

Kelly Axe • Billy Sunday • Bing Brothers • Fly Fishing

# Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Summer 2012 \$5.95

Arthurdale





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# From the Editor: New Deal

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Our cover story about Arthurdale makes me think about the New Deal. [See “Growing Up in Arthurdale,” by Jim McNelis; page 8.] Author Jim McNelis was a young man when his family was selected to move from the ravages of Scotts Run — reportedly some of the worst conditions of poverty ever witnessed by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt — into the experimental and idealistic environs of Arthurdale, Preston County.

Jim and the McNelis family were fortunate indeed. They were given a modern house, a mule, five acres, and a second chance. The federal Resettlement Administration (RA) worked with approximately 200 communities across the country: Arthurdale, Eleanor, and Dailey / Valley Bend here in West Virginia. Others included Greenbelt, Maryland; Greendale, Wisconsin; and Greenhills, Ohio.

There is a famous picture of a young farm boy wearing jeans and muddy boots while dancing enthusiastically with Mrs. Roosevelt — that’s Jim McNelis at his sister’s high school graduation! [See page 17.]

There is no question that the New Deal, particularly the Arthurdale experiment, was a great advantage for the McNelis family and their neighbors. Some of you might recall our Winter 2003 edition, which featured weaver Dorothy Thompson on the cover. She was also a product of Arthurdale, who went on to make a life and a living from the weaving that she was taught there.

In our Fall 2010 edition, we featured Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographs by Marion Post Wolcott and Ben Shahn. Our Fall 1998 edition featured an interesting article about New Deal-era post office art. In Spring 2000, we visited the Blacksville pottery in Monongalia County, another project started by Eleanor Roosevelt. Our Winter 2001 issue highlighted an all-black Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in McDowell County. Many of our state parks, hiking trails, and recreation areas, as well as fire towers, bridges, picnic shelters, and other outdoor amenities came from one federal program or another during the New Deal.

In fact, going back to the earliest editions of GOLDENSEAL, it’s hard to leaf through more than a few pages without finding someone citing the New Deal as the source of funding or other support for some worthwhile and memorable project. True

GOLDENSEAL buffs might recall that our predecessor publication — *Hearth & Fair* — put out its next-to-final edition in May 1974 dedicated to the 1930’s and the New Deal. As the saying goes, it’s in the bricks around here.

It was surprising to me, therefore, to come across two book-length studies critical of the New Deal in West Virginia: *An Appalachian New Deal: West Virginia in the Great Depression*, by Jerry Bruce Thomas (University Press of Kentucky, 1998) and *Back to the Land: Arthurdale, FDR’s New Deal, and the Costs of Economic Planning*, by C.J. Maloney (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011). [See pages 16 and 68.] Both of these books are well-written, well-researched, and well-intended. While critical, they both acknowledge that federal programs, Arthurdale included, were of at least some immediate benefit and relief to those people directly involved.

They also bring up some interesting points about dependency and the limited ability of the federal government to sustain these sorts of programs. If you ask Jim McNelis, however, or Dorothy Thompson, or any of the others here in West Virginia who just needed a hand up when their luck was down, you would no doubt hear that the New Deal was a good deal, not only for them but for the state and nation. Today, 80 years later, we still cross the South Side Bridge, vacation at Babcock State Park and, yes, celebrate the New Deal Festival at Arthurdale. [See page 7.]

The New Deal was a time when the many pulled together to help the few. It was a time when we showed our better nature and marked the optimism and humanity that we too often take for granted. It makes me proud. And I’m glad to see it once again on the cover of GOLDENSEAL.



Photograph by Michael Keller

*John Lilly*

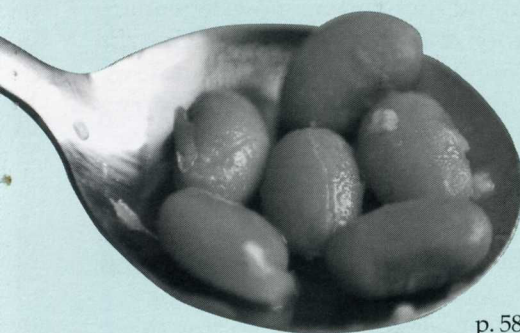




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On the cover: Plowing a field at Arthurdale, Preston County, photographer and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Harry Carlson Collection. Our story begins on page 8.

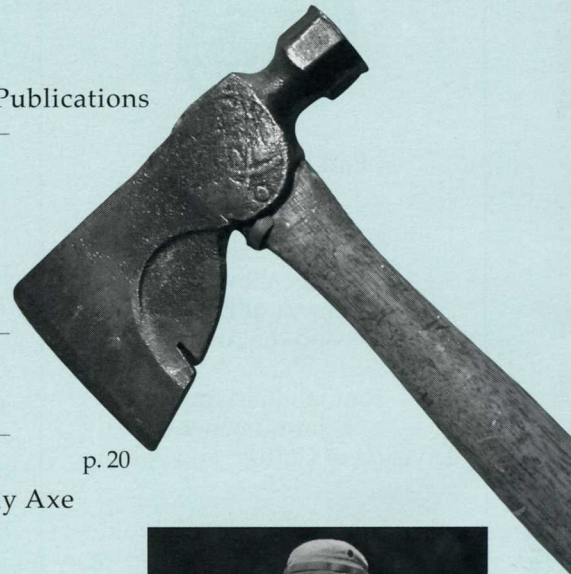
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## Letters from Readers

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

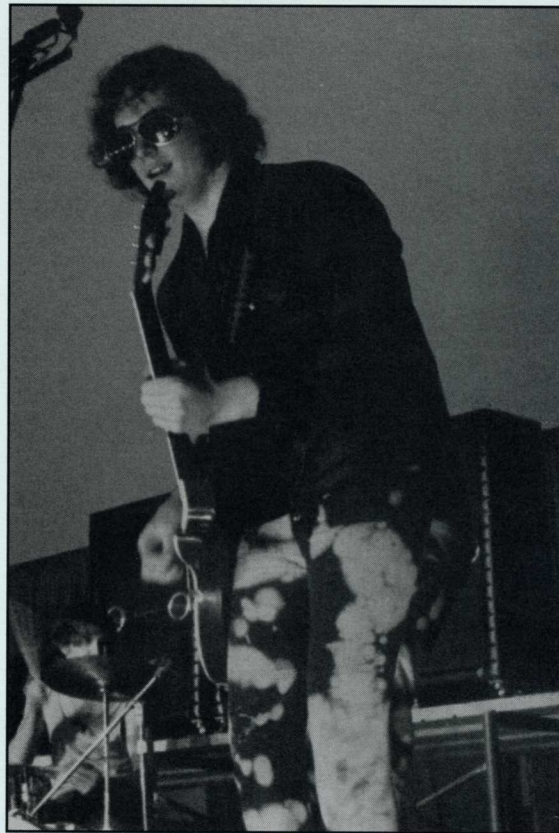
### Rock & Roll

March 24, 2012  
Lewes, Delaware  
Editor:

Thank you for your excellent recent edition of GOLDENSEAL. I have subscribed to the magazine since it began, and I have enjoyed reading every issue. But I especially liked the most recent issue as it struck a very personal note with me and my family. My late younger brother, Randall Wray, who died in 1995, was one of the featured artists. [See "Days of Glory: Rock Music in the Kanawha Valley (1965-1975)," by Terry Lowry; Spring 2012.]

Back in the summer of 2011, I was contacted by Terry Lowry of the West Virginia Blues Society to tell me that Randall was going to be honored at the Empty Glass on the East End of Charleston on September 24, 2011. I was proud and happy to represent our family, along with Steve George of Beckley, my brother's cousin, at the Randall Wray tribute show. I was honored to come to Charleston from my home in Delaware for such an evening in memory of Randall.

The evening was wonderful as more than 30 artists participated, including Norris Lytton who is featured on the cover of your magazine. Each of the artists signed a beautiful poster of the evening, and I was able to bring it home to show my brother's nieces and cousins something tangible



Guitarist Randall Wray, 1970. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame.

about him and his now-legendary rock & roll career in the Kanawha Valley and Charleston. And now, due to your magazine and Terry Lowry's excellent article, I have another part of my brother's life in Charleston to share with those in our family who had always heard of him but never really knew him.

Again, many thanks for the excellent article and photos that we in Randall's family have never seen before! And thanks to the West Virginia Blues Society and Terry Lowry for keeping the flame lit on a wonderful time in rock & roll history in West Virginia. GOLDENSEAL rocks!  
Sincerely,  
Dr. Gary D. Wray



**C.J. Richardson**

March 25, 2011

Via e-mail

Port Republic, Maryland

Editor:

It was terrific to read Carl Feather's story about C.J. Richardson's hardware store, including the reminders of C.J.'s affection for hunting and fishing, as well as for the music of the region. [See "Fair Dealing": C.J. Richardson's Hardware in Marlinton," by Carl E. Feather; Spring 2012.]

During the 1970's, Dwight Diller, Alan Jabbour, and I heard that same story "from the other side" when we visited the Hammons family in Marlinton. As GOLDENSEAL readers will know, the Hammonses were great outdoorsmen (and women) and superlative singers, musicians, and storytellers. During our visits, I copied some family snapshots that included the brothers C.J. and Ed Richardson; Maggie Hammons; and her father, Paris Hammons.

The Hammonses lived on the Williams River at the time, and the Richardsons had a fishing camp nearby. Maggie told us that the Richardsons would regularly send for one or another of the

Hammonses to sing, play, or tell stories. Paris died in 1926, which suggests that the pictures date from the 1920's. I jotted down the identifications at the time. If you or your readers spot any errors, please let me know.

Best wishes,  
Carl Fleischhauer

*Thanks, Carl. We'll let you know if we hear anything. For more about the Hammons family, see "Raised Really Tough": The Life and Music of the Bing Brothers," by John Lilly; page 40. —ed.*

**Barber Ray Mossor**

March 28, 2012

Via e-mail

Editor:

The West Virginia I remember is admirably depicted in Carl E. Feather's story, "Shave and a \$6 Haircut in New Martinsville"; Winter 2011. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, I could mow and trim a medium-size lawn on a Saturday morning and earn enough money to pay for a haircut plus a movie in the late afternoon and still purchase a bag of popcorn, a small Coke, and perhaps a bar of candy. In those days a boy's haircut was only 35 cents. A large

# 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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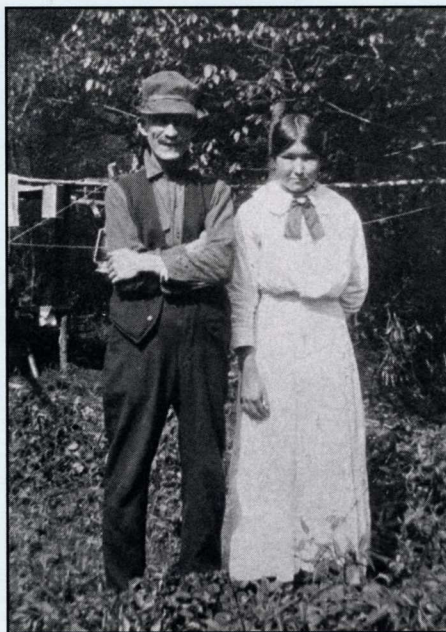
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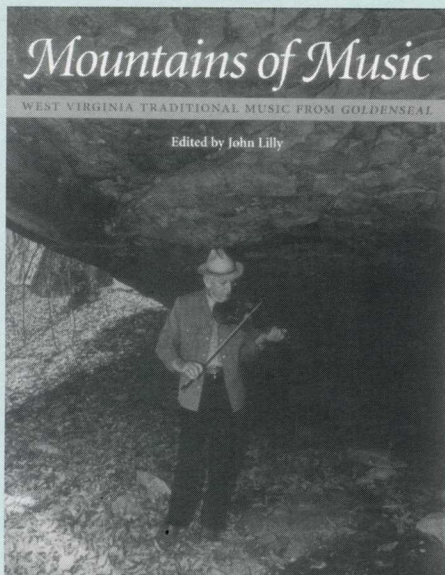


Paris Hammons (left) and Ed Richardson.



C.J. Richardson and Maggie Hammons.





*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 \$33.95, plus \$2 shipping per book; West Virginia residents please add 6% sales tax (total \$37.99 per book, including tax and shipping). Add *Mountains of Music* to your book collection today!

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sum of money was not necessary in my youthful West Virginia days. Even milkshakes were inexpensive. A cheese sandwich with a small Coke was practically a gift when compared to what such pleasures cost today.

I find Carl's barbering story more than simply an enjoyable read — his stories reflect the abundance of joy deep within the souls of those born and raised in West Virginia. The barbering article is only one such fascinating story. Wait until you read about the Berkeley Castle, also written by Carl E. Feather, in the same issue!

The impact of living an abundant life is ours to enjoy in GOLDENSEAL.

Sincerely,

C.W. "Bill" Jarrett

### Berkeley Castle

February 13, 2012

Via e-mail

St. Marys, West Virginia

Editor:

I wanted to let you know how much my husband and I enjoyed the article

"Berkeley Castle: Living in a Landmark,"  
by Carl



E. Feather; Winter 2011. The most intriguing part of the article was reading about Samuel Taylor Suit.

Prior to my grandmother Pearl Harper McFarland's passing in 1999, she had asked my dad to see that I was given a little brown jug that she had gotten from her uncle many years earlier. Since I have a passion for old stoneware, I was thrilled to receive it but knew nothing about the jug. It is a small, brown slip jug, and reads, "S.T. Suit, Suitland, MD. LITTLE BROWN JUG. The whiskey in this jug was made in 1869 and filled by me in 1873." I was delighted to learn of the jug's history upon reading the article. I'm sending you a photo of it.

We love visiting the Berkeley Springs area, and now the little brown jug holds even more meaning to me. My grandmother would have been thrilled, too!

Sincerely,

Kathy White



Illustration by Duane Ellifritt.

### Depression Farm

March 26, 2012

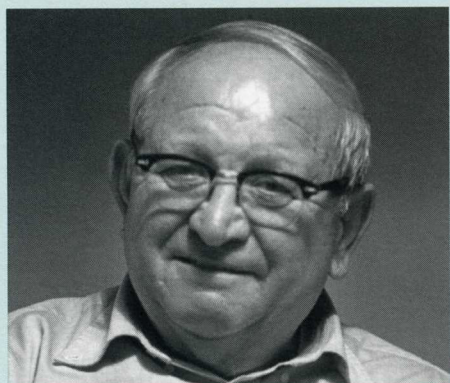
Clarksburg, West Virginia

Editor:

I want to thank you all for publishing my story. [See "Surviving the Great Depression: Our Year on the Farm," by Charles E. Brannon; Spring 2012.] I thought the illustrations by Duane Ellifritt were great. They sure helped to tell the story. Best wishes to you all,  
Charles E. Brannon



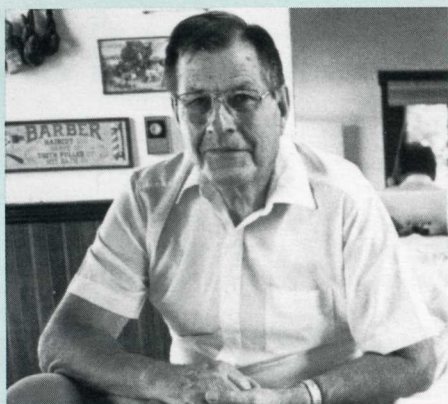
# GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes



Rush Butcher. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

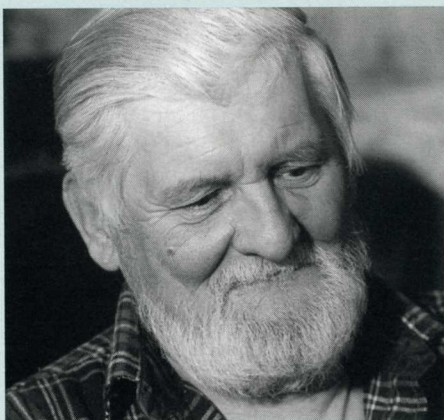
**Rush Butcher**, veteran dancer, dance caller, and teacher, was born in Belfont, Braxton County, in 1923. Rush met his wife, Ruby, at Berea College where he was introduced to folk dancing. He worked as 4-H extension agent in Nicholas County for 45 years. Through 4-H, Rush and Ruby Butcher organized folk dance groups and taught and presented folk dance at camps, festivals, and other gatherings for many years. Rush and Ruby Butcher received the Vandalia Award in 1999. They were the subject of a GOLDENSEAL story, "A Pattern to Life: Folk Dancers Rush & Ruby Butcher," by John Lilly; Spring 2000. Rush Butcher passed away on February 25. He was 88.

**Lyle "Lefty" Meeks**, long-standing barber at Cass, passed away on April 1. He was 92. Lefty was featured in our Fall 1993 issue in an article titled, "Lefty the Barber: Still



Lefty Meeks. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

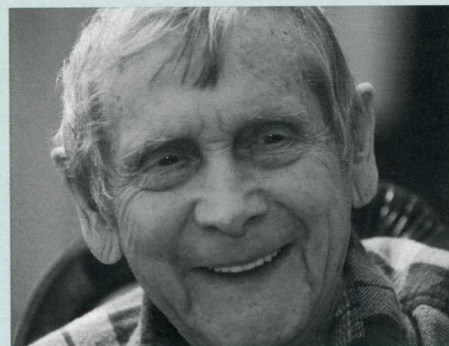
Clipping at Cass," by Louise Burner Flegel. Born at Stony Bottom, Pocahontas County, on Christmas Day 1919, Lefty attended barber college in Wheeling and opened his first barbershop at Durbin in 1949, moving to Cass the following year. Lefty's barbershop became a gathering place for the men of Cass, who came for good conversation and a \$3 haircut. Lefty retired after 62 years of barbering.



Connard Wolfe. Photograph by Michael Keller.

**Connard Wolfe**, of Livingston, Kanawha County, renowned wood carver, folk sculptor, and painter, died April 5 at age 79. Connard taught himself to work with stone and wood, and to make his own tools. He created inspiring sculptures and carvings, which attracted local, regional, and national attention. Connard Wolfe was mistakenly reported as deceased in the Spring 1993 issue of GOLDENSEAL, an error which led to the cover story of our Spring 1994 edition titled, "Alive and Working: Folk Sculptor Connard Wolfe," by Danny Williams.

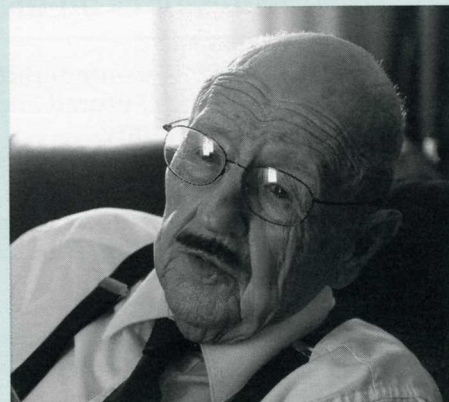
**Everett Lilly**, well-known musician and singer from Clear Creek, Raleigh County, passed away on May 8 at the age of 87. Everett, with his brother Michael Burt "B" Lilly, performed and recorded as the Lilly Brothers. Together with banjo player Don Stover, they performed



Everett Lilly. Photograph by Michael Keller.

for 17 years in Boston, Massachusetts, and are credited with bringing Appalachian music to New England. They were also among the first bluegrass musicians to perform in Japan. "B" passed away in 2005. Everett received the Vandalia Award in 2009 and was featured in the article "'Keep a-Goin'": Musician Everett Lilly of Clear Creek," by John Lilly; Summer 2009.

**Herman Isner** of Kerens, Randolph County, passed away May 5 at the age of 93. Raised up with farming, Herman bought his first cattle at the age of 11. He eventually bought and sold more than 3 million head of cattle. Herman was descended from a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and his 350-acre farm was considered one of the finest in the state. In 1985, the farm was put into a trust and was declared a demonstration farm by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Herman was the subject of a story in our Spring 2011 issue titled, "Randolph County Cattleman Herman Isner," by Barbara Smith.



Herman Isner. Photograph by Tyler Evert.



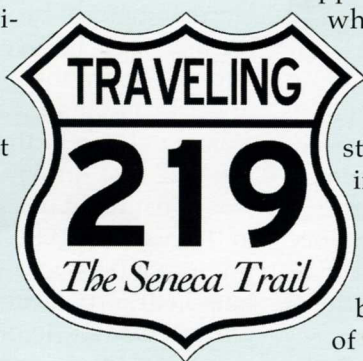
# Current Programs • Events • Publications

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.

## Travel Route 219

Stories, history, and images along U.S. Route 219 are featured on a new interactive Web site designed to promote travel and tourism on this scenic but mountainous highway through West Virginia's rugged eastern highlands. The Web site, [www.Traveling219.com](http://www.Traveling219.com), currently offers 25 radio stories, plus illustrations, depicting life and attractions along this 200-mile, two-lane stretch of highway. Topics include the old DePollo Store in Thomas (now the Purple Fiddle), Parsons clockmaker Doyle Kisner, Reed's Mill, and other locations and individuals.

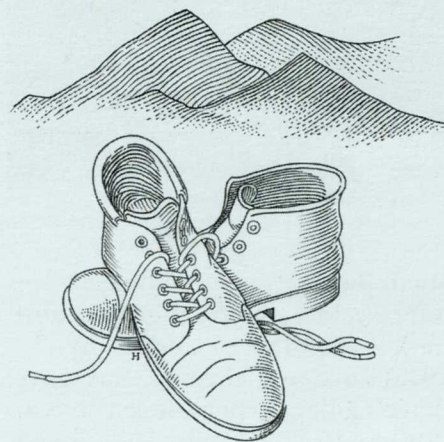
Project coordinators Roxy Todd and Emily Newton will present some of the stories recorded for the 219 Project in a multi-media performance



called "Wildcats, Ferris Wheels, and Bloody Butcher Corn," on Saturday, June 23, at 7:30 p.m., at the Morgantown Arts Center. Becky Hill of the Mountain Dance Trail and banjo player Christopher Harnett will also be performing.

## Mountain Dance Trail

Community square dances from Henderson to Franklin are included in the Mountain Dance Trail, sponsored by the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. The trail, which roughly follows U.S. Route 33 across West Virginia, seeks to promote and support traditional dance in areas where there is a strong heritage of dancing. Through a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council, Augusta staff members are documenting these dance traditions and working with local dance organizers to encourage youth involvement. A brochure shows the location of these dances and provides a



calendar of scheduled events. For a free brochure or additional information, visit [www.mountaindance-trail.org](http://www.mountaindance-trail.org) or phone (304)637-1209.

## New Deal Festival

Arthurdale, Preston County, will host its annual New Deal Festival on Saturday, July 14. This year's festival theme is "Remembering 1942." [See "Growing Up in Arthurdale," by Jim McNelis; page 8.] Activities for the New Deal Festival will include a visit from character actors depicting Franklin and

## Sesquicentennial Timeline Milestones on the Road to Statehood



- **June 13, 1862** – Confederate bushwhackers were captured and killed in Braxton County.
- **June 26, 1862** – Abraham Lincoln ordered the creation of the Army of Virginia and ordered it to protect western Virginia.
- **July 11, 1862** – A Soldiers Aid Society was organized in Wheeling.
- **July 14, 1862** – The West Virginia statehood bill was passed by the U.S. Senate.
- **August 5, 1862** – Union troops were attacked by Confederate cavalry at Wyoming Courthouse.
- **August 9, 1862** – Union meetings were held in Marshall, Wetzel, Tyler, and Upshur counties.
- **August 10, 1862** – Union troops destroyed the Mercer salt works in present-day Summers County.
- **August 11, 1862** – War meetings were held in Lewis County, Clarksburg, and Kingwood.
- **August 31, 1862** – Confederate troops captured Weston.

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



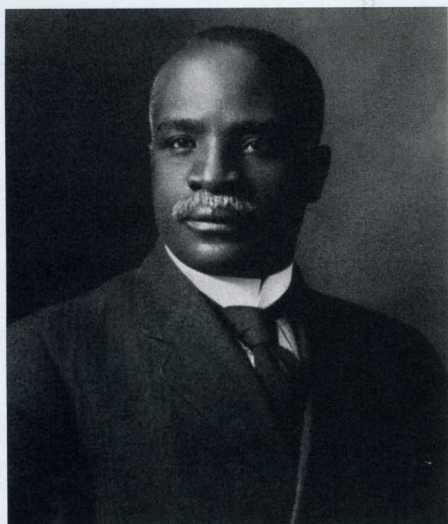


Historical re-enactors at Arthurdale's New Deal Festival.

Eleanor Roosevelt, craft market and artisan demonstrations, a 1942 military encampment, antique vehicle and tractor show, live music, and other events. Advance tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for children. For more information, visit [www.arthurdaleheritage.org](http://www.arthurdaleheritage.org); phone (304)864-3959.

### Kelly Miller School

The Kelly Miller Foundation will hold its biennial meeting in Clarksburg on July 19-21. Kelly Miller School was an influential all-black institution, serving the African American community in Harrison County beginning in 1866. Named for Dr. Kelly Miller (1863-1939), renowned teacher, administrator, advocate, philosopher, and journalist, it was called Kelly Miller Black High School from 1919-1957. The



Kelly Miller.

Kelly Miller Foundation recognizes and encourages academic achievement among black students in the area. The organization maintains a Kelly Miller Hall of Fame, and awards student scholarships.

For details or additional information, phone James E. Williams at (304)768-0447.

### Clifftop Festival

The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Appalachian String Band Music Festival, known informally as Clifftop, will take place August 1-5 at Camp Washington Carver in Fayette County. The popular event features five days of music in a rustic setting as participants from far and wide come to camp, compete, and immerse themselves in traditional — and not-so-traditional — sounds. [See "Open Arms at Clifftop: 20<sup>th</sup> Appalachian String Band Music Festival," by John Lilly; Summer 2009.]

Banjo, fiddle, band, and dance contests offer cash prizes. Additional activities include evening square dancing, kids' activities, craft sales and demonstrations, and nonstop jam sessions. Master artist visits will include West Virginia fiddlers Elmer Rich and Franklin George. Evening concerts will be presented by Fish from Within and the Ratchet Mountain Rock Farmers. For directions, costs, or more information, phone (304)438-3005 or visit [www.wvculture.org/stringband/index.html](http://www.wvculture.org/stringband/index.html).

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# Growing Up in

*Arthurdale, Preston County, was established in 1933 by the federal government at the encouragement of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The model homestead community — the first of its kind — offered struggling families from nearby mining towns a fresh start with a home of their own, five acres of tillable land, and other amenities. [See “Arthurdale: The New Deal Comes to Preston County,” by Kathleen Cullinan and Beth Spence; April-June 1981.]*

*The McNelis family from Cassville, Scotts Run, were among the first group of homesteaders to move to Arthurdale. Jim McNelis, now living in Maryland, was 11 years old at the time. In 1999, he wrote the following recollections of his early years in Arthurdale. They were published as a series in Restoring Yesterday for Tomorrow, the newsletter of Arthurdale Heritage, Inc., between January and July 2000. They appear here by permission. — ed.*

Arthurdale man uses horses to plow a field, while four children follow. Photographs courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Harry Carlson Collection, photographers and dates unknown, unless otherwise noted.





# Arthurdale

By Jim McNelis

Every Arthurdale homestead family has a story to tell as to how they lived before being selected to become

an Arthurdale homesteader, and their memories of how it was to live in Arthurdale during the

early 1930's. Most of the Arthurdale homesteader descendants were very young when they first moved to Arthurdale, and I hope that my first

impressions and recollections will bring back fond memories of a new way of life we enjoyed as homestead-

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*It was a meager existence of many coal miner families — some better, some worse.*

---

ers. If my recollections of dates and times are not exactly accurate for some, one should remember that I was very young in those early years.

Prior to being selected to come to Arthurdale, we were living in Cassville, Monongalia County, a

coal mining town at the upper end of Scotts Run outside Morgantown. My father was a miner for the Cassville

Mining Company. We lived in a company house, with water at the street near our house and outside toilets. Our house was heated by a

William "Bill" and Viola "Chris" McNelis at Arthurdale. Photographer and date unknown.





coal grate located in the middle of the house. It was a meager existence of many coal miner families — some better, some worse.

I first heard of Arthurdale when my parents told my sister and me that we would soon be moving to a new house we would own, and have a garden. My father left to work at Arthurdale, coming home on weekends.

My parents were William F. and Viola “Chris” McNelis. My sister was Louise McNelis Shafer, who graduated from Arthurdale High School in 1938. We lived in Arthurdale at F-12, and

our farm adjoined the West Virginia University Experimental Farm. During the weekdays, my father stayed at the Arthur House, a large, three-story mansion located where the Arthur-

and served by Mr. Luzier. The Arthur mansion was the home of the Richard Arthur family who owned all the land that is now called Arthurdale. During those early years the Arthur

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*When we moved to Arthurdale in 1933, it was the first time we had running water in the home, an inside bathroom, our own water system, and the first time we were to own a home and land.*

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mansion was used for numerous purposes, including the first few years of the Arthurdale elementary and high school classes, which were

moved to the new school buildings about 1935.

The first 50 families moved into the prefabricated homes, with home styles designated as I, L, H, or T shapes. Our

dale Inn is now located, up the hill from the Arthurdale service station. Room and board were furnished to all working homesteaders at the Arthur mansion, and all meals were prepared

Second graders at Arthurdale school construct a model village in 1935.





home was an H-style home. Each of the first 50 homes had approximately five acres of land. Other families followed during the next two or three years, and their homes were of the conventional design and construction.

We first visited Arthurdale in 1933 to see our house as it was being built, and these visits gave my parents a chance to plan for furniture and other moving problems. When we moved to Arthurdale later in 1933, it was the

first time we had running water in the home, an inside bathroom, our own water system, and the first time we were to own a home and land. It was quite an improvement over our prior

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*The Fourth of July and Labor Day celebrations were great events.*

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living style. The government later built our barn and chicken house.

The congressional debate in Washington, D.C., as to the decision of the

U.S. government to create resettlement projects such as Arthurdale and a similar project in Greenbelt, Maryland, a suburb outside Washington, D.C., created negative media coverage and brought to Arthurdale a flood of tourists and opponents of the project during the early years from 1933 to 1937. The Ar-

thurdale project was supported by the Roosevelt administration, while business interests and many independent voters opposed it. Arthurdale

Toddlers using child-sized sinks at Arthurdale. For many homesteaders, including our author, this was their first experience with indoor plumbing.





was referred to as "Eleanor's Pet Project" due to the strong support and guidance given by Mrs. Roosevelt and her influence with her husband, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

It was not unusual, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, to have visitors ask my parents for permission to walk through our house to see how it was designed and constructed. My parents usually granted permission unless we were entertaining relatives. Some of the visitors felt the homes of the fabricated design were poorly constructed and would cave in at the first snowfall, while others were impressed with the floor plan. A model home, the first house on the right from the center on A Road, was furnished and made available for inspection by visitors.

The Homesteaders Club played

an important role in the early years of Arthurdale. Members were very active in the functions of the community, helped govern along with the federal Resettlement Agency, and provided most of the social life for

The Homesteaders Club also formed a farm cooperative, which received free use of farmland to raise and sell chickens and established vegetable truck gardens to raise and sell vegetables. I was one of many who

worked at the vegetable farm picking beans, cucumbers, and such for 15 cents an hour. Also established was a small grocery store, managed by Mr. Robin-

son, in one of the center buildings. This store was in the general area of the grocery store later established by Mr. Fink.

Another business established was a Tea Room for light lunches and more formal dining. It was operated by Mrs. Marie Zinn but closed after a few years due to a lack of business. The Arthurdale Inn was built by the federal government and was

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*Arthurdale had a definite farm-community look in those early years — much different when compared to the present Arthurdale and the modern use of farmland.*

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the early families. The Fourth of July and Labor Day celebrations were great events. They were used for patriotic purposes and also as fund-raisers for the club's activities.

I wonder how many remember the Homesteaders Drama Club, which was active during those early years. My father was involved in the Drama Club and took acting roles in the plays performed at the Center Hall.

Detail from a panoramic photograph of Arthurdale, circa 1937





operated as a hotel during my high school years.

Arthurdale had a definite farm-community look in those early years — much different when compared to the present Arthurdale and the modern use of farmland. Most homesteaders raised cows for milk, a steer and hogs for meat for the winter, and chickens for both food and eggs. Most of the farms were fully planted in corn, gardens, and grass for producing hay for the livestock during the winter.

Thanksgiving Day was the traditional butchering day on F Road. Most of the families on our road got together as a group, purchased the necessary items, and took turns using the utensils during the weekend of butchering. Neighbors went from farm to farm to help with the work.

This arrangement continued for many years before the need to have cows and hogs was no longer present due to reductions in the family sizes as the children grew and moved on.

Shopping for food, clothing, and

items, Arthurdale shoppers went to Morgantown. Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs were also used for ordering clothes and household items. The items were shipped by parcel post and picked up at the Arthurdale post office.

The Arthurdale school system was established by the federal Resettlement Agency about 1933 or 1934. At first the schools were not part of the Preston

County school system, but later came under county control. Our first school principal was Miss Elsie R. Clapp, who was a good friend of Mrs. Roosevelt and was a nationally known educator. She brought teachers from the New York State area to help run the schools.

For the first few years, school was held in the Arthur mansion. Classes were small, and the rooms were large

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*Most of the families on our road got together as a group, purchased the necessary items, and took turns using the utensils during the weekend of butchering.*

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other supplies was difficult and inconvenient during those early years. There were no grocery stores within five or 10 miles of Arthurdale, and most families had to go to Mason-town or Morgantown for shopping. At Masontown, the main shopping stores for groceries were the A&P, then managed by Mr. Fink, and Streets Store, which is still in business. For clothing, shoes, appliances, and other

Lunchtime at the Arthurdale community school.





enough for each grade. I started school in the Arthur mansion in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Shop and metalworking classes were held in one of the center buildings, and history classes for younger students were held in the old Slave House — a log cabin-type structure located in the vicinity of the present Arthurdale post office. I started classes in the new high school for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, or my freshman year.

The Arthurdale school system was set up by the federal agency, which was unique in those early years. Many of

the federal school policies continued when the Preston County school board took more control of the schools and standards for graduating.

After World War II, the homesteaders had a chance to incorporate Arthurdale

land set aside for future parks located throughout Arthurdale, and other parcels of land that the government still owned in the community. Also included was the water system for some houses on M Road and vicinity that were hooked up to the system.

Had Arthurdale voted to incorporate as a town, all the properties would have been

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*The Arthurdale school system was established by the federal Resettlement Agency about 1933 or 1934. At first the schools were not part of the Preston County school system, but later came under county control.*

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as a town or municipality. Starting in 1945, the federal government began phasing out its financial support for the Arthurdale project and offered the community center buildings, all the

transferred to the town for \$1. After much debate, the homesteaders decided not to incorporate, and the chance to have a town mayor, a police force if needed, and the power to levy

School bus in the snow at Arthurdale.





taxes passed into history. The federal government later sold the community center, the service station, the park lands, and other land it owned to private investors. •

Arthurdale and its survival owe a lot to Mrs. Roosevelt. There was a lot of opposition in congress to establishing a community to give coal miners and similar workers a chance to own their own homes. Mrs. Roosevelt took the brunt of the criticism. There was also opposition from many Preston County residents.

Mrs. Roosevelt's visits were special days in the lives of the homesteaders during those early years. Special functions, dances, and meetings were

held, which were always highlighted by the national press corps accompanying Mrs. Roosevelt.

Mrs. Roosevelt was the guest speaker at all high school graduation ceremonies from 1935 until the later years of her life. She also signed the diplomas presented to Arthurdale High School graduates, which makes these diplomas unique historic documents as they contain her signature. President Roosevelt came to Arthurdale in 1938, and was the guest speaker for the 1938 Arthurdale High School graduating class.

Many of the surviving children of the homesteaders have fond memo-

ries of growing up in Arthurdale during those early years. I would like to give credit to the key roles the Homesteaders Club played in keeping the dream alive. I hope the memories I share will add to the knowledge of those early years when Arthurdale and its continued existence as a viable community hung in the balance. ✱

JIM McNELIS was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, the son of a coal miner. In 1933 he and his family were part of the first group who moved to Arthurdale, where Jim graduated from Arthurdale High School in 1939. Jim earned a degree in journalism from George Washington University in 1957. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

The Arthurdale school nurse gives toddlers their daily "thorough examination."





# Read More about It

Arthurdale and the New Deal are subjects of continuing debate and fascination as authors and historians attempt to draw conclusions from the experiments and experiences that took place 80 years ago.

***Eleanor Roosevelt and the Arthurdale Experiment***, by Nancy Hoffman, takes a positive view of its subject.

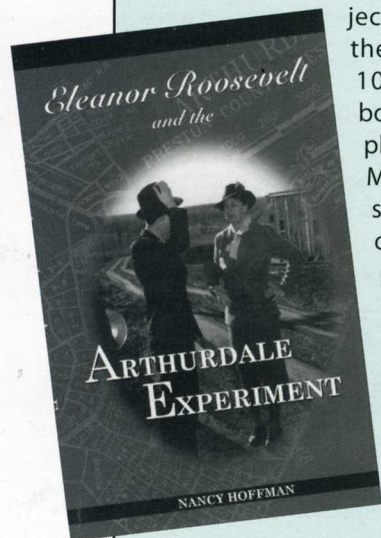
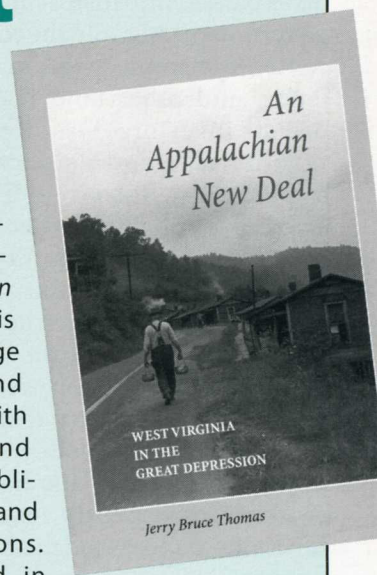
Focusing on the first lady, this 109-page hard-bound volume explains what drove Mrs. Roosevelt to spend so much of her time and political capital on this seemingly remote and obscure project. While acknowledging the controversy that

surrounded Arthurdale, Hoffman sees the venture as a great success and credits Eleanor Roosevelt for her vision, humanity, and tenacity. *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Arthurdale Experiment* includes a prologue, end notes, index, and bibliography. Published in 2001 by Linnet Books, this volume is currently out of print. Copies are available through West Virginia libraries.

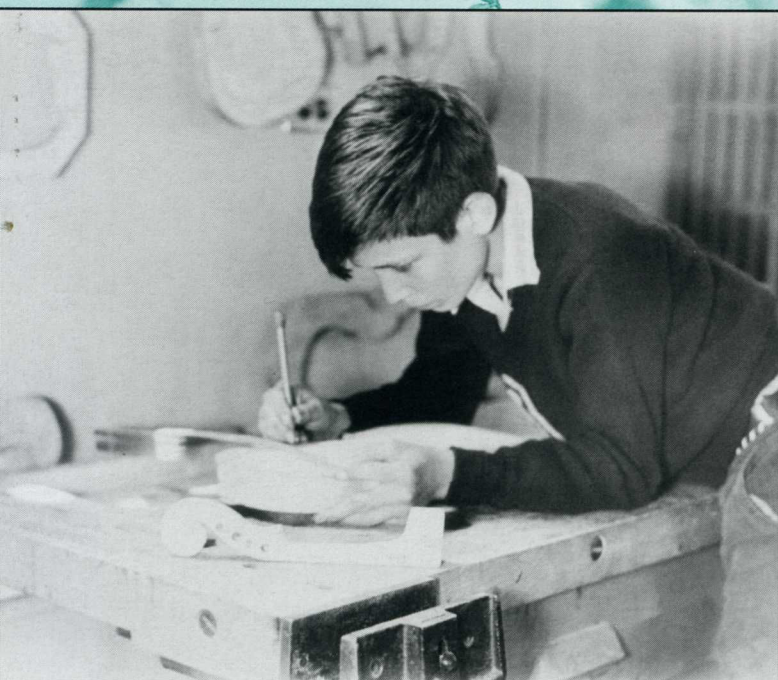
***An Appalachian New Deal: West Virginia in the Great Depression***, by Jerry Bruce Thomas, takes a more skeptical look at federal projects and their results. Thomas, a history professor at Shepherd College, now Shepherd University, uses personal papers of leading political and social figures of the time, along with newspaper accounts and public records to paint a picture of a reluctant state being dragged by Washington into an unwelcome and unproductive partnership. Arthurdale is discussed as part of subsistence

home-  
stead efforts and is viewed as a public policy failure. *An Appalachian New Deal* is a 316-page hardbound edition with index, end notes, bibliography, and illustrations. Published in 1998 by the University Press of Kentucky, it is currently out of print. Copies are available through West Virginia libraries.

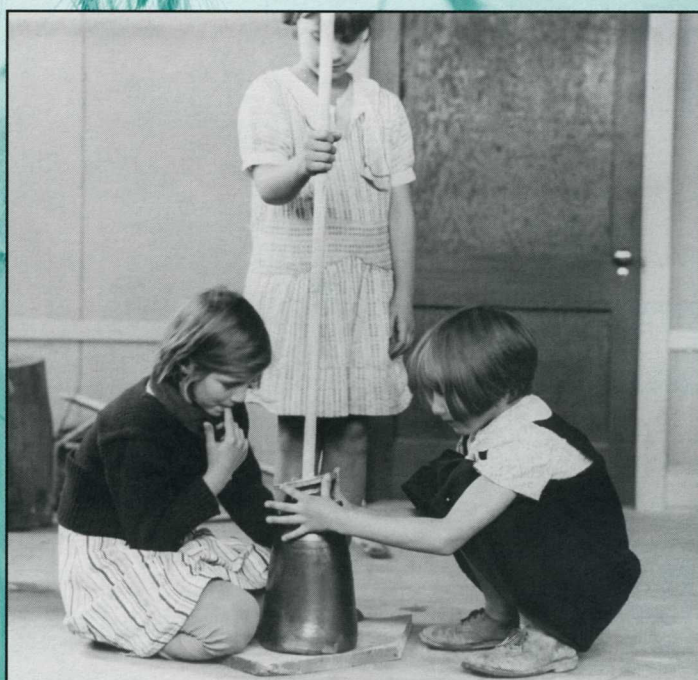
See also ***Back to the Land: Arthurdale, FDR's New Deal, and the Costs of Economic Planning***, by C.J. Maloney; page 68.



Arthurdale student building a violin.



Arthurdale girls with a small butter churn.





# Dancing with Mrs. Roosevelt

By Jim McNelis

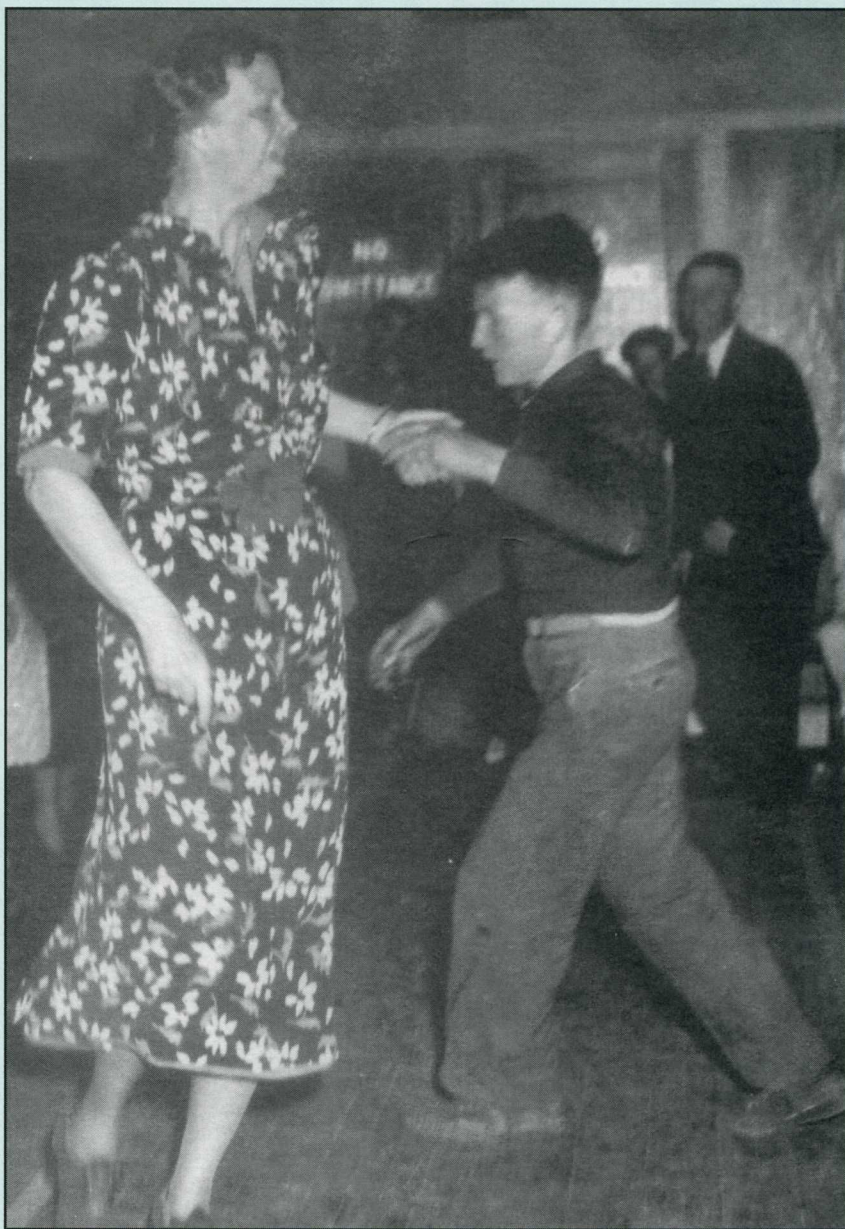
Many who have visited Arthurdale recently have noticed an enlarged photograph in the Center Hall of a young man dancing with Eleanor Roosevelt in the Arthurdale High School gymnasium. This picture first appeared in the June 6, 1938, issue of LIFE magazine. I was that young man, and it was a memorable experience for me.

In 1938, for the first and only time, President Roosevelt and Eleanor both attended the graduation ceremonies at Arthurdale High School. FDR was the speaker, and a graduation dance was held as usual in the evening.

My sister, Louise, was one of the 14 students who was handed an Arthurdale High School diploma by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that day. Our family attended the graduation, and afterwards I went home to work on the farm. After plowing the field all afternoon, and after dinner, I went to the dance to watch the dancing and meet some friends.

When the caller announced the Virginia Reel — Eleanor Roosevelt's favorite dance — she looked for a partner from among the attendees. Very few of the homesteaders or guests knew the steps, but I did, as I had learned them the previous year in school. The next thing you know, I was dancing with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, in my work pants and muddy sneakers.

The photograph was taken, and the rest, as they say, is history.



Author Jim McNelis dancing the Virginia Reel with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt at Arthurdale in 1938.





# Aunt Lucinda

By June Pennington

As I sit here on the porch swing, I can still see Aunt Lucinda walking up the hill. She was a spry old lady, hair blowing in the wind from under her sunbonnet. It was once down to her waist but grew thinner, lighter, after many days in the sun and wind. The style never changed. It was done in a twist and pinned up on the back of her head. Her slip showing slightly from under her cotton printed dress and her hose rolled on garters below her knees, she was still an attractive lady. Aunt Lucinda cared little about matching clothes, never took the time to. Clothes should be warm and clean.

Aunt Lucinda's given name was Ruth Pennington. She was my mother-in-law and was a very special lady. She planted so many flowers she couldn't find her yard. She was the busiest person I knew, but she always had the time to sit and reminisce for hours. We all learned a lot from her.

Leaning back in the old split-bottom rocker, making the porch squeak loudly, she told about the time school had to be started two weeks late because the apple butter had not been made. You don't tell the apples when to get ripe, she said. I asked, "What did the board of education members think of that?" She replied, "Oh! It was all right. The trustees would come around before cold weather to see if any repairs were needed. They thought the apple butter turned out real good." It was a one-room school, and the teacher was paid \$30 a month. The boy that made the fires got \$3 a month.

She was a proud American. She lived during the terms of 17 presidents and witnessed many important developments in American history. Being acquainted with each individual in this small Fayette County community, she spoke of the people who served in each war and remembered those



Ruth Pennington, known to our author as Aunt Lucinda. Photographer and date unknown.

who did not return. Perhaps she brought some of these boys into the world while serving as a midwife when no doctor was available. If not,

you can bet she had them to supper some time.

A handsome young man strolled up to the porch. He was Aunt Lucinda's



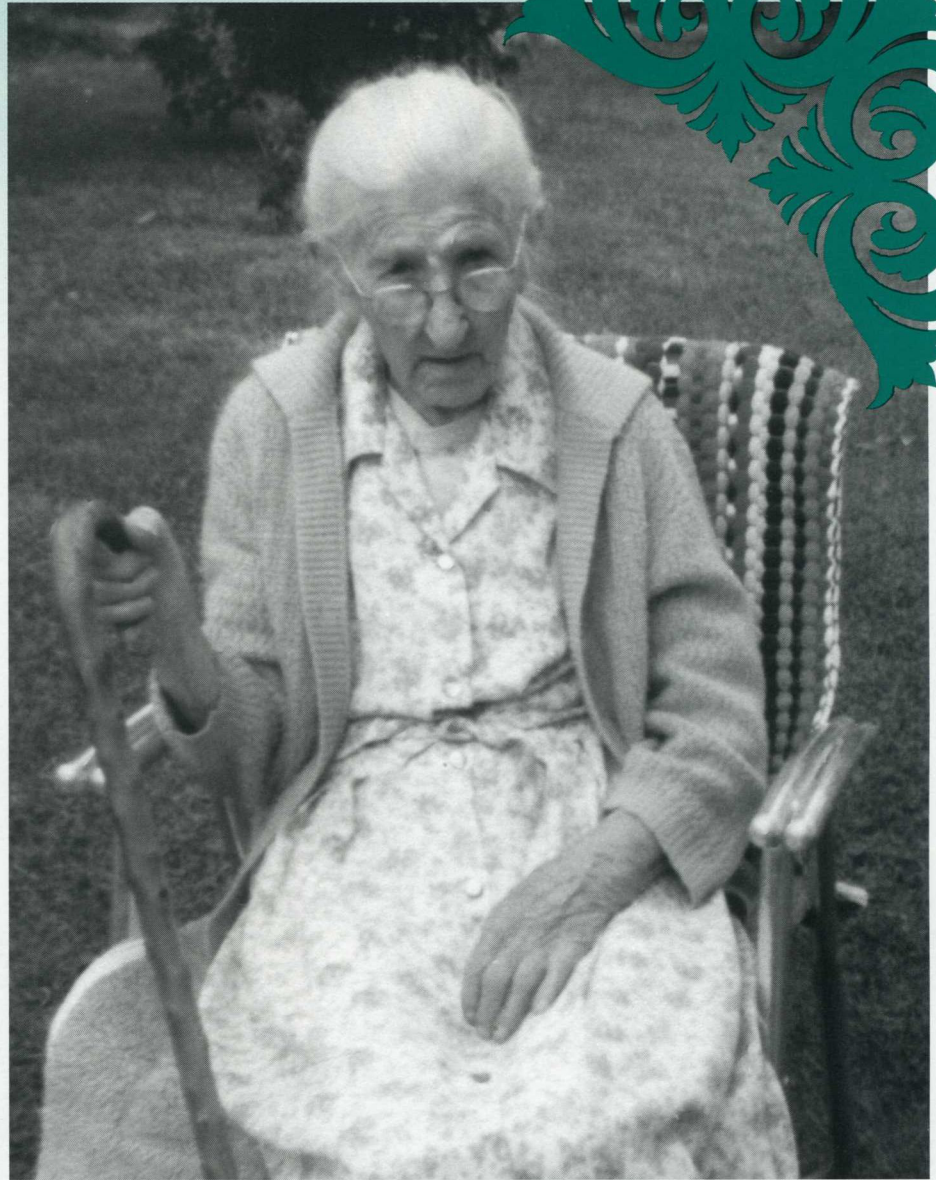
grandson who had been away to medical school. "Granny," he said, "thought I told you that I would take you to the store this week. I hear you walked over this afternoon." All was quiet. The young man chatted for a minute and went on his way. Aunt Lucinda looked at me with a twinkle in her eye and said, "Now don't that beat all. Sonny is riled at me because I can outwalk him any day of the week." He will make a fine surgeon, she said, but Granny knew some things that he never will.

We caught a glimpse of one of the baby birds that had fallen from its nest in the pear tree. Suspecting the dog of having something to do with it, she immediately gave that "trifling dog" a good thrashing for having followed her in the first place. Missing him by at least two feet, she said, "Go on, Sam, and lay down." She placed the bird back in the nest with such care you would think it was the most important task to be performed for days.

Strong enough to be firm, always in control, but if I watched closely enough, I could see that gentle touch come through. She could try your patience. She could see everyone's faults. I believe she could have seen her own if she had any.

She thought that everyone should go to college. By her suggestions, I got the idea that 98% should be teachers, 2% maybe doctors, and 100% farmers. They should all have at least one good milk cow. Then there was the reminder that unless I learned to work I would never be able to live through the next depression, which is just around the corner.

That reminds me of the quilt we started. When I got down to the two-inch pieces, I wished I could lose them. Aunt Lucinda wanted us to sew them up into a crib quilt for the baby next door. Well, it could only take so many pieces, and I enjoyed going over her quilt scraps trying to figure out who had a dress or garment made from this or that material. She would later quilt them all by hand. It would be a creation to be proud of, and I must remember



Aunt Lucinda in her later years. Photographer and date unknown.

the depression and be thankful for even the two-inch pieces.

I marvel at the good and bad experiences we shared through the years.

Speaking of the good and the bad, we had some bad women to move in the area. She referred to them as wenches, hussies, strumpets, and blatherskites. I noticed that some bore one title and some another, as if it were degrees of bad and worse. I thought Aunt Lucinda had used clichés that had no real meaning, but were time-worn ideas. Not wanting to admit that I didn't know for sure, I made an excuse to go in and use my Webster's. Do you know what?

She was right on each one! Just like when she said, "If the rooster crows before dinner someone is coming hungry." She would add a little more to the pot.

Aunt Lucinda is not with us anymore. The old sunbonnet hangs in the closet. Well, it didn't match a thing anyway. She left us instead a storehouse of love and memories.

Everyone should have an Aunt Lucinda at some time. Mine was someone you would like to have known! ❁

JUNE PENNINGTON was born at Layland, Fayette County, and is a graduate of Layland High School. She attended Beckley College and taught school in Fayette County. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



# "Kelly Perfect"



Kelly woodsman Paul Criss with a W.C. Kelly Perfect Axe, circa 1942. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Irene W. Mann Collection.



# Annabelle Rhodes Recalls Kelly Axe

By Amy M. Harper

Any collector of American hand tools wants a W.C. Kelly Perfect Axe. Today's buyers know that prices can range from a mere \$10 to well over \$100, when manufacturing date and condition are taken into consideration. The Kelly Perfect Axe was made by the Kelly Axe Manufacturing Company, which operated in the Charleston area from 1904 until 1982. At one point it was the world's largest in axe manufacturing — one reason collectors look for the Kelly Perfect.

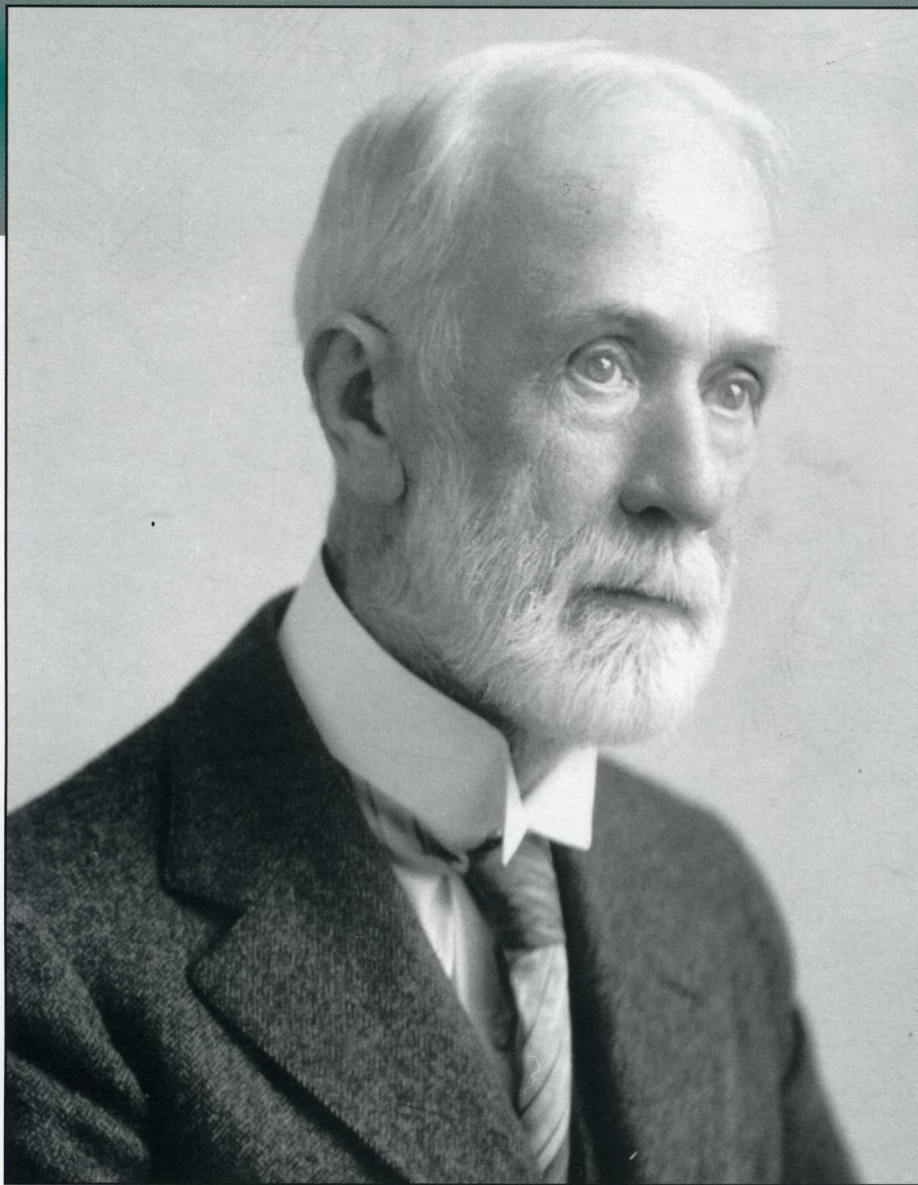
For decades, the factory supplied countless West Virginia families a means of employment. Even today it is difficult to find a longtime Charleston resident who does not have a connection to the once-prominent riverfront factory.

Such was the case for Annabelle Doughty Rhodes of Sissonville, Kanawha County. More than half of her 97 years were somehow connected to "Kelly's" — the shortened



Annabelle and Dayton Rhodes in Charleston, circa 1934. Annabelle worked for Kelly Axe for 12 years; Dayton for 40 years. This photograph was made shortly after they were wed.





Company founder William C. Kelly as an older man. He lived to age 83, passing away in 1933. Photograph by Kossuth Studio, Charleston.

name employees dubbed the factory despite its ownership changes over the years.

Annabelle's grandfather, Civil War veteran Isaac Wesley Doughty, settled in Fletcher near Kentuck, Jackson County, in the late 1800's. His property gave Annabelle's parents, John and Mary Doughty, a place to build their own cabin in 1894. Mary bore 11 children. Annabelle, the 10<sup>th</sup> child, arrived on Christmas Day 1913. She lived until December 6, 2011.

Like others in Fletcher, John Doughty provided for his family by living off of the land. Annabelle explained, "Back in those days, people farmed

and they raised their own stuff. Then they'd go to Ripley and buy the things that they would have to have, like flour, and coffee, and the stuff they didn't raise."

Annabelle's mother and father would take the trip to Ripley by wagon twice a year, in the spring and fall. They would camp overnight along the Mill Creek.

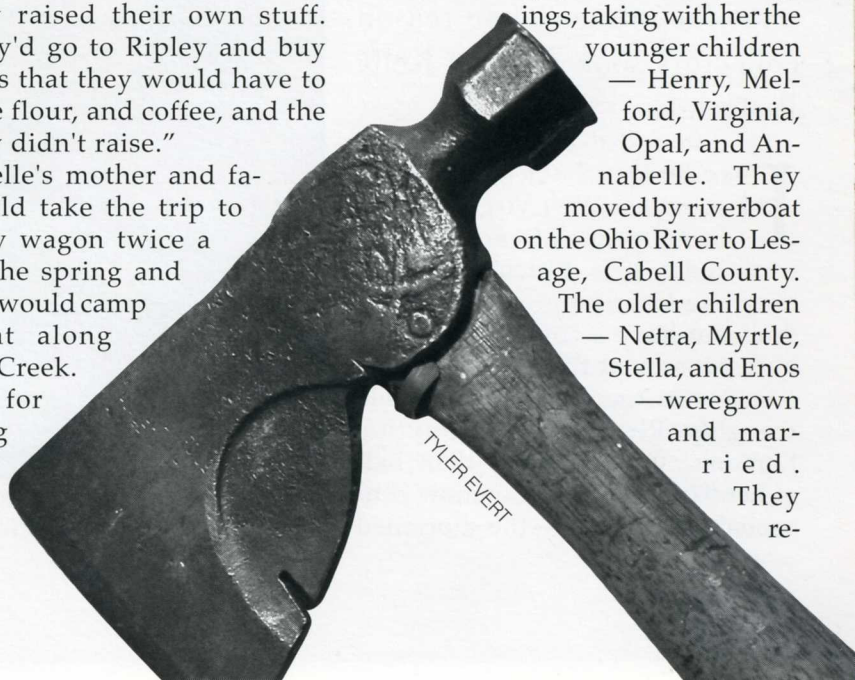
Material for making clothes, brown sugar,

and spices were among the things Mary and John usually purchased before traveling the 25 miles back to Fletcher.

"My parents raised their own corn and took it someplace to have it ground, you know, and that way they didn't have to buy meal," Annabelle recalled. Her mother would then sift the meal to make cornbread. "I remember that cornbread. It was awful good."

In 1919, Mary and John separated. Though an uncommon incident during the time period, the circumstances were understandable. Mary was only 13 years old when she married, under the arrangements of her parents. John, a widower and father of four, was already 35. For about 27 years, Mary played the role of wife, stepmother, and mother, but the year 1917 devastated the family. Annabelle remembered that the entire family suffered through the flu epidemic. Mary and John lost two of their 11 children just seven days apart. Austin was 16, and Aubrey only 11. Mary was never the same after their deaths.

In time Mary packed her belongings, taking with her the younger children — Henry, Mel-ford, Virginia, Opal, and Annabelle. They moved by riverboat on the Ohio River to Les-age, Cabell County. The older children — Netra, Myrtle, Stella, and Enos — were grown and married. They re-







Office workers at Kelly about 1934. At its peak, the 53-acre facility employed more than 1,000 men and women, and produced as many as 40,000 tools a day. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Irene W. Mann Collection.

mained in Jackson County.

The family traveled from Lesage to Gallipolis, Ohio, where they stayed for a short time. Then in 1919, Mary moved some of the children with her to Charleston. Annabelle returned to Jackson County and stayed for two years with her older sister Netra and attended Straight Run Grade School for second and third grade.

Eventually Annabelle joined her family in Charleston. It was this move that put her in close proxim-

ity to the Kelly factory. She attended Tiskelwah, Slip Hill, and Sugar Creek grade schools, completing through the eighth grade.

Like others in the 1920's, Annabelle

and I didn't have the clothes that I thought I should have. That's one of the reasons I think I quit more than anything else. My mother, Opal, and myself, and my brother lived together

at that time. And she could use a little extra money I give her."

Annabelle's job for the next 12 years was in

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*Annabelle's job for the next 12 years was in the hammer department of Kelly's axe factory.*

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had to leave school to help provide for her family. She remembered how she felt about leaving school: "I didn't want to really. I would have been going to high school then you see,

the hammer department of Kelly's axe factory. She began in 1927 at the age of 14.

In the early 1900's, the factory's owner, William C. Kelly, had pur-





A man feeds a length of metal bar into a cutting machine, possibly producing blanks for axe or other tool heads. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Ross Noble Collection.



A Kelly employee operates a large shear at the axe plant in Charleston. It is likely the steel being cut here was used to make shovels. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Ross Noble Collection.

chased about 53 acres along the north side of the Kanawha River, where Patrick Street Plaza is today. West Virginia's natural gas supply and cooler nights, as well as the site's accessibility to transportation on the river, convinced Kelly to move his then Indiana-based factory to Charleston. The factory experienced continual growth in its early years. By this time, W.C. Kelly was in his 50's and an experienced businessman who was reaching an international market. He stated in a March 1925 *Charleston Gazette* article that about 20% of the factory's output was sold outside of the United States.

Land deed records show that over the next several years Kelly's axe company continued purchasing lots in the Charleston area. Not too long before Annabelle's employment began, W.C. Kelly stated that Kelly Axe owned 180 acres. The factory buildings comprised about 40 acres. The rest of the land was used for employee housing and recreation.

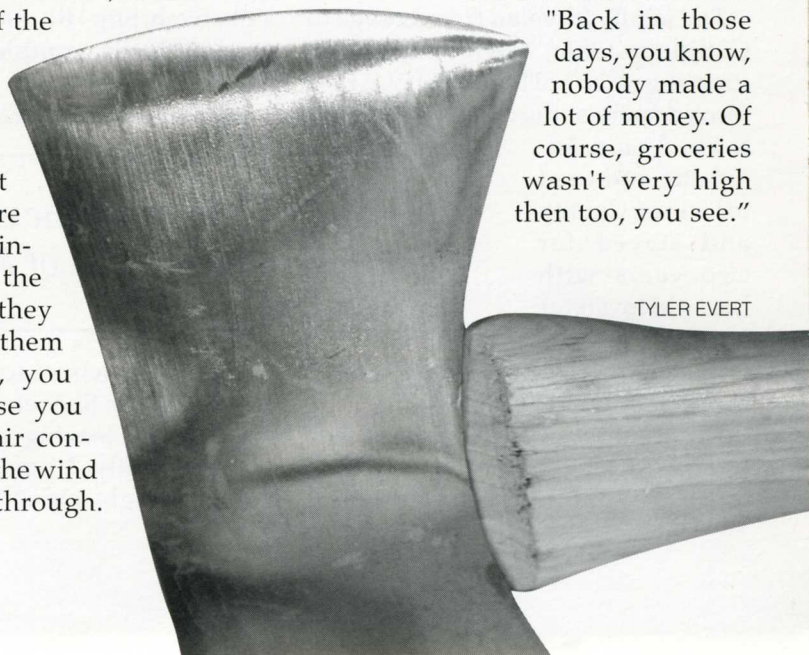
According to Annabelle, her work at Kelly's "wasn't too bad. I really had an easy job," she said. "I worked down in the hammers department. I wrapped them and put them in a box, about six or a dozen in a box. And then you had to label all of them. Some of them you had to paint, and some of them you didn't. But most of them you had to paint around the little head, you know, and in the claw of the hammer.

"Where I worked, there was probably about 12 girls. There was several windows, and in the summertime they would open them up, way up, you know, because you didn't have air conditioning. So the wind would come through.

It didn't get too bad." In the wintertime, Annabelle remembered, "It was a little bit cold, but they had a big old furnace, I reckon, to heat the buildings."

When Annabelle started work, she was at Kelly's five-and-a-half days each week, counting a half day on Saturday. Initially workers in her department filled 10-hour shifts for 17½ cents an hour.

"Back in those days, you know, nobody made a lot of money. Of course, groceries wasn't very high then too, you see."



TYLER EVERT



The company employed about 1,000 people at this time and could produce 40,000 tools in a day. Company houses rented for \$4.50 a week. Kelly's often employed multiple family members. Annabelle, for example, was following a job path already forged by sister Virginia and brother Melford. Virginia worked in the axe department painting the axe heads. Melford worked with the "handle gang," the department name for workers who attached wooden handles to the tools. "See, they had to put a handle up in that hammer, and then they had to secure it," Annabelle explained.

At first the 10-hour shifts were challenging for Annabelle. She said, "When I got home my feet and legs were hurting so bad, and Mother would bathe them for me."

Annabelle's sister Opal also found her first day in the hammer department challenging. "Opal wasn't quite as tall as I was, and she wasn't quite 14. She wore high heels on her first day. She was just about dead that evening, and I said, 'You shouldn't have wore those shoes!'"

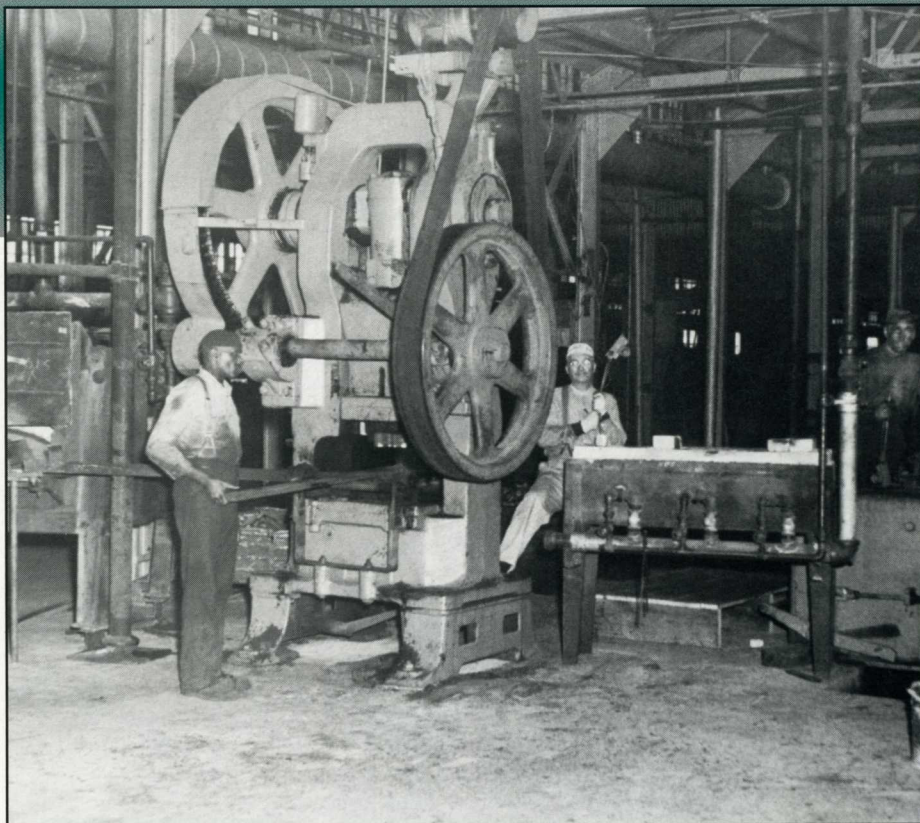
Annabelle remembered later during her employment being asked by a supervisor, "Annabelle, how old were you when you came to work here?"

"Sixteen," she replied.

"Now I want the truth. It don't matter now."

Annabelle reluctantly told him the truth, because she was then past the required work age of 16.

Annabelle met her future husband through her employment at the axe factory. Lurie West, a Kelly's



Forge at Kelly Axe plant. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Ross Noble Collection.

coworker, brought Annabelle over to her house to meet her brother Dayton. Annabelle recalled, "Lurie was telling me how many brothers and sisters she had, you know. She had three unmarried brothers, and Dayton was the middle one. He was just about my age. Hmm, he'd be all right for me, wouldn't he?"

Annabelle was right. They married on December 23, 1933. Two days later, Annabelle turned 20.

*Dayton, a quiet and industrious young man, worked as a scythe plater. His work included flattening, shaping, and polishing the steel of the scythe.*

The young couple set up house on Charleston's West Side and walked to work at Kelly's.

Dayton, a quiet and industrious young man, worked as a scythe plater. "He would take a rod-like thing,"

Annabelle explained, "and hammer it out. One end would be real sharp, and the other end would turn over a little bit." His work included flattening, shaping, and polishing the steel of the scythe. Most of his time was spent around one of the factory's furnaces.

Annabelle said, "The men that worked around the furnace [like] my husband did, they really got warm, really got hot. They had a fan direct on

them." Dayton would often comment that in the winter his front side that faced the furnace was burning up while his backside was frozen. He would also use the top of

one of the furnaces to store and heat up his hot lunch for later. All five of Dayton's brothers worked at Kelly's throughout the years.

Occasionally, workers would see W.C. Kelly walking around the dif-





Annabelle and Dayton Rhodes with their two children, Larry and Joann, on a family vacation to Washington, D.C., in 1952.

## Kelly's Reunion

**A**lthough the factory buildings are gone, the company loyalty behind Kelly Axe and True Temper still remains. Kelly's employees have been meeting for a reunion that has been celebrated for almost 30 years. The 2011 reunion brought 77 former employees and family members from the plant together to exchange good food, good fellowship, and good memories.

In recent years, Helen Jones has taken on the reunion planning and organizing. Although she was not a True Temper employee herself, Helen had participated in several reunions with her husband, Larry, a True Temper electrician from 1964-1982. When the previous reunion

organizer could no longer plan the event, Helen volunteered.

Recent reunions have averaged about 80 in attendance. Some former employees travel from as far as North Carolina, Tennessee, or Georgia to attend. When asked why the reunion has been such a success all these years, Helen says that the employees just love talking about their time working in the plant and asking each other, "Do you remember when this happened?"

The reunions are typically held at Shawnee Park in Dunbar. The 2012 reunion is scheduled for Shawnee Park on September 15. For more information call Helen Jones at (304)984-3174.

ferent factory departments. On one such occasion, Annabelle met W.C. Kelly. She said, "Oh yeah, I remember Kelly. He was always dressed proper every time — a tie, a handkerchief in his jacket pocket. Every time I ever seen him he was like that. Yeah, he was really nice. I mean he always spoke to us when he walked down the aisle, you know. He did that every once in a while.

"He stopped me one day, and he said, 'Hello.'

"I said 'Hello' back to him.

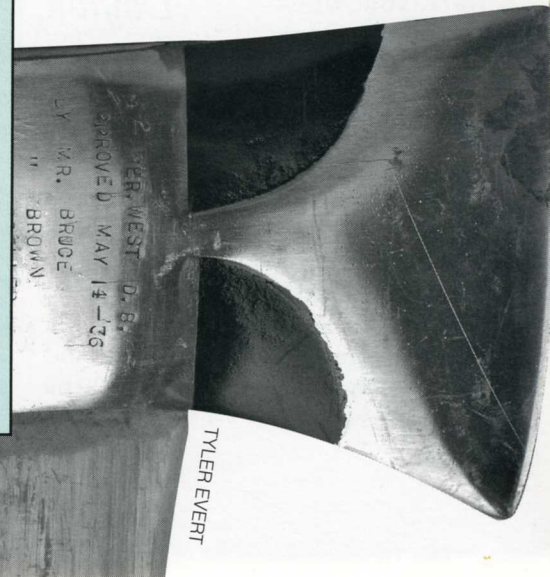
"He said, 'What are you working on, young lady?'

"W.C. Kelly Perfects!'

"He answered with a smile and 'Okay, young lady.'"

In 1930, Kelly's Axe & Tool Company merged with American Fork & Hoe. American Fork & Hoe continued to use "Kelly" on the tools made at the factory since the "Kelly" label was a recognizable brand name. To the employees and Charleston residents, the factory was still called "Kelly's."

Annabelle continued working at Kelly's until she was 27. When she gave notice to quit in 1939 a supervisor asked, "Can you work just two more months?" Apparently large orders were coming in.





"Yeah, I can," Annabelle replied.

By the time she left the hammer department, her salary had risen to almost 35 cents an hour, and her shifts had been reduced to eight hours. These changes were due in part from workers striking over the years.

In 1941, Annabelle and Dayton's first child, Larry, was born followed by a daughter, Joann, in 1944. In 1950 Annabelle, Dayton, and their two young children moved to what is now Lakewood Drive in Sissonville.

Dayton remained at the factory for 40 years, working through the merger into American Fork & Hoe and eventually the name change to True Temper in the 1940's. His last year before retiring in 1973, Dayton shifted to maintenance duties so that he would have time to train a new plater. He had spent almost 39 years making scythes.

"They thought just anyone could walk in there and make scythes," Annabelle said. "And they wasted so much steel while Dayton was trying to train others that they finally give scythe making up."

Larry Rhodes kept the family tradition and went to work at the factory in 1963 as a handle finisher. He even participated in a 1969 transfer when part of True Temper moved to Ashtabula, Ohio.

Dayton's later years were spent traveling with his family, gardening, and lending a helping hand. He passed away in October 1993. He and Annabelle had been married two months short of 60 years.

Although several of Dayton's True Temper Kelly Tools are still owned by family members, Annabelle had only one Kelly tool that was all her own. In 1939, when Annabelle left Kelly's, she was given a gift. A young man who had noticed Annabelle long



Annabelle Doughty Rhodes with her Kelly hammer in 2011, at age 97 Photograph by Michael Harper.

before her marriage presented her with a Kelly's hammer as a going-away gift. "He tried to go with me before I was married, you know. So I was married when he give me the hammer. He said, 'Here's a keepsake from everybody over here at Kelly's,' or something like that. He didn't say it was from him."

Later, Annabelle discovered the young man had carved his initials

into the bottom of the hammer handle. "He never did tell me he done that. I know he did!" She smiles at the "Kelly Perfect" memory. 🍁

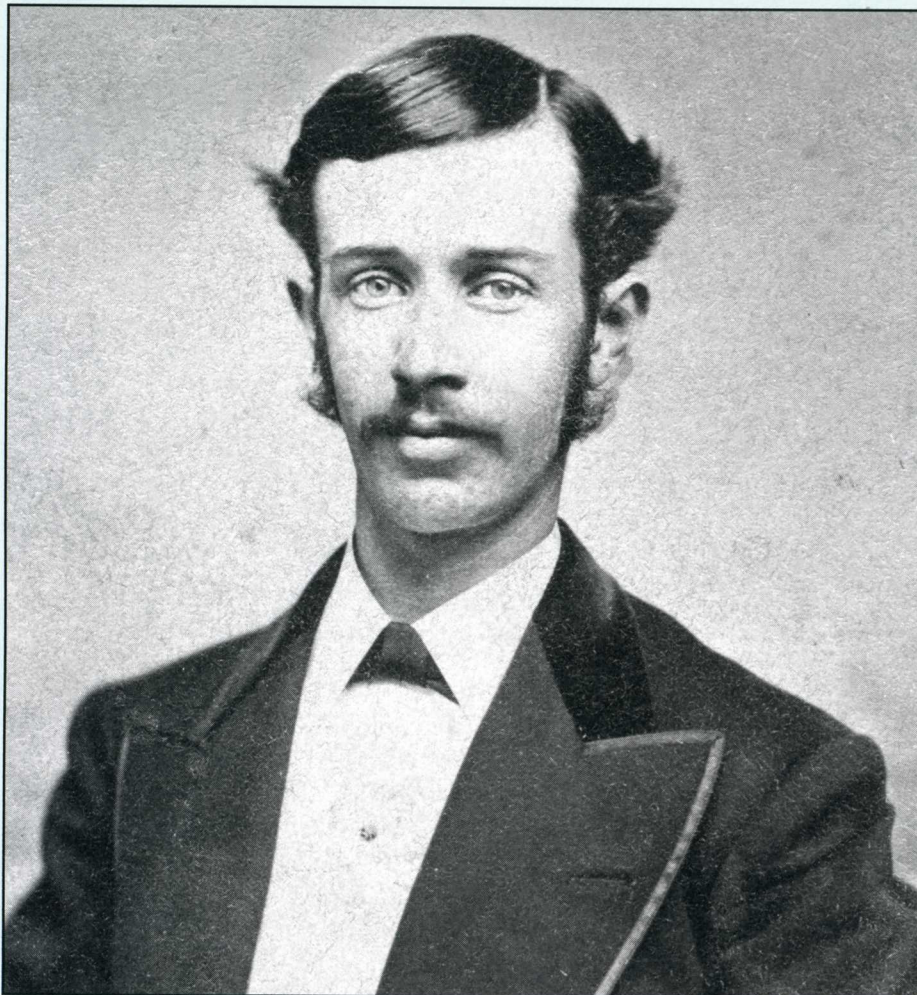
AMY M. HARPER is a native of Canton, Ohio, but has lived most of her life in Kanawha County. She holds a master's degree in English education from Pensacola Christian College and taught English in high school and college in Florida before returning to West Virginia in 1999. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



# The Kelly Axe Story

On the evening of August 19, 1900, a devastating fire raged through the Kelly Axe Manufacturing Company of Alexandria, Indiana. William C. Kelly, the owner, was left to decide whether to rebuild or relocate the heavily damaged plant. After just seven years at this location, Kelly already wanted to expand and knew the factory needed a greater supply of natural gas. Following a brief try at rebuilding, Kelly received an enticing offer from another state. The state was West Virginia. The city, Charleston. The offer — perfect!

W.C. Kelly explained the offer years later in the March 8, 1925, *Charleston Gazette*. He said that Charleston banks promised to buy Kelly Axe bonds if he moved the factory. In addition, land would be given for the factory site. Location was critical. Kelly clearly emphasized the importance of the Chamber of Commerce's promise to keep the factory out of Charleston's taxed municipal corporation. Kelly found "municipal taxes, even in the case of old established factories,...unduly burdensome."



William C. Kelly as a young man. Photograph by J.B. Webster, Louisville, Kentucky, date unknown.

Of course, W.C. Kelly loved the natural gas supply and the riverfront transportation that the Kanawha Valley location would freely offer. In 1904, the Kelly Axe Manufacturing Company moved to its new location on Charleston's West Side. Six hundred freight cars filled with Kelly's axe machinery and equipment came into Charleston from Alexandria. The factory comprised about 50 acres of riverfront property, today known as the Patrick Street Shopping Plaza. Where the Kmart now sits, employee row houses were set up. During Kelly's days the property contained about 50 factory buildings that stretched down the riverbank, ending with a high water tower.

W.C. Kelly's factory was very successful. By 1908, the *Beckley Raleigh Herald* claimed 60% of the world's axes were coming from Kelly's. A few years later, Kelly bought out his major competition — the American Axe & Tool Company. Kelly now had the rights to numerous tool firms, trademarks, and labels right at his Charleston location. He brought the new plants to Charleston in 1912.

By the 1920's, Kelly employed hundreds in the Kanawha Valley. Advertisements for male workers at the factory were at times specific to race. Often though, Kelly would ask for both white and black men within the same advertisement. Occasionally, young ladies seeking employment could find an advertisement just for them. At this time, the young lady needed to be at least 17. By the end of 1925, over 1,000 men and women were working at the factory.

A year prior, in 1924, W.C. Kelly had changed the name of the factory to Kelly Axe & Tool Company. This would be the first of many name changes over the years.

On July 23, 1930, Kelly Axe & Tool Company news appeared on the front page of *The Charleston Gazette*. Read-



By Amy M. Harper

ers learned that this large Charleston industry was merging with several other tool plants to form the American Fork & Hoe Company. It was at this time that Kelly's officially became the Kelly Axe & Tool Works of the American Fork & Hoe Company — the third official title for the Charleston Kelly factory.

William C. Kelly actively participated in his business ventures until his passing on March 2, 1933. He was 83 years old and suffering from heart disease. True to form, the day before his passing, he attended one last business meeting. Despite Kelly's passing, the factory continued to be a major industry in the Kanawha Valley.

When Uncle Sam needed help during World War II, Kelly's answered the call.

In 1941, *The Charleston Gazette* reported that Kelly's had been secretly working on experimental steel shell casings, hoping to replace the brass casings that were presently being used. Kelly's also acted as the subcontractor providing forged smoke shell cases for the Fletcher Enamel Company of Dunbar in 1943. Bayonets and machetes were also being made at the Charleston factory.

The 1949 *Charleston Daily Mail* announced the next major change for not only the Kelly Axe & Tool Works, but the entire American Fork & Hoe entity. The corporation changed its name to True Temper. Kelly's was now the Kelly Works of True Temper. The name "True Temper" referred to the industry's new steel tempering methods. At the time

of the name change, Kelly Works employed more than 700.

By 1967 the employee count was down to 400. This was also the year of another change — to the True Temper Corporation, although employees would notice little difference. The company became part of Allegheny-Ludlum Steel that summer. True Temper had already sold some of its Patrick Street location to Kmart and other area businesses in 1966. Over the following years, employees would see the business of the Charleston True Temper operation dwindle until the company finally closed the Charleston factory in 1982. The following year, W.C. Kelly's numerous factory buildings were demolished and cleared from the riverfront site. 🍁

1930's view of Kelly Axe facility along the Great Kanawha River in North Charleston. Patrick Street is visible at left, and Blaine Island at the top of this photograph. The plant was razed in 1982. The site currently houses a Kmart store and several automotive businesses. Photograph courtesy of Ames True Temper.





# Night Sounds

Summer nights were hot and humid in the river town where I spent my early years. I endured many sleepless hours in New Martinsville, surrounded by the high hills that lined the Ohio River. An array of memorable sounds made their way through my open window as I lay in my room, waiting for sleep to come.

Our town was home to the Wetzel County courthouse, and from its tower on still summer nights came the clear, distant tones of the large clock striking the hours.

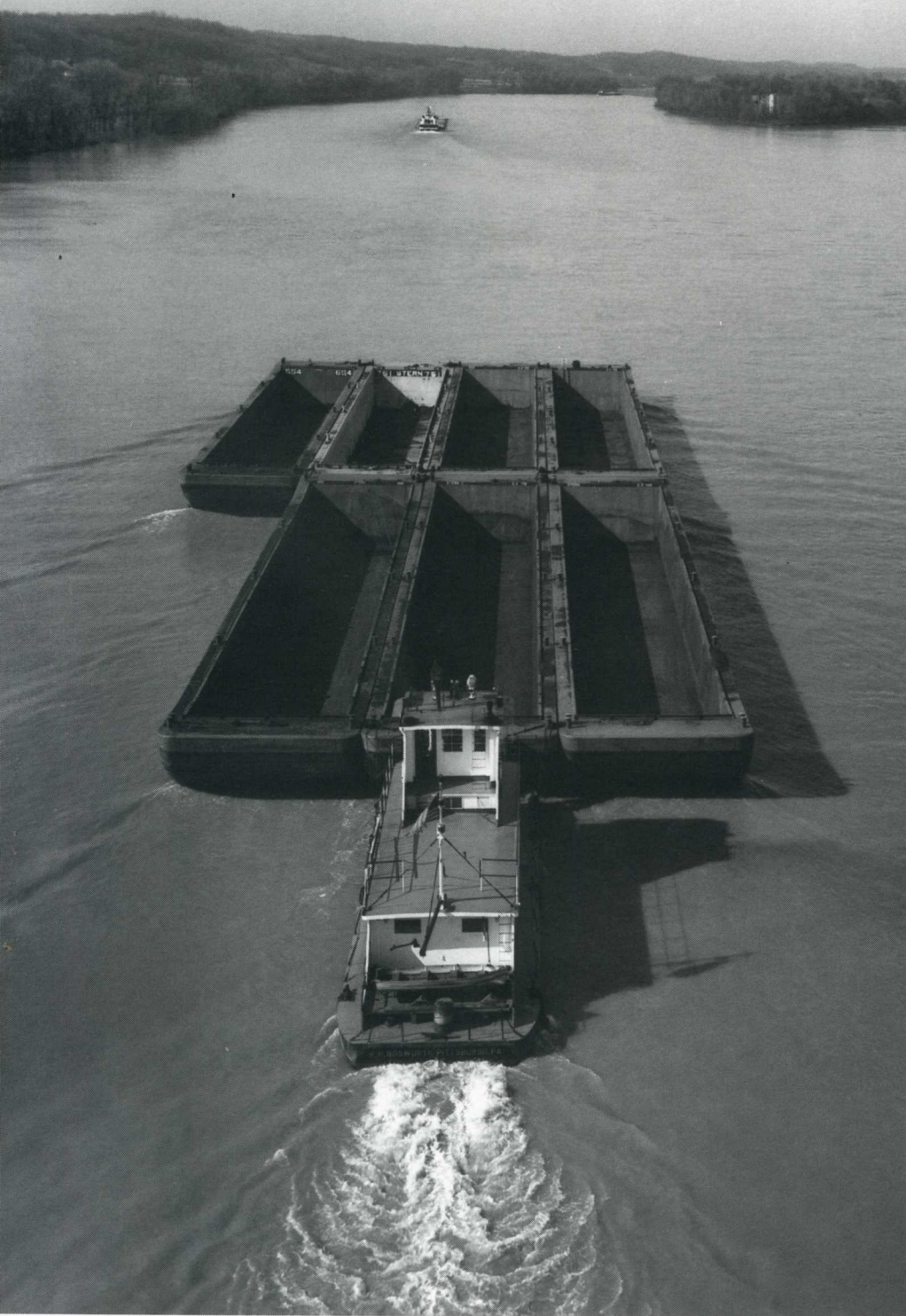
New Martinsville was a river town on the Ohio, and a great variety of river craft plied this mighty stream — a mile wide at the ferry landing. In my childhood a dam existed one mile below the town. All boats, large and small, needed permission to lock through the dam. Small boats obtained permission by sounding whistles or horns close to the giant structure.

Large tow boats, handling 10 to 12 barges, announced their presence in a different way. A large boat and its tow coming down river blew for the dam when it was opposite the center of town. On a quiet summer night, the deep cry of a diesel-powered air horn would pierce the stillness of the valley.

In the 1930's steamboats with their finely tuned chime whistles produced melodies that echoed merrily back and forth between the high hills. Harmonious sounds from the river lulled many to sleep during bygone summer nights.

The front of our house faced the river several blocks away. The rear of the house was less than 200 feet from a busy rail line. Railroad sounds of varying intensity serenaded us 24 hours a day, but I was more conscious of them on hot summer nights.

Long coal trains hauled by giant steam locomotives periodically arrived at the nearby railroad junction before heading upriver on their northern journey to Ohio and the Great Lakes. My father was a locomotive engineer, and I well knew the layout of the junction. It had multiple yard tracks, a large



The H.H. Bosworth transporting empty barges on the Ohio River below New Martinsville in 1954.



## Text and photographs by Borgon Tanner

wye, telegraph office, huge coal and sand tipple, and a large water tank. I could visualize activities at night and locate them by their sounds.

Imagine it is 3:00 a.m. on a hot, still night. The town clock has struck the hour, and as the sounds fade away more distinct sounds are heard. A Mallet — the largest steam locomotive ever seen on these rails — has arrived with a long coal train at the far edge of town. Sounds first come from the whistle as the engineer signals the flagman to leave the caboose, go back, and protect the rear of the train. Silence follows, but I know that the locomotive and tender will soon be uncoupled from the train and brought into the junction.

A few minutes later a whistle announces that the large locomotive

will cross the highway close to the water tank and swing around the big wye to the telegraph office. There they stop. The brakeman goes up to the office and picks up train orders, which will allow them to continue upriver to the next terminal.

That done, the Mallet backs around the wye and takes on coal — many tons of it — and sand, if needed. Then they move to the water tank, and the fireman spends many minutes filling up the large Vanderbilt tank with water. Fully loaded these giant locomotives carried 20 tons of coal and 22,500 gallons of water. After that, the engineer blows for the highway crossing again, backs slowly down, and carefully couples on to his train.

Long whistle signals call the flag-

man back to his caboose, more than a mile away. Exactly five minutes later the engineer whistles off. Two long blasts announce to the world that a mighty steam locomotive will slowly move forward with thousands of tons of loaded cars behind it.

This mighty locomotive containing two separate steam engines carefully starts that mile-long train. The line is up-grade at the start and will continue for eight more miles so the locomotive will labor for many minutes before it picks up speed.

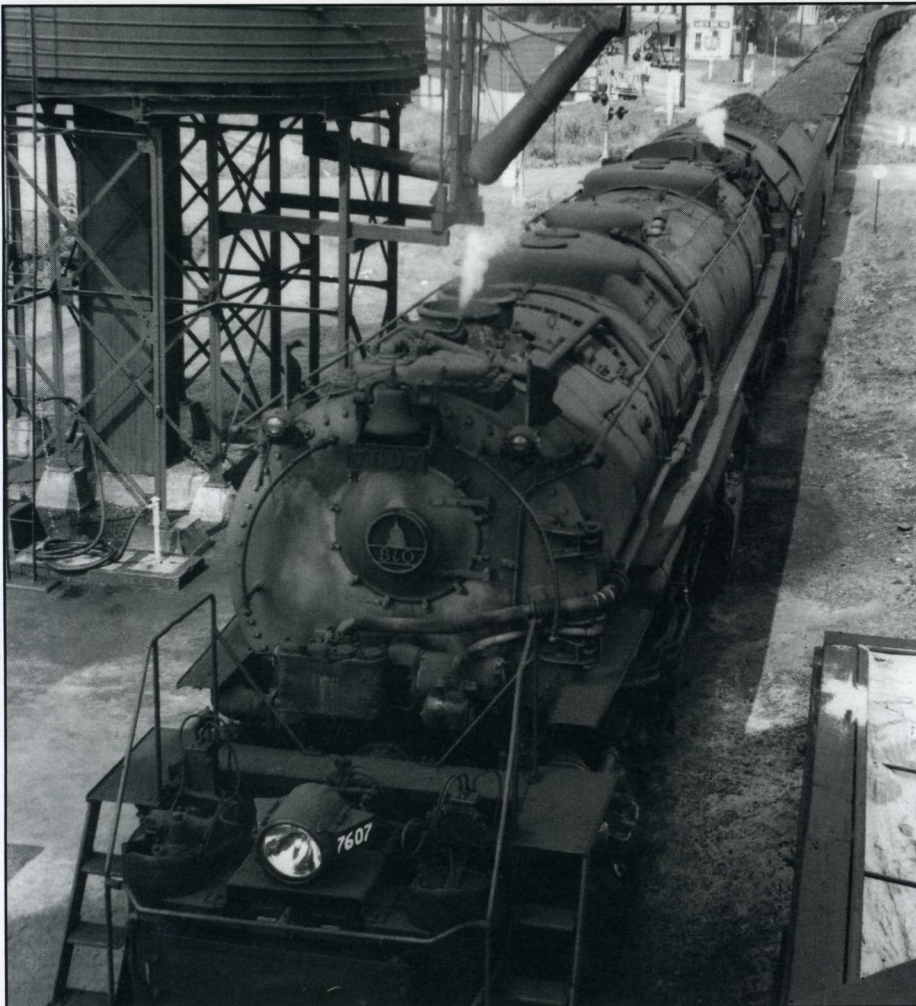
Wide awake in my bedroom, I revel in every sound coming from that mighty locomotive.

For the third time the Mallet whistles for the highway crossing — only this time the warning blasts are held longer because the locomotive and train are moving slowly. Minutes later the Mallet slowly swings around the wye and heads directly past our house.

The thundering sound of that giant locomotive fills the valley with sounds and echoes as it slowly increases its speed. As the train nears the house, the sounds swell into a gigantic symphony of the night, blotting out everything else. When the giant locomotive thunders by our house — causing my bed to tremble — its chime whistle erupts as the engineer blows for the street crossing above the nearby passenger station.

Sounds of the laboring locomotive slowly diminish and are replaced by sounds of hundreds of steel wheels passing over joints on steel rails. The rhythmic clicking is like a giant metronome with an unsteady beat. Many times I was fast asleep before the caboose passed and all sounds faded away.

In my childhood we had constant reminders of the industrial might of our nation. The sounds occurred day and night — but night sounds were the most vivid and colorful to me. 🌿



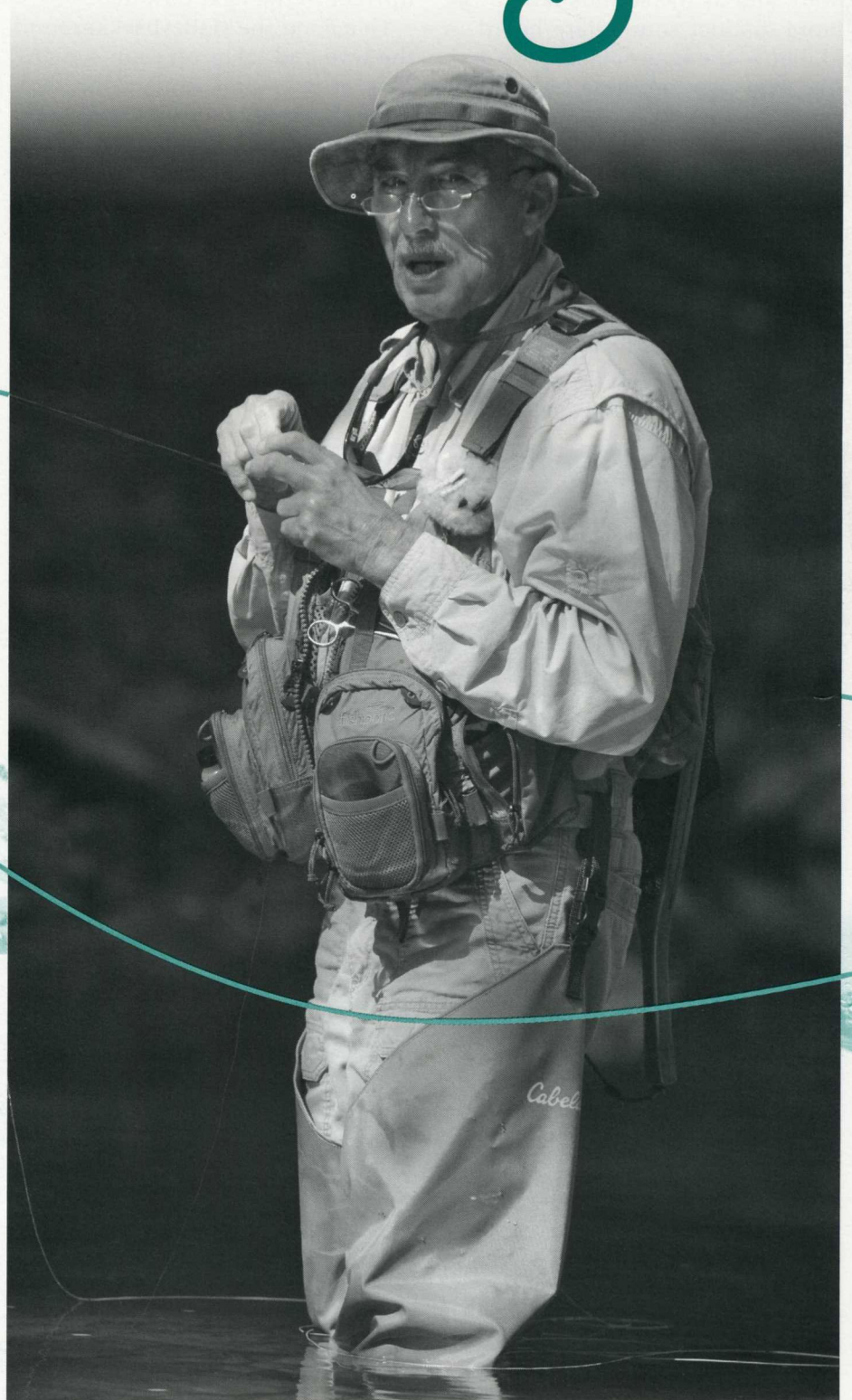
B&O engine #7607 at Brooklyn Junction, near New Martinsville, in 1954. This massive Mallet locomotive is pulling a mile of loaded coal cars to Benwood and points north.

BORGON TANNER is a freelance writer, photographer, and historian with family roots in Harrison and Wetzel counties. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2011 issue.



# Fly Fishing

By John Lilly  
Photographs by Tyler Evert



Danny Wickline, a retired teacher from Union, has been fly fishing for 35 years.



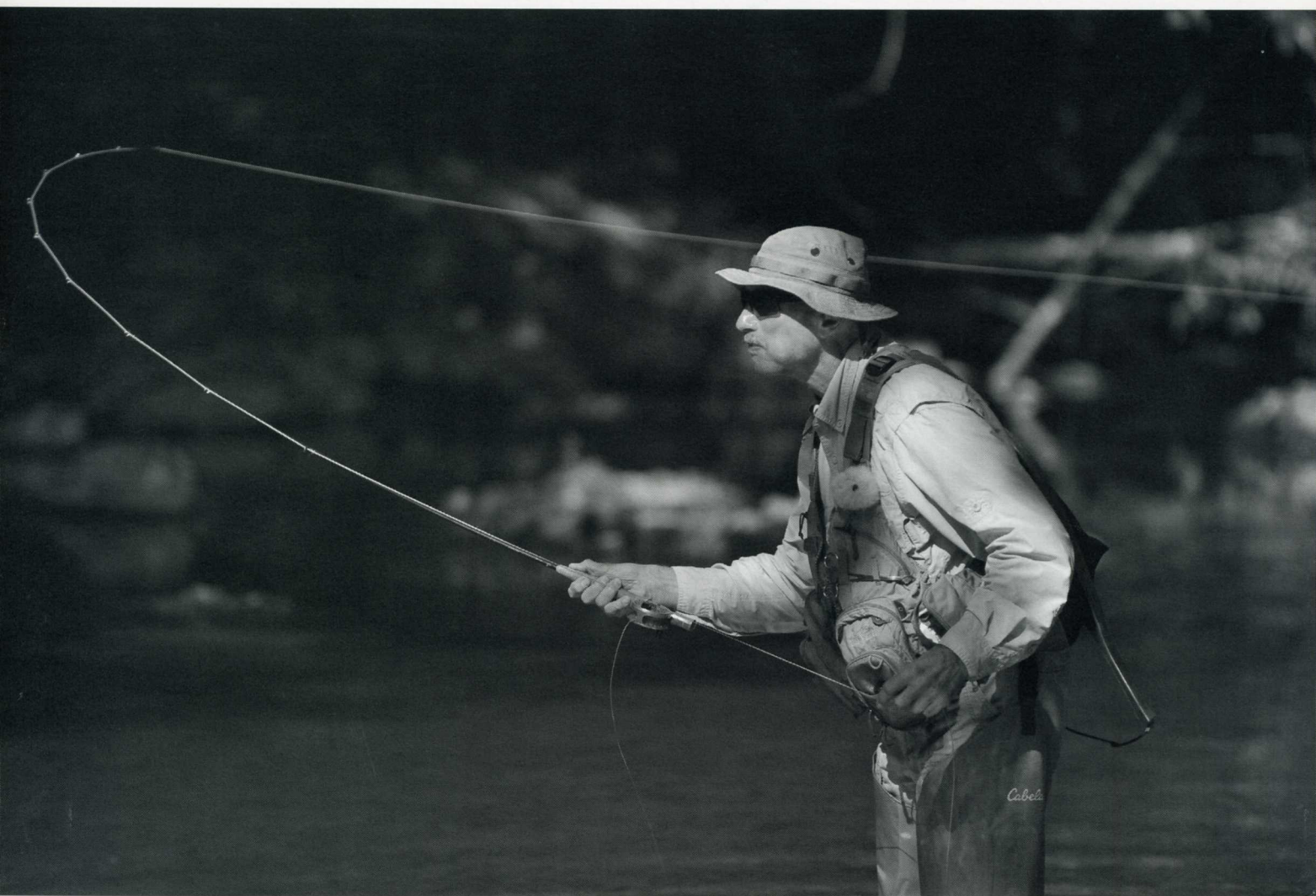


Outfitted from head to toe, Danny wades into a stream in rural Monroe County.

## Up a Creek with Danny Wickline

Fish fear him. Well, maybe they don't, but perhaps they should. This fellow can fool a fish five ways till Friday. On the other hand, few men in Monroe County know as much, or care as much, about the trout and other denizens of the sparkling fresh water in this soft-spoken paradise as does Danny Wickline.





Gently moving his pole forward and back, Danny gradually releases additional line until he is ready to complete his cast.

A native of Union, he's lived a stone's throw from these streams his entire life. Retired after 30 years of teaching in Monroe County schools — history, health, P.E. — he now spends his free time plying the backcountry waterways, or tying flies in preparation for his next opportunity to tempt a fish.

"My dad was a farmer," Danny says. "He worked for the Walnut Grove farms for over 50 years." His mother is a retired dietitian.

Though his dad did not fish, Danny came by his angling honestly.

"I sort of leaned toward fishing

pretty early," he recalls. His great-uncle Roy Mann, a native of Greenville, Monroe County, was an accomplished fly fisherman who inspired young Danny to try his hand at this ancient and genteel sport.

"I would run into him on the creek,"




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*The key to catching fish year round is knowing what natural food the fish are choosing at that time and location and offering them a lure that mimics that food source.*

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Danny says. "I'd fish along Anthony Creek some, and I'd sit down and just watch him fish. Fly fishing is what

he did best. I run into him one day and he said, 'When you gonna really start fishing?' I'd been using spinners and night crawlers and salmon eggs and that type of thing, and ultra-light gear. My father had an old fly rod — it was broken — and I patched that thing up

and started fly fishing. That was 35 years ago."

Watching and imitating his great-uncle, Danny soon got the hang of wading into the stream, unleash-

ing 30 or 40 feet of undulating line, and gently dropping his handmade fly on the water's surface. Roy Mann



also helped Danny get started tying flies — an essential skill for any serious fly fisherman.

"He got me started with a few materials, gave me a pointer here and there," Danny recalls. "Of course, I read as much as I could, picked people's brains for info on

how to tie and what have you." Soon Danny was as hooked as a 10-pound brookie with a No. 6 fly in his lip.

"Fly fishing to me is something special," Danny confesses. "I like to fish dry, to let it lay out there on the water, and have it float downstream at the same pace as a natural insect would, and see a trout come up and take that fly. That's the special part." Danny also notes the beauty

and symmetry of a well-cast line as it curls through the air, the swift whisper it makes as it whips back

mimics that food source. Danny has become an expert on that subject.

"This time of year it's hard to catch fish unless you are using terrestrials," Danny comments on a hot August morning. "That's what the fish are eating. You're not going to catch many

fish dropping a night crawler or a salmon egg in here right now."

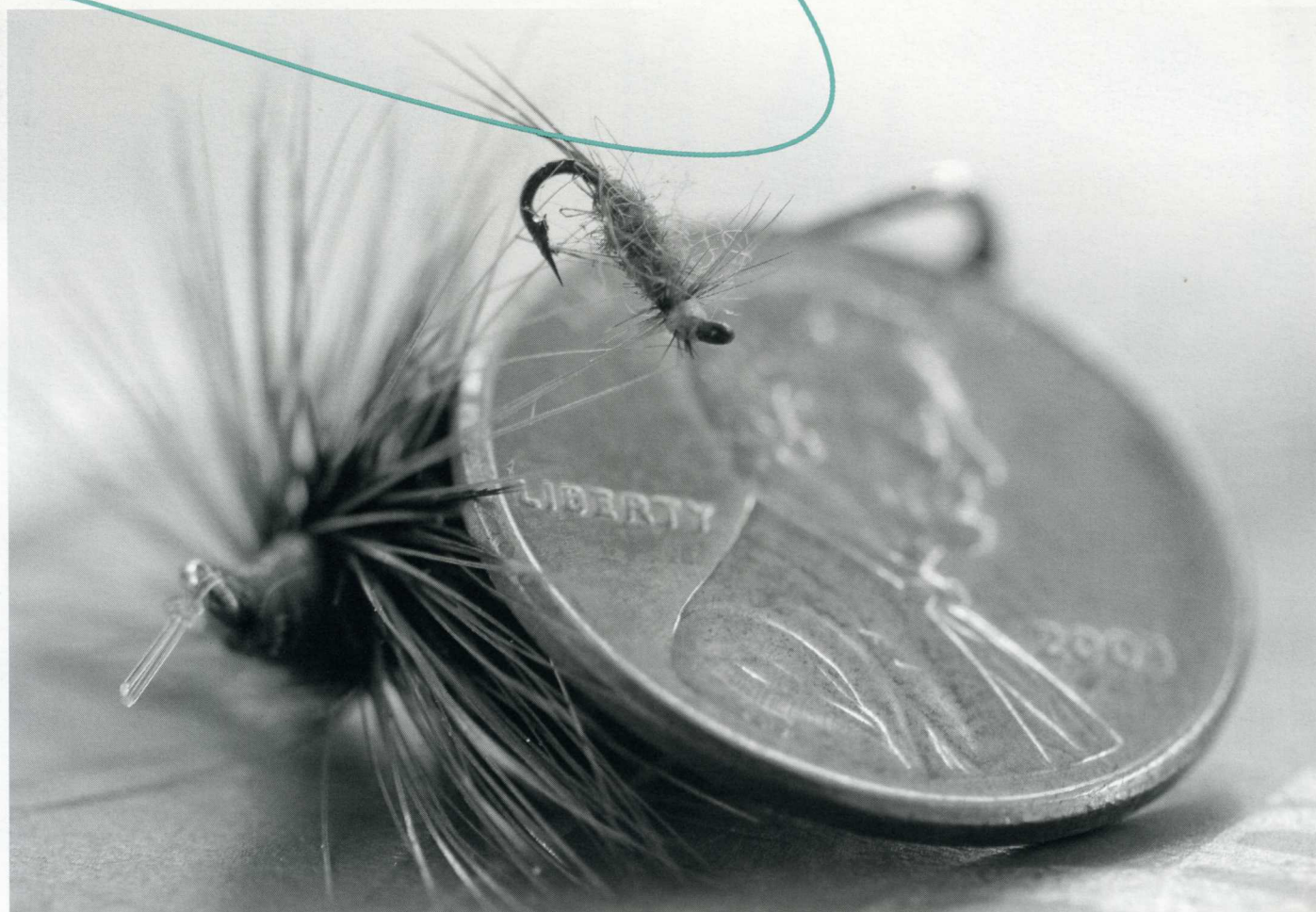
Instead, Danny and his fellow fly fishermen spend years learning to create realistic-looking — at least from the fish's perspective — insects and other edible creatures and assembling a war chest full of them in anticipation of the battle of wits between man and fish. Danny says that the basic materials used in today's fly tying

and forth, and the satisfaction the fisherman feels as it silently lays out on the water. "That's what attracted me to it," Danny says, "watching my great-uncle do it. And the man caught fish when other people weren't."

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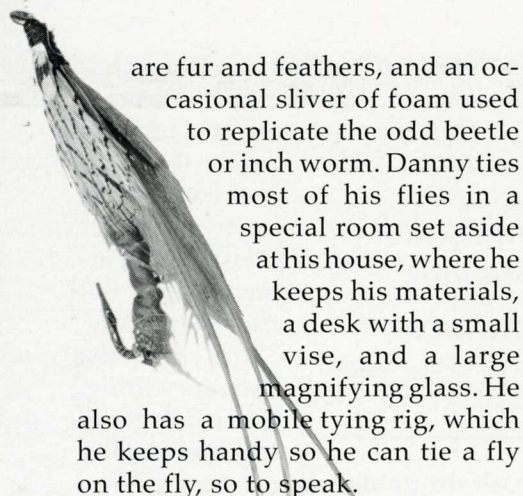
*The flies vary in size, but some are minuscule! Their sizes are referenced by the dimensions of the hooks they use — the larger the number, the smaller the fly.*

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Even small flies can catch big fish, according to Danny Wickline.





are fur and feathers, and an occasional sliver of foam used to replicate the odd beetle or inch worm. Danny ties most of his flies in a special room set aside at his house, where he keeps his materials, a desk with a small vise, and a large magnifying glass. He also has a mobile tying rig, which he keeps handy so he can tie a fly on the fly, so to speak.

The flies vary in size, but some are minuscule! Their sizes are referenced by the dimensions of the hooks they use — the larger the number, the smaller the fly. A No. 6 fly, for example, measures close to an inch in length, where a No. 24 is about the size of a flea's elbow.

"There's a place on the Elk," Danny

points out, "you've got to have a 32, or you're not going to catch any fish. It's just a little black gnat. That's all it is, and you've got to have it. I mean, [those fish] wouldn't look at that big thing."

Even those baby-sized hooks can catch big fish. Danny claims to have caught a 20-inch brown trout on a No. 24 hook.

"You've got to wait till they close their mouth," Danny says, pointing out the obvious.

Like most fishermen, Danny keeps a variety of flies in his tackle box so he can switch bait when necessary.

"In the winter months down here they'll hit tri-cones — a real small pattern with three little tail fibers," Danny says, admitting that he doesn't fish as much during the winter months. "I can't tie flies [then]; my hands are too cold."

The fly fisherman's main tool is his fly rod. Traditionally made of bamboo, today they are often made of fiberglass, graphite, or some other composite material.

"They even made them out of metal at one time," Danny says. Most of these long, thin rods break down into two, three, even four or five pieces for added mobility.

The fly line is made of a thick, waxy plastic designed to add enough weight to facilitate the casting process but light enough to float. Danny cleans his line regularly with soap and water, adding a final coat of ArmorAll as a conditioner and to make it slick. Attached to the end of the fly line is a thin leader, which, in turn, ties onto a tippet — a section of very fine, tapered monofilament line that attaches to the fly itself.

Once assembled, this setup is



An assortment of dry flies tied by Danny Wickline. Fur, feathers, and string are the primary materials used in making these lures.





Danny likes to cast his flies into a soft current, as shown here. The fly then floats slowly downstream on the surface of the water, mimicking a natural insect.

ready for the skillful touch of the fisherman, who holds the tip to the rod skyward then deftly rocks it back and forth. The combination of this gentle motion and the weight of the fly line brings more and more line into play.

"When that rod bends back, you know it's time to take it forward," Danny says, describing the almost hypnotic rhythm of the casting motion. "You let the rod do the work for you." The weight of the line carries the fly forward until it is finally laid out on the water.

"You want your line to shoot out and sort of stop over the water, and

come down lightly without slapping the water," Danny says. All this is

cast and the fish doesn't see my fly line."

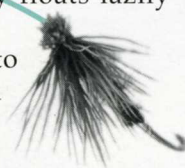
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*As the fly floats back downstream, the fisherman gathers — or mends — any excess line so that he can be ready to set the hook should one of these babies decide to take the bait.*

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to fool the fish into believing this is a natural insect floating with the current. Danny likes to fish into the current so that the fly floats lazily back toward him.

"The fish are going to be looking upstream 99% of the time," he says. "I like to be at a 45-degree angle, where I can



babies decide to take the bait. In that case, the angler has a split second to decide whether to battle the fish manually — stripping the line in by hand — or mechanically.

"If I get a big fish, I'm going to put him on the reel," Danny advises. "Keep your rod tip high and your line tight. Don't force the fish. Let the rod wear the fish out."



Most trout streams in West Virginia are "catch and release," which Danny feels is a positive thing, but it breeds smarter fish. After one has been reeled in and released a few times, a fish can grow suspicious or jaded toward familiar bait, so sometimes a different or unusual fly will bring greater success.

Danny, during his 30-year

career as a teacher in Monroe County schools, taught several students how to fish. "When I was at Union High School, I gathered up some old rods and we would get out on the football field and practice with casting," Danny recalls. "I even had a section for tying, [for] those people who were

interested. I showed them how to tie some of your basic flies, like a wooly booger or something like that." Danny sees some of his former students down on the creek from time to time, which is gratifying to him.

Danny stresses the importance of safety. "The rocks are slick," he says. "You gotta watch out. I busted my can on that bridge one day!"

When the water is too high or too fast, Danny doesn't venture out. There are those who might, but he'll wait for another fish, another day.

Patience is usually a virtue when it comes to catching fish, but Danny admits that he moves pretty quickly. If the fish aren't biting, he tries another place or switches flies. Other fishermen might linger longer, according to their personality and preference.

Part of the attraction to the sport of fly fishing comes from the lore and legends that develop around it — fish tales. And Monroe County is no stranger to "the one that got away!" According to Danny, old-timers relish stories of improbable fish and implausible tales, and who are we to question them?

"People used to catch some big fish up above here, prior to the catch-and-release area," Danny says. "They would take mice, live mice, and fish in this big pool up here. That was years ago. Now I never caught one on a mouse."

His biggest catch?

"Well, I caught a rainbow here that went close to 30 inches," Danny says. "I have a guy who witnessed it — I have no idea who he is. But I was downstream at a place called Misery. It's a hard place to catch a fish, but I lucked out and caught him. Caught him on a wooly worm." Danny has several of these simple flies, made of chenille and a feather. "I had a large brown one like that, then I put this olive one on. He came out and he turned on that brown one, then I put the olive one on. There was a guy sitting maybe 300 or 400 yards downstream. It took me a long time to land the fish. Well, he came upstream and said, 'Gosh, that thing

A tippet - a short length of very fine monofilament line - connects the fly to the rest of the fishing apparatus. A good fisherman is quick with a knot, Danny says.







This brook trout took the bait and will soon be released.

must be 10 pounds.' I don't know if he's that big, but it was a big fish. At least 28 inches, closer to 30."

The only trout native to West Virginia is the brook trout — the official state fish. The Department of Natural Resources stocks rainbow and brown trout as well. Crossbred varieties such as the so-called tiger and golden trout are also found in these waters.

The popularity of fly fishing goes up and down, Danny says. "I saw a big surge [in

popularity] especially after the movie *A River Runs through It*. I worked at The Greenbrier as a guide for 10 or

"Someone who can read the water, read the area and then figure out where a fish might be," Danny

says, describing what it takes. "Someone who can handle his rod, of course, and knows what fly to put on."

And that pretty well describes Danny

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*The only trout native to West Virginia is the brook trout — the official state fish. The Department of Natural Resources stocks rainbow and brown trout as well.*

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15 years and worked for First Light Outfitters. There were a lot of people interested in fly fishing after that [movie]."

While trends might come and go, it takes some time to become a really good fisherman.

Wickline. 🍁

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

TYLER EVERT is staff photographer for the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.





# "Raised Really



The Bing Brothers band at Camp Washington Carver in the mid-1990's. Dave Bing (fiddle), Tim Bing (banjo), Mike Bing (mandolin), John Blisard (bass), and Danny Arthur (guitar). Photograph by Michael Keller.

## The Life and Music



# Tough"

By John Lilly

Mike, Dave, and Tim Bing are among the most formidable and respected old-time musicians in West Virginia. Collectively as the Bing Brothers Band, and individually, they have performed, competed, taught, and promoted their brand of hard-driving old-time and bluegrass music to enthusiastic audiences across the state, the region, and around the globe.

**H**ow these three self-taught musicians came to travel the world representing the musical heritage of their home state is a bit of a mystery. Perhaps it is an argument for providence or predestination. Simply put, the Bings discovered the joy of traditional music as young men and let the music take its natural course.

Traditional music was present on both sides of the Bing family tree. The brothers' mother, Willodean Merritt Bing, now in her 80's, was an especially strong influence and their biggest fan, as she continues to be. The boys' father, Donald Ray Bing, died in 2000. Though not a musician himself, Donald was also a great follower of the Bing brothers and their music.

Willodean's mother, Florida Merritt, died in childbirth when Willodean was five years old. Following his wife's death, her widower, Willie Merritt, moved his family from



Donald Ray and Willodean Bing, with son Mike, in about 1952.

## of the Bing Brothers



Beech Fork, Wayne County, to Logan, where he took work as a miner. The situation there was not suitable for raising children, however, so Willodean and her siblings moved back to Wayne County, where they were raised by their grandparents, Susie and "Preacher" Paris Adkins.

The Adkins family lived on a 265-acre farm and shared a large, two-story farmhouse. Willodean recalls that there were as many as 22 people living in the farmhouse at one time. They raised all their own food and lived close to the land. According to Willodean, they didn't notice the Great Depression, because life seemed unchanged on their remote but productive family farm.

Music was a part of this household, as Willodean, her brother Buddy, and sister Hope all sang and played instruments, as did several of their Adkins relatives. Willodean recalls her grandfather reading his bible aloud and singing hymns in the early morning on the big wrap-around porch of the farmhouse. Other relatives would also play and sing on occasion, sharing old country and bluegrass songs.

When Willodean was 19, she married Donald Bing, from East Lynn, Wayne County. An aspiring journalist, Donald took a job as a pressman for the Huntington newspapers. The couple bought a home three miles from town on State Route 10 in Cabell County.

Donald and Willodean had three boys: Mike born in 1951, Dave born in 1955, and Tim born in 1958. During the summer months, the boys spent time at the old Adkins farm, where they were exposed to a rural way of life, farm work, and traditional music.

Mike, the eldest of the three brothers, was a sports enthusiast as a boy, excelling in baseball, basketball, and track among other sports. Competitive by nature, he won three state track medals. Though he didn't take up a musical instrument until he was in his early 20's, Mike recalls hearing his great uncles harmonize on traditional gospel songs and hearing Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs play on local radio and television.

The local Heck's Department Store would hire Flatt & Scruggs to play in their store on many occasions. "When they had any kind of opening — say, an appliance section — they'd have [Flatt & Scruggs] come out and do the opening for it," Mike says. "I'd walk over and be two foot away from Lester and Earl! I saw them probably 20 times. That was impressive!"

While attending Marshall University, Mike was exposed to old-time music through a friend at college. One day an uncle came in from Texas and brought a mandolin, which he gave to Mike. "It fit my hand," Mike says. Mike eventually learned to play fiddle tunes on the mandolin, inspired in part by the music of a North Carolina mandolinist named Red Rector.

"Hands down, he's my favorite mandolin picker with hardly any-



Fiddler Jake Adkins and guitarist Buddy Merritt. Old-time, bluegrass, country, and gospel music could be found on both sides of the Bing family tree. These two musicians were on the maternal side. Photographer and date unknown.





Three Bing boys in about 1960. From the left are Tim, Dave, and Mike.

body close," Mike says of Rector. When Mike lived in Kentucky, he used to get up at 6 a.m. to see and hear Red on a local TV station. The two mandolin players eventually met and played together a few times, including once at a campground between Milton and Barboursville.

Tim, the youngest brother, recalls hearing a record of the New Lost City Ramblers, which sparked his interest in learning the banjo. Raised on rock & roll, Tim started listening to

his first chords and taught him to play the "Wildwood Flower" and "Fireball Mail," which turned out to be two of the first numbers learned and performed by the Bing Brothers band.

Willodean and Donald Bing, avid square dancers and bluegrass music fans, were pleased to see their three boys develop an interest

bluegrass and old-time music while in his early teens.

Dave recalls his first exposure to old-time fiddle music: "I was about three. My great-great Uncle Jake at the old home place in Beech Fork, home of the Adkins family, he was [seated] on a nail keg. He had his legs crossed, and he was looking down at me. I don't remember actually hearing the fiddle. I remember seeing the fiddle and seeing him looking down at me."

When Dave was about seven years old, he showed an interest in the guitar, so Willodean showed him

in playing string music. The couple became their biggest supporters.

"We'd gathered up some old instruments," Tim recalls. "Then one Christmas, they brought in a new banjo, fiddle, and a mandolin." Over the years, their parents were patient and encouraging as the boys went through the learning process. The pair also shared the words to some of the old songs they knew.

When the boys got to be a little older, they tagged along with their father and attended a campout weekend with Donald's father, his uncles, and some other men of that generation. The men had a remote camp called Rock House Holler where they spent the weekend frying chicken, drinking liquor, and playing music. This was a revelation for the impressionable young Bings.

One year, Donald and his brother Gayle organized a similar party. A Wayne County banjo player named Boo Boo Ramey along with guitarists Charles Stiltner and Shelton Ramey provided the music, playing Hank Williams songs and trading instrumentals.

"They made chicken and dumplings in a big apple butter kettle," Dave recalls, and they played music all weekend long. After that experience, Dave decided to get a banjo

Music parties and informal gatherings played an important role in the brothers' musical development. This front-porch jam session took place in the 1970's.





and began to take trips out to see Boo Boo Ramey.

Ramey played his own variation of three-finger style banjo as well as the older clawhammer style. "At that time I preferred the three-finger style," Dave admits, noting his early preference for bluegrass music. After learning a few bluegrass tunes, however, Dave began experimenting with the old-time clawhammer style and never looked back.

By the time Dave was about 18 years old, the Bings were hosting two or three of those "chicken roast" get-togethers each year, eventually drawing guests numbering in the hundreds. A fiddle player named Junior Ruggles came to one of these gatherings and really turned Dave's head.

"I was really shook," he says. "I was ready to go to Marshall, and I [decided], I've got to learn to play fiddle like that. I dropped everything. I was engaged to get married, I was working. I pretty much quit everything."

Dave borrowed a fiddle, looked up in an encyclopedia how to tune it, and began the arduous task of teaching himself to play. He soon found a group of fellow musicians his own age in Huntington and they started going to visit Junior—a 54-year-old retired fiddler who had spent years on the road with country music star Hawkshaw Hawkins.

"He didn't do many fiddle tunes," Dave says, referring to Ruggles' repertoire. "He was more of a backup, country fiddle player. He was just

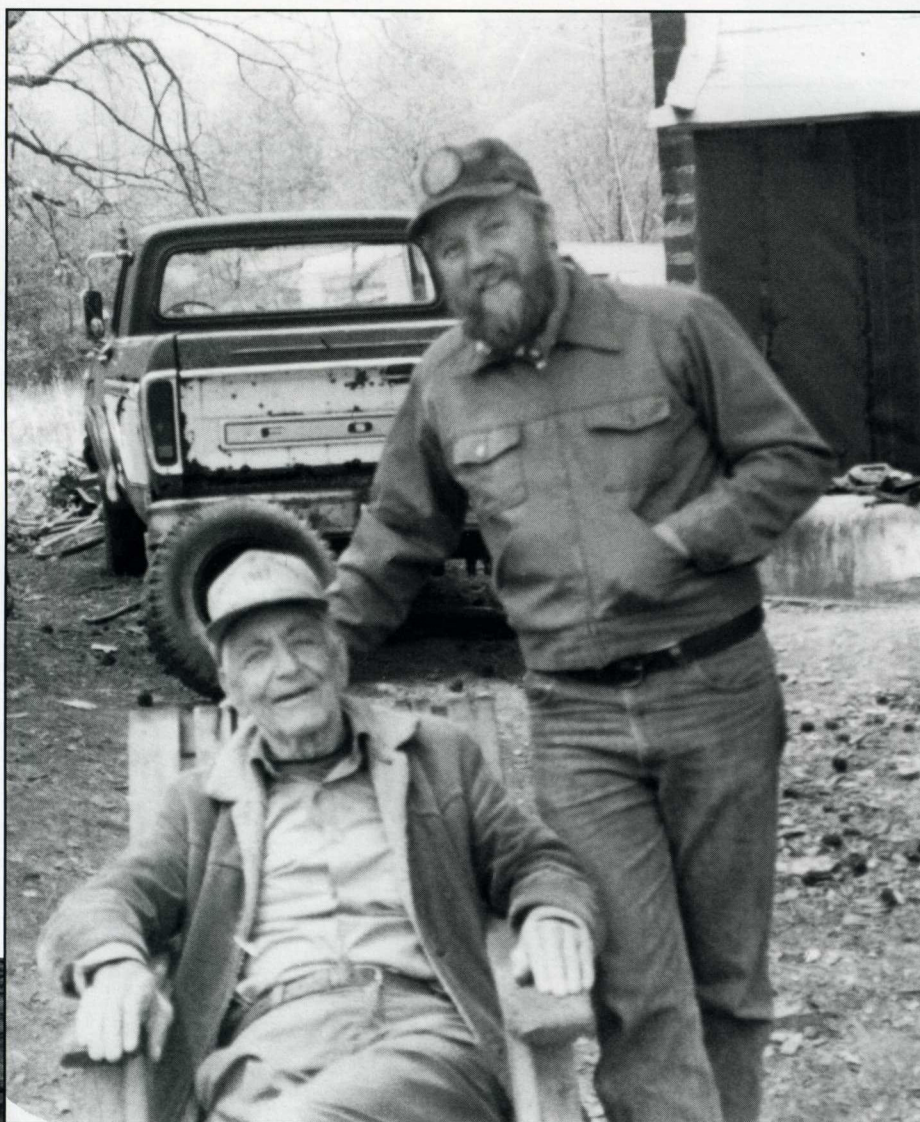
incredible." Unfortunately, Junior was also an alcoholic, who lived in a house with about a dozen other men. "You'd have to have a bottle of Gibson's White Port," Dave recalls. "I made the mistake of the first time, walking into that house with a bottle, and all these drunks [saying], 'Hey, boy! Hey!' The bottle was gone in no time, of course. After that I started picking him up and we'd go somewhere. They were building Beech Fork Lake at that time. You could drive out before they filled it up with water. We'd go out there and sit with a guitar and a fiddle."

Sadly, about four or five months after Dave began to visit him, Junior Ruggles and his brother got hold of some bad whiskey, which killed both men.

After Junior died, Dave got together with fiddler George Steele, a former professional radio entertainer who had played square dance fiddle in Arizona for 30 years. George was a tremendous influence on his music, Dave notes. "Junior got me inspired," Dave says, "but [George] actually sat down and showed me things — showed me the shuffle. Everything he played had what he called the 'Georgia bow.' It had that real rhythmic, driving dance feel. When we play square dances, that still is dominant in my fiddling."

Donald Bing and his father, Boyd, used to travel to Pocahontas County to the Williams River to go trout fishing. Having struck up a friendship with Sherman, Burl, Maggie and other members of the Hammons family, Donald eventually introduced

Meeting the Hammons family of Pocahontas County was a pivotal experience for the Bings. This photograph shows Dave Bing (standing) and Sherman Hammons at Sherman's home in 1985.







The Bing Brothers perform at the Pocahontas County Mountain Music and Bluegrass Festival in 1982. From the left are Mike, Tim, and Dave Bing. Photograph by Kim Johnson.

them to his sons.

"And the whole world shifted," Dave says.

Sherman Hammons sold night crawlers. One day, while buying some bait, Donald noticed a banjo neck poking out from under the bed. When asked about the banjo, Sherman got it out and played it. This was the beginning of a long-standing and fortuitous musical relationship between the Bings and the Hammonses. Dave, Tim, and Mike began to spend more and more time in Pocahontas County, visiting with

the Hammonses, learning music, hearing stories, and absorbing their unique and rustic way of life.

Rather than commercial square dance tunes, bluegrass, or popular

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*Dave, Tim, and Mike began to spend more and more time in Pocahontas County, visiting with the Hammonses, learning music, hearing stories, and absorbing their unique way of life.*

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songs, the Hammonses played archaic melodies, often with irregular meter and odd tunings. This elusive, strange-sounding style struck a chord with the Bings and changed their

outlook on music.

Dave, once again ready to get married and settle into a conventional way of life, dropped everything and started spending all of his time with Sherman and Burl. A talented carpenter, Dave would work for six months then take his earnings and his Toyota Land Cruiser and his pop-up trailer and make his way to Pocahontas County, where he would camp out and woodshed with the Hammonses until his money ran out. Then he would go back to work and repeat the pattern, which



continued for more than 10 years.

Tim and Mike Bing were equally taken by the Hammonses and their music.

"I kept going back," Tim says. "Got to know Sherman, and he just gave us a wealth of things. Lots of the old-time pieces. I started studying him really hard. We'd sit on the porch and just pass the banjo back and forth. It looks re-

ally simple, the way they did things. But when you break it down and really try to do it, there's a whole lot more to it than meets the eye, or the ear! Not only the music. It was the way he lived, his life. [Sherman] taught us as much about life as he did the music."

Mike also studied with Sherman and Burl Hammons, adapting fiddle melodies to the mandolin.

By the mid-1970's, Dave, Tim, and Mike were performing as the Bing Brothers band. They played at festivals, such as the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville, the Vandalia Gathering, Aunt Minnie's Farm,

House parties and outdoor music get-togethers were also popular venues for the Bings, whose names quickly spread as people responded to their combination of rustic repertoire, aggressive tempos, and boundless energy.

"We'd play all day, all night," Mike says.

With Dave on fiddle, Tim on banjo, and Mike on mandolin, the Bing Brothers band

also included a guitar and often an upright bass. Joey Broughman was an early guitarist with the group as were Pat Mullarky and Danny Arthur.

Their music was a unique combination of tunes and styles. "We would mix it up with a little bit of everything," Tim points out. "We didn't limit ourselves to just the old-time. A whole lot of the bluegrass comes

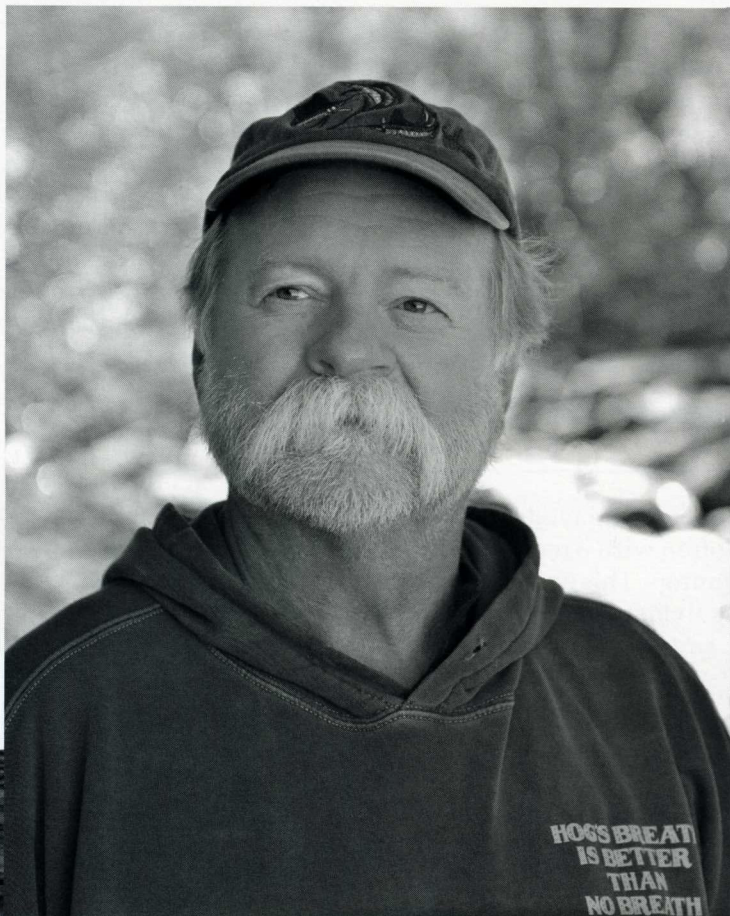
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*People responded to their combination of rustic repertoire, aggressive tempos, and boundless energy.*

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Stumptown, the Galax [Virginia] Old Fiddlers Convention, the Hammons Family Festival in Huntersville, and at the Appalachian South Folklife Center, as well as at local taverns and honky tonks.

"Jake's Pub, it was owned by John Black from Barboursville," Mike recalls. "That was the first place we played regularly. It was 10 bucks and all the beer we could drink."





out in my picking, too. You know, good music's good music."

In the 1990's the Bing brothers began traveling overseas to teach workshops and perform at festivals in Ireland, England, Australia, and elsewhere. They also taught and performed at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins.

In 1997, Mike founded the Allegheny Echoes program in Pocahontas County, a weeklong series of workshops designed to teach West Virginia traditional music. These workshops took place at Snowshoe Resort for the first seven years, after which they moved into Marlinton. Each year the program attracts about 150 people, who take classes in fiddle, banjo, mandolin and other instruments, as well as storytelling and singing.

"We try to make it a West Virginia thing," Mike says, summing up the goals of the program.

In 1997, Dave joined the band

Gandydancer, with Gerry Milnes, Mark Payne, Ron Mullenex, and Jim Martin. The current Bing Brothers band features Mike Bing, Tim Bing, Jake Krack, Bob Lieving, and Tim Corbett.

In addition to playing and teaching music, Dave is a skilled violin maker. "I've always worked in wood," Dave says. "I've always played music, and always played the fiddle. Finally I decided I've got to make a fiddle before I can't do it anymore." That was in 2000. To date, Dave has made 35 fiddles, with two more nearly completed.

"I had not planned on becoming a violin maker," he says, "but things just kept on snowballing. And here I am."

Dave lives in Roane County with his wife, Sue, in a home he built by hand several years ago.

Mike and his wife, Monica, live in Pocahontas County, where Mike has lived for 30 years. They live in a log

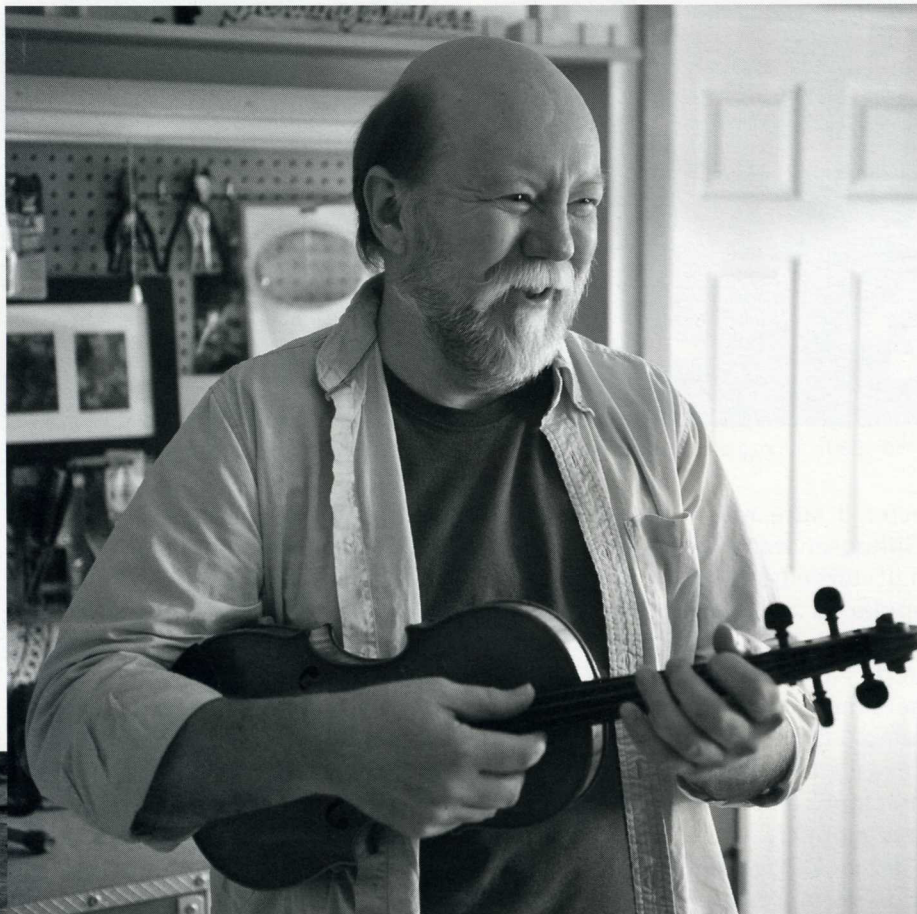
home Mike built himself, cutting and skidding the logs using a chain saw, draft horse, and a battery-operated crane.

Mike has been a field agent for the Department of Agriculture for 21 years. He inspects forest land for tree diseases, pests, and other problems — a dream job for someone who loves the out-of-doors and thrives on independence.

Tim Bing lives in Huntington. "I've been an iron worker for 20-some years," he says. "Doing the high steel, doing a lot of rebuilds, building steel mills, paper mills." His work involves a lot of traveling and hard manual labor. Though he is a successful and respected banjo player, Tim is grateful for the steady work. "We have to keep our day jobs," he says. "I'll probably have to work till I die."

On May 25, 2012, the Bing brothers received the Vandalia Award in recognition of their lifetime of contribution to West Virginia folklife and traditional culture.

"Wayne County roots from Beech Fork and East Lynn, that's what makes us what we are," Mike says. "That's our roots. We come from stock out there in the country. We were raised really tough. We raised a garden, we canned, raised hogs, bought very little food from town, worked hard on a hillside farm. That's the influence passed down to us, what you've got to do to get by on this planet." 🍁



From left: Mike Bing, Tim Bing and Dave Bing. Photographs by Tyler Evert.



# THE BUSHY-TAILED



Author Kenneth C. Daugherty with his family in the mid-1930's. From the left are Homer, Lily, Cecil, Kenneth, and Wayne Daugherty.

**T**his true experience took place about three miles west of Grafton. The year was 1931. My father had invested his last savings in a small farm. Since my older brother and I had just graduated from high school, we were to further our education as farmers.

An all-round handy farm helper was hired by my father to teach us the rudiments of farming. The wages for this character were 50 cents per day, plus dinner. When I say char-

acter, I sure mean character! Fred Gilhousen was a skinny, uneducated, half starved-looking individual who spoke in a loud southern drawl, which was not the least bit typical in this area. Although he had lived here most of his life, he claimed the honor of living for a short time in Texas, where he attained the accent that stuck as part of his happy, care-free manner.

He took the chore of teaching us city kids the operation of farming very

seriously. Surprisingly, we learned to clear land, plant crops, and numerous other facets of farm life. He taught us to cut down trees, split logs, and build fences. This latter chore led to the following unusual experience.

One bright midsummer morning at early daybreak with fence-building tools in tow, Fred and I finally reached the back line of our property, which was marked by the remains of an old, worn rail fence winding up the hill through the tall trees. We tramped,



# DEFENDER

By Kenneth C.  
Daugherty

single file, with Fred leading the way, up a path bordering the old fence we were going to replace with a nice, new barbed-wire job.

Suddenly, Fred stopped dead in his tracks and motioned for me to stop. In a whisper with finger pointing, he wised me up to a pretty little squirrel coming down the old rail fence toward us. He whispered a suggestion that we stand motionless and see how close the small animal would dare come to us. The squirrel dared come right opposite dear old Fred and sat on top of the fence, looking in what I interpreted as a friendly fashion.

The momentary silence was broken when Fred with a wide and curious grin stretched his free hand toward the squirrel

in a gentle manner. At this moment a ball of fury jumped through the air right at Fred's head. Fred, still hampered by a load of tools, was very agile in ducking his head just in the nick of time. In the same motion he threw his tools in all directions.

Fred didn't have time to recover from this first excitement because his attacker was climbing up the back of his trousers with lightning speed. Fred's slow Texas drawl became a hysterical staccato of profane expressions unfit for even the squirrel to hear. He quickly rid himself from this second onslaught by shaking his whole body in a manner equal to the modern dance of a teenager.

The squirrel no more than hit the ground before

a new onslaught carried it up to the belt line of hysterical Fred. Fred was able to defend himself by slapping his adversary back to the ground with his hand, but the squirrel flashed back to the attack with lightning speed. Fred was able to boot the squirrel with his foot before the small animal could climb his frame again. Finally, after three more aggressive attempts by the tiring rodent amid a jumble of curse words from Fred, this encounter came to a close. A well-planted kick by Fred finally discouraged his little adversary.

Where was I during Fred's ordeal? My funny bone had been struck to the extent that all I could do was roll on the ground in laughter. We watched the belligerent squirrel slowly trudge off into the woods beyond the fence and assumed it to be a mother squirrel protecting its young.

Several days were spent constructing the new fence, and we looked with anticipation for the bushy-tailed defender, but the squirrel had either left the area or stayed under cover during the workday hours.

I never saw the squirrel again. But even today when I see a squirrel, I recall the hilarious altercation, which never fails to bring a smile to my lips. 🍁

*Special thanks to Raymond Alvarez for bringing this entertaining story to our attention. —ed.*

KENNETH C. DAUGHERTY was a longtime school administrator in Taylor County, where he served as principal for five elementary schools. Kenneth passed away in 1986. This was his only contribution to GOLDENSEAL.







# *Fighting*

By Kate Quinn

For weeks the people of Wheeling had been excited at the prospect of a visit from the most famous evangelist in the country, the one and only Billy Sunday. His advance man, A.F. Gill, met with the religious leaders of the area and set up prayer meetings in homes. For 24 days he gave speeches, held meetings, and generally whipped the town into a frenzy of activity and excitement.

Meeting with the ministerial association, Gill was asked what he thought of Wheeling. He replied, "I have never visited a city which did not need a revival." Because of Wheeling's ordinance against swearing, Gill felt compelled to let everyone know that "Mr. Sunday does not use language the finest lady in the land cannot listen to." He was hedging only slightly.

Dividing the city into 152 districts, Gill found a group for each who would organize the prayer meetings to be held in various homes.

W.A. Wilson, who owned a wallpaper manufacturing plant in Wheeling, headed the building committee. Nearly 500 men gathered at the YMCA, and it was agreed that construction of the 1,500-foot tabernacle would begin on Tuesday, January 30, and take four days.

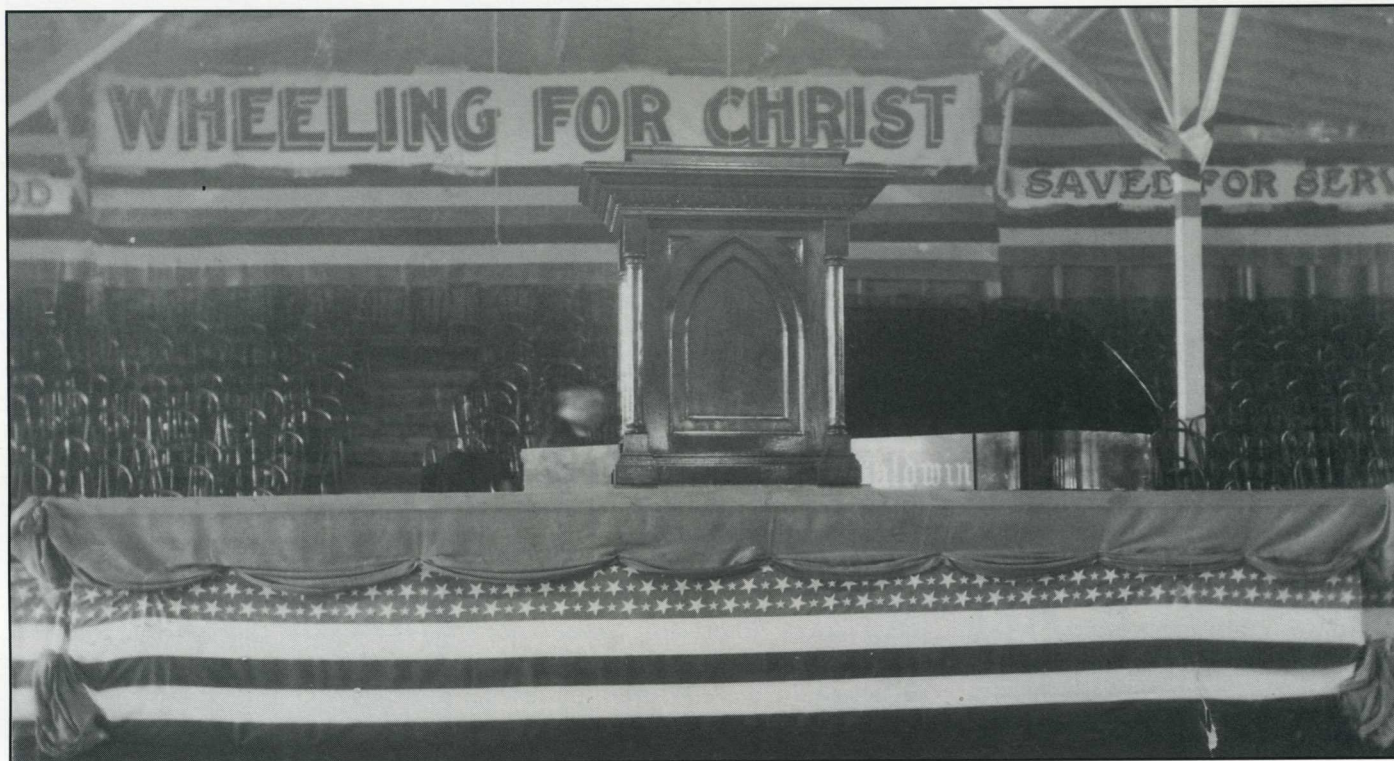
But who was this evangelist so eagerly anticipated by the lowly and elite of Wheeling in 1912?

William Ashley Sunday was born on a farm in Ames, Iowa, in 1862, the son of a Union soldier who died

Evangelist William Ashley "Billy" Sunday, in 1916. Photograph by Fairbanks, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Rebecca Putney Morgan Collection.



# *a Good Fight*



Pulpit from which Billy Sunday preached in Wheeling between February 18 and April 1, 1912, addressing an estimated 500,000 people over a six-week period. Photograph courtesy of Ellen Dunable.

five weeks later. After her husband's death, Mary Jane Sunday wed again, but that marriage ended in divorce. Her third union to an itinerant carpenter provided little family support. By the time Billy was 10, there had been 10 deaths in his family, and they were so destitute that the two youngest boys were sent to the Soldiers' Orphans Home in Glenwood, Iowa, where Billy got a decent primary education and realized he had some natural athletic ability.

By 14 he was working as a farmhand

and attending high school, although he never graduated. Sunday was recruited for a fire brigade baseball team and in 1883 was signed by the Chicago White Stockings, the defending National League champions. Sunday arrived in Chicago with "all his possessions in a cheap bag and a dollar in his pocket to spare," according to one account.

Popular with the fans and known for his speed in running bases, Sunday played right field and was the team's business manager. While in

Chicago, Sunday studied psychology at Northwestern University and paid his tuition by coaching baseball there.

In 1888, Sunday played for the Pittsburgh Alleghenies as the center fielder. The team, having no money to meet its payroll, traded Sunday to the Philadelphia Phillies for two players and \$1,000 in cash.

In 1891 Sunday turned down a \$5,000-a-year position with Cincinnati's team in order to work for the Chicago YMCA as an assistant secre-

## *Billy Sunday Comes to Wheeling*





Volunteers at Wheeling prepare to build a large tabernacle for Billy Sunday, beginning on January 30, 1912. Among the 225 workers were doctors, lawyers, merchants, and laborers. Photograph courtesy of Tony Paree.

tary at \$83 per month. He had experienced a religious conversion in 1886 and began attending the Jefferson Park Presbyterian Church, where he met Helen "Nell" Thompson, daughter of the owner of one of Chicago's largest dairy products businesses. The couple married on September 5, 1888, and Nell filled their long separations with letters using words she knew he would have to look up, in an attempt to improve his vocabulary.

In 1893 Sunday went to work as an advance man for the well-known evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman, who was well-educated, a meticulous dresser, suave, and urbane though very shy. Sunday organized choirs, erected tents, and took care of necessary details for Chapman. Night after night, Billy listened to Chapman preach, learning to make his own sermons forceful and pertinent.

When Chapman returned to his pastorate in 1896, Billy struck out on his own and for the next 12 years preached in communities in Iowa and Illinois, which he referred to as the "Kerosene Trail" because unlike Chicago, they had no electricity. He had been ordained in the Pres-

byterian Church in 1896, Billy struck out on his own and for the next 12 years preached in communities in Iowa and Illinois, which he referred to as the "Kerosene Trail" because unlike Chicago, they had no electricity. He had been ordained in the Pres- him to his audience. "I don't believe your bastard theory of evolution either; I believe it's pure jackass nonsense," Sunday said as Christian leaders cringed and publicly criticized him. "I want to preach a gospel so plain that men can come from factories and not have to bring a dictionary," he once stated.

He used anything at hand as a prop: the pulpit itself, a chair, whatever was there. He cavorted, pranced, and pounded leaving

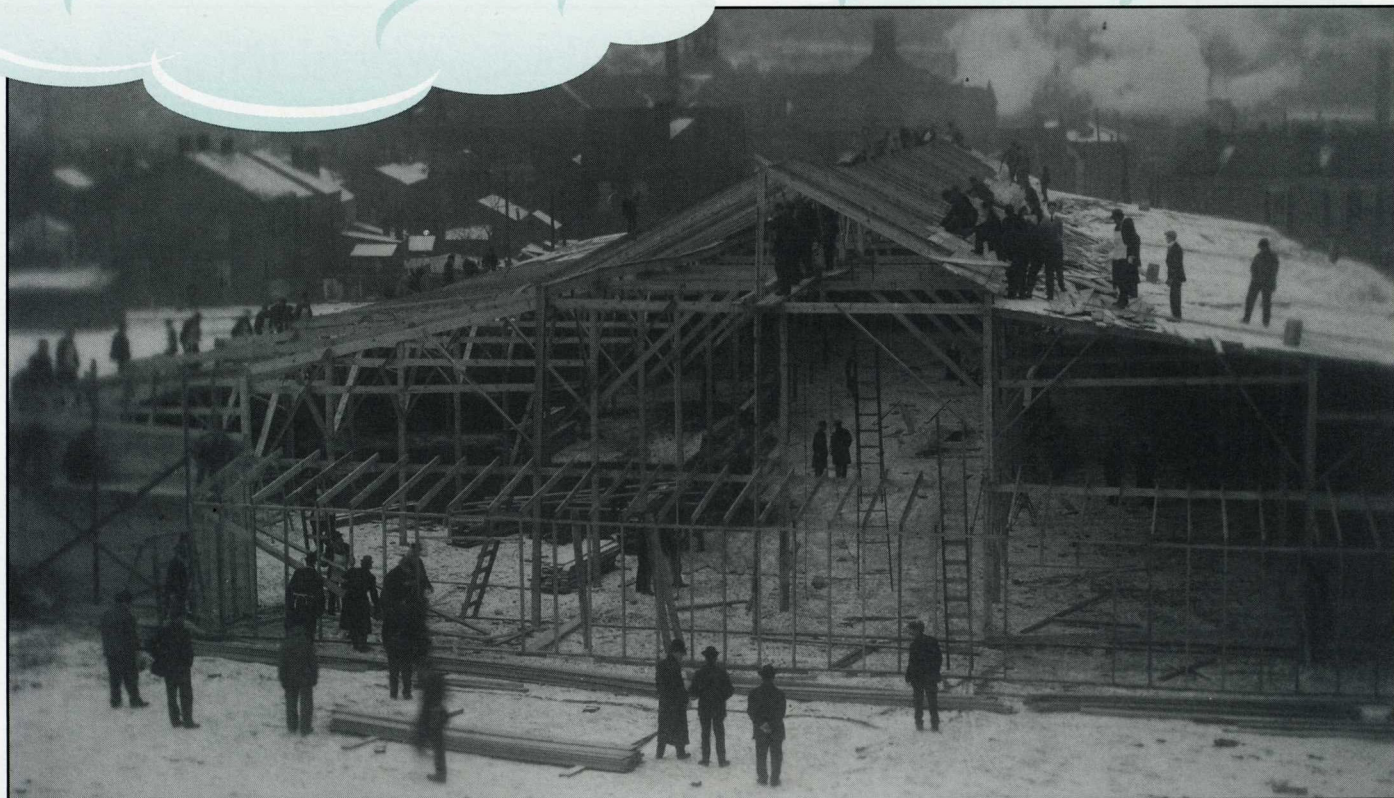
*Sunday's rough language endeared him to his audience. "I want to preach a gospel so plain that men can come from factories and not have to bring a dictionary," he once stated.*

byterian Church in 1903. Baseball served as Sunday's primary means of publicity, and he often organized games between local business teams. He would play both sides and then invite them to come to his revival. Another attraction he used was the Iowa giant, Billy Robinson, who Sunday hired as an usher and as a draw for his preaching.

Sunday's rough language endeared

the audience thrilled with his theatrics. He used mimicry, impersonations, memorial epigrams, and anecdotes to enhance his preaching. Unusual components of his sermon were to include blacks, decry child labor laws, and support Catholics and Jews. Though he denied evolution he had nothing good to say about Genesis literalists. He raised millions to support World War I, and





Tabernacle under construction in Wheeling. All the lumber and labor for this huge meeting house were donated, and volunteers completed the building in four days. Photograph courtesy of Tony Paree.

his sermons helped to encourage prohibition.

Sunday also supported many unpopular views, such as sex education in schools, woman suffrage, and urban reform. He also was against dancing, drinking, gambling, and other popular middle-class amusements. Though neither a theologian nor an intellectual, Sunday had over 600 books in his house and was well-read on political and social issues.

Sunday was famous for his wit and often said, "Try praising your wife, even if it frightens her at first." Another witticism went: "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile." His views on temperance were outlined in the quote, "Whiskey is all right in its place, but its place is in hell!"

As crowds increased, Sunday rented canvas tents, pitch-

ing them himself and sleeping in them at night for security purposes. A snowstorm in Salida, Colorado, in 1906, however, destroyed his tent. Afterwards Sunday insisted that each town he visit build him

a temporary, wooden tabernacle at their own expense.

Advance men would visit the upcoming town sites, organize local finances and work crews from churches, and provide advance publicity. Towns would get behind the endeavor as a community effort, and these "barn raisings" would unify the congregations in their excitement. Such was the case in early 1912 when Billy Sunday made plans to preach in Wheeling.

Fund-raisers were held by Wheeling churches to bring the evangelist to the city, and planning committees were soon hard at work in Wheeling to fulfill that dream. Wheeling churches agreed to suspend services while Sunday was in town and encouraged their members to attend his tabernacle instead.

Wheeling's tabernacle faced 26<sup>th</sup> Street. It was 1,500 feet long and could seat 8,000

## EXPECTED 40,000 PEOPLE TO HEAR "BILLY" SUNDAY

### KIM WAS VINDICATED.

New York, Feb. 24.—Miss Alice Jacobs is today mourning the loss of a \$150 engagement ring and the untimely death of little Kim. A couple of days ago, Kim, who was a very playful puppy, chewed up the box in which Miss Jacobs kept her engagement ring. The solitaire set could not be found. Emetics were given to Kim, but the ring did not come forth. Then the sentence of death was passed. Kim was choleraformid and his intestines examined. Kim was vindicated.

### Hundreds Coming From Three Cities to Hear Three Sermons Delivered By Evangelist. Tomorrow's Services.

Preaching in the tabernacle at 10:30 a. m., 2 p. m. and 7:30 p. m. Unless Old Man Boreas stretches forth his long arm and clasps Wheeling and vicinity for a radius of 50 miles in his icy clutch and sends severe storms to play havoc with railway and street car lines, a total of more than 40,000 people will endeavor to hear "Billy" Sunday tell just what he thinks about evil and sin. These are the indications, and judging from the interest being taken, the figures given above are low.

### INVASION OF THE EAST BEGUN

The total attendance during his visit near the



SEATING CAPACITY 8,000 — BUILT BY WHEELINGITES IN FOUR DAYS — PHOTO BY GOETZE'S DRUG STORE, WHG.

54 Summer 2012



plate on stage, leap to the top of the pulpit, and deliver a hellfire and damnation sermon while strutting the boards — was an exciting addition to Wheeling's pursuit of leisure-time distractions. Having no electronic amplification, Sunday could become quite angry when crying babies competed with him for attention. Nurseries were provided, infants forbidden, and so when a baby slipped past the vigilant ushers, Sunday could become quite rude in his commands that the mothers be escorted from the premises.

The first day's revival services saw 20,000 in attendance. The *Wheeling Register* described them as "a cosmopolitan crowd, rich and poor, humble and great, all mingled together on the crude benches."

When not preaching, Billy and Nell strolled the streets of Wheeling, stopping in shops and offices to talk to people and persuade them to come to hear his sermons. Special trains were arranged from Shadyside; Grafton; and Washington, Pennsylvania. A visit to the newspaper office led to front-page cartoons touting the popular evangelist and his wife. Each day the *Wheeling Register* reported a running tally of those who had taken the "sawdust trail to salvation," the monies collected in the offerings, and sometimes gave a word-for-word account of each sermon.

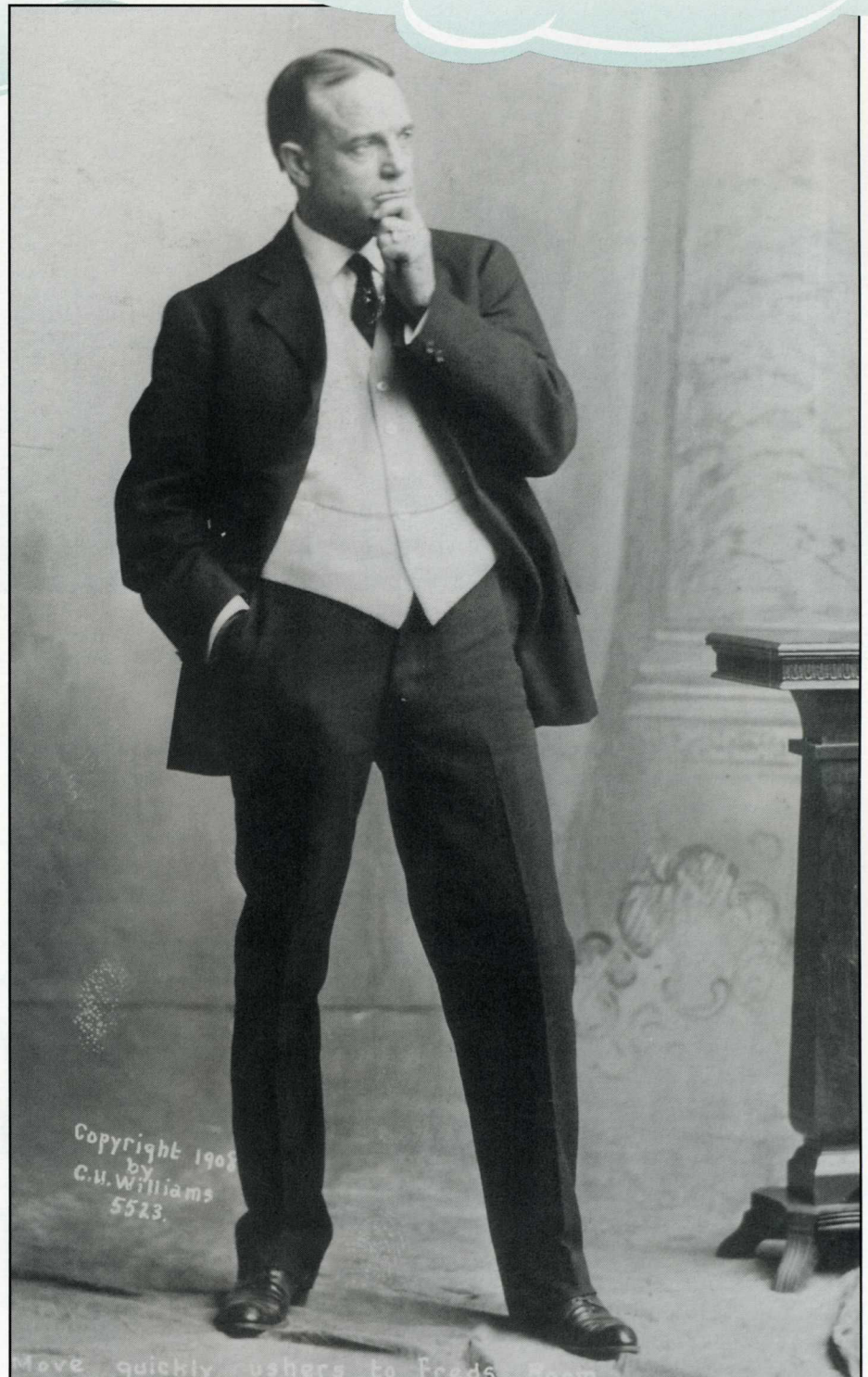
During one sermon, Billy Sunday recounted playing baseball 20 years earlier on Wheeling Island and mentioned his friend and fellow baseballer Jack Glasscock, who Sunday described as "one of the greatest shortstops the game ever produced." Glasscock was West Virginia's first player to make it to the major leagues.

In describing Billy Sunday's preaching style, the newspaper reported: "He preaches earnestly, with his whole soul; he drives his sermons home with forcible language, and pertinent gestures. He can be very

eloquent, or he can preach in street slang. He impresses different people in different ways."

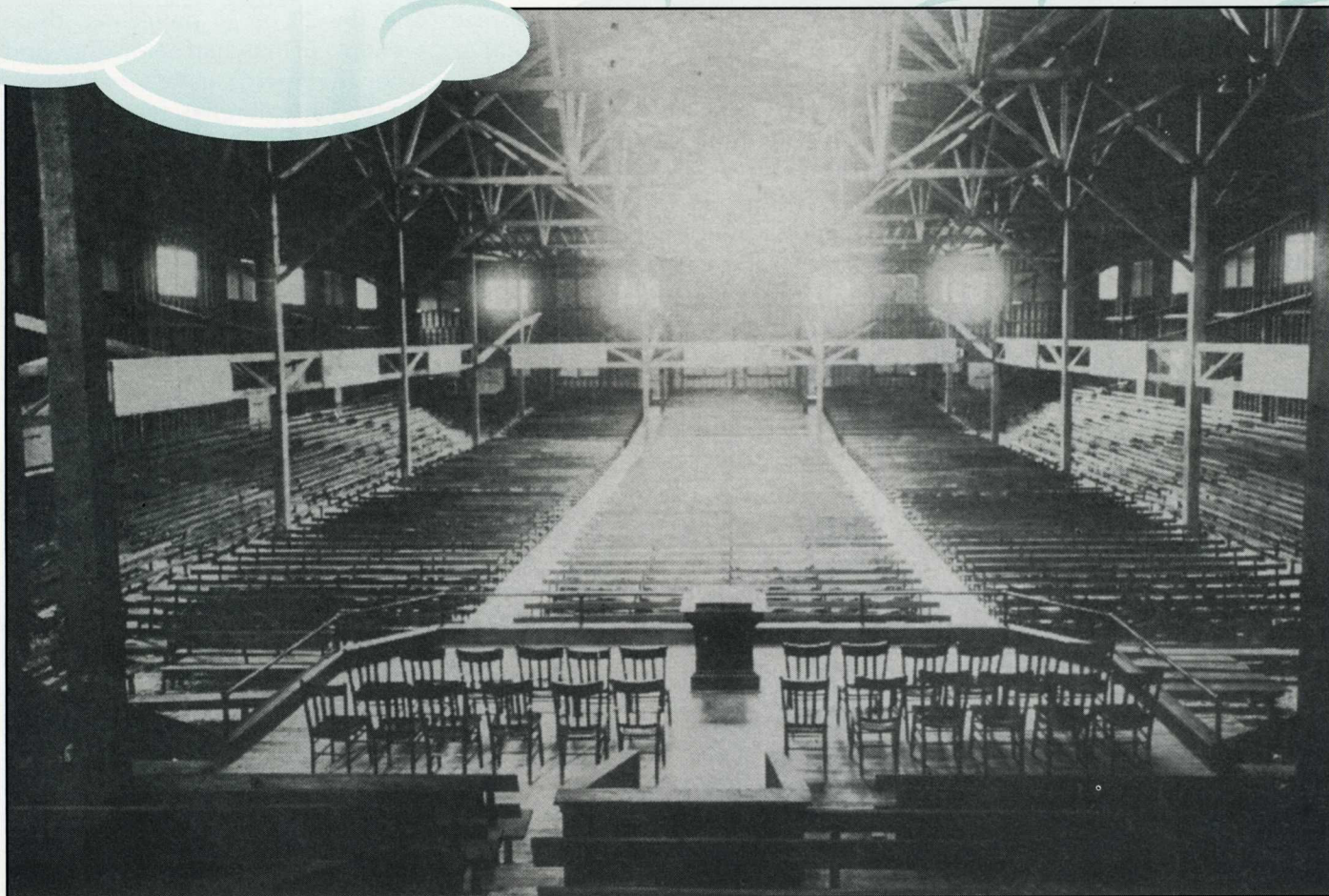
Crowds could easily become unruly as one newspaper report showed: "The women at the tabernacle didn't seem to care for anything,

and the 20 or 30 policemen there were swept like chaff before the wind when the crowds made a rush for the entrances. Umbrellas, fists, hairpins,



Billy Sunday in 1908. Photograph by C.H. Williams, courtesy of Ellen Dunable.





Tabernacle interior. This 1,500-foot-long wooden structure held 8,000 people, including a 700-voice choir. It had 14 entrances and was served by 125 ushers as Sunday delivered three sermons a day. According to the *Wheeling Telegraph*, "No one will deny that [Sunday] has influenced and held the attention of Wheeling and this section as never one man has done before." Photograph courtesy of Ellen Dunable.

and other implements of uncivilized warfare were used promiscuously, without regard to where the blows or jabs were going to land, and the damage to clothes and tempers was an item that may not even be estimated."

Sunday preached his last sermon in Wheeling on April 1, 1912, and said good-bye to Wheeling in the following manner: "Jesus, I came to Wheeling six weeks ago, a stranger, I only knew a few of these good ministers but the vast thousands of people I did not know. It had been 20 years since I was here, when I played a game

of baseball on the island, but I never thought then that I was to come back to save these dear people.

"Oh, Jesus, the hour has come for parting, the lights will soon go out, the doors will be closed, this great

crowd will have departed, and the tabernacle will be as still as a graveyard. The ministers will have vacated, the choir will have gone, all gone, all gone. I want to thank everybody who has helped make this revival such a grand success.

"God grant that when Gabriel's trumpet sounds we will all sweep uphill to the City and again greet each other. When we go we will pray for Wheeling and for the people. We will never forget you. Good-bye. We will think of you many, many times. Goodbye, farewell, bon voyage. Thank God there is no good-bye in the future.

SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 29.

## Backsliders Severely Arraigned by Sunday

Evangelist Says Delinquency Is Greatest Sin on Earth—Does Not Get Excited.

Working easier and getting less excited than during any sermon he has yet delivered in Wheeling "title"

"I preach against some classes and amusements. I have referred to these at times, and some time before I leave I will preach a sermon on them. (Laughter)"

"I will not sacrifice what I believe

*Wheeling Telegraph*, February 29, 1912.



"Oh, Jesus, I am saying goodbye to those who I will never see again. I have tried to save them. Oh, Lord, I know you are proud of Wheeling. The devil used to have Wheeling, but his hold is broken. Oh, God you must be proud."

Billy Sunday then returned to his home in Indiana for a rest. He had suggested that the proceeds from resale of the lumber used for the tabernacle be given to the Playground Association, but it is not clear whether this occurred.

In his long career, Sunday preached live to over 100 million people, and it is estimated that close to 1.25 million were converted. Sunday made \$870 a day preaching four sermons when the average working man made only \$836 a year! Between 1908 and 1920, Sunday earned over a million dollars while the average worker earned less than \$14,000 for the same period.

After World War I, with movies and theaters as competition, and in waning health, the Sundays saw a decline in attendance at their revivals. Their three sons indulged themselves in the disgraceful behavior that their father preached against, and the Sundays were forced to pay blackmail to several women to keep their activities quiet. After the death of their daughter from multiple sclerosis and the suicide of their son after financial ruin, the Sundays' popularity waned.

With a bad heart, stress, and exhaustion as constant companions, Sunday was so ill he was unable to attend Bob Jones University to receive his honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. His doctor had warned him to stay out of the pulpit and rest, but a heart attack in 1935 caused his death in November of that year.

His wife, Nell, continued to travel after his death, addressing youth rallies and raising money for rescue missions. In the early 1950's she spoke at some of Billy Graham's crusades and traveled to Europe and South America. She too had a heart attack



Billy Sunday, his wife Nell, housekeeper, and two of the Sundays' four children. Photograph courtesy of Tony Paree.

in 1948 and died in 1957.

They are buried outside Chicago in Forest Home Cemetery with an inscription that reads:

"I have fought a good fight.  
I have finished my course.  
I have kept the faith." \*

KATE QUINN is a Wheeling native who lived in New Zealand for 15 years, where she attended Auckland University. Since returning to West Virginia in 1994, Kate has had articles published in the *Upper Ohio Valley Historic Journal*, served as a tour guide at the Anna Jarvis Birthplace Museum in Webster, and received a 2009 History Hero award. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.





TYLER EVERT

# Pot of Beans

By Ken Snyder

**B**eans with supper (as distinguished from “dinner,” which, as West Virginians know, is lunch) has been and probably continues to be somewhat predictable for generations of natives. “Some days we had beans and cornbread for dinner,” says Mark Bell of Yawkey, Lincoln County, “and other days we had

cornbread and beans.”

Brown beans — actually pinto beans — have been a staple with West Virginians as long as anyone can remember. Cooking technique, taste, and preference for culinary accompaniment have been bequeathed from one generation to the next. Expressed more simply, my momma learned

from her momma, who learned from her momma, and so forth. And so did yours. My personal recollections at my home in Wilcoe, McDowell County, aren’t much different from Mark Bell’s, with one addition: a slice or two of regular bread leaned against the plate or bowl for “sopping up” the soup from the beans,



even with cornbread.

Keystone native, coal miner's daughter, and aunt Katie Vannoy Childress guesses my grandma served brown beans for supper "probably five days a week" as she was growing up in the 1930's. To avoid monotony to some slight degree and to adjust to a day off for my granddaddy, the family never ate brown beans on Sunday.

Bean boiling was obviously a routine for the Vannoy clan. "Momma would start a fire early in the morning, starting a pot of beans around 6:00, after Daddy would leave for

other vegetables for the Vannoys. "Momma would open up a jar of canned tomatoes. Daddy always had fresh meat killed and salted, or we'd have pork chops or bacon — some kind of meat," Katie explains.

The family crumbled biscuits or cornbread into and on beans and added sliced onions. Grandma did not tolerate picky palates. "We ate what was put on the plate," says Katie with firmness suggesting that consequences beyond going to bed hungry accompanied anything but

ping 82% reduction in heart-attack risk to high bean consumption. In short, beans were and are, perhaps, the perfect fuel for strenuous days in the mines, particularly so for miners in my granddaddy's pick-and-shovel era.

A pot of beans is present-day reality from border to border across West Virginia. Rare is the diner in, say, Kanawha or Cabell county that doesn't offer pinto beans. Even The Greenbrier's new restaurant, Prime West 44, offers "West Virginia Pinto Beans and Ham" among its side dishes.

So what is my own bean consumption for a mountain boy removed from Gary holler? The answer is simply "not enough" but not "without." When marrying my Louisville, Kentucky-born, bride 28 years ago, the one stipulation was she learn to "cook a pot of beans."

Today, usually as a winter dish, my family eats pintos with ham hocks that is, in my estimation, the best pot of beans you'll find west of Huntington. To my great satisfaction, my three children — all Louisville-born like their mom — have a taste for pintos.

For those of you who might ask, "What if you don't like them?" That's kind of a moot point for some of us. Many West Virginians were almost born, literally, with a taste for beans. You see, mountain mommas have been known to mash up pintos and feed them to infants. 🌱

KENSNEY is a native of Wilcoe, McDowell County. He earned a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and is currently a freelance writer living in Louisville, Kentucky. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

the mines," Aunt Katie recalls. "She would put that pot on the back of the stove, and they would simmer all day. She would add water as needed." A "streak" of bacon or fatback was the only other addition, Katie says.

Scrip was the currency for buying beans at the company store at that time. "They came loose and were measured out in little brown paper bags, a 'poke,'" she adds, using the common coalfields synonym for a bag.

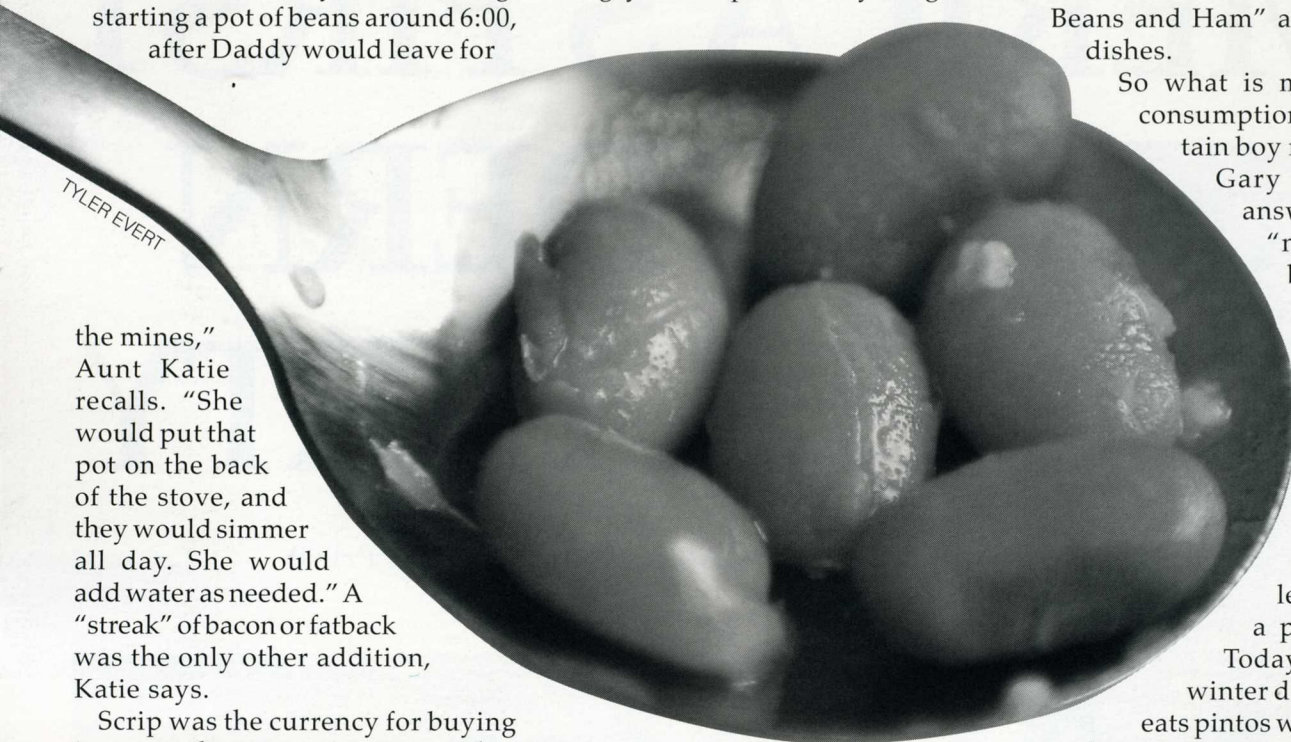
"Daddy would take them in his dinner bucket to the mines in a little, teeny mayonnaise jar and eat them cold," she remembers. Call this fast food for miners or "a lunch of lentils by lamplight" — arguably better than fast food today.

Only hours later, after the 3:00 whistle and a shower, Granddaddy ate more beans, except this time hot and on a plate or in a bowl. When not served with just cornbread or biscuits, fried potatoes and wild greens complemented meat and

a clean plate at dinner's end.

Onions and cornbread, while common, apparently aren't universal among mountain folk. "I'd put a slice of white bread in the bottom of a bowl, put the beans on top, and then put ketchup on top of that," says Mark Bell who, in my opinion, is wasting ketchup meant for white or navy beans. (But that's another story.) "I have put canned tomatoes on top," confides Aunt Katie in a tone suggesting confession.

The steady diet of brown beans for my granddaddy and other coal miners may have been providential. A cup of pinto beans, according to nutritionists, provides both high protein and fiber. One study also linked a whop-



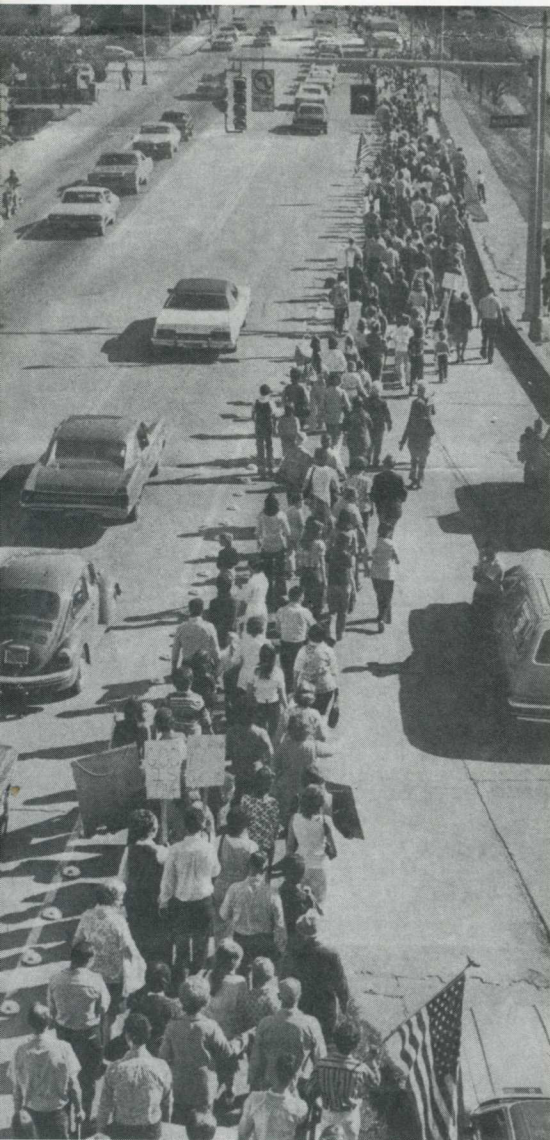
TYLER EVERT



*In the Fall 2011 issue, GOLDENSEAL published the story, "The Great Kanawha County Textbook War," by Trey Kay, based on the radio documentary titled, "The Great Textbook War," produced by Trey Kay and Deborah George. Kanawha County resident Karl Priest provided the following, responding to points in the earlier article. This article by Mr. Priest and Alice Moore appears without editorial modifications. The photographs, selected and submitted by Mr. Priest, are taken from local newspapers and are used by permission, with their original captions. —ed.*

# AMERICA'S FIRST MODERN TEA PARTY

By Alice Moore and Karl Priest



Long procession of textbook protesters winds its way up Kanawha Boulevard toward a round of speechmaking on the Capitol grounds. Gazette photo by Leo Chabot. 10-29-74



Patriotic pickets flank the flag in front of du Pont's Belle plant. Junior Woodrum (right) and Harry Wittington identified themselves as coal miners. They said they didn't intend to disrupt the plant's operation. "We just want them to know we're here," Wittington said. Gazette photo by Leo Chabot. 9-5-74





Moment of prayer – Kneeling on the parking lot at Kanawha County Board of Education offices on Elizabeth Street, textbook demonstrators are led in prayer. They turned their faces and lowered their heads so a police photographer could not take their picture. About 300 persons waited calmly throughout the early afternoon, singing hymns, praying, and listening to Rev. Ezra Graley, their new leader. As the afternoon wore on, the crowd became more emotional, with many of the women and some men crying as they praised the Lord. 9-19-74

Patient pickets stand in the rain as school convenes at J.E. Robins Elementary. They opposed textbooks recently adopted for use in Kanawha County schools. School officials reported no violence in the opening day boycott. Gazette photo by Lawrence Pierce. 9-4-74



Old Glory flaps in a gentle breeze as protesters to Kanawha County textbooks mass on the Capitol's front lawn to hear the words of encouragement from the demonstration's leaders. Gazette Photo by Leo Chabot. 10-29-74



## KARL PRIEST

The Kanawha County Textbook War was not a simple matter. It involved thousands of people (about 12,000 signed a petition against the books) with their own unique personalities and perspectives. The protesters were not perfect, but they were good people—the kind of folks most West Virginians would want to have as neighbors. As an historian of the protester side

of the Kanawha County Textbook War I take very seriously leaving a legacy of accurate information for future generations.

Trey Kay is an excellent journalist and I have no doubt he prepared his article ("Great Kanawha County Textbook War," Goldenseal, Fall 2011) without malice. However, Mr. Kay was influenced by a mixture of mistakes, hyperbole, and

outright propaganda that has been perpetuated about the protest since 1974. I want to address one glaring omission and two inflammatory items from his article. These matters are discussed in depth in my book *Protester Voices—The 1974 Textbook Tea Party* and on a set of webpages found at <http://www.insectman.us/testimony/textbook-protester-truth/the-facts.htm>.



(1) Kay failed to mention that the Business and Professional People's Alliance for Better Textbooks was a MAJOR protester group. That fact is often omitted because it does not fit the stereotypical image of the protesters as unsophisticated and uneducated.

(2) The alleged sign "Get the n - - - - books out of the county" was never photographed even though the media had cameras all over the place. If it existed, most likely 99.9% of the protesters would have torn it down. Also, such a sign could have been posted by anyone—including someone unsympathetic to the protest. The protest was NOT racist!

(3) The only serious personal violence during the protest was inflicted by a leader of a pro-book group who shot an innocent bystander. Another man (also pro-book) emptied his pistol at some union pickets grazing one man. Except for a tiny group of radicals (less than a dozen) who caused property damage the protesters were NOT violent!

Kay concluded his article with a quote from a protest critic that was insulting to the protesters. The full context of that vitriolic quote (calling the protesters "stupid") is in Kay's radio documentary and can be heard (47:00) at <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/textbooks/>. That attitude is sadly prevalent with many of those who disagree with the protesters.

In contrast there is Alice Moore who is recognized by friend and foe as the epitome of graciousness. After the protest Mrs. Moore won reelection by an impressive majority of votes and was supported county-wide. In spite of the opposition of major news media and the education establishment, she was reelected to the Board of Education by almost triple the vote of her first election. Mrs. Moore received over 25,000 votes, which was an unprecedented total for school board, defeating the pro-textbook organization's candidate by over 7000 votes. Her insight

into this event which (excluding disasters) has to rank as one of the top in West Virginia history is worth reading. (Mrs. Moore has her own chapter in *Protester Voices*.)

#### Alice Moore

Radical leftists in the decade of the Sixties, gave up their street fights, arson and mayhem, hid their public disdain for the law and followed the advice of Saul Alinsky, a self-decried "community organizer," who told them they would be more successful at bringing about "change" if they got out of the streets, went back to school and got into positions of power and influence. So they did! As well as getting into other places of influence, in time, they took over the U.S. Department of Education, became teachers of teachers, writers of textbooks and teachers of our children. Reshaping society through the schools was not lost on Kanawha County. One Kanawha County prin-

Book protesters in court – Twenty-two persons appeared this morning in Kanawha Circuit Court to answer charges in connection with a sit-in to protest public school textbooks Monday and Tuesday at the Board of Education offices on Elizabeth Street. Daily Mail Photo by Earl Benton. 2-27-75



Candlelight vigil – Textbook protesters began a 57-day candlelight vigil Friday night for the Rev. Ezra Graley in front of the Kanawha County Jail, where he has been confined since Tuesday. Protesters said they will continue the vigil around the clock until Mr. Graley is released from jail. Mr. Graley was sentenced to serve a 60-day term for violating a court injunction, granted to the Kanawha County Board of Education, which prohibits more than five protesters at entrances to school board properties. Daily Mail Photo by Chet Hawes. 10-12-74







Old Glory backdrops the Rev. Marvin Horan at Watt Powell Park Sunday, when he urged a crowd of more than 3,000 to resume a boycott of schools as part of the antitext protest. 10-7-74



White for purity was the way a textbook protester explained why she pinned a white carnation on the Rev. Avis Hill as he was released from jail Friday and was greeted by about 50 supporters. She said the carnation symbolized that even though the minister had been in jail he wasn't a criminal. Gazette Photo by Leo Chabot. 10-19-74

cial boasted, "We are no longer transmitters of information. We are transformers for social change." It was in this climate of social change, that Kanawha County selected so-called multicultural textbooks, as required by the State Board of Education for first through eighth grade schools. In 1974, the State Board had no authority over secondary books. These were selected by each local county.

At that time of the 1974 English Grammar and Language Arts adoption, I had one primary concern. That was the latest, now defunct, education fad of teaching nonstandard English. I had no objections to multicultural textbooks, until I learned at a National School Boards Association conference that multiculturalism had little to do with culture or ethnicity. I attended the conference less than a week before our scheduled adoption of English Grammar and Language Arts books. Speaking at the conference, was retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Stephen S. Jenkins, employee

of IBM, President of Arizona State Board of Education, and a black man. His subject was the need for school board control of textbook adoptions and for parental involvement in the selection process. Jenkins objected to the way blacks were depicted in the new multicultural textbooks. He mentioned, *Inner City Mother Goose*, being used in some New York City schools. "Jack be nimble Jack be quick Grab the purse It's easily done Then just for kicks Just for fun Plunge the knife And cut And run." I didn't think I had to worry about anything like that in West Virginia, but I had been reading a lot of education sources advocating nonstandard English and that learning nonstandard English was as important as learning standard English. Spending thousands of dollars on textbooks and teacher salaries to make children feel comfortable using street slang and sloppy grammar made no sense to me, but I quickly learned, upon examining our newly proposed books, so-called

"multiculturalism" far outweighed any concern I had over nonstandard English.

Shortly after our textbook battle became national news, Lt. Col. Jenkins was interviewed by *Human Events* magazine (Feb. 22, 1975, p. 3). (H)e emphatically agreed with Mrs. Moore that the West Virginia textbooks portrayed blacks in a very negative way, and said he thought she was correct in wanting to get other textbooks into the schools. . . (Jenkins said) 'There is a group within the black community... that feels that... kids have got to go out into today's world, so you have to go out and show them the gory details... so they [the texts] talk about kids with switchblade knives and their going out and knifing policemen. They are 'cussin' and 'fussin'. They're dealing with pimps and prostitutes and all that kind of thing. . . . But while we are at the level of force feeding, more or less, we should put quality in. Hopefully, when the children are through school, they will be able to differentiate between the bad and the good.'



(Jenkins) said Arizona has been . . . in the process of reviewing many of the same texts that have been embroiled in the West Virginia controversy. "We found that many of them were objectionable. They were objectionable from the standpoint of content and vulgarities and obscenities. They were objectionable from the standpoint of very, very low quality."

Jenkins advocates...parents getting involved in textbook selection as a way to avoid the adoption of textbooks with vulgarities, racial slurs and other objectionable materials.

Jenkins pointed out some of the texts invaded the privacy of the family in that they instructed teachers to question young people on their attitude toward their parents and the home.

Isn't all of this what Kanawha County parents were saying?

Lt. Col. Stephen S. Jenkins, black, successful, educated, patriotic American and President of the Arizona State Board of Education, agreed with Kanawha County parents, who were often referred to as uneducated

and racists. Fascinating!

A humorous incident that demonstrates the quandary the selection committee had, in publicly defending the books, took place at the May 1974 board meeting. I asked the chairman of the selection committee if she would read a poem from one of the books for me that I just couldn't read in public. She refused saying there were passages in the Bible she would not read publicly and pulled out a prepared list of Bible verses. I said, "I'm not asking you to read the Bible, just a poem to be read by minor children in class or elsewhere." She said, "No. I won't do it." I then turned to fellow board member, Russell Isaacs, who had assured me he would read anything that I could not read. Mr. Isaacs looked at the poem and said, "I won't read it." No other teachers or administrators in the audience would agree to read it. Finally, another board member, Dr. Harry Stansbury, said, "I'll read it. We're all adults here and I don't

want anyone saying we can't read a poem we are considering putting in the schools." With that, Dr. Stansbury began to read, "i like my body" by e.e. cummings.

At the completion of the reading the room was in stunned silence, until Dr. Stansbury said, "Well, obviously it refers to sexual intercourse." An assistant administrator, who had lead in the selection of the books, leaped from his chair, pointed at Dr. Stansbury and shouted, "It does not, Dr. Stansbury! It does not! That's just your interpretation." The tension at that moment was so great, the entire room, including me, exploded in uproarious laughter.

Not so funny is the fact that all board records of this incident have disappeared. Though the board secretary kept numerous pages of detailed notes on all our meetings and tape recorded every word spoken, there are no written notes, of that incident, beyond a one-line statement that the books were discussed, and there is

Lobbying for the antitext movement at Watt Powell Park Sunday, the Rev. Charles Quigley (left) asks Sen. Jennings Randolph, D-W.Va., to take a stand on the controversy. Gazette Photo by Lewis Raines. 9-30-74



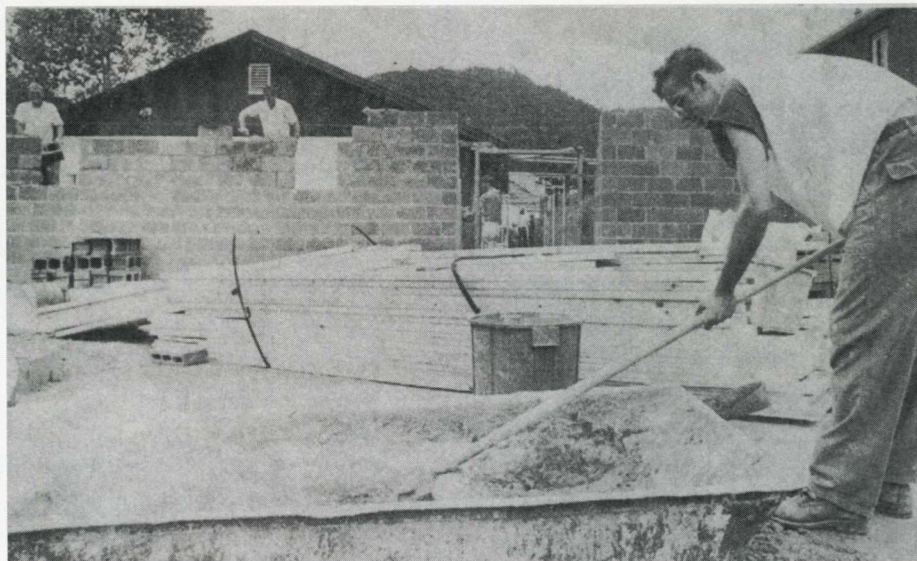
More demonstrators – This is a portion of the crowd which turned out at Sissonville school bus terminal this morning in the continuing protest of new English literature and grammar textbooks. The crowd prevented some buses from making runs in the Sissonville area this morning, although sheriff's deputies were able to get seven buses out. The deputies made three arrests at Sissonville this morning. Henry Thaxton is at center. Daily Mail Photo by William Tiernan. 9-6-74







Smiling school board member Alice Moore eyes one of two floral arrangements sent by supporters of her antitextbook stand. The flowers were delivered to the board of education building prior to Tuesday's meeting. 9-25-74



Mixing mortar for Fair Haven Christian School is Karl Priest, who will be principal. Working in the background are (from the left) Pastor Dave Kilburn and Harry Crowder. Staff Photo by Leo Chabot. 6-1-75

no recording though such notes and recordings exist for all previous and following board meetings. The news media did not report the incident, but there are letters to the editor, exchanged between the chairman of the selection committee and me, that reference the event.

Before the vote to purchase the textbooks, it was clear the great majority of parents were opposed to them. Later, when parents were offered the opportunity to opt their children out of using the books, they did so overwhelmingly. About 75% of elementary students and 33% of secondary students were opted out. To anyone who has raised teenagers, the reluctance of many parents of secondary students to expose them to the taunts and teasing of fellow students, and perhaps some teachers, as being "too immature to read the books" is understandable.

The board spent \$300,000 on textbooks and most of them were eventually destroyed without ever being used. Boxes of books, many never opened,

were gathered up all over the county and hauled off to the trash dump where they were either burned or buried. All that waste could have been avoided, if the school system had been more in touch with the community.

The book controversy, brought to the surface the great cultural divide that exists in this country between those who of us hold to the original intent of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence and who believe in our heritage as a unique nation under God; and those who seek to destroy our heritage and turn us into one more socialist/communist country in the great global economy--and they are using our tax-supported school system to do it. I have no doubt if what happened in Kanawha County had not taken place, we would have lost our country to international globalism long ago. Kanawha County stalled the advances of the radical left's agenda for many years, but the battle continues.

Many positive changes resulted

from the textbook controversy. From the Pacific to the Atlantic the message swept the country that something was terribly wrong with our schools and our school books. The publisher of the elementary series could not sell their books after Kanawha County, and orders already placed by some schools were cancelled. James Moffett's *Interaction* books were some of our most objectionable. After Kanawha County, many book salesmen refused to offer his series. After two or three more years, Houghton Mifflin Company, the publisher, dropped the series completely. There was no textbook publisher left unscathed. All lost sales and had to clean up their books thanks to Kanawha County, West Virginia. There is no joy in the personal financial losses of any of those companies, but there is great joy that for a time the Kanawha County textbook protesters delayed the attempt of the left to take over the elementary and secondary schools of this great nation.



# West Virginia Back Roads



Text and photographs by  
Carl E. Feather

## Drive-In Nights at Franklin

Rows of classic cars and pickup trucks perched on a hillside face an outdoor movie screen. It's enough to make any guy over 50 stop in his tracks and join the party. So I turned around and drove up the grassy drive of Warner's Drive-In, Pendleton County's only outdoor movie theater.

Located on U.S. Route 220 outside Franklin, the drive-in has been a Pendleton County landmark since the early 1950's. And I mean landmark. The screen, which has winged walls on each side, is made of concrete block and has a foundation that could double as a war bunker. The whole thing is about 50 feet tall, according to Jim

Hess, who ought to know. A couple of years ago, he rented a lift and, with help from his son, J.D., filled in all the cracks in the blocks and gave the screen a fresh coat of white paint.

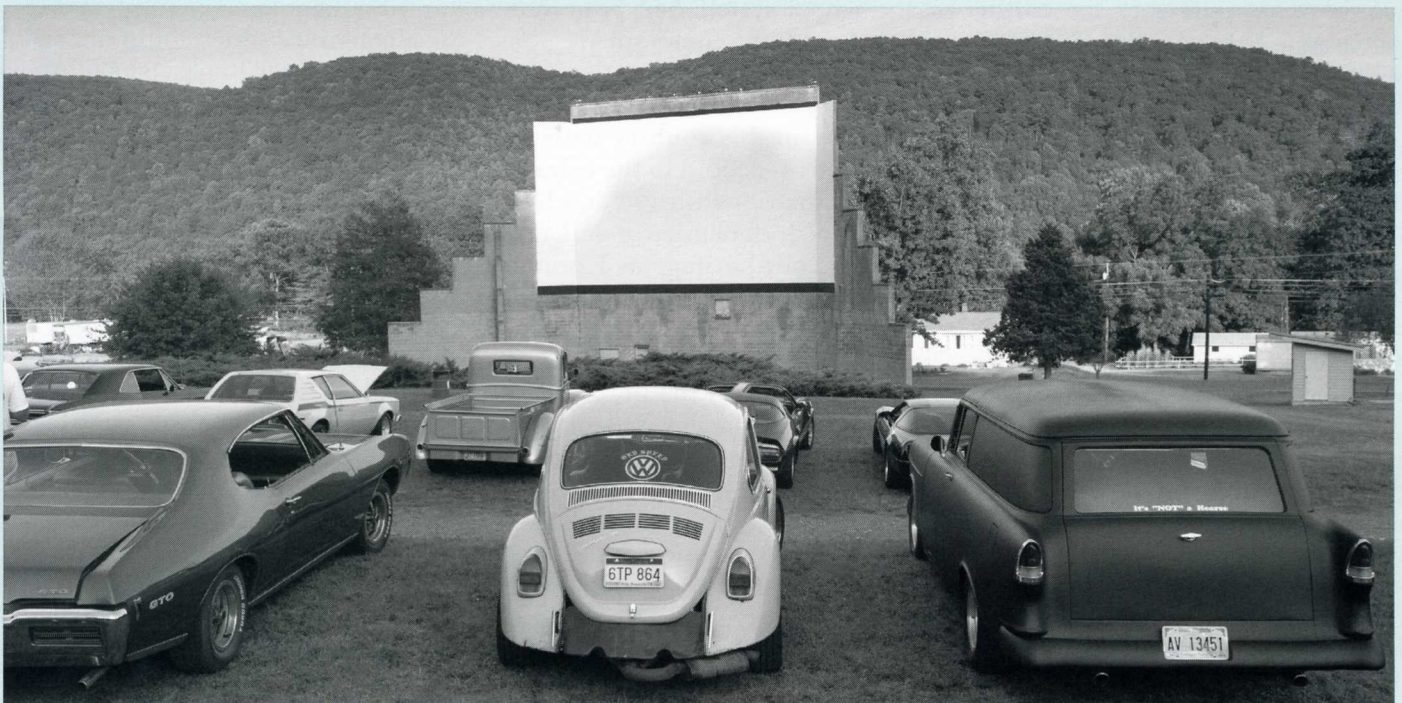
Jim and his wife, Nancy, lease the theater property from Franklin Oil. Last year was the Hess family's eighth year of operating the drive-in, although Jim's relationship with the outdoor theater goes back much further. He ran the projectors for the prior owners and frequented the theater as a child.

Jim's full-time job is working as a contractor; the drive-in is a labor of love and nostalgia that keeps him busy at least two nights a week

throughout the summer. The standard show nights are Fridays and Saturdays, the third weekend in May through the second weekend in September. Occasionally, he tosses in a Sunday evening show if it comes on the heels of a special event, like the classic car show that was happening the evening I stopped.

The show that night? *Cars 2*, of course. Jim says that any movie with cars in it is usually a hit with his audiences. Animated films also do very well, and there's never a shortage of youngsters to enjoy them.

"We do only PG and PG-13," Jim says. "No R-rated movies. We try to keep this as family-oriented as possible."



These classic cars appear poised for the movie to start, but are actually parked at Warner's Drive-In to take part in a car show.



Buddy Simmons, whose wife, Kristal, works in the concession stand, loves to bring his family to the drive-in. A couple of his five children sat in folding chairs near Buddy's pickup and gnawed on chili dogs and French fries from the concession stand while waiting for the show to start. The rest of his youngsters were scattered around the grounds, chasing friends, playing games, and enjoying the relaxed atmosphere.

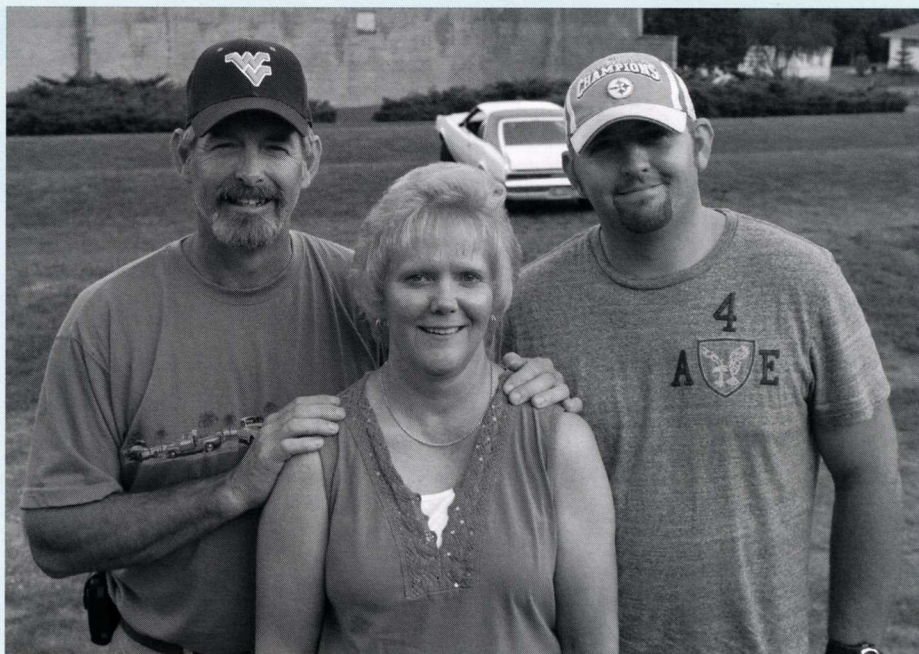
"The kids love it," Buddy says. "We're not cooped up in a little theater. If they want to get a little wild, they can get a little wild." Buddy lives in Petersburg and recalls coming to Warner's as a child.

"There was this one and one up at Moorefield. They got an 84 Lumber there now," Buddy says.

Perpetuating the tradition and making some money in the process are among the reasons the Hess family took on the task of operating an enterprise that faces competition from everything electronic.

That fun extends to the projection booth, where Jim operates two vintage 35mm projectors equipped with long-throw lenses. The capacity of each projector is a single 2,000-foot reel of film. About every 17 to 18 minutes, Jim must do a switchover between the projectors — he turns one off as it reaches the last frame on the reel of film and switches on the other one, ideally with such precision of timing that the audience won't even notice so much as a flicker on the screen. A typical feature will have four to six of these changeovers.

The Simplex projectors are probably original to the theater. While they are old, Jim says they are reliable and he has no interest in upgrading to digital projection, which would make life easier for him. "They are pretty good



Jim Hess, at left, with his wife Nancy, and son J.D. Jim and Nancy lease the Warner's Drive-In property outside Franklin and operate Pendleton County's only outdoor movie theater.

machines. We don't have a lot of problems with them," Jim says of the old-style projectors.

Conspicuously absent from this drive-in are the metal poles with a pair of silver-gray speakers mounted to them. Jim says the drive-in uses FM radio frequency 91.3 to broadcast the soundtrack to radios in patrons' vehicles. Jim's only regret about not having the high-maintenance speaker system is that the poles helped bring order to the parking scheme.

On a typical night, the theater draws 150 to 200 cars and trucks to its grassy hillside, but Jim feels its capacity, assuming folks "park right," is about 300 vehicles. Pickup trucks are among the most popular vehicles for the moviegoers.

Parked with the bed of his truck facing the screen, Jody Colaw and Landon Vaught sat in the bed with their two Australian cattle dogs and waited for the show to begin. They drove 45 minutes from Warm Springs, Virginia, to attend.

"We come for the atmosphere," Jody says. "The drive-in is so much

more fun than just going to the movie theater. And the food's great."

The concession stand is a separate lease, run by Lynwood and Janice Pennington of Franklin. Last year was their fifth year of running the concession, to which the moviegoers give high marks for quality and affordability. "You ain't going to find no better food, especially for the price," Buddy Simmons says.

The admission is likewise affordable — \$5 per person, with children under 12 free to make it family friendly.

"I enjoy watching movies, and I get to pick what we watch," Jim says. "It's just fun." 🍁

*Warner's Drive-In is located on U.S. Route 220 North, Franklin, about one mile from the intersection with U.S. Route 33. It operates on Friday and Saturday nights from the third weekend in May through the second weekend of September.*

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.



# New Books Available

By John Lilly

Federal attempts to alleviate the suffering brought on by the Great Depression are often viewed approvingly today, a fact which tends to overshadow the tremendous controversy they created at the time. The Division of Subsistence Homesteads — the agency responsible for Arthurdale, Eleanor, and Valley Bend here in West Virginia — was especially scrutinized and criticized. A new book from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., takes a fresh and scathing look at the government's attempt to create New Deal communities. [See "Growing Up in Arthurdale," by Jim McNelis; page 8.]

***Back to the Land: Arthurdale, FDR's New Deal, and the Costs of Economic Planning***, by C.J. Maloney, reviews the beginnings of Arthurdale from the squalor of Scotts Run to the establishment of the Preston County homestead community in 1933, through its

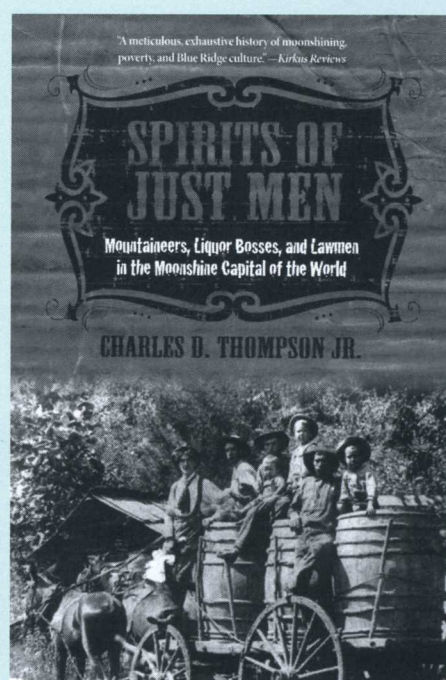
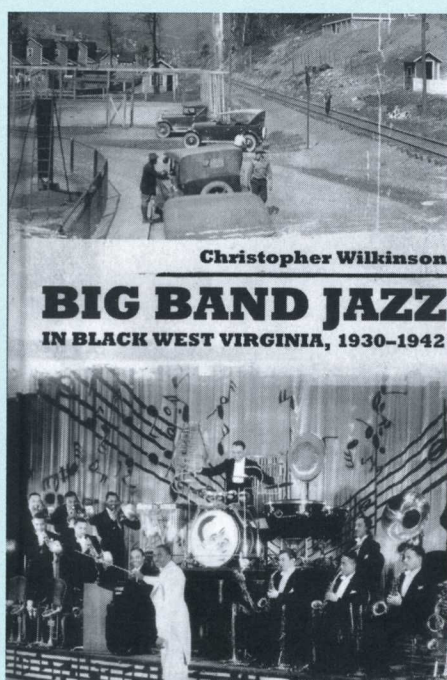
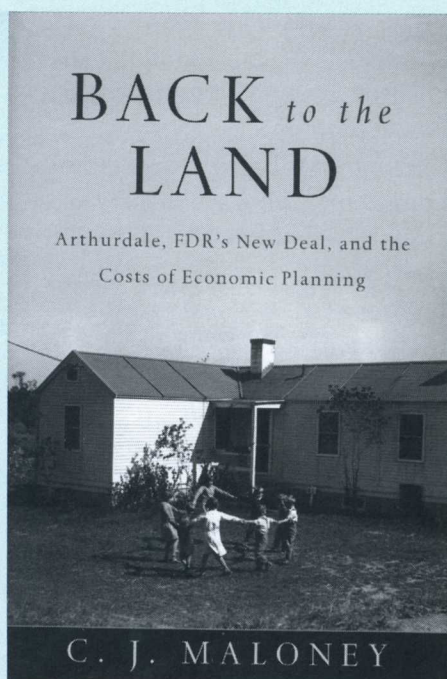
eventual divestiture during World War II. A skilled and engaging writer, Maloney has a pronounced Libertarian bent and finds little to like in the workings of "big government," then or now. In short, he sees the Arthurdale experiment as ill-conceived, poorly run, and fraught with waste and corruption.

A 292-page hard-bound volume with illustrations, end notes, bibliography, and index, *Back to the Land* sells for \$26.95; it is also available in an electronic version. Visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com) or phone 1-877-762-2974.

Though often overlooked today, West Virginia was once home to a vibrant African American musical and dance community. During the Great Depression, New Deal programs and a thriving coal industry supported in relative prosperity a large population of black work-

ers and their families, who in turn supported performances by some of the biggest names in jazz music. ***Big Band Jazz in Black West Virginia, 1930-1942***, by Christopher Wilkinson, shines a light on this exciting period in our state's musical past.

Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Fats Waller, Chick Webb and others brought their bands to West Virginia as often as they could in order to satisfy the black audiences who loved to listen and dance to their music. Author Christopher Wilkinson, a professor of music history at WVU, describes these bands, their repertoires, the audience, and their musical preferences. He also discusses the role that local radio and the black press played in promoting these appearances, and the relationship that existed between West Virginia entrepreneurs and national promoters and talent



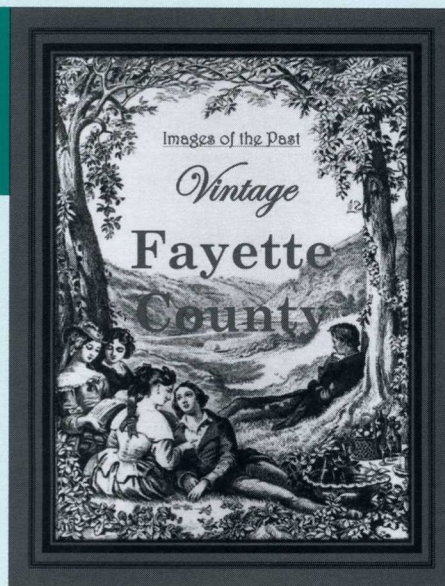


## A Pictorial History of Tucker County, West Virginia



Moving of courthouse records from St. George to Parsons.  
Photo at Parsons, looking northeast on Second Street.

Contributor Chris Kidwell



1-800-654-7179.

Author Dale Payne has produced another fine book of local history, this one titled *Images of the Past: Vintage Fayette County*. The 249-page large-format paperbound edition includes more than 500 historical photographs from Ansted to Smithers. Arranged alphabetically by location, the book documents Fayette County life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including coal mining; river life along the Gauley, New, and Great Kanawha; sports; schools; railroads; and churches. *Vintage Fayette County* sells for \$30, plus shipping, and is available from the author via e-mail at [dalmarpayne@hotmail.com](mailto:dalmarpayne@hotmail.com) or by phone at (304)574-3354.

*Salem, West Virginia: 1776-1976*, comprises a series of short articles about the history of this Harrison County town, written in

management.

*Big Band Jazz in Black West Virginia* is a 197-page hard-bound edition with illustrations, maps, tables, end notes, bibliography, and an index. It was published in 2012 by the University Press of Mississippi and sells for \$55. Visit [www.upress.state.ms.us](http://www.upress.state.ms.us) or phone (601)432-6205.

Moonshine liquor is an important part of Appalachian lore. During the Great Depression, it was also an important part of the economy in many areas as farmers and others did what they could to market their corn and feed their families. *Spirits of Just Men: Mountaineers, Liquor Bosses, and Lawmen in the Moonshine Capital of the World*, by Charles D. Thompson, Jr., published in 2011 by the University of Illinois Press, takes a sympathetic view of the distilling trade and those involved in it, both then and now.

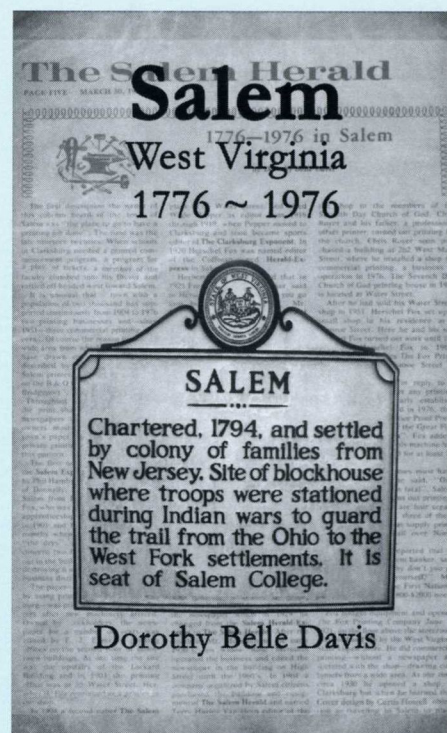
Author Thompson looks at an infamous 1935 conspiracy trial in which 34 people were indicted in the small town of Endicott, Virginia, located in Franklin County — the self-described moonshine capital of the world. Thompson had family ties to some of the defendants and offers an insider's viewpoint to the proceedings as

well as the circumstances. He also provides abundant details of whiskey making and selling, much of which still takes place in the mountains of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, and West Virginia.

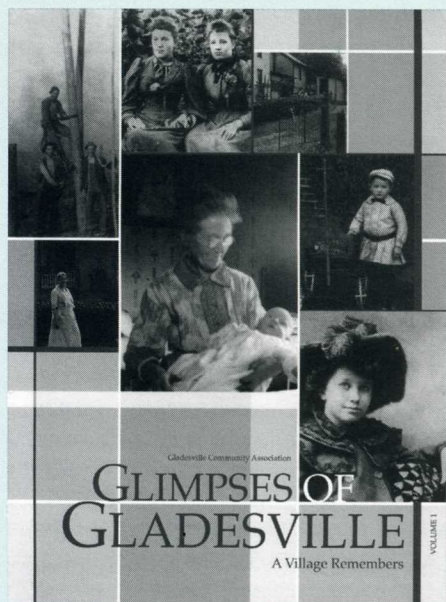
*Spirits of Just Men* is a 269-page paperbound book with 29 illustrations, end notes, bibliography, and index. It sells for \$23.95 and is available at [www.press.uillinois.edu](http://www.press.uillinois.edu); phone (217)333-0950.

Several local histories have arrived in our office, reflecting the ongoing trend of preservation and documentation throughout the state.

*A Pictorial History of Tucker County, West Virginia*, by Chris Kidwell, is a large-format tome published in 2011 by McClain Printing. As the title indicates, the emphasis here is on photographs, and there are many in these 400-plus pages. Divided primarily into the six main communities in the county — Parsons, St. George, Hambleton, Hendricks, Thomas, and Davis — the book includes short sections on other areas of the county, the Civil War, and floods. An index is also included. *A Pictorial History of Tucker County* sells for \$45, online at [www.mcclainprinting.com](http://www.mcclainprinting.com); phone

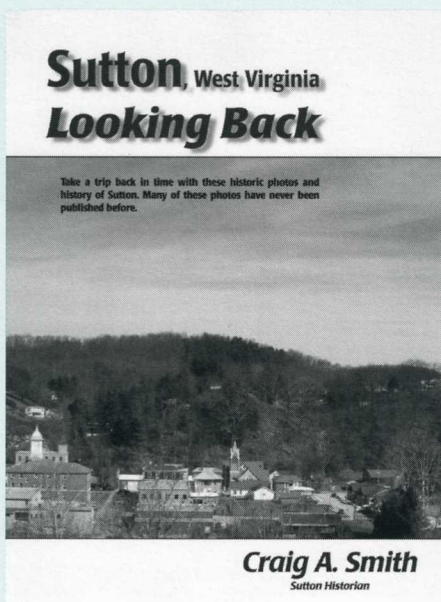






1976 by schoolteacher, librarian, and local historian Dorothy Belle Davis. When Davis passed away in 2004, the work was continued by Joan Carder Stine and Patricia J. Carder, who brought the project to fruition in 2011. The 149-page hard-bound volume recounts 200 years of life in this once-remote community, including local tales, events, tragedies, and humorous incidents. This book sells for \$22.23, plus shipping, and is available from Patricia J. Carder via e-mail at Pjdc6@frontier.com or by phone at (304)782-1922.

**Kimball, West Virginia: 1911-2011**, by Jean Battlo, documents 100 years of life in this hard-hit McDowell County community. Once a thriving and diverse coal and railroad town, Kimball experienced some tough times when the economy changed in the 1960's; it was further devastated by a series of floods over the past two decades. Resilient to the core, Kimball has come back as an arts and tourism center as local residents remain determined to survive no matter what fortune or misfortune they face. A lifelong Kimball resident, author Jean Battlo is a GOLDENSEAL contributor. *Kimball, West Virginia* sells for \$25 from McClain Printing, online at



www.mcclainprinting.com; phone 1-800-654-7179.

Two additional local history books are also available. *Glimpses of Gladesville: A Village Remembers*, was published in 2011 by the Gladesville Community Association, with financial support from the West Virginia Humanities Council. This 146-page large-format paperbound edition is available from Gladesville Community Association, 2929 Gladesville Road, Independence, WV 26374.

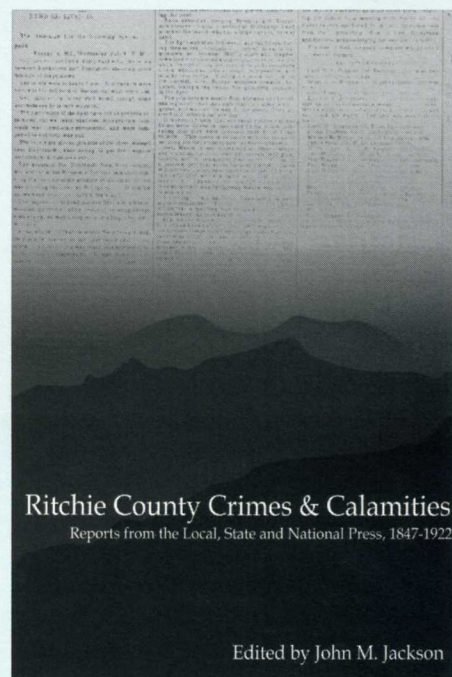
**Sutton, West Virginia: Looking Back** and **Sutton, West Virginia: Looking Back Again**, both written and published by Craig A. Smith, present the story of the seat of Braxton County, from the days of the first settler in 1792. The large-format paperbound books sell for \$18.95 each, plus shipping and in-state sales tax, via e-mail at braxton@wvdsi.net or by phone at 1-877-251-NEWS.

*Ritchie County Crimes & Calamities* is an exhaustive collection of press clippings from local, state, and national news sources between 1847 and 1922, edited by John M. Jackson, who published this imposing collection in 2011. Under the slug line "Murder, mayhem and melodrama in rural

West Virginia!" these 717 pages contain every piece of bad news you will ever want to see: fires, knifings, robberies, rapes, train wrecks, slanders, domestic violence, floods, and general "out-lawry." Arranged chronologically, this unique book goes on and on with tales of woe and misery. It almost makes you feel better just to read it!

*Ritchie County Crimes & Calamities* is available at Berdine's Five & Dime in Harrisville and at The Cairo Supply Company in Cairo. It is also available on-line through Amazon.com.

*The Secret Life and Brutal Death of Mamie Thurman*, by F. Keith Davis, is a different sort of crime book: highly focused, skillfully written, sensational, and salacious. It starts with a seamy assessment of the country-club social scene in Logan County during the 1930's — a time when coal was king and the upper crust led decadent lives, according to the author. Socialite Mamie Thurman, later known as the "Stratton Street Vixen," was reportedly involved with several powerful men in the town. She fell victim to a shocking murder in





June 1932, and became the subject of rumor and investigation. A local black man was tried and convicted of the crime, but many, including the author, still have questions. Ghost sightings and other paranormal encounters have heightened awareness and speculation about the case over the years.

This revised second edition, published in 2007 by Quarrier Press, features recent interviews and additional research by the author. *Mamie Thurman*, a 205-page paperback, is available for \$15.95, plus shipping and in-state sales tax, from the West Virginia Book Company; online at [www.wvbook.co.com](http://www.wvbook.co.com) or by phone at 1-888-982-7422.

Three GOLDENSEAL contributors have published book-length manuscripts recently. Hobart G. Everson [see "My First Job"; Fall 2011] penned his autobiography in 2011 titled, *A Case for a Stubborn Heart: The Life and Works of a Country Boy*. A graduate of Belington High School and Alderson-Broadbent and Fairmont State colleges, Hobart never lost touch with his rural raising or his sense of humor. This 279-page

paperback includes major chapters and small incidents in his life, a section of historical photographs, poems, and songs. *A Case for a Stubborn Heart* sells for \$17.49 and is available at [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com) or by phone at (972)840-3437.

Norman Julian is an award-winning columnist from the Morgantown area. [See "I Am Going to Tell the Story": Al Anderson of Osage"; Fall 2011.] *Trillium Acres* is a collection of some of Norman's favorite columns, tackling such subjects as environmental accountability, living off the land, and responsible hunting. This 176-page paperback is available from the author on-line at [www.normanjulian.com](http://www.normanjulian.com); phone (304)599-2294.

Tom "Euell" Felton, longtime sheriff of Tucker County, has written a number of stories for us. [See "A Life Well Spent: 'Doc Pete' of Parsons"; Fall 2008.] His new self-published book is titled, *Do You Know Where You Live? And Other Amusing Stories*. As the name suggests, this is a humorous collection of anecdotes, tales, and recollections. The 149-page paperback is available from Tom at 1249 Cheat Valley Highway, Parsons, WV 26287.

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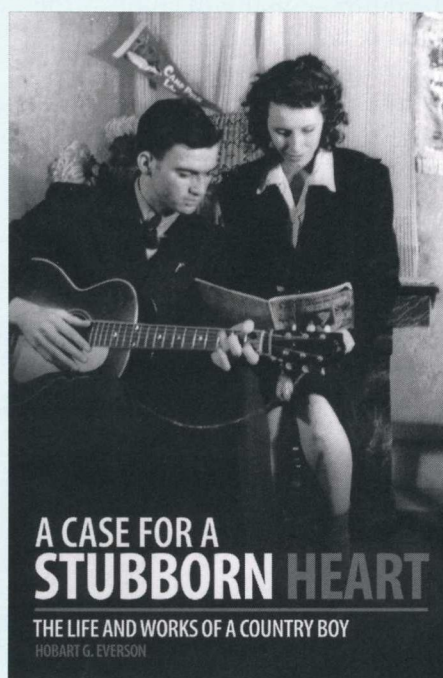
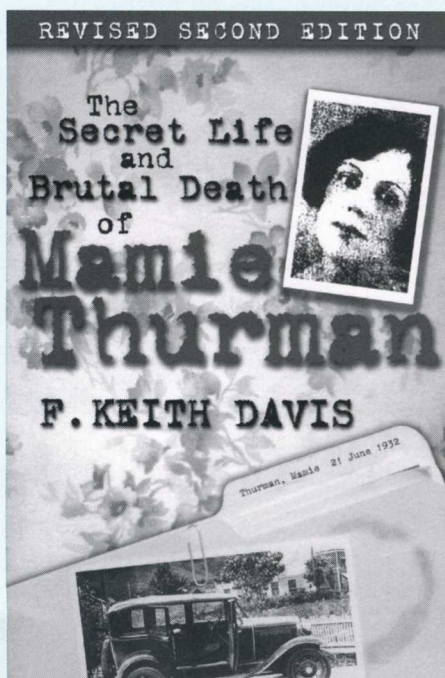
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## Midland Trail Book

The historic Midland Trail stretches from coast to coast. Its 189-mile West Virginia portion includes many of our state's most scenic and popular sites. [See "Homer L. Wells: Midland Trail's Mystery Photographer," by Bob Moore; Fall 2006.]

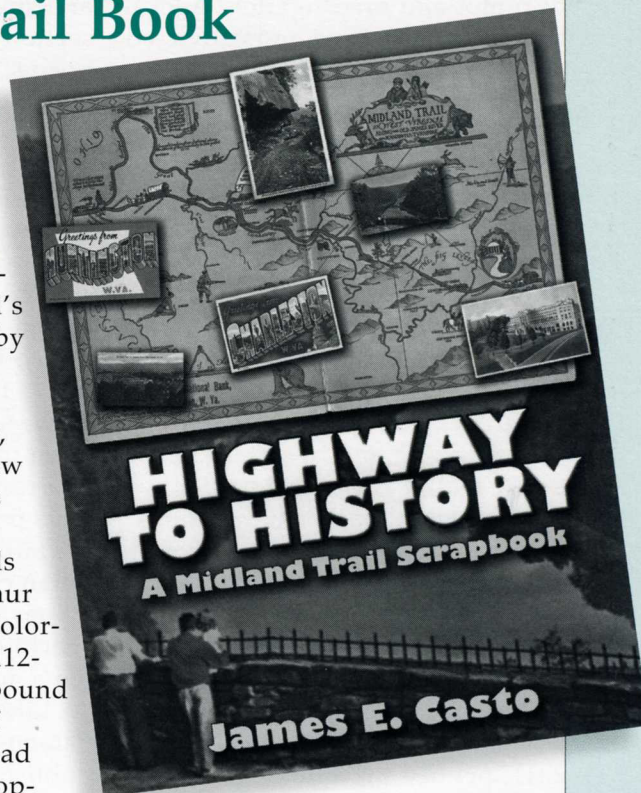
**Highway to History: A Midland Trail Scrapbook**, by James E. Casto, is a new book from Quarrier Press about what today is U.S. Highway 60, which wends its way from White Sulphur Springs to Huntington. Colorful and informative, the 112-page large-format paperbound edition starts with a brief historical sketch of the road before embarking on a stop-by-stop description of places to see and visit along the Midland Trail. Counties traversed by this important highway are, from east to west, Greenbrier, Fayette, Kanawha, Putnam, Cabell, and Wayne.

Richly illustrated with vintage postcards and photographs — many in color — the book takes readers past The Greenbrier resort, Organ Cave, Babcock and Hawks Nest state parks, Kanawha Falls, Malden, Charleston and the state capitol, the famous burial mound in South Charleston, West Virginia

State University, Blenko Glass, Marshall University, Camden Park, and Dreamland Pool at Kenova, among other places.

Author James E. Casto, a GOLDENSEAL contributor and veteran newspaperman, offers succinct commentary on locales and attractions along the road, with an emphasis on historical details.

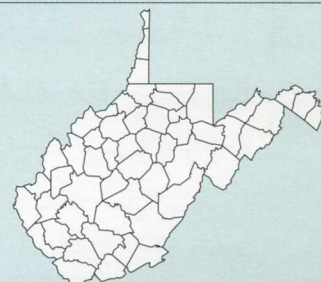
*Highway to History* sells for \$17.95 and is available at bookstores or from the West Virginia Book Company; online at [www.wvbookco.com](http://www.wvbookco.com) or by phone at 1-888-982-7422.



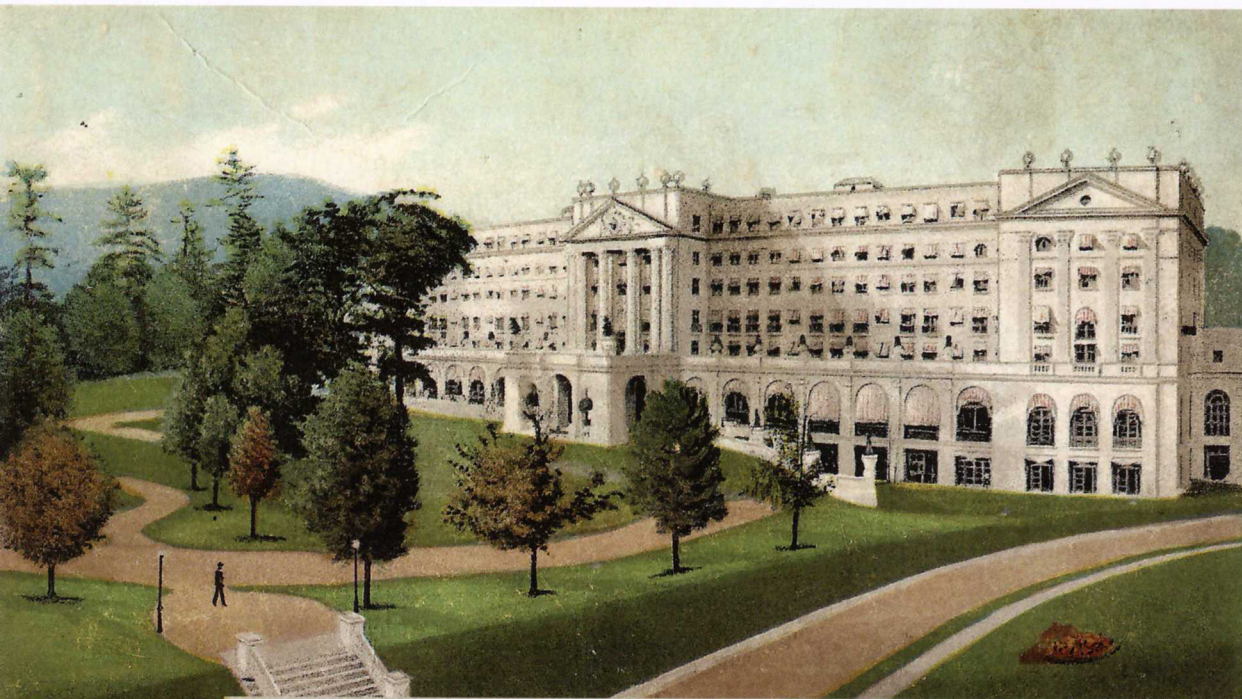
## Goldenseal

### Coming Next Issue...

- Cameo Glass
- Mountaineer Opry
- Dr. Everett R. Cooper
- "Greatest Generation" Military Museum







Top left: The Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, postcard view circa 1930. Above right: Tri-state view, postcard circa 1950. Postcards from *Highway to History: A Midland Trail Scrapbook*. [See page 72.]



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## Inside Goldenseal

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Page 50 - Preacher Billy Sunday took Wheeling by storm in 1912.

Page 30 - New Martinsville at night was rich with industrial sounds, according to author Borgon Tanner.

Page 20 - Kelly Axe in North Charleston was once the world's leading producer of edge tools.

Page 40 - The Bing brothers, originally from the Huntington area, play their own brand of hard-driving string music.

Page 8 - Arthurdale was a pioneering homestead community, established by the federal government in 1933. Jim McNelis tells us about growing up in this unique and controversial Preston County town.

Page 66 - Jim Hess operates the only drive-in movie theater in Franklin, Pendleton County.

Page 32 - Danny Wickline of Monroe County reveals the secrets of a successful fly fisherman.

