

Coleman's Fish • Baseball • Decota • Sharp's Store • Arden

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Summer 2011

\$5.95



TROLLEYS

From the Editor: Fine Summer Reading

Trolleys were all the rage 100 years ago — hi-tech transportation in a progressive age. Foot power or horse power along dirty, muddy roads had been the only practical options for travel as long as anyone could recall. Suddenly there came a new contraption that could lift the weary out of the muck and mire and scoot them to their destinations in a fraction of the time it otherwise would have taken. I enjoy thinking about those times and trying to place myself in that situation. [See our stories on pages 10 and 16.]

The trolleys made random stops, picking up passengers at farms, schools, or odd intersections and letting them off as needed. This not only benefited busy city dwellers, but afforded an entirely new horizon to country people and farmers. In Paden City, the trolley line proved a boon to the beautiful new Paden Park Pavilion, bringing large groups to its door to enjoy dances, concerts, picnics, and other gatherings. Trolleys made straight the winding path, clung to steep hillsides, and rattled through dark tunnels. As the photograph on page 20 illustrates, trolleys sometimes traversed lofty viaducts, providing breathtaking views not previously imagined. Sure trolleys were precarious and a little unpredictable, but that would only have added to the appeal for some (like me).

Today, with gasoline topping \$4.00 a gallon, perhaps public transportation will start to look more attractive once again. I hope so. It is hard to imagine, however, that sense of adventure and novelty our grandparents must have felt when the trolley was new. Thanks to authors Borgon Tanner, Laura L. Cramblet, and Mort Gamble for carrying us back to this brief but exciting time in our state's transportation history.

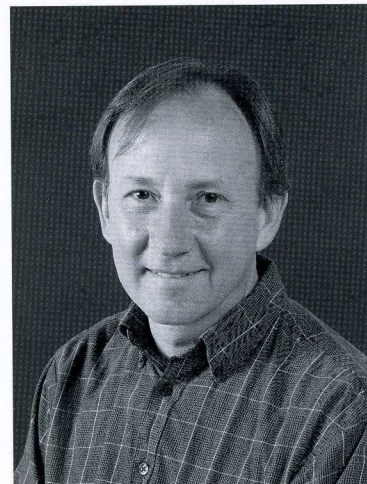
Sandlot baseball is a summertime ritual still played out across West Virginia, and Duane Ellifritt's recollections of his time as a ballplayer in the 1940's and '50's should ring true for a lot of readers. [See page 24.]

Fishing is always a reliable source for a good story, and author John Payne weaves a whopper of a tale about a star-crossed fishing expedition during the 1930's in Barbour County. He and his companions were lucky to come away with their hides. [See page 37.]

Coleman's Fish Market in Wheeling [see page 30] and Sharp's Store in Slatyfork, Pocahontas County [see page 59], are two West Virginia landmark businesses, each worthy of a visit during your summer travels. Hillbilly Daylilies is a promising new venture in Berkeley County [see page 66]. GOLDENSEAL favorite Carl E. Feather wrote and illustrated all three of these excellent stories, and we are grateful to him.

Rounding out this issue are stops in two out-of-the-way communities — Arden in Barbour County [see page 43] and Decota in Kanawha County [see page 48] — as well as a Braxton County farm visit [see page 54]. I love these personal recollections of life "below the radar" in rural West Virginia. They are what GOLDENSEAL is all about!

I hope summer affords you some adventure, some relaxation, and some fresh memories of your own. I believe this issue of GOLDENSEAL will provide you with some fine summer reading. Thank you for your continued support.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KELLER

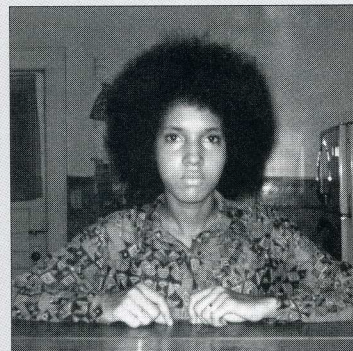
John Lilly



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On the cover: Wetzel & Tyler Railway trolley car No. 11 in the early 1900's. Photograph courtesy of the Paden City Public Library, O.O. Brown Collection. Our story begins on page 10.

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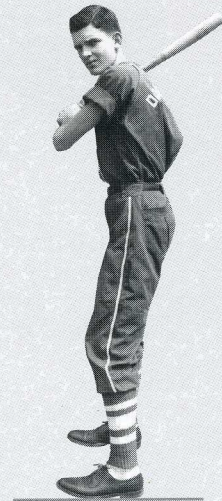
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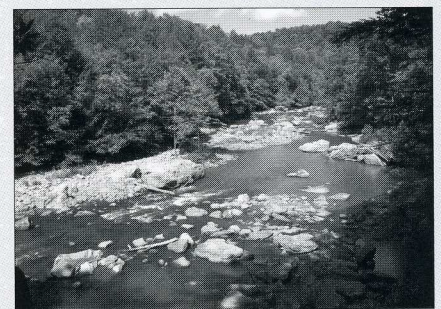
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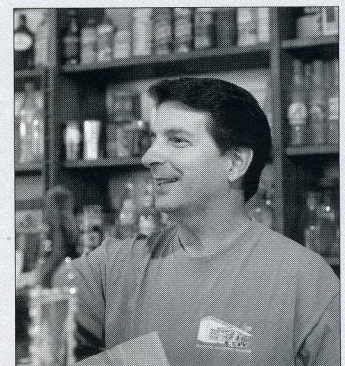
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Letters from Readers

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.

Stepping!

March 18, 2011

The Villages,
Florida

Editor:

What a surprise it was to see "Stepping!" on the cover, and what fun to read your article about it! [See "Stepping!" by John Lilly; Spring 2011.] I was especially interested to learn that girls

are participating. I'd seen the fellows in step shows, but never girls. I recall visiting with friends at a hotel during a national fraternity meeting when a group of young fellows began a spontaneous stepping routine in the lobby. Some of the hotel patrons who were not part of the fraternity were dumbfounded. They stood open-mouthed as the young frat guys wheeled, marched, and stomped around with great precision.

Ancella R. Bickley

March 9, 2011

Via e-mail

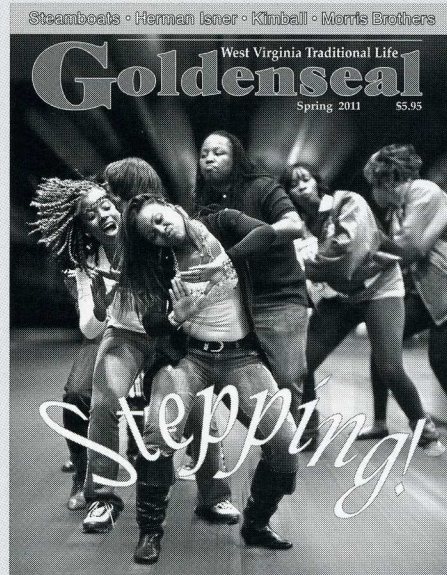
Morgantown, West Virginia

Editor:

You scooped me. I started over two weeks ago planning a [television] piece on the April step show in Morgantown. Great article and surprising cover. I'm going to have to read the whole issue, cover to cover.

Best,

John Nakashima
WV Public Broadcasting



March 22, 2011

Via e-mail
Lisbon, Ohio

Editor:

To put "West Virginia Traditional Life" and the stepping cover on the same page is an oxymoron. This cover looks like it should be on *Rolling Stone* magazine. The story was fine, but a West Virginia traditional life cover would

have been more appropriate. Very disappointing.
Steve Bledsoe

Thanks for your comments. Surprising as it might seem to some readers, stepping has been going on in West Virginia for three generations. It is taught orally and practiced within a tightly knit community, expressing that community's heritage, its values, and individual creativity. Though not in the majority, West Virginia's black population remains an integral part of the state and its traditional life. This cover was not only appropriate but long overdue, in my view. —ed.

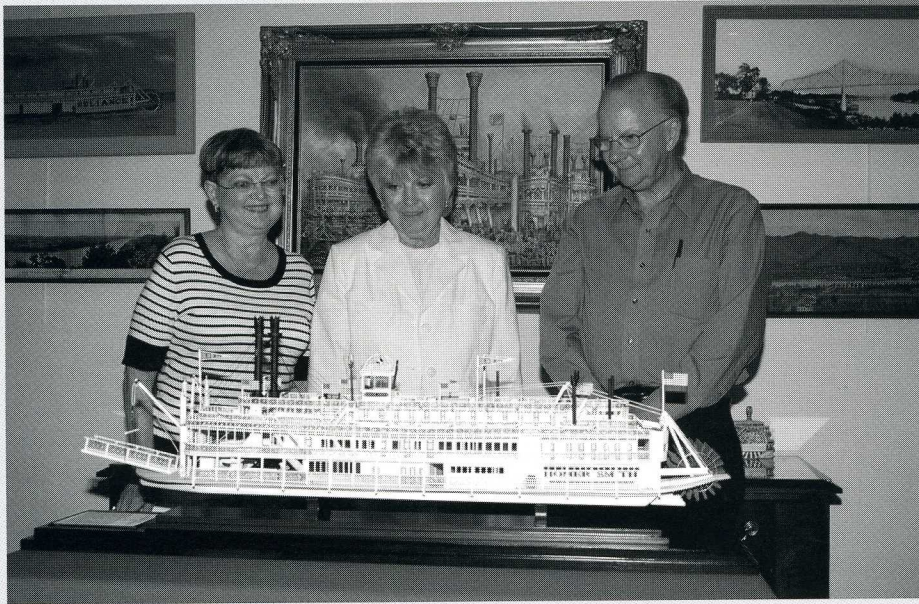
Steamboats

March 17, 2011

Wheeling, West Virginia

Editor:

Thank you so very much for the article. [See "Modeling History: John Bowman and his Steamboats," by Carl E. Feather; Spring 2011.] We thought all the accolades you gave author Carl E.



Nancy Jewell, Lynn Durst, and John Bowman at Point Pleasant River Museum.

Feather were highly appropriate. West Virginia's GOLDENSEAL magazine is an outstanding publication celebrating our state's heritage. Keep up the great work. We will definitely spread the word.

My Civil War models are on display at West Virginia Independence Hall here in Wheeling. I also will have two of my models, the 1815-16 *Washington* and the *Sidney*, on display at Oglebay Park this summer.

Concerning the picture on page six of Nancy Jewell, Lynn Durst, and me with the model of the *Homer Smith* at the Point Pleasant River Museum: The day I got my copy of GOLDENSEAL, Lynn was hit head-on in an auto accident and killed by a young girl who was texting. This has got to stop. Again, my thanks.

John Bowman

March 17, 2011

Via e-mail

Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Editor:

Hold on! Shepherdstown cannot let go unchallenged any upstart's specious claim to be the birthplace of steamboat navigation. As Malcolm Ater's article in your excellent magazine made abun-

dantly clear, this small place is to steamboating what Kitty Hawk is to aviation. [See "Setting History Straight: Shepherdstown Builds a Steamboat," by Malcolm W. Ater, Jr.; Winter 1987.] It was here in 1787 that James Rumsey conducted the first successful experiment with his steamboat making headway against the current. It was another 20 years before Robert Fulton presided over *Clermont's* run on the Hudson. Fulton seems to get most of the credit for "inventing" the steamboat, probably because he was the first to make a profit from the new technology with his New York-to-Albany line. Claims for Wheeling reveal a prejudice in favor of the Western rivers at the expense of the East's lordly Hudson and proud Potomac, and not substantiated by history.

Much as we'd like to keep the steamboat birthplace title in West Virginia, it must be admitted that Maryland, too, may stake a claim. That state's border with Old Virginia was the southern bank of the Potomac, and thus Rumsey's experiment actually took place in The Old Line State! However, in Shepherdstown we point out that his workshop was on the Virginia side.

It is always a delight to get your fine magazine. Keep up the good work.

Dabney Chapman

Jennie Bee Hall

March 10, 2011

Strange Creek, West Virginia

Editor:

Jennie Bee Hall was my favorite aunt. [See "Mom Was a Hard Worker: Remembering Jennie Bee Hall," by Jessie Lee Maiuri; Spring 2011.] You and your staff do an outstanding job on the GOLDENSEAL. I enjoy each issue and article.

May God continue to bless you in your great work for the state of West Virginia.

Sincerely,

Roscoe R. Bée



Jennie Bee Hall.

First Vandalia

March 17, 2011

Glenville, West Virginia

Editor:

I enjoyed hearing about the action at the first Vandalia Festival and the names being read, and wondering who all were still living. [See "Vandalia Time!"; Spring 2011.]

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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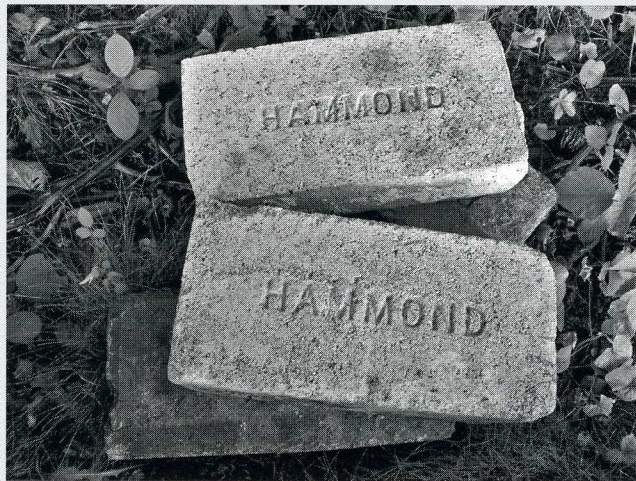
I am blind, and my hair is no longer black. It is white. But I still sing and recite to anyone I can get to listen.

The daughter who used to bring me to the Vandalia Festival has gone on to her reward on March 28, 2010. My granddaughter is carrying on the tradition.

I get subscriptions to the GOLDENSEAL for seven of my family for Christmas.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Marks

Thank you, Phyllis. We appreciate your note and your generous support of GOLDENSEAL. —ed.



Hammond bricks. Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.

Hammond Bricks

February 24, 2011
Solon, Ohio

Editor:
I was surprised and delighted to find Hammond, Marion County, featured in your Winter 2010 issue. [See "I Wish I Could Go Back": A Visit with Pete Henderson of Marion County," by Richard S. Bailey.] In 1935 when I was nine years old and in the fourth grade, I attended the Hammond one-room school. Miss Ruby Tatterson was our teacher. There were few students as the brickyard had just about shut down and not too many families were left in Hammond. I expect Miss

Ruby had to get to school early to build the fire in the potbelly stove that was our heat.

The superintendent was no longer living at the brickyard, and my grandfather, H.L. Clelland, rented the super's house. Grandfather worked at the Powell B&O tower and rented in Hammond so he could walk or "speeder" to work. Our home was located across the tracks from Hammond proper. I will always remember the 50 or so graduated steps I had to walk each day to come and go to school.

My family moved shortly after I passed to the fifth grade, and I lost touch with Hammond. The

brickyard did pick up for a few years in the 1940's, but prosperity did not last long. Hammond now is probably a ghost town. In the 1970's I went back for a visit and found that the road was washing away and in need of repair. There were very few families left there and, of course, I knew no one.

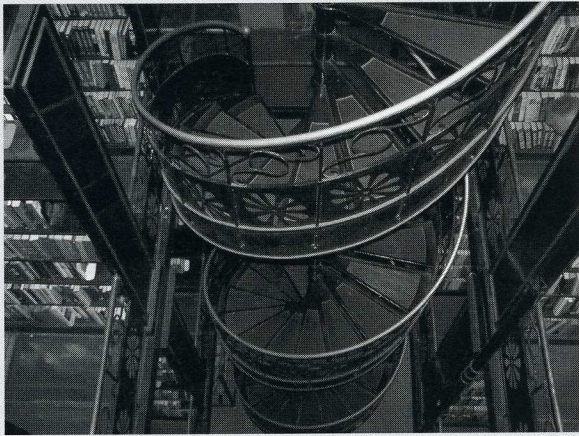
Sincerely,

Betty Phillips Kisel

Carnegie Library

January 18, 2011
Waynesboro, Virginia

Editor:
In the Fall 2010 issue, the article on the Carnegie Library caught my attention. [See "A Wonderland of Books: Recalling Carnegie Library in Parkersburg," by Deborah McHenry Ross.] I had the privilege of using the library to gather information for a few research papers during the 1960's while attending Williamstown High School and Glenville State College. The spiral staircase sticks in my mind more than the



Staircase at Carnegie Library, Parkersburg. Photograph by Deborah McHenry Ross.

research.

It was through Trans Allegheny Books that I received my first copies of GOLDENSEAL. My brother, who works in Parkersburg, would go there once in a while on his lunch hour. In 2002 he purchased four past issues. He read them and gave them to me. Since then I have been hooked on GOLDENSEAL. My husband, who is a Virginian, enjoys reading the stories as well.

Please find enclosed my check for another three years of great reading.

Sincerely,
Lila Reynolds Foster

Renewal Mailbag

March 21, 2011
Glenrock, Wyoming
Editor:

As good a magazine as I get.
Robert Kisken

September 28, 2010
Phoenix, Arizona
Editor:

Thanks to GOLDENSEAL for endless hours of memories filled with joy of days gone.
Dr. William L. Jones

October 26, 2010
South Bethany, Delaware
Editor:

As a former Hampshire Countian, I dearly love GOLDENSEAL and always look forward to receiv-

ing it. Please keep up the excellent work! It is a fine tribute to the Mountain State.
Carol Kerns

December 24, 2010
Milton, West Virginia
Editor:

Carl, my father-in-law, loves your magazine. He calls his son (my husband) after it comes to discuss all the articles they've read. It's great to see them have something to talk

about besides politics, pensions, and new guns! And it gets Carl talking about what happened during his younger years, too. Keep up the good work!
Merrily Taylor


January 10, 2011
Jewett City, Connecticut
Editor:

I always enjoy receiving and reading your magazine. I love West Virginia and its culture. My mother was born and raised in Wheeling. I'm glad she taught me how to use money wisely, because now I can afford a three-year subscription! All the best to everyone at GOLDENSEAL.

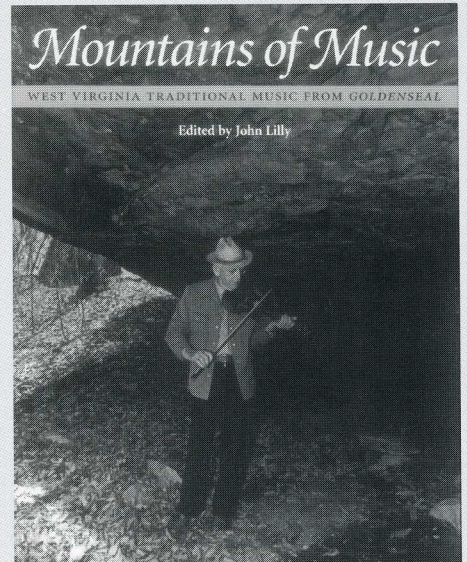
Michael David

April 15, 2011
Covington, Virginia
Editor:

What a lovely magazine! I have enjoyed it the most. Too bad Virginia doesn't have such a beautiful magazine of Virginia history. Thanks for wonderful quarterly reading.
Samuel and Alice Mason



The West Virginia hills are alive in the pages of — GOLDENSEAL see page 72.



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!

I enclose \$ _____ for _____ copies of *Mountains of Music*.

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The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



The West Virginia Mine Wars were a formative experience in our state's history and a landmark event in the history of American labor. GOLDENSEAL has published some of the best articles ever written on this subject. In 1991, former editor Ken Sullivan worked with Pictorial Histories Publishing Company to produce this compilation of 17 articles, including dozens of historical photos.

Now in its fourth printing, the book is revised and features updated information. The large-format, 109-page paperbound book sells for \$12.95, plus \$2 per copy postage and handling. West Virginia residents please add 6% state sales tax (total \$15.73 per book including tax and shipping).

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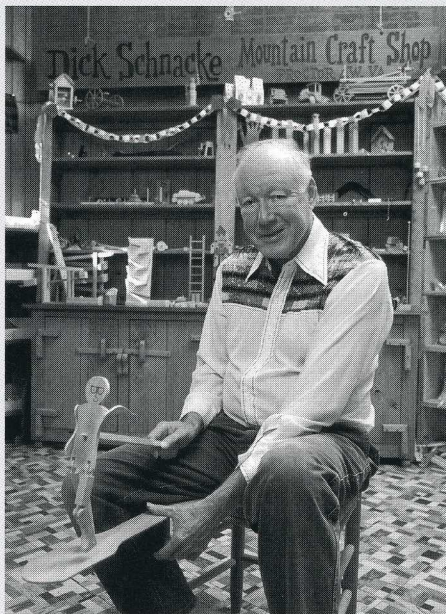
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GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes



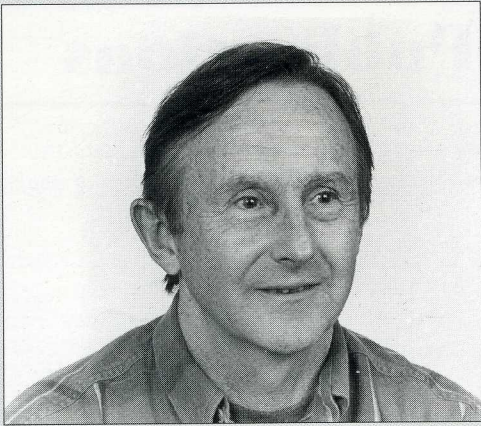
Dick Schnacke.

Dick Schnacke made a name for himself during the 1960's and '70's as a maker of clever and whimsical folk toys. Dick and his wife, Jeanne, lived in rural Wetzel County, where Dick ran his Mountain Craft Shop for 40 years. His book, *American Folk Toys*, sold widely. He was the founder of the West Virginia Art & Craft Guild, a cofounder of the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Ripley, and an early participant at the Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. A retired engineer in the aluminum industry, Dick served on several boards and commissions, including 22 years on the Wetzel County Board of Education. Dick appeared on the *David Frost Show* and *To Tell the Truth* and was featured in *Smithsonian* magazine, *Country Journal*, and other publications. He was featured on the cover of our Winter 2004 edition and in the accompanying article titled, "Whimmydiddles and FlipperDingers: A Visit with Toymaker Dick Schnacke," by Catherine Moore. Dick Schnacke passed away on March 15, 2011. He was 92.

Hazel Dickens was one of 11 children, born in rural Mercer County. She learned to sing and play traditional mountain music from her family members, many of whom worked in the coal mines around Montcalm. A small, frail child, Hazel was known for her strong and fearless singing voice. When the mines shut down, Hazel joined relatives in Baltimore, where she found factory and retail work. She was a pioneering female performer in bluegrass music, recording and touring with partner Alice (Foster) Gerrard. Moving to Washington, D.C., Hazel became widely known for her political activism on behalf of working women and coal miners, and for her hard-hitting original songs. She appeared in numerous films and recorded 11 albums. Hazel received many awards and honors in her lifetime, including her 2007 induction into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame. She was featured in an interview in our Summer 2004 edition titled, "'West Virginia, My Home': A Visit with Hazel Dickens," by John Lilly. Hazel passed away on April 22, 2011. She was 75.



Hazel Dickens. Photograph by Carl Fleischhauer



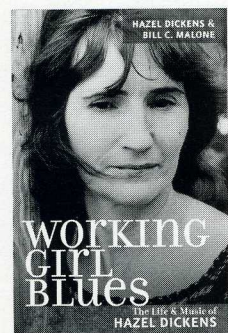
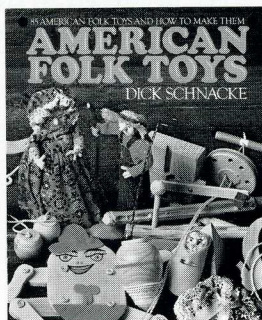
Skip Johnson. Photograph courtesy of the Charleston Newspapers.

Skip Johnson of Herold, Braxton County, passed away on February 20, 2011, at the age of 81. Skip was a veteran journalist who wrote tirelessly about West Virginia. His outdoors column for *The Charleston Gazette* titled, "Woods & Waters," appeared weekly for 35 years. Upon retirement, Skip

wrote a number of books, including a 1990 biography of his friend and colleague, photographer Ferrell Friend titled, *The Quicker the Sooner*. Skip's article about Ferrell Friend titled, "Country Photographer Ferrell Friend: 70 Years Behind the Camera," appeared in our Summer 2007 issue. Skip's other articles for GOLDENSEAL covered logging in Upshur County, the building of the Stonewall Jackson Dam, and volunteer weather observers around the state. Among his books were *River On the Rocks*, a 2001 natural and human history of Birch River; and *Upper River*, a 2005 book about the Elk River. At the time of his death, Skip was working on a new book about mountain lions in West Virginia.

Books Available

Dick Schnacke's book *American Folk Toys*, originally published in 1973, has sold more than 100,000 copies. This 160-page paper-bound volume describes 85 traditional folk toys and how they are made. Dick, a retired engineer, provided detailed instructions and clear drawings for each of these whimsical creations. *American Folk Toys* sells for \$14.95, plus shipping, from the Mountain Craft Shop at www.folktoys.com, phone 1-877-365-5869.



Hazel Dickens' autobiography *Working Girl Blues*, co-written by Bill C. Malone, was published in 2008 by the University of Illinois Press. It features a biographical sketch as well as a personal look at 40 of Hazel's best-loved original songs, including lyrics and notes from Hazel about each song and its circumstance. The 144-page paperback edition sells for \$17.95, plus shipping, from www.press.uillinois.edu, phone (217)333-0950. Skip Johnson's books are currently out of print.

Sesquicentennial Timeline



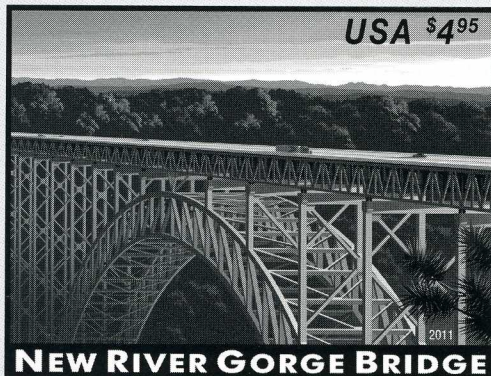
Milestones on the Road to Statehood

- **June 3, 1861** – First land battle of the Civil War was fought at Philippi, Union forces prevailed.
- **June 11, 1861** – The Second Wheeling Convention assembled.
- **June 13, 1861** – John Carlile called for a reorganized Union government to replace the rebellious state government at Richmond.
- **June 19, 1861** – The Second Wheeling Convention approved the ordinance reorganizing the government of Virginia.
- **June 20, 1861** – Francis H. Pierpont was elected governor of the new pro-Union Reorganized Government of Virginia.
- **July 1, 1861** – The Reorganized Government of Virginia convened in Wheeling.
- **July 9, 1861** – The Reorganized Government of Virginia elected officials, including two new U.S. Senators and three new U.S. Congressmen.
- **July 11, 1861** – Union troops defeated Confederate forces at the Battle of Rich Mountain.
- **July 17, 1861** – Confederate troops scattered Union forces at the Battle of Scary Creek.
- **August 20, 1861** – The Second Wheeling Convention adopted an ordinance to form the new state of Kanawha, pending voter approval.

(For more information, visit www.wvculture.org/history/sesquicentennial/timeline.html)

Current Programs • Events • Publications

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



New River Gorge Stamp

The New River Gorge Bridge is featured on a new U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail stamp, unveiled on April 11 in a ceremony at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center near Fayetteville. The \$4.95 stamp is the latest in the postal service's "Wonders of America" series, which includes Mount Rushmore, the Hoover Dam, and Yellowstone National Park's Old Faithful geyser, among other landmarks.

New postage stamps are normally unveiled in Washington, D.C., without much fanfare or local participation. However, in this instance, U.S. Congressman Nick Rahall was instrumental in arranging that the first-day-of-issue ceremony be held at the visitor center so that local people could attend.

The stamp is available at local post offices and online at www.usps.com.

Mine Wars Tour

Coal Country Tours will host a West Virginia Mine Wars tour June 16-18, visiting



sites significant to the Mine Wars era of the early 1900's. Stops on the tour include Holly Grove, site of several battles between striking miners and Baldwin-Felts mine guards; Blair Mountain, site of the infamous battle; Matewan, site of the legendary Matewan Massacre; and the McDowell County Courthouse at Welch, site of the 1921 assassination of Sid Hatfield and Ed Chambers. Other stops include the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and the Whipple Company Store.

At some of the stops, travelers will have an opportunity to visit and interact with local residents whose ancestors fought at Blair Mountain or were involved in the events leading up to the Matewan Massacre.

For tickets and other information, visit www.coalcountrytours.com, or call Doug Estep at (540)233-0543.

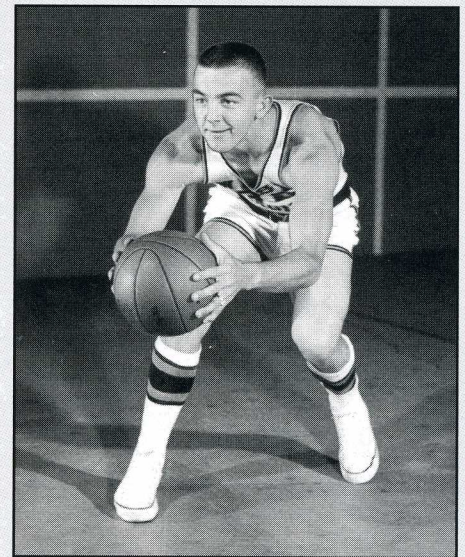
Aurora Heritage Days

The Aurora Area Historical Society will host its 6th Annual Heritage Days on July 1-3 at the Union District History Center, located at Aurora on U.S. Route 50. On Friday, free hot dogs and other refreshments will be available at the history center beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday's schedule includes a chicken barbecue starting at 11 a.m. Proceeds from the dinner will benefit the Union District Ambulance and Relay for Life. A spinning demonstration,

honey bees, and craft vendors will also be on hand Saturday and Sunday.

Marvin "Buck" Bolyard, one of Aurora's leading basketball players, will be commemorated on Saturday at the Aurora Community Building. Bolyard was



Marvin "Buck" Bolyard.

an outstanding player at Aurora High School in both baseball and basketball. A large exhibit of historical photographs from 1927-1977, featuring 50 years of Aurora High School basketball teams and cheerleaders, will be on display.

For more information, e-mail the Aurora Area Historical Society at aurorawv58@aol.com or call (304)735-5832.

Mushroom Foray

The West Virginia Mushroom Club will host a midsummer mushroom foray July 23-24 at Blackwater Falls State Park. Activities include mushroom collecting, identification walks, and a photography slide show.



Gary Lincoff.

Gary Lincoff, author of *The National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms* and *The Complete Mushroom Guide*, will be a guest speaker.

Activities on Saturday include a mushroom search and identification walk in the Blackwater Falls area and a potluck lunch followed by a mushroom lore discussion with Gary Lincoff. On Sunday, participants will explore the flora and fauna native to the Dolly Sods Wilderness area of Tucker County.

Registration for the mushroom foray begins Saturday at 9 a.m. in the Milton Harr Conference Center at Blackwater Falls State Park. The fee for Saturday is \$30; \$40 for Saturday and Sunday. Those who register before July 1 will receive a \$5 discount.

For more information about the mushroom foray, write to the West Virginia Mushroom Club, HC-68 Box 128, Bowden, WV 26254, online at www.wv.mushroomclub.org.

Riverside Blues Fest

The Third Annual Riverside Blues Fest will be held at the Riverside School on River Street in Elkins on Saturday, July 23, from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. The festival will include art and craft vendors,

refreshments, and live music.

Built in 1906, Riverside was the first high school for African Americans in the Allegheny Highlands. The two-story brick schoolhouse served the community until 1954. Alumni and community members are currently raising funds to restore the building. Proceeds from the festival will benefit the Riverside School revitalization project.

Blues Fest admission is \$10; children age 12 and under are admitted free. For more information, call (304)591-4494 or e-mail riversideschoolproject@yahoo.com.

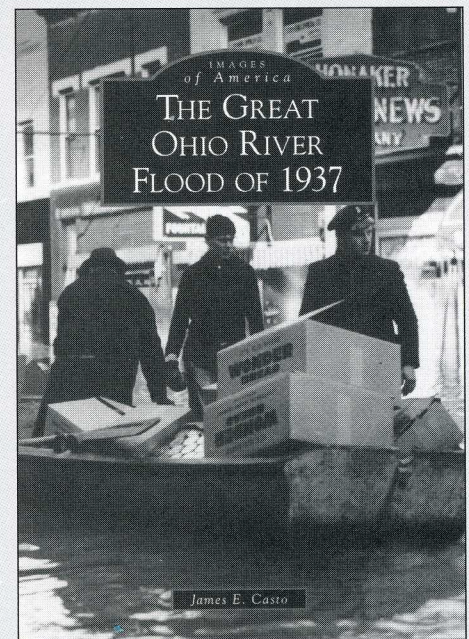
West Virginia Books

Three new West Virginia titles are now available from Arcadia Publishing in their Images of America series.

South Charleston, by local historian Judy Bowen Romano, illustrates the city's ethnic heritage and industrial past. Romano is the director of the South Charleston Museum Foundation, located in the historic LaBelle Theater on D Street. South Charleston was established in 1906. It was once known as "Chemical City," due to the chemical plants located along the Kanawha River. Belgian immigrants came to South Charleston in the early 1900's and established the Dunkirk Glass Company and the Banner Plate Glass Window Factory. The city was also home to the U.S. Naval Ordnance Plant, built after WWI. During the 1940's, the ordnance plant was the largest machine shop in the world, producing naval gun barrels and other armaments for the war effort. [See "U.S. Naval Ordnance Plant: A Brief History"; Spring 2010.]

The Great Ohio River Flood of 1937, by retired newspaperman and historian James E. Casto of Huntington, is a collection of historical photographs of the flood and its effects on communi-

ties along the length of the Ohio River. The 1937 flood waters destroyed thousands of homes, businesses, and farms, and claimed 400 lives. The devastation of the 1937 flood convinced the government to take action regarding flood control. *The Great Ohio River Flood of 1937* contains vintage photographs of the flood and its aftermath from the Ohio's headwaters in Pennsylvania to its mouth in Illinois. Also included are chapters regarding the floods of the late 1800's, the 1936 flood, and the subsequent taming of the river with various floodwalls, locks, and dams.



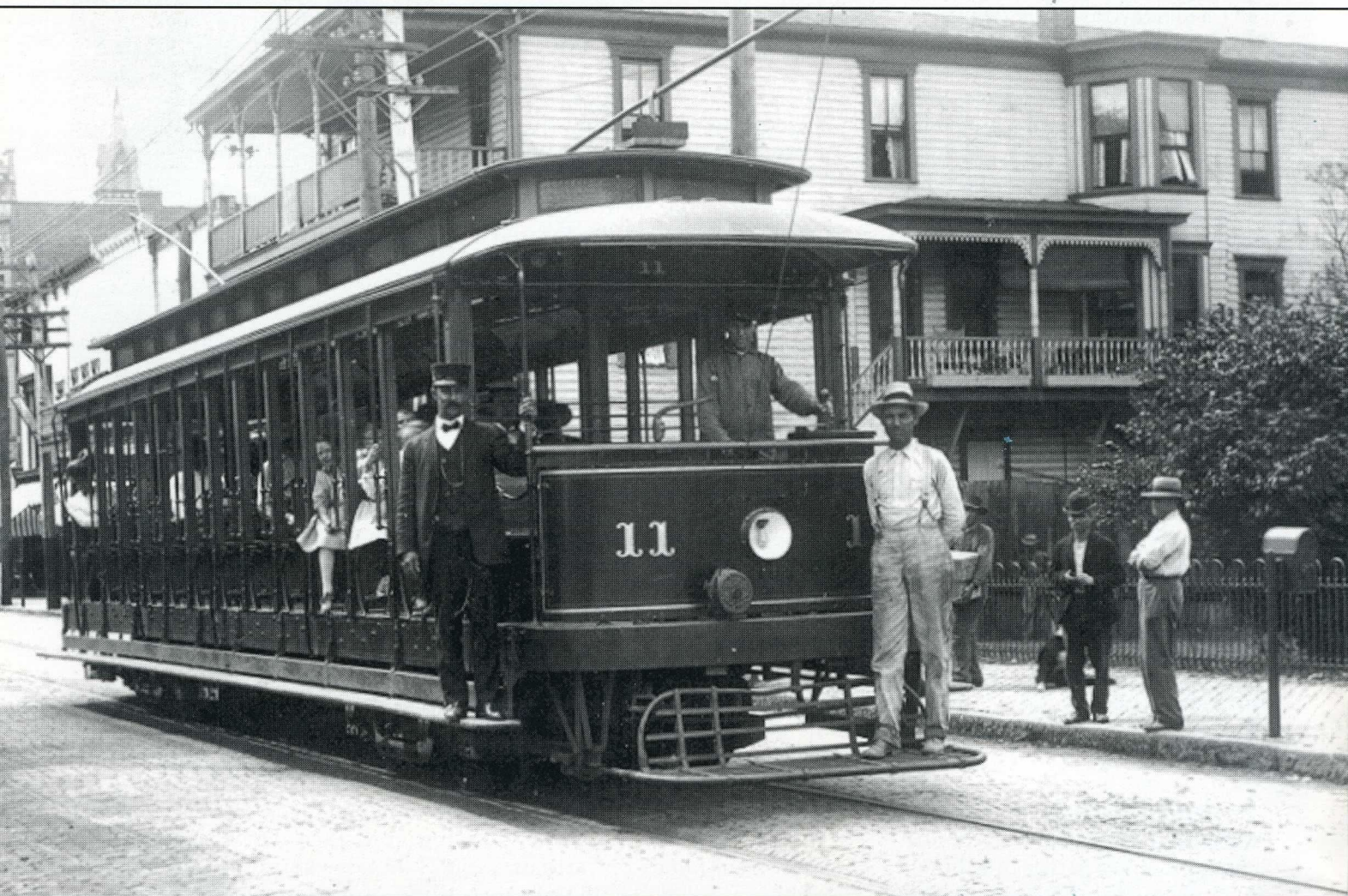
Lewis County, by historians and co-authors Joy Gilchrist-Stalnaker and Bradley R. Oldaker, is a visual document of everyday life throughout the county from the early 1900's to modern times. The book includes chapters about pre-1900 Weston, the Weston Hospital, county events, industry, and Lewis County communities.

All three books are 128-page paperbound publications, containing 200 black-and-white photographs each. They each sell for \$21.99, plus shipping and handling, from Arcadia Publishing, online at www.arcadiapublishing.com; phone 1-888-313-2665.

WETZEL & TYLER

By Borgon Tanner

RAILWAY



Trolleys connected New Martinsville, Paden City, and Sistersville from 1903 until 1925. Photograph courtesy of Paden City Public Library, O.O. Brown Collection. Date unknown.



Sistersville, like most cities in the early 20th century, had trolley tracks running through the middle of town. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Sue Rapp Collection. Date unknown.

A transportation craze swept across North America around 1890. It started in the big cities and soon affected residents in many rural areas as well. Electricity was becoming widely available, and inventors discovered that it could power locomotives — or a single car. The electric streetcar was developed, replacing its horse-drawn predecessor.

By 1900 it was a small town indeed that couldn't plan with pride for an electric streetcar — or "trolley" — that would soon be humming over the hill and running down Main Street. In 1901 there were 15,000 miles of electric railways in the U.S., and by 1902 practically all the street railways were powered by electricity

Major cities contained many streetcar lines, and pedestrians learned to be wary of speeding trolleys. The Brooklyn Dodgers of baseball fame did not receive that name for their agility on the playing field. At the height of the

streetcar era, the team was called the "Trolley Dodgers" in tribute to the maze of tracks criss-crossing Brooklyn.

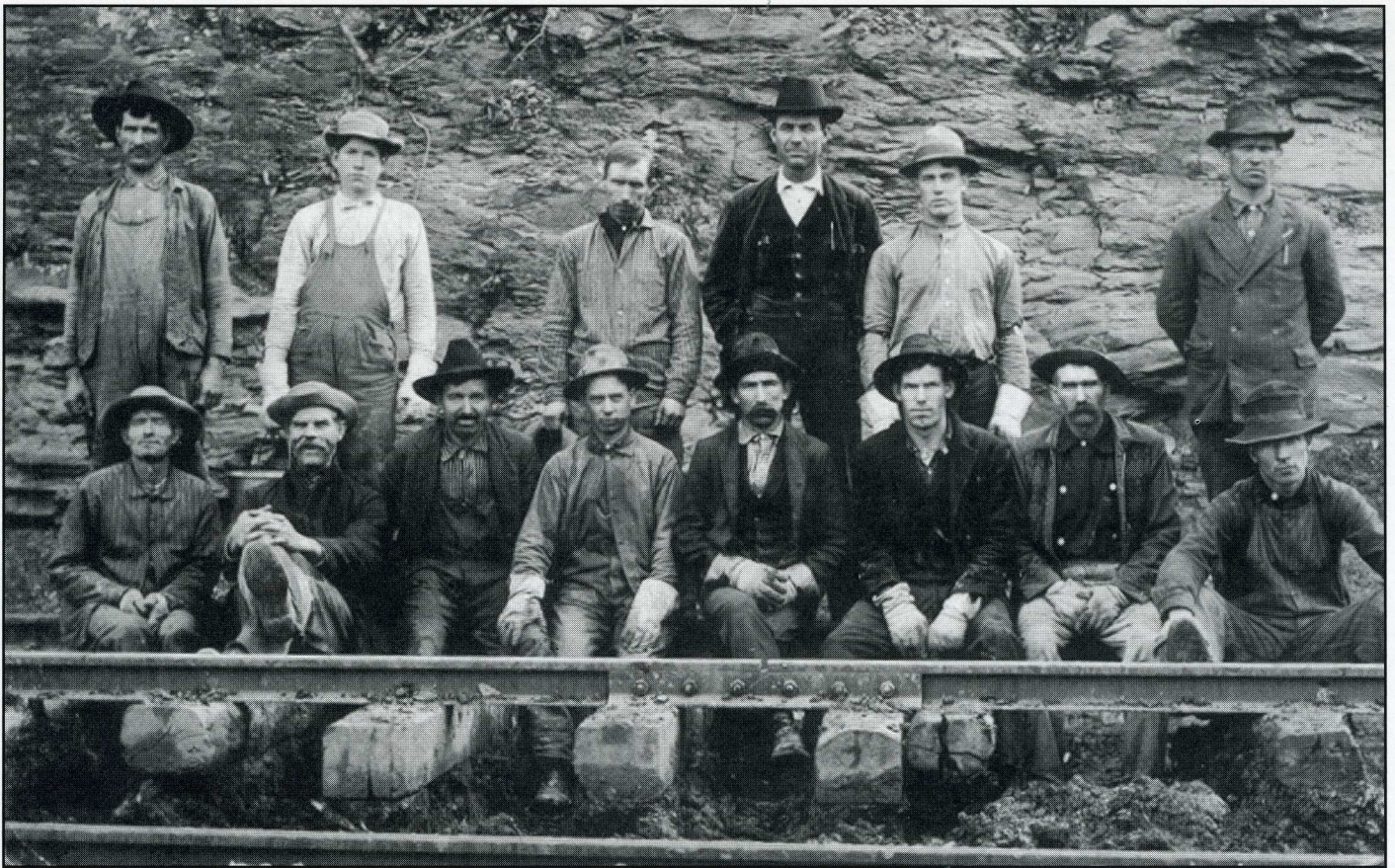
Streetcar lines in many areas became interurban lines, connecting towns, cities, and adjacent rural areas. An increase in farm incomes and literacy, spurred by the 1896 introduction of Rural Free Delivery (RFD), contributed to the decline of isolation for rural people. Farmers now felt the need for better ways to travel plus more frequent access to towns. Bad weather and poor roads could limit the range of any horse and buggy, so country people increasingly

rode the trolley into town.

The trolley ran on two overhead wires that furnished power to motors situated beneath the streetcar. Later, most systems used just one wire overhead, with a trolley pole conveying power to the car below

Within city limits streetcars provided the first dependable travel in the days before bus or automobile. In rural towns and the countryside, the trolleys and interurbans offered year-round transportation at low cost.

Stations were rare. Whenever possible, people waited at a place that offered shelter. Churches,



Trolley workers posed for a picture along the 11-mile stretch of track from New Martinsville to Sistersville around 1903. Photograph courtesy of Paden City Public Library, O.O. Brown Collection.

stores, and public buildings were used in town. Out in the country, churches and houses provided shelter, while many waited trackside in any weather.

It was no coincidence that Sistersville was the hub of several electric railways. With income from oil and gas revenues, it was the wealthiest and most influential town in the upper Ohio Valley during the 1890's and early 1900's.

Conventional transport on the Ohio River was provided by steam-powered packet boats. Weather typically affected the river traffic during the decades before the first dams were built, often adversely. A common summer scene before then was the sight of a packet boat "backing water" while waiting for a horse and wagon to cross the river ahead of them.

The Ohio River Railroad, built from Parkersburg to Wheeling in 1884, appeared to solve that

problem. But after a successful start, the railroad had problems of its own providing reliable passenger service. Stopping at farm crossings and whenever and wherever a passenger chose to get on or off the train caused delays and produced wear and tear on the equipment.

The solution to more available, frequent, and cheaper transportation was to build electric lines. They were cheaper to build and could easily operate on sharper curves and steeper grades than standard railroads.

The first major electric line in the Tyler and Wetzel county area was built from Sistersville northeast to Paden City and on to New Martinsville. This 11-mile line, built in 1903, was the Wetzel & Tyler Railway. When the original company failed, it was succeeded by the longer-lasting Union Traction Company of West

Virginia in 1908. In 1919 the line again changed hands and became the Sistersville & New Martinsville Traction Company.

The line in New Martinsville started in front of the North ME church on North Main Street. (Later, a short branch was extended to the intersection of North and Maple streets, a few blocks below the B&O passenger station.) The line went down the middle of Main Street, crossed over Fishing Creek into Brooklyn, turned left up Central Street, crossed the first set of B&O tracks by the yard office and again by the old road and the water tank. After crossing the tracks and road, it climbed a short grade, turned right, and headed southwest. The electric line crossed the road again near the bottom of River Hill, then gradually climbed to run on a sandstone ledge below the top of the hill.

The Ohio River Railroad had

taken the best grade along the bank of the river. So the electric line was carried on a sandstone ledge several miles before it came down into Paden City. Beyond Paden City the line curved around slopes on an easy grade, entered Sistersville, and ended on a major street—again in the center of the town.

Certain trolley cars had duplicate controls at each end and didn't need to be turned. This practice saved money on extra track work. At the end of the line, the motorman would stop the car and discharge remaining passengers. Then he would set the handbrakes, go outside, and with the aid of a long hook, pull down the trolley pole at that end and secure it under a low curved hook on the roof. Power was now off, but the handbrakes kept the car from moving.

Again outside, the motorman would walk up to the other end and use the long hook to release the trolley pole there. It would be

guided upwards until the trolley wheel contacted the overhead wire. Electricity would flow again and the air compressor (for brakes) would cut in under the car.

The motorman would then climb aboard, release the handbrake at the front end, walk down to

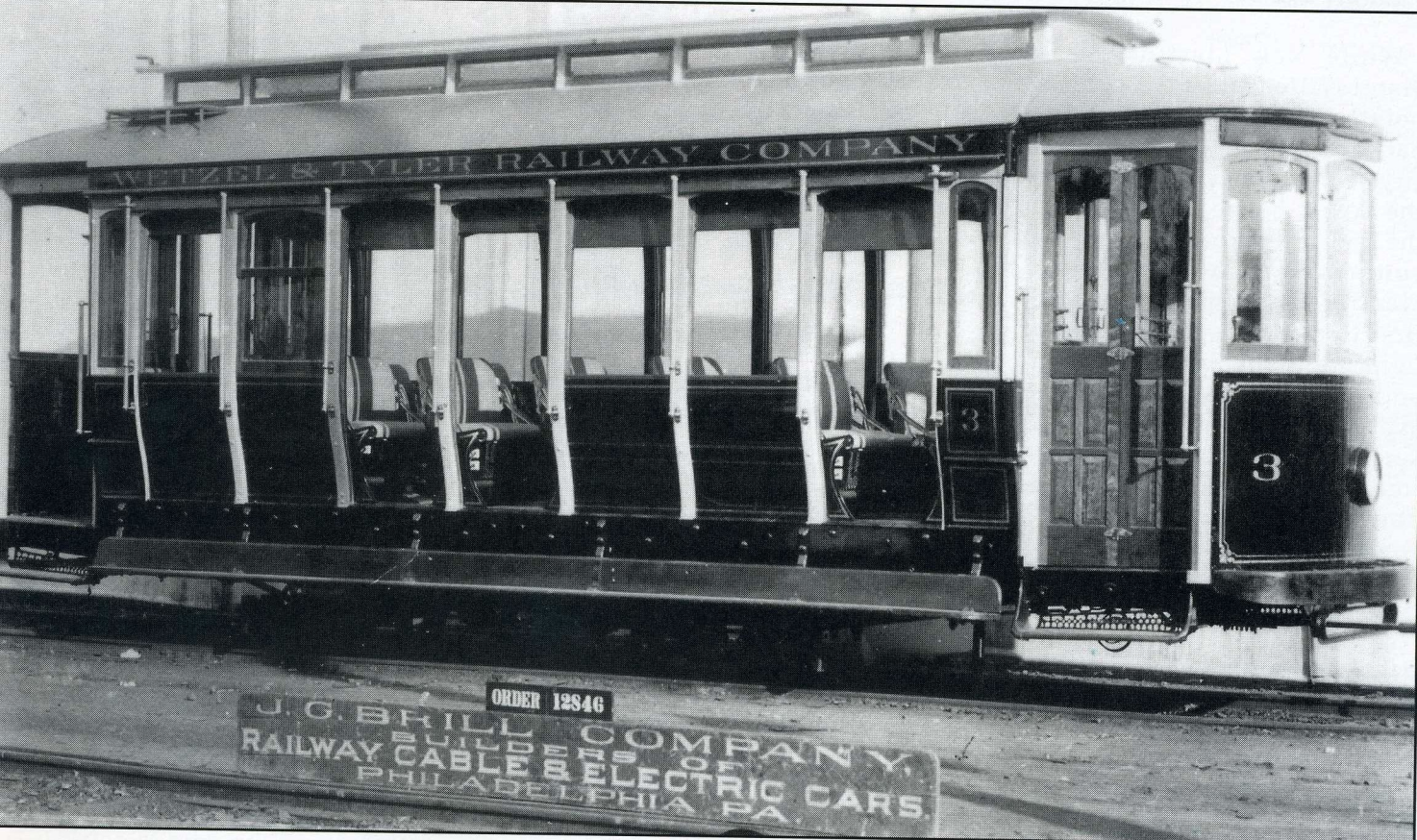
*The Wetzel & Tyler
Railway started with
three semi-convertible
cars in 1903.*

the other end and release the handbrake there. While walking down the aisle, he would flip the backs of the seats so passengers would be able to ride facing forward. The car, with its duplicate controls, was now ready to return in the opposite direction. The operation above would take only a few minutes.

The Wetzel & Tyler Railway started

with three semi-convertible cars in 1903. The last line, Sistersville & New Martinsville Traction Company, finished with 10 cars. The semi-convertible cars were well-chosen. After hot weather arrived, with a little work in the car barn, they would be converted from "closed-in" cars to the "open-air" cars that were the delight of summer travelers.

The electric lines between New Martinsville and Sistersville had several advantages over the parallel steam line. First of all, the electric line made more frequent runs, from early morning to late evening. Businessmen, tradesmen, and workers appreciated the more frequent and cheaper trolley runs. In addition, sandstone, an important building material, could now be obtained at a quarry south of New Martinsville located near the trolley track. Stone slabs were hauled to town by special freight runs.



Wetzel & Tyler Railway Company cable car No. 3 in New Martinsville, date unknown. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries.



This streetcar in Sistersville appears headed to a baseball game in Paden City in about 1910. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Sistersville Library/Walter McCoy Collection.

While New Martinsville and Sistersville served as the end points for the trolley, Paden City had land that was lacking in either city — land that was needed for the power house and car barn for the new interurban. Communities containing power houses for electric lines were among the first to use the surplus energy to light municipal buildings, stores, and homes. These two factors — available land and a reliable trolley service — were selling points touted by Paden City developers and boosters in the early 20th century.

Land in Paden City was also used for other purposes. One such treasure, located near the center of the existing line, was Paden Park Pavilion. Situated in front of the trolley line on the Tyler County side of Paden City, the pavilion was known to thousands in the upper Ohio Valley and nearby hill country

People could arrive by steamboat

or by railroad. Some clay-and-gravel roads also led to the park. But the cleanest, quietest, and most comfortable way to arrive was by trolley

*The cleanest, quietest,
and most comfortable
way to arrive
was by trolley.*

Paden Park Pavilion was built on a lavish scale around 1900. The two-story building was massive, being 200 feet long and 80 feet deep. The first floor was open and contained a large restaurant and dining area where large crowds could be served. The second story, enclosed, had a hardwood floor suitable for dancing. A raised area served as a platform for musicians, and well-known orchestras were brought in on a regular basis. Family reunions were often celebrated at the pavilion, as were company

picnics. The restaurant was open to serve food anytime the pavilion was open — during good weather and holidays.

A large extension to the right of the building housed a full-sized carousel. There were also a baseball field adjacent to the pavilion and, at one time, a zoo across from it. Paden Park Pavilion was well-attended by people in New Martinsville, Paden City, Sistersville, and Friendly.

Friendly had its own trolley line. It began in Sistersville. This five-mile stretch, built after 1903, was to have been the start of a 95-mile line running from Parkersburg to Wheeling. The new line was to be called the Parkersburg & Ohio Valley Electric Railway. It was a heroic plan. But the line never got beyond Friendly — population 217. There were too many obstacles, geographic and financial, that barred the way. Although this short segment only lasted until 1918, when it was dismantled, it still became famous as the shortest interurban line in

America.

The line between New Martinsville and Sistersville bowed out in 1925. But connections were not severed right away. One old map shows the line running between Paden City and Sistersville long after the "official" closing date.

This memorable trolley line was unique for several reasons: It provided cheap, frequent, clean, and comfortable runs at a time of great activity in the area. Its existence was bolstered by a well-known resort, which attracted many thousands of people throughout the mild weather in any year.

But it is best known for a fact that many today have forgotten. The trolley line provided a shortcut along the river between the towns of Paden City and Sistersville. In the early days no direct road existed along the Ohio River that connected these river towns. Travel over the old clay-and-gravel roads between the two large towns would take hours, even in dry weather. Today State Route 2 occupies portions of the old right-of-way between Paden City and New Martinsville.

So there you have two unique trolley lines — now steeped in

history — that operated during an important time in the upper Ohio Valley. Behind them they left a multitude of people with fond memories of the pleasures of travel in the days of electric trolley service in Wetzel and Tyler counties. 🍁

BORGONTANNER is a native of Clarksburg. His family moved to New Martinsville, where he graduated from Magnolia High School. He currently lives near Vanceboro, Maine. Borgon has been a documentary photographer, railroad historian, and a teacher in Maryland public schools. His articles have appeared in *Classic Trains* and *Rural Delivery*. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Spring 2010 issue.



Sistersville & New Martinsville Traction Company cable car No. 16 in New Martinsville, date unknown. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries.

By Laura L. Cramblet and Mort Gamble

THE BETHANY TROLLEY

When Scots-Irish minister and immigrant Alexander Campbell envisioned establishing a college in what would soon become West Virginia's Northern Panhandle, he sought a secluded, scenic location, free from

urban distractions, one that would encourage quiet scholarly pursuits and introspection by students and faculty. The site for the new college, he wrote, must be "entirely rural, in the country, detached from all external society, not convenient to

any town or place of rendezvous; in the midst of forests, fields, and gardens, salubrious air, pure water, diversified scenery of hills and valleys, and meandering streams of rapid flowing water."

Thus in 1840, in beautiful Brooke





Before the trolley, travelers between Bethany and Wellsburg went by foot, horse, or horse and buggy. This muddy wagon is stopped in front of Bethany College, date unknown. Visible in the background are the college's Cochran Hall and Carnegie Library (now known as Cramblet Hall).

County, along the banks of Buffalo Creek, just a few miles from the western boundary with Washington County, Pennsylvania, Bethany College started its journey into national prominence as the oldest degree-granting institution of higher education in West Virginia and one of the earliest accredited institutions of higher learning in the country. Campbell, a distinguished theologian, scholar, and author — the friend of such dignitaries of his time as Henry Clay, Jefferson Davis, and President James Garfield — saw the natural setting as intellectually empowering. Others viewed Bethany as a barely tamed wilderness fraught with travel difficulties.

Wheeling, Wellsburg, and other nearby communities with emerging glass, iron, timber, shipping, and agricultural industries were

served by the Baltimore & Ohio railroad and riverboats that plied the Ohio River. Bethany had neither. The new town was connected to the outside world via an overland trail that eventually became a road (State Route 67 today). For nearly 70 years, the most common means of traversing into and out of Bethany were by foot, on horseback, or by an early version of bus service — horse and hack. Students, faculty, and townspeople hired the hack for their trips to and from Wellsburg, the nearest larger town. Originated by J.M. Davis & Son, the service could carry up to 12 passengers at a time in a buggy-like vehicle pulled by two draft horses. Each trip between Wellsburg and Bethany, scheduled three times daily, took two-and-a-half hours. The roads were often little more than widened trails and were nearly impassable in bad weather.

In 1850, the commissioners of Brooke County directed that a turnpike be constructed between Wellsburg and Bethany. The new

road, which became known as the Bethany Turnpike, was engineered, graded, and given a base of limestone. Frequently following the meandering Buffalo Creek, the turnpike required two single-lane bridges, one two-lane bridge, and upgrades to two existing single-lane tunnels. The project cut travel between the two towns from 19 miles to seven, offering a shortcut and more convenient access to the college overlooking the town of Bethany.

The tunnels were the first west of the Allegheny Mountains. They were constructed prior to the turnpike by Richard Waugh, a progressive farmer and gristmill operator, who owned approximately 3,000 acres along the Buffalo Creek. In the early 1830's, he carved out the tunnels at his own expense so that his farmhands would have a practical shortcut to the mill, taking them through two mountains rather than over or around them. Waugh's farmhands dug the narrow tunnel passages through the hills during

The Wellsburg Bethany Trolley, left, served Brooke County from 1908 until 1929. Here, car No. 2 crosses the Ghost Hollow viaduct in 1908. All photographs courtesy of the Cramblet Family Collection.



The Waugh Tunnel, one of two tunnels carved along this route in the 1830's, helped reduce the trip between Wellsburg and Bethany from 19 miles to seven. The tunnels were later widened to accommodate trolley traffic.

winter months. The width of the first openings was just large enough for a man to walk through. Later, the tunnels were enlarged so that a person on horseback could ride through them. Next, they were widened enough for a team of horses. The cost of tunnel construction, from a log kept by Alice Wells, the

wife of a trolley motorman, was \$1,675. (More than a century later, the tunnels would be eliminated by the West Virginia State Road Commission at a cost of \$125,000.)

The larger tunnel had a curve on one end that made it impossible to see whether anyone was coming from the other direction. Years later,

when the automobile became the mode of transportation, a local boy would stand at one end of the tunnel and for a dime would tell drivers whether or not a second car was coming. If motorists didn't pay the dime, they risked a hazardous trip through the tunnel, according to late Bethany College professor John Taylor.

Laura L. Cramblet, a Bethany resident and coauthor of this story, remembers as a five-year-old girl being excited about seeing the different "tunnel-vision" boys and whether or not she would know any of them. She also remembers vividly when rocks fell inside the tunnels. Her mother would have to stop their station wagon in the middle of the tunnel so that Laura and her sisters could move the boulders out of the way

Sixty years after its founding, Bethany College was feeling the effects of its splendid isolation. The lack of convenient transportation into and out of Bethany affected enrollment, so much so that by 1900, many feared the college might close. In 1901, the Reverend Thomas Ellsworth Cramblet, Laura's great-grandfather, became president. One of his priorities was to increase the college's enrollment by improving access to the campus. In President Cramblet's home city of Pittsburgh, trolleys were an efficient and affordable mode of transportation. Naturally he was interested in creating a trolley line from Wellsburg that would carry students into Bethany. With the support of the Bethany College administration, and urging by his bride who half-teasingly threatened to return to Pittsburgh if he didn't create better access to the city, the Wellsburg, Bethany, & Washington (PA) Railway—WB&W—was born. Rev. Cramblet himself would serve as the railroad's president from 1908 through 1919

The project had the important and enthusiastic support of Wellsburg

businessman Harman Greathouse "H.G." Lazear, who dreamed of linking his hometown with Washington, Pennsylvania, a growing city that benefited from its proximity to Pittsburgh. The trolley line would be a win-win for all parties. Bethany's rural isolation would end with new, mechanized access. Bethany College could more easily entice students to enroll. When H.G. Lazear received the franchise to build the proposed trolley line, he and his investors could point with pride and newfound financial impetus to a modern transportation system that would spur economic development in the area.

Building a new trolley line, however, even amid the can-do attitude of early 20th-century industrialized America, was easier said than done. The general route was there — the

old Bethany Turnpike. The tunnels were also there, though they would require reinforcing and widening of at least 17 inches on each side to permit a trolley car to pass. In addition to the trolley tracks, however, additional improvements would be needed. Steel bridges would be necessary to replace the covered bridges along the turnpike. Two high viaducts were planned to bring the trolley to the edge of Bethany College's campus. These became known as the Bethany and the Ghost Hollow viaducts.

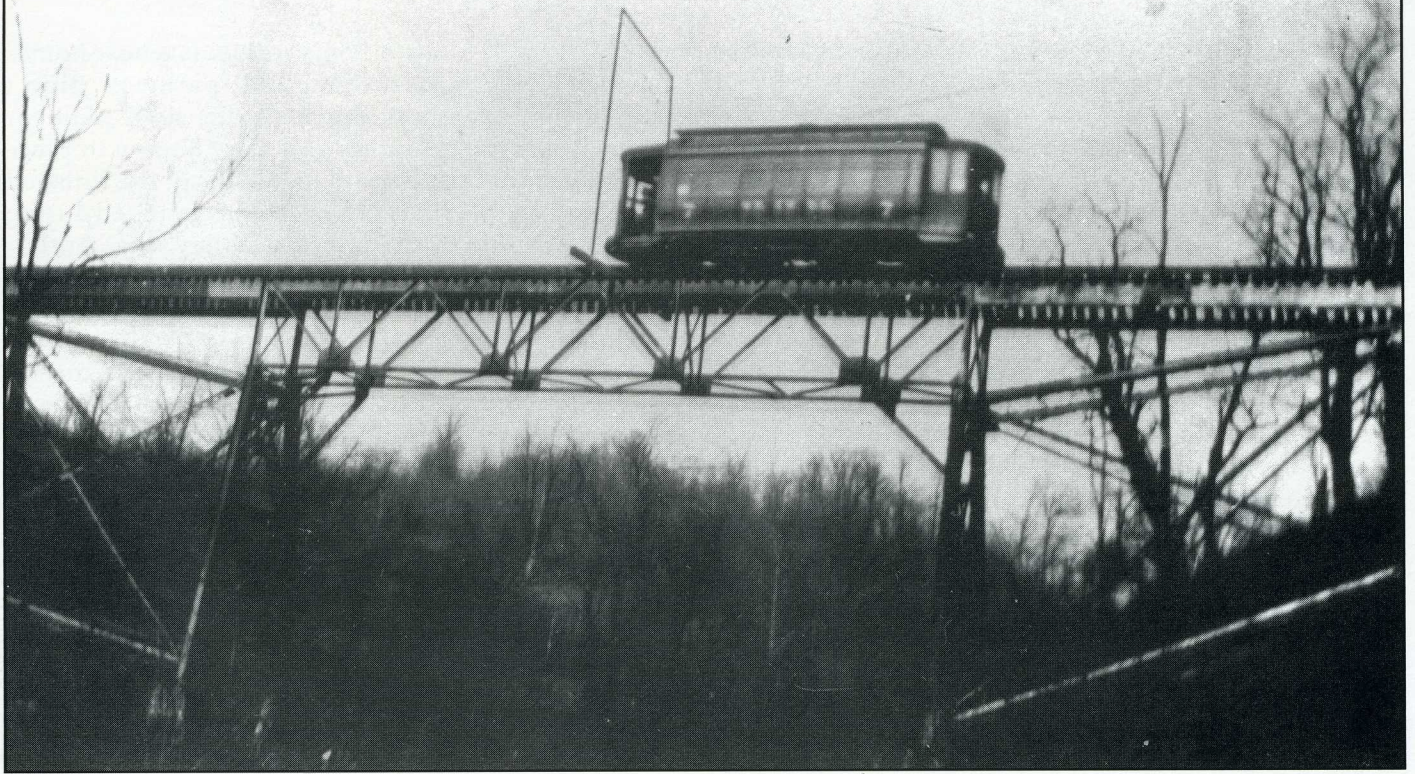
Kevin M. Morrissey, in his 2008 book, *The Up-Hill Climb: Defying the Odds on the Wellsburg, Bethany, & Washington Railway*, notes the various difficulties encountered in building the line, many related to financial concerns, others to the rugged terrain of the proposed

route. Some residents whose homes were along the pathway didn't think much of this bold plan for progress and were known to place spikes on the tracks of the finished line — pranks that continued during the life of the trolley line. Author Morrissey recounts an incident involving one local man, unpaid for his share of the right-of-way, who blocked the track with furniture within days of the scheduled opening of the trolley.

From the start, the backers of the enterprise seemed undeterred. They published a prospectus inviting investment in the new system. The proposed route, they noted, "begins at Wellsburg and runs in a general south-easterly direction along the line of Buffalo Creek, having its terminus at the town of Bethany, seven miles distant. ...The remain-



The arrival of the first Wellsburg Bethany Trolley on June 7, 1908. Bethany College president, the Reverend Thomas E. Cramblet, is circled at right, wearing a cap and gown.



Trolley crossing one of two viaducts between Wellsburg and Bethany, date unknown. Many passengers rode the trolley for recreation and to enjoy the view from perches such as this. The cost of a roundtrip ticket was 25 cents.

der of the line follows the county road through Buffalo Creek Valley, a greater part of which is productive farming country and beautiful scenery, crossing the Buffalo Creek at four points and running through two tunnels, all of which combines to make it the most attractive trolley ride in the section. Thousands will take this ride for the enjoyment of the beautiful scenery."

At some points, facing drop-offs of a hundred feet, the Wellsburg-to-Bethany trolley would offer spectacular aerial views. The cars were to travel along a route adorned with intriguing names, such as Rock Tunnel, Long Tunnel, and Ghost Hollow. The promoters alluded to the lucrative possibilities of coal and oil development in the vicinity of the trolley and assured the readers that "half-a-hundred students" would be transported to and from Bethany every school day. They estimated that between \$135,000 and \$150,000 would suffice to build and equip the trolley line.

As horse-and-carriage travel began its slow journey into oblivion,

a Bethany College student lamented in 1908 the local passing of a more leisurely, if less comfortable, way of transportation: "Even a Bethany hack cannot block the highway of civilization. The sound of the hammer, the cry of the mule driver... are heard in the land. The new trolley line is nearing completion."

For President Cramblet and other residents of Bethany, however, the completion of the trolley line couldn't come too soon. A writer in a January 1907 edition of the *Bethany College Bulletin* optimistically proclaimed that the roadway "is being well constructed, and there is every promise of a most successful enterprise. Six weeks of good weather will see the road completed to Bethany. This will be by all odds the greatest good fortune that has come to Bethany in all her history."

Despite delays, cost overruns, and legal problems, construction was finally completed in the spring of 1908, and the inaugural run of the trolley, from Wellsburg to Bethany, ran on Sunday, June 7. Financial

difficulties had deferred plans for extending the trolley line to Pennsylvania as originally proposed. But when President Cramblet climbed aboard car No. 3 after it arrived in downtown Bethany — still in his cap and gown from the college's baccalaureate service earlier in the day — with the citizens of Bethany crowded around him and other dignitaries, more than the dream of a trolley line was fulfilled. In the words of author Kevin Morrissey, "The trolley seemed like a miracle."

Dr. Wilbur H. Cramblet, Sr., president of Bethany College from 1934 to 1952, left this account of the first run of the trolley:

"The baccalaureate service was just ending. My father [T.E. Cramblet] had preached the sermon and still remained to sing the closing hymn and pronounced the benediction. I was sitting in the very rear of the church. Being careful not to be seen by my father, I slipped into the aisle, by the rear window, climbed out and down the rear wall. I then dashed madly uptown. There were others with me who ran faster than I



The trolley helped to boost college enrollment. Here Bethany College can be seen on the hill as a trolley car approaches at left in 1908.



Two trolley cars meet at the switch, the only section of the pike that had two sets of track. Date unknown.



The trolley rests at the end of the line, across from Chambers General Store on Main Street in Bethany, circa 1908.

could, but we all got to the streetcar about the same time. Everyone was ringing the bell on the floor of the front of the streetcar. It seemed that my father was there almost as soon as the rest of us although he closed the service with proper dignity and respect. ...This was a great day for Bethany."

For the next 17 years, the trolley line plied the nearly eight miles of steep inclines and winding tracks that connected Wellsburg and Bethany. Traveling some eight miles an hour, the citizens of the two towns faithfully rode the cars, which often also carried livestock, heavy freight, milk, produce, and supplies for the college. The trolley often stopped at every house along the route. Sometimes the motorman and passengers were pressed into service to chase livestock off the tracks. At one point the operators offered a smoking car. In the hot days of summer, an open car was added to the regular one. One day in 1912, the trolley's passengers included James Beauchamp "Champ" Clark, a candidate for president of

the United States.

The late Wilbur H. Cramblet, Jr., remembered that "many passengers considered a trip on the trolley a social event" — just as the line's promoters had promised in their published prospectus. In rural West Virginia, as elsewhere, this new mode of transportation "was welcomed and showered with adulation every bit as intense and sincere as that...generated by man's first step onto the surface of the moon," wrote William M. Moedinger in his 1977 book titled, *The Trolley: Triumph of Transport*.

Enrollment at Bethany College began to rise, as predicted. But the trolley faced ongoing challenges of financial solvency, emergency repairs, bad-weather delays, livestock killed on the tracks, and juvenile pranksters — local youths disconnected power cables, bringing the trolley to a halt; others hijacked the cars after operating hours, pushing them along the tracks for a joy ride.

Several high-profile accidents put the trolley line's future in doubt. In

1917, a runaway car rolling along the section of the route known as Buchanan's Hill derailed, killing one and injuring a dozen passengers. The trolley, seen as the solution to so many area challenges less than a decade before, was becoming a liability.

Facing continuing operational problems, the trolley line was leased to an outside corporation, which proved unable to revive the financial health of the system. Much of the operation had already been given over to freight hauling. President Cramblet, who had survived a shooting incident over a labor dispute, died in 1919 from an infection. Six years later, Bethany College assisted in developing a bus line between Wellsburg and Bethany that eventually replaced the dilapidating infrastructure of the trolley. Much diminished and plagued by financial problems, the trolley line continued operating until the issue of system safety — highlighted by one memorable, unauthorized trolley joy ride — helped to compel the closure of the line.

In 1928, according to Wilbur H. Cramblet, Jr., a trolley car was hijacked from the storage barn by juveniles, and the mischief went too far, literally. According to Wilbur, "That last trip, which I remember well, was when I rode in the front of the trolley and a student directed me to ring the car bell. ...I remember very well the excited voices of the students during the event." The car raced away with the students, who were unable to control it. It ran past its normal stop at the College Inn by several hundred feet and eventually halted short of leaving the town entirely. Mr. Cramblet remembered that the indentation of the car's wheels remained in the bricks of Bethany's Main Street for years.

The operators of the trolley had had enough. By 1929 — a little more than two decades after the

"miracle" of that hot June afternoon when the first trolley car rolled triumphantly into Bethany — the WB&W Railway's right-of-way was abandoned, the tracks were torn up, and the cars went to the scrap yard.

Today few visible reminders of the glorious days of the Wellsburg-to-Bethany trolley remain. Historical markers advise travelers of the site of the two former tunnels on State Route 67. Bethany College has thrived and grown into a nationally ranked institution. The scenery along the old trolley line remains ruggedly spectacular, a reminder of the physical challenge and economic promise of building a trolley line, once celebrated as Brooke County's technological wonder and now remembered for its colorful history — a brief chapter in West Virginia's diverse story of transportation. 🍂

In addition to those sources cited in the text, the authors wish to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable notes, photographs, and personal memories of Laura L. Cramblet's father, the late Wilbur H. Cramblet, Jr., as well as source material available through the Cramblet family archives, the T W Phillips Memorial Library at Bethany College, and the Digital Library of Appalachia.

LAURAL CRAMBLET is a native of Wheeling and a graduate of Bethany College. She earned a master's degree in library and information sciences from Kent State University and taught Appalachian culture and traditions at Bethany. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MORT GAMBLE was born in Cumberland, Maryland, and grew up in Moorefield. He earned a doctorate from West Virginia University in higher education leadership and currently is assistant to the president at Bethany College. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Fall 2009 issue.



This trolley wrecked in 1917 on its way to Bethany, killing one person and injuring a dozen others. Safety and financial concerns contributed to the demise of the trolley in the late 1920's.

Baseball Crazy in Doddridge County

By Duane Ellifritt

I was raised in Greenwood, Doddridge County, population about 370, where my father operated a small general store next to U.S. Route 50. I was born in 1935, the youngest of four children. The elementary school at Greenwood had grades one through eight, two grades to a room. It was here that I first played softball.

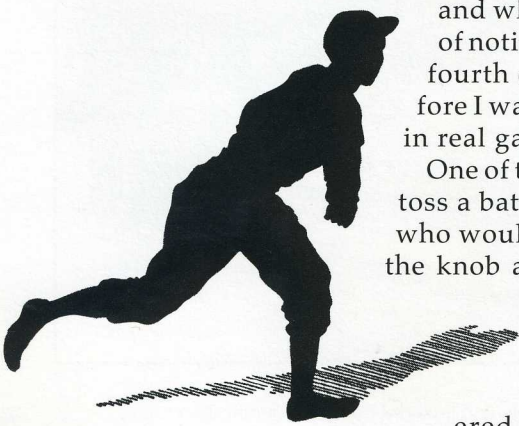
The boys would pour out of the building for recess and lunch hour, and immediately the two largest ones would begin the solemn ritual of choosing up sides. The seventh and eighth graders dominated the game and decided who would play and who wasn't worthy of notice. I think I was in fourth or fifth grade before I was allowed to play in real games.

One of the leaders would toss a bat to the other one, who would catch it as near the knob as possible. Then the two would go hand-over-hand until the last hand covered the knob, thus

winning the first pick. In cases where the knob was exposed, the other chooser would grasp the knob between thumb and middle finger and would then call "hen picks" or "crow picks." The other player then let go of the bat, and the last holder had to have such a grip on the knob as to be able to throw it in the air 10 feet. There then followed the inevitable argument as to whether or not it went 10 feet! Sometimes this ritual occupied most of the 15-minute recess period, and there was little time left for actually playing. It was better at lunch time, when we had a whole hour to play and argue.

Players were selected in turn, from the best to the worst, with some not getting picked at all. We had a tradition that the little guys, those last picked, could select one of the better players to take his third strike while he ran the bases.

If there were not enough players to field a full team, we played something called "cross-out." In this



scheme, there was no first baseman. If you fielded a ground ball, you had to throw it between the runner and first base. This caused arguments to erupt as there was no umpire. In fact, we spent probably 50 percent of our recreational time arguing about something!

Some days we played something called "Indian ball." There were a batter and a pitcher, and everyone else was in the field. If a fielder caught a ball on the fly, he automatically replaced the batter. When a person fielded a grounder, the batter had to lay his bat on the ground and the fielder rolled the ball on the ground toward the bat. If he hit the bat, he replaced the batter. If you fielded a foul ball, the batter stood the bat upright and you had to throw the ball at it. The batter held to the top of the bat and could sometimes tilt it slightly to make the ball miss. More arguments. "You moved the bat!" "No I didn't!"

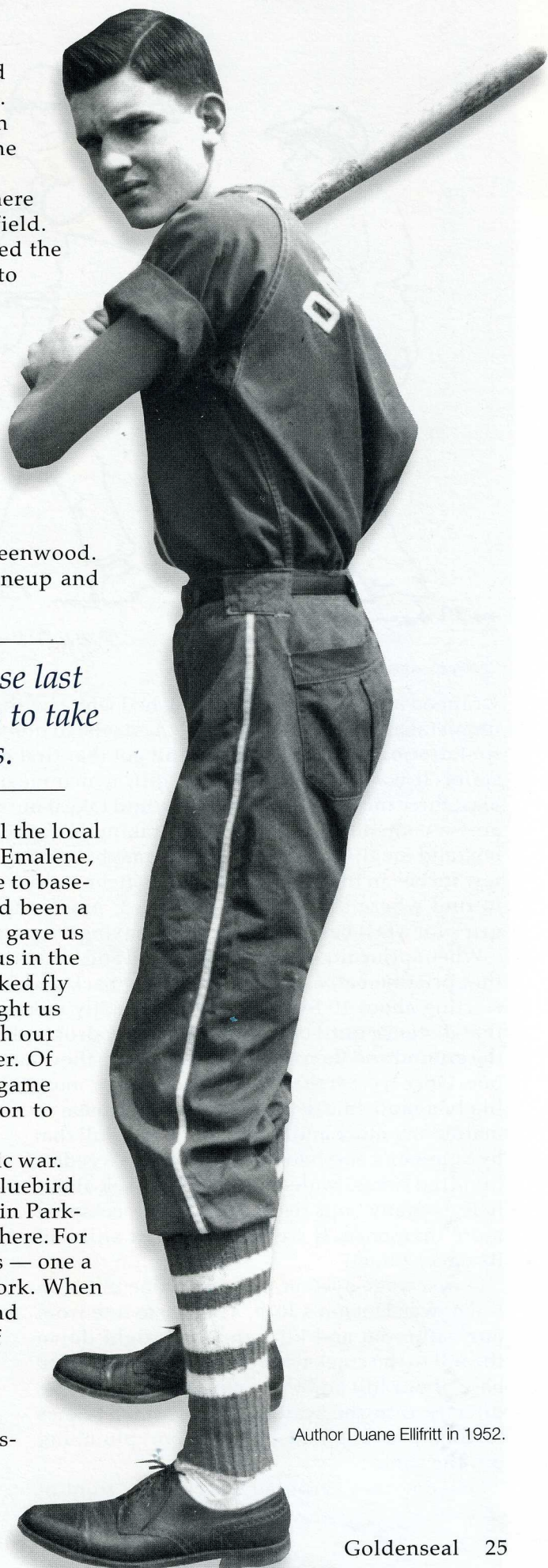
We actually played games with other grade schools in the county. I remember playing at Smithburg, West Union, and Carr. The school bus would transport us to the away games, and some of these schools would come to Greenwood. We never had a coach, so the oldest boys would set the lineup and decide who would play where.

We had a tradition that the little guys, those last picked, could select one of the better players to take his third strike while he ran the bases.

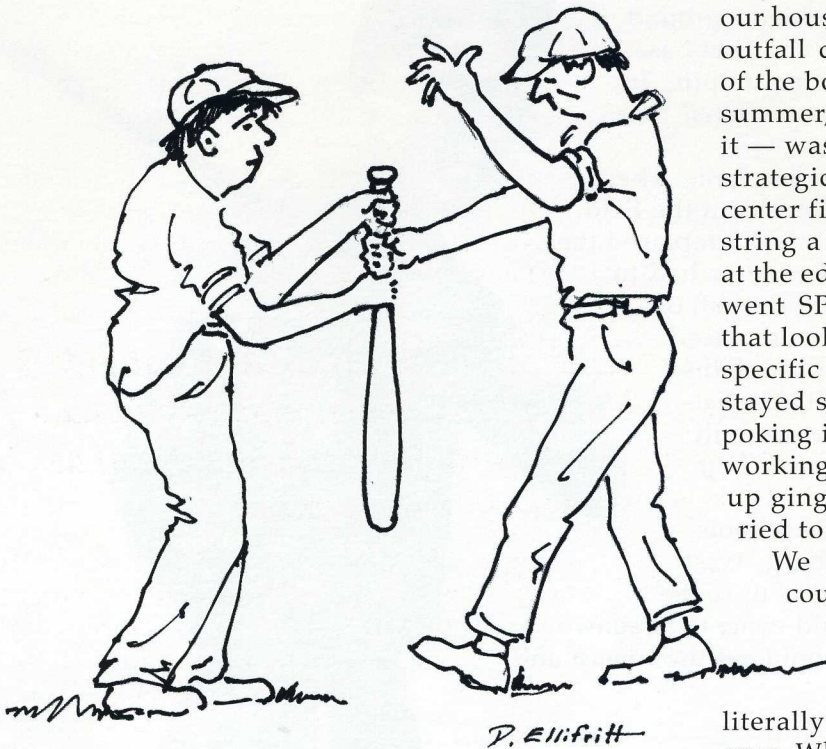
I had never played any baseball until WWII ended and all the local men came home. One of these men began courting my sister, Emalene, and it was he who introduced my brother Maywood and me to baseball. His name was Jennings Wiant, called Jeb, and he had been a pretty good high school baseball player at Cairo. I think he gave us the first baseball we had ever owned and then threw with us in the field between our house and Uncle Grover's. He also knocked fly balls to us down in the meadow below our house. He taught us not to backpedal on a fly hit over our heads but to turn with our backs to the batter and run looking back over one shoulder. Of course he had a vested interest in teaching us to play the game since it made points with the family and gave him a reason to visit my sister.

Meanwhile, my brother Hobart came home from the Pacific war. [See "West Virginia Back Roads: Hobart Ellifritt and his Bluebird Motels," by Carl E. Feather; Spring 2007.] Hobart got a job in Parkersburg, and he and cousin Robert Ellifritt roomed together there. For something to do after work, they bought a couple of gloves — one a catcher's mitt — and passed the ball to each other after work. When Hobart came home, he would play catch with Maywood and me, usually in the front yard just below the front steps. If someone threw one wild, which happened often, the ball would bounce in the road and go over the hill into the high weeds. The more we played with the ball, the greener it got, and by summer's end it was a dark brown and almost impossible to see lying in the weeds.

We usually got one new baseball a year. It came in a box,



Author Duane Ellifritt in 1952.



Choosing sides. Illustration by Duane Ellifritt.

wrapped in tissue paper, unblemished white, with that unmistakable new leather smell. And woe to him who first dropped it on the ground and got that first grass stain! It was often a Christmas gift, which meant at least three more months until we could take it outside. So we contented ourselves with taking it out of the box and smelling it occasionally, maybe tossing it a few inches in the air, counting the stitches and trying to find where they began and ended, practicing the grips for a fast ball and curve, then boxing it up again.

When spring finally came, Maywood and I would take that pristine ball and toss it gingerly back and forth, starting about 10 feet apart and gradually increasing that distance until one of us eventually dropped it on the ground and then took some grief from the other one. Once we got that first grass stain, or more likely a mud smear in April, it didn't seem to matter any more and it was just a baseball that by summer's end had been lost in the weeds a hundred times, fouled off into the creek about half as many, and rescued from the cesspool more than once. If we were lucky, it still had its cover intact.

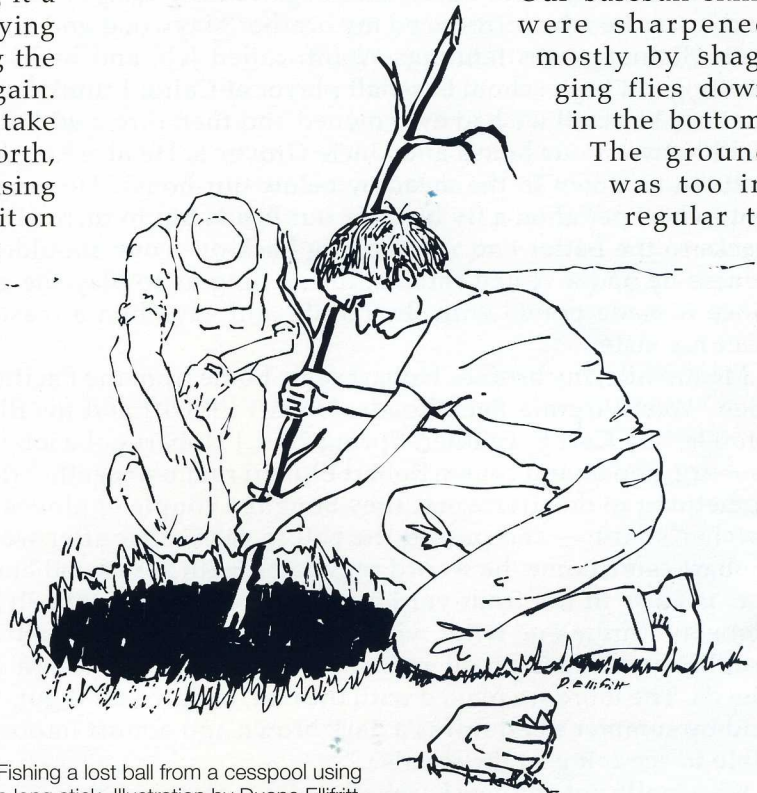
Our sewage system, like everyone else's in town, was Dotson's Run. The waste line from our bathroom and kitchen led straight down the hill to the creek where it came closest to the base of our hill and there emptied its contents directly into the water. All the other homes fortunate enough to have indoor plumbing did the same.

One day they rerouted the creek in front of

our house to enlarge the meadow and left our sewage outfall deposited in a cesspool right in the middle of the bottom. After the grass was cut for hay in the summer, the meadow — or "bottom," as we called it — was our baseball field. The cesspool occupied a strategic position halfway between second base and center field. Many an outfielder, charging in to shoe-string a sinking fly ball, was forced to pull up short at the edge of the pit and watch helplessly as the ball went SPLAT and buried itself deep into that stuff that looked like, and had the consistency of, tar. The specific gravity of the sludge was such that the ball stayed submerged and could only be resurrected by poking into the disturbed area with a long stick and working the ball to the surface, where it was picked up gingerly between thumb and forefinger and carried to the creek to be washed.

We never had more than one baseball, so we couldn't afford to just leave it interred in the cesspool. Washing it in the creek further waterlogged it and eventually caused the threads to rot prematurely and unravel. We literally "knocked the cover off the ball" more than once. When that happened, we would retrieve the two figure-eight pieces, which were still mostly attached to each other, get some good strong fishing line and a needle and sew the cover back on. It was never as good or as tight as the original, but it was all we had and it kept the game going. Modern kids who have never sewn the cover back on a baseball have missed one of life's more rewarding moments!

Our baseball skills were sharpened mostly by shagging flies down in the bottom. The ground was too irregular to



Fishing a lost ball from a cesspool using a long stick. Illustration by Duane Ellifritt.

hit ground balls, and we never had enough bodies to play a game. So the value of the time spent was in learning to judge fly balls and some limited batting practice, which could be accomplished with three or four boys.

We did not have any catcher's equipment, so the catcher would stand 30 or 40 feet back of the batter. Sometimes I tried to be macho and squat right behind the batter. And I got a foul tip in my face a couple of

being caught listening and praying at the same time.

One early morning in June 1947, Mother, Maywood, and I walked over to Route 50, flagged down the Greyhound, and rode to Cincinnati for the purpose of seeing a genuine major league baseball game. We had looked at the Reds' schedule and picked a home game with the St. Louis Cardinals, Maywood's favorite team. My team, the Detroit Tigers, was in the other league, so that was not an option.

Once we got that first grass stain, or more likely a mud smear in April, it didn't seem to matter any more and it was just a baseball that by summer's end had been lost in the weeds a hundred times, fouled off into the creek about half as many, and rescued from the cesspool more than once.

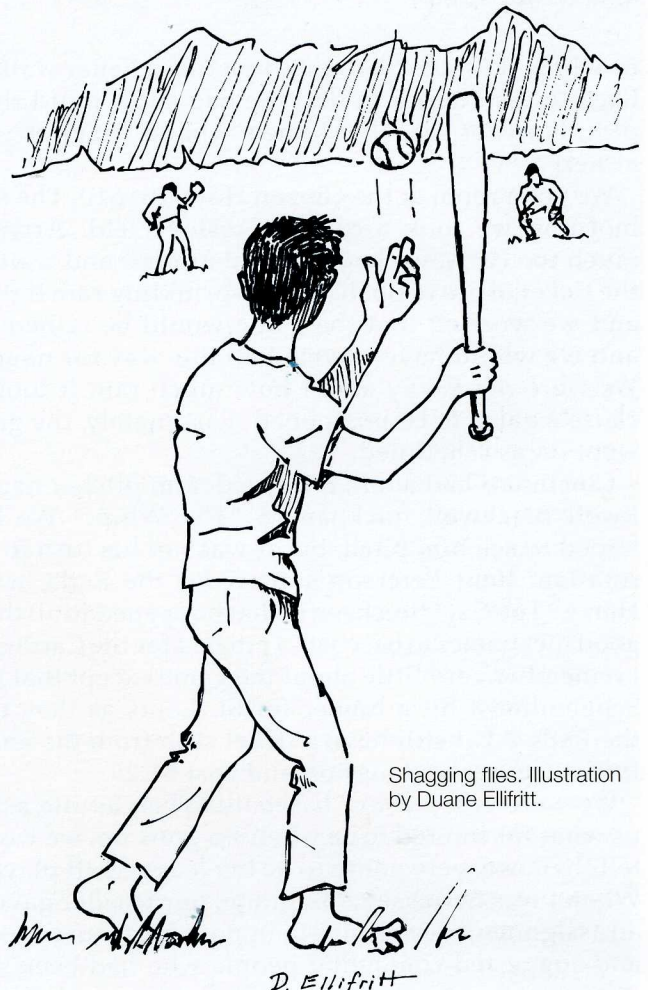
times. When I was in college, a dentist looked at my teeth and said, "The nerves are dead in both of your front teeth. Did you ever get hit in the mouth with a hard object?" Yes, I had.

The Detroit Tigers had just won the 1945 World Series, so I decided they would be my favorite team. I studied box scores in the *Clarksburg Telegram*, and we listened to any games we could find on our old Philco AM radio. On a day when the weather cooperated, we could pull in Pittsburgh, whose announcers were Rosy Rosewell and Bob Prince. Rosewell's signature line for a homer was, "Raise the window, Aunt Minnie! Here it comes!" Announcers then did not travel with the team but read the ticker tape and pretended they were at the game by using sound effects. You could always tell by the "chuga-chuga-chuga" noise of the ticker tape in the background that they weren't really seeing the game.

Hobart had been stationed in Cleveland in 1941 as a recruiting sergeant, and he got in free to any Indians game. When he came back from the war in 1945, he converted the whole family to Indians fans. So we listened to Jimmy Dudley and Jack Graney announce the games every time the weather permitted. On Sunday afternoons, the whole family would crowd around the radio. Even Mother got to know all the players on the Indians, and we cheered them on to a World Series championship in 1948.

One Sunday, we were listening to a game when Mother called us to dinner. We turned the radio up so we could hear it from the dining room. Dad always said grace, which was long and seemingly interminable when we were hungry. He was into his prayer when we heard from the living room, "It's a long drive to left! Mitchell goes back, back..." Dad stopped in the middle of his prayer until we heard that Mitchell caught it at the wall. Hobart, Maywood, and I stifled a snicker while Dad finished. He was a little miffed at us for laughing, and perhaps a little embarrassed at

Keep in mind that none of us had ever seen an organized baseball game of any kind. I was 12 years old, Maywood was 13. There was no such thing as Little League, and we hadn't been to high school yet. We listened to games on the radio and could picture what the field looked like, but radio announcers did not fill in all the gaps. When the announcer said, "Feller goes to the rosin bag," I had no idea what a rosin bag was



Shagging flies. Illustration by Duane Ellifritt.



The 1952 Doddridge County High School baseball team. Seated from the left are Fox, Bowerlin, Swisher, Nicholson, L. Coffman, Frame, Kinney, and O. Coffman. Standing are coach Davis, manager Gum, Chipps, Currey, Garret, Duane Ellifritt (circle), Scott, Britton, Shields, manager Coffindaffer, and assistant coach Vanscoy.

or where it was to be found. I pictured Feller walking back to the dugout to find the bag. Now that I think of it, I am not sure that I knew what a "dugout" was either!

We got a room at the Gibson Hotel for \$10. The next morning we took a cab to Crosley Field. Arriving much too early, we had to stand around and wait for the ticket office to open. It was sprinkling rain lightly, and we worried that the game would be rained out and we would have traveled all this way for naught. We were not savvy about how much rain it took to cause a game to be postponed. Fortunately, the game went on as scheduled.

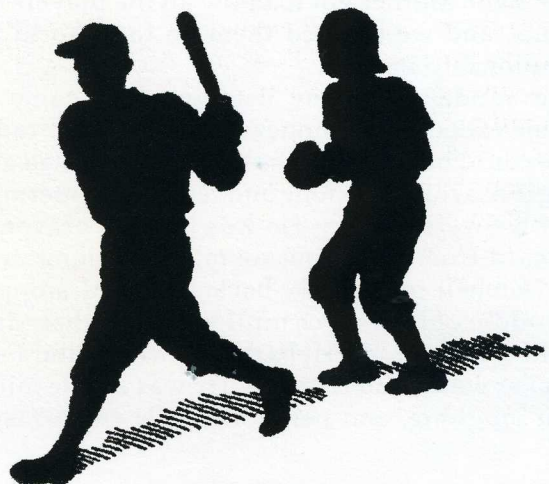
Cincinnati had a tall, rangy sidearm pitcher named Ewell Blackwell, nicknamed "The Whip." We had hoped to see him pitch, but it was not his turn in the rotation. Kent Peterson started for the Reds, while Harry "The Cat" Brecheen (What happened to all those good nicknames in baseball?) pitched for the Cardinals. I remember very little about the game except that Red Schoendienst hit a homer for St. Louis as they beat the Reds 7-2. I still have a ticket stub from the game. It was General Admission and cost \$1.25.

We were crazy about baseball! When adults asked us what we wanted to be when we grew up, we would tell them we were going to be big league ball players. When I was in the seventh grade, our teacher gave us an assignment of writing about possible future careers and suggested contacting people who had been suc-

cessful in the same. I wrote a letter to Detroit Tigers pitcher Hal Newhouser, who later became a Hall of Famer. Surprisingly, I got a letter back in a few days, encouraging me.

I started high school in the fall of 1949. Freshmen were not allowed to play varsity sports then, but I worked out with the team in the spring of '50. I was taller than most, so I tried out for first base. I made the starting team in my sophomore year and alternated at first base with Clyde Sweeney, who also pitched.

I was not a good hitter, but better than average in the field. The only memorable event in my sophomore year came in an end-of-season tournament at Pennsboro. We had a one-run lead over the Cairo Pharoahs in the last of the seventh. (All games were seven innings back



then.) Cairo had runners at second and third with two out. I was playing well off of first with a right-handed batter coming up. He lined one between me and first base that would have won the game for them had I not dived and speared the ball on a line before crashing to the ground. As I got up out of the dust, I looked up and saw all my teammates running from the bench to pound me on the back.

As a hitter, I was just average — around .250 or .260. I never hit a home run, mainly because we never played on a field with an outfield fence. Most of the diamonds we played on ended up with a hillside, the railroad, or a parking lot in the outfield.

One day we were playing St. Marys in Clarksburg when I came up with the bases loaded. I hit a high drive well over the left fielder's head, which he had to turn and run down. Anyone else would have had a grand slam homer, but I was pretty slow afoot and only made it to third before the ball was relayed back in. My teammates razzed me pretty good about that, and the story got better with each telling. One version had the left fielder crawling under a car to retrieve the ball. Another said the ball got stuck in the tailpipe and had to be pried loose as I was plodding my way around the bases. As to my speed on the base paths, Hobart used to tell everyone that I was once thrown out trying to stretch a triple into a single!

Of course, one remembers the bad times, too. At St. Marys one night I stepped into the box with the bases loaded and no outs. I looked at three strikes without taking the bat off my shoulder then had to walk back to the bench to get a chewing-out from my coach, Murray Davis. "Weren't ANY of those in there?" he asked. To hide my embarrassment, I lied. No, they were all off the plate, I said.

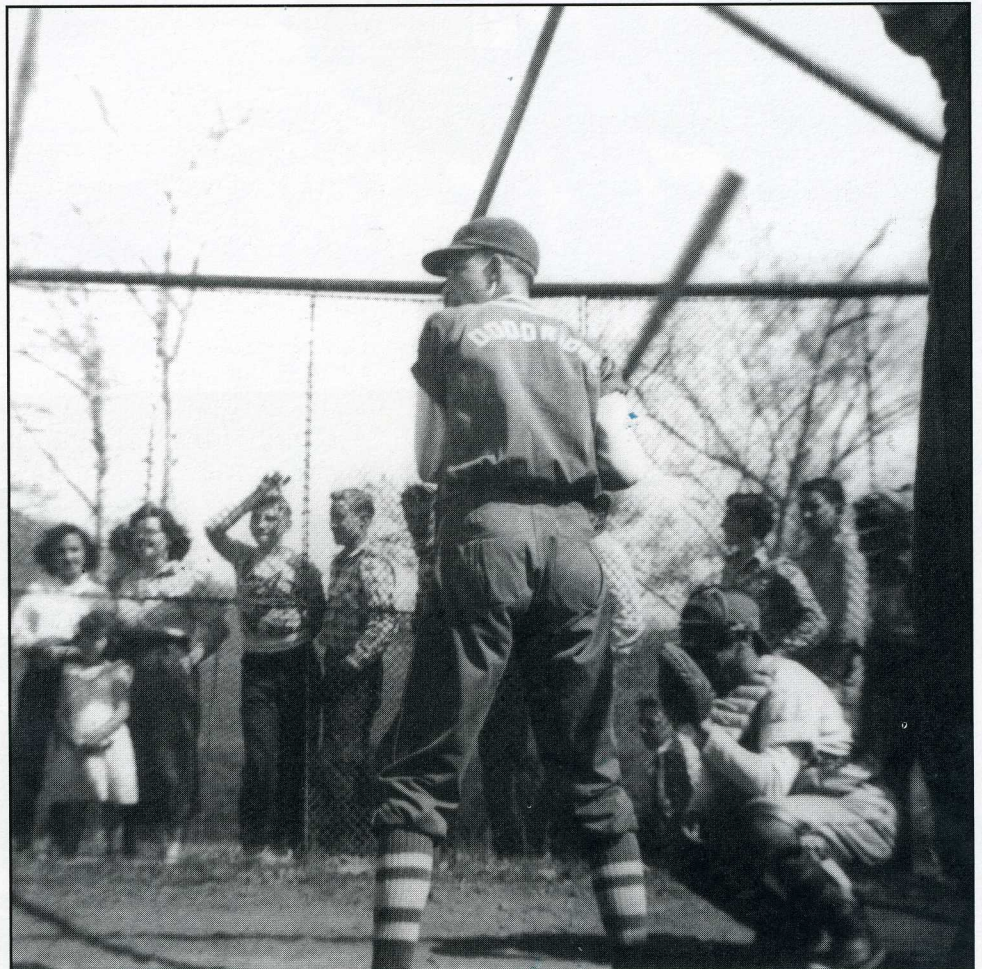
I was determined that whatever college I attended, I was going to play on their baseball team. I enrolled in Marshall College in the autumn of 1953. When the Thundering Herd began tryouts in the spring of '54, I tried out, even though freshmen were not allowed to play in those days. The weather was cold in Huntington in April and my hand hurt from taking throws from players, like Walt Walowac, who could throw much harder than my high school teammates. I

went to enough practices to get my picture made with the team in the 1954 *Chief Justice*, the college yearbook.

This was the last baseball I ever played. By the time my sophomore year came around, I was so loaded down with engineering studies that I knew I could never afford the time for baseball, so I gave it up for good and hated engineering for making me do it. However, I continued to play slow-pitch softball — a poor substitute but not without its rewards — for the next 45 years. 🍁

The author and editor wish to thank Bob Cole for his invaluable assistance in pursuing and developing this manuscript. Bob and Duane were roommates at Marshall College in 1956-57. Bob is a retired professor of journalism at the College of New Jersey. —ed.

DUANE ELLIFRITT is a graduate of Doddridge County High School and Marshall University. He earned a master's degree in structural engineering from the University of Cincinnati and later received a Ph.D. in structural engineering from West Virginia University. Duane retired from the University of Florida in 2000 as professor emeritus of structural engineering. An experienced writer, this is Duane's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Duane Ellifritt at bat for the Doddridge County High School baseball team in 1952.



Owner Joe Coleman holds his signature fish sandwich — two fillets of North Atlantic pollack on plain white bread — outside the entrance to his restaurant in Wheeling's Centre Market.

COLEMAN'S FISH

A Great Catch in Wheeling

Joe Coleman was asleep aboard a Navy nuclear-submarine tender preparing to embark on a tour of Europe with his wife when a knock on his door changed the course of his life and Wheeling's culinary history.

The visitor was a chaplain. He informed Joe on that fateful night in 1973 that his father, Ray, had suffered a heart attack. The next day in Rome, Italy, Joe met up with his wife, Renie, and instead of touring Europe, they caught a flight back to the United States and his ailing father's bedside.

His father suffered a second, and fatal, heart attack three months later. Management of the family business, Coleman's Fish Market in Wheeling, fell upon Joe. Up to that point, Joe had other plans for his life.

"I came in and basically I said, 'I'm your new boss. Tell me what to do,'" Joe says, recalling his first day on the job. "I had no idea what to do."

Nearly 40 years later, Coleman's is the largest fish house in the Northern Panhandle, with more than 200 wholesale customers in the tri-state area. The wholesale business operates discretely in an alley building off Market Street. Joe had the utilitarian building erected shortly after taking over the business. An 1873 Victorian Italianate row house on Market Street serves as the office.

Directly across the street from the wholesale operation is the lower market house, built in 1890. The north end of this building houses the retail side of Coleman's Fish Market, the iconic eatery that tourists and residents alike associate with Wheeling's south side.

On a Friday afternoon in Lent, the "regular" line of this eatery zigzags for six courses past the cash register then spills into the dining area and, eventually, out the market house's doors and onto Market Street itself.

When things are busy, diners willingly wait 30 minutes or longer for Coleman's most-famous menu

item. two three-ounce fillets of fresh North Atlantic pollack deep fried to golden perfection and tucked between two slices of white sandwich bread, then wrapped in translucent deli paper and tucked inside a brown paper sack.

Costing \$4 and change, the sandwich packs more fish than most fish dinners and leaves just enough room for one of the tempting po-

tato sides — jojo wedges, plain or seasoned French fries — basking under heat lamps near the spot where customers claim their orders.

On any given day, the serving line will include Wheeling-area residents who have been eating Coleman's food since childhood and seasoned visitors who have been waiting for this moment for weeks, perhaps months. They know



Joe and Ray Coleman in about 1949. This was young Joe's first experience with fish. Photographer unknown.



John Coleman, founder of the Coleman fish enterprise, with a snook in Florida, late 1940's. Photographer unknown.

exactly what they want, and what they want on it and with it, long before they step in front of Sandy Stillwell. Sandy has been taking orders for Coleman's since the sandwich cost 75 cents — 37 years ago.

This tradition was spawned in 1914, when farmers John and Nellie Coleman of Hannibal, Ohio, gave up the chicken-and-egg business and heeded the advice of veteran fishmonger Sam Hurdle of Wheeling. Hurdle's place was at the south end of the market house where Coleman's is now located.

"The old man was getting out of the fish business. He told my grand-

father, 'If you don't like selling chickens, you ought to try selling fish,'" Joe says, sharing the story that had been passed down to him by his father. Joe was three years old when his grandfather died and recalls nothing of the man from his own recollections.

Joe says his grandfather's business in those early days consisted of a 150-pound barrel of whole fish hauled in over the National Road from Baltimore. His first shop was in a narrow storefront across from where the Stone & Thomas store stood until the retailer exited Wheeling several years ago. From

there, it moved into a skinny side-alley room in the same neighborhood. A few years later, John moved into a two-story building. He lived in the upstairs and ran his market out of the ground-level floor.

John named his business Union Fish Market, capitalizing upon the moniker of a large market in New York City. To this day, the parent company's name remains Union Fish.

Joe says his grandfather was doing both retail and wholesale fish sales when he moved his business into the lower market house in the early 1920's. Built with open sides, the two market buildings were hubs of commerce where everything from live chickens and eggs to fish and fruit was sold.

"In those days, there were no supermarkets," Joe says. "This would have been the Walmart of the day."

Joe says that when his father came back from serving with the Marines in World War II, he began experimenting with sandwiches that could be prepared and sold at the retail location. At that time, blue pike or "Jack fish" was abundant, cheap, and readily available from Lake Erie fisheries 150 miles north of Wheeling. It was this fish that Ray Coleman used to create his first fish sandwich, which sold for a nickel, the going price for a loaf of bread.

"I found some old invoices where my dad could buy the fish plus delivery for three cents a pound," Joe says. "Now, the shipping alone is 25 cents a pound."

To Joe's knowledge, the sandwich has always been made with white bread. Ray Coleman developed the proprietary mixture of salt, pepper, spices, and cracker meal that coats the fresh fillets minutes before they hit the hot oil. Joe keeps the recipe under lock, and one of his myriad duties is to prepare this coating in 100-pound batches on Thursday evenings after his employees depart.

As with Joe, Ray was thrust into the business when his father suffered a heart attack at the age of 62.



In addition to a wholesale business and restaurant, Coleman's sells fresh fish from this retail display case. The fish is trucked in from Boston three times a week.

John's wife, Nellie, stayed on with the business and helped her son make the transition from Marine to fishmonger.

"My dad, he carried on the business and it grew," Joe says.

Joe says his father kept a limited menu on the retail side: five kinds of sandwiches, including deviled crab, oyster, and shrimp. He tried offering French fries but gave up on that idea because the side took up too much valuable deep-fryer capacity.

By the 1960's, Ray Coleman had expanded the business to three retail locations: Centre Market, downtown Wheeling, and Moundsville. But the operation became too large to manage, and he pulled back to Centre Market as his single retail location, while maintaining the wholesale operation across the street.

Ray and Maria Coleman had six

children. Joe, their only son, grew up avoiding the family legacy.

"I wanted to be an architect or engineer," Joe says. Rather than work in the family business, he spent his summers building houses with his future father-in-law and working for the West Virginia State Road Commission on highway maintenance and construction.

Joe ran into academic trouble during his first year as an engineering student at West Virginia University. A draft notice soon arrived. He enlisted in the Navy, and for the next five years worked on the reactors of nuclear submarines. As he was approaching the end of a six-year stint, his father asked him to consider running the business for a year. If he didn't like it, he'd be free to go back to engineering school and complete his education.

Ray's heart attack accelerated that timetable and thrust Joe into the

business with his widowed mother, whose previous work with it had been on the bookkeeping side. She became more hands-on after Ray died and worked with Joe for 30 years, retiring in 2003. She died five years later. Joe's sisters assisted in the business, but only one of them, Mary Rich, remains involved in it today.

Joe immersed himself in the business and took every opportunity to learn more about the industry. In the summer of 1980, he signed on as a crew member of a 100-foot trawler out of Boston. For a week he worked alongside the men who risk their lives so Wheeling residents and visitors can enjoy fresh North Atlantic pollack and other seafood.

"It just gave me a better grasp of what it's all about," Joe says, explaining his reason for wanting to get closer to the source of his product. "When customers com-

plain about the prices, I can explain to them all that goes into getting the fish to the market."

Joe says that when he took over the business, the basic fish sandwich sold for 45 cents. After doing an analysis of his costs, he decided a slight increase was in order.

"When I raised the price to 49 cents, I wondered if people would pay that for them or if we would go out of business," he says.

Coleman's had 10 employees when Joe began working there. Today 40 people draw their living from Coleman's. Many of them have

Mae began with breaded fish. After she'd done that for a few months, Ray challenged her to cut a one-pound fillet into five equal portions. "That, when breaded, weighs four ounces," she says.

Mae passed the test and began learning the art of filleting. Shortly into her career, she made the mistake of not raising her hand as the knife exited the fish. The resulting cut was right along her thumbnail.

Her boss pressed together the incised sections for a few seconds, then wrapped brown paper around the finger and told Mae, "You won't

in which she worked was less than a quarter of the size of the current fillet room, which has become very cramped with the growth of the business.

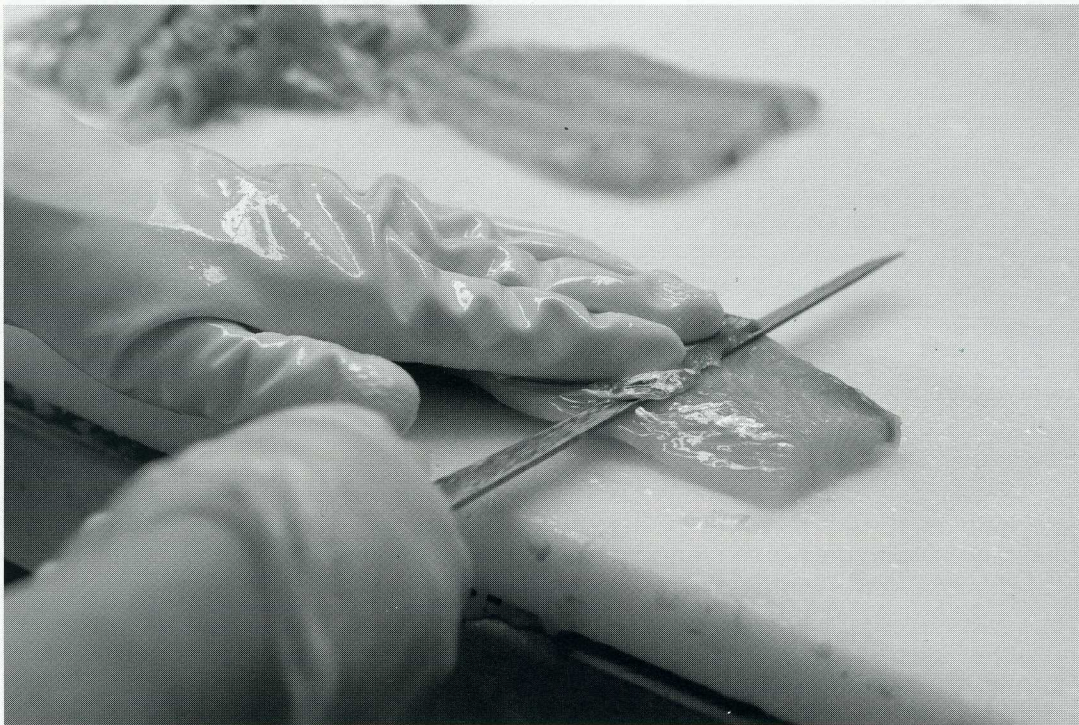
An experienced cutter can process a 25-pound box of fish sides every 15 minutes. Processing involves removing the dark veins and cutting away the layer of fat that lies just below the skin. The fillet is then cut into portions as ordered by the customer; if it's for the fish market's sandwiches, the fillets are three ounces each. No weighing is done. It's all based upon the cutter's experience.

The freshly cut fillets are coated and breaded, packed in a plastic container, and carried across the street, where they are fried and served, often within minutes of being pulled from the packing ice.

Fresh seafood arrives from Boston thrice weekly. During Lent, when many of the region's churches and civic groups hold fish fries for fundraisers, 10 tons or more of fresh seafood will pass through the Coleman's coolers in a typical week. Joe says that time of year is also the most demanding from a supply standpoint; fierce storms can pre-

vent the trawlers from heading to the Georges Banks, the source of the North Atlantic pollack that gives the Coleman fish sandwich its signature mild, slightly sweet taste.

Ray switched to this variety after the blue pike disappeared from overfishing. Joe has experimented with numerous substitutes; all but one has fallen short. He says the Alaskan variety is unacceptable, as is using frozen North Atlantic fillets. No matter how the fillets are frozen, they lose the quality that he



A fillet is trimmed before being cut into three-ounce portions, breaded, and fried for Coleman's famous fish sandwich. An experienced cutter can fillet 25 pounds of fish every 15 minutes.

been with Joe since his early days of running the business.

Mae Stan, who supervises the wholesale operation, started working for Ray Coleman in 1968. Her late sister, Shirley Barr, worked there and suggested Mae apply.

"I had seven children and the doctor told me, 'You got to get out of the house and work. You got to get a part-time job and get away from the kids.' So I started part-time and went to full-time and stayed for 42 years," Mae says.

do that again."

"And I never did cut myself again," she says. Mae says that when she came to work for Coleman's, Ray made his wholesale deliveries in the same station wagon he used to drive his six children and wife to church and family outings. She recalls him as a fair man to work for and one who treated his employees like family, a culture Joe continues to nurture.

She says the wholesale operation was in a former garage. The room



Joe Coleman has introduced several health-conscious measures in his restaurant's food preparation, as this sign indicates.

demands for his product.

"I struggled for 20 to 25 years to come up with a perfected way to freeze fish, and I couldn't come up with it," says Joe, who enjoys applying his penchant for engineering to the restaurant business.

About three years ago, Joe finally hit upon a close alternative for the North Atlantic pollack. Swai, a river catfish native to Vietnam, was found to have the qualities Joe needed for his signature sandwich.

"It's far superior to frozen pollack," Joe says. "It's now our backup fish."

Joe also applied his passion for engineering to the design of the carryout box for their fish and chips (it has holes in it so the steam can escape), the kind of bread used for the sandwich (baked by Nickles in Ohio, it has to be slightly hard so the steam from the fillet does not make it soggy), and the kind of oil in which he fries the fillets and potatoes.

With his family medical history — his father and grandfather both died at the age of 62 from heart attacks — Joe is a health-conscious

restaurateur. Long before the trans fat ban was placed on the Big Apple's restaurants, Joe was sending his frying vegetable oils to test labs for analysis so he could select the healthiest, most taste-neutral product for his fryers. He ended up using canola oil years before the rest of the industry adopted it for its healthier fats profile.

When a Cargill salesman showed

condiment bar item. Joe charges 10 cents for a packet of the cream-based variety, which is about as necessary as butter on cheesecake.

"If you want to buy the extra fat, that's fine," Joe says. "But the sandwich really doesn't need it."

The restaurant also offers low-fat options like steamed or grilled fish, rice, and vegetables, but Joe admits these "healthy options" are a very

The people who come to Coleman's are there for the taste and tradition.

up at his shop in 1993 with a new line of healthy oils, Joe agreed to allow Coleman's as a test site. Three years later, Coleman's was the first restaurant in the United States to adopt the company's trans fat-free product, which he proudly continues to use to this day.

He estimates that each sandwich, when served without sauce, has only 15 grams of fat.

Most people who eat at Coleman's for the first time are surprised to find that tartar sauce does not come on the classic sandwich. Nor is it a

small portion of his business. Most of the people who come to Coleman's are there for the taste and tradition.

"It's just wonderful," said Brenda Moyer, who drove from St. Marys, Ohio, to have a sandwich with her son's friend, Teri Cline.

"I lived in Monterey, California, and ate at the fisherman's wharf, but the fish tastes so much better here than it does there," she says.

"It's not a fishy taste," Teri chimes in. "It's a nice, mild fish, very flaky."

At another table, Marshall and

Elizabeth Nixon unwrap their steamy sandwiches and add their favorite condiments. Marshall, 70, has been coming here since he was a child.

"The food is wonderful. You can't beat it," he says.

That assessment is backed by solid sales figures. Despite the recession that had many families cutting back on luxuries like dining out, Coleman's had one of its best years ever in 2009, says Joe. He attributes that to the quality and value of the food. Even in hard times, you can eat well for under \$6 at Coleman's.

The market sells about a half-million fish sandwiches every year, and the wholesale division cuts and breads another million of the famous fillets for other vendors. Joe estimates that one of his long-time employees, Erma Vance, has assembled nearly 4 million sandwiches in her 34-year career.

A fourth Coleman generation is at work in the market. Daughter Jodi, who is allergic to fish and cracker meal, works in the office. One of their sons, Joe II, works in the wholesale division. Their other son, Bob, works in coal mining.

The restaurant has been featured in numerous magazine articles and food/travel books. Several professional athletes and country music stars have dined at Coleman's.

Joe says Coleman's is continuing to evolve and finding better ways to do things. One of the challenges facing the business is disposing of all the trimmings that come off the fish — there's no market for it. Mae says she can recall a time when a farmer would come and get the entrails for fertilizer.

"He had a nice garden, but he couldn't keep the cats out of it," she says.

Joe says his restaurant generates

about 75 gallons of waste oil a week. Ever the engineer, Joe is planning to purchase a diesel delivery truck converted to run on spent canola oil. If it works out the way he plans, the truck will be both a green vehicle and marketing gimmick.

"They say the exhaust smells like whatever was cooked in the oil," he says. "So wherever the truck went, it would be advertising the fish market." ❁

Coleman's Fish Market, located at 2226 Market Street in Wheeling, is open 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday and Tuesday; 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday; 8.30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday. Closed Sunday. For information, phone (304)232-8510.

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



A hands-on owner, Joe still enjoys operating the fryer at his family's Wheeling restaurant.



John (left) and Arnold "Red" Payne on a recent visit to the Middle Fork River near Audra State Park in Barbour County.



Bad Luck_{on the} Middle Fork

By John Payne

Photographs by Kevin Payne

Generations of Paynes have lived in the north-central part of West Virginia ever since Henry Payne crossed the mountains and settled along Sugar Creek in the early 1790's. I was born in 1920 in Barbour County and lived with my family on a farm right off of Old Route 250, between Philippi and Belington. Growing up, my brothers, sisters, and I spent most of our time at school, going to church, or doing our chores. Whenever time would allow, like all kids everywhere, we loved to play, especially in the great outdoors. And as we got older, my brothers and I developed a real love of hunting and fishing. Especially fishing. There is one particular fishing trip that I'll always remember. It was on opening day of bass season in the mid-1930's.

My brother Arnold, whom most people called "Red" because of his hair, was two years older than me. He and I, along with two of our neighbor's sons — Bernard, who was nicknamed "Burn," and Jim Everson — decided that we were going to be on the banks of the Middle Fork River at midnight on opening day. The river was about 14 miles away from where we lived. Usually we would have had no qualms about hiking that far, but since we wanted desperately to be the first ones to cast our lines in the water, we came to the conclusion that walking there would be out of the question. Red contacted a man named Sweet Everson, paid him some money, and made arrangements for him to drive us to Audra, which today is the site of a West Virginia state park by that name.

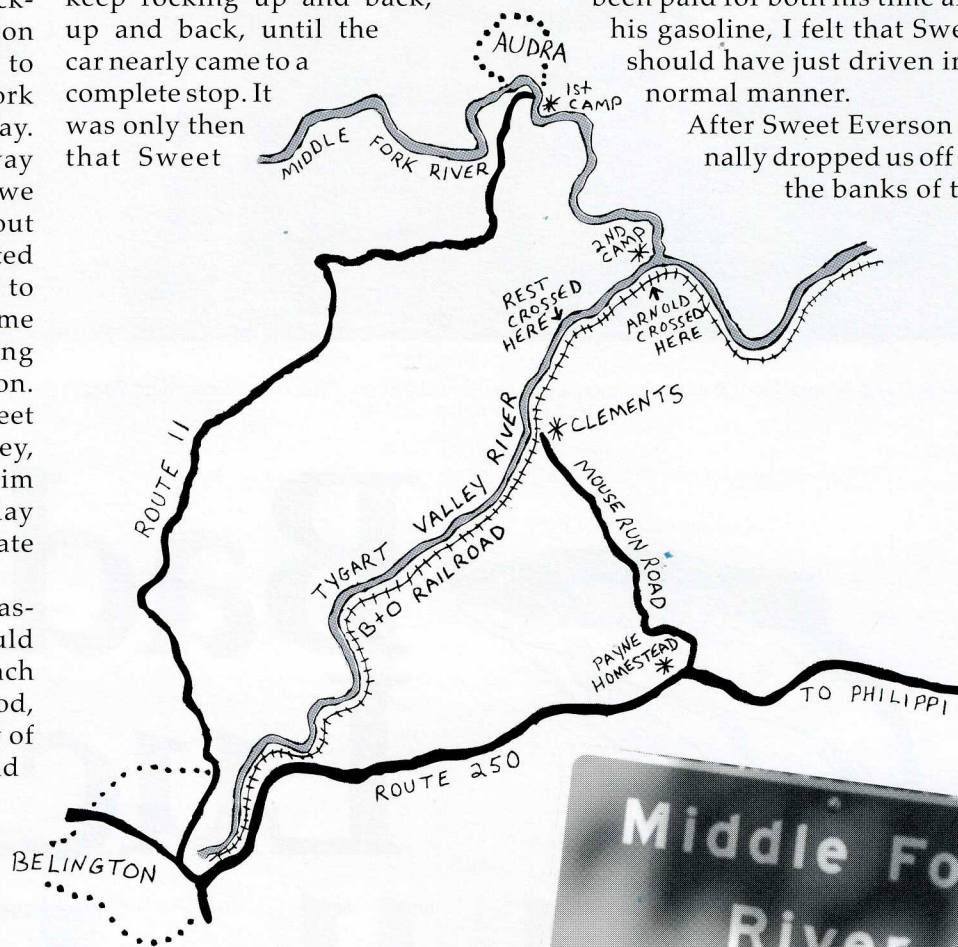
Red, Jim, Burn, and I quickly assembled everything that we would need for our expedition. We each brought our fishing gear, some food, a blanket to sleep on, and plenty of high hopes that we would all land a trophy-sized bass.

Even though we weren't walking, the trip to Audra took a little longer than we had hoped. Every time that we would top a grade, in an effort to save gas, Sweet Everson would cut off the ignition on his car — an old Model A, I believe — and let it coast all the way downhill. When the car started losing momentum, Sweet had a method for getting the car to

roll just a little bit further. Red was sitting next to him up in the front seat. Whenever the car reached the bottom of a hill, at Sweet's insistence, both of them would keep rocking up and back, up and back, until the car nearly came to a complete stop. It was only then that Sweet

would turn the engine back on. I personally found the whole thing awfully annoying. For one thing, it was taking up way too much time. For another, since he had already been paid for both his time and his gasoline, I felt that Sweet should have just driven in a normal manner.

After Sweet Everson finally dropped us off on the banks of the



Map by Kevin Payne.



When the Middle Fork River is down, as seen here, it is an easy matter to cross by foot. It is a different story, however, when the river is high.

Middle Fork, we set up camp under a rock overhang on the west side of the river. Today you can see this overhang from Audra State Park's beach if you look across the river and glance a little further upstream.

With great anticipation, we started fishing right at the stroke of midnight. But as it turned out, none of us had much luck that night. After a few hours, we finally decided to get some sleep. Using a rock for a bed and a pillow was pretty rough, so we searched around and finally found some old boards. We lined them up on the rocky ground and covered them with some leaf-covered branches that we had cut from some trees. Our makeshift beds actually turned out to be pretty comfortable.

We rose up right at sunrise and started preparing our breakfast.

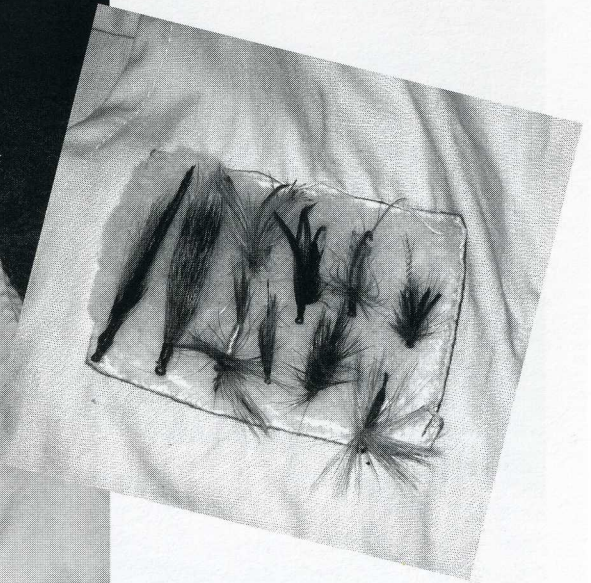
Our original intention was to fry up a mess of fish, but since nobody had caught anything the night before, we had to settle for some bacon warmed up over the campfire. We also drank down some coffee that we had boiled inside of a tin can.

Right after breakfast we grabbed our gear and cast our lines back out into the water. The Middle Fork River is rough and rocky. It forms in the high mountains of Randolph County, near Adolph, and flows northwest for 31 miles before emptying into the Tygart Valley River, about five miles south of Philippi. As the water plunges over the rocks, it forms lots of pools that are just great for fishing. The weather that day was warm and sunny, and the river itself was nice and clear with absolutely no indication of any rain upstream. In spite of the ideal condi-

tions, just like the night before, we still had little or no success. After a few hours, we decided to pack up our gear and head on downstream. We fished as went along and ended up catching a few, though none of them were trophy-sized. Most were not even worth keeping. We finally set up a new campsite under another rock not far from where the Middle Fork empties into the Tygart Valley River.

We fished the rest of the afternoon, into the evening, and well after dark. Since we didn't catch any fish for our dinner, that night we ate some canned beans cooked over our campfire. After breakfast the next morning we did some more fishing, again with little success. The biggest thing we caught was a water dog. They are something like a lizard, very ugly and monster-like.

Vintage fishing gear, belonging to the Payne brothers in the mid-1930's.



and murky as it rushed past us in unending cascades. Huge sprays of water blew up as the rapids smashed into boulder after boulder. We dropped our gear to the ground and just stood there, not knowing quite what to do next.

Since Red was the oldest, and since he always had a good head on his shoulders, the rest of us gladly deferred to his judgment in this situation. At first he just slowly shook his head and told us there was no way we were ever going to get across here. But after a few minutes, he knelt down and studied the currents for a long time. After that he rose up and paced back and forth along the bank for even longer. Finally he looked at us and announced that there might just be a way for us to get across after all.

Red gathered up his gear and started toward the rushing water. Suddenly he turned and told us to watch the path he was about to take. He told us that if he made it across safely, then we should follow in his exact footsteps so that we could make it to the other side as well. We nodded. Jim, Burn, and I all lined up on the bank so that we could watch every move that Red made.

With both of his fists tightening

After releasing the water dog, we decided that we might as well break camp and head on back home. Our plans were to head downriver, cross the Tygart, walk up the railroad track to Clements, and then walk the road up to River Hill and then on to Mouse Run Road and then home.

Traveling cross-country was pretty rough going in some spots. If we had walked alongside the road, it would have been a lot easier, but we would have had to go 14 miles. The way we chose to go was only about five. In spite of the rough terrain, we were making pretty good

time. That was until we ran into something that stopped us cold in our tracks.

Usually crossing the Tygart Valley River presented no problem at all. You could step on rocks all the way across without even getting your feet wet. But there was no way we were going to be able to do that this day. We had enjoyed such good weather on our trip that we had no way of knowing that there had been a heavy rain up in the valley the day before, and now, much to our surprise, the Tygart was almost at flood stage. The water was dark



This is the point near the confluence of the Middle Fork and the Tygart Valley rivers where Red Payne made his crossing, under similar conditions to those pictured here. He was lucky to have survived.

around his gear, my brother stepped down into the rushing water. His steps were slow and deliberate. The rapid flow made footing dangerously insecure. In spite of the strong currents, Red cautiously managed to pick his way among the submerged boulders and rocks so that he only had to wade through water that was just knee-high.

He made it halfway across when suddenly his left foot missed a rock and he plunged into water all the way up to his chest. The current was even stronger in the deeper water, and Jim, Burn, and I couldn't do anything but just stand there and watch as Red desperately struggled to keep from being swept away downstream.

If the danger of drowning or having his body smashed against some submerged rocks wasn't bad

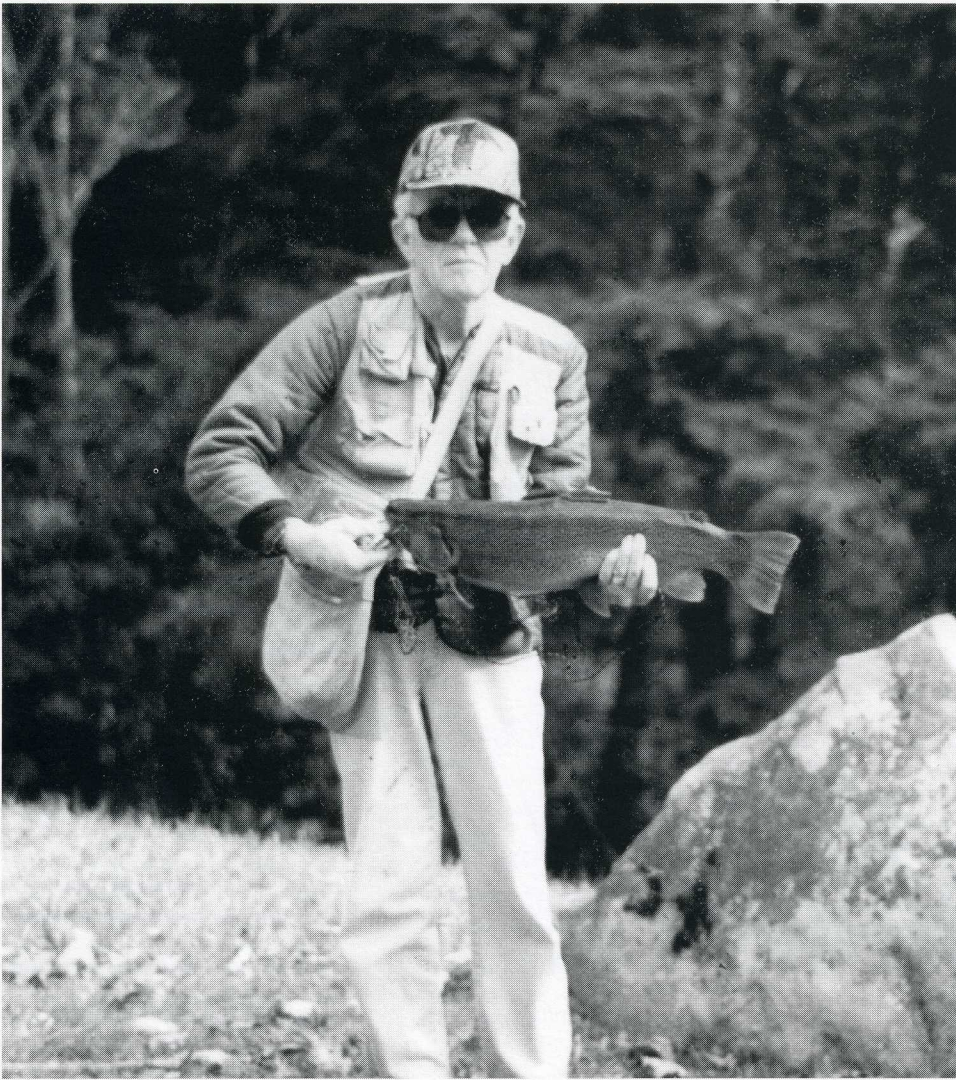
enough, Red had another frightening concern on his mind. For a teenager living in rural West Virginia in the middle of the Great Depression, losing your gear would be a heart-wrenching experience. But losing your brand-new fishing pole, the one you had to earn by scrimping and saving every last cent from all of the odd jobs that you had worked at during the past year, well, that would be just catastrophic.

As Jim, Burn, and I shouted words of encouragement from the safety of the riverbank, Red's leg muscles strained hard against the rushing water. His feet deliberately felt their way along the bottom, moving forward only inches at a time. He didn't dare move any faster. If he did, he would have faced the real possibility of wrenching one of his ankles in one of the many

submerged rock clefts. His right hand clutched the knapsack that held all of his gear. His left arm was stretched out far above his head, as high as it would go, hoisting his prized fishing pole in a death-like grip. He was bound and determined that he was not going to lose it for anything, no matter what.

Without any warning a surge of water crashed into Red, nearly sweeping him off of his feet. Just as it looked like he was about to lose everything, both of his feet found a secure rock, and he was able to right himself in the nick of time. On shore, Jim, Burn, and I all exhaled sighs of relief.

After catching his breath, Red started forward once again. Within minutes, in some shallower water, he was hit by another strong surge, but by then he had gained a precari-



Red Payne with trophy-sized trout. Photographer and date unknown.

ous foothold in some mud and shale. Finally, he reached the far bank. He climbed ashore, dropped his gear to the ground, bent over, grabbed his knees, and struggled to fill both of his lungs with air. Jim, Burn, and I all let out a cheer!

With water still dripping from his hair and clothes, Red stood up, motioned, and hollered at us to come on over. The Everson boys and I exchanged horrified glances. After watching what had just happened, none of the three of us had any intentions of trying to make the crossing ourselves. We huddled together for a quick conference and decided that we would head upriver to an abandoned coal train bridge and make our crossing there. We yelled out our plans to Red and

told him to follow the train tracks upriver, and we would meet up with him there.

Getting to the bridge turned out to be a massive undertaking. All along the river's banks were colossal laurel beds that we had to fight our way through. When we finally got to the bridge, our skin and clothes were torn and tattered.

The bridge itself presented yet another challenge. Much to our dismay, the floor of the bridge had long ago rotted away, leaving just a rusted steel skeleton. Our only choices were to cross here or to fight our way back through the laurel beds. After another quick conference, we decided that we'd take our chances with the bridge. We rubbed some dirt on our hands

and shimmied our way up to one of the horizontal support beams. This wasn't the easiest thing in the world to do considering that we had to climb up there while carrying all of our gear and our fishing poles. There was a steel bar that ran along one side. We used it to steady ourselves as we gingerly tightroped our way across. If one of us slipped, the bar was the only thing that we could have hung onto. In retrospect, it might have been safer crossing the rain-swollen river.

As we walked the rails, we met up with Red. We were quite a sight by then. Jim, Burn, and I were tattered and bleeding from going through the laurel beds, and Red was still wet from head to toe. We were all tired and hungry, but we were all filled with hope as we headed toward Clements.

The small town of Clements was once bustling and booming, but that had been before its coal-loading tipple operation had shut down. Now it only had one resident left, an older gentleman by the name of Bill Hack. We decided that we'd stop by his place and rest up a little before we had to walk the rest of

the way home. Once we got to his door and knocked, we saw that bad luck was still dogging us. Bill Hack had gone into Belington that day.

A mile-and-a-half later, we trudged back home. After filling up on one of our mother's home-cooked meals and getting a good night's sleep in our own beds, Red and I began planning out our next fishing excursion. We hoped for better luck next time. 🌿

JOHN PAYNE is a native of Barbour County and a graduate of Belington High School. A World War II veteran of the U.S. Air Force, John retired from a career in management at CVI Corporation in the mid-1980's. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

KEVIN PAYNE is from Columbus, Ohio, and a graduate of Capital University. He has worked as a professional photographer, graphic designer, novelist, and artist. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Arden

Willie Nestor Recalls Life in a Barbour County Town

By Richard S. Bailey

In my younger days, I spent a few warm summer days at the "Party Rock," swimming and fishing on the swift, picturesque Tygart Valley River, located near the Barbour County community of Arden. One of my friends suggested that his father-in-law, Willie Nestor, had quite a collection of Arden lore and that perhaps I would enjoy speaking with him. I made

my first trip to the Nestor home in October 2007

Willie and his wife, Vera, graciously welcomed me. A collection of photos and documents was laid out on a handmade log table. Born in Philippi on February 26, 1929, Willie Earl Nestor, Jr., is the son of Willie Earl, Sr., and Virgie Mae Nestor. He had two sisters. His father, a coal miner, moved from

Philippi to the little mining town of Midland. Then in 1935 the family moved to their present location along the Tygart Valley River at the little community of Arden.

"It was 1935 when we moved here to Arden," Willie says. "Overall, I can recall that we was very poor. As a boy, the railroad fascinated me. Now the railroad ran right in front of our house. About the first few days

we lived here, Dad said, 'That man is a hobo.' He pointed to a rough-cut, unshaven fellow standing in the doorway of a boxcar. Dad said, 'That's what hard times can do to a man.' I will never forget it."

Willie recalls that his father had to do a lot of work on the old house, which had once served as a boarding house owned by a coal company. "There was no



Willie and Vera Nestor in 2007 Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.



Downtown Arden in 1912. Note the dirt road, coal tippel, railroad depot, and general store. Willie Nestor grew up along these railroad tracks.

electric, no running water," he recalls. "We had 'Yankee walls' [plain boards running up and down with wallpaper] upstairs. Dad had to do lots of repairing."

Willie has especially fond memories of his mother. "Virgie Mae and my dad were hard-working people," he says. "Like my father, Mom was born and raised over in Nestorville. She went to school at

the Nestorville School. The school is still there, but I believe it has been converted into a community center. She and Dad lived doing without, so we kids would have a little something. Mother was known widely as a good cook.

"But there was a special story about my mom," he says. As he spoke, you could see a tear in his eye. "Well, one of the first telephone

switchboards in the area was built by Philips & Myers. Mom was one of the first operators. Three rings was the call up to my grandparents on Pea Ridge. This is while my dad was in the service during World War I. Uncle Jay was superintendent of the Arden Mine. The day the war ended [November 11, 1918], Mom asked him if she could hold back the switch on the steam whistle at the tippel to celebrate the end to the 'War to End All Wars.' She tied that whistle down with her apron, and it blasted for hours and hours, so the story goes. Mom let every-

one know that it was a great day, indeed."

Willie graduated from Philippi High School in 1948. He drove a school bus in Barbour County until 1964. He won election to the Barbour County Board of Education in the mid-1970's. Willie is retired from the Badger Coal Company, a division of Clinchfield Coal (now Pittston Coal). Willie has an interest in local history, so I asked him to give me a brief account of how the town of Arden was started.

"I do know from studying deeds and other records that the first major settlement was in 1883, during the building of the railroad," he says. "New life came to the entire region. Then, there was John I. Huffman, who bought 130 acres and settled here. He was a farmer, like most who came here in the beginning. 'Old Huff' is buried back on the hill here in the only cemetery in Arden, the Carpenter-Huffman Cemetery. There's about 20 [people] buried up there. Another important settler in these parts was George Duckworth, and, of course, the Gall family. I have heard over the years that these families were good, honest churchgoers."



The old Arden tippel above, circa 1907

"George Duckworth built a one-story log home. That was years before the railroad came through here. During the Civil War, George and another settler joined up in 1863. I also have heard that there was a Civil War battle in this area June 3, 1861. This battle was probably part of the skirmish in Philippi.

"Arden really began to grow when the coal mines started up in the 1890's," he continues. "According to my recollections there were six or seven mines here about that time." Willie points to the hill on the north edge of his property. "That was where the old Arden coal tippie was located. Above the tippie was the mine."

This mine is where Willie's father worked at one time. "[Arden Mine] was particularly dangerous," he says. "Dad was darn lucky. Never

got hurt seriously. This mine and most of the mines around here are gassy. They used to call it 'black damp.' If your carbide light went out, you better hurry out of the mine as fast as your legs would take you. Dad started work early in life. He didn't even get to finish sixth grade — couldn't stay in school. Had to do like many young men in those days — quit school to bring money home to the family. Dad worked at a lot of mines over the years. He loaded coal by the lump. That's how they did it. Paid by the lump."

Willie worked in the mines when he was young, as well. He recalls a couple of memorable characters from that experience. "Mr. [Herbert] Rexroad, my first boss, had a little pony working with us in the mine," Willie says. "'Charlie' was a smart little fellow. He was bigger

than a Shetland. Charlie had this tail chain and a pigtail that went into a single tree where it hooked on the harness. The back of it had a big hook on it. The minute he heard the metal hit, Charlie started right out. He would start out and stop to keep from getting it in a bind. My job was to catch the back of the car and ride it out of the mine then hit the brakes. For me, this was part-time work. I would get off school and come down and work for him. Rexroad contracted worked-out mines for salvage. Poor old Herb. He had two wooden legs. Got 'em in a railroad accident. You know, Herb could still drive that old coal truck. Working with Herb and Charlie was really something. I hadn't thought about Herb Rexroad or old Charlie in years." Willie appeared to be in a deep state of reflection.



Like most men around Arden, both Willie and his father worked in the mines. This photograph from 1926 shows miners at Arden with a motor car. From the left are Elihu Mitchell, Noble Marsh, Andy Carpenter, Andy Shanabarger, Walter Mitchell, and Orley Reed.



The first Arden post office, now a private residence. Photograph 2007 by Richard S. Bailey.

“The coming of the railroad in the 1880’s, the coal mines at the turn of the century, the building of the ‘Blue Bridge’ in 1908, construction of the first church in 1910, and the massive project to build the Tygart Dam during the 1930’s were the major events that led to what we got here today,” Willie says, summarizing the town’s early history. “Arden had more than one steam-powered mine and tipple, a theatre, a grade school, a cobbler’s shop, three or four grocery stores, several saloons, and a company store by the name of Tygart Valley Supply.”

The railroad spurred the growth of the river community, Willie points out. “The Grafton & Greenbrier Railroad [G&G] was completed about the time that the first post office was opened in 1883. This new line connected Grafton with Philippi. The first post office was operated by the Gall Family. The G&G Railroad was not a standardized gauge. The tracks were a much narrower gauge. The Grafton & Greenbrier sold out to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company during an economic downturn in 1892. The B&O rebuilt the line using

standard-gauge track. That helped open things up here. Then, in 1910, the first church was built. It and the Blue Bridge still stand today.”

Across the front lawn and the modest country road that once was the railroad right-of-way, Willie points to several local landmarks. “Look up the river from here,” he

says. “There is a large rock that some say is shaped like the head of the devil. People call it Hell’s Gate. Devil’s Den is down the river near the Party Rock,” he explains.

“As long as I remember, people have been coming here to the river to get away and relax,” Willie says, pointing at the smooth-flowing, lazy October river. “There are many pools and falls here. My dad was very strict about the river. We were never allowed to go down the river below the Blue Bridge. We learned what ‘no’ meant real quick. Look out there in front of the house,” he says, pointing. “That’s where our swimming hole was. It was a solid, smooth rock bottom. Perfect. You see that huge rock right there? That is ‘Pump Rock.’ Did you see the government plaque on it dated 1904? My family has had generations of fun over there.” He looked like he was gazing straight into the past.

“The ‘big rock’ or Party Rock is about half-a-mile down the road from here,” he says. “It is a very well-known gathering place on the river. I have seen as many as a hundred young people partying on it. Coming to the ‘Party Rock’ has been like a rite of passage. But it is also a place we here in Arden have



The Blue Bridge, built circa 1908, crosses the Tygart Valley River at Arden. Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.

seen tragedy Just about every year, some young person from the surrounding area loses his or her life by drowning. They come here to relax but don't realize how dangerous a swift river can be." Willie points to the river. "The river is low and slow today, but you can see strong currents swirling right out there."

Not far from Arden, the Tygart flows into one of West Virginia's biggest flood-control projects. Five miles north of Arden is the Tygart Dam. [See "Glory Days for Grafton: Building the Tygart Dam," by Barbara Smith; Winter 1998.] Before the dam was completed in 1937, major flooding was commonplace as far north as Pittsburgh.

"The construction of the dam forced the railroad to relocate away from our little community," Willie says.

Another public project that changed life in Arden was the construction of the Blue Bridge. "Travel in these parts was very difficult," Willie says. "There were only a couple of shallow crossings along the river. Most of the year, the river proved nearly impossible to cross. So, the Blue Bridge was a big step forward. We take it for granted today."

The Arden centennial took place the first Sunday of August 2010. This was a homecoming. It featured historical displays and events, and exhibited the pride local residents

feel toward their community, Willie says.

Willie and Vera reside along the Tygart Valley River just south of the Blue Bridge. Happily married for more than 60 years, they raised two daughters: Willa Jo and Billie Sue. Willie and Vera look forward to living out their lives peacefully in the little mountain community along the river they have come to love. 🍁

RICHARD S. BAILEY is a native of Clarksburg, currently residing in Bridgeport. A graduate of Fairmont State College, Richard retired from Harrison County schools in 2004 after a 34-year career as a history teacher and coach. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2010 issue.



The Nestor family held a reunion at the river near Arden in 2007. Photograph by Richard S. Bailey.

Surviving the Tough Times in Decota

By Jennifer Mosley

My family was a happy one that experienced a lot of good times, joy, and laughter.

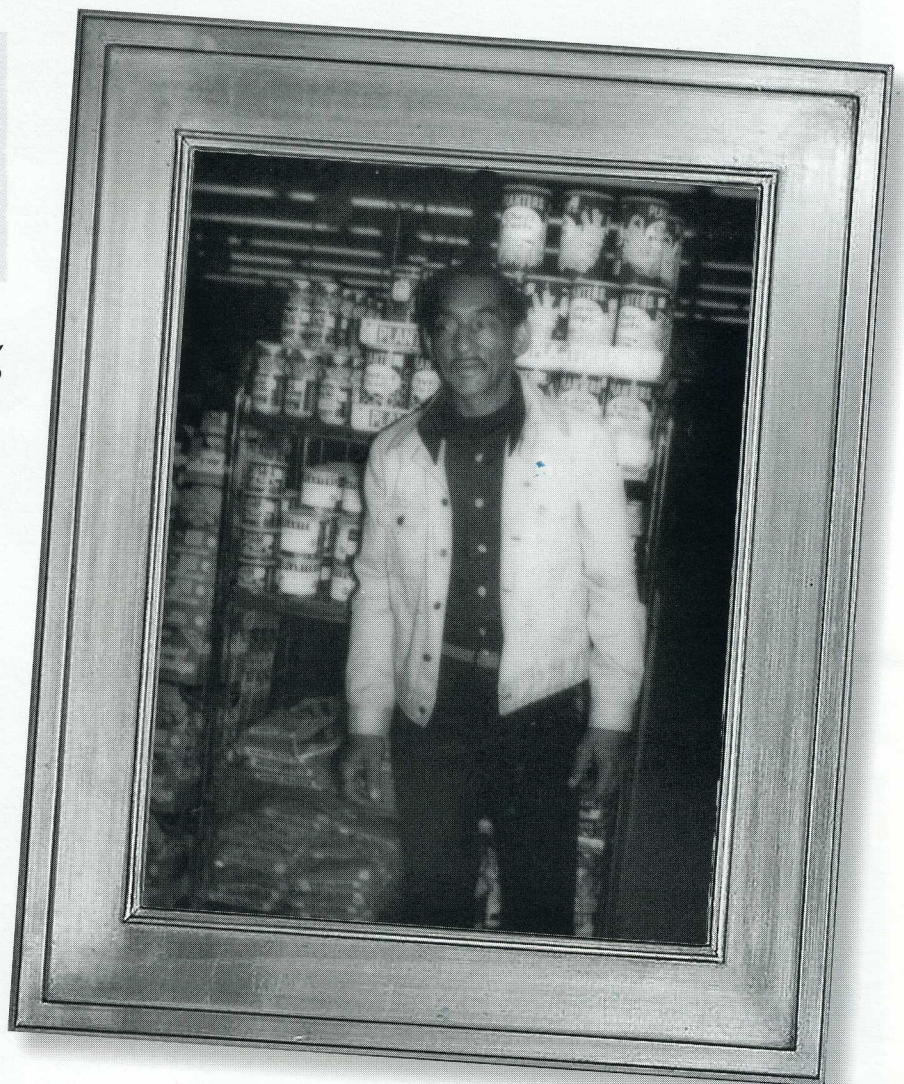
But there were also some tough times.

My grandmother, Theresa Crider, was a homemaker who had to cook, clean, and provide for 10 kids and a husband. My grandfather, Luther Delaney Crider, held a job as a coal miner for the Carbon Fuel Company during the late 1950's. When he took this job, the entire family moved up Cabin Creek to a coal camp in Decota, Kanawha County. They lived there until 1969

My grandfather was a good father and a good provider. Still, times were rough and there were years when there just wasn't enough money. The lack of money didn't bring my family down, however, as my grandparents found creative and somewhat unusual ways of improvising when there were no other options.

Lard, for example, was put to a lot of good uses. It could be used for frying foods, such as chicken, or baking

Luther Delaney Crider, our author's grandfather. Dates and photographers unknown unless otherwise noted.



bread. It was sometimes used for making popcorn. Within my family, it was also used for hair care. The black women of today use expensive hair relaxers or make appointments to go to salons to straighten their hair. However, those options weren't available to our family, so my aunts had to use a small amount of lard and Royal Crown hair dressing for pressing and straightening out hair. Royal Crown hair dressing is cheap but effective hair grease, designed for African American hair. My mother and I still use it on our own hair.

African American hair is different from Caucasian hair, as our hair dries out much more quickly and retains less moisture than Caucasian hair. So we have to use moisturizers designed for our hair type or use hair grease. Old silk stockings were worn to bed to keep the hair soft. For the women in our family, the only way to straighten hair was to use an old-fashioned straightening comb. A straightening comb is a special comb that was used on tangled hair when a regular comb could not do the job. It is also known as a hot comb or a pressing comb.

This straightening comb was placed on a stove to heat up. Once the straightening comb was hot, it was quickly pulled through hair as close to the scalp as possible without leaving burns. Not only did the straightening comb remove tangles and make it easier to use a regular comb in one's hair, but it gave African American hair a silky, smooth finish that was ready for styling.

This comb was all my aunts and uncles had to rely on to make their hair more manageable. It takes a lot of time to use, but it is good for use on hair that will be braided or eventually worn in a weave. My mother and I still use this straightening comb on our own hair.

Buying the newest and trendiest clothes was too costly for a family of 10 children, so clothes were either handed down to the younger siblings or came as gifts from others. When worn-out shoes could not be replaced, any holes or loose stitches were sewn back together. Newspaper and cardboard were stuffed in the soles for warmth during the bitter cold months.

For any other clothes that couldn't be replaced or needed mending, my grandmother would use a type of thread called Eight-Cord, which she would use to patch and repair pants and shoes. Unlike thin sewing thread, this type of thread was thick and heavy, making it ideal for repairing holes and tears. Socks were worn on the hands as a substitute for proper gloves. My grandmother's cousin, who lived in New York, would send boxes of clothes. The clothes that came in these boxes were freshly laundered and ironed,



Grandmother Theresa Crider.

and were a welcome escape from the hand-me-downs and the patchwork clothes that my aunts and uncles usually wore.

However there were times when my grandfather's credit was good, and during these times he would let my aunts and uncles occasionally buy some new clothes and shoes.

The lack of modern conveniences, such as dish-washing liquid and dishwashers, meant that dishes and clothes were all washed with laundry detergent. Automatic washing machines and dryers were financially out of the question, so clothes had to be washed by hand on what my aunt referred to as a wringer washer or on a washboard and were hung out to dry on a clothesline.

In the coal company town of Decota, every home had two fireplaces instead of the modern-day convenience of central heating. So it was essential that they had coal to heat their homes. A load of coal was made available to everyone for around \$20 or \$25. There was a time when my grandfather was unable to pay the electricity bill, so the family had to rely on candles for light.



Gas and splint coal mines on Cabin Creek near Decota, circa 1910. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

Fortunately this incident only occurred once.

Indoor bathrooms were not readily available to most of the residents of Decota, so a round metal pot with a top and a handle, known as a slop jar, was put to use. Outhouses were also still in use during this time.

Some natural remedies were used when a doctor or a hospital was not an option. Baking soda was used to soothe upset stomachs, and a paste of baking soda and water was used on bee stings. For indigestion a mixture of baking soda, water, and white vinegar was used. Iodine was kept in the house when rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide was not available. An unusual and somewhat of a tear-inducing remedy for colds was eating a paste that consisted of sliced onions and sugar.

Another strange remedy was white flour lightly browned and then cooled and placed on a baby's bottom to heal the blistering effects of diaper rash. For thrush, which is a yeast infection of the mouth, a concoction known as purple medicine was administered. It was very effective in eradicating the infection, but it left one's mouth purple. My grandfather used whiskey as a way to clear up his colds.

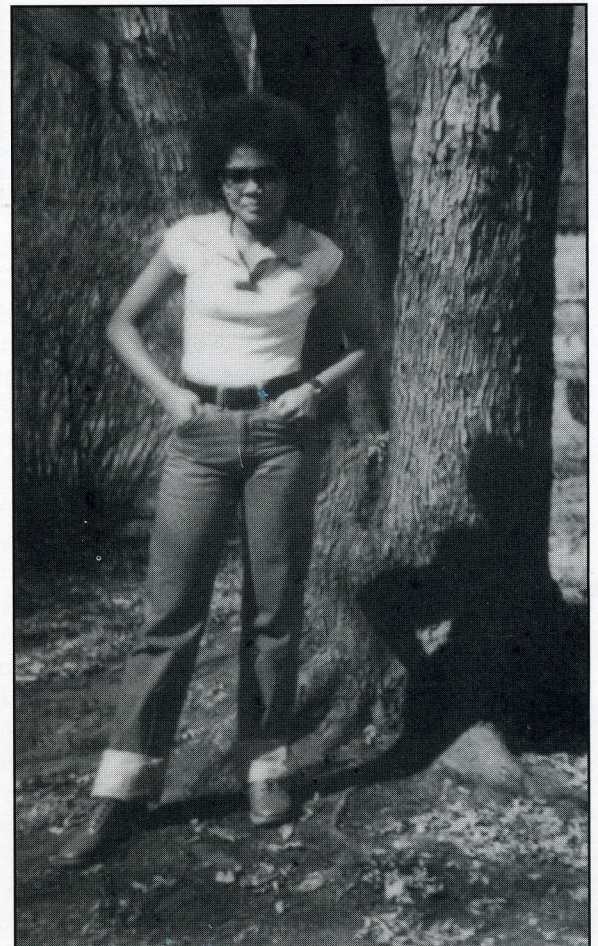
My relatives had running water, but only had cold water. So water was boiled. My relatives took their baths in a large steel tub, and the water was heated via the stove. Water was precious in the Crider household, and bath water was frequently reused until everyone had bathed.

In an era when bug spray was not readily available, pests, such as mosquitoes, flies, and gnats, were a constant annoyance. To keep these pests from dining on the blood of my aunts and uncles, they used something known as gnat's fire to keep the bugs away. A combination of dry kindling, ignited, with rags placed on top would produce smoke that was supposed

to ward off flying insects.

Cooking required creativity. Even today some of my relatives gag at the memory of what they had to eat. For example, a mixture of sugar and water was used as a substitute for pancake syrup. A can of condensed milk mixed with water served as a replacement for cow's milk. Condensed milk was put on cereal. It was used at one time as baby formula for one of my youngest aunts. Oatmeal was made of a lumpy, gluey mixture of condensed milk, water, and oats.

With the lack of food, a policy of "cleaning your plate" was enforced in the Crider home, whether or not the food that was on your plate was tasty or even at times edible. If there was no money



Mother Joyce Crider Mosley.

for store-bought meat, my grandfather provided the family with fish caught at Sutton Dam. Fishing was his favorite pastime and fish was his favorite food, so he would engage in this activity at the end of every week. This hobby was a worthy one as it put food on the table and served as an alternative to some of the less appealing meals offered during the week.

When my grandfather couldn't provide food, trips to my great-grandmother's home in Beckley on the weekends were essential. My great-grandmother, Annie Crider, wasn't what one would call rich, but she certainly had plenty of food to feed a family of 10 and more. She had a huge garden that produced a wealth of vegetables, and had apple, peach, and wal-

nut trees that yielded plenty of fruit. This store sold snacks, books, candy, hamburgers, and hot dogs. It also had a soda fountain, a pinball machine, and a jukebox. It was a well-known hangout spot for the teenagers. There was a swimming pool located beside the store.

now known as the Decota Grill. In the 1950's, relations between blacks and whites were at an all-time low. As a result of Jim Crow laws and forced segregation, blacks and whites were kept separate from each other. There were schools set aside for blacks to attend, and a separate school for the whites to attend. There were some public facilities that blacks could gain access to, but it was limited and they did not have the same privileges as whites did.

The Y was an example of this kind of facility. While



Aunt Phyllis Crider.



Uncle Luke Crider.

nut trees that yielded plenty of fruit. For meat there was a chicken coop. From these sources came mouth-watering chicken, succulent potatoes, jars of delicious canned fruits from the cellar, and what my relatives considered the best biscuits ever. My family never left empty-handed. My great-grandmother would send them home with canned vegetables, greens, and pickle-tasting vegetables called cha-chas. Sometimes if my grandfather had enough money after the trip to my great-grandmother's house, he would make a quick stop to the Dairy Queen and get everyone ice cream.

Every now and then there would be a windfall of financial luck, and there would be enough money to go to the company store. This company store sold nearly everything, including furniture, clothes, food, and meats. It even had a post office within its quarters. When there was no money to purchase from the store, my relatives relied on scrip. This scrip was currency that could only be used in whatever store you received the scrip from, and it made a good substitute for real money when my family had none.

Another source of food for my large family was the Y,

blacks were allowed in the store to purchase merchandise, they were not allowed to hang out in the store or sit at any of the tables. Once a black purchased what they needed, they were to immediately leave the store. Only whites were allowed to sit inside. So my family was forced to watch on the sidelines while their white neighbors sat inside the Y, having fun, eating hot dogs and ice cream, dancing, and grooving to the music from the jukebox.

The swimming pool was also off-limits for blacks. One night my grandfather and a couple of his friends climbed the fence surrounding the swimming pool and went for a swim.

Amazingly, all of my relatives claim that in spite of the segregated facilities in the town of Decota, the relations between blacks and whites were friendly and harmonious. For example, all the schools that my relatives attended were peacefully integrated.

The lack of modern conveniences and the racial restrictions did not have any negative impacts on my relatives' ability to have fun. They found ways to entertain themselves when there were no malls or



Original Decota store. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives.

computers to rely on. For example, for a fun game of baseball without a real baseball, a substitute of wadded newspaper shaped into a ball and held together with tape was used.

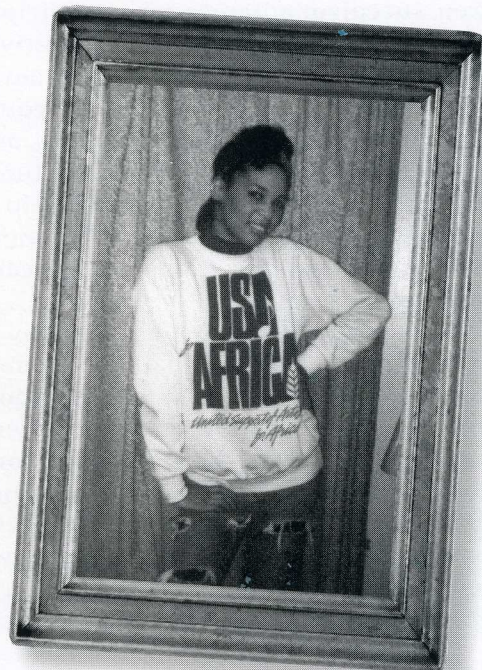
Televisions were available, but they had only four channels and no color. Reception came from an antenna perched on top of the roof. My grandfather liked to watch boxing and other sports. My grandmother was

satisfied with shows such as *Secret Storm* and *General Hospital*, while my aunts and uncles watched shows such as *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *American Bandstand*, or *Mickey Mouse Club*. On the weekends they all got together and would watch a scary movie.

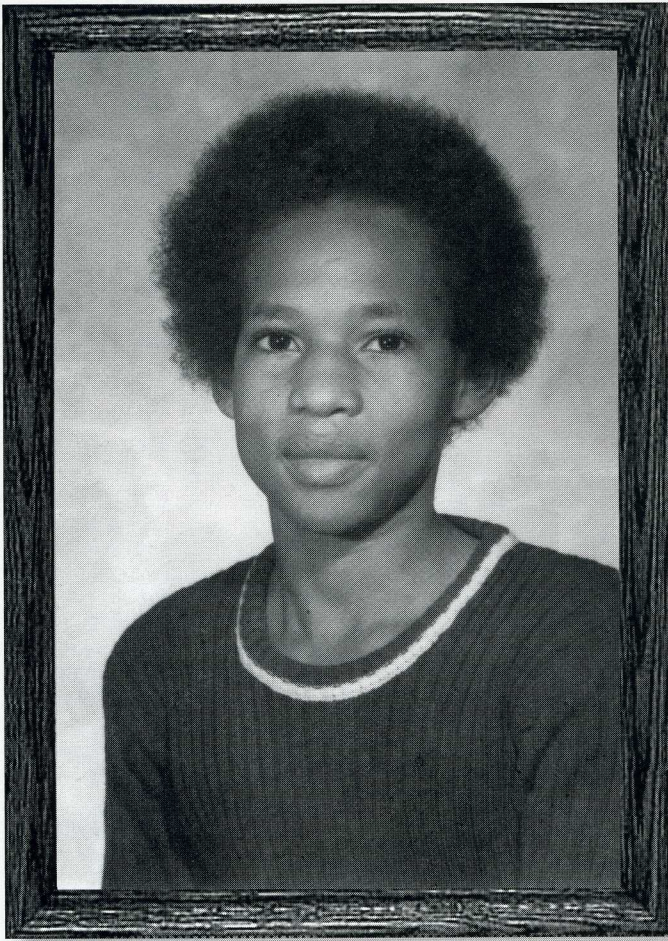
The holidays were not without fun and excitement in spite of the lack of money. During Christmas bobby socks were used as a substitute for red stockings.



Aunt Deloris
"Loisy" Crider.



Aunt Tina Crider.



Uncle Kenneth Crider.

These bobby socks were placed on both sides of the fireplace - five socks for the girls on one side and five for the boys on the other side. In each of the socks my grandparents would place an apple, an orange, candy, and nuts. The girls received dolls and dishes in their socks while the boys received trucks and toy guns.

Free time was spent playing Monopoly, Bingo, horse-shoes, jump rope, hopscotch, checkers, or badminton. Sometimes my grandfather would join these games and would shamelessly cheat each time he played. My grandmother was an expert at Chinese checkers and dominoes.

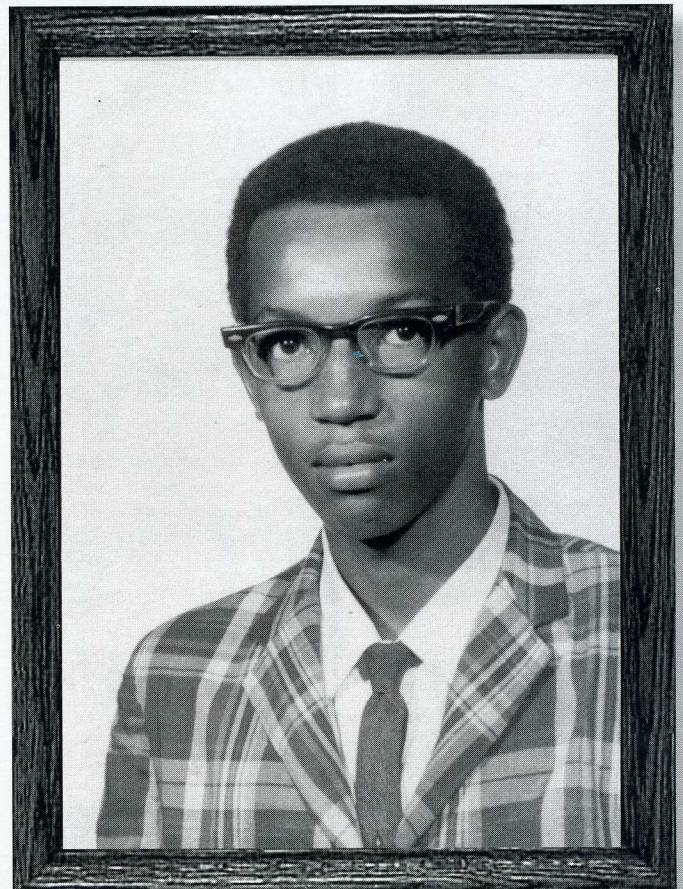
Another source of enjoyment involved a somewhat odd game with grasshoppers. Someone would catch a grasshopper, put both hands around it, and say, "Hopper-grass, hopper-grass, give me some tobacco." When they opened their hands the grasshopper would jump out, leaving behind a small drop of brown liquid in the palm of the hand. However I'm certain that that drop of brown liquid was not tobacco.

Some of what I have mentioned might seem unusual, unorthodox, and even disgusting to someone who has grown up in a world of shopping malls, computers, and cell phones. But listening to these stories from my

relatives has taught me a lot of lessons that I can use in my own life. For example, their stories have shown me how to "get by" through creativity and ingenuity in the face of financial obstacles. They have taught me how to improvise and how to find alternatives when all other options have been exhausted. They have taught me to have a sense of humor and laugh in the face of adversity, and that laughter and happiness are free for all. They have taught me to never stop trying even if a problem is never solved. They also have played a huge role in developing my own creativity and my passion for writing.

They have also given me a sense of appreciation for coal miners. According to my aunt, coal miners worked together harmoniously regardless of the color of their skin. They were good, kind, hard-working men who were the economic force that kept the town together. Perhaps this story will teach others how to work together regardless of race or religion. After all it is more fitting to try to find a solution or a work-around to a problem than to give in to defeat. ✨

JENNIFER MOSLEY is from Chesapeake and a graduate of Riverside High School. She attended West Virginia State University and wrote this story as a class assignment for Dr. Stuart McGehee's West Virginia history class. This is Jennifer's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

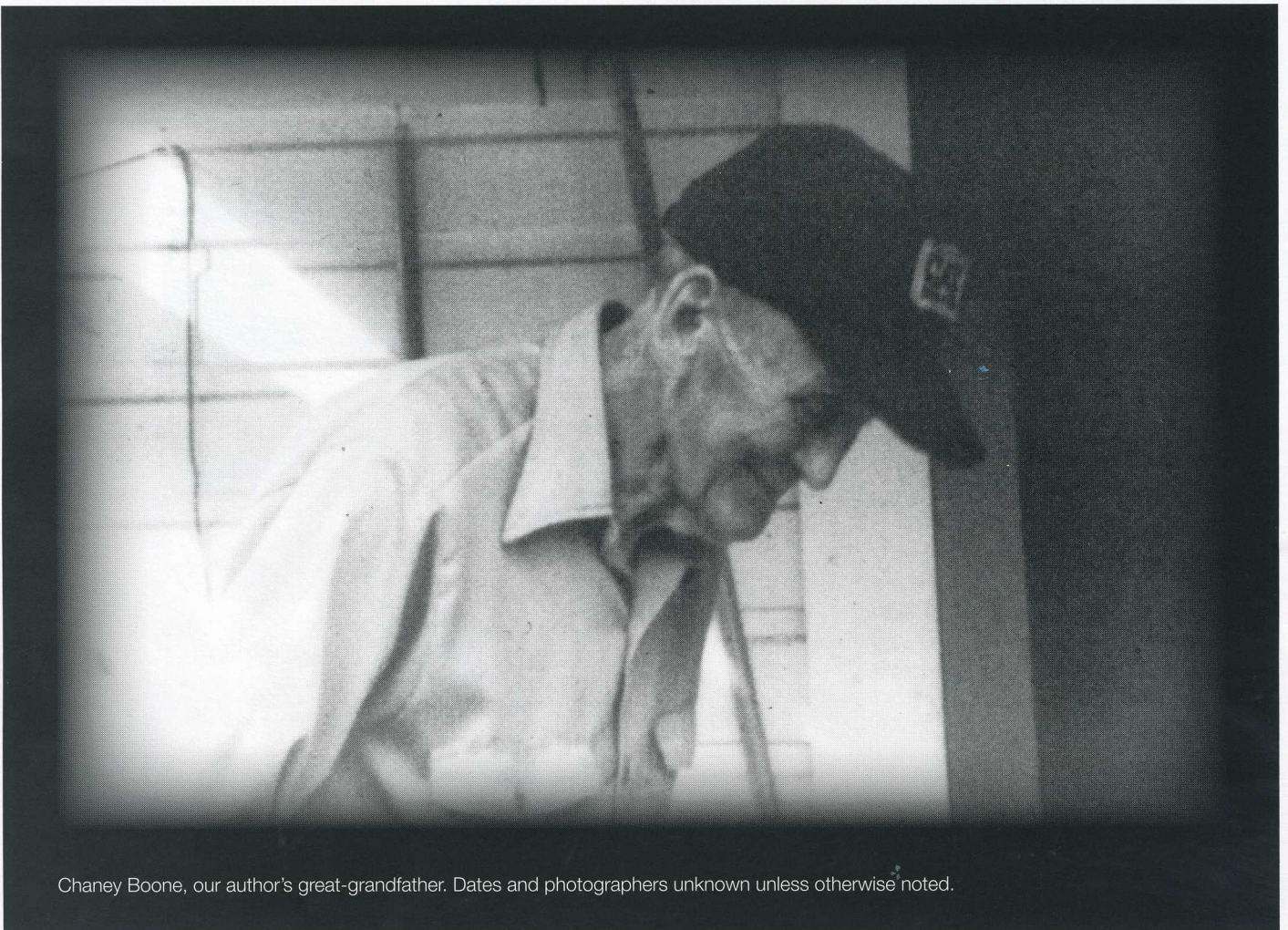


Uncle Melvin Crider.

Hard Work Was a Must

Chaney Boone's Braxton County Farm

By Elesse D. White



Chaney Boone, our author's great-grandfather. Dates and photographers unknown unless otherwise noted.



Aerial view of Chaney Boone's farm near Frametown, Braxton County.

The old Boone family farm and home place is located on Upper Sleeth in Braxton County. It was given by land grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia to my great-great-grandmother Prudence (Bourne) Boone's family. I have many pleasant memories of visiting there as a child.

The farmhouse was built by my great-grandfather Chaney Boone. He was born in Braxton County in 1891 and died there on April 25, 1997. Great-grandfather Chaney and his wife-to-be, Macie Hardway, were neighbors growing up. They married in 1913. Chaney and Macie had two children: my grandmother Melesse (Given) and my great-aunt Babe (Short). Aunt Babe, whom I interviewed in 2009, still resides in Frametown, close to the old home place. At the time of our interview Babe was 95.

The old farmhouse had a great wrap-around porch with two entrances to the house, both having screen doors, which we grandchildren always seemed to be getting into trouble for slamming. One entrance led into the living room, where an iron stove sat in the middle of the room. The other led

into a bedroom off to the right side of the farmhouse. The living room originally had a two-sided fireplace built into the wall that separated the living room and the bedroom, which was common during the time in which the house was constructed. This was later replaced by a cast-

The women did all the cooking, but Grandpa would be up every day at 4:30 in the morning to bring in the wood for the stove to get it burning and ready for cooking.

iron stove sometime before I can remember. I was always fascinated with the mantel that was left there and the oil-burning lamps that sat on this mantel.

Off to the left were two small bedrooms: one room for Great-grandpa and the other for his sisters, Hallie and Eulalie, who eventually moved back in with him in the later years of their lives. To the right was the huge bedroom my brother and I

always slept in, with two full-size beds. The beds were made of down feathers that had been collected from the poultry on the farm, along with straw tick underneath. This was wonderful to crawl up into as you could get into the bed and sink way down into it, being almost completely engulfed in the down. The brass headboards and bases were sold at the family auction after Grandpa Boone passed away. How I would love to have them now in my own home!

A back door from this room led to another small side porch and then to a little path that ran about 50 yards to the outhouse. We grandchildren were too skittish to go out there. We used the chamber pots in the house, which Mom would dump out the next morning into the outhouse.

The living room led to a dining room, pantry, and then on to the back where a large wood-burning stove was set up for cooking. The women did all the cooking, but Grandpa would be up every day at 4:30 in the morning to bring in the wood for the stove to get it burning and ready for cooking. Breakfasts were the best, but you had to be up at 6:00 in the morning if you wanted

to eat with the family. Once breakfast was put up, everyone went about their daily chores. So if you missed it, there were generally biscuits, ham, or bacon left in the warming oven, which was a compartment on the top of the stove where food was placed to keep warm.

Leading off to the left of the kitchen was another small porch, and off of it the well was located. Located on this porch was a wringer-style clothes washer, a wash basin for hand washing, a water bucket with ladle for getting a drink of — in my opinion — the best-tasting water in the world, and a water pump. After water was pumped, it was hand carried into the house and placed in a water tank on the side of the wood-burning stove, where it would be heated and available for bathing. After obtaining water from the pump, you were to leave a cup of water there so the next person could prime the pump to get it

started. I cannot tell you how many times I forgot to leave a cup of water. Invariably I got blamed when often it was actually my brother who did not leave a primer.

A fence enclosed the main farmhouse property. A rickety gate led out to the chicken house, barn, corn silo, and butter room, which was located underneath a small storage building that Grandpa later renovated into a guest room. The butter room was also a cool storage area for most of the vegetables grown in the gardens.

The barn had a hayloft in it. All of us grandchildren would go into the top loft, throw down as much



A dapper Chaney Boone with wife, Macie, at left, and sister Hallie in Gassaway. Photograph 1926 by Bollinger.

hay as we could, pile it up under the opening, and then JUMP! This was more of a dare game for us, and we would have a good time making fun of any who would not jump down through the hole into the hay. Grandpa only had two cows by this time, so the barn was our playground during the day when the cows were out in the pasture. I did try my hand at milking a cow once. I remember Grandpa Boone making fun of me, saying I had to grab the teat at the top and pull down. I never could get it right.

There were also dangers around the barn, which we all looked out for, like pitchforks and sharp tools.

The ladder going to the top loft was very steeply inclined and had large spaces between the steps. Our parents always told us children to be careful, but I do not ever remember any of us getting hurt, unless one counts the bee sting on my foot I once received while running through the front yard.

The corn shed and an old tool shed were located behind the farmhouse. Inside the corn shed there was a sheller, which I loved to play with. An ear of corn was placed into the top of the sheller, the handle was turned, and the kernels were shelled off leaving just the cob. The corn kernels could then be used for food for the animals or ground into corn meal. The cobs were placed in the compost pile for next year's gardens.

My great-aunt Hallie, Grandpa's sister, would take me up to the chicken house occasionally when she went there to feed them. I was always told to stay away from the roosters. They could be mean and inflict painful cuts and scrapes with their claws. She would let me help gather eggs. This was always a treat for me. We had to wait until most of the hens were out in the yard, and then we would sneak into the hen house. If there were any hens still sitting on the nests, we had to be careful when getting the eggs out as the hens could and would peck your hands. We left wooden eggs in the nests. Aunt Hallie told me this was so the hens would not think all their babies had been stolen and would be an incentive for them to



Author Elesse White, at right, with brother Curtis visiting the Chaney Boone farm as youngsters.

lay more eggs.

All of us grandchildren would go crowdad hunting in the creek that ran through the front of the farm. We looked under rocks at the edge of the stream then got so excited when we could find a big one to show off to everyone. The trick was to catch them from behind the head so as not to get pinched. Some of the braver grandchildren would pull the pincers off of them, making me cry to my mother about their cruelty. However, she informed me that the pincers would grow back.

Sometimes Great-grandpa Boone would let us borrow his trawler net so we could catch the shiny, silvery minnows swimming around in the creek. We always either set them free again along with the crowdads, or gave them to my grandpa for bait when he would go fishing. Fishing is one of the favorite times of all my family. It continues today, with my father and uncles making fishing trips to places like Lake Erie, Florida, and into Canada.

According to my family, the farm provided most everything needed to be fairly self-sufficient so they did not have to rely on outside sources for many items throughout the year. Vegetables were grown in the gardens. Linen was hand spun for clothing. Milk, dairy, and butter products came from the cows, and pigs were there for bacon and ham, which were cured and stored for winter food. Maple trees provided syrup; fruit trees provided cider, apple and peach butter, and pies. Food was canned, pickled, preserved, and put away for the winter months. Grandpa Boone sheared his sheep and sold the wool for the little money that was needed to survive the rest of the year. He used his team of horses to take items to or from the local store or market once or twice a year.

The farm sat in a bottom. To get to the farmhouse it was necessary to go down a switchback dirt path. Grandpa Boone had dug this path out so that visitors and family could more easily and safely get to the house. Once we got down to the house, I always felt that I would like to just stay there as I so dreaded the long trek back up the hill. Grandpa Boone led his team of horses along a road on the flat part of the farm to get to a dirt hill, in order to transport goods in and out of the farm. He bought a Chevrolet truck at some point in

his life and kept it in a building at the top of the hill. The truck was rarely used. Grandpa said the horses would do just fine, but if he ever made it to 85 then maybe he would do away with the horses and use the truck more often.

He did get his driver's license, but it was much later in life. With the horses gone and modern technology coming into play, Grandpa would drive his truck to the Upper Sleeth Methodist Church, where he went faithfully each Sunday to build the fire so that the building would be warm when the congregation arrived. But he had used the horses and cart up until he could no longer take care of them.

Grandpa Boone had some very simple beliefs. His lifestyle was that of a farmer, so hard work was a must. Everyone and every animal had a job to do. If you did not have a job to do, then go somewhere else. The dogs must hunt, the cats must catch rats and mice, and the horses must pull or till the gardens with a plow hooked up to them. The sheep, chickens, pigs, and cows had to provide food or wool. There were no "pets" on the farm.

Grandpa was born on the land



Every animal had a job to perform on the Chaney Boone farm, our author tells us. Here Chaney prepares to shoe a draft horse.

given to him and his family through land grants, as I mentioned. Although he did move to Richmond, Virginia, for a while then to Akron, Ohio, where he worked in a tannery, eventually the family moved back to the farm where Grandpa spent the rest of his life working as a farmer and a carpenter. I still have the crib that he made for my father and that was used by me when I was a baby. My mother still owns a table he made with clawed brass feet.

Grandpa Boone could have been a "poster boy" for the R.J Reynolds Tobacco Company. Like many of our elders, he rubbed snuff and smoked cigarettes for the better part of his life and never had any problems with cancer or other health problems related to tobacco usage. There were brass spittoons sitting around the farmhouse, and they were frequently in use. As a child I was fascinated to see Aunt Hallie rubbing snuff.

In Grandpa Boone's final years, he was still the epitome of the West Virginia farmer. I remember that, even at 90, he still could get around and do work on the farm, still went to the church every Sunday morning to build the fire in the stoves, and still rubbed snuff. His only real health trouble was loss of hearing. We all had to yell at him for him to hear us. When we talked to him we could hear it echo across the hillsides.

Grandpa Boone was a great man. Although small in stature, his character and life were colossal and in keeping with the stoic and stolid lifestyle of the self-reliant West Virginian.

Our family tends to re-use names from our ancestors. I am named after my grandmother Melesse. My father

carries the name of his great-uncle Curtis, who served as a private in the Spanish-American War and ended his career as a major in World War I. My brother is named after my father and his uncle. My brother used our grandmother's name as the middle name for his first child Madalyn, although he shortened it to Mele. We call her Maylo as a nickname. I have a second cousin with the name of Prudence, passed down from great-great-grandmother Prudence (Bourne) Boone. My father's brother has a son named after Grandpa Chaney himself, and Chaney recently named his son Isaac after Grandpa Boone's father. It is somehow comforting for ancestral names to be carried on throughout the years.

At the age of 105, Grandpa Boone fell while getting out of bed. He was taken to the hospital where he contracted pneumonia and passed away. There was a horse and caisson to carry his body and casket up the steep trek to the family gravesite. The cemetery plot laid at the very top of one of those rolling hills of our

beautiful state, and Grandpa was the last of our family to be buried up there. Grandpa had said it was to be so. This was the first time I had ever seen a horse-drawn caisson carrying a casket in a funeral service and probably will be the last time in such a beautiful, respectful country setting.

I often reflect back on Grandpa Boone's life, wishing I had taken the opportunity to converse with him more and learn from his experiences and wisdom. It is amazing to think of all the changes that occurred during his lifetime. I often wonder if it was the simplicity of his lifestyle, the hard work, "clean living," chemical-free food and environment, and well-balanced diet that led to his longevity. Maybe these truly were the "good old days." 🍁

ELESSE D. WHITE grew up in Kanawha City and is a graduate of Charleston High School. She earned a degree in history at West Virginia State University, where she wrote this article as a class assignment for Dr. Stuart McGehee's West Virginia history class. Elesse is currently working as a medical assistant. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Author Elesse D. White with Chaney Boone in 1991. He passed away in 1997 at age 105.



Tom Shipley at Sharp's Country Store, along U.S. Route 219 in rural Pocahontas County.

Sharp's Store

100 Years of Nostalgia in Pocahontas County

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather

"I came here at 7 p.m. on December 14, 2004," says Tom Shipley as he stands amid the antique glass showcases and shelves filled with collectibles, museum pieces, and homemade items in Sharp's Country Store, a Route 219 landmark in rural Pocahontas County since the 1920's.

Ninety-year-old Dave Sharp transferred his family's 300-plus acres of farmland and woodlands, farmhouse, 19th-century log home, barns, orchards, and iconic gas station/museum/antiques store to Tom, his grand-nephew, about 10 years ago. Tom is the great-grandson of L.D. Sharp (1872-1963), Dave's father and the founder



Souvenir T-shirts are among the items for sale at Sharp's Store in Slatyfork.



Road sign for Sharp's, as it appeared in 1988. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

of this enterprise.

Growing up in Parkersburg, Tom says his childhood recollections of this historic wide spot on the Seneca Trail were as a venue for the annual family reunion. Tom left the state following high school and became an actor, theatrical producer, wine merchant, and antiques dealer — far from the mountains of West Virginia.

He had just turned 50 when he was entrusted with the property and felt as if his ship had finally arrived. He planned to transport his inventory of antiques to Pocahontas County and continue his business in the peaceful Little Elk River valley, while revitalizing the tourist landmark. He planned to literally "live the high life" by building a modern home on the ridge overlooking the old store and tired farmhouse.

"You see things differently when you grow up in the city," Tom says, recalling his perspective at that time. "I was racking up the dollar signs in my mind."

On January 1, 2005, while walking his property in the morning following an ice storm, Tom had an epiphany as his mind tried to process the stunning landscape.

"It all started welling up inside of me," he says. "The tears started to run down my cheeks. I realized what was so important to my family about this place."

About that same time, Tom got an ominous letter. The Pocahontas County Public Service District had identified the farm as the best location for the new Slatyfork Wastewater Treatment Plant. If necessary, the farm would be taken by

eminent domain.

"I was here for an entire two weeks when I got the letter in the mail that called for eminent domain," he says. "The county decided it was a good idea to take our farm for a sewer plant."

For the next three years, Tom spent 12 hours a day learning all he could about the eminent domain process. He engaged the residents of the county and worked every angle of the debate in order to block the action. Along the way, he learned volumes about the property and its unique place in Pocahontas County's natural and human history.

"It was the most horrific yet wonderful experience of my life, because the people of this county and this state and even this nation came together and fought for us," Tom says. "We ended with this thing called an election, and the people voted every single one of the people out of office."

Tom was even installed as head of the sewer district board. But Tom says that he, his family, and like-minded friends in the community paid dearly for the farm's preservation. More than \$400,000 and thousands of hours were invested in litigation to defend the property and a way of life.

"We were very grateful, but tired and broke," Tom says, summing up the experience. It was a test by fire that not only challenged Tom's commitment to the heritage entrusted to him, but also radically changed his outlook on life. The dollar signs the city boy once "racked up" in his mind were transformed into something much more precious, which he shares with any person who cares to stop at the store and talk history,

nostalgia, and Pocahontas County.

The store itself has changed little through the decades. [See "Sharp's Country Store," by Elliot Gaines; Spring 1988.] Under Tom's ownership, however, it has evolved from

selling essentials to the woodsmen who invaded Pocahontas County as the lumber boom swept the region. L.D. also dealt in furs as a teenager, according to audio recordings Dave Sharp made of his father.

"He was quite the entrepreneur," Tom says of his great-grandfather. "He ended up with such a following that they had to build a new store. He didn't want to lose business, so he built the new store on top of and around the little one. When he was done, he dismantled [the old store] and took it out the front door."

The state abandoned the Huttonsville Turnpike in the mid-1920's, leading to the relocation of the store. L.D. vacationed in Florida during the winter months and decided to add an exotic look to his new store on Route 219. He embedded sea shells and coconut shells in the exterior stucco — artifacts that are still visible under the layers of white paint.

"He did that so local people and travelers could see what Florida was like," Tom says.

L.D. Sharp's new store catered to the burgeoning automobile-owning public. Four Gilbert & Barker T-26 gravity-fed gas pumps stood in front of the building, which was a Standard Oil, then Esso, dealership for many years. Tom has refurbished a couple of those pumps and is working on restoring the store's original red-and-white color scheme, as well.

L.D. capitalized on an additional opportunity that came with the new highway.

"When the road came through in about 1926, he noticed there were a lot of people who would come by and ask for a place to stay. [So] he



Store founder L.D. Sharp in the early 1900's. Photograph by Grover of Marlinton.

a convenience store to being more of a community gathering spot and tourist attraction. As the signs along the highway promote, it is now a "free museum" featuring "100 years of nostalgia."

"My great-granddad, L.D. Sharp, started the store when he was 12 years old, in 1884," Tom says. "There was a one-lane road called the Huttonsville Turnpike. If the road went through your property, the state would let you, twice a year, fix the road. Then you didn't have to pay taxes."

L.D. got into the retail business by



Tom Shipley is at home surrounded by antiques and artifacts in the 85-year-old country store he has owned since 2004.

built about eight or 12 little tourist cabins out of chestnut wood and put that metal-brick façade on them. He loved that stuff and nailed that onto everything he had," Tom says. "He charged a dollar a night, and you got breakfast with that. There were people living in those tourist cabins clear up until the 1960's."

L.D.'s son Ivan ran an auto parts store out of one side of his father's general store. Ivan was the eldest of L.D.'s sons. He was the father of Tom's mother, Ramona, who was born in the farmhouse on this property.

Sharp's was a classic country store during the 1930's and '40's — a community center where local people gathered around the radio and the potbellied stove. Today, a modern stereo system plays digital recordings of old-time string music. As for the stove, Tom says it was sold years ago and is in use in a

restaurant. Though the new owner is unwilling to part with it, Tom hopes to one day return the stove to its place of honor in the store.

"The only thing my family ever sold out of the store was that potbellied stove," he says.

Tom has retained many of the artifacts that his grandfather accumulated over the years. Old photographs and curiosities, like the skin of a huge Florida rattlesnake, fill the front windows of the old store.

Inside, the paintings of Silas "Si" Sharp, another one of L.D.'s seven children, are displayed in a mini-exhibit. Si used deeply saturated colors to create his folk art paintings, which often feature wildlife themes. Tom is constantly looking for Si's paintings, which occasionally show up at sales in the region. He has documented at least 40 works attributed to Si Sharp. To perpetuate his great-uncle's art,

Tom sells note cards featuring Si's images.

Si was the only one of L.D.'s four boys to stay in Pocahontas County. Ivan eventually left the car parts business and moved to Nitro. Paul went to Texas, and Dave went to Cincinnati. L.D. deeded the store to Dave when he turned 18. Dave also inherited part of the farm when L.D. died and the balance when Si passed. With the family far flung, Tom grew up not knowing his relatives or the Sharp family heritage in Pocahontas County.

"Three of the four boys had to move out of the area because it was hard to raise a family [here] after the war," Tom says.

Dave eventually established himself as a highly skilled and certified watchmaker in Cincinnati, but he never lost his love for Pocahontas County. He remained committed to family ownership of the farm and

*"I agreed to give up my home and my business, and I came here.
It's been a ride, but I've enjoyed it."*

perpetuating the country store, despite its outdated business model. For several years, Dave's daughter Linda and her husband, Benny Eduardo, ran it as a grocery store/flea market. Tom says she eventually tired of the restrictive lifestyle. As Dave neared his 90's, he sought a family member who would carry on the tradition.

In 2002, Tom, his older brother, and sister-in-law made a trip to Cincinnati to reconnect with their great-uncle over dinner.

"Dave was very appreciative of that, and he took us out to dinner," Tom says. "I remember he left a big old tip for the lady. That was my first introduction to his generosity."

Dave's house in Cincinnati was crowded with antiques he had purchased at auctions and sales. Their common interest in antiques provided an immediate connection with Tom, who offered to sell

several items from Dave's collection on eBay. Dave, 89 at the time, planned to have a big yard sale and dispose of his collection that way. Tom selected 10 of the items Dave planned to sell and listed them at the online auction site. The items fetched prices unimaginable to Dave.

"Needless to say, I endeared myself to him. I proved to him I could put fast money in his pocket," says Tom, who continued to help Dave liquidate his collection. The relationship between Dave and Tom quickly moved beyond antiques.

"Dave needed someone to run the place, and he started calling me at midnight every night for six months," Tom says. "He kept giving me things, trying to get me hooked on the Sharp farm at Slatyfork. And one of the things he gave me was Si's pocket knife. One day he called me, and of course it was

midnight. I said, 'I happen to be up sitting here at my desk, and I have to tell you, this knife you gave me of Si's is really cool. I use it to cut cheese with, pears and fruit, cut up strings for a package. I just really like that. Thank you for giving it to me.' And he said, 'Oh, that was Si's castration knife.'

"Finally, one day he made me an offer I couldn't refuse. He gave me the farm and the store. I agreed to give up my home and my business, and I came here. It's been a ride, but I've enjoyed it," Tom says.

One of the first things Tom did was to build a bridge in Dave's honor. The new red covered bridge just off Route 219 at Slatyfork is more memorial than bridge, more "romantic shelter" than transportation facilitator. Fully functional yet leading only to a pasture and family cemetery, Tom commissioned construction of the covered bridge



L.D. Sharp's sugar camp in 1906. L.D. is pictured at right behind a large, hollowed-out log. Standing at the other end of the log is his wife, Laura, with children and farm help. Photograph by Gibson.



This 50-foot covered bridge was built in 2005 to honor Dave Sharp. It leads across the Big Spring Fork of the Elk River to a pasture and cemetery.

during his first year on the farm. The lumber is native poplar for the deck and structural uprights, pine for the siding.

The covered bridge is supported by steel beams that came from a coal mine bridge blown up during a contentious labor dispute. Dave Sharp bought the steel for scrap, not knowing that it would one day support a covered bridge. When Tom told Dave that he planned to build a covered bridge on the farm to honor him, Dave concurred.

"He said, 'I always wanted a covered bridge. And it has to be red,'" Tom recalls.

Tom selected a site just north of the store where a rope bridge once crossed the creek. The covered bridge uses a simple "X" truss design and is 50 feet long. Tom estimates the cost at around \$40,000.

"Ken Gibson built that in about two-and-one-half weeks," Tom says of the bridge. "That was a really neat

time for me, because we could put our own mark on the farm and see a little progress."

A huge celebration was held for the opening of the bridge in late May 2005, during the family reunion weekend when all the Sharps return to the farm to decorate graves, honor their heritage, and reconnect.

"[Dave] had tears in his eyes," Tom says. "The whole community came out. We had a fiddler and special music."

A sign above the portal completes a circle that began more than seven decades earlier, when Dave Sharp inherited the store from his father. Dave had built, painted, and erected a number of billboards along Route 219 that promoted the store to tourists. Their remnants remain, linked by the last sign Dave Sharp made.

"When [the bridge] was finished, Dave came down from Cincinnati, and I saw him out back," Tom recalls. "Ninety years old, and he had

a saw and an old piece of plywood. I said, 'Dave, what are you doing?'

"He said, 'I'm making a sign.'

"I said, 'What's it say?'

"And he said 'I'm not going to tell you.'"

"And he made an oval sign out of that piece of plywood. It said, 'Sharp's Kissing Bridge.'

"I said, 'Dave, a kissing bridge?'

"He put the date on it and said, 'I need a ladder.'

"And we went and got it, and he supervised me — he did a lot of supervising when he was here — and we put it up there."

Dave then proceeded to explain the "kissing bridge" moniker, Tom relates:

"When I was a young man, everyone was always out — your mom and pop and all your brothers and sisters — watching you," Dave told Tom. "And the only place you could get a peck with your girlfriend is when you went to a covered bridge.

Tom strives to retain the look of the 1926 gas station/museum while generating revenue from the sale of his antiques and regional products.

And that's why it's called a kissing bridge."

Tom says the red bridge and the store's iconic "falling painter" mannequin on the side of a barn slow traffic and compel many motorists to pull off, snap pictures, and visit the store. The painter — an effigy that requires periodic replacement as a result of the sun rotting away the man's overalls — was Dave's idea, first placed there more than 30 years ago. Visitors have exported the idea to many other states and venues.

Dave's creative touch also greets visitors as they pass the little car that's parked next to the gas pumps. The car, which has a large "wind-

up" key stuck onto its trunk, once stood outside Dave's store in Cincinnati. The car attracts customers and ignites conversations.

"Come on inside," Tom says to visitors. "Have you ever been here before? No? Well, then, I have to be nice to you."

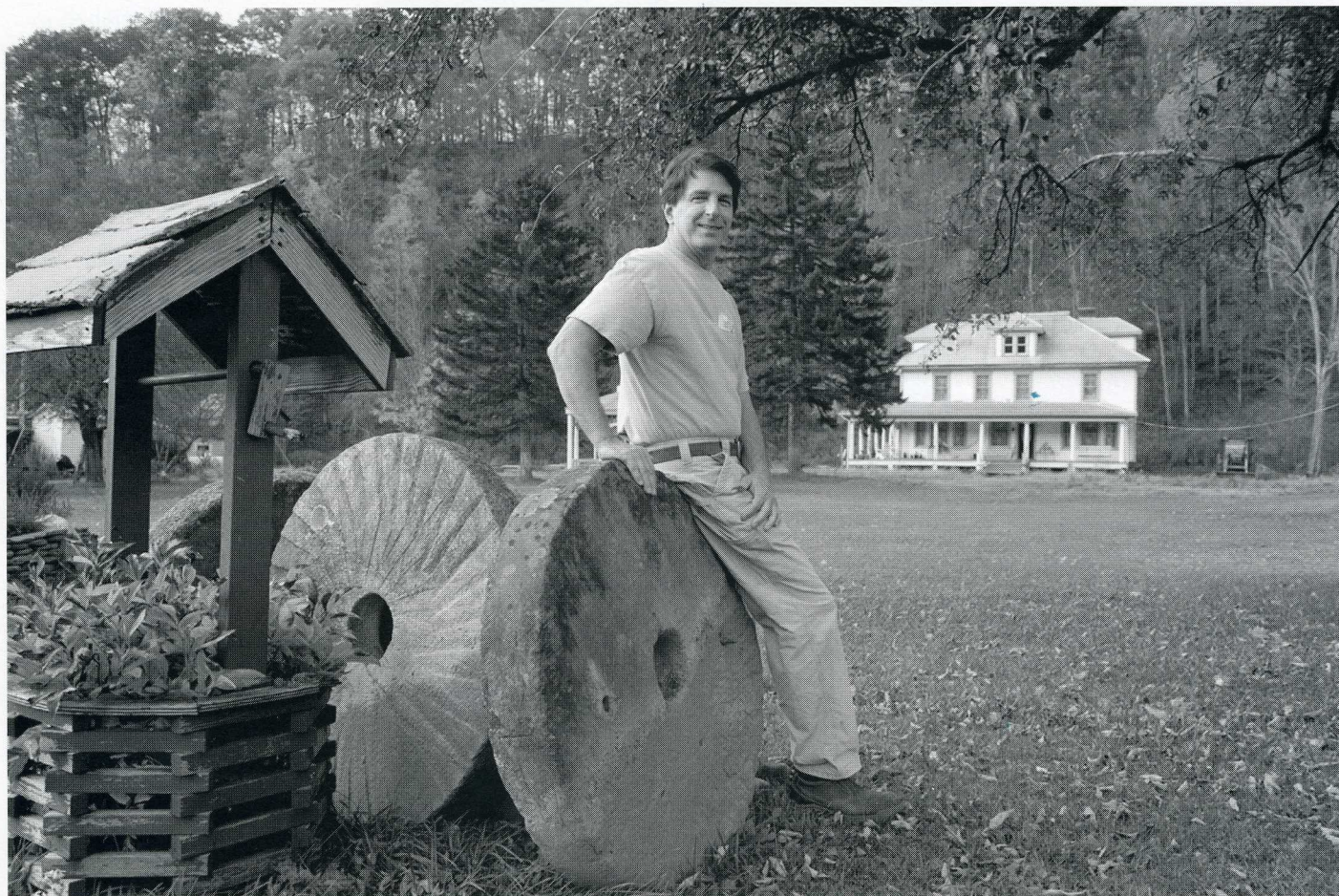
Tom strives to retain the look of the 1926 gas station/museum while generating revenue from the sale of his antiques and regional products. He has his own line of jam and jellies made from fruit grown on the farm. The Sharp family had a history of shepherding and beekeeping, and Tom sells local honey and beeswax candles and figurines. The shepherding heritage is acknowledged

in the sheep dolls that are hand-sewn by Dunmore resident JoAnn Gardner of Sleepyhill Farm.

Tom plans to restore the log home that was built by Hugh Sharp, L.D Sharp's uncle, where General Robert E. Lee once ate dinner in 1862. The house stands behind the store and next to the large farmhouse where Tom lives.

For Tom, the eighth generation of Sharps to live in this county, everything has come full circle.

"This is my life," Tom says, as he swings his arm across the property in an arc. "It's not the Gettysburg battlefield or anything like that, but I think it's cool. I think I have a good life." 🍁



Tom Shipley with grinding wheels on the 300-plus acres that have been entrusted to him. The eighth generation of his family to live on this land, Tom is responsible for this farmhouse, a 19th century log home, barns, orchards, and the popular country store at Slatyfork.

West Virginia Back Roads



Text and photographs
by Carl E. Feather

Selling Daylilies in Bunker Hill

What's the best way to maximize the return from several acres of hilly farmland in Berkeley County?

That was the challenge facing newlyweds Steve and Lisa Giles as they looked over the 11 acres of rolling terrain they had obtained from Steve's parents. Steve, a landscaper, and Lisa, a cosmetology salon owner, had no interest in fencing in the pasture and raising livestock.

"Been there, done that," says Lisa, who grew up on a farm in the Shenandoah Valley.

Encouraged by a relative who raises daylilies commercially, Lisa decided the most profitable use of their property, at least the frontage along the curvy Giles Mill Road, would be nursery beds planted with daylilies.

"We had this huge field and didn't want to have to mow it," Lisa says. "As it turns out, I probably mow it more, but it's a lot more enjoyable this way."

Daylilies are easy to grow, hardy, multiply quickly, and adapt well to just about any soil and climate — they grow in USDA zones 1 to 11. Within a couple of years, Lisa could be drawing an income from the property while enhancing the appearance of the landscape and expanding Berkeley County's agritourism base.



Lisa Giles with one of more than 300 varieties of flowers grown at Hillbilly Daylilies near Bunker Hill.

"It's always been a flower I was attracted to," Lisa says as we stand among thousands of daylilies in spectacular bloom on a warm July morning. "I love to garden, to be outside, and work with flowers. That's my passion. Anytime you can incorporate your passion into your business, you are going to succeed."

With help from her husband and family, Lisa began in 2005 with

an initial planting of three rows on an acre of land. "My husband thought three rows were enough, but I didn't," says Lisa, who broke ground for another three rows that same year.

Each row contains 46 beds, six feet long, seeded with 27 plants that Lisa purchases from hybridizers, growers who specialize in producing new varieties of daylilies.

All she needed was a catchy moniker for her venture.

"I had a list of names. I was trying to think of something with the flower's name in it, and I wanted West Virginia in there," she says. "Every time I would mention 'Hillbilly Daylilies,' I'd get a chuckle and a smile. So I knew that had to be the right name."

She started selling plants in 2007. Two years later, she added a festival, Bloomin' Bash, held the second

Saturday in July, typically when the blossoms are at their peak. Even when the lilies aren't blooming, Lisa sells plants using photographs of the blooms. The selling season typically ranges from May to September, but she will make off-season appointments for buyers to peruse the rows and photographs.

Her system, when the plants are in bloom, is for shoppers to take a clipboard and a list of all 350



Steve and Lisa Giles with Steve's mother, Janita, at the Bunker Hill farm that was once part of Janita's property.

options into the field and mark down the varieties they want to purchase. Workers then dig up the lilies and deliver the order while the shopper chats daylily history and growing tips with Lisa or her mother-in-law, Janita Giles, both Master Gardeners.

Lisa says the earliest reference to daylilies comes from China in 2697 B.C. Used as food (the tubers were boiled and consumed), the plants grew wild. They moved into the garden as the Chinese adopted the plant for medicinal value, as well. They believed the daylily roots calmed the five internal organs.

History is unclear as to how the plant made its way to Europe, but by the end of the 16th century, *Hemerocallis* was being grown in America. The most prosaic and ubiquitous of these cultivars, *Hemerocallis fulva*, grows along the roadsides of virtually every state, earning it the name "roadside daylily."

In addition to their relatively easy care, daylilies are popular because they come in so many different colors and varieties.

"The things that really intrigue

me about them are the history and the variety," Lisa says as she walks the field. "You can have one that is four feet high and have another variety that's just 22 inches tall."

Perennial plants, daylilies live up to both their common and scientific name — *Hemerocallis* is derived from the Greek for "beautiful for a day." As she walks the fields, Lisa feels compelled to "dead-head" yesterday's brown, withered blooms.

"In a perfect world, I would have this entire field deadheaded, although it does not promote growth," she says, pinching off a withered blossom. "I can't help it, when I see them, I've got to do it."

There are more than 60,000 registered cultivars of daylilies, so even though Lisa's farm is a spectacular sight in early July, these long rows of color are just a small slice of the daylily rainbow.

Lisa strives to give buyers a representation of styles, such as spiders, doubles, ruffles, and miniatures, as well as color combinations. But you won't find any blue daylilies, the Holy Grail for cultivators.

"Doubles [six petals/six sepals] and spiders are my favorites," says Lisa, explaining that to be a spider, the petal length must be five times the petal's width.

While most of the daylilies that Lisa sells come to her already registered with the American Hemerocallis Society (AHS), she has adopted several previously unregistered seedlings that she registered under "Hillbilly" monikers — such as Hillbilly Fever (a dark purple/yellow beauty) and self-explanatory Burgundy Hillbilly.

Fancy names aren't necessary, however, for the daylilies literally sell themselves. Lisa says the challenge is getting people to leave Interstate 81 and take the back roads to her farm. Those who make the journey are well-rewarded, both on the day of purchase and for many summers to come.

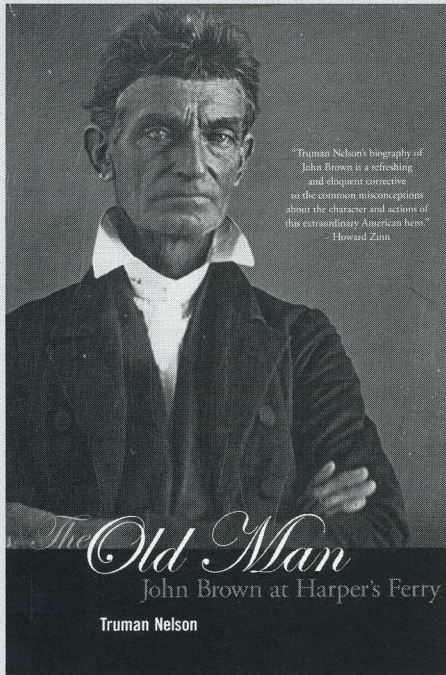
"This field just brings joy," she says. 🌸

The Third Annual Bloomin' Bash will take place on Saturday, July 9, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.hillbillydaylilies.com or phone (304)229-6698.

New Books Available

By John Lilly

With the 150th anniversary of West Virginia's march toward statehood at hand — the Sesquicentennial — there is an increased interest in books about the Civil War. Several such volumes have come into our office recently, each with a unique perspective on this formative conflict and its aftermath.



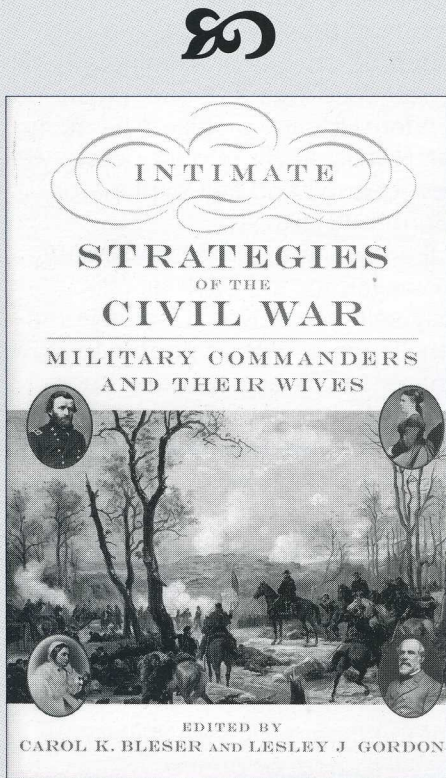
John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry is often viewed as the opening volley in the War Between the States. *The Old Man: John Brown at Harper's Ferry*, by Truman Nelson, is an in-depth account of Brown's insurrection, his philosophy, and his fate. The author uses a colorful narrative style to present a sympathetic portrayal of this often maligned and misunderstood abolitionist. Originally published in 1973, this new 304-page paperbound edition from Haymarket Books commemorates the 150th anniversary of Brown's failed but provocative attempt to foment an armed slave rebellion. *The Old Man* sells for \$17 from www.haymarketbooks.org; phone (773)583-7884.

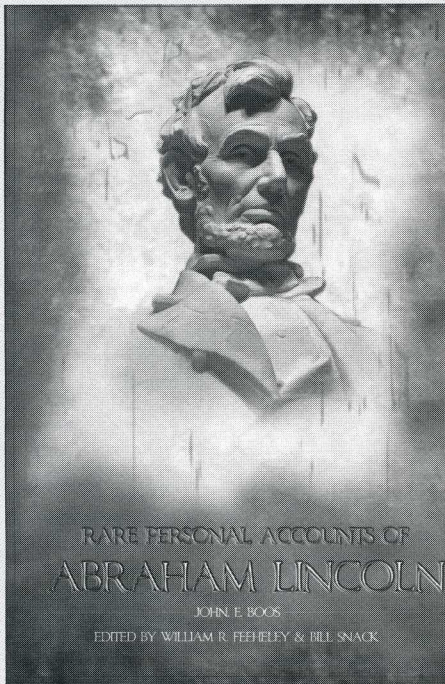
An estimated 60,000 books have been written about Abraham Lincoln, but this recent release from Rail Splitter Press claims to offer new information. *Rare Personal Accounts of Abraham Lincoln*, by John E. Boos, gathers a wide-ranging collection of first-person narratives regarding the 16th president and his personal life, public demeanor, and private moments. Between 1917 and 1940, author John E. Boos collected a vast quantity of eyewitness accounts, asking veterans, spectators, and former government officials "Did you know Lincoln?" Their responses lay unpublished for more than 60 years until memorabilia collectors William R. Feeheley and Bill Snack assembled and edited them into book form in

2005. The results are contained in this eclectic 357-page paperbound edition, offering an array of views, opinions, and observations. *Rare Personal Accounts of Abraham Lincoln* is available for \$19.95, plus shipping, from Amazon.com; e-mail wfeeheley@railsplitter.com.

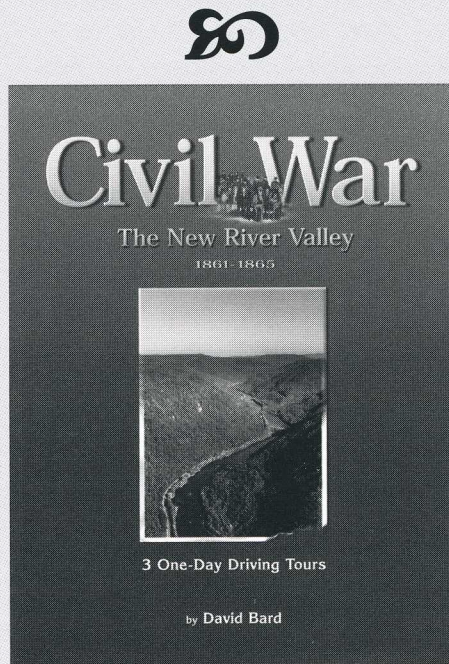
Intimate Strategies of the Civil War: Military Commanders and their Wives presents a unique wartime perspective indeed. By analyzing the marital relationships of six Confederate and six Union military leaders, this 289-page paperbound volume casts a new light on the personalities behind the uniforms and the personal stories beyond the battlefield. Edited by Carol K. Bleser and Lesley J. Gordon, *Intimate Strategies of the Civil War* is a collection of essays written specifically for this book by a diverse group of scholars and historians, each revealing the complex private lives of a key military figure and his spouse. Taken together, these essays paint a portrait of wartime America and the effects the hostilities had on domestic life in a divided nation. *Intimate Strategies* was published in 2001 by Oxford University Press. It sells for \$25, plus shipping, from www.oup.com; phone 1-800-451-7556.

The Civil War and Northwestern Virginia, by David L. McKain, provides a more traditional chronology of the war. Subtitled *The Military, Political, and Economic Events Surrounding the Creation of*

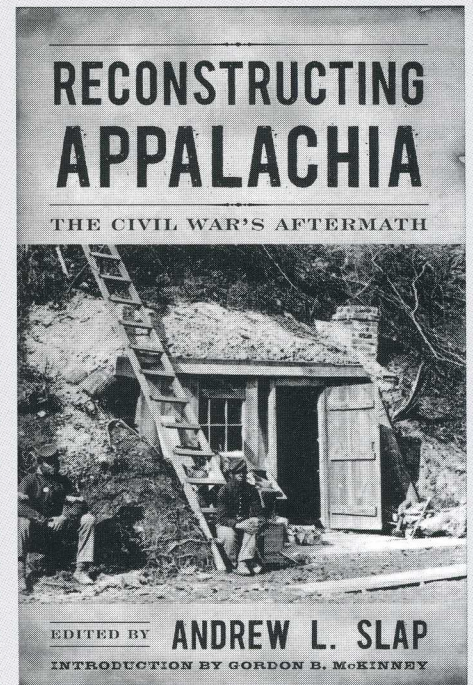




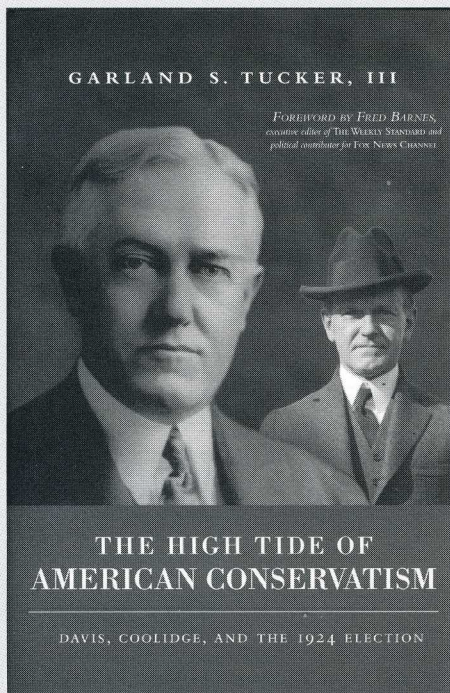
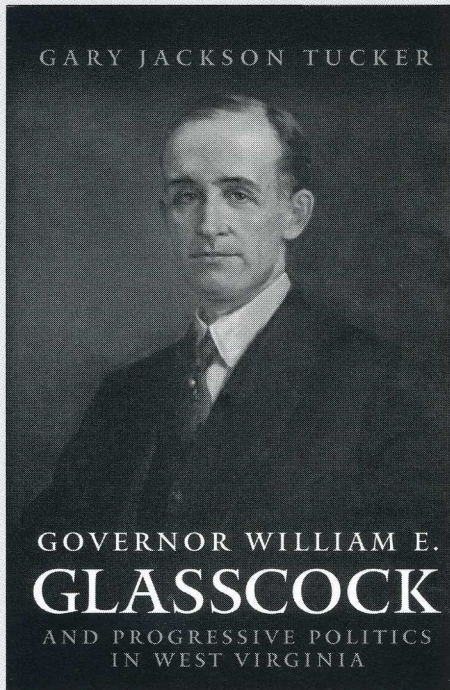
West Virginia and the Role of Parkersburg, West Virginia, in Those Events, this book lives up to its name. Author David L. McKain is a historian in the Parkersburg area, and much of this book reflects the importance of Parkersburg and the oil and gas fields to the war effort and the statehood movement. Meticulously detailed, this large-format, 203-page hardbound edition includes an extensive account of the conflict along the Ohio River Valley, as well as wider-ranging Civil War events and an assessment of the war's aftermath. A total of 25 appendices, nearly 150 maps and illustrations, and a statehood timeline make this a valuable publication, especially for those with a strong interest in the particulars of this difficult topic. *The Civil War and Northwestern Virginia* was published in 2005 by the author and is available for \$38, including tax and shipping, from David McKain, 1225 Ann Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101.



At the other end of the editorial spectrum, *Civil War: The New River Valley (1861-1865)*, by David Bard, provides three one-day driving tours to present-day sites connected to the "War of the Rebellion." Organized into three one-day excursions, the book includes colorful maps and brief descriptions of battlefields and other important wartime locations from Chilhowie, Virginia, to Marlinton, Cross Lanes, and Charleston. The large-format 144-page paperbound volume includes attractive graphics and easy-to-read narrative about the various stops, briefly summarizing the activities that took place there and why they are significant. Driving instructions are clear and concise and include modern landmarks and navigation tips. The book was published by the author in 2004. It sells for \$19.95, plus tax and shipping, from West Virginia Book Company; online at www.wvbookco.com or phone 1-888-982-7472.



The painful job of rebuilding after the war was especially challenging in the mountains, according to a new book titled, *Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath*, published in 2010 by the University Press of Kentucky. Editor Andrew L. Slap, an associate professor of history at East Tennessee State University, has collected 13 essays — 12 plus one of his own — examining a wide array of topics related to the tough, often halting, healing process in our region. Two essays are devoted specifically to West Virginia: "Neither War nor Peace": West Virginia's Reconstruction Experience," by Randall S. Gooden and "A House Redivided," by professor Ken Fones-Wolf. This 379-page hardbound edition includes an introduction by Gordon B. Kinney, illustrations, footnotes, and an index. It sells for \$40, plus shipping, and is available online at www.kentuckypress.com; phone 1-800-537-5487.



A number of new titles concerning West Virginia politics in the 20th and 21st century are now available.

West Virginia Politics and Government is an introduction to the state's political system and history written by members of the Department of Political Science and Division of Public Administration at West Virginia University. Published in 2008 by the University of Nebraska Press as part of its Politics and Government of the American States series, this book could well function as a text for a college course. It also will be useful as a reference for anyone seeking to unravel the nuance of political power and influence in a complicated terrain. The 331-page paperbound volume lists authors Richard A. Brisbin, Jr.; Robert J. Dilger; Allan S. Hammock; and L. Christopher Plein. The book includes 12 tables, an extensive bibliography, footnotes, and index. *West Virginia Politics and Government* sells for \$29.95, plus shipping, at www.nebraskapress.unl.edu; phone (402)472-3581.

Governor William E. Glasscock and Progressive Politics in West Virginia, by Gary Jackson Tucker, is a formal biography of the state's 13th governor. An ardent progressive and reformer, Glasscock was born during the Civil War, about 13 miles from Morgantown. His tenure as governor, from 1909 until 1913, was a busy and tumultuous time in the state's history, the author asserts. Glasscock, a liberal Republican, dealt with labor unrest, antitrust, election reform, regulation of public utilities, and workmen's compensation issues. His strong

leadership and populist appeal won him the praise and admiration of average people in the state. This 205-page paperbound edition was published in 2008 by West Virginia University Press. It sells for \$28, plus tax and shipping, from www.wvupress.com; phone (304)293-8400.

The High Tide of American Conservatism: Davis, Coolidge, and the 1924 Election, by Garland S. Tucker, III, looks at the presidential race involving West Virginia's only major-party candidate for the nation's highest office. John W. Davis was a conservative Democrat from Clarksburg who won his party's nomination for president in 1924. [See "John W. Davis and the 1924 Presidential Campaign," by Rod Rogers; Fall 2004.] His race against conservative Republican incumbent Calvin Coolidge was ultimately unsuccessful, but marked a turning point in national politics. Not since the 1924 contest have both parties nominated for president staunchly conservative candidates. *The High Tide of American Conservatism* is a 336-page hardbound volume, published in 2010 by the Emerald Book Company. It sells for \$29.95, plus shipping, and is available online at www.emeraldbookcompany.com; phone (512)891-6100.

Shirley Love, a West Virginia state senator from 1994 to 2008, is the subject of a recent biography titled, *A Man Called Shirley*, by Mannix Porterfield. Love's storybook career began with a hymn solo sung in a Fayette County church. The owner of WOAY radio in Oak Hill was among the congregation and encouraged teenaged Shirley to come by the



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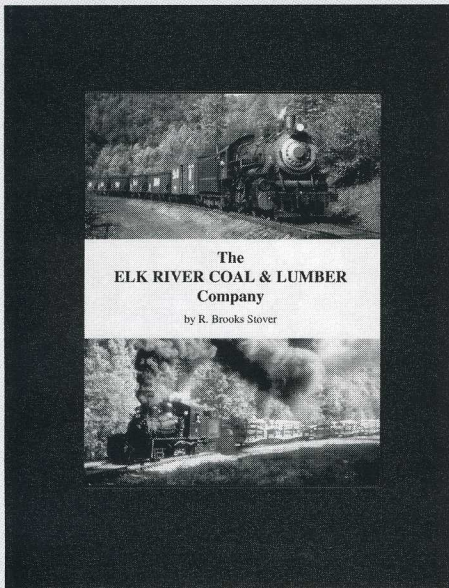
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station for an audition as an announcer. Thus began the long and unlikely career of one of West Virginia's more colorful politicians. Love's position as a radio announcer led him into television, where he became the anchor of the raucous weekly show, *Saturday Night Wrestlin'*. He garnered an appointment as a State Senator in 1994. His popularity as a TV personality helped him win subsequent elections in 1996, 2000, and 2004. This 263-page paperbound book, published by the author in 2009, is available for \$20.95, plus tax and shipping, from Mannix Porterfield, P.O. Box 602, Bradley, WV 25818.

Railroad history is always a popular subject in West Virginia. Two fine new books are available concerning a pair of important rail lines in the state.

The Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad (BC&G) has been featured several times in these pages, most recently in our Winter 2008 issue. [See "The Train, the Smoke, the Whistle, and the Bell: Memories

of Widen," by Barbara J. Young Workman.] This Clay County line, a subsidiary of J.G. Bradley's Elk River Coal & Lumber Company, ran between Dundon and Widen — little more than 18 miles — from 1904 until 1965. Railroad enthusiast R. Brooks Stover has published a detailed history of this legendary railroad, often thought to have been the last bastion of steam locomotion in America. *The Elk River Coal & Lumber Company*, published in 2010, is a 216-page large-format, hardbound volume. It is richly illustrated with photographs, maps, and tables and includes both historical facts and first-person accounts. The book sells for \$32.95, shipping included, from R. Brooks Stover, 2870 Plum Creek Drive, Oakland, MI 48363; phone (248)814-8699.

The Kanawha & Michigan Railroad: Bridgeline to the Lakes (1888-1922), by Donald L. Mills, Jr., describes one of the lesser-known companies that operated during the heyday of railroading. The K&M ran coal, timber, and chemicals from Gauley Bridge to Corning, Ohio — a distance of 153 miles. There was limited passenger service, as well. Author Donald L. Mills, Jr., follows the line from northern Ohio to central West Virginia, giving comments and details at every stop. Published in 2010, this 218-page, hardbound, large-format edition includes numerous photographs, maps, and tables, as well as a set of color plates. It sells for \$35, plus shipping, and is available from the author at 807 Fifth Street East, Huntington, WV 25701; phone (304)634-1514.

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

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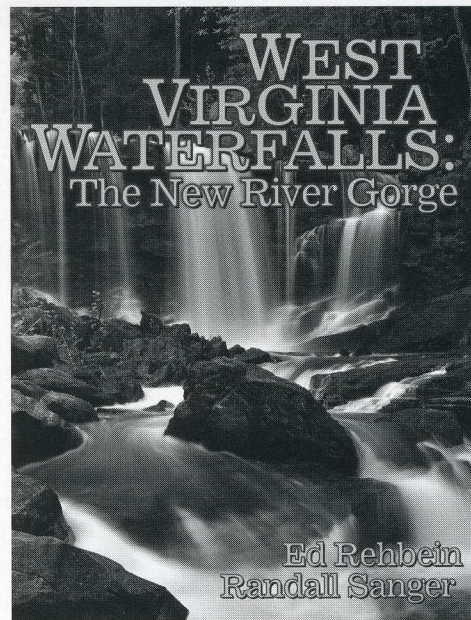
Waterfall Book

West Virginia is home to countless waterfalls, with more than 100 of them located in or near the New River Gorge. *West Virginia Waterfalls: The New River Gorge*, a beautiful new coffee-table book from photographers and outdoor writers Ed Rehbein and Randall Sanger, offers colorful pictures of 121 falls along the New, Gauley, Bluestone, and related waterways. Gathered over a 10-year period, these striking photographs show a wide range of falls in both popular and highly remote locations.

Part picture book, part field guide, *West Virginia Waterfalls* includes descriptions, directions, and GPS coordinates for each falls. The 112-page large-format, hardbound edition also includes a 16-page pullout guidebook, featuring topographic maps, travel tips, and a checklist. The waterfalls are coded according to accessibility as "easy," "moderate," or "difficult." They are further divided into three geographic regions: the Gauley and Lower New Rivers, the Central New River Gorge, and the Bluestone and Upper New River, with accompanying color maps for each region.

The authors' regard for these captivating and fragile natural attractions is abundantly clear in the short but engaging narrative that goes with each photograph. Commentary includes anecdotes about the authors' adventures in locating the falls and subjective comments about the falls, their assets, and relative merits. Rehbein and Sanger stress throughout the importance of environmentally responsible behavior in the quest of these treasures.

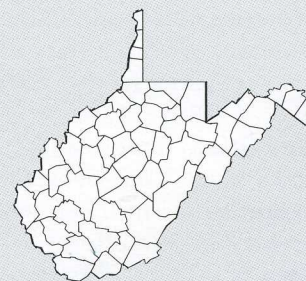
West Virginia Waterfalls: The New River Gorge was published in 2011 by Headline Books. It sells for \$49.95 and is available in Berkeley at Tamarack or online at www.wvscenicphotography.com



Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Osage
- Tanneries
- Musician Buddy Griffin
- Kanawha Textbook Controversy





Waterfall at Marr Branch, off Fayette Station Road in the New River Gorge. Photograph by Ed Rehbein, from *West Virginia Waterfalls: The New River Gorge*, by Ed Rehbein and Randall Sanger. See page 72.

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