

Dwight Diller • Salt • Wheeling Photos • Dinger Daugherty

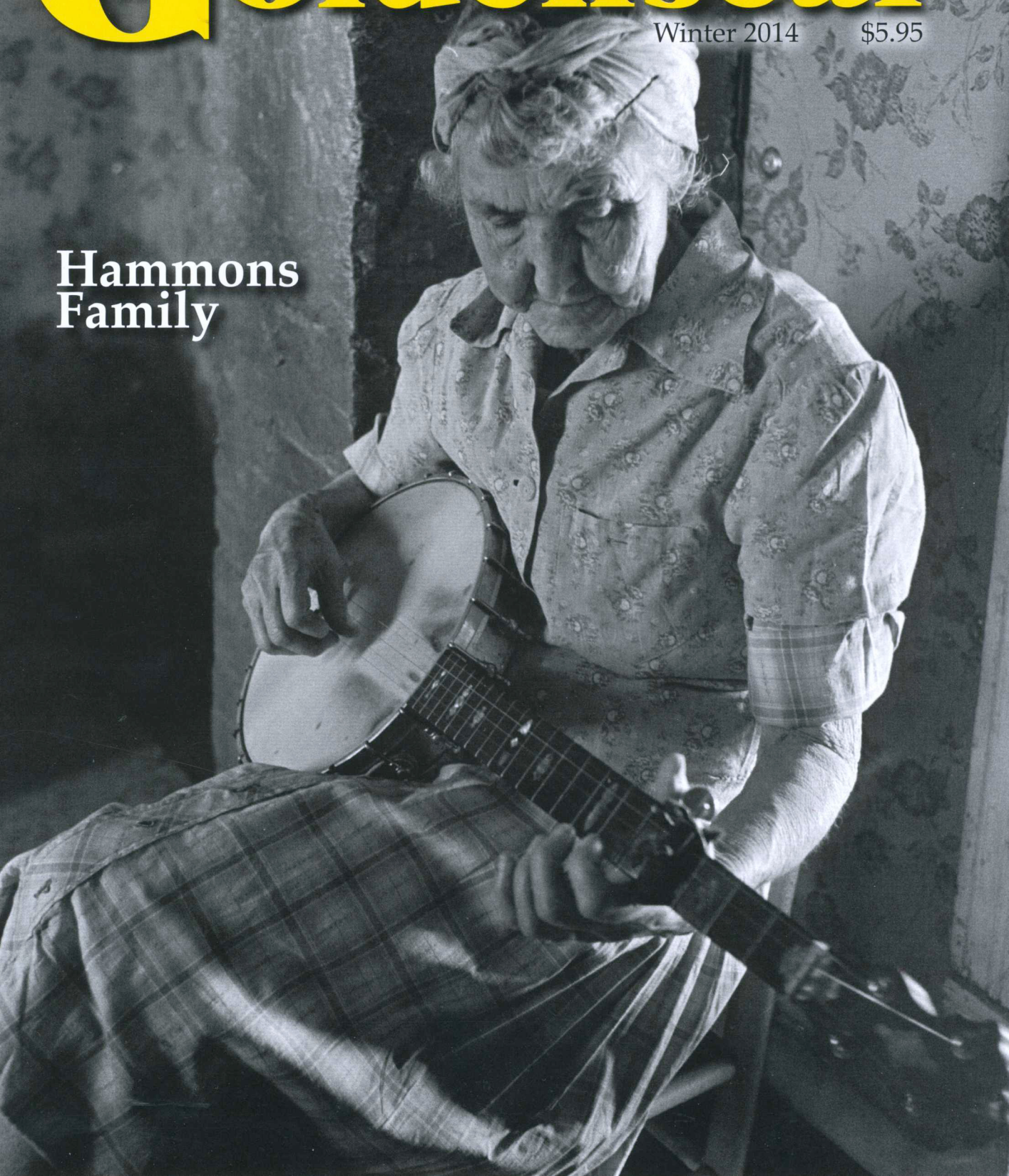
Goldenseal

West Virginia Traditional Life

Winter 2014

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Hammons
Family



From the Editor – In Praise of Adversity

Adversity is a blessing. That lesson looms large in this issue as we see several stories based on individuals or families whose lives were shaped by tragedy or misfortune, and whose tenacity and determination led them to unexpected, positive results.

The Hammons family of Webster, Pocahontas, and Randolph counties lived in humble accommodations and subsisted on less than most city people could imagine possible. They lacked amenities that most of us view as essential and did without formal education, health care, or transportation. Yet they are renowned and revered around the world for their stories, songs, tunes, and backwoods wisdom. Wayne Howard's article about the Hammons family begins on page 6.

Key to the story of the Hammons family is the work of banjo player Dwight Diller, who befriended the Hammonses in the late 1960's and did much to document and preserve their legacy. Dwight is a talented man in his own right, but his personal struggle with mental health led him to choose an unconventional path. That path and struggle not only brought Dwight to the Hammons family but to a life of faith, teaching, and old-time music. Allen Johnson's fine article about Dwight begins on page 14.

George Karos of Martinsburg lost his father when he was nine years old. James A. Patterson, the owner of the local pharmacy, took George under his wing and gave the fatherless boy a job delivering medicine to customers on his bicycle. George eventually became a registered pharmacist himself; he now owns the pharmacy where he worked as a boy. He has also been the mayor of Martinsburg since 2000. See page 26.

Morris R. "Dinger" Daugherty was a railroad detective in New Martinsville in 1918, an athletic young man with a bright future. He slipped and fell beneath the wheels of a moving train, where he lost both legs and one arm. His response? He learned to fly and became an internationally known stunt pilot. He was also a dancer, composer, dog breeder, politician, author, and inventor. Author Sam McColloch introduces us to Dinger on page 42.

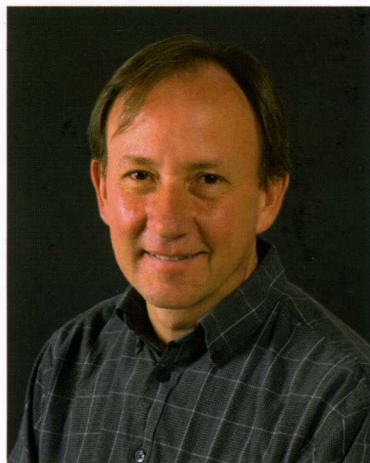
Photographer Eddie Martin of Wheeling loved to take pictures in spite of a spinal deformity that forced him to walk with crutches and climb stairs in a seated position. His diminutive stature and childlike appearance were an advantage to

him, however. He became a popular figure among Wheeling's schoolchildren as he took their portraits. Eddie's photographs of Wheeling are remarkable, as you can see starting on page 56.

West Virginians are known for their resourcefulness. Always have been. Those who settled the land that became West Virginia learned to love the rocky soil and wrested a living from the treasures that lay beneath it. In the earliest days, that wealth included brine — acrid water from deep underground that yielded millions of pounds of salt in the early to mid-1800's. Now a new generation of salt makers is drawing gourmet table salt from the same brine that their ancestors used 200 years ago. Read about it beginning on page 20.

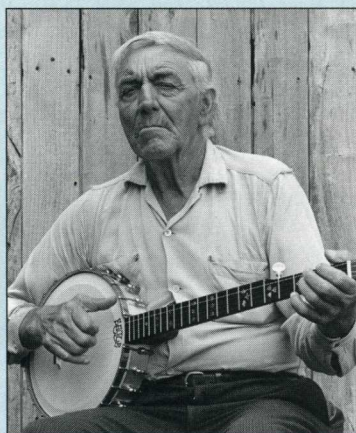
Adversity is part of life anywhere you go, but seems to come in bunches here in the Mountain State. We thrive on it. We cook it up and have it for breakfast, stomp it into juice and drink it, write songs and sing about it, spin it into tales and laugh about it, boil it down and sprinkle it on our popcorn. It is part of what makes us who we are. Thank heaven! We wouldn't have it any other way.

I hope you are comfortable and happy this holiday season. We appreciate your continued interest and support of GOLDENSEAL.



Photograph by Michael Keller

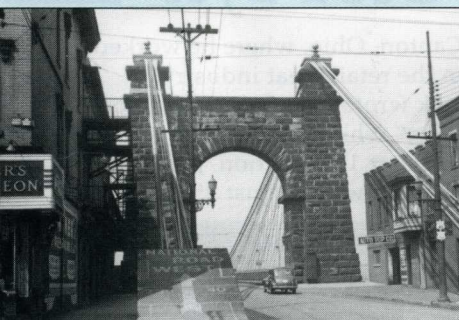
John Lilly



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On the cover: Maggie Hammons Parker at her home in Stillwell, Pocahontas County, in 1970. Photograph by Carl Fleischhauer. Our story begins on page 6.

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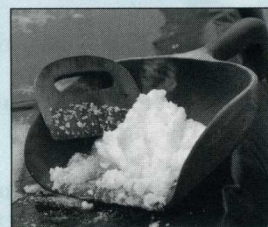
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Letters from Readers

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

Elk River Turtles

October 12, 2014
Hagerstown, Maryland
Editor:

I read the wonderful story by Todd Pettit about his experiences in Clay County. [See "When I Was a Young Boy: My Memories of Clay County"; Fall 2014.] I grew up along Elk River over on the Clay / Kanawha county line. I fear that [five-time State Liars' Contest champion] Bil Lepp might read Todd's story and find out about the huge snapping turtles there in the Elk River. There is no telling what might happen then!

The book *Amphibians and Reptiles of West Virginia*, by Drs. Bayard Green and Thomas Pauley, says that the largest snapping turtle on record in the state measured 17 inches long and weighed 40 pounds. The turtle that Todd Pettit



Snapping turtle.

saw was more than six feet across and would have weighed about 170 pounds!

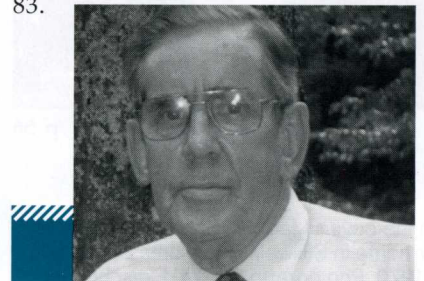
I once saw a turtle just above Queen Shoals Bridge in Kanawha County capture and eat a full-grown collie dog. Elk River boys are usually keen to make a deal, so I have a proposal for Todd: If he is willing to reduce the size of his snapping turtle, I'll trade my collie for a Chihuahua.

James C. Haught

GOLDENSEAL Good-Byes

Jack Lilly, a Hinton native, was president of the Lilly Reunion for 27 years and is credited with revitalizing the annual gathering. During his tenure, the reunion purchased 36 acres of land at Flat Top to serve as a permanent home to what is considered one of the oldest and largest family reunions in the country. Jack compiled and published a 376-page book titled, *Lilly Family History: 1566-1997*. He also served as coach at Beckley College for two years and as recreation director for the city of Beckley. He moved to

Canton, Ohio, where he worked in the retail meat industry. Jack wrote "The Lost Village of Lilly," which appeared in our Summer 1998 edition. Jack Lilly passed away August 25. He was 83.



Jack Lilly. Photographer unknown.



Fiddler Natchee the Indian with unidentified band in Cincinnati, date unknown.

Natchee the Indian

October 16, 2014

Via e-mail

Editor:

I enjoyed Ivan Tribe's article about fiddler Natchee the Indian. [See "Natchee the Indian: Many Stories, Some Factual"; Fall 2014.] I had heard a lot about Natchee from several old-timers who competed against him in contests over the years, including Lowe Stokes,

Bert Layne, and Fred Cockerham. Other fiddlers whom I spoke with saw Natchee play but never competed against him, including Ward Jarvis, Rector Hicks, John Hannah, and Juanita Lynch.

I have enclosed a photograph that was sent to me in the late 1990's or early 2000's. It shows Natchee with one of his bands in the Cincinnati area.

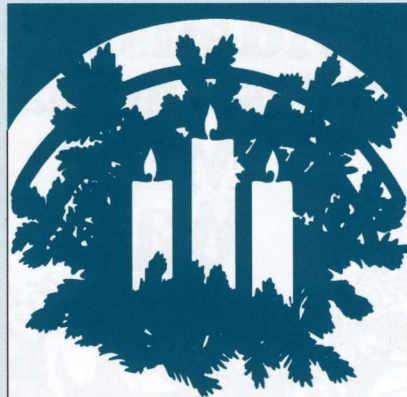
Take care,
Kerry Blech

Bertha Wallace of Kimberly, Fayette County, passed away on August 15, 2014. She was 82. Bertha, along with her husband, Judson, daughter, Linda, and two others were featured in our Winter 2012 edition in an article titled, "'We're Here for Service': United Gospel Singers," by Rebecca Kimmons. An accomplished gospel music singer, Bertha was a member of the West Virginia Baptist Quartet Convention, and for 55 years sang with the United Baptist Singers and the United Gospel Singers. She performed at the

Vandalia Gathering in 2007 and 2012. Bertha was a former restaurant owner, an experienced beautician, and the owner of Wallace Amusement Arcade and the Wallace Market.



Bertha Wallace. Photograph by Tyler Evert.



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Share the gift of GOLDENSEAL! We'll send the gift card. All you need to do is place the order. Look for a coupon on page 72.

Happy holidays!

The Goldenseal Book of the West Virginia Mine Wars



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

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

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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.

Seven Fishes Festival

The Feast of the Seven Fishes Festival will take place Saturday, December 13, in downtown Fairmont. The event celebrates Italian holiday traditions and features a Festival Cucina cooking school during which regional chefs demonstrate and discuss seafood-based recipes as well as Italian side dishes and desserts. Samples are provided. The festival also includes live Italian music, street vendors, and a variety of holiday-related activities.

The Feast of the Seven Fishes has its roots in the Italian Christmas

Eve tradition of meatless meals. It has been revived in Fairmont on the second Saturday of December each year in recognition of that city's vibrant Italian heritage and was featured in our Winter 2011 issue, in an article titled "Feast of the Seven Fishes," by Shannon Colaianni Tinnell.

The festival takes place from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. throughout the downtown area, particularly along Adams Street. Most activities are free of charge; there is a \$20 fee for the Festival Cucina. For additional information, call (304)366-0468 or visit www.mainstreetfairmont.org.

Tim O'Brien Concert

Wheeling native Tim O'Brien will appear in concert with the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra on Saturday, February 14, at the Capitol Theatre, 1015 Main Street, in Wheeling. A 2005 Grammy Award winner and a 2013 inductee into the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame, O'Brien is known for his vocal and multi-instrumental skills as well as his distinctive repertoire of folk, bluegrass, country, and original music.

A founding member of the popular bluegrass music band Hot Rize, Tim has also recorded



Tim O'Brien.

and performed with his sister, Mollie O'Brien, hit songwriter Darryl Scott, rock guitarist Mark Knopfler, and others. This will be Tim's second appearance with the Wheeling Symphony. Also appearing will be guitarist Ethan Ballinger. Tim's family was the subject of a story titled, "Wheeling's Irish Thread: An O'Brien Family Tale," by Margaret Brennen, which appeared in our Spring 1999 edition.

For tickets or more information, phone (304)232-6191 or (304)233-4470; online at www.wheelingsymphony.com. The show begins at 8 p.m.

Wheeling Photography Exhibit

Photographers from the Wheeling area will display their work throughout the month of December at the Wheeling Artisan Center. Ohio Valley Shutterbugs is an informal group of photographers from West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The group is sponsoring this exhibit, which will feature approximately 40 photographs showcasing the work of group members. Organizers describe the collection as widely varied both in subject matter and approach, with participating photographers ranging from professionals to beginners.

The Ohio Valley Shutterbugs exhibit will take place from December 4 to 25, with an opening reception planned for Thursday, December 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibition will be available to the public weekdays from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Saturdays from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., on the third floor of the Wheeling Artisan Center, located at 1400 Main Street in Wheeling. For more information, phone (304)232-1810 or visit www.artisancenter.com.

Mountain Dance DVD

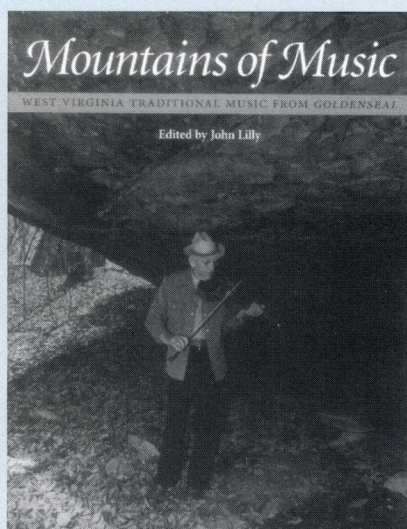
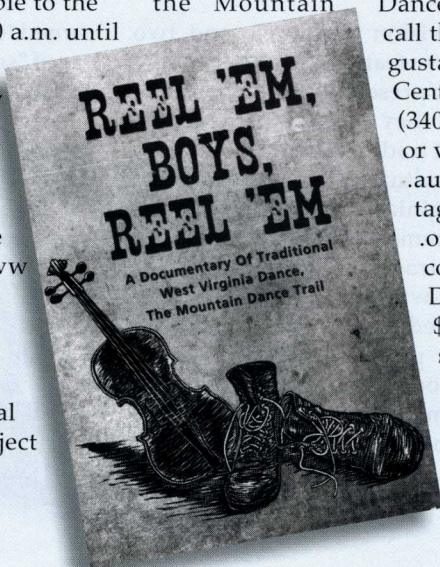
West Virginia's traditional dance heritage is the subject

of a new DVD from the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. *Reel 'Em, Boys, Reel 'Em: A Documentary of Traditional West Virginia Dance, the Mountain Dance Trail*, is a 60-minute look at square dancing and step dancing across the state. Producers Becky Hill and Gerald Milnes interview callers, dancers, musicians, and scholars about a range of topics related to dance. Topics include dance history, dance terminology, dance callers, religion and dance, fighting and drinking, and the sense of community that often develops around traditional square dancing.

Among those appearing in the film are dancer and caller Lou Mairi; musician, caller, and dancer Mack Samples; and fiddlers Woody Simmons and Glen Smith. Twenty different dance callers are featured, dance historians Phil Jamison and Susan Spaulding are interviewed, and vintage clips of square dancing at the West Virginia State Folk Festival at Glenville are also included.

The DVD follows what is known as the Mountain Dance Trail, an informal collection of dance communities across West Virginia, extending into neighboring counties of Virginia. The Mountain Dance Trail seeks to promote, support, and document traditional dance, and has identified several thriving dance communities, most of them located on or near U.S Highway 33.

To order *Reel 'Em, Boys, Reel 'Em*, or for more information about the Mountain Dance Trail, call the Augusta Heritage Center at (304)636-1209 or visit www.augustaheritagecenter.org. The cost of the DVD is \$20, plus shipping and in-state sales tax.



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

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

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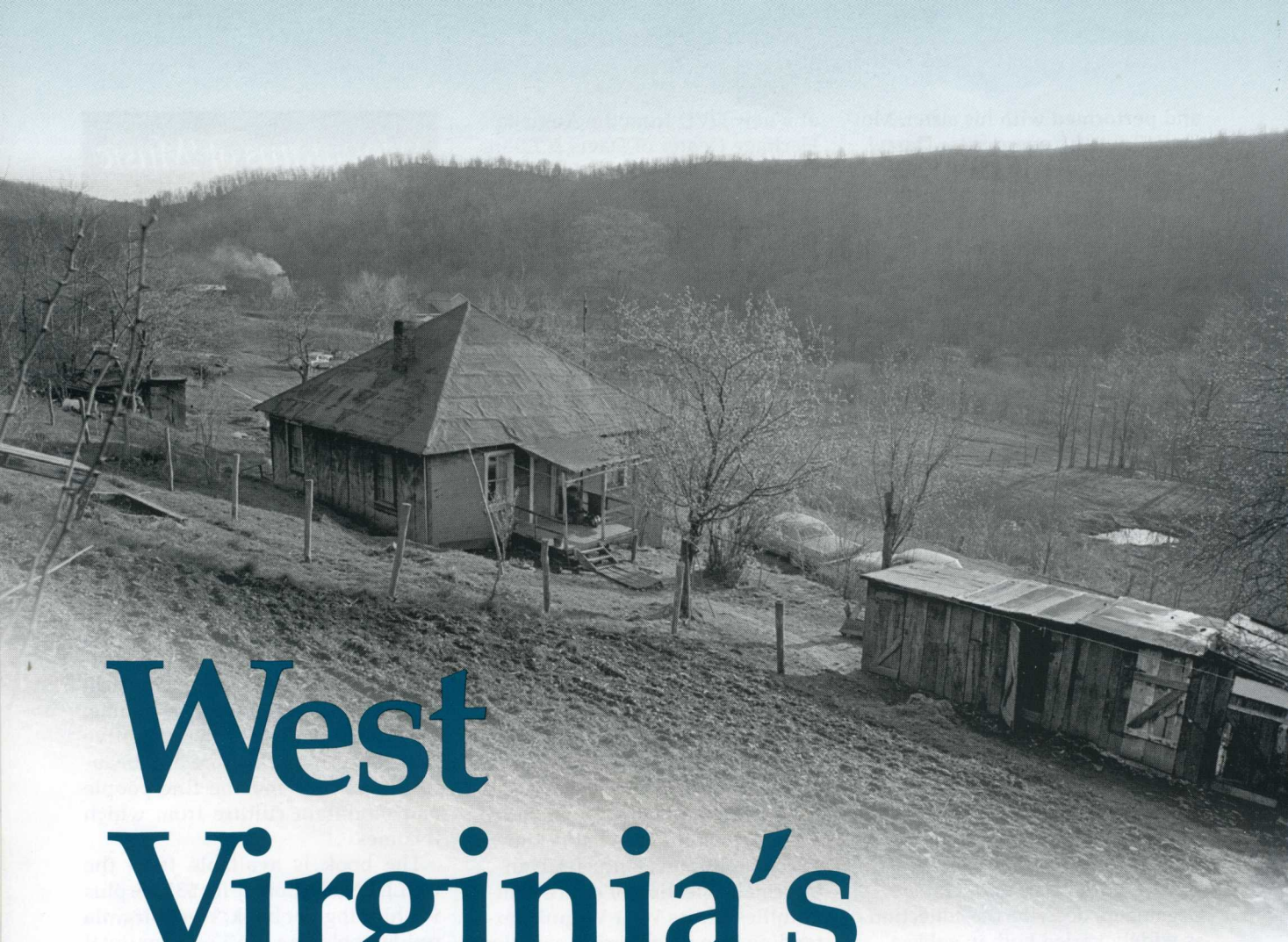
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The Hammons home at Stillwell, Pocahontas County, in 1972. Photograph by Carl Fleischhauer.

West Virginia's Hammons

By Wayne Howard

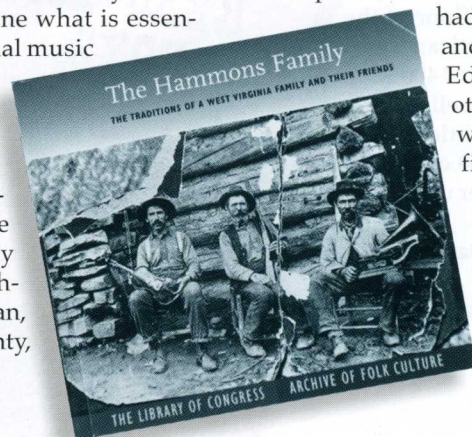
West Virginia has been home to many great traditional musicians. Some of the best, and best known, were members of a family named Hammons. The names Edden Hammons, Sherman, Burl, and Lee Hammons, Maggie Hammons Parker, Currence Hammonds, Dona Gum, and others are familiar to many old-time musicians and followers of traditional music. Some of them came to the world's attention in the early 1970's, when two LP albums of their music, songs, and stories appeared. Documentary films, at least

two television programs, and two books have featured members of the family or presented music by them. To some, they define what is essential about traditional music and folk culture in West Virginia.

The Hammonses' musical tradition, however, was well-established before all this publicity came about. Brothers Burl and Sherman, of Pocahontas County,

learned to play in the very traditional way of "sneaking" their father's fiddle without permission. Paris, their father, had an Uncle Pete and two brothers, Edden and another Pete, who were celebrated fiddlers.

In a logging camp, this brother Pete got into a fight one time, and the





Family



Smith Hammons holding a photograph of his father, Edden, in 1992 at Droop Mountain. Photograph of Smith Hammons by Mark Crabtree.

other man got Pete's fingers clear in between his teeth. "Let go!" Pete yelled. "You'll spoil my fiddling." And right away, the man did let up on the fingers.

When it came to fiddling, Edden was generally acknowledged as the best of them all. He traveled far and wide to win fiddle contests, had been recorded in the 1940's by West Virginia University professor Louis Chappell, and had even appeared

in a newsreel during World War II playing for President Roosevelt at The Greenbrier hotel.

Legend has it that Edden once entered a contest in which he planned to play a tune called "The Falls of Richmond." Another man got up ahead of him and played the same tune. When Edden's turn came, he added a third part to the tune — made up on the spot — and won the contest. His three-part version was the one

that the next generation played.

Louis Chappell's 1947 recordings of Edden did not make him famous, however. These recordings went unpublished until West Virginia University Press released them on LP's in 1984 and on two CD's in 1999 and 2000.

The story of the Hammonses' rise to fame begins in 1969 when Dwight Diller, a native of Pocahontas County, came home from West Vir-



Dwight Diller (left) and Burl Hammons in 1981 in Pocahontas County. Photograph by Bosco Takaki.

ginia University and located several outstanding musicians, including Lee Hammons and the other Hammonses. Dwight recorded not only their music and singing but their stories, which portrayed a world far different from anything in 20th-century America. The Hammons family encouraged him to play the banjo and gave him their lore. More than that, they captivated Dwight and changed his life. He had enrolled as a student at WVU after a hitch in the navy and, even more than most young men, was trying to find himself. Today, nearly 50 years later, he is still active as a performer, publisher, and teacher of West Virginia traditions — particularly those of the Hammons family. He regards them as his own second family. [See “The Rhythm of Dwight Diller,” by Allen Johnson; page 14.]

For their part, the old folks thought of Dwight as a son. I think, personally, that he gave them a new lease on life. Recently widowed, siblings Burl and Maggie were living with two other sisters, Emma (“Emmy”) and Ruie, in a little place called Stillwell. Another sister, Dasie, had a house across the road. Emmy was also widowed, and Ruie had never married. Sherman was

living out near their childhood home on the Williams River in a house that actually belonged to Maggie, with his wife and two grandchildren.

Dwight stepped into a vacant

place in their lives, with a winning personality and an obvious enthusiasm for their way of life. He was not the only one they took in — their house seemed always to contain a few young people — but his interest in their folkways and their music provided an added bond.

The Hammonses, you see, were different. They were known for their strange, very old ways. The four Hammons sisters at Stillwell had a distinctive style of headdress — a scarf folded and pinned around the head in a sort of turban — similar to the style of Cherokee headdress seen in old pictures. Sherman Hammons, in fact, claimed that their ancestry was “part Indian,” and one of the family stories of early days had to do with life in the “Indian Nation” and a harrowing escape from it after making one of the Indians angry. Maggie had a store of herbal cures that people swore by. The way the Hammonses talked sounded much older than the vocabulary and pronunciation of the people around them. They had some extraordinary family stories, such as the sighting



Carl Fleischhauer, at right, records Sherman Hammons in 1974 at Sherman's home near the Williams River, while Sherman's grandchildren Kay and Lee look on. Self-timed photograph by Carl Fleischhauer.



Sisters Maggie and Ruie Hammons with their distinctive scarves in 1971. Photograph by Wayne Howard.

of the “Yay-Ho” high on Kennison Mountain; they were the subject of stories themselves.

A man in Marlinton, for example, told me that Sherman had a goat that would butt him anytime it got a chance. It would charge at him openly or sneak up on him; it would even butt his hat if he left it lying around. The last straw was the day it knocked his feet out from under him and he went down hard. Sherman went and got his double-bitted ax, he said, and put in half a morning sharpening it up. Out in the yard, he wedged it into the end of a long, heavy log. Then he hung his hat over the ax head. Before long, sure enough, the goat charged the hat and split its head wide open. This story turns out to be a very old and widespread folktale.

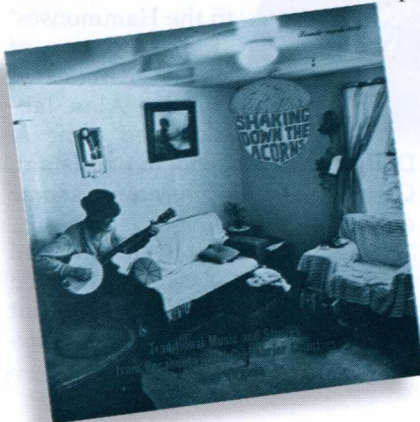
The Yay-Ho story belongs to a similar category — it will seem very familiar to those who have watched enough television or read the right kind of books — but it was a story

told and believed by the Hammons family themselves.

Once, when their father was a little boy, he went bear hunting with his father and another man somewhere on the Cherry River. There was plenty of game and good hunting. The deer were so thick they wore a path, just like cattle. So after several days they wanted to stay on, but their supplies were low. Their friend went to the town of Mill Point for more. Two days later, when they were expecting him back, they heard him screaming out in the woods and found him up

in a tree, with the supplies and his gun on the ground. He’d heard a panther in front of him, he said, then it was behind; it moved all around him so fast he didn’t know where it might spring from or how he could shoot it. He dropped everything and scrambled up into the tree. The panther just moved around on the ground, waiting for him to come down. Before long, though, something came along through the woods, and the panther hurried to get away from it. It was a huge creature that walked on its hind legs like a man. It was covered with long, beautiful hair — white with black spots. It poked around a little but bothered nothing and then went on its way. Nobody ever saw it again, but they heard it call, “Yay-Ho!” once, very plainly, and so they gave it that name. When the man came down from the tree, he said, “If you need anything else, you can go to town yourself!”

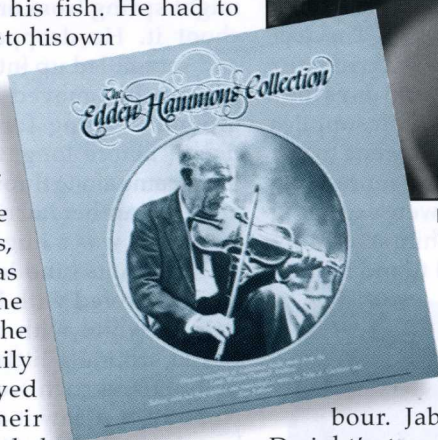
Other family stories had to do with magic and witchcraft, musical



inspiration from dreams, narrow escapes from panthers, and signs in the heavens. Dwight Diller recently published a DVD set of stories he recorded, with written transcripts of the stories and a large collection of photos. [See "Mountain Music Roundup," by John Lilly; Winter 2013.] The story that Dwight titled "Old Cripplefoot the Bear" is the masterpiece. A half hour in the telling, it concerns the hunt for a sheep-killing bear. Wildly funny at times, then chillingly suspenseful, it has elements of witchcraft; outrageous, eccentric characters; and a setting in a long bygone world. Without exaggeration, it is the greatest story that I ever heard anyone tell.

Maggie said that her father bought one of the houses they lived in for the price of a fish. There was a tremendous trout in the Williams River that everybody had been trying to catch. Paris Hammons was the one who finally caught it. Walking home, he passed the entrance to a lumber camp, and the superintendent saw him. Admiring the fish, he asked Paris how much he would take for it. It wasn't for sale. He kept trying to bargain for it, until finally Paris said his family could use a better house. The superintendent offered one in the camp that was empty, and Paris gave up his fish. He had to move the house to his own land, but the family lived in it for several years.

On top of their lifestyle and their stories, of course, was the music. The musicians in the Hammons family not only played well, but their repertory included quite a few songs and tunes unique to them. So, when Dwight traveled to music festivals in other counties and other states, he spread the word about his friends the Hammonses. His reports brought swarms of visitors



Brothers Burl (left) and Sherman Hammons. Each skilled at playing both the fiddle and the banjo, neither had played for several years until Dwight Diller

to the Hammonses' door, and one of those visitors was fiddler Alan Jabbour. Jabbour used some of Dwight's tapes, and his assistant, Carl Fleischhauer, rerecorded some of them.

These recordings were released in the early 1970's and generated considerable interest. They came out under two covers: *The Hammons Fam-*

ily: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions [AFSL65-66], a double-LP set with book-length notes, issued by the Library of Congress; and *Shaking Down the Acorns: Traditional Music and Stories from Pocahontas and Greenbrier Counties, West Virginia*, on Rounder Records [Rounder 0018]. Everything on the first album was performed by two brothers, Burl and Sherman Hammons, and their sister Maggie Hammons Parker. The second album



began to visit them during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Photographs by Carl Fleischhauer.

included two friends in their musical circle: Lee Hammons and Mose Coffman.

There were two albums because the Library of Congress could not pay the Hammonses anything for their contributions, so arrangements for the second album were made with Rounder Records — a small, startup commercial label. The terms of the contract were generous, but sad to say, traditional music has never been a hot seller. The story is told that

someone asked Maggie, "Now that you've got a big record contract, what are you going to do with all the money?" "Well," Maggie said, "I've always thought it would be nice to have a light on the front porch."

I myself came to Pocahontas County in the fall of 1969 to teach high school English. My girlfriend — now my wife of many years — had made me

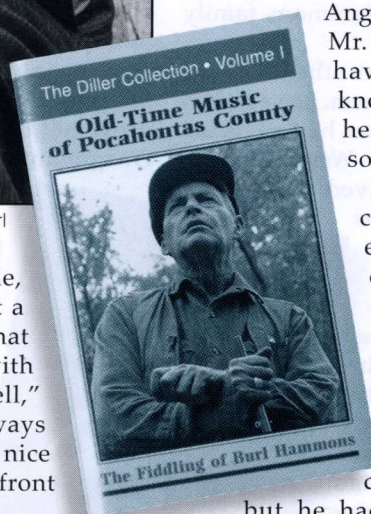
promise to try and find her a dulcimer. A secretary in the superintendent of schools' office heard about this and gave me directions to the home of an old man that her son knew. This secretary was Dwight Diller's mother. She told me — everybody told me for months — that I just had to meet Dwight; we had so many interests in common!

The dulcimer maker was Lee Hammons. As a boy, he had seen his father make them, but he had only recently attempted one himself. A girl who played one at Pioneer Days, the great annual folklife festival in Marlinton, had let him make measurements from it. We agreed on a price, and he gave me a date when it would be ready. From that very first visit we got along very well, but our friendship seemed to be cemented a few months later, when I brought him an order for another dulcimer. I had told one of my former professors about Lee Hammons' work, and he wanted to buy one. When I delivered it, he paid for it with a check. When Mr. Hammons saw the check, he could tell that I had sold the dulcimer at his price — that I wasn't making any money in the deal — and so he trusted me. The professor, by the way, later donated his dulcimer to a small museum of musical instruments in

Angers, France. I think Mr. Hammons would have been proud to know that something he built had traveled so far.

Although we were close friends for several years, I always called him "Mr. Hammons." This was because of his age — 83 when I met him — but also because of his manner. He

did not put on airs, but he had a great natural dignity about him. Maggie always addressed him as "Uncle Lee," out of respect for his age and, perhaps, the same dignity that I could sense.





Lee Hammons in 1973. Photograph by Wayne Howard.

He was not related to her family, as far as anyone knew. The coincidence of his last name and his appearance on one of their albums have linked him to the other Hammons family ever since.

But still, there were other odd connections between them. Lee's father, like their grandfather, had migrated from Kentucky to West Virginia. Lee himself had lived in Webster County for years as an adult. He had known their uncles Edden and Pete very well, was later a close neighbor to Edden in Pocahontas County, and knew Edden's sons. Like the other Hammonses he had worked in the logging camps when the virgin forest was timbered in that part of the country.

It was several months

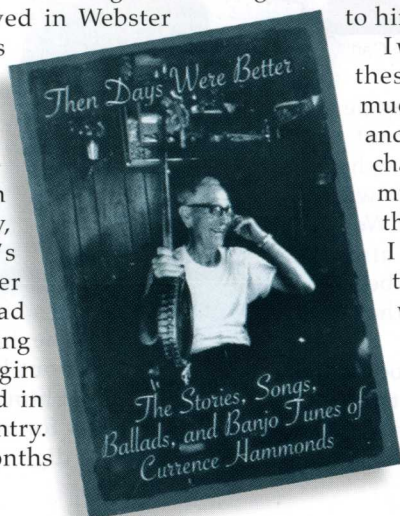
before I met those other Hammonses. In the summer of 1970, when Dwight came home from college, he and I finally met. From the start, we were friends, as if we had known each other all our lives. During Pioneer Days he introduced me to Burl and Maggie, and shortly after that we drove out to Sherman's house, and Dwight introduced me and my wife to him.

I was fascinated with these people just as much as Dwight was, and in some ways they changed the course of my life, too. I visited them every chance I got, wrote down their stories afterwards, and made tapes of their music as Dwight had done. I didn't have any idea of publishing their

stories; it just seemed to me that the things they told me were important, somehow, and needed to be remembered.

Though I moved to Charleston after a couple of years, I kept coming back to see them and to tape them. Even after I moved farther away, the visits continued. Over the years I have gained a deeper understanding and a greater appreciation of the way of life that the Hammons family represented. I learned to play their music well enough to be content with it. For 40 years or more, I have not bothered with commercial music. And I don't miss it. 🌿

WAYNE HOWARD is a retired computer programmer and analyst. Born in Owensboro, Kentucky, he holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in folk studies from Western Kentucky University. He now lives in Chicago. Wayne wrote a four-part feature about the Hammons family for the *Old-Time Herald* magazine in 2009-2010. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



The Hammonds Family of Randolph County

By Gerald Milnes

In 1975, I had moved to Huttonsville, Randolph County, and started inquiring about old-time musicians in that neighborhood. Old-time banjo player Arthur D. Johnson of Mill Creek told me if I liked old-time music I should visit Currence Hammonds and his wife, Mintie.

I remember knocking on the door of their tiny house for the first time. A voice inside said, "Come on in!" I did and stayed from mid-afternoon until after midnight. In that time I heard Currence and Mintie sing ancient ballads, ditties, and Civil War songs. I heard banjo tunes, stories, rhymes, riddles, family history, ate venison and home cooking, and played them some fiddle tunes, much to their delight. Later, I made the one-mile journey home with my head swirling, trying to process what had just happened. I knew I had just met some special folks.

I became a frequent visitor. Along with my wife, Mary Alice, we developed a neighborly friendship and learned a lot about old-time family traditions, music, folklore, and folk wisdom during visits. Currence and "Aunt Mint," as neighbors called her, were generous with their knowledge. They liked company, both being elderly at the time, and I in turn was able to help them out with routine chores. I made numerous field recordings of them which I treasure and still listen to often. They formed the basis of the Augusta Heritage Center's recording/booklet, *Then Days Were Better: The Stories, Songs, Ballads, and Banjo Tunes of Currence Hammonds* [AHMS-12] that I produced in 2012 with Kristina Gaddy. They also informed a chapter of my book, *Play of a Fiddle: Traditional Music, Dance and Folklore in West Virginia* [University Press of Kentucky, 1999].

I learned from Currence (1895-1984) that his father was Neale (Cornelius) Hammonds, a brother to Edden Hammonds and Paris Hammonds, who was the



Mintie and Currence Hammonds in 1976. Photograph by Gerald Milnes.

father of the Pocahontas County musical siblings that included Maggie, Sherman, and Burl. (Note: Family members spell the surname differently.) Currence had grown up on Williams River in Webster and Pocahontas counties, and he knew these cousins well. Currence's uncle Edden Hammons also lived a considerable amount of time in Tygart Valley and on neighboring Cheat Mountain. He visited the family often.

Mintie Louk Hammonds (1898-1987) was also distantly related to the Hammonds/Hammons families mentioned through her mother Melsena Hammonds Louk and her grandfather, Richard "Dick" Hammonds. She retained folklore, music, and singing traditions through both her Hammonds and Roberts ancestors. Mintie had been a "granny lady," and related midwifery tales and experiences. Unfortunately by the time I met her, arthritis had taken its toll and she could no longer play the banjo or fiddle.

Currence learned from and played a great deal of music with his fiddling uncle Edden and had great respect for his musical abilities. Currence's mother was Elizabeth Baughman and her father, David Baughman, was the first settler on Gauley River, where he operated a water-powered mill and made spinning wheels, dulcimers, and furniture. He figured prominently in Currence's stories. Currence's memories of childhood life on Williams River and visits to Gauley River before the virgin timber was cut were vivid. Currence was a musician and singer, but also a woodsman, hunter, fisherman, and worked at farming and various other nonfarm occupations, including moonshining when times were lean. 🌿

GERALD MILNES lives in Elkins, where he is retired after 25 years as folk arts coordinator at the Augusta Heritage Center of Davis & Elkins College. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2013 issue.

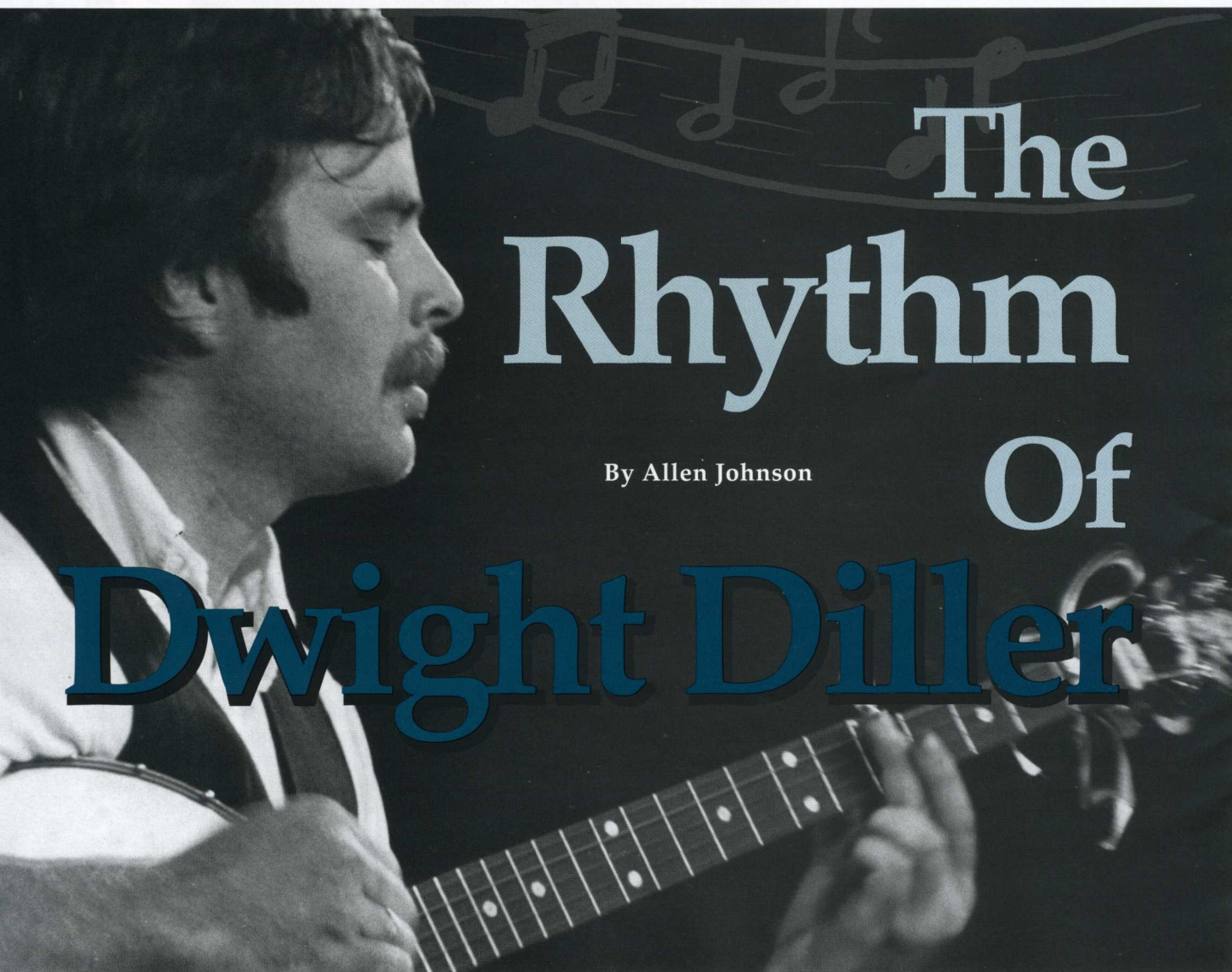
The banjo is speaking. Pressed against Dwight Diller's chest, the banjo becomes his soul-heart as it pumps out syncopated, rhythmic beats. A few loud, burry low notes and then a pitter of light raindrops on the high strings. We are sitting on my front porch on a soft July evening. Dwight's eyes are far away, sad, in another land. The banjo is speaking words from the depths of his soul. Even though I am not an old-time music aficionado, I know I am hearing a master at the top of his craft. The music is exquisite, compelling, soul-digging.

It's another day, early spring as the woods begin to twinkle in greenening buds. Dwight Diller has been through a difficult winter with serious physical and mental health challenges. We walk slowly to the back of my wood lot to a spot adjacent to where the north feeder stream of Knapps Creek tumbles down from the Monongahela National Forest. To the north, Sitlington Creek emerges from underground to seep slowly through a flat forest. Dwight has walked out here on this watershed divide to teach me a lesson about old-time music. No instrument is along.

Dwight steadies himself with his cane, casts his eyes around his surroundings, and waves his hand out to his right.

"We are standing on the divide," he says. "Let's say to my right the headwaters of Sitlington Creek represent melody. Most people in present times want to learn tunes. Melody as an end in itself is reassuring. It's being in the driver's seat with rhythm back behind. It helps one feel safe. Yet melody as an end in itself is a swamp. As North Carolina fiddler Tommy Jarrell sadly said about young folks visiting, 'They know a thousand

Dwight performing at the West Virginia State Folk Festival in Glenville, 1973. Photographer unknown.



fiddle tunes and can't play one of them.' That's because there wasn't a drop of real rhythm to be found."

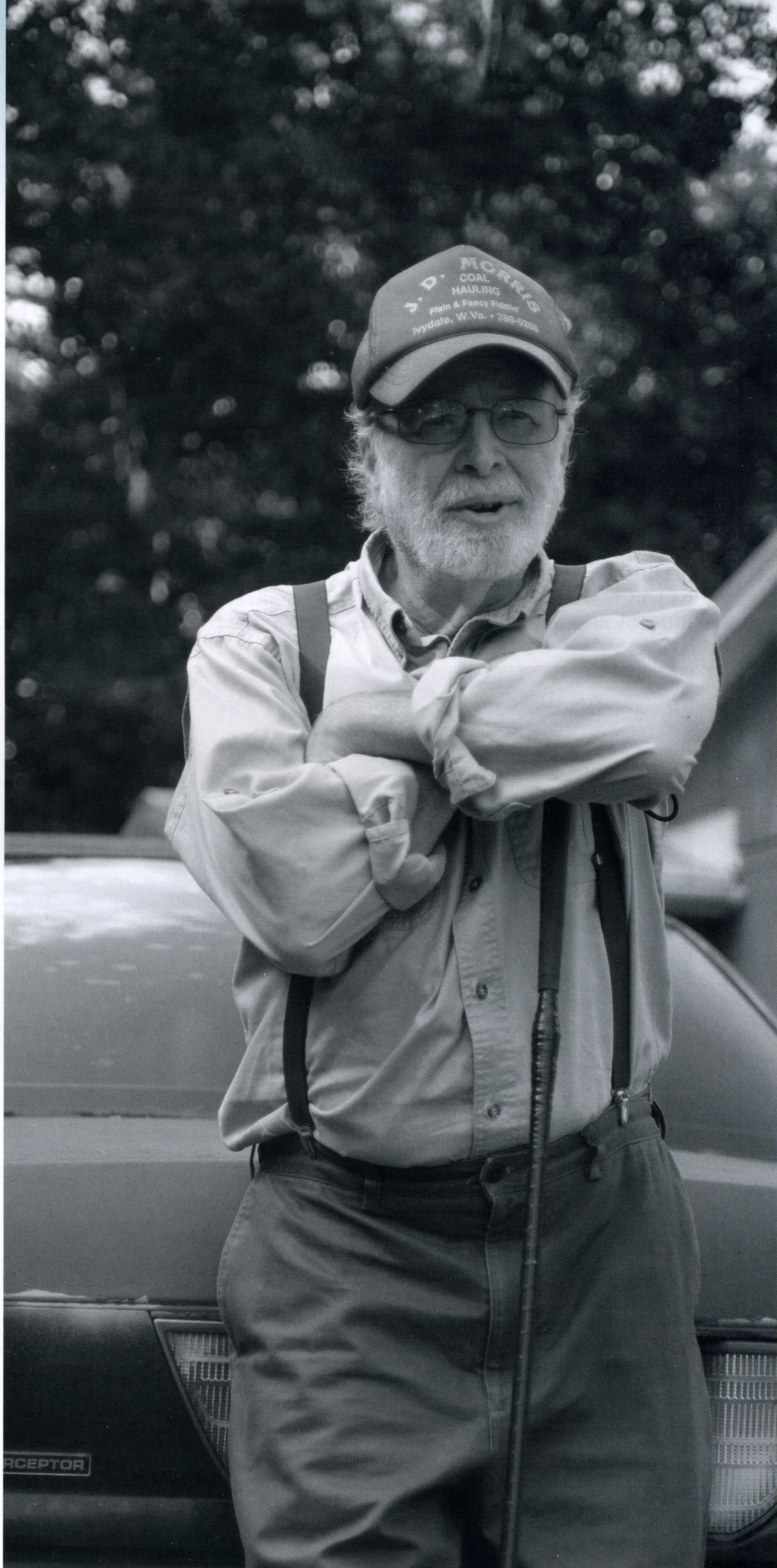
Dwight shuffles his feet, looks over to his left, then continues.

"On this other side of the divide is the tiny headwaters of Knapps Creek. You can see a gash cut out in the ground before me. What gave birth to it is the torrent which exploded forth driving rocks and soil out of its path. This gash is a result of what I call rhythm. For me [pointing to what the rushing water has done to the steep small hollow], this represents your permitting your own individual pulse to drive your music. But like that stream there, it takes you in its current in bends and falls. You aren't in control. It is dangerous, but it is good."

Dwight Diller is world-renowned in the genre of what is now being called "old-time music," meaning traditional Appalachian mountain music. His discography includes 15 commercially released music albums, five one-hour instructional DVD's, music background for a West Virginia wildlife video by acclaimed *National Geographic* photographer Bates Littlehales, and a full-length feature film with John Morris titled *Fifth String*. Dwight's recordings of music and stories of the Hammons Family continue to be a major influence on today's traditional old-time musicians and Appalachian cultural anthropologists. Dwight has taught and performed in countless venues across North America. He is a master of the clawhammer banjo while adding to this a repertoire of vocals and fiddle playing. "Dee'-wite," as Maggie and her brother Burl Hammons first called him, has an avid following of students and friends attracted to his unique teaching style and cultural interpretation that he has developed over the past 42 years.

Dwight Diller has ancestral roots in West Virginia dating back to 1793. He was born in 1946 in Rand, Kanawha County, but grew up in Pocahontas

Dwight Diller of Hillsboro, Pocahontas County.
Photograph by Doug Chadwick.



County where he has since lived most of his adult life. When Dwight was five his parents split up with his father moving to Pennsylvania. His mother moved him and his younger sister, Nancy, back to her childhood home near Marlinton.

"Growing up, my mom needed help," he says. "She had five sisters with their families scattered about in the county. Each of those five families generously welcomed me into their homes. Consequently I stayed on the move all the time. In my early years I stayed with one aunt who was living alone at the family homeplace. She did what she could to rescue me. Another of those aunts and her husband opened a beer joint in Hillsboro in 1957. Since my father had to leave our home, my uncle Bill took me under his wing. He and

my aunt ran a quiet 'West Virginia mountain beer joint' in Hillsboro. Bill allowed me to go along with the men hunting before I was 10.

"It was these early years when I was out in the mountains hunting, fishing, and camping for weeks with men in their 70's, 80's, and 90's that imprinted on me. It was great to be able to sit on a barstool and listen to the men talk. My system was always absorbing stories from the families, from the neighbors, from the men in the beer joint. From the age of 10 through 18 the men's talk and the music on the juke box imprinted on me. Johnny Cash, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, their music was derived from the Mississippi Delta African American syncopated rhythm. I internalized that rhythm that is the basis of the rhythm I have today. It

was all of these things that imprinted upon me my interpretation of the old West Virginia mountain music."

Dwight attended Marlinton schools. During his high school years, he was class president for three years, a member of the National Honor Society, and voted most popular student.

Dwight enrolled at West Virginia University in fall 1964 and spent three semesters, along with summer school. Then in early 1966 he joined the navy. Seventeen months into his service in the navy, Dwight suffered a nervous breakdown and was discharged.

"Many years later, in 1988, I was diagnosed with bipolar and PTSD," Dwight says. "I've had medication and counseling since then that has helped somewhat. Before, when I first got out of the navy in 1967, I was angry, confused, frustrated, and depressed. I went back to WVU. I didn't want anyone bothering me, so I went into the horticulture school. It was the smallest program at the university with about 25 students in the department. The GI Bill paid me \$100 a month. I lived on this — food, rent, utilities, tuition, books. I lived in rat holes in Sunnyside there in Morgantown."

Dwight went on to graduate as well as complete graduate degree courses except for a master's thesis.

"I was desperate when I got out of the navy. Suicidal," he says. "I looked for stability, something to hang on to. Roots. I found it in the old people and their mountain music. Hamp Carpenter of Cook Town just south of Marlinton kindly allowed me to start stopping by. Carpenter was a fiddler who sometimes played the banjo and had stories of the old ways. I wanted the banjo more than to eat when I was hungry. I was desperate for the old stories."

Dwight met Lee Hammons in the summer of '69. Shortly thereafter, Dwight met another nonrelated Hammons family: Sherman, Burl, Maggie, Emma, Ruie, and Dasie. According to Dwight they were the "last of the frontiersmen. They and their forebears lived way back in the



Known primarily for his expert banjo playing, Dwight also plays fiddle and bass, and sings. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

mountains. They were the last of the 1700's-type people remaining. Oral tradition, hunter-gatherers.

"The Hammons[es] saved my life. In those early days, suicide was on my mind every day. The bipolar and PTSD would never allow me to work a steady job, even though I wanted one. I was in such condition that I looked at the Hammons[es] as my grandparents, and they treated me like a son. I could show up day or night, it was okay. They accepted me whether I could hold a job or not."

Dwight scraped up \$140 to buy a reel-to-reel tape recorder and began recording the Hammonses in the summer of 1969. In October 1970, photographer and folklife researcher Carl Fleischhauer loaned Dwight a 35mm camera that enabled Dwight to gather photographs to accompany the recording he had been making for the past year. From 1969 until 1971 the Hammonses graciously allowed Dwight to take almost 700 black-and-white photos and record 130 stories, plus numerous tracks of music. Dwight served as a consultant as a portion of this material became incorporated as a Library of Congress collection, *The Hammons Family: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions*, and soon after, a record album, *Shaking Down the Acorns*.

Now, 40 years later, Dwight has released additional recordings, with support from the West Virginia Humanities Council, Pocahontas County Free Libraries, and Yew Pine Cultural Traditions. *Across the Yew Pines*, a four-hour presentation, was coproduced by Dwight and Gail Hatton over a period of seven years. It includes four DVD's and one audio CD, utilizing different selections from Dwight's recordings and Wayne Howard's recordings, plus selections from the photographs Dwight took in 1970. [See "Mountain Music Roundup," by John Lilly; Winter 2013.] Dwight plans to develop a lesson module for grade school classrooms.

Sherman, Burl, and Maggie Hammons had not played their instruments for decades when Dwight stopped by their house to learn the banjo.

He explains: "The Hammons[es] quit because the culture was gone. The bartering culture was replaced by a money culture, and the mountains were stripped of timber. Their music was an extension of their culture. When money comes in, it strips out the culture. Commercial music replaced the old music. As Lee Hammons said to me, 'Nobody wanted to hear the old music again.'"

Though his heart belonged to old-time music, Dwight did not shy away from other musical styles as well. From 1971 to 1977 he played standup bass and an occasional clawhammer banjo set with the Black Mountain Bluegrass Boys, a top Pocahontas County-based bluegrass band.

Also, beginning in 1971, Dwight connected with the Morris brothers,

Dave and John, of Ivydale, Clay County. [See "The Morris Brothers: Music from the Head of the Holler," by John Lilly; Spring 2011.] Some of the other skilled musicians who influenced Dwight were Glen Smith, Lee Triplett, Wilson Douglas, and Mose Coffman. Beginning in 1975, Dwight taught at the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops in Elkins and continued to do so for 30 years. Dwight also participated in the Stonewall Jackson Heritage Jubilee near Weston for 30 consecutive years, beginning in 1975.

Dwight has taught and performed extensively over much of the United States, Canada, and England. He has hosted numerous banjo camps; it is said that he has had more than 1,000 students. In 2013, Dwight received



Dwight, at right, with a bass as a member of the Black Mountain Bluegrass Boys at Cass in 1969. From the left are Richard Hefner, Bill Hefner, Glen "Dude" Irvine, Harley Carpenter, and Dwight. Photograph by Laurie Cameron.

the Mountaineer Heritage Award at West Virginia University.

"I'm now in my 42nd year of teaching," Dwight says. "I love to see people learning. My real goal is to give the young mountain folk some pride in their heritage."

Dwight's teaching style focuses on rhythm. He has students dampen the fret board to work on rhythm, and to find their own pulse.

"With music you either start off with melody and hope to learn rhythm, or you start out with rhythm and then inject melody," Dwight explains. "Ninety-seven percent of the old West Virginia mountain music is rhythm that is developed by the right hand and then the left hand. Real music comes from the spirit and not from dots on the page."

"A new tune, I find it has to resonate with my pulse. And then I have

to let my spirit interpret it, keeping it as best I can in the auspices of the tradition. However there is a price to pay in order to forge an alloy of the tune with the pulse from your own spirit. Only desperate people will do this. All art forms — whether it is a welder, truck driver, raising children, or playing music — take years of investment," Dwight says. "Music, as well as all art forms, must come from another realm."

Dwight Diller speaks candidly about his battle with mental illness. He admits he can be difficult to be around. He can tease, joke, and flash his incandescent smile. He also has dark times. Dwight believes the PTSD began in very early childhood, while the manic depression came on strong when he was 20. He knows this is not only hard on himself but on others as well.

"It drives me to operate in extremes," he emphasizes.

Dwight has been treated with medication and counseling for 25 years. Mental illness and physical ailments have been challenging, but Dwight recognizes the silver lining in the dark clouds.

"I cannot have done what I have done over the years without the blessings of that gift which accompanies bipolar as well as the hurt. They go hand-in-hand, don't they?"

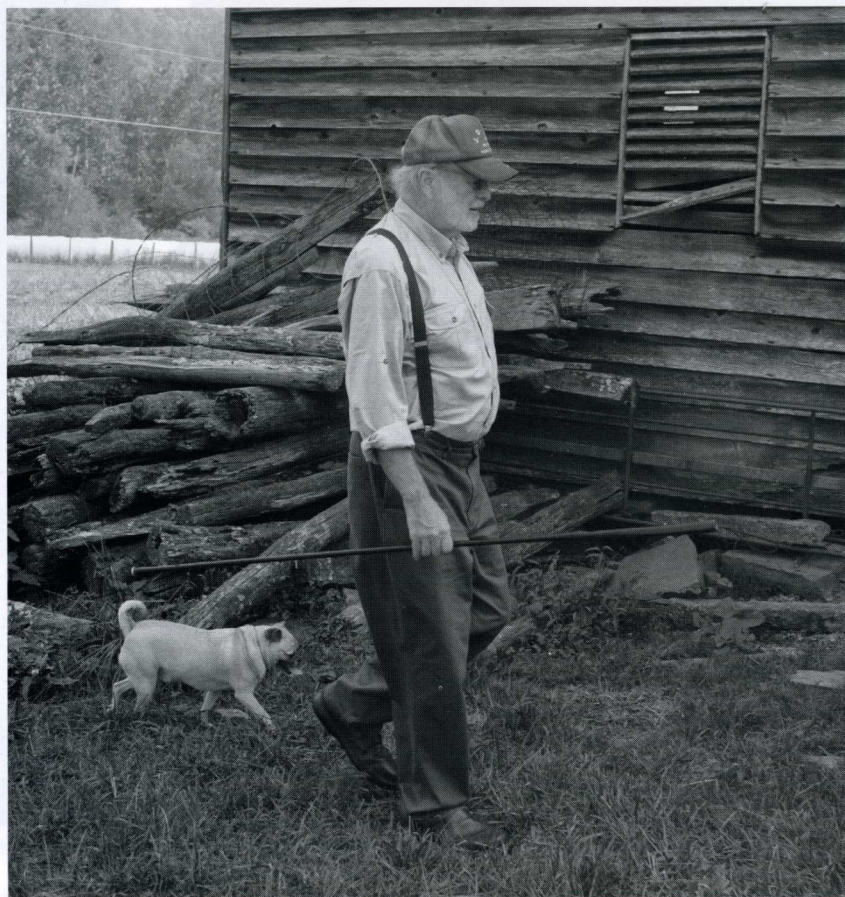
"When I was 29 years old, Jesus came into my life. So suicide was not an option, although its hold on me is still there all the time. This is why my talking about mental illness is so important. Almost all people are directly or indirectly affected by it. Hopefully, people and families with these problems can understand and not feel so inclined to have to hide it."

"As a ministry, it is better to share hope so when rejection comes they will not feel totally alone. That is part of why the Lord has called me. By speaking out about mental illness I can explain that it can destroy everything it touches - hope, trust, peace, careers, marriages, relationships."

"I had hated Christianity. In 1975 I met a quiet, laid-back preacher at Cass, and he then stopped by my house. He didn't say much, but my belly and chest felt on fire. I found out later that no one had ever heard of that preacher, and I never heard from him again. The next Sunday I went to a church for the first time ever on my own."

A few years later, Dwight enrolled at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He graduated with a double major in Christian counseling and in evangelism and church planting, and was ordained.

"The Lord had a different place for me to minister than in a congregational setting. I was to teach the old West Virginia mountain music, and God was to help whoever He wanted to through it. I was to minister through teaching banjo. I have discovered that desperate people are the ones who really get it, whether Christianity, music, or whatever. Only



Diagnosed with bipolar disease and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Dwight struggles on occasion to maintain good mental health. Here he takes a walk with a companion. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

desperate people will finally give up the belief that they are the master of their fate, the captain of their soul. It is at that point of brokenness that their heart, their human spirit, can burst forth and begin to allow their inner pulse to play its own rhythm. That is the point when music, or God, can take over so the voice of the heavenlies can sing."

It is an evening at our house, and Dwight Diller is our guest. My wife, Debbie, and I have known Dwight closely for 39 years and we are comfortable together. Supper is finished. Dwight gets his banjo out of his case. He tells us he never plays by himself, only when someone is around to listen. Debbie asks him to play her favorite song of his. Telling, because

"The Gospel Plow" sums up Dwight Diller's past, present, and future.

Dwight chops the banjo into a steady, pulsing tempo. He rocks his head back, his voice robust and solid. His heart and the music are one.

*"Went to church the other day,
For to hear them sing and pray;
Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on;
Hold on, hold on,
Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on.*

*"Preacher said we had to repent,
So right down the aisle I went;
Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on;
Hold on, hold on,*

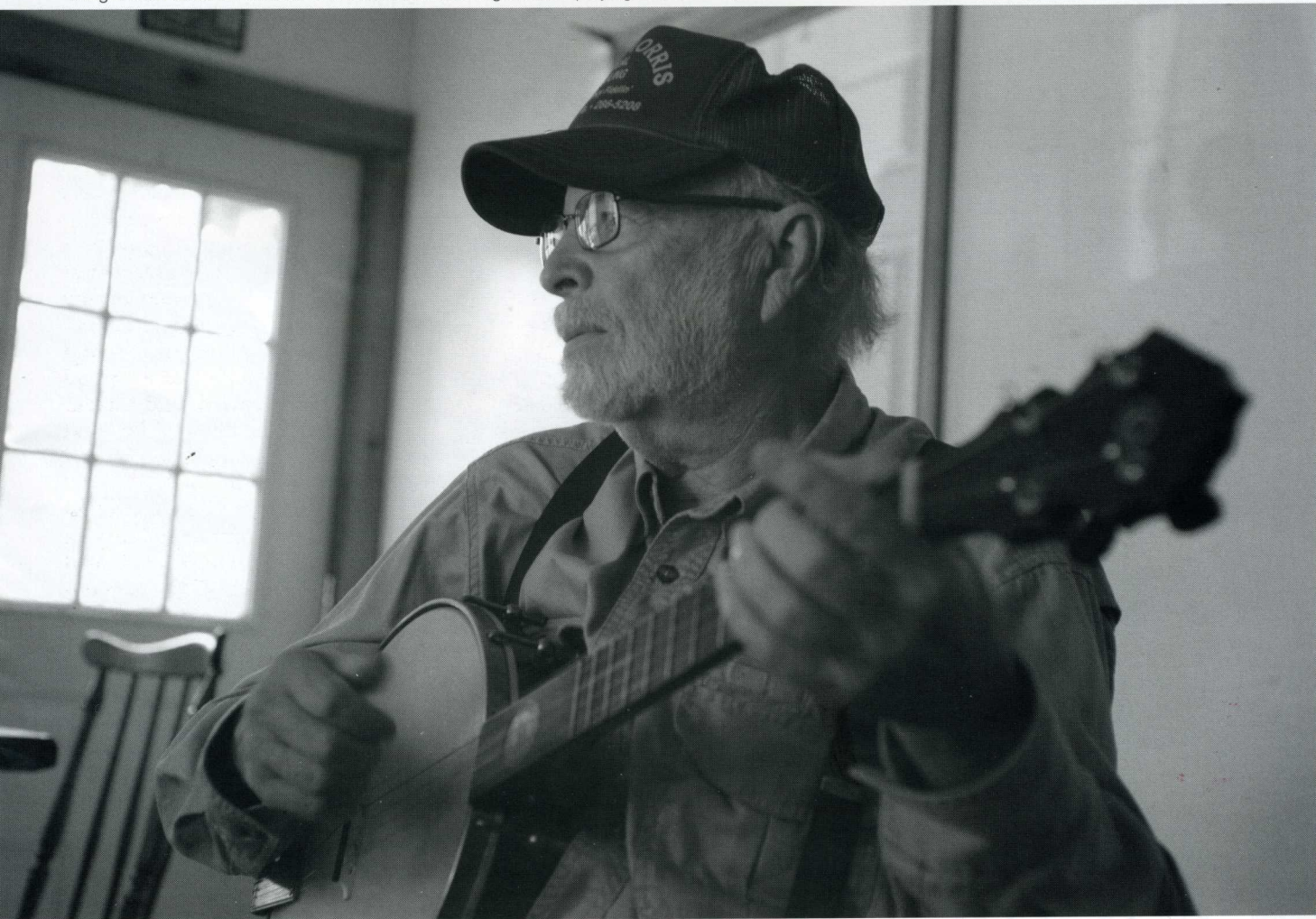
*Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on.*

*"Got my hand on the gospel plow,
Wouldn't take a-nothing for my jour-
ney now;*

*Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on;
Hold on, hold on,
Put your hand to the plow and hold
right on." **

ALLEN JOHNSON is former director of the Pocahontas County Library. Born in South Dakota, Allen has lived in Pocahontas County for 40 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Manchester College in Indiana and a master's degree in theology from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He is an environmental and religious activist and has published numerous essays, columns, and articles on that work. This is Allen's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Dwight is an ordained minister and feels that his calling involves playing and teaching old-time music. Photograph by Doug Chadwick.

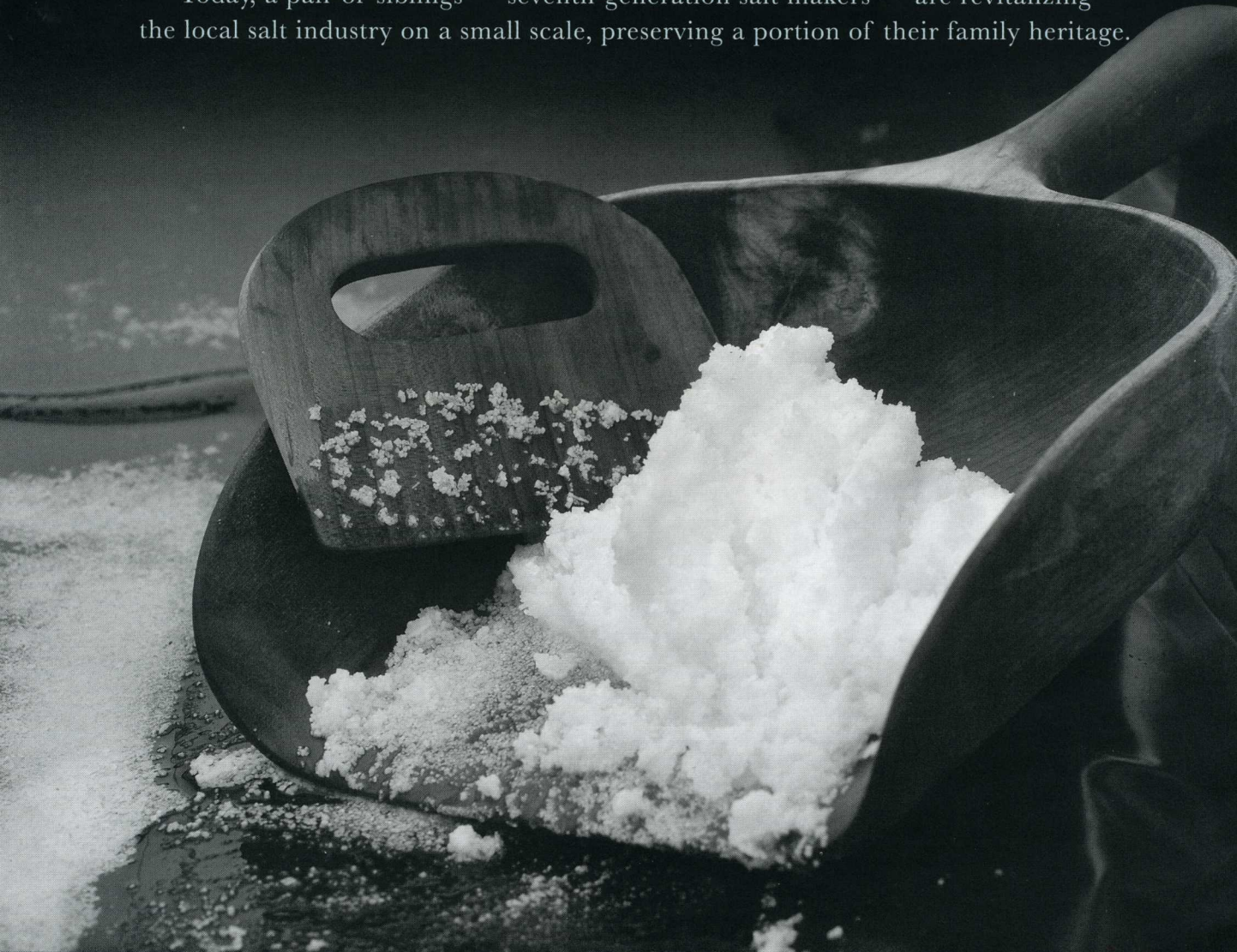


THE SALT RETURNS

By John Lilly — Photographs by Tyler Evert

Two hundred years ago, a 6.5-mile stretch of the Kanawha Valley between today's downtown Charleston and the town of Quincy, known as the Kanawha Salines, became one of the largest salt-making areas in the United States.

Today, a pair of siblings — seventh-generation salt makers — are revitalizing the local salt industry on a small scale, preserving a portion of their family heritage.



REBIRTH OF THE J.Q. DICKINSON SALT WORKS

Nancy Bruns and her brother, Lewis Payne, are both originally from Charleston. They are descendants of industrial pioneer William Dickinson, who invested in salt properties near present-day Malden in 1813 and began producing salt here in 1817. The Dickinson family continued to manufacture salt and saline byproducts until the 1980's — by far the longest-lived salt-producing family in the history of West Virginia.

In 2013, Nancy and Lewis committed themselves to finding a way to re-establish salt-making in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way. Nancy, who spent 20-plus years in the culinary field, was well-acquainted with gourmet salts and the demands of the restaurant industry. Most recently she owned and operated a restaurant in North Carolina for 10 years.

"I've always enjoyed trends in food," she says. "About eight or nine years ago, I started watching trends in salt." An astute woman with a businesslike manner, Nancy says that her husband's master's thesis in American history drew her attention to her own family's legacy and to salt-making in particular.

"He wrote his thesis on the industrialization of the Kanawha Valley, so he was looking at our family through

a totally different lens than I had seen it," she says. "It just occurred to me one day that it would make a lot of sense to start making salt again, with the consumer used to having more than one salt in their cabinet. Also chefs and consumers demanding more locally sourced foods and knowing their producers, and knowing that it is naturally made.

"With our background and access to the same land [as our forebears], it was sort of a no-brainer. We put together a business plan to see if we could make a go of it. I called Lewis and said, 'Hey....'"

Historically, salt was used as a preservative for meats and other foods. At its peak, more than 50 salt furnaces produced 30 million pounds of salt here annually. Considered America's finest, Kanawha salt was recognized for its high quality at World's Fairs in London in 1851 and in Paris in 1867. The salt was loaded into barrels and shipped by boat to Cincinnati, where it was used by meat packers.

The salt itself was coaxed from shallow wells of brine — liquid remnants of an ancient sea known as the Iapetus Ocean, dating back millions of years. The brine was pumped from underground to furnaces where it was evaporated and crystalized using wood as fuel at first and then coal. It

was hot, grueling work, employing thousands of slaves and hundreds of white laborers, along with dozens of slave owners, overseers, and managers. The salt industry supported hundreds of men working as coopers, boat-builders, teamsters, carpenters, well-drillers, masons, blacksmiths, and coal miners.

The coal industry in the Kanawha Valley was born to fuel the salt furnaces after the available timber was depleted. Before the Civil War, coal mines were manned largely by slave labor. More than 3 million bushels of salt — weighing approximately 50 pounds per bushel — were produced in the Kanawha Salines in 1846.

The industry declined after 1850 due to changing markets and new competition. A devastating flood in 1861, followed by the Civil War, also reduced the local salt industry. By 1890, the J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works was the lone survivor. The Dickinson company successfully adapted to changing market conditions and diversified, eventually producing chemical byproducts from the brine, such as chlorine, caustic acid, and bromides for the chemical industry. The salt works occupied roughly 45 buildings in 1915, according to a company record book recently uncovered by Nancy and Lewis.

John Quincy Dickinson, grandson of William Dickinson, had come to the Kanawha Valley in 1865 to repair the family's war- and flood-damaged salt works. In 1867, he also helped establish Kanawha Valley Bank, becoming the bank president in 1882. Under his guidance the bank became the largest financial institution in Charleston. It is now part of BB&T bank, where his picture hangs in the lobby of their downtown Charleston location.

Lewis Payne grew up in Charleston and attended college in South Carolina, where he also worked in the food industry. Lewis is in his 30's with a slight but athletic build and an easy smile.

"I ended up in Kentucky and practiced law for a few years," he recalls. "After our father passed away, I

Nancy Bruns and Lewis Payne are siblings and business partners. Seventh-generation salt makers, they have revived the J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works near Malden, Kanawha County, making gourmet table salt.



moved back here to Charleston to help manage the family business in 2003. The family business had evolved from salt into coal, timber, and natural gas. So our companies are land-holding companies. I was managing natural resources. When Nancy approached me about salt, it just kind of made sense — it fit within our model. Of course our family had the history with it."

Salt is a captivating and complex subject, Nancy says.

"I think it is very interesting how different salts are made in different parts of the world," she says. "They tell a little story about their source and what flavors that they impart. Our salt tastes different than a salt that is made in the Pacific Northwest, which tastes different than something that is made in France or in Japan.

"It is fascinating to see the heritage and traditions within each country and culture. [They each] have their own way of making salt, because it was such a valuable asset. You needed salt to survive. But if you look at them all

side-by-side, they are all very, very different. We take it for granted that salt is sodium chloride, but actually there is so much more to it — the different mineral contents can change the flavor profile. It's just a fascinating thing for me to see that."

Nancy and Lewis' finishing salt — their main product line — is a sparkling white, large-grained crystal. It tastes very, well, salty, with a rich flavor and a clean aftertaste.

Though their brine is pumped raw and unfiltered from the earth, it is remarkably pure.

"We had it tested first thing, early on," Lewis says, "just to make sure there were not any contaminants in it. Fortunately [the well] is deep enough and it is below the water table where it's protected from anything that could have been in the area. We were pleased with the results, and very pleased with the makeup and constituents of the salt itself. Turns out that it's a little lower in sodium chloride than most table salts that you get and higher in minerals. It is

only 95% sodium chloride, which is good. And it's stronger, so you don't have to use as much."

Nancy and Lewis are among a very small number of independent producers of culinary salt in the country, and the only ones in West Virginia. While their ancestors produced perhaps thousands of pounds of salt a day through labor- and resource-intensive evaporative methods, Nancy and Lewis have chosen to develop their own way.

"We decided on solar evaporation because we wanted to be very sustainable," Nancy says. "We didn't want to use fuels like our ancestors used — it just didn't make sense from a cost standpoint or from an environmental impact [standpoint]."

Through trial and error, the brother and sister came up with a method that is practical, profitable, and environmentally sound. First they sank a well 350 feet deep and submerged a pump into the saline solution. The pump is used to bring the brine to the surface where it is initially stored in

Solar evaporation has replaced salt furnaces at the J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works. These shallow basins hold brine pumped from 350 feet below the surface and will produce salt in three weeks to three months depending on weather conditions.





Table salt from J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works is sold from California to Georgia. For information, phone (304)925-7918 or visit www.jqdsalt.com.

a large settling tank. From there the brine is piped into greenhouses where shallow, plastic-lined beds await the salty liquid. The greenhouses are fitted with exhaust fans that slowly remove the moisture-laden air and exchange it for fresh.

Depending on the weather — particularly the outdoor temperature — the evaporation and crystallization process can take anywhere from three weeks to three months. Translucent walls and ceilings, sharply reflective evaporation beds, and a warm and humid atmosphere afford these greenhouses a distinctive, peaceful ambience.

As the sun and the water do their work, salt crystals begin to form along the bottoms of the evaporation beds. Handmade wooden utensils — most made by Allegheny Treenware of Preston County — are used to scrape the new-made salt crystals into small piles. [See “Allegheny Treenware: Carving Out a Living in Preston County,” by Carl E. Feather; Winter 2012.]

From there the salt is packed in cloth packets for drying before being sifted, inspected, and packaged — all done by hand.

“We have two types of salt we are making,” Nancy says. “We have our finishing salt, which is our primary

harvest. And we have a cooking salt, which is our secondary harvest. It has a much finer grain, which we have sold to just a few chefs. They have bought all our inventory of that — as much as we can produce.

“Then we have nigari, which is a liquid mineral byproduct — what’s left after we do all the salt harvesting. It’s a very clear liquid. It’s used to make tofu. It is also used as a mineral supplement — very high in magnesium, potassium, and calcium. We’ve also experimented with making cheese with it, as a coagulant for milk. It makes beautiful, fresh cheeses.

“We save the iron that comes out of the brine that we don’t want in our salt supply. We let it oxidize. It gets heavy in our tank and settles to the bottom. We are looking at ways to utilize that iron. Possibly animal licks or paints. Historical re-enactors want red salt again, so we can make them some salt with some iron in it.”

There are two full-time employees, one part-time employee, and “a lot of family-relative-volunteers,” Nancy says. She handles promotion, marketing, and product development while Lewis manages the day-to-day operations. So far their marketing efforts have proven to be quite rewarding and far-reaching. According to their Web site, Nancy and Lewis’

salt is sold at gourmet and specialty food shops in Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, California, and elsewhere, and is used in restaurants in South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Colorado, and Tennessee — and of course at various locales throughout West Virginia.

Their first salt went on the market just before Christmas 2013, Lewis says. Their hope is to produce about 7,000 pounds of salt in the first year.

“We’re going to hold tight with the size of our operation for another year or so and assess our demand,” Nancy says. “We’ve got more space, and we can build more greenhouses. We’ll grow some. I don’t think we want to become an enormous industry. We like that we are hand-harvested and it’s all done with care. That’s important to us to keep that quality and attention to detail.

“It’s not something that we want to build up and sell off either. It’s our family — we are in it for the long term. We hope our children will get involved in some way, and they’ll keep it going, too.” ❁

JOHN LILLY is editor of GOLDENSEAL magazine.

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

Great Kanawha Salt Industry

If an observer in 1850 were to walk upriver on the north side of the Great Kanawha River from the state capitol to Witcher Creek, he would have encountered 36 active salt furnaces, two abandoned furnaces, and 51 rigs (20- to 30-feet high) over brine wells. Also, one would have crossed 17 coal railroads carrying fuel from the nearby hills to the furnaces. On the river's south side up from the University of Charleston campus, one would have, while crossing 15 coal railroads, seen 16 furnaces in fire with adjoining buildings, four salt furnaces deteriorating, and 45 salt wells.

From the time of the frontier settlement through the early national period in the United States, salt was a scarce and expensive commodity obtainable domestically only from widely scattered, very small seashore evaporating ponds and interior salt springs. American consumers were solely dependent upon foreign salt importations to meet their extensive needs. As settlers crossed the Allegheny Mountains, they found

numerous salt licks frequented by native peoples and animals that furnished inadequate quantities of salt to meet needs even then. As import dependence continued, desperation continued; desperation for greatly increased quantities of salt led to small-scale evaporation at many licks. Many of these minor sources continued to supply local needs well into the antebellum period. The exploratory and manufacturing activities around the Buffalo Lick on the Great Kanawha River, initiated in 1797 by Elisha Brooks, was the first of these local efforts that resulted in a nationally significant salt production field.

Because its subterranean brine had greater salinity than any contemporary source, the Great Kanawha field, which came to be known as "Kanawha Salines," would free the American West from the inhibiting effects of salt scarcity and, to some degree, from foreign salt importation. It made the necessary commodity cheaper and the expansive agricultural frontier possible.

At the Great Buffalo Lick at present Malden, the Ruffner brothers built the first commercial furnace in 1808. By the end of 1810, 16 furnaces were in fire with an annual productive capacity between 204,400 and 292,000 bushels. During the War of 1812, salt furnace numbers grew to 52, and productive capacity roughly quadrupled to one million bushels annually. The Kanawha Salines produced more than double the quantity of salt than all the manufactories in any other single American state.

Sometime in 1814, the collective productive capabilities of Kanawha salt furnaces exceeded the level necessary to meet demand. Between 1817 and 1856, the Kanawha salt producers, using several different legal forms, combined into eight different organizations to attempt to control their industry.

The salt manufacturing process was relatively simple and simultaneous. The heart of the factory was the furnace that evaporated salt from the brine pumped from nearby wells. Brine passed through

Workers at the J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works at Malden in 1940. Original photograph by "Sessions"; copy photograph by Tyler Evert.



An Overview

By John E. Stealey III

from the wells to an elevated, square, wooden cistern, where it collected and was stored until fed by gravity through pipe logs to the furnace. After initial boiling, the water went to the brine trough, where the oxide of iron settled. After sedimentation, the brine flowed into the crystallization or graining kettles or pans. During boiling, tenders skimmed impurities from the water surface. Soon, salt crystals formed on the surface until their accumulated weight sank them. When the kettle or pan was boiled almost dry, the salt was lifted onto a platform or trough, where the bittern drained. After draining, the salt was transported to the salt shed, where it was stored or packed.

One aspect of the historical significance and uniqueness of Kanawha salt makers was their harnessing of the institution of slavery to meet their industrial requirements. Slaves participated in all phases of salt manufacturing: as woodcutters and miners; wheelers and haulers of coal inside and outside the mine; kettle

tenders at pans; firemen who loaded coal in the furnace; ash removers (cat-hole cleaners); engine tenders; plus salt lifters, packers, coopers, blacksmiths, and general laborers ("jim rounds"). A few served as working foremen; women usually cooked for the work force or worked in agricultural activities that supported the furnace and its owner.

Many of these occupations exposed Kanawha slaves to hazardous conditions: underground mining, boiling or highly heated brine, moving machinery, and steam boilers that could explode. The location of salt furnaces along the river provided opportunities for drowning, an avenue of escape on boats, and a passageway for five antebellum cholera epidemics that seemed to fall more severely on blacks than whites.

The decline of the Kanawha salt industry in the 1850's was quite sudden. In 1850, 33 operating companies, having a total of \$889,800 capital investment, manufactured an estimated 3,104,898 bushels annually. In 1860, nine facto-

ries with a total capital investment of \$175,000 annually produced an estimated 1,261,915 bushels.

Many complex factors contributed to the Kanawha industry's demise. In brief, the growth of the cotton trade in the 1850's encouraged the importation of great quantities of foreign salt as ballast into New Orleans. The growth of the Ohio River production field in Meigs County, Ohio, and Mason County, Virginia, plagued producers as the 1850's progressed. Of greatest significance for the Kanawha industry, however, were the basic changes in the western American economy. East-west railroads and new terminal towns changed the location of packing centers and made possible the transport of livestock to the East. As the population and packing industry moved westward and toward the Great Lakes a new domestic salt source developed. In 1860, a Michigan salt furnace at East Saginaw began production.

Although the salt industry would function at a greatly reduced level for many years, its owners would expand their production to include bromine and calcium chloride. Inheritors of the deteriorated furnaces, the prime agricultural bottomland, adjacent hills bearing coal, and the money accumulated by some salt makers, would search for economic options in other extractive endeavors. ✱

This essay was excerpted from Great Kanawha Valley Chemical Heritage: Symposium Proceedings. The symposium was held May 3, 2003, at West Virginia State University at Institute. It was sponsored by the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, based at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

JOHN E. STEALEY III holds master's and doctorate degrees in history from West Virginia University. He is distinguished professor emeritus of history at Shepherd University. His most recent book, *West Virginia's Civil War-Era Constitution: Loyal Revolution, Confederate Counter-Revolution and the Convention of 1872*, is published by Kent State University Press. This is John's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



GEORGE KAROS

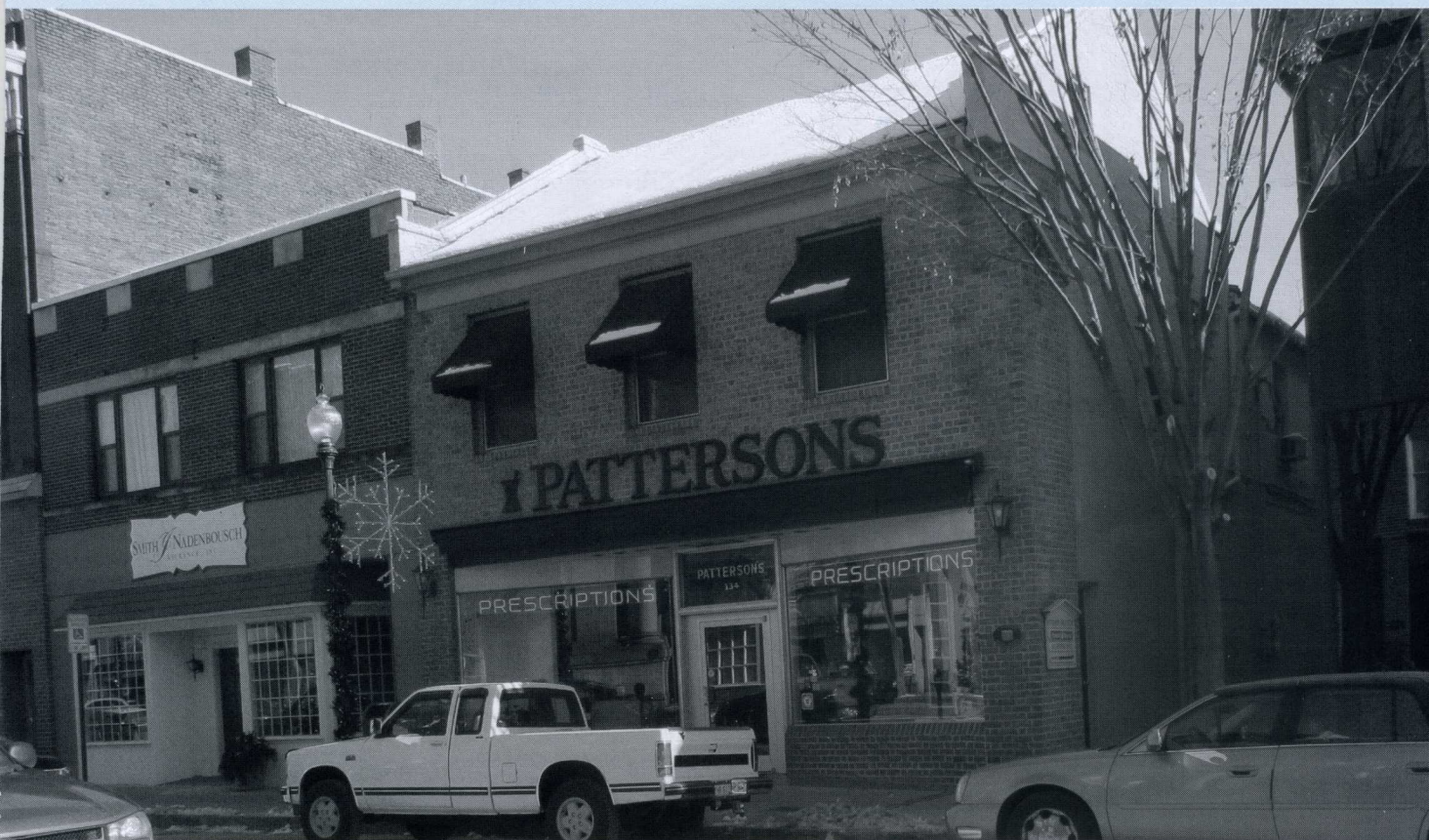
MARTINSBURG'S PHARMACIST MAYOR

By John Lilly
Photographs by William Young

For more than 55 years, George Karos has worked as a registered pharmacist at Patterson's Pharmacy in his native Martinsburg. Since the year 2000, he has also served as the town mayor.

George Karos at his desk at Patterson's Pharmacy in Martinsburg. George has been the city's mayor since 2000.





Exterior of Patterson's Pharmacy on a cold day last December. George Karos came to work here in 1940, delivering prescriptions on a bicycle. He is now the owner.

"People trust their pharmacist," George comments, acknowledging the logical tie between these two seemingly unrelated occupations. He knows his constituents by their medicines, with some families going back two or three generations. And they know him as the 83-year-old Greek gentleman who is as much of a fixture in downtown Martinsburg as the old railroad roundhouse or the giant red apple.

George Karos is a likable man with sparkling eyes and a firm handshake. He is a first-generation Greek American, born in Martinsburg in 1931. His parents, Mary and Constantine ("Gus"), were thrust together through an arranged marriage that took place in Havana, Cuba. They first met on their wedding day, George says. "Sort of a pig in a poke, you might say," he says with a chuckle. The ceremony was repeated on American

soil, and the newlyweds settled in Martinsburg, where Gus had already established a successful hat-cleaning and shoe-shine business.

There was a thriving Greek community in Martinsburg at the time, with restaurants and social and business opportunities for Greek immigrants and their families.

"All the restaurants were run by Greek people," George recalls. "There must have been six, seven, eight restaurants right in a three-block radius." Gus and Mary spoke Greek in the home, and George was raised bilingual.

Next door to Gus Karos' hat-cleaning and shoe-shining business was a pharmacy owned by Mr. James A. Patterson. When Gus died in 1940, Patterson took nine-year-old George Karos under his wing. He gave him the important job of delivering medicines by bicycle to customers throughout downtown Martinsburg.

"I sort of grew up in this pharmacy," George says, casting an eye around the store where he has been for nearly 75 years now. When not making deliveries, George would help the pharmacists, wait on customers, sweep, or do whatever else needed to be done. He soon decided that he would one day go to pharmacy school and become a pharmacist himself.

Martinsburg at the time was a "booming community," George says, with railroads, quarries, factories, stores, restaurants, orchards, and businesses of all descriptions. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, DuPont, Corning Glass, and General Motors were a few of the larger local employers.

"Everybody knew everybody," George recalls. "Somebody would come walking by, and you'd say, 'Hi, Jim!' or 'Hi, George!' or 'Hi, Frank!' It was just like a weekend reunion, so to speak. I remember growing



Queen Street in Martinsburg in 1941. Patterson's Drug Store is visible at left. Photographer unknown.

up, where the public square is now, there used to be a bandstand down there. They used to have concerts and music there almost every weekend. People would come and meet down there also."

George was a teenager during the World War II years and recalls that most of the people he knew worked at Fairchild Aircraft in Hagerstown, Maryland, located about 20 miles north of Martinsburg. Though not old enough to enlist, George was anxious to serve in the military and did enlist when he became of age.

Attending high school at Martinsburg High was a busy time for George. He was the sports editor of the school's weekly *Orange & Black* newspaper, was a member of the National Honor Society during his junior year, played drums in the school band and orchestra, and was very involved with the school's basketball team. The latter is remarkable, given George's compact frame — he stands 5'2"!

Ascrappy basketball player, George was offered a partial scholarship to attend and play ball for West Virginia University. He turned it down, however, fearing that all of the practice,

travel, and playing commitments would get in the way of his studies in pharmacy school. Instead he attended Medical College of Virginia, now Virginia College University (VCU)



Display cases at Patterson's contain old medicines and drugstore items from bygone times.

in Richmond, Virginia. George had enlisted in the navy after his high school graduation in 1949, serving four years as a hospital corpsman, though he never left the states. Toward the end of his service he began applying to pharmacy schools.

Frugal, George sent his navy pay home to his mother, who pinched pennies on his behalf and helped him build up a nest egg to help pay for his college education. Those savings, together with the GI Bill, carried George through pharmacy school. He graduated in 1959.

George was happy to get back to Martinsburg and Patterson's Pharmacy. Sadly, owner James A. Patterson had died while he was gone. George soon passed his West Virginia boards and became a registered pharmacist at Patterson's, where he had started out as a bicycle delivery boy so many years earlier.

Life was more than just school and work for George Karos, however. During his navy years, he made frequent weekend trips back home to Martinsburg, where a particular woman caught his eye.

"There used to be a place down on West King Street, next to Trinity Episcopal Church," George recalls. "When I'd come home on weekends — see my mother, do what I had to do — I would always pick up my ride back to either Bethesda or Quantico there. One afternoon a friend of mine came in with this very attractive lady. [We said] 'Hi! How you?' and they went back and set in the booth. I went back and tried to introduce myself. My future wife just wouldn't speak at all! Things went on [like this] every weekend until finally I called, and she finally consented to have a Coca-Cola somewhere. My ride would be at eight o'clock, so I'd meet her at seven o'clock. We'd meet at the same place — have a Coke.

"But then I got to thinking. I didn't know if I wanted to continue with this so-called start-up relationship or not. She was very, very conservative. Come to find out she just graduated from a convent school in Huntington. So one thing led to another, and



George Karos became a registered pharmacist in 1959. He is seen here at Patterson's in 1966, working at the same familiar desk he uses today. Photographer unknown.

we corresponded while I was in the service, while I was in the school.

"Her father was very much involved in unions in the southern part of the state, very much involved in the coalfields at one time," George continues. "His breathing got so bad they had to move to Arizona. We got married in Tucson, Arizona."

Sophie Vergis was a Boone County native. [See "Edwight: Recalling a Coal River Company Town," by Johnny M. Vergis; Spring 1993.] Her father chose to send her to school at the convent in Huntington for academic reasons, not intending that Sophie would necessarily become a nun. Following her graduation, Sophie came to Martinsburg to attend a local beauty culture school and to

begin her career as a beautician.

George and Sophie were married for about 25 years until her death in 1988. They had two children: a boy named George Constantine and a girl named Maria (or "Kiki"). George was a widower for about 10 years before marrying his present wife, Renee.

Meanwhile, George continued to work at Patterson's Pharmacy. The new owner, James A. Patterson's widow, herself passed away in 1980. So George and a partner bought the business. When his partner retired three years later, George bought out the partner's share and became the sole proprietor.

Entering Patterson's Pharmacy from the sidewalk on the east side of Queen Street gives the feeling of

stepping back in time. The smell of old wood and fresh coffee, the sounds of conversation and laughter, and a décor from a bygone era fill the 88-year-old business. Display cases house artifacts from the days when a pharmacy was more often called an apothecary — mortar and pestle, tinctures, smelling salts, and pretty glass jars filled with colorful liquids.

Across the room is an old-fashioned lunch counter and chrome-and-vinyl booths, where a steady stream of customers order from a mimeographed menu that tops off at \$5.50 for the most expensive meal in the house. All items are homemade and most are in the two- to three-dollar range.

Historical photographs of old Martinsburg line the wall, and a working phone booth occupies one corner.

Metal shelving holds toothpaste, deodorant, combs, and toothbrushes — usually just one or two of each. George doesn't believe in tying his money up in excess inventory. When-

In addition to prompt and personal attention to their pharmaceutical needs, customers appreciate the helpful staff, free delivery, and friendly atmosphere. Many of them hang around for something to eat and a chance to join the conversation at the lunch counter.

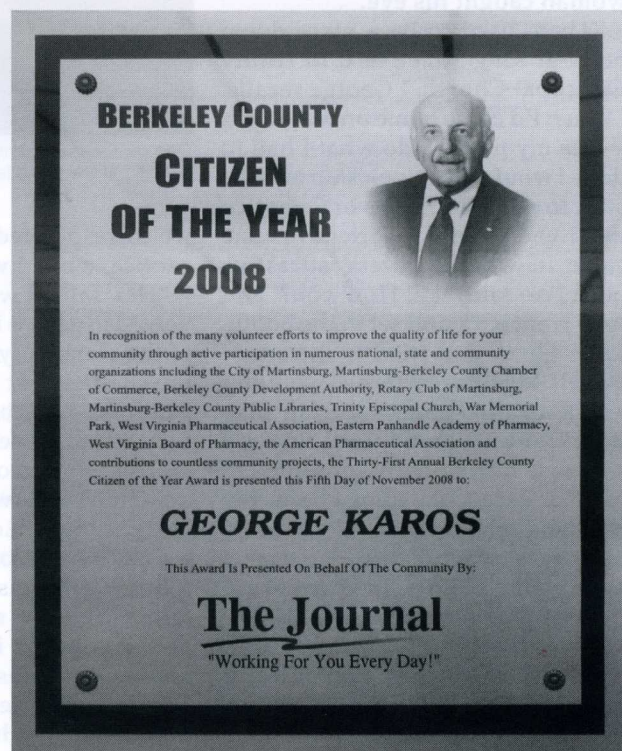
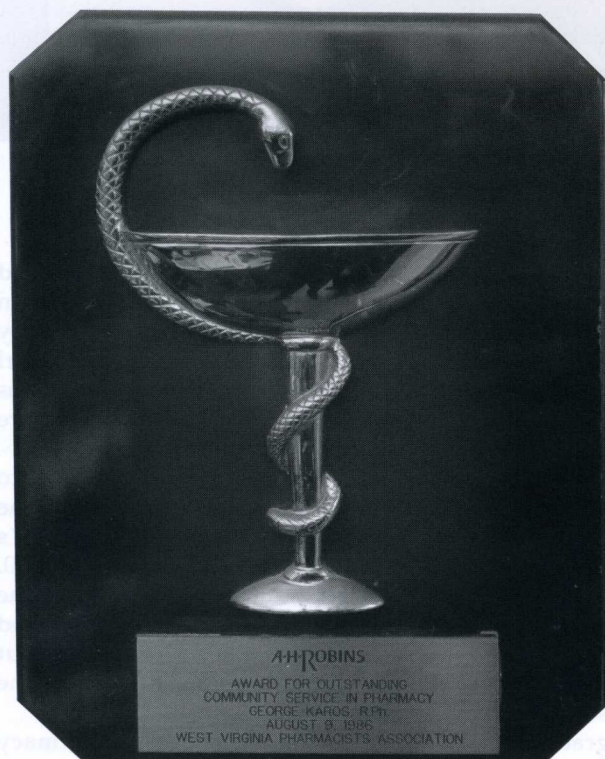
"The secret to our success is one word — service," George says proudly. In addition to prompt and personal attention to their pharmaceutical needs, customers appreciate the helpful staff, free delivery, and friendly atmosphere. Many of them hang around for something to eat and a chance to join the conversation at the lunch counter.

It is this ongoing conversation and community gathering that helped to launch George's second career in local politics.

"Every morning they used to have people who were very active in the community — people who had retired from the community — would always gather up at the soda fountain," George says. "At that time we always opened up at 8:00, closed at 10. And they would sit up there

ever someone buys, say, a bottle of aspirin, he orders another one and has it on the shelf within a day or so.

Only a fraction of his business comes from such purchases. The vast majority of his customers are there to get their prescriptions filled and to get expert advice on how they can see the best results from their medications.



A well-respected and prominent citizen of Martinsburg, George has received numerous awards and citations. These two hang proudly on the walls at Patterson's.



George Karos with customer Jim Siebert. Photograph by Caitlin Young.

and have their coffee. They would take care of everything that wasn't taken care of the day before. In other words they would talk about politics, talk about sports, they solved all the worldly problems. And they solved local problems.

"I remember a group of people coming to me and saying, 'Why don't you run for councilman-at-large?' [I said], 'I don't know. I don't want to do that. I got this pharmacy — I got this business. I don't want to do this.' Long and short of it, I ended up running and got elected in 1974. Back then we ran every two years.

"In 2000 there was a couple of projects I wanted to see done that we had started as council members. So I ran for mayor. I've been mayor since 2000. I was just recently re-elected again for the third four-year term."

George has no problem juggling his two lives, thanks in many ways to capable and trusted staff at both the pharmacy and city hall.

"I start out spending two or three hours here," he says, referring to the pharmacy. "Then I'll go down to city hall. The city managers and

I will confer and talk for an hour or two or three. Then I'll come back here, clean up my desk and do this for maybe another two hours. Then if I'm needed I'll call. 'Well, you'd better come down, because... ' It's sort of back and forth — it's only two blocks away."

In contrast to his old-fashioned surroundings, George Karos stays on top of the technology of the day, current events, and the latest scientific advances. He totes a cell phone, uses the Internet, and keeps tabs on developments in pharmaceutical and political matters.

"In our business here you can't do it the old way," he says, referring to the pharmacy. "Everything is controlled by insurance companies now. Everything is transmitted on the Internet."

Drug companies send out literature via e-mail on a weekly or sometimes daily basis, and George follows this information closely. Likewise, he is cognizant of shifts in the local economy and population trends as they affect Martinsburg and the surrounding communities.

"Martinsburg is going through

a transitional time," George says. "Now we have become somewhat of a transient community. Awful lot of rooftops in the past 10 years that have been built [here]. People now come up and retire here. Down at the train station, there are three trains that go to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. They get on a train and they commute, back and forth."

Mayor Karos is proud of the way the city has progressed during his tenure as mayor. He helped to secure millions of dollars to finance improvements to local roads and bridges, and is working with county officials to address other issues. He enjoys the challenges of the job and has no plans to retire from either the pharmacy or the mayor's office.

Eventually some younger hands may stand at the helm of this Eastern Panhandle metropolis and Patterson's Pharmacy, but it is doubtful that this new leadership will be as colorful, resourceful, or experienced as George Karos, the pharmacist mayor of Martinsburg. 🌿

WILLIAM YOUNG is an attorney in Martinsburg. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Wood

Groundhogs had begun their hibernation; rabbits scampered toward their burrows having foraged on the hillside during the night. As the sun broke through the morning mist, trees came alive with activity as squirrels frisked about exercising themselves for another busy day. Life stirred on the woodland hillside of the Long farm, where my parents and I lived with my maternal grandparents in rural Wetzel County. Leaves covered a rutted farm road, which ran tortuously around the middle of the hill overlooking Pleasant Valley. Soon this well-worn pioneer road would be the path of a mule team and sled carrying father and son into the depth of the forest to cut wood for heating the Long house during the coming cold winter months.

Rising at daybreak, Dad found his cherished mules grazing near the little barn below the house. They followed him to their accustomed stalls in the crude basement stable, where they pulverized huge ears of corn having been placed in the feedboxes, part of the manger structure. Engrossed in their corn treat, they were unaware of their owner harnessing them for the day's labor. Fitting each with bridle, col-



Author Jack Furbree with his parents, Clyde and Gertrude, at the farm of Jack's maternal grandparents in Wetzel County in about 1940.

Gathering Day

By Jack Furbee

lar, back straps, belly bands, hames, traces, and bits, Dad expertly dressed the mules with every harness detail snapped, strapped, and buckled tightly for maximum horsepower.

I awoke in my attic bedroom to Dad's voice in the wood yard below. "Whoa, Jack.... Whoa, Jennie.... Easy now," as he brought his mule team to a halt by the fence near the gate. Jumping off the sturdy sled, which he had built recently, he fastened the reins to the yard fence. Jack and Jennie, his faithful mules, male and female respectively, rested quietly while Dad had breakfast before driving them into the nearby forest to haul wood.

I skipped every other attic step as I hurried down to enjoy breakfast with Dad. We were in a warm area of the small farmhouse near the cook stove, still hot from breakfast preparation. Three rooms were heated by three wood stoves, which consumed voluminous cords of wood during cold winter months. Born in the hills of the Van Camp community, between the Ohio River towns of Paden City and New Martinsville, I became part of a family whose job it was to accumulate enough wood for multiple stoves.

Dressed in warm clothes, I followed Dad out the back door and stepped onto the new sled before the gate in

the yard fence clanged shut. When the mules felt my jolt at mounting the sled, they came to attention from a brief slumber. As Dad picked up the reins, the mules stood at attention for their day of hauling wood. "Jackie, are you ready? Hold tightly to the standards [uprights on the sides]," Dad cautioned me as he concentrated on rousting the team.

"Git up mules," he ordered, assuming a more firm and deeper vocal quality for speaking to his team. Perking their long ears up and forward in a state of appropriate readiness, the mammoth-muscled creatures gave their strength to pulling the sled slowly at first, making a sharp turn in front of the woodshed where they



Jack with his dog and wagon in front of a mostly empty wood yard.



Clyde Furbee holds Jack on the back of a mule. These mules appear ready to work with harness, blinders, and a sled.

stopped momentarily for the wood cutter to get his tools: crosscut saw, ax, a sledge, and two iron wedges.

"Gee now, Jennie.... Easy.... Easy," was Dad's gentle direction to the female on the right. A beautiful long-eared lady mule, she pulled to the right followed by Jack, the male on the left. A system of check reins caused pressure on the bits in the right side of the mouth of each mule; however Jennie led the way at Dad's command. We had arrived at the wooded area where Dad stopped the team, tethering them to a fence post. As his amateur helper, I jumped off the sled while Dad threw the ax and saw over his shoulder. His deliberate steps made deep impressions in the moist humus. I increased the length of my stride to follow his footprints exactly. His steps would take the best route, I was sure, avoiding danger. I felt that I was safe.

"Here is a good firewood tree," Dad

said as he threw his ax and saw near its trunk. Having succumbed to blight in the 1920's, it was a dried chestnut still standing, like a ghost among living trees. As if Dad could rely on my limited, innocent presence, he seriously inquired aloud, "Where are we going to land this tree?" Wishing I had an answer, I stood perplexed. Like an accomplished surveyor, he cited an ideal place for the tree to fall. Notching the tree several inches from the ground, he began to saw the trunk on the opposite side of the notch. Thus, when the tree was ready to fall it would do so guided by the notch.

After aggressively pushing and pulling the saw back and forth toward the notch, Dad suddenly stood to his full height; he was uneasy about something. "Run, get me the wedges and sledge!" The saw was bound in the trunk as the tree began to lean in the wrong direction. A job that might

have been somewhat advanced for me — getting the wedges and sledge to Dad — was a priority before the tree fell in the wrong place. Dragging the sledge and clinging tenaciously to the wedges, I arrived at Dad's side. He grabbed a wedge and stuck it into the saw cut, driving it deeply to free the saw. With the other wedge he changed the direction of the falling tree, pounding the wedge tightly with the heavy sledgehammer to make sure the tree was falling where he had originally surveyed. Urgently he asked that I hand him the saw, which I found lost among the leaves. He inserted it again into the girth of the leaning tree. With a few more crosscuts the ancient chestnut tree began its crashing descent to exactly where Dad had planned.

I stood stunned at the intense industry of bringing the tree to the ground. The smell of damp, exposed earth and decaying leaves mingled

with sawdust and chips around the tree. The echo of the tree falling reverberated in Pleasant Valley below. The silencing of the birds' songs at the great furor, the momentary numbing of my senses at the recent combat we had experienced, and the raining down of broken branches, leaves, and general refuse from surrounding trees caused me grave uneasiness as I stepped back, hoping the disruption would pass.

Realizing I was at my limit emotionally, Dad and I sat on the fallen tree for a while simultaneously comforting our spirits and admiring our accomplishment. "You okay, Richie?" he asked, using a name of endearment for times of my discomfort. Seated below him on the fallen trunk, I simply looked up at my father knowing everything was in good hands. Words were never spoken.

It was almost noon when Mom brought us a lunch of ham sandwiches and a jar of fresh well water from higher on the hill near the house. After the short lunch break the tree was sawn into eight-foot sections. Several of the sections had to be split with the sledge and wedges so that we could lift them. Although the old tree had lost most of its limbs, some remained as they became eight-foot sections, too.

"Jackie, let's get the mules," he said. Somewhat exhausted, I was awaiting this invitation. Jack and Jennie were restlessly waiting near an old fence line. The mule driver untied the reins from the fence while I jumped on the sled. We were in the last part of our wood-gathering day, loading the disassembled chestnut tree. Each piece of wood had its place on the sled to make a solid load stacked high against the standards. The larger split pieces were on the bottom, while the looser limbs were on the top. The two mules, having been hitched to the sled piled high with wood, seemed to know their greatest challenge lay ahead, pulling the sled heavy with wood up the steep hill to the wood yard.

"Let's go home, Jackie. This has been a good day! The old chestnut will make great wood for the stoves. Since it's dry we will have lots of kindling to start the fires." My father spoke as if he had accomplished a task cheered by an imaginary multitude who had gathered around us, although I was the only one who heard him. Coming back to reality, he paused a while walking around the perfectly assembled load of wood and admiring the mules who had been so patient. Holding their heavy heads in his hands as he looked into their big, bright eyes partially covered

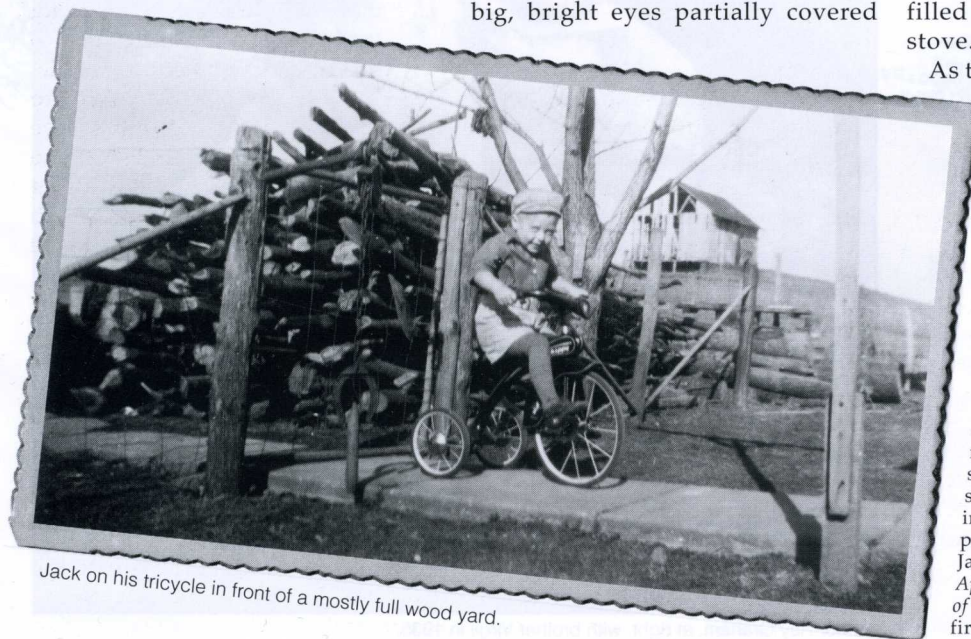
with blinders, he said affectionately, "Good boy, Jack.... Good girl, Jennie," to encourage his team for their final, intense exploit of the day.

Giving me a boost to the top of the load, he held the reins tightly as he issued the mules the firm command: "Git up! Let's go! Git up, Jack! Git up, Jennie!" The noble workers tightened on the double tree, pulling gently and in unison at first. Then mastering the load with their great strength, they surged forward with the sod flying from their powerful shod hooves.

Soon we pulled into the wood yard parallel to the yard fence. With the mules panting, sweating, frothing, and steaming, Dad unhitched the powerful duo and led them to the little barn where he gave them another generous treat. Climbing off the old chestnut tree, I threw open the gate and burst into the kitchen of the Long house before the gate clicked shut. When I entered the kitchen, Mom greeted me obviously concerned about my well-being. She never found out about our battle with the old chestnut, which lay harvested in the wood yard ready to be cut and split into stove-length pieces, placed into neat ricks, and later taken by wheelbarrow to the back porch from which the ladies filled their wood boxes beside each stove.

As the sun set, the forest regained its usual sylvan silence. Later in the darkness, nocturnal creatures inventoried the battered area to find one very old tree missing, the familiar chestnut, landmark of countless generations of wild creatures. ❁

JACK FURBEE was born in 1934 in Wetzel County. He holds a master's degree and a doctorate in education from West Virginia University and served 35 years as an educator, counselor, and administrator. He now lives in Bourbonnais, Illinois, where he is professor emeritus at Olivet University. Jack is the author of the book *Growing Up Appalachian in the Van Camp Community of Wetzel County, West Virginia*. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Jack on his tricycle in front of a mostly full wood yard.

Mountain Boys

By Ray Graham



Author Ray Graham, at right, with brother Virgil in 1935.

My Wyoming County Memories

This is about growing up in the mountains of Wyoming County during the 1940's and early '50's. I'm glad I grew up in the beautiful state of West Virginia. There were good times and bad times. Most of what I remember is good, but not my mom's death when I was eight years old.

After Mom died, Dad had to go to the hospital in Charlottesville for a year. During that time us children were divided among various relatives. My brother Jack and I were sent to stay with Uncle Wayne and Aunt Tressie. Marie lived with Grandma Graham, Lula with Grandma Sirilda, and Virgil with Aunt Maudy in Logan. These were rough times for us kids.

Uncle Wayne and Aunt Tressie already had four young'uns and a small house, but they made room for me and Jack. I tried to help out as much as I could by doing chores and staying out from underfoot. Jack and I slept on the floor behind the heating stove because there wasn't room anywhere else. Aunt Tressie made sure all five of us school kids were cleaned up and had packed lunches every morning before setting out for school in Oceana, two miles down the road. We had to walk in all kinds of weather. Sometimes we walked down the road, or the railroad tracks, or even through the creek.

Aunt Tressie and Uncle Wayne treated me and Jack just like their own kids, but they had a lot to keep

them busy and we had some lonely hours. When my cousin Frank wasn't around, the girls were a big comfort to a little boy learning to get along without his mommy. Hazel was my age, Maxine two years younger, and Jennie was still just a baby. Max and I were especially close. She would fuss over me — and at me. She would scratch me and pull my hair but wouldn't let anyone else do it.

Sundays at Aunt Tressie's always meant a big dinner. She baked pies on Saturday, and Sunday morning Uncle Wayne would kill the chickens for dinner. We all got dressed and ready for church in the morning. As soon as we got home, Tressie would start dinner. There were six of them, me and Jack, Grandma and Grandpa



The Graham family in about 1940. From the left, in front, are Marie, Virgil, Ray, and Jackie. Mother Lona holds baby Lulabelle. Father Onnie is at right. Lona died in 1944, and the family was scattered for several years.

Fortner, and sometimes other relatives too. I never heard Aunt Tressie complain. She just did it.

It seems like most small kids got picked on a lot, and I was little and skinny. My mom had been so good to me, and I thought everyone should be like that. But I soon learned that there are bullies. There was a boy in town much bigger than me, and he just started pushing me around. I told Frank, and he said, "Ray, when he bothers you again, just bust him in the nose." Well, it happened again. He said he was going to beat me up. Before he could land the first blow, I jumped up and hit him right in the nose as small as I was. His nose started bleeding and soon got all over his shirt. I think it probably scared me more than the bully. I thought I had killed him, and Frank had put me up to it. I did learn to take my part that day. I'm glad the

bully survived, and down the road we ended up friends.

During the summer, when the water was low, we dammed up Laurel Creek with stones and mud to make a swimming hole. The creek was only about the length of a football field from where we lived. To us, that little creek was a river. We fished for rock bass and bluegills, and sometimes we even caught fish with our hands. Crawfish hid under the rocks in the creek. I would catch the little ones, but when they were big I'd holler, "Frank! Come catch this one!" We made rafts of wooden logs, poles, whatever we could find, and floated on the creek.

Another favorite pastime of ours was playing cowboys and Indians, running up and down the mountains whooping and hollering. The Indians wore headdresses made of rhododendron leaves. On a windy day, we

made kites out of stick weeds and newspapers using flour and water for glue.

Baby groundhogs that we dug out of holes made good pets, at least until they got growed. Ginseng in the woods, dried and taken to Perry Bailey's general store, provided a little spending money. Once the ginseng was dried, it didn't seem such a lot, and it wasn't easy to find. We would sit on a railroad bridge for hours singing songs — me, Franklin, Ed Blankenship, and Arvis — each of us sure we sounded just like Hank Williams!

Another occasion for fun was Mr. Cook's watermelon patch. The patch was about a quarter of a mile away from his house, down near Laurel Creek. A bunch of us boys sneaked into the patch, got down on our hands and knees, rolled the melons over to the creek, busted them up, and had a watermelon lunch. Mr. Cook asked around trying to find out who stole 13 or 14 of his best watermelons. He promised if he found out who did it, he would send them to reform school. I was really scared, but Frank said not to worry. If anyone asked me about it, I would just say I didn't know anything. Frank wasn't scared a bit. Mr. Cook didn't find out, and I was glad. This was one adventure we never should have been involved in, but it was pretty exciting at the time.

Uncle Willy lived next door to Uncle Wayne. He had a pretty hard life and often turned to wine for consolation. He had an eye operation when he worked for DuPont, and that eye never did close completely. Poor ol' Willy would get drunk and pass out on the bed. Franklin and I would sneak in through the door and try to figure out if he was truly asleep or was that eye seeing us. If we decided he was asleep, we'd creep up to the bed and force a match between his shoes and the sole, light the match, and run. We'd hide in the bushes until he got over it. Jackie was an innocent bystander one day. He didn't run fast enough and ended up getting slapped when



Ray in third grade at Matheny Grade School.

he didn't do nothing. When Uncle Willy wasn't drinking, he was a good man — kind and gentle and easy to talk to. His favorite song he used to sing was "Barbara Allen."

When Daddy finally came home, we moved to the farmhouse up Matheny Hollow. Dad, Grandpa, and Uncle Wayne had built the house in 1940, but we didn't live there at that time because it was too hard for Mom's health. It was a Jenny Lind mountain four-room house. We had an outhouse, a granary, a hillside cellar, a chicken house, cow shed, and pig lot. There was a wide front porch and absolutely gorgeous view of moun-

tain after mountain after mountain. Grandpa Aleck (I'm named Alexander after him) helped build the house. When Grandma would give him a hard time, he would walk about five miles up to our house and spend a couple of days with us. He used to bring us kids paper and pencils and entertain us with stories.

The driveway to the house was about a quarter mile beyond the end of the road, steep and rocky. Hoot owls, deer, whippoorwills, foxes, bobcats, copperheads, and rattlesnakes were our closest neighbors. There weren't many deer because so many had been poached for meat to

feed hungry families. Dad had a mean white-faced cow that would escape out of the cow lot. Every morning before school it was my job to get the cow. Sometimes this meant going down the mountainside to get the cow out of the middle of the creek. I would throw rocks at her to get her moving. When we finally got back to the house, it was Jackie's job to milk her. Marie and Lula would wash dishes and sweep the house. Even though we were poor, our house was always neat. We each washed our own clothes on a washboard. Virgil would get really mad if I "borrowed" one of his clean shirts.

It was hard getting up and down our long, steep drive but we got used to it. At night you couldn't see a thing. Once I fell over a cow that was lying in the road. A big mule that belonged to a neighbor once tried to kick Virgil. Virgil couldn't see the mule, but he could feel the wind as his hoof went right past his head. Another night I was by myself and saw eyes in the darkness. It was a bobcat, and I took off running.

I was about 10 when we started farming at the Matheny house. Dad still wasn't real strong from having been in the hospital. He wasn't able to work, so he was home with us kids. Dad took care of all five of us — washing, cooking, and cleaning the house. Marie would wash the dishes, and six-year-old Lula would stand on a stool and dry them. Virg and I helped get in firewood that Dad chopped from trees behind the house. We had a hand-dug well. There was a spring about 75 feet up the mountain, and we helped haul water from there if we had a dry spell and the well dried up. We also had a seam of coal about 100 yards to the left that we used for heat in the winter. We dug it out ourselves with dynamite and carried it down the mountainside. I remember once a big rock fell when Dad blasted, narrowly missing Jack.

We had a big garden, and Virg and I worked in the garden with mattock, hoe, and spading fork. The hillside was too steep to plow, even if we



Virgil Graham as a teenager.



All of the Graham boys served in the military. This photograph from 1952 shows Virgil, at left, cousin Frank, and Ray Graham.

had had a horse. We planted sweet corn, popcorn, corn for pickling, and corn for the animals. The pickling corn was picked young, and then the mature crop we took to the mill and had ground. The miller was also a schoolteacher. He charged us by taking a half peck or so of corn. He couldn't have made any money at it. We planted pumpkins in the corn to feed the cows, also potatoes, beets, cucumbers, radishes, sweet potatoes, green beans (pole beans and bush beans), tomatoes, and onions. A big garden meant food for the winter. Anything we didn't need, we sold to the neighbors.

We worked really hard the first year on the mountain farm. We raised all of our own vegetables and sold them door to door. Dad also raised chickens. Me and Virg would head out of the holler both of us carrying two chickens in each hand just squawking and carrying on. Often our customers took the chickens with the promise to pay later. Sometimes we got the money but often we never did. I guess we were doing our part to feed the hungry right there in our community.

Dad cooked and took care of the house and all of us kids. He never

remarried. The big old cook stove could turn out the best biscuits and fried chicken I ever ate. He canned everything using a big galvanized washtub. We filled the tub with water, and Dad used burlap to keep the heat in the jars while they were cooking. We had a pig, and when Dad butchered, he would also can sausage. We might not have had a lot of money, but we sure ate good!

When we finished our chores for the day, Dad would let us play baseball or go swimming. Virg and I loved to play catch. Virgil brought two gloves and a ball from Aunt Maudy's in Logan, and we would play for hours at a time. I was usually the catcher, and Virg pitched. If we went swimming, we had to walk down the mountain to the swimming hole in Matheny. I had a stray dog for a time — a beagle named Bill. Bill would follow me anywhere. If I jumped into the creek, he would jump in right after me and swim along beside me wherever I went. His owner came to claim him, and he ended up killed by a car. I will never forget that dog. Even today, I can have a beagle in my lap and remember Bill.

Our closest neighbor was Buster Stewart and his family. Buster worked

in the coal mines during the day and worked his farm in the evenings. He went hunting and fishing and worked on cars in his spare time. Buster was so patient with me. He never complained about me being in the way, and I dearly loved to help him — especially working on cars. I would ask Dad a question about a car, but he always said, "Go ask Buster." My dad knew a lot, but automobiles were out of his line. Buster had a summer engine and a winter engine for his Model-A Ford. He had a carport with a galvanized roof and an engine lift. Buster was the first person that encouraged me to learn about cars. He rebuilt his own engines and kept his car running in tip-top shape.

One day me, Buster, and a neighbor named Oscar went to dig out some baby groundhogs out of their cozy little dens and make pets out of them. The dogs started barking, and we came upon a groundhog hole. We started digging into the opening just enough to see the old mama groundhog's nose. Buster's young pup got a little too close, and the old mama nipped him good on the nose. The pup learned mighty quick that groundhogs bite. The pup



Ray Graham on the Oceana bridge in 2006.

yowled and headed off for home just as fast as he could go.

Buster fell on the ground and rolled in the leaves laughing. We wanted to dig deeper and get the young ones, but a big rock was in the way and we had to give up. We started for home but suddenly we saw a copperhead, coiled and ready to strike. Oscar walked right up to it, took his mattock, and took a swing at the snake. He missed the snake but hit a nest of yellow jackets in the ground right next to the snake. We all took off running. Oscar was closest to the dogs running with the yellow jackets hanging on their fur. He was flinging his arms and yelling, trying to get the dogs to go another way but they weren't getting the message. Needless to say, Oscar's fun day was completely over — he must have been stung about 20 times. Buster and me got clean away.

Buster did catch other baby groundhogs though. One day we went to visit and "Billy," a baby groundhog, was in the house. Lula sat down on the couch and felt something touch her on the ankle. She jumped up off the couch screaming bloody murder because she thought it was a snake. It was just the groundhog looking

for something to eat. Again, Buster thought that was the most hilarious thing he had ever come across, but it took a while for Lula to settle back down. The bad thing about having groundhogs for pets is that they usually got meaner as they got older and eventually went back to the wild.

Entertainment was rare in the mountains, and we were forced to make our own. Many evenings, Buster would bring his old record player out on the porch with two stacks of records, turn up the volume, and country music would pour out over the mountains. Ella Jane often played a guitar, Buster his mandolin, and Velma and Ella Jane sang. Buster's wife just listened with the rest of us, shelling peas or stringing beans to hang to dry for "leather britches" depending on what was ripening in the garden. We also pitched a lot of horseshoes.

As the coal mines got slow, there weren't any other jobs in Wyoming County. When I got old enough, I worked hauling coal down the mountains from the auger strip mines in a two-ton dump truck. The augers would drill into the coal seam, and coal would be loaded by conveyers into the trucks. Bulldozers made "roads"

to get up and down the mountains. I was 17 and weighed probably 115 pounds. Guiding those heavily loaded trucks down rough, muddy, crooked, dangerous roads for a dollar an hour wasn't enough. By this time I had car payments, and northern money sounded pretty good.

Me, Frank, and my brother Virgil decided to look for work in Ohio. Frank was not happy at all in the north and returned home. I wasn't happy in the north either, and if I hadn't met Mary I never would have stayed. All three of my kids were born and grew up in the north. I have been satisfied living here but still want to go "home," especially in the last few years since I retired. Every time we head south, the Route 77 road signs make me excited.

I'm 78 years old now and still miss my mountain home. We do get in at least a couple of trips to West Virginia every year, and I still love driving those curvy back roads. I do believe it is "Almost Heaven." 🍁

RAY GRAHAM was born and raised in Wyoming County. As a young man he moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he spent the majority of his career in the automotive industry. He is now retired and spends his time as a grandparent, preacher, and musician. This is Ray's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.



Over the years New Martinsville has had a number of colorful citizens who can be classified as “characters,” but probably no one left a record quite like that of Dinger Daugherty.

Morris R. “Dinger” Daugherty (1895-1964).

Dinger Daugherty

By Sam
McColloch

Born in 1895, Morris Raymer “Dinger” Daugherty was known as the one-armed, legless aviator, who once attempted a trans-Atlantic flight from New Martinsville to Europe. His nickname came from his athletic prowess when someone remarked, “He sure is a humdinger!” In the days when everyone seemed to have some kind of nickname, this got shortened to “Dinger,” and stuck.

Dinger’s career encompassed stunt

flying, car racing, book writing, song composing, bloodhound breeding, various political posts, trained detective, motorcycle and bicycle riding, boat racing, small-scale inventions, and various other fields. His would be an amazing tale if it were told about a man with two healthy arms and two healthy legs. When you consider that Dinger had only one of his four limbs, having lost both legs and one arm in a near-fatal accident, the story becomes incredible.

Toasted from New York to Florida and landing in 30 states while (literally!) single-handedly piloting his planes, Dinger Daugherty was a nationally known figure in the “Roaring 20’s.” In spite of his severe handicap, Dinger supported himself and had been able to own an assortment of machines, vehicles, and contraptions, as well as a number of animals and birds. His backyard, trees and all, was covered with a large net to keep his birds and animals at home.

Up until Tuesday, July 30, 1918, Dinger Daugherty had been an athletic young man. He had left high school to complete a college business course in Wheeling. He then entered the law office of his grandfather, where he soon became experienced enough to try cases before a Justice of the Peace and the Mayor's Court.

Being an outdoors person, however, he soon tired of having an indoor job, so he accepted a position with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad as a patrolman. He had recently been elected constable, where he checked on truant schoolchildren and helped see that law and order were enforced in his territory. He had also received his draft notice to report into the service in two weeks, as World War I was raging in Europe and the United States had recently entered that conflict.

On that fateful Tuesday, the day of his life-changing accident, Dinger was patrolling the railroad, looking for tramps riding for free. A freight train rolled through New Martinsville, and Dinger was monitoring the train looking for hobos that he was instructed to roust off the train and arrest. He spotted two riding a

coal car near the end of the train. He was unable to signal the engineer to slow the train, so he swung aboard, climbed to the top of the cars, and headed in the direction of the tramps. Somehow he lost his footing on the swaying train and fell to the ground beneath the moving train where he was run over, costing him both legs, his right arm, and a broken back.

People who witnessed the accident felt he could not possibly live with such severe injuries, but Dinger took charge despite his condition and directed his friends in how to handle him. After treating him as best they could, his helpers called for a locomotive to transport him to the nearest medical facility, which at that time was the Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Glen Dale, about 30 miles up the Ohio River. At that time there was no medical facility in New Martinsville. The doctors in Glen Dale successfully treated his wounds, and Dinger spent 78 days in the hospital. After making a miraculous recovery, he decided he wanted a safer job, so he took up flying. And fly he did!

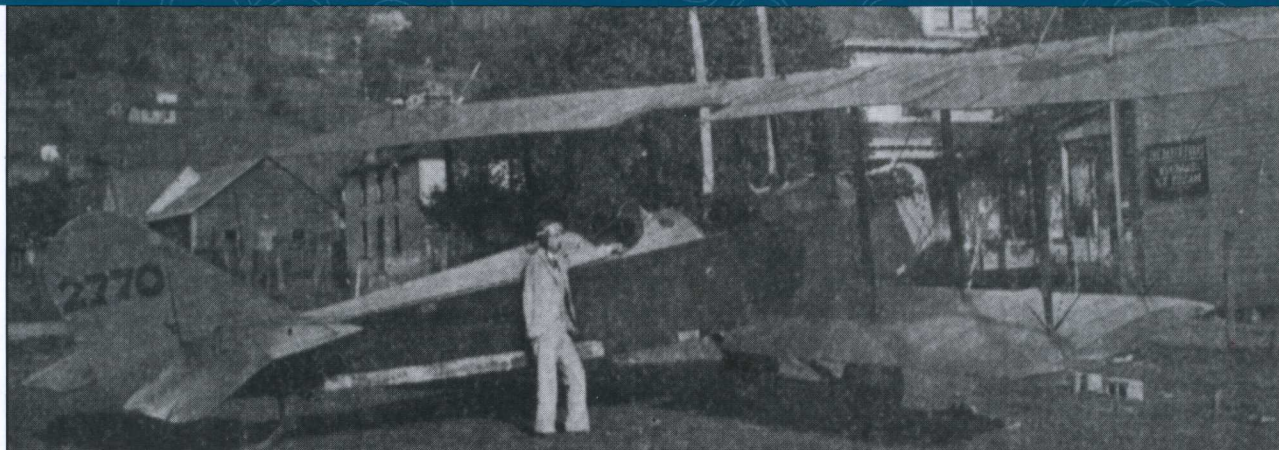
Dinger owned four different planes in his flying career, one of which cost

\$27.50 after it had been parked in a junkyard for 11 years. He became a stunt man with the famous Seaman's Flying Circus, and flew in all parts of the country. In a day when it was daring to step inside an airplane, Dinger was urging his rickety planes through thunderstorms and over hazardous mountain ranges, spreading the name of New Martinsville from coast to coast in a spectacular manner. He was welcomed, wined (in Prohibition Days), and dined every place he flew. The town of Sanford, Florida, even built a landing strip for him across from a cottage he rented. A New Martinsville contemporary of Dinger's was asked where he landed his plane. She immediately replied, "Wherever he wanted to."

The only known triple-amputee birdman, one of Dinger's most publicized ambitions was to fly the Atlantic. It is probably fortunate that he was stopped before he started across the deep blue sea, however, since odds were he'd have ended up in Davy Jones' Locker.

"I'll never forget that old plane," Dinger said when he was 62 years old. "It was an old rattletrap 1915 JI

New Martinsville's Fabulous Flying Fool



Dinger with a 1915 JI Standard biplane. Dinger landed this plane in 30 states. When he arrived at New York's Roosevelt Field, he was met by nearly 100 photographers and newsmen. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries.

Standard. I had it all wired together with baling wire. In fact, it was more baling wire than it was plane."

The rickety plane that Dinger had coaxed through 30 states got him to New York, where he had planned to raise funds for a better plane. But it took all his flying skill to accomplish this. He got caught in a vicious storm while crossing the Alleghenies. The raging winds pitched Dinger's plane hundreds of feet in the air and then smacked downward. Dinger pulled it through all right, though, and after resting at Gettysburg, he flew to Roosevelt Field, New York, where he was met by nearly 100 photographers and newsmen. Even several newsreel cameramen were at work filming Dinger's arrival.

"They looked my plane over, and a reporter said that darn thing's not safe to sit in, let alone fly," recalled Dinger.

The airport authorities took the same view of Dinger's unseemly craft and grounded him. For a while it looked as if the plane was headed for the graveyard. Dinger, with wings clipped, was stranded in New York with no way home until some friends from New Martinsville stopped at

his hotel and invited him to go to Canada, which he did.

"Boy, I was never gladder to see folks from the old hometown," Dinger said. "I remember John Emch, Bum Harman, Doc Pyles, and Joe Loehr all came along."

While in New York, Dinger took advantage of his "15 minutes of fame." He partook of the nightlife in the big city. At one event the manager recognized Dinger. The onstage performances were not going well, so the manager asked Dinger if he would consent to be introduced on the stage. Dinger said he would if the orchestra would play the Charleston, the popular dance of the time. After being introduced, Daugherty spoke briefly, explaining that he felt more like dancing than talking. To the accompaniment of a Charleston, he stepped around with all of the snap and fire of a man who had never even been frightened by a railroad train, much less run over by one. After acknowledging five curtain calls, he thanked his admirers for their lusty cheers.

He was then invited to the Silver Slipper Night Club, located in the heart of New York, where he gave

a talk and danced. Then he visited one of the large hospitals, where he talked to the patients who were able to listen. Later he made a speech under the "West Virginia Tree" at Columbia University.

He came back to the airfield and bribed a guard to look the other way while he lifted his flying orange crate skyward and headed home to the friendly little town on the banks of the Ohio. St. Louis could not have felt more for Charles Lindberg than New Martinsville did for Dinger, the Fabulous Flying Fool.

During his days as a stunt flyer with Seaman's Flying Circus, he successfully landed on a 100-foot runway in Akron on which previously only two men had ever brought down a plane. It was designed for dirigibles only.

"The runway was so blamed short that some men had to hold the tail of my plane while I revved it up. I flew so low over the lake, a guy fishing in a john boat had to duck," Dinger said.

Dinger's adventures were by no means confined to flying or to the 1920's. He developed into one of the best — if not *the* best — legless dancers in the history of the world.



In addition to his prowess as an aviator, Dinger was a dancer, racecar driver, dog breeder, patrolman, politician, inventor, author, musician, and composer. He is pictured here as the drummer with the Gold-Blue Troubadors Dance Orchestra in 1924. Photograph by Garnet Boothby.

With artificial limbs strapped on, Dinger not only danced slow dances but also even mastered the frantic steps of the frenzied age.

Dinger Daugherty's main claim to fame was his aerial prowess and other physical accomplishments such as dancing, driving cars, boats, and other conveyances. He also made his mark in the musical and literary worlds. While flying with Seaman's Flying Circus, Dinger collected material and wrote a booklet titled, *The Hobo of the Air*. Although the booklet did not reach the bestseller list, it was well-received by the large number of persons who had the opportunity to read it.

After he began to diminish his flying time, Dinger took a notion to write

songs. "I just wrote my songs according to my mood — however I felt at the time determined what sort of song I wrote," he said. Already known as "The Armless, Legless Wonder" and the "Flying Assessor" (he was once elected the Wetzel County Assessor), Dinger picked up another nickname when his songs made good — "The Songwriting Squire." Dinger penned 13 songs in his day and a few of them met with considerable success. He achieved enough prominence in the field to get some of his songs placed on jukeboxes. The "Musings" column in the *Wetzel Republican* newspaper from the 1940's mentioned that a local sport lost a bet when Dinger's compositions hit the downtown jukeboxes.

One of his popular successes, "How 'Bout de Fish Dinner Today," was inspired by a former well-known tavern keeper, Pete Altamese.

"I'll never forget Pete and his special fish dinner," Dinger said with a chuckle when reminiscing over his songwriting days. Among his other successful songs were: "Mister, I'd Like to be Your Baby," "Little Pal," "Meet Me Wednesday Afternoon," "I'm Crazy, Dear, Over You," "I'd Like to Write a Song," and "How Far is That Rainbow?" Many Wetzel countians remember Dinger as a feature attraction at Lion's Club minstrels a few years back, dancing and singing his own songs.

One short-lived Dinger endeavor was a pool room. He later sold out and became a candidate for Justice of the Peace of Magnolia District. After serving a two-year term in this office, he ran for, and was elected, Assessor of Wetzel County.

A funny incident occurred during the election campaign. Dinger decided he needed a horse for campaigning, and a neighbor sold him a Mexican pony that was promised to be "as gentle as a lamb." The first thing the pony did was to run away with Dinger aboard. He had no riding experience and was highly embarrassed when the mustang ran helter-skelter through the streets of New Martinsville, with Dinger's coattail flapping about. One artificial

leg came loose and fell off before the pony exhausted himself. Unable to walk with only one artificial leg, Dinger didn't dare dismount. Eventually Dinger and the pony made peace and went back to find the missing leg. They later campaigned together, and he won the election.

It was mentioned that Dinger was also an inventor. A short paragraph in the local paper on May 12, 1922, said that Dinger had invented "the most ingenious device for catching rats." The parts were to be made in Cincinnati and assembled in New Martinsville, but this project was abandoned for an undisclosed reason.

A young neighbor who often cut through Dinger's yard on the way to school described another Dinger invention. He found Dinger seated in a comfortable chair watching his remote-controlled lawnmower circle the yard long before such devices became readily available. The neighbor commented, "I guess I didn't know I was in the presence of a real legend at the time. He was a very hospitable person." That was probably around 1950.

Dinger died in 1964, at age 69. It was yet another remarkable accomplishment for him to have lived that long, with a life of many adventures, as one who had earlier been so close to death apparently on a number of occasions. Dinger's achievements and stories will live on. He was a man of exceptional perseverance and courage — a man with "true grit." 🍁

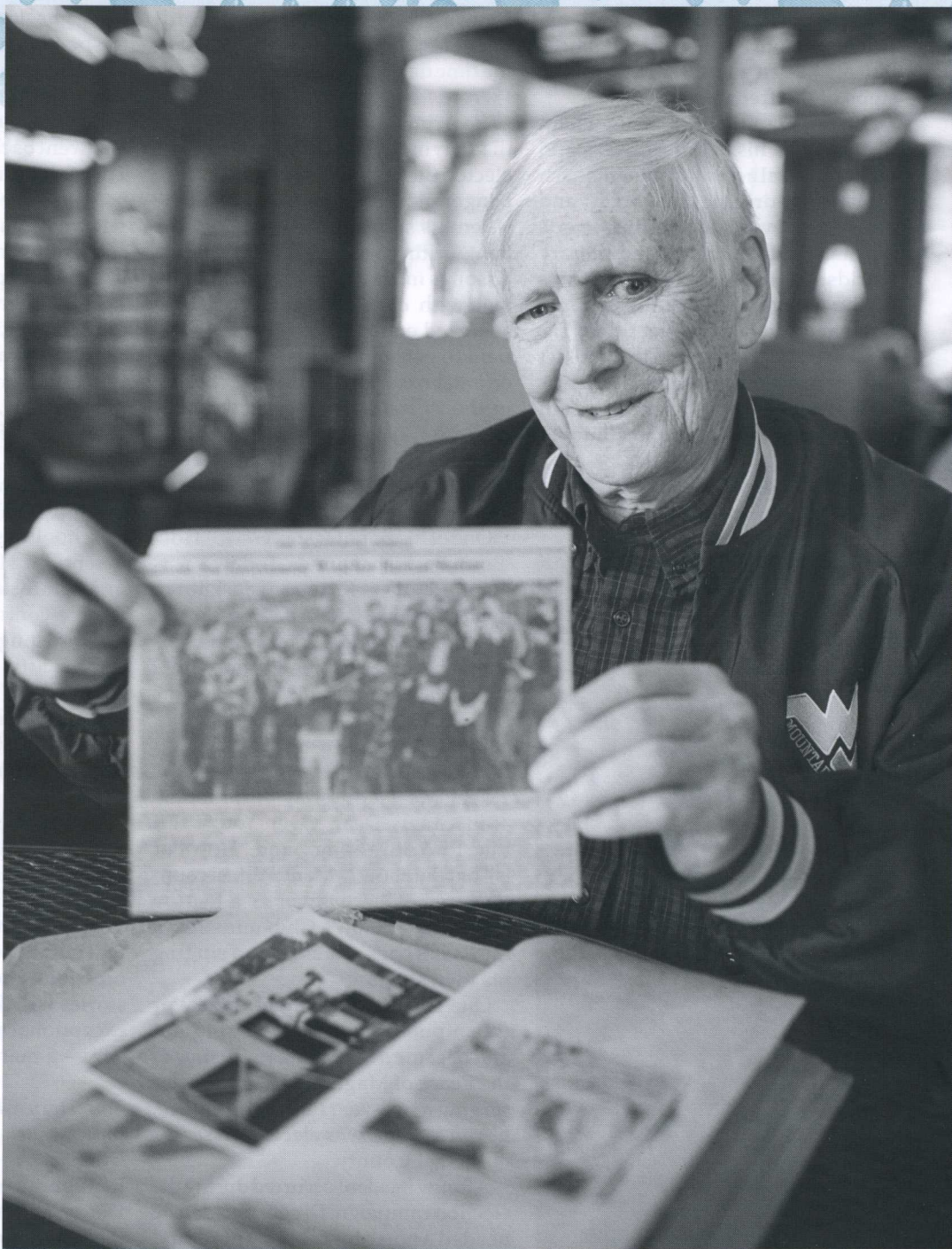
This story was compiled from several sources, including an interview by the late Sam A. Chapman in the Wetzel Republican in 1957. Another source was Dinger's autobiography, The Hobo of the Air. A number of friends made significant contributions of photographs and anecdotes, and the story was made better thanks to them. — Sam McColloch

SAM MCCOLLOCH was born in Wetzel County. A graduate of West Virginia University, he worked as a geologist for Shell Oil Company for 28 years and now lives in Texas. His photography appeared in our Spring 2013 issue; this is Sam's first contribution to GOLDENSEAL as an author.



Dinger Daugherty showing his artificial limbs. He lost both legs and one arm in 1918 when he fell under a moving train while working as a railroad patrolman. Photograph courtesy of the West Virginia and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries.

Henry Ruppenthal III of Wheeling recalls his days as a cooperative weather observer while a young man in Morgan County. Photograph by Carl E. Feather.



Henry Ruppenthal III

Henry Ruppenthal III of Wheeling can tell you what the weather was like in Berkeley Springs on December 21, 1949. Indeed, Henry has all the weather records for that community for 18 years, starting with October 22, 1948.

That's the day Henry — 11 years, 10 months, and 23 days old at the time — was appointed a cooperative weather observer (CWO) for Berkeley Springs. At the time, Henry was the youngest observer in the United States. To the best of his knowledge, his record has not been surpassed for that particular assignment.

The CWO program was established in 1890 and continues to this day under the direction of the National Weather Service (NWS). According to the NWS Web site, there is no minimum age for becoming an observer, but certain skills are required. The monitoring stations and volunteer observers who staff them are recruited by the field staff of the 121 NWS Weather Forecast Offices. Generally there is one station for every 625 square miles of the United States.

Melody Magnus of the NWS says that the service does not typically accept teenaged or younger applicants because they are "unlikely to continue living at their parents' address for more than 10 years." She points out that climate data (from the same location) increases in value over time.

Jim Zdrojewski of the NWS says the service does not keep statistics on the youngest observer in the program's long history. However, he says the service has families who have passed the observation task from generation to generation, thus young people in these families are exposed to the work and the disciplines involved.

"There are families that have taken observations for well over 100 years. In fact, [in 2014] we are awarding one such family that has been taking observations for 125 years," Jim wrote in an e-mail.

It was Victor T. Horn, official in charge at the Weather Bureau's office in Parkersburg, who appointed young Henry in 1948. The lad worked under the supervision of his father, Henry Ruppenthal II, the county's only professional photographer and a camera store owner.

Henry III says it was his father's professional connections that first brought the weather-observer opportunity to his attention.



Henry pours precipitation from one container to another for measuring purposes, in about 1949. At the time, Henry was considered the youngest weather observer in the country. Photograph by Ruppenthal.

"He was well-known around the area, and he had heard about it," Henry says. "He had a camera store and did studio photography, portraits, school pictures, newspaper pictures. He found out about it and told me about it."

The family lived on a farm along Route 522, and the weather station

Never Too Young to Be a Weatherman

By
Carl E. Feather

was set up in an open area on the Ruppenthal property. The open location ensured that shade would not skew the conditions recorded by the thermometer or precipitation gauge.

"The Weather Bureau provided all this equipment and set it up for me. Every so often, someone would come by and make sure everything was working properly," Henry says.

The equipment is housed in wooden boxes with louvered sides, painted white, and supported by wooden legs. The Weather Bureau maintains the enclosures, as well.

"There was space at the top of the roof so air would flow through it. It was the air temperature in there, not affected by the sun or the radiation on

the roof," that was recorded, Henry says.

An alcohol thermometer recorded the low temperature of the prior 24-hour period. A black indicator tracked the temperature until it reached the low and then stayed there, awaiting Henry to record the number.

Likewise, a device on a mercury thermometer tracked the temperature and locked in at the high for the period. Henry had to "spin down" the thermometer after taking a reading, and he admits to occasionally breaking the delicate tube.

Henry also took precipitation measurements for the prior 24 hours. A device collected both rainwater and snow. The latter was melted on a ra-

diator in the house, and the resulting water poured into another container for measurement, to an accuracy of 1/100th of an inch. Although it varied from snowfall to snowfall, in general, 10 inches of snow equaled about one inch of water, Henry says.

He also took measurements of snowfall on the ground each day, taking care to find a place in the yard where the snow had not drifted. His report also had to make note of any unusual weather phenomena, such as high winds, hail, sleet, thunderstorms, or blizzards. If it rained or snowed, he was to record the time the incident began and ceased.

The daily measurements had to be recorded at 6 p.m. every day. If Henry had a school activity or other commitment, he made arrangements for another responsible party to make the measurements and reset the equipment. That was often his brother, Virgil, or sisters Judy or Ronnie Sue.

"My father being a photographer, we were not away from the house very often," Henry says.

He also credits his father's line of work for the publicity that Henry received for his job. Because of his father's connections to the local newspaper, the *Martinsburg Journal*, and print media in general, Henry often found himself in the news. A scrapbook contains several articles from West Virginia newspapers about the 12-year-old weatherman. A photo and story published in the *Journal* when Henry was in eighth grade tells of students and teachers from Berkeley Springs High School making a field trip to Henry's weather observation station. The eighth grader enlightened the students and faculty on the importance of his work and how it was conducted.

The *New York Times* picked up the story about Henry and published an article on November 20, 1948, about this "12-year-old 'weather man.'" The newspaper quoted a letter that Henry had received from Horn, the Weather Bureau director at Parkersburg: "We have looked over your completed form for October and find your entries are almost perfect — you



This cartoon by Stookie Allen was published nationally in December 1948. Henry briefly became a national celebrity due to his being such a youthful weatherman.



In 1967, Henry, at left, handed over his records and weather-observing responsibilities to Kenneth Robertson, manager of radio station WCST. Photograph by Ruppenthal.

seem to be off to an excellent start in your observation work."

The novelty of his work also caught the attention of *The Washington Evening Star*, *The American Farm Youth*, *The American Weekly*, *The Market Bulletin*, and the syndicated cartoons "Teen-age Triumphs" by Stookie Allen, and "Strange As it Seems" by Ernest Hix. The latter's cartoon, featuring a drawing of Henry, was published in the *Honolulu Advertiser* on June 4, 1949. His work even earned a one-paragraph summary in *True Love* magazine, June 1967.

Because he had his fingers on the pulse of Berkeley Springs weather, Henry provided a daily weather report to the local radio station, and he supplied the *Journal* and *Morgan Messenger* newspapers with weather data for publication.

He says the combination of media coverage and being a son of the county's only professional photographer definitely helped him attain a celebrity status in the community. But he stayed true to his duties long after media coverage faded, keeping records throughout junior and senior high school. After graduation from high school, Henry got a job with the Baltimore Gas & Electric Company, where he worked 3½ years.

"I think [weather observation] was good training for keeping to a

schedule," he says.

Henry remained the observer of record during that time, although his siblings and father were actually making the observations. Henry returned to Morgan County and, while living at his parents' farm with his wife, continued his observation work while earning his degree at Shepherd College.

He also kept up with the observation work while teaching in a one-room school at Cherry Run, Morgan County. The following school year, he taught business and math courses at Berkeley High. He discovered that he had an interest in child welfare that extended outside the classroom, so Henry left education to become a child welfare worker with Morgan County.

That career change would eventually require Henry to relinquish his work as an observer. As he moved up the ranks in the Department of Welfare and into a supervisory position, his work took him away from the Eastern Panhandle. On June 12, 1967, the last picture of Henry Ruppenthal III as weather observer was printed in the *Journal*. The picture shows Henry turning over the records to Kenneth Robertson, who was manager of the radio station WCST.

Henry moved around West Virginia with his child welfare job. After retiring from the state, he worked for the

U.S. Census Bureau, then got a job in information technology that took him from Charleston to the Virgin Islands, Rhode Island, and Maine. In April 2012, he returned to his home state, settling down in Wheeling.

His 18 years of weather records remain in his care, although Henry is in the process of scanning and discarding the originals once they are digitized.

Although the job required accuracy, commitment, and a fair amount of time, there was no compensation. Henry says the work gave him a lifelong interest in weather, and he feels that, when provided with the pertinent information, he can make as good of an educated forecast as the professionals on television. While he thought about going into meteorology while in college, Henry found his path into education, social work, and information technology to be very rewarding.

"I had an original Radio Shack computer, and I was really fascinated with that," Henry says. "I was able to get into that field, and it's been an excellent vocation." 🌿

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.

Paying Respects

Text and photographs
by Kevin Payne

John W. Payne was born in Barbour County in 1920, the son of Pearl (Lantz) Payne and Lewis W. Payne. After graduating from Belington High School, John moved to Baltimore, Maryland, and worked for Glenn L. Martin Aircraft.

During WWII, he served as an aerial engineer in the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron in the Pacific. After VJ Day, he served in the U.S. Air Force reserves and was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. In the 1950's, John moved to Columbus, Ohio, to work at North American Aircraft Corporation. He married Norma Sinsel from Belington, whom he had met at Corley Church, located about halfway between Philippi and Belington.

John retired from a management position with CVI Corporation in the mid-1980's. Now in his early 90's, he remains very active. His three children and seven grandchildren help to keep him busy. He still goes fishing when he can find the time, and, whenever circumstances allow, he loves returning to his home state of West Virginia.

John has seen a lot of changes over the course of his lifetime. I recently had a chance to talk with him about some of the customs regarding funerals and wakes in north-central West Virginia, and how they are different from what they were 80 or so years ago. — Kevin Payne



Wake and Funeral Traditions of Barbour County

Kevin Payne: What's the earliest funeral you can recall going to?

John W. Payne: The very first one that I can remember was of my uncle John Payne, whom I was named after and who died in 1928.

For all of his life, Uncle John had suffered from severe high blood pressure. Over the years, the doctors had given him a little medication, but the main treatment they had prescribed for him was bloodletting. In those days, the theory was that if there were less blood pumping through the veins and arteries then the pressure would automatically go down all by itself. So the doctors

would routinely pierce one of Uncle John's veins with a needle that was connected to a tube and let his blood drain down into a tin pot.

But even in spite of all his doctors' care, Uncle John's health took a turn for the worse. Because he had never married and lived alone, he was taken from his own home to the house of his aunt, Caroline Thompson White, who lived on Mouse Run Road, which was near the vicinity of my family's farm.

A few weeks later, I was out toiling in the fields with my Uncle Ed Lantz and my brother Arnold, who was two years older than I was. My Uncle Ed was working a team of

horses when he suddenly pulled them to a stop. In the stillness, we could all hear the unmistakable mournful sounds of someone blowing on a conch shell. Since the noises were coming from the direction of Aunt Caroline's house, we all three knew what that meant. We immediately stopped working and headed home with heavy hearts.

KP. Did you say somebody was blowing on a conch shell?

JWP. Yes, that's what I said, a conch shell. That's how the people in the surrounding countryside communicated with each other back then. You



John W. Payne, of Columbus, Ohio, was born in Barbour County in 1920.

have to remember that there weren't any cell phones back in those days. Very few people even had a landline telephone back then. So blowing on a conch shell was the only thing most people had for long-distance communication.

Now if you heard a conch shell blowing towards evening, it usually meant that somebody was just calling his or her family in for supper. But if you heard one blowing at another time of the day or the night, it could mean that somebody was sick and needed help, or there was a fire, or there had been an accident in one of the mines, and people would go running.

In this case, when we heard the sound of the conch shell, we knew that it was a signal that Uncle John had passed away.

KP. What happened after that? Was Uncle John's body taken to a funeral home?

JWP. As far as I can recall, funeral homes didn't come into vogue in that part of West Virginia until the 1940's. So until then, an undertaker would actually come out to the house.

In the case of my Uncle John, the Runner Undertakers of Elkins were hired to take care of things. However, before they showed up, the whole area was hit with a torrential rainstorm that flooded the Mouse Run Road. So the Runners' hearse had to detour through our fields in order to get to Uncle John's house. The undertakers had brought a casket with them and all the supplies that they needed to embalm the body right there at the house. After they were done, they placed the remains in the casket and set it up in the biggest room in the house, in this case it was the living room.

KP. That's sounds like it would be kind of hard on the family, having the deceased right in the house.

JWP. In some ways it was. Unlike a funeral home, there were no set visiting hours, so from early morning

to late at night, there was a steady stream of neighbors and relatives all wanting to pay their respects.

It was customary that at least one awake person was always supposed to be with the body, even during the overnight hours. Some say that that's where the term "wake" came from. Anyway, usually a neighbor or a friend would volunteer to sit with the body so that the members of the family were able to get a little sleep.

KP. How long would the body be displayed in the house like that?

JWP. The customary time was three days.

KP. Was the funeral service actually held inside the home also?

JWP. No, the service would usually be held at a church. I can only recall

one that was actually held inside somebody's home. In my Uncle John's case, his service was to be held at Jerusalem Church.

The Runner Undertakers provided a long, black, eight-passenger limousine for us family members. I remember sitting on one of the fold-down seats. Our car was a Ford Model-T touring car with a cloth top, so I was really impressed at getting to ride in such a luxurious automobile.

Back then, just about everybody in the whole community would turn out for a funeral service. Men would take off from work, and teachers would even dismiss students from school if they were attending a funeral — regardless of whether the student was actually related to the deceased or not. Everyone felt that paying their respects to the dead was both an honor and a duty; it was just something that everybody did, regardless if they even knew the deceased or not.



Uncle John Payne, for whom John W. Payne was named. The passing of his uncle in 1928 resulted in the first funeral John W. Payne recalls. Photographer unknown.

KP. Can you remember attending a funeral service where the church wasn't big enough to accommodate all the mourners?

JWP. Oh, yes, that happened quite a lot back then. I can remember when it happened at the funeral of one of my great-uncles, Sam Lantz.

When Sam passed away, his funeral was held at the Valley Bend Baptist Church. My great-uncle was actually a member of the Corley United Brethren Church, but they could never have any funerals there because the one single aisle in their sanctuary just wasn't wide enough to pass a casket down its length. Six of Sam's grandsons served as pallbearers. Two preachers conducted the service. One was the preacher from the Corley United Brethren Church. The other was Reverend Troy Lantz, a relative of the deceased.

Even though Valley Bend Church was one of the largest in the area at that time, it still wasn't big enough to accommodate all the mourners. So many relatives, friends, and acquaintances showed up that a great number of them had to stand outside

the church and listen to the service through the open windows.

KP. You said earlier that you could only recall one time when the service was actually held at the deceased's home. Can you tell me about that?

JWP. Sure. It was at the home of a man named Santford Poling. When Mr. Poling passed away, since he had a rather small family, his relatives decided that it would probably be appropriate to just conduct the funeral service right there in his living room. So that's what they did. But they didn't count on so many of his friends and neighbors showing up, all of who had to walk a very long way over mountain roads just to get there. In fact there was such a big crowd, that many people had to listen to the service while outside on the front porch or out on the lawn. Just like what happened at my great-uncle Sam Lantz's funeral.

Burr Shockey, a preacher from the Mount Liberty Church of Christ, conducted the service. Like a lot of other ministers back then, he had to make his livelihood at something

besides just preaching, so he was also a farmer and possibly even did some mining.

After the service, the casket was brought out of the house and placed in what was then called a funeral coach, today what we'd call a hearse. Now, Santford's home was located several hundred yards off of Mount Liberty Road, and the only way to get to it was on a dirt-covered wagon lane that wasn't much more than a trail, except wider. The funeral coach had made it to the house without any problems because it was all downhill. But getting it back out onto the main road proved to be quite a problem.

Just as the coach started up the steep slope, it started sliding backwards. Several more tries all ended up the same way. Finally, the driver floorboarded the accelerator, but this time the coach nearly slid off the wagon road and almost overturned. After a long conference, they came up with another plan of action. Since there were so many men there, they surrounded the sides and rear of the coach and pushed as the driver accelerated. It was rather hazardous for the men involved, but they did it



John W. Payne shows a conch shell to his granddaughters Sheila (left) and Shelleigh Harris.

anyway. After a lot of arduous labor and effort, they finally managed to push the coach more than 100 yards up the embankment and out onto the main road.

KP. Were the services themselves conducted like the ones are today?

JWP. More or less it was the same format, but there were a couple of differences that I can recall. For instance, today it seems a lot of the music at the services either comes from an organ or it's prerecorded and played through loudspeakers. Back then the church's choir usually provided the music, although at times, everyone present would sing songs right out of the hymnals.

Another difference is that now the body of the deceased is already laying in state when you arrive at the funeral service. But back then it wouldn't be. Right at the beginning of the service, six pallbearers would carry the casket down the aisle and place it in the front of the church. Then usually as a rule they would raise the casket's lid. Right behind them, a line of girls and young la-

dies, who were usually related to the deceased, would each carry one of the bouquets of flowers down the aisle and place them on either side of the casket.

At the conclusion of the service, the pallbearers would carry the casket out of the church with all the young ladies carrying flowers filing out right behind them. That's something you don't see anymore.

KP. Earlier, you said that it was the custom for somebody to always be with the body, even during the over-night hours. Did you ever do that?

JWP. Yes, on occasion. I can particularly remember the first time I did it. There was a farm right next to ours, right off of old Route 250. During the years of my youth, this farm changed ownership many times. And it always seemed that the people who lived there either suffered some kind of misfortune or had an early death in the family.

For instance, one husband and wife who lived there for a time had some pretty serious domestic problems that always got worse after he drank too

much. Whenever things got particularly bad and he threatened to kill her, she would run out of the house and hide. At night he would take his gun in one hand and a spotlight in the other, and he would go up into the hills and search for her for hours. This happened so often that people in the area nicknamed him the "Night Hawk." Sometimes she would just hide out in the bushes until the next morning, and at other times she would seek refuge in the house of a neighbor. Many times she would go to the home of one of my great-aunts, Matilda Lantz, and seek refuge there. Usually after the man got tired of seeking his wife out in the hills, he would go around to all his neighbors and pound on their front doors, demanding to know if his wife was hiding inside. My great-aunt Matilda ended up saving this woman's life on numerous occasions. Even though he was armed, my great-aunt would refuse to be buffaloeed and would send the man away without surrendering his wife to him. Eventually the man and wife parted ways, and they both moved away. But that was just the beginning of the unfortunate circumstances that seemed to plague the inhabitants of this farm.

There was a Mrs. Hathaway who lived there. One day she was at a picnic and a bee stung her right on the lip. She was so allergic to bee venom that she ended up dying from it. Another resident of the farm, Andy Cox, who was the grandfather of the woman who would eventually become my wife [Norma Sinsell], was killed in the mines. Another man moved in, and he was killed when a tractor rolled over on him when he was out plowing a field. The Zurkle family moved in next. Soon thereafter the husband and father, Ray, was killed in one of the coal mines. His body was brought to his home and laid out in the living room. Even though I was only a teenager at the time, I was one of the people who agreed to stay up all night with the body.

KP. Tell us about that.



Jerusalem Church near Belington, Barbour County.

JWP. Relatives, neighbors, friends, and coworkers from all over came to pay their respects. From the early morning on through the afternoon and until quite late at night, there was just a steady stream of mourners.

Finally about midnight the last of the mourners had gone home. Three of us had agreed to spend the night: me, my uncle Ed Lantz, and another neighbor of ours named Alma Bosley. All the family members had retired to their beds except for Ray Zurkle's mother-in-law. She lived there also but she was too worked up to go to bed, so she ended up staying up most of the night with us three.

Back then whenever there was a death in the family, every clock in the house would be stopped. As the hours crept by that night, and I started getting sleepier and sleepier, I kept looking at one of the clocks and truly got the feeling that time

was indeed standing still. I nodded off a few times, and so did Uncle Ed, so we started drinking plenty of hot coffee. Alma was a brilliant conversationalist and could discuss just about any subject under the sun, so talking and listening to her also kept us awake.

It was customary to sit near the body, but sometime during the night we had all meandered into the kitchen where some of the family's neighbors had left some food out for us. After a while, Ray's mother-in-law walked back into the living room, and suddenly we heard a loud "scat," a hiss, and a thump so we rushed out to see what was going on. It seems the family's cat, which usually stayed outside, had gotten into the living room and had jumped up into the casket. After we put the cat back outside, for the rest of the night we made sure that there was

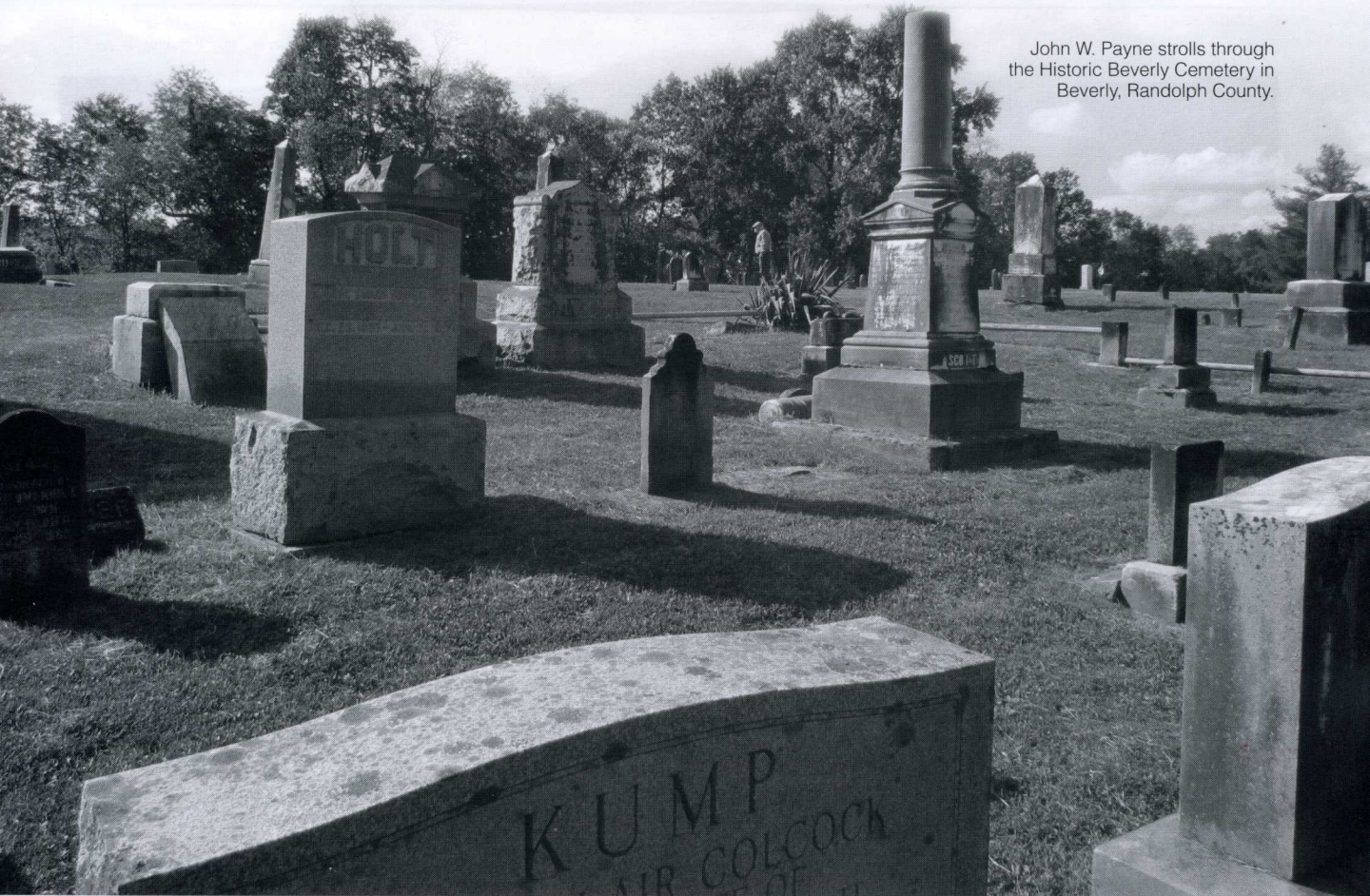
at least one of us with the body at all times.

KP. Anything you'd like to add in summing everything up?

JWP. Well, maybe over the years some of the customs may have changed, but the needs of people haven't. They still need a way to release their grief and pain during one of the most challenging times of their lives. Hopefully as friends and family, we can provide at least some small measure of comfort to those who are suffering.

KP. Thank you for sharing with us today. 🍁

KEVIN PAYNE is from Columbus, Ohio, and a graduate of Capital University. He has worked as a professional photographer, graphic designer, novelist, and artist. His most recent contribution to GOLDENSEAL appeared in our Summer 2011 issue.



John W. Payne strolls through the Historic Beverly Cemetery in Beverly, Randolph County.

Wheeling Photographer

Wheeling has been associated with a number of accomplished photographers over the past 160 years. Names like Partridge and Plummer in the 19th century gave way to the likes of Kossuth and Gruber in the 20th century, among many others. A name certainly deserving to be included among the greats, although often overlooked, is Edward "Eddie" Martin.

By Jon-Erik Gilot

Below: 10th Street entrance to the Wheeling Suspension Bridge.
All photographs by Eddie Martin, dates unknown unless otherwise noted.

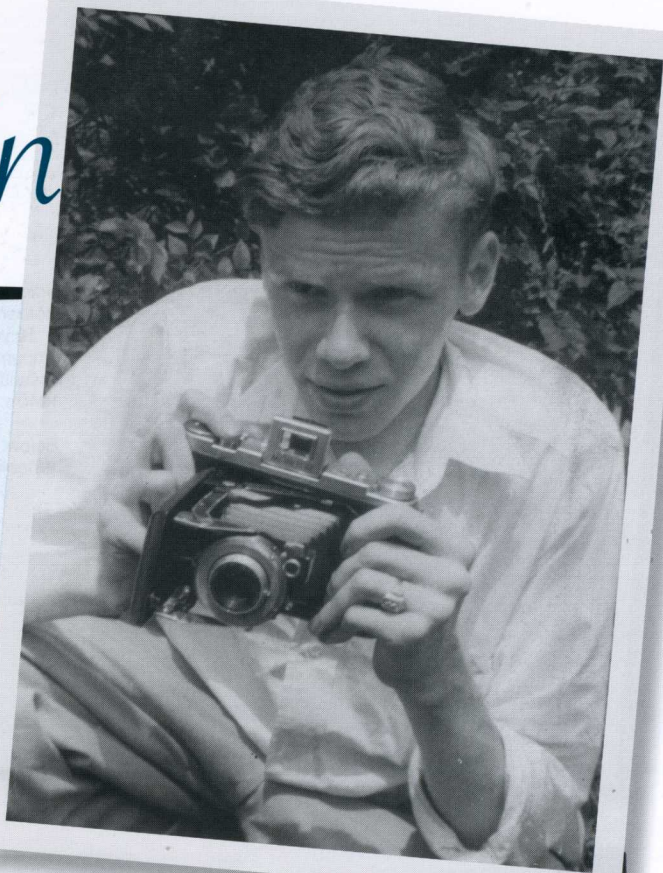
Below right: Parade in downtown Wheeling on November 22, 1940. Eddie Martin was 18 years old at the time he shot this photograph.

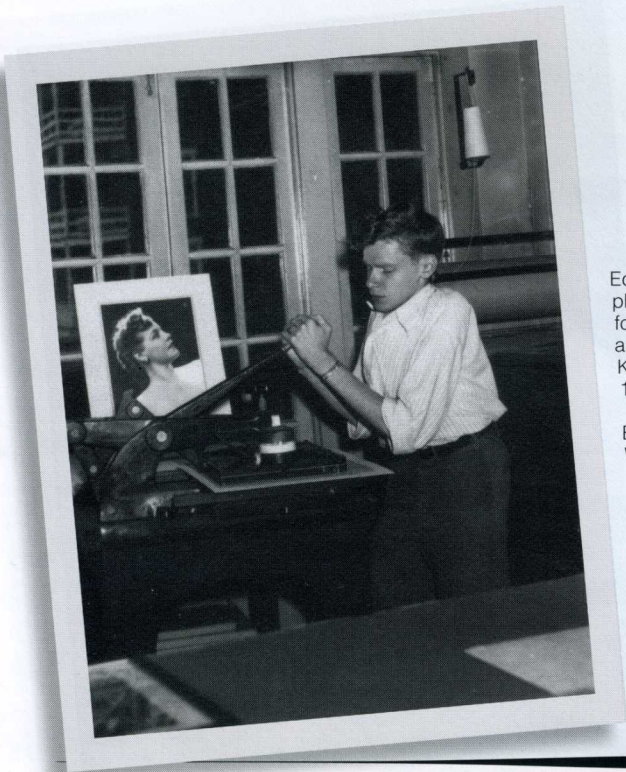


Eddie Martin

Martin was born in North Wheeling on March 26, 1922, the youngest child of German immigrants Louis and Elizabeth Schoen Martin. Eddie suffered from a physical disability throughout his life, a spine disfigurement causing a short stature, hunched back, and

Eddie Martin
(1922-1988).
Photographer
unknown.





Eddie worked for Wheeling photographer George Kossuth for 16 years. Here he operates a mounting press in the Kossuth studio in the late 1940's. Photographer unknown.

Below: Parade in North Wheeling.

broad chest. Often using crutches, he was forced to sit while going up or down stairs. He took to photography at an early age and would not let his disability hinder him from scaling walls or climbing rooftops to secure the perfect photo.

The Martins were devout Catholics and loyal parishioners at Sacred Heart Church on North Main Street in Wheeling. Eddie's sister Gertrude would clean the church while his



brother Robert operated the lighting and speaker system. Eddie and Robert operated two printing presses in the basement of their home, where for many years they would produce the weekly bulletins for Sacred Heart and numerous other Wheeling parishes. All three children were graduates of Sacred Heart School.

From 1944 to 1960 Eddie apprenticed under noted Wheeling photographer George J. Kossuth.

Under Kossuth, Eddie graduated from an amateur to a professional photographer and became a carefully practiced colorist. (Prior to color photography, black-and-white photos were hand-tinted to achieve a colorized effect.) During this time, Eddie would photograph operatic greats Jerome Hines and Wheeling native Eleanor Steber, becoming her close friend and the famed soprano's preferred colorist.

Following Kossuth's death in 1960, Eddie went to work for noted Wheeling photographer and Kossuth protégé, Charles F. Gruber. While working for Gruber, Eddie developed a close working relationship with the Diocese of Wheeling and the many Catholic schools in the area. Later operating under the Martin Photography imprint, Eddie would take class photographs and student portraits for many of the Catholic

Right: A crowd gathers while fire engulfs buildings between the Ohio River and the railroad tracks.

Below: A devout Roman Catholic, Eddie had a close relationship with the Diocese of Wheeling. Here he photographed nuns, nurses, and patients at Wheeling Hospital.

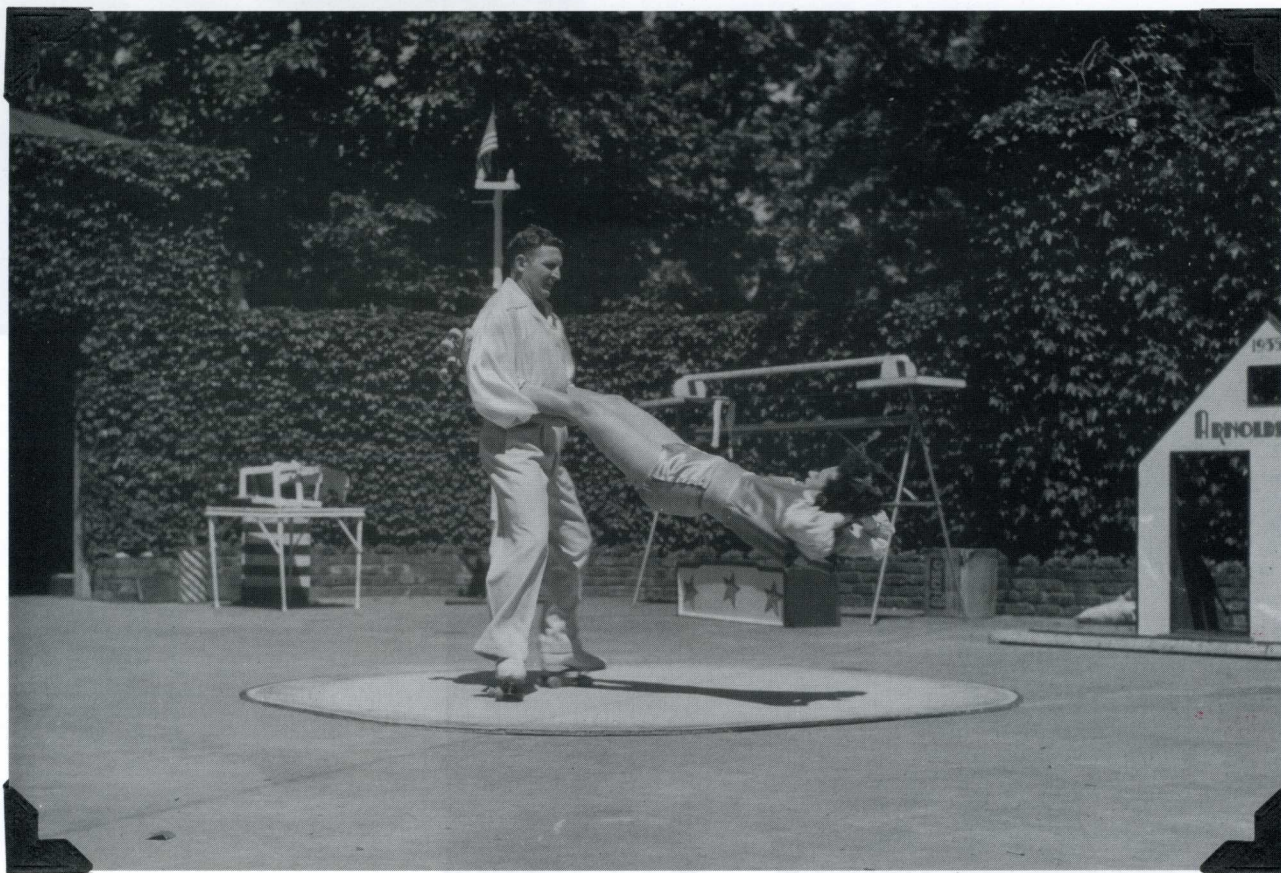




Left: Floodwaters run through the streets of Wheeling.

Below: Circus act at Oglebay Park.

Below right: Fort Henry Bridge.



schools in the Wheeling area. His short stature and childlike appearance endeared him to the students.

In addition to photography, Eddie held a lifelong passion for building miniature models and dioramas. Paying attention to the most minute of details, Eddie would often spend weeks or months creating highly detailed miniatures of circuses, landscapes, and villages. His annual nativity scenes and Christmas villages were the delight of children and adults for decades. Following his death, many of Eddie's miniatures were donated and displayed at the

Oglebay Museums while still others remain in private hands.

Eddie's photography waned in later years as his health deteriorated. A lifelong smoking habit (rather than business cards, Eddie was known to hand out packs of matches emblazoned with his name) and his disability forced Eddie to be placed on oxygen before succumbing on March 25, 1988, just one day prior to his 66th birthday. Family friend and caretaker Bill O'Leary would receive the majority of Eddie's photographs from Gertrude Martin's estate. Bill had the foresight to donate the vast

majority of Martin's photographs and negatives to the Archives of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, where today the photographs are being scanned for eventual inclusion in a Web-based archives database. The Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation recently scanned several of the photographs as part of the Wheeling history timeline on their revamped Web site.

While Eddie Martin's professional photographs display his skill, it is his personal and amateur photographs that exhibit his artistry and personality. His earliest photographs from the





1930's document his neighborhood, family, and friends — streetcars in North Wheeling, family picnics at a nearby park, and sneaking cigarettes with friends near the railroad tracks behind his house. Eddie painstakingly photographed each rally, parade, and scrap metal drive around Wheeling during World War II, no doubt feeling left behind as his closest friends and neighbors enlisted for the war effort while his own disability kept him home. He documented fires, floods, and community events not in singular photographs, but in detailed

series. He carefully documented construction of the Fort Henry Bridge near his home in Wheeling, and his casual street-scene photographs offer views of bustling neighborhoods and buildings no longer extant.

Unfortunately for those left to enjoy his photographs, Martin did not label or otherwise identify his subjects. Of the hundreds of photographs that compose the Edward A. Martin Collection in the Archives of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, only a handful are identified or dated in Eddie's own hand. Perhaps Eddie

felt his personal photos were for his own interest, and therefore he did not see the need in documenting names, dates, and locations. Work is underway with those who knew Eddie Martin and knew Wheeling during his time to assist in identifying his photographs. 🍁

Special thanks to Bill O'Leary of Wheeling for sharing his memories and photographs of Eddie Martin.

JON-ERIK GILOT of Wheeling is director of Archives & Records for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. This is his first contribution to GOLDENSEAL.

Left: First National Bank, Kloss Towers.

Below: Scrap metal drive on May 17, 1942.



West Virginia Back Roads →

Text and photographs by
Carl E. Feather

Keeping an Eye on the Wheeling Suspension Bridge

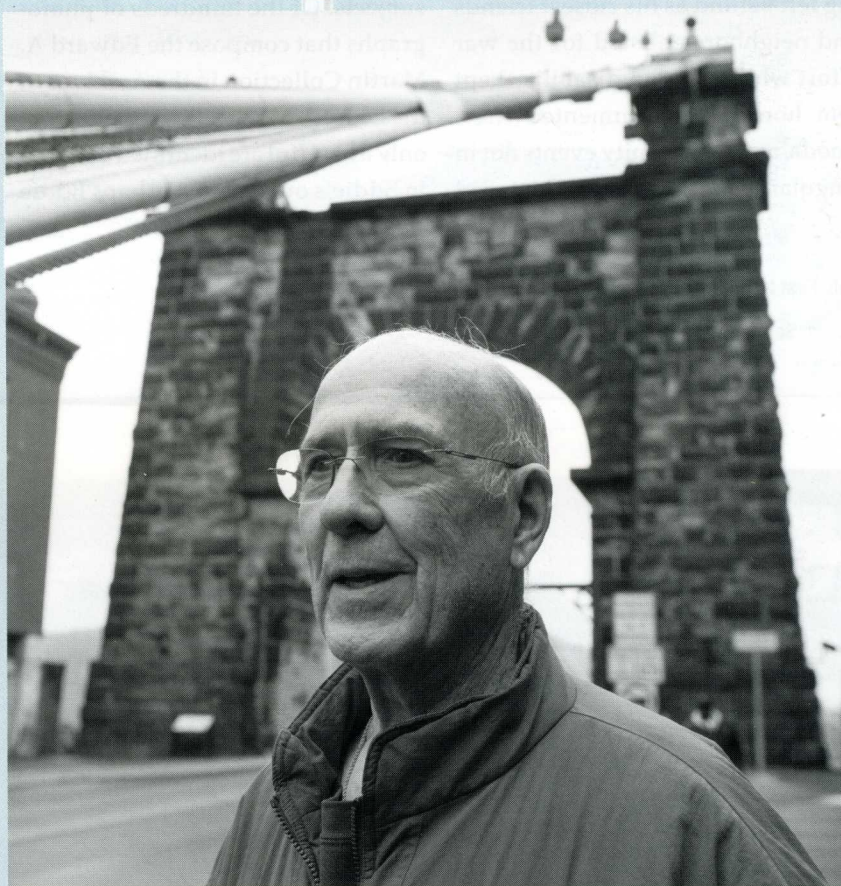
Dick Clark talks about the Wheeling Suspension Bridge as if it were an old friend or neighbor, both of which are the case. "Dick's Bridge," as locals sometimes refer to the historic structure, was built nearly 90 years before Dick was born. Nevertheless, the 78-year-old London, Ohio, native has a soft spot for this grand span across the Ohio River between Wheeling Island and the city.

Its east portal is immediately south of Knight's Inn, formerly Wheeling Inn, in the heart of Wheeling. Dick lives in the hotel and serves as its desk clerk and troubleshooter. A resident of the greater Wheeling area since 1975, Dick admits that the bridge, like most landmarks, suffers from familiarity.

"I never paid any attention to that bridge until I came here [Knight's Inn]," Dick tells me as we sit in the hotel's lobby. "I started to study the thing, and I had to ask, 'How did they do that?'"

When the 1,040-foot suspension bridge was opened in 1849, it was the longest bridge of its kind in the world. Although the bridge held that distinction for only two years, Dick still marvels at this work of engineering, which carries two lanes of motorized traffic across the Ohio River on U.S. Route 40.

Dick loves to talk about the bridge and eagerly gives a brief tour if the visitor is interested. Dick pauses at the 12 original steel cables that support the bridge and disappear into wooden enclosures near Main Street. He says those cables actually extend



Dick Clark of Wheeling stands at the east entrance to the historic Wheeling Suspension Bridge. Desk clerk at a neighboring motel, Dick enjoys talking about the bridge's history to anyone who shows an interest in listening.

under the streets for another two city blocks before terminating in concrete.

Although functional, the bridge has its limitations. Only light passenger vehicles are allowed on it, and signs at each end warn drivers to maintain at least 50 feet between their vehicle and the next one. Synchronized traffic lights at each end help avoid overloading.

Walkways on each side of the

bridge give pedestrians access to Wheeling Island from the city. Dick encourages visitors to take a walk across the bridge, the deck of which is about 90 feet above the river. He also likes to eavesdrop on the female pedestrians and their comments when they return to the lobby.

"They get out on that bridge, and they can see right down through the deck to the river," he says. "I believe



A river tow pushes barges filled with coal up the Ohio River at Wheeling. Visible on the far side of the bridge is Wheeling Island.

some of the women have been so mad at me when they got back that they would shoot me."

Dick points out the steel bar across the top of the entrance to the bridge — it is there to prevent trucks from driving onto the deck. Motorists driving a car or van with cargo secured to the roof don't think about this restriction, and Dick says there is usually at least one air conditioner, television, or other piece of top-loaded cargo that succumbs to the bar every year.

He's also seen a few despondent people talked down from both the Route 40 and Interstate 70 bridges. Dick has little sympathy for any person who is "that ignorant" to jump into the river from that height. The channel depth ranges from 19 to 34 feet, and Dick suspects they would hit bottom before they drown.

"That's going to hurt. But if he is a swimmer, he'll do all right," Dick says.

Dick's fascination with Wheeling, which he calls the most historic city in the United States, includes the Palace of Gold near Moundsville, Major Samuel McCulloch's Leap, and Oglebay Park. For several years, Dick worked as a step-on tour guide for buses that visited Oglebay. He often

asked the driver to deviate from the planned route so he could point out little tidbits of history or customize the tour to the visitors' interests.

Some 15 years after he left that business, Dick received a call from a Canadian man who had been on one of those tours. Dick said the man wanted to hire him to take his family to the Palace of Gold and show them around. While Dick could not get off work to fulfill that request, he considers it one of the nicest compliments ever paid to him.

"I felt really good that someone would remember that after 15 years," he says.

Dick also tells stories about Capitol Music Hall and the many country music stars he got to know over the years as a result of being an investor in the hotel's bar, Riverboat Inn. Dick says he adopted the practice of welcoming every star to the city with a bottle of liquor and a friendly invitation to relax in the hotel's bar. Dick was so well known around the theater, he had a key to a backstage entrance and watched many of the shows from a special room near the stage.

He still recalls the weekend Johnny Cash played the Capitol. When Cash

exited the theater and boarded his bus, a music hall employee presented Cash with his fee.

"I saw that check for \$75,000," Dick says.

Some of the performers were not as familiar to Dick as Cash, however. Dick, who had an accounting/computer business, was contacted at work one afternoon about a problem at his bar. When he arrived, he learned that customers were leaving because two men sitting at the bar were using offensive language.

Dick says he walked over to the men and asked them to either clean up their language or talk in the parking lot. The men apologized and Dick went back to work.

That evening, he returned to the bar, which was doing a good business. And the two men were still talking at the bar. The manager told Dick that after he had his talk with the men, the duo started paying for every patron's drinks. They also cleaned up their language, and a few days later, Dick got a letter from them apologizing.

"Those two guys happened to be [country music stars] Dave Dudley and Faron Young," Dick says. 🍁

Mountain Music Roundup

By John Lilly

The Golden Era of old-time country music, the late 1920's through the 1930's, was punctuated by some illustrious remote recording sessions sponsored by major commercial record labels and run by legendary producers. Ralph Peer and the 1927 and 1928 Bristol Sessions loom large, due primarily to the discoveries of singing stars Jimmie Rodgers and the original Carter Family for the Victor label. [See "Mountain Music Roundup," by John Lilly; Winter 2011.]

But there were others. Ralph Peer went to Asheville, North Carolina, in 1925. Okeh Records conducted field recordings in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in September 1927. The Brunswick label did likewise in Ashland, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1928, '29, and '30. Among the most significant and eclectic of these expeditions, however, were two that took place in Johnson City, Tennessee, in 1928 and 1929 for Columbia Records with producer Frank Walker.

The Johnson City Sessions 1928-1929: "Can You Sing Or Play Old-Time Music?" is a new boxed set from Bear Family Records that documents these Johnson City Sessions in grand style. Featuring 100 tracks on four CDs and a 135-page book, the collection is detailed,

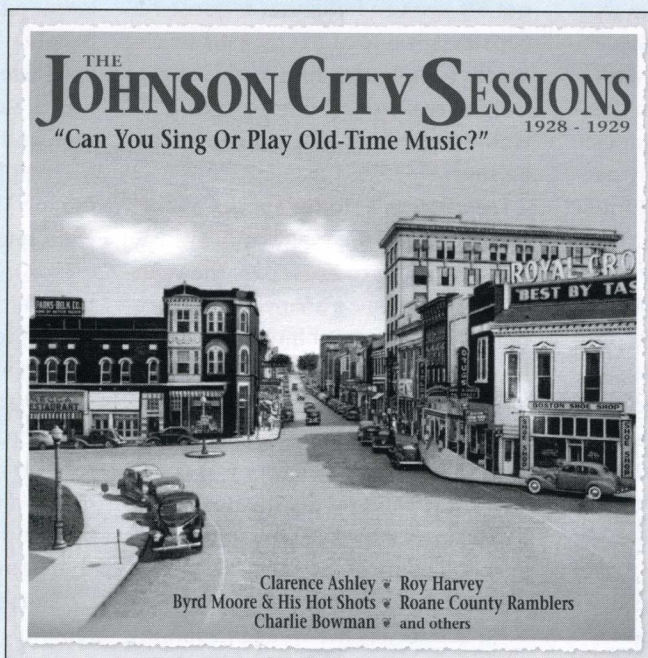
well-designed, and substantial. Produced by Ted Olson and Tony Russell, this attractive package includes informative notes, biographies of all of the musicians, lyrics to all of the songs, discography, chronology, bibliography, and vintage photographs along with digitally remastered tracks from 37 recording artists from across the Appalachian region.

West Virginia is very well represented. While at the earlier Bristol Sessions only two West Virginia acts participated (fiddler/singer Blind Alfred Reed and the West Virginia Coon Hunters string band), there were six at Johnson City. They included singer Richard Harold, guitar duo Roy Harvey and Leonard Copeland, vocal and

yodeling duo Earl Shirkey and Roy Harper, guitar/mandolin duo Robert Hoke and Vernal Vest, and string bands the Weaver Brothers and the Moatsville String Ticklers. All but one of these came from the Beckley area; the Moatsville group hailed from Barbour County. Eighteen of the 28 tunes or songs they cumulatively recorded included the talented, ubiquitous Roy Harvey — Roy recorded as both Harvey and Harper, and as a member of the Weaver Brothers.

Richard Harold, the first of these to record, was a blind street singer from the Princeton area, who was often associated with Blind Alfred Reed. [See "The Blind Man's Song: Recalling Alfred Reed," by John Lilly; Winter 2008.] On one song, "Sweet Bird," an uncredited fiddler is presumed by Olson and Russell to be Mercer County fiddler Fred Pendleton — to my ear it could just as likely have been Alfred Reed, though Pendleton is an equally strong possibility.

Roy Harvey recorded more than 200 songs in a five-year period for a variety of labels and in any number of bands. [See "'Daddy Loved Music': Recalling Guitarist Roy Harvey," by Matt Meacham; Winter 2007.] In Johnson City he recorded with guitarist Leonard Copeland, yodeler Earl Shirley, and





The Moatsville String Ticklers. From the left are Floyd Frye, Zel Frye, Doyle Shaffer, Harold Ritter, Brooks Ritter, Gordon Frye, Marshall Summers, and Cecil Frye. Photographer and date unknown.

band. The four guitar instrumentalists with Leonard Copeland were spirited and precise — “Beckley Rag” is a highlight. Using the thinly veiled pseudonym Roy Harper, Harvey recorded 10 songs with yodeler Earl Shirkey — far more than any other artist. Yodeling was all the rage at the time, and Shirkey possessed the skill and the tonality to yodel full choruses between Harvey’s verses. Their collaboration resulted in the runaway bestseller of the two Johnson City Sessions — “When the Roses Bloom for the Bootlegger,” a 1928 parody of a popular sentimental song that sold an amazing 72,545 copies, eclipsing the next best-seller fourfold. Invited back in 1929, the pair cut six more songs, including another parody, this time a swipe at West Virginia’s be-

loved anthem, “The West Virginia Hills” — a comic takeoff called “We Have Moonshine in the West Virginia Hills.”

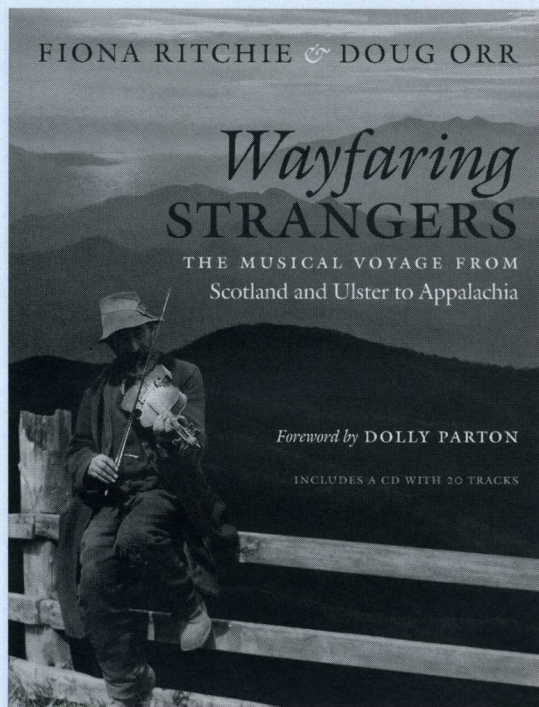
A straight-ahead reading of “The West Virginia Hills” was recorded later the same day by the Moatsville String Ticklers — one of the highlights of the collection for any West Virginian and among the most satisfying recordings of that song ever made. The flip side, “Moatsville Blues,” is also well worth a listen. Two other titles recorded that day went unreleased. The Moatsville String Ticklers were guitarists Floyd Frye, Doyle Shaffer, and Marshall Summers; banjo players Brooks Ritter and Zel Frye; fiddlers Cecil Frye, Gordon Frye, and Harold Ritter; and an unnamed vocal chorus.

Roy Harvey joined Vance and

Wiley Weaver and fiddler Odell Smith to record two numbers each as the Weaver Brothers and the Weaver Brothers String Band. Only two of their four songs were released.

Neither of the two songs recorded by Robert Hoke and Vernal Vest was released. None of the unreleased titles is included in this collection, unfortunately; they are presumed to be lost.

For fans of early country music, especially those interested in early country music from West Virginia, *The Johnson City Sessions 1928-1929: “Can You Sing or Play Old-Time Music?”* is a trove of little-known and seldom-heard recordings. The boxed set is available through County Sales; phone (540)745-2001 or online at www.countysales.com.



Appalachian culture, particularly Appalachian music, has long been considered to have deep roots in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A new book from the University of North Carolina Press takes a detailed look at this topic and makes a strong case for that argument.

Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia is written by radio host Fiona Ritchie and former college president Doug Orr, with a foreword by country music star Dolly Parton. Ritchie, host of National Public Radio's *The Thistle and Shamrock*, is deeply familiar with traditional music on both sides of the "pond," having crafted hundreds of hours of syndicated radio broadcasts during the past 30 years. Coauthor Doug Orr served as president of Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina, and is founder of the Swannanoa Gathering traditional arts workshops, which regularly feature workshops and performances of Celtic and Celtic-American music.

Wayfaring Strangers is a comprehensive volume that follows

vocal and instrumental traditions of Scotland, Ireland, and Great Britain from ancient times up to the present, from one side of the Atlantic to the other, and from the hearthside to the recording studio. Ambitious as it is, the book does a credible job of connecting relevant history with musical trends dating back to medieval times. Appreciating the political and social history of Scotland is key to understanding the migration of large numbers of lowland Scots to Northern Ireland (Ulster) — the so-called Scots Irish — and ultimately to the Appalachian Moun-

tains. These hard-working, long-suffering, tenacious people formed the backbone of Appalachian America and gave this region an inestimable part of its musical heritage.

While the emphasis of *Wayfaring Strangers* is on traditional song, instrumental music is considered as well. The authors highlight spe-

cific songs and tunes and follow their transitions from European to American folk music. Sidebars are used to concentrate on particular topics and add the voices of other authors and scholars, such as Pete Seeger, David Holt, Jean Ritchie, and others. To the book's credit, the musical discussion is consistently kept within its cultural and historical context. Illustrations are generous and evocative.

Wayfaring Strangers will be especially helpful for those with a general interest in American folk, old-time, bluegrass, and country music but who wish to gain a fuller understanding of where this music began and why it sounds the way it sounds. A companion CD, which includes 20 recorded examples of primarily vocal music, features mostly well-known artists such as Dolly Parton, Doc Watson, Jean Ritchie, Pete Seeger, and others.

The 384-page hardbound volume includes 60 color and 64 black-and-white illustrations, maps, artist profiles, glossary, timeline, discography, bibliography, index, audio CD, and CD notes. It sells for \$39.95, and is available from the publisher at <http://uncpress.unc.edu>; phone 1-800-848-6224. 🌿



Scottish Immigrants Monument at Penn's Landing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Photograph courtesy of Joe and Karen Holbet.

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Volume 40, 2014

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The GOLDENSEAL Index is published each year in the winter issue. The cumulative index is available on our Web site at www.wvculture.org/goldenseal/gsinde.html.

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Wood County	40:3;p24
Wyoming County	40:2;p26
	40:4;p36

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685 FOR GOLDENSEAL: WEST VIRGINIA TRADITIONAL LIFE (U.S.P.S. No. 013336), Filing date October 1, 2014, published quarterly, at The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. Number of issues published annually: 4. Annual subscription price: \$20. The general business offices of the publisher are located at The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300. John Lilly is the contact person at (304)558-0220.

The names and addresses of the publisher, editor and managing editor are: publisher, West Virginia Division of Culture and History, The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; editor, John Lilly, The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300; managing editor, John Lilly, The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

The owner is: West Virginia Division of Culture and History, The Culture Center, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Charleston, WV 25305-0300.

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Publication Name: Goldenseal: West Virginia Traditional Life
Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Summer 2014

The average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months are:

A) Total no. of copies:	13,000
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1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	10,694
2) Paid In-County Subscriptions	-0-
Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	446
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Circulation:	11,140
D) Free Distribution by Mail:	-0-
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In-County as Stated on Form 3541	-0-
Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	-0-
E) Free Distribution Outside the Mail	-0-
F) Total Free Distribution	-0-
G) Total Distribution	11,140
H) Copies Not Distributed (Office Use) (Returns)	188
I) Total	11,350
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation:	100%
The actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date are:	
A) Total no. of copies	12,500
Net press run:	
B) Paid and/or Requested Circulation:	
1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	10,384
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Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	-0-
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G) Total Distribution	10,872
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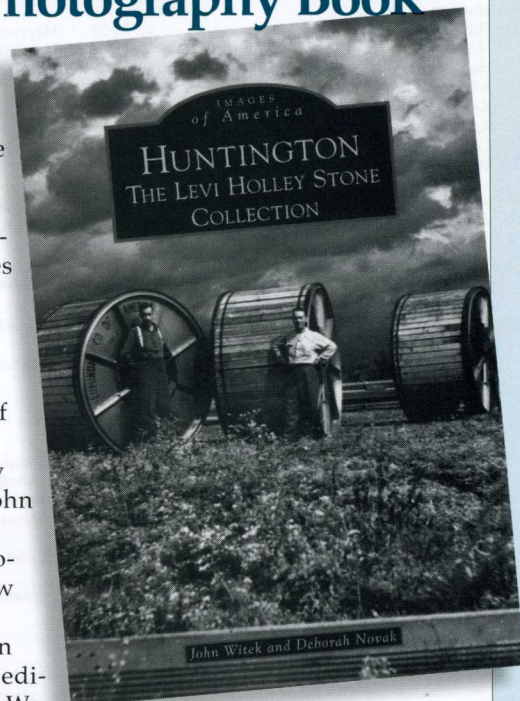
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Huntington Photography Book

Photographer Levi Holley Stone had a way with a camera. Through his eye and his lens, the city and the people of Huntington never looked so good. Thanks to a new book from Arcadia Publishing, 211 of Stone's images are now accessible in print, many for the first time.

Huntington: The Levi Holley Stone Collection is part of Arcadia's "Images of America" series. The book was authored and edited by documentary filmmakers John Witek and Deborah Novak, who discovered Stone's photographs at a yard sale a few years ago. Several of these pictures were included in an article in our Summer 2013 edition, "Huntington, the Way We Were: The Hometown Photographs of Levi Holley Stone," by John Witek. The Huntington Museum of Art recognized the value of these photographs as well and chose 80 of them for a special exhibit in 2013, which gave rise to this book.

Stone's photographs are complex, emotional, and technically advanced. Though skilled at traditional portrait photography, for example, Stone prefers double portraits featuring two people in the frame — sometimes identical, sometimes contrasting, sometimes conjoined. His most



famous photograph shows two linemen — one smiling, one serious — posed with huge reels of wire under an angry sky. From the early 'teens into the 1960's, we are given thoughtful and intriguing views of the people and objects in and around Huntington that caught the eye of this remarkable photographer.

Huntington: The Levi Holley Stone Collection is a 128-page 6x9-inch paperbound edition. It sells for \$21.99 and is available at local bookstores or from the publisher at www.arcadiapublishing.com.

Goldenseal

Coming Next Issue...

- Bird Man of Bethany
- Ballad Singer Phyllis Marks
- Sausage and Peppers
- Vandalia Time!





Antique containers of salt and salt byproducts at the J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works near Malden, Kanawha County. Photograph by Tyler Evert. See page 20.

Inside Goldenseal

Page 56 — Photographer Eddie Martin captured many memorable images of Wheeling.

Page 42 — New Martinsville was home to Morris "Dinger" Daugherty, the famous legless, one-armed aviator.

Page 50 — Barbour County has some unique funeral and burial traditions, says 94-year-old John W. Payne.

Page 20 — The J.Q. Dickinson Salt Works is back in business at Malden, now making gourmet table salts.

Page 36 — Rural Wyoming County holds a wealth of childhood memories for author Ray Graham.

Page 46 — Henry Ruppenthal III kept weather records for Berkeley Springs when he was a lad. He attracted national attention as the country's youngest weather observer, according to author Carl E. Feather.

Page 26 — George Karos is Martinsburg's pharmacist mayor.

Page 14 — Banjo player Dwight Diller of Hillsboro finds a deeper meaning in old-time music.

Page 6 — The Hammons family of Pocahontas County are widely known and respected for their fine music and old-time ways.

