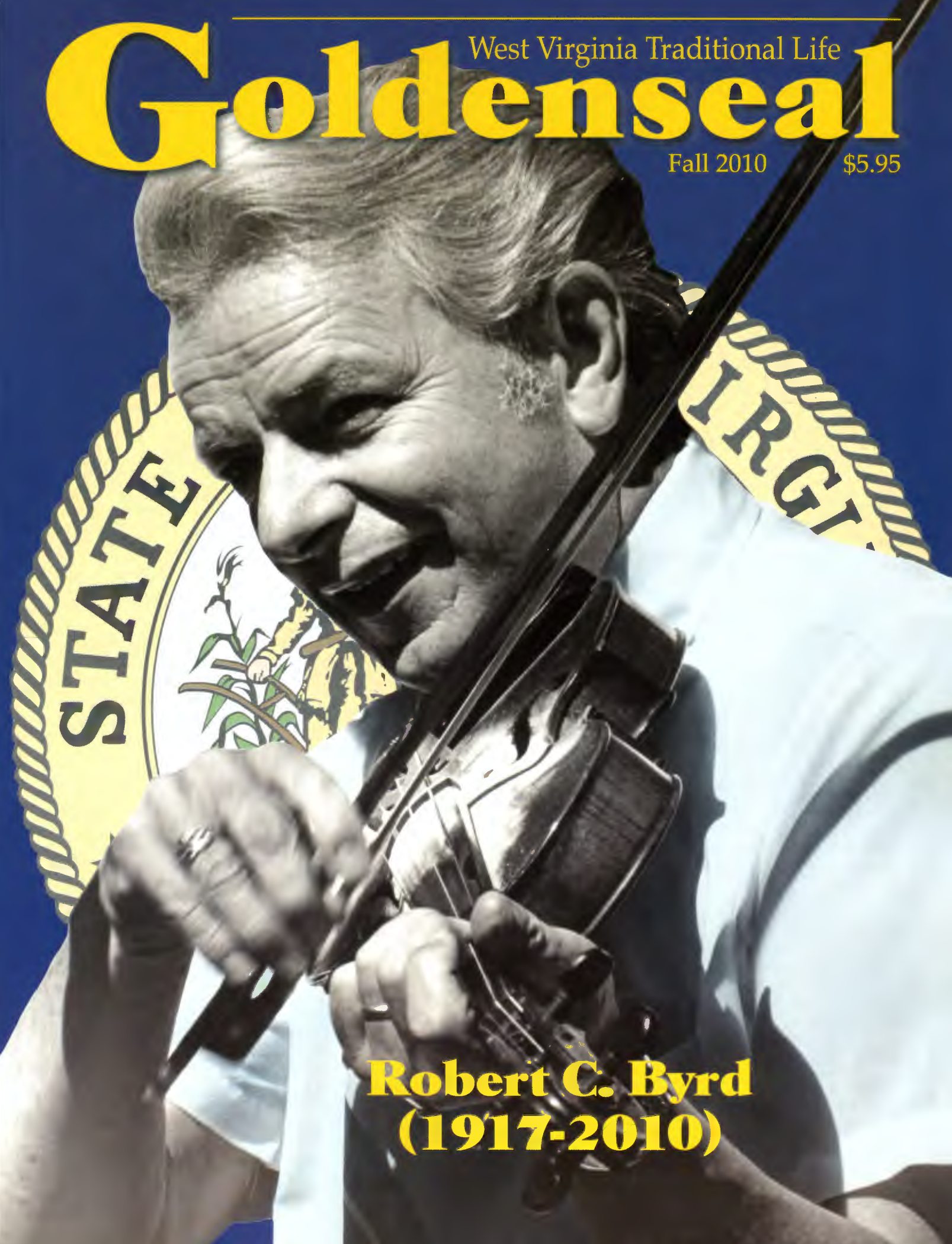
West Virginia Traditional Life

Goldenseal

Fall 2010 $5.95



Robert C. Byrd (1917-2010)

From the Editor: Thoughts on Byrd

In 1999, GOLDENSEAL released the book *Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from* Goldenseal. Regular readers are no doubt familiar with the book — a coupon appears in each issue. (You can find it on page 6 of this edition.) The book included stories from earlier editions of GOLDENSEAL, highlighting our state's musical heritage, introducing readers to some of the people who have kept this music alive, and offering details of how the music fits into their daily lives and remains part of the fabric of our state's traditional culture.

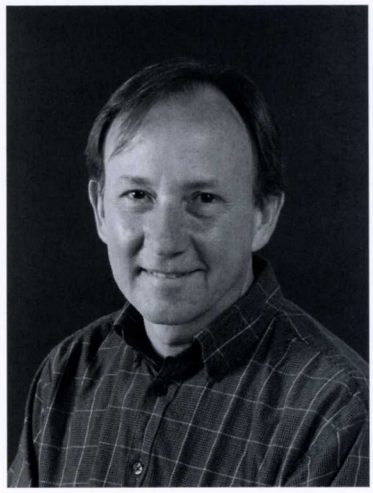
Corresponding with the 25th anniversary of the magazine, it included 25 stories about 25 musicians or family bands and featured the work of approximately 25 authors and photographers. We sent complimentary copies to all of the story subjects or their surviving families, plus all of the contributing authors and photographers. Many of these folks expressed their gratitude at being included in the book and for their complimentary copy.

But only one took the time to write a "thank-you" note. I have this note framed and on my wall. It is signed, "With warmest wishes, I am — Sincerely yours, Robert C. Byrd." The signature is handwritten.

I was deeply moved by this simple, old-fashioned gesture from such a busy and important man. In the midst of tending to the nation's business, serving on crucial legislative committees, and staying on top of world events, Senator Byrd took the time to thank me for sending him a book.

When Senator Byrd passed away — roughly halfway between West Virginia Day and the Fourth of July — I chose to pay my respects at the Capitol rotunda in the middle of the night. As you might recall, the procession from the federal courthouse to the Capitol took place in the late afternoon, and the body lay in state in the rotunda until 9 a.m. I set my alarm for 2:30, woke up my two teenaged sons, and the three of us drove down to the Capitol to witness this historic event.

The lights were off on the gold-leafed dome in honor of the somber occasion, so the Capitol's exterior was illuminated only by moonlight. A small cadre of photographers gathered on the walkway to capture this rare and beautiful scene. Inside was evidence of the throng who had attended earlier — three tables held the guest books; black ropes and gold stanchions extended through the governor's office, down the portrait-lined hallway, and to the lower rotunda. There, two soldiers stood at the head and foot of the flag-draped casket. There were no crowds, so we had the luxury of time and silence with which to contemplate this world leader and take in the enormity of the occasion. I attended the official memorial in the heat of the day a few hours later, but the quiet moments my sons and I spent in the rotunda at 4 a.m. dominate my memory.



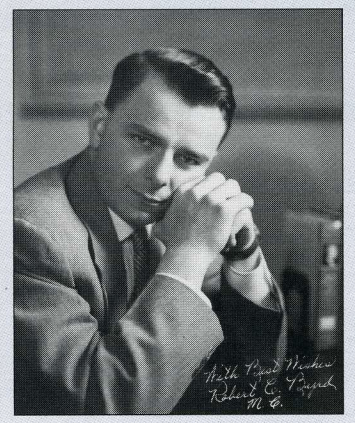
PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KELLER

Back at work, we made the necessary changes to the upcoming fall issue in order to recognize Senator Byrd and his passing. Perhaps appropriately, two stories about clock makers were moved to the next issue to make room for our special section on Byrd. By coincidence, we had already planned on publishing a feature story on fiddler Bobby Taylor, who was one of Senator Byrd's favorite musicians and a close personal friend; Bobby honored us and the senator with his reflections on Byrd, beginning on page 18. Our story about Vandalia Award recipient Bobby Taylor begins on page 20. Bobby Taylor will no doubt keep the musical side of Senator Byrd's legacy alive for years to come.

Senator Byrd was a proud GOLDENSEAL subscriber for many years. As life goes on, GOLDENSEAL will continue to bring you a rich and varied selection of West Virginia stories as long as you continue to support our efforts with your subscriptions, renewals, and gifts. Please note that after 12 years at $4.95, the cover price of GOLDENSEAL has now gone up a dollar to $5.95. Our one-year subscription rate is now $20; two-year subscriptions are now $36 and three-years are $50. These increases were unavoidable, considering the steady rise in postage and production costs. I'm sure you will agree that GOLDENSEAL is still a real bargain. We appreciate your continued support!

John Lilly

Volume 36, Number 3 **Goldenseal** Fall 2010



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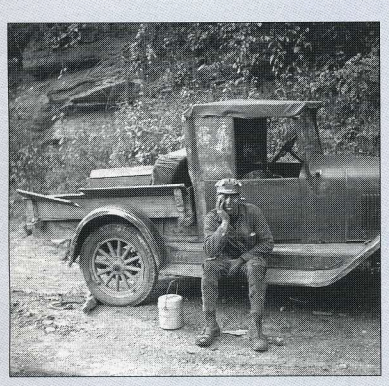

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MURDER!
$600 REWARD $600
For the arrest and detection of W. H. Griffith, alias W. H. Griffin, alias F. S. Rose, who, on the morning of May 1, 1915, shot and killed G. Ord Thompson, Chief of Police of the Town of Gassaway, West Virginia, wounded another officer and made his escape; was chased through seven counties and last seen near his home, at the edge of Wirt County, near the Roane County line, where he had killed a Constable a few weeks previous in resisting arrest.
The State of West Virginia offers a reward of $250.00.
The County of Braxton, West Virginia, offers a reward of $250.00.
The Town of Gassaway, West Virginia, offers a reward of $100.00.
DESCRIPTION:
Twenty-three years of age; height about 6 feet; weight about 170 pounds; smooth shaven; dark hair; dark complexion; prominent nose; high cheek bones; walks or runs in long strides; slightly stooped; wears No. 9 shoes; was shot by pistol through left hand; one shot from shotgun in neck; likely to make his way by passing bad checks.
Any information communicate with B. N. Rollyson, Sheriff of Braxton County, Sutton, West Virginia.

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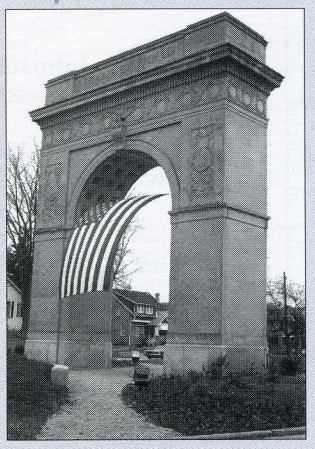

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On the cover· U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd with his fiddle. Late 1970's photograph by Blanton Owen. Our stories begin on page 10.

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Letters from Readers

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

Afghanistan Reader

May 20, 2010
Editor·
I am a lance corporal in the United States Marine Corps, currently living out of a vehicle in the most war-torn part of Afghanistan. I am part of an infantry platoon, currently trying to clear the Taliban from around our location.

It seems every day that there are roadside bombs, also called IED's (Improvised Explosive Device), being hit here. Every few days, we get to rest our legs and recover mentally and physically by guarding the route in and out of our forward observation post. During that time, we live in our vehicles, which we share with another company.

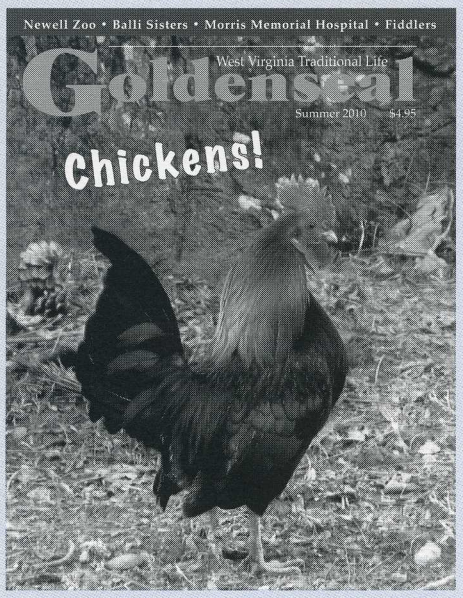
I came upon your magazine somehow in a vehicle we have in Afghanistan. And I am so glad I did. After discovering these two issues — Winter 2009 and Spring 2010 — I quickly lost my guard and let my mind feel relaxed while I read through these amazing magazines.

I got married to my wife, Lindsey, right before I got deployed. She and I love to travel when I get time off, which is very rare being an active-duty infantryman in the Marines. With me and my wife both being from Michigan and not knowing much about West Virginia, I have come to the conclusion that if I make it home, I'm going to travel to West Virginia on a vacation. Just from these two editions, GOLDENSEAL has opened up my eyes to how much history is left untold. I can't explain to you how weird and great it felt to slip into a trance and mentally leave this place of war and just imagine living there in the old days. It blew my mind how much history your writers can cover, and so well.

So I have to go back out on 120-hour patrol to seek these people who don't have a clue as to who they are going against. We all look forward to coming home and helping unwind the next few chapters of history on this war.

Thank you so much for the amazing magazines that I stumbled upon in very odd circumstances. It is very much appreciated. Thank you again, and continue the great work.
Lance Corporal Michael Zach

Thank you, sir, for a stunning letter and for those encouraging words. Our thoughts, prayers, and gratitude are with you and your comrades as you undertake this difficult and dangerous work. Come home soon and safely. And when you do, please come and see us in West Virginia! —ed.



Chickens

June 7, 2010
Via e-mail
French Creek, West Virginia
Editor:
I wish to thank you for the publication of the article that I wrote. [See "I Remember Chickens"; Summer 2010.] Our local doctor is a subscriber to GOLDENSEAL. My wife works as his nurse, and he told her last Friday that this was one of the best articles he had read. Then a patient came in and asked my wife if that was her husband that wrote that article. She said he laughed and said that it brought back some memories.

Today, I had to go to Buckhannon to run various chores and went to The Bookstore, located on Main Street. I saw two copies of the magazine on the floor and inquired where they were supposed to go. I then told them of the article that I wrote. One elderly lady said she used to have chickens and said she wanted a copy. So I signed my picture for her. And the owner looked at the article and decided he needed a copy of it, so I autographed it for him, too.

I also autographed a copy for the lady at the church, whom I mentioned in the article. I definitely need 10 additional magazines. I only have one left. Once again, thanks much for your professional work.
Charles M. Morrison, Sr.

June 9, 2010
Via e-mail
Riverton, West Virginia
Editor:
I want to take a few moments to personally thank you for the wonderful cover on the Summer 2010 edition of GOLDENSEAL. It is pure genius for you to have selected the beautiful rooster for the cover. It harks back to a time when West Virginia was largely agricultural, back before the land jobbers and robber barons placed their heavy hands upon this wonderful state of ours. This issue pays homage to my ancestors who settled Pendleton County in the early 1700's, and to me, as I continue their legacy.

We have no coal culture in Pendleton County, no glass factories, no metropolitan areas. We have always been largely agricultural in nature. I realize the great diversity of cultures in our great state, and I understand it must be very difficult to represent all of these cultural aspects on a regular basis in your magazine.

However, it seems to me that the original agricultural heritage of this state is often forgotten, or at the very least, placed upon the back burner when compared to the rural industrial aspects of the state. So, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for selecting the wonderful photograph of the very colorful rooster for the Summer 2010 cover. It is the perfect representation of the rich, colorful agricultural heritage of our great state. I've shown it to all of my family and friends, and they love it, as well.

You've made our day, and we're not apt to forget the kindness.
Matthew H. Burns

Here's My GOLDENSEAL Gift List!

Please add the following name(s) to the GOLDENSEAL mailing list. I enclose $20 for each subscription.

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KIM JOHNSON

June 14, 2010
Farmington, New York
Editor:
Thanks for the beautiful, colorful, well-written Summer 2010 issue. The cover restored good memories to all of us 95+ farm beings. With nine children, Mom, and Dad, we had to raise chickens, ducks, turkeys, a cow, and guinea fowl.

Keep up the good work. Keep lovely colors in all the covers. The gold in GOLDENSEAL is just beautiful. Add more gold, because there is gold in that coal.
Love,
Parthenia Edmonds

June 8, 2010
Via e-mail
Charleston, West Virginia
Editor:
I just wanted to extend my appreciation for your most recent GOLDENSEAL. I so love the beautiful cover photography. Even though I am a die-hard, born-and-bred daughter of the coalfields, I appreciate the fact that your fine journal brings attention to the agricultural side of our wonderful state.

That is a side so often overlooked for the more sensational stories of our rural industrial past and present. People often forget that we are a state founded on agriculture, and that it was such a big part of people's lives. It continues to be a large part of the lives of people who live outside of the coalfields and the Kanawha Valley region.

The vibrant chicken on the front cover made me smile and want to read your journal. Just wanted to let you know.
Sincerely,
Shirley Stewart Burns

June 7, 2010
Via e-mail
Hurricane, West Virginia
Editor:
I loved the rooster pictured on the front cover and the article about chickens! Most people these days are probably not aware that many, many people both in rural and urban areas raised chickens for eggs, the soup pot, or Sunday dinner. Quite a few still do. My mother was raised by her grandmother and a great-aunt who kept chickens (and ducks and geese at times). She frequently talks about how she liked feeding the chickens, but hated gathering eggs. She recalls how, when her grandmother dried fruit and vegetables on screens, she had to put them on the roof to keep the chickens from eating all of it. She tells how the chickens pecked her favorite puppy. She also remembers how good her grandmother's fried chicken tasted.

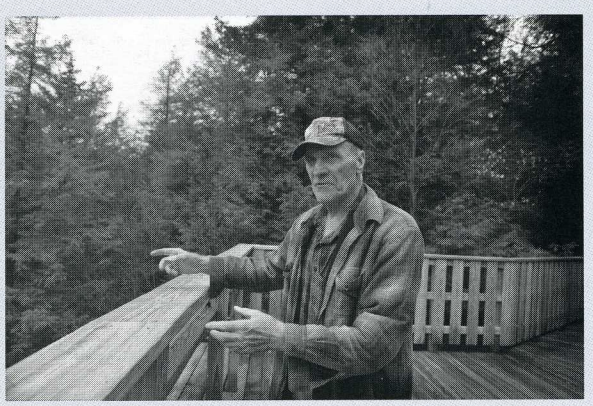
Thanks for the reminder of how much chickens have been a part of "West Virginia Traditional Life," and beyond. You sure turned on the spigot of memories!
Susie Scouras

June 21, 2010
From Facebook:
We love your magazine. My husband and I are with the U.S. State Department overseas, and we love our taste of home every quarter. Right now, we are in Accra, Ghana, and our two-year-old is obsessed with chickens — he loved your cover photo!
Gretchen Krantz Evans

June 10, 2010
Via e-mail
Editor:
Let me tell you how much I enjoyed

reading the most recent edition of GOLDENSEAL. I spent a summer in Helvetia and visited the Balli sisters more than once. [See "Visiting the Balli Sisters of Helvetia," by Alan Byer; Summer 2010.] It was nice to be reminded of that time.

Plus, the cover was perfect. I've been after my husband to buy me some chickens. When he saw the cover, he said, "You're really going to make me get you some chickens, aren't you?" I know of two people in South Hills with chickens in their fancy yards — suddenly chickens are chic! Mine will have to do with a more modest location, but I'm sure they'll be just as happy.
Renee Margocee



Boone Pase at Blackwater Falls State Park. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.

Balli Sisters

June 28, 2010
Atlanta, Georgia
Editor:
Alan Byer's piece about the Balli sisters is a classic. Thank you for a great summer issue.
Very best regards,
Wade Pepper

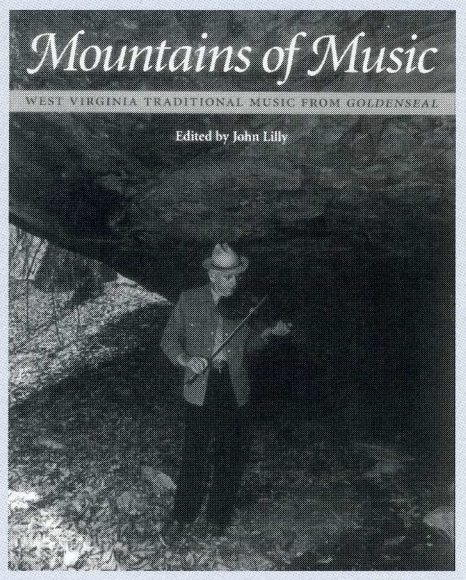
From the left, Martha Balli Jones, Anna Balli, and Freda Balli. Photograph 1998 by Samanda Dorger.

Boone Pase

June 3, 2010
Fairmont, West Virginia
Editor:
The article in your spring edition featuring Daniel "Boone" Pase was just great. [See "Building Blackwater: A Visit with Daniel 'Boone' Pase," by Carl E. Feather; Spring 2010.] I was born in Tucker County and grew up in the city of Thomas. I know Boone very well, and we are the best of friends.

There is another story about Boone that should be written. He was, as far as I'm concerned, the last of the true woodsmen of that era. He hunted, trapped, fished, and knew the mountains as well as anyone I ever knew. I spent many days in his cabin, and those memories are still the longest-lasting memories I have. In those days, we didn't have four-wheelers or four-wheel-drive trucks to drive to the cabin door. We walked with our packs approximately seven miles from Thomas to Boone's cabin. Boone was usually there to welcome those who stopped by.

Mr. Feather did an excellent job with the



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

The book is available from the GOLDENSEAL office for $29.95, plus $2 shipping per book; West Virginia residents please add 6% sales tax (total $33.75 per book, including tax and shipping). Add *Mountains of Music* to your book collection today!

— — — — — — — — — — — —

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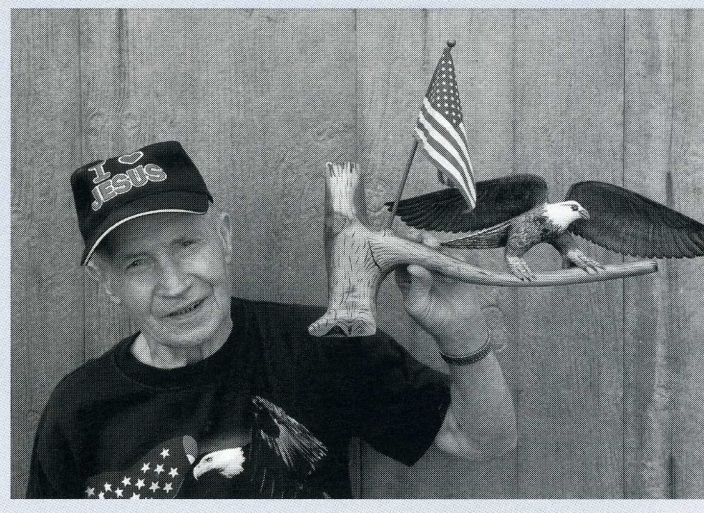
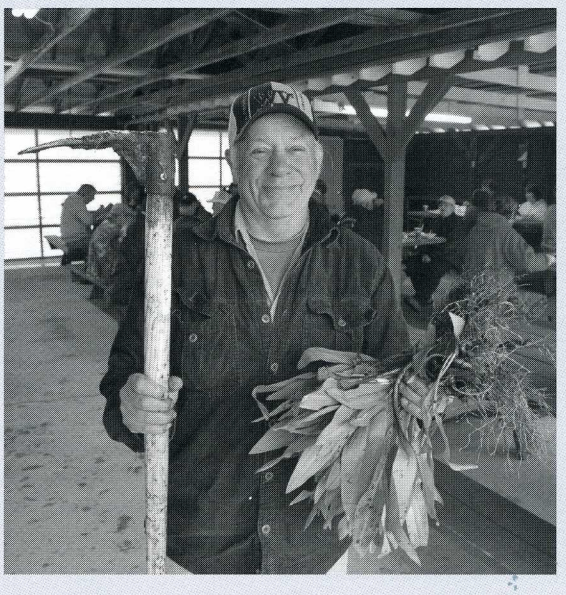
article in the spring edition. I suggest he also write the untold story of this man and the adventures many of the natives of Thomas and surrounding areas had with Boone. If not, the man and those adventures will be forgotten forever. I do enjoy your magazine very much.
Thank you,
Jerry Burch



Jim Davis with wood carving. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.

Ramps

May 8, 2010
Via e-mail
Mount Grove, West Virginia
Editor:
On behalf of the Mount Grove Volunteer Fire Department, I want to thank you for the "*West Virginia Back Roads*: Ramp Sunday at Mount Grove" article by Carl E. Feather in the Spring 2010 issue. The 2010 "Best Stinking Ramp Dinner You'll Ever Eat!" was a success. We served approximately 800 dinners this year, 150 more than last year. Many folks who came and ate dinner with us had read the article. We also received several phone calls from out of state, fondly remembering ramps and West Virginia. Thank you for putting Mount Grove on the map.
Sincerely,
Jeff Harsh
Mount Grove VFD Fire Chief


Ray Ball with ramps at Mount Grove. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.

Jim Davis

June 11, 2010
Via e-mail
Editor:
Just wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed reading "'I'm A Walking Miracle': Jim Davis of Cunningham Run," by Carl E. Feather, in your Winter 2008 edition. I had gotten behind in my reading, but just a few days ago I picked up this edition and was drawn to this article, probably because of the word "miracle" in the title. I like to hear how others define that in their lives.

As I read of Jim Davis' creativity and his ability to illustrate life lessons from his God-given talent, I was moved to tears. In the wee hours of morning, I was a very tearful, captive audience of one as I read about this most interest-

ing individual! I suppose one of the reasons this article held my attention was the fact that he is a welder, very artistic in his creations. So was my dad, who died several years ago.

For me, this article brimmed with a full range of emotions: laughter, tears, compassion, sensitivity, reverence, and connectivity. A warm blanket of nostalgia enveloped me as I read about this man's life.

Thanks, Mr. Davis, and thank you GOLDENSEAL for your investment in my West Virginia!
Phylenia French

Thank you, Phylenia, for your note. Special thanks and credit go to author and photographer Carl E. Feather. (See the three previous letters.) Carl consistently introduces us to amazing and inspirational West Virginians and writes about them with style and insight. Hats off to you, Carl! And thanks again, Phylenia, for writing to us. —ed.

Renewal Mailbag

June 11, 2010
Clarksburg, West Virginia
Editor:
One of the great reading pleasures for my wife and me is the arrival of our GOLDENSEAL magazine. The entire staff deserves much credit for the magnificent demeanor of your magazine.
W.B. Berry

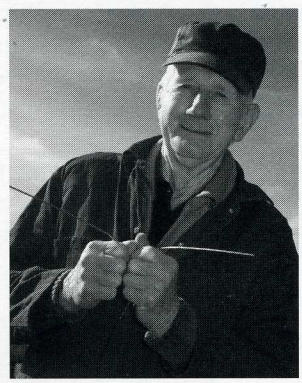
June 10, 2010
Prospect, Pennsylvania
Editor:
I enjoy GOLDENSEAL so much. I was born in Gilmer County in 1932. All of the articles make a lot of what I lived through come back in my mind and seem so true. That's why I enjoy GOLDENSEAL so well. Thank you for such a good magazine.
Kathleen Mick

June 3, 2010
Via e-mail
Editor:
I totally enjoy your magazine. I read it cover to cover TWICE as soon as I get it, so as not to miss anything. Thank you.
Sandy Tom

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Robert C. Byrd. Photographer and date unknown. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Hulett Smith Collection.

Robert C. Byrd, raised near Stotesbury, Raleigh County, died June 28, 2010. He was 92. Elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946, Byrd served the rest of his life in elective office, including an unprecedented nine terms in the U.S. Senate. A child of the West Virginia coalfields, Byrd became a champion for the Mountain State and a staunch defender of the U.S. Constitution. He was also an accomplished old-time fiddler. Byrd was featured in our April-June 1979 issue, in an article titled, "Robert Byrd, Mountain Fiddler," by Dave Wilbur, reprinted in our book *Mountains of Music*; the article also appears beginning on page 12 of this issue.



Keith Wotring. Photograph by Robert Peak.

Keith Wotring, 83, of Aurora, Preston County, died on December 17, 2009 A well-known handyman, Keith worked in timber, mining, and mechanics during his younger days. As a self-employed laborer, Keith continued to work as a mechanic, an electrician, a backhoe operator, and a well digger. He was most noted in Preston County for his abilities in water witching — locating underground water sources using two sticks or, in his case, two specially designed welding rods. Over the years, Keith estimated that he located and dug more than 100 wells in the Aurora area. He was the subject of a feature story titled, "Water Witching in Preston County· A Visit with Keith Wotring," by Donetta Sisler, which appeared in our Spring 2008 issue.

CORRECTION In our Summer 2010 issue, we reported that Mike Hornick of Gary, McDowell County, died on March 21 at the age of 80. This Mike Hornick is no relation to the Mike Hornick of Gary whose work appeared in GOLDENSEAL's Fall 1988 issue. The latter Hornick passed away on August 5, 1994, at Elbert. He was 71. We apologize to our readers and to members of both families. —ed.

Current Programs • Events • Publications

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

Sesquicentennial Events

The 150th anniversary of West Virginia statehood will be celebrated with a variety of sesquicentennial events across the state through June 2013.

On Sunday, September 19, at 2 p.m. the West Virginia Humanities Council will present Dr. Gary Kornblith, professor of history at Oberlin College in Ohio. Dr. Kornblith will discuss "The Making of the President 1860" at the Donald F. Black Courthouse Annex in Parkersburg. The lecture will examine how Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 presidential election with only 40 percent of the popular vote, how the state of Virginia came to secede from the Union, and why western Virginians opposed secession and chose instead to form their own state. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, call the West Virginia Humanities Council at (304)346-8500; on-line at www.wvhumanities.org.

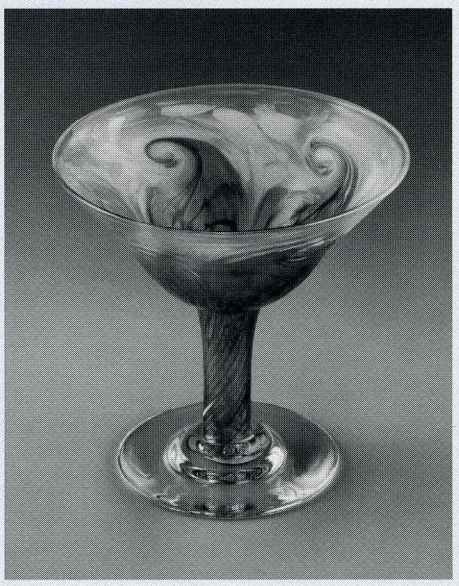
On Saturday, October 16, at 1 p.m., Dr. James Robertson, noted Civil War historian, will present "Quicksand and Landmines: Writing Civil War History" at the 10th annual West Virginia Book Festival. Dr. Robertson is one of the most distinguished historians in the field of Civil War history and is the author or editor of more than 20 books on the subject. He is a frequent contributor to Civil War programs for PBS and the History Channel, and was chief historical consultant for the movie *Gods and Generals*.

The West Virginia Book Festival will take place October 16-17 at the Charleston Civic Center. It is presented by the Library Foundation of Kanawha County, Kanawha County Public Library, the West Virginia Humanities Council, and Charleston Newspapers. Admission is free. For more information, call (304)343-4646; on-line at www.wvbookfestival.org.

Ron Hinkle Glass

The glass artistry of Ron Hinkle is on display until October 31 in the Lobby Gallery of the Culture Center in Charleston. The exhibit is part of the "West Virginia's Gift to the World" series at the Culture Center.

Hinkle is a nationally recognized craftsman who creates hand-blown glass art at his Upshur County studio. He is known for whimsical works such as glass kisses, flying pigs, birds, fish, and dolphins, as well as functional items such as lamps, vases, stemware, and Christmas ornaments. Each piece is a one-of-a-kind creation, with variations in size, shape, and color. [See "'I Have All I Need Here': Glass Artist Ron Hinkle," by Carl E. Feather; Winter 2009.]



Glass by Ron Hinkle. Photograph by Kitty Vickers.

For more information about the Ron Hinkle exhibit or the "West Virginia's Gift to the World" series, phone Betty Gay at (304)558-0240. Visit www.ronhinkleglass.com, or phone (304)472-7963, for information about Ron Hinkle Glass.

Folk Art Apprenticeships

The Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College recently awarded five traditional art apprenticeships. Joseph Browning of Braxton County will be apprenticing to Eugene Ratliff, a blacksmith from Oak Hill. Ripley resident Rebecca Epling will apprentice to Carolyn Casto, also of Ripley, to study traditional foodways. Christopher Zambelli of Beverly will be sharing his guitar-making expertise with apprentice Seth Marstiller, also of Beverly. Basketmaker Alan Miller of Pendleton County will be making traditional white oak baskets with apprentice Mike Kwasniewski of Randolph County. Apprentice Sharon Tonkery of Grafton will be learning glass blowing techniques from Claude Turner of Appalachian Glass in Weston.

The folk and traditional art apprenticeship program is open to all West Virginia residents. Grants

Glass blowing apprentice Sharon Tonkery. Photograph by Gerald Milnes.

are awarded twice a year through an application process, where a master artist and apprentice apply together. Applications to the program are due on April 1 and October 1 of each year. For more information, contact the Augusta Heritage Center at (304)637-1209; on-line at www.augustaheritage.com.

West Virginia Pumpkin Festival

The 25th annual West Virginia Pumpkin Festival will take place October 7-10 at Pumpkin Park in Milton. The festival was started in 1985 to help local farmers market their harvest; it has grown steadily over the years into one of the largest festivals in West Virginia.

Pre-festival activities will begin on Saturday, October 2, with a 5K run/walk at 8 a.m. and a horse show that evening. The Pumpkin Festival parade will take place on Sunday, October 3. Festival activities begin on Thursday, October 7, including children's activities, craft demonstrations, and musical entertainment throughout the day.

The festival features more than 125 juried craft vendors, as well as 150 display booths. *The West Virginia Pumpkin Festival 25th Anniversary Cookbook* will be for sale, with the proceeds benefiting the Pumpkin Festival scholarship fund.

Winners of the Largest Pumpkin Weighing Contest will be announced on Thursday, October 7. Prizes are awarded for first through 10th places, with all winning pumpkins being auctioned on Sunday, October 10. Proceeds from the auction will also benefit the scholarship fund.

Hours for the festival are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Visit the West Virginia Pumpkin Festival on-line at www.wvpumpkinpark.com, or call (304)638-1633 for more information.

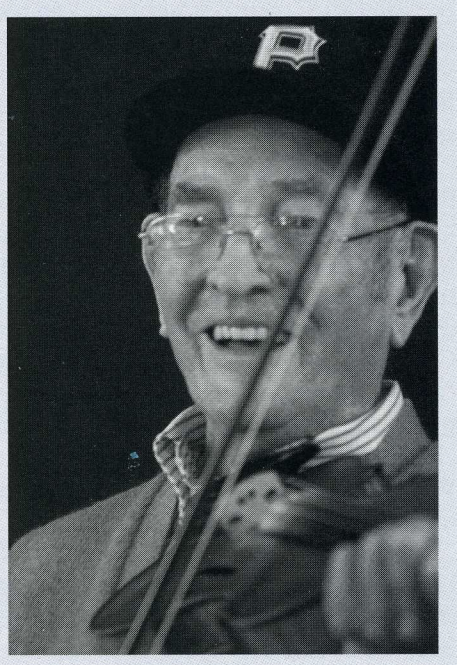
Fiddlers' Reunion

The Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College will host its annual Fiddlers' Reunion October 29-30, the final weekend of Augusta's October Old-Time Week of fiddle, banjo, and guitar workshops. Many of West Virginia's old-time musicians gather in Elkins for this weekend of music, dance, song, and fellowship. Informal concerts and jam sessions are a highlight of the weekend.

The reunion starts with a Halloween square dance on Friday night, with caller Lou Maiuri and music by the Old-Time Week staff. Costumes are encouraged but not required. Admission to the dance is $8, free for October Old-Time Week students.

Concerts begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday and continue throughout the day, featuring performances by invited old-time master fiddlers and younger musicians from across West Virginia. Admission is free. A freestyle clogging and dance contest starts at 4 p.m., and cash prizes will be awarded.

For more information, call the Augusta Heritage Center at (304)637-1209; on-line at www.augustaheritage.com.



Elmer Rich at Fiddlers' Reunion. Photographer and date unknown.

Remembering Robert C. Byrd

By John Lilly

Perhaps the greatest champion West Virginia has ever had or will ever have, U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd has gone to his reward. Dead at the age of 92 on June 28, 2010, he didn't even ascertain his own birth date until 1971. By then, he could quote chapter and verse from the Bible, the U.S. Constitution, the rules of the U.S. Senate, and a long list of classical literature. To say he was unselfish would be an understatement.

He focused his attention instead on bringing jobs and improvements to West Virginia, staunchly defending the U.S. Constitution, and speaking passionately and at great length about those things that mattered most to him — West Virginia, God, and country

The only West Virginian to be elected to both chambers of the state and federal legislature, the West Virginian who has held more legislative offices than any other individual in history, and America's longest-serving member of Congress was born in North Carolina on November 20, 1917 Cornelius Calvin Sale, Jr., was his given name. When his mother died the following year, the child was sent to live with relatives in West Virginia, who adopted him and changed his name to Robert Carlyle Byrd.

A bright boy, Robert attended Mark Twain High School in Stotesbury, playing violin in the school orchestra and graduating valedictorian in 1934. [See "My Memories of Mark Twain High School," by Pauline Haga; Fall 1999.] He worked several jobs, including gathering scraps for the family's hogs. He also worked as a gas station attendant, worked in the produce section of a grocery store, spent 12 years as a butcher, and worked as a welder in the shipyards during World War II. His father worked as a coal miner, in a brewery, and as a farmer.

Congressional portrait of Robert C. Byrd from the 1950's. Photograph by Hessler, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

In 1937, Robert married his wife of 68 years, Erma Ora James. The pair eventually had two daughters. Deciding to better himself, Byrd chose to get into politics. His first campaign in 1946 resulted in his election to the West Virginia House of Delegates. After two terms in the House of Delegates, one term in the West Virginia State Senate, and two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Byrd was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1958, where he served continuously until his death. He never lost an election.

Prior to entering politics, Byrd, a born-again Christian, taught adult Sunday school at a Baptist church in Crab Orchard. His class grew from six people to 636 within a year, and a Beckley radio station began broadcasting his fiery lessons. Byrd brought this gift for oratory and a sense of moral imperative to his politi-

During his six-plus decades of public service, Senator Byrd brought many projects and improvements to West Virginia, more than 50 of which bear his name. Here, he sets off an explosion in 1987 breaking ground for the Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam at Gallipolis Ferry, Mason County. Photograph by Mindy Shaver, courtesy of the Huntington *Herald-Dispatch*.

sional aides, he voted to make Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national holiday in 1983, and endorsed Barack Obama for president in 2008.

After years as a hard-line conservative, Byrd ended his career as the senate's most vocal opponent to the U.S.-led war in Iraq. He also surprised many with his stern language directed at the coal industry, advising them to "look to the future" and warning of environmental disaster.

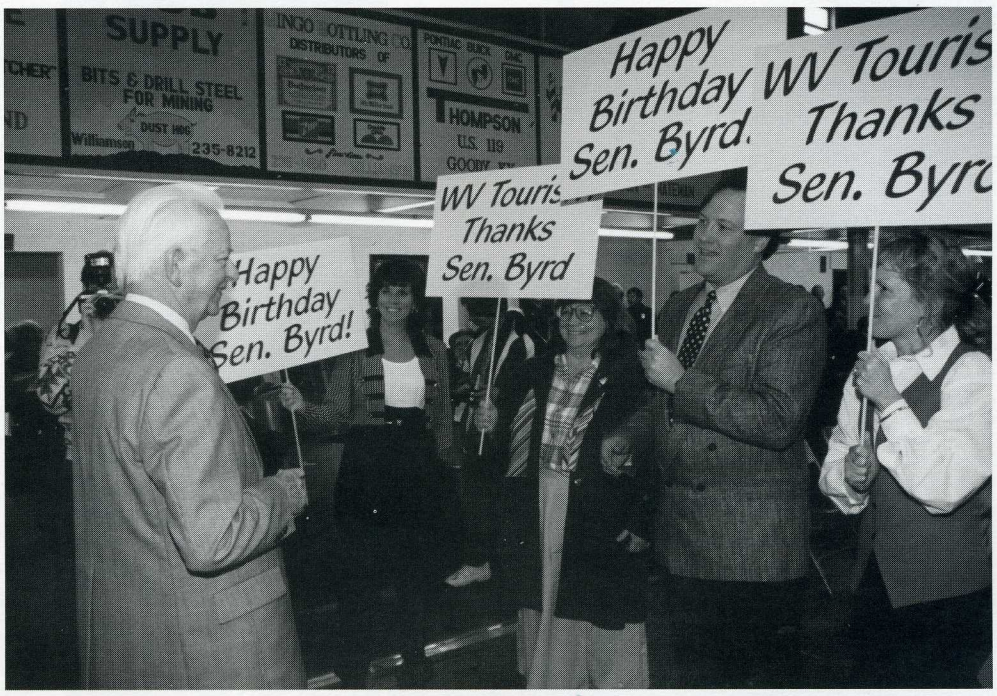
How Senator Byrd is most remembered — and for what he is most lavishly memorialized — were his ceaseless efforts to bring much-needed government dollars to West Virginia. Funding projects ranging from local schools and sewers to federal highways, courthouses, and government installations, Byrd became known as the "prince of pork." He served for many years as chair of the influential Senate Appropriations Committee and brought billions of dollars in grants and projects to his home state. He laughed off out-of-state critics and continued to bring federal money home to West Virginia, right up to the last.

Today, a multitude of projects bear his name: two U.S. courthouses, four stretches of highway, a bridge, two highway interchanges, a locks-and-dam project, and a telescope, to name a few. Perhaps there are those in other states who might take exception to Byrd's efforts, but it is a rare West Virginian who has anything but gratitude for Senator Byrd and all he did for the Mountain State. We won't see his like again.

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

cal career, where it served him well. At one point, he spoke for more than 14 hours on the senate floor, fueled by nothing more than licorice pellets and sips of milk, filibustering against the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Indeed, Byrd's strong opposition to civil rights legislation — and his youthful involvement in the Ku Klux Klan — branded him a racist in some corners and painted him as a backwoods reactionary in some press accounts. Renouncing his Klan affiliation and admitting his mistakes in the area of civil rights, Byrd underwent a remarkable change during the final decades of his career. As early as 1959, he hired one of the Capitol's first black congres-



Celebrating his 80th birthday on November 20, 1997, Senator Byrd is greeted by well-wishers in Williamson. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Cecil H. Underwood Collection.

Robert Byrd

[This article first appeared in our April-June 1979 issue and is included in our book Mountains of Music: West Virginia Traditional Music from *Goldenseal. —ed.]*

Young Robert C. Byrd with his fiddle in Raleigh County. Photographer and date unknown.

The year, as Robert Byrd remembers it, was his tenth. It was a year for heroes like Charles Lindbergh and Babe Ruth. One of my musical heroes, Bill Monroe, was just starting his professional career in the mill towns of northern Indiana. More likely than not, a train rather than a car got you in and out of the hollows of Raleigh County There was no New Deal yet, no welfare state. John L. Lewis had been president of the United Mine Workers for seven years already. No doubt many fathers in those West Virginia coal towns spent their afternoons pitching baseball with their sons and pitched coal the rest of the week. It was the height of normalcy. The year was 1927 That is when the persistent youngster who would become a U.S. Representative, Senator, and Senate Majority Leader prevailed upon his foster father to travel 10 miles up to Beckley and get him a violin.

It was no small gift. Senator Byrd told me the violin, case, and bow cost somewhere between 20 and 30 dollars, more than most miners made in a week. Titus Byrd, himself a coal miner, must have been convinced that his son would stick with the fiddle once he had it.

There was plenty of reason to think young Robert would stick with the fiddle. Musicians were plentiful around the coal camp of Stotesbury, where the Byrd family lived at the time. The man who one day would be his father-in-law inspired Byrd with his violin playing. Another fiddler, who was left-handed, played a version of "Old Joe Clark" that the young boy just had to learn. A banjo picker by

Mountain Fiddler

By Dave Wilbur

Especially fond of playing traditional square dance tunes and old hymns, Senator Byrd was an accomplished musician. He is shown here in concert. Photographer, date, and location unknown. Courtesy of the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame.

the name of Dana Blevins was a prominent influence. There was also the wife of the principal at Mark Twain High School. "Mrs. Cormandy taught me classical violin from the 7th grade through the 12th grade at Mark Twain," Senator Byrd remarked in a recent interview "I played first violin in the school orchestra."

Though Mrs. Cormandy might not have approved of it, the first violinist in her orchestra kept right on listening to the local musicians and began to hear musicians who lived far from Stotesbury. "The Grand Ole Opry was our kind of Saturday night entertainment. I particularly recall it in the Depression years,

From the beginning of his political career in 1946, Robert Byrd used his fiddle at speaking engagements to entertain audiences and attract potential voters. He is pictured here at Camp Caesar, Webster County. Photographer and date unknown. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Milton Furner Collection.

'33, '34. I thought Arthur Smith was the best fiddler I ever heard." Through phonograph records, the teenage fiddler became acquainted with the most famous West Virginia fiddler of that era, Clark Kessinger.

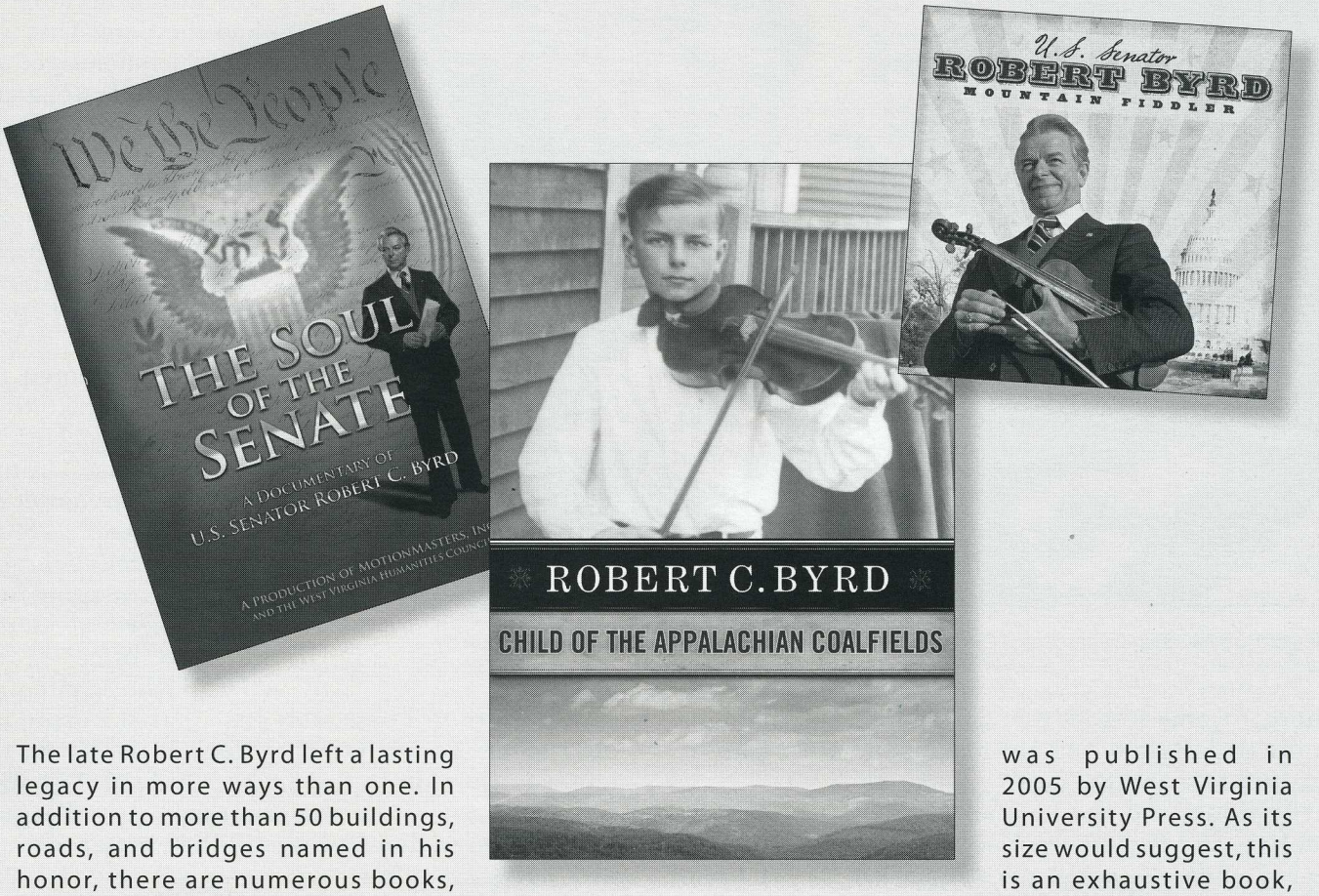
Relatively few mountain musicians were professional in the '30's compared with the enormous number of amateurs who entertained themselves and delighted those within earshot of their string music. Senator Byrd said he never dreamed of playing on the Grand Ole Opry or making a record in those days. In his formative years as a fiddler, he learned to play in the relative isolation of his Appalachian heritage. The boarders who stayed with his foster mother were mountain people from Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky. Songs like "Cumberland Gap" were learned by the young West Virginian from folks who came from that area. The traditions of learning the music directly and making your own music for entertainment or for use in worship were an integral part of the environment in which Byrd grew up.

As a young man, Robert Byrd worked hard as a butcher and, for a time, as a welder, before setting up a grocery store in Crab Orchard. His favorite recreation in the late '30's and early '40's was to play at square dances. One of his foster mother's boarders, Ed Milsap, played the guitar, and a coal miner named Jess Childers got together with him on many a Saturday night to entertain at the dance halls of Raleigh County. My wife's mother remembers Byrd playing at a family reunion. At the time Mr. Byrd first entered politics in 1946, he was undoubtedly better known as a fiddler than as a politician among his future constituents.

As the course of that '46 campaign unfolded, being known as a fiddler turned out to be much more of a blessing than a liability. As Byrd recalled, "I had no connections then, no political ties through my family. In a field of 13 candidates for three Democratic nominations for the House of Delegates, I had to do something to become known." A Beckley lawyer, Opey Hedrick, is the person Byrd credits with suggesting to him that he use the fiddle in his campaign. "Now, Mr. Hedrick was a Republican, but he convinced me nonetheless to take the fiddle wherever I spoke. He told me, 'Take that fiddle and make it your briefcase.' The idea was to play a tune, show people you were down-to-earth like them, give your speech, and play some more."

A quick perusal of back copies of the *Raleigh Register*, the pro-Democrat Beckley daily paper, reveals what happened. When the Democratic Women's Club hosted a Candidates Night prior to the August primary, the subheadline of the story read "Byrd Fiddles While Democrat Opponent Jigs." This opponent was one of the three incumbents Byrd beat out for the nomination a few days later. As the general election in November approached, a young Democrat named Hulett Smith organized a rally that included the top Democrats of that era, like Governor Clarence W Meadows and Senator Harley M. Kilgore. He also announced to the paper that entertainment at the rally would "feature the fiddling of Robert Byrd of Crab Orchard, candidate for House of Delegates, as well as 'Lost John and his Allied Kentuckians.'" Numerous other, smaller rallies in October 1946 were organized by candidate Byrd, and it was invariably stated that "the program will include string music under the direction of Byrd." Nothing distinguished the young politician from the rest of his opponents as much as identifying him as the fiddler. His ads in the *Register* highlighted it to the

Watch, Read, Listen



The late Robert C. Byrd left a lasting legacy in more ways than one. In addition to more than 50 buildings, roads, and bridges named in his honor, there are numerous books, films, and recordings documenting his life, career, and musical abilities.

U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd: Mountain Fiddler (CO-CD-2743) is the only commercially produced recording of Byrd's fiddle playing. (The Library of Congress recorded him, as well.) Originally released on vinyl in 1978, these 14 tracks have recently been reissued on CD by County Records of Charlottesville, Virginia. This collection, recorded in Byrd's office on specially designed equipment, features Byrd on fiddle and vocals, Doyle Lawson on guitar, James Bailey on banjo, and Spider Gilliam on bass. The senator is near the peak of his musical abilities —Bobby Taylor says Byrd's playing actually continued to improve over the next few years — and plays with feeling and authority. This recording gives us a look at the senator's musical side and offers a glimpse of what voters on the campaign trail likely heard during Byrd's early political career. Contact County Sales at (540)745-2001; on-line at www.countysales.com.

Senator Byrd's 817-page autobiography, ***Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields***, was published in 2005 by West Virginia University Press. As its size would suggest, this is an exhaustive book, with both biographical details and commentary on national and international events. It follows Byrd's early years as an adopted child in Raleigh County raised in challenging circumstances, to his marriage to high-school sweetheart Erma, his decision to enter politics, and his extended and storied tenure as a public servant. For those who want a personal and in-depth account of the senator's life and career, this book is essential reading. Contact West Virginia University Press at 1-800-621-2736; on-line at http://wvupressonline.com.

A documentary film about Senator Byrd was released in 2005 by Motion Masters of Charleston. ***The Soul of the Senate: U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd*** came out at a time when the senator's outspoken stance in opposition to the Iraq war was making national headlines. This 60-minute DVD includes selections from those speeches, as well as personal interviews with Byrd and an overview of his rise from poverty to an indelible role as a national leader. Contact Motion Masters at (304)345-8800; on-line at http://motionmasters.com.

Senator Byrd backstage at the Grand Ole Opry, with fiddler Howdy Forrester in 1979. Photograph by Blanton Owen.

public: "Come and see this candidate who campaigns in the true style of the old-fashioned South with his trusty fiddle and the bow."

The fiddle and the bow are not new to American politics, and Robert Byrd would be the first to tell you. Thomas Jefferson once remarked to his friend Nicholas Trist, "I suppose that during at least a dozen years of my life, I played no less than three hours a day." Jefferson is supposed to have played the fiddle on horseback, while making his rounds as a young lawyer in colonial Virginia. The *Dictionary of American Biography* states that Robert L. Taylor (1850-1912), former populist governor and U.S. Senator from Tennessee, was known as 'Fiddlin' Bob' to his constituents for his prowess with the fiddle on the campaign trail. He also conducted a lyceum tour in 1895 with his lecture "The Fiddle and the Bow" and is said to have reaped $40,000 in seven months. Although depicted as "a shallow fiddler" by his political enemies, he was immensely popular with the common people and is credited with saving Tennessee from the excesses of the agrarian revolt in the 1890's.

Anyone who has heard Robert Byrd play a fiddle could not depict him as "a shallow fiddler." His style and repertoire abundantly demonstrate his depth as a musician. What is noteworthy in the story of Robert Byrd the fiddler, though, is that he went into some long periods of not playing his fiddle at all.

Following his successful campaign for the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946, he continued using the fiddle until he won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1952. From 1953 until 1963, as he recalls it, he seldom played the fiddle because he seldom had the time. This was a period in which he forged his political career while doggedly pursuing a law degree at night, a degree which he finally earned in 1963 at the age of 45.

He picked the fiddle up again but did not play it with the intensity of interest he'd shown in his earlier years until about 1974 or '75. He found it to be a hobby that complemented the pressures and responsibilities of his duties on Capitol Hill. "It gave me a great release," he told me, "and gave me an outlet for my creative energies." Besides the pleasure of redeveloping a skill, he found playing was "tremendous therapy" and a political asset once again. "Any senator who invites me to speak in their home state insists that I bring the fiddle along. People tap their feet in the North the same way they do in the South." Indeed, last June he quipped to a *Newsweek* reporter, "My colleagues have discovered they like my fiddling better than my speaking."

This resurgence of fiddling led to a solo recording session at the Library of Congress in December of 1977 Alan Jabbour, director of the American Folklife Center in Washington, had arranged for these tapings and made a further suggestion to the Majority Leader that he consider making an album. Jabbour contacted record producer Barry Poss of North Carolina and let him hear the Library of Congress tapes. "Poss assured me he could get the right kind of musicians to back me up on an album," said Byrd. In mid-1978, Poss recruited Doyle Lawson and Jim Bailey from the prestigious bluegrass band the Country Gentlemen, and Spider Gilliam, a Washington bass fiddler, to make the album with Senator Byrd. Released in October 1978 by County Records of Floyd, Virginia, one of the most distinguished companies in bluegrass and old-time music, *Mountain Fiddler· U.S. Senator Robert Byrd* has been doing brisk business ever since, particularly in West Virginia.

Robert Byrd's name, of course, is by no means a sales handicap, especially in the Mountain State. However, to cynics who scoff that *Mountain Fiddler* was made only because a prominent person wanted to do it, this album fully justifies Mr. Jabbour's and

Mr. Poss' contention that Senator Byrd fiddles well enough to be recorded. Bluegrass giant and banjoist J.D Crowe once remarked to me, "All too many bluegrass records are being made these days, and there's many that don't merit being made." Unfortunately, that's true. But whether Bob Byrd was still a grocer in Crab Orchard rather than where he is now, his first album of bluegrass music would be enjoyable listening. It is distinguished by the energy and style of his fiddle playing and the authentic lyrics of the songs he learned 50 years ago.

Senator Byrd told me he would like to broaden his repertoire, especially in traditional (as opposed to "progressive") bluegrass, and in Scottish tunes. Recently he received an album from Scottish fiddle champion Ron Gonala and is attempting to learn the tunes by his own unique method. He says he listens to the tune, then transcribes it into his own tablature on paper, practices it until he can throw the paper away and play by ear. The Scottish tunes appeal to him because they constitute the origins of much of the Appalachian music he learned as a boy "They have a plaintive, haunting tone that just follows you," he remarked.

There are always new worlds to conquer in the live playing of his music as well. After numerous performances at political rallies over the years, Byrd went to Nashville on March 3, 1979, for, as he puts it, "one of the most enjoyable times in my life." It wasn't just playing on the Grand Ole Opry show that he enjoyed so much. Meeting Roy Acuff and Howdy Forrester and jamming with the greats of country music backstage was a lot of fun, too. "I don't know how many times I heard Roy Acuff sing 'The Great Speckled Bird' when I was a young man," he said. He mentioned that Acuff felt the Opry hasn't had, in recent years, the kind of old-time fiddling that Robert Byrd does, the music that helped make the Opry the popular institution it is today. The senator expressed his own concern that the Opry may be getting away from its unique role in our culture.

I'm not so sure. If the Opry would invite more guests like Robert Byrd, people whose roots verify their authenticity as musicians, it might again strike a musical chord in the American people. Even though our participation in Senator Byrd's Opry performance came through the electronic media of radio and television, the point of his performance was to reinforce an invaluable folk tradition: you don't have to be a "professional" to make your own music, nor do you necessarily have to turn to the professionals to gain pleasure from music. No *real* fan of bluegrass music just sits and listens to other people doing it. It was clear that night that there has always been something worthwhile to Senator Byrd in playing "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" simply for the pleasure it brings him. That it also brought pleasure to millions of others is relevant only in connection with keeping alive the idea that a folk art like fiddling is an art that is still made by the folk as well as by professionals.

DAVE WILBUR lives in Baker, where he is employed by the Hardy County Board of Education as an attendance director and substitute teacher. Dave worked from 1996-2008 as a sportswriter for the *Moorefield Examiner* A self-proclaimed "bluegrass nut," Dave regularly attends bluegrass festivals and concerts in West Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. This was his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL

Fulfilling a childhood dream, Robert Byrd performs at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 3, 1979. Photograph by Blanton Owen.

A natural entertainer, U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd captivates an audience during a record store performance in the late 1970's. Photographer and date unknown. Courtesy of the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame.

Bobby on Byrd

Vandalia Award Recipient Recalls West Virginia's Fiddling Senator

Fiddler Bobby Taylor will forever cherish the close personal friendship he shared with U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd. Born of their shared interest in fiddle music, their relationship was one of mutual admiration and affection. According to Bobby, Senator Byrd was only a phone call away and Bobby called him often to extend birthday greetings, wish him well, or discuss upcoming musical engagements.

And Senator Byrd called on Bobby, as well. He was one of Byrd's favorite fiddlers and was asked frequently to add music to an otherwise stuffy political event or to serenade the press or visiting dignitaries. After the senator passed away on June 28, 2010, Byrd's office and family clamored to have Bobby fiddle for the various memorial services, both in West Virginia and in the Washington area.

They met in the mid-1970's in Huntington. Senator Byrd was touring in support of his lone LP recording, *U.S. Senator Robert Byrd. Mountain Fiddler*, and Bobby was on the bill playing with the Sweeney Brothers band. The two became acquainted and kept in touch over the next several years.

In the early 1990's, Bobby began playing with the Chestnut Ridge band out of Morgantown. According to Bobby, this band was often asked to play at dedications and campaign events involving Senator Byrd. Physical problems kept Byrd from playing the fiddle himself, so the senator was pleased to have Bobby

Robert Byrd with the Chestnut Ridge band in Fairmont in 1994. They are, from the left, Mark Rankin, George Ward, Tracey Rohrbaugh, Byrd, Bobby Taylor, and Jim Gabehart. Photographer unknown.

and the band join him on the road. Byrd became an "official member of the band," Bobby says, and they played often from 1993 until about 1998, appearing throughout West Virginia as well as in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

Bobby is Senator Byrd's kind of fiddler. Forceful but precise, lively and entertaining, Bobby can stir up a room with his music, just as Senator Byrd used his fiddle to excite a crowd of potential voters on the campaign trail. Both Byrd and Taylor have been great admirers of legendary fiddler Clark Kessinger, and both employ elements of Kessinger's style and repertoire in their playing. Kessinger tunes such as "Red Bird," "Durang's Hornpipe," "Forked Deer," and "Turkey in the Straw" appear near the top of both fiddlers' lists of tunes.

In addition to playing these popular dance melodies, Byrd was fond of singing. He knew verses to "Cripple Creek," "Old Joe Clark," and "Sally Gooden," enjoyed mountain chestnuts such as "More Pretty Girls than One" and "Roving Gambler," and had a repertoire of hymns, such as "Amazing Grace." Even after his hands could no longer play the fiddle, he enthusiastically requested — demanded — that Bobby and other musicians play some of these favorites so he could sing.

In early 2008, Bobby called Senator Byrd to see if he would agree to come to Nashville that fall to receive the Perry F Harris Award, presented by the Grand Masters Fiddler Championship to honor lifetime achievement in the preservation of traditional fiddle music. After some discussion, Senator Byrd said, "I'll come if Bobby plays me 'Red Bird.'" Bobby replied, "Consider it done."

That October, Bobby went to Nashville to participate in the award presentation. The senator arrived and summoned Bobby and some other musicians to his hotel room. As they entered the room, Senator Byrd said, "I want to hear some fiddling!"

"You want to hear it right now?" Bobby asked.

"Well, that's why I'm here," Byrd said.

The musicians retrieved their instruments. As they returned, Byrd called out, "I want to sing!" So they played "Sally Gooden" while the 90-year-old Byrd sang several verses. "Now play it again," Byrd said. So they did.

At the award ceremony later that evening, Bobby did, indeed, play "Red Bird," as well as "Durang's Hornpipe" in Senator Byrd's honor. It was a memorable evening, Bobby says. It was also the last time he saw his friend alive.

Bobby knew a side of Senator Byrd that perhaps the public seldom appreciated. "I never met a person with more moral standards and more compassion toward humanity," Bobby says. He recalls a time in the 1990's when the Chestnut Ridge band and Senator Byrd had participated in a dedication ceremony at a poultry facility in Wardensville. Bobby had a long drive home that night.

When he finally arrived back in St. Albans, he was surprised to find his father waiting up. "I just got to talk to Robert Byrd!" his father said excitedly.

"My dad loved Robert Byrd," Bobby recalls, "and he considered it a major honor that Senator Byrd had called to see if I had gotten home okay I think that was kind of important." —ed.

Bobby Taylor, at left, fiddles a tune for Senator Byrd, accompanied by guitarist Andrew Dunlap in 2005. One of the senator's favorite fiddlers, Bobby played for Byrd's memorial service on July 2, 2010. Photograher unknown.

"Soul of the Mountains"

Fiddler Bobby Taylor.
Photograph by Tyler Evert.

A Visit with Fiddler Bobby Taylor

By Josh Gordon

Bobby Taylor of Kanawha County is one of the most respected and accomplished fiddlers in West Virginia. The recipient of the 2010 Vandalia Award, he is a fourth-generation fiddler, a collector of antiques, a librarian, teacher, and homespun philosopher. Bobby recently recalled how he got started playing the fiddle. It began when he and his family were on a visit to his grandparents' Roane County home in about 1965:

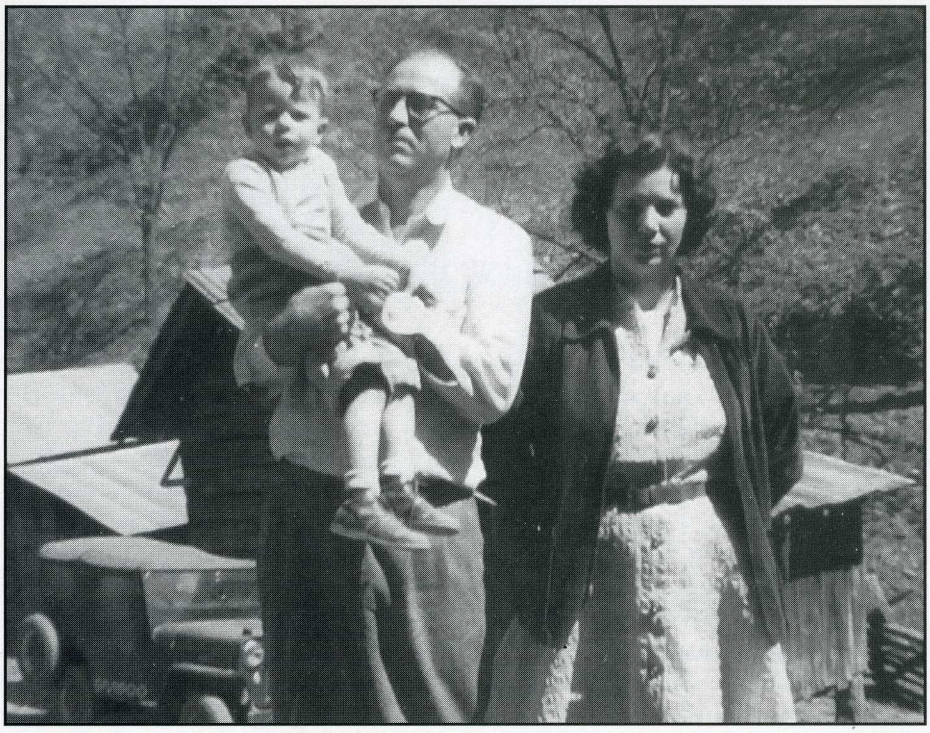
"The old fiddle hung on the wall by the fireplace with a little blue ribbon around the scroll. Dad decided when I was 13 and my brother was 10 that we might be able to respect it. His dad had given it to him on his deathbed. I got to carry Grandpa's fiddle across the hill about a mile-and-a-half to the car. I remember how guarded Daddy was of it, being such a prized possession. You couldn't drive to Grandma's house. You had to walk the last mile-and-a-half. That was in backwoods Roane County.

"We got it home and I thought, 'Well, how does that work?' Dad started me out playing 'Soldier's Joy.' I could pretty well play it, but then some time slipped by when I wasn't playing it. Dad said, 'Why aren't you playing the fiddle anymore?' I said, 'Well, I don't wanna play.' You know, a 13-year-old boy; 13 does what 13 wants to. Well, my dad sighed and said, 'It's just as well. You probably couldn't learn no-how.'

"So I thought, 'Well, I'll show him. I'll bet I can play that better than he can!' That's exactly what he had intended. I continued to play the fiddle on a dare, so to speak. So that was the way I got started. I still can't play 'Soldier's Joy' as good as Dad. He [had] a double shuffle that is absolutely unbelievable. At 92 he could take anybody out on 'Soldier's Joy.'"

Bobby's father was Lincoln Taylor, one of 11 children born to John Clinton and Arrie Ann Walls Taylor on a family farm located about three miles below Walton near the Poca River. Bobby's people were Taylors, Moores, Harpers, and Hivelys; he traces his family lines in West Vir-

The Taylor family of Roane County in about 1909. From the left are Germie, Zubie, America, father John C. Taylor, Tuskie, mother Arrie Ann Taylor, Emmert, Una, and Tressie. Bobby's father, Lincoln Taylor, was born about two years after this picture was made. The family eventually grew to include 11 children.



Lincoln and Muriel Taylor with young Bobby at the family homeplace in Roane County in about 1954.

ginia back to the 1800's, when his ancestors came here from Russell County, Virginia.

"All the men hunted, all the men fiddled," Bobby says of his forebears. He recalls hearing fiddle music and singing at family gatherings and reunions on both sides of his family from an early age.

Lincoln Taylor eventually left the farm and went to work at Point Pleasant, Mason County. He later moved to Dunbar to work at the Fletcher Enamel plant, then settled in at Gravely Tractor, where he retired after about 10 years. [See "Ben Gravely's Garden Tractor," by John L. Marra, Summer 1997]

Bobby was born in 1952. His mother, Muriel (pronounced "Merl"), had tuberculosis, however, and was committed to a hospital following Bobby's birth. So Bobby spent his earliest years in the home of his

Bobby fiddles at the Old Fiddler's Convention in Galax, Virginia, in 1981 The banjo player is Ed Kidd. The guitarist is Gene Meade, who often accompanied fiddler Clark Kessinger, one of Bobby Taylor's early musical influences on the fiddle. Photograph by Kim Johnson.

Aunt Tuskie and Uncle Roy Raines in Charleston.

"When my mom was sick for two-and-a-half years, [Aunt Tuskie] took care of me at her house," Bobby says. "My dad would come to visit as much as he could. Roy Raines and Tuskie loved music, too. And Tuskie could dance! She had a beautiful dance. We remained very close."

His mother eventually recuperated and rejoined her family in Dunbar; a younger brother, Michael, was born in 1955. Graduating from Dunbar High School in 1971, Bobby went on to get a bachelor's degree in library science from West Virginia State College. He now lives in St. Albans.

It was during his teen years, however, that he became involved with old-time fiddle music, charting the course for the rest of his life. In addition to the music of his father and other family members, Bobby was attracted to the fiddling of Mike Humphreys, Clark Kessinger, and Sam Jarvis.

"I met Mike Humphreys right after I got my driver's license at age 16," Bobby recalls. "I was driving uptown on Summers Street in Charleston, and I saw him standing across the street. I recognized him because I'd seen him playing on television. I'd never seen [anyone] as slick and smooth with the bow as he was. I went up to him very timidly, and I said, 'Are you Fiddlin' Mike?' He said he was, and he was getting ready to take the bus to go home. I offered to take him home. When we got there, he played the fiddle for me. Mike Humphreys [was] a distant cousin of mine. I always thought he played with the smoothest rolling bow No matter the technical complexity, his notes always came out sounding as big as golf balls."

At about this same time, Bobby had the good fortune to befriend legendary fiddler Clark Kessinger. During the late 1960's and early '70's, Kessinger was perhaps the most well-known fiddler in the country, with appearances on the Grand Ole Opry, national television, contests, and festivals. [See "Clark Kessinger· Pure Fiddling," by Charles Wolfe; Fall 1997]

The Sweeney Brothers band in 1976. Clockwise, from the left, are fiddler Bobby Taylor, guitarist Tom King, bass player Ralph Taylor (no relation to Bobby), banjo player Mike Sweeney, and mandolinist Steve Sweeney.

"My dad always talked about how great Clark Kessinger was," Bobby says. "When I turned 16, Dad and I went to see him. I remember my first impression was that it was sheer magic. I got to watch Clark play 'Arkansas Traveler' right there in front of me. I thought that I had died and gone to heaven! I'd never seen such unbelievable technique with the bow Unbelievable intonation — the notes just sparkled.

"I got to see him only one or two times before he had his stroke. When he had the stroke, it paralyzed his noting hand, his left hand. I would go talk with him often. At one point, I wanted to learn his triple bow jump I held the fiddle around from behind his head and did the noting, and Clark was doing the triple bowing. Clark Kessinger was the master of the bow, a master of technique and spirit."

A third well-known fiddler to influence Bobby during his younger days was Sam Jarvis.

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Remembering Lincoln Taylor

Fiddler Lincoln Taylor at home in 2003. Photograph by Kim Johnson.

Legacy of a Roane County Fiddler

By John Lilly

"My dad had four brothers, and they was all musicians," recalled Lincoln Taylor in a 1997 interview with Steve Stutler. "And they was some of them the best."

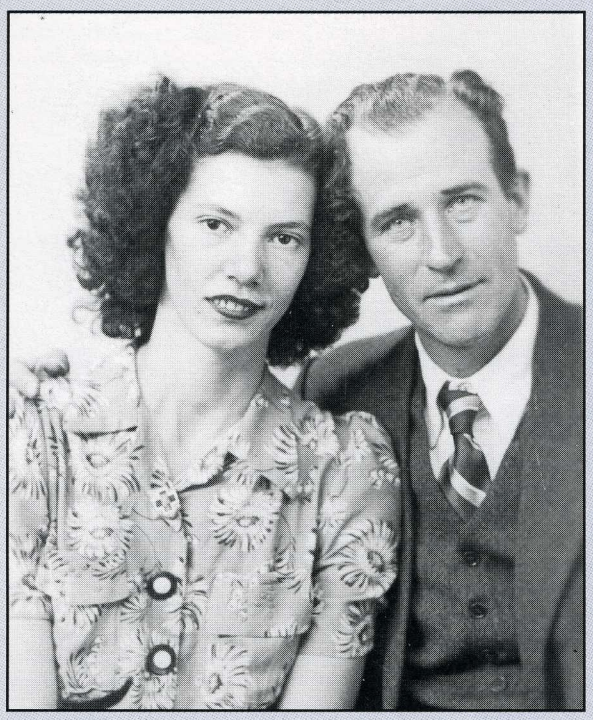
Born in 1911, Lincoln was one of 11 children raised on the Taylors' Roane County farm. His family's love of music flowed from him to his first-born son, 2010 Vandalia Award recipient Bobby Taylor. Though Lincoln passed away in 2005 at age 94, he left a lasting impression not only on Bobby but also on a steady stream of other younger musicians who traveled to meet him, record his tunes, and gain from his humor and insight. Among these were Jimmy Triplett, Gerry Milnes, Alice Gerrard, Andrew Dunlap, James Summers, and Mike Seeger.

Lincoln grew up surrounded by old-time fiddling and enjoyed talking about the music of his Uncle Silas, Uncle Lute, Uncle Okey, Uncle Lyle, Bill Jarvis, and his father, John Taylor. He recalled that his father had two sisters who were fine dancers and that his grandmother could dance with a cup of water balanced on her head. Some of the fiddlers Lincoln knew as a boy were highly accomplished musicians, including Sam Jarvis and Oren "Nibs" Taylor.

Nibs Taylor was Lincoln's first cousin. "He was crippled, born crippled," Lincoln recalled. "He didn't have no fingers on his right hand. He had a thumb. He held that bow with that thumb in there." According to Lincoln, Nibs was a remarkable musician who at one time beat Clark Kessinger in a fiddle contest. Bobby Taylor still plays a piece called "Old Nick," thought to have come from Nibs and named in his honor.

The second-youngest son in the family, Lincoln took on the responsibility of caring for his aging father during his later years. After John Taylor passed away, Lincoln decided to leave the family farm and took work on the C.C. Lewis estate near Point Pleasant in Mason County. According to Bobby, Lincoln impressed the Lewises with the quality of his work. "If they said cut down a tree, he dug out the stump," Bobby says.

From there, Lincoln took work in Dunbar at the Fletcher Enamel plant. He had been dating young Muriel Moore, a girl



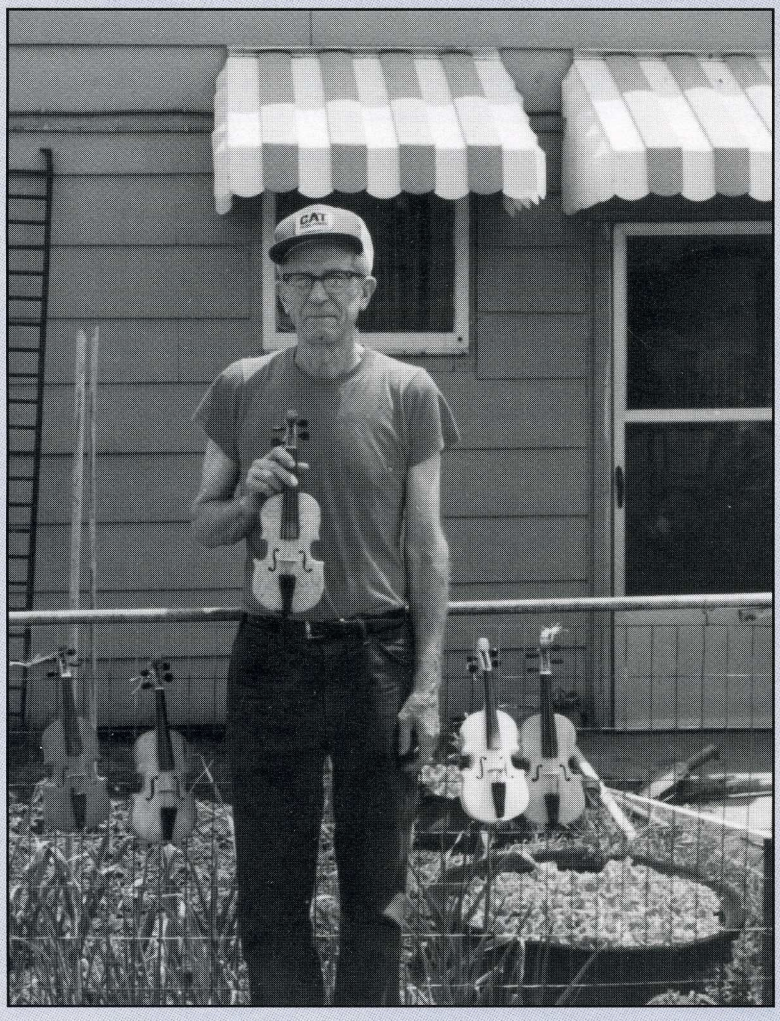
Lincoln and Muriel Taylor at around the time of their wedding in 1952.

from a nearby farm in Roane County, for seven years, and the pair wed in Dunbar in early 1952. Their first son, Bobby, was born in late 1952, but Muriel's tuberculosis landed her in a sanitarium for the next two-and-a-half years. Bobby went to live with Lincoln's sister Tuskie in nearby Charleston.

By the mid-1950's, Muriel was home, the family had grown to include another son, Michael, and life became routine at the Taylor family's Dunbar home. Lincoln, who now worked on the production line at Dunbar's Gravely Tractor plant, did not play much music during this time.

By the mid-1960's, Lincoln had retired and began to build fiddles. Some were miniature, hand-carved replicas, while others were carefully constructed, full-sized instruments. "I made one or two of 'em, 'bout as good as any I ever played on," Lincoln said.

When Bobby became a teenager, Lincoln showed his son how to play the tune "Soldier's Joy," starting Bobby on the road to becoming one of the most respected fiddlers in West Virginia. While Lincoln's playing style was spare and rustic, Bobby developed a smooth and fluid method of fiddling. Nevertheless, Lincoln shared his music with his talented son, teaching him tunes such as the "Old Sol Carpenter Tune" and various hymns. Other tunes Lincoln played included "Arkansas Traveler," "Muskrat Rag," "Johnson Boys," and "Uncle Lute's Tune." Lincoln was especially fond of children and would entertain youngsters with novelties such as "Pop Goes the Weasel."



As Bobby grew as a musician and began to attract attention to his own playing, a certain number of musicians took an interest in finding out where Bobby's music had come from. Many of these people were pleasantly surprised to discover that not only had Bobby learned from his dad, but that his father was still alive and active as a musician. It was a treat for many of them, coming to Bobby's home to play music, to discover that Lincoln was there, as well, willing to visit and share his music.

In 2001, Lincoln made a rare visit to the Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop and created quite a stir. Large crowds gathered to meet him and to hear and record him playing the fiddle in his unique style. Lincoln competed in the fiddle contest that year and received a second-place ribbon in the senior category.

Like his father before him, Bobby cared for his aging parents during their later years. Following his mother's death in 1995, Bobby and Lincoln moved to St. Albans, where they lived until Lincoln's death in 2005. Bobby still lives in the St. Albans home, surrounded by his father's homemade instruments, memorabilia from his family, and the legacy that his father has passed down to him.

In addition to building and playing violins, Lincoln enjoyed creating these miniature replica fiddles. He is pictured here in Dunbar in about 1980. Photographer unknown.

Bobby Taylor at his St. Albans home, with a few of his antiques. Bobby is an avid collector of old furniture, radios, musical instruments, and other antiquities. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

"I only got to see Sam Jarvis 'live' once. Sam Jarvis is a distant cousin, too. He was born Reese Blizzard Jarvis, because he was born during a blizzard. [Sam] Jarvis and [Dick] Justice recorded only four tunes, in 1928, for Brunswick. Those tunes remain in my mind today as the most perfect fiddling I've ever heard. 'Goodnight Waltz,' 'Poor Girl's Waltz,' 'Muskrat Rag,' and 'Poca River Blues.' It's the most unbelievable tone you've ever heard."

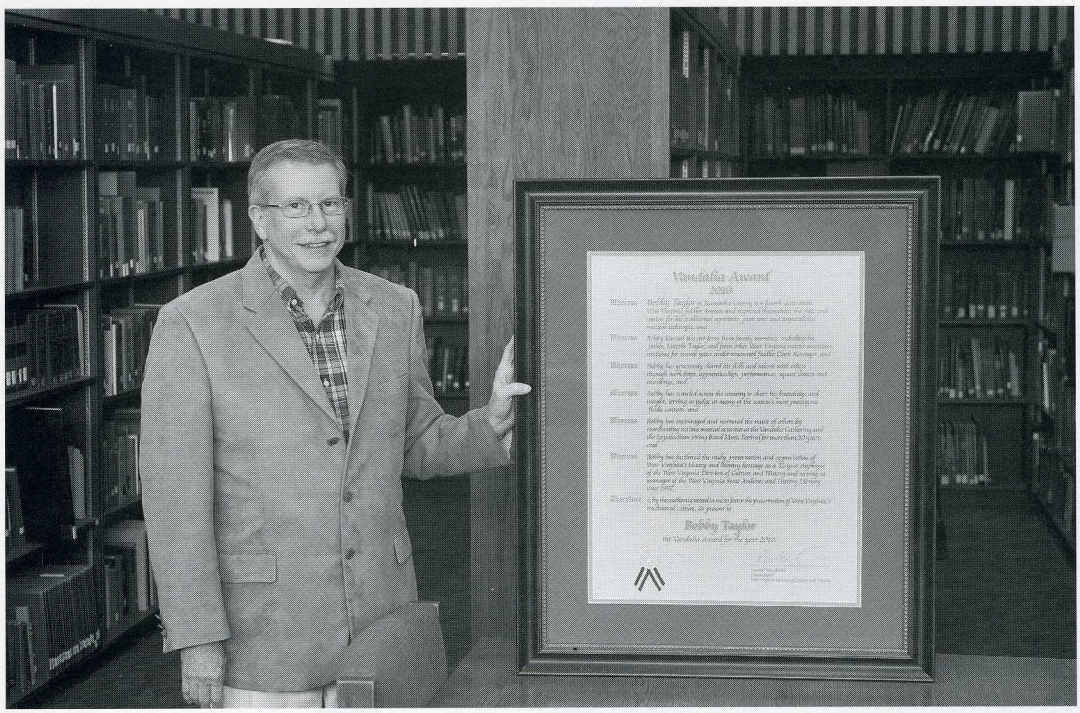
Curley Herdman, French Carpenter, and Ed Haley were other important musicians to Bobby during his formative years. Bobby considers his style today to be a combination of all these influences. "I'm a melting-pot fiddler," he says with a smile.

As Bobby developed as a musician, he quickly gained the respect and friendship of a wide circle of peers and contemporaries. Among these were fiddler John Morris and guitarist Tom King.

"John Morris has been a friend of mine for most of my life," Bobby says. "I've always revered his soul and his spirit. John Morris put the power in his fiddling, but he derived it from all the Clay County legends. He is a true West Virginia treasure. He is a true and genuine friend of mine, and he has been there for me when I've needed him.

"I met Tom [King] in 1974. Our music fit together perfectly. I don't know anybody on the planet that could play the guitar better than Tom King. He made everybody's music sound its best. I got to play with Tom from the age of 20 until his death at 39 I'm one year older than Tom, so I was 40 when he died. I remember him quitting a very good job just so he could go to a festival. He knew he could get another job easily, because he was a master of many trades. He was a good cook, a good hunter, a good fisherman, and he was a great teacher. He ran a music store in Morgantown. He knew instruments. He knew a lot about a lot of things, and shared it with people. When he died, a lot of my music went with him."

Bobby has been in a variety of bands over the past 35 years with these and other musicians. These bands have included the Teays Valley Boys, the Dave Morris Band, the Sweeney Brothers Band, the Green Meadow String Band, Bluegrass Revival, Chestnut Ridge, New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters, and Big Country. He has had his own band, Kanawha Tradition, since 1988. In various band combinations, he has played in Germany, Australia, Ireland, Washington, D.C., New



Bobby Taylor was the recipient of the 2010 Vandalia Award, West Virginia's highest honor in folk and traditional arts. He is shown here with the award proclamation. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

York, Tennessee, Chicago, Ohio, Kentucky, and throughout West Virginia. During the 1990's, Bobby and the Chestnut Ridge band traveled throughout West Virginia and elsewhere on behalf of U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, appearing with the senator and joining him at a variety of dedications, campaign stops, and other official functions.

Just as Bobby has gone to great lengths to discover and preserve West Virginia's heritage music, he has long held a parallel interest in collecting, restoring, and preserving antiques.

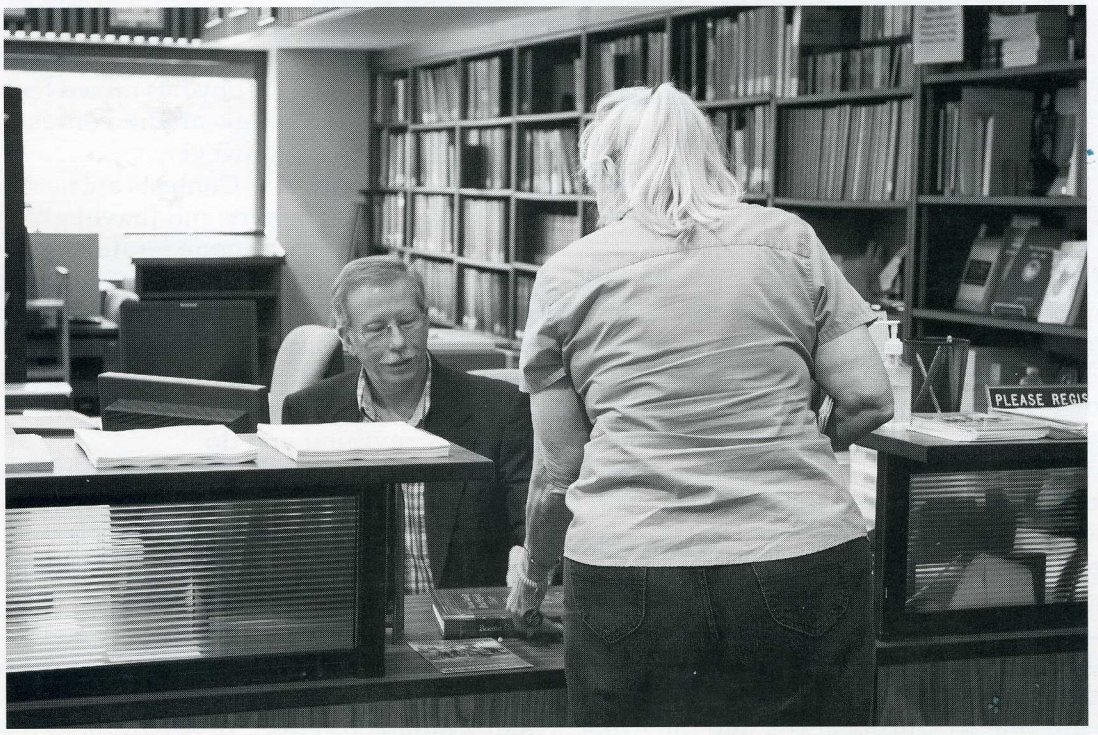
"I'm at home with old things around me," he says. "I collect a little bit of everything. One of the things I collect are the very rare Catalin radios. Very few people have ever seen one in their lifetime. I have five of them in my bedroom. Catalin is the jewel of plastic. It is gorgeous; women's jewelry and bracelets are made of it.

"I collect furniture from the late 1700's and early 1800's. I love antique furniture. I think of all the loving hands that have cared for this furniture for 200 years, and it lives today to be beautiful again."

Bobby recalls the event that first got him interested in exploring the world of antiques:

"My earliest memory of loving antiques was seeing a candlestick telephone and thinking, 'That's the neatest contraption I've ever seen. When I get money, I'm gonna buy me one of those candlestick phones.' So I went to an auction — I was 17, 18. [I] couldn't afford the candlestick phone. It was like $60. That was a lot of money then. Now I've got six or eight of them, so I've got my candlestick phone!

"From there, I got to meet various people who collected different things, and I got to gain knowledge from them. I think that my love of antiques goes right hand-in-hand



Manager of the State Archives Library since 1997, Bobby assists a library patron. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

with the music. I've always believed that a firm foundation in the past gives you a great base to build your music on. I think that is what leads me to try to preserve the old fiddling and even the old instruments."

Among his treasures, Bobby has been entrusted as custodian of two priceless fiddles belonging to Clark Kessinger and Ed Haley. He cares for these instruments, cherishes them, and plays and displays them from time to time.

As fortune would have it, Bobby found a career that combines his love of West Virginia history, his skills at preservation and conservation, and his degree in library science. Since 1997, he has been manager of the West Virginia Archives and History Library at the Culture Center in Charleston, working for the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

In addition to his expertise on the fiddle, Bobby has more than 30 years of experience in contest organizing and judging. Here, he awards a fiddle prize to Calhoun County musician Lester McCumbers at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop, Fayette County, in 2004. Photograph by Karen Heyd.

"I supervise seven staff members," Bobby says. "My main duty is to provide service to the public. Secondary to that, I do conservation work and field questions that come in, assist the staff and assist the public. They look for a lot of genealogy. The highest percentage of our patrons are looking to try to find a legacy to pass on to their kids. These people are wanting to find births, deaths, marriages, wills, deeds, any information they can tack together. They'd like to know these people that died long before they were born, if they can.

"The other side of the job that's very rewarding is master's thesis and doctoral dissertations. They come looking for the state's history, and we try to present them with anything and everything that's in our library for their research needs."

In addition to his library duties, Bobby has coordinated musical contests for events sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History for more than 30 years. These include the annual Vandalia Gathering held each Memorial Day weekend at the Capitol grounds in Charleston [see "Vandalia Time!", Spring 2010], and the Appalachian String Band Music Festival held each year near Clifftop in Fayette County. [See "Open Arms at Clifftop: 20th Appalachian String Band Music Festival," by John Lilly; Summer 2009]

A contest winner himself — he took the West Virginia State Open Fiddle Championship in 1977, among other awards — Bobby has become a nationally recognized authority on fiddle contests and contest judging. In recent years, he has served as a judge or a consultant at some of the most prestigious and competitive events in the country, including the Grand Master Fiddler Championship in Nashville, Tennessee; the Western Open Fiddle Championship in Red Bluff, California; the Grand National Fiddle Championship at Weiser, Idaho; and the Old Fiddler's Convention in Galax, Virginia. Bobby has mixed feelings about contests, however.

"Contests are necessary and [have] given a venue for fiddlers to play down through the ages. I don't like the animosity, I don't like the hurt feelings that go with contests. Never liked that. But I do love the striving for a standard of excellence in anything you do."

Never married and without children of his own, Bobby is keenly aware of the need to pass his knowledge and legacy on to others while he still has the opportunity.

"I have taught workshops at Augusta [Heritage Arts Workshops in Elkins], Allegheny Echoes [in Pocahontas County]; in Australia at the National Folk Festival in Canberra;

a mini-workshop in York, Pennsylvania; and at [Kentucky fiddler] J.P Fraley's house. Basically, little show-and-tells wherever I've gone to play music.

"I have had one apprentice, Jake Krack, and I am very proud of his accomplishments. Other students would be Jared Nutter, Amanda and Myra Morrison, Justine and Allison Parker, and Adam Hurt. I like to turn out people that can carry the tradition on, or the ones who can just enjoy it. Either way.

"I've been very successful with my teaching of students," he continues. "I've got people that have recorded my tunes endlessly, young people that play them on stage, other young people who terrorize the South by winning every contest going. I love that! Right now I've got a little dry spell as far as young kids wanting the challenge of playing. But I'm hoping that a year or so from now there will be another drove come in."

Nearing retirement age, Bobby has no intention of slowing down. Ten years from now, he plans to continue to collect antiques, coordinate and judge fiddle contests, play for square dances, give concerts, and teach. These last two items come together in what Bobby calls his historical showcase.

"My favorite thing to do is my historical showcases," he says. "I [bring] out Ed Haley's and Clark Kessinger's fiddles. I discuss all these fiddlers that I learned from — Ed Haley, French Carpenter, Wilson Douglas, Clark Kessinger. I feel humbled but honored to be able to showcase these wonderful fiddles and to keep this legacy alive."

These historical showcases serve as a culmination of Bobby's devotion to music, collecting, preservation, and teaching. They afford him the opportunity to play examples of music from West Virginia's past, to tell stories about the individuals who influenced him, to display the historic instruments themselves, and to share his insights and enthusiasm for these people and their music. He hopes that in time he will get increased opportunities to present these historical showcases.

"Fiddle playing is all about preserving, presenting, and keeping alive the memories of the past and memories for future generations."

Bobby has deep feelings about the music and its significance:

"The reason that a given fiddler is non-replaceable is that there's a soul there. Different fiddlers pull different colors of tone. They shape notes differently, they pull from the soul of the mountains. I think that it's very important, when learning to play, to capture that and then transform it into your own playing, add your own soul and spirit to that wonderful tradition of the past. It's always good to play from the heart and use the foundation of those wonderful fiddlers that you learned tunes from.

"Fiddle playing is all about preserving, presenting, and keeping alive the memories of the past and memories for future generations. This is always very important to me: to pass it on. It was given to me freely, and the people that played it never really shut me out. They were always available to show me something. I would record it and watch how they did it, and then hope to pull a little bit of their soul and spirit in my overall sound. But then you have to savor it yourself and add your own little twist to it and make it yours. Learn it exact, the way somebody did it before you. Build on that and keep it pure as you can, but you still have to add your spirit to their spirit.

"I think fiddle playing is taking the past and holding it very dear," he says.

TYLER EVERT

JOSH GORDON is a native of Alexandria, Virginia, now living in New York, where he teaches traditional music. Josh has written instructional articles for *Just Jazz Guitar*, *Guitar World Acoustic*, and the *Music City Blues Newsletter* This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

A miner, face streaked with coal dust, waits for a ride at Capels, McDowell County. The dollar signs on the truck's cab possibly indicate that this vehicle provides paid transportation. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott, 1938.

Revelation in the Mountains

By Betty Rivard

Wives of coal miners talk across the fence at Capels in 1938. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

West Virginia FSA Photographs

Photographs courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Seventy-five years ago this October, the first of two urban bohemian intellectual photographers traveled through West Virginia's southern coalfields to produce honest, candid, and insightful photographs of the region. Unlike later photographers who came with assignments to look for images to fit a particular storyline, these two photographers were each open to learning from the people and communities they met.

The company store at Capels in 1938. One of few racially integrated institutions at that time, the company store sold a wide range of goods and functioned as an important gathering spot and community center. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

The two photographers were Ben Shahn (1898-1969), who visited in October of 1935, and Marion Post Wolcott (1910-1990), who followed partly in his footsteps nearly three years later, in September 1938. Both Shahn and Post Wolcott had spent some time in Europe, where they witnessed Hitler's early rise to power. They were committed to social justice and wanted to do their part for President Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives. They each had a deep respect for the humanity and dignity of all Americans, regardless of their circumstances.

The trips were sponsored by various organizations within the federal government, including the Resettlement Administration (RA), the Farm Security Administration (FSA), and the Office of War Information (OWI). Their work was collected by Roy Stryker, who directed what is generally referred to as the FSA project. The purpose of this project, which ran from the summer of 1935 into 1943, was threefold: a) to document the conditions of people and communities who were suffering due to the Great Depression, b) to reveal the successes of the government programs designed to help them, and c) to preserve the details of everyday life in small

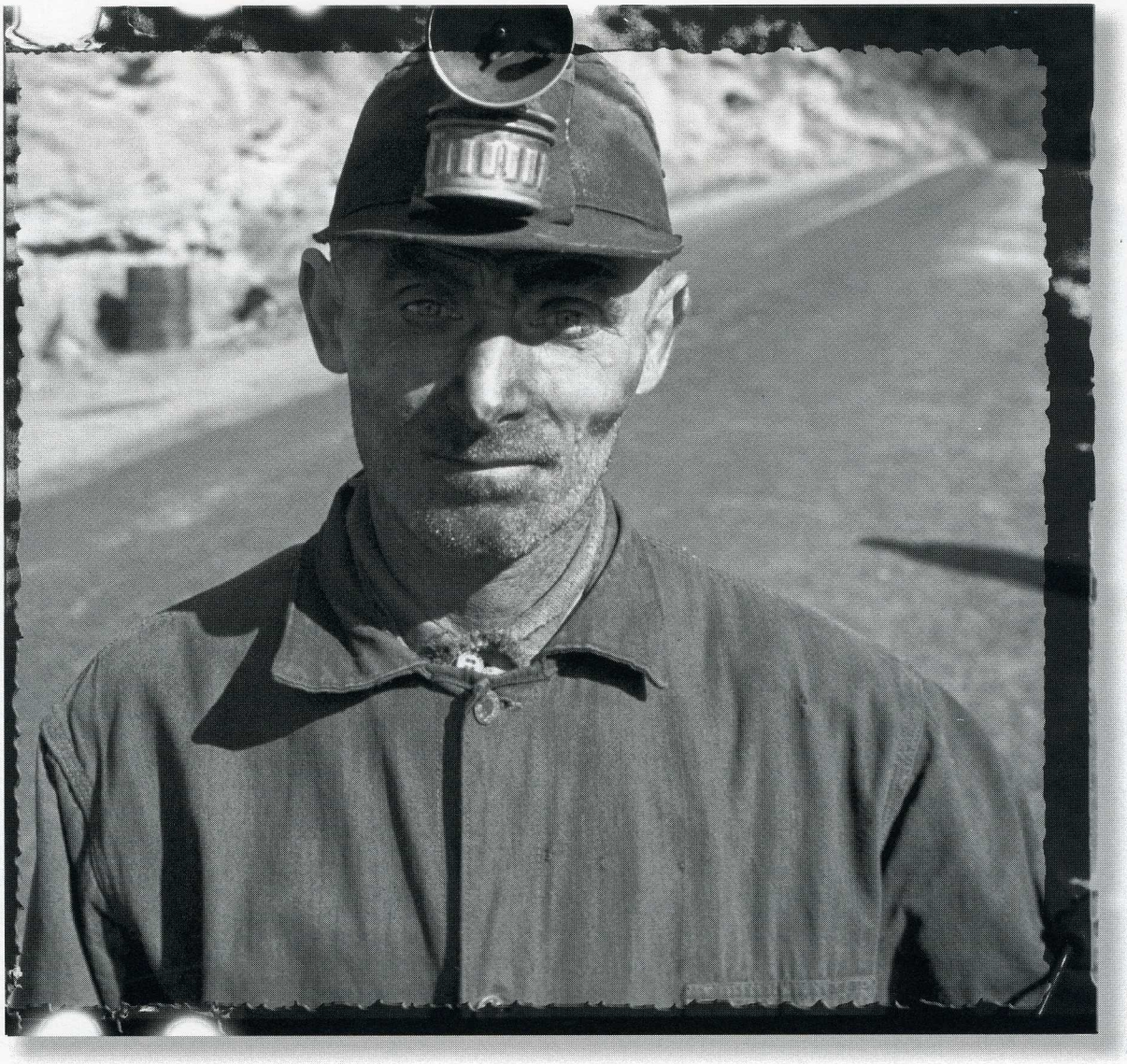
Company-owned housing up against a slag heap at Capels in 1938. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

towns and rural areas across the country.

At least 10 photographers came to West Virginia and produced more than 1,500 photographs. Photographs from all of the states were offered to government agencies and local and national magazines, newspapers, and books. At the end of the project, they were archived by the Library of Congress, where they can now be found online at www.loc.gov.

Walker Evans, widely considered one of the greatest photographers of the 20th century, visited north-central West Virginia in June 1935 and took some of the first photographs for the new FSA file. Shahn and Evans had shared a studio, and Shahn had rented an apartment to Evans, in New York City. Shahn was an established painter whose business was affected by the Depression. After working under the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP), he was hired by the Resettlement Administration (RA), which had also sponsored Evans' initial work. to prepare murals, posters, pamphlets, and exhibits.

Shahn first picked up a camera in order to do quick studies that he felt would be more effective than sketches as a basis for his painting. When the RA gave him the

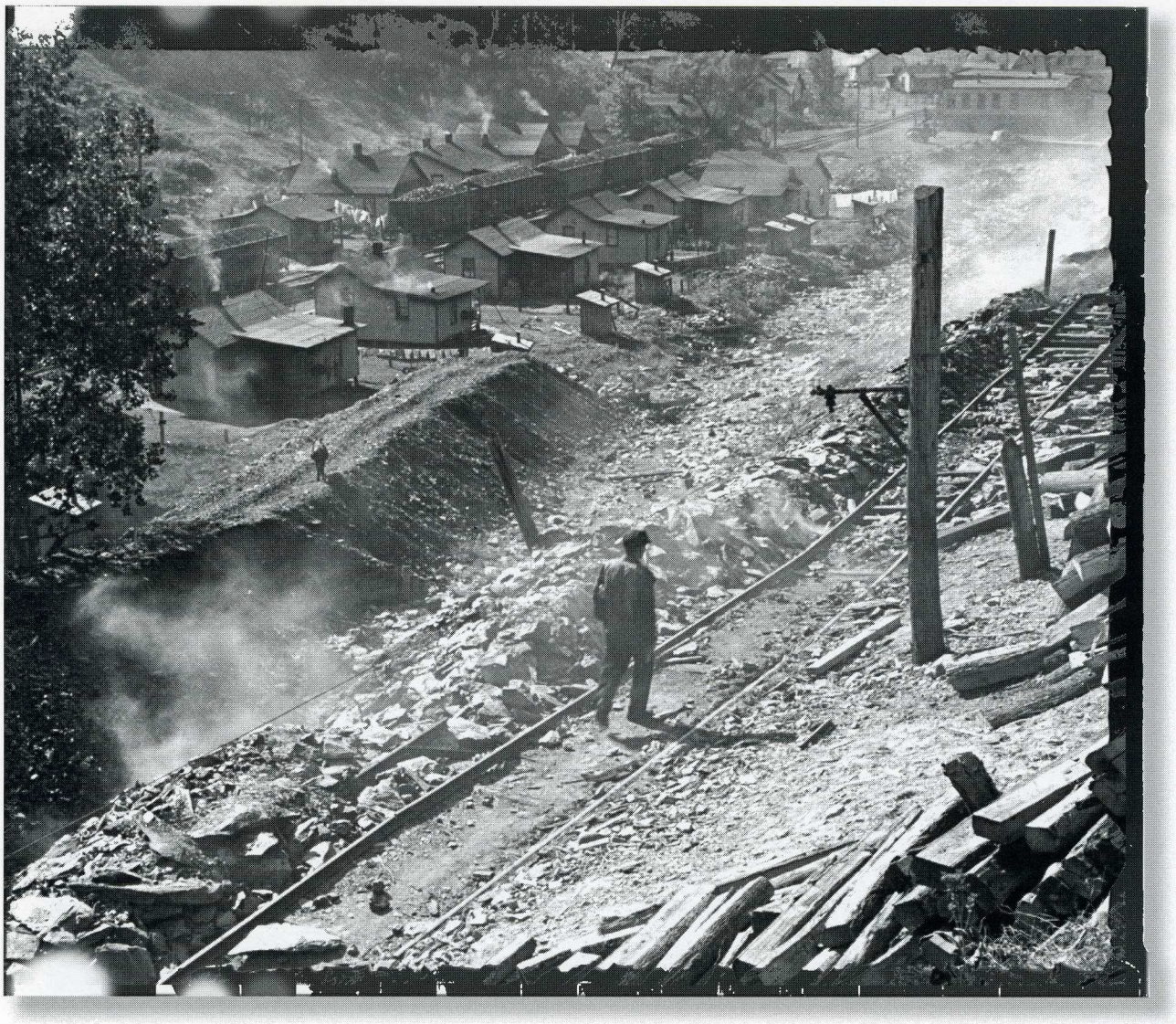


Miner at Freeze Fork, Logan County. This iconic photograph was taken by Ben Shahn in 1935.

opportunity to travel through the southeast in order to get a feel for the country beyond the east coast, he took his camera along with that purpose in mind. Stryker, who had just started the FSA project, used Shahn's photographs in setting up his file. Evans and Shahn became very influential in working with Stryker to shape the philosophy and development of the project as a whole. Their photographs were also examples for the other photographers who later contributed to the file.

Shahn began his trip by photographing in the northern coalfields, where Evans had been a few months earlier. He then traveled through Logan and Mingo counties on his way to the Deep South. He apparently spent at least two days, a Sunday and a Monday, in Omar, Logan County, and the surrounding area. How do we know it was a Sunday and a Monday? Some photographs show men in Sunday clothes; others show clotheslines with laundry, which was generally done on Mondays.

The Archives of American Art, now based in the Smithsonian Institution, did a series of oral history interviews between the mid-1960's and the early 1970's with people who were associated with the FSA



Smoke and dust fill the air at Freeze Fork in 1935. Photograph by Ben Shahn.

project. In 1964, Shahn reflected on the tour that brought him through West Virginia:

"It was really a very serious time. .I mean the present seemed to be hopeless, and I just felt that I'd never get out of New York again. ...When this thing came along and this idea that I must wander around the country a bit for three months, .I just jumped out of my skin with joy. And not only that, they were going to give me a salary, too! I just couldn't believe it. Anyway, I went, and I found things that were very startling to me. For instance, I remember the first place I went to on this trip, where we were active — these resettlements that we built — I found that, as far as I was concerned, it was impossible to photograph. Neat little rows of houses. This wasn't my idea of something to photograph. I had the good luck to ask someone, 'Where are you all from! Where did they bring you from?' When they told me, I went down to a place called Scot's Run [Scotts Run, Monongalia County], and there it began. I realized then that I must be on my own, find out, you know."

Shahn noted, "In the South or in the mine country, wherever you point the camera there is a picture." He said that his travels were a

Polish coal miner at Capels in 1938. Immigrants made up a large percentage of the work force in the coalfields of southern West Virginia. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

"revelation" to him.

Shahn eventually gave up the camera completely and returned to painting, murals, and printmaking. Some of his later paintings were based directly on some of his West Virginia photographs. In the same 1964 interview, Shahn spoke about his work under the New Deal.

"I felt very strongly [about] the whole social impact of that Depression, you know. I felt very strongly about the efforts ...[and what] this Resettlement Administration was trying to accomplish — resettling people, helping them, and so on. I felt completely in harmony with the times. I don't think I've ever felt that way before or since. Totally involved. ...I thought nothing of working through a night, or something like that, ...to print stuff or make posters or what have you."

Just as Shahn's photographs have left a legacy in West Virginia, his experiences in the state and the other areas he photographed had an impact on him in his own life, as well.

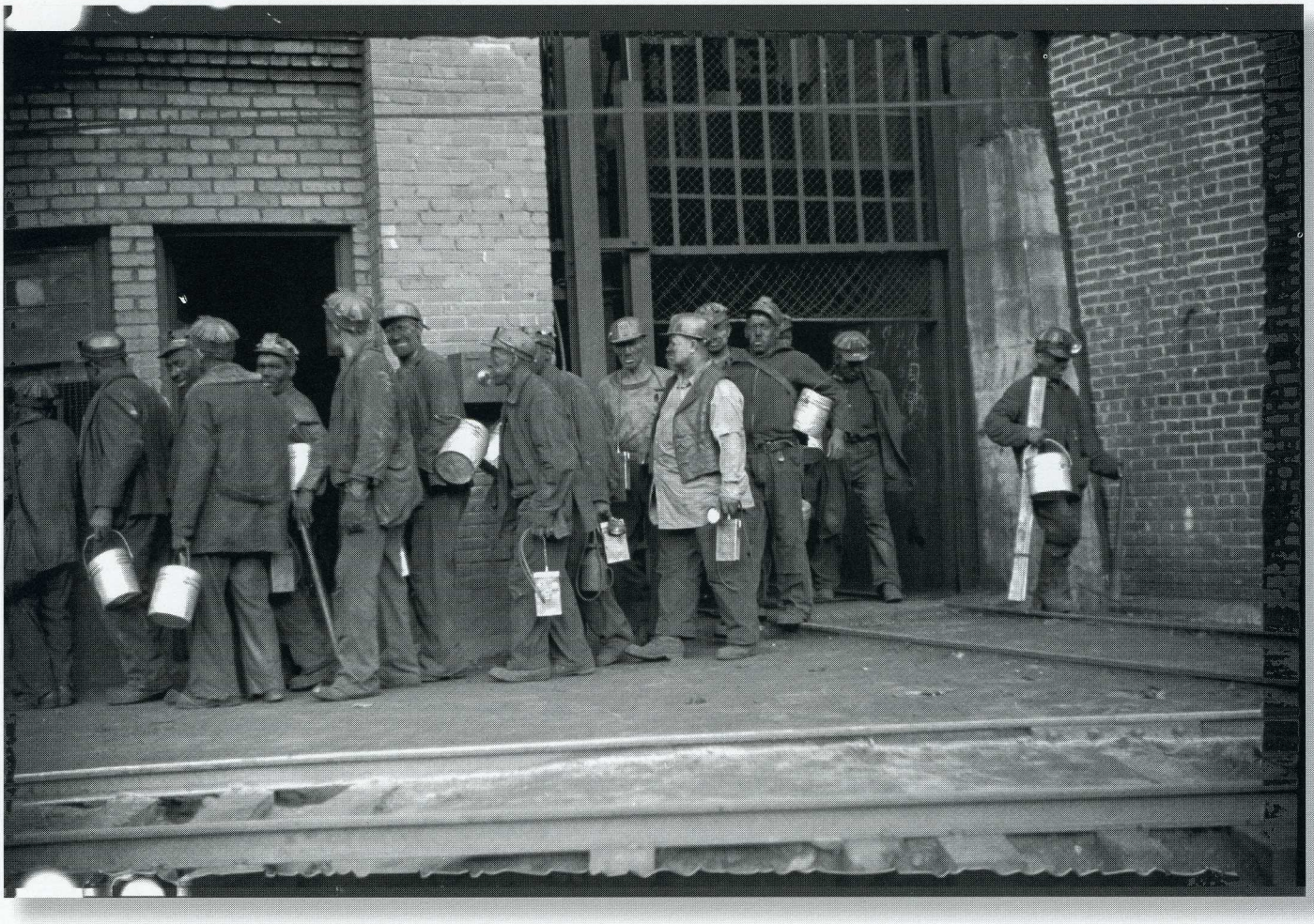
By 1938, Roy Stryker had built a well-established file of photographs from across the country. After a brief scare about securing the funds he needed to continue, his budget was approved and he was able to hire new photographers. Marion Post

Miners head home after work, lunch pails in tow. These homes were some of the nicer company houses in Capels. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott, 1938.

Wolcott started working for Stryker in the late summer of 1938, with a three-month probationary period. Post Wolcott had been working as a photographer for a Philadelphia newspaper when she left to work for the FSA. She spent time researching the existing file, then she was sent on a trip to photograph in West Virginia.

This first trip took her through some of the same parts of the state where Evans and Shahn had traveled. She produced an extensive portfolio in the coal camps that made up Scotts Run. Then she drove through Charleston to the southern coalfields and photographed in Omar, Bluefield, and McDowell County, particularly along Davy Road through Capels. She also documented molasses making in Boone County.

As a woman traveling alone, Post Wolcott was able to spend time getting to know families, particularly those in the coal camps. This helped her to photograph them as they went about their daily lives. At that point in the history of the New Deal and the FSA project, the focus was more on the successes of the government programs and less on the needs these programs addressed. But Wolcott depicted conditions as she found them; many



Miners emerge from underground at the end of their shift at Capels in 1938. This shaft went down 60 feet to a tunnel, two miles long. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

people and communities were still dealing with very difficult times that affected their energy, health, and well-being.

In a 1965 interview with the American Archives of Art, Post Wolcott spoke about her trip to West Virginia:

"My first assignments were very close to Washington. I think one of the first ones, if not the very first, was in the coalfields in West Virginia. That was a very short assignment, of course. And it was a very interesting one, too. I found the people not as apathetic as I had expected they might be. They weren't too beaten down. Many of them were, but they were people with hope and some of them still had a little drive. ..Of course, their health was so bad, it was telling."

During this trip, Post Wolcott took up to one third of the West Virginia photographs in the FSA file. Following her tour of West Virginia, Post Wolcott went back to Washington, D C., and then to the Deep South. She passed her probationary period and traveled to many other states. In 1941, she ended her career in order to concentrate on her marriage and her new family and to help manage their farms. In the 1960's, she was rediscovered as a pioneer woman photographer. She

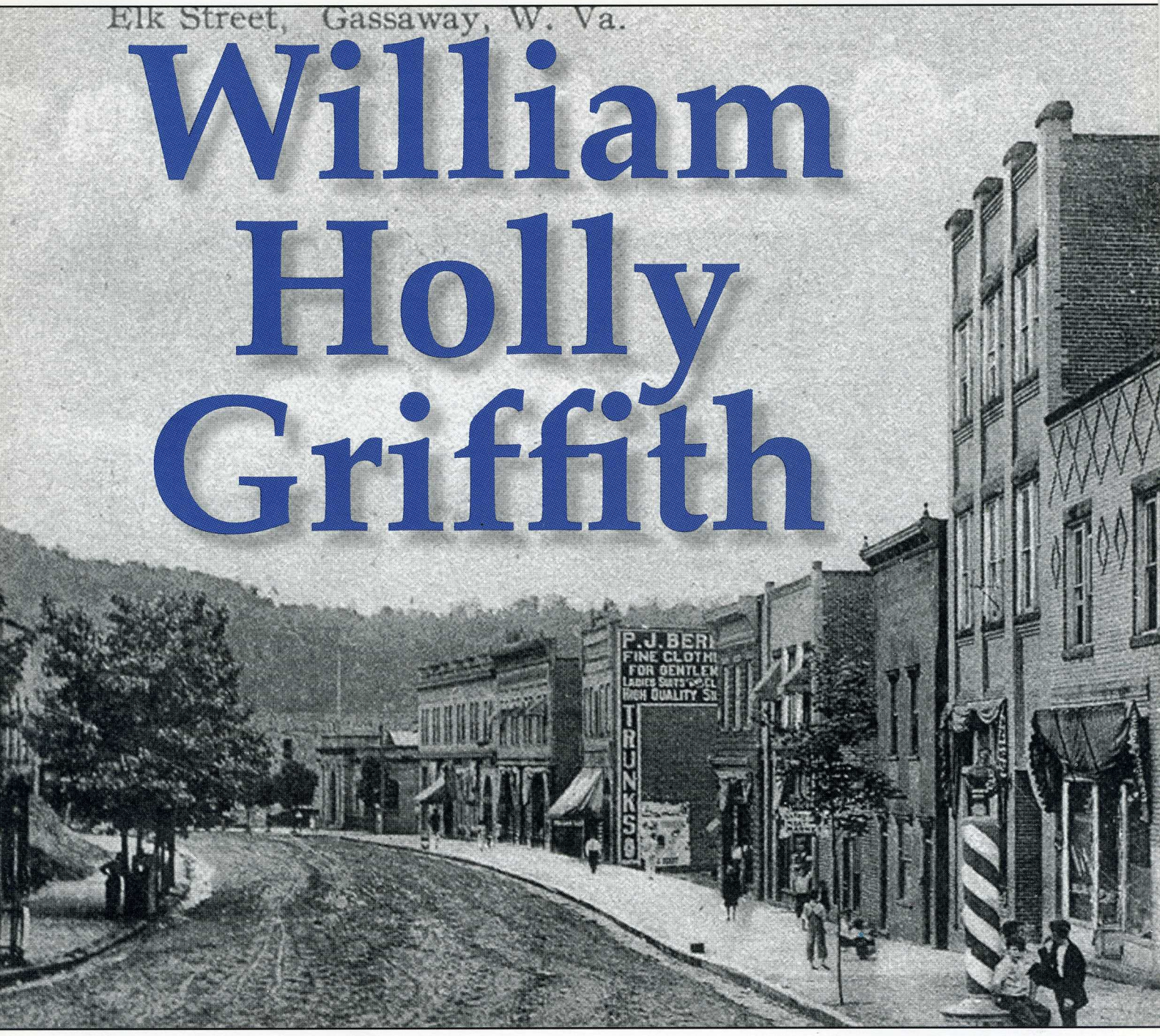
A miner on horseback takes home provisions along the unpaved streets of Capels in 1938. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott.

produced new photographs during her international travels with her husband. Her work continues to be researched, published, and exhibited today.

What is the value of resurrecting these photographs that were taken so long ago? Many of them show the resilience of people and communities in West Virginia. Even where they document destitute conditions, the spirit of the people still shines through. The photographs also give us images to go along with our understanding of the life of the times, like miners committed to their homes and families, women helping each other, people walking and using horses when there were still few cars, and the diversity of people of different races and cultures living and working together. Taken as a whole, these photographs show positive views of the state and its people, even during hard times.

BETTY RIVARD grew up in Detroit and San Francisco, moving to West Virginia in 1971. She holds graduate degrees in education and social work from West Virginia University. Betty retired after 25 years of service as a social worker and planner for the state of West Virginia and now works as a fine art landscape photographer. Her work has been featured in *Wonderful West Virginia* magazine and the 2005 State Historic Preservation Office calendar. This is Betty's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL

William Holly Griffith



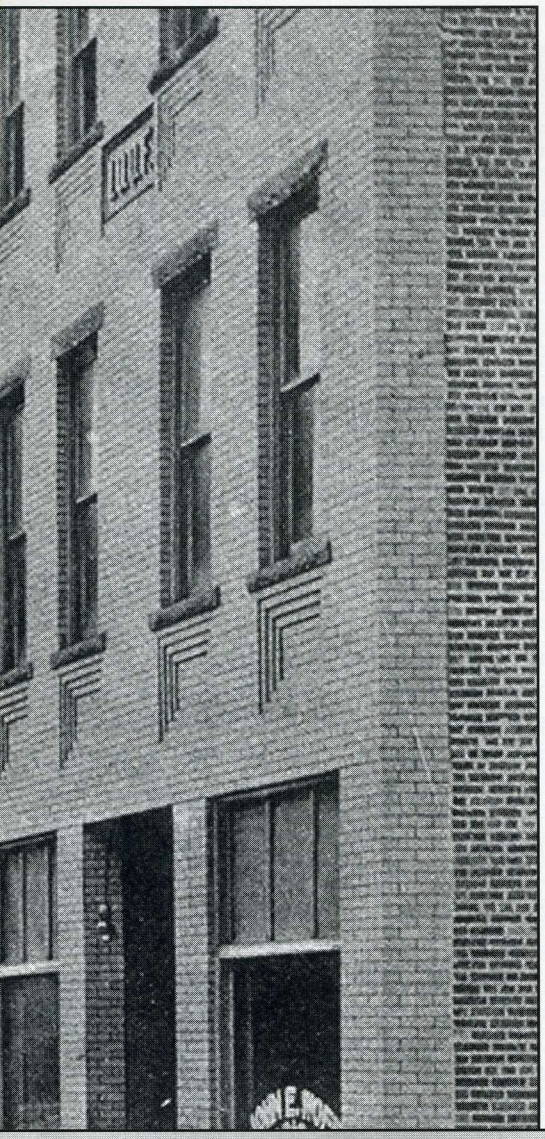
Gassaway in the early 1900's. Photographer and date unknown.

West Virginia Desperado

By H. R. Cogar

The town of Gassaway, Braxton County, appeared placid in late April 1915. Only 10 years had passed since it was founded by railroad tycoon Henry Gassaway Davis. There were new churches, stores, hotels, and boarding houses. A year before, the new Coal & Coke Railroad depot had been christened and had quickly become the centerpiece of the community.

Situated in a deep horseshoe bend in the Elk River, it was no accident that Davis decided to build his newest railroad town in Braxton County, near the geographical center of the state. It was here that heavy locomotives, required to negotiate the mountainous terrain to the east, could be turned around, allowing smaller, more economical engines



the task of pulling cars southwest along the river to Charleston. Gassaway had become an important place, and it had attracted a growing population.

For the time being, the future was bright. Spring had arrived. Gardens were being prepared. In the upcoming months, plans would be made for the annual Fourth of July parade with every storefront bedecked in red, white, and blue bunting.

Thirty-five miles from Gassaway, at a little place called Groundhog, near Creston, in Wirt County, William Holly Griffith lived with his young wife and baby daughter. Holly, as he preferred to be called, was a strapping young man of 22, slightly over six feet in height, and weighing more than 180 pounds, with brown eyes and dark hair. Though lacking any meaningful education, he was certainly affable with a decided affinity for the game of poker. When his chosen vocation as a painter proved to be less than lucrative, young Holly had determined to take the much easier route of a gambler and all-around con artist.

In February 1915, Griffith had swindled a man in Wirt County then later wrote a bad check for an automobile in Ritchie County, culminating in his arrest and escape from custody. By the time he made his way back to his home, the first victim had obtained a warrant for his arrest, which was delivered to Wirt County Constable Jefferson Goff for execution.

On Sunday, March 28, 1915, at about 10:30 p.m., Constable Goff arrived at the Griffith house and pounded on the door to announce his presence. Lulu Griffith answered and claimed that her husband was away Undeterred, the constable forced his way inside where he was confronted by Holly. A violent struggle ensued, resulting in Goff's sustaining a mortal gunshot wound, to which he succumbed on April 8. By then, Griffith, now wanted for murder, had fled to his father's house in Clarksburg.

Griffith would eventually travel by train from Clarksburg to Sutton, where, with a forged $500 check, he opened an account at the Home National Bank under the assumed name of F.S. Rose. He wrote worthless checks to several area businesses before his scheme was finally discovered in late April.

In the evening hours of April 29, Griffith, accompanied by a man who would later be identified as Jesse J Ferguson, arrived by train in Gassaway. The two men went to the John Cart boarding house on River Street, where Griffith had stayed several days during a previous visit to town. Cart's son-in-law, Daniel K. Comer, showed him to a room.

Some days earlier, a local dry goods store had taken one of Griffith's checks for

William Holly Griffith in his 1915 mug shot, taken at Moundsville following his first murder conviction. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Daniel K. Comer at age 21 around the time of his violent encounter with Holly Griffith. He was fortunate to survive.

a purchase in the amount of $36. Discovering the check was worthless and learning that "Rose" had previously stayed at the Cart boarding house, the proprietor asked Dan Comer to let him know if the man came back. Comer did so, and the store owner promptly reported the matter to chief of police G. Ord Thompson.

Chief Thompson had only been on duty for a short time that bright, clear Friday morning when, at about 8:45, he stopped by the Cart boarding house and located young Dan Comer, whom he knew would recognize F.S. Rose if he saw him. Thompson deputized Comer so that he could accompany him and, though he didn't think it would be necessary, to help him make the arrest. Comer asked Thompson if he should take a gun along with him, to which the policeman replied, "I've got a gun, and that's enough." It wouldn't be.

The two men made their way down Elk Street, where at about 9:00 a.m., they found the object of their search at E.M. Layman's Grocery, accompanied by Ferguson. As the two men leaned across the store's display counter, Chief Thompson and Dan Comer stepped in.

Details of what happened next are a bit murky, but one thing is for certain. All hell broke loose.

Thompson drew his .38 caliber service revolver, walked up behind Griffith, and grabbed hold of his shoulder, announcing that he should "consider [himself] under arrest." Griffith jerked away, simultaneously pulling from his hip pocket a large-caliber revolver. Dan Comer reacted quickly, grabbing Griffith's gun hand in an effort to wrestle the weapon from his grasp. During what must have seemed like an eternity from Comer's perspective, he found himself being overpowered by a bigger, stronger opponent, who at times during the struggle was pointing a loaded gun at his head and trying to pull the trigger. Incredibly, Thompson was standing by all the while with his own revolver pointed at Griffith's midsection, seemingly frozen in place. Comer was eventually able to force Griffith's arm downward, only to hear the sharp crack of the gun as it sent a bullet into his right thigh, breaking the bone. Dan Comer collapsed on the floor.

When Comer fell, instead of shooting, Thompson unwisely grabbed for Griffith, who pushed him away, raising his gun to send another bullet through the policeman's left chest, just below his heart. Thompson crumpled, losing the grasp of his own weapon, which tumbled onto a sack of potatoes near Comer's feet as Griffith made a hasty retreat. Comer screamed, "Give me that gun! I'll shoot the son of a b____!" Hearing that, Griffith halted his flight just long enough to turn and fire another round at Comer's head. It missed by inches, shattering a store display case. Griffith and Ferguson were out the door and on the run.

Both shooting victims were evacuated by train to Charleston, where, at 6:25 p.m., G. Ord Thompson died. He had become

G. Ord Thompson, chief of police in Gassaway, was fatally shot by Holly Griffith while Thompson attempted to apprehend Griffith for the murder of a Wirt County constable. Photographer and date unknown.

MURDER!

$600 REWARD $600

For the arrest and detention of W. H. Griffith, alias W. H. Griffin, alias F. S. Rose, who, on the morning of May 1, 1915, shot and killed G. Ord Thompson, Chief of Police of the Town of Gassaway, West Virginia, wounded another officer and made his escape; was chased through seven counties and last seen near his home in the edge of Wirt County, near the Roane County line, where he had killed a Constable a few weeks previous in resisting arrest.

The State of West Virginia offers a reward of $250.00.

The County of Braxton, West Virginia, offers a reward of $250.00.

The Town of Gassaway, West Virginia, offers a reward of $100.00.

DESCRIPTION:

Twenty-three years of age; height about 6 feet; weight about 170 pounds; smooth shaven; dark hair; dark complexion; prominent nose; high cheek bones; walks or runs in long strides; slightly stooped; wears No. 9 shoes; was shot by pistol through left hand; one shot from shotgun in neck; likely to make his way by passing bad checks.

Any information communicate with R. N. Rollyson, Sheriff of Braxton County, Sutton, West Virginia.

Reward poster, 1915.

Griffith Has Again Eluded His Pursuers

TRAIL WAS LOST NEAR BEAR DAM, IN ROANE COUNTY, SATURDAY

POSSE IN PURSUIT OF THE FUGITIVE HAS BEEN DISBANDED FOR THE PRESENT

WOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE HIMSELF UP UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

W. H. Griffith, alias F S. Rose, wanted for the murder of two men, who attempted his arrest, was trailed yesterday to Bear Dam, Roane county, where the trail was lost. Griffith is now thought to be among his friends who will aid him if necessary. The posse was disbanded, the officers who had been in the hunt from adjoining counties and others leaving for their homes.

Considerable business was disposed of yesterday

Among this was the examination of grades of normal students in the various denominational institutions of the state who expect to graduate this year and who on the completion of the normal course as provided by the board will be entitled to teaching certificates without passing county examinations. These grades will be taken up again at a future meeting.

PYTHIANS TO HONOR DEAD

Parkersburg News, May 9, 1915

the second victim of Holly Griffith and the first Gassaway policeman to be killed in the line of duty.

Gassaway and the surrounding county were in a state of grief, shock, and growing outrage. And then there was the terror of a murderer on the loose. Not just any murderer, but the murderer of a popular police officer who had himself been sworn to protect the vulnerable citizenry from such ugly matters.

J J Ferguson was quickly captured, and by noon the day of the shooting, was safely lodged in the Braxton County jail at Sutton, awaiting disposition.

A manhunt, the proportions of which had never been seen in West Virginia, was on. News of the events in Gassaway spread throughout central West Virginia, and men flocked to the town from the surrounding communities to join in the hunt for the killer. Bloodhounds arrived from Clarksburg. High-powered Winchester rifles were unlimbered. Tension was high as, on each succeeding day, posse members would return to report the close calls, of how Griffith had been sighted at one point or another, but somehow always managed to evade his killing or capture.

Adding a touch of myth to the mystery, local news reported Griffith to be "heavily armed...a crack shot...and [dodging] from place to place at his pleasure."

On the morning of May 3, 1915, West Virginia Governor Henry D Hatfield issued a proclamation offering a reward of $250 for the arrest of the murderer of Chief Thompson, then still believed to be F.S. Rose. Braxton County also offered a reward of $500 and the town of Gassaway and Wirt County each put up $100, bringing the total reward for Holly Griffith to $950, a substantial sum in 1915 dollars and enough to entice up to 300 participants in the manhunt.

Newspaper reporters waited anxiously for every scrap of information they might print about the chase. Often, the reports were rife with misstatements or outright lies. Increasingly aware of the situation getting out of hand, one paper wryly commented. "It will be a matter of gratification to Griffith's friends, if he has any, to know that he is being well cared for during the chase. Tuesday he ate breakfast with 14 different families, seven elegant luncheons were spread for him, and he sumptiously [sic] dined at 18 different and widely scattered places. His wound was dressed eight different times, and he slept in 23 different haystacks."

By May 9, 1915, posse members had all but lost interest in combing the hills of central West Virginia for Holly Griffith. To the man, they were generally exhausted and weary of nights spent away from their own homes. Adding to their frustration, Griffith seemed positively charmed. At each sighting, he managed to avoid their bullets and then seemed to melt away into the woods. On May 10, the heavily armed force declared that F.S. Rose or Holly Griffith, or whatever his name was, could not be caught. So they simply gave up. The best that they could hope for was that Griffith would turn up again somewhere. They wouldn't have to wait long.

Within two weeks, Griffith was captured by Youngstown, Ohio, policemen as he dined in a little off-track restaurant. Subsequently identified as a fugitive from West Virginia, he was transferred on May 24, 1915, to the custody of Charleston officers, who delivered him to Sutton.

The manhunt was over. Holly Griffith was at last locked up in the Braxton County jail where, on June 7, 1915, he was indicted for the murder of Gassaway police officer G. Ord Thompson.

The courtroom was filled to capacity as the opening arguments in the trial of Holly Griffith commenced on Tuesday, July 13. Dan Comer had recovered enough after 30 days of hospitalization to testify that Griffith was without doubt the man that had shot him and killed Ord Thompson. Young Griffith, looking anything but a murderer, wore a neatly tailored blue serge suit, an immaculate shirt and collar, and tan shoes. Pale and thin after weeks of confinement, he seemed uncharacteristically nervous.

The prosecution rested at noon

on Wednesday, July 14. The defense began the morning of Thursday, July 15, and concluded by the end of the day, suggesting that Griffith had merely acted in self defense when he shot Ord Thompson.

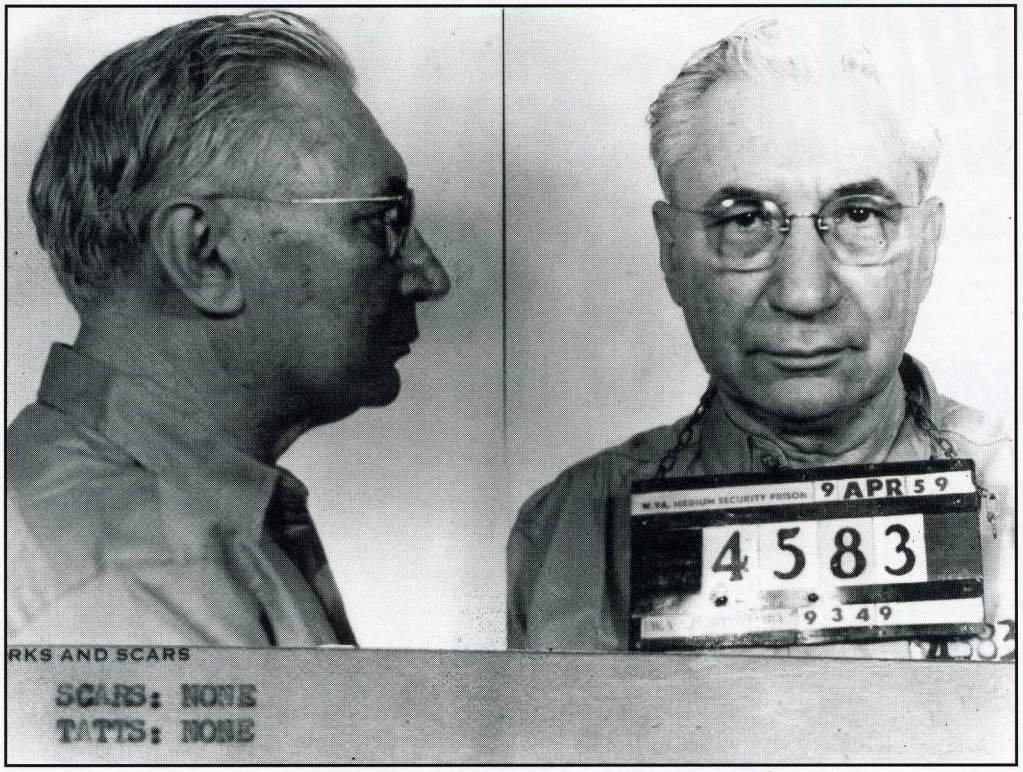
The following day, the jury returned a verdict of murder in the first degree. Four days later, Holly Griffith was sentenced to a term of 99 years in the state penitentiary at Moundsville. For reasons never publicly explained, Holly Griffith would not be tried in Wirt County for the murder of Jeff Goff.

At 10:00 Friday morning, July 23, 1915, Holly Griffith left Sutton in shackles aboard a train for Moundsville. The good people of Braxton and Wirt counties breathed a sigh of relief that it was over and that they had heard the last of Holly Griffith. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Five-and-one-half years passed. Holly Griffith had settled into the routine of a lifer. He had been assigned to work as a garment cutter and had even managed to win a spot on the prison band, where he learned to read music and play the cornet. But inmate No. 9349 had no intention of living a life behind the cold stone walls of the Moundsville penitentiary. Since the day he arrived, foremost on his mind were his plans for escape. And that time was nearly at hand.

Thursday, January 6, 1921, dawned cold and gray in northern West Virginia. The state was still reeling from Monday's news that the capitol building in Charleston had been destroyed by fire. At about 8:00 that evening, Griffith was returning to his cell from band practice when the fire alarm sounded. Taking advantage of the planned diversion, Griffith quickly made his way to the prison's self-contained electric power plant. Using a long, heavy knife he had smuggled with him, he quickly went to work cutting the belt to the main dynamo, effectively plunging the entire prison into darkness.

The assistant engineer in charge of the prison power plant that night was inmate Henry Lewis. Unfortunately for him, he discovered Griffith in the act of sabotaging the power generator and made an effort to stop him. Griffith turned the knife on Lewis, nearly decapitating him. Another prisoner intervened and suffered a severe laceration to two fingers, one of which would require amputation. Holly Griffith had killed his third man.



Following a prison break and two additional murder convictions in 1921, Holly Griffith became a model prisoner. In 1959, he was transferred to the state's medium-security prison at Huttonsville, where this photograph was made. Courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Griffith rushed through the yard to the prison's carpenter shop, finding a preplanned location where he could climb up to one of the skylights and onto the roof. From there he dropped to the ground then covered the short distance to the prison wall. Using a roll of insulated wire, he soon cleared the 30-foot wall and was on the outside.

Once again, the word was spread. The nightmare that everyone thought was over in 1915 had resumed. Holly Griffith was on the run. Just as he had done years earlier, Griffith melted away into the night.

Weeks later, a Greenwood, South Carolina, police constable, alert to be on the lookout for a suspect wanted for a post office robbery, arrested a haggard traveler near the town's rail station. Subsequent identification revealed the man to be none other than West Virginia fugitive Holly Griffith. The penitentiary warden dispatched the captain of the prison guard to retrieve him and return him to Moundsville.

On March 28, 1921, Holly Griffith was convicted of the penitentiary murder of Henry Lewis. The jury verdict surprisingly included a recommendation for mercy.

The nightmare that everyone thought was over in 1915 had resumed. Holly Griffith was on the run.

On the previous January 12, 1921, during Griffith's three-week hiatus from prison, Ira Roush of Antiquity, Ohio, was found dead in the Ohio River near Point Pleasant, shot in the chest by what was apparently a large-caliber firearm. Since Griffith's last reported sighting before he turned up in South Carolina was near Portsmouth, Ohio, he became a natural suspect.

Griffith's trial for the murder of Ira Roush commenced on September 14, 1921. The state's witnesses placed him at the victim's home the night before the crime and with the victim on his riverboat *Ben Hur* Others testified Griffith offered to sell the same boat at Portsmouth, Ohio, in the days after the murder. There was also evidence recovered on Griffith's person when he was arrested in South Carolina, not the least of which was the very coat last seen worn by young Roush, complete with a large-caliber bullet hole.

Despite defense claims of mistaken identity and tortured confessions, William Holly Griffith was convicted of murder for a third time on September 19, 1921. And yet again, the trial jury spared him the gallows in favor of a lifetime in prison.

From 1921 forward, Holly Griffith, now with three murder convictions behind him and a life in custody virtually assured, became by all accounts a model prisoner. In 1934, he went to work in the tailor shop, and five years later, opened his own tailoring business within the prison walls. He would eventually employ other inmates in the business and receive contracts to make uniforms for guards. For the 20 years that followed, he became the penitentiary's leading entrepreneur. Owing to his stellar record (post-1921), on April 9, 1959, he was transferred to the medium-security prison in Huttonsville, where he continued the tailoring business, by then supplemented by a dry cleaning operation.

Griffith was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1966. In 1967, after a series of petitions, he was granted a 180-day medical respite by Governor Hulett C. Smith to seek treatment at the Cleveland Clinic. Accompanied by a 20-year-old

Holly Griffith and his dog prepare to leave Moundsville, en route to Huttonsville in 1959. Eight years later, Griffith obtained a pass to receive medical treatment in Cleveland. Instead, he headed to Mexico and enjoyed 15 months of freedom before voluntarily surrendering. He was sent back to Moundsville, where he died of natural causes in 1971 Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

parolee acting as his chauffeur, he instead bought a 1962 Rambler and set out for Walla Walla, Washington, in search of an Indian doctor he had seen advertised in a magazine many years earlier. Once in Washington, Griffith learned the Indian doctor had died, so the two journeyed down the West Coast, trading the car for an older model and purchasing a house trailer. They continued into Mexico, where Griffith found an American doctor who treated him for two days at a cost of $150.

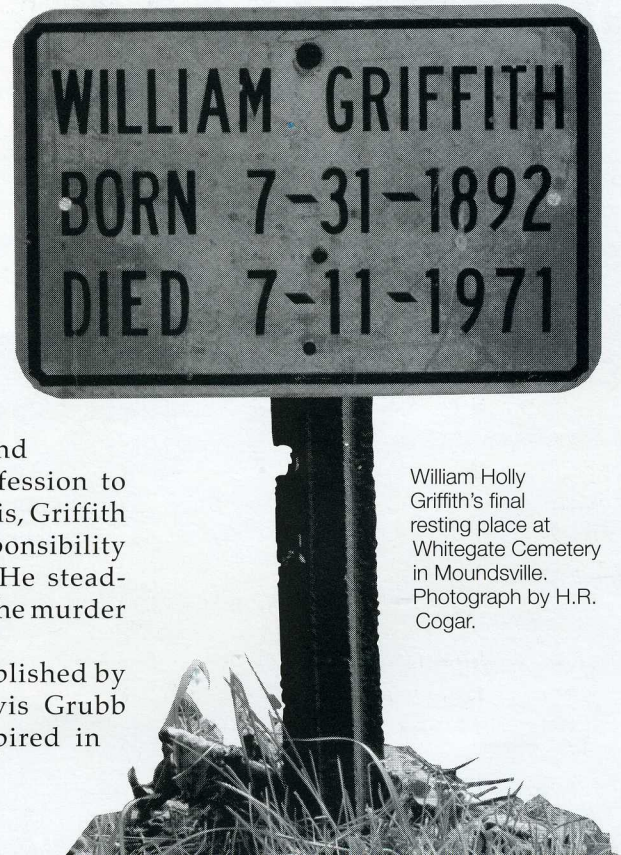
More than a year later, in May 1968, Griffith having failed to return to Huttonsville, Governor Smith authorized the issuance of a fugitive warrant for him. After 15 months of freedom, too old and sick to run again, Holly Griffith voluntarily surrendered himself on May 11 and was summarily returned to the Moundsville penitentiary.

During his lifetime, Griffith was the subject of numerous (and generally sympathetic) feature articles in Charleston newspapers. In an effort to cast doubt on his guilt and therefore engender sympathy for his parole, Griffith denied any responsibility for the murders credited to him. As to Jeff Goff (for which he was never formally charged), he maintained he was merely acting in self-defense during what was a home invasion and violent attack. He similarly claimed self-defense in the shooting of Ord Thompson. Beyond a contemporaneous confession to the murder of Henry Lewis, Griffith generally denied any responsibility for his killing, as well. He steadfastly denied any role in the murder of Ira Roush.

In 1969, a book was published by Moundsville native Davis Grubb titled *Fools' Parade*, inspired in part by Holly Griffith's prison career. The book was made into a movie by the same title in 1971. [See "When Hollywood Came to Moundsville: Filming Davis Grubb's *Fools' Parade*," by Camilla Bunting; Summer 1995.]

William Holly Griffith died in Moundsville on July 11, 1971, at the age of 78. He was buried at the penitentiary's Whitegate Cemetery on Tom's Run, just outside the Moundsville city limits. The final entry on his inmate record card read simply, "Discharged by Death 7-11-71."

H.R. COGAR is a native of Gassaway. He served as a military policeman in the U.S. Army from 1972-1979, when he returned to West Virginia to work as a criminal investigator for the state tax department. H.R. has worked for the legislature's commission on special investigations since 1992. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



William Holly Griffith's final resting place at Whitegate Cemetery in Moundsville. Photograph by H.R. Cogar.

The Memorial Arch in Huntington was built in the 1920's to honor local veterans of World War I. All photographs taken in 1980 by Rodney Collins, courtesy of the State Historic Preservation Office.

By Joseph Platania

Huntington's Memorial Arch

The Memorial Arch has stood at the east entrance to Huntington's Memorial Park for more than 80 years. It is so iconic that people tend to forget it almost slipped into obscurity before being revitalized and rededicated in 1980.

1924 architectural drawing of the arch, by Meanor & Handloser, courtesy of the State Historic Preservation Office.

The arch was built to honor Huntington and Cabell County soldiers who served in World War I, 91 of whom did not live to return home from the war. The building of the Memorial Arch was a community project that began with the planning of Huntington's park system in 1921, continued through the laying of the cornerstone in 1924, and culminated with the memorial's dedication in 1929

The memorial is a peaceful place where people can go to think, enjoy the nearby park, express their patriotism or their concern during a national crisis, or to meet veterans from bygone wars. The memorial's message of not forgetting those Cabell County soldiers who fought and died in World War I is hard to miss in the clean lines of the impressive monument. Inside the arch, there is a bronze plaque bearing the names of the 91 casualties.

The triumphal arch stands at the intersection of Memorial Boulevard and 11th Avenue West in Huntington. An example of Neo-Classical Revival design, the arch is a stylized and scaled-down replica of the famous Arc de Triomphe in Paris, France. Huntington's arch stands 42 feet high, is 34 feet wide, and nine feet deep. The keystone of the arch is 19 feet and six inches from the ground. The eastern façade of the arch carries a bas-relief image of an American eagle, the seal of West Virginia, a facsimile of a service button of a discharged soldier, and other decorations. Field artillery pieces from the World War battlefields once

stood in a grass-covered plaza directly in front of the arch, although those vintage artillery pieces long ago disappeared from the grounds around the arch.

The idea of honoring Cabell County's fallen World War I soldiers with a memorial originated with George S. Wallace, a Huntington attorney and military officer who served in both the Spanish-American War and in World War I. The arch was meant to complement efforts in the early 1920's to construct a Memorial Boulevard going through the park and along Fourpole Creek.

Newspaper accounts place the initial cost of the arch in the neighborhood of $40,000. In order to raise money for construction, performers were brought to Huntington by the memorial association to present benefit concerts. It took the memorial association almost 10 years to raise the money; much of the work and materials were donated. The cement for the foundation was donated by Huntington companies and individuals. The reinforcing steel was a gift of the city's West Virginia Rail Company. The cost of labor for the excavation and foundation work was paid by the Huntington Real Estate Board. A brick company in Portsmouth, Ohio, donated 50,000 paving bricks to the memorial association that were used for the construction of the arch's interior.

The inscription on the east-facing attic reads: "To the glory of God and to the honor of the men of Cabell County who served faithfully in the Great War."

The responsibility for the supervision of the arch's construction was entrusted to Thomas Gracie, a stonecutter and founder of Gracie Stone & Monument Company in Huntington. Mr. Gracie was a native of Glasgow, Scotland, who came to Huntington in 1912 to help build a church and decided to stay.

The excavation and foundation work were done in 1921. Ceremonies marking the cornerstone laying were held on Armistice Day, November 11, 1924. Funding shortages caused construction to stop and start several times over the next few years. At last, in the fall of 1929, work on the monument was completed. The ceremony of dedication of the Memorial Arch was held on November 11, 1929 All Huntington schools, Marshall College, municipal offices, banks, and some places of business were closed for the hour of the ceremony Before the dedication there was a parade, described in a front-page newspaper story·

"Flanked on either side of the street by thousands of people, with heads bared for the passage of the national colors, a huge Armistice Day parade, more than a mile long, replete in martial splendor, led to what was probably Huntington's greatest patriotic crowd to Memorial Park, where Cabell County's Memorial Arch, a tribute to the World War dead, was dedicated."

At the site, a bugler played "Taps" at 11 a.m., the hour when the armistice was signed outside Paris, ending World War I. This also was the hour when the arch was unveiled. Robert L. Archer, president of the Cabell County War Memorial Association, presided at the ceremony. The dedication address was given by U.S. Senator Guy D. Goff. The unveiling was done by William Wallace and George S. Wallace, Jr.

A special choir, recruited from the city's churches, sang at the dedication. Indicative of the new age of mass communications, the unveiling and the dedication service were broadcast live by Huntington's new radio station, WSAZ, in a special Armistice Day program. [See "WSAZ Radio: 'The Worst Station from A to Z,'" by Corley F Dennison; Winter 2001.]

Throughout the 1930's and '40's, classes of schoolchildren visited the memorial, and it was the center of much public attention. However, with the outbreak of World War II and, later, wars in Korea and Vietnam, the arch stood almost unnoticed as a monument from a bygone era.

In 1980, Huntington's Board of Park Commissioners authorized new landscaping of the grounds around the

arch and installed floodlights. On special occasions, a 20-by-15-foot American flag, specifically tailored to the arch at a cost of $7,000, is hung between its supportive columns. The revitalization of this landmark was supervised by parks director James L. McClelland.

The renewed interest in the Memorial Arch led to a rededication and lighting ceremony on July 3, 1980. More than a thousand people attended the ceremony, including at least eight World War I veterans from the region, their families, and friends. The arch was rededicated by then-Governor Jay Rockefeller. In April 1981, the Memorial Arch was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

During the Persian Gulf War, which ran from the last week in January until April 1, 1991, the huge American flag flew day and night inside the arch in support of U.S. troops. During this period of national crisis, a group of employees from the nearby former Owens-Illinois glass plant tied yellow ribbons to each of the 91 trees in Memorial Park — trees dedicated to the Cabell County soldiers who died in World War I. The employees then held a ceremony at the arch in support of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf.

In recent years, the Memorial Arch has become a gathering place for people in times of national crisis, as well as on patriotic holidays, such as Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

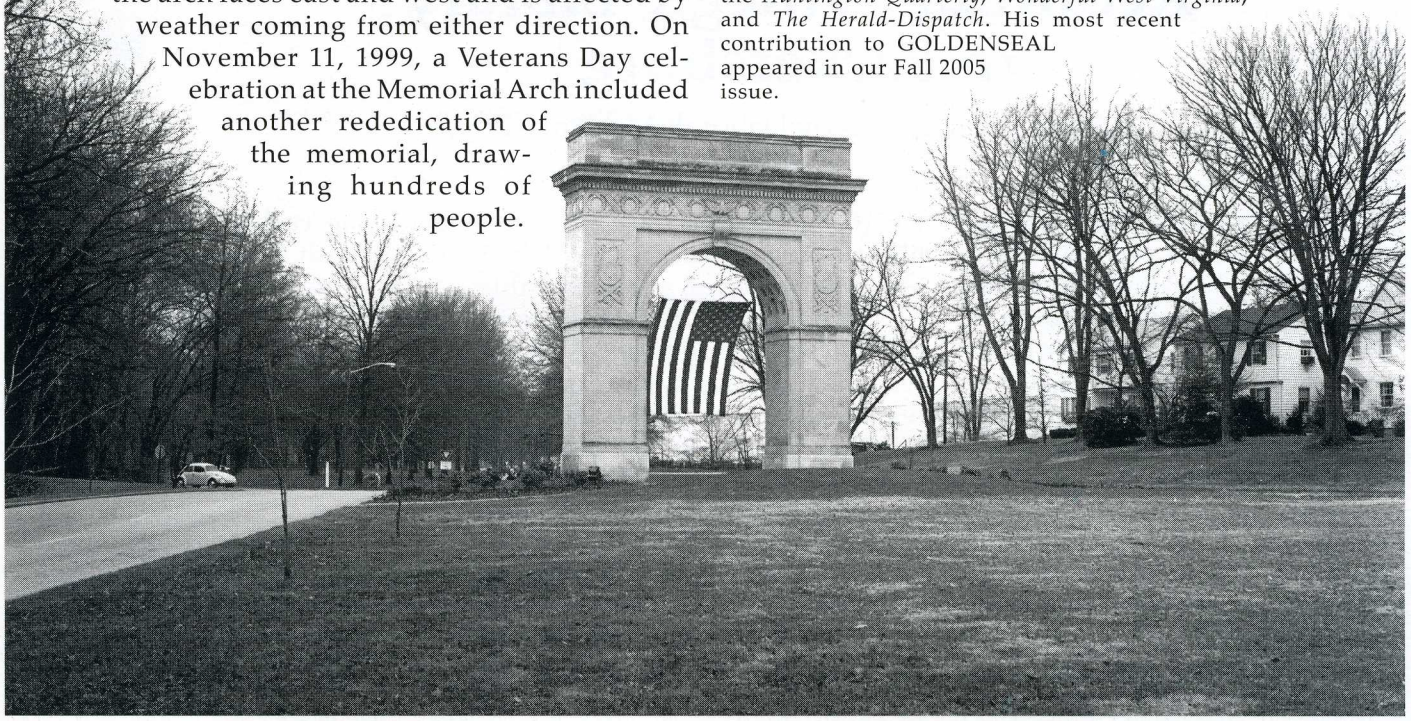
Park district director Jim McClelland states that in 1999, the Memorial Arch underwent an extensive rehabilitation due to damage from water seepage and from wind and weather, pointing out that the arch faces east and west and is affected by weather coming from either direction. On November 11, 1999, a Veterans Day celebration at the Memorial Arch included another rededication of the memorial, drawing hundreds of people.

Major events are held at the arch on Memorial Day and Veterans Day, although with the park district's permission, the Huntington police department and the fire department have hosted programs at the arch at other times, as well. In the past, various service organizations such as the American Legion, VFW, and the DAV held their programs at local cemeteries. As the number of World War II and Korean War vets has declined, however, these local service organizations are now under the umbrella of the Veterans Committee for Civic Improvement, which holds its Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs at the Memorial Arch. Now, classes of schoolchildren once again visit the arch as they did in the 1930's and '40's.

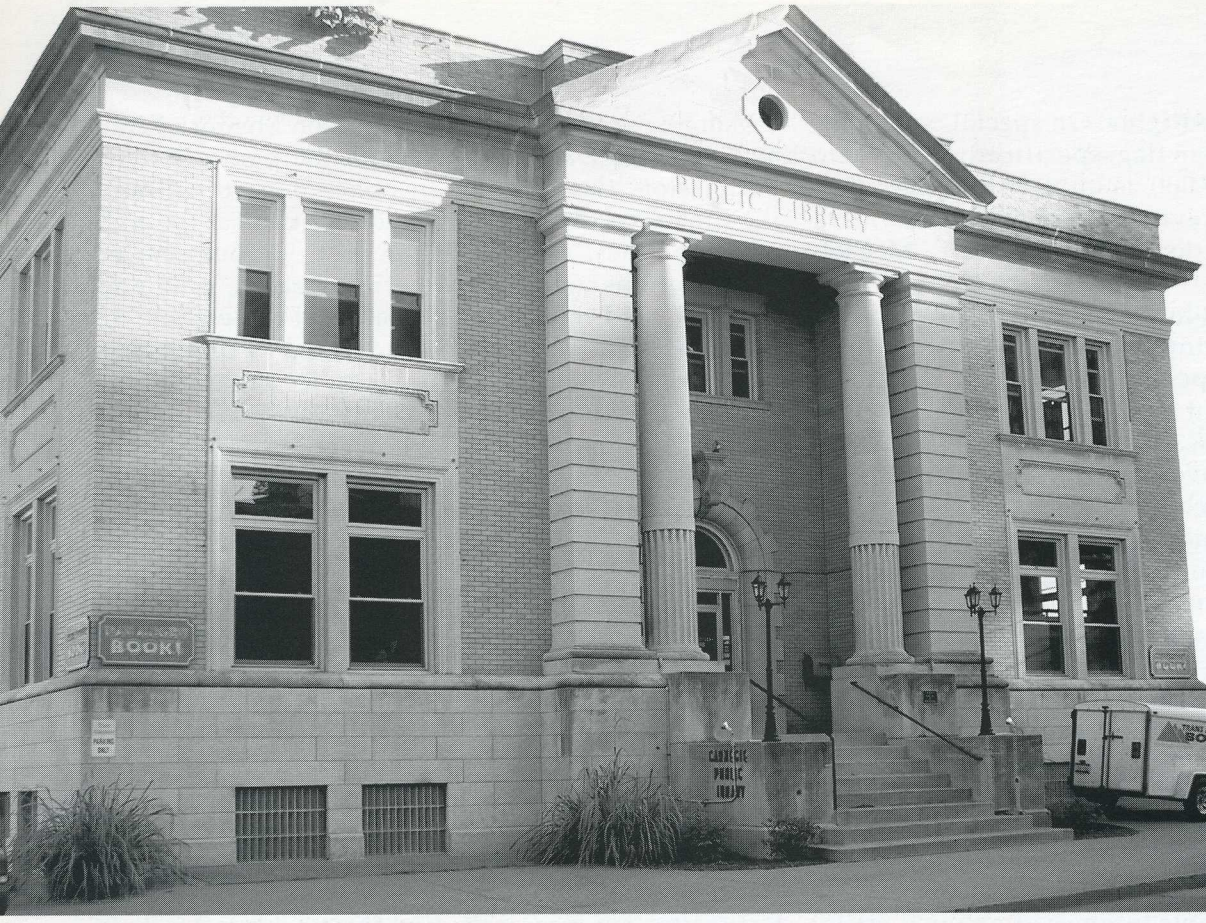
On November 17, 2000, a time capsule containing local historical items was buried at the Memorial Arch. In a newspaper article, Rick Bohnke, the chairman of the Veterans Committee for Civic Improvement, states that the capsule, donated by Steel of West Virginia, will be opened on Veterans Day 2050. Bohnke explains that the veterans committee collected items for about two years. The idea behind the capsule was for people and businesses to donate items for a fee, with the proceeds going to upgrade the arch.

Today, all of but one of West Virginia's World War I veterans are deceased, but their service to their country on foreign soil will never be forgotten as long as the Memorial Arch stands at the gateway to Memorial Park.

JOSEPH PLATANIA is a lifelong resident of Huntington. He received a master's degree in political science from Marshall University in 1968. Joseph is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in the *Huntington Quarterly, Wonderful West Virginia,* and *The Herald-Dispatch*. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2005 issue.

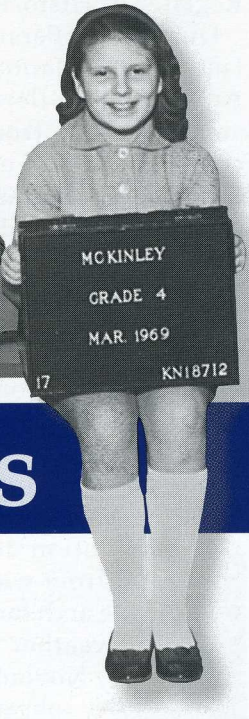


Bounded by Memorial Boulevard to the south and 11th Avenue to the north, the Memorial Arch stands at the east entrance to Huntington's Memorial Park.



Left: The Carnegie Library building in Parkersburg. Built in 1905, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Below: Author Deborah McHenry (Ross), at about the time of her story. Photographer unknown.



A Wonderland of Books

Recalling Carnegie Library in Parkersburg

Text and photographs by Deborah McHenry Ross

On a recent trip to Parkersburg, I visited the site of the old Carnegie Library, located downtown at 725 Green Street. The building now houses Trans Allegheny Books and is on the National Register of Historic Places. As I entered the venerable structure, I was immediately transported back in time, and memories of my first trip to the library came flooding back to me.

It was a warm spring day. My mother and I walked from our apartment on Lynn Street to downtown Parkersburg to run errands. I was taken along with the promise of a cold drink at the soda fountain of Murphy's and a trip to the library, where I would be given my first library card. The fact that I had been taken out of school for this expedition only added to the holiday atmosphere of the day. I do not remember the soda treat, but I do remember entering the doors of Carnegie Library for the first time. Just walking up the steps to the great front doors gave me the thrill of entering a place of importance.

Upon entering the building from the bright sunshine, my eyes adjusted to the interior lighting to reveal massive stacks of books. I paused, hardly able to believe that this many books could exist in one place. Tall wooden shelves rose high above me, each one filled from end to end with volume after volume.

As I turned in a circle to take it all in, I realized there was not just one room of books, but several. To my left and my right, additional rooms held even more stacks of books, plus tables and chairs and work areas. The main hall of the library also housed the librarian's checkout station. This rectangular, wooden station was almost frightening to my nine-year-old senses.

Holding tightly to my mother's hand, I marched forward to the desk. I whispered to the librarian that I would like to get a library card. In due time, I was writing my

signature on my very first library card. It was tan, stiff, and paper thin, but to my mind it was gold. The librarian gave me the speech that she had surely given to hundreds of other children my age about the responsibility of having a library card.

The words swirled around me, and I nodded dutifully as I learned about due dates, checkout limits, and fines for late books. Being a conscientious child, the responsibility weighed heavily on me as I accepted the card and the obligations that came with its ownership. It is a responsibility that to this day I take very seriously.

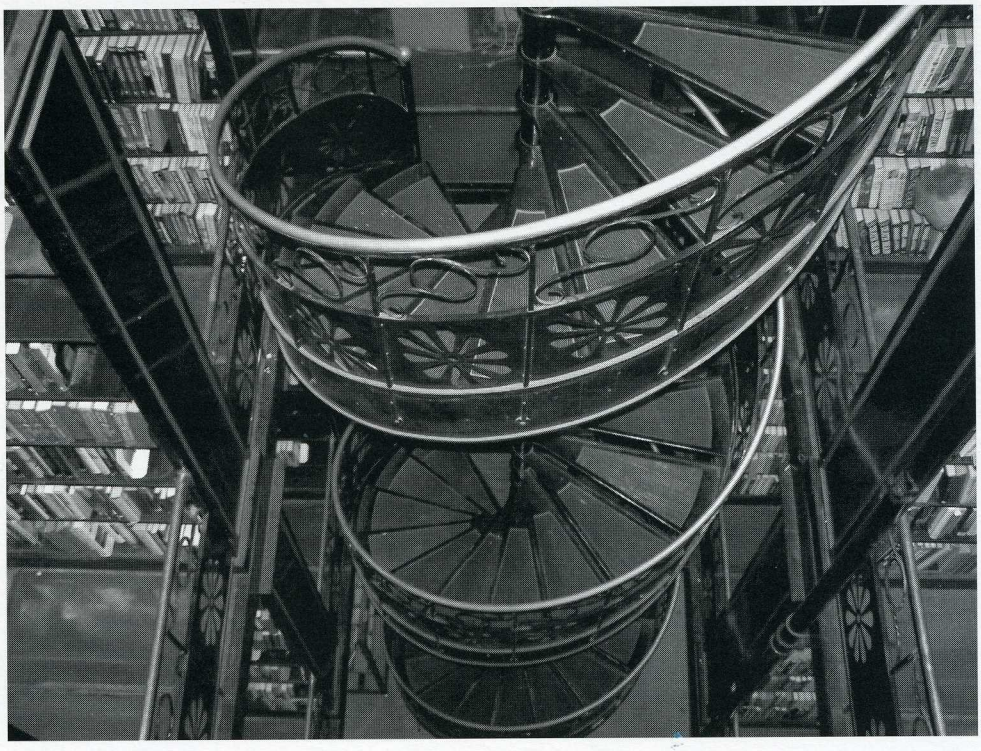
Having completed the requirements for card ownership, I was able to begin browsing. To my delight, I discovered an enormous wrought-iron spiral staircase rising up through three floors of the library. Each metal rung took me higher and higher in this wonderland of books. Branching off from each flight of the spiral staircase was a floor of bookshelves, resting on glass-tile flooring with stained-glass windows on the wall. I quickly learned that searching for just the right book was not only an intellectual treat but also a visual treat, due to the beautiful design of the library. The aroma of polished wood mixed with the scent of books both old and new to create a fragrance that still fills me with pleasure.

I soon discovered the children's book room and reveled in the choices that were available. Nancy Drew, Trixie Beldon, and Cherry Ames were all on the shelf just waiting to be picked up and read. I began a friendship that day with characters whose adventures would entertain me for years to come. Carefully removing the cards from the back pockets of the books, I neatly inscribed my name and handed the cards to the librarian. Her movements were quick and practiced as she stamped each card and book with the due date, filed the cards alphabetically, and handed me the stack of books, primly reminding me, once more, of the due date. Little did I realize as I staggered from the checkout desk with my treasures that I had begun a lifelong friendship with the written word. My steps were a little lighter as I walked alongside my mother on our way back home that day. I felt an enthusiasm for reading that I had not previously experienced.

That same feeling of enthusiasm added to my nostalgia during my return trip to the old library, built in 1905. Trans Allegheny Books has kept the original façade and interior of the library much as it used to be. The polished wood, spiral staircase, glass floors, stained-glass windows, and old bookshelves all remain. I remember feeling a sense of loss when the old library was closed back in the 1970's. For many years, the old library sat vacant, a sad fate for such a grand building.

I was glad to see that books once more adorn the shelves and visitors can once again browse among the shelves for literary treasures.

Modern libraries offer many amenities that former visitors to the Carnegie Library would not recognize. Computer access, music CD's, videos, books on tape, computerized checkout systems, and home access are all services that 21st-century library patrons, myself among them, have come to expect. None of these amenities seemed important, however, as I climbed the spiral staircase, inhaled the heady scent of polished wood and book leather, and remembered once more the thrill of being a child visiting the library for the very first time.



This spiral staircase is one of the many unique architectural features of the old library building still intact on Green Street in Parkersburg.

Unfortunately, Trans Allegheny Books in Parkersburg closed its doors last June. Plans for the facility are uncertain as of press time. —ed.

DEBORAH McHENRY ROSS was born and raised in Parkersburg. She holds a master's degree in education from Western Carolina University and has taught in North Carolina for more than 25 years. Her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 2007 issue.

By Alisa Stapler

Gardening and Gathering

Wanda Tucker Jarrell of Winifrede, Kanawha County, locates edible greens in the woods near her home. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

A Visit with Wanda Tucker Jarrell of Winifrede

I recently had the opportunity to go green picking with my great-aunt Wanda Jarrell of Winifrede, Kanawha County. At age 83, she is a walking encyclopedia of knowledge about nature and plant life. What I call weeds, she can point to, tell me their names, and describe what they are good for.

Though not as spry as she once was, Wanda stoops to gather some fresh wild lettuce and wild chives as we walk. She tells me that she not only enjoys being outside and getting fresh air, she really likes eating fresh greens and feels that she is healthier for eating them. She says the lettuce at the store does not taste as good and has fewer vitamins and minerals than do fresh wild greens.

After we gathered a few more greens, we went in and she quickly fried some bacon and cleaned the greens. She had me chop them, and she crumbled the bacon on top of the greens. She then took a boiled egg from her refrigerator, thinly sliced it, and put it in the salad. She told me that the secret to a good dressing for a wilted green salad was to add a little sugar to the white vinegar and bacon grease. Once our dressing mixture was complete, she poured it over the salad of greens while it was still hot. The greens wilted a bit, and she served us up two large plates.

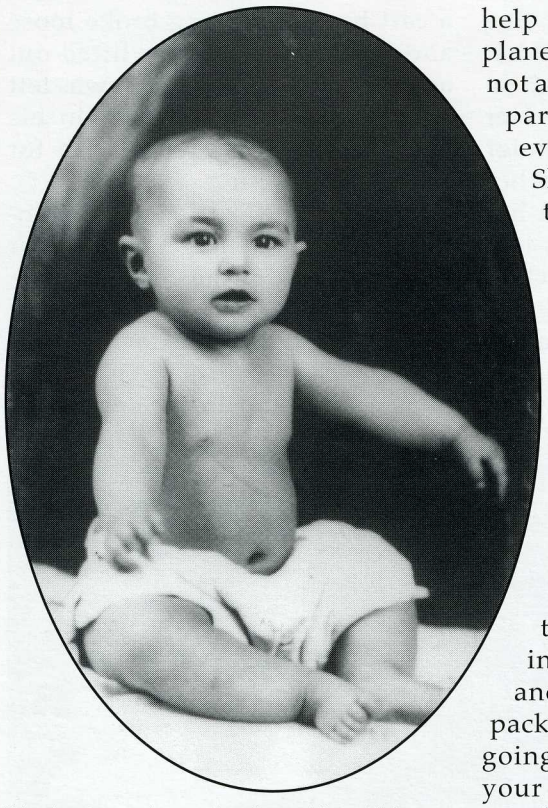
The salad was good, to my surprise. The wild greens had a stronger flavor than that of lettuces bought at the store. I was not sure I would like the bacon grease, but it was not too heavy and the mixture of flavors was good. Wanda said we just needed cornbread and we would have been set. She said, "Oh well, next time you come we will fix fried potatoes and cornbread, and we will pick greens to cook."

I am looking forward to that. I'm also looking forward to learning how to survive off the land, like Wanda, so I can pass this down to my daughter.

Wanda Tucker Jarrell was born July 21, 1927, the fourth child of Charles and Mabel Tucker. She grew up on Lick Branch Road, what is now South Ruffner Hollow, on the outskirts of Charleston. Her father was an armature winder for Charleston Electric, while her mother tended to Wanda and her four siblings. Charles Tucker had started college, but, due to lack of funds, he had to quit school and go to work in the mines at the age of 16. While working in the mines, his back was severely injured when a cart he was loading broke loose and struck him. He was lifted out and recovered at home but was left with a bad limp and pain in his back, which he suffered with for the rest of his life.

Although she had no formal training, Wanda remembers her mother being a nurse for the entire hollow, aiding in births, tending to the sick, and even assisting the doctor when he made house calls. Mabel Tucker knew home remedies to cure many

Wanda prepares to serve a wilted greens salad, made from locally gathered ingredients. Photograph by Tyler Evert.



Wanda at age six months. One of five children in her family, she grew up on the outskirts of Charleston.

common ailments like colds and bursitis, often making teas from herbs or roots gathered from the mountains. Wanda remembers a time when one of the family's hens was suffering and was about to die. Her mother made an incision in the chicken's neck and took out a shiny piece of glass. She then used a piece of horse's tail hair to sew the chicken up, and it was fine.

Wanda suffered from a hearing loss while growing up. It got progressively worse until, at the age of 14, she could not hear at all. She had a close relationship with her parents, especially her father. She was his helpmate, always fetching things for him due to his limp. Her siblings and other children picked on her and made fun of her because of her hearing problem. It became so severe that she was taken to a doctor in Charleston who suggested she have her tonsils removed. She had the surgery at Charleston General, but it did not fix her hearing problem.

Her mother had heard it might help for Wanda to go on an airplane ride. At the time there was not an airport in Charleston, so her parents drove her to Huntington every Saturday for three months. She went up in a small plane that she compared to a "Crackerjack box." Wanda was terrified of it and begged her mother to please not make her do it again, but they were desperate for a cure for her hearing loss and told her she must continue for the three months.

Once they realized that nothing they tried was going to fix her hearing problem, her parents took her downtown to try a hearing aid. Hearing aids at the time were big and clunky, having a big battery pack strapped to your leg and wires going up to a large microphone on your chest. Wanda was reluctant to try the apparatus because of its size and the stigma attached to it. Once they put it on her, however, she remembers clearly hearing the words "*Charleston Daily Mail*." She asked who was saying that. When they showed her the paper boy on the corner down below selling papers, she remembers being amazed and knew she had to have one.

Even though Wanda's family lived in what was considered Charleston, they kept chickens and had a hillside garden, growing potatoes, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, peppers, squash, corn, and beans. With five children to feed, Wanda's mother was always resourceful, taking the children with her into the mountains to gather wild lettuce, Shawnee, poke, mustard, and many other types of plants, which she would use to make a salad. The greens that grew in the mountains were the tenderest in the early spring, when the garden was just being put in. After a long winter of eating canned foods, they were a welcome treat.

Wanda helped her mother can their bounty from their garden, which would sustain the family for the winter. Often her family would have deer, pork, chicken, frog legs, fish, or turtle as meat with their meals. But many times they did not have a meat. Wanda didn't think what they ate was different or unusual. This is what all the families in her hollow had to eat, she says.

She loved going into the moun-

Wanda and Kermel Jarrell at their first wedding in 1948. The pair later divorced and remarried. Their second marriage lasted 55 years, until Kermel's death in 2003.

tains with her mother and picking the wild greens. She became able to quickly identify many types of edible wild foods growing in the mountains, like mushrooms, many types of berries, what roots make tea, and many plants that can be used as greens.

Wanda attended school, but not Charleston-area schools. She and the others up her hollow felt like outcasts; although they lived in what was considered Charleston, they did not live like city folk. For a few years the people up Lick Branch Road paid a small fee — which was a big sacrifice — to have a bus come and take their children to South Charleston schools, because they fit in better there. The fee was dropped after a few years, because they had a full busload of students from the hollows of Charleston who wanted to attend South Charleston schools.

Wanda did well in school and was even double-promoted once. She graduated at 16 and went to work as a florist near her home. The flower shop she worked at was near what is now the University of Charleston, so she was able to walk to work.

At the age of 19, she met and soon married Kermel Jarrell, nine years her senior. He was handsome and charming but different from the boys she was used to dating from the sock hops and skating rink. Kermel had worked on the barges that plied the Kanawha River, maneuvering them through the locks and dams. Wanda, still very close to her parents, requested that they live at her parents' house.

Their first marriage was short-lived, and Wanda looks back and says living at home was a mistake. She says that neither changed their ways like a married couple should. She still liked roller-skating, and he went out with his buddies. After a year, Kermel told her if she went skating that Friday night then he was going to get a divorce. Well, she went skating. That Monday, they both went to a lawyer and paid their $50 each and got divorced. She says the funny thing is they still dated after their divorce. They stayed divorced one year. She says she got married in pink the first time; you know if you get married in pink your marriage will stink. When they decided to remarry the following year, she wore a blue dress. She says if you get married in blue your marriage will be true. The saying must have some truth, because they were married 55 years until Kermel's death in 2003.

After they married for the second time, they had their own home and no longer lived with her parents, although she stayed very close to them until their deaths. Married life on their own was not always easy, Wanda says. Kermel became a boilermaker, which meant that they often had to travel and live in a pull-behind trailer when he would have to travel out of state for work. Many times there was no work to be had.

During these times, Wanda was able to turn to the survival lessons learned from her mother. Kermel had a plot of land in Winifrede Hollow, given to him by his father. They put a mobile home on the land and put in a garden almost an acre big, growing corn, tomatoes, potatoes, beets, squash, beans, peppers, onions, and any other seeds they could get their hands on. Wanda went to the mountains, or even her front yard, and gathered wild greens and either cooked or ate the greens

Kermel working in the Jarrells' huge garden in 1990. For many years, Wanda and Kermel raised plenty to eat, plenty to can, and plenty to give away.

fresh, incorporating them into most of their meals. Wanda even canned greens when times were tight. Nothing went to waste in the garden. What they could not eat fresh they canned for the winter. Wanda even made what she called the "end of the garden" — a combination of all the leftovers in the garden, which she would make into a relish that they ate with beans. Many times, they used their surplus of garden foods to trade or help their neighbors. Wanda and Kermel were well-liked up and down the hollow

They learned to make do. Wanda remembers one time Kermel wanted wine, so he went blackberry picking up in the mountains and made his own blackberry wine. She remembers another time that Kermel came home with two turtles as huge as washtubs in the back of the pickup truck. She says those things were meaner than snakes, but she made soup and, boy, was it a lot of soup! She says they had turtle soup in the freezer for what seemed like forever.

Many times, if they needed something done that Kermel did not know how to do or needed help to do, such as fixing the car or help putting in a fence, they either traded garden food or labor Wanda says they never did go without. They were always able to have what they needed either from the garden or the mountains. When she did have to go to the store, it was for very little coffee, flour, milk, and a few other staples, but never much Since Kermel would go sometimes two years without a job, they paid for what they bought with cash, and would put aside enough in savings to get by in the lean times. Most of what they paid for in cash was utilities, though not water. Wanda points out that Kermel dug the only well up Winifrede Hollow that never went dry.

Wanda and Kermel kept gardening and gathering the bounty from their surrounding mountains until Kermel was well into his 80's. Wanda fell and broke her hip while out gathering greens a few years back. She slipped and fell high on the mountain, where the best greens are found. She is a tough one, though. She managed to stagger home and did not go to the hospital until the next day. When she walked into the hospital, the nurses were amazed that she was walking. She had hip replacement surgery and within weeks was up and about, back out picking greens, just on the level this time.

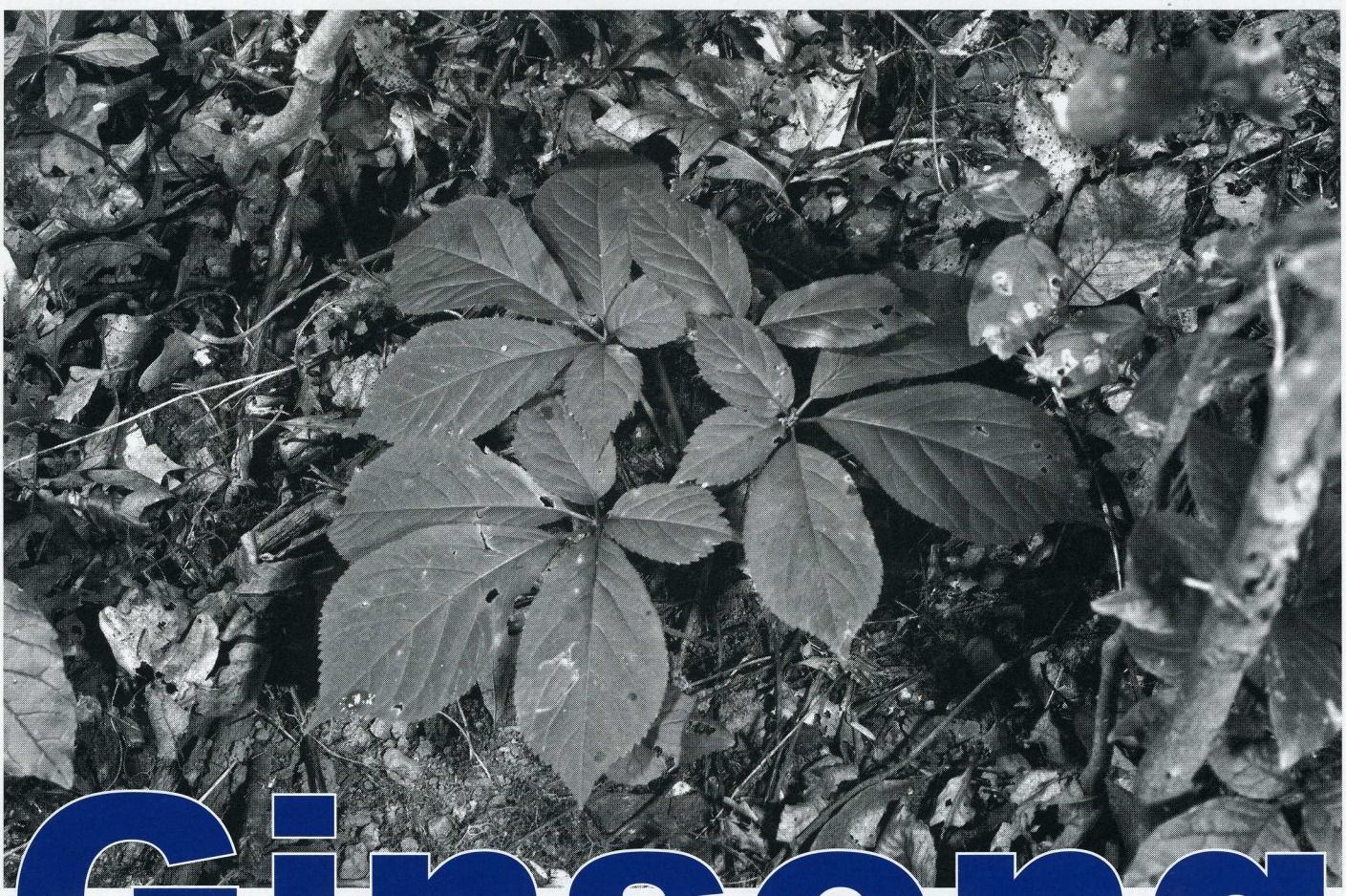
Kermel passed away in 2003, and that was the end of the garden. Wanda sold the garden spot to a family that has built a house on the property. Wanda is pleased with the family, saying the boy that bought it is resourceful and loves the mountains, hunting, or going up the mountain to gather mushrooms or ginseng. She says Kermel would have liked him.

She still has an acre of property, where her home sits. She enjoys walking the yard with her two little dogs. She and Kermel could not have children of their own and were unable to adopt due to Kermel's work, which was not constant. So they always had dogs and even once had a talking mynah bird. She enjoys watching the dogs play, and they are good company for her. She has lived in the same place for over 50 years and knows almost everyone in the hollow. She has no plans on ever leaving. This is her home.

ALISA STAPLER is from Charleston. She is currently a senior at West Virginia State University, pursuing a degree in education. She wrote this article as a West Virginia history class assignment for Dr. Stuart McGehee. This is Alisa's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Wanda still enjoys gathering and preparing wild greens and serving them to guests. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

To the trained eye, ginseng is not difficult to spot. "You can find this plant almost anyplace, if you look long and hard enough," Ben Copenhaver says.



Ginseng

Digging for Treasure in Brooke County

By Ben Copenhaver

Photographs by Michael Keller

I was born in the little village of Colliers, located in Brooke County, in the middle of West Virginia's Northern Panhandle. The village lies in a big hollow along Harmon Creek, which flows west from the Pennsylvania line and empties into the Ohio River. Also running through the small village is a four-track railroad.

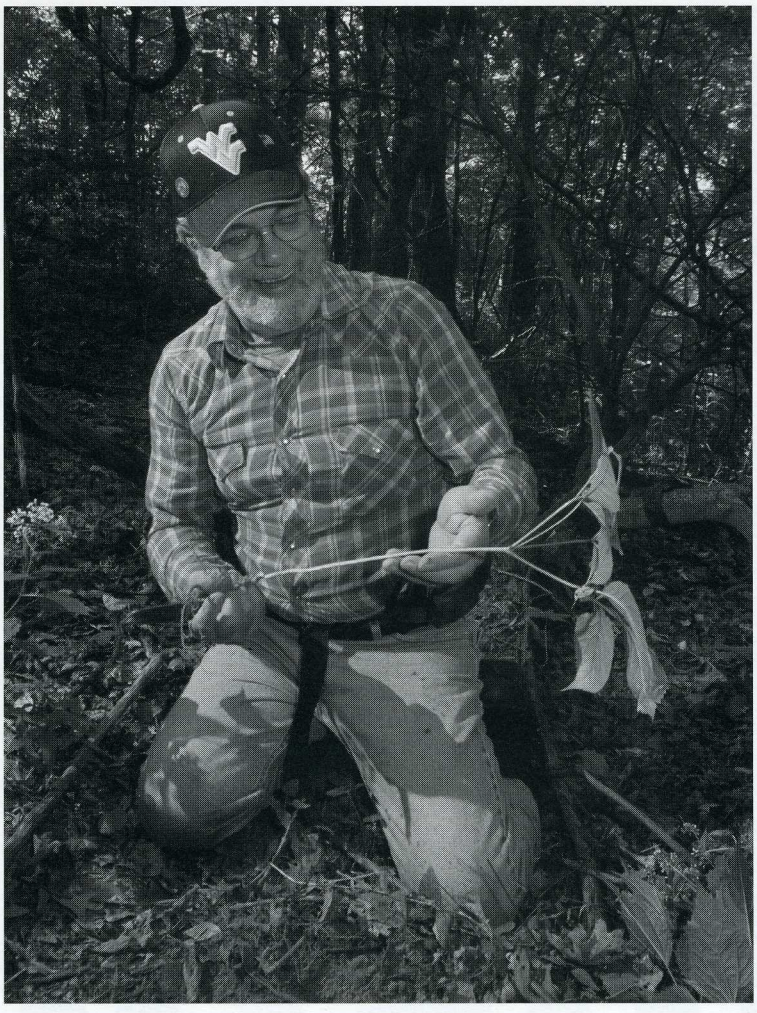
Colliers was the best place a young boy could grow up. The school was within walking distance, and the stores provided just about everything a family could need. Surrounding Colliers were the hills and hollows where, during my younger years, I would wander with my boyhood friends and sometimes go off on my own to hunt and trap. Back then, ginseng was not a part of my life. In fact, it wasn't until the ripe old age of 50 that I was introduced to the beautiful, majestic ginseng.

My close friend, Tom McPeek, and I were relaxing at his house one August day, when Tom started talking about his grandfather and how he would raise

money for his family by digging and selling ginseng and yellow-root — the old-timers' name for goldenseal. [See "In Search of the Wild Goldenseal," by Marion Harless, Fall 1999] He piqued my interest, and we decided to hunt for the seng the next day.

I picked up Tom and some friends, and we headed up to Boy Scout Hollow to try our luck. We hunted our way to the top of the left-hand side of the hollow, all the while searching for a plant that I had never seen before. As we neared the head of the hollow, I came to an outcropping of rock. I looked down beside the rock and saw a plant. I hollered to Tom to come verify what I had found. He did, and it was at that moment I had found my first ginseng. It was a pretty plant with what Tom called three "prongs" growing from the main stalk. Growing out from the middle of the main stalk was another stem, and on this stem was a pod of bright red berries. Tom immediately told me to pick the berries and plant them nearby He said that this was the law, and the penalties for breaking the law for digging seng outside of season was a fine and/or stiff jail time. Who would have thought, just for a plant? At that time, ginseng season opened on the 15th of August and closed in November.

The following day, I talked to Tom about our adventure in the woods, and he told me to come to his house as he had something for me. To my surprise, he had forged a ginseng mattock for me. Unbeknownst to me, Tom had a small home forge that he had fired up. He had taken some type of hammer and made a really nice mattock for me. I went to the woods and found a small hickory sapling, took it home, cut it to size, and made the handle for the mattock. It was about three feet long. I was now ready to go senging.



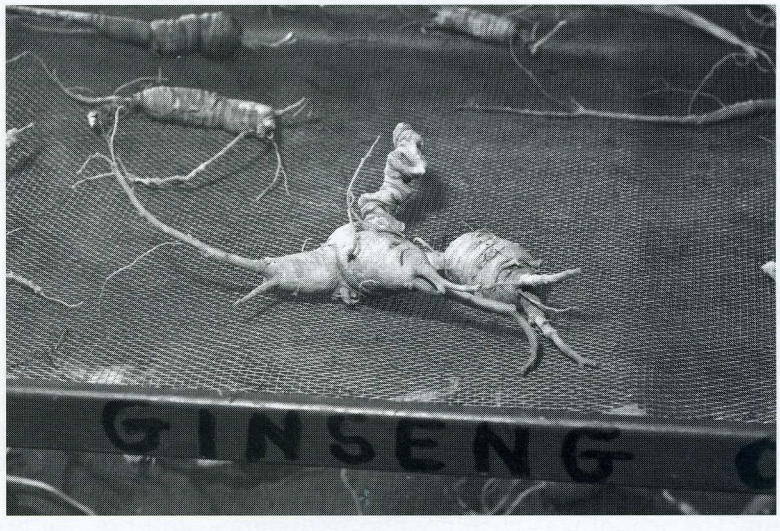
Ben Copenhaver with ginseng in Brooke County.

A few days later, Tom and I headed up to Police Lodge Hollow. We looked and looked and finally found a few three-prongs that we could dig. While I dug, Tom searched the flat for more seng. I finished digging, and we headed out of the woods. We had just about reached the truck when I realized something. I had left my mattock back in the woods.

The next day, we headed back into the hollow to find my mattock, but we never did. I was really upset. To think, it only took me two days to lose this prized tool that my friend had made for me!

A few days later, I got a call from Tom asking me to come down to his place. When I got there, guess what he handed me. Yep, a new mattock! I was happier than a "pig in mud," as they say. He had taken a mason hammer and forged me another one. Eighteen years later, I still use this same mattock. It was made so well that there is not one nick in the digging blade. What a great job he did!

Tom had also made a mattock for my grandson



Ginseng root drying on racks at Ben's home in Colliers.

Brenton, which the little fellow used until he moved from West Virginia. I'm looking at it right now as I write this story, hanging on the wall, bringing to mind the good memories of when we would go senging together. Great times!

Over the years, I have roamed the hills of Brooke County searching for seng. In the spring and summer months, I hunt for it. When I find it, I write in a book where it is located. Once season comes in, I return to those spots and dig the legal plants. In the early years, I used to mark the seng locations with orange tape, but I soon found out that wasn't a good idea. I would return during the season and find someone had already come along and dug it up. We sengers don't own the plants, but I guess I was naïve enough to believe that everyone else would honor my flags. Not so. Now I rely on my book and my memory. This works pretty good for me.

The woods around Colliers have changed a lot over the years, from the strip mining and the timbering. Where there once had been hardwood grôves with hardly any underbrush, now there is nothing but berry bushes, spice bushes, and filth. Being a lifelong mountaineer, I really dislike the strip mining and timbering, but I understand their necessity

Tom tells me that, according to his grandfather and other old-timers, ginseng would only grow in certain places and only on certain sides of a hill, such as the north side. Over the years, however, I have found seng on all sides of the hills, in semi-open fields, in briar patches, and in fallen-down treetops. I can even take you to an abandoned strip mine tailings pile, and right on the side of the tailing is seng growing. Not the ideal soil, but even though the land has been stripped and the woods have been timbered, the seng is hardy enough to endure. It's still there, growing and dropping its seeds, and producing small seng. You can find this plant almost anyplace, if you look hard and long enough. I had searched filth, strip mine areas, and among abnormal landscapes. A nice patch of ginseng will just keep on thriving where it shouldn't even be able to grow

I recently went in search of seng on this farm that had been strip-mined years ago. I was walking between what had been old pastures and strip pits. At the head of this little hollow, not a deep ravine hollow but a gradual sloping area, I came across a three-prong. I kept searching, and before the rain could halt my efforts, I had found over 70 ginseng plants, with 10 four-prongs in the bunch. Three-prongs are the norm for ginseng; four-prongs are very hard to find.

A few years ago, the state of West Virginia revised the laws pertaining to ginseng. The digging season now doesn't come in until September 1 each year. The plant must still have three prongs and be five years of age. I totally agree with these changes and support them. The best change I feel is the new opening date. In the past, with the season beginning in August, the berries could be red and ripe in the southern counties, but in the northern counties a lot of the berries would still be green. Then when certain diggers went out on opening day, it was pretty hard for them not to dig a nice three- or four-prong even though the berries weren't ripe.

Most of the diggers nowadays are good, conservation-minded individuals who know that digging ginseng will not make them rich, but realize it for what it is — a wonderful hobby to enjoy, as well as a way of helping to preserve this special plant and avoid it becoming extinct or too rare to find. Ginseng has no other way to propagate but from its berries. By the time the birds, chipmunks, and other forest dwellers get their share, the plant needs help. The digger is the key to this propagation.

Since the first time that I saw the majestic American ginseng, I have known that it was something special. The beautiful plant with the stem of red berries, some bigger than golf balls, make me feel that I'm looking upon one of West Virginia's outdoor wonders — the plant that I feel is the most regal in nature.

Berries, bright red when ripe, bear the seeds of the ginseng plant.

BEN COPENHAVER is a native of Colliers and a graduate of Follansbee High School. A U.S. Army veteran, Ben retired from Weirton Steel in 1997 He is an avid coon hunter and has written articles for *American Cooner* magazine. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MICHAEL KELLER was director of photographic services for the West Virginia Division of Culture and History for more than 20 years. He currently works for the West Virginia Humanities Council.

L.M. McNeil's store as it appeared in 2002. Photograph by June C. Jones. Now abandoned, this tiny store was once a hub of activity near Lansing, Fayette County.

L.M. McNeil's Store

By June C. Jones

It was never an architectural wonder, nor was it ever known to be a place of beauty. In its present state, it would be regarded as a "sight for sore eyes," but it once had its place in the sun. A grocery and hardware store located on Fayette Station Road in the New River Gorge, it was a gathering place, a watering hole, and a community hub for both old and young.

I first became aware of L.M. McNeil's store when we moved to Lansing, Fayette County, in about 1940. Mr. Marvin McNeil and his wife, Myrtle, known to everyone as Myrt and Mr. Mac, lived on the hill behind the tiny store. Mr. Mac was very kind to kids and frequently gave out penny candy or blow gum, which endeared him to us. He was also known to have a sharp eye for business and could squeeze a penny until it begged for mercy. Some regarded him as miserly.

Whatever else could be said about the McNeils, they were charismatic, and people loved to congregate at that little store. On warm summer evenings, local miners would go home, wash up, eat their dinner, and return to the store to shoot the breeze, smoke, and drink Royal Crown Cola or Nehi orange or grape sodas — there was definitely no alcohol allowed. There was no place to sit down, so the men would squat or sit on their haunches as they enjoyed a chat and smoke. At dusk, you could scarcely tell the soft glow of a cigarette from the lightning bugs.

In the wintertime, the little store was heated by a potbelly stove. It was warm and cozy inside, and the same old group congregated there. Mr. Mac sat on a stool behind the counter like a big frog. Always congenial to everyone, he had many friends. If you were hungry and wanted a sandwich, he would trot out the awfulest-looking knife you ever saw. It must have been a half-a-yard long and sliced the most delicate slices of whatever was on

hand, be it bologna, cheese, or another lunch meat. He always bought quality meat and sold it as cheaply as he could afford, so his customers kept coming back.

He also kept a supply of zinc tubs, water buckets, coal scuttles, brooms, and just about anything a body might need. In addition to these things, he kept fresh eggs, butter, and buttermilk, which he bought from local farmers. All this was long before my time, however, so I have no remembrance of these things.

At one time, he moved his business to Fayetteville, which had a greater population. He did not remain there too long for whatever reason, and he soon returned to Lansing and set up the store that I remember.

Store owner Lawrence Marvin "L.M." McNeil, standing at right with his wife, Myrtle. At left are Wallace and Annie Workman in this undated portrait. Photographer unknown.

I recall that Mr. Mac always sat behind the counter waiting for a customer. He sold school supplies, such as pencils, tablets, notebook paper, etc. Since it was on the way to school, kids frequently stopped in. My youngest sister was hired to sweep out the store each morning. She left home early in order to do her job and get to school on time. Mr. Mac was a severe asthmatic, and the tiniest bit of dust would send him into a violent fit of sneezing. My sister was paid a nickel a week for this job, which was not to be sneered at in those days. She kept her wages in a Prince Albert tobacco can, but when we did our spring cleaning, the can disappeared never to be seen again. So much for a school year's wages!

I remember a very frugal neighbor lady was visiting my mother one day. It seemed she was in need of a new broom. Apparently she had visited Mr. Mac's store, and she was fuming. I remember her exact words. "Evelyn, before I'd pay that man 50 cents for a broom, I'd sweep with a weed!" Since she lived on for many more years, we wondered if she conceded and parted with her 50 cents or did, in fact, use the weed. We children always remembered those words and enjoyed many laughs about them in later years.

There are many more tales to be told, but I will stop after the next one. It seems a family arrived about dusk to voice a complaint. This family was not known for their cleanliness nor for their high levels of education. People gave them a wide berth because they carried a shotgun, which they referred to as "The Man." They were not afraid to use it, and they were quick to anger. They arrived by mule and wagon, carrying torches, as was their custom.

The spokeslady stepped forward carrying a 25-pound sack of flour, which was partially used. This she plunked down in front of Mr. Mac and other customers. She shook it under his nose and proclaimed loudly, "This flour you sold me is musty and I want my money back!"

Mr. Mac tried to appease her by saying it was not outdated and that he would not sell any inferior goods. To which she retorted, "I know you'd say that, so I brought my own proof."

Then she reached into her armpit and brought forth a biscuit and held it under his nose saying, "Just take a bite of this, eat the whole thing."

Mr. Mac realized he had been had, so he refunded her money. She gave him a toothless grin, mounted the wagon, and the entourage set off for the holler.

That little store served many purposes over the years, including a stint as the post office. It was more of a lean-to than a place of business. Now it is empty and probably will never be used again. The McNeils' house still stands on the hill behind the store. I am not sure anyone lives there now. The McNeils have long since gone to their reward. They leave behind a good name and many pleasant memories of what it was to live in the 1930's and '40's. Mr. Mac's old store will soon fall to dust and ruin, but for many of us, memories will always burn brightly and evoke laughs when we need them. Yes, times really have changed.

JUNE C. JONES is a native of Minden, Fayette County, now living in Charleston. She is retired after 41 years as a certified registered nurse anesthetist in Charleston-area hospitals. June's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2006 issue.

Halloween at Mr. Mac's Store

By Albert Pennington

Author Albert "Boggie" Pennington, the ringleader of the 1940's Halloween pranks at Mr. Mac's store in Fayette County.

It was a Halloween night in the early 1940's, and a gang of boys were whispering. Boggie was giving directions: "Now Charles, you, Byron, Sim, and Tide go in and sing 'Happy Birthday' to Mac. The rest of us will have this little job done before you get through. It doesn't matter how it sounds, just make it loud."

Mac was the local storekeeper who operated a small Fayette County grocery store, 14 feet by 20 feet, stocked to the hilt with cigarettes, candy, cheese, and cans of this and that. Mac was middle-aged, had a big beer belly, and wheezed with asthma. The boys had nothing against him. In some ways he was likable. But it was Halloween, and Mac's two-holer outhouse had to be turned over before the night was over to make life complete for the young boys. Mac had let the word out that he was going to guard it with his shotgun, and the danger enticed the boys. They just couldn't let a challenge like this go unmet.

With a "Let's go, fellers," half of the gang marched through the door and loudly began singing "Happy Birthday." Mac's eyes lit up, for no one had ever thought about treating him to such attention. About midway through the verse, a "thump" could be heard, but only if one were listening. Before the last strains of the song, Mac was reaching for the jar of penny candy and generously filled each boy's hand. What a merry moment! Mac stood wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. The boys turned and marched out mumbling, "Thank you, Mac. Thanks, thanks Mr. Mac. Have a happy birthday, Mac."

Mac closed and locked his door an hour later and started up the path to his house thinking, "What a nice bunch of boys!" He cast the beam of his light to locate the door of the toilet before retiring and then — reality!

"I'll get 'em! I'll get 'em! Oh! The imps! And to think I stood there thinking what a fine bunch of boys!" Then he remembered the candy.

Of course, the same boys who sang for him happened around the next day and offered their help in setting the toilet upright on its foundation with one hand, while holding their noses with the other.

"Do you have any idea who did it, Mac?" they asked several times. "Whoever did it needs a whipping," one remarked. Another volunteered with, "Boy, if I knew I'd sure tell you." All of this passed with glances at each other and sparkles in their eyes.

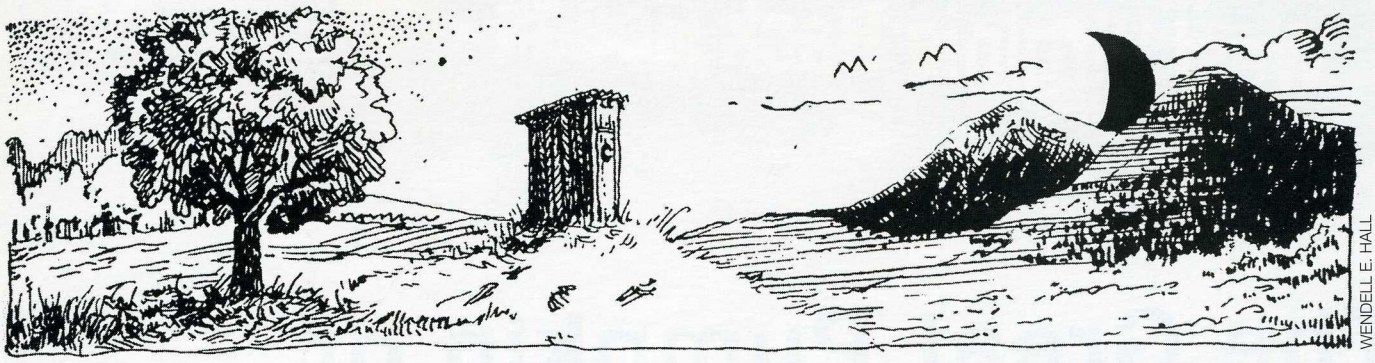
It took several weeks for things to get back to anywhere near normal. Mac kept mumbling to himself when he was stocking the shelves, sweeping, or anytime he wasn't waiting on a customer. People coming out of his store would talk among themselves, trying to figure out what he was mumbling about. It seemed that he was saying over and over again, "I'll get 'em if it's the last thing I do. I'll get 'em."

The boys drifted back one at a time, until all seemed normal, but it really wasn't. Mac remembered, and within himself he devised a plan. As the plan developed, his attitude toward the boys seemed to change. He often smiled as he chatted with them. He would get 'em. Just wait.

Halloween came again. "Spec" Workman, who was too old to be in the group but young enough yet to enjoy the fun, saw Boggie at the post office and waited outside for him to come out.

"Hey, Boggie, wait up," Spec said. "I'll walk with you as far as I go."

The two boys walked toward home together and, after they got



WENDELL E. HALL

out of hearing distance of anyone else, Spec said, "Boggie, I just came from Mac's, and you had better not bother him this year, or he is going to get you boys good. He just told me a little while ago that he had planned it all year, and he trusted me with his secret. He says he knows he can't stop you boys from turning over his toilet, but he is going to fix you up for good. He has stuck four sticks of dynamite down in the muck and has the wires ready to connect to a battery inside the store. Just when he hears the toilet flop over, he is going to connect the wires and blow that stuff all over you. I'd leave it alone if I were you."

"Thanks, Spec. You are a good guy," Boggie said. "I won't be forgetting the favor, and no one will ever know who tipped me off either."

Come Halloween night, the boys were jubilant. They had already cut a sizeable tree across the road to block any school bus from making them miserable the next day. Several fodder shocks had been turned over, and a gate to a pasture containing several mules had been opened. The mules were scattered and their braying could be heard for miles.

"Well, fellers, it's about time for Mac to close, so we had better get him," Boggie remarked.

"But you said he was all primed for us this year," came the comment from Randall Cowles.

"I did, but that doesn't mean that we don't get him. Here is the plan."

As Boggie laid out the plan, the boys smiled and chuckled. Soon, they were on their way to Mac's and were making quite a lot of noise. As several of them entered the store, they found Mac seated at the counter, waiting for the sound of his toilet being turned over. His hand trembled, and his eyes had a wicked, vengeful gleam. Then he heard it.

Boggie yelled, "Let 'er go, boys!" He threw a rock from a safe distance from behind a tree. The rock slammed into the toilet, making a loud thump. Mac jammed the wires to the battery, and the night air was filled with what sounded to be a cannon exploding. Mac's two-holer lifted into the air and rocked back and forth several times as two volcanoes shot forth through the toilet holes. The toilet settled back on its foundation in approximately the same position it was in before, but with the door hung crazily from one hinge, sagged sideways with a few boards splintered. As the gang crept from behind the trees, holding their noses, they slipped off into the blackness.

It is told that Mac cleaned for two weeks, using a No. 3 washtub and a broom to get the old two-holer into operation again. It was much longer than that before any of the gang risked dropping into L.M. McNeil's grocery for a candy bar and a bottle of pop.

ALBERT PENNINGTON was a native of Lansing and a Korean War veteran. He retired from Fayette County schools after serving 35 years as a teacher and principal. Albert passed away in 2005. This was his only contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

L.M. McNeil, known to area youngsters as Mr. Mac, was a local store owner and a frequent target for Halloween mischief. Photograph by Norma Wardrop, date unknown.

Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

The Great Pumpkin of Preston County

The October sun was brushing the final strokes of autumnal reds and oranges on the Aurora, Preston County, countryside when Scott Wotring's 1,021-pound pumpkin stopped me dead in my tracks. Loaded on a hay wagon parked in front of his parent's Fox Road home, Scott's pumpkin deserved more than a second glance. I pulled in the driveway and soon learned I was at the farm of West Virginia Pumpkin Royalty.

Scott held the state record for the largest documented pumpkin, 1,157 pounds, from 2005 to 2007. That year, Don Chambers of Wheeling dethroned Scott with a 1,242-pound fruit, which set a new state record.

Scott's 2009 pumpkin weighed in at the Pennsylvania Great Pumpkin Growers Association Weigh-Off, held in October 2009, in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The largest West Virginia pumpkin at that event, Scott's entry took eighth place overall, still a respectable showing and strong enough to earn $50 in prize money, plus an offer to sell it. Scott said a pumpkin that size can fetch about $1 a pound from store owners and pumpkin sculptors, but he decided to bring it back to Preston County, display it for a few weeks, then harvest the seeds.

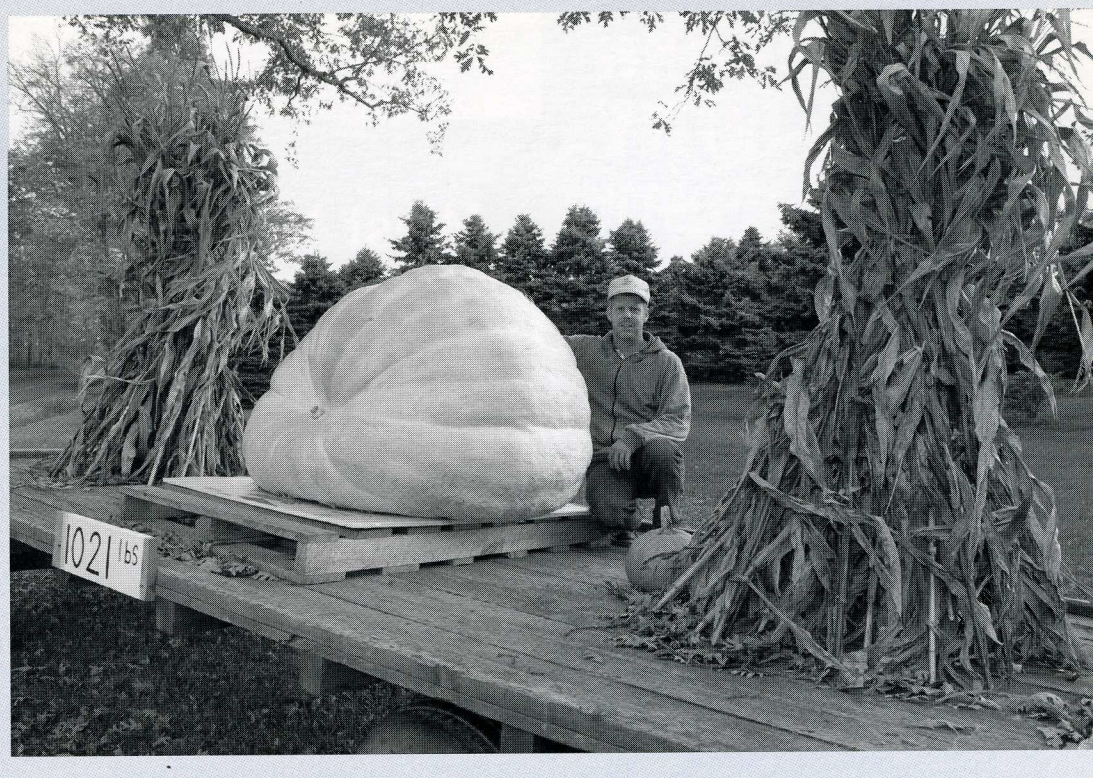
His goal is to eventually return the state title to Preston County with a pumpkin that would crush Chambers' 2007 record. "As far as being able to set a world record, never say never," Scott says, noting that growers from the northern states seem to fare better in competition. "Every time a grower plants one of the seeds, there is always the hope in the back of your mind: Will this be the one that sets a new world record? It just depends on how everything comes to-

Scott Wotring of Aurora, Preston County, checks on his 2010 pumpkin crop. These beauties should grow to about 1,000 pounds by harvest time.

gether throughout the growing season."

Scott became interested in the pastime after attending a weigh-off event and talking to growers, who gave him a few seeds to try. He's been growing giant pumpkins ever since.

It's really a year-round pursuit that starts with proper soil preparation in the fall. His patch is about 40 feet wide and 80 feet long. Only pumpkins are grown on the plot, which is used for two years and then retired. Scott says blight and bugs are major issues for pumpkin growers; by using a fresh patch every two years, the likelihood of loss to those natural enemies is reduced.



Scott poses with his 2009 prize-winning pumpkin, weighing 1,021 pounds. A former record holder, Scott hopes to return the state title to Preston County this fall.

Pumpkins do best in a soil with a great deal of organic matter, so Scott prepares the soil in the fall with a liberal coat of cow manure. He has plenty; his full-time job is heifer farming. If the soil test indicates an acidic condition, Scott will add lime in the fall, as well. He tests his soil again in the spring and makes corrections as necessary. Pumpkins flourish in soil with a pH between 6.5 and 7, he says.

He starts his plants indoors, usually the last week of April. Scott typically starts with five to six plants; there are so many things that can go wrong, the savvy pumpkin grower doesn't pin all his hopes on one plant. But 2009 was a particularly challenging spring for Scott, and he had to be content with just two plants.

About 10 days after the seedlings germinate indoors, Scott transplants them to their exclusive plots. Scott has a small greenhouse-like structure that he places over the young plants during the month of May to protect them from frost. Once the flowers appear, Scott hand-pollinates them, one flower per plant.

Application of herbicide and pesticide begins from the time the seedlings go in the ground. Scott says 2009 was so busy for him, he just didn't have time to give his plants the attention they deserve. He did give them plenty of water; during the dry spells, Scott pumped water from a pond near the patch, about 100 gallons a night.

"You have to keep the weeds out, keep it watered, and try to protect it from the weather, particularly hail," he says, summarizing the summer chores.

Scott said one of his 2009 pumpkins hit a 500-pound plateau and stopped growing. "I sold it to a fellow at Oakland, [Maryland], who wanted it for a fair," he says.

As the other fruit marched toward 1,000 pounds, gaining as much as 38 pounds a day, Scott kept an eye on it for splitting around the stem, one of the many snafus that can spoil a future champion. The grower also has to worry about severe weather and frost as the pumpkin comes into the homestretch. To help hold in the heat on those cool Preston County September nights, Scott covered his pumpkin with blankets and a tarp.

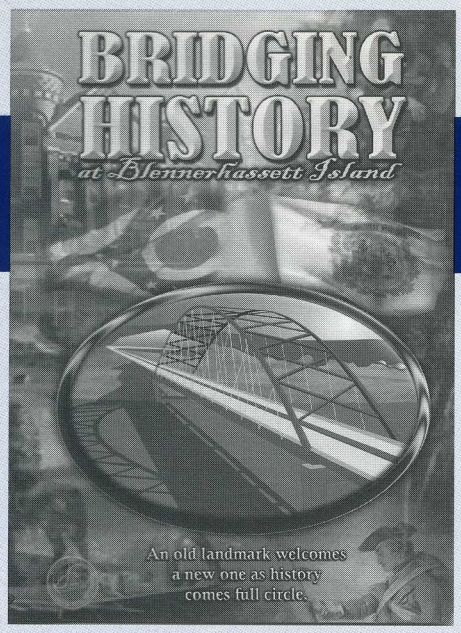
"They don't take frost like a normal pumpkin," he says. "When they get frost, the skin will get soft and they'll collapse."

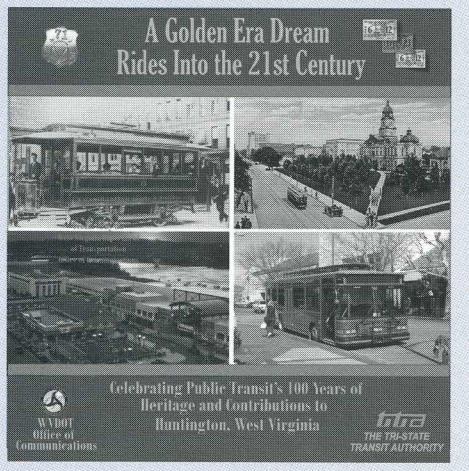
While one of these winners would make hundreds of pies, Scott says they aren't safe to eat — the growers use too many pesticides and herbicides on the plants and fruit. They are strictly for show, and bragging rights. The seeds of these giants are the true harvest. Scott says his 2009 pumpkin yielded only 250 mature seeds, which were shared with other growers.

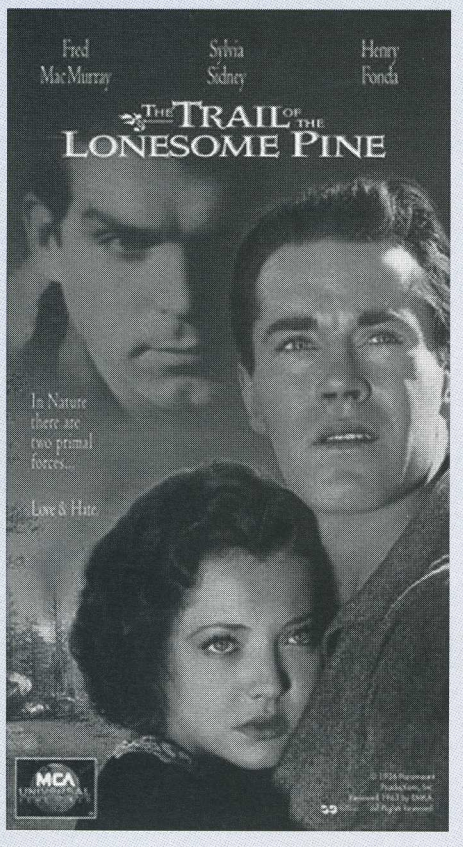
But Scott almost lost this harvest Halloween night.

"Someone tried to steal it," says Scott, who discovered his smashed pumpkin next to the wagon the morning of November 1. "It must have gotten too heavy for them, or they were one man short, and they dropped it. It just goes to prove that people will try to steal anything. At least it happened after the weigh-off."

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.







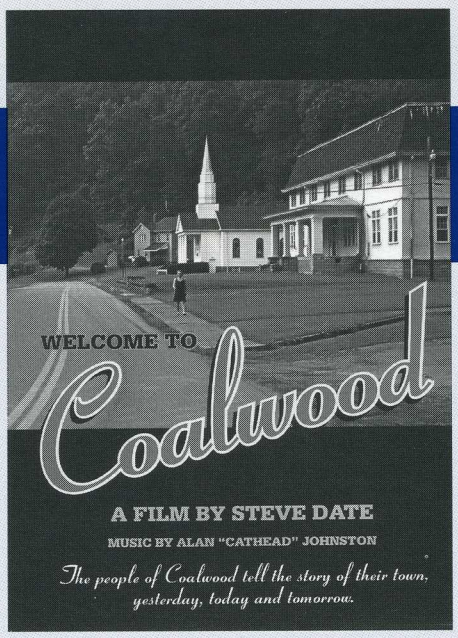
2010 Films on West Virginia andAppalachia

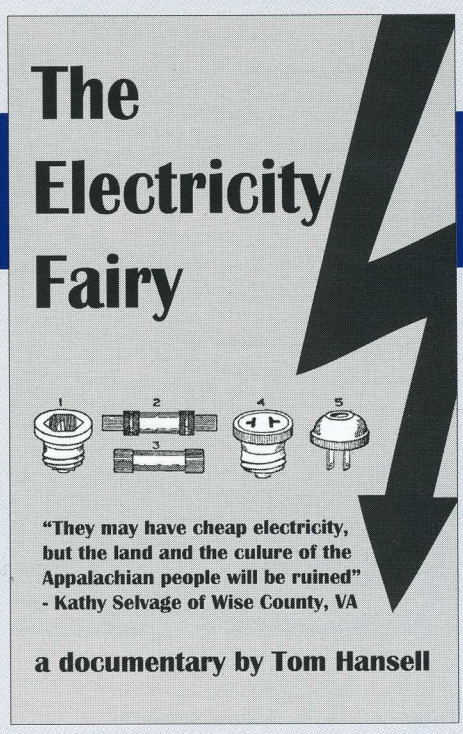
Bridging History at Blennerhassett Island
2007 30 mins.
WV Dept. of Transportation
This film documentary, written and directed by David Marcum, tells the history of Blennerhassett Island and the Parkersburg/Marietta region, and shows the great lengths to which West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) engineers, designers, and construction crews went in order to respect the integrity of the historical landmark while observing maritime restrictions to build the new Blennerhassett Island Bridge. The film was selected by the National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop (NTPAW) as the Best Transportation Film of 2009. This win for *Bridging History* marks the first time West Virginia has won this national award in any category.
Access: e-mail David.S.Marcum@wv.gov

A Golden-Era Dream Rides Into the 20th Century
2007 10 mins.
Tri-State Transit Authority
David Marcum of the WVDOT directed this short history of trolley cars in Huntington. Public transit has been providing transportation in this river city for more than 100 years. While Huntington was the first city east of the Mississippi to switch from trolley cars to buses, people missed the old trolleys. So the city purchased open-air buses that looked like trolleys, but they became uncomfortable in the hot summer months. Recently, the city has purchased buses that look like the old-fashioned trolleys but are standard buses on the inside. One interesting sidelight to this story is the founding of Camden Park, one of the country's last remaining destination parks. Established in 1903, the park was designed in part to increase the use of local trolleys.
Access: e-mail David.S.Marcum@wv.gov

The Trail of the Lonesome Pine
1936 (2009 on DVD) 102 mins.
Universal Studio
In 1936, Hollywood used the California hills to represent the Blue Ridge Mountains of Appalachian Virginia to create its first Technicolor outdoor film. Based on the popular 1908 book of the same name by John Fox, Jr., the film became a classic retelling of the Hatfield and McCoy feud, with coal mining and romance thrown in. Henry Fonda, Fred MacMurray, and Sylvia Sidney star, along with child actor George "Spanky" McFarland, who became an early TV star with the *Our Gang* series. Fonda plays a young man who asks his stepsister, played by Sidney, to marry him. She in turn falls in love with the stranger, played by MacMurray, who has come to bring the railroads and coal mining to the isolated hollow. Set against an ancient feud, the mining company is bringing "civilization" to the remote area. Stereotypes about Appalachia that have existed since the 19th century are given their full expression in this iconic film. The popular bluegrass band the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers reportedly took their name from the title of this film when it was first released in the late 1930's. [See "On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers," by Bill Archer; Summer 2010.]
Access: Amazon.com

By Steve Fesenmaier





Welcome to Coalwood
2009 65 mins.
See to Sea Productions
When Steve Date, a teacher from Minneapolis, Minnesota, visited the October Sky Festival in Coalwood, McDowell County, in 2005, he found the town to be more interesting than just the hometown of Homer Hickam and the *Rocket Boys*. Hickam's memoir, *Rocket Boys*, and the movie based on it, *October Sky*, had brought Steve and a group of teachers to this small, company-owned mining town, but it was the residents of the town living there today who intrigued and captivated him. [See "Historic Coalwood," by Stuart McGehee; Summer 2001.] Date decided to make a documentary film about Coalwood, telling its story — past, present, and future — through the voices of those who have lived there. Music by Alan "Cathead" Johnston from nearby Premier, photos, and home movies contributed by other former residents capture the history of the area, convey the spirit of the October Sky Festival, and illustrate some of frustrating current issues facing this special town.
Access: www.CoalwoodMovie.com

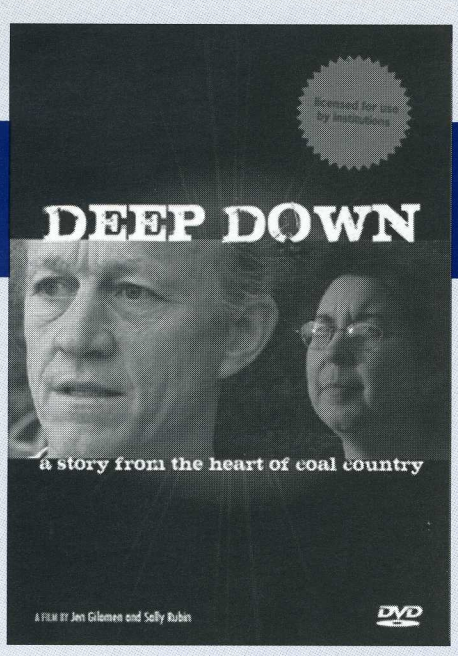
The Electricity Fairy
2009 50 mins. Appalshop
Tom Hansell's new film is about Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky as exporters of both coal and electricity. Exploitation of natural resources for power generation makes the impact of the nation's electricity consumption highly visible in these four states. From the director of *Coal Bucket Outlaw*, a powerful 2002 film about overweight coal trucks in eastern Kentucky, this latest release focuses on the construction of a new coal-fired power plant in Wise County, Virginia. The film combines present-day documentary footage with old educational films to reveal the hidden costs of America's major source of electricity.
Access: http://appalshop.org/electricityfairy

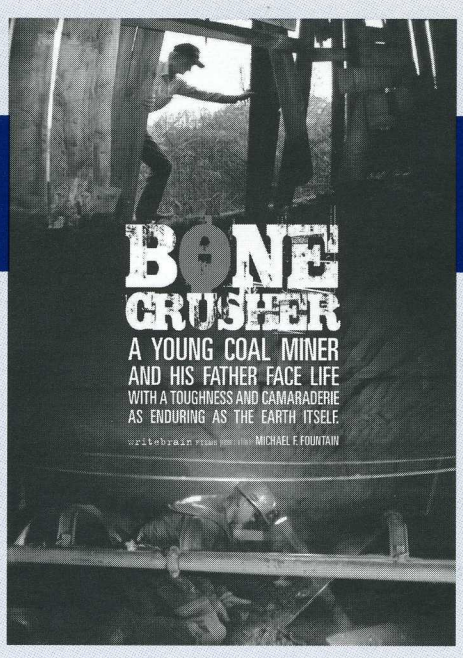
S300609 vs. Kanawha State Forest
2009 17 mins.
Kanawha State Forest Foundation
This short video "primer," produced by West Virginia filmmaker Mike Youngren, was assembled to alert the public that Keystone Industries has applied for a permit to clear away the trees, rip the top off nearby mountains, take away the coal, and dump overburden into valleys adjacent to Kanawha State Forest, a popular wooded area located just outside of Charleston. The permit application (S300609) predicts Keystone will take five years to complete removal of coal from 600 acres of property that abuts the forest's eastern border. Three big mountaintop removal mines already surround the bottom half of the forest. Naturalists, historians, lawyers, and friends of the forest come forward in the video to describe the profound environmental distress they anticipate if the permit is granted.
Access: www.vimeo.com/8869927

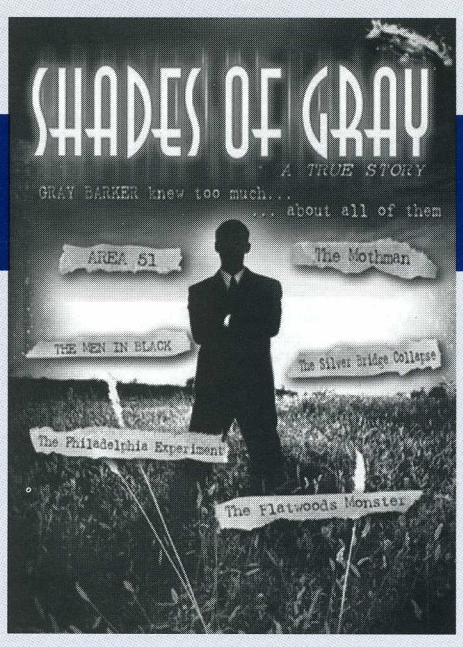
Mountaintop Removal Road Show
2009 65 mins.
Mountaintop Removal Road Show
An educational and public outreach effort by key players in the MTR cause, the Mountaintop Removal Road Show offers free programs to schools and community groups, as well as on-line resources. Included in their presentations are any of several films on the topic. Here are a few they recommend:

- *The Hidden Destruction of the Appalachian Mountains* is an overview of the mountaintop removal issue. (20:00)

- Retired underground coal miner Jim Foster talks about the mountaintop removal mine near his home in Boone County (an excerpt from the film *Rise up! West Virginia*, courtesy of B.J. Gudmundsson at Patchwork Films) www.patchworkfilms.com (9:36)







• *A Harlan County Fish Pond: Elmer Lloyd's Story* is the heartbreaking story of Elmer Lloyd, a retired coal miner whose prized fish pond was destroyed after a coal company started mining above his home in Kentucky. (6:14)

• *McRoberts, Kentucky: Residents Speak Out About TECO* looks at the blasting and flooding problems caused by mining above a small eastern Kentucky community. (9:57)

• *Mountaintop Removal in Kentucky* is a short montage of amazing MTR images. (2:45)

• *The Martin County Coal Slurry Disaster* looks at the October 2000 Massey coal slurry disaster at Inez, Kentucky, that was 25 times larger than the Exxon Valdez spill. This film features photos taken by me and University of Kentucky student Suzanne Webb. (2:28)

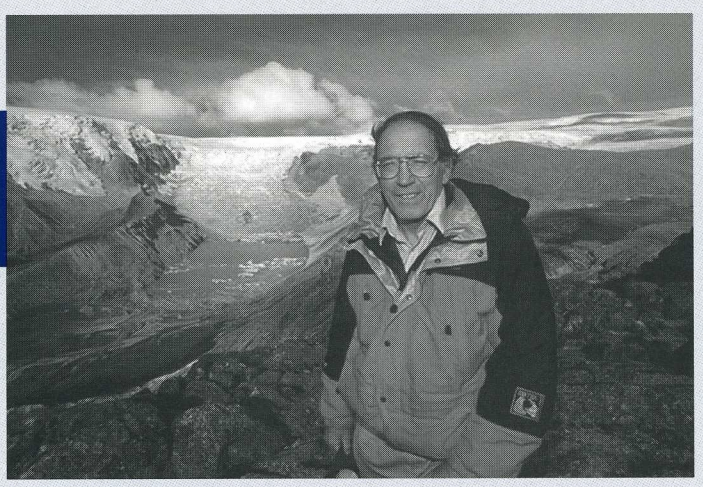
• *Mountain Justice* is a music video about young people fighting MTR. (4:08)

• *Wake Up, Freak Out* is a powerful, short animated film made in Britain by Leo Murray. This piece pulls no punches about the serious issue of global warming and the possible consequences we will face if we don't act now to stop it. It focuses on the "tipping points" of global warming and ends with a compelling call to action. Highly recommended. (11:35)
Access: www.mountainroadshow.com

Deep Down
2010 57 mins.
Deep Down Productions
The citizens of Floyd County, Kentucky, challenge a mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mine, and win! This is possibly the only film to date that shows such a positive result after citizens and environmental groups band together to stop MTR in their backyards. Beverly May, a healthcare professional and a fourth-generation resident living near the town of Maytown, leads the effort. Her friend and neighbor, Terry Ratliff, is tempted to play ball with the coal company but eventually joins May and the opposition. This film focuses on the pair as they successfully navigate the murky and turbulent waters of environmental policy and mining regulation. Recently premiered on Kentucky Educational Television, *Deep Down* is receiving strong national reviews.
Access: http://deepdownfilm.org

Bonecrusher
2010 72 mins.
New Day Films
Lucas Chaffin of Dante, Virginia, is a proud fourth-generation coal miner, trying to live up to the legacy and legend of his dad and what he believes is a family duty. But his father, Luther, still known in the mines as "Bonecrusher," is withered and sick at just 61. He has given his life to the dust and the coal and wants his son to get out of the mines before it is too late. This documentary is an intimate account of the love between a father and son and a moving portrait of a tough community and an even tougher way of life.
Access: www.bonecrusherfilm.com

Toxic Soup
2010 88 mins.
Man Bites Dog Films LLC
In the spirit of filmmaker Michael Moore, Rory Owen Delaney goes on a cross-country tour to explore the effects of industrial chemicals on the lives of contemporary Americans. Focusing largely on West Virginia, the director explores the recent MIC near-disaster in Institute. He also looks at how dangerous many chemicals are to the human body, some suspected of causing autism and



Dr. Lonnie Thompson

other health problems. He visits the Belle DuPont plant and interviews survivors of the 1984 Bhopal, India, spill. The film also looks at the effects of C8 on the people of Parkersburg, who have known about its effects for decades. Executive producer Kyle Stratton Crace grew up in West Virginia, and there is a brief interview with West Virginia native filmmaker Morgan Spurlock.
Access: www.toxicsoupmovie.com

Shades of Gray
2008 60 mins.
Allegheny Image Factory
Clarksburg native and freelance writer Gray Barker was a key figure during the 1950's and '60's in the public fascination with flying saucers and the "unexplained." Beginning with the famous 1952 Flatwoods Monster, Barker fanned the flames of fear and curiosity with books such as *They Knew Too Much about Flying Saucers;* magazines such as *Flying Saucer News*, *The Saucerian*, and *Saucerian Bulletin*; articles; newsletters; and pamphlets. [See "Gray Barker: West Virginia Ufologist," by Matthew Mullins; Fall 2002.] This film peels back the layers off one of the great American hoaxers of the late 20th century. Part Fox Mulder, part Mark Twain, Barker almost single-handedly created or perpetuated much of what is now taken as the "gospel" of UFO's. But Barker's twisting of the truth didn't stop there. In some ways, his entire life was as much myth as anything he ever wrote. This intriguing documentary is directed by Bob Wilkinson and produced by Robert Tinnell, Jeff Tinnell, and John Michaels.
Access: Amazon.com

NOVA ScienceNOW – Lonnie Thompson
2009 20 mins.
NOVA ScienceNOW
Dr. Lonnie Thompson is considered one of the greatest scientists in the world of climatology. He has been searching the world's glaciers for evidence showing trends in global warming and other climate phenomena. A native of Huntington, Thompson was raised on a farm outside Gassaway, Braxton County. This biographical film explores his roots as a young scientist in West Virginia and shows how he has spent much of his life living at an altitude of over 18,000 feet — more than any human ever. Thompson was chosen as a Hero of the Environment by *Time* magazine in 2008.
Access: www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=3685639

STEVE FESENMAIER, a Minneapolis native, retired as research librarian and film adviser for the West Virginia Library Commission in 2009 after 31 years of service. Among other publications, he writes a West Virginia film blog for *The Charleston Gazette*. Steve's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2009 issue.

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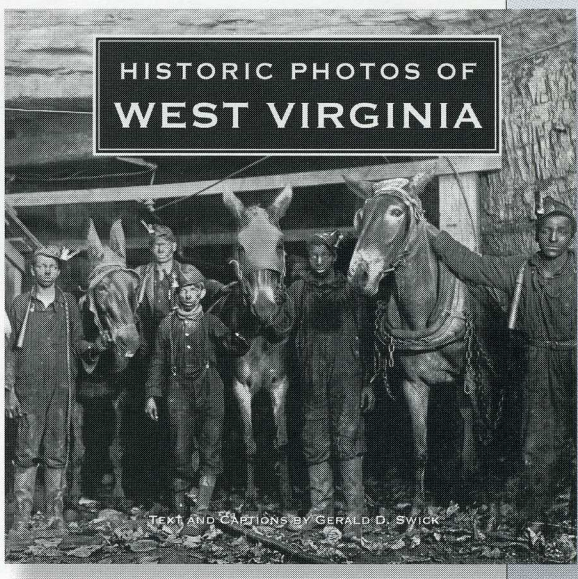
Historical Photos



Nearly 200 historical photographs, spanning more than 100 years of West Virginia history, are the centerpiece of a new book titled, *Historic Photos of West Virginia*, published in 2010 by Turner Publishing Company of Nashville, Tennessee, as part of Turner's "Historic Photos" series.

Historic Photos of West Virginia draws on a variety of sources, including the West Virginia State Archives, the Library of Congress, the West Virginia and Regional History Collection at West Virginia University, and several other libraries and collections to produce this coffee-table collection of images from our state's past. The variety of sources is a plus, as the book presents a geographic range as well as a pleasant mix of subjects and subtexts. For example, attractive photos of The Greenbrier and Chuck Yeager are appropriately balanced with classic views of bedraggled coal camps, floods, and mining disasters.

Many of these photos will seem familiar to GOLDENSEAL readers. Indeed, several of the photographs have appeared in GOLDENSEAL, including two or three of Marion Post Wolcott's 1938 Farm Security Administration (FSA) photos in this very issue. [See "Revelation in the Mountains: West Virginia FSA Photographs," by Betty Rivard; page 30.]

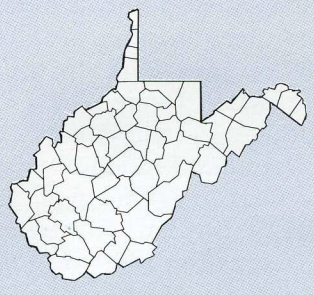
Gerald D Swick, a Clarksburg native and a graduate of Fairmont State College (now University), wrote the introduction and photo captions. His prose is colorful and informative, often going well beyond the minimum information and adding context to these fascinating images.

Historic Photos of West Virginia is a 205-page hardbound volume, including approximately 200 black-and-white photographs. It sells for $39.95 and is available at many retail bookstores or on-line at www.turnerpublishing.com.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Weirton Marching Band
- Clock Makers
- Singer Patti Powell
- Decota



Memorial Arch in Huntington, detail of keystone. Photograph 1980 by Rodney Collins, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, State Historic Preservation Office Collection. Our story begins on page 48.

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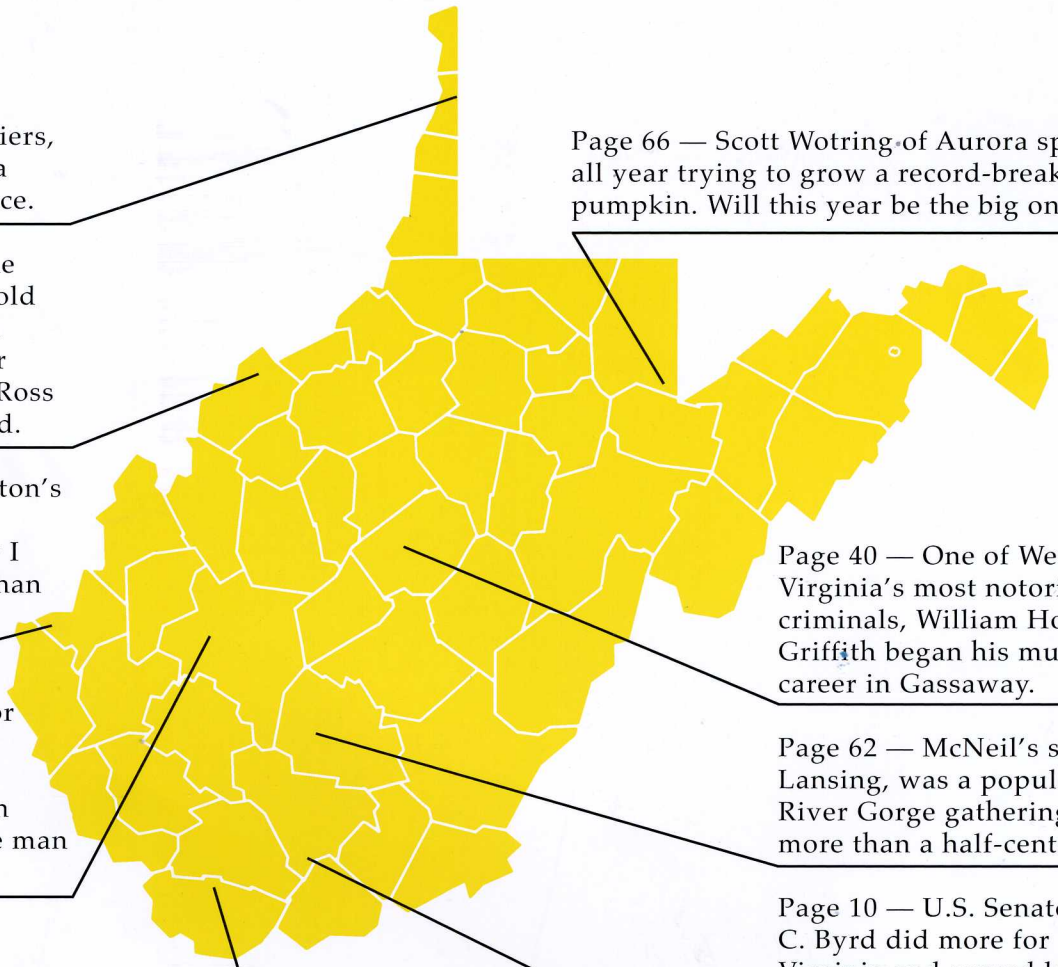
Inside Goldenseal



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