


Virginia Cook teaching home economics at Mullens High School, Wyoming County, date unknown.

Her boundless energy and enthusiasm for not only her chosen profession but for life in general was the strongest thread, stringing all of her students together through the generations. Mrs. Cook was one of those teachers that you NEVER forget.
Therese Thomas Parker

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.

Remembering World War II

This fall, West Virginia Public Broadcasting will begin airing televised stories of state residents and their experiences in World War II, both in service and on the home front. These broadcasts will be televised in conjunction with the new Ken Burns series, *The War*, premiering on Sunday, September 23.

More information and scheduling for these local programs can be found on the Web at www.wvpubcast.org as it becomes available, and at www.pbs.org/thewar/ for the seven-part Ken Burns series.

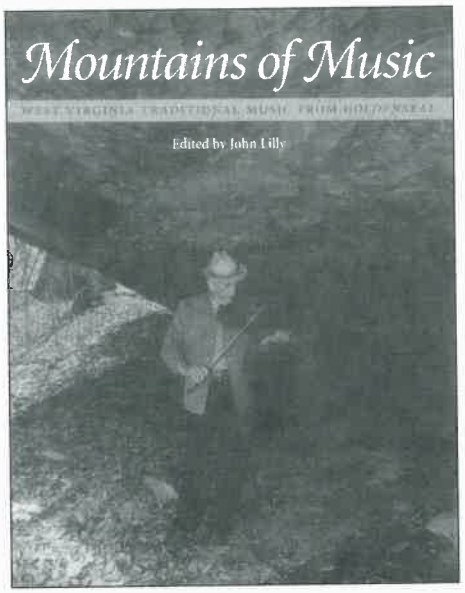
Military Events

POW/MIA Recognition and Remembrance Day will take place September 15 at Holly Gray Park in Sutton, Braxton County. Sponsored by the American Legion, the all-day commemoration will feature a presentation at 11 a.m. by Hershel Woodrow "Woody" Williams of Ona, West Virginia's only living recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Food, music, and ceremonies will mark the event, beginning with the playing of taps at 7 a.m. and continuing until the concluding ceremony at 6 p.m. Admission is $5 per person, proceeds to benefit military veterans. For more information, contact Roy Turner, West Virginia Sons of the American Legion; phone (304)364-8957, or e-mail renrut@citynet.net.

The annual Veterans' Day parade and program in Welch, McDowell County, will be held November 12. The march begins in town and ends with a commemoration and guest speaker at the Coney Island Veterans Park. [See "The Box It Came In:

Veterans' Day at Coney Island Veterans Park in Welch, 1997



Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from GOLDENSEAL gathers 25 years of stories about our state's rich musical heritage into one impressive volume. *Mountains of Music* is the definitive title concerning this rare and beautiful music — and the fine people and mountain culture from which it comes.

The book is available from the GOLDENSEAL office for $23.95, plus $2 shipping per book; West Virginia residents please add 6% sales tax (total $27.39 per book including tax and shipping). Add *Mountains of Music* to your book collection today!

— — — — — — — — — — — —

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Saving the French Gratitude Train," by Richard Hartman; Fall 2005.]

Since 1918, the Welch Veterans' Day event has hosted presidents, senators, admirals, generals, astronauts, and supreme court justices as guest speakers. For more information, phone Russell Burge at (304)436-3803.

Mule and Donkey Show

The 15th annual Mule and Donkey Show will take place September 8-9 in Sutton, Braxton County, at Holly Gray Park. Activities include riding, driving, halter, coon jump, and flag and barrel racing. In addition to races and contests, there are classes for owners and fans of mules and donkeys. The event begins at 4 p.m. on Saturday and resumes at 10 a.m. Sunday. For schedule information, entry and camping fees, and contestant registration, phone Karen Carr at (304)364-8364.


A young foal looks forward to the 15th annual Mule and Donkey Show this September in Sutton.

Pumpkin House

Halloween is the opening day for the famous Pumpkin House in Kenova, Wayne County. Located at 748 Beech Street, two blocks north of U.S. Route 60, the Pumpkin House is noted for its elaborate displays of carved and lighted jack-o-lanterns. [See "3,000 Points of Light: Kenova's Pumpkin House," by John Lilly; Fall 2006.]

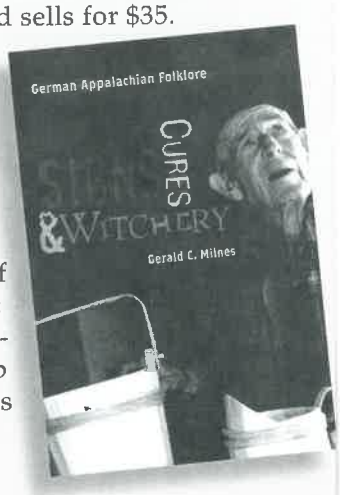
The annual tradition is the work of local pharmacist Ric Griffith, aided by family, neighbors, and volunteers in preparing the impressive display. For more information, phone (304)453-2381.


A few of the 3,000 jack-o-lanterns at Kenova's famous Pumpkin House. Photograph by Michael Keller.

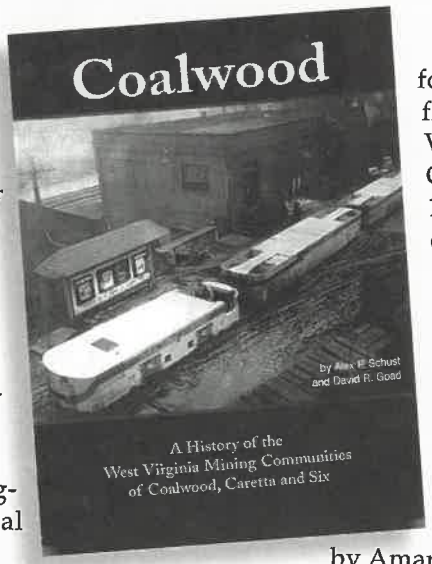
Witchery and Folklore

A new book, titled *Signs, Cures and Witchery: German Appalachian Folklore*, by Gerald Milnes, explores the folk culture brought to the southern mountain region by German immigrants, beginning in the 18th century. A host of religious traditions and folk beliefs and practices, including spells, astrology, and numerology, are documented by the author, a frequent contributor to GOLDENSEAL. [See "Old Christmas and Belsnickles: Our Early Holiday Traditions," by Gerald Milnes; Winter 1995.]

The new book is a 245-page hardback with endnotes, index, and bibliography, and sells for $35. An hour-long documentary of the same title on DVD is also available, and sells for $20. Available from the University of Tennessee Press; phone 1-800-621-8476, on the Web at http://utpress.org.



Local History Books



Coalwood: A History of the West Virginia Mining Communities of Coalwood, Caretta and Six, by Alex P. Schust and David R. Goad, is a companion volume to Schust's previous McDowell County history, *Gary Hollow*. The towns chronicled were built for one of the largest privately owned coal producers, the Carter Coal Company, part of the financial empire belonging to George L. Carter. [See "Historic Coalwood," by Stuart McGehee; Summer 2001.]

A large-format, 394-page hardcover, the new book is illustrated with photography, charts, and maps throughout. It contains a foreword by Homer Hickam, Jr., and a bibliography. *Coalwood* sells for $50, available from the West Virginia Book Company; phone 1-888-982-7472, on the Web at www.wvbookco.com.

Arcadia Publishing has two new volumes in its Images of America series.

Arthurdale, by Amanda Griffith Penix, executive director of Arthurdale Heritage, chronicles the nation's first New Deal Homestead, from Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to Depression-era Scotts Run in 1933 to current efforts to preserve Arthurdale's cultural heritage.

Around Morgantown, by Wallace and Norma Venable, contains chapters on the early history of Morgantown, river and rail traffic, the glass and coal industries, and West Virginia University.

Both books are 128-page paperbacks with hundreds of photographs, and sell for $19.99 each. They are available from Arcadia Publishing, phone 1-888-313-2665; on the Web at www.arcadiapublishing.com.

West Virginia Encyclopedia

The *West Virginia Encyclopedia* is now in its second printing. The large-format hardback book contains more than 2,200 entries, alphabetically arranged, and more than 350 maps, tables, illustrations, and photographs.

The 944-page book sells for $44.95, available the West Virginia Humanities Foundation, on the Web at http://wvhumanities.org/ency1_eg.htm; phone (304)346-8500.

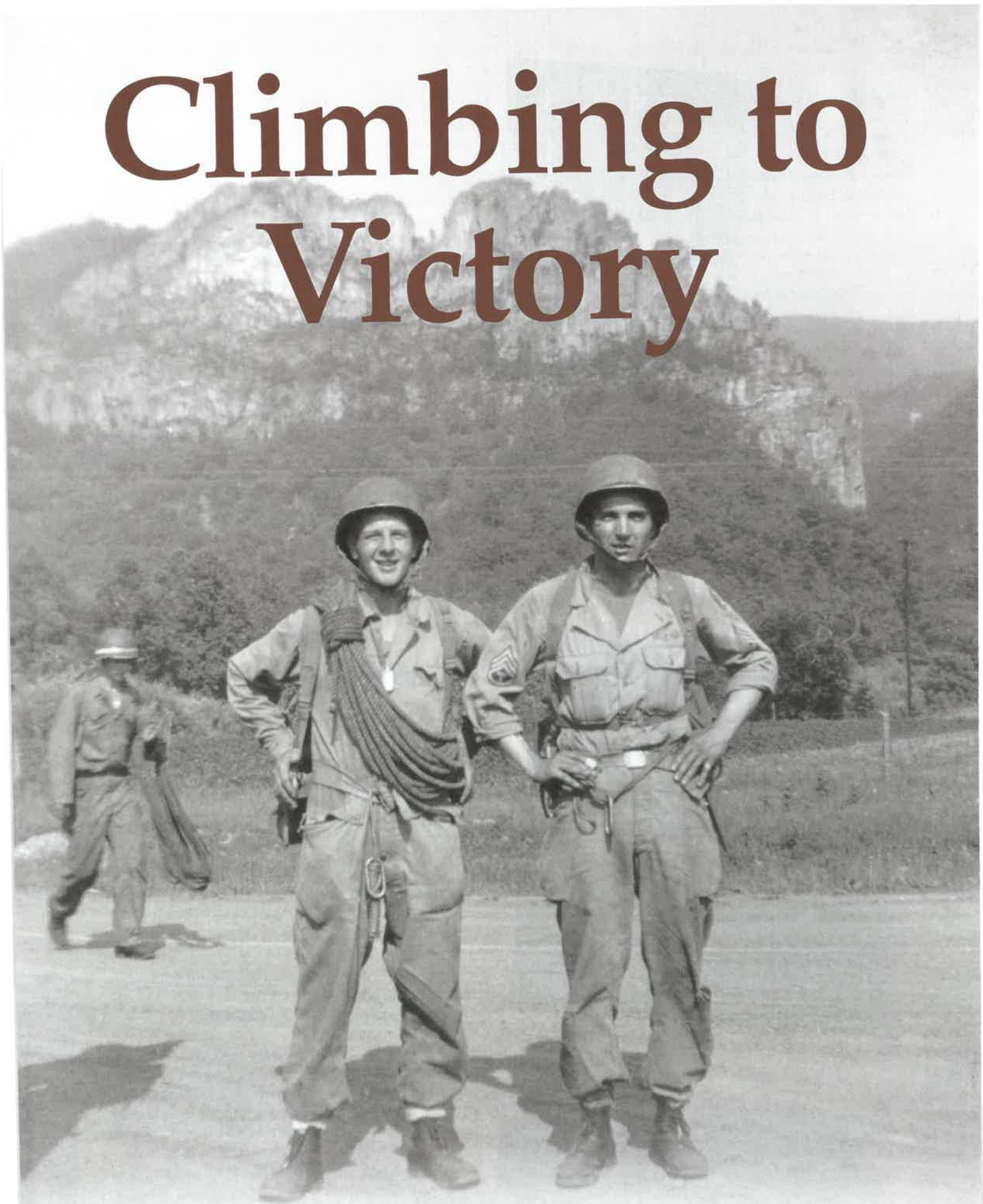
West Virginia History

West Virginia History, a journal published by the state office of Archives and History for more than six decades, is now under the direction of the history department of West Virginia University with a new look, as well as an expanded definition of its mandate.

The new series was inaugurated with the Spring 2007 issue, with Ronald L. Lewis as editor and Ken Fones-Wolf as associate editor. Feature articles include an examination of big band jazz among West Virginia's African Americans in the 1930's and '40's, and the role of anti-communism in the 1952 senatorial race of Harley Kilgore. Readers will also find a transcript of unionist statesman Francis H. Pierpont's detailed recollections of Abraham Lincoln, dating from 1882. In addition, there are a dozen reviews of books of scholarly interest about West Virginia.

The renewed periodical — now subtitled *A Journal of Regional Studies* to encompass cultural as well as historical materials — will be published twice yearly. Each fall issue will include a bibliography of recent books. A scholarly publication, subscriptions to *West Virginia History* are $45 annually, from the WVU Department of History, P.O. Box 6303, Morgantown, WV 26506; on the Web at http://wvhistory.as.wvu.edu.

Climbing to Victory



Seneca Rocks in Pendleton County was the site of a unique World War II wilderness assault training school for the army during 1943 and '44. These two trainees were photographed near the rocks in June 1944. They are Richard Schoen, at left, and Frank "Lefty" Sadjewski. Photograph courtesy of Richard Schoen.

WWII Assault Training at Seneca Rocks

By Robert C. Whetsell

In the summer of 1943, 32 army officers and enlisted men from the Mountain Training Center at Camp Hale, Colorado, embarked on a memorable journey to the wilds of West Virginia. Their mission was to set up and run the army's only low-altitude assault climbing school, located at the base of Seneca Rocks in Pendleton County and operated as part of the West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA).

These GI's were an elite cadre of world-class mountaineers known as the Mountain Training Group (MTG), sometimes called ski troopers or snow soldiers. The 13th Corps of the U.S. Army oversaw the WVMA from headquarters in Elkins. The climbing school at Seneca and a pack-mule transport school in Tucker County were two of several training programs unique to the five-county WVMA. [See "The Mule School: The West Virginia Home Front in World War II," by H.L. Hames; Spring 1991.] The area was selected for its rugged isolation and similarities to terrain found in northern Italy, the expected destination for those engaged in the training. Seneca Rocks was going to war.

For Sergeant Sylvan "Woodie" Waldrip, a 23-year-old climbing instructor, the detail was an eye-opening and life-changing experience. A native of northern California, Woodie documented that time in a 15-page memoir, written in the fall of 1944 while he was stationed in Texas.

It was a sunny July morning when Seneca Rocks first came into view of the army convoy, Woodie wrote. From their trucks, he and the others sized up their new playground. Most had never been to West Virginia or even heard of Seneca Rocks. This 900-foot blade of Tuscarora sandstone impressed them. Although nearby Champe Rocks and other formations were also used, Seneca Rocks was to be the focus of the program.

They were driven to their new campsite on the Wilbur Kisamore farm, situated between Champe and Seneca rocks on the banks of the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac River. "Upon arrival we found just an empty field," Woodie recalled, "but it wasn't long 'til the peaceful scene had changed into a seething, turbulent mass of cursing and sweating GI's."

Despite the noise from the neighboring pigs that could be heard "rooting and squealing throughout the day," Woodie felt the setting was a piece of heaven.

"To our rear was the river, from which we drew our water supply and from which we had many pleasurable afternoons swimming in its refreshing waters. A short ways from the river was a beautiful grove of hardwoods. It was in the shady lane between those trees and the river that we — the instructors — pitched our pyramidal tents."

The rest of the camp, including the mess, orderly, and supply tents, was arranged on one side of the field. The remaining pasture was used as a bivouac area for the students' pup tents.

With camp established, efforts turned to preparing Seneca and Champe rocks for classes. Teams of men armed with axes and saws hacked and cut away sections of dense underbrush that blocked the base of the rocks. Loose stones were rolled off ledges. Afterward, instructors sought to find climbs that required varying degrees of skill for the students.

Members of the elite Mountain Training Group (MTG) arrive at Seneca Rocks in July 1943. Photograph courtesy of Fritz Kramer.

Climbing instructor Sylvan D. "Woodie" Waldrip, prior to his arrival in West Virginia and his promotion to sergeant. Photograph courtesy of Mary Dalen.

For many, West Virginia was an alien place, filled with strange sights and sounds. Woodie described an evening walk to camp from the Mouth of Seneca, the nearest town:

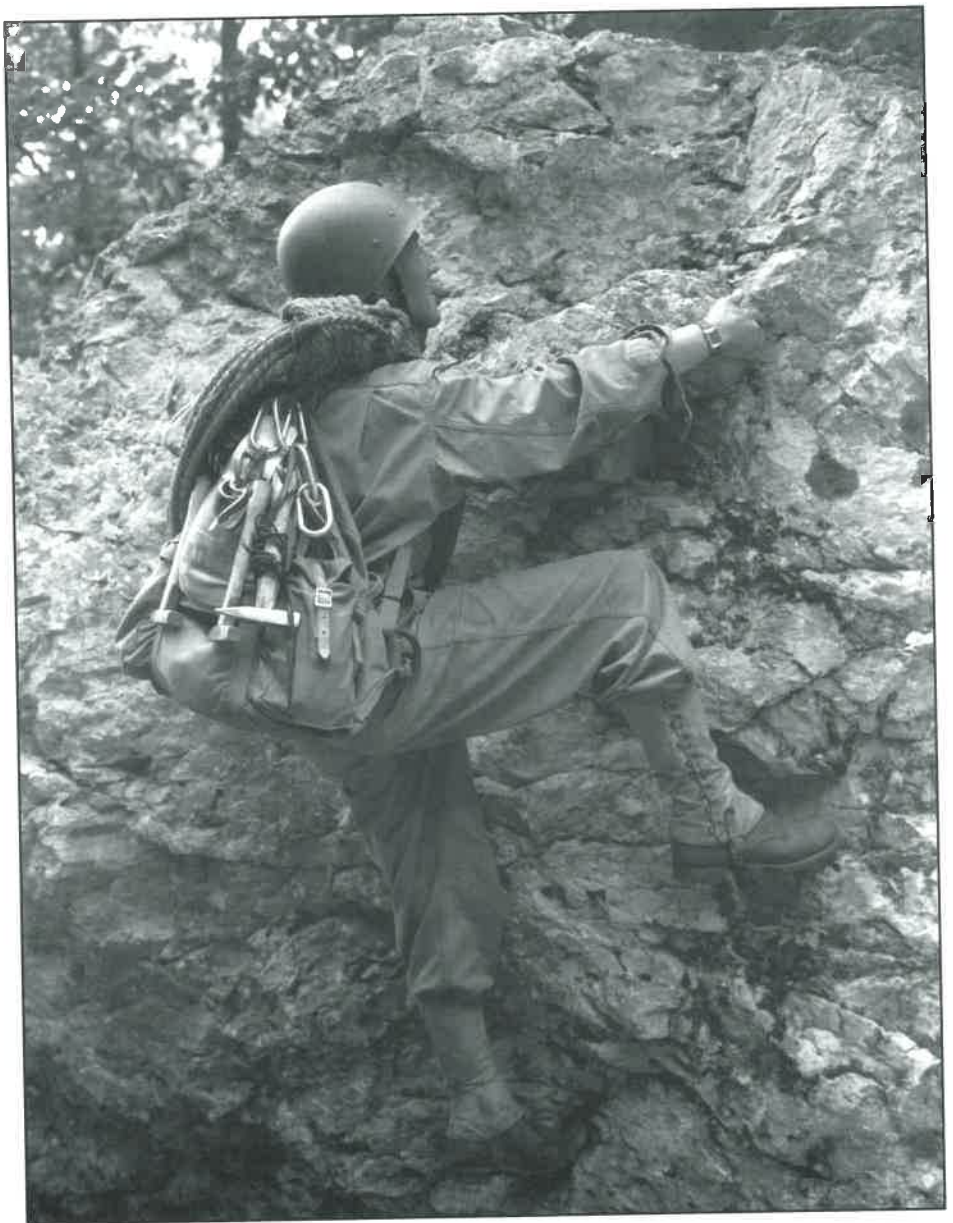
"Under a starlit sky, as we were homeward bound, I turned to Slim [Mabery] and remarked, 'It sounds as though 1,000 bands are playing!' The din was terrific — frogs croaking, bobwhites whistling, owls screeching, and 1,000 other strange and bewildering noises, unlike any I'd ever heard before, were adding their bit to this strange symphony. For the first time, I noticed fireflies — little sparks of flame flittering here and there through the black night. Another enchanting thing brought to my attention that evening was fox fire — old rotten wood that took on a weird phosphorous glow."

Soon, the first contingent of trainees arrived at Seneca. Fritz Kramer, an Austrian-born climber with the MTG, remembers that the students' initial reaction to the sight of Seneca Rocks was one of shock and fright. "They had been told they were going to an assault climbing school — which to them meant climbing over some obstacles," Fritz says. "No word about rocks. When they first saw the rocks and were told they were to climb them, their first reaction was 'We'd rather face a firing squad!'"

The school's 14-day program provided technical instruction on the fundamentals of rock climbing. According to Fritz, the structure of the class was simple: "Each instructor was assigned 10 men, who would be taught the basics of climbing. At the end of the first week, the weakest four were 'washed out.' The remaining six, composing two rope parties of three each, would receive another week of advanced training."

The initial days were used to build the confidence of the soldiers while weeding out those unsuited for climbing. From wooden towers, nicknamed "corn cribs," instructors taught the use of ropes, knot tying, and belaying — the art of catching a man tied on the end of your rope. As instruction moved to Seneca and Champe rocks, soldiers learned hand and foot holds, rappels, piton use, party climbs, night-climbing techniques, and medical evacuations. Overall, the school proved highly successful in teaching climbing techniques to combat teams, medics, engineers, officers, and enlisted men from five army divisions.

Climbing instructor Wendy Broomhall remembered, "Many had no de-



A soldier prepares to scale Seneca Rocks in August 1943, in full climbing gear. Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine, courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.

sire to climb and were frightened to start with, but after two weeks they would be doing real well." Some instructors couldn't help playing with the healthy fears of their students. "I can remember Bob [Galaher] telling a trainee as he was preparing to go off a ledge on his first rappel, 'Don't worry, the ropes hardly ever break,'" Wendy recalled.

While a few climbing injuries did occur, officials were surprised that more soldiers were not hurt, given the nature of the activity. Aside from a few broken bones, most injuries were limited to rope burns, bruises, and abrasions. The most serious injury to occur involved climbing instructor Rudolph Pundt, who sustained a fractured skull after being struck in the head by a falling rock. After that incident, instructors were required to wear helmet liners for protection — a stripe of white tape on the helmet identified the instructors from the students.

There were many dangers to climbers, but carelessness was the climbers' worst enemy. As Woodie explained, "The boys enjoyed the unusual and dangerous training immensely but were always trying some foolish stunt. One false move could spell death — death, not only to the foolish or careless one, but also to the other men in the party.

"As instructors, our classes were our moral responsibility, and it required constant vigil to see that none of them came to harm. We, ourselves, took lots of chances — foolish, unnecessary chances — while we were teaching. The chances we all took makes me shudder when I stop to think back about it. How so many of us came out unscathed, I'll never know."

Inclement weather was embraced as a way to toughen the climbers. After all, they could not count on perfect weather conditions in battle. In the summer, "the days were depressingly hot and the rocks were almost unbearable," Woodie recalled. "Our clothes would cling to our perspiring bodies, and the perspiration would roll off us in streams."

In winter, instruction continued

Photographer A. Aubrey Bodine and Seneca's Cliff-Scaling Soldiers

Photographer A. Aubrey Bodine, bare-chested and carrying a tripod, scales Seneca Rocks while on assignment for the *Baltimore Sun* in August 1943. Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine, copyright Jennifer B. Bodine, all rights reserved.

In August 1943, the *Baltimore Sun* dispatched famed photographer A. Aubrey Bodine (1906-1970) to cover a story about the army's unique assault climbing school at Seneca Rocks. Noted for his romantic documentary style of photography and a willingness to go to extremes to get the shot, the 37-year-old photographer joined members of the 28th Infantry Division as they scaled the rocks one hot afternoon.

He must have been quite a sight to the young army volunteers — shirtless, oblivious to danger, and armed with his press camera and lenses. With a rope tightly lashed to his waist and aided by the climbers, he slowly moved up the rock face, no doubt winning the respect of the men he was photographing. Stopping occasionally to capture an image, they made their way to a prominent pinnacle on the west face of Seneca's south peak known as Humphrey's Head. Once there, Bodine positioned the men for a dramatic series of photos.

In the end, the *Sun* ran two full-page articles featuring the Seneca school. Bodine sought to document the teamwork and spirit of the soldiers as they tested themselves against the seemingly insurmountable challenges hurled at them by Seneca Rocks. He illustrated the life of a mountain soldier: his primitive living conditions, climbing techniques, and unique equipment.

Through his lens, Bodine captured the grandeur of Seneca Rocks and put the observer in the climber's element, where you can almost taste the sweat and feel the breeze in your face, the dirt under your nails, and the blisters on your fingers. —Robert C. Whetsell

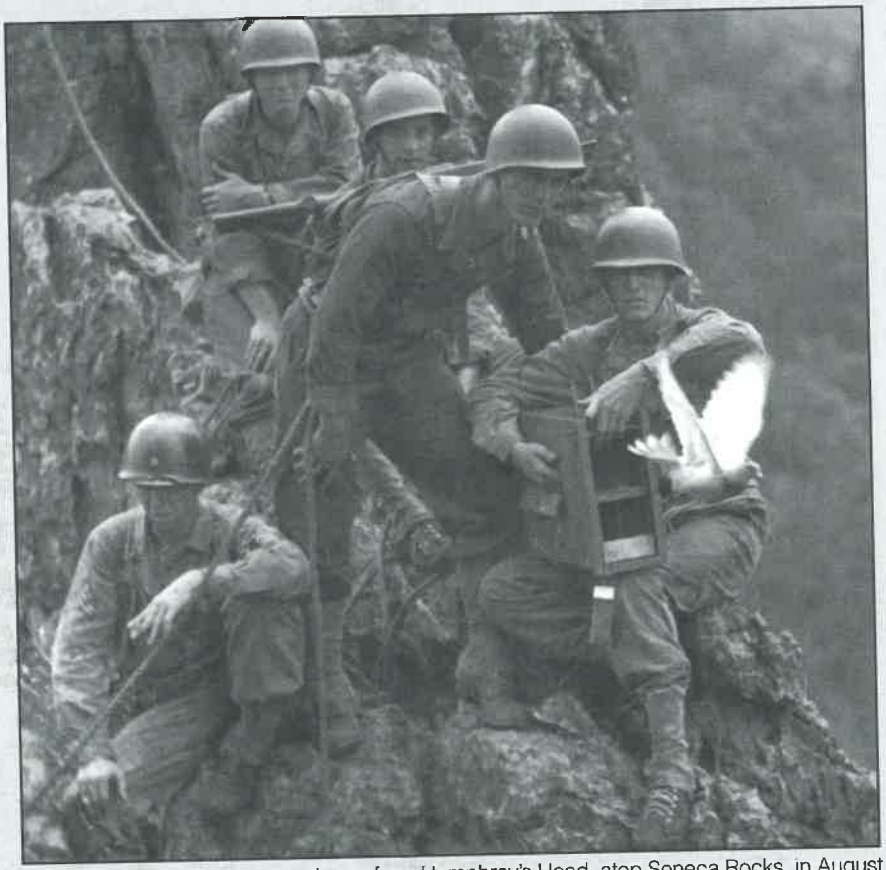
Army Pigeons at Seneca Rocks

Three images taken by A. Aubrey Bodine are the only known photographic documentation showing the army's use of messenger pigeons during the West Virginia Maneuvers. The army used portable pigeon lofts across remote regions of the WVMA to communicate with and train troops. Seneca school climbers also received instruction in messenger pigeon handling.

In the fall of 1943, the 281st Signal Pigeon Company set up a loft near the base of Seneca Rocks to introduce the climbers to the winged messengers. The results were mixed. Most climbers found the unwieldy wooden carriers awkward when positioned on their backs. The climbers also complained the extra weight affected their balance and rubbed their backs raw. After a few close calls, instructors resorted to hauling the carriers up the rocks on ropes.

During these exercises, messages were placed in tiny plastic tubes and strapped to the birds' leg. Two birds, each carrying the same message, were released from a portable, two-bird carrier. This improved the odds the message would get through, as some birds became lost or fell victim to menacing hawks.

In the event of accidents, pigeons were one of the few ways climbers could communicate with the base and medics' first-aid station. On one occasion, a messenger pigeon enabled medical personnel to quickly come to the aide of a climber who had fractured a hip. Today, climbers occasionally encounter roosting pigeons on assents of Seneca — perhaps descendants of errant army pigeons.
—Robert C. Whetsell



Soldiers release a messenger pigeon from Humphrey's Head, atop Seneca Rocks, in August 1943. Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine, courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.

without pause. Fritz Kramer adds, "Hands got very cold, and you had to stop whenever you could to warm them up a bit. Even worse, the rocks became ice covered and very slick. Fortunately, these conditions didn't last long."

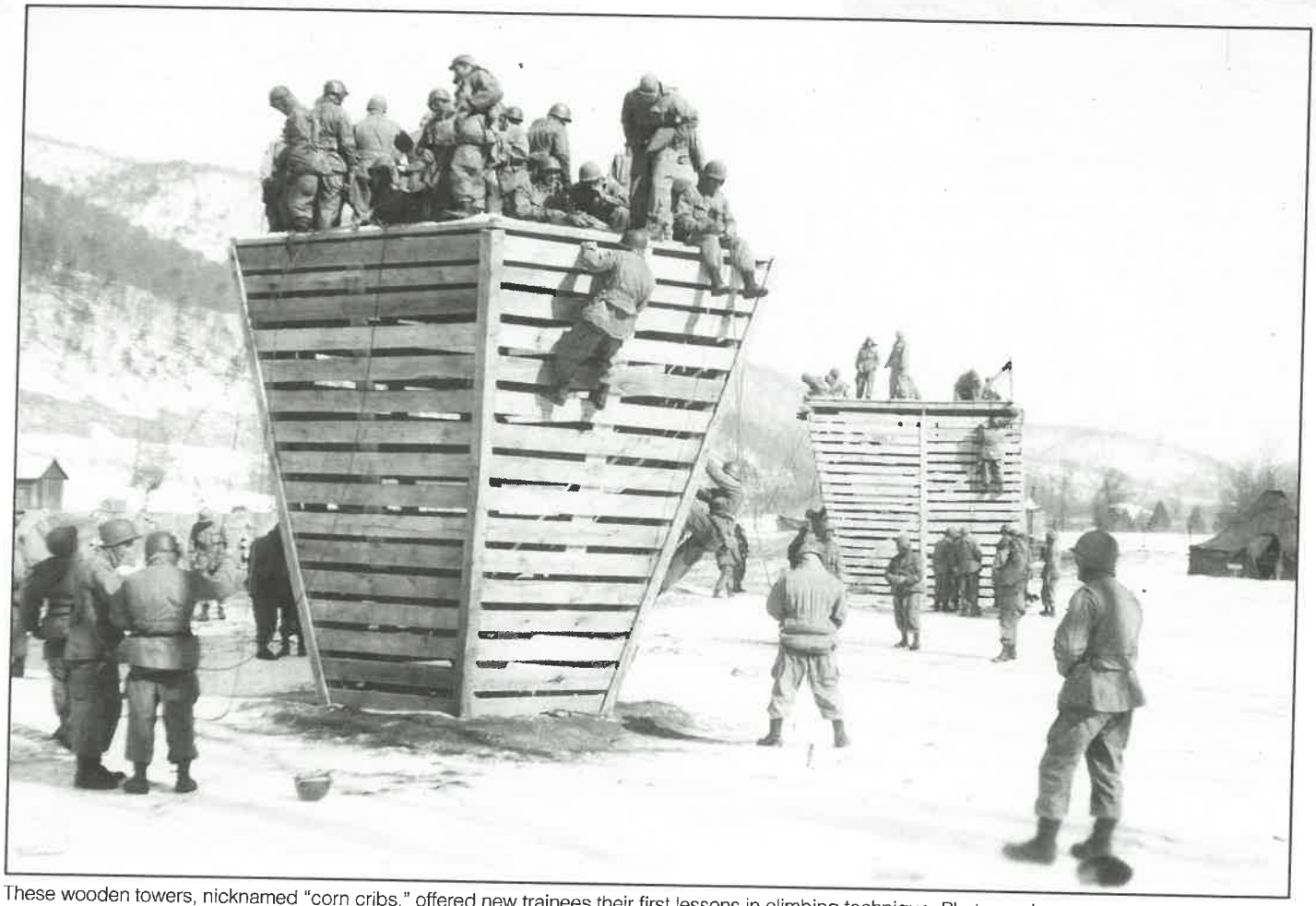
Snakes were another hazard, and fantastic stories abound concerning soldiers and rattlesnakes. The most common form of this story finds a soldier falling into a rattlesnake den where he is bitten to death. Death tolls in these stories range from one to three with as many as 17 injured, though there were actually no confirmed deaths to soldiers as a result of snakebite.

While soldiers from divisions training in the region were not given furloughs, those units stationed in support of the maneuver operation were granted passes. At Seneca, "down time" between classes provided an opportunity for instructors to mingle with the locals. As MTG member Dick Wellington explained, "We instructors had 'Class A' passes that allowed us to go to any of the towns whenever we were off duty, and we took full advantage of them."

In rural areas, most encounters with soldiers occurred by chance as the GI's crossed farms. Commonly, the soldiers would be offered spring water, coffee, homemade pies, or bread. In return, the farmer would be repaid with a broad smile, a "thank you," and whatever money the soldier had on hand. If there were children, coins and candy bars would be slipped into their small hands. These simple gestures were the going rate of exchange between the farmers and "their boys."

Bill Craft, a member of 35th Infantry Division, fondly recalls the mountain women who baked fruit pies for them: "Sitting around a campfire with a warm cup of coffee and eating one of those warm, delicious, fresh pies was a real treat. Those farm ladies really [knew] how to bake."

Early on, there was an effort to "educate" soldiers about the ways and culture of West Virginians. A mimeographed pamphlet titled



These wooden towers, nicknamed "corn cribs," offered new trainees their first lessons in climbing technique. Photograph courtesy of Norm Lindhjem.

"Mountain Lore" was distributed to incoming troops by WVMA headquarters. However, the colorful interpretations of mountaineers only fueled the soldiers' imaginations. Consider the following: "...Walking is still the principle means of travel, but horseback riding is common, and it is not unusual for the stranger to be startled by a bearded giant suddenly emerging from a dense thicket with a long-barreled rifle in the crook of his arm, only to disappear as suddenly as he came, over a trail scarcely visible to the untrained eye. ..."

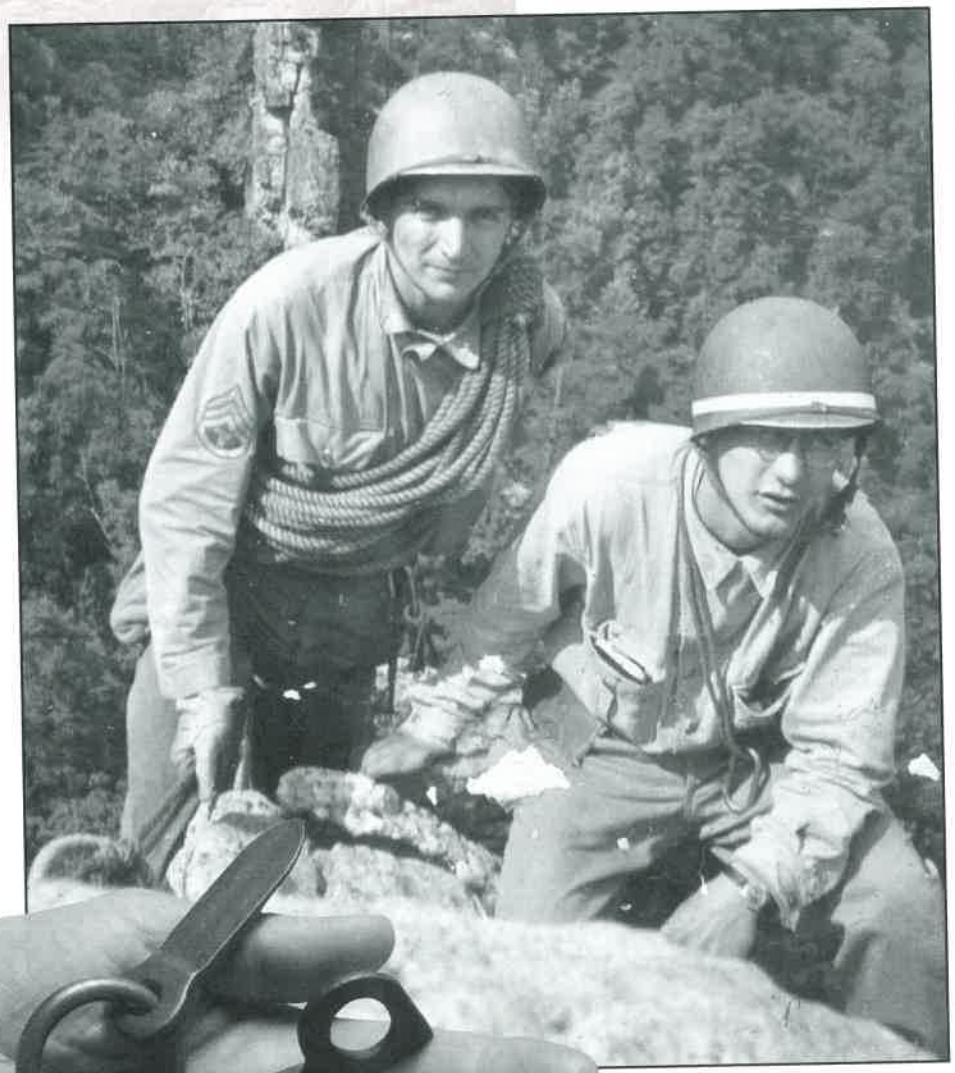
"It was with mingled feelings of dread and expectation that I went to West Virginia," Woodie wrote, noting that stories had filtered through the men about how "back-woodsy" and "uneducated" the people were and how "outmoded" everything was. Upon Woodie's arrival in Elkins, however, those stereotypes were shattered. His apprehension melted away as he found the town "much like any other I'd ever been in. The same stores, same window displays, advertisements, signs — there was no difference! Another amazing discovery was to find that all of the people wore shoes. In fact, they dressed not unlike the folks at home — they were clean, hardworking citizens. ...Where was the West Virginia I had heard such slandering tales about?"

Across the maneuver area, families and whole towns opened their homes and hearts to the soldiers.

Across the maneuver area, families and whole towns opened their homes and hearts to the soldiers. At Franklin, one evening, Woodie and another instructor were given a room at "the Browns'" for the night. As it turned out, recalled Woodie, "the Browns' proved to be the funeral home."

The following morning, the instructors were invited to a Sunday picnic outside of Franklin. Woodie remembered it as a "jolly and festive event," where "it seemed as though the townspeople had bared their cupboards for the affair. The reunion grounds echoed with joyous laughter, shouts, and singing voices. The tables were laden with chicken, cakes, preserves, olives, pickles, pies, salads, melons, drinks — everything imaginable. We gorged ourselves."

The soldiers reciprocated by providing entertainment. Army bands gave concerts while soldiers played local teams in sporting events. Most notable was the army show given the



Instructors, identified by a white stripe on their helmet, trained between 10 and 14 soldiers during each two-week session at Seneca Rocks. Here, an unidentified instructor is photographed with 95th Infantry Division climbing student Lefty Sadjewski in June 1944. Photograph courtesy of Richard Schoen.

Pitons, such as these, were an essential piece of hardware for the cliff-scaling soldiers. It is estimated that as many as 75,000 of these pitons were driven into the face of Seneca Rocks during the WWII army maneuvers. Photograph by Michael Keller.

evening of September 17, 1943, at the Tri-County Fair in Petersburg. Soldiers performed comedy skits, sham battles, close-order drills, and pigeon and climbing demonstrations. A singing quintet composed of instructors from the Seneca school stole the show. Of the evening, the Grant County Press reported, "with nice blending of voices and a varied repertoire, the snow soldiers left nothing undone in their efforts to please the audience."

According to soldier and performer Dick Wellington, "I must admit that we were pretty good. We had many invitations to sing at local Rotary, Elk, Kiwanis, and other clubs throughout the area and gratefully accepted them, although our only recompense was a good Southern meal and a drink of applejack whiskey out of a mason jar in the kitchen, and the warmth and friendship of the groups we entertained. I cannot imagine any area where servicemen were welcomed any more warmly than we were."

The soldiers' interactions with area families often led to dating and even marriages to local women. During the first months of the maneuvers, marriage rates soared in the counties where soldiers were stationed. In Randolph County, headquarters for the maneuvers, marriages doubled and the number of divorces increased.

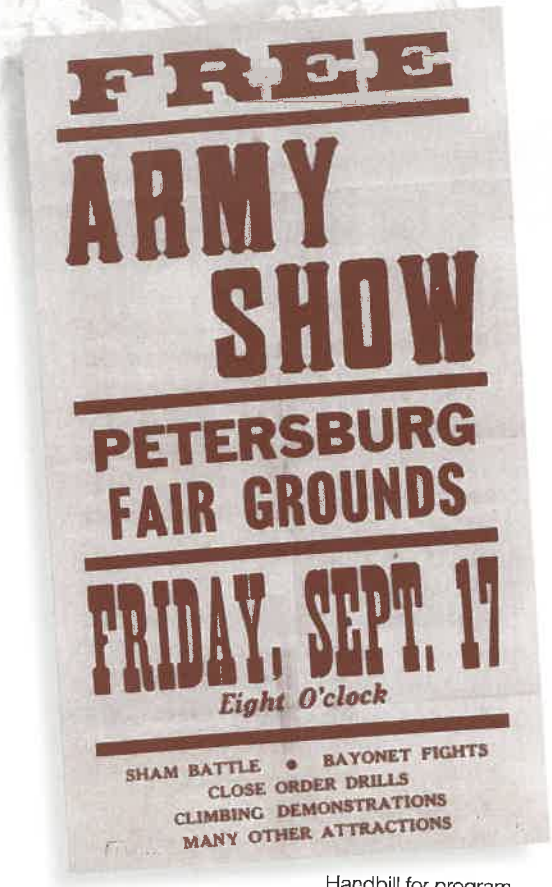
In Franklin, love was in the air for Mary "Sugar" Dyer. On her breaks from Madison College in Harrisonburg, Virginia, she and Woodie Waldrip began dating. Mary, who still makes her home in Franklin, remembers first seeing Woodie one evening at a popular nightspot known as the Hill Top, located outside Petersburg. Although they never danced that night, she admits that she was attracted to him and his uniform. "He was tall, dark, and handsome and a good dancer," she recalls, adding, "I knew he was a ski trooper because his uniform, like those of all of the climbing instructors, was different from ordinary soldiers. They also wore a unique hat that was different, too. They were very handsome and exciting individuals."

It wasn't long before Woodie had captured her heart and asked her to marry him. On June 20, 1944, Woodie and Mary exchanged vows during a simple Presbyterian service in Franklin. After a short honeymoon, the war crowded back into their new life together.

The maneuvers came to a close on July 1, 1944. Woodie and the other men of the MTG were sent to Camp Swift in Texas to join the newly created 10th Mountain Division. That winter, Woodie and the 10th were sent to Italy. Like so many wartime brides, Mary was left at home; she continued to pursue her education degree.

Writing to his parents, instructor Norm Lindhjem commented, "Everyone hates to leave West Virginia as the people have surely been nice to us all and treated us grand." He added, "It was almost like a home."

Of the estimated 100,000 troops believed to have trained in the WVMA, thousands passed through the Seneca school. Once trained and returned to their outfits, these former students aided climbing instruction during large regimental training scenarios within the WVMA.



Handbill for program presented by soldiers in Petersburg on September 17, 1943, courtesy of Norm Lindhjem.

Today, the climbing routes the soldiers blazed and the names they gave to them are lost to history. Climbers still come across rusting pitons—some of the estimated 75,000 pitons driven there by soldiers. Each is a touchstone, a reminder to successive generations of the determination, courage, and sacrifice of the soldiers who scaled Seneca's heights.

Participants of the maneuvers will never forget the kindness shown them by the people of West Virginia. Others, like Woodie Waldrip, never returned from war. Mary proudly retains her only photo of Woodie and the Silver Star she received after his death on April 19, 1945, less than a month before the German surrender in Europe. But it is that 15-page "love story" that is Mary's most personal and cherished item from Woodie, sent to his bride on the eve of his deployment overseas to an uncertain destiny.

In a happy twist of fate, during a brief visit to Montana some years later, Mary stopped to see old friend and former Seneca climbing instructor Ole Dalen. A remarkable man, Ole had returned home from the war and, despite the loss of his right arm, resumed his job as a ski instructor. What started as a brief two-hour visit eventually grew into a 45-year marriage, with the couple returning to Franklin to teach, farm, and raise two children: John and Andrea. Ole's passing in 1992 has left Mary Dalen with a lifetime of memories and grandchildren.

Today, Woodie rests in the Golden Gate National Cemetery, not far from his boyhood home in California. His legacy, and that of his fellow climbers, lives on through his writings and the memories of those able to recall Seneca's cliff-scaling soldiers.

ROBERT C. WHETSELL, a native of Elkins, works as a consultant in historic preservation. He is a graduate of Davis & Elkins College and earned a graduate degree in public history from WVU. Robert, with Gerald Milnes, produced the documentary films, *The Cliff-Scaling Soldiers of West Virginia* and *The 'CC Boys*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Mary Dalen of Franklin has fond memories of the climbing school. In 1944, she wed instructor Woodie Waldrip, who was killed in action in Europe in 1945. She later married former instructor Ole Dalen. She and Ole lived in Franklin until his death in 1992. Mary is shown here with Woodie's Silver Star and Ole's Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Photograph by Michael Keller.

West Virginia Maneuver Area

By Donald L. Rice

An official news release from Washington on June 23, 1943, announced that army maneuvers would commence in Randolph and four adjacent counties to familiarize army units with "low mountain" and rough-terrain operations under the command of the 13th Army Corps. Elkins was selected as the headquarters for the operations, which were to be conducted in the five-county area on both national forest and private lands.

Elkins and surrounding communities soon observed the movement of troops and equipment, with the arrival of truck convoys and special trains. Within a few weeks, 10,000 troops were living in tent cities within what had been vacant fields in Elkins and outlying communities. By early 1944, about 16,000 soldiers were being trained every eight weeks in terrain that had been selected due to its resemblance to European topography, particularly to parts of Italy.

The streets of Elkins were often thronged with soldiers. Local people said it was like Forest Festival days every time the masses of soldiers descended upon the town.

Service units, including a signal battalion, a quartermaster detachment, military police, a special services company, engineers, ordnance, and other support elements, were stationed in or near Elkins. Stuart's Park became the site of an army evacuation hospital. A transportation unit, consisting primarily of black soldiers, was encamped in the vicinity of what is now the Southgate and Riverview sections of Elkins. An army station hospital, consisting of seven frame buildings, was erected near the Davis Memorial Hospital on the south side of German Avenue.

A signal corps battalion established communications throughout the widespread maneuver area by the use of telephones, telegraphy, teletype, radios, and a carrier pigeon platoon. The pigeons were released on occasion near Alpena and returned to their lofts in the grove at Weese Park near Elkins. Unfortunately, our West Virginia hawks developed a craving for army pigeons, and their depredations soon reduced the carrier pigeon population to a small number.

An army special services company stationed in Elkins provided entertainment and recreation for the soldiers during their off-duty hours. The local citizens were welcomed to the many performances at the YMCA and at Elkins High School. A special program on November 15,

The West Virginia Maneuver Area (WVMA) was a vast, five-county training ground used by the army during World War II to train soldiers in low-altitude mountain operations. Here, soldiers scale Blackwater Canyon in Tucker County. Photograph courtesy of the Army Corps of Engineers.

"Mule school" was one facet of the WVMA training program. Here, soldiers use a primitive footbridge to lead pack mules across a river. Photographer and date unknown.

1943, at the high school featured the first live radio show to be broadcast from Elkins.

By November 1943, the quartermaster unit had the job of procuring and distributing up to 25 tons of food per day in the maneuver area.

Artillery units, utilizing a 60,000-acre preserve for 105mm and 155mm howitzers, engaged in practice firing in the Dolly Sods and Canaan Valley areas. Notices were placed in the local newspaper to forewarn hunters and other citizens of the dangers of being in or near the impact zones during scheduled exercises.

Climbing was taught at Seneca Rocks and Blackwater Canyon, while improvised ridge crossings were made on Blackwater and Dry Fork rivers and at other sites in the five-country area. In July 1943, a detachment from Camp Hale, Colorado, arrived to teach assault climbing. This detachment organized a high-angle rock and assault climbing school at Seneca Rocks. An average of 180 men and officers went through the course every two weeks, assaulting the sheer and crumbling faces of these crags. Training called for everything from easy rock scrambling to extreme tension work with pitons. Particular stress was laid on the rigging and use of assault ropes and pulleys. Each group made two tactical night climbs on unfamiliar rocks.

Selected individuals representing units throughout the army were trained in rock climbing in order for each organization to have trained climbers for use as observers for artillery and infantry and to emplace infantry weapons in commanding positions. Qualified snipers and scouts were trained to get into difficult positions and also, by means of fixed ropes and artificial aids, to prepare routes for regular troops over terrain that ordinarily would be impassable.

From July 1943 through June 1944, over 100,000 men gained invaluable training in the West Virginia mountains, which prepared them for combat overseas. These men were subsequently assigned to many fronts throughout the European Theater of Operations. One unit that trained here and served with distinction in Europe was the 94th Signal Battalion. The 94th saw action during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and participated in the capture and crossing of the Remagen bridge in March 1945.

Like other war efforts, the West Virginia Maneuver Area was a transient operation that left few permanent indications of its passing. Still its impact was considerable, if temporary. The arrival of the army had a significant effect on the local economy as business boomed at hotels and restaurants, and transformed the area into what some contemporary observers called an "old maid's heaven."

This article originally appeared in our Summer 1991 issue. —ed.

DONALD L. RICE of Elkins is a longtime Randolph County educator and historian.

"TOP KICK"

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Retired army sergeant Gereald Bland built this private museum in Petersburg, Grant County, to house his extensive collection of military equipment and memorabilia.

Petersburg resident Gereald W. Bland has this bit of wisdom for collectors: "If somebody wants to give you something, take it. Otherwise, they may not offer it to you again."

The results of Gereald following his own advice for the past two decades are displayed at Top Kick's Military Museum, a privately owned collection of U.S. and foreign military memorabilia. While heavy on World War II items, the museum has U.S. military memorabilia from the Civil War to current conflicts. Items as small as hypodermic and sewing-kit needles up to a landing craft used to deliver a Jeep or 30 troops to a South Pacific island are part of this collection. All this military stuff — including nearly 50 vehicles — come together in Gereald's backyard on a dead-end street in a residential neighborhood on Petersburg's west side. Gereald is the museum's owner and "Top Kick" — a term most nonmilitary visitors don't recognize.

"The first sergeant in the army, one of his names is 'Top Kick,'" says Gereald, whose easy-going, friendly manner defies the stereotypical image of a tough-as-nails sergeant. "I've been called that for a long time, so I figured I might as well go with it."

The Seneca Rocks native served his country from 1949 to 1971 in a combat engineering unit of the army.

"It was appealing to me," he says of his decision to enlist. "Once I got in there, I decided to stay."

He did two tours in Vietnam, two in Germany, and two in Alaska.

Gereald Bland and his Military Museum

Mannequins in a range of military garb pull guard duty over this display case, where Gereald Bland keeps different types of ammunition.

"In Vietnam, part of my first tour was raft operations 20 miles below Saigon on the Mekong River," says Gereald. "We provided support to the 173rd Airborne and 9th Infantry, moving them back and forth across the river."

In Alaska, Gereald had nearly 250 men under his command. They built roads and one bridge, but mostly they removed snow from the Anchorage base.

When it came time to retire, Gereald returned to West Virginia. He and his wife, Virginia, whom he had married in 1953, purchased 2.5 acres in Grant County and built a house on the land, which adjoins a large farm. At the time, Gereald planned to get into beef farming, but he took a Civil Service exam and got a job with the state fish hatchery instead. He spent 21 years there, the same amount of time he spent in the military. "My retirement date from both the service and fish hatchery are the same, just a different year," he says.

In 1982, Gereald made the seminal purchase that led to the creation of his military museum 13 years later. It was a military Jeep manufactured by Ford in September 1945.

"I found it down here in a hayfield," he says. "It didn't even have an engine in it. It had been used in a rock quarry until they retired it out."

It took Gereald about 18 months to track down parts and complete a restoration of his find. He took the restored vehicle to car shows in the area, where it drew the attention of veterans.

"People would come up to me and tell me, 'I got this-and-that military item,' and want to know if I'd be interested in it," he says. "We started collecting, and pretty soon we were out of room."

Having been in the military, Gereald was familiar with many of the items offered to him. But there were other things foreign to his experience, and he found the variety of memorabilia both fascinating and addicting. Fueled by trips to salvage yards, flea markets, and events held for collectors of military memorabilia, Gereald's collection soon required a building of its own. By 1995, he had acquired and restored six Jeeps and a couple of military trucks, as well as a large cache of smaller items.

"You couldn't see things," he says. "We decided to build a building where everyone could enjoy it."

The first building, a 30-by-60-foot pole barn, went up in 1995. After he opened it as a museum, Gereald discovered that he'd also opened a

floodgate of opportunities to expand his collection. Visitors gave him leads and offered to donate items from their own collections or the estates of family members.

"People would come in and say, 'I saw an old Jeep out in the woods,' and I'd go look at it," he says. "One time, I went out and looked at something that was supposed to be a Jeep, and it turned out to be a Model A. But you still got to go look."

The collection soon outgrew the initial building, and in 1997, he lengthened the building by 40 feet. In 2002, he completed a 20-by-50-foot addition, with a concrete floor and block foundation, to house items requiring a controlled-temperature environment. The buildings were put up with donated labor at a cost of $20,000.

"I've had a lot of free labor — family, a builder up the road, and good friends who are carpenters. You'd be surprised how quickly this building went up," he says.

Gereald's original building houses his collection of post-World War II Jeeps and military memorabilia. The addition is dedicated to mostly World War II-era Jeeps. Uniforms, posters, and flags hang from the walls, and various kinds of equipment camouflage are draped from the rafters.

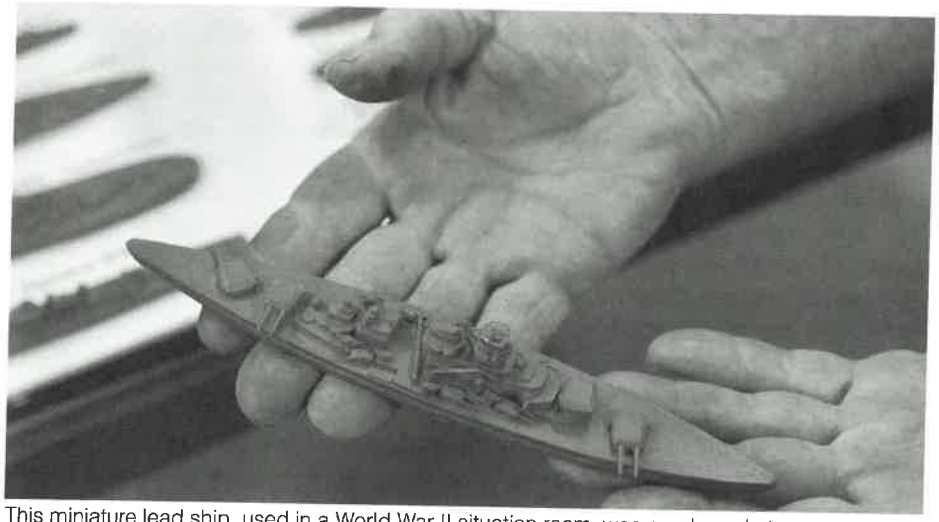
The cavernous rooms don't begin to house all of Gereald's collection, especially the vehicles. A dozen or so military trucks, ambulances, and cars are lined up behind the museum. There's a separate holding area for equipment awaiting restoration, as well as various Jeeps that he uses for parts. Several military trucks with covered compartments are put to good use every winter — Gereald stacks his firewood in their cargo areas and drives or tows them near an outside door, where they provide a handy supply of fuel for the wood burner in his house.

Small signs along State Route 55 direct motorists to the museum. Gereald says most of the 1,500 or so visitors who stop every year learn about the museum from those signs. He also distributes brochures to tourist information areas throughout the region and is listed on regional tourism Web sites.

The museum is not an official nonprofit corporation, but Gereald says it is non-profitable. Gereald doesn't charge an admission but gladly accepts donations, which are used to pay the utilities, insurance, and upkeep on the buildings. If any money is left over, he uses it for acquisition and restoration of more vehicles and artifacts.

Although he's always looking for new items to add to the museum, Gereald says most items find him. He and Virginia enjoy traveling, and they stop at flea markets and salvage yards, where he often stumbles upon yet one more item for his collection.

Gereald and his wife, Virginia, sit in a 1945 Ford Jeep that Gereald acquired in 1982. Restoring this vehicle — and, once restored, taking it to area car shows — was Gereald's first step in the creation of his museum.



This miniature lead ship, used in a World War II situation room, was purchased at an estate sale in Petersburg.

An aluminum canteen purchased at a flea market is an example of an unexpected find. The plain canteen has an eagle etched onto one side; Gereald says it's an example of "trench art" done with a pocketknife by a World War I soldier. A World War I bayonet also came from a flea market.

"You'd be surprised what you'll find at flea markets," he says.

Many of the items in his collection came from the area around Petersburg, including a set of lead ship models used on a situation board during World War II. The models, measuring three to 10 inches in length, came from the estate of a navy captain stationed in the Aleutian Islands during World War II.

"They were rolled up in paper towels in a box that an old iron had come in," Gereald says. "I unwrapped two of them and decided that I was going to buy that box."

Many of the items are gifts from friends and fellow collectors. Whenever someone is cleaning out an estate of a soldier, they often think of Top Kick's and make a donation.

"There was a gentleman in Martinsburg who died six months ago, and the family didn't know what to do with his World War I stuff, so they sent it up to me," he says. The items included a leather belt and leggings, which he displays on a Doughboy mannequin. Other donations are the result of downsizing.

"This is a World War II Zenith transoceanic radio," Gereald says, opening up the case to a large, portable radio. "This type of radio was issued to the units in World War II for immediate news and information. A friend of mine had it, and he moved from a two-acre place to a retirement village and had to get rid of a bunch of stuff. So he gave it to me. We haven't got it working yet, but we're working on it."

Gereald says that a lot of his ability to amass such a collection depends upon having the right connections. That's how he got a set of lockers from the Pentagon.

"There used to be a gentleman here who done maintenance work in the Pentagon," he says. "When they replaced these lockers, he brought them home to scrap them, but some of them didn't get crushed."

A fellow collector who works for South Carolina's highway department provided Civil War cannon balls dredged from a river in Charleston.

"He got a whole pickup load of them and gave me a few of them," he says. "That's part of the advantage of being in the International Military Collectors Club."

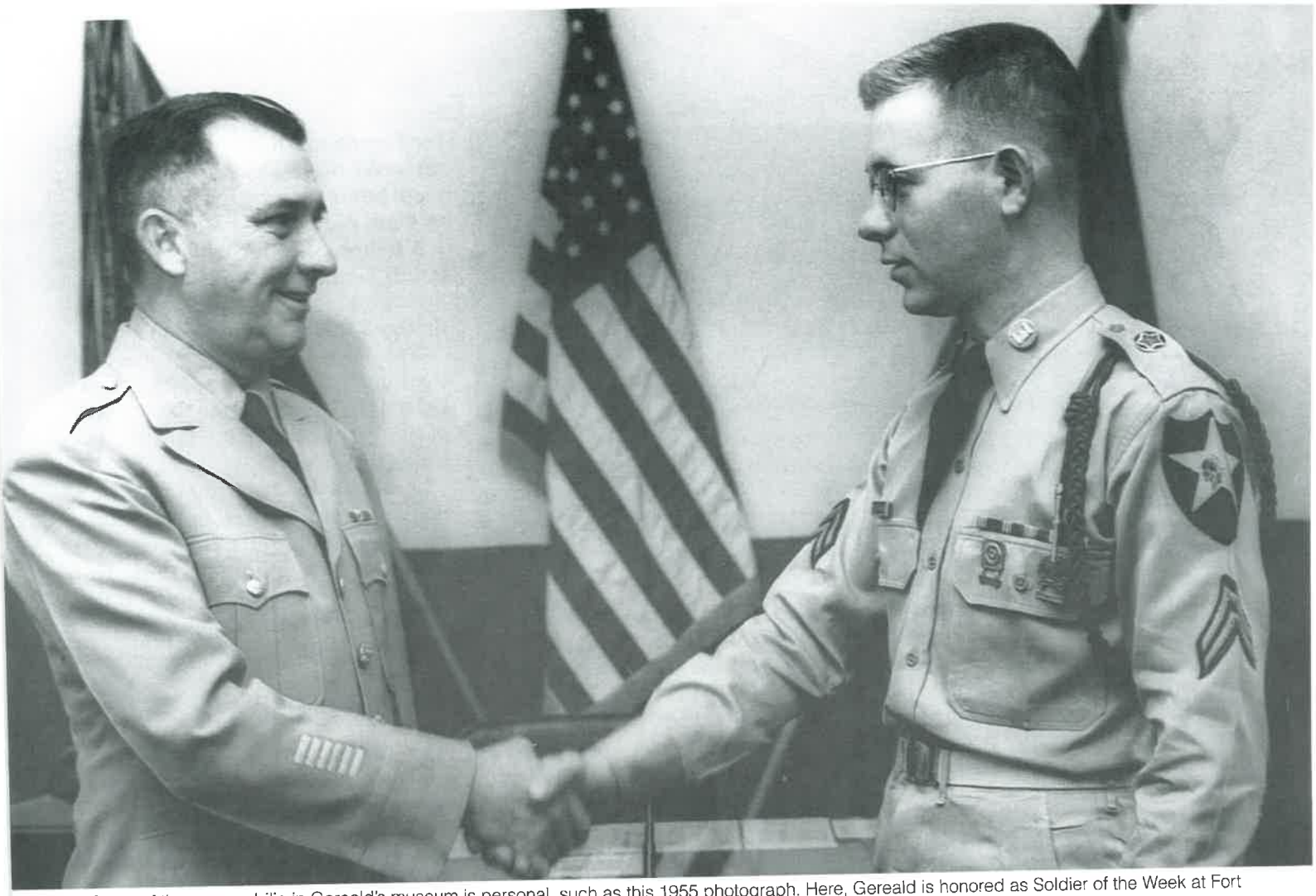
Local publicity surrounding Gereald's museum has helped him acquire memorabilia from current and recent U.S. military actions. He has anti-aircraft shells from Iraq, as well as a cigar from Mosul and a Saddam Hussein cigarette lighter.

"Some guys here who are in the reserves brought them back from Desert Storm," he says. "A signal man was in here, and he said 'I'm going back to Iraq, and I'll bring you back some items.'"

Some of the memorabilia have personal significance for Gereald — such as his dog tags or the ones issued to his wife and daughter, Iva Marie, while living on base in Germany. Gereald also displays a photograph of himself receiving the Soldier of the Week Award while he was stationed at Fort Lewis in 1955.

A few of the vehicles in his collection have special meaning for Gereald,

This World War II-vintage Studebaker Weasel cargo carrier is fully functional, with a top speed of 32 mph. Here, Gereald takes it for a spin in his side yard.



Some of the memorabilia in Gereald's museum is personal, such as this 1955 photograph. Here, Gereald is honored as Soldier of the Week at Fort Lewis, Washington, by Major General Thomas A. Timberman. Photographer unknown.

as well, like the 1942 Dodge 1½-ton truck he purchased from a dealer in North Carolina.

"The first military truck I drove was of this type," he says. The truck served in Greece then was sold as surplus and sent back to the United States. Gereald rebuilt it and did something to it he never would have been allowed to do when he was serving in the army: He painted his wife's nickname, "GINNY," on the hood.

It seems as if the Eastern Panhandle was a popular last stop for many military vehicles that had spent their retirements working on farms, in lumber operations, and for municipalities as fire trucks. His 1940 ½-ton Dodge WC21 4X4 came from a junkyard just 12 miles from his house.

"I went to the junkyard to buy just the windshield," he says. "He wanted to sell me the whole truck, and he brought it up here."

Gereald found a converted military dump truck on a potato farm near Philippi. A 1943 bomb-service truck, used to load 500- and 1,000-pound bombs onto trailers, had a long history of service. After being sold as surplus, it was used by at least three fire departments in the valley. Its last stint was with the Seneca Rocks department. "From there, it went to the junkyard, and then to me," says Gereald.

His 1951 Dodge 4X4 was sold as surplus to a buyer in Martinsburg, who eventually sent it to the scrap yard, where Gereald found it.

"The man wanted $500 for it, and I didn't have $500," he says. "I sent my daughter down to look at it a week later, and she bought it for $300, and he delivered it, too."

The trucks, although restored, don't hit the road. Gereald does license several of his Jeeps, which he runs in parades and takes to military collector shows around the area. He also trailers some his equipment, such as the Studebaker-built Weasel M29 cargo carrier, to festivals in the region. The Weasel, a World War II-vintage cargo carrier, is an attention grabber that helps raise public awareness of his museum.

"I reckon this is what they would call the first all-terrain vehicle," Gereald says, patting Weasel's thick metal skin. He traded one of his Jeeps for the Weasel, which was owned by another military museum in Hubbard, Ohio. Gereald runs the vehicle around a vacant lot behind his home.

"I'm hoping it snows this winter," he says. "I want to get out and play in it with this."

Gereald's shining moment as a collector came in 1994, when he was asked to provide a Vietnam-era Jeep for the filming of the feature motion picture *Major Payne* in Richmond, Virginia. Gereald agreed to provide the vehicle on one condition: He would drive it in the film.

"I'm on the screen for all of five

seconds, but I made it," Gereald says. The Jeep is still in his collection, along with some memorabilia from his movie-making experience.

Gereald says the most money he's spent on a single item for his museum was $2,600 for a 106mm recoilless rifle to complete his 1952 M38AIC Jeep, which was modified to carry the big gun. The gun is nonfiring surplus. He had to drive to Montana to pick it up, one of the longest trips he's made for the specific purpose of acquiring an item.

While Gereald can tell you the story behind just about every piece in his collection, he can't tell you how many pieces are in it — except for the 46 vehicles. He guesses there to be at least 1,500 smaller items.

"I was putting them on the computer, and guess what? The computer crashed. It all has to be redone," he says.

He says his daughter has shown an interest in the museum and a willingness to continue it after he is gone. In the meantime, Top Kick is on the job six days a week, virtually every week of the year, so he can greet his guests and give them a tour. Gereald says that, to the best of his knowledge, his military museum is the largest and perhaps the only one of its kind in West Virginia. He says one of the other things that makes it unique is its accessibility.

"You can get up close to the exhibits here," says Gereald, who allows visitors to sit behind the steering wheels of his Jeeps and climb into the cargo compartments of his trucks. "I've had people say they've been to museums in Washington, D.C., and tell me this is better because they can get up close and put their hands on things. Down there, they have to look at it through glass."

He especially enjoys having veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam visit. Indeed, he says that's the primary reason he's been willing to continue his search for new items.

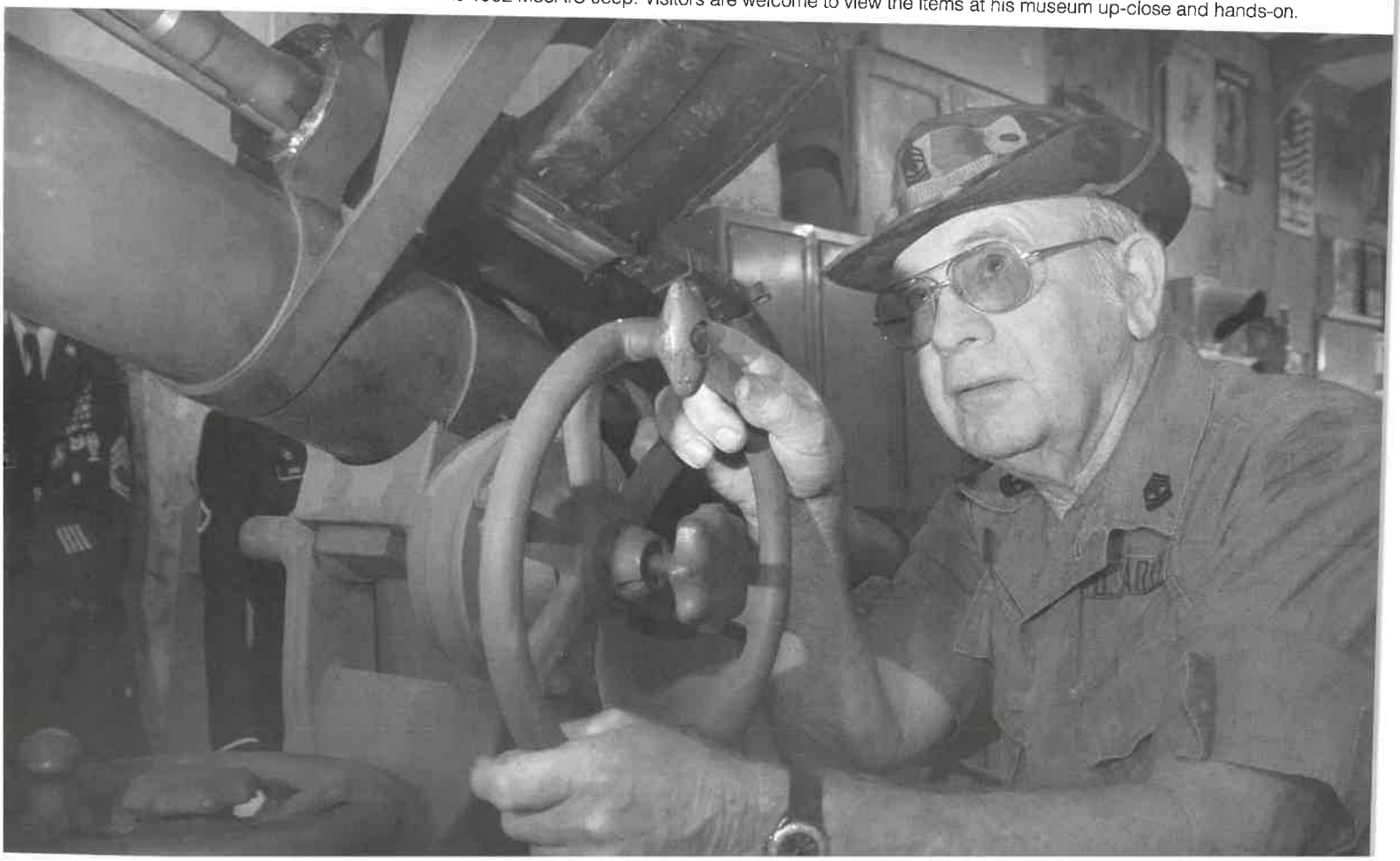
"I enjoy it," he says. "You get to meet a lot of people. Sometimes, these veterans come in here, and it's the first time they've talked about [their experiences] during World War II or Korea. I had a guy in here, a World War II vet, who got around in a motorized wheelchair. He couldn't turn it around in here, so I picked him up and wheeled it around. After he went home, his daughter wrote me a letter about how much he enjoyed his visit.

"This is not a money-making thing, but it's a lot of fun, and you meet a lot of people," he concludes.

Top Kick's Military Museum is located 1.5 miles west of Petersburg off State Route 55. Look for the small signs along the side of the road and turn at Ridgeview Estates. The museum is at the end of Maple Drive. Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, or by appointment; phone (304)257-1392.

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.

Gereald adjusts a 106mm recoilless rifle on his 1952 M38AIC Jeep. Visitors are welcome to view the items at his museum up-close and hands-on.



The

"Impossible." After a moment or two, he adds, "For all kinds of reasons."

That's the response that former nine-term congressman and four-term secretary of state Ken Hechler offers when asked about his first foray into electoral politics.

By 1958, Hechler had been a resident of Huntington — and of West Virginia — for barely two years. Coming to Marshall College for a temporary teaching assignment, the Roslyn, New York, native nevertheless had an impressive resume. Besides having taught at Columbia and Princeton universities, Hechler had served as a special assistant to President Harry Truman and research director for the presidential campaign of Adlai Stevenson.

Acting on advice from his mentor, jurist Louis Brandeis, young Hechler decided not to be a small fish in a big pond and used his position as a placement specialist for political science professors to wrangle the Marshall appointment.

Hechler proved to be a popular and innovative instructor, and was soon well-known on campus and highly regarded by the student body. His classroom was equipped with a telephone and speaker, and he would call members of congress, supreme court justices, and other public officials as part of his instruction. He would often invite local elected officials to address his class, and brought in actual voting machines to let students decide the debates of

Dr. Ken Hechler, a political science professor at Marshall College, was a dark-horse candidate for the U.S. Congress in 1958. His unexpected victory sparked a long and distinguished career.

By Gordon Simmons

Lonely Battle

the day. Administrators remained skeptical, however, wondering why an over-qualified New Yorker would want to set his sights on a temporary assignment at Marshall.

Meanwhile, Hechler was busy making contacts in the Huntington community beyond the college campus. He began cohosting a weekly political affairs television show on Channel 13, titled "Comment." Through book clubs, charity work, and membership in Trinity Episcopal Church, he also made the acquaintance of the social, political, and economic elite — as Hechler says, "the movers and shakers of Huntington."

The November 1957 publication of his book, *The Bridge at Remagen*, by Ballantine Books, cinched Hechler's growing renown and reputation. Based on his service as an army historian in World War II, his book was an instant success. Book royalties — and soon, money from the sale of movie and television rights — gave him an increased measure of financial independence.

The book also gave him increased political visibility in West Virginia. In January 1958, Democratic state party chair Hulett Smith took notice and recruited Hechler to conduct a precinct training course.

"I didn't want to just stay in the classroom," Hechler recalls. Urged on by his students, he had already made the fateful decision to run for congress from West Virginia's fourth district after his assignment with Marshall ended.

One reason for his decision was the knowledge that fellow Marshall professor Maurice "Burney" Burnside — who had previously held the congressional seat for three terms — had a falling-out with organized labor and had given up any ambition of another attempt at regaining the office from the Republican incumbent. Winning the Democratic nomination would pit a young, energetic, and charismatic populist against the 83-year-old office holder, Dr. Will E. Neal. On March 28, Ken Hechler officially announced his candidacy, but gaining

Ken Hechler, at right, appearing on Huntington's Channel 13 television. In the late 1950's, Hechler cohosted a weekly political affairs show called "Comment."

Ken Hechler's 1958 Campaign

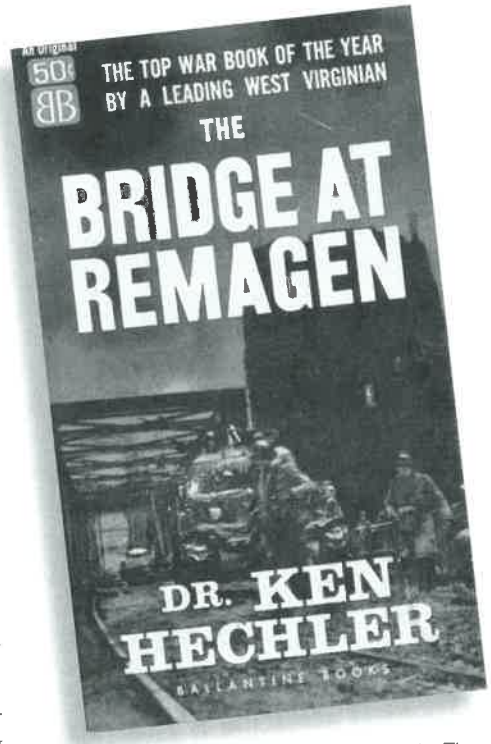
Popular in the classroom, Hechler was encouraged by many of his Marshall students to seek political office. These young supporters, some too young to vote, formed the core of Hechler's energetic campaign in 1958.

the primary victory would turn out to be an uphill fight.

In order to secure the Democratic nomination, Hechler soon learned he would have to square off against two opponents—Bill Jacobs of Parkersburg and Thomas W. Harvey of Huntington. Hechler already knew Harvey and had been encouraged by him earlier to run for party chair in Cabell County. Harvey was also a member of a liberal discussion group Hechler had been invited to join, but Hechler had not been let in on Harvey's intention to run for congress.

Tom Harvey had considerable political clout, as well as the home-field advantage. Hechler discovered that Harvey had tied up most of the major endorsements for the primary race and was the odds-on favorite. When Hechler approached state AFL-CIO president Miles Stanley to ask for labor's nod, he recalls Stanley telling him bluntly, "You don't stand a Chinaman's chance of winning the primary. That's why we're endorsing Harvey."

Hechler recalls Tom Harvey's campaign as well-financed and highly organized—"well-oiled," as he puts it. In order to win, Hechler realized that he would have to turn conventional wisdom on its head. Primary races were supposed to be played to the factions and leaders and centered on getting important endorsements; pitches to ordinary voters were saved for the general election. Hechler decided that he would have to reverse that strategy.



Special election edition of Hechler's book, *The Bridge at Remagen*, published by Ballantine Books.

Aided by volunteer campaign workers recruited from Marshall College, Hechler went to events and meetings all over the district and sent his students out to canvass door-to-door. He traveled to Kaiser in Ravenswood, Dupont in Parkersburg, and International Nickel in Huntington. Standing at the plant gates during shift changes, Hechler greeted and talked to the workers. The candidate embarked on a low-budget, grass-roots campaign of getting out and talking to as many voters as he could.

"Harvey was clearly the favorite," Hechler says. He recalls facing a particularly hostile reception at a Huntington-area labor council meeting and left the contentious exchange despondent. But as he walked toward his car, Summers Dean, chair of the labor council's committee on political education, caught up with him.

"Don't listen to any of that crap," he told Hechler. "The rank and file say you're working harder than any candidate."

Running his campaign on a shoestring, Hechler looked about for a way to generate publicity and greater name recognition. After announcing his candidacy, his book publisher told him, "We've never had an author run for congress." After some discussion, the two agreed to a special paperback campaign edition of *The Bridge at Remagen*.

The author's name appeared larger and more prominent on the new cover. Over the title it read, "The Top War Book of the Year/By a Leading West Virginian." Hechler's photo and name were printed on the back cover, along with that of his district's most populous city, Huntington, and the dates of the primary and general elections. Included in the book's preface was a section titled, "Why I Am Running for Congress."

His publisher sold him 10,000 copies for $1,000. "The best money I ever spent," Hechler says.

Handing out copies to workers at plant gates, Hechler used the book to combat the union endorsements of Harvey. One measure of how well it worked can be gauged from the March 1958 publication of a Steelworkers Local 40 listing of endorsed candidates. Under House of Representatives, Harvey's name appeared — at the bottom of the list. Hechler's name was listed at the top, although he had, in fact, not been given labor's approval in the primary race.

Hechler says that one of the first things he encountered on the campaign trail was the question, "Who are you kin to?" The inference that he was a carpetbagger dogged him throughout the race. When someone would point out that he was born in New York rather than in West Virginia, he took to responding with humor: "I tried hard to manage [that], but I had little influence over my parents."

He drove around in a boldly lettered red-and-white convertible and visited every hill and hollow he could find.

His army of student volunteers were key to his efforts.

"They gave spirit to the campaign," he says. "Even though the voting age was 21 and many of them couldn't vote, they had enthusiasm, idealism, and determination. And working on the campaign gave them a sense of empowerment. I told them, 'You're much more powerful than you realize.'"

He recruited four Marshall coeds who had won a music contest to do performances of a parody campaign song to the tune of "Sugar in the Morning." He drove around in a boldly lettered red-and-white convertible and visited every hill and hollow he could find. By his own reckoning, Hechler covered 12,000 miles, visited nearly every town, and wore out "two pairs of shoes in this district."

In Parkersburg, home turf of Bill Jacobs, Hechler hit upon a way to get positive publicity and diffuse the carpetbagger charge at the same time. He discovered from his

By his own estimate, Hechler traveled 12,000 miles in West Virginia's fourth congressional district during his first primary campaign. Here, he greets a worker in the field in Wayne County.

family that his grandfather, George Hechler of Marietta, had enlisted in the Union army during the Civil War in Parkersburg and had written letters describing his experiences in western Virginia. Hechler passed on the information to Marie Woods of the *Parkersburg News*, who then wrote it up in her column, giving the candidate a local tie.

Another fortunate bit of media publicity came just days before the primary. Paul Crabtree, writing in *The Charleston Gazette*, penned a favorable account of Hechler as an underdog willing to defy all the conventional wisdom about West Virginia politics. The candidate's unwillingness to answer negative attacks in kind was gaining him notice and admiration from those who had initially discounted his chances of getting nominated. Hechler believes that the Crabtree article was particularly influential in giving him credibility among Putnam County voters.

When a man approached Hechler, offering to deliver votes in Huntington's second ward, the candidate refused him. Word that he was conducting an honest campaign seemed to have spread beyond Huntington.

Lincoln County was home to political bosses like Lloyd Jackson and Claude Stowers. Word later reached Hechler that the Lincoln machine had held a bidding contest for the Democratic vote that had gone until two in the morning, with Harvey's offer prevailing over Jacob's. When Hechler asked his informant why he hadn't been invited, he was told, "We knew you wouldn't 'contribute.'"

As the Democratic nominee, Hechler had gained a few advantages, such as the unified support of organized labor.

On August 5, 1958, the primary was held. As the day went on and night fell, Hechler recalls he didn't sleep much. Early newspaper polls were showing Harvey the winner in Cabell, and of the 10 counties in the fourth district, Cabell was considered the bellwether.

As the results rolled in, there were some that could be expected. In the final tally, Jacobs carried both Wood and Roane counties. Harvey held a nearly 2-to-1 lead in Lincoln. But in all other counties, including hard-fought Cabell and Wayne, Hechler out-polled his opponents, winning the nomination by a comfortable plurality, more than 1,800 votes ahead of Harvey.

The morning after the primary, Ken Hechler went early to the plant gate of Huntington's International Nickel to thank the workers as they arrived. He remembers the repeated response the workers gave him: "Buddy, this is the first time anybody ever thanked us after election day."

Preparing himself for the general election, Hechler published a newspaper ad, promising to continue a clean campaign and congratulating his opponents, including the Republican incumbent he would now be facing. Author and political observer Sam Mallison later wrote him a letter, calling it "the smartest bit of political advertising I have ever seen."

Despite his own pledge for a clean campaign, negative attacks continued to dog Hechler in the general election. For his own part, Hechler refused to make incumbent Dr. Neal's age an issue. The farthest he would go was to accept a student volunteer's suggested slogan, "Campaign for the Young at Heart." This decision continued to count to his credit when, just days before the election, the *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, having endorsed the Republican candidate, praised Dr. Hechler for never bringing up the subject of age.

Even though he had scored an upset in the primary, the general election was looking more and more to favor the well-known conservative over the upstart populist. On October 10, vice president Richard Nixon addressed a crowd of 5,000 at Huntington's Memorial Fieldhouse, bolstering Republican expectations in the campaign.

As the Democratic nominee, however, Hechler had gained a few advantages, such as the unified support of organized labor. Still, there was speculation, voiced by *Charleston Gazette* writer

Ken Hechler presents a copy of his book, *The Bridge at Remagen*, to Governor Cecil Underwood. With Hechler is William Richard of Cabin Creek, a veteran of the Remagen battle. The woman is unidentified. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Still active and healthy at 92, Ken Hechler peers out the window of his Jeep. The license plate reads "KEN DO." Photograph by Michael Keller.

Thomas Stafford and others, that the political machines Hechler beat in the primary would exact revenge by throwing votes to Neal.

While Neal himself remained circumspect in public, others were willing to level charges against Hechler. Cabell County delegate Jessica Wyatt Payne wrote a satirical ditty about Hechler's New York roots. At a rally in Ripley, she went even further, accusing Hechler of being sent to West Virginia by the "left-wing" Americans for Democratic Action (ADA).

Hechler had, in his research, discovered that the Ohio Valley's first congressman after the formation of West Virginia had also been born in New York, a fact he now was happy to share with the voters. He responded to delegate Payne's charge with a newspaper advertisement, asserting that he had, in fact, never been a member of the ADA and pointing out that the delegate herself had been born outside of West Virginia.

Although Hechler's opponents depicted him as "too liberal" for his district — he supported federal aid for education and opposed right-to-work laws — his stands against socialized medicine and the entry of Red China into the United Nations cast suspicion on the label's accuracy.

Eager to bolster their electoral chances, Huntington conservatives arranged a public event at Marshall with *Newsweek* editor Raymond Moley, a well-known critic of liberalism. Hechler had taught at Columbia with Moley, and the two had remained friends. When Hechler rose from the audience at Moley's presentation to ask a question, the columnist prefaced his answer by introducing Hechler as a "great teacher." This unexpected tribute was not likely to please Hechler's opponents.

In the run-up to November 4, there were signs that the race would be surprisingly close.

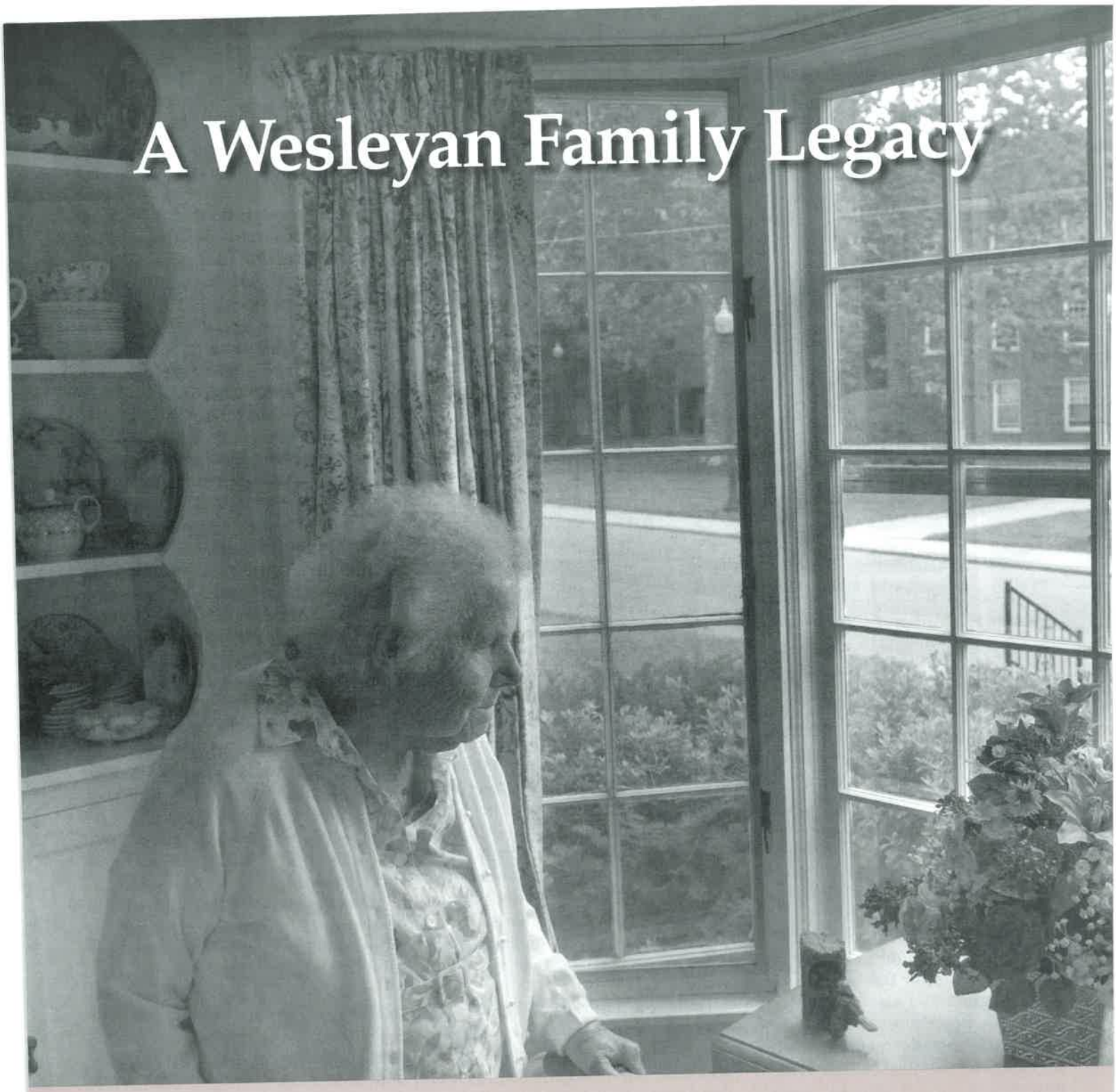
Then, on Thursday, October 28, Governor Cecil Underwood called a press conference. The governor announced that bags of surplus food distributed to the needy in Putnam County had been found to be stuffed with campaign literature for Hechler, including copies of his book. Calling it a "despicable display of political chicanery," the governor questioned the worthiness of Hechler for "West Virginia citizenship."

For his part, Hechler denied any knowledge of what had been done, attributing the incident to an overenthusiastic volunteer. Hechler went on to say that the governor himself was a "fine gentleman" and blamed the attack on "ghost writers" ready to "sling mud" five days before the election. Hechler then produced a photograph of the governor, inscribed to him with the words, "To Dr. Hechler — with sincere appreciation for intellectual leadership you are giving West Virginia." This, he suggested, expressed the governor's true feelings. Just after his book had been published, Hechler, along with a Remagen veteran from Cabin Creek, had presented the governor with a copy, and the governor had, in turn, given Hechler the inscribed photograph. It was enough to diffuse the bad press from the incident.

When the votes cast the following Tuesday were counted, Ken Hechler had defied the polls and pundits to become West Virginia's congressman from the fourth district. His opponent, Dr. Will E. Neal, died the following year. Delegate Payne, Hechler's most vociferous political critic, placed last in a series of 10 candidates in her bid for re-election to the House of Delegates.

One of the longest and most atypical careers in West Virginia politics had begun.

GORDON SIMMONS is editorial assistant for GOLDENSEAL magazine.



A Wesleyan Family Legacy

Katherine Reemsnyder

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather

Katherine Reemsnyder of Buckhannon, age 98, keeps an eye on activities at nearby West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC) from the front window of her home.

From the bay window of her Buckhannon home at the corner of Meade and Fayette streets, Katherine Curran Reemsnyder has witnessed the start of more than 60 fall terms at West Virginia Wesleyan College (WVWC).

In that span, she's seen the student body change from mostly tri-state residents to students from 12 nations and 37 states. Station wagons packed full of dormitory supplies have given way to minivans and, more recently, sports utility vehicles. Plastic tubs have replaced trunks and suitcases. Nevertheless, the gamut of emotions that accompanies parting ways with childhood and embracing academic challenges has remained unchanged through those decades of observation.

It was the fall of 1926 when Katherine, just a few weeks past her 17th birthday, underwent this ritual. Her mother, Ella A. Curran, accompanied Katherine to the college, an experience that evidently left a lasting impression. Based on her own experience and observations, Katherine says parents ought to say their farewells at home and allow the student to walk onto campus sans parents.

"It makes it doubly hard," she says of parents taking their children to college. "It points out the fact you are a freshman and haven't been among the student body."

Whatever awkwardness Katherine felt by having her mother present, both parted ways knowing she'd made the right decision. And Katherine wrote a letter to her mother every day she was away at college.

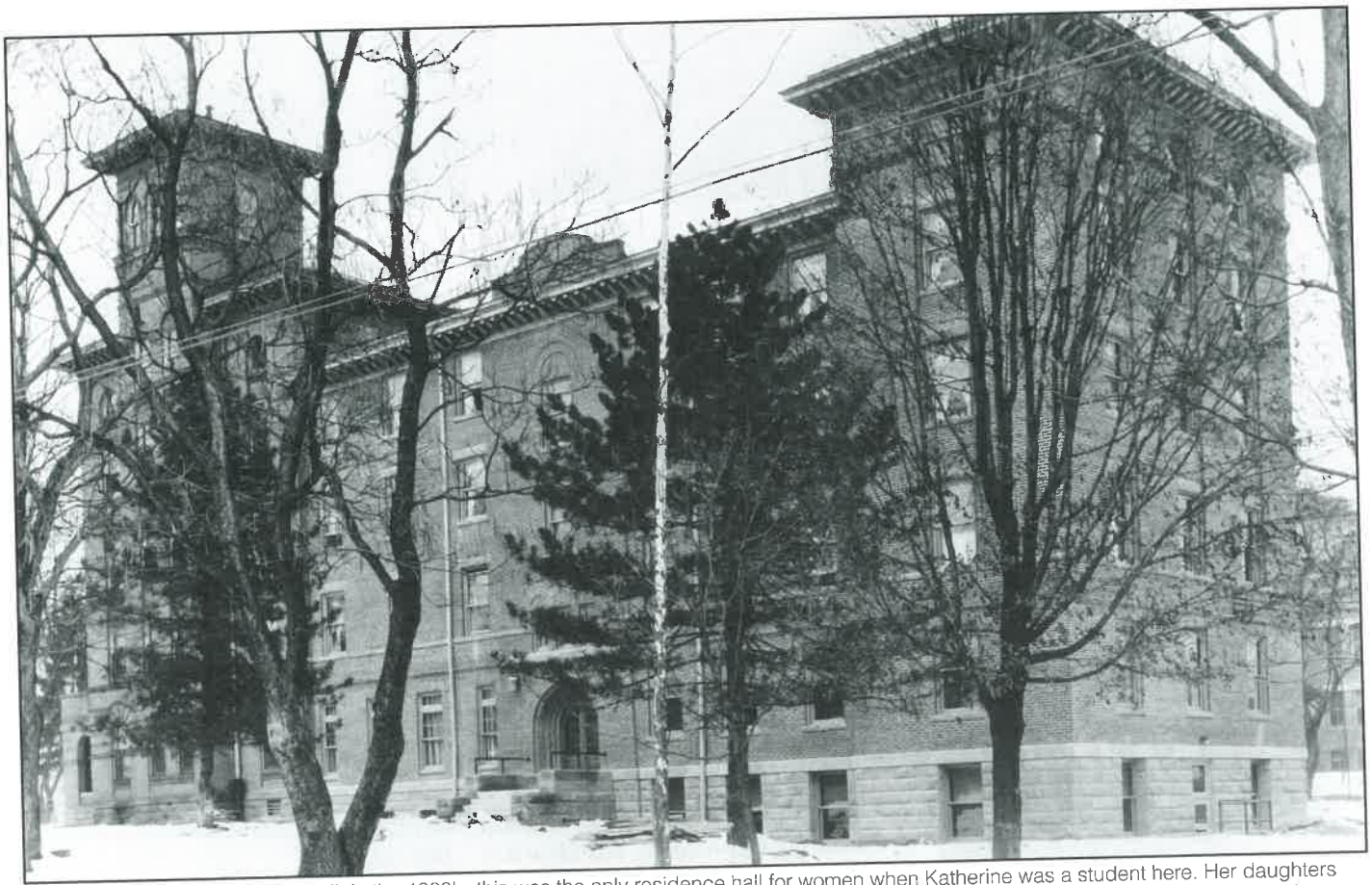
"[My mother] was impressed with the people she met and I'd be associating with," says Katherine, who turned 98 this past July 5.

One of the classmates Katherine met in her freshman year at WVWC was Dave Reemsnyder, also a freshman, from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Dave and Katherine would marry a decade later, settle in Buckhannon, build their house across from the campus, and devote their lives to WVWC and its students. In the process, Dave became a WVWC legend.

He taught math and physical education at the college, coached nine varsity sports, and later, served as its athletic director, a post he held until his retirement in 1975. He organized the school's first soccer team in 1959, and its game with Fairmont State College was the first intercollegiate soccer clash in state conference history.

Katherine Curran (Reemsnyder), around the time of her graduation from high school in Sistersville. Photograph by Henderson Studio, about 1926.

# of Buckhannon



Agnes Howard Hall at WVWC. Built in the 1880's, this was the only residence hall for women when Katherine was a student here. Her daughters later lived in the same hall. Photographer and date unknown, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Upshur Historical Society collection.

Edith Logsdon, a 1951 WVWC alumnus and Katherine's neighbor, took a night class — mathematics for teachers — in the 1950's. Dave Reemsnyder was her instructor.

"He was very good. He knew his subject and presented it well and in an interesting way," Edith says. "He was an inspiration to students. He made sure you had the material."

Dave Reemsnyder's contributions went beyond teaching and athletics. Also interested in architecture, he was involved in the completion of Rockefeller Center, the college's gym. The Reemsnyders' older daughter, Jane Soverns of Maryland, recalls her father's passion for that project.

"He'd come home at lunchtime and say, 'I've saved the college $20,000 today,'" says Jane, referring to the way her father made certain the contractors didn't cut corners.

Dave received an honorary degree in physical education from his alma mater and was a charter member of the school's chapter of Omicron Delta Kappa. He received an American Red Cross citation for 28 years of service and a Distinguished Leadership Situation Award from the Boy Scouts of America in 1967.

But in the fall of 1926, Dave Reemsnyder was an unproven freshman whose interests ran more toward athletics than academics. As shy as he was muscular, Dave Reemsnyder had been recruited by WVWC to play football, and that was the primary thing on his mind as he started his collegiate career.

"As far as education was concerned, he wasn't particularly interested," Katherine says. "He had the brains, but he didn't study. He wanted to play football."

She says Dave asked her to go on a date shortly after they met. As she recalls, they probably went to a movie. There wasn't much else to do in Buckhannon on a Saturday night. Katherine recalls her suitor as a shy, inexperienced youth who was walking on unfamiliar turf when he asked her for a date.

"He was such a big fellow," she says. "The rest of the girls were not interested in him. He was a foot taller than I was. He was 6 feet 2 inches tall. I don't think he'd ever had a date in his life."

"He was a foot taller than I was. He was 6 feet 2 inches tall. I don't think he'd ever had a date in his life."

They dated throughout their freshmen and sophomore years, but it wasn't a serious romance. Unlike her suitor, Katherine had a clear sense of her academic mission — she wanted to get her degree, teach, and eventually become a librarian.

Katherine says neither her father nor her mother had a college education. Her mother was a seamstress who took in work from others in their hometown of Sistersville, Tyler County. Originally from Ohio, Ella Coen was helping her mother serve meals to boarders when she waited on Daniel E. Curran, a widower, 20 years Ella's senior.

Daniel worked in the oil and gas industry, and after they married, the couple moved to Sistersville. Katherine says her father was looking for a job and didn't have the money for train fare. "So he thumbed a ride to the first oil town he came across," she says. "It was right across the river from Ohio."

Her father did well in Sistersville. "On his stationery, he put 'DAN CURRAN: OIL PRODUCER.' He was a director on the board of the bank," says Katherine.

An only child, Katherine grew up in a comfortable situation. She excelled in school and was allowed to skip fourth grade.

"I guess it was taken for granted I would go to college," Katherine says. For many young women of that era, teaching and nursing were the primary career options. As for where she'd get her training, the church provided direction on two levels.

"Daddy was a Catholic and my mother was Protestant," says Katherine. "But it made little difference because he wasn't a faithful churchgoer. We were Methodists and opted to stay Methodists. That was one of the reasons I chose this school."

"Back then, if you were active in [the Methodist Church], there was a real push to go to a Methodist college in the state," says Bob Skinner, director of marketing and communications for WVWC.

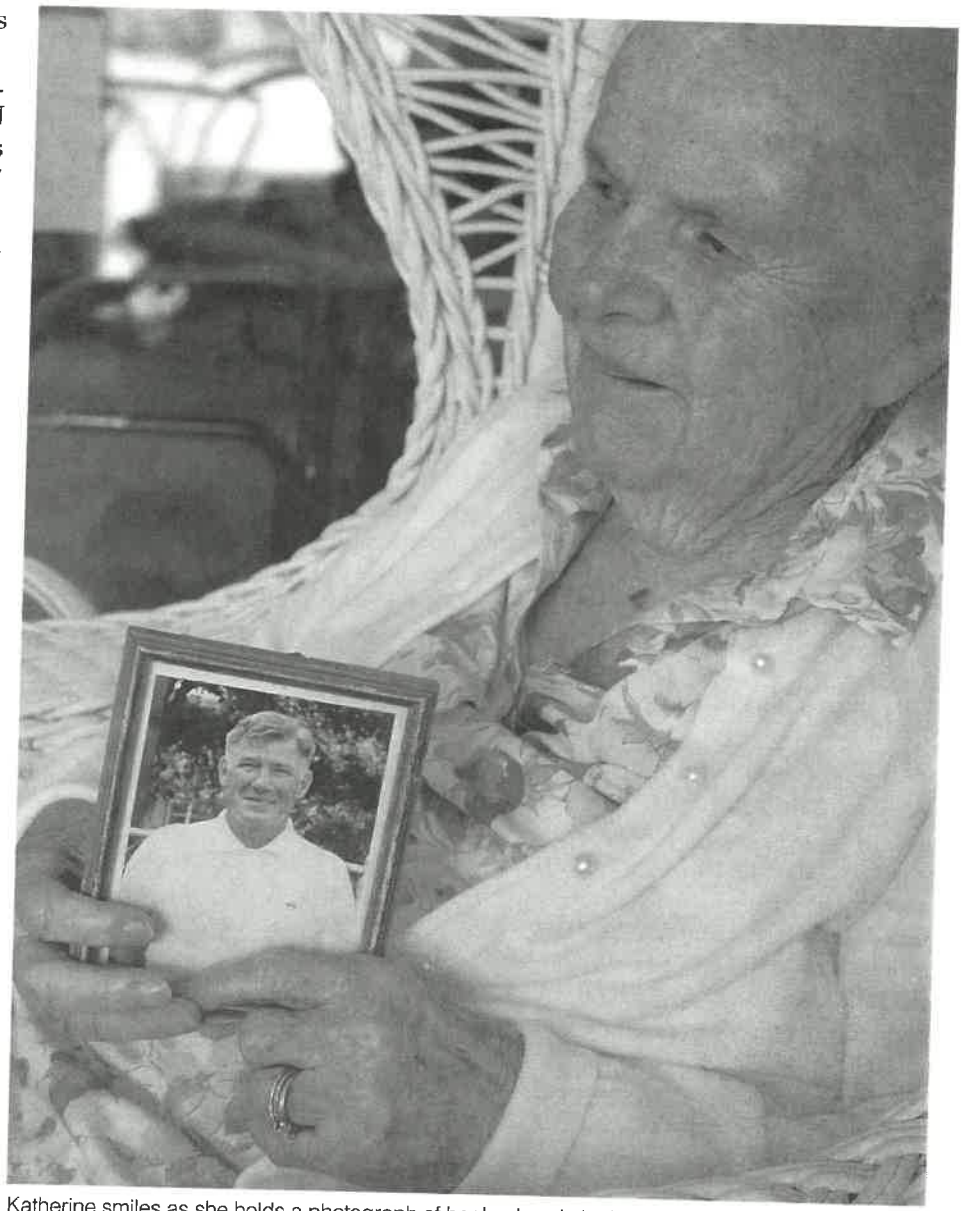
For Katherine, there was one other reason to go to WVWC: her pastor's daughter, Juanita Dawson, was a good friend and chose WVWC for her higher education. The two girls were roommates throughout Katherine's time at the college.

Katherine says she took the shortline railroad from Sistersville to New Martinsville, where she and her mother got on the B&O train to Clarksburg. From there, they took the train into Buckhannon.

Her father had died when Katherine was 13, leaving only Katherine and her mother to deal with all the details of the transition to college life, including moving the densely packed trunk into the residence hall. As luck would have it, Katherine's room was on the fourth floor.

Katherine says there was only one hall for girls, Agnes Howard Hall. Built in the late 1800's, the citadel still stands and is on the National Register of Historic Places. For young women of Katherine's era, it was a place where the housemother transformed giggling adolescent girls into proper ladies through discipline and tradition. For example, the residents were expected to dress for Sunday dinner and were held to a strict curfew — Katherine recalls it as being around 8 or 8:30 p.m. The religious influence on student life was more pronounced at that time, as well.

"Any girl who did not attend church on Sunday was not permitted to date on Saturday," says Katherine.



Katherine smiles as she holds a photograph of her husband, the late Dave Reemsnyder, a legend on the WVWC campus. Among his many accomplishments, Dave taught math and physical education, coached nine varsity sports, and served as college athletic director. A proposed $15 million science pavilion will be named in his honor. Dave and Katherine were married from 1937 until his death in 1979.

Katherine found the atmosphere at WVWC to be welcoming, but after two years, she decided to transfer to Ohio State University. Although they were dating, Dave stayed behind at WVWC to complete his education. Katherine says he wasn't the only man in her life at that time.

"I had a boyfriend in Atlanta, William Green," she says. "He was as good-looking as the day is long and had that Southern twang. He was a Southerner."

Katherine says she enjoyed her years at OSU. "I had a better time socially at Ohio State," she says. But after receiving her degree in 1930, Katherine crossed the river and returned to her hometown of Sistersville to teach high school English.

Dave stuck it out at WVWC and graduated in 1930, largely through the encouragement of a chemistry professor, Dr. Nicholas Hyma. After graduation, Dave accepted a job at Mark Twain High School in Raleigh County. [See "My Memories of Mark Twain High School," by Pauline Haga; Fall 1999.] Among his students was future senator Robert C. Byrd. Dave Reemsnyder's influence on Bryd was so significant, the senator continues to keep in touch with Katherine and calls her on her birthday.

Dave furthered his education at the University of Illinois and received his master's in physical education from Ohio State University in 1937. A job at his alma mater brought him back to Buckhannon. He and Katherine married on September 4, 1937, at the bride's home in Sistersville.

The marriage brought an end to Katherine's teaching career — most school boards prohibited female teachers from being married. She settled into domestic life, and the couple had three children: Jane (Soverns), David Echols Reemsnyder II, and Kathie (Kamm). Dave built their home on Meade Street in 1939. "He would work on it a few hours and then go over to the college," Katherine says. She recalls Dave's parents visiting while the house was under construction.

"His father thought we used too many nails in it," Katherine says. "Dave told him not to worry about it. They didn't stay very long after that."

Katherine's mother died in 1946 and willed to her the seed of what would become a definitive passion for Katherine: collecting butter chips. The small plates, which measure about three inches in diameter, came with sets of dishes and were used to hold the butter pats at dinner. Katherine has a collection of more than 400 of the chips, many of which are displayed on racks in her dining room.

Katherine doesn't recall when she started another distinctive habit: drinking Pepsi. While Dave started his day with fruit juice, Katherine got her jump start from a cold Pepsi. It became her beverage of choice at any time during the day. Pepsi memorabilia and knickknacks decorate the walls and shelves of the home, and her daughters refer to her as their "Pepsiholic" mother. Katherine still starts her day with a glass of Pepsi and a banana. Her daughters have introduced orange juice into this routine, but with limited success.

All three of the Reemsnyder children graduated from WVWC and lived on campus, despite their home being across the street.

All three of the Reemsnyder children graduated from WVWC and lived on campus, despite their home being across the street. The girls stayed in Agnes Howard, the same residence hall their mother roomed in decades earlier. "We called it 'Agony Inn,'" says Jane, mainly because of the housemother's strict rules about boys, curfews, and taking care of the rooms. Nevertheless, Jane fondly recalls it as "a good place" and a building in which her mother always retained an interest.

After Dave died in 1979, Katherine looked for ways to fill the lonely hours. She found it in the back-to-school ritual that occurred every September as students arrived at the residence halls. She offered to give one fortunate, deserving student free lodging for the year in her home. Thirteen students have benefitted from her hospitality.

Carol Wilcox Enterkin, today a registered nurse living in North Carolina, was the first student to take advantage of this situation. Katherine extended to Carol the opportunity to room in her house during Carol's sophomore year.

"It was a good deal for me," Carol says. "It was great."

She stayed with Katherine for two years, and they developed a close relationship that continues to this day.

Daughters Jane Soverns (left) and Kathie Kamm, as well as son, David, all hold degrees from WVWC. Katherine's grandson, Rick, graduated from there in 1990.

Katherine's contributions to WVWC have been honored on several occasions. She received the Alumni Award in 1984 and was named the college's Woman of the Year in 1994. She is a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority from Ohio State, and was a member of a local sorority at Wesleyan that eventually became Alpha Xi Delta. She's also a member of the WVWC Emeritus Club, an organization for alumni who have marked the 50th anniversary of their graduations. (Former WVWC students are eligible even if they did not graduate from the college.) She's never missed an alumni banquet.

Katherine also remained a staunch supporter of WVWC athletics after her husband died. "For decades, until the last two years, mother attended the college's home football and basketball games," says Jane.

Shortly after Katherine turned 90, she told her children there were two things she wanted to do one more time before she died: Go to colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, her favorite vacation destination; and attend an Ohio State football game. They were able to make the Williamsburg trip, much to Katherine's delight. But the logistics for getting a nonagenarian safely in and out of a college football crowd are daunting. Nevertheless, she watches the games on television, a Pepsi at her side.

To this day, she keeps track of the comings and goings of the college from her bay window and through a network of former students and faculty. Until December 2005, when her health began to fail, she continued to open her home to a student.

"She just had such a good heart," Carol Enterkin says. "She's one of those salt-of-the-earth people you wish there were more of."

Carol says it would always bother Katherine when WVWC students who post-dated Dave Reemsnyder's era didn't recognize his name or know of the legend's achievements and contributions.

"Even after his death, her life was focused on keeping alive his memory on campus. She was very proud of her husband," Carol says.

Katherine with some of her collection of butter chips. She owns more than 400 of the small, decorative plates.

A proposed $15 million science pavilion to be named in Dave Reemsynder's honor will recognize his legacy. Bob Skinner says the college is in the fund-raising phase of the project. David E. Reemsnyder II is chairman of the committee seeking contributions for this new addition, scheduled for completion in 2009.

Although no WVWC building bears Katherine's name, a first-floor commons room in Agnes Howard Hall is named after her. Some say the hall's front porch swing ought to be named in her honor, as well. For decades, one of Katherine's daily rituals was to walk two miles a day on the campus, and she'd rest a while on the porch swing at Agnes Howard Hall and reminisce.

Edith Logsdon often joined her on those walks and spent warm summer evenings reminiscing with Katherine on that swing. Although Katherine is too frail to take those long walks and visit Agnes Howard Hall, Edith still checks her neighbor and enjoys reminiscing about their favorite subject, WVWC.

"She loves that institution," says Edith. "That's where she met her husband, and he taught there all those years. She's very loyal to it."

"Wesleyan definitely holds a very special place in the hearts of the Reemsnyder family members," says Jane, WVWC Class of 1961. Kathie graduated in 1971, and David in 1969. Katherine's grandson, Rick, graduated in 1990 from WVWC. "The college continues to be a family affair for all of us," Jane says.

Coach Bobby

Deep within the heart of Clay County, not far from the Nicholas County line, tattered remnants of the Widen coal town can still be seen. What once was a majestic industrial operation is today a shadow of its former self. Gone are the community building, company store, airport, tennis courts, swimming pool, and high school. But for many individuals who once called Widen their home, colorful memories remain.

Bobby Stover graduated from Clay County High School in 1955, and later went on to teach and coach at Clay County schools for 31 years. Here, he gives a pep talk to members of his wrestling team at Clay County High School, date unknown.

Vivid recollections of Widen still exist for former school teacher and retired basketball, baseball, football, and wrestling coach Bobby Stover. A graduate of Clay County High School, Bobby taught and coached at Widen High School from 1958 until the school closed due to consolidation in 1963. He later taught, coached, and served as an administrator and athletic director at Clay County High School until his retirement in 1989. He touched the lives of many students, and there are those here who consider him a legend.

Bobby Stover grew up in Boone County in a small community named Janie, where his father, Clarence, worked as an electrician for the Blue Pennant mine. As an adolescent, Bobby attended Whitesville Junior High. He fondly remembers a special coach named C.W. Hoffman, who set a good example for his students and encouraged them to attend college rather than risk their futures in the dangerous mining industry. Bobby took Hoffman's advice to heart. He decided that he, too, wanted to become a teacher and coach.

Bobby attended Seth High School until the 11th grade, when his family moved to Clay County to be nearer extended family. He enrolled at Clay High School for his senior year.

Upon graduation from Clay County High in 1955, Bobby worked at Murphy & Company, a small general store, in order to save enough money to attend college. After a year, he enrolled at Marshall University, where he pursued a degree in education and joined the wrestling squad. After two years, his finances ran low. Consequently, Bobby chose to accept a 64-hour teaching certificate instead of completing his bachelor's degree.

In 1958, a mere 20 years old, Bobby accepted a position at Widen High School, teaching and coaching the miners' children, many of whom were nearly as old as he was. Mr. Stover taught health, geography, boys' and girls' physical education, and American history. He also served as the boys' basketball coach.

Stover felt lucky to have a job teaching in Widen. Mr. J.G. Bradley, the mine owner and operator, was generous with his school teachers, paying them salaries above the county wages for other teachers. By offering higher pay, Bradley was able to keep qualified teachers in his school, providing local children with a quality education.

Bobby recalls that Widen was a

Stover

By Kara Perdue Stover

Above: Young Bobby Stover as a seventh grader at Whitesville Junior High School in Boone County. His family moved to Clay County about four years later.

Left: Widen, Clay County, is where Bobby Stover began his teaching and coaching career. This photograph of Widen High School was taken in 1967.

The Making of a Clay County Legend

self-contained community at the time. All necessities from groceries to furniture were shipped in by train. Many people felt they had no reason to travel beyond the town's borders. Widen included a bank, a boarding house, and the company store, as well as a Baptist and Methodist church for the white families and a separate church for the black families. For recreational activities, a community building housed a gymnasium. The company store had an addition, which contained a pool room, a movie theater, and a stage for the performance of plays. A ballfield, YMCA, swimming pool, and tennis courts also provided areas where the young people of the town could play, socialize, and have fun. [See "Widen, The Town J.G. Bradley Built," by Betty Cantrell, Grace Phillips, and Helen Reed; January-March 1977.]

Throughout the school year, Bobby would transport his student athletes to area schools for basketball games. On one particular trip, a seventh grader who had never been beyond the confines of Widen was so terrified of the car ride that he crouched in the floor boards in fear. Bobby suspects that the student was also afraid of the world beyond the isolated town he had always known.

Early on, Bobby realized he had to establish a firm set of rules and consequences for his students. Rather than fear the man, students developed a deep respect for their coach and mentor.

Coach Stover's former student, Bob Dorsey, remembers Bobby as a strict disciplinarian, possibly due in part to Stover's young age. Early on, Bobby realized he had to establish a firm set of rules and consequences for his students. Rather than fear the man, students developed a deep respect for their coach and mentor. Bobby says behavior problems were not that common. When a student caused trouble, teachers would usually deal with the situation directly. If the problem could not be straightened out, the child's parents were contacted and brought into the school for a conference. Then, if the parents could not resolve the situation, the coal company

Coach Stover with the Clay County champion Widen Buffaloes softball team in 1962

would intervene. Families with a child the parents or company could not control were asked to leave the town.

While Bobby Stover's relative youth did not hinder his coaching abilities, sometimes the facilities made his work somewhat difficult. The gymnasium at the school was not of regulation size, and the physical-education students realized they could bounce the ball off the gym ceiling, using a spot marked in the accumulated coal dust to make bank shots into the basketball net. Bobby recalls that the students could throw the ball from one end of the court to the other and easily make the shots across the tiny floor. However, all official basketball games took place at the community building, which had a regulation-sized floor. The basketball players had to adjust to the differences in the two floors.

The basketball team might not have boasted winning seasons or triumphant championships, but spectators recall how the Widen basketball team performed impressive warm-ups before each game in their vibrant red-and-white satin uniforms. Basketball fans came not only for the competition of the game, but also to experience the colorful pregame show.

Industrial baseball was a big draw in Widen after basketball season and the school year came to an end. During summer breaks from school, Bobby split his time between working on the Widen & Buffalo Railroad repairing train tracks and playing baseball for the Widen Buffaloes. Bobby's wife, Rozella, says this helped her husband maintain his teaching position for so long. The mining company took its baseball team very seriously, and Bobby's athletic ability served him well as he played centerfield and was a powerful switch-hitter.

After repeated attempts by the UMW to organize a union in Widen and Mr. Bradley's refusal to allow this to happen, Bradley finally sold the company to the Pittston Coal Company in 1958. Sadly, in 1963, due to declines in mine production, town population, and school enrollment, Widen High School consolidated with Clay County High School. A year later, the mines closed completely.

After five years of teaching in Widen, Bobby decided to attend Morris Harvey College in Charleston to finish his education. Although he had already been a teacher for the past few years, Bobby had to fulfill a student-teaching requirement in order to obtain his four-year degree. He was placed at Stonewall Jackson High School in West Charleston.

After graduation from Morris Harvey, Bobby returned to Clay County High School to teach ninth-grade math, world history, American history, world geography, and career education. He later served the school as assistant vice-principal and athletic director for 14 years. During Bobby's tenure at Clay High, he coached football for five years and baseball for 13 years.

From his early days in college, Bobby had developed a love for wrestling and accepted the position of head wrestling coach, which he held for 22 years. Over the years, eight of Coach Stover's wrestlers became state champion wrestlers, while 12 became state runners-up. Bobby Stover was named West Virginia High School Coach of the Year in wrestling in 1979, and West Virginia AA Wrestling Coach of the Year in 1980. He was also awarded Regional Coach of the Year for athletic director

for the years of 1987 and '88. Each December, "The Bob Stover Classic" wrestling tournament is hosted at the high school.

In 2004, Coach Stover was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Oklahoma. He was nominated by a committee of West Virginia coaches and referees for his lifetime of service to the sport of wrestling. Today, he still volunteers his time, assisting local coaches with the junior wrestling teams throughout the county.

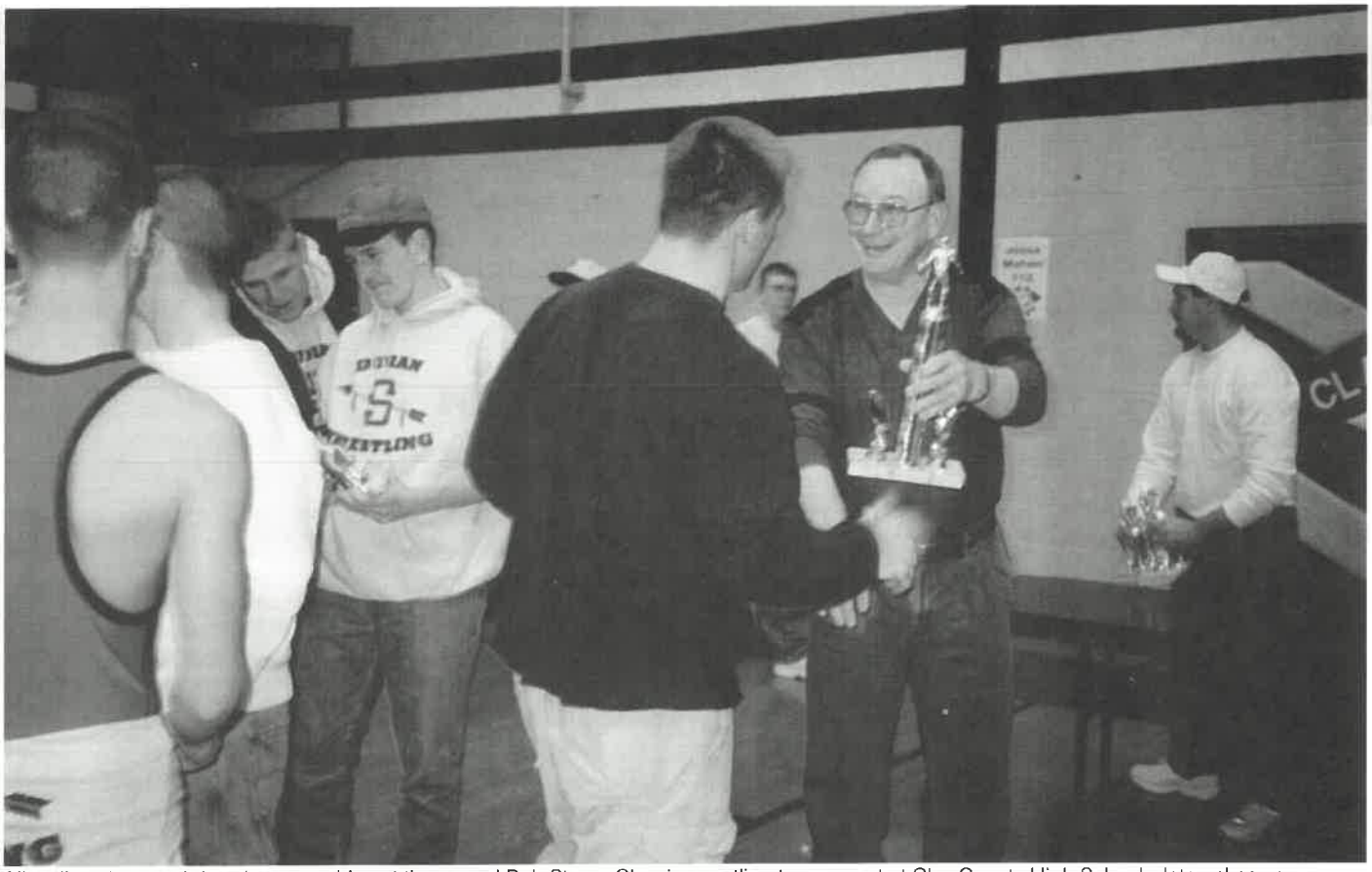
When I was a student at Clay High, I recall Coach Stover being placed in charge of student discipline. The rumor mill had it that he was tough. This was a man who did not tolerate any sort of nonsense. It was not his impressive stature that struck fear in the hearts of the students, but the intensity of his gaze that commanded our respect. I have to admit that I was intimidated by the man and feared him. As a student, simply making my way past his office I would walk a little straighter, lower my voice to a whisper, and make absolutely sure I was on my best behavior.

When Mr. Stover's son, Brett, asked me for a date a few years later, I was hesitant to meet the family. However, when I visited the Stover home for the first time, this strict man was crouched over the kitchen sink with soap suds up to his elbows, washing the dinner dishes. All of my preconceived ideas about him left me immediately, and I was placed at ease. I decided a man who was willing to wash dishes couldn't be all that bad. As I got to know him, he would often share the antics of his students with a twinkle in his eye and a sly smile. Mr. Stover became my father-in-law in 1988. Now in playful banter, he often teases me about being his favorite daughter-in-law. I remind him that I am his only daughter-in-law. Of course, he too is my favorite father-in-law.

After 31 years of dedicated service to the county school system, Bobby Stover retired in 1989. Those early days at Widen are still a vivid part of his memory and helped shape the teacher and coach he became in later years. "It was the best experience I ever had, and I wouldn't trade it for anything," he says of his time there. "I could never have had a better learning experience. I had to learn to think on my feet and improvise."

Obviously, this was a quality that served Coach Stover well throughout his career. My daughter asked me recently, "Is Grandpa a legend?" I contemplated this question for a moment and then replied, "You know, I think he probably is! At least he is in Clay County."

KARA PERDUE STOVER was born and raised in Ovapa, Clay County. She recently received her degree in education from West Virginia State University, graduating magna cum laude. This fall, she begins teaching seventh-grade English at Clay Middle School. This story, written as a class assignment, is Kara's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



All smiles, the coach hands out trophies at the annual Bob Stover Classic wrestling tournament at Clay County High School, date unknown.

Food

By Barbara Rasmussen

Recalling Georgia Wickline

My grandmother, Anna Georgia Miller Wickline, died in early July 1995 at the age of 91, in the picturesque village of Greenville. She was a country woman in almost every sense of the word, rarely leaving her mountain farm for any purpose at all. She was born and raised, lived and died in Monroe County, a descendant of original settlers there. She did not drive a car. In my memory, she traveled only once, to see a daughter in Arkansas. All but the last of her 91 years were lived in good health that yielded gracefully to the vagaries of age. While I was growing up, I often counted the differences between her world and mine, and was secretly relieved by my life in a town.

I did not expect to inherit anything from her — she had nine children — but in fact, it was her wish that I, as the eldest grandchild, should receive a prized personal possession that she took with her into her marriage in 1920. Her Victorian picture frame, gilded and carved, with hand-rolled, uneven glass, is a lovely thing that now enjoys a place of pride in my home. The glass slightly distorts the watercolor behind it, but in these imperfections I now can see that there is another legacy — priceless, unseen, and significant. My grandmother's gift has become a muse for reflecting upon the ties between our worlds.

From all outward evidence, she was a traditional and ordinary farm wife. She often forfeited her needs and her preferences to those of her family. She presided over an immediate brood that included her nine children, eight children-in-law, and 15 grandchildren, most of whom are now also spouses and parents. She was long a widow. When my grandfather died in 1977, she retired from life on her farm, worn out, she said, from the isolation and hard work. Her sons moved her to a small house in the village. In 1978, I took my infant son and toddling daughter to see her there, but they do not remember that.

In keeping with tradition, the 65-acre farm went to her youngest son, who paid each sibling an equal share for it. The farm still is in family hands, but none of Georgia's children chose agriculture, a decision she greatly influenced. The farm was successful, but the work

and Rebellion in Monroe County

Top left: The Wickline family farm near Greenville, Monroe County, date unknown.

Bottom left: Georgia Wickline as a young wife and mother in 1929. This photograph was taken in Zenith, Monroe County, at a family gathering.

Right: Virgil and Georgia Wickline, our author's grandparents, date unknown.

of it was too much for the younger generation to consider. That land had shielded the family from many of the heartbreaks of the Great Depression, because it was paid for and produced an ample supply of food. Shoes and clothing came harder, but everyone in the small agricultural county was in similar circumstances and they shared their burdens and talents with each other. They were not subsistence farmers; they would have disliked the pejorative context of that word. They were self-sufficient farmers, resourceful and multi-talented. Among my grandfather's possessions were shoe lasts and the tools for repairing boots.

Georgia was a wonderful cook. She could milk cows, butcher chickens, keep a garden, put food by, clean house, nurse babies, and bake hot bread for 11 people every day. Her coconut cream pies with a mile of meringue emerged, perfect, from her wood-fired oven every time. No electric mixer whipped the meringue. That was done by hand. Her kitchen accomplishments would stagger the imagination of any modern culinary master.

My many Sunday dinners in her farmhouse taught me much about food and life. I learned that the

Author Barbara Wickline (Rasmussen) as a girl at her grandparents' farm in the 1950's.

family was not always in harmony with itself, and many of the siblings quarreled with each other and their father. These rows rarely lasted very long, as the pull of kin was potent.

I learned that corn pudding loses something when it must be made with store-bought eggs. The corn, of course, should be picked within the hour of cooking. The best mashed potatoes are made only with a fork, quickly incorporating butter and warm milk. As prepared by my grandmother, fried country ham with red-eye gravy and fresh biscuits should be on the menus of the finest restaurants. This meal, to be perfect, requires a cold skillet and a hot wood stove with the oven precisely fired. I can fry the ham well and make the gravy, but not the biscuits. Thus, this cultural inheritance has been denied to my children, because my electric oven and I simply cannot find the proper temperature. A bad biscuit is worse than no biscuit, so we do without. The allure of Southern-cured ham is nearly lost these days, alas. Now, folks worry about sulfites and sodium in their diets the way my grandmother worried about providing enough meat. The trick to managing the salt is to soak the ham — in cold tea or cold water — and to use no other salt in preparing the meal. Pepper and vinegar admirably stand in for salt on vegetables.

There was no cookbook in her house. There were no measuring spoons or cups. Her handful and pinch and dab sufficed for all cooking needs. Her rendered lard was a key kitchen ingredient.

Butter was homemade, too. I often helped my grandmother make it. She had a very modern churn with a hand crank that turned a wooden paddle in a two-gallon glass jug. I remember being disappointed to learn that the dasher churn I had envisioned was an outmoded thing of her grandmother's era.

A tank built into the stove heated water for dishes and laundry. It was sometimes my job to make sure there was enough wood on hand to keep the stove at an even temperature. Never was I trusted to actually put firewood in the stove — an entire meal was at stake. Instead, I deposited an armload of split firewood in the wood box and perched on its edge, out of the way, and watched the kitchen proceedings.

At the end of the day, the cooling wood-fired kitchen range provided the correct temperature to set the clabber, as she called cottage cheese, when milk was plentiful. The tangy cheese was accented perfectly with black pepper. On Sunday nights, after supper, she put a pot of brown beans to soak to cook for dinner the next day. Accompanied by chopped onion and corn bread, the long-simmered beans would be as perfectly satisfying as ham and gravy.

On Mondays, she did the washing. On Tuesdays, she'd "redd up" the house, mopping the printed linoleum in every room. I remember the quaint words she used: "redd up," (tidy), "fotch" (fetch), "hark" (listen!), "haint" (ghost), "ye" (you), "retch" (reached), "poke" (bag), and many others. She was using language that marked her as a descendant of those 18th-century settlers of Monroe County. I am richer for these charming speech ways that are part of my identity as a daughter of the mountains.

A zinc bucket of spring water just for drinking rested near the edge of the counter in her kitchen. It seemed

Virgil Wickline and his six sons. They are, from the left, Elvin (our author's father), Leonard, Alfred, Newman, Frank, and Conley. Photograph around 1950.

Georgia Wickline, seated at right, with her three daughters. Standing, from the left, are Bonnie and Golda. Seated at left is Pauline, date unknown.

to stay cold all day. A tin dipper for communal use was hooked over the edge of the pail. The water was always so refreshing; its taste was sweet and clear. I yearned to stick my fingers into the whole bucket, just to feel the cold, but sensing its serious purpose, I did not dare. Because of that spring, I have never liked "city water" and its chlorine taste. There was a sink in the kitchen with a cold-water pump, but we never drank the well water. The spring water was better. Milk and cheeses and eggs were kept in the spring house, as there was no refrigerator in her kitchen for many years. Until I was in high school, there was no indoor plumbing, either. Catalogues and corn cobs supplied the outhouse, which was a hand-built "two holer."

As a child, my anxieties accompanied the wonders of visiting this country place. My grandmother introduced grandchildren to farm life matter-of-factly. I remember the apprehension I felt reaching under a fractious hen to retrieve a still-warm egg. I never mastered the squeeze-taper-tickle it takes to get milk from a cow's teat, but my grandmother could hit the barn cat between the eyes with a jet of milk from her best Hereford cow, and never break her rhythm. The woodshed terrified me because a black snake lived there. Sugar pears from the trees in the front yard attracted the bees that lived in my grandfather's carefully tended hives. They threatened painful stings when we children were sent to fetch the fallen fruit. My grandmother transformed the hard little pears into pear honey — a sweet conserve that has never been excelled for embellishing a hot biscuit. Choosing between pear honey and bee honey was a delicious childhood mealtime dilemma.

We cracked homegrown hickory nuts and store-bought pecans. The hickory nuts that did not go straight into our mouths often ended up in chewy hickory-orange caramels, or better yet, hickory nut cake. Occasionally, I see those nutcracker sets in old-time catalogues or at flea markets, and that memory of belonging returns and makes me smile. Sometimes we savored those fat, delicious store-bought chocolate drops called by a name I am embarrassed to remember and refuse to write down. And there were big coconut bonbons, iced in pink or yellow, that came from the C.J. Variety Store. That country emporium was a wonder to us, with its black-and-orange paint scheme. Every day was Halloween there.

My grandparents were educated through the eighth grade in the small, one-room schools of their county, some of which were established before the Civil War. They were both respected members of their community, which was founded in 1809. Greenville and Monroe County are lovely, small places, unsullied by Appalachia's tragic experiences with coal. There is not a single stoplight or a fast food store to be found there — and may there never be.

My grandparents' ancestors settled along Little Indian Creek in the early 1800's, ending their gradual century-long migratory drift south and west from Philadelphia, where our ancestor, Jacob Wicklein, disembarked in 1696. He was German and probably Jewish, but by the 1950's, his descendants were Protestants. My grandfather belonged to the Primitive Baptist Church on Little Indian Creek. Every Sunday he put on a pin-striped shirt, suspenders, and sleeve garters before he set off to the service. It was hard-shell Baptist preaching, but there were no serpents, only an angry God. His church membership had argued over the nature of the afterlife, and the "no-hellers" moved to another location. My grandmother did not attend church often. She read the Bible at home on Sunday mornings and cooked dinner.

Grandfather Virgil Wickline by the fireside at his Monroe County farm. He was a stern and formidable man, our author tells us, who farmed all his life.

At the end of every day, my grandfather sat by the front room fire. He would rock back on a hickory mule-ear chair that he had built and caned by hand. He spit tobacco juice into the fire as he read his newspapers: the Monroe Watchman, and improbably, the Wall Street Journal. From this I gleaned that he was a Republican. The newspapers didn't impress me then, though the spitting did. It was a forbidden thing in my mother's house, but in my grandmother's, the sizzle of the tobacco juice hitting hot coals seemed like a dignified punctuation for the waning moments of a rigorous day.

I think I was afraid of my grandfather when I was very young, terrified that he would make good on his promise to feed me to the hog if I didn't behave. I didn't know what his behaving standard was, but I sure tried to steer clear of the limit. Indulged grandchildren annoyed my grandfather. My brother, he said, "made more noise than a jackass shut up in a tin barn." We were the eldest two grandchildren. The other 13 were even noisier. They all called him "Pawpaw," but my brother and I were forbidden that by our mother, an outlander from a northern county, who demanded a respectful "Grandfather."

My youthful uncles tried, repeatedly, to teach me to pin a glass of water to the ceiling. I always failed, to their glee, and they were threatened with a strapping as I raced in shame and rage for a dry towel. Despite the punishment, it was understood that as a girl, I was fair game for all manners of torment. Beginning with the shenanigans of those two naughty boys, a palpable maleness pervaded that farm.

My grandfather was an extremely frugal, practical man. He saw his life in farming, and planned that for his sons. His will was iron. His word was law. When I grew older, it did little good to try to assure him that educating a woman would not be a waste of money, yet, at some level I think he was pleased that I was going to college. He complimented my choice of journalism with a taciturn observation that "a man needs a good paper." He had broadened his outlook ever so slightly, largely as a result of my grandmother's determination. His will and his word met their match in Georgia.

She intended for her firstborn to go to high school. Her determination chiseled away at my grandfather's authority. The standoff continued every day throughout the summer.

She defied him. For the duration of one Depression-era summer long ago, their contesting wills spread rancor through their home. At issue was the education of my father. When he finished eighth grade, Georgia ignored the pronouncement that her husband now required his son on the farm. She intended for her firstborn to go to high school. Her determination chiseled away at my grandfather's authority. The standoff continued every day throughout the summer. Resolute, she put by her egg money to buy him school shoes come fall. This was no small thing. Revolution was at hand.

When autumn came, my grandfather was a beaten man. One morning, he tossed a wad of bills on the table growling, "If you're going to send that boy to school, you'd better buy him some shoes." She did. And did so eight more times as each of their remaining children followed my father through high school. He went on to graduate from West Virginia University on the eve of America's entry into World War II.

Georgia's defiance of her husband rewrote her children's lives. The legacy of her rebellion in the matter of education assured her daughters and granddaughters of personal opportunities that she could scarcely have imagined for herself. She understood her own feminism and responsibility on a tactical level, unembroidered with rhetoric. She was keenly aware of a woman's power. She gave of herself to raise a family, yielding much to male will. Nevertheless, by insisting that her children were introduced to a larger world, she touched the future in unmeasurable and unknowable ways.

As we gathered in 1995 in the old cemetery of her Regular Baptist Church in Greenville and laid her to rest beside her husband gone before, we stood among the headstones of other mountain families, some dating back to the 1860's. In that ground, parents, children, and grandchildren, all long dead, remain together as family. We were different. We came to mourn Georgia from the worlds she opened to us by her defiant act of so long ago. Few of her children or grandchildren will ever rest beside her, for we have moved away. Nearly 50 of us paid our respects. My son and the other great-grandsons joined the grandsons as pallbearers. As I

Surrounded by photographs of loved ones and holding sleeping granddaughter Barbara Wickline (Rasmussen), Georgia flashes a satisfied smile.

watched him take this step to manhood, shoulder to shoulder with my now-graying brother, I was taken by the realization that my child at age 17 was laying to rest a woman who had rocked him, his mother, and his grandfather in her lap. In time, my son will know the rarity of that extended kinship.

Georgia's grandchildren include craftsmen, a physician, a lawyer, several teachers, an accountant, an engineer, homemakers, and successful business people. I became a historian. Among her great-grandchildren there are a geologist, a hospital administrator, a surgeon, a mathematician, and a teacher. The little ones, still growing, have much promise.

Most of us were educated in the universities of the Virginias — West Virginia University, Marshall University, James Madison University, Virginia Polytechnical Institute, and the University of Virginia. Most of us have come back to the mountains, but few of us to Monroe County and none of us as farmers. We are spreading out in ever-widening circles from this tiny mountain farm in the southernmost portion of West Virginia. We are now held together mostly by our recollections.

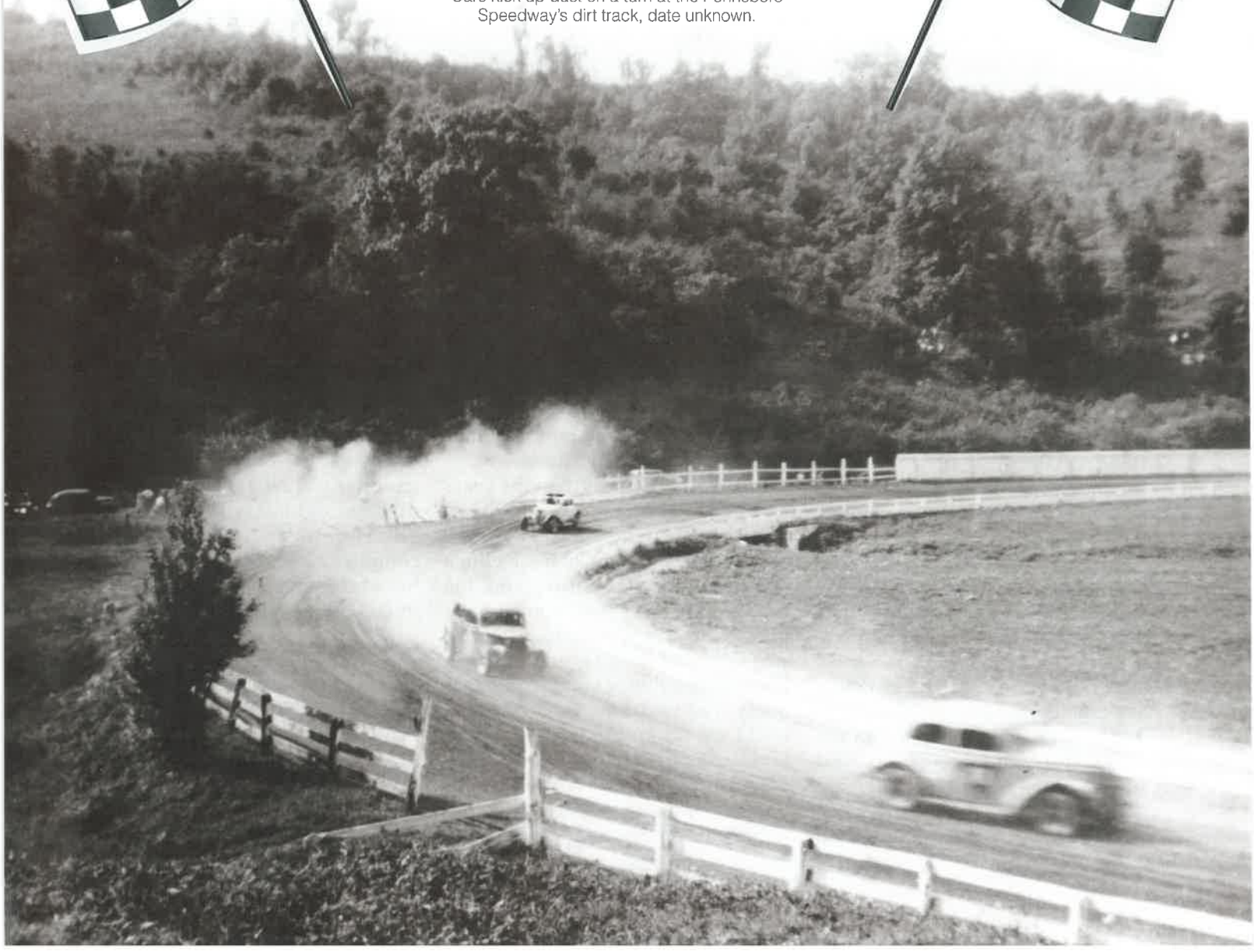
Taken in slow doses over the years since her death, these childhood memories of food and experience are challenging some of my feelings about traditional culture and the constrained roles that women have played in my Appalachian world. As I reflect upon my grandmother's life and rebellion, it seems to me that many traditional mountain women could see far and plan well. Contemplating her small revolt has tempered my nostalgia for the ways of the past, without extinguishing my affectionate memories. Can it be that my independence came not from the feminist movement of the 1970's but from the quiet strength of a mountain woman? Well and truly, she knew how to fricassee a patriarch.

She was a mother at age 18, a grandmother with young teens still at home by the time she was 51. I do not know the range of choices life gave her, nor can I imagine what her dreams might have been. However, I do know this: The subsequent accomplishments of all of us pleased her as if they were her own, which, in fact, they were.

BARBARA RASMUSSEN, a native of Lewisburg, holds a Ph.D. in history from WVU, where she directs the graduate public history program. She has published in numerous periodicals, most recently *Now & Then* and *Ohio Valley History*. Barbara is the author of *Absentee Landowning and Exploitation in West Virginia*, published by the University Press of Kentucky. Her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 1990 issue.

The Legendary Pennsboro Speedway

By Betty Leavengood



Cars kick up dust on a turn at the Pennsboro Speedway's dirt track, date unknown.

Fast Times in Ritchie County

In the late 1940's, my grandfather and I would get in his Plymouth coupe and head out U.S. Route 50, then a curving two-lane road, to Pennsboro and the Ritchie County Fair. My grandfather always "straightened out" the curves as he drove so we would get there faster. After parking, he and I would climb the stairs to the top of the grandstand to spend an exciting afternoon watching sleek horses speeding around the track.

I recently drove to Harrisville to talk with Russell Grose about his memories of racing at the track, now known as the Legendary Pennsboro Speedway. Russell is a tall, distinguished-looking man, and he greeted me with a firm handshake and a friendly smile. A spry 94-year-old, Russell appears to be in his early 70's. "That used to be my Ford dealership," he says, pointing across the street to Arlo's Antiques. "I opened the dealership in 1942. When I retired, I gave the building to my daughter, Anita Richards, and she opened an antique store. 'Arlo's' stands for Anita, Russell, Lonnie, and Opal. Lonnie is Anita's husband, and Opal is my late wife's name.

"I moved into this house in July of 1950. It used to be the Fry Hotel," Russell says. He showed me a large grindstone on his back porch. "This belonged to my wife's grandfather, George Layfield. I have it hooked up to electricity, and I can still sharpen knives with it."

Russell showed me into a large, comfortable room with a cozy fireplace, several chairs, and a television set. "I call this room my Boar's Nest," he says with a laugh. I agreed that this is definitely a man's room. The walls and ceiling are covered with an assortment of antiques. "There's at least $10,000 on that wall," Russell says as he points to his collection of antique match holders, tools, local pottery, lamps, and numerous other items. "When I retired, I went to a lot of auctions and sales at old farms."

We sat down to talk about the Pennsboro race track. "In the beginning, there were just races at the track once a year during the annual Ritchie County Fair," Russell says.

According to *A Photographic History of Ritchie County*, published in 1989 by the Ritchie County Historical Society, horse racing began in Pennsboro with the incorporation of the Ritchie County Agricultural and Fair Association on January 18, 1887. At the first meeting of the stockholders, the board of direc-

Russell Grose of Harrisville first attended races at the Ritchie County Fair as a boy in the early 1920's. He later became an investor in the Pennsboro Speedway and remained involved until he sold his shares in 1971. Photograph by Betty Leavengood.

Ritchie County Fair promotional postcard from 1911, courtesy of the Ritchie County Historical Society.

tors voted to procure a tract of land "by purchase or lease, fence the same, construct race course, erect necessary and suitable buildings, and hold a Fair sometime in the autumn of 1887." The fair association leased a tract of land on the outskirts of Pennsboro from the Bradford family.

By April, bids had been received and contracts awarded. Projects included building an oval five-furlong racetrack, ½ mile on the inside and ⅝ mile on the outside; fences around the racetrack and the perimeter of the fairground; 28 stalls for racehorses; two bridges across the small stream that ran through the racetrack; a grandstand; and a large exhibition hall.

The first Ritchie County Fair opened September 21, 1887, featuring agricultural exhibits, livestock competition, women's handiwork, food stands, entertainment, and horse races. Improvements were made each year, and by 1899, the horse barns housed 105 horses. In December 1899, the stockholders voted to purchase the leased land for $2,000 and to continue the fair for 40 years.

People came to the Ritchie County Fair by horse and buggy, on the railroad, and later, by automobile. In 1922, 20,000 people attended the fair and gate receipts totaled $10,000. They came to see the exhibits, enjoy the carnival, get together with family and friends, and to watch the area's finest horses circle the track.

"I started going to the fair in the early 1920's," Russell says. "Horse races were run on each day of the four-day fair and featured both trotters and pacers — the trotters pulled a sulky and the pacers had a rider. There were eight to 10 horses in each race, and the jockeys were really small.

"The 1927 fair featured an unusual race," Russell recalls. Advertisements in the *Pennsboro News* promised "The only Traveling Ostrich Show in the world will be there in all its glory on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. You will be thrilled by seeing these peculiar birds race."

"They hitched the ostriches to a sulky and guided them with a broom," Russell says with a laugh. "There were about 10 ostriches. They were a touring company from out of state, and I never saw them again."

Automobiles began to make their appearance in the parking lots in the early '20's. On September 8, 1921, the Pennsboro News noted that 1,500 automobiles had parked on the infield without incident. Although horse racing continued to dominate at the Ritchie County Fair for many years, automobile racing became a regular event at the track beginning with the first 50-mile race on Friday afternoon, September 1, 1926, when six cars raced 100 laps. According to the next day's paper, the Chevrolet car won the race and the Ford came second. The cars, not the drivers, received the attention! Cars and horses shared the track for the next 15 years.

As the speed of automobiles increased, however, it became evident that the track was not suited for both horse and automobile racing. Faster cars required an elevated track, and horses needed a flat track. When racing resumed fol-

lowing World War II, conflicts between the "horse people" and the "automobile people" led the Ritchie County Fair Board to ban automobile racing at the Pennsboro track.

Horse racing continued through the 1950's, but automobiles were not totally forgotten. The fair board allowed such special attractions as Jimmy Lynch's Thrill Show featuring daredevils in autos in 1951, and the All-Girl Auto Thrill Show in 1959.

"Near the end of the Ritchie County Fair, an outfitter from down south came to my dealership to purchase cars for a demolition derby," Russell recalls. "He wanted four old, used cars that would run but were basically beyond repair. I sold him the cars for $100. He had his own drivers, and they smashed the cars to pieces."

After the Ritchie County Fair was discontinued in 1962, automobile racing returned to the Pennsboro track. Various individuals or groups leased the track from the fair board on a year-to-year basis and sponsored automobile races on weekends from late spring until fall.

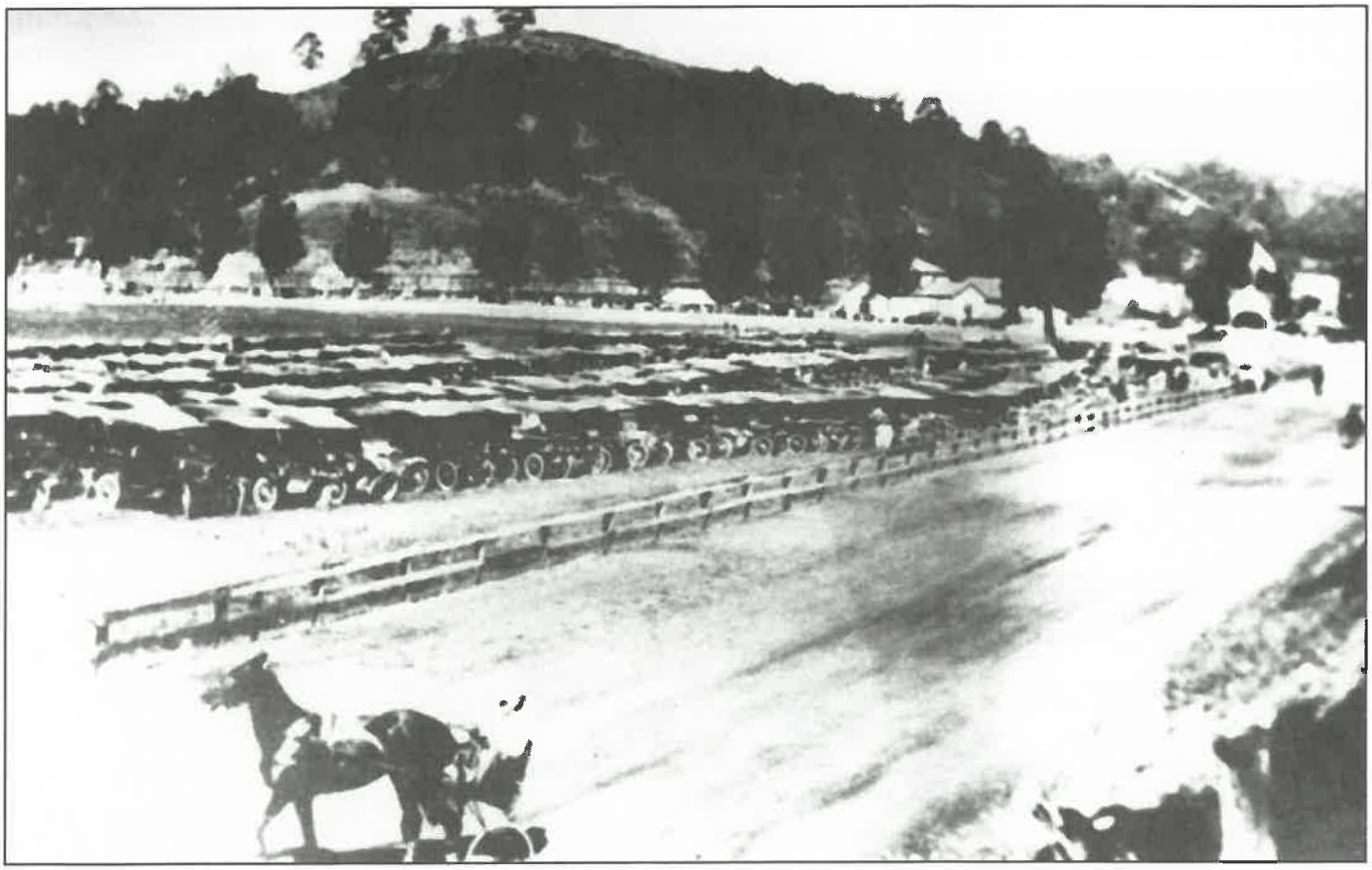
"I purchased a 1934 Ford coupe and hired Frenchie Pettit as my driver," Russell says, laughing as he remembers some of the races. "The promoters were always thinking up special features that they thought would please the crowd. The 'hot-dog' race was one of the most unusual races we entered. Only three drivers entered the race. The drivers raced for two laps, then turned off their engines and climbed on top of their cars to eat a hot dog and drink a cold soda before racing the final two laps. Two drivers, including Frenchie, could not get their cars to restart, so the third driver won hands down."

Russell remembers the beginning of the famous Hillbilly Hundred. "I was involved with the track when the Hillbilly Hundred started on Labor Day weekend in 1967," Russell says. "Lewis Six was track manager and the primary organizer of the race. Drivers came from eight to 10 states, and the crowds were the largest in the history of the track. The Hillbilly Hundred became one of the biggest events in auto racing." It is still being run today in nearby Tyler County.

The popularity of automobile racing led 13 men from Harrisville and surrounding communities to form Ritchie Raceway, Inc., in December 1969, for the purpose of improving the track and promoting racing at what was then called the Ritchie County Speedway.

"We rebuilt the track to get it ready for fast-car racing," Russell explains. "The state road employees were working on the new Route 50, and we got 500 loads of red clay mud from them. We elevated the track and added steel guardrails. We purchased the lease from the fair board. The board would only sell the lease one year at a time."

The track required weekly maintenance. "Before each race weekend, we brought in five tons of calcium chloride



By the early 1920's, horses and automobiles were found side-by-side at the Ritchie County Fair, as seen in this undated photograph. Beginning in 1926, cars and horses also shared the race track. This continued until car racing was banned in the late 1940's, only to return when horse racing ceased in 1962. Photograph courtesy of the Ritchie County Historical Society.

Winners of the 1966 Powder Puff Race at Pennsboro are, from the left, Sue Ross White, Mary Jane Wilson (first place), and Sara Bond. Photograph courtesy of Mary Jane Wilson.

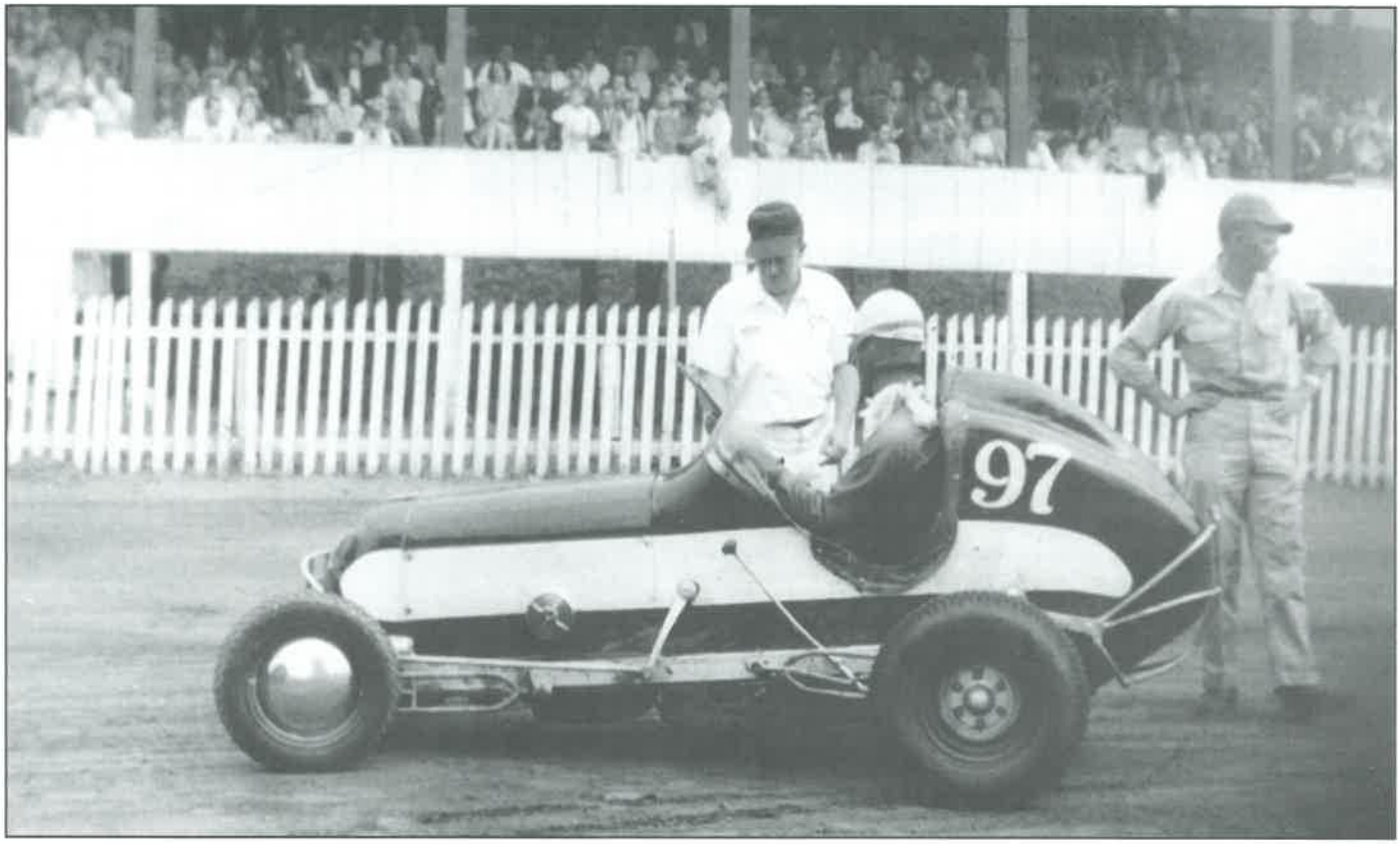
and spread it on the track," Russell says. "Calcium chloride absorbs many times its own weight of water and controls the dust. Then we watered the track down and drove eight to 10 pickup trucks around the track many times to dry it out. This made the track hard, almost like asphalt. We did that so fast cars could run."

With faster cars now able to run on the track, attendance increased. "People came from all over," Russell says. "The grandstand, which held 200 to 250 people, was full and we had 12 to 15 people standing on the hill. There would be 25 to 30 cars racing.

"With entry fees of $10 to $12 a person, plus the driver's fee, there was a considerable amount of money collected," Russell says. "We were afraid to count the money at the track. The police followed us to my office in my home, where we counted the money."

In one race, money was not the problem. "I served as a judge along with a man from Weston," Russell explains. "We had a judges' stand that they called the 'birdcage.' It was the same one used in the horse-racing days. I was in the birdcage with our treasurer. We were writing out checks for the winners, and we had the downstairs door locked.

"Some people from Michigan were not happy with the race results," Russell says. "One of their drivers had passed under the yellow flag. This is against the rules, and he refused to move back. They came down on the track and threatened to set the building on fire and throw Jim and me in the creek. I had the checks written, but I didn't give them to the people threatening us. If it hadn't been for the state police and friends who came to our aid, we would have been in the creek!" Fortunately, the affair ended



Faster cars brought larger crowds to Pennsboro. This midget race car was owned by O.B. Cottrell. Photograph by Howard Cottrell, date unknown.

The Legendary Pennsboro Speedway as it appears today. The track closed in 2002, after more than 100 years of racing. Photograph by Betty Leavengood.

peacefully. "By the next weekend, they had calmed down. They accepted their checks, and the matter was settled," Russell says with a laugh.

After many years of involvement with the race track, Russell sold his shares in Ritchie Raceway, Inc., to the other shareholders in 1971. "My father was very ill at the time and needed my help," Russell explains. "Plus I was getting older and running out of what my grandfather called 'spirizincum,' his word for 'get-up-and-go.' I never did know how to spell it and doubt that he did. I had some good times at that track."

Auto racing continued at the track after Russell's retirement. Attendance climbed as the Hillbilly Hundred and other feature races attracted top drivers from surrounding states. Race cars changed from souped-up Chevys and Fords to sleek custom-built, wedge-shaped race cars. When Carl Short leased the track in 1977, he changed the name to the Pennsboro Speedway. "I wanted the name of the track to be directly associated with the town," he explained.

Carl stunned the dirt-track racing world in 1981 by offering $30,000 to the winner of the first Dirt Track World Championship (DTWC). Eighty-nine racers competed for the richest prize ever given for a dirt-track race. By 1985, the winner's take was $60,000, and more than 100 of the nation's top drivers came to compete at the Pennsboro Speedway.

Carl began advertising the track as "The Legendary Pennsboro Speedway" because of the racing legends that competed there. Subsequent promoters continued to use that name in their advertising. Throughout the 1980's and '90's, the track was known as one of the leading dirt tracks in the United States.

By 2000, the track was in need of costly repairs and upgrades. Such repairs were the responsibility of the leaseholder. The owner of the track, the Ritchie County Fair Board, refused to grant a lease longer than one year, and no one was willing to invest in repairing and upgrading the track without a longer lease. It closed after the 2002 season.

On my way home from Harrisville, I drove to Pennsboro to see what remained of the Pennsboro Speedway. As I stood by the padlocked gate, I could almost hear the snap of the whips as the drivers urged their horses to victory and the roar of engines as drivers fought for position. The grandstand where my grandfather and I once sat is gone, destroyed, I learned, by fire in 1980. Nothing remains but the small, white announcer's booth perched on the hillside. A large sign beside the track still says, "Welcome to the Legendary Pennsboro Speedway," but there is an eerie quiet. More than 100 years of racing in Pennsboro has come to an end.

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 appeared in our Summer 2007 issue.

The Hillbilly Hundred

By Betty Leavengood

"I quit racing myself in 1966," Lewis Six tells me as we sit in the yard of his family farm near Cairo, Ritchie County. "But I stayed involved in the management of the track.

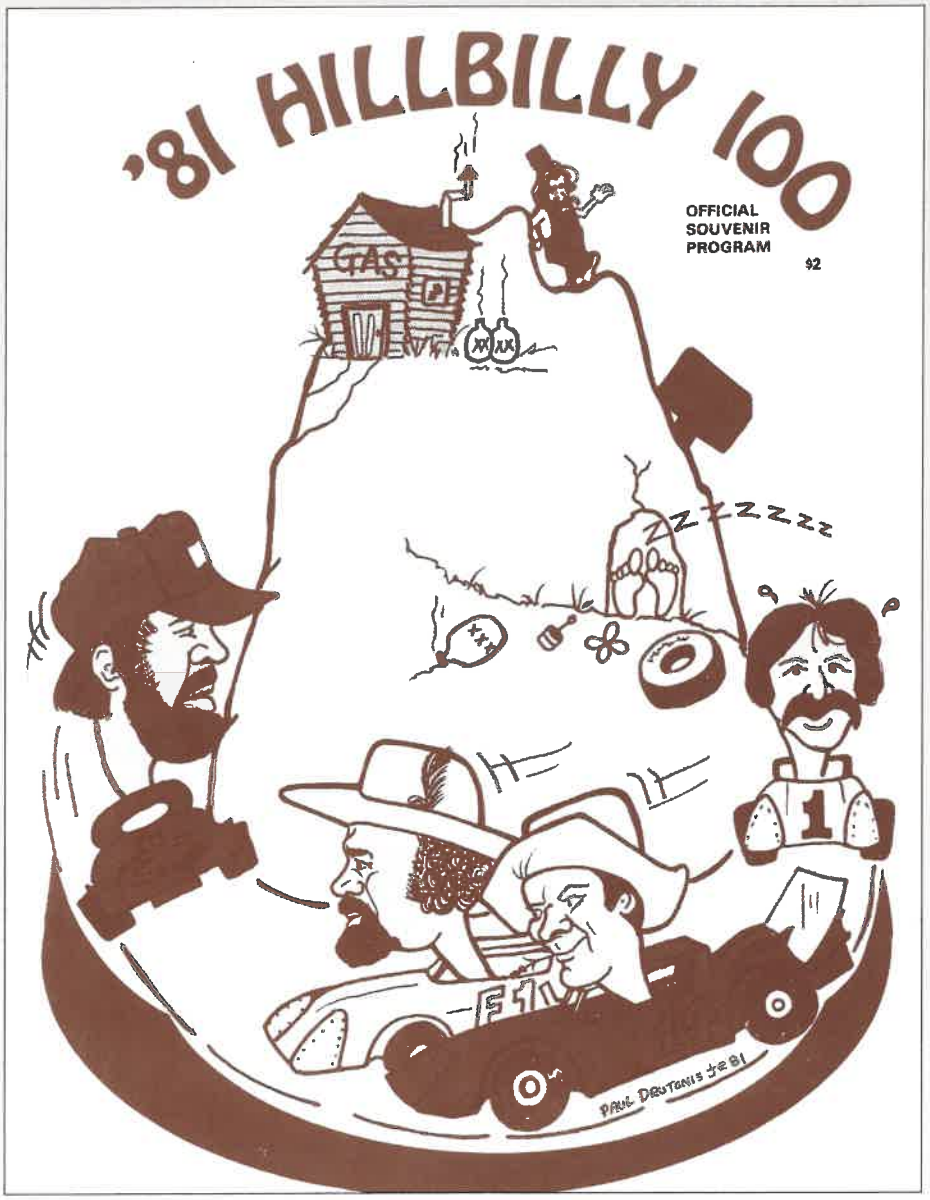
"We were always looking for ideas to generate interest and increase attendance," Lewis continues. "One day early in 1967, several of us were talking about adding a big race on Sunday afternoon. I came up with the 'Hillbilly One Hundred' idea. We'd run 100 laps. Ida Hinkle, our advertising manager, said it would save on advertising if we called it 'Hillbilly Hundred,' so that's what we called it."

Lewis set the race program. "I wanted to build excitement for the feature race," he explains. "I set up the first Hillbilly Hundred race program to run qualifying heats. We couldn't just run 100 laps and go home for the event to be successful." Lewis notes that some drivers do very well in qualifying but not in the actual race. "When they get in the pack, it's a different story.

"The race program worked like this," Lewis says. "First we had timed trials to qualify all the entries. The drivers did three laps around the track, and their fastest lap counted. The top four qualifiers raced in a helmet dash called 'King of the Hills.' Depending on their time, they started one through four in the feature race."

Lewis Six of Cairo, Ritchie County, founded the Hillbilly Hundred at Pennsboro in 1967.

The 1986 Hillbilly Hundred was won by Jack Boggs, shown here with supporters and a six-foot-tall trophy. Mountain Racing Photo, courtesy of Billie Shutts.



The remaining drivers competed in heat races. "The fifth qualifier was on the pole of the first heat, the sixth qualifier was on the pole of the second heat, and so on," Lewis explains. "Where they finished in the heat races is where they started in the feature race. The drivers that did not qualify for the feature race entered the consolation race. The person to win that race got the last position of the feature race. At the time, this format had not been used. Later, several raceways adopted the format, including a recent race at Daytona.

"We decided to have the Hillbilly Hundred on Labor Day weekend, September 3 and 4," Lewis says. "The qualifying races, King of the Hills race, and heats ran on Sunday, with the main feature on Monday afternoon. Everyone that qualified for the feature was guaranteed $100. The winner received $1,000, plus he got to kiss Miss Hillbilly Hundred!

"My youngest daughter, Lydia, was born on Labor Day," Lewis says. "When I went home from the meeting, I told her that I had a special race for her birthday. She believed the Hillbilly Hundred was her birthday present until she was 12 years old."

As the first Hillbilly Hundred approached, advertisements in local newspapers and racing publications promoted the race. Many top names in dirt-track racing from West Virginia and neighboring states entered. On race day, the largest crowd in the history of the Ritchie County Speedway filled the grandstand and covered the hillside, while drivers from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia competed for the top prize.

Six's daughter Cindy sang the "Star Spangled Banner" before the race started. "Cindy was only 11 years old. Her hands shook, but she never missed a note," Lewis says proudly. "When it was time for the Hillbilly Hundred to start, the woman that was supposed to sing didn't show up and Cindy took her place. She became the regular singer after that."

The cars raced around the 5/8-mile oval track for 100 laps. Don Gregory of Columbus, Ohio, drove a purple Chevelle over the finish line and claimed the $1,000 first prize. The first Hillbilly Hundred ran without an accident.

Lewis Six's idea proved to be one of the most successful races at what is now called the Legendary Pennsboro Speedway, where it ran until the track closed in 2002. Today, the Hillbilly Hundred is a featured race at the Tyler County Speedway, with last year's winner taking home $25,000.

This year's Hillbilly Hundred will take place September 1. For more information, phone (304)758-2934, or visit www.tylercountyspeedway.net.

Clarksburg grocer and former vacuum salesman Harry Powers — also known as Cornelius Pierson, Joe Gildaw, or Herman Drenth — became the subject of a multiple murder investigation in Harrison County in late August 1931. Photograph courtesy of the Clarksburg-Harrison County Public Library.

Quiet Dell

West Virginia's Crime of the Century

Murders

By Stan Bumgardner

A crowd gathers at the crime scene near Quiet Dell, where five bodies were recovered: two women and three children.

On August 27, 1931, lurid headlines shocked the town of Clarksburg and quickly took the nation by storm as a grisly story unfolded from the nearby community of Quiet Dell. Each extra of the local newspapers revealed more sordid, vivid details about Cornelius O. Pierson, a.k.a Joe Gildaw, a.k.a. Harry Powers. The nation soon knew him as the "Bluebeard of Quiet Dell."

The saga began with a phone call from more than 500 miles away. On the evening of August 26, officials in Park Ridge, Illinois, contacted Clarksburg police about a widow and her three children who had been missing for more than two months. The mother, Asta Buick Eicher, had left behind 27 letters from Cornelius O. Pierson, postmarked from Clarksburg. City officials did not recognize the name and dispatched detective Carl Southern to the local post office. Southern discovered that a Cornelius Pierson had rented Box 277 and followed the lead to 111 Quincy Street in the city's Broad Oaks suburb. It was the home of a local grocer and former vacuum salesman known locally as Harry Powers. Policemen waited outside the Quincy Street house for Powers to appear. When Powers returned home around noon on August 27, he was placed under arrest for manslaughter in the disappearance of Eicher and her children, despite the lack of solid evidence or the bodies of the missing people. In his pockets, curiously, were five letters addressed to five different women.

Additional information led police to a board-and-batten garage on a small farm Powers owned in Quiet Dell — located today just off the Nutter Fort exit of Interstate 79. With the help of neighbors, detectives broke into the garage and found dried bloodstains but no bodies.

On the morning of August 28, police escorted Powers to the garage and discovered bloodstained clothing and jewelry in a basement beneath the garage, concealed by a trapdoor. Powers admitted the scene looked suspicious but offered no explanation. In addition to the personal effects, police also noticed a noose tied to a rafter above the trapdoor.

Following up on a tip from a local 15-year-old boy, police uncovered a drainage ditch beside the garage. On the afternoon of August 28, while excavating the ditch, investigators found what they were looking for — the badly decomposed bodies of Eicher and her three children: Greta, 14; Harry, 12; and Anabel, 9. The

victims' hands had been bound with rope that matched the noose in the garage. Two days later, the police also found the body of Dorothy Lemke, a 50-year-old widow from Northboro, Massachusetts.

About 4:25 that night, in the early morning hours of August 29 — following lengthy questioning by police from Clarksburg and Park Ridge — Powers confessed to the murders. According to the confession, he allegedly had kept Eicher, her children, and Lemke in different cities around the state until one night in early August when he brought all of them to the Quiet Dell garage and killed them.

On April 29, police released photos of Powers. The images indicated Powers had been badly beaten. When asked about the black eyes, bruises, and welts, Clarksburg police blamed the physical coercion on the Illinois officials.

Within hours of the story breaking, new tales emerged about Powers' prowess with wealthy women. He had used matchmaking services and magazines to woo rich women, often widows. His typical modus operandi was to run ads in lonely-hearts magazines boasting of his own wealth and importance:

"My business enterprises prevent me from making many social friends. I am therefore unable to make the acquaintance of the right ladies. ...[I] own a beautiful 10-room brick home, completely furnished with everything that would make a good woman happy. My wife would have her own car and plenty of spending money, ...but she must be strictly a one-man woman. I would not tolerate infidelity. Am now living in West Virginia."

After a night of intense interrogation, Harry Powers signs a confession on August 29, 1931. He is flanked by Clarksburg city detective Carl Southern, at left, and chief of police Clarence Duckworth. Photograph courtesy of Clarksburg-Harrison County Public Library.

Virginia Bell, a nurse in Hagerstown, Maryland, alerted authorities that Powers was scheduled to visit her the following week. He also corresponded regularly with Bessie Storries of Olean, New York. Edith Simpson of Detroit expected to marry Powers in September. When the police showed Edith Simpson one of Powers' letters to Eicher, Edith was stunned at its similarity, word for word, to a letter he had sent her. She commented, "He must have made circulars." Later evidence suggested that Powers might have corresponded with as many as 115 women.

One of the lingering mysteries of the case is Powers' wife, Luella Powers, who continually maintained her husband's innocence despite compelling evidence that he had committed adultery, at the least, or murder, at the worst. She could not explain how some of Lemke's jewelry and clothing, including a fur coat, found their way into her dresser. Seemingly, never once had she been suspicious of her husband's travels or what should have been obvious warnings about his extramarital affairs. After his arrest, when the evidence of infidelity became overwhelming, she continually patted his forehead and referred to him as "my honey."

Powers' wife, Luella, denied any knowledge of the crimes or her husband's extramarital activities. Here, she is questioned by police chief Clarence Duckworth. She was later released and was never charged with any crime.

Within days of the arrest, journalists from the nation's leading papers arrived by train. Reporters from the Associated Press, United Press International News Service, *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, *Baltimore News*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Chicago Daily News*, *New York Daily News*, and *Detroit Mirror* descended on Clarksburg. In a classic piece of sensationalist writing, The New York Times referred to Powers as a "small-town Lothario with a speedy roadster." Others branded him as a "mail-order Romeo." Harry Powers had become the latest criminal celebre of the Depression-era's pulp journalism.

Tourists flocked to Harrison County to view anything related to Powers. On April 29, a local road foreman reported an estimated 900 cars per hour on the road to Quiet Dell. People parked as far away as two miles and walked to Powers' garage. As reporters and the morbidly curious poured into the region, entrepreneurs saw a chance to make a profit. Most Clarksburg businessmen were content with displaying photos of Powers and the murder scene in their store-

freezers full of venison steaks, wild turkeys, and bear. They're also growing all kinds of vegetables and fruits, preparing pies and homemade wines. The mothers are no slouches, either. Many ladies were competing on a very equal basis with the men.

At each station, we were poured a little wine or cider and offered some side dishes to go along with the main meal. These side dishes were certainly no throw-away items. Oftentimes, the chef would prepare a number of game dishes or wild food items but couldn't decide which one should be the competing entry. A couple of times, the other judges and I would give each other a little sideways glance — we thought the side would have been a winning main entry!

So, we tucked into everything from black bear to white-tailed deer. Many had comical names, adding to the presentation aspect: Ferrari Fricassee of Turtle, Moose Balls and Poop, and the local Democratic committee served Bushwhacked Elephant Stew. I've eaten my fair share of game in my time, but this was the first time I ever had moose, squirrel, groundhog, or raccoon. Honestly, in some cases it might have been the last time I have them.

All uniqueness aside, I had to judge the meats as they were prepared, in their own realm. Not everything "tastes like chicken," nor should it. So, I looked for care in preparation. Was the meat gristly? Was it tender or overcooked? Did the recipe show some creativity, or was it like a pioneer-era swamp in a cast-iron pot? Plus, you know what the chefs say about ingredients and recipes: the recipe is only as good as the least ingredient. Many of the contestants took care in including fresh vegetables and herbs, local wines, interesting mustards, and sauces. Others were more the "bachelor blue-plate special" variety — several cans tossed into the same pan.

There was another challenge to our judging: we were tasting 10 very large meals at the same time. It wouldn't be fair to get filled up, shortchanging a contestant at the end of the line. It was hard, because we would be staring into the big, hope-filled eyes of the chefs. Their faces practically implored us to love their creations and devour every bite.

Then — decision time. We all felt strongly about the first-place winner: the Coal Hollow Brothers with their pork and venison tenderloin. It was so well prepared, it would fit on any white-tablecloth restaurant's menu. The tenderloin was marinated with black pepper and served with a Dijon horseradish sauce. The heat and bite of the sauce was the perfect compliment to the meat. Our compliments went to the chefs!

This year's Pocahontas County Autumn Harvest Festival and West Virginia Roadkill Cook-Off will take place in Marlinton on Saturday, September 29. For more information, phone 1-800-336-7009 or visit www.pccoc.com/Harvest.cfm.

TAMAR ALEXIA FLEISHMAN is an attorney and writer living in Baltimore. She has been published in *Wonderful West Virginia* and *Huntington Quarterly*, and is editor-in-chief of *Southern Fried* magazine. This is Tamar's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

The Coal Hollow Brothers, from Christiansburg, Virginia, were the winners of the cook-off in 2006. From the left, they are Mark Salmon, John Pennington, Mike Robbins, Mike Pennington, Marlon Harris, Ed Blackford, Ian Evans, Wayne Nowak, and Ryan Comeau.

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

A Real Barn Dance in Aurora

As barns go, the two-story red one just east of Cathedral State Park on U.S. Route 50 in Preston County is simply stunning. Tucked between the forest, the highway, and a hillside dotted with cattle and horses, Brookside Farm is definitive in its bucolic beauty. A working cattle and sheep farm of 260 acres, the farm is owned by Ed and Mary Utterback.

More than 30 years ago, the Utterbacks traded their lives in Chicago for a totally foreign occupation — running a farm for Mary's father, the late Dr. Andrew Mance. With its daily operation now in the hands of their son, Mark, the farm and its buildings remain as working artifacts of an era when Aurora was a popular destination for tourists. More recently, the barn has become associated with another tradition that brings folks from long distances to Aurora — an annual barn dance.

The dance is a fund-raiser of the Aurora Project, a non-profit organization. Michele Moure-Reeves, co-founder, says money raised at the dance provides matching funds for grants sought by the Aurora Project, which is converting former Brookside cottages into short-term artist residences and venues for educational programs. Further, the dance involves the entire community in the project while celebrating the area's Appalachian heritage.

This hand-painted sign along U.S. Route 50 in Preston County points the way to the annual barn dance at the Utterback farm in Aurora.

"It's so appropriate to the area to be able to have these traditional musicians and use this wonderful old barn," she says.

Aurora's high altitude on the Allegheny front and associated cool climate made the community a popular destination for heat-weary residents of the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore region. They rode the B&O railroad to Oakland, Maryland, then took horse-drawn carriages to Aurora. At one time, there were more than 500 guest beds in this community, including 200 at the Brookside Hotel and Cottages.

Michele says Brookside Farm supplied produce, dairy products, and meat used in the hotel. It also had a seven-acre pond that supplied the ice. Every winter, ice was cut from the pond, sledded to the icehouse near the barn, and stacked between layers of sawdust.

The barn has been dated to around 1898. The original section is 40 by 120 feet. Ed has counted at least 50 8-by-8-inch chestnut beams 40 feet long in the barn. The first-floor area extends the entire length and width of the barn and has tongue-and-groove wormy chestnut siding on one wall and a tongue-and-groove hard maple ceiling. Ed says this hardwood treasure chest was built tall and elaborate because it was the hotel's livery.

The Utterbacks use this area for housing animals and farming equipment. But the week before the barn dance, they magically transform it. The preparation begins by relocating the animals and power washing the entire room.

"When I came in here about 10 days ago, there was a ram in that pen and a bull in this one," says Michele as we sit at a table near one of the stalls. "We power

Normally a working barn used for livestock, the 100-year-old structure is steam cleaned and decorated once a year as a fund-raiser for the nonprofit Aurora Project. Here, participants of all ages join in the dance last October

wash the entire thing and cover the floor with sawdust."

The room is decorated with quilts, hay bales and chrysanthemums, strands of miniature lights, and paper lanterns. Volunteers bake loaves of pumpkin and zucchini bread and pans of corn bread. They cook pots of white chili (beans and chicken) and Italian sausage, and set a spread for the dancers, who wash it down with cider and mulled wine.

The cider is a community effort, as well. Ed presses it from apples donated by residents. That which is not needed for the barn dance is sold as a fund-raiser.

The dance is held on the first Sunday in October. It gets under way at 3 p.m. and continues into the early evening. The entrance fee includes the music, dancing, and entrees served buffet style. Elkins old-time musicians Andy Fitzgibbon and Doug Van Gundy provided music for both the 2005 and 2006 dances. It's a venue they enjoy playing.

"It's a good place for this sort of music," says Fitzgibbon, who plays banjo. "It's easy to take this music and make it look like a museum piece."

"But when you play it in a barn for a dance, that's bringing it into its natural habitat," observes Van Gundy, who plays fiddle.

Jackie Burns calls the dances, mostly simple square and big circle dances. She chooses dances that are easy for the novice to pick up quickly and enjoy while learning. Burns assures the dancers, who range in age from toddlers to octogenarians, that the only thing they can do wrong is not have fun.

The barn dance, which was first held in 2004, is fast becoming a tradition in the community and for people who live far beyond its borders. Heather and Bronson Griscom of Harrisonburg, Virginia, own property in Rowelsburg and make sure their October visit coincides with the dance.

"We love it so much here, and we love this event," says Heather, a biology professor who's accomplished at country dancing.

"It's like a little reunion for us to come here," Bronson says.

Ruth Melnick of Tucker County brought her children, Jack and Helen, for the second year in a row.

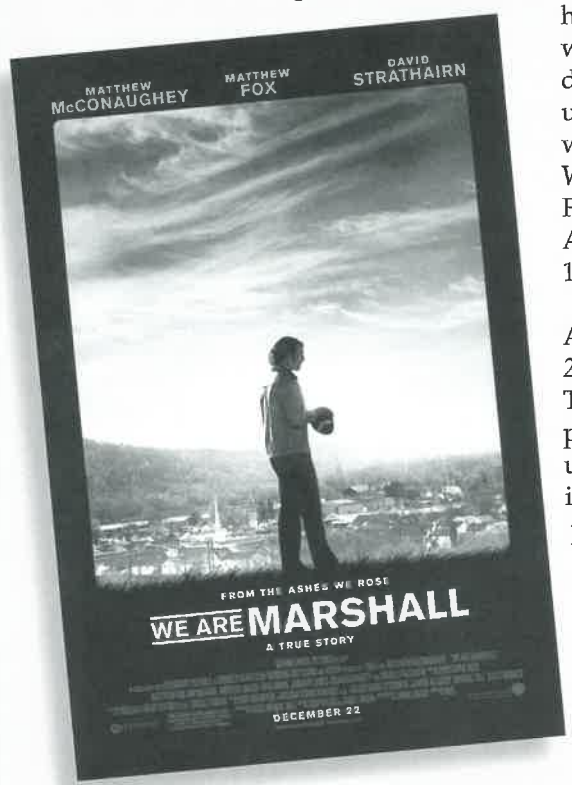
"The mulled cider is really good," says Ruth. "But I come for the music and for the kids to learn about these kinds of things. This is the only one of these I've been to that's actually been in a barn."

For information about this year's barn dance, scheduled October 7, call the Aurora Project at (304)735-6643 or Michele Moure at (304)735-6344.

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

By Steve Fesenmaier

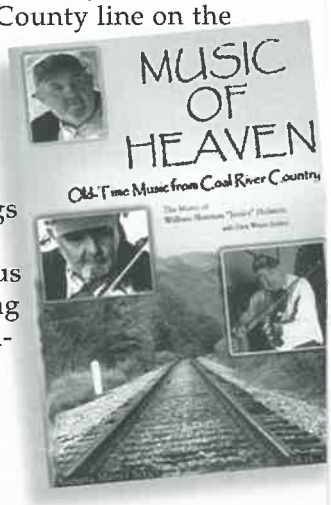
We Are Marshall
2006 128 mins. Warner Bros.
Based on the true story of the 1970 Marshall University plane crash — the worst sports disaster in American history — this major-studio production stars Matthew McConaughey as Jack Lengyel, the coach who led the university and the Huntington community from tragedy to triumph. Matthew Fox plays assistant coach Red Dawson, who helps Lengyel rebuild the team after giving up his seat on the doomed flight to another member of the Marshall squad. David Strathairn plays the president of Marshall University, who attempts to restore the school's broken spirit against overwhelming odds. Portions of the film were shot on location in Huntington and feature a large number of local citizens and university students as film extras.
Access: Amazon.com



Cam Henderson: A Coach's Story
2007 55 mins.
Witek & Novak
Cam Henderson was arguably the greatest sports coach in West Virginia history, first at Bristol High School in Harrison County, then Davis & Elkins College, and finally at Marshall College. His football and basketball teams were champions. He invented the fast break and zone defense for basketball. Marshall won the national championship in 1947 and broke the color barrier in West Virginia college sports under his leadership. Because he didn't want people to know about his diabetes, his career came to an untimely end. This film recently won a first-place award at the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival.
Access: Marshall Bookstore at 1-800-547-1262

Asturian U.S.
2006 52 mins. Luis Argeo
The town of Arnao, in the Asturias province of northern Spain, grew under the wing of the Royal Mining Company — a leading zinc producer. After the closure of its mine at the beginning of the 20th century, many employees and their families emigrated to similar operations in the New World, some in Harrison County. New towns were created, including Spelter and Anmoore, near Clarksburg. Their populations were 90% Asturians. Today, only remnants and memories remain of these little-known Appalachian Spanish communities. Filmmaker Luis Argeo traveled from Spain in spring 2006 to document these people with the assistance of Chip Hitchcock of WVPBS.
Access: E-mail Luis Argeo at argeol@hotmail.com

Music of Heaven: Old-Time Music from Coal River Country
2006 60 mins. Augusta Heritage Center
This film by 2006 West Virginia Filmmaker of the Year Gerry Milnes is about the extraordinary talents of William Sherman "Junior" Holstein. His nephew and apprentice, Gary Wayne Jordan, introduces us to Junior, from Emmons, Kanawha County, located near the Boone County line on the Coal River. He plays some rare and beautiful old-time fiddle tunes and sings several old songs and words to fiddle tunes, plus one original song to his own musical accompani-



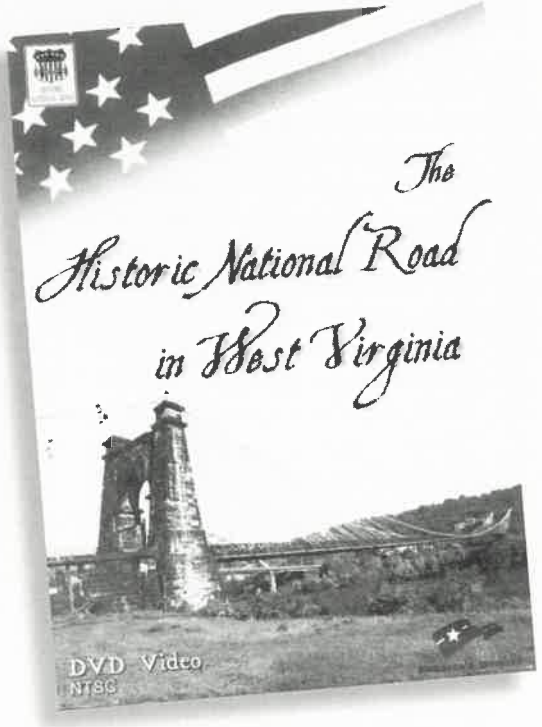
ment. Junior visits with other traditional musicians in the area, describes old-time methods of making moonshine, and leads us through some of his own trials and tribulations as he battles personal demons. The title tune, "Music of Heaven," a soulful instrumental, aptly relates to Junior's fixation on his prospects for the afterlife.
Access: www.augustaheritage.com/store.html

The Rhythm of My Soul: Kentucky Roots Music
2006 55 mins. Florentine Films/Sherman Pictures
This recent documentary features some true national treasures from Eastern Kentucky, including 77-year-old banjo player Lee Sexton; 80-year-old fiddle maker Buddy Ratcliff, who played with Merle Travis; the Tri-City Messengers, a gospel group made up of retired black coal miners; the Carriere Family, with 10- and 12-year-old fiddle players Josh and Stacie; songwriter Rob McNurlin and the Beatnik Cowboys band; bluegrass band Bottomline; fiddler John Harrod; mandolin picker and singer Don Rigsby; fiddler Jesse Wells; dulcimer maker Warren May; and others. It was directed by Roger Sherman and produced for the Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association.
Access: www.florentinefilms.com/sherman/videos.html

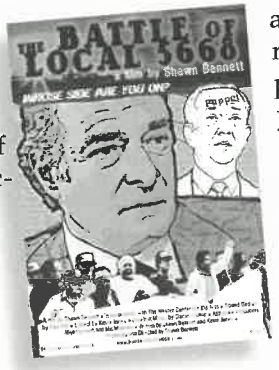
Christmas Family Tragedy
2006 60 mins. Break of Dawn Productions
This film is about the Lawson Family Massacre of Christmas Day 1929 in Stokes County, North Carolina. On that day, respected tobacco farmer Charlie Lawson brutally murdered his wife and six of his seven children before committing suicide — one of the most horrible and mysterious mass murders in North Carolina history. The Lawson murders became immortalized in several bluegrass songs ("Murder of the Lawson Family," "Story of the Lawson Family," "Ballad of the Lawsons," "The Ballad of Charlie Lawson", "Charlie Lawson's Still," etc.), ghost stories, tours of the crime scene, and legends known coast to coast. This film shows for the first time the true tragedy: the story of the families, the continuing effect it has on the community, and the tragedy of rural domestic violence.
Access: Break of Dawn Productions at www.bodproductions.com

The Devil and Daniel Johnston
2006 110 mins. This is That Productions and Complex Corp.
Songwriter and artist Daniel Johnston grew up in New Cumberland, Hancock County, eventually becoming homeless, then famous in Austin, Texas. More than 100 recording and performing groups have sung his songs, including Beck, Wilco, Sonic Youth, and Pearl Jam. Johnston also became a well-known primitive artist, selling his paintings for thousands of dollars. Using extensive documentation Johnston recorded of his own life, the madness that hounded him is revealed, which eventually sent him to Weston State Hospital. This film was the winner of the directing award for documentary films at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.
Access: Amazon.com

National Road in West Virginia
2006 30 mins. Walkabout Company
The National Road — the first interstate road — went through parts of northwestern Virginia, now Ohio County, West Virginia. This film takes the viewer on a sightseeing tour, revealing some of the landmarks that make the road still famous after more than a century.
Access: Phone 1-877-242-8133 (Kruger Street Toy and Train Museum) or (304)232-1810 (Wheeling Artisan Center)



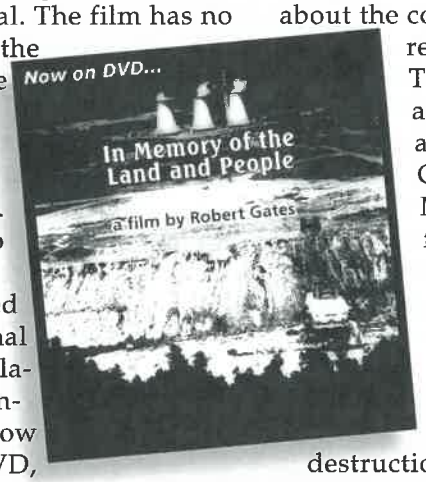
The Battle of Local 5668
2007 54 mins. Shawn Bennett
Shawn Bennett grew up in Parkersburg, studying film at Pittsburgh Filmmakers and studying under filmmaker Julia Reichert (*Union Maids*). Shawn's father, Joe Bennett, worked at the Ravenswood aluminum plant for years and was part of the famous lockout that took place for almost two years starting in 1990. Using historical footage, TV news broadcasts, and interviews with people who took part in one of the



most important labor struggles in recent American history, Bennett presents a compelling story of global capitalism vs. determined workers.
Access: shawn@shawnbennett.net or www.battleoflocal5668.com

The Electricity Fairy
2007 25 mins. Appalshop
Tom Hansell is best known for his powerful film about overweight coal trucks in Eastern Kentucky, titled *Coal Bucket Outlaw*. [See "Films and Videos on West Virginia and Appalachia," by Steve Fesenmaier; Winter 2003.] His new film is about West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky as exporters of both coal and electricity. Exploitation of natural resources for power generation makes the impact of the nation's electricity consumption highly visible in these three states. The film combines present-day documentary footage with older educational films and an animated folk tale to reveal the hidden costs of coal.
Access: Appalshop at www .appalshop.org/electricityfairy

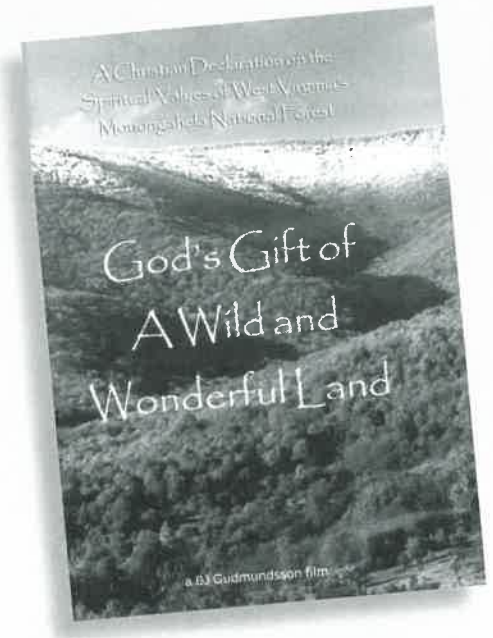
In Memory of the Land and People
1977 (2007) 55 mins Omni Productions
Using his own funds, Robert Gates, a former chemical/computer engineer at Union Carbide in Charleston, traveled throughout West Virginia, Appalachia, and the country, filming the effects of strip mining coal. The film has no narration, only the voices of people whose land and lives have been affected by this practice. It was shown to the U.S. Congress and helped motivate national legislative regulation of strip mining. The film, now available on DVD, has won many awards and has been shown all over the U.S.
Access: Omni Productions, Box 5130 Charleston, WV 25361, phone (304)342-2624; omni@ntelos.net



Mountaintop Removal
2006 57 min. Haw River Films
This film explores the issue of mountaintop removal mining through the actions of citizen activists, coal industry officials, and author Jeff Goodell. Starting with Mountain Justice Summer activists and Coal River Valley residents Ed Wiley, Maria Gunnoe, and Larry Gibson, the film chronicles the anti-mountaintop removal movement from the spring of 2005 to September 2006. Mingo County resident Carmilita Brown's 20-year battle for clean water is also explored. The soundtrack is by Donna the Buffalo, Julie Miller, John Specker, and Sarah Hawker.
Access: Haw River Films at www .hawriverfilms.com/index.html

Moving Mountains
2006 30 mins. Virginia Bendl Moore
Virginia Bendl Moore was a communications student at the University of Virginia when she created this documentary on the effects of mountaintop removal mining, mainly in Southern West Virginia. The film opens with West Virginia politicians and coal industry leaders talking about the importance of coal to the state. West Virginia Coal Association president Bill Raney is interviewed, talking about the coal industry being "the real environmentalists." The "usual suspects" are interviewed on the anti-MTR side – Larry Gibson, Ed Wiley, and Maria Gunnoe. The filmmaker uses several classic film clips, including ones from *Harlan County, USA* and *That High Lonesome Sound*, counterpoising the scenes of destruction and denial that take place on camera.
Access: E-mail filmmaker at movingmountains@virginia.edu

Note: There are 71 other videos on mountaintop removal mining posted at YouTube as of March 2007. There are also other videos on Appalachia and MTR posted at www.ilove mountains.org



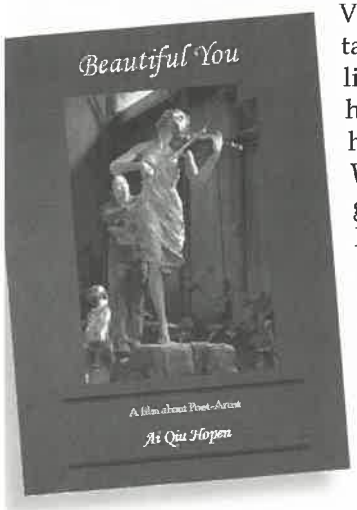
God's Gift of a Wild and Wonderful Land
2007 18 mins. Patchwork Films
Using stunning photography and beautiful religious music, the Monongahela National Forest is presented as a wilderness area that must be preserved for future generations. The forest is more than 900,000 acres in size, located in 10 different counties. Facts about the forest and Biblical links are emphasized along with an appreciation of God's creation. Viewers are encouraged to contact national and state legislators in support of protecting West Virginia wilderness areas.
Access: Patchwork Films at www .patchworkfilms.com/godsgift.htm

Field of Flowers
2006 50 mins. Heartwood in the Hills
Jude Binder has been teaching West Virginia children and adults about dance, music, and art for de-

cades in Calhoun County. In recent years, a group of exceptional artists have worked to combine song, drama, dance, animation, and masks with poetry and symbolism to convey the impact of domestic violence. They have fashioned a world of timeless drama that fuses personal testimony, historical court records, and artistic invention to link the phenomenon of domestic violence to the universal human struggle for freedom from violence and shame. Produced with the assistance of the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence.
Access: Heartwood in the Hills at http://heartwoodinthehills.org

Beautiful You
2006 34 mins. *Real Earth Productions*

Judy and Ray Schmitt have completed their portrait of one of West Virginia's most unusual artists, poet and sculptor Ai Qiu Hopen. She is the daughter of Chinese beekeepers who found her husband, Bill Hopen, via the Internet. Hopen is a well-known Sutton-based sculptor who founded the Landmark Studio for the Arts. The title of the film comes from "Beautiful You," a song by Elaine Wine who was performing in Sutton one night when the Schmitts were visiting. Ai Qiu's beautiful drawings are shown along with some of her other artwork. She is shown sculpting "Blind Boone" and "Spirit of the Violin." She talks about her life in China, her work, and her life in West Virginia with her husband and two young children. Her Web site is www.aiqiuhopen.com.
Access: Real Earth Productions at www.realearthproductions.com

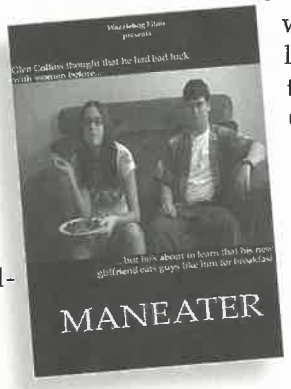


For the Love of Theater
2006 28 mins. *Real Earth Productions*

Hardy County filmmaker Ray Schmitt and colleague Joshua Miller created this portrait of the Landmark Players in Sutton and the company's director, Jim Walker. Several actors talk about the influence Jim Walker, and their general participation in theater, have had on their lives.
Access: Real Earth Productions at www.realearthproductions.com

Maneater
2007 100 mins. *Wazzlehog Films*

This indie feature film, directed by David Smith, a native of Oak Hill and a Marshall University student, was filmed mostly in Huntington and Fayette County. According to the plot, Glen Collins has wanted a girlfriend ever since he was five years old, without much luck. Enter D'arcy, a mysterious young woman who actually seems interested in Glen. There's just one problem — she's a cannibal. Unwilling to let that get in the way of his long-awaited chance at true love, Glen agrees to help D'arcy find victims. This film was screened at the 2007 Appalachian Film Festival in the Young Filmmakers competition and was submitted to the 2007 West Virginia International Film Festival Student Competition, as well as other festivals outside of the state.
Access: Amazon.com



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

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Vandalia Award 2007

Patty Looman, renowned dulcimer player and teacher from Star City, Monongalia County, received the 2007 Vandalia Award during a ceremony at the Cultural Center on May 26, as part of the 31st annual Vandalia Gathering.

Patty is highly regarded as a musician, playing both the hammered dulcimer and the lap (mountain) dulcimer. She carries on the north-central West Virginia dulcimer tradition, passed down to her from master artists, the late Russell Fluharty and Worley Gardner. A retired school teacher, Patty is also an avid teacher of traditional music, active at area workshops and festivals, and handling as many as 40 private students a week. She was the subject of a GOLDENSEAL article in our Winter 1995 issue. [See "Carrying on the Music: Dulcimer Player Patty Looman," by Danny Williams.]

The Vandalia Award is West Virginia's highest folklife honor, given annually to an individual in recognition of a lifetime of service and dedication to Mountain State folk arts and traditional life. Congratulations, Patty!

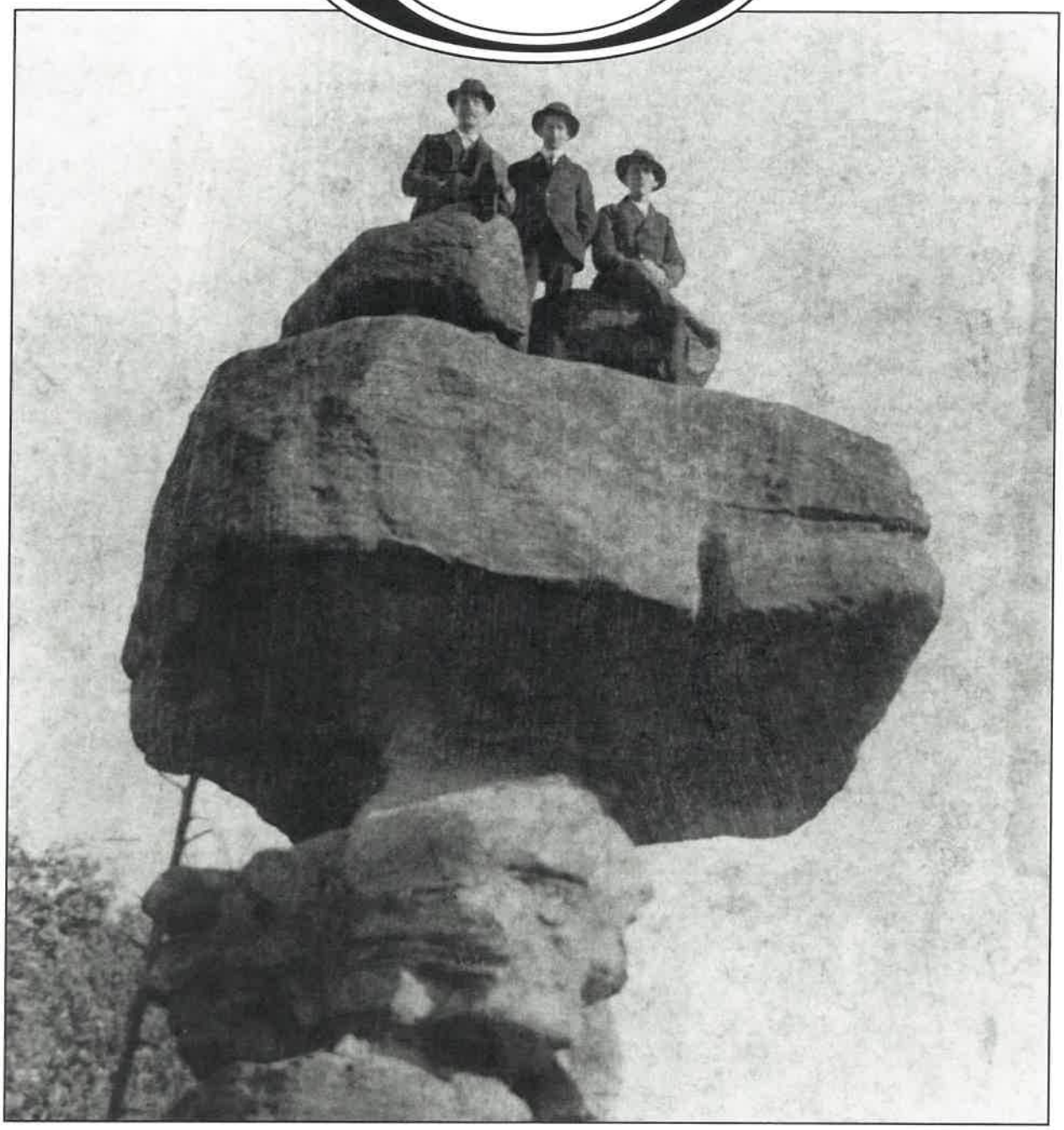
Patty Looman, 2007 Vandalia Award recipient. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Marx Toy Company
- Photographer Lloyd Gainer
- Guitar Legend Roy Harvey
- Locust Heights & Western Railroad

Photo Curiosity



Who are these guys and what are they doing up there on that rock?!? This photograph from the West Virginia State Archives, Mark Sergent Collection, piqued our curiosity, especially once we learned that this unusual geologic formation in Roane County is called Curious Rock, curiously enough. That's all the information we have. When was this picture made? Who was the photographer? Who are these fellows on the rock? How did they climb up there in their Sunday clothes? Why did they climb up there in their Sunday clothes? Perhaps they were just curious...

If you have any information about this photograph or Roane County's Curious Rock, please let us know at the GOLDENSEAL office.

Goldenseal
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0300

PERIODICALS

Inside Goldenseal

Page 54 – Quiet Dell in Harrison County drew national attention in August 1931, as police uncovered details of a shocking mass murder.

Page 30 – West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon has been home to Katherine Reemsnyder and her family for three generations. Carl E. Feather introduces us to this remarkable lady.

Page 46 – The Legendary Pennsboro Speedway in Ritchie County thrilled racing fans with sleek cars and fast horses, dating back to 1887.

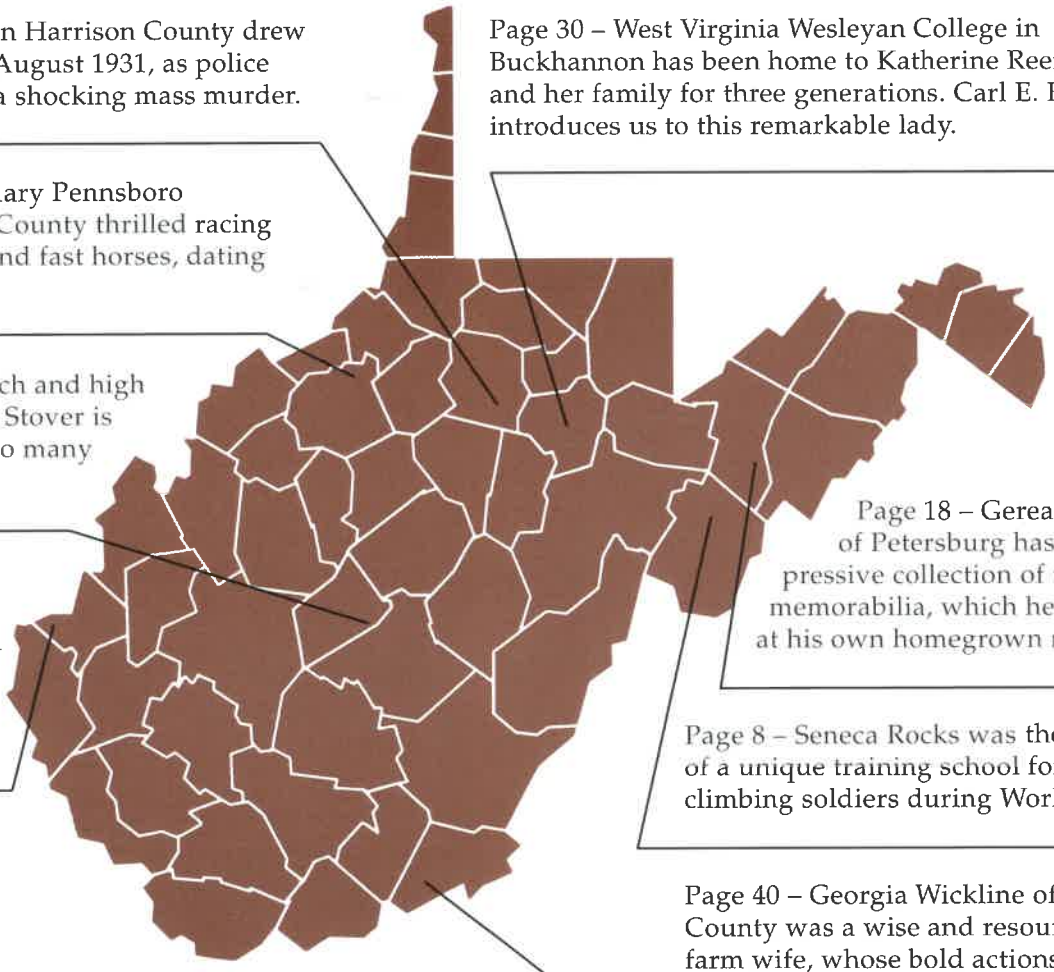
Page 36 – Retired coach and high school teacher Bobby Stover is considered a legend to many in Clay County.

Page 18 – Gereald Bland of Petersburg has an impressive collection of military memorabilia, which he displays at his own homegrown museum.

Page 24 – Marshall University professor Ken Hechler faced an uphill battle during his first political campaign in 1958.

Page 8 – Seneca Rocks was the site of a unique training school for cliff-climbing soldiers during World War II.

Page 40 – Georgia Wickline of Monroe County was a wise and resourceful farm wife, whose bold actions still echo in the hearts and lives of her family.



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