Back to the Land • Everett Lilly • Curio House • Poor Farm

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Summer 2009 $4.95

20th Appalachian String Band Music Festival

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

Kim Johnson
Editorial Assistant

Cornelia Crews Alexander
Circulation Manager

A.C. Designs
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 $18 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.

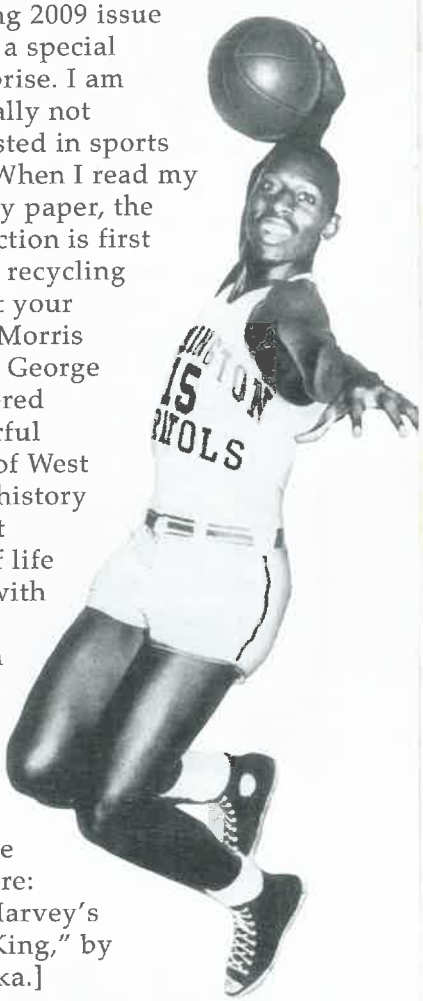
Bernard Cyrus

March 13, 2009
Towson, Maryland
Via e-mail
Editor,
Started on Spring 2009 at lunch today and was fascinated by Gerry Milnes' piece about Bernard Cyrus. [See "The Natural World of Bernard Cyrus."] Cool stuff, combining mountain music with West Virginia orchids!

I used to own about 60 acres in Monroe County, and one of my spring rituals was climbing the mountain behind the house to check the showy orchis patch. Not many plants, and they were tiny, but what beautiful flowers! Also found purple fringed orchids in Cranberry Glades and pink lady slippers at Holly River. I consider them all real treasures. Always heard that queen lady slippers were extinct in West Virginia. I'll bet Mr. Cyrus is the only person aware of that pair pictured on page 19. I plan to order that DVD from Augusta tonight!
Alan Byer

Basketball

April 22, 2009
Hyattsville, Maryland
Via e-mail
Editor,
I always enjoy the mix of people I meet in the pages of GOLDENSEAL, but the Spring 2009 issue held a special surprise. I am usually not interested in sports articles. When I read my local daily paper, the sports section is first to hit the recycling heap. But your story on Morris Harvey's George King offered a wonderful glimpse of West Virginia history and great details of life on tour with a college ball team in the late 1940's and early '50's. [See "Top Score: Morris Harvey's George King," by Bob Kuska.]



Basketball star Earl Lloyd. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State University Archives.

Cass Correction

March 5, 2009
Green Bank,
West Virginia
Via e-mail
Editor,
I'm sure this will be at least the 100th e-mail you receive, informing you that Cass Scenic Railroad didn't move to Pendleton County. We are still located in Pocahontas County, only five miles from my house in Green Bank. On page 9 of the latest issue I found the error on my second reading. Maybe others missed it the first time also.

Early 1900's postcard view of Cass, Pocahontas County. Courtesy of West Virginia State Archives.

Enjoy the magazine so much. Cancelled my subscription to the other West Virginia magazine, but I plan to keep this one coming.
Thanks,
Linda Stewart

Thanks, Linda. Yes, we received a lot of notes about this embarassing geographical gaffe, but none as gentle or forgiving as yours. Thank you for your tact and for these kind words. Our sincere apologies to citizens of both counties. —ed.

And the article on "Moonfixer" Earl Lloyd continued the winning streak! [See "'Moonfixer': Basketball Pioneer Earl Lloyd," by Michael Hawkins.]
Flawn Williams

GOLDENSEAL Treasure

March 6, 2009
Whitehorse, Yukon
Via e-mail
Editor,
Just received my first GOLDENSEAL, featuring the coal art on the cover. [See Winter 2008.] What a treasure of a magazine! I can't tell you how much I appreciate your efforts to record the history and culture of your state. It is so vitally important!

I love the black-and-white photos, and the articles have me pining to be back down there. I miss everyone from there so much and will never forget the warm hospitality that was extended to me when I was there for the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville a few years ago.

Keep up the great work, and I hope to be there again one day.
Yours,
Deb Jutra

Renewal Mailbag

September 22, 2008
Springfield, Missouri
Editor:
I moved out of West Virginia in 1946, but my affectation for my old home state is so strong that I enjoy reading your magazine from cover to cover.
Virginia (Lee Casey) Gleason

September 24, 2008
Madison, Indiana
Editor:
Read your magazine from cover to cover. Makes me proud to be a West Virginian.
Dan Stanley

September 25, 2008
Portland, Oregon
Editor:
I thoroughly enjoy your magazine. It brings back many memories of my boyhood in West Virginia.
John Booton

September 22, 2008
Bluefield, West Virginia
Editor:
I will be 94 on December 12. This is why I am ordering for one year only. I feel good and live alone. Hope to be here a while longer, but who knows.
Thank you,
June Naggie

September 12, 2008
Fairborn, Ohio
Editor:
I truly enjoy reading every article of every issue. As soon as we can get retired and a house built, we will be moving back to West Virginia for our retirement years.
Sincerely,
Mark E. Young Jr.

September 22, 2008
Bridgeport, West Virginia
Editor:
I have from Volume One. They are great.
Marie Kelley

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.

Worker installs pilot wheel at the West Virginia State Museum. Photograph by Michael Keller.

State Museum to Reopen

The newly renovated West Virginia State Museum is scheduled to open to the public at noon on Sunday, June 21, 2009. The 23,000-square-foot facility will illustrate the history of West Virginia through state-of-the-art exhibits and educational displays.

Visitors will experience a chronological journey through West Virginia's history, using displays, special effects, narration, audio effects, and theatrical lighting. Additional rooms, featuring music, art, film clips, stories, and artifacts will offer visitors the opportunity for more in-depth study. A computer lab will provide teachers and students access to a virtual museum, interactive research tools, and hands-on learning activities.

The West Virginia State Museum is located on the lower level of the Cultural Center at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston. There is no admission charge. The museum will be open from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday; noon until 5 p.m. on Sunday. The museum is closed on Monday.

For more information, visit www.wvculture.org or call (304)558-0162.

Golden Horseshoe Reunion

A reunion of past winners of West Virginia's Golden Horseshoe will be held on the Capitol grounds on June 19. Organizers expect up to 1,000 previous winners to attend. A reunion in 1996 attracted more than 800 winners.

Activities include a visit with the Governor and First Lady, special tours of the Capitol, a ceremony for Golden Horseshoe winners who were unable to attend their eighth-grade inductions, workshops in the State Archives, and an evening concert honoring the group at Charleston's Haddad Riverfront Park. A highlight of the day will be a VIP tour of the newly renovated State Museum.

Since 1931, more than 15,000 West Virginia students have received the Golden Horseshoe in recognition of their knowledge of West Virginia history. Every year, eighth graders across the state take the Golden Horseshoe exam, and the ones who receive the highest scores are inducted as Knights and Ladies of the prestigious Golden Horseshoe Society. [See "Knighted a Long Time Ago: Memories of the Golden Horseshoe," by David H. Halsey, Spring 1996.]

The Golden Horseshoe Reunion is being coordinated through the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts with the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Golden Horseshoe winners may register for the June 19 reunion on-line at www.wv.gov/ghreunion. Call the Department of Education and the Arts at (304)558-2440 for more information.

MICHAEL KELLER

Roots Music Exhibit

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition currently on tour in West Virginia, sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities Council. The exhibition includes blues, gospel, bluegrass, Cajun, and early country music styles.

New Harmonies
CELEBRATING AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC

New Harmonies features recorded music, photographs, and text telling the stories of a variety of roots music performers, such as Woody Guthrie, Mahalia Jackson, Blind Willie Johnson, Bill Monroe, the Chuck Wagon Gang, the Carter Family, Bessie Smith, Bob Wills, Narciso Martinez, and others.

The exhibition will be on display at the following locations: Grafton (until July 5), Elkins (July 11-August 21), Williamson (August 28-October 9), Beckley (October 16-November 30), and Petersburg (December 3-January 24).

For more information, call the West Virginia Humanities Council at (304)346-8500, or visit www.museumonmainstreet.org/newharmonies.

Riverside Blues Fest

The First Annual Riverside Blues Fest will be held July 18 on River Street in Elkins from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is $10; ages 12 and under are free. All proceeds will benefit the Riverside School Renovation Project. The school was built in 1906 and is the only African American high school in Randolph County.

Performers include the Dennis McClung Blues Band, the Appalachian Jazz Project, Ms. Freddye and the Blue Faze, Kevin Freison and Company, and Mick Souter. Jam sessions will be held between the scheduled performances.

In addition, the West Virginia Center for African American Art and Culture will present a series of educational posters, depicting historical achievements of noted African American educators and inventors. Special exhibits will include the Riverside Alumni Oral and Pictorial Histories, which will feature many never-before-published photographs of the African American community in Randolph County.

To purchase tickets or for information, call (304)924-2292 or visit www.randolphcountyyouth.org.

Melungeon Gathering

The Melungeon Heritage Association will hold its 13th Union on June 26-27 at Chief Logan State Park Hotel and Conference Center. The park is located four miles north of Logan, just off U.S. Route 119.

Formed in 1998, the Melungeon Heritage Association is dedicated to preserving Melungeon history and heritage in southern Appalachia. The annual gathering helps bring people together from across the country who are searching for information about their Melungeon culture and ancestry. The Union is held at a different location each year. This is the first time it has come to West Virginia.

The Melungeons are of mixed ethnic ancestry and were first documented in northeastern

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

Tennessee and southwestern Virginia. Some of the legends surrounding Melungeons include theories that they are descendants of early Portuguese and Spanish explorers, or possibly descendants of the "Lost Colony" of Roanoke Island.

For more information about the 13th Union, visit www.melungeon.org or write to the Melungeon Heritage Association, P.O. Box 4042, Wise, Virginia 24293.

Blennerhassett Frolic

Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park will host an Island Frolic on June 27, July 25, and August 29. The three-hour adventure includes a round-trip sternwheeler ride, an evening meal, a guided tour of the Blennerhassett Mansion, and a narrated old-fashioned hayride tour of the island.

Harman Blennerhassett was a wealthy Irish aristocrat from County Kerry. After Blennerhassett married his niece, Margaret Agnew, in 1796, the couple was ostracized by their families and decided to move to America. They settled on the Ohio River island in 1798, where Blennerhassett built a magnificent mansion, known as the most beautiful home west of the Alleghenies. In 1806, President Thomas Jefferson accused Blennerhassett and his friend Aaron Burr of plotting treason, and the lives of both men were ruined.

Activities begin at 6:30 p.m. each day. The menu is varied for each of the three frolics. Adult price for the Island Frolic is $25, children ages 3-12 are $20, and children under two years old are free. Reservations are required at (304)420-4800, or visit www.blennerhassettislandstatepark.com for more information.

Oral History Workshop

Michael and Carrie Kline will conduct a weeklong workshop, titled Listening for a Change: Oral History and Appalachian Heritage, in Elkins from June 28 until July 3. The course is open to anyone wishing to explore the folklore and oral traditions of the Allegheny Highlands of West Virginia. GOLDENSEAL contributors, the Klines are experienced oral historians, audio producers, and folklorists.

Students will learn to document

Blennerhassett Mansion, Wood County.

Michael Kline, at left, conducts interview. Photographer unknown.

and record songs, ballads, and stories. Activities will include field trips to rural homes, hillside farms, and small-town general stores.

Listening for a Change will be held at the Klines' home at 114 Boundary Avenue in Elkins. For information about tuition, meals, housing, or other questions, visit www.folktalk.org/events.html or call (304)636-5444.

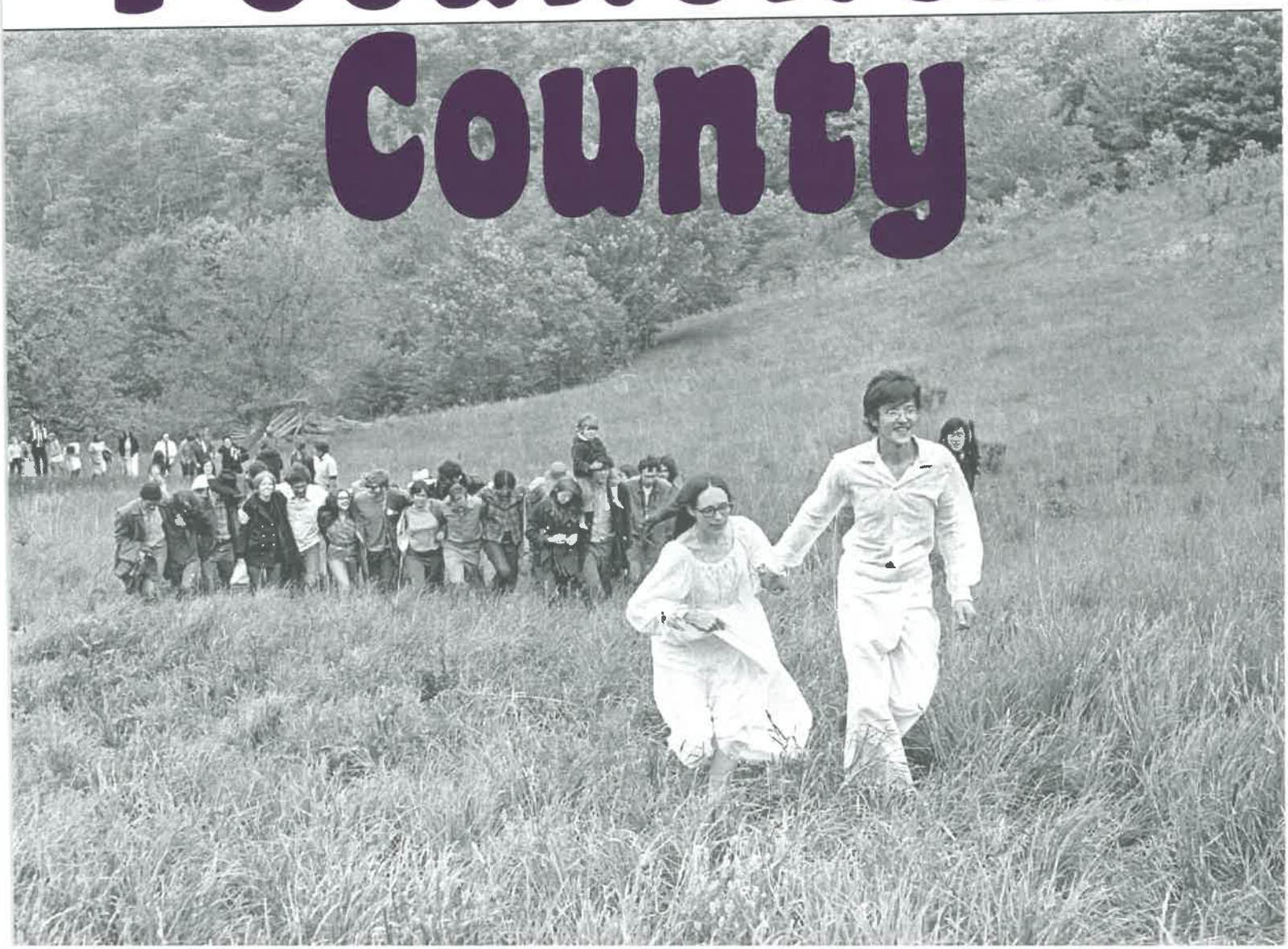
GOLDENSEAL Good-Bye

Ferrell Friend of Ivydale passed away on December 14, 2008, at age 96. After graduating from Clay County High School, he bought a camera and sold Clay County photographs to *The Charleston Gazette*. Ferrell was a photographer for the U.S. Navy during World War II and joined the staff of *The Charleston Gazette* after the war. He retired from the *Gazette* in 1975 but never stopped taking pictures. Many of Ferrell's photographs reflect country people going about their daily lives, but he also photographed presidents Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Gerald Ford during his career. Ferrell was featured in our Summer 2007 issue, in the article "Country Photographer Ferrell Friend: 70 Years Behind the Camera," by Skip Johnson.

Ferrell Friend

Back to the Land in Pocahontas County

By David Holtzman



Young transplants, many with cut-off jeans and long hair, valued certain aspects of West Virginia traditional life, including mountain music. Here, several participate in a jam session in Greenbrier County, photographer and date unknown. The banjo player is Chally Erb, others unidentified.

In 1971, a state road crew cut down some big trees on Lobelia Road in Pocahontas County. The people who lived there promptly cut the trees into stacks of firewood. To their surprise, the wood soon disappeared. It turned out that a young couple new to the area had spotted the freshly chopped wood and hauled it away.

"They thought, 'Oh boy, free firewood!'" remembers Beth Little, who moved to Lobelia Road around that time. "To the local people, they had just stolen their wood. Word got around pretty fast, and the couple was told they needed to take it back. It was ignorance, just not understanding how things worked."

Situations like this were common in southern Pocahontas County and just over the line in Greenbrier County during the early 1970's, as large numbers of people moved to the area from big cities. It was one of several places in West Virginia that drew the attention of people in the back-to-the-land movement, mostly young people seeking a simpler way of life. By the middle of that decade, there were so many newcomers that they became a topic of conversation among natives of the area.

It was a big deal for so many new people to be moving to Pocahontas County, which had been losing people since the end of the logging boom in the 1920's. The trend was hardly limited to Pocahontas — only two counties in the state did not gain population during the 1970's. The back-to-the-landers played a major role in this shift, but the trend did not last. By the end of the decade, many of the newcomers had moved back to the cities, typically because they couldn't make a living here.

Of those who stayed, few took up skills traditional to the area, like farming or timbering. They found other ways to connect to their new communities, such as starting their own businesses, going to work for the schools, or joining the boards of local organizations. The newcomers used their imaginations to live out their dreams of a rural existence and slowly took on new identities as West Virginians.

The back-to-the-land movement occurred during a time of great upheaval in American culture, and many of the people who joined it wanted to "drop out" of mainstream society. To people in Pocahontas County, many of the newcomers appeared to fit the image they had of hippies, with long hair, beards, tattoos, and a "love child" attitude, as Evelyn Lewis,

The back-to-the-land movement of the 1970's drew a large number of urban newcomers to rural West Virginia. This group at left climbs a hill in Pocahontas County to celebrate the wedding of Karl Hille and Barbara Lauster in 1970. Photograph by Laurie Cameron.

Beth White of Lobelia Road with daughter Diva and other children in 1976. Like many commune members, Beth made clothes for herself and her family.

a lifelong resident of Friars Hole Road in Greenbrier County, recalls. Some locals were wary of the new crowd, based on the perception that the newcomers were just too different to blend in.

"Some of my friends steered completely away from them," Evelyn says. "They didn't know them and didn't want to have anything to do with them. I found out, even though we don't embrace the same beliefs religiously, that they were always good neighbors."

The city people didn't necessarily take to their rural neighbors, either, at least not at first. But over time, the ones who wanted to break down the cultural barriers between the two groups found ways to do so.

On a section of the dirt road between Friars Hole and Lobelia roads, a group of city folks established a commune in the early 1970's, which drew other back-to-the-landers to their popular musical gatherings. Out of curiosity, Evelyn and her husband, Vesper, walked up the hill to some of these events. That's how Evelyn first met Beth White, a member of the commune and a native of Detroit.

That section of dirt road had come to be known as "Hippie Hollow," "Island of the Red Hood," or simply "Red Hood," depending on whom you asked. It was here that the commune settled after leaving its original home in Summers County. Members of the commune threw all their money into a common pot, whether or not they were related to each other, and lived like one big family. The "island" part stemmed from the newcomers' perception that they were surrounded by people who had very different views of the world than they did, says Beth Little. The "Red Hood" part of the name was a reference to the hood of a red car that had been left on the Summers County property.

Beth White had joined the commune in 1972, after a year of living in an old schoolhouse in Raleigh County and working for a farmer. She had come to West Virginia the year before to visit a friend, who was working in the federal government's VISTA antipoverty program. White was so enthralled by the rural beauty of the area that she decided to stay awhile. Though she was happy where she was, her friends thought the commune would give them some of the intellectual stimulation they had enjoyed during their city days. So Beth joined them and stayed when they relocated to the Lobelia Road property in 1975.

Everyone in the Friars Hole area knew their neighbors, and Evelyn and Vesper were accustomed to walking through the woods to visit friends and family. As a young mother staying at home, Evelyn relished these experiences. So when the Lewises heard about the commune, it made perfect sense to pay a visit.

While Evelyn and Beth bonded

Evelyn and Vesper Lewis welcomed their new neighbors and helped them get adjusted to life in the mountains. This 1983 snapshot shows Evelyn and Vesper with a work colt named Roxie.

right away, Evelyn also developed connections with other commune members. She would barter eggs and other farm products for things the newcomers made, like pottery and leather goods. Evelyn also gained an appreciation of organic gardening from the back-to-the-landers. Meanwhile, Vesper, who worked horses, shared his knowledge with the new neighbors.

In 1979, Vesper went to work for the state highway department, and Evelyn was left home alone with their young children much of the time. She began inviting other women in the neighborhood to her place to make quilts. Beth White and many of the other "hippie women" joined them.

"Most people came for the social life," says Evelyn. "It was before quilting guilds got a lot of notice. We'd meet for three or four hours and put on a big pot of soup." Evelyn was the most serious quilter among them, she says. The group made its only sale of a quilt to Beth White's father. "Then everybody started having babies, and some moved out of the area."

Few of the back-to-the-landers had children when they moved to the area. Beth Little was an exception. She, her husband, and two small children had traveled around the country for a year before settling on Lobelia Road in 1971. Beth Little was different from most newcomers in other ways, too: she was older, had bought a home, and had built a career as a computer engineer in California. Not only was she choosing to leave her home behind, she was trading in

Farming was a new experience for many back-to-the-landers, so they appreciated any help they could get. Here, Danny Boone, Josh Lipton, and Lionel Williams stand in front of a haystack, while Wells Friedman stands on top of it. Photographer and date unknown.

Colorful and smiling, this group celebrated Thanksgiving 1971 at "Melvie's Mansion," an old farmhouse in Pocahontas County where Beth Little and her family lived at the time.

a mainstream lifestyle for one that was radical for the times.

"We were going to take a year's leave of absence," she recalls. "It took us almost a year to get ready. We sold the house, the boat, all the furniture. We built our little travel trailer, saved our money. In the process, we really looked at every aspect of our lives, all the little things that cost money, and we went through a major lifestyle change. By the time we left, we knew we weren't taking a leave of absence. We were quitting. We just knew we weren't going to be coming back."

Beth Little, like many of the back-to-the-landers, came to West Virginia with a heightened environmental ethic. She wanted to raise her children on natural, unprocessed foods, which she felt would be difficult to do in the city, where she would have to buy everything at the grocery store. In the 1980's, when she built the house where she now lives, she built it partly into the ground, so it would be cooler in summer and warmer in winter.

"We really looked at every aspect of our lives, all the little things that cost money, and we went through a major lifestyle change."

Beth also wanted to home-school her kids. "A lot of the newcomers home-schooled their children. That was something new," says Mac McNeel, president of the Pocahontas County Board of Education in the 1970's. "I thought they all did it for their children's own good. That was when the consolidation of schools happened. A lot of people didn't like the traveling."

Beth Little's new neighbors were generally delighted that young people wanted to settle in the area. "They were pretty tickled at some of the strange ideas we had about how to do things, and at how green some of us were," she remembers. But they were also impressed that their new neighbors wanted to try to live in the old ways.

"I heard through the grapevine how they were living," says Mac McNeel, who didn't live on Lobelia Road and had few encounters with the back-to-the-landers at that time. "I was brought up to live on the land, and it wasn't too far from the way I'd been brought up."

Beth White remembers that

many of her neighbors would come and help the commune members learn basic farming techniques. The commune succeeded in setting up a small farm, though the commune petered out by the late 1970's as its leaders left the area.

Not everyone in the community was happy to see the new arrivals. Curtis Pritt, who has lived his whole life on Jacox Road just off Lobelia Road, had fought in Vietnam and wasn't pleased with his neighbors' antiwar stance.

"I'd grown up here and gone to school here, and they were completely different from what I was used to," he says. He found it remarkable that many of the newcomers had come to the area to live off the land, though they didn't know anything about how to grow crops or raise livestock. He was also mystified by their other ways. He remembers that a group of the newcomers nearly froze to death while spending a winter living in a barn, and soon left the area. Pritt wondered if the back-to-the-landers were surviving on welfare payments.

Other lifelong residents, while welcoming, had to come to terms with the fact that many newcomers lived with partners to whom they were not married. Few were interested in organized religion. Another point of contention for some natives was the fact that many back-to-the-landers grew and consumed marijuana.

Laurie Cameron, a New York City transplant who moved to Pocahontas County in 1975, says he knew of quite a few West Virginia natives who grew illicit drugs, too. But it was something many local residents associated with the outsiders. Laurie says he holds the distinction of being the first person charged with growing marijuana in West Virginia, for which he received a year's probation.

"There were a bunch of people who came up to me after it was starting to blow over, and said they'd been caught cooking alcohol 35 years before," he says. "A lot of older people around here regarded it as just another form of a revenue operation, and a lot of local people got into growing it. Most of the new people grew it just to smoke it."

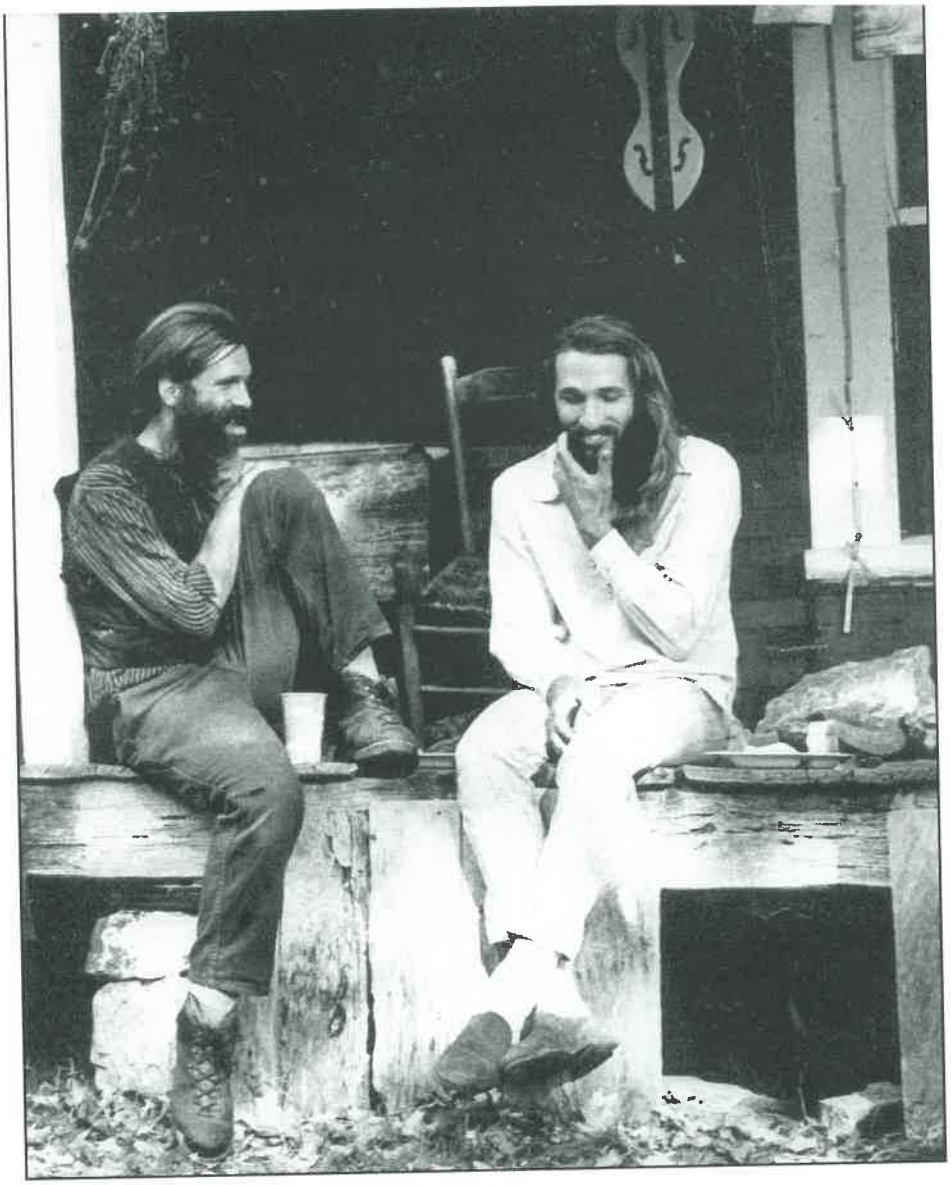
J. Moffett "Mac" McNeel served on the Pocahontas County Board of Education and the Farm Credit board of directors in the 1970's, when the back-to-the-land movement started in earnest. "They really took a hold in the 1990's," he says. "I never could figure out what changed, but I always thought people were more accepted in the community by then."

Like many of her counterparts, Beth Little had to return to the city to make some money. She moved to Philadelphia, where she found work at a university. But she always wanted to come back, and when she heard of an opening teaching at Pocahontas County High School, she returned.

This time, Beth Little intended to become a permanent West Virginian. Her friendship with Betty Rae Weiford, the county extension agent, led her to get involved with various community groups. She joined the board of Allegheny Mountain Radio, the community radio station. [See "Bringing Back Memories: On the Air With Bessie Gray," by Johanna Eurich; Winter 1982]. She also volunteered to teach fellow residents about good nutrition and how to save money. Meanwhile, she made enough money as a computer consultant to get by.

Beth White never returned to the big city, though she did move to a small one for awhile. She was happy living near the site of the former commune, and when the commune dissolved, Beth and her husband, Chally Erb, bought a place of their own on the Greenbrier side of the county line, where they lived without electricity or indoor plumbing. When their children were teenagers, the family moved to Lewisburg. After eight years, Beth and Chally returned to Lobelia Road, while one daughter, Diva, stayed in Lewisburg and opened an art gallery and shop.

Beth, who had studied dance in New York City, joined another new-



Dan Daley, at left, and Michael Condon at their adopted Pocahontas County home in the early 1970's.

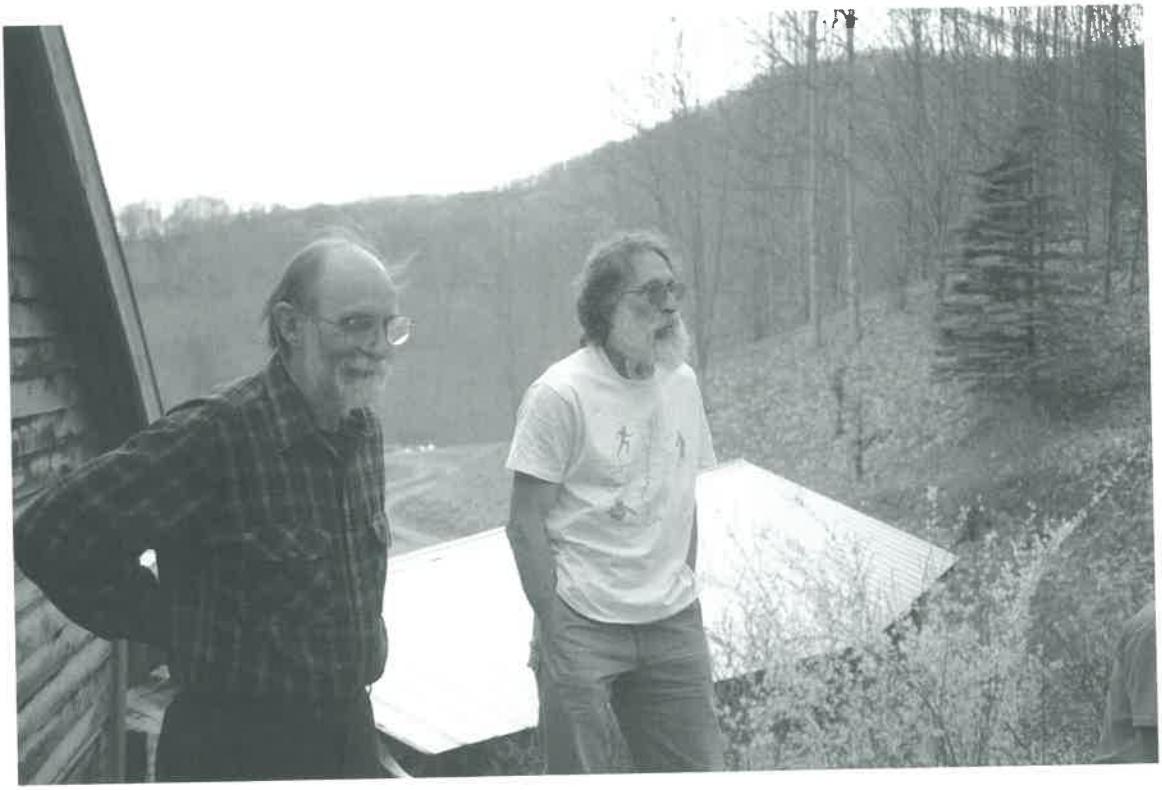
comer to the area to start a dance studio in Lewisburg, commuting from her home in the country. They were among a number of people who came from other parts of the U.S. and helped to change the face of the city's business district during the 1980's and '90's, opening a natural foods store and restaurants and reviving cultural institutions, like Carnegie Hall.

Many back-to-the-landers became involved in their communities over time. Martin Saffer is now a Pocahontas County commissioner. Dick Evans serves on the Pocahontas County Farmland Protection Board.

"At first, they weren't too involved with community or school activities," says Mac McNeel. "[But] they really took a hold in the 1990's. I never could figure out what changed, but I always thought people were more accepted in the community by then."

As different as their backgrounds were, many West Virginia natives and the newcomers eventually realized they had a lot in common. After all, the back-to-the-landers had come here because they thought people in rural West Virginia knew how to live better.

"They weren't into material things, and we never had many things," says Evelyn. "Mike Condon [another back-to-



Laurie Cameron, at left, and Michael Condon at a recent gathering in Pocahontas County. Laurie and Michael are among a small group of back-to-the-landers who settled here permanently. Photograph 2009 by Doug Chadwick.

the-lander on Lobelia Road] explained it to me," says Evelyn. "He just didn't like the rat race. Living like we did, we could understand that. You felt sorry for people who could not experience our type of life."

Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of the new people was their way of communicating. City people just tend to talk faster, and without as much hesitation. Sue Evans, who has lived off Lobelia Road since she moved from California in 1977, recalls when she first would go into Marlinton. "If I didn't stop and say something like, 'How are you?' or something about the weather, the people at Richardson's Hardware Store would look at me and say, 'You're not from around here, are you?' I just learned to slow down a little bit."

"You just have to know how to hunker down to meet people," says Dick Evans, Sue's husband. He demonstrates by squatting the way two farmers do when they meet at the fence. "You have to create the openness, the flow of communication. Sometimes [people from West Virginia] are a little reticent about being real open unless they know you. It helps to bring down any barriers, if you're open and accessible yourself."

Another wave of city people coming into Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties is occurring now, but the new crowd is very different from the group that came in the 1970's. Most are retired or are building a second home. Curtis Pritt, who does masonry work and has helped build several new houses in recent years, says some of today's newcomers seem uninterested in building community. "One family is even stranger than the people who came in the '70's. They don't associate with nobody," he says with a laugh.

Those back-to-the-landers who stayed recognize how much people on Lobelia Road valued knowing their neighbors. Sue Evans remembers how, when she and her husband first moved to the area, "The neighbors all thought they owed us a day's labor to help us build the house. This one old guy said he was sorry he couldn't help, because he had a bad back, but all summer he brought us fresh vegetables."

DAVID HOLTZMAN graduated from Colby College in Maine and holds a master's degree in urban policy from Tufts University. He was a Pocahontas County resident until recently moving to Massachusetts, where he works as an urban planner. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Beth White, at left, and Evelyn Lewis share a hearty laugh in 1994. The two met in the 1970's, when Beth was living on a commune.

Open Arms

20th Appalachian String Band Music Festival

By John Lilly

Photographs by Michael Keller

Left: A crowd gathers for the 2002 Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop, Fayette County.

Right: Musicians come to Clifftop from coast to coast and from several other countries to enjoy string band music in its many and varied forms. Jam sessions, such as this one in 2000, take place all day and into the night.

at Clifftop

"Though historically rooted in rural hills and hollows, string band music now enjoys a vitality and community that extends far beyond the Appalachian mountains. The [Appalachian String Band Music] Festival is an open-armed celebration — please join us!"

With these words on the first festival flyer in 1990, the West Virginia Division of Culture and History rolled out the welcome mat to musicians and music lovers of all backgrounds and invited them to join in a new adventure. Over the past 20 years, tens of thousands of musical pilgrims have found their way to a remote mountaintop in Fayette County and helped to create a unique event — one that combines tradition and eccentricity, rural roots and urban branches, heritage and innovation.

The Appalachian String Band Music Festival was the brainchild of Charleston musician and organizer Will Carter. In the mid-1980's, Will was playing in a local band called the Green Meadow String Band, with fiddler Bobby Taylor, banjo player Mark Payne, guitarist Tom King, and Will on bass. Having just finished law school in New York City and having attended college in Boston, Will was acquainted with string band musicians from the East Coast, whose approaches

Will Carter, at right, brought his proposal for an eclectic string band music festival to the West Virginia Division of Culture and History in 1989. The festival celebrates its 20th anniversary this summer. Will is pictured here at the festival in 2000.

to traditional music were anything but traditional.

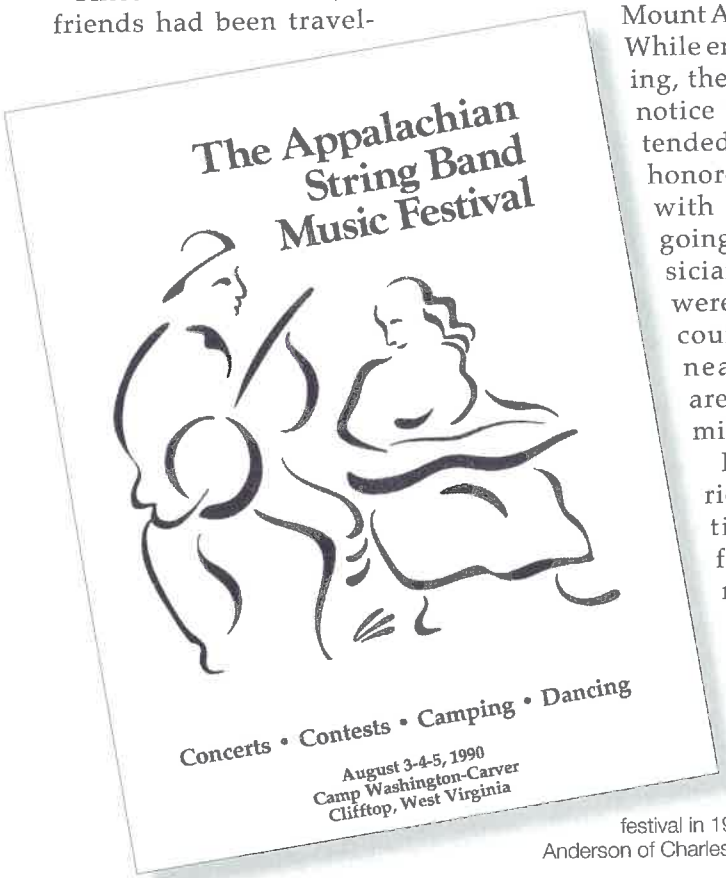
Since the mid-1970's, Will and his friends had been traveling to southern fiddlers conventions, including popular events held annually at Galax, Virginia; and at Mount Airy, North Carolina. While enjoyable and inspiring, they couldn't help but notice that these festivals tended to emphasize time-honored local traditions, with the contest prizes going mostly to local musicians. These festivals were also held in city or county parks, located near the downtown areas of these bustling mill towns.

In Will's own experience, musical traditions were traded freely and without much regard for the boundaries that sometimes exist between musicians. "I played for several years without even being aware of the distinction between bluegrass and old-time or mountain music or fiddle music," he says. "It was just what we played."

Though he eventually came to realize the differences between various styles of music, Will began to envision an event that would embrace a wide range of influences and one that would be held in a wooded, pastoral setting.

Several years earlier, the Division of Culture and History had hosted the Appalachian Open Championship, a high-dollar, highly competitive bluegrass music contest, held at Camp Washington-Carver, located near the town of Clifftop, in Fayette County. Clifftop, an old mining town established in 1884, was by then a quiet cluster of homes and closed-down buildings, situated along the old Midland Trail, about 20 miles southeast of Fayetteville.

Camp Washington-Carver was the nation's first state 4-H camp for African Americans. Dedicated on July 26, 1942, the stately facility was initially managed by West Virginia State College, now West Virginia State University. For the next 21 years, the camp served as a summer camp for as many as 1,600 black West Virginia campers annually. It also functioned as the primary non-school African American center for agriculture, mining, arts, and home economics education in West Virginia. Due to the effects of desegregation, the facility was closed in 1963 and was deeded to the state. [See "Camp Washington-



Flyer for the first Clifftop festival in 1990, designed by Colleen Anderson of Charleston.

campers and up to 1,500 walk-in participants. They come from primarily outside West Virginia. "I've seen people from all over the world come to this," she says. "They range from old hippies to city people who want to get out and enjoy the fresh air and this type of atmosphere. We have them here from North Carolina, California, Florida, Massachusetts. I've seen people from England, Ireland, Japan, Russia," and elsewhere.

One unexpected challenge Pat occasionally faces is dealing with financial paperwork for contest winners who live outside the country. "Sometimes they don't even speak English," she says with an exasperated smile.

Pat says that the largest challenge she faces is coordinating the staff for the event, which she estimates at between 50 and 60 people each year. This is complicated by the trend of campers wanting to come earlier and earlier each year, hoping to snag a favorable campsite. In response, Pat has decided to permit early campers on site beginning the Friday before the festival begins. This allows them a generous five days to set up their camps and enjoy the "quiet before the storm," while giving her staff the time they need to prepare the facility.

"To see this festival take off and be successful is extremely rewarding," Pat says. "I'm an events coordinator, and I do event after event after event. It's really nice to see something that takes off."

Responsible in no small way for the success of Clifftop is contest coordinator Bobby Taylor. Manager for the West Virginia Archives and History Library at the State Capitol complex in Charleston, Bobby has been with the state for more than 30 years. He is a fourth-generation West Virginia fiddler, an exceptional musician in his own right, and no stranger to the contest stage. He was pegged early on to coordinate state music contests at the Vandalia Gathering, the Appalachian Open Championship, and the Appalachian String Band Music Festival. Bobby also travels around the country, judging some of the most competitive and prestigious fiddle contests in the nation.

"I don't feel that I am totally, by any means, responsible for successes or failures," Bobby says. "But I am honored that the judging criteria, selection of judges, and guidelines for contests [at Clifftop] has been adopted far and wide."

Over the years, Bobby has heard countless comments and suggestions regarding the contests and contest judging at Clifftop and has willingly modified the rules

Brochures from previous festivals.

Campers fill every available space at the 583-acre facility. This photograph was taken in 1993.

and guidelines as the festival has matured. One example of this is the recent decision to change the nontraditional band contest to neo-traditional, with new awards given to the writers of the best original songs.

For years, the nontraditional band contest was a highlight of the festival for many, but was a quagmire from the judges' standpoint, Bobby says. With virtually anything in the world likely to happen on the stage, ranging from hot jazz, to Hare Krishna chants, to interpretive dance, the judging was indistinct, at best. With the recent introduction of the neo-traditional band category, however, festival organizers hope to clarify the judging criteria by awarding the highest scores to those contestants who successfully combine some aspect of traditional string band music with other influences. "You can't be pure to any tradition and win [neo-traditional]," Bobby says. "You've got to have the foundation of old-time. It's what you build on that foundation that allows you to win. The judges are looking for creativity. Versatility is another key factor in winning neo-traditional. We want to award our top places to people who skillfully and creatively blend something. We need to show different stuff being interwoven." Bobby admits that judging will always be subjective, especially in this area, but he plans to continue to modify and refine the contests and the rules as time goes on.

Contest coordinator Bobby Taylor. Photograph 1995 by Phil Swango.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the festival

from Bobby's perspective has been the joy of watching younger musicians come into the music, mature in their playing, and eventually go on to do well on stage, in some cases winning contests in competition with people of their parents' generation. Indeed, the festival owes much of its character and success to its popularity among younger musicians and their friends, many of whom have been attending Clifftop since they were born. It is this younger generation who will define the future of the music and, certainly, decide the future of events like Clifftop.

And the future looks good. More and more young people are taking up instruments, filling the dance floor, and writing new tunes and songs. In the safe and supportive atmosphere of Clifftop, they are free to explore different sounds and activities and experience people from widely different backgrounds. Many of these people they will see again, year after year, as they return to Clifftop each summer.

Bobby Taylor looks on this festival with satisfaction. "I feel like the sands of time, standing on stage," he says. "This is something special. Something historic. One hundred years afterwards, it's not going to die. If the Appalachian String Band Music Festival ceased, it has already made history."

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

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

Dancers move to the music in 2006.

20th Annual Appalachian String Band Music Festival

July 29 - August 2, 2009
Camp Washington-Carver
Clifftop, West Virginia

Wednesday, July 29
8:00 p.m. Square dance

Thursday, July 30
10:15 a.m. Banjo contest
11:00 a.m. Beginning square dance workshop
3:00 p.m. Masters showcase – Mike Seeger
3:00 p.m. Fiddle contest
8:00 p.m. Square dance
8:30 p.m. Concert – New Lost City Ramblers

Friday, July 31
12:30 p.m. Neo-traditional band contest
1:00 p.m. Masters showcase – Tracy Schwarz
2:30 p.m. Beginning square dance workshop
7:00 p.m. Concert – Special Ed and the Short Bus
8:00 p.m. Square dance

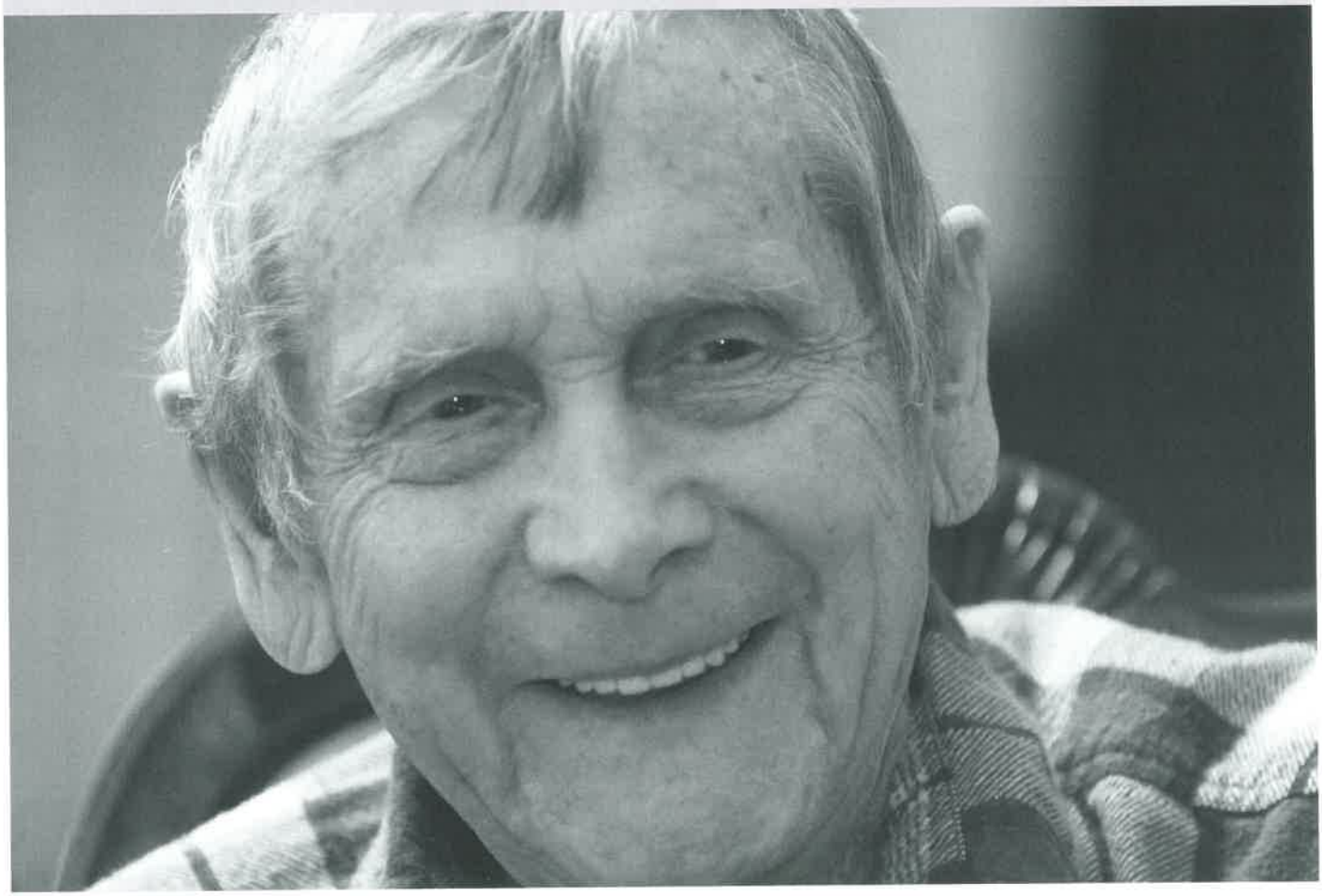
Saturday, August 1
11:00 a.m. Flatfoot dance workshop
12:00 p.m. Traditional band contest
3:00 p.m. Masters showcase – John Cohen
5:45 p.m. Flatfoot dance contest
8:00 p.m. Concert – Bing Brothers
8:00 p.m. Square dance

For a complete schedule, directions, or information about camping and admission fees, phone (304)558-0162 or visit www.wvculture.org/stringband/.

"Keep a-Goin'"

By John Lilly

Musician Everett Lilly of Clear Creek



Everett Lilly of Clear Creek, Raleigh County. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Born in 1924, musician Everett Lilly has been going strong for nearly 85 years, living just a stone's throw from the Clear Creek property where he was born. A casual observer might not realize that Everett, together with his late brother "B," traveled the world over, performing and promoting the music of his Raleigh County home.

The Lilly Brothers, playing with neighbor Don Stover, introduced countless new fans to the down-home music of southern West Virginia at the peak of their popularity during the mid- to late 1960's. Singing tight, "brother" harmonies and playing at a breakneck tempo on guitar, mandolin, banjo, and fiddle, they are generally credited with bringing authentic mountain music to New England in the 1950's and then, in the 1970's, to Japan.

One of seven children born to Burt and Stella "Stell" Lilly, Everett describes himself as one of the family's "middle" children. He had four sisters: Flossie, Strossie, Ella, and Zettie. His older brother was named Michael Burt "B"; the youngest child in the family was brother Vivia. The ancestors of the Lilly family were among the earliest settlers to that part of West Virginia. [See "The Lost Village of Lilly," by Jack Lilly; Summer 1998.]

Everett's family farmed and lived without indoor plumbing or electricity, as did all of their neighbors. Burt was a carpenter by trade. He built houses, including the house where Everett was raised. He also taught Everett the carpentry trade; Everett himself built his current home, as he points out with a note of pride in his voice.

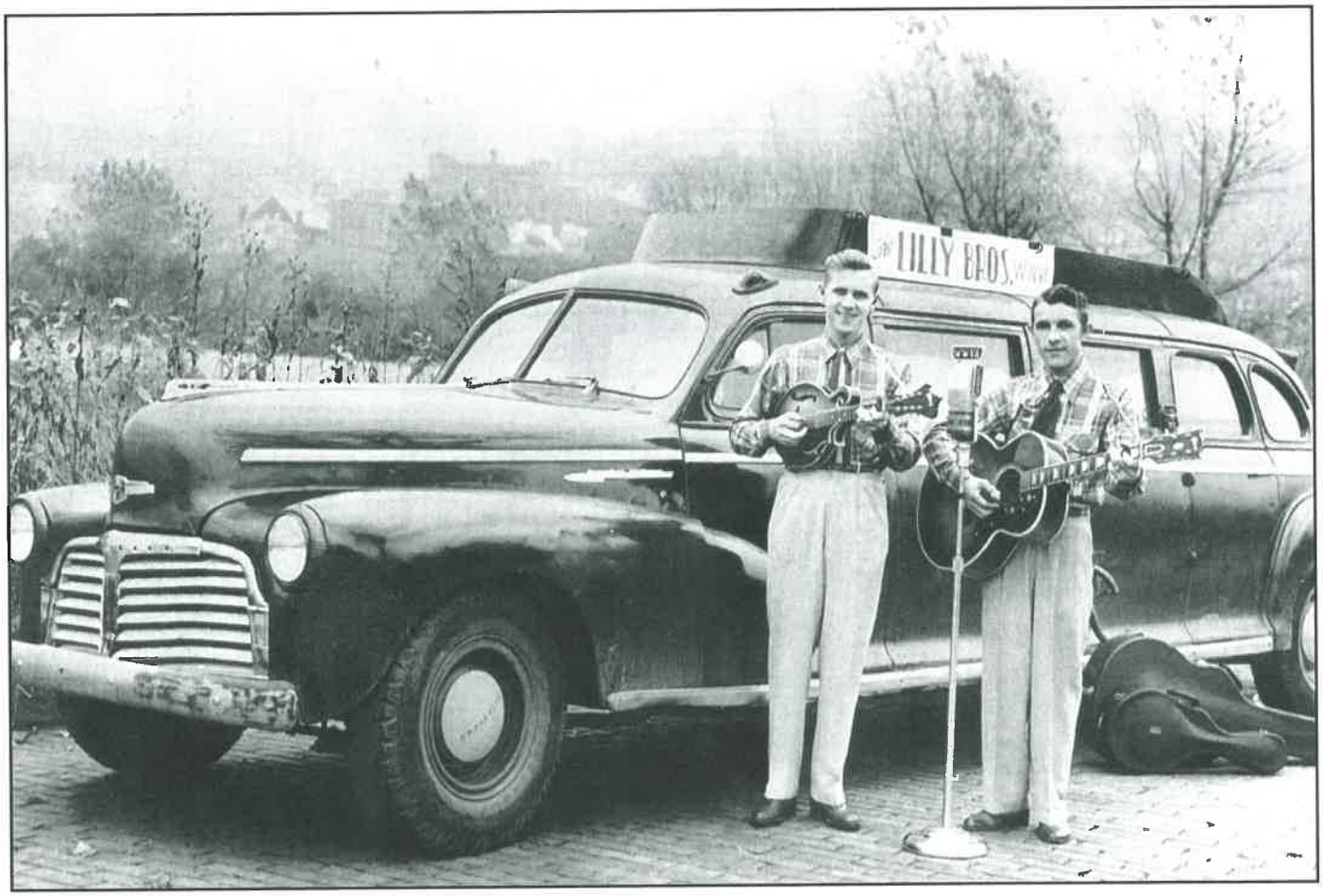
While he was growing up, Everett and his family spent much of their time at the local Methodist church, where Burt Lilly sang and played the pump organ. This was Everett's introduction to music, he says. Many of the old hymns sung at this church, most taken from an old Shape Note hymnal, became integral to the Lilly Brothers' repertoire in later years.

Everett, at left, and his older brother Michael Burt "B" Lilly began singing and performing together at an early age. They are pictured here at Wheeling in about 1948.

There was an old pump organ in their home, as well, and two of Everett's sisters became proficient at playing it. "I had a sister. Her name was Ella," Everett recalls. "She could really play an organ. She'd play all such stuff as 'Ridin' On that New River Train.' She could tear it up!"

But keyboard music didn't hold a deep attraction for Everett personally. "We never cared much for the organ and pianos," Everett says. "I like them now more than I did in those days." Instead, Everett and B were drawn to string music, which was becoming increasingly popular in their area.

At the age of four or six years old — Everett isn't sure exactly how old he was — Everett and B began singing together. As Everett recalls, he initially sang the melody while B played guitar and sang harmony. The pair of precocious youngsters sang at church and entertained neighbors at family and community gatherings, singing hymns and traditional songs. Though Everett had



The Lilly Brothers' broadcasts over Wheeling's WWVA radio introduced them to a wide audience, particularly in New England and Canada. They drove this Chevrolet to personal appearances during the early 1950's. Everett says he wishes he had this vehicle back again.

already begun to teach himself to play the guitar, his father bought him a mandolin, which quickly became Everett's main instrument. In addition to taking up the mandolin, Everett also taught himself to sing tenor harmony, leaving B to carry the melody on most songs and establishing the core of the distinctive "Lilly Brothers" sound they would carry with them throughout their careers.

Everett feels there is something unique in the sound of sibling harmony. "It's just something you feel from one to another, you know, if you're family," he recently told Suzanne Higgins of West Virginia Public Broadcasting. "We was putting it right in the people's ears. And we knew that. We could feel it. We could feel them taking it in. It was easier to do that a-way."

As youngsters, Everett and B built a local reputation as musicians. They performed whenever possible, joining in local music gatherings and playing for square dances. They also practiced diligently. "In our younger days, early of the morning, we'd sit in the kitchen," Everett recalls. "One of us on the stove door, the other one on a chair. We'd sing and play, maybe for an hour before we'd quit. And this went on just about every day. So they say, practice makes perfect. In our case, we put in the time."

They also spent time with various musicians from their area. Some were strictly amateur, Everett says, while others were highly skilled. Paul Taylor was an accomplished drop-thumb banjo player who performed with Everett and B for some years. Singer and banjo player Jiles "Valley" Williams was reportedly quite talented, as well. Everett recalls that Valley did an excellent job on traditional numbers, such as "Little Birdie" and "Old Reuben," and also sang a little-known song called "The Very Scenes of Winter," which Everett hopes to record on an upcoming CD. ("In the very scenes of winter / Entwined with frost and snow / Dark clouds around me gather / Oh, the chilly winds do blow.")

Eventually, Valley Williams became Everett's father-in-law, when Everett married Joanne Williams, 60 years ago. The couple later named their son Jiles after Joanne's father.

In addition to local and family influences, Everett and B were drawn to the popular recording and radio artists of the day. Some of these included the Delmore Brothers, Callahan Brothers, Mainer's Mountaineers, the Blue Sky Boys, and the Carter Family. Though the Lilly family did not own a radio at the time, Everett and B found ways to hear the music they loved. "A man that ran the store where we bought groceries, he had one," Everett told journalist Penny Parsons, as quoted in a recent issue of *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine. "Me

The Confederate Mountaineers performed in Boston, Massachusetts, for 17 years, beginning in late 1952. They are, from the left, mandolinist Everett Lilly, guitarist B Lilly, fiddler Tex Logan, and banjo player Don Stover.

and my brother used to go over to his store early of a morning and get him to turn his radio on so we could hear the Monroe Brothers, Charlie and Bill."

Everett and B also listened to 78-r.p.m. recordings, learning many songs off of those records. In addition, they attended performances by their heroes whenever they played nearby. Everett recalls a memorable show put on by Mainer's Mountaineers, which he believes was one of his first exposures to professional entertainment.

The thought of making a profession of performing mountain music was never far from Everett's mind. "It run through our mind once in a while that we'd like to make a good living at that," Everett recalls. "I think anybody [who] plays and gets pretty good and gets around gets an idea that they'd want to make a living with [their music]."

After Everett and B each had a taste of coal mining, and after witnessing the hard labor their father undertook building houses, the boys were anxious to accept offers to perform for money and to play over live radio. They began to appear at local churches, schools, shows, theaters, and radio stations. While still teenagers, they appeared several times on WCHS radio's *Old Farm Hour* in Charleston. In 1940, they helped to open radio station WJLS in Beckley. [See "Principal Influences on the Music of the Lilly Brothers of Clear Creek, West Virginia," by James J. McDonald; April-June 1975.]

In 1944, Everett and B worked with Huntington musicians Molly O'Day and Lynn Davis over WJLS. [See "'Living the Right Life Now': Lynn Davis & Molly O'Day," by Abby Gail Goodnite and Ivan M. Tribe; Spring 1998.] They worked with Lynn and Molly again in 1947 over WNOX in Knoxville. In 1948, they went to WWVA in Wheeling, joining the popular Saturday night *Wheeling Jamboree*, working their own early morning time slot, as well. At WWVA, they appeared with Kentucky banjo player Red Belcher and fiddler Tex Logan, performing as the Kentucky Ridge Runners. According to Everett, their morning shows were very popular, owing much to Belcher's prowess as a pitch man. As Everett recalls, the main products sold on these early morning shows were baby chicks.

Everett and B Lilly at the Hillbilly Ranch, a honky tonk in Boston where they performed six nights a week for many years. Don Stover plays the banjo at left; others are unidentified.

Everett plays a custom-made mandolin built for him in 1986 by John Hutto. It has "The Lilly" inlaid into the headstock. Photograph by Michael Keller.

The group's Saturday night spots were also well-received and were broadcast over WWVA's powerful 50,000-watt signal, aimed at New England and Canada. Everett recalls that they received frequent letters and fan mail from Canada. He feels that their time in Wheeling opened many doors for them and introduced their sound to a much wider audience.

A couple of years later, a financial dispute led to the Lillys departure from Wheeling. They headed to Fairmont and WMMN for a brief stay before returning to Clear Creek.

Everett and B had met and befriended many well-known musicians, who had been playing the same radio stations and personal engagements as the Lilly Brothers had played. In early 1951, Everett received a call from Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, asking Everett to join their popular Foggy Mountain Boys band. Leaving B in Clear Creek, Everett hit the road with Flatt and Scruggs for a little over a year. During this time, he worked in Kentucky, Oak Hill, Roanoke, and Raleigh (NC). In addition, Everett recorded 14 songs with Flatt and Scruggs, including several that today are considered bluegrass music classics.

Everett missed traveling and performing with his brother, however, and in the summer of 1952, had a conversation with fiddler Tex Logan, whom Everett and B had known from their Wheeling days. Tex was a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston, and he encouraged Everett to consider forming a new band with him and coming to Boston. Everett and B discussed it. Though they were interested, the brothers felt they needed to find a suitable banjo player to join them.

During the time Everett was away, B had begun playing with a young neighbor and banjo player named Don Stover. When B asked Don if he wanted to join them and go to

Everett with his father-in-law, banjo player Jiles "Valley" Williams. Date and photographer unknown.

Massachusetts, Don was enthusiastic. "He was working in low coal, so daggone right he wanted to go!" Everett recalls. Within a week, Everett, B, and Don packed into a 1941 Chevrolet and headed to Boston.

Coming to Boston was a bit of a shock for the Raleigh County musicians. "When we went to Boston, it was sort of like going to a foreign country," Everett told interviewers Carl Fleischhauer and Tom Screven in 1975. [See "We Sing About Life and What It Means to Us: A Conversation with Everett Lilly," by Tom Screven and Carl Fleischhauer; July-September 1975.]

Everett with Robert and Jerry Tainaka, left to right, in the early 1970's.

Nevertheless, the new band set to work performing at various nightclubs and theaters in and around Boston. At Tex Logan's suggestion, they called themselves the Confederate Mountaineers and dressed in Confederate officers' uniforms, with boots, riding pants, dress shirts, ties, wide-brim hats, and badges that read "CSA."

"Oh yeah, I fit a few battles," Everett recalls with a chuckle. "I had a fight or two over that. I don't think it's really over that. I think it's just bully-ers come around, seeing how much you'll take."

Within a year, the Confederate Mountaineers settled into a regular, six-night-a-week engagement at a honky tonk called the Hillbilly Ranch, located next door to the Trailways bus terminal on the edge of Boston's entertainment district. They also performed a daily 15-minute program over WCOP radio and appeared each afternoon on the station's *Hayloft Jamboree*. Other engagements followed, and the band built a strong local audience for their brand of authentic mountain music.

"The music and our style of singing, for the folk and country [music], it was for real. So we were for real when we played and sang. And that made our music dominant. Didn't matter where we played. We really meant that music," Everett says. "It's telling about somebody's life. [If] they was good or bad, or if they was having a hard time or a good time, ...we were singing about that. We put our heart and soul in it. And the people could feel it."

"It's telling about somebody's life. [If] they was good or bad, or if they was having a hard time or a good time, ...we were singing about that. We put our heart and soul in it. And the people could feel it."

Soon, Everett, B, and Don moved their families to Boston and settled in for the long haul. Though the winters were rough and the culture was something new to them, the musicians were determined to make a living with their music, and staying in Boston seemed to afford them their best opportunity.

In 1956, Tex Logan took a job in New Jersey, leading Everett to step in and learn the fiddle. Everett had played fiddle casually as a boy, fiddling on occasion for square dances back home. He now became serious about the fiddle, and it soon became an important part of the band's music.

In the summer of 1958, Everett left Boston briefly to rejoin Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, but returned after about six months. "Lester and Earl was good to work with and good to work for, [but] I just missed B," Everett says.

During the 1960's, the band, performing as the Lilly Brothers, became part of the national folk music revival, appearing at colleges and festivals, particularly in New England and the Midwest. Everett says they were careful about scheduling these trips, however, mindful of their steady work at the Hillbilly

For the past 30 years, Everett has traveled and performed with his sons in the bands Clear Creek Crossing and the Lilly Mountaineers. Visible here with Everett are sons Daniel, at center, and Mark; date and photographer unknown.

Ranch.

About once a year, Everett says, the boys would return to West Virginia for about a week at a time. They also enjoyed occasional visits from their families to Boston. When Everett's father-in-law, Valley Williams, came to Boston, he would bring his banjo and join the brothers on stage. "He didn't play professional-like," Everett says, "but when he got around me an B, he got to playing some with us. We had him on stages different places. We had him professional before he knew it!"

As their families grew, some of Everett's sons joined them on stage, as well. At various times, Everett's sons Jiles, Charles, Mark, Everett Alan, and Daniel have been part of his band.

Sadly, in 1970, 16-year-old Jiles was killed in an automobile accident. Six months earlier, Everett's youngest son had been involved in a near-fatal accident. These tragedies hit Everett hard and caused him to reconsider his decision to live so far from Clear Creek. "I came back to West Virginia, thinking I wouldn't even play," he recalls. "I believe anybody, when anything bad happens, I believe you want to go home. At least long enough to get a hold of yourself."

After 17 years, Everett and his family returned to West Virginia. Everett did quit playing music temporarily and set about reestablishing his life in the place where he was born. For a time, he drove a school bus. By 1971, however, he, B, Don Stover, and Tex Logan began appearing at a few bluegrass music festivals around the country.

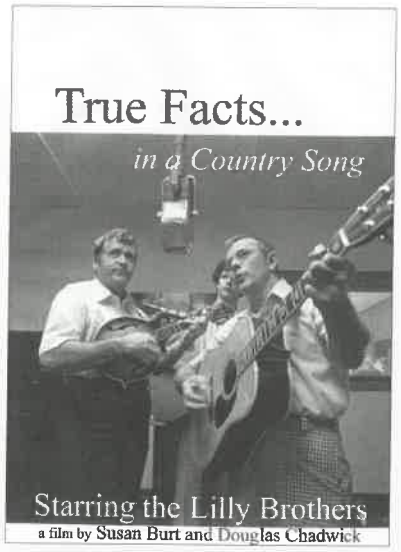
In 1973, something unexpected happened, when two old acquaintances from Boston named Robert and Jerry Tainaka invited the Lilly Brothers to be the first professional bluegrass band to perform in Japan. Everett and B had met the men some years earlier and had given them permission to record one of their live performances at the Hillbilly Ranch. The Tainakas had released this recording on an LP to Japanese listeners, and it had attracted a good deal of attention.

When the Lilly Brothers landed in Tokyo in September 1973, they were surprised by the reception they received. Crowds were gathered to see them at the airport, and they treated them like "rock stars," Everett says. "They wouldn't even let us carry our own instrument cases."

They returned to Japan a few years later, and Everett helped to book, promote, and manage a subsequent tour of Japan for Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys. To this day, the Lilly Brothers remain quite popular in Japan and are credited with introducing bluegrass music in that country.

Back in West Virginia, Everett continued to play music, though mostly in churches and at local gatherings, and primarily with his sons and other local musicians. Brother B and banjo player Don Stover returned to Boston, reuniting with Everett a

Lilly Brothers on DVD



A film about the music and lives of the Lilly Brothers is available on DVD. The film, titled *True Facts... in a Country Song*, was first released in 1979 and includes rare footage of Everett, B, and others performing at the Hillbilly Ranch in Boston, at a church in Raleigh County, off the front porch of a mobile home, and elsewhere. Interview segments with Everett Lilly reveal his rural background, strong religious feelings, and his thoughts about the music.

Produced by Doug Chadwick and Susan Burt, the 29-minute documentary was reissued on DVD in 2003. It sells for $20, plus tax and shipping, and is available by writing to P.O. Box 99, Hillsboro, WV 24946; phone (304)653-4916.

few times a year to play some of the bigger shows or festivals.

Recordings of the Lilly Brothers continued to be reissued and kept their music in front of the growing audience for roots and traditional music. Everett feels that there is a steady audience for his style of music due to its sincerity and the stories that are told in the songs. "They seem to like it 'cause of the stories they told," he says. "The songs are about something. When they heard a song, it's like telling them something. When we're singing a song, it like we're giving them a message, either good or bad, you know. I think that's where they really picked up on it."

The band's rural roots were another attraction to audiences. "They didn't figure they was hearing some pass-me-by," Everett says. "[They're] hearing somebody that's real. That often comes up when you're playing music. 'You guys are for real, ain't ya?' 'Yeah, you'd better believe it!'"

Over the last 30 years, Everett has performed extensively with his sons in the bands Clear Creek Crossing and the Lilly Mountaineers, along with periodic appearances with B as the Lilly Brothers, until B's death in 2005. The Lilly Brothers and Don Stover were inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Hall of Fame in 2002 and into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame in 2008. In 2008, Everett's recording, titled *Everybody and Their Brother*, was named the IBMA Recorded Event of the Year.

Though his health has slowed him down a bit recently, Everett still enjoys getting out and sharing his music with an appreciative audience. He also feels it is important that the music is passed on to another generation. "This kind of music needs to keep a-goin'," Everett says. "I'm sure it will, but the other music will smother it out, if it can."

Everett calls his style "American folk mountain country" music, and it will keep on going, as long as he has anything to say about it.

Everett takes to the hills on his four-wheeler, date and photographer unknown.

Sharp's Camp

By Bill Archer

Mercer County Poor Farm

When an entire generation of rural West Virginians left their family farms for jobs in the nearby coal mines or factories in the urban North, a part of the time-honored tradition of generational family support vanished with them. The families that remained to tend farms or open small businesses did the best they could to help family members who were too aged or infirm to fend for themselves, but almost overnight, a class of chronic poor emerged with no one left to help them and nowhere left to go.

The Mercer County Commission took what it no doubt thought was a magnanimous and altruistic step in about 1920, when it established a county poor farm at Gardner. The county acquired the farm from the Bluestone Land & Lumber Company, which had clear-cut the forests of Gardner and the surrounding area for more than a decade, processing the trees into lumber with the plant's huge band saw. Bluestone Lumber employed about 300 people from 1906 until 1917, until most of the nearby timber resources had been consumed. When Bluestone Lumber pulled out, the company left the estimated 80 flimsy buildings they called Sharp's Camp.

The county shuttled the poor to the abandoned shacks and provided them with seed to grow their own food. The poor farm's official record is scant at best. The poor farm's operational expenses don't appear as a line item in the county records. In fact, it is difficult to find any mention of the poor farm in the minutes of the commission's meetings. People remember it simply because it was there.

The county shuttled the poor to the abandoned shacks and provided them with seed to grow their own food.

"The houses they lived in were off the ground on blocks," Beverly Mills recalls. Her grandmother, Ollie Mae Hicks, lived the last few years of her life in one of the poor farm shacks. "How cold it must have been in the winter! How hot it must have been in the summer! It looked so barren." Mills, the wife of current Mercer County Commissioner Jay Mills, still laments the tragic circumstances that forced her family to send her grandmother to the poor farm.

Some of the old shacks that Bluestone Lumber built in the main section of Sharp's Camp were made of boards, but several cabins were made from logs. It was a segregated poor farm. Single white men were housed in one building, and single white women were housed in a separate building. Families were housed in cabins. The nearest integrated poor farm was located in Wytheville, Virginia, about 40 miles south of Gardner. Some black people who lived in southern West Virginia during the time of the Mercer County poor farm's operations indicated that local black families cared for the chronic poor, but many pulled up stakes and moved on.

The people who lived at the poor farm did everything for themselves. Poor farm residents transformed Bluestone Lumber's main office building and transient worker facility into a building called "the hotel," which was used for short-term male poor farm residents, according to

Sharp's Camp, an abandoned lumber operation near Gardner, became the Mercer County poor farm in about 1920. These cabins housed families or single mothers with children. Photographer and date unknown.

John Allen Scott, who grew up on a farm nearby. "They didn't have any women staying there at the hotel," recalls Scott, 84, of Gardner.

Scott says that his father, Hercules "Hack" Scott, was active in Democratic Party politics in Mercer County and would go to the poor farm hotel on election day to transport Democrats to the polls. Scott says that he and his father got along well with the people living at the poor farm, and he started taking his son, John Allen Scott, Jr., with him on his visits.

Like his father, John Scott, Jr., grew up on the family farm adjacent to the poor farm. The younger Scott was born in 1947 and remembers the final years of the poor farm's operations. "Those guys who lived there farmed the land and raised animals," he says. "They were expected to do everything for themselves. The county gave them a place to stay, but they had to do everything else for themselves."

Ruth (Hedrick) Porter was born on the Mercer County poor farm and was only 13 months old when her father, Thomas Clayton Hedrick, died. Mr. Hedrick was working for the county as superintendent of the poor farm and was 49 years old in 1944 when he died of a heart attack. The county allowed Mrs. Hedrick to remain on the farm to tend to orphan children who were living there.

"It was like a little city there," recalls Ruth, wife of State Delegate Mike Porter (R-Mercer). "There were some fun times and some hard times, I'm sure. People who didn't

Beverly Mills of Princeton recalls seeing the cabins at Sharp's Camp. Her grandmother lived in one of these shacks during her later years. Photograph by Bill Archer.

"The Hotel," at center, was the largest building on the poor farm complex and housed short-term male residents. It was formerly used as the lumber company's main office building. Photographer and date unknown.

have nobody and didn't have any money, ...I'm sure they had some hard times." The Hedrick family remained on the poor farm for the next few years until it closed, but Ruth still has fond memories of growing up with the orphaned children whom her mother cared for.

Jim Kinzer of Winfield, Putnam County, was born on the poor farm in 1939. His mother was not married and had gone to the poor farm because of the hard times brought on by the Great Depression. After Jim's birth, Lula Lambert, who was living nearby and was experiencing health problems, sent her husband to the poor farm in search of a woman who could assist her with the housework and help care for her. He hired Kinzer's mother, and the young woman brought her infant son to the Lambert home with her.

Kinzer's mother only stayed for a few months before leaving her infant son in Mrs. Lambert's care. Although Lula Lambert recovered from her illness, her husband died, and the two — Lula Lambert and Jim Kinzer — were forced to move in with her daughter, Mrs. James H. (Ruth) Clark, on Mercer Springs Road.

"I went to school for 12 years at Athens," Kinzer recalls. "I went by Gardner many times in the 1940's and '50's and wondered what my mother was like and what it was like to live there."

Kinzer's history teacher at Athens High School, Dorsey Martin, also had an interest in the poor farm and kept newspaper clippings about the farm. "I wanted to know all that I could about that way of life and, possibly, about my mother," Jim says. "I went to summer school between the seventh and eighth grades, and I just could not get enough West Virginia history." Jim parlayed his passion for understanding the state's history into being Athens Junior High School's Golden Horseshoe winner when he was in eighth grade.

Jim Kinzer of Winfield, Putnam County, was born at the poor farm in 1939. He is pictured here about eight years later.

In 1958, Jim was home on leave from the U.S. Army when his foster mother, Lula Lambert, passed away at age 86. "God has been wonderful to me," he says. "I have a lovely wife, two great daughters, and three grandchildren. I guess you can be born into extreme poverty and still become a good citizen, if you want to."

New federal and state programs emerged in the post-World War II era that rendered the old poor farm system obsolete. After it closed the Mercer County poor farm in the early 1950's, the county commission demolished all of the old cabins and most of the other structures. Recently, the Princeton Little

James "Jim" Russell Helmick was born on January 28, 1926, in Upper Tract, Pendleton County. His parents were Luther and Lena (Pennington) Helmick. Jim and his family lived at the Pendleton County poor farm during the early years of his life. He sat down with me in October 2007 and talked about that time and that place.

William D. Rexroad. When you were at the poor farm, how did you come to be there?

Jim Helmick. I think I was about three years old when I went there. We had a big family, and they couldn't make a living during the [Great] Depression. I think my dad was working for some farmer in Upper Tract, and in them days you didn't make a lot of money. They couldn't make a living, so they just brought us to the county farm. It went by three different names: the parish farm, the county farm, and the poor farm. My father didn't come when the rest of us did. I remember him coming later.

Jim Helmick spent his early years at the Pendleton County poor farm. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

WDR. Who were all your brothers and sisters in this big family?

JH. There were 13 kids all together. The two oldest ones died when they were young. The others after those two, from oldest to youngest, were: the twins, Mary and Mabel; then Lydia; Ella Mae; Ruth; me [Jim]; Anna Lee; Paul; Richard; Luther, Jr.; and Betty Jo. They were all at the poor farm at one time. There are only five of us left now: Ella Mae (Smith); Ruth; me; Richard; and Luther, Jr. Richard is Richard Murphy. He was adopted by the poor farm overseers, Isaiah and Kate Murphy. *[Ruth and Richard both passed away in 2008. —ed.]*

WDR. What was it like there? Did they just provide you a place to live and food to eat?

JH. Yeah, that was about it — a place to live and something to eat. Life itself was nothing. You just grew up. There wasn't really anything to do until you were old enough to work. From the time I was three until about six I just grew up. You had no amusement, nothing to play with, no radio. You lived with the old people. Life was boring, that's what it was.

It was a hard life, but you had to put up with it and you learned that you could. We came through it all right. I don't think I'd ever want to go through it again, but it helps you out the rest of your life. You never had nothing when you were little, so you don't miss things so much when you get older. I hear people complain about poverty. They can't tell me a thing about poverty. I know all about it. The only thing we got was what we ate and the clothes we wore.

WDR. How did they handle the meals?

JH. My mother and another lady did the cooking, and we ate down where they stayed. There was a house where the supervisor lived and another house where they cooked and ate. The women who cooked lived in that house.

WDR. What was the food like?

JH. It wasn't too good. About the only time we ever had a special dinner was on Sundays when visitors would come out, so they could see how good we were eating. The rest of the time you got a lot of stuff made out of dough, pot pies, gravy, and something they called milk soup. We never had much pork, and we never got much of the beef they butchered. This milk soup, I'd never heard of it before, and I don't ever want to eat it again. I couldn't stand it. It was just blue john milk and what they called ribbles. A ribble was made

Poor farm residents in about 1931. Seated, from the left, are Mabel Helmick, Mary Helmick, Anderson Bennett, Jim Helmick (circle), George Hedrick, Stewart Bennett (holding Paul Helmick), Dave Shoemaker, Anna Lee Helmick, and Ruth Helmick. Standing, from the left, are Bill Bennett, George Mowery, Elmer Lambert, John Hoover, Rose Cunningham, Beck McCoy, Jessie Bennett, Artie Arbogast, Lena Helmick, Virgie Hevener, Laura Mitchell, and Peggy Kirkyndall.

out of flour. They put a little water in it and made little balls. It was like what the lumps are in lumpy gravy. I can't eat lumpy gravy to this day.

WDR. What was blue john milk?

JH. That's what they called separated milk. Back then they called it blue john. That's about what it looked like after you got the cream out of it. They used a crank separator. I don't know who got the cream or what they did with it.

WDR. Did you ever get any sweets of any kind?

JH. Not very often. They'd make some pies once in a while, but we never did get any candies or anything like that.

WDR. What were the living arrangements like?

JH. There were three other buildings, 200 or 300 feet away from where they did the cooking. They were two-story, four-room buildings. The women were in one house, the men were in one house, and

"We slept on chaff ticks, or straw ticks, they were sometimes called. You fill them up with straw, and that's what you slept on."

they had a couple of people they kept in the third house. I stayed in the house where most of the men stayed. They didn't separate us by age. I was staying there with the old people. When my father came, he stayed in the same building with my mother, where they did the cooking. Us kids still stayed in the other buildings.

We slept on chaff ticks, or straw ticks, they were sometimes called. You fill them up with straw, and that's what you slept on. They had bedsteads that you put them on. The straw would finally go to pieces, and you had to refill them ever so often.

WDR. What kind of people were they, the older ones?

JH. They had a few that was real good and a few that wasn't really good to nobody, not even good to themselves. It was just a mix of people. Some of them were mentally incompetent and some just didn't have any education. Back in them days, they didn't go to school too much.

There was one old guy there who could cuss better than a Marine sergeant. He could cuss up a storm. He'd been there all his life, and no

one knew where he came from. No one knew how old he was. He didn't have any education either. People would come there just to hear him cuss. He'd ask for a nickel of people who came to hear him. He'd get mad if they gave him a penny instead of a nickel. He had a cane, and he'd hit you with it. The overseer finally told them, "If that's all you're coming for, well, stay away."

WDR. Did those older folks treat you kids badly?

JH. There was this one man who would get after you if you did anything to bother him. He just had a bad personality about him. I don't know where he came from. They brought a lot of them in from Grant and Hardy county. They weren't all from Pendleton County. One man there was mean as all heck. He stayed in one house with someone else.

WDR. You said there wasn't anything to do until you were old enough to work. What then?

Jim recalls a hard life at the poor farm. "I hear people complain about poverty," he says. "They can't tell me a thing about poverty. I know all about it. The only things we got was what we ate and the clothes we wore." Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

JH. We were too little to do much of the farm work, like cutting corn or making hay or thrashing wheat. But we had to carry the water for the hands out in the field. My father did all the work with the horses. He used a riding cultivator. That was better than walking along behind the horse. He would plow the corn, and we would have to follow along and uncover all the corn he covered up. And we had to carry a hoe along to cut the weeds out.

My father did most all the work after he came — all the work with the horses. I don't know who did the work before he came. There wasn't really many there who were competent to do anything. They were either mentally retarded or were too old.

After we got old enough to work, we had to learn to milk a cow. You're not much of a milker at 10 years old. One old cow was pretty good at kicking and kicked me over. She'd either kick me over or put her foot in the bucket, one or the other.

We had to take the cows to pasture every morning and go get them of an evening. The pasture was about a half-a-mile down the highway. We had 10 or 15 cows. One evening, me and this other boy went to get the cows, but we couldn't find them. I guess they went in the brush. We come back to the house and told them we couldn't find them. They said go back and get them. So we went back, and I guess they came out of the brush, 'cause we found them. But it was getting dark before we got them home, and somebody run into them. I don't think it hurt anything. It didn't hurt the cow, and it didn't hurt the car. The only thing that got hurt was our rear ends. We got a whipping for getting them back so late.

WDR. The farming work, was this just to grow food that you'd eat, or was it more than that?

JH. They grew all the food they ate. They had a garden, and they had fruits, and butchered hogs and beef. There were certain things they had to buy at the store, but they raised everything they ate. They milked cows, too.

They would have sales in the fall. I don't know what all they sold, but

they did sell corn. I remember that. They raised good corn. They hilled the corn back in those days. They didn't drill it like they do now. The hills were about 30 inches apart. When they cut the corn they'd shock it, 16 hills square. They'd sell it out of the field in the shocks.

WDR. What did they do with the fruit?

JH. They sold a lot of it, and I guess they put some away for the winter, but we never got any. I got my rear end whipped a couple of times for stealing apples out of the orchard. I remember one time they caught me when we were supposed to be filling the chaff ticks. I was out stealing an apple.

Another time I threw a rock up in the tree and hit a wasps' nest. I think every wasp in that nest stung me on the head. I couldn't say anything about it though, 'cause you knew what was coming if you did.

WDR. What about holidays, like Christmas?

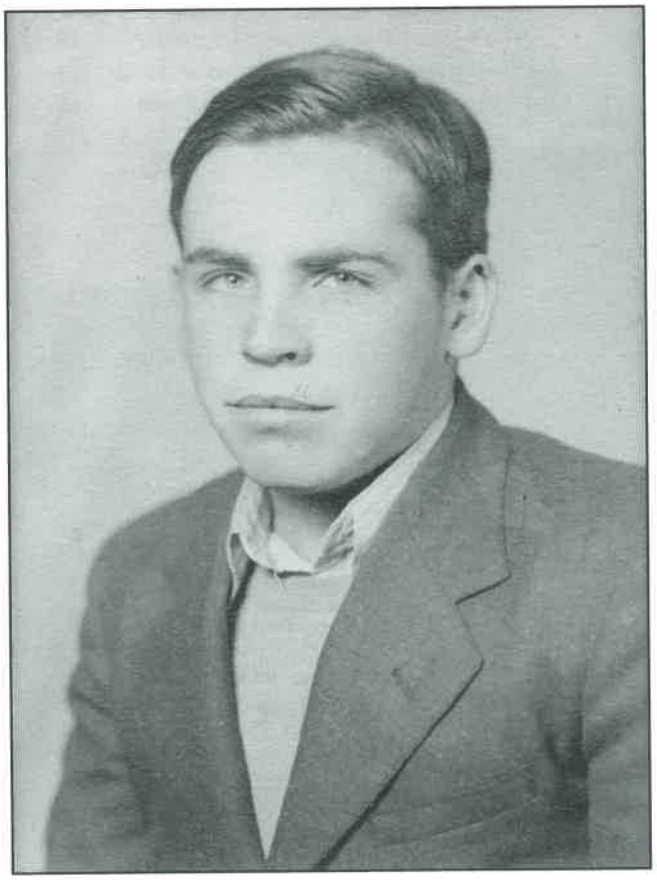
JH. We didn't even know what Christmas was. The only thing you knew about Christmas was what you heard somebody talk about. They might have given you an apple or an orange. No Christmas tree or anything. Christmas was just another day in the year. We never got to go anywhere, just stayed there at the poor farm except for going to school.

WDR. So you went to school while you were at the poor farm?

JH. Yeah, we went to school when we were six years old. We walked about two miles up to the schoolhouse. It was north of Ruddle. It was cold in the wintertime up along the river. You'd pretty near freeze.

WDR. Did you have any friends outside of the poor farm?

JH. There was a family that lived closest to the poor farm. They had a pretty big family, and they went to school the same time we did. We learned to know a lot of kids at school. We didn't know many kids at the poor farm. There wasn't many there, and when one came, well, somebody might adopt them or take care of them.



Jim Helmick in high school, about 1940. Photograph by Sayre, Clarksburg, W.Va.

WDR. How did you feel when you knew your friends from school were getting something for Christmas and you didn't get anything?

JH. That's the most disappointing thing in the world when you see other kids get things and you don't get anything. I remember one time, later in life, they were giving out candy to the kids in the church, but they wouldn't give any to kids who didn't belong to the church. I told them they'd better give it to all the kids, because that's the most disappointing thing in the world for a child to be left out like that. So they did. Then all the kids got candy.

WDR. How long were you at the poor farm?

JH. Until 1936, after they had the general elections. They came and took some of us out of school and took us to Elkins. About five of us went at the same time. They took us out there to a children's home.

WDR. Did they tell you why they moved you away like that?

JH. Well, they wanted to get us away from those old people.

WDR. Did they have their own school when you went over to Elkins?

JH. Yeah, it was a three-room school house in a barracks of the old CC camp there. That's where I graduated from the eighth grade. I got the Golden Horseshoe from West Virginia. I won it one year, and my sister won it the next. The prize was a trip to Charleston. They gave us the award in the State Capitol.

WDR. How long did your parents stay at the poor farm?

JH. My dad passed away there. I think that was about in 1938. I was at Elkins and didn't find out about it until about six months later.

My mother was there until they closed the place down. I think it was about '70 when they closed it

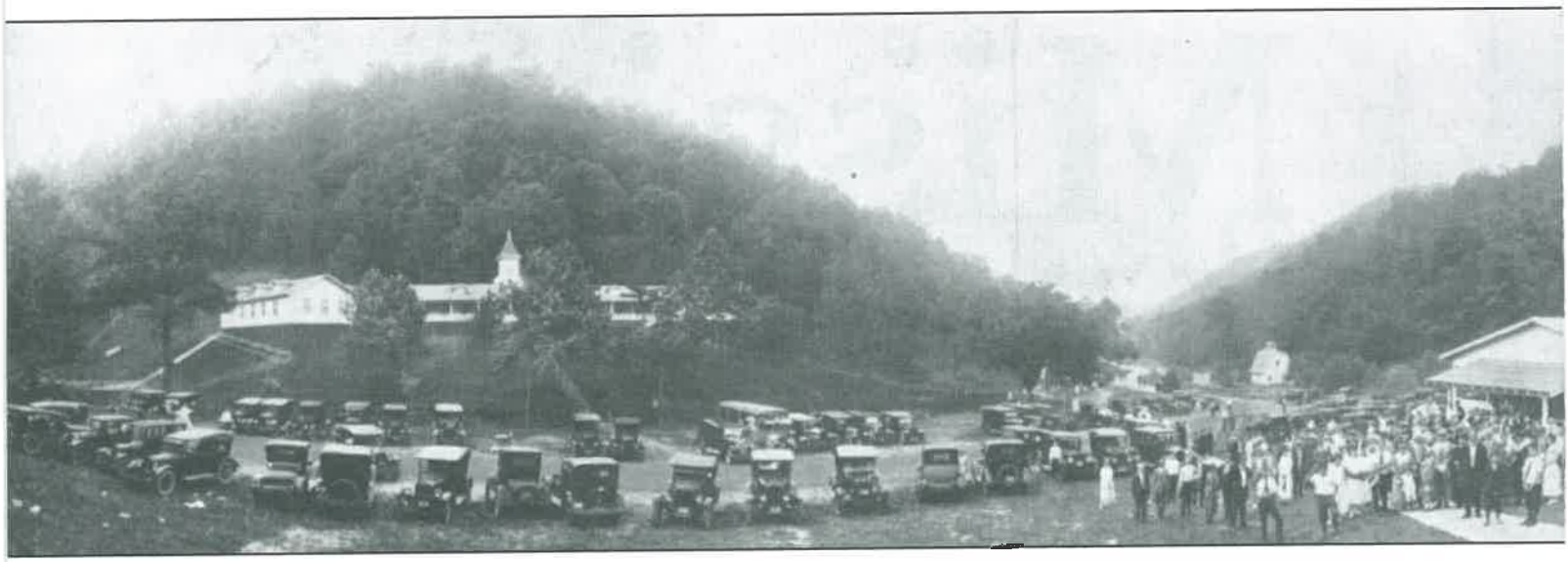
Mission Hollow Memories

By Karl Priest

"I've got a mansion just over the hilltop," sang a group of children sitting on the hillside. Just behind them was what many of them considered to be a mansion. They were residents of the Union Mission Children's Home on Mission Road in Charleston, and they were my summer brothers and sisters while I was growing up.

Left: Children and puppies gather for a picture at Union Mission's Brookside facility near Charleston, in the mid-1950's.

Right: As a child, author Karl Priest lived at Brookside, where his father worked as an off-season caretaker. The family's home is visible in this 1956 snapshot.



Abney Park, later known as Brookside, as it appeared in 1931. The Abney family donated 840 acres near Charleston to establish this camp for children in need.

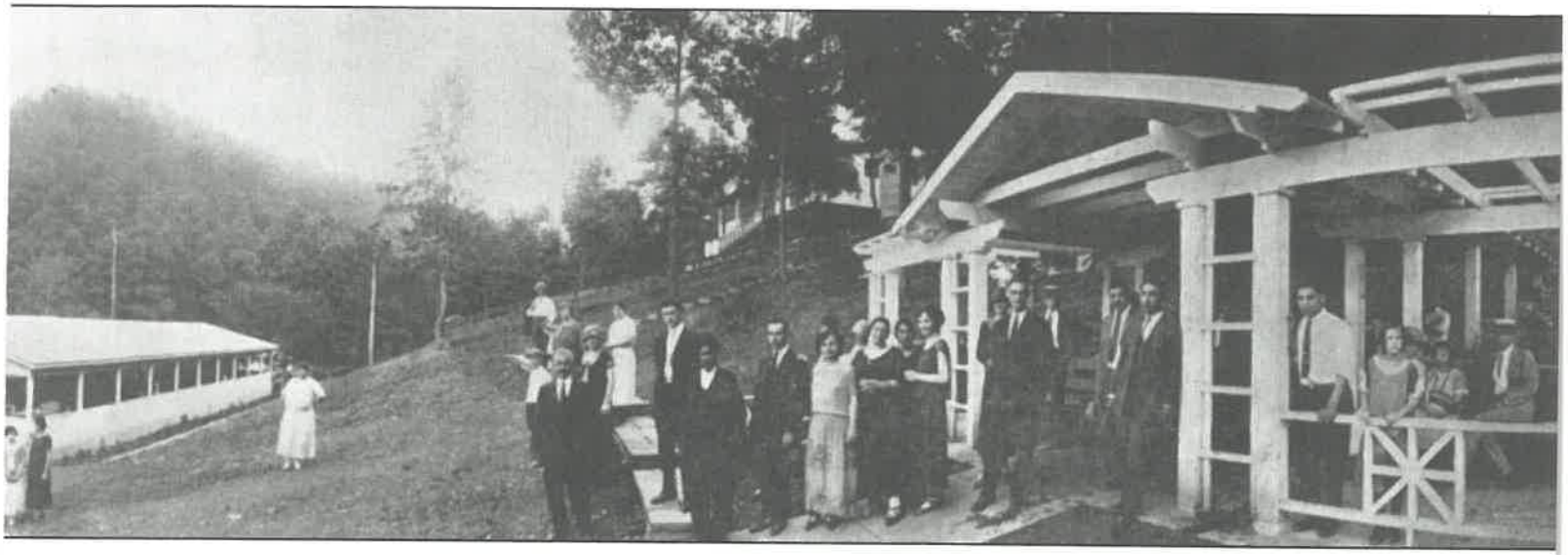
The Union Mission Children's Home was part of a rescue ministry founded by former bartender and self-described drunkard-turned-preacher Pat Withrow. [See "'Soup, Soap, and Salvation': 'Brother Pat' Withrow and the Charleston Union Mission," by Louise Bing; July-September 1980.] Brother Pat, as he was known, had a soft spot for the downtrodden and wayward — the drunkards, the unwed mothers, and especially children who were abused or abandoned.

Pat Withrow's mother died when he was 10 years old, and his father sent the Withrow children to live in different homes. Being separated from his brothers broke Pat's heart. He was so immensely impacted that he started the children's ministry, which was uncommon for a rescue mission at the time. Brother Pat's goal was to keep siblings together whenever possible.

Known as the largest mission in the world, the Union Mission cared for more than 12,000 children from 1923-58 at its facility on West

Our author's father, Howard Mason Priest, at Brookside in 1955.

Our author's mother, Ruby Justice Priest, in 1956.



Washington Street, bordering on the notorious Triangle District in downtown Charleston.

The Abney family donated 840 acres to the Union Mission in the late 1920's. The wooded land lay along South Park Road, near what is today the Kanawha City section of Charleston, and soon "Mission Hollow" began to materialize. By 1931, there were summer dormitories, a swimming pool, playground, tabernacle, and vegetable garden located at the summer camp.

My father, Howard Mason Priest, was one of those rescued by the Mission. After he attained sobriety, he served as a driver for Pat Withrow on some of his evangelistic campaigns. My parents met at the Mission, they married in 1940, and I came along eight years later. We lived at the main Mission complex, across from the current Charleston Civic Center and Town Center Mall complex until about 1950, when we moved to a small house located on the summer camp property. My father worked full time at the Thomas-Field wholesale company and was designated as the off-season caretaker for the Mission summer camp.

There was a family with five children living just on the upper edge of the Mission property that had two older daughters, who were my surrogate big sisters. They would walk with me the mile or so up the hollow to South Park Elementary

Author Karl Priest with a birthday cake in 1956.

Charleston's Union Mission cared for more than 12,000 children at its downtown location between 1923 and 1958. These boys are finishing a meal at the mission, probably in the early 1950's.

School. One morning, we started out and had to return to their house when a fierce storm hit. Our parents said it was the "tail end" of a hurricane. I had to tightly hold my lunch box in an arm fully extended by the wind and hold on to the hand of one of the neighbor girls while we struggled up the muddy path to their house.

A vast wooded area surrounded the summer camp, but I was too young to venture very far into it. Instead, I had a huge play area on the camp grounds. I never lacked for someone to play with when the Mission children came to stay during the summer. It was with those kids that I first held a baseball bat in a ballgame one summer day. We enjoyed the nearly ice-cold water of the camp swimming pool, which was located along a creek at the base of the hill across the road from the main campus. Water for the pool came from the creek.

Before I graduated to a bicycle, I rode my tricycle in the open-air tabernacle. Also, in the summer I could play in the no-longer-used chicken houses located behind my home. I thought the trap doors, probably once used for cleaning purposes, were really neat.

My parents raised a garden along the creek bank across from our house, and I would play in the creek while they worked in the garden. We must have had a chicken or two of our own, because I remember my mother slinging the head off of one, which, when released, ran around the yard headless.

During a winter snow, Mission Hollow kids would gather at the Well House, which was an unwalled structure on the hill above the tabernacle. The older kids would light a fire, and everyone would sled down the hill toward the road.

Work began in the late 1950's to convert Brookside from a summer camp into a year-round residential facility. This undated photograph shows the swimming pool under construction.

On one occasion, I was walking home after sledding. Just as I crossed a short bridge on a sharp curve in the road, a car approached but could not make the turn. It rolled on to its right side and slammed the roof against the concrete-and-stone bridge abutment. Soon, a door opened and some Charleston High School majorettes were helped out and down from the wreck, apparently uninjured.

Pat Withrow died in November 1957. In September 1956, he had recruited and relinquished the management of the Mission ministries to Memphis businessman/evangelist Clyde Murdock. Mr. Murdock began to greatly upgrade and expand the operations. A major part of his strategy was to make the summer camp a year-round facility for the Mission children.

Mr. Murdock began to greatly upgrade and expand the operations. A major part of his strategy was to make the summer camp a year-round facility for the Mission children.

Renovations of the Abney Park summer camp (often called "Camp Abney") began during the winter of 1956-57. My family had to move in the spring of 1957. The "Mission Men" used a Mission truck to move us to public housing at Orchard Manor. We had to leave before school was out, and I remember that my parents were not pleased. I also remember that we had to leave our dog, which broke my heart. But Mr. Murdock had a plan in mind that made our move necessary.

The old tabernacle was remodeled into a chapel, and the old summer dormitory became the boys' dormitory. The new boys' dormitory

Karl Priest returned to Brookside in the early 1970's as a relief house parent in the boys' dormitory. Karl is shown here with glasses, next to his wife, Melody. Resident Dewain Haynes, at left, gives Karl "rabbit ears."

At night, we would watch television together. Overall, I was more of a "big brother" than a father figure to the boys.

contained a combination recreation, study, and dining area. The Civitan Club led the fund-raising to build a new swimming pool and the construction of the girls' dormitory for 24 more children. The house my family lived in became what was known as the "Tot House" for the younger children.

A dining facility and a 100-seat chapel were completed in 1964. The S.S. Kresge family foundation helped with finances to build an 87x45-foot gymnasium in 1968. The gymnasium was the seventh building completed in a seven-year period. Much of the construction and renovation work was performed by Mission staff and adult residents.

According to a newspaper article, the remodeling was completed in time for the children to move in before Christmas 1958. The first group of about 50 children to arrive at Abney Park ranged in age from two to 17, and included children who had been housed in the crowded, barracks-like downtown Mission building.

Children were brought to Abney Park by Child Welfare workers of the Department of Public Assistance (DPA), policemen, or others at any time of the night or day. Typical of Union Mission children are those described in a newspaper article from the 1970's: Three brothers, aged 12, 14, and 16, arrived at Brookside, as Abney Park was later called, not knowing how to tell time and having attended school only about two months in four years. A 15-year-old arrived unable to read. Six siblings came after witnessing their father murder their mother with a shotgun. Another boy, after witnessing his father fatally beat his sister, came to Brookside after living on the streets as a male prostitute.

Some were runaways, and some were involved in criminal activities. Some came from filthy, unheated shacks or trash-strewn automobiles where their parents were passed out drunk. Occasionally, one was disfigured and needed corrective surgery. Some were seriously ill. Others had been severely beaten or raped. Many had emotional scars so deep that it took months of love and care before they would relax.

At Brookside, these children found something as close to normal family life as they had ever known. During the Christmas season, the children engaged in decorating and shopping, took trips to plays, participated in caroling for shut-ins, ringing bells for the Salvation Army, and performing Christmas plays of their own. In the late 1970's, the children decorated nearly 20 trees as a fund-raising activity.

All of the children attended Bible studies. The younger ones had play and nap times, while the older ones attended local schools. Some were placed in foster homes. Frequently, the older children elected to stay at Brookside.

I seldom returned to the Mission until I was in my early 20's. In December 1971, I graduated from college, and, while working part-time at the Belle post office and waiting on a permanent teaching position, I became a relief house parent in the boys' dormitory at Brookside.

I lived in a room in the dormitory, and, when not on duty, I performed various chores, such as taking kids to doctor appointments or picking up food donations from a local bakery. On the campus, I spent time playing ball with the boys on the diamond or in the gymnasium. At night, we would watch television together. Overall, I was more of a "big brother" than a father figure to the boys.

The majority of former Brookside residents became good and productive citizens. After I got married in October 1972, my wife and I would take some of the kids over to our house for visits. One boy called me regularly for several years and kept me posted on many of the others as they grew up, married, and had children of their own.

For many years, the Union Mission children's ministry opened its loving arms to hurting children. Many of the children were hungry for food, but they all hungered and thirsted for love. They found both in a mansion just below the hilltop.

The Union Mission 100th anniversary will occur in 2011. Anyone who has benefited from any Union Mission ministry is requested to contact Alan Fisher at (304)925-0366 ext. 147.

KARL PRIEST is from Charleston and is a graduate of West Virginia State University and Marshall University Graduate College. He retired after 33 years as a teacher and principal in Kanawha and Roane county schools and now serves as volunteer West Virginia coordinator for Exodus Mandate. Karl's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2006 issue.

Children enjoy the playground at Brookside in 1966.

"They Were So Good to Me"

Recalling Life at Brookside

Dewain Haynes of Charleston spent 11 years at Union Mission's Brookside facility. He arrived as an infant with the nickname of "Porky," because he weighed 13 pounds as a baby. An alcoholic father made it impossible for the Sissonville family to remain as a unit, so most of the 13 children were taken in by Brookside.

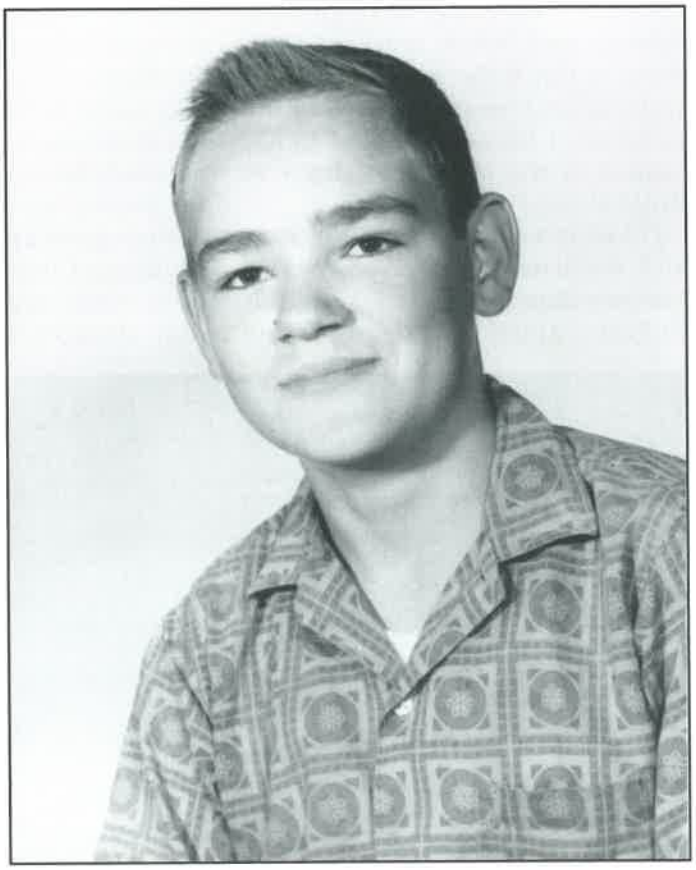
Dewain's years at Brookside were interrupted by stays in three different foster homes, along with one or two of his brothers and sisters. After he returned to Brookside as a seventh grader, he remained there until graduating from Charleston High School in 1976.

Dewain remembers Brookside as a "fantastic" place. He recalls a house parent, the late Danny Fisher, who practically made Dewain a member of his family, including taking Dewain with them on family vacations. Upon high school graduation, Danny took Dewain and three other graduates to Camden Park only to find the park closed. They decided to attend an all-night drive-in theater instead, though Danny neglected to inform his wife. The State Police found them eating breakfast in a Kanawha City restaurant the next day.

Dewain recalls that there was always something to do at Brookside — swimming, sports, and much more. The dorm had a TV room with a pool table. There were trips to many places, including Hawks Nest, Camden Park, and King's Island; camping at Watoga State Park; and a goodwill work trip to a Michigan farm, with a side visit to Chicago. They frequently attended Civic Center events, such as the circus, basketball games, and other activities held there.

When Dewain first arrived at Brookside, the children traveled in an old school bus with "Union Mission Children's Home" written on the side, but in later years each age group of children had their own designated van.

On Sunday mornings, they attended church on campus or could leave to attend a church of their choice elsewhere. Many went to an off-campus service on Sunday evening. There were optional religious activities held sometimes during the week, such as Bible study or special speakers.



Dewain Haynes in 1967, at age 12.

All the children had assigned chores. The senior boys each had a section of grass to keep mowed, and they made sure the job was completed before leaving for weekend visits with relatives. In the dorm, they were assigned cleaning chores, which rotated weekly.

Naturally, the children sometimes got into mischief

There were trips to many places, including Hawks Nest, Camden Park, and King's Island; camping at Watoga State Park; and a goodwill work trip to a Michigan farm, with a side visit to Chicago.

and required discipline. Originally they were paddled, but in later years punishment meant restriction to the dorm or the bedroom. Restriction meant that their meals were brought to them. In spite of these occasional punishments, Dewain remembers that all of the staff were nice to them, including nonsupervisory staff, such as cooks.

The only bad memory Dewain has of Brookside was of Christmas. The children were each given $35 to spend by ordering from a J.C. Penney catalog. Unfortunately, all that would buy would be one or two small gifts, he says. Church groups would provide them with edible treats, but the holiday season was not as cheerful as it might have been had they lived in a normal family. Dewain does fondly remember bell-ringing for the Salvation Army on Capitol Street.

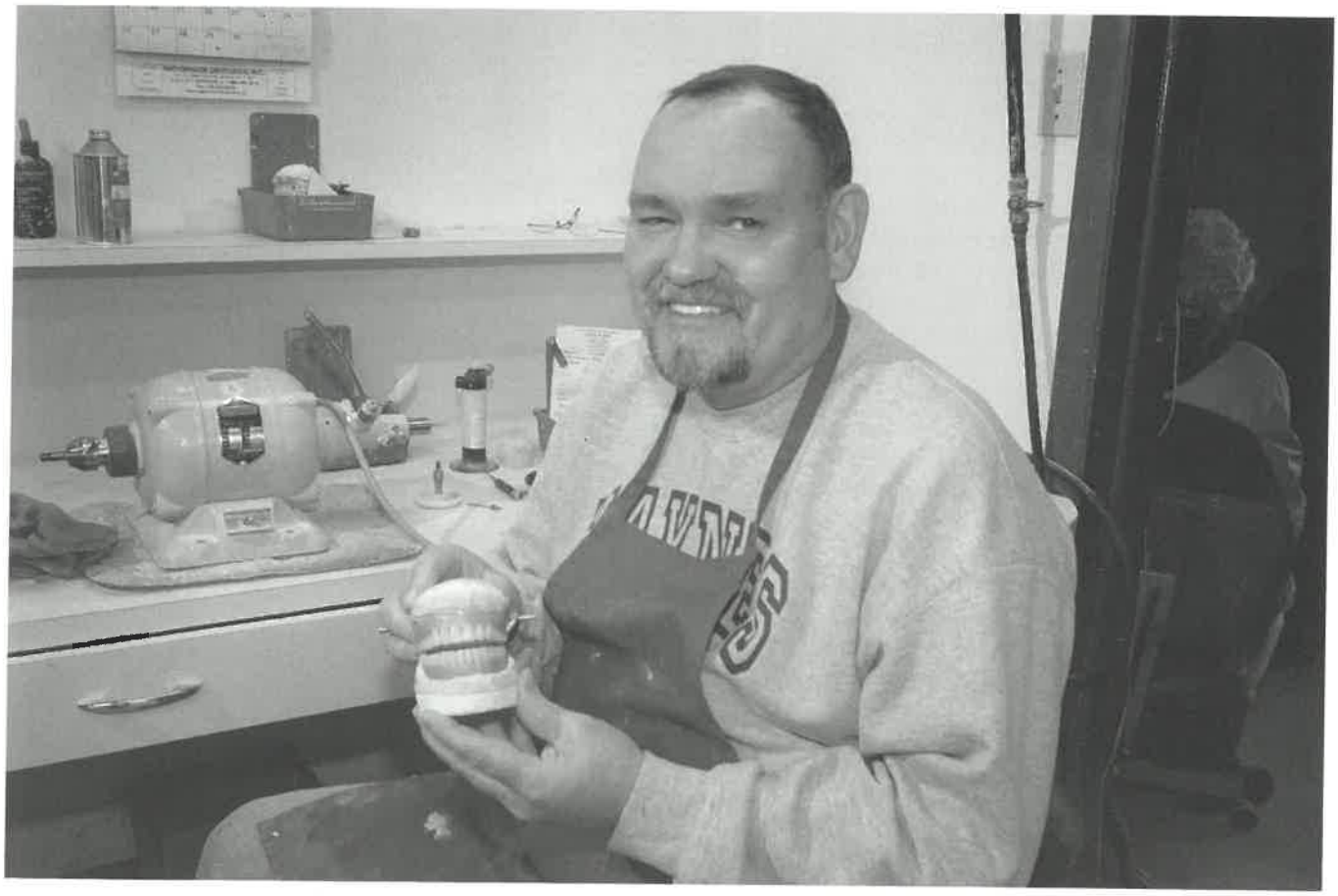
During his high school years, Dewain worked as a Western Union bicycle delivery boy and later worked evenings in the laundry at St. Francis Hospital. He rode a city bus back to Brookside each day after work. During the summers, the Manpower program provided Dewain with employment.

Upon graduation, Dewain did construction work for a couple of years before landing a job running deliveries for Dental Arts Company. Dewain became good friends with the owner, the late Bill Chevalier, and Bill provided technical training to Dewain after work hours. After 10 years, Bill sold the company, and the new owners laid off Dewain.

Dewain worked as a janitor at Yeager Airport for some time, until Bill came out of retirement. With Dewain as an equal partner, they opened Statewide Dental Lab in Bill's basement. After Bill's health declined, they sold their equipment to another dental lab. Following Bill's death, Dewain decided to reopen Statewide Dental, working from his home. Soon, the business was going so well that Dewain rented six rooms in the Medical Arts Building on Quarrier Street in Charleston, where the business is currently located.

Now Dewain lives in a comfortable home in St. Albans. He has grandchildren who like to visit him and his camp near Sutton Lake in Braxton County.

"If I had to live life over, I wouldn't mind going back [to Brookside]," Dewain says, "because they were so good to me." —Karl Priest



Dewain today, at his dental lab business in Charleston. Photograph by Michael Keller.

My Mom, the Snake Slayer

By Beverly Cookro


MICHAEL KELLER

I was born in Akron, Ohio, in 1942. My first six years were spent on grass and asphalt, and playing with neighborhood children. I was a city girl.

My parents, along with most of their brothers and sisters, had left their homes in West Virginia as teenagers to find work. After experiencing a mild stroke, my grandfather, Isaac Mayberry Lantz, begged my mom and dad to return to Aurora, Preston County, and take over his 60-acre farm. We packed up, moved, and so began what was for me an incredible journey.

We had no running water in the house, no electricity, and no inside plumbing. At six years of age, this was no big deal to me. But all of a sudden, to be an only child with the closest neighbor a half-mile away, that was a different story. I was really alone, and everything suddenly became scary. It was big (cows, horses, pigs), it hissed (big fat roosters), and it slithered (snakes).

The farm was located in a deep valley, and we had a large creek that had once powered the grist mill near our house. It was the perfect home for snakes.

One beautiful afternoon, I managed to catch a large trout and carried it back to show my mom. She suggested I build a dam with rocks in the runoff water from the spring house and keep my fish alive. This accomplished, what joy to go out and watch him swim around in his own little stream! Little did I know that I had sealed his fate.

The next day, as I happily checked on my trout, there lay a large black snake in his place. I could clearly see where my fish was, bulging at the sides of the snake. Screaming for Mom, I raced back to the house and told her what I saw. She quickly picked up the old garden hoe, and off she ran to slay the beast. Since the snake was unable to move, due to the large dinner he had consumed, she wasted no time in doing him in.

My mom! My hero! The Snake Slayer!

The Snake Slayer, Elinor Knotts, now resides in Ohio. At 90 years old, she tells many great stories of her early years in Canaan Valley, Tucker County, and her early adult years living on Stemple Ridge, near Aurora. My grandfather rests in his beloved Canaan Valley, where he was once a share cropper, high on the mountain.

BEVERLY COOKRO lives in Barberton, Ohio, and has family roots in Preston County. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Arnold and Elinor (Lantz) Knotts, in Ohio in 1938. The pair returned to West Virginia about 10 years later.

ing the hog house. When the pigs came up to eat the corn, some of us would jump on their backs for a short, rough ride across the pen.

Miracle Run, which ran through my grandfather's lower meadow, had wonderful swimming holes situated on each side of a covered bridge. In warm weather, my cousins and I would swim there or go fishing along the banks of the stream up to the end of his property line. I still can hear the hum of insects and the sound of birdsong on those warm summer afternoons.

In the evening, we would drive grandfather's cows from the meadow up to the barn for milking. Aunt Savannah Tuttle and her son, Henry, lived on the property directly across the road from my grandparents. Henry had a spinal defect resulting from a childhood injury and was only about five feet tall. Henry did not have a car, but he always owned small saddle horses and ponies, which provided his sole means of transportation. Often when we grandsons were going to fetch the cows, Henry would let one of the older fellows ride his horse or pony. This was always a special treat for the lucky boy.

The outhouse was located about 50 yards behind the farmhouse. In summertime, the place stank remarkably, and you held your breath for as long as possible when using the facility. Some of my male cousins and I had a game that we played at the outhouse. There was a small knothole on one side of the building. One boy would get inside and rapidly stick his finger in and out of the knothole. Another boy would stand outside and try to grab and hold the finger. If the boy on the outside were successful, the poor fellow inside the outhouse would be trapped there for an extended period of time. On one occasion, I accidentally lost my hat down the toilet hole. The hat had a small airplane pin on it that I treasured. We fished the hat out, removed the pin, and promptly tossed the hat back down the hole.

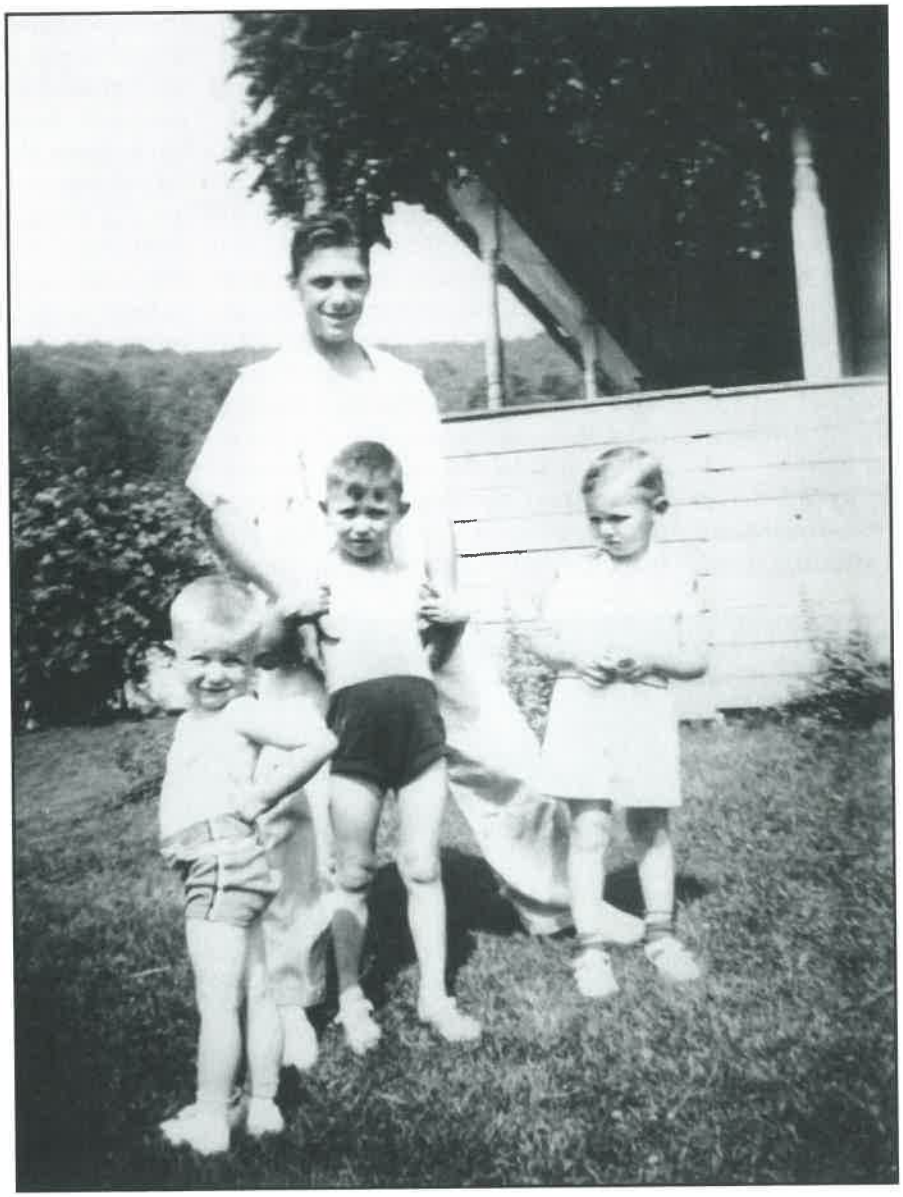
Each fall, usually around Thanksgiving time, Grandfather Tuttle would butcher three or four hogs. His sons and sons-in-law always helped with the butchering. Tripods were assembled in the lane that led up to the barn, and the carcasses were placed on an old farm sled, dragged down from the pig pen, and suspended from the tripods. A big fire heated water in an iron cauldron, and the scalding water was then poured into a large drum. The hogs were dipped into the water, and the hair was scraped off their bodies. My cousins and I would get the bladders from the slaughtered hogs and make footballs out of them. Fresh sausage made from the hogs was fried on a hot plate out in the washhouse to provide lunch for the workers.

Our author's uncle Bud Tuttle at Miracle Run in the 1930's.

One butchering day, it began to snow in the morning, and by late afternoon there were three or four inches of snow on the ground. With great effort, the grandsons pulled the old farm sled to the top of the hill where we all piled on and rode down to the bottom. We did this only a few times, since pulling the heavy sled up the hill was quite a task. But it was

great fun while it lasted.

The washhouse and the meathouse stood to the left of the farmhouse. My grandmother did her washing using a Maytag with a gasoline motor. After World War II, electricity came to Miracle Run, and she was able to have an electric washing machine. Some of us boys salvaged the motor from the old Maytag and made us an automobile. We took a board about 18 inches wide and five feet long, attached a short two-by-four on the front with a bolt, and used a piece of clothesline for the steering device. We nailed another two-by-four on the back end of the board, found some old wagon wheels and axles, and used fence staples to attach the axles to the two-by-fours. We then bolted the Maytag motor on the back end of our vehicle, removed the rubber from one of the rear wheels, and ran an old automobile fan belt from the motor pulley to the wheel. Believe it or not, this contraption actually worked. We made a few trips tooling up and down Miracle Run Road before the thing began falling apart.



Bud Tuttle with cousins Ronnie and Bob Toothman. Bob Masters is at left, with hands on hips, during the 1940's.

Mealtime was always an event at my grandparents' house. The food was probably unhealthy by today's standards, but nevertheless delicious. Breakfasts were especially memorable, consisting of ham or bacon and eggs with biscuits and gravy. My grandmother made butter in a wooden churn and served real cream with the coffee. Large crocks of milk, cream, and butter, covered with cheesecloth, were kept in a cellar at the rear of the house.

The cellar also contained baskets of apples and other fruit. Grandfather's cases of Mail Pouch chewing tobacco and grandmother's boxes of Square and Navy snuff were also kept there.

My grandfather always had coffee with cream and sugar first thing in the morning. I remember his sitting at the kitchen table with his morning coffee. He would pour hot coffee out of the cup into a saucer and sip the coffee from the saucer. I always thought that this was strange.

The Miracle Run Methodist Church played an important role in my grandparents' lives. Everyone in that household attended church on Sunday mornings. I can remember Grandfather Tuttle opening the door to the stairs that led to the bedrooms on the second floor and announcing that it was time to get ready for church. The church was always filled with wasps. They would drop down from the ceiling and crawl out of the walls. When the bell rang for the beginning of services, wasps would drop out of a hole that went up to the belfry, and the person pulling the bell rope had to dodge large numbers of these falling insects. My cousins and I were always amused by the sight of the bell ringer trying to avoid the cascade of wasps.

From time to time, church members were asked to testify before the whole congregation. The minister would go from one pew to another and ask each person to stand and give his or her testimony. All my cousins and I sat together in a single pew. Each of us in turn would repeat, "Pray for me," since

All that remain are memories and the lingering vision of summer sunsets.

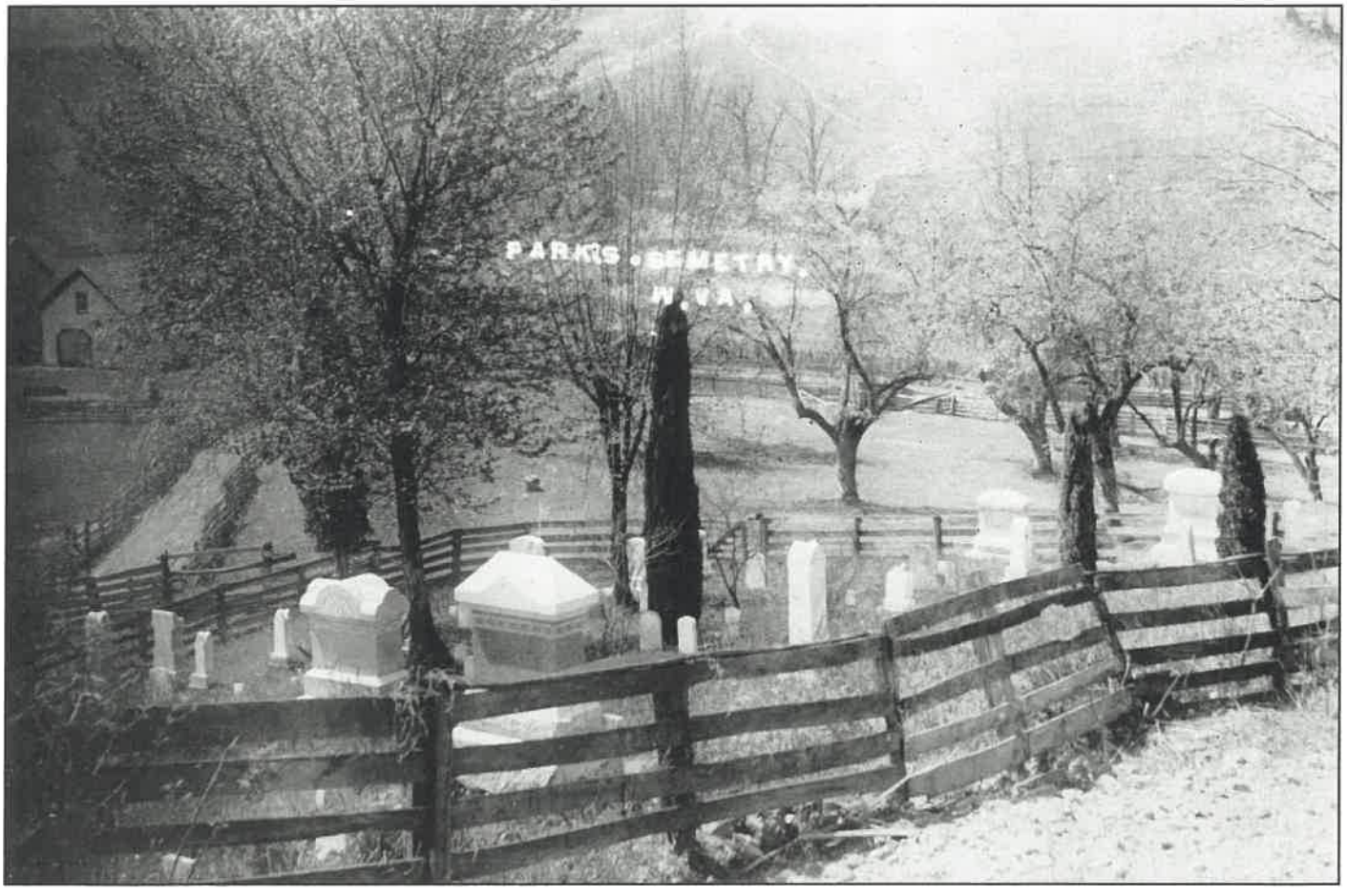
we could think of nothing else to say. Inevitably, before everyone had finished saying his piece, all of us would break out in uncontrollable giggles.

Every October, my dad, uncles, male cousins, and I would congregate at Miracle Run for the opening day of squirrel hunting season. Great excitement surrounded this annual event. Even when I was too young to participate in the hunt, I would go along with my dad and spend the day shooting my BB gun around the farm. I remember arising before daylight, and with the aroma of Hoppe's No. 9 gun solvent still in the air, boarding the old Pontiac with my dad for the drive to Miracle Run. When I became older, I was allowed to join the hunt and bagged my first squirrel in the woods behind the farmhouse. I was so excited that I came back to the house before anyone else to show off my "trophy" — a rather smallish gray squirrel.

Grandfather Tuttle died in 1950. Things were never the same after his death. The livestock and poultry were sold. The pastures and hay meadows became overgrown with brush, and the farm buildings gradually disappeared. After living alone there for many years, Grandmother Tuttle fell and broke her hip and had to move away to live with one of my aunts. Grandmother died in 1983 and the farm was sold. Emerson and Mae Tuttle are buried behind the Miracle Run Methodist Church in the Park Cemetery, along with their ancestors and other relatives. The old covered bridge has been replaced with a modern structure. Aunt Savannah's house, barn, and pasture land are gone.

Several years ago, a large coal mine opened at the head of Miracle Run. The meadow below my grandparents' farmhouse now has railroad tracks going down the center of it. All that remain are memories and the lingering vision of summer sunsets viewed from the swing on the veranda of their old farmhouse.

BOB MASTERS grew up in Hundred, Wetzel County. He is graduate of West Virginia University and holds a master's degree from Vanderbilt University. Bob retired as library director at Fairmont State College in 1999. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2007 issue.



Park Cemetery at Miracle Run was the final resting place for Emerson and Mae Tuttle. This postcard view is from the early 1900's.

By Christopher Craig

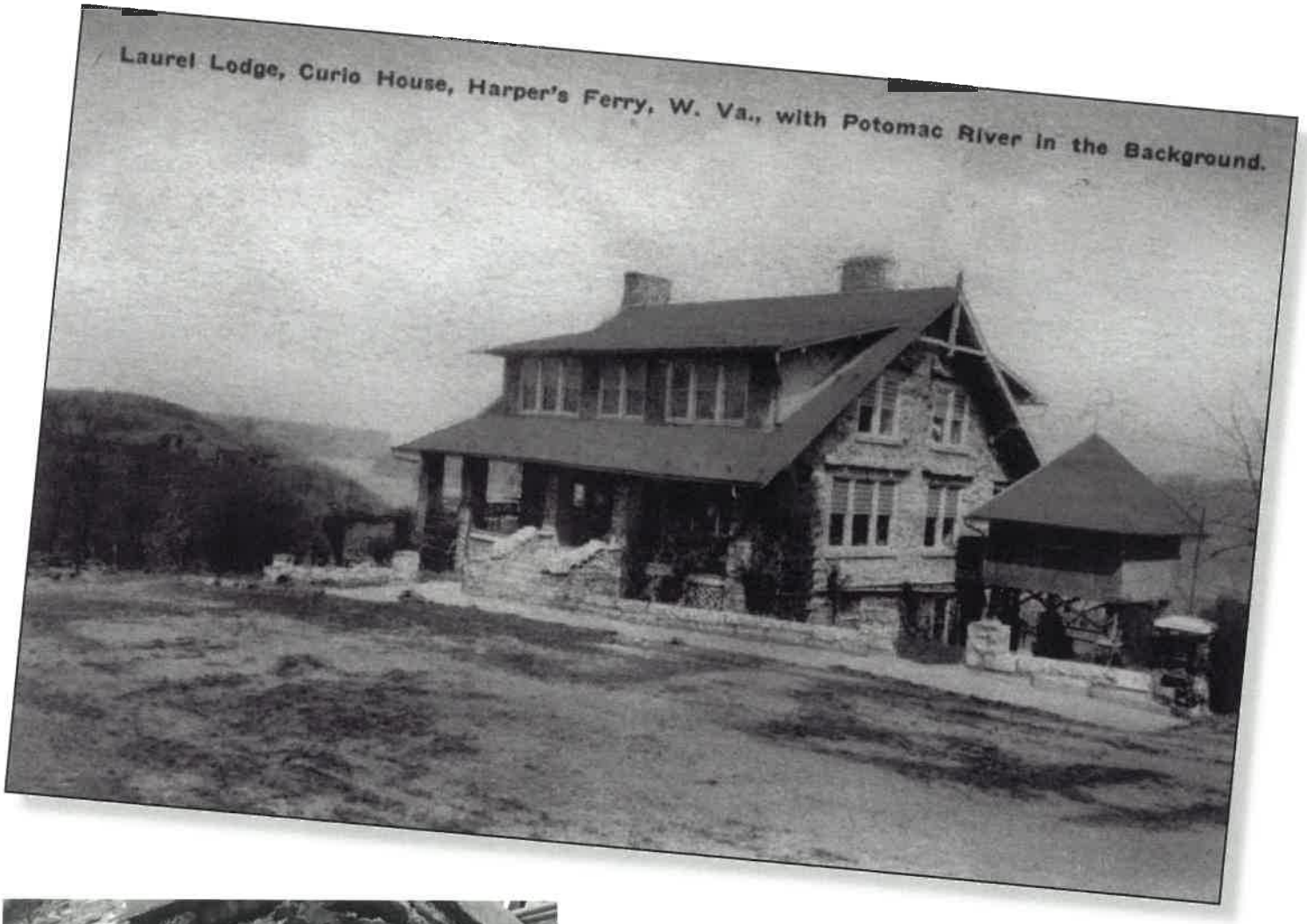
The Curio House at Harpers Ferry

A stately stone bungalow stands in Harpers Ferry, overlooking the Potomac River from its site atop Camp Hill. Dubbed Laurel Lodge by its builder nearly 100 years ago, it stands at the opposite end of Ridge Street from the historic Hilltop House Hotel and is the oldest of several grand old homes that line the river side of that road. In later years, it was known as The Curio House.

At first glance, Laurel Lodge impresses viewers with its native-stone masonry, expansive wraparound porch, abundance of windows, and classic Craftsman design. A closer inspection, however, reveals a number of curiosities. The porch railings are rustic aged cedar wood, except in the front, where thick iron chains hang. A covered sleeping porch extends from the back porch, elevated on cedar pillars and providing an overlook of the river. Above the windows, imbedded in the masonry, are bayonets, bullets, and the impressions of rifles. Inscribed in the walkways are dates, names and, curious sayings like, "Hell will freeze over when you get there." Old gears, tools, bottles, and dolls are built into the porch pillars in back. All these curiosities hint at the personality of the house's builder and original owner, Eugene Shugart.

Born in 1867, Eugene was a native of nearby Charles Town. His father, Rezin Shugart, was a saddle and harness maker who served on the jury for one of John Brown's co-conspirators. Eugene married Margaret "Maggie" Trussell and moved to Harpers Ferry in 1891. He built a large frame house on the corner of Jackson and Washington streets, where the couple lived with their three eldest children: Frank Eugene, Margaret, and Eliza.

Although he was not independently wealthy, Eugene apparently never owned a business or worked for a private employer. Instead, he



Above: Laurel Lodge in Harpers Ferry, also known as The Curio House, was begun in 1910. This postcard view dates from 1922.

Left: Detail of an exterior porch pillar, embedded with bottles, tools, pipes, and miscellaneous hardware. Photograph by Ed Wheeless.

was a public servant who was involved in various affairs of his adopted town. He served at different times as magistrate, constable, justice of the peace, postmaster, and notary public. He was the volunteer bandmaster, a vestryman for St. John's Episcopal Church, and a prominent booster of Harpers Ferry High School.

Eugene was elected mayor of Harpers Ferry in 1902 and served six successive one-year terms. After his 1906 win, the Charles Town newspaper *Spirit of Jefferson* commented on his re-election and service: "This being Mayor Shugart's fifth successive term proves his popularity with the people, and that the city government has never been in more capable hands is also shown by the published statements of the town affairs. Mr. Shugart is also the efficient Deputy Sheriff of Harpers Ferry district, and in such capacity has served his constituents honorably and faithfully."

Besides these involvements, Eugene was also known as an ardent collector. His collections of Civil War relics were massive, and items from them are frequently seen

Maggie and Eugene Shugart. Photographs by McClung, date unknown.

today in relics auctions and sales. His fondness for artifacts from fires and other disasters was strong enough that he wrote Mayor Timonus of Baltimore after that city's great fire of 1904, asking for a "souvenir" of the event.

It's uncertain what prompted Eugene to buy land and start building the foundation of Laurel Lodge in 1910. Perhaps it was his desire for a display of some of his curios; or the growth of his family after the birth of his two youngest children, Jarvis and Eugenia; or a thought that his prominence in town demanded a grander setting. After the foundation was dug and a barn and several other outbuildings were built, there was a long pause before the house was constructed in 1914 and 1915.

Although Eugene's descendants do not know of any architect's involvement, the house had a decidedly modern look amid Harpers Ferry's old Federal-style homes. Its grand setting over the Potomac was nearly matched by its massive stone walls and large, beautiful windows. There appears to be careful planning in such a solid house. But Frank Shugart, Jr., Eugene's grandson who grew up in Laurel Lodge in the 1940's, says, "Eugene and his buddies sat down over whiskey each night and decided what they would build the next day."

How did a family of moderate means afford such an undertaking? Frank says, "I think [Eugene] was so well-liked that he was able to cut deals and get help from his friends." He also did much hard work himself on the project. The family believes Eugene paid $25 for the Federal Armory powder warehouse along the Potomac, which had been in ruins since the Civil War. Using a horse-drawn wagon, he hauled the stones for his bungalow up Camp Hill.

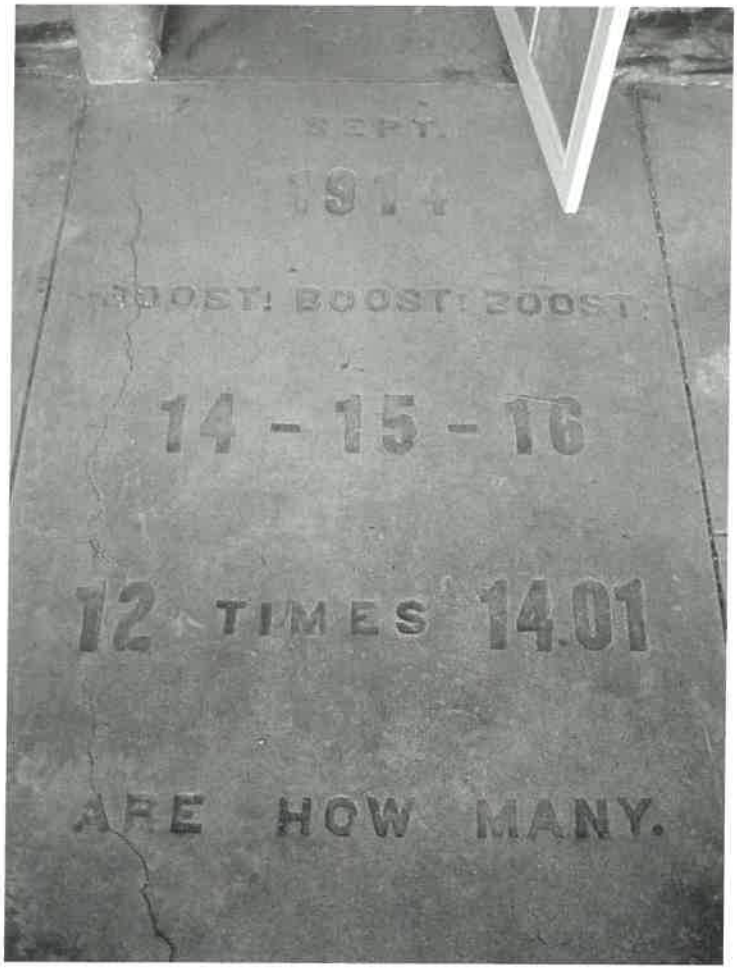
He hung lock chains from the C&O Canal on the front porch and imbedded a number of his collected artifacts into the stonework and the pillars of the house. There were Civil War rifles and bullets above the windows and doors, Union army belt buckles in steps and retaining walls. In one porch pillar he placed twisted bottles and charred forks and cups found after the Hilltop House Hotel burned in 1912.

Signs under the floor of the elevated sleeping porch urged visitors to Laurel Lodge not to worry. "Please don't worry." "Don't worry—Grunt." And "Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due." The outline of a coffin was inscribed in a sidewalk with the message "Old worry is buried here." At this, Maggie drew the line. Frank, Jr., relates, "I think she was spooked by the coffin and made Eugene cover it up." He replaced it with Civil War bullets and bayonets in decorative designs.

Eugene's homespun philosophy and humor came out in signs and inscriptions on the property: "Some are profiteerin' and some are just hoggin' it," "Be a booster," or, "Ever since Goldimples learned that potatoes have eyes, she has refused to take her bath in the cellar."

Even before the Shugarts moved into the house in April 1916, Laurel Lodge had gained notoriety. Charles Town's *Farmers Advocate* reported on the home in September 1914:

"Eugene Shugart, former mayor and ex-magistrate, has in the course of erection on a bluff overlooking the Potomac, a house that is the outward expression of his mental bent — he has always been a faddist for curios. It is related by one of his schoolmates that he once gave him $1.25 for a marble, fancying he saw different animals in it, strangely formed through the process of molding. ...He has accumulated a wonderful collection of all sorts of unusual exhibits in the years intervening from boyhood to the present and is having many of them set in the walls of the house



Enigmatic phrases and comments are inscribed into walks, walls, and floor joists. This one on the back porch appears to date from 1914, the approximate year the lodge was completed. Photograph by Ed Wheeless.

as it rises, and the concrete work around the house."

In spite of its name, Laurel Lodge was intended to be a home. But its size — five bedrooms upstairs, a spacious great room, and a finished basement — allowed it to be used as a gathering place from the beginning. "Porch parties" were held to raise money for the Charles Town hospital or to entertain church youth and ladies. Young newlyweds stayed with the Shugarts until they could set up a home of their own. The older Shugart children would return home from school or jobs away, bringing friends to enjoy the views and friendly atmosphere.

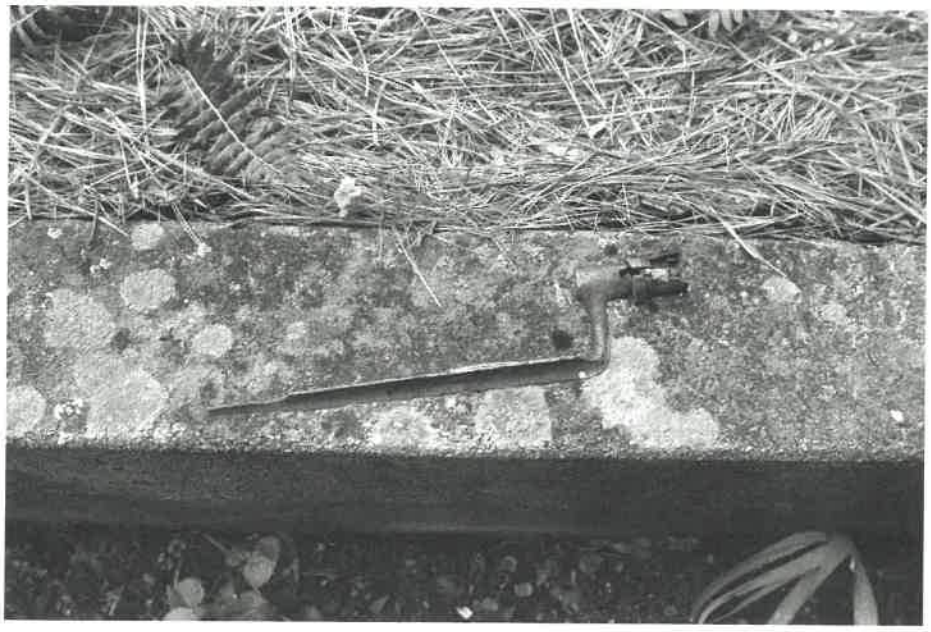
Sadly, Eugene did not enjoy life at Laurel Lodge for long. He died in September 1919, possibly from a heart attack. He had served additional terms as mayor and had remained active in public affairs until the last.

After Eugene's death, Maggie remained at Laurel Lodge until she passed away in 1931. She ran the property as a boarding house and served meals to visitors. She hired a manager and workers to operate the lodge and hosted prominent guests from Richmond and Washington.

After Maggie's death, Laurel Lodge was used sporadically by her children. The youngest child, Eugenia, died in 1932, and the older Shugart children had jobs in business and education that had taken them out of the area. Much of the time, Laurel Lodge sat vacant and suffered from petty vandalism and neglect.

Eventually, Frank Eugene was prompted by the house's deterioration to take action. His son Frank, Jr., recalls, "I think Daddy was upset enough about it that he felt he had to move in, even though he managed a business in Piedmont [100 miles west]. He bought out his brother's and sisters' shares in the house, and we moved in in 1942." Frank Eugene's wife, Ann, his daughter, Margaret, and Frank, Jr., once again made Laurel Lodge a full-time home, while Frank Eugene commuted on weekends from his workplace in Piedmont.

Frank vividly remembers his family's move from Piedmont to Harpers Ferry, because it was the week of the big flood of 1942. "Our neighbor Berkley Winters and I went down to the lower town and watched several houses of neighbors and friends wash away in the flood," he recalls. "It was upsetting, but it made me feel secure knowing our home was high up on the hill."



Eugene Shugart was a prolific collector of antiquities, especially Civil War memorabilia. This Civil War-era bayonette is embedded in a retaining wall. Photograph by Alex Wilson.

A popular gathering spot, Laurel Lodge hosted this multigenerational group of Shugart relatives in about 1930. Maggie Shugart is at the rear. Frank Eugene is seated second from the left, in the front row.

Ann Shugart once again developed Laurel Lodge as a social and business center. She called her business The Curio House and kept long-term boarders and short-term visitors. The great room provided ample space for summer visitors and holiday parties. Daughter Margaret shuttled arrivals at the train station to Laurel Lodge or to the racetrack in Charles Town. Although he had outside jobs, Frank, Jr., helped with the chores around the property.

Byrnes Island (also known as Picnic Island), which lies below the house in the Potomac River, was a famed picnic spot and a popular site for revivals and community events. On Sunday afternoons, island visitors would ascend to Laurel Lodge, where Ann and her domestic staff would serve fried chicken dinners. To help at the house, Ann hired Bolivar residents George and Martha Washington, descendants of the slaves of the first president's family, who lived in Jefferson County.

Like his father, Frank Eugene's ownership of Laurel Lodge lasted only three years. He died in 1945. That same year, Margaret left for nursing school. Frank, Jr., married and moved to Richmond in 1951. Ann remained in the house, continuing to rent rooms to boarders and host visits from her four children. By 1963, she became unable to care for the large house and took a room in nearby Purcellville, Virginia. The Shugarts sold Laurel Lodge that year, ending five decades of family ownership.

Washingtonians Parker and Virginia Reed, the new owners, used Laurel Lodge primarily as a weekend and summer house. After Parker's death in 1966, Virginia rented rooms to residents of the town and students at nearby Shepherd College, now Shepherd University. All the outbuildings but the sleeping porch and a small shed were removed, and a small room was added to the basement level.

Even after the conversion into apartments, Laurel Lodge remained a beloved gathering place. Julie and Laurence Johnson, also from Washington, D.C., rented rooms as their summer vacation getaway. While they have passed away, their children and grandchildren fondly remember their summer visits to Harpers Ferry and the house.

Diane Vari-Alquist, a schoolteacher in Frederick, Maryland, lived with two colleagues in the upper floors of the house during the early 1980's. She remembers it as a great place to entertain. "We had tons of parties, and people would come to visit all the time," Diane says. "There were lots of friendships made in that house — one of us even met her husband there."

Laurel Lodge business card from the 1940's.

Eventually, Virginia Reed grew ill and became unable to manage the house. Laurel Lodge sat vacant for four years until her death in 2001. During this time, rifles and bullets were pilfered from the walls, and the house suffered from natural deterioration.

Laurel Lodge's present owners, myself and Ed Wheeless, purchased the house in 2001 from the Reed

Three generations of Shugarts reunited at Laurel Lodge in 2008. From the left are Eugene's grandson, Frank Shugart, Jr.; his daughter Margaret Shugart; and grandson Frank Copenhaver. Photograph by Ed Wheeless.

estate. We undertook an extensive renovation and moved into the house full time in 2005. Frank Shugart, Jr., is glad to see his boyhood home cared for once again. "I think it looks great! I'm so glad to see that someone has it who cares enough to take it back to the way it originally was," he says.

In the tradition of the Shugarts, Ed and I opened Laurel Lodge as a bed-and-breakfast on Labor Day weekend 2007. Nearing its century date, Eugene and Maggie Shugart's house on Camp Hill is once again filled with visitors and holiday celebrations.

CHRISTOPHER CRAIG is a graduate of Kansas State University and has a master's degree in education from Wichita State University. He lived in Washington, D.C., for 15 years before moving to Harpers Ferry and opening the Laurel Lodge bed-and-breakfast in 2007. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Dining room, interior view. Photograph by Alex Wilson.

Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

PIGS Haven in Shepherdstown

The road that leads to 1112 Persimmon Lane in Shepherdstown is often filled with pain and neglect. But once an animal enters the gate, it is assured a happy-ever-after life.

The 60-acre farm is home to PIGS Animal Sanctuary, a non-profit organization founded as a pot-bellied pig rescue in 1992. Originally located in Charles Town, the group relocated its quickly growing population to the former dairy farm in 1997. Melissa Susko, the hands-on, resident executive director, was hired in 2002.

Owner Melissa Susko and a few of the more than 200 rescued pigs under her care near Shepherdstown. Melissa also tends to dogs, cats, goats, and prairie dogs, among other critters.

Melissa is a Pennsylvania native and veterinary technician who, in her work, frequently encounters pet owners who have abandoned their exotic animals.

"I would see so many animals come into the vet's office for euthanasia for no good reason," she says. "It was always my goal to have a small farm for all animals, to save lives."

Concurrent with her clinical work, Melissa personally made the transition to a plant-based diet. As she worked with cows and pigs, Melissa became aware of their intelligence and emotions. By 1995, she realized she simply could not include the flesh of these sentient creatures in her diet.

Thus, when visitors, who are always welcome, come to the sanctuary, they are asked not to bring any meat products with them. PIGS is a non-threatening environment for animals, although Melissa says it is oaky to describe the antics of the dogs and cats as "hamming it up."

The 150 pot-bellied or 65 domestic pigs here don't have to worry about becoming Easter ham. They will live out their natural lives in porcine luxury —- snoozing, socializing, rooting, and rolling in the mud to their hearts' delight in the eight acres of

woodlands, pastures, and mud holes devoted to their kind.

Indeed, every PIGS resident enjoys the best of care. Melissa jokes that the 175-year-old farmhouse where she lives needs more updating than the housing for the animals. The dogs and cats enjoy heated and air-conditioned group houses, but her farmhouse lacks a cooling system. All animals receive regular veterinary care, quality food, very clean environments, and lots of love and attention from Melissa, the full-time farm manager, three part-time workers, and numerous volunteers.

It's an expensive operation, and Melissa and her board weigh every rescue request against the rising costs and dwindling donations. On average, it costs $25,000 a month just for operating expenses, if nothing goes wrong, which is seldom the case.

Blossom, a 500-pound domesticated pig, was brought to the shelter following complaints of her roaming the neighborhood. After two years and a round of antidepressant medication, she is happy and well-adjusted at PIGS Animal Sanctuary.

The farm is located in an area under heavy pressure from suburban sprawl, and it is Melissa's opinion that the neighbors appreciate the sanctuary's buffering presence. They try to be good neighbors by housing every resident in a fenced-in lot or barn, and then surrounding the entire gated property with a second fence. A microchip is embedded in every animal just in case it happens to stray.

The sanctuary offers cat adoptions, and area residents are starting to view it as a resource for finding a good companion animal. Unfortunately, they also see it as a convenient spot at which to discard unwanted kittens and puppies.

"The biggest problem is people dropping them off at the gate," she says. "I've had 23 cats dropped off in one night."

The sanctuary's guests come from all manner of situations. Many of the 23 goats were 4-H projects in which youngsters lost interest or lacked the means to maintain. The pot-bellied pigs are largely from owners who quickly got over their initial infatuation and dumped them on a humane society or animal control group.

Blossom, a 550-pound pig, came from a home in Berkeley Springs. The owner, who lived in town, treated the pig as a dog — she allowed it to roam the neighborhood. Neighbors complained, authorities removed Blossom, and PIGS took her in. With the change in her circumstances, Blossom became extremely depressed and required treatment with antidepressant medication.

Two years later, Blossom is well adjusted and enjoys sharing her pen with a pot-bellied and two other domestic pigs, Houdini and Travis, both of whom are not long for this world. Melissa worries about the emotional fallout Blossom will suffer when the end comes for her penmates.

"Pigs hate any kind of change," Melissa says.

The most unusual case Melissa has seen was a prairie dog whose owner had abandoned it after he murdered and dismembered his spouse. Law enforcement took dental impressions of the prairie dog to link the murder to the house, and Melissa ended up testifying in the trial.

"I'd testified in animal cruelty cases before, but never a murder trial," she says of the high-profile Eastern Panhandle murder case, which resulted in a conviction. Despite the trauma the critter had experienced in its earlier life, it was able to live out its final days in peace amid the several hundred other highly contented animals.

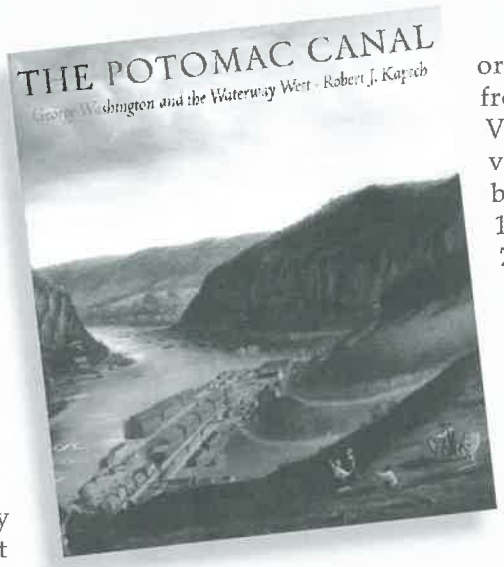
"[The prairie dog] was lovable. He would curl up in my arms," Melissa adds. "It was so sad. We only had him four months before he died."

For more information, visit www.pigs.org or call (304)262-0080.

CARL E. FEATHER, freelance writer and photographer, is owner of Feather Multimedia. Carl is a resident of Kingsville, Ohio, with family roots in Preston and Tucker counties. He is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor.

New Books Available

By Kim Johnson

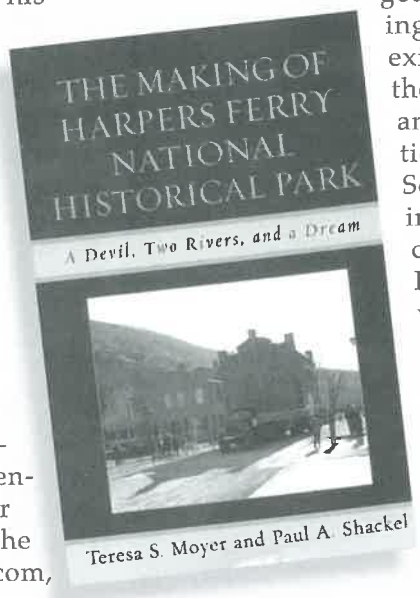


The Potomac Canal: George Washington and the Waterway West, by Robert J. Kapsch, is a history of America's first attempt to connect the farmlands west of the Allegheny Mountains with the port cities of the East. Founded in 1785, the Potomac Canal Company played an important role in the expansion of the young nation by providing transportation to and from the western lands. George Washington was the first president of the company.

The route established by the Potomac Canal was the foundation for what would eventually become the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, and later, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

Richly illustrated with historical photographs, paintings, maps, and drawings, *The Potomac Canal* gives a detailed account of the beginnings of this important waterway and George Washington's early involvement with its construction.

The Potomac Canal is a 374-page, large-format, soft-cover book. It is colorfully illustrated, indexed, and includes extensive endnotes. It sells for $40 and is available on the Web at www.wvupress.com, or directly from West Virginia University Press by calling 1-866-988-7737.



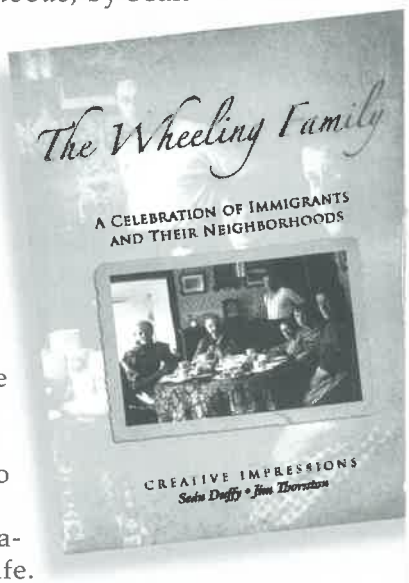
The Making of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park: A Devil, Two Rivers, and a Dream, by Teresa S. Moyer and Paul A. Shackel, tells the behind-the-scenes story of how the incident of an attempted slave revolt led by John Brown in 1859 was selected for commemoration at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in Jefferson County.

Through extensive research and documentation, Moyer and Shackel detail the conflicting goals and differing views that existed between the local people and the National Park Service during the park's creation. Harpers Ferry was designated a National Monument in 1944 and declared a National Historical Park in 1963.

The Making of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park includes chapters regarding Harpers Ferry and its place in history, the local residents and the National Park Service, and the interpretation of African American history at Harpers Ferry.

The soft-cover book contains 235 pages, an index, and is illustrated with historical black-and-white photographs. It is available for $27.95, plus shipping, at www.altamirapress.com, or by calling Alta Mira Press at 1-800-462-6420.

The Wheeling Family: A Celebration of Immigrants and Their Neighborhoods, by Sean Duffy and Jim Thornton, is a glimpse into the lives of Wheeling's early immigrants, who came to West Virginia looking to improve their situations in life.

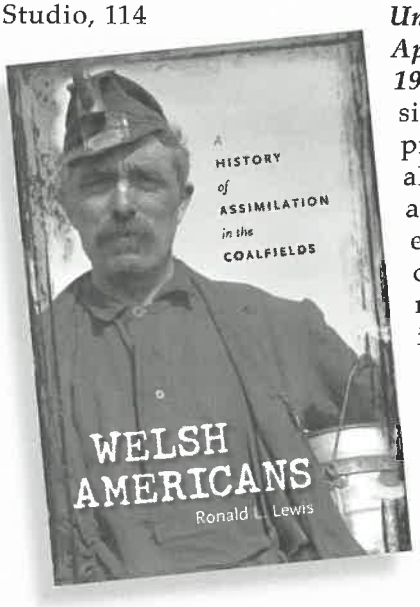


This book is about the rich and diverse cultures of those immigrants who came to the Wheeling area from 1850-1950, primarily from Italy, Greece, Poland, Lebanon, and Ukraine.

Duffy and Thornton interviewed Wheeling residents and compiled those oral histories into this collection of first-person

immigrant experiences. The book is illustrated with more than 500 historical family images and documents. An added bonus is the inclusion of several recipes for special family dishes.

The Wheeling Family: A Celebration of Immigrants and Their Neighborhoods is available for $29.95, plus $6 postage, from Creative Impressions Studio, 114 14th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003, on the Web at www.cre8m.com, or by calling 1-888-232-9623.



Welsh Americans: A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields, by West Virginia University professor Ronald L. Lewis, explores the Welsh immigration to the United States in the late 1800's and their contribution to the coal industry. They were hard workers and skilled laborers, the author writes, who had been recruited by the mining companies for work in the coalfields.

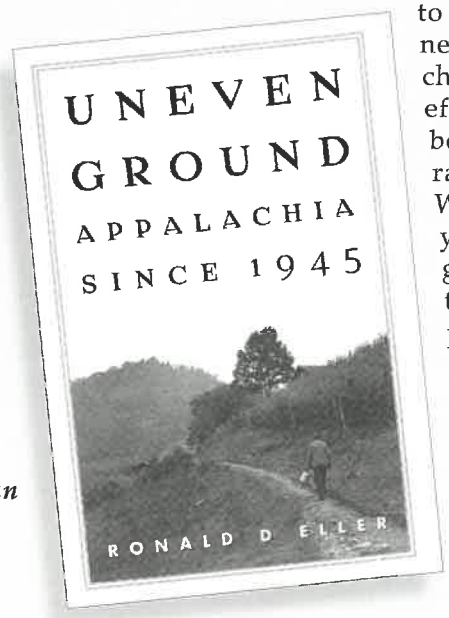
The book examines why the Welsh were so readily welcomed and accepted in America while other immigrant groups, such as eastern Europeans, Italians, Irish, and Asians, were often regarded as alien foreigners. The Welsh brought their politics, religion, language, and music to their new country, but because of this welcoming atmosphere, they were so completely absorbed into American life that they eventually lost their cultural identity.

Although there never were a large number of Welsh coal miners in West Virginia, several of the most successful coal operators here were Welsh, including Thomas Phillips Davies, Evan Powell, Jenkin B. Jones, and William H. Thomas.

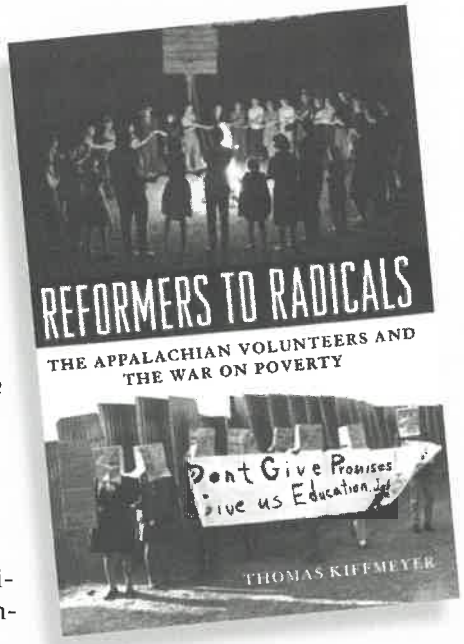
Welsh Americans has 408 pages and is illustrated with photographs, maps, and drawings. It is available for $49.95 from University of North Carolina Press, online at www.uncpress.unc.edu. Call (919)966-3561 for more information.

Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945, by University of Kentucky professor Ronald D. Eller, is a study of the economic, political, and environmental issues in Appalachia during the last half of the 20th century. Eller takes a look at the impact of federal programs, such as the War on Poverty, and discusses how government policies have been manipulated by political corruption and corporate greed. Chapters include "Rich Land—Poor People," "Politics of Poverty," "Growth and Development," and "The New Appalachia."

The book has 376 pages and includes an index and a 32-page photograph section. It sells for $29.95 and is available from the University Press of Kentucky at www.kentuckypress.com or by calling (859)257-5200.



Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty, by Thomas Kiffmeyer, is an account of the



rise and fall of the Appalachian Volunteers, a government-funded program connected to the War on Poverty.

After John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign brought national awareness to the intense poverty of the Appalachian region, hundreds joined the Appalachian Volunteers, a group of young people who came to eastern Kentucky to repair homes, rebuild schools, and provide books and other educational materials for students. Their mission was to improve the daily lives of the Appalachian poor, while trying to create permanent economic change. Their efforts proved to be only temporary, however. Within a few years, plans began to fail due to a variety of problems that arose between the Volunteers, local critics, and government agencies.

Reformers to Radicals has 296 pages and

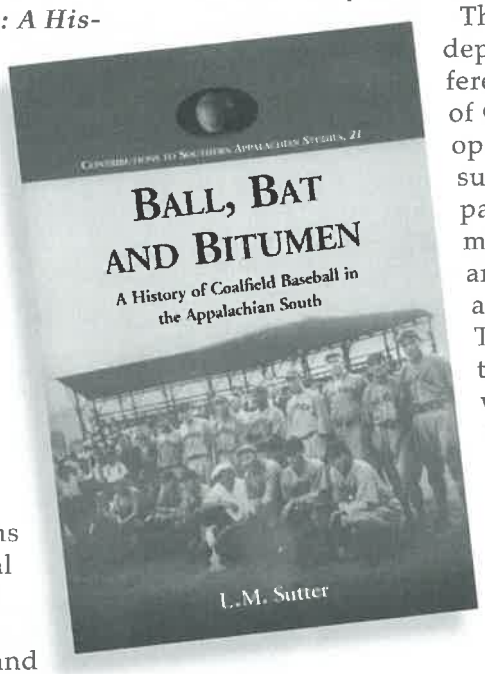
includes an index and 24 pages of photographs. The book sells for $40 and is available from the University Press of Kentucky at www.kentuckypress.com. For more information, call (859)257-5200.

Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South, by John C. Inscoe, is a collection of 17 essays examining the racial beliefs and attitudes of Appalachian people before, during, and after the Civil War.

Using letters, journals, and memoirs of slaves, slaveholders, and abolitionists, Inscoe explores the reality of slavery and racial attitudes of the time, and how these beliefs have been misunderstood and distorted from the 19th century up to the present day.

The book has 395 pages and is fully indexed and documented. It sells for $50 and is available from the University Press of Kentucky at www.kentuckypress.com. For more information, call (859)257-5200.

Ball, Bat, and Bitumen: A History of Coalfield Baseball in the Appalachian South, by L.M. Sutter, is a history of baseball in the coalfields. Through in-depth research and interviews with surviving players, relatives, and fans, Sutter explores how baseball in the coalfields was a different game than what was played anywhere else.

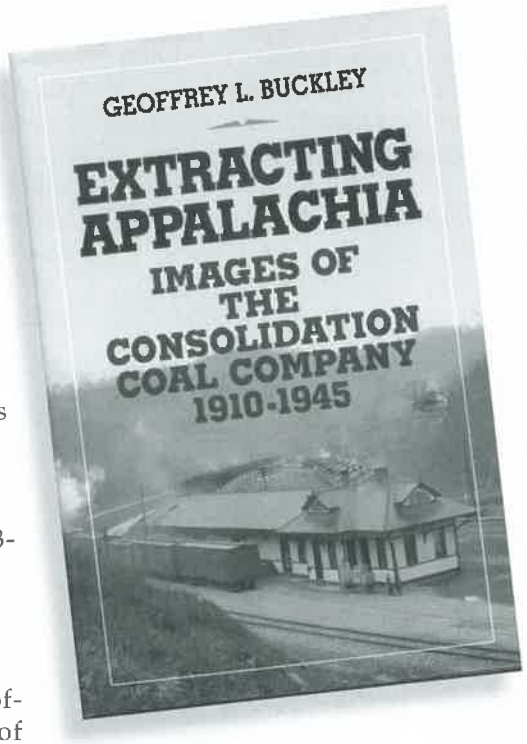


Entertainment options were limited in the coal camps, and baseball games between rival towns attracted large and enthusiastic crowds. It was a seriously competitive game, and many major league players got their start with the coalfield teams. The chapter "Fertile Soil" explores West Virginia's contribution to baseball, with such players as Lew Burdette, Jack Warhop, Bill Mazeroski, Earl "Greasy" Neale, Sad Sam "Toothpick" Jones, Shufflin' Phil Douglas, Big Max Butcher, and numerous others.

Ball, Bat, and Bitumen has 212 pages and is illustrated with many historical photographs. It sells for $35 and is available from McFarland & Company Publishers, on the Web at www.mcfarlandpub.com, or by calling 1-800-253-2187.

Extracting Appalachia: Images of Consolidation Coal Company 1910-1945, by Geoffrey L. Buckley, is a history of this influential mining operation told through a selection of photographs from the Consolidation Coal Company archive at the Smithsonian Institution. The majority of the photographs were taken in West Virginia and eastern Kentucky coal camps.

The images depict different views of Consol's operations, such as company towns, men at work, and mining accidents. These photographs were used by Consolidation Coal to create a positive public image of the company's operations. Buckley critically examines and interprets these photographs as historical documents and reveals the human story behind these company images of life in the coal towns.



Extracting Appalachia contains 215 pages, historical photographs, an index, and extensive notes. It sells for $46.95 and is available from Ohio University Press from its Web site at www.ohio.edu/oupress. Call (773)702-7000 for more information.

Carolina Mine: A Northern West Virginia Coal Camp, by Trudy Ice Lemley and Irene Yuhas Ice, is a pictorial history of a Marion County coal camp, from its construction in 1915 to the present day. This collection of historical photographs illustrates the lives of mining families at Carolina and methods of early coal mining at Consolidation Coal Company Mine No. 86.

Carolina Mine has 120 pages and contains more than 200 photographs and documents. The book sells for $19.95, plus $5 shipping, from Trudy Lemley, P.O. Box 206, Carolina, WV 26563.

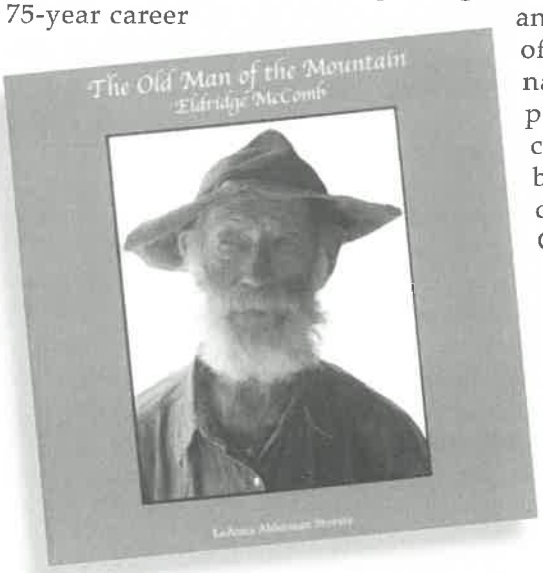
Appalachian Legacy & The Quest, by Enoch E. Hicks, is the story of the hard times and perseverance of a coal mining family and their lives in Upper Excelsior, a McDowell County coal camp known locally as The Bottom.

The book is divided into two sections: "Home — The Family & Hard Times," and "The Quest," which explores Hicks' search for information about the geological formation of coal and the development of the coal industry.

Appalachian Legacy & The Quest has 246 pages and is illustrated with historical photographs and documents. It sells for $24.95 and is available from McClain Printing Company, on the Web at www.mcclainprinting.com, or by calling (304)478-2881.

The Pocahontas Communications Cooperative has recently published two books of local interest: ***Roland Sharp, Country Doctor: Memories of a Life Well Lived***, by Roland Sharp, and ***The Old Man of the Mountain***, by LeAnna Alderman Sterste.

Roland Sharp, Country Doctor, is an autobiography of a 102-year-old Pocahontas County physician who had an impressive 75-year career as a one-room schoolteacher, family doctor, and medical educator. Throughout his half-century in medicine, Dr. Sharp has been recognized as one of the West Virginia's leading physicians. He became the first president of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in 1974. The book sells for $25.



The Old Man of the Mountain tells the story of Eldridge McComb and his life on a remote Pocahontas County farm that has been in his family since the 1700's. McComb, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 83, is well-remembered by the community as a gifted storyteller, humorist, and a reservoir of knowledge about the old ways of living. *The Old Man of the Mountain* sells for $12. Both books are available on the Web at www.alleghenymountainradio.org; phone 1-800-287-2346.

Uphill Both Ways — Barefooted, by David H. Halsey, is a memoir of the author's experiences growing up in Otsego, a Wyoming County coal camp. The son of a coal miner, Halsey shares recollections of his boyhood adventures and mishaps during the 1930's and '40's. Author David H. Halsey is a GOLDENSEAL contributor.

The 97-page book sells for $18.50, plus $7 shipping, and is available online at www.heritagebooks.com; phone 1-800-876-6103.

The Immobile Man: A Neurologist's Casebook, by Dr. Lud Gutmann, is a collection of 17 stories regarding the triumphs and tragedies of human nature when patients are challenged by serious disease. Dr. Gutmann, a GOLDENSEAL contributor, is a physician who believes that learning about the patient's family relationships, emotional strengths and weaknesses, and life experiences reveals the person behind the illness and aids in their care.

The Immobile Man contains 134 pages and sells for $14.95, online at www.mcclainprinting.com; phone (304)478-2881.

Kim Johnson is editorial assistant for GOLDENSEAL magazine.

Back Issues Available

___Summer 2002/*Princess Margy* Sternwheeler
___Spring 2003/Stained Glass Dome
___Fall 2003/Artist Boyd Boggs
___Winter 2003/Weaver Dorothy Thompson
___Summer 2004/1939 World's Fair
___Fall 2004/Grafton Trains
___Winter 2004/Toymaker Dick Schnacke
___Fall 2005/Coke Ovens
___Spring 2006/Pepperoni Rolls
___Fall 2006/Pumpkin House
___Winter 2006/Whitcomb Boulder
___Summer 2007/Raising Goats
___Fall 2007/Seneca Rocks
___Winter 2007/Photographer Lloyd Gainer
___Spring 2008/Dancer Lou Maiuri
___Summer 2008/Fenton Glass
___Fall 2008/Yokum's Vacationland
___Winter 2008/Coal Art
___Spring 2009/Bernard Cyrus

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

Better yet, take advantage of our Deluxe Gift Package: receive all 19 back issues listed above, plus a copy of the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from* GOLDENSEAL, a copy of *The* GOLDENSEAL *Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars*, and a full-color reprint booklet featuring our 1985 Homer Laughlin China article, all for only $50, plus $4 shipping. That's a savings of more than $30 off the regular price!

Treat a friend or treat yourself to this memorable collection of GOLDENSEAL books and magazines. Take advantage of our new Deluxe Gift Package, and celebrate West Virginia traditional life!

(Please include $1 shipping for orders of 1-3, $2 for orders of 4-9, $4 for orders of 10 or more.)

I enclose $_____for_____back issues of GOLDENSEAL.
-or-
Charge my ____VISA____MasterCard
#_____
Exp. Date _____

Name_____
Address_____
_____

Please make check or money order payable to GOLDENSEAL.
Send to:
GOLDENSEAL
The Cultural Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

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

Note from the West Virginia State Treasurer's Office:

When you provide a check as payment, you authorize the State Treasurer's Office to use information from your check to make a one-time electronic fund transfer from your account or to process the payment as an image transfer. Funds may be withdrawn from your account as soon as the same day you make your payment. You will not receive your check back from your financial institution. For inquiries, call 1-866-243-9010.

An Orphan's Tale

Growing up without parents or a stable home during the Great Depression would be trying enough for most. Add to that the burden of polio, and the odds seem nearly insurmountable. Such was the early life of retired New Martinsville jeweler John Kormos, as related in a recent memoir, titled *Why Not Smile*, penned by his wife, Thelma Kormos.

This remarkable book tells the story of John Kormos, who is born in 1926 to Hungarian-immigrant parents in Rivesville, Marion County. John's mother dies a few months later, leaving her husband with the lone responsibility for their five children. The family moves from town to town, following their father's checkered efforts to find work and make ends meet.

John is diagnosed with polio at 18 months of age and is placed in a Fairmont children's home, the first in what becomes a long list of institutions and foster homes. The family is together again in Wheeling in 1934, when their father is hit by a bus and killed. The children are left without support or resources and begin a complex and heart-rending adventure, involving orphanages, foster homes, hospitals, and social service organizations. They experience unexpected kindness, unspeakable cruelty, piercing loneliness, and memorable good times as they are repeatedly separated, reunited, and separated again.

Why Not Smile

Thelma Kormos

John Kormos' experience is punctuated by the progress of his disease and treatment. His descriptions of life with polio are eye-opening, and his positive attitude and persistent faith are inspiring. Eventually, John receives training and opens a successful watch-repair and jewelry shop in New Martinsville, where he and his wife live today.

Why Not Smile, a 261-page hardbound volume, is available from McClain Printing Company and sells for $22.50, plus tax and shipping, online at www.mcclainprinting.com; phone 1-800-654-7179.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Hispanic West Virginia
- Fiddler Elmer Rich
- Prichard School
- Circus!

PHOTO CURIOSITY

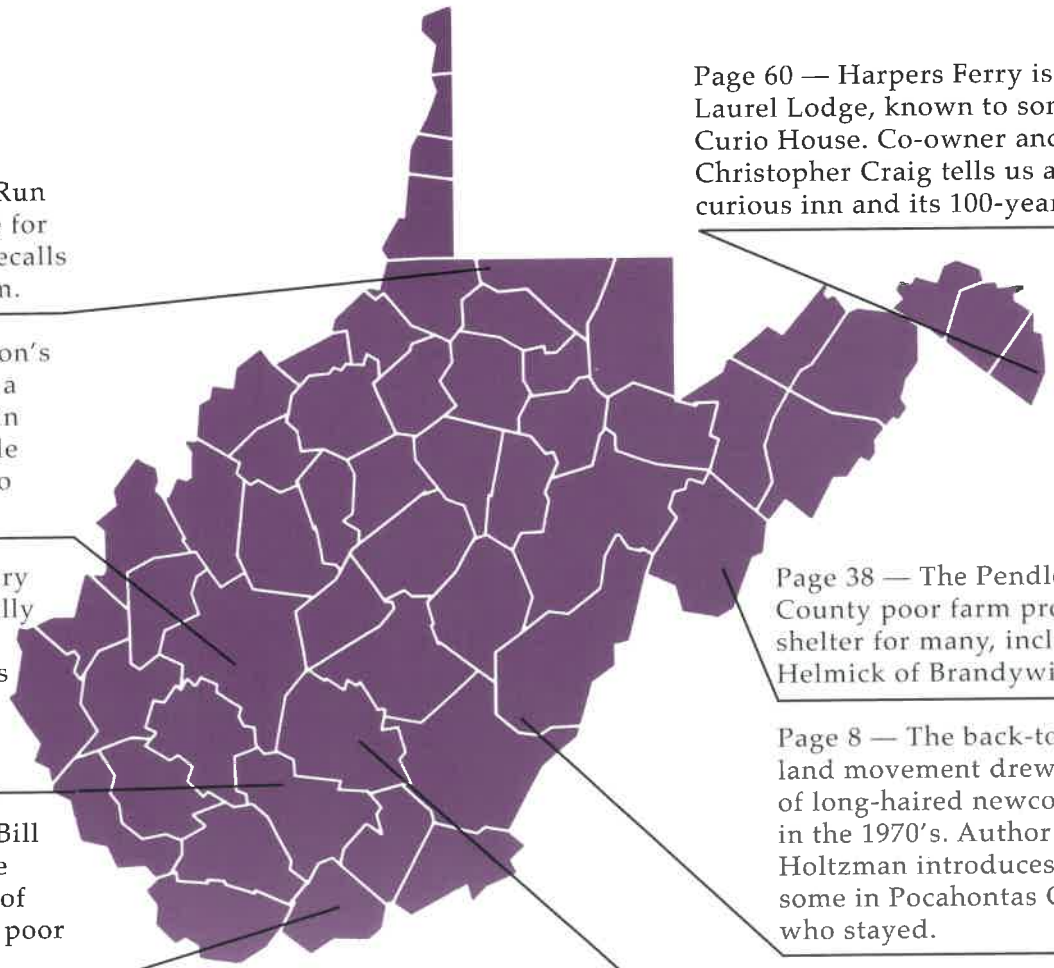
"Is there anything good to eat around here?" This hungry youngster raids a fridge at the Union Mission's Brookside facility near Charleston, probably in the mid-1950's. We are curious why the canned goods occupy the top shelf in this icebox. We also wonder what the rectangular packages contain on the second shelf. Most importantly, who's going to get this kid a fresh diaper?

Our thanks to author Karl Priest for providing this wonderful slice-of-life shot. See Karl's story about life at Brookside, beginning on page 44.

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

PERIODICALS

Inside Goldenseal



92
0 94295 76645 1