Mountaineer Opry House • Military Museums • Putney

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Fall 2012 $5.95

Cameo Glass

From the Editor: Creative Thinking

Creativity takes many forms. "The quality of being creative" or "the ability to create" is as far as the dictionary goes in defining this elusive term. Here in West Virginia, though, we see creativity at work every day. From the beautiful architecture of our towns and cities to the clever use of recyclables on the family farm, Mountaineers are not only free, they are resourceful and imaginative. Which I suppose is a big part of what makes us free.

As with other issues, there is a common thread of creativity running throughout these pages. Kelsey Murphy and her partner, Bob Bomkamp, are recognized around the world for their amazing cameo glass creations. Painstakingly and delicately carving multiple layers of cased glass — as many as 12 layers at a time — this talented team is taking cameo glass to an unprecedented level at their remote studio in rural Wayne County. [See page 10.]

Martha Manning lived 102 years, continually finding new ways to express herself. She taught piano for 50 years, became a photographer at age 70, and a published author at age 80. Armed with a bullhorn and a lifetime of knowledge about church architecture and stained glass, she gave walking tours of Morgantown for many years. [See page 20.]

Photographer and bead artist John Winter sees beauty where others cannot, in the light and shadows of the industrial remnants of the now-silent Fenton glass works in Williamstown. His freeform, abstract images speak volumes about the unexpected and the unexplained. [See page 26.]

Picking a mile a minute, bluegrass musicians from across the state and region have made Milton's Mountaineer Opry House a cornerstone of the state's bluegrass music scene. Now in its 40th year, this humble cinderblock structure has hosted big names, up-and-comers, hometown heroes, and fly-by-night bands nearly every weekend since 1972. [See page 36.]

Campbells Creek native Richard Howard left his hometown of Putney in 1942, but recalls this once-prosperous coal town in fine detail. Using common household items, Richard has built a replica of Putney, down to the houses, stores, tipple, and "smoke" billowing out of the chimneys. [See page 42.]

Photograph by Michael Keller

Model maker Jef Verswyvel of Rowlesburg has customized more than four dozen mannequins to resemble soldiers and other participants in the war effort at the World War II museum located in the old Rowlesburg high school building. [See page 60.]

It is also appropriate to point out the creativity of our GOLDENSEAL contributors, whose writing and photography tell these stories. Photographer Tyler Evert continues to impress us with his camera. Regular contributor Carl E. Feather has written more than 90 stories for GOLDENSEAL, and his work brightens and enriches every issue.

Tying all of this content together is the exceptional work of designer Karin Kercheval. Her creative spark brings these stories to life, and this issue is no exception.

My creative role in this process lies primarily in recognizing a good manuscript or photograph when I see one, and letting these talented people do what they do best. It is a pleasure to see it all come together and to send on to you. I hope you enjoy it!

Those who know me outside of my editing job are aware that my main creative outlet is through music — I write and perform old-style country songs. I will be taking a leave of absence from my job here to go on tour during the months of September and October. I'm very excited about the trip and am grateful to Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith and Deputy Commissioner Caryn Gresham for permitting this leave. I have 25 concerts and other performances booked over an eight-week period, from Alaska to New York to Louisiana. By the time you read this, I will probably be yodeling somewhere in Saskatchewan. What could be more creative than that?

John Lilly

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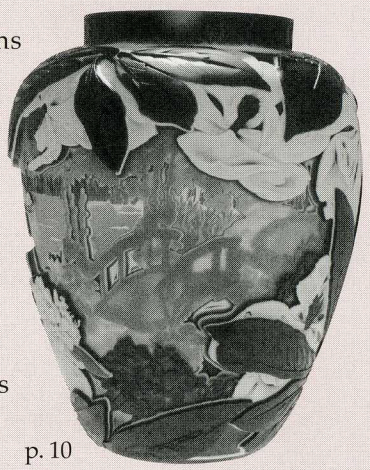

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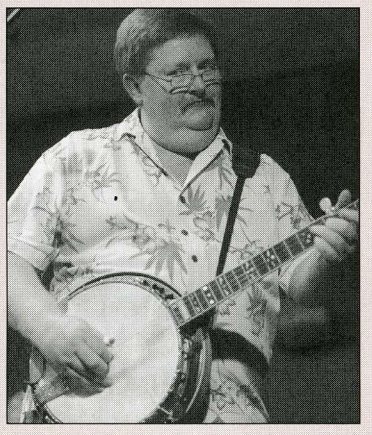

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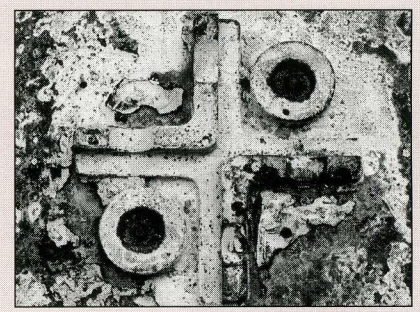

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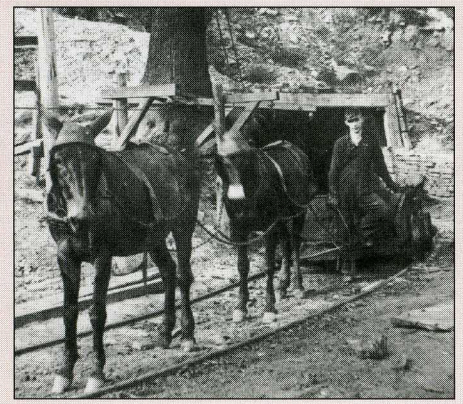

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On the cover: *Giant Fairy Ming*, six-color cameo glass vase by Kelsey Murphy and Bob Bomkamp of Studios of Heaven in East Lynn, Wayne County. Photograph by Tyler Evert. Our story begins on page 10.

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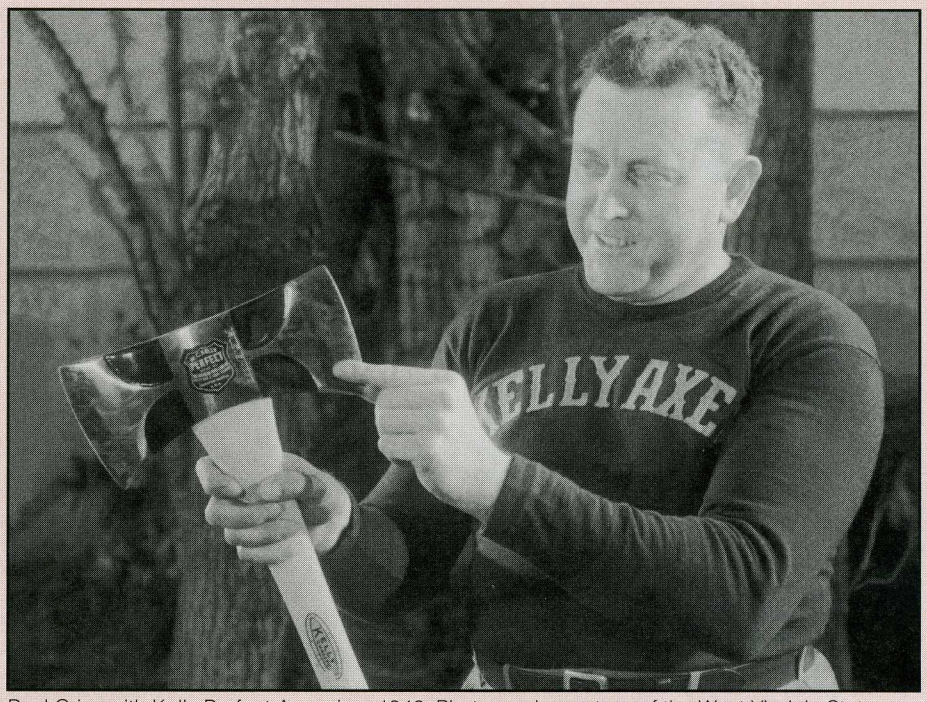
Letters from Readers

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



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

Kelly Axe

June 12, 2012
Cincinnati, Ohio
Editor:
Many thanks for everything as we worked together on this issue. [See "'Kelly Perfect': Annabelle Rhodes Recalls Kelly Axe," by Amy M. Harper; Summer 2012.] I used to do a column for the *Nevada Appeal* in Carson City and then again for the local papers here in Cincinnati for more than five years. It was fun to be in the game again.

Looking forward to sharing copies of Summer 2012 GOLDENSEAL with family and friends. Also looking forward to the Kelly/True Temper reunion, delivering a True Temper axe to you, and providing more books to any who are interested.
Again, many thanks!
Karen Kelly

June 13, 2012
(Via e-mail)
Strongsville, Ohio
Editor:
Your Summer 2012 issue was especially interesting for me because I had personal connections to people and places in the articles about Kelly Axe and Arthurdale.

How sharp was a Kelly axe? Well, Paul "Bunyan" Criss shaved bearded men with one. He was hired by the company to promote the Kelly edge in demonstrations around the country. I remember hearing about him when I was advertising manager for True Temper Corporation in Cleveland (1956-66).

I knew plant manager Aubrey Bowers, and remember visiting the plant in Charleston to learn about the making of axes and other striking tools. It was like going back home for me because I'm a native

West Virginian — born in Upshur County, schooled in Fairmont, and with relatives years ago in both Charleston and Huntington. I still have copies of some of True Temper's advertising materials of those years, which I will send to Helen Jones for the Kelly reunion in September. If my 91-year-old body cooperates, I hope to be there.

In his Arthurdale story, I learned that the hometown of author Jim McNelis and his family, before moving to Arthurdale, was Cassville, Scotts Run (near Morgantown). [See "Growing Up in Arthurdale"; Summer 2012.] I lived in nearby Fairmont at the time and remember hearing about this federal project, both pro and con. Scotts Run rang a bell because my dad was a deliveryman/salesman of Swift & Company meat to the coal company store at Scotts Run in the years 1928-31. Here's what my dad had to say about that in 1995:

"At the meat counter miners would line up. One would say he wanted, for example, a four-pound roast. The clerk would grab a piece of meat and put it on the scales. If the miner asked for a different piece, the clerk would put the meat back and say to the next man in line, 'Okay mister, what do you want?' So the miners tended to take what they were handed or go without. There was no union, so the miners had it pretty rough." Sheldon Harper

Thanks Mr. Harper. [See "Rex Harper: My West Virginia Dad," by Sheldon Harper; Summer 2000.] —ed.

Aunt Lucinda

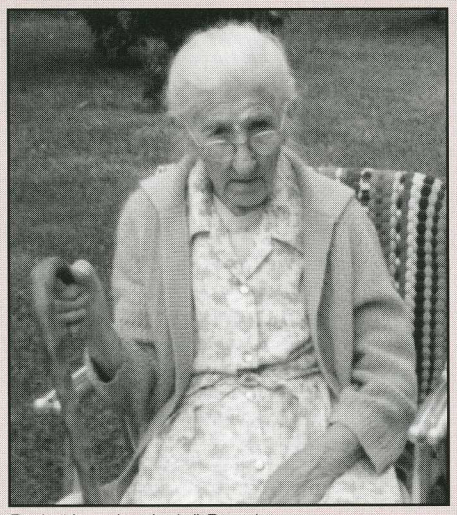
June 25, 2012
(Via e-mail)
Keystone Heights, Florida
Editor:
I am constantly delighted to read the stories you publish from first-time contributors. "Aunt Lucinda" seemingly describes my very own Aunt Lottie, my mother's sister, who lived on a small farm lying on the outskirts of Parkersburg. [See "Aunt Lucinda," by June Pennington; Summer 2012.] June Pennington suggests that everyone should have an Aunt Lucinda. Well, I did, and we called her Aunt Lottie. The small farm, Uncle Ben, the horses, cows, chickens, plowed land, growing crops, small country church, cousins (all boys), country roads, spring water, and my Aunt Lottie are precious memories from when I was a boy.

Let's hope June Pennington will delight us once again with another story.
God bless.
c.w. (Bill) Jarrett

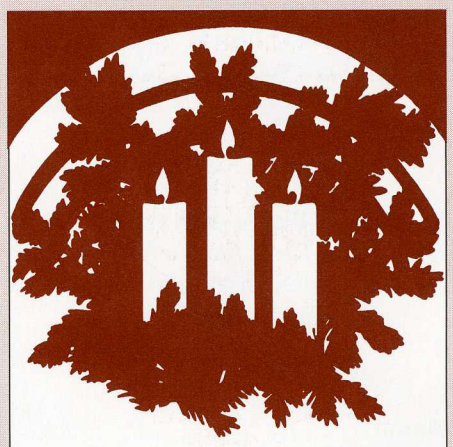
Fly Fishing

June 28, 2012
Leesburg, Florida
Editor:
Love your magazine. My sister and I were my daddy's only "boys." He was a "hoghead" on the B&O railroad in Grafton for nearly 40 years. My best memories go back to when I was four or five years old, and he would read to me from *Field & Stream* magazine. He had me believing that one day we would go to Africa and do some "big game" hunting. But as I grew up, I only got to hunt groundhog in some farmer's corn patch.

My dad also spent many hours with me looking at pictures of



Ruth "Aunt Lucinda" Pennington.
Photographer and date unknown.



Happy Holidays!

Simplify your holiday shopping by giving the gift of GOLDENSEAL. Twenty dollars buys a year's worth of good reading, with special discounts for two- and three-year gifts.

GOLDENSEAL brings out the best of the Mountain State — stories direct from the recollections of living West Virginians, beautifully illustrated by the finest old and new photography. After more than three decades of publication, the stories just keep getting better. Stories that are just right for you, not to mention those on your holiday gift list.

Share the gift of GOLDENSEAL! We'll send the gift card. All you need to do is place the order. Look for a coupon on the other side of this page.

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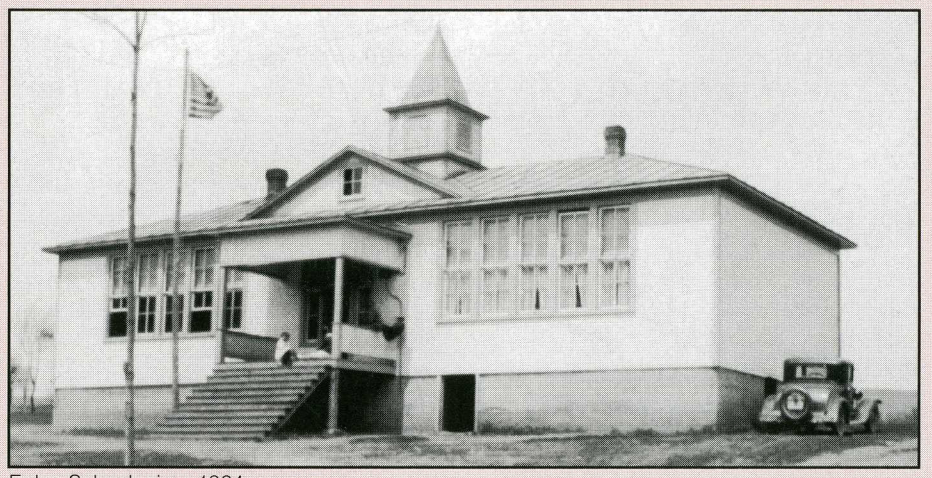


Eglon School, circa 1924.

trains in the B&O's train magazine.

This 71-year-old lady now lives in Florida, but I am a true Mountaineer and in my heart are all the things that make West Virginia what it was, and is today. Keep the railroad and the fish stories coming. [See "Fly Fishing: Up a Creek with Danny Wickline," by John Lilly; Summer 2012.]

Sincerely,
Carolyn M. Branch

Books Available

June 13, 2012
Salem, West Virginia
Editor:

Thank you for featuring my book *Salem (1776-1976)* in your magazine. [See "New Books Available," by John Lilly; Summer 2012.] I have already received more orders due to your article. All profits from the sale of this book are going toward a community fund to beautify Salem.

I have been a longtime subscriber to GOLDENSEAL. The extra copy you mailed to me will be donated to the Salem University library.

Sincerely,
Patricia J. Carder

Eglon School

April 23, 2012
Oakland, Maryland
Editor:

I went to the Eglon School in the first grade — 1938. [See "From the Ashes: Saving Eglon School," by J. Michael Fike; Spring 2012.] My teacher was Pauline Elsey. Third-grade teacher was Helen Loughrie. She passed me from third to fifth grade. (I guess I was smart.) I have all my report cards in a scrapbook. I was at Eglon School in sixth grade, then went to Aurora School and graduated in 1949. Then went to West Virginia Business School.

I'm 80 years old and still like to read history!

Ms. Josephine E. Ashby

Lewis Hine

June 1, 2012
(Via e-mail)
Charleston, West Virginia
Editor:

In Raymond Alvarez's article on photographer Lewis Hine, he left out Hine's return to West Virginia, working for the Farm Security Administration (FSA) during the Great Depression. [See "In Close Touch with Reality: Photographer Lewis Hine"; Spring 2012.] I have four original prints in my possession with Hine's name on the back with the FSA stamp. Several other originals I donated to the West Virginia Archives and History section in 1988.

My mom, Mary Behner Christopher (1906-1988), founder of The Shack, always spoke of Hine with awe. Mom remembered that Hine remarked that the only smiles he saw at Scotts Run were at The Shack.

Bettijane Christopher Burger

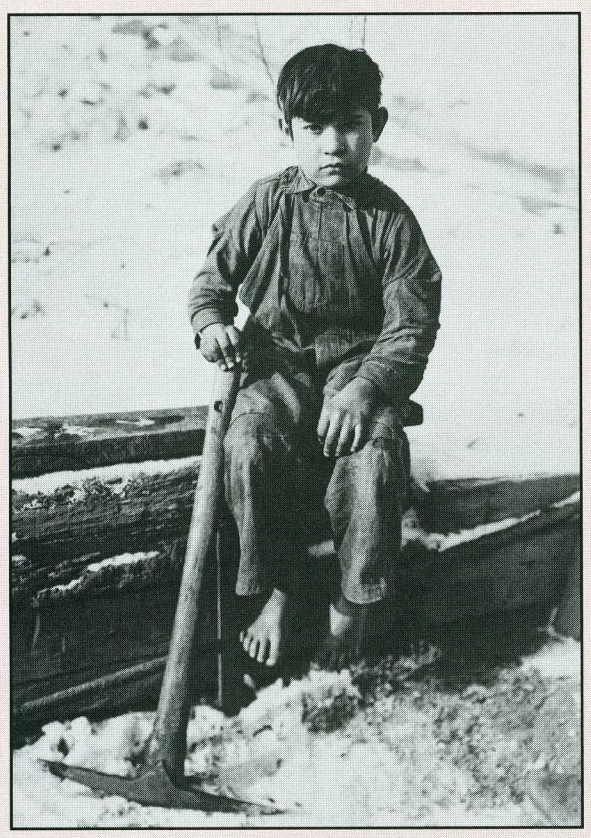
June 1, 2012
(Via e-mail)
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Editor:
As I leafed through the Spring 2012 issue of GOLDENSEAL, what memories came rushing back when I reached page 47. Pictured there is the school building where 14 years of my life were spent! The windows on the left first-floor corner were the windows of the room where I taught sixth grade for seven years, then first grade for seven more years.

The picture must have been taken when the building was first built. By the time I was teaching there, 1963-1977, the building was surrounded by tall, beautiful trees — pine and tamarack. Until the new Pocahontas County High School was built, the building housed grades one through 12. My son Tom was valedictorian of his graduating class here in 1967. The building was torn down in the 1970's.

Other articles in this issue were of great interest to me as well. It was so good to meet the lady fireman of the Cass Scenic Railroad. And C.J. Richardson's! So many of our needs were furnished there. This issue is a treasure trove for me. [See "The Lady is a Fireman: Amy McGrew of Cass," and "'Fair Dealing': Richardson's Hardware in Marlinton," by Carl E. Feather.]

GOLDENSEAL published some of my articles in the past. Ken Sullivan was my mentor and editor, and John Lilly has been most kind. I am now an old lady, living in a retirement home in North Carolina. But I will always think of Pocahontas County as home and will keep subscribing to GOLDENSEAL to bring back memories.
Leona G. Brown

Great to hear from you, Leona! Thanks for keeping in touch. —ed.

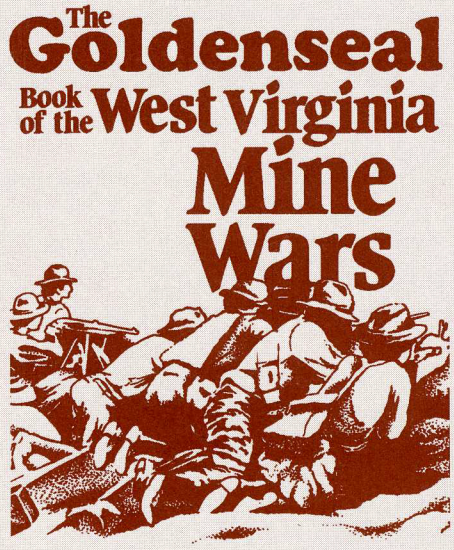


Miner's child salvaging coal from mine refuse. Photograph by Lewis Hine, courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, Mary Behner Christopher Collection. Date unknown.

Renewal Mailbag

March 20, 2012
Cocoa, Florida
Editor:
I'm so sorry I forgot to send the money for my GOLDENSEAL. I certainly want to renew it. I look forward to it so much. Thanks for the notice. You all do such a great job with the magazine.
Thanks again,
Maxine Currey

July 5, 2012
New Martinsville,
West Virginia
Editor:
Your last issue was extraordinary in my book, and I just wanted you to know my feelings. You have been so kind to me in my old age and illness. God bless your staff and you, and thank you for a fine publication indeed.
Very cordially and thanks,
J. Scott Pyles



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).

I enclose $ ___ for ___ copies of *The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars.*
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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.

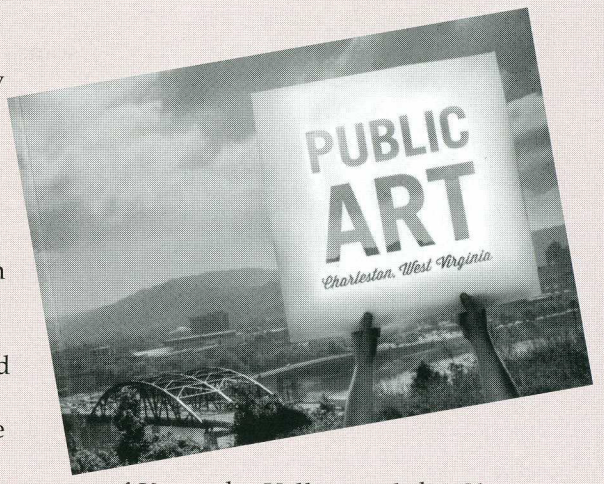
Harshman New Poet Laureate

Marc Harshman, a retired English teacher and a GOLDENSEAL contributor, has been named West Virginia's new poet laureate. Harshman, of Wheeling, is a poet, storyteller, and author of 11 children's books. He was appointed in May by Governor Earl Ray Tomblin to replace the late Irene McKinney, who died in February after 18 years as the state's poet laureate.

Harshman is the author of "Raised Among the Hills: Storyteller Bonnie Collins"; Spring 1989 and "Education at Sand Hill"; Fall 1996. He is a former West Virginia English Teacher of the Year and recipient of the Smithsonian Notable Book for Children prize and the Parents' Choice Award.

Originally from Indiana, Harshman graduated from Bethany College with a bachelor of arts degree in 1973, Yale University Divinity School with a master's degree in religion in 1975, and the University of Pittsburgh with a master's degree in English in 1978.

He and his wife, author and GOLDENSEAL contributor Cheryl Ryan Harshman, have one daughter, Sarah.



Public Art Booklet

Public Art: Charleston, West Virginia, is a free guide book to sculptures, murals, architecture, and other works on display in the capital city. The 86-page booklet was produced by the Charleston Area Alliance, the Arts Council of Kanawha Valley, and the Clay Center.

Color photographs of 45 art pieces are divided into four sections: Downtown, East End, West Side, and South Hills. Maps show the locations of the artwork. Descriptions of each piece and information about the artists are also included.

The booklet is available in Charleston at the Charleston Convention & Visitors Bureau, the city manager's office in Charleston City Hall, Taylor Books, and the Culture Center, while supplies last.

For more information about *Public Art*, phone Susie Salisbury at (304)340-4253.

Marc Harshman. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Big Tree

A 65-foot Virginia pine with a 125-inch circumference and a 63-foot crown spread near Smithtown, Monongalia County, is the largest of its species on record in the United States, according to the National Register of Big Trees.

The tree, known by the scientific name *Pinus virginiana*, has been listed on West Virginia's Big Tree Register since 1999. Each year, big-tree hunters and enthusiasts across

the country nominate hundreds of trees as champions of their species. The ultimate champions are decided by a point system that is determined by a precise mathematical equation. One of almost 100 new champion trees listed on the 2012 national register, Monongalia County's Virginia pine scored 206 points. The state's next-largest Virginia pine, which is in Parkersburg, scored 161 points.

To view West Virginia's Big Tree Register visit www.wvcommerce.org/bigtrees.

Photography Workshop

A photography workshop and gallery tour is scheduled September 28 through October 3 in Hardy and Grant counties. The six-day event, titled "Escape to the Mountains," is created and organized by Albert C. Mach II, owner of Albert Mach Fine Art & Custom Framing in Arthur, Grant County, and includes seminars, field trips, a large display of cameras and photographic equipment, and classes, some of which will take place in a canoe, on an airplane, or aboard a train.

Galleries in Moorefield, Petersburg, Lost River, Wardensville, and Romney will feature special photographic exhibits that week. "Escape to the Mountains" coincides with Hardy County's 59th Heritage Weekend, which is set for September 29-30.

The historical photography display, Heritage Weekend, and gallery tour are free to registered guests. Most classes and photo opportunities cost between $35 and $75, but some additional fees may apply.

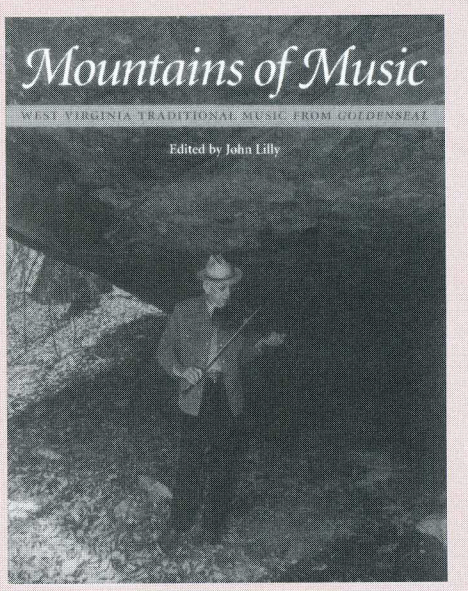
For more information, phone Albert C. Mach II at (304)749-8757; e-mail acmach2fineart@hotmail.com.

Rocket Boys Festival

A festival celebrating West Virginia's "Rocket Boys" is set for October 5-7 on the grounds of the Exhibition Coal Mine in Beckley. "Rocket Boys" Homer Hickam, Roy Lee Cooke, O'Dell Carroll, and Billy Rose are scheduled to appear. They will autograph copies of Hickam's best-selling book *Rocket Boys*, which is about Hickam's life growing up in Coalwood, McDowell County, and was the basis for the Hollywood movie *October Sky*. Other festival activities will include rocket launching, live music, a chili night, a bus tour of Coalwood, and a fire-hydrant painting contest.

OCTOBER SKY
ROCKET BOYS
festival
BECKLEY, WV • OCTOBER 5-7

Photograph by Albert C. Mach II.



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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The festival has been held in McDowell County since 1999 but was recently moved to Beckley. For more information, phone William Scott Hill at (540)580-3908 or visit www.rocketboysfestival.com.

Glass Gathering

The 21st annual Glass Gathering will take place October 19-20 at the Allegany Museum in Cumberland, Maryland, sponsored by the West Virginia Museum of American Glass in Weston.

The conference, which coincides with the opening of an exhibit from the Weston museum's collection at Allegany, includes tours of factories, studios, and galleries in western Maryland. Participants may also dig for shards at the Utility Glass Works site in Lonaconing, Maryland.

Seminars will cover such topics as bottles, Maryland glass, the early American pressed-glass diamond point loop pattern, Utility Glass Works, and glassmakers Georg Truog and C.A. Borchert. A banquet and silent auction also are planned.

For more information or to register, call the West Virginia Museum of American Glass at (304)269-5006; e-mail WVMuseumofGlass@aol.com.

Utility Glass Works display at the West Virginia Museum of American Glass. Photograph by Helen Jones.

OUR-WV.com

A new on-line marketplace for West Virginia-made crafts, art, and other handmade ware is now in operation. OUR-WV.com is a Web site that offers West Virginia cottage businesses an affordable opportunity to market their products directly over the Internet. Following a free trial period, sellers can post links to their products for as little as $10 a month. Currently, OUR-WV.com features West Virginia-made furniture, jewelry, home décor, food items, leather and needle work, quilts, and accessories. Buyers and sellers are encouraged to visit the Web site, which is designed to sustain West Virginia's cottage businesses by putting them within reach of a global customer base. For additional information, call manager Paul Thompson at (304)613-5950 or 269-5168.

Sesquicentennial Timeline

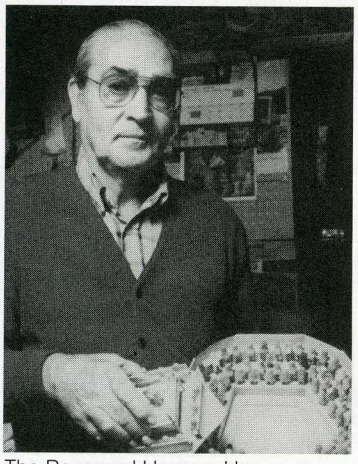
Milestones on the Road to Statehood

West Virginia CIVIL WAR STATEHOOD 150

- **September 2, 1862** – Spencer was surrendered to Confederate General A.G. Jenkins.
- **September 10, 1862** – Union and Confederate forces clashed at the Battle of Fayetteville.
- **September 13, 1862** – Confederate forces under the command of General W W Loring captured Charleston.
- **September 15, 1862** – Confederate forces captured more than 11,000 Union troops at Harpers Ferry.
- **October 1, 1862** – President Abraham Lincoln visited Harpers Ferry.
- **October 23, 1862** – Pro-union newspaper editor Lewis Wetzel was killed by statehood leader John Hall over editorial differences.
- **October 31, 1862** – Confederate cavalry under General A.G. Jenkins were driven from the Kanawha Valley.
- **November 9, 1862** – A Confederate force captured St. George, the seat of Tucker County.
- **November 24, 1862** – Union authorities banned the circulation of the *Wheeling Press* in the Cheat Mountain military district.
- **November 26, 1862** – Union troops raided a Confederate camp in the Sinking Creek Valley, Greenbrier County.

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

~ GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes ~

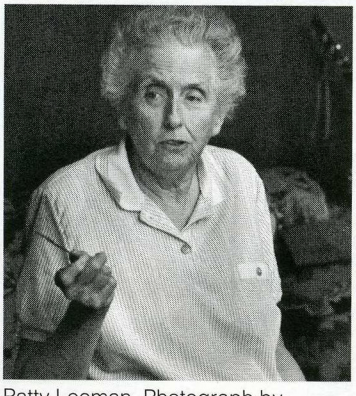


The Reverend Herman Hayes.

Reverend Herman Hayes was a talented and respected woodcarver whose unique, whimsical creations were prized by collectors of folk art from around the world. Born in Elkview, Kanawha County, in 1923, Herman began whittling as a young boy, learning to carve puzzles and novelties using a pocketknife and scrap wood. As an adult, Herman carved complex and intricate figures, often with religious themes. Following World War II, Herman served as a Methodist minister for 27 years at various locations across West Virginia. Eventually, Herman achieved widespread acclaim for his carvings, selling many pieces to collectors and museums. He was the subject of the cover story in our Summer 1999 edition titled, "Redeeming the Wood: Self-Taught Woodcarver Herman Hayes," by Colleen Anderson. Herman Hayes passed away March 30, 2012. He was 88.

Nat Reese. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Nat Reese, award-winning blues and swing musician and singer, died in Princeton on June 8. He was 88. Nat received the John Henry Award in 1988, the Vandalia Award in 1995, and was inducted into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame in 2009 He was the subject of the article "Something to Give: Nat Reese's Early Life and Music," by Michael Kline; Winter 1987 Born in Salem, Virginia, in 1924, Nat and his family moved to Wyoming County when Nat was quite young. There, Nat was exposed to a variety of musical styles and became a skilled guitarist and singer. He worked as a coal miner, commercial artist, television repairman, mechanic, and in other occupations in addition to performing. Nat was a regular participant at the annual Vandalia Gathering in Charleston and will be remembered as a soulful, playful, and riveting performer.



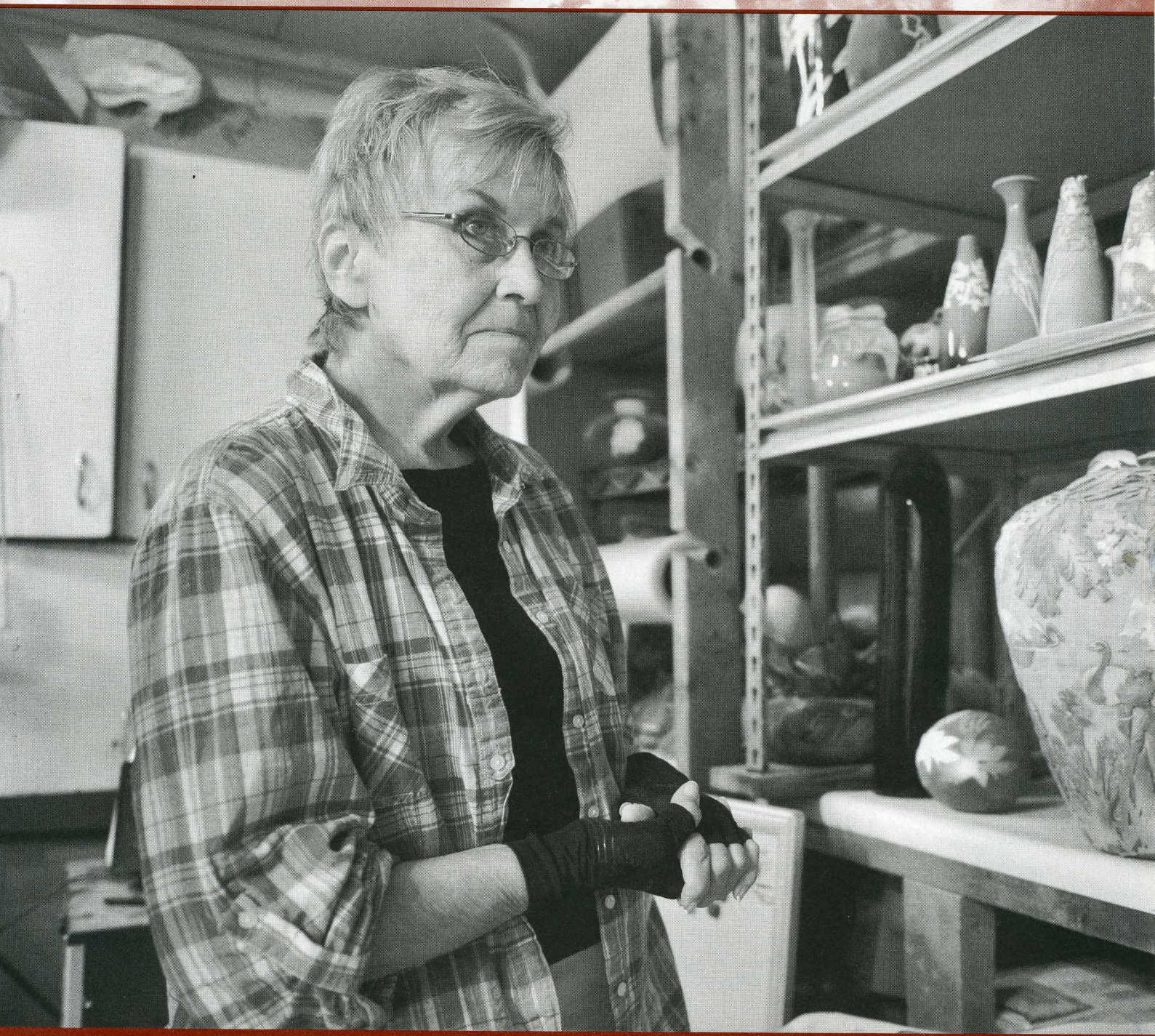
Patty Looman. Photograph by Mark Crabtree.

Patty Looman, renowned dulcimer player and teacher, passed away on June 5 at the age of 87 Loved for her sweet personality and unbridled generosity as well as her musical abilities, Patty received the 2007 Vandalia Award. She was also the guest of honor at the annual PattyFest, celebrated each year in the Morgantown area. Born at Mannington, Marion County, in 1925, Patty taught high school speech and drama for 35 years. She became friends with local musicians Worley Gardner and Russell Fluharty, and after their deaths carried on their work to promote, teach, and play West Virginia traditional music on the hammered dulcimer — an ancient precursor of the piano. Patty was the subject of a story in GOLDENSEAL titled, "Carrying on the Music: Dulcimer Player Patty Looman," by Danny Williams; Winter 1995.

Hazel Westfall. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Hazel Westfall, one of 12 children, was raised in a musical household in rural Jackson County. Together with her husband, Bill, Hazel performed over WMOV radio in Ravenswood in the early 1950's; the pair published a songbook under the name "The Country Gospel Singers" at that time. Later, they became participants at the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, teaching and performing regularly at the college for more than 20 years. Their book titled *Singin' in the Hills* was published by Augusta in 2002; they were featured in a GOLDENSEAL story, "Still Singin' A Visit with Bill and Hazel Westfall," by Bob Whitcomb; Summer 2001. Hazel was known for her cheerful nature, love of music, and repertoire of old mountain songs. She passed away on July 31 at age 84.

Visions of

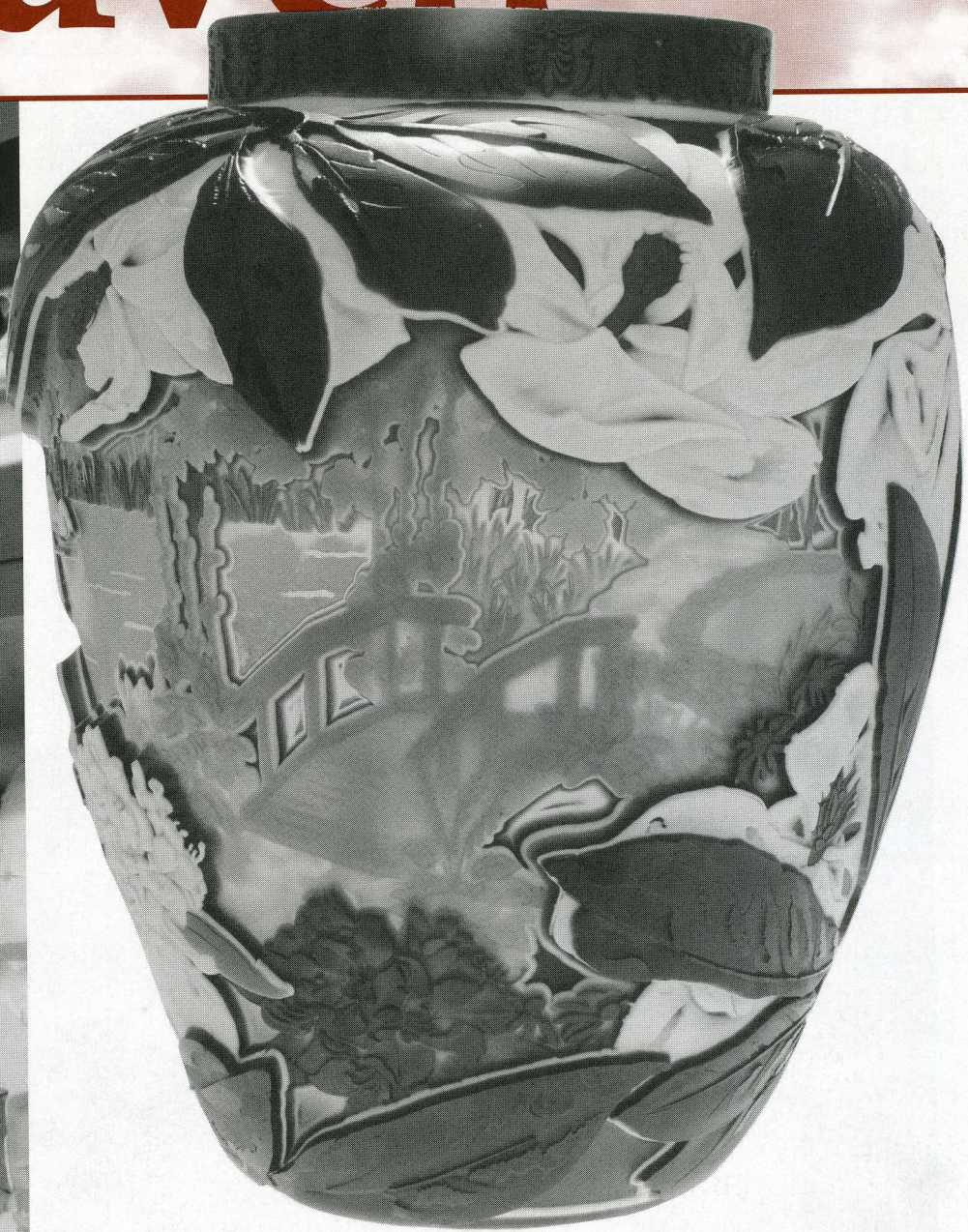


Kelsey Murphy with cameo glass at Studios of Heaven in East Lynn, Wayne County.

Cameo Glass Artist

Heaven

By Donna Meredith
Photographs
by Tyler Evert



Not so long ago, women were excluded from traditional glassmaking, the secrets of artisans being passed only from fathers to sons. Today women have reasserted themselves in this field, and none more so than Kelsey Murphy.

Kelsey Murphy

Above: "Gardens of Heaven." This unique nine-layer supercameo creation sold for $100,000 in 2011. Photograph by Bob Bomkamp.

In a small studio in rural Wayne County, Kelsey is carving a substantial niche for herself in the history of American art glass. Her accomplishments have mounted over the years, pushing both the technical and aesthetic elements of cameo glass to levels unimaginable just a few decades ago.

Any one of her accomplishments would be the stuff of fairy tales:

• Until Kelsey developed her methods, only five layers of cameo glass had ever been successfully cased and carved. She and Pilgrim Glass Union glass blowers pushed that number to 12.

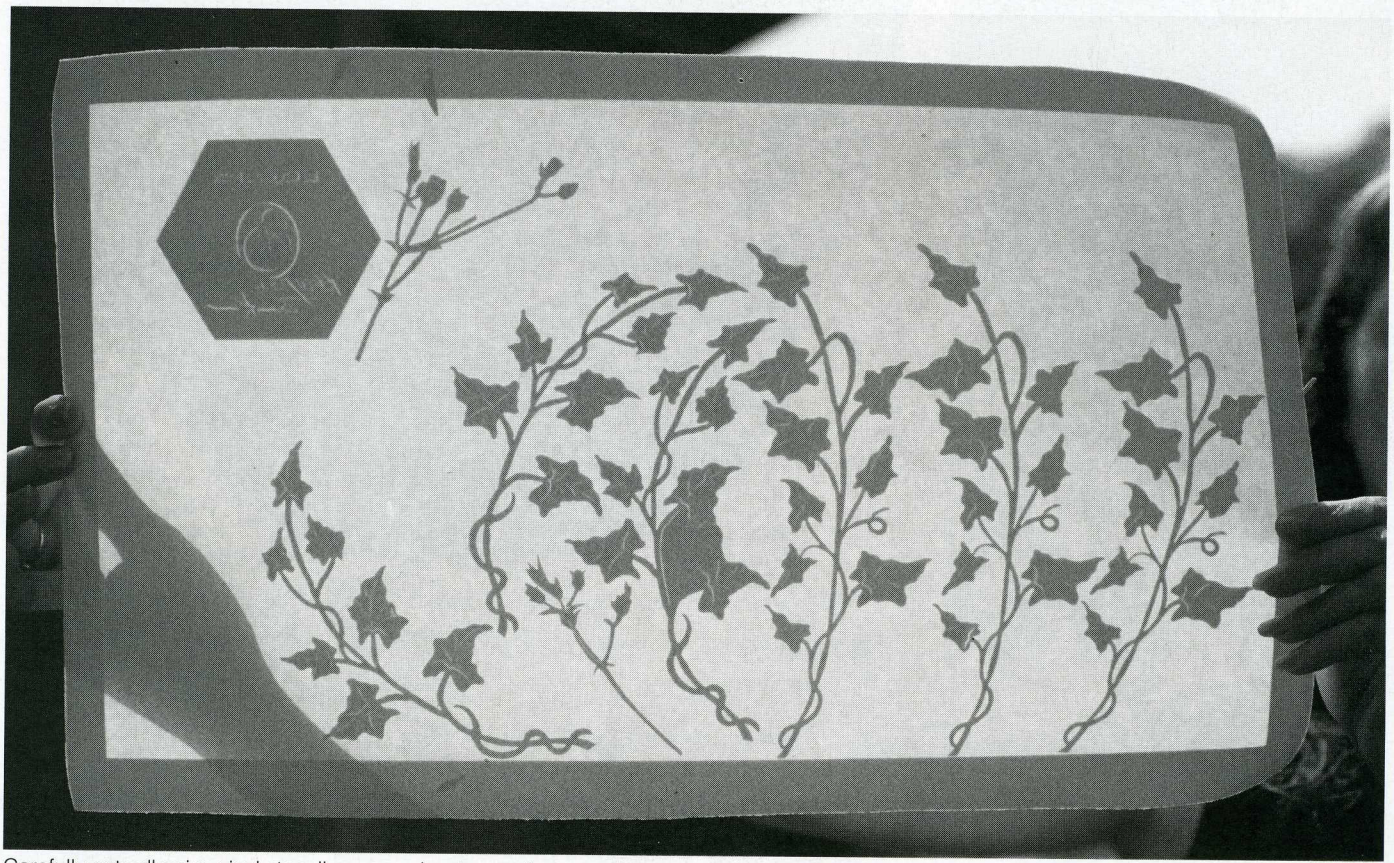
• Her 1994 "Run for the Roses" creation was among the largest cameo vases ever carved. It stands 6'2" tall. A team of Pilgrim Glass master craftsmen executed Kelsey's design.

• In 1995, the New Orleans Museum of Art offered a retrospective of Kelsey's work, a crowning achievement for any artist.

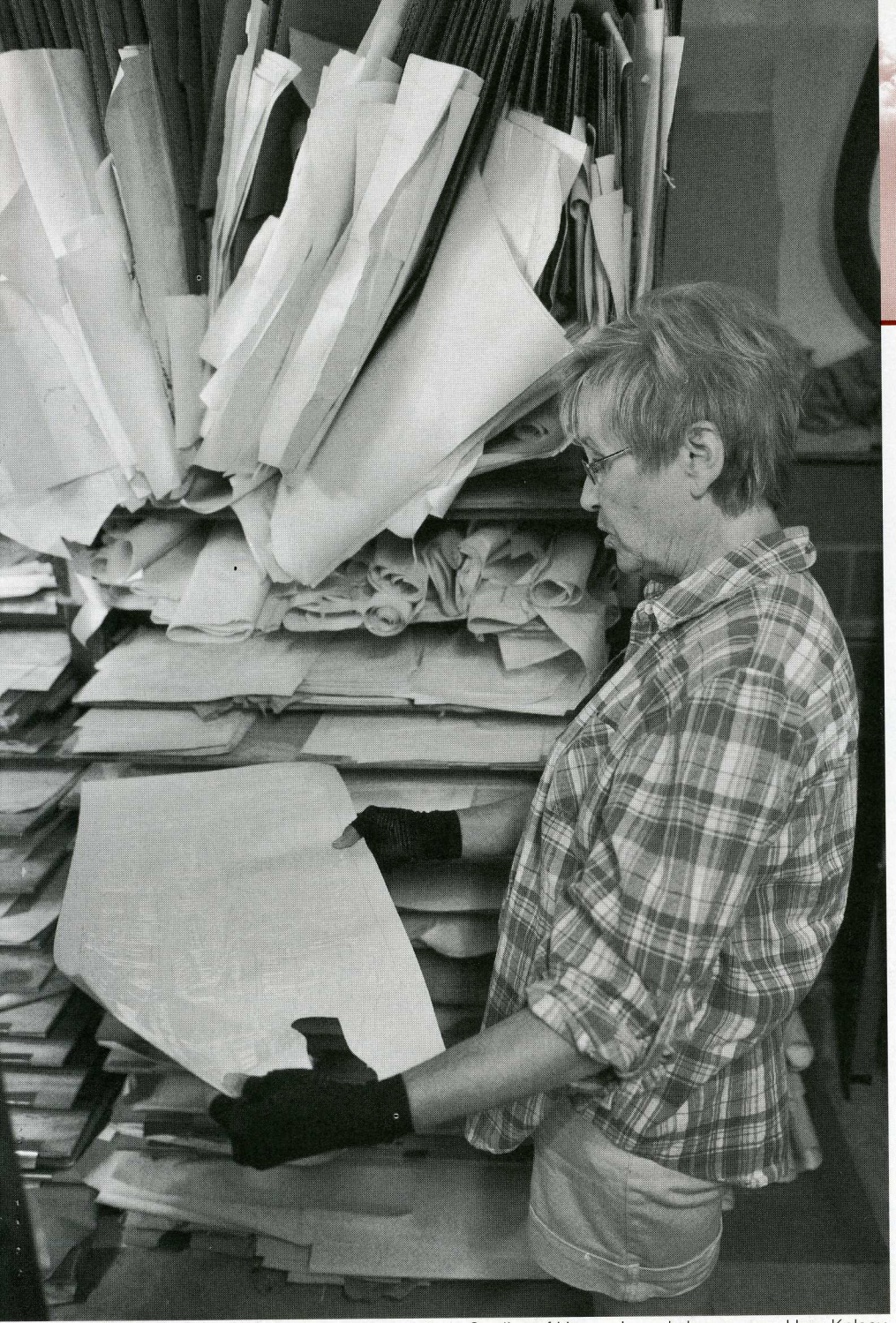
• A three-dimensional carved eagle blown by Pilgrim master craftsman Keith Adkins and carved by Kelsey was presented to Bill and Hillary Clinton when the president visited Huntington in 1996. The life-size eagle was crafted from five colors and blown without the benefit of a mold. The piece now resides at the front door to the Clinton Library in Little Rock, Arkansas.

• Kelsey's "Gardens of Heaven" supercameo vase sold for $100,000 in 2011, a new milestone. The piece boasts nine layers of glass, each a brilliant contrasting color. Kelsey carved through the layers to reveal large magnolia blossoms and leaves that frame swans gliding across a blue lake.

Dean Six, executive director of the West Virginia Museum of American Glass in Weston, believes Kelsey's



Carefully cut adhesive vinyl stencils are one key to creating complex cameo glass designs. Here Kelsey holds a sheet of stencils to a light, showing the outlines of some leaf and vine patterns.



Hundreds of designs are stored as stencils in Studios of Heaven's workshop space. Here Kelsey explains the stencil-cutting process.

cameo glass will stand the test of time.

"It will prove to be some of the most respected and dominant art glass of the 20th century," Dean says. "She has the amazing ability to look at a piece of glass and see art within it. She'll take a brown blob and see a hillside in autumn. Besides the technical skill, besides the graphic design, that vision is what sets her apart. Way apart."

Dean should know. The Ritchie County native is the author of some of the most respected books on glass collecting, including *West Virginia Glass Towns*, *West Virginia Glass between the World Wars*, *Viking Glass 1944-1970*, and *Lotus: Depression Glass and Far Beyond*.

In the spring of 1980, Kelsey was restoring a run-down gothic revival building in Lebanon, Ohio. Andy Rainey, an employee helping with the project, knew she had recently bought an air compressor and suggested she might hook it up to his sandblaster to remove old paint from an antique medicine cabinet destined for a sitting room in the building. Kelsey didn't protect the mirrored door of the cabinet when she turned on the blaster. Just then one of her daughters wanted something, and while Kelsey was distracted, sand splatted onto the mirror and etched it.

That's the moment many of us might have cursed ourselves for the mistake. Instead, Kelsey screamed and ran in the house to get a sheet of thick masking material known as frisket.

So giddy she could hardly hold her hands steady, Kelsey covered the entire front of the mirror and the frame with frisket, pressing it snugly into the corners. Sandblasting would cut through anything hard, like glass, but she thought the softer texture of the masking material would resist abrasive action. With an X-acto knife, she cut out an impromptu design of vines and stylized leaves.

She pulled the sandblaster's trigger again and in a few minutes returned to the house screaming again. "I was so excited I couldn't stand it," she says. Soon she had her assistant, Kathy Link, squealing too. Over five days, they developed a catalog of 400 different window designs with a pricing schedule.

Kelsey, one quickly learns, never does anything by half-measures. The women made catalogs formatted as flip-through pages attached to Masonite boards and placed them in area glass shops. A few months later, in October 1981, Kelsey in-

Natural images are recurring themes in cameo glass from Studios of Heaven. Adhesive stencils protect specific areas of the glass surface while sandblasting carefully carves the surrounding space.

corporated Glass Expectations and began manufacturing etched glass and mirrors.

"That discovery was the lightning strike that changed my life forever," she says.

That lightning didn't strike in a vacuum. Years of training and design work prepared her for that meeting with the mirror. After graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1966, Kelsey worked as a book designer for Houghton Mifflin in Boston, led a design team that developed *The Godfather Game* and *The Howard Hughes Game*, and later served as art director for a university in Mexico City.

Early exposure to industry also shaped Kelsey, allowing her to quickly grasp what manufacturing could offer an artist. Her father designed and operated brick factories in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

"He was always the first one at work in the morning and the last to leave at night," she says. "And he was always the dirtiest." That ethic was transferred to Kelsey, who often worked around the clock, first to get her factory into production, and later to fill outrageously large orders.

The renovated building on Silver Street kept Kelsey alive financially for years. The elegant, spacious, one-bedroom apartments rented for $500 apiece. This income ensured she could feed her daughters during the start-up of Glass Expectations. A small trust that became hers when she turned 35 helped bankroll the new company.

Like any fairy tale, Kelsey's story had dark moments.

"During the Glass Expectations years, I was always horribly broke, horribly in debt," Kelsey says. "We had a lot of great projects, but I was always undercapitalized."

The company made windows for Chi-Chi's and Wendy's restaurants, as well as thousands of etched mirrors sold through discount stores. At one point, the company employed 40 workers.

Kelsey's ability to persuade others to join in her projects is one of her greatest gifts. One of the people she pulled into glasswork was Robert "Bob" Bomkamp. He is a machinist who had worked in many factories, including General Electric, contributing to projects like the B-1 bomber and Harrier jet when they were just concepts.

The two met at the opening party for Glass Expectations, and Kelsey hired him right away.

"I was totally amazed," Bob says of their first meeting. "I appreciated her industrial bent. Later I could see her father in her."

Kelsey claims Bob was able to match her energy, no matter what they faced. ridiculous deadlines, number of hours on the job, early morning starts. Bob's technical and building skills merged with Kelsey's artistic talent to forge a business and life partnership that has lasted 30 years.

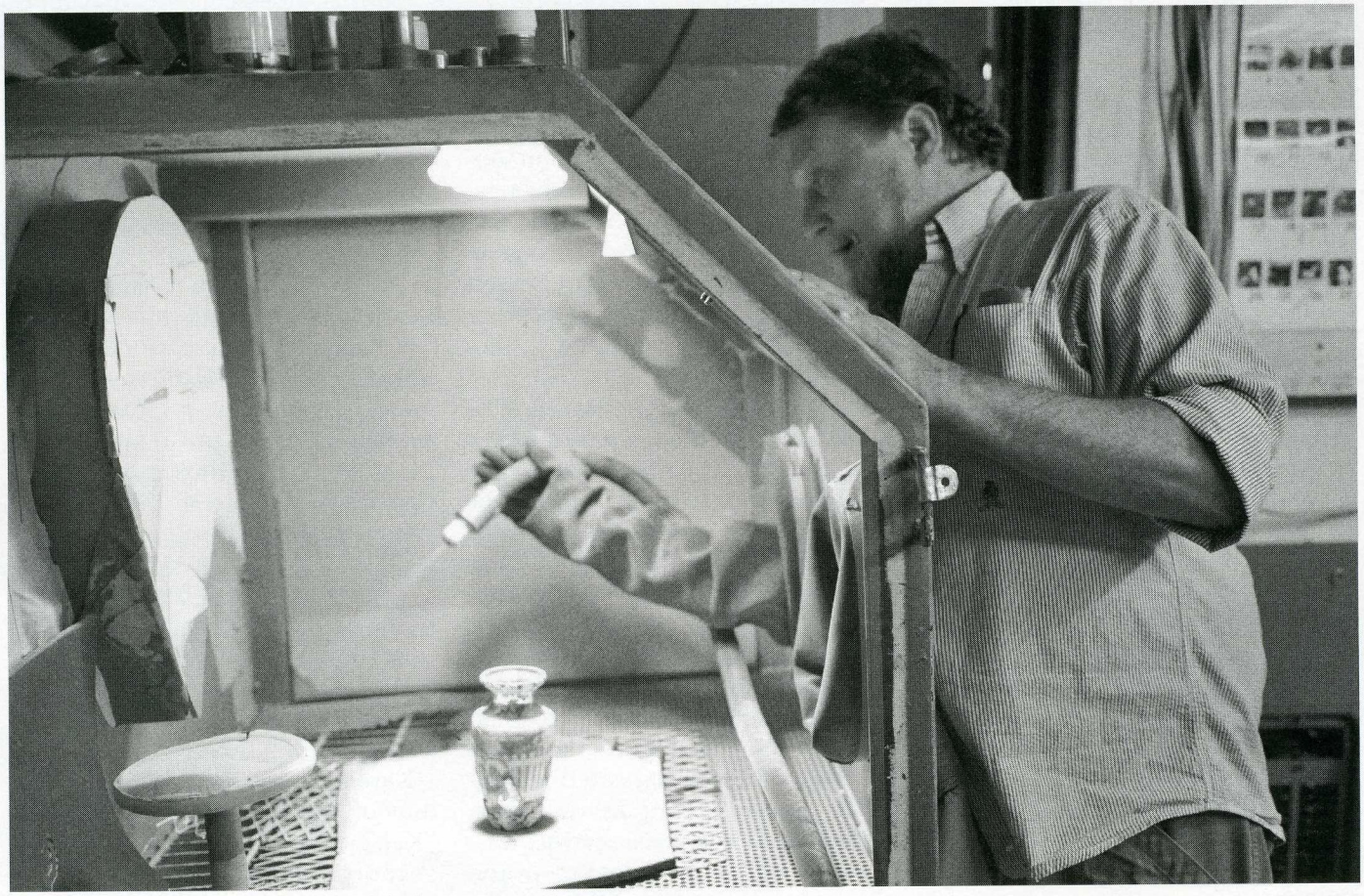
"He turned out to be a great carver," Kelsey says. "Whether it was production volume etching of glassware or very detailed deep carving in multi-layers, he did it beautifully, creatively, and efficiently."

Three years after Glass Expectations began production, another chance meeting shaped Kelsey's future. She and Bob visited Pilgrim Glass Company in Ceredo, looking for a source of large glass vessels. By extraordinary coincidence, Pilgrim's CEO Alfred Knobler and general manager David Davies happened to be in the plant that day. That meeting began a collaboration that would change the future of Pilgrim Glass, as well as the direction Murphy and Bomkamp would take.

Knobler and Davies placed an order for 100 each of 12 vase shapes and solid eggs. More importantly, Glass Expectations sales representative Larry Sarno gave Kelsey a book on 19th-century English cameo glass. Fascinated by what she saw, Kelsey shared a copy of the book with Davies. They all fell in love with the idea of giving cameo glass a new life in a 20th-century factory.

Alfred Knobler backed the arduous process of developing cameo as a commercial venture. But it wasn't easy. The slightest flaw in a piece of cased glass caused it to shatter when carved. In the beginning, 95 percent of the pieces broke, due to expansion coefficients inherent to the glass. In time, the loss rate was reduced to 5 percent as the company figured out how to make each color compatible with the surrounding glass layers. Bob realized by calculating their molecular weights that many of the breakage problems actually were the result of faulty annealing, the cooling of the glass.

Bob's skills as a machinist were indispensable in creating tools to enable mass production of three-



Bob Bomkamp demonstrates how sandblasting is used in the cameo glass process.

Layers of different-colored glass are used in blanks, providing a range of color options. This blank has seven layers, of varying thicknesses.

dimensional, compound-curved objects at Pilgrim. In 1987 Murphy and Bomkamp moved the Glass Expectations equipment from the Cincinnati area to Ceredo and officially became part of Pilgrim Glass Corporation. They bought a 300-acre farm nearby. Each piece of cameo made there is stamped "Made in Heaven" and signed by the artists.

The relationship between Knobler and Kelsey was troubled almost from the beginning. "He either fired me or I quit about every other week," Kelsey says. "There were times when I was working with Pilgrim, that if you'd asked me what I thought of Alfred Knobler, I'd have told you I would like to stick a knife between his eyes. But looking back I realize he had the best instincts. He could see the potential in something, and would throw his money behind it. He wouldn't quit if he believed in something."

The marriage of fine art to manufacturing was uneasy in other aspects. Knobler and Kelsey's push to develop cameo glass created tension in the factory as some workers felt the wares they made, such as cranberry glass, were relegated to less important status.

Initially, Pilgrim cameo was produced in white opal over cranberry or cobalt blue. The first three-color combination Pilgrim produced was called "Midnight Cameo," with black glass cased over crystal over cranberry. Soon Kelsey experimented with other combinations.

Wildlife is a major motif in Kelsey's art. Since childhood, she has ridden horses, but once she moved to West Virginia she was able to own them for the first time. Repeatedly, they show up in her art, as do bears, wolves, and birds. Daisies, hyacinths, peaches, and willow leaves — the plant kingdom is equally present as subjects. Her art also ventures into fanciful themes with fairies, mermaids, and figures from Greek myths.

Dean Six discerns differences in Murphy's and Bomkamp's styles of art. "She often draws from familiar objects in life," Dean says. "This gives her the same popular appeal as Norman Rockwell and other great American illustrators. Bob is creative in an entirely different way. His expressions are more abstracted and less dependent on realism."

Bob is currently experimenting with enlarged dot patterns, similar to halftone screens of hot-type days. Only from a distance can a viewer discern that the dots form, for example, a nude torso.

Karen Kleppe, an assistant at Studios of Heaven, agrees with Dean. "Kelsey's art is very free-flowing, very organic," she says. "Bob's tends to be technical, and he does a lot of

hidden images. Their techniques in carving also differ. His is more precise, more regimented. Hers is more you-get-the-feel-for-it."

The carving produced by sandblasting results in a style distinct from its English and Art Nouveau forerunners. In a catalog produced for Kelsey's retrospective, John Keefe, curator of decorative arts for the New Orleans Museum of Art, explains it this way· "The sandcarved edge achieved by Kelsey and the Pilgrim Glass Union artisans is deliberately more sharp and precisely delineated, creating an effect pronouncedly more striated than the Art Nouveau types. This is enhanced by bold, dramatic contrasts of colors."

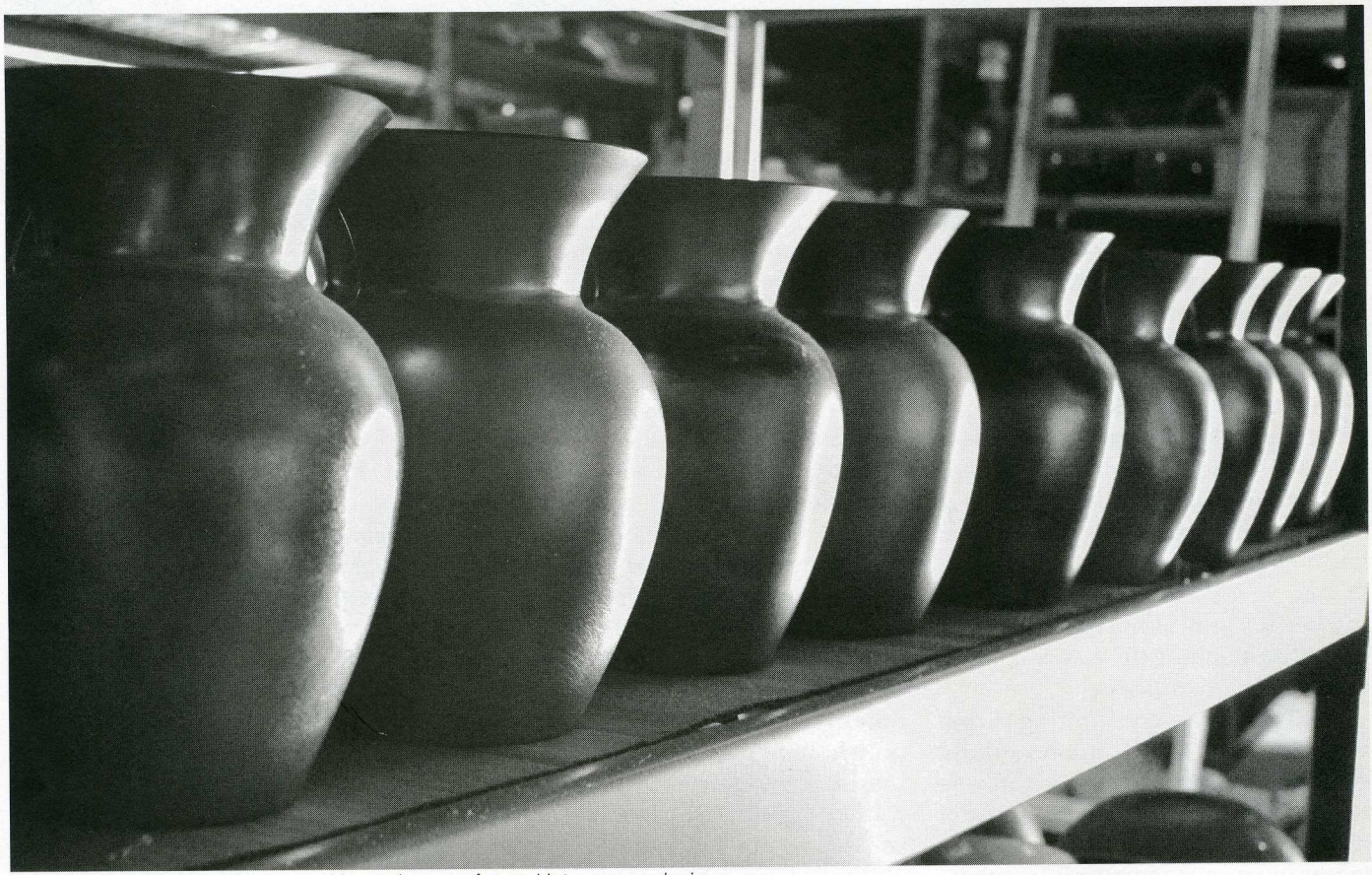
Stacking colors results in the brilliant palette Kelsey works with: green, topaz, plum, cobalt, cranberry, ruby, persimmon, purple, black, white, and crystal. The order of the layers affects the coloration.

"Kelsey has this amazing ability to think in layers and see the way the design will evolve," Karen says.

Huntington is a good place to start if you want to view an impressive representation of Made in Heaven cameo. It is on display at the Huntington Museum of Art, which has 42 pieces, and also at Marshall University's Drinko Library, which boasts 82 pieces. Local physician Dr. Joseph Touma donated these pieces from his private collection. He also bought up Kelsey's cameo wherever he could find it from sources like eBay in an effort to preserve what he sees as an important part of art history and local heritage.

Dr. Touma likens Made in Heaven cameo to stardust that's been scattered far and wide. "So bright, so beautiful! I'm trying to gather it and bring it back together for the museums.

"Not only is Kelsey a gifted artist, there's nothing impossible for her," Touma says. "Between her and Bob, they solved all the problems with multi-layered glass. Every piece of her glass is unique and beautiful."



Cased glass blanks in storage, waiting to be transformed into cameo designs.

Bob Bomkamp, Christina Carpenter, and Kelsey Murphy surrounded by cameo glass at Studios of Heaven in Wayne County.

Kelsey's cameo is also part of the Louis S. Harris Collection, donated to the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2003. The collection contains just under 200 pieces of glass. The curator of decorative arts for the New Orleans Museum was a serious promoter of Kelsey's work, according to Harris' widow, Karen "Kim" Harris.

"As curator, John Keefe's passion of all the decorative arts was glass," Kim says. "So when he saw Kelsey was doing things nobody else was doing, with these new techniques that hadn't been updated since Gallé and Daum, it was tremendously exciting because the skills had grown so withered and here they were coming back like blockbusters."

At 67, Kelsey is confronting carpal tunnel issues that limit how long she can sandblast the glass in one session, and Bob is recovering from lung cancer. The health issues have made them more focused on ensuring all they've learned isn't lost.

After Pilgrim closed in 2001, Murphy and Bomkamp sought other sources of glass. For a time, Kelsey collaborated with Fenton Glass, training carvers to use her designs with traditional Fenton colors such as the peach and yellow Burmese glass, as well as the pink and white Rosalene and iridescent Favrene. They also bought glass from Ron Hinkle, GlassWorks, and Blenko.

In November 2011 a friend purchased the remaining blanks produced by Pilgrim and made some of this glass available for carving. A blank is an undecorated piece of cased glass that can be carved. Kelsey now believes she and Bob will be able to obtain an adequate stock of blanks on which to work their magic for as long as they are able to carve.

Luckily, adapting to change is something Kelsey does well.

"Even after 30 years this journey seems to start new each and every day," Kelsey says.

That's because, as Kelsey will tell you, every piece of glass behaves like a living entity. Similar to others, yet each with its own unique qualities. Strong, yet fragile. As real as the physics and chemistry that rule its structure, yet as magical as the transformation of grains of sand into luminous art.

A marriage of physics and fairy tales.

For more information, visit www .studiosofheaven.com or phone (304) 849-4320.

DONNA MEREDITH is a Clarksburg native and a graduate of Washington Irving High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Fairmont State College, and holds a master's in journalism from West Virginia University. Currently living in Florida, Donna is a retired teacher and the author of two award-winning novels. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Museum of American Glass

More than 20,000 pieces of American glass sparkle from display cases at the West Virginia Museum of American Glass (MAGWV), located at 230 Main Street in Weston.

The mission of the nonprofit history museum is to share the diverse and rich heritage of glass as a product and historical object while depicting the lives of glass workers, their families, and communities, and to show the tools and machines they used in glassmaking.

"Kelsey Murphy's cameo pieces consistently receive some of the 'ohhs' and 'aahhhhhs,'" MAGWV director Dean Six says.

One recent donation to MAGWV included more than 600 paperweights and hundreds of other glass creations. When the Degenhart Paperweight and Glass Museum in Cambridge, Ohio, closed in November 2011 after 31 years, it sent a third of its collection to the Weston museum. Visitors will find covered animal dishes, whimsies, and small pressed figurals among the new items on display.

In 2008 the National Marble Museum became part of MAGWV, and the American Flint Glass Workers Archives are also located within the museum.

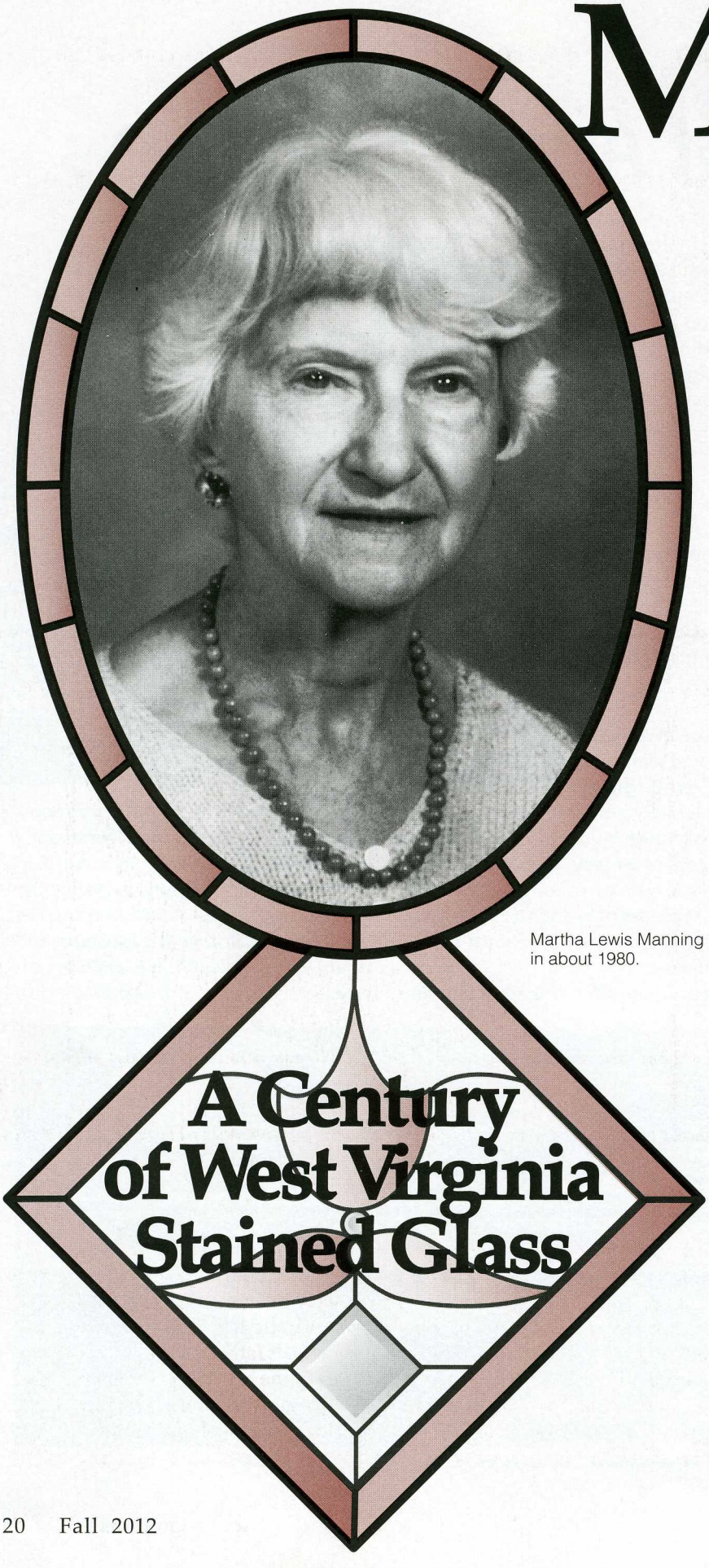
MAGWV sponsors a Glass Gathering each October, with lectures on topics including picking up old glass, marble companies, Viking glass, Depression glass, and cameo glass. This year's Glass Gathering will take place in Cumberland, Maryland, on October 19 and 20. There is an admission fee, and pre-registration is required. [See page 8.]

A native West Virginian, Dean Six has loved glass since he was a boy. He owns an extensive collection himself, including about a dozen of Kelsey Murphy's cameo creations. He owns one of the very earliest pieces of her art, a footed bowl of white cased over blue with carved snowflakes.

The museum offers free admission and relies on donors to continue programs, pay for its building, and fund daily operations. A benefit of membership is receiving the quarterly magazine the museum publishes, *All About Glass*. For more information on the museum and its activities, call (304)269-5006 or visit www.magwv.com. —Donna Meredith

The West Virginia Museum of American Glass in Weston. Photographs by Helen Jones.

Martha



Martha Lewis Manning in about 1980.

A Century of West Virginia Stained Glass

Martha Jane Lewis Manning of Morgantown witnessed more than a century of West Virginia stained glass. Born November 14, 1910, she died May 2, 2012, leaving behind a legacy of writings and photography of stained glass from the Mountain State.

"My father, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all worked in glass factories," Martha said.

Her own fascination with stained glass surfaced when she was just a young girl of five. Her grandfather, Will Hal Lewis, traveled across the United States as a salesman for a stained glass company, Advance Glass. Every time Grandpa visited Martha and her family in Fairmont, he would be sure to bring along his sample case. Those beautiful pieces of colored glass her grandfather would show her captured Martha's attention.

"My sisters, brothers, and I would say, 'Oh, Grandpa's coming! Grandpa's coming!' His sample case was a great favorite with all these pretty pieces of colored glass, different types of glass that he let us play with. The fact that Grandpa would let us delve into his sample case was exciting. It probably took a while for him to straighten it out after he left," she said with a smile.

"The glass was pretty-colored. I liked the transparency of it and the bright colors, especially the reds, and the fact that you could pick up these pieces and not get cut by the glass. And there would be a little clinking sound."

Martha Jane Lewis was born the fifth of nine children to Arthur Earl Lewis and his wife, Lizzette. At the

Manning

By Martha Caroline Coleman

Martha in 1912. As a young girl, Martha developed a lifelong interest in stained glass. She became an authority and wrote extensively on the subject, including four articles for GOLDENSEAL.

time, Martha's father was working in the Marilla Glass factory in Morgantown.

"My father was anxious to get out of the glass factory, so he built a shop [A.E. Lewis Glass Company] in which he sold glass windows and display cases in Morgantown," Martha said. "It was in business just a couple of years before it burned down, and he was not able to recover from that. He had to take a job, and the best one available was to work as a traveling salesman for Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. For his training, we moved to the Oakmont section of Pittsburgh for a couple of years. We then moved to Fairmont, which was the center of his sales territory. We were there until he got the idea that with all these children to educate he had better move back to Morgantown to where the university is."

The move back to the Morgantown area was the beginning of a new lifestyle for Martha and her family. Her father had decided that living on a farm out on old Cheat Road, in the community of Avery, would be perfect. And maybe it would have been had he known how to farm! Instead he continued with his traveling sales job while attempting to manage the farm on weekends and during his annual two-week vacation.

While her siblings took an interest in farm work, Martha found time to develop her talent as a pianist and organist. She took weekly piano lessons at West Virginia University, and on Sundays and Wednesdays she would play the pump organ for the community church in Avery.

"When I was in high school the teacher one day said it would be a good idea to visit a downtown business," Martha recalled. "Well, all I did was go home and mention that to my father, and he was so excited! He was anxious for us to learn about the glass business. The glass industry that my father knew and grew up with was hard work, and it was desirable to get out of it. Even though he didn't want us to do it, he wanted us to know how it was done. Anytime anybody gave him an opening, he loved to tell about it."

Martha's father accompanied her on a tour of the Mississippi Glass factory in Morgantown. She remembered being fascinated by the glassmaking process.

"The plant was located along the Monongahela River, but it is no longer in existence," Martha said. "They made wire glass in that factory. There were only three companies in the world that did that, and one of them was here in Morgantown.

"I got to go right by the furnace and stand there and watch while the man stuck his ladle into the melted glass, brought it across the brick floor, and poured it on a table. He had to wait 20 minutes to do it again because he had to give the furnace enough time to reheat. Most of the ladle handles were about 15 to 20 feet long, some with bowls two to three feet wide and two feet deep. They had ladles of all different sizes to pour. They were heavy and hard to maneuver."

What Martha witnessed in the 1920's at the Mississippi Glass Company soon became an extinct process in the glassmaking business.

"I have actually seen glass being poured from a heated furnace onto a table," she said. "That is a process that is no longer done. Glassmaking became mechanized about the same time that I took that tour. That factory was torn down soon after I was in it. By the 1920's and '30's, those glass factories were all gone."

After high school, Martha went on to study piano at West Virginia University and graduated in 1932 with a degree in piano performance. In 1936 she married Warren Francis Manning, a Harvard University graduate and professor of romance languages at WVU In Morgantown they raised four daughters: Catherine, Dorothy, Alice, and Lucy, first at 123 South Walnut Street and then at 812 Price Street. Over the next 50 years, Martha continued her interest in music by teaching piano at home to some 300 local children, as well as by playing the organ for the First Presbyterian Church of Morgantown. She eventually gave up teaching piano because of her deteriorating eyesight and the demands of caring for her ailing husband. But true to Martha's resilient nature and never-ceasing yearning for knowledge, she found another interest to explore, and that was photography.

"I was about 70 years old, and it was after my husband died," she said. "One of the things I always wanted to do was to take pictures."

This newfound hobby became a practical one as her childhood interest in stained glass was reignited a few years later.

The Lewis family on old Cheat Road, near Avery, in 1924. Seated are parents Lizzette and Arthur Earl Lewis. Standing in front, from the left, are Will Hal, Eugene, Florence, and Rose. At rear are B. Clements, Damaris, Anne, Arthur, Emily, and Martha.

"When I was 75 or so, I was on a tour with music teachers, and we visited St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, Austria," Martha recalled. "Here in this cathedral was the most gorgeous stained glass window I had ever seen or ever would think I'd see. It had modern glass and modern colors and was located at the end of the church. I was hooked!

"Once I saw that, I had to explore further. I wanted to learn the different ways that the glass was made for stained glass windows — the colors, the styles, and also all the different countries making glass. Soon, I found there were many stained glass windows in the United States, and I further found that a lot of the glass in these windows came from West Virginia.

"The [stained] glass came from two [main] places: Blenko in Milton, and Wissmach, which is at Paden City on the Ohio River. The two companies each made a different kind of glass. Wissmach glass is multi-colored and is rolled out into a big sheet, about three feet by eight feet. Blenko glass is entirely different. It's blown by hand into a mold and then flattened out into a sheet of glass, I think 18 inches by 25 inches. The Blenko glass has a brilliance. It has a life to it from being hand blown, and the colors, especially their blue, are clear and have a kind of life to them that you don't get in sheet glass. Blenko makes a second kind of glass, which is called dalles — a block of glass an inch thick and about 8 inches by 12 inches in size."

Martha was determined to learn more about stained glass and its connection to West Virginia, and to share her discoveries with other West Virginians and fellow stained glass enthusiasts.

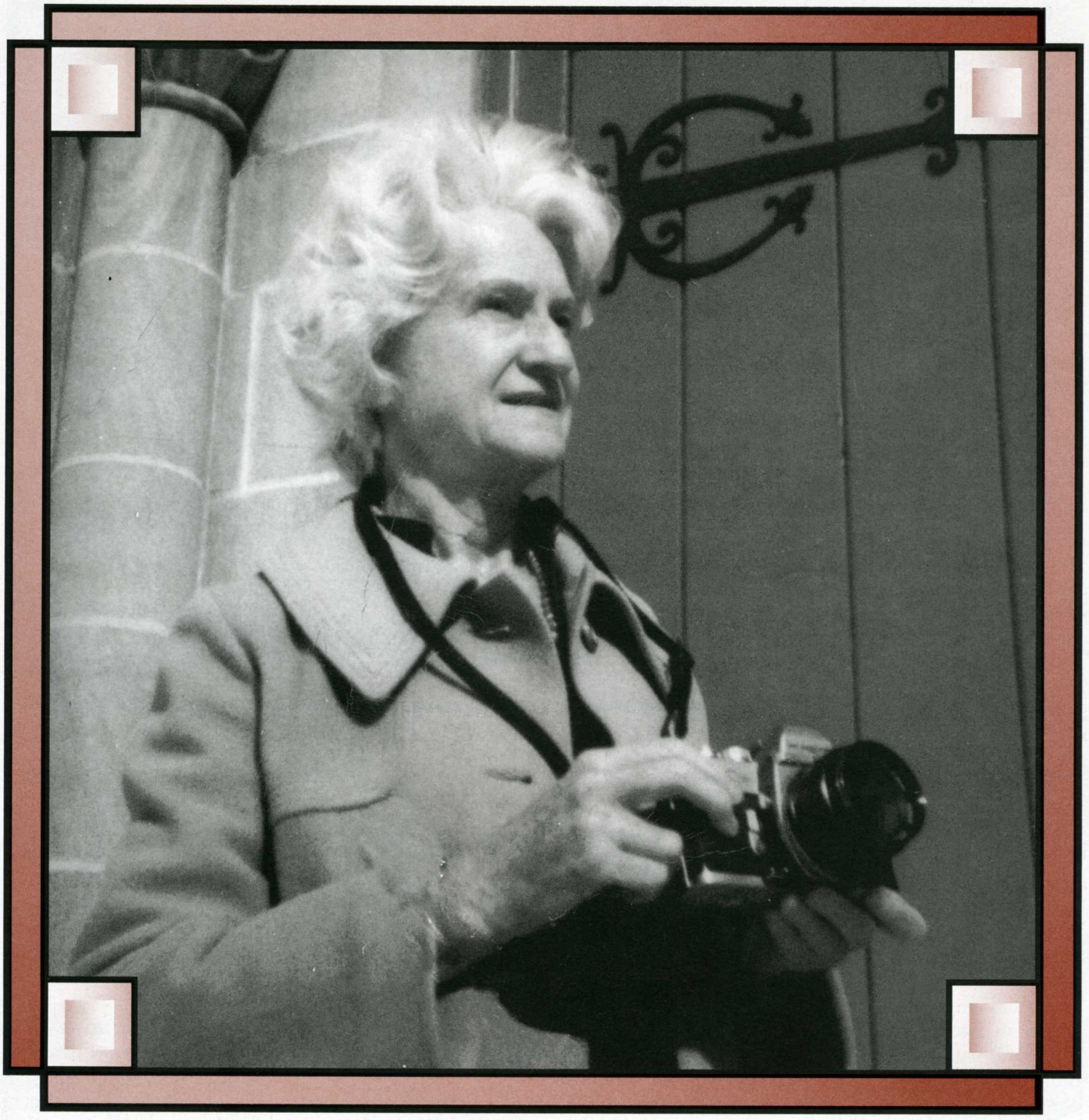
"I applied to the West Virginia Humanities Foundation for a grant to travel and locate windows that were made with West Virginia glass," Martha said. "They gave me $4,500 to travel, locate, and photograph windows made with West Virginia glass. I had never written a grant before. They had us come to a meeting in Charleston for instructions, and they had a committee that we could refer to with questions. The secretary of the foundation thought it was such a fun idea she made some trips with me. You really don't travel much with that money, but with the help of my children and friends, I got to see quite a few places.

A talented musician, Martha played and taught music nearly all her life. She is seen here at a church organ in about 1960.

"In San Francisco, California, a former piano student who lived there took me around to find the cathedrals that used glass from West Virginia. There is a beautiful display in the new St. Mary's Cathedral there. In Dallas, Texas, I visited my daughter Lucy and found this excellent Episcopal church [St. Michael & All Angels] with all Blenko glass. While visiting my daughter Alice in Washington, D.C., I wanted to look for examples in the National Cathedral. One of the men who actually worked on the windows there said, 'I can tell you this part of the window, in the center, that the flame is Blenko glass.' In Las Vegas, there was a casino [The Tropicana] with a stained glass ceiling. Well, this was all from Wissmach. It was an amber design, and it just exactly fit the ceiling. It covered the whole dome-shaped ceiling."

As a member of the Stained Glass Association of America, Martha was hired to write a short article for each issue of the association's quarterly magazine. Incorporating writing into her stained glass interest was something new to Martha.

"I had never thought of myself as a writer," she said, but then a friend suggested that she submit an article to GOLDENSEAL magazine. Martha authored four articles for this publication: "'Most Radiant Windows': West Virginia Stained Glass," and "'Paden City Was Like the Other End of the World,'" Summer 1982; "West



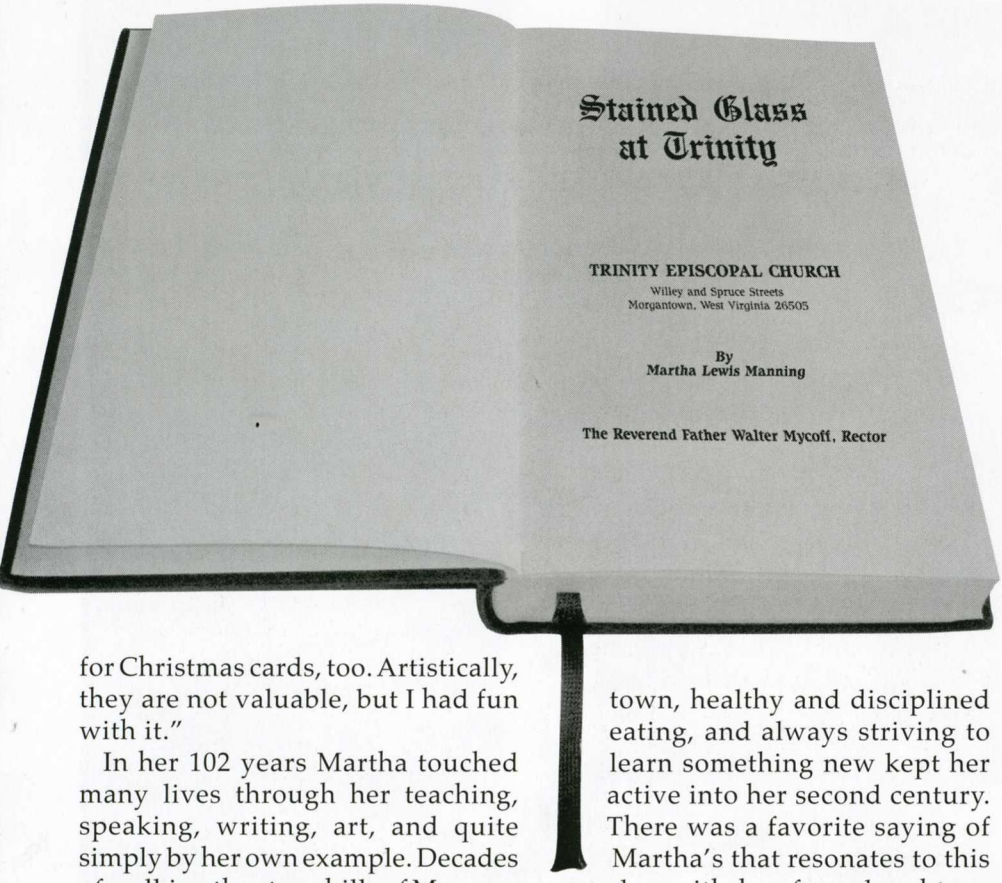
Martha took up photography at the age of 70, specializing in shooting stained glass windows. She is seen here with her camera at the door of a church in about 1985.

Virginia Cut Crystal," Spring 1984; and "Cities Celebrate: Morgantown, Clarksburg and Parkersburg Turn 200," Winter 1985.

In 1987, at the age of 77, Martha created a 40-page booklet about the stained glass at Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgantown. The booklet included her own color photographs. By the time she was in her 80's, Martha was an established photographer and writer and was considered an expert on West Virginia glass.

In addition, she enjoyed serving as an official guide for walking tours through hilly Morgantown, complete with a bullhorn to better communicate with the tourists about the historical and architectural details of the town. In her downtime, she would paint some of her favorite stained glass windows on paper.

"I carefully copied each section of the window itself and then painted it in," Martha said. "It took a lot of time and patience. These paintings were a slow process. I used to do it



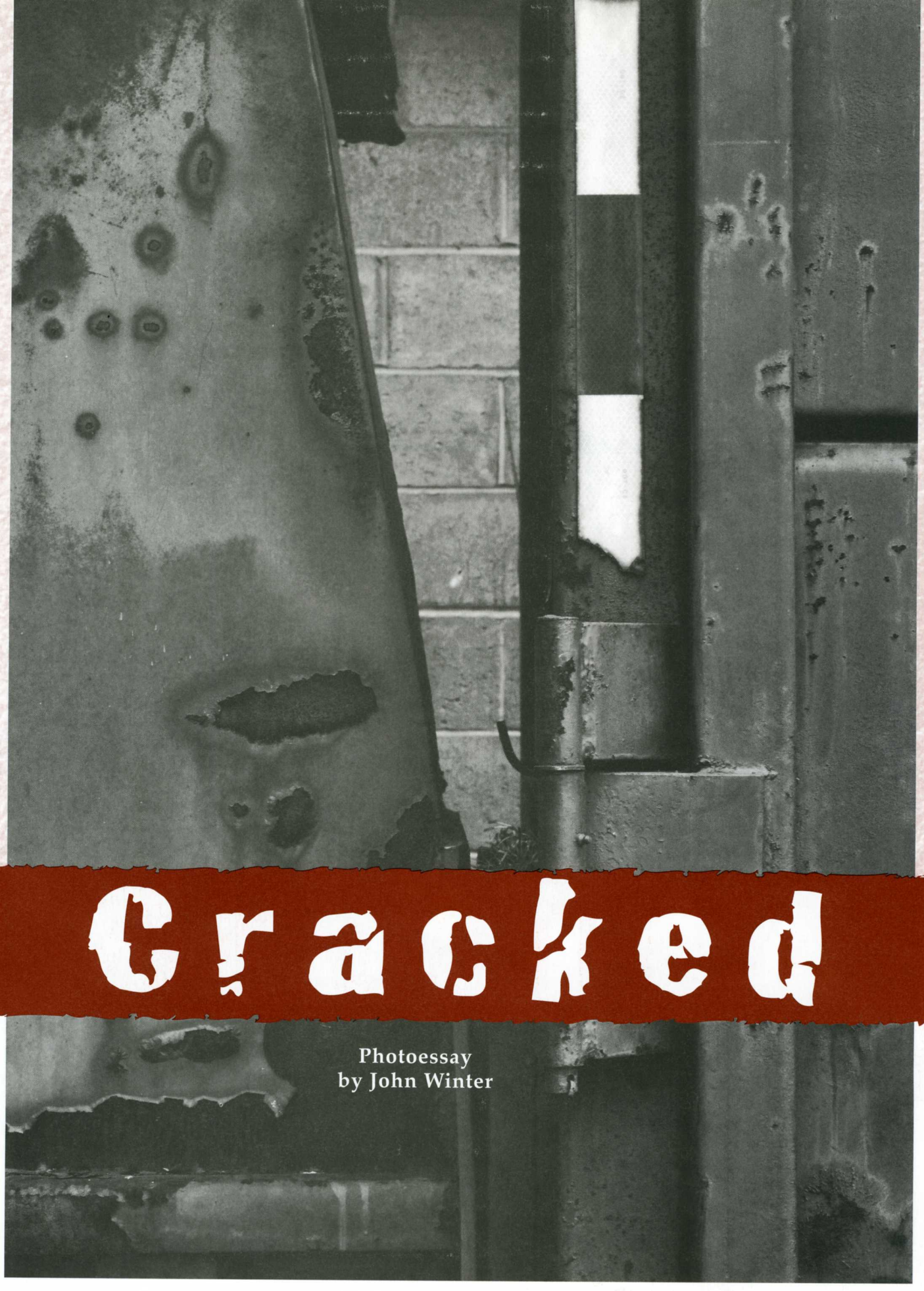
for Christmas cards, too. Artistically, they are not valuable, but I had fun with it."

In her 102 years Martha touched many lives through her teaching, speaking, writing, art, and quite simply by her own example. Decades of walking the steep hills of Morgantown, healthy and disciplined eating, and always striving to learn something new kept her active into her second century. There was a favorite saying of Martha's that resonates to this day with her four daughters: "Make yourself useful, as well as ornamental." Martha definitely practiced what she preached.

Martha Jane Lewis Manning was my maternal grandmother, and I am her namesake. She truly was an exceptional woman. A native West Virginian, she had a multitude of talents and successes, a zest for learning, and a sincere interest in the lives of her family and friends. She spent her later years listening to classical music and the news, engaging in conversation with friends, and keeping up-to-date with her four daughters, eight grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

MARTHA CAROLINE COLEMAN grew up in Kanawha City, but she and her family moved to their family farm near Hurricane when Martha was 13. She graduated from Hurricane High School and earned a degree in journalism from Marshall University. Martha's work has been published in *Guideposts* and *Dog Fancy*. This is her first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

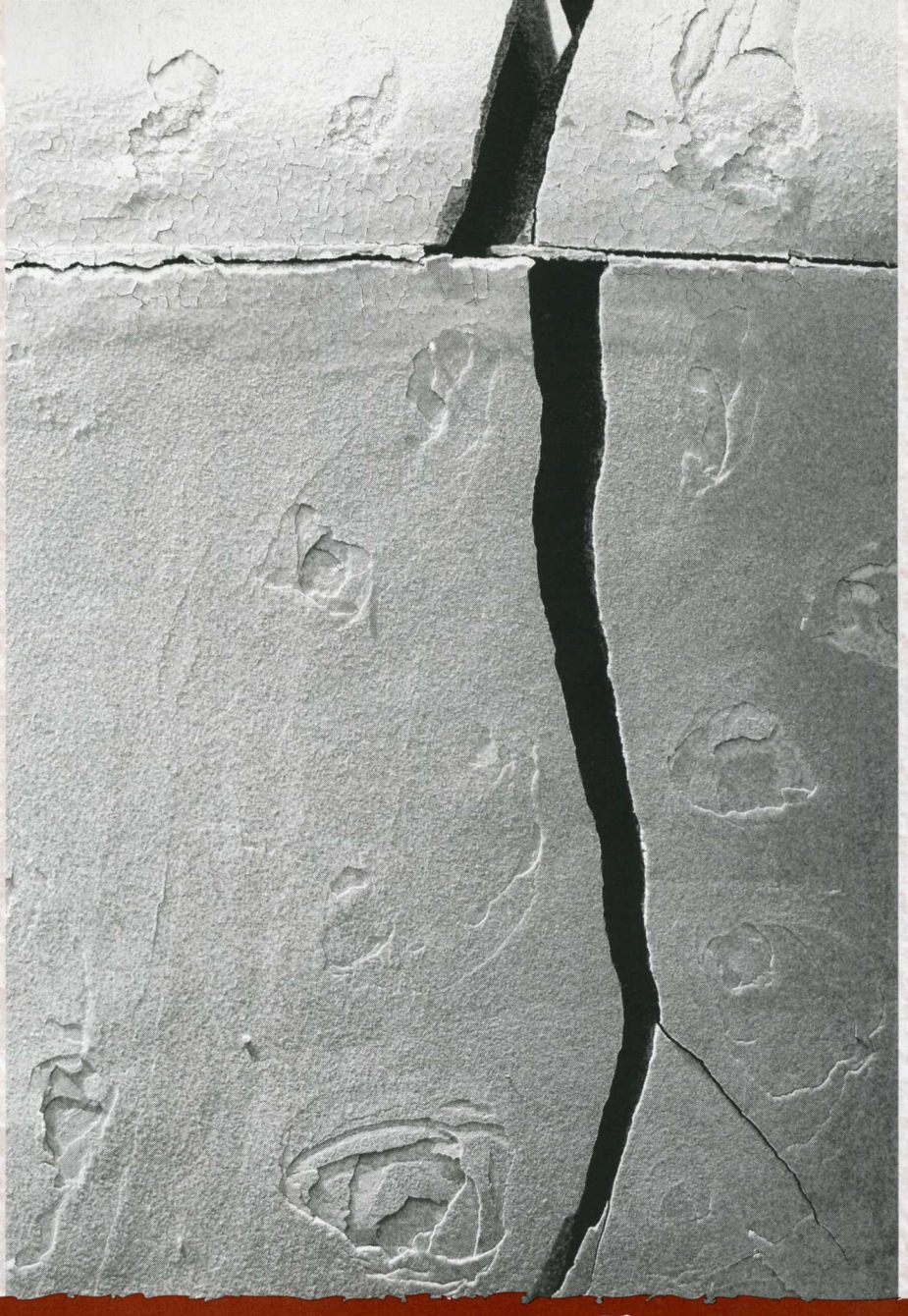
Martha Manning surrounded by family in Morgantown, celebrating her 100th birthday in November 2010. Author Martha Caroline Coleman stands second from the right.



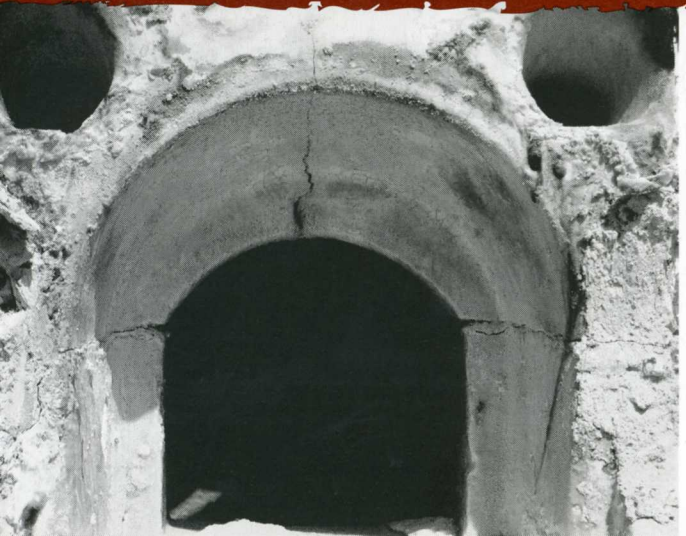
Cracked

Photoessay
by John Winter

Freeform Photos from Fenton



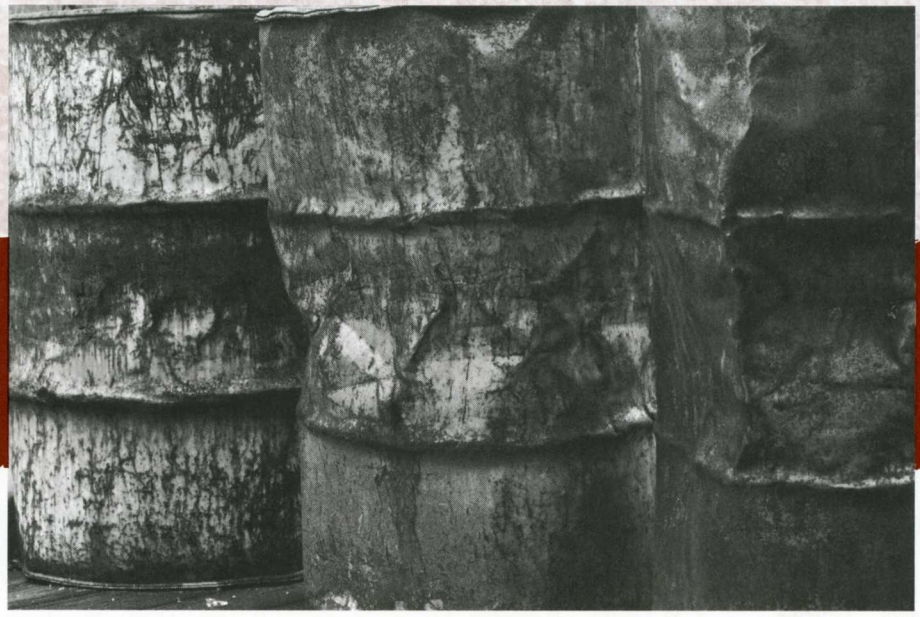
Crucible



Above: Cracked crucible.
Left: Discarded glass crucible.
Opposite page: Detail of an unused loading dock.

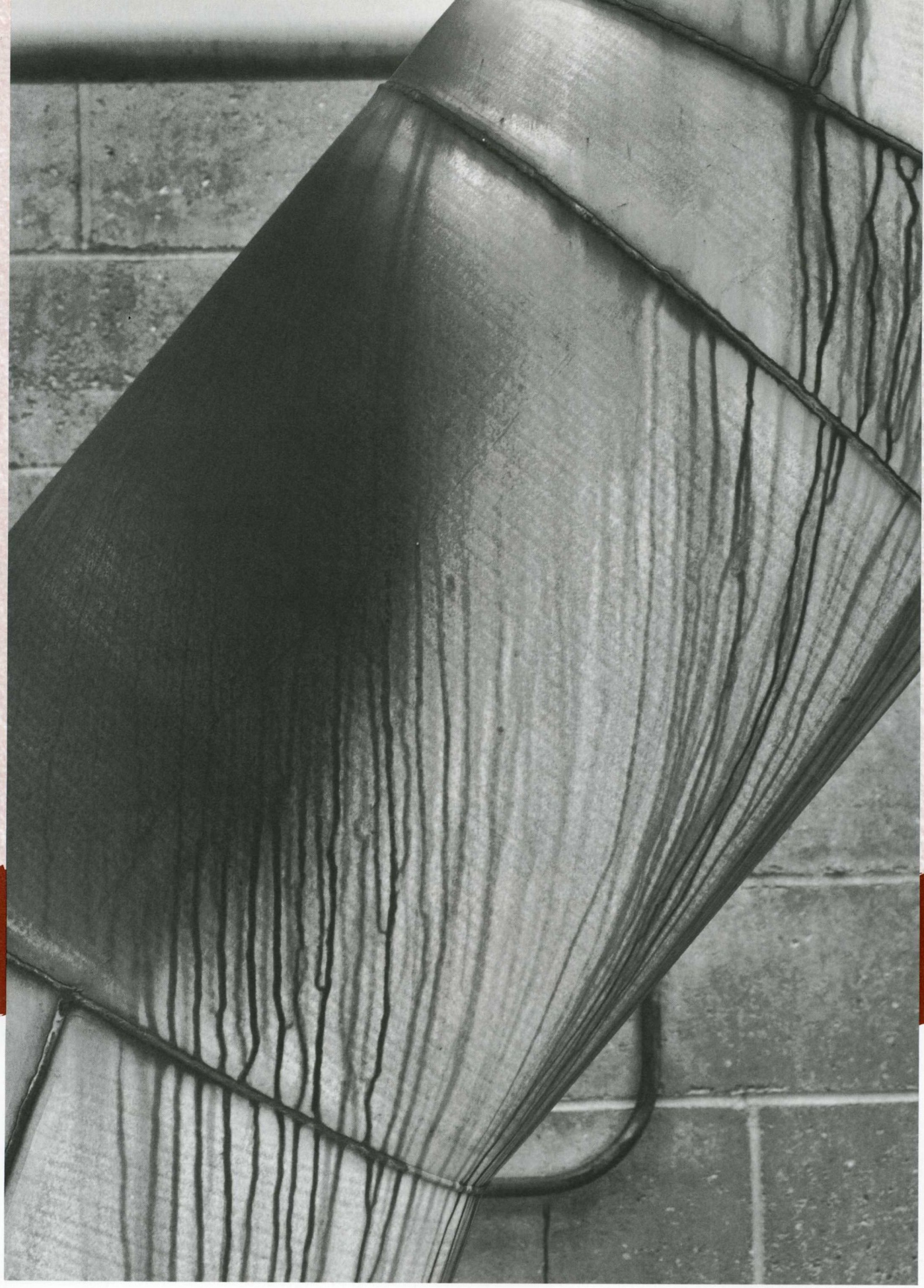
Fenton. To the collector, the word is synonymous with glass. Started in 1905, the Wood County glass house set the standard for art glass for more than a century. [See "Fenton: A Century of Art Glass in Williamstown," by Dean Six; Summer 2008.]

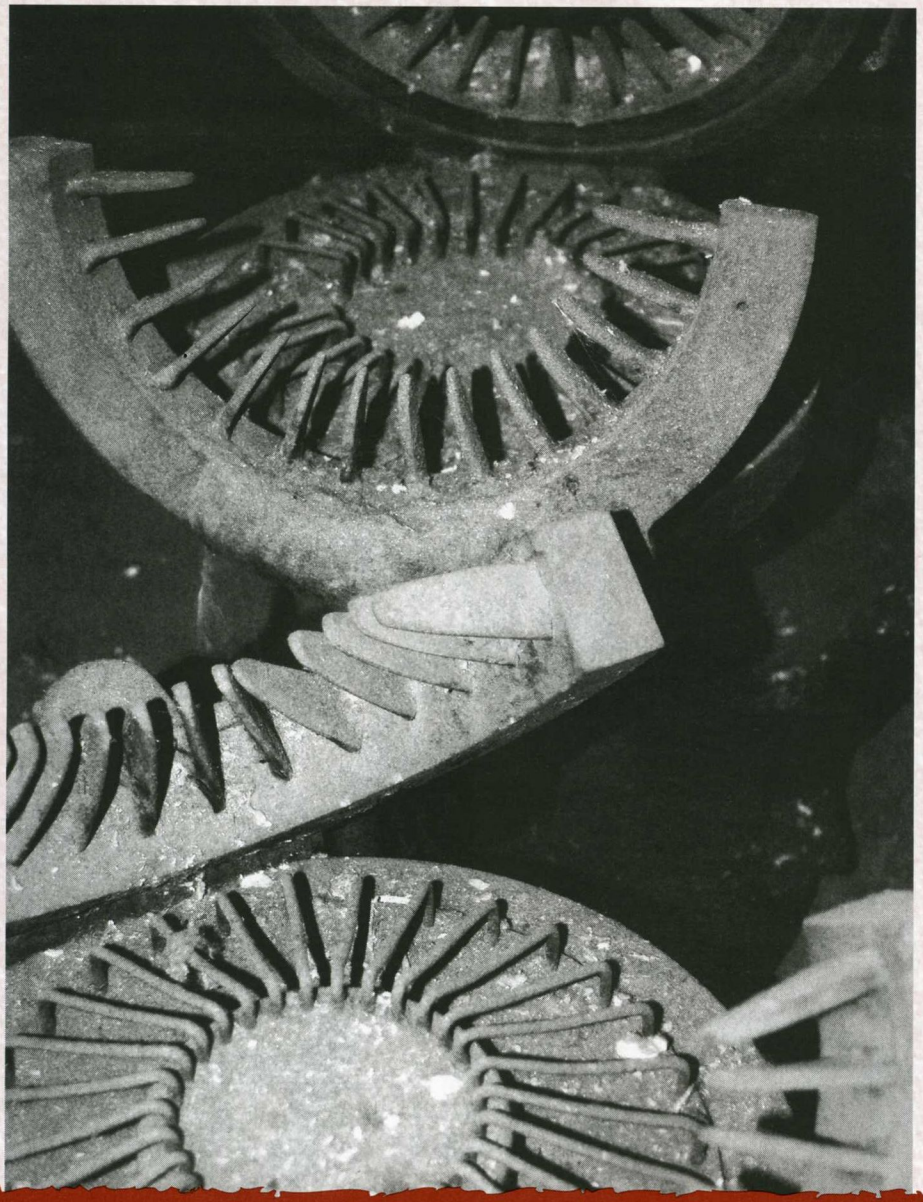
Left: Manhole cover.
Above: Slag glass.
Right: Barrels used to store scrap glass cullet.



The grandson of the founder had the onerous task of announcing the closing of most of the plant's production in 2011, with high gas prices, overseas competition, and an aging collector base contributing to the plant's demise.

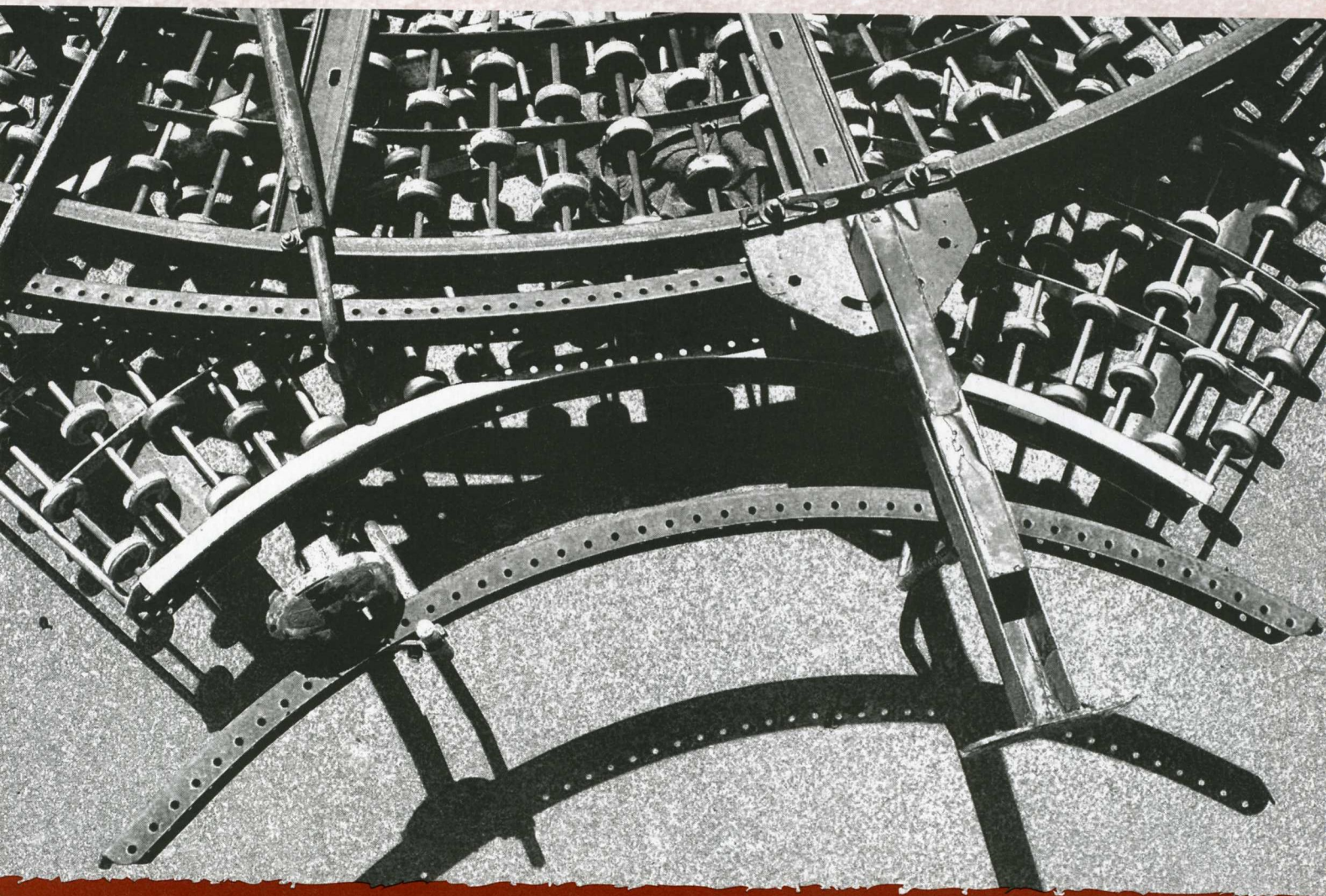
Above: Metal saw with steel stock.
Right: Creosote drips on an exhaust pipe.





Left: Mold parts used to create frilled edges. Opposite page: Coating peeling off of storage tank.

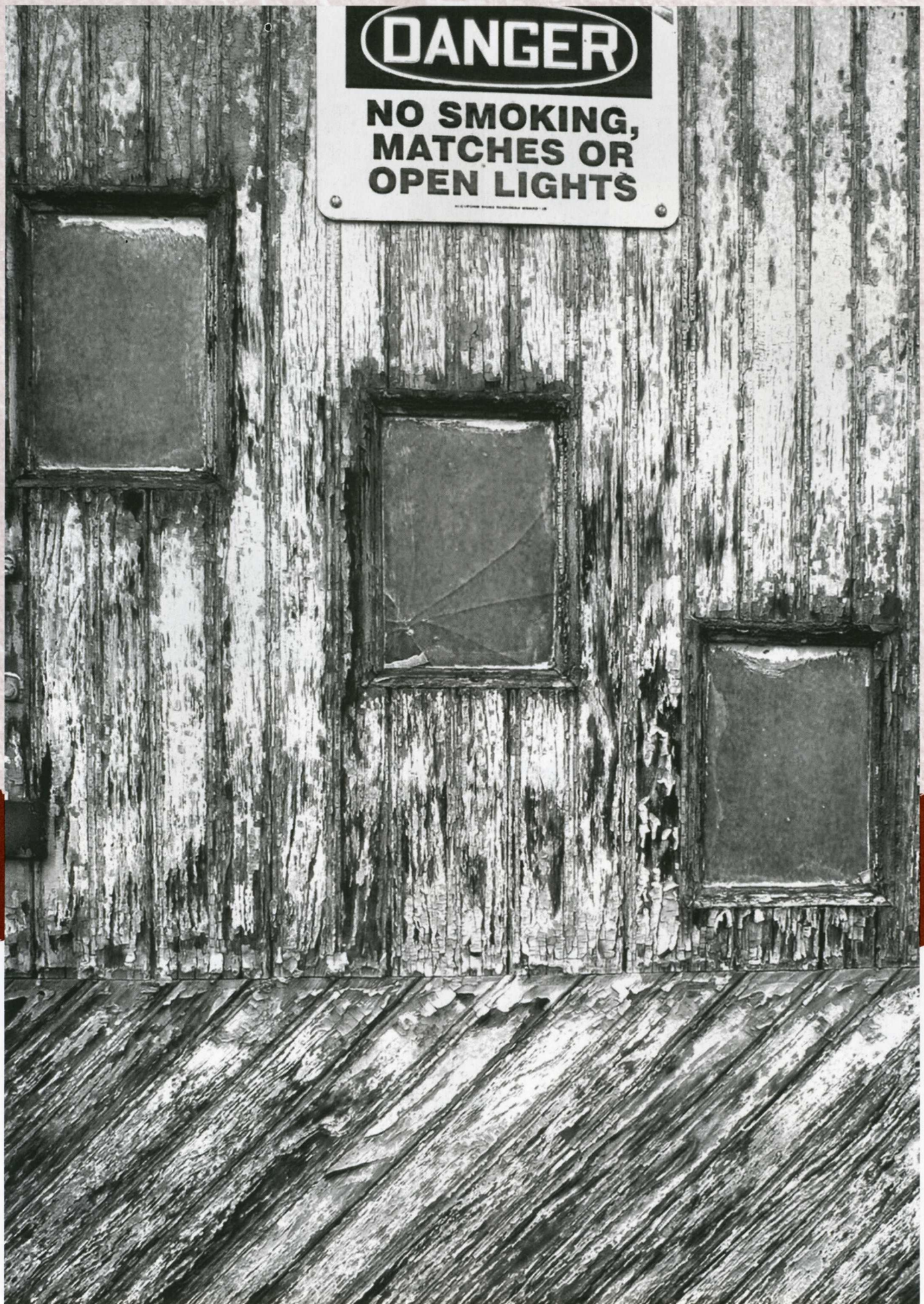
However, one division continues — that of glass beads and earrings. I had the honor of teaching the craft of glass beadmaking — lampworking — to Fenton employees for a period of some eight months, thanks to the efforts of accomplished beadmaker and Fenton employee Jena Blair.

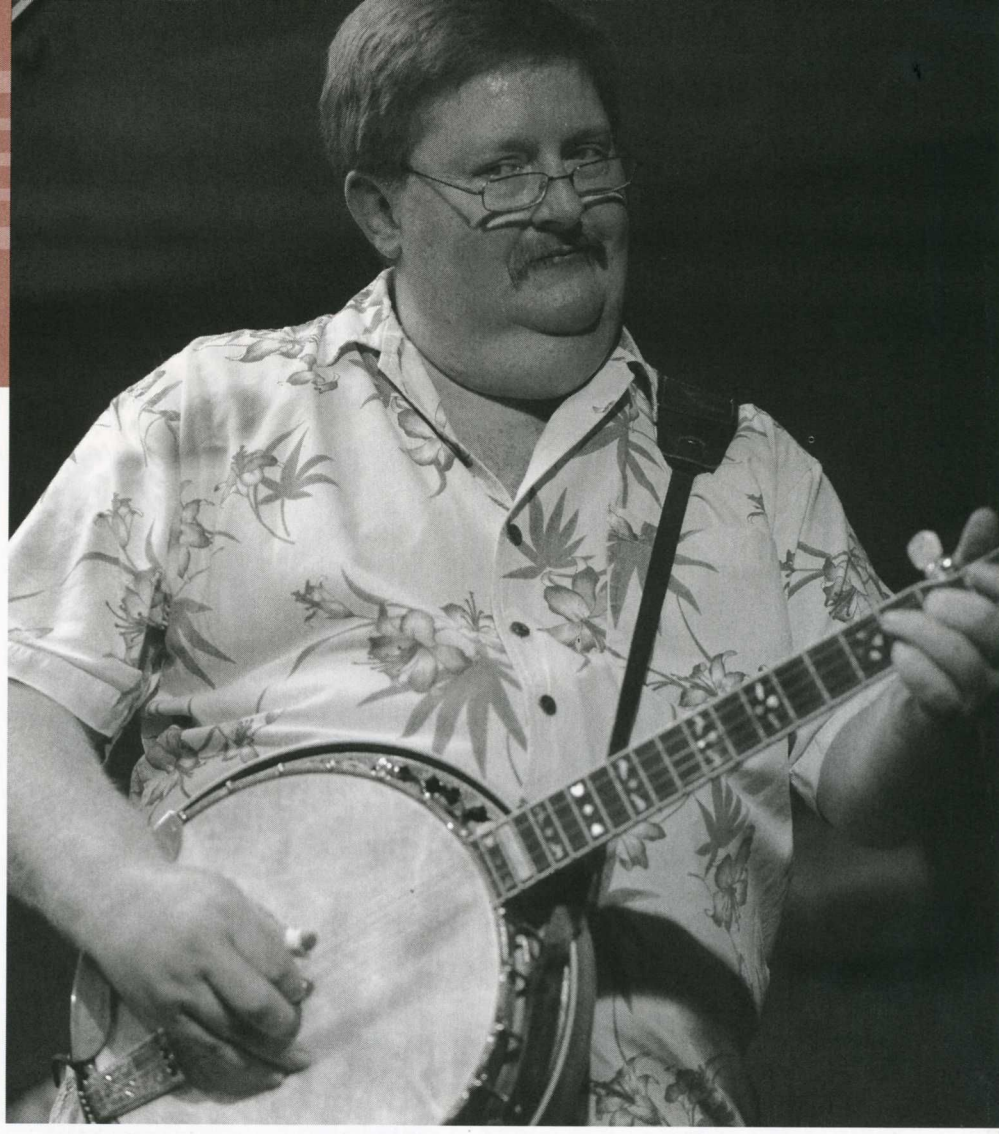


Living in my RV at the plant, I had the opportunity during that time to exercise my other love, photography, at all hours. This selection of images attempts to honor the aesthetics of the process of glassmaking. By removing context, I attempted to hold up the tools of the trade as objects of virtue in their own right. Some of these tools could well date to the factory's inception.

Above: Parts of a roller transport mechanism.
Right: Sign on an outbuilding.

JOHN WINTER is a professional photographer and bead artist who currently makes his home in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. His photography has been featured in *Smithsonian* magazine; his bead work has been featured in numerous magazines and in several museums. This is John's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.


DANGER
NO SMOKING,
MATCHES OR
OPEN LIGHTS



Author Jim Gabehart has played bluegrass banjo for more than 35 years and has performed at the Mountaineer Opry House many times.

Mountaineer Opry House

By Jim Gabehart
Photographs by Tyler Evert

Milton's Home for Bluegrass Music

For generations the Mountaineer Opry House in Milton has been the premier place to see bluegrass·music concerts for people in western West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and southeastern Ohio.

On July 15, 1972, the Opry House opened its doors to begin its heroic run of weekly concerts featuring country, gospel, and bluegrass music. The Mountaineer Opry was built by Paul King adjacent to his residence, located just off the Milton exit of Interstate 64 in Cabell County. Retired following 30 years as a chemical truck driver for Union Carbide's South Charleston plant, Paul was looking for something to supplement his retirement. He had previously operated a pastry shop, owned a grocery store, and shown horses. With no prior experience in the music business, Paul enlisted the help of Eck Gibson not only to perform, but to manage the Opry House in its early years.

Eck Gibson was a blacksmith with the Chessie System Railroad at its Barboursville shop. He was also the leader of the Mountaineer Ramblers, a bluegrass group that included two of his sons: Curt on banjo and Troy on bass, along with Charles Reynolds on mandolin, Elmer Bird on second guitar, and Virgil "Shorty" Ross on fiddle. Many will remember Elmer Bird for his later solo career as the "Banjo Man from Turkey Creek." [See "Elmer Bird: The Banjo Man from Turkey Creek," by Paul Gartner; Summer 1997.]

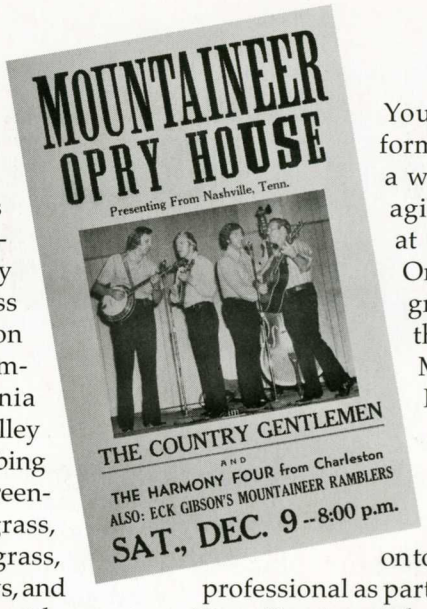
Paul's vision was to establish a show patterned after the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. To properly present this show, he needed a good master of ceremonies. To fill this role, he employed local media professionals

The Teays Valley Boys perform in 2011. From the left are Bobby Taylor, Clarence "Louie" Lewis, Willard Reynolds, Rob Ward, and Kevin Coll.

Tom Zalaski and Jim Roberts. Tom, a news anchor on WOWK-TV Channel 13, and Jim, an engineer with WCHS, shared emcee duties, while Jim also acted as sound engineer during the performances. For many years, Tom and Jim would collaborate to "warm up" the audience. The seating in the Opry House is divided into two sections with a center aisle. The two men would come out together and, after some opening banter, they would stand with one on each side of the audience and bet, usually for a penny, and pride, which of them could get their side to cheer louder.

Also involved in the early years was Bill Browning, owner of Midway Recording, a recording studio operated in Hurricane, Putnam County. A guitar player and songwriter himself, Bill is known as the composer of the popular bluegrass song, "Dark Hollow." Bill's nearby studio recorded and released albums by most of the local artists that appeared on the Mountaineer Opry in the mid-1970's.

The construction and establishment of the Opry House as a viable enterprise was due in no small part to the many local bands who were willing to perform with little monetary remuneration. Bluegrass groups like Eck Gibson & the Mountaineer Ramblers, the West Virginia Gentlemen, the Teays Valley Boys, the Outdoor Plumbing Company, Frog & the Greenhorns, the Sons of Bluegrass, Kanawha Valley Bluegrass, the Laurel Mountain Boys, and Bloomin' Grass, along with country groups like Gwen's Country Jubilee, Denny & Phyllis Crisp, and Randy Mallory & the Country Overtones, and many others, helped to get the Opry House started and left audiences looking forward to the next Saturday night. "In its own way, it was our Grand Ole Opry, and we all were thrilled to step on that stage on Saturday night," recalls fiddler Bobby Taylor, a former member of the Teays Valley Boys.



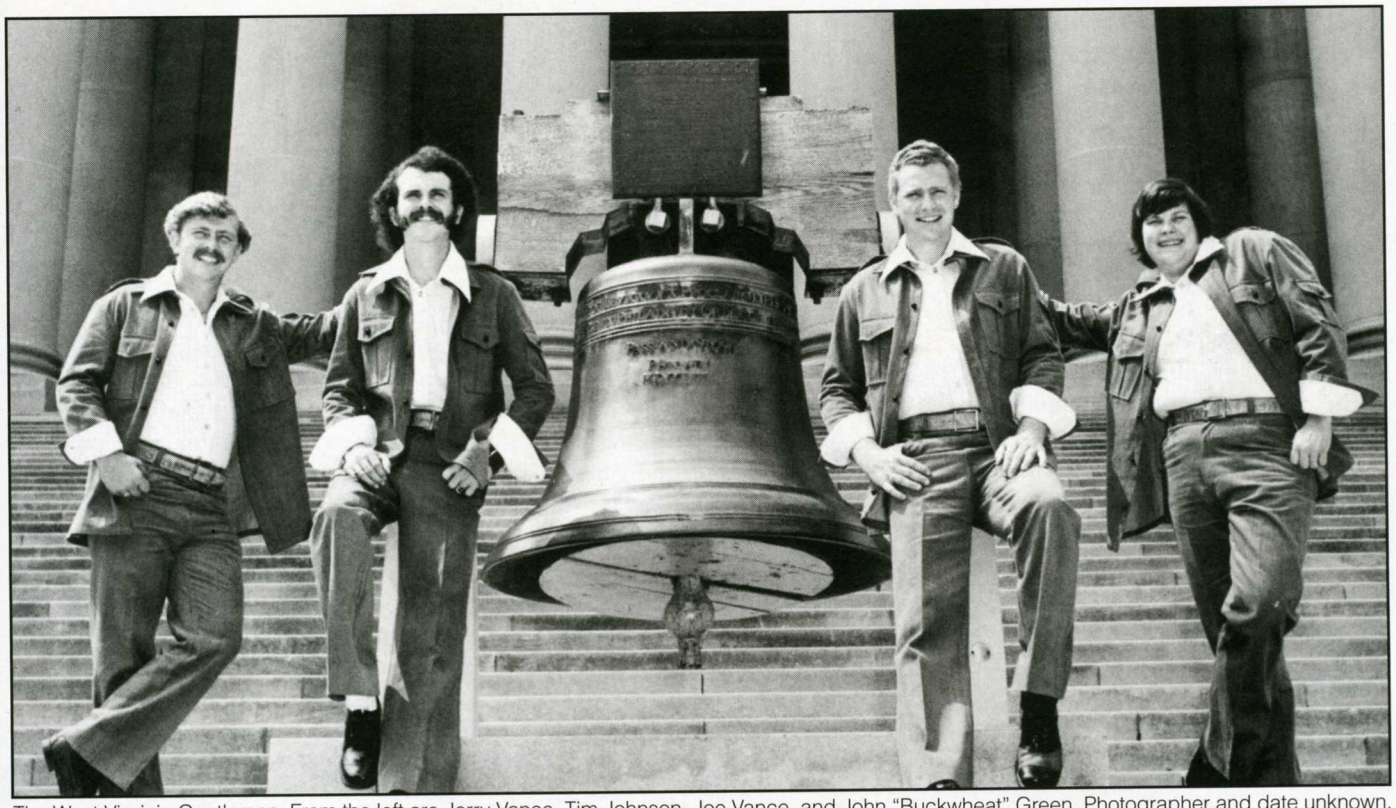
Young and newly formed groups found a warm and encouraging environment at the Opry House. One of these young groups that learned their craft on the Mountaineer Opry House stage was the West Virginia Gentlemen. John "Buckwheat" Green, who went on to become a touring professional as part of the Lonesome River Band, and three friends — Joe and Jerry Vance and Tim Johnson — formed their group as teenagers in the early 1970's. They performed on a monthly basis and quickly became one of the most popular groups at the Opry House. Green remembers that Paul King saw the group's potential and, at his own expense, hired a consultant to coach the young musicians in stage presence and presentation. "For him to do that, it showed us he really wanted to see us grow," Green says. "We really appreciated it and have never forgotten that experience."

With shows that typically started at 7:30 p.m. and often lasted past 11:00 p.m., and at an initial admission cost of $1.50, audiences got their money's worth and then some. In the beginning, the Opry presented mainly local performers, with a professional act appearing once a month on average. As it became more established, however, the Opry House attracted more touring professionals. In the mid-1970's the show operated near capacity, routinely selling standing-room-only tickets for popular groups like Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, the Osborne Brothers, and Jim & Jesse.

Other groups to perform at the Mountaineer Opry House include Ralph Stanley, the Country Gentlemen, J.D. Crowe & the New South, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, the Lonesome River Band, and IIIrd Tyme Out, many of them on a regular basis.

However, by the early 1980's, the crowds had become smaller, and over

Eck Gibson and the Mountaineer Ramblers in about 1972. In the front row are Virgil "Shorty" Ross and Eck Gibson. Standing, from the left, are Charles Reynolds, Troy Gibson, Elmer Bird, and Curt Gibson. Photographer unknown.



The West Virginia Gentlemen. From the left are Jerry Vance, Tim Johnson, Joe Vance, and John "Buckwheat" Green. Photographer and date unknown.

the next decade the shows were no longer held every weekend. For a period of time, Paul King leased the Opry House to another person who operated it, and at various times Paul would rent the facility to musicians or promoters who put on their own shows. It was during this time that the current proprietors, Larry and Mary Stephens, began presenting shows at the Opry House. A guitar player and singer, Larry Stephens was a traditional country music fan and would occasionally visit the Opry House during his days as Cabell County chief deputy sheriff. As Paul's health and energy began to decrease, Larry agreed to take over the operation of the Opry House.

The 1990's saw the Opry House become almost exclusively a bluegrass music venue, in part due to the tastes and demand of audiences, and also due to the infusion of rock and pop sounds into modern country music, much to the dismay of traditional country music fans.

Paul King died on July 8, 2002, at the age of 80, just a week shy of the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Opry House. Unlike Paul, who was not one to take the microphone or perform, Larry Stephens took on the role of announcer, and occasionally has taken the stage as a performer. Twenty years after taking over, Stephens is still presenting a show every Saturday night, with occasional weeks off in the summer.

The Opry House today is a "family" operation, with a small group of loyal volunteers. Larry Stephens is the master of ceremonies, runs the sound system, and performs building maintenance. Mary Stephens has assumed the responsibility for booking performers. Charlie Vaughn usually mans the ticket booth, with assistance from Ralph Hensley. Dr. Michael "Doc" Skeens helps promote the shows by maintaining the Internet Web site and sending out e-mail announcements. Preparing the concession stand, cleaning the bathrooms and floors, and adjusting the heating and/or air conditioning are all part of the pre-show routine every week — not exactly the glamour that comes to mind when the stage lights come on, but a necessary part of keeping the tradition alive at the Mountaineer Opry House.

The Opry House building remains almost exactly as it was when it opened 40 years ago. A rectangular cinderblock structure, it sits back about 200 feet from County Road 13/Mason Road, which connects U.S. Route 60 with Interstate 64. After entering the gravel parking lot and finding a spot, visitors stop at a window on the side of the building to purchase tickets before entering. Tickets are a little more expensive these days than when it opened — $15 for adults, $12 for seniors, and $5 for children — but it still costs less than many other venues where professional groups perform.

The original theater seating installed at the Opry House is still there and accommodates a crowd of 550. Although they were already used when installed 40 years ago, the spring-loaded seats still pop up when not occupied and are still spacious and comfortable. Aside from the addition of a portrait of Bill Monroe many years ago, the stage has remained the same, including a wagon wheel and an old upright piano that has seen little use in the past 30 years. In the

early days, the stage curtains were closed while the performers positioned themselves, only to step forth as the curtains opened and launch into their show. The curtains aren't drawn at the beginning and end of the shows these days, but they hang at the sides of the stage, remaining as a decoration and nostalgic reminder of their earlier use.

At the back of the room, behind the seating, are the concession area, bathrooms, and artist sales area where groups display their recordings, publicity photos, T-shirts, and other merchandise. During intermission at midpoint of the show, this area is elbow-to-elbow with fans buying merchandise, getting photos, autographs, hot dogs and popcorn, or just visiting with each other.

The facility is showing its age in some respects, and is badly in need of a new roof. In recent years, a common sight has been the appearance of buckets and other receptacles around the room to catch leaks during shows on rainy nights. Such things may not make a good impression on newer visitors, but they are no deterrent to the die-hard bluegrass fans who know and appreciate the Opry's history.

Audiences at the Opry House have the reputation of being knowledgeable, attentive, and enthusiastic, often not content to wait until the end of a song to applaud or cheer a good instrumental solo. Playing in a comfortable setting, over a well-run sound system, for an audience that knows bluegrass music and gives its undivided attention, makes the Opry House a highlight on any band's schedule.

Unlike the Opry's early days, most recent shows consist of a single touring professional group. "My greatest regret is that we can no longer afford to pay an opening group," states Larry Stephens. This takes away an opportunity for most local groups, and for younger and newer groups in particular, to get that experience.

Looking back over the past 40 years, there are as many memories and stories as there have been shows, performers, and audience members. Larry Stephens, recalling one of Bill Monroe's visits to the Opry House, recounted that "Bill recently had

A full house and an appreciative audience greet another bluegrass band on a recent night at the Mountaineer Opry House.

broken his arm, but he stepped on the stage, with a cast on his arm, put on a great show." Larry still remembers with fondness how Monroe, once he learned that his booking agent had not maintained contact with Stephens, quickly remedied the situation by giving Stephens his home telephone number with instructions to call him directly in the future to make sure a regular visit to the Opry House stayed on the Blue Grass Boys' schedule.

Much of the background and historical research for this article was provided by newspaper articles, show posters, and promotional literature that was collected and preserved by Milton resident and mandolin player Willard Reynolds. Willard recalls sitting backstage and watching through a window at the side of the stage, which was where the sound system controls were originally located, while his heroes were on stage performing.

"It was a thrill to be in the middle of all of that great music as I was learning to be a performing musician," Willard says. Taught by his father, who was mandolin player with Eck Gibson's Mountaineer Ramblers, Willard went on to play regularly at the Opry House with the Teays Valley Boys, and later with Free Spirit, the Outdoor Plumbing Company, Dave Evans & River Bend, and others.

At 76, Larry Stephens can envision a day when the show might end, but he doesn't foresee that happening anytime soon. When that day does come and the stage lights are turned off forever, the Mountaineer Opry House should be remembered for its important role in the history of bluegrass music in West Virginia.

For more information, visit http://mountaineeropry.com or phone (304)743-5749.

JIM GABEHART was born and raised in South Charleston, graduating from South Charleston High School, Marshall University, and West Virginia College of Law. Jim is presently the assistant prosecutor for Lincoln County. An award-winning bluegrass banjo player, Jim is a staff correspondent for BluegrassToday.com. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

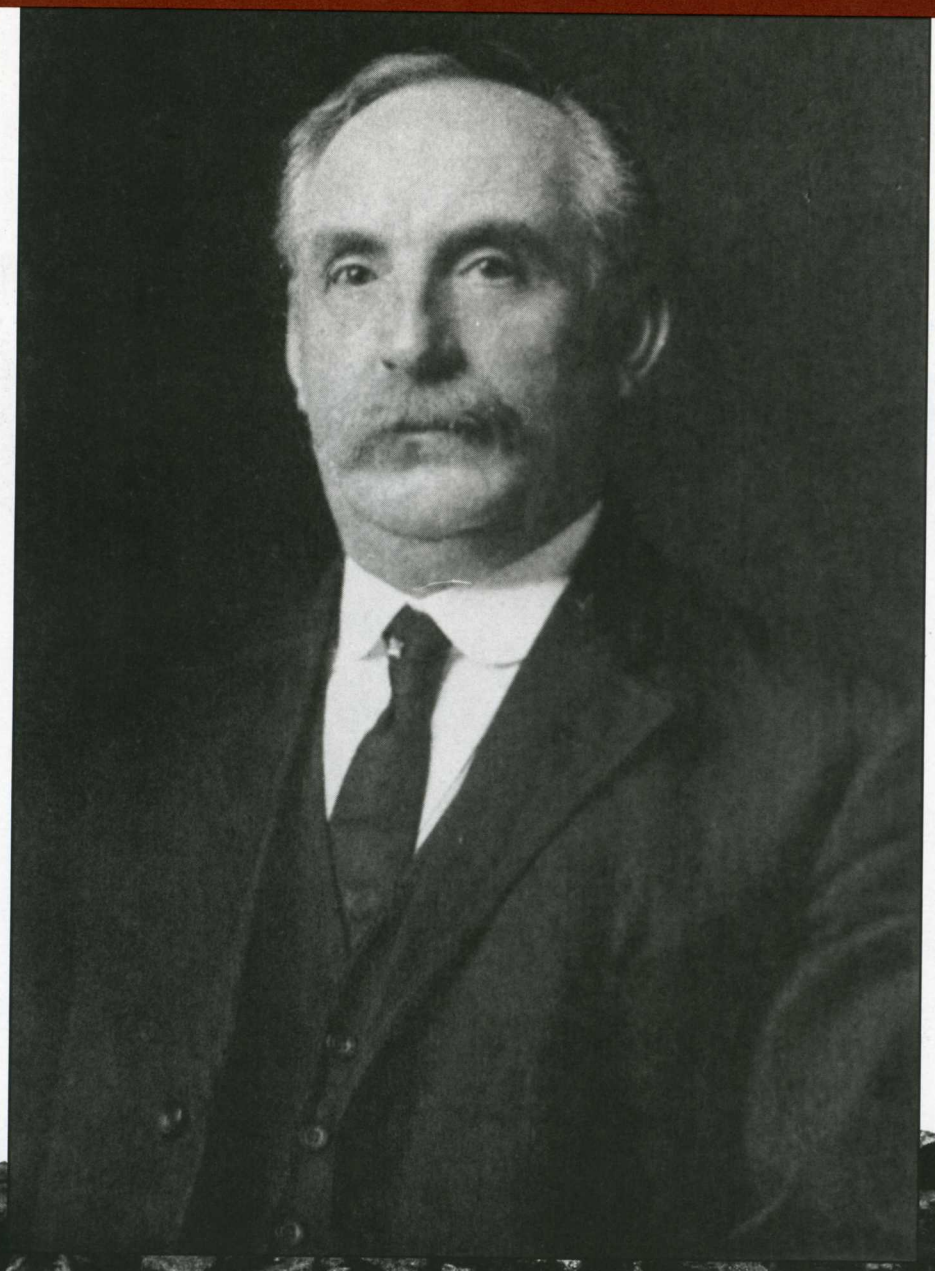
TYLER EVERT is staff photographer for the West Virginia Division of Culture and History.

Mary and Larry Stephens have managed the Opry since 2002. Mary handles the bookings while Larry serves as emcee, sound engineer, and building maintenance supervisor. Larry is also a performer.

Putney

"Model" Coal Town in Kanawha County

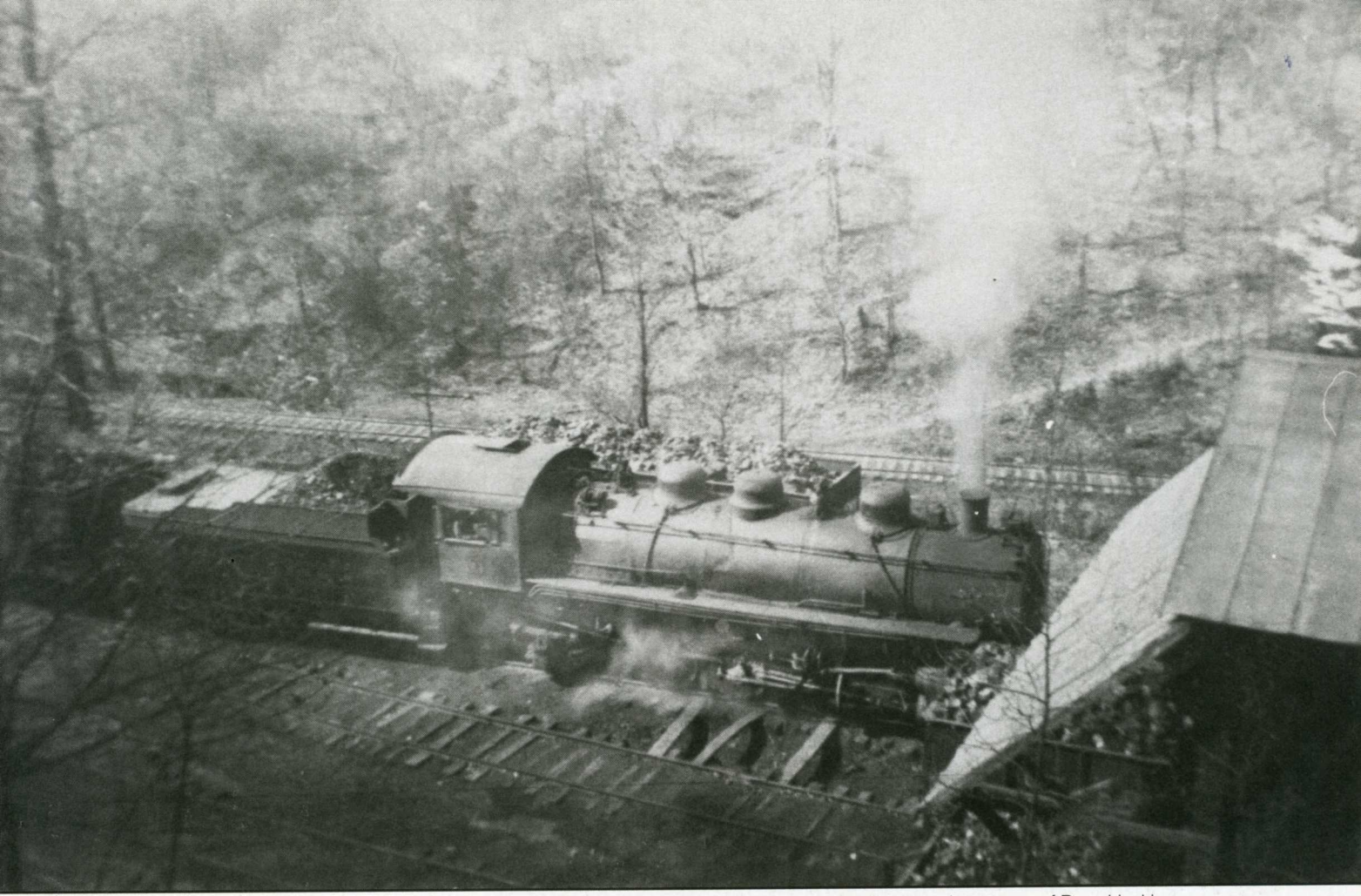
By Todd A. Hanson



Home, our childhood home, will always be a special place. A place of innocence, where all our hopes and dreams lay ahead. Here the seeds of lifelong friendships were sown, hardships shared, and our parents are forever young. The carefree days may be long past and sadly missed, but have left a profound impression defining who we are and what we have become.

For Richard Howard, 83, of Collingswood, New Jersey, the small town of Putney, Kanawha County, will always be home. This former mining community at the headwaters of Campbells Creek in eastern Kanawha County exists only in the memories of its past inhabitants. For the first half of the 20th century, however, this bustling coal community was home to thousands. Since that time all have moved on and nature has reclaimed the site. Only a few crumbling ruins remain. Daffodils that once adorned residents' yards return each spring to gently remind us of this long-ago place.

Alexander Moseley Putney, for whom the town of Putney was named. Photograph circa 1911.



Campbells Creek Railroad engine No. 11, approaching the Putney No. 1 coal tipple, circa 1940. Photograph courtesy of Rose Linski.

"All the houses and buildings I remember so well are all gone," Richard says. "I can see everything in my mind's eye. For the most part, I have a poor memory of my early life, but for some reason I can see everything in Putney as clear as I can see a picture today."

For Richard Howard, it all began September 1929, when he was born the first child of coal miner Espie Howard and his young bride, Roberta. Two years later Richard's brother Joe was born, completing their immediate family. Like most, the Howard family lived in company housing, shopped at the company store, and attended the Putney school. This continued throughout the 1930's.

Things began to change for the Howards in 1942. Espie and Roberta purchased a house of their own and moved the family five miles down the hollow, just north of Cinco. "Rather than change school for just six or seven weeks, [Joe and I] finished the year at Putney," Richard explains. "I was in the seventh grade. Dad still worked at Putney but now had to ride the train. After school finished I left Putney forever."

Incorporated in 1865, the Campbells Creek Coal Company concentrated their initial efforts on the lower portion of the creek, near the Kanawha River. The town of Putney was the result of the company's efforts to develop a new sector of coal land, situated several miles beyond their previous frontier.

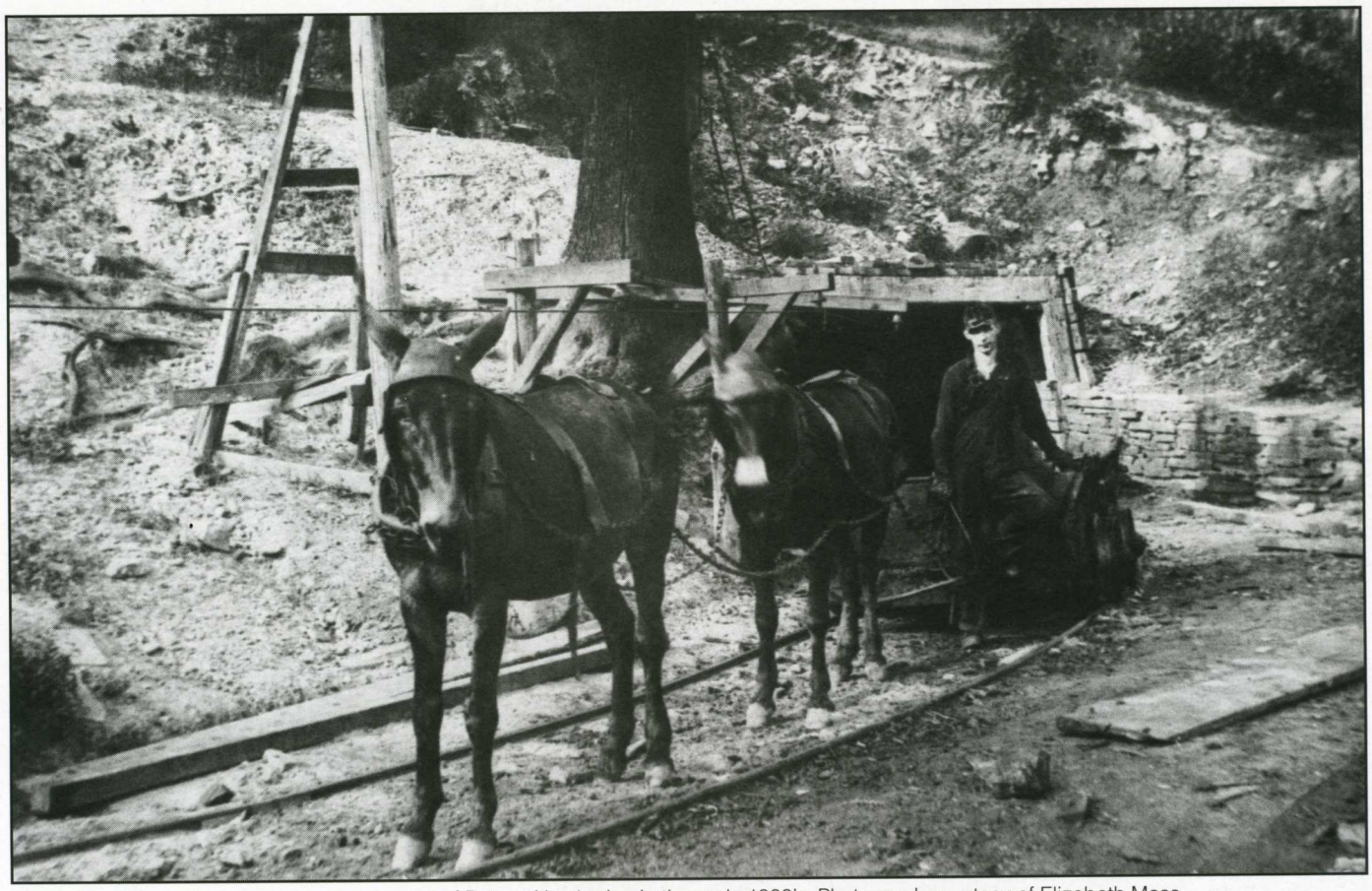
Named in honor of coal company manager Alexander Moseley Putney,

The company store at Putney was a center of activity. Alexander Moseley Putney, at right, stands with his staff of clerks outside the store in about 1912. Photograph courtesy of Kay Duncan.

this ambitious expansion would require extending the company's short line railroad; building worker housing, store, school, and church; and providing all the amenities to sustain life in this remote location. Operational facilities would eventually include two coal tipples, stables, blacksmith shop, mine shop, carpenter shop, motor barn, electrical power substation, rail yard, tram roads, sand house, powder house, mine fans, and water reservoir.

The first shipment of coal was made in 1902, and, in less than three years, production steadily increased to well over 100,000 tons per year. This marked the beginning of what would become one of the area's larger coal producing centers and the pride of the Campbells Creek Coal Company. For nearly a half-century, Putney prospered, employing at its peak nearly 400 miners and boasting a population of around 1,500. This all ended in 1951 when the mine shut down. The company store closed, and rail service was discontinued. Putney quickly became a ghost town.

Richard Howard never had a desire to work in the mines. He served in the U.S. Air Force and became a mechanic on fighter planes. He later went to aeronautics school and became a flight engineer. Working for Overseas National, a charter airline, his job took him around the world three times, over a career that spanned more than two decades. Richard remembers, "In those days it was expected that when you grew up you'd go to work in the mines. At that time I didn't know what I'd do, but I knew I'd never go in the mines." He left West Virginia in 1957



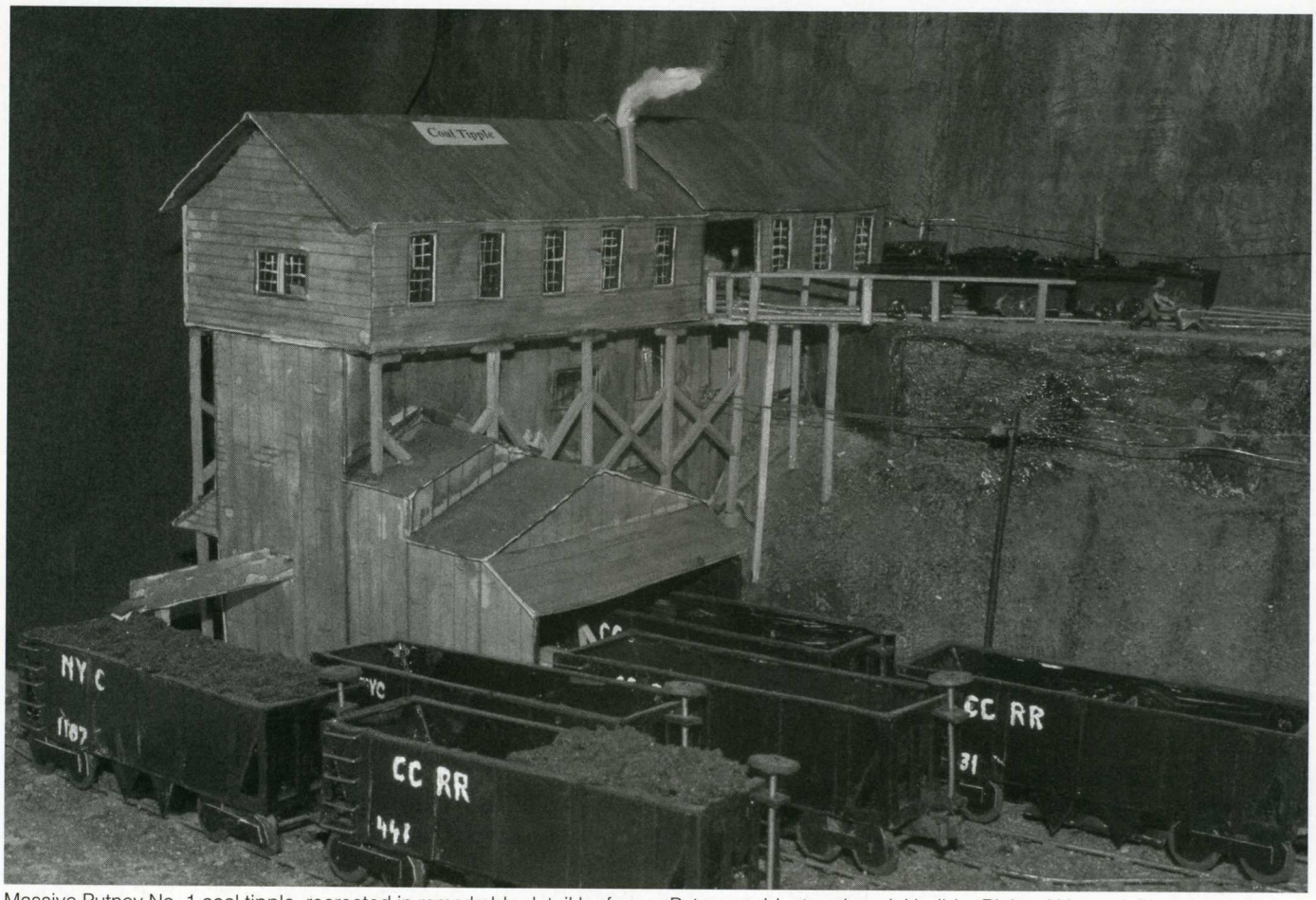
Jimmy Henderson driving a team of mules out of Putney No. 1 mine in the early 1900's. Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Moss.

and returned only briefly in 1965. Since that time he has resided in New Jersey.

Memories of Putney remained in his heart, however, and he eventually began recreating the town in miniature. Over a period of years, his detailed model — measuring 84 inches long, 26 inches wide, and 12 inches tall — grew to include more than 30 structures.

"I dreamed of building the town, but didn't know how I'd go about it," Richard says. "I started to use wood, but discovered the stiff cardboard packing paper that came in a package of Fifth Avenue candy bars." He began to draw every last detail, cutting and fitting them into three-dimensional works of art. Soon the little village began to come back to life.

With painstaking care and attention to the smallest detail, and fueled by a grand imagination, Richard fitted his childhood town back together. He laid the railroad tracks through the center of the camp, one by one, using wooden match sticks as ties. The rails are made of a stiff wire, covered with dark-colored sand resembling coal debris. Lollipop sticks line the road, carrying small copper electrical wire to each and every structure. Picket fences cut from popsicle sticks surround the lawns, just as they did back then. A piece of broom handle makes the boiler of the old steam engine, a soda straw its stack. Button snaps create the wheels of the locomotive and railcars. Cotton balls stream from the chimneys as smoke and steam from the coal tipple. You can see the mine motor emerging from the drift mouth, pulling a string of loaded



Massive Putney No. 1 coal tipple, recreated in remarkable detail by former Putney resident and model builder Richard Howard. Photograph by Todd A. Hanson.

coal cars on the tram road above the tipple. The stone wall leading to the store was carefully laid, one pebble at a time. Outhouses, chicken coops, sheds, and shops complete the fullness of everyday life. Of the many people depicted, Richard is quick to point out his mother in a pink dress, standing on the porch of his boyhood home.

The company store was the hub of the community. "It was more than just a store," Richard says. "This building housed groceries, dry goods, hardware, furniture, feed-and-seed, just about anything you could imagine. They called it IGA — Independent Grocers Association — but was owned and operated by the coal company," Richards says, laughing. "The miners used to say it stood for 'I Get All,' since it was the only one in the camp." The company store also served as the post office, mine office, scrip exchange, and railroad depot.

Located next to the store was the boarding house or clubhouse, as it was called, where many of the single men stayed. This large, two-story, wood-framed structure was much like a hotel, featuring a huge dining room and lobby. Guests were offered meals and bedding. "Uncle Bud [Leftwich] and Aunt Thelma lived on the main floor," Richard says. "Upstairs there were a number of guest rooms. Any stranger that spent the night in Putney most likely stayed here. They had a full-size bathroom with

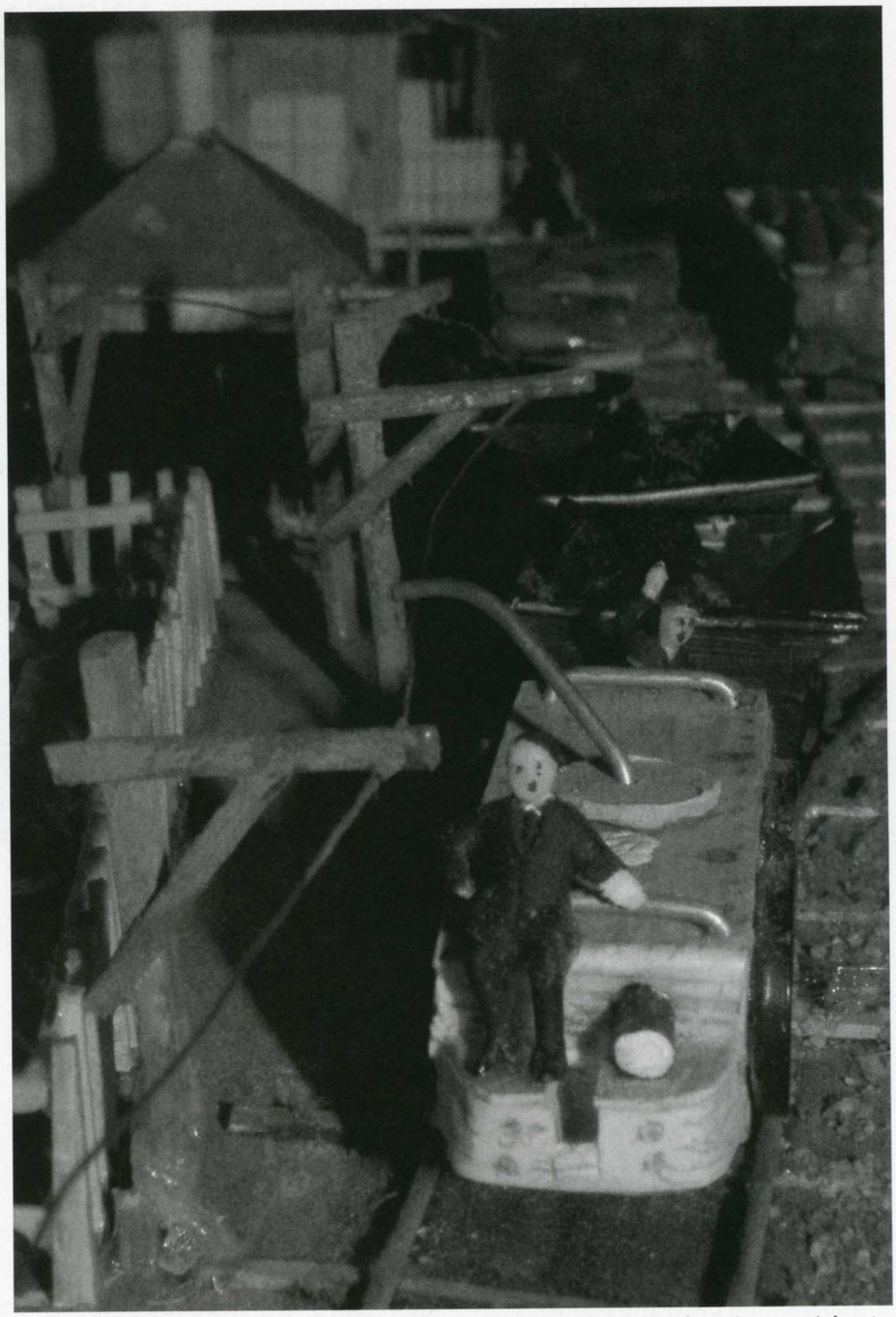
hot-and-cold running water. That was something in those days. All the houses in Putney had electricity, but we didn't have much use for it. Other than lighting, we only used electric for the radio. All the houses used coal for cooking and heating."

There was only one church building in town, and it was shared by both the Methodist and Baptist denominations. These two congregations worshiped side-by-side, letting Baptists have full control of the services for one week and then turning the services over to the Methodists for the next week. This arrangement continued with the support of both sets of members throughout the existence of the community.

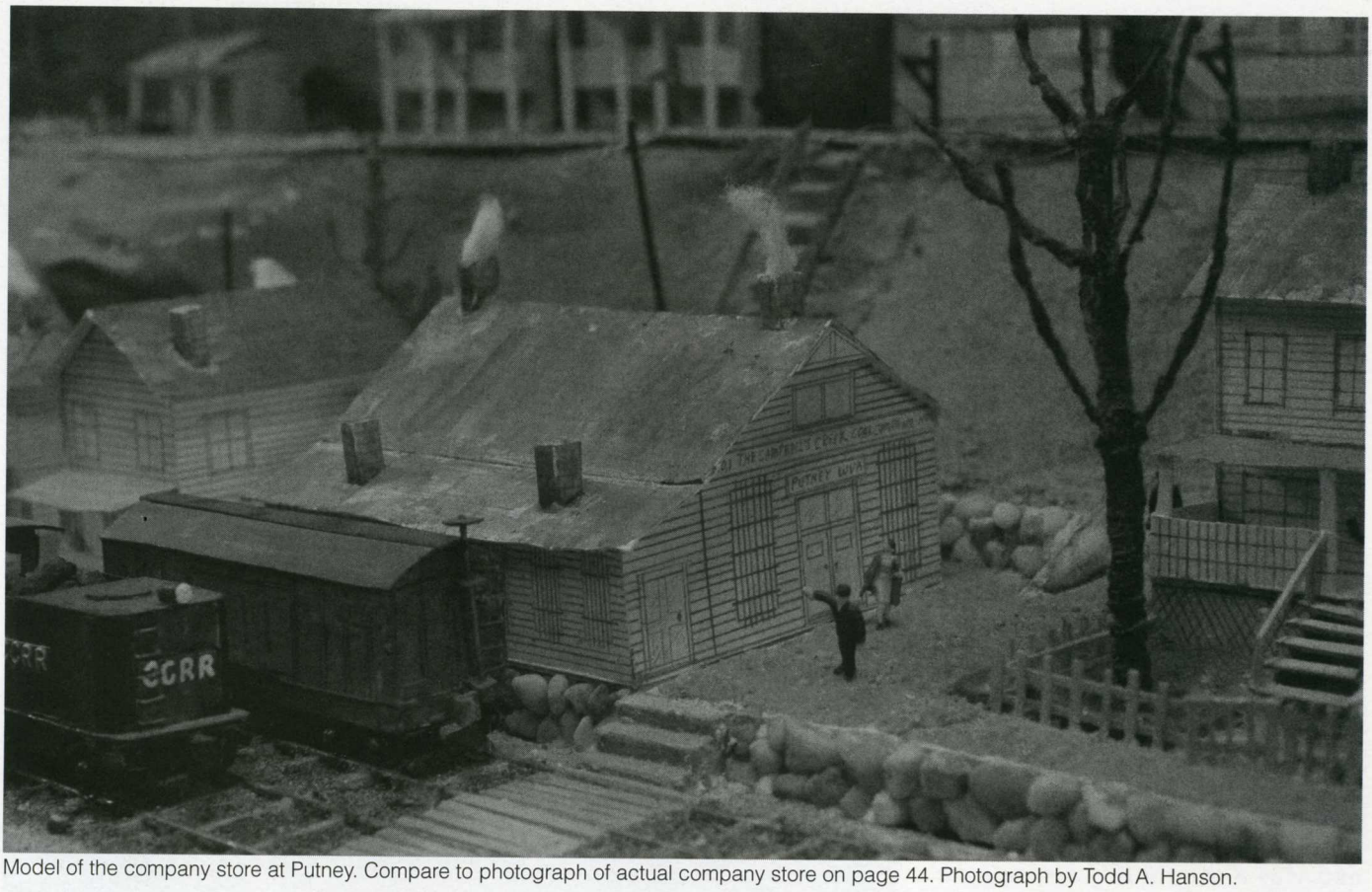
Another outstanding feature in Putney was the lodge building. Situated next to the church, this two-story building was used by such fraternal organizations as the Improved Order of Red Men. It also served as a meeting place for the United Mine Workers of America Local #2347 and was a community recreational activities building.

Movies were shown there on a weekly basis throughout the 1930's and '40's. "Saturday night was the most exciting time of the week. We were all cleaned and dressed in our best overalls. Nothing could keep us away from the Saturday movies," Richard recalls. "Once in a while we'd get a Gene Autry or Roy Rogers movie. In those days, for us they were the tops."

Howard's handiwork features many little details, all of which have a story of their own. Like the old truck loaded with mine posts. The isolated community was served only by the



The model uses household items to depict objects, people, and activities from the now-defunct coal community of Putney. This detail shows the main line motor crew hauling coal. Photograph by Todd A. Hanson.



Model of the company store at Putney. Compare to photograph of actual company store on page 44. Photograph by Todd A. Hanson.

company-owned railroad, which made two passenger trips daily. "There was a way to get to Putney by automobile, but you could hardly call it a road," Richard says. "Most of the road just ran through the creek bed. It appeared the road was never made, it just evolved."

Richard points out within the layout a model of his Uncle Howard driving a team of mules, pulling a wagon. "Uncle Howard was in charge of taking care of the barn and mules. They also had wagons there; some were used to deliver coal and groceries to the houses." Other small details include a tiny bell inside the church steeple and Mount Desert fire tower in the distant background he painted himself.

To think all this time and effort was almost tossed away! I received a letter from Mr. Howard some time ago, telling how he was considering getting rid of his village. "I live in an apartment now, and space is tight," he wrote. He asked if I was interested, should he give it to me. I was honored and excited to have the model. We began making plans to get together. I met Mr. Howard about halfway between his house and mine, near Hagerstown, Maryland. My desire was to rescue this piece of hometown heritage and see it preserved. The model was cleaned and restored, and a wooden display case with Plexiglas top and front was built. With the help of Amherst/Madison, the last coal operator of Putney, the model was recently donated to the Exhibition Coal Mine museum in Beckley. The staff at the museum added lights to the showcase and provided it with a permanent home.

Richard Howard's detailed model of Putney is now on permanent display at the Exhibition Coal Mine museum at Beckley. Photograph by Todd A. Hanson.

Today Putney is still a locally well-known place, tucked away from the noise of everyday life. Here ATV riders explore the vast network of roads and trails left behind from the mining, logging, and drilling industries. The only inhabitants now are a large array of wildlife such as deer, bear, and wild turkey. Vegetation once again covers the scarred land, and returning visitors are becoming fewer and fewer. To them, however, Putney will always be that special place filled with fond memories — the place they once called "home."

Author Todd A. Hanson at left, with model builder Richard Howard, in 2010. Photograph by Stephen D. Hanson.

TODD A. HANSON, author of *Campbells Creek: A Portrait of a Coal Mining Community*, is a sixth-generation native of Campbells Creek. His father, Randall, was born in a coal company house at Putney. Todd's articles and photographs have been published in *Wonderful West Virginia*, *West Virginia Hillbilly*, *Blue Ridge Country*, and *West Virginia Mountain Majesty*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Everett R. Cooper was born in Gilmer County in 1878. He graduated from Glenville Normal Teachers College in 1904, studied in Cincinnati for a year, then transferred to West Virginia University. He graduated from West Virginia University and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Baltimore, in 1912. There were seven in his class.

Dr. Cooper set up general practice at Webster Springs. Six months later he accepted the job as physician for the Pardee & Curtin Lumber Company in Leivasy, Nicholas County. In 1914 he set up an office in Troy, Gilmer County. In 1934 he moved to Glenville but later accepted a position as medical doctor at Weston State Hospital.

During his tenure at Weston, he became interested in psychiatry. So he went to Marion, Virginia, and studied under a prominent psychiatrist there. Upon completion of his studies, he went to Spencer State Hospital and later moved to Gallipolis, Ohio, and worked in the mental hospital there. Sometime later, Dr. Cooper moved back to Weston to work at Weston State Hospital. He and his family lived in a physician's apartment in the main building on the hospital grounds until he reached retirement age.

After several years of retirement, Dr. Cooper was asked to come back to the hospital to continue working. As his sight was failing, he had a special secretary to help him until he finally retired in 1961, at the age of 82. He passed away in 1976.

In 1967, he was interviewed by his granddaughter Willa Jane Loftis at his home in Troy. Willa Jane graciously shares Dr. Cooper's memories with GOLDENSEAL. —ed.

Memories of a Country Doctor

TYLER EVERT

By E.R. Cooper, M.D.
As told to Willa Jane Loftis

TYLER EVERT

I started to practice medicine in 1912. The first morning I was on duty, I had scarcely finished my breakfast when they brought in a man who had fallen about 25 feet. Examination showed that he was not seriously hurt. I had scarcely finished with him when they brought in another man who had fallen in the same place, and he was not seriously hurt.

I was not done with him when I got a call to go about two miles to see a woman who got her clothes burned off her. She was making apple butter outside and got her clothes afire. She had a girl helping her, but the girl got scared and could do nothing. The woman ran one way a little distance and then the other way a distance. Then it occurred to her there was a little pool of water nearby. She jumped in that and rolled over and extinguished the fire. She was burned over the greater portion of her body, but nearly all the burns were superficial. There was much fear among her people lest the fact she got in water would make her burns worse. That proved to be unfounded, and she made satisfactory recovery.

In March following, I was called about two miles on a Sunday morning to attend a childbirth. The patient was a young woman, unmarried, and was in convulsions before I was called. I told the family of her serious condition and that I ought to have help. Fortunately, a nurse had been employed nearby and had finished her case and was ready to leave. They asked me if she would be any help to me, and I said she certainly would. We got her, and she was much help. I treated this patient with *veratrum viride*, which was approved treatment for such cases at that time. After

Dr. Everett R. Cooper on horseback, circa 1925. Photograph courtesy of West Virginia State Archives, Dr. E.R. Cooper Collection.

several more convulsions, the baby was born. The baby did well and the mother did not die. That was better than average of such cases.

There were two boarding houses in the town where I stayed. One was called Delmonico's. The other one was nicknamed the Orphans' Home. I boarded at the Orphans' Home. About 50 men boarded there, and naturally a lot of food was served. It wasn't always just what I would like to eat, but it was what I got and what I ate. Occasionally I got out among the farmers and got a meal that I liked better than what I got at the boarding house.

The boarding fee was only $15 a month, not very much. I remember two of the boarders at one time were talking about what they wanted to eat. One said he expected to have at least one mess of beef each year, even if beef cost a dollar a pound. A dollar a pound was unthinkable at that time, although it's quite common now. We ate beans, potatoes, and some kind of meat usually.

The first winter I was there in Curtin, they had two little snows that didn't amount to a great deal. The next fall, I think the 10th of November, I woke up one Sunday morning and the snow was 20 inches deep and still coming down. The snow came down steadily all day and was still 20 inches deep in the evening. Now that was in the valley at the junction of Hominy Creek and Grassy Creek. The snow drifted in places. After a while a thaw came and part of the snow went away. The rest settled, and a layer froze. Another snow came and drifted over those same drifts. That process continued periodically until April before the roads were clear of snow.

I traveled by foot, on horse, on a log train, or on somebody's sled or wagon — any way to get to my patients. My traveling frequently was not very good. Sometimes I would be riding on my horse, his front feet would go down and his chest would hit the hardened snow drift while his rear feet were still on top.

I had several horses in my time. One was Ray, one was Rex, one was Charlie, and another or two, but I don't remember the names of all of them. I carried some drugs and a few instruments with me. I carried some things that were not customary for a doctor to carry at that time. Used to be the doctors carried a thing called a pill bag on their horses. I never did use them. I knew they wouldn't carry the things I wanted to carry, so I had a pair of plain old saddle bags, and I loaded such things in them as I thought I would need.

There was a trail there in Nicholas County that I traveled frequently

Log home where Everett Cooper was born in 1889. Photograph 1915 by Sidney Wooddell Cooper.

about two miles long and not a house on it. I went down that trail one night in August, and then the next morning I started up that same trail. I didn't get very far until I found a dead rattlesnake somebody had killed. The dead snake was approximately five feet long — the biggest part of it was as big around as the calf of my leg. I said, "I'd rather see you dead today than alive last night." I didn't have any snake boots on — it was too hot to wear them.

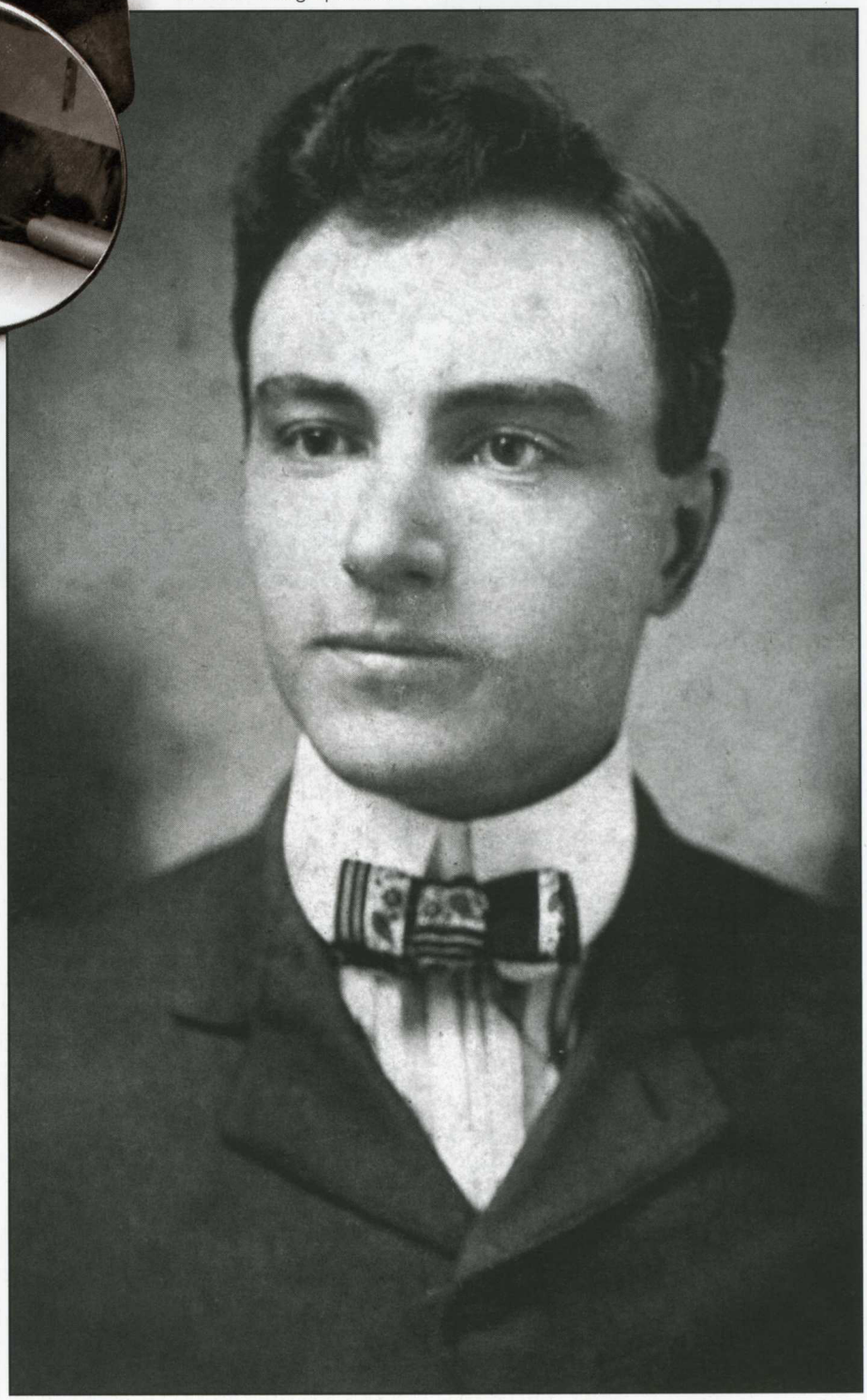
After staying in Nicholas County about two years, I came to Gilmer County in 1914. After I had been here about a year, I was called to attend a woman who was in confinement. She was the wife of a local merchant. I was not consulted until she was already in labor. I found the baby to be turned crossways, so I told the husband I would need the help of another doctor.

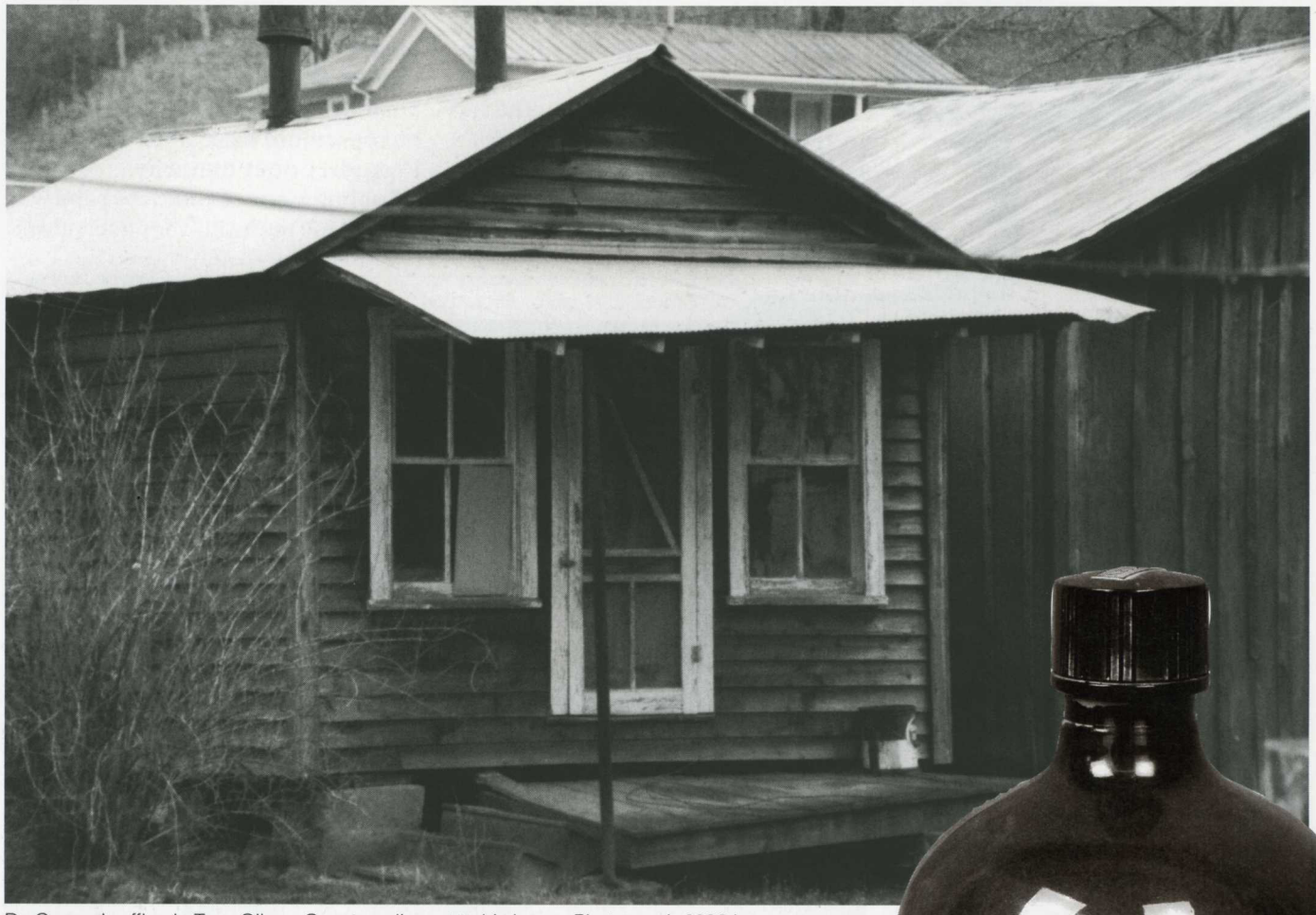
He didn't have a telephone in his house. I think he went to his store. He was gone quite a while. There were five physicians within a distance of not more than two miles, but he came back to report that he had called all of them, but failed to get any of the five. There was an Irish doctor about 15 miles away who promised to come, however. We knew it would take him some time to get there. He was traveling by horseback. It was night and in the fall, and we had bad roads.

In the meantime, I had succeeded in getting a finger around the baby's leg and brought down a foot. So by the time he had got back and gave his report, I told him I could take care of it. I was able to turn the baby until it could be born feet first. He replied that he would rather it be born head first. Well, I would, too, but he should have understood that I couldn't do it that way.

Labor progressed, and the baby was born all but the head. The husband and

Everett Cooper as a young teacher before graduating from Glenville Normal School. Photograph circa 1904.





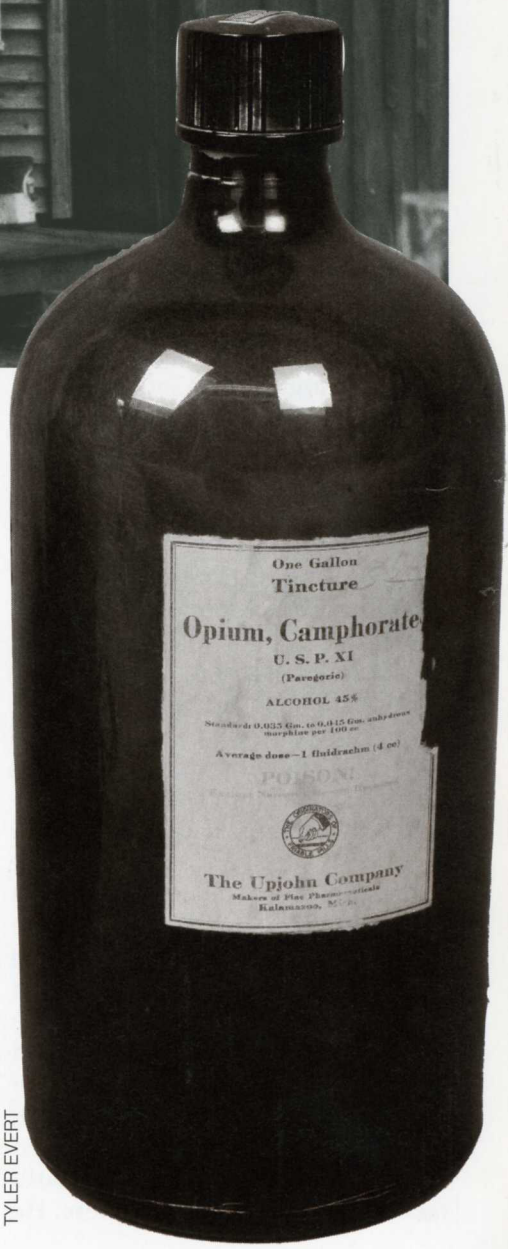
Dr. Cooper's office in Troy, Gilmer County, adjacent to his home. Photograph 2006 by Letitia (Massey) Dubusky.

the two women in attendance told me she would have to rest a while. I told them I couldn't do that — the baby would die in that condition, couldn't live but a few minutes. I almost had to fight the three of them in order to deliver that baby in time to keep it from dying. After I had things well under control, the doctor who had to come such a distance arrived.

I had some adventures in Gilmer County crossing swollen streams and driving icy hillsides. One time I was called on a cold night to see another doctor's patient. The other doctor was old and didn't want to be out on such a bad night. I went. Before I got there, I was to cross a stream where the water was several inches deep. My horse's feet would break the ice, but when he went to move forward, the ice would catch his leg, and he couldn't make it. I got a long pole and tried to break the ice, but couldn't. I would've had to cross the same stream again before getting to the house where I was to go, but I remembered one time I had traveled a path around a hillside above a high cliff, so I thought I would try it. Fortunately, my horse was very solid for traveling on ice. The path was a hard path traveling down over about a half-inch of dry snow. I couldn't have walked there, but the horse did and didn't have any trouble.

I got to the place where I was to go, but was not able to do much for the patient. I spent most of the night turning around in front of a coal fire. One side would be hot to the fire while the other side would be cold.

I hadn't been in my new location in Gilmer County very long until the physicians at Weston State Mental Hospital published a report in the



TYLER EVERT

medical journal on a case of pellagra. I was taught that pellagra was a disease appropriate in the South, although I had known some persons in Gilmer and nearby counties to be very much interested and somewhat afraid of it.

I managed to interview this physician there at Weston State Hospital and learned some things about it that I did not know. This patient of theirs was a young woman — a mental patient by reason of pellagra. She made a good recovery. She married. Then her husband's sisters all came there to pay him $1,000 if he'd divorce his wife. He agreed and divorced her, collected the $1,000, and remarried her.

Some years later I was called to see a brother of this same patient. They were not poor people, but it was their custom to live on a diet very low in protein food. This brother had an advanced case of pellagra. He was almost past the ability to take food. I tried to do what I could for him, but in a few days he killed himself with a shotgun.

In the meantime, I had seen a few other cases of pellagra. One was a man past middle age. He was not a poor man — in fact, he could raise $10,000 on a day's notice. But likewise he had been living on a meager diet and he had tuberculosis. He died, but tuberculosis was the main cause of his death.

I saw a child who had pellagra. It was in the summertime. She would go without shoes. She washed her feet one night. Next morning, all the top part of her feet was in acute dermatitis. Using a common expression, they were raw. I gave her such treatment as I could and got a change in her diet, and she made a good recovery. She grew up and she married, and in her first confinement she had twins.

I saw another woman who had pellagra. She was a woman past middle life, but she died of cancer after her recovery from pellagra. Cancer of the breast was her main problem.

I had another one, a mental patient. She was probably 45. She had pellagra and diabetes. There was no essential conflict in the treatment of diabetes and pellagra. She made a good recovery on the pellagra, and her mental condition and her diabetes were under control.

Pellagra was quite easy to identify. It would be on the top surface of the feet, on the backs of the hands, and around the neck. The spots on both the hands or both the feet would be almost identical. I remember one patient I had was scarcely in middle life, had been on a restricted self-imposed diet, and she had an acute case. I got the diet changed. The neighbors were all helpful and she made a good recovery.

One time I was called to see a man who had a broken arm. It was broken up next to his shoulder, in fact, up in the shoulder flesh where I couldn't actually find the break. This man had relatives in Doddridge and Harrison counties, and I tried to get him to go stay with some of them and get to a doctor who had X-ray advisers and had experience with that kind of thing, but he would not go. He wanted me to treat him, and at his insistence, I did. He was not very cooperative in the course of his treatment. After the bone had united and the function of the arm was somewhat impaired, he threatened to sue me for damage. However, he changed his mind and didn't sue and didn't get any damage either.

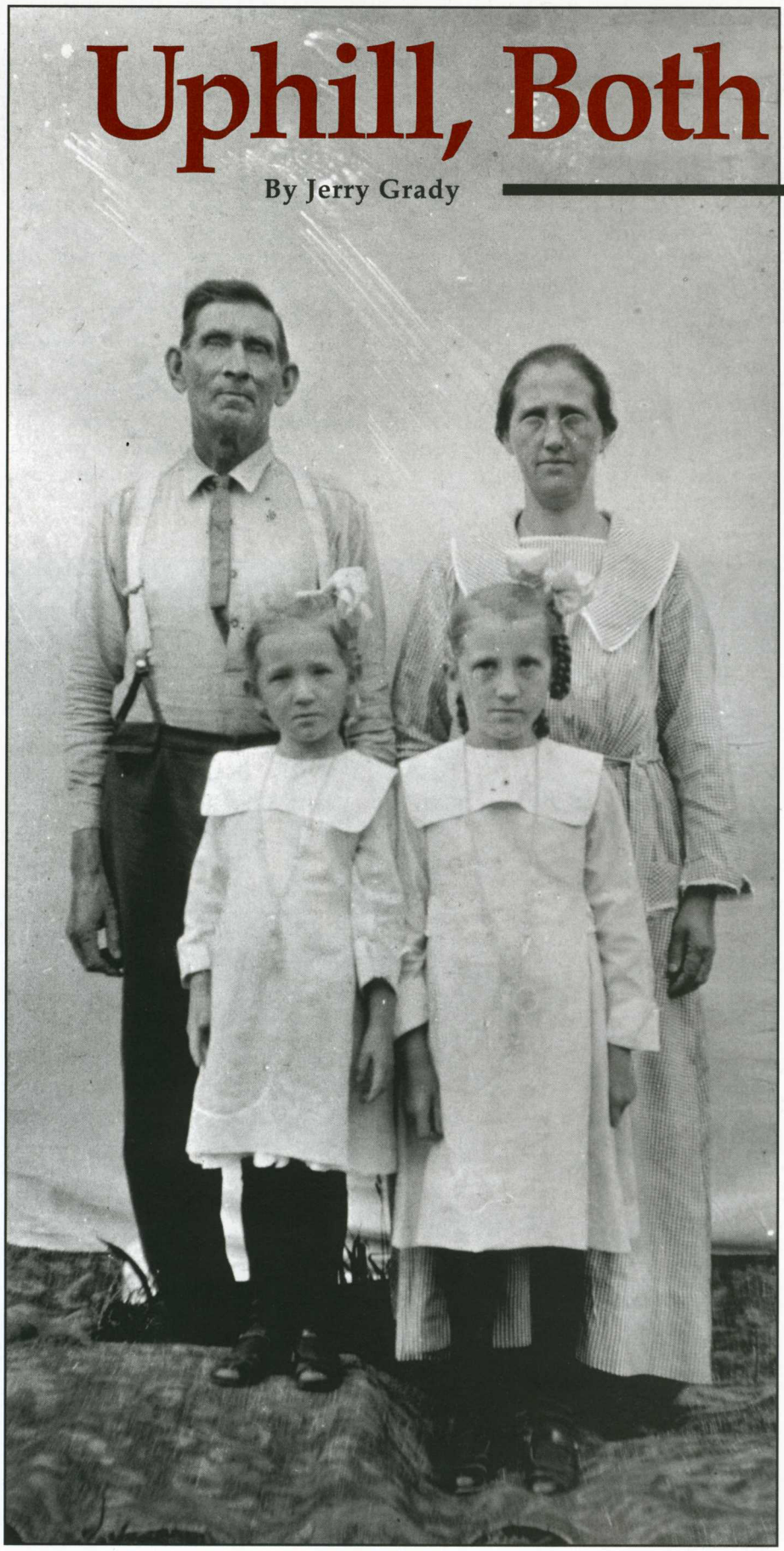
Dr. Cooper with his wife, Cecil, circa 1960.

Uphill, Both Ways

By Jerry Grady

My mother, Georgia Elizabeth Stewart, and her younger sister, Lenora Evelyn Stewart, walked six miles to school, literally uphill, both ways. In the 1930's these two teens overcame what would be insurmountable odds by today's standards to complete their education.

The *Jackson Herald* newspaper published the following article about them in 1938:



Evelyn, at left, and Georgia Stewart with their parents, George and Lizzie, in Jackson County during the late 1920's.

Stewart Sisters Went the Extra Mile for Education

Among the students graduating from the high school of our county this year none have a record which is excelled by Miss Georgia and Evelyn Stewart. They are the daughters of Mr. and Mrs. George Stewart of Foster Chapel. While these girls were in the lower grades of the McKinley school, these parents began to look forward to and to plan for their high school education. To send them to high school was no small task. Their home was six miles from a school bus line and of course many more miles from high school. Modest means forbid them from boarding and attending school as many pupils do.

They entered the Cottageville High School the fall of 1934. For awhile they stayed home nights going to and from the bus by walking part way and by riding with neighbors. Many times they left before daybreak and returned after the shades of night had fallen.

After a time these girls obtained a house in Evans and did what is commonly called light housekeeping.

Scarcity of houses prevented them from sometimes having an ideal place. In fact the last year of school was spent in a building which was made for a wash house. It looked more like a cow shed, but to be sure was cozy and neat inside. ...

During the four years their work has been very outstanding. They have always finished the year's work in first and second place as they have this year with the exception of one year when one of them lost second place to a classmate by one point.

The writer recently during an interview asked this question: "Evelyn, did either of you ever fail a subject in semester test?" The answer came back quickly. "No, and we have never made but two 'C's.'"

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, we heartily congratulate you on the fine daughters you have.

Georgia and Evelyn Stewart, left to right, stand in the third row of this class photo, taken at Cottageville in May 1938. Also standing in the third row are Eleanor Matthews, Mila Baier, Selly Robey, and Carroll King. In the middle row are Lenore Kay, Stewart Sayre, Jack Sayre, Esther Cox, and Audra Click. In the front row are Howard Swain, Roy Loyd, and Clyde Durst.

Georgia was born in 1917; Evelyn came along two years later. Father George B. McClellan Stewart was born in the Civil War era and was named after the famous Union general. His wife, Nora Elizabeth "Lizzie" Thornton, was 24 years his junior. They lived on Foster Ridge, in a remote western corner of Jackson County.

The family lived a harsh life by today's standards, but pretty good for their neighborhood at the time. Evelyn's diary from her years at home revealed a daily amount of work that would daunt today's families. Even as teens the two sisters cooked meals and washed and ironed clothes, all with no modern electrical machines. They also scrubbed floors, painted, gardened, gathered eggs, milked, picked berries, canned, and did other work. When their own chores were finished, they often went to neighbors to help them do the same, sometimes staying overnight until the work was done.

The Stewart family farmed their 120-acre cove, raising, among other crops, hay, corn, potatoes, buckwheat (for the turkeys and chickens), and a big garden. They had no electricity until the mid-1930's; their first car was one that Georgia bought around 1941. The family drew their water from a nearby hand-dug well, and kept their food cool in the cellar.

The two sisters attended McKinley school, a one-room, eight-grade school about three quarters of a mile away. Mom, and later Aunt Evelyn, passed a special test that was required to permit them to enter high school. The closest bus route to a high school was in Evans, a long six-mile walk from home. At this time very few of their neighbors were able to overcome the obstacles and continue their education beyond the eighth grade, but Georgia and Evelyn were determined to do so.

Georgia waited a year until her sister graduated from the eighth grade, and then both began their remarkable four-year odyssey to a high school diploma. During that yearlong wait, Georgia became the teacher's helper at McKinley, assisting with both teaching and janitorial duties.

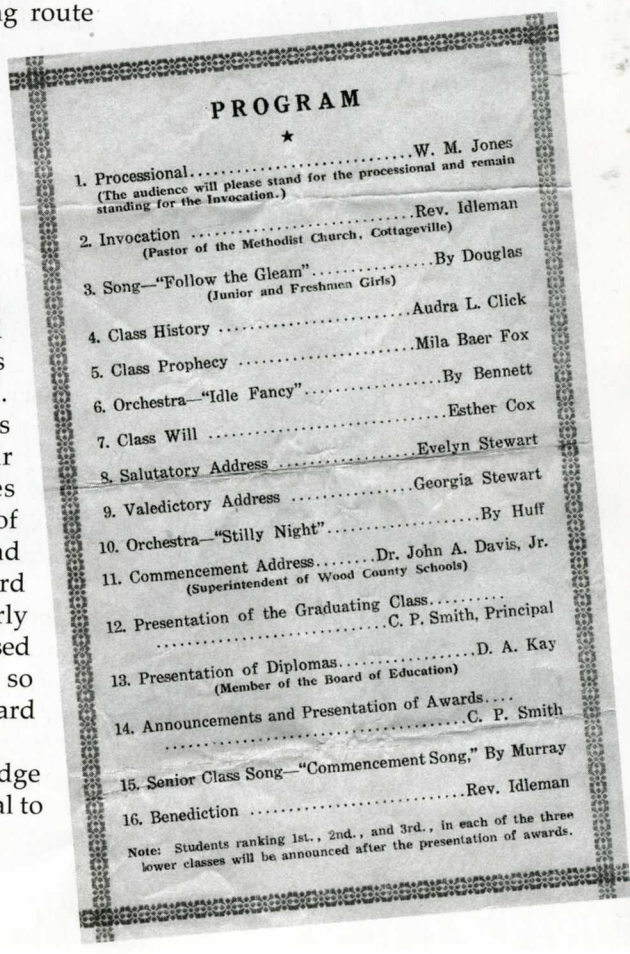
At Evans they could not board with relatives like some classmates did, due to financial limitations. Instead, they found a series of places to stay and "keep house." One year they converted an old one-room shed in Evans into a livable weekday home. They would live — on their own — in this small shack in Evans during the week, catching the bus to and from Union High School in Cottageville. Then on Friday they walked more than six miles through woods and over dirt roads to their home on Foster Ridge for the weekend. On Sunday they would walk back to their temporary home in Evans to start another week. Two hills between Evans and home made it "uphill, both ways." Sometimes they were lucky enough to catch a ride with a neighbor. Often, however, they would take the most direct walking route through the woods, avoiding the muddy roads.

Very few of their neighbors were able to overcome the obstacles and continue their education beyond the eighth grade.

Both young women learned to be frugal and not waste anything, especially when it came to food. Back then butter was often not yellow but was "colored" its natural white. Early in the morning before daylight, Georgia and Evelyn would fix their lunches before heading off to school. One day at school both girls eagerly started eating their butter-and-jelly sandwiches only to discover that instead of using the white butter they had used the similarly colored lard due to the darkness of the early hours. They were too embarrassed to admit their mistake, and so they continued eating their lard sandwiches.

While living in the Foster Ridge community, Georgia felt equal to her neighbors; actually they were probably better off than most. However, in high school she was self-conscious of their poverty, more so than her sister. Georgia was particularly embarrassed by her clothes — both in the lack and the quality. Her shoes often were ruined by the long, muddy trips back home on weekends. Perhaps that is why, as an adult, she loved to buy shoes.

As a teacher, she later helped one of her young students obtain clothing. It seems that one of her young female students had only one dress. Because the mother was a Seventh Day Adventist, the mother could not wash that solitary dress on Saturday and again not on Sunday because of the father's strict Protestant beliefs. So the girl had to stay home every Monday to allow the mother to wash that one dress. When Georgia eventually discovered the cause for the student's missing school every Monday, she bought cloth, sewed two dresses, and gave them to the family. The girl immediately began regular attendance.



PROGRAM

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1. Processional ..... W. M. Jones
(The audience will please stand for the processional and remain standing for the Invocation.)
2. Invocation ..... Rev. Idleman
(Pastor of the Methodist Church, Cottageville)
3. Song—"Follow the Gleam" ..... By Douglas
(Junior and Freshmen Girls)
4. Class History ..... Audra L. Click
5. Class Prophecy ..... Mila Baer Fox
6. Orchestra—"Idle Fancy" ..... By Bennett
7. Class Will ..... Esther Cox
8. Salutatory Address ..... Evelyn Stewart
9. Valedictory Address ..... Georgia Stewart
10. Orchestra—"Stilly Night" ..... By Huff
11. Commencement Address ..... Dr. John A. Davis, Jr.
(Superintendent of Wood County Schools)
12. Presentation of the Graduating Class ..... C. P. Smith, Principal
13. Presentation of Diplomas ..... D. A. Kay
(Member of the Board of Education)
14. Announcements and Presentation of Awards ..... C. P. Smith
15. Senior Class Song—"Commencement Song," By Murray
16. Benediction ..... Rev. Idleman

Note: Students ranking 1st., 2nd., and 3rd., in each of the three lower classes will be announced after the presentation of awards.

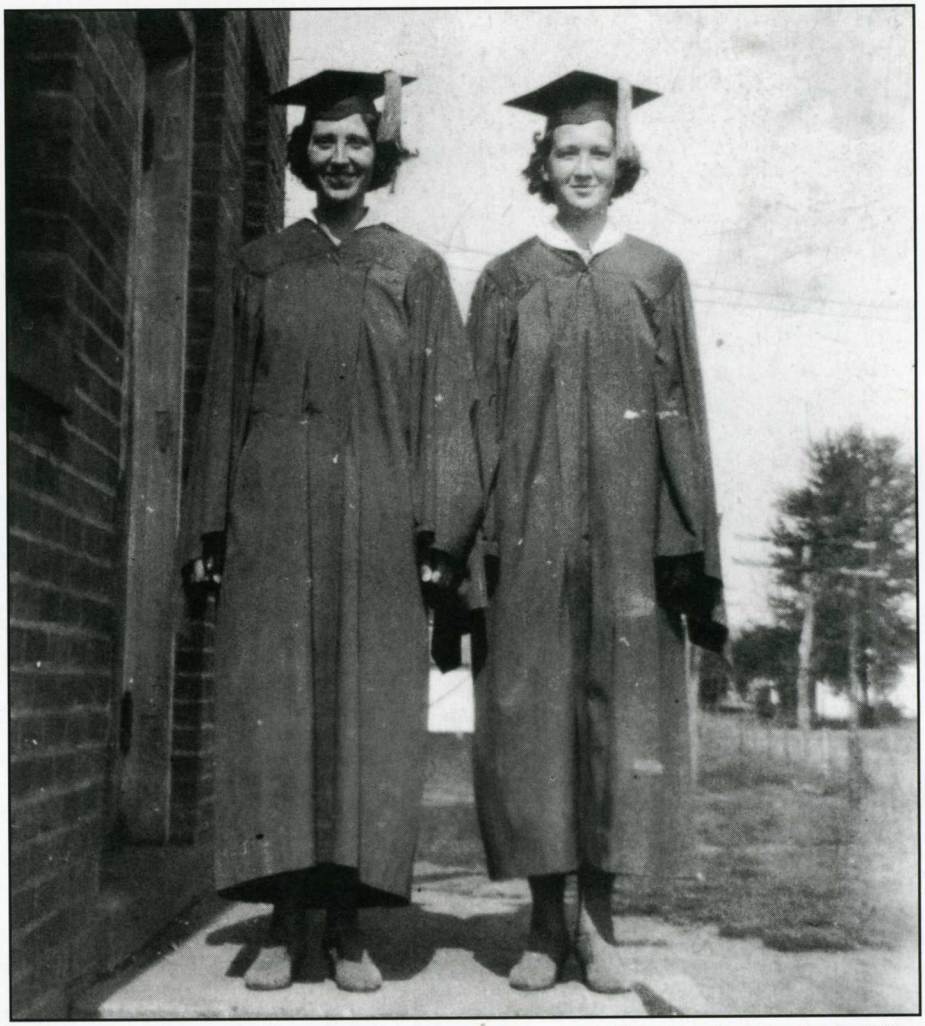
While in school, the sisters particularly liked it when, by getting an "A" in a class, they would be permitted to leave early on a Friday afternoon for their long trek back home while all the other students had to stay at school and suffer through a test.

Despite the hardships they endured to attend high school, Georgia was able to graduate valedictorian, and Evelyn salutatorian, from Union High School class of 1938.

Within a few days of graduating high school, Georgia went to spend the following summer with a relative who worked as a nurse, babysitting her children with the idea of perhaps going into nursing herself. Georgia had a scholarship to West Virginia Wesleyan College. Even with a scholarship, however, Glenville State Teachers College was less expensive, and the summer babysitting job convinced her teaching would be better than nursing.

I believe, however, that Georgia's decision to teach was not too hard; even while an elementary school student, she knew she would go farther in schooling than her peers and practiced teaching on her sister and the other students in the area. At Glenville she crammed many classes into a 15-month program that allowed her to get a provisional teaching certificate and start teaching by the fall of 1939. She seldom came home from Glenville because she worked Friday evenings and all day Saturday scrubbing floors to pay for her tuition.

For the next 15 years, she taught at various one-room schools in the immediate area. Long Hollow was her first school, followed by other schools in Rock Castle, Millwood, and Mt. Alto. In 1957 she completed her four-year degree at what was then Morris Harvey College, now University of Charleston. In 1960 Georgia began teaching at the Ravenswood elementary school, named Kaiser Elementary for the industrial benefactor that helped build schools in the area. In 1976 after more than a third-of-a-century teaching in Jackson County schools, she retired to another quarter-century of farm life with her husband, Dorn, and a full life of volunteering for church and nearly every community group that existed in the Cottageville area. She died in 2004.



Above: Georgia, at left, and Evelyn Stewart smile following their high school graduation in 1938. Left: Commencement program from Union High School in Cottageville, May 19, 1938. Evelyn and Georgia Stewart delivered the salutatory and valedictory addresses respectively.

Out of high school, Evelyn stayed two months with her cousin and his wife until the couple's baby was born. She then attended Perry Business School in nearby Ripley and for a short time worked at a Dunbar glass factory.

When she was 23 years old, Evelyn moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where she worked for 10 years with the National Security Administration and at the Pentagon, doing classified work with the U.S. Army.

Evelyn married former high school classmate Clyde Durst on November 2, 1945. They lived in the Bowie, Maryland, vicinity until her death in 2003.

Though they are now deceased, Georgia's and Evelyn's commitments to education live on. All five children — Georgia's two sons Gary and Jerry both of Charleston, and Evelyn's three daughters Pam Philyaw, Debbie Stem, and Marilee Curran, all living in the Maryland and Delaware regions — have college educations. Most of the grandchildren also have college degrees. However, it is certain that none of the descendants had to climb the hills, literally or figuratively, that Georgia and Evelyn Stewart had to conquer in order to reach their educational goals.

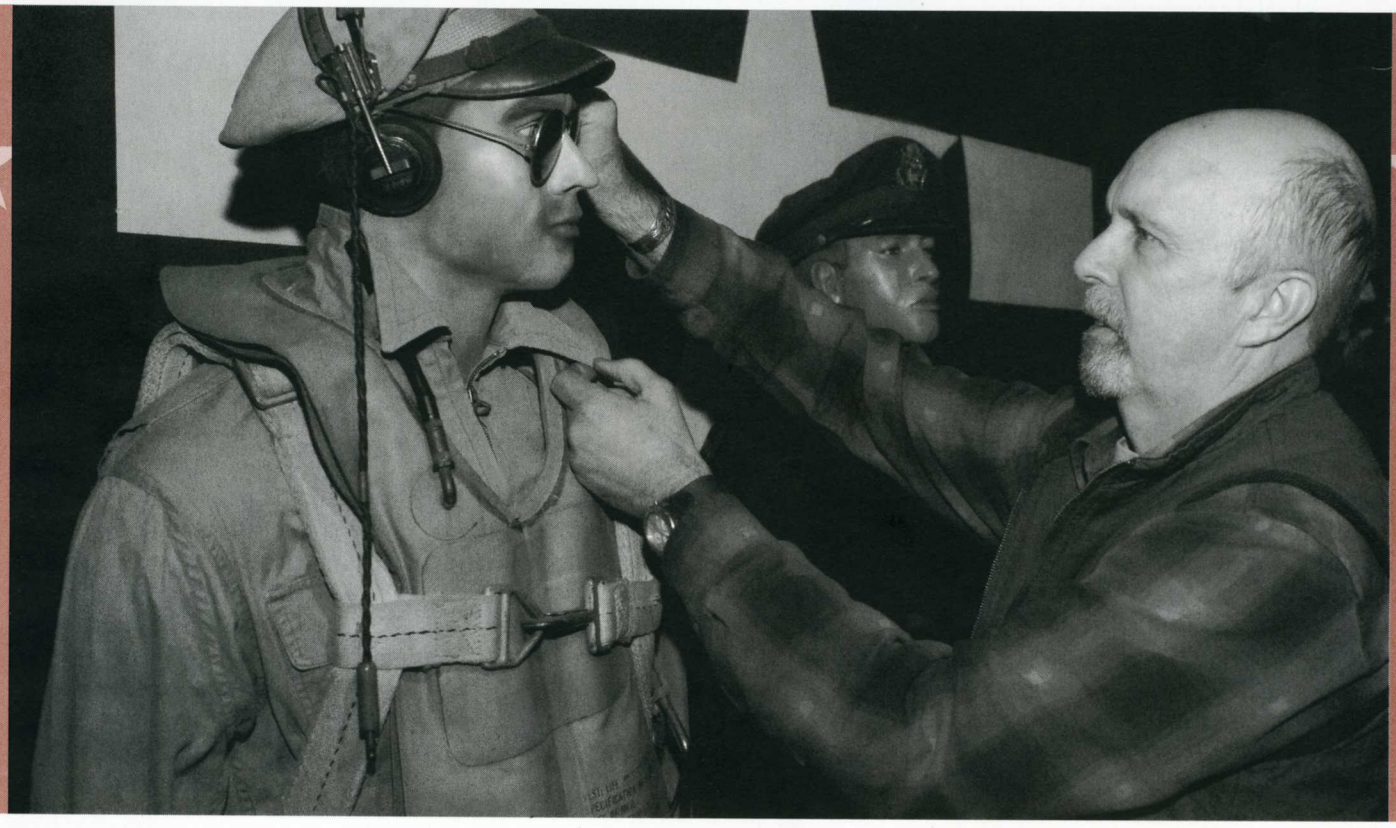
JERRY GRADY grew up in Cottageville, Jackson County, and graduated from Ravenswood High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in education at West Virginia University, and a master's degree in counseling from the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies. He was a counselor and social studies teacher in the Jackson County school system and was active in 4-H. Sadly, Jerry passed away on May 1, 2012. This was his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Remembrance, Reflection, and Honor

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather

Rowlesburg, Preston County, population 615, seems an unlikely location for a museum dedicated to the veterans of World War II. Equally unlikely is the ownership of this not-for-profit venture — Jef Verswyvel and Maggie DeWeirdt, a Belgian couple who moved to the Cheat River community in April 1999, just two months after Jef made his initial visit to the state.

Jef Verswyvel adjusts the uniform on one of more than four dozen mannequins on display at the Greatest Generation Society Exhibit and Gallery in Rowlesburg, Preston County.



Rowlesburg's World War II Museum

Despite the unlikelihood of a Belgium couple locating a World War II museum in a town more commonly associated with German immigrants and the Civil War, Jef says they and their museum are exactly where they need to be. Kathleen Wolfe, chairwoman of the Rowlesburg Revitalization Committee (RRC), agrees.

"It's the perfect marriage," Kathleen says of the partnership between the Greatest Generation museum and the RRC, which owns the building that houses Jef and Maggie's collection of World War II uniforms and artifacts from all militaries engaged in the conflict.

The former Rowlesburg High School, built in 1910, was a casualty of the 1985 flood. Imre and Janet Szilagyi purchased the building from the school board and operated a whitewater rafting business in the building for a couple of decades. They donated the building to the committee in 2008, helping the group to move forward with its ambitious plan to revitalize the community.

"The school was part of a dream," says Doris Rooks, who chairs the building subcommittee. "The town has struggled since the 1985 flood, but the mayor and council have made great strides."

The old high school was renamed the Janet and Imre Szilagyi Center for Visual and Performing Arts. The center hosts an annual River City Festival of the Arts over Memorial Day Weekend and West Virginia's Chestnut Festival in October.

Additionally, the Greater Downtown Rowlesburg organization spruced up the business district with flowers and trees, and RRC built a Main Street garden with a memory walk, gazebo, and town clock.

Still, the RRC needed an anchor that would bring visitors into the community and building year round. They found it in the Belgian newcomers who had purchased one of the town's Victorian homes.

Jef, a professional model maker, came to Miami, Florida, from Belgium in April 1995. He and a business partner saw the United States as a stronger market for their specialty, customized accessories for model builders.

The company did well, but after four years in Miami, Jef and Maggie wished for a safer, friendlier, and slower-paced community in a cooler climate. "He wanted the four seasons," Maggie says. Jef's partner

The World War II museum is located in part of the old Rowlesburg High School, now named the Janet and Imre Szilagyi Center for the Visual and Performing Arts.

recalled meeting a West Virginia resident during a field trip to an army base. He put Jef in touch with the contact, who invited Jef to come visit his hometown, Rowlesburg.

"I liked it, and we stayed," says Jef, who relocated in April 1999. His wife says the culture shock was major, as was the realization they had bought a house 10 yards from the spot on the railroad tracks where the freight trains blow their whistles day and night.

"The first night we moved in it was, My God! The noise! The whistles blowing! People told us that after a while we'd get used to it. The first night we hit the roof, but now, we miss it when we sleep somewhere there aren't trains," she says.

Jef says it took them about two days to adjust to the culture. The transition was made incredibly easy by townspeople, who welcomed the foreigners with open arms.

"From day one, we felt at home," Maggie says. "I never felt like an outsider. We have made family here."

Jef set up his manufacturing business in Rowlesburg, making resin parts for serious modelers who want more detail in their projects' accessories than what a kit model offers — a steering wheel for a specific model of vehicle, or a pilot outfitted with the specific garb and equipment of a particular air force.

The business prospered and soon captured the interest of a Texas firm, which made Jef an offer to buy his company and give him a job there, as well. He accepted the offer, although it meant periodic flights to Texas. It's an inconvenience Jef is willing to live with, however, as part of remaining in Rowlesburg.

Maggie became involved in a community beautification project that offered flowers at cost for residents to plant in their yards. She also joined the RRC's efforts, and serves as liaison for Rowlesburg and the RRC to the state's On Trac program.

Jef found Rowlesburg conducive to his long-standing interest in history. During the Civil War, the Cheat River community, situated in a deep river valley, played a critical role in the movement of Union trains along the Baltimore & Ohio line. The railroad bridge at Rowlesburg remained in Union hands throughout the conflict. Cannon Hill, overlooking the community, is the community's best-known Civil War site.

The Rowlesburg Historical Society has cleared a route to Cannon Hill so visitors can more easily access the overlook. A tourism committee, the RRC, and historical society jointly work to promote the site.

Although this nation's struggles for freedom and equality are foreign to Jef, he and his family were well acquainted with the hardships of war. Belgium was under Nazi control during World War II, and Jef grew up hearing the many stories of occupation and conflict. Further, during his childhood, many of his neighbors and family members had war relics of one kind or another, such as Nazi uniforms and helmets, flags, and paper items. When he was 12 years old, Jef discovered one of these helmets in his uncle's attic, a discovery that set him on a course of collecting World War II memorabilia. Once his collection

A professional model maker, Jef Verswyvel creates highly detailed and convincing displays, down to the cigarettes and facial expression on this soldier.

was sizable enough to display, he set up a museum in a backyard shed.

"I put in big chalk letters 'MUSEUM' on it and charged my neighbor kids a penny to go in and see the stuff," Jef recalls.

Jef sold off his collection as a young adult, but soon realized the mistake he'd made and returned to collecting with a renewed passion.

"I don't like to call myself a collector," he says. "I like to be thought of as somebody who preserves."

In the United States, his preservation interests took on a new angle, for he was now living among the veterans, members of the so-called Greatest Generation, who had helped liberate his family and nation from the Axis occupation. With a large collection of World War II memorabilia back in Belgium, and a large debt of gratitude in his heart, Jef decided to launch a museum in Rowlesburg.

"It was just a way to say 'thank you' for what they did for my parents," he says. "I just put up this museum as a thank you for the veterans, so they would never be forgotten. This is all from the heart. I wanted to do something for these guys. I like these guys."

Jef and Maggie opened their museum in November 2005 in a leased building on Route 72. The building had a kitchen, and Maggie was enlisted to make and serve authentic Belgian waffles, an amenity that had to be dropped when the museum moved to the Szilagyi Center in 2008.

At first, Jef didn't think the old high school was a good match for his museum. "They had asked me a few times, but I could never see us being here," Jef says. "The classrooms were old and in pretty bad shape. I could not see putting the museum in here, but the committee asked if they gave us some money to fix up the rooms, would I consider it?"

Two first-floor classrooms were thus dedicated to the museum, and Jef hopes a third can eventually be remodeled to complete his vision for the museum. Additionally, a café operates when the museum is open, providing a place for veterans to recollect and talk about their experiences following a tour of the displays.

Prior to opening his museum, Jef placed advertisements in regional West Virginia newspapers seeking donations from veterans. Jef says his effort was, understandably, met with skepticism at first. But after meeting Jef, seeing the extent of his personal collection, and appreciating his dedication to the project, veterans from Preston County and beyond started signing on with donations. Several dozen men and women went to the attic or basement, retrieved uniforms, helmets, and gear they had not looked at in 50 or 60 years, and entrusted it to this effort.

One of the first veterans to donate extensively was Kingwood resident Charles H. Brown, a U.S. Navy pilot during World War II. Brown was shot down over Tokyo on February 16, 1945, taken prisoner, and tortured. He was presumed dead until his release in late August that year.

"I met Charles before we opened the museum," Jef says as he pauses by the section of the museum dedicated to Charles' service. "I'd put an ad in

This startlingly realistic nurse has caused more than one visitor to do a double take at a display representing a Red Cross hospital scene.

the paper stating I was looking for uniforms."

After learning about plans for the museum, Charles Brown arrived at Jef's door with a chest full of uniforms and artifacts from his time as a pilot and from his Japanese imprisonment.

"Charles and his wife, Betty, have become some of the best friends we have here," says Jef. "I almost fell over when he brought all these things in."

The naval aviator's uniforms and flight suit take up about half of one wall in the Virgil Gibson Room, named in honor of a Reedsville veteran who donated material to the museum. The room named in his honor has nearly a dozen soldier mannequins dressed in uniforms from U.S., British, Canadian, Russian, and German armies.

A second room is dedicated as the Molly Crane-Zeller Room, in honor of a Terra Alta resident and nurse who served in the Women's Army Corps (WAC's). Molly lost all her uniforms and memorabilia in a house fire, but has been an enthusiastic supporter of Jef's efforts to recognize the contributions made by both sexes and all branches of service to the war effort.

The scenes and mannequins in the Crane-Zeller Room include an army telephone switchboard, mannequins dressed in the uniforms of the WAC's and Women Appointed for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVE's), a Red Cross hospital scene, and the home front. An army nurse seated at a desk at the entrance to the room causes more than one veteran to do a double take because she looks so real — and attractive.

The pretty face is Jef's work. He starts with used department-store mannequins then changes the poses as necessary to fit the scene and uniform. He usually gives the figures a new face, bringing into play his skills as a model maker. After creating the face using a resin material, he paints in the details with oil paint. Although he goes to great pains to create accurate facial details and expressions, Jef does not try to create the actual likeness of the person who once wore the uniform.

He's created more than four dozen such mannequins, which are set against realistic backdrops he fashioned from wood, foam, plaster, stone, artificial plants, concrete, and other materials.

Jef thrives on details and authenticity; he makes sure stripes, medals, insignia, and armament are properly matched and displayed on each representative soldier or sailor. He has an extensive collection of books about World War II and the military, and often consults them as he builds his displays.

"I'm pretty good at what I do as far as getting it right," he says. "But once in a while a veteran will point out something to me. I learn from these guys, and I ask them a lot of questions."

When these veterans climb the steps to the first floor and enter the main hall of the school, they are greeted by dozens of 8-by-10-inch portraits of men and women from the Greatest Generation, walls of fame that are quickly running out space. Inside the exhibit rooms, Jef creates an

Uniforms and artifacts representing American, British, Canadian, Russian, and German soldiers are included in the collection at the World War II museum at Rowlesburg.

atmosphere with dramatic lighting and period music. He strives to set a mood for remembrance, reflection, and honor.

The children and spouses of veterans who visit the museum often tell Jef that their family member had never spoken about his or her war experiences until visiting the collection, which has a way of freeing tongues otherwise stilled by the horrors of war.

Jef tells the story of a 90-year-old man and his wife who came to visit the museum one day, but stayed only two minutes. The man came back the next day, stayed a few minutes longer, and left again.

"The third time he came back, he brought me a jacket and started to talk to me for like an hour," Jef says. "His wife said, 'He's never talked to me about this. He never said anything for 60 years.'"

Jef says most of the veterans do not have an issue with the museum's view of both sides of the war, which includes the display of Nazi flags, uniforms, and weapons, especially after they talk with Jef and learn of his motivation. Many of the European Theater veterans he speaks with had passed through Belgium as they pressed toward Germany and France in Allied operations.

"They always talk about the beer, and of course, the Belgian women," Jef says. "They'll say, 'I liked them Belgian women.'"

Jef provides each visitor with a guide sheet that identifies exhibits by number and briefly explains the historical background of each uniform. A more detailed guide can be purchased. Digging deeper into the garment's history reveals fascinating, sometimes macabre stories.

One of the Nazi SS uniforms bares a particularly disturbing story. Concentration camp labor was used to sew most SS uniforms, which were often lined with fabric salvaged from the clothing of prisoners. Jef pulls back the label of a crudely made jacket to reveal a purple lining that probably came from a Holocaust victim's coat. Sometimes, jackets were lined with the black-striped pajama material of concentration camp prisoners.

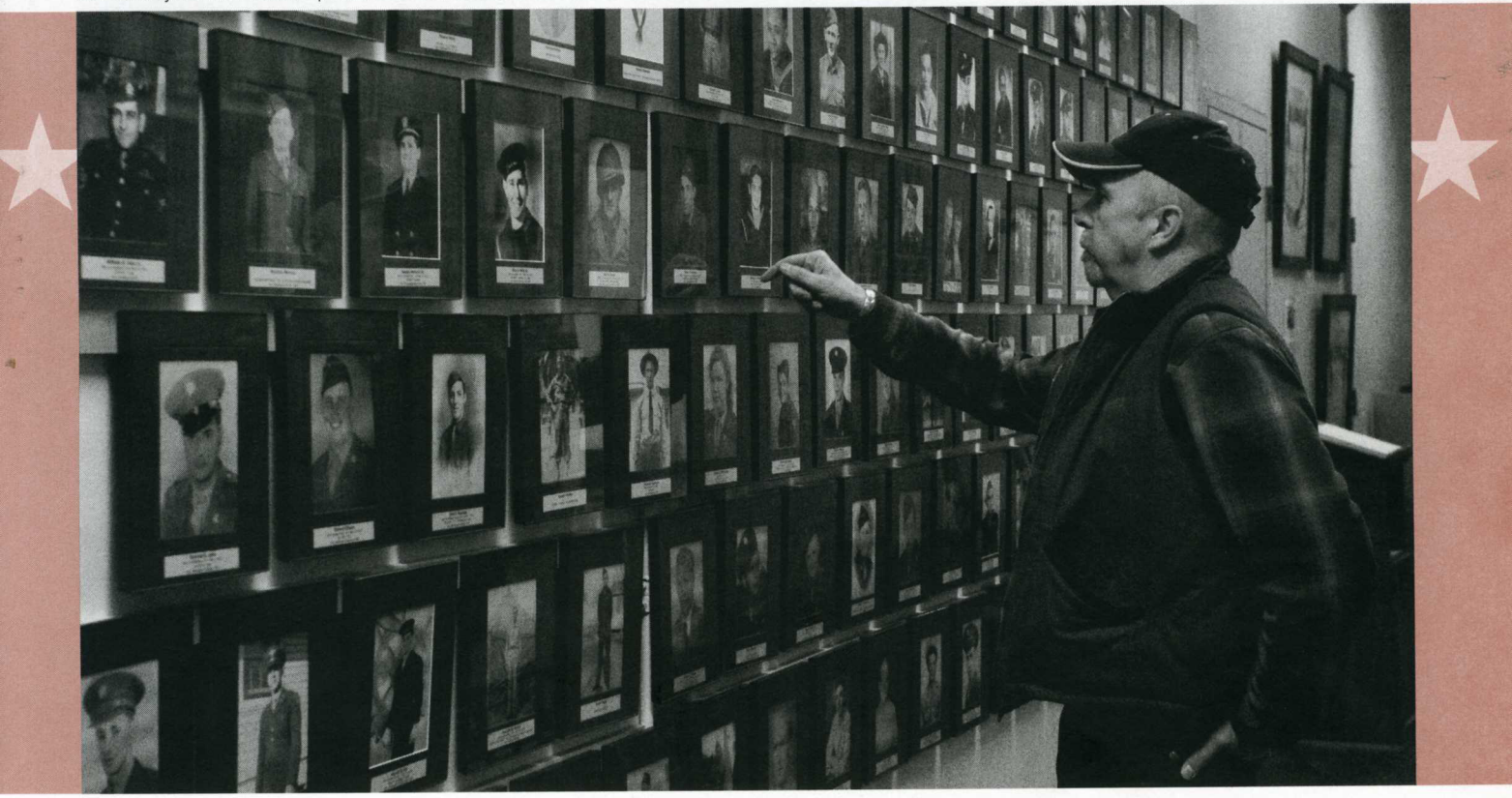
These chilling details bring to life the stories of the Greatest Generation and help explain the veterans' cause. Jef says now is the time to honor them, while they are still living; most of them, and their stories, will be gone in another decade. But Jef hopes his museum will continue to honor them in this most unlikely place long after the last one departs this life.

"I get a lot of remarks that this museum should be in a big city," Jef says. "But it needed to be here in Rowlesburg, West Virginia, because there are a lot of veterans out here."

The Greatest Generation Society Exhibit and Gallery is open Saturdays and Sundays until 5:00 p.m. and by special appointment. For more information, visit www.rowlesburg.org or phone (304)329-1240.

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.

Jef Verswyvel with framed portraits of World War II veterans, which line the halls of the Greatest Generation museum.



West Virginia Back Roads

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Military Memories in Weston

"Welcome home." The sign that hangs over the door of Ron and Barbara McVaney's Mountaineer Military Museum welcomes U.S. veterans of the Korean and Vietnam conflicts who visit the Center Street, Weston, attraction.

There's a secondary implication to that welcome, however, for the museum has evolved into a "home" for artifacts and stories of America's military men and women.

Whenever a family member or veteran offers to donate something, the McVaneys first encourage the donor to retain the item as an heirloom. There are families who have no room in their lives for these treasures, however, even in the case of a 48-star American flag that draped the coffin of a soldier killed during the Normandy Invasion.

"A family member brought it in and said, 'Nobody in the family wants this. Would you give it a home?'" Barbara McVaney says as we tour the one-room museum.

"That's sad. It makes me want to cry," Ron adds.

The McVaneys provide a home for these artifacts of sacrifice, service, and honor. It all started with a promise Ron made on the day he was a pallbearer for one of his three childhood friends who died in Vietnam. Ron and two of the young men were inducted into the army at the same time; the third entered later. While his friends were shipped to Vietnam, Ron was assigned to Germany, where he served as a medic.

Guilt-ridden because of the hand that fate dealt his friends, Ron promised that he would "never let anyone forget" about their sacrifices.

"I just carried that with me. I never talked about it that much," Ron says.

Ron began purchasing war memorabilia at flea markets and garage sales.

Barb and Ron McVaney are the founders of the Mountaineer Military Museum in Weston. On a shelf above them is "Sergeant Valor," the museum's mascot.

"I didn't know he had all this stuff," says Barbara, who learned about his collection after they married in 1985. "When we moved from Clarksburg to Buckhannon, he had all these boxes and bins."

Inspired by Ron's collection and service, Barbara became interested in collecting wartime memorabilia from the home front.

"[The collections] consumed our house, every nook and cranny of it," Barbara says.

After Ron retired in 2003, Barbara, who was still teaching, convinced her husband that it was time to do something with the collection and honor his promise. They took a sizable amount of his retirement money and opened a museum in a storefront in Buckhannon, hoping the community would get behind it and provide ongoing support. But by the fall of that year, the McVaneys had exhausted the money. The museum closed, but they would not give up on the idea.

After another failed attempt at the Weston State Hospital, the McVaneys found a permanent home for their collection in the former "colored school," a one-room schoolhouse owned by the Lewis County Board of Education. The McVaneys entered into a perpetual lease for the building and opened their museum in its new home in 2005. With support from the community and board of education, both the size of the collection and number of visitors who stop each year have grown. In 2011, about 1,200 visitors were "welcomed home."

The museum covers all American wars but has a special focus on post-World War II conflicts. Frequently a veteran will follow up his or her visit with a donation that has been buried in a drawer or under a bed for years.

Ron McVaney stands beside a museum display that includes items created by his father, Paul, using 50-caliber rifle shells.

Ron's father, who served with the Navy Seabees in the South Pacific during World War II, dug into his past after visiting the museum.

"He brought in a box and said, 'Put this in there,'" Ron recalls. The box was filled with items his father made from spent shell casings, including a cigarette lighter and a model of a P-38, while he was serving in the Pacific Theater.

"I didn't know he had this stuff. He had kept it under his bed all those years. He even had a live grenade in there," Ron says. Ron's father lived long enough to see his items displayed in the section of the museum dedicated to World War II.

The Vietnam era is on the opposite side of the room. This section's most poignant entry is a page of thin paper on which a soldier recorded his thoughts from a foxhole. Dated January 1, 1969, the memoir is signed and includes a drawing that makes reference to his loved one, "Janet," back home in West Virginia.

"He brought it in, handed it to me, and started crying," Ron says. "He said, 'Maybe somebody might want to see it.'"

Ron says the museum has evolved into a repository for personal stories of war and sacrifice.

Visitors enter the museum through the Hall of Heroes, a photo gallery of military men and women, most of them from West Virginia. Ron's picture is in the hall, as is that of a childhood friend killed in Vietnam at the age of 20.

"One of the things I tell kids when they visit the museum is to stop and look at the faces," Barbara says. "I tell them that these are the people who served and sacrificed, and some of them died, to give them the freedoms they enjoy, freedoms some of them don't even know they have. But the thanks for them goes to these people."

Welcome home.

For hours and more information, visit the museum's Web site at www .mountaineermilitarymuseum.com

Tale of Two Dogs

By James Meade

The first little dog was in 1938. I was a boy living in Williamson, Mingo County, at the time. Two grown men asked me and my younger brother to set them across Tug Fork River to go to a bootlegger. They came back in about an hour, and I set them back across the river. The men had a young pup that the bootlegger gave them, and I noticed that one of the men was holding the pup under the water. I told him that would drown the pup. The man was about half drunk, and when I set him off, he threw the puppy to a sandbar and told my younger brother to take it to the house to make a hunting dog out of it. So my brother took the dog.

About three days later, the pup came out from under the house, dragging its hind legs. My brother told me that I could have him. So I went into the house to get medicine for the pup. The only thing I could find was a small bottle of iodine, so we gave it to the pup. I then got some warm cow's milk for the dog. Fleas and lice had eaten all the hair off the dog, so I got some used motor oil and covered the little pup with oil.

In one week, the pup was playing and happy. The pup became the best hunting dog that we ever had. I went on to college, and when I came back home my baby brother had claimed the dog. He changed its name to Jack, after himself.

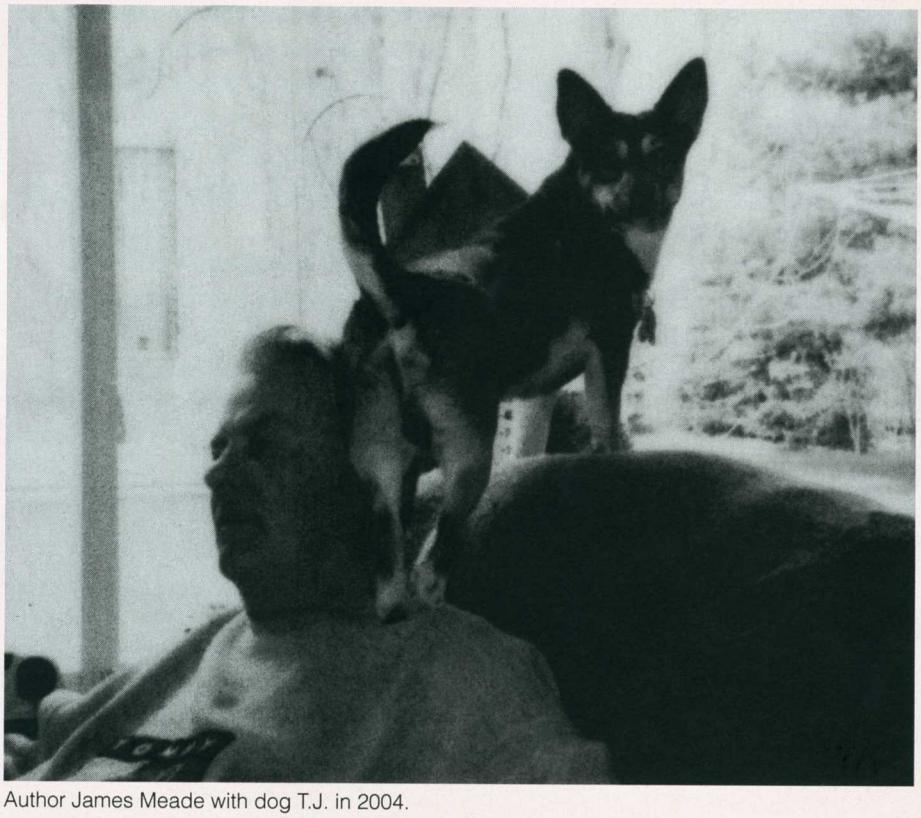
As time passed, my baby brother grew up and got married. He asked me to find him a pup, and I kept him in pups. When the dogs grew old and died, I would find him another pup. Finally, when he was 73, he called me from Cleveland, Ohio, and said he wouldn't need another one. But about a month later, he called and asked me to find a chihuahua for him.

I searched, but I couldn't find one. Then, I was talking to a fellow in Walmart, and he said he had a mixture of a feist and a chihuahua. I told him to bring it to me. He brought the pup to me, and it looked like a duplicate of the one we had in 1938. He gave me the pup, and I gave the man a suit of clothes.

I called my brother in Cleveland, and he had his daughter and son-in-law (they own a plane) to fly down to southern West Virginia to pick up the pup. It was seven weeks old, had worms, and had no hair from the fleas and lice. I took it to the vet, and he got rid of the worms. I got a shampoo and got the fleas.

My brother and his wife got attached to the dog, and it stayed with them night and day. The vet in Cleveland asked my brother where he got the dog, and he told him from his brother in West Virginia. The vet asked him if he knew what breed it was. My brother said chihuahua-feist cross. The vet laughed and told him it was a corgi.

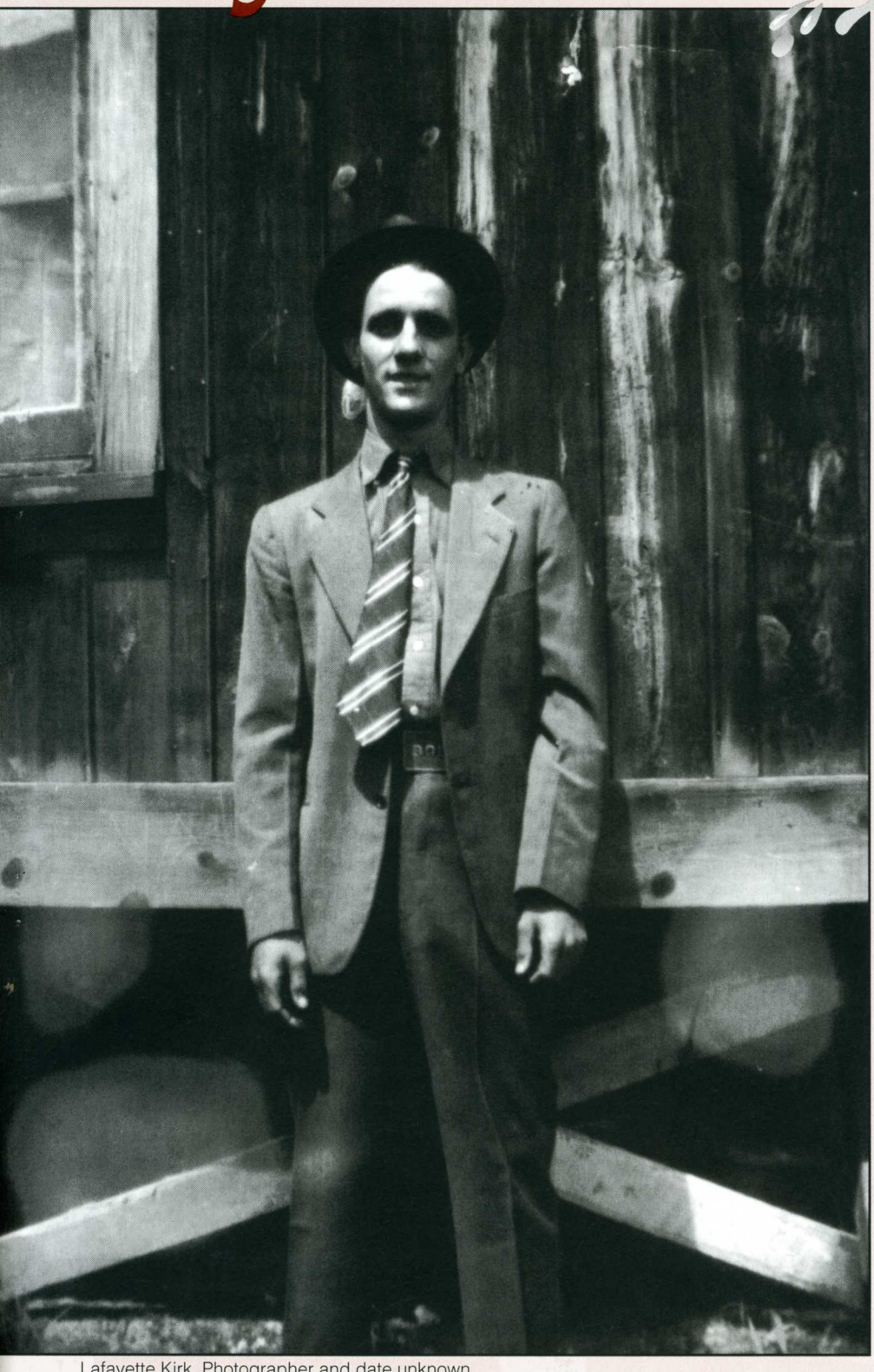
My baby brother is 75 now. Since his wife died, the pup, which he named T.J. Rusty, is his constant companion. My brother says the pup can read your mind, and he is very pleased to have him.



Author James Meade with dog T.J. in 2004.

JAMES MEADE was born in 1919 on Oil Field Branch, Mingo County, where he was a schoolteacher, principal, and basketball coach for 40 years. James passed away in February 2010. This was his only contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

My Friend Kirk



Lafayette Kirk. Photographer and date unknown.

By Albert I. Pennington

He knocked at our door as we were eating lunch. The young man standing there had an air about himself that you just had to like at first glance. "My name is Kirk," he said. "Lafayette Kirk. I have no home. Could I stay with you?"

My dad said, "Sure, come in. Here, have a chair and pull it up to the table. Ruthie, set another plate. We have company."

After a slight hesitation, the young man said, "I'm not very hungry and besides, you weren't expecting me." As he spoke, his eyes took in the steaming bowls of fresh green beans, potatoes, ham, and biscuits.

"Come on, pull up a chair. We've got plenty. How long do you think you will be staying?" my dad asked.

"Just as long as you'll keep me," Kirk answered, as he pulled the chair closer. "I'm not afraid of work, if you could manage to feed and clothe me."

"Stay as long as you like," my dad replied. "You'll work just like my boys do and wear the same kind of clothes. We don't allow no drinking, but otherwise there are no restrictions. You know I can't pay you any money for there just isn't any."

Then the chatter quieted down as the ll of us began to fill our hungry stomachs. This was in 1936, and I was about eight years old. We had been cutting corn, and after lunch we went back into the field. I wondered if Kirk knew anything about cutting corn. He was a lot older than me. I heard Jim ask, "Kirk, how old are you?"

"Sixteen," he replied, as he picked up a rock and threw it at a wood-

pecker. That rock went straight and hard. I'd never seen anyone throw like that. It hit the woodpecker and the feathers flew. We were all big-eyed at his luck, and Bud managed to say, "I'll bet you can't do that again."

"Ain't no more woodpeckers around," Kirk answered. "Usually I throw at squirrels with my left hand to keep from tearing them up so bad."

"Yeah," Bud replied. "And I'll bet you think you can beat me to that big maple across the pasture field."

At that, we all started off in high gear. Bud and Jim were fast, but not as fast as Kirk. He was there a good 30 yards ahead of Bud and Jim while I was still halfway out in the pasture. I could see the admiration in their eyes, but Bud was still trying. "Well, you can run, but I'll bet I can swim farther underwater than you."

"You mean there is a swimming hole around here?" Kirk asked.

"Yeah, but dad won't let us go until the corn is all cut," Bud replied.

"Hot diggity, then let's get 'er cut," Kirk replied.

Grabbing our cutters, we each started chopping a swath of corn 10 rows wide and 10 hills deep. These 100 stalks of corn were then put together in a big bundle and tied with a green, limber stalk of corn and stood upright. This was a shock of corn.

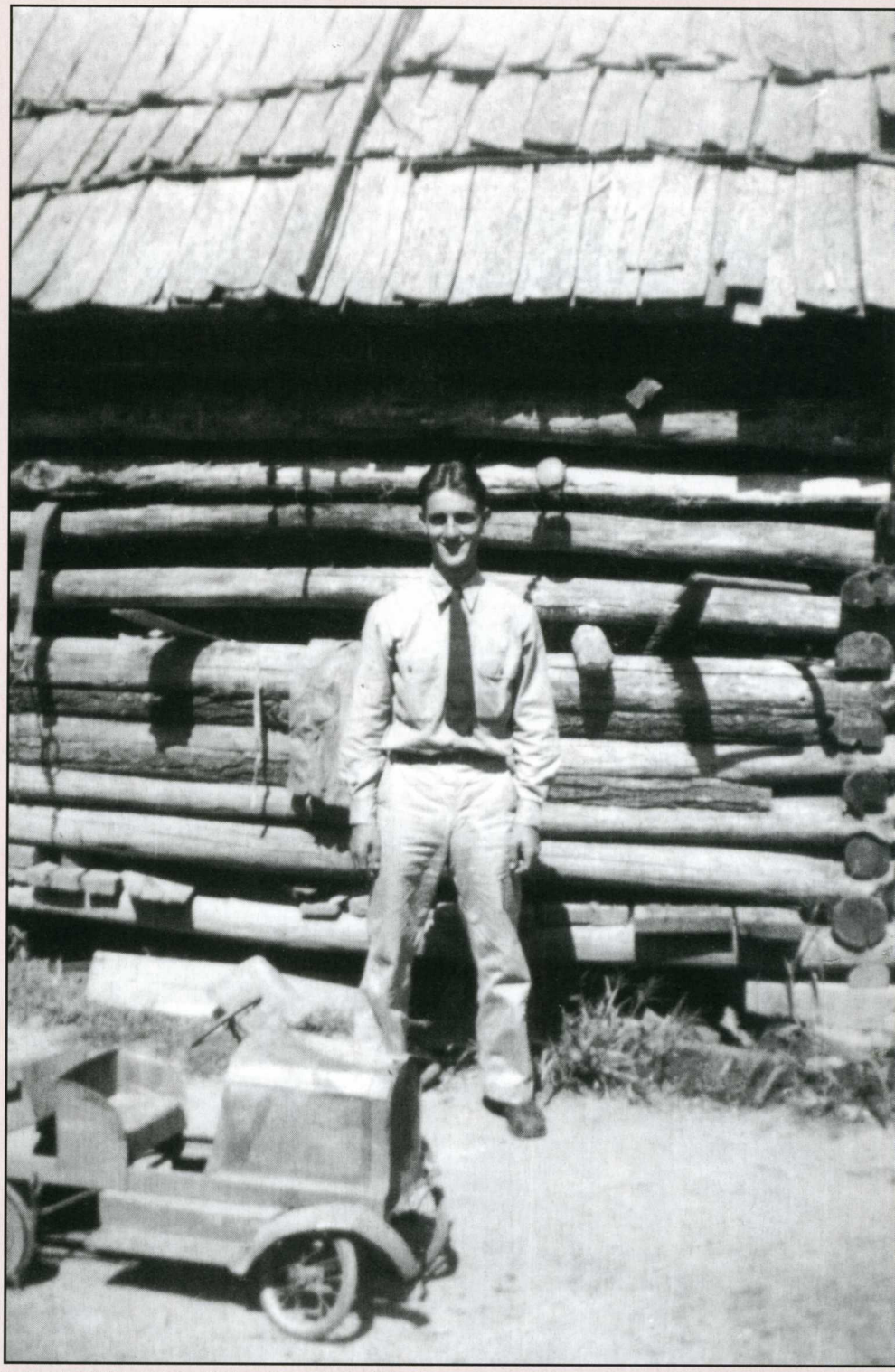
Pretty soon I noticed that Kirk had the lead. At the end of the day the count was Bud 27, Jim 26, and Kirk 40. It just seemed like he was a natural-born corn cutter. The next day it was the same way. Kirk could really cut corn. About 2:00 the next day we finished. The corn all stood in shocks to finish curing and to wait for husking.

"Okay fellers, you can go swimming," Dad called out.

"Last one in is a frog!" yelled Bud as they all started out in a run.

Taking a shortcut I jumped over briers, tore down laurel, and plowed through brush in high gear. The swimming hole was about a mile away and the last 100 yards was down a steep hill. As I tore along the path, I kicked off my shoes and while still traveling at top speed, I kicked out of my trousers. When I hit the cliff we dived from, I was in high gear and went up in a power dive. Then as I turned over in the air for the plunge, I saw I had really boo-booed.

Out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of about 20 girls. My shame was immense, and I couldn't turn back as I flew through the air and into the water. I couldn't stay under for long and finally came up for air.



Lafayette Kirk came in 1936 to live with the Pennington family at their farm in Lansing, Fayette County, and stayed for seven years.

I immediately had to go under again and again as they pelted the water around me with rocks. Bud, Jim, and Kirk finally got there and had the girls to turn their backs while I came out and covered up in the sand until they were finished with their party.

Bud and Kirk both dived in at the upper end and we waited to see who would surface first. At about ¾ of the distance, Bud had to lift his head for air. We kept watching for Kirk to surface. Finally at the lower end, we saw a hand stick up. Then, after waiting, Kirk surfaced at about the same spot as Bud. He had gone underwater to the lower end and stuck a hand up to let us know he was there, then turned and swam back to where Bud was. Bud was beaten again, and immediately ducked Kirk's head under the water.

Suddenly, the water parted and Kirk's head appeared. He immediately gulped in fresh air and started swimming toward the bank with one arm.

They clinched and wrestled. Finally wading out, they wrestled more, each trying to get his opponent's shoulders to the ground. After what seemed to me to be an hour, Bud pinned Kirk. At this, Kirk jumped up and said, "Bud, let's get this straight. I can throw better than you. I can swim underwater farther than you, and I can cut more corn than you. Also, I can outrun you. Now, you can beat me at wrestling. Let's be friends." With this, he stuck out his hand, and Bud slowly lifted his and they shook on it.

As we sat on the beach telling stories, Kirk remarked that he couldn't pass his lifeguard test because he couldn't go deep enough.

Kirk stayed with us seven years and became as close as any of my brothers. I admired him for his athletic ability. Then the war came on and he was found to have a physical disability that kept him out of the action. However, he was able to get a job in a defense plant where he became a loom mechanic, then supervisor.

Years later, I visited Kirk at his home on the Big Draft Road and, of course, we went swimming. Suddenly there was a great commotion. A little girl was missing. Someone had seen her go down in the deepest part. The lifeguard dived and came up for air to dive again and again.

Finally, he weakly swam out and said, "I can't get to the bottom."

At this, I noticed Kirk with a big rock held between his hands. Swimming with just his feet, he approached the spot where the little girl was last seen, slightly jumped, his shoulders barely breaking the surface and gulped in a huge amount of air. Then he disappeared beneath the surface, the weight of the rock carrying him down, down, down.

We waited and waited. I began swimming to the spot where he and the little girl had gone down. Suddenly, the water parted and Kirk's head appeared. He immediately gulped in fresh air and started swimming toward the bank with one arm.

As he scrambled out on the bank, I could see he had a handful of hair, then the little girl's body came into full view. He immediately placed her face down with her head downhill, and began pushing her back, then letting go with his hands. After several times, there was a gasp from her, and she began breathing on her own. My friend had finally gone deep enough!

ALBERT I. PENNINGTON was a native of Lansing and a Korean War veteran. He retired from Fayette County schools after serving 35 years as a teacher and principal. Albert passed away in 2005. An earlier contribution appeared in our Fall 2010 issue.

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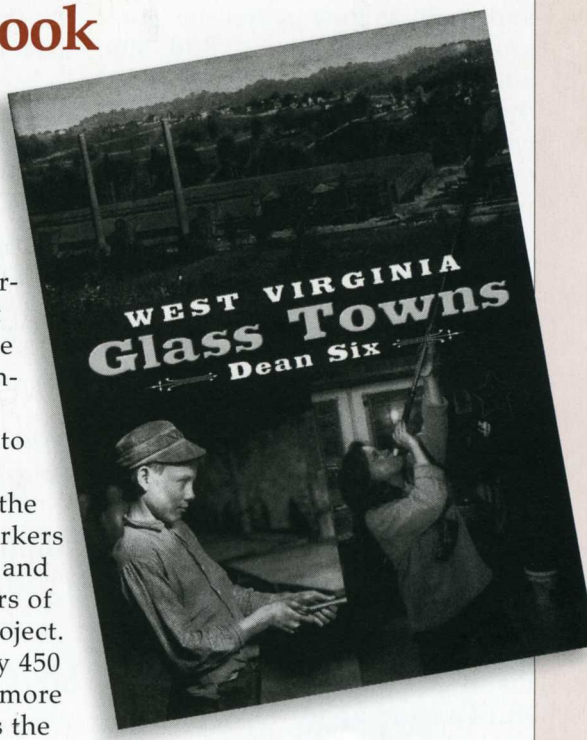
New Glass Book



Dean Six has written several books about glass and glass collecting, and his new title adds weight and substance to his previous excellent work. ***West Virginia Glass Towns*** (Quarrier Press, 2012) is the most thorough accounting to date of glassmaking in the Mountain State, dating from the early 1800's and extending to the present day.

A Ritchie County native, the author has former glass workers on both sides of his family, and he brings more than 20 years of personal research to this project. Six identifies approximately 450 hot glass manufacturers in more than 50 communities across the state. Some, such as Elkview and Van Voorhis, hosted only a single glass shop, while industrial centers such as Clarksburg and Wellsburg boasted dozens.

Taken as a whole, this unique book paints a rich and colorful picture of West Virginia glassmaking. With a spartan approach to text, Six simply lists the names of the companies and what they made — lamp chimneys, tableware, fruit jars, colored flat glass, handmade marbles, fluorescent bulbs, glass stoppers, etc. He includes the dates of operation for each concern and provides a brief introduction for each community.

The majority of this book comprises graphic depictions of various aspects of the glass industry, such as advertisements, aerial photographs, letterheads, maps, and documentary photography.

Not a book about glass itself, this book provides a valuable reference for those who wish to read and learn about the glass industry in West Virginia. The 230-page large-format hardbound edition sells for $29.95 at local book stores. It is also for sale through the West Virginia Book Company; phone 1-888-982-7472 or visit www.wvbookco.com.

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- Corton
- Treenware
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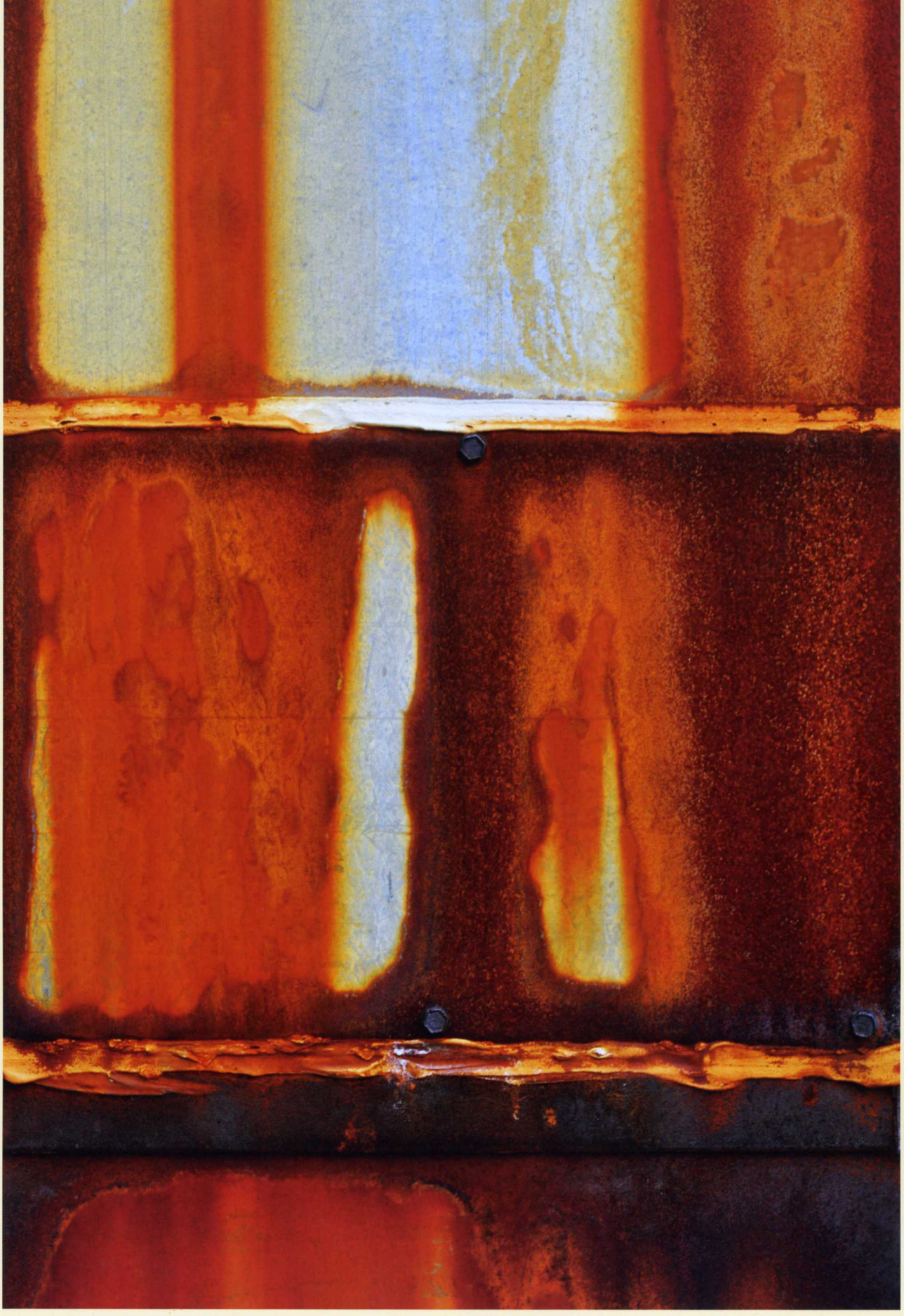

Heat discoloration on a cullet barrel at Fenton Glass in Williamstown. Photograph by John Winter. [See page 26.]

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PERIODICALS

Inside Goldenseal

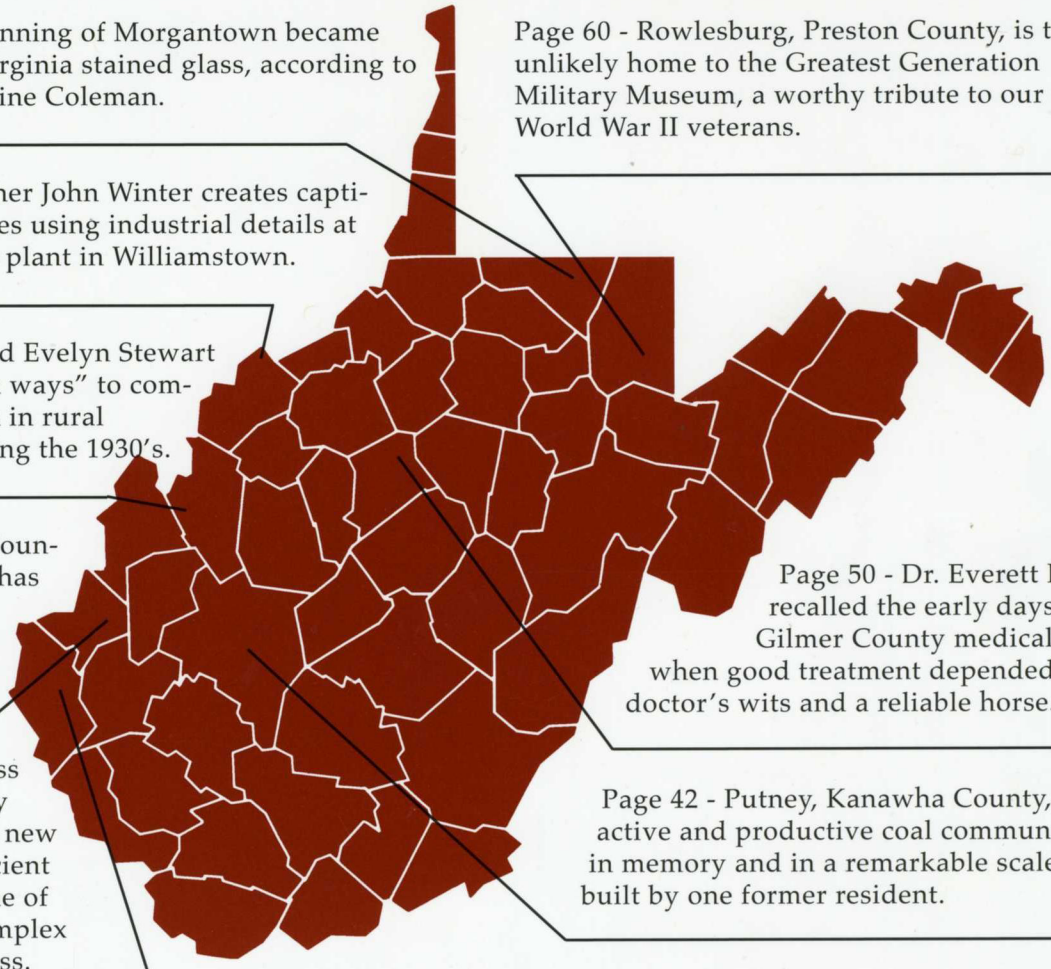
Page 20 - Martha Manning of Morgantown became an expert on West Virginia stained glass, according to author Martha Caroline Coleman.

Page 26 - Photographer John Winter creates captivating abstract images using industrial details at the old Fenton Glass plant in Williamstown.

Page 56 - Georgia and Evelyn Stewart walked "uphill, both ways" to complete their education in rural Jackson County during the 1930's.

Page 36 - Milton's Mountaineer Opry House has been an important venue for bluegrass music since 1972.

Page 10 - Cameo glass artist Kelsey Murphy of East Lynn applies new technology to an ancient craft to produce some of the world's most complex and beautiful art glass.



Page 60 - Rowlesburg, Preston County, is the unlikely home to the Greatest Generation Military Museum, a worthy tribute to our World War II veterans.

Page 50 - Dr. Everett R. Cooper recalled the early days of his Gilmer County medical practice, when good treatment depended on a doctor's wits and a reliable horse.

Page 42 - Putney, Kanawha County, once an active and productive coal community, lives on in memory and in a remarkable scale model built by one former resident.

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