

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Spring 2014

\$5.95



**Celebrating
40 Years!**

Folklife • Fairs • Festivals 2014

GOLDENSEAL'S "Folklife•Fairs•Festivals" calendar is prepared three to six months in advance of publication. The information was accurate as far as we could determine at the time the magazine went to press. However, it is advisable to *check with the organization or event to make certain that the date or location has not been changed.* The phone numbers given are all within the West Virginia (304) area code unless otherwise noted. Information for events at West Virginia State Parks and other major festivals is also available by calling 1-800-CALL-WVA. An online version of this list, which includes links to many of the events, is posted on our Web site at www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/flist.html.

March 7-9	Upper Potomac Spring Dulcimer Festival Shepherdstown (263-2531)	May 22-26	Dandelion Festival White Sulphur Springs (536-5060)
March 14-15	15 th Annual Sisters Fest Sistersville (218-820-1772)	May 23-25	River City Festival of the Arts Rowlesburg (329-1240)
March 14-16	George Washington's Bathtub Celebration Berkeley Springs (1-800-447-8797)	May 23-25	38 th Vandalia Gathering State Capitol Complex/Charleston (558-0162)
March 15	28 th Annual Irish Heritage Festival Pipestem Resort State Park (466-1800)	June 3-7	52 nd Annual Calhoun County Wood Festival Grantsville (354-9725)
March 15-16	Irish Spring Festival Ireland (452-8952)	June 6-7	13 th Annual Greek Food Festival Clarksburg (624-5331)
March 15-16	W.Va. Maple Syrup Festival Pickens (924-5096)	June 7	Mountain Music Festival Caretta (875-3418)
March 21-23	Civil War Weekend Hurricane (562-0518)	June 7	PattyFest Fairmont (641-2376)
April 12	Lewisburg Chocolate Festival Lewisburg (1-888-702-1364)	June 7-8	15 th Annual Bluegrass & Gospel Festival Hamlin (824-7748)
April 12	66 th Annual Quartets on Parade Wardensville (874-3951)	June 7-8	Ronceverte River Festival Ronceverte (647-3825)
April 12-13	Wildwater River Festival Webster Springs (847-2145)	June 13-15	Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival Shenandoah Junction (1-800-624-0577)
April 19	Scottish & Celtic Heritage Festival Parkersburg (488-8009)	June 17-21	W.Va. Coal Festival Madison (369-9118)
April 25-27	22 nd Spring Mountain Festival Petersburg (257-2722)	June 19-21	Old Central City Days Festival West Huntington (544-4880)
April 26	Helvetia Ramp Dinner Helvetia (924-6435)	June 19-21	W.Va. Quilt Festival Summersville (775-5049)
April 26	76 th Feast of the Ramson Richwood (846-6790)	June 19-21	W.Va. State Folk Festival Glennville (462-5000)
May 2-4	Scottish Heritage Festival & Celtic Gathering Bridgeport (842-0370)	June 20	W.Va. Day Celebration Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park (420-4800)
May 2-4	SpringFest Franklin (358-3884)	June 20-22	Hatfield-McCoy Reunion Festival Matewan (426-4092)
May 2-4	Three Rivers Festival Fairmont (366-5084)	June 20-22	Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival Parkersburg (428-5554)
May 3	Cheat River Festival Albright (329-3621)	June 20-29	FestivALL Charleston (470-0489)
May 3	18 th Annual W.Va. Marble Festival Cairo (269-5006)	June 25-28	34 th Music in the Mountains Bluegrass Festival Summersville (706-864-7203)
May 3	Heritage Farm Spring Festival Huntington (522-1244)	June 26-28	24 th Annual Point Pleasant Sternwheel Regatta Point Pleasant (593-2404)
May 3-4	Antique Steam & Gas Engine Show Point Pleasant (675-5737)	June 27-29	17 th Annual Little Levels Heritage Fair Hillsboro (653-8563)
May 9-10	20 th Annual Bluegrass Festival North Bend State Park (643-2931)	June 28	South Branch Valley Bluegrass Festival Romney (822-7300)
May 10	Bramwell Spring Home Tour Bramwell (248-8381)	July 3-5	Mountain State Art & Craft Fair Cedar Lakes/Ripley (372-3247)
May 10	Mother's Day Founder's Festival Webster (265-5549)	July 4-6	Gassaway Days Gassaway (364-5111)
May 10	St. Albans Founders Day St. Albans (395-0155)	July 9-13	47 th Annual Pioneer Days Marlinton (799-4452)
May 10-18	73 rd W.Va. Strawberry Festival Buckhannon (472-9036)	July 12	New Deal Festival Arthurdale (864-3959)
May 11	106 th Observance of Mother's Day Grafton (265-5549)	July 12	21 st Wileyville Homecoming Wileyville (386-4532)
May 16-18	Cass Railfan Weekend Cass Scenic Railroad State Park (456-4300)	July 19-20	Beverly Heritage Days Beverly (637-7424)
May 16-18	Siege of Fort Randolph Point Pleasant (675-7933)	July 20-27	64 th Mtn. State Gospel Singers Convention Mt. Nebo (622-0546)
May 22-25	Webster County Woodchopping Festival Webster Springs (847-7666)	July 21-26	70 th Annual W.Va. Poultry Festival Moorefield (530-2725)

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On the cover: A young participant enjoys the festivities at the 2013 Vandalia Gathering in Charleston. Photograph by Tyler Evert. Our Vandalia coverage begins on page 64.

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Earl Ray Tomblin
Governor

Kay Goodwin
Secretary
Department of Education
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Randall Reid-Smith
Commissioner
Division of Culture and History

John Lilly
Editor

Kim Johnson
Circulation Manager

Karin Kercheval Design
Publication Design

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Correspondence to:
The Editor
GOLDENSEAL
The Culture Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

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e-mail chgoldenseal@wv.gov
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From the Editor

Forty years is a long time! Here at the start of our 40th year, I'll take this opportunity to reflect on some of the highlights from my experience here as editor.

It is an honor and a privilege to follow in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessors, Tom Screven and Ken Sullivan. Talented, articulate, and imaginative editors, Tom and Ken set a high standard during the 23 years prior to my arrival in this office in 1997. Since that time they have both been encouraging and supportive, and I appreciate that.

Ken published a special 20th anniversary edition in Winter 1994, looking back on our first two decades. That magazine was the inspiration for this special commemorative issue, which looks back at some favorite stories I have seen in the decades since then.

Included are stories about gypsies, cars, music, trains, pottery, and coal. A particularly strong memory for me was visiting Spruce Knob in the spring of 2000 with author Bill Garnette and his family. A U.S. Navy pilot, Bill's plane crashed near the summit of West Virginia's highest point in 1946. He barely survived. I returned with Bill and his family to the site of the crash — his first visit in more than 50 years. What we found there was both chilling and invigorating. It is a pleasure to share his story with you once again.

I hope that you enjoy all of these stories. I think they are among the cream of the crop, and that is saying something! Special thanks to the authors, photographers,



Photograph by Michael Keller.

designers, and printers who have contributed to the magazine's success these past four decades. We also appreciate the support of the administration at the West Virginia Division of Culture and History over the years as well as the Department of Education and the Arts, particularly Commissioner Randall Reid-Smith and Secretary Kay Goodwin and their staffs.

I am most grateful to all of you, the readers and subscribers who keep this boat afloat. Thanks to you we remain self-sufficient, independent, and ad-free. The comments we received during our recent renewal mailings are heartwarming. Please rest assured that we will keep bringing you your GOLDENSEAL as long as you keep supporting it. And I hope that will be a long, long time!

John Lilly

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.

Winter Issue

December 9, 2013

Port Republic, Maryland

Via email

Editor:

The editor's opening statement for the Winter 2013 issue says, "This might possibly, just possibly, be my favorite issue of GOLDENSEAL ever." Well, this reader seconds that thought! Many elements make this issue a hit, but I can't resist calling attention to the presence of various strands of the Hammons (and Hammonds) family.

I was flattered to see my own photo of Lee Hammons (page 68) illustrating the nice blurb about Dwight Diller's boxed set of recordings and video of the Hammons of Pocahontas County. (One correction: the earlier and now out-of-print publication of the family's music and tales came from the Library of Congress and not Smithsonian Folkways.) On page 66, we see the cover for the republished book, *Folk Songs of the South* by John

Harrington Cox, illustrated by a photograph of son-and-father James and Edden Hammons. [See "Mountain Music Roundup," by John Lilly.] Edden is the justly famous fiddler featured on a pair of CD's published by the West Virginia University Press and still in print.

Finally, there are Finley Taylor's wonderful and evocative photographs of wood hicks and lumber camps, well assembled and presented by Luther Baker. [See "Finley Taylor: Early Richwood Photographer," by Luther Baker.] On page 26, we see a young Billy Hammonds, reported to be still living in Richwood at age 94. I do not know if Billy might be distant kin to the Pocahontas Hammonses — the names are spelled a little differently, but that is not uncommon for broad and extended families with roots in early America. In any case, it is great fun to see the then-young Billy in his new cork boots, we trust made by the esteemed A.A. Cutter company.

Keep up the great work!

Best wishes,

Carl Fleischhauer

Friendship Quilts

January 10, 2014

Ellenboro, West Virginia

Editor:

The story of the friendship quilts was so interesting. [See "Friendship Quilts," by Edwin Daryl Michael; Winter 2013.] The beautiful workmanship of the ladies was lovely. So many small towns had groups of ladies who met and quilted and had suppers to raise funds for their community.

I was lucky to grow up in one such community in

Ritchie County. The Pike women's club met in the wintertime to quilt each week. The ladies met in the old schoolhouse, which is still standing. I still have a quilt we made in 1937. Most of the fabric is feed sack material, since most raised chickens. There are 36 blocks of different ladies in Pike. The quilt block is a ship block — so it was a friend "ship" quilt!

All of the ladies are gone who made blocks for the quilt, but their children and grandchildren remember them when it is displayed, the small community of Pike, and how they helped each other.

My aunt Daisy Wilcox was one of the quilters. She taught me to sew, and I have continued the quilting line today. I make 50 or more each year. They go to children in disaster areas through Churches of Christ disaster relief and to missions in Eastern Europe. This year I had the honor to make Ritchie County's quilt block for the West Virginia state birthday quilt.

Yours truly,

Dixie Carbery Harper

Thanks for writing, Dixie! We applaud your talents and generosity — 50 donated handmade quilts a year is an admirable feat and a wonderful gift. You are to be commended. —ed.

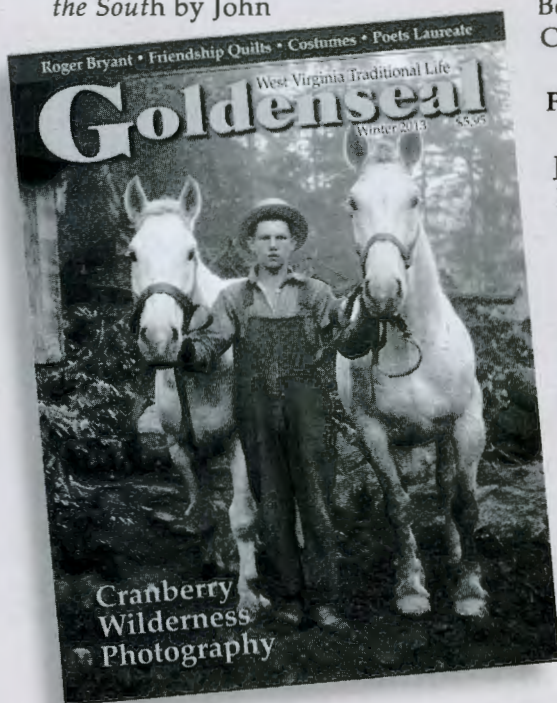
State Centennial

December 30, 2013

Clarksburg, West Virginia

Editor:

GOLDENSEAL's stories on West Virginia's 1963 centennial celebration brought back lots of memories for me, as I'm sure they did for many of your readers. [See "Recalling the Centennial: West



The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



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

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

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Virginia at 100," by John Lilly;
Summer 2013.]

I thought you and your readers might enjoy seeing a future GOLDENSEAL staffer cutting the ribbon to open the first Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes in 1963. Yep, that's me with the windblown hair and oh-so-fashionable eyewear, wielding the scissors, with then-Commerce Commissioner (later governor) Hulett Smith looking on.

The opening ceremonies were held the day before the fair was officially opened to the general public, and Cedar Lakes was packed with the state's movers and shakers as well as with many of the people who had worked to make the fair happen. Mary Sonis, mother of future GOLDENSEAL staffer Debby Sonis, was bustling around the fair trying to keep everything moving along smoothly. I was there with my father, Tom Stafford, associate editor of *The Charleston Gazette*, who had been quietly involved with various planning stages of the fair and other centennial events.

Although the fair itself wasn't actually open yet, most of the vendors were up and running. The day included tours of the facilities, craft demonstrations, and a luncheon for the assembled dignitaries, featuring the usual long-winded speeches and an entertaining performance by [singer and songwriter] Billy Edd Wheeler. After singing a few of his better-known songs, Billy Edd told the crowd that he'd like to preview a new piece he was working on. He pulled a torn piece of paper bag out of his pocket, unfolded it on the podium, and proceeded to reduce some of the most important people in the state to tears of laughter with the first public rendition of "The Little Brown Shack out Back." The version we heard that day was somewhat longer, a little more bluntly descriptive, and even funnier than the version eventually released by his record label.

After the luncheon, Hulett asked me to cut the ribbon to officially open the fair. I don't think he asked me to do the honors because I was his niece by marriage, or because he'd gone to school with my mother, or because my father worked for the state's biggest newspaper, or even because my several times great-uncle had been a delegate to the 1882 Wheeling Constitutional Convention. I think he looked around at all the VIP's on hand and decided to err on the side of caution. Instead of choosing a VIP and thereby risking insulting all the others, he handed the job to the youngest person present.

One of the Charleston television stations was covering the opening ceremonies, and by the time my dad and I got home my mother had already seen the ribbon-cutting on the evening news. A typical mom, before we even got in the door she was demanding to know why he hadn't bothered to comb my hair and remove my glasses before the ribbon-cutting and photo op.

I now live in Clarksburg, which had its own wide range of centennial-related activities in 1963. Chief among them was "Out of the Whirlwind," a huge pageant tracing the history of West Virginia, written by Salem College professor and author Dorothy Davis, with music and lyrics by E.B. James. The most memorable piece of music was one Bill James wrote for the pageant titled "My Home among the Hills," which is still performed by church groups, string bands, children's choirs, and the WVU marching band. Bill was the longtime director of the Madrigal Singers of Clarksburg, currently celebrating their own 75th anniversary. I've been a member of the Madrigal Singers for several years. Although it's hardly an Elizabethan madrigal, our most requested and well-loved piece is "My Home among the Hills."

The 1963 West Virginia centen-

nial gave me my introduction to the state's history, folklore, traditional music, and arts and crafts. It also prompted some of my older relatives to share their own stories about our family history and made me realize how deeply our roots go in this state. It all stood me in good stead when I later went to work for GOLDENSEAL under your predecessor, Ken Sullivan.

As you can probably tell, I enjoyed the sesquicentennial issue, as I do every issue of the magazine. Thanks for the memories.

Sincerely,
Margo Stafford

Margo Stafford was assistant editor of GOLDENSEAL from 1979-84.
—ed.

January 5, 2014
Fairfield, Idaho
Via email
Editor:

I was given a copy of the Summer 2013 GOLDENSEAL magazine by a West Virginia resident. I found it

extremely well done and in some ways amazing, in that it portrays things that are little known or unknown here in Western America where I live.

My 1961-65 college career corresponded exactly with the 100th anniversary of the Civil War. In search of a Christian education, I attended Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, even though it was 2,500 miles from home. At that time BJU had the nation's second-ranked college motion picture program, and my older brother was enrolled in that. When I arrived in South Carolina, feelings about the Civil War still ran strong. About the first question I was asked was, "Which side were you on?" I didn't know what they were talking about. It didn't take me long to become aware that my home state of Idaho didn't even become a territory until 1863, so obviously we weren't on any side.

The GOLDENSEAL article about West Virginia's official creation

in 1863 and 100th-anniversary celebrations in 1963 brought back memories of Idaho's big territorial celebration in the summer of 1963. Many of the same activities took place here, and most of us dressed up in period clothing for specific events.

GOLDENSEAL's front cover and feature article about Civil War reenactors also brought back vivid memories. [See "Reliving History: Memories of a Civil War Reenactor," by Michael Sheets.] In early 1962 Bob Jones University's cinema department began a full-length motion picture project depicting the early years of the Civil War. The true story on which it was based was the religious conversion of Confederate General Richard Stoddert Ewell due to his battle experiences. Extreme effort was made to ensure the film's historical accuracy. We college students were used as "extras."

Those who could quickly grow a period beard were utilized as Southern forces. Since Union



Young Margo Stafford cuts the ribbon, opening the first Mountain State Art & Craft Fair at Cedar Lakes in 1963, as Hulett Smith looks on. Photograph by Jim Rust, West Virginia Department of Commerce.

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forces didn't appear in the
shooting schedule until later,
students who were slow
beard growers were used as
Northern soldiers. As a fast
beard grower, I was involved
from the very first as a Con-
federate foot soldier. For sev-
eral months every free moment
was taken up with the movie's
requirements.

An amazing thing happened.
Students from the North who
grew beards quickly became
strong Southern supporters
since they were assigned as Reb-
el troops. Young men from Ala-
bama and other Southern states
who were arbitrarily assigned to
Northern forces soon espoused
the Union cause. Of course their
real personal convictions didn't
change, but for the period of the
movie shooting everyone fit well
into their assigned roles.

We participated in mock battles,
and the Southern ladies held
elaborate parties in their planta-
tion houses. Much time was spent
being bored, like real soldiers,
because of the hurry-up-and-wait
realities of both battle and shoot-
ing schedules.

A memorable experience!
GOLDENSEAL brought it all back.
Thank you for your fine magazine.
Best regards,
Clell G. Ballard

Mailbag

October 27, 2013
Madison, Virginia
Via email
Editor:

I have always taken great pride in
my calculations capabilities until
GOLDENSEAL burst that bubble.
I recently ordered every back is-
sue that was offered for a total of
28 issues. I had it calculated that
reading one issue a week would
get me through roughly five long,
dreary months of winter. Wrong!
I'm reading two a night, so I will
have them all read in less than a
month. Do hope there are plans



to put all issues on DVD's, so I
can enjoy the wonderful stories
of West Virginia's people and its
places. You certainly do an excep-
tional job in publishing GOLD-
ENSEAL, and my hope is that it
will outlive this 72-year-old.
Sincere regards,
Janet Lohr

*Good to hear from you, Janet. Yes, we
have scanned all of our back issues
and are working toward making the
entire GOLDENSEAL collection
available in a digital format — hope-
fully sometime later this year. Stay
tuned for details! —ed.*

December 12, 2013
Duncannon, Pennsylvania
Via Facebook
Editor:

I absolutely love GOLDENSEAL
magazine! From my 79-year-old
father to my 10-year-old daugh-
ter, the whole family fights for a
chance to read each edition. My
father has been known to hide it
when he finds it in the mail so that
he doesn't have to share it with
anyone. GOLDENSEAL is one of
the best magazines out there. Keep
on keepin' on, and we'll keep
reading and fighting.
Judy F. Radel
Yeehaw Farm

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes



Delma Garrison. Photograph by Tyler Evert.



Paul Weinberger. Photograph by Michael Keller.



Larry Bartlett. Photograph by Michael Keller.

Delma Garrison was born in 1914 on Plum Run, Marion County. Her mother, Essie Myers Gump, was an accomplished quilter who taught her daughters how to quilt. In the winter of 1931-32, Essie, along with her daughters and several female relatives and neighbors, created two memorable friendship quilts. One quilt represented the work of friends and neighbors, and the other was from relatives. Delma stitched a butterfly for the latter quilt, which was pictured in our Winter 2013 issue. [See "Friendship Quilts," by Edwin Darryl Michael.] As an adult, Delma became an accomplished quilter in her own right. She was living in New Martinsville at the time of her death on January 14 at the age of 99.

Paul Weinberger of Weston was a master woodworker. Born in Lewis County in 1923, Paul was a World War II veteran and a patternmaker for the local glass industry. The son of an Austrian immigrant mouldmaker, Paul worked in the family business for more than 40 years, taking over following his father's death in 1954. Upon his retirement in 1988, Paul turned his attention to woodturning. Utilizing his years of experience in mouldmaking, Paul soon became skilled at the use of a lathe, creating unique and beautiful segmented bowls. Some of his pieces contained as many as 400 individual segments in maple, walnut, ebony, and other woods. Paul's apprentice, Dave Shombert, wrote a feature article in our Winter 2000 issue titled "Turning and Learning: Paul Weinberger's Woodshop." Paul Weinberger, age 90, passed away on December 29, 2013.

Larry Bartlett of Parkersburg passed away on November 11, 2013. A talented writer, Larry contributed nine stories to GOLDENSEAL between 1995 and 2000, including "Mayberry in Harrisville: Keeping the Peace in Ritchie County" [Spring 1995], "Rural Murals: New Deal Art in West Virginia" [Fall 1998], and "Doodle Was a Tough Old Bird" [Summer 2000]. Larry was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Vienna, Wood County, graduating from Parkersburg High School in 1955. He earned a master's degree in fine art from Colorado University and a journalism degree from Tulane University. He worked as a writer, art instructor, grade school teacher, and sculptor. His many rock sculptures decorated his lawn. Larry Bartlett was 76.

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.

Cameo Glass Exhibit

The cameo glass of Kelsey Murphy and Bob Bomkamp is now on permanent display at the West Virginia State Museum in Charleston. The exhibit, titled "The Cameo Glass Artistry of Kelsey Murphy," includes pieces from Murphy and Bomkamp's Studios of Heaven in Wayne County. Art for this display is drawn from 55 items donated by Drs. Joseph B. and Omayma Touma of Huntington.

Cameo glass is an ancient art form that involves the careful removal of multiple layers of colored glass, revealing intricate and delicate designs. Traditional cameo glass usually involves working with two or three layers; Murphy and Bomkamp typically work with glass that contains as many as 10 or 12 layers. Their work was featured on the cover of our Fall 2012 issue and in the article "Visions of Heaven: Cameo Glass Artist Kelsey Murphy," by Donna Meredith in that same edition.

The cameo glass exhibit can be found in the North Connections Room in the State Museum, located on the lower level of the Culture Center at the Capitol Complex.

For more information call (304)558-0220.



Dianne Anestis.



Cameo glass by Kelsey Murphy. Photograph by Tyler Evert.

Archives Lecture Series

The West Virginia State Archives Section continues its free lecture series this spring with Tuesday and Thursday evening lectures at the Archives Library, located at the Culture Center in Charleston. Upcoming topics and lecturers will include:

March 20 – Women's Roles in Native American Society with Dianne Anestis

April 1 – Collis P. Huntington with Jim Casto



Ken Bailey.

April 17 – Appalachian Ghost Stories with Mike Knost

May 6 – Civil War Ceredo: A Northern Experiment with Ken Bailey

May 15 – African American Authors with Phyllis Wilson Moore

The lectures begin at 6:00 p.m. and are open to the public at no charge. No reservations are necessary. For additional information call (304)558-0230 or visit www.wvculture.org/history/workshops.html.

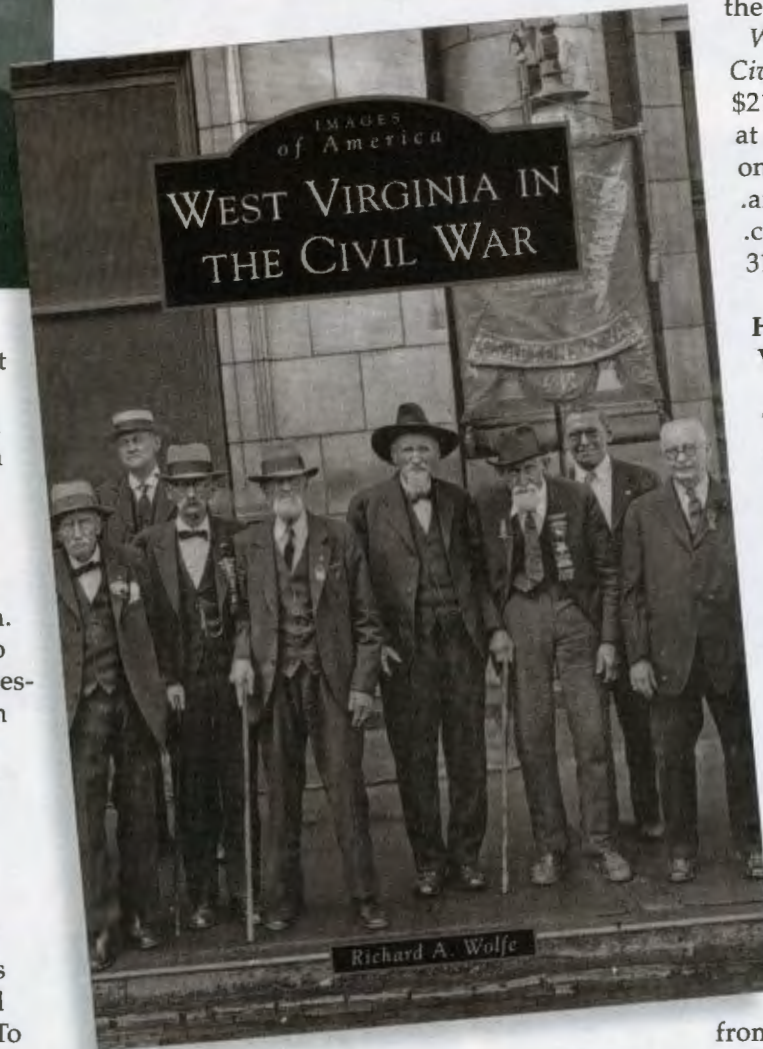
Prison Book Project

The Appalachian Prison Book Project has provided free books to inmates in West Virginia and neighboring states since 2006. To date they have mailed more than 10,000 books to institutionalized individuals in a six-state region, receiving 80 to 100 requests a week at their Morgantown office.

A prison education symposium is planned April 4-6 at West Virginia University. Funded by a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council, the gathering is designed to enable scholars, artists, journalists, prison activists, corrections officers, literacy advocates, inmates, and former inmates to exchange ideas, information, and insights about how to strengthen educa-

tional opportunities within West Virginia prisons.

For more information about the symposium, or to volunteer or donate to the Appalachian Prison Book Project, visit <http://aprisonbookproject.wordpress.com/> or e-mail appalachianpbp@gmail.com.



Civil War Book

West Virginia in the Civil War is a new title from Arcadia Publishing that chronicles the role West Virginians played in the Civil War through the use of vintage photographs and drawings, and recent images. Part of Arcadia's Images of America series, this 128-page paperbound volume includes a brief introduction by author Richard A. Wolfe. Chapters are arranged chronologically and trace the

conflict from John Brown's Raid of 1859 to the surrender at Appomattox in 1865. The final 36 pages highlight monuments, parades, and reunions — a significant portion of the book but appropriate given the continued prominence of the war in this state, 150 years after the fact.

West Virginia in the Civil War sells for \$21.99. It is available at local retailers or online at www.arcadiapublishing.com; phone 1-888-313-2665.

Holliday's Cove Video

The history of the Brooke County town of Holliday's Cove is the subject of a new 70-minute video. "Rediscovering Holliday's Cove," a project of the Weirton Area Museum & Cultural Center, is narrated by librarian and GOLDENSEAL author Pamela Makricosta. It tells the story of this hamlet

from Revolutionary War times up to its 1947 merger with Weirton, its younger but more powerful northern neighbor. It features a trove of historical photographs as well as contemporary views and includes a generous sampling of local music.

"Rediscovering Holliday's Cove" is available on DVD at the Weirton Area Museum & Cultural Center for a donation of \$20. The DVD is also available by mail. Send a check for \$22.50, payable to the Weirton Area Museum & Cultural Center, to WAMCC, P.O. Box 517, Weirton, WV 26062.



DEATH OF A GYPSY KING

By Jane Kraina and Mary Zwierzchowski

Unidentified gypsies in north-central West Virginia, circa 1900. Photograph by Scott Gibson, courtesy of Permanent Art Collection, West Virginia University Libraries. No photographs are known to exist of Zeke Marks or his family.

Under ordinary circumstances the obituary of Zeke Marks, a 75-year-old father of nine, would have been placed in the back section of the local newspaper. But Marks was not an ordinary man.

His passing was noted on page one of *The Weirton Daily Times*, November 21, 1931, under the headline "Strange Rites Over Body of Gypsy King Who Died in Weirton." What followed was a rare and fascinating look into the strange customs of nomadic life.

"The mystery which has segregated that colorful band of wandering nomads," the paper stated, "has been temporarily lifted here today with the death of the tribe's king of a quarter of a century, Zeke Marks, 75. The body of the ruler of the tribe of 84 members lies in state at the Schwerha Funeral Home in Weirton. Zeke has been a revered leader and known to all gypsies in the United States. His passing leaves the destinies of the group to his son, Peter, 54."

Traveling in a caravan of eight cars, the tribe had arrived in Weirton in July 1931, settling along Kings Creek on the outskirts of town. The colony was of the Serbian branch of gypsies. They were fluent in nearly all European languages, including English.

John Mankowski, a retired steelworker from Weirton, was 16 years old when the gypsies came to Kings Creek. His father, Adam Mankowski, owned the large, stately house overlooking the creek and field where the gypsies camped. John lived there with his parents, six brothers, and four sisters. They ran a thriving dairy farm covering 121 acres of green pasture that bordered both sides of the creek.

To the gypsies, the Mankowski family was known as *gadje* or outsiders. But they soon became good neighbors. John has vivid memories of that summer and remembers their friendly encounters.



Serbian picnic grounds today along Kings Creek — site of the 1931 gypsy encampment near Weirton. Photograph courtesy of Jane Kraina.

"They would come to the house and buy milk, eggs, butter, and pickled cucumbers from my mother. They could speak English well, but would speak to her in Polish (her native tongue). We had a springhouse out back and would let them get fresh water from the croft. I can still picture them walking down the road, eating as they went along."

One could easily recognize the gypsies by their appearance, especially the women with their dangling jewelry and brightly colored head scarves. John saw them as "friendly people who never caused us any trouble. Far as I know, they never did harm to anyone while they were here."

John went near the camp many times and had a good view of how the tribe lived. From what he observed, their manner of living was crude, even by standards of the 1930's. "They lived in tents, cooked over an open fire, and stone-washed their clothes in the creek. They swam in the creek, as we all did. It was much wider and deeper then."

Gypsies do not socialize with *gadje* or non-gypsies. However, they did invite outsiders into the camp and,

for a fee, would offer to tell their fortunes. John often played ball with the children in the camp and was invited several times to share food with them. "Some of the younger children were very pretty. They looked different, fair-skinned with light hair (unlike the dark-skinned gypsies). They told me that the children had been stolen from somewhere out west." That gypsies steal babies is a tale often told, but John does not know if the story was true.

The daily activities of the tribe were not confined to the rural life of Kings Creek. They owned cars and frequently made the five-mile trip into downtown Weirton. Both young and old from the gypsy camp enjoyed the diversions and opportunities that town life provided.

Matt Javersak was an usher at a movie theater in north Weirton. "They came to the movies often, in bunches," Matt recalls. "Times were tough then, but they always had money. Mostly, they would pay in gold."

The gypsy women rented storefronts on Main Street and displayed the occult signs of the fortune-telling trade. Their lucrative skills in palm



reading made them the breadwinners of the family. The men found success, too, by offering their musical talents to anyone for the drop of a few coins.

Back at the camp the gypsies made their own entertainment. John could hear the music from across the creek — “the mandolin, guitar, and a small squeeze-box, something like an accordion.” The evenings would be filled with song and dance. “They would put sheets of plywood down for a dance floor and also dance on the grass. They knew how to have a good time.”

The gypsies remained at Kings Creek through the end of the summer and well into autumn. Then abruptly, on November 17, the good times came to an end.

King Zeke — a highly regarded yet stern leader — was described as a healthy-looking man, short and slightly balding. He wore a large gray, drooping moustache. Despite his robust appearance, “Old Zeke” died of bronchial pneumonia, leaving the reins of power to his son Peter.

News of the king’s death spread quickly. The tribe summoned relatives by phone and telegraph. Over 200 members of the colony journeyed to Weirton to pay homage to their fallen leader. Peter Marks, a gruff and determined fellow, took on the awesome task of arranging his father’s funeral. As the newly designated king, Peter resolved to carry out “to the last letter” the unwritten rules passed down from barbaric times. But he encountered problems.

Seven of Zeke’s children had already arrived from various parts of the country. But his two daughters, Frances and Gloria, were in jail in Elmira, New York. Tradition required that all nine be present at the place of death before the body could be shipped to St. Paul, Minnesota, for burial. The king would be laid to rest there in a grave alongside his wife, who had died the previous year.



Unidentified gypsy woman in north-central West Virginia, circa 1900. Photograph by Scott Gibson, courtesy of Permanent Art Collection, West Virginia University Libraries.

John Mankowski describes the funeral scene. “When the king died they came from everywhere — California, Texas, Florida. At one time there were about a hundred families camped through here all along the

creek about a quarter of a mile [upstream from the Weirton baseball field]. The king was laid out in a big tent, about where the ball field is now. I went to see him. There was gold in the casket, a shaving kit, and



The Schwerha Funeral Home, now the Presley Funeral Home, hosted more than 10,000 visitors during the 1931 funeral of gypsy king Zeke Marks. Photograph by Michael Keller.

a loaf of bread."

Later, the funeral activities were moved from Kings Creek to the Schwerha Funeral Home in town. At the funeral home, the story goes, funeral director George Schwerha "named his price and the money was paid — in gold. They did not barter." Gold was used, Peter said, because "paper burns."

Although the gypsies kept mostly to themselves, no barriers were placed against visitors at the funeral home. The curious came from miles around — from city to countryside, factory and farmland — to view the colorful ceremonies. During the three days that the king's body lay in state at the Schwerha Funeral Home, it was estimated that 10,000 curious on-lookers filed past the funeral bier. For those who stood in long lines and took on the November chill, a bizarre scene awaited them.

According to *The Weirton Daily Times* report and other newspaper accounts, the king's body lay in state in a bronze casket, unkempt and

unshaven with a red bandanna tied lightly around his chin. A knitted scarf sealed his mouth. His ankles were bound with rope. He lay there in death's grip, hands clasped to his chest, clutching a \$5 gold piece. The gold coin, the gypsies say, is for safe passage across the River Styx in the future world. A wine jug was tucked under his right arm and a shaving kit under his left. His hat lay off to the side.

At the foot of the casket were all that remained of his worldly possessions — towels, handkerchiefs, cases, brushes, and other small items. Also, four paid bills — for a cemetery plot, vault, monument, and suit of clothes — showing that "he leaves this world a square man."

Like other life passages death brought a set of rituals, and the unkempt state is in keeping with gypsy belief. After a death, the family of the dead cannot wash themselves or change their clothes for three days. The number three is significant in events held after death; many ac-

tivities involve the number three or multiples of three.

Normally hardy people, the gypsies became visibly shaken in the face of death. Some of them wailed and beat themselves on the mortuary floor, while others spoke to the man in loud, curt tones as if he were not dead. Relatives "sipped rich wine near the bier and left a portion in the bottle, placed under the dead man's arm." Gypsies believe the dead man's soul will come and take the food and money buried in the casket. A luxurious silk shroud and sprinkling of incense lent a final touch to the morbid scene.

Only in death can the closely guarded secrets of the mysterious gypsies be revealed. A spokesman for his clan explained the meaning of the strange rituals. "Zeke, they say, is only sleeping and may arise from the casket. Fearing that he might arise at night when they maintain no death vigil, they have tied his feet to prevent him from wandering off a hermit; and have bound his jaws, lest he might reveal the deep secrets of the romantic and fascinating gypsy."

Six days after Zeke's death, Frances and Gloria Marks were released from jail. With all nine children present at the scene of death, they could now proceed with the burial rites.

At 3 p.m. — note the time of 3 — on November 23, services were held at the Schwerha Funeral Home. Although the newspaper makes only slight mention of a brief chanting ceremony, it is believed that a local priest of the Russian Orthodox faith was called in to assist. The women each clipped a lock of the dead man's hair and tied it to their clothing. Gold was poured into the casket as it was about to be closed.

Following the ceremony, the gypsy mourners — dressed in colorful garb — paraded through the streets of Weirton, then traveled by car to neighboring Steubenville, Ohio,





Gypsy wagon in West Virginia, date and location unknown. Photograph by Harold Field.

where they resumed the parade. A local band led the procession slowly up Market Street toward the train station, marching in cadence to the mournful tone of a Slavic dirge.

At the station, the bronze coffin was lifted gently from the hearse and placed in readiness for its final journey. Later that evening Peter and his two brothers, Joseph and Rover, would accompany Zeke's body on the long train ride to St. Paul, Minnesota.

With arrangements in place, the gypsies returned to their encampment at Kings Creek where they joined together for an elaborate funeral feast. More than \$700 in gold was spent for food. But even at this point, custom dictated. An empty chair symbolized the throne vacated by Zeke, their absent king.

The funeral feast is called a *pomana sinia*. Feasts are held for up to a year in multiples of three. A typical setup of feasts is at three days, six weeks, and another at either six or nine months. Commonly at such feasts, they bless the table with incense, carrying it around the table three times. Drinks are also passed around the table three times.

John Mankowski witnessed the banquet scene. "They rolled out a long sheet of paper on the grass — about 100 feet. That's where they sat

and ate. Roast pig was the main item on the menu. I know that for sure because they bought three pigs from my dad, and I had to kill them."

The conclusion of the feast brought an end to the Kings Creek episode. Soon afterwards, the tribe broke camp and continued their *hegira*, or journey. The gypsies consider the funeral parlor and place of death unlucky and travel from the death site, moving around for at least six weeks.

Soon after they left Weirton, the Marks clan met again in the blustery cold wind of a Minnesota cemetery. At graveside ceremonies Peter carried out the final ancient rite. Family and friends looked on as Peter descended into the grave which had been showered with gold pieces. With grim determination, he opened the bronze coffin, untied the bonds, unsealed the mouth, pronounced his father dead, and in a gesture of triumph, proclaimed himself king.

Finally, the long, grueling ordeal came to an end. The grave was closed and the tribe moved on. "To southland trails," Peter said, where the weather is warm.

Several years later, John Mankowski's father made him an offer. "My dad said that if I would build a bridge across the creek, he would give me all the land on the other side. I built the

bridge — and a house, too." At the age of 81, John still lives there with his wife Josephine on the same land where the gypsies once camped.

John speaks of those memorable times as "the good old days." But the deep nostalgia in the old gentleman's eyes says it best. For the adventurous young farm lad, the time of the gypsies had been "an unforgettable experience."

The brief encampment of the gypsies at Kings Creek in the fall of 1931 adds a colorful page to Weirton's ethnic history, which lists more than 70 nationality groups. But more importantly, for three days that November, a veil of secrecy was lifted allowing thousands who ventured here a close-up look into the strange rituals of the nomadic life — and the death and burial — of a gypsy king. ✱

JANE KRAINA is a Weston native. She holds a master's degree in journalism from West Virginia University. Jane works as coordinator of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Museum at the Brooke County Public Library in Wellsburg. This 1998 story is her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

MARY ZWEIRZCHOWSKI grew up near Cliftonville, Greenbrier County, and graduated from Northern West Virginia Community College. She works in Weirton at the Mary H. Weir Public Library and is a freelance author. Her most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2005 edition.

Gypsies in Weirton

By Jane Kraina and
Mary Zwierzchowski

Since their encampment at Kings Creek in 1931, the gypsy tribe never returned to the Weirton area. There are those who still recall their encounter here, however, and acres of lush, green fields bordering Kings Creek serve as scenic reminders of that memorable time.

Joe Mankowski is the grandson of Adam Mankowski, the Weirton resident who had befriended gypsy king Zeke Marks and permitted the tribe to camp along Kings Creek. Joe manages the Get Togethers Picnic Grounds at the same location.

John Kosanovich of Weirton is a member of the Eastern Serbian Orthodox Church in Steubenville, Ohio. He talks of the picnic grounds in Weirton, where the Serbs hold their annual picnic next to Kings Creek, close to where the Mankowski farm sits. John's parents passed down to him the stories of the gypsies who had encamped there during the 1931 funeral of gypsy king Zeke Marks.

The church bought the picnic grounds in the 1940's from Carl and Rose Frank-

ovich. Every year on the fourth Sunday in July, the Serbs hold their big annual picnic. John says, "Our spits can hold 36 lambs, and we also cook chicken. Every Wednesday we have chicken blasts in the summer for the public. People order their chickens in the morning, and they are ready in the afternoon and evening. We also have standing orders."

The playground, basketball courts, and natural setting make it a popular spot for people to bring their families. Among those groups who still hold annual picnics there are the Polish, the Shriners, and the 25-year club of Weirton Steel — a group of steelworkers who were employed at the steel plant for at least 25 years. In the past, other social and religious groups chose the site for their picnics as well, including the VFW, the Elks, and the American Legion. "We have started having graduation parties and even weddings at the facility," John Kosanovich adds.

George Martich recalls the types of food cooked for the larger Serbian picnics. "Over the open fire they placed the chicken and lambs on spits. In addi-

tion they made a small sausage called cevaps, and cabbage and noodles. As a dessert item they served krofne, a Serbian-style doughnut."

Nick Zatezalo says the original picnic grounds had been further down the road, but were rebuilt where they stand now. After those wooden structures burned, people who worked at Weirton Steel helped to build the steel pavilion that is there now. The grounds were purchased in two segments and total around 25 acres. "During the big picnics the Serbian dancers from the church would perform, and a band played the traditional music for those at the picnic," Nick says.

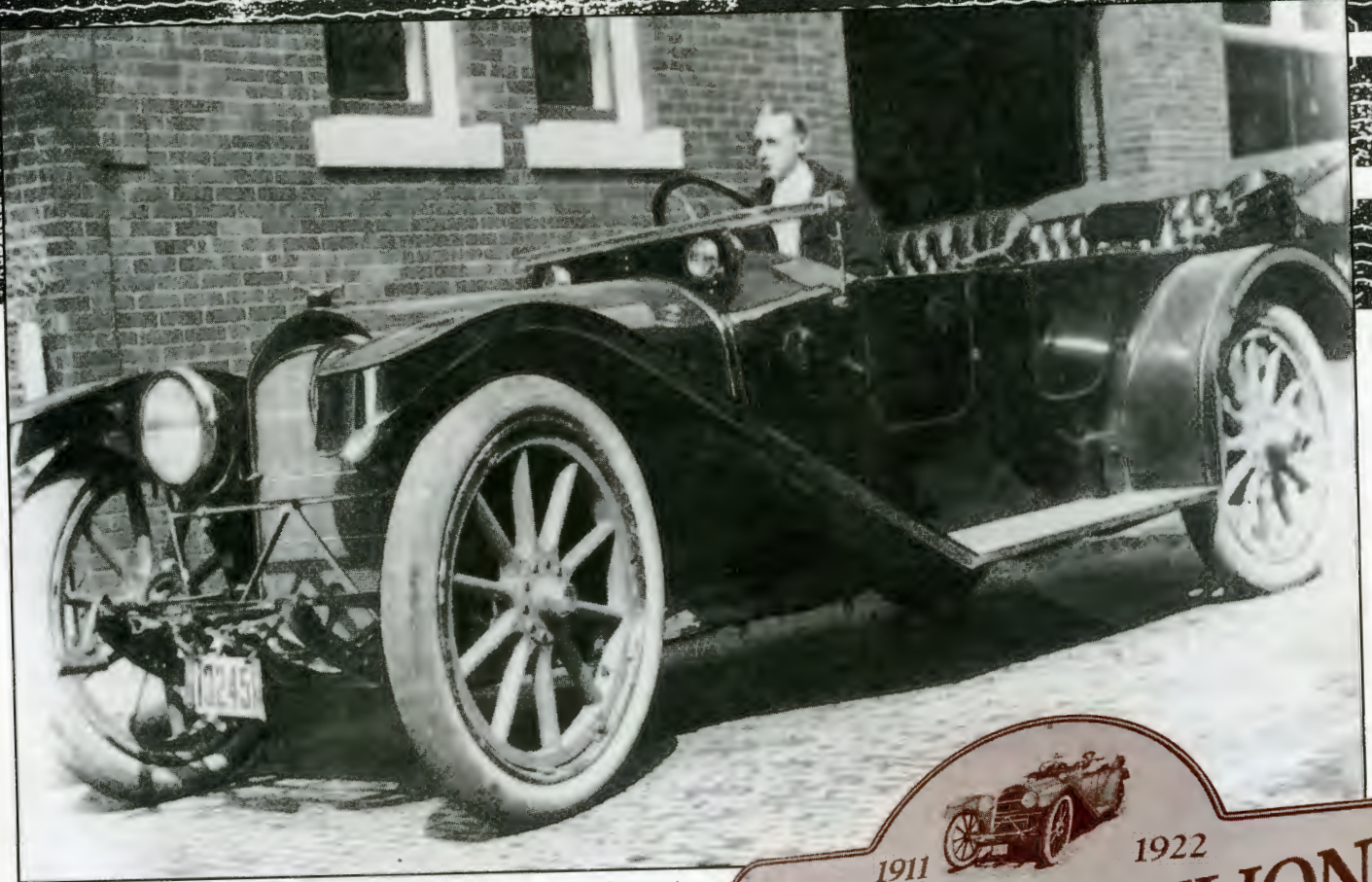
Weekly chicken blasts at the picnic grounds are a tradition in Weirton. Every Wednesday from the last week in May to the last week in August, the locals can enjoy the pleasant area and the food. Billy Price says, "The men chose Wednesday because it was one of the paydays for the Weirton Steel employees, and also mid-week."

The Serbian church recently opened the Serbian American Cultural Center in Weirton. The Top of West Virginia has their fair there, and the Women's Club has a fall craft show. The center cooks dinners and holiday banquets. As with most religious groups in the area, the Serbian church has falling membership, due to the decline of population as the steel industry globalizes.

Men of the Eastern Serbian Orthodox Church grill pigs and chickens at the picnic grounds north of Weirton. From the left, they are Jimmy Price, Danny Zatezalo, John "Rudy" Kosanovich, and Mark Zatezalo. Photograph by Jane Kraina.



The Norwalk



Brand new 1912 Norwalk Underslung Six being driven from the factory in Martinsburg. Photographer unknown. Inset: Sign at War Memorial Park in Martinsburg. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.



By Daniel J. Friend

In the early 1900's, a low-riding luxury car was built in Martinsburg's industrial center. The long and lavish Norwalk Underslung Six was billed as "The Car of Absolute Exclusiveness."

It remains Martinsburg's primary claim to automotive history and stands as the most successful and longest-made motor vehicle known to have been manufactured in the Mountain State.

Martinsburg's Motor Car

The Norwalk Motor Car Company assembled cars and trucks from 1912 to 1922 on Miller Avenue — recently renamed Norwalk Avenue — located along the Winchester & Western Railroad tracks in Martinsburg's once-thriving woolen mill district.

The auto manufacturer started in Norwalk, Ohio, in 1910. It faced financial trouble there, however, and a group of local investors bought out the company and its remaining parts stock, and moved everything to Martinsburg. The company began assembling the Underslung Six in

1912 in a building formerly occupied by the Brooklyn Brass Works.

The hulking Norwalk Underslung featured unique and expensive design concepts, many of which became standard features on later models. The Norwalk Underslung frame and suspension design lowered the car's center of gravity, making for less sway in curves. Engineers mounted the Norwalk's axles on top of the frame, while most manufacturers mounted the frame on top of the axles.

An advertisement in the 1913 edition of Motor magazine detailed the advantages of the low-riding car. Ac-

cording to the advertisement, "The keynote of Norwalk Underslung construction lies in the fact that we have brought the center of weight, the point of suspension, and the point of support to coincide in practically one point. Flat springs are used all around, supported on top of the axle. Side sway and body swing are eliminated absolutely. In rounding corners, the centrifugal force is not taken up by the springs vertically, but the stress is lateral. As a result, the Norwalk, when rounding curves, carries the same weight on all four wheels as on the straightaway."



The Norwalk Motor Car Company operated out of this building in Martinsburg's woolen district from 1912 until 1922. This photograph was made in about 1920, photographer unknown.

The standard Norwalk Underslung Six was a huge convertible with 40-inch tires tall enough to bring the front fenders level with the plane of the hood. The tourer offered a 500-cubic-inch in-line, 6-cylinder, 8.6-liter, overhead-valve engine. By comparison, one of today's larger engines used in many General Motors vehicles is the 350-cubic-inch, 5.7-liter, V-8. With room for six passengers, the Underslung Six

boasted a 136-inch wheelbase. By comparison, a modern, full-sized 2003 Cadillac Deville's wheelbase is 115.3 inches.

In 1912, the two-passenger Underslung roadster was offered for \$2,900, the three-passenger roadster for \$3,000, and the six-passenger tourer for \$3,100. According to an advertisement, those prices got the owner the following equipment: "Top with curtains and cover, glass fold-

ing windshield, complete dynamo and battery, electric lighting system, self starter, speedometer, electric cigar lighter and trouble lamp, extra demountable rim, electric horn, coat rails, foot rails, trunk, all tools, etc."

A top-of-the-line Underslung would cost a buyer about six times Henry Ford's \$500-\$600 price for a standard passenger car of the same era. Not a car for the common man, the Underslung was mainly mar-



General manager Arthur E. Skadden, at center with hat, posed for this picture with his office staff in about 1916. From the left, they are Margaret Youtz, Gerald Coppersmith, Mr. Snapp, Skadden, shop supervisor Mr. Boyer, and bookkeeper Hattie Lockart. Photograph courtesy of Garry Murphy, photographer unknown.

keted and sold in the more opulent sections of New York, Philadelphia, and Toronto.

"We're talking a lot of money for ol' Martinsburgers in 1912," says Garry Murphy, historian for the Norwalk Antique Car Club of Martinsburg, named in honor of the local vehicle. Garry has spent many years tracking local lore and information associated with the Norwalk Motor Car Company and has given numerous talks about the car and its history to collectors and other groups.

"At this time, an automobile wasn't a necessity," Garry says. "Henry Ford was just getting started. This [Norwalk] was still a plaything for rich people. Hey, there's been over 3,000 cars built in this country since 1900, or names on file. Some, they only built one of, some a half-a-dozen. And some never got beyond the drawing board." [See "The Elusive Jarvis Huntington: Early Automobiles of West Virginia," by Joseph Platania; Fall 1999.]

After about 1915, few, if any, Underslung models were built. The Norwalk company began instead to produce smaller and less expensive four-cylinder models with standard suspension. Utility trucks — with an "outhouse cab sitting on a frame," Garry Murphy says — were also built during the final five years. A Norwalk truck was put into service for Hose Company No. 1 as Martinsburg's first motorized firefighting equipment.

Information about Norwalk vehicles is not scarce. The company advertised in all of the popular trade journals, and several articles were written about Norwalks. Much of the literature is very "forward-looking," however, and often overstates the company's success and the performance of the automobiles. Some of

the advertised features, and even the car styles themselves, were available only if a buyer placed a special order for the car.

Martinsburg was no Detroit. The low-production Norwalk assembly plant was never financially stable. In fact, it was ordered to close in 1915 by a Berkeley County circuit judge, but was reorganized and kept operating through sales companies and at the mercy of the bankruptcy courts until its final closure in October 1922.

According to an April 13, 1967, *Martinsburg Journal* article, about 35 people were employed by the company, "their work week consisting of 10-hour days, six days a week, for about \$10 a week."

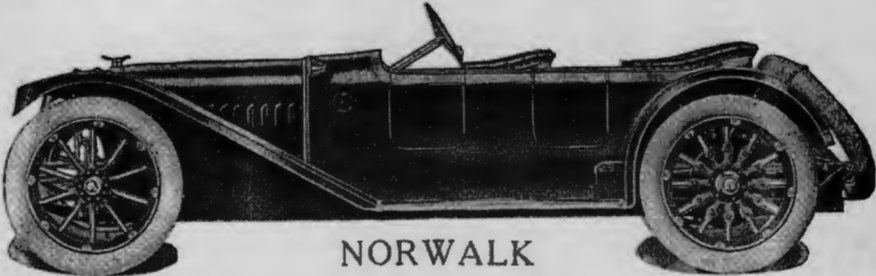
George E. Anderson, born in 1900, worked at the factory in his youth and was one of Martinsburg's last surviving Norwalk employees. Before George Anderson died in 1992, Garry Murphy interviewed him at his West Virginia Avenue home about his work experience at the factory.

"[George Anderson] was a tall, lanky, rough-cut fellow," Garry re-

members. "I talked to him one time. I was very impressed, and I really regret that I didn't go back and talk more." George showed him "several pieces off of Norwalk cars," Garry says, including an isinglass oval rear window for the convertible top.

George Anderson said during the interview that he worked at the factory "wherever they needed him," giving him experience throughout the plant. The order of production, he told Garry, was frame, engine, wiring, and body. While major components were brought in from elsewhere, certain parts, such as spark and throttle control or brake parts, were made or finished in the shop. He told Garry that the body was built in two pieces, and that they turned out an average of about two cars per week.

A few were sold locally; most of these were trucks sold to local businesses, such as Thatcher's Dairy and Miller's Orchard [see "Apple Royalty: Berkeley County's Miller Family," by Carl E. Feather; Fall 2001]. According to George, local sales were transacted



NORWALK

"The Car of Absolute Exclusiveness"

BUILT IN MARTINSBURG

¶ The scientific application of the UNDERSLUNG FRAME principle in connection with abundant, continuous SIX CYLINDER POWER makes the NORWALK the SAFEST car to drive at all speeds on all roads with the maximum of comfort, and really a revelation in performance and general road ability.

THE NORWALK MOTOR CAR COMPANY
MARTINSBURG, W. VA.

Advertisement from the *Martinsburg Directory*, 1913-14.

right there at the factory. A New York City company held the marketing rights to the car, and many of the vehicles were exported overseas.

George recalled that legendary car racer Barney Oldfield came to Martinsburg when parts were being sold off in 1922 and drove away with enough frames, engines, and other components to build three Norwalks.

"Painting and detailing? We got into quite a bit of detail about that," Garry recalls. According to George, the fenders were dipped and dried, and the body was painted with a brush. The bodies were then finished on the factory's top floor. "There was a guy [upstairs] that painted them,"

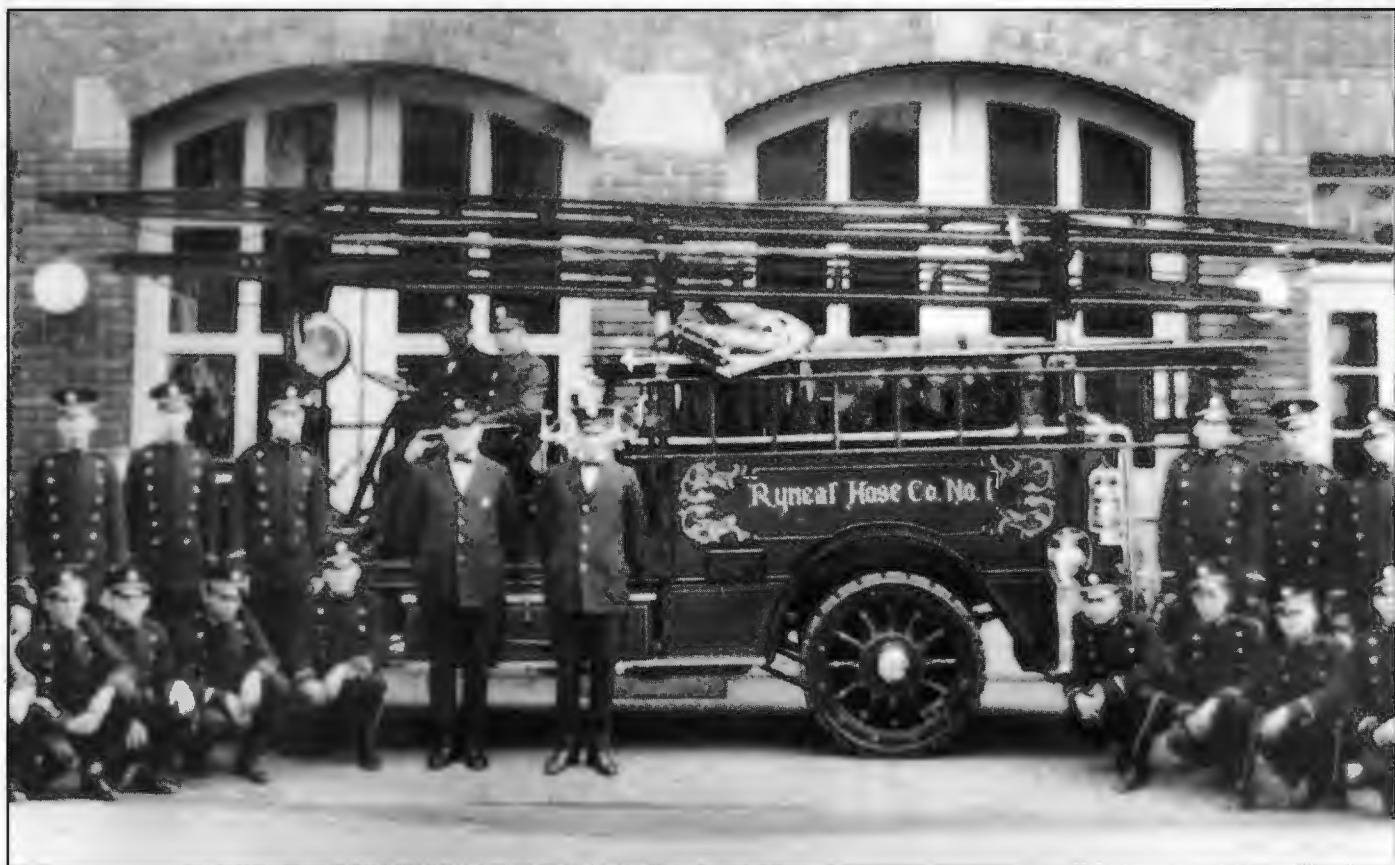
George told Garry. "There was steel troughs around the perimeter of the building. They poured gasoline in them steel troughs, lit fire to it, walked out and closed the door, and didn't come back until the next morning. That was how they dried them bodies."

Mechanics drove the completed cars out King Street to the west end of town and used the Tuscarora Pike as a testing ground for the vehicles, according to conversations Garry Murphy had with Jim Noll, who ran a machine shop in Nollville. "Often times, you'd see this guy riding on the chassis," Garry recalls from his talks with Jim Noll. "They'd drive them out to the base of the mountain

and back. They'd run the bugs out of them."

Though there is now a newly renamed Norwalk Avenue, and a popular picnic shelter in Martinsburg's War Memorial Park has been designated the Norwalk Antique Car Club Pavilion, Berkeley County residents at large know very little about the Norwalk or its history. None of the Norwalk factory employees is alive, but relatives remember fragments of the Norwalk story.

Janet Hiatt, owner of the All About Fabric shop on Queen Street in Martinsburg, is the granddaughter of Alvin O. Seibert, who worked at the Norwalk Motor Car Company in his early 20's as an apprentice and



This Norwalk fire truck was among Martinsburg's first motorized firefighting equipment, pictured here with the Ryneal Hose Company No. 1. Photographer and date unknown.

ultimately became a master mechanic there. Seibert and his family lived within sight of the car factory. "He no doubt walked to work," Janet says. She recalls that very little was ever said about the Norwalk plant. "It wasn't dinner table conversation," she says, but she remembers her grandfather as a "very Baptist and Christian" man.

Paul Boltz of Inwood, along with his brother Donald, owned and operated all of the former Interwoven woolen mills buildings in Martinsburg during recent years, including the former home of the Norwalk Motor Car Company. Paul is also the nephew of the late Alvin O. Seibert.

"He was a little short fella," Paul says of his uncle. "He was an excellent machinist. He had a little lathe and could do real small, intricate stuff. He and my aunt and my mother and father moved into Martinsburg from the country around the turn of the century."

Local historian Jeff Hollis has amassed volumes of information and photographs from Martinsburg's early-1900's industrial boom period, including the Norwalk. He obtained pages of details about the Norwalk and those who operated the factory from Bill Lewis, an automotive historian in California. Bill had taken written statements from former Norwalk workers, including this June 6, 1966, letter reportedly written by Alvin O. Seibert. The letter reads:

"I worked for the Norwalk Motor Car Company from the start to finish. I was employed as an entered apprentice 1911, worked my way up, by 1919 I was master mechanic. I had the blacksmith department, machine shop, and truck assembly under my supervision.

"[In] 1912, we started to make the Underslung Six. We made them by



Miller Avenue, the site of the former Norwalk factory, has been renamed Norwalk Avenue. It runs along the railroad tracks near the old Interwoven mills, visible in the background. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

special order, different specification and color. They bought the frame from some metal-stamping company. The castings were ordered from different foundries, and we machined them and assembled them. The motors were bought from Continental Motors. The bodies were bought in the rough. We upholstered them with split leather, painted to specification. Some had as many as seven different coats of paint and primer. \$3,000 was the price. Best-looking car on the market at that date. One man came here and saw his car built from start to finish, then drove it home. They built approximately 75 cars, of which 25 were electric gear shift."

The original Berkeley County backers of Norwalk, holding one share of stock each, were Thomas W. Martin, F.A. Minor, Gilbert W. McGown, Gray Silver, James Rothwell, S.P. Hopkins, Xenophen Poole, H.L. Alexander, and Leon H. Ware. Arthur E. Skadden was the general manager for the company and owned the rights to the name and design. Gerald T. Coppersmith was his assistant, and W.S. Reed was chief engineer.

Bill Lewis and Jeff Hollis corresponded with Ruth Skadden Giblin, the daughter of Arthur E. Skadden, and spoke with her on the telephone. "[She] remembers roller-skating through the building on both floors," Jeff says. "There were hardwood floors all through the building, and she would roller-skate up and down while her father was doing some things in the office."

The company's continual money problems forced manager Arthur Skadden to build smaller, lower-priced cars in the later years. The Underslung design was no longer used, and the overhead-valve engine was no longer affordable. Bush and Stork-Kar automobiles were report-



The old Norwalk Motor Car Company building in flames on November 30, 1989. Photograph by Jeff Hollis.

edly assembled at the Miller Avenue factory for a time, as were Piedmonts. Most of these cars were simply "re-badged" Norwalks, according to some automotive historians.

Along with their financial difficulties, the onset of World War I dealt a major blow to the company as nearly two-thirds of the 35 workers were drafted into the U.S. Army.

Arthur Skadden died in 1919, and his wife, Clara B. Skadden, took charge of the company. She finally moved to Indianapolis, where the company business offices were located until the Martinsburg factory closed October 24, 1922.

"As Bill Lewis' commentaries went, everybody in the world was in that business all of a sudden. Everybody that could nail two things together and stick a piece of metal across it tried to build a car," Jeff says. "Thousands of manufacturers go to hundreds, go down to a half-a-dozen. I don't think it was anything because of Martinsburg. It was the industry itself."

Paul Boltz and Jeff Hollis toured the old Norwalk building in 1989. "We wanted to find anything that would verify or authenticate that this was the place and find evidence of things. And we found evidence," Paul Boltz says. Handwritten parts labels were tacked onto the massive wooden floor beams above parts bins in the

basement of the 50' x 150' building.

In November 1989, shortly after their visit, the building burned in one of the most spectacular fires in recent Martinsburg memory. "I could have cried when that place burned," Paul Boltz says, looking through a stack of photos he and Jeff took of the building during their visit. "It just tore me up. I've thanked God many times that we got in there when we did. It was really that close."

Following the fire, Paul combed through the ruins and took home a carload of bricks, a massive iron gear from the factory's wooden elevator, and iron "S" braces from the ends of wall support rods. In 1990, the Martinsburg Jaycees buried a time capsule at the intersection of West King Street and the Winchester & Western Railroad. Inside it, Paul Boltz placed a brick from the Norwalk factory along with photos of the fire — remnants of West Virginia's greatest claim to automotive history and a proud part of Martinsburg's industrial heritage. 🌿

DANIEL J. FRIEND grew up in central West Virginia around Sutton and Elkins. He worked for many years as a reporter, assistant editor, and columnist at newspapers in the Eastern Panhandle before becoming a full-time high school teacher in Frederick County, Virginia, in 2010. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2008 issue.

The Norwalk Comes Home

By Daniel J. Friend

On September 10, 2008, Frederick and Dianna Gantt of Hedgesville, Berkeley County, headed west to bring home the last known example of Martinsburg's automotive heritage—a 1914 Norwalk Underslung Six touring car. With Vic and Shelly McFillan following, the two couples made the 3,400-mile, 10-day trek to return the bright yellow vehicle with a burgundy top from Longmont, Colorado, to Berkeley County—where it was made. The journey was the culmination of six years of careful negotiations with the former owner by members of the Norwalk Antique Car Club, who formed the Friends of Norwalk Foundation, Inc., a non-profit group that will raise funds to pay off the bank loan that brought the historic car home.

The total cost of the car was \$300,000. Owner Shirley Hoffman informed car club member Christopher Breeze that she was planning to sell it, most likely on the Internet through eBay.

Breeze had first contacted Hoffman in 2002 after learning about the car

through a national auction house. But the car never showed up at the auction location. That near miss sparked renewed interest in the car among the West Virginia car club membership. Members Bob and Bea Aikens made a trip to Longmont to see the car and brought back many photos. Breeze stayed in touch with Hoffman, calling her about twice a year to keep tabs on the car.

After Hoffman called Breeze in spring 2008, Breeze immediately called Dianna Gantt and notified her that the car could be put up for open bidding. Thirteen car club members quickly formed a foundation and raised a \$20,000 down payment, which was wired to Hoffman. The foundation board then set to work finding a local bank to finance the remainder of the \$300,000 asking price. Centra Bank of Martinsburg agreed to a no-interest loan, and the funds were wired to Hoffman. The Gantts and McFillans then set out to retrieve the car.

The Norwalk arrived back in Martins-

burg on September 20, and the car club hosted a special event on September 28 to mark the return of the low-riding luxury vehicle. Among those present to celebrate the return of the Norwalk were Circuit Court Judge Gray Silver III and Martinsburg attorney Clarence E. "CEM" Martin—both grandsons of Gray Silver, one of the original stockholders of the Norwalk Motor Car Company.

"I think it's a wonderful thing for the community," Silver says. "It's part of the heritage."

Martin agrees. "This is a truly significant event," he says, commending the foundation members who made it happen. Martin calls the return of the Norwalk car to Martinsburg "one of the greatest achievements" among volunteer historic preservation groups in the Eastern Panhandle.

Breeze says the most important thing now is to raise funds. "The only way this car will remain in Martinsburg is through contributions to pay off the debt," he says. "This is the only remaining Norwalk car known to exist in the world, and it is an integral part of history for Martinsburg and West Virginia."

One fund-raising effort has been the raffling off of classic automobiles. The current raffle is for a 1966 Dodge Dart GT, which will be given away at the 2014 Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival this October in Martinsburg. Other fund-raisers are planned as well.

For more information or to send donations, write to Friends of the Norwalk Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 1464, Hedgesville, WV 25427; online at www.norwalkmotorcar.com.

This 1914 Norwalk Underslung Six—the last one known to exist—returned to Martinsburg in 2008. Local antique car enthusiasts are still raising funds to retire the \$300,000 loan. Photograph courtesy of the Norwalk Foundation.



MIRACLE DUST ON



Spruce Knob, Pendleton County, West Virginia's highest point.

In January 1942, our nation was a few weeks into World War II. Thousands of guys registered at their local draft board, while others voluntarily joined up so as to have their choice of military service. I couldn't decide. Army? Navy? Marine Corps? I opted to wait till my "number" came up, wait for fate to make the decision for me.

In the meantime, the Army Corps of Engineers had hired me as a laborer on Ohio River lock repair. During the week, I had room and board up the river near the work site, and I came

home to Huntington on weekends. I returned to work on Mondays when my ride showed up, usually before dawn. On a certain Monday morning, I quietly let myself out the front door to await my ride to work. To my surprise, sitting on the porch was my high school best friend, Marty, drinking from one of the milk bottles our dairyman had just left.

Stealing our milk was kind of his calling card, a habit from the past. We would walk to school together passing the bottle back and forth until it was empty. Marty hurriedly

told me that he was between trains, that his time was short. He went on to say that he was a naval aviation cadet in the V-5 program and that he had already completed three months of training to become a navy pilot. If he successfully completed the additional nine months of training, he would receive navy wings and a commission as an ensign.

I bombarded him with questions about the details and took it all in. It was as simple as going to the navy recruiting station downtown! Seeing my excited reaction, he was quick to

SPRUCE KNOB

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By Bill Garnette
Photographs by Steve Shaluta

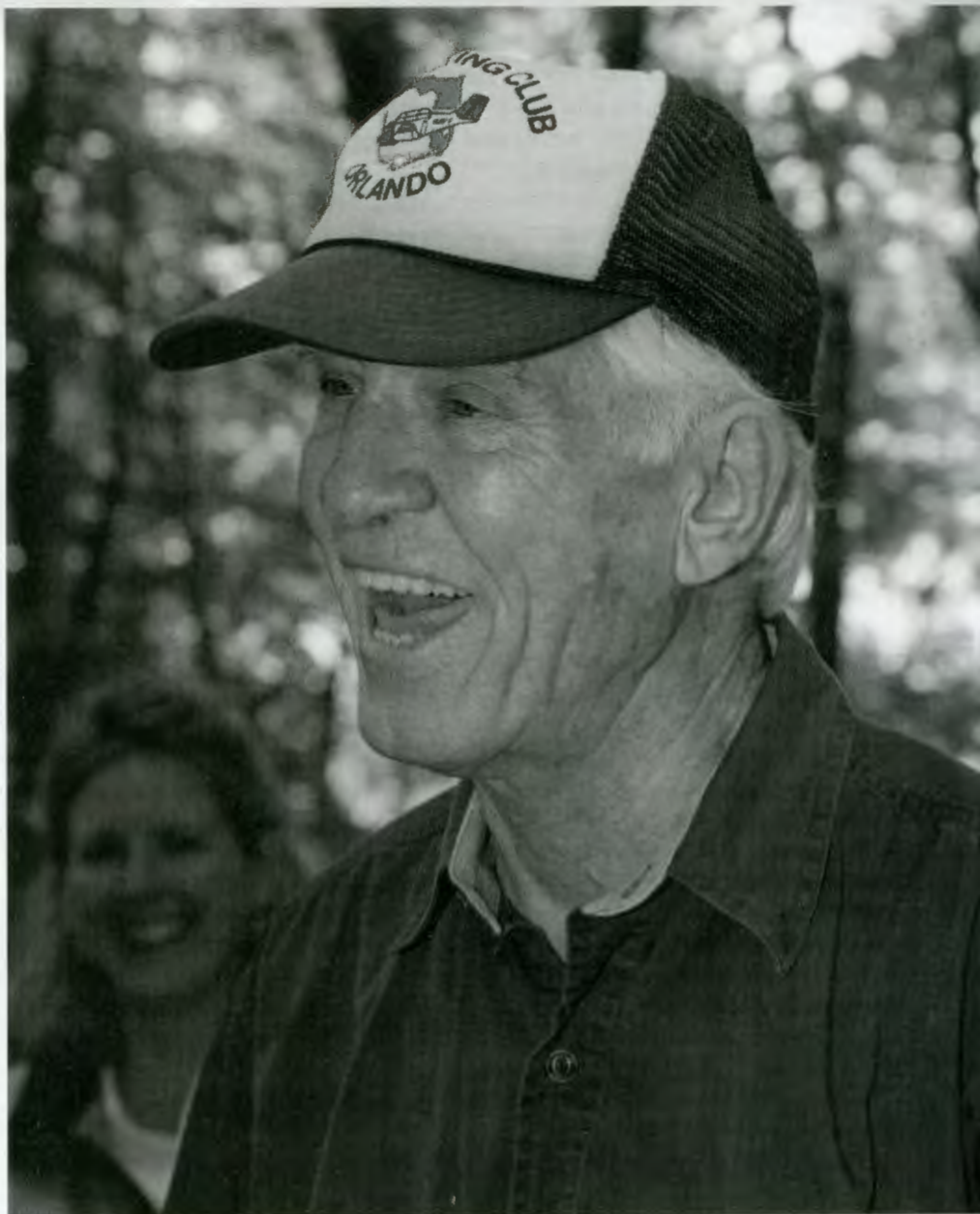
tell me about the demanding physical exam; he expressed doubts that I could pass it due to the deviated septum I had picked up in my several Golden Glove thumpings.

About 15 minutes into our chat, my ride drove up. I went to the curb and told the guys that something had come up, and that I would not be going to work. Marty took them up on their offer for a ride; it was to be eight years before I would see him again — in the 1950's. By then, he was a captain with Lake Central Airlines, flying DC-3's.

When the navy recruiting office opened that morning, I was there on the steps, figuratively waving my high school diploma. I left the recruiting office to obtain the three required letters of recommendation, with which I returned in the afternoon, all from solid citizens. Well, at least two were solid, and the other one was solid enough. The officer provided me with a voucher to ride old No.2 of the C&O railroad line to Washington, D.C., the next morning. He gave me the address of the Naval Aviation Cadet Selection Board.

When I reported there, the testing began: vision, hearing, nose, throat, and "turn your head and cough." Written exams were graded on the spot. All had gone well with the math and with the physical exam — the navy ignored my nasal deformity. I had tested satisfactorily in all respects and was sworn in. Thrilled that the navy now owned me, I boarded the No.1 train and returned home to await my training orders.

The six-month wait for orders put



Author Bill Garnette at Spruce Knob in 2000.

me a full year behind Marty, but I squeezed in a few college credits in the meantime. I received my first set of orders late in the fall of 1942, and underwent various phases of flight and ground school training at five different bases over the next year and a half.

On May 19, 1944, at Pensacola, Florida, I was married. I also acquired navy wings and a commission as an ensign on that same day.

A fighter training squadron on the West Coast soon picked me up, and I qualified in landings aboard a training carrier. I later became part

of an Air Group; the entire group of new fliers had to requalify as fighter pilots, dive bomber pilots, and torpedo pilots before going aboard the carrier which would carry us out to the Pacific.

These were typhoon days, Kamikaze days, Iwo Jima days, Okinawa days. After the Japanese surrender in August 1945, we returned to Hawaii and a month later were back in the states. I was lucky all the way — had some close calls but never put a scratch on any of my airplanes.

Upon reaching home, I immediately put in a request for active duty and transfer to the regular navy. After using all my accumulated annual leave, I was returned to active duty and reported on orders to Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, pending action on my transfer application. Upon arrival there, I found that I had no orders; I had only to appear at fleet headquarters each day to check whether orders for me had come. Receiving none, my days and evenings were free.

I lolled around at the gym, wrote letters, watched movies at the base theater, and occasionally wandered into the "O" Club. I'd been in Virginia about three weeks, when, on a Wednesday evening in March, I struck up a conversation at the bar with a fellow aviator. He was a movie-star-looking lieutenant assigned to a ferry squadron based there. His name rang a bell — Reginald Parsons. He was a Huntington native, and I was well-acquainted with his younger stepbrother, another guy named Bill who was about my age. I told him how long I'd been awaiting orders, and that I had not flown since my return from overseas. He said that he was scheduled to ferry an SNJ to Pittsburgh the next day, Thursday, and would fly another airplane back to Norfolk the following day. He volunteered to ask his skipper if he could take me along. I welcomed a break from my dull routine, and I was glad for the chance to fly again.

Instead of leaving on Thursday — a sunny, spring day — our flight was postponed for a day due to a

mechanical problem with the SNJ. Coincidental with that change of plans was the fact that when I checked in at fleet headquarters on Thursday morning, my orders had arrived. At last! I was to join a squadron on the aircraft carrier *USS Shangri-La*, scheduled to be deployed to Bikini Atoll to monitor A-bomb testing there. I had 10 days leeway to act on my orders, so the flight to and from Pittsburgh was still on!

Reggie and I arrived at the flightline about 0700 hours on Friday, March 14, 1946. We pre-flighted the SNJ, topped off the tanks, checked oil level, and kicked the tires. His

'chute was already in the front cockpit, and I drew a 'chute from the parachute loft while he went to get the weather and file our flight plan. Reggie took his place as pilot-in-command in the forward cockpit, I strapped myself in behind him, and we were on our way! Our course lay across the Appalachian mountains, with high ridges running northeast and southwest. We were scheduled to make an intermediate fuel stop at Elkins.

As we approached the foothills east of the mountains, Reggie asked if we were on course. Our flight path from Norfolk had taken us just south



Navy pilot Bill Garnette in his flight suit. Photographer and date unknown, photograph courtesy of Penelope Garnette.



U.S. Navy SNJ airplanes at Corry Field, Pensacola, Florida, in 1943. These planes are similar to the one flown by Reginald Parsons and Bill Garnette on March 14, 1946. Photographer unknown, photograph courtesy of the author.

of Harrisonburg, Virginia, and just north of a small airport. The airport was not charted, but those two landmarks showed unmistakably that we were on course. I reported to the pilot-in-command that we were "on the beam."

The altitude of the terrain grew higher. Hazardous razorback ridges reached with great spines toward overlying layers of cloud cover. Only a little daylight shone between the shrouded ridge tops and the cloud bottoms. It was obvious that we would soon be like the fat guy in the crawl space under his house, except that our risk was a good bit greater than bumping our heads on the floor joists. We jointly decided to turn back to the east. We retraced our steps and landed at the little airport we had overflown earlier to wait out the lowered ceilings.

With no other means of communicating with Elkins, we used the pay phone — remember, this was over 50 years ago — at the little line

shack at the airport. While Elkins had been socked in all morning, the word was that the ceiling there was lifting now. We waited an extra half-hour to allow the lifting cloud layer to produce even more clearance above the mountaintops, then we took off toward the mountains to the west.

As we readied to go, the airport manager asked whether we would do a low-level flyby, since he and the others there had little opportunity to see military aircraft in action. To me, that was an invitation to take off, fly a distance to the east, reverse direction, then maybe do a "slow roll" over the runway as we leveled off to the west. Our actual departure maneuver, however, was quite conservative, one that convinced me that Reggie, the pilot-in-command, was a safe, "by the book" aviator.

After climb-out, we proceeded west as before, scooting between several cloud layers. We were forced to climb once more in order to maintain the

altitude required to clear the charted heights of the ridges over which we were passing, trying to see whether the next ridge might expose a little daylight over it. It was not to be! Reggie spoke up on the intercom, saying that we'd have to forget VFR — visual flight rules — and climb toward the blue that hopefully awaited us on top of the cloud cover. That sounded good to me.

He advanced the throttle to bring the nose up into a normal climb attitude and speed, about 150 m.p.h. We were now in the thick of the clouds, the wing tips not clearly visible. It was then that I made my only concession to our hairy circumstances: I snugged up my shoulder harness.

Reggie's last words were, "I think we've about got it made." Since then, I have never used those words about anything, no matter how near the success of any endeavor, no matter how trivial that endeavor. Lots of aviators heed their superstitions.

I discovered much later that the



Bill Garnette recalls details of his harrowing 1946 experience on Spruce Knob. In 2000 he returned to the crash site for the first time, accompanied by his family. They are, from the left, grandson Luke Swetland, daughter Michelle Swetland, wife Penelope, and daughter Jill.

coming drama, involving fate and coincidence, was to be played out with a huge sprinkle of miracle dust.

I don't remember hearing anything or seeing anything prior to or during our brief trip across the tree-covered, boulder-strewn real estate, none of the sights or sounds that must have accompanied the impact of this more than 5,000 pounds of airplane.

With no intention to violate the serenity of West Virginia's highest mountain, two native sons had crashed an aircraft into the eastern face of Spruce Knob, altitude 4,861 feet. The area behind and alongside the impact point was strewn with ripped and twisted aluminum sections of wings and other control surfaces, all shed as the craft plunged on, decapitating trees, the belly scraping across boulders the

size of an outhouse, the fuselage finally wedging between two trees and a huge outcropping of rocks. Fortunately, there was no fire. The fuel tanks, nestled inside the wings, were intact a safe distance from the engine's heat.

Although semiconscious with no sense of time, I realized that I was still strapped into the rear cockpit, injuries undetermined. All was quiet. The only sound was a faint hissing as moisture from a slight mist fell upon still-hot engine parts. No sound or movement emanated from the forward cockpit. Beginning when I found myself shivering from the damp cold, some things began to make sense. I desperately needed my leather flight jacket — I'd taken it off before we left the small airport because the sun's heat on the cockpit had been stifling. I'd stowed it

in what was now an inaccessible gear compartment, jammed shut by two trees squeezed against the fuselage.

I undid the seat belt, shoulder straps, parachute chest buckle, and leg straps. While I was now free to exit the airplane, I became aware of a couple of disabled limbs which might not contribute much to my efforts. The right side of the cockpit was closer to the ground than the left, so I elected to get out on that side. I have no memory of how I accomplished that. I know that my right leg was not functioning, and the same for my right arm and shoulder, but somehow I got it done. Leaning down over the coaming into the cockpit, I fumbled my way to the parachute pack and wrestled it over the side, toward me. A gingerly hop forward on my left leg put me near

enough now to see Reggie's head, slumped forward slightly, chin on chest. I spoke to him, calling him to "wake up," but saw no movement nor heard any sign of life.

I surveyed the scene. A few paces to the right, away from the wreck, I saw a cube-shaped rock about 18 inches square and high. Behind it, stood a thin vertical rock, like the back of a chair. Dragging the parachute behind me, I inched my way to the "chair," boosted the 'chute onto the "seat," and planted myself atop the 'chute pack. The exertion failed to bring any noticeable warmth, so I began digging at a corner of the parachute packing, trying to snake out a small pinch of the nylon canopy. With a little more effort and some shifts of my behind, I pulled out enough fabric to drape a bit around my shoulders. It wasn't a down quilt, but it was a big improvement and shielded me from the dampness of the drizzle. I continued easing out more folds of parachute cloth and swathing my upper body in it.

I also worked, with little success, on ridding my mouth of an excess of blood, now beginning to dry thickly on my nose and shredded upper lip. I knew about most of my injuries by this time, but I was blessed with a kind of cognitive numbness that didn't provide space for fright. I thought vaguely of steps I might take to survive, but most of the time I was unconscious or semiconscious, unable to focus clearly on my situation. One moment I would find myself planning what route to take down the mountain; the next, realizing that I was encircled within a stockade of trees and shrubs, huge rocks all around me, few smaller than the one upon which I was sitting. The slope descended at a 45-degree or steeper angle.

The timber stands on this mountain represented thousands of board feet of lumber. Lightning strikes not being uncommon, a narrow trail had been fashioned as a means to slow forest fires and to assist in cutting-off areas already ablaze. The trail was barely wide enough to accommodate a team



Bill Garnette with a twisted piece of metal from the wreckage of his SNJ aircraft, found in the overgrowth on Spruce Knob more than 50 years after the crash that nearly killed him.

of mules, and snaked its way up and around the mountain, one switchback after another. A prominent feature was a ditch on the uphill side of the trail, about two feet wide and a foot or so deep.

The fact that the trail existed, joined with the coincidence of my regaining consciousness during the briefest of moments, saved me! Through a daze,

I heard a human sound below, not a voice, but a nanosecond of the sound of steel scraping against rock.

With all the volume I could muster, I quickly yelled, "Help!" (although, not to split hairs, my "p" was silent).

A strong voice rang out, "What's the matter?"

I replied, "Plane crash!" (again the "p" was silent).

Again the voice came back, "Anybody hurt?"

"Hell, yes!"

"Hold on, we're coming!"

At the time, I could not comprehend the critical importance to my salvation of the plural pronoun. Now I heard two male voices! As they scrabbled toward me, I heard their quiet curses about slow progress, skirting around rocks too large to climb, grasping brush and sprouts which gave way with the force of their weight, with nothing substantial to support their upward struggle. By the time they reached me, both were puffing and winded.

The older man — the "voice" — was first to pop his head over the final barrier and come to my side. He

was clad in a blue jean jacket, which he peeled off and placed around my shoulders. He introduced himself as Uncle Matt and his companion Bob, a distinctly younger man. Both wore bib overalls. In this situation, Uncle Matt was in command. He saw that the sight of me was too much for Bob: me, seated on my perch, battered face, snow-white parachute splattered with red flecks like a house painter's drop cloth.

After Bob recovered himself, Uncle Matt assigned him duties, one of which was to search the aircraft for any medical kits. When we were alone, I told Uncle Matt that I thought Reggie might be alive, but he told me that he had already determined that was not the case. Earlier, I had

blubbered some maudlin sobs of thanks to Uncle Matt. Now my emotions spilled over anew, and I shed a few more tears.

It was then that I heard Bob crashing his way downhill through the brush. He'd been dispatched to get help. I was still on the mountain, alive, fading out a little, dazed, but saved!

When I came around again, Uncle Matt was still by my side and eager to keep me lucid.

He was anxious to establish our names and who needed to be notified of our plight and location, but it was not an easy chore for either of us. The injuries to my mouth and face required me to spell each garbled letter of my name and Reginald's,

Photograph of plane wreckage taken by U.S. Navy crash investigators. The fore section of the plane faces right. The plane missed clearing the top of Spruce Knob by 100 feet.



but the real challenge was in naming the navy people to be notified. Uncle Matt was, of course, unfamiliar with navy acronyms. We finally got it all right, but later it brought a laugh to describe to others the problem of deciphering the lengthy acronym of the U.S. Navy entity having control over me: "COMFAIRLANT FLEET, NAS Norfolk." Translation: "Commander for Air, Atlantic Fleet, headquarters Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia."

We had no way to tell the exact time of the crash, but Uncle Matt went to the rear cockpit and said that the cracked glass on the instrument

panel clock had pushed against the hands, stopping them at 11:10. He estimated that when they heard my cry, a couple of hours had probably passed since we'd been down. He and Bob had been scooping leaves and other flammable debris from a ditch on the uphill side of the narrow trail so that a lightning strike wouldn't be as likely to jump across the trail and ignite a larger area.

They were both part-time employees of the forest service, and had been working their way down the mountain when they heard my faint cry. He asked if I'd heard them earlier, and I replied that I'd heard no human sound prior to hearing metal scrape against rock. He said Bob was bringing up the rear, getting the last of the "little stuff" out of the ditch and that it was probably Bob's shovel I'd heard. He casually stated that, had it been a few moments later, they would have been out of earshot, further on down. He went on to say that this job was a semi-annual chore — spring and fall — and added puckishly that no one would be making any more "scraping sounds" on Spruce Knob until next fall.

I had drifted off into my previous stuporous condition by the time Bob returned with three helpers in tow.

I recall some conversation concerning how to go about transporting me down to the trail, but I had no input into their plans other than to suggest that they use the straps and canopy of my parachute to fashion a litter. Movement of my right leg to any position other than vertical was agony, and as I moved to get off the parachute, I fainted dead away.

When I came around, the rescuers had cut two poles, had attached the 'chute straps to them, and were in

semiconsciousness and went into a kind of rest period.

I emerged to the sound of a gentle and soothing feminine voice from somewhere above me. I was unable to see its source, but when I turned my head a little to the left, I saw the hem of a calico dress brushing the tops of a pair of high-top, lace-up black shoes, the same as those worn by my grandmother each day on Grandpa's farm, a couple of hundred miles away. She spoke only a few words, but the caring

She spoke only a few words, but the caring and sympathy expressed in her trembling voice touched me to the verge of tears, and I made some mumbling attempts to assure her that I was okay.

and sympathy expressed in her trembling voice touched me to the verge of tears, and I made some mumbling attempts to assure her that I

the process of spreading the canopy cloth over the entire rig. My suggestion that one of the big guys test it for strength was accepted, and it passed. All that was necessary was to place me on the litter, the memory of which is only a painful blur. But memory is clear as to the trip down to the trail. There was a man supporting the end of each pole. It was the responsibility of the fifth bearer to go alongside, sweeping away the branches that whiplashed back toward me. I recall that the guys on the uphill side were bent over, trying to keep the litter level. They held their poles close to the surface while the arms of the two on the lower end were straight up. Even then, the hill was steep enough that the litter itself was at a precarious downward angle. The rescue party kept up a chatter of encouraging words to me, and I picked up on their humor as we slipped and slid our way down. Miraculously, they never once dropped me.

Upon reaching the trail, the two bearers at my feet rested their poles on the ground and quickly scooped up a thick bed of leaves as a cushion for the litter. Then the two at my head lowered me to the ground. With the jouncing and bouncing at the end, I reverted to my previous state of

was okay. I never learned where she came from or how or why she got to the site. Sadly, she is the only unidentified principal of those involved in my rescue. Maybe I made her up.

An emergency vehicle arrived after a while, and I was passed into it through a wide rear door, litter and all, placed upon a padded cot, and covered with a blanket. Then we set out for the nearest town, Franklin. During the 15 miles of winding road we traveled to get there, I got acquainted with the gentleman in the rear. His was the town's only funeral home, and he also operated an ambulance service with the help of his son, our driver, up front.

Upon arrival at Franklin, the vehicle entered a driveway and halted alongside a residence, part of which was devoted to a doctor's office. The doctor came out promptly and climbed into the vehicle. After a couple of "tsks, tsks" along with a shake of his head and a few kind words, he pulled back the blanket, located a suitable spot on my right arm and injected a heavenly dose of painkiller. As the morphine began doing its duty, the funeral director told me that we were 40 miles from each of two hospitals — one to the east, the other to the west — and asked me if I had a preference. I opted for



The rugged terrain of Spruce Knob proved challenging to rescuers in 1946, as it did for Bill Garnette on his return visit in 2000. Here he descends the mountain with the help of Faye Bennett, at right, and GOLDENSEAL editor John Lilly. Faye heard the crash and was instrumental in identifying the crash site.

the Virginia facility, reasoning that the navy would prefer me to be in an area most accessible to a military hospital. We'd long ago used up daylight, and I, too, was used up.

I spent the next six days at a hospital in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where I was initially treated by an

orthopedic surgeon who appeared to share my interest in flying. He talked and asked a lot of questions as he moved around the table, sewing, patching, wiring, and splinting. I later came to believe that he was humoring me, as a distraction.

As I passed in and out of conscious-

ness in my recovery room, I recall seeing three figures standing at the foot of my bed. One-by-one, I identified their anxious, tear-stained, but smiling faces. Here were my mother and dad who, since their divorce when I was only a wee one, had rarely been in the same room together. The third presence was that of my high school sweetheart, the former Jewel Effingham, who had pinned my wings on me and married me at Pensacola, so many months before. I was able to comprehend what they were saying, but was unable to respond.

Six days after arriving at Harrisonburg, and against the recommendation of the civilian orthopedic surgeon, the navy flew me back to Norfolk in a small twin-engine airplane, still bound, mummy-like. The takeoff was from the same small airport Reggie and I had used, but to the best of my knowledge, there was no request this time for a "hot pilot" takeoff.

For the next 23 months, I was sequestered — half in surgery, the other half in rehab — first at the Norfolk Naval Hospital, then I was transferred to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital. In the matter of my lengthy recovery, treatment, and rehab, I cannot praise too highly the support and encouragement I received from my faithful, always-at-hand spouse as she sat at my bedside, day after boring day. She was a source of strength as she endured my whinings and overlooked my sometimes hopeless state.

At the end of 1947, I was discharged from the hospital and officially retired from the navy. 🍁

BILL GARNETTE was a Huntington native and a graduate of Huntington High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1942 until 1947 then had a lengthy career with the United States Civil Service Commission Investigations Division. Retired to Florida, he passed away in 2006.

STEVE SHALUTA is a Grafton native and a former locomotive engineer. He has worked as a full-time photographer since 1985, most of that for the West Virginia Division of Tourism. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2012 issue.

Dangerous Spruce Knob

The east side of West Virginia's highest mountain is scarred by the wreckage of planes that failed to negotiate its 4,861-foot summit. When GOLDENSEAL joined author Bill Garnette in trying to locate the remnants of his 1946 brush with death, we were confounded by contradictory stories and conflicting directions on where to find the Spruce Knob wreckage.

Adding one more coincidence to this almost-eerie tale of tragedy and rescue, photographer Steve Shaluta came into contact with Mr. Faye Bennett, a lifelong resident of Pendleton County who grew up at the foot of Spruce Knob. Faye was able to lead Steve — and eventually the entire GOLDENSEAL entourage — to the exact site of the 1946 wreck.

Nearby, there are at least two other wrecksites. In June 1950, a twin-engine B-25 Air Force bomber was en route from Olmstead Air Base at Middletown, Pennsylvania, to its home base near Ogden, Utah. The huge aircraft crashed into the east side of Spruce Knob at about daybreak, killing all nine men aboard. Local residents helped in the grim recovery effort which left victims and wreckage hanging from trees over a wide area. *The Pendleton Times* newspaper reported that the disaster was the worst loss of life on record in the county up to that time.

On November 13, 1960, a small civilian business plane crashed at the very top of Spruce Knob, killing both passengers. Nelson P. Jackson, a 49-year-old retired Air

Force colonel from Maryland, was piloting the plane for the Joy Company; his passenger was 23-year-old Roger Bell, an industrial engineer also from Maryland. While the pilot was killed by the impact and subsequent fire, passenger Roger Bell managed to crawl or walk away from the wreck. According to undertaker and ambulance driver Doug Brown who was involved in the recovery of bodies and the funeral arrangements, Bell walked for six miles with third-degree burns over 60% of his body, before expiring just a short distance from help.

In all, 12 people are known to have died in plane wrecks on the treacherous east slope of Spruce Knob. Bill Garnette — lucky number 13 — was the lone survivor.



Bill Garnette with Doug Brown, a local Pendleton County man who helped save Bill's life in 1946.

It is unusual for a state to have more than one official song. West Virginia has three. At least three people — including an 11-year-old boy — had creative voices in writing the first song more than 100 years ago. A military officer wrote the second after distinguished service in World War II. And a Charleston jazz musician began composing the third while she was asleep in the early 1960's.

"The West Virginia Hills," with words by Ellen Ruddell King and music and chorus by Henry Everett Engle, was completed in 1885 in Gilmer County.

"West Virginia, My Home Sweet Home" appeared in 1947 and was composed by Col. Julian G. Hearne, Jr., a Wheeling native, attorney, and career military officer.

The third song, "This Is My West Virginia," was written by Charleston musician and performer Iris Bell in 1962.

Each of these three songs had received an official designation from the State Legislature over the years. "West Virginia, My Home Sweet Home" was declared the first official state song in 1947. In 1961, an edited and approved version of "The West Virginia Hills" was also made an official state song. In 1962, "This Is My West Virginia" was named the official Centennial Song of West Virginia. Understandably, this resulted in considerable confusion.

To resolve the matter, all three songs were declared official and equal by House Concurrent Resolution No. 19, adopted by the State Legislature on February 28, 1963. The Secretary of State's office is guardian of the official versions.

Though they are melodic and heartfelt, Hearne's and Bell's works have not been performed often. Long before it was declared official, however, "The West Virginia Hills" was used on many public occasions. And for nearly four generations — in those days when people more often gathered to sing for pleasure — the old anthem proved a favorite. It has sweep and majesty and thunder, especially its inspired chorus, which singers divide into a call and echoed reply, singing, "Oh the hills (beautiful hills), Beautiful hills (beautiful hills), How I love those West Virginia hills!" The three songs represent early, middle, and modern eras of the state's history. And here's how each came to be.



Ellen Ruddell King first published the verses to "The West Virginia Hills" as a poem in the *Glenville Crescent* newspaper in 1885, though some credit her husband, the Reverend David King, with writing part or all of these words in honor of his wife. Photographer and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia State Archives, WWSA hereafter.

WEST VIRGINIA'S THREE STATE SONGS

By Richard
Ramella



Henry Everett Engle, of Barbour County, wrote the music and chorus to "The West Virginia Hills" after reading Ellen King's poem in the newspaper. The song was published in 1886. Photographer and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of WVSA.

There's divided opinion about who wrote the words of "The West Virginia Hills." The official sheet music credits Ellen King, born in 1846 in Glenville, Gilmer County. Other sources, including a state road marker in Barbour County, say the creative one was her husband, the Reverend David King.

Rev. King came from his native Pennsylvania in about 1877 to teach at Glenville Normal School, now Glenville State College. Ellen Ruddell and King were wed in 1879. They soon departed the banks of

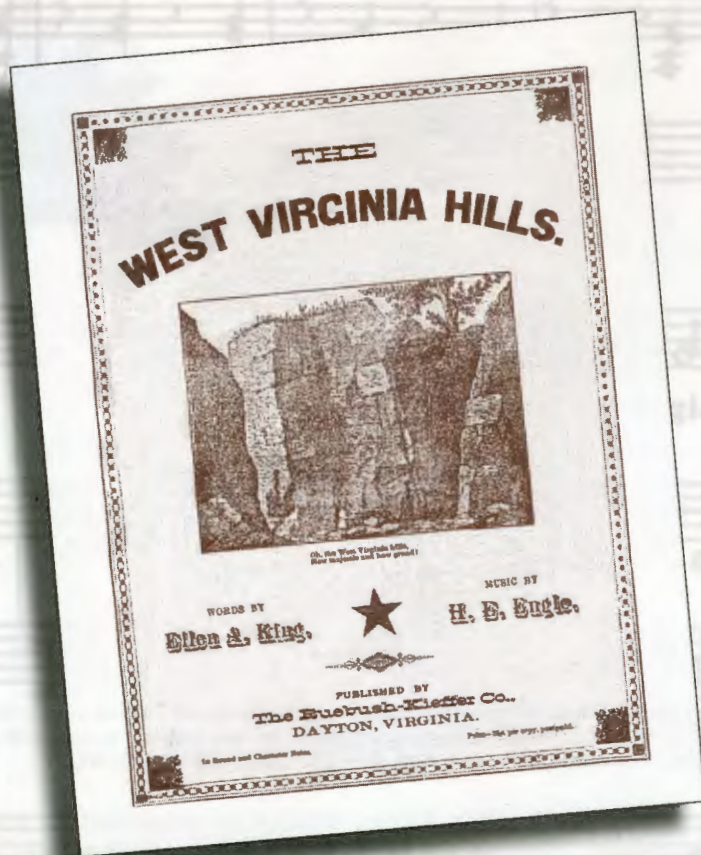
the Little Kanawha River in favor of Punxsatawny, Pennsylvania. They later lived in New Jersey. One story has Ellen King penning the words during a nostalgic visit home to see her father, Stephen S. Ruddell.

Mary Ann Radabaugh, a retired Glenville teacher and writer, commented on the song in 2004. Based on her research of area history, she believes Ellen King wrote the poem herself. "Ellen died in 1927," says Mary Ann, "and it was after her death that someone started the rumor... her husband had written the words."

Mary Ann notes that the song takes the first-person viewpoint of a state native, which Mrs. King was and Rev. King was not.

Another version of the story holds that Rev. King wrote the poem as a love letter to his wife as she visited Glenville. A later account suggests the poem was actually a collaboration between the two. However it came to be, the poem was published — under her name — in September 1885 in the *Glenville Crescent* newspaper. There, it was read by Henry Everett Engle, a farmer and music teacher who was





"Live a Holy Life."

Brother James told family members he was present when Henry first read the poem in the newspaper. James said Henry sat in a rocking chair and hummed a melody. He repeated some parts. Then he took an envelope from his pocket and wrote the basics of the tune's musical notation. Henry later said the tune came to him as if by inspiration.

In one published account in the *Charleston Daily Mail*, Henry's widow, Mrs. Julia Engle, recalled that her husband was so moved by the poem that he immediately paid a visit to Mrs. King. Visiting Gilmer County from her home in New Jersey, Mrs. King was said still to be in the vicinity when the poem was published. During their visit, Henry Engle explained to Mrs. King that he enjoyed the poem and offered to try his hand at setting it to music. According to Julia Engle, "Mrs. King was delighted by the idea." Henry reportedly began writing the tune in his head on his way home.

The melody is Engle's, as is most of the rousing chorus, but not all of the chorus. The Gilmer County Historical Society tells in its 1994 history how the song took its final form. According to this account, 11-year-old Orpha T. Engle watched and listened as his Uncle Henry worked on the song. When Henry reached the chorus and sang, "Oh, the hills," the boy spontaneously chimed in, "Beauti-

born in 1849, south of Philippi, in Barbour County.

Henry Engle stood six feet, three inches tall and weighed more than 200 pounds. Farming was his main interest; music was his avocation. His brother James said Henry was the strongest man and fastest runner he ever knew. When the composer was 70 years old, he could outwork his farm employees.

Henry wed Julia Lloyd in 1885,

and they had a son named Aldine. The composer was postmaster from 1889 until 1919. He served on the board of education and was a member of the county court from 1915 until 1921. He was a Christian and a prohibitionist who expressed his anti-alcohol stance in a song titled "Save the West Virginia Boys and Girls." Other songs included "Take the World for Christ," "My Country Home," "The Rhododendron," and



ful hills." It sounded so right that it became part of the finished song. The uncle always gave his nephew credit for the inspired addition.

The published version was copyright and before the public in 1886. It appeared first in *The Royal Proclamation*, a songbook edited by Aldine Kieffer and William Blake of Dayton, Virginia. Engle agreed to the song's inclusion in the book with the stipulation copyright be registered in his name. Instead, the song was copyrighted by Kieffer & Blake, Music Publishers, according to the Library of Congress.

Through a string of kinship over the years, Rick Collins and his daughter Cortney of Tanner, Gilmer County, have been entrusted with material connected to Engle's work. Rick Collins and his wife, Jane, live on land

where once stood Engle's homestead, of which only some chimney stones remain. The Collinses possess an organ on which Henry is believed to have composed the song and the rocking chair where he sat as he first read Mrs. King's poem. Among the items passed down to the Collins family is a songbook that Henry Engle published. It has 16 songs — including "The West Virginia Hills" — and sold new for five cents.

Connected only by the song, Ellen King and Henry Engle survived for decades after "The West Virginia Hills" was introduced and saw the song warmly accepted by their fellow West Virginians. Mrs. King lived to 81 but never again in West Virginia. She died in Hollywood, California, in 1927. Her husband passed away in 1921. Engle died in 1933 after a fall

from a horse. He was 84. Orpha — O.T. Engle — emulated his uncle by teaching at singing schools in north-central West Virginia counties.

The song was commercial property for 75 years. At the 1960 gathering of the West Virginia Music Educators Association in Morgantown, members asked Dr. C. Buell Agey of West Virginia Wesleyan College to come up with an official version of the song. That version was approved by the group's executive board and the state music consultant, Dr. Thomas Wikstrom. State legislators adopted a resolution naming it a state song in 1961, two years prior to it being redesignated, along with the other two songs, in 1963.

Following are the words of the official version of the song, as edited by Dr. Agey:

*Oh, the West Virginia hills!
How majestic and how grand,
With their summits bathed in glory,
Like our Prince Immanuel's Land!
Is it any wonder then,
That my heart with rapture thrills,
As I stand once more with loved ones
On those West Virginia hills?*

Chorus:

*Oh, the hills, (beautiful hills),
Beautiful hills, (beautiful hills),
How I love those West Virginia hills!
(beautiful hills)
If o'er sea o'er land I roam
Still I'll think of happy home,
And my friends among the West Virginia hills.*

*Oh, the West Virginia hills!
Where my childhood hours were passed,
Where I often wandered lonely,
And the future tried to cast;
Many are our visions bright,*

*Which the future ne'er fulfills;
But how sunny were my daydreams
On those West Virginia hills.*

*Oh, the West Virginia hills!
How unchang'd they seem to stand,
With their summits pointed skyward
To the Great Almighty's Land!
Many changes I can see,
Which my heart with sadness fills;
But no changes can be noticed
In those West Virginia hills.*

*Oh, the West Virginia hills!
I must bid you now adieu.
In my home beyond the mountains
I shall ever dream of you;
In the evening time of life,
If my Father only wills,
I shall still behold the vision
Of those West Virginia hills*

© 1961 by C. Buell Agey



Colonel Julian G. Hearne, Jr., of Wheeling, writer of West Virginia's first official state song, "West Virginia, My Home Sweet Home," published in 1947. Photographer and date unknown. Photograph courtesy of WVSA.

Col. Julian G. Hearne, Jr., was born in 1904 to accomplished Wheeling parents. His father was a lawyer. His mother, Lydia Cromwell Hearne, was a physician who served in many volunteer capacities in Ohio County and across the state. In the 1920's, she was director of the West Virginia Historical Society. The family home was called Hearnlee.

Julian, Jr., graduated in the 1926-27 class of Harvard Law School, but it was not the practice of law that most distinguished him. In World War II, Hearne commanded the 24th Infantry Regiment in the Pacific. He was reported to be the first American officer

to accept the surrender of an enemy garrison in Japanese-held territory. That surrender came on August 22, 1945, on Aka Island near Okinawa, Japan. A Japanese officer gave Hearne a ceremonial sword marking the end of the battle, which he later donated to the Smithsonian Institution.

Also in the 1940's, Hearne wrote "West Virginia, My Home Sweet Home." It became the sole, official state song in 1947. Hearne didn't want any monkeying around with his creation, which he presented as a lofty work. The sheet music instructs, "On solemn occasions, may be played moderately, with feeling, at rallies and other assemblys (sic),

march tempo is appropriate. Ought not be played as country music or in hillbilly fashion."

Hearne continued in the military after the war and served in the Washington, D.C., area. Mike Henderson of Silver Spring, Maryland, says Hearne returned to Wheeling in the 1970's. Henderson notes, "I was Colonel Hearne's secretary in Wheeling while I was attending Wheeling College [now Wheeling Jesuit University]." Hearne also composed music on military and patriotic themes. The *Harvard Law Bulletin* reported his death at age 91 on March 18, 1995, in McLean, Virginia. The song has two verses:

*West Virginia, My Home, Sweet Home,
My heart beats with lasting love for you,
Where my roots are so deep, where my forefathers
sleep,
Where kinfolks and friends are staunch and true;
Where the Blue of the North, and the Grey of the
South
Long have blended in perfect harmony,
Where the East meets the West, and derives from
each the best,
That's West Virginia, Home, Sweet Home for me!*

*West Virginia, My Home, Sweet Home,
Where mountains and hills and valleys too,
And the orchards, the farms, timberlands all have
charms,
And fact'ries and mines are on review;
There I work, and I play, and I worship Sunday,
In that land where the mountaineers are free.
Other States are OK, it's a grand old USA,
But West Virginia, Home, Sweet Home for me!*

©1962 by Julian G. Hearne, Jr.

Iris Bell woke in the middle of the night with the words and melody ringing clearly in her mind: "This Is My West Virginia." "My mind was singing," Iris recalled. "I got up and wrote the rest of the words right then, the music, too." It was all on paper before daybreak.

The inspiration came on the birthday of Bell's beloved grandfather, John Good, an artisan and contractor who built the Charleston house where Iris was born in 1934. From the first irkling, she knew the song honored her grandfather.

It was October 1962. Bell was 28 years old, a musician and well-known performer around the capital city. She took the song to state officials, and it was soon named the official Centennial Song for West Virginia. It was then accepted as one of the three equal, official state songs the following year.

After the 1963 announcement, Bell received a call from Col. Julian G. Hearne, Jr., composer of "West Virginia, My Home Sweet Home." "He said he hoped there'd be no fight about the songs," Iris says. "There was mutual respect."

Bell's father, Aaron Jones Bell, was an eye, ear, nose, and throat surgeon with doctoral degrees in philosophy and psychology. Her mother, Irene, was

a classically trained singer and pianist who wanted her daughter to follow her lead. The child endured piano lessons until age 14, then quit.

As a teenager, Iris discovered jazz. Singer Sarah Vaughan and pianist George Shearing became prime influences. When Iris graduated from Stonewall Jackson High School in 1951 and pursued her own style of music, her mother was supportive but disappointed. "I did my music right away. That's all I ever wanted to do," Iris said.

She attended the University of Illinois and Centre College, a liberal arts school in Danville, Kentucky. She started a band called the Iris Bell Adventure in 1956 in Charleston. She was the group's singer and pianist.

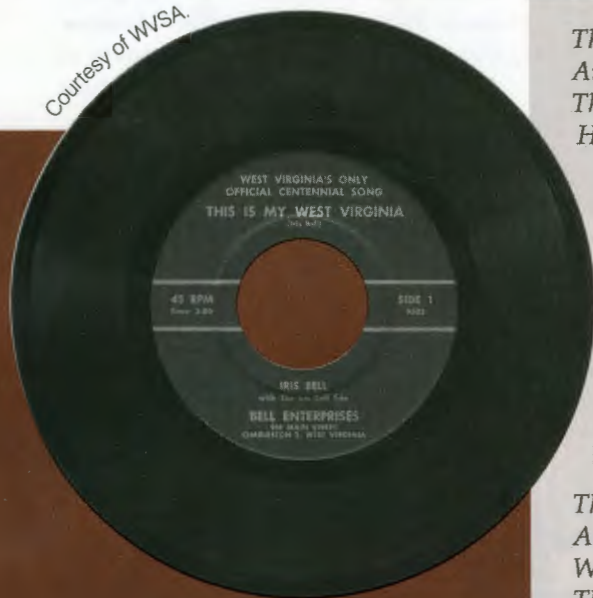
In 1967, the band took to the road. After touring, Iris and the group settled in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and appeared for seven years as the sole attraction at a club called the Rubaiyat. She returned to the family home in Charleston in 1978 and cared for her Alzheimer's-stricken mother until the mother's death. Iris performed annually in the now-defunct West Virginia State Jazz Festival and continued to perform in and around Charleston until her death in 2008. Her hopeful song has four verses:



Iris Bell, of Charleston, composer of "This Is My West Virginia," pictured here at around the time she wrote the song in 1962. Photographer unknown.

RICHARD RAMELLA is a McDowell County native whose first newspaper job was with the *Welch Daily News*. He has worked as a writer, photographer, designer, and editor for 13 newspapers and published a computer magazine for nine years. He is now retired and lives in Texas. His 2004 stories about West Virginia music are his most recent contributions to GOLDENSEAL.

Courtesy of WWSA.



*This is my West Virginia, the home of all my family,
And the faces of her people ever glow with loyalty;
The honest sweat born of honest toil is the only way they know,
Here in my West Virginia is the home that I love so.*

*This is my West Virginia, her beauty calms my fevered soul;
In the times of dread and anguish it makes my spirit whole,
I lift mine eyes unto these hills and they give me power to go on,
Here in my West Virginia, where I was born.*

*This is my West Virginia, and free her sons will always be,
We will stand behind our principles as in 1863;
Her pride will live and her strength will grow
Till her mountains turn to dust;
This is my West Virginia, the land I trust.*

*This is my West Virginia, these hills that guard my liberty,
And her flag proclaims the legend "Mountaineers are Always Free,"
Where e'er I go she will call to me through the world in which I roam,
This is my West Virginia, my land, my home.*

©1962 by Iris Bell. Used by permission.



LH&W Railroad



The Locust Heights & Western Railroad (LH&W RR) is a privately owned excursion line near Clarksburg.

The Locust Heights & Western Railroad hasn't turned a profit in more than three decades, as long as it has been running. Owners Keith and Jean Mason have never taken a salary from the venture, and their workers have never drawn a paycheck.

Nevertheless, every Wednesday from June through October, the LH&W makes its scheduled run from the depot in the Masons' backyard at 7 p.m. From there, the tracks parallel Spence Drive (the little street that runs through this Harrison County subdivision), cross a trestle, and ascend a 5% grade. They terminate at the far reaches of the Masons' property, at a reclaimed strip mine.

The excursion lasts 20 to 30 minutes and is but one mile, round trip. The Masons don't charge a fare, although donations are gladly accepted. Nor do they advertise. As one first-time rider noted, he's lived in Harrison County all his life and didn't know this hobby excursion train existed until a friend told him about it.

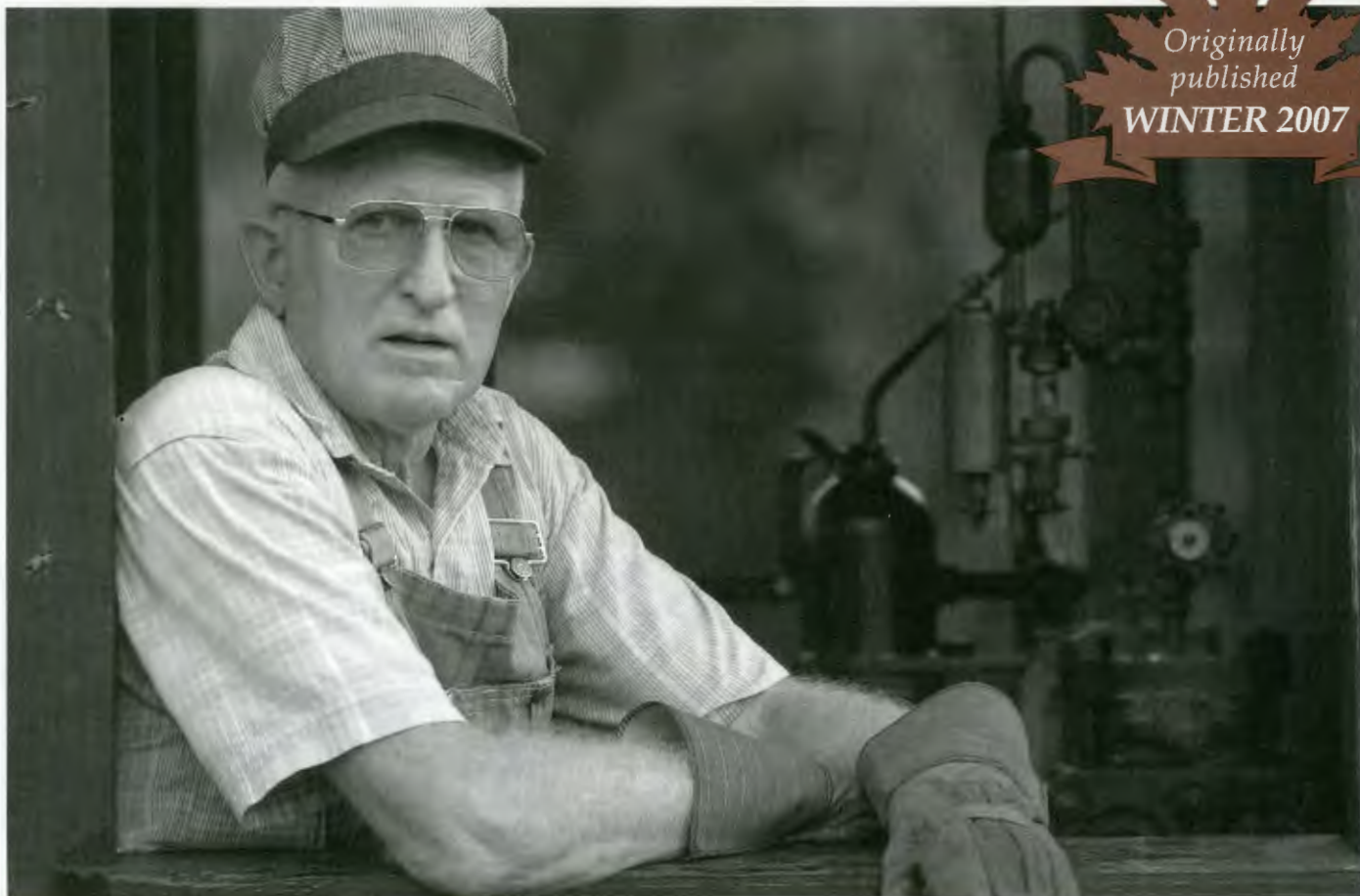
Most people who ride it come back again and again to enjoy the novelty of the excursion, the genuine steam-railroading experience, and camaraderie of the owners and volunteer crew.

"We have a lot of faithful people who come and ride it every year," says Tammy Roach, the Masons' daughter and a trackside resident of Locust Heights. "We do it because we love it."

For at least 20 years, Bill and Norma Smith of Morgantown have been making the 30-mile trip virtually every

The Mason Family's

Originally
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Keith Mason, retired machinist, built this railroad nearly 40 years ago. Keith and his wife, Jean, still operate it with the help of several volunteers and family members.

night the train runs. They discovered the train while their son, Jeff, was a teenager. Norma says Jeff's interest in railroading is what initially drew them to the mini-excursion.

"We just started coming up on Wednesday nights, and that's the way it's been ever since," Norma says. "It's our lifestyle."

Railroading is a lifestyle for Keith and Jean, as well. Their home is surrounded by evidence of Keith's

passion for all things mechanical and historical, from the antique gasoline engines he enjoys restoring and showing to the life-size locomotive and cars he built for his narrow-gauge railroad.

A retired machine shop owner — his shop is next to their home — Keith learned the trade from his late father, Kenneth, and four years of mechanical engineering classes at West Virginia University.

He's never worked for a railroad, and there are no railroaders in his family. Nevertheless, Keith has always been fascinated with trains and what makes them run. When he was in junior high school, he built a working stationary steam engine. It was then just a matter of time and real estate before he built a steam locomotive and the railroad on which to run it.

Jean and Keith have three daugh-

Text and photographs by Carl E. Feather

Backyard Train

ters: Michele, Tammy, and Kristi. When one of them asked for a playhouse, Keith instilled a bit of his railroading interest in the project.

"We started by building a caboose when my daughter Michele was six or seven years old," he says.

That was in the late 1960's. After his father died and the responsibility of the family business fell upon Keith in 1972, he decided to build a locomotive as a pastime.

Keith chose the Climax Class A locomotive, which was used in lumbering operations in many West Virginia

forests. Using only photographs and drawings of these classic timber-operation locomotives, Keith built his engine over the course of a year. At 20 feet in length, his locomotive is slightly smaller than a Climax. It has a chain-sprocket drive rather than the conventional gear drive of the Climax. While some Climax engines ran on U-shaped wheels on "pole rails," he chose a narrow-gauge set of wheels. Otherwise, it's an accurate, fully functional, steam-powered reproduction built of wood.

The original boiler came off a

steam winch found near Roanoke, Virginia. The two upright cylinders, manufactured by J.F. Byers, came off a steam winch Keith found in Ohio. The link and pin couplers are from log cars used by Ely-Thomas Lumber Company in Jettsville. The wheels are off lumber carts used at a sawmill near Franklin. The bell is from an antique store, and various steam whistles are used, including one made by Mark Ware, an LH&W crew member.

Keith fabricated and assembled the balance of the locomotive in his

Tom Proud, at right, directs the Mason Climax engine as it prepares to hook up to a flatbed car in the LH&W yard.



shop. "We ran it back and forth on the shop floor using compressed air and worked the bugs out of it that way," Keith says of the development stage.

Compressed air was used again to move the engine out of the shop and onto a spur of the mainline. Keith says its maiden run went well because of all the testing they'd done during development. "We had everything working pretty good," he says.

Keith says he named his railroad the Locust Heights & Western because Locust Heights is where they live,

and the train runs west. A nameplate on the LH&W No. 1 states the date of manufacture as 1974.

Building a locomotive and the cars was only half the job, however. Keith also had to grade the land, put down a bed, and lay track. He scrounged around the state, looking for track on which to run his new locomotive. "A lot of the rails came from a sawmill in Franklin," he says.

The railroad ties were cut from discarded utility poles to the specifications needed by his railroad: five-by-seven inches around and five feet long.

Cutting the ties was no problem for Keith. Concurrent with building his railroad, he also ran a steam-powered sawmill behind his shop. Keith put his locomotive to good use hauling the utility poles from the drop-off site in his yard to the sawmill, where he built an elaborate system to convey the poles from the log railcar he built to the sawmill. Keith operated the mill 33 years before having to shut it down because of a bad boiler.

It takes a sizable crew of volunteers to keep the track, locomotive, and rolling stock in good condition. The crew includes Tom Proud, helper and general hand; Kevin Snyder, brakeman; Bill Brady, a track worker who is married to the Masons' daughter Kristi; Mark Ware, the locomotive's fireman; Tammy Roach, who can do just about any job on the railroad; and Gerald Corder, a welder who does many different jobs. Worthy Hall hauls coal for the engine, and Dave Schwartz takes care of any job that comes along. The railroad also gets

In 2003, this group of hobbyists nearly doubled the reach of the LH&W by spending many weeks cutting locust trees for ties and laying track up further into the second-growth forest. Tom Proud says they put the railroad to good use hauling locust logs to the sawmill area. Worthy Hall sawed most of the ties for the railroad. Tom Proud says these locust ties present a formidable challenge to the trackmen. The wood is so dense, they have to drill starter holes in the ties before driving the spikes in them.

The men wrapped up the track extension project in 2004. The following year, they turned their attention to repairing and upgrading the original section of the railroad. Many of the ties had rotted and were in need of replacement.

Their winter 2006 project was to replace the trestle, which was part of the original track from the early 1970's. The 40-foot-long trestle crosses a swampy area just before the track ascends the first grade. Although only six feet tall, the trestle still must bear the weight of the locomotive, which Keith estimates at 5.5 tons. Accordingly, the timbers supporting the trestle are set on concrete footers.

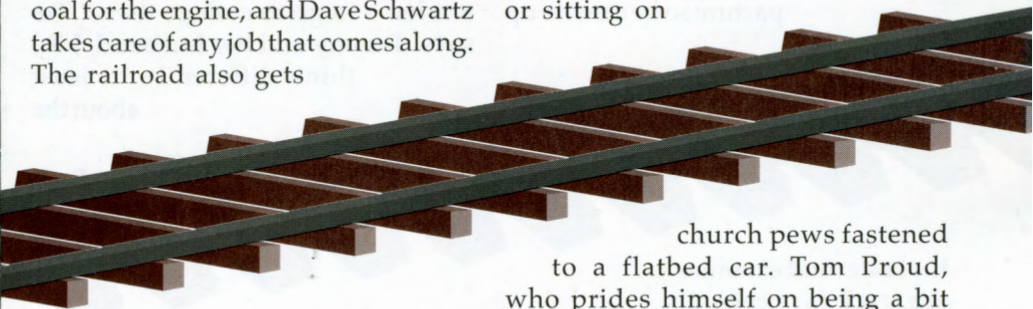
Crossing this trestle is one of the excursion highlights. Another is seeing the deer and wild turkey that frequently cross the track in front of the train. Passengers have the option of riding in the caboose or sitting on

church pews fastened to a flatbed car. Tom Proud, who prides himself on being a bit of a comedian, likes to remind riders, "Just because you are sitting in church pews, don't fall asleep."

Although they joke around a lot with the passengers, the men who run this railroad are very serious about safety. The boiler, which was

a helping hand from Kevin Snyder, Bill Smith, Bill Lance, Bob Fultz, and Jack Clayton.

"We all do track work," says Tom Proud. "Keith, we still consider him to be the engineer. We're all a bunch of grunts."



replaced about five years ago at a cost of \$10,000, is inspected annually by the state. Only experienced boiler operators—Keith, Mark, Dave, and Tom—are permitted to steam up the engine and operate it. Dave Schwartz and Tom Proud have both volunteered on scenic railroads and are certified locomotive engineers.

Likewise, an experienced brakeman rides the caboose and carefully controls the train's descent down the 5% grades. The engine doesn't run unless there's a full crew available to ensure safe operation, even though the train goes only five miles per hour.

Tom Proud has been working with Keith since 1985, when he visited the railroad for the first time. Tom, who worked for a utility company at the time, says he learned about the LH&W when he dropped off some contract work at Keith's machine shop. Railroading resonated with Tom, a native of the Thomas area, and he showed up for the next Wednesday night run.

"I liked it. It was unique," Tom says, recalling that first ride. "I liked the scale. The first time I went out, I didn't know whether to go as a tourist or a worker. I said, 'You got anything you want me to do?' And he told me, 'You can shovel that sawdust away from the sawdust chain drag for the mill.' That started it."

Tom now has a standing date at Keith's rail yard every Wednesday afternoon. He arrives at least three hours before the train's 7 p.m. departure so he can fire up

steamed up and power the locomotive for an evening of excursions. One of Tammy's many preparation jobs is to fill the coal bin at the back of the locomotive. The boiler's water tank is on the front end and is filled from a garden hose.

Keith runs the train from the "hot seat" next to the two steam cylinders. Afflicted with Parkinson's Disease, Keith is confined to a motorized chair. The disease makes it extremely difficult for him to maneuver into the hot seat, so once he's settled in, Keith stays put throughout the evening. Shortly before he begins his duties, Jean gives Keith an injection of medication that improves his mobility.

Tre, Tammy's eight-year-old son and the Masons' only grandson, is engineer-in-training. In bib overalls and a railroader's hat bearing the patches of several mainline railroads, he dresses the part. His job on the excursions is to ring the bell. When he can't fill the post, his cousin Casey Underwood, the daughter of Bill and Michele Underwood (Keith and Jean's eldest daughter), takes his place.

An avid railroading hobbyist, Tre enjoys working with his grandfather on both the full-size railroad and the model railroad layouts Keith has in his home. It was Tre who gave the locomotive its nickname, "Big Black."

Tre says he's in training for his dream job, to be an engineer on the Cass Scenic Railroad.

"I told my mom and dad that I may not have to go to college then," Tre says. Tammy and her husband, J.R., think differently, at least about the

college part. However, they admit Tre does share his grandfather's passion for railroading.

"I was just fortunate to have a boy," says Tammy. "He lives, eats, and breathes that train and all the other stuff his granddaddy has. My son took an interest in it before he was two years old."

Of course, telling your classmates that your grandfather runs a real railroad in his backyard produces some incredulous responses, until the youngsters attend one of the railroad parties that Tre's family periodically

the boiler and examine the track for problems.

"It's not good to warm a boiler up fast," says Tom, who starts the fire in the boiler with kindling before adding the coal.

Coal is purchased four tons at a time. Keith estimates it requires about 150 pounds of coal to get the boiler

The LH&W RR crew from the left are, onboard, Bill Brady, Mark Ware, Keith Mason (seated), Tammy Mason Molina, and Tre Roach. Standing in front are Worthy Hall, Tom Proud, and Kevin Snyder.



throws for his friends. Jean says the railroad is also a popular excursion for daycare and preschool groups, Boy Scout troops, and Sunday school classes. They have had as many as 200 people come out for rides on one day, in which case they make several runs as the train can hold only 40 to 50 adults and children at a time.

The train keeps to its schedule, rain or shine. Jean says the neighbors don't seem to mind the noise of the clanging bell, sharp whistles, clicking rails, and hissing steam.

"They like to ride it," Jean says.

"I've never heard any complaints from the neighbors. At one time or another, they've all been on it."

In warm weather, passengers opt for the open car, the one with the church pews. Keith puts a log car between the locomotive and passengers to reduce the chances of them getting showered with cinders, but passengers are forewarned that they might go home with a few black streaks on their faces or spots on their clothing.

The 7 p.m. excursions are run in near darkness by late September.

Kerosene lamps illuminate the interior of the caboose, and on cold nights, a fire is built in the little heating stove. Tom says those are his favorite nights to run the train — cold, moonlit evenings when the steam rises like clouds of history in the night air.

The family also runs their train on special holidays. There is a Halloween night train, for which they replace the traditional whistle with an eerie mockingbird one. (Keith has more than two dozen train whistles in his collection.) They also run their





On the return trip, the caboose leads the way as the engine pushes the train back to the depot. Here Tom Proud serves as brakeman, slowing the train's descent on this 5% grade.

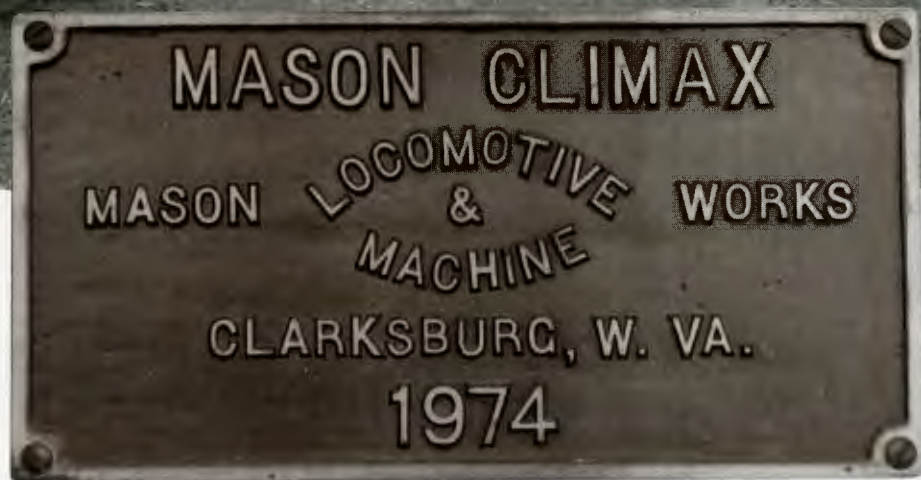
This brass plate on engine No. 1 acknowledges builder Keith Mason.

train New Year's Eve, an especially festive run. Tammy says they ushered in the millennium on the LH&W Railroad.

Jean says the train is an expensive venture. It costs them \$500 annually just to carry liability insurance, a requirement even though they don't charge a fare. There's the cost of the coal — about \$50 a ton — and the huge expense of maintaining a half mile of track.

"If you know the equipment and maintain it right, you don't have much in the way of problems with that," says Tom. "You have more problems with track maintenance than you do with the engine."

Increasingly, as Parkinson's has taken its toll on Keith, the tasks of maintaining this railroad have fallen



upon these volunteers. Both Jean and Keith are extremely appreciative of their efforts to keep his dream running on schedule for more than 30 years.

"We keep telling the guys we're going to give them a raise, but 100% of zero is still zero," she says.

"It gives my buddies something to do to keep them out of trouble," Keith says.

Tammy says Tre is quickly learning the many aspects of operating a railroad, and she hopes he will be there to take over the tradition when Keith is no longer able to do so. For the past 30 years, the LH&W has very

much been a family affair, and the Masons intend to keep it that way. 🍁

The LH&W Railroad departs from the Mason family's backyard 7 p.m. every Wednesday, from June through October. Locust Heights is located just off U.S. Route 19, south of Clarksburg. Look for the Mason Machine Shop sign on the right-hand side of the road. For more information, phone (304)622-6606.

CARL E. FEATHER is a freelance writer and photographer who lives in Ashtabula County, Ohio. He has family roots in Tucker and Preston counties and is the author of the book *Mountain People in a Flat Land*. Carl is a regular GOLDENSEAL contributor.

LH&W Railroad

By Carl E. Feather

Fired by a third generation of Masons, maintained by a faithful crew, and promoted through social media, the Locust Heights & Western Railroad (LH&W RR) continues to grow in ridership, nearly four decades after making its first run.

Jean and Keith Mason still own the private excursion railroad, which still runs on Wednesdays, with the first run departing at 7 p.m. Memorial Day marks the beginning of the season, and a Halloween ride closes it.

Although the length of the trip has not gotten any longer, the wait to get on has. Jean says they've recently had as many as 200 or more riders in one night. The fare remains a donation, used to offset the cost of coal, insurance, and maintenance of the "hobby railroad." Despite its popularity, Jean says the railroad has not been commercialized as an attraction, though they do offer it for special occasions, such as birthday parties, picnics, or reunions.

Her husband, Keith, who owned and operated a machine shop in Clarksburg before he retired, is still involved with the railroad, although he seldom gets to ride it because of being confined to a wheelchair. Keith has battled Parkinson's Disease 18 years and has been disabled by it for eight years.

"Sometimes he gets to ride in the caboose, but it is hard," Jean says.

Tom Proud, Gerald Corder, and Worthy Hall continue to serve on the all-volunteer crew, which maintains the track, locomotive, and cars in addition to running the excursions. Tom Proud is the only one licensed to operate the powerful steam engine. The family is grateful for these dedicated volunteers.

"It's really hard to function if one of the crew is missing," says Tammy Mason Molina, a daughter of Keith and Jean Mason.

A key factor in keeping the line operating has been the interest of Tammy's son Tre Roach in learning every aspect of the operation. Tre, described by his family as a "born railroader," is fireman on the locomotive. He turns 16 this March and is a sophomore in high school. Jean says her grandson plans to take up welding and would like to follow in his grandfather's footsteps as a machine shop owner.

"Tre is the push that keeps it going," Jean says.

Tammy says her son was interested in joining the crew at Cass Scenic Railroad State Park, but he has shifted his railroading passion to keeping his grandfather's train running.

A second push was added to the family three years ago with the birth of William Brady, a second grandson who is just as fascinated with the railroad as Tre was when he was that age.

Tammy, whose wedding ceremony was held on the railroad last year,

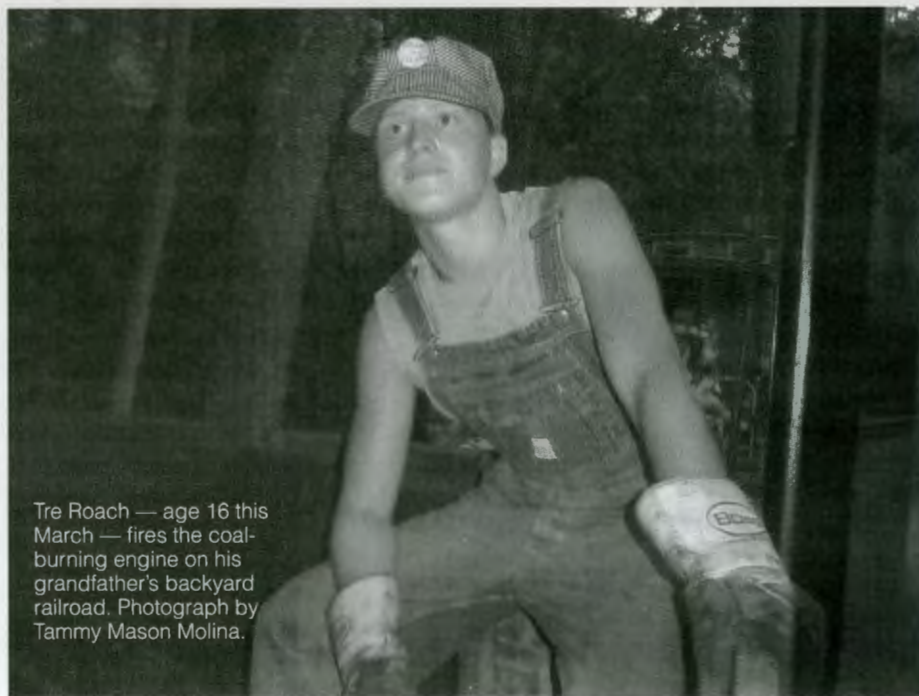
handles publicity and traffic control for the LH&W RR. Her husband, Duane, assists with the property maintenance. Tammy maintains a Facebook page for the railroad, promoting upcoming ride nights and documenting events. She also maintains a Parkinson's awareness page on Facebook in honor of her father's determination to stay active in spite of the illness.

Keith's family credits the railroad for motivating him in his struggles against the disease.

"[The railroad] definitely helps to get him out," Jean says.

Although Keith can no longer do the physical work involved in running the railroad or maintaining the locomotive's vertical steam engine that he built back in 1974, he still supervises all aspects of the operation.

"He tells them how to do things," Jean says. "Mentally, he's still very sharp. He has taught Tre how to do a lot of the things on the train."



Tre Roach — age 16 this March — fires the coal-burning engine on his grandfather's backyard railroad. Photograph by Tammy Mason Molina.

LOCAL HANDS AND NATIVE CLAY





Most people around Blacksville own a piece or two of beautiful handmade pottery. Some own quite a few. Many in this friendly town in far northern Monongalia County have fond personal memories of making this unique pottery and of participating in this pioneering community arts and industrial education program.



Bess Richardson, of Blacksville, holding a pitcher made by her husband, pottery instructor Ed Richardson. This piece of handmade pottery was a birthday gift to Bess in 1946.

Beginning in the mid-1930's, the Blacksville pottery program thrived for some 25 years, drawing on the creativity of hundreds of ordinary local people and a nearby vein of high-quality native clay. Thousands of pottery pieces were made in Blacksville, attracting widespread attention, including the New York World's Fair and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Today, these pieces are considered to be collectors' items and are an indelible part of the local culture.

Bess Johnson Richardson was born in 1903 and lived in Blacksville all her life, until her death in 2000. Making the pottery not only provided her with a welcome artistic outlet, but it was part of her social life. "We had suppers," she said, recalling the monthly social gatherings held among the adult pottery students. "People'd bring their husbands or their wives, and everybody brought their favorite dish they liked. Some bring buns, some bring potato salad, some baked beans and bread. Anything! We just had a good time together. It was just like having a little party. We'd work a little while and then we'd decide it was time to eat. We'd spread things on the table and everybody'd sit down and eat. Oh, it brings back memories, I'll tell you!"

BLACKSVILLE POTTERY

By John Lilly

Photographs by Mark Crabtree



The program also provided financial support for the Richardson family, since Bess' husband, Ed Richardson, was the pottery instructor at Blacks-ville for some 15 years. He taught pottery, welding, and shop classes at Blacksville's Clay-Battelle High School during the day and taught adult pottery classes at the school in the evening. Two nights a week,

he also held adult pottery classes in Morgantown. "He had a nice class and everybody liked him," Bess said, with obvious nostalgic pride. "We had a wonderful life. He was the nicest person. You ask any student what they thought of him; everyone said he was a wonderful person, and he was."

Their romance began with a car

ride, she recalled with a chuckle. "He had bought a little car. A Ford. He come to borrow a flashlight from my brother. I told him, 'I hadn't seen much of you since you had a new car.' He said, 'Would you like to go for a ride?' I said, 'Well sure!' From then on, I had him hooked." They were married in 1923.

During the 1930's, Ed Richardson was among the first students in the early days of the Blacksville pottery program, before eventually assuming the role of teacher in the mid-1940's. Bess recalled how her husband first learned to make pottery. "He had his leg broken. He was just sitting around, and he wasn't being satisfied sitting still. So I'd fix his lunch, and he was on crutches. He went to school and learned to make pottery on crutches."

Ed's teacher was Bess' cousin, Charles Tennant. It was Charles who accidentally discovered a valuable vein of native clay in about 1935. Charles Tennant was an industrial arts instructor at the local four-room high school. A small mudslide — or slip — in the road revealed a rich deposit of fine gray clay, which Tennant found to be excellent for making pottery. This clay was so pure that it required very little preparation or handling before it could be formed into attractive and useful shapes by local hands.

According to Nick Fedorko of the West Virginia Geological Survey, vast deposits of native clay have been found across the state, some of it underlying coal beds and dating back more than 300 million years. The Blacksville clay, however, is of a relatively modern vintage in geological terms — dating back perhaps as recently as 20,000 years. At that time, glaciers blocked the flow of what we



Bess and Ed Richardson in 1954. They were wed from 1923 until his death in 1962. Photographer unknown.



Ed Richardson demonstrates pottery making at an event at the Fairmont Armory in the late 1940's. Photographer unknown.

now call the Monongahela River and its tributaries, forming a massive body of water known to geologists as Lake Monongahela. Once the lake drained, sand, silt, and clay deposits were left behind.

One particular outcropping of this clay appeared on the banks above the Monongahela River in early Morgantown, giving rise in 1785 to Thompson pottery — a family business that thrived in Morgantown for more than a century. Evidence of other smaller-scale potteries in northern West Virginia suggest that families, settlers, and communities welcomed this natural resource and found it to be useful in forging a life on the rugged frontier. Archeologists have found shards of Native American pottery in the region that they say date back more than 1,000 years.

What Charles Tennant discovered along the side of the road in the 1930's was a seemingly limitless supply of local clay, which he soon converted into a community resource for education, art, commerce, and culture. Not only was the quality of the clay unique, but the Blacks ville pottery

program became the only one of its kind in the country.

The program was originally established for local adults, with classes held two nights a week in a shop adjoining the old Blacks ville High School. A 1937 newspaper article noted that there were 33 adults enrolled in pottery classes at Blacks ville, with another 20 adults taking pottery classes from Charles Tennant in Arthurdale [see "Arthurdale: The New Deal Comes to Preston County," by Kathleen Cullinan and Beth Spence; and "Arthurdale Craftspeople, 1974," by Colleen Anderson; April-June 1981]. The classes operated on what was known as the Smith-Hughes Plan, in which the county was reimbursed by the state and federal government for the instructor's salary.

Wilbur Morrison, industrial arts director for the U.S. Board of Education, was quoted in a news story as saying, "As far as we know, this is the first and only handcraft pottery class in the country which is partly sponsored by the federal government." In addition to money, the government established certain standards, regulations, and

procedures that local programs of this type were required to meet.

"In the pottery class," Mr. Morrison said, "the students are required to produce a series of articles as they would in a factory, just as if the products were for sale. In other words, the course is on a strictly practical basis. Finished products are taken home by the students and often land in the homes of family and friends."

Charles Tennant's students built their own potters' wheels using junk parts from washing machines and automobiles. Eventually, the program moved to the new consolidated Clay-Battelle High School in Blacks ville, and became a regular part of the school curriculum under the guidance of Ed Richardson.

Bess Richardson recalled how the students themselves dug the clay as part of their class work. "He had the boys from the school start digging in that clay, Tennant did. Then Ed took over. It got to the place where it was so deep, they put a ladder down and the boys'd get down there. Ed sent the bucket down, they'd fill the bucket full of clay, and he'd pull it back up.



Marvin Phillips turns pottery on a wheel during pottery class at Clay-Battelle High School in Blacksville, late 1940's. Photograph courtesy of Mildred Girling, photographer unknown.

That's the way they got their clay."

Once it was gathered from the field, the clay was brought back to school where the students prepared — or wedged — the clay. Bess explained.

"You heard about wedging clay? It's just like you were mixing dough. You have a piece of wire and you cut the clay, and put it down. If there happened to be a little stone in there, you'd fire that and that would make a hole in it — wasn't pretty at all! You had to get all the impurities out of that clay — I mean little particles like sand and stuff like that. You just kept mixing it until [Ed] thought it was right, and then you start using it. You cut a piece of clay, slap it together, cut it again, slap it together, till you got it real smooth."

While a few students pieced their pottery together by hand, most preferred to use a wheel and the more challenging method called "turning" or "throwing." In this method, the potter starts with a single mound of

clay at the center of the wheel and then carefully uses his or her hands to form the desired shape as the clay spins rapidly on the wheel.

One of the more talented students in the Blacks ville program was Marvin Phillips. Marvin was in Ed Richardson's class from 1946-48 and received the 1948 West Virginia Gold Key award in art for his pottery efforts. Marvin recalls Ed as a very good potter who encouraged creativity in his students. This approach to teaching fostered a feeling of excitement and enthusiasm among the pottery students, who looked forward to their time in class. According to Marvin, the pottery classes at Clay-Battelle High School met five days a week, three hours a day. Marvin points out that not every day was spent at the wheel giving rise to new pottery. About once a month, they would go out and dig clay. Other days were spent wedging the clay, while other days were devoted to mixing the glaze

compounds or tending the kiln.

Marvin enjoyed all aspects of pottery, though he fell away from it after graduation. He and his wife, the former Peggy Yost — also a Clay-Battelle graduate and an accomplished Blacks ville potter — moved to Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, in 1948, where Marvin enjoyed a long career as a millwright. They still live in Waynesburg, just north of Blacks ville, and cherish their collection of pottery — souvenirs from their old high school days.

Jim Haught from Blacks ville is another former student of Ed Richardson who carefully keeps a few examples of his high school pottery. Jim, a student at Clay-Battelle during the 1950's, also recalls Ed as being a fine potter who encouraged his students to be innovative. Getting out and digging the clay was a welcome change of routine, says Jim, who enjoyed climbing down into the hole and sending up buckets of fresh clay.



Jim's wife, the former Karen Lemley, is another Clay-Battelle alumna with ties to the Blacksville pottery. Though she chose not to take part in the pottery classes at school, the clay came from land belonging to her relatives. Today, she and Jim share a large home outside Blacksville that has been in the Lemley family for many years. In the fireplace are dozens of small clay balls taken from the same vein, placed in the hearth by Karen's grandmother more than 50 years ago. The balls serve to retain the heat of the fire, and provide another testimony to the versatility and strength of the native clay.

One event etched in local memory is the time First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt came to Blacksville to inspect the pottery operation. Mrs. Roosevelt

had a deep and abiding interest in social programs that fostered self-sufficiency, and she had an obvious soft spot for West Virginia. It was in her honor that the Putnam County town of Eleanor was named in 1934 [see "Happy To Have a Chance: The Founding of Eleanor," by Rick Wilson, Spring 1988]. So it was not surprising that Mrs. Roosevelt was interested in the Blacksville pottery project and decided to pay a visit. Accompanied by young U.S. Representative Jennings Randolph, Roosevelt advisor Bernard Baruch, and an entourage of other dignitaries and officials, Mrs. Roosevelt's 1938 tour created quite a stir.

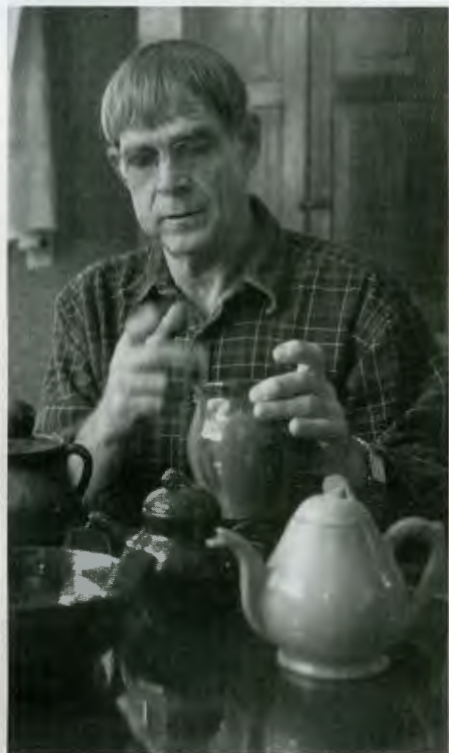
Bess Richardson recalled the day. "She came at the school to talk about the pottery. She had a meeting down

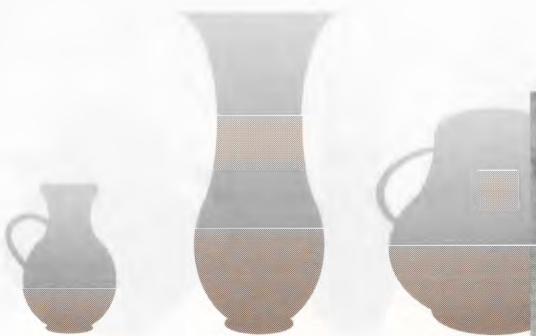
at the old gym. Everybody around there went. I was so amused. She walked so fast! She had a couple of men from the Board of Education with her. They could hardly keep up with her walking from the schoolhouse down to the gym. She'd just fly!

"She watched Ed and Charles make pottery. Charles made the pottery — Ed helped him. They made a tea set for her — the pitcher, the little mugs. And they mixed up something for a blue and they called it 'Eleanor Blue.' So they sent it to her, 'cause she saw them making it. Of course, they had to fire it and all that. I had the clipping that she wrote back about the pottery — about how she liked it and she had it on her mantel in her living room up in Hyde Park."

Even from a distance, Mrs. Roosevelt

Left: Jim Haight, of Blacksville, was one of hundreds of students who learned pottery making through the high school's pottery program. Like many in this small community, Jim keeps several examples of his work, as shown here. Right: Tea set by Ed Richardson, replica of the set given to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1938. Courtesy of Shelly Hinkins.





left a lasting impression on Bess. "She was pretty," Bess recalled, "because she gave out the personality of being a nice person. And that's the way you looked at her."

Eleanor Roosevelt was quoted in the local press as saying, "I think that it is a most interesting local project and should be fostered as such. I hope it will grow and be most successful."

The program did achieve a measure of success over the years, including a highly acclaimed display at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. It was also the subject of a short documentary film shot in 1937 for an industrial conference in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

Although the Blacksville pottery program was not established as a commercial enterprise, steps were eventually taken to find a market for the excellent pottery that fairly streamed out of this small West Virginia town. Bess Richardson recalled that she and her husband made several trips to the Smoky Mountains, where the pottery was sold for a time. "We took it down to Gatlinburg, Tennessee," Bess said. "We'd take, oh, a hundred little pitchers like these," she said, pointing to a small, finely shaped pitcher her husband made for her. "They bought 'em, and then they sold 'em to different parks. We made two or three different trips down to Gatlinburg."

Bess also told of an ambitious plan Ed had to establish a local pottery shop and outlet store in Blacksville. "We had a big barn right close to us," she said. "We were going to have a pottery shop, gift shop. We were going to call it 'The Hands.'"

Unfortunately, Ed's failing health stood in the way. Working with lead-based glaze compounds over an extended period can be dangerous,



Shelly Hinkins, Ed Richardson's niece, with several pieces of pottery made by her uncle.

and Bess felt that this occupational hazard contributed to her husband's health problems. "I think that's partly what killed him," she said sadly, "breathing that white lead. All those recipes for the glazes had white lead in it. The doctors wouldn't believe that, of course. But I do."

Diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—Lou Gehrig's Disease—Ed found himself in a wheelchair, but he kept teaching and remained as active as possible. "He taught school the last year in a wheelchair," Bess said. "He

was capable. Nothing wrong with his mind. He just had deterioration of the muscles and the nerves in his body."

After Ed Richardson's death in 1962, the pottery program at Blacksville was abandoned. The art created by the students and teachers during that time, however, has taken on a life of its own. Antique collector and dealer Mildred Gerling of New Martinsville discovered several pieces of Blacksville pottery around 1990 and has combed the countryside

since then, adding to her collection. She currently owns about 70 pieces. Mildred appreciates the fact that no two pieces of Blacksville pottery are alike, reflecting the creative approach taken by the teachers and students. She likes the glazes that were used and especially admires the look of the earlier pieces. Each item in her collection is identified with an inscription on the bottom including "Blacksville, W.Va.," and the maker's initials. Some of the earlier works also include the date.

Mildred finds this pottery mostly in and around Blacksville at private sales or household auctions. Although she used to be able to obtain them for a dollar or two, they have become quite popular in the past few years and now command prices upwards of \$20 each. She has seen larger pieces, such as lamps, go for as much as \$60 or \$70 each.

Clay-Battelle High School is still the center of learning in this part of Monongalia County. High school art teacher Wally Pierce came to Blacksville in 1971 from Berkeley Springs and soon learned of the legendary Blacksville pottery program. He took steps to revive it, restoring a few old potters' wheels and procuring access to a kiln. Unfortunately, a fire in 1976 destroyed the kiln and set him back. A new addition was added to the school in 1978 and offered a new art room, which Wally used to begin a new pottery program for a few years. Wally Pierce retired from Clay-Battelle High School in 2003. There is currently no pottery instruction taking place at the school.

What of the local native clay? Actually, most of it is still in the ground where Ed Richardson and his students left it, 50 years ago. Wally Pierce went to see the clay deposit and dug a



Jim Haught with a shovelful of Blacksville clay.

sample. He noted that its gray color turned to orange at a low fire and a rich brown under high heat. He acknowledged the possibility that students in Blacksville might again someday produce handmade pottery in part from this clay.

That is an appealing prospect when one considers the proud heritage associated with Blacksville pottery and the unlimited potential for creativity represented by clay still hidden underground.

As Bess Richardson said, "It's amazing to think what you can make with just a simple little piece of clay!"

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine. This was his first full feature to appear in the magazine.

MARK CRABTREE is a photographer and freelance writer living in Morgantown, with family ties in Brooke County. His photographs have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* (London), and elsewhere. Mark is a frequent GOLDENSEAL contributor, whose work most recently appeared in our Winter 2013 issue.

"Worth Their Weight in Gold"

In 1946, my father, Joseph J. Plasky, was hired as safety and training director for the Red Jacket Coal Company in Red Jacket, Mingo County. My family lived there for the next 10 years, and Red Jacket was the site of many memorable experiences for me as a child. Among the most enjoyable of these were the annual Family Picnic and Safety Day gatherings held in our coal camp each summer.

The Red Jacket Coal Company was a subsidiary of the W.M. Ritter Lumber Company, which had mines in several places throughout southern West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. The Ritter Lumber Company had its main offices in Columbus, Ohio, where the founder, W.M. Rit-

ter, made his home. Mr. Ritter was very involved in the day-to-day operations of the mines and was deeply concerned about treating each employee fairly and about creating a "family" atmosphere within his company.

Following World War II, many changes took place in the mining industry in our area. Local coal mines faced new challenges from abundant and cheap oil and gas, as well as the prospect of low-cost nuclear energy. Mines were still mostly of the manual method of production, which resulted in low productivity. The United Mine Workers of America had recently made major gains, and the union was growing in momentum. John L. Lewis and

President Harry S. Truman were in constant battles, with neither side giving much quarter.

When my father was hired, it was hoped that he would improve safety

Red Jacket Coal Company vice president and general manager W.M. Ritter addresses the crowd at Safety Day in 1951.



By Joe Plasky

Recalling Red Jacket Safety Day

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Above: Mine safety team from Junior Mine, Mingo County, winners of the Safety Day competition at Red Jacket in 1951 and '52. They are, from the left, Lewis Simpkins, Ed Simpkins, Nakomis Sloan, George Williamson, John Halley, and Benny Chafin. All photographs courtesy of the author, photographers unknown. Below: Family Picnic and Safety Day drew a large crowd to the ballpark at Red Jacket, Mingo County. The events took place each summer from 1950 until '55.



for the miners at a lower cost to the company. His other duties included improving labor relations and training the miners in mechanization. The objectives of fostering a "family" organization and the encouragement and recognition of an improved mine safety program came together in the creation of the Red Jacket Coal Company Family Picnic and Safety Day. This idea was largely my father's, and he was the driving force behind its implementation.

Planning for the event was thorough and involved many committees. There was a general committee, plus committees in charge of games, parking, registration, entertainment, grounds, and prizes. The committee members included management, employees, and union representatives. There was a lot of coordination necessary as the mines were in different locations.

The place selected for Safety Day was the Red Jacket ballpark. This was not a full-sized ballpark as it was bordered by the railroad on the third-base side and a very steep hill for right field. The community building, grade school, and junior high buildings were also utilized.

At the time, I was in my teens and needed what spending money I could earn. So I asked to do the weed cutting to prepare the grounds. In those days, we did not have powered weed-cutting equipment, so this was my introduction to the use of a hand scythe. The scythe was just about as big as I was and required a lot of sweat and muscle to operate. It took me the better part of three days to clear the area. I was paid about \$20,

and I was proud to have mastered the operation of the scythe.

Other preparations were under way by the grounds committee to erect the speakers' and drink stands. These were constructed by the company's carpenters.

Perhaps one of the most important preparation items was to devise the mine rescue and first-aid problems for the teams to work during the contests. These had to be realistic problems that could be solved in the time allotted. State and federal mine inspectors developed these problems and, of course, kept them secret.

The door prizes to be given away

were selected and donated by a joint committee of the union and the company. This cooperation was an indication of the "family spirit" that was one of the purposes of the event.

The first Safety Day was held on August 5, 1950. Since Red Jacket did not have rail passenger service, the families from the other coal camps drove in. Parking was arranged on a slate pile beside the grade school building. The parking committee was hard-pressed to park all the incoming cars in this small area, but it was done.

The first featured event of the

Safety Day founder Joseph J. Plasky and his wife, Mary. Joseph, our author's father, was safety and training director for the Red Jacket Coal Company.





A mine rescue team brings an "injured" man out of the "mine" during competition at Safety Day on August 4, 1951.

day was the mine rescue contest. This contest was one of my father's favorites, as he believed that every mine should have its own mine rescue team — he was close to achieving this goal within Red Jacket Coal. This contest was the showcase for the men who had spent their time in rescue training, which was extensive and strenuous.

The contest required the teams to wear full clothing and SCBA's (self-contained breathing apparatus). This attire was very hot to wear in the middle of summer as the contest was conducted above ground. Concern for the heat was the reason for the early morning start.

It was a very exciting and serious event, with the teams always well-trained and very competitive. A replicated mine was identified on the ball field by using ropes and lines to simulate rooms and entries. A ficti-

tious accident or disaster prepared by the contest committee was given to each team captain. The captain and the team would determine a rescue or recovery plan that met the given situation, and then they would go about executing the plan.

The first part was the inspection of the equipment and preparation of their SCBA's and gear. The team would then enter the "mine" and simulate their safety checks for gas and roof conditions as they proceeded

to the affected area. I remember the use of a trailing rope to find their way out, should it become necessary.

Once they arrived at the area of the problem, the team would make an assessment and begin their work. They might be confronted with a roof fall, results of an explosion, or other disaster that required their expertise. While the teams were working on the problem, a group of judges from the U.S. Bureau of Mines and West Virginia Department of Mines would

Women's nail driving contest in 1951.



evaluate every move of each team member. By staying just outside the marked-off area, the judges could follow the teams as they entered the mine and moved in for the rescue. This added a level of excitement to see the teams in operation and their performances being evaluated by the experts.

The mine problems were announced to the crowd so they could better understand the work going on. When the teams were performing, a real hush fell over the entire crowd in awe and respect for the work these men were capable of doing. Timers clocked the teams during the simulation. While this contest was not a race, a part of each team's score was the time it required to perform the rescue. Here were a coal company, union miners, and government all working together to ensure Red Jacket had a highly qualified mine rescue team at each mine. Remember, this was the early 1950's, and this level of cooperation did not exist everywhere.

After the mine rescue contest, Safety Day was officially opened with prayer and welcoming remarks. The next events were the fun contests for the boys, girls, men, and women. A committee was in charge of the games, but the one person I remember best was

Dick Grist. Dick was the company forester and a fine person who was also the scoutmaster in Red Jacket. He always assumed the lead in the games, and his leadership assured a lot of participation.

The boys and girls' game I remember best of all was the slow bicycle race, as that was one I won most every year. The race course was a distance of about 100 feet over the ballpark infield, so it was on dirt. The object of the race was to take the longest time to go from start to finish. If your feet touched the ground, you were disqualified. My sister had a Schwinn bicycle with a spring on the front wheel. This allowed the bike to be moved up and down, making the bike move very slowly without using the pedals. But the best part of the bike was the tires, which had a 1½-inch-wide flat tread surface. This was really great for balancing. I have not seen one of those bikes since the '50's. I also have not heard of a slow bicycle race anywhere else.

The other events I remember for the boys were the 100-yard dash, three-legged race, wheelbarrow, and sack race. Contests for the girls were the 100-yard dash, sack race, and baseball throws. The bubble-gum blowing contest was mixed for the boys and girls.

The men had two contests: hog calling and horseshoe pitching. You had to live in the hollows to appreciate the seriousness of these events. Hog calling was an art form for all those who participated, but one man stood out each year. This man was Mr. Elias Sipple, and he had some voice! Some said he could be heard in Matewan, 15 miles away. He had suffered war injuries but not to his voice. Mr. Sipple relied mostly on volume, while other contestants used more words, with a singsong approach. This was a very difficult contest to judge.

Horseshoe pitching was as serious as hog calling. The coal camps were in very narrow hollows, so there was little land for ball fields and the like. Horseshoes did not require much flat land, thus people could enjoy this activity in their yards. There were many enthusiasts and very good pitchers. I remember the horseshoe pit we built along the edge of Mate Creek. We looked very hard to find just the right "blue clay" for the box. This clay allowed the horseshoes to slide properly to the peg. As a result, we had one of the better horseshoe pits in the area. On Safety Day, horseshoe pitching was a crowd favorite and had a lot of spectators, along with teams from each coal camp.

One of the most-watched games was the women's nail driving contest. In the coal camps, the women had to be pretty self-sufficient, and some of them could really drive a nail. In this contest, each lady was given a nail, hammer, and a board. The object was to drive the nail all

Author Joe Plasky, winner of the slow bike race in 1951.



the way through the board in the shortest time.

The other women's contest was husband calling. This was a real fun event as the women would get creative about the calls. While volume was important, the words used to call the husbands were also entertaining.

The games stopped for lunch. Most of the miners and their families ate picnic lunches they had brought. Since there were no picnic tables, the lunches were enjoyed on blan-

kets and tablecloths spread on the ground. In the shade on the hillside overlooking the field, which I had mowed previously, was a great place to spread a blanket for the picnic. There was a drink stand nearby, which sold ice-cold drinks.

During lunch, the music contest was held, providing entertainment for the picnickers. The crowd always danced to the music right on the ball field as an expression of having a good time.

The management group ate at the

general manager's house, about a half-mile from the field. But there is no question in my mind that those who ate the best were the federal and state mine inspectors. My dad was a friend with these men and was close to some of them as he had worked as a federal mine inspector prior to the Red Jacket employment. My mother was an outstanding cook and used this occasion to show off her cooking ability. She would start several days early, cooking pies and cakes. Then, the day prior to the event, the large beef roasts and hams would be prepared. On the morning of the event, Mom would make her yeast dinner rolls. A buffet would be set up with all the fixings in our dining room. We had a large living room and porch that were used for seating as everybody ate and visited. Mom received many compliments for the fine meal, and the coal company rewarded Mom for her efforts each year with a gift.

After lunch, the first-aid contest was held. If you lived in the remote coal camps or worked in the mines, you would appreciate first-aid training. If there was an accident in the mines underground, it was up to the miners to take care of the injured and bring them to the surface. Likewise, home or auto accidents in the coal camps required the people on the scene to properly take care of the injured until help could arrive. There was no doubt about the value of first-aid training, because it could mean saving your life or the life of someone dear to you.

The teams were divided into adults,

Mrs. Alex Smith in the process of winning the husband calling contest in 1952.



boys, girls, and "colored." (After all, these were pre-integration times.) Each team consisted of a captain and six team members; one team member would act as the injured person. The teams would study and practice together during the year leading up to the summer contest, and the winning team in each division received a cash prize. I thought it was as much fun being on the first-aid team as it was being on a school athletic team.

Personnel from the West Virginia Department of Mines and the U.S. Bureau of Mines conducted the first-aid contest. Each team had an assigned area and brought their supplies in a large box. The captain would be given a written, realistic situation prepared by the committee. The situation usually involved an underground accident that the team must handle and included preparing the victim or patient for transportation. Some of the situations I remember were a miner being caught between a shuttle car and a timber post with a broken pelvis and bleeding, or a miner being trapped under a rock with broken legs and bleeding.

These were simulated situations, and the team members would have to speak the actions they were taking so the judges could follow their movements. For example, "standing on a dry board to remove the electric wire from the injured," or "inspecting throat to make sure tongue is not swallowed." Treating the victims for shock was a big concern; the treatment for this condition was mostly simulated, so the judges had to be very alert to see that these actions

were done correctly. The judges stood right next to the teams to observe their every move. The contest was timed, and each team needed to have its patient stabilized and ready for transportation within the time allotted. At the end of the demonstration, the judges inspected the bandaging and splints for proper application.

The next-to-last event of the day involved remarks from the representatives of the two government agencies, the union, and coal company. The union was well-represented at each Safety Day, and the speeches alternated each year between District 28 president Allan Condra and District 17 representative Charles Kiser. On some occasions, the international UMW was represented, as well. I recall the union executives were greatly impressed by the teamwork and cooperation shown between the men, company, and government agencies.

At the 1951 Safety Day, Allan Condra remarked: "More lives can be saved if the mines are made safer

places in which to work. Men have and will preach safety, but it takes cooperation such as shown here today to reduce coal mines' accidents."

My father's remarks that year included the following: "Mine rescue teams are worth their weight in gold in case of a disaster. It is these men upon whom the mothers, wives, sisters, and others call to save their loved ones. It is great satisfaction to know that we have such men available."

After the remarks were made, the mine rescue and first-aid contest winners were announced and the prizes distributed. This was one of the highlights of the day, and everybody was anxious to hear who the best teams were. In addition to the prizes, the winning teams were eligible to compete at the Mingo County Mining Institute meet at Williamson.

The last event of the day was the drawing for door prizes. The selection of prizes tells its own story about life in the 1950's coal camps:

Boys' team conducts a first-aid drill at Safety Day in 1951.



smoking stands, an electric range, a seven-cubic-foot refrigerator, an electric washing machine (with a wringer), electric floor lamps with clocks, electric sweepers, and electric roll ironers.

After a closing prayer, the festivities were officially concluded. That night, Dad hosted a poker game for the visitors. The players included coal company, government, and union personnel. To prepare for the game, Dad would make a trip to Ironton, Ohio, to buy the beer. Dad was of the opinion that Ohio beer had higher alcohol content and thus was a better beer. This was a 200-mile round trip, but my father was firmly convinced it was worth it. I was in charge of icing and serving the beer that night. We had several washtubs outside in the yard for this purpose. Watching over the tubs of iced beer led me to sample one or two. It was, after all, a warm evening! Mom had leftovers from the lunch, and she served sandwiches. There were always several tables playing, and the men would have a great time. The card game would end late, then the men would go to the clubhouse for the night, thus signaling the unofficial end to the Red Jacket Coal Company Family Picnic and Safety Day for another year.

This successful and memorable event began in 1950 and continued until Red Jacket Coal Company was sold to Island Creek Coal Company in 1955. My family and I were proud to have had a hand in it. 🍁

JOE PLASKY lives in Kinston, North Carolina. Following 36 years with DuPont, he currently works in engineering and technical sales for the textile industry. He is a 1961 graduate of West Virginia University with a degree in civil engineering. Joe's most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Winter 2012 issue.

UPDATE

Red Jacket

In 1997 my brother, our wives, and I visited Red Jacket. We were very impressed with the appearance of the community — one cannot call it a coal camp anymore. A coal camp was built to last only as long as the mines could economically work in the area, usually a period of 20 to 30 years. Red Jacket has clearly moved beyond the coal camp days into becoming a very attractive community in its own right.

The areas that were used for the Safety Day activities have been changed. The slate pile adjacent to the grade school, which was used for parking, has been covered with dirt and now houses a convenience store. The main location of the activities was the ball field. This area is now the location of 24 very nice townhomes. I have been told these were

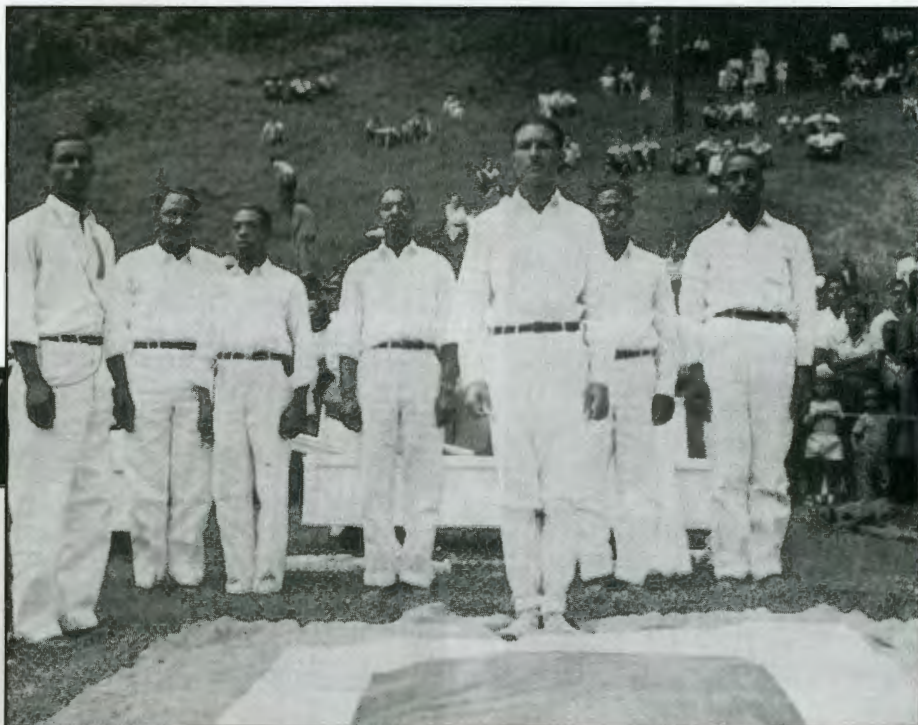
built as part of the Matewan floodwall project as replacement housing for those dwellings that were sacrificed to build the floodwall. This is a very nice addition to the Red Jacket community, although at the loss of the ball field.

Our house, site of my mother's lunches and Dad's poker games, was just like we remembered it.

The safety building, which my father had built to do the mine safety training in, is in use by the Kiwanis and also used for a Head Start program. It is remarkable to me that the building built for mine safety education is now being used for education of children.

I am proud to have lived in Red Jacket and proud of the residents who have done much to continue to have a great community. —Joe Plasky

This first-aid team from Red Jacket took first place in the "colored" division in 1950. They are, from the left, James Currey, Ed Reed, John Moore, Walter Martin, Jack Belcher, James Green, and Claude Berger.



2013 LIARS CONTEST



Prize-winning liars from 2013. At left is Youth Award winner Jackson Sorrells, from South Charleston. At center is third-place winner Scott Hill, from Beckley. At right is second-place winner Gary Buchanan, from Creston, Calhoun County. First place was awarded to Adam Booth, of Shepherdstown. Photographs by Tyler Evert.

First Place
Adam Booth
Shepherdstown

Second Place
Gary Buchanan Creston

Third Place
Scott Hill Beckley

Youth Award
Jackson Sorrells
South Charleston

The 2013 West Virginia State Liars Contest took place on Saturday, June 22. It was part of the special Sesquicentennial edition of the Vandalia Gathering, bringing the heritage arts to the Mountain State's 150th birthday celebration. Nothing livens up a party like a couple of tall tales, so here are excerpts from two of last year's contest winners.

1st Place - Adam Booth **"Beauty Contest"**

A buddy of mine is a rural community events planner, and he and his team just recently constructed a new community events building in southern West Virginia. They had a big grand opening ceremony, and he called me to be a part of it.

He asked me would I like to judge a beauty pageant in Wayne County. And I thought about it, and I said, "Yes, indeed I did want to judge a beauty pageant in Wayne County." And he

said, "Great! Go south of Wayne, about 20 or 25 minutes down 152."

Now, if you're from around there, like I am, you know that 20 or 25 minutes south of Wayne — that ain't out Wayne, that's wa-a-ay out Wayne. So I went wa-a-ay out Wayne down 152 to the community center.

It was a pretty little building, a few cars out in the parking lot, and there was a banner over the door that answered one very important question that I should have asked before I agreed to be a judge.

It said, "The First Annual Lower Wayne County Over-80 Beauty Pageant and Hot Dog Sale." I was gawking at the banner when my buddy came out, and I said, "Over 80?" And he said, "Ain't it great!" And he pulled me on in.

Now, they had divided the inside of the community center in half with one of those accordion dividers, because also happening that day on the other side of the building, the 4-H was having a goat judging competition.

Over on this side where the beauty pageant was, they had set out chairs. And eight or nine

people had shown up to watch.

We waited for the competitors. Slowly three beauties came in. There was Mabel A. Adkins, Dottie Ferguson Adkins, and Letha Adkins Ferguson — none of whom were related to each other. And we waited and waited for more competitors. My buddy went over to the other side to see if maybe people had gone to the wrong side of the building.

Before I knew it, he was pulling that divider back because only three goats had shown up for the 4-H competition, and he had made an executive decision to combine the two competitions so that the over-80 beauties and the goats were now competing against each other. They would alternate rounds of competition from one side to the other.

So the first round of competition was the general beauty competition. And the over-80 beauties came down the catwalk. They had made themselves up. They had pretty dresses and pretty make-up on with great southern West Virginia beauty queen hairstyles that I can only describe as the Cement Mixer, the Bundt Pan, and the Mushroom Cloud.

Following them, the goats came down. But they all received low scores, because they had all chosen to wear a beard to a beauty competition.

After the first round, Bundt Pan was in first place. Second place was a breeding goat, and third place was a tie between a meat goat and Mushroom Cloud. We went on to the second round of competition, which came from the 4-H side. This was the milking competition.

The goats came down the catwalk and a pail was placed under each one. See, it was the first competitor to fill their pail who would win the competition. Bundt Pan, Cement Mixer, and Mushroom Cloud looked at each other; they nodded, and they went up on the catwalk and took a stool next to each one of the goats. They decided it would be a team competition, and they began milking those goats. The team that won was meat goat and Mushroom Cloud, and that just boosted them right up to the top of the competition.

The third round was back on the beauty pageant side, and that was the talent competition. That was really great. The judges were really impressed because there was a recitation of the preamble, one of them played the fiddle, a goat tap-danced a little bit, and one of the beauties came forth and she was singing her favorite song, "...down upon the Swanee River..."

Right as she got to that high note, her mouth was so wide open that her teeth fell out on the floor. And a goat, thinking it was a can, came over and gobbled them up and kept going like this as she sang, and it turned into a really great ventriloquism act that just pushed that meat goat all the way up to first place.

Now there were several more rounds of competition, but by this point, Bundt Pan was so far in the back that she bowed out of the competition. Two of the goats, they had decided that this wasn't their thing anymore, and they were eating hot dogs in the back row. And poor old Cement Mixer had fallen asleep.

So it was in a dead heat between the meat goat and Mushroom Cloud. Then came the final round of competition — the interview.

The question was, "If you are crowned the First Annual Miss Over-80 Lower Wayne County, what would you do to fight hunger?"

Mushroom Cloud stepped right up and answered without even thinking, "I would bake more cookies." So pleasant. And they passed the microphone to the meat goat, and the meat goat gave another great answer, "Me-hhh...ma-aa-hh," which put all of us judges into a big deliberation.

We thought about it and argued for a while, and then finally we decided that Mushroom Cloud had come up with the better answer. So we crowned her the First Annual... This is when Cement Mixer woke up.

And she looked, and she stood up, and she said, "Wait a minute! She's 79!" Mushroom Cloud was so confused and distraught, she said, "It's true. I'm only 79." Which meant that, by default, meat goat won the First Annual Lower Wayne County Over-80 Beauty Pageant.

By agreeing to be a judge, I didn't know that I had also agreed to take the winner out on a date. Everyone thought the joke was on me, but really the joke was on the goat, because Mushroom Cloud had actually won the goat from the 4-H raffle to serve at her restaurant, which is where my date was.

So, that is how I won a date with the prettiest old goat in Wayne County, and boy she sure tasted good!



Gary Buchanan, second-place winner.

2nd Place - **Gary Buchanan** "Time Travel"

Years ago my daddy took me to Talcott. The C&O Railroad was making a tunnel over there, and they had brought in this steam-powered hammer. My daddy wanted to see it.

When we got there, there was a huge crowd. My daddy asked what was going on, and he was told there was this large Negro man who worked for the railroad. He was the best hammer man anyone had ever seen, so they decided to have a contest.

It had been going on all day, and that man had only stopped twice for a little sip of water. Pretty soon a huge cheer went through the crowd, and people were shouting, "The man bested the machine! The man bested the machine!"

I told my daddy I wanted to meet that man, so I worked my way over through the crowd. When I got there, he was all sprawled out on the ground. His

wife was kneeling next to him, holding one hand. In his other hand he had his hammer. And he was dead.

I told the lady I was sorry, and I asked her what his name was. And she said, "They calls him John Henry."

My daddy always said that we can learn lessons from things that happen in life. He asked me if I learned anything there today. And I said, "Yes sir. I don't want to work for the railroad."

In 1888, I was asked to go down to the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy. It seems there was two families down there, one from West Virginia, one from Kentucky. And they'd been killing each other for quite some time. They asked me if I could do anything.

So I was walking up the road to this family's cabin, and there was all these daffodils growing along the road because it was early spring. So I got an idea. I picked a bunch of them daffodils and carried them with me. When I got to that cabin, they

all came out to meet me, men and boys, women and children, babies and dogs. And they all had rifles, even the dogs. So I walked right up without saying anything, and I put one of them daffodils in the barrel of each of them rifles. And them people were so happy that some stranger would do something kind that they decided not to shoot their neighbors any more.

Now I had to find a way to keep their neighbors from shooting them. So I told them boys, "When you want to wave to your neighbor, don't be waving with one finger like you have been doing. Wave with two fingers like this. And that will show them that you don't want to fight any more."

I've been told that people later started calling this the peace sign. I don't know. That's how I settled the feud between the Hatfields and McCoys.

Have a happy sesquicentennial, and thank you for listening to my story. Goodbye, goodbye.

Vandalia Time!

The **2013 Vandalia Gathering** celebrated the Mountain State's folk heritage along with its 150th birthday. Activities were split between Memorial Day weekend in late May and the three days surrounding West Virginia Day in late June, so there were plenty of opportunities to join in the fun! Photographer Tyler Evert captured these memorable images.





2013 Vandalia Winners

Vandalia Award –
Gerald Milnes, Elkins

Senior Old-Time Fiddle
(age 60 and over)

- 1 - Elmer Rich, Morgantown
- 2 - Jim Mullins, St. Albans
- 3 - Terry Vaughan, Cross Lanes
- 4 - John Morris, Ivydale
- 5 - Richard Eddy, Maidsville

Old-Time Fiddle
(age 59 and under)

- 1 - Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
- 2 - Jason Chewing, Beverly
- 3 - Walter King, Elkins
- 4 - Cody Jordan, Point Pleasant
- 5 - Robbie Mann, Glenville

Youth Old-Time Fiddle
(age 15 and under)

- 1 - Walter King, Elkins
- 2 - Lydia Hager, Kenna
- 3 - Chloe Sargent, Milton

Senior Old-Time Banjo
(age 60 and over)

- 1 - Jim Mullins, St. Albans
- 2 - Paul Gartner, Yawkey
- 3 - Ken Sheller, Elkins
- 4 - John Morris, Ivydale

Old-Time Banjo (59 and under)

- 1 - Tim Bing, Huntington
- 2 - Logan Hoy, Belle
- 3 - Dennis Ott, Ronceverte
- 4 - Chad Ashworth, St. Albans
- 5 - James Blankenship, Sand Fork

Mandolin (all ages)

- 1 - David Watson, Jr., West Union
- 2 - Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
- 3 - Karl Smakula, Montrose
- 4 - Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
- 5 - Ben Perdue, Morgantown

Bluegrass Banjo (all ages)

- 1 - Logan Browning, St. Albans
- 2 - Marteka Lake, Hacker Valley

- 3 - Karl Smakula, Montrose
- 4 - Robert Russell, Tallmansville
- 5 - Blaine Johnson, Beaver

Lap Dulcimer (all ages)

- 1 - Martha Turley, Ona
- 2 - Will Manahan, Elkview
- 3 - Ezra Drumheller, Prosperity
- 4 - Ryan Davis, Beckley
- 5 - Morgan Spradling, Beckley

Flat-pick Guitar (all ages)

- 1 - Adam Hager, Kenna
- 2 - Jamie Rhodes, Culloden
- 3 - Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
- 4 - Doug Workman, St. Albans
- 5 - Jarrod Saul, Sumerco

Youth Flat-pick Guitar
(age 15 and under)

- 1 - Bryant Underwood, Charleston
- 2 - Isaac Putnam, Looneyville
- 3 - Claire Walker, Charleston



38th Annual Vandalia Gathering May 23-25, 2014

State Capitol Complex • Charleston, West Virginia

Friday, May 23

7:00 p.m. Award Presentations and Concert

Saturday, May 24

10:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Craft Circle, Food

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Kids Activities, Storytelling

12:00 noon-4:00 p.m. Appalachian Heritage Dancing

12:00 noon-5:00 p.m. Music Contests (Fiddle, Bluegrass Banjo, Mandolin), Old-Time Square Dancing, Flatfooting, Performances

2:00 p.m. Pound Cake and Cupcake Contests

3:30 p.m. Cake Dance

6:30 p.m. Concert

Sunday, May 25

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Craft Circle, Food

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Gospel Sing

12:00 noon-4:00 p.m. Appalachian Heritage Dancing



12:00 noon-5:00 p.m. Music
Contests (Old-Time Banjo, Lap
Dulcimer, Flat-Pick Guitar),
Kids Activities, Performances,
Old-Time Square Dancing,
Flatfooting
1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Storytelling
2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Liars Contest

*All events are free and
open to the public.
For more information,
call (304)558-0162 or
visit [www.wvculture.org/
vandalia](http://www.wvculture.org/vandalia).*



Back Issues Available



- ___ Fall 2006/Pumpkin House
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- ___ Summer 2008/Fenton Glass
- ___ Fall 2008/Yokum's Vacationland
- ___ Spring 2009/Bernard Cyrus
- ___ Summer 2009/Back to the Land
- ___ Spring 2010/Pilot Steve Weaver
- ___ Winter 2010/Weir High School Band
- ___ Summer 2011/Trolleys
- ___ Fall 2011/Forest Festival
- ___ Fall 2012/Cameo Glass
- ___ Winter 2012/Travelers' Repose
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- ___ Fall 2013/Folklife Goes to College
- ___ Winter 2013/Cranberry Wilderness

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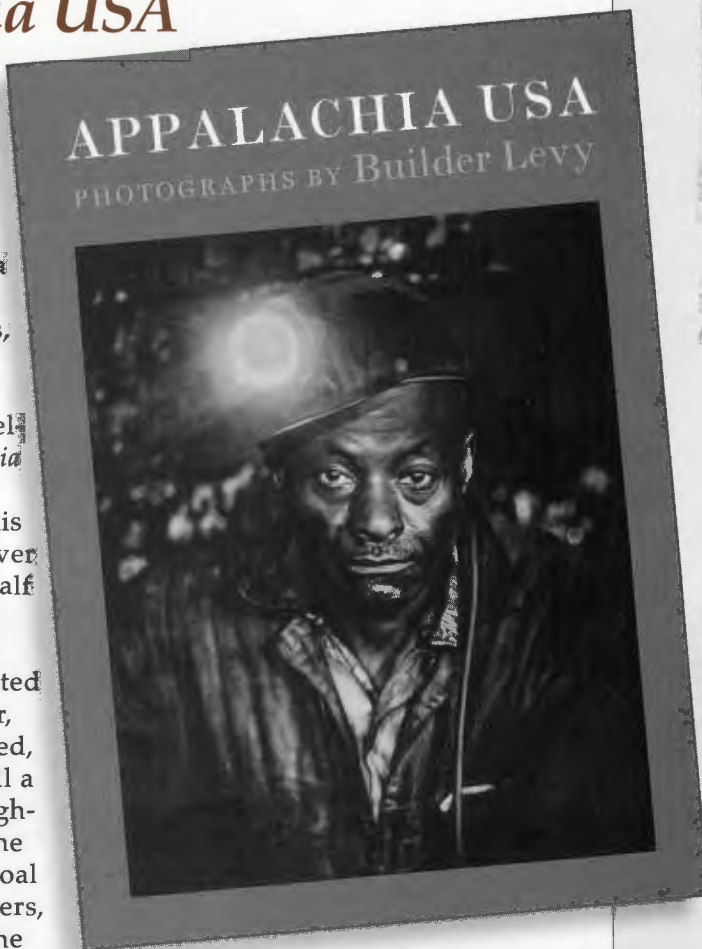
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Appalachia USA

Photographer Builder Levy has beat a path from his home in Brooklyn, New York, to the hills of Appalachia for the past 45 years. Camera in hand, he has explored the rural areas, mines, and mining communities and has captured some compelling images. *Appalachia USA*, his latest book, is a retrospective of his work in this region over the past four-and-a-half decades.

Beautifully shot in black and white, printed on high-quality paper, and tastefully arranged, these photographs tell a story of struggle, laughter, labor, and loss. The emphasis here is on coal — the mines, the miners, the coal towns, and the environmental price we pay. There is a strong presence of African Americans as well as several heartwarming images of children. It is overall a gritty assessment of life in the shadows of coal, though an honest and respectful portrayal.

Published in 2014 by David R. Godine, Publisher, this 125-page, large-format, hardbound edition includes 69 images.



Each photograph is identified and captioned by the photographer. There is an introduction by renowned West Virginia author Denise Giardina as well as a cover comment by West Virginia country music singer Kathy Mattea. *Appalachia USA* sells for \$40, plus shipping, and is available from the publisher at www.godine.com; phone 1-800-344-4771.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Charleston Baseball
- Riverboats
- Nurse Cadets
- Campbells Creek Train Robbery



continued from inside front cover

July 25-27	32 nd Upper Ohio Valley Italian Heritage Festival Wheeling (233-1090)	September 20-21	Country Roads Festival Hawks Nest State Park (658-5212)
July 26	W.Va. Hot Dog Festival Huntington (525-7788)	September 20-21	Grape Stomping Wine Festival Summersville (872-7332)
July 27-August 2	Cherry River Festival Richwood (846-9114)	September 20-21	Harvest Moon Arts and Crafts Festival Parkersburg (424-7311)
July 30-August 3	Appalachian String Band Music Festival Camp Washington-Carver/Clifftop (558-0162)	September 25-26	W.Va. Storytelling Festival Prickett's Fort State Park (363-3030)
July 31-August 2	W.Va. Blackberry Festival Nutter Fort (622-3206)	September 26-28	Mountain Heritage Arts & Crafts Festival Shenandoah Junction (725-2055)
August 1-3	Lemonade Festival Bluefield (589-0239)	September 26-28	St. George Greek Orthodox Church Greek Festival Huntington (522-7890)
August 2	Swiss National Day Helvetia (924-6435)	September 26-28	Volcano Days Waverly (558-1403)
August 8-10	Augusta Festival Elkins (637-1209)	September 26-29	Preston County Buckwheat Festival Kingwood (379-2203)
August 8-10	W.Va. Peach Festival Romney (788-0903)	September 27	W.Va. Roadkill Cook-Off Marlinton (799-2509)
August 8-16	State Fair of West Virginia Fairlea (645-1090)	September 27-28	Capon Bridge Founders Day Capon Bridge (856-1118)
August 10	Mahrajan Lebanese Heritage Festival Wheeling (233-1688)	September 27-October 5	78 th Mountain State Forest Festival Elkins (636-1824)
August 11-16	Town & Country Days New Martinsville (455-4275)	October 2-5	30 th Salem Apple Butter Fest Salem (782-1518)
August 15-17	Jefferson County African American Cultural & Ranson (725-9610)	October 2-5	W.Va. Pumpkin Festival Milton (634-5857)
August 22-24	Appalachian Festival Beckley (252-7328)	October 3-4	Huntersville Traditions Day Huntersville (1-800-336-7009)
August 29-31	Jackson's Mill Jubilee Weston (269-7328)	October 3-4	Pine Bluff Fall Festival Pine Bluff (592-1189)
August 29-31	36 th W.Va. Italian Heritage Festival Clarksburg (622-7314)	October 3-5	Oglebay Fest Wheeling (243-4000)
August 30-31	Apple Butter Weekend Blennerhassett Island State Park (420-4800)	October 3-5	Rocket Boys Festival Beckley (580-3908)
August 30-31	Oak Leaf Festival Oak Hill (1-800-927-0263)	October 4	Freshwater Folk Festival White Sulphur Springs (536-1361)
August 30-31	10 th Annual Aunt Jennie Festival Chief Logan State Park (792-7229)	October 4	Southern W.Va. Italian Festival Bluefield (589-3317)
August 30-September 1	51 st Rowlesburg Labor Day Celebration Rowlesburg (454-2441)	October 4-5	Country Fall Festival Point Pleasant (675-5737)
September 4-7	CultureFest 2014 Pipestem (320-8833)	October 4-5	41 st Annual Old-Fashioned Apple Harvest Festival Burlington (289-6010)
September 5-7	24 th Annual W.Va. Black Heritage Festival Clarksburg (641-9963)	October 9-12	W.Va. Black Walnut Festival Spencer (927-1640)
September 6	Hampshire Heritage Fest Romney (822-3647)	October 11	19 th Annual Bramwell Oktoberfest Bramwell (248-8004)
September 11-13	46 th Annual Oil & Gas Festival Sistersville (652-2939)	October 16-19	35 th Mountain State Apple Harvest Festival Martinsburg (263-2500)
September 12-13	45 th Nicholas County Potato Festival Summersville (1-866-716-0448)	October 18	Bridge Day Fayetteville (1-800-927-0263)
September 13-14	Elizabethtown Festival Moundsville (845-6200)	October 18	W.Va. State CCC Museum Jubilee Mount Clare (622-3304)
September 13-14	Helvetia Fair Helvetia (924-6435)	October 18-19 & October 25-26	Hinton Railroad Days Hinton (466-6100)
September 18-21	46 th Annual Treasure Mountain Festival Franklin (358-3298)	October 25	Halloween Train Cass Scenic Railroad State Park (456-4300)
September 18-21	Golden Delicious Festival Clay (651-7353)	October 31-November 2	Fiddlers Reunion D&E College/Elkins (637-1209)
September 20	Charles Town Heritage Festival Charles Town (725-2311)	December 5-7	18 th Century Christmas Market Prickett's Fort State Park (363-3030)
September 20	13 th Annual Mothman Festival Point Pleasant (675-9726)	December 13	Feast of the Seven Fishes Fairmont (366-0468)

GOLDENSEAL requests its readers' help in preparing this listing. If you would like your festival or event to appear in the 2015 "Folklife•Fairs•Festivals," please send us information on the name of the event, dates, location, and the contact person or organization, along with their mailing address, phone number, and Web site, if available. We must have this information by January 7, 2015, in order to meet our printing deadline. GOLDENSEAL regrets that, due to space limitations, Fourth of July celebrations are not included in this listing.

Inside Goldenseal

Page 10 — Gypsy king Zeke Marks died in Weirton in 1931. His funeral offered a rare look into the mysterious world of the gypsies.

Page 40 — The Locust Heights & Western Railroad (LH&W RR) is a labor of love for the Mason family of Clarksburg.

Page 34 — Mrs. Ellen King of Glenville composed the original verses to "The West Virginia Hills" — one of three official West Virginia state songs.

Page 56 — Red Jacket Safety Day highlighted mine safety and cooperation in this small Mingo County town. Joe Plasky was there.

Page 48 — Native clay and local hands created a one-of-a-kind pottery in the Monongalia County town of Blacksville.

Page 16 — Martinsburg's elegant Norwalk Underslung Six touring car remains West Virginia's greatest claim to automotive history.

Page 24 — Spruce Knob proved a formidable obstacle for pilot and author Bill Garnette. He recounts his harrowing 1946 encounter with the mountain.

Page 67 — The Vandalia Gathering returns to Charleston on Memorial Day weekend.

