Bridgeport • Organ Cave • Rainelle Airport • Moonshine

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Summer 2008 $4.95

Fenton Glass

From the Editor - Go, See, Do

Photograph by Michael Keller.

Summer is here. And, if you are like me, so is the summer travel bug. With ridiculous gas prices, however, many folks are looking closer to home this year for their Great American Road Trip. Let this issue of GOLDENSEAL be your idea book for summer fun and travel in West Virginia.

Author David Halsey recalls for us an eye-opening trip taken by him and his family in the summer of 1947. His father bought their first family car that year, learned how to drive it, then piled the wife and kids inside for a memorable jaunt across southern West Virginia. David was 12 years old at the time and had never been more than 15 miles from his home. He was amazed at the things he saw on that journey and brings a marvelous sense of wonder to his travelog, beginning on page 34.

If you've never visited one of West Virginia's world-famous glass factories, you owe it to yourself, while you still can. Recently snatched from the jaws of closure, Fenton Glass in Williamstown, Wood County, continues to make some of the finest handmade art glass anywhere. The gift shop alone is worth the trip, but the informative factory tour is not to be missed, either. Author and glass authority Dean Six tells us the history of the company, and photographer Michael Keller offers a colorful look at the enduring beauty of Fenton Glass, beginning on page 8.

Summer heat got you down? It's always cool in Organ Cave, the second-longest cave system east of the Mississippi River. Located in southeastern Greenbrier County, Organ Cave is a historic treasure; artifacts discovered there date back thousands of years. The cave takes its name from a spectacular 40-foot-tall limestone formation, which, at one time, produced musical tones when struck with a rubber mallet. Author Carl E. Feather introduces us to owner Janie Morgan and takes us deep into the cave, beginning on page 42.

Thirsty? Shirley Morris of Nicholas County is one of a select few people in West Virginia who actually has a license to legally make and sell moonshine. His tiny Isaiah Morgan Distillery operates out of a back room at the Kirkwood Winery and Country Store, where Shirley and his wife, Brenda, cheerfully offer for sale a wide range of things to sip and savor, all made at their place just north of Summersville. Even if you are a teetotaler, a visit to the distillery and winery is fascinating, and Shirley and Brenda are salt of the earth. Our features about whiskey making, including our stop at the Isaiah Morgan Distillery, begin on page 58.

If you are traveling in the Eastern Panhandle, you might enjoy a stop at George and Pam Farnham's place, near Unger, in southern Morgan County, to see what they feel is the country's largest private collection of oversized fiberglass advertising figures. It's something to tell the kids about — trust me on this one. Carl E. Feather's *West Virginia Back Roads* feature begins on page 66.

A story about a 98-year-old Bridgeport citizen, a look at aviation in Rainelle and Wood County, and a photographic tour of a family's aging farm structures in Lewis and Gilmer counties fill out this issue. I hope something here catches your eye and inspires you to go, see, or do in West Virginia this summer.

Happy travels!

John Lilly

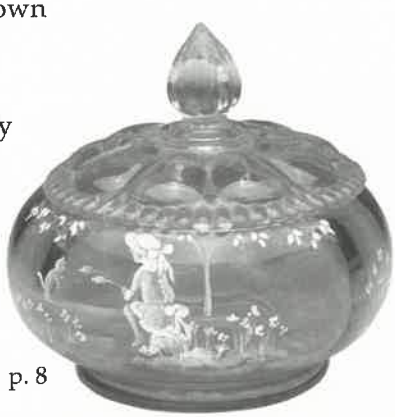
Volume 34, Number 2 **Goldenseal** Summer 2008

p. 29

p. 50

p. 58

On the cover: Fenton Art Glass Company in Williamstown recently marked 100 years of producing beautiful handmade glass. Photograph by Michael Keller. Our story begins on page 8.



p. 8

p. 42

Published by the
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Joe Manchin III
Governor

Kay Goodwin
Secretary
Department of Education
and the Arts

Randall Reid-Smith
Commissioner
Division of Culture and History

John Lilly
Editor

Cornelia Crews Alexander
Circulation Manager

BlaineTurner Advertising, Inc.
Publication Design

GOLDENSEAL (ISSN 0099-0159, USPS 013336) is published four times a year, in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. The magazine is distributed for $17 yearly. Manuscripts, photographs, and letters are welcome; return postage should accompany manuscripts and photographs.

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

Phone (304)558-0220
e-mail goldenseal@wvculture.org
www.wvculture.org/goldenseal

Periodical postage paid at Charleston, West Virginia.

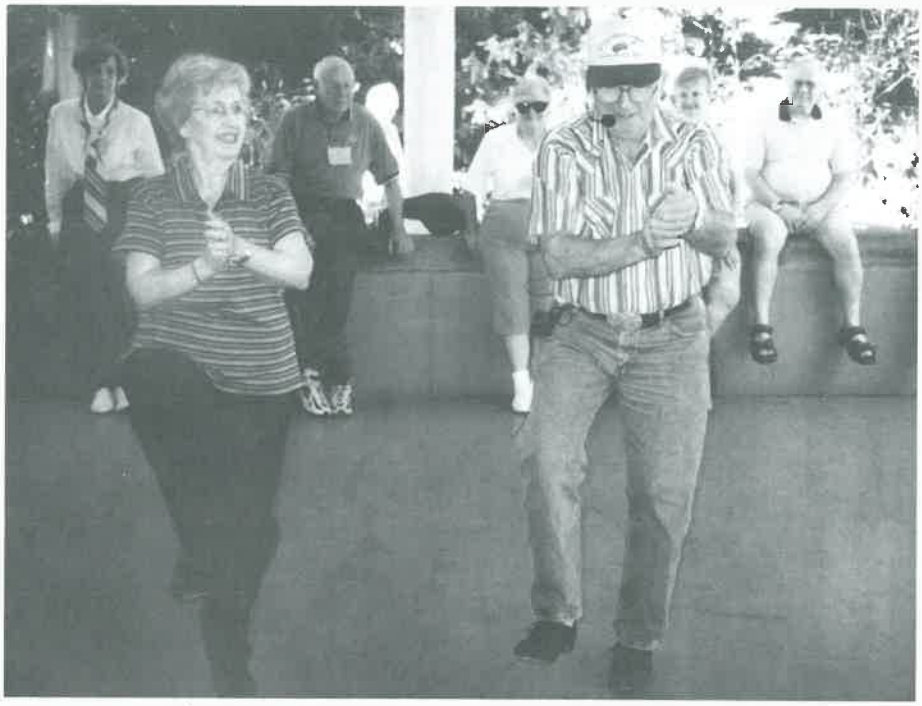
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to GOLDENSEAL, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

The Division of Culture and History is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Printed in West Virginia by
Morgantown Printing & Binding

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.



Lou and Jessie Maiuri.

Lou Maiuri

March 31, 2008
Leesburg, Virginia
Editor:

I have just finished reading the delightful story of Lou Maiuri and his dancing feet. [See "'I Dearly Love to Dance': Mountain Dancer Lou Maiuri," by Doug Van Gundy; Spring 2008.] Louie and I were classmates at Montgomery High School, and I can truthfully say he was the jitterbug king.

At one of our MHS reunions, Louie and his wife clogged for us — the highlight of our banquet. I hope those feet never stop dancing!
Audrey Dean Wood

Virginia Cook

March 7, 2008
Mullens, West Virginia
Editor:
I had the honor of reading your magazine in the Mullens Library and enjoyed it very much. The story about Virginia Cook was well written. [See "89 Years in the Coalfields: A Satisfying Life in Wyoming County," by Virginia Cook; Spring 2008.] She is a very fine lady and a wonderful teacher.

Keep up your good work, for we

Virginia Cook. Photograph by Bill Archer.

do have a very wonderful state.
Sincerely,
William "Sarge" McGhee

March 24, 2008
Fairfax, Virginia
Editor:
I was very pleased to read the article "89 Years in the Coalfields," by Virginia Cook, in the spring issue of your fine magazine. I was born and raised in Mullens and attended Mullens High School while Mrs. Cook was a teacher there. Her excellent article brought back many fond memories of growing up in Mullens. As indicated in Mrs. Cook's article, Mullens was a thriving town during the post-war period.
Sincerely,
Paul C. Farmer

Leading Creek Church

March 4, 2008
Scott Depot, West Virginia
Editor:
You will not be surprised to find me commenting on any GOLDENSEAL article about Gilmer County. In this instance, it is the good one by Katrina Minney about her memories of the Leading Creek Baptist Church. [See "Leading Creek Baptist Church: Up From the Ashes in Gilmer County"; Spring 2008.]

My father, the Reverend J.C. Musser, became pastor of the Glenville Baptist Church in December 1926. I do not remember any use of the word "circuit," but he also served other Baptist churches in Gilmer County located at Troy, Leading Creek, Sand Fork, and Dawson. The smaller churches conducted Sunday schools every week but usually had preaching services only once a month. When I saw the photograph of the large gathering at the Leading Creek church in 1932, I immediately tried to locate my father in the photo. He is the man in the light-colored suit standing in the right front. He no doubt had some part in the day's program.

I would have been only six years old at the time and do not know if I was present on this occasion or not. I do remember a big "dinner on the grounds" event there at some point, when we children began gathering up the used paper plates and sailing them like Frisbees out over the creek, where they landed and floated slowly

Leading Creek Baptist Church, 1932.

Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

Please add the following name(s) to the GOLDENSEAL mailing list. I enclose $18 for each subscription.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

[ ] I'm adding $5 extra per subscription (total $23). Please send the current issue along with the gift card!

Gift Giver's Name _____

Address _____

_____

Name(s) to be signed on gift card:

_____

[ ] Add my name too! I enclose $18 for my own subscription.

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL.

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

downstream. Such blatant littering would be outrageous today, but we were not restrained by any adult and considered it great fun.

On another occasion when attending Sunday school at Leading Creek, I was given a nickel for the offering. After Sunday school, my mother noticed I still had the nickel and asked why. I responded by saying they asked the children to put their pennies in the offering, and since I had a nickel, I figured it did not apply to me. My mother added this to the store of anecdotes that she related until they wore pretty thin.

Best wishes,
Dwight Musser

Chester Bills Antiques

March 13, 2008
St. Marys, West Virginia
Editor:

I certainly enjoyed the spring issue. The Billses who live up the street from me own the antique shop. [See "*West Virginia Back Roads*: A Shop for Sore Eyes in St. Marys," by Carl E. Feather, Spring 2008.] I went to a country school with Chester Bills back in the '30's. They are a nice couple.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Frances Davis

Chester Bills. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.

J. Elmer and Alice D. Everson, early 1940's.

Schoolboy and the Blizzard

March 20, 2008
Springport, Michigan
Editor:

A friend recently gave me a copy of GOLDENSEAL Winter 2007 to read, because we both are former residents of Philippi, Barbour County. I started glancing through the magazine and saw a picture of my great-aunt Alice Daughtery Everson. [See "Schoolboy and the Blizzard," by Hobart Everson.] Author Hobart Everson is my dad's first cousin.

How I would have loved to have shared this story with my dad, Lewie W. Simpson! Unfortunately, my dad died on his 94th birthday, December 14, 2007.

Thanks for a very interesting magazine.

Juanita Simpson Siefert

Photographer Ferrell Friend

February 25, 2008
Via e-mail
Editor:

My father had the greatest surprise for me this evening. He showed me a copy of your

Summer 2007 GOLDENSEAL, which contained a picture on page 12 taken by photographer Ferrell Friend. [See "Country Photographer Ferrell Friend: 70 Years Behind the Camera," by Skip Johnson.]

The scene is of a baptism in Scary Creek, Putnam County. My dad explained to me that the man in the middle was my great-uncle, and he also knows the names of the other gentlemen. I thought you might like to know the names for your files.

From left to right are: Reverend Moses, a pastor in Hurricane; Rosevelt (Rose) Meadows, Hurricane, deceased; evangelist Nim Barker, Huntington, deceased.

Dad said he has been a subscriber for years and enjoys your publication greatly. Keep up the great work.
Tim Meadows

Wetzel Republican

October 15, 2007
Springfield, Missouri
Editor:
As a transplanted West Virginian, I'm always eager to get a new issue of GOLDENSEAL. I especially enjoyed the article about the *Wetzel Republican*. [See "Thursday Night at the *Wetzel Republican*," by Borgon Tanner; Spring 2004.] It brought back memories of the week or two when I substituted as the society editor for that paper while the regular society writer was on her honeymoon.

It was in the 1940's, and I was a teenage correspondent for Pine Grove news. Paid two cents per inch for the social happenings in Pine Grove, I dug up a lot of news. I sent these reports to the city newspapers, too, as I was saving money to go to West Virginia Wesleyan College. But the city papers cut out many of my items of "news."

I also enjoyed the well-written story in the Fall 2007 issue about the life of Georgia Wickline. [See "Food and Rebellion in Monroe County: Recalling Georgia Wickline," by Barbara Rasmussen.] I could relate to many of the facets of her life.

I left West Virginia years ago, but I love to go back by reading GOLDENSEAL.
Virginia Lee (Casey) Gleason

Baptism at Scary Creek, Putnam County, 1971. From the left are the Reverend Moses, Rosevelt (Rose) Meadows, and Nim Barker. Photograph by Ferrell Friend.

Current Programs • Events • Publications

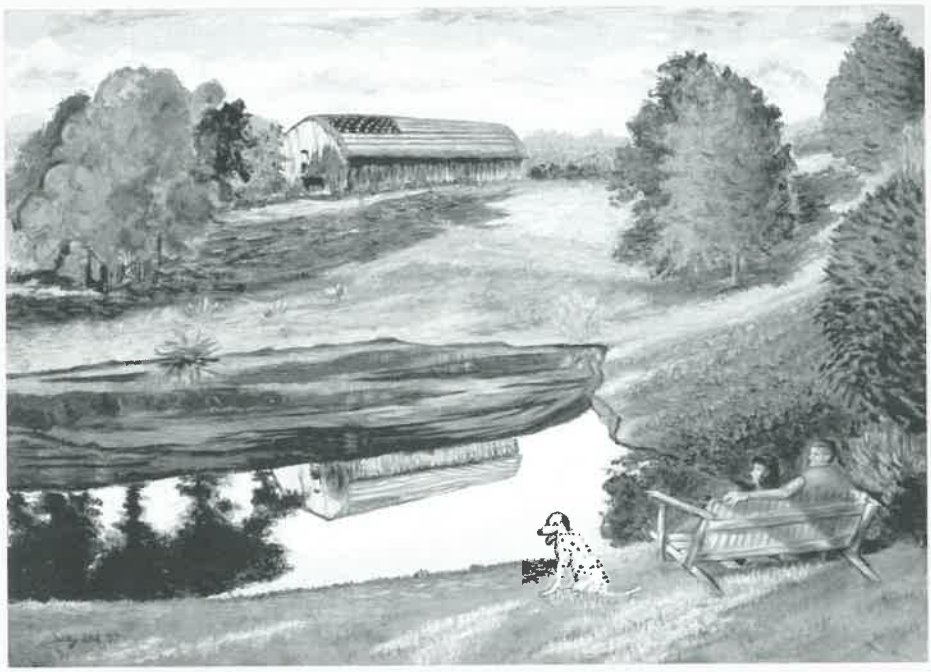
GOLDENSEAL announcements are published as a service, as space permits. They are not paid advertisements, and items are screened according to the likely interests of our readers. We welcome event announcements and review copies of books and recordings, but cannot guarantee publication.

New State Fossil Named

An ancient three-toed sloth and the timber rattler were declared the new state fossil and state reptile, respectively, on the final day of the 2008 legislative session. The bones of the giant sloth, *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, were discovered in western Virginia in 1790 and are currently housed at the Jefferson Museum in Philadelphia. They include a large claw and some limb bones. When alive, the sloth stood ten feet tall and weighed 800 pounds. It has been extinct since the mid-1500's.

The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey reports that the bones were excavated from Haynes Cave in Monroe County; others assert that the find can be traced to Organ Cave in Greenbrier County. [See "Organ Cave: A World Within a World," by Carl E. Feather; page 42.] The fossilized remains came into the possession of then-vice-president Thomas Jefferson, who presented them at a meeting of the American Philosophical Society in 1797. The bones, whose name means "Jefferson's giant claw," are named in Jefferson's honor and are thought to be between 10,000 and 1.8 million years old.

Fossil claw from *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, courtesy of E. Ray Garton, curator, Prehistoric West Virginia.



Grand Old Barn, oil painting by Billy Edd Wheeler.

Grand Old Barn

A painting of Matt and Ann Wilkinson's distinctive Boone County barn, featuring a huge American flag painted on its roof, is being offered for sale to raise money for the new West Virginia Music Hall of Fame. The artist, internationally known songwriter and 2007 Hall of Fame inductee Billy Edd Wheeler, saw a photograph of the barn and the Wilkinsons in the Winter 2006 issue of GOLDENSEAL, page 29. [See "Woodcarver Matt Wilkinson: Boone County's Tool Man," by

Carl E. Feather.] Wheeler obtained permission to base a painting on the photograph and donated the finished work to the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame. It is a colorful, framed oil painting, measuring 20' x 24'. "I hope this painting ends up in a good home of patriotic people who love America," Billy Edd says.

For more information about artist Billy Edd Wheeler and his paintings, visit www.billyeddwheeler.com/paintings.htm. To learn more about the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame, visit www.wvmusichalloffame.com or phone (304)342-4412.

50 Years Ago on TV

Television news clips from a half-century ago can be downloaded from an innovative new Web site, thanks to Marshall University Libraries and WSAZ-TV. The free site, called "50 Years Ago Today: As Seen on WSAZ-TV News," was unveiled last January and features daily looks back at news and current events in Huntington and the region, as they were seen on the evening news at West Virginia's first television station. [See "WSAZ Radio: The Worst Station from A to Z," by Corley F. Dennison; Winter 2001.]

To view the news clips, visit www.marshall.edu/50yearsago/.

History Heroes

The State Archives and History section inducted another class of History Heroes as part of its annual History Day activities at the State Legislature on February 21, 2008. Thirty-six individuals from around the state were honored this year, in recognition of their efforts to promote and preserve local and regional history.

Among the 2008 recipients were author and retired public servant Ken Hechler [see "The Lonely Battle: Ken Hechler's 1958 Campaign," by Gordon Simmons; Fall 2007] and Fred Armstrong, who served 22 years as director of the State Archives [see "100 Years of Collecting: State Archives Centennial," by Gordon Simmons; Winter 2005].

For information about nominations for future History Hero Awards, write to Archives and History, The Cultural Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305; phone (304)558-0230.

Ken Hechler, center, receives History Hero Award from Secretary of Education and the Arts Kay Goodwin and Archives and History Commission Chairman Robert Conte, February 21, 2008. Photograph by Michael Keller.

MOUNTAIN Quilt Quest

Quilt Quest

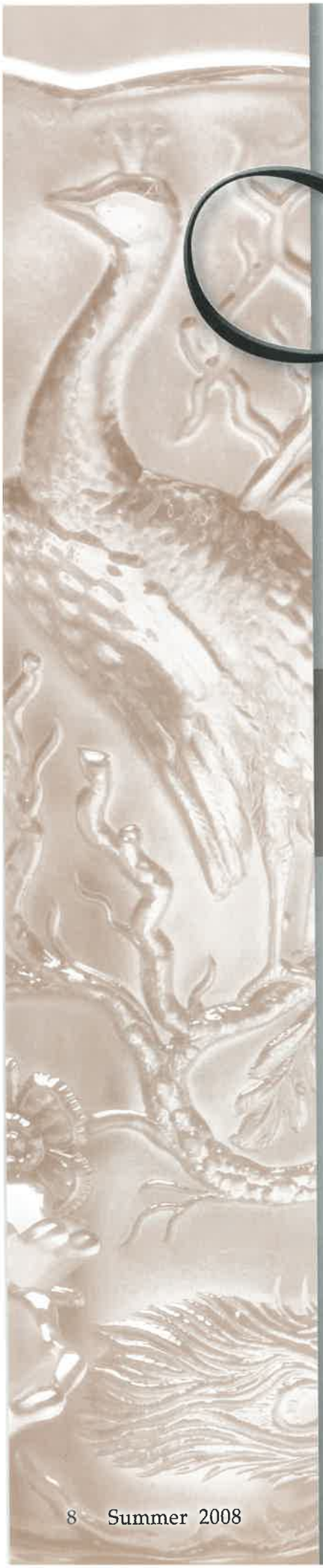
Quilters will travel across the state this June 11-14 as part of the 2008 Mountain Quilt Quest. The 13 participating quilt and sewing shops are spread from Elkins to Huntington, and from Williamstown to Victor. They have banded together for this event to welcome the avid and the curious and to promote the practice of quilting in West Virginia. Each shop will offer a different quilt pattern and fabric kit for sale, as well as free souvenir quilt charms.

For more information about the Mountain Quilt Quest, visit www.mountainquiltquest.com or phone (304)453-5650.

John Henry Days

The 13th anniversary John Henry Days will take place July 11-13, in Talcott, Summers County. John Henry, the legendary steel-driving man, is believed by some to have fought his fatal fight against the steam drill in the Big Bend Tunnel here during the early 1870's. [See "John Henry: The Story of a Steel-Driving Man," by Robert Tabscott; Summer 1996.]

John Henry Days will feature live entertainment, a grand parade, memorabilia displays, races, wagon rides, a car show, fireworks, and a historical presentation about John Henry by Bill Dillon. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, phone (304)466-3745.

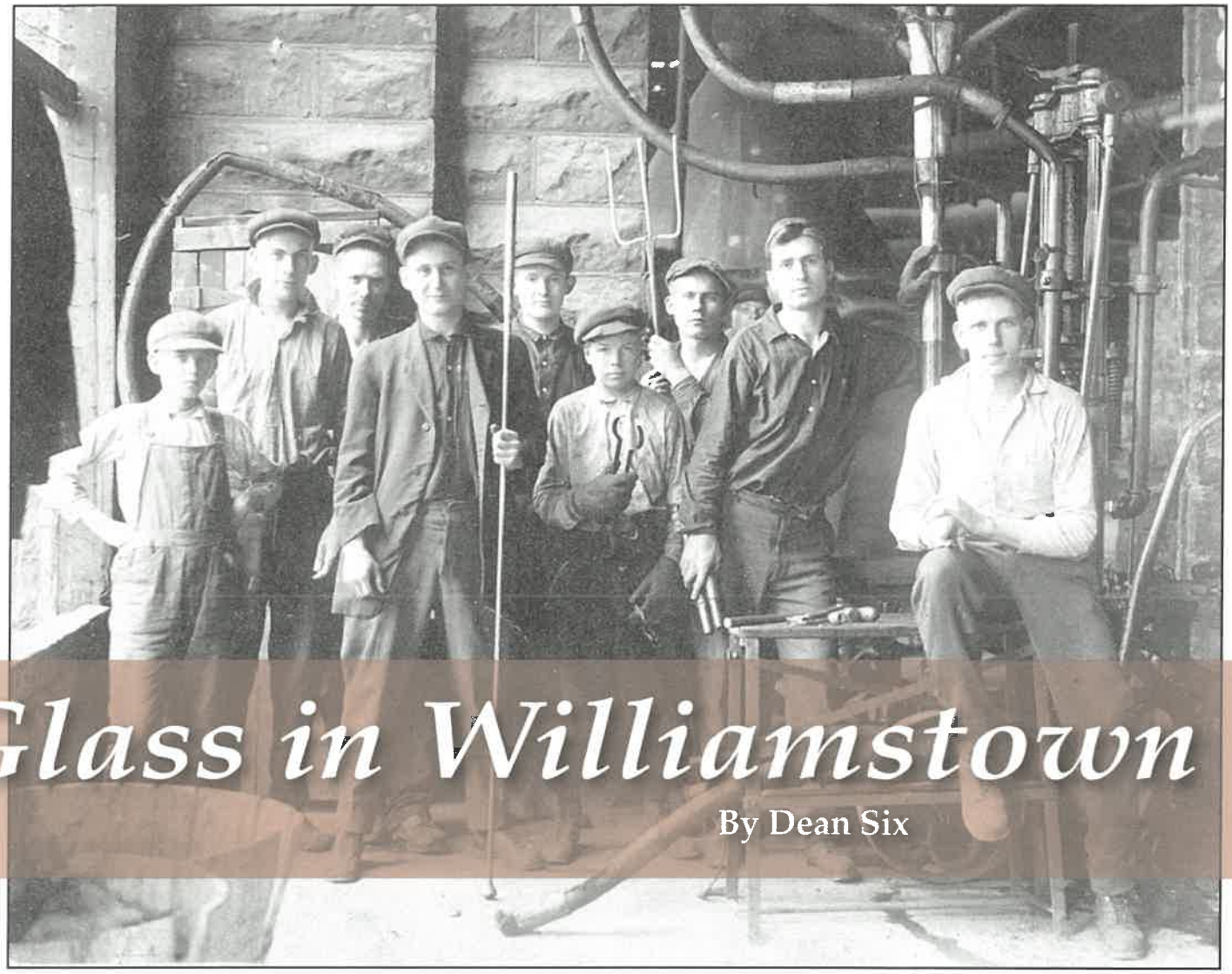


Fenton

In 1905, a small firm began in Martins Ferry, Ohio. They decorated glass made by other companies. The founders, brothers Frank L. and John W. Fenton, soon found that their needs and vision exceeded the available glass and relocated 70 miles downriver to Williamstown, Wood County. Attractions there included available land, a dependable supply of natural gas, and ready transportation by train and on the Ohio River. A new factory was begun in 1906, and Fenton Art Glass opened in West Virginia as a maker of handmade glass with their first production on January 2, 1907.

A Century of Art

Frank L. Fenton (1880-1948), company founder, pictured here in the early 1940's.



Glass in Williamstown

By Dean Six

The Fenton press shop, headed by Elmer Goosman (second from the right), in about 1910.

Early offerings included the types of glass that the Fentons had witnessed being manufactured in the firms where they had apprenticed and learned. Opalescent glass, a transparent glass with a milky white rim, was a leader in early Fenton production. Within that first year in West Virginia, Fenton introduced a line of glass in imitation of the more costly art glass from Tiffany, Steuben, and from Europe. The glass had an iridescent finish, which gave the surface the multicolored appearance of oil on water, or rainbows. Today, this type is called carnival glass. Fenton was the original producer of this glass, and it sold in vast quantities for about a decade.

Over the next few decades, Fenton continued this early trend of being a leader in handmade glass. The company grew to include 142 men and 13 women by 1924. When iridescent carnival and opalescent glass lost favor in the 1920's, Fenton looked to opaque, solid-colored glass. Color names were exotic and included Mandarin Red, Peking Blue, Chinese Yellow, Lilac, Mongolian Green, Periwinkle Blue, and Jade Green. This widely successful glass was made into the early 1930's, until the arrival of the Great Depression. The Depression led away from these decorative and novelty items toward more practical products. Tableware lines became popular in the 1930's and beyond.

In 1938, Fenton landed an account to make a bottle to be filled and sold with cologne. The bottle had small, sharp points in repeating rows. The design was called hobnail. The hobnail pattern was to become one of the most recognized of all Fenton lines. It continued in production for decades in a multitude of colors and dozens of shapes, with immense numbers of pieces being produced. The 1940's saw the popularity of opaque white "milk glass," and crested glass — a milk glass (and other colors) with colored or crystal accents along the edges or rims.

In 1948, founder Frank L. Fenton, age 68, died unexpectedly. His brother, Robert C., who had been sales manager, passed away before the end of the same year. These

Hobnail glass, shown here, was introduced in 1938 and became a highly successful and recognizable line of glassware for Fenton. Photograph by Michael Keller.

deaths thrust the management of the Fenton company upon the second generation, specifically Frank M. and Wilmer C. (Bill) Fenton, whose combined leadership would span the next 40 years.

Under this second generation of Fentons, new products continued to be introduced, though the strength and success of the Fenton company rested on utilizing the shapes, forms, and processes of glass that had come before. Frank M. purchased items at antique shows and shops, took them back to Fenton, and asked himself and others how might this form, this color, this process be adapted or copied to produce an attractive glass object for a new market. In this manner, Fenton revived, reclaimed, and preserved a number of historic glass processes and types of glass.

Fenton grew and prospered in the post-World War II era. Sales and profits were at an all-time high. To accommodate increased production, the factory was expanded in the 1950's. In the early 1950's, some glass was sold from a small building on the factory site, but it appears that this was to employees and locals through an informal arrangement. By the late 1950's, however, a public gift shop had been added on site. 1962 saw the expansion of the gift shop and its incorporation as a separate business corporation. The Fenton Gift Shop became a success, drawing

Fenton began as a hand-decorating operation in 1905, and elegant, handpainted ware remains a prominent feature of the Fenton catalog today. This 1907 photograph shows the decorating room of the glass works, with John W. Fenton looking on, at far right.

visitors from across the nation and around the world. Today, it is not uncommon to see multiple busses of tourists unloading to enjoy the gift shop and the free factory tour, one of West Virginia's most visited attractions.

The mid-20th century saw a shift in the type of glass produced at Fenton. While production had long included novelties, Fenton relied on the sale of many utilitarian items, such as lemonade pitchers, tumblers, plates, and goblets. The 1950-'60's era saw tableware being replaced by giftware. Items such as covered candy dishes, large "swung" vases, small candle lamps, and whimsical glass animals — more decorative than practical — outnumbered dinner plates.

By the 1960-'70's, glass collecting began to exert a strong influence on Fenton. Some of the oldest products, like iridescent carnival glass, were re-introduced to address the demand for this type of glass. To distinguish new from old, a Fenton logo was added to each piece with the addition of a permanent mark, beginning January 1970. Products made before the late 1960's were never marked. Today, all Fenton glass bears its mark. The awareness of and concern for nurturing collectors has likely been a prominent element in the company's survival, while other glass companies have failed.

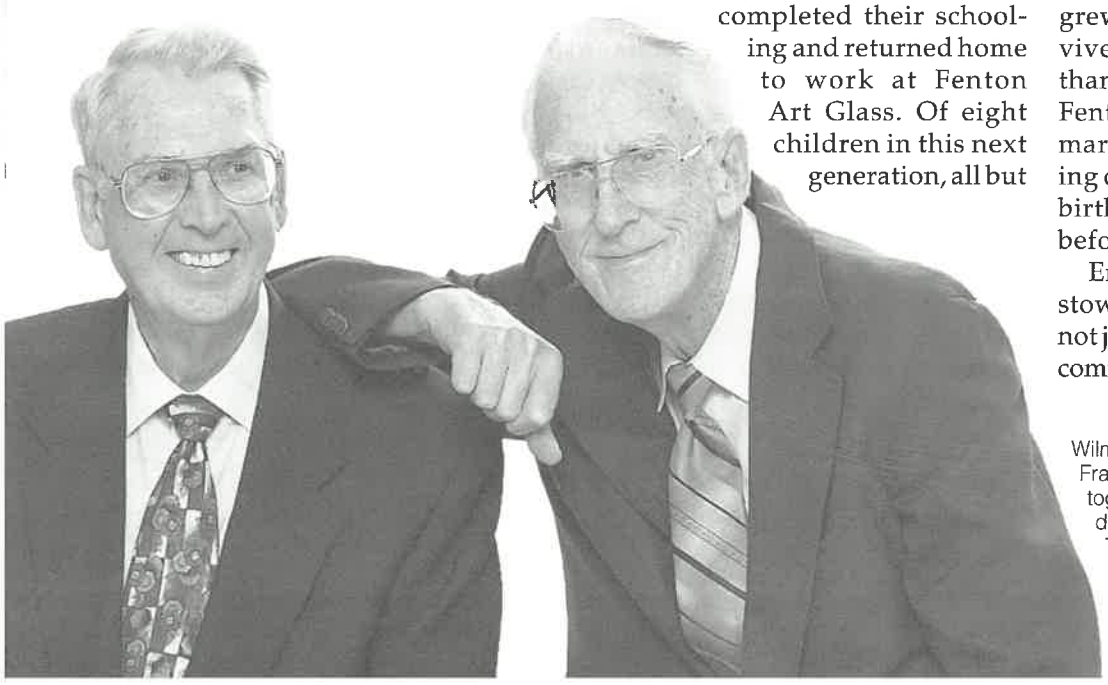
To sell Fenton in an ever-changing market, diverse plans have been used. Limited editions, family signature specials and signing events, work with collector clubs, and other creative sales approaches have opened new markets. The television shopping network QVC was an important marketing partner for Fenton, and an array of special products was made exclusively to sell to QVC shoppers. Bill Fenton first appeared on QVC on August 5, 1989, and this tradition has continued with several other family members making appearances. Despite these innovations, the world was changing, and handmade glass faced an ever-tougher market.

While Fenton has always explored new technologies and techniques, traditional methods of glass making are still employed. Here, a worker practices the ancient art of glassblowing in 1985. Photograph by Ron Snow, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Department of Commerce Collection.

During the 1960's and '70's, the third generation of Fentons completed their schooling and returned home to work at Fenton Art Glass. Of eight children in this next generation, all but one continued the family pattern of working for the company. In 1986, George Fenton, son of Frank M., assumed the presidency of the company. These were not the best of times for what was left of the handmade American glass industry, but Fenton continued.

On Thursday, August 9, 2007, company president George Fenton made a painful announcement: As fuel costs soared, transportation costs climbed, and foreign competition grew, Fenton Art Glass, having survived and often prospered for more than a century, would be closing. Fenton had celebrated its century mark with a Festival of Glassmaking on August 3-5, surviving its own birthday party by a short four days before this announcement.

Emotions ran high from Williamstown natives and residents. It was not just about an industry but about a community. "I know the Fenton family



Wilmer C. "Bill" Fenton (left) and his brother, Frank M. Fenton, managed the company together for 40 years, following the 1948 deaths of Frank L. and Robert C. Fenton. This photograph was made in 1998.

Since the late 1950's, the Fenton Gift Shop has been a popular destination for collectors and glass enthusiasts. These shoppers are looking for bargains in 1974. Photograph by Gerald Ratliff, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives. Department of Commerce Collection.

must be heartbroken," writes Marilyn Kaple, a former Fenton worker now residing in Fairborn, Ohio. "I remember the day Frank walked into our classroom in 4th grade to talk about summer little league. I was stunned that giants really walked the earth! What a great man he was if you got to know him, and most of us did in one way or the other.

"I worked there summers during college as one of those 'notorious' tour guides. I loved it! I came to enjoy and respect all the men who worked in the factory during those summers," Marilyn continues. "I never tired of watching their skill, no matter how many tours I gave. They were friendly, and we would always exchange pleasantries and joke a bit. The men were also so helpful with the tours and making my job easier. The plant would change production twice on each shift. So, what they were making, and the path that I and the other guides would have to take to weave in among the work stations, would change, too. The men were always so gracious to make a space for us to stop, and make sure no one would be too near the hot pieces being moved about. When I think of Fenton's, I think first of the skilled craftsmen I worked with."

Bob Dawson, a son of the town now residing in White Plains, Maryland, recalls, "Williamstown and Fenton Art Glass have been synonymous for so long, it's hard to believe that this era is ending. As Mayor Ford so aptly stated, 'Williamstown is Fenton, and Fenton is Williamstown.' As I moved around the country and told people I was from Williamstown, they almost always responded with 'Oh, that's where Fenton glass is, isn't it?'

"As a kid, I remember sneaking behind Fenton's and climbing the rejects pile looking for 'treasures' to take home for my mother, which she probably pitched the next day. We still have a number of Fenton glass pieces in our home. And, like most of us, I appreciated all that the Fentons did for Williamstown, particularly Williamstown High School and their support of 'Jacket' athletics."

Though operating on a smaller scale since a recent corporate restructuring, Fenton continues to produce its most popular lines. Here, glassworker Charlie Porter uses a glazer to fire polish a small cat figurine. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Fenton Art Glass Company headquarters in Williamstown today.

Howard Ross, another of the Williamstown "kids," now residing in Beverly, Ohio, shares, "My family history revolves around Fenton. My grandfather, Henry Snyder, came to Williamstown to work at Fenton's at the age of 15. He worked there 48 years. And my uncle, Henry Jr., worked there 33 years.

"My grandfather lived across the street from Fenton's. I remember as a boy the times he would take me to work with him. I would sit on a stool behind him and watch him finish glass. I learned the value of craftsmanship from him. He taught me that anything worth doing was worth doing the best you can. I think the whole community took pride in the fact that Fenton's was the best glass house in the country."

Clearly, Fenton glass was more than just a factory or a product. On December 4, 2007, Fenton Art Glass released a press statement, saying that due to the buying frenzy that resulted from the original news of the closing, as well as some internal restructuring, the company would stay open, at least for the time being.

"We currently have about 120 employees, and we want to preserve those jobs."

George Fenton states, "People from all over the country have visited the Fenton Gift Shop in recent months, and we're seeing many local friends, too. We wish to thank our dealers, collectors, and neighbors for this surge in orders, because these orders have been essential in giving us a chance to continue. We currently have about 120 employees, and we want to preserve those jobs." Fenton continues. Plans call for the company to be smaller, making and selling fewer items to fewer dealers. "Our company will have two divisions: Fenton USA will consist of glass made domestically, and Fenton International will consist of glass and non-glass products that are imported. Each brand will be clearly marked," he says. "While we are not out of the woods yet, we can see the possibility of Fenton as a part of this community for years to come."

The leadership, art, and skilled craftsmanship that continue to be at the core of the Fenton Art Glass Company have provided the Fenton family and hundreds of employees for more than a century with a legacy that intertwines the history of a community and one industry into a single tapestry and story. It is an awesome tale that has yet to have the final chapters written.

FENTON®

Handcrafted American Glass Artistry

Photoessay by Michael Keller

Celeste Blue iridescent stretch glass eight-lobe dish from the mid-1920's (at left); a rare, collectible Mosaic inlaid glass fan vase from the mid-1920's (at right); and a 1980's Blue Opalescent Fenton logo and base in the foreground.

Contemporary Cranberry ribbed optic glass candy dish, with Mary Gregory-style handpainted decoration and crystal cover.

Glass figurines are popular items for Fenton. This Blue satin glass swan is from around 1978; the Indigo Blue cat and dolphin are contemporary.

Contemporary
Black vasiform vase,
with pomegranates.

Contemporary Ruby
Carnival candy box,
with grape leaf design.

Top left, Aqua Crest three-lobe dish, circa 1940; at right, Amethyst carnival glass Grape and Cable pattern bowl, circa 1910; bottom left, contemporary Cobalt blue carnival glass Persian Medallion pattern bowl.

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

"The Best Thing I Ever Did"

Willa Norman and Fenton Glass

By Dean Six

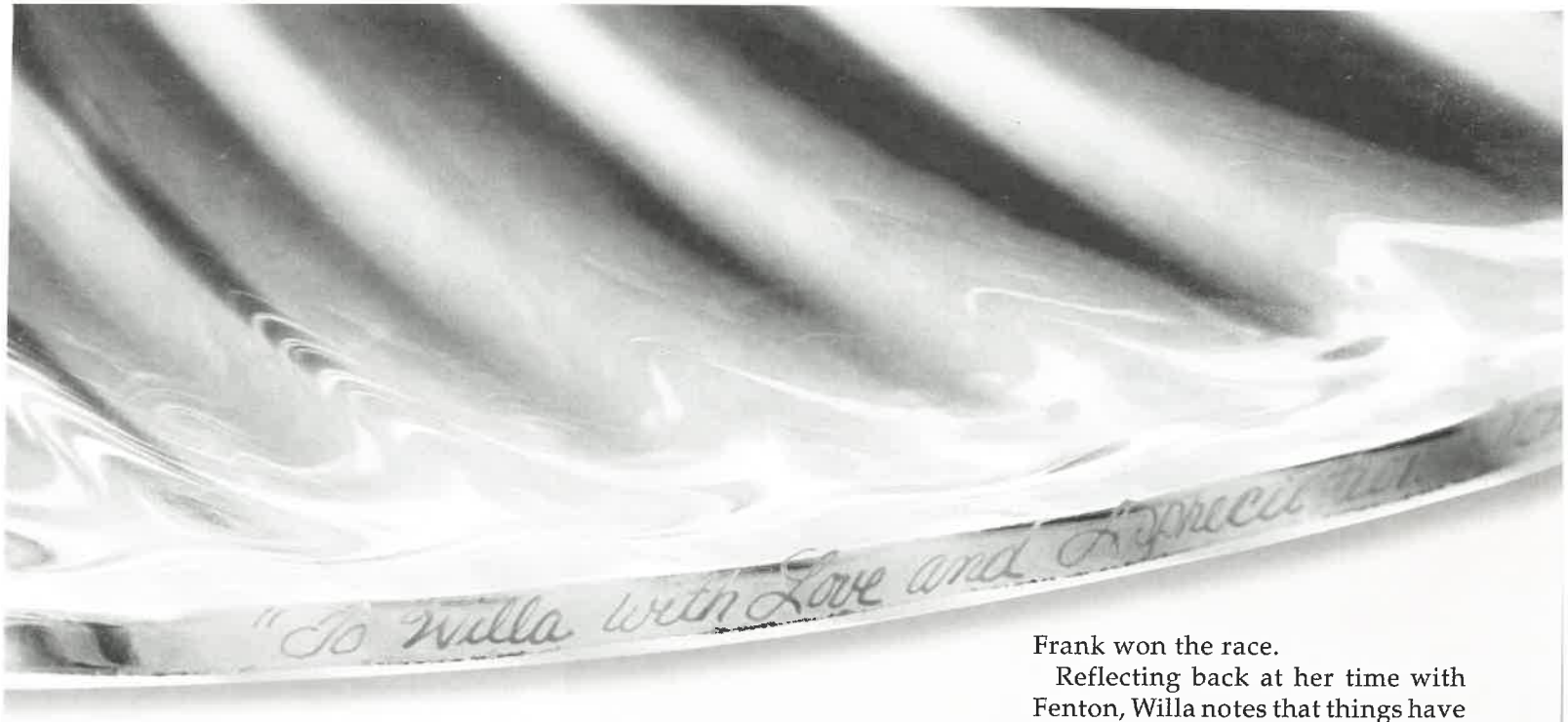
Photographs by Michael Keller

The Fenton legacy in Williamstown is deep, and the people in the community with stories to tell are many. Willa Norman is one such person.

Willa Norman went to work at Fenton more than a half century ago. "I was born 84 years ago in the house where I still live in Williamstown," she says. "I was 30 years old in 1953, and I had worked at C.L. Bailey Grocery Company in Marietta, Ohio, for ten years or more. My friend Margaret Yost Cox was taking a leave of absence from Fenton and suggested I might inquire about work there. I went to see Frank Fenton in August of 1953 in the bookkeeping department. Of course, in a small town everybody knows everybody else. Frank hired me for less than I was making at Bailey's, but in three months, I was making more."

She remained a Fenton employee for the next 32 years. Willa's family came from Roane County and other places before settling in Williamstown after World War I. Like many in this Wood County town, members of Willa's family found work at Fenton glass. "My grandfather, my aunt, and my dad all worked there

Willa Norman of Williamstown went to work at Fenton glass in 1953. She retired after 32 years, in 1985. Today, Willa has fond memories of her time at Fenton.



Willa was presented with a lamp as a parting gift upon her retirement. The lamp bears a personalized inscription from owners Frank and Bill Fenton.

briefly. Dad was a cutter for a while. My cousins worked there for years. It was a good place to work, but the work was not steady back then," she says, explaining why family members often moved on to other occupations and more constant work.

It was during the post-war boom years that Willa herself came to Fenton. "For my first job at Fenton, I was privileged to work with Grace Sayer, using an old National Cash Register machine to type checks," Willa recalls. "Shortly after that, Fenton brought in consultants from out of state to do a time-and-movement study, to explore paying employees based on quality control and this time study. I was assigned to help record those results. Then I was assigned to keeping records of the color codes and ware numbers. Roger Simms had devised a ware system copied after something he had learned in the military. It was numeric for the wares and alphabetical for the colors — very systematic with charts and good record-keeping.

"For ware, the first two digits were the pattern. Each pattern had an assigned number, like hobnail, or moon-and-star, and so forth. The third and fourth digits indicated the shape, like a bowl or candlestick or salt-and-pepper. Each had a number. There were no computers then, but my last job was to prepare the information, all written out, for the data-entry girls to enter into the new computers. Once computers came, all sorts of things changed.

"The very best part of my work was the people." Willa is firm of voice and emphatic as she states, "The people I worked with and my employers, it was like a family. We always had a nice Christmas luncheon, and we really enjoyed it. The Fenton Foundation each year at Christmas gave a sum of money to each church in the town, and there were a lot of churches. But each one was treated equally by the Fenton family." Community and company have been historically intertwined in Williamstown.

Willa notes that dignitaries often toured Fenton glass and that governors made repeated visits to the factory. Frank Fenton, a man well over six feet tall and known for a gentle and yet fun-loving spirit, was said to have engaged then-Governor Jay Rockefeller, also a man of unusual height, in a foot race up two adjacent sets of stairs inside the factory. Willa was at the top of one set of stairs, papers in hand, as the governor came to a sudden halt, throwing his long arms up and all but colliding with her. She adds, laughter in her voice, that perhaps due to her intervention Frank won the race.

Reflecting back at her time with Fenton, Willa notes that things have changed dramatically. "For years, a best seller was the hobnail pattern. I liked the Valencia pattern a lot, too, and it sold well. But hobnail was a wonderful seller, from plates and cake plates to tumblers and wine glasses and anything for the dinner table. The younger generation doesn't much care for things to set the table today, so tableware has been gone for a long time. Now it is decorative things like vases and glass that is pretty but not used on the table."

In 1985, Willa concluded her 32 years of service and was treated to a cake and the practice of allowing her to select a lamp as a parting gift. She chose a Blue Ridge-pattern lamp. It is of white-and-clear French opalescent glass, with a deep, cobalt blue rim or "crest." Pride and affection are apparent as she notes, "The lamp I chose was given to me signed, 'To Willa from Frank and Bill with love.'"

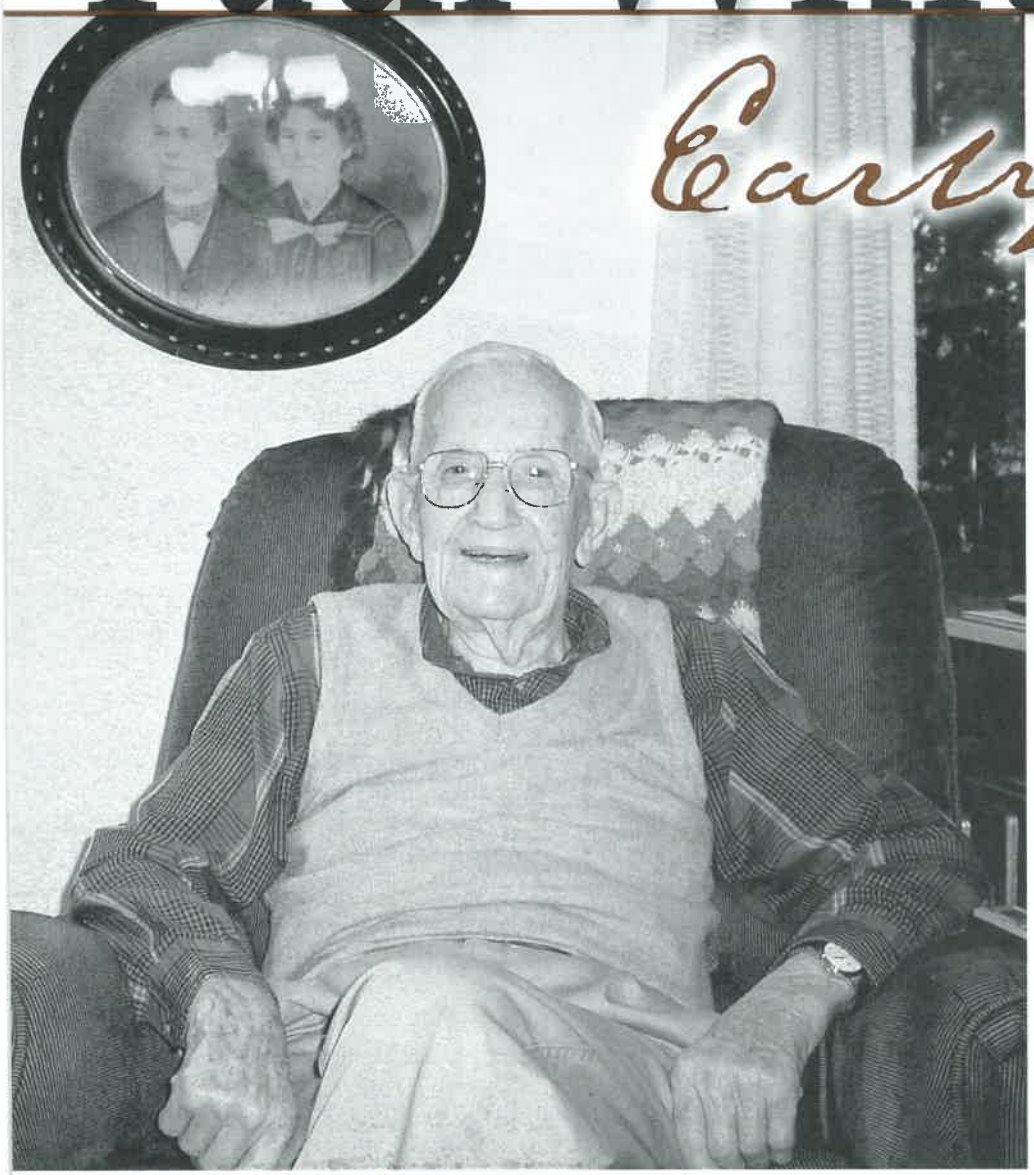
Summing up her time at Fenton glass, Willa hesitates not a second before saying, "Going to work there was the best thing I ever did."

DEAN SIX is a Ritchie County native and a nationally recognized authority on glass history. He holds five degrees from West Virginia University, including a bachelor's degree in history and a doctorate in law. Dean has authored or coauthored several books on the history of West Virginia glass and other subjects. Dean's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 2003 issue.

Paul Whiteman

Early Days

By Richard S. Bailey



Paul Whiteman, age 98, at his home in Bridgeport. Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.

On September 16, 2005, hundreds of Bridgeport High School alumni and fans gathered to celebrate Fifty Years of Indian Football: 1955-2005. All of the decades of B.H.S. football were well-represented that memorable evening. Many exhibited their pride by wearing their old jerseys. Some reminisced with old locker-room tales while observing politely how time had changed their appearances.

As the undefeated 2005 Bridgeport Indians charged out onto the field, the fans in the bleachers cheered wildly. Then the public address announcer, Mr. "Gooch" Holbert, made this introduction: "And now, leading the 'parade of the decades' is the elder statesman of the Bridgeport High School alumni in attendance this evening, Mr. Paul M. Whiteman, Bridgeport Class of 1927. Let's give this 96-year-old gentleman a big round of applause!"

It was unclear how many people in attendance had ever heard of Mr. Whiteman. His life span extended well beyond the 50 years being celebrated that evening. Few knew how many detailed memories this gentleman held concerning the history and traditions of Bridgeport.

I arranged to meet with Mr. Whiteman to gather some of those memories. Our first interview took place on November 29, 2006, at the Whitemans' residence. Paul and his wife, Ellenor, live in a modest, sturdily constructed home in Bridgeport that he built with his own hands. They had been childhood sweethearts, wed in Spencer in 1930. He and Ellenor welcomed me into their home with warm hospitality.

The elderly gentleman sat in his favorite recliner in the quaint living room. Examples of Ellenor's oil paintings adorned the walls. Above Paul's head was a reverent wedding photo of his parents from 1902. A rather large, framed photo of Paul and his three brothers hung on the other side of the room. Paul points out, "That's Roy, me, Walter, and Harley." At that moment, the familiar sound of a train whistle blew along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks that slice through the middle of this Harrison County town.

Paul Whiteman's life had humble beginnings at a small community four miles northwest of Bridgeport, named Adamsville. He was born on the Fourth of July, 1909, in a log cabin. "Mother was a Christian woman and got my name from out of the Bible," he says. Paul spoke with deep respect as he referred to

Recalls in Bridgeport

Paul Whiteman in his christening gown on April 7, 1910.

his mother. "Murray was her maiden name. They named me Paul Murray Whiteman. Mother's name was Mary Elizabeth Murray Whiteman, and my father was named J.B. Whiteman. He was called 'Jake.'

"Mother said that her mother told her that during the Civil War, the Swiger family used to live in that log house before my father rented it. Confederate soldiers came through and robbed and murdered one of the Swigers. The bullets from that incident were never removed from our old homestead. The Confederates stole the Swigers' chickens and horses. They took everything they could use. Meanwhile, the Swigers had hidden out in the woods until the soldiers went off. Mother said that Union soldiers done the same thing."

Paul continues, "Mother said that the day I was born, it was very chilly and even spit snow. Doctor Cox rode over from Shinnston and delivered me in our house. And he charged us five dollar! Five dollars!!"

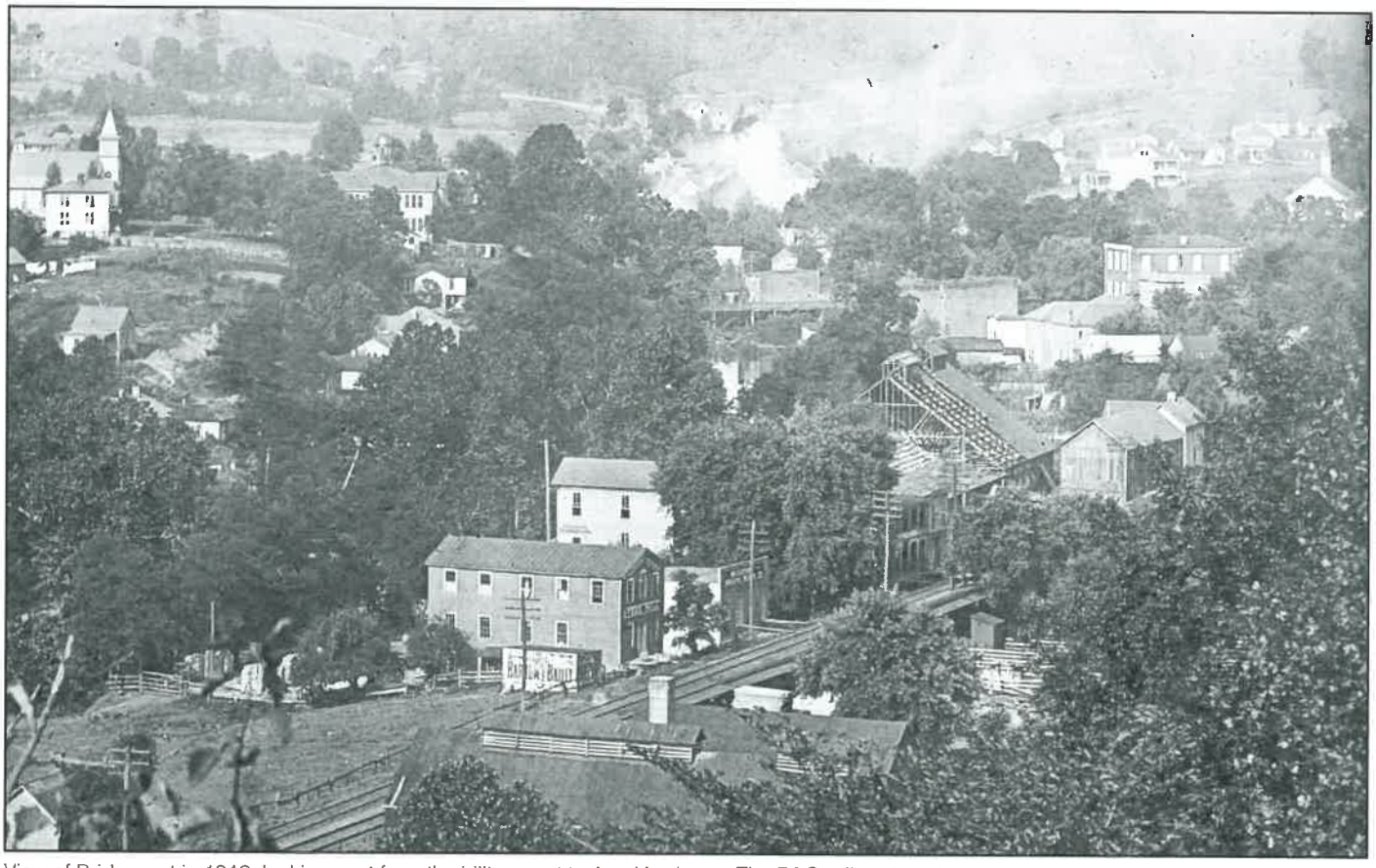
Paul tells me that his father's people, the Whitemans, lived in the area of Adamsville. They were all hardworking farming people. An uncle taught Paul's father the carpentry trade, and Jake Whiteman built many homes in the Bridgeport-Clarksburg area. Later, homebuilding would be handed down to Paul Whiteman, and it became his way of life, as well.

Before that, Paul held down a number of jobs. He worked in the early natural gas business and in the Union Carbide plant in Anmoore during World War II. He later went into business for himself, contracting homes in the traditon of his father. "I retired as a homebuilder in 1972," he says.

Mr. Whiteman spoke of his earliest childhood memories. "Well, I can remember when we lived on Gordon Street [in Bridgeport]. My father's uncle had built a house there before. So my father decided to build a house there, too. We had about an acre lot, kept a cow, chickens, a big garden, which my mother loved to tend. We had no sewerage nor electricity. We had a well on one end of the house and on the other end, an outhouse. We had a little bit of [natural] gas in the winter and lots of gas in the summertime. The reason for the shortages of gas in the winter was that the wells did not produce enough to meet the demand. So we had to have a coal fire to keep warm in the winter."

Paul and his three brothers in about 1918. From the left, they are Roy, Paul, Walter, and Harley Whiteman.

Before the turn of the last century, a large petroleum and natural gas discovery was made in the Shinnston, Lumberport, Adamsville area. "Yes, the Whiteman family stuck oil on their place down there in Adamsville," Paul says. "They all became wealthy. They was moderately wealthy. Not real rich, but, well off. My father's uncle, when things were handed out, only inherited a stony point down below Coon's Run, not any more than ten acres, if that. The other relatives got nice 65- or 70-acre farms. Everyone else made fun of Uncle because Grandpa only gave him that small, seemingly insignificant plot of land. Well, when the boom came, [Grandpa's] daughter and her other two sons did right nice, but Uncle's land produced ten times more than all of them put together! He became the richest of the bunch." Paul laughed out loud. "And, I remember [Uncle] bought



View of Bridgeport in 1912, looking east from the hilltop next to Ace Hardware. The B&O railroad tracks cut through the center of town. The Bridgeport Lamp Chimney Company office is visible in the foreground, directly behind the Barnum & Bailey circus advertisement. Bridgeport High School is on the near left (just over from the church at far left); Paul Whiteman's Gordon Street neighborhood is visible in the upper right-hand corner. Photograph courtesy of Richard Duez.

a shiny new steam-driven car. It seemed like it was a block long. When he started it out, that steam just rolled and poured out from under it like the blazes. He got a lot of attention after that. Everyone said he was the king of that stony point." Paul continued to smile at the irony. The "unfortunate" uncle was named Everal Johnson Whiteman, and his wife's name was Maude. Uncle Everal lived until 1927, passing away at age 73.

I asked Mr. Whiteman if he recollected his first movie. With a confident expression, the wise gentleman's eyes got real big, and Ellenor looked up from her reading to listen intently. "I recollect my first picture show. I sure do. It happened in downtown Bridgeport where the old Peshak & Utt Ford Garage used to be. That was down on Main Street. A tall man with a low voice drove into town in a closed buggy, something like the Amish folks use. Word got out, and we all came running. We took snuff wrappers off of snuff cans as the price of admission. He would pull the buggy over in a little depression in the hill along the dirt street to the left of where the Petroleum Development Corporation is located today, then known as the old Folk Building. You had to wait til after dark. We watched our first real movie out of the back of that old buggy. You could hear that reel a-running, clicking and clacking. It was so exciting. We kids thought it was really modern times."

"We watched our first real movie out of the back of that old buggy. You could hear that reel a-running, clicking and clacking. It was so exciting. We kids thought it was really modern times."

Along those same lines came the invention of the radio in the late 19th century. "Oh yes, our first radio," Paul continues. "Well, my oldest brother, Roy, got our first radio. I recall it being right about at the end of World War I. Roy was always interested in electronics, and he took a correspondence course when he graduated from Bridgeport. The course was from L.L. Cook out of Chicago, an electric course. He was always tinkering with stuff and fascinated by it. Anyway, Roy assembled together a radio on a big wooden work stand. The top was about three-foot square and it had a condenser and all these little gadgets and items that he wired all together. You listened through headphones. We could actually listen to Cincinnati, and sometimes we could hear Pittsburgh, KDKA.

Everybody kept saying, 'Let me hear! It's my turn to hear!" We would listen for about half a minute. Then somebody else got their turn. And, that was our first radio."

During those early days of his life, Mr. Whiteman stressed how people had to do so many things for themselves. "Dad soled all our shoes in his little shop," Paul recalls. "We all walked to school and back. So, we would wear out shoes very quickly. My father had a [last] stand. You could buy leather by the sheets. Dad would put your shoe down and mark it with a pencil. Then he'd take his sharp pen knife, cut around it, you know. He'd turn the shoe and put it on the [last]. Then he would tack it on. That's the way he did it, 'cause we wore out lots of shoes. One time after Daddy had soled our shoes, my foot got to hurting real bad by the time I got home from school. 'Uh oh,' Dad said with raised eyebrows. 'That's one I forgot to clinch!' But I had to walk on it all day before he knew it. That's the way it was back then. You didn't complain."

I asked Mr. Whiteman about his memories of early industry in Bridgeport. "When I was a boy, Bridgeport was the largest shipping point for cattle in northern West Virginia," he tells me. "They used to start their drives way back in the mountains and move the cattle here, picking up more and more as they went. We had a large area of cattle pens all the way back next to the B&O tracks behind what today is Leeson's Import Motors. That array of cattle pens seemed to me like it was half-a-mile in length down there along the tracks and along the creek. It was a big deal.

"The cattle wouldn't be wild because the drivers would move them for days and nights. All night long, from our home on Gordon Street, we could hear them them a-poking them along and hollering as they pushed them down the muddy or dusty old Main Street of town. We were told to stay off the streets back then when all this cattle driving went on. To us boys, it was exciting."

"It was scary!" Ellenor interjected.

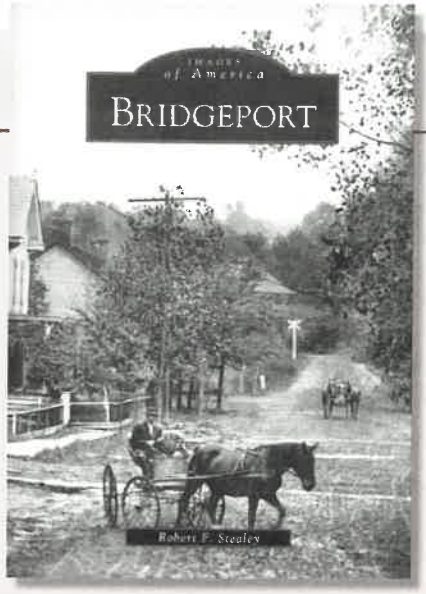
In the days before World War I, there was a glass plant in Bridgeport that made high-quality globes for house lamps. "Yes, the old glass plant was located where the tennis courts and swimming pool are today," Paul says. "It was down along the creek. It was called the Bridgeport Lamp Chimney Company, and it was the original glass plant. There was also an old pottery. I will tell you about it another time. I do remember your grandfather Weis was a glass blower there. I remember him well. He was considered a good glass blower," he says, recalling my grandfather, George Weis.

"That company made globes for home-use oil and kerosene lanterns. I recall that they didn't work the plant all the time. It all depended on contracts. It would just run for about six months of the year, because when the warehouse filled up with inventory, the plant would shut down. That is how they had to do things to stay profitable.

"Old J.R. Jones came down from Weston, just before World War I, about 1911, or a little before that," Paul says. "He had made good there in Weston as a harness salesman. He didn't hesitate when a dollar was to be made and had a good reputation for honesty. Jones had the glass plant as a sideline when it blossomed into a thriving business. So, he bought more interest in it, and it became even more successful. He went in with another enterprising gentleman of means, John Duncan. He was also well-known for his ability and honesty. These two businessmen made quite a name as businessmen in the area back then."

Paul leaned forward, looked me in the eye, and said, "My brother, Harley, worked there for two years, so I heard lots of things. My first real job in life was with the old Bridgeport Gas Company. Every morning by 8:00, I had to change the meter at the old chimney plant. Our [gas company] meter was between the

Bridgeport



Bridgeport, by Robert F. Stealey, a new volume in Arcadia Publishing's popular Images of America series, is a collection of more than 200 vintage photographs related to the history of this Harrison County town.

Each black-and-white photograph is accompanied by a descriptive caption; the illustrations are arranged in thematic chapters with brief explanatory introductions. There is a chapter related to downtown and other businesses and industries. Another reproduces historical documents, monuments, gravestones, and other markers. The chapter on the people of Bridgeport begins with images of Emanuel Benedum from the late 19th century and concludes with recent sports photographs. The final three chapters are on historic homes, schools and churches, and well-known buildings and locations, respectively.

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

factory and the creek. It had a time clock that regulated the amount of gas that was used in the plant. It made a mark in ink. So, every morning I had to be there to reset it. No one seemed to mind me stepping in and watching the goings on."

Paul described the workings at the old glass plant in some detail: "Well, you see, a shop is considered a 'blower,' a 'gather boy,' a 'finish boy,' and a 'turn man.' The turn man was in charge of all the blowers, and he also blowed. The turn man was like the shift boss. They had women and men who packed the lamp chimneys and put them on buggies, and they hauled them to the warehouse across the creek by way of a concrete bridge, known today as the old 'Bow Bridge.'"

In the last ten years, the Bow Bridge has been renovated and is currently in use for pedestrian traffic to the city park.

A young Ellenor Lawson in her "flapper" outfit during the early 1920's. She and Paul Whiteman were married in 1930.

"I used to see them pull the glass and blow it," Paul continues. "They had the gather boy, who went in and put a long tube into a large tank. He then gathered the glass on the end [of the tube]. Then he took it over to his stand, which was about four or five feet across and was sloped a little so he didn't have to bend over so far. He'd roll the glass, blowed it, and got it started. He then shipped it over to the blower, and he shaped it into a lamp chimney. He blowed it again and cracked it off. The finish boy would take it over to another station. He'd heat it at what was called the 'glory hole.' That was hot, burning gas in there. Real hot! It would melt the end of it and he would take

Workers at the Bridgeport Lamp Chimney Company in about 1912. Photograph courtesy of Richard Duez.

it to a machine and push it down, give the wheel a turn, then shove it in to make a kind of fancy trim. Most of the chimneys produced did not have that fancy trim. That was it. I witnessed this many times back then," Paul states.

For many people, school days hold some of their most cherished memories. For Mr. Whiteman, high school was a very special time. "Now, they built the high school in 1922," he recalls. "I went up there the same year it opened. I was in seventh grade. It ran grades seven through 12. They named it Bridgeport Union High School. When I was in school, all of the administrators were local people who served on the board of education.

"I played football in 1927," he recalls. "You see, they didn't finish that school completely for some years. Our dressing room was unfinished, and we hung our pants and shoulder pads on the spikes out from the studding. We would run down the hall naked to the shower room, and it got very cold sometimes. To save money, they didn't heat the whole building back then.

"We used to practice football up on the hill next to the high school. We played our football games at Faris Acres. I remember an old mill used to be there right next to the field. It was ready to fall down back then. The land where the field was located was donated to the board of education by the Faris family. On this flat little piece of land, they'd just line off the field, and people would come down to watch. Maybe 25 or 50. Games then were always on Fridays after school, about 4:00 in the afternoon. No night games, because there were no lights. There was no electric running down there. They would all stand on the sidelines and watch the ball game. Sometimes, the football would land in the creek and be taken downstream, with fans running after it. We didn't much follow the lined-off boundaries back then, either. I remember in my first game getting my bell rung more than once out of bounds, and there were no calls. That was the W.I. game! (Washington Irving High School in Clarksburg) Washington Irving was about the toughest team around back then. It was a much bigger school than little Bridgeport. W.I. was always big and rough. We had to be at our very best," Paul says. Mr. Whiteman's face seemed to glow as he recounted his football memories.

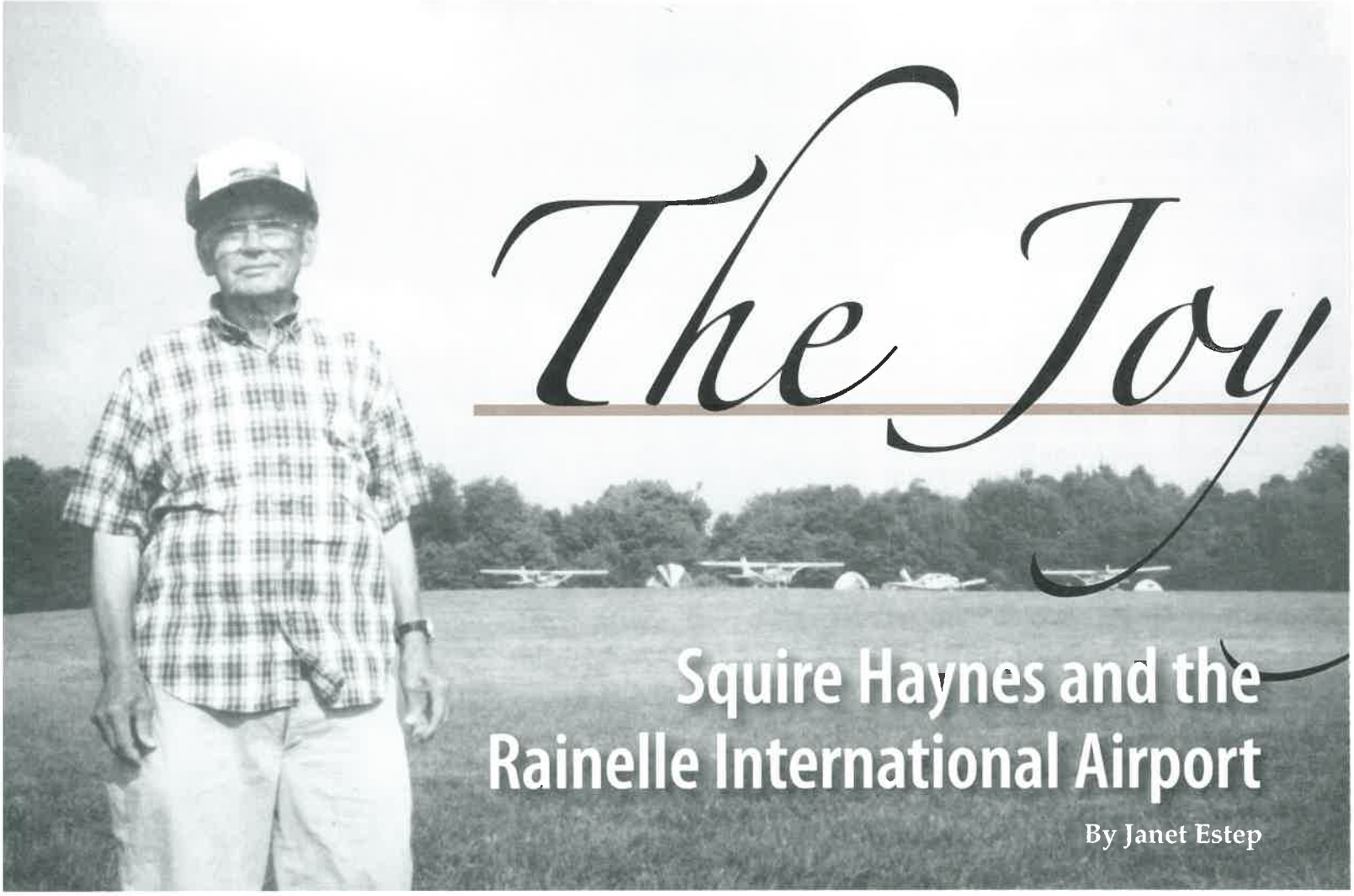
Paul and Ellenor Whiteman today. The pair have been married for 78 years. Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.

The first time I remember seeing Paul Whiteman was at that Fifty Years of Bridgeport Football gathering in 2005. I asked him about his thoughts on that event. "Last fall, they had a Fifty Year doings at one of their football games," he says. "I wore a white sweater, which is in the closet over there. It wasn't the original sweater, however. I asked Ellenor to sew my 'B.U.' onto that sweater. It was the original letter I received when I was initiated into the B.U.H.S. Varsity Club. Now, that initiation was quite another story to be told at a later time. Yes, for another time."

Paul seemed to gaze deep into his memory and looked as if he had just touched the tip of the iceberg when it came to his memories of the history and traditions of his hometown, Bridgeport.

Ellenor added with a gentle voice, "Yes. Just the tip of the iceberg for Paul!"

RICHARD S. BAILEY of Bridgeport is a graduate of Fairmont State College and West Virginia University. He retired in 2003 after 33 years as a history teacher and coach in Harrison County schools. This is Richard's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



The Joy

Squire Haynes and the Rainelle International Airport

By Janet Estep

Lawrence "Squire" Haynes at his Rainelle Airport in western Greenbrier County.

During a less complicated age, Sunday drives were considered traditional. In our family, slow rides along country roads through rolling farmland and verdant forests were entertainment on Sunday afternoons. My dad, Austin "Red" Ballengee, drove the 1955 black Oldsmobile that took us gawking across several counties in southern West Virginia.

My father worked for a time at Haynes Television & Refrigeration in Rainelle. The store was owned by Jim and Madge Haynes and employed Jim's brother, Lawrence "Squire" Haynes. One Sunday afternoon in the mid-1960's, my dad knowingly drove my mother, me, and a friend of mine, Karen Goddard, up Little Sewell Mountain to see the new airport that Squire Haynes had cut into his family farm on the top of the mountain.

There weren't many people around on that afternoon. Ernest Simms, a friend from church, was visiting. Squire was there with his airplane, a 1958 Cessna. While the scenery was magnificent, it wasn't anything we hadn't already seen. The airport was something altogether different, though. The grown-ups talked a little, but I imagine Squire wanted to get to the reason for the whole airport business. Squire Haynes lived to fly. Much to my mother's astonishment, he offered Karen and me a ride in the airplane. Ernest Simms was invited, also. I think it surprised my mother that Karen and I said yes.

It was a small plane. The four of us got in and flew up off the grass airstrip into the sky, over the tops of the mountains. We flew over our houses and Rainelle. I suppose my mother anxiously awaited our return. I know how I would have felt about my child taking off from a mountaintop in a tiny plane with the local TV technician. She needn't have worried, though, because Karen and I were having the time of our lives up above the mountains of western Greenbrier County. Squire had provided two schoolgirls with their very first airplane ride. He wanted to share the joy of flying with everyone.

When Squire Haynes began bulldozing a landing strip on the old family homestead in the spring of 1963, he didn't foresee how popular the facility would become. He wasn't planning on state and national news coverage. He just wanted a place to keep his airplane handy so that he could fly above the mountains of southern West Virginia.

Squire Haynes was born on January 9, 1917, to Levi and Anna Andrew Haynes on a farm on Little Sewell Mountain. After serving in the navy in World War II, Squire obtained his pilot's license under the GI Bill. He

# of Flying

bought a 1958 Cessna in 1960 and kept the plane at an airstrip in Pence Springs. Because of the inconvenience of driving to Pence Springs whenever he wanted to fly, he decided that his family farm would make a perfect airport.

With the help of local investors, the Rainelle Airpark was born on May 6, 1963. Investor Ralph Williams says that the shareholders invested in the airport along with other financial ventures, such as coal mining at Snake Island. The grass airstrip measured 3,300 feet long and 75 feet wide with an elevation of 3,446 feet. Soon, other pilots were landing at "Rainelle International Airport," as

Aerial view of the Rainelle Airport in 1995.

Squire Haynes was an avid pilot. In 1963, he built the Rainelle Airpark, largely to accommodate his own private plane and his unflagging desire to fly.

it was affectionately called. In 1988, a restaurant was opened at the airport, and it quickly became popular with local residents as well as pilots from all over the United States, who flew into Rainelle, had some lunch, and then returned home.

In 1989, Herb Shuck of Meadow Bridge lost his job in the coal mines. He made a deal with Squire Haynes that, in exchange for mowing the grass at the airport, Squire would let him use his airplane to fly. Herb worked at the airport up until the closing of the season in 2004.

Herb says that Squire was prudent in the operation of the airport. In the spirit of flying with duct tape and baling twine, Squire often kept the repair budget to a minimum. Herb remembers when the pump in the well went out. Squire had Herb repair the pump, but when the repairs didn't hold, Herb went to Rainelle to get a new pump before Squire could find out and try a second round of repairs on the old one. "Make do" was a driving principle in Squire's life, Herb says.

For those who preferred to keep their feet on terra firma, the airport restaurant was a popular destination. Karen Henson worked as manager of the airport for the last six years of its existence. "We might have as many as 200 people if the weather was good," she says. The largest crowd she could remember serving was 250 customers on one Mother's Day.

People drove up the mountain road for Nellie Tincher's homemade hot rolls and coconut cream pie. Nellie was the cook who brought her own homegrown recipes to the restaurant.

A hot buffet was served on Sundays. Squire liked to joke about pilots coming in for a $100 hamburger: $2.50 for the hamburger and $97.50 for fuel.

Pilots came to see Squire. "He was one of a kind," Herb says. There were customers from Roanoke, Virginia, who flew in two or three times a weekend, and Junior Meadows from Charleston, who might fly in three times a day. Many of the airplanes that landed in Rainelle were reconditioned antique planes. Herb Shuck recalls that, a few years ago, a jet buzzed the airport. The airport was a choice destination for flying clubs, including one association that flew Cub airplanes. Some pilots flew vintage airplanes or replicas they had built themselves. Herb remembers one that had a Volkswagen engine. "But mostly they came to fly a little bit and show off a little bit," Herb says.

In September 1997, the magazine *AOPA Pilot* published an article by Stephen Coonts about the Rainelle Airport. The article extolled Squire's love of airplanes and the camaraderie of the pilots who settled in for a hot lunch at the restaurant. The weekend after the publication of the article, Herb says that 65 airplanes were parked on top of Little Sewell Mountain.

When a reporter from *The Charleston Gazette* came up the mountain to write about the airport in 2000, the staff was prepared for a large crowd after the story was printed. However, the story was printed earlier than expected. Karen says, "We ran out of cheeseburgers, we ran out of coconut cream pie. Everybody who came up there wanted a cheeseburger."

Pilots land at the airport from all over the United States and some from Canada, truly making the airport international. Part of the appeal of the airport might be the attention paid to flying rather than to technical gizmos. The only flight

Downhome and hospitable, the Rainelle Airport and its simple restaurant became a destination among fliers from as far away as Canada, earning the airport its "international" status.

An orange wind sock and a two-way radio are as high-tech as it gets at the Rainelle Airport. Photograph by Loretta Shuck.

instruments are an orange wind sock and a two-way radio. When Squire saw a plane circling the airport, he got on the radio and gave the pilot permission to land.

In his later years, Squire suffered a stroke, which limited his ability to fly. He could still fly, but he required a second pilot in the plane with him. Herb says that he was afraid to ride in a car with Squire driving after he had the stroke, but he would have flown anywhere with Squire at the controls of the plane. "His legs didn't work as well," Herb says, "but he had no problems in the airplane."

While Squire was alive, the airport was open from the first of May through the end of October. In a documentary video by Gary Aide titled *The Biography of Squire Haynes*, Squire and his friends celebrated the end of another flying season in October 2004. Squire was 87 years old. As a pilot was taking off, Squire told him over the radio, "As long as I'm living and doing good, we'll be here the first of May." Squire died April 30, 2005.

"When Squire was sick, I made him two promises," says Herb. "I promised to keep the runway mowed and to check in on Aggie [Squire's sister]." He continues to keep those promises.

Since Squire's death in 2005, the airport has remained open, but with restricted access. The restaurant never reopened. Ralph Williams is handling the sale of the airport property, and he hopes that it will continue to be used as an airport and restaurant. As long as pilots are able to fly and love to talk about flying over a good, home-cooked meal, the Rainelle Airport will have customers.

Herb Shuck of Meadow Bridge, shown here in 2003, promised Squire Haynes he would keep the runway mowed — a promise he keeps to this day. Photograph by Loretta Shuck.

JANET ESTEP was born in Richwood and raised in Rainelle, graduating from Rainelle High School in 1968. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Berea College and a master's degree in educational administration from West Virginia Graduate College. This is Janet's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Pilot Jean Pickering

75 and Still Flying

By Betty Leavengood

Pilot Jean Pickering of Williamstown at the controls of a Piper Cherokee in the 1990's.

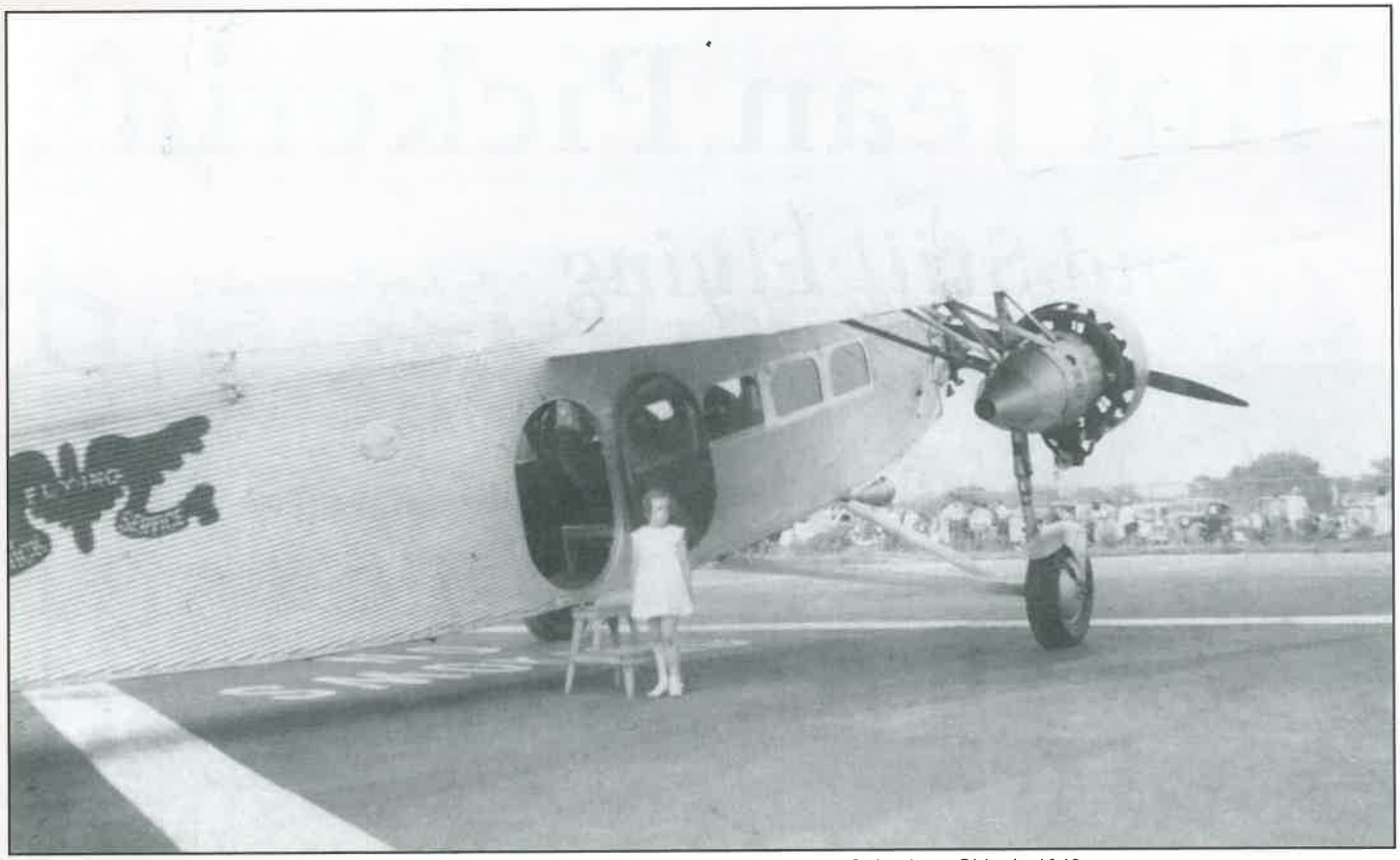
"I've been spoiled," Jean Pickering of Williamstown says. "If I want to go someplace, I get in our Cessna 182 and head for my destination. I never lose my luggage. When I land, I pull onto the ramp, reach in the baggage compartment, pull out my suitcase, and walk into the terminal."

Jean didn't think about learning to fly while she was growing up in this northernmost Wood County town. "I'd never dreamed of becoming a pilot," Jean says, "even though I took my first flight when I was eight years old in a Ford Tri-Motor." Jean graduated from Williamstown High School, then attended West Virginia Wesleyan College in Buckhannon. "I majored in art, English, and home economics," she recalls.

Jean met Charles Pickering, her husband-to-be, while they were in high school. "Charlie, as everyone called him, attended Ohio University," Jean says. "We got married after we both graduated from college. His degree was in business." Charlie joined the army, and the Pickerings spent six weeks in Washington, D.C., and two years in Washington State.

"While we were in Washington State, I used my home economics degree to make clothing and do alterations. Plus I had a minor in library science, so I worked in the army library," Jean says. "That's where I learned I had a flair for sign making that would help me in the future."

When Charlie got out of the army in 1957, the Pickerings moved back to Williamstown. "We bought a house



Eight-year-old Jean Allen prepares to take her first plane ride, aboard a Ford Tri-Motor at Columbus, Ohio, in 1940.

in the same block where I had grown up," Jean says. "I lived in that block for 42 years.

"Charlie always wanted to learn to fly," Jean says. "He took lessons at the Stewart Airport in Parkersburg, and received his license in the mid-'60's. We bought a share of a Piper Cub and later purchased a Piper Tri-Pacer.

"We took the kids flying, and I enjoyed the flights," Jean continues. "I began thinking about getting my own license. Then, if I wanted to go somewhere, I wouldn't have to depend on Charlie to take me. When I went to the doctor to get a medical examination for flying lessons, he said, 'This is ridiculous. Why don't you go home and quit wasting your husband's money?'"

Despite her doctor's negative comments, Jean took lessons at the Wood County Airport near Williamstown and received her private pilot's license (single-engine land certification) in 1971. "When I started flying, there weren't many female pilots," she says. "Men around here accepted me, but they teased my husband a lot with questions like, 'Are you going to let your wife fly your plane?'"

Flying is an expensive hobby. Although her husband's business, Pickering Electric Company, was doing well, Jean wanted to help finance her own flying habit. "I started a sign-painting business, Pickering Sign Company, to help support my hobby," she says. "In the days before vinyl lettering, businesses had to hire someone to paint their name on their vehicles and buildings. I lettered trucks, automobiles, emergency vehicles, and airplanes in addition to [painting] signs and the sides of buildings."

Jean met other women involved in flying by joining the Ninety-Nines in 1975. The Ninety-Nines is a national organization of women pilots, founded on November 2, 1929, at Curtiss Field on Long Island in New York. Among early names suggested for the organization were the Climbing Vines, Noisy Bird Women, and Gadflies. When Amelia Earhart was elected president of the group in 1931, she suggested that the organization be named for the 99 charter members. Today nearly 6,000 women pilots belong to the Ninety-Nines. Jean and her friend and fellow pilot, Barbara Baron, of Wheeling, were among the 20 women who chartered the West Virginia Mountaineer chapter of the Ninety-Nines.

"We held monthly meetings at different airports around the state," Jean says. "We would fly into the airport and have lunch and a program. I remember touring the tower at the Charleston airport as part of one of our meetings.

"One of our West Virginia Mountaineer projects involved painting a 'compass rose' on the taxiway of several area airports," Jean says. "A compass rose is helpful in assuring the accuracy of a compass. The pilot taxies onto the compass rose and checks her compass for accuracy prior to departing the airport." The Mountaineer chapter painted compass roses at the Gallipolis airport in Ohio and at the Pineville, Lewisburg, Charleston, and Wood County airports in West Virginia.

Jean attended conventions of the Ninety-Nines around the United

States. At a convention in Alaska, Jean had the opportunity to add the single-engine sea certifications to her pilot's license. "I learned to fly on floats on the lakes around Anchorage. None of the lakes are very deep, and many had moose standing around the shoreline feeding," she says.

It was through the Ninety-Nines that Jean and Barbara became interested in the 1976 all-female Powder Puff Derby, officially known as the All-Women's Transcontinental Air Race. The 1976 Powder Puff Derby started at Sacramento, California, and ended at Wilmington, Delaware. "At that time, I was a Cub Scout den mother, a Girl Scout leader, church choir member, and the mother of four children," Jean says, "but entering that race became my dream. I kept thinking that it would be a wonderful way to see the United States in the bicentennial year.

"Barbara and I began making plans to enter the 1976 Powder Puff Derby," Jean says. "There was some controversy surrounding the race when several men filed lawsuits to participate. They were unsuccessful, and the 1976 Powder Puff Derby remained an all-female race. It was announced that this would be the last Powder Puff Derby."

Jean and Barbara flew a friend's Bellanca Decathlon. "The Bellanca Decathlon had a front seat and a back seat and was a fully aerobatic airplane," Jean explains. "Aerobatic means that the plane can withstand positive and negative 'G's' [gravity]. Rides at amusement parks have positive and negative 'G's'," she adds.

"By the time we arrived, everyone was delighted to see us safe and sound."

Jean and Barbara flew to Sacramento, California, for the start of the race. "There were nearly 400 women pilots vying for a chance to win the final Powder Puff Derby," Jean says. "Teams wore matching outfits, and Barbara and I wore bright red jackets trimmed in white, with navy blue skirts and white blouses.

"Our first stop was in Fresno, California, where we experienced brake problems," Jean recalls. "We had them fixed and continued that day to Riverside, California. Our next stop was at the Grand Canyon Airport in Arizona. We took off at dawn the following day and had magnificent views of the canyon."

The race continued with stops in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Lubbock, Texas; Little Rock, Arkansas; Nashville, Tennes-

Pilots Barbara Baron, left, and Jean Pickering during the pair's coast-to-coast flight as part of the 1976 Powder Puff Derby. The plane is a Bellanca Decathlon. "Entering that race became my dream," Jean says.

see; and Parkersburg.

"We looked forward to the Parkersburg stop," Jean says. "There was an incident the day before we arrived. Two of the racers ran out of fuel and landed rather unsuccessfully on a golf course in South Parkersburg. This drew much attention, none of it favorable, to the racers. [The women] were laid up here for several weeks with broken limbs. By the time we arrived, everyone was delighted to see us all safe and sound."

The race terminus was Wilmington, Delaware. "We didn't win the race, but our challenge was to finish the race safely and enjoy the flight, which we accomplished," Jean says.

As the only female pilot in the Williamstown area in the 1970's, Jean was often asked to talk to organizations about her experiences. "I developed a slide presentation I titled, 'God's-Eye View,' to acquaint people with flying," she says. She also continued adding to her certifications. In addition to single-engine land and single-engine sea, Jean now has the following certifications: instrument, commercial, multi-engine, flight instructor, and instrument instructor.

Flying is one of the great pleasures in Jean's life. Whether it's going with friends to a quilt show or a quick flight with Charlie to their favorite restaurant for dinner, she enjoys it.

"I taught flying at Rambar Aviation at Wood County Airport for 13 years," Jean says. "In addition to my male students, I taught seven women to fly. They came to me because they felt comfortable with me," she explains. "Once, I was teaching a man to fly, and his wife found out that he would be sitting beside me. She told him that he couldn't continue lessons with me, and he had to get a male instructor."

Jean continues to do freelance instructing. "Currently, I am working with a high school student," she says. "You can get your pilot's license at age 17 and can solo at 16. Twenty hours of solo flight and 20 hours of dual are required to get a pilot's license. Glider pilots can get their license at age 14."

A member of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 915, located at the Wood County Airport, Jean encourages exposing young people to flying. "Once a year, we have a Young Eagles Day at the airport," she says, "and we take kids from the age of nine to 18 for rides." She adds that when her scout troops held fundraisers, she would donate a plane ride as one of the prizes. "Most winners would go with me on the flight," she says.

In 1977, Jean and her husband purchased a 146-acre farm across the Ohio River from Williamstown near Lowell, Ohio, with enough level land to have an airstrip. "We called

Charlie and Jean Pickering, today, with the family's Cessna 182 and dog Poncho.

it Checkpoint Charlie," Jean says. "I taught our sons Charles "Chip," Mike, and David how to fly at Checkpoint Charlie. Our daughter, Beverly, married a ComAir pilot, who flies out of Cincinnati. I can honestly say that all my children are interested in planes and flying."

Now that Charlie has retired, he devotes more time to his hobby of restoring planes. "He always took care of the mechanical side of our planes," Jean says, "so I never had that worry. I have helped him occasionally with a restoration project."

Charlie found a 1941 L2M Liaison Taylorcraft in a barn in Pennsylvania. "This was a spotter plane that flew over enemy lines in the days before helicopters," Jean explains. "Early planes, starting with the Wright brothers' plane, had a linen-like fabric stretched across their wings to help with the lift of the plane. The fabric on the L2M was badly damaged and had to be restitched. I did that part of the restoration." Charlie completed the restoration by spraying the fabric several times with aircraft dope, a type of paint used to tighten and seal the fabric, and sanding the wing surfaces.

Jean also finds time to devote to her more earthbound hobby, quilting. "I made my first quilt in 1968," she says, "and am currently in the planning stages for a compass rose quilt. It's called a Mariner's Compass, in quilting circles." Jean and her fellow quilter, Effie Townsend, attend quilt shows across the United States. "We fly, and sometimes we let our husbands go along," she says with a laugh.

Flying is one of the great pleasures of Jean's life. Whether it's going with friends to a quilt show or a quick flight with Charlie to their favorite restaurant for dinner, she enjoys it.

"There is no age limit to flying," Jean says. "As long as you can pass the medical examination, you can keep flying. Before age 70, you have to take the examination every two years. After age 70, a medical exam is required every year."

Jean has logged 6,000 hours of flying time. "My logbook is like a diary of the memorable flight experiences," she says. "Flying has truly been one of the highlights of my life. I've shared this with my husband and my kids, with pilots that I've taught to fly, and especially other women who I've taught to fly. The excitement for me is never ending. I can truthfully say I've enjoyed all the years of flying. I'll be 75 this summer and hope to continue flying as long as my health will allow."

BETTY LEAVENGOOD is a Parkersburg native. 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. Returning to the Parkersburg area in 2000, she wrote a pictorial history of Wood County. Her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2007 issue.

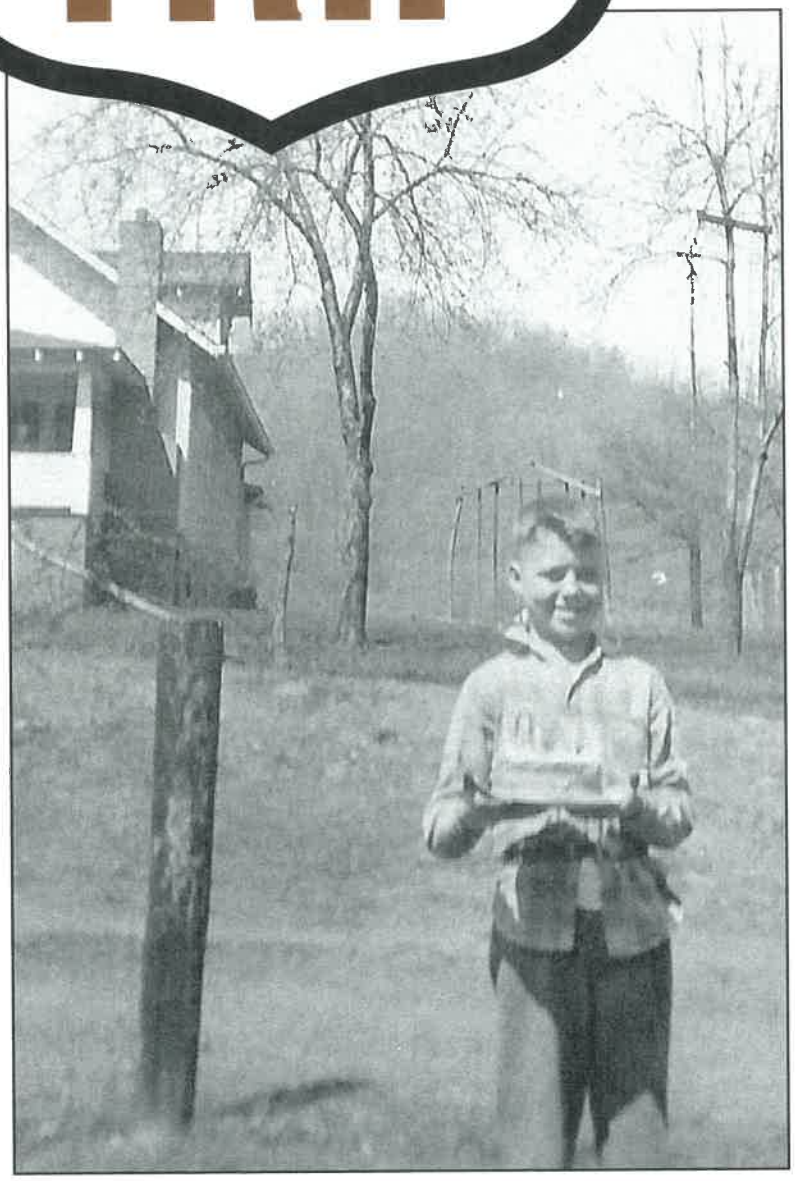
Jean and Charlie Pickering, 1976.

ROAD TRIP

An Eye-Opening Journey to Pocahontas County in 1947

By David H. Halsey

It was mid-May 1947, and my entire family and a few of our Pierpoint neighbors were mingling on a small knoll just below a spot where the railroad had taken a slice from the mountainside to form a cut, creating high banks on both sides. That knoll was the best vantage point from where we could see the road clearly through the trees as it came off Pierpoint Mountain, located in eastern Wyoming County.



Author David H. Halsey at age 12, with his birthday cake, in 1947.

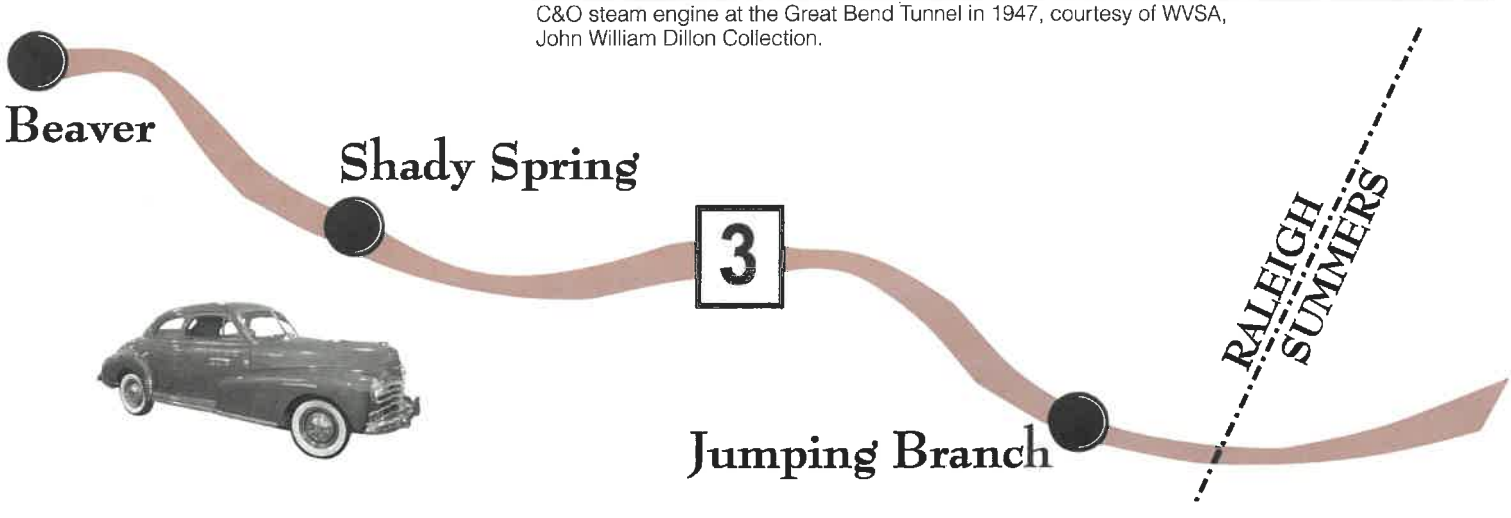
parallel to one another. The C&O lost the race, and the State Highway people used that right-of-way, with all the improvements, to construct a road.

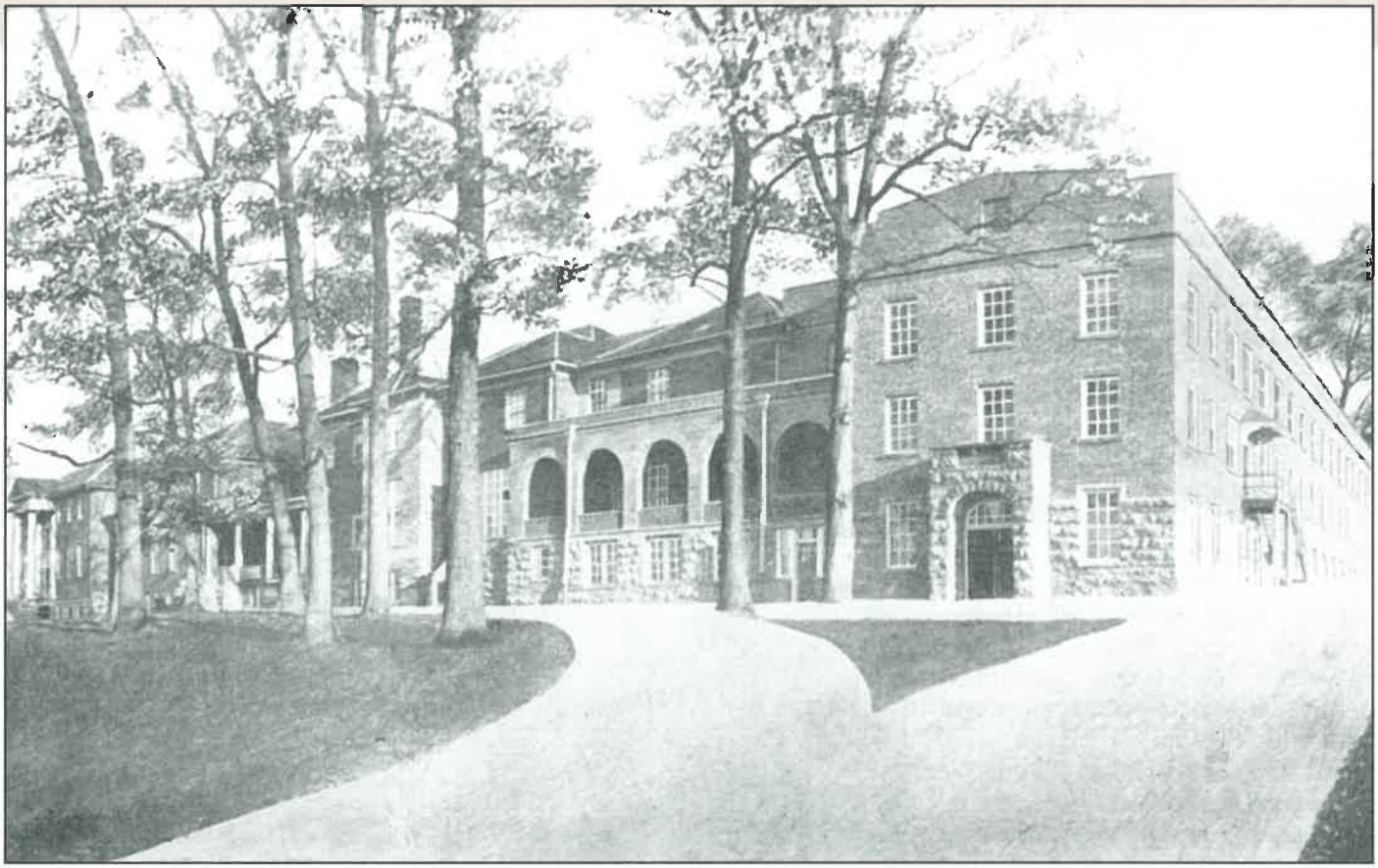
We followed that route to near Beckley, where we picked up State Route 3, which took us to Hinton. As we passed the southern edge of Beckley near the vocational school complex, we found our first "POI" (point of interest), a Dairy Queen. What a treat! We had never seen one before. That stop was anticipated on most of our future trips, including the return trips home.

As we progressed toward a hamlet called Shady Spring, we discovered our second POI, a fruit-and-vegetable stand. It was located just before starting down the longest and straightest hill that we had ever seen, bypassing a town called Beaver. We stopped at that fruit-and-vegetable stand during every trip, and Dad bought the ripest bananas, since they were the cheapest. That was our very first taste of a banana.

Our next POI was the Beckley water supply lake, near Beaver. Years later, as we rummaged through Mom and Dad's old photos, we found evidence of several "Kodak moments" enjoyed at the lake. On that first journey to Pocahontas County, we imagined that the Greenbrier River must be a large body of water similar to that lake. When we first saw the river, Mom took out the camera

C&O steam engine at the Great Bend Tunnel in 1947, courtesy of WVSA, John William Dillon Collection.





Postcard view of Greenbrier Military School main building in Lewisburg, courtesy of WVSA.

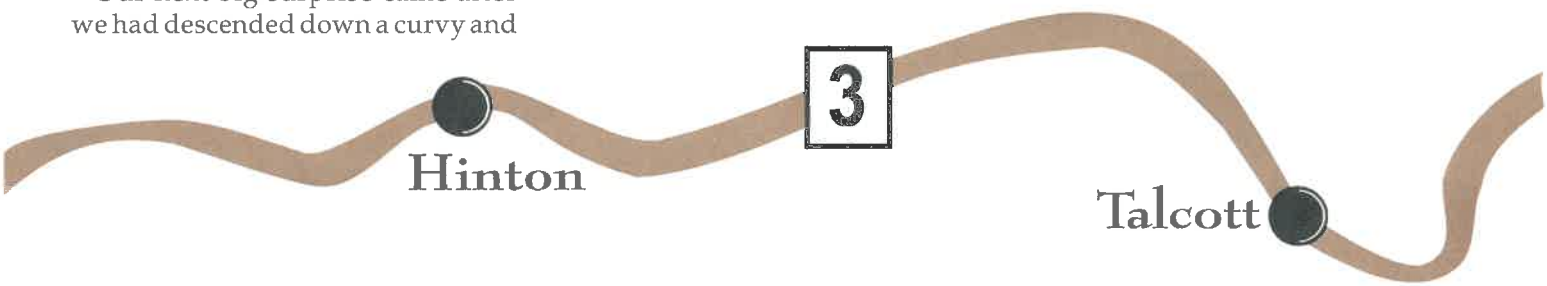
and snapped a photo. I remember seeing the "no swimming," "no fishing," and "no trash" signs located just inside a fence made of a cable stretched through holes in three-foot-high posts. We then loaded back into the car in anticipation of what lay ahead.

We passed through a "wide spot in the road" called Jumping Branch. Its only identification was a small roadside sign, indicating that the town was unincorporated. We came upon a huge white bull that had a hump on its neck. Later, we learned that it was called a Brahman bull and that its ancestors were from India. It was an awesome animal. Our world was expanding faster than we could imagine.

Our next big surprise came after we had descended down a curvy and steep road off White Oak Mountain into the railroad town of Hinton. There we got our first glimpse of the New River. At this point in our young lives, we thought that everything we saw was either the biggest or tallest thing in the world. As we crossed the New and continued following State Route 3, we quickly came upon the confluence of the Greenbrier River with the New. The route from Hinton continues its snake-like trail eastward, running adjacent to the Greenbrier River. Along this stretch, there were a few miles of fishing camps and homes with easy access to the river.

Finally, we crossed the river, left the Greenbrier Valley, and traveled onto another historic site called Talcott, the home of the Great Bend Tunnel made famous by John Henry. Of course, we all had sung the "John Henry" song about his fatal competition in 1870 with the steam-driven pile driver. As we continued down the hill into Talcott, I remember all of us looking back toward the two railroad tunnels that disappeared into the mountain that we had just crossed. It took a trip or two and some research and deduction before we were sure which of the two tunnels was the one in which John Henry had lost his life.

By now we had made our way back into the Greenbrier Valley as we came upon another famous small settlement called Pence Springs. We knew about that place and were awed

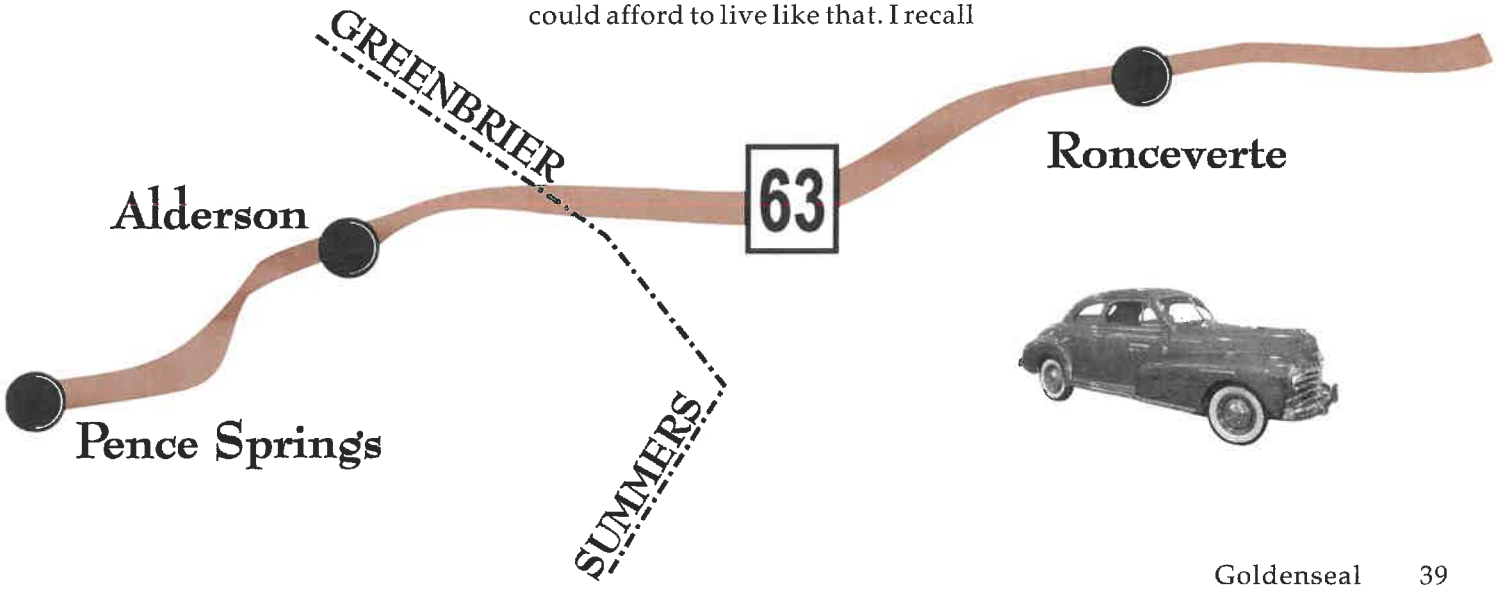


Entrance to the Droop Mountain Battlefield in 1936. Photograph by Frank Wilkin, courtesy of WVSA, Frank Wilkin Collection.

by being so close to the locations of both the state and federal prisons for women. The state prison was on our side of the river, and the federal was located a few miles across the way on the other side of the river. I'm not sure if Tokyo Rose was an inmate at the federal prison at the time we made our first journey in the summer of 1947, but we knew for sure that she was scheduled to take up residency. All of a sudden our world had gone global!

By that time, we were about halfway to Pocahontas County. Each new view was more interesting than the one before. The drive along the Greenbrier River into Alderson was spectacular as we passed all those magnificent homes that were positioned to have a river view. We had never before viewed such beautiful home sites. We wondered aloud who could afford to live like that. I recall wondering why the Summers and Monroe counties' boundary marker was located in the middle of the bridge that connected Alderson's small business section and federal prison with the residential part of Alderson.

We soon left Route 3 and took Route 63 toward Ronceverte. As we approached the town of Ronceverte, which is French for "Greenbrier," two huge smokestacks came into

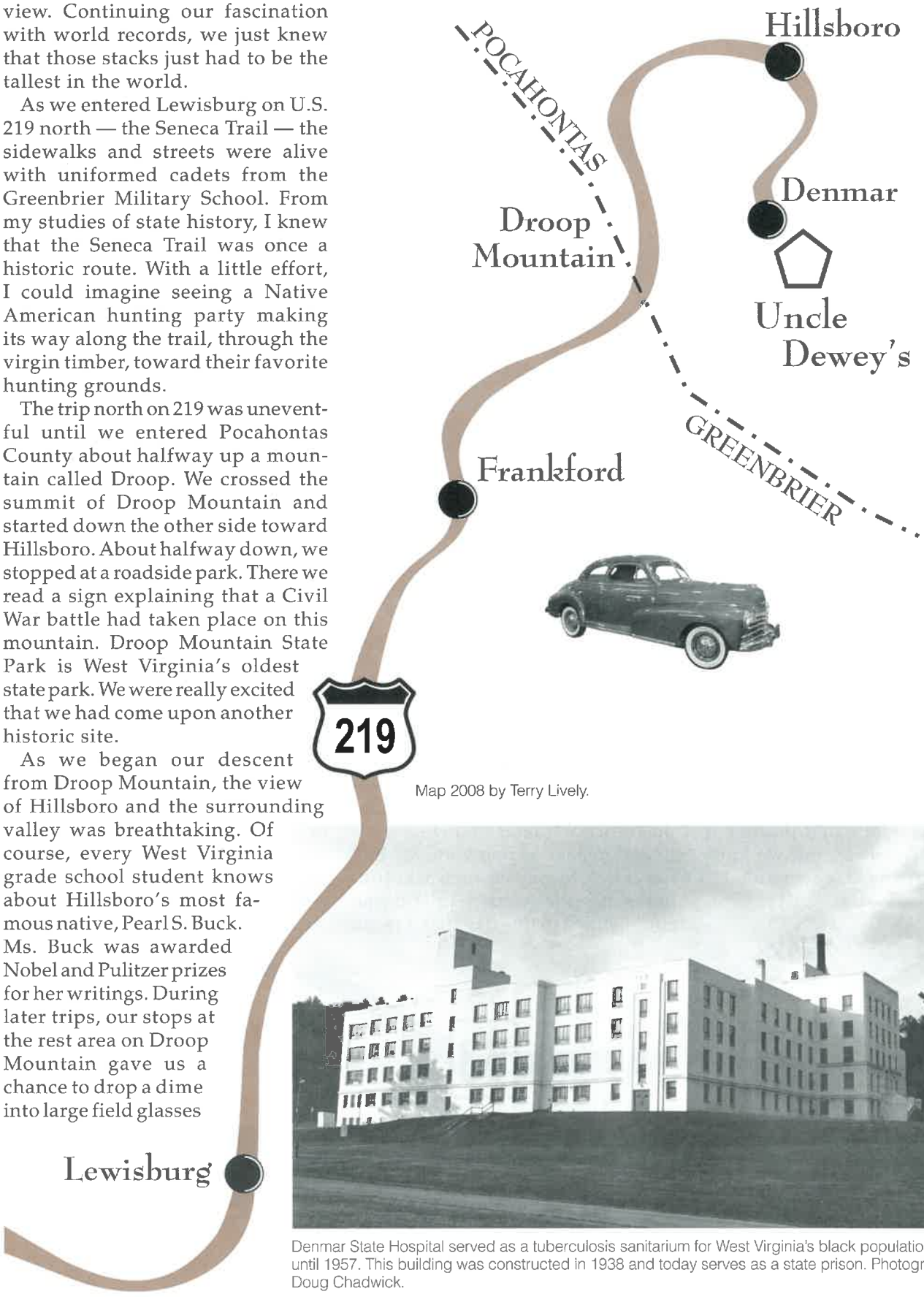


view. Continuing our fascination with world records, we just knew that those stacks just had to be the tallest in the world.

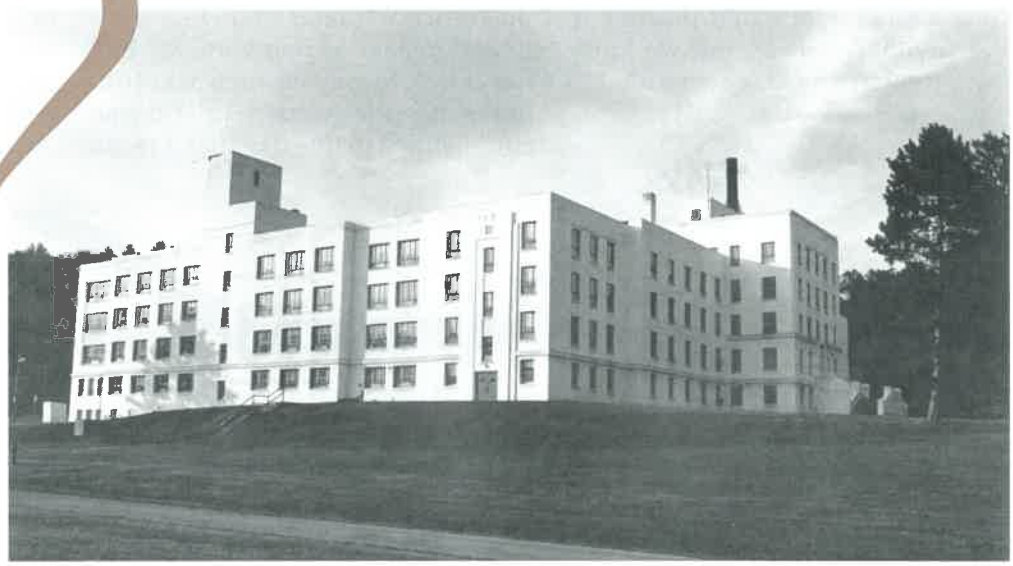
As we entered Lewisburg on U.S. 219 north — the Seneca Trail — the sidewalks and streets were alive with uniformed cadets from the Greenbrier Military School. From my studies of state history, I knew that the Seneca Trail was once a historic route. With a little effort, I could imagine seeing a Native American hunting party making its way along the trail, through the virgin timber, toward their favorite hunting grounds.

The trip north on 219 was uneventful until we entered Pocahontas County about halfway up a mountain called Droop. We crossed the summit of Droop Mountain and started down the other side toward Hillsboro. About halfway down, we stopped at a roadside park. There we read a sign explaining that a Civil War battle had taken place on this mountain. Droop Mountain State Park is West Virginia's oldest state park. We were really excited that we had come upon another historic site.

As we began our descent from Droop Mountain, the view of Hillsboro and the surrounding valley was breathtaking. Of course, every West Virginia grade school student knows about Hillsboro's most famous native, Pearl S. Buck. Ms. Buck was awarded Nobel and Pulitzer prizes for her writings. During later trips, our stops at the rest area on Droop Mountain gave us a chance to drop a dime into large field glasses



Map 2008 by Terry Lively.



Denmar State Hospital served as a tuberculosis sanitarium for West Virginia's black population from 1919 until 1957. This building was constructed in 1938 and today serves as a state prison. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

for a spectacular view of the valley and Hillsboro in the distance. At that point on our first trip, we were all excited because the journey was almost over. By that time, we had been on the road for a little more than three hours. However, no one was complaining. We were all wide-eyed and alert as we had quickly changed from tourists to excited children anticipating the visit to Uncle Dewey's.

At Hillsboro we took a narrow, winding country road toward the Greenbrier River to a settlement called Denmar, about six miles from Hillsboro. That section of the trip was uneventful other than two hairpin curves, many groundhogs sunning in the fields, and acres of farmland.

As we made our first trip through Denmar, we went down a hill toward the C&O railroad tracks that ran along the Greenbrier River. We came upon the largest barn that I could have imagined. It was located on the river side of the tracks. Uncle Dewey's homestead was located across the Greenbrier River from the Denmar tuberculosis sanitarium.

The things we saw and experiences we had on that first of many trips to Uncle Dewey's in Pocahontas County are some of the best memories I have.

The sanitarium housed black TB patients from West Virginia during the time of segregation. That was our next POI. It was a huge, white, multilevel structure, which quickly came into view as we rounded our last curve. It was the largest building that I had ever seen. The black trustees/prisoners worked the farm, which provided meat and vegetables for the sanitarium. We were taking it all in as we passed by.

We parked our car at a site near the barn, collected our sacks of clothes, and started walking up the tracks towards Uncle Dewey's, which was located on the other side of the river. The farm had the river on one side with Watoga State Park and a creek called Laurel Run on the other side. Laurel Run was full of trout and was guarded by timber and diamondback rattlesnakes.

Mom had written Uncle Dewey a letter to inform them on what day to expect us. Upon our arrival, we kids hollered and Dad whistled to get someone's attention at the farm. Announcing our arrival was never a difficult chore since they were expecting us and our cousins were on the lookout. Eventually someone poled a boat across the river to fetch us.

The things we saw and experiences we had on that first of many trips to Uncle Dewey's in Pocahontas County are some of the best memories I have. My life was changed completely when I realized that there was so much to see and learn outside my 15-mile-wide world that existed prior to that trip in 1947.

Our author's parents, Ralph and Omeda Halsey, at about the time of this story. Following their first, eye-opening journey, the Halsey family made many such trips from Pierpoint, Wyoming County, to Denmar, Pocahontas County, to visit Omeda's older brother, Dewey Cook, and his family.

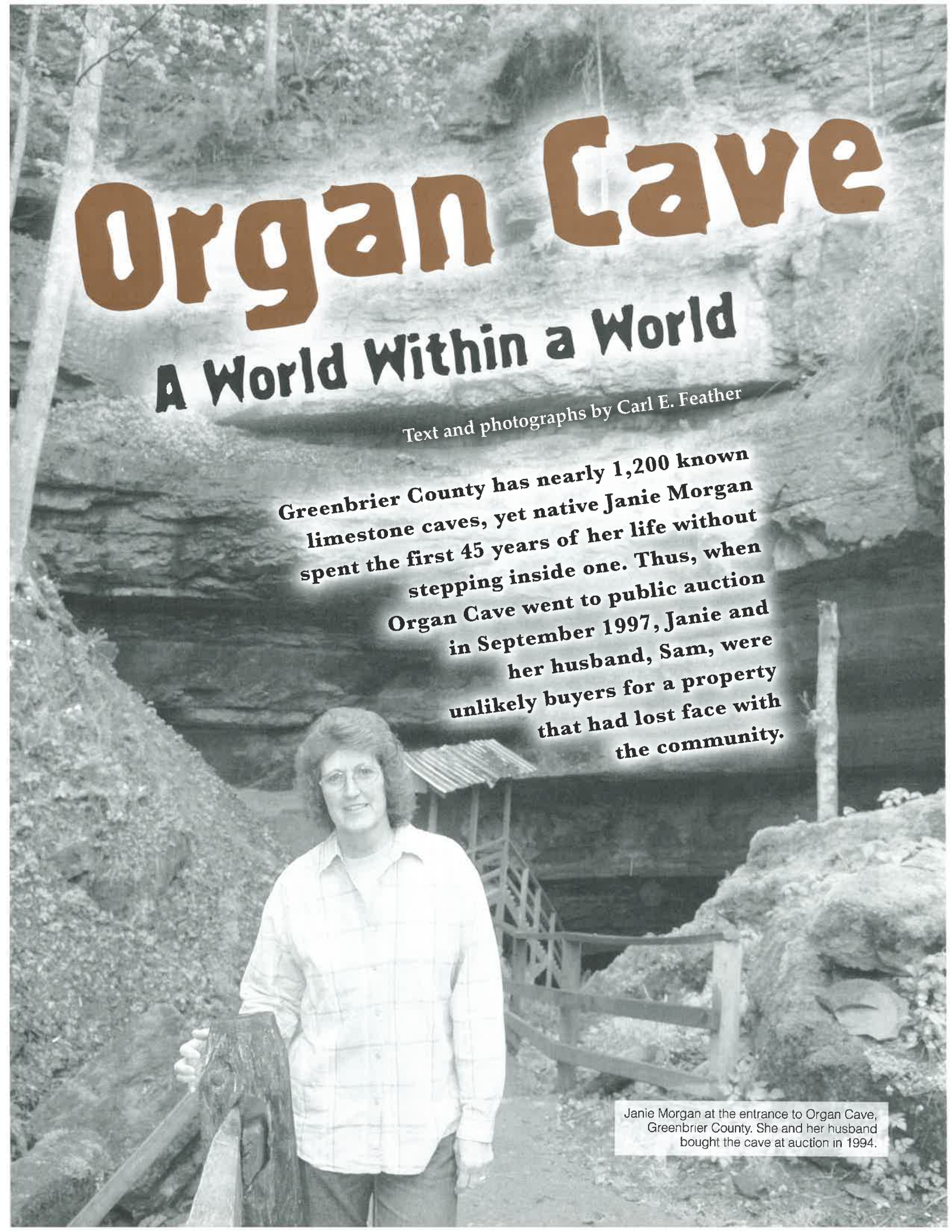
DAVID H. HALSEY was born in Pierpoint in 1935 and grew up in Otsego, both in Wyoming County. A graduate of Mullens High School, he earned a degree in engineering from Marshall University. He is a retired colonel from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, now living in Woodstock, Virginia. David's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2000 issue.

Organ Cave

A World Within a World

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather

Greenbrier County has nearly 1,200 known limestone caves, yet native Janie Morgan spent the first 45 years of her life without stepping inside one. Thus, when Organ Cave went to public auction in September 1997, Janie and her husband, Sam, were unlikely buyers for a property that had lost face with the community.



Janie Morgan at the entrance to Organ Cave, Greenbrier County. She and her husband bought the cave at auction in 1994.

"When the cave came up for sale, we started asking people in the community about it, and they laughed at us," says Janie. "The cave had never been kept up as far as the buildings or anything. It was in a pretty sorry state."

Janie says the stairs that descend 100 feet to the mouth of the cave were rickety and dangerous; the cave itself had become a repository for refuse. Things were in sad shape above ground, as well. A dilapidated house trailer served as the gift shop, and a gutted trailer housed the restrooms, which lacked sufficient water flow to flush the toilets.

"There wasn't a whole lot of interest in it," she says. "At the auction, there were an undertaker, a retired man, and a lot of cavers who'd pooled their money to buy it."

Sam reminded Janie that livestock, not bats and stalagmites, were their forte. Nevertheless, the price of livestock was tumbling, and the couple needed another revenue stream. Further, Janie had been dealing with a serious medical condition, and owning a commercial cave seemed a good fresh start for her life. When the bidding was done, Sam and Janie were the new owners of Organ Cave.

"We are livestock dealers, so we are used to purchasing things on the spur of the moment," Janie says, sitting in the log cabin-style gift shop she and Sam erected shortly after buying the property. "I didn't walk through it until after I purchased it. I knew of its history, and I did not want to see it destroyed. I did not want to see someone buy it and close it off."

Sam, who suffers from osteoporosis and can't tolerate the cave's dank environment, gave Janie free rein of the cave. More than a decade after taking her first walk through it, Janie speaks of Organ Cave as a living organism, a fascinating world within a world where she can escape the cares of life above ground and, ironically, grow closer to God.

Courtesy of the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

"When you are underground, you forget about this world up here. It's rather amazing," she says. "There are only two places remaining on this Earth that we have not completely explored: our oceans and our caves."

Spelunkers began mapping Organ Cave's myriad passages in 1948. The various maps created through the subterranean journeys of approximately 400 men and women have been combined and reconciled to document about 45 miles of passages. However, there are at least 200 unmapped leads.

"We don't know how large the cave is, and it is doubtful it will ever be known," says Janie, who has done her fair share of exploration. "You could probably spend the rest of your lifetime exploring it, and I don't think you could ever accomplish it all in your lifetime."

The second-largest commercial cave east of the Mississippi, Organ Cave gets its name from a massive calcite formation that resembles an auditorium-size pipe organ, about 40 feet tall. The formation is about ½ mile from the entrance and toward the end of the commercial segment of the tour. At one time, in an era before West Virginia's strict cave laws prohibited misuse of these treasures, the formation was actually played with a rubber mallet — the various "pipes" produced different tones when struck.

There are accounts of at least two wedding ceremonies held in front of this organ in the last century. In the early 1900's, the organ was pure white in color, much like the "Christmas tree" calcite formation nearby. However, it is suspected that repeated contamination from human touch and natural sources resulted in its color change to a tan.

Janie says that to the best of her knowledge, music was last coaxed from the cave's namesake formation in 1976, when a woman tapped out "Silent Night" on its ancient deposits.

That kind of trivia is an example of the information that residents and

Owner Janie Morgan discusses items on display in a lit showcase with visitor Barbara Feather.

cavers have shared with the Morgans since they purchased the site. Janie keeps a scrapbook of articles about the cave. A showcase contains artifacts people have donated to the Morgans, as well as items they retrieved from the cave during the process of restoring it.

According to Janie's research, European pioneers first became aware of the cave in 1704, although the discovery of cryptic "Irish Monk" symbols on rocks in the cave suggests a European visitation prior to Columbus' arrival in the New World. Harvard biologist Barry Fell attributed a similar petroglyph on a Wyoming County rock wall to Irish monks who came to America between the 6th and 8th centuries; most archeologists, however, attribute the markings to Native Americans.

Janie says Organ Cave's walls and ceilings have deposits of nodule chert, a fossilized coral also known as flint. There is evidence the cave provided Neolithic Native Americans with a source of this material for arrowheads, knives, and fire-producing tools. These crude but effective artifacts have been found in the cave and around the grounds surrounding it. Petroglyphs of an unknown origin have also been discovered on walls and ceilings in the cave.

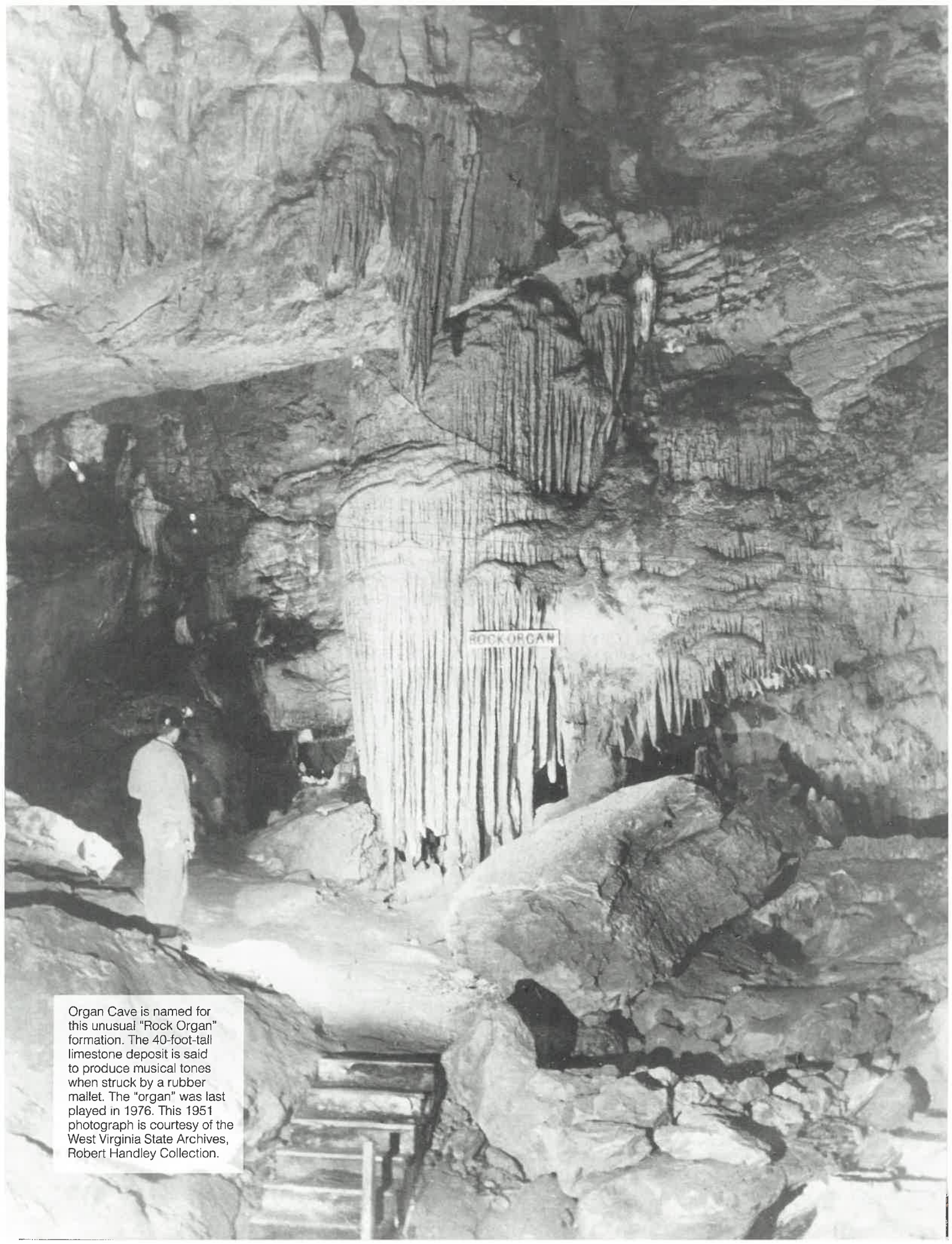
In the late 1700's, the bones of a giant, three-toed sloth were found in a cave in this region, thought by some to be Organ Cave. Thomas Jefferson became aware of this discovery and made a written record of finding fossil remains of a prehistoric animal in a limestone cave on "Frederic Cromer's place beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains on the west side of the Greenbrier River." Unfortunately, Jefferson's compass must have been absent or malfunctioning, for the cave is very much to the east. *[The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey places the find at Haynes Cave in Monroe County. —ed.]*

Jefferson presented these bones to the Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. In 1799, Casper Wistar described the bones as those of an extinct ground sloth and named this creature *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, in honor of the third president.

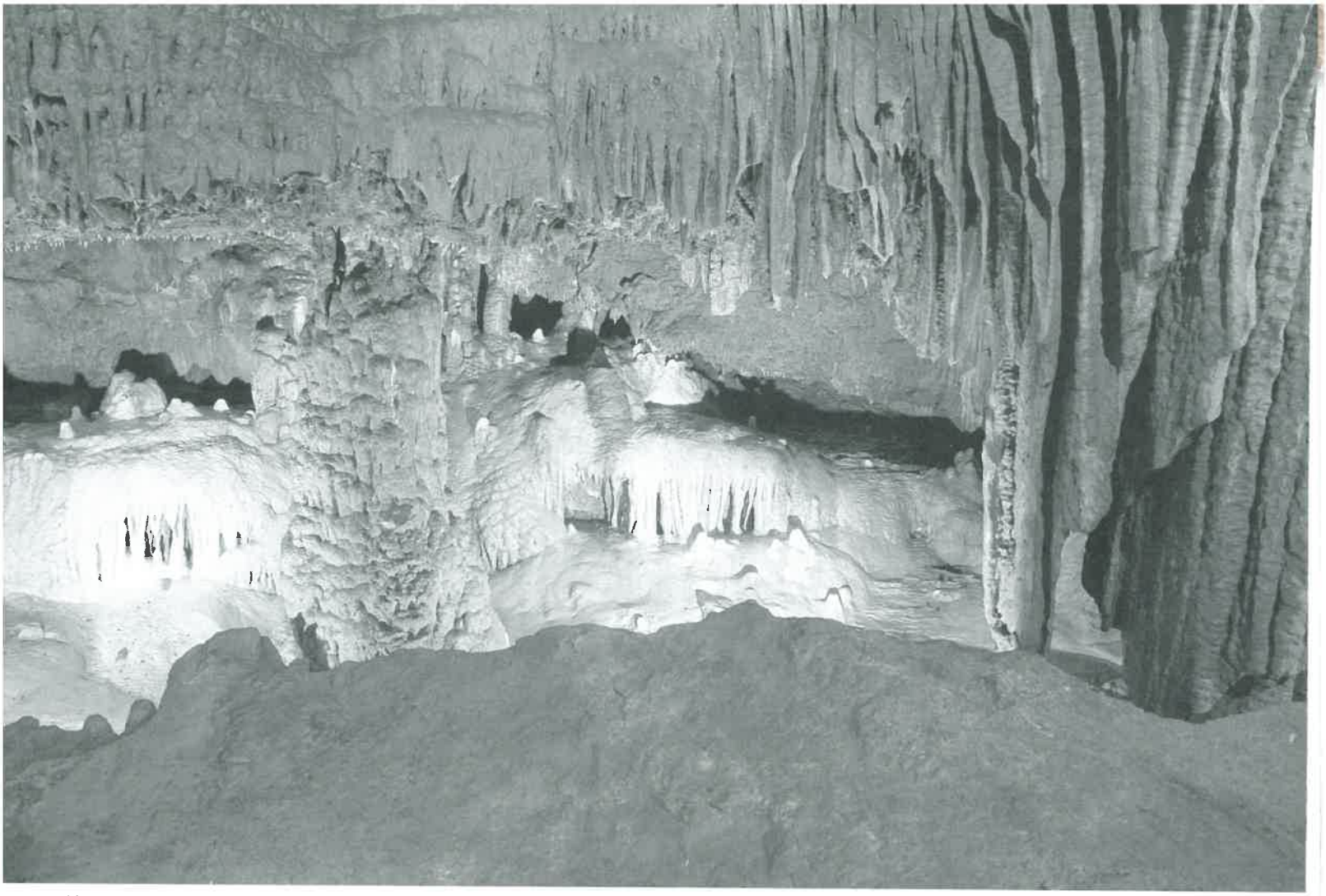
"It turns out, Thomas Jefferson was our nation's first paleontologist," says Janie, who has obtained copies of the written documentation that appears to support Jefferson's association with Organ Cave and recovery of the bones. "At first, they didn't know what it was. They thought it was a giant lion or an elephant."

The sloth was the first found on the North American continent and is, to date, the largest to be uncovered in the United States. On March 8, 2008, the West Virginia State Legislature designated *Megalonyx jeffersonii* as the official state fossil. [See "Current

Items recovered from the cave, such as these, provide evidence of Native Americans, dating back thousands of years.



Organ Cave is named for this unusual "Rock Organ" formation. The 40-foot-tall limestone deposit is said to produce musical tones when struck by a rubber mallet. The "organ" was last played in 1976. This 1951 photograph is courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Robert Handley Collection.



Vast and mysterious, Organ Cave is the second-longest cave system east of the Mississippi River. Owner Janie Morgan believes the cave dates back to the time of Noah's flood.

the growth of light-loving algae. Kerosene lanterns were chosen as receptacles for much of the lighting to fit the cave's Civil War heritage.

"We decided we wanted it to look like it was stepping back to the 1800's," Janie says.

The cave is open for commercial tours throughout the year — the interior temperature varies by only four degrees summer to winter. The commercial tour covers 2.2 miles and is led by Janie or one of several guides, who must learn 11 pages of cave history and trivia before leading a group. David Hall, a guide from Union, Monroe County, says guides must also be able to find their way out of any section of the commercial tour in total darkness in the event of a power failure.

Experienced guides also lead extended expeditions into sections that require crawling, climbing, and the use of basic caving gear. The expeditions include the Waterfall Room, which has three waterfalls that drop 90 feet, and the Mini-Cliff Hanger, which involves boulder climbing in areas with steep drops.

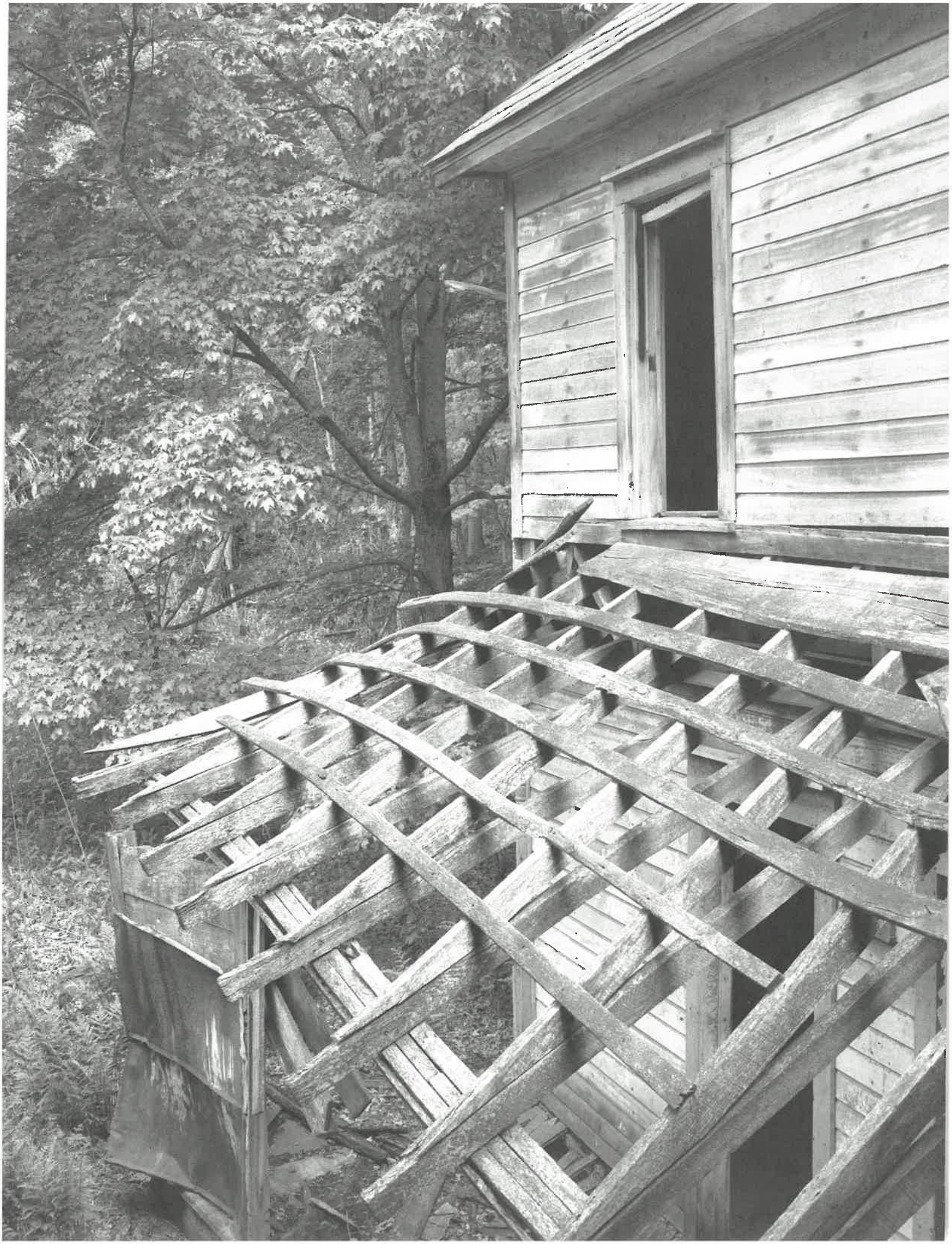
Janie says the cave continues to yield artifacts to its serious explorers. In the 1950's, caribou teeth were found there, and in the spring of 2000, a caribou antler was discovered by spelunker Robert Godshall. A wooden ladle dating to saltpeter production during the War of 1812 was recently found.

In an average year, the cave hosts several thousand commercial tour visitors and hundreds of extended-tour explorers. The passion some of these spelunkers feel for the place is remarkable. On the tour, the guides point out the initials "RHH" inscribed in a rock 50 feet above the floor. Robert Handley crawled through a tiny hole in the ceiling to leave his mark there. Bud Rutherford, a Charleston resident who did much of the mapping of the cave, loved it so much he asked to be interred therein. In 1999, his ashes were scattered in accordance with his wishes.

The cave also attracts scientists who come to study the geology, biology, archeology, paleontology, and ecology of this environment. For example, the cave has nine species of bats, three endangered, two rare.

Janie says a group of scientists and cavers took her and Sam out to dinner shortly after they purchased the cave so they could discover the new owners' intentions.

"They were afraid of what we planned to do with it," she says. "They offered their expertise, and I took them up on it. They took me through the cave and showed me things, pointed things out to me.



I found out that the world down under is a completely other world and fascinating at that."

Although Janie is knowledgeable of the scientific explanation of how limestone caves were formed during the Mississippian Era, she takes a different view of their age and the mechanism by which they were created.

"Everything in the cave points to Noah's flood," says Janie, who believes the Earth is no older than 10,000 years. "I've been laughed at and called one of those weird ones. I said, 'That's fine. We all have a way to walk and a way to go, and the Lord and his Word are my ways.'"

Janie has worked tirelessly to get the cave the recognition it deserves. In 1973, the Organ Cave System was declared a National Natural Landmark. In 2005, Organ Cave was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Janie continues to work to get it designated a National Historic Landmark. The Morgans have no plans of doing anything to the cave that would jeopardize these cherished designations.

"If you want to see history and you want to see a real cave, it is here," Janie says. "You can't deny it. It speaks for itself."

Organ Cave, located in Ronceverte on Route 63 between routes 60 and 219, is open daily for the commercial, 90-minute walking tour. Hours vary by season and day of the week. For current hours and information on extended tours, visit www.organcave.com or call (304)645-7600.

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.

Janie Morgan is proud to promote and preserve Organ Cave. It is designated a National Natural Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Shadows OF THE PAST

Photoessay by Marty Olsen

Photography gives me an opportunity to tramp around hillsides, use brain areas that I frequently disregard, and celebrate the lives of those who came before me. When I take pictures of an old building, I consider the people who constructed it and lived their lives in its shadows. Each building was once new, a source of pride to its owners and builders. For some buildings, my pictures are a last chance to tell the stories of farm families who grew up around them. Now many of the structures are decomposing, returning to the hills that provided the materials from which they were made. There is a wistful feeling around a building in decay, but there is also symmetry, as old boards go back to the soil and rock foundations turn into homes for chipmunks. The buildings are markers of a people in harmony with their place.

On my mother's side, I can trace my family back to the time land was cleared in Lewis and Gilmer counties. Family stories, handed down for generations, tell of huge trees rolled into piles and burned to make farmland out of forest. I was born in Morgantown, but my family moved several times during my childhood. My grandparents, Delbert and Mavis Cole, continued to live on the farm where my mother grew up. Throughout my childhood, this farm was constant, a stabilizing locale where I was always welcome.

As an adult, I have returned to my Appalachian roots and am now an obstetrician at East Tennessee State University. The pressures of medical and academic life can be extensive, but I have found this family farm to be a remarkable place to calm stressed nerves. I visit the Cole farm in Gilmer County three or four times a year and contemplate the things in life that are most important to me: family, parenthood, making a difference, the community of those who came before me, and those who will follow. This refocusing helps me become a better human being.

The Cole farm was the life work of Delbert and Mavis Cole. Portions of the farm were willed or given to them by their parents, and they purchased additional acres over time. During the last quarter-century, much of the farm has deteriorated from the pristine agricultural landscape of my grandfather's era, but recent efforts have begun to recover it. Today, black Angus cattle roam the hills where my grandfather once raised red Herefords.

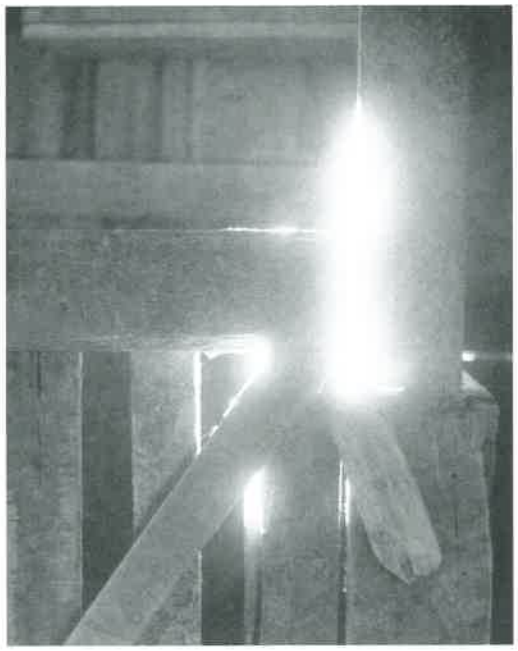
In the last years of my grandmother's life, I spent some time during every visit listening to stories of her life and the lives of those who had been a part of her community. After her death in 2002, I took up photography more seriously. One of my first projects was to document the farm where she lived more than 60 years of her life. Later, cousins welcomed me to the Smoke Camp farm, where she had been born in Lewis County. Pictures from these two farms comprise the photographs in this article. While today we have many advantages that Mavis Cole did not experience, many of us do not regularly encounter the same joys she celebrated. There is much to be learned from our rural ancestors. These pictures celebrate the lives of the people who lived on these sites.

My grandmother described her life as follows: "My farm life was a good life, living around growing things, being close to God."

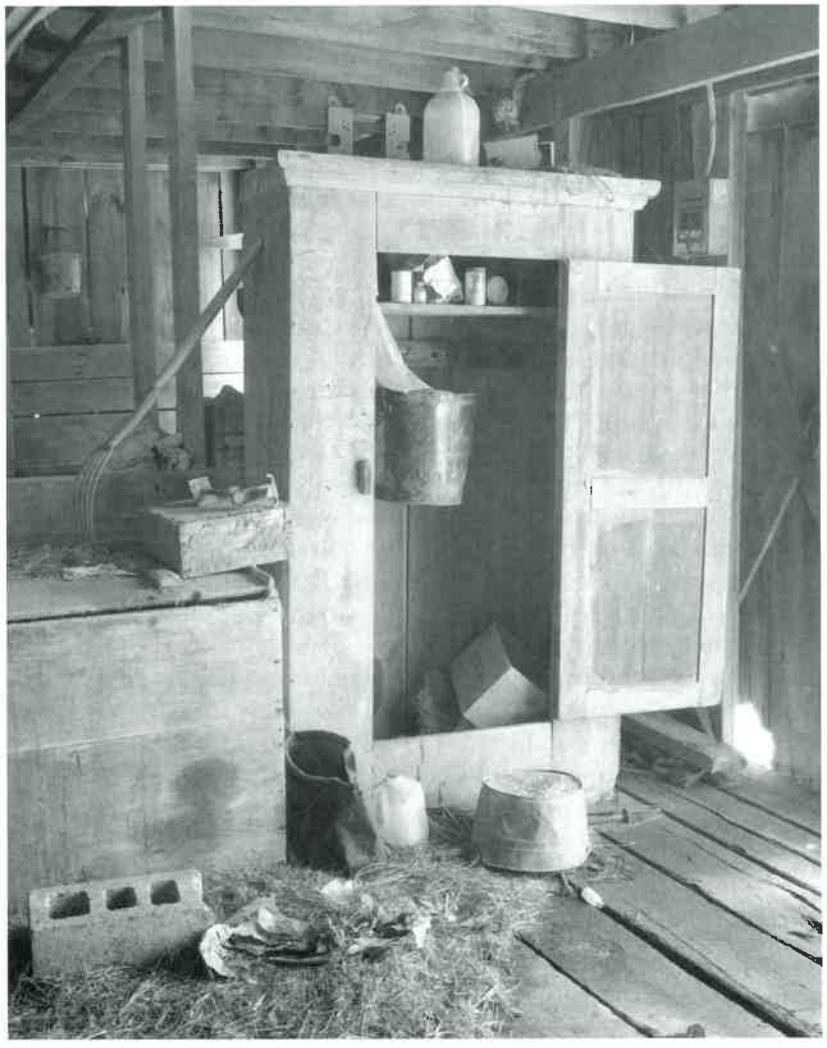
MARTY OLSEN was born in Morgantown. In 1981, he earned a bachelor's degree from Muskingum College in Ohio, receiving his M.D. from the Medical College of Ohio in 1985. He now works as an obstetrician in Johnson City, Tennessee. A self-taught photographer, his photos can be viewed on-line at www.martyophoto.com. This is Marty's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Left page: Upstairs window and overhang at the Charles and Delphia Garrett farm in the Smoke Camp region of Lewis County.

Shadows OF THE PAST



Morning sun through a gate in the sheep barn at the Delbert Cole farm, Gilmer County.



Barn interior at the Loman Garrett farm in Gilmer County.

Horse stall in the Delbert Cole barn, Gilmer County.

Shadows OF THE PAST

Left page: Ladder and door at the Loman Garrett barn in Gilmer County.

Above: Cellar house at the Charles and Delphia Garrett farm in Lewis County.

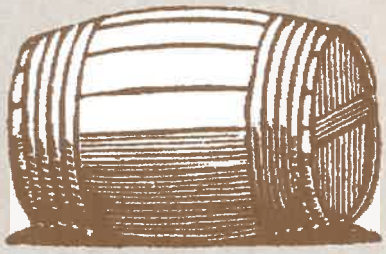
Right: Rope and pulley assembly in the hayloft of the Delbert Cole barn, Gilmer County.

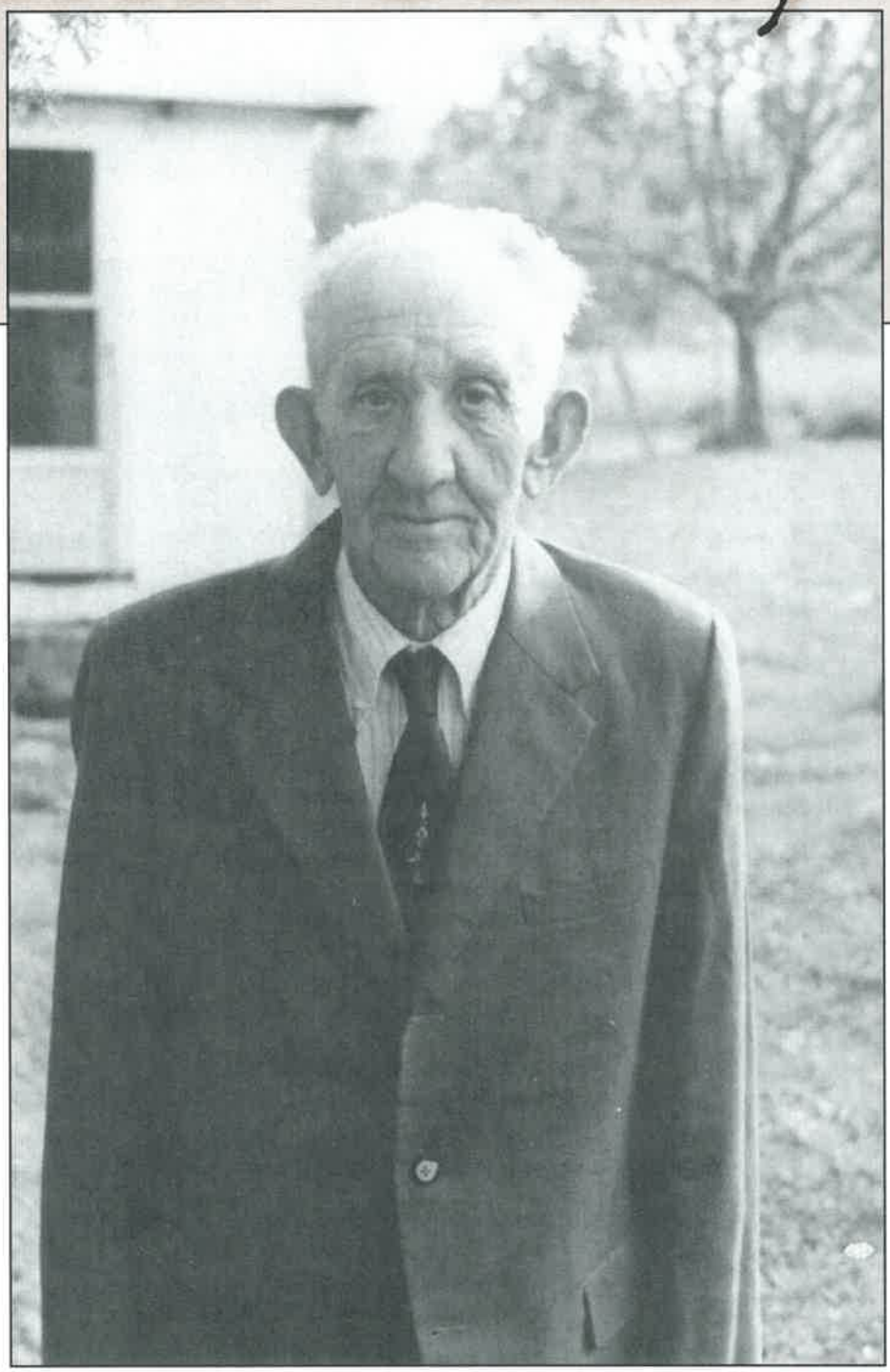
Right: The Taylor home in 1919, in the Smoke Camp region of Lewis County, about 200 yards from the Charles and Delphia Garrett farm. Standing third from the left is young Mavis Garrett (Cole). Photographer unknown.

Below: The Taylor home, as it appeared in 2004.

Right page: Barn on the Franklin Cole farm, about 1/4 mile into Doddridge County from Gilmer County. Mavis Cole's mother-in-law, Jenny Kemper Cole, once walked four miles from this farm to the Delbert Cole farm to teach new bride Mavis how to make soap. This act of kindness told Mavis she had married into a good family.

Making Whiskey in Greenbrier County





John Houston "J.H." Crookshanks in about 1983.

By Ben Crookshanks

Many of the early settlers in West Virginia were Scottish or Scots-Irish. Once they were here, they continued their traditional practice of producing whiskey, using a variety of grains. They also brought with them a proud and defiant attitude. They had a fierce independence and a contempt for anyone who would tell them what they could or could not do. This led to trouble when the newly formed United States government decided to tax whiskey in the late 1700's and again when production was outlawed altogether in 1919.

My father, J.H. Crookshanks, passed away in 1985, one month short of his 83rd birthday. He and a friend operated a still off-and-on in the 1920's and '30's in Greenbrier County. What follows are his words. —Ben Crookshanks

Wooden barrels and copper coils are the telltale signs of a whiskey operation. The law seems to have caught up with this remote distillery, date and location unknown. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives (WVSA hereafter), Elizabeth Windsor Collection. Photograph by J. Earl Windsor.

Me and Bert Osborne had a still up on the side of a mountain. There was a spring fed out the side of the hill where we got our water. Lot of fellows had their still down close to a stream. The law could just follow the stream till they found the still. They never did find ours.

You need a wooden barrel to set your mash in. Has to be wood. Metal barrel won't work. It would give the whiskey a metal taste. Recipe is easy to remember. All you have to keep in your head is "50": 50 pounds of grain, 50 pounds of sugar, and 50 gallons of water, and about five pounds of yeast. You can use about any kind of grain. Some people like to use corn, but we always used wheat bran. Got more liquor out of it. Fifty pounds of corn will make you about four, maybe four-and-a-half gallons; wheat bran will make five gallons.

First you make what they call "mash." To do that, you warm the water and mix the yeast, grain, and sugar together and let it set. When you do that, it'll start working, and in about a week or two, it's ready to run. We used to bury the barrels partway in the ground. We dug the hole extra big and put a layer of leaves around the outside of the barrel. Then we poured hot water on the leaves. That way they would start to give off a heat. Worked like a hotbed. Helped to keep the mash warm, and it would work better.

We would cover the barrel with a sack and then throw leaves over it to hide it. About the only way you could find the barrel would be to trip on it. Had this redbone gyp [female] dog, and she was looking for a place to lay down and found that sack we had over a mash barrel, stepped up on it, and fell in. [Bert] run up and yanked her out by the collar. As he pulled her out, he stripped the mash off. He said to me, "Aye God, Crook! What are we going to do?"

I told him, "We'll just go ahead run it. After it's run, they won't be anything in it that would hurt you." Bert called that batch of whiskey Red Dog Brandy.

Back in the '20's, after the country went dry, wasn't no trouble getting ever'thing you needed to make whiskey. We made a cooker out of a big stock pot like they got in restaurants. These days they are made of aluminum. Back then, they was copper. Best thing in the world for a cooker. We took a fire extinguisher and cut it in half, cut a hole in the lid of the stock pot same size as the fire extinguisher, and soldered the top half of the fire extinguisher to the lid. All you had to do was slip the

rubber hose of the fire extinguisher onto the worm. Wasn't no joints to couple or fool with. With that stock pot, you could just clamp the lid down and didn't have to fool with putting dough around the lid.

The worm was made out of copper pipe, coiled just big enough to go down inside a barrel. The barrel was filled with water — that's what cooled the steam. Of course, the worm came out down at the bottom, and that's where your whiskey come out.

To make your worm, just take copper pipe and stop one end up and fill it with sand. The sand keeps it from collapsing when you bend it. Just heat it and bend it in a coil, and there you are. In movies, you see the coil setting out in the open, not down in a barrel. That won't work. You got to have water all around the worm to cool the steam. To make the best whiskey, you need to have the water running in the top and out the bottom. If you set up below a spring, you can pipe it right down the hill into your barrel. That way the water is about 50-60 degrees. I've heard of fellows that, instead of running water, would use a barrel of water with a big chunk of ice in it.

Of course, there was times you had to make do with what you had. Me and Fred Lively once run some whiskey through a copper tea kettle on top of a wood cookstove.

The secret for making good whiskey is to have a clean cooker and to run it slow. Copper will corrode, and if you don't clean the cooker, your whiskey will have an awful taste and a green tint to it. We used to take salt and scrub the inside of that cooker till she shined like new money. To get the corrosion out of the worm, you stop it up and pour it full of mash. Then you lay it on the fire and get it to boiling, and that will cut that corrosion right out of the worm.

It takes a lot of patience to run whiskey and do it right. You can't get in a hurry. First thing you do is strain the mash to get the grain out of it. Once you get the cooker to boiling, you have to stay there and

This collection of confiscated stills was photographed at the Mingo County courthouse in Williamson in about 1921, during the early days of Prohibition. Photograph courtesy of WVSA.

keep just enough wood on the fire so that it is barely boiling. Bert was about the best there was. He would set there and feed the fire. If it got to boiling a little too fast, he would pull a stick of wood out of the fire. The alcohol boils off first. It don't take as much fire to boil the alcohol as it does to boil water. The longer you run the mash, the less alcohol there is, and the hotter you have to run the fire. The slower you run whiskey, the milder it is. If you run it too fast, it'll have a hot, burny taste. And, if you run it too fast, the mash will splash up against the inside of the lid of the cooker. The old bootleggers called that "puking," something you didn't want to happen.

Back then we had what they called a "proofer" (hydrometer). It was a little thing looked like a thermometer. It told you what the proof of the whiskey was. Worked something like these antifreeze testers. I don't know if you can still buy them. You could buy them during Prohibition. The first whiskey that come out of the still was about 180 to 190 proof. You run it till what was coming out tested 40 proof. Then you quit. You dump what's left in the cooker back in the mash barrel and wash out the cooker. Put you about a gallon or two of water and the whiskey you've run back in the cooker and run it again. That is what they called "doubling" it. Doubling the whiskey took a lot of impurities out. The old-timers said it took the headache out. Some people used what they called a thumping keg. That way you didn't have to double the whiskey. I never used one. I don't think it made as good a whiskey.

One thing you want to do is strain the whiskey as it comes out of the still. Have a jug setting there with a funnel in it. Line the funnel with cotton cloth and put a couple of handfuls of hickory charcoal on top of that. The whiskey don't come out very fast. It will be a stream a little bigger than a broom straw. There is an oil that comes off first. Now, that will make you sick. You want to get rid of that oil. That's why you strain it real good. After you double the whiskey and run it down to 40 proof, you mix it all together and add some water till you get down to about 100 proof. If you do it right, making whiskey is a lot of work.

Like I said, sometimes we would bury the mash barrels in the ground. If it was going to rain, we would cover it so rain water couldn't get in the mash. We would lay a sack on top and throw leaves over that to cover it up and always lay a few sticks on the leaves. The sticks would be laid

Making It Legal

A Visit to the Isaiah Morgan Distillery in Summersville

By John Lilly | Photographs by Michael Keller

The word "moonshine" usually conjures up images of hidden stills and midnight runs. But a handful of ambitious whiskey makers in West Virginia have obtained licenses to make and sell distilled spirits in plain sight. According to the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration, there are currently three legal moonshine operations in the state: Forks of Cheat Distillery in Morgantown, West Virginia Distilling Company in Granville (Monongalia County), and the Isaiah Morgan Distillery near Summersville. GOLDENSEAL payed a visit to Shirley Morris at his Isaiah Morgan operation, and we found him hard at work on a fresh batch of rye whiskey.

Tucked away in a cozy storeroom off the back porch of his Kirkwood Winery headquarters, located about two miles east of U.S. Route 19 in Nicholas County, Shirley Morris runs what he considers to be the smallest licensed distillery in the country. He and partner Rodney Facemire obtained the necessary license and began distilling here in 2002. Rodney had started Kirkwood Winery in about 1991, Shirley says, and the pair built up a considerable wine business over the years. Rodney mentioned the possibility of branching out into whiskey making several times, and Shirley finally agreed, if Rodney took care of all the paperwork. After Rodney passed away in 2005, Shirley decided to carry on in Rodney's memory. "I don't know whether we've ever made

Shirley Morris and his 50-gallon "Revenoor" still at the Isaiah Morgan Distillery near Summersville.

The Kirkwood Winery is home to the Isaiah Morgan Distillery, which Shirley operates in a small back room.

any money off it or not," Shirley says. "It's just something he wanted to do, and I've just kept up with it and tried to keep it going."

The new distillery was named after Rodney's young son, Isaiah Morgan Facemire, who, in turn, was named after two of his grandfathers. Rodney also named a port wine after his infant daughter, Kaitlyn. Today, Isaiah is around nine years old, and Kaitlyn is five.

In the beginning, Rodney and Shirley used a tiny 10-gallon still called a "Revenoor," purchased through the mail from Terry Wilhelm of Washington State. It arrived fully assembled and came with a set of printed instructions. They soon moved up to the 50-gallon model, which is what the distillery uses today.

Shirley was raised on Birch River, where he says he witnessed plenty of distilling, the old-fashioned kind. He never tried his hand at moonshining, however, until he did it legally. In fact, he doesn't even drink the stuff. "I never found any kind of whiskey I acquired a taste for," he says. "I still don't like it today. I went to the doctor the other day, and he told me I should drink eight ounces of red wine every night. That's been three or four months ago, and I just can't bring myself to drink wine. Just something about it—I never acquired a taste for it. Now I do like a good, cold beer every once in a while!"

After a long career as a heavy equipment mechanic, Shirley had his mind set on retiring, but it wasn't meant to be. "I worked here below Summersville for 20-some years," he says. "Then I went up to Cowen and worked on a strip job for another 10 or 11 years. That's where I was working when I retired." He began working with Rodney at the winery in the early 1990's, helped him start the distillery in 2002, and now is back to working full time.

Southern Moon, an 80-proof corn liquor, is Isaiah Morgan's main product. Shirley also distills rye whiskey and a grape brandy, called grappa. They are offered for sale at the Kirkwood Winery Country Store, and elsewhere.

The main product he makes at Isaiah Morgan is an 80-proof corn whiskey called Southern Moon. He also makes rye whiskey and a grape brandy, called grappa, and is experimenting with rum and other spirits. He was recently contacted by some government researchers, who asked for his help in the experimental manufacturing of ethanol.

It seems unlikely that he will branch out too far anytime soon, however. Shirley and his wife, Brenda, have their hands full running a busy winery and country store, keeping the still cooking, and trying to stay one step ahead of the paperwork. And the paperwork is formidable, Shirley says. Each year, the distillery has to be re-licensed, requiring volumes of forms and extensive documentation over and above the regular day-to-day paperwork of running the winery business.

That's a lot to do, and sometimes it has Shirley thinking about quitting. Or selling. Or, other times, thinking about building on and expanding. He feels he has outgrown his current distilling space — we can testify to that claim — but he isn't sure whether the nation's smallest distillery can bear the cost of expansion or not. In the meantime, he has several barrels of mash working and several cases of empty bottles to fill with one of the rarest of commodities — legal West Virginia moonshine.

Kirkwood Winery and the Isaiah Morgan Distillery are located at 45 Winery Lane, Summersville; phone (304)872-7332, or on the Web at www.kirkwood-wine.com.

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

West Virginia Back Roads

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Character Farm in Morgan County

George Farnham of Unger, Morgan County, with a portion of his private collection of giant advertising figures. George believes he has the largest such collection in the nation.

George and Pam Farnham of Unger are accustomed to having total strangers stop at the end of their driveway and take photographs of the characters in their backyard.

"It's really funny," says George, whose Morgan County farmhouse is just 3/10 of a mile from the Virginia border. "Sometimes, they'll get out their cameras and start inching their way up the driveway to get closer to them. You can't help but expect that when you have fiberglass figures in your yard."

Indeed, George believes he has the largest privately held collection of fiberglass advertising figures in the United States. A 17-foot-tall Santa Claus, arm extended, waves to motorists on the Winchester Grade Road as they approach the farm. In the backyard is a row of classic advertising behemoths: Beach Boy holding a can of Coca-Cola, the famous Midas Muffler Man, "Big John" with arms full of grocery bags, and another Santa Claus. The figures range in height from 19 to 26 feet.

A fiberglass pterodactyl with a 15-foot wingspan and bald eagle with a 12-foot wingspan loom above Pam and George's (real-life) alpaca herd.

Smaller fiberglass figures on the property include crabs from Baltimore, two apples from Winchester, a whale, a shark, and Cindy Bear and Ranger Smith imported from a Jellystone campground. A second Muffler Man is undergoing restoration and will soon join the lineup on the Farnham's seven-acre farm.

George came here from Washington, D.C., in 1984. Thirty years old at the time, he had been a D.C. lawyer who specialized in public issues

litigation. He shelved the law career and urban lifestyle for self-employment as an antiques and collectibles dealer. Pam, whom he married after moving to Morgan County, found the farm a good place to raise alpacas. Both Pam and George are avid collectors of Americana and advertising, so these fiberglass characters are the perfect, bigger-than-life fit for their passion.

George's first fiberglass figure, the Muffler Man, was a 50th birthday present from Pam, who snagged it in an eBay auction. Located in California, the 21-foot-tall figure was shipped to their house in a moving van.

The figures come from all across the country. The Santas came from Maine and Texas, Big John from a small-town grocery store in southern Illinois, and Beach Boy from an amusement park. He arrived in two pieces on a flatbed trailer. The eagle came from North Carolina and is the only figure George and Pam hauled themselves.

"That was the most frightening drive of my life," says George, who hauled it in a pickup truck. "I had one wing six feet above the cab of the truck facing the wind going down I-95. My main fear was the wing breaking off and flying through a windshield of a vehicle behind me."

Needless to say, motorists gave the eagle a wide berth.

George learns about the figures through auctions and a network of dealers who know of his interest. Sometimes the figures come from collectors who must dispose of their characters because residential zoning prohibits their display.

Fortunately for the Farnhams and their characters, Unger has no zoning. Ironically, this same absence of restrictions brought to his neighborhood a housing development that raised the Farnhams' ire.

Fifty-six homes are planned for what had been a 100-acre working farm across the road from their property. That's at least 56 more cars, trucks, and SUV's on their country road; 56 new wells tapped into the water table; 56 new septic tanks placing an additional burden on the soils; and dozens of youngsters who will need classrooms, books, teachers, busing, and playgrounds, George says.

Frustrated by the corporate-empowered housing development, in the spring of 2006, Pam and George mobilized their neighbors and much of southern Morgan County in a protest. They selected the outhouse as their cause's symbol.

"Our primary issue is our fear of having our water taken away," says George. "We chose the outhouse because we are afraid that's where we are all going to end up if our wells go dry."

The Farnhams and many of their supporters built nearly 100 faux outhouses from plywood, painted them in bold colors, embellished them with slogans, and planted them in front yards. Their neighbors built a two-seated, blue-and-pink his-and-her outhouse. Another fancy outhouse had a book slot on one side. All of them bore the message "Keep Morgan County Rural."

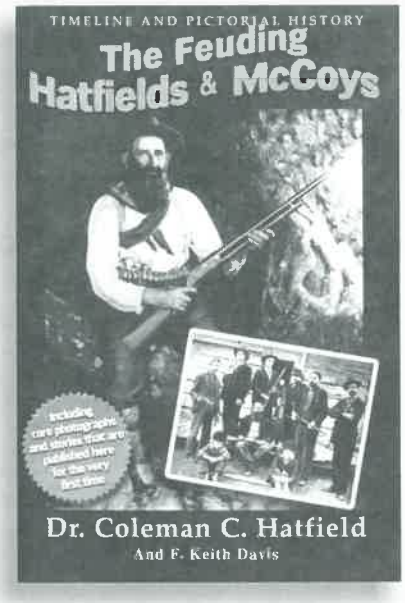
The protest drew media attention from Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, and local outlets. It also sparked discussion of establishing zoning regulations to keep Morgan County towns from becoming the suburbs for Winchester, Virginia; and Washington, D.C.

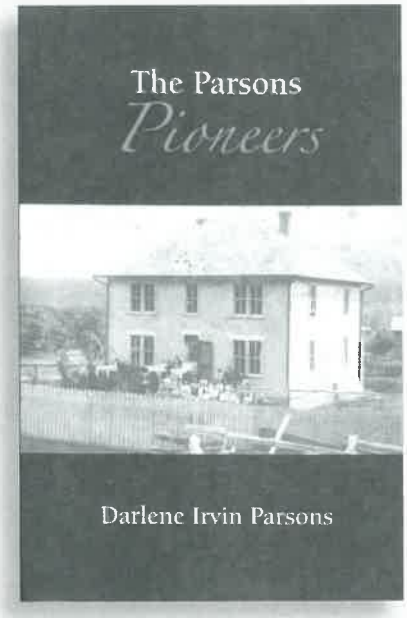
To that end, voters elected a Democratic pro-zoning county commissioner, Brenda Hutchinson, in November 2006. "Democratic candidates are never elected [in Morgan County]," George says. "It really sent shockwaves through the community. We were told we didn't have a chance of winning, and we won in a landslide."

One by one, the Outhouses of Unger have disappeared from the landscape, many as a result of vandalism or theft. But George's fiberglass figures are likely to be around for many years to come — his structures would enjoy grandfather protection even if zoning eventually outlawed them. So whether they like it or not, all 56 families in the new subdivision will live and play in the shadows of Muffler Man, Beach Boy, and Santa Claus.

George and Pam Farnham oppose a planned residential development near their farm and helped to organize a grassroots protest movement, using the outhouse as their symbol.

New Books Available





By Gordon Simmons

West Virginia People and Places

Jewish Communities on the Ohio River: A History, by Amy Hill Shevitz, presents case studies of how Jewish settlement in river towns differed from the Jewish experience in larger metropolitan areas. This settlement was part of the wave of immigration that began in the late 1890's and extended through the early decades of the 20th century. In focusing on the Ohio River Valley, this book includes treatments of Weirton, Wheeling, Wellsburg, Parkersburg, and Huntington.

Both the Jewish contribution to river communities and the development of distinctly small-town American Jewish cultural and religious life are explored.

The book is a 288-page hardcover with photographs, demographic tables, footnotes, and an index and sells for $50. It is available from the University Press of Kentucky, 663 South Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40508; on the Web at www.kentuckypress.com, or phone 1-800-839-6855.

Judge Ira Ellsworth Robinson: West Virginia Statesman and Man of Letters, by Barbara Smith, is a biography of a remarkable public figure who served as chief justice of the state Supreme Court, as well as the first chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. Smith chronicles Robinson's eventful life, including his dissenting decision to declare as unconstitutional the governor's imposition of martial law during the 1920's mine wars.

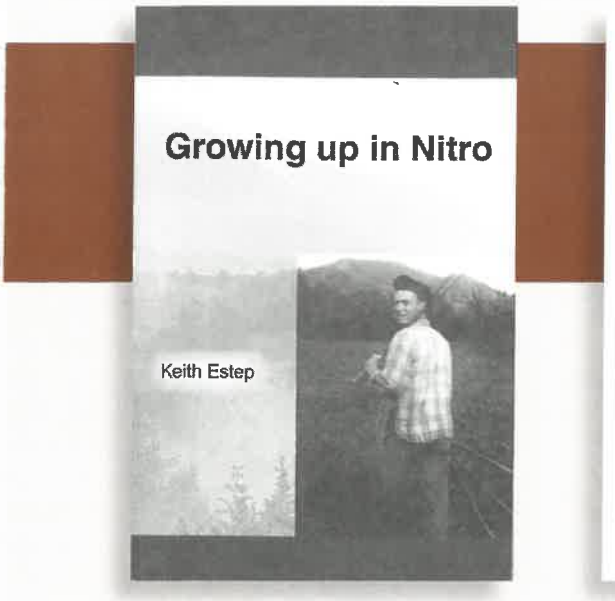
Although Judge Robinson is today principally known as the former owner of the historic Adaland Mansion in Philippi, Smith's account brings to light the life and work of a West Virginian deserving renewed public attention. [See "Making Judge Robinson's Death Mask," by Richard Crawford, and "Philippi's Adaland Mansion"; Fall 2001.]

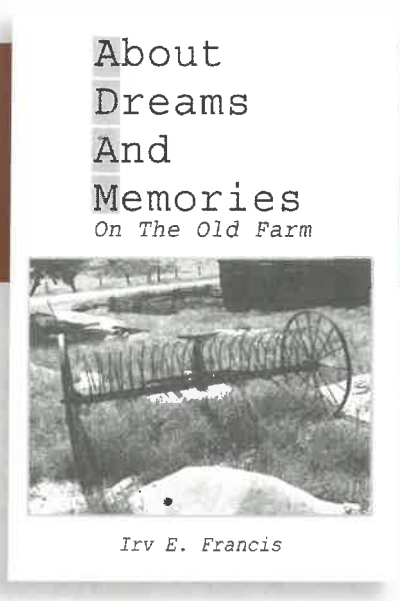
This 477-page paperback is available from Publish America and sells for $29.50; on the Web at www.publishamerica.com.

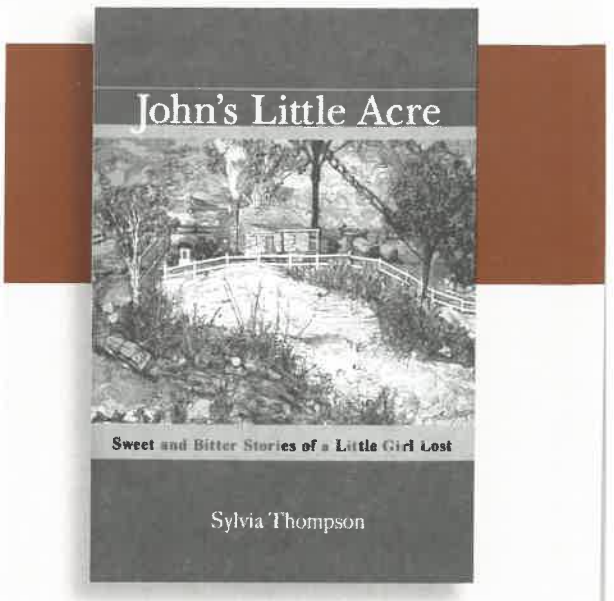
The Feuding Hatfields and McCoys: Timeline and Pictorial History, by the late Dr. Coleman C. Hatfield and F. Keith Davis, gives an account of the infamous feud by way of chronologies, family stories passed down from the participants, and reproductions of original documents related to the events. Of special interest are dozens of photographs from both families, many never before published. [See "The Scholar and the Legend: The Research of Coleman A. Hatfield," by Robert Spence; Fall 1995.]

The book is a 190-page paperback that sells for $18.95, published by Woodland Press, 118 Woodland Drive, Suite 1101, Chapmanville, WV 25508; phone (304)752-7152; on the Web at www.woodlandpress.com.

The Parsons Pioneers, by Darlene Irvin Parsons, records the lives and accomplishments of Parsons family figures who played prominent roles in Tucker County history. Beginning with escaped Indian







captive Captain James Parsons, who, in 1762, came across what is now Tucker County, local history is explored, including the Civil War and statehood period, as well the founding of the town of Parsons in 1891. There is also an account of the infamous Tucker County courthouse war in 1893, when 200 armed residents of Parsons forcibly removed courthouse records from St. George.

The Parsons Pioneers is a 250-page paperback with bibliography and sells for $25 from McClain Printing; phone 1-800-654-7179, on the Web at www.mcclainprinting.com.

Kanawha County Public Library: A History, by Kenneth R. Bailey, chronicles the history and people of one of the largest public library systems in West Virginia. From its beginnings in 1908 to the current plans for a new, modern building in downtown Charleston, the development and growth of the library is traced, followed by an alphabetical listing of prominent backers, staff, and board members. This book will appeal to those with an interest in Kanawha County history.

The book is a 191-page hardcover with index and sells for $15 from the Kanawha County Public Library; phone (304)343-4646, ext. 287.

Mountain State Memoirs

Several memoirs by West Virginians have been published recently.

The Day Is Far Spent, by Martinsburg native Kenneth A. Tabler, is a memoir of coming of age in the 1930's Depression-era Eastern Panhandle, as well as the opportunities afforded by the post-war boom in education and technology. The 402-page paperback sells for $22, including shipping, from Montani Publishing, P.O. Box 07455, Fort Myers, FL 33919, on the Web at www.montanipublishing.com.

Growing Up in Nitro, by Keith Estep, recounts growing up in the 1940's and '50's in a humorous and entertaining narrative. The 203-page paperback sells for $10, published by Evergreen Syndicate, 50 Evergreen Circle, Poca, WV 25159; on the Web at www .evergreensyndicate.com.

About Dreams and Memories on the Old Farm, by Irv E. Francis, chronicles a youth spent on a Marshall County farm during the New Deal. Rich with vivid details of rural life, the book is a 360-page hardback and sells for $22.50. It is published by Author House, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403; on the Web at www.authorhouse.com.

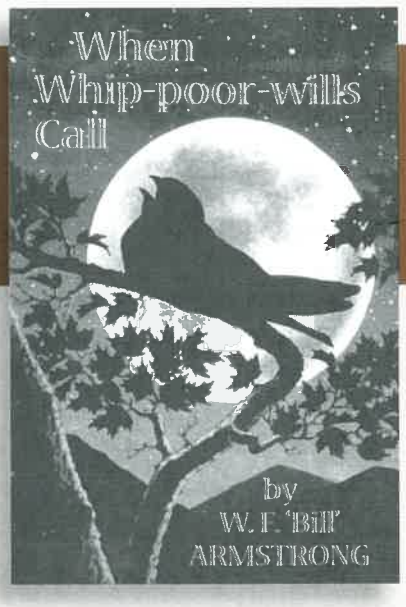
John's Little Acre: Sweet and Bitter Stories of a Little Girl Lost, by Sylvia Thompson, is a memoir of growing up in rural Lincoln County, experiencing financial and familial hardships, and overcoming difficulties by determination and a love of education.

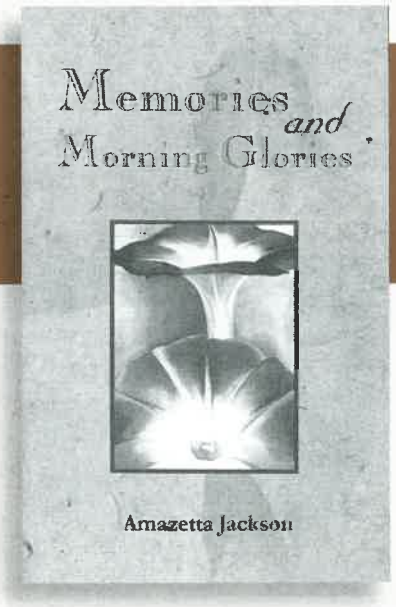
The book is a 147-page paperback and sells for $12, published by Mid-Atlantic Highlands, an imprint of Publishers Place, 945 Fourth Avenue, Suite 200A, Huntington, WV 25701, on the Web at www.publishersplace.org.

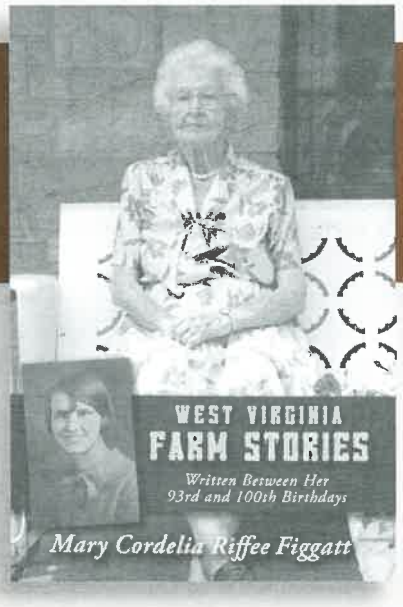
When Whip-Poor-Wills Call, by W.F. "Bill" Armstrong, is a series of vignettes based on the author's decades-long career as a conservation officer in the wilderness areas of West Virginia. Armstrong's stories highlight the experiences of protecting the natural resources and wildlife of some of the state's most prized park lands and rivers.

The book is a 182-page paperback and sells for $25, including shipping, from Bill Armstrong, P.O. Box 13, Colora, MD 21917.

From Coal Fields to Oil Fields and Beyond, by Sylvester C. Myers, is an autobiography that takes the reader from a Depression-era McDowell County coal camp to a successful international business career. The son of a union







African American coal miner, the author imparts the lessons of life he learned along the way of his successful education and wide-ranging work experience.

The book is a 313-page paperback and sells for $26, published by Rosedog Books, 701 Smithfield Street, Third Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222; phone 1-800-834-1803.

Sometimes a Hillbilly, Always a Mountaineer, by Sherman R. Williams, is a memoir of growing up in the Hemphill and Redbird communities in the coalfields of McDowell County. The author recounts his working-class upbringing, education, and, eventually, his rise to prominence as a health policy analyst.

The 211-page paperback sells for $22, including shipping, from Sherman Williams, 4185 Hallowing Point Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678.

Memories and Morning Glories, by Amazętta Jackson, is a memoir of growing up in the coal camps of Logan County in the period of 1919-1929.

The book is a 104-page paperback and sells for $9.95, available from www.bookschristian.com.

Growing Up on the Hard Wood, by Jarrod West, gives an insider's look at playing basketball for the West Virginia University Mountaineers under coach Gale Catlett in the late 1990's.

The 153-page paperback sells for $20, published by Goose River Press, 3400 Friendship Road, Waldboro, ME 04572; on the Web at www.gooseriverpress.com.

Willie's Wild Wonderful Wildcats, by Brad Browning, tells the story of Logan High School basketball for the two decades of coaching by Willie Akers. The 114-page oversized paperback includes photographs and team statistics.

The book sells for $15, and is available from Brad Browning, 616 Staffwood Drive, Itmo, SC 29063; phone (803)407-8045.

The Life of a Locomotive Engineer from Steam to Diesel, by Jack Young, recounts a life working on the railroad by a native of Hinton who spent 40 years on the C&O railroad.

The book is a 108-page oversized, spiral-bound paperback and sells for $16, available from Trafford Publishing, on the Web at www.trafford.com; phone 1-888-232-4444.

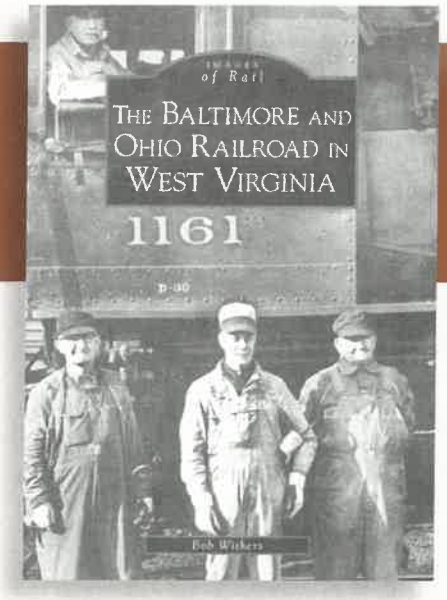
West Virginia Farm Stories, by Mary Cordelia Riffee Figgatt, is a homegrown memoir that should prove dear to the hearts of many GOLDENSEAL readers. Cordelia Figgatt of Charleston, now 104, wrote these engaging snippets for family members between her 93rd and 100th birthdays, describing colorful details of her Jim Ridge, Putnam County, upbringing. These short remembrances were excerpted in local newspapers and proved so popular that her family began selling photocopies of the entire work, on request.

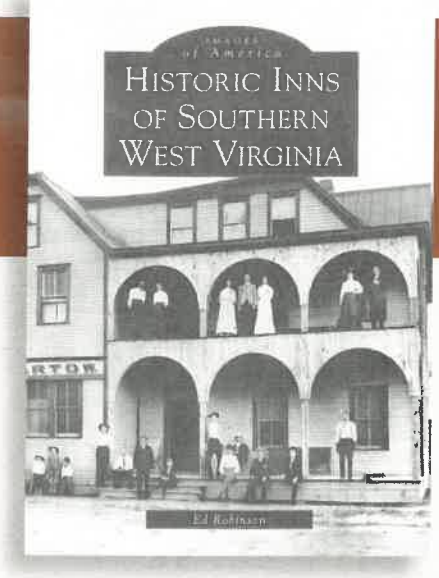
Thanks to publisher Bill Clements and the West Virginia Book Company, *West Virginia Farm Stories* is now available to the public. The 141-page paperback sells for $14.95, plus shipping, from the publisher at 1125 Central Avenue, Charleston, WV 25314; phone 1-888-982-7472, on the Web at www.wvbookco.com.

Images of West Virginia

Arcadia Publishing continues to release new volumes in its Images of America series, each with hundreds of vintage black-and-white photographs, organized into thematic chapters related to the history of the each book's locale.

Among the additions is ***Point Pleasant***, by Jason Bolte, which traces in photography the history of this Ohio River city from its transformation into a boomtown in the 1880's to its modern-day, small-town stability. In between, there are chapters devoted to his-





toric flooding, riverboats and river traffic, and to the December 15, 1967, tragic collapse of the Silver Bridge that spanned the Ohio River.

Sistersville and Tyler County, by Luke N. Peters, has an initial chapter of images drawn from the oil boom that began here in 1891. This is followed by chapters illustrating historic buildings and homes; public events, celebrations, and parades; rail and river travel in Tyler County; and industrial life, floods, and fires.

Roane County, by Jack Nida, contains pictorial treatments of the timber industry, the days of oil and gas development, roads and transportation, community activities, schools and churches, commerce and industry, and prominent citizens, such as Colonel Ruby G. Bradley, one of the most decorated women in American military history.

Historic Inns of Southern West Virginia, by Ed Robinson, is composed of photographs ranging from early log structures to the massive and prestigious The Greenbrier hotel. Separate chapters arrange the images into early lodging, mineral springs hotels, lodging in county seats, railroad towns, lumber towns, coal towns, rural locations, and state parks. A chapter of contemporary bed-and-breakfast inns concludes the book. Counties covered are McDowell, Mercer, Wyoming, Raleigh, Summers, Fayette, Monroe, Greenbrier, and Pocahontas.

Another series from the same publisher, Images of Rail, features two new titles, both by frequent contributors to GOLDENSEAL. ***The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in West Virginia*** is by Bob Withers and includes chapters highlighting such topics as passenger service, freight, local rail lines, locomotives, presidential whistle-stops and other special trains, train wrecks and accidents, buildings, trackwork, and personnel.

The Virginian Railway is by Bill Archer and uses archival photographs from the Princeton Railroad Museum. The first chapter features images from the building of the Virginian by businessman Henry Rogers, followed by treatments of coal-powered steam, electric trains, the development of the Virginian, and, finally, its legacy.

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

GORDON SIMMONS of Charleston is a field organizer for UE Local 170, a public workers union. Gordon is a former editorial assistant at GOLDENSEAL magazine.

New To GOLDENSEAL?

We're glad to make your acquaintance and hope you want to see more of us. You may do so by returning this coupon with your annual subscription payment for $18.
Thanks — and welcome to the GOLDENSEAL family!

I enclose $_____for a subscription to GOLDENSEAL.
-or-
Charge my
___VISA ___MasterCard
#_____
Exp. Date _____

Name_____

Address_____

_____

Please make your check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL.

Send to:
GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300
(304)558-0220

ADDRESS CHANGE?

Please enter old and new addresses below and return to us.

OLD

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____

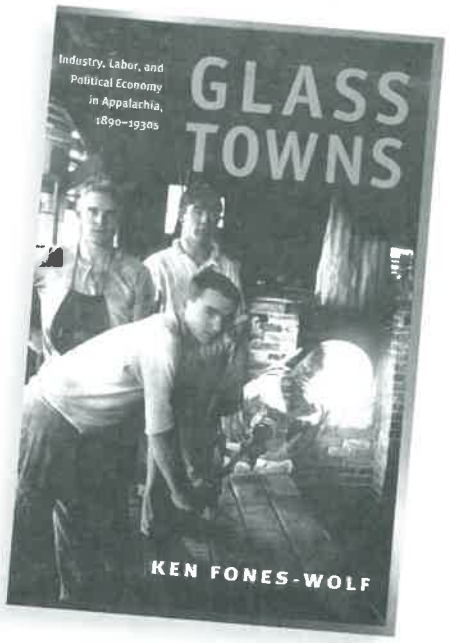
NEW

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____

West Virginia Glass Towns



Glass Towns: Industry, Labor, and Political Economy in Appalachia, 1890-1930's, by Ken Fones-Wolf, looks at the history of three glass manufacturing communities in West Virginia and attempts to understand why the once-prevalent glass industry ultimately failed to make the state's economy more viable and diverse.

The author examines the history of producing tableware in Moundsville, window glass in Clarksburg, and bottles in Fairmont, with attention to the conditions of glassworkers in each case, as well as the local and global market forces that affected these industrial enterprises. At one time, West Virginia was second in the nation in glass manufacturing, and the industry seemed to promise an economic alternative to the domination of extractive enterprises like timber and coal.

According to Fones-Wolf, the fact that this economic promise failed to be realized had much to do with investment decisions and political calculations. The trajectory of West Virginia's industrial history was, he finds, not a matter of historical inevitability. Fairmont coal operators found the presence of the glass industry, with its union tradition and high wages, decidedly unwelcome. Coal investors therefore withdrew their financial support for the development of quality-added manufacturing, cutting off the prospect of a more diversified economy.

By relating political and economic decisions to one another, *Glass Towns* offers a more complex look at West Virginia history and may well serve as a model for future historical research about the Mountain State and the Appalachian region.

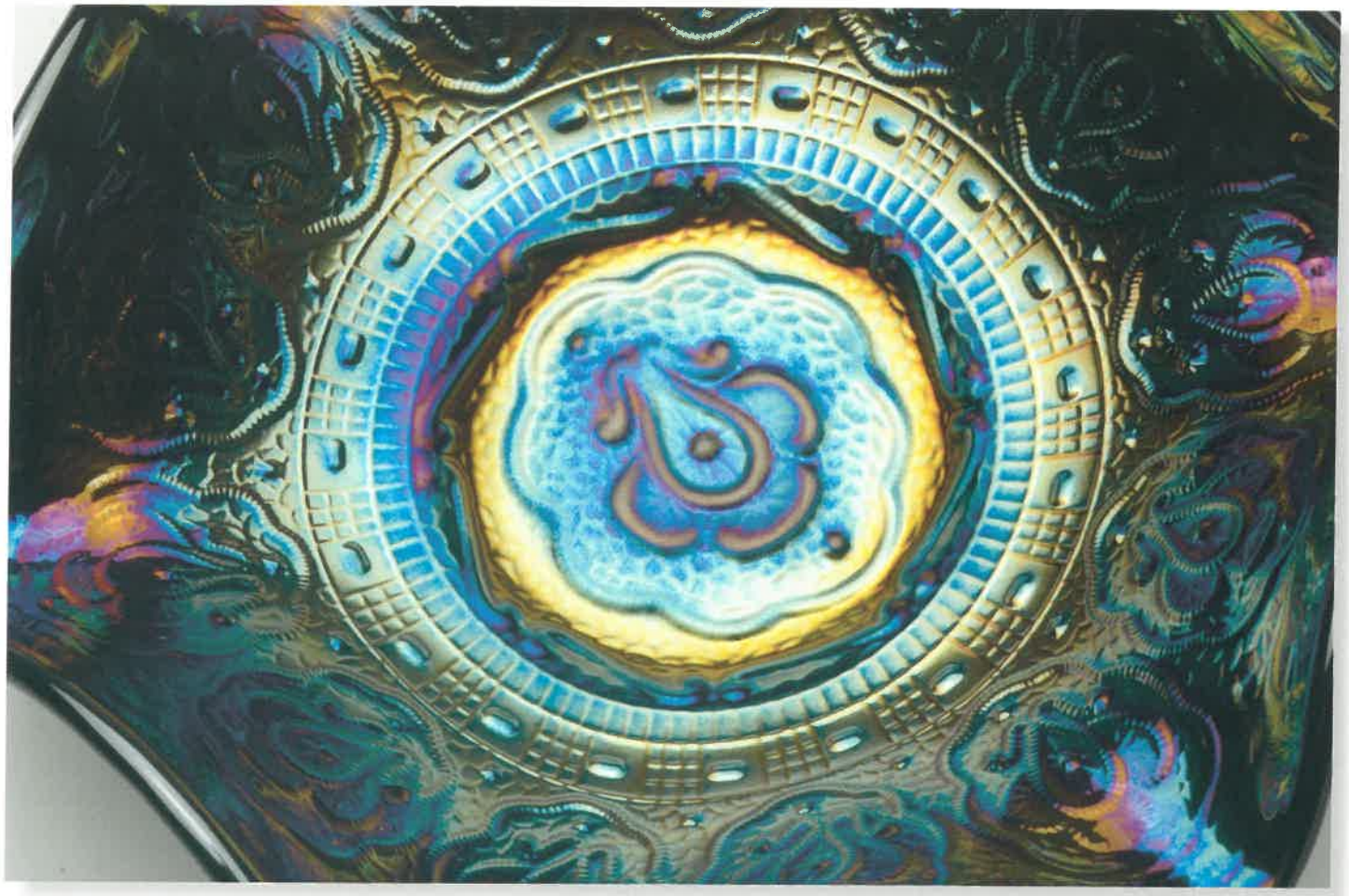
Glass Towns is a 272-page paperback and sells for $25. Published by the University of Illinois Press, it includes photographs, footnotes, and an index. The book is available from Appalachian Book Company; phone 1-800-395-7074, on the Web at www.appalachianbookco.com.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Bluefield Drum and Bugle Corps
- Lillybrook
- Fairmont Totem Pole
- Berdine's 5&10

Photographer's Choice



This striking photograph by Culture and History photographer Michael Keller captures a glimmering detail of a recently made blue carnival glass Persian Medallion pattern bowl from the Fenton Art Glass Company of Williamstown.

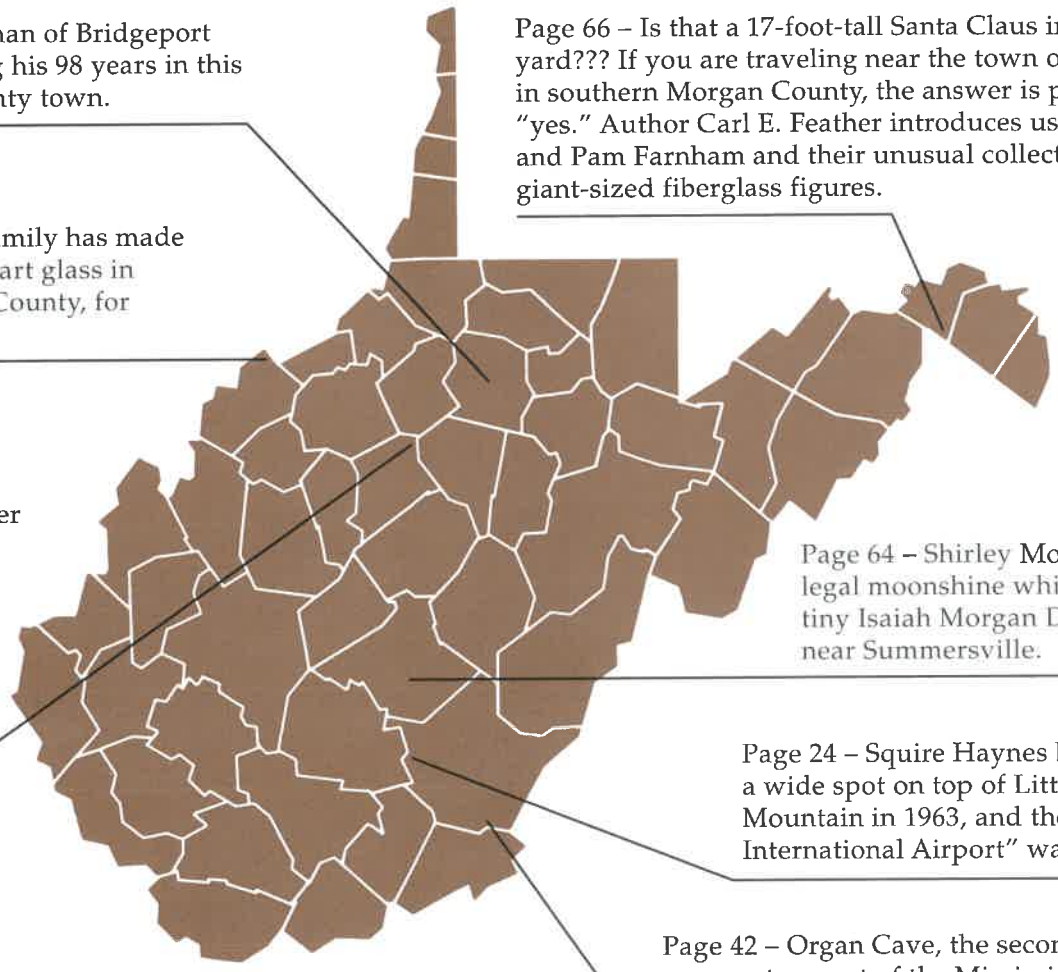
Nearly 350 pieces of handmade art glass from Fenton will be on display through the summer at the Cultural Center in Charleston. The exhibit includes examples of carnival, hobnail, opalescent, milk glass, crested glass, and other distinctive ware from Fenton's century of fine glassmaking in Wood County. For more information, phone (304)558-0220 or visit www.wvculture.org/museum/exhibits.html.

See our story beginning on page 8.

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

PERIODICALS

Inside Goldenseal



0 94295 76645 1 82